

Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership (NCRP)

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Midterm Report to SSHRC, March 2016

1. Response to Feedback on the Formal Application

Partnership Grant, 2012-2019: *Neighbourhood Inequality, Diversity, and Change: Trends, Processes, Consequences and Policy Options for Canada's Large Metropolitan Areas*

Policy Analysis Concerns: The Expert Panel questioned the nature and scope of the policy analysis we will undertake. They asked which policy areas are to be analyzed and compared and how the knowledge generated will be mobilized to influence policy.

Our objectives, as specified in the proposal, are:

- 1) *Insight*: to generate new knowledge on neighbourhood *inequality, diversity and change*; and
- 2) *Connection*: to put this knowledge to work in the world beyond academia, through partner involvement in research, effective knowledge mobilization, and systematic consideration of policy and program options.

Impact begins with solid academic research and the compilation of evidence. It continues with active strategies to reach relevant audiences beyond the academy. We research and document the impact of trends, processes, and consequences associated with inequality, diversity, and change in major metropolitan areas. These matters are all policy-relevant. Our decision-making on initiating any research includes an assessment of policy relevance and potential impact: who would be interested in the findings, and how do we plan to reach that audience? As described below (particularly in Section 5) and in the Appendix, this is a multi-method endeavour. We have been making good progress and are increasing our communication efforts now that more of our research is complete.

Thematic Research Links: The Expert Panel raised questions about the links between our thematic research and the larger (more general) objectives of our project.

We had not anticipated any linkage issues nor do we feel we are experiencing any. However, since we recognize the importance of clearly identifying these links, the insight and connection issue raised by the Expert Panel has been a key agenda item at each of our team meetings. As we completed more of our initial, foundational research (the 40-year change trends in each Census Metropolitan Area [CMA], and the development of neighbourhood typologies), we concluded that most research themes in our proposal touch on the rental housing sector. Most of the population groups we focus on (youth, older people, newcomers, disadvantaged minorities) live in rental housing. These groups face low vacancy rates, high rental costs, overcrowding, and lack of upkeep in older buildings, although there are important differences within CMAs and between CMAs. We now have a budget line specifically for rental housing research. We have purchased many cross-tabulations from Statistics Canada relating to the thematic interests and housing tenure (1981, 1996, and 2006, and will do the same when the 2016 Census is available). Thus, reference to “rental housing” in our research agenda and budget is a reference to many of our key research theme areas.

In the Appendix to this report we provide a summary description of our *research agenda* (pages 2–3) and we outline our management structure (page 4).

2. Governance and Management Structure

We continue to implement the governance and management structure described in our proposal and the Milestone Report. There have been no major changes.

Seven CMA Teams: We started with research teams in six CMAs. A recent change is the addition of a team in Hamilton headed by Richard Harris (McMaster University). The academics and partners are fully participating in the NCRP and producing matching reports for the Hamilton CMA, paralleling those produced for the other six CMAs. We have added Professor Harris to the Board and will soon add a partner from Hamilton to the Board.

Board of Directors: Day-to-day oversight of NCRP activities is provided by the principal investigator and project manager. The NCRP is governed by a 19-member Board (broadened from the original 13): the principal investigator, the seven CMA coordinators (academics), a partner representative from each of the seven CMAs, one national partner (Federation of Canadian Municipalities), and three activity area coordinators (see page 4 of the Appendix for Board members' names).

Democratic governance: We are governed by the 20-page *NCRP Governance Agreement* that was drafted and approved in the first year of our project (2012/2013). The Board meets by teleconference (nine times to date) and at team meetings (five times to date; the next meeting is in May 2016). All NCRP team members are informed of Board meetings well in advance and are welcome to participate. Minutes of the meetings are posted on our website for team members.

Proposal process for funded research initiatives: Our internal research proposal process ensures that NCRP activities fulfill the objectives set out in our proposal and governance document. In addition to providing scholarly context and rationale for any proposed study, proposal writers must also clarify the study's links with the NCRP proposal, the role of partners and students, policy and practice implications, and the plans for knowledge mobilization to both academic and community audiences. Each proposal is subject to scholarly review by the NCRP Research Advisory Board and Board of Directors, whose feedback and recommendations proponents incorporate into their project design (see page 4 of the Appendix for Research Advisory Board members' names).

3. Evidence of Support from Host Institution

The University of Toronto has provided financial and in-kind assistance, as it promised.

