

*inclusive*  
cities

CANADA - EDMONTON

**Community Voices,  
Perspectives and Priorities**

MARCH 2005

**Report of**  
The Edmonton Civic Panel

**Prepared By**  
The Edmonton Social Planning Council

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**A partner of**  
Inclusive Cities Canada: A Cross-Canada Civic Initiative  
<http://www.inclusivecities.ca>



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## **ICC partners are:**

- Federation of Canadian Municipalities
- Social Planning and Research Council of BC
- Edmonton Social Planning Council
- Community Development Halton
- Community Social Planning Council of Toronto
- Human Development Council of Saint John

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This report of the Edmonton Civic Panel was prepared by the Edmonton Social Planning Council through its participation in Inclusive Cities Canada: A Cross-Canada Civic Initiative.

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- Nicola Fairbrother – Edmonton Social Planning Council
- Hope Hunter – Boyle Street Community Services Cooperative
- Robinson Koilpillai – Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation
- John Mahon – Edmonton Arts Council
- Janice Melnychuk – Edmonton City Councillor (Panel co-chair)
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# **Inclusive Cities Canada: Edmonton Community Voices, Perspectives and Priorities**

## **The Report of the ICC Edmonton Civic Panel**

### **Executive Summary**

Far too many people in Edmonton face genuine and often painful barriers to feeling socially included. All too often institutional, community and personal barriers work against many Edmontonians feeling a sense of belonging, acceptance and recognition in their own city. People who are viewed as being different in some way – for example, people who are visible minorities, are openly gay, or have a low-income, face discrimination, personal abuse and institutional roadblocks. The resulting erosion of social cohesion in our city undermines the quality of life for all Edmontonians.

These are some of the findings contained in the report, *Inclusive Cities Canada: Edmonton Community Voices, Perspectives and Priorities*. Edmonton participated with four other cities in Inclusive Cities Canada, a national initiative examining social inclusion in Canada's cities. To explore how inclusive Edmonton is, over 200 people shared their personal and professional reflections and experiences with issues related to social inclusion.

Based on research and participants' experiences, we know that inclusive communities

- Incorporate diversity into their institutional structures, functions and processes
- Value equity
- Provide accessible and culturally sensitive services
- Celebrate both the similarities and appreciate the richness of the differences among citizens.

As one local participant noted, "We are inclusive in theory and intent, but we have not mastered the practice."

Inclusiveness is linked to social health and quality of life, and this in turn is closely linked to economic prosperity. While Alberta has successfully eliminated its financial debt, an equally important social deficit remains to be paid off. Failure to take action on eliminating this social deficit will lead to further inequities in our province and undermine the prospects for long-term prosperity in Alberta.

Addressing such a complex issue as social inclusion in Edmonton requires a long-term, multi-sector commitment to building civic partnerships and fostering public engagement. The City of Edmonton must be the catalyst for collaborative efforts aimed at rebuilding the city's social infrastructure, sustaining civic capacity, and preserving social cohesion. These are the foundations of a strong, supportive and inclusive Edmonton. Addressing social inclusion at the provincial and national levels requires a similar long-term commitment to creating horizontal relationships between jurisdictions, sharing good practices across communities, and sustaining a strong social infrastructure throughout Canada.

Participants in Edmonton perceived that the area of Living Conditions presented the biggest challenge to Edmonton becoming more inclusive. (Living Conditions was the key dimension in all five of the cities participating in ICC.) This dimension includes issues such as income and employment, housing and community safety. These are complex issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries and individual ministerial responsibilities. The *ICC Edmonton Report* contains 19 recommendations with roles and responsibilities for various stakeholders. These recommendations provide stakeholders with direction about where to direct their joint efforts in order to build a more inclusive and prosperous Edmonton.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 What is Social Inclusion?

*Social Inclusion is the capacity and willingness of our society to keep all groups within reach of what we expect as a society - the social commitment and investments necessary to ensure that all people are within reach of (close to) our common aspirations, common life and its common wealth.*<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2 Social Inclusion is Key to Individual and Collective Well-Being

An inclusive community is one that provides opportunities for the optimal well-being and healthy development of all children, youth and adults. All members of the community potentially gain from social inclusion – those who are vulnerable for reasons of poverty, racism, or fear of difference – as well as the broader community that benefits when everyone is able to participate as a valued and contributing member. Population health research has taught us that inequality hurts everyone, not just those at the bottom. Similarly, while inclusion provides obvious dividends to individuals and groups who are marginalized, it benefits everyone – both in terms of the vitality a society derives when all its members fully contribute and by removing the liabilities associated with exclusion.<sup>2</sup>

Inclusive cities and communities are critical not only to the well-being of individuals, but also to the social and economic health of nations. Cities are at a crossroads and are being challenged to either become more inclusive or to enter into decline. The Cities Alliance, an international initiative launched by the World Bank and the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, expressed this challenge as follows:

*The social and economic future of countries is increasingly being determined in their urban areas . . . Two alternative scenarios are emerging: one of cities characterized by increasing poverty, social exclusion and decline; the other of inclusive cities characterized by equitable and sustainable growth.*<sup>3</sup>

Internationally, inclusive cities initiatives focus on areas as varied as building child-friendly cities, promoting good urban governance, and strategies for accepting growing urban diversity. In Canada, social inclusion has the potential to act as a guiding framework for two inter-related creative projects: advancing the well-being of

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<sup>1</sup> Freiler, Christa. (2001). What needs to change? Concept paper prepared for the Laidlaw Foundation. (Download from [www.inclusivecities.ca](http://www.inclusivecities.ca) )

<sup>2</sup> Backgrounder for A New Way of Thinking? Towards a Vision of Social Inclusion, November 2001 Conference sponsored by the Laidlaw Foundation and the Canadian Council on Social Development.

<sup>3</sup> The Cities Alliance. "City Development Strategies: The Cities Alliance Perspective," [undated] <http://www.citiesalliance.org/citiesalliancehomepage.nsf>

*“Cariwest has been trying so hard for 20 years to make space for us in the city and we want people to support it. This is what inclusion is all about. It’s not just us going to their events, it’s for them to come to ours – that’s inclusion.*

*“We’re always trying to convince people and funders that what we do is art. It may not look the same as yours, but it’s our cultural expression. Inclusion isn’t about ‘okay here’s your cheque’, it’s about sitting down and developing capacity with us.”*

*“We need to determine a strategy for ensuring that those “furthest out” on the margins will be included rather than making things better for more people in the middle.*

*We need to be careful to frame the issue so inclusion doesn’t mean making those furthest out more like us in order to be included.”*

Canadians and urban nation-building. People’s well-being is closely tied to where they live. Therefore, it is in cities and communities across Canada that children, youth and adults first experience inclusion or exclusion. The quality of neighbourhoods and communities, the common public spaces where people interact and share experiences, and the adequacy of a city’s social infrastructure all contribute to creating environments that either welcome and include or reject and polarize.

The federal government’s social development ministry recognizes the important link between well-being and social inclusion. Social Development Canada describes its mandate as: “[Building] a Canada where the capacities of individuals, children, families and communities are strengthened in order to promote social inclusion, participation and well-being.” Recognizing that “Canada’s quality of life depends on strong, vibrant and sustainable cities and communities”, the federal government has introduced the New Deal for Cities and Communities. One of its key components is to “start to deliver stable, predictable, long-term funding for cities and communities in urban and rural areas.”<sup>4</sup> To date, \$1.3 billion in new revenues, to be shared among municipal governments in Canada, has been committed to maintain and replenish infrastructure programs, such as public transit.

From a social inclusion perspective, both social and physical infrastructure are required to create strong and vibrant communities and cities. Social inclusion integrates and promotes this interdependence between physical and social infrastructure. According to Clutterbuck and Novick (2003),

*Within a decade or so cities will have either “strong” or “weak” infrastructures, reflecting the combined quality of both their physical and social infrastructures and how well these are integrated and mutually reinforcing. “Weak” infrastructure will indicate a continuing separation of the physical and social requirements of the city. In contrast, municipalities developing “strong” infrastructure will integrate physical and social planning and development and will invest adequately in both.*

With up to 80 per cent of our population now residing in large, medium and small urban municipalities, and half living in large urban centres across the country, we are compelled to address the implications of this trend for urban life in the Canada of today and the future. A social inclusion lens has obvious implications for assessing and shaping urban social infrastructure, the mix of community supports and the human services that provide stability and advance social development within cities.

*“Police don’t respond to community concerns, so there’s not a high regard for police in our community – people definitely believe it’s because of where they live that police don’t respond.”*

### **1.3 Introducing Inclusive Cities Canada: A Cross-Canada Civic Initiative**

*Inclusive Cities Canada: A Cross-Canada Civic Initiative (ICC)* is a collaborative venture of five social planning organizations across Canada and the social infrastructure sub-committee of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). The aim of *ICC* is to strengthen the capacity of cities to create and sustain inclusive communities for the mutual benefit of all people.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to funding, the components are: vision, relationships, and cities and communities lens. *New Deal for Cities and Communities*, [www.infrastructure.gc.ca/ndcc/index\\_e.shtml](http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/ndcc/index_e.shtml)

*“Our funding model counters civic engagement. It’s not money for citizens and it turns people into clients and consumers of services, rather than citizens. It does nothing to organize them and use their capacities.”*

Specifically, its goals are:

- To promote social inclusion as key to the development of a Canadian urban strategy
- To support civic capacity to build inclusive communities in which all people are able to participate as valued and contributing members
- To secure a stronger voice for civic communities in national social policy
- To ensure that community voices of diversity are recognized as core Canadian ones.

*Inclusive Cities Canada* is a unique partnership of community leaders and elected municipal politicians with a major focus on children, youth and families - particularly those from diverse and vulnerable populations. The social planning partners are:

- Social Planning and Research Council of BC (focus on Vancouver and North Vancouver)
- Edmonton Social Planning Council
- Community Development Halton (focus on Burlington)
- Community Social Planning Council of Toronto
- Human Development Council of Saint John (focus on Greater Saint John Area)

The strategic direction for the cross-Canada work comes from a National Steering Committee with members drawn from the partners. (See Appendix 3 for a list of Steering Committee members.)

The federal government, through Social Development Canada, provides multi-year core funding. The Laidlaw Foundation, a private Canadian foundation, provided supplementary start-up funds.

The first phase of the initiative involved research, analysis and reporting. The National Steering Committee developed a common framework and methodology for the local research, including identifying the common dimensions of inclusion. Each city established a Civic Panel to provide leadership and direction to the initiative locally. All Civic Panels are co-chaired by a municipal politician, either a mayor or city councillor, and a community leader.

#### **1.4 Social Inclusion and the Dimensions of an Inclusive City**

*Inclusive Cities Canada* recognizes social inclusion as both a process and an outcome. As a process, social inclusion promotes the open, welcome and supported participation of all people in social planning and decision-making affecting their lives. It requires the active engagement of the community’s full diversity in civic dialogue and public debate on policy issues.

