Neighbourhoods Alive! Community Outcomes Evaluation 2010

FINAL REPORT

Submitted to:

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TABLE OF ACRONYMS

NA!   Neighbourhoods Alive!
NRC   Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation
NRF   Neighbourhood Renewal Fund
NDA   Neighbourhood Development Assistance
NHA   Neighbourhood Housing Assistance
CLM   Community-Led Model
NRP   Neighbourhood Renewal Plan
CED   Community Economic Development
FSA   Forward Sortation Area
TNRC   Thompson Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation
BNRC   Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation
SNA   Spence Neighbourhood Association
WBDC   West Broadway Development Corporation
NECRC   North End Community Renewal Corporation
CNDC   Central Neighbourhood Development Corporation
DM/SMCA   Daniel McIntyre / St. Matthews Community Association
ANC   Action for Neighbourhood Change
SEED   Supporting Employment & Economic Development
CEDNet   Community Economic Development Network
CMHC   Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
RRAP   Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program
HSC   Health Sciences Centre
MMF   Manitoba Métis Federation
CDC   Community Development Corporation
LSP   Local Strategic Partnership
LNRC   Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
URC   Urban Regeneration Companies

NOTE ON REPORTING

To ensure a common understanding of the terms used in the analysis, the following guidelines in analysing and reporting on key informant interview results have been used:

› "A few/a small number of interviewees" = less than 25 per cent;

› "Some/a minority of interviewees" = 25 to 49 per cent;

› "A majority of interviewees" = 50 to 75 per cent;

› "Most interviewees" = over 75 per cent; and

› "Almost all interviewees" = 95 per cent or more.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Neighbourhoods Alive! (NA!) Community Outcomes Evaluation focused on the NA! strategy and model as well as the progress achieved by key program components, namely: the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF); the Neighbourhood Development Assistance (NDA); and the Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA). A snapshot of findings is presented below.

Neighbourhood Revitalization – Stakeholders involved in NA! largely share a common understanding of neighbourhood revitalization as multi-dimensional efforts with the goal of improving conditions in communities. Any differences in the specific meaning or importance are often influenced by individual beliefs, needs, or priorities of key stakeholder groups.

Community-Led Model (CLM) – Available literature confirms that the CLM employed as a fundamental principle of NA! is a key feature of successful revitalization programs - viable solutions for revitalization must include the community members most impacted by the challenges. The evaluation confirms that the delivery of NA! through the key program components support a community-led model, and this model is consistently cited by NA! stakeholders as a best practice of the initiative.

Community Outcomes – Through its core programs, the NA! initiative seeks to achieve three long-term outcomes:

> Communities have leadership and capacity to maintain sustainable neighbourhoods.

While there are some variations by community, NRCs are emerging as local leaders in revitalization in their neighbourhoods. Recognition and leadership is perceived to be more advanced among organizations involved in revitalization efforts than to the general public due to challenges in maintaining awareness among residents. Longevity of the organization plays a role, with the early years spent building credibility and visibility with the community residents and stakeholders. The community consultations, development of partnerships, and the improved planning process due, in part, through the five-year renewal plans are factors which have supported NRCs role as leader and placed communities on the pathway to revitalization.

> Communities have enhanced social, economic, physical, cultural and environmental conditions.

Through the NRF, NA! seeks to increase activity in four identified community priority areas:

Stability – Efforts have included projects such as: renovations to neighbourhood facilities; developing or reclaiming of parks and open space for community use; developing community gardens; improving local

amenities; and contributing to neighbourhood beautification. Much of the NRF activity to date contribute to the stability priority, as stability is the more straightforward out of the four priority areas.

Capacity Building – Community consultations and annual general meetings that have taken place due to NA! are viewed as fundamental to capacity building activities and a key principle of the CLM. Other efforts contributing to this priority area have involved skill building which has helped to engage residents in the community and foster empowerment. While outreach has been an important component of capacity building efforts, more resources could be made available to support these activities.

Well-being – Much of the activities funded through the NRF have had a positive effect on well being and, collectively, these projects have created a welcoming environment, an enhanced perception of safety, and improved well being in communities.

Economic Development – Economic development has proved to be a more challenging area to address and stimulate activities, and in some communities, there are other organizations with more expertise to conduct economic development activities. While economic development is cited as needed in a community to enhance revitalization, more could be done to improve capacity in this area.

> Communities have adequate, affordable, safe, quality housing to meet their needs.

Evaluation findings point to an improvement in the quality of housing in the relevant communities; however, there is a dearth of *affordable* quality housing. Quality improvements attributed at least in part to NA! include a decrease in derelict buildings, improved tenant-landlord relations, and renovations and rehabilitation of housing stock.

Overall – The evaluation findings support the continued relevance and need for NA!. While there have been improvements in communities in many areas, the original neighbourhoods included in the NA! program continue to experience issues related to safety, economic hardship and lack of affordable housing. The overall NA! program model and mix of interventions (NDA, NRF, NHA) are appropriate. The capacity of NRCs is improving and many projects are occurring under the NRF and NHA programs.

1. INTRODUCTION

In early 2010, Manitoba's Department of Housing and Community Development commissioned a community outcomes evaluation of Neighbourhoods Alive! (NA!). This Draft Final Report presents the findings of the evaluation.

There are five chapters in this report. Chapter One provides information on the Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative and the context within which NA! programs are delivered. This is followed by an overview of the evaluation objectives and approach in Chapter Two. Chapter Three presents the findings of the evaluation on the design and delivery, immediate and intermediate outcomes of NA!. Conclusions are included in Chapter Four and recommendations are presented in Chapter Five.

1.1 NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE!

The Neighbours Alive! initiative is a provincial program coordinated by Housing and Community Development of the Government of Manitoba. NA! operates in accordance with a community-led model which provides Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations in selected neighbourhoods in Manitoba the latitude to develop their own priorities for neighbourhood revitalization. The initiative is overseen at the governmental level by a Ministerial steering committee and an interdepartmental working group, as well as a provincial office employing an NA! coordinator and project officers. As of March 31, 2008[1], just under $45 million had been committed to NA! programs.

a) Background

Launched by the Manitoba government in June 2000, NA! coordinates programs and services that support the efforts of designated communities to revitalize their neighbourhoods. As part of the provincial government's long-term social and economic strategy to support community-driven revitalization and renewal efforts in designated older neighbourhoods, NA! works collaboratively with communities, non-profit organizations, local institutions and community businesses to support a wide range of neighbourhood projects with funding and planning assistance. NA! supports and encourages community-driven revitalization efforts in designated neighbourhoods in a number of key areas including: housing and physical improvements; employment and training; education and recreation; and safety and crime.

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[1] Neighbourhoods Alive!, Annual Report 2007-2008.

NA! targets specific high-needs communities and neighbourhoods in order to focus and maximize the impact of the initiative's resources. Originally, NA! focused on providing support to five communities: Thompson; Brandon (core area); Spence; West Broadway; and Winnipeg's North End (William Whyte, Lord Selkirk Park and Point Douglas). In 2005, the provincial government expanded the initiative to seven additional Winnipeg inner-city neighbourhoods that were grouped into three communities: North End (St. John's, Dufferin); Central Winnipeg (West Alexander, Centennial, Central Park); and Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews. In 2007, the government announced a further expansion of NA! to five additional urban communities outside of Winnipeg (Dauphin, Flin Flon, Portage la Prairie, Selkirk, The Pas).

A number of broad objectives were identified within the original NA! framework for a community-driven approach to neighbourhood revitalization and renewal. Over time, these broad objectives were incorporated into the Neighbourhoods Alive! logic model. Through its core programs, the NA! initiative seeks to achieve three long-term outcomes, these are:

> Communities have leadership and capacity to maintain sustainable neighbourhoods.

> Communities have enhanced social, economic, physical, cultural and environmental conditions.

> Communities have adequate, affordable, safe, quality housing to meet their needs.

b)   Rationale

Building communities was identified in the Manitoba 2007 Budget as a key element of the province's *Action Strategy for Economic Growth*. The provincial government's approach to urban revitalization is "built on a commitment to inner city renewal and economic development, which reflects a belief in more equitable, sustainable and diversified development[2]", including the expansion of the Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative to include urban communities across the province.

NA! supports and encourages community-driven revitalization efforts in older, designated neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods are often experiencing significant social, economic and environmental challenges such as high rates of poverty, unemployment and crime, as well as a lack of appropriate family support, recreation, affordable housing and economic opportunities.

The Housing and Community Development branch of the Government of Manitoba develops and implements policies, programs and projects that support neighbourhood revitalization in urban centres. The Branch works in partnership with other governments and community partners and is responsible for the administration of the NA! initiative.

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[2]   Manitoba's Action Strategy for Economic Growth, Budget 2007, Province of Manitoba.

In the November 2008 Speech from the Throne, the provincial government renewed its commitment to support Manitoba's families and communities by balancing their current needs with investments in their long-term well-being by announcing its intention to accelerate municipal infrastructure programs, including its urban development strategy.

c)   Programs and Activities

NA! supports a holistic approach to neighbourhood renewal by recognizing the broad and distinctive needs, conditions and priorities of older neighbourhoods, and by providing a wide range of resources that support neighbourhood revitalization efforts. NA! support is provided to designated communities through three programs:

> **Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF):** Provides funding to community organizations for capacity building, stability, economic development and well-being focused projects in the designated NA! neighbourhoods. These include projects that support the renewal of community facilities, local economic development, safety, healthy living, and community cooperation and leadership. The definitions of the four categories of eligible initiatives are as follows:
>
> *Neighbourhood Capacity Building*: Supports projects that: promote neighbourhood consultation, outreach, awareness and collaboration; enhance knowledge, skills and leadership; nurture individual and community pride; and support the sustainability of programs.
>
> *Neighbourhood Stability*: Complements housing improvements in a neighbourhood by supporting projects such as: renovations to neighbourhood facilities; developing or reclaiming of parks and open space for community use; developing community gardens; improving local amenities; and contributing to neighbourhood beautification.
>
> *Neighbourhood Economic Development*: Assists neighbourhood organizations to prepare community economic development strategies for their neighbourhoods that foster balanced, equitable and sustainable economic development and develop projects that: provide local business opportunities; enhance employment and training opportunities for local residents; and promote local purchasing.
>
> *Neighbourhood Well-being*: Funds activities that support neighbourhood cohesion and well-being by: enhancing neighbourhood safety and preventing crime; reducing at-risk behaviour (e.g. recreation programs); contributing to better health practices; strengthening tenant-landlord relations; and improving neighbourhood co-operation.

> **Neighbourhood Development Assistance (NDA):** Assists community economic development in the designated neighbourhoods by supporting the formation and operations of democratic Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations (NRCs) that are locally administered. NDA

provides core funding to twelve NRCs to support their coordination of revitalization efforts in the designated neighbourhoods.

> **Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA):** Provides financial assistance to support community-based home ownership and renovation initiatives in designated neighbourhoods. The NHA program is used to support local housing improvement projects and provides funding to NRCs, non-profit community housing corporations and private landlords/developers to renovate, rehabilitate or construct new housing units and to promote home ownership.

In addition to these core programs, other resources under the NA! initiative available to the designated neighbourhoods, as well as to wider audiences, include:

> **Community Initiatives Program:** Supports initiatives that have a broad impact on Winnipeg's inner city or target specific groups across the inner city.

> **Lighthouses:** Works to enhance public safety by supporting local communities to provide after-school recreation activities for youth.

> **Training Initiatives:** Offers a variety of training to targeted residents to provide them with new career opportunities in areas of labour market demand.

> **School Resource Officer Program:** Supports the deployment of community constables in schools.

> **Urban Arts Centres:** Provides financial support to community-based, non-profit organizations delivering arts programming to high need and high risk communities.

> **Community Youth Recreation:** Provides support to municipalities and Lighthouse sites in NA! designated communities to increase access to or availability of youth recreation programming.

In support of NA! goals, NRF and NHA funds are also provided from NA! to NRCs to provide several locally administered grant programs in communities, including:

> **Small Grants:** The Small Grants Funds are administered by NRCs and are available to local community groups and organizations to support small projects under $5000 that bring people together and respond to the priorities of the NRC's 5 year neighbourhood plan.

> **Residential Exterior Fix-ups** (also called Front and Paint in Brandon and Thompson): Grant assistance is provided through the NRCs to homeowners and landlords to undertake exterior renovations to their properties. Applicants are expected to contribute some of their own resources.

> **Storefront Improvements:** Businesses, co-ops and not-for-profit organizations are eligible for grants from the NRCs in Brandon and Winnipeg's North End to contribute to aesthetic

improvements on the exteriors of their buildings. Applicants are also expected to match the provincial contribution.

d) Community-Led Model

NA! delivery is founded on a Community-Led Model (CLM) to promote local knowledge and leadership to coordinate responsive neighbourhood revitalization. NA! supports this model by providing resources to NRCs to plan and coordinate neighbourhood revitalization and renewal efforts. The role of the NRCs in the Community-Led Model is to:

> Develop Neighbourhood Renewal Plans (NRPs) to determine priorities for revitalization.

> Play a coordinating role to mobilize partnerships and resources to plan and achieve revitalization goals.

> Review and advise on local project proposals received by NA!, based on the NRPs.

> Propose and implement projects with community partners to fulfill goals outlined in the NRPs.

Through their emphasis on the Community-Led Model, NA! and the NRCs have adopted the principles of Community Economic Development (CED) to guide revitalization efforts. CED is a community-led process that combines social and economic development to foster the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of communities. A CED approach is driven by the community, which in the case of NA! designated neighbourhoods includes local residents, businesses, institutions and organizations.

Through CED, local economies are strengthened by local skill development and employment, as well as by social organization and business development, all of which contribute to community health and well-being. CED is a key component of Manitoba's economic strategy to support community-driven neighbourhood revitalization. The NRPs incorporate strategies to change neighbourhood conditions using CED principles, which include: local employment; local ownership and decision-making; local economic linkages; reinvest profits back into community; local knowledge and skills development; positive environmental impact (physical, mental and emotional health and well-being); neighbourhood stability and community cohesion; and human dignity.

1.2 NA! COMMUNITY OUTCOMES EVALUATION 2010

The NA! Community Outcomes Evaluation 2010 is intended to determine the impact of the NA! model and programs, and to guide future program planning. The scope of the evaluation included:

> Assessment of overall progress made to date on achievement of NA! intermediate outcomes in neighbourhood revitalization as experienced cumulatively in Brandon, Thompson, and the three original Winnipeg communities of Spence, West Broadway, and the North End (William

Whyte, Lord Selkirk Park, North Point Douglas), including change in neighbourhood conditions.

› Assessment of the progress achieved on NA! short term outcomes as experienced in the Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews, Central (Centennial, Central Park, West Alexander), and expansion North End (St. John's, Dufferin) neighbourhoods.

› Assessment of the role and effectiveness of the Community-Led Model to achieve the intermediate outcomes.

› Production of conclusions on the progress achieved and recommendations to improve NA! processes to advance revitalization.

Building on the 2005 Evaluation of Neighbourhoods Alive!, the 2010 NA! Community Outcomes Evaluation examines the NA! strategy and model as well as the progress achieved by key program components, namely: the NRF; the NDA; and the NHA. The scope of the evaluation will be limited to the overall community level change (outcomes) of the designated communities and not the outputs of the specific programs.

Given the inherent difficulties in measuring societal change over relatively short periods of time, as well as difficulties in attributing any measured change to a limited set of environmental factors, the impact analysis will be more descriptive than causal in nature. Notably, the evaluation will attempt to describe the extent to which NA! programs and the Community-Led Model have contributed to ongoing efforts of neighbourhood revitalization and renewal within the designated communities.

2. EVALUATION DESIGN

To address the evaluation objectives, the methodology for conducting the Evaluation of NA! involved gathering information using multiple lines of evidence. This enables consideration of evaluation questions through triangulation of multiple perspectives gained from different persons consulted and from multiple sources of information.

The core methodological approach to the study involved six components: review of literature; review of administrative files; key informant interviews; survey of community residents; case studies; and focus groups. Each of the components is described below.

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of recent published literature in Manitoba and Canada, as well as internationally has been undertaken. Literature resources with potentially useful information include past evaluations, and studies and research on the effectiveness and efficiency of other community renewal models and strategies. These sources are intended to serve as a comparative for analysing the NA! model and programs in terms of design, implementation and outcomes achieved to date.

In general, the main purpose of the literature review was to identify models and programs similar to NA! that could be used to identify possible benchmarking and best practices alternatives as well as criteria for analysis of NA!'s components and against which elements could be compared. More specifically, based on the evaluation matrix, the literature review seeks to:

> Identify examples of program components from other jurisdictions that have been documented as effective in supporting a Community Led Model.

> Explore the definition of neighbourhood revitalization as it is used and pursued in other jurisdictions.

> Compile a discussion of emerging practices of initiatives from other jurisdictions that are relevant to the goals of Neighbourhoods Alive.

Information obtained through the literature review has been compiled as a separate literature review report (Appendix E). Information from the literature review report has been used as context when conducting the data collection and report writing, but is also layered within the integrated final report to make any recommendations for improvement of NA!, such as in relation to the role, delivery and effectiveness of the Community-Led Model to achieve the intermediate outcomes.

2.2 REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE DATA AND NA! DOCUMENTATION

The document and data review component of the evaluation served to develop a thorough understanding of the NA! model and programs, and to support many of the evaluation issues. An understanding of NA! has been important for implementing most other methodologies for this evaluation, including the refinement of the data collection instruments.

The document review includes a review of key NA! program documentation and performance data as well as existing community socio-economic data in order to obtain information related to the individual components and to the impact of the NA! model and programs on neighbourhood conditions. The documentation includes five year Neighbourhood Renewal Plans for individual communities, Annual Community Plans, Community Annual Reports, list of NRC websites, NHA Information (CHII Backgrounder, NHA project trackers, NHA Program Description and Proposal Requirements), Link to NA! reports web page (including direction to listing of all funded NRF projects), Neighbourhood Development Assistance (NDA) Program Guidelines document, forward sortation areas (FSAs) for the eight evaluation communities including household counts, and a map of Winnipeg NA! original and expansion communities.

2.3 KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The EKOS research team has conducted 42 interviews with knowledgeable stakeholders identified by the NA! evaluation team in order to solicit their opinions and observations on the evaluation issues. The interviews were undertaken with following major stakeholder groups:

> NA! staff (n=4);

> Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations (NRCs) (n=15);

> Neighbourhood Stakeholder Organizations (n=11);

> Provincial/Municipal Representatives (n=4);

> External Community Development Experts (former NA! management staff, ED consultants) (n=5); and

> Supplementary Key Stakeholders in Winnipeg North End (n=3).

The key informant interview guides were developed during the design phase. While there were common questions across all the guides, four separate versions were developed to address issues specific to each group.

Because the respondents identified above are located primarily in Winnipeg, along with Brandon and Thompson, many of the interviews were conducted in-person, while others were conducted by

phone. We note that some of these interviews were conducted to contribute to the case studies. Each interview was about 60 minutes in duration.

The NA! evaluation team undertook communications to alert key informants to the upcoming interviews. In addition, to engender high-quality responses, EKOS sent (by email) to all interview candidates a copy of the appropriate interview guide in advance of their appointment so that they had an opportunity to review the interview questions and consider their answers. This approach is proven to help to ensure that the interviews proceed efficiently and that all relevant issues are covered.

Notes for each interview were prepared for internal use by the study team. These interview notes were then used to prepare a summary of the views expressed by each stakeholder group. Findings from key informant interviews have been included in this integrated report and organized by the major categories of evaluation issues.

To ensure a common understanding of the terms used in the analysis, the following guidelines in analysing and reporting on interview results have been used:

> "A few/a small number of interviewees" = less than 25 per cent;

> "Some/a minority of interviewees" = 25 to 49 per cent;

> "A majority of interviewees" = 50 to 75 per cent;

> "Most interviewees" = over 75 per cent; and

> "Almost all interviewees" = 95 per cent or more.

2.4   SURVEY OF COMMUNITY RESIDENTS

The survey of community residents involved a stratified random sample, drawn from land-line telephone listings according to the FSA and letter carrier routes for the relevant neighbourhoods. The NA! evaluation team provided the information on neighbourhood boundaries and EKOS drew this custom sample from our supplier Survey Sampler. The neighbourhood was verified by the respondent within the introduction of the survey.

Prior to the interviewing period, the questionnaire went through a round of pre-testing on April 8, 2010, with a total of 11 respondents in order to gauge the flow and clarity of the of the survey instrument. Based on interviewer feedback, minor revisions were made to the survey instrument as a result of the test (such as clarifying the wording of some questions and rating scales). On completion of the pre-test, the survey was in field from April 9 – 24, 2010. There were at least 50 surveys in each of the seven communities for a total of 357 interviews. The survey results are valid within a margin of error of +/- 5.2 percentage points for items to which all 357 individuals responded, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases at the community level to +/- 13.7 – 14.0 per cent.

TABLE 2.1: Sampling Error

	Community Population*	Evaluation Sample size	Margin of Error (%)**
Brandon	11,399	52	+/- 13.7
Central	9,780	50	+/- 14.0
DM/SM	15,545	52	+/- 13.7
North End	19,625	51	+/- 13.8
Spence	4,260	50	+/- 13.9
Thompson	13,446	51	+/- 13.8
West Broadway	5,325	51	+/- 13.8
Total	83,640	357	+/- 5.2

*Source: 2006 Census
 ** At the 95 per cent level

Fieldwork for this project was conducted by highly trained interviewers at EKOS' call centre in Ottawa. Throughout the data collection, survey supervisors continuously monitored interviewing to ensure consistency of questionnaire administration and interviewing techniques. Up to eight call-backs were made to each member of the sample for which initial attempts at contact were unsuccessful. Follow-up calls were made on subsequent days, at varying time periods to maximize the potential for reaching a given respondent. Appointments were made for respondents wishing to reschedule a survey. Daily records were kept of all calls made, whether successful (i.e. interviews completed or appointments made) or not. Once the survey collection was completed, the data was reviewed for the purposes of coding open-ended responses and general cleaning (e.g., based on skip patterns and for unusual outliers, typically in dollar figures reported). The data was weighted to ensure the age and gender matched the composition of each of the seven communities.

2.5 FOCUS GROUPS OF COMMUNITY RESIDENTS

The EKOS research team conducted five focus groups: three with engaged residents in the original 2000 communities (the neighbourhoods identified for the case studies); and two in the 2005 expansion communities. The focus groups featured:

> Random selection from the samples provided of engaged community residents to participate in the groups (with some screening criteria applied to ensure a representation of age groups, and some business owners);

> A structured and guided discussion linked to the program objectives and purpose of the evaluation; and

> Use of honoraria – to recognize participants' time and expenses in attending the group, an honorarium was offered to each participant in the group.

A focus group moderators guide was designed to be sufficiently flexible to enable respondents to elaborate on their responses and to provide feedback on their community, while still addressing the objectives of the evaluation. The issues covered were similar to those identified above for the community resident survey, but framed for the less structured, qualitative format of the focus group.

A sample of approximately 25 - 100 individuals in each of the five communities was provided by the applicable NRCs. The sample was comprised of "engaged residents" in the community and included: residents known by the NRC or other community organizations, community volunteers, residents serving as board members on other community organizations, and business owners in the community. An informational letter was provided by EKOS to NA! for use by the NRCs in compiling the focus group sample. At the discretion of the NRCs, the letter was presented to individuals being identified in the sample and provided a brief description of the purpose and issues to be discussed.

Participants were recruited by telephone by experienced EKOS interviewers using the custom lists provided by the NRCs. Six to twelve confirmed participants were recruited for each focus group. In addition, all participants were given a reminder call a day or two before their scheduled group discussion. In addition to describing the study purpose and the nature of the group discussion (e.g., time, place and duration), interviewers noted the following to potential focus group participants:

> the study is being conducted on behalf of the provincial government;

> although we would greatly appreciate their involvement in the group, participation is entirely voluntary;

> the discussion will be tape-recorded for purposes of any analysis; and

> information they provide in the group discussion will be kept strictly confidential.

Focus groups were held at community centres or NRC offices in the relevant communities. The focus groups took place in May 2010, during the evening, and were up to two hours in duration. In total, 42 participants attended the groups. The following outlines the times and locations for the focus groups:

> **Brandon:** May 19, 2010. 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., at Brandon City Hall where the BNRC is located. Eight participants were recruited, five attended.

> **Central:** May 20, 2010. 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., at the Burton Cummings Community Centre. Eight participants were recruited, six attended.

> **Winnipeg North End:** May 25, 2010. 5:30 – 7:30 p.m., at Wahbung Abinoonjiiag. Twelve participants were recruited, ten attended.

- **Daniel McIntyre / St. Matthews:** May 25, 2010. 7:30 - 9:30 p.m., at the Oriels Community Centre. Six participants were recruited, four attended.

- **Spence:** June 15, 2010. 7:00 – 9:00 p.m., at the Magnus-Eliason Community Centre. Ten participants were recruited, nine attended.

- **Spence:** Youth Discussion Group. June 15, 2010. 5:00 – 6:00 p.m., at the Magnus-Eliason Community Centre (note, incentives were not provided for this group. Youth were recruited by the Youth Coordinator in Spence and provided a consent form signed by their guardian to participate). Ten participants were recruited, eight attended.

All focus group sessions were tape-recorded and, based on notes and the audio recordings, results have been incorporated into this evaluation report and the case studies as applicable.

2.6   COMMUNITY CASE STUDIES

To allow for a more detailed community-level exploration of the outcomes of NA!, three case studies of the original five communities were developed. The NA! Evaluation Committee chose Winnipeg North End, Spence, and Brandon as the case study communities.

Each of the case studies compiled and analyzed the data collected at the community level. Information for the case studies came from the following lines of evidence:

- A review of documentation/files/data. This includes, for example, review of the proposal/ funding application, data maintained by the NRCs, Census and other profile data;

- Key informant interviews with NRC representatives, stakeholders/partners, and other community representatives who would add value and insight (described above);

- Focus group with community residents. Focus groups were conducted according to the methodology described above; and

- Community resident survey results (neighbourhood level).

The analyses of the case studies were both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The various findings from interviews, the focus group, community resident survey and documentation/data have been summarized and synthesized to present major observations. The case study summaries include a brief presentation of the methodology, a description of the community, and the findings. The case studies also describe best practices and lessons learned. Illustrative examples from the case studies are woven throughout the integrated report as appropriate.

2.7　Caveats

This integrated report and the case studies include a description of Neighbourhoods Alive! activities and illustrations of outcomes in the community based on a review of available documentation and primary data. Both the qualitative and quantitative results may be vulnerable at a community or case study level due to the lower amount of respondents (in the Survey of Community Residents, Focus Groups, and Key Informants) relative to the overall evaluation. Further, a challenge in community outcome evaluations is in attributing outcomes to the specific activities of the program. When it comes to addressing urban social issues, the timeframe for implementing core changes in the socioeconomic vitality of neighbourhoods and communities (i.e., ultimate outcomes) is considered quite long and is often measured in terms of decades. Also, the literature underscores the magnitude of resources (financial, structural, organizational and social) required to achieve enduring and sustainable results.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 INITIATIVE DESIGN

a) Defining Neighbourhood Revitalization

The concept of neighbourhood revitalization covers a broad range of approaches and outcomes. While in its more limited application, the focus is on upgrading or replacing physical assets, such as deteriorated and abandoned properties, revitalization generally encompasses a process of significant socioeconomic change that seeks to reduce poverty and welfare dependency and to increase employment and the overall quality of life[3]. In its broader application, the physical and economic focus of neighbourhood revitalization includes elements of social cohesion and citizen empowerment through the reinforcement or introduction of local democratic mechanisms[4]. In Canada, the concept of neighbourhood revitalization tends to vary across provincial and territorial jurisdictions in relation to the relative importance attributed to the various economic development and/or social inclusion aspects of neighbourhood change[5].

The shift in perspective from isolated issues to complex problems has provided the impetus behind the emergence of comprehensive community-led initiatives in the revitalization of urban areas. The Aspen Institute[6] defines these initiatives as: "neighbourhood-based efforts that seek improved outcomes for individuals and families as well as improvements in neighbourhood conditions by working comprehensively across social and economic sectors. Additionally, comprehensive community initiatives operate on the principle that community building is a necessary component of the process of transforming distressed neighbourhoods. Community building includes, for example, strengthening institutional capacity at the local level, enhancing social capital and personal networks, and developing local leadership capacity."

Embedded within the idea of "comprehensiveness" a number of different challenges are being addressed through neighbourhood revitalization and the strategic responses required[7]: 1) completeness challenge – filling the gaps (all important pieces are present for tackling the issue at hand); 2) coordination challenge – improving links (pieces are effectively linked with one another, i.e., not overly fragmented);

[3] Pomeroy S., 2006. *Rethinking Neighbourhood Renewal: Review of the US Experience and Possible Lessons for Canada*.

[4] Maclennan D., 2006. *Remaking Neighbourhood Renewal: Towards Creative Neighbourhood Renewal Policies for Britain*.

[5] Chantier de l'économie sociale, 2005. Social Economy and Community Economic Development in Canada: Next Steps for Public Policy.

[6] Torjman S., Leviten-Reid E., 2003. *Comprehensive Community Initiatives.* (cited in)

[7] Leviten-Ried, E., 2009. *Comprehensive Strategies for Deep and Durable Outcomes*.

3) robustness challenge – strategic investment (capacities are present but less fully developed in their reach or their depth); 4) governance challenge – collaborative government (complex problems are dynamic and involve a wide range of interacting factors that continuously reshape the specific challenges involved and that require a new response capacity, i.e., an ongoing institutional capacity to adjust and readjust the actions of various partners in relation to one another over time); and 5) innovation challenge – social innovation through the creation of new or different ways of combining the various pieces together.

Within the literature[8], comprehensive revitalization initiatives are distinguished by a number of key features, notably, they are:

> **Comprehensive –** address a range of issues rather than a single concern and typically move beyond the provision of services, amenities and supports, and seek to create new or improved assets in a neighbourhood or community to help build its physical and social infrastructure as well as foster a community's capacity to solve its problems by creating or sustaining networks (social capital) that serve as an important base for making local decisions and seek to make changes in the broader social and economic context;

> **Holistic –** try to identify links among various issues and then engage diverse sectors to tackle the complexities involved in the social, economic and environmental challenges that the community seeks to address;

> **Multisectoral –** encourage partnering and collaborative work arrangements and recognize the value of contributions from diverse backgrounds, networks and areas of expertise (typically governed by a coordinating mechanism in the form of leadership roundtable or steering group);

> **Long-term –** complex issues cannot be resolved in the short term, it takes time to establish relationships among the various sectors and work effectively in a collaborative fashion;

> **Developmental –** they are not simply remedial interventions, rather these efforts aim to build the capacity of the community in a positive way from the perspective of decision-making and resilience;

> **Inclusive –** with respect to the members they involve (diverse sectors and stakeholder groups); and

> **Concerned with process and outcomes –** the real value added of comprehensive community initiatives is to establish effective structures that can enable the community to reduce poverty, change policy and introduce innovation, and where improved process may be a major outcome.

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[8] Torjman S., Leviten-Reid E., 2003. *Comprehensive Community Initiatives.*

In Canada, neighbourhood revitalization initiatives and programs generally reflect (to varying degrees) the principles of comprehensive community-led initiatives, regardless of the terminology applied to describe them (e.g., community economic development, community development, neighbourhood renewal). Within the framework of the Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative neighbourhood revitalization has been defined as: "local efforts by residents, organizations, schools, businesses, and community groups to build on the existing strengths and experiences of communities, and take into account the distinctive needs, conditions and priorities of individual neighbourhoods to affect change in housing and physical improvements, employment and training, education and recreation, and safety and crime prevention"[9]. This definition is consistent with the core principles and practices applied in other jurisdictions, both within Canada and internationally.

The findings of the key informant interviews indicate that the majority of interviewed stakeholders define neighbourhood revitalization as being multi-dimensional in that it incorporates a number of core elements, however, the specific meaning or perceived importance of different aspects associated with revitalization tended to vary among respondents.

For a majority of interviewees, neighbourhood revitalization represents a comprehensive or holistic approach in that it addresses a number of social, physical, environmental, cultural and economic conditions in the area. Also, a majority of key informant respondents identify an enhanced quality of life (clean, safe neighbourhoods with adequate housing and/or recreational opportunities) as a key feature of neighbourhood revitalization. Just under half of interviewed key informants indicate an engaged and/or empowered citizenry as a defining element of neighbourhood revitalization. A significant minority of interviewees underscore the community-led aspect (bottom-up, inclusive and/or participatory), especially in relation to the identification of priorities and solutions, as an essential feature of neighbourhood revitalization. For some key informants, an important element is the place-based aspect of revitalization in that it is geographically focused by neighbourhood to include distressed and disenfranchised areas.

A small number of interviewees consider community economic development as a defining aspect of neighbourhood revitalization. For a few key informants, physical revitalization and development represents an essential feature of neighbourhood revitalization.

b) Shared Understanding of Neighbourhood Revitalization

The majority of key informant interviewees believe that partners and stakeholders (business, residents and organizations) share a common understanding of neighbourhood revitalization and have a shared view of neighbourhood revitalization as a means of improving conditions in their community. Many respondents qualified their comments by indicating that there are, nevertheless, differences of understanding about some elements. Some key informants, for example, point to differences in revitalization priorities and implementation based on individual perspectives: "there are differing views…it all depends on

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[9] Source: NA! program staff

people's background and perspective". A minority of interviewees linked differences in understanding to differences in the goals of the key stakeholder groups: "for residents, it's about their local situation, their block and how it looks and their safety; for business, it's about the same goals but they are more concerned about patron safety, security of their property and commercial viability" and "for organizations, it means meeting the needs of their clients".

Some interviewees attribute differences in the objectives of the key stakeholder groups with their level of involvement with NA! initiatives: "business has had limited engagement to date…there is a gap in understanding and focus between neighbourhoods and business, with business, in general, adhering to a more top-down notion" and "institutions have their own goals and priorities which are sometimes in conflict with the goals of NA!". Likewise, a shared understanding and commitment to revitalization among formal stakeholders and partners is not always seen as being inclusive of, or supported by, residents: "the NRC, businesses and NGOs are on the same page of what revitalization means…residents may not share the common understanding" and "resident owners tend to be one dimensional – me, not we – and removed from community needs".

For a small number of interviewees, the achievement of a shared understanding between key stakeholders and partners, at least within each area, is seen as the result of ongoing dialogue or consensus building activities: "the more chances there are for discussion, the more common the view" and "there are commonalities, but we work hard on doing community consultation" and "there are different ideas about what it means…it takes a lot of dialogue".

c)   Design and Delivery

Program Aspects Contributing to Neighbourhood Revitalization

For the majority of key informant interviewees, the funding aspects of the NA! program represent a vital contribution to the neighbourhood revitalization process. Of these respondents, a minority of interviewees indicate that NDA core funding of NRCs is key in that it enables locally-led planning, consultation and coordination of revitalization activities, contributes to community capacity building and supports local delivery of projects.

For some key informants, the flexibility of the NRF in providing investment funds to implement neighbourhood priorities and initiatives has contributed significantly to the revitalization process. A small number of key informants identify the Small Grants Fund as important in enabling the NRCs to engage the community by providing timely funds in support of local initiatives.

The NHA, in conjunction with NA! collaboration with Manitoba Housing, is another funding aspect cited by a few interviewees as contributing considerably to the revitalization process in the targeted neighbourhoods.

Beyond the funding aspects, some interviewees identify the NA! community-led model, which requires locally developed renewal plans and a high level of participation from stakeholders, as a key element that is contributing to the success of the revitalization process. A few interviewees cite the technical support provided by NA! project officers who work closely with the NRCs as an NA! aspect that contributes significantly to the revitalization process. Similarly, a small number of interviewees consider that the provincial interdepartmental framework has contributed to the process of revitalization.

Program Aspects Hindering Neighbourhood Revitalization

Insufficient funding was identified by a minority of interviewees as a key aspect of the NA! program that is hindering the neighbourhood revitalization process. For a few interviewees, the short-term nature of project funding, with few opportunities for repeat or capital funding, impacts negatively on the sustainability of community revitalization initiatives Some key informants, including NRCs, board members, and stakeholder groups, think that core funding to NRCs is inadequate to ensure that strong organizational structures, characterized by experienced personnel and/or sufficient administrative capacity, are in place.

A few interviewees think that balancing accountability and efficiency is a challenge and indicate that NA! reporting and administrative follow-up requirements are diverting valuable time and resources from community work. A small number of respondents identify community capacity, due to limited resources within the community and/or increased demands on support structures, as an aspect that impedes the revitalization process.

For a few key informants, the absence of a long term solution or a legislative mandate for neighbourhood revitalization renders NA! vulnerable to policy changes. A small number of interviewees point to a lack of shared understanding or to competing community priorities as hindering the revitalization process.

d)   Community Led Model

Views from the Literature

While neighbourhood and community are words that are often used interchangeably within the literature, they represent two different, but interrelated, concepts:

> "A neighbourhood is the place with which we identify. Communities are defined by our social relationships. Community is strong to the extent that individuals identify with and support one another and work together for the common good. A neighbourhood can provide a good context for building community. A community requires a *common identity* which a distinct neighbourhood with its own…unique characteristics makes possible. The relatively *small scale* of a neighbourhood in a much larger city is conducive to people getting to know one another. Relationship building is further facilitated by a neighbourhood's *gathering places*…And

neighbourhoods have a variety of *voluntary associations*, both formal and informal, through which residences work together for the common good. All of this builds community." (Diers, 2008; 2).

The research[10] indicates that communities can exercise tremendous power when their voluntary associations are inclusive, active and strategic in the development and implementation of revitalization programs and activities. The concept of community ownership is not limited, necessarily, to geographic communities but rather to communities as defined by geographic, social, cultural and economic connections. In this sense, the idea of community-led revitalization initiatives reflects a growing recognition that viable solutions must include the community members most impacted by these problems. To this end, community-led initiatives emphasize a commitment to putting residents at the centre of planning, their full participation in decision-making, and reinforcing their ability to make choices regarding their own lives. Therefore, community engagement should seek to create a broad inclusion of citizens in all aspects of the processes and activities that seek to improve their lives, to the extent that they develop ownership of the process and make it sustainable (Homan 2004). Through community, individuals have the capacity to care for one another and the environment, to prevent crime, to prepare for and respond to emergencies, and to demand social justice[11].

In Britain, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR), a 10-year horizontal initiative implemented in 2000, acknowledged the significance of neighbourhood effects and the potential influence of community choices and social capital on revitalization initiatives. Within the NSNR, each neighbourhood is considered to be different in its context, trajectory and capacities. Government policy under the National Strategy aimed to put in place the mechanisms by which communities and cities would be able to answer these questions (i.e., what to do) effectively for themselves. In the NSNR, commitments to promote social inclusion and participation were considered, to ultimately, result in neighbourhood regeneration strategies which link local and mainstream policies and which recognize that lasting social improvements require simultaneous economic actions and stronger roles for communities[12].

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[10] Sieppert J.D., PhD, RSW, 2009. *Community Solutions: Promising Practices and Principles for Addressing Street Level Social Issues*. Core Challenges Initiative: Canada West Foundation.

[11] Diers J., 2008. *From the Ground Up: Communities Role in Addressing Street Level Social Issues*. Core Challenges Initiative: Canada West Foundation.

[12] Maclennan D., 2006. *Remaking Neighbourhood Renewal: Towards Creative Neighbourhood Renewal Policies for Britain*.

In the 2010 evaluation of Britain's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal[13], the study identified a number of key benefits attributed to resident engagement in community revitalization initiatives, such as:

> A more informed community;

> More relevant and responsive programmes and services;

> Increased accountability in decision-making;

> Greater buy-in from residents to projects and services;

> Increased level of understanding of local views by service providers and trust between residents and service providers;

> An increased sense of community belonging; and

> Development of confidence and new skills among residents.

However, the 2010 study findings also indicate that there is also a risk of disillusionment if promised benefits of engagement do not materialize, and of residents failing to prioritize the most significant issues or, alternatively, focusing on single issues. Ongoing management support from skilled public sector individuals was identified as a possible critical factor within successful examples of community engagement.

In Canada, the Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) initiative, a two year federally funded pan-Canadian action research project, modeled a resident-led, asset-based approach to neighbourhood revitalization. In this model, healthy communities are able to sustain their development over time by building a stockpile of assets (financial, physical, cultural and social) that can be used to generate income, weather hard times and innovate in response to changing circumstances. By developing a critical mass of assets in theses different areas, neighbourhoods are able to meet their needs and aspirations on an ongoing basis. In this model, resident participation is considered to be integral to both the process and outcome of neighbourhood revitalization, in that such involvement represents the very basis through which the neighbourhood is able to build the community assets needed to ensure its long-term vitality[14].

NA! Alignment with Community Led Model

Most interviewed key informants think that the NA! programs, together, support a community-led model. Some interviewees cite the NDA component that grants core funding to the NRCs as being key to enabling communities in that NRCs: provide leadership, coordinate activities and enhance community capacity through long-term planning and support; create opportunities for resident engagement and

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13 AMION Consulting, 2010. *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, Final Report.* Communities and Local Government, Office of Public Sector Information, United Kingdom.

14 Leviten-Ried, E., 2007. *Investing in Community Capacity Building.*

empowerment through participation on Boards and committees; and act as a conduit for information sharing within their community.

Some key informants emphasize the importance of community driven renewal plans in supporting the community-led model in that neighbourhood renewal plans are developed and approved through a consultative approach that encourages partnering and project integration across the community.

A few key informant respondents indicate that NRF funded projects support the community-led aspect of NA! delivery in that to secure funding, projects need to demonstrate neighbourhood partnerships, community support and help to ensure that the work is driven at the local level. Similarly, a small number of respondents point to collaborations across stakeholder groups and the focus on intersectoral work - whether through consultations, participation on local committees or through revitalization projects – as a key aspect of the NA! design that supports the community-led focus of the program. A few interviewees note the importance of the support and guidance provided by NA! project officers in facilitating locally-led work and projects. However, a small number of respondents consider the NHA component of the NA! program as being less aligned with the CLM.

Complementarity among NA! Components

The majority of key informant respondents consider that NA! programs complement each other well. NA! funding streams are seen to complement each other through their shared obligation to support neighbourhood renewal and embody a holistic or comprehensive approach, in which the individual components are seen as being interrelated and complementary. A few key informants indentify the NRCs - through their coordination, planning and vetting roles - as playing a key role in aligning NRF and NHA projects with community priorities.

While the majority of key informant interviewees consider that NA! funding programs are an appropriate and comprehensive mix to support and encourage community revitalization; some respondents note an insufficiency of NA! funds to meet programming needs across all priority areas.

A few interviewees indicate that the declining funding structure for community led initiatives does not take into account the need for sustained, long-term program funding if projects are to have a lasting community impact. A small number of key informants note the need to increase the flexibility of place-based funding to enable support to boundary or "shoulder" communities that are currently excluded from participating in community revitalization initiatives.

A few interviewees think that current NA! funding is too focused on addressing social issues and that there is a need to introduce more community economic development measures, such as tax credits and employment subsidies to tackle underlying economic issues within the targeted communities.

3.2 OUTCOMES – NDA

a) Identification and Coordination of Revitalization Efforts

As mentioned previously, the NDA program assists community economic development in the NA! designated neighbourhoods by providing core support to NRCs. While the organizational status and structure of the NRCs vary, they share commonalities in that the NRCs:

›   Are governed by a Board of Directors. Boards are comprised of representatives of local neighbourhood residents, community organizations, business and other stakeholders with an interest in the area. Members may be identified to have special expertise in areas such as housing, law, equity group representation, and health;

›   Have various committees to focus on specific priorities, which may include board members, as well as other representatives from organizations or community members. Committees may be struck to address issues such as housing/homelessness and safety, and to manage programs such as Front and Paint and Small Grants; and

›   Have dedicated staff positions, including administrative positions (Executive Director, administrative assistance) and positions to direct community development and/or housing development.

Key informants across all respondent groups were highly supportive of NDA support for core operations of the NRCs. Identification and coordination of revitalization priorities is a pivotal undertaking of the NRCs, and one which is perceived to be best accomplished by an organization specifically committed to the task, "a legitimate body to focus on the work". Key informants note that the core funding provided to the NRCs importantly allows for dedicated personnel 'on the ground' to focus on the work of revitalization. Staff positions such as the Executive Director, Community and Housing Coordinators within NRCs provide the human resources to connect with the community, identify priorities and plan, and coordinate and execute the work to address these priorities. "Without the core funding for the NECRC we would not have been able to look at revitalization from a long-term perspective and we would not have projects such as the North End Wellness Centre". As a further example, Housing Coordinators were noted as important in working with neighbourhoods to develop housing plans, and in outreach to residents about the availability of supports (Fix-Up grants) for improvements.

Community residents' opinions, canvassed through the community residents survey and focus groups also indicate a generally favourable impression of the NRCs and the appropriateness of their role in revitalization. Focus group participants in some communities speculated that many of the community improvements, particularly in streetscape changes, would not have occurred without the efforts of their local NRC. Other comments included: they've done "amazing" work, a lot for the community", "those working there are committed and familiar with the neighbourhood and there is a genuine effort in the work that they

do" and "staff really care about the community". There were some feelings of dissatisfaction among a minority, often having to do with difficulty in accessing funding (lack of advertising, and that too little notice was given for grants). They felt that community groups needed more information about funding cycles. As well, focus group participants in the North End noted some of the challenges for NRCs in serving this larger community "they are spread too thin and cover 11 communities" and "It's the largest NA! community and they don't have enough resources to service all areas and communities effectively."

Among surveyed community residents who were familiar with their NRC, more than three quarters (78 per cent) believed having NRCs is helpful for their neighbourhood (i.e., a rating of at least five on a seven-point scale).

Helpfulness of NRCs

"To what extent do you think having Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations is helpful or unhelpful for this neighbourhood?"
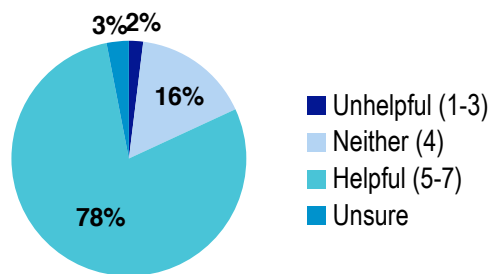
- Unhelpful (1-3)
- Neither (4)
- Helpful (5-7)
- Unsure

3% 2% 16% 78%

EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=219

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

The majority of key informants identified community consultations and the community renewal plan process (described in more detail below) as critical to support identification of community revitalization priorities and coordination of efforts. Other notable supporting factors in NRCs ability to identify and coordinate revitalization efforts include: the strength of the Board and staff members (e.g., networks in the community); innovative ideas and initiatives; and a robust understanding of gaps in services and available resources within the community. The longevity of the organization is also a factor – as NRCs become established in communities, they develop a fuller understanding of the profile, needs and environment of the community and enhance their connections within various sectors in the community.

