

In this issue:

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Exposing Deficiencies in Child Welfare During the 1940s

Seniors Issues: Then and Now

Shining a Spotlight on Indigenous Peoples

Public Transportation: Pioneering the Disabled Adult Transit Service (DATS)

Serving the Community: The Formation of Boyle Street Community Services

Basic Income Advocacy and Research in the 1970s

Urban Planning Issues: Enhancing Edmonton's River Valley Trails

Breaking Ground in Food Security

Challenges Faced by Renters in the 2000s



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

◆
Susan Morrissey



The year 2020 marks the 80th anniversary of the Edmonton Social Planning Council, a major milestone for our organization!

We didn't anticipate this anniversary year happening during a global pandemic, and although we have had to make adjustments (our ability to physically gather in a safe fashion is perilous at best, but we have taken advantage of virtual connections), we remain determined to share our story and chart a course for the next 80 years.

For our 80th anniversary year, we combed the archives of our storied history and are chronicling them for a comprehensive historical publication that promises to be enlightening and illuminating for our members and supporters—both old and new alike. Our contributions to community development—through research, advocacy, policy analysis, co-ordination, and support for emerging community groups—is almost too dizzying to quantify. The publication will help to capture and highlight our efforts to build a community in which all people are full and valued participants. Be on the lookout for its release in time for the holiday season!

While putting together this document, we realized that a single publication would not capture everything that the Edmonton Social Planning Council has taken on throughout its history. For this issue of the *FACTivist*, we cast a spotlight on some of the major areas of social development that have been impacted by our efforts—it's a diverse list that includes Indigenous issues, child welfare, public transportation, community development, seniors, and more. These represent only a sample of the issues we have tackled over the years. Nevertheless, the following articles represent some of the noteworthy milestones in our history. I want to offer my thanks for the phenomenal

efforts of our volunteer contributors who sifted through historical reports and enumerated milestones with an eye on the modern context, and who helped identify areas where more progress will be needed.

Besides the anniversary content, you will find an engaging submission from Sydney Sheloff, our Research Officer, on the School Resource Officer Program in public schools, and the myriad concerns that have been raised from it. Of particular note are the ways students from racialized communities have been negatively impacted by the program.

We're also pleased to see the recent release of our latest *Vital Signs* report—produced in partnership with the Edmonton Community Foundation—which focuses on millennials in Edmonton.

Furthermore, this summer we had the chance to participate in the Government of Alberta's Affordable Housing Review Panel, which sought to explore ways to make affordable housing more accessible for those living with low-income. We participated in an engagement session and had the opportunity to provide a written submission to the panel, which you can read about in this edition.

Typically in the fall we would be preparing for our annual United Way bake sale fundraiser, in which we invite neighbours and supporters to make a donation in exchange for tasty homemade treats. Due to COVID-19 safety measures we've had to shift our activities, and so this year we are organizing a bottle drive to raise money for this great cause. We invite you to take your empty bottles and cans to the Bottle Depot and donate the earnings to our campaign! Find out more details in this issue.



Susan Morrissey
Executive Director

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS AND THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

By Sydney Sheloff

The school-to-prison pipeline is a set of policies and practices that push youth marginalized by class and race oppressions away from education and towards the criminal justice system (Mallet, 2015). This is a complicated system with many interrelated elements, including harsh disciplinary techniques, student streaming, alongside racism and discrimination. However, given the current debate on removing School Resource Officers (SRO) from Edmonton schools, the focus will be on how disciplinary techniques, especially those that involve SROs, contribute to this system.

SROs are police officers who work within K-12 schools. They are tasked with the responsibility to ensure school safety, collaborate with community organizations to support youth, educate youth about issues related to crime, and divert youth from the criminal justice system (Edmonton Police Service, 2019). However, the way that they actually operate in schools has been called into question. The debate to remove SROs is part of the growing conversation around Black Lives Matter and police brutality. Many argue that SROs extend police involvement, discrimination, and brutality into the lives of BIPOC youth and children, which brings them into—and keeps them entrenched in—the criminal justice system.

The Edmonton Police Service (EPS) claims that SROs divert youth away from the criminal justice system (2019), but SROs are themselves a part of the criminal justice system. Youth may not be going to court, but they are regularly watched, judged, and disciplined by police officers. SROs are arguably introducing more criminal justice involvement into the lives of students, as misbehaviours that would have previously been addressed by school authorities, such as principles or teachers, are now being addressed by police, and can possibly result in a criminal charge (Bernard & Smith, 2018). Police-Free Schools Winnipeg (2020) shared several stories from

teachers who were encouraged to bring in SROs to deal with minor behavioural issues. These situations increase the odds for certain students to interact with police and can establish conditions for youth to enter the criminal justice system.

Abela and DonLevy (2020) explain that SROs are often not given specialized training to work in schools or with youth—they rely on basic police training. Illustrating this point, some students in Edmonton have claimed that officers at their schools view students as potential threats and criminals rather than as young students (CBC News, 2020). Local activist Bashir Mohammed found evidence that Edmonton SROs were setting up “bait phones” with tracking devices in an attempt to entrap potential thieves. Students were supposed to learn about these phones through gossip to understand that officers were always on the lookout for crime (2020). The Toronto District School Board’s review of their School Resource Officer Program found that many students felt that they were being watched or targeted by SROs, which made them feel intimidated and uncomfortable going to school (2017). Police-Free Schools Winnipeg (2020) also collected several testimonials from students who stated that SROs harassed them and made them feel scared or uneasy. Thus, youth do not feel protected by police—they feel like suspects being watched.

Although SRO student arrests directly contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline, they are not the only issue. When students feel targeted, unsafe, scared, or harassed, they are less likely to attend school. Police-Free Schools Winnipeg (2020) shared stories of students who had skipped class because they felt too anxious around SROs, which made it harder for them to succeed. School completion influences future career opportunities and earning potential, so students who miss school are likely to face barriers in attaining gainful employment. This

could keep these students in poverty—yet another factor that can lead to involvement with the criminal justice system.

In much the same way that BIPOC are disproportionately targeted by the police in public, BIPOC students are targeted by SROs in schools. Stereotypes that claim Black and Indigenous people are violent or dangerous may be just one way that SROs are led to perceive these students in negative ways. Students in Edmonton have claimed that SROs target Black, Brown, and Indigenous students (CBC News, 2020). Police-Free Schools Winnipeg (2020) also shared stories of students who believed BIPOC students were targeted by SROs. Unfortunately, there is no data on SRO interactions disaggregated by race, so there is no evidence that SROs are in fact disciplining BIPOC students at a higher rate. However, a study done on anti-Black racism within the Peel District School Board found that Black students were suspended at a disproportionate rate—Black students made up 10.2% of the school population but 22.5% of those suspended (2020).

