NAVIGATING COMPLEXITY

THE JOURNEY OF THE CITY OF VANCOUVER'S SOLUTIONS LAB (SO FAR)

November, 2018

CITY OF VANCOUVER

OUR JOURNEY

STARTS HERE

2015 Healthy City Strategy

Winter 2017 Steering Committee

SLab 1.0 Trail

Summer 2017 1.0 Labs Begin

Public Engagement Lab

Engineering Customer Service Lab

Public Space + Public Art Lab

Spring 2018 1.0 Evaluation

Connections and Community Resilience Lab

Summer 2018 Adventure #2 Begins

SLab 2.0 River

A HEALTHY CITY FOR ALL

HEALTHY PEOPLE

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

LEGEND

- SLab Team
- City Staff
- Facilitators
- Community Partners
- Steering Committee/ Senior Leadership

- - - End of Trail
- ▪ - Resting Point
- ▶ - Path continues
- Viewpoint
- Lab 1.0 Endpoint Shelter

NAVIGATING COMPLEXITY | i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to live, work, play, and learn on the unceded and traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), sḵwx̱wú7mesh (Squamish), and selíl̓witulh (Tsleil Waututh) Nations.

We are grateful for the generosity and hard work of other social innovators and lab practitioners in sharing their thinking, experience, and learning that have allowed us to make different mistakes, as best we can.

We are grateful to all of the people who have taken a risk and said yes to joining a lab team, to the community of practice, and to the steering committee, for pouring their hearts and minds into experimenting and building something new together.

ORIENTEERING*

This is your quick guide to the journey that unfolds at a more leisurely pace in the pages that follow. This is a story of the City of Vancouver's **public sector innovation lab**, called the Solutions Lab, that began in January 2017. The initial call to action for the lab was in the Healthy City Strategy, named as a way to grow collaborative leadership to implement big policies like this one. The City's innovation fund provided some start-up resources, and we did best practices research into other public sector labs to inform the approach. If you're most interested in this contextual part of trip, head to the **Trailhead.**

The first four labs began in June 2017. Together teams of city staff and community partners worked on **complex challenges** like public engagement, public space and public art, customer service, and community connections and resilience. We used **social innovation** frameworks and processes to design the trails that we followed, and we worked our way through processes that helped us to better understand our complex challenges from different points of view, and to develop and prototype possible new solutions. If you really want to read about each of the labs and their outcomes, hit the **Trails.**

With this experience under our belts, we took a moment to pause, reflect, and evaluate our work on these first four labs. We learned that we wanted to focus more on building the social innovation competencies, infrastructure and enabling conditions within the City of Vancouver in order to work toward culture change, rather than relying on external expertise and one-off lab processes that ended before the hard work really began. We learned that we were right to focus on complex service, policy and engagement challenges, but that we needed to focus further in order to have

*Orienteering (noun): an activity in which you have to find your way to somewhere on foot as quickly as possible by using a map and a compass[2].

A **public sector innovation lab** is a a semi-autonomous body established for the purposes of catalysing innovation in policy, service, engagement, democracy and governance challenges in the public sector. They typically engage diverse participants in open collaboration in order to create, elaborate, prototype, and often implement discontinuous, scale shifting, or radical solutions to open-ended systemic challenges[3,4].

Complex challenges are defined in the cynefin framework (see Fig. 1 on next page), and defined relative to simple, complicated, and chaotic challenges. Complex challenges are described as having no right answers, where cause and effect aren't tightly linked or predictable, and in the domain of "we don't know what we don't know[5]."

A **social innovation** is any initiative (product, process, program, project, or platform) that challenges and, over time, contributes to changing the defining routines, resource and authority flows or beliefs of the broader social system in which it is introduced. Successful social innovations have durability, scale and transformative impact. Social innovation is the full process of transformation from concept through to systems change[6].

greater impact given the resources that we had available to us. We learned that we needed more flexible and nimble processes in order to enable fuller participation by more people. If you want to learn more about this part of the journey, join us at the **Campfire.**

We learned so many other things as well that are now being integrated to the theory of change, activities and measures that are coming together for the second leg of our trip. If you want to learn more about where we're heading next, grab your paddle and join us on the **Water.**

So sit back, pour yourself a camp stove coffee, put another log on the fire, and settle in to read more about this story of the Solutions Lab, so far.

Figure 1. Cynefin framework.

EMERGENT PRACTICE

COMPLEX
PROBE · SENSE · RESPOND

GOOD PRACTICE

COMPLICATED
SENSE · **ANALYZE** · RESPOND

UNORDERED   DISORDER   ORDERED

CHAOTIC
ACT · SENSE · RESPOND

NOVEL PRACTICE

SIMPLE
SENSE · **CATAGORIZE** · RESPOND

BEST PRACTICE
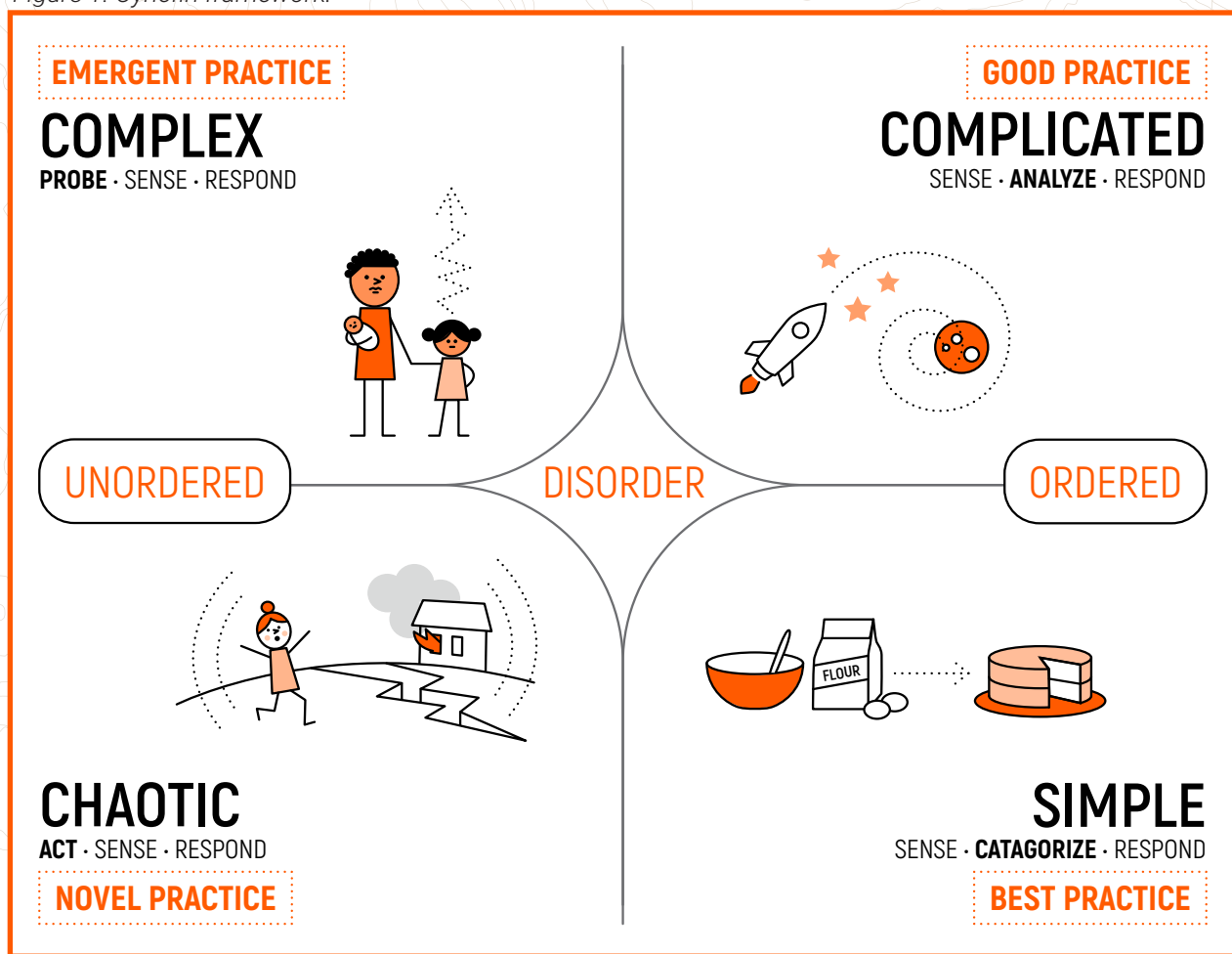
Adapted from Snowden and Boone (2007)

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What's a Public Sector Innovation Lab?

Over the last decade, public sector innovation labs (PSILs) have emerged around the world (see Fig. 2 below) as a response to growing pressures on governments to deliver higher quality, more cost-effective, more citizen-centred, digitally sophisticated, and more innovative responses to increasingly complex challenges.

PSILs take a variety of different forms, use different methodologies, and have different drivers for their work so that they can respond best to the specific context that they are working in. Most commonly they are developed by governments in order to address service, policy, engagement, and democratic challenges of an increasingly complex and systemic nature[7].

Seeking innovation in government is not new[8]. The New Public Management paradigm, which spread broadly in the 1980's and remains the dominant organising framework in many governments today, views efficiency, entrepreneurism, profit-seeking and competition-oriented management approaches as both drivers of, and the purpose for, innovation in government. What's new with the emergence of PSILs are the values and paradigms that underlie an evolving definition of "innovation" that now includes considerations like sustainability, collaboration, experimentation, and citizen-centrism, to name a few. What's also new are the increasing pressures on government to respond to a quickly changing and highly complex world, a world that couldn't be imagined when the current structures and systems of government were established. Through the use of design and social innovation frameworks and methods, the goals of improved citizen experience, democratic engagement, and finding promising solutions to complex systemic challenges are put front and centre in these rapidly emerging and proliferating public sector innovation labs.

Figure 2. 2018 Canadian Labs Landscape
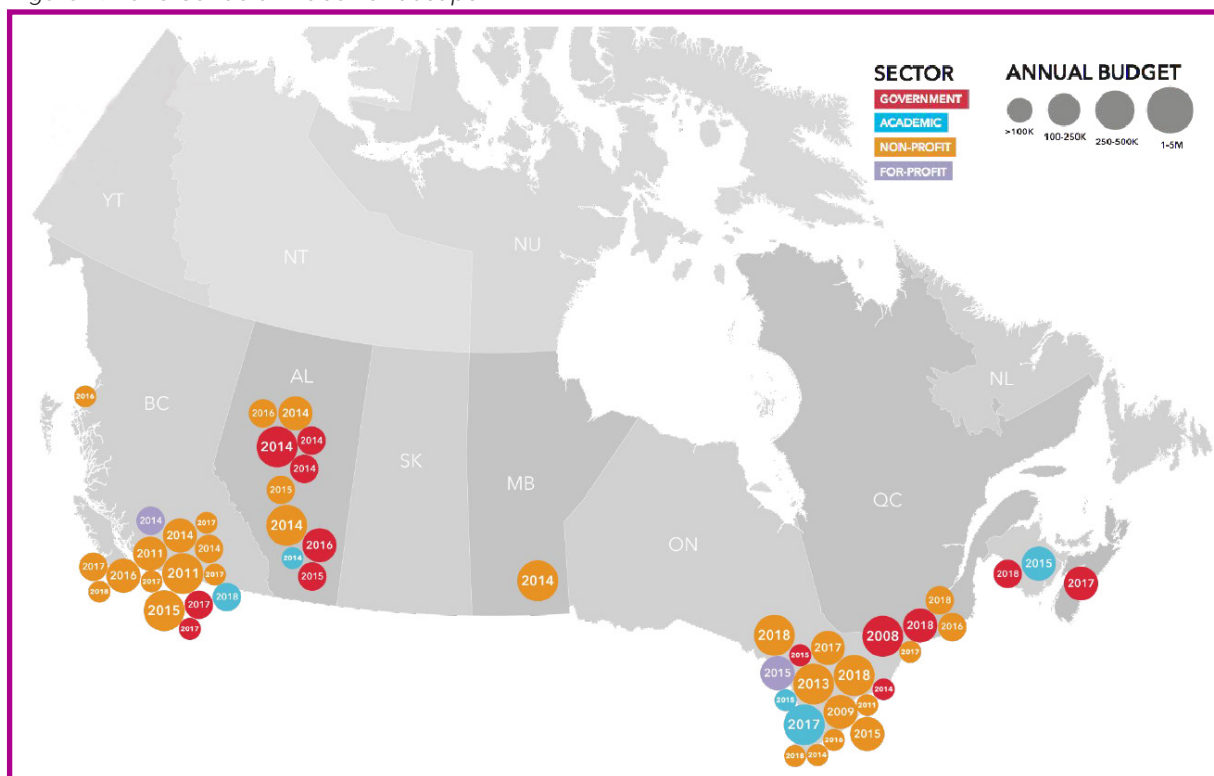
Source: Radius SFU

Lay of the land: what do we know about PSILs?

