



Vibrant Surrey

**Plan for Action & Learning
2007 to 2010**

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Framing the issues

Poverty in Surrey

Surrey is a dynamic and prosperous community but it has serious social issues and not enough infrastructure to respond adequately.

The population is growing at the rate of almost 1000 people a month, development trends are strong and business opportunities abound. But not everyone is benefiting from current economic conditions.

- Because of rising costs of living and a weakened social safety net, poverty is deepening and that is presenting ever more complex challenges for a growing number of Surrey residents and organizations.
- Social decay is becoming evident in most neighborhoods and too many families have to choose between housing and food security.
- Social services, government infrastructure and networks are estimated to be about one eighth those of Vancouver, which Surrey approaches in size.
- While many efforts are underway to respond to these issues, the task is enormous for such an under serviced community and demands are growing daily.

Also, trust among community groups has eroded because of the competitiveness that comes from competition for shrinking resources, as well as the gulf created by conflicting ideologies and political agendas.

What does Vibrant Surrey want to do?

Since 2002, community leaders across Canada have been building momentum to bring together those who are committed to innovative local action on poverty issues. In Surrey, a community profile identified poverty as a concern for all. This led us to become a member of Vibrant Communities, a national initiative to learn more about how to reduce poverty in our own communities. Vibrant Surrey, led by a broad community-based steering committee, now has members from every sector of the community including business; city, provincial and federal governments; social service sector; labour, and private citizens.

Vibrant Surrey's mission is to encourage and facilitate collaborative efforts to reduce poverty and the issues related to poverty, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all who call Surrey home.

Over the last year, we have developed a plan of action that we believe will result in significant increase in quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. We have begun to develop some of these ideas but before we really get going, we must do what we can to strengthen our community's capacity and social capital so the work we do together results in lasting change.

Initially, we will:

- Dedicate staff and technical resources to connecting people and ideas, bridging differences and increasing skills and knowledge
- Facilitate opportunities for social innovators to work together, including those who have resources and other kinds of influence
- Incubate promising new projects
- Create links to tools and resources that have worked elsewhere.
- Develop tools and opportunities for better understanding each other and our community and assessing our well-being
- Provide forums and tools for learning from each other and the work we are doing together
- Track all this from the beginning so we can understand what is working and build on that.

Why do we think this will work?

There is a vacuum that needs to be filled as no other group is leading in this particular way. Vibrant Surrey's neutrality makes it an ideal broker and convenor and our members count most of the community's leaders already.

As we become more confident with this approach and begin to experience successes, we are all more likely to take risks and try new approaches. This will create fertile ground for introducing the models and best practices that have worked elsewhere and incubating the ideas emerging here in response to Surrey's unique context.

Based on the principle that success breeds success, we believe this will result in more investment into asset building which will be the foundation for the long term change required to deeply impact the systems and institutions we rely on for our social and economic well being.

How will we know it works?

- ✓ More Surrey residents will have increased access to the local economy
- ✓ The systems and infrastructure we rely on in Surrey will be more able to deal with today's complex socio-economic issues
- ✓ More individuals from the populations we are most concerned about will be able to prosper, participate and contribute to community.

Research

Poverty situation

Over the last three years, we have learned a great deal about our community. Some the most commonly cited development characteristics of Surrey include that:

- ✓ it is considered one of the fastest growing communities in Canada,
- ✓ it is the second largest municipality in British Columbia,

- ✓ it is home to one of the most highly concentrated South Asian communities in Canada
- ✓ it has the largest deep sea vessel docks on the West Coast of North America
- ✓ it hosts the annual Canada Cup Women's International Fastpitch Tournament
- ✓ it covers a huge geographic area (317.4 square kilometers, 35% of which is designated agricultural)
- ✓ historically Surrey has offered a large, diverse stock of affordable housing¹.

But Surrey is also known for the increasingly visible symptoms of deepening poverty in some segments of its population. Over 18% of its population (345000) was living below the Low Income Cut Off and 40% of the children in the care of the BC government lived in Surrey in 2001. While Surrey enjoyed one of the highest average income levels in the province, it also had more people living in poverty than is true for the rest of BC². Today, it is estimated that up to half of the residents in some neighborhoods who rely on rental housing are considered to be at risk of homelessness³, the incidence of which has more than doubled over the last three years⁴. In 2005, the regional homelessness count found that 318 individuals were living on the streets of Surrey, but it is difficult to assess exactly what the incidence of absolute homelessness is in our community, and some service providers believe the rate is much higher than determined by the count.

In terms of a specific target population, our work to date concerning the connection between gender and poverty is particularly informative. In 2003, we participated in the Vibrant Communities Gender and Poverty Project along with five other communities across Canada. Our aim was to hear from the diverse groups who lived on low incomes how they experienced our local economy through a gender lens, and how that impacted them.

A review of local research at that time "...indicated that Surrey, with a population of over 375,000, is a dynamic community growing at a phenomenal rate. Some of that growth is in the visible minority community, which has expanded by 26% over four years to comprise 36.7% of the whole population. Little is known, however, about the economic profile of immigrant and visible minority residents of Surrey in particular. While the Aboriginal community is relatively small, at approximately 6900 people, its average income is higher than for the Aboriginal population of B.C. in general. On the other hand, people over the age of 25 in the Aboriginal population are even less likely to finish high school than the total population in Surrey.

Surrey is an example of what is commonly described as the growing divide between the haves and the have-nots. Despite enjoying a slightly higher average income than is true for the province, Surrey also has a higher number of people living under the Low Income Cut

¹ www.surrey.ca

² Statistics Canada, Profile of Income of Individuals, etc, 2001 Census

³ An Analysis of the Balance of Social services in Surrey, BC, Erin Harron, Whalley BIA, 2006, Surrey

⁴ Emerging Trends in Poverty in Surrey, Strathcona Research Group, Vibrant Surrey, Nov 2006, Surrey

Off. Those working on poverty reduction in the area say this is reflected in the striking differences in level of affluence from neighbourhood to neighborhood: Whalley is described as having all the issues that older inner city neighbourhoods like the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver struggle with, while Ocean Park is home to some of the most affluent people in the Lower Mainland.

Other highlights indicating gaps in Surrey:

- Homelessness is described as ‘reaching crisis proportions’,
- There are too few services for the hungry and the homeless in general
- Only 10 beds are reserved for homeless women and their children
- Most substance abuse recovery services are male focused
- The most likely to be street involved are young aboriginal women.

... We learned that women were more vulnerable to changes to the social safety net and jobs because in their traditional role as caregivers, they themselves were more likely to be underemployed or dependent on the state. They were also more likely to internalize the loss of support and regard it as personal, which manifested as severe health issues and led to further isolation and deterioration. Men, in identifying as workers, saw themselves as part of the larger economic picture. Their experiences told them they were disposable: wages were lowered to subsistence levels, jobs reclassified from permanent, full time to casual, pride of workmanship and longevity were no longer valued. They felt powerless to do anything and identified with other men who might turn to violence or substance abuse to cope.

Deep concerns regarding the imminent possibility of homelessness for most of those being forced off the ‘system’, coupled with the sense that no one cared painted a bleak picture. ⁵⁵

A recent survey of government and social service agencies confirmed that more and more Surrey residents must choose between eating and having a roof over their heads⁶, that those seeking support are dealing with complex issues beyond the ability of individual agencies to meet and that the geography of poverty is now reaching in to every Surrey neighborhood but services have not kept pace. We also learned that for two sub-groups within the large South Asian community in Surrey, farm workers and women leaving a marriage, poverty related more to low wages than it did barriers to access of government support programs.

The November 2006 Strathcona Research Group report titled *Emerging Trends in Surrey* commissioned by Vibrant Surrey provided us with clearer statistical breakdown (Fig. 1) of the experience of poverty by populations, based on the most recent census figures available (2001).

⁵ Hara, Louise et al, Vibrant Surrey Gender & Poverty Project, January 2004, Surrey

⁶ Ibid

Fig. 1 – Poverty in Surrey, Vulnerable Populations

		LICO	LICO (%)
Total Population	345,060	62,990	18%
Male	170,730	29,470	17%
Female	174,335	33,520	19%
Aboriginal	6,770	2,590	38%
Male	3,185	1,185	37%
Female	3,585	1,405	39%
Visible Minority	126,890	31,890	25%
Male	62,570	15,755	25%
Female	64,315	16,135	25%
With Activity Limitation	57,815	13,860	24%
Male	26,995	5,900	22%
Female	30,820	7,960	26%
Immigration Period			
before 1986	51,710	7,505	15%
Male	25,460	3,325	13%
Female	26,245	4,180	16%
between 1986 - 1990	15,920	3,485	22%
Male	7,830	1,585	20%
Female	8,085	1,900	24%
between 1991 - 1995	23,150	6,145	27%
Male	11,030	2,850	26%
Female	12,120	3,295	27%
between 1996 - 2001	23,835	9,730	41%
Male	11,330	4,740	42%
Female	12,510	4,990	40%

Fig. 2 - LICO by Age Group

Age Group	with income	% of pop	LICO?	
			Yes (%)	No (%)
15 - 24	47635	18%	20%	80%
25 - 34	47470	18%	19%	81%
35 - 44	58310	22%	17%	83%
45 - 54	49850	18%	13%	87%
55 - 64	30615	11%	15%	85%
65 - 74	20720	8%	15%	85%
75 and older	15570	6%	21%	79%
Total	270170	100%		

These tables were created from data that was obtained courtesy of United Way of the Lower Mainland through an agreement with the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project.

Overall community analysis

Although Surrey, with an estimated population of almost 500,000, is projected to surpass Vancouver within the next couple of decades, it is estimated to have only 1/8 of its infrastructure.

Covering 371 square kilometers, Surrey is most densely populated at its northern and southern ends, and has a total of six city centres. However, the regional transit system does not provide adequate access across neighbourhoods and city centres and is too costly for those on fixed incomes.

British Columbia, like most of North America, is in the grips of a hot housing market, prices are soaring and Surrey is feeling the impact. Decaying affordable housing

stock is being replaced with developments that are out of reach for low-income families. Surrey's economic base is a mixture of manufacturing, high tech, agriculture and commercial services. Jobs are plentiful but most of those available to low skilled individuals in Surrey do not pay enough to cover the ever-increasing cost of living.

Government Income supports, which have been shrinking over the last decade in concert with a North American trend for leaner and tougher policies, not only fail to provide for basic necessities but penalize recipients for accessing additional supports. Increased media attention to the ever more visible sex and drug trades in some Surrey neighborhoods as well as gang related violence and increasing levels of property crime have resulted in local pressure for tougher laws rather than addressing the root causes.

Add to this the pressures created by more than ten years of government fiscal restraint and an already over burdened infrastructure trying to cope with the influx of 800 to 1000 new residents a month (a number of whom were born outside of Canada), and it becomes apparent why capacity is straining to meet demand.

Vision and Targets

Vision

Vibrant Surrey's goal is to encourage and facilitate collaborative efforts to reduce poverty and the issues related to poverty, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all who call Surrey home.

We believe broad social inclusion is a priority and will support the community in organizing to that end.

Our Beliefs: The members of Vibrant Surrey share the following beliefs and basic values with each other and other members of the Pan Canadian Learning Community of Vibrant Communities with regards to finding local solutions to poverty reduction in Surrey and Canada:

1. Communities can have a deeper impact if they focus on reducing not just alleviating poverty
2. Local organizations are effective in mobilizing broad based community support for efforts to deal with local problems.
3. We can do more together than we can do on our own
4. We can create increased credibility, capacity and capital for the entire field of community poverty reduction by working together.
5. We can compliment the efforts of municipal, provincial and federal governments in tackling social and economic challenges.
6. We do not have the answers only a commitment to learn, change and grow.
7. We are *inclusive* not just with issues but also in membership. We have a commitment to fostering new relationships, with a special emphasis on ensuring

that low-income residents shape solutions meant to address their needs. We provide support to enable their contributions, which means recognizing and addressing the realities of those living on low income. We acknowledge the diversity of experiences of poverty. We support community organizing and believe that broad social inclusion is a priority. To that end we are prepared to commit resources and focus on ongoing learning and improvement

8. We understand that everyone is part of the problem and part of the solution
9. We focus on the strengths and assets of communities rather than their deficits.
10. We ensure a safe, non- judgmental environment where everyone can share their knowledge, experience and stories.
11. We respect and embrace diversity of opinions, ideas, outlooks and abilities and engage in the work in a spirit of trust, appreciation and generosity.
12. We are prepared to take risks, be creative and innovative in our work.
13. We emphasize mutual support for and among all those participating in the work of poverty reduction
14. We measure our success by our results

Our Principles: The following principles have been borrowed from the Vibrant Communities Initiative. As they guide the work across Canada they will also guide the work of the people committed to Vibrant Surrey.

1. We are rooted in a commitment to learn, model and apply the strategies of comprehensive thinking and action, multi-sector collaboration, community asset building and community learning.
2. We are *comprehensive*: we are broad in scope and working with umbrella issues. We collaborate on projects that are interconnected. We intervene at several levels, from systemic to individual, and work beyond service provision to asset building. We empower neighbourhoods and communities. Our work results in changes to the broader social and economic context.
3. We are *holistic*: we break down artificial boundaries (silos) to identify links between various issues and engage diverse sectors.
4. We are *multisectoral*: we encourage partnering and collaborative work and recognize the value of contributions from diverse backgrounds, networks and areas of expertise. We believe this bring new value in terms of resources, insights and expertise. In order to embrace this concept, we are governed by a coordinating mechanism that encompasses our plurality.

Poverty reduction targets

In order to inspire the community and build momentum towards change, Vibrant Surrey has put some numbers to its vision.

These targets are meant to inspire, rather than serve as prescriptive measures of success. We hope our initiatives and projects will provide that. These targets will encourage us to focus on big scale change for the populations we believe are most at risk in Surrey, as they also help to underscore the breadth of poverty in these groups. These targets represent roughly 15% of those who lived in poverty in 2001. We settled on this figure as it strikes a balance between what is attainable, and

what can be considered significant progress towards lasting change.

We imagine that by the end of 2010:

- ✓ **1000 Families will have moved out of poverty and have the means to continue to prosper**
- ✓ **10,000 Individuals have experienced significant improvement in their lives.**
Included in this group will be:
 - 4000 immigrants**
 - 1700 youth**
 - 400 Aboriginals**
 - 5000 women**
- ✓ **500 new jobs will have been created that pay sustainable incomes**
- ✓ **More and more individuals and groups are joining this movement for change, including:**
 - 60 non-profit organizations (incl. Faith, social service, civic & labour)**
 - 30 government representatives**
 - 100 individuals experiencing poverty**
 - 50 community representatives**
 - 25 business orgs**

General Approach

Framing poverty

We believe that poverty is more than just a lack of income. It is multidimensional - including things like safe and affordable housing, a feeling of hope for the future, participation in community, financial savings, etc. A variety of factors outside of an individual's control can contribute to poverty: age, gender, ethnicity, migration, health, physical and developmental ability etc.

While we rely on the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) as one of the means of measuring the incidence of poverty in Surrey, it is with the knowledge that an income based formula cannot truly measure or reflect an individual's or a household's economic well being. We believe that the concept of sustainable income may capture that better as it measures the income needed to meet basic needs, to have an adequate standard of living, and to be able to save for the future. Families and individuals with sustainable incomes are able to improve their standard of living over time, actively participate in their communities, build strong support systems, and contribute to their local economy. That journey out of poverty can be understood and captured by their progress along a multi-dimensional continuum. For that reason, Vibrant Surrey has chosen to adopt the Caledon framework for poverty reduction, which you will find on the next page, to reflect a way of achieving an enhanced quality of life.

Framework for change

For the last three years, Vibrant Surrey has worked with the community to understand the experience of poverty in Surrey, build commitment for collaborative approaches and develop a comprehensive plan for action. We have engaged leaders in every sector, including those with first hand knowledge of economic and social exclusion and its impacts. We listened and we learned. The result has been the formulations of a plan that we believe will significantly increase our community's capacity to reduce poverty and increase quality of life for all its residents.

Our goals over the next four years are to:

- Encourage and facilitate collaborative efforts to reduce poverty
- Understand poverty through access to economic security
- Strengthen community capacity

There are four initial strategies we mean to pursue:

1. Increase understanding of poverty and poverty reduction best practices through research and evaluation
2. Demonstrate the benefits of working within a community economic development framework
3. Increase economic security through income and asset building
4. Develop and implement a community learning plan

Theory of change

Our community is grappling with the more visible symptoms of increasing poverty but there is little capacity to frame a common understanding of the root causes. As a result, responses are piecemeal and their aims as diverse as the number of efforts being made. At the same time, there simply are not enough assets in place to deal with the situation we face.

For instance, there are initiatives underway by the City of Surrey and the community based Homelessness and Housing Task Force to address the local housing crisis. It is identified as the number one issue impacting those living in or near poverty in Surrey today and so would seem like the logical place for us to start. But as a community we have too few resources already to indulge in duplication so we have made a commitment to support the efforts being made by the City and the community Task Force. However, we see an additional role for ourselves that adds another layer of response to this urgent issue: we believe that increased understanding of the root causes of poverty and how they lead to homelessness in Surrey would better enable us to mobilize responses so that the incidence of poverty leading to homelessness itself may be reduced. As a convenor we can enhance these groups' ability to reach their goals by leveraging support for their efforts and creating opportunities for extending their reach and impact. At the same time, we can work with the City and the Task Force and other local innovators to align our goals and focus our work to support the community's agenda as it emerges.

Using this model, we have determined that initially we will:

- ***strengthen capacity and increase social capital by dedicating staff and resources to connecting individuals and groups and tables, supporting joint planning and visioning, brokering the use of existing assets to leverage new engagement and strengthen successful efforts, and bridging difference wherever possible.***
- **incubate new projects (with seed or development money, technical assistance, access to funders, engagement of champions etc) to be led by Vibrant Surrey members**
- **facilitate knowledge sharing through comprehensive communication, evaluation and learning plans**

As the community's capacity grows and we learn more about and from each other and our community, we will identify and pursue more focused initiatives to bring about deep and lasting change.

Portfolio of Strategies and Initiatives for 2007

1. Demonstrate the benefits of working within a community development framework

1.1 Through CED approaches, creates linkages and capacity with community

How will we know we have done this?

- A clearer understanding of existing CED assets will have emerged
- CED practitioners and supporters will be connected and engaged in a vision for Surrey
- Community capacity to do CED is increased through coordination of resources
- All levels of government have better ability to meet their goals in concert with community agenda

Emerging Initiative:

An environmental scan is to be undertaken early in 2007 to update our knowledge of all that exists or is emerging in the field of CED in Surrey and engage proponents towards identifying an early set of actions.

Existing Initiatives:

Vibrant Surrey is actively working through its members to provide public and behind the scenes support for the development of an urban agreement in Surrey.

1.2 Increase knowledge and access to resources

How will we know we have done this?

- CED practitioners and supporters will be connected and engaged in a vision for Surrey
- Practitioners and potential project leads will have access to national resources and experience
- As neighborhood plans are developed through the municipal process, there is more potential to incorporate CED approaches

Emerging Initiative:

A community forum will be held by Vibrant Surrey once the environmental scan is complete to present the initial plan and engage others in building on that.

1.3 Support existing initiatives and incubate innovative strategies that address barriers to successful participation in the local economy

How will we know we have done this?

- Projects would continue to engage all aspects of community in being part of the solutions
- More people with employment barriers have jobs that meet their particular needs
- More employers turn to the social purchasing portal first to fill new postings
- Staffing shortages are addressed through targeted employment practices
- There is a greater sense of connection between hiring practices and economic health of households
- Social issues are more integrated into corporate planning i.e. Coast Capital Savings establishes annual goals related to incidence of homelessness in Surrey
- More businesses start with or evolve to embracing triple bottom line approaches
- Social enterprise is recognized as a viable tool for neighborhood revitalization
- Entrepreneurship is a viable option for those with employment barriers

Existing initiatives:

- a) Surrey Social Purchasing Portal, led by Community Innovations
- b) Seeing is Believing, led by Canadian Business for Social Responsibility. Vibrant Surrey is being invited to partner in the planning and engagement strategies for the second round of corporate tours to neighborhoods or agencies with the goal of involving tour participants in poverty reduction strategies

2. Increase Economic security through income and asset building

2.1 Continue to support current projects

How will we know we have done this?

- Projects would continue to engage all aspects of community in being part of the solutions
- We would learn from these projects as we go and respond accordingly
- Community understanding and capacity for response would grow around needs of working homeless and the conditions that caused them to become homeless
- New strategies emerge from what we learn (i.e. Living wage or progressive HR campaign links to Project Comeback outcomes)
- Fewer working people are homeless, and they retain jobs and housing longer
- Community understanding and capacity for response would grow around needs of women in the sex trade, who they are and where they come from; and what conditions caused them to turn to the sex trade
- Women in the local sex trade would be less vulnerable to violence and disease
- Fewer women would have to engage in the sex trade to make ends meet

Existing initiatives:

- a) Project Comeback, led by Newton Advocacy Group Society, places homeless day labourers in sustainable jobs and market housing and provides support through transition
- b) Sex workers & Community Working Together, led by Surrey Women's Centre. Needs assessment to determine who is out there and what their safety and other health needs are

2.2 Create a strategy for addressing barriers to economic security for immigrants, youth, women and aboriginals

- A more specific understanding of how immigrants, women, youth and aboriginals are faring, and what they require in order to thrive in our community has emerged.
- Multi sectoral stakeholders have an enhanced working relationship
- Local decision makers are confident they are acting on a community based plan
- Community capacity for taking collaborative comprehensive approaches to meeting the gaps is increased
- VS engagement of members of target populations has deepened

- One or more target led 'made in Surrey' solutions are now incubating

Developing initiatives:

The Mapping Project, led by Vibrant Surrey, is in discussions with several departments of all three levels of government as well as other local planners and analysts. The vision is to create maps of Surrey neighborhoods that include layers of data gathered by all the proponents that can be manipulated by the user and that will be accessible to the whole community.

2.3 Create local solutions to accessing financial institutions through community development

- The community will have a deeper understanding of how access to banking and other financial services impacts an individual's ability to thrive
- Immediate reduction of stress for those opening bank accounts, allowing more capacity for dealing with life's other challenges.
- Increased financial literacy and financial competence.
- Increased social capital for all involved, including more connection to people and places concerned. Increased capacity to achieve sustainable incomes and build assets.
- For some families, an end to generational poverty.
- For some banking institutions, increased capacity to respond to a more diverse client base, with attendant increased market share.
- As well, banks may be regarded as more socially responsible and connected to their community.

Emerging initiative:

Led by Newton Advocacy Group Society, talks are underway to increase Vancity Credit Union's engagement with Project Comeback through a pilot micro-lending project. A Vancity Credit Union branch is already piloting the provision of banking services to project participants.

3. Increase understanding of poverty and poverty reduction best practices through research and evaluation

3.1 Set up a structure for evaluating Vibrant Surrey practices, projects and other activities

How will we know we have done this?

- Action is linked to learning from the outset, ensuring that the process of change is dynamically linked to what we do and how we do it.
- We have the ability to adjust our course as we assess the impacts of our actions

- The potential for authentic 'made in Surrey' responses increases as we move from theory to practice
- Trust in our capacity to effect change grows as transparency increases and we share what we learn from engagement with the community

Developing initiative:

Simon Fraser University, in partnership with Kwantlen University College and Sustainable Employment Network Inc. is developing an evaluation framework which will study all the we do and how do it (strategies, systems, process and attribution) so we can learn from what works and why. (see Appendix _Evaluation plan)

3.2 Set up a structure for learning from and with those most impacted by poverty that informs all VS activities and practices

How will we know we have done this?

- Community concerns are identified and response strategies are explored collaboratively
- Research is integrated or embedded as part of the ongoing process of community development
- Target-led participatory research findings increase the likelihood that recommendations will lead to meaningful and sustained community action

Developing Initiative:

Kwantlen University College in partnership with Simon Fraser University is proposes to undertake target-led participatory research that will ensure that we do is responsive, effective and that we learn from it. (see Appendix _ Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Community Learning and Poverty Reduction in Surrey, British Columbia)

3.3 Create links to poverty reduction and/or CED tools and practices

How will we know we have done this?

- Knowledge is shared more freely and spontaneously, so knowledge base grows where it needs to
- Increased capacity for innovative, collaborative problem solving based on best practices

Developing Initiative:

Simon Fraser University is now hosting the Vibrant Surrey website and is provided technical support for embedding the links and other

information sharing tools, including e-bulletins and document sharing.

3.4 Create and implement a strategy for sharing all that is being done and all that is learned

How will we know we have done this?

- Increased learning across boundaries or within non –traditional groups
- Increased understanding of gaps in community economic development and economic security
- Increased understanding of how a community learns and what it needs to learn
- Learning and action are linked, so activities are more effective (see communications plan)

Developing Initiatives:

- a) Skilled communication experts will be engaged by Vibrant Surrey in the first quarter of 2007 to develop briefs, background papers, media and government relations’ toolkits and train-the-trainer workshops.
- b) An annual report card to the community will be designed by Vibrant Surrey to provide an update on community initiatives and the impact they may be having, as well as report on how the community is faring.

4. Develop and implement a community learning plan

4.1 Provide access to national learning opportunities regarding poverty reduction tools and strategies

How will we know we have done this?

- Increased capacity for innovative, collaborative problem solving based on best practices

4.1 Develop a community learning strategy based on priorities identified in other strategic areas

How will we know we have done this?

- Knowledge is shared more freely and spontaneously, so knowledge base grows where it needs to
- Learning and action are linked, so activities are more effective

Existing Initiatives:

- a) See Appendix _ Community Learning Plan

- b) A communications expert is working with us to identify how to best support the knowledge transfer that will facilitate collaboration, strengthen capacity, social capital, and networks.

4.2 Work with Vibrant Communities to support local learning

How will we know we have done this?

- o Vibrant Surrey learning goals link more directly with Pan Canadian Learning Community

Existing Initiatives:

See “Learning Nationally, Acting Locally” below

Learning & Evaluation

Overall Learning and Assessment

We believe that in order to support deep and lasting change, learning must be dynamically linked to action: it must come from what we do and also inform all that we undertake. Our intent is to inform those working in the activity areas, to continue to engage those who are most connected to the systems we believe need to change, as well as to ‘set the context’ for change through shared learning.

We have three primary sources of knowledge: the product of a three-level evaluation system as well as the findings of target-led participatory research, and the learning opportunities offered to us through participation in the Pan Canadian Learning Community (PCLC). What we learn will be communicated through a comprehensive communications strategy that reaches all those we engage and keeps our community informed of our progress and its impact.

On the following page is the Community Learning Plan, which illustrates our goals and projected outcomes in a logic model.

INPUTS	IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES/ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	LINKING CONSTRUCTS	OUTCOMES
<p>VS Members</p> <p>Staff and contractors</p> <p>Learning sub-committee</p> <p>Pan-Canadian Learning Community</p> <p>Tamarack</p> <p>Caledon</p> <p>Funding</p> <p>Strategic Plan</p> <p>Community groups</p> <p>Residents of Surrey</p>	<p>Evaluation & Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Develop an evaluation framework -Evaluate past and current activities and processes -Scan CED projects & resources -Scan financial literacy and accessibility opportunities and resources -Map economic security assets -Create virtual research and best practices library -Act on what we learn 	# of learning partners	Increased learning across boundaries or within non-traditional groups	Learning and action are linked, so activities are more effective
		# of meetings of sub-committee	Increased community capacity for inclusivity and reciprocity	
		# of staff and volunteer hours to do evaluation, develop library, map and resource lists	Knowledge is shared more freely and spontaneously, so knowledge base grows where it needs to	
		# of focus groups and interviews to evaluate activities	Increased understanding of gaps in community economic development and economic security	
		<p>Community Engagement</p> <p>Link to member and other community information networks to disseminate local poverty reduction case studies and related information in order to increase interest and support for poverty reduction work</p> <p>Develop a plan to share</p>	# of notices, articles, community meetings and agency contacts	Increased understanding of how a community learns and what it needs to learn
	# of community learning and PCLC events		Increased capacity for innovative, collaborative problem solving based on best practices	
	# of participants to PCLC and community learning events			
	# of individuals accessing electronic lists and web based resources			

Learning & Evaluation Strategies & Initiatives

1. Learning Nationally, Acting Locally

Since 2003, Vibrant Surrey has benefited from several of the learning events offered by Vibrant Communities. They have provided timely information and practical tools as we created the conditions for success in our community. They have also offered opportunities for engagement as we demonstrated through shared learning some of the benefits of working collaboratively.

Currently there are several streams of learning provided by the Pan Canadian Learning Community that are giving support to our efforts for capacity and social capital building as well as skills development:

Government Learning Circle: several local bureaucrats participated in the pilot events run in spring 2006. We invited them to listen in to the calls as a group hosted by the local Service Canada office. Not only did what they heard spark debate about potential learning themes for future calls, but two opportunities for collaboration between levels of gov't and different ministries resulted. We plan to continue to host group events so this kind of practical application can continue. This will also support the high level development talks around the Surrey Enrichment agreement.

Evaluation Community of Practice: While our members have a wide range of knowledge and experience with evaluation, what we are attempting has never really been measured before. This community of practice is allowing us to learn as we go, to share what we learn with our colleagues in other communities, and explore together the challenges we all face. We also get to test new tools and practices, and benefit from each other's findings. The shared learning and problem solving is invaluable as we create our own evaluation framework.

The Funders Network: our funder members continue to connect with their peers across the country as they build the case for supporting community agendas through comprehensive collaborations like ours.

ANC Revitalization: while the current phase of this national project will soon be ending and plans are being made locally for maintaining the momentum for revitalization in Bridgeview, we are only just beginning to understand the scope of what has been achieved. These calls help to connect the theories discussed to events and actions as they have unfolded in the communities involved.

Collaborative & Inclusive Leadership: We believe we must be led in all that we do by the people who's lives we mean to impact. We try to model that

in our ways of working but we struggle to put in to practice the values that we hold. This series, which means to explore models for inclusive community engagement, will be particularly useful for core staff and volunteers but will be open to anyone engaged in Vibrant Surrey initiatives.

Vibrant Communities Case for Support: As the first Vibrant Community proposing to become a Trail Builder in this next phase of the national initiative, we will have a lot to learn from those communities who have come before us. We know that there will soon be others to join us in this level of poverty reduction work, but we won't have to break trail the way the first five communities have done and we can benefit from their struggles and successes. Even though we have four years to build our own case for support, we have to start doing it now as it may take some time for our community to recognize the value of supporting collaborative leadership of this nature.

Included in our annual visioning session where we evaluate what we have done and what we have learned will be an exercise designed to identify learning goals for the coming year. These will be shared with the Pan Canadian Learning Community to ensure every opportunity for synergy between the local and national learning agendas.

2. Evaluation

Vibrant Surrey has a two-phased approach for evaluating our preliminary strategies and initiatives:

- Core evaluation at three scales: systemic, process, and strategic
- Depending on additional funding, the Target Inclusion Model of evaluation, that will provide a more robust, participatory, and theoretically informed (and informing) approach to comprehensive communities initiative evaluation.

2.1 Three Levels of Evaluation

In accordance with the Vibrant Communities evaluation approach, our efforts will consider and track three levels of outcomes:

- **Systemic: e.g., shifts in policy, investment, decision-making processes and information sharing practices.**
- **Process: e.g. how effective is the Vibrant Surrey table, according to (for example): community learning, building partnerships, planning, inclusivity, transparency, diversity, implementation.**
- **Strategy: each VS strategy committee will conduct its own evaluation using the evaluation framework established by Vibrant Communities.**

We will use the Vibrant Communities evaluation matrix that describes the techniques, time line and persons responsible for capturing results from the initiative and for developing a fuller sense of the contribution the collaboration made in moving the initiative forward. (See attached Matrix)

Systemic Evaluation

Systemic evaluation represents a comprehensive approach to evaluation of the VS initiative. The critical aspect at the systems level is attribution to VS itself. Vibrant Communities resources and ongoing coaching and evaluation learning will assist VS to construct a coherent and realistic approach to systemic evaluation. Each strategy table will also be instructed to map their system-level impacts, particularly in terms of access to decision-makers and policy processes. Systems level evaluation could become particularly important within the context of a Surrey Agreement.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation will evaluate the functioning of the VS coalition table. As a starting point for entering the next phase of our development into Trail Builder status, we will conduct a summative evaluation (using mainly qualitative techniques) of the process to date – gathering information from members and reflecting on the utility and effectiveness of the process. The intent of the evaluation will be to extract lessons learned and to inform, in a positive manner, facilitation and coordination of the table moving forward.

The capacity building focus in the Trail Builder evaluation guide is also particularly relevant to the Vibrant Surrey initiative in terms of evaluating the success of the brokering and facilitating role we play in the community. Here, the capacity criteria established by Vibrant Communities provides possible avenues to evaluate the capacity building function of the VS table:

- **Enhanced local capacity to convene a comprehensive, multisectoral initiative for poverty reduction**
- **Development of a network of partners committed to working for poverty reduction, including segments of the community who are not typically included as full participants in such work**
- **Enhanced trust, information-sharing and capacity for collaborative problem-solving among members of the network**
- **Broadened awareness of poverty reduction strategies and the roles that various local partners can play**
- **Improved local capacity to examine the whole system of factors contributing to poverty and develop strategic interventions**
- **Enhanced ability to generate innovative responses to poverty by combining diverse resources and perspectives**
- **Development of a shared vision and plan of action for poverty reduction**

- **Development of clout needed to impact systemic conditions that lie beyond the influence of any single agency**

Strategy Evaluation

We will workshop the following strategy evaluation questions with each strategic cluster (using the evaluation framework) as a starting-point for launching the Trail Builder phase of Vibrant Surrey. These questions will provide the core of evaluation feedback for the initiative as a whole and assist each strategic cluster with its own operational planning. These questions will be periodically re-visited by each cluster during the implementation phase.

Setting the Context

1. What is the particular challenge or opportunity the initiative is designed to address?
2. How does this challenge relate to reducing poverty in your community?

Understanding Outcomes (Logic Model)

3. Describe the various changes the initiative will likely (hopefully) generate.
4. How many households do you anticipate the initiative will affect? What type of changes might households experience?

Understanding Contribution

5. What is the role of your collaboration in moving forward this initiative?

Capturing Outcomes (Evaluation Matrix)

6. What are the key indicators of change for each of the major outcomes your collaboration is seeking?
7. What techniques will your collaboration use to track these changes?
8. What techniques will your collaboration use to determine the type of contribution your collaboration made to move the initiative forward?
9. Who is responsible for researching these questions and what are their major work plan milestones?

Guiding Principles

Again, as per the Vibrant Communities Trail Builder Evaluation approach, evaluation of each strategic cluster and the table as a whole will be informed by the following guiding principles:

Evaluation will be:

- **User driven: they define major questions, how they will answer them and when they need them.**

- **Participatory**
- **Guided by appropriate expectations on the “burden of evidence” required to answer questions.**
- **Acknowledging of different levels of outcomes emerge and embrace anticipated and unanticipated outcomes.**
- **Flexible in approach.**
- **Long term**

Technical & Financial Resources

Simon Fraser University, Kwantlen University College and Sustainable Employment Network, Inc lead the Evaluation Strategic team. In addition, evaluation will be facilitated by project staff and complemented, when necessary, by external consultants. Each strategic cluster is also formed by Vibrant Surrey members who are all well-versed in evaluation processes and able to bring their wealth of experience in terms of evaluations of their own organizations and initiatives to the Vibrant Surrey team.

2.2 Target Inclusion Model: Expanding the Scope of Evaluation

Vibrant Surrey submitted an evaluation proposal to the Research Development Initiative program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). We were recommended for funding by the evaluation committee but ranked one position outside of available funding. We will re-visit the proposal, incorporating SSHRC comments and suggestions, and hope to be successful upon our second attempt. This funding will enable Vibrant Surrey to expand the scope and theoretical significance of its evaluation process. To guide this expanded approach, we will use the Target Inclusion Model of evaluation – developed a successfully implemented by a member of the Steering Committee.

In brief, the purpose of the *Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives* (ECCI) project is to construct a research framework that will both advance our theoretical understandings of the processes of evaluation and local institution-building and provide practical benefit to an exciting social planning initiative within the city of Surrey, British Columbia. Through an innovative research partnership linking Simon Fraser University, Kwantlen University College and Vibrant Surrey, our well-timed investigation will lend insight into the dynamics of comprehensive community initiatives and their ability to address issues of social planning and poverty reduction. Local development processes are common within the Canadian and international context, however, they are often criticized for lacking theoretical sophistication and substantial evaluative proof concerning the effectiveness of their process and outcomes. Our project will address these deficiencies and yield practical benefit to the community through the following research objectives:

The purpose of the model is to provide one possible option and funding source for scaling-up the depth of our evaluation process (in terms of theoretical sophistication, community participation, and initiative learning).

Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the process of Vibrant Surrey in its attempts to create a collaborative, multi-stakeholder initiative to address poverty reduction in Surrey, British Columbia;
2. To evaluate outcomes associated with the four strategic initiatives outlined in the Vibrant Surrey strategic plan;
3. To assess the institutional qualities and potential of the comprehensive community initiative approach as it applies to Vibrant Surrey;
4. To develop, assess and monitor the development of an information system - based upon the target inclusion model of evaluation – as it applies to the comprehensive community initiative (CCI) approach;
5. To create and disseminate an evaluation “toolkit” for the CCI approach (specifically targeting other Vibrant Communities across Canada).

The Target Inclusion Model

The Target Inclusion Model (Dooley and Floyd, 1999) will be utilized as a methodological tool to implement and assess the research objectives. The Target Inclusion model is designed to involve the broad community at all stages of the research process from the setting of research objectives to the interpretation of final results.

The Target Inclusion Model is relevant for this project because it reflects both the values of Vibrant Surrey and the community organizing and planning components central to the CCI process. The model has been developed with the following guiding principles in mind:

- **Research will be conducted in a manner that includes members of the community as an integral and valued component of the research process;**
- **From the beginning of the study to the submission of the final report, community consultation will be an ongoing feature of the research process;**
- **The direction of the study will be determined by the expression of community need;**
- **The expertise of the research teams lies in its ability to effectively utilize the tools of research. The community has situational and contextual knowledge that complements the expertise of the research team;**

- **The research process will be flexible and dynamic. The research team will respond to community concerns as they arise.**

The Target Inclusion Model is designed to make an explicit link between community development as a process and the implementation of a program of research. The aim is to move beyond the view of research as an add-on feature that evaluates a particular community program or initiative. Consistent with the values described above, the goal is to integrate or embed research as part of the ongoing process of community development. Further, community support for research findings increases the likelihood that recommendations will lead to meaningful and sustained community action. More often than not, a disconnect between the research team and the community results in unused research manuscripts.

2.4 Learning from Vibrant Communities

Finally, the ongoing coaching from Tamarack and the Mid-Year and End-of-Year progress reporting will assist Vibrant Surrey to schedule and monitor its evaluation process. We look forward to working with Tamarack on this process.