SROs are also tasked with offering counselling and support to students (Edmonton Police Service, 2019), but these services would be much better performed by other professionals (Mallet, 2015). Youth who have trouble in school are not going to certified counsellors or mental health professionals to deal with their problems, they are going to police who have little to no training in this specific field (Abela & DonLevy, 2020). Furthermore, as illustrated above, many students, especially BIPOC and impoverished students, feel targeted by SROs and do not trust or feel safe around them, so it is unlikely that they would go to them for support.

Crime is often the result of interactions between systemic and personal issues such as mental health, racism, poverty, and victimization. Youth who experience these problems need support to overcome barriers and access opportunities for a better life. However, the SRO program, by hiring police officers instead of certified counsellors, does not give youth the support they need. Rather, SROs monitor, discipline, and may even criminally charge vulnerable and marginalized youth. Marginalized youth are not given support to succeed in school, but are instead

pushed toward the criminal justice system.

There are studies on Canadian SRO programs that found the programs to be positive and useful, but these findings should be questioned. A study on the SRO program in the Peel District of Ontario found SROs were effective at preventing crime, improving student perceptions of police, and making students feel safer (Duxbury & Bennell, 2018). However, this study paid no attention to how different groups of students experienced SROs in different ways. A study on the Peel District School Board two years later found wide-spread anti-Black racism within the school district by teachers and administrators, and shared some evidence of SROs discriminating against Black students (Chadha, Herbert, & Richard, 2020), calling into question the results of the first study.

A separate study of the SRO program in the Winnipeg schools district also found students had positive perceptions of SROs, and that SROs were useful in a school setting (Kaplan Research Associates, 2014). However, according to Police Free Schools Winnipeg (2020), “policing discriminates against a minority of students on the basis of race and class. The positive opinion of a majority, who themselves have little or no interaction with the police, is irrelevant to assessing the harm caused by police presence.” Both the Peel District and Winnipeg studies asked students who had little interaction with police what their perceptions were, which resulted in positive results. But these results are irrelevant to the issues. Marginalized students are the ones who are the most affected by SROs—the ones who claim the greatest harm by SROs—and yet they were not consulted.

Those in power, such as governments, school board officials, and the EPS, have depicted the SRO program as a benefit to schools and students. However, since its inception in 1979, the program has never been formally reviewed (CBC, 2020). Going forward it is important that we look past these idealistic portrayals, engage in rigorous research, and listen to the perspectives of those who are actually impacted by these programs.

Sydney Sheloff is the Research Officer at the Edmonton Social Planning Council



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EXPOSING DEFICIENCIES IN CHILD WELFARE DURING THE 1940s

By Jenna Horning

The early years of the Edmonton Social Planning Council, or the Council, (known at the time as the Edmonton Council of Social Agencies) saw it making waves in the area of child welfare, and placed it on the map. In 1943, the Child Welfare Services division of the Council began work on a study of child welfare—questions had been raised about the quality of services offered. The Council's Executive Committee prepared a report that outlined examples of standard welfare practices by national organizations, and discussed these in relation to child welfare services in Alberta, with a list of suggestions and recommendations for change. The completion of an official survey of services was one of nineteen recommendations. The province, however, did not take up the recommendation and, instead, revised the Child Welfare Act in 1944. Rumours of inadequate child care continued.

In October of 1945, the Executive Committee requested a new study of child and welfare services. However, due to a lack of resources, the Council was unable to administer the survey. Sponsored by the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire (IODE) and recommended by the Council, Dr. Charlotte Whitton of the Canadian Welfare Council was chosen for this task. Through her work, she uncovered an array of questionable adoption practices. She reported that the Superintendent of Welfare would bundle kids in his car, drive down the highway, and stop at farms to ask if the homeowners would like a child. Boys and girls were also placed in “free” foster homes. Criticized as child labour, these homes were intended for children to work in return for their care, instead of placements in homes that were subsidized by the government. Babies were also sent to the United States for adoption with no more than mailed references.

Dr. Whitton criticized the government based on what she found. It soon became very clear they were no longer interested in co-operating with the Council. Instead, she wrote an article in a Toronto-based magazine about adoption practices in Alberta. The piece became a nationwide scandal. The magazine offices were raided by the RCMP and Dr. Whitton was charged with conspiracy to commit libel. To drop the charges, an Alberta Royal



Commission on Child Welfare was set up to investigate, putting the provincial government's involvement with social workers on hold.

By August 1947, the Royal Commission was officially created. In a meeting with 44 attendees, the Council was tasked with submitting a brief to the Commission on behalf of its member organizations. The Council included 44 recommendations that included working to keep children in their own families, performing intensive and systematic searches for foster homes, and discontinuing cross-border placements of children. The Royal Commission only acted on 20 of them.

In the end, a report of Alberta's Child Welfare Services was provided to the government. As its contents were so unexpected, the Commission's Secretariat declared that no copies would be produced. In response, a group of volunteers hand-typed and delivered out more than 300 copies of the report, leaving an impression on the public. The deficiencies exposed in the child welfare system allowed the Council to play an important role in having the City of Edmonton upgrade its services by hiring more professional social workers to administer programs and to bring them up to an acceptable standard. This move would also have reverberations for the development of the Council. Notably, one of these social workers was E. Stewart Bishop, the first professional social worker to lead a municipal department in Canada. Several years later, he would go on to become an Executive Director for the Council during the 1960s!

Jenna Horning holds a Bachelor of Communication Studies degree and currently works for an association representing Alberta's water and wastewater operators. She is an active volunteer for several Edmonton festivals. She loves research and writing, and is using these skills to learn more about social policy issues.

Thanks to Baldwin Reichwein for providing extra background information that was incorporated in this article.

SENIORS ISSUES: THEN AND NOW

By Aastha Tripathi

Throughout its 80-year history, ESPC (or the Council, due to its various name changes throughout this period) has been committed to discovering the needs of the aging population. Its first major exploration, the Study on Aging, gathered comprehensive information on the needs of the older population between 1956 and 1964. Using a simple survey and a series of interviews, the Council determined the most important issues and themes that affected the everyday lives of this demographic. The most frequently discussed topics were health, finances, and access to social services. The final report, *Edmonton Senior Residents' Survey Report* (1964), was considered at the time to be one of the most comprehensive surveys of this population in Canada. The data was even used by the provincial government for housing programs and health care.

In 2010, a report published by the City of Edmonton and the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council outlined similar concerns (https://www.seniorscouncil.net/uploads/files/Seniors_Portrait.pdf), demonstrating that issues have remained the same throughout the years. For instance, when it came to financial security, those surveyed and interviewed in 1956 indicated that the inadequacies of various pension arrangements were troublesome. The pension system did not leave funding for medical expenses, which resulted in a significant drain to income. Income remains an issue today, with more than a third of people aged 65 years or older living with low-income. The situation is worse for women than men, in part due to these pension regulations. Furthermore, when services for older adults are privatized, costs are shifted directly to the user which makes it infinitely more difficult to make ends meet.