As an outcome, an inclusive city is one that “provides opportunities for the optimal well-being and healthy development of all children, youth and adults”. Practical expressions or ways of promoting inclusion are: universal access to meaningful opportunities in education, the arts, culture, and recreation; relevant health services,

*“Community schools used to be an exceptional resource to communities. It was a good concept. It had staffing that dealt with community needs and it gave communities a common place to talk about a number of issues. I’m sorry those resources are gone, as nothing has really replaced them.”*

*“There needs to be recognition of diversity of the Aboriginal community. The government has lumped Aboriginal people into one big group and that causes difficulties for the native population – there are different nations, different languages. I believe people are somewhat aware, but not really aware, of just how diverse it is.”*

school curricula adapted to specific needs and strengths, family support services and respite, safe streets and parks, and responsive governance on all levels.<sup>5</sup>

*Inclusive Cities Canada* builds on previous research and community development work undertaken by the Laidlaw Foundation and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, including a series of local soundings in 10 cities.<sup>6</sup> Based on this research and a review of Canadian and international literature, ICC defined the following five dimensions of inclusion as central to building inclusive cities and communities:

1. *Diversity*  
The adoption and implementation of policies, plans and concrete actions by key public institutions that provide valued recognition to individuals and groups and reflect and respond to the full diversity of the population.
2. *Human Development*  
A focus on the development of talents, skills and capacities of everyone from early childhood through the transition years into and including adulthood.
3. *Civic Engagement*  
Strategies and actions to promote participation of individuals and groups in the full range of civic and community life to enhance social interaction, harmonious neighbourhoods and active citizenship.
4. *Living Conditions.*  
Provisions for personal and family security (food/nutrition, income and employment, housing, community safety) that minimize disparities in community living conditions within the population.
5. *Community Services.*  
A well-coordinated system of public and community support services connected to strong networks of informal and personal support to address the diverse circumstances of vulnerable people.

These dimensions became the basis for the research questions that explored people’s perceptions of their city’s ‘inclusivity’. Community focus groups, local soundings, feedback forums and electronic surveys were used in different ways by local ICC partners to examine the level of inclusion in key areas such as: public education, recreation, transportation, policing and justice, local government, early childhood development, and community safety. (The research process and the areas of inquiry will be discussed more fully in the next section.)

*Edmonton Community Voices, Perspectives and Priorities* reflects and analyzes what was heard, identifies formative themes and issues, and puts forward priorities for local action. The Edmonton Civic Panel members have been key to the process. This is their report.

*“The consultation process is not there – no input into decision-making and shared power. There is only giving of information and passive receiving by community members.”*

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from the Canadian Institute of Child Health Communique, "Towards a Vision of Social Inclusion," January 2002. [http://www.cich.ca/Communique\\_Jan02.html](http://www.cich.ca/Communique_Jan02.html)

<sup>6</sup> The findings and recommendations are in the 2003 report, *Building Inclusive Communities: Cross-Canada Strategies and Perspectives* ([www.inclusivecities.ca](http://www.inclusivecities.ca)).



## 2. Edmonton Findings

*“We are inclusive in theory and intent, but we have not mastered the practice.”*

### 2.1 Exploring How Inclusive Edmonton Is

For the first phase of the Inclusive Cities Canada (ICC) initiative, about 200 Edmontonians explored how inclusive their city is through various formal and informal processes. The Edmonton Social Planning Council (ESPC) organized these consultations with the community as part of the Council’s commitment to the ICC initiative. These dialogues included focus groups, local soundings, electronic surveys and feedback forums. The Council also analysed the results of these consultations and drafted this report. However, the ICC Edmonton Report is a report of the Edmonton Civic Panel and the panel will present the report to the citizens of Edmonton.

### 2.2 Edmonton Civic Panel

Each city in the ICC initiative established a Civic Panel to provide leadership and direction to the initiative locally. Civic Panels are made up of municipal and community leaders from various backgrounds that reflect the diversity in each city. Panel members were selected for their expertise and experience in a specific area as well as for their capacity to understand how the different aspects of social inclusion intersect. In Edmonton, the Civic Panel reviewed the consultative methods, examined the results and analysis, and in particular, developed the report recommendations. The Edmonton Civic Panel will be presenting its findings to Edmonton City Council and other key civic and community bodies.

The members of the Edmonton Civic Panel are:

Lewis Cardinal – Native Student Services, University of Alberta (Panel co-chair)  
Nicola Fairbrother – Edmonton Social Planning Council  
Trevor Gladue – Metis Nation of Alberta <sup>7</sup>  
Hope Hunter – Boyle Street Community Services Cooperative  
Robinson Koilpillai – Canadian Multicultural Education Foundation  
John Mahon – Edmonton Arts Council  
Janice Melnychuk – Edmonton City Councillor (Panel co-chair)  
Tom Olenuk – Edmonton & District Labour Council

### 2.3 Design of Edmonton Focus Groups

In order to explore how inclusive Edmonton is, 12 focus groups, with a total of 84 participants, were held during the summer of 2004. Each focus group examined inclusion through one of five dimension areas: Diversity, Human Development, Civic Engagement, Living Conditions, and Community Services. During each focus group, participants explored three specific areas of inquiry (see Table 1) that were relevant to the dimension of social inclusion under review. Potential participants were drawn from the ESPC’s database of over 1,500 people. Invitations to participate in the focus groups were sent to over 250 leaders in the community from diverse backgrounds, e.g., non-profit agency staff, religious leaders, academics, business people, etc.

*“I went to the library to get a card and I told them I couldn’t afford the fee. They said that was okay and I can take books out like anyone else and they don’t treat me any differently. More programs should be like this.”*

<sup>7</sup> Trevor Gladue resigned during the process.

*“A lot of people don’t reach their potential because of years of being beaten down – their spirit is finally broken.”*

## 2.4 Focus Group Participants’ Perception Ratings of Inclusion

Prior to the focus group discussions, participants rated their responses to statements about the three areas of inquiry for that session. This was intended to provoke discussion and provide insights about participant’s views prior to the focus group interaction. While the participant’s ratings listed in Table 1 are not based on a representative sample, nevertheless they are informative. For this measurement of inclusion in Edmonton, ideally the ratings for the dimensions should be in the ‘Inclusion Zone’, from 0 to +1. As shown in Table 1, none of the ratings fall within the ‘Inclusion Zone’.

Participants in Edmonton perceived that the Living Conditions dimension presented the biggest challenge to the city becoming more inclusive. This dimension includes issues such as income and employment, housing, and community safety. (Living Conditions was the key dimension in all five cities participating in the ICC initiative.)

**Table 1– Participants’ Perception Ratings on Inclusion Dimensions (N=84)**

| <b>Inclusion Dimension</b> | <b>Areas of Inquiry</b>   | <b>Average Perception Rating</b> |
|----------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Diversity                  | Local governance, publicly funded education and policing/justice system           | -0.53                            |
| Human Development          | Early childhood education, publicly funded education, and recreation/arts/culture | -0.58                            |
| Civic Engagement           | Local governance, public spaces and community capacities                          | -0.48                            |
| Living Conditions          | Income and employment, housing and community safety                               | -1.26                            |
| Community Services         | Health care, crisis services and mobility/ transportation                         | -0.61                            |

## 2.5 Key Inclusion Strengths and Weaknesses in Edmonton – By Dimension and Areas of Inquiry

*“Why do we celebrate differences instead of similarities? So many times we look for differences. We need to look for similarities and ways to connect. We need to celebrate both similarities and appreciate the richness of the differences.”*

During the focus groups, participants discussed the strengths and weaknesses of current practices in Edmonton within the three areas of inquiry under discussion. Participants were asked to share both their personal experiences and professional knowledge about inclusion in general, and these areas of inquiry in particular. The definitions of the dimensions listed below were provided and discussed at the focus groups. The key strengths and weaknesses under each dimension were typically raised by more than one participant or they appeared to reflect a consensus among participants. While they are not an exhaustive list, they represent the most significant strengths and weaknesses raised by participants.

### 2.5.1 Dimension – Diversity

**Defined:** Public institutions, such as local government, public education, and the police and justice systems recognize and respond to the full diversity of the City of Edmonton.

*“Devaluing publicly funded education leads to less educated citizens who feel less vested in their community and it contributes to a social malaise. It contributes to a less opening of minds.”*

**Example:** Explicit race relation policies that are reflected in both committee and administrative structures and practices for implementation (e.g., training programs in cultural diversity competence for all employees).

### **Local Governance**

#### **Key Strengths**

- City has strong committees for urban Aboriginal people and for people with disabilities, with city representatives on each
- City departments like Community Services do a good job in a provincial environment that is not supportive of inclusion (i.e., new AISH bus pass)
- Community Leagues are a good model of grassroots governance, but the quality between leagues varies

#### **Key Weaknesses**

- City Council doesn't reflect the diversity in Edmonton; there are perceived barriers to elected office, i.e. the cost of running and level of education required
- Education of citizens about civic responsibility, the value of diversity is needed
- City's employment policies perceived by some as reverse discrimination
- City recognizes diversity, but doesn't promote the value of inclusion; difficult to change structural barriers as the City's mandate is from the Province

### **Publicly Funded Education**

#### **Key Strengths**

- Public system has weathered challenges posed by charter/private schools – reacted and changed with the key components of universality intact
- Aboriginal community controls their own schools within the public system
- Non-profit agencies providing creative adult learning programming, are aware of students' needs, are efficient with resources and take a holistic approach

#### **Key Weaknesses**

- Inadequate supports for struggling students from diverse cultures, i.e., program for Aboriginal social workers nurtures First Nation's culture/values, but life supports not in place; haven't built in systemic capacities to address non-educational issues
- Citizenship and Immigration cut funding for language training; fewer adult students
- Provincial education policies are tied to labour market needs; education is viewed as an investment and not an intrinsic public good

### **Policing and Justice System**

#### **Key Strengths**

- Progress in diversifying police force; but more successful recruiting women than Aboriginal people and other ethno-racial populations
- Neighbourhood police stations and community policing
- More women in judiciary, but still few visible minorities
- Good access to Legal Aid

*“(Aboriginal people's over-representation in the justice system) relates to their inability to buy themselves out of trouble. It also relates to confidence and knowledge of how to access support. They don't have the connections or understand the system.”*

*“The justice system sustains the norm and has institutional support for doing so. The justice system is meant to be blind to diversity – designed at the highest levels to treat everyone the same way, equal under the law.*

*But how do you retain that and also be sensitive to the social reality that people are not all treated the same in society? How do you say in the courtroom ‘you are treated the same and your personal experience of not being treated the same isn’t relevant’?”*

*“There is a generally accepted ideology that children are basically the responsibility of parents. The Alberta government still thinks women should stay home and it doesn’t value the contribution women make to the economy.”*

### **Key Weaknesses**

- Policing policies emphasize fairness, but inadequate training in diversity issues, i.e., group stereotyping and racial profiling still common within the force
- Limited access to neighbourhood police stations, funding for community policing
- Confusing/lengthy police complaint process; effectiveness is under question
- Large Legal Aid caseloads and limited resources undermine judicial fairness
- Aboriginal people’s over-representation in the justice system is often due to systemic factors that reflect the larger social and structural inequities in society
- Differing views about what causes crime, i.e. systemic vs. personal responsibility

## **2.5.2 Dimension – Human Development**

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**Defined:** Children and youth have opportunities to develop their talents, skills and capacities to contribute to the community.

**Example:** Ensuring learning and developmental opportunities for all children and adults; community child care and recreational programs for children that promote growth rather than merely custodial, and that serve all children regardless of perceived or assessed challenges to learning.

