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Community Vitality

A REPORT OF THE CANADIAN INDEX OF WELLBEING

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Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD)

 CANADIAN
Index
OF WELLBEING
Measuring what matters

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Abstract

The goal of this concept paper is to discuss alternative conceptualizations of “community vitality” and its component parts and to propose an initial set of measures for inclusion in this domain of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW). To this end, the paper presents and discusses different definitions of community vitality and its key components; sets out key assumptions to assist in the selection of specific measures; develops a conceptual model of community vitality that lays out specific subdomains of community vitality and potential indicators under each; and provides a list of initial headline indicators in order to move the development of the community vitality domain forward.

An analysis of the headline indicators reveals that Canadians, by and large, have strong social relationships with their families and their communities. The size of social networks appears to be increasing, the rate of membership in voluntary groups and organizations is relatively high, and the proportion of Canadians engaged in volunteering has been going up. Moreover, Canadians report high levels of social support, extending assistance to family, friends and neighbours. Levels of crime are down, an indicator of enhanced community relationships. And Canadians report a strong sense of belonging to their local communities across the country. That said, looking at attitudes towards others and community, more than half of Canadians aged 15 and older report that “you can’t be too careful in dealing with people” – and increase from 2005. While the level of compassion for others has increased since the early 1990s, again less than half of Canadians disagree with the statement: “These days, I feel hard pressed to take care of my own needs, that I worry less about the needs of others.” In 2009, one in ten (9.3%) reported experiencing discrimination because of their ethnicity, race, culture, skin colour, religion or language, more than double the proportion reporting discrimination in 2004.

On balance, the positive trend of most of these indicators is heartening, suggesting that the wellbeing of Canadians as measured by the quality of their relationships is improving over time. That said, these findings reveal that more research is needed to unpack these aggregate figures, to examine the strength and density of social relationships and societal norms and values at lower levels of geography and for different groups in the population. The increase in the proportion of Canadians reporting discrimination is a very troubling sign. Are all citizens enjoying the same access to prosperity and wellbeing? This is one of Canada’s most fundamental challenges moving forward into the 21st century.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The development of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) is being undertaken by a number of researchers and organizations across Canada, under the direction of the Atkinson Charitable Foundation. The goal of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework for the community vitality domain and identify an initial set of headline indicators for its measurement.

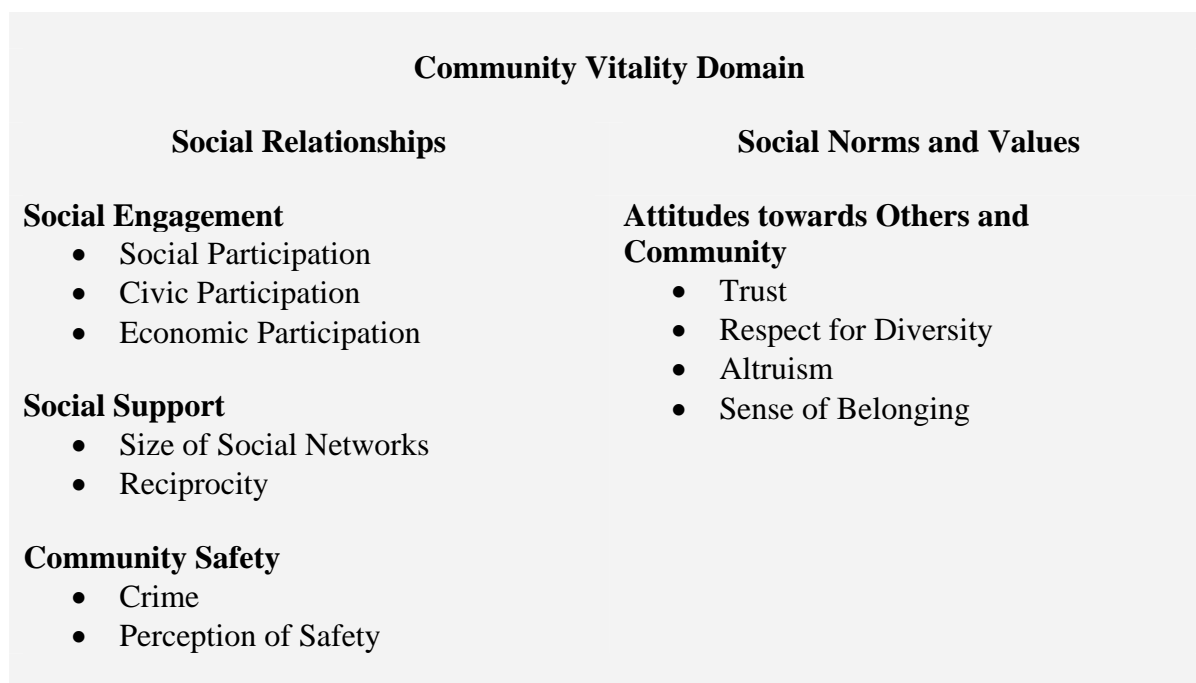
While many domains that make up the CIW are well established, with clearly articulated and accepted indicators, the domain of community vitality is relatively undeveloped in Canada. Nor is there a uniform or broadly accepted definition of what community vitality means. Despite this level of imprecision, individuals – including participants in the Stakeholder and Public Consultations around the CIW – report that community vitality broadly understood is central to their understanding of wellbeing. One key informant said: “this is the domain where the rubber hits the road.” And individual’s relationship to their community – both in terms of the stock and flow of resources and opportunities available to people and in terms of the strength and quality of relationships that people enjoy – is inextricably linked to wellbeing. The question is: what are the most important components of community vitality of the many possible dimensions to capture in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing?

Community Vitality Domain – Proposed Conceptual Model

This paper explores this question by exploring the concept of community vitality – how it has been defined in theory and in practice – and related concepts such as social capital and inclusion. Based on this review, the paper presents the following definition of community vitality as a starting point:

Vital communities are characterized by strong, active and inclusive relationships between residents, private sector, public sector and civil society organizations that work to foster individual and collective wellbeing. Vital communities are those that are able to cultivate and marshal these relationships in order to create, adapt and thrive in the changing world and thus improve wellbeing of citizens.

This definition emphasizes the understanding of vitality as **the capacity to thrive and change** in the pursuit of individual and social wellbeing, in ways that are inclusive and respectful of the needs and aspirations of diverse communities. Taking this definition as a basis, our Conceptual Model for Community Vitality is comprised of four sub-components, organized into two main groups. The first group of indicators are measures of **Social Relationships**. The three sub-components are: Social Engagement, Social Support and Community Safety. The second group of indicators are measures of **Social Norms and Values**. Under this heading, we include the sub-component: Attitudes towards Others and Community. The model is summarized in the following chart.



Proposed Headline Indicators

The paper identifies a suite of 23 indicators to measure the community vitality domain. A shorter list of 11 headline indicators has been chosen for inclusion in the composite index, encompassing each of the dimensions of the proposed conceptual model. These indicators have been identified in research as relevant to the understanding of the character and dynamics of social relationships and networks. The selection of the indicators has been guided by the need to identify at least two points in time, a mix of subjective and objective indicators, and the desirability of deriving cross-national comparative estimates in the future. The proposed headline indicators are:

- Participation in group activities
- Volunteering
- Number of close relatives
- Providing assistance to others
- Property crime
- Violent crime
- Walking alone after dark
- Trust
- Experience of discrimination
- Caring for others
- Belonging to community

Main Messages

As described further on in this report, each sub-component is measured with headline indicators and several secondary indicators. National and provincial/territorial level trends are reviewed for each indicator. A number of main messages emerge from this analysis:

1. Two-thirds of Canadians in 2008 were members of voluntary groups or organizations, an increase in participation since the late 1990s
2. Four in ten Canadians volunteer with non-profit and charitable organizations, a proportion that fell in the late 1990s, but has been rising since 2000
3. The size of Canadian's social networks is growing; Canadians report a significant increase in the number of close relatives and close friends.
4. A growing number of Canadians report that they provide help to others directly on their own; over three-quarters of Canadians across the country report extending assistance to family, friends and neighbours.
5. Property crime rates have been on a downward trend across the country since the early 1990s
6. Similarly, the violent crime rate has been trending down. In 2009, the number of violent offences declined again, with the exception of increases in the rate of firearm offences and attempted murder
7. Canadians report high levels of personal safety; the proportion feeling safe walking after dark has increased between 1993 and 2009
8. Less than half of Canadians believe that, generally speaking, people can be trusted, a decline from levels reported in 2005
9. In 2009, 9.3% of Canadians reported experiencing discrimination because of their ethnicity, race, culture, skin colour, religion or language, a two-fold increase from 4.1% reported in 2004
10. Four in ten Canadians reported being concerned about the needs of others, regardless of the pressures of their own lives. This represents an increase from the mid 1990s when only one in four did.
11. The majority of Canadians express strong attachment to their local community and have done for several years

On balance, the positive trend of most of these indicators is heartening, suggesting that the wellbeing of Canadians as measured by the quality of their relationships is improving over time. That said, these findings reveal that more research is needed to unpack these aggregate figures, to examine the strength and density of social relationships and societal norms and values at lower levels of geography and for different groups in the population. The increase in the proportion of Canadians reporting discrimination is a troubling sign. Are all citizens enjoying the same access to prosperity and wellbeing? This is one of Canada's most fundamental challenges moving forward into the 21st century.

Next Steps

Much remains to be done to flesh out community vitality measurement – in general and for the purposes of the CIW. First, further analysis of our initial suite of indicators is needed, to explore the difference in social relationships and related norms and values for different sub-populations and geographies. Further work should also be undertaken to test and verify the value to this initial set of indicators and the conceptual model in describing and tracking community vitality over time. Second, these indicators have been selected based largely on the availability of trend data. There are certainly other possible indicators of community vitality worthy of exploration. This field of inquiry is relatively young. Much could be profitably gained from employing different methodologies to identify and analyse the structure and dynamics of various types relationships and networks that operate in communities.

Lastly, the goal of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing project is to enable Canadians to share in the best possible health and wellbeing by identifying, developing and publicizing measures that offer clear, valid and regular reporting on progress toward achieving the health and wellbeing we seek as a nation. To this end, it will be important to explore the links between the different domains of the CIW so that we are better equipped to identify and explain notable trends and gaps. More specifically, such an examination in partnership with other organizations working at the local, provincial and national levels, will assist in understanding the impact of positive or negative levels of community vitality – for individuals and communities. This is key to developing an action to enhance the wellbeing of all Canadians.

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1. Introduction and Background

The purpose of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) is to provide Canadians with a clear, valid, and regular accounting of the things that matter to them and the genuine progress of Canada.

Project Background

The development of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) is being undertaken by a number of researchers and organizations across Canada, under the direction of the Atkinson Charitable Foundation. The proposed Index focuses on eight domains that affect the wellbeing of Canadians, including: living standards; time management; healthy populations; democratic engagement; educated populace; ecosystem health; arts, culture and recreation; and community vitality. Different research teams are exploring individual domains in order to establish key concepts and identify potential measures. The CCSD's role is to consider the domain of "community vitality" and its inclusion in the CIW.

While many domains that make up the CIW are well established, with clearly articulated and accepted indicators, the domain of community vitality is relatively undeveloped in Canada. Nor is there a uniform or broadly accepted definition of what community vitality means. For example, some authors stress the economic dimension of community vitality. Shaffer and Summers (1988) define community vitality as the capacity of a local social system to generate income and employment in order to maintain, if not improve its relative economic position. Others have focused on the idea of sustainability of a community; they highlight institutional linkages and relationships, group and individual interaction within the community, community membership and social citizenship (Grigsby, 2001).

Despite this level of imprecision, individuals – including participants in the Stakeholder and Public Consultations around the CIW – report that community vitality broadly understood is central to their understanding of wellbeing. One key informant said: "this is the domain where the rubber hits the road." And individual's relationship to their community – both in terms of the stock and flow of resources and opportunities available to people and in terms of the strength and quality of relationships that people enjoy – is inextricably linked to wellbeing. The question is: what are the most important components of community vitality of the many possible dimensions to capture in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing?

As a starting point, the CIW Canadian Research Advisory Group (formerly the National Working Group) agreed to explore a number of concepts in order to identify the parameters of the community vitality domain and its component parts. These include: *social cohesion, social inclusion, social capital, sense of community, and community safety*.¹ In addition, this report also touches other potential constructs in order to spur discussion on a final working definition of community vitality. Each of these constituent concepts, in and of themselves, is also broad and

¹ In the original proposal, there was a longer list of related concepts noted. Following approval from the National Working Group, this list was narrowed as concepts were grouped and others dropped.

complex, subject to multiple interpretations. However, as noted above, these concepts have been chosen to serve as a starting point for further exploration of the concept of community vitality.

The goal of this concept paper is to discuss alternative conceptualizations of community vitality and its component parts and to propose a set of measures for the Canadian Research Advisory Group to consider as it develops the CIW. To this end, this paper will:

- present and discuss potential definitions of community vitality and its key components;
- set out key assumptions to assist in the selection of specific measures;
- identify a conceptual model of community vitality that lays out specific sub-domains of community vitality and potential indicators under each; and
- provide a list of initial headline indicators to measure community vitality, recognizing that this is but a first step in developing a robust set of measures to capture this key component of individual and social wellbeing.

This concept paper has been written in order to flesh out the community vitality domain and to serve as a basis in order to achieve consensus on its content. This paper – and the proposed indicator model – incorporates feedback from the Canadian Research Advisory Group, provided at the June 28, 2006 and the June 5, 2007 meetings, as well as feedback from members of the Community Vitality Expert Sub-Committee, the CIW Institute Board and a panel of external reviewers from Canada and abroad. The final paper was released in June 2009 at the launch of the Canadian Index of Well-being. This revision has been commissioned to update the headline indicators and re-assess the trend in community vitality.

Methodology

The following activities were undertaken to accomplish the goals of the project:

- 1) ***A Community Vitality Expert Sub-Committee.*** The CCSD set up a Community Vitality Expert Sub-Committee to guide the development of a working definition of community vitality and the selection of sub-domains and indicators.
- 2) ***An environmental scan.*** The CCSD conducted an environmental scan and collected background information on alternative definitions of community vitality (including the sub-domains of social inclusion, social cohesion, and community safety) and potential indicators for measuring community vitality. Information from a variety of sources including a review of academic, research, government and on-line resources were consulted. This information is presented in a spreadsheet that includes bibliographic information, a short summary and information on whether the paper includes potential indicators. A summary of the sources that were consulted and the search terms is included in Appendix A.
- 3) ***Analysis of existing community indicator reports.*** The CCSD identified and gathered a broad range of community-level indicator reports to inform the development of the community vitality domain. Several of these reports are highlighted in the text and appendices.

4) ***Survey of the Canadian Research Advisory Group.*** This activity was added by the CCSD to help incorporate expert opinion. A survey designed by the CCSD was sent out to Canadian Research Advisory Group members to solicit their opinions on community vitality, its fit within the CIW, and their views on some preliminary sub-domains and indicators. The Advisory Group has provided feedback at every stage of the development of the community vitality domain.

5) ***Review of Stakeholder and Public Consultations on the Canadian Index of Wellbeing.*** The CCSD also consulted and integrated the feedback from the consultation overview report on the community vitality domain (See Appendix B for a summary of findings.)

6) ***Review of existing relevant survey and administrative data sources.*** Finally, the CCSD analysed various potential data sources to construct the community vitality domain, assessing the validity of various measures, their availability, and comparability over time. Detailed findings on each potential measure are included in Appendix L of the Concept Paper.

Plan for Concept Paper

This concept paper only touches upon the wealth of material that has been gathered and reviewed for this report. Below, we present highlights of our findings and our recommendations for the Community Vitality Domain. In the next section we look at the ways in which the concept of community vitality has been defined in theory and in practice. Following this, the paper looks at related concepts and then at the ways in which these themes have been used and measured in existing community-level indicator reports in Sections 3 and 4. A list of principles is presented in Section 5 to guide the development of the indicator model for community vitality. In section 6, we present our proposed conceptual model of community vitality and in Section 7 the proposed set of “headline indicators” for community vitality and a discussion of community vitality based on an analysis of these indicators. The paper concludes with a set of recommendations for moving forward with the development of the community vitality domain.

2. Defining Community Vitality

The CIW National Working Group efforts to define wellbeing and our own efforts to propose an operational definition of community vitality are taking place against at least a decade of renewed interest in social indicators and statistics, and measures of the overall state of wellbeing in Canada. Not content with standard economic measures of progress, there has been growing interest among scholars and community-level practitioners and advocates in concepts such as social capital, social health, quality of life, and the sustainability of communities. The growing body of local indicator reports, many of which are highlighted in this report, bears witness to the sustained level of interest in these ideas. Communities across Canada and the United States are engaged in community reporting in order to track community conditions, inform policy choices, build consensus and promote accountability. New Zealand, under its 2002 *Local Government Act* now requires communities across the country to report on their social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing.

Generally speaking, these initiatives can be loosely grouped under four “sub-movements”: healthy communities; sustainable communities; quality of life reporting; and performance evaluation.² Each of these sub-movements tackles the common goal of improving individual and social wellbeing from a different perspective, reflecting the tremendous diversity in vision, organizational genesis, and purpose, as the following discussion illustrates.

The World Health Organization launched the “healthy communities” project in the mid 1980s in an effort to advance social, environmental and economic wellbeing at the community level. Since that time, many Canadian communities have taken up the challenge and regularly report on determinants of health (i.e., Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition³). At the same time, the environmental community was developing and promoting the notion of sustainable communities. The Earth Summit in 1992 spurred the creation of numerous community coalitions dedicated to promoting a vision of socially, economically and environmentally sustainable communities (e.g., Sustainable Seattle⁴, Sustainable Calgary⁵). Other communities adopted a “quality of life” approach, an approach that has strong theoretical and empirical links to the social indicator work in the 1960s and 1970s. These initiatives are characterized by a comprehensive approach to community wellbeing, one that encompasses economic, social, cultural and environmental dimensions. For example, the *Quality of Life Progress Report* of Jacksonville, Florida, one of the first in North America, reports annually on 114 indicators across nine theme areas.⁶ The FCM *Quality of Life Reporting System* tracks 10 different dimensions of community life in 16 Canadian municipalities.⁷ *Oregon Benchmarks*, launched in 1989, took the community indicator movement in a new direction with its focus on benchmarking and performance measurement. Through extensive community consultation, the state of Oregon developed a 20-year strategic

² See David Swain and Danielle Hollar (2003), “Measuring Progress: Community Indicators and the Quality of Life,” *International Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. 26, No. 7, p. 795.

³ See <http://www.healthycommunities.on.ca/ohcc.htm>

⁴ <http://www.healthycommunities.on.ca/ohcc.htm>

⁵ <http://www.sustainablecalgary.ca/home.html>

⁶ <http://www.jcci.org/statistics/qualityoflife.aspx>

⁷ <http://www.fcm.ca/english/qol/qol.html>

vision (*Oregon Shines*) and a set of targets / outcomes and measures (published each year by the Oregon Progress Board) to guide public policy and resource allocation.⁸

The concept of community vitality and efforts to measure community vitality in specific communities need to be understood against this backdrop. Below, we look at the concept of community vitality in detail, its constituent components, and the ways in which it has been measured. The goal of this discussion is to identify the unique dimensions of community vitality, in comparison to other community indicator initiatives, in order to develop a working definition for the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. This overview also explores the conceptual challenges involved in defining the community vitality domain. These challenges are summarized in the conclusion of this section and inform the proposed model set out in Section 6.

A Note about Community

The definition of “community” is central to the concept of community vitality and its place within the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. It is also arguably the most difficult dimension of the CIW to pin down, as community has many possible meanings. The *Dictionary of Human Geography* includes a number of different definitions of community that have emerged over time from various fields of research.⁹ Generally, community has been defined to include three inter-related concepts or elements:

- the quality of holding something in common such as values, goals or interests;
- a social bonding and an accompanying shared sense of self or identity; and
- the people of a certain district, neighbourhood or town.

The 1979 Task Force on Canadian Unity, for instance, stressed the first and second elements in its definition of community as “*a group of persons joined together by a consciousness of the characteristics they have in common...and by a consciousness of the interests they share.*” This definition stresses both common values and interests (not necessarily bounded by geographic proximity) highlighted in Ferdinand Tönnies concept of *Gemeinschaft*¹⁰ and the sense of belonging engendered through participation in or identification with an active social network.

By contrast, more recent work on place-based public policy and programs has highlighted the specific geographic locale or territory in the definition of community as interacting individuals within a defined neighbourhood, town, municipality, city or economic region. In Canada, and among other industrialized countries, there has been a revival of interest in local communities and among policy-makers, a revival of interest in issues of place management and governance. The

⁸ <http://www.oregon.gov/DAS/OPB/index.shtml>

⁹ James Marsh, ed. (1999). *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, p. 525. See also R. J. Johnston, et al., eds. (2000). *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. 4th edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing for an interesting discussion of the evolution of the concept of community in sociology.

¹⁰ *Gemeinschaft* is a German word introduced by sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936) to define an ‘ideal type’, or model, society where social bonds are personal and direct and there are strong shared values and beliefs. Tönnies saw the family as the most perfect expression of *Gemeinschaft*; however, he also noted that *Gemeinschaft* could be based on shared place and shared belief as well as kinship. See Ferdinand Tönnies (1957), *Community and Society: Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, translated and edited by Charles P. Loomis, East Lansing: Michigan State University Press.

Final Report of the External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities, *From Restless Communities to Resilient Places* (2006), is clearly grounded in a geographical understanding of community, its central argument being that the success of Canada in meeting current and future challenges hinges on recognizing and fostering local response and sense of community.¹¹

The question for the National Working Group (NWG) is whether “community” should be identified and measured as a geographic or symbolic construct and / or whether community is going to be understood as an entity with certain characteristics or a process of engagement. This question is critical to the development of the domain and the selection of indicators. While a community vitality domain can conceivably contain measures of both types of communities as well as indicators of community attributes and processes, it is essential to establish a primary focus for the domain, flowing from the choice of the definition for the domain’s two key concepts, community and vitality.

We come back to this question in Section 5 after the review of the conceptual literature on community vitality and its related concepts.

Defining Community Vitality in Theory

Community vitality means the set of relationships, capacity and creativity that exist in a community that helps the community as a whole to sustain itself, solve common problems, and to express its unique identity (Key Informant)

Community vitality can be defined and measured across three stools (economy, society and environment) by personal and other reports of relative observables and unobservables. A community with high levels of vitality would have relatively large proportions of people actively engaged in personal and public projects, a vibrant mix of economic activities from production to consumption, all of this in the context of sustainable environmental stewardship. (Key informant)

These two quotations reveal the different themes that have been associated in theory and in practice with the concept of community vitality. The idea of vital or resilient communities dates back to the 1960s and 1970s, in the early community psychology literature.¹² In this work, community vitality is defined as the ability of communities to collectively solve problems. This literature talks about “competent communities” that are able to:

- collaborate and work effectively in identifying their problems and needs;
- achieve a working consensus on goals and priorities;

¹¹ Final Report of the External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities (2006), *From Restless Communities to Resilient Places: Building a Stronger Future for all Canadians*. Ottawa: Infrastructure Canada. “Governments in Canada,” the report argues, “have lost their sense of place in policy-making. We lag competitors in understanding how the geographies arising from current economic and social changes shape our capacity to achieve our ambitious aims for the future ... Understanding how places work, and managing them more effectively, are central to better Canadian futures and to reducing the extent and costs of unequal outcomes today.” (p. 16)

¹² See L. Cotrell (1975). “The competent community,” in B. Kaplan et.al. (eds.) *Further Explorations in Social Psychiatry*. New York: Basic Books. Cited in Grisby, p. 2.

- agree on ways and means to implement the agreed-upon goals and priorities; and
- collaborate effectively in the required actions.

As alluded to above, the concept of community vitality has also been used to “the capacity of a local social system to generate income and employment in order to maintain, if not improve its relative economic position.”¹³ This definition equates vitality with community economic development. Adaptability and maintenance of a local resource base are identified as key factors underlying vital communities.

More recently, the concept of community vitality has been used to refer to the presence of institutional linkages and relationships, group and individual interaction, and community membership or social citizenship. This third approach is clearly linked to the work on social capital. Vital communities are understood as having strong relationships and/or networks between individuals, groups, local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and institutions such as government that sustain communities over time.¹⁴

Defining Community Vitality in Practice

The breadth of the concept is evident in practical application as well, as the following examples illustrate. In Canada, a few community indicator initiatives are engaged in ongoing efforts to measure community vitality. The *Vital Signs* project,¹⁵ first published by the Community Foundation of Toronto in 2001 and now being expanded to include other communities across the country, and the *Action for Neighbourhood Change*,¹⁶ spearheaded by United Way Canada, are two examples. Similarly, several American communities explore the concept of vitality in their local or regional indicator reports.

Most of these initiatives do not define the term community vitality *per se*; rather they identify a list of outcomes – through different means – that project leaders and/or citizens associate with vital communities or neighbourhoods. For example, the *Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force*,¹⁷ sponsored by the City of Toronto and the United Way of Greater Toronto, defines strong neighbourhoods as:

- 1) **Inclusive.** This includes active community involvement; democratic processes, strong sense of belonging; a welcoming community; respect for diversity, tolerances.
- 2) **Vibrant.** This includes an active street life (e.g., cafes, shops and services, opportunities for interaction; a strong sense of place, ‘identity’ and pride).

¹³ R. Shaffer and G. Summers (1988). Community economic development. In *Community Economic Vitality: Major Trends and Selected Issues*. Ames, IA: The North Central Regional Center for Rural Development.

¹⁴ See P. Smailes (1995). “The enigma of social sustainability in rural Australia,” *Australian Geographer*. Vol. 26, No. 2. Cited in Grisby, p. 2.

¹⁵ <http://www.torontovitalsigns.com/>

¹⁶ http://www.anccommunity.ca/index_english.html

¹⁷ GHK (2005), *Measuring Neighbourhood Vitality: Final Report*. Toronto. Report prepared for the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force. http://www.urbancentre.utoronto.ca/pdfs/curp/SNTF_Neigh-Vitality_RP3.pdf#search=%22measuring%20neighbourhood%20vitality%22

- 3) **Cohesive.** This includes a sense of mutual responsibility and strong bonds of reciprocity (e.g., neighbourhoods looking out for each other's children; trust (e.g., not having to worry about locking doors; negotiated solutions to conflicts).
- 4) **Safe.** This includes both subjective feelings of safety (people feeling they can go anywhere, feeling comfortable in public), as well as objective measures of safety (e.g., freedom from crime, absence of pollutants and contaminants, safe buildings).

The *Action for Neighbourhood Change* project team's concept of neighbourhood vitality is based on John McKnight and John Kretzmann's work on community assets.¹⁸ For McKnight, the most important aspects of any community are not its 'deficits' but its assets, here including economic and physical assets as well as human assets, both individual and collective, that are assembled in networks and social relationships. Working from this perspective, the ANC team defines vitality as the sum of a community's assets. A neighbourhood is vital if, at a minimum:

- 1) residents can and will act together for the collective benefit;
- 2) collectively residents are able to reach outside the neighbourhood and mobilize resources for collective benefit;
- 3) residents have some capacity to influence policies that affect them and to garner support for their development and implementation; and
- 4) there is a strong sense of collective efficacy.¹⁹

In order to promote the capacity of individuals and families to build and sustain strong, healthy communities, the project team has developed a neighbourhood vitality framework that brings together a theory of change model, a methodology for profiling neighbourhoods and evaluating vitality (a Neighbourhood Vitality Index), and a process for identifying and mapping the change context. The Neighbourhood Vitality Index is a catalogue of indicators that assist communities to profile neighbourhoods, assess levels of vitality or distress, monitor and track change, and evaluate impact.

The *Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership* (CIEL) based in Nelson, BC, has employed a similar approach in their definition of community vitality.²⁰ In the CIEL framework, community vitality refers to the degree to which communities are economically profitable, ecologically sustainable, and socially desirable. To this end, the CIEL has developed a tool that assesses communities through a survey of residents in several broad domains:

- 1) **Personal and economic security.** There is adequate and diversified employment, a range of types of affordable housing, and personal safety.

¹⁸ John McKnight and John Kretzmann (1993). *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets*. Evanston, IL: Institute for Policy Research.

¹⁹ Action for Neighbourhood Change (March 2007), *Rebuilding Neighbourhoods: A Neighbourhood Vitality Framework*, Unpublished Draft.

²⁰ <http://www.theciel.com/cvi.php>

- 2) **A learning culture.** A spirit of life-long learning, and a hunger for knowledge and wisdom, pervades the community. There is a variety of modes of learning for all age groups.
- 3) **A culture of wellness.** Supported by adequate health facilities, citizens take responsibility for their own health. The leadership of the community actively encourages fitness, wellness, and prevention.
- 4) **Innovative leadership.** The formal and informal leadership of the community encourages discussion, participation, and new ideas in public affairs and in business. There is an energetic flow of ideas and opinions, and there are many active groups.
- 5) **A clean environment.** The water, air, and land are healthy.
- 6) **Vibrant arts, architecture, and culture.** There are galleries, concerts, and celebrations. The built environment is beautiful and pedestrian-friendly, with an unhurried, neighbourly feeling. There are many people working in cultural and creative occupations.
- 7) **Diversity and sense of community.** The community is home to a diversity of types of people: ages, occupations, races, languages. They talk to each other, and there is a strong sense of community.
- 8) **Community entrepreneurship and innovation.** The community actively fosters a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship and the opportunities for business and employment. Entrepreneurial ventures and business creation are encouraged and supported by citizens and local governments.
- 9) **Physical space.** The community is attractive and accessible. Public infrastructure is well maintained and used. There are welcoming public places to meet.

Looking to the United States, in Chicago, the Metro Chicago Information Centre (MCIC) has developed a *Community Vitality Index* that brings together a similarly broad list of attributes that emphasize not only traditional economic measures of vitality, but also the human and cultural potential of neighbourhoods as well.²¹ The MCIC community vitality index measures three equally-weighted sub-domains:

- social capital (the connections between people that allow communities to work together);
- economic potential (community economic assets that can be leveraged for community change); and
- community amenities (the presence of different amenities that serve as the nuclei for the growth of social capital and community development).

Each component is comprised of sub-components, data for which are gathered, analysed and mapped for every census tract in the greater Chicago metropolitan area. Individual census tracts are compared to the minimum, median, mean and maximum values of regional benchmarks.

Further information on the models developed by Action for Neighbourhood Change, the Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership and the Metro Chicago Information Centre is provided in Section 4.

²¹ <http://info.mcfol.org/www/datainfo/cvi/>

Discussion

In theory and in practice, the concept of community vitality defies easy definition. William Grisby, in fact, suggests that it seems to lend itself better to “list-making” than to concise theorization or application.²² (Indeed, this concept paper will suggest several lists of indicators to consider). That said, several core themes or assumptions are evident in the literature and the initiatives briefly outlined above.

- **Change:** Communities change over time, especially as their connections with the broader environment expand and intensify. Vitality is used in this work to refer to the collective capacity of communities to adapt and thrive in the face of change, including economic change. The terms ‘resilience,’ ‘sustainability,’ and ‘adaptability’ are also commonly used.
- **Agency:** The notion of agency is common across approaches and can be thought of as the engine of community vitality. Vital communities are those that have the capacity to act, to develop and marshal resources (different forms of capital) together, in pursuit of individual and social wellbeing.
- **Inclusion:** Vital communities are also inclusive communities, where there is broad participation in community development at the grassroots level as well as in leadership positions. Vital communities are those which enable citizens to participate in social and economic life under conditions which enhance their wellbeing and individual potential.²³
- **Relationships:** In a similar vein, existing community vitality reports place a great deal of importance on formal and informal relationships that facilitate interaction and community engagement, and the sense of belonging that citizens report. There is a clear link to the work on social cohesion and social capital (reviewed below) that sees positive social relationships and the norms they promote (i.e., trust and reciprocity) as key to effective collective action.

In sum, community vitality can be thought of as **active engagement** towards the **betterment of the community**, the latter incorporating issues of prosperity, distribution (inclusion), and sustainability, as defined by democratic community process. Vital communities are engaged not only in the collective task of “getting by” but also of “getting ahead.” Alan Black and Philip Hughes, in a review of the literature on community strength, conclude that: “the notions sustainability, resilience, capacity and health, as applied to communities, all point to the ‘capacities’ of communities to maintain and enhance outcomes ... not just for the present, but for future generations ... maintaining outcomes in the face of shocks and stresses which might otherwise diminish the capacity of a community.”²⁴ To this end, the energies, knowledge and skill of engaged residents fuel the engine of community wellbeing.

²² William Grisby (2001). *Community Vitality: Some Conceptual Consideration*. The Northeast Regional Centre for Rural Development. Rural Development Paper No.6. 2001. [www.cas.nercd.psu.edu]

²³ See W. Beck, L. van der Maeson, et al., (2001). “Social quality: from issue to concept,” in W. Beck, L. van der Maeson and A. Walker, eds. *The Social Quality of Europe*. Kluwer Law International, The Hague, Netherlands., p. 7. Cited in Phillips and Berman (2003). “Social quality and ethnos communities: Concepts and indicators,” *Community Development Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 4, October, p. 345.