Where neighbourhoods experience challenges in identifying and coordinating revitalization efforts, these difficulties often have to do with the size or diversity of the community and the competing

priorities this implies. Several key informants, for example, noted challenges for NRCs in this area. A second challenge for NRCs is balancing the coordination function of the NRC with efforts in the area of program delivery. Finally, many revitalization efforts require coordination across jurisdictions – for example, NA! community housing plans may intersect with municipal development planning process.

b) Participation of the Community in Revitalization Efforts

As mentioned above, NA! is founded on a community-led model, expressed in the establishment of local NRCs to lead revitalization efforts. A key task of the NRCs is to connect with the various constituents within their neighbourhood to facilitate their participation in revitalization efforts. According to key informants, participation in revitalization occurs "to varying degrees" across the NRCs and across the various stakeholder groups – "we are tinkering with engagement all the time, looking at different ways of engaging people in ways that work". To communicate with their constituents, the NRCs maintain their own web-site and also publish newsletters, brochures and other information products. Some NRCs have developed specific initiatives to foster engagement of identified target groups such as youth (e.g., in Spence). For community members who choose to become more actively involved in local revitalization efforts, opportunities include:

> The governance and operation of the NRC, such as membership on the board or various committees that includes representatives from business, residents, and NGOs. NRCs also place a priority on hiring locally;

> Community consultations and meetings such as consultations conducted as part of renewal planning (focus groups, surveys, town hall meetings), the annual general meeting and consultations conducted on a project-specific basis;

> Membership in groups/networks whose development has been facilitated by the NRC (e.g., business associations, youth services networks);

> Participation in community events (e.g., spring clean up, community gardens, youth activities, events such as Picnic in the Park, haunted house and winter carnival, tree banding); and

> Participation in programs, for example, by accessing Small Grants, Residential Exterior fix-ups and Storefront Improvement programs.

Participation in revitalization by each of the NRCs key constituents – residents, business and other organizations/sectors – is described in more detail below.

Residents

While NA! as a program is largely invisible to community residents, the local NRCs have much more visibility. Fully two-thirds of community residents who were surveyed reported no familiarity with the NA! initiative. Awareness of NRCs is higher, with half of survey respondents (51 per cent) familiar with the

relevant NRC in their area. Community residents unfamiliar with their NRC's name were given a description of the organization, resulting in a further one in five recalling the organization. While awareness levels did not vary significantly between Winnipeg and non-Winnipeg neighbourhoods, awareness of both NA! and the NRC was highest overall in Spence.

Familiarity with Neighbourhoods Alive! Program

"Are you familiar with the Neighbourhoods Alive! Program?"
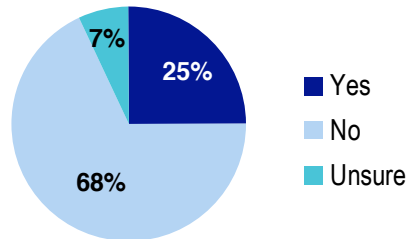
EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=357

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

Familiarity with Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation

"Are you familiar with the Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation in your neighbourhood?"

[IF NO] "Do you recall hearing about an organization like this in your neighbourhood?"

n=357

n=175
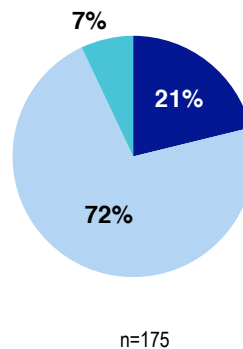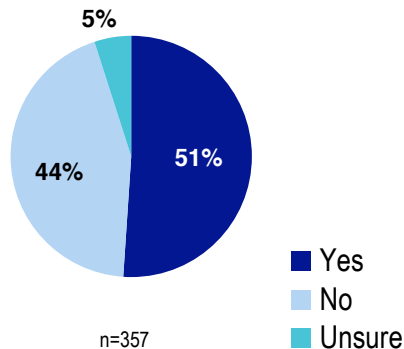
EKOS Research Associates Inc.

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

In order to gauge the overall participation of residents in community activities, surveyed community residents were asked about their involvement in seven activities. Of all community activities described in the survey, respondents were most likely to have volunteered in their community (38 per cent)[15] or attended a community or neighbourhood event such as a block party (37 per cent). Four in ten (39 per cent) reported doing none of the things described in the survey.

At this time, survey respondents reported that NRCs have a modest impact on enhancing their participation in communities. Of those who reported both participating in any community activities *and* said they were familiar with the NRC, one quarter feel that they participated in activities as a result of the NRC, while over half (54 per cent) said that community's NRC did not influence their decision to participate in community activities. The level of community involvement did not vary significantly among communities, nor between the 2005 expansion communities and original 2000 communities.

Involvement in Community Activities

"Have you done any of the following in last year?"

Activity	Percentage
Volunteered in my community	38%
Attended a community or neighbourhood event	37%
Participated as a member of a neighbourhood group	24%
Attended a community meeting	22%
Been involved in discussions about services and priorities	15%
Served on a local board or committee	12%
Participated in a community garden	10%
None of these	39%
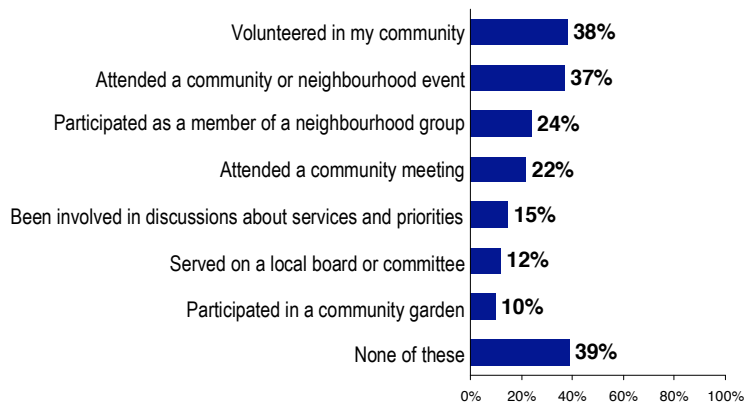
EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=357

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

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[15] By comparison, volunteerism rates within the province of Manitoba is reported to be 50 per cent, and the national average is 45 per cent (Statistics Canada. *Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating.* June 5, 2006).

About half (51 per cent) of residents in NA! communities report having an interest in getting involved or being more involved in their community, including 40 per cent of those who reported not participating in community activities. Those respondents who are not interested in getting involved or being more involved were most often indicated not being able to do so at this time due to issues such as lack of time or other commitments. Nearly half (44 per cent) cited this reason. The next most commonly cited explanation was a low priority given to neighbourhood issues at 18 per cent. Focus group participants echoed these sentiments: lack of time is a primary reason for no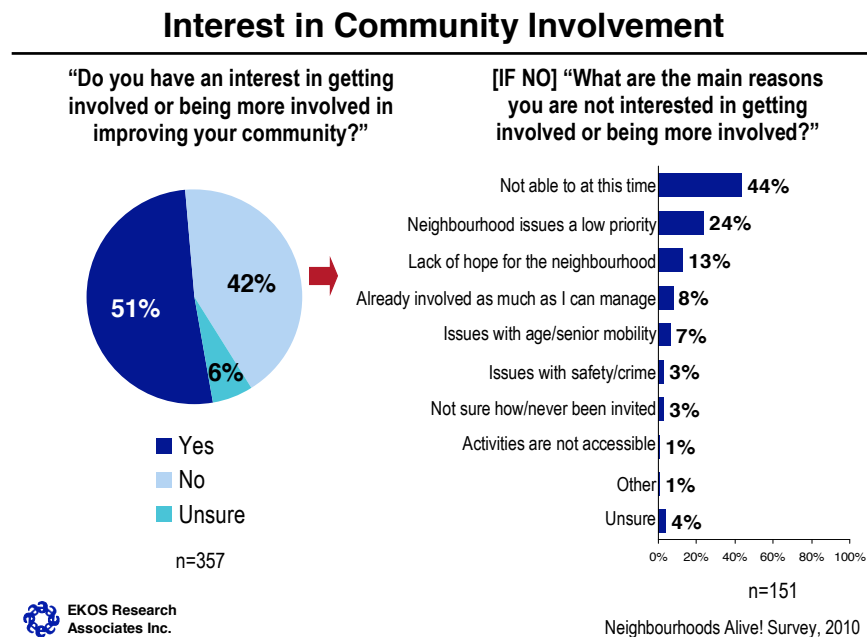t becoming involved or more involved in community events. Some key informants, including external respondents and representatives of the NRCs, further noted that volunteer fatigue, particular in smaller communities is a challenge. As well, some community segments reportedly have proved to be more difficult to engage than others: Aboriginal people, new immigrants, renters.

Interest in Community Involvement

"Do you have an interest in getting involved or being more involved in improving your community?"

- 51% Yes
- 42% No
- 6% Unsure

■ Yes
■ No
■ Unsure

n=357

[IF NO] "What are the main reasons you are not interested in getting involved or being more involved?"

Not able to at this time	**44%**
Neighbourhood issues a low priority	**24%**
Lack of hope for the neighbourhood	**13%**
Already involved as much as I can manage	**8%**
Issues with age/senior mobility	**7%**
Issues with safety/crime	**3%**
Not sure how/never been invited	**3%**
Activities are not accessible	**1%**
Other	**1%**
Unsure	**4%**

n=151

EKOS Research Associates Inc.

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

Business

The feedback from key informants and the case studies provide many instances of business participation in neighbourhood revitalization (e.g., Storefront Improvement program, participation in NRC governance, collaboration on community gardens). Some NRCs such as Spence have established very productive partnerships with the local business improvement zone (West End Biz). In the North End, a Social Purchasing Portal has been established with SEED Winnipeg to promote business development by connecting inner city businesses with purchasers.

Yet, there is a congruence in the comments of key informants that if there is a weakness in engagement in NA! communities, it is the participation of business. Key informants who expressed this sentiment (and this included external key informants, representatives of NRCs and stakeholders), offered a variety of explanations: absence of a strong business sector within the local neighbourhood; a divergence of interests in revitalization between the NRC and business – with business perceived to be more interested in community economic development and less so in development of social capital; and the nature of the networks and contacts of NRC staff and board members, which are more oriented toward community-based organizations and NRCs being less familiar with or having less access to the tools to that would engage this sector.

Other Organizations

All NRCs work with local organizations in a variety of capacities. Partners include service delivery organizations, cultural groups, schools, youth organizations and the like. These groups participate in NRC consultation and operational activities, as well as partnerships around delivery of NRF projects.

c) Revitalization Planning

The development of five-year community renewal plans is a requirement of NA!'s NDA funding. Thus, all communities have plans in place and, in fact, neighbourhoods that were funded in the first phase of NA! are in the process of implementing their second 5-year renewal plan. Initially a highly individualized document for each NA! community, the program has introduced a number of guidelines to assist communities in the development and structure of their renewal plans. Typical components of renewal plans may include:

> Background on the community (geographic, economic, demographic information);

> Planning process (consultation activities);

> Guiding principles (core values, vision statement, mission statement); and

> Community goals (addressing areas such as housing, safety, recreation, participation/ empowerment, employment/economic development, image/environment).

For the latter, a template matrix is often presented to help articulate the specific initiatives, partners, tasks and outputs leading in a causal chain to measurable outcomes. Community renewal plans are used, in turn, by NRCs to prepare more detailed operational or workplans (e.g., specific initiatives, assignment of staff resources) to address each goal.

In general, the development of community renewal plans is based on a mix of: 1) internal research and thinking by NRC staff, board and committee members; 2) consultation with neighbourhood residents and stakeholders; and 3) validation of the plans and priorities with key community organizations and residents. NRCs have taken various approaches to conducting community consultations – for example, through structured focus groups, community surveys, web-based feedback and/or town hall style meetings.

In general, key informants had the impression that these processes were working effectively – that NRCs "had the pulse of the neighbourhood", and that plans reflected the "grassroots".

In addition to the 5-year community renewal plans, NRCs also undertake other planning activities on an ad hoc or project basis. NRCs commonly have housing plans, for example, and then discrete plans for other activities such as property development.

Overall, there was broad approval among key informants in all respondent groups of the processes in place to plan revitalization efforts in the NA! neighbourhoods and the activities of NRCs are perceived to have led to greater planning for neighbourhood renewal. In some communities such as Brandon, planning for revitalization had not occurred prior to the NRC, and according to key informants in this area, would not be occurring now without the NRC. The five-year renewal plans, founded on community consultations, were widely perceived to be a foundation for revitalization – described as "fruitful", "proactive" and a "precondition for coordination". The plans provide a vehicle to identify priorities during the development stage and to continue to guide efforts on an annual basis – "they (renewal plans) keep us on track and drive the work forward".

A number of key informants specified concerns that plans do need to be responsive to changing conditions over the course of five years; however, most feel that the plans do allow for the flexibility to identify and address distinctive priorities in each community while providing coordinated and consistent planning of revitalization efforts. Plans are reviewed annually to adjust priorities based on perceived changes in community needs and work completed to date. A small number of key informants further noted that community renewal plans provide a way to assist with transition periods that occur when key staff depart.

Key informants opinions were mixed on the extent to which renewal plans are being implemented by NRCs. Some reported that renewal plans drive the revitalisation efforts of NRCs, and the plan is used as a touchstone or flexible guidepost for the NRCs and the board for decision-making. According to others, NRCs are implementing renewal plans "the best they can with what they have", "to some extent" and "slowly".

Capacity of NRCs

The NDA program provides core funding to NRCs on a five-year term. New NRCs are eligible for up to $25,000 in start-up funding and received $75,000 annually in the first phase of NA!. While any NRC added after 2006 can not access more than $75,000 annually, the NRCs involved in this evaluation received $150,000 annually in the second phase to support operations (the exception being the North End and Central which receive a higher amount owing to the comparatively larger size of these communities) (see Table 3.1).[16] As mentioned previously, eligible expenditures include personnel costs (e.g., Executive

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[16] North End data includes the expansion neighbourhoods of Dufferin and St. in 2005.

Director, administrative support, Community Coordinator or Housing Coordinator positions), operating costs (e.g., facility expenses) and programming expenses.[17]

TABLE 3.1: Annual NDA by Community

Funding Year	Thompson ($000s)	Brandon ($000s)	West Broadway ($000s)	Spence ($000s)	North End[18] ($000s)	Central ($000s)	DM/SM ($000s)
2001/2002	24.8	75	75	53.5	200		
2002/2003	75	75	75	75	200		
2003/2004	75	75	75	75	200		
2004/2005	75	75	75	75	200		
2005/2006	75	75	75	75	200		
2006/2007	150	150	150	150	275		
2007/2008	150	150	150	150	333.3	58	
2008/2009	150	150	150	150	350	75	75
2009/2010	150	150	150	150	350	225	150
Total	924.8	975	975	953.5	2,308.3	358	225

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf
*Includes start-up funds

In addition to the funding from the NDA, NRCs may also receive financial and/or in-kind support from other funders. These include, for example, the local municipality and charitable sources (e.g., the United Way, Winnipeg Foundation). NRCs also typically pursue project funding from various sources to develop and deliver programming in their community.

The weight of key informant opinion is that, for most NRCs, NDA funding is insufficient to carry out the revitalization activities in the NRC's mandate. These key informants point out that annual funding is flat across the five-year agreement timeframe (thus shrinking due to inflation) and as NRCs mature over the five-year term, demands on their organization and their involvement in revitalization efforts tend to grow. A common sentiment was "we could do more if we had more". There were two more specific issues that were raised by key informants with respect to resources. First, the limited core funding available to NRCs was perceived to impact negatively on staffing NRCs appropriately. Wages and benefits for the Executive Director position, for example, are reportedly not commensurate with the importance and responsibilities of this position and not comparable to remuneration offered to individuals with similar skills in other sectors. Second, resources were perceived to be inadequate for NRCs to address the more complex and costly community *economic* development goals.

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[17] Data includes all NA! communities. Source: Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf . The communities relevant for this evaluation are included in Table 3.2.1

[18] North End data includes the expansion neighbourhoods of Dufferin and St. John's in 2005.

Conversely, there were a small number of key informants who noted that resources for (their) NRC were sufficient to carry out their activities. As well, several key informants pointed out that level and sufficiency of resources depends, at least in part, on the efforts of NRCs to diversity their funding base. NRCs that have obtained their charitable status, for example, are able to access dollars through the United Way or other funding groups. Some NRCs have pushed to be more entrepreneurial (e.g., incubating businesses, property development) in order to increase assets and diversity their sources of funding. Diversification also protects NRCs from unexpected changes in NA! funding. The NA! program does not have a legislative mandate, making program funding vulnerable to a change in provincial or departmental priorities or direction.

As a final thread, there were a number of comments related to the role of NRCs in project delivery. All NRCs, themselves, apply for project-based funding to deliver revitalization activities in their communities. This funding boosts revitalization projects, may fill a gap in the service delivery spectrum locally and increases the revenue of the organization. According to these key informants, however, project-based funding can also put an administrative strain on NRCs owing to additional efforts devoted to proposal-writing, delivery and reporting. A few key informants felt that delivery can also put NRCs into conflict with other community-based organizations that deliver programming and divert attention away from their coordination function.

There was an overall consensus among key informants that NRC's administrative capacity has been improving over time. As the organizations have matured and thanks to capacity building support provided by NA! (e.g., board development activities, consulting on governance and management), most NRCs are in a comparatively stronger position now than in the early years of their development. General management, financial and administrative practices are seen to have improved and some key informants noted that it is becoming easier to recruit staff and board members as a result of their success. Still, some respondents questioned the depth of the capacity of NRCs, which are still seen to be highly dependent on the strength of the Executive Director. Some NRCs have suffered significant turmoil in past years as a result of turnover in this position and these key informants underlined the importance of continuing to build capacity of all staff members and the board of directors to address this fragility in the organizations.

Despite some resource and capacity challenges, most key informants felt that, while there are some variations by community, NRCs are emerging as local leaders in revitalizations in their neighbourhoods. Recognition and leadership is perceived to be more advanced among organizations (e.g., the city, community organizations, media) than the general public due to challenges in maintaining awareness among an often transient group of residents (as noted earlier, only about half of community residents overall are aware of the relevant NRC in their community). Again, longevity of the organization plays a role, with the early years spent building credibility and visibility of the NRC with the community residents and stakeholders. Housing was an area mentioned by some key informants where the NRCs play a strong leadership role, while programs such as Small Grants increase the visibility of the organization. Leadership in economic development is perceived to be much more limited than in other areas.

Connections among stakeholders and sectors

All NRCs have also established partnerships or linkages with stakeholders and various sectors. Multi-sectoral involvement in NRC governance or in project planning or implementation afford opportunities for sectors to work together. Project-based partnerships take many forms and have varying levels of complexity. For example, many bilateral partnerships have been established between the NA! communities and other sectors (e.g., safety audits based on partnerships between the NRC and local policing services) or are smaller-scale initiatives such as development of local community gardens involving private sector donations of materials and expertise. More complex partnerships can involve multiple sectors. An example is the development of the North End Wellness Centre which was led by the NRC and involved municipal, provincial and federal government departments and a private fundraising campaign. The Massey Building is a similar development initiative that is underway in Brandon. Other examples, by sector, include:

›   Municipal level. In Thompson, the 5–year plans were considered to be well-founded to improving the community. This resulted in the creation of a memorandum of understanding with the City of Thompson because the city saw validity in the plan. The partnership resulted in improved planning city-wide. In some neighbourhoods such as Brandon, the partnership with the City of Brandon Planning Department has been very productive and critical to work on land use and zoning issues with respect to housing initiatives, which is a high priority for this community. Engagement of the City of Winnipeg has reportedly been somewhat less successful, though the City does work with NRCs in some select areas such as recreation (e.g., playground upgrades), contribution to city lots for use as community gardens and housing. In the North End, the City of Winnipeg Police Department has worked with the NECRC in safety planning and with the City was instrumental in supporting the development of the North End Wellness Centre through building and land sales;

›   Several Provincial government departments, including those that fund areas such as justice and sport provide complementary funding for NRF projects or leadership in other initiatives;

›   Federal government funding such as the National Crime Prevention Strategy, Urban Aboriginal Strategy, National Homelessness Initiative, Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program, Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program and Western Economic Diversification (Recreational Infrastructure Canada (RInC); and

›   Charitable organizations or foundations, for example, Habitat for Humanity, the Winnipeg Foundation and United Way.

3.3   OUTCOMES – NRF

The majority of key informants believe that the NRF is an appropriate and important component of NA!. As expressed by one key informant, "it is a critical component, essential. It is how projects come to life". As noted by a few key informants involved longer term in NA!, there has been

previous initiatives (such as in Winnipeg and Brandon) prior to NA!, but the NRF allows for a comprehensive, multifaceted revitalization that connects to the priorities of the community.

The benefits of the NRF, stated by key informants, include that the NRF is the biggest fund available to organizations for revitalization efforts. Some mention that the NRF allows for much flexibility in the types of projects eligible for funding. This flexibility allows for a broad range of projects to apply and/or receive funding to meet specific community needs. Challenges with the NRF noted by some key informants involve clarity and transparency of the application process and the sustainability of good programs when the NRF start up funding ends. These are discussed further in the Challenges section of this report.

a)   Accessing Funds

The NRF has contributed to enhancing the access to funds to support renewal projects in designated communities to a great extent. As one Expert key informant noted, sometimes the NRF is "the only game in town", however, most key informants, especially NRC and Stakeholder representatives concur that the NRF is regularly leveraged with other sources of funding. A few key informants noted that in the early years of NA!, eligibility requirements simply implied that leveraging would strengthen a proposal. Now, as mentioned by an NA! staff, "The NRF is a fund which seeks to collaborate with other projects. When we review a proposal, we always want to see who else is involved. This complementary funding demonstrates broader support for the proposal". Staff key informants confirm that the proposal must respond to an identified need and consultations in the community. The NRF is intended to fund initiatives that are part of five year plans that preferably include complementary (2 or 3 other) funders (including in-kind support).

The program has calculated that for every $1 of NRF, $1.20 of non-Provincial funding is obtained. According to some key informants, the sophistication of leveraging funds has evolved to the point where there is now much cost sharing, and for some projects, "the NRF plays a minor role" as a funder. Staff and Expert key informants identify that application proponents are encouraged to identify complimentary funding, such as from the Winnipeg Foundation, the United Way, municipal, federal, or other provincial sources. A few key informants note that in recent years, leveraging, and the development of partnerships, has become the expectation of all funders and is "the reality now". A few NRCs or Stakeholders estimate that the NRF portion of a project typically represents about one-third of the total cost of the activity.

A few key informants note that finding partner funders is more challenging outside of Winnipeg, and especially in Thompson. For example, the Winnipeg Foundation and the United Way do not exist in Thompson. Leveraging the NRF is also less feasible for shorter term projects. For example, the St. Matthews Kids Korner wanted to do a summer project, but the administrative elements involved in obtaining multiple funders made it cumbersome to achieve in time for a short term project.

Without the NRF, most key informants speculate that many revitalization activities would not occur. Fewer projects could be done not only because the funding available for revitalization efforts would

decrease, but also "no funder wants to or can fund an initiative on their own". As mentioned by a stakeholder key informant, the "NRF provides a platform of stability and gives viability to organizations".

b)   Activity in Identified Community Priority Areas

The NRF has been a source of funding for an extensive amount of revitalization efforts in the NA! communities. According to NA! administrative documents, the NRF has been accessed to fund 630 activities for a total of $20,023,133 since 2000[19]. As displayed in Table 3.2, the level of NRF varies considerably among communities with the quantity of activities and level of funding considerably higher in the Winnipeg North End than all other communities; although this is congruent with the larger population within the North End relative to the other communities.

TABLE 3.2: Annual NRF by Community

Funding Year	Thompson	Brandon	West Broadway	Spence	North End[20]	Central	DM/SM
2000/2001	$30,000	$220,028	$298,400	$42,504	$561,316		
2001/2002	$69,310	$294,292	$226,911	$383,843	$689,865		
2002/2003	$263,752	$252,810	$266,692	$304,080	$754,433		
2003/2004	$231,138	$239,383	$347,271	$174,343	$508,747		
2004/2005	$243,780	$306,631	$152,532	$372,000	$655,393		
2005/2006	$313,590	$204,825	$166,562	$249,229	$1,490,678	$167,943	$175,500
2006/2007	$230,346	$185,820	$126,043	$141,630	$1,013,424	$124,600	$76,588
2007/2008	$191,580	$226,392	$153,167	$237,500	$953,219	$371,872	$131,150
2008/2009	$167,000	$124,750	$86,900	$116,025	$992,038	$25,000	$138,632
2009/2010	$220,800	$131,800	$229,750	$229,918	$932,071	$166,200	$165,900
Total	$1,961,296	$2,186,731	$2,054,228	$2,251,072	$8,571,184	$855,615	$687,740
Total Number of Funded Projects	75	87	82	91	189	25	21

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

There are four main categories of initiatives that are eligible for the NRF: Stability, Capacity Building, Economic Development, and Well-being. Through the NRF, NA! seeks to increase activity in these identified community priority areas. While administrative data certainly points to an extensive amount of activity, most key informants agree that the activity represents an increase in revitalization efforts taking place in the applicable communities since the inception of NA! in 2000. Further, the consensus of key

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[19] Data includes all NA! communities. Source: Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf . The communities relevant for this evaluation are included in Table 3.2.1

[20] North End data includes the expansion neighbourhoods of Dufferin and St. John's starting in 2005.

informants is that activities take place in each of the community priorities and that the benefit of some activities may overlap to support multiple priorities.

Neighbourhood Stability

NRF stability projects complement housing improvements in a neighbourhood by supporting projects such as: renovations to neighbourhood facilities; developing or reclaiming of parks and open space for community use; developing community gardens; improving local amenities; and contributing to neighbourhood beautification. Most key informants note that much of the NRF activity to date contributes to the stability priority, and some state that stability is the more "straightforward" out of the four priority areas. According to some key informants, these stability projects help to create visual improvements in the neighbourhoods, and have resulted in an improved community perception of residents and visitors.

One of the most common activities according to the NA! administrative data and most key informants is community gardens and greening projects. Efforts in this area can include reclaiming parks, revitalizing playgrounds, and transforming empty lots. Neighbourhood stability projects can reportedly have a variety of benefits for the community. For example, some informants note that the development of community gardens have resulted in food education and security through the production of fruit and vegetable gardens. The gardens provide a destination and activity for residents to participate in, helping to alleviate isolation and allowing opportunity for residents to interact. The greening projects provide further opportunities to bring together multiple community stakeholders to work on neighbourhood revitalization; such as labour of residents, donation of materials from businesses, involvement of other neighbourhood organizations, or painting of sheds by local artists. In all, most key informants feel that the resulting beautification from greening projects have "created a welcoming environment" and are good starting projects to draw attention to revitalization and provide residents with a tangible example of positive change. Further, some key informants note that there has been minimal theft or vandalism to gardens and feel that this is due to the increased pride in the neighbourhood and the community involvement in the development of these greenspaces.

A multitude of other projects were mentioned by key informants to enhance neighbourhood stability such as renovations to community centres (including flooring upgrades, roof repair, kitchen upgrades, accessibility ramps), community clean-ups, mural paintings, graffiti cover-up, and tree-banding. As articulated by one key informant, "these lead to stability because people have a place that they want to be in". Another notes that "a major result (of stability projects) is that there has been an increase in families coming to the community, and the community is a less transient and (more) healthy place to live". Most key informants agree that stability projects have helped to give a quick upgrade to the appearance of a community and when residents see the changes they feel that there is progress being made to improving the community and some may get involved with other community efforts.

Neighbourhood Capacity Building

Capacity building activities support projects that: promote neighbourhood consultation, outreach, awareness and collaboration; enhance knowledge, skills and leadership; nurture individual and community pride; and support the sustainability of programs. Examples provided by key informants are abundant and varied. Most key informants point to community consultations and annual general meetings to illustrate capacity building activities. As mentioned by one key informant, "everything we do is in consultation with neighbourhood stakeholders". While some key informants indicate a desire or need to conduct more outreach, others mention that outreach activities are taking place through NRC staff positions such as community coordinators. A few key informants feel that the outreach connection at the community level has a strong impact by "having a local presence to go to individual homes, encouraging them to come out into the neighbourhood".

Skill building is another area noted by most key informants that contributes to neighbourhood capacity. A few key informants mention that capacity is built "through an understanding that local efforts help people to grow in their own communities". Many capacity building activities connect residents to skill building and empowerment. As an example of a more formalized activity, the West End Cultural Centre partnered with the House of Opportunities and others to offer work exposure for un- and under-employed residents without any prior exposure to construction. This involved a training session on safety, rights and responsibilities, and brought people on to the work site to learn how to do construction projects. Other training and skill building activities include staff who have been trained locally, board members who have either increased their experience or have helped guide others to learn more and build skills and capacity. Childcare skills have been offered where local women are trained and then hired to childmind.

Most key informants note capacity building activities that build on the community gardens and greening projects mentioned earlier. These include leveraging previous experience gained in creating gardens to make improvements to new gardens. An example is the newer community gardens such as Rock Park in Brandon that include substantially raised beds to allow for handicap access. Further on gardening capacity building, some key informants note that there are gardening workshops on topics such as how to create gardens, grow fruits and vegetables, and preserve the harvest. Key informants feel that there is now greater coordination for community gardeners. The momentum from the initial step of creating a single garden in a community has produced many gardens which are now self-managing and residents have benefited from improved skills and social development.

Finally, some key informants note other activities that help to enhance community pride such as cultural celebrations, winter carnivals, and block parties (often sponsored through small grants). There has been the development of Community newsletters which key informants feel have also contributed to capacity building. Overall, most key informants feel that the collective activities taken place have had a "huge impact" on helping to build the capacity of residents and other stakeholders in the NA! communities.

Neighbourhood Well Being

The NRF seeks to fund activities that support neighbourhood cohesion and well-being by: enhancing neighbourhood safety and preventing crime; reducing at-risk behaviour (e.g. recreation programs); contributing to better health practices; strengthening tenant-landlord relations; and improving neighbourhood co-operation. Most key informants note that much of the activities funded through the NRF have had a positive affect on well being. They note safety initiatives such as improved lighting and pathways, such as those in major parks in Brandon and interconnecting pathways in Thompson, which have resulted in increased usage enhanced well being. Strengthening tenant-landlord relations activities have taken place as part of rental programs which outline mutual responsibilities for tenants and landlords.

Most key informants note that crime prevention is a priority for many areas including Winnipeg North End, Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews, and Spence. A few staff key informants mention that some of the more experienced NRCs help with information sharing for other NRCs in addressing safety issues. The Safety Coordinator position is mentioned as an important activity in raising awareness, conducting outreach, and improving perceptions of safety. Having a safety coordinator and/or a safety plan that was developed through consultation with community groups is a critical activity that has taken place, according to most key informants, to contribute to neighbourhood well being. Further, they feel that addressing safety addresses well-being. Safety has much to do with perceptions; therefore, some efforts have to do with creating a feeling of safety. Block programs, safety meetings, block meetings, and block parties are all activities that have taken place in part through NA! funding and that key informants feel have helped to increase perceptions of safety. As will be discussed further in this report, surveyed community residents were asked to rate the change in conditions of a range of community indicators. The perceptions of safety levels vary greatly for community residents. Community residents were divided in their feelings of if safety has improved (20 per cent indicated that safety is better now), is the same (39 per cent feel there has been no change), or is worse (30 per cent believe that safety is worse now) in their community in the last 10 years (or since they moved to the area). The focus group of engaged community residents further illustrate that safety perceptions can be very individual and subjective. On the whole, many focus group participants indicate that they feel their community is safer in recent years, but some believe there has been no change. While most focus group respondents initially state that they feel safe in their community, the majority further offer that they feel violence is in the community but "happens to other people", that they have been victims of property crime, or that they are concerned for their wife or pre-teen / teenage children.

Most key informants also note the benefits of partnerships for activities to promote well being. Neighbourhood watch programs and signage were conducted by working with the Winnipeg City Police to enhance the safety and crime prevention in neighbourhoods. A few other selected examples include a collaboration with the Brandon Race Relations Network to promote multiculturalism in central Brandon, especially given the influx of immigrants to Brandon. In Central, the CNDC supported Knox Church for skating in the park with the police. The North End Wellness Centre helps well being by delivering recreation activities.

Finally, many key informants note an increase in youth programming conducted in the communities. Some communities, such as Spence, have taken on youth initiatives as a priority area. Youth programs are targeted to help reduce at-risk behaviour. Youth drop-in and scheduled programming, after school programs, professional basketball coaches offered to teach the kids, activities to get youth into safety patrolling have all been conducted. One North End key informant articulated, "with the youth at the Wellness Centre you are preventing crime". Some key informants feel that the youth focused activities benefit both the youth and the community as they "keep youth away from vandalism, violence".

Some key informants note the efforts on graffiti removal and feel that these activities have created an enhanced perception of safety and improved well being. Similarly, resulting beautification from greening projects and the creation of wall murals have once more been noted by key informants as activities that contribute to multiple priorities. These projects have created a welcoming environment and an increased sense of safety. Some key informants note that the community involved gardens and murals have had very little theft or vandalism. Community gardens and workshops contributes overall to well being by getting residents out, to get people to meet and know each other, and feel a part of the community, and are often "more interested in talking about safety issues".

Finally, activities that contribute to individual or family support are noted to contribute to well being by a few key informants. For example, the Good Food Club in West Broadway has been developed to contribute to health and well being of residents. The West Central Women's Resource Centre is cited as a strong support of well being by providing resources to women to lead safer, healthier lifestyles for themselves and their families.

Neighbourhood Economic Development

Economic development projects assist neighbourhood organizations to prepare community economic development strategies for their neighbourhoods that foster balanced, equitable and sustainable economic development and develop projects that provide local business opportunities; enhance employment and training opportunities for local residents; and promote local purchasing.

As will be discussed again in the CED section of this report, overall, economic development principles are viewed by key informants as harder to address, a more challenging area to create activities, and that in some communities, there are other organizations with more expertise to conduct economic development activities (such as CEDNet in Winnipeg, Thompson Unlimited, or the Brandon Chamber of Commerce). However, all key informants note that as a standard practice, efforts are made to hire locally by, for example; hiring staff positions, hiring a local artist to work with kids to paint garbage and recycling bins, hiring parents for after school programs, paying residents to deliver community newsletters, and buying food from local caterers for meetings. Other examples of economic development activities provided include local resource support such as resume writing, hand tool training, food handling certificates, and financial literacy training.

Selected larger economic development initiatives mentioned by key informants include:
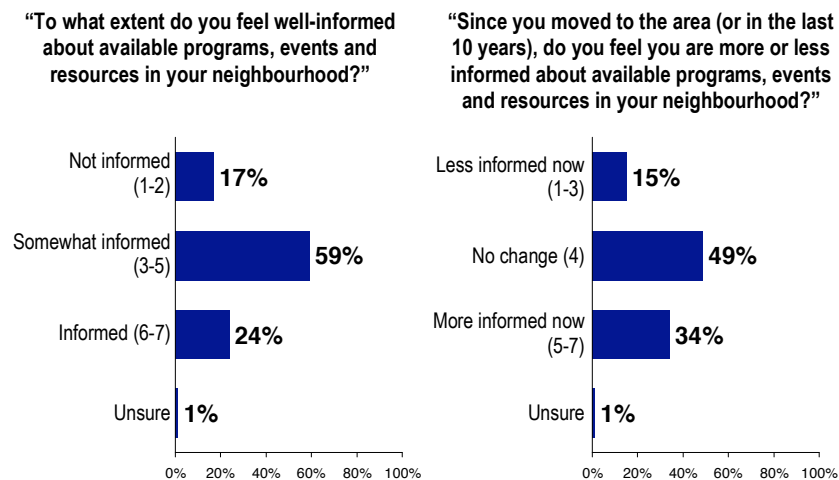
> The Good Food Club is an economic development activity in West Broadway. The Good Food Club works with members to offer opportunities to work in exchange for "sweat equity points" that can be redeemed for healthy food. Opportunities developed by the club include community cafes, fresh food boxes in the winter months, trips to a local farm in the summer months, and a vegetable community market. The Soup Bee is a social enterprise linked to the Good Food Club and aims to provide work experience and supplemental earnings to Good Food Club participants.

> The Community Research Hub in Spence provides training for workers to do research and then take on paid projects. These services include phone surveys, in-person surveys, and focus group facilitations. Individuals from the community are invited to assist in training workshops and could become a member of the Research Hub which allows them to participate in meetings and contracts.

> The West Central Women's Resource Centre is reported to have 50 women come in every day. The resource centre is credited as having a strong impact in supporting individuals. As a result of the Centre's activities, families are supported, women learn new skills, and community cohesion is improved.

> The Home Repair Program in the Brandon core has contributed to economic development activities and overlapped with the other three priority areas. The program consists of 5 modules and teaches people how to take care of their homes and do repair and maintenance. Residents have used this in conjunction with the community's Front and Paint Program and applied skills to improvements.

> Key informants in the North End note a long term strategy that looks at developing a specific area. They have selected properties and rejuvenate that area by attracting other business to move into the area. The North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC) has purchased buildings and renovated the buildings using local residents and support from Red River Community College.

A few key informants state that economic development often comes with too high expectations and that the instrument of CLM revitalization should be focusing on small steps. Difficulties are that these are impoverished areas with a low capacity in business. NA! and the NRF alone are not enough to launch an enterprise. A gap mentioned by some key informants is that there is a lack of support for economic development training and knowledge to NRCs to encourage and support these types of activities. As neighbourhoods develop, economic development activities come more in to play; however, some key informants point to a problematic area of staffing and experience to undertake economic development activities. They feel that NA! should provide more resources to set up economic development and business initiatives in the community, "especially the ones that benefit the greater community".

c) Community Member Awareness of Revitalization Efforts

A large majority of residents surveyed (83 per cent) indicated that they felt at least somewhat well-informed (i.e., a rating of at least three on a seven-point scale) about available programs, events and resources in their neighbourhood. One-quarter felt well-informed (i.e., a rating of six or seven), with significantly more of these responses coming from individuals who had heard of NA! (47 per cent) and NRC (33 per cent).

Knowledge of Available Programs, Events & Resources

"To what extent do you feel well-informed about available programs, events and resources in your neighbourhood?"

- Not informed (1-2): **17%**
- Somewhat informed (3-5): **59%**
- Informed (6-7): **24%**
- Unsure: **1%**

"Since you moved to the area (or in the last 10 years), do you feel you are more or less informed about available programs, events and resources in your neighbourhood?"

- Less informed now (1-3): **15%**
- No change (4): **49%**
- More informed now (5-7): **34%**
- Unsure: **1%**

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n=357

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

When asked whether they feel more or less informed about available programs, events and resources in their neighbourhood since they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years), nearly half (49 per cent) of respondents said there has been no change (i.e., a mid-point rating of four on a seven-point scale). One-third of respondents (34 per cent) said they feel more informed now (i.e., a rating of at least five). Once again, significantly more respondents who have heard of NA! (47 per cent) and NRC (39 per cent) felt this way, as well as significantly more who had participated in community activities. Community residents in the 2005 expansion communities, Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews and Central, are less apt (15 and 14 per cent respectively) to state that they feel well informed about available programs, events and resources in their neighbourhood; however, when asked if they feel more or less informed in recent years, findings for these communities are similar to the average (for instance, 32 per cent of Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews residents feel more informed now and 39 per cent of Central residents feel more informed).

Just over half (52 per cent) of those surveyed reporting noticing revitalization projects in their community. Those respondents most frequently reported having seen projects related to improving gardens, greenspace, parks and recreational facilities (51 per cent), home improvements/renovations (33 per cent), or new housing / rentals (28 per cent).

Awareness of Revitalization Projects

"Community groups in your neighbourhood have been granted funds to implement revitalization projects that include things like improving housing, safety and recreation. Have you noticed any projects like this happening in your community?"
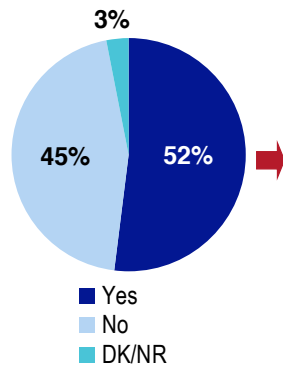
[IF YES] "What kinds of projects have you noticed?"

3%

45% 52%

- ■ Yes
- ■ No
- ■ DK/NR

n=357

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Project	%
Improving gardens, greenspace	51%
Home improvements	33%
New housing/rentals	28%
Community projects	17%
Crime and safety improvements	12%
Infrastructure improvements	3%
Other	2%
Unsure	2%
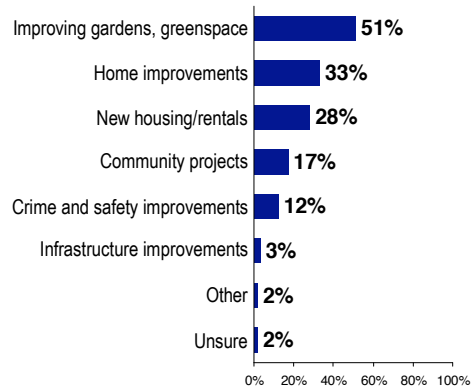
n=186

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

Nearly all of the respondents who have noticed revitalization efforts (91 per cent) believe that these projects are helpful for the neighbourhood (i.e., a rating of five or more on a seven-point scale).

Helpfulness of Projects

[IF YES] "To what extent do you think these projects are helpful or unhelpful for this neighbourhood?"

3% 6%

91%

- ■ Unhelpful (1-3)
- ■ Neither (4)
- ■ Helpful (5-7)

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n=186

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010
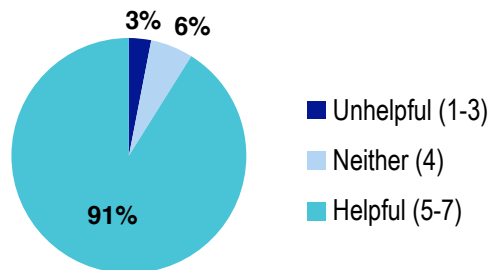
d) NRC Ability to Implement CED Principles

As mentioned in the program description in Chapter 1, in support of the Community-Led Model, NA! and the NRCs have adopted the principles of Community Economic Development (CED) to guide revitalization efforts. CED is a community-led process that combines social and economic development to foster the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of communities. A CED approach is driven by the community, which in the case of NA! designated neighbourhoods includes local residents, businesses, institutions and organizations.

Through CED, the goal is to strengthen local economies by local skill development and employment, as well as by social organization and business development, all of which are believed to contribute to community health and well-being. The Neighbourhood Renewal Plans incorporate strategies to change neighbourhood conditions using CED principles, which include: local employment; local ownership and decision-making; local economic linkages; reinvest profits back into community; local knowledge and skills development; positive environmental impact (physical, mental and emotional health and well-being); neighbourhood stability and community cohesion; and human dignity.

Some key informants, mainly staff and external experts, clarify that while there is an understanding that NRCs would follow CED principles to improve communities, especially in the early years of NA!, the overall focus is more on community development. Community development involves a greater focus on social capital and less on addressing economic conditions which is intended to address the root causes of poverty and exclusion. The reasons for this evolution was twofold: 1) the tools provided to NRCs tend to support community development, not CED; 2) people who govern and manage NRCs have expertise in CD, but less in CED. That said, most key informants indicate that the CED principles are considered when conducting all activities. Some use the metaphor that the CED principles are a lens to prioritize activities or make decisions. As stated by one key informant, "taken as a whole, and there are hundreds of projects, (NA! funded activities) do reflect almost all these principles".

Most key informants note that the local ownership and decision-making principle is an integral part of NA! renewal activities. This is most often addressed through the requirement for locally-led renewal plans and high level of participation with stakeholders. A few key informants provide comments such as "a lot of energy goes into engaging the local community". Others point to community consultations along with the representation of residents and local stakeholders on NRC boards and committees that are a key part of the decision making process.

Most key informants indicate that whenever possible, efforts are made to hire local. To address local employment and local knowledge and skills development principles, hiring practices involve considering local residents first for staff positions and hiring residents to work on a project basis such as to deliver the community newsletters, paint murals, or conduct renovations to facilities. A few key informants mention some limitations to hiring locally. For example, there is limited capacity at times to hire and train locally. One key informant mentions that some staff discover that when they live locally, other residents find it difficult to establish boundaries. Another mentions the challenge that entry level jobs are often used by residents as a training platform to go on to other positions. The positive is that the employment opportunity gives local residents a boost up, the negative is that NRCs find that they train and then lose good people.

The local economic linkages and reinvest profits principles are viewed by most key informants as having received the least attention since economic development has been less of a focus and less successful. Most key informants state that efforts are often made to buy locally whenever possible to support local businesses. However, some key informants feel that there is a lack of understanding or consensus of what it means to reinvest profits in the community and the extent to which it is happening. As expressed by one key informant, "Reinvest profits? There are no profits!". Overall, economic development principles are viewed by key informants as harder to address, a more challenging area to create activities, and that in some communities, there are other organizations who more expert to conduct economic development activities (such as CEDNet in Winnipeg or the Brandon Chamber of Commerce).

3.4 OUTCOMES – NHA

The January, 2010 issue of *Research Highlight,* published by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) presents an overview of the current state of knowledge on societal outcomes of housing. The conclusion of this report states that "Overall, the literature is fairly consistent in finding that housing in itself is not the root cause of advantage and disadvantage; rather, it is only one element in a set of interrelated factors that determine the outcome. Some authors contend that improvements in housing are not enough to result in significant improvements in non-housing outcomes. Others point out that, because housing is so connected to the neighbourhood it is situated in, it has a major impact on individual well-being on a broad range of social outcomes. For the individual or household the evidence points to the observation that, the greater the degree of affordability, security of tenure, choice and quality of accommodation, the more positive the impact. That is, the more positive the housing status, the greater the likelihood of positive educational performance, skills development and employment success."[21] NA!'s interest in supporting housing is a means to an end, the end being long term, community-based, social and economic community development. Within NA!, Neighbourhood Housing Assistance is a program to help revitalize housing in designated neighbourhoods that are considered to be in decline. It provides funding to Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations, non-profit community housing corporations and private landlords/developers to renovate, rehabilitate or construct new housing units and promote homeownership.

The question of trying to determine impact of NA! on private and public investment in housing stock should be regarded with caution since it would be difficult to isolate direct cause and effect. It is essential to bear in mind market effects, interest rates, and other economic factors as well. As one key informant stated, "NHA has contributed, but is one player in a much larger suite of programs: Affordable Housing Initiative, RRAP, municipal programs. Further, most key informants in the 2005 expansion communities, for example, felt that it was "too early to tell" the impact of the NHA on housing stock in their communities Therefore, it is difficult to attribute NHA's contribution in this area. Affordable housing is becoming a bigger issue in that there has been a huge increase in housing prices since 2000 (increase in average price increase in the North End has outstripped the rest of the city) due to housing renewal and market effects. This has made affordable housing more of an issue. Improvements to housing stock have put pressure on rents – there is a fear that the poorest are being squeezed out. NRCs are working to try to keep options available, however, ownership is becoming more expensive."

Since 2000, just over $9 million in NHA funding has been committed toward the rehabilitation/renovation or new construction of approximately 2,770 units in Winnipeg. In areas outside of Winnipeg, nearly $3.7 million has been committed toward 389 units. However, NHA has leveraged other sources of funding, including homeowners themselves. According to one senior provincial respondent, the investment tends to vary from area to area, from $1.30 for every $1 provincial to $3 for every $1 provincial.

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[21] CMHC (2010). *Research Highlights.* Socio-economic Series 10-001.

a) Existing Housing options and community needs

When asked about the extent to which existing housing options met community needs, key informants and focus group respondents responded that housing in their communities did not meet the community needs. The sole exception was Brandon, where the Brandon focus group participants stated they felt there was an adequate mix of affordable housing. This would need to be accepted with caution, however, as one key informant stated: ''With Maple Leaf Pork, 2000 workers have been recruited to work there, mostly from outside Brandon''. In addition, a Housing Report[22] commissioned by the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation stated that, in 2005, virtually all dwelling units constructed since 1998 were occupied, as rental vacancies hovered around 1 per cent from 1998 to 2004, and few single family dwellings had been built on speculation and were currently on the market. Of those housing developments that were in planning stages then, almost 100 per cent of the homes and/or lots were presold.

The two areas of need that were mentioned often by evaluation participants were safe and affordable rental housing in general, and specifically housing for larger families was in very short supply. It was noted in several of the communities that many apartment blocks had become "condo-ized," effectively shutting down many rental options. The presence of Kinew Housing[23] in a few communities was helpful in providing good, affordable rental housing options for some Aboriginal families and it was felt that there should be more of this type of housing. Generally, as one North End key informant stated: "There are a number of issues, including the mix of housing available. There is little apartment style housing. There are also concerns around diversity and quality of housing. We do not have a lot of single family owned housing and low cost housing. Welfare rates are an issue as there is a lack of affordable, quality lower income housing. There is boarded up and vacant housing. There needs to be work on the time that houses are allowed to be boarded and vacant. How long can people hold on to houses that are broke down?" And in yet another inner city Winnipeg community, the West Broadway area, it is reported that between 93 per cent[24] of the housing is rental apartments; the rent is high and rising and many of the high-rises are becoming condos.

According to key informants, the most vulnerable in terms of housing needs are: single parents, people with addictions and/or mental health issues, seniors, and single people with physical disabilities, continue to be the most in need of safe, affordable housing.

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[22] An Update on Housing Supply and Demand in Brandon and surrounding Region 2005.

[23] Kinew Housing Inc. is a non-profit Urban Native housing group that owns and manages almost 400 units of housing in Winnipeg. Kinew was incorporated in 1970 and was the first non-profit housing corporation in Canada sponsored, owned and managed by Aboriginal people. Kinew was the sponsor of the very first Urban Aboriginal housing project in Canada 35 years ago. Source: Province of Manitoba website.

[24] Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

b) Perceptions of change over time

There is some sense among evaluation participants that there have been positive changes over time in the quality of housing in NA! communities. Most communities could point to the decrease in derelict, boarded up buildings and broken windows. Also apparent is the improved exterior appearance of homes, courtesy of the "fix-up" grants (e.g., Front and Paint program in Brandon) available to homeowners through the NHA. These cosmetic changes, according to most key informants, have made a significant difference in the appearance of the community; however, many respondents observed that, over time, the number of available affordable rental properties had sharply declined. Another change that has occurred over time is the gentrification of some neighbourhoods. Older houses are being purchased for low prices and then extensively renovated. While this improves the quality of housing, it also has the effect of driving up prices and taxes, making houses unaffordable for many people. In addition, housing improvements can result in the better quality rentals turning in to condos which makes less affordable rental units available overall.

In some Winnipeg communities, notably Spence and Central, external influences were having a tremendous impact on housing. The Health Sciences Centre (HSC) was expanding, and in order to do so, had bought up several blocks of houses that were/are to be torn down. As a side note, a few of the area key informants reported that some of these houses were homes that had been renovated with money provided through the NHA, but due to a lack of communication between the various organizations and systems, the plans for HSC expansion were made public only after funds had already been expended to renovate imminently doomed properties. Spence area residents are mindful that the University of Winnipeg is purchasing significant housing stock for the use of student residences. While students are welcome neighbours, there is awareness that the very nature of student housing will change community dynamics, affecting stability, rental rates and residents' access to larger homes.

Thompson and Brandon have also experienced significant impacts on their housing due to external influences. As previously noted, the Maple Leaf Pork expansion impacted and continues to exert pressure on the housing market as affordable housing options are needed for the families of the newcomer workers to the area. As a mining community, the housing market in Thompson has fluctuated according to the success of the mine. When the mine is doing well, the housing prices increase and the need for housing becomes greater as the work force expands. This economic boom has other effects on housing as apartment blocks become replaced by hotels and apartment complexes get converted to condominiums.

c) Changes in housing prices

As has already been mentioned, gentrification has impacted housing prices in some of the NA! communities. Another influence in housing prices has been the entrepreneurial practice of "flipping" homes – the purchase of a home for a low price, renovations being quickly done, and then the resale of the same home for significantly more money. The respondents to the questionnaire indicated in every community that housing was less affordable now than it was in the past. This refers to housing across the board, from

housing purchase prices to rentals. With an average vacancy rate for rentals hovering around 1%, lower income families have few options for housing.

d)   Availability of different types of housing

Respondents in all areas reported that there are few options for different types of housing. One interview respondent stated "I would like to see more Habitat for Humanity houses available and more subsidized housing for single people." Within each of the NA! communities, different housing needs were reported. Co-ops, infill housing, housing that is accessible for persons with disabilities, housing for seniors, and affordable housing for singles were examples of housing that were noted as lacking. Many of the communities, notably Brandon, Thompson, Spence and Central said that they needed more affordable rental options; the North End, with a large number of social housing developments, is concerned with increasing home ownership.

e)   Number of units renovated

The renovations and improvements to housing have increased significantly. Respondents to the questionnaire indicate a range of 55% in Winnipeg's North End to 82% in the Spence area who state that the amount of renovations in their communities is significantly higher than it was in recent years. According to CMHC's[25] 2010 Renovation and Home Purchase Report, over 50% of Winnipeg home-owners undertook major home renovations in 2009. According to NA! reports, 2,592 units were renovated and rehabilitated in all of the NA! communities as of December 31, 2009.

It is also worth noting that renovations and rehabilitation of housing stock has been an important part of the entire NA! community capacity building strategy. Local residents and youth begin learning the skills to work in the building industries. They then use their skills to renovate and improve the housing stock in their own community. The improvement of the housing stock, along with the beautification of the neighbourhood through painting, gardens, etc., further increases the sense of well-being and community ownership.

f)   Extent of increased capacity in housing renewal

Through NHA, all NRCs have a mandate to consult with community members and support efforts to make improvements to houses in their communities. Each NRC has a housing director or coordinator to assist community members in achieving this goal. While each community has handled this program and their housing issues differently, there is no doubt that each community claims success in terms of increased capacity in housing renewal.

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[25] CMHC Renovation and Home Purchase Report, 2010.

One of the most significant outcomes of the NHA has been the ability to leverage support in other areas. One respondent stated that this is "one of the best examples of blending revitalization, housing, training and employment." Another resident states that this program has had a significant impact on local capacity as the housing director is able to work with city planners to mount specific projects. In Winnipeg, some communities have been involved in discussions in land use planning. Others have formed partnerships with different organizations, for example, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) in William Whyte, to find individuals who may not be able to hold full-time employment and engage them in cutting grass and picking up garbage in the community. The North End Community Resource Corporation has been working for seven years with the William Whyte and North Point Douglas communities. Local community residents actively inform the decisions that are made.

Thompson has not only developed a Housing Authority to better assist landlords and tenants, they have formed the initiative called *Our Home Kikinaw,* which will operate similar to a Habitat for Humanity build and work towards building homes for eligible families in exchange for "sweat equity." The land for the first build has already been provided by the City of Thompson. It was noted, however, that in spite of some good progress, so far the approach has been primarily through projects and that a planned approach would be required for ongoing sustainability.

g) Examples of housing renewal increases

The Inner City Renovation Company, based in Winnipeg's north end, is an excellent example of how a program such as the NHA can facilitate synergy to increase community capacity. It is a company that developed locally to meet the housing renewal and renovation needs in the area, as well as to provide training and assist in creating local employment opportunities. They hire locally and train workers in the building trades. They have leveraged funding from SEED Winnipeg and from a local Credit Union in order to help the workers obtain tools and materials. In addition, for the last four years NECRC has had the Building Construction Maintenance Program and has hired 60 plus individuals to work on projects, and in the course of doing so, these people have learned and gained some of the skills needed to work on their own home. NECRC has renovated 250 apartments.

In Brandon, residents report having developed the expertise in creating partnerships to fulfill housing obligations. With the support of the NHA program, Brandon residents partnered with the Canadian Mental Health Association, Brandon Friendship Centre, and Habitat for Humanity to purchase and renovate an old warehouse called the Massey Building, turning it into mixed housing: some Habitat for Humanity units will be privately owned by qualified households; some will be rented to low-to-moderate income Aboriginal households; some will be rented to low-to-moderate income mental health clients, and some will be reserved for emergency shelter units under Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy.

Residents are encouraged and given incentives to improve their properties and are therefore staying longer in the community. It was pointed out that in some communities, and specifically in 2005 expansion communities there is much more knowledge to be gained and more connections must be made

with housing programs and experts as the information about housing renewal is still not widespread. This speaks to the acknowledgement by the majority of key informants that while gains have been made, there is still more work that can be done in communities to coordinate housing renewal opportunities.

3.5   COMMUNITY VITALITY

When asked what they liked best about their neighbourhood, community residents most often said proximity to amenities or aesthetics (e.g., scenic, quiet, etc.) (25 per cent each) followed by the neighbours or the people in the community (16 per cent).

Best Liked About Neighbourhood

"Overall, what do you like best about this neighbourhood?"

Category	Percentage
Close to amenities	25%
Like it aesthetically	25%
Like my neighbours/people	16%
Like location/neighbourhood	7%
Like the house/apartment/building	6%
Affordability of housing/neighbourhood	4%
Community life/assistance/services	3%
Crime is low/safe neighbourhood	2%
It's home	2%
Unsure	8%

EKOS Research Associates Inc.   n=357   Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

Almost all focus group participants were content with their community and plan to stay for the foreseeable future. They could not envision a reason that would cause them to move away from their current home or their neighbourhood. Reasons articulated were that they are generally happy with their location and proximity to downtown or amenities, enjoyed the mature area, the large trees and the mixture of homes, and a few noted that their community enjoyed lower property taxes than other neighbourhoods.

Conversely, community residents were also asked to describe the biggest challenges in their neighbourhoods. Surveyed residents most frequently cited crime and safety issues (33 per cent) followed far behind by infrastructure such as roads and sidewalks (12 per cent). All other issues were identified by fewer than 10 per cent of respondents each.

Biggest Challenges in Neighbourhood

"What do you see as the biggest challenges in this neighbourhood? What needs to change?"
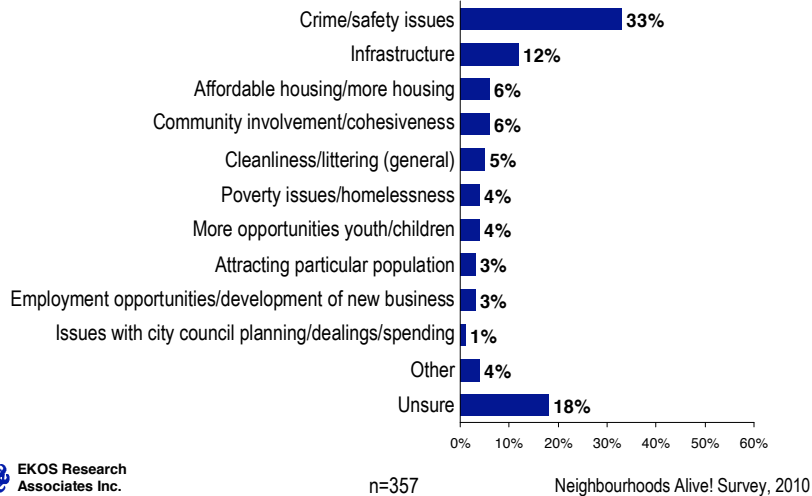
Challenge	Percentage
Crime/safety issues	33%
Infrastructure	12%
Affordable housing/more housing	6%
Community involvement/cohesiveness	6%
Cleanliness/littering (general)	5%
Poverty issues/homelessness	4%
More opportunities youth/children	4%
Attracting particular population	3%
Employment opportunities/development of new business	3%
Issues with city council planning/dealings/spending	1%
Other	4%
Unsure	18%

EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=357   Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

Survey respondents were asked to rate changes to various aspects of their neighbourhood since they moved to the area or in the last 10 years. Of all the aspects about which respondents were asked, the amount of renovations or improvements being done to housing in their communities was seen to have improved the most; 64 per cent of those surveyed said that this was "better now", i.e., it received a rating of at least five on a seven-point scale. This was followed by respondents noticing a positive change in other residents taking the initiative to improve their neighbourhood and the access to public facilities (50 per cent each). The remainder of the aspects measured were most often described by respondents as having "no change" (i.e., a score of four). Only the affordability of available housing was rated by the majority of respondents as "worse now" (i.e., a score of three or lower). As an indicator of the general evolution of the neighbourhoods, nearly half, 49 per cent, of community residents feel that the condition of their neighbourhood has improved overall since they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years).

Changes to Neighbourhood

"Have you noticed any changes in the following aspects of your neighbourhood since you moved to the area (or in the last 10 years)?"

Aspect	Unsure	Worse now (1-3)	No change (4)	Better now (5-7)
Amount of renovations or improvements being done to housing in my community	3	7	26	64
Residents taking initiative to improve their neighbourhood	4	12	33	50
Access to public facilities	5	12	33	50
Condition of my neighbourhood overall		22	29	49
Willingness of neighbours to look out for each other	3	19	36	42
Appearance of my community	1	26	31	42
Quality of housing in my community	2	17	42	39
Opportunities to participate in traditional or cultural activities	10	9	43	38
Opportunities for sport or recreational activities	9	15	39	37
Ability to buy goods and services for a neighbourhood business	5	12	47	36
Information and programs available to help residents of this neighbourhood make lifestyle improvements	8	13	44	35
Safety of my neighbourhood	2	30	39	29
Number of events that bring members of my neighbourhood together	10	18	42	29
Opportunities in my neighbourhood for residents to upgrade their job-related skills or work experience	17	15	39	29
Availability of different types of housing	10	19	47	25
Affordability of recreational opportunities	9	23	45	23
Affordability of the housing that is available in my community	7	52	26	16

■ Unsure ■ Worse now (1-3) ■ No change (4) ■ Better now (5-7)

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Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

Respondents were then asked whether they have noticed any other positive changes in their neighbourhood since they moved to the area (or in the last ten years.) While a majority (47 per cent) reported seeing no other changes, a variety of changes were noted by other respondents, most notably improving parks and recreation (11 per cent), a focus on community, and improving city development of infrastructure or services (10 per cent each). All other changes were reported by fewer than 10 per cent of the survey population.
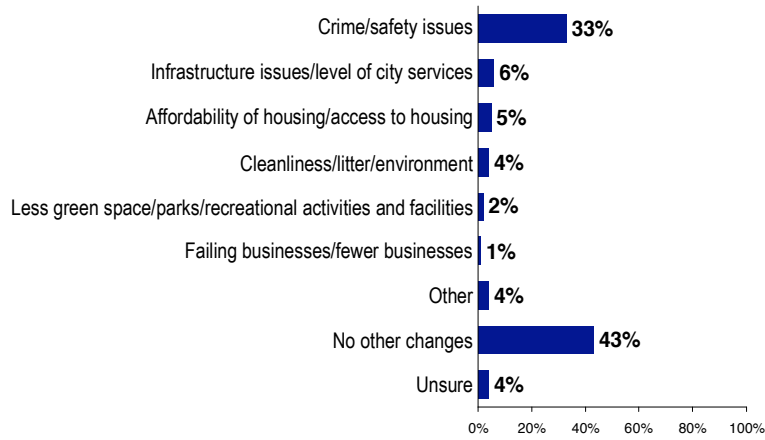
Other Positive Changes

"Have you noticed any other positive changes in your neighbourhood since you moved to the area (or in the last 10 years)?"

Category	Percentage
Improving parks/recreation and sport facilities	11%
Focus on community/build a better neighbourhood	10%
Improving infrastructure/city development and services	10%
Improvements due to home ownership	9%
Improvements to crime rate/level of safety	6%
Building new housing/improving existing housing	5%
New businesses/industry	5%
General clean up	4%
Population increase	3%
Other	1%
No other changes	47%
Unsure	3%

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n=357

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

When asked whether they noticed any other *negative* changes, 43 per cent of survey respondents said they had seen none. Those who said they did notice additional negative changes overwhelmingly described crime and safety issues (33 per cent). All other changes were reported by fewer than 10 per cent.

Other Negative Changes

"Have you noticed any other negative changes in your neighbourhood since you moved to the area (or in the last 10 years)?"

| Category	Percentage
Crime/safety issues	33%
Infrastructure issues/level of city services	6%
Affordability of housing/access to housing	5%
Cleanliness/litter/environment	4%
Less green space/parks/recreational activities and facilities	2%
Failing businesses/fewer businesses	1%
Other	4%
No other changes	43%
Unsure	4%

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n=357

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

Overall satisfaction with one's neighbourhood appears fairly high among community residents, with nearly two thirds (63 per cent) reporting being satisfied right now (i.e., a rating of six or more on a 10-point scale).

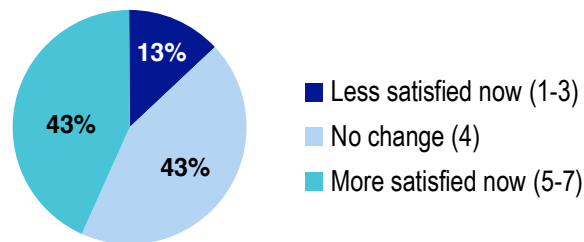## Satisfaction with Neighbourhood Right Now

"Overall, how satisfied are you with your neighbourhood right now?"

24%

63%

13%

■ Dissatisfied (1-4)

■ Neither (5)

■ Satisfied (6-10)

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Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010
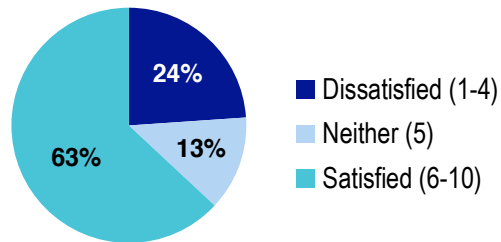
In an effort to measure the change in satisfaction since the inception of NA!, community resident respondents were also asked how satisfied they are with their neighbourhood since they moved to the area or in the last ten years. Over two in five (43 per cent) of all respondents indicate that they are more satisfied now with their neighbourhood than when they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years). Only 13 per cent are less satisfied than before, and 43 per cent feel their satisfaction is unchanged in recent years.

Satisfaction with Neighbourhood Since Moving In

"Since you moved to the area (or in the last 10 years), how satisfied are you with your neighbourhood?"

- Less satisfied now (1-3)
- No change (4)
- More satisfied now (5-7)

13%
43%
43%

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n=357

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

3.6   BEST PRACTICES / LESSONS LEARNED

a)   Best Practices Attributed to NA!

For some interviewed key informants, the community-led model represents a best practice of the NA! approach in that it provides for local involvement, resident-led priorities and community driven initiatives that are essential for effecting change. A minority of respondents identify the 5-year core funding of neighbourhood renewal corporations and associations as a best practice in that it allows for multi-year community-based planning while providing a mechanism for neighbourhood leadership, consultation and capacity building.

The interdisciplinary, participatory aspect of NA! is considered by a few interviewees as a best practice in that, by involving all stakeholder groups, it provides for intersectoral engagement and restructuring at the community level. A small number of key informants identify the flexible nature of funding

provided through the Small Grants Fund and NRF to support community initiatives and projects as another best practice. Similarly, a few interviewees indicate that the holistic or complementary nature of NA! funding programs represents a good practice to meet the varying needs of stakeholder groups within the community. A small number of key informants cite the support and engagement of NA! project officers and staff as a best practice that has contributed to the success of the NA! initiative.

The literature review findings reveal a high level of consistency in the alignment of NA! components with the application of the community-led model. A number of guiding principles for implementing effective revitalization initiatives have been articulated within the literature[26]:

> Place-based solutions are essential – place-based solutions recognize that neighbourhoods are more than a sum of their parts;

> Residents are at the heart of change – priorities and strategies must be resident led and take into account local knowledge and expertise, and to be sustainable;

> Champions at many levels – local leadership is necessary but insufficient for sustainable change;

> Lasting change requires resources from many diverse people working within their sphere of influence;

> Capacity building – enhancing social networks and capacity typically requires additional and long-term support in the form of technical assistance, financing and access to information and data; and

> Comprehensive initiative context – bridge builders (individuals and local level organizations) are needed to function as intermediaries among residents, neighbourhoods and the larger systems of support at the local, regional and national levels.

In a number of studies, the NA! initiative itself is cited as a best practice example of a comprehensive, community led revitalization program.

Aspects of the NA! initiative that are cited as embodying the principles and processes of generally accepted best practices include: the establishment of community renewal corporations; the alignment between neighbourhood renewal corporations and NA!; the role of housing within a CED framework; and the horizontal policy framework supporting Neighbourhoods Alive!. Notably:

> Sieppert (2009; 20)[27] highlights the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC) as an example of an organization that has successfully embedded the four pillars for addressing

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[26] Gorman, C., 2006. *Orienteering Over New Ground: A Neighbourhood Theory of Change.* Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

[27] Sieppert, J.D., *Community Solutions: Promising Practices and Principles for Addressing Street Level Social Issues*, Canada West Foundation, 2009.

urban social problems (harm reduction, housing first, community justice and community ownership): "NECRC has changed the North End by adopting a comprehensive approach to community development. This includes investing in property development in the area, facilitating loans for local businesses, offering training and counselling to local residents, fostering local leadership and supporting local "social entrepreneurs" who contribute to the North End's economic and social capital."

> Chaland and Magzul (2008; 14)[28] point to the NA! initiative as an example of the benefits of applying a CED approach to urban revitalization through the funding of neighbourhood renewal corporations and the creation of affordable housing: "The construction and renovation of homes by the Neighbourhoods Alive Program has had significant positive economic impacts; it requires material inputs, labour and investments. Therefore, suppliers of construction materials attain economic benefits, local residents obtain employment opportunities and skill development, and banks and insurance companies gain increased business opportunities."

> Silver (2008; 16)[29] asserts that: "There can be no doubt that the partnership between the neighbourhood renewal corporations and Neighbourhoods Alive!, using the community-led model, has produced *many* positive benefits in the neighbourhoods affected."

> The Chantier de l'économie sociale (2005; 38-39) underscores the comprehensive nature of the NA! Program within Manitoba's horizontal policy framework in support of CED: "Neighbourhoods Alive! has a strong foundation in CED, which is reflected in the initiative's approach to neighbourhood renewal. NA! recognizes that: Successful neighbourhood revitalization requires a comprehensive approach that supports building the local economy and promoting health and well-being; In order for neighbourhood revitalization to succeed, the community must have ownership of the revitalization process and the capacity to identify a strategy and implement it; A strong neighbourhood depends on its individual members having the capacity to fully participate in the life and development of the community, and that access is required to training and other personal development opportunities to enable full participation; and Government can assist neighbourhood revitalization most effectively by making appropriate and flexible supports available and by ensuring there is coordination and cooperation among programs, departments and jurisdictions."

[28] Chaland, C. and Magzul, L., *Understanding and Responding to Neighbourhood Decline and Renewal*, 2008 Symposium Background Paper, Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, 2008.

[29] Silver, J., *The Inner Cities of Saskatoon and Winnipeg: A New and Distinctive Form of Development*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba; Saskatchewan, 2008.

b) Best Practices in Other Jurisdictions

A majority of interviewees are aware of neighbourhood revitalization efforts in other jurisdictions. The most frequently cited programs from other jurisdictions are the Quint program in Saskatchewan (on which NA! was modeled), the Lower East Side project in Vancouver, the Minneapolis revitalization program, community economic development initiatives in Québec as well as various community development models implemented in the United States and regeneration programs introduced in England.

In the US, community development corporations (CDCs) have been recognized as an important and effective vehicle through which to coordinate revitalization funding and efforts. Pomeroy (2006) observes that organizations with comprehensive roles like the CDCs exist in only a few communities in Canada and that better integration of revitalization programs through local development corporations could help to build stronger community entities and engines for proactive change[30].

According to Jargowsky (2003)[31], achievements of US neighbourhood strategies have been significant, amounting to important reductions in geographically concentrated poverty (especially among African Americans) and increasing home ownership and minority owned businesses in inner city areas. Citizen participation in neighbourhood planning has increased and preliminary evidence of economic progress in the form of job growth and labour force development.

The US experience suggests that there are two critical elements for effective revitalization: strong community leadership and capacity; and sufficient resourcing (funding) to achieve measurable goals. Strong leadership and sustained capacity within resident and community organizations is a prerequisite to planning and implementation. Dedicated funding can be effective in kick-starting local revitalization, but there must be a critical mass of funding support and a long-term commitment to ensure that the slow process of change can gradually evolve with continuous support[32].

In Britain, local strategic partnerships (LSPs) were established within the framework of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal and act as the central vehicle for the coordination of renewal programs at the local level. The development of LSPs represented a break with past regeneration initiatives and signalled a step-change in the approach to neighbourhood renewal. It is expected that the formation of LSPs will lead to a rationalization of other local partnerships and simplification of the funding streams. Case study research (ODPM, 2004) identified several structures common to most LSPs: 1) a forum (generally with an open membership); 2) a Board; 3) an Executive; 4) theme groups (e.g., health, safety, learning,

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[30] Pomeroy S., 2006. *Rethinking Neighbourhood Renewal: Review of the US Experience and Possible Lessons for Canada*.

[31] Dobilas, G. and Battye, F., 2005. *Multi-Partner Funding for Neighbourhood Revitalization in Toronto, Final Report*.

[32] Pomeroy S., 2006. *Rethinking Neighbourhood Renewal: Review of the US Experience and Possible Lessons for Canada*.

inclusion, sustainability, youth); 5) task groups (e.g., program delivery, communications); and 6) community forums (community development workers/officers, local community organizations and resident groups). Although LSPs do not deliver services directly, they provide coordination and oversight to local services, plans, partnerships and initiatives. And, they do have a permanent structure. The development and delivery of a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS) forms the core of the work of LSPs[33].

Urban Regeneration Companies (URCs) represent another example of how local-based entities can help to coordinate regeneration across different levels of government. In the late 1990s, an Urban Task Force report (ODPM, 1999) concluded that the "pace of regeneration could be increased if responsibility for delivering area programmes was placed in the hands of "arms length" organizations, owned by local partnerships. URCs could not only oversee work to completion, but also raise private finance and undertake direct development where necessary". Specific success factors and benefits attributed to URCs include: enhancing capacity of local/regional partners to deliver generally and in support of specific government policies; linking Board decisions to local authority processes (enhancing capacity); improved communication/transparency; close partnership (right team/Board, clarity, roles and responsibility); a master plan provides an integrated framework for driving projects forward; and ability to proactively plan and manage periods of transition[34].

Maclennan (2006)[35] notes that the UK experience suggests that effective neighbourhood renewal policies: 1) require a clear, big picture understanding of the relationships between social and economic development over time and how that is embedded in places; 2) entail creative renewal policies; 3) design, fund and evaluate programs on the basis for which they are intended; 4) the multi-sectoral nature of renewal policies require senior coordination/leadership within the political levels of government (cross-departmental coordination); 5) strengthen the regional presence; 6) concentrate on local outcomes rather than replicate local delivery; and 7) the establishment of multiple relevant working groups composed of officials, experts and community sector executives is effective both in eliciting key ideas and in forming consensual networks (i.e., complex, multilevel governance does not have to serve as a barrier where partner governments are willing to create governance solutions).

c)   Lessons Learned

A small number of key informants identify lessons learned from the NA! approach, notably:

> The need for a longer timeframe for change to occur and the corresponding need to provide multi-year funding to community projects;

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[33] Dobilas, G. and Battye, F., 2005. *Multi-Partner Funding for Neighbourhood Revitalization in Toronto, Final Report*.

[34] Dobilas, G. and Battye, F., 2005. *Multi-Partner Funding for Neighbourhood Revitalization in Toronto, Final Report*.

[35] Maclennan D., 2006. *Remaking Neighbourhood Renewal: Towards Creative Neighbourhood Renewal Policies for Britain*. Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

› The need for more evidence-based evaluation and research to identify underlying or root issues and proven renewal practices and programs to counteract the effects of poverty and disfranchisement; and

› The importance of investing in grassroots and community involvement to create a sense of community ownership, pride and leadership.

Some of these sentiments are echoed in other literature such as the 2010 evaluation of the British National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal[36] which identified a number of lessons for future revitalization initiatives:

› Continuing commitment – the process of change in socio-economic conditions at neighbourhood level is complex; reversing or stemming the concentration of deprivation and social exclusion must be seen as a long-term process;

› More focused targeting of resources – evidence suggests that a critical mass of investment is needed in order to foster improvement, particularly in the most deprived areas, although lower levels of resource appear to have had some effect in limiting decline;

› Nature of intervention – evidence does not suggest there is a particular type of programme or project that guarantees success in turning around the prospects of poor neighbourhoods (success depends critically on a variety of local factors), however, there is widespread recognition of the importance of employment as a cornerstone for revitalization – there is a strong case that future neighbourhood interventions should have at their heart the challenge of reducing joblessness;

› Resourcing of neighbourhood intervention – flexible local regeneration resources have been critical to enabling success in that piloting innovative approaches and activities, helped bring local stakeholders together in planning and delivery (carrot), and provide flexibility to develop tailor-made approaches;

› People and place – the importance of residential mobility patterns and the functional roles that they play in the housing market; and

› Wider policy links (that recognize the importance of wider economic and housing indicators in explaining changes in local neighbourhoods) – policy for neighbourhood renewal needs to recognize the fundamental link between the "internal" and the "external" processes that determine the performance of deprived areas.

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[36] AMION Consulting, 2010. *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, Final Report.* Communities and Local Government, Office of Public Sector Information, United Kingdom.

3.7   CHALLENGES

Most key informants from all communities mention funding as the greatest challenge impeding revitalization efforts. The funding concern is articulated as "always a barrier" and that "there are not sufficient resources for all the work that needs to be done". The funding challenge is expressed more specifically in several contexts. First, the core funding to the NRCs is felt to be needed to continue and increased to match commitments in the renewal plans and to sustain revitalization efforts. Reasons stated include the effects of maturing as an organization and ensuring the continuation of productive efforts. As expressed, "NRCs have developed capacity but are vulnerable if there is a change in (policy or) government". A few key informants point to Saskatchewan as an example of where funding was cut, and viewed to be a result of government change. Overall, key informants with concerns over sustainability feel that having more matching funds and more entrenched funds may help with sustainability. Some key informants feel that those NRCs or projects that have diversified their funding sources are in the strongest position (for example, have other funding partners such as the City or the United Way), however, others note the challenges with leveraging their funding as increasing the strain on staff to continuously source and then report to multiple funders. Some key informants also feel that if there were more public education on the need for and outcomes of revitalization efforts, funding would be more apt to be established as a public priority and therefore a policy priority.

Another need for sustained or increased core funding is to attract and retain high quality staff. Some key informants note that salaries must be competitive with other organizations. As, articulated, "now that NRCs have matured, we look for higher quality staff but the salaries to offer have not increased". Some interviewees note that there is a need for dedicated staff specialized in an area (such as a Housing Coordinator, Safety Coordinator, etc.), and that staff positions are needed to conduct partnership development, community consultations and outreach, and administrative reporting. The key informants brought forward that the quality of staff can have a meaningful impact on outcome achievement. Therefore, the need for compensation to acquire high quality staff persists. Some key informants note that currently, some resources go in to training staff who often use the positions to gain experience to transition to other roles (usually in the provincial government). Informants feel that more competitive wages, and more longer term assurances of employment, would help to resolve the rotation of staff while maintaining the position and focus within the community.

The majority of key informants also noted challenges specific to the NRF. In part, this is the second main funding concern; the funding to projects. While the NRF is viewed by most key informants as being a good and needed fund for pilot projects, the resulting short term funding nature of the NRF is viewed by some as a challenge as it results in concerns about sustainability of effective projects. Some key informants note that funding is a significant concern to them because they spend much of their efforts on funding issues. For example, an NRF requirement is to source other funding to fulfill partnership obligations and then once the NRF funding cycle is nearing completion, funding needs to be sourced in an effort to continue the maturing but successful programs; illustrated by one key informant as "you just get going and

the funding quits". Key informants also note that efforts are further needed to fulfill the accountability requirements of the various funding sources.

While the sustainability of successful projects is viewed as a barrier to success, the application process of the NRF was mentioned as a challenge by some key informants. As expressed, "the whole process to apply to NRF results in frustration for community groups" and that the application requirements, along with the proposal review and decision procedures, are not sufficiently clear. This results, according to some interviewees, in applicants submitting proposals that they feel were thorough, but then the applicant receives questions from NA! that are "more than would be reasonable". These key informants feel there is a gap in common understanding between the community and government. "What makes sense to a community gets lost some times and what is required for the government is not understood". A few key informants note that the NRCs will review NRF proposals and provide comments, but this seems to not have an influence on eventual funding decisions. They feel that the working committee, or the group of individuals who review the application, seems to drive a lot of the questions, and it is not transparent who comprises the working group (to understand their perspectives).

Some key informants mention challenges where NA! could provide more knowledge and resource support to NRCs and organizations delivering NRF funded activities. These include providing:

- Education and training for the NRC staff and board of directors before the start and during their tenure.

- Assistance in recruitment for Board members.

- Knowledge in governance procedures.

- Economic development tools. The economic development plans are described by some key informants as "fairly macro, so far only superficial and cosmetic". In order to support ED as a priority, support and expertise is required.

- Evaluation tools for measuring the impact of projects within the community.

- Sharing of best practices from other NA! communities or other jurisdictions to help NRCs and organizations take on appropriate activities in the most efficient way.

- Increased coordination with other provincial departments to coordinate revitalization efforts and the systemic needs in the communities (housing, crime, treatment program access).

- Increased connection with the community including walk throughs of the community by NA! staff and/or other government officials.

- Tools to help get businesses involved in revitalization efforts.

- An increase in focus on the Aboriginal and Immigrant populations to consider these population groups' needs and means to get these groups more engaged.

The final challenges highlight that success is a challenge in itself. While the NA! concept and many of the activities supported through NA! are considered to be a success, some key informants feel that the risk is in growing too broad with the resulting momentum. As NRCs are maturing and building capacity, the tendency is to expand the efforts; however, "NRCs can't be all things to all needs in their area (such as gardens, youth-based programs, rejuvenation of business area), NRCs need to pick something and do it well". This is further highlighted by a few key informants who cautioned that by expanding geographical boundaries or expanding priorities, NRCs may become stretched too thin, especially in light of static NDA resources. An example of where this has occurred is in Thompson. According to some key informants, the TNRC started too widely focused and found greater success after creating a more targeted approach on three priority areas: Housing, Safety and Cultural Acceptance.

Finally, the adverse effect of community improvements is the resulting mobility of its residents. As mentioned by some key informants, "disenfranchised people must live somewhere and a challenge is in ensuring that they are not displaced when communities get healthier". The same is true of individuals who become more advantaged and then leave the area, taking with them the investments in their personal capacities. Some key informants feel that those involved in revitalization need to be mindful of these challenges.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The 2010 NA! Community Outcomes Evaluation focused on the NA! strategy and model as well as the progress achieved by key program components, namely: the NRF; the NDA; and the NHA. The findings of the evaluation lead to the following conclusions about the relevance, design and delivery, and outcomes of the NA! approach to revitalization since the program's inception in 2000.

Neighbourhood Revitalization

Within the framework of the Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative, neighbourhood revitalization has been defined as: "local efforts by residents, organizations, schools, businesses, and community groups to build on the existing strengths and experiences of communities, and take into account the distinctive needs, conditions and priorities of individual neighbourhoods to affect change in housing and physical improvements, employment and training, education and recreation, and safety and crime prevention". This definition is consistent with the core principles and practices of neighbourhood revitalization applied in other jurisdictions, both within Canada and internationally.

Those involved in NA! share a common understanding of neighbourhood revitalization as multi-dimensional in that it incorporates a number of core elements. There is also a shared belief in neighbourhood revitalization as a means of improving conditions in communities. There are some minor differences, however, in the specific meaning or perceived importance of different aspects associated with revitalization. These differences are often influenced by individual beliefs, the needs and priorities of key stakeholder groups—such as residents, businesses and organizations—or by differences in community needs—such as safety, social development, or physical revitalization, even if not articulated in the same manner.

Community-Led Model (CLM)

Available literature confirms that the CLM employed by NA! is a key feature of successful revitalization programs - viable solutions for revitalization must include the community members most impacted by the challenges. NA! programs, together, support a community-led model. The NDA component grants core funding to the NRCs and is key to enabling communities in that NRCs: provide leadership, coordinate activities and enhance community capacity through long-term planning and support; create opportunities for resident engagement and empowerment through participation on boards and committees; and act as a conduit for information sharing within their community.

Community Outcomes

Through its core programs, the NA! initiative seeks to achieve three long-term outcomes. Conclusions on progress toward the three long-term outcomes, based on evaluation findings, are discussed below.

> ❯ Communities have leadership and capacity to maintain sustainable neighbourhoods.

While there are some variations by community, NRCs are emerging as local leaders in revitalization in their neighbourhoods. Recognition and leadership is perceived to be more advanced among organizations involved in revitalization efforts than to the general public due to challenges in maintaining awareness among residents. This is evident in the community survey with moderate levels of awareness of the NRCs among residents. Longevity of the organization plays a role, with the early years spent building credibility and visibility with the community residents and stakeholders. Likewise, a general consensus is that NRC's administrative capacity has been strengthening over time; however, the organizations could still be fragile to funding decisions and would benefit from increased support and resources from NA! As organizations have matured and have received some capacity building support by NA!, most NRCs are in a comparatively stronger position now than in the early years of their development. Capacity in housing renewal is another area viewed to have increased over time. This is achieved primarily through the ability to leverage support and develop partnerships, and is augmented in communities through the Housing Coordinator role.

Key informants identified community consultations and the community renewal plan process as critical process to support identification of community priorities and coordination of efforts. Other notable supporting factors in NRCs ability to identify and coordinate revitalization efforts include: the strength of the Board and staff members (e.g., networks in the community); innovative ideas and initiatives; and robust understanding of gaps in services and available existing resources within the community based on research and planning.

Overall, there was broad approval among key informants in all respondent groups of the processes in place to plan revitalization efforts in the NA! neighbourhoods. The activities of NRCs are perceived to have led to greater planning for neighbourhood renewal. The five-year renewal plans, founded on community consultations, were widely perceived to be a foundational exercise for revitalization. The plans provide a vehicle to identify priorities during the development stage and sufficiently flexible to continue to guide efforts on an annual basis.

While each of the designated neighbourhoods has different needs, priorities and resources identified in a neighbourhood plan, the NRF assists neighbourhood organizations to carry out projects consistent with the goals of the neighbourhood plan. The NRF is an appropriate and important component of NA! that allows for a comprehensive, multifaceted revitalization that connects to the priorities of the community. The NRF has been a source of funding for 630 revitalization activities in the NA! communities since 2000; lending robust support for evidence of increased capacity in neighbourhoods. If there is a

weakness in the NRF, it is in the application process. The NRF application requirements, along with the proposal review and decision procedures, are considered by some stakeholders to be unclear and not sufficiently transparent.

> Communities have enhanced social, economic, physical, cultural and environmental conditions.

Through the NRF, NA! seeks to increase activity in four identified community priority areas; stability, capacity building, well-being, and economic development. Progress toward outcomes in each of the priority areas are discussed below:

Stability. NRF stability projects complement housing improvements in a neighbourhood and have included projects such as: renovations to neighbourhood facilities; developing or reclaiming of parks and open space for community use; developing community gardens; improving local amenities; and contributing to neighbourhood beautification. Most key informants note that much of the NRF activity to date contribute to the stability priority, and some state that stability is the more straightforward out of the four priority areas. According to some key informants, these stability projects help to create visual improvements in the neighbourhoods, and have resulted in an improved community perception of residents and visitors. Most key informants agree that stability projects have helped to give a quick upgrade to the appearance of a community and when residents see the changes they feel that there is progress being made to improving the community and some may get involved with other community efforts.

Capacity Building. Capacity building activities support projects that: promote neighbourhood consultation, outreach, awareness and collaboration; enhance knowledge, skills and leadership; nurture individual and community pride; and support the sustainability of programs. Key informants note that most of the listed activities have occurred in communities, with community consultations and annual general meetings being a key principle of the CLM and fundamental to capacity building activities. Outreach, skill building, workshops, events, and newsletters are further specific examples of activities that have taken place to positively contribute to building capacity in NA! communities to date.

Well-being. Most key informants note that much of the activities funded through the NRF have had a positive effect on well being. They mention initiatives that have taken place such as improved lighting and pathways in parks, efforts toward strengthening tenant-landlord relations, the work of Safety Coordinators and safety plans, block programs, partnerships with the City Police, recreation activities, youth activities, and graffiti removal. Most key informants note that, collectively, these projects have created a welcoming environment, an enhanced perception of safety, and improved well being in communities.

Economic Development. Economic development has proved to be a more challenging area to address and stimulate activities, and that in some communities, there are other organizations who have more expertise to conduct economic development activities. However, all key informants note that as a standard practice, efforts are made to hire locally and that local resource support is offered in communities such as resume writing, hand tool training, food handling certificates, and financial literacy training. While key informants feel that economic development is needed in a community to enhance revitalization, many cite that more could be done to improve capacity in this area.

The impact of revitalization activities is evident in the views and impressions of community residents. Community residents surveyed felt that there has been an improvement in residents taking the initiative to improve their neighbourhood, the access to public facilities, the willingness of neighbours to look out for each other and the appearance of their community. Overall satisfaction of community residents with their neighbourhood appears fairly high among community residents, with nearly two thirds reporting being satisfied right now. Encouragingly, over two in five community residents indicate that they are more satisfied now with their neighbourhood than when they moved to the area.

> ▸ Communities have adequate, affordable, safe, quality housing to meet their needs.

Evaluation findings point to an improvement since the inception of NA! in the quality of housing in the relevant communities; however, there continues to be a dearth of *affordable* quality housing. Most key informants perceive that communities have experienced a decrease since 2000 in derelict, boarded up buildings and broken windows. Also apparent are the exterior improvements of housing resulting in part through the NHA, and perceived by stakeholders to have made an improvement to the appearance of the community (and aiding social factors such as safety perceptions and pride in the community). However, many respondents observed that, over time, the number of available affordable properties has declined. This is consistent with the views of community residents when asked to rate changes to various aspects of their neighbourhood. Of all the issues presented to respondents, the amount of renovations or improvements being done to housing in their communities was seen to have improved the most. Only the affordability of available housing was rated by the majority of respondents as worse. Another area of concern for key informants is the adverse effects as the higher quality apartments are being converted in to condominiums and houses are being purchased and renovated to be sold for higher prices. While this positively influences the quality of housing, this, along with low supply, has had the effect of increased prices, making quality housing less affordable for many residents.

Overall

Overall, the evaluation findings support the continued relevance and need for NA!. While there have been improvements in communities in many areas, the original neighbourhoods included in the NA! program continue to experience issues related to safety, economic hardship and lack of affordable housing. The overall NA! program model and mix of interventions (NDA, NRF, NHA) are appropriate. The CLM aligns

well with the best practices evident in the literature which indicates the effectiveness of community-led. The NA! program has been identified as a model of neighbourhood revitalization by other jurisdictions.

The capacity of NRCs is improving and many projects are occurring under the NRF and NHA programs. Those involved in the program and community residents have generally positive views of the program and the initiatives that are taking place in their community. The suggestions for improvement most often focused on funding for NRCs and achieving stability in the funding of the NRF projects. More operational adjustments were proposed to address complexities in the NRF application process and to achieve greater inclusiveness for some groups (e.g., Aboriginal residents and new immigrants). As well, there were some suggestions to improve the program's efforts with respect to economic development.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Neighbourhoods Alive! focus on improvements to the program and are based on the findings and conclusions of the 2010 evaluation.

CLM approach

According to the literature, the CLM approach implemented in a sustained manner a key feature of successful revitalization programs. The evaluation confirms that NA! programs, together, support a community-led model.

1. **NA! should continue to be delivered through a CLM**, with community-identified priorities and activities. To ensure long-term viability of community-based NRCs, the program should examine the required means of support through a more diversified funding base or by entrenching funding of the program.

NRC Administrative Support

While core funding for NRCs is a distinguishing feature of NA!, some organizations may be characterized as 'fragile' and are challenged to manage periods of transition (e.g., departure of key personnel) and to fully meet their mandate as the organization matures. Challenges have occurred in attracting and retaining qualified NRC staff.

2. **Current levels of funding and related supports to NRCs** should be reviewed to ensure their sufficiency to support the health and capacity of these organizations. Strategies to bolster the strength of the NRCs might include:
    i. assistance with staff and board member recruitment, training for staff, and development of governance policies;
    ii. development and communication of best practices for specific activities from other NA! funded projects or other jurisdictions. Opportunities for long-standing NA! communities to mentor newer communities could be beneficial.
    iii. assistance from NA! staff to identify potential funding sources/partners for NRCs, particularly fostering access to potential funders in other provincial departments and to currently underrepresented funders (such as businesses, private investment).
    iv. fostering a closer relationships between the program and NRCs/NA! communities, for example, through site visits to NA! communities by staff and/or other government officials enhance the communication flow between the community and program staff, and ensure the community-level connection is sustained.

