

Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership

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Neighbourhood Displacement, Inequality, and Responses in Metro Vancouver

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Community Partner/s	Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia; Tenants Resource Advisory Committee; Housing Justice Project.

1. Rationale & Potential Policy Relevance

The Metro Vancouver region's population has increased from 1.4 million in 1970 to more than 2.3 million in 2015. This growth has been accompanied by a skyrocketing cost of living and the subsequent displacement of many low- and moderate-income households to other neighbourhoods that may not have the same kinds of commercial or social supports. Displacement is primarily the result of housing market forces; however, it can also be the consequence, often, but not always unintended, of public sector land use or transportation decisions.

While this issue of displacement has been showcased in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, it is increasingly apparent that it is no longer only an inner-city phenomenon. The rapid suburban development in Metro Vancouver over the last three decades suggests that affordability and security of tenure is increasingly a regional problem. In the Downtown Eastside, a local political culture emerged to resist displacement of the poor. It called for considerable amounts of social housing that could withstand rising land values. Some of the policies established in that community became part of the city's broader political culture and were adapted to in efforts to help protect low-income housing in other neighbourhoods. This is reflected in the fact that irrespective of its effectiveness, two of the City's top priorities are to end homelessness and to expand the stock of housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

However, many of the region's other low- and moderate-income areas have not had the same history of strong community organizations and sympathetic municipal councils that have been present in Vancouver's inner city. This research will analyze low-income communities that are facing the forces of displacement, the roles of the private and public sectors and the response of the community organizations and the media regarding this issue. The research will be carried out in a way that seeks to support the informal network of policy makers, researchers, and community organizations working to give voice to the needs of low- and moderate-income people in Metro Vancouver.

2. Research Questions

R1) Regional Restructuring Trends: Where are the poor in the Vancouver metropolitan region?

Building on existing socio-spatial research on the changing distribution of low- and moderate-income households in Metro Vancouver from 1970 to 2005, this project will provide an overview of the income changes in municipalities throughout the region, review research that has been completed in the Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and Burnaby Metrotown, and carry out four case studies in neighbourhoods that have been experiencing considerable pressure: Coquitlam (Burquitlam), Maple Ridge, Langley City, and Surrey (Surrey Centre and Newton). This work will yield a deeper understanding of kinds of low income populations these neighbourhoods have housed, the nature of the changes they are experiencing, as well as the municipal, media and community responses to low-income issues. These

municipalities were chosen because they have growing low income populations and because they contain low income housing that is being impacted by municipal and regional policies including transit-oriented development and new town centres. We intend to identify the similarities and differences among select municipalities with respect to changes in the socio-economic character of their neighbourhoods.

R2) Policies and Programs: What planning approaches are being used to mitigate (or exacerbate) the spatial dislocation of low- and moderate-income households in these communities?

What are the major factors putting pressure on the sample neighbourhoods. What types of municipal and regional policies and programs are currently in place that contribute to or moderate the impacts on low-income housing? How are these policies being applied? To what effect? How does the application or non-use of these policies contribute to changes at the neighbourhood level?

R3) Policies and Programs: How can we support the development of a regional consensus to protect existing or develop replacement low income housing in neighbourhoods facing redevelopment pressures?

Some further questions within this category are: What roles can municipal and regional governments, NGOs, and the private sector play in reducing the loss of low income housing in areas facing development pressures, especially those resulting from public sector decisions? What neighbourhood-level interventions have been applied in mitigating or resisting the effects of socio-spatial inequalities? How can key actors work together in developing support for public policy measures to reduce inequality across the Metro Vancouver region?

3. Specific Fit with the NCRP Objectives & Research Questions

This research will help build on and extend the knowledge and capacity of NGOs, social agencies, and communities throughout Metro Vancouver. The study results will also help inform policies and programs aimed at reducing socio-spatial inequalities throughout Metro Vancouver, thereby enhancing social and economic inclusiveness. This research will support regional and national connections between various NCRP research teams.