It is a time of rapid experimentation, iteration, learning, reflection, and research in this field, and each lab is highly contextual. This makes it challenging to succinctly describe and define a PSIL at this moment in history. That said, much has been learned and the practices are being more clearly articulated, refined, and codified making for a much more sophisticated set of tools, case studies, methodologies, and stories of impact to build on. Organisations like NESTA, the UK's innovation foundation, have been working to codify innovation practices in the public sector and to build the capacities of civil servants to use them. Canada's Social Innovation Generation did a decade's worth of experimentation and learning across sectors in order to codify and share social innovation methods and practices, and make progress on some of our most wicked challenges. The OECD's Observatory for Public Sector Innovation is tracking case studies of innovation in action on multiple issue areas all over the world. Many innovation labs have been sharing and learning from one another in order to improve our work. This is important so that we are building on each others' learning, not repeating the same mistakes, and getting to higher impact practice more quickly together.

Given that this is a rapidly emerging field, there are a few things that we can say about PSILs right now based on the research and observations of the Solutions Lab team, and research, reports, and stories coming from the broader field:

- They are rapidly growing in number, and are present on all inhabited continents and at all levels of government. In Canada, the Federal Government has an Impact and Innovation Unit in the Privy Council Office, the Provinces of British Columbia, Nova Scotia, and Alberta have innovation labs, and Toronto, Montreal, Calgary and several other Canadian cities have innovation labs.

- Most of the other public sector labs with similar ambitions to SLab have teams of ~8+ staff from multiple disciplines as well as budget for consultant support and for building and

testing prototypes, and they have significant leadership and engagement from senior staff and/or elected officials.

- They are attracting network attention, as evidenced by Bloomberg Philanthropies investing in civic innovation teams, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities starting a new innovation network, McConnell Foundation's focus on Future Cities, NESTA's investment in growing the public sector innovation system, and others.

- They work on different problem types: administrative; service; policy; engagement; and democracy[9].

- Different problem types and contexts call for different methods, which can include: design; social innovation; digital; behavioural; and others. They are also gaining expertise about when a lab is the right problem solving approach, and when other methods are a better fit.

- All labs have some basic requirements including[10]:
  - » Work on complex challenges
  - » Team members from multiple parts of the system and with diverse skills and experiences
  - » Strong container and boundary created to hold the lab work
  - » Robust process and experienced facilitation

There is a rich ecosystem of innovation labs outside the public sector as well, with Canada being a very active place for labs in non-profits, academic institutions, and foundations. Canadian innovation labs appear to be unique in the world with their strong focus on social innovation lab practices and values, and in particular are bringing a systems change, decolonisation, equity, community economic development, and sustainability ethos to innovation labs in Canada that doesn't exist as strongly in lab practices globally.

Based on the research from our Solutions Lab team, we are starting to see a subtle shift in the focus of the leading edge PSILs that can be described as follows, and that SLab is practicing as well.

SHIFT IN THE FOCUS OF LEADING EDGE PSILS	
SHIFTING FROM:	**TO INCLUDE WHERE WE HAVE BEEN AND ALSO...**
Expert team in innovation methods	Expert team in building capacities for innovation, and embedding knowledge, skills and tools
Innovation understood as creating public value for community being served	Considers sustainability, equity, reconciliation, and other values as well
Finding inventive prototypes on specific challenges	Implementing long-term, scaleable, systemic, embedded and high impact innovations
Design methods in toolkit	Expanded toolkit to include multidisciplinary methods (i.e. social innovation, collaborative leadership, transformative learning)
Evaluating creativity and invention, novelty, volume of projects and outputs	Evaluating scaling and embedding solutions, leadership, learning, outcomes, and others
Belief that creativity and disruption is what's needed to change government	Belief that culture change and building innovation infrastructure is what's needed to change government
Single lab focus	Movement building focus

Why a PSIL in the City of Vancouver?

Policy Story

In October 2014 Vancouver City Council approved the first Healthy City Strategy, and in July 2015 the first four-year action plan for 2015-2018 was approved. This is a highly integrated and intersectional plan that includes the essential ingredients for living full and healthy lives. The strategy includes a goal about collaborative leadership, acknowledging that leaders from the public, private, and civil sectors in Vancouver need to work in integrated and collaborative ways towards the vision of a healthy Vancouver for all. The four-year action plan tasks staff with developing a Staff Hub that brings together City of Vancouver staff to work on high priority complex challenges related to Healthy City for All, Greenest City, Engaged City, and the Economic Action Strategy. The Staff Hub was resourced with $200,000 (from the City's Innovation Fund) to cover staffing, consulting and expenses to test the concept over the 2015-2018 time frame. The result of this Staff Hub work was intended to be an increase in collaboration across departments to improve solutions to these integrated and complex challenges.

Work on this Staff Hub began in 2016 with some case study research into other similar structures both inside and influencing the public sector. We found a rapidly growing community of PSIL practitioners in governments around the world including Denmark, France, the UK, Mexico City, Australia, and others. With this case study research, some early method tests, and a name change, in January 2017 the first iteration of the City of Vancouver's Solutions Lab began.

Purpose Story

The purpose for the lab continues to grow and expand as it's co-created with those who are bringing the lab to life. The SLab 1.0 statement of purpose describes our hopes for the lab when we began:

The Solutions Lab is seeking breakthrough, transformative solutions to some of the city's most complex problems. It's a place where City staff, community members and stakeholders collaborate to deeply understand complex challenges from the points of view of the people most affected by them, and where we rapidly prototype and test innovative responses to see what we can learn through co-creation and

some risk taking. It's an exciting place where we dialogue and listen deeply, try new processes and collaboration tools, and learn and have fun together.

Since then we've evolved this statement of purpose to a clearer, stronger, and more ambitious theory of change, which includes this assessment of the context that we're working within:

Our city is facing increasing pressure to address convergent and complex challenges like reconciliation, affordability, the opioid epidemic, equity, climate change, sustainability, social isolation, falling trust in government, recruitment and retention of talented staff, and many others. The go-to structures and processes of local governments were set up for a very different reality, and for significantly different work and responsibilities, and if governments don't adapt we'll be left behind. We're being called, both as individual public servants and as an organisation, to experiment, learn, and scale new solutions in response to these pressures. We're being called to respond to the root causes of these systemic challenges, not just apply incremental quick fixes. The Solutions Lab is a response to this call.

You'll see in the pages that follow some profound paradoxes that are creating the contours of the SLab approach. We have big aspirations and limited resources. We need to move quickly and efficiently and also need to slow down, think systemically, and address root causes. We have a wide variety of desired outcomes that exist alongside a pressure to deliver short-term outputs to demonstrate the value of the SLab. We need to experiment and try new things, and have a very real accountability to deliver high quality and reliable services. We want to be a City of Reconciliation yet have highly colonial power and governance structures in our organisation. We need transformational change and yet most of the time incremental improvements are challenging enough.

Why Have We Written This Story Now?

The goal of this report is to share the story of the Solutions Lab so far, where we're heading next, and why. It's about learning out loud in order to clarify our own thinking, improve our practice, invite feedback and dialogue, and have more significant impact. It's about sharing the research, thought leadership, and practices that have most inspired the direction and choices that Vancouver's lab has taken so far. It is written for Vancouverites, both residents and City staff, curious about what the Solutions Lab has tried and learned, and what this might mean for finding some promising new practices for tackling our most complex problems. It is also written for other public sector and social innovation lab practitioners, with the hopes that our experiments in Vancouver can contribute to the learning, growth, and ultimately impact of our shared work and practice.

What you'll find in the following pages is:

🚶 The design brief for the first iteration of Vancouver's Solutions Lab, including the theory and frameworks that we used to inform this work;

🚶 A description of the activities from the SLab 1.0, with details from each of the four labs including the convening questions, team members involved, prototypes developed and tested, what outcomes resulted, and what participants said about their experiences;

🚶 Insights about what we learned through the evaluation of SLab 1.0; and

🚶 What's next - how all of this work and learning was shaped into the second iteration of the lab (which is just beginning at the time of writing this report) including the Theory of Change for SLab 2.0 and the areas of focus for the coming iteration.

For readers in Vancouver, we hope that this story can deepen your understanding of what the SLab has been working on, facilitate your curiousity to learn more or get involved, and challenge you to think about how this might influence your own practice to bring a stronger social innovation culture to our city. For readers in the social innovation and public sector lab communities, we hope that this story is a useful contribution to our emerging field, that it can help us to connect with each others' experiments, successes and challenges, and that you can gain a few insights relevant to your own work. We warmly welcome and invite any thoughts, reflections, feedback and critique you might offer in response to this story.

ADVENTURE #1 ON THE TRAILS: SOLUTIONS LAB 1.0

SLab 1.0 Design Brief

Solutions Lab 1.0 began in January 2017 and went until ~June 2018, with one lab still continuing at the time of writing this report. Our design brief was collaboratively developed by the SLab 1.0 Steering Committee and senior management lead, was informed by case study research into other PSILs, and included the following elements.

Guiding questions:

- How might we figure out what the most important challenges to work on might be?
- How might we discover the best core methods to use?
- How might we integrate personal and systems transformation into this work?
- What does success and significant impact look like, and how might we measure it?
- What might the operating model look like to best support the work?
- How might we resource the lab on an ongoing basis?

Design guidelines:

- Focus our work on complex challenges.
- Choose challenges that: are on the centre of a City staff persons' desk; don't have a predetermined solution already in mind; and where there is a willingness from the staff lead(s) to work differently.
- Lab experience should be 50% about finding breakthrough solutions, and 50% about professional development.
- Lab teams should include people from multiple City departments, and also community partners working on the lab challenge.
- Core methodological frameworks will be Theory U and human centred design.

- Continuous integration of relevant research and learning from other innovation labs.
- Lab sessions will have a different aesthetic experience from day-to-day work. They will be off-site in places that inform and inspire, will be longer than usual meetings to create a retreat and reflect experience (½ day minimum), and will be well hosted.
- Labs will be action-oriented, and a "risk-taking as learning" ethos will infuse the process.
- There will be an intentional systems and personal transformation element to the work.
- Seek opportunities for shorter process and professional development experiments, where possible.
- We will use developmental evaluation[10] to understand what is happening throughout the process, learn as we go, and to seek promising practices in future iterations of the Solutions Lab.