²⁴ Alan Black and Philip Hughes (2001). *The identification and analysis of indicators of community strength and outcomes*. A Report to the Department of Family and Community Services, Department of Family and Community

From this perspective, a host of issues are potentially relevant to the discussion of vital communities, including social and economic security, sustainable use of natural resources, formal and informal social networks, vibrant arts and culture, employment creation and maintenance, human capital investment, civic engagement, diversity, resilience, and access to external resources and local infrastructure. As a result, existing community vitality reports have tended to embody a **comprehensive perspective** on wellbeing, similar to the one that has been adopted in the CIW initiative and other quality of life reporting programs. Further, the concept of community vitality as it has been defined and operationalized to date refers to both the **characteristics** of a community and the **conditions** or **processes** necessary to create them. This dual focus on process and outcomes, on structure and agency, as well as what should be included under this domain are both important considerations in developing the theoretical foundations of the CIW community vitality domain – issues to which we will return in Section 5.

Next, we extend this discussion by exploring several concepts that have been linked to community vitality. Again, we will be analysing this work as we build our own definition of community vitality, highlighting cross-cutting themes and challenges with regard to measurement.

Services Occasional Paper, No. 3, Edith Cowan University. Cited in Sean Meagher (2007), *A Neighbourhood Vitality Index: An Approach to Measuring Neighbourhood Well-being*. A Report for Action for Neighbourhood Change. Toronto: United Way of Greater Toronto, p. 16.

3. Conceptual Building Blocks

The Stakeholder and Public Consultations conducted for the CIW project reveal that citizens understand the importance of community vitality as key to their own quality of life yet they are hard pressed to define it. In this, their struggle to define the essence of successful communities mirrors the National Working Group's attempt to identify the qualities or characteristics that distinguish vital communities from others. The environmental scan of the community vitality literature has highlighted a number of themes, including the idea of change and adaptability, the presence of strong social networks, and the sense of belonging. In order to further this discussion, we discuss these potential building blocks below, linking the discussion of community vitality to other relevant debates about concepts such as social capital and community safety. Through this effort, we hope to capture potential themes – and possible measures – of community vitality.

In the original proposal, we identified several related concepts to explore, including *social cohesion, social inclusion, social capital, personal security and safety, sense of community, arts and culture, identity, multi-culturalism, diversity, spirituality, and family*. In the following discussion, we have elected to narrow this field by grouping several of these concepts together where there is evident overlap with regard to definition and measurement. As a starting point, the paper explores the following concepts in the community vitality domain: *social cohesion, social inclusion, social capital, sense of community, and community safety*. In addition, this report also touches other potential constructs such as diversity in order to spur discussion on a final working definition of community vitality.

We are excluding the concepts of family and spirituality as separate topics of discussion. Experts consulted for this report determined that while family relationships and faith were clearly important to individual wellbeing, it would be difficult to determine or articulate the relationship or impact of family type and spirituality on community vitality or the notion of societal wellbeing. (We do discuss the issue of family relationships and participation in organized religion below but not as distinct and separate components of the indicator model). Therefore, these items have been excluded but are possible candidates for future development.

As well, following the meeting of the National Working Group (NWG) of June 28, 2006, the NWG decided to create a separate domain called “Arts, Culture and Recreation” that will focus on the strength and resilience of identity, including language, and sense of cultural belonging.

Please note, the list of concepts that might be useful to consider in the development of the community vitality domain is extensive. We have been guided in our selection by the advice of the Canadian Research Advisory Group and its initial selection of potential components, as well as by consideration of the content of other domains of the CIW such as educated populace, healthy population, and living standards. As such, the list of related concepts discussed below is confined to material that is not reviewed elsewhere.

Below, a brief description of each conceptual building block is presented along with an overview of some of the key attempts to measure these concepts in practice.

Social Cohesion

The first discussions of social cohesion took place in Europe. The European Union, the Council of Europe and the OECD have published an extensive literature on social cohesion and related topics, and have committed significant resources to combating social exclusion.²⁵ In Canada, social cohesion – and subsequently social capital – has been the subject of cross-cutting research at the Policy Research Initiative, a research unit of the Privy Council Office of the Government of Canada tasked with the advancement of research on horizontal issues.²⁶ Interest in these concepts has also been taken up in the academic and community sectors as well.

This work confirms that concepts such as social cohesion and those we examine below – social capital and social inclusion / exclusion – are useful lenses for understanding the wellbeing of communities and society more broadly. At the same time, they remain difficult to operationalize. This problem stems in part from difficulties in adequately defining and measuring these concepts and assessing their impact on other individual or community-level outcomes. There is a clear need for better operational understandings of these concepts in order to develop policies and programs that foster social and economic wellbeing. Below, we look at a range of definitions and assess their usefulness in the effort to define community vitality.

In 1996, a Social Cohesion Network was established in the federal government, headed up by the Policy Research Initiative of the Privy Council Office. As a starting point, the Network adopted the following working definition: “*Social cohesion is the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity within Canada, based on a sense of trust, hope and reciprocity among all Canadians.*”²⁷ Subsequent work refined this definition. Jane Jenson’s monograph on the concept of social cohesion, for example, presented a more nuanced definition grounded in its theoretical origins that stressed the connection between social cohesion and social order.²⁸ Jenson broke down the concept of social cohesion into five distinct dimensions or axes, each of which captures one distinct facet of social cohesion:

- Belonging-isolation
- Inclusion-exclusion
- Participation-non-involvement
- Recognition-rejection
- Legitimacy-illegitimacy

Paul Bernard, building on Jenson’s social cohesion mapping exercise, adds a sixth dimension – equality-inequality (here including both equality of opportunity and equality of condition).²⁹ A summary table is presented below.

²⁵ See Sharon Jeanotte (2000). *SRA-309: Social Cohesion around the World: An International Comparison of Definitions and Issues*. Ottawa: Canadian Heritage. Copies are available through the Strategic Research and Analysis Directorate at Canadian Heritage.

²⁶ See [www. Since 2000, PRI has shifted focus. It has explored the use of social capital as a public policy tool.](http://policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=rp_sc_index)

²⁷ PRI, Social Cohesion Research Workplan, March, 1997.

²⁸ Jenson, Jane. *Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research*. Ottawa: CPRN, November 27, 1998.

²⁹ Bernard, Paul (1999). CPRN Discussion Paper. *Social Cohesion: A Critique*. Ottawa: CPRN. CPRN Discussion Paper No. F09. <http://www2.arts.ubc.ca/cresp/scc.pdf>.

Dimensions of Social Cohesion Bernard, 1999		
Domain	Formal	Informal
Economic	Inclusion/Exclusion	Equality/Inequality
Political	Legitimacy/Illegitimacy	Participation/Passivity
Socio-Cultural	Recognition/Rejection	Belonging/Isolation

In a more recent paper on the topic, members from the Strategic Research and Analysis Branch at Canadian Heritage presented a modified definition: *social cohesion is based on the willingness of individuals to cooperate and work together at all levels of society to achieve collective goals.*³⁰ They argue that social cohesion requires both support for collective social activities and trust in others and in institutions. In a socially cohesive society, citizens have a sense of belonging and inclusion, they participate actively, their differences are recognized, and they are both treated equally and enjoy a relative measure of equality in an environment where public and private institutions are trusted and recognized. While authoritarian regimes can imitate the signs of social cohesion by advancing shared values and the ability to undertake collective action, these processes are coercive and exclusionary, and as such, undermine the conditions necessary for voluntary social cohesion to exist.

The Canadian Council on Social Development has focussed its own work on social cohesion on the question of measurement. Social cohesion is defined as *the willingness of people to cooperate and engage in voluntary relationships*. From this perspective, social cohesion, or lack thereof, is evident in individual and collective practices that foster: solidarity with others; participation in formal and informal networks, group activities and associations; participation in civic life; acceptance of diversity, trust and confidence in others and in the community; and a sense of belonging.³¹ It can be measured at different level of geographies and is not just confined to communities or neighbourhoods.

The CCSD's indicator model for the measurement of social cohesion includes indicators of the conditions favourable to the creation of social cohesion as well indicators of socially cohesive activity. That is, the model includes both "inputs" as well as "outputs." As well, the social cohesion indicator model includes both objective data and subjective data such as the individual's perception of neighbourhood safety. As a general note, experts consulted were clear about the importance of including perceptual data. However, it should be noted that sources for this type of information are limited and sometimes difficult to use. The wording of public opinion polling

³⁰ Jeannette, Sharon et al. (2002). *Buying in or dropping out: The Public Policy Implication of Social Cohesion Research*. Ottawa: Strategic Research and Analysis (SRA), Strategic Planning and Policy Coordination, Department of Canadian Heritage. Ref. SRA-631-e.

³¹ Canadian Council on Social Development (2000). *Social Cohesion in Canada: Possible Indicators. Highlights*. Ottawa: Strategic Research and Analysis (SRA), Strategic Planning and Policy Coordination, Department of Canadian Heritage. Ref. SRA-542.

questions, for example, often changes over time. These points will be taken up below in the discussion of the proposed conceptual model for community vitality.

Social Cohesion: Indicator Model
Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000

Conditions Favourable for Social Cohesion

- Economic conditions that impact socially cohesive activity
 - Distribution of income
 - Income polarization
 - Poverty
 - Employment
 - Mobility
- Life Chances
 - Health care
 - Education
 - Adequate and affordable housing
- Quality of Life
 - Population health
 - Personal and family security
 - Economic security
 - State of the family
 - Time use
 - Built environment
 - Quality of natural environment

Elements of Socially Cohesive Activity

- Willingness of cooperate
 - Trust in people
 - Confidence in institutions
 - Respect for diversity
 - Understanding of reciprocity
 - Belonging
- Participation
 - Social consumption / social support networks
 - Participation in networks and groups
 - Political participation
- Literacy

Two others efforts of operationalizing social cohesion are worth noting. Fernando Rajulton, Zenaida Ravanera and Rod Beaujot of the Population Studies Centre at the University of Western Ontario have developed an exploratory model for measuring social cohesion at the community level (here defined as Census Metropolitan Areas), using the 2000 National Survey on Giving,

Volunteering and Participating.³² Drawing on this data set, they identify potential indicators to correspond to the definition of social cohesion developed by Jenson (1998) and Bernand (1999), noted above. Statistical techniques including factor analysis and standardization were applied to the data to generate an overall index of social cohesion for each CMA. To this end, the scores of each sub-domain – social, political and economic – were averaged with weights of 30% for the Social and Political domains and 40% for the Economic domain.

Rajulton, Ravanera and Beaujot, 2003	
Political-Legitimacy	Proportion of people voting in last federal election Proportion of people voting in last provincial election Proportion of people voting in last municipal election
Political-Participation	Proportion volunteering Proportion participating in organizations
Economic-Inclusion	Proportion in full-time jobs Proportion with job tenure
Economic-Equality	Proportion with personal incomes greater than \$20,000
Social-Belonging	Proportion socializing weekly with family and relatives Proportion socializing weekly with friends Proportion joining weekly in sports and recreation with friends
Social-Recognition	Heterogeneity measure of major ethnic groups

Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed that the indicators chosen had a statistically significant impact in each of the three domains identified but that the error variance was also high, suggesting that there was a need for other, potentially more powerful, indicators such as “ideational” indicators. As well, the relationship between the different indicators and the sub-domains was not straight forward, pointing to the need for a more refined conceptualization of the various dimensions of social cohesion.

With regard to the index, there was no consistency in the ranking of CMAs with regard to each of the three sub-domains. The most “socially cohesive” cities were small cities, while larger CMAs from Ontario dominated the list of “economically cohesive” cities. And those that had a high overall score did not necessarily rank high in all three domains. The authors suggest that different cities differ in their basis for cohesion and that when weak in one area, they compensate by being strong in another. They acknowledge that another data set might well produce different results. That noted, these findings highlight the complexity of “social cohesion” at the community level.

³² Fernando Rajulton, Zenaida Ravanera and Rod Beaujot (2003). “How Cohesive are Canadian CMAs? A Measure of Social Cohesion using the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating,” Discussion Paper No. 03-10, Population Studies Centre, University of Western Ontario.

Regina Berger-Schmitt has also developed a theoretical model to operationalize the concept of social cohesion, drawing on the European System of Social Indicators.³³ Her model looks at the literature on social cohesion as well as the conceptual work on the concepts of social exclusion, social capital and quality of life. For her, social cohesion incorporates two “societal goals dimensions”: the reduction of disparities, inequalities and social exclusion; and the strengthening of social relations, interactions and ties (social capital). Under each goal dimension, she identifies several related issues (outlined below.) These dimensions are then operationalized for the different life domains around which the European System of Social Indicators has been built (i.e., population; households and families; housing; transport; leisure, media and culture; social and political participation and integration; education and vocational training; labour market and working conditions; income, standard of living and consumption patterns; health; environment; social security; public safety and crime; total life situation).

Berger-Schmitt, 2000	
Societal Goal Dimensions	Constituent Issues
1. Reducing disparities, inequalities and social exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional disparities • Equal opportunities of / inequalities between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Women and men ○ Generations ○ Social strata ○ People with disabilities ○ Citizenship groups • Social exclusion
2. Strengthening social capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of social relations • Social and political activities and engagement • Quality of social relations • Quality of societal institutions • European-specific concerns re: social cohesion between European countries

Berger-Schmitt focuses predominantly on “social and political participation and integration” and “labour market and working conditions” for which several indicators are available. She concludes that the challenge is to find the best indicators – the most meaningful, valid and reliable – that are of high political relevance and can be measured over time for as many countries as possible. This is the challenge before the CIW initiative as well.

Social Inclusion / Social Exclusion

³³ Regina Berger-Schmitt (2000). “Social Cohesion as an Aspect of the Quality of Societies: Concept and Measurement,” EuReporting Working Paper, No. 14, Centre for Survey Research and Methodology, Social Indicators Department, Mannheim.

The concepts of social inclusion and social exclusion have also been topics of scholarly and policy debate over the past decade that has generated a great deal of interest. Governments in Europe, notably the United Kingdom,³⁴ and in Canada have explored social inclusion and what it might mean for public policy. Other community-based actors have also embraced the concept of social inclusion, including the Laidlaw Foundation, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, regional social planning councils, and the CCSD.

Like social cohesion, social inclusion embodies a variety of ideals such as the valuing of diversity; equity; the recognition and acceptance of difference; economic security; and active participation in society including the opportunity and the ability to participate in ways that have meaning for individuals and are valued. And like social cohesion, it can be understood or framed as an input or an output / outcome, depending on the definition and the purpose of the research. This is an inherent tension running through CIW as each of the domains is linked to others, thus serving as both input and outcome. For example, the link between economic security and healthy populations is well established. Even within each domain, inputs or preconditions and outcomes are typically identified and measured. This characteristic is important in considering the design of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, a topic to which we will return below.

Amartya Sen's work has been widely credited with advancing the concept of inclusion. Sen argues that quality of life should ultimately be judged in terms of "the freedom to choose a life one has reason to value."³⁵ Sen's work draws on discussions of social justice within the broad liberal tradition to stress the distinct dimensions of human wellbeing, which range from meeting bare subsistence needs, to the need of the individual to participate in and be recognized by society, to the need to the individual to exercise choice in the development of talents and capabilities which give meaning to life. The degree of inclusiveness of a society is, by extension, to be judged in terms of the freedom or capability of persons within it to both choose and achieve a desired set of valuable 'functionings'. The functionings which make up 'a life one has reason to value' range from the most elementary and universal such as freedom from hunger and disease, to being well housed, to access to education, to active participation in the life of the community and gaining the self respect which comes from recognition by the community. Following from this concept of freedom as capacities or capabilities, inclusion is characterized "*by a society's widely shared social experience and active participation, by a broad equality of opportunities and life chances for individuals, and by the achievement of a basic level of well-being for all citizens.*"³⁶

In Canada, the Laidlaw Foundation has taken up and promoted the concept of social inclusion as a framework or lens for developing and promoting a progressive social agenda, linking long-standing concerns regarding poverty, unemployment, income inequality, unequal opportunities and life chances, discrimination and barriers to participation. The Laidlaw Foundation defines social inclusion as "*the capacity and willingness of our society to keep all groups within reach of what we expect as a society – the social commitment and investments necessary to ensure that*

³⁴ See <http://www.socialinclusionunit.gov.uk/>

³⁵ Amartya Sen (2001). *Development as Freedom*. Oxford University Press, p. 74.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

socially and economically vulnerable people are within reach of our common aspirations, common life and its common wealth.”³⁷

Both of these definitions embody two key notions that are useful to consider in defining social inclusion and for work around community vitality. First, socially inclusive societies are those where there is **equality of opportunity** for individuals to develop their talents, capacities or capabilities to the fullest extent possible. And second, inclusive societies are those that have achieved a **basic level of wellbeing** among citizens, where citizens are **actively engaged**, and experiences are **widely shared**.³⁸ Thus, inclusion involves a set of processes for meeting basic needs and creating the circumstances necessary to the full development and active participation of individuals, taking into account that attention must be paid not only to formal processes but also to substantive outcomes. Following from this, social inclusion is understood to have four key elements or dimensions: the spatial (i.e., geographic proximity, economic proximity); relational (i.e., social proximity, solidarity, recognition); functional / developmental (i.e., talents; potential human capital; assets/liabilities); and participation/empowerment (i.e., agency).

How then to measure social inclusion? There are obvious difficulties involved in measuring the extent to which individuals have freedom to choose lives they have reason to value, or as Sen describes it, the freedom to choose desired ‘functionings.’ In an important article, Brandolini and Alessio make the case that social inclusion can be measured by assessing the level **and** distribution of key functionings at the level of the individual, household, and community.³⁹ Drawing upon the Swedish Level of Living Surveys, they identify nine components of wellbeing:

- Health and access to health care (health status and access to the health system)
- Employment and working conditions (labour market conditions and working conditions)
- Economic resources (income, wealth, degree of economic security)
- Education and skills (level of attainment, access)
- Family and social integration (contacts with family, friends; social participation)
- Housing
- Security of life and property (vulnerability to crime)
- Recreation and culture (access, use)
- Political resources (civic engagement)

The key point here, and one to consider in the design of the community vitality domain and the CIW as a whole, is that an inclusive society is not only a society where there is basic access to these resources or preconditions to wellbeing, but it is a society where there is an equitable distribution of these resources, where citizens share in a common social, economic and political space. This raises questions, at a minimum, about the type of measures to include in the community vitality domain and the relevant geographies to consider.

³⁷ Christa Freiler (2001). “What needs to change? Towards a vision of social inclusion for children, families and communities,” Toronto: Laidlaw Foundation.

³⁸ Peter Clutterbuck (November 2001). *Social Inclusion: Raising or Removing the Bar*. Toronto: Laidlaw Foundation. <http://www.laidlawfdn.org/programmes/children/agenda-discuss-rt.html>. See also: http://www.opc.on.ca/english/our_programs/hlth_promo/project_ini/soc_econ/full/index.htm

³⁹ Brandolini, A. & D’Alessio, G. (1998). “Measuring well-being in the functioning space.” Banca d’Italia, Research Department. Paper prepared for the 26th General Conference of the International Association for Research in Income and Wealth, Cracow, Poland, August 2000.

Social inclusion also provides a conceptual framework that accommodates interest and concern about diversity and the wellbeing of different groups that have been historically marginalized in Canadian social, economic and political life, including members of ethno-racial minority groups, people with disabilities, and Aboriginal peoples. A social inclusion framework focuses attention on the differential life experiences of all citizens within a community and in so doing, highlights the need to remove barriers to equal participation, free from discrimination. A socially inclusive society is thus one that develops the talents and capacities of all members, promotes inclusive participation in all walks of life, actively combats individual and systemic discrimination, and provides valued recognition to groups such as ethno-racial communities.⁴⁰

As well, the concept of social inclusion highlights the importance of place, and thus provides a bridge to studies of distressed communities – a theme of relevance in many discussions of community vitality. Work in Canada and elsewhere has documented the connection between mutually reinforcing sources of disadvantage and geography.⁴¹ For example, the geographic concentration of long-term poverty and unemployment, particularly among minority populations, is evidence of disparities that have implications for a host of social and economic outcomes among individuals and households, and at the community level as well. As such, social inclusion can serve as a link between diversity, discussed above, and the equitable distribution of opportunities and resources within given communities and the concept of community vitality.

Social capital

Like social cohesion and social inclusion, social capital is another concept that has inspired a large number of studies that are useful to consider in developing a definition and system of measurement for community vitality.

Robert Putnam, who popularized the notion of social capital, defines it as the “*features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.*”⁴² Other definitions have been developed as well with a view to measuring social capital. Statistics New Zealand, for example, has published a Framework for the Measurement of Social Capital in New Zealand (2001) that defines social capital as: “*relationships among actors (individuals, groups and/or organizations) that create a capacity for mutual benefit or a common purpose.*”⁴³ This definition is similar to the one set out by the OECD: “*social capital is networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that*

⁴⁰ See Anver Saloojee (2003). *Social Inclusion, Anti-Racism and Democratic Citizenship*, Toronto: Laidlaw Foundation, Working Paper Series: Perspectives on Social Inclusion.
<http://www.laidlawfdn.org/cms/file/children/saloojee.pdf>

⁴¹ See Paul Jargowsky (1996). *Poverty and Place: Ghettos, Barrios and the American City*. New York: Russell Sage; Kevin Lee (2000). *Urban Poverty in Canada*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development; Miles Corak and Andrew Heisz (1998), “Neighbourhoods, Social Capital and the Long-term Prospects of Children,” Paper for CSLS Conference on the State of Living Standards and the Quality of Life in Canada.
<http://www.csls.ca/events/oct98/corak.pdf#search=%22neighbourhood%20social%20capital%20corak%22>

⁴² Putnam, R. (2001). “Social Capital: Measurement and Consequences,” *ISUMA*. Ottawa: PRI.

⁴³ Anne Spellerberg (2001). Framework for the Measurement of Social Capital in New Zealand,” Statistics New Zealand. Catalogue No. 01.095.00, p.9.

facilitate co-operation within or among groups.”^{44, 45} In Canada, the Policy Research Initiative (PRI) adopted a “lean approach” to the definition of social capital, focusing on social networks as its central component: “*social capital refers to the networks of social relations that may provide individuals and groups with access to resources and supports.*”⁴⁶

These definitions draw attention, to varying degrees, to the resources available to individuals through their membership in community or family networks. Unlike financial or human capital, social capital is primarily concerned with the structure and quality of relationships, both at the individual level and collective level. Social capital is seen as a resource residing in and stemming from social relationships and networks. Moreover, it flows from different types of relationships. Distinctions are commonly made between bonding, bridging and linking capital. Bonding social capital is created through homogeneous social networks, such as families, that serve as a key source of social support. Bridging social capital, by contrast, is derived from diverse, heterogeneous networks that bridge social difference. While these ties are weaker than the ties of homogeneous networks, they can facilitate access to a wide range of resources. Linking social capital refers to connections to people in power and has been identified as important to advancing successful community action.

Not all ties are positive. Strong in-group bonding can work to exclude outsiders or constrain the freedom of its members. Criminal gangs are a classical example of “negative” social capital in the communities within which they operate. These networks function well but not in the interest of the community. Robert Putnam draws attention to these dynamics by stressing in his definition of social capital the presence of norms and trust deployed for mutual benefit. It is not enough for bonding, bridging and linking networks to be present; they have to be accessible to the whole community. This dual character of social capital – like social inclusion and social cohesion – where benefits (or liabilities) accrue to individuals as well as groups, organizations or communities as a whole is important to keep in mind; it poses important challenges in the development and measurement of an indicator model as we discuss below.

There are other challenges as well, related to the conceptualization of social capital, particularly, as it has been employed by Robert Putnam. The dynamics between individual-level relationships, on the one hand, and community-level networks, on the other, are not clearly specified in Putnam’s formulation. Moreover, the whole issue of the direction of causality is vague; in Putnam, Koniordos, writes: “social capital measured in resources is considered to have a positive effect on community, while its existence is certified by the results of its function.”⁴⁷ The circularity at the heart of Putnam’s conceptualization of social capital makes it hard to tease out

⁴⁴ Cote, S. and T. Healy (2001). *The Well-being of Nations: The Role of Human and Social Capital*. Paris: OEDC, p. 41.

⁴⁵ See also, Australian Bureau of Statistics (2000). Discussion Paper. *Measuring Social Capital: Current Collection and Future Directions*; Rosalyn Harper and Maryanne Kelly (2003), “*Measuring Social Capital in the United Kingdom*,” Working Paper. London: Office of National Statistics; World Bank Social Capital Website: www.worldbank.org/poverty/scapital/index.htm

⁴⁶ PRI (2005). *Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool: Project Report*. Ottawa, p. 6. http://policyresearch.gc.ca/doclib/SC_Synthesis_E.pdf; Franke, Sandra (2005). *Measurement of Social Capital: Reference Document for Public Policy Research, Development and Evaluation*. Ottawa: PRI. http://policyresearch.gc.ca/doclib/Measurement_E.pdf

⁴⁷ Sokratis Koniordos (2008), “Social Capital Contested,” *International Review of Sociology*, 18:2, p. 327.

cause and effect. These criticisms highlight the need to clearly define the concept of social capital and the context and mechanisms through which social capital is engendered and deployed, particularly as it relates to measurement.

The conceptual work on social capital encompasses a number of different themes which have been used to build indicator models, some of which overlap with the literature on social cohesion and social inclusion. The work of the OECD on social capital indicator development has been an important reference point in this regard. Its definition of social capital, noted above, has been officially adopted in the United Kingdom and Australia and has been accepted as a working definition here in Canada. In 2003, this definition was adopted by the Siena Group for Social Statistics, a group of experts working under the auspices of the United Nations, and served as the basis for their recommendations on a module of standard questions on social capital.⁴⁸ In the Siena Group model, indicators are presented under four theme areas: social participation, social support, social networks and civic participation. (See Appendix D for the list of indicators proposed by the Siena Group).

The conceptual model of the Office of National Statistics in the UK is based on the OECD definition of social capital. It breaks out social capital into five distinct themes which cover the sources of social capital, the conditions that facilitate its production, as well as the outcomes of social capital.

- **Social Participation.** This is defined as involvement in, and volunteering for, organized groups.
- **Civic participation** (level of empowerment). This is defined as individual involvement in local and national affairs and perceptions of ability to influence them.
- **Social Networks and Social Support.** This is defined as contact with, and support from, family and friends.
- **Reciprocity and Trust.** This dimension measures the amount of trust individuals have in others, those they know and do not know, as well as trust in formal institutions.
- **Views of the Local Area** (perception of community). This dimension measures individual perceptions of the area in which they live.⁴⁹

One of the most interesting assets of this project is its association with the Neighbourhoods Statistics Strategy, which offers the possibility of contextualizing social capital at the local level. As well, the ONS has recently developed a module of standardized questions as a part of its General Household Survey.

The Canadian government has also undertaken to measure social capital, in this instance, through a dedicated survey. The 2003 *General Social Survey* was designed to study the ways in which Canadians engage in civic and social life and to develop a better understanding of how social networks and norms of trust and reciprocity may contribute positively to individual and social

⁴⁸ Nancy Zukewich and Doug Norris (2005), National Experiences and International Harmonization in Social Capital Measurement: A Beginning. Draft Paper submitted at the Feb. 9-11, 2005 meeting of the Sienna Group in Helsinki. Available at <http://tilastokeskus.fi/tup/siennagroup2005>

⁴⁹ See Rosalyn Harper and Maryanne Kelly (2003), "Measuring Social Capital in the United Kingdom," Office for National Statistics, December, p. 8.

outcomes. Based on the OECD/ONS definition of social capital, individual-level information was collected from 25,000 respondents on Canadian's social contacts with family, friends and neighbours; their involvement in formal organizations, political activities and religious services; their level of trust in people and in public institutions; and their sense of belonging to Canada, their province and their community. As with the ONS, the 2003 GSS seeks to gather a broad range of information on potential dimensions of social capital identified in the emerging literature.

In the United States, the Saguaro Seminar at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University headed by Robert Putnam has developed and fielded a series of tools as part of its efforts to increase levels of civic engagement in that country.⁵⁰ In its initial phase, from 1995-2000, the Saguaro Seminar worked to identify approaches, networks, organizations and strategies to build social trust and reciprocity in neighbourhoods and to re-engage America civically. Since 2000, the Seminar's mission has been to improve social capital measurement and the availability of social capital data and to undertake analysis of building social capital in a changing environment, one characterized by greater diversity and high levels of social and civic inequality.

In 2000, the Seminar fielded the Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey on the civic engagement of Americans. Nearly 30,000 respondents were surveyed in 40 communities across 29 states. The survey was repeated in 2006 in 22 communities. This survey documents 11 different facets or dimensions of social capital, each of which forms a separate sub-index of the survey.⁵¹

- Social trust
- Inter-racial trust
- Diversity of friendships
- Conventional political participation
- Protest political participation
- Civic leadership
- Associational involvement
- Informal socializing
- Giving and volunteering
- Faith-based engagement
- Equality of civic engagement across the community

The Metro Chicago Information Centre (MCIC) (referenced in Section 2) provides an example of a community-based exercise to document the presence of social capital in the Chicago neighbourhoods. The MCIC Community Vitality Index includes a social capital component which is made up of a civic engagement sub-index, an interaction potential sub-index, a stability sub-index, and a community diversity sub-index. Both of the examples – the Saguaro Seminar and MCIC – identify diversity as an important dimension of social capital. The inclusion of diversity is based on assertion that bridging ties are valuable in producing community solidarity

⁵⁰ See <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/#>

⁵¹ Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey. www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/communitysurvey.html

and in forging a larger consensus on how communities need to change or work together particularly within the context of a global economy. The MCIC looks at three dimensions of diversity: ethnic diversity, age distribution; and income mix, in the belief that “mixed-income communities that are racially integrated and multi-generational have the highest potential to participate fully in the vitality of our increasingly connected and diverse world.”⁵² The approach highlights tolerance of differences as a community strength and serves as an interesting approach to consider in the development of the CIW community vitality domain. (Please see Appendix I for a complete description of the MCIC indicator model).

Australian researcher, Paul Bullen, provides another example of a community-based effort to capture and measure the everyday interactions between residents. In a large scale study in New South Wales, Bullen and his colleagues set out to measure social capital in five communities. A conceptual framework and questionnaire was developed and piloted. The final questionnaire contained a range of questions on different potential dimensions of social capital. In analysing the responses, Bullen found that eight distinct elements emerged as central to the definition of social capital. Four elements were about participation and connection: participation in local community; neighbourhood connections; family and friends connections; and work connections. And four elements emerged as building blocks of social capital: proactivity in a social context; feelings of trust and safety; tolerance of diversity; value of life. (Please see Appendix E for example of the questions used in the Australian community survey).

In all of the initiatives described above, social capital is understood as a composite of different elements. By and large, these surveys have undertaken to document *both* the level and type of engagement among individuals (micro level) and the conditions that foster the creation and maintenance of social relationships networks (macro level). In Canada, the Policy Research Initiative social capital project provides an example of another meso level perspective, one that looks at the role that social networks play in attaining social policy goals. For PRI, the unit of analysis is not an individual, group or community, but the relationship between these entities. The PRI project attempts to identify the specific properties of individual and group networks and the ways in which they function in specific circumstances. To this end, they recommend a conceptual framework and a series of measurement tools to empirically document the existence and character of the social networks – a meso level analysis. (Please see Appendix F for an overview of the PRI Conceptual Framework).

The PRI social capital project and its reference documents on measurement are an important resource to consider in developing the content of the community vitality domain. The focus on networks is an important one, as revealed in a recent PRI / Health Canada study (based on an analysis of the 2003 GSS) that demonstrates the link between network structure and network resources and self-reported health status.⁵³ This preliminary research shows the potential value of

⁵² MCIC Community Vitality Index, “A Technical Explanation of the CVI Methodology.”

www.mcfol.org/cvi/tech_methodology.htm

⁵³ Louise Bouchard, Jean-François Roy, and Solange van Kemenade (November 2005). “What Impact Does Social Capital Have on the Health of Canadians?” Policy Research Initiative: Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool. Ottawa. The study found a significant relationship between social capital – defined as network structure and network resources – and the health of Canadians as measured by self-reported health, taking into account factors such as sex, age, education, life status and type of household. For example, a medium to large network of strong ties were associated positively with self-reported health; reciprocity among members of a network appeared to be beneficial –

tracking social capital in the conjunction with other major household surveys and the usefulness of these types of indicators for the Canadian Index of Wellbeing.

Sense of Community

A common theme that runs through each of the concepts or topics discussed above is sense of belonging, specifically, the sense of belonging to a community.⁵⁴ While various definitions of sense of community have been advanced, the definition developed by David MacMillan and David Chavis (1986) has been widely adopted as a reference point for research and measurement. They define sense of community as “a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together.” This definition is predicated on four key elements: membership; influence; integration and fulfillment of needs; and shared emotional connection.⁵⁵ Building on this definition, Chavis, Hogge, McMillan and Wandersman (1986) developed and empirically tested a Sense of Community Index which has since been widely adopted (please see Calgary Sense of Community Index, Appendix K). While the scale was originally developed to assess sense of community in geographic communities, it has also been used to evaluate strength of attachment to communities of interest (Chipuer and Pretty, 1999).