In addition, the Vibrant Communities project and select partner communities have provided a wealth of information and advanced project evaluation frameworks and “lessons learned” that will inform the Vibrant Surrey evaluation plan and allow us to not “re-invent the wheel.” Specifically, two partner community processes have proven particularly informative. As a first step in the evaluation process of our Trail Builder journey, we are proposing to sponsor an evaluation session with members from Victoria’s Quality of Life Challenge and Vibrant Communities Edmonton to meet with the Vibrant Surrey table (including each strategic cluster) to share their experiences and models. We are looking for more information on the Quality of Life Challenge use of Outcome Mapping and the evaluation framework charts used by VC Edmonton.

Outcome Mapping represents a particularly relevant model for Vibrant Surrey to explore, given our focus on brokering. According to International Development Research Centre publications:

Outcome Mapping focuses on one particular category of results - changes in the behaviour of people, groups, and organizations with whom a program works directly. These changes are called “outcomes.” Through Outcome Mapping, development programs can claim contributions to the achievement of outcomes rather than claiming the achievement of development impacts. Although these outcomes, in turn, enhance the possibility of development impacts, the relationship is not necessarily one of direct cause and effect. Instead of attempting to measure the impact of the program’s partners on development, Outcome Mapping concentrates on monitoring and evaluating its results in terms of the influence of the program on the roles these partners play in development.

Outcome Mapping provides not only a guide to essential evaluation map-making, but also a guide to learning and increased effectiveness and affirmation that being attentive along the journey is as important, and critical to, arriving at a destination.

Michael Quinn Patton, Foreword

See: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html

Leaders and Partners

Community Engagement

Since the first conversations began among a handful of community organization representatives in 2002, engagement in the vision for poverty reduction in Surrey has been principally a building of connections between individuals. Often times, those individuals had the capacity to bridge into an entire sector (Surrey Board of Trade) or institution (Simon Fraser University), but the spark happened between two people initially.

As the momentum built and our membership grew, we decided to undertake a project as a means of testing our ability to work collaboratively. The Gender and Poverty project would compel us to engage more directly with community groups as a whole for the first time.

In 2003, we brought together a diverse group of people living in poverty, as well as a number of agency representatives who worked closely with them, to learn what their realities were and hear their vision for a better future. More than 45 people shared their stories, struggles and dreams with us and together created The Wall of Poverty in Surrey in a one-day community workshop.

Completed in January 2004, this project deepened our grasp of the dimensions of poverty in our community. This was enhanced by our participation in the Tamarack Sustainable Incomes tele-learning series. Later that same year, we interviewed more than a dozen front line service providers to hear their opinions of the state of things and what they wanted to do about it. We shared all that we had learned to date through a series of fact sheets titled *The Face of Poverty In Surrey* that provided a statistical overview of the situation as well as insights into why certain populations were more vulnerable and some avenues for creating change.

The following spring, Mark Cabaj of Tamarack led a community workshop where we were introduced to the concept of a theory of change. Over twenty community representatives worked with Mark to identify, within our context, which approaches to bringing about change would make the most sense. It was identified that there should be three drivers to our work: community economic development, capacity building and research and education.

We then held a series of public meetings, made presentations to community tables

and increased our efforts at engagement, culminating with an open house in the fall of 2005 attended by over 100 business people. Everywhere we went, we talked about what we were learning and the approaches we felt would be more effective in bringing about change. Support was immediate and enthusiastic.

By the end of 2005, our membership had grown to over 20 organizations representing every sector in Surrey. More importantly, Vibrant Surrey was being recognized as an initiative that was endorsed by most of the leaders in our community as it provided a vehicle through which the community agenda could be supported.

Through the fall of 2005 and early into 2006, we held a series of strategic planning sessions involving all of our members during which we build a community action that reflected the essence of what the community had identified were its priorities. We then shared the plan at every Surrey table, as well as with regional and national partners, to get confirmation that we were on the right track. To date, feedback is that our approaches and the action plan are filling a much-needed role in Surrey and proponents are eager to get on with it.

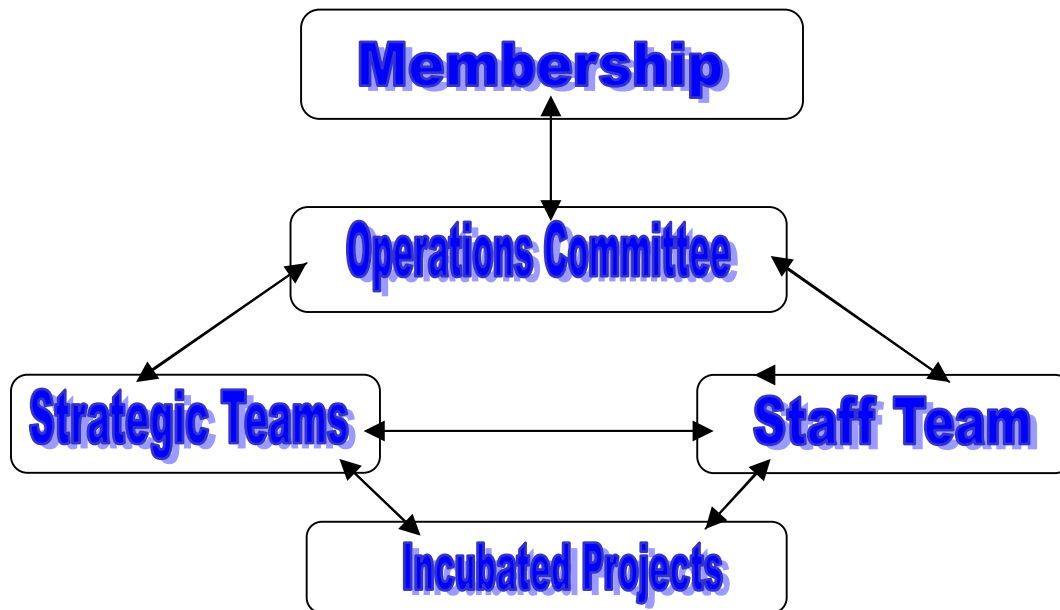
Leadership Roundtable

Led initially by three community organizations in 2002, United Way of the Lower Mainland, Community Innovations and Surrey Social Futures, today Vibrant Surrey's membership includes leaders from every sector of our community:

- **BC Professional Firefighters Association**
- **City of Surrey**
- **Coast Capital Savings Credit Union**
- **Community Innovations Inc.**
- **Kla How Eya Aboriginal Centre**
- **Kwantlen University College, National Institute for Sustainable Community Development**
- **National Crime Prevention Centre**
- **Newton Advocacy Group Society**
- **Options Services to Community**
- **Pacific Community Resources**
- **Phoenix Alcohol & Drug Recovery Services**
- **Progressive Intercultural Society**
- **Self Employment and Entrepreneur Development Society**
- **Service Canada (ex officio)**
- **Simon Fraser University, Surrey Campus**
- **South Fraser Women's Services Society**
- **South Fraser Community Services**
- **Surrey Board of Trade**
- **Surrey Women's Centre**
- **Sustainable Employment Network Inc**

- **Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society**
- **United Way of The Lower Mainland**
- **Vancity Community Foundation**

The management of the activities of the coalition is distributed amongst working groups as follows:



Operations Committee:

In consultation with the membership, the Operations Committee acts as the primary decision-making body for Vibrant Surrey. The key responsibilities include the overall management and administration: human resources, financial management, communications, outreach, planning and evaluation as well as liaison with related initiatives. Its members are:

- Linda Western (chair) – United Way of the Lower Mainland
- Deanna Bhandar – Coast Capital Savings
- Michel Pouliot – Pacific Community Resources
- Sean Markey – Simon Fraser University
- Gill Eston, Service Canada (ex officio)
- Klaus Werner – Community Innovations
- Wendy Rogers (interim co-chair) – Vancity Community Foundation
- Ray Hudson – Surrey Board of Trade
- Sanjeev Sandhu – Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society
- Sonya Boyce – Surrey Women’s Centre
- Bill Beatty – Sustainable Employment Network Inc.
- Steve Dooley – Kwantlen University College, National Institute for Sustainable Community Development

Strategic Teams:

Established to follow through on the initial strategies identified in the strategic plan, four teams have been established to lead the way and engage others in these specific areas:

Research & Evaluation:

Sean Markey, Simon Fraser University
Steve Dooley, Kwantlen University College

CED:

Gurjit Dusanjh, Service Canada (ex officio)
Klaus Werner, Community Innovations
Deanna Bhandar, Coast Capital Savings
Wendy Rogers, Coast Capital Savings

Economic Security:

Susan Keeping, Newton Advocacy Group Society
Michel Pouliot, Pacific Community Resources
Melinda McGraw, Service Canada (ex officio)
Lesley Woodman, Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society
Cameron McBeth, Kwa Waka Eya Aboriginal Cultural Centre
Denise Darrell, South Fraser Women's Services Society
Sonya Boyce, Surrey Women's Centre
Annette Welsh, South Fraser Community Services Society
Bill Beatty, Sustainable Employment Network Inc.

Strategy & Initiative Partners

As we just noted there are a significant number of community leaders who choose to engage in poverty reduction efforts in Surrey through shaping and running Vibrant Surrey, declaring their intent by becoming members of the collaboration. However, many groups and individuals choose to make valuable contributions in other ways without joining the Leadership group. This illustrates well the accessibility and flexibility of the Vibrant Surrey structure and the various levels of engagement it allows. The challenge is to determine if those contributions are attributable to our influence, or if they would come regardless of our efforts.

Project Partner: One of the local poverty reduction projects has many partners who choose to work at the project level without involving themselves directly with Vibrant Surrey. *Project Comeback*, modeled on the comprehensive multi-sectoral collaborative model introduced to lead organization Newton Advocacy Group Society by Vibrant Surrey, has over twenty collaborators and partners,

spanning the business, faith, social service and government sectors, only eight of whom are VS members.

Project Participant: Another way to effect change is to participate directly in a project or initiative that is designed to re-align influence and resources to meet gaps in the community. *The Surrey Social Purchasing Portal*, for instance, now boasts over 150 employer/members whose commitment to hire locally amongst underemployed groups could potentially change lives. Another avenue for creating change is a project in development called the *Economic Security Mapping Project*. This has the potential to not only amalgamate raw data being gathered by all three levels of government through six of their departments with that of community based planners, it will also make that information available to the whole community for the first time.

Ex Officio collaborators: As has been the experience in other Vibrant Communities as well as at the national level, some government departments are forced to temper their participation in the governance of our collaboration out of a concern that they not place themselves in a conflict of interest and, as a result, jeopardize their ability to provide financial support to local projects. Typically, these department mandates are better suited to supporting projects through resource allocation, but local staff also has a wealth of knowledge and skills that could be a significant asset to collaborative efforts. The local Service Canada Centre has taken the approach of assigning staff to committees and working groups on an 'ex officio' basis, meaning that they are clear that they do not officially represent their department or the Federal Government in any way, and they also take care to refrain from exerting influence on VS management decisions.

Resources in kind: And finally, some organizations choose to support what we do in a more traditional way, while keeping a low profile. Providing printing at cut rates (Whalley Printers) or free space for a large reception for business leaders (Tong Louie Family YMCA) are some examples of this type of engagement. These contributions are significant and tell us that there is still a role for arms-length partners in poverty reduction.

Sponsorship

Vibrant Surrey would like to thank all its members who have so generously contributed to reducing poverty in our community. Without them it would not have been possible to sustain this collaborative effort, let alone commit to a long-term vision. It is important to note that each contributor, by becoming a member of Vibrant Surrey, has agreed to focus on the good of the community over their individual organizational goals when they are engaged in the work of the coalition. This is what makes the coalition stronger than the sum of its parts.

All Vibrant Surrey members are required to be specific about the nature of their commitment to the Vibrant Surrey vision, or in other words, how they will contribute to its success. We recognize the value of 'putting your money where your mouth is' but also understand that some members have more capacity than others to make financial contributions. Technical and knowledge based resources are also critically important, as are skills and expertise in a number of areas.

One of our founding members, *United Way of the Lower Mainland*, as well as long term member *Coast Capital Savings Credit Union* have very generously provided funding support in the past, and have also committed to ongoing support for the next four years.

Other members are committed to in-kind support: *Community Innovations* provides financial administration while the *Surrey campus of Simon Fraser University* acts as web host and supplies ongoing website design and maintenance services.

Members contribute in other ways as well: meeting space & resources, technical skills (i.e. proposal writing, marketing, communications), access to target groups/individuals, sector specific information, staff resources (i.e. representatives & admin support) etc.

However, the most valuable contribution members are making is in placing their trust in Vibrant Surrey's ability to strengthen our community and their faith that together we can do more than we could on our own.

Resources

Staff

The governance model currently in use with Vibrant Surrey is that of a coalition, led by a representative committee that makes decisions on behalf of the larger group. This model is under review but consensus has not been reached on an alternative that would retain all the benefits of a coalition. In the interim, Vibrant Surrey's human resources needs have been met by hiring a consultant to coordinate its activities and contracting other discreet pieces of work as required.

In order to operationalized the strategic plan and its initial activities, we have identified three functions required to meet our objectives. Our intent is to continue to contract with consultants, possibly a management team, to fulfill these functions on our behalf. Contracts will be awarded to professionals in related fields, as the work unfolds and the need arises, starting with the mobilizing of resources required in the initial activity plans (see Portfolio of Initiatives and Activities for 2007). While we are confident that, with the additional support provided through matched Trail Builder funding, we have the necessary resources to meet our staffing needs for the next two years, it is quite

possible that we will need to secure additional support in the 3rd and 4th years as more specific strategies are identified and our engagement deepens and broadens accordingly.

REQUIRED STAFF FUNCTIONS		
Administration	Community Development & Project Incubation	Communications
Planning Contract Management Resource Management Evaluation co-ordination Special Events planning VC liaison Member orientation & Support	Outreach Project Incubation Member & Community Capacity Building Liaison to other tables Liaison to funding network Learning Lead Member Development	Support to other functions Meeting Co-ordination Assistance with report & proposal development E-newsletter/bulletin Community Stories Media/gov't relations toolkits Maintain web documents Maintain contact lists



Budget

April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007

INCOME

	Operations	Evaluation Research	CED	Economic Security	Commun. Plan	Outreach Plan	Project Incubation	Total
Opening Balance	34918	7000	5000	10000	13250	5000		75168
Coast Capital Savings	31750			5750				37500
United Way	15000	3000			10000			28000
McConnell Found (proj)	20000					5000		25000
Total Income	101668	10000	5000	15750	23250	10000	0	165668

EXPENSES

Operations Team & Consultants	78621	6000	5000	15750	23250	5000		133621
Overhead Costs	9887	4000				5000		18887
Project Incubation								0
Total Expenses	88508	10000	5000	15750	23250	10000	0	152508

Surplus/Deficit

13160

April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008

INCOME

	Operations	Evaluation Research	CED	Economic Security	Commun. Plan	Outreach Plan	Project Incubation	Total
Opening Balance	13160							13160
Coast Capital Savings	50000							50000
United Way	45000							45000
McConnell Foundation	52927	5000	6000	6000	5000	10000	15073	100000
SERVICE CANADA - proj				14250				14250
SSHRC - proj		32000						32000
Sponsors tbd - proj			4000					4000
Total Income	161087	37000	10000	20250	5000	10000	15073	258410

EXPENSES

Operations Team & Consultants	143187	27000		14250		5000		189437
Overhead Costs	17900	10000	10000	6000	5000	5000		53900
Project Incubation							15073	15073
Total Expenses	161087	37000	10000	20250	5000	10000	15073	258410

Surplus/Deficit

0

April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2009

INCOME

	Operations	Evaluation Research	CED	Economic Security	Commun. Plan	Outreach Plan	Project Incubation	Total
Opening Balance	0							0
Coast Capital Savings	50000							50000
United Way	45000							45000
McConnell Foundation	52000	10000	1000	1000	5000	6000	25000	100000
SERVICE CANADA - proj								0
SSHRC - proj		32000						32000
Total Income	147000	42000	1000	1000	5000	6000	25000	227000

EXPENSES

Operations Team & Consultants	160000	27000			5000			192000
Overhead Costs	13900	15000	1000	1000		6000		36900
Project Incubation							25000	25000
Total Expenses	173900	42000	1000	1000	5000	6000	25000	253900

Surplus/Deficit

-26900

April 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010

INCOME

	Operations	Evaluation Research	CED	Economic Security	Commun. Plan	Outreach Plan	Project Incubation	Total
Opening Balance	0							0
Coast Capital Savings	50000							50000
United Way	45000							45000
McConnell Foundation	52000	10000	1000	1000	5000	6000	25000	100000
SERVICE CANADA - proj								0
SSHRC - proj		32000						32000
Total Income	147000	42000	1000	1000	5000	6000	25000	227000

EXPENSES

Operations Team & Consultants	220000	27000			5000			252000
Overhead Costs	13900	15000	1000	1000		6000		36900
Project Incubation							25000	25000
Total Expenses	233900	42000	1000	1000	5000	6000	25000	313900

Surplus/Deficit

-86900

April 1, 2010 to March 31, 2011

INCOME

	Operations	Evaluation Research	CED	Economic Security	Commun. Plan	Outreach Plan	Project Incubation	Total
Opening Balance	0							0
Coast Capital Savings	50000							50000
United Way	45000							45000
McConnell Foundation	27000	10000	1000	1000	5000	6000	15000	65000
SERVICE CANADA - proj								0
SSHRC - proj		32000						32000
								0
Total Income	122000	42000	1000	1000	5000	6000	15000	192000

EXPENSES

Operations Team & Consultants	220000	27000			5000			252000
Overhead Costs	13900	15000	1000	1000		6000		36900
Project Incubation							15000	15000
Total Expenses	233900	42000	1000	1000	5000	6000	15000	303900

Surplus/Deficit

-111900

Administration Reporting

As has already been amply described, evaluation is a core component of the Vibrant Surrey action/learning dynamic. The lessons learned from evaluation will inform our ongoing activities and our stakeholders, and be included in an annual report card to the community. As a Trail Builder, Vibrant Surrey also commits to holding semi annual and annual reflection sessions in order to report to Tamarack the progress, challenges and lessons learned over the last year as well as the Vibrant Surrey proposed business plan for the coming year.

Charitable Status

United Way of the Lower Mainland, a registered charity and founding member of Vibrant Surrey, has agreed to act as fiduciary agent. This is necessary as our administrative member does not have charitable status and Vibrant Surrey continues to function as a collaborative and so has no legal standing.

Sponsor Credibility & Financial Management

Community Innovations Inc., a non-profit company operated by North Fraser Community Futures Development Corporation, will continue to administer Vibrant

Surrey financial resources as it has done for the last three years. North Fraser has for the last 16 years provided programming and fee for service activities to the Fraser Valley. They also provide loans to small business and have a large loan portfolio. Their accounting is audited annually by an independent auditor, and their programs are monitored by funders (Federal, Provincial, Municipal and private). In accordance with accepted accounting practices, Community Innovations will report regularly to the Operations Committee.

Appendices

Vibrant Surrey Terms of reference

Emerging Trends In Poverty In Surrey

Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Community Learning and Poverty Reduction in Surrey, British Columbia

Propellor Communications Research – Strategic Communications Memo



OUR GOAL:

The goal of Vibrant Surrey is to encourage and facilitate collaborative efforts to reduce poverty and the issues related to poverty, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all who call Surrey home. Leaders from all facets of the community who care about Surrey and its neighbourhoods, businesses, workforce and residents have founded the Vibrant Surrey Initiative.

Join us in this challenge of building economic and social opportunities for all.