The community survey data indicated that local residents are interested in revitalization, but not involved, and not often aware of the NRC. In addition, outreach efforts to the business community have been limited.

3. **More awareness and communications activity is required.** NRCs should continue efforts in the area of awareness-raising to support the community-led model, including reaching out to transient community segments, the business community, and currently underrepresented groups such as new immigrants and Aboriginal people.

Enhance NRF Funding Sustainability

The pilot project nature of the NRF is an asset in terms of the flexibility of the types of projects that may be funded and opportunities to incubate innovative programming ideas. However, there are challenges in sourcing funding to sustain successful projects in the longer-term.

4. **NA! should review the eligibility requirements for NRF** to consider if longer term project renewals could be supported if their success has been proven or assist with transitions to other funders for maturing projects.
5. **More formalized and effective evaluations should be conducted at a project level** to assess the outcomes and best practices of selected existing projects. This could help measure and improve the effectiveness of programs and serve to enhance sustainability.

Improve NRF Transparency

The NRF application requirements, along with the proposal review and decision procedures, are unclear and not sufficiently transparent to some applicants.

6. **NA! should provide better clarity to applicants** in areas such as: the eligibility requirements for funding, if support is needed on the application from the NRC or community, the impact of any support or recommendations from the community on funding, and the structure and responsibilities of the application review committee.

Economic Development Support

While community economic development is noted as one priority for NA! neighbourhoods and NRF projects are reviewed using a CED lens, this is an area that has been less developed than other priorities during the initial years of NA!. The majority of activity to date has been in the stability category. Yet the literature confirms that that revitalization of a community must remain holistic and include development of the local economy and reduce unemployment.

7. **NA! should consider encouraging a stronger emphasis on community economic development** in programming activities and provide support to NRCs (financial, training, expert guidance, staff resources, tools) to identify and pursue community economic development

opportunities. In some communities, CED activities can build on successful examples of projects that blend economic development with achievement of other priorities (e.g., training/employment projects in the area of housing).

Housing

An unintended impact of neighbourhood revitalization activities in the housing area can be gentrification and an overall rise in the costs of housing and a shrinking supply of housing options to low income residents. Housing affordability was an area where many residents have seen a decline in their community. Many NA! communities have focused on enhancing the supply of affordable housing through partnerships with developers or municipalities.

8. **Housing should continue to be a core element** of the comprehensive NA! suite of programs. The efforts of communities that have focused on housing affordability should be examined and shared with others. Momentum on housing capacity building can be built on to enhance or identify partnerships. The housing needs between the communities vary and change based on market conditions, and improvements to quality of housing. Therefore, the focus of housing efforts should remain in the community and be customized to the unique needs.

APPENDIX A
EVALUATION MATRIX
AND NA! LOGIC MODEL

NA! Evaluation Matrix - Final

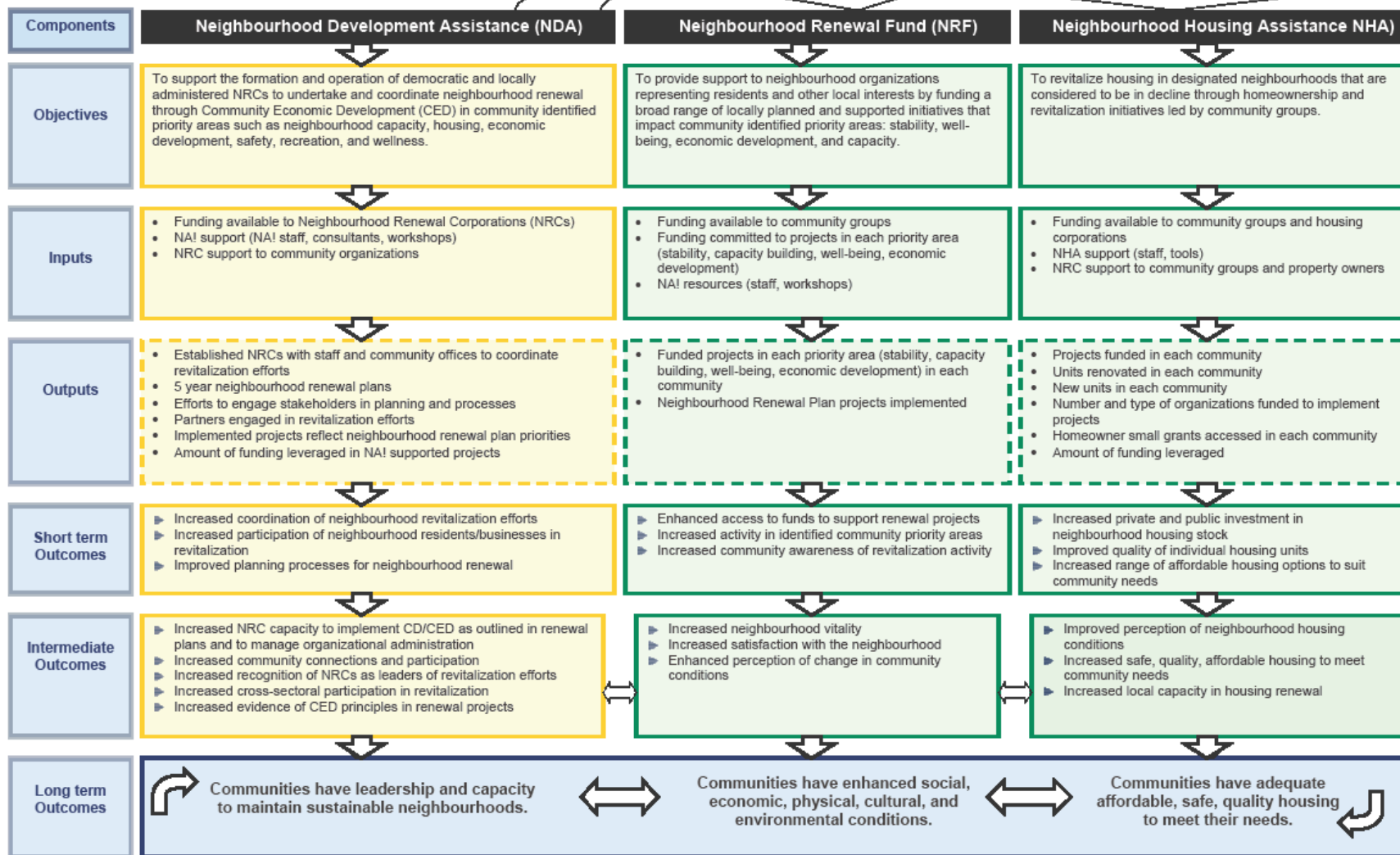| Evaluation Question	Indicators	Data Sources/Methods
Initiative Design		
1. To what extent do the NA! program components together support a Community Led Model (CLM)? To what extent do NA! program components complement each other?	› Definition of Community Led Model › Extent to which the NA! program components are seen by partners and stakeholders as supporting the CLM › Extent to which NA! program components are seen as complementary by partners and stakeholders › Extent to which partners and stakeholders feel there are gaps or duplication in the NA! programs › Examples of how the NA! program components support the CLM	› Literature review › Key informant interviews › Document reviews
2. What does "neighbourhood revitalization" mean to partners and stakeholders? Is the definition, as articulated by NA!, clear to partners and stakeholders? Is this definition consistent with how 'neighbourhood revitalization is defined in other jurisdictions?	› Definition of 'neighbourhood revitalization' used by the NA! initiative › Understanding of the meaning of 'neighbourhood revitalization' on the part of partners and stakeholders › Consistency with the definition in other jurisdictions	› Literature review › Key informant interviews
Success - Immediate		
3. Has the NDA contributed to improved coordination of neighbourhood revitalization efforts?	› Evidence/examples of improved coordination of neighbourhood revitalization efforts › Extent to which key stakeholders and partners have been engaged in neighbourhood revitalization efforts as a result of NA! (NDA component)	› Document reviews › Key informant interviews
4. Has the NDA facilitated participation of neighbourhood residents, businesses, and organizations in revitalization efforts?	› Extent to which neighbourhood residents, businesses, and organizations are actively involved in revitalization efforts › Extent to which neighbourhood residents, businesses, and organizations feel they are given the opportunity to participate in revitalization efforts › Examples of how residents, businesses, and organizations are participating in revitalization efforts in their communities (i.e. types of revitalization efforts in which residents, businesses, and organizations participate)	› Document reviews › Key informant interviews › Survey of residents
5. Has the NDA facilitated improved planning for neighbourhood renewal?	› Extent to which the NDA has contributed to improved planning for neighbourhood renewal › Examples of how NDA has contributed to improved planning for neighbourhood renewal	› Document reviews › Key informant interviews ›

Evaluation Question	Indicators	Data Sources/Methods
	› Extent to which key stakeholders and partners have been involved in planning for neighbourhood renewal › Extent to which projects implemented reflect neighbourhood renewal plan priorities	
6. Has the NRF contributed to enhancing the access to funds to support renewal projects?	› NA! funding has been used to leverage other funds for neighbourhood renewal projects (amount and sources)	› Document reviews › Key informant interviews
7. Has there been increased activity in identified community priority areas as a result of the NRF?	› Number and type of projects funded/implemented in each priority area (stability, capacity building, well-being, economic development), change over time	› Document reviews › Key informant interviews
8. Are community members in NA! communities more aware of revitalization activities as a result of the NRF?	› Extent to which community members are aware of revitalization effort in their community	› Survey of residents › Focus groups with residents
9. What has been the impact of the NHA on private and public investment in neighbourhood housing stock? Has there been an improvement in the quality of individual housing units? Has there been an improvement in the range of affordable housing options?	› Extent to which existing housing options meet community needs (type of housing, cost of housing) › Perceptions of change (over time) of quality of housing in the community › Changes in housing prices › Availability of different types of housing in NA! communities (rental, cooperative, ownership) › Number (proportion) of units renovated in each community › Number (proportion) of new housing units in each community › Number of homeowner small grants accessed in each community	› Survey of residents › Focus groups with residents › Document review › Key informant interviews › Literature review
Success - Intermediate		
10*. Has the capacity of NRCs to implement the CD/CED outlined in community renewal plans as a result of NDA? Has the capacity of NRCs to manage organizational administration improved in recent years? To what extent are NRCs recognized as leaders in community revitalization efforts?	› Administrative capacity of NRCs › Perception of NRCs in communities › Capacity of NRCs to implement or coordinate the CD/CED components of community renewal plans	› Document review › Key informant interviews
11. Has the NDA facilitated community connections and participation in community revitalization efforts? Has there been increased cross-sectoral participation in revitalization efforts?	› Extent to which NRC's have facilitated connections among community members businesses, and organizations (including examples). › Extent to which multiple sectors are participating in revitalization efforts › Examples of projects in which multiple sectors are participating	› Survey of residents › Focus groups with residents › Document review › Key informant interviews

Evaluation Question	Indicators	Data Sources/Methods
12. Has the NRF supported the inclusion of CED principals in renewal projects?	› Extent to which each of the nine CED principals have been included in renewal projects.	› Document review › Key informant interviews

13. Do residents, businesses, and organizations perceive positive changes in the community in recent years? Do residents, businesses, and organizations perceive and an increase in neighbourhood vitality[37]?	› Overall satisfaction with the neighbourhood on the part of residents, businesses, and organizations.
	› Perceptions of the change in neighbourhood vitality, such as:
	  ¤ Perceptions of community safety and security (crime, street lighting, home security, personal safety)
	  ¤ Perceived adequacy of access to recreation and wellness opportunities (community garden and green space, play structures, community recreation facilities and programming, affordability of recreational opportunities)
	  ¤ Sense of belonging
	  ¤ Willingness to stay in the community
		› Survey of residents
		› Focus groups with residents
		› Document review
		› Key informant interviews

14. Has there been an increased capacity in housing renewal?	› Extent to which there has been increased capacity in housing renewal › Examples of how capacity in housing renewal has increased	› Document review › Key informant interviews
Best Practices/Lessons Learned		
15. Are there any best practices/lessons learned that could be shared among communities? Are there any best practices from other jurisdictions within Canada or internationally (i.e. United States)	› Examples of lessons learned/best practices	› Document review › Key informant interviews › Literature review
16. Challenges/barriers to success encountered by NA! communities	› Challenges/barriers to success › Possible solutions/mitigation strategies to respond to challenges/barriers	› Survey of residents › Focus groups with residents › Document review › Key informant interviews › Literature review

 * = Evaluation priority area

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[37] According to relevant vitality indicators used in the development of NA! and identified in the document: Meagher, S., *A Neighbourhood Vitality Index, An Approach to Measuring Neighbourhood Well-Being,* Action for Neighbourhood Change. Prepared for United Way of Greater Toronto. http://www.unitedwaytoronto.com/downloads/whatWeDo/reports/ANC_neighbourhoodVitalityIndex.pdf

Neighbourhoods Alive! (NA!) Logic Model

Components	Neighbourhood Development Assistance (NDA)	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF)	Neighbourhood Housing Assistance NHA)
Objectives	To support the formation and operation of democratic and locally administered NRCs to undertake and coordinate neighbourhood renewal through Community Economic Development (CED) in community identified priority areas such as neighbourhood capacity, housing, economic development, safety, recreation, and wellness.	To provide support to neighbourhood organizations representing residents and other local interests by funding a broad range of locally planned and supported initiatives that impact community identified priority areas: stability, well-being, economic development, and capacity.	To revitalize housing in designated neighbourhoods that are considered to be in decline through homeownership and revitalization initiatives led by community groups.
Inputs	• Funding available to Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations (NRCs) • NA! support (NA! staff, consultants, workshops) • NRC support to community organizations	• Funding available to community groups • Funding committed to projects in each priority area (stability, capacity building, well-being, economic development) • NA! resources (staff, workshops)	• Funding available to community groups and housing corporations • NHA support (staff, tools) • NRC support to community groups and property owners
Outputs	• Established NRCs with staff and community offices to coordinate revitalization efforts • 5 year neighbourhood renewal plans • Efforts to engage stakeholders in planning and processes • Partners engaged in revitalization efforts • Implemented projects reflect neighbourhood renewal plan priorities • Amount of funding leveraged in NA! supported projects	• Funded projects in each priority area (stability, capacity building, well-being, economic development) in each community • Neighbourhood Renewal Plan projects implemented	• Projects funded in each community • Units renovated in each community • New units in each community • Number and type of organizations funded to implement projects • Homeowner small grants accessed in each community • Amount of funding leveraged
Short term Outcomes	▶ Increased coordination of neighbourhood revitalization efforts ▶ Increased participation of neighbourhood residents/businesses in revitalization ▶ Improved planning processes for neighbourhood renewal	▶ Enhanced access to funds to support renewal projects ▶ Increased activity in identified community priority areas ▶ Increased community awareness of revitalization activity	▶ Increased private and public investment in neighbourhood housing stock ▶ Improved quality of individual housing units ▶ Increased range of affordable housing options to suit community needs
Intermediate Outcomes	▶ Increased NRC capacity to implement CD/CED as outlined in renewal plans and to manage organizational administration ▶ Increased community connections and participation ▶ Increased recognition of NRCs as leaders of revitalization efforts ▶ Increased cross-sectoral participation in revitalization ▶ Increased evidence of CED principles in renewal projects	▶ Increased neighbourhood vitality ▶ Increased satisfaction with the neighbourhood ▶ Enhanced perception of change in community conditions	▶ Improved perception of neighbourhood housing conditions ▶ Increased safe, quality, affordable housing to meet community needs ▶ Increased local capacity in housing renewal
Long term Outcomes	Communities have leadership and capacity to maintain sustainable neighbourhoods.	Communities have enhanced social, economic, physical, cultural, and environmental conditions.	Communities have adequate affordable, safe, quality housing to meet their needs.

APPENDIX B
BRANDON CASE STUDY

NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE!
COMMUNITY OUTCOMES EVALUATION 2010
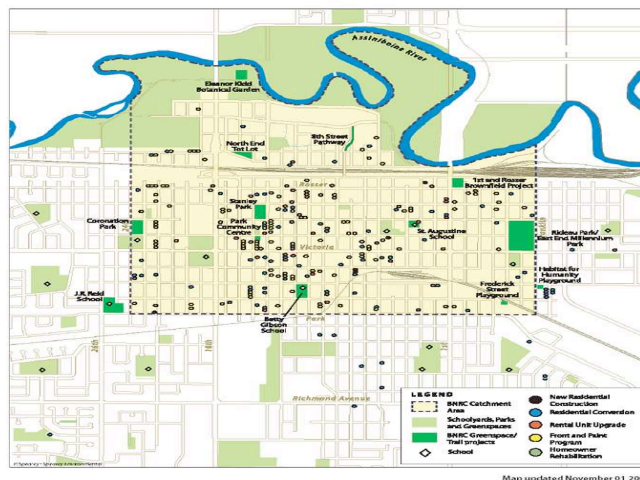## BRANDON NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL CORPORATION
CASE STUDY REPORT – DRAFT FINAL

1. INTRODUCTION

The following account presents the findings of a case study of the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (BNRC) zone of Brandon. The case study explores activities and illustrates outcomes at a community level of the Neighbourhood Alive! (NA!) approach to community revitalization. Brandon core is one of three case studies conducted as part of the 2010 outcome evaluation of Neighbourhoods Alive!

1.1 SUBJECT OF CASE STUDY

The BNRC was created in 2000 through a partnership agreement between Neighbourhoods Alive! and the City of Brandon. The BNRC literature states that the organization is dedicated to improving the quality of life for residents in Brandon's core residential neighbourhoods[38]. The boundaries of the BNRC are defined in the North by the Assiniboine River, the South by Park Avenue, the West by 24th Street, and the East at Franklin Street. A map displaying the BNRC boundaries, and activities as of 2004, is presented below.

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[38] Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation. *Annual General Report.* November 2009.

1.2   INFORMATION SOURCES

Information sources include

› Three key informant interviews with BNRC stakeholders, in addition to BNRC-specific comments derived through the 38 other Neighbourhoods Alive! evaluation key informant interviews.

› Results from the Telephone Survey of Community Residents: A sub group of 52 residents in the Brandon core were surveyed as part of the 357 residents contacted in the seven communities included in the evaluation. The survey was conducted between April 9 – 24, 2010.

› Focus group findings: One focus group was held on May 19, 2010, in the evening. The participants were recruited from a list supplied by the BNRC of engaged residents. The list included community volunteers, residents participating in programs offered by the BNRC, residents serving as committee members on the NRC or other community organizations, and business owners in the community. While there were eight participants recruited for the group, five individuals attended the discussion.

› A group meeting with five representatives from BNRC's Board of Directors.

› Documentary and secondary sources: Statistics Canada; BNRC Five-year Neighbourhood Renewal Plan December 31, 2006 – March 31, 2011; brochures, including BNRC *Bringing Neighbours Together*, Brandon Bike and Trail Map, Manitoba Housing HomeWorks! *Investing in Communities: Our two year plan*, Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), Storefront Improvement & Graffiti Removal Program, Front and Paint Program, 7th Street Health Access Centre, and Neighbourhood Watch; BNRC Annual General Reports (2007, 2008, 2009); Community projects 2010 Application; Brandon Interagency Housing Committee (BIHC) Terms of Reference; and the BNRC website (www.BNRC.com).

2.   DESIGN AND DELIVERY

2.1   COMMUNITY PROFILE

The BNRC zone encompasses over 25 per cent of the Brandon population. Overall, the residents of the Brandon core are younger and earn a lower income than the Brandon population overall. The population of Brandon has increased during the years the BNRC has been in operation. More specifically, between 2004 and 2009, Brandon received over 1,700 workers at the new Maple Leaf Consumer Foods facility, the majority of which arrived on a temporary foreign work visa. It is expected that the influx of new residents will continue to at least 2011 with almost 4,000 spouses and children of the

workers expected to immigrate to Brandon. In 2006, Census data reported visible minorities comprised 4% of Brandon's population, up from 2.5% in the 2001 Census. This proportion is expected to grow to 10% in the 2011 census[39]. This population growth has placed pressure on housing stock in Brandon, and in turn, the availability of quality, affordable housing in the Brandon core.

TABLE 2.1: Community Profile

	BNRC district 2006	Brandon 2006
Total population	11,399	41,511
Median Age	33.9	37.0
Total occupied dwellings	5,491	17,920
Number of owned dwellings	2,589	11,150
Number of rented dwellings	2,894	6,770
Average household income	$42,165	$60,167
Average monthly rent payments	$530	$581

Source: Statistics Canada

2.2 BRANDON NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL CORPORATION

Established in 2000, the BNRC is located in the offices of Brandon City Hall, within the BNRC zone of the Brandon core. Prior to the BNRC, there was the BIA: Brandon Improvement Association from 1995-2000. The BNRC receives core funding through a partnership between the City of Brandon and NA!. According to key informants, the city partnership allows for additional financial and in-kind support. The city provides office space, payroll support, equipment, and IT support. There are several staff positions at the BNRC, including a General Manager, Office manager, Community Coordinator, and Housing Coordinator.

The BNRC is governed by a board of directors. The organization's by-laws specify that the board consist of between 10 and 21 directors and include representation from stakeholder groups. Specifically, the board must have:

> 6 residential members, serving a two-year term, elected at the Annual General Meeting; and

> up to 15 appointees from professional groups and organizations having an interest in the BNRC area.

Currently the Board has 15 members, including 5 residential appointees and the balance consists of representation from organizations or specialties such as environmental, housing, legal, disabilities, and the Health Region. Further, there are various committees created to focus on specific

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[39] Economic Development Brandon. *Maple Leaf Consumer Foods Overview.* April 2010. Online.

community priorities. These committees are comprised of both Board Members, representatives of stakeholder groups and interested and/or knowledgeable community members. In addition to the BNRC Board, currently active committees coordinated by the BNRC include:

> Community Advisory Board for Homelessness

> Community-Led Emissions Reduction Committee (This is a new program for 2010.)

> Community Projects Committee

> Neighbourhood Watch Committee

> Brandon Race Relations Network

> Storefront Improvement Committee

> Front and Paint Committee

The BNRC is currently in the final year of their second five year mandate. The duration of the current plan is December 31, 2006 – March 31, 2011.

2.3   NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! APPROACH

a)   Community-led Model

NA! delivery is founded on a Community-Led Model (CLM) to promote local knowledge and leadership to coordinate responsive neighbourhood revitalization. NA! supports this model by providing resources to NRCs to plan and coordinate neighbourhood revitalization and renewal efforts. The role of the NRCs in the CLM is to:

> Develop Neighbourhood Renewal Plans (NRPs) to determine priorities for revitalization.

> Play a coordinating role to mobilize partnerships and resources to plan and achieve revitalization goals.

> Review and advise on local project proposals received by NA!, based on the NRPs.

> Propose and implement projects with community partners to fulfill goals outlined in the NRPs.

According to key informants, the NA! programs offered in Brandon through the BNRC support a CLM. To corroborate this, the majority of key informants point to the governance of the BNRC to ensure that activities reflect the interests of the community. The composition of the board involves stakeholders in the Brandon core such as residents and businesses. The programs that are offered are founded on community consultations and described as being "broad and encompassing". For example, through community consultations an activity was created to address cycling needs, which has changed due to an influx of immigrants who are used to cycling for transportation. As a result of community identified needs, the BNRC is leading an initiative to

create bike paths. While the program offering is felt to be comprehensive, a gap mentioned by one key informant had to do with the geographical boundaries of the defined core of Brandon. Any need for revitalization that falls outside of the boundaries are not eligible for funding although there may be the same need or the work may, in turn, benefit the core.

All BNRC focus group participants felt that the use of a Community Led Model to help revitalize neighbourhoods is a good approach. A few participants stated they felt that communities would know best what revitalization activities would work well and be accepted by residents. When community consultations were described, all stated that this would be a valuable exercise; however, only one participant had participated in a community consultation in Brandon in the past. Most participants felt that the BNRC would listen and be open to concerns of the residents and act on the most appropriate ones. One participant recommended that while there is much benefit to soliciting the input of residents, the BNRC should also present recommendations for activities at community consultations that have been proven successful in other comparable communities, so that priority activities can be done in the most effective manner.

b)   Understanding of Neighbourhood Revitalization

In the context of NA!, the goal of "neighbourhood revitalization" has been defined as local efforts by residents, organizations, schools, businesses, and community groups to build on the existing strengths and experiences of communities, and take into account the distinctive needs, conditions and priorities of individual neighbourhoods to affect change in housing and physical improvements; employment and training; education and recreation; and safety and crime prevention. Brandon key informants feel that there is, for the most part, a common understanding among stakeholders of neighbourhood revitalization. They state that board and committee members are generally aligned in what is required to revitalize the community, although one key informant notes this can depend on a stakeholder's background and perspective. For example, some stakeholders may be more focused on social issues, while others are focused on housing issues. In all, key informants and focus group participants state that it is the role of the BNRC to bring together the different views and expertise to encompass a more complete spectrum of revitalization efforts.

3.   COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

3.1   COORDINATION OF REVITALIZATION ACTIVITIES

The Neighbourhood Development Assistance (NDA) assists community economic development in the designated neighbourhoods by supporting the formation and operations of democratic Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations (NRCs) that are locally administered. The NDA provides core funding

to seven NRCs including the BNRC to support their coordination of revitalization efforts in the designated neighbourhoods. During phase one of BNRC's funding, from 2000 – 2005, the organization received $75,000 in core funding per fiscal year for a total of $375,000 of NDA funding. In phase two, from 2005 – 2010, this funding was increased to $150,000 per fiscal year for a total of $750,000 of NDA funding.

According to key informants, the NDA funding has "very much" contributed to improved coordination of neighbourhood revitalization efforts. As expressed by one key informant, "the BNRC is a legitimate body to focus on the work". The importance of dedicated staffing is mentioned as a contributor to the improved coordination. The positions at the BNRC help to connect the organization with the community. For example, the Housing Coordinator helps to ensure residents applied for Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) grants correctly and helps residents navigate through the process. Further, the Housing Coordinator conducts outreach to residents to communicate the availability of the Front and Paint program and ensure that those in need are aware of the resource. The staff's network in the community, along with the length of time the organization has been in operation, was also brought forward as making a difference in revitalization efforts. To illustrate, a key informant noted that "people were not calling us at first but now our General Manager has been out marketing the NRC and people come to us to partner (on projects)". Most key informants and board members believe that the BNRC is recognized as a leader in the community for revitalization activities. Descriptions from key informants include that the BNRC is out there "leading the change", and that the "successes have translated into increased awareness as a source for others to turn to". A few key informants note that "having the BNRC leading efforts has brought about an increased awareness in the community of revitalization efforts and needs".

All Brandon focus group participants were familiar with the BNRC. Further, all participants had a favourable impression of the organization and stated that it played a needed and appropriate role in revitalization efforts. Some participants speculated that many of the community improvements, particularly in streetscape changes, would not have occurred without the efforts of the BNRC.

Among surveyed community residents, general awareness of NA! is somewhat low. One quarter (26 per cent) indicated they were aware of the Neighbourhoods Alive! program. However, when asked if they were familiar with the BNRC, six in ten (59 per cent) of those surveyed reported awareness of this organization. Community residents unfamiliar with the BNRC name were given a description of the organization, resulting in a further one in five recalling the BNRC.

In general, community resident respondents who are familiar with the BNRC view the organization favourably. When asked whether they believed having BNRC is helpful or unhelpful for their neighbourhood, four in five (81 per cent) of this group of respondents reported that it is helpful (a rating of at least five on a seven-point scale).

a)   Participation of Partners and Stakeholders

Stakeholder groups are represented in the revitalization efforts in the Brandon core through the boards and committees that operate within the BNRC. Membership includes representatives of business, residents, and NGOs. Throughout the history of the BNRC, ad-hoc committees have also been formed to take on specific initiatives as outlined by the Board of Directors. According to the BNRC's website, previous ad-hoc committees have included the GreenStreets Committee, which was involved in a number of park revitalization and streetscaping projects, and the Crime and Safety Committee, which in 2002/2003 undertook a comprehensive safety audit of the BNRC area.

The BNRC is viewed by most key informants, board members, and focus group participants as an appropriate organization to initiate the activities and bring players together. These groups further agree that the BNRC has been successful in facilitating and improving connections among stakeholders and that every element is open for stakeholders to participate (such as through the Annual Meeting, representation on committees, and participation in programs), and many activities are undertaken to bring the community together.

There are a number of opportunities for partners and stakeholders to participate in the planning and coordination of revitalization activities in the Brandon core. According to key informants and board members, the BNRC has facilitated partnerships and linkages with a number of specific stakeholders, including: government and community organizations, groups and programs. One key government partner is the City of Brandon - Planning Department. The Planning Department deals with land use planning and zoning issues in Brandon. The Planning Department and BNRC work closely on housing issues within the community.

Key informants and board members confirm that all three levels of government are involved in revitalization efforts in Brandon. The most common example is the project currently underway referred to as the Massey Building. According to some key informants, this is viewed in Brandon as the "number one project in the city right now" with all three levels of government funding. One key informant referred to it as "from Pigeons to People" because it was a non-usable building prior to the renovation. Upon completion, the Massey Building is expected to serve about 250 people in the Brandon core. This project is a collaboration with Habitat for Humanity, the Western Diversification Fund, Mental Health, Friendship Centre, Federal and Provincial Funding.

Other examples on a smaller scale are brought forward by key informants and board members to support the consensus that stakeholder groups are actively involved in revitalization efforts. An example of business effort is through the Storefront Improvement program where the BNRC funds a portion of eligible renovations to improve the exterior façade of the business. The benefit is not only visual, such as when one store accessed the program to support a portion of its renovations to allow for handicap access. This resulted in more community residents, such as seniors living next door and those with mobility issues,

to be able to access the store. Further, through a partnership with Brandon Renaissance, revitalization efforts are reaching not just the exterior fix ups of businesses but also the interiors and graffiti removal.

According to key informants, work on community gardens involves multiple stakeholders. Some gardens are constructed in partnership with Healthy Brandon. Private organizations are also involved, such as a trucking company and landscaper who donated material, equipment and expertise. Further, key informants state that community gardens projects are driven by residents to benefit the Brandon core.

In order to gauge the overall participation of residents in community activities, surveyed community residents were asked about their involvement in seven activities. Of all community activities described in the survey, respondents in the Brandon core were most likely to have generally volunteered in their community (34 per cent) or attended a community or neighbourhood event such as a block party (30 per cent). One-quarter indicate they have participated as a member of a neighbourhood group or organization (26 per cent). One in five (19 per cent) have attended a community meeting. Roughly one in ten each have served on a local board or committee (13 per cent), participated in a community garden (eight per cent), or been involved in discussions about services and priorities for neighbourhood renewal (seven per cent). Nearly half (44 per cent) reported doing none of the things described in the survey. Of those who were aware of the BNRC and participated in at least one activity, 14 per cent indicate that their participation was a result of the efforts of the BNRC.

The general interest of getting involved or further involved in improving their community is moderate for community residents in the Brandon core. While 42 per cent of residents indicate they have an interest in getting involved or more involved in revitalization efforts, those who are not interested cite reasons such as a lack of available time, neighbourhood issues are a low priority, they don't believe their involvement will make a difference, or they are already involved as much as they can manage. Focus group participants echo these remarks that a lack of time is their reason for not being more involved in community events. The lone participant who was actively involved in BNRC community consultations indicated a strong satisfaction with their involvement in revitalization efforts. Further, several of the BNRC board members interviewed cite a keen interest in being involved since several live within the community and members generally want to contribute to improvements in Brandon and feel a sense of reward through their efforts.

b)   Revitalization planning

All key informants state that the activities of the BNRC has led to greater planning for neighbourhood renewal. They indicate that this has been achieved both through the community plan and through collaboration with stakeholders. Revitalization planning in NA! communities is driven through the 5-year community plans required through NA!. As articulated by one key informant, "it seems like we never stop planning", however, the planning was not conducted to this level in Brandon prior to the formation and maturation of the BNRC. While the creation of 5-year formal plans are a requirement, most key informants and board members agree that they are a useful tool to identify priorities during the development stage and to continue to guide efforts on an annual basis. A few key informants or board members specified concerns that plans do need to be responsive to changing conditions over the course of five years; however, most feel

that the plans do allow for flexibility while providing coordinated and consistent planning of revitalization efforts.

3.2 RENEWAL ACTIVITIES

a) Accessing funds

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) provides funding to community organizations for capacity building, stability, economic development and well-being in the designated NA! neighbourhoods. These include projects that support the renewal of community facilities, local economic development, safety, healthy living, and community cooperation and leadership. According to NA! administrative data, the BNRC has received NA! funding through the NRF from 2000 to 2010 for a total of $2,186,731 to support community identified renewal projects.

TABLE 3.1: BNRC NRF

2000/2001	$220,028
2001/2002	$294,292
2002/2003	$252,810
2003/2004	$239,383
2004/2005	$306,631
2005/2006	$204,825
2006/2007	$185,820
2007/2008	$226,392
2008/2009	$124,750
2009/2010	$131,800
Total	$2,186,731

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

According to BNRC's website material[40], 21 million dollars has been leveraged through the NRC to Brandon's core residential neighbourhood since 2000. This supports the perspective of key informants that funding received through NA!, including that received through the NRF, is "highly leveraged". One key informant mentions that an advantage is that the NRF is so broad that a lot of groups are eligible and that the capacity for partnerships is wide-ranging. Another feels that "having money in our hands (through the NRF) helps to get more players to the table" and is beneficial to create new partnerships. Key informants generally state that the NRF allows groups to access money and to conduct activities that could not be done before. Further, the NRF activities have evolved in that "we are seeing new groups apply that we didn't see participating in revitalization efforts before". Without the NRF, most key informants feel that the Brandon core would be "much worse off" and that substantially fewer revitalization efforts could be conducted.

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[40] BNRC Home Page. http://www.bnrc.ca/. Accessed June 2010.

b) Activity in Identified Community Priority Areas

To receive support from the NRF, initiatives must aim to strengthen local capacity, help revitalize the neighbourhood and reflect the objectives and priorities of the neighbourhood plan. There are four main categories of initiatives that are eligible for the NRF: Stability, Capacity Building, Economic Development, and Well-being. Through the NRF, NA! seeks to increase activity in these identified community priority areas. According to NA! administrative data[41], 87 projects have been funded in Brandon through the NRF since 2000. While each project may benefit more than one community priority area, for the sake of categorization, specific projects will be listed in one "primary" category.

Neighbourhood Stability

NRF stability projects complement housing improvements in a neighbourhood by supporting projects such as: renovations to neighbourhood facilities; developing or reclaiming of parks and open space for community use; developing community gardens; improving local amenities; and contributing to neighbourhood beautification. Funded projects include:

TABLE 3.2: BNRC Stability Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Renovations to Facilities	Community Laundry and Kitchen Development Project Phase 1
	Brandon Friendship Centre Educational Toys and Equipment 2003
	Meredith Place Residence – Equipment and Furnishings 2005 Phase 1
	Community Services Centre Upgrades 2007
	Elevator Installation Project 2008
Community Gardens	Eleanor Kidd Gardens 2000
	Daly House Museum Victorian Garden 2009
	Coming Together Through Community Gardening 2004 Phase 1
	Community Gardens Project 2008
Playground Improvements	New Era School Playground 2000
	North End Playground 2000
	East End Millennium Park Playground 2000
	Betty Gibson School Millennium Playground 2001
	Brandon YMCA / Brandon FC Playground 2003
	J. R. Reid Schoolyard Redevelopment Project 2004 Phase 1
	St. Augustine School Playground Redevelopment 2005
	King George School Community Playground 2006 Phase 1
	Ecole New Era Play Structure Project

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[41] Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf

Category	Project name
Beautification	Streetscaping Program – Heritage Accent Nodes 2001
	Summer Clean Team 2001
	1st and Pacific Brownfield Project 2002
	BNRC Entrance and Pedestrian Pathway Project 2003
	Winter Lights Park 2006 Phase 2
Reclaiming Parks	Riverbank Pathway 2000
	Stanley Park Upgrading 2000
	BNRC Corridor Project 2003
	Greenspace Development 2002, 2003
	Riverbank Pathway 2003
Housing Improvements	BNRC Front and Paint Program (multi-year)
	BNRC Housing Coordination 2003
	Housing Benchmarks Project 2003
	Housing Design project 2003
	BNRC Housing Coordination 2002

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

All key informants note that stability is the area that receives the most attention, as evidenced by the relatively abundant projects noted in table 3.1. The reach of these projects is extensive, with, for example, one key informant noting that 400 – 500 home owners have accessed the Front and Paint Program since 2000. According to some key informants, these stability projects help to create visual improvements in the community, and have resulted in an improved perception of safety for residents and visitors. There have been major parks reclaimed in the downtown core and as one key informant noted, "people used to go around the park to avoid it, now they have less fear of going into the park". Key informants note, and focus group participants confirm, that the parks have increased in popularity due to the improved lighting, trimming down of hedges, and general beautification. Key informants point to the activity in community gardens for improvements in neighbourhood stability. Some informants note that the development of community gardens have resulted in food security, decreased isolation, and created a welcoming environment. Some gardens in Brandon that were created through the NRF have been sustained by other funders and caretakers.

Neighbourhood Capacity Building

Capacity building activities support projects that: promote neighbourhood consultation, outreach, awareness and collaboration; enhance knowledge, skills and leadership; nurture individual and community pride; and support the sustainability of programs. Some NRF activities which have taken place in the Brandon core that benefit capacity building are mentioned in the following table.

TABLE 3.3: BNRC Capacity Building Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Neighbourhood Consultation	BNRC Board Governance 2000
	Neighbourhood Communication 2000
	Downtown Day Care 2000 Needs Survey
	Regional Housing Study 2001
	Development Plan Impact Study 2001
	BNRC Community Development Coordination (multi-year)

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

The administrative listing of NRF projects identifies at least six formal studies to seek consultation on the development of activities or projects. Key informants primarily note capacity building activities such as fostering previous experience of creating gardens to make improvements on new gardens. This is evidenced on the newer community gardens such as Rock Park that include substantially raised beds to allow for handicap access. Further on gardening capacity building, some key informants note that there are gardening workshops such as how to create gardens, how to grow fruits and vegetables, and how to can the harvest. Finally, some key informants note community events such as block parties sponsored through small grants, playground sweeps and cleanups as contributing to positive outcomes in capacity building.

Neighbourhood Well Being

The NRF seeks to fund activities that support neighbourhood cohesion and well-being by: enhancing neighbourhood safety and preventing crime; reducing at-risk behaviour (e.g. recreation programs); contributing to better health practices; strengthening tenant-landlord relations; and improving neighbourhood co-operation. Funded activities that could be attributed to activities enhancing well being are included in Table 3.4.

TABLE 3.4: BNRC Well Being Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Recreation Programs	Keystone Centre Sport Court 2004
	Climbing Wall and Family Recreation Centre 2004 Phase 1
Neighbourhood Cohesion	Welcome to Brandon: Video for New Immigrants 2005
	Cultural Connections Project
	Roots of Empathy 2006

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

Most key informants note that much of the activities funded through the NRF have had a positive affect on well being. They note the improved lighting, pathway, and resulting safety improvements

for Stanley Park and Rideau Park. More residents are now using these large parks to stay and enjoy or to walk through. Some key informants feel that crime has decreased with the increase of improvements. A few perceive that some people move in to crime due to social and economic factors and that when these are improved, "we experience a lower crime rate because of activities".

Most key informants also note the benefits of partnerships for activities to promote well being. A neighbourhood watch program and signage, along with block parties, were conducted by working with the Brandon City Police to enhance safety and crime prevention in neighbourhoods. Another collaboration is with the Brandon Race Relations Network to promote multiculturalism in central Brandon, especially given the influx of immigrants to Brandon. Finally, one key informant notes an increase of activities in youth programming conducted in the community with the Brandon Friendship Centre.

Neighbourhood Economic Development

Economic development projects assist neighbourhood organizations to prepare community economic development strategies for their neighbourhoods that foster balanced, equitable and sustainable economic development and develop projects that provide local business opportunities; enhance employment and training opportunities for local residents; and promote local purchasing. Economic development activities that have been funded through the NRF in the BNRC zone include:

TABLE 3.5: BNRC Economic Development Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Local Business Opportunities	Storefront Improvement Program (multi-year)
Training Opportunities	Renovation Workers Training Program (CARM) 2001
	Computer Training for Literacy 2005 Phase 1
	BNRC Social Enterprise Training and Mentorship 2005
	Tool Lending Coop Program 2004 Phase 1
	Home Repair Program 2004, 2005
Enhance Employment Opportunities	Downtown Day Care 2001

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

Some key informants note that economic development is the more challenging piece to find appropriate initiatives. One key informant specifies that in Brandon, the Chamber of Commerce has a focus and expertise on economic development initiatives. That said, within the BNRC activities, all key informants note that efforts are made to hire locally by, for example, hiring a local artist to work with kids to paint garbage and recycling bins. A result of having engagement in activities such as murals and community gardens, according to most key informants, is that they have experienced a reduction in instances of graffiti or vandalism in these areas.

Some key informants point to the Home Repair Program as having contributed to economic development activities, along with overlap in the other three priority areas, in the Brandon core. The

program consists of 5 modules and teaches people how to take care of their homes and do repair and maintenance. Residents have used this in conjunction with the Front and Paint Program and applied skills to improvements.

c) Community Resident Awareness of and Approval of Revitalization Activities

A large majority of community residents surveyed (92 per cent) indicated that they felt at least somewhat well-informed (a rating of at least three on a seven-point scale) about available programs, events and resources in their neighbourhood. Over one-quarter felt well-informed (i.e., a rating of six or seven), with significantly more of these responses coming from individuals who had heard of NA! and the BNRC.

When asked whether they feel more or less informed about available programs, events and resources in their neighbourhood since they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years), half (55 per cent) of respondents said there has been no change (a score of four on a seven-point scale). Three in ten (29 per cent) said they feel more informed now (a score of at least five out of seven). Once again, significantly more respondents who have heard of NA! and the BNRC felt more informed, as well as significantly more who had participated in community activities.

Almost six in ten (58 per cent) community residents surveyed report seeing revitalization projects that include things like improving housing, safety, and recreation. The projects mentioned by half of those respondents related to improving green spaces including gardens and parks (50 per cent). About one-third noticed improvements to new or existing houses (39 per cent). Nearly all respondents who noticed any revitalization activities (98 per cent) believe that these projects are helpful for the neighbourhood (a rating of five or more on a seven-point scale).

Brandon focus group participants recalled, unaided, a comprehensive list of BNRC activities that have taken place over the past number of years. The activities that participants attributed to the BNRC include:

> Front and Paint Program, including landscape fix ups

> Benches and stonework on street corners

> Youth After School programs

> Bike path / shared lane

> Dash tent

> Apartment improvements

> Playground upgrades

> Skateboard park

> Rideau Park and Stanley Park upgrades

> Community gardens

> Historic Building fix ups

Overall, all focus group participants affirmed that the priorities and activities supported by the BNRC are appropriate and are making a positive improvement in the community. Most noted that they feel the improvements that have taken place in the Brandon core would not have happened without the BNRC. Some participants observed that the activities creating a visual change are the ones that are making the greatest impact and that "appearance goes a long way". A few noted that some activities, such as activities for youth, are likely to make a big difference in the youth's life; however, they may be less visible as a revitalization effort. Several participants acknowledged that a momentum seems to have occurred in revitalization efforts. As one participant noted, sometimes it takes progress in one revitalization activity to help stimulate another activity. The participant's point was further expressed that now that some projects have been completed, new projects are positioned to have greater success based on the experience of the first project. This momentum can occur within the BNRC activities or be a positive consequence of improvements externally where, for example, other homeowners will take on exterior fix-ups based on the improvements made by their neighbour.

d)   Community Vitality

In terms of overall satisfaction, three-quarters (77 per cent) of surveyed community residents indicate that they are currently satisfied with their neighbourhood. Further, nearly half (47 per cent) of all respondents indicate that they are more satisfied now with their neighbourhood than when they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years). Only 10 per cent are less satisfied than before, and 44 per cent feel their satisfaction is unchanged in recent years.

When community residents were asked what they liked best about their neighbourhood, survey respondents most often mentioned the aesthetics (e.g., scenic, quiet, etc.) (36 per cent) or the proximity to amenities (26 per cent). One in ten each mention that they most like the general location of the neighbourhood, the neighbours (friendly, diverse, helpful), or their home (house, apartment, building).

Conversely, community residents were also asked to describe the biggest challenges in their neighbourhood. Respondents most frequently cited crime and safety issues (21 per cent), followed by infrastructure such as roads and sidewalks (19 per cent). All other issues such as the cost of housing, issues with renters, and lack of employment opportunities were identified by fewer than 10 per cent of respondents each.

Survey respondents were asked to rate changes to various aspects of their neighbourhood since they moved to the area or in the last 10 years. Of all the aspects about which respondents were

asked, the amount of renovations or improvements being done to housing in their communities was seen to have improved the most; 68 per cent of those surveyed said that this was "better now", i.e., it received a rating of at least five on a seven-point scale. Half or more community resident respondents confirm they have also noticed an improvement in three specific key areas: the appearance of the community (54 per cent), access to public facilities such as community centres, gardens, or playgrounds (53 per cent), and in residents taking the initiative to improve the neighbourhood (51 per cent). Over two in five felt there have been improvements in the opportunities to participate in traditional or cultural activities (48 per cent) or in the quality of housing in the Brandon core (44 per cent). Many other neighbourhood attributes were primarily listed as "no change". Only the affordability of available housing was rated by the majority of respondents as "worse now" (i.e., a score of three or lower). The majority, 61 per cent, of community residents feel that the overall condition of their neighbourhood has improved since they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years).