The Council's earlier study noted a common theme in a concern over health as it related to issues such as finances or quality of care. Older adults also expressed an inability to reconcile present poor health with their more abled physical condition in years past. This anxiety was rooted in the realization that with age, recovery from injury or poor health was slow. However, this was no longer a concern

for participants in the 2010 study. Rather, according to the 2010 report, seniors remained concerned about health issues in terms of finances and quality of care—a shortage of health care professionals, an increase in costs for non-insured services, and a lack of transportation to medical appointments or facilities.

That being said, the concern that has remained the most prevalent—today and in the past—is that of social supports, services, and facilities for older adults. Currently, there are four non-profit agencies in Edmonton that provide home support services and match older adults with qualified staff. One of these is the Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (Sage), which aims to enhance the quality of life of older persons and their families through the support of staff and volunteers. Sage services promote socialization and intellectual stimulation, enhance the safety and well-being of older persons, provide information about services that assist community participation, and advocate on issues affecting their clients.

At ESPC, the agency continues to advocate for the older population. The aim of assisting older adults is not simply to address basic, physical needs, but to provide these supports in ways that are acceptable to, and satisfying for, those who need to access them.

Aastha Tripathi is a Bachelor of Arts student at Concordia University of Edmonton and is currently working with the ESPC as a practicum student. She is expected to graduate in May 2021 and hopes to pursue a Masters in Psychology in the next academic year.

CHALLENGES FACED BY RENTERS IN THE 2000S

By Kevin Beauchamp

The Edmonton Social Planning Council has been engaged with housing issues throughout its history, but arguably some of the strongest and most insightful work came about in the 2000s when its research emphasized affordable housing and the challenges that renters faced.

In May 2007, the Council and City Councillors Michael Phair and Dave Thiele hosted two Renter Listening Forums, where 62 individuals spoke of their experiences with the rental market. These discussions were a result of the rental housing crisis and Alberta's economic boom, in which average rental rates increased 30% between 2005 and 2007. Rental and utility increases created unaffordable housing conditions for full-time workers making low wages and those reliant on fixed incomes (such as seniors and people with disabilities) whose benefits didn't increase to reflect the market rates. Renters also faced fewer housing options due to a decrease in new rental construction and unit conversions to condominiums. These conditions created long wait-lists to obtain housing, or forced renters to move away from family, friends, and support networks. Ultimately, renters felt substantial stress. During the forums, many participants said their quality of life was in decline as they couldn't spend as much time with family, and were making tough choices between food, health care, and rent. Following the forums, the Council released 13 recommendations to address rental housing in the report *A Roof Over their Heads*.

The following year, the Council conducted a follow-up survey of renters, receiving 727 responses. Rent affordability was garnering less media attention, but rental rates were continuing to rise, incomes were stagnant, and vacancy rates remained low—with only slight improvements. The survey was summarized in a follow-up report, *Not Just a Roof Over Our Heads*. The research indicated that 82% of respondents had their rent increased (an average monthly increase of \$195), and 61% indicated their rent was unaffordable. Over half of participants (58%) said that their rental situation had become worse. Key issues identified by renters broadly fell under the following categories:

- Increased difficulty affording the costs of housing and basic needs;
- Reduced stability of housing and lack of control to change the situation; and
- Decline in housing quality and value for rent dollars paid.

In September 2008, John Kolkman authored *It is Time to Step Up*, an accumulation of the previous two reports that revised the Council's recommendations on rental housing. Policy recommendations were divided into nine key themes, which included:

- Rent stability;
- Construction of, and access to, affordable housing;
- Changes to government policy (assistance, regulation, accountability, and transparency);
- The role of the City (taxes and planning);
- Community safety; and
- Ending homelessness.

Kolkman's research was invaluable. It offered recommendations to solve the rental crisis in the mid-to-late 2000s and kept track of the trends, offering sound social policy options to address a damaging social problem that continues to challenge low-income Edmontonians.

Kevin Beauchamp was a Human Geography student at the University of Alberta and will be entering a Master of Urban and Regional Planning program. Kevin plans to explore topics such as affordable housing, social marginalization, and community development throughout his Masters studies.

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

By Asheika Sood

The Council has a long history producing research that is at the forefront of understanding the lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in Edmonton. Interest in issues faced by Indigenous peoples in an urban area began in earnest in the 1960s when the Council established an Indian and Métis Study Committee in November 1960. A report submitted by the committee in 1962 made a number of recommendations to improve the status of Indigenous people, which included appropriate foster and adoptive homes for Indigenous children, an examination of negative stereotypes in school textbooks, public education, and anti-discrimination legislation. In addition, the committee recommended that the Council be involved in supporting a committee to establish a Native Friendship Centre in Edmonton, which came to fruition that very same year.

In 1970, in a paper titled *Where Will All the Natives Go*, the voices of several Chiefs from across Alberta were captured to share experiences from their time resisting and actively opposing dam development through the PRIME (Prairie Rivers Improvement, Management, and Evaluation) program. The program aimed to “capitalize on...[the] distribution [of water in the province] ... by building a series of forty dams and canals within the province to divert northern waters south, including some 5 on the Smoky-peace River system, 11 on the Athabasca, 9 on the North Saskatchewan and 15 on the South Saskatchewan” (Poppe, 1970, p. 1). The ongoing struggles that Indigenous people face for land sovereignty and environmental protection is apparent, as many concerns of Indigenous leadership in Alberta today are a reflection of the arguments and words of the Chiefs in 1970. Chief Fred Marcel of the Athabasca Chipewyan Band (now called the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation) spoke to the loss of trapping opportunities in the region—from “100 rats in 3 days” to just “18 muskrats” in four days (Poppe, 1970, p. 8). Even today these stories are common, and mark an

ongoing neglect of the wisdom of Indigenous leaders on the impacts of changes to the land. In April 2019, in the Slave Lake *Lakeside Leader*, Treaty 8 Grand Chief Arthur Noseky was quoted on herbicide use, stating, “Our hunters and trappers are reporting reduced wildlife in the surrounding areas where this is being done” (Clegg, 2019). While the particular issues change over time, the impact is the same—the continuous erosion of environmental well-being is taking a toll. Although Indigenous leaders continue to advocate for the protection of the land, the story still seems to be the same today.