### **Early Childhood Education**

#### **Key Strengths**

- One-year maternity leave is a marked improvement
- Recent pay increases for early childhood educators (although rigidly applied)
- Funding increases for Brighter Futures; Healthy Families provides training funds
- Head Start has made a significant difference, but waiting lists remain long

#### **Key Weaknesses**

- Little cooperation between government ministries and non-profit agencies
- Inadequate staff training leads to children experiencing fewer cognitive, social, and emotional interactions with adults
- Governments download responsibilities; unreliable, inadequate funding is tied to stricter regulations; program funding inconsistent beyond the pilot project level
- Lack of common standards and use of best practice; low wages for staff
- Limited child care options available to the working poor
- Huge disparity in quality and accessibility of services across the country

### **Public Funded Education**

#### **Key Strengths**

- Quality of school staff is high
- Inner city schools are a model in the delivery of inclusive services and effective inter-agency cooperation

#### **Key Weaknesses**

- Funding based on testing and labeling leads to individualized funding, exclusion; Universal Standardized testing narrows the view of the purpose of education
- Arts programs are not funded in public schools
- Large class sizes and lack of resources creates difficult environments for teachers

*“There is a societal and political undervaluation of the Arts. It’s an impoverishment for society when we don’t allow people’s artistic capabilities to be developed.”*

- Teachers are not trained to understand learning disabilities and FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder); parents are often forced to seek help in the private sector which excludes low income families
- Provincial special needs funding emphasizes assessment and ends up labeling and stigmatizing students
- Libraries are no longer part of core funding so parents sometimes staff school libraries; books/resources are not updated
- Tighter college and university screening processes exclude marginalized students
- Rural students have financial and adjustment difficulties when moving to the city

### **Recreation/Arts/Culture**

#### **Key Strengths**

- Given impoverished funding situation, arts and recreation programs are excellent
- Fee reduction program help to ensure accessibility
- Action for Healthy Communities provides support and grants for community initiatives (for example, CD recordings and work with gangs)
- Public support for the arts is comparatively strong in Edmonton
- Examples of excellent initiatives: Green Shacks, Snack in the Park, City Centre Education Project and Nina Haggerty Centre

#### **Key Weaknesses**

- Shift towards ‘user-pay’ systems detrimental to universality and accessibility, and is increasing with P3 (private-public partnership) model
- Government funding cuts and a lack of support for the arts; school utilization policy penalizes schools for offering arts programs with low space utilization
- Little collaboration and communication within sector
- Rich arts community for adults, but limited options available to children/youth
- Emphasis on ‘traditional’ recreational activities which may exclude immigrant communities who seek other opportunities
- High levels of leadership burnout within the arts community
- Fear of insurance and liabilities impacts service and program availability

### **2.5.3 Dimension – Civic Engagement**

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**Defined:** Cities and communities promote active participation in local government, community organizations and civic life.

**Example:** Explicit allocation of municipal funding to building community capacity for local democratic participation in civic affairs.

#### **Local Governance**

#### **Key Strengths**

- City worked hard to involve youth in designing the skateboard park
- Some established immigrant communities have a voice with some politicians
- Youth Secretariat works to get young voices heard

#### **Key Weaknesses**

- Although some citizens feel engaged, the majority do not (e.g., seniors, youth)

*“There is no investment in citizen participation for its own sake. The processes tend to foster competition and division rather than people coming together to find solutions.”*

*“If we are talking about the fear of youth and of homeless people, I would like to ask: Why is it that the person who has everything is the person at risk? There needs to be some sort of process and discourse around equity.”*

- View that those with money control the process; example, Urban Development Institute has a great deal of influence with City Council and the administration
- City councillors and bureaucrats see themselves as experts and do not take community engagement or consultation seriously
- People do not feel their voices are heard by politicians; current ‘first past the post’ electoral systems undermine representative democracy

### **Public Spaces**

#### **Key Strengths**

- Public buildings and festivals are largely accessible for those with disabilities
- Significant number of parks in Edmonton, including a number with free services

#### **Key Weaknesses**

- Schools are no longer accessible hubs of community activity
- General alienation of youth; people fear others just ‘hanging out’ in public spaces; also a fear of gangs, homeless people and youth in public spaces
- Inner city and other neighbourhoods do not have enough park space
- Transportation to public spaces is difficult for those with disabilities
- Very little social mixing or the building of new relationships in public spaces

### **Community Capacities**

#### **Key Strengths**

- People have enormous capacity when they have passion and adequate resources
- Edmonton Transit hosts annual community conference, which has excellent participation rates, and could provide a model for other municipal departments
- Advisory Board on Services for Persons with Disabilities (City of Edmonton)
- Community League structure is centred around community engagement

#### **Key Weaknesses**

- Citizen participation is not valued for its own sake, but often as a means to an end; societal shift from citizenship to consumerism
- City structures/departments often miss important opportunities to foster inclusion and meaningful dialogue around contentious structures (e.g., group homes)
- Funding is typically activity/event specific and outcomes based; it doesn’t support the ongoing development of an organization or its staff, nor advocacy
- New communities/organizations face barriers – time, high level of sophistication needed for funding process; increasing competition for funding within the sector
- There is a lot of inclusive language but no funding to back it up
- Immigrants may long to interact, but they don’t identify with the neighbourhood

*“Income inequity is enormous. There’s a strong correlation between mortality rates and the degree of income inequity – not just poor people dying, but overall health of the population is effected by the income inequities.”*

## **2.5.4 Dimension – Living Conditions**

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**Defined:** There is a reduction in the significant differences in levels of income, decent jobs, safe neighbourhoods, and the availability of affordable housing among residents.

**Example:** Affordable housing development is linked to the employment objectives of a community economic revitalization program, rather than rent supplements to low income people for use in the private rental market.

*“Sustainability of employment is so critical for inclusion – sustainable in the sense it pays a living wage, has some benefits, and is stable - not month to month, or even year to year.”*

## **Income and Employment**

### **Key Strengths**

- Mayor’s Safer Cities Initiatives is excellent, especially having paid staff
- Participation in focus groups connected to the Alberta Government’s Low Income Review was encouraging, but overall, the report left many discouraged
- Despite limited space, fee reduction programs and Families First have been well received and allow children and youth to participate in recreational programs
- Federal Child Tax Benefit makes a difference, but does not offset low wages

### **Key Weaknesses**

- Increased numbers of working poor; live disproportionately in the inner city
- Income Support recipients securing minimum wage employment often worse off
- Single parents do not have the time and energy to advocate for themselves
- Inability to effect change: agency staff too busy/burnt out to do important advocacy work; symptoms, rather than systemic issues, are addressed
- Health officials aren’t strong advocates despite income being a health determinant
- Unrecognized overseas education and training leads to underemployment among immigrant groups and professional/institutional exclusion
- No increases in employment supports and there are few training opportunities

## **Housing**

### **Key Strengths**

- Increasing awareness of affordability and homelessness issues due to Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing campaigns
- Kids in the Hall a good initiative; employing youth develops their experience
- Edmonton Inner City Housing Society works with communities and neighbours in developing projects prior to obtaining building permits from the City
- Community-driven process of identifying housing priorities without government intervention sets Edmonton as a model for other cities
- Low-Income Housing Strategy has been effective

### **Key Weaknesses**

- Withdrawal of affordable housing funding by all three levels of government; City committed, but not without support of other government levels
- Problems intensifying as people have few options but spending a disproportionate amount of their income on housing; appearance of working homeless
- Support programs and services are inaccessible and not widely-known
- Trend to more group homes (rather than independent living) located in lower income neighbourhoods; little mixed housing types in new suburbs
- Housing needs of specific groups (e.g., seniors, people with addictions, people with disabilities) not being met; ethnic and racial communities are ghettoized
- Gentrification pushed low income people to outlying communities; have trouble accessing transportation and other supports
- Housing instability leading to transient populations, poor public and media perception, and few social connections

*“We need to see housing as asset-building as well as just shelter. It also needs to be seen as a way to create stability for children and families – that requires social support on a day to day basis, beyond the bricks and mortar piece.”*

*“There are neighborhoods for the rich and neighborhoods for the poor and we’ve planned it that way.”*

## **Community Safety**

### **Key Strengths**

- Community policing initiative worked to build relationships, but officers shifted from ‘walking the beat’ to driving, thereby leading to a feeling of distrust
- Crime rates have decreased, but the perception persists that society is less safe
- Safer Cities initiated needle exchange programs, but limited access in some places
- Issues of family violence and bullying being discussed more (recent conference)

### **Key Weaknesses**

- Gangs and drugs are becoming an increasing concern
- Media influences and sometimes distorts the perception of community safety
- Inner city neighbourhoods are seen as ‘blighted’; low income residents do not feel as connected to their community as mid- and high-income earners do
- Perception that police do not respond to the concerns of low income communities leads to distrust, as does different cultural perceptions of policing
- Neighbourhood Watch, Citizens on Patrol and police racial profiling are viewed as contributing to exclusion because they target anyone ‘different’ as suspicious
- Streets are designed to accommodate vehicles and pedestrian safety is a growing concern, especially for seniors and people with disabilities
- Pedestrians also face challenges when infrastructure is not maintained; not all intersections have curb cuts and some communities are prioritized over others

## **2.5.5 Dimension – Community Services**

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**Defined:** Our city has a well-coordinated system of public and community support services that are connected to strong networks of informal and personal support to address diverse circumstances of vulnerable people.

**Example:** A community strategy, supported by the City that provides infrastructure support to emerging groups and agencies without undermining the financial stability of the overall community sector.

## **Health care**

### **Key Strengths**

- Quality and expertise of doctors is excellent
- Immigrant Mental Health project a great best practice
- Home Care system is good, but could be improved
- Increased recognition of holistic models of health
- Success by Six and Families First are model programs

### **Key Weaknesses**

- Long waiting lists; staff overburdened; many people are without family physicians
- Limited translation services, necessitating the need for patient advocates
- Limited support for community health centres – little focus on prevention
- Low quality of care for seniors, people with addictions, developmental disabilities
- Transportation a significant barrier, especially for marginalized populations
- Environment and air quality not seen as a community health issue

*“Society has values around not asking for help, pretending that we all are OK. We don’t want to put other people out. There is shame and stigma attached to having personal problems.”*



*“People are sunk if they don’t have friends or family.”*

- Increasing shift to private health care facilities (disagreement within focus groups about whether this is a strength or weakness in relation to an inclusive city)

### **Crisis Services**

#### **Key Strengths**

- Tele-Health, mobile mental health services operated by Capital Health are great
- Free on-line database of services ([www.informedmonton.com](http://www.informedmonton.com))
- Seniors Abuse Help Line is a collaborative effort that reduces duplication
- ARTscape is a wonderful model within the disability community
- Collaborative effort to translate mental health information into five languages

#### **Key Weaknesses**

- There is no coordination of emergency/crisis services other than for health
- Low levels of awareness about available services and supports
- Immigrants face barriers related to language and spiritual support; counseling is not culturally-sensitive (e.g., shame/stigma present barriers to accessing support)
- Many groups continue to face barriers to shelter and support services (e.g., families with children, gays/lesbians, ethno-cultural groups)
- Funding is not stable and agencies spend a disproportionate amount of time pursuing funding opportunities; competition for funding is also a factor

### **Transportation and Mobility**

#### **Key Strengths**

- Over half of City buses are accessible to those in wheelchairs
- City heavily funds DATS with no support from the Province
- National bodies advocating for increased federal funds for public transit
- Donate-a-Ride program provides transit tickets to people with low incomes

#### **Key Weaknesses**

- Public transit provides limited frequency and service
- Little civic and political commitment to public transit, so funding is limited
- Not affordable and insensitive to marginalized people on low incomes
- Uncertain service and space limitations on DATS buses
- No coordination between Edmonton Transit and other agencies/services
- Growing safety concerns for pedestrians

*“A person with disabilities couldn’t come today because she couldn’t get DATS. So the availability of transportation is still an issue.”*

## **2.6 Local Soundings with Vulnerable Groups**

The formal and highly structured focus group process largely involved professional people who are familiar with interacting in this environment. While some of these participants have directly experienced exclusion, most have little personal experience, and so they largely engaged from a professional perspective. At the focus groups, issues and areas were identified that needed further exploration. To explore these issues and provide another way of obtaining information, a less formal and more interactive process called local soundings was developed.