4. Research Design & Methods

1. Literature review: Relevant published materials including peer-reviewed research and other media / published accounts such as municipal and regional policy documents, newspaper articles, web site posts, blog entries, etc.
2. Quantitative Analysis: Analysis of household demographics information using Census information and Tax Filer data; household information incl. Low-income Measure and housing tenure type will be compared to outline the changing spatial distribution of low-income households over time.
3. Qualitative Analysis: 30 to 50 semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with city planners and leaders of non-profit organizations. Media scan to identify key actors and agencies.
4. Regional Support Network: Interested community leaders, organizations and supportive professionals supporting will be involved throughout the study. It is intended that this may help enhance their current initiatives and to help them determine whether it would be worthwhile for them to form or supplement a regional coalition on issues related to the displacement of low income housing.

5. Role of Community Partners

1. Social Policy and Research Council of BC: quantitative data; provision of census and tax-filer data and support in structuring the research analysis and outreach to community partners;
2. All partners: provide input into study areas; provide qualitative data via interviews; participate in workshops, ideas-labs, discussions to identify low- and moderate-income communities and the issues

facing them; participate in advocacy and support of regional coalition or network; disseminate research findings.

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

Roles:

- Project management including proposals, preparation of Tri-Council ethics review approval
- Quantitative analysis: data and spatial analysis including mapping using ArcGIS
- Qualitative analysis: media and literature reviews; survey and/or interview development; interview and event facilitation; qualitative data analysis and reporting

Contributions to Training:

- Students will learn how to do how work with community leaders and professionals in using community-based research to strengthen a network to address low income housing issues
- Students will learn how to secure media attention for emerging research findings.

7. Schedule

Task	Deliverable	Completion/submission
Literature review / background	Summary of key articles and documents	Ongoing
Quantitative analysis	Maps, spatial analysis - census & tax filer data	June 15 2015
Qualitative interviews and analysis	30 to 50 one-hour interviews; key informants, stakeholders	August 15 2015
Workshops / Focus Groups	3 throughout Metro Vancouver	Sept. 2015
Plain-language informational bulletin and media coverage	Plain-language informational bulletin. Media coverage and commentary by community leaders and professionals	Sept. 2015
Submit chapter for review	Chapter in Reclaiming Vancouverism	August 30 2015
Submit paper to Journal	Journal Article	Dec. 2015

8. Outcomes / Deliverables

Community deliverables:

- Two or three regional workshops/focus groups and learning events
- Plain-language informational bulletin
- Media coverage in community newspapers and electronic media (eg. Tyee.ca)

Academic deliverables:

- Book chapter in *Reclaiming Vancouverism: Regionalism, Equity, Resilience & confronting/avoiding the threat of decline*; by UBC's School of Community and Regional Planning.
- Report for dissemination via the Neighbourhood Change Project publications and website
- Journal article

9. Budget Explanation

The attached budget reflects the following:

- 820 hours of work by 4 MA candidates
- 215 hours of work by 3 PhD candidates
- Materials and facility rentals for 2 to 3 community workshops
- Publishing and distribution costs for dissemination to community partners, regional advocacy network

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 *	\$10,000	\$10,500 (in kind)**		\$20,500
Doctorate *	\$6,000			\$6,000
Non-student salaries and benefits/Stipends				
Postdoctoral				
Travel and subsistence costs				
Applicant/Team member(s)				
Canadian travel		\$100 (in kind)		\$100
Students				
Canadian travel	\$100			\$100
Other expenses				
Other expenses (specify)				
Facility rentals for workshops/focus groups	\$500	\$1000 (in kind)	partner organizations	\$1,500
Meeting supplies incl. materials, printing, refreshments	\$500	\$100 (in kind)	partner organizations	\$600
Research publishing and distribution costs	\$900	\$300 (in kind)	partner organizations	\$1,200
Total	\$18,000	\$12,000		\$30,000

- * Hourly rates for students:
Masters candidates: \$25 / hour
PhD candidates: \$28 / hour

** Two SPARC interns will be working on the project as in-kind SPARC contributions

- Sent to the NCRP's Research Advisory Board for comment: date _____ deadline: _____
- Funding approved by the NCRP's Board: \$ _____ date _____