Both at the geographic and relational levels, a strong sense of community appears to be related to a range of positive outcomes for individuals and communities. At the neighbourhood level, Schweitzer (1996) found that people who have a strong sense community have greater feelings of safety and security, participate more in community affairs, and are more likely to vote, recycle, help others and volunteer. Having a strong sense of community improves individual sense of wellbeing, in terms of increased happiness, decreased worrying, and a greater sense of self-efficacy (Davidson and Cotter, 1991). This isn’t always the case however. Brodsky concludes in a study of resilient lone parents that the women in her study felt that it was in their children’s best interests to have a low sense of community in order to ensure their safety (Brodsky, 1996).⁵⁶

It is fair to say research into sense of community is still in its early stages. Existing studies reveal the often contradictory connections between sense of community and geographic and relational communities. For example, Buckner (1988) shows that people with lower levels of education appear to have a higher sense of community than those with higher levels of education; by contrast, Korte’s work (1998) shows that neighbourly helping, a related concept, is correlated with higher education. In part, this confusion results from the difficulty involved in disentangling the idea of sense of community from related concepts such as community participation, community helping or volunteering. (This is a problem for the concept of community vitality as well.) Another other problem, common in studies of social capital and social inclusion, stems

those who both gave and received assistance from family, neighbours or friends were more likely to report good health.

⁵⁴ The following discussion is based on the excellent literature review of “sense of community” prepared by the Sense of Community Partners, Calgary. See: *Exploring Sense of Community: An Annotated Bibliography*, 2004. http://www.calgary.ca/docgallery/bu/cns/soc_biblio.pdf

⁵⁵ In 1996, David McMillan published a revised definition of sense of community: “a spirit of belonging together, a feeling that there is an authority structure that can be trusted, and awareness that trade and mutual benefit come from being together, and a spirit that comes from shared experiences that are preserved as art” (McMillan, 1996).

⁵⁶ Sense of Community Partners, p. 3.

from difficulties inherent in attitudinal research, not least of which are the challenges involved in reconciling different understandings of sense of community between researchers and community members. How does one account for differences in individual and collective experience in defining and measuring a concept as complex as sense of community – or social inclusion, social capital and social cohesion?

Researchers agree that the idea of belonging is central to individual and community well-being. That said, these challenges suggest that more needs to be done to better define and measure sense of community and to understand the role that it plays in creating vital communities.

Community Safety

The topic of community safety – identified as “personal security” in the original proposal – is also a central consideration in assessing the quality of life in communities. This concept, broadly understood, refers to the security or safety of the community environment. Community safety not only includes safety from crime and violence, a topic that is regularly included in community indicator reports, but it can also incorporate other themes such as threat of injury related to the safety of the built and natural environments. The Safer Calgary initiative is an example of one community coalition that has adopted a broad approach to the measurement of community safety. This initiative tracks a number of indicators under four separate categories in its efforts to promote safety and injury prevention, individually and collectively: injury prevention; crime and violence; natural and built environment; and public attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.⁵⁷ Because the areas of injury and ecosystems are covered elsewhere in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, the community vitality domain will confine its scope to the experience and perception of crime and violence, an indicator of the quality of relationships within the community.

In community research, safety from crime and violence has been identified by residents consistently as a key measure of quality of life. For example, the *Quality of Life in the GTA* report, prepared in 1995, identified safety – and levels of crime specifically – as the number one concern of residents evaluating the quality of life within their communities.⁵⁸ Similarly, research in the United States and the United Kingdom has shown that lack of personal security is highly correlated with level of neighbourhood dissatisfaction.⁵⁹

The inclusion of community safety however raises a number of questions to consider in the development of the community vitality domain and the CIW more broadly. While there remain ongoing debates about the methods of data collection, we have good information with regard to the incidence of crime that is published regularly. At the same time, surveys of Canadian’s perceptions of crime and safety raise questions about the relevance of “objective” measures of crime and what they tell us about community wellbeing. Over the past decade, research has

⁵⁷ Safer Calgary (2003), *Safety in Number: Calgary’s Safety Measurement Indicators Report for 2000*. <http://www.safercalgary.com/aboutus.htm> See also *Safety in Numbers, Update 2005*.

⁵⁸ Environics Research Group (1995), *Quality of Life in the GTA*. Cited in GHK International (2005), *Measuring Neighbourhood Vitality: Final Report*. Toronto.

⁵⁹ See R.B. Taylor (1995). “The Impact of Crime on Communities,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 539; A. Parkes, A. Kearns and R. Atkinson (2002). “The Determinants of Neighbourhood Dissatisfaction,” Centre for Neighbourhood Research, University of Bristol and University of Glasgow. <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/cnrpaperspdf/cnr1pap.pdf>

shown that the fear of crime – particularly violent crime – is disproportionate to the true risk of being victimized (the rate of violent crime has been largely falling). Whether it's an older woman who feels nervous about walking home, parents who feel anxious about sending their child up the road to buy a treat, or a shopkeeper who tenses up every time a customer enters his shop, fear of crime can have a devastating effect on people's quality of life and their perception of community. What then is the appropriate measure of personal safety to include in CIW?

The CCSD's Personal Security Index tackles this dilemma by tracking both "objective" and "subjective" measures of personal security, including: the level of violent crime (defined as level 3 – the most serious crimes), the level of property crime, and Canadians' perceptions of these two types of crime in their own communities. Including both types of data in the CIW is one option to consider.

It is also important to note that in focusing on measures of crime, for example, existing community reports rely on "anti-measures" – measures that mark the absence of social engagement or social support. The topic of community safety – and human security more broadly – is considerably wider than these types of reports suggest. Often choices are driven by available data. This limitation needs to be taken into consideration in developing the community vitality domain.

The CIW Stakeholder and Public Consultations also raised some topics in this sub-domain that were not considered originally. Some participants felt that the indicators of child abuse and family violence should be included. Working group members also agreed that these indicators had a direct link to social cohesion, and thus were appropriate to consider for inclusion in the CIW. Safer Calgary, for example, includes domestic-related offences as reported by victims, child interventions, and offences motivated by hate/bias in its tracking report. One member argued, however, that including measures of child abuse or family violence might be difficult as they were inherently measures of individual or family wellbeing and not community wellbeing. This issue needs further discussion.

To further flesh the examples discussed in this section, Section 4 presents an overview of selected indicator initiatives. More detail on several indicators models is presented in the appendices, as indicated in the text.

Section 5 provides an overview of Sections 2, 3 and 4, discussing different approaches or options for defining community vitality and building an indicator framework or model to operationalize this domain within the context of the larger Canadian Index of Wellbeing. Recommendations for moving forward are set out in the conclusion of Section 5.

4. Measuring Community Wellbeing

The following inventory of project summaries illustrates the diversity of approaches that have been adopted to define and measure community vitality, highlighted in Section 2, and the related concepts discussed in Section 3. (Further detail on specific initiatives is provided in the appendices). These examples are useful to our own efforts to develop the Canadian Index of Wellbeing as they are illustrative of what is possible and the drive to make communities better places to live.

Selected Canadian Projects

1) Action for Neighbourhood Change – United Way of Canada and partners

Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) is a pan-Canadian initiative that brings local residents, not-for-profit agencies and public and private sector partners, in order to develop creative locally-based solutions for sustainable community development and neighbourhood revitalization.⁶⁰ Its central goals are: to build the capacity of individuals, families and neighbourhoods and to strengthen the responsiveness and coordination of policy and program strategies while addressing issues such as personal security, substance abuse, health, housing stability, learning and skills development, and literacy.

ANC pilots were sponsored in the cities of Surrey, Regina, Thunder Bay, Toronto and Halifax. Neighbourhood sites were selected by the local United Way in consultation with residents, community leaders, government and key community organizations.

Neighbourhood vitality is a core concept for the Action for Neighbourhood Change project as discussed in Section 2. In order to further its work, the ANC developed a Neighbourhood Change Framework and Vitality Index. The Framework is based on a ‘theory of change’ model and methodology, and brings together a catalogue of potential indicators of neighbourhood vitality and contextual variable (or change assets) that can affect the trajectories and impact of strategic interventions.

The Index – of particular interest to this project – draws on Census and other statistical and administrative data as well as information collected through a suite of local surveys here including an institutional survey, a resident outreach survey, a business survey, and an evaluation survey that includes systematic social observation.⁶¹ It groups assets under several headings:

Economic Assets

- Income
- Equipment
- Access to employment
- Access to capital

⁶⁰ http://www.anccommunity.ca/index_english.html

See ⁶¹ ANC (2007), *Rebuilding Neighbourhoods: A Neighbourhood Vitality Framework*, Unpublished Paper.

Physical (Hard) Assets

- Housing
- Aesthetic assets
- Institutional assets
- Qualities of hard assets

Social (Soft) Assets

- Community engagement
- Social capital
- Individual skills
- Willingness, confidence and hope

Different measures were assembled in the Neighbourhood Vitality Index to profile neighbourhoods, assess levels of vitality or distress, monitor and track change and evaluate impact. Indicators were identified to measure: family composition, demographic cohesion, mobility, educational attainment, skills, participation in community structures, collective efficacy, neighbourhood conditions, neighbourhood characteristics, housing, presence of community facilities, access to public amenities, access to community facilities, connection to community services, safety, income, employment, distribution of employment, access to employment, business connection, business activity, and business climate.

2) Community Vitality Index – Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership (CIEL)

The Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership (CIEL) is a Canadian non-profit research centre involved in the study of community-level entrepreneurial and economic leadership. CIEL has developed a series of tools to help communities to become more dynamic and entrepreneurial. The Community Vitality Index (CVI), one of these tools, combines perceptual indicators with statistical ones to assess community vitality. It is part of a community development process, designed to identify issues and initiate improvement efforts that has been developed by CIEL. Community members are invited to complete a survey and attend an initial “assessment” meeting to discuss their community’s assets and challenges. After the data are analysed, a “focus” meeting is held to discuss the survey results and statistical indicator findings, and to identify possible community actions. Lastly, in the “action” phase, communities are asked to identify three or four top priorities and develop action plans to move the chosen priority forward.

The CVI tool – which is being piloted in Quebec – is comprised of nine broad categories or domains, summarized in Section 2. Working from this framework, the CIEL has developed a list of **perceptual indicators** (based on existing surveys and discussion forums) and **statistical indicators** to measure community vitality. Data are collected and aggregated scores are presented for each category and then plotted on spider or radar graph. Communities are able to compare their results with other communities using the CIEL methodology. The perceptual indicators and statistical indicators are listed in Appendix G.

3) *How Canada Performs – Conference Board of Canada*

The Conference Board of Canada has been involved in measuring and monitoring for many years, but this work has largely focused on the state and performance of the Canadian economy compared to its international competitors. More recently, the Conference Board has expanded its research and monitoring activities to include other domains such as the environment and health. In 2007, it introduced a new report called: *How Canada Performs: A Report Card*.⁶² This report is similar to the *Oregon Benchmarks* reports as it assesses Canada's performance against that of other countries in six broad areas: economy, innovation, environment, education and skills, health and society. Like the *OECD Society at a Glance* series, indicators are expressly chosen with a view to whether they can be influenced by public policy. To this end, each group of indicators is divided into three groups: output, input and policy. A range of output indicators are measured against the performance of other countries, while input indicators are used to examine the underlying causes of a particular outcome. Policy indicators are included to assess how government, businesses and (or) individuals are attempting to improve performance.

4) *Index of Social Health – Human Resources Development Canada*

In 1986, Marc Miringoff of Fordham University developed one of the first aggregate measures to track social health in response to the pervasive use of economic measures such as the GDP to track progress. The Index of Social Health (ISH) focuses on 16 different social issues, stratified by life stage, that deal with health, mortality, inequality and access to services to monitor social progress. Each indicator's best year of performance since 1970 is scored a ten while its worst year is scored a zero. All remaining observations are rated proportionately between zero and 10. Scores are averaged and expressed as a percentage to derive the aggregate Index of Social Health. This measure is then tracked against changes in the GDP.⁶³

In 1997, the Applied Research Branch of Human Resources Development Canada undertook to produce the ISH for Canada. The Canadian version of the index relies on 15 indicators, a few of which were modified to better capture the Canadian experience. Unlike findings for the US, Canada experienced its best years in the 1970s. The ISH and GDP per capita moved in tandem until 1982, after which the gap between them began to grow. The ISH for Canada has not been reproduced since that original report.⁶⁴

Children

- Infant mortality
- Child abuse
- Child poverty

⁶² <http://sso.conferenceboard.ca/HCP/default.aspx>

⁶³ See Alan Miringoff, *2003 Index of Social Health, Monitoring the Social Wellbeing of the Nation*, Tarrytown, NY: Fordham Institute in Innovation in Social Policy.

http://www.fordham.edu/images/Graduate_Schools/GSSS/2003%20Index%20of%20Social%20Health.doc

⁶⁴ Brink S. and A. Zeeman (1997). *A. Measuring Social Well-being: An Index of Social Health for Canada*. Ottawa: Human Resources Development Canada, Applied Research Branch (Research Paper R-97-9E).

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/sdc/pkrf/publications/bulletins/1997-000006/page03.shtml>

Youth

- Teen suicide
- Drug abuse
- High school dropout

Adults

- Unemployment
- Average weekly earnings

Elderly

- Poverty among those aged 65+
- Out-of-pocket health expenditures for those aged 65+

All

- Highway deaths related to alcohol
- Homicides
- Persons receiving social assistance
- Gap between rich and poor
- Access to affordable housing

5) Indicators of Well-being in Canada – Human Resources and Social Development Canada

More recently, Human Resources and Social Development Canada has developed and launched a web-based tool to help monitoring individual and societal well-being. *Indicators of Well-being in Canada* is a bilingual website that aims to present a comprehensive picture of well-being in Canada.⁶⁵ It is based on a broad model of individual well-being. Indicators are organized under ten areas of well-being, by status, life event, and key influence. Indicators are presented for Canada and broken down by age, gender, region where data permit. As well, selected international comparisons are available. This website is designed as a tool for a wide range of potential users. As such, it does not provide detailed analysis of social trends.

Areas of well-being include: work; housing; family life; social participation; leisure; health; security; environment; financial security; and learning.

6) Indices of Community Well-being for Calgary Community Districts – City of Calgary

Indices of Community Well-Being is a long standing publication of the City of Calgary that draws on Census data.⁶⁶ The report has been produced in order to provide relevant information regarding the key dimensions of Calgary communities to assist community leaders and service providers in identifying strengths and needs within their own communities. One of its goals is to provide a measure of the wellbeing of Calgary communities relative to other communities and the city as a whole.

The indicator model that was developed for this project provides a holistic view of community that recognizes that the wellbeing of the individual and the community is defined by the quality of the individual's social relationships, economic situation, and physical environment.

⁶⁵ <http://www4.hrsdc.gc.ca/home.jsp?lang=en>

⁶⁶ http://www.calgary.ca/docgallery/bu/cns/indices_1.pdf

Consequently, the report utilizes a framework which incorporates the economic, social, and physical dimensions of community to describe the wellbeing of Calgary communities. Nineteen indicators are used, drawn primarily from the Census of Canada, grouped under three domains.

Economic Wellbeing

Poverty

- Persons Who Live in Low-Income Households
- Children in Households Receiving Supports for Independence
- Seniors Receiving Guaranteed Income Supplement

Employment

- Persons Aged 25+ in the Labour Force and Unemployed
- Persons Aged 15-24 in the Labour Force and Unemployed

Social Wellbeing

Family Stability

- Families with Children That Are Headed by a Lone-Parent

Social Inclusion

- Persons Aged 1 Year or More Who Moved in the Past Year
- Immigrants Who Arrived Between 1991 and 1996
- Persons Who Speak Neither English Nor French
- Unattached Individuals
- Seniors in the Community Who Live Alone

Education

- Persons Aged 15+ Who Did not Complete High School

Housing

- Tenant Occupied Households Spending More than 30% of Income on Shelter Costs
- Occupied Private Dwellings Requiring Major Repair

Physical Wellbeing

Personal Health

- Hospital In-Patients
- AISH Recipients

Personal Safety

- Hospital Emergency Room Visits
- Person Crimes
- Residential Property Fires

7) Leduc Genuine Wealth Assessment – City of Leduc

The City of Leduc Genuine Wealth Well-being Report is another example of exemplary indicator work being done at the municipal level.⁶⁷ In 2005, the City retained Mark Anielski from the National Working Group to conduct a Genuine Wealth Assessment of the community. The Genuine Well-being assessment combines statistical or qualitative measures of well-being along

⁶⁷ http://www.city.leduc.ab.ca/Leduc/files/communications/pr/Leduc_GW_Report.pdf
http://www.city.leduc.ab.ca/Leduc/files/communications/pr/Appendix_A_GW_City.pdf

with perceptual indicators, based on citizen input and dialogue. The Genuine Wealth process asks citizens to rate their overall quality of life, identify key attributes that both contribute and detract from their personal well-being and their sense of community well-being, and asks citizens to rate their sense of belonging to the community. This perceptual quality of life input from citizens is contrasted with the quantitative or statistical well-being assessment using a number of economic, health, social and environmental indicators.

To assess the well-being of the City of Leduc, 117 indicators were used to generate a profile of the city's economic, social, health, and environmental conditions. These indicators were broken down into 22 well-being themes and the City of Leduc was scored based on these themes. A composite index is prepared for each theme area. These scores are used to identify the city's well-being strengths and weaknesses. Themes are further grouped into five capitals accounts (human, social, economic/financial, built, and natural capital) and a self-rated happiness index. The underlying indicators and composite indices are evaluated against established benchmarks, usually the Alberta provincial average, the Canadian average, or the City of Edmonton or Calgary. A grade of "very good to excellent" results when the indicator is 10% better than the benchmark, "moderate to good" when the indicator is 10% above or below the benchmark, and "fair to poor" when the indicator is greater than 10% below the benchmark.

Within this model, there is a social capital domain that captures many of the themes relevant to our discussion of community vitality. Community vitality is specifically identified as a sub-theme under the social capital domain. The following table sets out the themes under the social capital domain and the measures that have been chosen to measure these concepts.

City of Leduc Genuine Well-being Report (Anielski, 2005)	
Social Capital Well-being Theme	Social Capital Indicators
Diversity	Ethnic diversity index (visible minorities and aboriginal population) ⁶⁸
	Population that is foreign born
Trust and sense of belonging	Self-rated sense of belonging to the community
	Self-rated trust of neighbours
	Neighbourliness: Number of neighbours you know
	Citizens who lived at the same address for five years or more
	Community organizations, clubs and groups
Safety and crime	Violent crime against persons
	Property crime rate
	All crime cases per capita
	Drug crime cases
	Perception of personal safety regarding crime
	Unintentional injury death rate
	Motor vehicle collision rate

⁶⁸ The diversity index is derived by comparing the percentage of visible minorities (by ethnicity) and aboriginal people as a percentage of the population to the provincial average. In 2005, a region was considered less diverse than the provincial average with only 5.0% of the population being either foreign born, a visible minority or aboriginal compared to the provincial average of 15.9% and compared to Edmonton with 24.0%.

Equity and fairness	Income gap between top income households and the lowest earning households
	Ratio of female earnings to male earnings, working full-time.
	Number of women on municipal/civic councils
Community vitality	Attendance at Economic Development Authority Partnership breakfasts
	Number of festivals, community and cultural events
	Attendance (visits) at recreation centres and registration in recreation programs per citizen per annum.
Citizenship	Voter turnout at elections.

8) Quality of Life Reporting System – Federation of Canadian Municipalities

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities established the Quality of Life Reporting System (QOLRS) in order to measure, compare and monitor the quality of life in 20 of Canada's urban municipalities.⁶⁹ It draws on data from a variety of national and municipal sources and uses indicators grouped under the following domains:

- Demographic Background Information
- Personal Financial Security
- Personal & Community Health
- Personal Safety
- Affordable, Appropriate Housing
- Local Economy
- Natural Environment
- Education
- Employment
- Civic Engagement
- Community and Social Infrastructure

Different QOL reports have highlighted different themes. The first QOL report in 1999 looked at the social effects of the economic recession of the early 1990s. Since that time, the FCM has published a number of updates and theme reports based on their suite of indicators tackling topics such as the quality of life, the growing income gap, and the ecological footprint of Canadian cities.

9) Vision 2020 – Annual Sustainability Indicator Report, City of Hamilton

In 1992, the Hamilton City Council adopted a Vision 2020 statement that set out Hamilton's goal to more a stronger and more sustainable community. Since that time, the city has published a Sustainability Indicator Report to monitor progress towards meeting their goals and stated indicator targets.⁷⁰ The Report tracks progress over time under 14 different theme areas, against the baseline year, 1993. Indicators receive one of three ratings: "needs improvement", "hard to

⁶⁹ <http://www.fcm.ca/english/qol/qol.html>

⁷⁰ <http://www.myhamilton.ca/myhamilton/CityandGovernment/ProjectsInitiatives/V2020/IndicatorsMeasuringProgress>

say” where results are mixed, and “making progress”. Actions to accelerate progress for the city, community, citizens and business are also included for each theme area.

- Local economy
- Agriculture and rural economy
- Natural areas and corridors
- Improving the quality of water resources
- Reducing and managing waste
- Consuming less energy
- Improving air quality
- Changing our mode of transportation
- Land use in urban areas
- Arts and heritage
- Personal health and well-being
- Safety and security
- Education
- Community well-being and capacity building

10) Vital Signs – Community Foundation Toronto

Vital Signs is a community report card on Toronto prepared by the Toronto Community Foundation, in partnership with each of the three Toronto universities, charitable foundations, local government agencies and departments, community based agencies, public interest and advocacy groups, corporations and individuals in the Greater Toronto Area.⁷¹ It was first undertaken in 2001; its eighth Vital Signs was published 2009. Currently, Community Foundations of Canada is working to spread the initiative to other municipalities. In 2009, along with Toronto, a total of 16 Vital Signs reports were released across the country.⁷²

Vital Signs tracks a set of ten core indicators. Each community then adds other indicators and areas to reflect local priorities and issues.

- Gap Between Rich And Poor
- Safety
- Health and Wellness
- Learning
- Housing
- Getting Started in our Community
- Arts and Culture
- Environment
- Work
- Belonging and Leadership

⁷¹ <http://www.torontovitalsigns.com/>

⁷² <http://www.vitalsignscanada.ca/about-vital-signs-e.html>

The core set of indicators is being revised and will include an expanded list of indicators from which individual communities can choose to profile their communities.

Selected American Projects

1) Boston Indicator Project – Boston Foundation

The Boston Indicators Project, initiated just over 10 years ago, issued its first report in 2000 with the goal of tracking incremental progress through 2030, Boston's 400th anniversary. The Project aims to democratize access to information, foster informed public discourse, track progress on shared civic goals, and report on change in 10 sectors: Civic Vitality, Cultural Life and the Arts, the Economy, Education, the Environment, Health, Housing, Public Safety, Technology, and Transportation. It also works to develop a shared Civic Agenda reflecting the perspectives of the participants – from school children and engaged residents to academic and community-based experts to public officials and policymakers.

All Boston Indicators Project reports are available online.⁷³ The website provides sector highlights, indicators with data available for download, and a Data Portal leading to other data-rich sites. New research from area and national sources is posted on a regular basis.

This report is interesting as it emphasizes civic vitality here defined as the social infrastructure – networks, organizations, institutions, gathering places, bonds of friendship, civic institutions, and ways of accessing and working through information as individuals and communities – that together create a welcoming, informed, and inclusive society. The civic vitality domain tracks indicators such as civic health, level of social capital, state of race and community relations, stability and investment in neighbourhoods, access to information and strength of the nonprofit sector.

2) Community Vitality Index – Metro Chicago Information Centre (MCIC)

The Metro Chicago Information Centre (MCIC) *Community Vitality Index* (mentioned above) uses multidimensional indicators to quantify the relative potential of neighbourhoods and geographic communities in the metropolitan Chicago area.⁷⁴ The MCIC brings together a similarly broad list of attributes under three interrelated headings or sub-domains. The MCIC community vitality index measures social capital (the connections between people that allow communities to work together); economic potential (community economic assets that can be leveraged for community change); and community amenities (the presence of different amenities that serve as the nuclei for the growth of social capital and community development). Each component is comprised of sub-components, data for which are gathered, analysed and mapped for every census tract in the greater Chicago metropolitan area.

⁷³ http://www.tbf.org/uploadedFiles/Indicators/Indicators2006/Homepage/2004-06_IndicatorsRpt.pdf

⁷⁴ <http://info.mcfcl.org/www/datainfo/cvi/>

Indicators in this index model were determined through a review of the literature and current practices, small area data availability, and stakeholder input. All data indicators are normalized to account for population density differences. The MCIC Community Vitality Index then provides a composite score, made up of the three subcomponents – social capital, economic potential and community amenities – each of which is equally weighted in the formal composite score. Regional benchmarks for minimum, median, mean, and maximum values, as well as Community Vitality Index scores, are calculated as well to facilitate comparison. Please see Appendix H for a list of the indicators used in this initiative.

3) *Jacksonville Quality of Life Progress Report – Jacksonville Community Council, Inc.*

Jacksonville has been a leader in the community indicator movement. For 21 years, JCCI has collected data and tracked trends on the quality of life in Jacksonville and Northeast Florida. The *Quality of Life Progress Report* measures 114 indicators in nine areas.⁷⁵ An annual survey, donated by American Public Dialogue, provides additional information on the community's perception of the quality of life. Detailed reference data, including charts and graphs, are also provided for those who wish to explore these trends further.

- Achieving Educational Excellence
- Growing a Vibrant Economy
- Preserving the Natural Environment
- Promoting Social Wellbeing/Harmony
- Enjoying Arts, Culture, and Recreation
- Sustaining a Healthy Community
- Maintaining Responsive Government
- Moving Around Efficiently
- Keeping the Community Safe

4) *Life in Santa Cruz County, Year 13, 2007 – Community Assessment Project*

Over the past 13 years, a consortium of public and private organizations convened by the United Way of Santa Cruz County, have sponsored the Community Assessment Project, to measure and improve the quality of life in Santa Cruz.⁷⁶ Applied Survey Research, a nonprofit social research firm developed and continues to manage the project for the United Way. ASR collects secondary data and conducts a bi-annual community survey to track indicators over six topical areas: Economy; Education; Health; Public Safety; Natural Environment; and Social Environment. The Comprehensive Report presents an analysis of trends over time and assesses progress towards the Community Goals that are set out under each domain. The Report is designed to lay the groundwork for planning and community action.

The overall results and demographic comparisons of key indicators are presented in the report. Additional demographic breakdowns and supplementary charts and graphs are presented

⁷⁵

<http://www.jcci.org/Portals/0/documents/statistics/quality%20of%20life%20progress%20report%202007%20jcci.pdf>

⁷⁶ www.santacruzcountycap.org

electronically on the project website. Question by question cross-tabulations by ethnicity, region, age, gender and income are also available on the website.

5) *Neighbourhood Trend Watch – Wilder Centre for Communities, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, St. Paul, Minnesota*

Wilder Center for Communities has been considering the various components that contribute to the quality of life in central urban neighbourhoods and has created a working document called the Vital Neighborhoods Framework. This framework is used in its series of Neighborhood Trend Watch publications.⁷⁷

A vital neighbourhood is defined as “a place where all people can fulfill their basic needs, live and travel safely, realize opportunities for meaningful work and financial gain, and possess political voice and adequate representation. In a vital neighborhood, people feel a sense of belonging, respect diversity, uphold common standards, and participate in community traditions.” Following from this, the framework spells out five qualities that contribute to neighbourhood vitality:

- **Strong social fabric.** Organizations, resident cohesion, diversity, and history
- **Opportunities to grow and fulfill needs.** Education and learning, and basic needs and services, for children, youth, and older adults
- **Safe, accessible places and spaces.** Crime and security, environment, and housing
- **Vibrant local economy.** Businesses, jobs, homeownership, and economic development
- **Power and influence.** Political leaders, community leadership, and resident involvement

In order to measure these qualities in different St. Paul neighbourhoods, the Wilder Research Center, in conjunction with Wilder Center for Communities, produces neighbourhood fact sheets based on Census information for each community and conducts a neighbourhood profile survey with neighbourhood leaders, activists, and other close observers of the community. The survey is based on the vital neighbourhoods framework and is designed to identify neighbourhood assets and challenges to efforts to create thriving neighbourhoods.

The survey consists of a series of 54 statements in five the categories. For each statement, respondents are asked: “Would you say the description is a lot like the XXX neighbourhood, somewhat like it, a little like it, or not at all like the XXX neighbourhood?” The survey also asks respondents to describe the neighbourhood’s greatest strengths and its biggest challenges at this time. The top three to five rated items – those items ranked “a lot” – within each category of the framework are identified as the neighbourhood’s assets. Only the most positive response option to describe neighbourhood assets is used. Items rated by five or more respondents (11% or more) as “not at all” like the neighbourhood are described as challenges or concerns. Please see Appendix I for an overview of their survey questions.

⁷⁷ http://www.wilder.org/reports.0.html?&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Bpointer%5D=6

6) ***Truckee Meadows Tomorrow: 2008 Community Wellbeing Report – Truckee Meadows Tomorrow***

In the face of significant growth, Truckee Meadows Tomorrow (TMT) was formed in 1989 to monitor the quality of life in Truckee Meadows, Nevada. In 1997, TMT published its first report – *Quality of Life in the Truckee Meadows: A Report to the Community* – and has continued to publish the biennial report, as recently spring 2008. The original list of indicators was reviewed in 2000 and again in 2005. TMT currently tracks 33 community indicators, across 10 quality of life categories.⁷⁸

In many respects, this community well-being indicator report is the closest in structure to the proposed Canadian Index of Wellbeing. Like the CIW, it tracks indicators under arts and culture, civic engagement, economic wellbeing, education and lifelong learning, enrichment, health and wellness, natural environment and public wellbeing, and two other domains relevant to local reporting: land use and infrastructure and innovation. Its quality of life indicator model provides a useful model to consider in designing the CIW and the community vitality domain in particular (Please see Appendix J).

⁷⁸ http://www.quality-of-life.org/news_article/324

5. Building the Community Vitality Domain: Key Assumptions

There was general agreement among participants in the Stakeholder and Public Consultation process that community vitality should be a key component of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing. For them, what goes on in communities is clearly associated with individual and social wellbeing. Moreover, they supported the inclusion of community vitality because it includes important, “often overlooked ‘soft indicators’ of wellbeing.” National Working Group members surveyed for this concept paper also supported the inclusion of a community vitality domain in the overall index. One member said: “[Community vitality] will provide information about the social fabric of communities that will provide context for the other domains.” Another stated: “... in my view, community vitality describes what happens at the local level, e.g., in neighbourhoods, towns and cities, where most of what is covered in other domains (such as living standards, health, etc) are “lived” by people.

The question is not whether community vitality is relevant to individual and social wellbeing but *how it fits* within the Canadian Index of Wellbeing as it is currently framed. This is the crux of the task before the National Working Group. Setting out this relationship is critical to the overall integrity and coherence of the CIW design.

The conceptual literature on community vitality and the related concepts of social cohesion, social inclusion, social capital, sense of community, and community safety – and the overview of existing community wellbeing initiatives – provide a solid starting point for this discussion. Other questions remain, however, as we move from the abstract to the concrete task of defining and measuring community vitality. What definition of “community” should we adopt? What should the scope of the domain be? What level of geography makes sense for the CIW community vitality domain? What is the appropriate unit of analysis? Should we rely on “objective” or “subjective” approaches to measurement? What should the markers of progress be? In the following section, we set out and discuss these questions, and present recommendations for moving forward.

Key Assumptions

1) The Definition of “Community”

There is little agreement about the definition of community as the discussion earlier reveals. Community can refer to both a geographic unit of any size or a community of interest where individuals share common values or goals. *What definition of community should the CIW employ?*

Recommendation

From the perspective of wellbeing, the quality and strength of an individual’s relationships with community – whether it is a community of interest, of kinship, of values, or of place – have important implications for wellbeing. That said, and following discussions among the National Working Group, this paper proposes to focus on a geographic interpretation of community as the

primary focus or reference for this domain. It follows from this decision that the types of indicators under community vitality will highlight the character and quality of relationships that individuals experience in their neighbourhoods, towns, and cities and/or regions. This does not prelude an examination of community vitality among communities of kinship or interest. But it acknowledges that geographic community is a key reference for all Canadians – and the limitations of readily available data sources.

2) Scope of the Domain

As the conceptual overview illustrates, a range of issues are potentially related to a concept such as community vitality. Community vitality reports regularly touch on issues such as social and economic security, sustainable use of natural resources, formal and informal social networks, employment creation and maintenance, human capital investment, civic engagement, diversity, resilience, and access to external resources and local infrastructure. Existing initiatives such as the Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership's Community Vitality Index, the Leduc Genuine Wealth Assessment, and the Truckee Meadows Tomorrow Community Wellbeing project have tended to embody a comprehensive perspective on wellbeing, similar to the one that has been adopted in the CIW initiative. *What then should be the focus of the community vitality domain for the CIW?*

Recommendation

As a starting point, it is recommended that we substantially narrow the scope of the community vitality domain at this initial point in time to focus on issues of **social relationships and networks and the conditions that foster these relationships and facilitate community action on behalf of current and future residents**, taking into account the fact that several possible themes such as health, education and democratic engagement are covered elsewhere in the CIW and current data availability.