OUR BELIEFS: The members of Vibrant Surrey share the following beliefs and basic ideas with each other and other members of the Pan Canadian Learning Community of Vibrant Communities with regards to finding local solutions to poverty reduction in Surrey and Canada:

15. Communities can have a deeper impact if they focus on reducing not just alleviating poverty
16. Local organizations are effective in mobilizing broad based community support for efforts to deal with local problems.
17. We can do more together than we can do on our own
18. We can create increased credibility, capacity and capital for the entire field of community poverty reduction by working together.
19. We can compliment the efforts of municipal, provincial and federal governments in tackling social and economic challenges.
20. We do not have the answers only a commitment to learn, change and grow.

OUR PRINCIPLES:

The following principles have been borrowed from the Vibrant Communities Initiative. As they guide the work across Canada they will also guide the work of the people committed to Vibrant Surrey.

5. We are rooted in a commitment to learn, model and apply the strategies of comprehensive thinking and action, multi-sector collaboration, community asset building and community learning.
6. We are *comprehensive*: we are broad in scope and working with umbrella issues. We collaborate on projects that are interconnected. We intervene at several levels, from systemic to individual, and work beyond service provision to asset building. We empower neighbourhoods and communities. Our work results in changes to the broader social and economic context.

7. We are *holistic*: we break down artificial boundaries (silos) to identify links between various issues and engage diverse sectors.
8. We are *multisectoral*: we encourage partnering and collaborative work and recognize the value of contributions from diverse backgrounds, networks and areas of expertise. We believe this bring new value in terms of resources, insights and expertise. In order to embrace this concept, we are governed by a coordinating mechanism that encompasses our plurality.
9. We are *inclusive* not just with issues but also in membership. We have a commitment to fostering new relationships, with a special emphasis on ensuring that low-income residents shape solutions meant to address their needs. We provide support to enable their contributions, which means recognizing and addressing the realities of those living on low income. We acknowledge the diversity of experiences of poverty. We support community organizing and believe that broad social inclusion is a priority. To that end we are prepared to commit resources and focus on ongoing learning and improvement
10. We understand that everyone is part of the problem and part of the solution
11. We focus on the strengths and assets of communities rather than their deficits.
12. We ensure a safe, non- judgmental environment where everyone can share their knowledge, experience and stories.
13. We respect and embrace diversity of opinions, ideas, outlooks and abilities and engage in the work in a spirit of trust, appreciation and generosity.
14. *We are prepared to take risks, be creative and innovative in our work.*
15. We emphasize mutual support for and among all those participating in the work of poverty reduction
16. We measure our success by our results

OUR DEFINITION OF POVERTY:

- Poverty is more than just a lack of income. It is multidimensional - including things like safe and affordable housing, a feeling of hope for the future, participation in community, financial savings, etc. A variety of factors outside of an individual's control can contribute to poverty: age, gender, ethnicity, migration, health, physical and developmental ability etc.
- A household's/person's journey out of poverty can be understood and captured by their progress along a multi-dimensional continuum. Vibrant Surrey has chosen to adopt the Caledon framework for poverty reduction to reflect a way of achieving an enhanced quality of life.

OUR APPROACH TO POVERTY REDUCTION:

Community Economic Development: a participatory process bringing together a diversity of interests and sectors by which communities initiate and generate their own solutions to socio-economic problems leading to positive concrete changes for individuals and communities.

Community Capacity Building: strengthening the capacity of the community infrastructure to respond to a variety of needs and opportunities. Together we can do more!

Research and Education: in order to understand the socio-economic factors that contribute to poverty, we will develop, implement and evaluate various approaches that are appropriate to the target populations, in partnership with community.

OUR STRUCTURE:

Convening Committee:

The convening committee is comprised of members representing the diverse facets of the community. This committee facilitates the community development process and will provide administrative support to the Community Roundtable. This group will act as the link to the funders, to the Pan–Canadian Vibrant Communities Initiative and the community. A representative from the Convening Committee will be appointed to act as the spokesperson for Vibrant Surrey. The work of the Convening Committee will be guided by the following principles:

- To subscribe to the mission and beliefs of the Initiative
- To make a commitment to support the efforts of Vibrant Surrey by providing resources which may include funding, staffing, space or expertise
- To be committed, valued and consistent representatives of their organizations.
- To make decisions by consensus whenever possible
- To work collaboratively to strengthen the capacity of individuals, organizations and community
- To believe in ongoing learning from others and our experiences and to share these learnings
- To celebrate the strengths and assets of our community

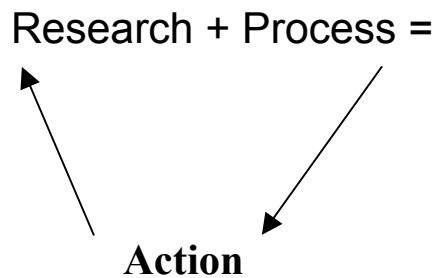
Roles and Responsibilities of Convening Committee members:

- To commit to attending meetings and contribute to the process however any alternate representatives are to be approved by the committee. The term of membership is open
- To recruit members to the Community Roundtable
- To manage all funding revenues and expenses
- To supervise support staff when funding is available
- To liaise with various community groups in the process of developing strategies and supporting the activities of the Roundtable
- To be responsible for appropriate communication tools and material for the initiative

Community Roundtable:

The Community Roundtable is an open forum for all sectors including business, labour, non-profit, residents and all levels of government. The Community Roundtable will undertake the following tasks that will lead to an increase in Surrey's community capacity to build economic and social opportunities with the purpose of enhancing the quality of life and reducing poverty.

- Identify and meet measurable targets
- Lead collaborative initiatives/ strategies
- Build supportive partnerships with community organizations, businesses and low-income leaders
- Ours is a process of continuous improvement driven by quality research, strategic action and ongoing evaluation



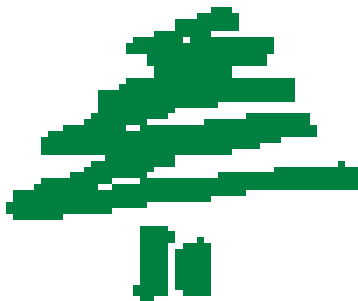
For further information about the Pan Canadian Vibrant Communities Initiative connect with the website www.vibrantcommunities.ca.

EMERGING TRENDS IN POVERTY IN SURREY

**A Report Based on Data From
Interviews with Service Providers,
Government Agencies, and the 2001
Census**

Vibrant Surrey

November 2006



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1. Introduction

Vibrant Surrey asked Strathcona Research to conduct a survey of emerging trends related to poverty in Surrey as well as to confirm the most recently available census figures on poverty. Strathcona was also asked to focus specifically on poverty in Surrey's South Asian community as well as to examine the situation with regard to women. The methods used to accomplish this are outlined in Section 2. The primary purpose of this report is to document the findings of a series of sixteen interviews with thirty-four people working in community service organizations or government agencies. For the most part, interview respondents work either directly in front-line service provision or in supervisory capacities just beyond the front-line. We sought to include organizations from a range of different sectors, including youth and family services, homeless services, rights advocacy, mental health, employment assistance, women's services, immigrant services, and food programs. In some cases, there was overlap between different sectors.

Based on the interviews and Vibrant Surrey's requirements, the report outlines four key areas in which respondents collectively suggest that there have been changes over the past few years. Generally, these findings reflect what appears to be a near-consensus about the situation 'on the ground' across the different sectors, including both community and government agencies. First, Surrey, as with much of the Lower Mainland, is in the grip of a housing crisis at the lower end of the market. Incomes derived from income assistance or minimum or low-wage jobs are not enough to sustain monthly rents, with the consequence that tenants are forced to make trade-offs between housing and other vital resources like food. This in turn ramifies into other issues, particularly health.

Second, respondents report greater numbers of clients with multiple barriers to housing and/or employment but comparatively few services to help deal with them. Clients often have complex issues beyond problems with landlords or income assistance that require intensive services that are often not available. In particular, mental health and appropriate medical services are widely seen as lacking. Rights advocacy and women's services were also identified as key programs that have suffered cutbacks.

Third, the geography of poverty in Surrey is changing. The socio-demographic profile Whalley, which has been generally perceived as the home of much of Surrey's poverty, is shifting as the result of ongoing redevelopment. Increasingly, low income residents are moving into neighbouring Guildford and Newton and are also increasingly present in both Cloverdale and South Surrey.

Fourth, poverty in Surrey's South Asian community is related primarily to low wage and seasonal employment rather than income assistance rates. Respondents pointed out two groups that are particularly vulnerable to poverty – seasonal farm workers and women leaving family relationships in which they have been abused. For South Asians, family and social networks provide important access to survival resources, but they can also be channels into exploitative employment that perpetuates low income.

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Issues specific to women in Surrey intertwine through each of these key areas. In particular, respondents expressed widespread concerns around the situations of single parents, primarily women, as well as women escaping abusive and/or violent relationships. The impact of program and funding cuts was seen to have inordinately affected these groups.

More generally, cuts to programs focusing on poverty in Surrey are problematic for women because they tend as a group to be more likely to earn low incomes (see Tables 16 and 23). This is the case even within particular social groups that are more likely than the general population to have low income. Thus, among visible minority members in Surrey, a group that was almost twice as likely to have low income than the non-visible minority population, women were more than one and half times more likely than men to have low income (see Tables 7 and 8). Lone parent families, which are overwhelmingly headed by women, were more than two and half times more likely than two parent families to have low incomes (see Table 14). Moreover, much smaller proportions of women than men, except those in the 15 to 29 age group, earned income from employment (see Table 22).

It is also important to emphasize, at this point, that much of the following report is based on anecdotal evidence and the conclusions are therefore speculative. This is particularly the case with the section on the South Asian community but also applies to the other sections. More extensive research is required to confirm or revise the preliminary findings outlined here. This should take the form of surveys of clients of the organizations that were included in this study as well as others that have not participated. This study does provide a good basis for establishing a questionnaire that can be administered on wide scale as well as highlighting future directions for census-based research.

2. Methodology

The scope of this project was relatively narrow given the three week timeline available to conduct the research. In order to accomplish the two-fold objective of the project, the researchers engaged in two main activities. First, using the 2001 census-based data from the Urban Poverty Project, provided to Vibrant Surrey by the United Way of the Lower Mainland, which obtained the data through the Canadian Council on Social Development, socio-demographic figures on poverty in Surrey were analysed along a number of axes, including Aboriginal, visible minority, and immigrant status, gender, and age.

Although this data is five years old and a new census was carried out this year, it still provides the most reliable comprehensive information available on poverty. It also offers a good baseline with which to compare the poverty-related data from the 2006 census that

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will be released in 2008 and 2009. This type of comparison will provide a quantitative indication of emerging trends that can be used to confirm or revise the developments inferred from the qualitative research outlined below.

The second activity in this project involved a series of interviews conducted with personnel from service providing and government agencies in Surrey. The organizations from which these respondents were drawn are listed in Appendix 1. This questions they answered are included in Appendices 2 and 3. In total, respondents numbered 34 people in 16 sets of interviews. Half the interviews were conducted in person and the other half via telephone. Three interviews involved more than one respondent, ranging from ten in one case to three in another. While the questionnaires were designed for one-to-one interviews, we felt that offers of groups sessions should not be rejected because they offered the opportunity for the interviewer to participate in a collective discussion of the situation that would expand the parameters of the research.

Three interviews were conducted with personnel from government agencies. The rest involved personnel from non-profit organizations operating in a range of sectors or across sectors in Surrey.

3. Housing and Poverty

Housing affordability is unquestionably considered to be the most pressing poverty-related issue by respondents. It is widely seen to be pivotally connected to a range of other issues facing people with low incomes at the same time that its availability and quality centrally determines their immediate life-chances. The key problem is that housing unaffordability in Surrey is escalating, thus aggravating a range of other issues and seriously eroding the short-term life chances of those with low incomes.

Rising unaffordability is a consequence of three developments. First, housing costs continue to rise, pushing rents ever-higher. Second, related to this, is the boom in the construction of new housing, which, as many respondents point out, is not accessible to people with low incomes. Moreover, new construction is overwhelmingly for the owner-occupier rather than the rental market. Third, stagnant (or actually declining) welfare rates and minimum wages have meant that housing costs are increasingly out of the reach of those with the lowest incomes. With the average 2005 monthly rent for a Surrey apartment ranging from over \$500 bachelor apartment to more than \$900 for a three bedroom, shelter allowances from income assistance require people in all categories of assistance to dig into their support payment (ie., food money) to pay rent⁷. For workers earning wages that are at, below, or even marginally above, minimum wage, the average

⁷ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2005. **Rental Market Report: Vancouver**. Ottawa.

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rent for a bachelor apartment represents nearly 37% of gross monthly income. For anything larger, the ratio of rent to income rises accordingly, thus affecting families especially hard.

The magnitude of rent in relation to income means that low income tenants are forced to choose between having a place to live and other basic necessities such as food, childcare, and transportation. While the Province offers childcare subsidies, they are minimal in relation to income versus rent. Transportation support is available only to individuals who are classified as Person with Disabilities (PWD) by the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance. In a city like Surrey, in which the population and services are widely distributed across an area larger than Vancouver, Burnaby, and Richmond combined, transportation is a crucial resource for people with income so low they are unable to drive a car. A one zone adult bus fare costs \$2.25 and lasts only for an hour and a half. A round trip lasting longer than that will thus be double.

Most respondents argued that, based on their experience, housing affordability is inextricably, and inversely, linked to housing quality. We were told that while it is possible to find affordable housing, the conditions that tenants must endure in return for such affordability, are highly problematic. While lower rents do not always mean that housing conditions are poor, they usually do so. Moreover, at least some landlords take advantage of the desperation of renters. Some have created *de facto*, unlicensed rooming houses by dividing the rooms of single- or even multi-family homes to create several rooms that can be rented out for the welfare shelter rate of \$325 per month. One advocate talked about a landlord who collected fourteen rent cheques from tenants in subdivided suburban rancher. In any case, finding appropriate housing that is not sub-standard in terms of its conditions (ie., no water leaks, functioning appliances, odour, mildew and mould-free, no floor, stair, or wall-rot) or overcrowded (ie., enough bedrooms for the household) is difficult.

It is worth noting here that 2001 Census data shows that Surrey had six of the Lower Mainland's thirty-four census tracts that were home to the highest 10% of core housing need households. Another fourteen census tracts had higher than average concentrations of households in core housing need. In other words, 37% of Surrey's 89 census tracts had higher than average proportions of households in core housing need. Canada Mortgage and Housing defines core need as "households unable to pay the median rent for alternative local housing meeting all standards for less than 30% of before-tax household income" or "without spending 30% or more of before-tax household income." This definition exclude non-family individuals between the ages of 15 and 29. Housing that does not meet standards is in need of major repairs, overcrowded, and/or costs more than 30% of before-tax household income.⁸

⁸ Engeland, John, et al, 2005. **Evolving Housing Conditions in Canada's Census Metropolitan Areas, 1991-2001**. Analytical Paper. Catalogue No. 89-613-MWE2004005. Statistics Canada.

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In the current conditions, food security has emerged as a central issue in relation to poverty. The high level of rents in relation to income means that low income earners, whether their income is garnered through income assistance or low wage employment, must make trade-offs in order to stay off the streets and maintain their housing. This means that food and other resources are unavailable unless they are freely accessible. Thus, even in a booming job market, 11% of the Surrey Food Bank's clients are counted as the 'working poor', people with employment but whose incomes fall below the low income cut-off.

The trade-off between rent and food has particular consequences for the health of people with low incomes across a broad spectrum. Respondents reported seeing increasing numbers of clients or program participants with a range of health issues for which diet is a key element. A number of interview participants reported seeing increasing numbers of people with diabetes. Some respondents noted that depression is almost universal among their clients. Dental health is also widely seen as problematic among low income clients as both an outcome of and a contributor to overall health status. Poor dental health is also poses a social dilemma insofar as it can impede access to jobs and other potentially beneficial situations.

Of course, the ultimate outcome of housing insecurity is homelessness, which increased substantially in Surrey from 2002 to 2005 and has likely risen further in the interim. In 2005, more than 20%, or 436 of the more than 2,000 homeless individuals included in the regional homeless count, were found in the South of Fraser area, primarily in Surrey. Moreover, the count found 318 people living on the street, 29% of all the 'street homeless' people then living in the Lower Mainland.⁹ This represents a more than 130% increase over the 187 homeless people who were found in the South of Fraser area during the 2002 snapshot of the Lower Mainland's homeless population. At that time, only 18% of Greater Vancouver's homeless population was located in the South of Fraser area.¹⁰ The consequences of homelessness are wide-ranging and involve an intensification of the problems bound up with rising rents and housing insecurity, particularly around health.

A key shift involved in homelessness has been the increasing intermingling with drug use. One service provider noted that over the past three years, she has increasingly seen people becoming addicted because they are homeless. Prior to that, addiction was a cause of homelessness. Now, increasingly, it is a result of being homeless.

At the same time, a growing number of homeless people are employed as day labourers through the temporary labour agencies located in the Surrey City Centre area. Pay rates for this work tend to be low, around minimum wage. Workers are often paid cash on a daily basis. The low wages and daily payments combine with the difficulties in

⁹ Michael Goldberg, et al, 2005. **On our streets and in our shelters...: Results of the 2005 Greater Vancouver Homeless Count.** Social Planning and Review Council of British Columbia.

¹⁰ Eberle Planning and Research, et al., 2002. **Research Project on Homelessness in Greater Vancouver Volume 2: Profile of Homeless and At-Risk People in Greater Vancouver.** Greater Vancouver Regional District.

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establishing bank accounts faced by people without adequate identification documents and the imperative of meeting immediate needs, ie., food, work clothing, and/or drugs, to make it problematic for day labourers to save money for the rent and deposit on a place to live. Because it provides a more or less steady income stream, day labour can thus form the basis of a lifestyle from which it is difficult to exit without assistance in dealing with addiction issues and finding housing and steady employment. However, at this point, there is a paucity of such resources.

4. Barriers and Resources

Closely related to housing instability and its consequences is the widely perceived rise in clients facing ‘multiple barriers’.¹¹ When they were asked to clarify what this means in practice, respondents cited a combination of two phenomena. First, clients are increasingly seen as despairing and desperate, generally lacking hope that their situation can improve. One respondent noted, with reference to those who have been homeless for an extended period, that clients’ expectations begin to decline and, as they internalize stigmatizing concepts that they are undeserving, become willing to settle for less.

Second, the issues that clients are bringing to the attention of service providers are increasingly complex and multi-layered. Thus, a service provider may initially be approached by someone seeking help in dealing with a housing and/or income assistance problem but then find out that the person has a drug and/or alcohol addiction and/or a serious mental/health problem. As noted above, these multiple issues mutually reinforce each other, making it difficult for service agencies to unravel them and develop a support strategy.

The corollary of this is that almost all respondents cited severe frustration at the lack of services to which clients can be referred to deal with problematic issues. This is generally seen as the product of a combination of factors, primarily a shortage of relevant services in Surrey itself as well as an erosion of services resulting from budget and program cuts earlier in the decade. Given its population of 400,000 people, which is rapidly growing, Surrey has relatively few services compared to other centres of similar size. Moreover, as noted, the geographical size of Surrey aggravates the accessibility problems created by limited number of services.

In the case of service deficits, mental health and medical services were specifically cited as acutely lacking. In the former case, limited resources mean that mental health services must screen potential clients. A number of respondents told us that the only potential site for referrals for mental health services was on an upper floor of the Scotiabank office

¹¹ This is consistent with the responses from many employment service providers in a study Strathcona conducted in 2004. J. Sommers, et al., 2004. **Lifting Barriers: Identifying Barriers to Employment for Homeless People and Practical Tools for Removing Those Barriers**. Strathcona Research Group.

