RESILIENT NEIGHBOURHOODS PROGRAM

KICK-OFF WORKSHOP REPORT

CITY OF VANCOUVER

RESILIENT VANCOUVER

Workshop Date	
November 27, 2017	
Workshop Time	**30**
12:30 pm – 5 pm	**Attendees**

30 **Participants**

12	10	8
representatives from the four neighbourhood Anchor Organizations	City of Vancouver staff	representatives from external partner organizations

Program Background: The Resilient Neighbourhoods Program initially started within the Office of Emergency Management's Community Resilience team, with the intent of building on the City of Vancouver's Disaster Support Hub initiative. Since the appointment of the Chief Resilience Officer, the program has moved under the broader resilience portfolio. In addition to addressing community planning and response to shocks, the Resilient Neighbourhoods Program seeks to examine and reduce stresses, and cultivate the conditions that foster resilience. This presents an opportunity to support and amplify current initiatives building resilience at the neighbourhood level, and offers a chance to reframe and transform the way that neighbourhoods collectively think about, prepare for and experience crises. By approaching the challenge through a resilience and capacity-building lens, neighbourhoods will be able to identify and build on the services and networks that enable them to thrive day-to-day and, as well as consider how these assets can be leveraged to address future hazards like earthquakes or severe weather.

Over the summer, Council approved an Innovation Fund to enable the development, piloting, and scaled launch of the Resilient Neighbourhoods Program that responds to the recommendations from local citizens. Over the next 18 months, the City will partner with "anchor organizations" in 4 diverse communities to refine and pilot a framework that is adaptable, accessible and inclusive. Each of these groups

and neighbourhoods has identified different resilience challenges, and has expressed an interest in taking on a role in mobilizing Disaster Support Hubs in their communities.

The four neighbourhoods and Anchor Organizations are:

- **Grandview-Woodland** (Britannia Community Services Centre)
- **Renfrew-Collingwood** (Collingwood Neighbourhood House)
- **Downtown Eastside** (312 Main Community Co-op)
- **Dunbar** (Dunbar Residents Association)

Summary: On November 27th, 2017 30 participants from four neighbourhoods in Vancouver and a selection of staff from the City of Vancouver and other external partner organizations came together for the first workshop and meeting of Vancouver's Resilient Neighbourhoods Program. This workshop aimed to gather together stakeholders from the four Resilient Neighbourhood Program neighbourhoods, including Anchor Organization partners, City staff, and external partners to learn more about resilience perceptions and actions at the neighbourhood scale.

PART I: NETWORKING LUNCH

Participants were invited to have lunch and meet other participants in the program. This allowed for some informal discussions, exchanges of information, and presented an opportunity for various partners to get to know each other before working through challenging activities and conversations around neighbourhood resilience.

PART II: ROUNDTABLE INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATION

After the networking lunch, the group went through formal introductions and a brief presentation was given that provided background information on 100 Resilient Cities, the Strategy Process, the City Resilience Framework, and background information on the Resilient Neighbourhoods Program and Innovation Fund.

This presentation was intended to give all participants a foundation of information about the process and work to be undertaken over the next year, and to provide context for newcomers to this work.

PART III: SHOCKS, STRESSES, AND TRENDS

For the remainder of the workshop, the room was divided into 4 table groups – one for each of the neighbourhoods in the pilot program. Each table group consisted of staff from the Anchor Organization in that neighbourhood, as well as 2-3 City staff, and 1-2 external partners.

The group was then asked to add to the pre-existing list of Shocks, Stresses, and Trends to identify unique neighbourhood concerns and viewpoints. "What's missing? What impacts your neighbourhood?" Blue text below indicates the examples provided to table groups on a flip chart at the outset of the exercise and were taken from the 100 Resilient Cities Vancouver Agenda-Setting Workshop. Meanwhile, text in black represents additions made by the Resilient Neighbourhoods Workshop tables on November 27th and is not edited from its original form. Table groups had nuanced and animated discussions around the terminology of a shock and a stress – and voiced concerns over the use of the word stress for two reasons:

1) Stresses, in many cases, are actually a shock or a critical situation for the person experiencing it. The Opioid Crisis and Homelessness in particular were brought up around this idea.

2) The term stress may be pathologizing to the groups who are labelled with those terms. A related discussion took place around labelling groups as "vulnerable" and how this labelling sometimes disregards inherent resilience of that same group.

Shocks:

- Earthquakes
- Sea Level Rise
- Oil Spills / Hazardous Materials
- Extreme Weather
- Toxic Fumes
- Infrastructure Failure (water, sewer, electricity)
- Forest Fires (Air Quality)
- Overdoses and Mental Health Episodes
- Violence (e.g. gender violence)
- Electrical Outages
- Hydro Outages
- Financial Shocks (2008)
- Mass Violence
- Riots
- Extreme Fires (UBC Endowment Lands / Stanley Park)
- Pandemic
- Change in Local & National Governments
- Global Conflict (Trump)
- Forest Fires (smoke, cascading social impacts)

Stresses:

- Homelessness
- Drug Addiction
- Affordability
- Social Isolation
- Aging Infrastructure
- Aging Population
- Living Alone (number of seniors living alone)
- Low Income
- Poverty
- No Shelter
- Number commuting into the City
- Transient daytime populations
- Transit stress – eg new train/ viaduct removal
- Neighbourhood includes waterfront with no access to water
- Stress and anxiety from all of the above
- Western Industrialism
- Downsizing (slums)
- Mental Health Crisis
- Densification
- Changing demographic (transient population)
- Demographic change

- Lack of Children
- Presence of under-served mental health needs
- Systemic racism and colonialism
- Food insecurity (healthy foods)
- Lack of walkable access to diverse households/emergency needs – Army & Navy is the only place

Trends:

- Technology
- Nature of Work
- Population Growth
- Zoning (single homes to multi-family dwellings/changes to commercial or industrial zoning and employers).
- Forest fires and smoke
- Resource Constraints/Depletion
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- Agricultural-chemical
- Peak Oil
- Ecological point
- Depending on global resources (lack of self-sufficiency – food)
- Global conflict and refugees
- More willingness for collaborative work
- Disaster fatigue/cynicism

PART IV: CURRENT RESILIENCE ACTIONS

Next, the facilitator asked the four groups "What programs or initiatives are you currently doing as an organization to support resilience within your neighbourhood?" The tables were directed to use post-it notes and write these onto large print-outs of the City Resilience Framework and align them where they best fit.

Some of the actions listed include:

COLLINGWOOD:

- Food security and breakfast program
- Homeless support services
- Childcare programs
- Community development
- Newsletter and website
- Employment services and counselling
- Advocacy and referrals to Vancouver Coastal Health clinic

312 MAIN (PENDING COMPLETION OF CO-OP SPACE):

- Aboriginal Wellness Centre
- Community Garden with edible plants
- Archives of Union of BC Indian Chiefs
- Accessible, gender-neutral public washrooms in the DTES
- Artist exhibition space
- Peer-employment program
- Monthly low-barrier community lunches
- Incorporation of micro-business and social enterprises into operations

BRITANNIA:

- Renewal and long-term community planning
- Cold weather warming centre
- Youth Matters program
- Food Connections program
- Grandview-Woodland Area Council
- Grandview-Woodland Area Services Team
- Britannia Volunteer Program
- Thingery Sharing Library

DUNBAR:

- Dunbar Earthquake and Emergency Preparedness (DEEP) emergency preparedness workshops
- DEEP training and exercises around the Dunbar Disaster Support Hub
- Emergency Preparedness and Response container
- Meetings and discussions that foster deeper neighbourhood connections

PART V: CURRENT RESILIENCE GAPS

After identifying current resilience actions, the groups were asked to consider the shocks, stresses, and trends discussed earlier, and to think about their current work. With this in mind, they were to use a fresh, large print out of the City Resilience Framework and indicate the gaps, barriers, and factors that limit their resilience as a neighbourhood. Again, these were written on post-it notes and placed around the CRF wheel where they best fit. The perceptions collected are listed in the table below.

Natural assets in neighbourhood	Very few natural assets, very little green space, open space, or water access. Parks get water logged.
Request for Proposal Process	Process causes competition among groups
Community food storage limitations	No cold storage or dry storage for food and no ability to store emergency food.
Water collection	Communities do not have independent water collection infrastructure.
Housing	Maxed out on space for more housing yet demand for additional (and more affordable) housing is high.
Studio space for artists	Very few physical spaces for artists and lack of affordability for existing spaces
Support for micro-enterprises	Need additional support for artists, low-income entrepreneurs
Possible communication failure	––
Community-based plans for emergencies	City-wide plans exist but not neighbourhood-level plans. Specifically, need ones created by the community, for the community.

Therapeutic supports for brain injury	Not enough support-systems or programs in place for individuals living with brain injury.
Day-programming for adults	Many programs exist for youth and for seniors, but adults have few options for community programs.
Distance to hospitals	For individuals seeking medical care, it takes multiple buses to reach hospitals from many areas of the city. This can be a barrier to access.
Youth programming	Specifically for youth who are not thriving in school and do not fit into teen-programs. Gap in ages for youth programming.
Accessibility of programs	Need better accessibility for programs for all people.
Competency of policing	Need for competency training for community policing centres. Community policing has a reputation of targeting "undesireables".
Addressing systemic stereotypes	Related to competency of community policing - programs need to address stereotypes (racism, sexism, ageism, ableism).
Funding for organizations	Non-profit organizations struggling to obtain funding for operations.
Mental health and addictions stigma	Continued stigmatizing of people with mental health challenges and addictions.
Trust between groups and people	Individuals' lack of trust towards institutions or organizations can be a barrier.
Burnout	Front-line workers and non-profit staff face high rates of burnout, particularly those working with marginalized communities.
Funding for cultural programs	Limited funding for artistic and cultural programming.
Translation and Interpretation Services	Growing number of service users require language services. Most service-agencies aren't prepared for the extra planning/cost of this.
Spread of communicable diseases	Service providers have a lot of contact with people with communicable diseases. Get sick regularly as a result.
Aging population	Fewer young people and families and more seniors in the community. Eventually this could lead to resource strain.
Empty homes	Turnover in single family homes and non-resident buyers - many empty large homes especially on the west side. Results in lower levels of social connection.
Renter population	Renters less invested in community because they may be there for a very short time.
Cultural attitudes towards emergency preparedness	Not all cultures have the same views or understanding of emergency preparedness
General community storage	Nowhere to store water, food, clothing for emergency situations as a community - all up to individuals.
Local decision-making	Decisions made between City and Developers but without integrated approach to consulting the community/neighbourhood on the ground (different definition of local).