- **\$100,000 cash grant.** This grant increased our budget to \$2.6 million. It was transferred into our budget at the start of the project.
- **50% of the salary and benefits of the NCRP Data Analyst:** Our host Faculty pays half the salary and benefits of our full-time data analyst and will do so for seven years. The remaining four years represents a contribution of approximately \$180,000 to the NCRP.
- **Seven RBC Endowed Doctoral Research Fellowships, \$70,000.** Our host Faculty contributes one of its RBC endowed doctoral student research fellowships annually to the NCRP. The recipient of this \$10,000 annual research fellowship works directly with the principal investigator gaining valuable research experience and experience by participating in NCRP activities and events. Four PhD candidates have received the fellowship thus far: Ruth Wilson; Jessica Carrière; Roxanne Ramjattan; and, this academic year, Kristina Nikolova.

4. Degree of progress since the Milestone Report – Insight Activities (research)

As scheduled, we have completed the foundational research on trends, especially change in income, over four decades in the seven metropolitan areas under study. Much of this research builds on and extends the *Three Cities within Toronto* report that used census data from 1971 to 2006, supple-

mented with 2010 and 2012 tax filer data. This research has produced individual reports focusing on trends in seven metropolitan areas. Each report is illustrated with maps and related graphics. A major characteristic of this research compared with other studies on income and other socio-economic disparities is its emphasis on spatial analysis within and between CMAs.

We have also completed the combined analysis of all our metropolitan areas, identifying neighbourhood typologies for 2006 and change typologies (clusters of change) from 1981 to 2006 (all available on our website). The relevant publications are:

- Robert A. Murdie, Richard Maaranen, and Jennifer Logan (2014) *Canadian Metropolitan Areas: Spatial Patterns of Neighbourhood Change, 1981–2006*, Cities Centre UofT & Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership, Research Paper 234. 85 pages.
SUMMARY report: How Neighbourhoods are Changing: A Neighbourhood Change Typology, 1981–2006.
- Robert A. Murdie, Jennifer Logan, and Richard Maaranen (2013) *Eight Canadian Metropolitan Areas: Who Lived Where in 2006?* Cities Centre UofT & Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership, Research Paper 229. 44 pages.
SUMMARY report: Who Lived Where in 2006.
- Robert A. Murdie and Jennifer Logan (2014) *Bibliography and Review of Neighbourhood Typologies with a Focus on Canada, the United States, and Australia/New Zealand*, Cities Centre UofT & Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership, Research Paper 233. 58 pages.

Not all types of change appear in all CMAs. Larger and more socially complex CMAs have the greatest number of clusters. After mapping the types of change for each CMA, we identified common patterns in each CMA. For example, the “Aging in Place” cluster indicated a spatial gradation from a higher-than-average representation of adults 65 years and over in the inner suburbs to a higher-than-average number of adults aged 50–64 in the outer suburbs. Also, the “Immigrant Minorities Lagging Behind” cluster included not only traditional central-city immigrant reception areas that receive lower-status newcomers, but also newer areas of certain CMAs that attract a younger immigrant population as well as second-generation immigrants, many of whom struggle economically.

These analyses have macro-level policy implications and serve as the foundation for more specific studies: the 22 specific individual research projects funded thus far (see pages 9–10 in the Appendix). These and other changes within Canadian CMAs have important implications for the lives of people living in these CMAs in that they create “winners and losers.” Researchers studying neighbourhood differentiation and change in each of the CMAs can use this information to draw comparisons between their CMA and other CMAs and undertake local case studies to enhance understanding of the changes identified. Each research initiative has its own policy implications that build on the broader policy implications of the foundational studies.

The 22 proposals funded thus far are posted on our website’s “Research Team Documents” page: <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/about/research-team-documents/> (password: 2012).

The Appendix (pages 5–8) contains a list of publications. We have already produced many research reports and will produce more peer-reviewed scholarly papers (refereed journals, book chapters) as more and more projects are completed.

A review of the research completed and under way, together with the publications to date, reveals key facets of our approach to defining, producing, and mobilizing research: community engagement, strong theoretical and empirical perspectives, a breadth of methodological approaches, and an emphasis on policy and program implications.

5. Degree of Progress since the Milestone Report – Connection Activities

As outlined in our Milestone report, the NCRP employs an integrated knowledge transfer approach whereby partners, stakeholders, and other end-users are directly involved in every stage of the research. NCRP projects are driven by dialogue among scholars, students, community organizations, government, and neighbourhood residents. This process helps us define research questions, identify available data sources, debate and develop appropriate research designs, and analyze findings. It ensures the validity and reliability of the results we publish, and of our knowledge base. Our publications can be downloaded from our website, www.NeighbourhoodChange.ca. All NCRP-funded research initiatives have a knowledge mobilization strategy – the details of individual studies are worked out as the research approaches completion.