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tower at the Gateway skytrain station, an environment that was widely cited as unfriendly to and uncomfortable for many people with mental health issues. Moreover, potential referrals to mental health services are required to have an address so that they can be contacted by telephone. This effectively excludes people who are homeless or who do not have telephones.

Access to medical health care, as well, is seriously constrained among people with low incomes, especially those who are 'on the street'. Some respondents noted that many of their clients have no family doctors. The only alternative source of medical health services is Surrey Memorial Hospital, which was cited by a number of respondents as being particularly unfriendly to people who are 'on the street'. Royal Columbian and Saint Paul's have been named as hospitals to which 'street people' prefer to go in lieu of Surrey Memorial.

Similarly, refugees who have settled in Surrey are obliged to leave the city for medical and other services. Government-sponsored refugees have access to a range of services. However, few, if any are actually available in Surrey. Unfortunately, travel to Vancouver, where most such services (eg., Three Bridges Clinic) are located, is expensive (\$8.00 per adult for a day pass).

In terms of service cuts, advocacy and women's centres were foremost among those that were reported as having lost funding and therefore accessibility. One group of respondents said they believe that provincial funding for rights advocacy was terminated because the government saw it as a threat to policy restructuring. Low income women thus took a double hit in this process, facing diminished access to support in fighting for their rights but also to the array of other services provided by women's organizations, in which the former are often situated. One respondent argued that the Province effectively downloaded responsibility for community problems onto the shoulders of non-profit organizations through its budget and program cuts. The cuts, particularly those to income assistance, generated more clientele for service providers even as many of the latter also lost program funding, thus intensifying the community services work process. This has been especially problematic in Surrey where there was already a relative scarcity of services compared to Vancouver, the next largest city in the region.

This decline in resource availability was seen by some respondents as especially problematic for people dealing with trauma, particularly women leaving domestic violence or emotional abuse and/or refugees who have fled situations of war and/or torture. In each case, the imperative of meeting basic needs such as shelter and food actually served as a barrier to dealing with the psychological and emotional issues of trauma. Yet, dealing with the latter issues is a prerequisite for many people to moving forward and more effectively meeting their basic needs. People are thus trapped in low income situations through a kind of Catch-22 in which being poor means they will remain poor.

An important addendum to issues of accessibility and barriers is a perception among some service providers regarding a shift in their client base. The rise, noted above, of

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homeless people who have employment of some kind reflects a wider increase in the number of employed people seeking services, including – perhaps especially – food programs. The reasons for this shift are not clear at this point. However, we can speculate that an interaction of three factors may be propelling increasing numbers of working people to utilize community services that are generally associated with low income clients.

First, the labour market is particularly active, with record-low unemployment levels. Uptake into the market must necessarily embrace groups and individuals who would normally be excluded or marginal. One respondent who administers an employment program said that his staff are seeing increasingly barriered individuals who are seeking employment and, in some cases, they are finding it. Studies from the US have shown that employer willingness to hire such employees declines as competition for higher skilled workers increases.¹² At the same time, many such individuals and families have also relied on a range of services for their livelihood prior to employment and it is possible they will continue to use them when they are employed.

Second, however, the extraordinarily active labour market does not mean that wages have increased. The extent to which high demand for labour, during this period of ultra-low price inflation and interest rates, has translated into wage rises, particularly at the low end of the market, is unclear. Given the necessary trade-offs between housing costs and other costs of living, as noted above, low wage workers will likely need to obtain some forms of service in order to sustain their livelihood.

The third factor that may be influencing increasing numbers of people is the constriction of income assistance that resulted from the restructuring of provincial welfare policy. This operates in two ways. First, not only is it more difficult for prospective clients to get income assistance as new policies actively deter them from applying successfully, but new clients are required to seek employment and/or basic skills training. Studies in the US and UK have shown that such work first policies exert downward pressure on low wage segments of the labour market by promoting market ‘churning’.¹³

The second element of British Columbia welfare restructuring that may promote an increase in the number of ‘working poor’ seeking to use community services is that direct cuts to income support programs. As with the cuts to advocacy and women centres, these cuts have affected women disproportionately, particularly parents. Not only were income assistance rates reduced for families of three people or less, including single parents, but childcare subsidies were significantly diminished. This affected low wage workers as well as people receiving income assistance. Although the childcare subsidies have since been restored somewhat, they nevertheless play directly into the trade-off between rent

Holzer, H., Raphael, S., and Stoll, M., 2003, **Employers in the Boom: How did the Hiring of Unskilled Workers Change during the 90s?** Russell Sage Foundation and the Urban Institute: Washington, DC.

¹³ Cf. Mehta, Ching and Nik Theodore, 2004, *Revolving Doors: Temp Agencies as Accelerators of Churning in Low Wage Labour Markets*. In L. Simmons (ed.), **Welfare, the Working Poor, and Labor**. ME Sharpe: New York.

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and other necessities, thus potentially propelling working families into the community services sector for livelihood support.

5. The Geography of Poverty in Surrey

Although respondents were specifically asked about the geographical distribution of poverty in the community, most raised the issue either directly or obliquely before it was raised in the questionnaire. Among all respondents, North Surrey, particularly Whalley and especially Surrey City Centre, was seen as the area where the largest number of low income residents are concentrated. Guildford was also frequently mentioned in this regard.

However, a number of respondents noted that this geography has begun to shift in recent years. The frequency with which Guildford was mentioned in conjunction with Whalley may be indicative of what one respondent characterized as a movement of low income residents from Whalley to Guildford. To some extent, the respondent argued, this change stems from the ongoing and accelerating redevelopment of Surrey City Centre and the inaccessibility of the new housing to low income residents. This will have consequences in coming years as Guildford increasingly become the site for many of the issues that are now seen to prevail in Whalley. However, the apartment complexes in Guildford tend to be family-oriented, so this will have some additional impact as the drug and related street scenes relocate.

Guildford is not the only place in Surrey where respondents report rising poverty-related issues. Cloverdale has also seen a similar increase. Until recently, it was the site of a growing homeless population, many of whom camped in vacant lots or squatted in abandoned buildings. More recently, though, as the pace of construction quickened, those locations have become increasingly unavailable and many of the homeless seem to have moved on or are at least not quite as visible as they were previously. But poverty in Cloverdale is not only apparent via homelessness. A food program has been initiated there which attracts a large number of senior volunteers who also use the program as a necessary part of their survival strategy. One index of change in the geography of low income is the demand for services. In this regard, Cloverdale, along with Newton, has become the site of a Surrey Food Bank depot as well as a branch of the South Fraser Women's Services Society that provides family and poverty law services.

Newton, too, was reported to have a significant low income population. While some respondents noted an increasing street scene in the forms of visible homelessness and street drug activity, the primary locus of low income residents is the large stock of usually illegal secondary (ie., basement) suites in the district. This is an especially important source of housing for low income immigrants, particularly, but not only, those in the South Asian community.

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But Newton is not the only site of secondary suites, which are scattered around Surrey. The City identified about 12,000 secondary suites in 2000. Yet, a report for the Tenants Rights Action Coalition estimated that the number at that time was actually double the City's figures.¹⁴ Despite the vulnerabilities of tenants who are living in suites that can be closed by the City, some respondents suggested that such accommodation can be an improvement for clients who have been living in unsafe or unfit residences. In particular, they offer an alternative to apartment complexes, usually in Whalley or Guildford, that are sub-standard and/or have become centres of the drug trade.

In the latter context, the area around Grosvenor and Bentley Roads, northeast of 108th Avenue and King George Highway, came in for special mention from at least three sets of respondents. This small district is the site of a number of low rise apartment buildings that house numerous low income households, including a large number of refugees from Africa. The buildings are both sub-standard in condition and serve as sites of low-level drug dealing. They have also become sites for increasing ethnocultural conflict between newcomer and non-immigrant tenants which has extended into physical fights.

No area of Surrey is immune to low income, its causes, or its effects. Surprisingly, the South Surrey-White Rock area has become a site of increasing, or at least increasingly apparent, poverty. One respondent told us that the increasing affluence of South Surrey is relatively recent in nature and is primarily a result of real estate development. Many of the low income residents in this wide area lived there prior to the onset of development and are now finding it more difficult to live there because of the higher prices and rising rents. While there has apparently been displacement to other part of Surrey, many people are also hanging on, some living in very difficult circumstances. The two respondents from South Surrey both operate programs that recently began meal, shower, and laundry services that have increased their numbers of clients. Interestingly, people come to use showers because they may not be available in their place of residence or because they are homeless. In the latter situation, respondents reported having clients living on campgrounds in trailers but also in cars and vans. Both also reported, as did many other respondents, increasing numbers of clients who they classified as 'working poor'.

One South Surrey respondent noted that her programs include large numbers of low income senior women, sometimes dealing with abusive relationships. It is not surprising, she argued, that the first transition house for senior women has been located in White Rock. For many such women, the issue of domestic violence is aggravated by a more general phenomenon in which older women, who have not worked outside their homes and thus have no Canada Pension, are entirely reliant on Old Age Security. Their income is quite limited and they are therefore required to utilize community services as part of their livelihood strategies.

We were also told that workers in South Surrey have seen an increase in women who are doing informal sex work, exchanging sex for a place to live. This includes not only single women but also some with children.

¹⁴ Gauthier, Bryce, 2000. **Rental Housing Profile**. Tenants Rights Action Coalition.

6. Poverty in Surrey's South Asian community

Based on our interviews and a look at the 2001 census figures from the Urban Poverty Project, the dynamics of poverty in the South Asian community are somewhat different than they are in the community-at-large. Two key elements account for much of this difference. First, a lack of English language proficiency and limited understanding of 'how the Canadian system works' mean that some South Asians may encounter barriers to the labour market and access to their social rights. Second, low income seems to be mediated in a number of ways by social and family networks through which the South Asian community is constituted.

We gathered information about two particular groups of people in Surrey's South Asian community: Farm workers and women who have left their domestic relationships. In both cases, poverty is framed by a number of factors. Two respondents noted that, compared to the more visible poverty resulting from homelessness and 'street scene' activities currently most evident in Whalley and Surrey Centre, South Asian poverty tends to be invisible. This is because South Asian households with low income are still embedded in community networks and are thus able to mobilize resources necessary for survival, including housing, food, childcare, and employment. However, while these networks can serve to ameliorate the effects of poverty, they also provide channels through which some people gain access to exploitative jobs, thus perpetuating the low income that underpins poverty.

Farm workers, according to one respondent who works with them, tend to be older, with relatively low educational attainment and English language skills. Farmwork is available for a maximum of three to four months a year and, because it is based entirely on piecework, generally pays less than minimum wage except at peak periods. The short period of employment means that farm workers are eligible for only three to four months of Employment Insurance, leaving them without income for at least one third of the year.

Despite this situation, application for income assistance can be problematic for two reasons. First, many Farm workers are immigrants and have been sponsored by relatives who are obligated to provide them with support. Second, use of income assistance is apparently stigmatized in the South Asian community, perhaps to a greater degree than it is in the wider community. However, it is not clear if there is a relationship between these two issues.

In any case, as a result, farm workers are dependent on community-based resources for their survival. Many live in extended family situations, often in secondary suites, while temples provide daily meals. As with many other low income households in Surrey, access to transportation is also a problem. One respondent noted that the lack of transportation leads to a clustering of low income South Asian households in higher density areas that are within walking distance of temples, community centres, and shopping malls. While it is not possible to confirm this with currently available data, it would be worthwhile exploring should a wider dataset become accessible.

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The situation of South Asian women leaving family relationships is similar in many respects. As with agricultural workers, women can find employment through community networks. However, such employment is sometimes highly exploitative, paying less than minimum wage with no employer's contributions because it pays cash. In any case, whether formal or informal in nature, many women earn so little that they are dependent on community networks for resources such as childcare and housing. As with farm workers, they may often live in secondary suites obtained through family or friends. Childcare can be unstable because it is also arranged through community networks and the providers may need to engage in more formal work at some point over the year.

Income assistance is rarely seen as an option in this situation either. British Columbia requires that mothers who are separated and applying for income assistance agree to its efforts to recover child support from fathers. For South Asian women leaving domestic relationships, this requirement plays into and complicates the sponsorship issue and the cultural stigmatization of income assistance, potentially aggravating child custody conflicts. As a result, women in this situation are very reluctant to apply for income assistance.

Issues of language and culture can aggravate both situations. A lack of facility in English can combine with an unfamiliarity with the functioning of Canadian bureaucracies to create barriers that hinder people's ability to maneuver through their straitened circumstances.

7. Data Tables

The distribution of poverty in Surrey is not only uneven geographically but also socially, insofar as particular groups are more susceptible to it than others. Aboriginals, visible minorities, immigrants, women, and lone parent families are more likely to have low incomes than the general population. But even within these groups, there are sometimes differences between sub-groups, eg., different age groups.

7.1 Aboriginals

In 2000, Aboriginals adults constituted only 2% of Surrey's total adult (15 years and over) population of just over 252,500 people. While 16% of the latter were classified as low income earners (see Table 2), the proportion of identifying Aboriginals with earning low income was more than double that figure, at 33%. Standardized averages show that Aboriginal adults were almost twice as likely as non-Aboriginal adults to have low incomes (see Table 3). When children are included in the figures, the proportion of low income Aboriginals rises to 38%, compared to only 18% for the entire population.

While low income is not more likely for females in general (see Tables 16 and 23), this is especially the case for those who identify as Aboriginal. While the standardized low income rate for non-Aboriginal adult females is a just under one full percent higher than

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the entire non-Aboriginal population, the low income rate for Aboriginal females is more than 2% higher than for the Aboriginal population as a whole (see Table 4). The standardized unemployment for Aboriginals was also twice as high in 2000 as for the non-Aboriginal population (see Table 5).

Income variation by age group within Surrey's Aboriginal population parallels that of the non-Aboriginal population, but the degree of variation is significantly lower (see Table 1). While the peak average income of the non-Aboriginal population is 3.5 times that of the lowest-earning age group, that of Aboriginal adults is only 3 times higher than the lowest-earning age bracket. Moreover, at all levels but one, the average earnings of Aboriginals are significantly lower, ranging from 10% to almost 40% less than those of the non-Aboriginals (see Table 1).

7.2 Visible Minorities

Surrey's visible minority population is also highly vulnerable to poverty. Standardized averaging shows that the rate of low income among the visible minority population is almost half as high again as that of the non-visible minority population (see Table 10). Members of visible minorities were almost twice as likely (1.76 to 1) as non-visible minorities to earn incomes below the low income cut-off (see Table 7). Interestingly, females who were also had visible minority status were *less* likely to have low income than the overall visible minority population, seemingly indicating that males with visible minority status are more likely to earn low incomes (see Table 8).

As with Aboriginals, Surrey's visible minority population experienced significant differentials in earning power between age groups and with the non-visible minority population at different life stages (see Table 6). Moreover, the magnitude of those differences was greater for visible minorities than Aboriginals, ranging from just under 10% in the 15 to 24 age group to over 40% in the older middle-aged group of 55 to 64 years. Unlike Aboriginals, however, the degree of variation between the average of the visible minorities and the majority only slightly declines. The average income of visible minority members over the age of 34 is never less than 30% than that of non-visible minorities.

7.3 Immigrants

Immigrants in Surrey were also more likely to be poor than non-immigrants (see Tables 11 and 12). However, this differed both by gender and by year of arrival. Thus, while all immigrants were one and a half times more likely to earn low incomes than non-immigrants, more recent arrivals (ie., 1996-2001) were much likelier to have low incomes than those arriving prior to 1986. Recent immigrants, with a standardized low income rate more than double the rest of the population (see Table 13), were more than two and half times likelier to earn low income than were non-immigrants. In contrast, people arriving before 1986 were actually *less* likely to have low income than non-immigrants. Surprisingly, female immigrants seem to be minimally less vulnerable to low income than the overall immigrant population. If this is indeed the case, the reasons for this variation should be subject to additional research.

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7.4 Lone Parent Families

Family structure is clearly a factor in poverty in Surrey. Lone parent families are more than two and half times more likely to have low income than are two parent families (see Table 14). While lone parent families constituted only 13% of all Surrey's families, they made up 48% of the city's low income families (see Table 15). However, low income lone parent families actually comprised much lower proportions of all low income families with children at home (see Table 14). The reason for this discrepancy is not clear and should be explored.

7.5 People with Disabilities

People living with disabilities (or differently abled) also made up a much higher proportion of the low income population than their numbers in the overall population would suggest. While only 12% of Surrey's population identified an activity limitation in 2001 (see Table 20), almost one quarter – 24% – of that group was part of the city's low income population (see Table 21).

7.6 Women

Women were also represented disproportionately in Surrey's low income population. They were slightly more likely to earn low incomes (see Table 23) even though women from the ages of 30 to 64 and with employment were more likely to have full-time employment (see Table 22). Women were also more likely to have a secondary graduation certificate than were men (see Table 22). However, they were less likely, in all age groups, to have employment income. The cumulative data suggests that, despite the greater likelihood that they have employment income, that income is not derived from full-time, full year work nor does it pay as much as that of men.

Appendix 1 – Urban Poverty Project Data Tables

The following tables detail statistics on characteristics of populations living in poverty in Surrey, British Columbia. The tables are based on the 2001 Census of Canada and were provided to Vibrant Surrey by the United Way of the Lower Mainland. The United Way obtained the data from the Canadian Council on Social Development's Urban Poverty Project. The tables give an overview of all populations living in Surrey, but they primarily highlight the living conditions experienced by men and women who identify themselves as Aboriginal; as part of a visible minority; who are recent immigrants; and are lone parent families. Three types of tables are provided to help characterize the living conditions that populations living in poverty in Surrey face. The broadest are referred to as *general percentage* tables. These are designed to give broad estimates as to the current living conditions experienced by populations living in poverty in Surrey. *Odds ratios* were constructed for a number of the tables to illustrate the relative risks that certain populations face for experiencing poverty relative to a reference population. In most cases, the reference population is the 'other' or 'all other population' from which the sample population was drawn. The final classification used is a *standardized percentage*. Only a minority of the total population living in Surrey identifies themselves as being a lone parent, status Aboriginal, belonging to a visible minority group or as a recent immigrant. Standardized percentages are a good way of demonstrating what the relative likelihood that individuals in these groups would have of experiencing poverty if the age or population distributions were the same as the reference population.

Table 1: Average Income by Status Aboriginal and Age Group

	Average Income	% of population	LICO?	
			Yes (%)	No (%)
All other Population	\$29,052	98%	16%	84%
Status Aboriginal	\$22,777	2%	33%	67%
	Status Aboriginal		All other population	
Age Group	N		N	
15 - 24	840	\$9,822	35,350	\$11,022
25 - 34	1,070	\$22,501	45,440	\$27,075
35 - 44	1,130	\$28,189	56,045	\$35,605
45 - 54	715	\$30,265	47,265	\$39,383
55 - 64	320	\$21,654	28,440	\$31,320
65 - 74	105	\$27,010	20,390	\$23,932
75 and older	45	\$14,486	15,465	\$23,335
Total	4,225		248,395	

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 2: Low Income Cutoff (LICO) by Status Aboriginal and Age Group

	with income	% of population	LICO?	
			Yes (%)	No (%)
All other Population	248,395	98%	16%	84%
Status Aboriginal	4,235	2%	33%	67%
Age Group				
15 - 24	845	20%	34%	66%
25 - 34	1,075	25%	40%	60%
35 - 44	1,135	27%	27%	73%
45 - 54	720	17%	28%	72%
55 - 64	320	8%	34%	66%
65 - 74	105	2%	24%	76%
75 and older	40	1%	75%	25%
Total	4,240	100%		

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 3: Standardized LICO Rates by Status Aboriginal and Age Group

	Age Groups							Total Population	Standardized Low Income (N)	Standardized Rate (%)
	15 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 +			
Status Aboriginal										
With Income	840	1,070	1,130	715	320	105	45			
% Low Income	0.22	0.20	0.18	0.13	0.16	0.17	0.27			
Population adjusted (N)	9168	13333	12152	10487	7357	3941	6204	62643	24.80	
All other population										
With Income	35,350	45,440	56,045	47,265	28,440	20,390	15,465			
% Low Income	0.19	0.17	0.15	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.13			
Population adjusted (N)	5157	6877	7843	5264	3651	2629	2652	34074	13.49	
								252,620		

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 4: Standardized LICO Rates for Female Aboriginals and Age Group

	Age Groups							Total Population	Standardized Low Income (N)	Standardized Rate (%)
	15 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 +			
Status Aboriginal										
With Income	445	570	575	425	225	55	15			
% Low Income	0.44	0.46	0.29	0.25	0.38	0.27	1.00			
Population adjusted (N)	5388	7569	6399	4726	3724	2246	4498		34550	27.17
All other population										
With Income	17,240	23,280	28,125	23,430	13,355	10,425	8,980			
% Low Income	0.19	0.19	0.17	0.12	0.15	0.17	0.27			
Population adjusted (N)	2798	3740	4143	2522	1819	1499	1885		18405	14.48
									127,145	

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 5: Standardized Unemployment Rates by Status Aboriginal and Age Group

	Age Groups							Total Population	Standardized Low Income (N)	Standardized Rate (%)
	15 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 +			
Status Aboriginal										
With employment	645	765	870	550	135	15	10			
Unemployment (%)	0.23	0.11	0.17	0.10	0.19	0.33	1.00			
Population adjusted (N)	5,599	3,980	7,074	3,728	2,757	715	225	24077	13.31	
All other population										
With employment	29,030	39,030	48,645	40,455	17,510	2,845	440			
Unemployment (%)	0.12	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.12	0.11			
Population adjusted (N)	3,286	2,686	2,508	2,097	1,171	317	46	12111	6.69	
								180,945		

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 6: Average Income by Status Visible Minority Status and Age Group

	Average Income	% of population	LICO?	
			Yes (%)	No (%)
Visible Minorities	\$21,720	33%	22%	78%
All other population	\$32,494	67%	13%	87%
Age Group	Visible Minority		All other population	
	N		N	
15 - 24	14,160	\$10,048	22,035	\$11,602
25 - 34	20,410	\$23,702	26,105	\$29,525
35 - 44	20,070	\$27,491	37,110	\$39,767
45 - 54	13,365	\$27,224	34,615	\$43,889
55 - 64	7,800	\$19,546	20,960	\$35,554
65 - 74	5,130	\$15,137	15,365	\$26,889
75 and older	2,235	\$15,529	13,270	\$24,620
Total	83,170		169,460	

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 7: Odds Ratio of Incidence of Low Income and Visible Minority

	Low Income?		Odds
	Yes (%)	No (%)	
Visible Minority	25%	75%	0.25 : 1
All other population	14%	86%	0.14 : 1
Odds Ratio			1.76

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 8: Odds Ratio of Incidence of Low Income and Visible Minority (Female)

	Low Income?		Odds
	Yes (%)	No (%)	
Female Visible Minority	25%	75%	0.25 : 1
Female population	16%	84%	0.16 : 1
Odds Ratio			1.59

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 9: Standardized Unemployment Rate by Age Group

	Age Groups							Total Population	Standardized Unemployment (N)	Standardized Rate (%)
	15 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 +			
Minority Population										
In Labour Force	11,110	17,400	16,825	10,775	4,190	750	95			
% Unemployed	14.00	8.45	7.25	10.21	11.22	28.67	10.53			
Population adjusted (N)	3643	3100	3348	3798	1778	635	42	16344	9.03	
All Others										
In Labour Force	18,560	22,390	32,695	30,225	13,440	2,100	350			
% Unemployed	11.88	6.45	4.66	3.74	5.88	6.90	10.00			
Population adjusted (N)	3151	2412	2207	1478	979	184	40	10451	5.78	
								180,925		

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 10: Standardized LICO Rates by Visible Minority Status and Age Group

	Age Groups							Total Population	Standardized Low Income (N)	Standardized Rate (%)
	15 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 +			
Visible Minority										
With Income	14,160	20,410	20,070	13,365	7,800	5,130	2,235			
% Low Income	0.21	0.21	0.25	0.23	0.20	0.17	0.16			
Population adjusted (N)	6,275	7,915	11,331	8,891	4,781	2,986	2,177	44356	17.56	
All other population										
With Income	22,035	26,105	37,110	34,615	20,960	15,365	13,270			
% Low Income	0.14	0.16	0.11	0.09	0.13	0.14	0.22			
Population adjusted (N)	4,577	6,360	5,888	3,815	3,271	2,511	2,745	29168	11.55	
								252,630		

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

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Table 11: Odds Ratio of Incidence of Low Income by Immigration Status and Year (5 year blocks)

		LICO	LICO (%)
Non Immigrants	227,480	34,575	15%
All Immigrants	114,610	26,865	23%
before 1986	51,710	7,505	15%
between 1986 - 1990	15,920	3,485	22%
between 1991 - 1995	23,150	6,145	27%
between 1996 - 2001	23,835	9,730	41%
Odds Ratios			
All Immigrants		1.54	
before 1986		0.95	
1986 - 1990		1.44	
1991 - 1995		1.75	
1996 - 2001		2.69	

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 12: Odds Ratio of Incidence of Low Income by Immigration Status Gender (female) and Year (5 year blocks)

		LICO	LICO (%)
Non Immigrants	113,875	18,415	16%
All Immigrants	58,955	14,365	24%
before 1986	26,245	4,180	16%
between 1986 - 1990	8,085	1,900	24%
between 1991 - 1995	12,120	3,295	27%
between 1996 - 2001	12,510	4,990	40%
Odds Ratios			
All Immigrants		1.51	
before 1986		0.98	
1986 - 1990		1.45	
1991 - 1995		1.68	
1996 - 2001		2.47	

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 13: Standardized LICO Rates by Immigration Year and Age Group

	Age Groups							Total Population	Standardized Low Income (N)	Standardized Rate (%)
	15 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 +			
Immigrated before 1986										
With Income	1,065	4,715	10,670	12,350	9,405	6,860	5,345			
% Low Income	0.23	0.17	0.15	0.10	0.12	0.15	0.23			
Population adjusted (N)	11,157	13,754	14,548	9,742	7,527	7,638	10,159	74525		29.73
Immigrated 1986 - 1990										
With Income	1,785	3,530	4,570	2,095	1,170	985	465			
% Low Income	0.23	0.23	0.21	0.18	0.20	0.17	0.13			
Population adjusted (N)	11,032	18,085	20,139	15,571	11,737	8,722	6,269	91555		36.52
Immigrated 1991 - 1995										
With Income	2,565	6,585	4,795	2,635	1,885	1,240	345			
% Low Income	0.32	0.22	0.25	0.30	0.25	0.17	0.17			
Population adjusted (N)	14,317	17,288	22,601	24,160	14,005	8,583	8,126	109080		43.51
Immigrated 1996 - 2001										
With Income	2,945	4,440	3,395	2,505	1,225	725	180			
% Low Income	0.31	0.25	0.44	0.43	0.28	0.23	0.11			
Population adjusted (N)	14,141	19,589	34,788	31,151	15,420	11,256	5,485	131829		52.59
All other population										
With Income	27,485	26,580	33,305	28,115	14,960	10,620	9,145			
% Low Income	0.13	0.15	0.11	0.08	0.14	0.14	0.20			
Population adjusted (N)	6,892	12,412	11,653	7,971	8,421	7,098	9,271	63716		25.42
								250,675		

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 14: Odds Ratio of Incidence of Low Income by family status (children < 18)

	Low Income?		Odds
	Yes (%)	No (%)	
Lone Parent Families	46%	54%	0.85 : 1
Couples with Children	18%	82%	0.22 : 1
Odds Ratio			2.63

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 15: Characteristics of Families with Children in Surrey

	Total	Age Groups of Children at Home			
		less than 6	less than 12	less than 18	less than 25
Lone Parent Families	23,005	2,840	7,755	12,940	14,210
	13%	11%	15%	16%	16%
Low Income Cut-Off (LICO)	11,885	2,075	4,805	7,165	7,620
	48%	34%	37%	38%	37%
Couples with Children	159,220	21,880	45,705	68,780	76,745
	87%	89%	85%	84%	84%
Low Income Cut-Off (LICO)	12,820	3,990	8,135	11,620	12,820
	52%	66%	63%	62%	63%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

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Table 16: Odds Ratio of Incidence of Low Income by gender

	Low Income?		Odds
	Yes (%)	No (%)	
Women	19%	81%	0.24 : 1
Men	17%	83%	0.21 : 1
Odds Ratio			1.14

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 17: Unemployment Rate by Age Group

Age Group	% in labour force	Employed?	
		Yes (%)	No (%)
15 - 24	16%	85%	15%
25 - 34	22%	92%	8%
35 - 44	27%	94%	6%
45 - 54	23%	94%	6%
55 - 64	10%	92%	8%
65 - 74	2%	86%	14%
75 and older	<1%	89%	11%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 18: Low Income Cutoff (LICO) by Age Group

Age Group	with income	% of population	LICO?	
			Yes (%)	No (%)
15 - 24	47,635	18%	20%	80%
25 - 34	47,470	18%	19%	81%
35 - 44	58,310	22%	17%	83%
45 - 54	49,850	18%	13%	87%
55 - 64	30,615	11%	15%	85%
65 - 74	20,720	8%	15%	85%
75 and older	15,570	6%	21%	79%
Total	270,170	100%		

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 19: Percentage Official Language Spoken at Home by Age Group

Age Group	N	% of population	English/French?	
			Yes (%)	No (%)
0 - 14	75,370	22%	96%	4%
15 - 24	47,655	14%	99%	1%
25 - 34	47,515	14%	98%	2%
35 - 44	58,380	17%	98%	2%
45 - 54	49,895	14%	96%	4%
55 - 64	30,655	9%	91%	9%
65 - 74	20,740	6%	87%	13%
75 and older	15,575	5%	92%	8%
Total	345,785	100%		

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 20: Activity Limitation and Incidence of Low Income Cutoff (LICO)

	with disability	% of population	(N)	LICO?	
				Limitation	No Limitation
Total Population	21,945	12%	3,740	21%	79%
Male	11,750	54%	1,880	20%	80%
Female	10,195	46%	1,885	19%	81%
Age Group					
15 - 24	1,830	8%	440	12%	88%
25 - 34	3,035	14%	755	20%	80%
35 - 44	5,345	24%	1,145	31%	69%
45 - 54	6,470	29%	785	21%	79%
55 - 64	4,125	19%	520	14%	86%
65 - 74	900	4%	60	2%	98%
75 and older	240	1%	40	1%	99%
Total	21,945		3,745		

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 21: Characteristics of Populations Living in Poverty in Surrey

		LICO	LICO (%)
Total Population	345,060	62,990	18%
Male	170,730	29,470	17%
Female	174,335	33,520	19%
Aboriginal	6,770	2,590	38%
Male	3,185	1,185	37%
Female	3,585	1,405	39%
Visible Minority	126,890	31,890	25%
Male	62,570	15,755	25%
Female	64,315	16,135	25%
With Activity Limitation	57,815	13,860	24%
Male	26,995	5,900	22%
Female	30,820	7,960	26%
Immigration Period			
before 1986	51,710	7,505	15%
Male	25,460	3,325	13%
Female	26,245	4,180	16%
between 1986 - 1990	15,920	3,485	22%
Male	7,830	1,585	20%
Female	8,085	1,900	24%
between 1991 - 1995	23,150	6,145	27%
Male	11,030	2,850	26%
Female	12,120	3,295	27%
between 1996 - 2001	23,835	9,730	41%
Male	11,330	4,740	42%
Female	12,510	4,990	40%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 22: Characteristics of Populations Living in Surrey by Gender

	Age Groups			
	15-29	30-44	45-64	65 +
Female				
With employment income	79%	81%	69%	5%
Without secondary certificate	33%	32%	38%	69%
% Full-time employment	93%	93%	94%	84%
Male				
With employment income	80%	88%	75%	14%
Without secondary certificate	38%	44%	52%	64%
% Full-time employment	93%	92%	91%	90%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Table 23: Standardized LICO Rates by Gender and Age Group

	Age Groups							Total Population	Standardized Low Income (N)	Standardized Rate (%)
	15 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 54	55 - 64	65 - 74	75 +			
Women										
With Income	23,125	24,600	29,680	25,615	15,285	10,665	9,035			
% Low Income	0.22	0.20	0.18	0.13	0.16	0.17	0.27			
Population adjusted (N)	8589	7912	8895	5736	4223	3011	3310		41674	15.43
Men										
With Income	24,505	22,870	28,630	24,240	15,330	10,055	6,535			
% Low Income	0.19	0.17	0.15	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.13			
Population adjusted (N)	7605	6897	7606	5736	3760	2384	1791		35778	13.24
								270,170		

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census Data for the Canadian Council on Social Development Urban Poverty Project (unpublished data).

Appendix 2 – Questions for Service Providers

1. What is your organization’s role in relation to poverty-related issues in Surrey?
Prompt: What proportion of your client base would you say is poor/low income?
2. What do you consider to be the 3 most pressing issues related to poverty in Surrey?
3. Have you noticed any changes in your client base (or the part of your client base that has low income) over the past 2 years?
4. If yes to Q.3, to what do you attribute those changes?
5. Are there any specific health-related issues that your low income clients face?
Prompt: Has this changed at all over the past 2 years and why?
6. Are there any specific housing-related issues that your low income clients face?
Prompt: Has this changed at all over the past 2 years and why ?
7. Are there any employment-related issues that your low income clients face?
Prompt: Has this changed at all over the past 2 years and why ?
8. What do you consider to be the geographical distribution of low income residents in Surrey?
Prompt: How/has this changed over the past 2 years and why?
9. What are the biggest challenges you and your organization face in providing services for/working with low income clients?
10. What can be done to address those challenges?
11. Have you seen any new trends in poverty in Surrey over the past 2 years?

Appendix 3 – Questions for Government Agencies

1. What do you consider to be the 3 most pressing issues related to poverty in Surrey?
2. Does your organization have a role in addressing these issues? If YES, what does it do? If NO, what organizations and/or groups do?
3. What key changes have taken place in Surrey over the past 3 to 5 years that have most affected the situation with regard to poverty in the community?
4. What particular government policies is your organization involved in implementing that touch on or address poverty and related issues.
5. Have you noticed any new or emerging trends related to poverty in Surrey over the past 2 years?
6. What have been the effects of those policies and of your organization's work in this area?
7. How do you assess/evaluate those effects?
8. Has (and if so, how) the mandate of your organization changed over the past 3 to 5 years in terms of its involvement in poverty and related issues?
9. If YES to Q. 6, how did this change affect the organization's poverty-related work?
10. Have you seen any new trends in poverty in Surrey over the past 2 years?

Appendix 4 – Organizations Consulted for this Study

City of Surrey

Fraser Health Authority

Ministry of Child and Family Development

Newton Advocacy Group – Advocacy Program and

Options: Services to Communities – The Roost

Options: Services to Communities – Whalley Family Place

Peace Arch Community Services – Food Bank

Progressive Intercultural Community Services – Settlement Workers

Progressive Intercultural Community Services – Agricultural Workers Employment Program
(AWEP)

South Fraser Community Services – Front Room

South Fraser Women’s Services

South Fraser Women’s Services – Family Law Program

Surrey Food Bank

Surrey Women’s Centre

Surrey-Delta Immigrant Services

Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives: Community Learning and Poverty Reduction in Surrey, British Columbia

Sean Markey, Department of Geography, Simon Fraser University
Steve Dooley, Faculty of Arts: Social Science, Kwantlen University College

Summary of Proposed Research

The purpose of the *Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives* (ECCI) project is to construct a research framework that will both advance our theoretical understandings of the processes of evaluation and local institution-building, and provide practical benefit to an exciting social planning initiative within the city of Surrey, British Columbia. Through an innovative research partnership linking Simon Fraser University, Kwantlen University College and Vibrant Surrey (a multi-stakeholder poverty reduction initiative in Surrey), our investigation will lend insight into the dynamics of comprehensive community initiatives and their ability to address issues of social planning and poverty reduction.

The project will contribute to two associated research dialogues related to community development. First, community development processes are common within the Canadian and international context, however, they are often criticized for lacking theoretical sophistication. Our research will address this theoretical gap through an examination of comprehensive community initiatives (CCI) and their institutional significance. The link between CCIs and local institution building will allow us to investigate the role of multi-stakeholder processes within the broader context of municipal governance (specifically, social planning) and their ability to become institutionalized within the community setting.

CCIs are locally-oriented planning processes that seek to address development issues in a multi-faceted manner, in terms of both stakeholders and issues (Brown, 1996; Torjman and Leviten-Reid, 2003). We will extend the CCI dialogue specifically by adopting an institutional lens through which to assess the extent to which Vibrant Surrey and its affiliated projects become embedded within the community and contribute to a more diverse and complex system of local governance.

A second research gap concerns the extent to which community development efforts are critiqued for lacking substantial evaluative proof concerning the effectiveness of their process and outcomes. In order to address this deficiency, the project will implement and assess a participatory evaluative information system (the Target Inclusion Model - Dooley and Floyd, 1999) as it applies to the Vibrant Surrey process and its project outcomes.

The ECCI project will advance our understanding of the community development process and yield tangible benefits to the Vibrant Surrey initiative in their efforts to engage poverty reduction within the City of Surrey, BC. We will share findings widely through academic journal contributions, conferences (including graduate student participation) as well as participation in community forums hosted by Vibrant Surrey. In addition, the project will create an evaluation “toolkit” that will be shared with other Vibrant Communities (Vibrant Surrey is one of fifteen Vibrant Communities across Canada, all focused on poverty reduction) and be posted on the Centre for Sustainable Community Development website at Simon Fraser University for broader public access.

Detailed Description

The purpose of the *Evaluating Comprehensive Community Initiatives* (ECCI) project is to construct a research framework that will both advance our theoretical understandings of the processes of evaluation and local institution-building and provide practical benefit to an exciting social planning initiative within the city of Surrey, British Columbia. Through an innovative research partnership linking Simon Fraser University, Kwantlen University College and Vibrant Surrey, our well-timed investigation will lend insight into the dynamics of comprehensive community initiatives and their ability to address issues of social planning and poverty reduction. Local development processes are common within the Canadian and international context, however, they are often criticized for lacking theoretical sophistication and substantial evaluative proof concerning the effectiveness of their process and outcomes. Our project will address these deficiencies and yield practical benefit to the community through the following research objectives:

Research Objectives

6. To evaluate the process of Vibrant Surrey in its attempts to create a collaborative, multi-stakeholder initiative to address poverty reduction in Surrey, British Columbia;
7. To evaluate outcomes associated with the four strategic initiatives outlined in the Vibrant Surrey strategic plan;
8. To assess the institutional qualities and potential of the comprehensive community initiative approach as it applies to Vibrant Surrey;
9. To develop, assess and monitor the development of an information system - based upon the target inclusion model of evaluation – as it applies to the comprehensive community initiative (CCI) approach;
10. To create and disseminate an evaluation “toolkit” for the CCI approach (specifically targeting other Vibrant Communities across Canada).