Such a focus is consistent with the growing literature on the links between social engagement and individual and societal wellbeing. People's sense of belonging to a community, their attitude towards others, their level of engagement with family and friends, and opportunities to develop and engage in community activities have been shown to foster individual and social wellbeing. Vital communities are those that manifest high levels of social capital.⁷⁹ In the health field, researchers have demonstrated the close relationship between social networks and mortality rates.⁸⁰ At the individual level, researchers found that those with weak or nonexistent social links had a greater probability of dying than those with strong links and lower level of self-reported

⁷⁹ There are many studies that confirm this point. High levels of social engagement have been correlated to positive ratings of personal health, happiness and life satisfaction. Robert Putnam's classic work, *Making Democracy Work*, illustrates that communities that are characterized by strong networks and high levels of interpersonal engagement have stronger civic lives and are consequently more resilient and productive.

⁸⁰ Solange van Kemenade, in a paper for Population and Public Health Branch of Health Canada, provides a useful overview of a number of influential studies. The following studies are cited in Solange van Kemenade (2003), "Social Capital as a Health Determinant." Health Policy Research Working Paper Series, Working Paper 02-07. Ottawa: Health Canada.

health.⁸¹ James House and his colleagues have linked the absence of social support to known health risks such as smoking, obesity, hypertension and physical inactivity.⁸² Since the late 1990s, social capital has been considered as a determinant of certain diseases.⁸³ Researchers such as Ron Labonte and Trevor Hancock have also made the case that a relationship exists between community capacity and resilience, and community health.⁸⁴

3) Level of Geography

Assuming that we adopt a place-based definition of community, what level of geography makes sense for the CIW? More often than not, community in Canada has been used to refer to lower level geographies such as cities, town, neighbourhoods or even rural hamlets. But, as Fernando Rajulton and his colleagues argue in a review of social cohesion, community can be used to define larger geographic areas such as provinces or even the country as a whole.⁸⁵ A concept like social cohesion is often measured at a national level. Robert Putnam tracks national-level indicators of social capital in his work. *What level of geography makes sense in the context of the community vitality domain?*

A related question is: *What level of geography makes sense to community members?* Community or neighbourhood can have different meanings for people and most certainly for statistical agencies and governments. In Canada, for example, the definition of a specific town, neighbourhood or regions varies tremendously. Statistics Canada level geographies often do not correspond to the set boundaries of towns or cities established by the provinces. The most common Statistics Canada urban geography is the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) which does not necessarily correspond to a single city. The CMA of Toronto, for example, encompasses several cities and rural areas. Is the CMA an appropriate level of geography to use to measure community vitality?

⁸¹ See Lisa Berkman and Leonard Syme (1979). "Social networks, host resistance, and mortality: a nine-year follow-up study of Alameda County residents." *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Volume 109, No. 2; Ichiro Kawachi et al., (1997). Social capital, income inequality and mortality," *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 87, No. 9; Ichiro Kawachi, Bruce Kennedy and R. Glass (1999). "Social capital and self-rated health: A contextual analysis," *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 98, No. 8.

⁸² James House, Cynthia Robbins and Helen Metzner (1982). "The association of social relationships and activities with mortality: Prospective evidence from Tecumseh Community Health Study." *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Volume 116, No. 1.

⁸³ Campbell, Williams and Gilgen (2002) have examined the link between the participation of members of a community in voluntary organizations and the prevalence of AIDS; Worsley (2001) has documented the influence of social capital on hypertension. See C.B. Campbell and D. Gilgen (2002). "Is social capital a useful conceptual tool for exploring community level influences on HIV infection? An exploratory case study from South Africa." *AIDS-Care*, Vol. 14, No. 1; Anthony Worsley (2001). "Diet and hypertension in the Asia-Pacific region: A brief review." *Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Vol. 10, No. 2.

⁸⁴ Trevor Hancock and Ron Labonte with Rick Edwards (1998). *Indicators that Count: Measuring Population Health at the Community Level*. Unpublished report prepared for Health Canada. Cited in van Kemenade (2003).

⁸⁵ Fernando Rajulton, Zenaida Ravanera and Roderic Beaujot, *How Cohesive are Canadian CMA's: A Measure of Social Cohesion Using the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating*.

Recommendation

Given data availability issues, in this initial phase, the domain should focus on national level data. We cannot promise a Community Vitality domain that focuses on local communities at this point, as we do not have community-level data on many key dimensions. While the Labour Force Survey and the Canada Community Health Survey are very large surveys, the Census and certain administrative files (such as tax filer data) remain the only solid sources of this level of information. In the long-term, our goal should be to measure community vitality at the lowest level (through disaggregating all CIW data to the lowest possible level through an instrument like the Newfoundland and Labrador Community Accounts).

4) Unit of Analysis

What is the appropriate unit of analysis for community vitality? Should the community vitality domain strive to include only community-level data (community / organization = unit of analysis) or include individual-level data (individual = unit of analysis). Thinking about the CIW as a whole, does the unit of analysis need to be consistent across domains?

Following from this question, *how should we measure the community vitality domain?* Should we measure the number of communities that have attributes associated with our understanding of community vitality? Alternately, are we measuring the proportion of the population that live in vital communities? These questions are key to developing a methodology for aggregation.

Recommendation

Given current data availability and the decision to focus on social relationships and the conditions that foster these relationships and facilitate community action, the proposed unit of analysis is the individual. All we are able to do at present is assess and compare the proportion of Canadians that report, for instance, a strong sense of belonging to their community, size of social networks, and high level of involvement with voluntary organizations. The goal in the long term should be to develop measures of local connection that make sense within the context of the CIW as it is currently conceived. While it would be desirable to look at communities as the unit of analysis, there are very real conceptual and empirical barriers to such an approach. However, the methodology that has been developed to assess learning in individual Canadian communities by the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) provides one possible model to explore this approach further.

5) Objective vs. Subjective Measures

In the analysis of community vitality, *what relative weight should be attached to objective measures and to subjective measures, particularly where the two approaches to measurement yield results that are out of line?* The example highlighted in the text is the incidence and perception of crime. Other examples could include measures of economic vitality versus the perceptions of community residents about their communities as places to live. Studies of residents from depressed neighbourhoods often report that there is a significant spirit of community that flies in the face of the negative portrait painted by so-called objective measures.

The use of both objective and subjective indicators raises additional concerns. There can often be a “disconnect” between objective and subjective indicators that is largely a by-product of having to draw upon different data sources. Subjective data may need to be collected (purchased) from public polling companies. As such, sample sizes, periodicity, wording of questions may create inconsistencies / difficulties in both interpreting the data and linking the data to the objective indicators.

This was a problem for the CCSD’s Personal Security Index (PSI). The subjective indicators were based in the current year while the objective data was two to three years out of date. This proved to be less problematic for certain domains, such as economic security, where there is often a lag between current economic trends (e.g., rising interest rates) and impact of economic trends on the population (e.g., housing affordability). In other areas such as the Community Safety component, people’s perceptions of their own safety can be influenced by a particular event occurring at the time as the survey collection. For example, in one edition of the PSI, Quebec residents expressed higher levels of concern about violent crime than residents in other provinces despite the fact that during the same time period, Quebec posted one of the lowest violent crime rates in Canada. Was this truly a reflection of what Quebecers thought or were they influenced by the media coverage of the Hell’s Angels and the start of the trials in Quebec which were taking place at the same time as the survey was in the field?

Recommendation

Taking these reservations into account, it is recommended that we report on both types of measures in order to capture varying perspectives on topics linked to community vitality. It is one thing to know how many residents are involved in community organizations; it is another to document whether these same individuals feel a heightened sense of belonging and connection. To this end, it will be imperative to be transparent in our reporting and to acknowledge potential inconsistencies. Indeed, the very questions that are raised are grist for the mill of public debate.

6) Assessing Community Vitality, Measuring Progress

What constitutes progress? Are higher levels of social capital or social inclusion always a good thing? How should we assess what constitutes “high” or “low” levels of community vitality? These are important questions to consider with regard to the entire Canadian Index of Wellbeing.

In thinking about community vitality, it is important not to fall into the trap of thinking higher levels of social participation, or higher levels of donations, or denser support networks are always a good thing for every individual or every community. More is not always better; members of small rural communities, for example, can attest to the limitations of “too much of a good thing.” Social capital researchers have often noted that criminal gangs exhibit high levels of social capital, the presence of which threatens the security and quality of life of other community members.

The other thing to keep in mind in the selection measures for community vitality is potential ethno-cultural, gender or urban/rural bias. For example, existing schemes tend to privilege participation in “formal” networks via volunteering or charitable giving. The problem here is that

many newcomer groups do not report volunteering in large numbers. For many, volunteering is not a familiar concept in their cultures and/or they have lived in countries where repressive regimes have actively discouraged popular association. Participation in “informal” networks tends to be more revealing measure of community engagement for many. Looking only at formal volunteering, then, can skew our understanding of community vitality. This example is a reminder to us that a concept such as community vitality is always rooted in time, place and culture, and our findings will not always speak to the realities of all people or all communities.

Recommendation

This discussion suggests that it is important to identify the assumptions underlying the definition and selection of measures for the community vitality domain, that this exercise is not value free or ethically neutral. It is recommended that the pros and cons of each indicator be discussed with a view to identifying potential bias and clarifying how progress will be measured.

Summary

In summary, we propose to design the community vitality domain based on the following assumptions:

- The community vitality will primarily report on a geographic interpretation of community;
- In this initial phase, the scope of the community vitality domain will be confined to issues of social relationships and networks;
- In the short term, the community vitality domain will report on national level data;
- The unit of analysis of analysis will be the individual.
- The community vitality domain will contain both objective and subjective measures.
- The metrics of progress will be clearly identified for each measure of community vitality, taking into account potential bias.

A Note about Indicator Selection

Indicators provide quantitative or qualitative information that is tracked over time. In the context of community indicators projects, they provide quantitative information about what has often been considered a qualitative subject: the wellbeing of communities. They tell a rich story about the state of the community, where they have been and where they are likely headed.⁸⁶

In our selection of indicators, we have been guided by criteria developed by the Canadian Research Advisory Group. These include:

- Data should be available over time.
- The data should permit some demographic breakdown. Ideally, the data we want should be broken down by gender, age, immigration status, visible minority status and household income. (among others)
- The data should permit some geographic breakdown.
- The measures selected have to come from reliable sources (e.g. Statistics Canada, reputable polling companies, etc).
- The data have to be consistent over time, and ideally, be readily available in the future so that longer-term comparisons or changes can be identified in future reports.

In developing a potential list of measures for community vitality, it has been necessary to cast a broad net. Many potential measures do not meet all of these specific standards. For example, many data are not consistently available at lower levels of geography. Statistical indicators that measure “soft” values are also often lacking. Public opinion surveys – a potentially useful source of data – tend to change a great deal over time and are typically limited in their demographic breakdowns. This paper has endeavoured to identify and evaluate a variety of potential measures from a variety of sources in order to assist in the final selection of indicators for the community vitality domain.

⁸⁶ Jacksonville Community Council, Inc. (1999). *Redefining Progress*.
http://www.rprogress.org/publications/pdf/CI_CaseStudy1.pdf

6. Indicator Framework for Community Vitality

Section 6 sets out a framework for the community vitality domain. This framework represents a starting point for future development, taking into consideration the assumptions discussed in Section 5 and the limits of current data availability. The intent with the community vitality domain, as with the Canadian Index of Wellbeing as a whole, is to continue to evolve as new sources of data and new methodologies are developed and refined.

In this section, we present a definition of community vitality and identify sub-components for this domain. An initial set of indicators are listed and defined under each sub-component; greater detail on these indicators is provided in Appendix L. The proposed short list of headline indicators follows in Section 7.

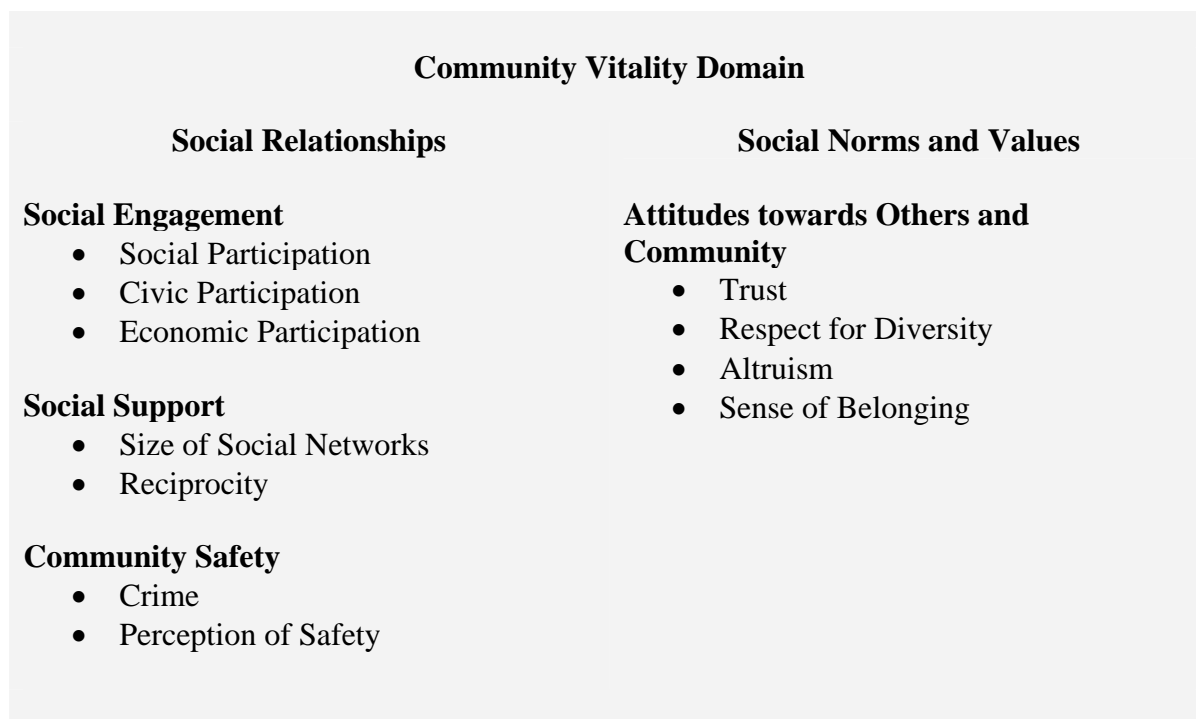
Defining Community Vitality

Our proposed definition of community vitality is as follows.

*Vital communities are characterized by strong, active and inclusive relationships between residents, private sector, public sector and civil society organizations that work to foster individual and collective wellbeing. Vital communities are those that are able to cultivate and marshal these relationships in order to create, adapt and thrive in the changing world and thus improve wellbeing of citizens.*⁸⁷

This definition emphasizes the understanding of vitality as the capacity to thrive and change in the pursuit of individual and social wellbeing, in ways that are inclusive and respectful of the needs and aspirations of diverse communities. Taking this definition as a basis, our Conceptual Model for Community Vitality is comprised of four sub-components, organized into two main groups. The first group of indicators are measures of **Social Relationships**. The three sub-components are: Social Engagement, Social Support and Community Safety. The second group of indicators are measures of **Social Norms and Values**. Under this heading, we include the sub-component: Attitudes towards Others and Community.

⁸⁷ One of the Canadian Research Advisory Group members argued that community vitality is synonymous with the notion of social capital. He defines social capital as “the strength of relationships within a community along with people’s sense of belonging to a community.” The definition proposed above adopts a similar perspective.



In this discussion below, we present each sub-component of the indicator model. A brief definition and link to community vitality is provided. Following this, we identify measures for each sub-component, looking at the pros and cons of each – including the possibility of potential bias. This discussion remains exploratory. As we noted at the onset, the area of community vitality and the measurement of community ties is not well developed. Efforts to measure individual and community relationships date back about ten years. During this time, there has been a great deal of experimentation in Canada and elsewhere which has laid the ground work for moving forward. But, with the exception of a few areas, there are no consistent sources for these data. In many instances, the wording of survey questions has changed from one survey cycle to the next, creating barriers for indicator selection and analysis.

In developing this framework, we have cast a broad net. We have been guided by the assumptions set out in Section 5 as well as the criteria for indicator selection developed by the CIW Canadian Research Advisory Group. In particular, we have tried to identify measures where we have at least two consistent points in time. As well, we have been mindful of whether there are possible measures from cross national sources that might be used in the future.

A final note: please see Appendix L which presents a detailed discussion of each indicator and related measures used in other data sets.

Measuring Community Vitality

Part I: Social Relationships⁸⁸

Three types of social relationships are identified below: social engagement, social support and community safety. Social engagement captures a diverse range of activities through which individuals participate for their own enjoyment or benefit or to provide benefit to others in the wider community. Social support describes the activities individuals undertake, within the context of social relationships, to share information, provide emotional or physical support, to provide financial assistance among other things. Finally, community safety is included under this subcomponent to track evidence of *negative* or *anti-social* community relationships which work to undermine community vitality.

1. Social Engagement

Based on our review of the literature and other community-based reports, we recommend that this component include the following sub-components: social participation; civic participation; and economic participation. Formal and informal networks and relationships facilitate social interaction, community engagement and sense of belonging, all of which have been linked to individual and collective wellbeing. (Civic participation and economic participation are usually included in these frameworks. We make reference to these dimensions of social engagement; indicators for these sub-domains are included elsewhere in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing.)

Below we identify potential indicators under each component. We look at two types of indicators under each: indicators of the level of engagement (these indicators comprise the A list); and indicators that track the intensity, density and diversity of engagement where applicable (these indicators make up the B list).

1.1 Social participation: This theme assesses the participation in civil society organizations and involvement in clubs or groups. These are measures of the propensity people have to give of their time to causes from which they will not necessarily directly benefit. As such, these types of questions reveal the level of investment in community. They also serve to measure the extent of social interaction people have with others through formal organizations including faith communities.

That said, for many, participation in formal groups is not always a good indicator of their level of social engagement. Participation in one's community is shaped by a host of factors, including gender, ethno-racial identity, socio-economic status, health, and place of residence. Low rates of participation in local neighbourhood associations or charity events may not truly capture the level of interest or engagement in a particular community or among particular groups. In this context, it is important to consider whether individuals are active in "informal" networks (i.e., extended family) and/or via vehicles such as the internet, a growing phenomenon especially among young people. We return to this discussion below.

⁸⁸ The following discussion has been informed by the excellent overview of social capital measurement, produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004), "Information Paper: Measuring Social Capital, An Australian Framework and Indicators."

1.1.1 Participation in group activities

1.1.1a) CER_Q110-120 In the past 12 months, were you a member or participant in: 8 options. (GSS 2008, 2003; NSGVP 2000, 1997)

1.1.1b) CER_Q170 Altogether, about how often did you participate in group activities and meetings? (GSS 2008, 2003; NSGVP 2000, 1997)

Discussion: For this indicator, we have chosen the proportion of Canadians that report being a member of at least one group or organization. Information for this indicator is based on the 1997 and 2000 cycles of National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) as well as the 2003 and 2008 General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS also asks whether individuals are active in various groups via the internet.

1.1.2 Volunteering

1.1.2a) VCG_Q300 In the past 12 months, did you do unpaid volunteer work for any organization? (GSS 2008 and 2003; NSGVP 2000, 1997)

1.1.2b) VCG_Q310 On average, about how many hours per month did you volunteer? (GSS 2008, 2003; NSGVP 2000, 1997)

Discussion: Information on volunteering has been gathered in a number of surveys. In the interest of consistency, we have chosen an indicator based on the 1997 and 2000 NSGVP and the 2003 and 2008 GSS – both of which used the same question about volunteering. Due to wording differences, the data on volunteering from the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) is not comparable with estimates produced based on the 1997 and 2000 NSGVP.

Please note, rates of volunteering can vary significantly by household income, gender and ethno-racial background. Formal volunteering is not always a good measure of social participation as noted above.⁸⁹ It would also be important, in moving forward, to consider generating age-standardized rates of volunteering, in order to account for the pronounced differences in volunteering over the life course. The data presented below, from published sources, are not age-standardized.

1.1.3 Charitable Giving

1.1.3a) FG_Q03 In the past 12 months, did you make a financial donation to a charitable or non-profit organization: 13 options? (CSGVP 2007, 2004; NSGVP 2000, 1997)

1.1.3b) GS_Q03 What was the amount of the donation to this organization? (CSGVP 2007 and 2004; NSGVP 2000, 1997)

⁸⁹ For a more detailed discussion of volunteering among immigrant communities, please see Katherine Scott, *Making Connections: Social and Civic Engagement among Canadian Immigrants*, Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development, 2006. <http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2006/makingconnections/makingconnections.pdf>

Discussion: Information on charitable giving has also been gathered in a number of surveys, notably the General Social Survey and by the Canada Revenue Agency. Unlike the data that were generated for volunteering, data on charitable giving derived from the CSGVP are considered reliable. We have chosen to track charitable giving via the CSGVP; this data source provides a detailed portrait of donors in Canada, at the national level and for selected provinces.

Given that a large majority of Canadian report making financial donations of some sort, it would be appropriate, looking forward, to develop an integrated measure of charitable giving that takes frequency of giving into account (as opposed to level of giving). Again, it would also be desirable to generate age standardized rates.

1.2 Civic Participation: This theme is regularly included in social capital inventories. A distinction is drawn between civic and social participation. Civic participation is understood to mean involvement in activities reflecting interest and engagement with governance and democracy, such as membership in political parties, social movements, community organizations, professional associations, etc. Civic participation is the process by which citizens' concerns, needs and values are incorporated into governmental decision-making.

For the Canadian Index of Well-being, measures of civic participation are included under the Democratic Engagement Domain.

1.3 Economic Participation: Economic participation is taking part in activities that are economic in nature. This includes activities such as labour force participation and the exchange of goods and services. In the context of social engagement, it is the social aspect of these activities that is of relevance and interest.

For the Canadian Index of Well-being, measures of economic participation are included under the Living Standards Domain.

2. Social Support

All people are reliant to some extent on the support and care of others at some stage of their lives. The support may take the form of physical, emotional or financial support, and may be provided during times of need or as part of daily life. Most often there is a sense of reciprocity where support is concerned, with many people being both providers and recipients of care. Growing evidence suggests that those individuals with strong ties – to family, friends and community – are better able to cope with stress and are more resistant to illness and disease. (See Section 5) While social connection is not always positive for individual and community well-being – criminal gangs being one oft-cited example – on balance, those who can rely on diverse networks of support experience positive benefits.

2.1 Size of Social Networks: This theme is prominent in discussion of social capital. Positive interactions with family and friends through acts of support, for example, are signs of strong relationships, a key pre-condition of community vitality, as defined above. Existing measures focus on family and friends, less so on neighbours and community. Nevertheless, these

measures reveal the degree to which people are connected to family, friends and their broader community.

2.1.1 Number of close family, friends and neighbours

2.1.1a) Number of close family: SCR_QINT Now I want to ask you some questions about contacts you have with your relatives, including all relatives such as aunts, uncles, cousins, and in-laws. Exclude people who live in your household.

SCR_Q810 How many relatives do you have who you feel close to, that is, who you feel at ease with, can talk to about what is on your mind, or call on for help? (GSS 2008, 2003, 1996)

2.1.1b) Number of close friends: SCF_QINT Now I want to ask you some questions about your friends, that is people you feel at ease with and can talk to about whatever's on your mind. Exclude people who live in your household.

SCF_Q100 How many close friends do you have, that is, people who are not your relatives, but who you feel at ease with, can talk to about what is on your mind, or call on for help? (GSS 2008, 2003, 1996, 1990)

2.1.1c) Number of close neighbours: DOR_Q623 About how many people in your neighbourhood do you know well enough to ask for a favour? (GSS 2008, 2003)

Discussion: Size of social network is addressed in several surveys. We propose to track the number of close relatives, friends and neighbours (six or more) in order to gauge the size of respondents' social networks. These networks provide a variety of forms of personal support. The GSS also probes the ways in which people connect – in person, by phone, or by internet, and provides the opportunity to explore the factors related to strong versus weak social networks.

2.1.2 Living alone

2.1.2a) Proportion of population in private households living alone. (Census 2006, 2001, 1996, 1991)

Discussion: The proportion of single households has been growing in Canada and elsewhere over the last twenty years. In part, this reflects lower fertility rates in recent decades as couples have, on average, fewer children. The dissolution of marriages or common-law relationships and population aging are additional factors. This trend toward smaller families may have implications for the size and density of social networks and the support that they provide. Looking forward, it will be important to evaluate the impact of this trend in light of the shift to more electronic forms of communication: is proximity key to vibrant and sustaining social support and its positive effects on individual and community well-being? Cycles 17 and 22 of the GSS provide information on this question.

2.2 Reciprocity: Reciprocity is any relationship between two parties where there is a mutual action, giving and taking. Reciprocity is considered to encompass the full spectrum of giving and receiving ranging from the quid pro quo of favours and other direct exchanges, to behaviours considered to be altruistic in considering the welfare of others, such as making charitable donations. The individual provides a service to others, with the general expectation that this kindness may / will be returned at some point in the future. People care for each other's interests in communities with high levels of reciprocity. This is reflected through direct acts of support and the efforts of communities to support members in need.

2.2.1 Providing assistance to others

2.2.1a) IV_Q02 In the past 12 months, did you help anyone with work at their home such as cooking, cleaning, gardening, maintenance, painting, shovelling snow, or car repairs?
IV_Q04 In the past 12 months, did you help anyone by doing any shopping, driving someone to the store, or to any other appointments?
IV_Q06 In the past 12 months, did you help anyone with paperwork tasks such as writing letters, doing taxes, filling out forms, banking, paying bills, or finding information?
IV_Q08 In the past 12 months, did you provide anyone with health-related or personal care, such as emotional support, counselling, providing advice, visiting the elderly, unpaid babysitting?
IV_Q10 In the past 12 months, did you help anyone with unpaid teaching, coaching, tutoring, or assisting with reading? (CSGVP 2007, 2004; NSGVP 2000, 1997)

Discussion: The Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP) and the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) both ask respondents about “informal volunteering.” The questions asked in the NSGVP are an expanded version of those included in the CSGVP. While specific items can be compared, we have elected to compare the aggregate scores (those reporting that they provide at least one type of assistance to others) given the underlying similarity of the concepts and questions.

The General Social Survey also includes a set of questions looking at unpaid work in the home and unpaid work performed for others outside of the home. These questions ask about the amount of time spent engaged child care, housework or home maintenance or care for seniors. We have used the CSGVP as it provides a more detailed list of activities and a useful derived variable that serves as a summary measure for informal volunteering.

2.2.2 Help received

2.2.2a) HICR_Q110 The following questions are about unpaid help you received from other people in the last month, not counting those you live with. In the past month, did anyone help you ... by doing domestic work, home maintenance or outdoor work? By providing transportation or running errands? By helping with child care? By teaching, coaching, or giving you practical advice? By giving you emotional support? By helping you in some other way? (GSS 2003)

Discussion: This indicator has been proposed to monitor the degree to which Canadians receive help from others. The indicator tracks the proportion of respondents who received at

least one form of help from others, not including those in the immediate household. We choose this indicator because of its focus on help received from a respondent's broader social network.

This variable was not repeated in the 2008 GSS. It will be important to explore alternatives in the future. For example, the 2007 GSS on Care looks at the help received by older Canadians. A population specific measure could be developed or selected to gauge reciprocity. Another possibility is to examine the level of support between neighbours. For example, the General Social Survey, Cycles 17 and 22, ask whether respondents "have done a favour for a neighbour" in the past month (DOR_Q628) and whether a neighbour has provided assistance to the respondent (DOR_Q629). These variables would be interesting to track as well, providing a more geographic-specific focus for the subcomponent.

3. Community Safety

Violence and crime threats significantly reduce the quality of life for the victim and other community residents in a multitude of ways. Levels of crime have been consistently identified as one of the most important factors in determining quality of life.⁹⁰ In effect, these indicators can be viewed as measures of *negative* or *anti-social* relationships. The measures proposed below have been used extensively to report on levels of crime. While there was discussion at the Stakeholder and Public Consultations with respect to this component, EKOS acknowledged that: "In the end, there was general agreement that crime rates should be included, along with perceptions of safety (e.g., feeling safe walking alone at night or taking public transportation, etc.)." (Please note indicators of perception of crime are included under another component below.)

3.1 Crime

3.1.1. Property crime

3.1.1a) Rates of property crime per 100,000 population (UCRS, annual)

3.1.2 Violent crime

3.1.2a) Rates of violent crimes per 100,000 population (UCRS, annual)

3.1.3 Drug crime

3.1.3a) Drug crime rates per 100,000 population (UCRS, annual)

3.1.4 Sexual assault

3.1.4a) Sexual assault rates per 100,000 (UCRS, annual)

3.1.5 Domestic violence

⁹⁰ EKOS (1995), *Quality of Life in the GTA*. Cited in Measuring Neighbourhood Vitality (2005).

3.1.5a) Five-year rates of spousal assault among women, population aged 15 years and older (GSS 2009, 2004, 1999, 1993)

Discussion: It is important to note, with regard to all of these measures, that the direction of change is not always easy to interpret. A rise in the rate of domestic violence, for example, may reflect better and more accurate reporting. It could be argued that this represents a positive change for communities who now have more accurate information to better tackle the problem. Care should always be taken in interpreting crime statistics.

3.2 Perception of community safety

3.2.1 Walking alone after dark

3.2.1) PHR_Q130 How safe do you feel from crime walking alone in your area after dark? (GSS 2009, 2004, 1999, 1993)

Discussion: Under this measure, we report on those who state that they feel safe – very safe, reasonably safe and somewhat safe – walking alone after dark. This measure has been widely used in community vitality reports of different types. It should be acknowledged however that this variable may not be useful in capturing the perception of safety among residents in rural areas or small towns. The General Social Survey on Victimization does ask whether respondents have taken action to protect themselves or their property from crime (such as taking a self defence course). We have chosen to proceed with the internationally recognized indicator of perception of safety with a view to looking at alternatives in the next iteration of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing.

Part II: Social Norms and Values

The following components are included to highlight the norms and values that exist in communities – among and between individuals – that serve to enhance the functioning of social relationships and networks.⁹¹ Norms and values are unwritten but are commonly understood guidelines for determining patterns of social interaction in different contexts. Norms and values such as trust, cooperation, and acceptance of diversity are essential to healthy functioning of relationships and networks because they encourage people to act cooperatively, and effectively provide rules and sanctions to govern people's behaviour. In their absence, people fall back on formal systems of rules and regulations.

4. Attitudes towards Others and Community

This component of the indicator framework focuses on how people feel, what they believe and what they value. Attitudes and values are important to measuring community vitality because ideas, assumptions and beliefs motivate social exchange and action within communities and the broader civil society. Below we look at attitudes towards others – including concern for people's interest, confidence in others, and tolerance.

⁹¹ This discussion is based on the summary provided in the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004), "Information Paper: Measuring Social Capital, An Australian Framework and Indicators."

4.1 Trust: This subcomponent looks at the perceived trust in others. Trust is an important part of social capital and fosters the development of strong interpersonal and community relationships. It is based on the expectation that people or organizations will act in mutually supportive ways and that they will take into account the interest of others.

4.1.1 Trust in people

4.1.1) TRT_Q110 Generally speaking, would you say that people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people? (GSS 2008, 2005, 2003)

Discussion: Questions about trust are included in GSS 17 and 22 on Social Engagement, GSS 19 on Time Use and GSS 14 on ICT. Due to differences in wording, we have chosen to only include estimates from the 2008 GSS, the 2005 GSS and the 2003 GSS. This indicator looks at the proportion of Canadians who report that “people can be trusted.”

4.2 Respect for Diversity: In the public consultation report, EKOS noted that participants saw respect for diversity as important to the wellbeing of communities. Participants discussed the importance of cultural/ethnic diversity and “how communities benefited economically, culturally and socially from the synergy it generates.” Further, there seemed to be agreement that “diversity needed to be looked at in its broadest sense, including the diversity of ideas/beliefs, lifestyles, sexual orientation, etc.”

4.2.1 Bridging ties

4.2.1) DBT_Q340 Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important, how important is it for you to establish and maintain ties with people who have different ethnic or cultural origins to you? (GSS 2003)

Discussion: The GSS on Social Engagement is the only national source of information on bridging capital. We look at the proportion of Canadians who feel that it is important or very important to establish and maintain ties with people of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds. The 2003 and 2008 General Social Surveys also ask about the number of friends that a respondent that are from the same (or different) socio-demographic group.