Delivery model:

- One Solutions Lab Manager.
- A Steering Committee with keen and committed staff from multiple departments, many of whom were also involved on a lab team.
- Reporting to the Deputy City Manager.
- Facilitation consultants for each lab with expertise in social innovation and/or design methods to bring necessary capacity and also to bring diverse approaches to the process design and delivery.
- Start-up funding of $200,000 for first iteration from City's Innovation Fund, allocated through the Healthy City Action Plan funding approval from Council in 2015, and covering staffing and consulting fees as well as lab expenses.

Theory and frameworks informing the work:

Here are the primary theories and frameworks that were used to shape the approach of SLab 1.0. These frameworks were used to inform the process, method, and tool choices used in session for each of the labs, as well as building understanding of the impact and possibility of the SLab as a whole. Each has a rich literature and set of stories and experiences connected to it, so we've provided a link to a resource that aims to describe each one concisely. Please do go deeper if you're interested!

- **Social innovation**, many sources. Used as a framework for understanding and designing for systems change.

- **Theory U**, Otto Scharmer. Used as a framework (see Figure 3 below) for learning and change, as well as a process archetype for the lab sessions.

- **Design**, various sources. Used resources from design leadership, design thinking, service design, permaculture, and others. These were used to inform the process archetype, as well as the approaches to ethnographic research, creativity and prototyping.

- **Adaptive cycle**, Buzz Holling and Lance Gunderson. Used as a theory of change framework to inform how systems cycle and change over time, and the role that the lab might play in this change.

- **Systems thinking**, Donella Meadows (and others). Used as a theory of change framework, as well as a resource for mapping, understanding, and finding patterns and leverage points in complex systems.

- **Cynefin framework**, Dave Snowdon and Mary Boone. Used to understand qualities of different types of problems (simple, complicated, complex, chaotic), and to discern what types of challenges the lab should focus on. (Figure 1, p. iv).

- **Integral theory**, Ken Wilber. Used as a thinking tool to help ensure that the lab as a whole, as well as specific lab challenges, were attended to each of the four quadrants in their work (the me you can see, the me you can't see, the we you can see, the we you can't see)

- **Developmental evaluation**, Michael Quinn Patton and Mark Cabaj. Used as a way of making sense of the impacts of the lab using the cycle of asking "what, so what, now what"in order to enable learning and adapting as we went. (Figure 4, p. 22)

Figure 3. Theory U Framework used for structuring the lab process.
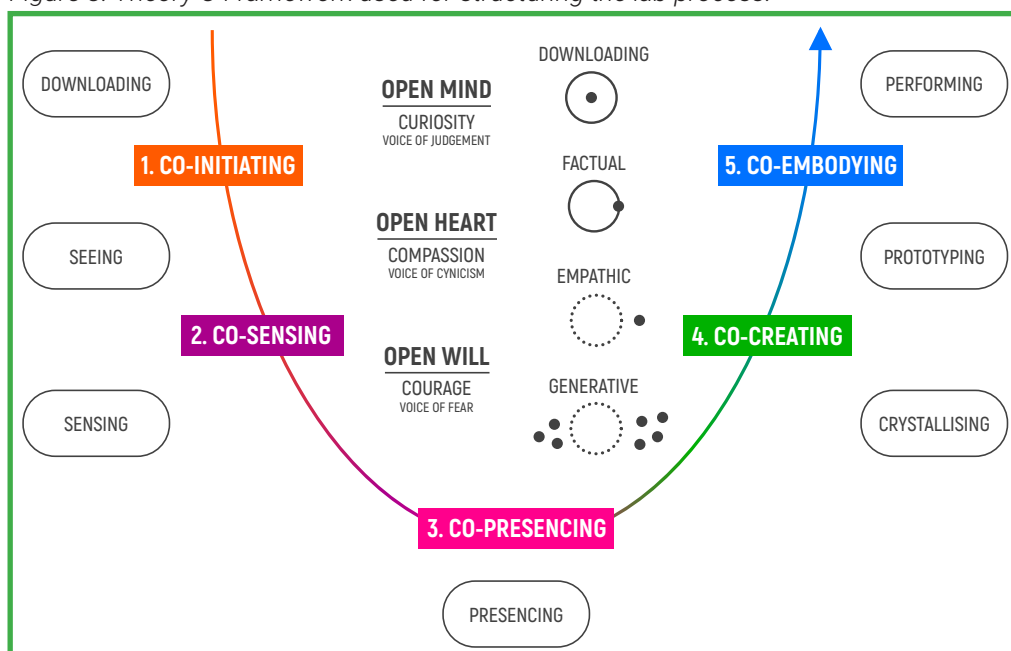
Otto Scharmer, Theory U[12]

Tales from the trail: what we did

The first six months were spent preparing the ground for the lab sessions to begin. A steering committee of City staff was established, along with the design brief. Further research into the practices, methods, forms, and challenges that other innovation labs were using was undertaken, and a process design archetype was developed using Theory U and design as the anchor methods. Research into the ecosystem of potential organisations and people that could support the labs as contracted process designers and facilitators was done. Much discussion was had with different City staff to discover potential lab challenges. The challenge needed to be complex and sitting in the centre of their desks, and they needed to be able to spend focused and "different" time to work on the challenge in the coming year and an openness to trying something new. Many discussions were had to determine the right timing, fit, team, and process for developing and confirming the right lab question, and a great deal was learned about how to shape this intake process.

Once a staff lead and question was confirmed, a design brief was developed, a multi-stakeholder lab team was invited in to join the process, the consultant support was contracted, and the lab sessions began. Each lab followed its own timing and structure, but we tried to be consistent across them all with the process design archetype so that we could learn across the different labs. (See figure 3). Each question, team, and experience was unique, nuanced, productive, and interesting in its own way, and there were also themes that emerged from the evaluation across these first four labs.

What follows is a brief description of each of the four SLab 1.0 labs.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EACH OF THE FOUR SLAB 1.0 LABS			
LAB	**CONVENING QUESTION**	**LAB LEADS**	**STATUS**
Customer Service in Engineering	How might we improve customer experiences in Engineering Services?	Cheryl Nelms, CoV Engineering Jimmy Zammar, CoV Engineering	June - December 2017. Lab finished after 2+ iterations + user testing on 2 prototypes, and a senior management briefing to evaluate results.
Public Engagement	How might we be more consistent, collaborative, and values-aligned in our public engagement work at the City?	Amanda Gibbs, CoV Public Engagement	June 2017 - April 2018. Lab finished after 2 iterations + user-testing on 2 prototypes.
Public Space + Public Art	How might we build a culture of collaboration between the City and community partners to unlock further potential for creative and engaged city-building through our public spaces?	Margaret Wittgens, CoV Engineering Jenniffer Sheel, CoV Engineering Eric Fredericksen, CoV Cultural Services Thomas Daley, CoV Planning	June 2017 - March 2018 Lab finished after 3 prototype concepts were developed.
Community Connections + Resilience in Renfrew Collingwood	How might we increase resilience, connectedness, and belonging in a neighbourhood with growing diversity and increasing densification?	Keltie Craig, CoV Social Policy Katia Tynan, CoV Resilient City January Wolodarsky, Collingwood Neighbourhood House	June 2017 - ongoing Lab user-tested 3 prototypes; added a 4th prototype that is about building ongoing innovation infrastructure in the neighbourhood, currently seeking funding. Will close current version of lab in Nov. 2018.

ENGINEERING CUSTOMER SERVICE LAB

Convening question:

How might we improve customer experiences in Engineering Services?

Because this is such a big question, the lab leads decided to begin by focusing on customer service challenges that touch the Engineering customer service desk, and then further narrowed to consider the water and sewer permitting process in Engineering and major street disruptions caused by infrastructure renewal. These refined questions are captured as the "how might we…" questions in the lab summary section on the next page.

Design sprint team:

Engineering: Cheryl Nelms, Karima Mulji, Jens Skov, Jimmy Zammar, Kurt Stavrou, Jim Burnett, Mark Reilly, Bob Racine, Ann Cooper, Kevin Cavell, Dawn Sleightholm, Lindsay Kelly, Daniel Roberge, Rob MacDonald, Ozzie Lepore, Mark Schwark, Jen Sheel.
Other City Departments: Lihwen Hsu, Sam Levy, Amanda McCuaig, Michelle Au, Tony Syskakis, Norman Li, Jeannie Dixon, Suzan Pretti, Tom Hsieh, Richard Traer, Tobin Postma.
Community: Gwendal Castellan.
Facilitation: Sarah Dickinson and Erin Cooper (THNK), Tamsin Smith and Simon Hardy (Harmonesse).

Prototyping team:

Engineering: Jim Burnett, Jimmy Zammar, Lidija Jankovic, Lidia McLeod, Andrea Newman, Ann Cooper.
Other City Departments: Jeannie Dixon, Tom Hsieh, Sam Levy, Tadhg Healy, Amanda McCuaig.
Facilitation: Lizzie Brotherston.

Workshop dates and purposes:

CO-INITIATING | JUNE 6, '17
-Call to purpose + team building
-Understanding service design

CO-EMBODYING | JAN. - MARCH '18
-Brief of learning and results shared with Engineering senior management

CO-SENSING | JUNE 7-8, '17
-Mindsets for co-sensing
-Current state service journey mapping
-Learning journey ethnographic field research
-Insight collection and analysis
-Set strategic direction

CO-CREATING | SEPT. - DEC. '17 (8 SESSIONS)
-Further developed, user-tested, and refined 3 prioritised prototypes

CO-PRESENCING + CO-CREATING | JUNE 12-13, '17
-Reframe How Might We questions
-Best practice research and inspiration
-Idea generation + prioritisation
-Build first prototype
-Pitch + feedback + prioritisation

Engineering Customer Service Lab Summary:

|	PROTOTYPE		
	MINDSET SHIFT	**STATUS PORTAL**	**DECISION TREE**
How might we...	...shift Engineering management mindsets from a risk- and complication focus to a progressive customer-focused experience?	...provide a single point of reference for contractors and staff to access real time status and supporting information to plan their projects?	...empower inexperienced contractors with a timely, user-friendly permit application journey?
Prototype concept	A self-service permit process for approved engineering firms for a portion of the water + sewer permitting process to expedite the process, and to free up staff time to work on the more complicated projects.	An aligned on-line portal where all information about a project is available to staff and project stakeholders. Includes notification about where a project is at in the approval stages, and time estimates for moving through the process.	An on-line, self-guided, step-by-step information tree so that inexperienced contractors can easily find information about the basics of the Engineering water and sewer permitting process.
User testing	1. A group of 8 designers and builders provided feedback on all three prototypes in a shared workshop. 2. As the prototypes iterated, additional 1-1 user testing was done to develop further.		
Key insights from prototyping	Designers and project managers don't want to take on this responsibility, they want the City to provide this service. Their pain points are at different places in the process, not with the portion of water and sewer permitting that Engineering is responsible for. Mindset shift needs to be something else - working across the silos of the City to provide an integrated customer experience is more important. Also want more transparency about processes and available information and data.	This idea doesn't make sense for only a small piece of the overall building permitting process that Engineering is responsible for, and Engineering's part of the process actually works pretty well. The users' experience of the whole building permit process, including all of the departments involved, needs to be considered for this prototype concept to be most useful.	This is a relatively simple "just do it" idea, the digital infrastructure already exists at the CoV. The information needs to be collected and tested with users to make sure it's relevant for them, and then this should be integrated into the Status Portal idea.
Where we got to	• Generated ~40 customer service experience project and prototyping opportunities resulting from this work, both for the specific water and sewer permitting process as well as for customer service more generally, some simple and some complex. • Mindset shift prototype resulted in testing an integration and streamlining process for new project intakes involving 3 key City departments to work through complicated projects and develop a shared strategy early in the project. Early results showing time and cost savings for City and users. • Deep learning and insights from prototyping team about the value of prototyping, particularly user-testing.		