Changes to Neighbourhood – Brandon

"Have you noticed any changes in the following aspects of your neighbourhood since you moved to the area (or in the last 10 years)?"

n=141 Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010
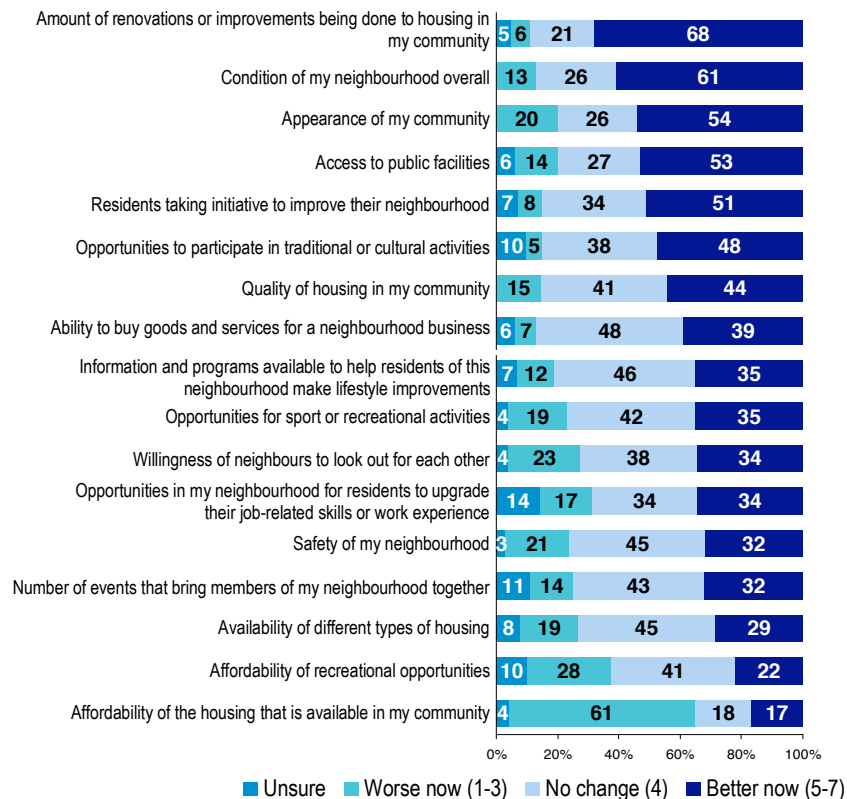
Respondents were then asked whether they have noticed any other positive changes in their neighbourhood since they moved to the area (or in the last ten years.) While residents most commonly (40 per cent) reported seeing no other changes, a variety of changes were noted by other respondents, most notably improvements to infrastructure and buildings (16 per cent), improvements due to home ownership and pride in ownership (11 per cent), new business in their neighbourhood (11 per cent), a focus on building a more supported and involved neighbourhood (seven per cent) and a general population increase (six per cent). All other changes were reported by fewer than five per cent of the survey population.

When asked whether they noticed any other *negative* changes, 42 per cent of survey respondents said they had seen none. Those who said they did notice additional negative changes primarily described crime and safety issues (32 per cent). All other changes were reported by fewer than 10 per cent and include the level of city services and a lack of housing affordability.

All focus group participants were content with their community and plan to stay for the foreseeable future. They could not envision a reason that would cause them to move away from their current home or the Brandon core. Reasons articulated were that they are generally happy with their location, enjoyed the mature area, the large trees and the mixture of homes.

All participants indicated that they feel relatively safe in their community, but perhaps not to the point of feeling comfortable to walk alone at night despite their concurrence that the lighting in their area is adequate. Perceptions about the change in safety compared to five years ago are divided with some saying that safety has improved due to more home ownership in the area and fewer smaller suites. Others say that they have seen an increase in renters that include individuals who the residents speculate as being drug dealers or gang members. Another concern over safety was voiced by one resident who lives close to a convenience store where individuals hang out causing the resident to feel less safe.

Participants felt there are abundant parks in their community to bring children and grandchildren. Most observed, unaided, that there have been improvements in recent years to the play structures in various parks, and noted the planned spray park addition to the East End Community Centre. The residents were less familiar with other events and activities that have taken place, with the exception of the winter carnival. None of the residents in the focus group had taken part in activities such as workshops, gardening, or block parties.

Most focus group participants report feeling a sense of community in their neighbourhood. They know the majority of the other longer-term residents and feel they could turn to them if they needed help and generally look out for each other. Residents specified that it was more difficult to get to know occupants of rental properties as they change often, especially for those in the areas closest to the University of Brandon. Most felt that the sense of community is the same as it was five years ago, but others who have seen an increase in the amount of rental units in their area indicated that they feel less community cohesion.

3.3   HOUSING

a)   Quality and Availability
of Housing Stock

Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA) provides financial assistance to help revitalize housing in designated neighbourhoods by supporting homeownership and renovation initiatives of community based groups. Financial assistance is also provided to NRCs under the Community Housing Improvement Initiative (CHII) component of NHA to develop and deliver local housing and property improvement initiatives (for example, the various annual housing and/or exterior fix-up grants).

All key informants and board members note that Brandon has had a very low rental housing vacancy rate over the past number of years. As of April 2009, the vacancy rate in the city of Brandon was 0.2 per cent[42]. Many key informants attribute this to the influx of new workers from outside Brandon to the Maple Leaf Foods facility. According to some key informants, this resulted in a "housing crisis", putting a strain on access to affordable housing. The challenge noted is that rents have increased, but provincial assistance and incomes have not. The increase in rent did not correlate with an increase in quality and some key informants felt that there were some "slum landlords".

Key informants note that a focus of the BNRC has been in the coordination of activities to increase the availability of safe and affordable housing. Most key informants note that the BNRC has been instrumental in putting pressure on landlords to improve rental conditions. A few key informants point to the recent BNRC annual general meeting theme to honour businesses and individuals who have made a positive contribution to housing in the community. They note that this theme resulted in good publicity and placed positive pressure on others.

According to some key informants, over the past 10 years, the BNRC has coordinated efforts to create 900 units of housing. Kiwanis Court has been developed to include those with mobility issues and contains 35 units. These units have experienced very low turnover and there is a waiting list for spaces. The Massey Building, to be completed this year, will enhance this with 57 units of mixed housing within the same building, including condominiums, affordable rental units, and emergency units.

Key informants point again to the Front and Paint Program as facilitating an improvement in the quality of housing in the Brandon core. These improvements have helped to change the neighbourhoods visually, resulting in the perception of a better neighbourhood and safety. Key informants note the Front and Paint Program as small in dollar value, but high in volume and reach, and a good example of private and public investment in housing renewal. Low income home owners receive funding for exterior fix ups and these and other private homeowners have also been spending money to do improvements.

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[42] Manitoba Housing. Home Works! A housing strategy and policy framework for Manitoba. June 2009.

b) Community Perceptions of Housing Conditions

Overall, evaluation participants feel there has been an improvement in housing conditions in Brandon core neighbourhoods. As mentioned previously, surveyed community residents indicate they have noticed an improvement in the amount of renovations or improvements being done to housing (68 per cent feel that conditions are much better), and 44 per cent feel that the quality of housing has improved in recent years. While residents believe there has been an improvement to housing conditions, the majority of community residents (61 per cent) feel that the affordability of available housing is much worse than when they moved to the area (or 10 years ago).

The consensus among residents in the Brandon focus group was that there is appropriate housing in the community to meet their needs. The housing options were viewed to be somewhat affordable, although they also note that the home values have risen in recent years, with a mixture of options in terms of price range and composition (rental, ownership, habitat housing, etc.). Participants report being very pleased with the streetscape of their neighbourhoods, using phrases such as "I love my street", and note the large trees, older homes "with character", and the general appearance of the homes. They all agree what there has been a substantial change in the appearance of the neighbourhood, with many examples of refinishing of the exterior of homes and properties. Most participants were aware of the Front and Paint Program, even if not by name, and stated that some homeowners on their block would use the Program to make visible exterior improvements, which seemed to motivate another home owner to make improvements, and then another. As one participant articulated, "no one wants to have the ugliest house on the block". All changes to the community in terms of housing fix-ups were viewed as improvements and positive, resulting in greater pride in their community.

The Front and Paint Program was the most widely known BNRC offering among focus group participants. One challenge noted about the program was that the eligibility requirements made the program not accessible to some people because their income was too high or they felt they would not qualify because they earned income from renting out a suite in their home. That said, even if they could not personally benefit from the program, most participants felt that it was an excellent concept with benefits to the whole community due to the "spill over effect" of homeowners making improvements to their property based on seeing other upgrades made within their neighbourhood.

Most key informants and board members agree that while many positive activities have occurred, there continues to be a deficiency in the Brandon core of quality, affordable housing. They note that many higher quality rental units were converted into condominiums, continuing the strain on the most vulnerable residents. The majority of key informants caution that low income housing needs has still not been adequately addressed and that the quality needs to rise to an acceptable standard. They state that there have been some improvements in quality due to the availability of NHA to stimulate improvements; however, a few key informants note that more needs to be done to encourage and support other types of housing. They suggest that the public sector must be more proactive in creating positive change in

availability and quality of housing options, and one key informant foresees an upcoming need for low income seniors housing.

c) Community Capacity in Housing Renewal

Most key informants feel that there has been an increased capacity in housing renewal in the BNRC zone. They state that the stakeholders in Brandon have developed more expertise in creating partnerships to fulfil housing obligations. The BNRC has also looked at broader community issues to address housing. For example, one key informant mentioned that the Brandon School Division wanted to close an inner city school and the BNRC put public pressure on them to not close so that the residents would not be disadvantaged by not having accessible schooling. To address the low vacancy rate, the Brandon Interagency Housing Committee and Community Advisory Board for Homelessness were created to build quality of life and empower individuals. Finally, learnings from previous initiatives have helped to increase capacity in housing renewal. For example, features of the Massey Building were designed from lessons learned in the development and use of the Kiwanis Court building.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

4.1 STRENGTHS

A number of strengths of the NA! approach to community revitalization were identified by evaluation respondents. The primary best practice, mentioned by all key informants, was the CLM approach to revitalization. They feel that positive outcomes are best achieved by establishing the connection with stakeholders at the community level and being responsive to community needs. Key informants state that the BNRC must be and is focused on every level of the community and their role is to rally the community, conduct outreach, solicit input, and form partnerships to affect change. Key informants feel that the outcome of community driven priorities is greater stakeholder involvement in efforts, community cohesiveness, and a sense of pride in the results. By contrast, some key informants feel that if, for example, City Council were to make and impose decisions, the activities would not be as appropriate or the results as effective.

Some board members and key informants note the administrative capacity of BNRC, supported through the NDA, as a strength and contributing to the progress made on the revitalization of the Brandon core. Specifically, they note that efforts can depend on the individuals hired for the positions and their network in the community. One key informant states that awareness of the BNRC has increased since the early stages and the General Manager has been establishing networks and marketing the BNRC to achieve substantive collaborations. Further, the outreach efforts of the Housing Coordinator mentioned previously were noted as strengths. Similarly, the broad-based representation of board members was viewed as a strength of the renewal efforts because it helps to ensure the priorities and needs of multiple

interests, from residents to businesses to service agencies, are considered. As an example, a representative from the Regional Health Authority (RHA) can combine the issues and learnings from the RHA and link them to the initiatives of the BNRC.

4.2   CHALLENGES

Most key informants mention funding as the greatest challenge facing the BNRC. The funding concern is expressed in several contexts. First, the core funding to the BNRC is felt to be needed to continue and increase. Reasons stated include the effects of maturing as an organization. "The more we do…the more is expected". Also, to attract and retain high quality staff, salaries must be competitive with other organizations. Second, the short term nature of the NRF results in concerns, according to some key informants, about sustainability of effective projects. Much effort is needed to source other funding to fulfill partnership requirements or to continue maturing but successful programs.

Brandon focus group participants were asked to name the biggest issue or challenge facing their community right now. Most mentioned that there continues to be empty spaces and empty stores in the Brandon core. This results in a "run-down" look to some parts of the community, with messy windows and sometimes birds living in the buildings. Participants feel that the city and BNRC should work to help with the improvements by encouraging private investment or finding uses for the buildings. Another challenge noted by participants is the lack of retail options in their community. Once the issue was noted, all confirmed that they typically drive out of the community to access supplies: groceries, household, hardware, etc.

There were a number of activities mentioned by focus group participants that they feel could enhance their community, or current activities that could be improved. These include:

- ❯ Bike paths—There needs to be road signs on the lanes to better demonstrate how bikes and vehicles are to share the roads. The signs posted on the sidewalks are not enough.

- ❯ Trees—More planting of new trees or maintenance of existing trees should be done.

- ❯ Rental properties—Renters are less interested in being engaged in the neighbourhood, or maintaining the yards, and landlords seem less apt to make improvements to the property. More focus on improving these properties and community engagement of renters is needed.

4.3   COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

Overall, most key informants and board members state that NA! has resulted in positive change in the community and that the NRF has had a significant impact in Brandon for community projects. All agree that Brandon is a "much renewed" city through downtown improvements. Some board members state that while there is still a fragility to the Brandon core, there is now a renewed and vibrant downtown that is very active in the evenings with people going to stores and restaurants. The collection of activities, such as Front and Paint projects, Store Front improvements and community gardens, have created visual improvements, but most key informants and some board members state that the outcomes go beyond the

look of the community and affect residents in a deeper way. As articulated, "driving around, you can feel it and see the positive changes". They mention that residents feel better about the community and that even those who did not directly realize an improvement (such as receiving a front and paint grant, or an improvement to their school's playground) have benefited from the activities and feel a sense of pride in the community.

APPENDIX C
NORTH END CASE STUDY

1. INTRODUCTION

The following account presents the findings of a case study of the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC) zone of Winnipeg. The case study explores activities and illustrates outcomes at a community level of the Neighbourhoods Alive! (NA!) approach to community revitalization. Winnipeg North End is one of three case studies conducted as part of the 2010 outcome evaluation of Neighbourhoods Alive!

1.1 SUBJECT OF CASE STUDY

The NECRC was founded in 1998 through a coalition of Winnipeg organizations. The NECRC literature states that the organization is dedicated to promoting social, economic and cultural renewal of the North End of Winnipeg[43]. The boundaries of the NECRC are defined as North of the CP tracks, South of Carruthers Avenue, East of McPhillips Street and West of the Red River.

1.2 INFORMATION SOURCES

Information sources include

> Nine key informant interviews with NECRC stakeholders, in addition to NECRC-specific comments derived through the 32 other Neighbourhoods Alive! evaluation key informant interviews.

> Results from the Telephone Survey of Community Residents: A sub group of 51 residents in the North End were surveyed as part of the 357 residents contacted in the seven communities included in the evaluation. The survey was conducted between April 9 – 24, 2010.

> Focus group findings: One focus group was held on May 25, 2010, in the evening. The participants were recruited from a list supplied by the NECRC of engaged residents. The list included community volunteers, residents participating in programs offered by the NECRC, residents serving as committee members on the NECRC or other community organizations.

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[43] NECRC, North End Community Renewal Corporation. A*nnual Report.* 2008-2009

While there were twelve participants recruited for the group, ten individuals attended the discussion.

> Documentary and secondary sources: Statistics Canada; North End Five-Year Community Plan (2006 – 2011); brochures, including NECRC Building Community *Together*, NECRC Annual Reports (2006, 2007- 2008, 2008- 2009); NECRC Financial Statement 2008-2009; St.John's Community Plan 2006-2009; Dufferin Community Plan 2006-2007; Update on St. John's and Dufferin neighbourhood January 18, 2007; Presentation for Annual General Meeting June 19, 2009, *Comprehensive Community Development In the North End;* Neighbourhoods Alive Project Monitoring Report for NECRC Core Funding and Interim Reporting, Newsletter NECRC Update; Spring 2007 Issues #25, Summer 2007 Issue #26, Spring 2008 Issue #27, Winter 2009 Issue #28; NECRC Neighbourhoods Alive-Small Grant Fund 2009 Tracking Report; and the NECRC website (www.NECRC.org)

2.   DESIGN AND DELIVERY

2.1   COMMUNITY PROFILE

The NECRC zone encompasses six per cent of the Winnipeg population. Overall, the residents of the North End are younger and earn a lower income than the Winnipeg population overall. The population in the North End has increased at a slightly faster rate than Winnipeg as a whole and Aboriginal people comprise 29 per cent of the North End's population, significantly higher than the 10.2 per cent represented in the entire city of Winnipeg. The NECRC covers 11 different communities, 5 of which (William Whyte, Lord Selkirk Park, North Point Douglas, Dufferin and St. John's) are NA! designated communities. In 2006, Census data reported that the housing stock in the NECRC zone is older with 50.2 per cent being constructed before 1946 and 16.9 per cent of the housing stock requiring major repairs.

TABLE 2.1: Community Profile

	NECRC district 2006	Winnipeg 2006
Total population	37,615	633,451
Aboriginal Identity	29%	10.2%
Visible Minority	19.9%	16.3%
Total occupied dwellings	15,105	261,090
Number of owned dwellings	8,905	169,845
Number of rented dwellings	6,195	91,245
Average household income	$40,703	$91,240
Average monthly rent payments	$515	$618

Source: Statistics Canada

2.2 NORTH END COMMUNITY RENEWAL CORPORATION

Established in 1998, the NECRC is located at 509 Selkirk Avenue, within the NECRC zone of the North End. The NECRC receives core funding of $350,000 annually from NA! through the NDA fund and in the 2008-2009 fiscal year the operating budget grew to $5,185,580, of which $3,297,357 relates to the construction of the North End Wellness Centre. Revenue from non government sources accounted for $3,755,652 (72 per cent) of the operating budget[44]. The 2008-2009 NECRC financial statements indicate that the NECRC owns four commercial buildings located at 221 Austin, 627 Selkirk, 509 Selkirk and 510 Selkirk, at a net book value of $555,336. These properties generate $100,704 in rental income.

There are numerous staff positions at the NECRC, including an Executive Director, Community Development Director, Safety Coordinator, Food Security and Greening Facilitator, summer position Urban Green Team Coordinator, summer position Picnic in the Park Coordinator, Housing Program Supervisor, Tenant Landlord Cooperation Coordinator, Winnipeg Rental Network Coordinator, Administrative Assistant, Finance Controller, Administrative Coordinator, Housing Training Initiative Coordinator, Housing Resource Coordinator, Dufferin Community Worker, North End Community Ambassador Program Manager, and St. John's Community Worker[45].

The NECRC is governed by a board of directors. The organization's by-laws specify that the Board of Directors may be comprised of no more than thirteen (13) Directors, 12 of whom shall be elected from the organizational class of membership. At least one position is delegated from each of the categories of organizational membership, except for the Residents' organizations which is represented in 3 positions. [46]

Organizational class of membership includes the following;

› Aboriginal Organizations (one)

› Cultural Organizations (one)

› Business Organizations (one)

› Community Service Organizations (one)

› Labour Organizations (one)

› Religious and Fraternal Organizations (one)

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[44] North End Community Renewal Corporation Financial Statements. For year ended March 31, 2009.

[45] NECRC Contact Page. http://www.necrc.org/offices. Accessed June 2010

[46] NECRC Governance Page. http://www.necrc.org/governance . Accessed June 2010

> Residents' Organizations (Three)

> Directors from any of the above categories, but limited to one additional director per Sector

Nominations for candidates to unassigned seats can be from any sector such that the number of representatives on the Board, at any given time, from any one sector, not including the "Residents' Organizations" is limited to a maximum of two with "Resident Organizations limited to a maximum of four. The Board may appoint one Director–At-Large to the Board, based on their specific expertise or knowledge[47].

Currently the Board has 12 members, representing all the above required organizational class of membership expect for Cultural Organizations which is currently vacant. Further, there are various committees created to focus on specific community priorities. These committees are comprised of both board members, representatives of stakeholder groups and interested and/or knowledgeable community members. In addition to the NECRC Board, currently active committees coordinated by the NECRC include:

> Employment Development System committee

> Employment Exchange Committee

> Neighbour to Neighbour Safety Strategy

> Selkirk Avenue Committee

> Small Grants Committee

> North End Housing Network

> North End Picnic Committee

> Winnipeg Rental Network

The NECRC is in the final year of their second five year mandate. The duration of the current plan is December 31, 2006 – March 31, 2011. The objectives of the NECRC as presented at their 2009 Annual General Meeting are;

> to alleviate poverty;

> to reduce unemployment;

> to improve the quality of housing;

> to promote economic development;

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[47] NECRC Governance Page. http://www.necrc.org/governance . Accessed June 2010

- ❯ to reduce crime and violence; and

- ❯ to relieve suffering. [48]

2.3   NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! APPROACH

a)   Community-led Model

NA! delivery is founded on a Community-Led Model (CLM) to promote local knowledge and leadership to coordinate responsive neighbourhood revitalization. NA! supports this model by providing resources to NRCs to plan and coordinate neighbourhood revitalization and renewal efforts. The role of the NRCs in the CLM is to:

- ❯ Develop Neighbourhood Renewal Plans (NRPs) to determine priorities for revitalization.

- ❯ Play a coordinating role to mobilize partnerships and resources to plan and achieve revitalization goals.

- ❯ Review and advise on local project proposals received by NA!, based on the NRPs.

- ❯ Propose and implement projects with community partners to fulfill goals outlined in the NRPs.

According to key informants, the NA! programs offered in North End through the NECRC support a CLM. To corroborate this, the majority of key informants point to the governance of the NECRC to ensure that activities reflect the interests of the community. The composition of the board involves stakeholders in the North End such as residents, business organizations, Aboriginal organizations, cultural organizations, labour organizations and community service organizations. The programs that are offered are based on community consultations and described as being "anchored in community." For example, through community consultations the need for local recreational activity was identified after the closing of the North End YMCA. As a result of community identified needs, the NECRC lead the establishment of the North End Wellness Centre whose mandate is wellness and accessible recreational programming for all. Another example includes the need for local banking services as many residences do not operate vehicles and find it difficult to access banking services. Through the work of the NECRC, a partnership with the Assiniboine Credit Union (ACU) is in place and there are now plans to open a small local ACU branch in the near future.

While the program offering is felt to be comprehensive, a gap mentioned by many of the key informants had to do with the geographical boundaries of the defined North End. Any need for revitalization that falls outside of the boundaries are not eligible for funding although there may be the same need or the work may, in turn, benefit the NA! designated North End neighbourhoods: "Gaps include service for shoulder communities Burrows, Inkster Faraday, and perhaps Luxton who do not qualify. This creates a have and have not situation for local communities who want to revitalize their communities."

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[48] Annual General Meeting. *Comprehensive community Development In the North End*. June 18, 2009

All focus group participants felt that the use of a CLM to help revitalize neighbourhoods is a good approach. A few participants stated they felt that communities know best what revitalization activities would work and be accepted by residents. When community consultations were described, all stated that this a valuable exercise. All but one participant had participated in a community consultation in the North End in the past. Most participants felt that the NECRC listened and was open to concerns of the residents; however, some participants felt that their recommendations were not always heard. One participant had concerns over the representation of the entire community stating that "while there is much benefit to soliciting the input of residents, in some cases the community is not properly represented by the community members who are involved in the process."

b) Understanding of Neighbourhood Revitalization

In the context of NA!, the goal of "neighbourhood revitalization" has been defined as local efforts by residents, organizations, schools, businesses, and community groups to build on the existing strengths and experiences of communities, and take into account the distinctive needs, conditions and priorities of individual neighbourhoods to affect change in housing and physical improvements; employment and training; education and recreation; and safety and crime prevention.

Most North End key informants feel that there is a common understanding among stakeholders of neighbourhood revitalization even though their priorities may differ. They state that each group viewed revitalization from their required needs. For example, some stakeholders may be more focused on social issues, while others are focused on housing issues. The NECRC approach to revitalization efforts has been to identify seven key areas to building the community together. These areas include Housing, Employment, Recreations & Wellness, Culture & Diversity, Economic, Safety and Community. As identified by key informants, these action areas are aligned with the community and cover all major aspects of revitalization.

3. COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

3.1 COORDINATION OF REVITALIZATION ACTIVITIES

The Neighbourhood Development Assistance (NDA) assists community economic development in the designated neighbourhoods by supporting the formation and operations of democratic Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations (NRCs) that are locally administered. The NDA provides core funding to NRCs including the NECRC to support their coordination of revitalization efforts in the designated neighbourhoods. During phase one of NECRC's funding, from 2000 – 2005, the organization received $200,000 in core funding per fiscal year for a total of $1,000,000. In phase two, from 2005 – 2010, this

funding was increased to between $275,000 and $350,000 per fiscal year for a total of $1,658,000 of NDA funding. According to NECRC's 2008-2009 Financial Statements[49], 4,874,310 million dollars has been leveraged directly by NECRC in their 2008-2009 fiscal year.

According to key informants, the NDA funding has "greatly" contributed to improved coordination of neighbourhood revitalization efforts. As expressed by one key informant, "without the core funding from the NECRC we would not have been able to look at revitalization from a long term perspective and we would not have projects such as the North End Wellness Centre." The positions at the NECRC help to connect the organization with the community. For example, the Housing Coordinator helps work with the different NA! communities to develop their specific housing plans. Further, the Housing Coordinator conducts outreach to residents by communicating the availability of the Fix Up grants and ensure that those in need are aware of the resource. The staffs' network in the community, along with the length of time the organization has been in operation, was also brought forward as making a difference in revitalization efforts. Most key informants and board members believe that the NECRC is recognized as a leader in the community for revitalization activities. Statements from key informants include that the NECRC is visible in the community and seen nationally as a model for revitalization "We are nationally recognized and people come to us as a best practices (model)." In focusing on the community needs the NECRC has been able to bring together stakeholders that may never have worked together. One key informant noted that "I don't see other organizations doing the work that it (NECRC) does with the entire community in mind. The NECRC works for all individuals, not just one subgroup."

All but one North End focus group participants were familiar with the NECRC. Those that had knowledge of the NECRC had mixed impressions of the organization. Four participants stated that NECRC played a needed and appropriate role in revitalization efforts. One participant articulated "those working there are committed and familiar with the neighbourhood and there is a genuine effort in the work that they do." Another participant agreed that NECRC played a role in revitalization and wanted what was best for the community but that they seem to be only a broker of funding or didn't always listen to what the community was saying. One participant articulated "They made bad decisions and wasted money doing things that the community did not want. The Ambassador program is an example of this." These participants also felt that the area that NECRC covered was too large. All agreed with the following participant statement "they are spread too thin and cover 11 communities. It's the largest NA! community and they don't have enough resources to service all areas and communities effectively." It was also stated that the residents' associations were not always informed about community activities in a timely manner which participants felt hindered residents' ability to participate fully in the revitalization process.

Among surveyed community residents, general awareness of NA! is somewhat low. One quarter (24 per cent) indicated they were aware of the Neighbourhoods Alive! program. However, when asked if they were familiar with the NECRC, nearly half (48 per cent) of those surveyed reported awareness of this organization. Community residents unfamiliar with the NECRC name were given a description of the organization, resulting in a further one in six (17 per cent) recalling the NECRC.

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[49] North End Community Renewal Corporation Financial Statements. For year ended March 31, 2009.

In general, community resident respondents who are familiar with the NECRC view the organization favourably. When asked whether they believed having NECRC is helpful or unhelpful for their neighbourhood, four in five (83 per cent) of this group of respondents reported that it is helpful (a rating of at least five on a seven-point scale).

a)   Participation of Partners and Stakeholders

Stakeholder groups are represented in the revitalization efforts in the North End through the boards and committees that operate within the NECRC. Throughout the history of the NECRC, ad-hoc committees have also been formed to take on specific initiatives as outlined by the Board of Directors. Membership of committees includes representatives of business, residents, and NGOs. A wide variety of funding partners have contributed to revitalization projects and all levels of government have contributed.

The NECRC is viewed by most key informants, and focus group participants as an appropriate organization to initiate the activities and bring players together. These groups further agree that the NECRC has been successful in facilitating and improving connections among stakeholders and that every element is open for stakeholders to participate (such as through the Annual General Meeting, representation on committees, and participation in programs), and many activities are undertaken to bring the community together. A few key informants articulated the important role that NECRC has played in creating cohesiveness between different community stakeholders "Government often comes to us for advice. We (NECRC) often mediate in conflict situations"

There are a number of opportunities for partners and stakeholders to participate in the planning and coordination of revitalization activities in the North End. According to key informants and board members, the NECRC has facilitated partnerships and linkages with a number of specific stakeholders, including: government and community organizations, residents' associations and community groups and businesses. One key government partner is the City of Winnipeg Police Department. The Winnipeg Police Department has worked with the NECRC in safety planning and with the North End School Resource Officer program. This program is offered in 15 North End schools and assists in creating safety through the strengthen relationship between police, youth and community.

Key informants and board members confirm that all three levels of government are involved in revitalization efforts in the NECRC zone. The most common example is the City of Winnipeg: "The City helped with the North End Wellness Centre (NEWC), they turned over buildings and land for marginal costs." All key informants indicated that the NEWC is one of the key successes for the community and for the revitalization efforts. Through the community consultation process, recreation activities and services were identified as one of the priorities in the 5 year plan. After years of planning, consulting and partnering the NEWC opened a 25,000 square foot multi-service facility in 2009. The services in the facility are provided through a collaboration with Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, YMCA-YWCA, Splash Child Care Inc. and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. Funding partners included Western Economic Diversification,

Winnipeg Partnership Agreement, City of Winnipeg, other provincial and government departments and a private fundraising campaign.

Other examples on a smaller scale are brought forward by key informants and board members to support the consensus that stakeholder groups are actively involved in revitalization efforts. Most key informants indicate that to their knowledge projects have leveraged funding from the Winnipeg Foundations, United Way of Winnipeg, Thomas Sill Foundation and other government departments. Examples include:

> The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) run by Winnipeg Homelessness and Housing Initiative (WHHI) is supported by NECRC by helped local responsible landlords access RRAP funding; and

> The majority of NRF projects and programs are supported by Foundations and other non government funding bodies.

An example of business effort is through the Social Purchasing Portal set up in partnership with SEED Winnipeg Inc. This program encourages business development and economic support to community organizations through the connection of inner city businesses with large potential buyers. One key informant identified "We use purchasing dollars to buy from local organizations. They hire locally and support local organizations that do employment training". Another example is the Storefront Improvement Grant Program (run by business and community representatives). This program has resulted in more business participation in revitalization efforts and has assisted in creating stability in the community. According to key informants, engaging the business community in revitalization efforts has been a challenge and must be a priority moving forward. One key informant indicated "It's a circle because the image of the community is of a crime ridden area. This has an impact on business. As we increase safety in the community, it also improves the image of the North End."

In order to gauge the overall participation of residents in community activities, surveyed community residents were asked about their involvement in seven activities. Of all community activities described in the survey, respondents in the North End were most likely to have generally volunteered in their community (44 per cent) or attended a community or neighbourhood event such as a block party (30 per cent). One in five indicates they have participated as a member of a neighbourhood group or organization (23 per cent) or have been involved in discussions about services and priorities for neighbourhood renewal (20 per cent). One in six (16 per cent) have attended a community meeting and roughly one in ten each have participated in a community garden (10 per cent) or served on a local board or committee (9 per cent). Two in five (40 per cent) reported doing none of the things described in the survey. Of those who were aware of the NECRC and participated in at least one activity, 42 per cent indicate that their participation was a result of the efforts of the NECRC.

The general interest of getting involved or further involved in improving their community is high for community residents in the North End with 57 per cent of residents indicating they have an interest in getting involved or more involved in revitalization efforts. Those who are not interested cite reasons such as

a lack of available time, neighbourhood issues are a low priority, they don't believe their involvement will make a difference, or they are already involved as much as they can manage.

Focus group participants were actively involved in NECRC community consultations, boards, communities associations and NRF programming. They indicated a strong satisfaction with their involvement in revitalization efforts and all supported the statement for continued involvement "I have seen lots of improvements and find it very rewarding."

b) Revitalization planning

All key informants state that the activities of the NECRC have led to greater planning for neighbourhood renewal. They indicate that this has been achieved both through the community plan and through collaboration with stakeholders. Revitalization planning in NA! communities is driven through the 5-year community plans required through NA! As articulated by one key informant, "they keep us on track and drive the work forward." However, the planning was not conducted to this level in the North End prior to the formation and maturation of the NECRC. While the creation of 5-year formal plans is a requirement, most key informants agree that they are a useful tool to identify priorities during the development stage and to continue to guide efforts on an annual basis. Key informants and focus group participants cited the NECRC's support in developing individual community plans and housing plans. All believed that this was critical as each community within the North End zone had slightly different needs and characteristics.

3.2 RENEWAL ACTIVITIES

a) Accessing funds

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) provides funding to community organizations for capacity building, stability, economic development and well-being in the designated NA! neighbourhoods. These include projects that support the renewal of community facilities, local economic development, safety, healthy living, and community cooperation and leadership. According to NA! administrative data, the NECRC has received NA! funding through the NRF from 2000 to 2010 for a total of $8,571,184 to support community identified renewal projects.

TABLE 3.1: NECRC NRF

2000/2001	$561,316
2001/2002	$689,865
2002/2003	$754,433
2003/2004	$508,747
2004/2005	$655,393
2005/2006	$1,490,678
2006/2007	$1,013,424
2007/2008	$953,219

2008/2009	$992,038
2009/2010	$932,071
Total	$8,571,184

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

The overall impact on dollars leveraged is believed to be much higher but could not be determined with the documentation provided. This belief is supported by the perspective of key informants that funding received through NA!, including that received through the NRF, is "highly leveraged". All key informants outlined projects that had received funding from others sources such as the Winnipeg Foundation and the United Way of Winnipeg. One key informant mentioned that over 50 per cent of their funding comes from leveraged sources. Another stated that "having NRF funding helps to get other funders on board as many require matching funds which NRF provides." Key informants generally state that the NRF allows groups to access money and to conduct activities that could not be done before. Further, the NRF provides funding for activities that many other funders do not fund; examples included feasibility studies and volunteer coordinator positions. Without the NRF, most key informants feel that the North End would be "much worse off" and that substantially fewer revitalization efforts could be conducted.

b) Activity in Identified Community Priority Areas

To receive support from the NRF, initiatives must aim to strengthen local capacity, help revitalize the neighbourhood and reflect the objectives and priorities of the neighbourhood plan. There are four main categories of initiatives that are eligible for the NRF: Stability, Capacity Building, Economic Development, and Well-being. Through the NRF, NA! seeks to increase activity in these identified community priority areas. According to NA! administrative data[50], 189 projects have been funded in North End Winnipeg through the NRF since 2000. While each project may benefit more than one community priority area, for the sake of categorization, specific projects will be listed in one "primary" category.

Neighbourhood Stability

NRF stability projects complement housing improvements in a neighbourhood by supporting projects such as: renovations to neighbourhood facilities; developing or reclaiming of parks and open space for community use; developing community gardens; improving local amenities; and contributing to neighbourhood beautification. Funded projects include:

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[50] Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf

TABLE 3.2: NECRC Stability Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Renovations to Facilities	Amphitheatre Renewal
	REZ Youth Drop-in Renovations Project 2007
	Salter Tot Lot Renovation 2009
	Gretta Brown Unit Expansion and Renovations
	Turtle Island Community Centre Expansion
	Renovations –Sprinkler System Project
	Indian Family Centre Building Renovation phase 1
	Manitoba Indigenous Cultural Education Centre Inc. Building Renovation Project
Community Gardens	NECRC Community Gardens
	Lord Selkirk Park Community Gardens
Playground Improvements	Machray Park Playground 2007
	St.John's Park Playground Redevelopment 2006
	Niji Mahkwa School Playground 2001
	Norquay School Playground Rehabilitation 2003
Beautification	St.Art
	Urban Canvas 2001
	North End Murals 2001
Housing Improvements	NECRC Exterior Fix up Grants Program (multi-year)
	NECRC Housing Coordination
	R.B Russell Home Renovations Program 2001
	Storefront Enhancement Grant Program 2007

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

All key informants note that stability is the area that receives the most attention, as evidenced by the relatively abundant projects noted in table 3.2. The reach of these projects is extensive, with, for example, one key informant noting that "community gardens have changed how people feel about one another and the neighbourhood overall. It really seems that everyone is respectful of the community gardens." According to some key informants, these stability projects help to create visual improvements in the community, and have resulted in an improved perception of safety for residents and visitors. There have been entire streets that have seen improvements, "one person on my street received a grant and fixed up the outside of their property. Now I have seen eight to nine other home owners that have started to renovate." Key informants note, and focus group participants confirm, that people feel more comfortable out in their yards during the day and that the biggest change in the community has been in beautification. Key informants point to the activity in community gardens for improvements in neighbourhood stability. Some informants note that the development of community gardens have resulted in food security, decreased isolation, and created a welcoming environment. Some gardens in the North End that were created through the NRF have been sustained by volunteer caretakers. Together key informants felt that stability was providing a sense of pride in the community as residents are taking ownership of the neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Capacity Building

Capacity building activities support projects that: promote neighbourhood consultation, outreach, awareness and collaboration; enhance knowledge, skills and leadership; nurture individual and community pride; and support the sustainability of programs. Some NRF activities which have taken place in North End that benefit capacity building are mentioned in the following table.

TABLE 3.3: NECRC Capacity Building Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Neighbourhood Consultation	Community Development Resources for Dufferin
	Community Development Resources for St. John's
	NECRC Community Housing Plan
	NECRC Neighbourhood Organizing and Planning
	North End Wellness Centre Consultation Phase
	Neighbourhood Community Plans

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

The administrative listing of NRF projects identifies at least six formal studies to seek consultation on the development of activities or projects. The development of community plans and housing plans for each of the five NA! communities has been key in creating leadership and creating sustainability for programs. As one key informant noted "The plans help our volunteers to stay focused and know what we are working towards." Key informants primarily note capacity building activities such as Housing Networks that help to coordinate and strengthen cooperation between different stakeholders and align their priorities with community housing plans. Finally, some key informants note community events such as Picnic in the Park sponsored through small grants and cleanups as contributing to community pride and ownership "They (residents) are getting involved in the community and there are not as many problem areas."

Neighbourhood Well Being

The NRF seeks to fund activities that support neighbourhood cohesion and well-being by: enhancing neighbourhood safety and preventing crime; reducing at-risk behaviour (e.g. recreation programs); contributing to better health practices; strengthening tenant-landlord relations; and improving neighbourhood co-operation. Funded activities that could be attributed to activities enhancing well being are included in table 3.4.

TABLE 3.4: NECRC Well Being Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Recreation Programs	Turtle Island Drop-In Centre
	Project Makoonsag
Neighbourhood Cohesion	North End Wellness Centre
	William Whyte Neighbourhood Renewal and Volunteer Coordinator
	Aboriginal Child Support Helper
	Counselling Services for Women
	Youth Outreach Workers
	North End Food Security 2009
	Picnic in the Park
	Family Support Program
	Tenant Landlord Cooperation

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

Most key informants note that much of the activities funded through the NRF have had a positive affect on well being. They note the improved community gardens, employment creation, and training programs for residents have assisted with lowering criminal activity and improving neighbourhood cooperation. Although the North End is becoming an undesirable place for criminal activity these key informants also acknowledge that criminal offenders most likely have only moved to other locations in the City. The North End Wellness Centre was identified by all key informants as a project that is supporting wellness and recreation. The North End Wellness Centre provides recreation opportunities for residents and, as the majority of key informants identified, has provided youth and children with an alternative to criminal activity and promotes the reduction of at-risk behaviour.

In supporting Neighbourhood Well being some key informants identified the focus on children and youth in many funded programs "Many project activities are geared to children and youth, and preventative in nature" Examples included recreation, cultural, health, and food security and are considered by key informants to be a long term approach.

Neighbourhood Economic Development

Economic development projects assist neighbourhood organizations to prepare community economic development strategies for their neighbourhoods that foster balanced, equitable and sustainable economic development and develop projects that provide local business opportunities; enhance employment and training opportunities for local residents; and promote local purchasing. Economic development activities that have been funded through the NRF in the NECRC zone include:

TABLE 3.5: NECRC Economic Development Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Local Business Opportunities	Storefront Improvement Program (multi-year)
Training Opportunities	Path Resource Centre
	Aboriginal Youth Business and Money Management Project
	Youth Leadership Development Initiative
	Ogijita Pimatiswin Kinamatwin, Inc.
	Housing Training Initiative
Enhance Employment Opportunities	Employment Development System Committee
	Employment Exchange Committee
	NECRC Community Economic Development Plan
	Building Construction Maintenance Program

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

Some key informants note that economic development is the more challenging area of revitalization as the North End is traditionally a lower income area and it has been hard to engage the business community in revitalization efforts. That said, within the NECRC activities, all key informants note that efforts are made to hire locally by, for example, hiring staff for the residents' associations that live in the community they represent. Furthermore, the Housing Training Initiative and the Building Construction Maintenance Program have created employment and business opportunities for local residences. Further, some key informants point to the efforts of local organizations to procure products and services from local business.

c) Community Resident Awareness of and Approval of Revitalization Activities

A large majority of community residents surveyed (69 per cent) indicated that they felt at least somewhat well-informed (a rating of at least three on a seven-point scale) about available programs, events and resources in their neighbourhood. One third felt well-informed (i.e., a rating of six or seven), with significantly more of these responses coming from individuals who had heard of NA! and the NECRC.

When asked whether they feel more or less informed about available programs, events and resources in their neighbourhood since they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years), nearly half (47 per cent) of respondents said they feel more informed now (a score of at least five on a seven-point scale). Just over three in ten (37 per cent) said there has been no change (a score of four out of seven). Once again, significantly more respondents who have heard of NA! and the NECRC felt more informed, as well as significantly more who had participated in community activities.

Almost four in ten (37 per cent) community residents surveyed report seeing revitalization projects that include things like improving housing, safety, and recreation. The projects mentioned by over

half of those respondents related to improving green spaces including gardens and parks (60 per cent). About one-third noticed home improvements and renovations to existing houses (36 per cent). Eight in ten respondents (81 per cent) who noticed any revitalization activities believe that these projects are helpful for the neighbourhood (a rating of five or more on a seven-point scale).

North End focus group participants recalled, unaided, a comprehensive list of NECRC activities that have taken place over the past number of years. The activities that participants attributed to the NECRC include;

- Community gardens

- Newcomer program

- Community clean ups

- Fix-up grants and other housing initiatives tracking problem houses

- Partnerships with the city for free programs

- Police cadets

- Picnic in the Park

- Lighthouses

- Support for the Residents' Associations

- Community on Patrol (COP)

- Ambassadors Program

Overall, all participants affirmed that the majority of the activities are appropriate for the NECRC and are making a positive improvement in the community. The exception was the COP program which all agreed was not making an impact on safety as they felt, in some cases, it was putting residents at risk. Most noted that they feel the improvements that have taken place in the North End would not have happened without the NECRC or funding from NA! Some participants observed that the activities creating a visual change are the ones that are making the greatest impact and that "Fix-up grants helped to create a feeling of community on my street." A few noted that some activities, such as activities for youth, are likely to make a big difference in the youth's life "(We) need to get children engaged and teach them how to support their communities." Several participants acknowledged that a momentum seems to have occurred in revitalization efforts through the different communities in the North End. However, all participants agreed that currently the communities are working disjointedly and that greater effort needs to be made to bring communities together. One participant stated "we need to get together and talk between communities and be brought together and coordinate together to discuss ideas."

d)   Community Vitality

In terms of overall satisfaction, half (50 per cent) of surveyed community residents indicate that they are currently satisfied with their neighbourhood. Further, over a third (36 per cent) of all respondents indicated that they are more satisfied now with their neighbourhood than when they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years). Only 16 per cent are less satisfied than before, and 47 per cent feel their satisfaction is unchanged in recent years.
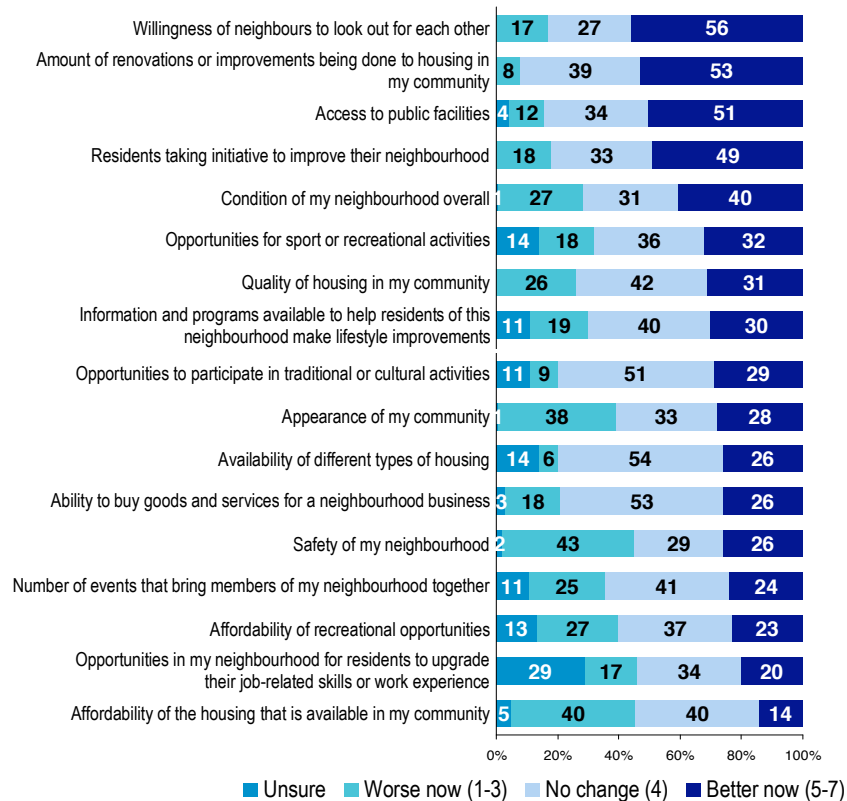
When community residents were asked what they liked best about their neighbourhood, survey respondents most often mentioned the aesthetics (e.g., scenic, quiet, etc.) (25 per cent) or the neighbours (friendly, diverse, helpful) (20 per cent). One in eight (12 per cent) mentioned that they most like the closeness to amenities (convenient/central, close to everything).

Conversely, community residents were also asked to describe the biggest challenges in their neighbourhood. Respondents most frequently cited crime and safety issues (49 per cent). All other issues such as cleanliness, community involvement, cost of housing, poverty issues, infrastructure and lack of opportunity for youth were identified by fewer than 10 per cent of respondents each.

Survey respondents were asked to rate changes to various aspects of their neighbourhood since they moved to the area or in the last 10 years. Of all the aspects about which respondents were asked, the willingness for neighbours to look out for one another was mentioned most often. Of those surveyed (56 per cent) said that this was "better now", i.e., it received a rating of at least five on a seven-point scale. Half of community resident respondents confirm they have also noticed an improvement in two specific key areas: the amount of renovations or improvements being done to housing in their communities was seen to have improved (53 per cent) and access to public facilities such as community centres, gardens, or playgrounds (51 per cent). Over two in five felt that residents are taking initiative to improve their neighbourhood (49 per cent). Many other neighbourhood attributes were primarily listed as "no change." Both the affordability of available housing and safety was rated by the majority of respondents as "worse now" (i.e., a score of three or lower). Two in five, 40 per cent, of community residents feel that the overall condition of their neighbourhood has improved since they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years).

Changes to Neighbourhood – Winnipeg North End

"Have you noticed any changes in the following aspects of your neighbourhood since you moved to the area (or in the last 10 years)?"