*“A man came up to me in the mall, grabbed my arm and said ‘Why don’t you go back to where you came from?’”*

Local soundings were informal sessions with existing groups and populations that directly experience exclusion. Typically the 90-minute sessions were piggy-backed onto scheduled meetings of the groups. The sessions were intended to both test the results from the focus groups and gather first-hand stories and experiences about exclusion. Participants reviewed summaries from the focus groups and shared their personal experiences with feeling excluded.

During the summer of 2004, nine local soundings, with approximately 100 participants, were held.<sup>8</sup> The following are the groups and populations:

- Youth Understanding Youth (gay, lesbian and transgendered youth group)
- Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers (immigrants)
- KARA Family Support Centre (single mothers with low incomes)
- Canadian Mental Health Association (people with mental health disabilities)
- Pride Centre of Edmonton (gay, lesbian and transgendered adult group)
- City of Edmonton Youth Council (youth advisory committee)
- Inner-City Youth Development Association (former street-involved youth)
- Edmonton Arts Council (participants largely from ethno-cultural arts groups)
- Advisory Board on Services for People with Disabilities (City of Edmonton)

Participants in the 9 local soundings largely affirmed the results from the 12 focus groups. In addition, they shared first-hand experiences with feeling excluded and offered suggestions for effecting change. The following are a summary of comments:

### Reflections

- The persistence of widespread and negative stereotypes faced by some population groups remains the most pervasive barrier to inclusion. This permeates all aspects of their lived experience, from the denial of rights to the accessibility of services.
- Gaining employment for many LGBTQ (Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgendered and Queer) individuals is not an issue (depending on how one ‘presents’), but unofficial ‘don’t ask don’t tell’ policies make it difficult to fit into office culture
- Schools do little to facilitate relationship building between children with disabilities and their non-disabled peers
- Perceptions of discrimination, and little ethno-cultural representation on the police force, contribute to several communities feeling targeted rather than protected by the police. This feeling is particularly prevalent among marginalized youth in the inner city, many of whom feel they are under constant surveillance with their movement in the community heavily scrutinized.
- Ethno-cultural communities continue to struggle for recognition of their contribution to the broader arts community. This is made worse by limited funding for the arts in general and by a tension between what society sees as ‘professional’ versus ‘folk’ art.

### Issues

- Lack of recognition for foreign-earned credentials, discrimination and low wages in the job market, inadequate income supports and a “humiliating” bureaucratic

*“When I first moved here from Poland, the public transit system was very poor. I had to wait until my husband got home from work to go get groceries, which was strange for me because I come from a place where you can get groceries at the end of every block.*

*This was the first time I experienced dependence and isolation.”*

<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, sessions with seniors and Aboriginal groups were not held. Particular effort will be made during the alliance building and implementation phases to develop strong links with these populations. For details on follow-up work with seniors, see Next Steps (page 21).

*“This sort of thing [paying for faster service] is not acceptable for an inclusive society, but it’s really becoming more common.”*

process affect profoundly the sense of self-worth of many marginalized populations.

- Policies that emphasize the use of private vehicles contribute to a public transit system that does not effectively reach all parts of the city and is largely unaffordable to those living on low incomes.
- Despite the affordability of child care through subsidies, quality and nutrition are major concerns for low income single mothers.

### **Strategies**

- City legislation requiring that 25% of housing in all communities be accessible to those with disabilities (universal design also allows people to ‘age in place’).
- Design neighbourhoods to encourage interaction between people (e.g., higher density neighbourhoods with community hubs of activity).
- Granting programs that support the development of community capacity rather than just provide funding, including mentorship programs.
- Create a City organization that acts as an information/resource hub for inter-group communication.
- Provide more education in the school system for arts from various cultures so people gain an exposure early on.

## **2.7 Participants Review Reported Results**

Two feedback forums, with a total of 20 participants, were held in November 2004 to help ensure that the draft ICC Edmonton Report accurately captured the knowledge and experiences shared by participants in the focus groups and local soundings. In particular, the feedback forums were designed to solicit comments on the themes and issues that emerged from the earlier consultations (see the ‘Summary of Social Inclusion Issues’ in the next section). Invitations to attend the forums were sent to both the participants and all the invitees to the focus groups. People could choose to either attend a forum or provide feedback through an electronic questionnaire. (In total, 21 questionnaires were returned electronically.)

*“The wording of the document is modest and cautious, which is not entirely reflective of what was said at the focus groups and local soundings. Overall, the language needs to be more direct; otherwise our voices may not be heard. We are at risk of sending the message that ‘things are mostly okay’, which then gives people an easy out.”*

The results of the feedback forums and electronic surveys largely affirmed that the themes and issues in the draft Edmonton Report reflected what participants had said. However, a few participants challenged what they described as the “modest and cautious” tone of the draft (see sidebar quote on this page). These participants felt the language of the final Edmonton Report needed to be more direct and forceful to better ensure that it didn’t send the message that “things are mostly okay”.<sup>9</sup>

### **Reflections**

- Economic worth and outcomes are the prevailing focus (the bottom line) and all other outcomes are secondary. It’s hard to secure funding for intangible outcomes (i.e., how do you quantify inclusion?).
- There’s a sense of denial of the value of diversity. Canada used to have strong programs and cross-cultural training, but now there seems to be an attitude of ‘it’s all been done – it’s no longer a need’ and we’ve lost that focus. This appears to be happening at both the institutional and community levels.

<sup>9</sup> This critical feedback was shared with the other ICC partners and members of the Edmonton Civic Panel. It was helpful in shaping the language and content of the Edmonton Report.

*“Our cultural wisdom is that private enterprise can achieve the highest human ambitions. We need to recognize that there are some things that cannot make a profit, were never meant to make a profit, and provide numerous contributions to society nonetheless.”*

### **Issues**

- Long-term funding is difficult to secure in a climate that values short-term thinking. We end up repeating work that’s already been done. Funders are recognizing the problem of the “funding dance”.
- Many of the barriers to inclusion are systemic and the Aboriginal population is the most marginalized. There is significant racism against the Aboriginal community in the justice system. We know it, we’ve known it for a long time, and we need to take action.
- Public space is a huge issue for youth and we need to make sure they have space in the community for their activities (e.g., Churchill square is under heavy security and there is no space for skateboarders)
- Many organizations feel they lack the resources to facilitate inclusion because they’re caring for basic needs. This suggests a need to build coalitions. But this doesn’t excuse the government from its responsibilities.

### **Strategies/Recommendations**

- Recommendations should be focused on a community-based process (especially those that are directed at City).
- The City’s closure of the Diversity Office a few years ago was telling. The office needs to be revived.
- The Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing is a useful model that is clearly heard by the government. It brings key people together in a joint capacity to develop and monitor Edmonton’s affordable housing and homelessness strategy.
- We need increased powers for the City in response to downloading of responsibilities from the Province, but this cannot come without the transfer of additional funds. Why do we allow our cities to be victimized? Municipalities are in an awkward position because they are entities of the Province.

*“Before they speak, people ask themselves ‘what is the City or the Province going to think of this?’ Is the chill real or just perceived? Experience shows that agencies are not ‘punished’ (for example, having their funding cut) for speaking out and doing advocacy, but the perception is real, so it remains important. There is a great deal of self-censorship happening in the non-profit sector.”*

*“It’s a matter of safety within the political realm. Municipalities do not have the capacity and there is fear about taking action in those areas. It can put you in conflict with other institutions and levels of government.”*

### 3. Framing Social Inclusion Issues in Edmonton

#### 3.1 Summary of Social Inclusion Issues

Documenting and analysing the knowledge and experiences shared by over 200 people in Edmonton was challenging and required several steps. A key step in this process was identifying the ‘big picture’ social inclusion issues that include elements of several of the five inclusion dimensions (Diversity, Human Development, Civic Engagement, Living Conditions, and Community Services). These overarching issues are a summary of the themes and concerns participants raised in the community consultations. Identifying these issues was an important transitional step in the process of moving from documenting and analyzing what was heard to developing recommendations. These issues emerged during the preliminary analysis of the Edmonton results conducted jointly by local ESPC and national ICC staff.

- **A solid community-based foundation for inclusion is at risk in Edmonton.**  
The basis for a more inclusive community exists in several of the dimensions, but it is threatened by a lack of strong and consistent support and public investment.
- **The Alberta political culture challenges a social inclusion perspective.**  
The dominating ideological approach to social and economic issues and to the role of government in Alberta presents a particularly challenging context for social inclusion initiatives.
- **Cohesion, rather than divisions, needs to be promoted in an increasingly diverse city.**  
As Edmonton becomes a more diverse community, political leadership, the media, and the larger public are challenged to move from attitudes of fear, control and mere tolerance towards diverse groups, which only heightens differences and creates divisions. Edmonton needs to adopt a more welcoming and supportive approach that embraces diversity for its contribution to a more vital and dynamic community.
- **Pressures on the non-profit sector impede its contribution to the building of a more inclusive Edmonton.**  
The non-profit community sector can be a source of innovation and positive change for reducing exclusion and enhancing inclusion. The lack of funding stability and growing service delivery demands threaten to marginalize the sector and reduce its capacity to contribute to a more active and engaged civic culture.
- **There is an unresolved debate in Alberta about the two models of human service delivery – public/equitable versus private/for profit.**  
There is a lively, ongoing debate about access, equity and the quality of human services in Edmonton, given the wealth that exists in Alberta. Often, this debate is framed in terms of the public versus private service delivery models. A good example is the debate in Alberta about the benefits of public versus private health care delivery.

*“Society in general, and politicians in particular, need to fundamentally recognize the value of children. We know children are our future, but this is not reflected in policy.”*

*“What a huge effort it takes to have your voice heard! It shouldn’t be so hard to be heard.”*

## 4. Key Recommendations

The Key Recommendations of the Edmonton Report are based on the Summary of Social Inclusion Issues listed in the previous section. These issues provided a context for the development of the more specific recommendations. The recommendations are divided into **Foundational** and **Developmental Recommendations**. Realizing the Foundational Recommendations in these five key areas is essential to Edmonton becoming an inclusive city. The Developmental Recommendations will help to foster a culture of inclusion in Edmonton through institutional shifts. (An expanded version of the **Key Recommendations**, including the rationale for the recommendations and the roles and responsibilities for various stakeholders, is in **Appendix 1**.)

### Foundational Recommendations

#### 1. Fostering Institutional Readiness

**Outcome:** Institutional change in Edmonton fosters inclusion.

**Benchmarks:** Institutions and organizations shift their philosophy and operations to implement inclusion principles. Edmonton Inclusion Office uses internal and external indicators to evaluate progress towards a more inclusive Edmonton.

**Recommendation:**

- Create an Edmonton Inclusion Office

#### 2. Income and Employment <sup>10</sup>

**Outcome:** All residents of Edmonton have a living income.

**Benchmarks:** Everyone working full-time will earn a wage that provides for their basic needs. Adequate income supports will be provided to those unable to work.

**Recommendations:**

- The Alberta government will adopt the Market Basket Measure as the low income measure in Alberta and the tool to set AISH, welfare, and minimum wage rates.
- Capital Health will adopt policies and programs and undertake advocacy efforts that address the key influence of income and housing on health.
- City will adopt a Living Wage policy for City employees and contractors.
- Diverse stakeholders will adopt strong policies and public education strategies to reduce employment discrimination for at-risk groups (i.e., immigrants, people with disabilities, sexual minorities, etc.).
- Professional associations will reform their foreign accreditation policies to optimize the opportunities and contributions of immigrants.