What the Engineering Customer Service Lab participants had to say:

"I was surprised how willing customers/citizens were to participate and I was struck by how large the divide can be between the subject matter experts in the City and the customers. I'm familiar with the concept of Gemba Walks to examine a process, but this brought it to another level, putting yourself in the shoes of the actual citizen or customer. Seeing a process through both an internal and external lens provides much greater clarity." --City Staff Person

Action shots:
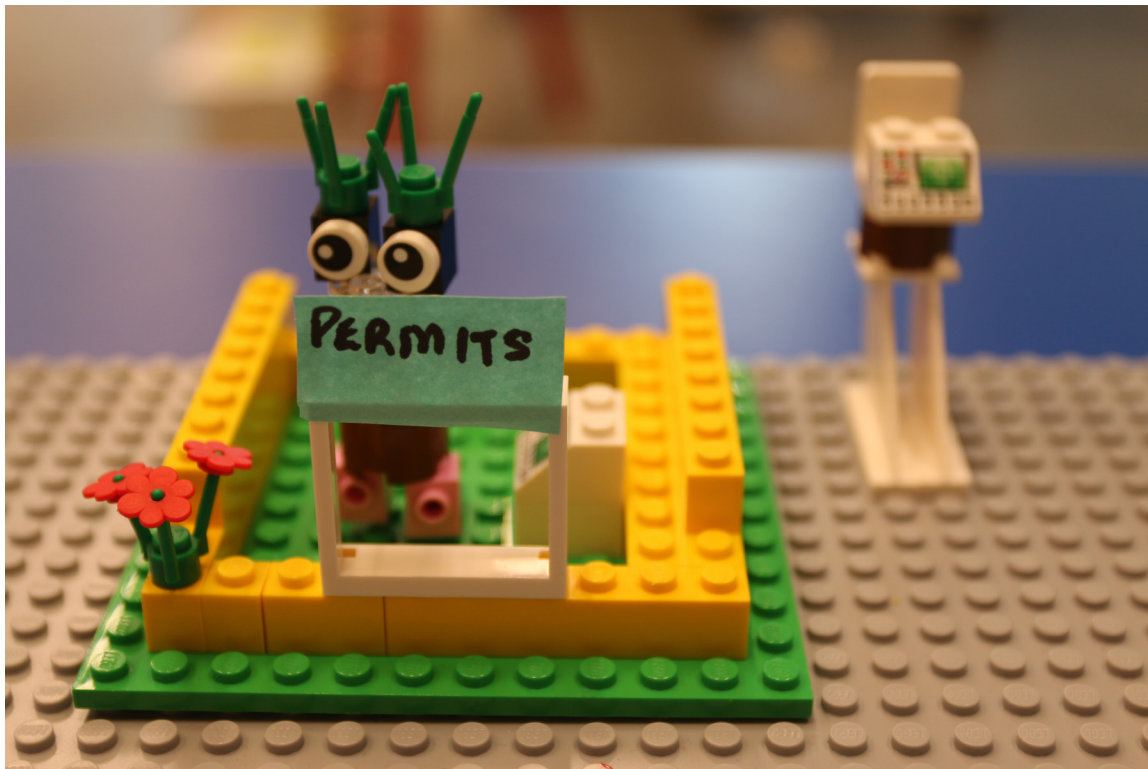
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT LAB

Convening question:

How might we be more consistent, collaborative, and values-aligned in our public engagement work at the City?

Lab team:

CoV staff: Amanda Gibbs, Jason Hsieh, Cheryn Wong, Peter Marriott, Dale Bracewell, Metha Brown, Amanda Mitchell, Tobin Postma, Emory Davidge, Rachel Magnussen, Lihwen Hsu, Megan Herod, Spencer Lindsay, Catherine Neill, Baldwin Wong, Andrew Pask, Kaye Krishna, Rena Kendall-Craden.

Community partners: Lyndsay Poaps, Olive Dempsey, Janet Webber, Sue Hallatt, Neal Lamontagne, Kevin Huang, Angela Ho, Mark Gifford.

Facilitation: Stacy Barter (Shift Collaborative), Sara Hay (Slow + Steady Design).

Workshop dates and purposes:

CO-INITIATING | JUNE 21 '17
-Purpose + building team
-Integral mapping
-Wicked questions

CO-SENSING | JULY 25-26, '17
-Systems mapping
-Learning journey ethnographic field research
-Generating creative questions

CO-CREATING | JANUARY-APRIL 2018
-Further developed, user-tested, and refined 2 prioritised prototypes

CO-PRESENCING + CO-CREATING | NOV. 7-9 '17
-Pattern identification and fractal mapping
-Reframing prioritised problems
-Idea generation and solution seeking
-Concept and prototype development
-Pitch + feedback + prioritisation

Public Engagement Lab Summary:

	PROTOTYPE	
	MEASURING WHAT MATTERS	**NEIGHBOURHOOD- AND VALUES-BASED ENGAGEMENT**
How might we...	...create a culture of learning from mistakes for City staff to foster a more equitable and engaged city?	...begin potentially polarising engagement processes for values-diverse neighbourhood and city-wide groups to go beyond polarising positions and into understanding the different values in place and how those might come together/converge through scenarios for possible futures?
Prototype concept	A reimagined understanding of what "successful engagement" means including learning, independent evaluation, accountability to public, more robust outcome measures, and an aim to always do better.	A neighbourhood-based dialogue between the Kiwassa Neighbourhood House and City. Kiwassa would host a new City information bulletin board that was actively updated and responsive to neighbourhood questions. The City would host a "Kiwassa month" on City staff internal information channels.
User testing	The City has an "engaged bureaucrats" group that meets every 1-2 months to share practices and learn from one another, and this group provided feedback at two different workshops on two iterations of the prototype. The first prototype collected feedback on what engagement is needed at this time given the issues at stake in the city, and how people experienced the gap between what's needed and what is happening. The second prototype tested ideas about a new evaluation framework and metrics, and the potential for a community of practice to build learning together.	The City and Kiwassa set up a bulletin board at Kiwassa with up to date information about several city-wide and neighbourhood-specific issues. Neighbours were encouraged to interact with the content and put up questions for City staff to respond to.
Key insights from proto-typing	There is a large community of City staff who are very interested in, and committed to, improving their engagement work, practice and impact.	It is not easy to figure out: how best to design a simple, engaging installation in a community, and encourage people to interact with it? What information is going to be most relevant to neighbours, and in what form (design, language, timeliness, etc.)? How can neighbourhood house staff and City staff keep this active, enlivened, interesting, topical, and engaging within existing job and time constraints?
Where we got to by July 2018	Tested learning circles and measurement and reporting framework prototypes with Engaged Bureaucrats group. Learning circles prototype needed more clarity about what it was about. Not strong support for measurement and reporting framework prototype (too much additional work) so it needs another iteration. Need to do more work on refining both prototypes to test their usefulness for, and buy-in from, users.	This prototype was quite similar to two others developed in the Public Space + Public Art Lab and the Community Connections + Resilience Lab. The common idea is about creating better two-way connections and collaboration between the City and neighbourhoods, particularly neighbourhoods that aren't as engaged in City-led processes. Staff from Public Engagement, Engineering, Public Art, and Resilience have begun a conversation of a possible shared program or project to respond to this idea.

What the Public Engagement Lab participants had to say:

"Getting out of comfort zones is where magic happens. The prototype installation was amazing. Meeting up, talking to staff, getting out of our usual places, was a great feeling." --Facilitator

"[The greatest impact has been] being able to have the legitimizing authority of Engagement naming that "the City" is at the outset of a new learning cycle about naming and addressing the way racism/ colonialism impact our current relationships/ways of working with publics." --City Staff Person

Action shots:

PUBLIC SPACE + PUBLIC ART LAB

Convening question:

How might we build a culture of collaboration between the City and community partners to unlock further potential for creative and engaged city-building through our public spaces?

Lab Team:

CoV staff: Jennifer Sheel, Margaret Wittgens, Eric Fredericksen, Thomas Daley, Paul Kruger, Marie Lopes, Thor Kuhlmann, Katherine Howard, David Lewis, William Dunn, Amanda Mitchell, David Lewis, Karen Henry.

Community partners: Barbara Fairbrother, Arthur Macapagal, Tara Gloster, Cameron Cartière, Laura Macdonald, Shiloh Sukkau, Kim Spencer-Nairn, Janet Moore, Paola Qualizza, Mitchell Reardon, Naomi Reichstein, Kamala Todd, Jen Weih.

Facilitation: Olive Dempsey (consultant), Sue Biely (Nudge Consulting).

Workshop dates and purposes:

CO-INITIATING | JUNE 27 '17
-Purpose + building team
-Story building and telling

CO-SENSING | AUGUST 14,15 '17
-Systems mapping
-Learning journey ethnographic field research
-Generating creative questions

CO-PRESENCING + CO-CREATING
JANUARY 29, FEBRUARY 6, AND FEBRUARY 14, '18
-Crystallising creative questions
-Ideation + prioritisation
-Prototype concept development, sharing, and refinement

Public Space and Public Art Lab Summary:

	PROTOTYPE		
	DISMANTLING AND DECOLONISING THE "WE"	POWER AND RISK	HARED OWNERSHIP
How might we...	How does dismantling, opening and constantly iterating the "we" happen and how does that impact City support and services?	...understand influence and power to advance impactful public space projects while managing risk?	...create/enhance shared ownership of city public spaces and processes that govern their use?
Prototype concept	Say yes, give a 'Golden Ticket'. Work with an emerging/fragile 'group' that does not traditionally have access to City support and services through a process of internal education, communication, outreach and engagement, deep listening, and hanging out. Relationship building, joint and collaborative problem-solving, facilitate access, support, agency, belonging. Coast Salish Nations to be included, visible, of central importance. CoV to learn through this process of making the 'yes' happen to see what this might mean for our public space and public art work.	Use a Solutions Lab concept to connect 'influencers' and 'experiencers' in progressing a creative city action plan and celebration. Understand 'influence' and 'power', real or perceived, and know that loud voices don't mean most innovative ideas. Decentralise authority or power, take the time to do this and establish guidelines. Embrace risk as positive, and as a possible path for higher rewards.	Have an ambassador type individual in community and an equal in the CoV. Values about capacity building and knowledge exchange.
User testing	Didn't proceed to user testing. Public space + public art lab leads are participating in the potential shared program emerging from three of the Solutions Labs, focused on improved two-way dialogue between the CoV and neighbourhoods.		
Key insights from user feedback			
Where we got to by July 2018			

What participants had to say:

"We talked in my group a great deal about education, both within the [City of Vancouver] and within the city at large, towards a shifting set of expectations about what a public art work is, and how it comes about and the importance of flexibility in that regard. For that to be realised, lab type experiences could be beneficial for a much larger cross section of City workers whose jobs could be touched by new types of public art projects." --Citizen/Partner Organisation