Aspect	Unsure	Worse now (1-3)	No change (4)	Better now (5-7)
Willingness of neighbours to look out for each other		17	27	56
Amount of renovations or improvements being done to housing in my community		8	39	53
Access to public facilities	4	12	34	51
Residents taking initiative to improve their neighbourhood		18	33	49
Condition of my neighbourhood overall	1	27	31	40
Opportunities for sport or recreational activities	14	18	36	32
Quality of housing in my community		26	42	31
Information and programs available to help residents of this neighbourhood make lifestyle improvements	11	19	40	30
Opportunities to participate in traditional or cultural activities	11	9	51	29
Appearance of my community	1	38	33	28
Availability of different types of housing	14	6	54	26
Ability to buy goods and services for a neighbourhood business	3	18	53	26
Safety of my neighbourhood	2	43	29	26
Number of events that bring members of my neighbourhood together	11	25	41	24
Affordability of recreational opportunities	13	27	37	23
Opportunities in my neighbourhood for residents to upgrade their job-related skills or work experience	29	17	34	20
Affordability of the housing that is available in my community	5	40	40	14

■ Unsure ■ Worse now (1-3) ■ No change (4) ■ Better now (5-7)

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n=61

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

Respondents were then asked whether they have noticed any other positive changes in their neighbourhood since they moved to the area (or in the last ten years.) While residents most commonly (57 per cent) reported seeing no other changes, a variety of changes were noted by other respondents, most notably improvements in the focus on community/building (10 per cent), improvements to crime rates (10 per cent), improvements due to home ownership and pride in ownership (9 per cent), and improving parks, recreation and sports activities (six per cent). All other changes were reported by fewer than five per cent of the survey population.

When asked whether they noticed any other *negative* changes, 44 per cent of survey respondents said they had seen none. Those who said they did notice additional negative changes primarily described crime and safety issues (38 per cent). All other changes were reported by fewer than 10 per cent and include the level of city services and a lack of housing affordability.

All focus group participants are content with their community and plan to stay for the foreseeable future. The only reason that would cause them to move away from their current home or the North End would be the crime. Reasons articulated for staying were that they are generally happy with their location, enjoyed the mature area, the large trees and the mixture of homes. Participants also indicated that the cost of living was a large contributing factor in their choice to live in the North End with low property taxes being the number one factor

Focus group participants indicated that they feel relatively safe in their community especially on their own street, but perhaps not to the point of feeling comfortable to walk alone at night. Perceptions about the change in safety compared to five years ago are divided with some saying that safety has improved due to more home ownership in the area and the improvements from the fix up grants. Others say that they have they have been victims of crime or have witnessed drug dealers, gang members and prostitution. All agreed that the major concern was what they classified as senseless crime that they believed was committed by young offenders and noise levels in the community.

Focus group participants felt there had been improvements to recreational activities in the area and improvements to parks and playgrounds. The increase in City programming and the establishment of the North End Wellness Centre were attributed by participants to the improvements. All participants had taken part in community activities such as community consultations, workshops, creating community gardening, or block parties over the last 5 years. Most participants report feeling a sense of community in their neighbourhood and they felt they could turn to them if they needed help and generally they look out for each other. Residents specified that it was more difficult to get to know occupants of rental properties as they change often. Most felt that the sense of community had improved in the last five years with the majority of participants attributing the change to the fix up grants and community activities.

Two focus group participants identified the lack of businesses in the area as a challenge. They felt that the redevelopment of Selkirk Avenue into a social service area had not assisted with the revitalization of the North End. Other participants indicated that social service agency needed to evaluate their operating hours so that they could better service the community.

3.3   HOUSING

a)   Quality and Availability of Housing Stock

Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA) provides financial assistance to help revitalize housing in designated neighbourhoods by supporting homeownership and renovation initiatives of community based groups. Financial assistance is also provided to NRCs under the Community Housing Improvement Initiative (CHII) component of NHA to develop and deliver local housing and property improvement initiatives (for example, the various annual housing and/or exterior fix-up grants).

All key informants and board members note that North End communities have unique housing needs and each requires a different approach to addressing their challenges. Overall all had challenges with vacant properties and derelict houses. It was felt that the majority of derelict houses in the North End were owned by "absentee" landlords that were not vested in the community. A few key informants identified the Tenant Landlord Cooperation (TLC) project with addressing this challenge. TLC provides member landlords with fix-up grants to assist with repairs. Further, the NECRC has coordinated workshops to create understanding and awareness of City by-laws. All key informants believed that the City needed to be more efficient with enforcing by-laws so that derelict properties can be removed in a timely manner. It was also believed by some key informants that once by-laws are enforced landlords will begin to take corrective actions.

Key informants stated that the housing stock in the North End was older and to assist with housing conditions there needed to be upgrading to attract homeowners into the area. Currently it was believed that 60 per cent of the homes are used as rental properties in the area. Informants feel that this has contributed to the neglect of homes in the area and to address this challenge there is a need for more local home ownership: "The rental property owners are not attached to the houses and more cooperatives should be available to people. People care more about properties when they have a vested interest."

Key informants point again to the Fix Up grants as facilitating an improvement in the quality of housing in the North End. These improvements have helped to change the neighbourhoods visually, resulting in the perception of a better neighbourhood and safety. Key informants note the Fix Up grants as small in dollar value, but high in volume and reach, and a good example of private and public investment in housing renewal. Low income home owners receive funding for exterior fix ups and these and other private homeowners have also been spending money to do improvements.

b) Community Perceptions of Housing Conditions

Overall, evaluation participants feel there has been an improvement in housing conditions in the North End neighbourhoods. As mentioned previously, surveyed community residents indicate they have noticed an improvement in the amount of renovations or improvements being done to housing (40 per cent feel that conditions are much better), and 31 per cent feel that the quality of housing has improved in recent years. While residents believe there has been an improvement to housing conditions, the majority of community residents (80 per cent) feel that the affordability of available housing is much worse or has not changed since they moved to the area (or within the last 10 years).

The consensus among residents in the North End focus group was that there is not appropriate housing in the community to meet their needs. The housing options were viewed as becoming less affordable since the values of homes have risen in recent years. They also believed that the mixture of housing options was weighted too heavily in the rental category. All but one participant believed that increasing the percentage of homeowners would benefit the area. Participants report being very pleased with the streetscape of their neighbourhoods, using phrases such as "I love my street," and note the large

trees, older homes "with character," and the general appearance of the homes. They all agree that there has been a substantial change in the appearance of the neighbourhood, with lots of refinishing of the exterior of homes and properties. Most participants were aware of the fix-up grant program, even if not by name, and stated that some homeowners on their block would use the program to make visible exterior improvements, which seemed to initiate another home to make improvements, and then another. All changes to the community in terms of housing fix-ups were viewed as improvements and positive, resulting in greater pride in their community.

All participants agreed that there were still issues with vacant lots and derelict houses. It was strongly felt absentee landlords were a major cause for the poor quality of rental housing available in the area. One participant articulated "They do not care about the home or the community." All participants felt that the City has a responsibility to the community to enforce by-laws that would see the reduction of derelict houses in the North End. Infill housing was seen as a positive change in the North Point Douglas area were there had been a high number of infill houses constructed in the last 5 years. One resident did feel that building standards were not as high and that infill houses did not always fit in with the character of the community.

Most key informants agree that while many positive activities have occurred, there continues to be a deficiency in the North End of quality, affordable housing. They note that each community in the North End is unique and requires its own housing plan to address these needs. The majority of key informants caution that low income housing needs have still not been adequately addressed and that the quality needs to rise to an acceptable standard. They state that there have been some improvements in quality due to the availability of NHA to stimulate improvements; however, a few key informants note that more needs to be done to encourage and support responsible landlords. They suggest that the public sector must be more proactive in enforcement of city by-laws as derelict houses are still a major concern for the community.

c) Community Capacity in Housing Renewal

Most key informants feel that there has been an increased capacity in housing renewal in the NECRC zone. They state that the stakeholders in North End have developed more expertise in creating partnerships to fulfil housing obligations. The NECRC has also looked at broader community issues to address housing. For example, one key informant mentioned the improvements made by the *Building Construction Maintenance Program.* This program has hired and trained 60 North End residents in carpentry and housing construction to provide maintenance and repairs to 256 Manitoba Housing Authority units located in the North End.

Most key informants and focus group participants also indicated that the NECRC and residents' association have helped to inform and educate North End residents on housing standards and city by-laws. This has empowered residents to take personal action as articulated by one key informant

"Residents are taking action themselves and they now understand what the standard for housing is and they are reporting things to the authority. This ensures that the standard is met".

4. LESSONS LEARNED

4.1 STRENGTHS

A number of strengths of the NA! approach to community revitalization were identified by evaluation respondents. The primary best practice, mentioned by all key informants, was the CLM approach to revitalization. They feel that positive outcomes are best achieved by establishing the connection with stakeholders at the community level and being responsive to community needs. Key informants state that the NECRC must be and is focused on every level of the community and their role is to rally the community, conduct outreach, solicit input, and form partnerships to affect change. Key informants feel that the outcome of community driven priorities is greater stakeholder involvement in efforts, community cohesiveness, and a sense of pride in the results. By contrast, some key informants feel that if, for example, City Council were to make and impose decisions, the activities would not be as appropriate or the results as effective. The North End Wellness Centre (NEWC) is an example of an outcome from a community lead model. Through the community planning process the community identified the need for wellness and recreational activities in the North End. Since 2005, the NECRC has worked to create long term partnerships between different community stakeholders and government departments to address this priority.

A best practice in the NECRC zone identified by case study key informants was the creation of the Residents' Association in each of the five NA! neighbourhoods. One staff stated "The development of the community perspective in the planning process was essential. Having the community working for themselves (is) helping to get the work done in each community. The communities that have the support of a residents' association get more accomplished and are more organized". The focus group participants also indicated that the residents' associations helped to organize volunteers and identified unique programming needs for each North End community.

Some board members and key informants note the administrative capacity of NECRC, supported through the NDA, as a strength and contributing to the progress made on the revitalization of the North End. The core funding provided to the NECRC has enabled staff and board to concentrate on long-term goals that can be accomplished over a number of years. As outlined above, the NEWC is an example of a complex long-term project. Further, the outreach efforts and the visibility of the NECRC staff were noted as strengths. Similarly, the broad-based representation of board members was viewed as a strength because it helps to ensure the priorities and needs of multiple interests, from residents to businesses to service agencies, are considered.

4.2 CHALLENGES

Most key informants and focus group participants mention funding as the greatest challenge facing the NECRC. The funding concern is expressed in several contexts. First, the core funding to the NECRC is felt to be needed to continue and increase. Reasons stated include the expansion of the NECRC communities without the corresponding funding increase: "Things that have hindered the process include expanding the NA! program to other communities without increasing the funds to support that growth. This makes it difficult to undertake activities. We are always looking at cutting the budget and doing more with less". Another funding challenge is the NECRC's ability to attract and retain high quality staff. Salaries must be competitive with other organizations. Second, the short term nature of the NRF results in concerns, according to some key informants, about sustainability of effective projects. Much effort is needed to source other funding to fulfill partnership requirements or to continue maturing. The added time required to source other funding takes time and efforts away from programming and revitalizations efforts. One informant stated "Many of the projects have to focus the majority of their time on reporting and proposal writing instead of programming, activities and the work in the community". All key informants expressed the challenge of engaging the local business community in the community activities and revitalization efforts. Some key informants felt that since the majority of business owners did not live in the community their involvement and motivation was limited.

North End focus group participants were asked to name the biggest issue or challenge facing their community right now. All mentioned crime and safety as a continued concern with one resident indicating that her vehicle had been vandalized last month. Even though all participants felt that crime was the biggest challenge facing the community they all felt that the media had exaggerated the problem and given the North End a bad reputation. Participants feel that the city and NECRC should work to help with the improvements by encouraging private investment or finding alternatives to social services agencies. Another challenge noted by participants is the lack of retail options in their community. Once the issue was noted, all confirmed that they typically drive out of the community to access supplies: groceries, household, hardware, banking etc.

There were a number of activities mentioned by focus group participants that they feel could enhance their community, or current activities that could be improved. These include:

› Derelict houses- There needs to be greater effort by the City to work with NECRC and the residents' associations to remove derelict houses in the area.

› Rental properties—Renters are less interested in being engaged in the neighbourhood, or maintaining the yards, and landlords seem less apt to make improvements to the property. More focus on improving these properties is needed.

› Service audit – Need an audit of who is doing what in the community so that we know there is no overlap or redundancy.

> Support for volunteers – The residents' associations are supported mainly though volunteers. More resources or core funding should be provided to the residents' associations in order to support revitalization efforts. It was clearly stated that if NA! funding was eliminated the revitalization efforts in the community would cease and the communities would once again begin to move backwards.

4.3   COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

Overall, most key informants and board members state that NA! has resulted in positive change in the community and that the NRF has had a significant impact in the North End of Winnipeg for community projects. All agree that Winnipeg's North End is a "safer and more desirable place to live" and that there is a greater sense of community.

The collection of activities, such as Exterior Renovations Fix-Up grants, Store Front Improvements and community gardens, have created visual improvements, but most key informants state that the outcomes go beyond the look of the community and affect residents in a deeper way. As articulated, "it's the broken window effect, once you fix one thing others join in. This leads to a feeling of safety and community." They mention that residents feel better about the community and that even those who did not directly realize an improvement have benefited from the activities and feel a sense of pride in the community. The North End has also seen an increase in the capacity development of people in the neighbourhood. The Housing Training Initiative (HTI) has helped to develop the skills of community people in the area of home improvements. A number of these individuals have been hired by their neighbours to assist with small home improvements and fix-ups thus promoting economic impacts. The NECRC has been focused on revitalizing Selkirk Avenue. This has been a slow process but all focus group members and key informants agreed that Selkirk Avenue is now a more vibrant area in the neighbourhood where activities are taking place and people feel safe and welcome during the day. There was still a concern with the lack of business development and the over population of social service agencies.

APPENDIX D
SPENCE CASE STUDY

NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE!
COMMUNITY OUTCOMES EVALUATION 2010
SPENCE NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION
CASE STUDY REPORT

1. INTRODUCTION

The following account presents the findings of a case study of the Spence Neighbourhood Association (SNA) area of Winnipeg. The case study explores activities at a community level attributed to the Neighbourhood Alive! (NA!) approach to community revitalization. Spence Neighbourhood is one of three case studies conducted as part of the 2010 outcome evaluation of Neighbourhoods Alive!

1.1 SUBJECT OF CASE STUDY

The SNA was created in 2000, evolving from a group of local residents and business owners who came together in 1997 to form the Winnipeg Inner City Home Ownership Inc (WICHO). WICHO originally collaborated to clean back lanes in the neighbourhood and renovate a boarded up house. Later that year a group of local residents began the first community garden in the neighbourhood. In 2000, WICHO changed its name to Spence Neighbourhood Association Inc. The organization's relationship with NA! began this same year, with an initial grant of $17,500.00. SNA's Mission, as mentioned on their website and in their literature states: "Spence Neighbourhood Association is to activate and engage the people of Spence in building and rebuilding their neighbourhood in the primary areas of health, safety, community economic development, youth, housing and neighbourhood image."[51] The boundaries of the SNA is the Spence Neighbourhood as defined to be a 25 block area in core Winnipeg from Balmoral to Agnes Streets and Portage to Notre Dame Avenues[52].

1.2 INFORMATION SOURCES

Information sources include

> Three key informant interviews with SNA stakeholders, in addition to SNA-specific comments derived through the 38 other Neighbourhoods Alive! evaluation key informant interviews.

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[51] Spence Neighbourhood Association Annual Report 2008-2009.

[52] Spence Neighbourhood Community Plan 2006-2011

› Results from the Telephone Survey of Community Residents: A sub group of 50 residents in the Spence neighbourhood were surveyed as part of the 357 residents contacted in the seven communities included in the evaluation. The survey was conducted between April 9 – 24, 2010.

› Focus group findings: One focus group was held on June 15, 2010, in the evening. The participants were recruited from a list supplied by the SNA of engaged residents. The list included community volunteers, residents participating in programs offered by the SNA, and residents serving as committee members on the SNA or other community organizations. There were ten participants recruited for the group and nine individuals attended the discussion.

› Youth focus group findings: One youth focus group was held in the afternoon of June 15, 2010. The participants were recruited by staff of Magnus-Eliason Recreation Centre (MERC). All youth who attended were actively involved in community programs offered at MERC. Ten participants were recruited and eight attended the discussion.

› Note: both Spence focus groups were delayed because of, and occurred several weeks after, a period of increased violence in the community. As a result, perceptions of safety for focus group participants may be influenced by the timing of the groups and the regency of the increased violent activities.

› Documentary and secondary sources: Statistics Canada; City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles; Spence Neighbourhood Five Year Plan 2006 – 2011; SNA Monthly Newsletters January 2007-May 2010; SNA Annual General Reports (2004-05, 2005-06, 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09); NA! Project Monitoring Reports (2007 – 2009), SNA CED Report April 2009, NDA Report (2007, 2008); archival media reports; the SNA website (www.spenceneighbourhood.org); and research papers, including:

   ◇ Building the Economy on Community Capacities: the Spence Neighbourhood – University Partner and Principal Investigator Project Co-ordinator Judith Harris PhD, Lee Ann Beaubien and Community Partners and Co-investigators Inonge Aliaga, Director, Spence Neighbourhood Association, Earl Fast and Joan Hay, House of Opportunities

   ◇ 2008 State of the Inner City Report: Putting Our Housing in Order by Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba. December 3, 2008.

   ◇ Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations in Winnipeg's Inner City: Practical Activism in a Complex Environment by Jim Silver, Molly McCracken, Kate Sjoberg. June 10, 2009.

   ◇ Food Resilience: A low income goulash – Food research. Prepared by the Community Research Hub. April 2009.

   ◇ Spence Neighbourhood Housing Plan (undated)

- ◇ Aboriginal Involvement In Community Development: The Case Of Winnipeg's Spence Neighbourhood by Jim Silver, Joan Hay, & Peter Gorzen in *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XXV, 1(2005):239-288.
- ◇ Putting Our Housing in Order: State of the Inner City Report: 2008. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba Office.

2.   DESIGN AND DELIVERY

2.1   COMMUNITY PROFILE

Housing in Spence is made up of single family houses which are more than half rental and turn of the century apartments, often in need of major upgrades. There are more rooming houses in Spence than in any other area of Winnipeg. The area is in close proximity to the Health Sciences Center which is viewed to coincide with many people in the community struggling with mental health and other disabling issues. Families living in this neighbourhood often have a higher than average number of children, have a lower income and are more likely to be single parent families in comparison to other areas of Winnipeg. The Spence community is diverse in ethnicity, age and family size. This is a 25 block geographic area with a higher than average youth (0-9yrs) population. In 2006, Census data reported visible minorities, including Filipino, Black, Southeast Asian and other, comprised 40.5% of Spence neighbourhood's population and 31% reported Aboriginal ancestry.[53]

TABLE 2.1: Community Profile

	Spence 2006	Winnipeg 2006
Total population	4,260	633,451
Total occupied dwellings	1,765	261,090
Number of owned dwellings	310	169,845
Number of rented dwellings	1,460	91,240
Aboriginal Identity	30.9%	10.2%
Visible Minority	40.5%	16.3%
Median household income	$20,039	$49,790
Average monthly rent payments	$446	$664

Source: Statistics Canada

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[53] City of Winnipeg Neighbourhood Profiles, June 2010. Online.

2.2   SPENCE NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

Established in 2000, the SNA has two locations. A main office at 615 Ellice Ave and a second location in the Magnus Eliason Recreation Centre at 430 Langside St. SNA receives core funding through a funding agreement with NA! The breakdown of this funding as total percentage (49 per cent) of SNA's budget is: Neighbourhood Development Assistance (core funding of 22 per cent); Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (19 per cent); and Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (8 per cent).[54] For the remainder of the budget, SNA relies on a mix of other grants from the Province, the City of Winnipeg, foundations, the Government of Canada, private donations and other fundraising efforts. There are staff positions at the SNA, including an Executive Director, Financial Officer, Housing Coordinator, Image/Greening Coordinator, Safety Coordinator, Rental Safety Coordinator, Block Captain Coordinator, Composting Coordinator, Green House Coordinator, Rental Outreach Worker, Skills Bank Coordinator, Community Liaison, Youth Coordinator, Youth Program Coordinator, Building Belonging Program Coordinators, New Comer Outreach Worker, First Jobs for Youth, Volunteer Coordinator, Sports Coordinator, Sports Development Coordinator, Youth Outreach Coordinator, Youth Outreach Workers, Education Coordinator, CRH Administrator, and CRH Training Coordinator.

The SNA is governed by a board of directors. The SNA Board is made of up 12 representatives. The community is divided into eight areas, each with a representative chosen to sit on the board. As well, there are four director-at-large positions that offer different perspectives to the board. Board positions are from two to four years and meetings are once a month. Meetings are open to the public.

Currently the Board has 10 members, including six residential appointees and four directors-at-large. Further, there are various committees created to focus on specific community priorities. These committees are comprised of both board members, representatives of stakeholder groups and interested and/or knowledgeable community members. In addition to the SNA Board, active committees coordinated by the SNA include:

> Housing Committee

> Housing Grants Committee

> Tenants Committees

> Image Committee

> Small Grants Committee

> Community Economic Development Committee

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[54] Source: Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations in Winnipeg's Inner City: Practical Activism in a Complex Environment by Jim Silver, Molly McCracken, Kate Sjoberg. June 10, 2009.

- Safety Committee

- Youth Committee

The SNA is in the final year of their second five year mandate.

2.3 NEIGHBOURHOODS ALIVE! APPROACH

a) Community-led Model

NA! delivery is founded on a Community-Led Model (CLM) to promote local knowledge and leadership to coordinate responsive neighbourhood revitalization. NA! supports this model by providing resources to NRCs to plan and coordinate neighbourhood revitalization and renewal efforts. The role of the NRCs in the CLM is to:

- Develop Neighbourhood Renewal Plans (NRPs) to determine priorities for revitalization.

- Play a coordinating role to mobilize partnerships and resources to plan and achieve revitalization goals.

- Review and advise on local project proposals received by NA!, based on the NRPs.

- Propose and implement projects with community partners to fulfill goals outlined in the NRPs.

According to key informants, the NA! programs offered in the Spence neighbourhood through the SNA support a CLM. To corroborate this, the majority of key informants point to the governance of the SNA to ensure that activities reflect the interests of the community. The composition of the board involves resident stakeholders in the Spence neighbourhood. The visual portrayal of the SNA structure on the website shows a structure that has the community at the top, informing the board committees, the board of directors and the staff of SNA. The programs offered are founded on community consultations. However, it should be noted that the priorities for funding are decided by government so proposals that do not fit within the current guidelines would be unlikely to receive support even if they have been forwarded through the CLM process.

All Spence Neighbourhood focus group participants felt that the use of a Community Led Model to help revitalize neighbourhoods is a good approach. They cited the advantages as:

- Meeting other community residents aside from close neighbours.

- Many types of people are serving on the committees, better representing the people in the community.

- Community involvement allows for a better chance of meeting the community's needs.

- Serves as a positive example for other communities.

It was stated by some focus group participants that a disadvantage of the CLM was that it could be very time consuming and hard to get the funding for the desired projects. They also stated that it takes an investment of time and energy to develop the relationships required to build a stronger community and there is a huge learning curve to start the process.

b) Understanding of Neighbourhood Revitalization

In the context of NA!, the goal of "neighbourhood revitalization" has been defined as local efforts by residents, organizations, schools, businesses, and community groups to build on the existing strengths and experiences of communities, and take into account the distinctive needs, conditions and priorities of individual neighbourhoods to affect change in housing and physical improvements; employment and training; education and recreation; and safety and crime prevention. Spence key informants feel that there is, for the most part, a common understanding among stakeholders of neighbourhood revitalization. It was noted by one key informant that differences may depend upon the perspective of the person in the community and have more to do with which activities would benefit the community.

3. COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

3.1 COORDINATION OF REVITALIZATION ACTIVITIES

The Neighbourhood Development Assistance (NDA) program assists community economic development in the designated neighbourhoods by supporting the formation and operations of democratic Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations (NRCs) that are locally administered. NDA provides core funding to twelve NRCs including the SNA to support their coordination of revitalization efforts in the designated neighbourhoods. During phase one of SNA's funding, from 2000 – 2005, the organization received up to $75,000 in core funding per fiscal year for a total of $353,450 of NDA funding. In phase two, from 2005 – 2010, this funding was increased to $150,000 per fiscal year for a total of $750,000 of NDA funding.

According to key informants, the NDA funding has contributed "greatly" to improved coordination of neighbourhood revitalization efforts. As expressed by one key informant, "Priorities are identified through 5 year planning processes – we've identified greening processes; coordinating efforts. We have a full suite of youth programs at MERC that are in regular communication with other programs...Whenever we start a new program we start by meeting with a number of different organizations. For example, we learned that there are not enough supports for parents...We are tinkering with engagement all the time, looking at different ways of engaging people in ways that work. For example, the gardening coordinator knows her volunteers won't come to certain events but they will come to something in the garden. We are thinking about connections all the time. The more we're around, the more we're able to do it. Businesses are composting now, youth are working in local businesses."

All Spence focus group participants were familiar with the SNA and many were actively involved on various committees or were present or past board members. Further, all participants had a favourable impression of the organization and stated that it played a needed and appropriate role in revitalization efforts. Some participants speculated that many of the community improvements, particularly regarding the community gardens, would not have occurred without the efforts of the SNA.

Among surveyed community residents, general awareness of NA! is fairly good. Almost one half (47 per cent) indicated they were aware of the Neighbourhoods Alive! program. Eight in ten (81 per cent) of those surveyed were familiar with the SNA. In general, community resident respondents who are familiar with the SNA view the organization favourably. When asked whether they believed having SNA is helpful or unhelpful for their neighbourhood, three in four (74 per cent) of this group of respondents reported that it is helpful (a rating of at least five on a seven-point scale).

a) Participation of Partners and Stakeholders

Stakeholder groups are represented in the revitalization efforts in the Spence neighbourhood through the boards and committees that operate within the SNA. Membership includes representatives of business, residents, and NGOs. The SNA is viewed by most key informants and focus group participants as an appropriate organization to initiate the activities and bring players together. These groups further agree that the SNA has been successful in facilitating and improving connections among stakeholders and that every element is open for stakeholders to participate (such as through the Annual Meeting, representation on committees, and participation in programs), and many activities are undertaken to bring the community together.

There are a number of opportunities for partners and stakeholders to participate in the planning and coordination of revitalization activities in Spence. According to key informants and board members, the SNA has facilitated partnerships and linkages with a number of specific stakeholders, including: government and community organizations, groups and programs.

Key informants and board members confirm that all three levels of government are involved in revitalization efforts in the Spence area. Collaboration with the City of Winnipeg has helped to make use of empty city lots and allow the SNA to use as community gardens. With funding from the Province of Manitoba and City of Winnipeg, SNA dispersed $73,200.00 in 2009 to 44 properties in the Spence neighbourhood. Of the total grants allocated, $40,200.00 went to 29 private homes and $33,000.00 was granted to 15 rental properties. Over 90% of the grants given in 2009 were given to first-time applicants.[55]

One key informant noted that in Spence, a committee of residents created a garden in a crime ridden park, and engaged in watching out for the community. This helped drive out the crime in that space and bring residents outside to interact. Businesses then began to get involved with storefront improvements

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[55] Spence Neighbourhood Association Annual Report 2008-2009.

by using the matching grant for graffiti removal, safety patrols, increased lighting—all activities that can improve safety. Several respondents referred to the strong relationship between SNA and the West End Biz.

In order to gauge the overall participation of residents in community activities, surveyed community residents were asked about their involvement in seven activities. Of all community activities described in the survey, respondents in the Spence neighbourhood were most likely to have generally attended a community or neighbourhood event such as a block party (55 per cent) or volunteered in their community (44 per cent). Two in five (42 per cent) have attended a community meeting. One-third have participated in a community garden (30 per cent), or been involved in discussions about services and priorities for neighbourhood renewal (thirty-three per cent). One-quarter indicate they have participated as a member of a neighbourhood group or organization (26 per cent). Roughly one in ten have served on a local board or committee (13 per cent). Just over one-third (34 per cent) reported doing none of the things described in the survey. Of those who were aware of the SNA and participated in at least one activity, 51 per cent indicate that their participation was a result of the efforts of the SNA.

The general interest of getting involved or further involved in improving their community is fairly high for community residents in the Spence neighbourhood. Nearly three in ten (71 per cent) of residents indicate they have an interest in getting involved or more involved in revitalization efforts. Of those who are not interested, 60 per cent cite lack of available time and 20 per cent cite reasons of safety for not participating.

b)   Revitalization planning

All key informants state that the activities of the SNA have led to greater planning for neighbourhood renewal. They indicate that this has been achieved both through the community plan and through collaboration with stakeholders. Revitalization planning in NA! communities is driven through the 5-year community plans required through NA! While the creation of 5-year formal plans are a requirement, most key informants and board members agree that they are a useful tool to identify priorities during the development stage and to continue to guide efforts on an annual basis. A few key informants or board members specified concerns that plans do need to be responsive to changing conditions over the course of five years; however, most feel that the plans do allow for flexibility while providing coordinated and consistent planning of revitalization efforts.

3.2   RENEWAL ACTIVITIES

a)   Accessing funds

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) provides funding to community organizations for capacity building, stability, economic development and well-being in the designated NA! neighbourhoods. These include projects that support the renewal of community facilities, local economic development, safety, healthy living, and community cooperation and leadership. According to NA! administrative data, the SNA

has received NA! funding through the NRF from 2000 to 2010 for a total of $2,251,072 to support community identified renewal projects.

TABLE 3.1: SNA NRF

2000/2001	$42,504
2001/2002	$383,843
2002/2003	$304,080
2003/2004	$174,343
2004/2005	$372,000
2005/2006	$249,229
2006/2007	$141,630
2007/2008	$237,500
2008/2009	$116,025
2009/2010	$116,025
Total	$2,251,072

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

Most key informants confirm that funding received through NA!, including that received through the NRF helps arrange other funding. While it is leveraged, however, key informants in Spence mentioned concerns about the reporting and paperwork that is involved when obtaining additional funders. Further, the majority of community key informants express concern about sustainability of funding and the implications of the level and uncertainty of funding on continuing projects and attracting and retaining quality staff.

b)   Activity in Identified Community Priority Areas

To receive support from the NRF, initiatives must aim to strengthen local capacity, help revitalize the neighbourhood and reflect the objectives and priorities of the neighbourhood plan. There are four main categories of initiatives that are eligible for the NRF: Stability, Capacity Building, Economic Development, and Well-being. Through the NRF, NA! seeks to increase activity in these identified community priority areas. According to NA! administrative data[56], 90 projects have been funded in Spence neighbourhood through the NRF since 2000. While each project may benefit more than one community priority area, for the sake of categorization, specific projects will be listed in one "primary" category.

Neighbourhood Stability

NRF stability projects complement housing improvements in a neighbourhood by supporting projects such as: renovations to neighbourhood facilities; developing or reclaiming of parks and open space

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[56] Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf

for community use; developing community gardens; improving local amenities; and contributing to neighbourhood beautification. Some of the funded projects include:

TABLE 3.2: SNA Stability Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Renovations to Facilities	West End Cultural Centre Maintenance and Renovation Project
	WECC Flame Retardant Drapes
	West Central Women's Resource Centre Building Renovations 2010
	Redevelopment of Neighbourhood Resource Centre Space – St Matthews Maryland 2005
	Busy Bee Day Care – Purchase and Renovations
Community Gardens	Spence Greenhouse Project
Playground Improvements	John M King School Grounds Redevelopment 2009
	Sister MacNamara Community Play Structure
Beautification	Art From the Heart 2001, 2002
	Culture, Character & Community
	Spence Murals
	Community Kids Arts Program
	Image Coordination and Support 2005 Phase 1
Reclaiming Parks	Jacob Penner Park Upgrade Phase 1
Housing Improvements	Fencing for the Future
	Housing Coordination
	Light Up your Neighbourhood
	Rooming Door Project
	Rental Home Safety Coordination

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

All key informants note that stability is the area that receives the most attention, as evidenced by the relatively abundant projects noted in Table 3.2. The reach of these projects is extensive and the community gardens in Spence have become a model for other communities. According to some key informants, these stability projects help to create visual improvements in the community, and have resulted in an improved perception of safety for residents and visitors. There have been parks and playgrounds reclaimed in the community and taken together, the gardens, murals and art works are, as one community member stated "important to a holistic idea of community health." Key informants point to the activity in community gardens for improvements in neighbourhood stability. Some key informants note that the development of community gardens have resulted in food security, decreased isolation, and created a welcoming environment.

Neighbourhood Capacity Building

Capacity building activities support projects that: promote neighbourhood consultation, outreach, awareness and collaboration; enhance knowledge, skills and leadership; nurture individual and

community pride; and support the sustainability of programs. Some NRF activities which have taken place in the Spence neighbourhood that benefit capacity building are mentioned in the following table.

TABLE 3.3: SNA Capacity Building Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Neighbourhood Consultation	Community Connection 2001/02
	Housing Strategy 2000/01
	Spence Revitalization Strategy 2000/01
	West Central Community Guide 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004
	Information Stations
	Community Outreach Project

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

The administrative listing of NRF projects identifies at least six formal studies to seek consultation on the development of activities or projects. Key informants primarily note capacity building activities such as fostering previous experience of creating gardens to make improvements on new gardens. Further on gardening capacity building, some key informants note that there are gardening workshops such as how to create gardens, how to grow fruits and vegetables, and how to preserve the harvest. Finally, some key informants note community events such as block parties sponsored through small grants, playground sweeps and cleanups as contributing to positive outcomes in capacity building.

Neighbourhood Well Being

The NRF seeks to fund activities that support neighbourhood cohesion and well-being by: enhancing neighbourhood safety and preventing crime; reducing at-risk behaviour (e.g. recreation programs); contributing to better health practices; strengthening tenant-landlord relations; and improving neighbourhood co-operation. Funded activities that could be attributed to activities enhancing well being are included in Table 3.4.

TABLE 3.4: SNA Well Being Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Recreation Programs	Swim Meets
	Kidswim
	Legacy of Leaders
	After School Program Expansion
	Youth Hip-Hop CD Project
Neighbourhood Cohesion	Ellice Street Festival 2001, 2002
	Small Grants
	Inner City Aboriginal Neighbours
	Creating a Safe Community

Category	Project name
Health and Social Support	Pregnancy Distress Home Visitor/Outreach
	Mother's Support Circle
	West Central Health Promotion Strategy
	WCWRC Community Safety and Housing Peer Support Group
	Healthy Foods for Better Health
	West Central Community Cupboard

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

Many of the key informants in the Spence neighbourhood agree that the activities funded through NRF have positively affected community well-being. Recreation programs have been implemented and supported to contribute to this area. For example, Spence has a well developed youth program that NA! was involved in initially and after school programs. Respondents report that safety is much more difficult to address directly, noting that the community can focus on other areas and safety will be positively influenced. Safety Coordinators have been effective because they are tasked specifically with safety. Safety, it was noted, has a large part to play in well-being and in Spence, safety plans are created, based on the concerns of the area. Safety has much to do with perceptions, so some efforts have to do with creating a feeling of safety. The annual street fairs and block parties also help to enhance safety and well-being.

Neighbourhood Economic Development

Economic development projects assist neighbourhood organizations to prepare community economic development strategies for their neighbourhoods that foster balanced, equitable and sustainable economic development and develop projects that provide local business opportunities; enhance employment and training opportunities for local residents; and promote local purchasing. Economic development activities that have been funded through the NRF in the SNA include:

TABLE 3.5: SNA Economic Development Projects, 2000 - 2010

Category	Project name
Local Business Opportunities	Community Research Hub
Training Opportunities	Youth Builders Training Facility
	House of Opportunities 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005
Enhance Employment Opportunities	Roots for Community Economic Development
	Skills Bank Project
	Work Exposure Project
	First Jobs for Youth

Source: NA! administrative data. Funding Sort by Community Year End 2009-10.pdf. As at April 13, 2010.

Some key informants note that economic development is the more challenging piece to find appropriate initiatives. In Spence, the main themes in the CED plan start from the greatest need.[57] These involve finding local employment, developing local businesses and supporting their sustainability, building on existing community skills and assisting people with developing new skills, getting accreditation for those skills, using community gardens to help with food security, and supporting local businesses and residents in accessing local resources. One unique example of economic development in the Spence neighbourhood is the Community Research Hub. Community members identified that their community often served as a focal point for various research studies on a number of issues such as crime rates, housing issues, and poverty. As a result, the SNA created a business plan for a community-run business that would offer data collection for social research and related services to community organizations and universities. The Research Hub trains and employs local residents who specialize in community door-to-door surveys, focus groups, and other forms of data collection, having developed experience at information gathering in marginalized neighbourhoods. The Research Hub also supports knowledge transfer back to the communities through training workshops and learning circles.

c) Community Resident Awareness of and Approval of Revitalization Activities

A large majority of community residents surveyed (91 per cent) indicated that they felt at least somewhat well-informed (a rating of at least three on a seven-point scale) about available programs, events and resources in their neighbourhood. Almost one-half felt well-informed (i.e., a rating of six or seven), with significantly more of these responses coming from individuals who had heard of NA! and the SNA.

When asked whether they feel more or less informed about available programs, events and resources in their neighbourhood since they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years), half (56 per cent) of respondents said there has been no change (a rating of four on a seven-point scale). Three in ten (29 per cent) said they feel more informed now (a score of at least five out of seven). Once again, significantly more respondents who have heard of NA! and the SNA felt more informed, as well as significantly more who had participated in community activities.

Four in five (80 per cent) community residents surveyed report seeing revitalization projects that include things like improving housing, safety, and recreation. The projects mentioned by over half of those respondents related to improving green spaces including gardens and parks (58 per cent). Over one-third noticed improvements to new or existing houses (42 per cent). Nearly all respondents who noticed any revitalization activities (93 per cent) believe that these projects are very helpful for the neighbourhood (a rating of five or more on a seven-point scale).

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[57] Spence Neighbourhood Five Year Plan 2006-2011

Participants in the focus group were readily able to list a number of specific activities that SNA had undertaken, including: community gardens, the Ellice Street Festival, Sargent street festivals, block parties, various children's events, spring and fall clean-ups, gardening workshops, home renovation workshops, safety audits, safe lighting initiatives, assisting with safety upgrades, bed bug workshops and other health and safety workshops, and fix up grants for painting.

Overall, participants affirmed that the activities are appropriate for the SNA and are making a positive improvement in the community. They felt that more could be done for youth and children, getting them engaged in community activities. Outreach in general was cited as being needed, for youth, for renters who may not have a telephone, and to support general community involvement. They thought some specific programs, such as educating children on healthy food choices and making healthy food available to children was important. Some felt that the SNA could be taking a more political stance and work on lobbying on behalf of community members for higher housing allowances, and generally representing the community members in ways that government programs are not. They saw the role of the SNA as "funding a development of humanity and programs to show people how to communicate and care for their community."

d)   Community Vitality

In terms of overall satisfaction, two-thirds (66 per cent) of surveyed community residents indicate that they are currently satisfied with their neighbourhood. Further, half (49 per cent) of all respondents indicate that they are more satisfied now with their neighbourhood than when they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years). Twenty one per cent are less satisfied than before, and 31 per cent feel their satisfaction is unchanged in recent years.

When community residents were asked what they liked best about their neighbourhood, survey respondents most often mentioned the location and proximity to amenities (33 per cent) or the neighbours and people (22 per cent). One in ten each mention that they most like the aesthetics of the community and the community life.
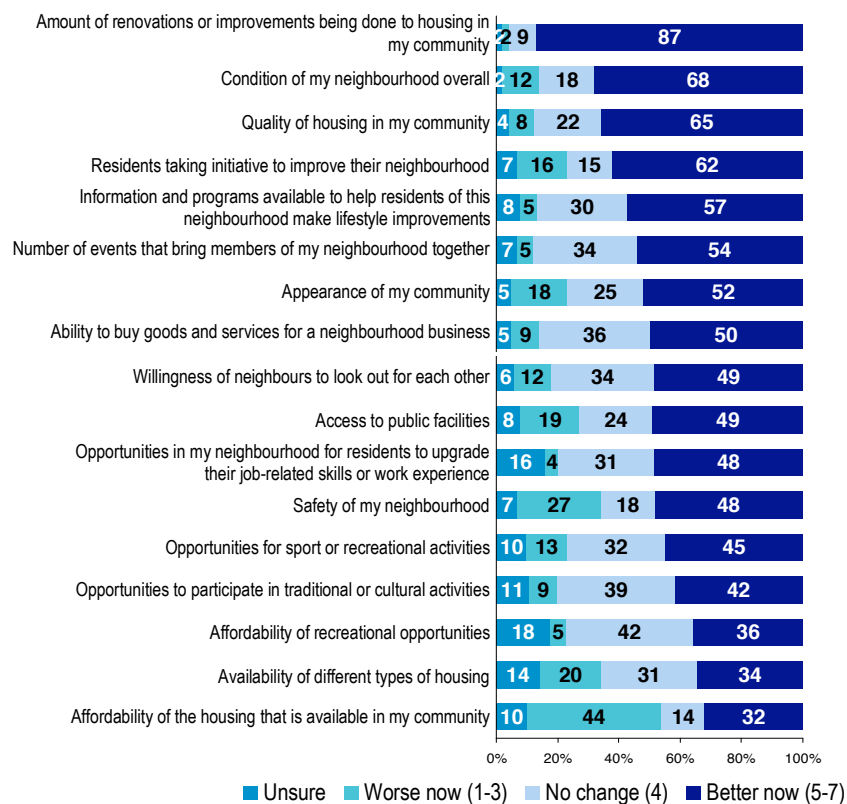
Conversely, community residents were also asked to describe the biggest challenges in their neighbourhood. Respondents most frequently cited crime and safety issues (56 per cent). All other issues such as infrastructure, poverty and homelessness, the cost of housing, issues with renters, and lack of employment opportunities were identified by fewer than 10 per cent of respondents each.

Survey respondents were asked to rate changes to various aspects of their neighbourhood since they moved to the area or in the last 10 years. Of all the aspects about which respondents were asked, the amount of renovations or improvements being done to housing in their communities was seen to have improved the most; 87 per cent of those surveyed said that this was "better now", i.e., it received a rating of at least five on a seven-point scale. Half or more community resident respondents confirm they have also noticed an improvement in specific key areas: the quality of housing in the Spence neighbourhood (65 per cent), residents taking the initiative to improve the neighbourhood (62 per cent), information and programs available to help residents make lifestyle improvements (57 per cent), the number of events that

bring members of the community together (54 per cent), the appearance of the community (52 per cent), and the ability to buy goods and services from a neighbourhood business (50 per cent). Only the affordability of available housing was rated by more respondents as "worse now" (i.e., a score of three or lower. Two-thirds, 68 per cent, of community residents feel that the overall condition of their neighbourhood has improved since they moved to the area (or in the last 10 years).

Changes to Neighbourhood – Spence

"Have you noticed any changes in the following aspects of your neighbourhood since you moved to the area (or in the last 10 years)?"

Aspect	Unsure	Worse now (1-3)	No change (4)	Better now (5-7)
Amount of renovations or improvements being done to housing in my community	2	9		87
Condition of my neighbourhood overall	2	12	18	68
Quality of housing in my community	4	8	22	65
Residents taking initiative to improve their neighbourhood	7	16	15	62
Information and programs available to help residents of this neighbourhood make lifestyle improvements	8	5	30	57
Number of events that bring members of my neighbourhood together	7	5	34	54
Appearance of my community	5	18	25	52
Ability to buy goods and services for a neighbourhood business	5	9	36	50
Willingness of neighbours to look out for each other	6	12	34	49
Access to public facilities	8	19	24	49
Opportunities in my neighbourhood for residents to upgrade their job-related skills or work experience	16	4	31	48
Safety of my neighbourhood	7	27	18	48
Opportunities for sport or recreational activities	10	13	32	45
Opportunities to participate in traditional or cultural activities	11	9	39	42
Affordability of recreational opportunities	18	5	42	36
Availability of different types of housing	14	20	31	34
Affordability of the housing that is available in my community	10	44	14	32

■ Unsure ■ Worse now (1-3) ■ No change (4) ■ Better now (5-7)

EKOS Research Associates Inc.

n=14

Neighbourhoods Alive! Survey, 2010

Respondents were then asked whether they have noticed any other positive changes in their neighbourhood since they moved to the area (or in the last ten years). While some residents (27 per cent) reported seeing no other changes, a variety of changes were noted by roughly one in four respondents, including; a focus on the community / more cohesive and involved community, improvements in safety measures / removing graffiti, and noticed improvements due to home ownership / more home ownership and less rental properties.

When asked whether they noticed any other *negative* changes, 38 per cent of survey respondents said they had seen none. Those who said they did notice additional negative changes primarily described crime and safety issues (40 per cent). All other changes were reported by fewer than 10 per cent and include the level of city services and a lack of housing affordability.

Most focus group participants are content with their community and plan to stay for the foreseeable future. A few said they may move for safety reasons, particularly citing concern for their children, an increase in violence and drugs, or the proximity of an empty lot for one participant. Participants did indicate, however, that they would consider moving back if the perception of safety increased over time. They like the neighbourhood, the character of the homes, the street and close proximity to amenities.

Participants indicate they enjoy the "multiculturalism" of their community, the programs such as community gardens, trees, and houses with character. There is a good mix of commercial and residential properties; they see kids playing on the streets and they are close to concerts and downtown. They dislike the drug dealing, prostitution, stabbings, drinking, violence and unsupervised children in the neighbourhood. The men all stated that they feel safe and the women that they did not. They were divided on whether the level of crime was better or worse in their neighbourhood compared with others. Some felt it was better than (for example) the North End, others felt it was worse. One participant pointed out that they can't be sure because their community is always highly publicized (alluding to the recent increase of violence in the community, and the related media coverage). All felt their home was safe.

All participants said there was a need to prune the trees in the community to improve the lighting and that all of the street lights need to be working. They said the lights are too dim, suggesting the white lights instead of the current orange ones. They said the main streets are bright, but the side streets are less so and the back lanes are very dark. Once again, participants were divided on whether the level of safety was better or worse than 5 years ago. A few felt it was better, but the majority felt it was much worse. They point to lack of consequences for juvenile crime, increase in youth gangs and increase in crack houses. They stated that the children are not afraid of the police. They do have a safe walk program, but it doesn't always work for everyone.

Participants stated that there are a number of recreation and activity options: MERC, the Central Women's Resource Centre, community gardens, BBQs, block parties, street festivals, and the Boys and Girls Club at Sister MacNamara school,. There are a number of play structures for children and lots of green space.