We place great emphasis on disseminating and using what we learn. This is not a set activity in a particular year or an activity relegated to the end of the project. We actively seek opportunities to inform current policy and program discussions with research evidence by, for example, submitting briefs, participating in public meetings, and hosting public forums.

We have had notable success with media coverage of the release of our major reports in each metropolitan area. Pages 13 to 18 of the Appendix list media coverage for 2014 and 2015 (the full list is too long for the Appendix).

In addition to the traditional scholarly output (refereed journal articles and book chapters; and our planned edited books), we are updating our website and either have begun or will shortly begin each of the following activities:

- **Blog:** we have produced “How-to-Blog” guidelines for our team; the blog will be launched on our website in April 2016.
- **Social media** to promote our publications: these include the Twitter handle @Hulchanski (1,900 followers) and the hashtag #NeighbourhoodChange.
- **Op-eds:** we encourage and assist team members to write and submit newspaper op-eds.
- **Research Reports:** full reports from research projects are published in the University of Toronto’s Cities Centre series in PDF, professionally edited, available online without restrictions.
- **Summaries of Research Reports:** these summaries of longer research reports are written in accessible language and make extensive use of maps, charts, and infographics.
- **Policy Briefs:** research teams are expected to produce policy recommendations targeted at a particular level of government or sector of society, including social agencies, foundations, and relevant private-sector firms.
- **NCRP email newsletter:** we currently have a periodic internal update from the PI to the team; this will be shifted to an email format for the broader public.
- **Media:** press releases, which we produce when the topic warrants; we also send members of the research team to participate in interviews or panel discussion programs.

The success of our knowledge mobilization strategy thus far is evidenced by the media coverage NCRP research has received in every city with an active research program. Indeed, our “Three Cities” approach to urban spatial analysis has entered the policy and popular lexicon in discussions of urban inequality across the country. Pages 21 to 24 of the Appendix, using our Winnipeg team as an example, provide a summary of the range of knowledge mobilization activities each of our local CMA teams engage in. When major reports are published, community events are organized with our partners, media are informed about the research findings and policy advice, and other forms of dissemination are engaged in.

We seek out and capitalize on opportunities to present our research at significant venues. Page 24 in the Appendix provides, as an example, a description of two sessions (7 paper presentations) NCRP organized for the June 2016 Canadian Association of Geographers' annual conference in Halifax. We also reach policy and practice audiences through participation in professional conferences. For example, several NCRP partners are active members of the International Federation of Settlements (IFS), an international association of neighbourhood-based services, whose biennial conferences in Stockholm in 2012 and Vancouver in 2014 (hosted by NCRP partner Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC) featured workshops and presentations of NCRP research and policy implications by our community partners. NCRP will again support partners' presentations at the September 2016 IFS conference in Berlin.

6. Research Training Development (student engagement and training)

We are on track to exceed the targets for student involvement that we set for ourselves in our original proposal. The broad array of NCRP activities offers students, staff, partners, and others many opportunities to contribute to the research and knowledge mobilization process. Students are involved in designing projects, analyzing data, facilitating focus groups, working with partners, and disseminating research through academic and community venues.

All NCRP research provides training and development opportunities to students at all levels and to recent graduates, including project design, data collection, data analysis, writing, and dissemination. Students have participated in the coordination of the local CMA teams, gaining skills in research management, partnership development, and knowledge mobilization.

Several master's and PhD theses have drawn on NCRP research. Students have also played key leadership roles in NCRP projects. We help students present the research they have worked on and allow them to share authorship where appropriate. Some students have co-authored scholarly publications with team members. The 2014 and 2015 NCRP team meetings included a Research Day in which research results are presented to an invited audience of scholars, partners, and other stakeholders. Graduate, post-graduate, and undergraduate students have been sole presenters or co-presenters on five Research Day sessions.

We provide funding to enable students to present their work at conferences (e.g., two undergraduate students recently presented a poster at an Association of American Geographers conference with NCRP co-investigator Shauna Brail, UofT). And as part of its support for the project, the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work provides an annual PhD fellowship to the NCRP. Doctoral fellows have acted as coordinators and co-investigators in our research.