*“Overall, the recommendations are good because they are strongly worded and move away from the ‘softness’ of the report”.*

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<sup>10</sup> Income/employment and housing are the first two areas for recommendations given that these issues and concerns are described within the Living Conditions Dimension. Focus group participants identified Living Conditions as the dimension that presented the foremost challenges to Edmonton becoming more inclusive. (This result was consistent in all five cities participating in the ICC initiative.)

*“It’s common knowledge that if you’re admitted into hospital, you better have a caregiver with you to monitor the quality of care you get because nurses are really stretched.”*

### 3. Affordable Housing

**Outcome:** All Edmonton residents have an affordable and physically accessible home.

**Benchmarks:** Everyone will live in housing that is adequate, accessible and suitable. This housing will cost no more than 30% of their pre-tax income.<sup>11</sup>

**Recommendations:**

- Affordable housing supply will be increased through government partnerships with the private and non-profit sectors to meet the recommendations of the Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing.
- 25% of new housing will be universally designed (i.e., wider doors, larger bathrooms, etc.) to offer housing choices to people with disabilities.

### 4. Child Development

**Outcome:** Edmonton is a child-friendly community in which all families have the capacity and supports to nurture their children.

**Benchmarks:** Edmonton is viewed as a child-friendly community. All families have access to child care that meets their needs and integrates early childhood development good practices. Parents have easy and affordable access to necessary family supports, parent training and respite parental care.

**Recommendations:**

- The Federal government will introduce and adequately fund a universal, high quality and affordable national child care strategy with Alberta government support.
- Diverse stakeholders will work together to create child-friendly workplaces in all work environments.

### 5. Public Transit

**Outcome:** Edmonton has a public transit system that is safe, accessible and affordable for everyone.

**Benchmarks:** Edmonton has an adequately funded public transit system with annual increases in ridership. People view transit as a practical alternative to private transportation.

**Recommendations:**

- A civic commitment to sustaining a safe, affordable, and accessible public transit system that reflects the value of public transportation over private.

*“I have a PhD and I’ve been teaching for most of my life and they won’t let me teach high school. Professional associations are there to protect their own, and there is a deliberate attempt to keep out foreign-trained professionals.”*

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<sup>11</sup> Statistics Canada (2005). Evolving Housing Conditions in Canada’s Census Metropolitan Areas, 1991-2001. Ottawa Catalogue 89-613-MWE2004005. “Affordable dwellings cost less than 30% of before-tax household income.” (p.36) In 2001, 38,140 households in Edmonton paid more than 30% of the household income on rent. These households comprise more than 1/3 of all renter households in the City. Nearly 1 of every 6 renter households (18,440) had a severe rent-to-income burden – more than 50% of income on rent (City of Edmonton, 2005).

*“The thing that makes me feel most left out is the lack of wheelchair accessible housing. It extremely limits my choices on where I live and who I interact with.”*

## **Developmental Recommendations**

### **6. Justice System and Crime Prevention**

**Outcome:** Edmontonians have a justice system they have confidence in.

**Benchmarks:** Edmontonians feel the justice system is fundamentally fair. The integrity and effectiveness of the justice system improves as it integrates community healing and alternative measures into new justice models. There is a shift in attitude and resources to preventing crime through community policing and by addressing its root social causes. Through deliberate equity strategies, the Edmonton Police Service will reflect the ethno-racial population of Edmonton.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Edmonton Police will partner with the community on strategies to reduce crime.
- Community policing will be Edmonton’s key policing strategy, with adequate resources.
- Improving relationships with ethno-racial communities will be a cornerstone of community policing.
- Integrate the practices and wisdom of Aboriginal culture into all aspects of the justice system.

### **7. Quality of Life**

**Outcome:** All Edmontonians have a high quality of life in a community that is enriched by the arts, culture and recreation.

**Benchmarks:** The lives of all Edmontonians are enriched through an inclusive, well-funded and participatory approach to the arts, culture and recreation. All Edmonton communities are healthy and strong.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Directly support individual artists that are from diverse cultures and backgrounds and are at all levels of development.
- Renew civic commitment to ensuring that all public spaces and recreational facilities are accessible, affordable and are preserved for the public good.<sup>12</sup>

### **8. Education**

**Outcome:** All Edmontonians have access to a high quality education that meets their lifelong learning needs.

**Benchmarks:** All Edmontonians can access a high quality education that is inclusive and affordable, and meets their needs at different points in their lives.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The Alberta government fosters a sense of cultural competence among teachers and a culture of inclusion throughout the education system.
- Recognize that public schools and institutions are valuable community assets deserving of adequate supports and resources.

*“Some (arts) groups are realizing that ‘equal’ access is not enough, as some communities need more support.”*

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<sup>12</sup> For example, all children under six years old and families receiving Income Support benefits will not be charged to use City recreational facilities.



## 5. Next Steps

### 5.1 Alliance Building in Edmonton

The relationships formed and the lessons learned during Phase 1 of the ICC initiative will help to support and guide the local follow up activities. During this next phase, the Edmonton Civic Panel, the ESPC, and other participating organizations will seek to build alliances with other stakeholders to implement the recommendations in this report. These other local stakeholders include the City of Edmonton and specific departments within the City, Provincial and Federal governments, the business sector, education institutions and school boards, and community-based organizations.<sup>13</sup>

The challenge of creating a more inclusive Edmonton is too complex and overwhelming for a single stakeholder to take on. Consequently, this alliance building phase is a critical step in transforming these recommendations into policies, procedures and activities that will lead to a more inclusive Edmonton. Substantial progress has already been made through our coordinated and collaborative efforts.

Three important outcomes have already emerged from the ICC initiative in Edmonton:

- **City Opens a Diversity and Inclusion Office**

In January 2005, the City of Edmonton opened a Diversity and Inclusion Office within its Corporate Services Branch. This internal initiative will address issues related to employment equity and how the City can provide services to an increasingly diverse population. As well, the Office is expected to work with community stakeholders on broader issues related to diversity and social inclusion. While the Office didn't emerge directly from the ICC initiative, the two initiatives did surface during the same time period from a common concern about inclusion in Edmonton.

- **Multicultural Inclusion Initiative**

The ICC initiative in Edmonton was a more direct catalyst for local ethno-cultural organizations to come together to develop a vision of multicultural inclusion in Edmonton. Since November 2004, about 20 ethno-cultural organizations have been working together, with support from the ESPC, on developing an inclusion plan and strategies. The coalition of groups plans to work with other stakeholders, such as the City's Diversity and Inclusion Office and the provincial and federal governments, to realize its vision of a multicultural inclusive Edmonton. Through the ICC initiative, the ESPC is providing strategic and organizational support to the efforts of these ethno-cultural organizations.

- **Senior's Inclusion Issues**

The voices of seniors were underrepresented during the community consultations for this report. To address this, the ESPC met with about 45 seniors at half a dozen seniors' centres and lodges<sup>14</sup> in February and March 2005.

*“Culturally sensitive is considered nice to have, instead of critical to have. It's not the norm and funding is hard to get. On the up-side, it is becoming more recognized and we are becoming more responsive to cultural diversities.”*

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<sup>13</sup> Appendix 1 includes the roles and responsibilities for various sectors in implementing the Key Recommendations.

<sup>14</sup> Since these seniors regularly socialize at a centre or lodge, they would likely express less social exclusion than would more isolated seniors that live alone with fewer social supports.

The seniors participating in these dialogues came from different backgrounds (i.e., ethno-cultural, low income and ‘mainstream’) reflecting the diversity in Edmonton. While most seniors didn’t feel socially excluded, they did identify specific strategies that would help them to feel a greater sense of inclusion. This work with seniors was timely given the opening of the City’s Diversity and Inclusion Office, the appointment of a Provincial ombudsman for seniors, as well as the recent creation of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council. Through the ICC initiative, the ESPC will be supporting seniors in pursuing their goals.

## **5.2 ICC Across Canada**

Civic Panels in the four other partner cities have produced reports based on a civic audit process similar to that conducted in Edmonton. A cross-national report, highlighting similarities and differences between cities, will be produced and presented at a national roundtable in Ottawa in June 2005. The focus of the roundtable will be on the importance of engaging the federal government in building and sustaining a strong social infrastructure.

In the fall of 2005, *Inclusive Cities Canada* will invite other municipalities and communities to become part of the cross-Canada initiative in building inclusive cities. This will include convening a national or regional symposia to lay the foundation for increasing constituency/alliance building. Civic partnerships and public engagement are vital towards reconstructing the social infrastructure, sustaining civic capacity, and preserving social cohesion. These are the foundations of strong, supportive and inclusive communities.

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## 7. Appendix 1

### Key Recommendations with Rationale, Roles and Responsibilities

| <b>Foundational Recommendations</b>   |   |           |   |                     |  |                 |  |                  |   |                    |  |                    |  |
|---|---|-----------|---|---------------------|--|-----------------|--|------------------|---|--------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| <p>Realizing these Foundational Recommendations in these four key areas is essential to Edmonton becoming an inclusive city.</p>  |   |           |   |                     |  |                 |  |                  |   |                    |  |                    |  |
| <p><b>1. Fostering Institutional Readiness</b></p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Institutional change in Edmonton fosters inclusion.<br/> <b>Benchmarks:</b> Institutions and organizations shift their philosophy and operations to implement inclusion principles. Edmonton Inclusion Office uses internal and external indicators to evaluate progress towards a more inclusive Edmonton.</p> <p><b>Recommendation #1:</b> Create an Edmonton Inclusion Office<br/> <b>Rationale:</b> This City funded, independent body will have a mandate to actively champion inclusion, civic engagement and leadership development in Edmonton. The Office will foster institutional readiness for inclusion and oversee and coordinate the implementation of these recommendations. Using internal and external indicators, the Office will evaluate and report to City Council on Edmonton’s progress towards becoming a more inclusive city.</p>   |   |           |   |                     |  |                 |  |                  |   |                    |  |                    |  |
| <p><b>2. Income and Employment</b></p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> All residents of Edmonton have a living income.<br/> <b>Benchmarks:</b> Everyone working full-time will earn a wage that provides for their basic needs. Adequate income supports will be provided to those unable to work.</p> <p><b>Recommendation #2:</b> The Alberta government will adopt the Market Basket Measure (MBM) as the measure of low income in Alberta and the instrument to set AISH, welfare, and minimum wage rates.<br/> <b>Rationale:</b> The MBM is a useful objective measure to set policies for low income policies and programs. It redefines low incomes as the inability to buy specific goods and services.</p> <p><b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Community</td> <td>The Community will advocate for the adoption of the MBM and show how adopting the MBM would positively affect people’s incomes.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Public Institutions</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Business Sector</td> <td>The Business Sector will advocate the business case for adopting the MBM in Alberta.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>City of Edmonton</td> <td>The City will affirm its support for the MBM and show how using the MBM to set rates would increase people’s incomes.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alberta Government</td> <td>The Alberta government will undertake an objective review of the implications of adopting the MBM.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Federal Government</td> <td>The Federal government will clarify the MBM review and updating process, as well as the timelines.</td> </tr> </table> |   | Community | The Community will advocate for the adoption of the MBM and show how adopting the MBM would positively affect people’s incomes. | Public Institutions |  | Business Sector | The Business Sector will advocate the business case for adopting the MBM in Alberta. | City of Edmonton | The City will affirm its support for the MBM and show how using the MBM to set rates would increase people’s incomes. | Alberta Government | The Alberta government will undertake an objective review of the implications of adopting the MBM. | Federal Government | The Federal government will clarify the MBM review and updating process, as well as the timelines. |
| Community   | The Community will advocate for the adoption of the MBM and show how adopting the MBM would positively affect people’s incomes. |           |   |                     |  |                 |  |                  |   |                    |  |                    |  |
| Public Institutions   |   |           |   |                     |  |                 |  |                  |   |                    |  |                    |  |
| Business Sector   | The Business Sector will advocate the business case for adopting the MBM in Alberta.  |           |   |                     |  |                 |  |                  |   |                    |  |                    |  |
| City of Edmonton  | The City will affirm its support for the MBM and show how using the MBM to set rates would increase people’s incomes.           |           |   |                     |  |                 |  |                  |   |                    |  |                    |  |
| Alberta Government  | The Alberta government will undertake an objective review of the implications of adopting the MBM.                              |           |   |                     |  |                 |  |                  |   |                    |  |                    |  |
| Federal Government  | The Federal government will clarify the MBM review and updating process, as well as the timelines.                              |           |   |                     |  |                 |  |                  |   |                    |  |                    |  |

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| <b>Recommendation #3:</b> Capital Health will adopt policies and programs and undertake advocacy efforts that address the key influence of income and housing on health.   |   |
| <b>Rationale:</b> Income and housing are key social determinants of health. Joint advocacy is key to addressing complex and systemic issues like low income and affordable housing.  |   |
| <b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b>   |   |
| Community  | The Edmonton Coalition on Housing will coordinate housing advocacy efforts. The Edmonton Social Planning Council will support low income advocacy with research and analysis.     |
| Public Institutions  | Capital Health's programs will address housing and low income as health issues and its advocacy efforts will reflect their key influence on health.                               |
| Business Sector  | Business organizations will advocate for public policies that address low income and affordable housing as measures to promote social cohesion and economic prosperity.           |
| City of Edmonton   | The City will cooperate with Capital Health on strategies that address low income and affordable housing as health issues.  |
| Alberta Government   | The Province will fund health initiatives to address these issues. It will also work with various stakeholders on strategies to address the social determinants as health issues. |
| Federal Government   |   |
| <b>Recommendation #4:</b> City will adopt a Living Wage policy for all City employees and contractors.   |   |
| <b>Rationale:</b> City needs to show leadership in societal shift to ensuring a living wage for all workers.   |   |
| <b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b>   |   |
| Community  | The Community supports political leadership in adopting the policy.   |
| Public Institutions  |   |
| Business Sector  | Business sector supports the City initiative, including the increased costs.  |
| City of Edmonton   | City Council adopts a living wage policy.   |
| Alberta Government   |   |
| Federal Government   |   |
| <b>Recommendation #5:</b> Diverse stakeholders will adopt strong policies and public education strategies to reduce employment discrimination for at-risk groups (i.e., immigrants, people with disabilities and sexual minorities). |   |
| <b>Rationale:</b> Subtle employment discrimination undermines inclusion efforts and the spirit of employment law.  |   |
| <b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b>   |   |
| Community  | The Community will support public education efforts and a broad community dialogue about the issue, and advocate for stronger public policies.                                    |
| Public Institutions  | Institutions will enhance internal policies and education efforts. For example, unions will develop fair internal processes for addressing discrimination.                        |
| Business Sector  | Businesses will enhance internal policies and education efforts. They will develop fair internal processes for addressing discrimination.   |
| City of Edmonton   | The City will enhance internal policies and education efforts to reduce employment discrimination. It will also adopt an employment equity policy.                                |
| Alberta Government   | The Province will strengthen employment discrimination legislation and enhance education efforts through programs to help organizations address discrimination.                   |
| Federal Government   |   |

**Recommendation #6:** Professional associations will reform their foreign accreditation policies to optimize the opportunities and contributions of immigrants.

**Rationale:** The talents of highly skilled immigrants are being underutilized, resulting in a societal loss, lost professional expertise, frustrated immigrants and an underclass of excluded immigrants.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Community           | The Community will learn more about foreign accreditation issues and support immigrants by lobbying professional associations to reform their policies.                      |
| Public Institutions | Schools and non-profit agencies will offer training in professional decorum to address business concerns about the suitability of immigrants and their capacity to “fit in”. |
| Business Sector     | Professional associations will reform their foreign accreditation policies for immigrants and businesses will be more flexible with their decorum expectation.               |
| City of Edmonton    | The City’s employment policies will support immigrants struggling to meet professional accreditation requirements.   |
| Alberta Government  | The Province provides financial and program support to ease the transition of immigrants trying to meet foreign accreditation requirements.                                  |
| Federal Government  | The Federal government funds transition programs for immigrants trying to meet foreign accreditation requirements.   |

**3. Affordable Housing**

**Outcome:** All residents of Edmonton have an affordable and physically accessible home.

**Benchmarks:** Everyone will live in housing that is adequate, accessible and suitable. This housing will cost no more than 30% of their pre-tax income.

**Recommendation #7:** Affordable housing supply will increase through government partnerships with the private and non-profit sectors to meet the recommendations of the Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing.

**Rationale:** The current stock of affordable housing is inadequate to meet the growing need. Various partnership arrangements are needed to meet the diverse needs.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Community           | The Community, governments and the private sector will partner to build affordable housing and reduce the Not-In-My-Backyard (NIMBY) response.   |
| Public Institutions | Community Foundations and service clubs will fund affordable housing initiatives.  |
| Business Sector     | The Building Industry will support affordable housing by providing low-cost professional services and supplies.  |
| City of Edmonton    | The City will invest tax surpluses and long-term investment income in building affordable housing.   |
| Alberta Government  | The Province will partner with the private and non-profit sector to build more affordable housing. It will also increase the rent supplements to current housing projects to cover the actual cost of the housing. |
| Federal Government  | The Federal government will work with the City, Province and the private/non-profit sectors to build more affordable housing.  |

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| <p><b>Recommendation #8:</b> 25% of new housing will be universally designed (i.e., wider doors, larger bathrooms, etc.) to offer housing choices to people with disabilities.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> People with disabilities need private sector housing options. Adapting existing housing is costly. Seniors would have the option of staying in their homes longer.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b></p>  |   |
| Community  | The Community will accept cost sharing through a price hike for new housing and a partial government subsidy to offset the increased costs.                   |
| Public Institutions  |   |
| Business Sector  | The Building Industry will support the policy and negotiate a sharing of the increased housing costs.   |
| City of Edmonton   | The City will adopt the policy and negotiate a sharing of the increased housing costs between new homebuyers, industry and governments.                       |
| Alberta Government   | The Province will share the increased housing costs between new homebuyers, industry and governments.   |
| Federal Government   | The Federal government will share the increased housing costs between new homebuyers, industry and governments.   |
| <p><b>4. Child Development</b></p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> Edmonton is a child-friendly community in which all families have the capacity and supports to nurture their children.</p> <p><b>Benchmarks:</b> Edmonton is viewed as a child-friendly community. All families have access to child care that meets their needs and integrates early childhood development good practices. Parents have easy and affordable access to necessary family supports, parent training and respite parental care.</p> |   |
| <p><b>Recommendation #9:</b> The Federal government introduces and funds a universal, high quality and affordable national child care strategy with Alberta government support.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Secure child care is essential to working families and to help nurture the development of healthy children.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b></p>  |   |
| Community  | The Community holds governments accountable for the program details and funding. Private and non-profit operators create a range of options for families.     |
| Public Institutions  | Institutions provide quality training to child care workers and offer best practice child care models in schools, etc.  |
| Business Sector  | Private operators provide high quality child care, respect staff and provide adequate pay and training.   |
| City of Edmonton   | The City offers best practice models of child care and staffing in its buildings.   |
| Alberta Government   | The Province cooperates with the Federal government and funds diverse options. It adopts supportive progressive workplace legislation, policies and programs. |
| Federal Government   | The Federal government adopts the policy and provides adequately funding. It also develops effective evaluation tools and processes.                          |
| <p><b>Recommendation #10:</b> Diverse stakeholders will work together to create child-friendly workplaces in all work environments.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> All sectors of society have an interest and a key role in nurturing healthy children and supporting families.</p>   |   |
| <p><b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b></p>  |   |



|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Community           | The Community provides neighbourhood-based supports for families.   |
| Public Institutions | Institutions adopt flexible internal policies and practices as well as external outreach to support families. |
| Business Sector     | The Business Sector offers flexible working conditions and onsite child care to assist working parents.       |
| City of Edmonton    | The City adopts flexible working conditions and onsite child care to assist working parents.                  |
| Alberta Government  | The Province adopts flexible working conditions and onsite child care to assist working parents.              |
| Federal Government  | The Federal government adopts flexible working conditions and onsite child care to assist working parents.    |

## 5. Public Transit

**Outcome:** Edmonton has a public transit system that is safe, accessible and affordable for everyone.

**Benchmarks:** Edmonton has an adequately funded public transit system with annual increases in ridership. People view transit as a practical alternative to private transportation.

**Recommendation #11:** A civic commitment to sustaining a safe, affordable, and accessible public transit system that reflects the value of public transportation over private.

**Rationale:** Safe, affordable, and accessible public transit is a key to promoting inclusion. Public transportation is a sustainable public good requiring an ongoing civic support.

### Roles and Responsibilities:

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Community           | The Community will support a funding shift from private transportation to public transit and accepts the related higher taxes and costs.                                      |
| Public Institutions | Institutions will support this societal shift to public transit. They will reward staff using public transit.   |
| Business Sector     | Businesses will support this societal shift and additional costs. In lieu of offering parking stalls, businesses will reward staff transit users by providing transit passes. |
| City of Edmonton    | The City will champion public transit over private transportation. It will increase service, raise the operating subsidy, freeze fares and expand the LRT.                    |
| Alberta Government  | The Province will support this shift by increasing the operating subsidy to transit. It will increase financial support for LRT expansion.                                    |
| Federal Government  | The Federal government will increase its financial commitment to public transit, including a national marketing campaign.   |

## Developmental Recommendations

These Developmental Recommendations will help to foster a culture of inclusion in Edmonton through institutional shifts.

## 6. Justice System and Crime Prevention

**Outcome:** Edmontonians have a justice system they have confidence in.

**Benchmarks:** Edmontonians feel the justice system is fundamentally fair. The integrity and effectiveness of the justice system improves as it integrates community healing and alternative measures into new justice models. There is a shift in attitude and resources to preventing crime through community policing and by addressing its root social causes. Through an employment equity strategy, the Edmonton Police Service will reflect the ethno-racial population of Edmonton.