All participants report feeling a sense of community in their neighbourhood. Most know their neighbours and share information, borrow tools, and talk about gardening and renovations. They all reported that the community is losing affordable rental properties. They stated that condos and students accommodations are taking the place of lower priced rentals. They noted that there are a lot of Manitoba Housing complexes in the community. Good rental housing is not easily available and housing for larger families is particularly hard to find.

e)   Youth Perspective

Most youth focus group participants talked about their community as being violent. They reported being scared to walk in the neighbourhood, citing problems with dogs and fear of sexual assault. They did not feel their neighbourhood was safe due to gangs, bullies, gossip, graffiti, lack of lighting, vandalism, and drunk people on the street. They perceive it to be worse here than in other neighbourhoods because "people have guns here." Two participants reported attempted break-ins of their homes when they were at home.

Most of the youth said they do not know their neighbours, but have lots of friends and "have fun hanging out". They mostly like that their community is close to stores and Portage Place shopping centre and that there are lots of corner stores to go to. The youth state that they come to MERC regularly and there is a lot to do – a number of them had just received books for a reading group and some were applying for summer jobs with SNA at the MERC (young people apply to volunteer hours and then earn a stipend at the end of their hours). They said they would like to see the neighbourhood cleaned up and they would like to feel more safe in the community; however, they were sceptical that anything that could be done. One participant asked: "Police get paid to help us, so why don't they do more to help us?"

3.3   HOUSING

a)   Quality and Availability of Housing Stock

Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA) provides financial assistance to help revitalize housing in designated neighbourhoods by supporting homeownership and renovation initiatives of community based groups. Financial assistance is also provided to NRCs under the Community Housing Improvement Initiative (CHII) component of NHA to develop and deliver local housing and property improvement initiatives (for example, the various annual housing and/or exterior fix-up grants).

All key informants and board members note that Spence neighbourhood has had a very low rental housing vacancy rate over the past number of years. According to Manitoba's housing strategy framework,[58] "In the Winnipeg Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), the apartment vacancy rate in October 2008 was 1.0 per cent and in April 2009, it was 0.9 per cent. The rental market is considered balanced when the vacancy rate is 3.0 per cent. Winnipeg's vacancy rate is expected to remain well below the balanced rate for some time. As of April 2009, there were 53,906 rental units in Winnipeg, 3,300 fewer units than in 1992. The tight rental market has resulted in an increase in the construction of rental housing. Since 2007, approximately 1500 units have been added to Winnipeg's market through private and public investment. However, this increase is not enough to keep up with population growth and increased numbers of households. The decline in both social and rental-market housing keeps vacancy rates low. As a result, average rents in the province have increased more than the incomes of people living in poverty."

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[58] Manitoba Housing. Home Works! A housing strategy and policy framework for Manitoba. June 2009.

The consensus among the focus group participants is that there have been improvements to the housing stock in recent years: fewer boarded up houses, more home ownership, the streets are brighter and properties look better. The noted downside, however, is that there is an impact on property taxes, which in turn makes affordable housing less accessible. There is less and less affordable housing, according to the participants, the vacancy rate is getting smaller each year, and people can no longer find homes to rent for what they can afford. The overall general appearance of the community is much better agreed all participants. All stated some concern about the changes that they anticipate with the student housing that is coming into the community. They feel that the community dynamics will change, affecting stability, rental rates and access to larger homes. Key informants note that a focus of the SNA has been in the coordination of activities to increase the availability of safe and affordable housing. Most key informants note that the SNA has been instrumental in working with landlords to improve rental conditions. In addition, SNA has worked over the years to renovate derelict properties, build infill housing and pocket housing, and provide residents with the skills needed to maintain upkeep of their homes.

b) Community Perceptions of Housing Conditions

Overall, evaluation participants feel there has been an improvement in housing conditions in the Spence neighbourhood, but that there is still more to be done. As mentioned previously, surveyed community residents indicate they have noticed an improvement in the amount of renovations or improvements being done to housing (87 per cent feel that conditions are much better), and 65 per cent feel that the quality of housing has improved in recent years. While residents believe there has been an improvement to housing conditions, the majority of community residents (34 per cent) feel that the affordability of available housing is much worse than when they moved to the area (or 10 years ago).

Most key informants and board members agree that while many positive activities have occurred, there continues to be a deficiency in the Spence neighbourhood of quality, affordable housing. They note that many higher quality rental units were converted into condominiums, continuing the strain on the most vulnerable residents. The majority of key informants caution that low income housing needs have still not been adequately addressed and that the quality needs to rise to an acceptable standard. They state that there have been some improvements in quality due to the availability of NHA to stimulate improvements; however, a few key informants note that more needs to be done to encourage and support other types of housing.

c) Community Capacity in Housing Renewal

Most key informants feel that there has been an increased capacity in housing renewal in the SNA area. They state that the stakeholders in Spence have developed more expertise in creating partnerships to fulfil housing obligations. The SNA has also looked at broader community issues to address

housing. The community's top priorities as set out in the SNA Housing Plan[59] are: work to get rid of vacant property; prevent further deterioration leading to new vacancies and distress; and make property owners deal with problem tenants faster. Second priorities include maintaining or enhancing safety features on homes and encouraging everyone to take care of their properties, the properties that they use and the whole neighbourhood. Third, but also very important priorities are to create opportunities for neighbours to meet, work together and learn about each other; to find ways for people in the neighbourhood to feel ownership of their neighbourhood and home; to continue to encourage home ownership, drawing people from inside and outside the neighbourhood and encouraging those here to stay; and, to make places for the kids to play near their homes and outdoor places for the adults to garden and socialize.

Efforts of the SNA to address housing issues in the community have resulted in recognition of the Spence neighbourhood as a leader in developing housing capacity. Some of the accomplishments of the SNA include:

> The Spence Rental Safety Program consists of a home safety audit for renters and the possible installations of: a deadbolt, a wide-angle peephole, and a swing bar lock. Lighting grants are also available if needed. Since 2008, there have been over 150 installations of safety equipment improvements in apartments and rooming houses, and 350 tenants and 70 landlords have been given support in order to increase rental safety.

> Over 30 new homes have been built since incorporation of SNA.

> Housing Incentives are available to home owners and landlords to improve their properties. More than $60,000 is invested annually and many property owners more than match the SNA incentive amount. Two popular project areas for the housing incentives grants are windows and fences.

> Specific housing grants offered by SNA to support the capacity of the community to improve housing: the Homeowner Curb Appeal Grant (max. $700); the Small Homeowner Grant ($1000 with owner contribution of $500 or more); the Homeowner Big Project Grant (grant of up to $2500 with owner contribution of $2500 or more); Exterior Rental Grants (grant of $1500 or $2500 with owner matching contribution of $1500 or 2500 or more); and Critical Repair Rental Grants (for repair or upgrade of major systems in a property).

> SNA has taken advantage of various government funding opportunities to maximize their capacity in housing efforts. In 2007, the tripartite funded Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative invested $1.2 million in the Cozy Rooms project. This project oversaw the renovation of 11 suites in 2 existing rooming houses in the community.

> The identified need for quality housing for single people in the area led to a partnership with local management company SAM Management to build pocket suite houses.

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[59] Spence Neighbourhood Housing Plan

> Empowerment of local residents is an element of the SNA housing strategy. The Home Training Initiative, which Spence neighbourhood participates in along with the Centennial and William Whyte communities, offers skills building workshops for residents in basic home renovations. SNA has developed and maintains as tool lending library, allowing residents to borrow tools for home repairs and odd jobs.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

4.1 STRENGTHS

The development of the Spence Neighbourhood Association and its subsequent funding as a community-led organization is in itself a best practice, as was identified by almost all of the key informants and the focus group participants.. Key informants state that the SNA must be and is focused on every level of the community and their role is to rally the community, conduct outreach, solicit input, and form partnerships to affect change. Key informants feel that the outcome of community driven priorities is greater stakeholder involvement in efforts, community cohesiveness, and a sense of pride in the results.

Capacity in housing renewal is seen as a strength specific to Spence, according to most community key informants. The SNA is a leader in housing capacity, with the coordination of a strong number of homes built or renovated, and the formation of the Rental Home Safety project which is mentioned by a few key informants as a promising practice.

4.2 CHALLENGES

Most key informants mention funding as the greatest challenge facing the SNA. First, the core funding to the SNA is felt to be needed to continue and increase to support the organization and to attract and retain quality staff. Second, the short term nature of the NRF results in concerns, according to some key informants, about sustainability of effective projects. Much effort is needed to source other funding to fulfill partnership requirements or to continue maturing but successful programs.

While all key informants identified the community led model as a strength, many noted that the bureaucratic structure of NA! seemed to mitigate against a community led model. They pointed to the process that dictated that community decisions get approved by the community residents, but then their plans need to be vetted through a committee of bureaucrats before going for final approval to the Minister's office.

Spence focus group participants were asked to name the biggest issue or challenge facing their community right now. Most participants stated the gangs that prey on kids, violence and alcohol abuse,

kids wandering the streets at night and poverty as the issues the community faces. Suggestions to mitigate some of these challenges include:

- Get to know the kids and empower them to say no to the gangs.

- Provide good programs where they can go so they are off the street.

- Having longer hours and more staff at the facilities where they can go.

- More programs and support for the kids and their families.

- Provide positive role models for kids. Let kids know there are other ways to live their lives.

- Need to address not only the youth but also the entire family.

- Making the kids accountable for their actions and showing them that there are other things they can be doing. For example: paying the kids to do chores etc… so that they can avoid gangs.

4.3   COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

Overall, most key informants state that NA! has resulted in positive change in the community and that the NRF has had a significant impact in the Spence neighbourhood for community projects. One key informant noted that all ages of residents in the community now felt that they had a say in the community and emphasized the youth involvement. The majority of key informants and focus groups participants felt the NRC has had a positive impact as evidenced by fewer boarding houses in the community, community gardens, and events to build a sense of community, helping people feel safer.

APPENDIX E
LITERATURE REVIEW

Neighbourhoods Alive! Community Outcomes Evaluation 2010

APPENDIX A: LITERATURE REVIEW

Submitted to:

Government of Manitoba,
Housing and Community Development
Attn: Shannon Watson

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June 28, 2010

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Appendix A: Bibliography

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the literature review was to provide evidence on the extent to, and ways in, which community led, neighbourhood revitalization programs implemented in other jurisdictions have worked and to generate relevant information to inform the analysis of the outcomes of the Neighbourhoods Alive! initiative as well as to provide constructive and practical lessons that can be drawn from the research for the development of future program and policy options.

1.1 APPROACH TO THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The structure of this document reflects the three stage approach to this literature review which can be summarized as:

> We obtained a clear understanding of the policy framework supporting "neighbourhood revitalization" models, goals and programs by reviewing relevant legislative and policy documents;

> We reviewed conceptual perspectives on community led models in available research literature and other relevant published materials;

> We examined theories and evidence on success factors, best practices and emerging trends in the delivery and achievements of community led models and their impacts on community revitalization.

1.2 OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

The main purpose of the literature review was to identify community renewal models and programs similar to NA! which could be used to identify possible benchmarking and best practice alternatives as well as criteria for analysis of NA!'s components, against which elements could be compared. More specifically, based on the evaluation matrix, the scope of literature review was to:

> Explore the definition of Neighbourhood Revitalization as it is used and pursued in other jurisdictions.

> Identify examples of program components from other jurisdictions that have been documented as effective in supporting a Community Led Model.

> Compile a discussion of emerging practices of initiatives from other jurisdictions that are relevant to the goals of the Neighbourhoods Alive! Initiative.

A review of recent relevant literature published in Manitoba and Canada as well as internationally was undertaken in order to obtain useful information on the effectiveness and efficiency of community renewal models and strategies. The information collected from the literary sources reviewed also serves as a comparative for analysing the NA! model and programs in terms of design, implementation and outcomes achieved to date.

Information obtained through the literature review will be integrated into the evaluation report in support of any recommendations for improvement of NA!, notably in relation to the role, delivery and effectiveness of the Community Led Model to achieve the intermediate outcomes.

2.   NEIGHBOURHOOD REVITALIZATION

2.1   NEIGHBOURHOOD REVITALIZATION

The concept of "neighbourhood revitalization" covers a broad range of approaches and outcomes. While in its more limited application, the focus is on upgrading or replacing physical assets, such as deteriorated and abandoned properties, revitalization generally encompasses a process of significant socioeconomic change that seeks to reduce poverty and welfare dependency and to increase employment[60]. In its broader application, the physical and economic focus of neighbourhood revitalization policy includes elements of social cohesion and citizen empowerment through the reinforcement or introduction of local democratic mechanisms[61]. In Canada, the concept of neighbourhood revitalization tends to vary across provincial and territorial jurisdictions in the relative importance attributed to the various economic development and social inclusion aspects of revitalization[62].

Although neighbourhood revitalization approaches and activities are fluid in their application, they share a common theme in their goal to improve conditions in neighbourhoods that are characterized by deprivation and socioeconomic decline. (AMION Consulting, 2010; Chaland and Magzul, 2008; Gorman, 2006; Pomeroy, 2006). Within the literature, neighbourhood decline refers not only to material well-being but also to the extent to which residents are able to participate in society at large[63].

Neighbourhood conditions are impacted by a complex array of factors including an area's internal characteristics, external factors and internal change dynamics[64]. The research identifies a number of factors associated with neighbourhood change, both positive and negative, such as: housing tenure, skill levels, population churn and diversity, income levels, growth performance in the wider sub-regional economy, crime levels, and policy interventions. When different neighbourhood factors combine they tend to have a profound and cumulative effect on an area's potential for improvement or its probability of further decline (AIMON Consulting, 2010; Pomeroy, 2006; Gorman, 2006).

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[60] Pomeroy S., 2006. *Rethinking Neighbourhood Renewal: Review of the US Experience and Possible Lessons for Canada*.

[61] Maclennan D., 2006. *Remaking Neighbourhood Renewal: Towards Creative Neighbourhood Renewal Policies for Britain*.

[62] Chantier de l'économie sociale, 2005. Social Economy and Community Economic Development in Canada: Next Steps for Public Policy.

[63] AMION Consulting, 2010. *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, Final Report*. Communities and Local Government, Office of Public Sector Information, United Kingdom.

[64] AMION Consulting, 2010. *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, Final Report*. Communities and Local Government, Office of Public Sector Information, United Kingdom.

In the late 1980s, the shift in perspective from isolated issues to complex problems provided the impetus behind the emergence of comprehensive community initiatives. The Aspen Institute[65] defines these initiatives as: "neighbourhood-based efforts that seek improved outcomes for individuals and families as well as improvements in neighbourhood conditions by working comprehensively across social and economic sectors. Additionally, comprehensive community initiatives operate on the principle that community building is a necessary component of the process of transforming distressed neighbourhoods. Community building includes, for example, strengthening institutional capacity at the local level, enhancing social capital and personal networks, and developing local leadership capacity."

Schorr (1997)[66] associated the popularity of comprehensive community led initiatives in the US with both the accumulating evidence that services meant to enhance the life prospects of the poor were often proving ineffective (at least in part because they were so fragmented) and the growing body of social research that points to the role which community conditions (i.e., neighbourhood effects) play in perpetuating or reducing poverty.

> "The new synthesis rejects addressing poverty, welfare, employment, education, child development, housing and crime one at a time. It endorses the idea that the multiple and interrelated problems of poor neighbourhoods require multiple and interrelated solutions… (Its proponents) insist on combining physical and economic development with service and education reform, and all of these with a commitment to building community institutions and social networks." Schorr 1997.

According to the Aspen Roundtable on Community Change (Auspos and Kubisch 2004)[67], comprehensive community initiatives are *place-based* (anchored in defined neighbourhoods or communities), *comprehensive* in their programmatic scope (working across a wide range of issues) and *community-building* in their operating principles (committed to developing capacities and connections of individuals and organizations).

Typically, comprehensive community initiatives tend to: 1) pursue broad, multiple goals; 2) promote multisectoral collaboration; 3) combine different strategies to enhance effectiveness; 4) seek changes in a number of spheres (e.g., employment, housing) and levels of action (e.g., individual, organizational and community); 5) pursue some combination of community empowerment, ownership, participation, leadership and community capacity building; 6) are intentionally flexible, developmental and responsive to changing local conditions; 7) and recognize the long-term nature of fundamental community change and employ relatively long-term time frames (Brown 1995)[68].

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[65] Torjman S., Leviten-Reid E., 2003. *Comprehensive Community Initiatives.*

[66] Torjman S., Leviten-Reid E., 2003. *Comprehensive Community Initiatives.*

[67] Leviten-Ried, E., 2007. *Investing in Community Capacity Building.*

[68] Leviten-Ried, E., 2007. *Investing in Community Capacity Building.*

Embedded in the idea of comprehensiveness are a number of different challenges being addressed through neighbourhood revitalization and the responses required: 1) completeness challenge – filling the gaps (all important pieces are present for tackling the issue at hand); 2) coordination challenge – improving links (pieces are effectively linked with one another, i.e., not overly fragmented); 3) robustness challenge – strategic investment (capacities are present but less fully developed in their reach or their depth); 4) governance challenge – collaborative government (complex problems are dynamic and involve a wide range of interacting factors that continuously reshape the specific challenges involved and that require a new response capacity, i.e., ongoing institutional capacity to adjust and readjust the actions of various partners in relation to one another over time); and 5) innovation challenge – social innovation (new or different ways of combining pieces together)[69].

Within the literature[70], comprehensive revitalization initiatives are distinguished by a number of key features, notably, they are:

> Comprehensive – address a range of issues rather than a single concern and typically move beyond the provision of services, amenities and supports, and seek to create new or improved assets in a neighbourhood or community to help build its physical and social infrastructure as well as foster a community's capacity to solve its problems by creating or sustaining networks (social capital) that serve as an important base for making local decisions and seek to make changes in the broader social and economic context;

> Holistic – try to identify links among various issues and then engage diverse sectors to tackle the complexities involved in the social, economic and environmental challenges that the community seeks to address;

> Multisectoral – encourage partnering and collaborative work arrangements, and recognize the value of contributions from diverse backgrounds, networks and areas of expertise (typically governed by a coordinating mechanism in the form of leadership roundtable or steering group);

> Long-term – complex issues cannot be resolved in the short term, it takes time to establish relationships among the various sectors and work effectively in a collaborative fashion;

> Developmental – they are not simply remedial interventions, rather these efforts aim to build the capacity of the community in a positive way from the perspective of decision-making and resilience;

> Inclusive –with respect to the members they involve (diverse sectors and stakeholder groups); and

> Concerned with process and outcomes – the real value added of comprehensive community initiatives is to establish effective structures that can enable the community to reduce poverty, change policy and introduce innovation, and where improved process may be a major outcome.

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[69] Leviten-Ried, E., 2009. *Comprehensive Strategies for Deep and Durable Outcomes*.

[70] Torjman S., Leviten-Reid E., 2003. *Comprehensive Community Initiatives*.

In Canada, neighbourhood revitalization initiatives generally reflect (to varying degrees) the principle of comprehensive community initiatives. Gorman (2006) identifies a number of guiding principles for implementing effective revitalization initiatives: 1) place-based solutions are essential - place-based solutions recognize that neighbourhoods are more than a sum of their parts; 2) residents are at the heart of change – priorities and strategies must be resident led and take into account local knowledge and expertise, and to be sustainable; 3) champions at many levels – local leadership is necessary but insufficient for sustainable change; 4) lasting change requires resources from many diverse people working within their sphere of influence; 5) capacity building – enhancing social networks and capacity typically requires additional and long-term support in the form of technical assistance, financing and access to information and data; 6) comprehensive initiative context – bridge builders (individuals and local level organizations) are needed to function as intermediaries among residents, neighbourhoods and the larger systems of support at the local, regional and national levels[71].

Torjman and Leviten-Reid (2003) identify three approaches or strategies that have emerged through efforts to introduce comprehensive revitalization initiatives: 1) mounting an initiative that is comprehensive from the outset; 2) using a strategic driver to focus the activities (opportunity-based); and 3) starting with one type of program and adding others as the initiative and/or the organization matures[72].

2.2   COMMUNITY LED MODELS

While neighbourhood and community are words that are often used interchangeably within the literature, they represent two different, but interrelated, concepts[73].

> "A neighbourhood is the place with which we identify. Communities are defined by our social relationships. Community is strong to the extent that individuals identify with and support one another and work together for the common good. A neighbourhood can provide a good context for building community. A community requires a *common identity* which a distinct neighbourhood with its own…unique characteristics makes possible. The relatively *small scale* of a neighbourhood in a much larger city is conducive to people getting to know one another. Relationship building is further facilitated by a neighbourhood's *gathering places*…And neighbourhoods have a variety of *voluntary associations*, both formal and informal, through which residences work together for the common good. All of this builds community." Diers, 2008.

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[71] Gorman, C., 2006. *Orienteering Over New Ground: A Neighbourhood Theory of Change.* Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

[72] Torjman S., Leviten-Reid E., 2003. *Comprehensive Initiatives.*

[73] Diers J., 2008. *From the Ground Up: Communities Role in Addressing Street Level Social Issues.* Core Challenges Initiative: CanadaWest Foundation.

The research indicates that communities can exercise tremendous power when their voluntary associations are inclusive, active and strategic. Through community, individuals have the capacity to care for one another and the environment, to prevent crime, to prepare for and respond to emergencies, and to demand social justice. Diers (2008) notes that strong, healthy communities are considered to play a leading role in the mitigation, elimination and prevention of street level problems and in the reintegration of the people involved. Community approaches to addressing problems on the street tend focus on: 1) removing (visual) social problems from the street (which tends to displace problems); 2) reintegrating labelled people into the community; 3) mitigating problems on the streets (self-help efforts); and 4) preventing street level social issues (where prevention is seen as the only long-term solution). Conversely, research shows that weak communities (i.e., those with little social capital) face an increased risk of crime and social disorder which, in turn, tends to further weaken communities (Sampson R.J. 1999). Diers concludes that, in order to prevent this downward spiral, citizens need to build a strong sense of community in which neighbours know one another, support one another, and work together for their common good[74].

The concept of community ownership is not limited, necessarily, to geographic communities but rather to communities as defined by geographic, social, cultural and economic connections. In this sense, the idea of community ownership reflects a growing recognition that viable solutions must include the community members most impacted by these problems. To this end, community led initiatives emphasize a commitment to putting residents at the centre of planning, their full participation in decision-making, and reinforcing their ability to make choices regarding their own lives. Therefore, community engagement should create a broad inclusion of citizens in all aspects of processes and activities that seek to improve their lives, to the extent that they develop ownership of the process and make it sustainable (Homan 2004)[75].

By contrast, in the traditional expert driven model, service delivery is often planned by people and in regions that are distant from local communities. Through the emphasis on professional expertise, community residents learn that professionals have all the ideas, resources and power. Even more critical, these top-down models may contribute to devaluing and disempowering the members of a community who require assistance. In community led development, there is a strong commitment to enhancing community capacity and social capital by establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. The talents, assets, skills and experience of everyone in a community are highly valued and are seen as untapped resources. Through the community led model, which focuses on bottom-up solutions, residents own and control the community development process[76].

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[74] Diers J., 2008. *From the Ground Up: Communities Role in Addressing Street Level Social Issues*. Core Challenges Initiative: CanadaWest Foundation

[75] Sieppert J.D., PhD, RSW, 2009. *Community Solutions: Promising Practices and Principles for Addressing Street Level Social Issues*. Core Challenges Initiative: Canada West Foundation.

[76] Sieppert J.D., PhD, RSW, 2009. *Community Solutions: Promising Practices and Principles for Addressing Street Level Social Issues*. Core Challenges Initiative: Canada West Foundation.

Powell and Egghead (2005) identify three models of socioeconomic development: market led, state led and community led[77]. The market model, shaped by neo-liberal ideology is seen as the dominant model within the current framework of globalization. The state led model, which is representative of a social democratic or Marxist ideology, has largely disappeared with the decline of socialism after 1989. For Powell and Egghead, the community led model, representative of a democratic or civic republicanism ideology, offers the only viable alternative to the market led model within the context of globalization. Differences in the three models are reflected in differences in their respective strategies and goals as well as in differences in the location or social sphere in which they operate. Table 1 provides an overview of the key characteristics of each of the three socioeconomic development models.

Table 1: Models of Development

Model	Ideology	Strategy	Goal	Location
Market led	Capitalism/ Neo-liberalism	Modernisation	Globalisation	Economy
State led	Social democracy/ Marxism	State planning	Social equality	Politics/ Government
Community led	Democracy/ Civic republicanism	Citizen participation	Sustainable development	Civil society

Source: Powell F. and Geoghegan M., 2005.

Torjman (2007) indicates that the first important step in any neighbourhood revitalization effort is to set up a local process that enables a community or neighbourhood to make decisions on its own behalf, that is to say, to determine the nature of the issues, preferred strategies, unique strengths and clear challenges. While Torjman[78] refers to this approach as a local governance process, it embodies many of the concepts and benefits generally associated with community led models.

> "Local governance processes make a deliberate and conscious effort to capture the diversity of the community in both demographic profile and sectoral composition. The importance of local governance is also embedded in the notion of sustainable development in that creating an appropriate governance framework and the necessary tools to assist local efforts is central to the goal of achieving sustainable communities. Local governance work is guided by the principle of inclusion. Local residents are seen not simply as targets or subjects of the proposed interventions but rather participate actively in the formulation and application of these actions. Their involvement helps to ensure the relevance of the work. Local governance structures also harness resources, including appropriate financing. They link the comprehensive initiative with relevant organizations, projects and resources in the broader

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[77] Powell F. and Geoghegan M., 2005. *Reclaiming civil society: the future of global social work?*, European Journal of Social Work, Vol. 8, No. 2, 129-144.

[78] Torjman S., 2007. *Organizing for Neighbourhood Revitalization*.

community. They provide opportunities for learning and monitoring results on an ongoing basis." Torjman 2007.

Based on a review of 11 cities in Canada, Europe and the United States, Bradford (2003) highlighted three key observations of community led processes. First, the most basic point of convergence is the effort to "build from within". Local actors were focusing on and experimenting with development models that aimed to grow local assets. The general dynamics of innovation were the same among the processes reviewed, combining bottom-up strategies with top-down support from higher levels of government. Further, the mechanism for planning and implementing community change took a similar form in that public-private partnerships supplied an infrastructure for collaboration, learning and investment. These partnerships were typically anchored institutionally in dedicated agencies or bodies with visibility and legitimacy to coordinate input from the public, private and volunteer sectors. Second, the process of convening multi-stakeholder networks at the local level was seen as generating synergies and momentum (positive spin-offs where success in solving one problem fed into progress on another). Finally, community based innovation was enabled or constrained, and channelled down particular paths in relation to policies and institutions at higher levels of government. Bradford concluded that in Canada, federal and provincial governments, for the most part, have not fully appreciated the interdependence of economic and social investments in building strong communities[79].

In the United States, the revitalization and community (re)development process is characterized by an active and sophisticated network of community-based agencies and organizations. Due to sustained investment in community capacity building initiatives, primarily through funding from foundations and public intermediaries, revitalization strategies in the US have been primarily developed and driven at the local level – either through community-based leadership or elected administrators. Pomoroy (2006) argues that this has contributed to the development of a community sector in the US which is both more organized and entrepreneurial than is the case in Canada. [80]

In Britain, the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal (NSNR), implemented in 2000, recognized the significance of neighbourhood effects and the potential influence of community choices and social capital on revitalization initiatives. Within the NSNR, each neighbourhood is considered to be different in its context, trajectory and capacities. Government policy under the National Strategy aimed to put in place the mechanisms by which communities and cities would be able to answer these questions (i.e., what to do) effectively for themselves. In the NSNR, commitments to promote social inclusion and participation are considered, to ultimately, result in neighbourhood regeneration strategies which link local and mainstream policies and which recognize that lasting social improvements require simultaneous economic actions and stronger roles for communities[81].

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[79] Bradford N., 2003. *Cities and Communities that Work: Innovative Practices, Enabling Policies*.

[80] Pomeroy S., 2006. *Rethinking Neighbourhood Renewal: Review of the US Experience and Possible Lessons for Canada*.

[81] Maclennan D., 2006. *Remaking Neighbourhood Renewal: Towards Creative Neighbourhood Renewal Policies for Britain*.

In the 2010 evaluation of Britain's National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, resident engagement was measured in accordance with the type of activity (mode) and extent (low, medium, high) of engagement, notably: direct delivery of services; engagement in the design of services; representation on borough or neighbourhood partnerships/boards; engagement in consultation exercises (e.g., strategy development); and the provision of information. Key benefits attributed to resident engagement include: 1) a more informed community; 2) more relevant and responsive programmes and services; 3) increased accountability in decision-making; 4) greater buy-in from residents to projects and services; 5) increased level of understanding of local views by service providers and trust between residents and service providers; 6) an increased sense of community belonging; and 7) development of confidence and new skills among residents. However, the study findings indicate that there is also a risk of disillusionment if promised benefits of engagement do not materialize, and of residents failing to prioritize the most significant issues or, alternatively, focusing on single issues. Ongoing management support from skilled public sector individuals was identified as a possible critical factor within successful examples of community engagement[82].

In Canada, the Vibrant Communities initiative (a 4 year national effort to explore promising local solutions to reduce poverty) linked together 14 cities involved in a community led Pan-Canadian Learning Community. Basic guiding principles were developed by the participating cities to ensure respect for the community process, notably: 1) community driven; 2) collaborative partnerships and relationships (create value by bringing new resources, insights and expertise to the table); 3) seek out the assets and resources imbedded in communities; 4) inclusive in terms of the members and issues they involve (diverse sectors and groups); 5) recognize the importance of both outcomes and process; and 6) recognize the need for longer time horizons for tackling complex problems[83].

The Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) initiative, a two year (2005–2007) federally funded pan-Canadian action research project, modeled a resident led, asset-based approach to neighbourhood revitalization. In this model, healthy communities are able to sustain their development over time by building a stockpile of assets (financial, physical, cultural and social) that can be used to generate income, weather hard times and innovate in response to changing circumstances. By developing a critical mass of assets in these different areas, neighbourhoods are able to meet their needs and aspirations on an ongoing basis. In this model, resident participation is considered to be integral to both the process and outcome of neighbourhood revitalization, in that such involvement represents the very basis through which the neighbourhood is able to build the community assets needed to ensure its long-term vitality (Leviten-Reid, 2006)[84].

> "There are three intertwined qualities embedded in this principle. First, all neighbourhoods have individual and collective assets that can be strengthened and enhanced. Second, resident engagement is integral to the process and outcome of

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[82] AMION Consulting, 2010. *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, Final Report.* Communities and Local Government, Office of Public Sector Information, United Kingdom.

[83] Torjman S., 2004. *Community Renewal.* Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

[84] Leviten-Ried, E., 2007. *Investing in Community Capacity Building.*

interventions. Sustainable progress toward neighbourhood vitality requires that issues chosen for intervention be resident-led. Finally, place-based development reflects a growing understanding that local settings present unique factors which interact in a complex way to generate positive effects (innovation, resilience) as well as negative effects (poverty)." Gorman, 2007.

A number of studies cite the NA! initiative as a best practice example of a comprehensive community led neighbourhood revitalization program. Aspects of the NA! initiative mentioned within the literature as embodying the principles and processes of generally accepted best practices include: the establishment of community renewal corporations; the alignment between neighbourhood renewal corporations and NA!; the role of housing within a CED framework; and the horizontal policy framework supporting Neighbourhoods Alive!. Notably:

› Sieppert (2009; 20)[85] highlights the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC) as an example of an organization that has successfully embedded the four pillars for addressing urban social problems (harm reduction, housing first, community justice and community ownership). "NECRC has changed the North End by adopting a comprehensive approach to community development. This includes investing in property development in the area, facilitating loans for local businesses, offering training and counselling to local residents, fostering local leadership and supporting local "social entrepreneurs" who contribute to the North End's economic and social capital."

› Chaland and Magzul (2008; 14)[86] point to the NA! initiative as an example of the benefits of applying a CED approach to urban revitalization through the funding of neighbourhood renewal corporations and the creation of affordable housing: "The construction and renovation of homes by the Neighbourhoods Alive Program has had significant positive economic impacts; it requires material inputs, labour and investments. Therefore, suppliers of construction materials attain economic benefits, local residents obtain employment opportunities and skill development, and bank's and insurance companies gain increased business opportunities."

› Silver (2008; 16)[87] asserts that: "There can be no doubt that the partnership between the neighbourhood renewal corporations and Neighborhoods Alive!, using the community-led model, has produced *many* positive benefits in the neighbourhoods affected."

[85] Sieppert, J.D., *Community Solutions: Promising Practices and Principles for Addressing Street Level Social Issues*, Canada West Foundation, 2009.

[86] Chaland, C. and Magzul, L., *Understanding and Responding to Neighbourhood Decline and Renewal*, 2008 Symposium Background Paper, Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, 2008.

[87] Silver, J., *The Inner Cities of Saskatoon and Winnipeg: A New and Distinctive Form of Development*, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba; Saskatchewan, 2008.

> The Chantier de l'économie sociale (2005; 38-39)[88] underscores the comprehensive nature of the NA! initiative within Manitoba's horizontal policy framework in support of CED. "Neighbourhoods Alive! has a strong foundation in CED, which is reflected in the initiative's approach to neighbourhood renewal. NA! recognizes that: Successful neighbourhood revitalization requires a comprehensive approach that supports building the local economy and promoting health and well-being; In order for neighbourhood revitalization to succeed, the community must have ownership of the revitalization process and the capacity to identify a strategy and implement it; A strong neighbourhood depends on its individual members having the capacity to fully participate in the life and development of the community, and that access is required to training and other personal development opportunities to enable full participation; and Government can assist neighbourhood revitalization most effectively by making appropriate and flexible supports available and by ensuring there is coordination and cooperation among programs, departments and jurisdictions."

Public opinion research indicates that Winnipeg residents do not feel that governments are doing as much as they could to address social issues. The Canada West Foundation's Looking West 2007 survey[89] found that just under half (47 per cent) of Winnipeg residents considered that governments were doing a poor job or very poor job addressing social issues in their city, with only 14 per cent indicating they were doing a good job or very good job. The results for Winnipeg are somewhat higher than the six city average of 45 per cent for respondents that consider governments are doing a poor or very poor job, and somewhat lower than the group average of 20 per cent that think governments are doing a good or very good job addressing social issues in their city.

On a more positive note, the findings of the 2007 survey suggest that Winnipeg residents are more positive in their expectations for future change in the overall quality of life in their city as a whole. Half of Winnipeg respondents (51 per cent) think, that in five years time, quality of life conditions will have improved, while 15 per cent think that quality of life conditions will have deteriorated; compared to 42 per cent and 29 per cent averages for the six western cites as a whole.

2.3   OUTCOMES –TOWARDS HEALTHY NEIGHBOURHOODS

Consultations with 311 frontline workers in six western Canadian cities (including Winnipeg) revealed that "street level" social problems are often seen as symptoms of more complex social issues such as poverty, racism, abuse and economic dislocation. Feedback from the frontliners revealed a number of key similarities in reported street level social problems across the six cities, notably: problems are

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[88] Chantier de l'économie sociale, 2005. Social Economy and Community Economic Development in Canada: Next Steps for Public Policy.

[89] Berdahl, L., Caring Cities? Public Opinion and Urban Social Issues in Western Canadian Cities, Canada West Foundation, December 2007.

intensifying and becoming more complex; problems are concentrated in older inner city neighbourhoods (often on specific streets); street level social problems are highly interconnected; youth are reported to be increasingly affected by street level social problems (prostitution, gang activity, drug activity and homelessness); and street level social problems are reported to affect a wide variety of social groups (youth, seniors, families, Aboriginal peoples)[90].

In a review of neighbourhood revitalization initiatives, Turnham and Bonjorni (2004) found that a common theme among revitalization efforts is that the more distressed the neighbourhood, the larger the investment required, both in terms of the level of resources invested and the time frame for realizing neighbourhood change. In turn, the level of investment was seen as influencing the leadership and organizational structure of the initiative. Specific attributes of the target neighbourhood were also found to affect the choice of revitalization strategies (urban vs. rural; weak market vs. strong market locations), in general, neighbourhoods that already had a mixed-income character were considered to have important advantages over purely low-income communities as targets for revitalization because they are attractive to developers, and to both private and public investors[91].

Based on their review, Turnham and Bonjorni identified a typology of the targeted neighbourhoods: distressed urban areas; weak but still functioning urban neighbourhoods; and neighbourhoods with some assets but in decline. Neighbourhood revitalization initiatives tended to fund three key types of activities: 1) program focus – includes economic and human capital development as well as specific project-based strategies (e.g., housing); 2) capacity building – of community institutions and residents to carry out a range of community development activities; and 3) project-focused – on implementing specific activities/strategies with capacity building as a secondary goal. Two themes that emerged across the reviewed initiatives were the importance of having a "champion" to mobilize resources and implement the vision, and meaningful participation by community residents. Another theme was that institutionalizing partnerships and leadership structures takes many years[92].

Finally, many of the initiatives reviewed by Turnham and Bonjorni experienced difficulties in developing outcome and impact measurements that were both meaningful and supported by local stakeholders. Initiatives that were housing-based tended to focus on housing production figures while capacity building efforts tended to devote significant attention to process outcomes. Also, relatively few initiatives had been able to measure neighbourhood impact. Challenges in measuring neighbourhood impact included: 1) a lack of sources of quantifiable, systematic and timely data with which to proxy neighbourhood improvement; 2) a wide range in the scale and characteristics of neighbourhoods being targeted; and 3) the interaction of multiple and overlapping revitalization initiatives. In addition to

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[90] Wilkie K., Berdahl L., PhD, 2007. *Hard Times: A Portrait of Street Level Problems in Western Canada.* Core Challenges Initiative: Canada West Foundation

[91] Turnham J., Bonjorni J.; Abt Associates Inc., 2004. *Review of Neighborhood Revitalization Initiatives.*

[92] Turnham J., Bonjorni J.; Abt Associates Inc., 2004. *Review of Neighborhood Revitalization Initiatives.*

neighbourhood impact, measures that address the cost effectiveness of a given initiative, such as investment per person impacted, are seldom reported[93].

The 2010 NRSP evaluation notes that, in the literature, neighbourhood deprivation is generally measured by reference to a composite of factors (i.e., an index) relating to the economic, health, education, safety, housing, environmental, and social capital aspects of life for residents of a particular area. Although each deprived area is unique in terms of its geography profile, socio-economic role and relationship to wider housing and labour markets, areas of deprivation tend to be characterized by a number of factors, specifically: a greater incidence of households within the social housing sector, largely at the expense of owner occupied stock; greater ethnic diversity; a younger age profile, with a greater proportion of individuals aged 25 years or less and a smaller aging population; a high proportion of individuals suffering from a limiting long-term illness; substantially higher levels of unemployment among households containing children; more than twice the rate of lone parent households; and restricted access to private motor transport[94].

An evaluation by the Aspen Institute's Roundtable on the Contribution of Community Building Project identified community building as an important precursor to community change in that it builds a platform that can be instrumental in accomplishing other things. Notably, community building was seen as contributing to: changes in the individuals who reside in the neighbourhood; changes in the internal programs and institutions that serve the community; and changes in outside actors and systems that interact with the community, provide services or programs, or affect the physical conditions or environment within the community (Auspos, 2005)[95].

In England, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, an internationally recognized organization with member organizations in 146 countries, list the following indicators for measuring neighbourhood decline: an unemployment rate twice the national average and below average wages; a vacancy rate of over 4.5 per cent of properties; low property prices; an abundance of litter and graffiti; declining local shops; voter turnouts of less than 15 per cent; above 200 recorded crimes per 1,000 individuals; housing unfitness level of above eight per cent; levels of long-term illness 10 per cent higher than the national average and/or good health 10 per cent lower than the national average; poor educational results; poor quality, older housing; and a sharp increase in housing being rented out[96].

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[93] Turnham J., Bonjorni J.; Abt Associates Inc., 2004. *Review of Neighborhood Revitalization Initiatives.*

[94] AMION Consulting, 2010. *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, Final Report.* Communities and Local Government, Office of Public Sector Information, United Kingdom.

[95] Gorman C., 2006. *Orienteering Over New Ground: A Neighbourhood Theory of Change*, Action for Neighbourhood Change, Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

[96] Chaland N, and Magzul L., 2008. *Understanding and Responding to Neighbourhood Decline and Renewal*, 2008 Symposium Background Paper, Canadian Community Economic Development Network, Canadian Housing and Renewal Association.

2.4   NA! POLICY FRAMEWORK

a)   Canada

In their review of social economy and community economic development initiatives in Canada, Le chantier de l'économie sociale (2005)[97] found that community economic development policies and programs that explicitly address integrated approaches to social and economic development have been created in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nunavut, Québec, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. These jurisdictions also provide long-term funding to regional and neighbourhood development organizations (Manitoba, Saskatchewan) or to regional development agencies with a devolved mandate to coordinate and support community economic development (Newfoundland, Nova Scotia).

In both Manitoba and Nova Scotia, capacity building funds for community economic development are supplemented by capital financing incentives (tax credits) and loan loss guarantees to support private and institutional investment in community enterprises. There is a great deal of diversity (across provinces) in the government definition of community economic development. Also, cross-government support for integrated approaches to community social and economic development is very uneven. Le chantier de l'économie sociale concluded that comprehensive policy frameworks in Nunavut, Manitoba and Nova Scotia, in some instances articulated in legislation, appear to have resulted in the most significant cross-departmental support initiatives for community economic development, as defined in Canadian Community Economic Development Network's policy framework.

In Canada, community economic development initiatives are generally supported through public policy frameworks and programs. While there are some examples of where legislative instruments have been used to either facilitate or encourage community-based investment, these tend to focus on financial and fiscal instruments such as tax credits and investment funds. However, Le chantier de l'économie sociale identified a few examples of legislative instruments that extend beyond the traditional scope to focus on more holistic or community driven supports, notably:

> In 1997, the Government of Québec enacted legislation to create Local Development Centres (CLDs) within every territory across the province. CLDs are managed by a Board of directors comprised of elected municipal officials and individuals from the business and social economy sectors. Their mission includes: front line services for businesses; business financing; development of a local action plan for the economy and employment (in coordination with the regional or metropolitan plan); implementation of the local plan in partnership with other local organizations and government entities; formulation of a strategy for the development of entrepreneurship that encompasses social economy entrepreneurship; and act as an advisory body to local government centres within their respective territories. The Fonds local d'investissement (FLI) is the main financial tool of CLDs and provides funding to start-up

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[97] Chantier de l'économie sociale, 2005. Social Economy and Community Economic Development in Canada: Next Steps for Public Policy.

and/or expand businesses, including social economy enterprises. More recently in Québec, changes were brought to the corporate legislative framework through the creation of a new cooperative model, the solidarity cooperative, which brings together not only the workers and users of the enterprise but also the members of the community who are affected by the services offered.

> In Nova Scotia, Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) are enabled by the Regional Community Development Act: An Act to Encourage and Facilitate Community-based Planning for Economic, Social and Institutional Change. The 13 provincial RDAs work with communities across the province to plan and develop economically sustainable initiatives that are consistent with each community's values and assets. In the mid 2000s, the provincial government went on to approve a Community Development (CD) Policy for Nova Scotia which seeks to: 1) clarify government and community roles in community development; 2) increase collaboration among departments, between communities and departments, among levels of government, and among communities; 3) increase government and community capacity to understand and advance community development; and 4) develop an accountability framework to report on progress, ensure transparency and enable evidence-based decision-making in community development.

> In Saskatchewan, Cabinet approved Policy Framework Papers devolve authority to local bodies for regional or community economic development. These policies relate to regional economic development, northern economic development, rural action plans, Métis and off-reserve First Nations peoples, youth and neighbourhood development organizations.

> In Manitoba, *The Community Development Bonds Act* was enacted to enable communities to plan and manage bond offerings to raise capital to finance eligible business opportunities and expansions. Activities are managed through local Development Bond Corporations which market the bond issues, make project investments in new or expanding local businesses and keep investors informed of ongoing activities.

In the United States, Le chantier de l'économie sociale notes that governments have supported community economic development initiatives primarily through financial and fiscal instruments, which are sometimes enacted through legislation. These include:

> Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) are private-sector, financial intermediaries that focus on community development initiatives. Although there is a variety of structures and development lending goals, there are six basic types of CDFIs: community development banks; community development loan funds; community development credit unions; microenterprise funds; community development corporation-based lenders and investors; and community development venture funds. All CDFIs are market-driven, locally controlled, non-governmental organizations. However, one crucial source of support for CDFIs is the federal CDFI Fund, created in 1994 and administered by the Department of the Treasury. The CDFI Fund makes capital grants, equity investments and awards to finance technical assistance and capacity building.

› The *Community Reinvestment Act*, revised in 1995, is intended to encourage depository institutions to help meet the credit needs of the communities in which they operate by requiring that each insured depository institution's record in helping meet the credit needs of its entire community (including low- and moderate-income neighbourhoods) be evaluated periodically. That record is taken into account in considering an institution's application for deposit facilities, including mergers and acquisistions.

› The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) program is designed to generate $15 billion of private sector equity investments in low-income communities by financing neighbourhood retail centres, small businesses, charter schools, childcare centres and other community facilities in distressed areas nationwide. Congress enacted the NMTC as part of the *Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000*. Approved Community Development Entities (CDEs) apply to the Fund annually for New Markets Credits. These entities sell the credits for cash to individual investors and use the proceeds to support their community redevelopment projects. Taxpayers may claim credits over 7 years starting on the date when the equity investment is made in the CDE and on each anniversary.

Le chantier de l'économie sociale noted a number of emerging trends. In some Canadian jurisdictions, there are municipal initiatives to strengthen and support community economic development, inclusive of social enterprise development, without formal partnerships with senior levels of government (e.g., Edmonton's Innovative Services Section of the Community Services Department). Also, in some Canadian cities, preferential procurement policies are being examined and some first steps have been made, focused primarily on environmental or equitable products. Municipal governments are showing increasing awareness of the social economy's potential to support communities.

b)   Manitoba

In May 2009, Manitoba's Minister of Finance and Minister of Family Services and Housing announced *All Aboard* a multi-faceted and long-term initiative for poverty reduction. *All Aboard* represents an annual investment of $744 million, of which, $212 million is new funding. To tackle the numerous factors that create and sustain poverty, the provincial investment will be directed towards four core clusters of intervention: safe affordable housing; education, jobs and income support; strong and healthy families; and coordinated programs and services. Key program aspects for each of the four targeted areas are:

› Safe affordable housing – the new *Homeworks!* strategy commits $327 million over 2 years ($227M province; $100M federal) towards sustaining and improving existing social and affordable housing, increasing the supply of quality affordable housing, and supporting community and economic development. The *Homeworks!* Homelessness Action Plan and Mental Health Housing Initiative follow the "housing first" philosophy and the purpose is to connect homeless people and individuals with mental health challenges with stable, secure housing and support services. Funding will also be used to enhance the Manitoba Shelter Benefit (increased eligibility, higher benefits) as well as to expand the *Neighbourhoods Alive!*

initiative and other community economic development efforts that involve safety, build neighbourhood capacity, enhance physical conditions and support the local economy.