The reality of repeated harms is echoed in many of the research documents about Indigenous people published by the Council. A research study conducted in 1991, titled *Edmonton's Urban Natives: An Uphill Struggle for Survival*, depicted trends in average family income, educational attainment, and employment for Indigenous communities. Although many of these numbers have improved, the overall trends remain similar today. According to the report, “under half (48.4%) of all members of a Native-led family were in poverty, while only one-sixth (17.3%) of the total population lived in a low-income family” (Murphy, 1991, p. 6). As of 2015, “13,235 or 22.5% of Aboriginals in Edmonton lived low income compared to 10.8% of the total population” (Edmonton Community Foundation & ESPC, 2015, p. 4). Data shows that while there have been moderate improvements for Indigenous communities, there is need for a much deeper systemic change to address the discrepancy.

The Council's research is still very important because it helps to track the history of these issues during a time when this data collection was likely limited in a municipal context. The story is challenging, as it forces settler acknowledgment of longstanding Indigenous issues, despite ongoing feigned ignorance today. Data shows

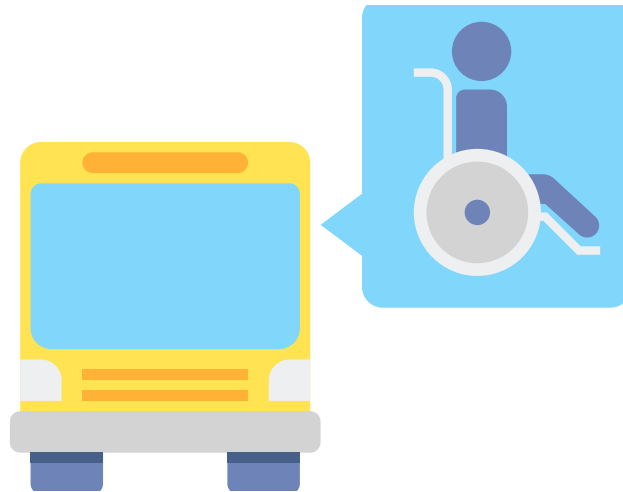
that Indigenous peoples have experienced inequitable outcomes for at least 30 years. Moving forward requires an end to these data trends through partnership with Indigenous peoples, and providing a platform for their voices and knowledge—which have always been present—to lead research and movement for change. The Council's use of data and reports to form studies that invoke change for Indigenous communities is another important step forward, and it has done this increasingly with the involvement of Indigenous organizations. This research has included the review of support for youth at risk of sex work, the risks of tobacco use among youth, and improvements for inner city services. Notably, many of the recommendations from the *Urban Natives in Edmonton* report are still highly relevant and necessary today (see also: Community Trends Working Group, 1993; Edmonton Social Planning Council, 1993; Edmonton Social Planning Council, 1996; Hanson Community Resources Ltd., 1997). The work is powerful, and will continue into the future, hopefully with ongoing collaboration with Indigenous communities and their elected leadership, alongside the organizations that serve them in Edmonton.

Asheika Sood (she/her/they) is a settler born in Treaty 6 Territory in amiskwaciy-wâskahikan or the lands currently known as Edmonton. Her family originates from Punjab, India. She is passionate about listening and doing work that aligns with the interests of community..

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PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION: PIONEERING THE DISABLED ADULT TRANSIT SERVICE (DATS)

By Jenna Horning

In its 80-year history, the Council has played a part in a variety of social issues. One such area is public transit. Through the lens of social impact, the Council studied the problem of transportation for people with disabilities, advocated for a public transportation system, and determined the need for a public transportation training program. Because of these efforts, long-lasting positive impacts were made.

Back in 1961, the Council sought to study transportation issues for people with disabilities. Initially, transportation services for this demographic were provided through the Central Volunteer Bureau. Unable to keep up with exponential growth and increased requests, transportation was only provided for emergency situations. In response, the Community Planning Committee for the Handicapped was established. The agencies represented on the committee wished for a coordinated transportation system. Ultimately, a sub-committee would plan the system, and its Terms of Reference were approved for an initial period of 18 months.

The Handi-Bus Service, as it was called, aimed to make transportation available to all age groups and all people with disabilities. It would be run by a division of the Cerebral Palsy Association. Service expansion was needed quickly and efficiently, with priority given to children going to school, followed by adults commuting to work.

In October 1967, the Evaluation Committee – Edmonton Handi-Buses was formed. Appointed by the Council, it consisted of a Chairman from the Board of Directors and two independent citizens. Agencies were invited to submit reports on the program and meet with the Committee. After this meeting, Handi-Bus services were increased and new transportation needs were identified.

In addition to its study, the Council advocated on the need for a public transportation system. In 1972–73, the Council sent a brief to the City of Edmonton explaining that for many people, an efficient public transit system was a necessity. Getting around the city could be difficult for people who didn't have access to a car, couldn't afford a car, or couldn't afford parking. The Council pointed out that with a good transit system, city life could be rewarding, productive, and fun. A transit system would also benefit the riders and driver, as streets would be clear, and it would cost less for taxpayers than increasing roadways and public parking lots. The social benefits included accessing a downtown that would be more pleasant, useful, and productive. The brief also touched on the idea that public transit was an essential service, and should therefore be free. Suggestions to fund the service from city revenue and grants referred to other essential services, such as parks, libraries, and health clinics, that were also free services.

To develop such a system, the city would need to increase routes and service, expand the current system through electrically-powered equipment, create a rapid transit system, explore dial-a-bus, create exclusive lanes for busses and trolleys, develop park & ride facilities, and develop a consultation program with drivers.

Not long after this brief was sent to the City, the Council began work on its Mentally Handicapped Transportation Study in 1978. The aim was to determine whether or not there was a need for a transit training program in Edmonton. A variety of objectives were set: prepare an inventory of organizations serving people with intellectual disabilities, determine the need for a transit system, figure out how many clients or students might benefit from a transit training program, identify and evaluate current operation training programs, and finally, note the type of transportation used, along with the number of daily trips and cost per trip.

The majority of survey respondents noted that their present training program was inadequate. This was due to a shortage of staff time. In addition, the majority of respondents were in favour of a transit training program.

Through the survey, two program priorities were identified. The first was to teach clients and students how to use public transit to travel from their homes to particular locations, and the second taught them how to use the service to travel throughout the city.

Although it was difficult to determine the exact number of individuals who would be impacted by such a training program, there was enough evidence to conclude that between 330–550 individuals would benefit. The survey also helped to determine that there were a minimum of 3,112 daily one-way trips, although only 1,899 of these trips were accounted for using Edmonton Transit.

To further the idea that a transportation training program was a positive move, the Council identified the benefits of safe transit use. For people with intellectual disabilities, using public transit would contribute to enhancing self-esteem and independence. Additionally, it would support normalization and integration into the community. Another major benefit was reduced costs. Many people with intellectual disabilities were responsible for their own transportation, and taking public transit would greatly reduce individual costs. In light of these findings, the Council recommended the development of a transit training program for people with intellectual disabilities in Edmonton.

