

Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership

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The Emerging Skytrain Poverty Corridor

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Community Partner/s	Association of Neighbourhood Houses BC

1. Rationale & Potential Policy Relevance

Recent research into urban income inequality has revealed a transition in Canadian cities over the last 40 years (see Hulchanski et al. 2007, Brzozowski 2010, Ades et al. 2012, Chen et al. 2012, Ley & Lynch 2012). Traditional inner-city areas of poverty have become revalorized in post-industrial cities while some middle-income suburban districts have transitioned into low-income areas, reversing our traditional understanding of the geography of urban income distributions. In Greater Vancouver, a distinctive zone of districts along the rapid transit Skytrain corridor have moved into low income status in the past 40 years, a trend that has accelerated since 2000. What factors have led to the development of this new low-income (and in several neighbourhoods, very-low income) region in formerly middle-income neighbourhoods, straddling four municipalities from inner city Vancouver through the suburbs of (South) Burnaby, New Westminster and (North) Surrey? What have been the relative roles of public policies and private housing and labour market changes? How secure is this affordable housing region in light of public intensification strategies? What types of socio-cultural groups live in this corridor, how significant is this location to them, and what social services are most urgently needed?

2. Research Questions (number list)

1. Why has this corridor of low-income households developed, and what needs does the location serve for its population?
2. What are the demographic characteristics of households along this corridor, and how do they change with increasing distance from Vancouver? What particular challenges to poverty mitigation does suburban poverty present?
3. What share of the population do new immigrants represent? Have co-ethnic clusters formed? Is there evidence of shared social capital expressed in mutual aid around extended families or religious places of worship? What specific policies best address the needs of diverse groups of new immigrants, including refugees?
4. What services are currently available to low-income people living in or near the Skytrain corridor?
5. What has been the role of public policy in the development of this low-income region? How might future policies – eg the redevelopment of sites near Skytrain stations -- affect the stability of affordable housing in this district?

3. Specific Fit with the NCRP Objectives & Research Questions (see our SSHRC Proposal)

Building on the findings of Ley and Lynch (2012) on socio-economic polarisation in the Vancouver CMA, this research will provide a finer-grained level of analysis of neighbourhoods that are located long the transit corridor of Metro Vancouver's Skytrain line, where median income has dropped over a broadening area over the last 30-40 years. Focus groups with residents and semi-structured interviews with service providers will provide insight into the efficacy of current policy and program options that address inequality in suburban areas of Metro Vancouver.

4. Research Design & Methods (specific tasks)

Semi-structured interviews with service providers and community leaders.
Three focus groups of 6 to 10 participants, drawn from service agency lists.
Construction of a list of services available in study areas.
Fine-grained (dissemination area) analysis of research area, drawing upon the 2001, 2006, 2011 censuses.
Review of newspaper accounts, planning reports and other public documents.

5. Role of Community Partner/s

There are six Neighbourhood Houses within this corridor, 4 in Vancouver and one each in South Burnaby and North Surrey. We anticipate interviews with program staff in these neighbourhood centres, and working with focus groups in 3 of them.

6. Role of Students / Research Assistants and Contributions to Training

Craig Jones is an MA student in UBC Geography who will be carrying out the fieldwork for this research, supervised and mentored by Dr. David Ley.

7. Schedule (timeline of research tasks, including deliverables submission dates)

May 1 st to May 27 th :	Seek ethics approval from UBC Research Services. Make contact with service providers and community leaders. Make contact with potential focus group participants. List of services available in the study areas.
June 3 rd to June 30 th :	Semi-structured interviews with service providers and community leaders. First focus group conducted.
July 1 st to July 31 st :	Database analysis of study areas. Second focus group conducted.
August 1 st to 31 st :	Review of planning reports and municipal documents. Third focus group conducted. Preliminary findings submitted in a written report to community partners.
Jan 1 st 2014 to May 30	Writing of Master's thesis, informed by preceding research.

8. Outcomes / Deliverables

An accessible document will be distributed at a community forum. At least one academic article will be written.

9. Budget Explanation [and fill in separate budget worksheet page below]

The primary budget item is to support the MA student conducting the field research: 12 weeks x 35 hrs x \$25. We include also \$3000 for expenses accruing to community partners (eg interview time, organising focus groups, room rental). \$500 is allocated for newsletter printing & field costs.

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sent to the NCRP's Research Advisory Board for comment: date _____ reviewed by RAB _____</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Funding approved by the NCRP's Board: \$ <u>14,000</u> date <u>11 April 2013</u></p>

SSHRC Budget Worksheet

	Amount requested from NCRP	Contributions (In-Kind / Cash)	Contribution source	Total Project Cost
Personnel costs				
Student salaries and benefits/Stipends				
Undergraduate *				
Masters *	10,500			
Doctorate *				
Non-student salaries and benefits/Stipends				
Postdoctoral				
Other				
Travel and subsistence costs				
Applicant/Team member(s)				
Canadian travel				
Foreign travel				
Students				
Canadian travel				
Foreign travel				
Other expenses				
Non-disposable equipment (specify)				
Professional / technical services (specify: includes partner staff time contributed to or paid for by project, translation, editing, etc.)				
	3,000			
Other expenses (specify: includes honoraria, data purchase, field costs, printing, supplies, etc.)				
	500			
Total	14,000			

* Please indicate hourly rates for students and estimated number of students: