



A Neighbourhood Vitality Index

**An Approach to Measuring
Neighbourhood Well-Being**

An Action for Neighbourhood Change Report

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Public Interest

For United Way of Greater Toronto



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CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPING A VITALITY INDEX

This report sets out a strategy for measuring the well-being or vitality of neighbourhoods: an objective that it is both elusive and challenging. Neighbourhoods remain hard to define, hard to quantify and hard to compare. Why then should we remain so committed to the idea of neighbourhood indicators? For two reasons: neighbourhoods matter, and measurement is a critical element in the effort to address the emerging crisis in our neighbourhoods.

1. Why Neighborhoods Matter

For the past 20 years researchers have been increasingly concerned about neighbourhoods. Beginning with research on the impacts of concentrations of poverty and “neighbourhood effects” on children’s learning and health outcomes, researchers have identified the neighbourhood as one significant determinant of success for individuals and for families.

United Way of Greater Toronto recognized these trends when developing its research on the emerging concentration of distress factors in its 2004 study Poverty by Postal Code. This study identified clear trends in the challenges emerging for local communities in the City of Toronto (United Way 2004).

The Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force, a joint project of the United Way and the City of Toronto, commissioned Christa Fielier to focus the existing research with her extensive review of this issue entitled *Why Neighbourhoods Matter*, Fielier’s study identified a range of impacts neighbourhoods have on their residents, but also on the City around them. This study served as a key building block for the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force Report, which set a course for investment in neighbourhoods for the City of Toronto.

These documents, and many like them, cite several pressing reasons to focus on the neighbourhood when we analyze the impacts of poverty. Most of these studies cite the significance of cities in our economy and our society, noting that for most cities, neighbourhoods are the constituent elements and are determinants of the cities’ ultimate success.

As expressed in the Strong neighbourhood Task Force Report:

If our city is to remain strong, vibrant and competitive in the years to come, then its neighbourhoods must be places where people want to live. Parents must feel that neighbourhood streets are safe for their children to walk, and that local parks are safe places for their children to play. They must be assured that there are places for their teenagers to meet and get involved in sports and social events. They need to be confident that the shops and services that are a necessary part of daily life will be nearby and accessible. And they want to know that they will be

welcomed and have a connection to their neighbours. Where we live matters to all of us.

The state of Toronto's neighbourhoods demands attention today because many are beginning to show signs of distress, putting at risk Toronto's long history as a city of great neighbourhoods (Strong Neighbourhood Task Force 2005:5).

Neighbourhoods are also one of the more promising units for programmatic intervention. City-wide, region-wide and country-wide policies are often too broad and too generalized to be genuinely appropriate to the context of their intended clients. Policies and practices pursued more broadly also have less capacity to fully engage their clients. In contrast, neighbourhood-scale organizations can root themselves with the people they serve and improve their sensitivity to clients and their capacity for sustainability. As a result, local programs have an added advantage in producing their intended results.

In summary, neighborhoods are where life of the city, and the lives of its individual residents, plays themselves out. Because of this, strong neighbourhoods truly do matter.

This sentiment echoes recent research on the significance of neighbourhoods across the English speaking world.

Jim Ife, an Australian expert in community development, argues that there should be a renewed emphasis on local communities and away from communities of interest. He notes that many issues have physical manifestations or are based on relationships that occur in particular areas. As a result, efforts to address them should be rooted in a specific locality (Black and Hughes 2001: 11).

University of Chicago researcher Robert Sampson notes that increasingly distress is concentrated in specific communities and that the geographic location of those neighbourhoods has implications for the future of those communities and for others nearby (Sampson 2003). Sampson argues that the geography is a critical component in the evolution of urban poverty.

The National Neighbourhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP), a partnership among six of the America's leading community development organizations and the US Urban Institute, urge that the challenges of urban life are increasingly concentrated in a few neighbourhoods (Kingsley 1999). As a result, designing appropriate interventions, even on a city-wide basis, requires increasing focus on specific neighbourhoods. "It is self-evident that knowledge of characteristics of neighborhoods and their populations is also critical to the deployment—at least the cost-effective deployment—of many other city-wide programs." In short, there is no point in designing an anti-poverty program that works on Park Avenue, or one that doesn't work in Harlem (Kingsley 1999).

Neighbourhoods shape the future of cities and are the sites for some of their greatest challenges while simultaneously serving as the most effective places for addressing these issues. The importance of understanding neighbourhoods cannot be overstated.

2. Why measure

Neighbourhoods matter because they give us a window on the places where the various issues have their effect and on how and where interventions to mitigate them can have the greatest impact. To benefit from this knowledge, we need to understand how to intervene to support distressed communities. That objective can only be met by applying measurement in three very different ways:

- we need to know which communities are in distress so we can identify priorities;
- we need to know what forms of distress they are in so we can shape agendas for action; and
- we need to know how we can measure their progress out of distress so we can distinguish effective interventions from ineffective ones and focus resources on successful strategies.

Ultimately measurement answers these three questions.

Identifying priorities:

Neighbourhoods are diverse in a wide variety of ways. Some are visibly dilapidated while others have a reputation for violence and crime. Sadly, what we know about communities often reflects more about media reporting habits than about the real needs of communities. We implicitly accept this when we use income statistics to prioritize services or crime statistics to allocate resources. If an effort is being made to address the needs of communities, we need more accurate tools to tell us what neighbourhoods are truly in distress. A simple graffiti count, or tally of media hits is hardly sufficient. But what are the most accurate tools for setting priorities? Overwhelmingly, the evidence suggests that a more robust measurement system that tracks the intersection of factors would better allow policy makers to understand neighbourhoods and better identify the places that need and benefit most from intervention.

Shaping Agendas:

Knowing which neighbourhoods face challenges does not tell us much about how to address them. Communities can face many types of challenges that have a wide variety of potential root causes. For each root cause there are a variety of potential interventions. Specific neighbourhood characteristics and unique confluences of opportunities dictate which intervention is the most appropriate. Considerable information about and engagement with a community is required to determine which issues should be addressed as a priority and which avenues for addressing them will prove most fruitful. An appropriate set of neighbourhood indicators could provide that information.

Measuring Progress

Whatever community development interventions are undertaken in a community, the ultimate goal is to improve the conditions for the people who live there. Measuring progress is the only way to determine whether those interventions are successful. However, neighbourhood processes are difficult to quantify, and progress is gradual and

not obvious to the public eye. Measuring neighbourhood progress requires a set of indicators that are appropriate to the actual processes of neighbourhood change. Just like you cannot use a thermometer to measure wind chill, you cannot use age as an accurate measure of child development. As we will see, the characteristics of community development require creative measurement techniques if they are to accurately reflect real progress in complex neighbourhoods.

This report is intended to provide measurement tools and indicators that perform these functions. It is important to note that these functions differ fundamentally. Determining priority and methodology is not the same as measuring progress and outcomes. While these functions interrelate to some extent, they will, in fact, require very different types of measures and in many cases different tools and methods. Measuring communities, as it turns out, is a challenging activity itself.

3. The Challenges of measurement

Measuring community well-being, in the three methods identified is not a simple task as each tool presents specific types of challenges.

There are some underlying challenges that are universal to the effort of measuring community vitality. Indeed the National Neighbourhoods Indicators Project, a multi-partner project carried out in conjunction with the Urban Institute, argues that effective, replicable neighbourhood vitality measurement has only been possible for the last 10-15 years, as technology, data management, data gathering and policy priorities gradually aligned themselves in ways that made small scale analysis of interrelated datasets possible (Kingsley 1999). The emergence of inexpensive data management tools, from accurate and flexible spreadsheet programs to desktop SPSS data management software has meant a quantum leap in the practical capacity to measure progress at the neighbourhood level. The emergence of publicly accessible, detailed GIS systems that track data in local areas and allow the aggregation of data in contiguous areas, especially the emergence of the TIGER system (the Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing system) in the United States, have changed the landscape as well. Increasingly, public policy attention to neighbourhoods has caused data gatherers to be sensitive to smaller units of geography, measuring in more discrete local units and making data available on smaller geographic units.

But even as the technical challenges have been overcome, many of the fundamental challenges remain.

Data Sources

One key problem is that not all the data useful to neighbourhood vitality measurement is gathered in comprehensive ways and on a neighbourhood by neighbourhood basis.

Particularly in Canada, data is often suppressed for smaller areas, and sometimes for entire census tracts, making information on critical subjects like numbers of lone-parent families, multifamily households and mother tongues unavailable at the neighbourhood

level. Even for data released, disaggregating data to provide discrete information by ethno-cultural and linguistic background is impossible.

NNIP partners recommends a highly pragmatic approach that adopts the best of the available data sources to provide the clearest possible picture, rather than seeking specific data sets that have important theoretic implications. It is more important that the data be readily available than that it be ideal (Kingsley 1999).

Data Interpretation

Measuring neighbourhoods cannot be done with a simple tally of data. Neighbourhood indicators require an approach to analysis that is informed by the intersection of data and an interpretation based on the specific neighbourhood context.

Most neighbourhood indicator systems tacitly acknowledge what the NNIP's guidebook, Building and Operating Neighborhood Indicator Systems, specifically states: data has to be analyzed in relative terms (Kingsley 1999). The number of people living in poverty tells us a little. The percentage of people living in poverty tells us much more. We learn far more from the percentage relative to the surrounding region. We also learn a great deal from the range of incomes in the neighbourhood. Simple facts in neighbourhood measurement tell us far less than the interrelation of those facts, requiring the data to be looked as a whole, rather than as isolated indicators.

In his study on community development corporations for the US Urban Institute, George Galster notes that the interpretation of this data is enhanced by community input, which can clarify the significance of otherwise ambiguous data (Galster et al. 2005). Most of the more effective community measurement efforts are developed by researchers who carry out their data analysis informed by community engagement processes. This combination ensures that robust, local grassroots knowledge informs the design of the indicators and the interpretation of the data.

Boundaries

Even data that is gathered for smaller areas often suffers from the inconsistency of boundaries. Police historically gather data by division, which is too large to be neighbourhood relevant and often incommensurable with even collections of census tracts. Also, service providers gather data by catchment areas, which may reflect neighbourhoods, but not ones that are necessarily coterminous.

Even where boundaries are clear and consistent, neighbourhood-specific issues have inputs that cross over boundaries. Key concerns like fear of crime can be caused by proximity to a violent area nearby. People living in one neighbourhood, potentially working in another, and perhaps shopping or socializing in a third, will have multiple neighbourhood experiences shaping their views and behaviors.

In urban settings, boundaries between neighbourhoods are almost always inexorably porous and are often somewhat blurred. Perfection in setting boundaries is unattainable. An effective reflection of local understanding within the confines of what data sources

make practical for regular measurement is likely the best attainable goal, imperfect though it is.

Significance of Primary Data

Even where boundaries are comparatively clear, there are challenges with data. Claudia Coulton has been leading a comprehensive array of community well-being indicators projects in Cleveland over much of the last 30 years and has led American neighbourhood indicators projects in the identification of appropriate data sources (Milligan, Coulton, York and Register 1998). Coulton still concedes that over 1/3 of the critically necessary indicators in the neighbourhood measurement system she used in the late 90's had no secondary data source that could be identified and required fresh primary research, in the form of neighbourhood interviews and observation logs, to obtain this information. This primary research has become clearly a critical source of data in the development of neighbourhood indicators (Milligan, Coulton, York and Register 1998).

However, surveys present challenges as neighbourhood indicators. Some data gathered through neighbourhood surveys suffers from inconsistencies and unreliability as a result of the subjective nature of the data. This is especially the case with observation logs, which record researcher observations of the neighbourhood. "Windshield surveys" conducted by social housing redevelopment efforts under HOPE VI also reveal limitations as they include highly subjective analyses such as the presence of "high quality" housing, and the ranking of litter problems a "major" or "minor." In the case of The City of Jacksonville, Florida, data gathered on community engagements and satisfaction depends on respondents remembering and accurately accounting for things that they are unlikely to be able to do with any precision (American Dialogue Inc 2004). For example, participants were asked to tally their volunteer hours for the last year and provide an average per week for this study.

Increasingly, researchers utilizing neighbourhood indicators are accepting the need to engage in primary research to acquire necessary information. Robert Sampson, using what he calls "ecometric" models, has developed strategies to reduce the subjectivity of analysis of such "soft" subjects as cleanliness, comfort, fear and trust to a point where replication produces consistent results in 98% of cases (Raudenbush and Sampson 1999). Using the strict rules of ecometrics, this primary data can be rendered more reliable as a tool. His analysis of measurement techniques also points to some surprisingly positive results about the accuracy of data on attitudes and beliefs gathered through interviews.

Complexity

Data analysis also suffers from the three forms of complexity identified by Ann Kubisch of the Aspen Institute (Kubisch, Weiss, Schorr and Connell 1995). Kubisch identifies challenges in "horizontal complexity", or the importance of working across sectors and working to link the elements of support in each sector, even where data for those sectors is incommensurable in a variety of ways. Some of these complexities include "vertical complexity," or the need to track changes at the individual, family and community level, and the interrelation of those improvements and "contextual complexity," or the need to

track changes that may be subject to influences from contextual factors outside the control of the project (Kubisch, Weiss, Schorr and Connell 1995).

Outcome Measures

The Aspen Institutes successive roundtables on Evaluating Community Initiatives also identify several barriers specific to the effort to measure outcomes. In seminal articles like Robinson Hollister and Jennifer Hill's *Problems in Evaluating Community Wide Initiatives* (Hollister, Robinson and Hill 1995), and Carol Weiss' (Weiss 1995) articles on "theory of change" based evolutions as well as in thoughtful contributions such as Robert C. Granger's *Establishing Causality in Evaluation of Comprehensive Community Initiatives* (Granger 1998) and Michelle Gambone's *Challenges In Measurement Of Community Change Initiatives* (Gambone 1998), an array of barriers in data analysis are clearly articulated.

One perplexing barrier is the pace of neighbourhood change noted in these reports. While assessing progress is ideally carried out continuously, most if not all of the major outcomes of neighbourhood interventions are very slow to develop. Practitioners often cite 3-5 year time frames. Staff administering the Vancouver Urban Development Agreement cite time frames in excess of 20 years. Few practitioners and even fewer funders are willing to wait that long to determine if they are on the right track. The problem is compounded by the fact that progress is not only slow, it is not consistent. For example, improving employment systems may require skills development. However, over the period in which future workers are in training, the employment rates will not increase. Gains in the key indicator will not begin until later in the process, even if the process is entirely successful. In many areas of community development, progressions are geometric, not mathematical, with most of the change happening on the last stages of the process.

Another confounding issue to consider is the mobility of residents in distressed communities. Distressed communities are frequently marked with high rates of mobility. The individuals measured when setting an initial benchmark for the community are not the same individuals measured later on after an intervention is completed. Some of those who leave have improved their economic and opportunities and move on to more attractive neighbourhoods. Some leave the neighbourhood through eviction, because their declining economic status has rendered them unable to meet the costs of stable housing. Some are removed by officials from child welfare, or the justice system. Those people will not be in subsequent samples as the community is re-measured at future dates to assess progress, making comparisons challenging.

More confounding, for each departure from the neighbourhood, a CONTRARY statistic can be generated including:

- people who leave a neighbourhood because success has created new opportunities are replaced by new arrivals who presumably have fewer economic and social opportunities, and are therefore limited to selecting a more distressed community

- to live in. Therefore socio-economic indicators will decline in the neighbourhood, even as people in the community are achieving greater success;
- a person who cannot pay their rent, and is, as a result, evicted, is presumably replaced by a person who can pay their rent. Therefore the economic indicators in the community will rise slightly, as a result of a precipitous decline in one resident's income; and
 - people who are incarcerated are presumably replaced by people who are in somewhat less conflict with the justice system, producing positive effects on safety in a community with rising arrest rates.

As a result, mobility makes the assessment of neighbourhood progress precarious.

Outcomes are also difficult to measure because casual relationships are hard to attribute. This is partially because the mechanisms of change are not obvious and it is hard to legitimately claim that events that follow interventions are caused by those interventions without a clear causal chain of events. But it is also because exogenous factors can and often do overwhelm neighbourhood initiatives. A recession can eliminate any absolute gains from even the best community economic development program. Even if the program prevents greater economic harm from the recession, the benefit is difficult to measure. The arrival of a community centre in an abutting neighborhood can have a positive effect on youth that masks the ineffectual nature of a local youth program. What happens outside a neighbourhood can have a big impact on what happens inside it and the outside influences are difficult to take into consideration in research.

Hollister and Hill, in some compelling examples, address the full range of potential methods of creating control groups for neighbourhood initiatives (Hollister and Hill 1995). They find that neighbourhoods are sufficiently different and complex that no one can accurately predict which ones will genuinely plot a parallel course and can therefore be compared to each other over time. In case after case, they find devastating evidence against the reliability of any system of establishing control groups for community development initiatives.

Robert C Granger suggests a "blended approach" by assessing community projects using absolute benchmarks against their own prior status, relative benchmarks comparing a community to similar communities around it, and comparing more broadly to agglomerations of neighbourhoods to cancel out specific neighbourhood effects (Granger 1998). While compelling as an argument, the overall impact of combining measures that Hollister and Hill have shown to be individually utterly unreliable has limited utility. Without some assurance that some of these measures has a least some degree of reliability, their combination can offer little reassurance about our ability to test against a benchmark (Hollister and Hill 1995).

Hollister and Hill, though committed to finding the "holy grail" of evidence in determining ways to develop control groups, acknowledge that outcome measures are not always the most appropriate measure for community revitalization (Hollister and Hill

1995). In some cases, inputs, outputs and process measures are all that merit tabulating, as they achieve a goal of the community and can be clearly identified as a benefit.

Theory of Change Models

Carol Weiss takes the concept of output and process measures one step further, arguing that strict outcome measurement will be misleading and that a more appropriate model for measuring progress should be explored through what she defines as a “theory of change (Weiss 1995).”

According to Weiss, a “theory of change” articulates the process through which the community would change, providing a sequence of measurable phenomena that should, if found to be present in increasing numbers, satisfy observers that the community is in progress toward long term objectives (Weiss 1995). For example, the theory of change causing increased employment might include development of an inventory of skill needs, increased availability of training programs, followed by increased enrollment in programs, followed by increased skill levels followed by increased local recruitment followed by increased employment. At most points along the process, employment will not increase, but measurable indicators of progress along the continuum are none the less present and indicate the successful implementation of a strategy that will eventually lead to increased employment.

To employ a theory of change model to measure progress, Weiss recommends developing a set of long term objectives, and articulating the interim and short term changes that would be evident during the process to the long term objectives (Weiss 1995). Lastly, Weiss recommends an articulation of the processes and supports that would need to be in place for those short and long term objectives to be met. Over the near term, process measures, clearly indicating the degree to which the needed processes and supports are emerging would be the appropriate measure. Over the middle term, the earlier objectives and more advanced processes should come into evidence, and only over the long term would the primary objectives be met and measurable. This model avoids the disruption of counterintuitive outcomes that result from good processes. For example, the apparent increase in crime rates that result from neighbourhood engagement and therefore increased neighbourhood reporting of crime. If engagement is the process that occurs at the early stages of the theory of change, its success is measured not by assessing changes in long term objectives like crime rates, but in the short term process objectives like increased engagement in community processes.

While the model is attractive in theory, its implementation is challenging. Theories of change have to reflect not only the intentions of funders and actors, but the opportunities existing in local communities, the will of their members and the constraints imposed by exogenous factors. “Surfacing” a theory of change, according to Anne Kubisch of the Aspen Institute, requires a collaborative approach, working with the key actors to identify priorities, opportunities, capacities and interest (Kubisch 1995). As Claudia Coulton points out in her account of using of a theory of change model in Cleveland (in Aspen 2) the application of the method is not without challenges including:

- in practice that “co-production” of the theory of change requires sensitive work on complex objectives with many actors in delicate situations. Simply reaching agreement on the constraints and the goals can be an extensive piece of work;
- the application can and will produce multiple theories in some circumstances, which have to be reconciled;
- the process measures require careful design to distinguish actions (organizing a meeting) from process outcomes (having people attend) so that measures clearly indicate not simply that the strategy is being carried out but that it is functioning well;
- the process measures need to be set at an appropriate level of detail to avoid over or under-documentation; and
- most significantly, the links between the proposed processes and the anticipated outcomes need to be rooted in sound research and solid theory. Process measures that do not describe processes with a credible claim to producing the long term outcomes desired cannot provide legitimate assurances that a community initiative is moving closer to its ultimate long term goals (Milligan, Coulton, York and Register 1998).

While these challenges remain significant, ongoing practice in recent years has shown that the theory of change-based approach is increasingly popular and trusted and the development of these methods within communities is practical, though not easy. Moreover, recent research, much of it cited above, has drawn clearer and clearer pictures of neighbourhood processes and interventions and their relationship to outcomes that alter neighbourhood effects.

A theory of change based model then appears to be, as George Galster reinforced at the Caledon Institute’s ANC Policy Forum in October of 2005, the appropriate and most effective model for engaging in ongoing measurement of community vitality as it changes over time in response to specific interventions.

4. Measurement strategies

In summary, measurement of community vitality indicators presents a variety of problems, which can be addressed through the following strategies:

- 1) The ambiguity of boundaries is a barrier to success in analysis, and a practical system for setting boundaries has to be established for the research to be relevant and the data to commensurable.
- 2) The availability of consistent data is a critical issue. Secondary data gathered should reflect the issues and priorities in the community as well as the research on significant factors in neighbourhood effects, but, as noted by the NNIP the availability of data has to be a primary consideration. Where data desired is not readily available for the neighbourhood boundaries, alternate data sets that are available should be sought.

- 3) As noted by the NNIP data should be analyzed in relative, rather than absolute terms attending to the intersection of data, within a context, and should be analyzed as a whole.
- 4) As Galster notes, and many practitioners tacitly acknowledge, data should be considered with community participation and in the context of community insights to overcome the inherent ambiguities of statistical data (Galster et al. 2005).
- 5) As Claudia Coulton recognized, some data, especially qualitative data, cannot be obtained in any form appropriate to the neighbourhood without community surveys and observational logs (Coulton 1998). However, their use should be kept within very narrow bounds to ensure that the process is cost effective and replicable. Some tools, especially observation logs, suffer from subjectivity and are therefore neither accurate nor replicable. The design of instruments should follow constraints that make them reliable, replicable and as objective as possible. Observations logs in particular should follow the strictures of Sampson's "ecometric" systems to increase the reliability of the data.
- 6) As Carol Weiss notes, evaluating outcomes is less accurate over the short and medium term than evaluating the extent to which progress through the effective implementation of a theory of change is in evidence (Weiss 1995).

Given this approach, our vitality index requires 5 elements.

1. A neighbourhood definition to address boundary issue
2. A definition of neighbourhood vitality and a corresponding theory of change
3. Sources of secondary Data
4. Tool for acquiring primary data
5. Processes for assessing and interpreting data in the context of neighbourhood input

5. What's a neighbourhood?

Clarence Perry's 80-year-old definition of a neighbourhood has proven enduring (Gallion 1950). He saw a neighborhood as a residential community with one elementary school and a population of about 5,000 to 6,000 residents. National Neighbourhood Indicators Project staff note that, "assuming a density of 10 families per acre, the neighborhood would occupy about 160 acres that, if in a circular form, would have a radius of about one-quarter of a mile" – a walkable neighbourhood.

As tempting as that definition is, most researchers, including leading figures like Claudia Coulton (Coulton 1998), Gerald Suttles (Suttles 1972), and George Galster (Galster 2005) recognize that neighbourhoods have a variety of definitions depending on the aspect of neighbourhood one considers and that, even individuals define their neighbourhood differently depending on the purpose they have in mind. In urban settings, Robert Sampson points out, people traverse neighbourhoods for various purposes, working in one neighbourhood, living in another, perhaps shopping in a third and visiting

friends and family in a fourth (Sampson 2003). For this reason, neighbourhood definitions are varied and imprecise.

In practice, there is no one definition of neighbourhoods and there is no description of a neighbourhood that can sever it from the influences of the communities around it. That does not mean that neighbourhoods are not significant. Neighbourhoods remain the locus of our most frequent interactions and the physical and social influences that are most likely to influence us. But it does mean that in defining a neighbourhood, the absence of any one right answer creates limitations in selecting a convenient and practical answer.

The NNIP encourages practitioners to be flexible about how strictly neighbourhood boundaries are defined, and to follow convention and community direction in the definitions (Kingsley 1999). For the purposes of community indicators they have to reflect two things above all. First, they have to, as much as possible, reflect the actual networks of interaction that define the most likely constellations of social networks and social capital. Second, they have to reflect the practical considerations of data gathering and reflect the boundaries that correspond to those used by data sources.

In keeping with the first considerations, the Action for Neighbourhood Change project in Toronto adopted the following definition:

“A neighbourhood is a geographical location, usually contained within recognizable boundaries, where residents live in proximity to each other and make use of common spaces (including parks, schools, stores, clubs and recreation facilities) that bring them into relationships with each other in ways that give rise to or reflect shared interests.”