Through the Handi-Bus program, advocacy for a public transit system and the Mentally Handicapped Transportation Study, profound impacts have been made. Because of the Council's work, public transportation needs were identified. Benefits of these programs for riders, drivers, and taxpayers were also shared. Ultimately, the true benefit to the service has been the creation of an effective and well-rounded transportation system that supports all Edmontonians.

Jenna Horning holds a Bachelor of Communication Studies degree and currently works for an association representing Alberta's water and wastewater operators. She is an active volunteer for several Edmonton festivals. She loves research and writing, and is using these skills to learn more about social policy issues.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY: THE FORMATION OF BOYLE STREET COMMUNITY SERVICES

By Jenna Horning

Perhaps one of the Council's greatest and longest standing legacies was its work to facilitate the development of Boyle Street Community Services. In 1971, a committee saw a growing need within the Boyle Street neighbourhood, and proposed a street-level centre to offer valuable services. Community centres had been developed elsewhere in the city, however, Boyle Street provided an opportunity to relate to the problems of the area's "transient" population.

Representing a unique part of Edmonton, Boyle Street offered a connection in the city for diverse groups such as Indigenous migrants; men from lumber camps, mining camps and oil-rigs; ex-inmates; and newly arrived immigrants. The neighbourhood had the highest percentage of transient people, the highest incidence of welfare recipients, the poorest housing facilities, the lowest income rate per capita, and the highest rate of alcoholism. In terms of demographics, 30% of the population was over 60 years of age (notably double that of the city average); 20% of homes were not fully serviced for light, gas, or water, while the other 80% of homes often had very poor quality service; and over 77% of individuals and families in the area lived under the poverty line. The proposed community services centre aimed to meet the needs of these individuals.

The detailed plan for successful development included setting up operational procedures, developing aims and goals, accessing facilities and support funds, encouraging community member involvement, developing community outreach programs, planning an all-encompassing services co-op, configuring the physical location of the center, and collaborating with other communities. Initially, the centre was to operate from the main floor of the Windsor Rooms Hotel in Edmonton, with room for further expansion. The Bissell Centre was located directly across from the hotel and its facilities were also offered to accommodate an expanding program. The Boyle Street Community Hall and playground were also nearby, which could be used for recreational programs and community meetings.

The proposed multi-services centre would house 10 groups and services, including an information and drop in-centre, housing registry, legal aid, employment service, health clinic, welfare information, counselling, support for alcoholism and drug treatment, ex-inmate support, Indigenous community services, and services for older adults and persons who were disabled. Each was to receive workshop-focused training to further understand aspects of life in the Boyle Street area, ensuring their services would have a longer-lasting impact. Outreach workers were also an important element of the Boyle Street Community Services Centre. Having Indigenous organizers and community outreach workers was deemed to be very important in order to build rapport with the community. The responsibilities of outreach workers included seeing that community needs were shared with the Centre, helping people understand and make use of the services at the Centre, collecting data to help departments plans, and developing community outreach programs.

In order to run the Centre effectively, an Administrative Structure was formed through a three-phase process. First was the Interim Committee, consisting of representatives from a variety of groups and social agencies, including the Edmonton Native Brotherhood Society, Student Legal Services, Edmonton Citizens for Better Housing, City of Edmonton Public Health, and the Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission. Notably, the Edmonton Social Planning Council was also represented on this committee, and provided a meeting place and two staff persons to spur the development process. Second was the



Management Committee, a group that replaced the Interim Committee once building and support funds had been established. It was composed of an Executive Director and 15 members—two-thirds from the Boyle Street area, and one-third representing the various other service groups. Third, a co-op was established as a means of helping the locals educate themselves. This was to ensure that they could take responsibility over matters affecting their own lives, as well as participate in operational decision-making for the agencies established to serve them.

Today, Boyle Street Community Services offers over 40 programs and services to over 12,000 individuals every year with a continued focus on culture, outreach, mental health, housing, family and youth, and employment. According to Boyle Street's website, a drop-in centre still offers the community a place to enjoy food, warmth, and companionship. Housing and shelter options are also offered. As one of the original goals, Boyle Street partners with other agencies to provide services from child and youth programs to needle exchange to supports for street-involved sex workers. Because of this work that started in 1971, thousands of vulnerable Edmonton citizens are now able to utilize programs and services to better themselves and their community.

Jenna Horning holds a Bachelor of Communication Studies degree and currently works for an association representing Alberta's water and wastewater operators. She is an active volunteer for several Edmonton festivals. She loves research and writing, and is using these skills to learn more about social policy issues.

Membership

The strength of our voice is dependent upon the support of people and organizations concerned about social issues—people like you. By getting involved with the Edmonton Social Planning Council, you add your voice to our message of positive social development and policy change.

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BASIC INCOME ADVOCACY AND RESEARCH IN THE 1970S

By Brett Lambert



Throughout its 80-year history, the Council has contributed a great deal of social policy research, analysis, and advocacy to the issue of government transfers—be they child benefits, unemployment insurance, social assistance, seniors' benefits, or supports for persons with disabilities. During this time, Albertans have seen investments in these programs ebb and flow, depending on the provincial and federal government of the day. Nevertheless, despite making the case that robust social investments improve communities, social safety nets today are not as strong as they could be—something made abundantly clear this year with the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, that prompted renewed conversations on how best to make necessary reforms.

One current reform is built upon an idea from the past: a universal basic income. A no-strings-attached cash transfer to families and individuals designed to raise their standard of living so they can afford the basic necessities of life. The idea arguably hasn't seen so much attention or momentum since the late 1960s and early 1970s. When combing the archives of past Council publications, one report that stood out, and could offer insight for today's circumstances, was called *Alternatives to Poverty and Welfare in Alberta* (1973).

The report came during a particularly fruitful period in the Council's history, during which it had oriented itself as an agent for social change and development. This was done by analyzing current social policies and making recommendations for improvements, while harnessing the power of citizen participation to inform research and advocacy. To facilitate the work, four Citizens' Commissions were formed and tasked with exploring

major areas of social concern. One of these was called the Decent Standard of Living commission, which focused on the patchwork of welfare programs (and their inadequate attempts to eliminate poverty), difficulties in accessing health care services, and the problem of very low wages.

Produced by the commission, *Alternatives to Poverty and Welfare in Alberta* placed the Council in a position to lead social policy development rather than simply reacting to government proposals. It was a sophisticated piece of research, presenting poverty statistics, the effects of social and economic policies on the poor, available income security programs, and an overview of the welfare system in Alberta. It would help to inform the Council's work on poverty for several years to come. The paper recommended that policies and programs strive to raise employment rates as much as possible in "socially useful" sectors such as health care, housing, and recreation. Nevertheless, concerns were raised that automation and "cybernation" would reduce employment through reduced working hours, overtime, and employment disruption. The report made a plea to readers to anticipate and plan for disruptions to the welfare system so as not to be caught unawares. If left unchecked, these disruptions could increase poverty and unemployment rates, and widen the wealth gap between the rich and the poor.