This variable may not hold up to scrutiny. One of the domain reviewers noted that people with little contact with others different from themselves might state that establishing these kinds of relationships would be very important, while the reverse could be very true as well. “Intellectually judging diversity as important is a very different thing than being actually prepared to live with diversity. This makes the proposed question a poor determinant of the existence of “bridging ties.” Further research is clearly needed to test the validity of these measures. Stratifying the sample will be important to begin to get a sense of the range of opinion by socio-economic status, gender, place of residence, immigrant status, etc. This is a candidate for further data development.

4.2.2 Discrimination

4.2.2) DIS_Q115 through Q190 In the past five years, have you experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly by others in Canada because of your: Ethnicity or culture? Race or colour? Religion? Language? (GSS 2009, 2004; EDS 2002)

Discussion: Discrimination was an important topic in the Ethnic Diversity Survey. A question about discrimination also appears on the most recent 2009 GSS on Victimization. We worked with the 2004 GSS to construct a variable that is directly comparable to the question asked in the 2002 EDS, and have updated this indicator in 2009. The indicator looks at the proportion of the total population that reported having experienced discrimination – sometimes or often – because of their ethnicity or culture, race or colour, religion or language. While the wording of the question is the same, it is important to note that the focus of each survey and the structure of the sample are different and thus may have influenced respondents. We present the overall responses to these questions by province. As well, we report on the response of visible minority respondents, available from the EDS in the text. (The comparable information is not available for visible minorities is not available.) This measure is a candidate for future data development.

4.3 Altruism: Altruism is a social behaviour and value orientation in which individuals give primary consideration to the interests and welfare of others and as such is directly linked to reciprocity and trust. In communities where feelings of altruism and reciprocity are strong, people care for each other's interests. Individuals balance their self interest with the good of the community.

4.3.1 Caring for others

4.3.1) These days I'm so hard pressed to take care of my own needs that I worry less about the needs of others. Agree? Neither agree or disagree? Disagree? Don't know? (EKOS, Rethinking Government Series, 2003, 1999, 1997, 1994)

Discussion: This indicator tracks the proportion of Canadians who "disagree" with this statement, thus indicating those that worry about the needs of others. This indicator was included in the Rethinking Government survey, fielded by EKOS, in the years noted above. In order to update this indicator, it will be necessary to purchase this question on a future survey.

4.4 Sense of belonging: Sense of belonging is another dimension of community vitality. Research has shown that strong sense of community reflects in increased levels of social participation and engagement in community and greater feeling of safety and security, as well as numerous positive individual-level outcomes.⁹² That said, there is no single methodology for measuring sense of belonging. In Calgary, Sustainable Calgary spear-headed its own initiative to track and measure this important indicator. Working with 12 community groups,

⁹² See Statistics Canada (2005). *Community Belonging and Self-Perceived Health: Early CCHS Findings (January to June 2005)*, Catalogue No. 82-621-XIE – No. 001

researcher developed their own survey instrument that touches on several themes (See Appendix K).

Below, we have used the indicator included in the biennial CCHS and another indicator from the Ethnic Diversity Survey which assesses feelings of exclusion.

4.4.1 Belonging to community

4.4.1) GEN_Q20 How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community? Would you say it is very strong? strong? somewhat weak? or very weak? (CCHS 2009, 2008, 2007, 2005, 2003, 2001)

Discussion: This indicator tracks the proportion of Canadians who express a “very strong” or “somewhat strong” sense of belonging to their local community. The General Social Survey (Cycle 17 and 22) also include questions about sense of belonging to local community, province and country (DOR_Q635). At this time, we have chosen to proceed with the variable from the CCHS because it is gathered more frequently.

4.4.2 Feeling out of place

4.4.2) IS_Q030 How often do you feel uncomfortable or out of place in Canada because of ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, language, accent or religion? (EDS, 2002)

Discussion: This question is an important measure of belonging. It looks at the proportion of Canadians who feel out of place sometimes, most of the time or all of the time. These data are available for the total population and specific sub-groups such as visible minorities. This variable does not appear in other surveys. As such, it is a candidate for further data development.

Indicator Summary

Social Relationships

1. Social Engagement

1.1 Social Participation

- Participation in group activities
- Volunteering
- Charitable giving

1.2 Civic Participation – See Democratic Engagement

1.3 Economic Participation – See Living Standards

2. Social Support

2.1 Size of Social Networks

- Number of close relatives
- Number of close friends
- Number of close neighbours
- Living alone

2.2 Reciprocity

- Providing assistance to others
- Help received

3. Community Safety

3.1 Crime

- Property crime
- Violent crime
- Drug crime
- Sexual assault
- Domestic violence

3.2 Perception of Safety

- Walking alone after dark

Social Norms and Values

4. Attitude towards Others and Community

4.1 Trust

- Trust in people

4.2 Respect for Diversity

- Bridging ties
- Experience of discrimination

4.3 Altruism

- Caring for others

4.4 Sense of Belonging

- Belonging to community
- Feeling out of place

7. Making Connections: Proposed Headline Indicators for Community Vitality

“How we associate with each other, and on what terms, has enormous implications for our well-being.”⁹³ Strong, active and inclusive relationships – reflected in high levels of engagement and interaction and the presence of cooperative norms and social trust – create the capacity for mutual benefit and common purpose. Vital communities are those that are able to cultivate and marshal these relationships – between and among individuals, groups, and organizations – in order to create, adapt and thrive in the changing world and thus enhance the wellbeing of all citizens.

How does Canada measure up?

Below, we propose a list of 11 headline indicators to assess the level of community vitality in Canada. These indicators have been chosen in order to capture each of the dimensions of the conceptual model presented above. These indicators, as highlighted in the literature review for this concept paper, have been identified in research as relevant to the understanding of the character and dynamics of social relationships and networks. As well, we have been guided in our selection by the need to identify at least two points in time, a mix of subjective and objective indicators, and the desirability of deriving cross-national comparative estimates in the future. We hope that the suite of headline indicators can serve as a starting point to continue the development of community vitality domain going forward.

Community Vitality: Headline Indicators

Concept	Headline Indicator
Social Engagement	
Participation in group activities	In the past 12 months, were you a member or participant in: 8 options. (GSS 2008, 2003; NSGVP 2000, 1997)
Volunteering	In the past 12 months, did you do unpaid volunteer work for any organization? (GSS 2008, 2003; NSGVP 2000, 1997)
Social Support	
Number of close relatives	How many relatives do you have who you feel close to, that is, who you feel at ease with, can talk to about what is on your mind, or call on for help? (Percentage of those with 6 or more close friends) (GSS 2008, 2003, 1996)
Providing assistance to others	In the past 12 months, did you help anyone with work at their home such as cooking, cleaning, gardening, maintenance, painting, shovelling snow, or car repairs? (4 other options) (CSGVP 2007, 2004; NSGVP 2000, 1997)

⁹³ Michael Woolcock (2001), “The Place of Social Capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcomes,” ISUMA, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring) 2001, cited in Schellenberg (2004), p. 4.

Community Safety	
Property crime	Rates of property crime per 100,000 population (UCRS 2009 – 1993)
Violent crime	Rates of violent crime per 100,000 population (UCRS 2009 – 1993)
Walking alone after dark	How safe do you feel from crime walking alone in your area after dark? (15 years and older) (Percentage who feel safe walking alone after dark) (GSS - Victimization 2009, 2004, 1999, 1993)
Attitudes towards Others and Community	
Trust	Generally speaking, would you say that people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people? (15 years and older) (Percentage who felt people could be trusted) (GSS Time Use 2005, GSS- Social Engagement 2008, 2003)
Experience of discrimination	In the past five years, have you experiences discrimination or been treated unfairly by others in Canada because of ethnicity or culture? race or colour? religion? language? (15 years and older) (For GSS, those reporting at least one form of discrimination; for EDS, those reporting discrimination often or sometime, total population) (GSS 2009, 2004; EDS 2002)
Caring for others	These days I'm so hard pressed to take care of my own needs that I worry less about the needs of others. Agree? Neither agree or disagree? Disagree? Don't know? (Percentage of those who disagree) (EKOS, Rethinking Government Series, 2003, 1998, 1997, 1994)
Belonging to community	How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community? Would you say it is very strong? Somewhat strong? Somewhat weak? or Very weak? (Percentage who report very strong or somewhat strong sense of belonging) (CCHS 2009, 2008, 2007, 2005, 2003, 2001)

I. Social Engagement

- 1. Participation in Group Activities:** Two-thirds of Canadians in 2008 were members of voluntary groups or organizations, an increase in participation since the late 1990s

One of the ways in which Canadians support each other and their communities is by joining non-profit and voluntary organizations and participating in their ongoing work. Participation in such groups is also thought to be an important contributor to the development of social relationships and networks, enabling people to build bonds of trust and reciprocity that provide the foundation of vital communities.

Population 15 years and older reporting membership in voluntary organizations or groups, 2003-2008

	2003	2008
Canada	61.0%	64.9%
Newfoundland	62.2%	62.8%
Prince Edward Island	61.2%	71.3%
Nova Scotia	60.1%	69.9%
New Brunswick	59.2%	63.5%
Quebec	53.0%	57.4%
Ontario	61.9%	68.6%
Manitoba	64.6%	68.8%
Saskatchewan	69.1%	68.9%
Alberta	64.5%	65.7%
British Columbia	66.9%	63.9%

Source: Statistics Canada (2004), 2003 General Social Survey on Social Engagement, Cycle 17: An Overview of Findings, Catalogue No. 89-598-XIE; Statistics Canada (2009), 2008 General Social Survey: Selected Tables on Social Engagement, Catalogue No. 89-640-X.

In 2008, 65% of Canadians reported they were members of a voluntary organization, according to the General Social Survey on Social Networks.⁹⁴ This represents a significant increase from the late 1990s. In 1997 and 2000, half of Canadians aged 15 and over (51% in each year) were members or participants in at least one group, organization or association.⁹⁵ This figure jumped by ten percentage points between 2000 and 2003.

In 2008, Prince Edward Island had the highest percentage of residents who were members of a group or

organization at 71% compared to other provinces; Prince Edward Island also experienced the most significant growth in the proportion of residents involved in voluntary organizations over the 2003-2008 period. Membership in organizations was lowest in Quebec at 57%.

Widespread membership in voluntary groups is consistent with information about the scope and size of Canada's non-profit and voluntary sector. There are approximately 161,000 non-profit and voluntary organizations in Canada, making Canada's non-profit sector the second largest in the world, following the Netherlands.⁹⁶

Organizational involvement tends to be strongly associated with education and household income; individuals with higher levels of education and higher family incomes are more likely to be involved in at least one organization.⁹⁷ According to the 2003 GSS, among individuals who participate, 40% did so at least once a week and 20% participated a few times a month.⁹⁸ About one-half of Canadians belonged to a group or organization and participated in a meetings or activities at least once a month.⁹⁹

More recent data from the 2008 GSS shows that young people aged 15 to 24 years are somewhat more likely to belong to an organization or group compared to those of working age (25 to 54 years) or those over age 55: 68.2%, 66.3% and 60.5% respectively. Younger Canadians are also

⁹⁴ According to the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 66% of the population aged 15 and over belonged to a group, organization or association. See Statistics Canada (2006), *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians*, Catalogue No. 71-542-XPE. Ottawa: Industry Canada. Information on participation was not collected in the 2007 CSGVP.

⁹⁵ Statistics Canada (2001), *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians*, Catalogue No. 71-542-XIE. Ottawa: Industry Canada.

⁹⁶ Michael Hall, et. al., (2005) *The Canadian Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector in Comparative Perspective*, Toronto: Imagine Canada.

⁹⁷ Grant Schellenberg (2004), *2003 General Social Survey on Social Engagement, Cycle 17: An Overview of Findings*, Ottawa: Industry Canada, p. 11.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

more likely to be involved in sport or recreational groups and school or community associations. Working-age adults are more likely to be involved with professional or union organizations, while older Canadians participate in religious organizations and service clubs in greater numbers.¹⁰⁰

2. Volunteering: Four in ten Canadians volunteer with non-profit and charitable organizations, a proportion that fell in the late 1990s, but has been rising since 2000

Volunteers play an important role in communities across the country, giving of their time and energy to individuals and community groups. Volunteering is an important expression of commitment and connection to community, defined by geography and interest. While people often have many different reasons for volunteering, the large majority report being motivated by a sense of obligation or opportunity to make a contribution to their communities.¹⁰¹

According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 41% of Canadians volunteered in 2008, a notable increase of eight percentage points from 2003 and 14 percentage points from the levels reported in the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) in 2000.¹⁰² The increase in volunteering between 2000 and 2008 more than makes up the ground lost over the 1997-2000 period. The highest rate of volunteering in 2008 was found in Prince Edward Island (57%), followed by Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia (both at roughly 50%) and Manitoba (at 48%). The lowest rate was found in Quebec at 28%. While care must be taken in interpreting these results, based on different surveys, the trend is positive.¹⁰³

That said, several studies have found that a small core of volunteers contribute the lion's share of the hours volunteered. In 2007, for instance, over three-quarters of all volunteer hours (78%) came from the one-quarter of volunteers (25%) who contributed the highest average number of hours. While many people take part in charity runs, only a relatively small proportion (12% of all Canadians over age 15 in 2000) are deeply engaged in volunteer activities in the community.¹⁰⁴ This group tends to be older, have higher household incomes and have children present in the

¹⁰⁰ See Statistics Canada (2009), *2008 General Social Survey: Selected Tables on Social Engagement*. Catalogue no. 89-640-X. Table 1-1 and Table 2-1.

¹⁰¹ Almost all volunteers (93%) agreed that making a contribution to their community was an important reason for volunteering. The other most frequently reported reasons for volunteering were the opportunity to use one's skills and experience (77%), being personally affected by the cause supported by the organization (59%), exploring one's strengths (50%), to network with or meet people (48%), and because friends volunteered at that organization (47%). Statistics Canada (2009), *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians*, Catalogue No. 71-542-XPE. Ottawa: Industry Canada, p. 48.

¹⁰² According to the 2007 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating, 46% (or 12.5 million Canadians aged 15 and over) volunteered for a charitable and non-profit organization in 2007. The rate of volunteering is essentially unchanged from 2004 (at 45%).

¹⁰³ While the overall estimates on volunteering are different between the General Social Survey and the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, the variation between provinces is roughly similar. According to both surveys, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan are home to the greatest proportion of volunteers – and Nova Scotia and Manitoba follow closely behind. For a discussion of the differences between these two surveys, please see page 59.

¹⁰⁴ Statistics Canada (2009), *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians*, Catalogue No. 71-542-XIE. Ottawa: Industry Canada, p. 37.

home. As well, frequent volunteers are more likely to be actively involved in religious organizations.

**Volunteering rate by province, population aged 15 and older,
1997-2008**

	1997	2000	2003	2008
Canada	31.4%	26.7%	33.3%	40.9%
Newfoundland	33.0%	31.0%	39.9%	44.7%
Prince Edward Island	36.0%	37.0%	39.9%	56.5%
Nova Scotia	38.0%	34.0%	38.2%	50.3%
New Brunswick	34.0%	29.0%	35.4%	44.1%
Quebec	22.0%	19.0%	22.9%	28.3%
Ontario	32.0%	25.0%	34.9%	44.5%
Manitoba	40.0%	36.0%	38.8%	47.5%
Saskatchewan	47.0%	42.0%	45.3%	50.7%
Alberta	40.0%	39.0%	39.0%	45.1%
British Columbia	32.0%	26.0%	36.6%	42.2%

Source: Statistics Canada, 1997 and 2000 NSGVP, 2003 and 2008 GSS

These findings are consistent with reports of non-profit organizations regarding the difficulty in finding and retaining volunteers. The 2003 National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO) found that over half of organizations surveyed (57%) reported problems recruiting the volunteers that they needed, two-thirds of whom said that this was a “moderate” or “serious” problem. And half of organizations (49%) reported having problems with retaining volunteers.¹⁰⁵

It is important to note that there are many factors influencing volunteering, not least of which is available time and personal resources. In today’s economic climate, many are struggling to provide their families with the basics, and consequently they often don’t have a great deal of time to volunteer. Economic disadvantage works to isolate groups like new immigrants and young families, the groups which would arguably benefit most from connections to social networks and service providers.¹⁰⁶

II. Social Support

¹⁰⁵ Statistics Canada (2004), *Cornerstones of Community: Highlights of the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations*, Catalogue No. 61-533-XPE, p. 44.

¹⁰⁶ See Katherine Scott, Kevin Selbee and Paul Reed (2006). *Making Connections: Social and Civic Engagement among Canadian Immigrants*. Ottawa: Canadian Council on Social Development.

3. Number of Close Relatives: The size of Canadian's social networks is growing; Canadians report a significant increase in the number of close relatives and close friends

Membership in kin and social networks is important on a number of levels to Canadians. In the health field, researchers have demonstrated the close relationship between familial and social networks and mortality rates and other known health risks such as smoking, obesity, hypertension and physical inactivity.^{107,108,109} Social networks also serve to provide both emotional benefits and actual assistance in time of need. To this end, network size is consistently related to health and wellbeing. Further, an individual's actual perception or awareness of the availability of support from family and friends, regardless of the presence of a stressful circumstance, is health-enhancing.

Population 15 years and older reporting six or more close relatives, 1996-2008

	1996	2003	2008
Canada	36.7%	33.8%	43.7%
Newfoundland	57.3%	44.9%	50.8%
Prince Edward Island	50.9%	40.0%	54.8%
Nova Scotia	57.2%	40.7%	47.8%
New Brunswick	52.3%	36.7%	47.0%
Quebec	25.1%	21.5%	36.5%
Ontario	38.3%	36.4%	45.0%
Manitoba	42.3%	40.4%	47.5%
Saskatchewan	46.2%	43.2%	54.6%
Alberta	37.8%	39.4%	50.0%
British Columbia	37.7%	36.6%	41.8%

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2008, 2003, 1996

Several indicators point to the decline in the size of social networks – such as the rise in single-person households and decline in average family size.¹¹⁰ However, new data from the 2008 GSS reveal that more Canadians are reporting larger support networks of close relatives and friends. In 2008, as shown, 44% of Canadians over age 15 reported having close contact with six or more relatives, up from 34% in 2003.¹¹¹

Residents of Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan reported the largest familial networks, while residents of

Quebec reported having the smallest. That said, Quebec respondents reported the largest increase

¹⁰⁷ Solange van Kemenade, in a paper for Population and Public Health Branch of Health Canada, provides a useful overview of a number of influential studies. The following studies are cited in Solange van Kemenade (2003), "Social Capital as a Health Determinant." Health Policy Research Working Paper Series, Working Paper 02-07. Ottawa: Health Canada.

¹⁰⁸ See Lisa Berkman and Leonard Syme (1979). "Social networks, host resistance, and mortality: a nine-year follow-up study of Alameda County residents." *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Volume 109, No. 2; Ichiro Kawachi et al., (1997). Social capital, income inequality and mortality," *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 87, No. 9; Ichiro Kawachi, Bruce Kennedy and R. Glass (1999). "Social capital and self-rated health: A contextual analysis," *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 98, No. 8.

¹⁰⁹ James House, Cynthia Robbins and Helen Metzner (1982). "The association of social relationships and activities with mortality: Prospective evidence from Tecumseh Community Health Study." *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Volume 116, No. 1.

¹¹⁰ The size of households has dropped in the last two decades, as fewer people live in large households and more people live alone. The proportion of one-person households has risen from about one-fifth of all households in 1981 to more than one-quarter in 2006 (26.8%) in 2006. See Statistics Canada (2007), *Family Portrait: Continuity and Change in Canadian Families and Households in 2006, 2006 Census*, Catalogue 97-553-XIE.

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/famhouse/pdf/97-553-XIE2006001.pdf>

¹¹¹ The data presented here on number of close relatives does not include the family members living in the respondent's household.

in the proportion reporting six or more close relatives between 2003 and 2008 – 15 percentage points – compared to the other provinces.

While the content of each General Social Survey varies, and this needs to be taken into account when analysing survey results, the upward trend in the size of social networks is clear – and is evident across the country.¹¹²

4. Providing assistance to others: A growing number of Canadians report that they provide help to others directly on their own; over three-quarters of Canadians across the country report extending assistance to family, friends and neighbours.

Giving and helping can take many different forms. It is therefore important to consider both formal and informal giving and helping out in order to get an accurate picture of the ways in which Canadians are connected to and support their communities.

Rate of helping others directly, by province and territory, population 15 years and older, 2004-2007

	2004	2007
Canada	83%	84%
Newfoundland	85%	87%
Prince Edward Island	86%	86%
Nova Scotia	85%	87%
New Brunswick	82%	85%
Quebec	83%	83%
Ontario	86%	83%
Manitoba	83%	86%
Saskatchewan	81%	85%
Alberta	81%	86%
British Columbia	78%	83%
Yukon	76%	85%
Northwest Territories	86%	67%
Nunavut	89%	83%

Source: Statistics Canada, Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004 and 2007

The incidence of direct personal care and assistance far exceeds that of formal volunteering. In 2007, a majority of Canadians were involved in informal helping.¹¹³ More than eight in ten Canadians (84%) provided unpaid care and assistance to others.¹¹⁴ This represents an increase from 73% in 1997, 77% in 2000 and 83% in 2004.

Canadians provide assistance directly to others in a variety of ways. In 2007, for example, 60% provided help in the home such as cooking, cleaning, gardening, maintenance, painting, shovelling snow, or car repairs. Over half (53%) provided health-related or personal care such as emotional support, counselling,

providing advice, visiting seniors or unpaid child care. Another 47% extended assistance by shopping and driving someone to appointments and so forth. Three-in-ten (29%) helped with paperwork tasks and 16% provided unpaid teaching, coaching, tutoring or assistance with reading.¹¹⁵

¹¹² According to the General Social Survey, the proportion of Canadians reporting six or more friends increased as well between 2003 and 2008, from 30.0% to 34.8%.

¹¹³ These figures do not include care and assistance provided to members of the immediate household.

¹¹⁴ Statistics Canada (2006), *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*, Catalogue No. 71-542-XPE, p. 52-53.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

The reported rate of helping out varied from a high in Newfoundland and Labrador and Nova Scotia to a low in the Northwest Territories. Nonetheless, over two-thirds of Canadians across the country are involved in assisting others in some way.

III. Community Safety

5. Property Crime: Property crime rates have been on a downward trend across the country since the early 1990s

The national crime rate¹¹⁶ has been falling since the early 1990s. In 2009, the number police-reported crime fell by 3% from 2008, following a decline of 4% in 2008. Overall, it has dropped by over 30% since peaking in 1991, after increasing steadily through the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s.¹¹⁷

Rates of Property Crime,* per 100,000 Population, 2006-2009

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Canada	3,604	3,331	3,087	2,967
Newfoundland	2,362	2,289	1,997	2,143
Prince Edward Island	3,026	2,686	2,992	2,890
Nova Scotia	3,499	3,071	2,748	2,790
New Brunswick	2,565	2,330	2,354	2,242
Quebec	3,123	2,876	2,785	2,703
Ontario	2,839	2,647	2,530	2,489
Manitoba	4,927	4,401	3,554	3,390
Saskatchewan	4,746	4,309	3,943	3,833
Alberta	4,437	4,242	3,895	3,666
British Columbia	5,776	5,247	4,510	4,145
Yukon	4,942	4,229	3,910	3,806
NWT	6,204	5,706	5,346	4,903
Nunavut	4,257	4,176	4,264	4,105

* The aggregate violent crime rate was changed in 2008 to include a broader range of violent crimes. This time series has been calculated using the old definition in order to produce a comparable series. The trend for both is the same.

Source: Statistics Canada (2010), Police-reported Crime Statistics in Canada, 2009, Catalogue No. 85-002-X; Statistics Canada, Table 252-0051 - Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, annual (number unless otherwise noted) (table), CANSIM (database); Statistics Canada (2009), Police-reported Crime Statistics in Canada, 2008, Catalogue No. 85-002-X.

The drop in 2009 was driven by the continuing decline in non-violent crimes. Between 1993 and 2009, the rate of property crime dropped from 5,575 per 100,000 to 2,967, a decrease of 47%. For instance, the rate of reported break-ins in 2009 was less than half of what it was in 1991. Between 1999 and 2009, it fell by 42%. The rate of motor vehicle theft has also declined steadily since the mid 1990s; the drop in the rate between 2008 and 2009 was 15%. Over the decade, the rate fell by 40%.

Across the country, in 2009, the rate of property crime among was highest in the Northwest Territories at 4,903 crimes per 100,000.

Newfoundland reported the

lowest levels of property crime, 2,143 per 100,000. Most provinces experienced a decline in the

¹¹⁶ The crime rate is defined as the total number of Criminal Code incidents (excluding traffic and drug offences) divided by the population. These data are collected through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey using a nationally approved set of common crime categories.

¹¹⁷ These data are published in Statistics Canada (2010), "Police-reported Crime Statistics in Canada, 2009," *Juristat*, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Catalogue No. 85-002-X, Vol. 30, No. 2.

experienced a decline in the rate of property crime. The largest annual decline (2008-2009) was in British Columbia and Northwest Territories (both at 8%), followed by Alberta (6%). Newfoundland, by contrast, experienced an increase in property crime of over 7%.

- 6. Violent Crime:** The violent crime rate has been trending down since the early 1990s. In 2009, the number of violent offences declined again, with the exception of increases in the rate of firearm offences and attempted murder

Overall, the violent crime rate has been trending down since the early 1990s, despite a small increase around 2000 and 2005. The 2009 rate of 911 violent offences per 100,000 population was 16% lower than the rate recorded in 1993 (1,081 crimes per 100,000 population).¹¹⁸

Rates of Violent Crime,* per 100,000 Population, 2006-2009

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Canada	968	951	932	911
Newfoundland	857	964	966	956
Prince Edward Island	705	673	645	670
Nova Scotia	1,143	1,081	1,046	1,022
New Brunswick	859	874	947	975
Quebec	769	741	754	731
Ontario	776	759	732	705
Manitoba	1,608	1,556	1,530	1,645
Saskatchewan	2,038	2,051	1,963	1,913
Alberta	1,107	1,120	1,120	1,093
British Columbia	1,251	1,205	1,137	1,094
Yukon	2,906	2,962	2,857	3,078
NWT	6,290	6,992	6,548	6,476
Nunavut	6,760	7,309	7,816	7,526

* The aggregate violent crime rate was changed in 2008 to include a broader range of violent crimes. This time series has been calculated using the old definition in order to produce a comparable series. The trend for both is the same.
Source: Statistics Canada (2010), Police-reported Crime Statistics in Canada, 2009, Catalogue No. 85-002-X; Statistics Canada, Table 252-0051 - Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, annual (number unless otherwise noted) (table), CANSIM (database); Statistics Canada (2009), Police-reported Crime Statistics in Canada, 2008, Catalogue No. 85-002-X.

The homicide rate fell slightly in 2009 by 1%. Despite annual fluctuations, the homicide rate has been relative stable for the past decade. The rate of common assault, the most frequent violent crime, fell from 543 offences per 100,000 to 538 offences. While most violent crime offences declined or did not appreciably change in 2009, there were increases in the rate of attempted murder (10%) and firearm offences (15%).¹¹⁹

Regionally, most provinces were stable or experienced a decline in the rate of violent crime between 2008 and 2009, with the exception of increases in Prince Edward Island (4%), New Brunswick (3%), Manitoba (8%) and Yukon (8%).

Newfoundland and Labrador reported the largest decline in Statistics Canada's severity of violent crime index, while Manitoba reported the largest increase. Overall, the western provinces and territories tend to have higher index values compared to the eastern provinces and central Canada.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ The items used to calculate the aggregate violent crime rate were changed in 2008 to include a broader range of violent crimes. The time series reported here has been calculated using the old definition of violent crime in order to produce a comparable historical series. The trend for both is the same.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* The traditional crime rate measures the volume of crime reported to police. The Crime Severity Index is a measure that has been developed by Statistics Canada to measure the seriousness of the crimes reported to police. Each crime included in the Index is given a weight derived from the sentences handed down in criminal court. The

7. Walking Alone After Dark: Canadians report high levels of personal safety; the proportion feeling safe walking after dark has increased between 1993 and 2009

How do Canadians feel about their personal safety? Do they worry about becoming a victim of crime? Has their perception of safety been increasing as the crime rate has trended down through the last decade?

The General Social Survey on Victimization reports on Canadians' experiences of crime and their perceptions of crime and safety in their communities. Overall, Canadians report being satisfied with their safety from being a victim. In 2009, almost half of Canadians (48%) said that they were "very satisfied" with their personal safety, a four percentage point increase from 44% in 2004. Another 45% stated that they were "somewhat satisfied" with their personal level of safety.¹²¹

Population 15 Years and Older who Feels Safe Walking Alone After Dark, 1993-2009				
	1993	1999	2004	2009
Canada	71.9%	73.8%	76.5%	79.3%
Newfoundland	89.2%	86.5%	84.9%	86.4%
Prince Edward Island	83.9%	84.4%	80.9%	86.8%
Nova Scotia	73.4%	75.1%	76.6%	80.0%
New Brunswick	76.1%	79.6%	78.3%	82.8%
Quebec	66.8%	72.1%	74.6%	77.2%
Ontario	71.4%	72.8%	76.4%	81.5%
Manitoba	75.2%	73.7%	78.4%	74.8%
Saskatchewan	86.3%	79.1%	82.2%	81.2%
Alberta	76.9%	77.5%	80.0%	78.6%
British Columbia	70.9%	72.6%	74.3%	76.3%

Note: Based on all responses, including those who report never walking alone at night.

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, Cycle 8, 13, 18 and 23

A good way to gauge feelings of safety is to ask about specific situations like walking alone after dark or using public transportation after dark. In 2009, eight out of ten Canadians aged 15 and over (79.3%) reported that they felt 'reasonably safe' or 'very safe' walking alone after dark. This represents an increase from 71.9% in 1993, 73.8% in 1999 and 76.5% in 2004. The growth in feelings of security parallels the decline in the rate of crime over this same period.

Most of the provinces were similar in terms of citizens' evaluations of their personal safety. Feelings of safety while

walking after dark were most prevalent in Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island and least prevalent – but still high – in Manitoba and British Columbia.

There was little variation between the overall perceptions of men and women with regard to their personal safety, but there were considerable differences with respect to situations such as walking alone after dark. In 2004, for example, women expressed higher levels of fear than men (16%

more serious offences have a greater impact on changes in the Index. The crime rate and crime severity index work to complement each other, providing a more comprehensive picture of crime trends in Canada.

¹²¹ Samuel Perreault and Shannon Brennan (2010), "Criminal victimization in Canada, 2009," *Juristat*, Catalogue no. 85-002-X, Vol. 30, No. 2.

versus 6%). However, women's fear of walking alone after dark had dropped since 1988, consistent with the overall trend.¹²²

IV. Attitudes towards Others and Community

- 8. Trust:** Less than half of Canadians believe that, generally speaking, people can be trusted, a decline from levels reported in 2005

Attitudes and values are important to measuring community vitality because ideas, assumptions and beliefs motivate social exchange and action within communities and the broader civil society. Within this context, trust is an important part of social capital and fosters the development of strong interpersonal and community relationships. High levels of trust among individuals – within a community or among those engaged in a common purpose – reflects the expectation that people or organizations will act in mutually supportive ways and that they will take into account the interest of others.

Population 15 Years and Older who Feel that 'People can be Trusted', 2005-2008

	2005	2008
Canada	54.5%	46.1%
Newfoundland	53.4%	48.2%
Prince Edward Island	64.5%	50.4%
Nova Scotia	56.4%	51.7%
New Brunswick	51.7%	46.0%
Quebec	34.2%	31.0%
Ontario	59.3%	48.7%
Manitoba	63.6%	49.4%
Saskatchewan	65.1%	49.4%
Alberta	63.5%	53.8%
British Columbia	64.7%	56.0%

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Social Engagement, 2003 and 2008

The General Social Survey regularly asks about Canadians' level of trust of their fellow citizens. The GSS asks: "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people?"

In 2008, 46.1% of Canadians stated that they believe that others can be trusted while 50.6% reported that "you can't be too careful in dealing with others."¹²³ This represents a decline from 2005 and 2003 levels, at 54.5% and 52.8% respectively.

According to the 2003 GSS, men were slightly more likely to report that people can be trusted than women. And those aged 50 to 64 years were also slightly more likely to agree that, generally speaking, people can be trusted, compared to other age groups (those aged 15 to 29 years, 30 to 49 years, and 65 years and over).¹²⁴

¹²² Marie Gannon (2005), *General Social Survey on Victimization, Cycle 18: An Overview of Findings*. Statistics Canada, Catalogue No. 85-565-XIE. Ottawa: Industry Canada.

¹²³ Three percent of respondents did not reply to this question.

¹²⁴ Grant Schellenberg (2004), *op.cit.*, p. 51.

Individuals with higher levels of education and those residing in higher income households were more likely than others to report that people can be trusted.¹²⁵

Across Canada, levels of trust are noticeably lower in Quebec. Just under a third of Quebecers reported that people can be trusted, while the largest group of British Columbian residents believed others were generally trustworthy. This is a shift from 2003 when the highest levels of trust were recorded in all of the western provinces and Prince Edward Island. The largest decline in levels of trust was in Saskatchewan (-16 percentage points), followed by Prince Edward Island and Manitoba (at -14 percentage points).