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| <p><b>Recommendation #12:</b> Edmonton Police will partner with the community on strategies to reduce crime.<br/> <b>Rationale:</b> Preventing crime will help build safer, stronger neighbourhoods. Communities often have insights about how to reduce crime and improve the safety of their neighbourhood.</p> |  |
| <p><b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b></p>   |  |
| Community   | The Community will dedicate more resources and time to working with the police on crime prevention and also support longer-term initiatives to address the root causes.          |
| Public Institutions   | Community Foundations will fund community-based crime prevention, especially those addressing the root causes.   |
| Business Sector   | Businesses will fund and participate in crime prevention strategies through joint community development strategies.  |
| City of Edmonton  | The City will fund and participate in crime prevention through joint community building strategies.  |
| Alberta Government  | The Province will support and fund new justice models that integrate alternative justice measures. It will fund crime prevention through joint community development strategies. |
| Federal Government  | The Federal government will increase follow-up support to alternative measures programs. It will fund crime prevention through joint community development strategies.           |
| <p><b>Recommendation #13:</b> Community policing will be Edmonton’s key policing strategy, with adequate resources.<br/> <b>Rationale:</b> Community policing helps to reduce crime, helps to engage the community in the problem, and is very popular with citizens.</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b></p>   |  |
| Community   | The Community will agree to pay for additional staffing costs.   |
| Public Institutions   |  |
| Business Sector   | Business Sector will agree to pay for the additional staffing costs.   |
| City of Edmonton  | The Police will adopt community policing as the key policing strategy.   |
| Alberta Government  | The Province will provide additional resources to the City to pay for community policing.  |
| Federal Government  |  |
| <p><b>Recommendation #14:</b> Improving relationships with ethno-racial communities will be a cornerstone of community policing.<br/> <b>Rationale:</b> Improved relationships will lead to reduced tensions and ultimately, a reduction in crime and improved better social cohesion.</p>                        |  |
| <p><b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b></p>   |  |
| Community   | The Community, especially ethno-racial communities, is a partner in cross-sector initiatives to reduce crime and ethno-racial tensions by addressing their root social causes.   |
| Public Institutions   | Community foundations will fund community building and crime prevention programs that involve ethno-racial communities.  |
| Business Sector   |  |
| City of Edmonton  | The Police will work to improve relationships with ethno-racial communities.   |
| Alberta Government  |  |
| Federal Government  |  |

**Recommendation #15:** Integrate the practices and wisdom of Aboriginal culture into all aspects of the justice system.

**Rationale:** Aboriginal people are over represented among offenders. Our societal schism and racism are played out in the justice system. Integrating Aboriginal cultural values and practices is key to addressing the root causes of crime.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Community           | The Community values the key role of the Aboriginal community (i.e., Elders, community sentencing, etc.) in addressing concerns about crime and safety.            |
| Public Institutions | Schools/teachers will promote a greater understanding of and appreciation for Aboriginal culture among non-Aboriginal students.                                    |
| Business Sector     | Businesses will support the policy and resource shift to new justice models, including alternative measures strategies.  |
| City of Edmonton    | The City will support the Aboriginal community's increased role in the justice system. It will promote a greater appreciation for the value of Aboriginal culture. |
| Alberta Government  | The Province will support the Aboriginal community's increased role in the justice system through policy shifts and more dedicated resources.                      |
| Federal Government  | The Federal government will support the Aboriginal community's increased role in the justice system through policy shifts and more dedicated resources.            |

**7. Quality of Life**

**Outcome:** All Edmontonians have a high quality of life in a community that is enriched by the arts, culture and recreation.

**Benchmarks:** The lives of all Edmontonians are enriched through an inclusive, well-funded and participatory approach to the arts, culture and recreation. All Edmonton communities are healthy and strong.

**Recommendation #16:** Directly support individual artists that are from diverse cultures and backgrounds and are at all levels of development.

**Rationale:** Standardized global entertainment results in a loss of diverse locally-based activities. Supporting groups that primarily seek to preserve diverse cultures or art forms is important. But supporting the development and excellence of local artists who come from diverse (and often excluded) backgrounds is more effective.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

|                     |   |
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| Community           | The Community will become familiar and comfortable with artistic works that are not considered mainstream, and will value a wider range of arts and recreation. People will participate more directly in artistic and recreational activities and become less exclusively consumer oriented in arts and recreation. |
| Public Institutions | Arts Councils and other funders will develop/augment grants for individual artists. An artist's interest/ability to express a marginalized point of view will be one of the criteria in making grant decisions. Arts/recreational organizations that fund artists from diverse backgrounds will be supported.       |
| Business Sector     | Businesses will encourage more participation by all employees in arts and recreational activities at the local level.   |
| City of Edmonton    | The City will use diversity as one of the criteria for civic operating grants to arts and recreation organizations. It will allow community investment grants to be made to individuals as well as to non-profit organizations.   |
| Alberta Government  | The Province will use diversity as one of the criteria for operating grants to arts and recreation organizations and allow grants to individuals and non-profit groups.   |

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| Federal Government   | The Federal government will use diversity as one of the criteria for operating grants to arts and recreation organizations and allow grants to individuals as well as to non-profit organizations.                     |
| <p><b>Recommendation #17:</b> Renew civic commitment to ensuring that all public spaces and recreational facilities are accessible, affordable and are preserved for the public good.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Public spaces are being transformed into private spaces that may exclude some citizens. Pressure on public recreational facilities to pay for themselves threatens their affordability. Public facilities that are inaccessible are exclusionary.</p> <p><b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b></p> |  |
| Community  | The Community will support extra costs to ensure public spaces remain public, accessible and affordable. It subsidizes public recreation and ensures its buildings are accessible.                                     |
| Public Institutions  | Institutions will champion the value of public spaces and facilities. They support public access through flexible hours, creative public outreach, and accessible buildings.   |
| Business Sector  | The Business Sector champions public spaces and facilities as key to economic growth and attracting new businesses. It will support extra costs to ensure public spaces remain public, accessible and affordable.      |
| City of Edmonton   | The City will champion public spaces and facilities as key to a growing city. It will provide adequate support to ensure that public spaces remain public, accessible and affordable.                                  |
| Alberta Government   | The Province will reverse the shift towards the privatization of public spaces and will provide the necessary support to the City to ensure that public spaces remain public, accessible and affordable.               |
| Federal Government   | The Federal government will reverse the shift towards the privatization of public spaces and will provide the necessary support to the Province to ensure that public spaces remain public, accessible and affordable. |
| <p><b>8. Education</b></p> <p><b>Outcome:</b> All Edmontonians have access to a high quality education that meets their lifelong learning needs.</p> <p><b>Benchmarks:</b> All Edmontonians can access a high quality education that is inclusive and affordable, and meets their needs at different points in their lives.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Recommendation #18:</b> The Alberta government fosters a sense of cultural competence among teachers and a culture of inclusion throughout the education system.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Students from diverse backgrounds (i.e., sexual orientation, ethno-racial, etc.) must feel included in the institutional learning process. Teachers need skills to eliminate learning barriers.</p> <p><b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b></p>  |  |
| Community  | The Community will champion diversity in its working relationships to reinforce the emerging culture of inclusion in schools and communities.  |
| Public Institutions  | Schools will see diversity as a value to embrace and apply. Student teachers will receive diversity training and develop cultural competency.  |
| Business Sector  | The Business Sector will take on internal diversity education and adopt inclusive workplace measures.  |
| City of Edmonton   | The City will adopt the goal of fostering an inclusion culture and will adopt inclusive workplace measures.  |

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| Alberta Government  | The Province will champion the goal of fostering an inclusive culture in schools, while actively addressing institutional resistance to the transformation.                    |
| Federal Government  |  |
| <p><b>Recommendation #19:</b> Recognize that public schools and institutions are valuable community assets deserving of adequate supports and resources.</p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Public schools and institutions have a vital role in fostering inclusion. Although there are still challenges, public schools have largely adapted to the demands and opportunities of embracing diversity.</p> <p><b>Roles and Responsibilities:</b></p> |  |
| Community   | The Community will continue to strongly support public schools and institutions as a key foundation of society and advocate for sustainable funding.                           |
| Public Institutions   | Institutions will show their adaptability to change, demonstrate their role in fostering inclusion, and hence, their value as a public investment.                             |
| Business Sector   | The Business Sector will advocate for the value of public institutions as a key to economic prosperity and community stability.  |
| City of Edmonton  | The City will show its value to the public and senior governments through the development of outcome measures and other evaluation measures.                                   |
| Alberta Government  | The Province will provide sustainable funding and recognize the value of public schools and institutions. It will resist demands to privatize public schools and institutions. |
| Federal Government  | The Federal government will provide sustainable funding and recognize the value of public institutions. It will resist demands to privatize public schools and institutions.   |

## 8. Appendix 2

### 8.1 Recent Local Research and Public Reports

The 15 research reports listed below address inclusion issues and themes contained in this document. As these reports were drawn from a variety of sources – local and provincial governments, non-profit organizations and Alberta-based think-tanks, they reflect diverse views on these topics. Participants in the community consultations specifically mentioned some of these reports. Others are drawn from credible sources that will complement and enrich the information and dialogue gleaned from the focus groups and local soundings.

- **Building a Public Participation Process – City of Edmonton (2004)**  
Community Services Department's developed this detailed roadmap for staff facilitating community participation processes; it could be adopted as a template for all City departments.
- **Provincial Economic Impact of the Arts study – Province of Alberta (2005)**  
The arts contribute \$153.2 million annually to the Gross Provincial Product of Alberta. As the Alberta Foundation for the Arts provided \$13 million in grants in 2003/2004, this represents a 1:12 ratio of return on Arts investment in Alberta. The arts sector provides more than 3,500 Albertans with full-time employment and returns over \$19 million in taxes to the province.
- **Benchmarking Edmonton's Progress: Federation of Canadian Municipalities Quality of Life Reporting System – City of Edmonton (2004)**  
This report for Edmonton City Council on the quality of life in Edmonton uses a series of life indicators developed by the FCM. A follow-up process with local stakeholders identified three key areas of concern: incidence of low income; lack of affordable housing; and the rate of low weight babies.
- **Shared Responsibility: Final Report and Recommendations of the Urban Aboriginal Initiative – Canada West Foundation (2003)**  
The Alberta-based, non-profit public policy research institute created the UAI to examine issues affecting urban Aboriginal people (over 50% of Aboriginal people live in urban areas; 2/3 of Aboriginal people live in western Canada; Edmonton has the second largest population of urban Aboriginal people). UAI identified key policy areas, explored policy options and alternatives, highlighted promising practice ideas, and promoted a dialogue about urban Aboriginal issues.
- **Report and Recommendations: Alberta's Learning Commission – Province of Alberta (2003)**  
Its vision for the future of education in Alberta includes these recommendations: provide support for children with diverse languages and cultures; adopt province-wide guidelines for average class sizes across school jurisdictions; and develop schools as hubs of services for children and communities.
- **Safer Cities Advisory Committee, Action Plan, Strategic Plan – City of Edmonton (2002)**  
For 15 years, SCAC has tackled community issues around urban safety using a collaborative, multi-sector and strategic approach. In 1998, Safer Cities was named in the Global Best Practices 100 List prepared by the U.N. Centre for Human Settlements (known as Habitat).
- **Running to Stand Still: How Alberta government policy has led to wage stagnation during a time of prosperity – Alberta Federation of Labour (2003)**  
This report states that Alberta has the strongest economy in Alberta, yet over the last decade, wages in Alberta have grown very slowly, and inflation has eaten up these modest increases. More importantly, real wages have stagnated during a decade of unprecedented growth and prosperity. The study asks 'why aren't working people in the province realizing the economic benefits of the boom?'