The Council therefore advocated for what was then called a Guaranteed Annual Income (GAI) with work incentives as a way to improve these conditions and redistribute the wealth. The GAI would be accessible to all families and individuals who lived below a certain income level with the goal to raise them to a minimum standard of living, which was set at, or above, the poverty line. The concept

ALTERNATIVES TO POVERTY AND WELFARE IN ALBERTA

A response by the Edmonton Social Planning Council
to the problems of poverty and welfare in Alberta.

PREPARED BY: Ted Parnell
Second edition: January 1973.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: Officials of Department of Social Development for
information provided;
Deborah Dennison for help in obtaining data.

gained traction as a poverty reduction tool during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and found some support from the political left and right. The report envisioned that until the federal government implemented a national program, the province would establish its own program as a replacement for its social assistance system.

The Council cautioned that although a GAI would be an important and essential step towards eliminating poverty, it would need to be viewed as only a partial solution. For one, a GAI would be one component alongside other policies like increases to the minimum wage—to ensure that as few families as possible relied on the benefit, and to prevent employers from using the program to subsidize low wages. In addition, a GAI program would need to be accompanied by robust policies in health care, housing, and education to aid the poor so that “all Canadians live a life in at least a minimum standard of opportunity, health, comfort, and decency” (p. 30).

Some elements of the report were products of the 1970s and could not anticipate future trajectories. Warnings of job elimination from automation have not necessarily

come to fruition, but the concern is still around today and perhaps more likely to happen compared to these warnings from several decades ago. Nevertheless, what endures from the report is the desire for social change, and a number of policy proposals to make this change.

This drive continues to be in full force today within the Edmonton Social Planning Council.

Brett Lambert is the Community Engagement Coordinator at the Edmonton Social Planning Council.

URBAN PLANNING ISSUES: ENHANCING EDMONTON'S RIVER VALLEY TRAILS

By Jenna Horning



The 1970s saw the Council become increasingly involved in urban planning issues, which included work on neighbourhood design, light-rail transit, and important work in the development of Edmonton's river valley trails.

In order to better understand Edmonton river valley trails— how they were used, by whom, and for what purpose, the Council created a Task Force on River Valley Trails in the mid 1970s. With a grant received from the Alberta Environmental Research Trust in 1975, the Task Force identified issues, recommended data sources, and developed an approach to trail planning. The work quickly concluded that the value of trails could be enhanced by planning a trail system. So the Task Force compiled information focusing on three matters: the context of the system, the components of the system, and the nature of the system itself.

To understand the first issue, context of the system, features of the valley were taken into consideration. Characteristics included a valley depth of 200 feet, inner bends where access to the valley could be found, and numerous ravines. In addition, the Task Force's 1975 report *An Approach to Planning River Valley Trails* looked at the dimensions of the river valley, of which 25 miles were within the city boundary. Notably, the valley runs diagonally through the heart of Edmonton and at the time no part of the city boundary was more than five miles away. It was necessary to plan a system that took into account the fact that the trails would run through the city's urban centre.

The second issue explored by the Task Force was looking at the components of the system, including the types of

trail users and the purpose of trail use. Seven different types of users were identified: people with disabilities, walkers, cyclists, cross-country skiers, horseback riders, snowshoers, and motor users (that is, motorcycles and snowmobiles). The majority of users were deemed to be walkers and cyclists. People with disabilities were considered a significant group that would need specially designed trails. Both snowshoers and motor users were deemed not suited for use of river valley trails and therefore not considered further by the Task Force. Trail use was also imperative to understand individual purpose: the enjoyment of nature, wilderness and solitude; exercise, fitness and sport; travel and commute; and socialization. By looking at user type and purpose, the Task Force determined that a variety of specifically tailored trails could be developed.

The third issue, the nature of the system itself, considered how the trail system was interconnected with other elements of the trail system as a whole. While many factors came into play, one was thinking through ways the various trails types could be linked together. Another considered the relationship between trail types within the local trail system and those located outside Edmonton. Further, to determine the relationship between the trail system and urban features was critical to ensure access to the trail system by various modes of travel (for example walking or cycling). It was also believed that the public transit system should be closely linked, with limited space for car parks.

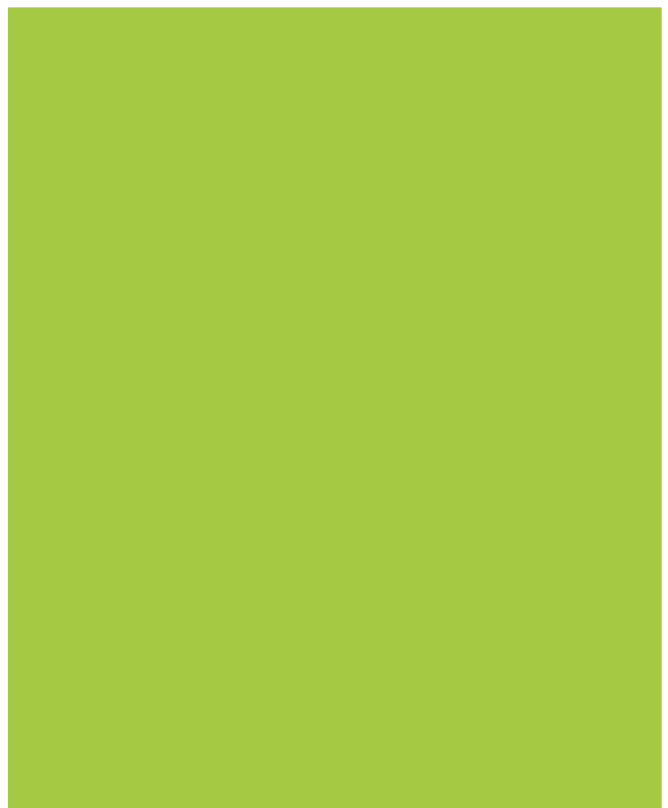
Taking all of these factors into consideration, the Task Force proposed nine different trail types. The first, Type A trails, would include non-slippery surfaces and slopes



appropriate for wheelchairs, with aesthetically pleasing features, services such as washroom and picnic sites, and points of historical or biological interest. Although expensive, these trails would be close to residents in various parts of the city and accessible by transit and foot. Type B trails would be designed like boardwalks—a place to stroll with the idea of meeting neighbours. Ideally, Edmonton would plan for one starting near downtown, to be all-weather accessible, patrolled at night, and well-lit. Type C trails would suit the able, active-bodied and be natural and unmaintained. Type D trails would be designed to facilitate city walking, and would connect different parts of the city. Type E trails would be purely for exercise. Trail types F, G and H would be for cyclists, and Type I would be used for horse riding. By understanding the user, purpose of use, and a variety of location-based factors, these nine trails were deemed to offer the most benefit.