Systemic issues	Difficult to address systemic issues (racism, sexism) that are embedded within corporate, institutional, government environments and trickle down to local level within neighbourhoods.
Age divide in engagement	Millennials are often too busy to participate in community social engagements.
Interculturalism	Newcomers and long-time residents often have trouble bridging the communication and cultural divide to foster strong connections.
Centralization of Resources	Resources (services to vulnerable populations) are often centralized (hospitals) in the centre of the city, making it difficult for those in peripheral neighbourhoods to access.
NIMBYism	NIMBYism over moving mental health and addictions treatment services into areas with child care.
Inter-sector collaboration	Separation between business sector (private) and non-profits.
Communication between community groups	Lack of centralized communication or listserv between community groups, non-profits, and service providers - hinders collaboration and planning.
Labour shortage	Growing unaffordability leading to labour shortages throughout the city and causing the closure of businesses.
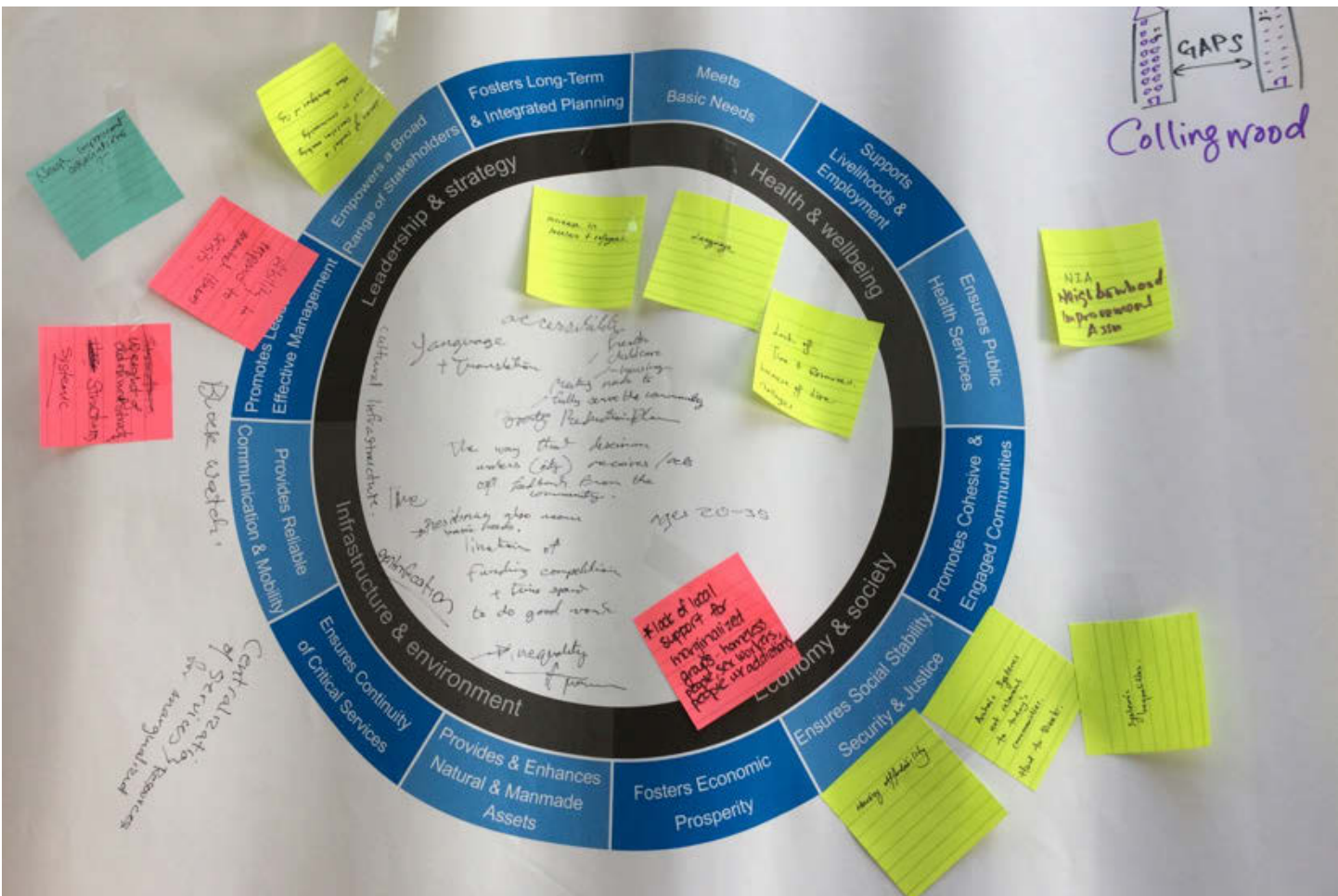
VI: REPORT BACK

At the conclusion of Part V, table groups were asked to post their two CRF wheels on the wall, and briefly present on their discussion and findings. While each of the four groups had many similarities in the themes, perceptions, and actions discussed, they all put different emphasis on these. This is indicative of the fact that each neighbourhood is unique, both in terms of the support networks and structures within the neighbourhood, but also in terms of their distinctive resilience challenges. For example, the Dunbar group emphasized emergency preparedness as the most significant gap for their neighbourhood, while Collingwood referenced the need for deeper connections within the community – which would result in greater resilience in the face of emergencies. Britannia discussed equity within their neighbourhood, both in the context of day-to-day experiences in the neighbourhood, as well as in the face of an emergency, while 312 Main expressed the ongoing crises happening within the Downtown Eastside, and their unique opportunity as a new Co-op space to bring together the diverse groups and individuals living and working within the DTES.

PART VII: BRAINSTORMING – VISION OF NEIGHBOURHOOD RESILIENCE

Next, in groups of four with each neighbourhood working with their team, we asked the groups to come up with a vision of their resilient neighbourhood, using the direction, "Blue-skies: if your neighbourhood were to achieve resilience on an ongoing basis, what would that look like?" Each group created this vision on flip chart paper.

Highlights for each of the visions include:

312 MAIN	BRITANNIA	COLLINGWOOD	DUNBAR
having a thriving Co-op with diverse users coming from different cultural, linguistic, age, and economic backgrounds.	a neighbourhood that makes all people feel secure, and that is able to transform to support the community during a disaster.	a connected, caring, sharing neighbourhood where everyone can be a leader.	understanding key vulnerabilities and assets in the neighbourhood and improving communications.