Public Space and Public Art Lab Action Shots:
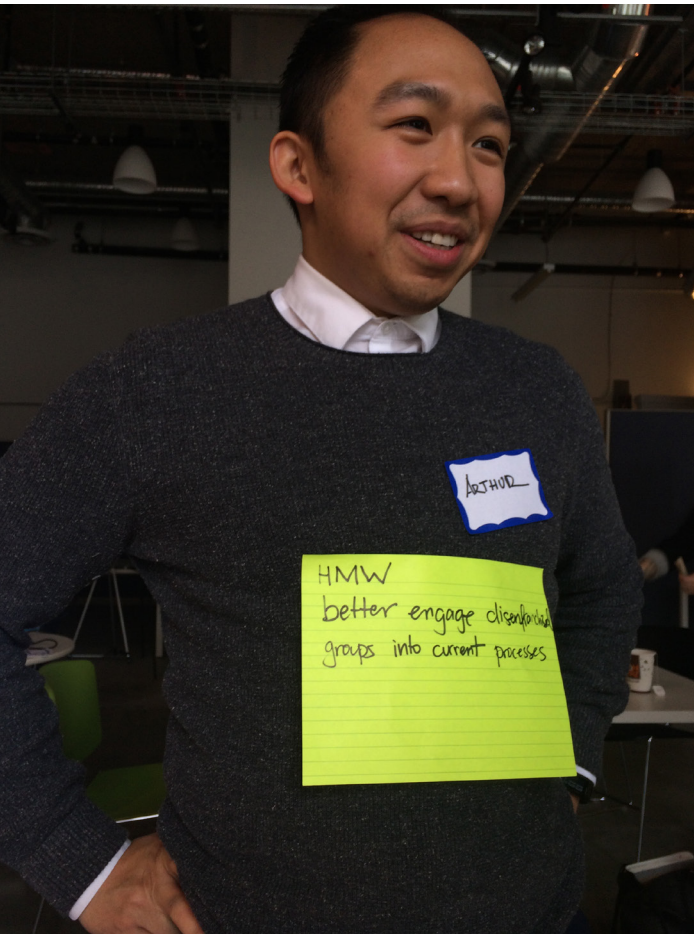
COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS + RESILIENCE LAB

Convening question:

How might we increase resilience, connectedness, and belonging in a neighbourhood with growing diversity and increasing densification?
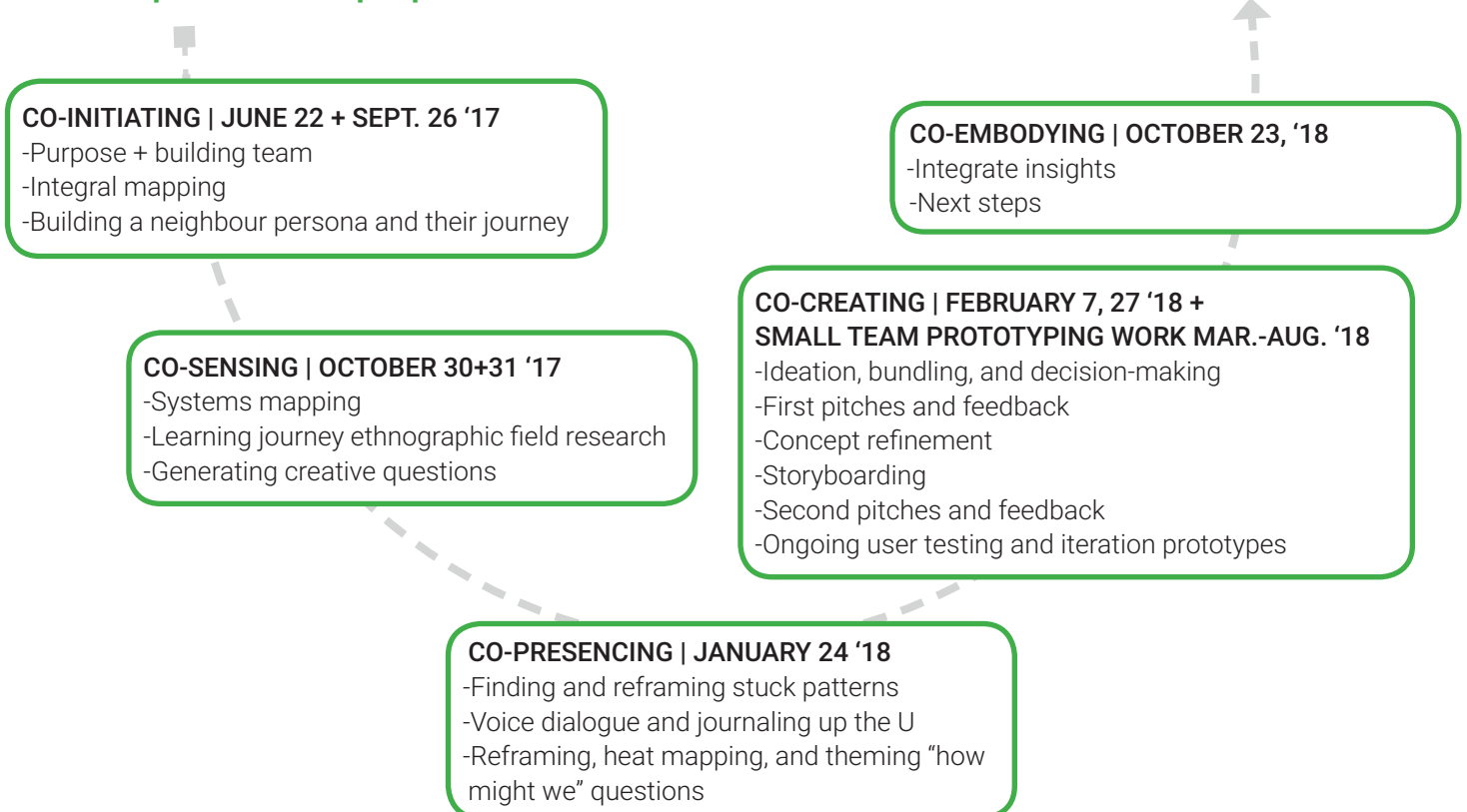
Lab team:

Community partners: Elise Barber, Charlotte Jackson, Kyle Nelson, Angela Evans, Partap Sahota, Andrea Berneckas, Kim Franco, January Wolodarsky, Sheri Park, Marisol Peterson, Bea Miller, Suzanne Liddle, Crecien Bencio, Naomi Schatz, Jennifer Grey-Grant, Carmen Rosen, Mik Turje, Yoko Tomita, Jas Parmar, Lucinda Yeung, Donna Clarke, Dorothy, Michael Hajduk.

CoV + VPL staff: Heidi Schiller, Marian Gardner, Jason Hsieh, Katia Tynan, Keltie Craig, Wendy Mendes, Eric Kowalski, James O'Neill, Carly Benson, Fran Heng, Jan Fu.

Facilitation: Lisa Gibson (Collingwood Neighbourhood House), Bea Miller.

Workshop dates and purposes:

CO-INITIATING | JUNE 22 + SEPT. 26 '17
-Purpose + building team
-Integral mapping
-Building a neighbour persona and their journey

CO-SENSING | OCTOBER 30+31 '17
-Systems mapping
-Learning journey ethnographic field research
-Generating creative questions

CO-PRESENCING | JANUARY 24 '18
-Finding and reframing stuck patterns
-Voice dialogue and journaling up the U
-Reframing, heat mapping, and theming "how might we" questions

**CO-CREATING | FEBRUARY 7, 27 '18 +
SMALL TEAM PROTOTYPING WORK MAR.-AUG. '18**
-Ideation, bundling, and decision-making
-First pitches and feedback
-Concept refinement
-Storyboarding
-Second pitches and feedback
-Ongoing user testing and iteration prototypes

CO-EMBODYING | OCTOBER 23, '18
-Integrate insights
-Next steps

Community Connections + Resilience Lab Summary:

	PROTOTYPE			
	COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR	**COMMUNITY SKILL SHARE NETWORK**	**SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTION**	**INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE**
How might we...	...decentralise decision-making in planning processes?	...identify and create leadership opportunities for neighbours so they can help other neighbours in order to increase resiliency and connection?	...require community space in all new development?	
Prototype concept	Embed a community planner from the City of Vancouver into the neighbourhood to be more responsive to, and understanding of, what's going on in the neighbourhood. Democratises knowledge and supports grassroots input.	Create a network of individuals with skills, experience, and/or knowledge willing to share their expertise with others. Connect with existing programs and networks to test interest in idea.	Prototype by inviting the developer, city, and neighbourhood organisations into a dialogue together prior to a concept being developed for a new site to see if people will have an open, candid, and co-creative dialogue with one another. If there is traction, there is an opportunity to connect this idea in the Social Infrastructure Plan under development at the City.	
User testing	Tested receptivity of residents to the concept at the Collingwood Days festival, and with several groups who access Collingwood Neighbourhood House.	Brought idea to Resident Animator in a multi-unit rental building for feedback, testing 2 different models (1 on 1 skill share; group format)	Developer did not respond to invitation. Prototype team didn't pursue idea from here.	Though prototype iteration and reflecting on what happens after the lab, a fourth prototype about building innovation infrastructure was developed. It intends to continue to build the capacities of neighbourhood organisations to use social innovation and design methods to respond to connections + resilience challenges in the neighbourhood.

Community Connections + Resilience Lab Summary (Cont'd):

	PROTOTYPE			
	COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR	**COMMUNITY SKILL SHARE NETWORK**	**SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE SOLUTION**	**INNOVATION INFRASTRUCTURE**
Key insights from user feedback	There was positive feedback about the prototype. Rather than get feedback about the prototype, the lab members played the role of community ambassadors. There was a hunger for more in-person communication between the city and neighbourhood. Lots of ideas were generated but there was the realization that the scope of a community ambassador would need to be clearly defined as the ideas shared included everything from more gardens to technology hubs to changes in development policy. Going out into the community, particularly to key community events was a very effective way of connecting with a diverse audience.	Consider "FOMO" (fear of missing out) – don't run multiple sessions concurrently, but rather set it up as a series. Choose an ongoing day/time, to create predictability and consistency. Start with just one, but consider branding from the outset: to create expectations that there will be more. There is less comfort in hosting these in private spaces than in shared community amenity spaces.		User testing with the rest of the lab's prototyping team and a grants manager from the Vancouver Foundation provided useful feedback.
Where we got to by July 2018	One CoV lab lead is participating in the conversation about a shared program to improve two-way dialogue between the City and neighbourhoods. The ideas continue to be embedded in the ongoing community development work of Collingwood Neighbourhood House. The need for a liaison between the City and neighbourhoods is being explored through the community health centre that is being developed for the neighbourhood. New versions of the prototype will be developed and tested at festivals in the community in the fall of 2018, including the Moon Festival.	Idea of "Skill Share" is one that our Hey Neighbour Resident Animator is interested in testing, so this will be explored as part of that existing program in the fall/winter.		A letter of intent for this idea has been submitted to the Vancouver Foundation from the Collingwood Neighbourhood House using this HMW question: ...embed social innovation infrastructure into the heart of the Renfrew Collingwood neighbourhood to support more responsiveness to the social isolation and resiliency that neighbours and community organizations experience? This prototype may also find legs through a new multistakeholder community health centre that is planned for the neighbourhood in the next several months.