Because of this work completed by the Task Force on the river valley trails, Edmontonians continue to access and use the trail system in ways best suited to them. By integrating type of user, purpose of use, and characteristics of the valley, the Task Force identified nine trail types to meet the needs and goals of trail users in Edmonton. Successfully creating such an interconnected trail system required research, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Today, Edmontonians can see the true benefit of this work by going online to find information on trails, attractions, and accessibility. Citizens of Edmonton know and love the river valley and thanks to the Council's work, will do so for many years to come.

Jenna Horning holds a Bachelor of Communication Studies degree and currently works for an association representing Alberta's water and wastewater operators. She is an active volunteer for several Edmonton festivals. She loves research and writing, and is using these skills to learn more about social policy issues.



BREAKING GROUND IN FOOD SECURITY

By Shawna Ladouceur



Food, the most essential of necessities, is the first victim of inadequate income. Thus, the Council has long been concerned with issues of food security. Its historical records make many mentions over many decades. Concerns led to the formation of a task force on public assistance food allowance in the early 1970s, and a groundbreaking joint study with Edmonton's Food Bank in the 1990s. Multiple publications since have dispelled myths, informed community partners, educated the public, and given food for thought for policy-makers. For this 80th anniversary reflection, we look at some of the important contributions by the Council to the ongoing issue of food security in Edmonton.

Originally defined by the United Nations in 1974, food security "exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." [i] Predating this formal definition, aspects of food security are already mentioned in the Council's very first annual report in 1941. Though addressed more broadly in intervening years as a component of the welfare system, the 1973 task force on Public Assistance Food Allowance Increases highlighted the specifics of the issue. Here the Council called on both provincial and federal governments to properly fund food allowances based on the actual cost of living, publicly publish the information and calculations used to set food allowances, and educate those living within the severe confines of a finite food allowance on how to stretch food dollars while achieving nutritional requirements. This specific focus on food security set the stage for coming decades.

The Edmonton Gleaners Association, better known as Edmonton's Food Bank, was incorporated in 1981, and was the first food bank in Canada. By 1985, the Council was involved in the important work of this essential agency, taking part in organizing the first national Food

Bank Conference. In 1986, the Council partnered with other concerned groups to publish *Still Hungry?: Why?*, in a follow-up to a 1985 Food Bank report. Statistics contained in this brief highlighted the increasing number of Alberta families living in poverty, and demonstrated intensifying reliance of the poor on the Food Bank. The report provided key recommendations and demanded government response through a letter-writing campaign, calling for government consultation with community stakeholders on decisions of related social policy.

Fast forward to 1996 and a publication that signaled the beginning of a now long-time partnership between the Council and Edmonton's Food Bank—*Two Paycheques Away* was considered a landmark study. One of the first and largest of its kind in Canada, the agencies came together to examine the recent and dramatic increase in food bank need. The organizations were looking for patterns within the reasons that people found themselves in need of a food bank, and information that could be used to develop long-term strategies to mitigate this need. Focus groups and interviews with over 800 food bank recipients found that the primary cause of Food Bank need was a profound lack of income. Sweeping social and economic changes of the early 1990s had resulted in an unprecedented increase in Food Bank usage. A shrinking job market and extreme cuts in government income security programs pushed those already struggling with basic necessities to rely on the service. Research revealed that 1 in 20 Edmontonians used Food Bank services. As a result of these findings, the Council released a magazine, fact sheet, and calendar to educate the public on problems associated with low-income living. The study received national attention and resulted in talks with the minister of Family and Social Services, and the formation of a joint working group in an effort to amend policies.

In 1997 the Council published an updated report, *Return Look at Two Paycheques Away*. This smaller follow-up

study took a closer look at families using the Food Bank. Ongoing money shortages meant families were unable to meet even the most basic needs. Hard choices between these basic requirements lead to struggles to access essential nutritional requirements. The report demanded that the government use the findings as “food for thought” in ongoing policy decisions.

The Council and the Food Bank produced a third report in 1999. *Often Hungry, Sometimes Homeless: A Look at Edmonton Families Turning to the Food Bank* was based on 100 interviews with Food Bank recipients. Among other highlights, the report noted that of the families turning to the Food Bank, 55% were headed by a single female parent, 75% had been late with their rent payments, and 28% had been homeless at some point during the previous five years. Many other families were near homelessness, and often living without heat, power, or phone services. Alberta Human Resources Minister Clint Dunford responded to the report stating he believed people were using the food bank “because it’s a service that’s become available ... there are people who can afford food who are going to food banks.”^[ii] After meeting with Council and Food Bank representatives to discuss the findings in their study, Dunford retracted his comments and spoke in support of Alberta’s food banks.

Many other Council publications since have focused on food security, including the Summer 2007 edition of the *fACTivist*, calling for attention to hunger and insecurity despite prosperity, and a 2010 fact sheet that presented a grim overview of data on food security in Edmonton. In 2013, the Council partnered with the Edmonton Community Foundation to produce *Vital Signs*: community report cards published annually across the country. This inaugural edition focused on food security—examining the cost of nutritious food, food bank use, and other related topics. The following year, the Council published a fact sheet that reported on persistent and growing food

insecurity despite economic recovery.

In 2018, the Council once again partnered with Edmonton’s Food Bank to conduct and analyze interviews in a study of 505 hamper recipients. With a 50.6% increase in the number of people requiring food hampers over the previous three years, the report, *Beyond Food Revisited*, showed an increase in the number of people struggling with unemployment, which resulted in an increasing reliance on government assistance.

Sadly, food insecurity in our city continues to grow. Given current economic and global circumstances in 2020, several articles have been published by the Council on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security, and this looming food crisis. If there is a bright spot among grim statistics, perhaps it is that 80 years of research have prepared the Council to provide valuable information to community partners, the public, and decision makers in a renewed push for long-term, systemic changes toward an equitable and sustainable food system, and ultimately, food security for all.

Shawna Ladouceur is a Registered Nurse who sees the impacts of the social determinants of health in ways that demand action. She has extensive experience working directly with vulnerable populations in the inner city. Her personal interests include skiing, hiking, biking, running, reading, and travelling.

[i] United Nations (1974). *Report of the World Food Conference, Rome 5-16 November 1974*. New York. <http://undocs.org/en/E/CONF.65/20>

[ii] “Minister admits unfairly knocking food-bank users,” *Edmonton Journal*, October 2, 1999.