In this section, we will briefly describe the context of the project in Surrey, British Columbia, introduce the Vibrant Surrey and Vibrant Communities initiative, and outline the academic (evaluation of institution-building and comprehensive community initiatives) and practical significance (learning and evaluation for the community planning table and select development initiatives) of the project.

Research Context and Theoretical Significance

Surrey: Growth and Development in a Complex Urbanized Environment

Surrey is home to approximately 400,000 residents, making it the second largest city in British Columbia. At current growth rates, Surrey is projected to overtake the population of the largest city (Vancouver) within the next 15-20 years. Complementing its sizable population, Surrey covers a large land-base (317 square kilometers) that contains both urban and rural characteristics (e.g. 35% of the land-base is designated agricultural). In terms of socioeconomic

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characteristics, Surrey is growing quickly, has a relatively diverse urban economy, and has a sizable visible minority population (127,015 people) (City of Surrey, 2006).

Despite the many advantages Surrey holds as a growing, dynamic city, it faces many social challenges. These challenges are not necessarily unique to Surrey – as many if not all modern (Canadian) cities struggle with and contain marginalized elements:

Evidence to date suggests that income polarization and increasing income inequality is growing in Canadian cities...Municipal governments, already struggling in the face of shrinking resources and growing responsibilities, have neither the means nor the jurisdiction to respond to these changing conditions [quality of life indicators] on their own (FCM, 2004).

However, from a comparative perspective within the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), Surrey faces a deeper level of social malaise (Vibrant Surrey, 2005a; 2005b):

- Fully 20% (62,990) of Surrey households are living below the low-income cutoff (2001)¹⁵; of these 62,990 people:
 - 38,105 are identified as belonging to a visible minority
 - 20,227 are recent immigrants
 - 11,471 are youth (15-24)
 - 9,430 are lone parents, mostly women
 - 3,310 are First Nations
- Surrey has a higher reliance on income assistance and employment insurance than the BC average;
- Surrey has lower than GVRD average incomes per person; and
- The crime rate in Surrey 5% above BC average.

Service agencies in Surrey who are working with marginalized groups support the statistical evidence and convey a general trend of increasing marginalization and its effects, including homelessness, sexual exploitation, and a particular spike in the numbers of the working poor. There are a suite of traditional services for addressing poverty in Surrey: affordable housing, employment services, drug counseling, etc. but these are not considered adequate by the service providers themselves. Particularly in Surrey, where there is a legacy of reluctance from the municipal government to assume responsibility for social planning – and an even greater reluctance for engagement with poverty issues – addressing issues of poverty in a constructive manner has proven to be a challenge.

Recognizing the significance of Surrey as an urban landscape in BC and Canada, Surrey was selected by the Tamarack Institute to be one of fifteen Vibrant Communities across Canada.

Vibrant Communities: Vibrant Surrey

Vibrant Communities is a pan-Canadian research and development project being led by the Tamarack Institute and Caledon Institute with primary funding being provided by the J. W.

¹⁵ Statistic Canada Low Income Cut-off (LICO) changes based upon size of household and metropolitan or non-metropolitan status: e.g. 2 people in population area 100,000 – 499,999 = \$19,697.

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McConnell Foundation. It is a community-driven effort to reduce poverty in Canada by creating partnerships that make use of our most valuable assets – people, organizations, businesses and governments. The project promotes a unique approach to poverty reduction that allows communities to learn from — and help — each other.

The Vibrant Surrey initiative, started in 2003, models the Vibrant Communities approach. It is a multi-sector planning table pursuing a comprehensive and collaborative approach to poverty reduction. Poverty reduction activities are interventions that reduce the *number* of people in poverty and/or the *depth* of people’s poverty by ensuring that they have access to political, social or economic resources that provide them with the ability to make measurable progress out of poverty (e.g. customized training, asset development programs). There are a wide variety of organizations participating at the table, making it a truly inclusive and representative initiative - government, non-government, and corporate actors include:

- The City of Surrey
- Community Innovations
- Coast Capital Savings Credit Union
- K’la How Eya Aboriginal Centre
- National Crime Prevention Centre
- Newton Advocacy Society
- Pacific Community Resources
- Surrey Chamber of Commerce
- Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society
- United Way of the Lower Mainland
- Simon Fraser University
- Kwantlen University College

The vision and goals associated with the Vibrant Surrey initiative situate the planning process within the comprehensive and collaborative principles of the Vibrant Communities concept. However, the comprehensive approach raises a variety of challenges when seeking to implement the approach within a complex urban environment and where there is a lack of any legacy of interdependent action. In an effort to understand the dynamics and potential of the Vibrant Surrey approach, this project will draw from the conceptual roots of the project linked with the Comprehensive Community Initiative (CCI) approach (pioneered primarily in the US) and extend the framework within a theoretical framework associated with the local development process and the dynamics of institution-building.

Comprehensive Community Initiatives (CCI)

CCIs are locally-oriented planning processes that seek to address development issues in a multi-faceted manner, in terms of both stakeholders and issues. CCIs rose to prominence in the US in the 1980s and 1990s and have been adapted to the Canadian context in response to perceived challenges associated with community development efforts of the past and the changing roles of government relative to social and economic development (Brown, 1996; Torjman and Leviten-Reid, 2003). CCIs reject standard approaches of addressing poverty, welfare issues, employment, education, etc. as isolated events (Aspen Institute, 1997; Chaskin, 2001). Rather, CCIs endorse the idea that issues of poverty are multiple and interrelated and as such, require multiple and interrelated solutions (Schorr, 1997).

CCIs use a coalition approach of public and private agencies. Collectively, these groups, brought together by a coordinating body, address the complex issue of poverty on multiple fronts (Messinger, 2004; Silver, 2004). Comprehensive then, refers to both the process (in terms of uniting independent organizations and organizational mandates) and outcomes (in terms of seeking to address poverty issues through different strategies and even scales).

The stability of the CCI structure and its potential to generate shared understandings of and actions to address poverty provide a solid theoretical link to institution building within the local development process. There is an intuitive appeal of the CCI approach because problems cannot be isolated and tackled in isolation (Stagner and Duran, 1997); however, providing a framework for understanding and testing this intuitive appeal provides interesting research opportunities using the processes of institution building and evaluation. As Kubisch (1996) states:

The key to establishing an effective institutional base is to ensure that form and function are well-matched, and that one dimension does not take too much of a lead. Those designing the governance of a CCI need to have the tools to assess neighborhood circumstances, and the flexibility to respond to them, so as to maximize the initiative's potential.

CCIs and Institution Building

Institutions provide a vehicle through which to look at both the practical processes of local development and also the application of the CCI approach. For these purposes, a narrow definition of institutions is most suitable. Narrow institutionalism in the literature describes a process whereby organizations are bound together in order to generate shared understandings, socialize costs, and develop a “mutual awareness of being involved in a common project” (Jessop, 2001). However, the definition of “institution” varies from a single, concrete organization to a diverse set of social practices and norms, such as money and language (Hodgson, 1998; Jessop, 2001).

The conceptual origins of institutions lie within institutional economics and economic sociology. The two bodies of work illustrate that economics is both an instituted process and a socially embedded practice (Amin, 1999). Early researchers identified institutions as a means to interpret an economy that is non-equilibrating, imperfect, and irrational, contrary to more narrow neoclassical interpretations. For example, Veblen (1973) emphasizes the importance of habit and human agency in economic life (Hodgson, 1998; MacLeod, 2001b). Institutions impose structure and social coherence upon human activity through the “production and reproduction of habits of thought and action” (Hodgson, 1998).

The community organizing and planning components of the CCI process are important steps in developing what Jessop (2001) refers to as a “common project.” A sense of unity is important because local development requires a deliberate coordinated effort in order to exert substantive local influence over the economy. Another benefit of community organizing and planning is that it often creates a local development network that is capable of mediating micro and macro economic relationships.

Community organizations, like Vibrant Surrey, serve as organizational hubs for local institution building. This is because the functions of the organization, such as initiating and coordinating planning, generating information, facilitating communication, and building community participation helps to create the linkages and norms of interpretation that determine the direction of local development. However, the formalization of the local development process, which may be seen as an informal local response, requires effort in the form of organizing, fund-raising capacity, and the nurturing of internal and external relationships. The ability to move from planning to implementation of development strategies serves as a test for the institutional

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credibility of the local development process and the clear linkage to the importance of evaluation. In order to facilitate the evaluation of Vibrant Surrey, the project will utilize the target inclusion model of evaluation – an approach that is well suited to the participatory values of the Vibrant Surrey initiative.

The Target Inclusion Model

The Target Inclusion Model (Dooley and Floyd, 1999) will be utilized as a methodological tool to implement and assess the research objectives. The Target Inclusion model is designed to involve the broad community at all stages of the research process from the setting of research objectives to the interpretation of final results.

The Target Inclusion Model is relevant for this project because it reflects both the values of Vibrant Surrey and the community organizing and planning components central to the CCI process. The model has been developed with the following guiding principles in mind:

- Research will be conducted in a manner that includes members of the community as an integral and valued component of the research process;
- From the beginning of the study to the submission of the final report, community consultation will be an ongoing feature of the research process;
- The direction of the study will be determined by the expression of community need;
- The expertise of the research teams lies in its ability to effectively utilize the tools of research. The community has situational and contextual knowledge that complements the expertise of the research team;
- The research process will be flexible and dynamic. The research team will respond to community concerns as they arise.

The Target Inclusion Model is designed to make an explicit link between community development as a process and the implementation of a program of research. The aim is to move beyond the view of research as an add-on feature that evaluates a particular community program or initiative. Consistent with the values described above, the goal is to integrate or embed research as part of the ongoing process of community development. Further, community support for research findings increases the likelihood that recommendations will lead to meaningful and sustained community action. More often than not, a disconnect between the research team and the community results in unused research manuscripts.

Dooley and Floyd have successfully utilized the Target Inclusion Model in a number of studies most recently in *Aboriginal youth Justice: Emerging strategies for Programme Development* (Dooley et al., 2005). This research brought together a group of Aboriginal youth service providers and members of the Vancouver Police Department to develop, plan and implement a research project involving 200 interviews with aboriginal youth and more than 10 focus groups. The research planning committee from this project continues to meet (after the completion of the research piece) to ensure that the Aboriginal community and Vancouver Police services continue to dialogue about issues of mutual interest.

Methods and Workplan

Vibrant Surrey

The Target Inclusion Model sets a plan for involving members of the community in all stages of the research process. Two key features of the model are the establishment of a research Steering Committee embedded within the Vibrant Surrey structure, and the training of members of the population to serve as research consultants, in partnership with Kwantlen and SFU students. The full research process will be conducted in four phases:

1. Literature review (5 months)

The literature review will update and inform the research team and the Vibrant Surrey table on issues of urban social planning, institution-building, and a comparative perspective with other municipalities and local development initiatives. In addition to informing the evaluation process, the findings and working papers drawn from the literature review will be included with the “community learning” strategy for Vibrant Surrey.

2. Target Inclusion Model (12 months)

The target inclusion model involves a series of steps, including: establishing the Steering Committee; hiring and training community and student researchers; conducting focus groups and targeted interviews; and facilitating a community planning day to workshop findings.

3. Development of evaluation toolkit for CCI evaluation (4 months)

Using the results of the literature review and the target inclusion evaluation process, we will create an evaluation toolkit for comprehensive community initiatives. The toolkit will hold particular relevance for Vibrant Community initiatives, but will also add value for all collaborative community development processes.

4. Dissemination of results and (3 months)

Finally, dissemination of project results will take a variety of forms: web-posting, participation in Vibrant Community learning forums (tele-learning, web-based, conferences), and journal articles documenting the initiative and contributing to the research dialogue surroundings CCIs and collaborative, community-based approaches to social planning.

Description of Team

Applicants

Dr. Sean Markey is an Assistant Professor with the Explorations in the Arts and Social Sciences Program at Simon Fraser University (SFU) and an Associate with the Centre for Sustainable Community Development at SFU. Dr. Markey has conducted considerable sustainable community development research across BC, most recently culminating in the book *Second Growth: Community Economic Development in Rural British Columbia* (UBC Press, 2005). In addition to his academic experience, Dr. Markey continues to work with municipalities, non-profit organizations, Aboriginal communities and the business community to promote and develop sustainable forms of community development, including his role as a Steering Committee member for the Vibrant Surrey initiative.

Stephen Dooley is the Director of The National Institute for Research in Sustainable Community Development at Kwantlen University College. Steve has been involved in a number of community based research projects, and is the co-developer of The Target Inclusion Model. Recently Steve completed a review of Aboriginal youth Justice Programs with the Vancouver Police Department and is currently the principal investigator of a study of Aboriginal youth programs with The Surrey School District. Steve is also a member of the Vibrant Surrey Steering Committee.

Partners

Vibrant Surrey

Vibrant Surrey is made up of leaders from every sector of the community who are committed to improving the economic situation for those living in poverty. Working collaboratively and using practical applications learned from national partners, Vibrant Surrey supports local poverty reduction efforts and compliments those with economic development projects that make a real difference in people's lives. Current members of Vibrant Surrey include:

- The City of Surrey
- Community Innovations
- Coast Capital Savings
- Kla How Eya Aboriginal Centre
- National Crime Prevention Centre
- Newton Advocacy Society
- Surrey Women's Centre
- Pacific Community Resources
- Surrey Chamber of Commerce
- Surrey Delta Immigrant Services Society
- United Way
- Simon Fraser University
- Kwantlen University College

United Way of the Lower Mainland

United Way has a 75-year history of helping people in the Lower Mainland. The United Way of the Lower Mainland plays a leadership role in bringing together resources to care for the social service needs of the community. They support the delivery of more than 400 programs and services that help people find their way. The United Way has provided a leadership position within Vibrant Surrey since its inception. Their extensive expertise in funding and evaluation will provide valuable contributions to the project.

Training and/or Role of Students

The research for the *ECCI* project will be conducted with assistance from a graduate student from Simon Fraser University and undergraduate students from Kwantlen University College.

Year One:

- 1 MA student (part-time): The MA student will assist with the literature review during the first phase of the project. The student will also serve a coordination role in the design of the evaluation framework and in linking with the Vibrant Surrey initiative. The project will provide an excellent opportunity for an MA student to identify an appropriate research area and use the project as a foundation for thesis work.
- 4 Undergrad (part-time, honorarium): The undergraduate students will be trained to conduct interviews and will work with community research assistants. The students will all have taken, at minimum, a 3rd year research methods course in Criminology, Psychology or Sociology.

Year Two:

- 1 MA student (part-time): the MA student will assist development and testing of the evaluative information system using the target inclusion model. The student will also assist with write-up of the project, the development of the toolkit, and coordinating the community forum in partnership with Vibrant Surrey.
- 2 Undergraduate students (part-time, honorarium): the undergraduate students will assist with the testing of the evaluation model (e.g. interviews) following their participation in the research training workshop. We will also include undergraduate students in the community outreach and dissemination phase.

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Vibrant Surrey

Budget Justification (Funds Requested from SSHRC)

SSHRC Categories:

Project Total: \$32,000

Personnel Costs

Student and Non-Student Salaries

Undergraduate.....\$4,000

- Four undergraduate research assistants will be provided with a \$1000 honorarium for participation in the community research process

Masters.....\$16,000

- One MA student will be hired on a contract basis to serve as the project coordinator and to assist with literature review, community-based research, and analysis

Non Student\$3,900

- Tamarack Vibrant Communities coordinator will liaise with the project on three occasions @ \$500/consultation
- Community researchers will be given an honorarium for participation in the focus group and interview process: four researchers @ \$500 each
- Community researchers will be provided with a \$100 honorarium for participating in the research training day (4 @ \$100)

Travel and Subsistence

Conference Attendance.....\$2,500

- Funding will be used to support student conference participation (one academic conference and one Vibrant Communities conference); conference sites unknown at time of budgeting
- Travel for Tamarack Vibrant Communities coordinator (two trips for \$500 from Calgary)

Other Expenses

Focus Groups\$800
Planning Day.....\$500
Communications\$500
Meeting Resources.....\$300
Web-posting.....\$1,500
Toolkit Production & Printing\$1,000
Community Forum.....\$1,000

Budget Phase Description

<p>Phase One: Literature Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graduate Student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Coordinator o Literature review 	<p>SSHRC Funds</p> <p>\$2,000</p> <p>Phase Total: \$2,000</p>
<p>Phase Two: Target Inclusion Model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training days - Focus groups - Planning day - Vibrant Communities Consultation - Graduate Student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Coordinator/Researcher - Undergrad students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 4 students - Community Researchers 	<p>\$400</p> <p>\$800</p> <p>\$500</p> <p>\$2,000</p> <p>\$12,000</p> <p>\$4,000</p> <p>\$2,000</p> <p>Phase Total: \$21,700</p>
<p>Phase Three: Analysis and Report Production</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graduate Student <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Coordinator/Researcher 	<p>\$2,000</p> <p>Phase Total: \$2,000</p>
<p>Phase Four: Dissemination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vibrant Communities Conference - Web-posting - Toolkit Production - Vibrant Surrey Community Forum 	<p>\$2,000</p> <p>\$1,500</p> <p>\$1,000</p> <p>\$1,000</p> <p>Phase Total: \$5,500</p>
<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communications (conference calls) - Meeting resources 	<p>\$500</p> <p>\$300</p> <p>Phase Total: \$800</p>

Total Budget: \$32,000.00

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Letters of Support from Partners

- Linda Western, United Way
- Wendy Rogers, co-Chair, Vibrant Surrey

Supporting Documentation

- One-page Vibrant Surrey Strategic Planning Framework, 2006-2009



PROPELLOR
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Vibrant Surrey: Strategic Communications Memo

Core ideas/ recommendations:

- Identify your core competency from a communications perspective – capacity builder and convener -- and set about being clear about who you are and who you are not – occupying your brand or identity and find helpful ways to communicate it to your stakeholders and members.
- Linking your strategic goals with doable, communications goals, audiences, strategies and appropriate tools
- Think ahead to message development and consider working to develop framing and messaging for member groups working in Surrey for their outreach work to their diverse constituencies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The purpose of this document is to provide detailed strategic communications advice to Vibrant Surrey. Its methodology: following several interviews, a half-day facilitated session with some members of the network as well as independent research, media and communications audits, Propellor Communication Research was able to make some overarching recommendations toward the creation of a detailed communications strategy.

This report summarizes the findings of this work, and outlines a range of potential communications goals, strategies and tactics in order to assist in building a robust communications strategy. This document is not intended as a full communication strategy, which is a lengthy, ongoing activity linked to specific timelines, resources, and specific initiatives, but it will provide some direction for the development of this plan. The outline here is linked to the specific goals outlined in Vibrant Surrey's Strategic Plan for 2006-2009.

This report will specifically deal with issues relating to:

- The “brand” identity of Vibrant Surrey, and some thinking on the relationship between Vibrant Surrey and its member groups vis a vis media work
- Some clarification of the priority target audiences including some analysis of strategies and appropriate tools required to engage them
- Some recommendations re: message development and a potentially valuable role for Vibrant Surrey as a capacity builder for the sector

POSITIONING – ACHIEVING CLARITY ABOUT WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO.

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Vibrant Surrey has a high and growing level of credibility among its constituent audiences. As part of a national project, it has benefited from and helped expand a growing body of knowledge, but it is dedicated to supporting nimble, community-driven solutions to the urgent challenges of poverty reduction in Surrey, British Columbia. It is viewed as a helpful organization, but there is some confusion as to its role, principally because much of the work it does it behind the scenes coupled with the fact that it is not an “organization”. Some other factors that may contribute to this fuzziness: its complexity; dedication to facilitation, process-related tools, partnerships and discussion; the fact that it does not directly deliver community services; and its name, which is engaging, if somewhat euphemistic about what you *do*.