(ANC Toronto, 2005)

This definition provides a functional framework for interviewing local residents and asking the appropriate questions to define the neighbourhood functionally. Ultimately, the residential locations that shared schools, shopping parks and recreation facilities comprised an area slightly larger than in Perry's definition, with three elementary schools, several parks, and a population of 13,700, roughly triple his estimate. This area could be subdivided into two or three neighbourhoods more closely fitting Perry's definition and reflecting meaningful patterns of social interaction, demographics and interests, but the areas overlapped sufficiently to make that division awkward for practical organizing and community interventions (Perry 1950). Neighbourhood definitions can and should be flexible enough to allow for those modifications that enable interventions and supports for positive social processes to occur efficiently and effectively.

To the extent that *measuring* community vitality, social capital and social change are an objective, the second practical consideration for neighbourhood definition has to be the availability of data. As NNIP staff point out, there is no definition of neighbourhood that is so compelling that it can ultimately override the fact that key data sets are only available in prescribed boundaries (Kingsley 1999). For Canadian purposes, that limits neighbourhood definitions to boundaries that reflect the boundaries used by Statistics Canada. At best that means using the smaller the Census Dissemination Areas (often a

few blocks or an apartment building) but often it means using the more readily available data gathering boundaries, the Census Tracts, generally covering an area with thousands of residents. Gathering data on most of the major indicators without using Census DAs or Census Tracts would be prohibitively expensive and virtually impossible for most organizations to complete. As a result, no measurement effort can afford to define neighbourhoods in ways that do not respect those boundaries, as well as the boundaries identified by the local communities.

This later consideration is the more inflexible. The boundaries used for data gathering do not bend to accommodate any other factors. Any neighbourhood where measurement is a relevant consideration must be composed of agglomerations of those data reporting units. How those agglomerations are arrived at should be entirely guided by the earlier consideration of the communities experienced neighbourhood, reflecting the spaces and places of frequent interaction, such as schools, parks, stores local facilities and that give rise to shared interests.

Those boundaries, once defined, should be treated as stable to enable comparative analysis of neighbourhood vitality over time.

6. What is vitality?

In his widely read work, John McKnight of Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research takes issue with the history of neighbourhood analysis. McKnight questions the tendency to focus on "deficits" like the concentration of poverty and the absence of facilities (McKnight 1993). These are important, he agrees, but they are not the most important aspects to focus on. What matters most, McKnight argues, are the various assets possessed by the community, including local skills and infrastructure. Most measures follow McKnight in this belief, including in their structures what M.R. Jackson called the "aggregate of individual and community level endowments" in their assessment of community vitality (Jackson 1996).

Virtually all measurement systems we reviewed take into account at least economic and physical assets of a community. But increasingly, researchers are finding that the human assets, both individual assets and collective assets assembled in networks and social relationships, matter to community success.

A. Economic Assets

Adequate income is critical to the success of individuals and neighbourhoods. High concentrations of poverty correlate significantly with adverse neighbourhood effects in an almost endless number of studies. But we will see throughout this study, having an asset and having the means to sustain its benefits are not always the same thing. The ability to sustain an adequate level of income, for individuals and for a community, are also important. The means to obtain an income on an ongoing basis is, therefore, a necessary element of neighbourhood vitality.

Equipment is one asset that enables people to work. Owning the tools or other materials one needs for employment increases the likelihood of employment. More significant in facilitating employment are places of work. As explored later in this report, research on the economic effects of networks, primarily by Mark Granovetter shows the presence of employers in the immediate neighbourhood increases the likelihood of employment, in part by increasing information of potential employers and employees have about each other (Granovetter 1973). Equally important to income is access to the capital that enables businesses to start up and grow.

Many measures assess the amount of capitalized value that exists in the neighbourhood, primarily in the form of mortgagable property. However, assuming families will risk their homes to gain capital for their businesses does not reflect any body of evidence we are aware of nor our experience in the field.

The physical proximity of lending institutions is likely to be a more significant measure of access to capital. Carlos Teixeira, in his research in immigrant businesses, points to the persistent barrier to capital created by the lack of acquaintance between newcomer entrepreneurs and lending institutions (Teixeira 2001). Granovetter's research on weak ties and network affects on economic decisions underscore the role of proximity and familiarity in economic decisions which undoubtedly include borrowing and lending (Granovetter 1973).

B. Physical Assets

Housing

The consequences of economic well being can come in non-economic forms. Decent affordable housing can be present to various degrees independent of incomes. In tough rental markets, working families can face very adverse housing arrangements, while in communities with good social housing systems; low income families can have decent, affordable units. Testing for this asset is almost universally seen as relevant by those developing neighbourhood well-being measures. The characteristics of good housing exceed simple questions of its presence. Conditions of housing, including maintenance, crowding and tenure have an impact on the quality of life of its residents, but also on their perception of their community and their desire to remain there rather than becoming members of the transient community. The strain that housing costs places on their incomes also affects their willingness to stay, as well as their economic well being.

Aesthetic Assets

Less often included in community indicators is the aesthetic condition of the neighbourhood. The absence of sidewalks and green space, the presence of litter and vandalism are not utterly incompatible with well-being. However, recent research, most notably by Robert Sampson, demonstrates that these factors have a persistently adverse impact on perceived quality of life and on the conditions like social cohesion that are already known to contribute to neighbourhood effects. Some aspects of this, most notable the proverbial "broken windows", have received considerable attention of late. Though the popularized versions of the research deviate in significant ways from what the

evidence actually indicates, as outlined below in the research on collective efficacy. In general, aesthetic issues have an impact on the well-being and merit consideration.

Institutional assets

Institutional assets are another important category of assets that contribute to community well-being. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, as a result of two successive community development programs covering as many as 20 communities over more than a decade, developed their own priorities. The Casey Foundation's report entitled *Six Areas for Rebuilding Communities* focuses primarily on the organizational structures in the community, specifically, the capacity of neighbourhood resources and institutions, and the effective neighbourhood-based human service delivery systems (Annie E Casey Foundation 1995).

The presence of institutions, organizations, services and supports in a neighbourhood are shown to influence the probability of residents seeking and obtaining assistance that offsets neighbourhood effects (Sampson 2003). Their presence of social supports also influences a community's sense of distress and anxiety. (Sampson 2003). As with other assets, Granovetter's research indicates that the presence of the facilities in the community increases connections among the users and the providers of services and increases access (Granovetter 1973).

C. The qualities of physical assets

For these institutional assets to be of benefit to the community, they must meet certain criteria, above and beyond their being present. They must be, in our assessment, adequate, accessible and integrating.

Assets cannot serve the community fully if they are inadequate, either in quality or quantity. A community service provider that can only serve 10% of the local client base is not a resource for most residents. A community service provider that provides poor or ineffective service is equally irrelevant to neighbourhood vitality. Consequently, measures of adequacy should accompany measures of physical assets.

Similarly assets cannot serve the community if they are inaccessible to some or all of the residents. A club for seniors only is, from the perspective of youth, not a community asset at all. A bank that doesn't serve individuals or small business is not an asset either. As McKnight points out in his primary work on community development (subtitled "Finding and mobilizing a community's assets"), assets must be mobilized to be relevant (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993). The Urban Institute's study on key indicators of successful community development includes the mobilization of economic resources (Walker, The Urban Institute, and Weinheimer 1998). None of those resources can be mobilized for community benefit if they cannot be accessed. Therefore, it is important that measures of accessibility should accompany measures of physical assets.

Finally assets should be integrated in a neighbourhood. Assets that separate communities have the potential to weaken relationships and social infrastructure. Institutions that leave out some members of the community can divide the strength of the community and create

friction and distrust. As we will see in the following section, disaggregating the neighbourhood has adverse affects on communication, planning, and social cohesion. Assets are most likely to provide benefits to communities when they serve collective needs, rather than exclusive ones. Therefore, measures of integration should accompany measures of physical assets.

D. Non-Physical Assets

McKnight's asset orientation is not limited to concrete assets like institutions and community programs (McKnight 1993). Most measures of neighbourhood well-being include a range of qualitative human assets.

Decades of research on community health, strength, vitality and capacity, have produced various collections of models and matching indicators. Some measure determinants of health or economic success, and others are single measures of development such as land values, socio-economic status of residents or employment rates. Some measure specific factors, such as concentrations of poverty, single-parent families or unemployment. There are many areas of congruency and divergence. Over the last few years, the research has become more comprehensive, systematic and focused in ways that provide a better guide to the most useful elements of community intervention and the most critical aspects of community vitality.

In 2001, Alan Black and Philip Hughes were commissioned to carry out a comprehensive review of literature on indicators of community strength by the Government of Australia's Department of Family and Community Services. In this study they provide a good overview of the range of perspectives on community well-being, including community sustainability, community resiliency, community capacity, community development and community health (Black and Hughes 2001). Within each of these perspectives, different models place greater or lesser emphasis on economics, social networks, the environment, individual skills, neighbourhood engagement, access to external resources and local infrastructure.

At the end of their report summary, Black and Hughes note that "the notions of sustainability, resilience, capacity and health, as applied to communities, all point to the 'capabilities' 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 (Black and Hughes 2001: page)." In short, Black and Hughes identify community vitality or community strength as the capacity to act. Active, willingly engaged residents are of primary importance to community vitality. Their application of skills, knowledge and energies are the fuel that runs the engine of community well-being (Black and Hughes 2001).

Most current models for measuring community well-being connect their analysis and well-being measurements with inclusive community processes. As noted above, the development of a viable theory of change is dependant on the leadership of community members. Similarly, the development of the assets that theory of change should enhance is a function of the actions and decisions of the people in the local community.

Sophisticated contemporary models of community well-being tend to follow this logic, rejecting simple yardsticks such as wealth, achievement or infrastructure. Instead, these models focus more on a collection of indicators that suggest the community's probable capacity to produce outcomes and make changes.

Community Engagement

Most recent indexes of community well-being also identify social assets centered on an engaged community working for the betterment of the neighbourhood.

Even when the community development goals are purely economic, many researchers and practitioners point to the critical need for community engagement to play a role. Whether viewing the Business Vitality Index developed by The Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Leadership, or the literature on successful Community Development Corporations and Empowerment Zones, the role of community engagement remains critical (Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Leadership 2005). Galster et al point out in their review of successful CDCs that community engagement is necessary to ensure that investments reflect the real conditions of the neighbourhood, reflect real needs and are carried out in ways that do not undermine existing benefits or face resistance that limits the effectiveness of the investments (Galster et al. 2005). Other analyses emphasize the role of an engaged, active local population in attracting public sector support, sustaining commitment to the project over the longer term and serving as a diffuse, persuasive advertisement for the investments.

Anne Kubisch of the Aspen Institute, in the Institute's volumes on Evaluating Community Initiatives, identifies community engagement in the determination of a neighbourhood's future as a critical element of lasting success, no matter what measures you utilize (Kubisch 1995). After all, neighbourhood-level, embedded leadership is more likely to continue to exercise its positive effects over the long term than external actors serving shifting mandates.

Social Capital

The specific character of that engagement has been subject to much debate. Generally going under the label "Social Capital" it has been given many divergent descriptions, and considerable research has been devoted to simply cataloguing and analyzing the definitions. In *Building Community Capacity: A Definitional Framework and Case Studies from a Comprehensive Community Initiative*, Robert J. Chaskin, of the University of Chicago, provides an extensive overview of definitions of community capacity, and notes several consistent characteristics. "(1) the existence of resources (ranging from the skills of individuals to the strength of organizations to access to financial capital), (2) networks of relationships (sometimes stressed in affective, sometimes in instrumental terms), (3) leadership (often only vaguely defined), and (4) support for some kind of mechanisms for or processes of participation by community members in collective action and problem solving" (Chaskin 1999:293).

Individual skills

In the previous sections the presence of physical resources has been discussed, including access to financial capital, but the individual human resources also bears scrutiny. For communities to be truly vital they need not only engaged residents, but engaged residents that have the skills and resources to act on their intentions. Chaskin cites Goodman et al. 1998; Meyer 1994 as particularly focused on the existence of skills, resources, and problem-solving abilities. He also cites Eichler and Hoffman; Gittel, Newman, and Ortega 1995 and Goodman et al. 1998 as focused on community planning, decision making, and action and Stephen Fawcetts 1995 definition, “the community’s ability to pursue its chosen purposes and course of action” (Fawcett et al. 1995, 682) as evidence of this skills-based, action oriented approach.

Governments, media and casual observers often place primary emphasis on leadership skills, a loosely defined collection of capacities that are expected to mobilize communities more effectively. In practice, expecting the full array of needed skills from a single “leader” is neither realistic nor useful. Successful community engagement depends on shared leadership that allows multiple actors to play key roles in advancing the community’s interest. The division of roles helps to mitigate the concentration of power and the alienation of community members. The distribution of roles also helps to avoid and risks of inequitable distribution of benefits and provides more well rounded input that better identifies the broader community priorities.

James Cunningham and Milton Kotler call for a broad mix of essential skills including decision-making, communication, evaluation, provision of incentives, issue identification, fund-raising, planning, problem-solving, negotiating, participation, power-building, recruiting, research, social fabric-building, staffing, and training and leadership development (Cunningham and Kotler 1983).

Willingness, confidence and hope

Some authors argue that willingness, confidence and hope is necessary to sufficiently utilize individual skills. Sidney Verba, Kay Schlozman, and Henry Brady note, in *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*, the significance of willingness, ability, and confidence in their abilities as necessary elements in advancing community engagement, in addition to the passive requirement for avenues for applying themselves (Verba, Schlozman and Brady 2002). This “spark” of will, that ignites the capacity for action, is almost certainly what causes Chaskin to give leadership its own category separate from skills (Chaskin 1999). The motivation to act is as necessary as the capacity to act effectively. Australian community development leader Eva Cox reinforces that view, giving willingness prominence in her *Social Audit Cookbook* (Cox 2002). In our experience in the field, we have found community members often add “hope” to the list of assets that mobilize the skills and abilities of residents. If there is little confidence in the prospect of real change, then few people will use the limited time and scarce resource they have to pursue it.

E. Social Networks

However, the vast majority of attention in the current body of literature on social capital focused on what Chaskin called “networks of relationships” and “processes of participation (Chaskin 1999).”

Black and Hughes provide a concise history of its use in their literature review on the issue, but they note that the definition of social capital remains vague in many ways and methods of measuring it are unclear (Black and Hughes 2001). In 1920, L. F. Hanifan defined social capital as ‘those tangible assets [that] count most in the daily lives of people; namely, goodwill, fellowship, sympathy, and social intercourse among the individuals and families who make up a social unit (Hanifan 1920)’ More recently, in 1986 French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defined social capital as ‘the aggregate of actual and potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition (Bourdieu 1983) Robert Putnam also contributed to this debate when he described social capital as referring to ‘features of social organization, such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit’ (Putnam 2000).

The emphasis on social capital is essentially an emphasis on the networks of relationships and the social infrastructure that makes them possible. These networks are the normal social relationships that occur in any group and they are hardly unique. But in neighbourhoods where resources are scarce and formal systems of support are lacking, these social networks are one of the few ways people get access to the information they need and support when they face challenges. The more extensive, robust, stable and effective these networks are, the more likely people are to have access to the information and support they need.

The primacy of those considerations stems no doubt from the fact that not only are these functions essential, but they are also catalytic. Networks of relationships can mobilize new resources. Processes of participation can attract new skills and social networks are transformative in a range of ways. Social networks can convey information that is not available through and accessible formal channels. They provide people who lack access to formal services and systems some basic support that they need.

However the analysis of those relationships has undergone a transformation in the last 10 years, with researchers moving from a broad enthusiasm for social networks, to a complex picture of social networks supporting different types of benefits, and in some cases challenges, for communities.

Strength and density of ties

The analysis of social networks initially emphasized two aspects, the strength of those ties and the density of those ties.

Strong ties among people who have very close relationships tend to be more persuasive. People are more willing to help, support and communicate with family members and

close friends than strangers. In summary, the stronger the ties, the more help, support and information sharing is likely to happen.

We are also more likely to support and communicate with people who are connected to us by a dense web of relationships. An individual will be supportive of acquaintances, but if those acquaintances are also friends of family members and friends of friends, the frequency of social interaction, as well as the awareness of the other person and their needs will increase, as will the sense of obligation to share information resources.

Strong, dense ties are seen as particularly attractive social assets in some academic work. Neighbourhoods where there are dense interrelationships among many of the residents are better able to share information, exchange views and determine solutions to problems. They have better “social cohesion”. Neighbourhoods where the ties are strong are better able to motivate participation in community-based interventions. These neighbourhoods are also more likely to preserve or enhance the area and are better able to discourage behaviors that adversely affect the community. They have better “social control”.

Weak Ties

The significance of “Weak Ties” in neighbourhoods has also become a focus of research in community development and capacity building. One of the first major changes in the analysis of social networks was that of Mark Granovetter (Granovetter 1973).

Granovetter, in his groundbreaking work the *Strength of Weak Ties*, and in his subsequent work on the impact of social networks on economic outcomes, in particular, stresses the importance of social networks and the particular importance of minor, informal contacts. Before Granovetter’s research, most analyses of social networks focused on the strength and density of ties (Granovetter 1973).. However, weaker ties, among casual acquaintances and people that are contacted infrequently, bring advantages as well.

Weaker ties are easier to maintain and we tend to be able to have more of them. Also, the networks we connect to through our weak ties are more extensive. As a result they provide a wider array of contacts and link a community to a wider array of resources and more new information and relationships than the dense social networks that require a lot of time and effort to maintain. Though weak ties have limited impact on social cohesion and social control, they are very effective at connecting communities to employment opportunities or to opportunities to mobilize resources. Weak ties tend to be the ties through which neighbourhoods access services, raise concerns with decision makers and raise money for community projects. Weak ties, overwhelmingly, are how neighbourhoods mobilize resources from outside their boundaries.

Mobilization of external resources

Many recent researchers in the field have placed increased emphasis on the ability of networks to reach beyond the neighbourhood and mobilize resources outside the community, as well as those inside. Deepa Narayan cites the significance of the role of weak ties and “cross cutting ties” in her research for the World Bank, identifying cross-cutting ties as the essential element in making social capital and social networks a tool for distributing, rather than concentrating benefits (Narayan 1999).

Robert Chaskin stresses the significance of the ability of communities to access resources outside the neighbourhood noting:

neighborhoods are embedded in and intimately tied to the broader socioeconomic systems of the metropolis and region, and the prospect for stability and economic well-being in a neighborhood largely depends on policy made beyond its borders and on the nature of macrostructural changes in the broader environment ...Communities with abundant capacity have some ability to influence policies that directly affect them and to garner resources to support their development (Chaskin 1999).

An individual or community's capacity is dependant on the presence of an array of well placed weak ties.

Collective benefit

But a full range of strong and weak ties that work both within and outside neighbourhoods does not ensure beneficial social networks. Robert Sampson, Felton Earls and their colleagues have criticized the whole notion of attributing community benefit to social networks, noting that a range of potential networks can be damaging to communities rather than beneficial (Raudenbush and Sampson 2003). Sampson cites network relationships among drug dealers and gangs as one example of a community resource that is present, effective but not beneficial. These networks function well, but they do not function for the general benefit of the neighbourhood residents. The same is true of cliques and cabals, which support the well being of their own members, but not the community as a whole. Sampson and his colleagues assert a need for resources to be deployed for the broader community benefit, echoing Robert Putnam's often cited 1993 definition of social capital, which emphasizes the presence of "norms and trust ... deployed for mutual benefit (Raudenbush and Sampson 1999)." As we saw with physical assets, it is not enough for social capital to merely be present. It has to be accessible to the whole community and integrated into a community wide purpose.

F. Collective efficacy

In an effort to address that issue, Sampson has carried out extensive research to identify what assets are likely to be employed by residents for community benefit. Sampson found a high correlation between residents' commitment to pursuing collective benefits and higher levels of "social cohesion," or the belief that neighbours are likely to help and that helping ones neighbours is the norm (Raudenbush and Sampson 1999). He also found that higher levels of "social control" or a commitment to intervening when things aren't quite right, for example when youth are seen skipping school or damaging property. Interestingly, Sampson also found that the two elements, social control and social cohesion occurred in tandem. Higher levels of social control and social efficacy occurred together and were apparently linked. Sampson coined the term "collective efficacy" to describe the condition of robust social control and social cohesion that corresponds to an increase in behaviors that are more aimed at collective benefit (Raudenbush and Sampson 1999). High "collective efficacy" means that people are more likely to intervene for the well-being of their neighbours. They are more likely to help senior citizens carry their groceries, to lend a cup of sugar to the neighbour, to discourage

youth from vandalizing other people's property or to stop a passerby from littering. Since Sampson first described this phenomenon, several studies have shown that high collective efficacy is a very good predictor of lower levels of crime and violence in a community, and that it is more accurate than most other measures. It appears that people who perceive their community as working for them and that their neighbours will support them are more likely to act in ways that support an effective collectively beneficial system. Also, people who feel like it's 'everyone for themselves' are more likely to act in ways that benefits themselves, even criminal ways, undeterred by the overall negative consequences for the neighbourhood as a whole.

Recognizing the significance of collective efficacy in the vitality of neighbourhoods, several studies have attempted to identify the sources of the beliefs that make up efficacy.

Physical decay undermines collective efficacy

Sampson in particular closely examined a range of potential causes and found correlation between most of the probable causes and efficacy (Sampson 2003). Crime, victimization, evidence of social disorder such as public drinking, public violence and visible physical decay were all correlated with decreased levels of efficacy.

Surprisingly, certain factors correlated more highly than others in patterns that revealed unexpected implications. More liquor stores and cigarette ads showed high levels of correlation but are not transferable to the experience in Toronto, where cigarette ads are illegal and liquor stores are government operated and generally not sited in distressed communities. There was also a high correlation between low levels of efficacy and evident protection from crime, such as grates over windows in stores. This reflects a more fundamental finding of Sampson's: it is the psychological signals suggesting neighbourhood decline that are more significant than simple physical evidence (Sampson 2003).

Social capital is vulnerable to the perception of decline

Sampson found efficacy declined when people saw examples of what they associate with disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Sampson 2003). But the decline was not consistent. More decay did not translate automatically into less collective efficacy. As a result, Sampson attributes this to a third cause: neighbourhood expectations.

Residents in low income neighbourhoods react to their expectations about how a neighbourhood will function. They use a variety of indicators to make that decision. Physical decay appears to be one aspect. Concentrated poverty is a second. High rates of crime tend to correspond to high levels of fear of crime, which constitutes a third signal. The absence of community services is a fourth. A sad but inescapable fact is that racial composition is the most compelling factor. Residents of all races see the concentration of visible minorities as a sign that their community is unlikely to receive supports and to be cared for. They see this development as a signal that their neighbourhood is becoming a place where everyone has to fend for themselves to survive.

These signals are, for many people, the result of community decline, but they also appear to be a cause. Decline in these areas reinforces the behaviours that accelerate the decline in the first place. Not surprisingly, Sampson's research showed that virtually none of the neighbourhoods in Chicago that were in decline in the 1970s had improved 20 years later (Sampson 2003). Though many Chicago neighbourhoods had shown considerable gains over that time, the neighbourhoods that were most disadvantaged without exception continued to decline. Moreover, the neighbourhoods that were located near them also, overwhelmingly, declined rather than improved. Sampson sounds a note of caution here. Left unsupported and unassisted, the neighbourhood concentration of poverty not only deepens, it expands, affecting nearby communities in broadening areas of deprivation (Sampson 2003). Turning that process around requires strategies that tackle root causes of poverty. Many of those causes are outside the ability of any neighbourhood program to achieve. But as we already discussed, there are a range of opportunities to intervene in communities to alter negative trends in neighbourhoods, break the cycle of decline and put neighbourhoods back on track toward health and well being.

In the final analysis vitality appears to centre on the ability and will to take action to address shared priorities. That can take the form of capitalizing on opportunities, changing undesirable circumstances or finding new ways to work within the circumstances that present themselves. Whatever a neighbourhood chooses to address, vitality tells us how effective they can be in addressing it. There are many different constituent elements of that ability and that will. Economic resources help. So do strong social networks or access to power and decision making. So does the belief that taking action will make a difference. Each of these contributes to the capacity of neighborhoods to make change, but few if any of them are indispensable. There are neighbourhoods that can make change because they have resources to do it. And others with fewer resources but a conviction they can make change, and strong social networks with an ability broad support. Clearly there is no single element to vitality, but a critical mass of abilities and characteristics that are needed to make action possible.

The foregoing analysis helps to name many of those assets. In the following section the indicators that help us describe vitality are catalogued. Each can tell us one or more things about the vitality of a community. In specific combinations they can tell us a great deal. The following sections apply those indicators in specific combinations to create tools that help community development workers achieve four goals:

1. finding neighbourhoods that would benefit from community development work
2. describing those neighbourhoods and setting priorities in those neighbourhoods
3. assessing progress in those neighbourhoods

In the following section those indicators are listed, their value described and their role, as a tool for finding distressed neighbourhoods, setting priorities in distressed neighbourhoods or assessing progress in those neighbourhoods is identified.