What the Community Connections + Resilience Lab participants had to say:

"I'm so fortunate to be able to meet and know some incredible community leaders. All who have the area's need and wants as a common goal." --Partner Organisation

Action shots:

# SITTING AROUND THE CAMPFIRE: EVALUATION OF SLAB 1.0

Developmental Evaluation: Learning As We Go

Beginning in the early stages of SLab 1.0, we used developmental evaluation (DE) to learn from and adapt our work as we went. DE is a field of evaluation meant to assist social innovators create - or radically adapt - a program based on trial and error[13]. DE is different from other types of evaluations. Summative evaluations help judge the value of a program and formative evaluations assist in the improvement of a program, DE evaluates what the next steps are in the creation of an emerging program. DE asks questions such as: What is developing? What are the options for the next iteration of the program[14]?

In SLab 1.0, DE was used to evaluate processes on two different scales: 1) within and between each of the four labs; and 2) the Solutions Lab process as a whole. While many key learnings arose, a major emergence was around how to measure the impacts of SLab, and to clarify what impacts and outcomes the SLab was aiming to achieve as there were many different views about this. At the end of summer 2017, after initiating the DE framework for SLab, it was suggested to take stock of what we had learned and develop a concrete evaluation framework to measure the impact of the SLab in terms of breakthroughs, transformations and relationships.

Much of the DE work was done by those at arms length to the lab to provide additional perspective and insight. Ongoing DE coaching, and the design, facilitation, and analysis of results from the 1.0 evaluation workshop were provided by Mark Cabaj with Here2There Consulting. Maggie Low and Lily Raphael, the Healthy + Greenest City Scholars working during the summers of 2017 and 2018 collected and analysed evaluation data.

Figure 4. Developmental Evaluation Iteration Process
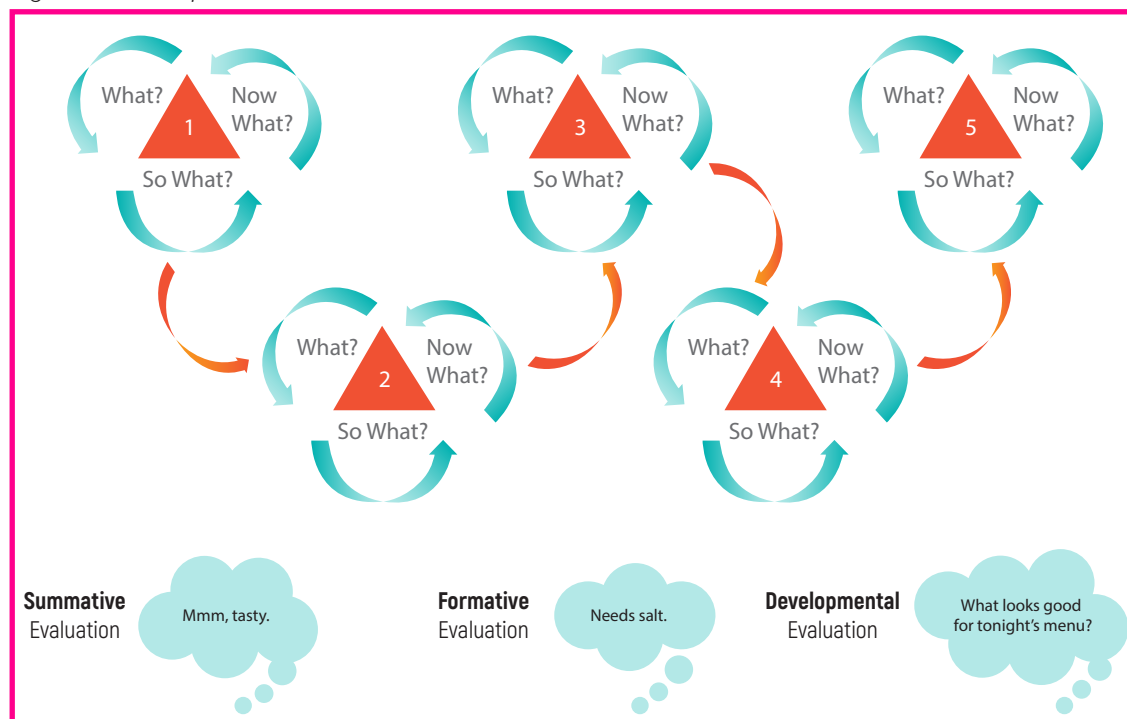
Source: Adapted from Patton, 2011

Evaluation Process & Findings

Building on this initial learning from the DE framework, we conducted an evaluation of the SLab 1.0, which concluded in Spring 2018 as most of the first 4 labs were coming to a close, and it was clear that the time to iterate the SLab had come. Our 1.0 evaluation consisted of survey responses from 28 participants across the 4 labs, including City staff, partner organisations, citizens, and facilitators. Additionally, we interviewed 7 of the lab team leads. The evaluation invited SLab participants and leaders to reflect on the major learnings and insights, significant changes in their work or personal development owing to their participation in the Lab, and things they would do differently to help us plan for future iterations of the lab.

Following the surveys and interviews, in April 2018 we held a workshop to share the findings from the evaluation and engage in deeper conversations about where we have been in SLab 1.0, and where we are going in SLab 2.0.

SLAB 1.0 BY THE NUMBERS

- 110 lab participants (63 CoV staff, 47 community partners)
- 21 different CoV departments/work groups + Vancouver Public Library + Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
- 26 different community partner organisations
- 37 learning journeys to meet with different people out and about in the city
- 12 initial prototypes developed and 9 tested with users
- 4 labs and ~34 workshops convened.

We have used the "so what?" stage of developmental evaluation to frame our analysis and discussion of the evaluation. It includes 1) a thematic analysis based primarily on survey responses and some in-depth interviews; and 2) a summary of the post-1.0 workshop that helped to further shape the direction of 2.0.

Survey participants were asked to reflect on the following broad questions related to their experience participating in a lab:
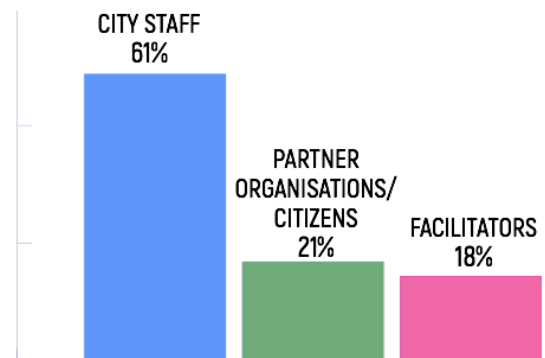
- Most significant learnings
- Most significant changes that participants are making in their work because of their participation in the lab
- Greatest impact of having participated in the lab
- What should we keep in mind for the 2.0 iteration of SLab?

SO WHAT?: SURVEY ANALYSIS

Survey Participants by Lab
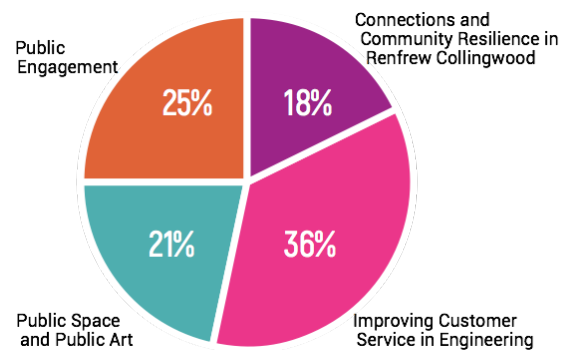
Survey Participants by Role

Survey responses revealed a diverse range of learnings, significant changes, and impacts as a result of the lab experience. The responses revealed the four major themes below which will be explained in detail over the next pages.

1. Shifting perspectives and building shared context on an issue
2. Focusing on users, customers and stakeholders
3. Creating focused time and processes for deeper thinking and work, and for building relationships
4. Learning and applying different and robust methods

Significant Learnings

Using different processes like systems mapping and learning journeys helped some respondents to take a step back and think about their work and the problems they're addressing in a different way. Some respondents specifically named the Theory U process and the ability to connect and discuss with others as helpful ways to understand the "bigger picture" behind a complex problem. The lab process also helped bring to the surface difficult topics such as naming and confronting power dynamics, inequality and colonialism and the ways in which they show up, both in City-led processes and lab environments themselves. Naming power in relation to some lab questions was helpful in revealing and developing shared values surrounding these issues.

While the siloed nature of the City is commonly recognised, the result of bringing together different departments in a lab environment shed light for some participants on a willingness amongst City staff to improve processes and approaches to complex policy and service design problems.

"City staff have a hard time innovating with city staff hats on." -Partner Organisation

"There are people at the city genuinely invested in tackling complex issues in order to improve the customer experience. This may appear obvious to those who have been involved in these types of initiatives before, but it was really refreshing to see that the City is investing in these types of initiatives. It's easy to appreciate that a system is flawed when you work in it every day, but it reinforces that the City as an organization has values that align with my own when I see the City investing in improving its processes to better serve the public."--City Staff Person

"There is a will on behalf of the city to radically transform the delivery and focus of public art programs. [This] opens up ways of thinking and the sense of what might be possible in collaboration with the city." --Citizen

Significant Changes

Many respondents stated that they approach their work differently as a result of participating in SLab. Some indicated working to understand a problem from multiple perspectives, especially those of end-users and individuals most affected by the problem. Others are taking the time to understand a problem more deeply before coming up with an immediate solution. There are also individuals looking at their work through a different lens, applying intersectionality and reconciliation, and taking larger risks in naming when power and privilege shows up in certain contexts.

"What we thought we knew has quite possibly changed and our thinking is outdated."--City Staff Person

Greatest Impact

The lab experience was transformative for many respondents, and the process as a whole has been seen as an impact in itself.

> *"I really like the Theory-U idea of moving from an ego-driven world (selfishness and greed) to a more eco-holistic approach. Leveraging the real-time connections we can make in this modern digital age to really come up with global solutions to the issues we're facing. I found it very uplifting to shift my thinking to a place where I thought: 'actually one small person can make a difference if they communicate with just a few other small people with a similar vision". --City Staff Person*

> *"To me the greatest benefit of the lab was to bring together people who work in public engagement from across the organization and provide a focused context for thinking about what we do and how to improve what we do. In some ways, I think it is a mistake to desire/ look for the big fix or solution that miraculously changes how we do things. Instead, especially for the systemic stuff that matters most, what has most value is naming these problems, remembering them, and considering how we can do things differently. It is building a common understanding of these shared issues that is one of the things that is more empowering, rather than a 'solution'. Given the scope of some of the systemic issues, I think the small shifts, the small habits, the small moves we can make likely offer more sustained hope for change. So, I'd recommend putting less pressure on the 'solution' and emphasizing how the process itself is part of what is most valuable." --City Staff Person*

What should we keep in mind for Slab 2.0?

In order to provide continuity to shifting perspectives and building shared context on an issue, a few considerations were identified in responses from lab participants:

- Spreading and institutionalising learnings and solutions from the lab process

- How power and authority show up in lab environments and lab processes

- Increasing diversity of participants and process leaders, both of individuals and as well as of departments/community partners represented.

> *"[Consider] how can this best be supported? What structures and systems need to be in place for the system to embed/embody the learning from the lab? How does this transition from prototyping to embodying take place?" --Facilitator*

> *"The unacknowledged power imbalances in the room (including between participants and me as the facilitator) kept silent some of the perspectives (inside and outside the room) that would have been useful to hear." --Facilitator*

Survey Finding No. 2
Focusing on users, customers and stakeholders

Significant Learnings

Building skills in empathy and human-centred design practices is a key method used in the Solutions Lab. As building programs and policies with the end-user or people most affected in mind is not the default approach for much work done at the City, this was an eye-opening element for many participants that yielded significant shifts in perspective.