9. Experience of Discrimination: In 2009, 9.3% of Canadians reported experiencing discrimination because of their ethnicity, race, culture, skin colour, religion or language, a two-fold increase from 4.1% reported in 2004

Vital communities are those that reach out to all citizens, that “keep all groups within reach of what we expect as a society ... our common aspirations, common life and its common wealth.”¹²⁶ Such communities provide for the active participation and a broad equality of opportunities and life chances of their residents, working to create bonds of mutual trust and common purpose. Commonly shared attitudes of trust, belonging and caring are markers of inclusive societies. Discrimination, by contrast, undermines community relationships and creates barriers to the pursuit of wellbeing for targeted groups.

In Canada, public opinion polling and more recent social surveys have canvassed Canadians about their experience of discrimination. In 2002, the Ethnic Diversity Survey asked Canadians whether they had experienced discrimination or had been treated unfairly by others because of their sex, ethnicity or culture, race or colour, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, language or on any other ground during the previous five years.

The vast majority of citizens aged 15 years and older reported that they had not experienced discrimination or unfair treatment in Canada. That said, 5% said they felt that they had sometimes been discriminated against or treated unfairly, while 2% said that this had often happened to them.¹²⁷ In total, 7.0% or 1.6 million Canadians, said they had “sometimes” or “often” experienced discrimination or unfair treatment in the past five years because of their ethno-cultural characteristics.

By contrast, among respondents from visible minority groups, in 2002, fully one in five (20%) reported that they sometimes or often experienced discrimination. Another 15% reported that they had experienced discrimination – but rarely.

A question about discrimination was also asked in the 2004 General Social Survey on Victimization. According to this survey, a smaller proportion of Canadians (4.1%) reported experiencing discrimination because of ethno-cultural characteristics (including race, ethnicity,

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Christa Frieler (2001), op. cit.

¹²⁷ Statistics Canada (2003), *Ethnic Diversity Survey: Portrait of a Multicultural Society*, Catalogue No. 89-593-XIE. Ottawa: Industry Canada.

skin colour, language, culture, or religion). There were only slight differences among the provinces in this regard.

Population 15 Years and Older who Report Discrimination based on ethnicity, culture, race, colour, religion, language, 2004-2009		
	2004	2009
Canada	4.1%	9.3%
Newfoundland	*1.6%	4.2%
Prince Edward Island	X	*2.8%
Nova Scotia	*1.8%	5.7%
New Brunswick	5.5%	6.9%
Quebec	3.7%	7.5%
Ontario	4.4%	9.6%
Manitoba	3.8%	10.0%
Saskatchewan	5.3%	11.7%
Alberta	3.9%	11.5%
British Columbia	4.6%	11.4%

* use estimates with caution

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization, Cycle 18 and 23

The 2009 GSS, however, shows significant growth in the proportion of Canadians reporting discrimination, rising from 4.1% in 2004 to 9.3% in 2009.¹²⁸ The highest rates of discrimination were reported in the western provinces. The largest increases in the proportion of the population reporting discrimination were also in the west.

It is difficult to interpret these reports, absent a more detailed analysis of those reporting discrimination. Certainly, the continuing economic difficulties of new immigrants – the majority of whom now come from non-European countries – is an important factor. Despite a decade of positive economic growth and strong labour

market demand in Canada, the obstacles to immigrant success appear to have increased. New immigrants have experienced these barriers most acutely – reflected in the downward trend in the employment rates and earnings of successive cohorts of newly arrived immigrants.¹²⁹ The recent recession represented another significant blow: employment losses were particularly heavy very recent immigrants, young workers and those with lower levels of education, and non-unionized workers.¹³⁰

According to Jeffrey Reitz and Rupa Banerjee, evidence suggests discriminatory inequalities play a significant role in the slow integration of new immigrants and the economic obstacles facing racial minority communities. At the same time, while the broader Canadian population acknowledges racism in Canada, many remain skeptical of the significance of racial discrimination affecting minorities. Consequently, there is an important racial divide in the perception of the extent of racial inequality and the adequacy of the existing policy and program response.¹³¹

¹²⁸ The 2004 GSS asks about other forms of discrimination as well including discrimination based on age, sex, sexual orientation and disability. One in fourteen Canadians (7.3%) reported experiencing at least one form of discrimination in 2004. In 2009, approximately one in six (15.2%) reported experiencing at least one form of discrimination. Estimates for respondents from visible minority groups are not available.

¹²⁹ Garnett Picot and Arthur Sweetman (2005), “The Deteriorating Economic Welfare of Immigrants and Possible Causes: Update 2005,” Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 11F0019MIE B no. 262.

¹³⁰ Sébastien LaRochelle-Côté and Jason Gilmore (2009), “Canada’s Employment Turndown,” *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 75-001-X.

¹³¹ Jeffrey Reitz and Rupa Banerjee (2007), “Racial Inequality, Social Cohesion and Policy Issues in Canada,” in *Belonging? Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada*, K. Banting, T. Courchene, and L. Seidle, eds. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy.

The growth in the proportion of Canadians reporting discrimination is very troubling and demands further analysis and exploration. Is the increase in discrimination a reflection of high levels of economic and social stress associated with the economic recession in the survey year or does it represent a significant shift for Canada? In that the perception of discrimination has grown over a period of economic growth suggests that much remains to be done to provide for the active participation and a broad equality of opportunities and life chances of racial minorities in Canada.

10. Caring for Others: Four in ten Canadians reported being concerned about the needs of others, regardless of the pressures of their own lives. This represents an increase from the mid 1990s when only one in four did

In communities where feelings of altruism and reciprocity are strong, people care for each other's interests. Individuals balance their self interest with the good of the community. Do Canadians care for others in their communities? The EKOS Rethinking Government Study includes a measure that asks respondents whether they agree or disagree with the following statement: "These days I'm so hard pressed to take care of my own needs that I worry less about the needs of others." This question is a useful marker of compassion for others.

In 1994, still recovering from the deep recession of 1991-92, over half of Canadians aged 16 and older (55%) agreed with this statement, while one in four (27%) disagreed that they were so hard

These days I feel hard pressed to take care of my own needs that I worry less about the needs of others, 1994-2003

	% who Disagree			
	1994	1997	1998	2003
Canada	27%	41%	41%	42%
British Columbia	32%	44%	44%	41%
Alberta	33%	44%	48%	46%
Prairie	25%	39%	43%	39%
Ontario	24%	42%	40%	43%
Quebec	26%	39%	41%	40%
Alberta	26%	36%	33%	42%

Source: EKOS Rethinking Government, Selected Years

pressed they worried less about the needs of others. However, over the decade, the proportion who disagrees

has grown. In 2003, over four in ten (42%) stated that they did worry about the needs of others, compared to 37% who felt that meeting their needs overshadowed those of others.

This trend was evident across all regions of the country between 1994 and 2003. The most dramatic change was reported in Ontario, where the percentage of the

population who disagreed about feeling too hard pressed to worry about the needs of others increased by 19 percentage points. British Columbia reported the smallest increase at only 9 percentage points over this period.

Level of compassion appears to increase with level of educational attainment (in 2003, 49% to those with a university degree disagreed with this statement compared to 35% of those with a high school degree or less) and is highest among the most affluent (54% of those earning more than \$100,000 compared to roughly 40% of those with incomes below this level disagreed with this statement).

11. Belonging to Community: The majority of Canadians express strong attachment to their local community and have done for several years

Population 12 years and older who report a very strong or somewhat strong sense of community belonging, 2001-2009						
	2001	2003	2005	2007	2008	2009
Canada	57.9%	63.9%	64.4%	62.0%	65.0%	65.4%
Newfoundland	77.7%	79.9%	79.2%	79.2%	81.3%	81.1%
Prince Edward Island	70.4%	73.7%	75.1%	70.5%	75.9%	74.5%
Nova Scotia	66.1%	70.9%	72.6%	70.1%	73.3%	71.1%
New Brunswick	62.0%	72.3%	73.2%	67.1%	71.3%	73.9%
Quebec	46.9%	55.5%	54.7%	58.4%	57.4%	56.4%
Ontario	59.9%	64.4%	65.5%	65.5%	67.3%	67.1%
Manitoba	63.1%	69.4%	68.5%	67.9%	68.2%	68.6%
Saskatchewan	68.1%	72.6%	72.2%	70.4%	70.6%	71.0%
Alberta	56.6%	64.5%	64.8%	62.8%	60.5%	65.2%
British Columbia	63.3%	67.7%	69.6%	68.7%	67.4%	68.9%
NWT	80.3%	72.0%	70.6%	72.1%	75.3%	72.1%
Yukon		79.3%	74.3%	77.6%	81.3%	81.4%
Nunavut		79.9%	82.8%	77.9%	86.7%	85.3%

Source: Calculations by CCSD using Canadian Community Health Survey, selected years

Research has shown that a strong sense of community is tied to high levels of social participation and engagement in community and greater feelings of safety and security, as well as numerous positive individual-level outcomes.¹³² Sense of belonging is arguably the most telling marker of social vitality as it asks directly about the

connections that individuals have forged with their community, their province or region, and with their country.

The Canadian Community Health Survey includes sense of local community in its annual survey. According to the 2009 CCHS, two-thirds of Canadians (65.4%) reported having a “very strong” or “somewhat strong” sense of belonging to their local community. This represents an increase from levels reported in 2001.¹³³

In 2009, sense of belonging to community was strongest in Nunavut where 85.3% of the population over age 12 reported having a strong link to their community. Residents of the Newfoundland and Yukon also reported a very strong degree of attachment to their local communities. The lowest share of residents reporting a strong attachment to community was in Quebec, where only 56.4% reported a strong sense of belonging. Data from the 2008 General Social Survey on Social Networks shows that Quebecers were also less likely to report a strong sense of belonging to Canada; their sense of belonging to their province and their community was stronger.¹³⁴

Between 2001 and 2009, the percentage of Canadians reporting a strong sense of belonging to community increased from 57.9% in 2001 to 63.9% in 2003 and then 65.4% in 2009. The largest

¹³² See Statistics Canada (2005). *Community Belonging and Self-Perceived Health: Early CCHS Findings (January to June 2005)*, Catalogue No. 82-621-XIE – No. 001

¹³³ The General Social Survey on Social Networks also asked about sense of belonging to Canada, to province, and to local community. In 2008, 72.1% of individuals described their sense of belonging to their local community as somewhat or very strong; 82.19% described their sense of belonging to their province as somewhat or very strong; and 88.3% described their sense of belonging to Canada as somewhat or very strong – all of which have increased since 2003. See Statistics Canada (2009), *2008 General Social Survey: Selected Tables on Social Engagement*. Catalogue no. 89-640-X. Table 4-1.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* Table 4-1 through 4-6.

overall increases were experienced in New Brunswick (11.9 percentage points) and Quebec (9.5 percentage points). Only the Northwest Territories experienced a decline in the sense of belonging to the community over this period (-8.2 percentage points). There was little change between 2008 and 2009 with regard to sense of belonging.

According to the CCHS, in 2009, the highest level of attachment to community was among youth aged 12 to 19 years (75.1%). It drops quite sharply, however, among young adults – falling to 58.1% among those aged 20 to 34. Level of attachment to community increases after age 35. Over seven in ten Canadians aged 65 and older (71.9%) reported a strong sense of community belonging.¹³⁵ Sense of belonging did not vary substantially according to household income, but lower income households did report lower levels of attachment than individuals in other income groups.¹³⁶

Overview

How does Canada measure up? An initial examination of community vitality reveals that Canadians, by and large, have strong social relationships with their families and their communities. The size of social networks appears to be increasing, the rate of membership in voluntary groups and organizations is relatively high and the proportion of Canadians engaged in volunteering has been going up. Moreover, Canadians report high levels of social support, extending assistance to family, friends and neighbours. Levels of crime are down, an indicator of enhanced community relationships. And Canadians report a strong sense of belonging to their local communities across the country. That said, looking at attitudes towards others and community, more than half of Canadians aged 15 and older report that “you can’t be too careful in dealing with people” – and increase from 2005. While the level of compassion for others has increased since the early 1990s, again less than half of Canadians disagree with the statement: “These days, I feel hard pressed to take care of my own needs, that I worry less about the needs of others.” In 2009, one in ten (9.3%) reported experiencing discrimination because of their ethnicity, race, culture, skin colour, religion or language, more than double the proportion reporting discrimination in 2004.

¹³⁵ See Statistics Canada, Canada Community Health Survey, Table 105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2007 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database).

http://cansim2.statcan.gc.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgi.exe?Lang=E&CNSM-Fi=CII/CII_1-eng.htm

¹³⁶ Statistics Canada (2005), *Community Belonging ...*, p. 8.

Community Vitality Headline Indicator	↑↓	Trend
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in group activities • Volunteering • Number of close relatives • Providing assistance to others • Property crime • Violent crime • Walking alone after dark • Trust • Experience of discrimination • Caring for others • Belonging to community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↑ ↑ ↑ – ↓ ↓ ↑ ↓ ↑ ↑ – 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + + + +/- + + + – – + +/-
Note: ↑ and ↓ represent the direction of the data trend over time; the next column provides an assessment as to whether the direction of change is positive or negative with respect of community vitality.		

On balance, the positive trend of most of these indicators is heartening, suggesting that the wellbeing of Canadians as measured by the quality of their relationships is improving over time. That said, these findings reveal that more research is needed to unpack these aggregate figures, to examine the strength and density of social relationships and societal norms and values at lower levels of geography and for different groups in the population. The increase in the proportion of Canadians reporting discrimination is a very troubling sign. Are all citizens enjoying the same access to prosperity and wellbeing? This is one of Canada's most fundamental challenges moving forward into the 21st century.

8. Conclusions and Next Steps

We have proposed a definition of community vitality that focuses on the social connections that support and inspire the efforts of communities on behalf of their residents – current and future. In order to measure the level of vitality in a given community, we have proposed a conceptual model that builds on the insight of scholars and community practitioners working in the area of social cohesion, social capital, social inclusion, sense of community, and community safety. The indicators under each subcomponent have been selected to reflect the attributes of vital communities. They include a mix of objective and subjective measures.

This concept paper represents a first step. The conceptual framework needs to be subjected to critical scrutiny, each component carefully weighed and assessed, each indicator evaluated, and gaps identified so as to advance future indicator development. Particular attention needs to be paid to the position of the community vitality domain within the larger CIW, both conceptually and technically, and the sources for these data going forward.

Critical Questions for Defining and Measuring Community Vitality

As with any comparatively new field of interest, the definition and measurement of community vitality and related concepts like social capital is proceeding in fits and starts. Conceptual development is pushing forward as the literature review reveals. But predictably, the development of concrete measures to track and evaluate the impact of community vitality has lagged behind. As a result, developing a conceptual indicator model is necessarily difficult: simply put, we do not yet have measures for everything we might want to measure in relation to community vitality. Data constraints are real and immediate. The resulting indicator model has the feel of a patch work quilt.

There are a number of critical questions to think about in moving forward with the community vitality domain for the CIW, both conceptual and practical in nature.

1) Conceptual Considerations

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis as set out in this model is the *individual*, and more specifically, the connections between individuals and their community. Following from this, we have adopted what has been called a “participation perspective,” that is, we have chosen to look at relationships among family and friends, work relationships, community relationships, and local networks. The indicators that have been chosen in effect document the presence of relationships or networks among individuals – at different levels. They gauge the propensity of individuals to participate in collective action.

This is but one perspective on community vitality. The Policy Research Initiative research on social capital adopts an alternative unit of analysis, namely *relationships* between individuals, groups or communities. Their conceptual model seeks to first document the presence and

manifestations of social capital – that is the quantity and forms of social capital that individuals and groups have access to – and second, to diagnose how social capital operates – the relational dynamics in particular life situations, socio-spatial contexts, etc. There is a structural approach that seeks to examine the relationships between entities rather than the attributes of these relationships, which has been the focus of traditional social surveys, such as the General Social Survey on Social Engagement.

Given the focus of the CIW on individual wellbeing, it may well be that the individual is the most appropriate unit of analysis given the focus of the other domains in the CIW, that explicitly adopting the individual as the unit of analysis promotes or facilitates the conceptual integrity of the entire index. It is the only possible approach at this time. That said, a participation approach is necessarily limited in its explanatory value of a phenomenon such as community vitality.

Level of Geography

Level of geography remains a difficult question. The concept of community vitality as we have argued above is understood widely to refer to geo-spatial entities. Certainly, community vitality initiatives have adopted this perspective. This raises questions about the focus of the relationship indicators that we have chosen to define community vitality in the context of the CIW. Many of the indicators are designed to assess participatory behaviour regardless of geographic focus, for example, the density of kin relationships.

And following from this, how is community defined – spatially or otherwise? The fact is that the choice of indicators invariably follows the administrative boundaries marked out by available statistical data bases. These boundaries do not always correspond to what respondents' might consider to be their own community. This important constraint on our own work needs to be acknowledged. It highlights the importance of exploring the concept and measurement of community vitality at lower levels of geography and for different communities of interest.

Level of Aggregation / Disaggregation

Tracking the level and intensity of individual relationships is not the same thing as tracking the level and intensity of relationships or networks among groups or organizations. There is a danger inherent in this exercise of suggesting implicitly that one can add up individual level social capital, for instance, and arrive at an estimate of collective social capital. This is not to suggest that individual and community level relationships or networks are not related. Indeed, an active and engaged citizenry is critical to advancing the wellbeing of communities as consistently revealed in the social development literature. But as Sandra Franke argues in her monograph on social capital measurement for the PRI Social Capital Project “we cannot claim to have a full picture of the associative architecture of a given community by simply collecting data on the participatory practices of individuals ... [i]t is important to avoid the trap of aggregating individual social capital in order to estimate collective social capital.”¹³⁷ This is an important caution as we build and interpret the community vitality domain for the CIW.

¹³⁷ Sandra Franke (2005), “Measurement of Social Capital: Reference Document for Public Policy Research, Development and Education,” Ottawa: PRI Social Capital as a Public Policy Tool, p. 12.

2) Practical Considerations

There are also a number of more practical considerations to pursue in finalizing the community vitality domain. We highlight two below.

Confirming Data Sources

First and foremost, as noted above, it will be critical to confirm future sources for these data. At this time, for example, to our knowledge, there is no plan to field the Ethnic Diversity Survey again. It will also be important to participate in the review of content to ensure that the measures of interest are included in future cycles. Moreover, if the group supports the inclusion of measures from the EKOS Rethinking Government Series, we will have to approach EKOS about the availability and cost of these specific indicators.

It will be important, as a part of the CIW initiative, to lobby the funding departments such as HRSDC and Heritage Canada to continue their support for these surveys. While social engagement has been an important topic of research over the past decade, will this interest be sustained? There are many research topics competing for limited time and resources.

Methodological Approaches

There are a variety of ways in which one could advance the study of community vitality, including quantitative studies, comparative studies such as Putman's original work in Italy, and/or qualitative studies (including case studies, key informant interviews, participant observation).

Looking just at quantitative strategies, countries have adopted different strategies to advance research. For instance, the United Kingdom Office for National Statistics has developed an interactive electronic data matrix on social capital which provides information on national and community-level social capital indicators and their sources. In the United States and Australia, researchers have developed survey tools for communities to undertake their own assessments. Canada has fielded a special survey on social engagement (GSS 2003 and 2008) that includes a wide range of variables that describe the attributes of social engagement. The Siena Group on Social Statistics has recommended incorporating a module of questions into major thematic surveys on topics such as health, employment and education.

In Canada, we have pursued all of these different strategies. Indeed, Canada has a relatively large collection of community vitality indicators (at the national level) scattered across dozens of surveys. What is needed at this point is a strategy for developing a coherent and comprehensive set of indicators at the national and community levels, moving forward. The CIW has an important role to play in developing and advancing such a strategy. Indeed, the future success and coherence of the community vitality domain depends on creating a stable, timely and consistent base of information – at the national and community levels.

Areas for Future Development

Much remains to be done to flesh out community vitality measurement – in general and for the purposes of the CIW.

First, further analysis of our initial suite of indicators is needed, to explore the difference in social relationships and related norms and values for different sub-populations and geographies. As in any survey, national level aggregates can and do mask important variation. The disconnect between reportedly high levels of engagement and middling levels of trust and compassion suggest that patterns of engagement and support may well be varied. To this end, it will be critical to improve access to population data stratified by key socio-economic characteristics, including age, gender, ethno-racial identity, household income, educational attainment, and disability status.

Further work should also be undertaken to test and verify the value to this initial set of community vitality indicators and conceptual model in describing and tracking community vitality. The General Social Survey on Social Engagement (2003) and the General Social Survey on Social Networks (2008) provide an excellent opportunity to test the predictive value of several variables and their relationships to self-reported health status, life satisfaction and the level of happiness.

Second, these indicators have been selected based largely on the availability of trend data. There are certainly other possible indicators of community vitality worthy of exploration. Indeed, the measures identified here barely scratch the surface of the complexity of social relationships in communities. Much remains to be known about the types of relationships and networks that exist (e.g., bonding, bridging or linking), the purposes of these relationships (e.g., community support, civic engagement, friendship), and their structure (e.g., size, frequency and intensity of contact, density and openness, mobility, power dynamics). As well, it would be useful to have a better understanding of transactions that occur between people within networks and between organizations (e.g., provision of assistance, exchange of information, application of sanctions).

Lastly, the goal of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing project is to enable Canadians to share in the best possible health and wellbeing by identifying, developing and publicizing measures that offer clear, valid and regular reporting on progress toward achieving the health and wellbeing we seek as a nation. To this end, it will be important to explore the links between the different domains of the CIW so that we are better equipped to identify and explain notable trends and gaps. More specifically, such an examination in partnership with other organizations working at the local, provincial and national levels, will assist in understanding the impact of positive or negative levels of community vitality – for individuals and communities. This is key to mobilizing people and resources in the pursuit of greater individual and collective wellbeing among all Canadians.

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Appendix A – Sources: Environmental Scan

Many data bases were consulted as a part of the environmental scan. They include:

- Communication Abstracts
- Communication Studies
- Criminal Justice Abstracts
- Criminology - Sage Fulltext
- Family Studies Abstracts
- Expanded Academic ASAP
- Genderwatch
- Population Index
- PAIS -Public Affairs Information Service
- Social Services Abstracts
- Sociological Abstracts
- Urban Studies Abstracts
- Urban Studies Planning
- Worldwide Political Science Abstracts

The key terms used in the searches included the following:

- Community vitality
- Indicator reports – quality of life
- Community wellbeing
- Community quality of life
- Community indicators
- Economic vitality
- Social cohesion, social inclusion
- Social cohesion, social inclusion and community
- Social cohesion, social inclusion and quality of life
- Multiculturalism and community
- Multiculturalism and wellbeing
- Identity and community
- Sense of belonging and community
- Sense of belonging and Canada
- Sense of belonging and community
- Personal security and community
- Personal security, crime and community
- Personal security and family
- Religiosity and community
- Family and community
- Family and neighbourhoods
- Culture and indicators
- Cultural and community vitality
- Culture and community

Appendix B – Stakeholder and Public Consultations on the Canadian Index of Wellbeing

Excerpt on the Community Vitality Domain

This domain generated a significant amount of discussion, in part because it contained what people considered to be fairly disparate and abstract sub-domains and indicators. First, and most generally, people supported the inclusion of a domain that pertained to what they considered to be often overlooked “soft indicators” of wellbeing. There was also a sense among some participants that this domain appeared to constitute a type of catchall for indicators that were judged to be worthy of inclusion in the CIW, but not obviously relevant to the other domains. Overall, the examples of potential sub-domains and indicators suggested to most participants that this domain’s development was heading in the right direction.

There was an assumption that the “Safe Communities” sub-domain would centre on crime rates. This prompted some debate between those who thought the incidence of crime was more of an outcome than a determinant of wellbeing: “If you have all of the rest at a high level, then you will have lower crime. To me it’s mixing means and ends again.” Others countered that crime constituted a bread and butter issue for many Canadians, particularly those living in large urban centers, and that its importance warranted inclusion. In the end, there was general agreement that crime rates should be included, along with perceptions of safety (e.g., feeling safe walking alone at night, or taking public transportation, etc.). Some also thought it important that the “Safe Communities” sub-domain incorporate indicators of child abuse and family violence.

There was agreement that the arts, culture and recreation aspects include a significant focus on access: “I’ve seen cultural indicators that basically count the number of museums and festivals and so on. The real issue is access: How easy is it for people, particularly low-income families, to take advantage of these things?”

Voluntarism was obviously important to participants. There was strong agreement that the CIW should include at least a sub-domain on voluntarism. Most thought that it should be placed with the Community Vitality domain rather than the Time Allocation domain, because the latter might limit the types of indicators that could be used: “I’d like to see more than measuring the number of hours people volunteer. We already have that anyway.”

Many people thought that it was very important to obtain a measure of the “quality of the relationships” that people have (e.g., with family, friends, coworkers, etc), arguing, among other things, that having a social support network can act as a buffer against stress. For many, this “soft” indicator of societal and individual progress and wellbeing was a prime example of what is often overlooked. Participants agreed that measuring this aspect of Canadians’ lives was perfectly in keeping with what they considered to be the spirit of the CIW: “When it comes down to it, the quality of your relationships has an incredible impact on your wellbeing, and it’s not the type of thing that’s going to get picked up by any of the other indicators we’ve been talking about.”

In a somewhat similar vein, there was discussion in a number of groups about the merits of including a measure of “spirituality”, or spiritual wellbeing, within the Index. This issue was particularly significant to Aboriginal participants. In addition to noting its broad historical and cultural significance, they noted how spirituality had helped many Aboriginal people overcome the adversity of abuse, discrimination and addiction. In the end, however, these and other participants who thought it beneficial to include an indicator of spiritual wellbeing had a great deal of difficulty defining the term in a way that would be universally meaningful: “It’s not really religion, it might be closer to self-esteem and your connection to yourself, but I’m not sure how you would measure that.”

The issue of identity, sometimes referred to as “cultural identity”, surfaced during a number of discussions. It was most often in response to concern that the culture sub-domain might focus exclusively on the performing arts and cultural institutions. The discussion linked cultural identity to self-esteem and the creation of a sense of belonging to one’s community. In this sense, it was also related to the “multiculturalism” sub-domain.

Many people spoke about the importance of diversity to the wellbeing of communities. The most obvious aspect related to cultural/ethnic diversity and the multiculturalism sub-domain and how communities benefited economically, culturally and socially from the synergy it generates. There was also agreement that diversity needed to be looked at in its broadest sense, including the diversity of ideas/beliefs, lifestyles, sexual orientation, etc. In discussing this issue, quite a few people made reference to Richard Florida’s work on the “creative class”, and specifically of his use of a “gay index” as proxy for a community’s openness to new ideas: “It isn’t just that it’s nice to live in a city with vibrant gay village and lots of ethnic restaurants. It’s about the real economic impacts you get when you bring people with different perspectives together in an open environment.”

The issue of “human rights” was raised in a number of the groups. The ensuing discussion revealed that most of those who thought it was necessary to have an indicator of human rights were more often than not referring to the extent to which communities are free of racism and discrimination.

Another suggestion was to include one or more indicators of community’s success at integrating immigrants.

Appendix C – Potential Data Sources

The following surveys conducted by Statistics Canada and other organizations have a range of questions that measure the different concepts discussed here.¹³⁸ By and large, with the exception of the Census, these surveys do not provide comparable data over a long period of time (greater than 10 years). This reflects the fact that studies of social capital and the like are relatively recent. These sources, however, provide an indication of the type of questions related to community vitality that have been asked in Canada in the past. Below, we provide a general description of each survey. More detailed information on the specific indicators chosen for the proposed Community Vitality domain are included in the Appendix I: Indicator Summary.

Statistics Canada Data Sources

- Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP) – 2004 and 2007**
 The purpose of CSGVP is to collect information from Canadians 15 years and older about the ways in which they support one another and their communities through their involvement in giving, volunteering and participating. Originally called the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP), this survey has been fielded four times, in 1997, 2000, 2004 and 2007. It is built upon an earlier survey, the 1987 Survey of Volunteer Activity. Due to methodological differences, the data from the 2004 and 2007 CSGVP are not directly comparable with the data from the 1997 and 2000 NSGVP. The next survey is planned for 2010, pending confirmation of funding.
- Canadian Community Health Surveys (CCHS)**
 The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) is a biennial survey that collects information on the health status and health utilization of Canadians for health regions and combinations of health regions across Canada. In 2000, the CCHS replaced the cross-sectional component of the National Population Health Survey (1994-2000); since that time, the CCHS has been fielded in 2000-01, 2003, 2005 and 2007.

The CCHS is conducted in two waves. In the first year, general health information is collected from roughly 130,000 Canadians age 12 and over in order to produce reliable cross-sectional estimates at the provincial, territorial and health region levels. In the second year, a smaller sample is surveyed on different topics of interest such as mental health. There is information on a wide range of topics, including: physical activity, height and weight, smoking, exposure to second hand smoke, alcohol consumption, general health, chronic health conditions, injuries, and use of health care services. It also provides information on the socio-demographic, income and labour force characteristics of the population.

Since 2007, the CCHS has been fielded annually with a smaller cross-sectional sample of 65,000.

¹³⁸ For full explanations of these surveys and their usefulness for measuring social capital (at least for social capital at the community level), please refer to Bryant and Norris' paper, *Measuring Social Capital: the Canadian Experience*, Statistics Canada, August 2002. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/21/48/2381103.pdf>

- **Census of Canada**

The Census of Canada is conducted every five years, most recently in the spring of 2006. It provides the population and dwelling counts not only for Canada but also for each province and territory, and for smaller geographic units such as cities or districts within cities. The Census also provides detailed information on a range of demographic, social and economic characteristics. The Census serves as an important source of basic community level information, specifically in relation to community size and make-up.

- **Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) – 2002**

The 2002 EDS was one-time post-censal survey which interviewed about 42,500 people aged 15, living in one of the ten provinces. The EDS provides information on how people's backgrounds affect their participation in Canada's social, economic and cultural life of Canada. Topics covered in the survey include ethnic ancestry, ethnic identity, place of birth, visible minority status, religion, religious participation, knowledge of languages, family background, family interaction, social networks, civic participation, interaction with society, attitudes, satisfaction with life, trust and socio-economic activities. The generalized questions on trust developed for the World Values Survey were used in the EDS.

- **General Social Survey**

The GSS program was established in 1985 and is conducted in the 10 provinces. Each survey contains a core topic or focus and a standard set of socio-demographic questions. More recent cycles include some qualitative questions which explore perceptions. Until 1998, the sample size was approximately 10,000 persons. This was increased in 1999 to 25,000. Estimates are available at the national and provincial levels.

General Social Survey on Social Engagement – Cycle 23, 2009

Cycle 23 is the fifth cycle of the GSS that collected information on the nature and extent of criminal victimization in Canada (see also: Cycle 3 – 1988; Cycle 8 – 1993; Cycle 13 – 1999; Cycle 18 – 2004). This survey also collects information about the public perceptions of crime and violence, and since 1999, specific information about family violence. In 2004, there were new questions on the use of restraining orders, stalking and social disorder. This survey is the only national survey of self-reported victimization which provides data on criminal victimization for the provinces and territories. As not all crimes are reported to the police for a variety of reasons, the survey provides an important complement to officially recorded crime rates. It measures both crime incidents that come to the attention of the police and those that are unreported. It also helps to understand why some people choose whether or not to report a crime to the police.

General Social Survey on Social Engagement – Cycle 22, 2008

The first GSS cycle on social engagement in 2003 (see below) collected data on dimensions of social engagement, including social participation, civic participation, trust and reciprocity. The purpose of Cycle 22 is to collect data on social networks, and social and civic participation. Information is also being collected on major changes in respondents' lives and the resources they used and needed during these transitions.

General Social Survey on Family, Social Support and Retirement – Cycle 21, 2007

Cycle 21 builds on Cycle 11 (1996) which was designed to explore the dynamic between an individual's social network and help received and provided. Cycle 11 focused on help given or received during either temporarily difficult times or out of necessity due to long-term health or physical limitations. Cycle 16 and Cycle 21 look specifically at support for seniors and the experiences of Canadians over the age of 45. The target sample size is 25,000, thus results are available at both the national and provincial levels and possibly for some special population groups such as disabled persons, visible minorities and seniors.

General Social Survey on Family and Friends – Cycle 20, 2006

The first GSS on Family and Friends (Cycle 5) was fielded in 1990 and explored the respondents' relationships and interaction with family and friends. The content drew heavily on the 1984 Family History Survey and GSS Cycle 1. Cycle 10 in 1995 and Cycle 15 in 2001 also addressed a range of family issues. The theme of social supports and networks has also carried throughout other cycles of the GSS. The latest cycle in 2006 focuses on family and early course transitions. New content will look at the challenges and transitions faced by families such as family formation, work/life balance, child care and buying a first home.

General Social Survey on Time Use – Cycle 19, 2005

The GSS – Time Use Cycle collected data from persons 15 years and older. The core content of time use repeats that of Cycle 12 (1998), Cycle 7 (1992) and Cycle 2 (1986), and provides data on the daily activities of Canadians. Question modules were also included on unpaid work activities, cultural activities and participation in sports. In Cycle 19, respondents were asked new questions about transportation, sense of belonging, trust and workplace health.