Catalogue of Measures

A. Family Composition

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
A1. Youth	Census	% of population which is 15-24	Indicates potential needs in services and supports
A2. Youth	Census	% of population which is 15-24 as a ratio of the city average	Indicates potential needs in services and supports
A3. Seniors	Census	% of population which is over 64	Indicates potential needs in services and supports
A4. Seniors	Census	% of population which is over 64 as a ratio of the city average	Indicates potential needs in services and supports
A5. Lone Parent Families	Census	% of lone parent households	Indicates potential needs in services and supports
A6. Lone Parent Families	Census	% of lone parent households as a ratio of the city average	Indicates potential needs in services and supports
A7. Children	Census	% of population which is under 15	Indicates potential needs in services and supports
A8. Children	Census	% of population which is under 15 as a ratio of the city average	Indicates potential needs in services and supports

These measures provide a rough approximation of the proportion of dependants or people with limited economic capacity in the population. It also provides an indication of the concentration of the stresses brought by those dependants within particular families by identifying concentrations of parental demand such as lone parent families, large families and families that impose a significant childcare burden on women. These demographic profiles should also be a social planning tool, indicating which groups are large, both absolutely and relative to a typical city neighbourhood, indicating who will need large proportions of the local service capacity.

B. Demographic Cohesion

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
B1. New Immigration	Census	% of population who are new immigrants, relative to the City average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates potential needs in services and supports • Indicates possible areas of social fragmentation or clustering • Indicates potential barriers to resources
B2. Immigration	Census	% of population arrived in the last 10 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates potential needs in services and supports • Indicates possible areas of social fragmentation

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • or clustering • Indicates potential barriers to resources
B3. Home Language	Census	% of population without English as a home language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates potential needs in services and supports • Indicates possible areas of social fragmentation or clustering • Indicates potential barriers to resources and information
B4. First Language	Census	% of population belonging to a first language cluster with 5% or more of the population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates possible enclaves as basis for social clustering
B5. Diversity of Immigration	Census	% of population belonging to a first language cluster with 5% or more of the population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates possible enclaves as basis for social clustering

These measures test the extent to which viable local groups exist as the building blocks of cohesion. Cultural similarities correlate highly with social cohesion. Lower income neighbourhoods may be heterogeneous on the whole, but the presence of culturally similar sub-groups can produce building block for cohesive communities by facilitating cohesive subgroups. Previous programs in multicultural communities shows that subgroups of less than 5% of the population tend to be too small to form a coherent, stable subgroup of immigrants, languages or ethnicities.

C. Mobility

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
C1. Recent Mobility	Census	% moving in one year (use 15% as a benchmark for average stability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates possible causes of social fragmentation • Indicates potential barriers to information and cohesion
C2. Long Term Mobility	Census	% moving in 5 years (use 35% as a benchmark for average stability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates possible causes of social fragmentation • Indicates potential barriers to information and cohesion • Indicates persistence of problem

The literature is clear that increased mobility is a barrier to group formation. Census data is helpful here. Census data is comprehensive but infrequently gathered. School data is collected annually and annual turnover in schools should be factored in to this analysis.

D. Educational Attainment

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
D1. Educational	Census	% of people over 25 with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator of educational

Attainment		high school diploma (use 30% as a benchmark for average)	success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator of future employability
D2. Educational Attainment	Census	% of people over 25 with some university education (Use 20% as a benchmark for average participation rates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator of educational success • Indicator of future employability
D3. Educational Attainment	Local School Board	% of secondary school students with 14 or fewer credits accumulated by the end of Grade 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator of future educational success
D4. Educational Attainment	Local School Board	Annual school turnover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicator of future educational success • Indicator of stability of neighbourhood • Indicator of barrier to social cohesion

Educational success is a key determinant of economic and social mobility. High school diplomas are the most significant milestone in that range. Toronto district school board researcher Rob Brown found Grade 10 credit accumulation to be a very strong indicator of future educational success (Brown, 2006). Elementary test scores are inconsistent predictors and school readiness evaluations are not always available. School turnover is a clear barrier to school success and a good negative predictor of educational success.

E. Skills

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
E1. Skills	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“Are there people or organizations in your neighbourhood you can count on to help solve community problems or conflicts?” “Who?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies awareness of networks and resources • Identifies availability of community cohesion skills
E2. Skills	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“Are there people or organizations in your neighbourhood you can count on to make sure everyone knows about an important issue or event?” “Who?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies awareness of networks and resources • Identifies availability of community cohesion skills • Indicates information flow over social networks

These measures provide some indication of the extent of skills available in the in the neighbourhood that support community cohesion and health, and of community awareness of those skills.

F. Participation in Community Structures

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
F1. Neighbourhood Interaction Through Groups	Resident Outreach	"Do you currently belong to any neighbourhood groups or organizations?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates level of social organization and contact
F2. Neighbourhood Interaction Through Community Events	Resident Outreach	"How many times in the last year have you attended community events in the neighbourhood?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates level of social activity and contact Indicates information flow over social networks
F3. Resident Participation	Institutional survey	"Does your board represent the local demographics?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates diversity of social engagement and contact with organizations
F4. Resident Participation	Institutional survey	"Does your volunteer base represent local demographics?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates diversity of social engagement and contact with organizations
F5. Parent Participation in Schools	Institutional survey	"Do parents participate in school activities or councils?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates social engagement with organizations
F6. On-street Neighbourhood Interaction	Systematic Social Observation	Incidence of people greeting each other and pausing to talk on the street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator of social interaction (which can correlate to collective efficacy and to stronger community networks)
F7. Neighbourhood Interaction Through Worship	Resident Outreach	Do you attend religious services in the neighbourhood more than once per month?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicator of social interaction (which can correlate to collective efficacy and to stronger community networks)
F8. Participation in External Networks	Resident Outreach	"Are there groups or organizations outside the neighbourhood that you participate in?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates social engagement with networks that go beyond the neighbourhood

Social cohesion is a key element of neighbourhood vitality. The ability to connect to neighbours and to maximize interaction in the community create opportunities for links that share resources and act as portals to needed supports as well as creating opportunities to identify issues and priorities and act on them. Access to groups outside the neighbourhood can potentially expand the pool of information and resources available within the community.

G. Collective Efficacy

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
G1. Mutual Protection	Resident Outreach	How strongly do you agree with the following statement “In this neighbourhood, when someone is not at home, their neighbours will watch over their property?” (strongly agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree)	Indicates confidence in shared objectives and the support of neighbours
G2. Cordial Relationships	Resident Outreach	“In an average week, how often do you and your neighbours visit or stop to chat with each other?”	Indicates social connection to neighbours
G3. Shared Advice	Resident Outreach	“How often do you and others in the neighbourhood ask each other advice about personal things such as childrearing or job openings?” (often, rarely, never)	Indicates confidence in shared values and in the support of neighbours
G4. Mutual Help	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How strongly do you agree with the following statement: ‘people around here are willing to help their neighbours’” (strongly agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree)	Indicates confidence in shared values and in the support of neighbours
G5. Mutual Help Across Varied Demographics	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How strongly do you agree with the following statement: ‘people around here are willing to help their neighbours, even if they are from different backgrounds’” (strongly agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree)	Indicates confidence in shared values and in the support of neighbours
G6. Lack of cohesion	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How strongly do you agree with the following statement: ‘people in this neighbourhood generally don’t get along with each other’” (strongly agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree)	Inverse indicator of confidence in shared values and in the support of neighbours
G7. Social Control	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How likely do you think it is that your neighbours would intervene in some way if they saw an older child bullying a younger child?” (very likely/somewhat likely/neither likely nor unlikely/somewhat unlikely/very unlikely)	Indicates confidence in shared values and in the willingness of neighbours to act in other people’s

			interests
G8. Joint Action	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How likely do you think it is that your neighbours would intervene in some way if they heard that the City was planning to close (the local community centre/ the local fire hall/ the local school <i>use one that reflects existing local community services</i>)?” (very likely/somewhat likely/neither likely nor unlikely/somewhat unlikely/very unlikely)	Indicates confidence in shared values and in the active support of neighbours

These measures are derived from Robert Sampson’s surveys assessing collective efficacy based on levels of social cohesion and social control (Sampson 2003). They reflect his experience in Chicago, reflecting certain American social/cultural tendencies and would benefit from some testing in the Canadian context.

H. Neighbourhood Conditions

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
H1. Littered Public Spaces	Systematic Social Observation	Average incidence of clusters of litter over 30cm wide in a single location on each block on main streets. (use 20 as a benchmark)	Indicator of perceived physical disorder (which can correlate to perceived low levels of safety and low levels of collective efficacy)
H2. Damage to Public Spaces	Systematic Social Observation	Average number of instances of vandalism, including broken signs, broken windows, and other visible signs of damage to property on any given block	Indicator of perceived physical disorder (which can correlate to perceived low levels of safety and low levels of collective efficacy)
H3. Safe Public Spaces	Systematic Social Observation	% of windows larger than 18 inches square protected by, grates during the day, on commercial strips	Indicator of perception of social disorder or low levels of safety (which can correlate to perceived low levels of safety and low levels of collective efficacy)
H4. Payday Lending	Systematic Social Observation	Number of payday lending outlets or pawn shops in the neighbourhood	Indicator of perceived social disorder (which can correlate to perceived low levels of safety and low levels of collective efficacy)

These measures assess the likelihood that the neighbourhood appears to be in decline. These measures attempt to translate Sampson’s research into a Canadian context. While Sampson identified the combined presences of liquor stores, cigarette ads and grates over windows as having a high correlation to perceptions of decline and the attendant erosion of collective efficacy (Sampson 1999), we have chosen window grates and payday

lending facilities. Payday lending is a business that is often seen as pernicious and victimizing and is focused on low income communities. Their presence, while often physically well maintained, sends a signal similar to the signal a liquor store might send in American cities, telling residents, “This is a community where one can take advantage of your vulnerabilities and no one will care”.

I. Neighbourhood Characteristics

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
I1. Boundaries	Key Informants/ Resident Outreach	“What do you think are the boundaries that best describe the neighbourhood, where people share a sense of community or share key elements of the community like schools, parks, shopping and public spaces?”	
I2. Diversity	Key Informants/ Resident Outreach	“How would you describe the diversity of the neighbourhood?”	
I3. Challenges	Key Informants/ Resident Outreach	“In your opinion what are the particular challenges you think this area faces?”	
I4. Equity	Key Informants/ Resident Outreach	“Does anyone or any group in the community face those challenges more than others?”	
I5. Assets	Key Informants/ Resident Outreach	“What are the strengths of this neighbourhood? What works well here? What makes it feel like home?”	
I6. Key Informants	Key Informants/ Resident Outreach	“Who do you think we should talk to in the neighbourhood?”	

Early analysis of the neighbourhood should be based not simply on statistical data but on direct feedback from the community. This section explores subjective assessments of general issues about the neighbourhood that provide perspective on the responses provided in other sections. It provides open ended opportunities for respondents to shape the overall assessment of priorities and issues.

J. Housing

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
J1. Housing Tenure	Census	% of dwellings that are rented rather than owned, as a ratio of the city-wide average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates range of housing options Indicates level of ownership which correlates well with low mobility Indicates level of ownership which correlates well with commitment to neighbourhood success
J2. Housing Cost	Census	% of households spending more than 30% of income on gross rents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates stress on housing and pressure on incomes Source of stress on residents
J3. Condition of Housing Stock	Census	% homes needing major repairs as a ratio of the city average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates poor housing quality, may reflect to low incomes Indicates poor housing quality, may promote higher mobility Source of stress in on residents Indicates poor housing conditions contributing to sense of physical disorder and adversely affecting collective efficacy

Access to decent, affordable housing is a key element of stable vital communities. The diversity of housing types better enables stability in the community by allowing new arrivals to access various built forms, tenure forms and costs without leaving the community.

Affordability of housing is a correlate of income because low incomes accompanied by high rents can precipitate more acute financial problems. In contrast, where low incomes are accompanied by low rents some financial impacts are offset. Affordability is assessed solely through the proportion of families spending more than 30% of income on housing.

The percentage of housing needing major repairs is used as a proxy for overall housing quality. This measure should provide some insight into the visual indicators of decline as well as an indicator of underlying motivations for mobility.