For City staff especially, connecting with users, customers and stakeholders in the lab process resulted in many "aha" moments and realisations. Some learned that their department was on the wrong track entirely with regards to serving the needs of customers. Others found that focusing on customers' experience provided tangible direction for their work.

"In speaking directly with customers we can learn fairly quickly about quick-win improvements that can be made fairly easily. The quick win identification is significant because tackling the large, systemic issues takes significant time and investment. Though personally I believe that investment is worth it, it's good to uncover things that will make clients' experiences incrementally better in the short term while we work to improve the bigger picture over a longer time horizon" --City Staff Person

Greatest Impact

The ability to connect with, learn from, and give voice to end-users and stakeholders was very impactful for City staff. By going through this process, they feel that more meaningful solutions can be generated.

What should we keep in mind for SLab 2.0?

Many respondents said that more engagement of a diversity of external partners is an important action moving forward, specifically:

- Who is participating? If only a select small number of customers or users are participating, then only their input will be incorporated.

- At what point should external partners be brought in to the process? This will inevitably vary according to the specific lab question. Some lab participants felt that the customers should be brought in earlier during the prototyping phase. For other lab questions, they felt that more time was needed working with just City staff prior to engaging with partners.

- How can we encourage fuller participation of external partners while recognising--and accounting for-- time and resource constraints?

"Spending the time to dig below the surface (iceberg model), and to talk to 'users' to help us get to some of these underlying norms, mental models, etc. I think this can help us go beyond superficial "programs" to try and address more systemic issues with our solutions." --City Staff Person

Survey Finding No. 3
Creating focused time and processes for deeper thinking and work, and for building relationships

Significant Learnings

While focused time and process was appreciated by many participants there was also a tension between this and the time required to fully participate. Theory U provides a container for deeper learning and connection, and participants recognised the need for the individual to show up with self awareness and willingness to commit to the process. In labs where attendance was more fluid, the process and focused time felt more compromised for some participants. This also contributed to the diversity of lab team members based on who was able to commit the time required to participate.

> "It was really challenging to build a container with rotating people each time. I felt it undermined the credibility of the lab, in a way. And also made it challenging to support the kinds of relationships that could support deeper insight."--Facilitator

Greatest Impact

City staff and facilitators found this aspect of the lab process quite valuable and it was a noteworthy impact for many participants. For City staff respondents, having this time and space to work collaboratively and understand more deeply the complexities of the issues they take on was instrumental in setting out to engage in meaningful problem-solving. Facilitators found it impactful to create that space for a large organisation such as the City and to watch participants take deeper dives in their work.

> "The confluence of staff, facilitators, users/participants, experts and new methods of testing and resolution. These things don't happen on their own without a lab environment."--City Staff Person

> "Watching people have a-ha's about how the process enabled deeper and more engaged understanding beyond initial stances." --Facilitator

What should we keep in mind for SLab 2.0?

Some participants mentioned a few elements related to this theme that we should think about for future developments:

- Playing with time and thinking patterns
- Creating opportunities for deeper commitment and personal ownership of the lab
- Providing clarity on time commitment, process timeline, and process goals for participants
- Engaging senior leadership to allow participants to integrate lab time into their "desk" work objectives

> "Use time and thinking styles in the design to keep prompting people past habitual thoughts and behaviour"--Facilitator

> "I think a model that has some individual work in addition to group work would be helpful. I wanted it to be part of my job instead of it feeling voluntary and like I'm part of a group so my presence isn't as important.."--City Staff Person

Survey Finding No. 4
Learning and applying different and robust methods

Significant Learnings

The exposure to new innovation and collaboration tools used in lab processes was a major point of learning for many respondents. Many saw the benefit in specific tools such as rapid prototyping, through which new ideas could be tested in small, quick ways and learning journeys, by which participants could step inside the shoes of their end-users and individuals who are affected by particular actions.

> *"I've always thought you needed to put a really well-developed idea forth. But, as we learned in the lab, often times you're on the wrong track, so using rapid prototyping is a great way to course correct and minimize wasted time/energy." --City Staff Person*

Significant Changes

Many City staff in particular indicated that they have begun to apply tools they learned in the lab process into other work at the City, such as testing concepts through prototypes and design sprints. Through using these tools, some respondents have changed the way they do things, such as altering the format of an open house for public engagement.

Greatest Impact

City staff and partner organisations/citizens appreciated learning different methods and trying them.

> *"Working on the design for possible solutions; because I realized the solution didn't have to be perfect the first time"--City Staff Person*

> *"Seeing a model for effective, deep and meaningful project development in a collaborative, consensus based team approach." --Partner Organisation*

What should we keep in mind for SLab 2.0?

Some participants commented on elements that we should keep in mind for the future:

- How to support groups with iterating their solutions, especially in between lab sessions and after the lab ends.
- Deeper consideration of the approach used for problem identification and solutions-building.

> *"The problem identification, fit, and the methods for resolution, and framing, need to be reviewed and carefully analyzed prior to launch"--City Staff Person*

> *"We all want immediate solutions but to make the right one we need to see it from many many different perspectives" --City Staff Person*

Evaluation Workshop Findings

In April 2018, Mark Cabaj, from Here2There Consulting, convened lab leaders, steering committee members, facilitators, and lab practitioners from other organisations to share the findings of the survey and interviews while also situating SLab in the greater context of public sector and social innovation labs. With the survey results and context of innovation labs in mind, participants were asked to reflect on three questions during the workshop. Below are the questions and the responses that emerged from them.

So what new questions emerge?

- Does the City of Vancouver have the right enabling conditions for an innovation lab at this time? Given the need for transformative change in the City at this time, has the SLab been set up to succeed with the necessary staffing and budget resources, and senior management and political leadership required to have a real chance at success?

- How are the rules of the larger system at the City working for and/or against the approach of the lab?

- Problem identification: Which types of issues/challenges does the city have a responsibility to work on and hold through a lab process (and which does it not)? How are these issues identified and by whom? How can this be democratised?

So what elements do we need to see in the next iteration of SLab?

- Aim for a mix of pragmatic and transformative change (quick wins vs. long-term systems change).

- Further define and refine: the scope, scope and type of lab the COV needs at this time; who the lab teams include; and what type of challenges to work on.

- Make lab participation part of job descriptions and performance evaluations to further enable and structure participation.

So what else do we need to keep in mind for the next iteration of SLab to make it as successful as possible?

- What would it look like to have one lab? Use a cohort model, build relationships, alumni, mentorship, use same questions and follow different journeys.

- There are multiple ways to build SLab 2.0; what if we build scenarios to test different possibilities?

- How do we ensure cultural diversity and lived experiences are more included in lab process?

The results of these evaluation activities were then used to inform the next iteration of the Solutions Lab, described in the next section: on the water.

ADVENTURE #2 ON THE WATER: SOLUTIONS LAB 2.0

Setting the next course

The first iteration of the Solutions Lab taught us many things, captured through ongoing developmental evaluation work, reflection and learning of the lab team, the outcomes of each of the unique lab processes, the data collected through the survey and interviews, and by staying in touch with the experiments and learning from the global public sector innovation lab and social innovation lab communities. We did our best to wrestle with one of the big paradoxes we faced, that of having an ambition for transformative change while working with limited capacity and resources. This collection of learnings, as well as the context of the City of Vancouver at this time, has informed the "now what" next direction for Solutions Lab 2.0, described here.

Focus to have greater impact. This focus will take the following shapes for SLab 2.0:

- thematic focus on building ongoing innovation infrastructure for experimentation and learning in service of developing, prototyping and scaling social innovations to build the healthy + green city

- complex challenges (not simple, complicated, or chaotic challenges)

- policy, service, engagement, and democracy challenges with both an in- and outward focus (not administrative challenges, or challenges that are only inward focused);

- personal and organisational culture transformation as a clear and purposeful objective;

Move from a "design brief" to a "theory of change" to more clearly describe the context, vision, working approach to how change happens here, and the role of the SLab in contributing to this vision (more on the theory of change in the next section);

Build diversity, intersectionality, reconciliation, and justice into the DNA of how the lab works, so as not to recreate existing structures and systems of power within the lab environment;

Move the process design and facilitation from outside consultants to inside the City by building a community of practice with, for, and by City staff in order to build internal capacities to design and deliver social innovation processes outside of what happens in "the lab";

Hold frameworks and methods more lightly. Using social innovation and systems change as our guide, a variety of frameworks, methods and tools will be used, with different formats, timeframes, and levels of participation, in order to make lab participation more nimble and right-sized;

Reform the "lab team" in SLab 2.0 to include existing staff working on healthy + green city work to bring innovation lab practices into their approach, to better integrate across these two policy areas, and to potentially include other partners and community of practice members to join this reformed lab team;

Manage expectations and/or grow the lab team. With a dedicated staff of only one .8 FTE staff person, the SLab needs to be ruthless and strategic about what work has the greatest potential to demonstrate the value for working in this way, and also ruthless about managing expectations. The ambition set out in SLab 2.0 isn't possible to realise with the current leadership support or resources allocated to the SLab. A focus on growing the team in a variety of creative ways will be a priority if the SLab is to have a real chance at demonstrating the potential for an innovation lab to help solve some of the most complex challenges that the city is facing; and

Continued and active developmental evaluation practice to learn and adapt as we go, and a summative and realist evaluation practice to measure impacts of our work.

SLab 2.0 Theory of Change

The second iteration of the Solutions Lab is going to use a theory of change to guide our work. A theory of change aims to concisely describe how and why a desired change is intended to take place in a given context as a result of the work being done to create that change. This theory of change is a work in process as it is being co-created by the emerging innovation leaders at the City of Vancouver at the time of writing this story.

Context

Our city is facing increasing pressure to address convergent and complex challenges like reconciliation, affordability, the opioid epidemic, equity, climate change, sustainability, social isolation, falling trust in government, recruitment and retention of talented staff, and many others. The go-to structures and processes of local governments were set up for a very different reality, and for significantly different work and responsibilities, and if governments don't adapt we'll be left behind. We're being called, both as individual public servants and as an organisation, to experiment, learn, and scale new solutions in response to these pressures. We're being called to respond to the root causes of these systemic challenges, not just apply incremental quick fixes. The Solutions Lab is a response to this call.

Future Vision

A Vancouver that collaboratively, systemically and effectively responds to complex challenges facing our city in order to improve the lives of current and future generations and restore a relationship of care with the land, water and people. This is made possible because City of Vancouver staff and key partners are growing greater capacities to experiment and learn in service of addressing these complex social, economic and environmental challenges.