The NCRP/Cities Centre research paper series includes papers authored or co-authored by graduate and recent post-graduate students, including Craig Jones (MA, UBC), Greg Suttor (PhD, UofT), Amy Twigge-Molecey (PhD, INRS), and Ruth Wilson (PhD, UofT). Student-authored or co-authored reports based on NCRP research have also been published at other NCRP member institutions, including the Institute of Urban Studies (U of Winnipeg). The NCRP Halifax website showcases several papers based on student research. Students have and will continue to author and co-author journal articles, chapters, and conference presentations based on NCRP research.

The NCRP trains students to calculate complex indices and analyze raw census data at Statistics Canada's Research Data Centre. For example, Dylan Simone, a UofT graduate student under Alan Walks's supervision, has been calculating coefficients of inequality and polarization and analyzing census data for the joint NCRP-United Way Toronto and York Region research. Students have also participated in NCRP knowledge mobilization, networking with partners, assisting in the preparation of knowledge mobilization documents and activities, and acting as volunteers at public events.

Pages 11 and 12 in the Appendix document the involvement of students in NCRP research:

- Fifteen Master's and PhD theses relating to NCRP research themes and projects are being supervised by NCRP professors;
- Seventeen presentations have been made by students at academic conferences;
- Eight students have presented research at our NCRP-hosted "Research Days" (two-day conferences featuring our research).

In the coming year we will implement a new form of student engagement: an undergraduate course based on NCRP research offered by the University of Toronto's Urban Studies Program based at Innis College. With a theme of "Divided City / United City," the course will draw on NCRP networks and connect undergraduates to current urban research and researchers. Guest lecturers will include senior and emerging scholars from the NCRP research team, as well as community partners. This third-year special topics course will be offered in the Winter Term 2017 and every year thereafter. NCRP will support the development of the course and provide guest lecturers and materials, while Innis College will cover the cost of the instructor.

All the research projects we fund are required to specify the "Role of Students/Research Assistants and Contributions to Training" in Section 6 of our internal proposal form. It is part of our funding assessment criteria. The 22 proposals funded thus far are posted on our website's "Research Team Documents" page. See: <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/about/research-team-documents/>

7. Evidence of Partner Organization Engagement

We consider our partnership model a success. We have found that partnerships grow organically when there are intrinsic benefits for partner organizations and opportunities for substantive policy-focused research on areas of mutual interest.

Community partners participate at all levels: on the Board of Directors, on local CMA teams, and in research projects. The extent of their active involvement, from our three annual Partner Contribution Reports, is shown in the total in-kind value of partner participation of \$244,800 (from more than 25 partners) and cash contributions of \$65,900 (from eight partners and other contributors).

Each of our 22 funded research projects has been developed by an academic/community partner team. These are identified at <http://neighbourhoodchange.ca/about/research-team-documents/>. Section 5 of each of these proposal documents provides a summary of "The Role of Community Partners." Partners contribute to every research initiative, offering advice, staff time, space, access to research participants, and knowledge mobilization opportunities. At the same time, participation in NCRP initiatives builds partners' capacity, contributes to the training of personnel, and provides an evidence base for service provision and policy advocacy.

Certain partners have also led NCRP research initiatives. For example, the Social Planning and Research Council of BC initiated "Metro Vancouver's Shifting Debtscape," a project that emerged from SPARC BC's ongoing focus on household debt. The Council played a lead role throughout the project, from concept and design, to providing staff time and student interns, to carrying out data analyses, and co-presenting preliminary findings at the May 2015 NCRP Research Day. The project's KM strategy includes dissemination initiatives aimed at the community and policy sectors.

At times, partner engagement has surpassed involvement in governance or in specific research initiatives. An important example is the ongoing NCRP partnership with United Way Toronto and York Region (UWTYR), which has a long-established program of research and intervention focused on urban inequality. Their research and policy activities in this area run parallel to those of NCRP and have intersected at many points, notably in the research leading to UWTYR's 2015 report, *The Op-*

portunity Equation: Building opportunity in the face of growing income inequality. Toronto-area NCRP academics (particularly J.D. Hulchanski, R. Murdie, and A. Walks) served on the advisory committee and the NCRP is acknowledged in the report (our logo is on the cover).

In early 2016 we asked partners to answer several questions about the quality of our partnership. One question was: Describe how your organization and its members/clients *benefit* from participating in the NCRP. In the Appendix, pages 19 and 20, we provide a sample of answers to this question from six partners. Toward the end of this Partnership Grant we will have a much more detailed assessment of the quality of the partnership, including lessons learned and advice for improving research partnerships.