This role as a behind the scenes player – a convenor and host to a learning network – is critical to your success, and so it does not make sense to expect Vibrant Surrey to have a high level of visibility broadly within Surrey, nor would this be a strategic use of resources or time. It is neither possible nor desirable to “broadcast”, when you must narrowcast to reach those champions who can activate their own communities to make change, and use limited resources to best advantage. So the goal would be to “brand” this network among those practitioners, policymakers, business leaders, organizations and community members whom it can engage most effectively on its journey towards poverty reduction.

As was said, most of Vibrant Surrey’s outcomes are related to its role in facilitating collaboration, building capacity, social capital, and networks to the end of poverty reduction. From a communications perspective, this leaves a vital role for Vibrant Surrey in building the capacity of its member groups for improved and highly strategic communications outreach. So rather than getting the word out about Vibrant Surrey, take on communications outreach as a vehicle for building support and recognition for your members. For instance, during our planning session there was a suggestion that Vibrant Surrey create background briefings and tools for reporters and editors when there is an important initiative afoot, shift in the sector or issues, or a community project soon to launch. The goal would be to educate reporters and then direct them to community spokespeople. Providing research into the most effective messages on key issues, media training and support would also be helpful in getting more profile for the member groups, their desired outcomes, and the issues themselves. Again, this approach supports the convenor, capacity-building function of Vibrant Surrey.

One caveat: Vibrant Surrey must guard against the perception that if they are not speaking to everyone, then they are being exclusive and limiting debate. Communications effectiveness will require you to cast broadly for ideas, solutions and messages, but to hone your outreach with laser-like focus to those who will be able to activate these ideas and bring them to life.

While I heard that the discussion to make Vibrant Surrey a discreet organization has largely been resolved, it would be valuable to find language and messaging that will clearly communicate your role and identity to external audiences without limiting your ability to be responsive to opportunities and community needs.

On the eve of Vibrant Surrey becoming a “trailblazer organization” within the Vibrant Communities project and increasing its capacity and reach, I would suggest that you consider creating a tagline or strapline that is more descriptive in order to address this challenge. Perhaps

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a sentence that uses language like alliance, convenor, capacity-builder or network may give your target audiences and potential audiences a clearer sense of your role and mandate (particularly since many of your audiences fall within business and government and don't deal so well with ambiguity). Consider using your stretch targets in your descriptions of who you are and what your goals are – they will be excellent tools for grounding your vision for the community. Another excellent tool for communicating who you are is to create a short (one-page) story-telling document that talks about the genesis of this project, its inspiration and goals for the future.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

This section will look at your strategic planning goals and suggest priority audiences, communications strategies and tactics to support these outcomes. The sharpest communications objectives will be concrete, achievable, and referenced to a particular time period with benchmarks. I will attach a sample communications strategy that will allow you to allow you to break your communications activities down based on external opportunities and developments. Costs and time resources should be attached to each activity and measured according to impact. I'd also suggest a check-in semi-annually to assess the effectiveness of strategies and how close you are to achieving your objectives.

I'll outline the goals, strategies below with some recommendations for priority audiences, approaches and tools.

STRATEGIC GOAL #1:

INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY AND POVERTY REDUCTION BEST PRACTICES THROUGH RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

- Activities include: setting up evaluation tools for assessing the effectiveness of Vibrant Surrey' practices and projects; setting up a participatory model of learning with those most impacted by poverty; and creating a strategy for sharing tools and learnings with key audiences.

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVE #1:

Share and communicate these tools with practitioner audiences with the outcome of increased social capital, partnerships and community capacity

TARGET AUDIENCE #1:

Primary: (those who have the power to achieve the communications goal)

- Members of Vibrant Surrey
- Potential members of Vibrant Surrey and organizational allies in poverty reduction, CED, social enterprise, and issues related to the root causes of poverty.

What do you want them to do?

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Use and share these tools within their own organizations to set goals, improve effectiveness, media outreach, and fundraising.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

- Develop a strategy for introducing new tools and information: this may include a quarterly learning exchange in order to introduce new tools and support members in a face-to-face setting.
- Consider a yearly report card that would check-in on the progress made towards the global goal of poverty reduction and would serve several key purposes: it would highlight the evaluation tools you've developed; and it would spotlight the efforts of your members and the hard realities of the issue. This report card could be made available to the media, partners, funders.

TOOLS/ SKILLS INVENTORY

- Template for creating clear, multi-media presentations (Power Point)
- Create media briefing notes (fact sheets, story tip sheets, etc.) for member groups to enhance their media outreach. Media are looking for great numbers and hard facts, as well as human interest story leads.
- New staff should have excellent communications skills and be able to brief, lead workshops and work with a diverse set of audiences from funders to community members.
- Ensure all tools and templates generated by Vibrant Surrey are accessible online in a useable format for members and other interested groups (templates, factsheets, summaries, models, links to host sites).
- Develop plain-language resource packages for member groups so that they can share the findings of this research broadly within their own stakeholder groups, including media, government audiences and community members.

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVE #2:

Set up a structure for leaning from and with those most affected by poverty that informs all Vibrant Surrey activities and practices.

TARGET AUDIENCE #2:

Primary audiences:

- Immigrant audiences
- Single parents
- Seniors
- Youth
- Others within identified populations and overlapping within these categories.

What do you want them to do?

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Participate as advisors, contributors to a growing body of knowledge on the roots of poverty.

Secondary:

- Frontline workers, community organizations
- Media outlets (advertising)
- Libraries, community centres, childcare centres, women and youth serving agencies, seniors serving agencies, immigrant settlement organizations.

What do you want them to do?

Help get the word out to these folks.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

- Develop participatory, culturally appropriate outreach strategies to recruit and work with members from these disproportionately affected groups and to solicit their input, and assistance in creating models for learning and action. Work in concert with member groups and front-line agencies to assist in creating action/ advisory groups from within these communities.
- Potentially cultivate folks from within this group to be media storytellers and ongoing Vibrant Surrey allies and champions.

TOOLS/ SKILLS INVENTORY

- Develop culturally driven, translated outreach materials available to immigrant audiences. This may involve deeper collaboration with immigrant serving organizations in Surrey and increased outreach and relationship building with ethnoculturally specific media outlets in Surrey and Lower Mainland.
- Hire community workers who have cross-cultural skills and/or who are representative of affected communities
- Create opportunities for ongoing participation, learning and growth by participants through communications, public speaking and storytelling workshops following information gathering.

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVE #3:

Improve the quality of policy and funding decisions by providing excellent ongoing evaluation that not only measure assets and needs, but the effectiveness and potential of on-going strategies.

TARGET AUDIENCE #3

Primary:

- Senior bureaucrats (ADMs principally) at the federal, provincial and municipal level
- Community funders
- Champions at all levels of government

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What do you want them to do?

See objective above.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

- Develop government affairs working group
- Facilitate coordinated meetings by teams of Vibrant Surrey members and allies on pressing issues and provide succinct clear briefings on the research findings (should be tailored to the needs/ interests and values of each decision-maker, and could piggyback on related, timely initiatives.)

TOOLS/ SKILLS INVENTORY

- Briefing notes that summarize in one-two pages the methods and findings of evaluation tools
- Best practices briefings – solutions-focused and with a clear-ask for policy support/ collaboration/ funding
- Develop a government relations tool kit for those working on poverty reduction and related issues in Surrey.

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STRATEGIC GOAL #2

DEMONSTRATE THE BENEFITS OF WORKING WITHIN A COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK. Activities include:

- assisting funders to work closely with community to achieve common goals
- collaborating with all stakeholders towards a Surrey Agreement or similar type of agreement (pending WED review)
- supporting existing initiatives and incubating innovative strategies that connect employers with the hard to employ, increase community engagement and help seed new social enterprises
- creating enhanced capacity and networks within community including improved access to CED tools and resources

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVE #1

To ensure funding, development and policy support for CED approaches to poverty reduction measurable through:

- the development of a Surrey Agreement or similar types of coordinated funding approaches
- ongoing funding for Surrey based NGOs working toward poverty reduction
- improved collaboration between government and community organizations

TARGET AUDIENCE #1:

Primary Audience:

- Funders
- Government decisionmakers and senior bureaucrats at all levels

What do you want them to do?

- Collaborate in the creation of Surrey Agreement
- Fund ongoing poverty reduction initiatives in Surrey

Secondary Audience: (who do they listen to?)

- High profile champions within business community and civil society
- Blocs of potential voters within their constituencies
- Media

What do you want them to do?

Communicate the value and importance of CED strategies for poverty reduction in Surrey

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

- To create opportunities for briefings with senior bureaucrats at every level of government on timely issues like Surrey Agreement changes in funding environment, using detailed evaluation findings, case studies and face-to-face story telling. Involve small delegations that may include a business person, NGO leader, community representative, and Vibrant Surrey representative.

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- To continue regular outreach to funders with success stories and measureable shifts, aside from regular reporting (demonstrating efficacy, accountability etc.)
- To cultivate and prepare high-level champions within business community to quietly and actively communicate with government decisionmakers re: importance and efficacy of CED approaches to poverty reduction
- To seed stories and information about solutions to poverty reduction through innovative CED approaches with mainstream media in Surrey. This may include assisting members of B.I.A in writing opinion editorials, or preparing them with statistics and information

TOOLS / SKILLS INVENTORY

- Regular e-newsletter that should be sent to funders, as well as members, practitioners, government researchers, etc. with updates on recent projects, metrics and developments
- Ongoing government relations intelligence gathering, which may include creation of a government relations tool kit with key messages for Vibrant Surrey membership
- Briefings/ tools, outreach to BIAs, Chamber of Commerce and other influential business leaders where there is a specific ask – re communications in support of specific initiative.
-
- Tools might include face-to-face meetings, briefing notes with clear metrics, evaluation of benefits
- Resource document with stats, factsheets and suggested storytellers/ spokespeople mailed and pitched to editors and sympathetic media in Surrey.

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVE #2

TARGET AUDIENCE #2

Primary Audience

Potential employers

What do you want them to do?

Hire hard to employ through projects like the SSPP or Project Comeback.

Secondary Audiences

B.I.A.s

Board of Trade

Chamber of Commerce

Canadian Business for Social Responsibility

Influential and high profile members of business community (ie., Vancity, Coast Capital)

Labour organizations

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Community media

What do you want them to do?

Champion projects like those listed above with their constituencies
Support broadly your approaches to poverty reduction

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

- Cultivation of champions within business community on specific initiatives. Ask them to partner with sponsoring organization in media outreach (ie., serve as media spokespeople)
- Support member organizations who have co-developed initiative to do media outreach, email-blast to potential local businesses to publicize the solutions they have come up with.
- Deputations or presentations to BOT, BIAs and Chamber of Commerce to introduce new initiatives and frame them within larger CED approach to poverty reduction

TOOLS/ SKILLS INVENTORY

- Briefings and power point presentations on value of hiring hard to employ, case studies etc.
- Develop media messaging kit for members to use in outreach on specific initiatives like social purchasing portal.
- Hold insider briefings for media in advance of new projects.

TARGET AUDIENCE #3:

Primary audience:

- Membership Vibrant Surrey
- NGOs working on related issues

What do you want them to do?

- Increase knowledge and access to CED resources
- Encourage new social enterprises
- Encourage sectoral collaboration and partnerships on CED initiatives

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

- Make new CED tools and approaches available to member organizations
- Provide ongoing opportunities for face-to-face learning opportunities as well as advance functionality for online learning and sharing of tools
- Sponsor interested members to attend bi-annual Enterprising Non Profit workshops

STRATEGIC GOAL #3

INCREASE ECONOMIC SECURITY THROUGH INCOME AND ASSET BUILDING

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Note: We were not able to explore this section in our facilitated session as this strategy is clearly under development and will need to move forward in concert with member groups and community partners.

STRATEGIC GOAL #4

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT A COMMUNITY LEARNING PLAN

Including activities such as:

- providing access to national learning opportunities regarding poverty reduction tools and strategies
- working with Vibrant Communities to support local learning
- linking to schools, colleges and information networks to share learning opportunities and resources

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVE #1

To provide opportunities for learning opportunities to member groups, their constituencies, and engaged community members.

TARGET AUDIENCE #1

Primary audiences

- Vibrant Surrey Member Organizations
- Their constituencies and stakeholders

What do you want them to do?

- Participate in a range of learning opportunities re: tools and strategies for poverty reduction including participation in Pan-Canadian Learning Community tele-learning sessions, and regular learning exchanges to explore new tools and resources

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

- Develop an e-newsletter with updates on new local tools, resources and developments, and learning opportunities.
- Use the release of the report card as an opportunity to create community discussion of issues and solutions – both through media education and outreach and perhaps by convening a series of community discussions.

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVE #2

Share learning opportunities and resources with schools, colleges and universities and related information networks and solicit their support in the creation of new models/ tools.

TARGET AUDIENCES

Primary audiences:

Vibrant Surrey

College, University and Other Education and Information Networks especially those like Social Work, CED, Business and Commerce, Public Policy development and Public Administration ideally those based in Surrey, but with a slightly broader focus to the Lower Mainland.

(Kwantlen and SFU Surrey are obviously key connecting points)

What do you want them to do?

Access and absorb the latest and most effective strategies for poverty reduction and engage fully in the issues as volunteers and future leaders

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

- To provide resources to Surrey and Lower Mainland based students using the portal of allied professors and instructors to engage the next generation of those fighting poverty in our communities.
- To use campus media (both radio and print) to connect students with resources and learning opportunities
- To involve students in research projects and ongoing activities of Vibrant Surrey as volunteers.

TOOLS/ SKILLS INVENTORY

- Outreach through press releases or small ads to campus publications and radio for specific opportunities
- Collaborate with classes to undertake specific project – provide opportunities to attend national learning opportunities, and access to resources, web-based tools and invitations to attend networking and briefing sessions.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES AND TACTICS FROM PROPELLOR COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT:

Framing and reframing the issues:

One of the most popular buzzwords in communications and public advocacy is “framing”. The words, phrases, and themes – or frameworks – used to describe advocacy issues are extremely important. In our world of sound bites and 10-minute meetings or hearings, those who frame issues often win public discussions. If Vibrant Surrey could support its network of organizations in taking control of how issues of poverty reduction were framed it would assist the sector in:

- Defining issues on its own terms, without waiting to respond to other’s agendas
- Identifying and reaching those who have the power to make change

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- Ensuring your messages are heard by reporters, their audiences and policymakers

Additionally, each of the strategies outlined above requires specific messaging for each target audience. In this exercise, I suggest you follow the messaging maxim, “lead with values, and follow with facts”. Vibrant Surrey could work with its members or a committee, to develop and reframe messages according to the needs and sensibilities of its priority target audiences in addition to the values identified in your strategic plan. For example, one major gap in understanding poverty is how to message and discuss the challenge of poverty among immigrant audiences. If Vibrant Surrey took this on, they would be providing a useful resource to communities across Canada.

In terms of the “how to”, while factual information is important, your key audiences are also interested in having poverty reduction expressed in human terms. Personal stories are essential elements in producing compelling news stories and successfully lobbying policymakers. If the participating organizations were to coordinate their messaging – consistently and persistently delivering the same key messages – then they would begin to resonate and permeate the public debate. Secondary messages should be refined according to ongoing analysis of leading and emerging policy, learning and community initiatives. Another caveat: CED is not a familiar concept/ term for many of your audiences. You may need to focus on some plain language messages that anchor these concepts.

Promote and prepare key organizational messengers

One of the most important caveats in strategic communications is the notion that “messengers are as important as messages.” One example, policy makers and business leaders are often more willing to listen to messengers who more closely resemble their own values. In this way it may be important to cultivate and empower messengers who are “not the usual suspects” – gatekeepers who, ideally, enjoy both access and influence in policy circles. Prepare member groups and spokepeople through intensive media training, and government relations support. This should include the cultivation of storytellers, community validators, and community allies willing to assist with communications.

Recommendations for Communications Infrastructure:

1. Invest significantly in creating a strong web portal to facilitate research and information sharing and some interactive functionality in the form of e-newsletters or bulletins, and perhaps an ongoing blog / common space for members and allied groups.
2. Reconsider the development of expensive printed and collateral materials like brochures, posters, displays, t-shirts, pens and annual reports in favour of templates for briefing notes, branded folders as leave-behinds at meetings, and improved presentation tools like a power point presentation and perhaps investment in an LCD projector. Consider development of a simple template for handouts and posters that can be printed from the desktop for use in community outreach.

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3. Consider hosting media training for organizational spokespeople as well as the development of messaging/ framing reports, media relations and government relations toolkits for members/ partners. A train the trainer session to root the media training skills within organizations could be useful to this end.
4. Some useful resources:

Sample communications toolkit:

http://www.amssa.org/advantage_diversity/index.html

Some very useful resources on storytelling and tools development (see the newsletter archives):

<http://www.agoodmanonline.com>

<http://www.impacs.org>

Again, some useful resources for development of websites for mission-driven groups:

<http://www.coyotecomunications.com/webdevo/index.html>

I've attached an article I wrote for Front and Centre, the newsletter of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy a few years ago on branding for not-for-profits.

Vibrant Surrey Communications Action Plan Year 2007-2009

STRATEGIC GOAL ONE: INCREASE UNDERSTANDING OF POVERTY AND POVERTY REDUCTION BEST PRACTICES THROUGH RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES	AUDIENCES	STRATEGIES	TACTICS/ TOOLS	BENCHMARKS	RESOURCES	LEAD	TIMING/ DEADLINE
SHARE TOOLS/ DATA WITH PRACTITIONER AUDIENCES WITH THE OUTCOME OF INCREASED SOCIAL CAPITAL, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY CAPACITY.	<p>PRIMARY: Members of Vibrant Surrey</p> <p>Potential members of Vibrant Surrey and organizational allies in poverty reduction, CED, social enterprise</p>	<p>For each new tool or research output, develop a mini-strategy for introducing these tools and data.</p> <p>Some strategies might include:</p> <p>A quarterly learning exchange in order to introduce new tools and support members in a face-to-face setting.</p> <p>A yearly report card to check-in on progress toward big goals of poverty reduction and to share solutions.</p>	<p>Template for creating clear, multi-media presentations</p> <p>Tools made available online, with an e-bulletin or newsletter to ensure members and others are kept abreast of latest outputs</p> <p>Create media briefing notes (fact sheets, story tip sheets, etc.) for member groups to enhance their media outreach.</p> <p>Hire staff with excellent communications skills</p>	<p>Measurable through things like: participation in learning exchanges</p> <p>use of materials for outreach, and number and quality of media stories, increase in awareness among media audiences.</p> <p>data and tools improves effectiveness in fundraising, staff capacity and policy outreach</p>	<p>People hours Budget required</p>		Completed by...

OVERALL COMMUNICATIONS GOAL: CLARIFY VIBRANT SURREY’S ROLE, MESSAGING AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS CAPACITY.

COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES	AUDIENCES	STRATEGIES	TACTICS/ TOOLS	BENCHMARKS	RESOURCES	LEAD	TIMING/ DEADLINE
Clarify messaging about who VS is and what you do.	All audiences	Develop a brand brief that outlines key non-negotiable values, vision for the future, and how you would like to be seen and how you would like to be engaged by your audiences.	<p>Develop a strapline that truly communicates who you are.</p> <p>Create a two-page story that talks in a compelling way about the genesis of Vibrant Surrey and your theory of change.</p> <p>Ensure consistency of look, feel and layout across all materials.</p>	<p>Less confusion about role</p> <p>More awareness about what you can offer measureable through more members, solicitations for information, advice, referrals</p>	People hours Budget required		Completed by...