How Change Happens Here

- **Theoretical Frameworks**: work in the Solutions Lab starts from a place of working toward truth + reconciliation, intersectionality, and inclusion. It is guided by these interdisciplinary theory + practice frameworks:

  » Transformative learning

  » Adaptive and collaborative leadership

  » Social innovation and systems change

  » Strategic and Systemic Design

  » Emergence

- **Practical Considerations:** change must also be highly practical and results-oriented. With this in mind we also believe that change happens through:

  » Learning from, and contributing to, the global ecosystem of public sector innovation

  » Courageous leadership that provides permission and encouragement

  » Learning through action, experimentation and doing

  » Being humble and bringing our whole selves

  » Distributing leadership, learning and power
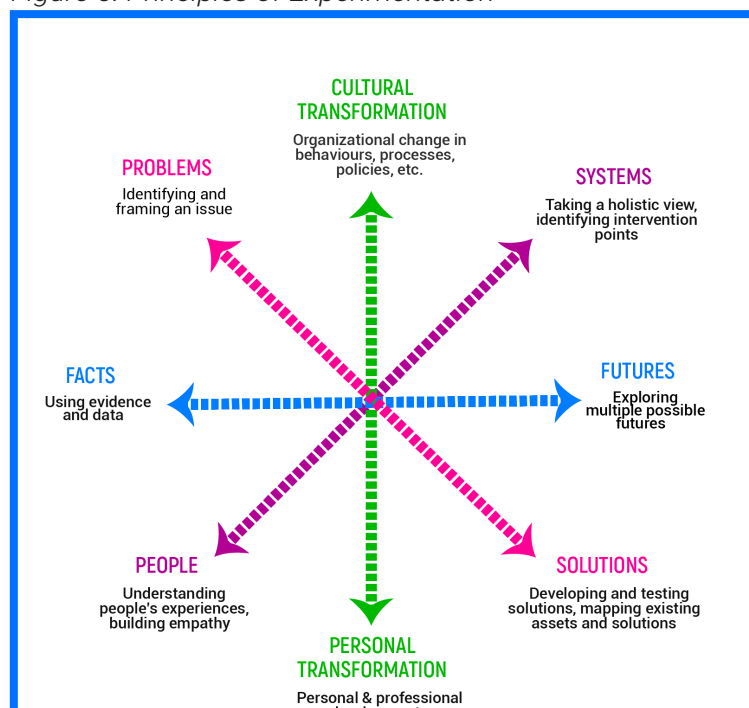
  » Building shared capacities

Principles of Experimentation

Public sector innovation labs can use a variety of different methods, tools, and tactics in their work. Our aim is to use these with discernment and great skill. The principles for experimentation in government will be used as a guide to methodological choice-making, with the idea being that if all eight directions are being attended to in an innovation process then experimentation and learning is happening.

Evaluation and Learning

The vision for the lab is ambitious, and the call to action is profound. A strong evaluation framework to help us understand where, when, and how work in the lab is having an impact is essential so that we can hear and see the signals of change, and amplify their effects. Measuring impact using developmental, summative, and realist evaluation methods is a core element of how change and learning happens.

Figure 5. Principles of Experimentation

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION
Organizational change in behaviours, processes, policies, etc.

PROBLEMS
Identifying and framing an issue

SYSTEMS
Taking a holistic view, identifying intervention points

FACTS
Using evidence and data

FUTURES
Exploring multiple possible futures

PEOPLE
Understanding people's experiences, building empathy

SOLUTIONS
Developing and testing solutions, mapping existing assets and solutions

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION
Personal & professional

Source: Adapted from Nesta Innovation Playbook, 2018

Our Contribution to Change

The SLab supports this vision by:

- **Shifting organisational culture** to support experimentation as learning, social innovation, and systems change practices and behaviours. Providing a creative, stimulating and positive work environment.

- **Building innovation infrastructure** that delivers ongoing research, invention, innovation, implementation, and scaling of solutions to complex service, policy, democracy and engagement challenges.

- **Unlocking the potential of people** by building adaptive leadership, transformative learning, co-creation, intersectional understanding, and collaboration skills, competencies, experiences and performance expectations for CoV staff.

- **Growing authentic and high impact partnerships** to amplify the potential impacts of our work through authentic, mutually beneficial, and action-oriented partnerships with the many collaborators working toward a similar vision for Vancouver.

- **Telling our stories of change** through a deep reflection, monitoring, measuring, evaluating and reporting practice.

Activities + Outcome Measures (September 2018 ~ 2020)

Over the coming 24-36 months, Solutions Lab 2.0 will focus on experimentation and learning in service of developing, testing, and scaling social innovations that contribute to a healthy + green city. This set of activities and measures (see the table on the next page) reflects the current best thinking about how that work will take shape over the coming year.

ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOME MEASURES 2018 ~ 2020		
SLAB CONTRIBUTION	**ACTIVITIES**	**MEASURES**
Shifting Organisational Culture	Develop and deliver senior leadership engagement plan Internal/external blog sharing lab activities and learning Build internal resource "library" for innovation lab frameworks, methods, and cases Encourage, support, and track patterns of behaviour change that indicate social innovation techniques and approaches are being integrated into the day-to-day and leadership work of those participating in different lab processes	Secure longer-term and more robust budget and senior leadership support for 2018-19 and beyond Develop a CoV-centric culture and systems change evaluation framework to measure the impacts of the lab against this theory of change, and our understandings of "how change happens" Lab work, and lab team members, formally recognised/rewarded internally and externally
Building Innovation Infrastructure	Design and delivery of 3 policy labs using social innovation methods (Healthy City, Greenest City, Age-Friendly policies) Design and delivery of 1 service improvement lab using service design methods (topic tbc)	Sticky + scaleable prototypes with impacts that improve lives + land resulting directly and indirectly from the labs Creation of innovation infrastructure for ongoing research, invention, innovation, implementation, and scaling in the Greenest City and Healthy City policy domains
Unlocking the Potential of People	Design, facilitate and support SLab Community of Practice (CoP) Co-design all labs with staff leads to build their capacity Learn and integrate decolonised, intersectional, and inclusive lab practices	Portfolio changes for lab team and CoP members that add new work responsibilities resulting from their experiences in the SLab Number + depth of practices built for CoP members Number of CoP members with active participation included in their annual performance plans SLab support of CoP members in integrating innovation practices into their work
Growing Authentic Partnerships	Each lab team to include community partners and learning journeys or other ethnographic and empathy building work Learning + research partnership with UBC School of Public Policy and Global Affairs Partnership with BC Government Innovation Hub Partnership with FCM Innovation Network Participation in national labs community of practice	Recognition and invitation of SLab team to participate in other social innovation events, networks, conferences, etc. Partner organisations adopting tangible actions resulting from work on lab teams Formal funding +/or partnership agreements with external organisations supporting lab work
Telling our stories of change	Ongoing developmental evaluation to adapt and learn through each lab project and for the SLab as a whole Summative and realist evaluation used at end of specific labs Evaluation coaching from Here2There Consulting to provide expertise, outside view, and additional credibility of evaluation results Mentoring of a Green/Healthy City Scholar to support evaluative practices	Document evaluation process and results as part of final reports for each lab Continued evaluation of lab outcomes and impacts for 1.0 and 2.0 lab challenges and participants to determine longer-term impacts and outcomes Document and share SLab 2.0 against the Theory of Change and the 2018-19 activities and measures Learning, critical reflection, measurement and reporting acknowledged as core practices of the SLab and all those involved

THE PADDLE AHEAD

The goal of 1.0 was to find a few people who would join a challenging hiking adventure on a landscape that was new to many of us. We had an ambition of traveling the terrain of complex challenges together and trying some new methods in the hopes that we would collect some important insights and solutions along the way. Our 1.0 map was characterised by choosing between multiple existing paths - following Theory U and design frameworks and their relatively well-groomed methodological pathways. To a certain extent we were able to follow some of those that had gone before us; we weren't breaking new trail amongst other social innovators, although these trails were new for most of us travelling on them together. We had seasoned facilitators as our guides, we added skills and tools to our backpacks, made some great progress, grew our connections with one another, and were able to high-five about our accomplishments at the end. And we did all of this without having the right quality or amount of gear for the terrain - our resources were limited.

When we took a moment to rest and tell stories by the campfire, we learned many things. We wondered if the terrain that we had travelled on was actually the right place to be, and if instead we needed to venture into less-known territory. We wanted to learn how to lead and navigate this journey ourselves, rather than rely on guides. We learned that we needed to continue to add to our technical skills, and also learn to listen to our intuition to read the landscape as we travel into new territory. We realised that we needed different ways for people to come on this journey because the one methodological path that we followed was too long for some, and we wanted to make sure we designed an adventure that many people could be a part of in different ways. Finally we wondered if the conditions were right for us to continue on this journey at this time, but realised that we were called to continue regardless.

The next leg of our journey will take us from the land to the river. The river has banks to focus the path (healthy and green city, complex challenges, social innovation and systems change methods), but the conditions within it are constantly changing and requiring more moment-to-moment navigation (holding methods lightly, understanding underlying conditions, foresight). Different people will join the journey in different ways, for a quick swim or a longer paddle (short creative sessions through to full labs). It is riskier terrain that requires different kinds of leadership, reliance, collaboration, partnerships, and trust in one another, and a wider skill set. There are many different possible courses to choose while travelling down the river and its tributaries, although it carves a shared path. We'll need to make the map together as we go. We'll have to pay attention to bailing out the boats while also making it to our destination. Hopefully any necessary paddling upstream will take us closer to the source.
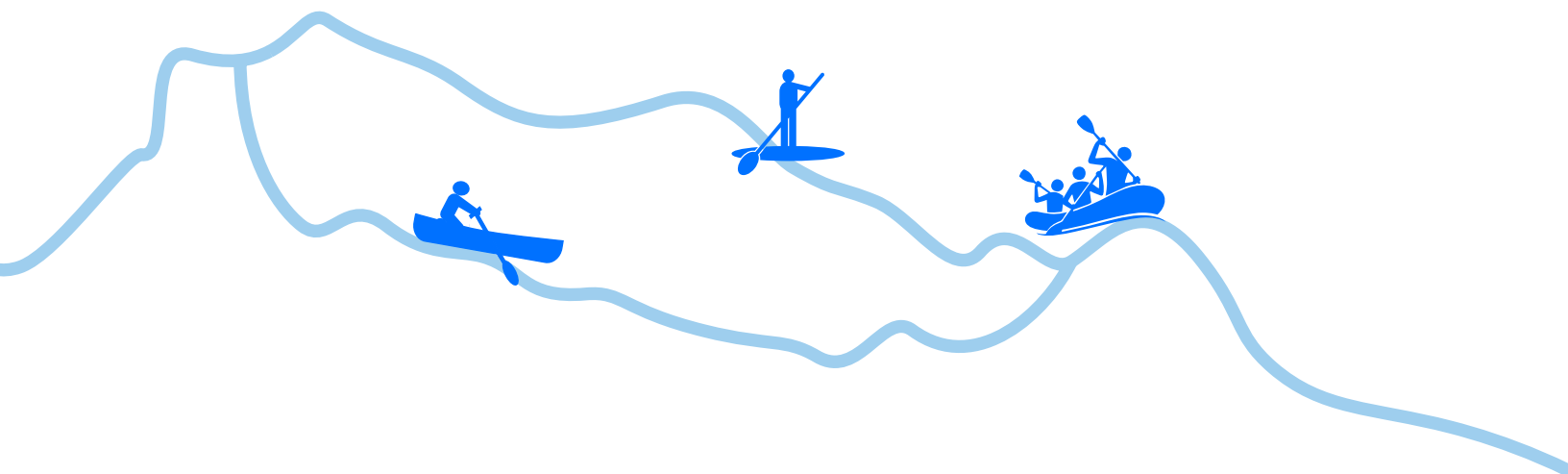
ENDNOTES

1. Noun Project Icon Credit Attribution: Binoculars by Gregor Cresnar, Campfire by Creative Stall, Canoe by Richard Zeid, Hiker by Luis Prado, Hiking by johanna, Location pin by Ashley Weiss, People Sitting in a Circle by Gan Khoon Lay, Person by Carlos Navas, Person by Stijn van der Grinten, Supping by bmijnlieff, Windsurfer by Gan Khoon Lay.

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