K. Presence of Community Facilities

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
K1.Secondary School in Community	Institutional survey (in Toronto, City SDFA maps)	Number of secondary schools within 1 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates access to facilities including meeting space and play space Indicates opportunities for social interaction at school
K2.Elementary School in	Institutional survey (in	Number of elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates access to facilities including meeting space and

Community	Toronto, City SDFA maps)	schools within 1 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> play space Indicates opportunities for social interaction at school
K3.Distance to Services	Institutional survey (in Toronto, City SDFA maps)	Presence of 1 or more large Multi-service Agencies within 1 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates access to services and supports Indicates access to facilities including meeting space Indicates opportunities for social interaction at local service sites
K4.Distance to Services	Institutional survey (in Toronto, City SDFA maps)	Presence of Recreation Centres within 1 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates access to facilities including meeting space and play space Indicates opportunities for social interaction at local service sites
K5.Distance to Services	Institutional survey (in Toronto, City SDFA maps)	Presence of library within 1 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates access to facilities including meeting space and play space Indicates opportunities for social interaction at local service sites
K6.Stores	Systematic Social Observation (in Toronto, City SDFA maps)	Presence of grocery stores within 1 km	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates opportunities for social interaction at local stores Indicates access to more affordably priced necessities such as fresh foods
K7.Parks	Institutional survey (in Toronto, City SDFA maps)	Number of parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates access to play space Indicates opportunities for social interaction at local service sites
K8.Parks	Systematic Social Observation	Number of parks with even, mowed grass, no visible litter, that are lit at night.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates real accessibility of parks Indicates low levels of physical disorder which correlates with collective efficacy

The proximity of services in communities is also an important measure to examine. R.D. Peterson found the presence of community services reduced crime in low income communities and Claudia Coulton found increased community resources reduced child maltreatment (Colton et al. 1998). Even if these venues only serve as gathering places, their immediate availability in the neighbourhood affects the capacity of the community

to link the elements of success together. The physical presence of community services in the neighbourhood also increases casual contacts that can lead to more extensive use of supports and, reciprocally, supports that are more responsive to community needs.

The presence of schools is particularly significant. Schools provide critical fundamental skills, they tend to involve parents as well as children (if only in drop off and pick up) and they are almost universally used, linking a larger proportion of residents than any other service. This enables schools to play a large role in neighbourhood cohesion as well as providing individual supports.

Stores that sell food to individuals and families are another key support that fosters vitality. In neighbourhoods where extended travel is required to obtain appropriate affordable food, there are additional strains on the budget and on the time and stress of residents. So-called “convenience” stores tend to charge more for food than grocery stores adding to economic pressures. Grocery stores also play a role in neighbourhood cohesion as a place where community members encounter each other, interact and form ties.

Parks and other public spaces play a similar role. In addition to contributing to the healthy and active lifestyles of children and youth, parks are a gathering place that enhances social cohesion, if they are attractive, clean and safe.

L. Access to Public Amenities

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
L1. Schools	Resident Outreach	“Do you feel welcome at your local school?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates accessibility of facilities • Indicates stronger sense of connection to local facilities which correlates with collective efficacy
L2. Recreation Centres	Resident Outreach	“Do you and your family feel welcome at the local recreation centre?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates accessibility of facilities • Indicates stronger sense of connection to local facilities which correlates with collective efficacy
L3. Gathering Places	Resident Outreach / Key Informant	“Are there places in the neighbourhood where people gather casually?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates connection to and use of local facilities • Indicates access to more extended social opportunities
L4. Gathering Places	Resident Outreach / Key Informant	“Are there places in the neighbourhood where people can hold community events or celebrations?”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates connection to and use of local facilities • Indicates access to more extended social opportunities
L5. Parks	Resident	“Are the parks in your	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates connection to and

	Outreach	neighbourhood a place you or your neighbours like to go with their families?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of local facilities • Indicates perceived quality of recreational opportunities in area • Indicated perceptions of safety
L6. Parks	Resident Outreach	"Are the parks in your neighbourhood a place you or your neighbours feel comfortable after sunset?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates connection to and use of local facilities • Indicates perceived quality of recreational opportunities in area • Indicated perceptions of safety
L7. Transit	Resident Outreach	"How long does it take to get to the nearest subway station or major transit hub at rush hour?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates access to services • Indicates barriers to mobility and opportunity • Indicates access to external resources

These measures are designed to assess the effectiveness of public amenities in supporting community needs. If residents are comfortable with public amenities they are more likely to use them and gain the appropriate benefits, if not, current use may not be stable and may erode. Active use of public amenities also assists social cohesion by bringing people together casually to form weak ties and the links that support collective efficacy.

M. Access to Community Facilities

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
M1. Facilities	Institutional Survey	"What kinds of programs, for example recreation, healthcare, health promotion, employment, childcare or settlement programs, do you offer to residents of this area?"	Indicates range of service
M2. Facilities	Institutional Survey	"On average, roughly how many people from this neighbourhood do you serve each month in each of those programs?"	Indicates volume of service
M3. Facilities	Institutional Survey	"In terms of age, gender, language and ethnic background, roughly what is the demographic profile of clients in your programs?"	Indicates accessibility or relevance of service
M4. Facilities	Institutional Survey	"Are there programs that draw a different mix of clients in terms of age, gender, language and ethnic background?"	
M5. Facilities	Institutional Survey	"Who else in this area offers services?"	

M6. Facilities	Institutional Survey	“What kinds of services do they offer?”	Indicates range of service
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These measures are designed to identify the extent to which the community infrastructure in key services areas is present, but also to assess the extent to which it is serving the neighbourhood effectively. These measures assess the size and stability of available services and the extent to which the services are accessible by testing if they are reaching all demographic groups in the community.

N. Connection to community services

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
N1. Settlement	Resident Outreach	"Do you think you might ever need immigration or settlement support?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies immigration service users to segment subsequent responses
N2. Settlement	Resident Outreach	"Who would you turn to for help with immigration and settlement problems?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates awareness of and access to services, including informal ones
N3. Settlement	Resident Outreach	"Are you satisfied with the immigration and settlement help you are able to get?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates comfort/perceived quality/perceived appropriateness of services and likelihood of ongoing use
N4. Health Care	Resident Outreach	"Where would you go to get help when someone in your family is ill?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates awareness of and access to services, including informal ones
N5. Health Care	Resident Outreach	"Are you satisfied with your health care arrangements"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates comfort/perceived quality/perceived appropriateness of services and likelihood of ongoing use
N6. Child Care	Resident Outreach	"How often do you need childcare?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates volume of need separates out non-users
N7. Child Care	Resident Outreach	"Who do you turn to for childcare?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates awareness of and access to services, including informal ones
N8. Child Care	Resident Outreach	"Are you satisfied with the childcare you are able to get?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates comfort/perceived quality/perceived appropriateness of services and likelihood of ongoing use

N9. Other Facilities	Resident Outreach	"Does you or your family use other services in the neighbourhood? Where?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates access to overlooked services
N10. Shops in the Area	Resident Outreach	Where do you go to buy most of your meats, fruits and vegetables?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates possible neighbourhood gathering point Indicates access to affordable necessities
N11. Shop Satisfaction	Resident Outreach	"Are you satisfied with the groceries you are able to get at your local store?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates comfort/perceived quality/perceived appropriateness of services and interest in ongoing use

The measures that look at residents' choice of services are designed to identify formal and informal services by using the question "where do you turn for help," as more recent measures tend to do. This approach enables respondents to identify cultural groups, informal organizations or friends as well as formal service providers. These measures also provide a test of the quality of services by asking whether residents are using the services and whether they are satisfied.

O. Safety

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
O1. Relative Standing	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"Relative to other place in Toronto do you think this area is more safe, less safe or about the same"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates perceptions of safety which correlates with collective efficacy
O2. Improvement	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"Over the last few year do you think this neighbourhood has been getting safer, getting less safe or staying about the same?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates perceptions of trend in community safety Indicates expectations of improvement which correlates with collective efficacy
O3. Personal Safety	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"How safe do you feel walking alone after dark?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates perceptions of safety which correlates with collective efficacy
O4. Personal Safety	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"Do you feel like the police are around when you need them?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates perceptions of institutional support for safety which correlates with collective efficacy
O5. Violent Crime	Police Reporting	Violent Crime Reported per 1,000 residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates third party measures of safety

O6. Violent Crime	Police Reporting	% of violent crime reported that are cleared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates extent to which local safety is effectively addressed
O7. Property Crime	Police Reporting	Property Crime Reported per 1,000 residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates third party measures of safety
O8. Property Crime	Police Reporting	% of property crime reported that are cleared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates perceptions of safety which correlates with collective efficacy

The perception of safety, or the perception of risk, has a considerable impact on people's ability and willingness to interact in shared spaces, connect to their neighbours, intervene in socially beneficial ways and choose to act to support the well-being of their neighbourhood.

Though perception of crime often fails to correlate to actual crime rates, perception of violent crime correlates more highly to actual levels of violent crime (Sampson 2003), and violent crime also tends to be reported more consistently than other types of crimes (Sampson 2003).

Property crimes are tabulated here despite their being less reliable predictors of perceived crime and less likely to be consistently reported but as an element of assessing the rate of solved or "cleared" cases, indicating the effectiveness of local law enforcement. This measure is coupled with the survey question on policing to provide an overall measure of police effectiveness.

P. Income

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
P1. Household Income	Census	% households below LICO	Indicates financial pressure on households
P2. Household Income	Census	Median Household Income	Indicates resources available to households

Concentrations of poverty correlate highly with neighbourhood effects and also correlate highly with the impression of decline that underlies diminished collective efficacy. Here we assess that aspect of vitality by measuring the median rather than mean incomes of the local households, avoiding the skews caused by some high income households.

The proportion of households who have incomes below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) is also tracked to take into account the different needs of larger families who may have higher media incomes than singles but are still under financial pressure.

Q. Employment

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
Q1. Employment Rate	Census	Employment Rate for people over 25 as a % of the city average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates access to employment Indicates access to resources

Employment is a key element of economic vitality but also a key test of social networks and a key indicator of neighbourhood effects. Neighbourhoods with very high unemployment rates can suffer from insufficient weak ties that connect them beyond the immediate area to job opportunities elsewhere. High unemployment also means that little information about job opportunities exists in the immediate neighborhood and therefore few opportunities to improve incomes are available. These numbers are taken as a percentage of the City average to provide a context for the raw numbers. Low labour force participation rates can be even more significant, capturing the people who have so little opportunity they have abandoned regular job searches. All statistics are for residents over 25, avoiding skews resulting from variations in participation in post-secondary education.

R. Distribution of Employment

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
R1. Youth Employment	Census	Unemployment Rate 15 – 25 as a % of city-wide average	Indicates economic pressures on individual groups
R2. Women's Employment	Census	Unemployment Rate women 25 and over as a % of city-wide average	Indicates economic pressures on individual groups
R3. Women's Employment	Census	Labour force participation of women 25 and over as % of the city wide average	Indicates economic pressures on individual groups
R4. Barriers to Women's Employment	Census	Rate of women providing more that 30 hours of unpaid childcare per week as a % of the city wide average	Indicates barriers to work for women
R5. Immigrant Employment	Census	Average unemployment rate in the 1/5 of Census Dissemination Areas with the highest rate of immigration in the last 10 years as a % of the average unemployment rate in the 1/5 of Census Dissemination Areas with the lowest rate of immigration in the last 10 years	Indicates economic pressures on individual groups

These measures attempt to identify the distribution of employment. Unemployment rate and labour force participation rates are both assessed for women. Youth unemployment is compared to City averages, but labour force participation is ignored due to skews caused by rates of post-secondary participation. Also, barriers to employment are explored in identifying women whose childcare responsibilities inhibit employment.

Inequities in employment within the community are identified for immigration by measuring unemployment rates for different Dissemination Areas (DAs) in neighbourhoods, and assessing the rate of unemployment for those with high immigrant populations as opposed to those with fewer immigrants. This measure is subject to the availability of DA level data for the neighbourhood.

S. Access to Employment

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
S1. Access to Employment	Resident Outreach	"Where do you go to get help with finding a job or with training to help you get a job?"	Indicates awareness of and access to services, including informal ones
S2. Access to Employment	Resident Outreach	"Was it helpful in getting a job?"	Indicates comfort / perceived quality / perceived appropriateness of services and likelihood of ongoing use

This section explores a range of physical, institutional and social measures that identify local access to employment.

We measure the intent of local employers to hire local residents, which indicates opportunity for residents but also provides insights into the embeddedness of local business and of collective efficacy. Businesses that want to hire locally show an interest in the well-being of the community, adding to the engaged local resource base. Businesses that have local involvement are more likely to have people show an interest in their well being, including vandalism and theft, thereby helping businesses. Lower levels of vandalism are a self-reinforcing source of positive messages about efficacy that produce more positive intentions on the part of residents.

This section focuses primarily on systems of support. Residents are not asked what programs they use but instead are asked "where do you go?" to get help. This question is based on trends in recent research to try to capture informal as well as formal systems. Recognizing the need to go beyond the mere presence of systems to their adequacy, the capacity and effectiveness of the system of support are tested with question 26.

home in search of a business venture and our experience in the field that suggest they would not be.