- **A Framework for Reform – Report to the Premier’s Advisory Council on Health (Mazankowski Report) – Province of Alberta (2001)**  
 The report argues that without fundamental changes in how Alberta pays for health care, the current health system is not sustainable. Its recommendations include: creating an expert panel to review categories of services (possibly leading to the de-listing of some services); creating an electronic health record; encouraging more choice, competition and accountability; and privatizing some health services.
- **Making Ends Meet: A Profile of Urban Poverty in Alberta – Inter-City Forum on Social Policy (2004)**  
 Between 1996 and 2001, the national poverty rate dropped by 14.4% and by 17.8% in Alberta. In 2001, poverty was more prevalent among lone-parent families with children under age 18 (39.1%) and unattached women (39.1%). While lone-parent families with children under 18 represent 8.5% of all Albertan families, they account for 32.1% of poor families. Nearly one in five Albertans with a disability is poor (19.3%) (all figures based on LICO).
- **Public Remedies, Not Private Payments: Quality Health Care in Alberta – Parkland Institute (2004)**  
 This report from the University of Alberta-based think tank states that the Alberta government has manufactured a fiscal crisis in Alberta’s health care system. It argues that the government can afford to adequately fund public health care but it is unwilling to do so, largely for ideological reasons.
- **MLA Committee to Review Low-Income Programs – Province of Alberta (2001)**  
 After extensive consultations with community stakeholders, the Alberta government selectively adopted some of the committee’s recommendations. While administrative recommendations were adopted, recommendations to enhance benefits were largely ignored (e.g., increase to Income Support benefits, phase in of the Market Basket Measure as the targeted minimum income threshold, etc.).
- **Equity in Edmonton Schools: Research Report – Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations (2004)**  
 Surveys showed considerable variation among schools in respect for cultural differences, frequency of racial incidents, sense of safety, etc. Other issues include: a shortage of role models (few minority teachers); teachers do not understand non-mainstream cultures (a key to an equitable learning environment); senior district staff denied that racism is a problem. Some black and Aboriginal parents are skeptical that system-wide changes were possible. Others felt the change was possible, but that it would take a long time.
- **Foundations for Prosperity: Creating a Sustainable Municipal-Provincial Partnership to Meet the Infrastructure Challenges of Alberta’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Century – Canada West Foundation (2004)**  
 The report lays the foundation for a new governance and funding partnership between the Federal and Alberta governments and provincial municipalities that will address the municipal infrastructure debt.
- **Edmonton Community Plan on Housing and Support Services 2005-2009 – Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on Housing (2004)**  
 This plan addresses homelessness, low income housing and related support services in Edmonton. Concentrated efforts are needed to significantly increase the supply of housing and support services that provide longer-term solutions. Over the next four years, these efforts require: \$250 million in capital; \$180 million for operations/support services; and \$6 million in strategic services to implement the plan.
- **More Money in Their Pockets: Pragmatism, Politics and Poverty in Alberta; Why the ESPC challenges Alberta to adopt the Market Basket Measure – Edmonton Social Planning Council (2005)**  
 This paper explains the Council’s position that the Alberta government should adopt the MBM as the measure of low income in Alberta and the instrument to set welfare and minimum wage rates. Although the MBM has limitations, the Council believes its practical advantages offset its theoretical disadvantages.

## 8.2 Relevant Local Good Practices and Policies

The following are examples of good practice and policy initiatives that are currently being undertaken to help create a more inclusive Edmonton. These examples were identified by participants in the consultations or by members of the Edmonton Civic Panel. They are listed here to both celebrate successful initiatives as well as provide direction for future initiatives.

- **City of Edmonton: Safer Cities Initiative**

Since it started in 1990, Safer Cities has addressed crime prevention and urban safety through collaborative approaches to social development and environmental crime. The advisory committee is comprised of key stakeholder groups from civic departments, the Edmonton Police Service, Capital Health Authority, citizens-at-large and various community members, such as small business. The Safer Cities framework is a progressive model for action that moves from creating a caring community by focusing on individuals and the vulnerable to designing safe environments. The model identifies four inter-related components of urban safety through its four objectives for building safe communities:

1. Through violence prevention
2. By caring for the vulnerable
3. By creating safe places through environmental design
4. By sharing success through communications

The Safer Cities Initiative was named in the Global Best Practices100 List prepared by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.

- **Vibrant Communities Edmonton**

Vibrant Communities is a community-driven effort that seeks to reduce poverty by creating multi-sector partnerships in 15 cities across Canada.

Vibrant Communities Edmonton started in 2001 and is co-sponsored by the Edmonton Community Loan Fund, the City of Edmonton Community Services Department, and the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region. Building on a first phase that created a working group and identified key sectors with a role in poverty reduction, Vibrant Communities Edmonton is currently developing a community plan. The plan will focus on “learning, action, and how the community can view and respond to poverty, moving from alleviating the effects of poverty to poverty reduction.”

These five key areas for community engagement have been identified through a series of focus group sessions:

1. Research and Analysis
2. Community Awareness/Education
3. Partnerships/Community Engagement
4. Leadership/Governance
5. Fund & Resource Development

A Leadership Council, comprised of representatives from municipal and provincial government, funders, faith communities, Aboriginal communities, business, labour, and the health sector, will guide the initiative in the next phase of its work.



- **City of Edmonton: Community Services and Public Participation Processes**

In 2003, the City of Edmonton's Community Services developed a manual called *Building a Public Participation Process* that reflects the department's commitment to public process. The manual lays out four cornerstones to ensure that public processes meet the needs of citizens through provisions for genuine participation:

- Belief in individual and group capacity
- Right to community self-determination
- Equitable access to information and services
- Commitment to citizen involvement

The Commitment to the Community highlights the department's approach to citizen engagement:

1. Determination of need for citizen and community involvement will always be the initial/integral step in all of our planning.
2. Community Services employees will practice/understand/adopt their service role of responding to community needs and situations.
3. Processes we initiate and/or participate in will have a shared understanding/agreement/consensus on purpose, scope, process and the use of results.

- **Edmonton Community Leagues**

Borrowing from New York's Social Centre Movement, Edmonton became the first city in Canada to adopt the concept of a community-based organization in the early 1900s. There are now 145 active leagues in Edmonton governed by the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL). The EFCL is now the largest volunteer organization in North America.

The Community Services Department provides operating grants, funding for staff, and small offices for community leagues in recreation facilities. While there is no formal reporting relationship between the City and community leagues, the City sees the leagues as an effective vehicle with which to communicate with citizens.

Although largely focused on recreation, leisure, and neighbourhood improvement, some community leagues have become much more involved in local planning processes and issues, including advocacy and public education. There is a significant range in vision and mandate among the 145 community leagues in Edmonton, making some more effective structures of inclusion than others. The EFCL created a comprehensive consultative guide, *Community Consultation in the Planning and Development Process*, which was informed by different perspectives from key stakeholders in the planning process.

- **Community Schools as Hubs**

There is a common perception that schools are no longer used as 'hubs' in the community despite a Joint Use Agreement between the City of Edmonton, Edmonton Public Schools and Edmonton Catholic Schools.

Together the three partners aim to bring facilities and communities together, provide opportunities for a wide variety of low cost and no cost activities, and make more effective use of tax dollars through shared use of facilities. A belief in cooperating with community organizations to meet the educational and recreational needs of the community inform the agreement, and both boards encourage the after-hours use of district buildings by the community.

Although community use of schools is encouraged under the Agreement, there are a number of restrictions on its use and the process involved in booking space appears bureaucratic. These factors combined may impact accessibility and the desirability of using schools for community events. Given a trend toward greater security considerations in recent years, particularly where children and youth are involved, the perception that schools are no longer hubs of community activity may be well founded despite the existence of a joint agreement explicitly promoting the use of these spaces.

The City has recently recognized the benefit of schools serving as hubs within communities. The Future School Sites Study, approved by Council in July 2003 outlines the vision for new schools: "School sites in communities of the future will be centrally located, multi-use 'community knowledge campuses; that serve students and learners of all ages and house a range of complementary recreational, community, and public services. They will be 'beacons' at the heart of the community."

- **The Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative**

The Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord Initiative was developed through partnership between the City of Edmonton (working with the City Council-appointed Edmonton Aboriginal Urban Affairs Committee (EAUAC)), the Government of Alberta, and the Government of Canada. The initiative is responding to an increasing awareness of the specific needs and aspirations of Aboriginal people in Edmonton. It seeks to increase opportunities to work together in: improving service delivery for Aboriginal people; enhancing the attractiveness of City employment for Aboriginal people; and ensuring that available resources flow to Urban Aboriginal priorities, as determined by Aboriginal people in Edmonton. Four phases will take place between Summer 2004 and December 2009:

Phase One: Dialogue and Relationship Building

By bringing citizens together in culturally appropriate forums, inclusive discussions will build trust, respect, and common understanding while developing shared priorities.

Phase Two: Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord

The development of an Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Accord will dominate this phase, and will include mutually held values and principles, and protocols for creating a sustained respectful working relationship between the City of Edmonton and Aboriginal citizens.

Phase Three: Working Together to Achieve More

Working to address the barriers to participation in Edmonton's economy and quality of life for Aboriginal people, the initiative will identify and undertake shared actions. This will include a City of Edmonton project team examining department-specific cases for improving services to Aboriginal people and identify specific ways to improve the Aboriginal community's participation in the City's workforce.

Phase Four: Annual Project Status Review

Annual reviews of progress will be conducted over the life of the initiative to determine what adjustments or further stakeholder involvement is required.

- **Diversity: The City of Calgary Experience**

Concerns surrounding the exclusion of ethno-cultural communities in various aspects of civic life were brought forward to the City of Calgary by the Committee for Race Relations and Cross-Cultural Understanding in late 1999. Later that year the Calgary Cultural and Racial Diversity Task Force was created to investigate steps forward for the City.

The Task Force developed a five-phase initiative to address exclusion in the city by involving four key sectors (public, private, not-for-profit, and community) in focus groups. Once the key issues were identified, twelve strategies to address exclusion emerged and six ‘inter-sectoral’ teams comprised of leaders in each of the four sectors were assigned to implement strategies in the four sectors.

Now called Diversity Calgary, the body responsible for the initiative became an independent non-profit organization that operates separately from the City of Calgary despite the City’s significant role in its early development and funding.

For this report, Nitin Manerikar, Chair of Diversity Calgary, offered the following reflections and lessons learned through the Calgary experience:

Co-creation is critical: The Diversity Calgary experience saw stakeholders from government, community, and non-profit sectors involved for several years doing research and analysis only to turn it over to another group “who did not have the benefit of years of knowledge and understanding, and who also brought very different perspectives as corporations and institutional employers. This has resulted in two years of spinning wheels.”

Clear vision, mandate and methods: The creation of an organization with a clear vision of what an inclusive society looks like is problematic when there is not a clear understanding of how to get there, the roles of different groups within the organization, and the strategies and methods that are best suited to getting the work done within each of the sectors.

Leadership: An initiative of this nature requires “time, energy, passion, and fortitude” in addition to a strong board and excellent staff.

Collaboration: In any city there are a number of groups interested in work surrounding diversity, and each has unique funding needs and ideology so it’s important to make use of existing strengths and infrastructure.

- **Diversity: The City of Edmonton Experience**

In contrast to Calgary’s ‘city as a community’ approach, the Laurier Institution (2004) cites the City of Edmonton as an example of a ‘city as an organization’ approach to addressing diversity. The City of Edmonton’s diversity initiatives have focused on the City as an employer, and only recently the City has explored a model that views Edmonton as culturally diverse.

A short-lived Diversity Office was responsible in the mid-1990s for creating and implementing City initiatives and policies on diversity within the workplace. Since 2002 a Diversity Consultant has operated within the Corporate Services Department as an advisor to City departments on internal diversity issues. Each department crafts its own responses to internal diversity issues, which must meet general standards. However, this allows for inter-departmental variations in addressing diversity.

Community Services has taken a lead role in creating a Diversity Leadership Team aimed at supporting “opportunities for staff training, recognition and resources that encourage its business units to ensure community services are diversity sensitive and inclusive.” The chair of this team has expressed the City’s hope that a similar initiative will cover all City departments in the future.

The City’s broad range of citizen advisory committees also aim to incorporate Edmonton’s diversity into municipal structures.

Starting in January 2005, the City opened a Diversity and Inclusion Office within the Corporate Services Department. The scope of the activities of the office is being developed.

## **9. Appendix 3**

### **ICC NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE**

#### *Co-Chairs*

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City Councillor, City of Edmonton

Joey Edwardh, SPC Co-Chair  
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Randall Hatfield, Executive Director  
Human Development Council of Saint John (HDC)

#### **Civic Panel Co-Chairs/Municipal Government/FCM**

Barbara Sharp, Mayor  
City of North Vancouver

Janice Melnychuk, City Councillor  
City of Edmonton

Pam McConnell, City Councillor  
City of Toronto

Robert MacIsaac, Mayor  
City of Burlington

Carl White, City Councillor  
City of Saint John

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