General Social Survey on Social Engagement – Cycle 17, 2003

Cycle 17 was the first cycle to survey the topic of social engagement. Topics include wellbeing, social participation, civic participation, trust and values. This survey builds on earlier surveys and includes questions on contact with friends and relatives (Cycles 16, 15, 14, 11, and 10), giving and receiving informal help (Cycles 16 and 11), volunteering (Cycles 16, 14, 12, and 9), voting and other political activity (Cycle 14).

General Social Survey on Health – Cycle 6, 1991

The first (1985) and sixth (1991) cycles of the GSS had health as their core content. With the introduction of the National Population Health Survey in 1994, the core health content was gathered through this new vehicle. The GSS surveys, however, provide additional historical trend data on population health of potential use to the CIW.

- **Juristat Crime Statistics in Canada**

Juristat is an annual report on crime statistics based on an analysis of the police-reported data in 2005. These data are presented within the context of both short and long term trends. Data are examined at the national, provincial and territorial levels, as well as for major metropolitan areas by type of crime. The report distinguishes between violent crime, property crime, other Criminal Code offences, impaired driving, drug offences and youth crime.

Juristat draws on many surveys in its work, including:

Uniform Crime Reporting Survey

The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), in co-operation with the policing community, collects police-reported crime statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR). The UCR Survey was designed to measure the incidence of crime in Canadian society and its characteristics. UCR data reflect reported crime that has been substantiated by police. Information collected by the survey includes the number of criminal incidents, the clearance status of those incidents and persons-charged information. The UCR Survey produces a continuous historical record of crime and traffic statistics reported by every police agency in Canada since 1962.

Transition Home Survey (THS) – 2003/04

The THS is a biennial census of all residential agencies providing services to battered women and their children across Canada. Its objective is to collect data on residential services for abused women and their children during the previous 12 months, as well as to provide a one-day snapshot of the clientele being served on a specific date. Historically, information about transition homes was collected by the Residential Care Facilities (RCF) Survey. However data collected from the RCF were very limited. In 1991/92, the Transition Home Supplement to the RCF Survey was developed as an interim survey in response to information needs under the Federal Family Violence Initiative. Since 1992/93, the Transition Home Survey has been conducted as an independent survey.

Violence Against Women Survey (VAWS) – 1993

This one-time survey examined the safety of women both inside and outside of the home. It included topics such as perceptions of fear, sexual harassment, sexual violence, physical violence, and threats.

- **Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) – 2003**

The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants is a biennial survey that attempts to assess how new immigrants adjust to life in Canada over time and to provide information on the factors that can facilitate or hinder this adjustment. The LSIC is designed to examine the first four years of settlement, a time when newcomers establish economic, social and cultural ties to Canadian society. Topics covered in the survey include language proficiency, housing, education, foreign credential recognition, employment, health, values and attitudes, the development and use of social networks, income, and perceptions of settlement in Canada. The LSIC has been fielded twice, in 2001 and 2003.

- **Survey of Household Spending (SHS)**

The Survey of Household Spending is carried out annually across Canada in the ten provinces. Data for the territories are available for 1998, 1999 and every second year thereafter. The main purpose of the survey is to obtain detailed information about household spending during the reference year (previous calendar year). Information is also collected about dwelling characteristics as well as household equipment, as of December 31 of the reference year. Conducted since 1997, the Survey of Household Spending integrates most of the content found in the Family Expenditure Survey (FAMEX) and the Household Facilities and Equipment Survey (HFE).

Other Data Sources

- **Adult Literacy and Lifeskills (ALL) Survey**

The Adult Literacy and Lifeskills (ALL) Survey is an international comparative study designed to provide participating countries, including Canada, with information about the skills of their adult populations. ALL measured the literacy and numeracy skills of a nationally representative sample from each participating country. On a pilot basis, ALL also measured adults' problem-solving skills and gathered information on their familiarity with information and communication technologies. ALL specifically includes questions on levels of participation and sense of belonging. In Canada, the ALL tested more than 23,000 Canadians in 2003 on their skills proficiency in four scales: prose, document, numeracy and problem-solving. ALL builds on the foundation of earlier studies of adult literacy, notably the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), which was conducted in three phases (1994, 1996 and 1998) in 20 countries.

- **Canadian Election Survey**

The main objective of the Canadian Election Survey is to explain what makes people decide to vote (or not to vote), and, if they do, what makes them decide to support a given party or candidate, and why parties gain or lose ground from one election to another. Elections Canada and the Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP) are partners in this project. The study consists of a three-wave survey conducted by the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at York University. It includes a rolling cross-section survey with over 4,000 interviews during the campaign, a post-election survey with more than 3,000 of the campaign survey respondents, and a self-administered mail-back questionnaire filled out by more than 1,500 of the post-election respondents.

- **EKOS Research Associates – *Rethinking Government* series**

The Rethinking Government study was developed in 1994 by Ekos Research Associates. It is an annual survey devoted to understanding Canadian public opinion, attitudes, behaviour and values as they relate to major public policy issues. There are core tracking questions on issues such as government priorities, values for government, personal optimism and security, identity and belonging, and public perceptions of public institutions provide the crucial contextual backdrop against which more specific areas of study (e.g., health care, the environment).

- **World Values Survey (WVS)**

The World Values Surveys grew out of a study launched by the European Values Survey group in 1981. The EVS carried out the initial survey in 10 West European countries. It was subsequently replicated elsewhere. The first wave of the current survey was fielded in 1990, the second wave in 1995, the third wave in 2000, and the most recent in 2005. Canadian data are available for 1982, 1990 and 2000. This data collection is designed to enable cross-national comparison of values and norms in a wide variety of areas and to monitor changes in values and attitudes of mass publics in 45 societies around the world. Topics covered include: work, the meaning and purpose of life, family life and contemporary social issues.

<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>

Appendix D – Social Capital Indicators Proposed by the Siena Group for Social Statistics

1. Social Participation

Type of group(s) in which respondent is involved

Type of active involvement in groups

Type of involved by type of group

Alternate option:

(a) Type of group(s) in which respondent is actively involved

(b) Frequency of active involvement by type of group

(c) Type of active involvement by type of group

2. Social Support

Type of informal unpaid help provided to non-household members

Frequency of provision of informal unpaid help received from non-household members

Type of informal unpaid help received from non-household members

Frequency of receipt of informal unpaid help from non-household members by type of help

3. Social Networks

Frequency of contact with friends, relatives or work colleagues

Frequency of contact with friends, relatives and neighbours by type of contact

4. Civic Participation

(a) Engagement in civic action (national issues)

(b) Engagement in civic action (not restricted to national issues)

(a) Voted in most recent national election

(b) Voted in most recent election by level of government

Appendix E – Measuring Social Capital in Five Communities, Paul Bullen, 1998

Elements of Social Capital

A. Participation in the Local Community

1. Do you help out a local group as a volunteer?
2. Have you attended a local community event in the past 6 months (e.g., Church fete, school concert, craft exhibition)?
3. Are you an active member of a local organization or club (e.g., Sport, craft, social club)?
4. Are you on a management committee or organizing committee for any local group or organization?
5. In the past 3 years, have you ever joined a local community action to deal with an emergency?

B. Proactivity in a social context

1. Have you ever picked up other people's rubbish in a public place?
2. Do you go outside your local community to visit your family?
3. If you need information to make a life decision, do you know where to find that information?
4. If you disagree with what everyone else agreed on, would you feel free to speak out?
5. If you have a dispute with your neighbours (e.g., over fences or dogs) are you willing to seek mediation?
6. At work do you take the initiative to do what needs to be done even if no one asks you?

C. Feelings of Trust and Safety

1. Do you feel safe walking down your street after dark?
2. Do you agree that most people can be trusted?
3. If someone's car breaks down outside your house, do you invite them into your home to use the phone?
4. Does your area have a reputation for being a safe place?
5. Does your local community feel like home?

D. Neighbourhood Connections

1. Can you get help from friends when you need it?
2. If you were caring for a child and needed to go out for a while, would you ask a neighbour for help?
3. Have you visited a neighbour in the past week?
4. When you go shopping in your local area are you likely to turn into friends and acquaintances?
5. In the past 6 months, have you done a favour for a sick neighbour?

E. Family and Friends Connection

1. In the past week, how many phone conversations have you had with friends?
2. How many people did you talk to yesterday?

3. Over the weekend do you have lunch / dinner with other people outside your household?

F. Tolerance of Diversity

1. Do you think that multiculturalism makes life in your area better?
2. Do you enjoy living among people of different life styles?

G. Value of Life

1. Do you feel valued by society?
2. If you were to die tomorrow, would you be satisfied with what your life has meant?

H. Work Connections (questions asked of people in paid employment)

1. Do you feel part of the local geographic community where you work?
2. Are your workmates also your friends?
3. Do you feel part of a team at work?

Appendix F – PRI Conceptual Framework

Elements to Social Capital		Individual Social Capital	Collective Social Capital		
		Interpersonal Networks	Intra-Organizational Networks	Inter-Organizational Networks	
Presence of Social Capital	Structural Properties of Network	Size of network	Number of persons with whom one maintains different types of relationships	Number of members in an organization	Number of partners in network
		Density of network	Level of interconnections between network members	Level of interconnection between members of an organization	Level of interconnection between partners in network
		Diversity of network	Heterogeneity of the socio-economic status of network members	Heterogeneity of the socio-economic status of members	Heterogeneity of organizational partners in network
		Frequency of contact	Number and length of contacts between network membesr	Number and length of contacts between members	Frequency of communications between the organizations and number of networking activities
		Intensity of contact	Strength and nature of a relationship in terms of emotional investment (weak-strong)	Strength and nature of working relationships within organization	Strength and nature of relationships between partners
		Spatial proximity of network members	Network members who meet face to face on a regular basis	Organizational members who meet face to face on a regular basis	Network partners who whork in the same geographic area
Functioning of Social Capital	Network Dynamics	Mobilization of networks: Conditions of access to resources	Presence or absence of alternative solutions, feelings of dependency, difficulties in asking for assistance	Autonomy and interdependence of organizational members	Autonomy and interdependence of partner organizations
		Mobilization of networks: Gap between perceived and mobilized resources	Expectations about available support/resources and questions on the support/resources actually received	Expectations about available support/resources and questions on the support/resources acutally received	Expectations about available support/resources and questions on the support/resouces acutally received
		Relational competency and conditions of social integration	Relational skills and effects of lfie-course events	Stability of intra-organizational relations through various events that mark the organization's evolution	Stability of inter-organizational relations through various events that mark collective project's evolution
		Norms and rules internal to the network	Norms: cultural and ethical dimensions of relationships (e.g., trust, belonging, tolerance) / Rules: reciprocity, symmetry, equality	Quality and democratic aspect of interactions, openness, and respect of actors, common perception of issues, confidence in the contribution of each member of organization	Quality and democratic aspect of interactions, openness, and respect of actors, common perception of issues, confidence in the contribution of each member of partners
	External Context in which Social Capital Operates	Structures and institutional arrangements	Forma/informal arrangements which help/hinder the development of relationships and social integration	Formal/informal arrangements that help/hinder the interactions between members of organization	Formal/informal arrangements that help/hinder the creation and functioning of inter-organizational partnerships

Appendix G – CIEL Community Vitality Index

The Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership is piloting a Community Vitality Index in three Quebec towns. The CIEL list of “perceptual” and “statistical” indicators” is presented below. (Further information on this initiative can be found in the main text on page 12 and page 31). The indicators highlighted in grey are under consideration while the others have been chosen for the Index.

Statistical Indicators

The CIEL relies on a select group of “statistical” measures to complement its more detailed community survey of community vitality. These indicators function as a “kind of reality check.” The selection was guided by the following criteria:

- Available for the local area – the indicators must apply to a specific municipality, and not the region or a higher-level geography;
- Available for the current or previous year;
- Appropriate to a small sample
- Readily available for any community

Statistical Indicator	Rationale	Source
Family demographics and family economy		
1. People on Social Assistance and/or EI vs. provincial average	Health, nutrition, child care, education, recreation, and public safety are all affected by income level.	Statistics Canada annual tax-filer data, by postal code
2. Average household income vs. provincial		
3. Youth and/or overall employment or unemployment rate vs. provincial.		
4. Ratio of highest to lowest income households.		
5. Families below low income cutoff line as percent of all families or vs. provincial		
6. Families led by a single parent with at least one dependent child as % of all families or vs. provincial.	Average income of all families is nearly twice that of lone-parent families.	
7. Population change over past year(s)	Net in- and out-migration tells whether, and how, people are voting with their feet.	
8. 25-34-year-olds, % of total population, over previous years	25-34 is the key demographic as this is the group to settle, buy real estate, replenish real estate & infuse energy into community.	
Personal Security		
9. Rate of violent crime.	Low crime rate may indicate a community	Provincial government,

10. Rate of property crime.	with ample educational, recreational, cultural, and employment opportunities, as well as a sense of safety and trust.	details still to be ironed out
Business and government		
11. Voter turnout in last municipal election vs. provincial average or previous elections	Indicates level of local civic engagement and openness to diversity.	Municipal government
12. Number of women on last three councils		
13. Number of business licenses per capita	Indicates the vibrancy of the local economy, whether an entrepreneurial spirit is thriving, and whether businesses are successful.	
14. Business licenses that renewed or did not renew each year, for past three years.		

Perceptual Indicators

1. Personal and Economic Security

Issues: access to work/earn a living, affordability of housing, feeling of safety & security, role of community/society for less advantaged

1. Local middle-income earners can afford to buy a house in this community.
2. Homelessness is not a problem here.
3. Those with skills and education can find a well-paying job in the community.
4. There are adequate job opportunities for young people age 15-24 in the community.
5. There is a diversity of employers—the community is not dependent on a small number of employers.
6. The community is a safe place to live.
7. Car, home, and business break-ins are not a big problem in the community.
8. Women consider it safe to walk alone downtown at night.
9. There are effective crisis intervention programs such as crisis lines and affordable counselling services.
10. There is active communication between the police, businesses, community groups, and schools about public safety.
11. There is a mix of affordable housing options available for all groups including seniors, youth, and people with physical and mental disabilities.
12. People are able to work here without commuting to another community.
13. There are work programs and volunteer opportunities for the mentally and physically disabled.

2. Life Long Learning

Issues: culture of learning, ability to adapt, accessibility of education

1. Citizens are motivated to learn new skills and develop existing ones.
2. Citizens have access to a variety of learning modes: on-line, college, distance, etc.
3. Businesses and educational institutions collaborate to train for the employment skills needed by the community.
4. Citizens strive to become fluent in both official languages.
5. There are good schools for our children in the community.
6. Parents are welcome in the schools and the schools are involved in the community
7. Citizens are interested in national and international news and public affairs.

8. There is a range of affordable non-credit (“continuing education”) courses for adults in the arts, business, computers, etc.
9. There are alternatives to the mainstream public (and Catholic) school systems (alternative programs within the system, alternative schools, private schools, etc.)
10. Schools consult with parents and respond to their concerns.

3. Wellness

Issues: personal and community happiness, health, equity, social connections & feeling of connectedness, reflection, celebration

1. Citizens are committed to fitness and healthy lifestyles.
2. A good recreation facility with a gym, fitness centre, and a swimming pool is accessible and affordable
3. You see many active, healthy-looking seniors in this community.
4. Healthy food is available in school cafeterias and vending machines.
5. A high-quality health care facility is accessible.
6. There are enough doctors, nurses, and other health professionals.
7. There is a diversity of alternative health care available (eg chiropractors, naturopaths, acupuncturists, massage therapists, etc)
8. There are accessible, effective drug and alcohol counselling and intervention programs.
9. There is effective, accessible pre-natal and post-natal education and counselling.
10. This is a happy community.
11. There are opportunities for group fitness activities in the community (curling, races, etc.)
12. Local government actively encourages fitness and wellbeing among its citizens.

4. Leadership, Teamwork and Networking

Issues: forward thinking, responsive, inclusiveness, opportunities to meaningfully engage, handling of conflict, a voice for those who do not have one, opportunities to identify & develop new leaders, leadership vs. leaders, openness to collaboration

1. This town believes in itself. We think that with enough support, we can do anything.
2. We have high quality local government.
3. Council represents a diversity of the community’s citizens.
4. Citizens and town council have an active dialogue. Citizens feel welcome to participate in local government processes and decisions.
5. There is a community development plan that the community follows and it is updated periodically.
6. In public issues, there is understanding and collaboration between anglophones and francophones.
7. There is a good balance between new ideas and a respect for tradition and history.
8. There are opportunities to develop volunteers, potential and emerging leaders.
9. Youth & seniors are heard and truly count in community decision making.
10. Groups with similar interests can form alliances and co-operate to achieve goals.
11. There is a pool of talented leaders with diverse skills, cultural experiences and backgrounds who are available for leading community initiatives.
12. Co-operative and joint community initiatives are encouraged and respected.
13. The governance of this community could be called innovative
14. Anyone can easily participate in decision-making in this town if they want to, because there are multiple avenues for access.
15. Leaders help people deal with contentious public issues through civilized debate in which the different sides listen to each other.

16. In public issues, there is a constructive relationship between aboriginals and others.
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5. Environment

Issues: thought given to integrity, planning for future generations, green space, pollution (of all types), recognition of the impact of industry & community decisions, community sustainability

1. For people in this community, the integrity of the environment is a priority.
2. There are opportunities for people with differing opinions to have constructive discussions about the environment.
3. There is at least one person on city council who regularly advocates on behalf of local environmental integrity.
4. Local government actively supports the reduction of domestic and industrial waste through recycling and other means.
5. The air is clean.
6. The drinking water is clean and it tastes good.
7. There is good public transit within the community, with bus shelters and convenient schedules and routes.
8. The community considers sustainability in its community planning.
9. Wetlands and other sensitive areas are protected from residential and industrial development.

6. Arts, Heritage and Culture

Issues: recognition, opportunities for involvement, participation, recognition of value (\$ or otherwise), appreciation for local history

1. We celebrate the arts and support local artists.
2. The community has adequate displays of public art: sculptures, murals, etc.
3. There are numerous opportunities to see local live theatre and live music in a variety of genres (folk, hip-hop, choral, jazz, etc.).
5. There is a pleasant and inviting venue for theatre and other special events that is open to people of all ages.
6. There are numerous opportunities, in and out of school, for children to learn the arts (dance classes, etc.)
7. There are adequate opportunities and venues for local artists and craftspeople to display and sell their work.
8. We have at least one public festival that generates a feeling of magic and excitement.
9. We are aware of and celebrate local history.
10. The library is valued by the community.
11. The arts are actively supported by local government and business.

7. Sense of Community

Issues: empowerment, working together, acceptance of diversity, social capital, pride, assistance of others, resilience, interest in community

1. Citizens are committed to this community—they have a strong sense that they belong here.
2. Most people know the individuals in at least three neighbouring households by name.
3. Newcomers are welcome in the community.

4. Highly educated people want to move here from other places.
5. Young adults age 25-34 consider the community to be a desirable place to live.
6. Citizens seek to improve their skills in both official languages.
7. There is a collaborative relationship between Anglophones and Francophones.
8. Residents are proud of this community. They are always promoting it to outsiders.
9. We have identified something positive that is unique to this town, and we promote it well.
10. Local newspapers, newsletters, community websites, etc are hungrily devoured and discussed.
11. Newcomers with a variety of different backgrounds (ethnic, cultural, linguistic, etc.) feel welcome and at home here.
12. Racism is not a problem here.
13. There is a variety of positive, challenging, and active things for young people to do in the community (recreation, sports, culture, entertainment.)
14. Many seniors in the community are active and involved in a variety of activities.

8. Community Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Issues: culture of innovation & entrepreneurship, opportunities, attitudes, networks, capital, acceptance of change, strategic thinking & planning

1. Innovation is valued and recognized in the community
2. There are formal and informal forums (conferences, workshops, meetings) on business innovation, technology and technology applications.
3. Business capital is available to anyone committed to a venture with market support and a good business plan.
4. People travel away from the community and bring new ideas back.
5. Businesses in the community/region market their products and services as a group.
6. The community has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image.
7. There are a variety of business training opportunities and information resources available locally for those wishing to start a business.
8. Entrepreneurial ventures and business creation are encouraged and supported by citizens and local governments.
9. People prefer to purchase local products & services before those from out of the area.
10. A pool of motivated employees is available to meet business needs.
11. There are adequate opportunities (informal & formal) where business people and entrepreneurs can network with each other.
12. The community is capable of identifying new, unconventional or changing business opportunities.
13. Individuals are capable of identifying new, unconventional or changing business opportunities.

9. Physical Space

1. There is good public transit to neighbouring communities.
2. The community is physically beautiful and distinctive: It does not look like any other town in the area.
3. The community is laid out in such a way that most goods and services are accessible on foot.
4. It's easy and safe to get around by bicycle.
5. There are friendly public spaces where a variety of kinds of people feel welcome: parks, squares, fountains, outdoor cafes, benches, playgrounds.
6. There is a vibrant town centre or community core.

- | |
|---|
| 7. A variety of real estate is available to accommodate business, expansion, attraction or creation (i.e. home-based, downtown core). |
| 8. Infrastructure (telecommunications, roads, transportation) is reliable, well maintained, and modern. |

Appendix H – Community Vitality Index, Metropolitan Chicago Information Centre

The Metro Chicago Information Centre (MCIC) *Community Vitality Index* (mentioned above) uses multidimensional indicators to quantify the relative potential of neighbourhoods and geographic communities in the metropolitan Chicago area. Below is the list of indicators used to track community vitality. For a complete explanation of the indicators used to calculate the community vitality index, see “A Technical Explanation of the CVI Methodology” info.mcfol.org/www/datainfo/cvi/

CVI Composite Score Range 1 - 100		
Social Capital 33.3% of total composite Index	Economic Potential Score 33.3% of total composite Index	Community Amenities 33.3% of total composite Index
Civic Engagement (25% of component) Percent voting in most recent national (Nov.) election	Commercial Vitality (25% of component) # business / sq. mi. value of small business loans / population	Art, Culture, Leisure and Amusements (25% of component) # opportunities w/in 3 miles
Community Diversity (25% of component) Age distributions, ethnic diversity, income mix	Buying Power (25% of component) Aggregate income /sq mi. Shelter cost burden	Restaurants (25% of component) # w/in 1 mile
Interaction Potential (25% of component) Common language, social support in household, available adults	Neighborhood Confidence, Investment (25% of component) Home ownership rates, rehab loan rates, percent occupied dwelling units	Community Institutions (25% of component) # libraries, houses of worship, higher education institutions w/in 2 miles
Stability (25% of component) Mobility, immigration	Workforce Potential (25% of component) Educational attainment, # wage earners/sq. mi, labor force participation	Health and Human Services (25% of component) # of providers w/in 3 miles

Appendix I – Neighborhood Trend Watch, Neighborhood Profile Survey, Wilder Research Center

The Wilder Research Center publishes neighbourhood profiles which include a telephone survey of residents identified as knowing a great deal of their neighbourhoods as well as Census fact sheet based on their Community DataWorks website. The Profile Survey is used to generate discussion and action regarding neighbourhood assets that are already in place and possible gaps that need to be filled to help create thriving neighbourhoods. The *Neighborhood Trend Watch* indicators are presented below because they provide an interesting example of an approach to the measurement of community vitality that brings together objective and subjective information.

The Census fact sheet includes information at the neighbourhood level on the following topics:

- Population
- Age profile
- Race and ethnicity
- Languages
- Countries of origin
- Households
- Children and youth
- Older adults
- Housing
- Housing costs
- Cars and drivers
- Workers and jobs
- Education
- Income
- Poverty

The Profile Survey consists of a series of 54 questions in five categories:

- Strong social fabric: organization; resident cohesion; diversity and history
- Opportunities to grow and fulfill needs: Education and learning; and basic needs and services for children, youth and older adults
- Safe, accessible places and spaces: Crime and security; environment; and housing
- Vibrant local economy: Businesses; jobs; homeownership; and economic development
- Power and influence: Political leaders; community leadership; and resident involvement.

For each statement, respondents are asked: Would you say the description is a lot like the XXXX neighbourhood, somewhat like it, or not at all like the XXX neighbourhood? The survey also asks the respondents to describe in their words the neighbourhood's greatest strengths and its biggest challenges. The indicators are listed below.

Social fabric of the neighborhood

- The neighborhood accepts and respects the diversity of individuals and families.
- Volunteerism is strong in the neighborhood.
- People watch out for each other and uphold common standards in the neighbourhood.
- There are strong non-profit and civic organizations in the neighbourhood.
- The faith community contributes to the overall well-being of the neighbourhood.
- People of different ethnic backgrounds and races would be welcomed if they moved into the neighbourhood.
- When there is a problem in the neighbourhood, people get together and work on it.
- People of all ages get along with and trust others in the neighbourhood.
- Organizations in the neighbourhood have efficient administration and stable funding.
- Organizations in the neighbourhood have skilled staff and board members reflective of the neighbourhood.
- People living in the neighbourhood are proud of its history and accomplishments.
- The neighbourhood works together with other neighbourhoods on neighbourhood issues.

Opportunities to grow and fulfill needs

- The neighbourhood is a great place for young people to grow up and thrive.
- People living in the neighbourhood have easy access to activities and services that provide for people's basic needs.
- People who live in the neighbourhood have easy access to opportunities that help them learn about and celebrate different cultures
- People who live in the neighbourhood have easy access to activities and services that provide for their mental and physical health and safety.
- People who live in the neighbourhood have easy access to activities and services that help individuals and families overcome obstacles, find jobs, work toward self-sufficiency, and develop their interests and talents.
- The neighbourhood has good library services available.
- People who live in the neighbourhood have easy access to recreational activities.
- Youth who live in the neighbourhood have easy access to after-school opportunities and activities.
- Seniors who live in the neighbourhood have easy access to services that support their independence.
- There are many opportunities in the neighbourhood for life-long learning such as through community education.
- The public schools in the neighbourhood provide a quality education.

Safe, accessible places and spaces

- Affordable, attractive housing is usually available in the neighbourhood.
- The neighbourhood has good parks where people can walk and play.
- People living in the neighbourhood take pride in the outward appearance of their residences.
- People can walk safely at night in the neighbourhood.
- People living in the neighbourhood are committed to keeping their environment clean.
- The neighbourhood has lots of plants, flowers, and gardens.

- Police respond quickly and helpfully when residents call them.
- There are places in the neighbourhood where people can meet, gather and talk.
- The streets of the neighbourhood are kept clean and in good repair.
- The neighbourhood is a safe place to live.

Vibrant local economy

- Good jobs are easy to find in the neighbourhood.
- Businesses in the neighbourhood support volunteerism and civic participation.
- Businesses in the neighbourhood contribute to overall well-being of the community.
- Businesses in the neighbourhood employ local workers.
- Businesses in the neighbourhood locally sell or produce quality goods or services.
- Businesses in the neighbourhood make regular donations of money, goods or services, or time to local causes.
- The neighbourhood has a strong economic development program.
- The neighbourhood is committed to helping people become first-time homeowners.

Power and influence

- People in the neighbourhood nurture emerging leaders of all ages.
- In the neighbourhood, community members actively participate in the political process.
- People who live in the neighbourhood are informed about and work together on neighbourhood issues.
- In the neighbourhood, community members contribute to community planning by serving boards and advisory committees.
- The neighbourhood has strong, responsive, and creative leaders.
- The neighbourhood is well represented in City Hall and the neighbourhood's concerns are listened to.
- The neighbourhood leaders work well cooperatively with residents to achieve common goals.
- In the neighbourhood, decisions are based on input from all segments of the community.
- Community leaders, organizations and institutions reach out to under-represented groups and encourage them to participate.
- Barriers to active participation in neighbourhood decision-making are minimized.
- People in the neighbourhood search for innovative ideas in other communities and encourage creativity at home.
- The neighbourhood has clear and frequent communication among community members, using a variety of methods.
- People living in the neighbourhood have a big impact in making the neighbourhood a great place to live.

The Neighborhood Profile Survey also asks residents to identify the neighbourhood's greatest strengths and biggest challenges.

Appendix J – Truckee Meadows Tomorrow: 2008 Community Wellbeing Report

The *Truckee Meadows Tomorrow* Quality of Life indicator model tracks 33 indicators over 10 areas.

Arts and Culture

- Expression of culture through the arts (civic investment funding and grants support for the arts)
- Participation in the arts and cultural activities

Civic Engagement

- Voter turnout (proportion of eligible population that registers and votes)
- Effective government engagement (participation in the government process, diversity on community boards)
- Civility and neighborhood pride (proportion of population happy living in community; proportion intentionally investing time and energy in community)
- Emergency preparedness (households with emergency kits and businesses with disaster response plans)

Economic Wellbeing

- Entrepreneurship (patents; venture funding and micro-enterprise funds)
- Individual and family economic wellbeing (cost of living; percent of families in poverty; median family income; housing opportunity index; households overpaying for housing)
- Economic vitality (job creation, job loss and employment by industry; employment wage by industry; unemployment; building permits)
- Workforce development (basic workforce readiness – participation in training; graduates staying in region)

Education and Lifelong Learning

- Educational infrastructure to meet community needs (school capacity; special needs education opportunities; use of technology for learning; education funding adequacy)
- Educational success (graduation and dropout rates; educational attainment; alternative educational opportunities)
- Community-wide involvement in education (parental involvement; business collaboration with schools)
- Literate community (functional literacy; newspaper circulation)

Enrichment

- Recreation (community access)
- Philanthropy and voluntarism (charitable giving, volunteer hours)

- Access to faith community and spiritual wellbeing (ability to participate in spiritual opportunities)

Health and Wellness

- Access to healthcare (uninsured adults and children; women receiving first trimester prenatal care; infant mortality; workforce wellness programs)
- Wellness and preventative healthcare (childhood immunization; low birth weight babies; teen birth rate; obesity; industrial accidents and injuries; leading causes of death; substance abuse rates; communicable diseases)
- Mental health and social wellbeing (suicide rate per 100,000 population)

Innovation

- Renewable energy (renewable energy sources)
- Technology infrastructure and engagement (proportion satisfied with technology in their lives; innovative economy index; wireless access)
- Transformative community initiatives (initiatives that have made a positive impact)

Land Use and Infrastructure

- Affordable housing (housing affordability index; owner-occupied housing)
- Land use balance and sensitivity (density infill; vehicle congestion;
- Mobility and convenience (transportation mode split)
- Development that encourages healthy lifestyles and neighborhood livability (acres of parkland; pedestrian and bicycle friendliness)

Natural Environment

- Air quality (pollution standard index)
- Clean and available water (Truckee River water quality; water consumption)
- Open space access and connectivity (open space service standards; miles of connected multi-use trails)

Public Wellbeing

- Perception of safety (perception of physical safety; perception of fire safety; crime index; juvenile crime; violence in schools; vehicular fatalities)
- Secure families (domestic violence; child abuse, neglect and placement)
- Community responsiveness to its most vulnerable populations (food security; Nevada 211 system; population living in poverty; developmental childhood services; licensed childcare spaces; homelessness)

Appendix K – Calgary Sense of Community Project

Between 1999 and 2000, a coalition of groups in Calgary came together to develop measurable indicators for sense of community and a method of measuring them at both a city-wide and neighbourhood level.¹³⁹ Survey variables include 13 demographic items and 18 sense of community questions designed to probe 10 indicator areas: general sense of community; attachment; sense of belonging; civic pride; satisfaction; volunteerism; participation; efficacy; neighbourliness; and safety. The indicators are listed below. The Calgary Sense of Community project provides another interesting community-level survey that attempts to assess attachment to place – an important dimension of community vitality identified in the literature.