T. Business Connection

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
T1. Local Owners	Business Survey	Home neighbourhood of owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates attachment of local business to community Indicates possible bases for early small business successes

T2. Local Managers	Business Survey	Home neighbourhood of manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates attachment of local business to community Indicates possible bases for early small business successes
T3. Appeal to Employers	Business Survey	"Would you like to hire more local residents"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates role of local business in creating economic opportunity in the community
T4. Local Engagement	Business Survey	"Does your business participate in any community organizations or events?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates attachment of local business to community Indicates possible bases for early small business successes

This section looks at community connections for business. Given the significance of network density, embeddedness in the neighbourhood will make these businesses more likely to address the needs of residents and employ local residents. Conversely, businesses embedded in the community will, according to Carlos Teixeira's research, be more effective in attracting and stabilizing a core market, a key to short term success (Teixeira 1991).

U. Business Activity

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
U1. Business Turnover	Local Economic Development Office	1 year rate of business closures as a % of citywide rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates short term economic growth Indicates perceived success of community which correlates to collective efficacy
U2. Business Growth	Local Economic Development Office	1 year growth in number of business as a % of the city average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates short term economic growth Indicates perceived success of community which correlates to collective efficacy
U3. Business Growth	Local Economic Development Office	5 year growth in number of business as a % of the city average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates long term economic growth Indicates perceived success of community which correlates to collective efficacy
U4. Total	Local	Total employees per	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates role of local

Local Jobs	Economic Development Office	1000 residents relative to city average for residential neighbourhoods	business in creating economic opportunity in the community
U5.Total Local Jobs	Local Economic Development Office	Growth in employees per 1000 residents relative to city average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates role of local business in creating economic opportunity in the community Indicates perceived success of community which correlates to collective efficacy
U6.Total Local Jobs	Local Economic Development Office	Growth in part-time employees per 1000 residents relative to city average	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates role of local business in creating economic opportunity in the community

This section draws on municipal economic data sets to identify growth in the business sector based on numbers of businesses and numbers of employees. This growth is compared to city average growth to provide a context for the raw numbers. Thriving business activity not only benefits the owners and employees, the robust commercial sector presumably provides positive psychological feedback about social efficacy, the converse of Sampson's research that showed gated and boarded buildings can have a negative effect on social efficacy.

V. Business Climate

Title	Source	Indicator	Purpose
V1. Good for Business	Business Survey	"If you had a friend who was starting a business, would you encourage them to locate here?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates perceived success of community which correlates to collective efficacy
V2. Good for Investment	Business Survey	"If you had the money to expand would you do it here?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates perceived success of community which correlates to collective efficacy
V3. Safe at Night	Business Survey	"Would you leave a young employee alone in your business after dark?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates perceived safety of community which correlates to future investment and growth Indicates perceived safety of community which correlates to collective efficacy
V4. Safer than Elsewhere	Business Survey	"Relative to other place in Toronto do you think this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indicates perceived safety of community

		area is safer, less safe or about the same?"	which correlates to future investment and growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicates perceived safety of community which correlates to collective efficacy
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This section attempts to understand the underlying causes of growth or contraction in the local economy by asking business operators attitudinal questions about their experience of local business conditions. Disinvestment in local business can be an economic setback, but it is also a contributor to declining collective efficacy due to the increased evidence of social disorder. These measures also track the level of stress and concern about declining social control, again contributors to diminished collective efficacy.

In addition to asking business operator opinion on this, staff conduct an observation survey of the area. Sampson’s “ecometric” models require all surveys to be conducted using strict criteria (Sampson 1999). Tests are quantitative (all measures on a set scale) rather than qualitative, leaving less room for judgments and minimizing observer bias. Tests are conducted using set physical processes. Speed, mode of travel, height of observation and time of day are set by the system.

Sampson’s models for this are inappropriate to urban Canadian settings. Sampson’s research team used slow driving SUVs with video recording devices to conduct a visual survey, which we see as intrusive and likely to erode confidence in the collaborative nature of ongoing community engagement (Sampson 2002). Sampson himself found video recording produced more data than could be used and had to limit his research to subsets of his recordings. Instead we recommend an alternative research approach as follows:

- observers walk along all streets with retail activities at 5 km/h. Their observations are made in passing without stopping;
- the observations are conducted once at 4 pm and once at 9 pm;
- results are strictly numerical counts of all windows visible from the street that are greater than 18 inches square and the number of windows of that description that have grates. Grates that are visible, but are open should be counted; and
- separate counts are taken for each block face.

Methodology

As outlined in Section 2 above, there are three purposes for gathering data using these measurements. How each of the described measures is utilized depends on the community development research goals. Each phase, Priority Identification, Issue Identification and the Measurement of Progress, have processes most appropriate to these sub-areas. Below we have regrouped the measures described above to form a coherent

process for measurement of priority and issues, and outlined a process for creating progress measures through a theory of change model

The first two phases, Priority Identification and Issue Identification, begin with overlapping efforts since the evidence that support placing priority on community development also provides indications of what issues ought to be tackled in that community.

Information from Existing Databases

Almost half of the measures we have identified can be obtained from analyzing existing data sets. That process can, and likely should be, carried out by centralized research organizations.

Analyses of census data can provide researchers with a good overview of issues including income, poverty, employment, education, housing conditions, neighbourhood stability and demographic clusters that may form the building blocks of neighbourhood cohesion.

This data can be purchased more cost-effectively and processed more efficiently by a central research body. The results can then be shared with each of the neighbourhoods.

We recommend the following measures derived from the census.

R1. Youth Employment	Census	Unemployment Rate 15 – 25 as a % of city-wide average
R2. Women's Employment	Census	Unemployment Rate women 25 and over as a % of city-wide average
R3. Women's Employment	Census	Labour force participation of women 25 and over as % of the city wide average
R4. Barriers to Women's Employment	Census	Rate of women providing more than 30 hours of unpaid childcare per week as a % of the city wide average
R5. Immigrant Employment	Census	Average unemployment rate in the 1/3 of Census Dissemination Areas with the highest rate of immigration in the last 10 years as a % of the average unemployment rate in the 1/3 of Census Dissemination Areas with the lowest rate of immigration in the last 10 years
P1. Household Income	Census	% households below LICO
P2. Household Income	Census	Median Household Income
J1. Tenure	Census	% of dwellings that are rented rather than owned, as a ratio of the city-wide average
J2. Cost	Census	% of households spending more than 30% of income on gross rents

J3. Condition of Housing Stock	Census	% homes needing major repairs compared to city average
D1.Educational Attainment	Census	% of people over 25 with high school diploma
D2.Educational Attainment	Census	% of people over 25 with post secondary degree or certificate
A1.Youth	Census	% of population which is 15-24
A2.Youth	Census	% of population which is 15-24 as a ratio of the city average
A3.Seniors	Census	% of population which is over 64
A4.Seniors	Census	% of population which is over 64 as a ratio of the city average
A5.Lone Parent Families	Census	% of lone parent households
A6.Lone Parent Families	Census	% of lone parent households as a ratio of the city average
A7.Children	Census	% of population which is under 15
A.8.Children	Census	% of population which is under 15 as a ratio of the city average
B1.New Immigration	Census	% of population who are new immigrants, relative to the City average
B2.Immigration	Census	% of population arrived in the last 10 years
B3.Home Language	Census	% of population without English as a home language
B4.First Language	Census	% of population belonging to a cluster representing 5% or more of the population
B5. Diversity of Immigration	Census	% of population belonging to a cluster representing 5% or more of the population
C1. Recent Mobility	Census	% moving in one year
C2. Long Term Mobility	Census	% moving in 5 years

Similarly, considerable information can be derived from government data sets such as police reports, economic development reports, social service location data (through the 211 database in communities where that system is present, local community information and referral system in other communities).

These should also be centrally gathered and processed to provide communities initiating development work with comprehensive review of existing available data.

D3. Educational Attainment	School Board Data	% of secondary school students with 13 or fewer credits accumulated by the end of Grade 10
D4. Educational	School Board	Annual school turnover for each school in the

Attainment	Data	neighbourhood
K1. Secondary School in Community	Institutional survey (in Toronto, City SDFAs maps)	Number of secondary schools within 1 km
K2. Elementary School in Community	Institutional survey (in Toronto, City SDFAs maps)	Number of elementary schools within 1 km
K3. Distance to Services	Institutional survey (in Toronto, City SDFAs maps)	Presence of 1 or more large multi-service agencies within 1km
K4. Distance to Services	Institutional survey (in Toronto, City SDFAs maps)	Presence of Recreation Centres within 1 km
K5. Distance to Services	Institutional survey (in Toronto, City SDFAs maps)	Presence of library within 1 km
K6. Stores	211 Data	Presence of grocery stores within 1 km
K7. Parks	Institutional survey (in Toronto, City SDFAs maps)	Number of parks
K8. Parks	Systematic Social Observation (in Toronto, City SDFAs maps)	Number of parks with even, mowed grass, no visible litter, that are lit at night
O5. Violent Crime	Police Reporting	Violent Crime Reported per 1,000 residents
O6. Violent Crime	Police Reporting	% of violent crime reported that are cleared
O7. Property Crime	Police Reporting	Property Crime Reported per 1,000 residents
O8. Property Crime	Police Reporting	% of property crime reported that are cleared
U1. Business Turnover	Toronto Economic Development	1 year rate of business closures as a % of citywide rate
U2. Business Growth	Toronto Economic	1 year growth in number of business as a % of the city average

	Development	
U3. Business Growth	Toronto Economic Development	5 year growth in number of business as a % of the city average
U4. Total Local Jobs	Toronto Economic Development	Total employees per 1000 residents relative to city average
U5. Total Local Jobs	Toronto Economic Development	Growth in employees per 1000 residents relative to city average
U6. Total Local Jobs	Toronto Economic Development	Growth in part-time employees per 1000 residents relative to city average

Initial gathering of new data

Institutional Surveys

Institutional supports are key elements of vitality. The following measures help to clarify the accessibility, adequacy and integrating functions of local community services and supports. They would be addressed to service providers. Institutional leaders can also be key informants. Key Informant interviews cannot serve as a substitute for direct community engagement but can be a strong and highly reliable starting point.

Robert Sampson’s research on measures of communities indicates that as few as 50 interviews can produce high levels of accuracy and that community leaders tend to have views congruent with the elements of the community they represent (Sampson 1999).

Consequently, a well-selected *Key Informants* process (one which makes every effort to ensure that all sectors of the community are represented, by culture, income, gender, race, faith, tenure and other characteristics) can provide a strong initial understanding of the neighbourhood, its assets, priority issues, its level of cohesion and collective efficacy, and the base of services and facilities that support the community.

M1. Facilities	Institutional Survey	“What kinds of programs, for example recreation, healthcare, health promotion, employment, childcare or settlement programs, do you offer to residents of this area?”
M2. Facilities	Institutional Survey	“On average, roughly how many people from this neighbourhood do you serve each month in each of those programs?”
M3. Facilities	Institutional Survey	“In terms of age, gender, language and ethnic background, roughly what is the demographic profile of clients in your programs?”

M4. Facilities	Institutional Survey	“Are there programs that draw a different mix of clients in terms of age, gender, language and ethnic background?”
M5. Facilities	Institutional Survey	“Who else in this area offers services?”
M6. Facilities	Institutional Survey	“What kinds of services do they offer?”
F3. Resident Participation	Institutional Survey	“Does your board represent the local demographics?”
F4. Resident Participation	Institutional Survey	“Does your volunteer base represent local demographics?”
F5. Parent Participation in Schools	Institutional Survey	“Do parents participate in school activities or councils?”
I1. Boundaries	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	What do you think are the boundaries that best describe the neighbourhood, where people share a sense of community or share key elements of the community like schools, parks, shopping and public spaces?
I2. Diversity	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	How would you describe the diversity of the neighbourhood?
I3. Challenges	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	In your opinion what are the particular challenges you think this area faces?
I4. Equity	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	Does anyone or any group in the community face those challenges more than others?
I5. Assets	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	What are the strengths of this neighbourhood? What works well here? What makes it feel like home?
I6. Key Informants	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	Who do you think we should talk to in the neighbourhood?
E1. Skills	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“Are there people or organizations in your neighbourhood you can count on to help solve community problems or conflicts?” “Who?”
E2. Skills	Key Informant/ Resident	“Are there people or organizations in your neighbourhood you can count on to make sure everyone knows about an important issue or event?”