PART VIII: NEXT STEPS

With all of the group discussions complete, the Chief Resilience Officer Katie McPherson, and the Neighbourhood Resilience Planner Katia Tynan gave short closing remarks and described some of the logistics that the group would be undertaking over the next two months, and indicated a timeline for follow-up.

PART IX: COLLABORATION CLOSING

To end the session, all participants were asked to consider the next 18 months of work around Neighbourhood Resilience, and to write skills and knowledge that they can contribute to the group, or any type of help they would be willing to provide. The text below is unedited from the post-it notes collected.

"I CAN HELP WITH…"

- "Creative community engagement" – *Vanessa*
- "Neighbourhood perspective" – *anonymous*
- "Having fun" – *Crecien*
- "Community connection" – *anonymous*
- "Designing facilitation and engagement processes" – *Lisa*
- "Connecting people across organizations and across the city" – *Spencer*
- "Facilitating community dialogues" – *Spencer*
- "Training and implementing Disaster Support Hubs" – *Ann*
- "Food – putting together a pantry" – *anonymous*
- "I can contribute knowledge about risk reduction opportunities that are actional at individual and collective level" – *Murray*
- "I have lots of community connecting and socially and community engaged arts" – *Fran*
- "Facilitation and deep listening" – *Fran*
- "Ultimate ideas generator" – *Fran*
- "Different perspectives" – *Fran*

"I CAN CONTRIBUTE…"

- "Connections" – *Fran*
- "I can speak four Chinese dialects" – *Fran*
- "Contacts, community connections" – *Lindsay*
- "Listen to community and facilitate community action and approve budget" – *anonymous*
- "Developing an emergency preparedness program at neighbourhood level" – *Ann*
- "A group of masters students with policy and analytical skills to work on a project for you. January through April" – *Andrea*
- "Sustainability – information about green buildings, electric vehicles, and renewable energy" – *Angela*
- "Energy. Knowledge about: climate change, sea level rise, ecology and intertidal, storm water biology, extreme heat" – *Angela*
- "Advice re: indigenous engagement and inclusion" – *Spencer*
- "Meeting/workshop space, meeting minutes, assistance with circulating information" – *Jennifer*
- "Food strengthens connections and work and strategizing" – *Sarah*
- "Grad student labour for internship – GIS mapping and program management" – *Shareen*
- "Ideas for having fun while doing the work" – *Lisa*
- "Arts-based engagement" – *Vanessa*
- "connect ideas and people. Community development in creative ways" – *anonymous*

PART X: SUMMARY

In addition to the structured feedback received through activities in this workshop, there were also several themes that emerged. These themes reflect themes and comments received through the community-centred engagement sessions held over the past few months. Some of these themes include:

SPACE:

- Storage spaces for food/water/supplies
- Space for artists and community groups
- Distance to hospitals (not for crises, just for day-to-day access

FINANCE:

- Access to finance for artists and community groups (grants, etc.)
- Micro-finance for micro-businesses
- Request for Proposal processes and grant processes foster competitiveness rather than collaboration
- Funding for cultural programs and activities

RESOURCES:

- Access to programs (youth, people with disabilities, people living with mental health challenges)
- Meeting basic needs of clients
- Food and water – no backup systems or local-level contingency plans
- Neighbourhood level emergency planning resources (templates, etc.)
- Mental health and addictions resources
- Burnout for service providers
- Access both from a functional needs perspective and from a financial perspective (data costs money!)

OTHER:

- Racism
- Accessibility
- Other forms of systemic forms of oppression
- Trust – theme throughout
- Divide between city decision-making and neighbourhood consultation (not asked or consulted prior to decisions being made)
- Engagement for people across the age spectrum
- Clear understanding of role within neighbourhood (what is community responsible for vs. what is government responsible for) both on day-to-day and during crises

Finally, the Resilient Neighbourhoods Kick-Off Workshop brought together key stakeholders who will play a significant role in driving forward neighbourhood resilience work both within 4 key neighbourhoods and across the City of Vancouver. Participants included staff and volunteers from Anchor Organizations, City of Vancouver staff, and partners from other government organizations and social enterprises. The workshop enabled these individuals and groups to gain a shared understanding of the background behind this work, and the process to be undertaken over the next 18 months. Furthermore, the workshop was an opportunity to learn more about and celebrate the incredible resilience work already taking place in neighbourhoods, and to identify gaps that may be addressed through the Resilient Neighbourhoods Program and Resilience Strategy process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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