Sense of Community in Calgary

- When I travel I am proud to tell others where I live
- I like living in this city
- There is a strong sense of community in Calgary
- I feel very much like I belong in Calgary
- It would take a lot for me to move from this city
- I help out by volunteering in Calgary

Sense of Community in Neighbourhood

- My neighbourhood is a safe place to live
- I could count on people in my neighbourhood for help in an emergency
- I feel like I belong in my neighbourhood
- I recognize a number of children and adults in my neighbourhood
- Living in this neighbourhood gives me a sense of community
- I regularly stop and talk with people in my neighbourhood
- I would like to stay in this neighbourhood for many years to come
- If there were a problem in receiving some service from the city, people in my neighbourhood could get the problem solved
- I borrow things from or trade favours with people in my neighbourhood
- I have influence in changing my neighbourhood for the better
- I get involved in neighbourhood events or activities
- I help out in my neighbourhood by volunteering

¹³⁹ <http://www.sustainablecalgary.ca/projects/senseofcommunity.html>

Appendix L – Indicator Summary

Part I: Social Relationships

1. Social Engagement

1.1 Social Participation

- Participation in group activities (GSS 2008, 2003; NSGVP 2000, 1997)
- Volunteering (GSS 2008, 2003, NSGVP 2000, 1997)
- Charitable giving (CSGVP 2007, 2004; NSGVP 2000, 1997)

1.2 Civic Participation – See Democratic Engagement Domain

1.3 Economic Participation – See Living Standards Domain

2. Social Support

2.1 Size of Social Networks

- Number of close family (GSS 2008, 2003, 1996)
- Number of close friends (GSS 2008, 2003, 1996, 1990)
- Number of close neighbours (GSS 2008, 2003)
- Living alone (Census 2006, 2001, 1996, 1991)

2.2 Reciprocity

- Providing assistance to others (CSGVP 2007, 2004; NSGVP 2000, 1997)
- Informal support networks (GSS 2003)

3. Community Safety

3.1 Crime

- Property crime (UCRS 2009 – 1993)
- Violent crime (UCRS 2009 – 1993)
- Drug crime (UCRS 2009 – 1993)
- Sexual assault (UCRS 2009 – 1993)
- Domestic violence (GSS 2009, 2004, 1999, 1993)

3.2 Perception of Community Safety

- Walking alone after dark (GSS 2009, 2004, 1999, 1993)

Part II: Social Norms and Values

4. Attitude towards Other and Community

4.1 Trust

- Trust in people (GSS 2008, 2005, 2003)

4.2 Respect for Diversity

- Bridging ties (GSS 2003)
- Experience of discrimination (GSS 2009, 2004; EDS 2002)

4.3 Mutual Obligation and Care

- Caring for others (EKOS 2003, 1999, 1997, 1994)

4.4 Sense of Belonging

- Belonging to community (CCHS 2008, 2009, 2007, 2005, 2003, 2001)
- Feeling out of place (EDS, 2002)

Indicator: 1. Social Engagement

Component	1.1 Social Participation
Sub component	1.1.1 Participation in Group Activities
Indicators	GSS; NSGVP
Two Options: CSGVP or CCHS	<p>1.1.1a) CER_Q110 In the past 12 months, were you a member or participant in: a union or professional association; a political party or group; a sports or recreational organization; a cultural, educational or hobby organization; a religious-affiliated group; a school group, neighbourhood, civic or community association; a service club or fraternal organization; other.</p> <p>1.1.1b) CER_Q330 Altogether, about how often did you participate in group activities and meetings? (Proportion who report being a member of at least one group)</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, 2008 – Survey on Social Networks; GSS Cycle 17 – Survey on Social Engagement in Canada; National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000 and 1997
Frequency	GSS every 5 years
Most recent year available (of data)	2008, 2003, 2000, 1997
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of 25,000. Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national and provincial levels
Considerations	In the interests of consistency, we have used the question that was used in the 2003 and 2008 GSS and the NSGVP. The 2004 Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating also collected information on participating as well. The question was worded slightly differently than the one used in the GSS and NSGVP.
Use in other frameworks	Earlier cycles of the NPHS included a social involvement index. This index measured the respondent's frequency of participation in

	<p>associations or voluntary associations and the frequency of attendance at religious services. This item was discontinued in cycle 3 (1998-99).</p> <p>The WVS and the GSS calculate the number of groups to which individuals belong.</p> <p>The World Value Survey (WVS) also asks about membership in voluntary organizations and unpaid help for voluntary organizations. “Which, if any, groups do you belong to?”</p>
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Indicator: 1. Social Engagement

Component	1.1 Social Participation
Sub component	1.1.2 Volunteering
Indicators	<p>GSS; NSGVP</p> <p>1.1.2a) VCG_Q300 In the past 12 months, did you do unpaid volunteer work for any organization?</p> <p>1.1.2b) VCG_Q310 On average, about how many hours per month did you volunteer?</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, 2008 – Survey on Social Networks; GSS Cycle 17 – Survey on Social Engagement in Canada; National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000 and 1997
Frequency	GSS every 5 years
Most recent year available (of data)	2008, 2003, 2000, 1997
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	<p>The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of 25,000.</p> <p>Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.</p>
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national and provincial levels
Considerations	<p>We have chosen to use the volunteer variable from the NSGVP and the 2003 and 2008 GSS. The Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating would have been a logical choice. However, due to methodological differences with the NSGVP, the data on volunteering that were gathered in the 2004 survey are not directly comparable with the data from the NSGVP 1997 and NSGVP 2000. (See Appendix C of Statistics Canada, <i>Highlights from 2004 CSGVP</i>, Catalogue No. 71-542-XIE). As a result, a historical time series is not available.</p> <p>The questions from the NSGVP and the GSS are identical and can be used to measure rates of volunteering over this period. (Personal communication with Paul Reed, Statistics Canada).</p>

Use in other frameworks	<p>Information on volunteering is also available in Cycle 19, 12 and 7 (Time Use), Cycle 16 (Social Support), Cycle 14 (ICT), and Cycle 9 (Education, Work and Retirement) of the GSS. The wording is not strictly comparable in all cases.</p> <p>In the WVS, the survey asks respondents for which organizations (of a lengthy list), if any, are they currently doing unpaid voluntary work?</p>
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Indicator: 1. Social Engagement

Component	1.1 Social Participation
Sub component	1.1.3 Charitable Giving
Indicators	<p>CSGVP; NSGVP</p> <p>1.1.3a) FG_Q03 In the past 12 months, did you make a financial donation to a charitable or non-profit organization: 13 options?</p> <p>1.1.3b) GS_Q03 What was the amount of the donation to this organization?</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. Canada Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2004 and 2007; National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000 and 1997
Frequency	CSGVP every 3 years
Most recent year available (of data)	2007, 2004; 2000, 1997
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of roughly 21,000. Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national and provincial levels
Considerations	<p>We have chosen to use the charitable giving variable from the CSGVP. The CSGVP is designed to prompt respondents to report on all types of giving. Detailed donor profiles can be produced for Canada and selected provinces using CSGVP data.</p> <p>Information on charitable giving is also available from tax filer data, published annually by Statistics Canada. Selected tables on number of donors reporting donations, total, average and median donations by age, sex and income group – by geography – are available for a modest cost through CANSIM. While these data are published annually, they only capture donations reported by tax filers. There is also the question of those who do not file income taxes, most notably low income individuals or households. (The issue of response rate at the top and bottom of the income distribution is also a concern with survey data as well.)</p>

	<p>That said, charitable giving information based on tax filer data is regularly reported in community-level report cards, because it is available at lower levels of geography.</p> <p>A single question on charitable giving is also available in Cycle 17 and Cycle 22 (Social Engagement) of the GSS (VCG_Q340: In the past 12 months, did you donate money or goods to any organization or charity? Do not include membership fees or duties.)</p> <p>Given that a large majority of Canadian report making financial donations of some sort, it would be appropriate, looking forward, to develop an integrated measure of charitable giving that takes frequency of giving into account. Again, it would also be desirable to generate age standardized rates.</p>
Use in other frameworks	Charitable giving is regularly included in community report cards (i.e., Vital Signs) as well as indicator initiatives that track social relationships.

Indicator: 2. Social Support

Component	2.1 Size of Social Networks
Sub component	2.1.1 Number of Close Relatives
Indicators	<p>GSS</p> <p>2.1.1a) Number of close relatives: SCR_Q810 How many relatives do you have who you feel close to, that is, who you feel at ease with, can talk to about what is on your mind, or call on for help? (Proportion with six or more close family members)</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, 2008 – Survey on Social Networks; GSS Cycle 17 – Survey on Social Engagement in Canada
Frequency	Every 5 years.
Most recent year available (of data)	2008, 2003 (1996)
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	<p>The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of 25,000.</p> <p>Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.</p>
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national and provincial levels
Considerations	This is a standard question on family contact. It makes a distinction between relatives living together and those living else where. It is assumed that members of private households of two or more have daily contact.
Use in other frameworks	<p>Information on contact with family and friends is available in Cycle 21, 16, Cycle 15, Cycle 14, Cycle 11, and Cycle 9) but the questions are not always directly comparable.</p> <p>Frequency of contact with family and friends was included in earlier cycles of the NPHS. This index was discontinued after cycle 2. The CCHS includes a question on the number of close friends and relatives (SSMC_01) as a segue to the MOS Social Support survey. However, this module is optional and not all provinces participate. Estimates for Canada are not available.</p> <p>The World Values Survey asks respondents about the frequency of time</p>

	that they spend with family, friends, colleagues from work, people from church, synagogue, mosque, and people at sport, culture or communal organizations.
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Indicator: 2. Social Support

Component	2.1 Size of Social Networks
Sub component	2.1.1 Number of Close Friends
Indicators	<p>GSS</p> <p>2.1.1b) SCF_Q100 How many close friends do you have, that is, people who are not your relatives, but who you feel at ease with, can talk to about what is on your mind, or call on for help? (Proportion with six or more close friends)</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, 2008 – Survey on Social Networks; GSS Cycle 17 – Survey on Social Engagement in Canada
Frequency	Every 5 years.
Most recent year available (of data)	2008, 2003 (1996, 1990)
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	<p>The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces.</p> <p>Sample of 25,000.</p> <p>Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.</p>
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national and provincial levels
Considerations	We propose to look at the size of friendship networks. GSS 5 (1990), 11 (1996), GSS 17 (2003) and GSS 22 (2008) ask about the number of close friends that respondents feel close to, that is, who they feel at ease with or can call on for help. We propose to track the number of close friends, those with six or more.
Use in other frameworks	<p>Information about the frequency of contact with family and friends is available in GSS Cycle 22, Cycle 21, Cycle 17, Cycle 16, Cycle 15, Cycle 14, Cycle 11, and Cycle 9) but the questions are not always directly comparable.</p> <p>Frequency of contact with family and friends was included in earlier cycles of the NPHS. This index was discontinued after cycle 2. See note above. organizations.</p>

Indicator: 2. Social Support

Component	2.1 Size of Social Networks
Sub component	2.1.1 Number of Close Neighbours
Indicators	<p>GSS</p> <p>2.1.1c) DOR_Q623 About how many people in your neighbourhood do you know well enough to ask for a favour? (Proportion with six or more close friends)</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, 2008. Cycle 22 – Survey on Social Networks
Frequency	Every 5 years.
Most recent year available (of data)	2008
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	<p>The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces.</p> <p>Sample of 25,000.</p> <p>Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.</p>
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national and provincial levels
Considerations	<p>We propose to look at the size of neighbour networks. We propose to track the number of close neighbours, those with six or more.</p> <p>There is also another question on the GSS 17 (and 22) that asks: Would you say that you know most, many, a few or none of the people in your neighbourhood? (DOR_Q222) We have chosen the more specific variable in the upcoming 2008 GSS in order to generate comparable data for family, friends and neighbours.</p>
Use in other frameworks	

Indicator: 2. Social Support

Component	2.1 Size of Social Networks
Sub component	2.1.2 Living Alone
Indicators	Census 2.1.2 Proportion of population in private households living alone
Source	Statistics Canada. Census of Population, 2006.
Frequency	Every 5 years.
Most recent year available (of data)	2006 (2001, 1996, 1991)
Publicly available or Data Source	Selected Census tables published by Statistics Canada. Available on CANSIM
Availability by demographic information	The Census provides detailed population data for the entire population. Results are available for several population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.
Level of geography	Results are available for all levels of geography.
Considerations	The census is administered every 5 years. It is the best source of information on the number and type of Canadian households. Other surveys provide information on the number of households in Canada, including the CCHS and SLID. We can calculate the number of unattached individuals, for example, but we do not know whether these same individuals are living with other family members or non-related individuals.
Use in other frameworks	The proportion of the population living alone is tracked in several community report cards, for example, the Metro Chicago Information Centre Community Vitality Index and the Wilder Center Neighbourhood Trend Watch.

Indicator: 2. Social Support

Component	2.2 Reciprocity
Sub component	2.2.1 Providing assistance to others
Indicators	<p>CSGVP; NSGVP</p> <p>2.2.1a) IV_Q02 In the past 12 months, did you help anyone with work at their home such as cooking, cleaning, gardening, maintenance, painting, shovelling snow, or car repairs? IV_Q04 In the past 12 months, did you help anyone by doing any shopping, driving someone to the store, or to any other appointments? IV_Q06 In the past 12 months, did you help anyone with paperwork tasks such as writing letters, doing taxes, filling out forms, banking, paying bills, or finding information? IV_Q08 In the past 12 months, did you provide anyone with health-related or personal care, such as emotional support, counselling, providing advice, visiting the elderly, unpaid babysitting? IV_Q10 In the past 12 months, did you help anyone with unpaid teaching, coaching, tutoring, or assisting with reading? (Proportion who provide some form of unpaid help to others)</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2007, 2004; National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, 2000 and 1997
Frequency	Every 3 years.
Most recent year available (of data)	2007, 2004; 2000, 1997
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of roughly 21,000. Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national and provincial levels
Considerations	The questions asked in the NSGVP are an expanded version of the ones included in the CSGVP. While specific items can be compared, we have elected to compare the aggregate score given the underlying similarity of the questions and concepts. Personal communication with Paul Reed, Statistics Canada.
Use in other frameworks	Social support questions (help given) are also asked on other General Social Surveys. Help given questions are included in Cycle 22 on Social

	<p>Networks, Cycle 21 on Family, Social Support and Retirement, Cycle 17 on Social Engagement, and Cycle 16 on Social Support and Aging. Cycle 21 and 16 are targeted at finding out whether respondents are providing support to those with long term health conditions. The questions used in Cycle 17 and 22 are not consistent with the questions on informal volunteering used in the CSGVP and the NSGVP.</p> <p>As an alternative, GSS 17 and 22 ask respondents whether they have done a favour for their neighbour in the past month (DOR_Q628). These surveys also ask whether neighbours have done favours for respondents (DOR_Q629). See below. These questions could be substituted 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 in future iteration of the community vitality domain.</p> <p>The GSS on Time Use (Cycle 19) includes questions about the provision of unpaid to individuals outside of the household, specifically providing care for children and seniors as well as doing housework, home maintenance and yard work (UWA_Q120, Q140, Q160).</p>
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Indicator: 2. Social Support

Component	2.2 Reciprocity
Sub component	2.2.2 Help received
Indicators	<p>GSS</p> <p>2.2.2a) HICR_Q110 (11-17) The following questions are about unpaid help you received from other people in the last month, not counting those you live with. In the past month, did anyone help you ... by doing domestic work, home maintenance or outdoor work? By providing transportation or running errands? By helping with child care? By teaching, coaching, or giving you practical advice? By giving you emotional support? By helping you in some other way? (Proportion who received at least one form of help from others, not including those respondent lives with)</p> <p>2.2.2b) HICR_Q120 Did you receive help on a regular basis? (GSS 2003) HICR_Q140 Who helped you? Were they a ... relative? Friend? Neighbour? Another person?</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, 2003. Cycle 17 – Survey on Social Engagement in Canada.
Frequency	Every 5 years.
Most recent year available (of data)	2003
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	<p>The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of 25,000.</p> <p>Results are available for some special population groups such as disabled persons, visible minorities and seniors.</p>
Level of geography	<p>Results are available at both the national and provincial levels</p> <p>**question relates directly to people and location**</p>
Considerations	<p>This set of questions was not included in the 2008 GSS.</p> <p>The CCHS and the NPHS have a section on social support that is fielded every second year. These surveys use the Medical Outcomes Study Social Support Survey. The MOS social support survey provides indicators of four categories of social support, all of which are directly related to health care: emotional and informational support; affection; positive social interaction (the availability of other persons to do fun</p>

	<p>things with); and tangible support (the provision of material aid or behavioural assistance). The MOS index replaced the perceived social support index that was included in the first and second cycles of the NPHS. The MOS Social Support Survey however is an optional section in the CCHS. Estimates for all of Canada are not available.</p> <p>Social support questions (help received) are also asked on other General Social Surveys, including Cycle 21 on Family, Social Support and Retirement, Cycle 16 on Social Support and Aging and Cycle 11 Social and Community Support. These modules are similar in design to the one included in GSS 17, noted above, but provide much greater detail on the need and availability for different kinds of support. Specifically, the questions in Cycle 11 and Cycle 16 are closely linked to social support given or received during temporarily difficult times or out of necessity due to long term illness or physical limitation. Cycle 16 and 21 only interview Canadian 45 years and older. As such, they do not provide estimates for the entire working age population.</p> <p>GSS 17 and 22 also asks about whether neighbours provide assistance to one another. If the help received question is dropped from the 2008 GSS, we could explore the option of substituting the question DOR_Q629: In the past month, have any of your neighbours done a favour for you?</p>
Use in other frameworks	

Indicator: 3. Community Safety

Component	3.1 Crime
Sub component	3.1.1 Property crime
Indicators	UCRS 3.1.1a) Rate of property crime charges per 100,000 – by type
Source	Statistics Canada (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics), Uniform Crime Reporting Survey. Findings published in <i>Juristat</i> each year
Frequency	Yearly
Most recent year available (of data)	2009 – 1993
Publicly available or Data Source	Released in the Daily; electronic publication free of charge on Statistics Canada website
Availability by demographic information	Can examine crime data by age, gender
Level of geography	National, provincial and CMAs
Considerations	<p>The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), in co-operation with the policing community, collects police-reported crime statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR). The UCR Survey was designed to measure the incidence of crime in Canadian society and its characteristics.</p> <p>UCR data reflect reported crime that has been substantiated by police. Information collected by the survey includes the number of criminal incidents, the clearance status of those incidents and persons-charged information. The UCR Survey produces a continuous historical record of crime and traffic statistics reported by every police agency in Canada since 1962.</p>
Use in other frameworks	

Indicator: 3. Community Safety

Component	3.1 Crime
Sub component	3.1.2 Violent crime
Indicators	UCRS 3.1.2a) Rate of violent crime per 100,000 population – by level
Source	Statistics Canada (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics), Uniform Crime Reporting Survey. Findings published in <i>Juristat</i> each year
Frequency	Yearly
Most recent year available (of data)	2009 – 1993
Publicly available or Data Source	Released in the Daily; electronic publication free of charge on Statistics Canada website
Availability by demographic information	Can examine crime data by age, gender
Level of geography	National, provincial and CMAs
Considerations	<p>The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), in co-operation with the policing community, collects police-reported crime statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR). The UCR Survey was designed to measure the incidence of crime in Canadian society and its characteristics.</p> <p>UCR data reflect reported crime that has been substantiated by police. Information collected by the survey includes the number of criminal incidents, the clearance status of those incidents and persons-charged information. The UCR Survey produces a continuous historical record of crime and traffic statistics reported by every police agency in Canada since 1962.</p>
Use in other frameworks	

Indicator: 3. Community Safety

Component	3.1 Crime
Sub component	3.1.3 Drug crime
Indicators	UCRS 3.1.3a) Change in rate of drug crime per 100,000 population
Source	Statistics Canada (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics), Uniform Crime Reporting Survey. Findings published in <i>Juristat</i> each year
Frequency	Yearly
Most recent year available (of data)	2009 – 1993
Publicly available or Data Source	Released in the Daily; electronic publication free of charge on Statistics Canada website
Availability by demographic information	Can examine crime data by age, gender
Level of geography	National, provincial and CMAs
Considerations	<p>The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), in co-operation with the policing community, collects police-reported crime statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR). The UCR Survey was designed to measure the incidence of crime in Canadian society and its characteristics.</p> <p>UCR data reflect reported crime that has been substantiated by police. Information collected by the survey includes the number of criminal incidents, the clearance status of those incidents and persons-charged information. The UCR Survey produces a continuous historical record of crime and traffic statistics reported by every police agency in Canada since 1962.</p>
Use in other frameworks	

Indicator: 3. Community Safety

Component	3.1 Crime
Sub component	3.1.4 Sexual Assault
Indicators	UCRS 3.1.4a) Rate of sexual assault per 100,000 population
Source	Statistics Canada (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics), Uniform Crime Reporting Survey. Findings published in <i>Juristat</i> each year
Frequency	Yearly
Most recent year available (of data)	2009 – 1993
Publicly available or Data Source	Released in the Daily; electronic publication free of charge on Statistics Canada website
Availability by demographic information	Can examine crime data by age, gender
Level of geography	National, provincial and CMAs
Considerations	<p>The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), in co-operation with the policing community, collects police-reported crime statistics through the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR). The UCR Survey was designed to measure the incidence of crime in Canadian society and its characteristics.</p> <p>UCR data reflect reported crime that has been substantiated by police. Information collected by the survey includes the number of criminal incidents, the clearance status of those incidents and persons-charged information. The UCR Survey produces a continuous historical record of crime and traffic statistics reported by every police agency in Canada since 1962.</p> <p>More detailed information on sexual assault and other related offences, including information on children, are published occasionally. These data would be available on an annual basis via a custom tabulation request. See http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-002-XIE/0060385-002-XIE.pdf</p>
Use in other frameworks	

Indicator: 3. Community Safety

Component	3.1 Crime
Sub component	3.1.5 Domestic Violence
Indicators	GSS 3.1.5a) Five-year rates of spousal assault among women, population aged 15 years and older
Source	Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, 2009. Cycle 23 – Survey on Victimization.
Frequency	Every 5 years.
Most recent year available (of data)	2009, 2004, 1999, 1993
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	<p>The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of 25,000.</p> <p>Results are available for some special population groups such as disabled persons, visible minorities and seniors.</p>
Level of geography	<p>Results are available at both the national and provincial levels</p> <p>**question relates directly to people and location**</p>
Considerations	<p>Estimating the prevalence of violence against women is challenging. A group of police services across Canada tracks the gender of victims and offenders for crimes that are reported to them, but these estimates are known to undercount to prevalence of violence; just over one-third of spousal assaults and less than 10% of sexual assaults are reported to police. As a result, victimization surveys are used to estimate the extent of violence in the general population.</p> <p>In 1993, Statistics Canada conducted the first dedicated survey on violence against women, establishing a baseline for understanding and monitoring physical and sexual assault. Since then, Statistics Canada has adapted the GSS on Victimization to include a module on spousal violence that is conducted every five years.</p> <p>Care should be taken in comparing data over time as the Violence Against Women Survey (1993) contained a single focus on acts of male violence against women, while the GSS is a general crime victim</p>

	<p>survey that includes a module on spousal assault against both men and women.</p> <p>The Uniform Crime Reporting Survey (UCR) also tracks assaults against women, children and other family members over time by relationship of perpetrator to the victim. UCR data reflect reported crime that has been substantiated by police.</p>
Use in other frameworks	

Indicator: 3. Community Safety

Component	3.2 Perception of Community Safety
Sub component	3.2.1 Walking alone after dark
Indicators	<p>GSS</p> <p>3.2.1a) PHR_Q130 How safe do you feel from crime walking along in your area after dark? (Proportion reporting feeling very safe, reasonably safe and somewhat safe walking alone after dark)</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, 2009. Cycle 23 – Survey on Victimization
Frequency	Every five years
Most recent year available (of data)	2009, 2004, 1999, 1993
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	<p>The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of 25,000.</p> <p>Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.</p>
Level of geography	<p>Results are available at both the national and provincial levels</p> <p>**question relates directly to “community”</p>
Considerations	These data are also available through Juristat.
Use in other frameworks	<p>This question is regularly used in surveys here in Canada and elsewhere to assess neighbourhood safety.</p> <p>There are several other questions that could be used to assess perceptions of neighbourhood safety. For example, the GSS on Victimization asks respondents whether they curtail activities because of fear of crime. As well, there are questions about the type of measures that people take to protect themselves or their property from crime.</p>

Indicator: 4. Attitudes towards Others and Community

Component	4.1 Trust
Sub component	4.1.1 Trust in people
Indicators	<p>GSS</p> <p>4.1.1a) TRT_Q110 Generally speaking, would you say that people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful in dealing with people? (Proportion reporting that people can be trusted)</p> <p>4.1.1a) TRT_Q540, Q570 If you lost a wallet or purse that contained \$200, how likely is it to be returned with the money in it if it was found? By someone close by? By a complete stranger?</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, 2008 – Survey on Social Networks; GSS Cycle 17 – Survey on Social Engagement in Canada
Frequency	Every 5 years.
Most recent year available (of data)	2008, 2005, 2003
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of 25,000. Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national and provincial levels **question relates directly to “community”
Considerations	Another indicator looks at trust in the local community: TRT_Q420 Would you say that you trust most, many, a few, or nobody in your neighbourhood?
Use in other frameworks	<p>In the GSS 19 (2005) on Time Use, there is a trust section as well which includes the first indicator above (TRT_Q110). The follow up questions ask how much the respondent can trust members of their family, neighbours, work colleagues, strangers. A question on trust does not appear in the 2010 Time Use survey questionnaire.</p> <p>This question is asked again in GSS 14 (2000) on Access to and Use of Information Communication Technology (M26) but the wording is slightly different. The estimates of trust in people are much lower than those based</p>

	<p>on the 2003 and 2005 GSSs.</p> <p>There are generalized trust questions in 2002 EDS, including: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can never be too careful?”</p> <p>See also the World Values Survey: “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you need to be very careful in dealing with people?” Also: “Do you think that most people would try to take advantage of you if they got the chance or else they would try to be fair?”</p>
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Indicator: 4. Attitudes towards Others and Community

Component	4.2 Respect for diversity
Sub component	4.2.1 Bridging ties
Indicators	<p>GSS</p> <p>4.2.1a) DBT_Q340 Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important, how important is it for you to establish and maintain ties: with other people who have different ethnic or cultural origins to you? (Proportion reporting forging ties are important or very important)</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, 2003. Cycle 17 – Survey on Social Engagement in Canada.
Frequency	Every 5 years.
Most recent year available (of data)	2003
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	<p>The target population is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of 25,000.</p> <p>Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.</p>
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national and provincial levels
Considerations	<p>Diversity is often understood to mean ethnic or cultural diversity. Should this be the focus of the question in the CIW community vitality domain?</p> <p>This variable was not repeated in the 2008 GSS.</p>
Use in other frameworks	<p>Other possible questions from the EKOS Rethinking Government series.</p> <p>“In your opinion, do you feel that there are too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada? Too few? About right? Too many? Don’t know?”</p> <p>“Does the fact that we accept immigrants from many different cultures make our culture stronger or weaker? Much weaker? Weaker? Neither weaker or stronger? Stronger? Much stronger? Don’t know?”</p> <p>In the World Values Survey, the survey asks respondents to identify various groups of people that they “would not like to have as neighbours?”</p>

	<p>including people of a different race; immigrants/foreign workers; people of a different religion; people who speak a different language; and homosexuals. (V34-V43) This survey also asks: With which of the following views do you agree: ethnic diversity erodes a country's unity OR ethnic diversity enriches life? (V221)</p> <p>In another question, respondents are asked: "Do you like being with people whose ideas, beliefs or values are different from your own?"</p>
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Indicator: 4. Attitudes towards Others and Community

Component	4.1 Respect for Diversity
Sub component	4.1.2 Discrimination
Indicators	<p>GSS; EDS</p> <p>4.1.2a) DIS_Q115 through Q190 In the past five years, have you experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly by others in Canada because of your: Ethnicity or culture? Race or colour? Religion? Language? (Proportion of total population reporting experiencing discrimination based on ethno-cultural factors)</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. General Social Survey, 2009. Cycle 23 – Survey on Victimization; Ethnic Diversity Survey 2002
Frequency	Every five years
Most recent year available (of data)	2009, 2004; 2002
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	<p>The target population of GSS is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of 25,000.</p> <p>The target population of EDS is non-institutionalized persons 15 years of age or older, living in the ten provinces. Sample of 42,500. Care was taken to ensure that the sample would include a broad representation of immigrants from non-European origins.</p> <p>Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.</p>
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national, provincial levels and larger urban areas.
Considerations	We have elected to use this variable drawing from two different surveys. The wording of the question is the same, however, it is important to note that the focus of each survey and the structure of the sample are different and thus may have influenced respondents. In order to construct comparable indicators, we created a new variable in the 2004 GSS drawing together those forms of discrimination identified in the 2002 EDS question, and used this variable in 2009 as well. The indicator tracks those that report experiencing at least one of these types of discrimination.

	<p>It is important to track the proportion of the population reporting discrimination; at the same time, it is also essential to look at the experience of historically marginalized groups, including visible minorities to get a more accurate assessment of the scale of discrimination experienced.</p> <p>The EDS also asks whether respondents have been the victims of crimes in the past five years, and specifically, victims of hate crimes. This is another concrete measure of discrimination that might be useful to include in future editions of the CIW.</p>
Use in other frameworks	

Indicator: 4. Attitudes towards Others and Community

Component	4.3 Altruism
Sub component	4.3.1 Caring for others
Indicators	EKOS 4.3.1a) These days I'm so hard pressed to take care of my own needs that I worry less about the needs of others. Agree? Neither agree or disagree? Disagree? Don't know? (Proportion of those who disagree with this statement)
Source	EKOS Rethinking Government series
Frequency	2003, 1999, 1997, 1994
Most recent year available (of data)	2006 (These data for 2004, 2005 and 2006 are available for \$1,000)
Publicly available or Data Source	Private. The Rethinking Government survey is fielded every year. It is a survey of Canadian 16 years and older. The firm interviews a sample of approximately 1,500.
Availability by demographic information	SES, Age, Gender
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national and provincial levels
Considerations	These questions are available on a private survey. We would have to negotiate with EKOS to use this question on a CIW survey or purchase these data for the relevant geographies in future years.
Use in other frameworks	The World Values Survey asks: "Do you think that people today are more willing, or less willing, to help each other than they used to be, say ten years ago?"

Indicator: 4. Attitudes towards Others and Community

Component	4.4 Sense of Belonging
Sub component	4.4.1 Belonging to Community
Indicators	CCHS 4.4.1a) GEN_Q20 How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community? Would you say it is very strong? Strong? somewhat weak? or very weak? (Proportion of those reporting a “very strong” sense of belonging to their community)
Source	Statistics Canada, Canada Community Health Survey
Frequency	Annual since 2007
Most recent year available (of data)	2009, 2008, 2007, 2005, 2003, 2001
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	Detailed demographic and health status data available. Results are available for some special population groups such as persons with disabilities, visible minorities, and seniors.
Level of geography	The CCHS target the population living in private households, over age 12 years. The survey is designed to produce reliable estimates for the 122 health regions. A target sample of 130,000 individuals are interviewed through each cycle. Since 2007, this survey has been conducted on an annual basis with a sample of 65,000.
Considerations	<p>It will be important to consider how to focus this question. Do we want to know about the respondent’s sense of belonging to their local community or to Canada? The GSS 2003 and 2008 ask about attachment to province and Canada as well. The EDS asks about sense of belonging to family and ethnic or cultural groups. Should we include this measure?</p> <p>For the initial CIW, we have chosen the general CCHS variable because it is now available every year</p>
Use in other frameworks	The concept of sense of belonging is found in other frameworks and in other surveys (i.e., GSS; World Values Survey). In the GSS on Social Engagement and the GSS on Social Networks, respondents were asked: “How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community? To your province? To Canada? This indicator is included in

	<p>the GSS on Time Use (Cycle 12 and 19) as well.</p> <p>The EKOS Rethinking Government series has tracked sense of belonging for years. “Some people have a stronger sense of belonging to some things than others. Please tell me how strong [using a 7 point scale] your own personal sense of belonging is to each of the following (family, community, province, Canada).” This might be another good alternative.</p> <p>In the WVS, respondents are asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the statement: I see myself as part of my local community. (V211). As well, the WVS asks to which geographic group do respondents feel most attached: “To which of these geographical groups would you say you belong first of all? And the next? And which do you belong to least of all? First: locality; region; country; continent; the world?”</p>
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Indicator: 4. Attitudes towards Others and Community

Component	4.4 Sense of Belonging
Sub component	4.4.2 Feeling out of place because of ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, language, accent or religion
Indicators	<p>EDS</p> <p>4.4.2 a) IS_Q030 How often do you feel uncomfortable or out of place in Canada because of ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, language, accent or religion? (Proportion of visible minorities reporting that they feel out of place – sometimes, most of the time, all of the time)</p>
Source	Statistics Canada. Ethnic Diversity Survey
Frequency	One time
Most recent year available (of data)	2002
Publicly available or Data Source	Data source that is available as a public use file.
Availability by demographic information	<p>The Ethnic Diversity Survey (2002) provides information on how people's backgrounds affect their participation in Canada's social, economic and cultural life of Canada. As well, it indicates how Canadians of different ethnic backgrounds interpret and report their ethnicity. The Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) was a post-censal survey which included about 42,500 people aged 15 and over, from the 10 provinces.</p> <p>Detailed information is available for several population groups including visible minorities.</p>
Level of geography	Results are available at both the national and provincial levels and selected large urban areas.
Considerations	<p>With a variable such as this one, it is very important to look at the experience of marginalized groups. Looking at estimates for the total population will mask significant disparities.</p> <p>This variable is a candidate for future data development as there is no commitment to administer the EDS again – at this time.</p>
Use in other frameworks	

Based in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at the University of Waterloo, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing Network is an independent, non-partisan group of national and international leaders, researchers, organizations, and grassroots Canadians. Its mission is to report on wellbeing at the national level and promote a dialogue on how to improve it through evidence-based policies that are responsive to the needs and values of Canadians.

The Network's signature product is the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW). The CIW measures Canada's wellbeing and tracks progress in eight interconnected categories. It allows us, as Canadians, to see if we are better off or worse off than we used to be — and why. It helps identify what we need to change to achieve a better outcome and to leave the world a better place for the generations that follow.

The Honourable Roy J. Romanow, Chair
The Honourable Monique Bégin, Deputy Chair



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