8. Partner Contributions: Minimum of 35% by year 7

As of 31 March 2015, as reported to SSHRC, we have received \$636,300 in cash and in-kind contributions (25% of our grant). To reach 35% by end of year 7, we need a further \$200,000. Last year we received \$195,000.

We anticipate passing the 35% threshold in either this current reporting period (ending in March 2016), or early in the next reporting year. *We will significantly surpass the 35% minimum.*

Please note: In Section 3 above (*Evidence of Support from Host Institution*) we have yet to report the cash contributions for the final four years of the 50% of the data analyst's salary and benefits (approximate \$180,000) and the final four doctoral research fellowships (\$40,000). These alone put us over the 35% minimum.

9. Budget Update and Justification

There has not been any significant change in the allocation of our budget since our proposal.

As the attached budget update page indicates, as of 31 December 2015, we have spent or allocated 45% of our \$2.6 million budget (the \$2.5 million SSHRC PG plus the \$100,000 UofT cash grant). "Allocated" refers to the fact that when we fund a specific research project, the budget for that project is allocated to the project's PI at her/his home university's research office (a standard sub-grant process between universities). This process decentralizes the administration of the research.

The attached budget page is divided into three spending categories: research, management, and knowledge mobilization. We want to minimize the second (management) without downplaying its importance. This budget, and its estimates of future year allocations (always subject to decisions by our Board) reflects our project's Insight and Connection priorities, with approximately two-thirds of the total project budget dedicated to research and knowledge mobilization activities.

However, our three budget categories (research, management, and knowledge mobilization) are not always discrete and spending may extend into other categories. This is particularly the case for expenditures classified as "management." Management activities directly support research and dissemination activities and occasionally engage in such activities. For example, CMA Research Management funds support partnership development and the preparation of research proposals. The NCRP Project Manager works with co-applicants, partners, and working groups to shape and carry out research initiatives. Our annual NCRP Team Meetings include research presentations and public forums (dissemination).

As we move into the second half of our program of research, more funds will be allocated to cross-CMA projects and to knowledge mobilization efforts, including edited books and a national conference.

NCRP Budget Update February 2016

Expenditures/allocations as of 31 December 2015 & projected allocations

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Expenditures as of 31-Dec- 2014	Expenditures & allocations Jan-Dec 2015	Total Spent as of 31-Dec- 2015	2016 Budget	2017 Budget	2018 Budget	2019 Budget	Total	% of Total NCRP Budget
RESEARCH									
Projects focused on 6 CMAs (initial \$100,000 per CMA)	143,000	195,700	338,700	100,000	25,000	25,000		488,700	19%
Comparative Canadian CMA Research Initiatives	46,000	49,200	95,200	50,000	25,000	25,000		195,200	8%
Comparative International Research Initiatives	4,000	5,200	9,200	15,000	15,000	15,000		54,200	2%
Rental Housing Initiative	0	33,500	33,500	50,000	40,000	25,000		148,500	6%
GIS Data Analyst 50% (other 50% paid by FIFSW UofT)	100,000	47,400	147,400	45,000	45,000	45,000		327,400	13%
Data Purchase	14,000	17,200	31,200	15,000	20,000	20,000	10,000	96,200	4%
MANAGEMENT									
CMA Research Management; \$15,000/CMA Team	90,000	0	90,000	35,000				125,000	5%
Project meetings (travel, teleconferences)	74,000	28,300	102,300	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	202,300	8%
Project Management (staff)	240,000	90,100	330,100	45,000	45,000	45,000	45,000	510,100	20%
Equipment, supplies	17,000	6,900	23,900	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	63,900	2%
KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION									
Conference travel (research team; students)	10,000	12,500	22,500	15,000	15,000	15,000	15,000	82,500	3%
Special public events (in any of the 6 CMAs)	4,000	4,300	8,300	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500	38,300	1%
Final conference & edited Books	0	0	0	10,000	10,000	20,000	30,000	60,000	2%
KM services (website, editing, translation, printing)	21,000	33,500	54,500	35,000	38,200	40,000	40,000	207,700	8%
TOTAL PER YEAR									
	\$ 763,000	\$ 395,500	1,158,500	\$ 447,500	\$ 320,700	\$ 317,500	\$ 227,500	\$ 2,600,000	100%
Spent: \$ 1,158,500				Remaining: \$ 1,441,500					55%