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Your donation helps us do our work. It keeps our social research current and comprehensive; allows us to take on bigger projects and make a greater impact in the community, strengthens our voice—your voice—and the voices of those who lack the opportunity to speak for themselves.

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NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alberta Child Poverty Report: 2020 Update

The *Alberta Child Poverty Report* is a yearly publication written in collaboration with the Alberta College of Social Workers (ACSW) and Public Interest Alberta (PIA). These reports began in 2008 as part of the national Campaign 2000 coalition, which formed in response to an 1989 all-party House of Commons resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000. Canada has clearly failed to meet its objective, and significant work remains before child and youth poverty is eradicated. These reports provide statistics and analysis, as well as policy recommendations to end child poverty.

Every year, the *Alberta Child Poverty Report* focuses on key indicators, such as poverty rates, housing, and income equality. Special topics are also featured, such as last year's focus on Indigenous children and specific challenges for Indigenous children in care.

For our upcoming report, students from the University of Alberta, University of Manitoba, and Concordia University are contributing their considerable expertise and energy to explore topics such as mental health, immigration, health care, rural poverty, and family violence. Stay tuned for what is sure to be a compelling and informative issue in early December. The national report released by Campaign 2000 will be available on November 24, 2020 at <http://www.campaign2000.ca>

Tracking the Trends: 2020 Update

Since 1989, the Edmonton Social Planning Council's *Tracking the Trends* publication provides a comprehensive overview of Edmonton's social well-being. Updated every other year, it tracks demographics, education rates, employment rates, cost of living, wages and income, and poverty across the city. This report was set to be released earlier this year, but faced delays as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted work patterns for almost everyone across Canada. Data we rely on for this report wasn't available in time, as research organizations shifted their focus to collecting and sharing information on COVID-19. With the recent release of key data, we are anticipating releasing *Tracking the Trends* on November 10, 2020.

ESPC Lunch and Learns Go Virtual

With the COVID-19 pandemic making physical gatherings difficult to conduct in a safe manner, we have shifted our long-time series of Lunch and Learns from a physical gathering at the downtown branch of the Edmonton Public Library to a virtual webinar format hosted through Zoom. Since transitioning to the Zoom platform, we have seen attendance to these virtual gatherings grow significantly. Our first virtual Lunch and Learn was held in late August 2020, featuring Lynn Hanley and Rose-Marie McCarthy who discussed the history of WIN House—Edmonton's first women's shelter. Subsequent virtual

events have presented our Vital Signs 2020 report and food security in Edmonton. If you missed these events or wish to watch them again, you can access the recordings on our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/edmontonspc>

Vital Signs 2020 Report Launched

On October 6, the Edmonton Social Planning Council and the Edmonton Community Foundation released our annual *Vital Signs* report. Since 2013, these reports have served as an annual check-up to measure how the community is doing. Each year the report focuses on a different segment of Edmonton's population; previous topics include women, Indigenous people, as well as sexual and gender minorities.

The theme for this year's report is "Millennials in Edmonton." About one in four Edmontonians is a millennial, representing Canada's largest voting cohort. We explore their financial realities (e.g. student debt load, precarious work), activism and engagement (e.g. voting patterns, political causes, philanthropy), use of technology (e.g. social media, smartphone apps, e-commerce), and how they're setting trends that are changing the world.

To download the full report, visit: <http://www.edmontonsocialplanning.ca/vital-signs-2020-millennials-in-edmonton/>

ESPC Submission to the Government of Alberta's Affordable Housing Review Panel

In the summer of 2020, the Government of Alberta formed an Affordable Housing Review Panel to explore ways that affordable housing could be more accessible for people with low-income. The panel held engagement sessions with a number of stakeholders: affordable housing developers, private companies, and civil society organizations. The Edmonton Social Planning Council was among those who participated.

We also contributed a written submission to the panel to detail our current concerns with the lack of accessible affordable housing for those in core housing need. We advocated for a human rights-based approach to housing, and identified the excessively long wait times that qualified tenants experience to receive rental assistance subsidies. This has been one of the most intractable issues for Edmontonians when it comes to housing affordability.

To read our full submission, visit: <https://edmontonsocialplanning.ca/submission-to-the-government-of-albertas-affordable-housing-review-panel/>

ABOUT THE EDMONTON SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL

The Edmonton Social Planning Council is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan social research organization, with registered charitable status. Our focus is social research, particularly in the areas of low-income and poverty. ESPC is a source of knowledge and expertise on social issues within our community.

We are dedicated to encouraging the adoption of equitable social policy, supporting the work of other organizations who are striving to improve the lives of Edmontonians, and educating the public regarding the social issues that impact them on a daily basis.

Our Vision: A community in which all people are full and valued participants.

Our Mission: Through rigorous research, detailed analysis, and community engagement, we deepen community understanding of social planning issues, influence policy, and spark collaborative actions that lead to positive social change.

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Bottle Drive for our 2020 United Way Campaign

Poverty is the most debilitating social issue we are dealing with today. It strips people of self-esteem, robs children of their true potential, and causes families to lose hope. It can take many forms, and there are numerous ways that someone can find themselves locked into poverty due to job loss, domestic violence, or a lack of mental health support. It is #unignorable because it holds our community back from reaching its full potential.

United Way brings together partners and strategies to deliver local programs and services aimed at addressing the root causes of poverty. It continues to address the need of the most vulnerable in our community and is leading local efforts to respond to both urgent and long-term needs. More than ever, people need supports to stay afloat. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed how truly important it is to take action against the #unignorable issue of poverty.

This year's United Way campaign theme is: Local People Doing Local Good.

Do local good in these challenging times—donate today! United, we can overcome the challenges that our community currently faces and respond to the #unignorable issue of poverty, to make a tremendous impact on the lives of local people who are struggling.

All donations strengthen our community, helping fund over 100 programs right here in the Alberta Capital Region.

Normally, ESPC would host an annual bake sale for neighbours and supporters to make a donation in exchange for tasty homemade treats, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have had to adjust plans. This year, we will be holding a Bottle Drive to fundraise for the United Way and 100% of the proceeds go directly to the United Way! We invite you to take your empty bottles and cans to the nearest Bottle Depot and donate the cash to our campaign.

Please contact Justine at reception@edmontonsocialplanning.ca for more information if you'd like to participate or donate!



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Volunteer Now!

Are you concerned about social issues? Do you want to give back to the community? The Edmonton Social Planning Council is always looking for volunteers to help with its research and outreach endeavors. We will do our best to align your interests, availability, and skills with the tasks we offer. Visit our website at <https://edmontonsocialplanning.ca/volunteer-opportunities/> to learn more about our volunteer opportunities and to sign up today. Contact Jenn Rossiter (jennr@edmontonsocialplanning.ca) if you have any suggestions or questions about volunteering with ESPC.

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FALL
2020



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