> Education, jobs and income support – the *Bright Futures* initiative, a $1 million fund, will enable community-based groups to work with schools to provide support such as tutoring, greater family involvement in schools, mentoring, goal-setting, career exploration and bursaries. The overall objective of the Initiative is to help disadvantaged and low-income students complete high school and pursue post-secondary education. Other funded initiatives include: 1) an increase in minimum wage; 2) modifications to the *Rewarding Work* initiative through a reconfiguration of the income security system in Manitoba to provide additional assistance to low-income and workless families, including the introduction of the Manitoba Child Benefit; 3) the *marketAbilities* initiative which helps individuals with disabilities find and keep jobs; 4) the launch of the *Rebound* initiative a $11.2 million, two-year retraining strategy to assist more than 1,000 low-income workers hurt by the current recession (including those not eligible for federal or provincial assistance programs); enhancements to the *Full Citizenship: A Manitoba Strategy on Disability* through a $30 million investment for more accessible housing (including a $5.4 million investment in the construction of new housing), an $11 million infrastructure plan to "bust barriers" through upgrades to public buildings, schools, campgrounds and community facilities to increase accessibility as well as a commitment to review the province's social assistance disability trust to realign with federal tax credits and savings plans; and the release of *Opening Doors: Manitoba's Commitment to Persons with Disabilities*, a community consultation process to guide the implementation of the new disability strategy.

> Strong and Healthy Families – through the creation of new family resource centres in community schools and a commitment to more affordable, quality child care (reduced fees/increased eligibility); increased funding to the *Family Violence Prevention Program*; and the launch of the *Healthy Foods Action Fund* to enable communities to develop solutions to food security issues.

> Coordinated Programs and Services – involves easing access to government programs through a more streamlined eligibility and delivery systems. Specific actions include: implementing *ServiceLink* a new navigation strategy for accessing services; *MYTEAM* a youth transition employment program to help young people who are ready to leave the child welfare system; and the launch of *Career Development Gateway* that will provide single-entry access to career development assistance[98].

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[98] Torjman S., Battle K. and Mendelson M., 2009. *All Aboard Manitoba's Poverty Train.* Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

c)   Winnipeg

The Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council (WPRC) was launched in 2007 by a group of 22 experienced leaders from business, social services, labour, recreation, education and health. By 2008, the WPRC had established an operating structure and formulated an action plan. The Council members have agreed to work across sectors using a "cross-pollination" approach in order to generate innovative approaches to poverty reduction. WPRC defines poverty as "(T)he condition of not having sufficient resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, economic, political and social rights.", which takes into account personal, social, economic, cultural and political factors. WPRC has identified a number of key drivers which contribute to poverty in Winnipeg: lack of high school completion; few opportunities for recreational and cultural activities; insufficient economic tools for the school to work transition; lack of help for low-income families to build assets; insufficient supports and quality of life benefits for individuals dealing with mental health problems; and lack of employment and economic supports for people with disabilities[99].

WPRC strategies are developed according to need, based on issues the community has identified as top priorities. Four Working Groups have been established to focus on selected areas of interest (asset building, post-secondary education, early years initiatives, and recreation and culture). The WPRC's long-term plan (2008) identifies eight areas of activity: 1) asset building and wealth creation initiatives – facilitate home ownership, support savings for adult learning and child's education, and encourage personal savings for retirement income; 2) early education – provide support for elementary and middle schools in low-income, high-risk neighbourhoods; 3) post-secondary education – improve post-secondary educational opportunities for low-income youth; 4) social infrastructure – improve and enrich recreational and cultural opportunities for children and youth living in low-income, high-risk neighbourhoods; 5) early years initiative – ensure that the youngest children get the best possible start in life; 6) affordable housing – support new housing initiatives and the maintenance of existing housing; 7) disability income and quality of life benefit – provide a minimum standard of living and improved quality of life for people with mental and physical disabilities; and 8) public education and engagement – reduce stigma and discrimination associated with living in poverty and engage all citizens in WPRC's efforts[100].

The Council receives financial support from the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba, Vibrant Communities and United Way of Winnipeg and anticipates receiving support from the City of Winnipeg. Local business partners have indicated that they will provide in-kind and project-specific funding as plans move into action. Signs of progress established by the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council focus on five outcome areas: impact on individuals and households (variations in numbers

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[99] Vibrant Communities, 2009. *Winnipeg: Becoming a City Where Everyone Belongs.* Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

[100] Vibrant Communities, 2009. *Winnipeg: Becoming a City Where Everyone Belongs.* Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

accessing resources and opportunities); collective action; engagement; policy and structural change; and attitudinal change[101].

2.5   BEST PRACTICES IN NEIGHBOURHOOD REVITALIZATION PROGRAMS

a)   United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, neighbourhood regeneration initiatives are developed by the central government with local partnerships forming a key aspect of how the policy becomes delivered at the local level. Efforts implemented in the UK in the early 2000s recognized that previous (area-based) regeneration programs had failed due to problems being addressed in "silos". It was recognized that "joining up" (bringing local government in as a full partner and fostering interdepartmental working) could increase the effectiveness of regeneration programs through added value and wider impacts. For the government, area-based initiatives provided a rationale for a partnership based, coordinated response. A further rationale was to stimulate innovation in service delivery (make a sustainable difference by "bending the mainstream")[102].

In 2001, the UK central government launched a comprehensive strategy "A New Commitment to Renewal" and high levels of funding were put in place with the aim that within the next 10-20 years no one in Britain would be disadvantaged by where they live. Key funding streams included: the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (5 year, £1.875 billion, 88 most deprived wards) and the New Deal for Communities (10 year, £2 billion, 39 neighbourhoods of less than 4,000 households).

All levels of government were involved in the delivery of the strategy through central government departments, Regional Development Agencies, Government Offices for the Regions, and Local Authorities. At the local level, Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) were established and act as the central vehicle for the delivery of renewal at the local level. The development of LSPs represented a break with past regeneration initiatives and signalled a step-change in the approach to neighbourhood renewal. It was expected that the formation of LSPs would lead to a rationalization of other local partnerships and simplification of the funding streams.

Case study research (ODPM, 2004) identified several structures common to most LSPs: 1) a forum (generally with an open membership); 2) a Board; 3) an Executive; 4) theme groups (e.g., health, safety, learning, inclusion, sustainability, youth); 5) task groups (e.g., program delivery, communications); and 6) community forums (community development workers/officers, local community organizations and resident groups). Although LSPs do not deliver services directly, they provide coordination and oversight to local services, plans, partnerships and initiatives. However, they do have a permanent structure. The

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[101] Vibrant Communities, 2009. *Winnipeg: Becoming a City Where Everyone Belongs*. Caledon Insitute of Social Policy.

[102] Dobilas, G. and Battye, F., 2005. *Multi-Partner Funding for Neighbourhood Revitalization in Toronto, Final Report*.

development and delivery of a Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (LNRS) forms the core of the work of LSPs[103].

Urban Regeneration Companies (URCs) represent another example of integrated regeneration through different levels of government cooperating. In the late 1990s, an Urban Task Force report (ODPM, 1999) concluded that the "pace of regeneration could be increased if responsibility for delivering area programmes was placed in the hands of "arms length" organizations, owned by local partnerships. URCs could not only oversee work to completion, but also raise private finance and undertake direct development where necessary". In 1999, three pilot URCs were launched in the UK and as of 2005 there were 16 URCs nationally.

Specific success factors and benefits attributed to URCs include: enhancing capacity of local/regional partners to deliver generally and in support of specific government policies; linking Board decisions to local authority processes (enhancing capacity); improved communication/transparency; close partnership (right team/Board, clarity, roles and responsibility); a master plan provides an integrated framework for driving projects forward; and the ability to proactively plan and manage periods of transition[104].

b)   United States

Community development in the United States is complicated due to its highly decentralized governmental organization, heavy reliance on private sector investment, considerable diversity of neighbourhood circumstances, and the many sources of subsidized support for various elements that go into neighbourhood quality[105]. The Federal government has traditionally funded county and municipal governments to carry out community development activities and has left decisions on strategies and tactics to them. State governments have not traditionally been involved as either funders or regulators.

In their review of US community development initiatives, Dobilas and Battye (2005) synthesized the diverse set of approaches to neighbourhood change into four basic models[106]:

> Redevelopment model – characterized by wholesale land assembly, demolition, and new construction or substantial rehabilitation of large numbers of housing units, commercial properties and community facilities;

> Market-regeneration model – in which multiple public, non-profit and (sometimes) private actors invest in discrete and loosely connected projects and initiatives is intended to influence investor perceptions of neighbourhood market prospects (and investment opportunities).

[103] Dobilas, G. and Battye, F., 2005. *Multi-Partner Funding for Neighbourhood Revitalization in Toronto, Final Report*.

[104] Dobilas, G. and Battye, F., 2005. *Multi-Partner Funding for Neighbourhood Revitalization in Toronto, Final Report*.

[105] Dobilas, G. and Battye, F., 2005. *Multi-Partner Funding for Neighbourhood Revitalization in Toronto, Final Report*.

[106] Dobilas, G. and Battye, F., 2005. *Multi-Partner Funding for Neighbourhood Revitalization in Toronto, Final Report*.

These efforts have increasingly relied on the community leadership and investment strategies of non-profit community development corporations;

›   Community-building model – community organizing supported by philanthropic and sometimes public sector entities aims to develop community leadership, promote social solidarity, encourage self-help in the form of educational, homeownership, financial asset-building, cultural expression and other initiatives; and

›   Stock preservation model – in which local governments aim to forestall neighbourhood-wide housing deterioration by aggressive enforcement of building codes and provision of subsidies for the repair and moderate rehabilitation of owner-occupied housing. These four core strategies have been pursued in a variety of combinations.

Beginning in the early 2000s, local governments and their non-profit sector partners began to pair up community development programs with neighbourhoods in a more deliberate, strategic fashion spurred by increasing scarcity of funding, new Federal and public demands for better program performance and availability of high quality information on specific neighbourhoods. What has emerged is a general feeling in policy circles that: 1) renewal strategies designed without local knowledge and intergovernmental cooperation are largely unsuccessful; 2) evaluation frameworks need to be incorporated into programs at the outset; and 3) the emphasis on enumerating challenges neighbourhoods face often meant overlooking other community assets that could be used to leverage success.

According to Jargowsky (2003)[107], achievements of US neighbourhood strategies have been significant, amounting to important reductions in geographically concentrated poverty (especially among African Americans) and increasing home ownership and minority owned businesses in inner city areas. Citizen participation in neighbourhood planning has increased and preliminary evidence of economic progress in the form of job growth and labour force development.

In a review of major US funding programs Pomeroy (2006) notes that the programs reviewed explicitly permit funding of organizational community development. Increasingly, the scope of regeneration extends well beyond just bricks and mortar redevelopment to include a range of community development, social service and economic development activities. These relationships tend to evolve based on need and dynamics of local situations. In many cases, public program funds are augmented with other sources of public funding or with time-limited funding from foundations. Also, because so many neighbourhood revitalization initiatives in the US are driven by community development, they are frequently integrated with local economic development strategies (including job training and placement for local residents) combined with initiatives to draw new business and employment, and tax credits that help attract financing and private equity investment.

The US experience suggests that there are two critical elements for effective revitalization: strong community leadership and capacity; and sufficient resourcing (funding) to achieve measurable goals.

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[107] Dobilas, G. and Battye, F., 2005. *Multi-Partner Funding for Neighbourhood Revitalization in Toronto, Final Report*.

Strong leadership and sustained capacity within resident and community organizations is seen as a prerequisite to planning and implementation. Dedicated funding can be effective in kick-starting local revitalization, but there must be a critical mass of funding support and a long-term commitment to ensure that the slow process of change can gradually evolve with continuous support[108].

Within the literature, the United States is acknowledged as a leader and early adopter of comprehensive community led programs. In their review of US neighbourhood revitalization initiatives Turnham and Borjorni (2004) provide a comparative overview of the approach, key attributes and preliminary outcomes of a diverse selection of programs, many of which were implemented during the 1990s. Table 2 summaries the findings of three programs reviewed, specifically: the Minneapolis Neighbourhood Revitalization Program (Minneapolis City Council); the Rebuilding Communities Initiatives (Annie E. Casey Foundation); and the Neighbourhood and Family Initiative (Ford Foundation).

Table 2: Examples of US Neighbourhood Revitalization Initiatives

Minneapolis Neighbourhood Revitalization Program (NRP)
(Sponsor Organization: Minneapolis City Council)

› **Target:** City-wide revitalization with a focus on housing

› **Approach:** NRP was established by the Minnesota State Legislature and the Minneapolis City Council in 1990. Average funding for Phase II (2003-2009) of $8.3 million per year. Housing programs must make up 52.5% of NRP's expenditures. Neighbourhoods must develop Action Plans that address a variety of issues, including: housing, transportation, job creation and community spaces. Neighbourhoods applying for NRP funding must follow a six-step competitive process with review and approval by overseeing NRP agency.

› **Activities/Support:** additional financing sources (Housing Trust Fund, Single-family mortgage revenue bond program), existing laws (Tax increments Finance Districts, Locational policies and design guidelines, Inclusionary Zoning), and an online database of previously approved neighbourhood plans an projects.

› **Classification:** NRP neighbourhoods are classified into three categories: 1) protection neighbourhoods; 2) revitalization neighbourhoods; and 3) redirection neighbourhoods.

› **Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:**

  ¤ Survey of 1,100 residents: 66% of adults surveyed had heard of program and 90% support program

  ¤ Housing outputs: 1) 46% of NRP allocations were for housing and housing related activities (below 52.5% mandate); 4,775 home improvement grants and loans (mainly to homeowners); and 675 rental units built or renovated

  ¤ Neighbourhoods with most need (redirection neighbourhoods) received most funding as did larger neighbourhoods. The poorest neighbourhoods received 2.5 times the funding as the highest, and revitalization neighbourhoods received 1.5 times the funding of protection neighbourhoods.

› **Process Findings:**

  ¤ Foundations and CDCs have their own agenda's, which are not necessarily in line with the community's agenda

  ¤ Make data available to sites from the beginning

  ¤ The resident-led model of NRP makes neighbourhoods accountable for their successes in revitalization

  ¤ A politically independent governance structure is the key to success

  ¤ There must be a training program for resident volunteers

  ¤ Residents need a guiding force to help them continue the process

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[108] Pomeroy S., 2006. *Rethinking Neighbourhood Renewal: Review of the US Experience and Possible Lessons for Canada.*

Rebuilding Communities Initiative (RCI)

(Sponsor Organization: Annie E. Casey Foundation)

› **Target:** Strengthening families and communities in distressed neighbourhoods throughout the United States.

› **Approach:** RCI was launched in 1993 as an effort to build the capacity of distressed neighbourhoods to change their communities into safe and supportive places. RCI funded lead organizations in five cities nationwide. RCI goals include: improving housing and infrastructure, increasing capital investments, developing collaboratives of local agencies who could eventually take over the project, using existing capital to maximize impact and increasing residents' power.

› **Activities/Support:** RCI was divided into three phases: planning capacity building and implementation.

› **Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:**

  ¤ Lead agencies improved their staff, management systems and resources

  ¤ All partners improved their ability to use data and evaluation techniques

  ¤ Lead agencies increased their collaboration with other agencies

› **Process Findings:**

  ¤ CCIs suffer from high expectations and meagre resources

  ¤ Collaborations can be difficult when local agencies with long histories are forced to interact (risk of resentment from smaller partners and residents due to perceived conflicts with larger agency agenda, while successful community-based organizations (CBOs) may not feel comfortable functioning as an equal participant)

  ¤ Resident-led governance boards were politically contentious

  ¤ It took a long time for the local sites to trust the technical assistants (TA) providers (ultimately, it was decided that TA providers would work for the CBOs and not the Casey Foundation

Neighbourhood and Family Initiative (NFI)

(Sponsor Organization: Ford Foundation)

› **Target:** Comprehensive community development in four urban neighbourhoods (Detroit, Memphis, Milwaukee and Hartford).

› **Approach:** Launched in 1990, NFI was one of the earliest comprehensive community initiatives. The goal of the 10-year initiative was to improve the physical, social and economic circumstances of the targeted neighbourhoods by building on community strengths (resident leadership) and creating and exploiting synergies among different types of community development (housing, economic, human capital). Two principles underlying the NFI are: comprehensive change; and organizational collaboration and citizen participation. Ford provided approximately $3 million for operations and program support to each site plus dedicated support for TA and evaluations. Grant periods varied from 9 months to 3 years.

› **Activities/Support:** Programs included: 1) increased access to existing services and some new supportive services; 2) connections to jobs in the city and economic development activities; 3) physical revitalization (housing repair, beautification, renovation to commercial facilities); and leveraging of resources for neighbourhood improvement

› **Outcomes and Evaluation Findings:**

  ¤ The comprehensive vision proved very difficult to implement

  ¤ The initial funding was not sufficient to effect comprehensive change

  ¤ The collaborative structure did not survive beyond the demonstration

  ¤ The leadership structure was not successful across all sites because of the ambiguity of Ford's role and because of insider/outsider tensions between the community foundations and the collaboratives

  ¤ Neighbourhood change resulting from NFI was at a very small scale

  ¤ Sites were reluctant to conduct local evaluations

  ¤ There needs to be good, grounded knowledge of the neighbourhood from the outset

  ¤ Be aware of the complexities in working with different stakeholders

Source: Turnham, J. and Bonjorni, J. Neighbourhood Reinvestment Corporation (2004)[109]

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[109] Turnham J., Bonjorni J.; Abt Associates Inc., 2004. *Review of Neighborhood Revitalization Initiatives.*

2.6 BEST PRACTICES IN COMMUNITY LED PROJECTS

The literature provides a myriad of examples of best practices in community led neighbourhood revitalization projects. In his review of a community's role in addressing urban social issues, Diers (2008) highlights examples of best practices in neighbourhood and community led approaches to addressing social problems through: removing social problems; integrating labelled individuals into the community; mitigating social problems; and prevention. Diers also identifies examples of best practices for stimulating broad and inclusive community engagement and building effective government-community partnerships[110]. Table 3 provides a synopsis of best practice examples that reflect these three aspects. In summarizing the community's role in addressing street level social issues, Diers cites an extract from the Waterloo, Ontario's Regional Police Services and their Community Safety and Crime Prevention Council:

> "By far the largest number of activities that maintain or restore neighbourhood vitality are led by neighbourhood residents. Citizens' efforts create strong and sustainable neighbourhoods while service efforts tend to be short lived and problem focused…There is greater success when partnerships are present and citizens become engaged with creating solutions for their neighbourhood. Committing ourselves to a holistic approach, progressively moving from community-based toward community-driven action."
>
> *Working Together to Prevent Crime: The Integrated Model from Crime Prevention*, 2005 (cited in Diers, 2008)

Table 3: Examples of Best Practices in Neighbourhood and Community Led Responses

Community Approaches to Addressing Problems on the Street – Removing Social Problems

› When an epidemic of drugs, gangs and violence threatened Southeast Seattle neighbourhoods in 1988, residents established a Southeast Seattle Crime Prevention Council and started staffing a hot line. Nine weeks later, a list of 46 crack houses had been identified by citizens. The crime council took their list to the Chief of Police and demanded that he focus his resources on shutting down the crack houses. Crime Council leaders indicated that they would return regularly for progress reports. Although Police officials at first resisted, when the Crime Council persisted, they finally agreed to pilot a community policing program in Southeast Seattle. For their part, Crime Council members volunteered thousands of hours for neighbourhood cleanups, graffiti paintouts and the monitoring of crack houses. In 1989, the US Department of Justice conducted an evaluation of the program and found that it had resulted in a dramatic drop in burglaries and other crimes. The police department expanded community policing to the rest of Seattle and the Seattle Neighbourhood Group now supports crime prevention councils throughout the city.

› Once a thriving commercial strip, Lake Street in Minneapolis had fallen on hard times. Between 1970 and 2000 most of the stores were either boarded up or were home to sex shops, liquor stores and taverns. Street crime was bad and getting worse. In an effort to turn things around, a local nonprofit community development corporation purchased and renovated an abandoned building strategically located at the corner of a major intersection. They spent a year unsuccessfully trying to persuade chain stores to move into the building in this predominately Latino neighbourhood. Finally, the nonprofit organization learned of an emerging business cooperative. A Latino church in the neighbourhood had used a talent inventory to identify parishioners who had operated businesses in Central America and others who were eager to create a business utilizing their craft or cooking skills. They had organized a cooperative of those willing to invest $1,000 and enrol in a 16 class entrepreneurial training program. In

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[110] Diers J., 2008. *From the Ground Up: Communities Role in Addressing Street Level Social Issues.* Core Challenges Initiative: CanadaWest Foundation.

> 1999, the cooperative began to operate the building as a traditional marketplace. The Mercado Central now has more than 40 incubator businesses including complementary stores, restaurants and other commercial services, all geared towards the Latino community. The large common spaces are used for concerts, dances, poetry readings, Catholic masses and cultural events. The concept has been so successful, that the Somali community established a similar marketplace in a former bakery and the historic Collins Building now boasts a Global Market. In addition to these neighbourhood markets, Latino immigrants have established over 400 businesses on Lake Street.

> Alberta Avenue is one of Edmonton's most historic neighbourhoods, but it had also become one of the most blighted. In 2004, the City Council supported a community-driven planning process that recommended building on local assets to revitalize the business district. Activists mobilized the neighbourhood's many artists to stage a highly successful Arts Alive Festival in December of 2005 and again in 2007. Meanwhile, they founded Carrot, a volunteer-run coffee house featuring live family entertainment on weekend nights and an arts market every Saturday. A new snowboard shop helped sponsor the Deep Freeze Winter Festival in 2008, complete with a sledding hill, ice sculpting, and snow shoeing. Some of the neighbourhood's many immigrants are establishing ethnic restaurants. Today, the street level social activity on 118th Avenue is largely positive and attracts residents from all over Edmonton.

Community Approaches to Addressing Problems on the Street – Integrating Labelled People into the Community

> In Cincinnati, members of New Prospect Baptist Church have been serving homeless men through a soup kitchen in the church basement. Instead of just feeding these clients, the members decided to eat with them and to get acquainted. The congregants soon learned that most of the homeless men liked to cook, and the men were pleased to be invited to do so. Not only did the meals improve, but it became increasingly difficult to distinguish the providers from the clients.

> West Garfield Park is one of Chicago's toughest neighbourhoods. Bethel New Life, the local community development corporation, led a Take Back the Streets Campaign in which residents organized street fairs and basketball tournaments, sold snow cones and hot dogs and held prayer vigils on targeted street corners in order to compete for turf with the drug dealers. Simultaneously, they offered the dealers alternative jobs and training programs. Bethel New Life fills 500 full-time positions a year in addition to providing more than 1,000 affordable housing units, a holistic health centre, a performing are centre and much more.

> In an effort to highlight the growing problem of homelessness in Portland and respond to the desperate need for shelter, eight homeless activists, after a series of confrontations with the city, eventually signed a lease to use a portion of a city composting site for the creation of Dignity Village. Dignity Village now includes 53 dwelling units ranging from makeshift tents to straw bale houses. It also has kitchen and toilet facilities, gardens and a computer centre. Dignity Village is self-governed and managed. Residents elect a 13 member council and attend monthly meetings. Residents must perform 10 hours of work for the community each week and they hold one another accountable for a code of conduct. In return, they get a place to live as well as assistance in connecting with employment, training, permanent housing and other steps towards self-sufficiency.

Community Approaches to Addressing Problems on the Street – Prevention

> In the Clinton neighbourhood of Garland, Texas, neighbours work together on weekends to renovate their houses. Collectively they have all the necessary skills - a carpenter, plumber, electrician, stone mason, etc. Elderly or disabled neighbours who aren't able to help with construction contribute in other ways, such as preparing lunches for the work parties.

> In Lawrence, Massachusetts, the local community development corporation trains facilitators for NeighborCircles, a program through which 8 to 10 families meet 3 times over the course of a month for dinner in a neighbour's house. They get to know one another and discuss whether there are issues or activities that they would like to cooperate on. If so, they continue to get together on a regular basis. In the way, Lawrence CommunityWorks has built a membership of nearly 4,000 residents. The organization has developed affordable rental and home ownership opportunities; created parks, playgrounds and community gardens; provides economic development training; and supports Movement City, a program that involves 200 young people every week in exploring their potential through design, technology and the performing arts.

> Every Block a Village has been recruiting and training Citizen Leaders in Chicago's Austin neighbourhood since 1995. Today, more than 100 blocks are actively involved in the network. Neighbours share their skills and knowledge in person, and via the internet, with an emphasis on supporting local youth. Citizen Leaders from each block meet together monthly to tackle economic, social and health issues confronting the neighbourhood as a whole.

Stimulating Broad and Inclusive Community Engagement

> In Airdrie, Alberta, the city furnishes free block party kits in order to encourage neighbours to use their street as a place to get better acquainted by sharing food, games, music and other fun activities.

> In Redmond, Washington, the city produced short videos on policy issues as a basis for discussion at the block level and grassroots input to elected officials.

Community Approaches to Addressing Problems on the Street – Removing Social Problems

› The Dickens community of Vancouver knows how to combine business with pleasure. They have drastically reduced street crime by taking pleasant walks around their neighbourhood as the Dickens Street Patrol. More recently, they started a jogging group with the slogan "Run like the Dickens." They sponsor a multi-cultural festival and music in the park. Their Guerilla Gardening teams have created community gardens and landscaped other formerly neglected public spaces.

› Concerned that cars had more space than the community did in San Francisco, a local organization hung a PARKing sign encouraging people to feed the meter on a street parking space. Then, they unrolled sod on top of the asphalt and installed a bench and a potted tree, and proceeded to have a picnic in the street. Now, PARKing day is an annual event when gray streets give way to green parks all over the city.

Effective Government-Community Partnerships – Neighbourhood/Community Focused

› Many cities have established interdepartmental teams with a neighbourhood focus. The City of Toronto, for example, has organized 13 Neighbourhood Action Teams to support integrated City service planning and delivery from a neighbourhood perspective. These teams include City representatives from community Housing, Children's services, Culture, Facilities and Real Estate, Economic Development, Parks Forestry & Recreation, Property Standards, Shelter Support and Housing, Social Development, Social Services, Police Services, Public Health, Public Library and the Toronto School Board. External stakeholder participation is as varied as East Scarborough Boy and Girls Club, Native Child and Family Services, Seneca College, Toronto School District Board and West Hill Social Services.

› Seattle and many other cities have established little city halls in neighbourhood business districts, shopping centres, libraries or other decentralized locations. Not only do these facilities enable citizens to access a wide range of city information and service in one convenient location, but the coordinator for each little city hall also serves as an overt double agent, helping both government and the community to accomplish their goals by working together.

Effective Government-Community Partnerships – Neighbourhood/Community Focused – Asset-based

› In 1989, Seattle developed the Neighbourhood Matching Fund as a powerful incentive for communities to mobilize their assets. The City provides cash for community-initiated projects when matched by an equal community contribution of cash, volunteer labour and/or donated goods and services. Over the past 20 years, the City's $50 million investment has leveraged $70 million worth of community resources, more than 4,000 projects have been completed and tens of thousands of citizens have worked together to make these projects possible. The program has since been replicated by cities throughout the world including Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton.

Effective Government-Community Partnerships – Neighbourhood/Community Focused – Community Driven

› In the late 1990's, Seattle gave communities the power to create their own neighbourhood plans. The community could define the scope of the work and use city funds to hire a planner who was accountable to them. In return, the city insisted that all stakeholders be involved in the effort, that outreach be targeted at labelled groups and that the community be given the opportunity to vote on the final plan. The 38 neighbourhood planning efforts involved 30,000 people and resulted in over 5,000 recommendations. Broad-based community ownership of the plans meant that the city was held accountable for implementation. Equally important, the community took responsibility for those recommendations that is could best implement.

Diers J., 2008. *From the Ground Up: Communities Role in Addressing Street Level Social Issues*. Core Challenges Initiative: Canada West Foundation. (adapted)

2.7   LESSONS LEARNED

Comprehensive revitalization strategies seek to tackle the issues that often lie at the interface of several fields such as child development, health, education, training, employment and income security. While comprehensive initiatives may recognize these interrelationships, they can easily become overwhelmed by the scope of issues. Community led efforts typically are limited in their budgets and resources. For many initiatives the challenge is to find the balance between a broad definition of the issue and a relatively targeted strategy to tackle its various elements, that is to say, the community must identify clearly the issue(s) around which if feels it can have an impact. The importance of achieving small successes, building on existing strengths and expertise, and developing a broad overarching strategy with steps along the way represent different ways for communities to deal with the challenges of comprehensive

initiatives. The important factor in comprehensive initiatives is not that all the interrelated issues be addressed simultaneously; rather the defining factor is that they are rooted in comprehensive analysis, which leads, in turn, to strategic action[111].

The 2010 evaluation of the British National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal[112] identified a number of lessons for future revitalization initiatives: 1) continuing commitment – the process of change in socio-economic conditions at neighbourhood level is complex; reversing or stemming the concentration of deprivation and social exclusion must be seen as a long-term process; 2) more focused targeting of resources – evidence suggests that a critical mass of investment is needed in order to foster improvement, particularly in the most deprived areas, although lower levels of resource appear to have had some effect in limiting decline; 3) nature of intervention – evidence does not suggest there is a particular type of programme or project that guarantees success in turning around the prospects of poor neighbourhoods (success depends critically on a variety of local factors), however, there is widespread recognition of the importance of employment as a cornerstone for revitalization – there is a strong case that future neighbourhood interventions should have at their heart the challenge of reducing worklessness; 4) resourcing of neighbourhood intervention – flexible local regeneration resources have been critical to enabling success in that piloting innovative approaches and activities, helped bring local stakeholders together in planning and delivery (carrot), and provide flexibility to develop tailor-made approaches; 5) people and place – the importance of residential mobility patterns and the functional roles that they play in the housing market; and 6) wider policy links (that recognize the importance of wider economic and housing indicators in explaining changes in local neighbourhoods) – policy for neighbourhood renewal needs to recognize the fundamental link between the "internal" and the "external" processes that determine the performance of deprived areas.

The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change[113] have identified five "creative tensions" that have emerged as organizations transition from traditional to comprehensive approaches in implementing community revitalization initiatives, these are: the process/product tension; the comprehensive/targeted tension; the long-term/short-term tension; the inside/outside tension; and the race-neutral/race-centric tension. While the five tensions are seen as being inevitable, they are considered to be manageable and critical to success. Table 4 summaries key challenges and lessons learned for each of the five creative tensions.

Sieppert (2009) identifies a number of principles that hold promise to positively influence the impacts of initiatives that address urban social issues: 1) focus on strong communities – barriers to positive change can be overcome by building a strong community base to address critical social problems; 2) shared

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[111] Torjman S., Leviten-Reid E., 2003. *Comprehensive Community Initiatives.*

[112] AMION Consulting, 2010. *Evaluation of the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal, Final Report.* Communities and Local Government, Office of Public Sector Information, United Kingdom.

[113] The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, 2008. *Restoring Vibrant Communities: Applying Lessons from Comprehensive Community Change Initiatives to Rebuilding Neighbourhoods in New Orleans,* Presentation (New Orleans), September 17, 2008.

ownership is empowerment – dialogue and vital involvement of community and client stakeholders is in fact critical to achieve a broader community-level performance orientation in the future; when ordinary people develop the capacity to solve the problems they face, the ability to control the means to do so, and the authority to make real decisions that affect them; 3) changes will be long-term and complex – short-term goals and strategies so common to the dominant service delivery system are not compatible with pursuing community level impacts; 4) advocacy and service must mix – informed and reasoned advocacy can inform policy-makers and government officials about the challenges that individuals and groups face who work at the front lines of our urban streets; and 5) government and business need to be involved – business brings much more than the ability to generate revenues, it also brings a pragmatic goal orientation and a passion for action that is important in creating change in that business knows how to develop human capital and how to develop strong partnerships. All levels of governments need to become better at connecting and listening to local communities as they strive to address their social problems and must commit resources that support comprehensive, large-scale community change[114].

Table 4: Creative Tensions in Implementing Comprehensive Community Initiatives

Tensions	Challenges	Lessons Learned
Process vs. Product The success of community interventions depends on the sustained inclusion, participation and investment of a broad cross-section of stakeholders. vs. People get frustrated by excessive talk, meeting, committees, plans and outreach and drop out if they don't see action, product or outcomes.	How can community revitalization gain and keep maximum stakeholder engagement and commitment while also being efficient in moving to outcomes?	› Not everyone has to be involved all the time › Some strategies require less engagement than others (e.g. employment vs. safety) › Collaboration among organizations takes a lot of time and should be strategic
Comprehensive vs. Targeted The problems we are dealing with have multiple, inter-related causes, requiring comprehensive approaches that are incredibly challenging to implement. vs. More targeted programs are easier to implement, have outcomes that are easier to grasp, and success is easier to demonstrate.	How to keep the ambitious and comprehensive approach to the work solutions without getting overwhelmed?	› It is possible to drown under the weight of comprehensiveness › It should be a *lens*, not a requirement; look for and capitalize on connections at all times › Some choose a strategic driver (e.g. child wellbeing)
Long-term vs. Short-term We recognize that the problems of poverty, poor education, low employment and racism have deep roots, and it will take a long time for any community intervention to make significant progress on them. vs. Residents want to see some change as soon as possible, both because each life is precious, and because it is important to demonstrate change is possible.	How to simultaneously tackle the entrenched structural and institutional problems in our community systems while also making early progress that keeps all stakeholders on board?	› Look for quick wins that are visible – paint the lobby, clean up the block, inoculate the kids › Be opportunistic › Don't let the best be the enemy of the good › BUT keep your eye on the prize at all times and don't get distracted

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[114] Sieppert J.D., PhD, RSW, 2009. *Community Solutions: Promising Practices and Principles for Addressing Street Level Social Issues*. Core Challenges Initiative: Canada West Foundation.

Tensions	Challenges	Lessons Learned
Inside vs. Outside Stakeholders in neighbourhood, schools, and business sectors must lead and "own" the work of revitalization effort. vs. The systemic nature of these problems requires that interventions must ensure adequate political support, technical assistance and additional resources from the outside - the larger region, the states, and from national entities.	How to strategically include people, institutions and other resources that are beyond the community to help move everyone toward the goal, without losing local ownership, knowledge and commitment? How to align insiders and outsiders for maximum impact?	› CCIs tipped the balance too far in the direction of intra-community work › CCIs under-attended to the kinds of capacities that are needed to take on a comprehensive community change agenda
Race-neutral vs. Race-centric When our work is perceived as being targeted to people of colour, we risk marginalizing the initiative and losing important constituencies, resources and support. vs. If we do not recognize and take race into account – specifically, the racial features of our history, public policies and institutional practices – we risk coming up with partial or inadequate solutions and neglecting the specific circumstances of people of colour.	How can our work both address the racialized causes of the problems we are working on, and the specific needs of people of colour, while also keeping ALL constituencies on board and promoting universal policies and practices that will lift ALL boats?	› If you don't keep a priority on reducing racial inequalities front and center at all times, forces that work to maintain the standard ways of doing business will take over › Aiming to reduce racial inequalities can help improve the system for everyone › Keep the focus on the institutional and structural causes of racial inequalities, and not on the personal

Source: The Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change, 2008.

In his review of innovative practices and enabling policies, Bradford (2003) highlights the importance of the role of governments in implementing sustainable, community led revitalization initiatives[115].

"It is important to underscore that if the community-based paradigm is to generate sustainable innovations, the process must not involve the "hallowing out" or dismantling of national state capacity. Rather the goal is "multi-level governance" that allocates roles and responsibilities in relation to the comparative advantage of each (level of) government in contributing to community-based innovation: 1) municipalities – are best able to convene the actors for partnership, to undertake land use and development planning for inclusive urban spaces, and to work with other local authorities (school boards, band councils, social service agencies, etc.) to secure upper level policy support and to ensure fit with local conditions; and 2) provincial, national and supranational governments are all variously equipped to supply resources to local actors for building the infrastructure and relationships of the learning community (knowledge transfer, action research, financial support/ investment, regulatory tools, accountability frameworks)". Bradford, 2003

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[115] Bradford N., 2003. *Cities and Communities that Work: Innovative Practices, Enabling Policies*.

Another key challenge identified in the literature is the need for systemic change in policy-making structures and processes. Table 5 summarizes the transitions from traditional government administrative frameworks to place-based governance frameworks within Canada's policy making structures and processes as developed by Bradford (2008)[116].

Table 5: Two Public Policy Frameworks

	Transitional Government Administration	Place-Based Governance
Organizational Logic	Departmental mandates / Constitutional Allocations	Multi-level collaboration / Framework Agreements
Design Principles	Central Control / Standards	Local Discretion / Priorities
Delivery Mechanisms	Government Programs	Negotiated Partnerships
Policy Goals	Palliative Management	Transformative Prevention
Policy Discourse	Discrete Files	Wicked (complex) Problems
Policy Knowledge	Rationalist Expert	Constructivist Experiential
Policy Skills	Design / Delivery / Direction	Convening / Brokering / Facilitating
Evaluation Frames	Government Outputs	Community Outcomes
Learning Dynamics	Departmental Reporting	Social Dialogue

Source: Bradford, N., Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2008.

In the US, community development corporations (CDCs) have been recognized as an important and effective vehicle through which to coordinate revitalization funding and efforts. Pomeroy (2006) observes that organizations with comprehensive roles like the CDCs exist in only a few communities in Canada and that better integration could help to build stronger community entities and engines for proactive change[117].

The importance of a critical threshold of investment generates a difficult policy dilemma (e.g., fund worst or most apt to succeed communities first). Based on a review of US neighbourhood revitalization initiatives, Pomeroy (2006) considers that the evidence would seem to suggest that, in some cases, funding the worst communities represents simply throwing good money after bad (a bottomless pit of spending) and that a more strategic and selective investment would focus on areas with a greater chance of success – with the intent of gradually edging into areas of greater challenge. While focusing primarily on US federal programs and initiatives, Pomeroy notes the active and increasing roles of local and state level revitalization initiatives, in part as a result of federal block grant funding to localities (community groups, municipal corporations), has helped to build expertise at the state and local levels to the point where these empowered entities are taking greater responsibility and adding their own resources and programming. Pomeroy concludes that federal investment can be a critically important lever in nurturing increased capacity

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[116] Bradford, N., *Canadian Policy in the 2000s: Bringing Place In*, CPRN Research Report, Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2008.

[117] Pomeroy S., 2006. *Rethinking Neighbourhood Renewal: Review of the US Experience and Possible Lessons for Canada*.

at both the state (provincial) and local level – provided that the funding and program rules are permissive rather than prescriptive[118].

In many instances, funders that adopt a community capacity building orientation often do so out of a sense that conventional funding strategies cannot keep pace with the array of complex problems confronting communities. A shift in orientation is the crucial starting point for funders interested in finding new ways of working with communities. A number of measures have been identified to help guide funders in their transition towards funding capacity building for neighbourhood revitalization: 1) get closer to the community; 2) recast principles to reflect capacity building goals; 3) fund communities and systems rather than projects; 4) support the core process; 5) enable resident involvement; 6) locate one's spot in the funding cycle; 7) form consortia to support learning and to share the risk; 8) develop broad, flexible criteria; 9) lengthen the terms of funding; and 10) create cross-organizational teams[119].

Maclennan (2006) notes that the UK experience suggests that effective neighbourhood renewal policies: 1) require a clear, big picture understanding of the relationships between social and economic development over time and how that is embedded in places; 2) entail creative renewal policies; 3) design, fund and evaluate programs on the basis for which they are intended; 4) the multi-sectoral nature of renewal policies require senior coordination/leadership within the political levels of government (cross-departmental coordination); 5) strengthen the regional presence; 6) concentrate on local outcomes rather than replicate local delivery; and 7) the establishment multiple relevant working groups composed of officials, experts and community sector executives is effective both in eliciting key ideas and in forming consensual networks (i.e., complex, multilevel governance does not have to serve as a barrier where partner governments are willing to create governance solutions).

Based on their review of various initiatives in the UK and US, Dobilas and Battyre (2005) identified several key lessons: 1) provide a strategic framework upfront (define desired outcomes); 2) provide time upfront to build a shared vision and working relationships between key partners (culture of partnership and recognition of "softer" benefits); 3) build in political ownership at the highest level (leadership and champions); 4) engage with communities before final approaches are decided and then engage on a continuous basis (levels of effort in terms of time, patience and resources should not be underestimated); 5) multifaceted interventions having a spatial focus that recognize the multiple challenges faced by many people in distressed neighbourhoods; 6) be as detailed as possible about the types of programs likely to be funded; 7) the need to consider what comes next (most effective approach to ensuring sustainability is to focus on realignment of mainstream budgets and services); 8) be clear up front about the expectations of partnerships (in terms of leverage and delivery); 9) be clear in terms of funding contributions (new, in-kind, reallocated); 10) establish clear structures for implementation (roles, responsibilities, support, resources); and 11) ongoing performance monitoring (what is working and on track)[120].

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[118] Pomeroy S., 2006. *Rethinking Neighbourhood Renewal: Review of the US Experience and Possible Lessons for Canada*.

[119] Leviten-Ried, E., 2007. *Investing in Community Capacity Building*.

[120] Dobilas, G. and Battye, F., 2005. *Multi-Partner Funding for Neighbourhood Revitalization in Toronto, Final Report*.

2.8   CHALLENGES

Torjman and Leveiten-Reid (2003) identify two distinct challenges associated with creating a broad-based inclusive community response to poverty: engaging the diverse sectors of the community; and building relationships among these "partners" (many of whom may have not worked together closely in the past and may even have a history of conflict and distrust). In both cases, conveners play a crucial role in mobilizing the community around the goal of poverty reduction. Conveners must have a good understanding of poverty and a commitment to poverty reduction, credibility in the eyes of diverse segments of the community and a capacity to speak to the perspectives and concerns of different participants.

There are many challenges associated with ensuring that low-income residents are included as meaningful participants in community-based poverty reduction processes: 1) recognizing and addressing the diverse realities of people living on low income (sub-populations – homeless youth, seniors, recent immigrants, single-parent households, etc. and different levels of poverty – working poor, unemployed, persistently unemployed, dependent poor and indigent, etc.); 2) lack of involvement of community residents (and need for community organizing); 3) inclusion of low-income residents as full participants in governing community-based initiatives involves numerous other obstacles (time/energy, hardships/stresses, logistical factors, doubts of outcomes, previous (unsatisfying) experiences, discomfort in participating in formal meetings, concerns about expressing criticisms of existing programs and services to people in positions of power and authority). To effectively address these challenges, comprehensive community initiatives must make broad social inclusion a priority both in terms of committed resources and as a focus of ongoing learning and improvement[121].

Another key challenge that community-based organizations face in implementing comprehensive initiatives is finding sufficient support to help them get established and to sustain their work over the long term (most comprehensive efforts in the US have been supported by foundations). In order to maintain momentum (to sustain participation and attract additional partners), comprehensive community initiatives should pursue issues and concerns that resonate with the lived reality of local residents (Gray, Duran and Segal 1997). At the same time, these approaches need to maintain a longer-term, strategic vision so as not to be overwhelmed by the myriad of immediate concerns that confront impoverished communities[122].

Leviten-Reid (2007) notes that, although community building is demanding work under any circumstances, the scale, complexity and pace of change associated with comprehensive revitalization initiatives compound the challenges involved, notably: 1) they are time and energy intensive; 2) they are highly contingent on the opportunities and challenges posed by a changing context; 3) they do not follow a straight-line path of development; 4) committed effort is required to engage residents, particularly those who tend not to be involved or included, and to maintain involvement; 5) process needs to be balanced with outcomes; 6) the change processes they foster can stir conflicts as well as build partnerships; 7) skilled and

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[121] Torjman S., Leviten-Reid E., 2003. *Comprehensive Community Initiatives.*

[122] Torjman S., Leviten-Reid E., 2003. *Comprehensive Community Initiatives.*

thoughtful leadership is needed throughout; and 8) the importance of developing intermediary organizations and structures for collaborative governance.

Sustainability of the initiatives became a critical issue in the wind-down phase of the Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) research project. Caution was expressed to the participating organizations about becoming overly attached to a particular organizational structure, noting that funding streams come and go. What is important is the continuous improvement of the neighbourhood's assets, however that is achieved. Lessons from the ANC project include: 1) uncertainty about future funding meant that substantial resources were spent on renewing and sustaining the work before it had really begun; 2) neighbourhoods will continue to need a system of support; 3) the relationship with municipal government emerged as a critical success factor for sustainability, regardless of the structure or form neighbourhood work takes; 4) the ANC asset-based, resident led model demonstrated that residents can and will lead neighbourhood change given sufficient assistance from external systems; and 5) residents were working for positive change in their neighbourhoods before ANC and will continue to do so (after ANC)[123].

Barriers to positive change in the social service delivery system include the remarkable complexity and fragmentation of our social service delivery system, limited vision and expertise dedicated to systemic change and lack of incentives for collaborative activity. The barriers also include a political context that makes scarce resource distribution a competitive arena and funding structures that are short-term, restrictive and competitive. These barriers point to the complex array of service delivery organizations, political agendas, lack of coordination within the sector and the absence of significant client involvement in resolving the issues that directly impact them. There is preliminary evidence that it is possible to build and sustain broader systemic responses to street level social challenges by focusing efforts on relationship building, shared leadership, inclusive practices, and a commitment to broad-based, long-term community goals. Traditional government structures are based upon top-down hierarchies, command and control procedures, and performance measurement approaches. On top of that we can add the realities imposed by short-term political cycles. None of these factors are well-adapted to solving long-term, complex urban social problems. The firmly established structures inherent in government tend to reinforce hierarchical relationships, sector silos, short-term goals and short-term funding. A shift toward more inclusive, community-based services for resolving street level social issues will demand strong and responsive nonprofit organizations. This is a prerequisite for implementing broad policies and services that link economic, health, social care and labour dimensions together. Nonprofit organizations and staff must be prepared to work collectively and collaboratively; in many situations they will need to give up autonomy and "territory" in order to streamline and coordinate service delivery. There may even be compelling reasons for some nonprofit organizations to engage in joint planning and actual service delivery activities, co-locate or even merge[124].

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[123] Gorman C., 2007. *Final Reflections from the Action for Neighbourhood Change Research Project*.

[124] Sieppert J.D., PhD, RSW, 2009. *Community Solutions: Promising Practices and Principles for Addressing Street Level Social Issues*. Core Challenges Initiative: Canada West Foundation.

APPENDIX A – BIBLIOGRAPHY

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