	Outreach	“Who?”
G4. Mutual Help	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How strongly do you agree with the following statement: ‘people around here are willing to help their neighbours.’” (strongly agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree)
G5. Mutual Help Across Varied Demographics	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How strongly do you agree with the following statement: ‘people around here are willing to help their neighbours, even if they are from different backgrounds’” (strongly agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree)
G6. Lack of Cohesion	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How strongly do you agree with the following statement: ‘people in this neighbourhood generally don’t get along with each other’” (strongly agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree)
G7. Social Control	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How likely do you think it is that your neighbours would intervene in some way if they saw an older child bullying a younger child?” (very likely/somewhat likely/neither likely nor unlikely/somewhat unlikely/very unlikely)
G8. Joint Action	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How likely do you think it is that your neighbours would intervene in some way if they heard that the City was planning to close (the local community centre/ the local fire hall/ the local school <i>use one that reflects existing local community services</i>)?” (very likely/somewhat likely/neither likely nor unlikely/somewhat unlikely/very unlikely)
L3. Gathering Places	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“Are there places in the neighbourhood where people gather casually?”
L4. Gathering Places	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“Are there places in the neighbourhood where people can hold community events or celebrations?”
O1. Relative Standing	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"Relative to other place in Toronto do you think this area is more safe, less safe or about the same"
O2. Improvement	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"Over the last few year do you think this neighbourhood has been getting safer, getting less safe or staying about the same?"
O3. Personal Safety	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"How safe do you feel walking alone after dark?"
O4. Personal Safety	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"Do you feel like the police are around when you need them?"

	Resident Outreach	
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Resident Outreach

While the above measures area effective tools for Priority Identification through Key Informant Interviews, Issue Identification will also depend on the views of a wide assortment of residents. These issues can be obtained through random surveys to create statistically reliable results that can be compared over time, but can also be obtained through discussions at community meetings or focus groups.

E1. Skills	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"Are there people or organizations in your neighbourhood you can count on to help solve community problems or conflicts?" "Who?"
E2. Skills	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"Are there people or organizations in your neighbourhood you can count on to make sure everyone knows about an important issue or event?" "Who?"
F1. Neighbourhood Interaction Through Groups	Resident Outreach	"Do you currently belong to any neighbourhood groups or organizations?"
F2. Neighbourhood Interaction Through Community Events	Resident Outreach	"How many times in the last year have you attended community events in the neighbourhood?"
F7. Neighbourhood Interaction Through Worship	Resident Outreach	Do you attend religious services in the neighbourhood more than once per month?
F8. Participation in External Networks	Resident Outreach	"Are there groups or organizations outside the neighbourhood that you participate in?"
G1. Mutual Protection	Resident Outreach	How strongly do you agree with the following statement "In this neighbourhood, when someone is not at home, their neighbours will watch over their property?" (strongly agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree)
G2. Cordial Relationships	Resident Outreach	"In an average week, how often do you and your neighbours visit or stop to chat with each other?"
G3. Shared Advice	Resident Outreach	"How often do you and others in the neighbourhood ask each other advice about personal things such as childrearing or job openings?" (often, rarely, never)

G4. Mutual Help	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How strongly do you agree with the following statement: ‘people around here are willing to help their neighbours’” (strongly agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree)
G5. Mutual Help Across Varied Demographics	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How strongly do you agree with the following statement: ‘people around here are willing to help their neighbours, even if they are from different backgrounds’” (strongly agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree)
G6. Lack of Cohesion	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How strongly do you agree with the following statement: ‘people in this neighbourhood generally don’t get along with each other’” (strongly agree/somewhat agree/neither agree nor disagree/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree)
G7. Social Control	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How likely do you think it is that your neighbours would intervene in some way if they saw an older child bullying a younger child?” (very likely/somewhat likely/neither likely nor unlikely/somewhat unlikely/very unlikely)
G8. Joint Action	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	“How likely do you think it is that your neighbours would intervene in some way if they heard that the City was planning to close (the local community centre/ the local fire hall/ the local school <i>use one that reflects existing local community services</i>)?” (very likely/somewhat likely/neither likely nor unlikely/somewhat unlikely/very unlikely)
L1. Schools	Resident Outreach	“Do you feel welcome at your local school?”
L2. Recreation Centres	Resident Outreach	“Do you and your family feel welcome at the local recreation centre?”
L3. Gathering Places	Resident Outreach / Key Informant	“Are there places in the neighbourhood where people gather casually?”
L4. Gathering Places	Resident Outreach / Key Informant	“Are there places in the neighbourhood where people can hold community events or celebrations?”
L5. Parks	Resident Outreach	“Are the parks in your neighbourhood a place you or your neighbours like to go with their families?”
L6. Parks	Resident Outreach	“Are the parks in your neighbourhood a place you or your neighbours feel comfortable after sunset?”
L7. Transit	Resident Outreach	“How long does it take to get to the nearest subway station or major transit hub at rush hour?”
N1. Settlement	Resident Outreach	"Do you think you might ever need immigration or settlement support?"
N2. Settlement	Resident Outreach	"Who would you turn to for help with immigration and settlement problems?"

N3. Settlement	Resident Outreach	"Are you satisfied with the immigration and settlement help you are able to get?"
N4. Health Care	Resident Outreach	"Where would you go to get help when someone in your family is ill?"
N5. Health Care	Resident Outreach	"Are you satisfied with your health care arrangements"
N6. Child Care	Resident Outreach	"How often do you need childcare?"
N7. Child Care	Resident Outreach	"Who do you turn to for childcare?"
N8. Child Care	Resident Outreach	"Are you satisfied with the childcare you are able to get?"
N9. Other Facilities	Resident Outreach	"Does you or your family use other services in the neighbourhood? Where?"
N10. Shops in the Area	Resident Outreach	Where do you go to buy most of your meats, fruits and vegetables?
N11. Shop Satisfaction	Resident Outreach	"Are you satisfied with the groceries you are able to get at your local store?"
O1. Relative Standing	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"Relative to other place in Toronto do you think this area is more safe, less safe or about the same"
O2. Improvement	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"Over the last few year do you think this neighbourhood has been getting safer, getting less safe or staying about the same?"
O3. Personal Safety	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"How safe do you feel walking alone after dark?"
O4. Personal Safety	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	"Do you feel like the police are around when you need them?"
S1. Access to Employment	Resident Outreach	"Where do you go to get help with finding a job or with training to help you get a job"
S2. Access to Employment	Resident Outreach	"Was it helpful in getting a job"
I1. Boundaries	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	What do you think are the boundaries that best describe the neighbourhood, where people share a sense of community or share key elements of the community like schools, parks, shopping and public spaces?

I2. Diversity	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	How would you describe the diversity of the neighbourhood?
I3. Challenges	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	In your opinion what are the particular challenges you think this area faces?
I4. Equity	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	Does anyone or any group in the community face those challenges more than others?
I5. Assets	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	What are the strengths of this neighbourhood? What works well here? What makes it feel like home?
I6. Key Informants	Key Informant/ Resident Outreach	Who do you think we should talk to in the neighbourhood?

Business Survey

Business owners and operators are a critical part of a healthy community. Looking at the established research on what makes businesses community assets, we can see several measures of business confidence that indicate the probability of success, expansion, local engagement and local employment. Appendix 4 provides a Business Survey to guide researchers through the following key questions.

T1. Local Owners	Business Survey	Home neighbourhood of owner
T2. Local Managers	Business Survey	Home neighbourhood of manager
T3. Appeal to Employers	Business Survey	"Would you like to hire more local residents"
T4. Local Engagement	Business Survey	"Does your business participate in any community organizations or events?"
V1. Good for Business	Business Survey	"If you had a friend who was starting a business, would you encourage them to locate here?"
V2. Good for Investment	Business Survey	"If you had the money to expand would you do it here?"
V3. Safe at Night	Business Survey	"Would you leave a young employee alone in your business after dark?"

V4. Safer than Elsewhere	Business Survey	"Relative to other place in Toronto do you think this area is safer, less safe or about the same?"
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Systematic Social Observation

Assessing priorities and agendas also requires a physical understanding of the community.

Using Systematic Social Observations on the “Ecometric” model, the following process should provide some clear measures of the physical condition of the neighbourhood and, using the research described above on the social impact of physical disorder, a sense of the impact of that physical character on the social values of the community.

This data should be gathered using a restricted and consistent method as follows:

- Observers walk along all streets with retail activities at 5 km/h. Their observations are made in passing without stopping.
- The observations are conducted once at 4 pm and once at 9 pm.
- Results are strictly numerical counts of all windows visible from the street that are greater than 18 inches square and the number of windows of that description that have grates. Grates that are visible, but are open should be counted.
- Separate counts are taken for each block face.

Appendix 4 provides researchers with a worksheet for keeping track of the following neighbourhood observations. The first set of questions provide spaces for information on block specific observations.

H1. Littered Public Spaces	Systematic Social Observation	Average incidence of clusters of litter over 30cm wide in a single location on each block on main streets. (use 20 as a benchmark)
H2. Damage to Public Spaces	Systematic Social Observation	Average number of instances of vandalism, including broken signs, broken windows, and other visible signs of damage to property on any given block
H3. Safe Public Spaces	Systematic Social Observation	% of windows larger than 18 inches square protected by, grates during the day, on commercial strips
H4. Payday Lending	Systematic Social Observation	Number of payday lending outlets or pawn shops in the neighbourhood
F6. On-street Neighbourhood Interaction	Systematic Social Observation	Incidence of people greeting each other and pausing to talk on the street
K8. Parks	Systematic Social Observation	Number of parks with even, mowed grass, no visible litter, that are lit at night.

K6. Stores	Systematic Social Observation	Presence of stores selling food including meat and fresh produce within 1 km
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Using the Vitality Index

The measures can be used to identify neighbourhoods that would benefit from place-based development strategies. By gathering the census data, conducting Key Informant interviews, carrying out institutional surveys, business interviews, and resident’s surveys and gathering the systematic social observation data, an initial assessment of neighbourhood distress can be developed.

This information is drawn largely from direct contact with residents and business owners in the neighbourhood.

In keeping with best practices, these initial indicators should be analyzed in cooperation with local residents who are best able to put the statistical findings in context.

We recommend sharing data with community coalitions drawn from local leaders, active residents and residents engaged during the initial data gathering process.

Though this analysis process, themes and priorities should emerge, Galster notes the significant improvements in data analysis that result for engaging communities in that work (Galster et al. 2005). Working with local residents, broader community outreach should be undertaken to test the findings of the research and begin to convert those findings into an agenda for community development. The data, emphasizing employment, or services or safety or cohesion, can help to guide priority setting in the community, but should always be subject to the community’s own assessment of the most pressing priorities.

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Appendix 3: Sample Institutional Survey

M. Access to Community Facilities

1. What kinds of programs, for example recreation, healthcare, health promotion, employment, childcare, or settlement programs do you offer to residents of this area?

2. On average, roughly how many people from this neighbourhood do you serve each month in each of those programs?"

3. In terms of age, gender, language and ethnic background, roughly what is the demographic profile of clients in your programs?"

4. What programs draw a different mix of clients in terms of age, gender, language and ethnic background?

5. Who else in this area offers services?

6. What kinds of services do they offer?

F. Participation in Community Structures

1. Does your board represent the local demographics?
 - a. Very well represented
 - b. Somewhat represented
 - c. Minimally represented
 - d. Not represented

2. Does your volunteer base represent local demographics?
 - a. Very well represented
 - b. Somewhat represented
 - c. Minimally represented
 - d. Not represented

3. Do parents participate in school activities or councils?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never

I. Neighbourhood Characteristics

1. What do you think are the boundaries that best describe the neighbourhood, where people share a sense of community or share key elements of the community, like schools, parks, shopping and public spaces?

2. How would you describe the diversity of the neighbourhood?

3. In your opinion what are the particular challenges you think this area faces?

4. Does anyone or any group in the community face those challenges more than others?

5. What are the strengths of this neighbourhood? What works well here? What makes it feel like home?

6. Who do you think we should talk to in the neighbourhood?

E. Skills

1. Are there people or organizations in your neighbourhood you can count on to help solve community problems or conflicts?

a. Yes - Who?

b. No

2. Are there people or organizations in your neighbourhood you can count on to make sure everyone knows about an important issue or event?

a. Yes - Who?

b. No

G. Collective Efficacy

1. How strongly do you agree with the following statement: 'people around here are willing to help their neighbours'

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Somewhat agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Somewhat disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

2. How strongly do you agree with the following statement: 'people around here are willing to help their neighbours, even if they are from different backgrounds'

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Somewhat agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Somewhat disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

3. How strongly do you agree with the following statement: ‘people in this neighbourhood generally don’t get along with each other’
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Somewhat disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

4. How likely do you think it is that your neighbours would intervene in some way if they saw an older child bullying a younger child?
 - a. Very likely
 - b. Somewhat likely
 - c. Neither likely nor unlikely
 - d. Somewhat unlikely
 - e. Very unlikely

5. How likely do you think it is that your neighbours would intervene in some way if they heard that the City was planning to close
 [*use one that reflects existing local community services*]
 - a. The local community centre
 - i. Very likely
 - ii. Somewhat likely
 - iii. Neither likely nor unlikely
 - iv. Somewhat unlikely
 - v. Very unlikely

 - b. The local fire hall
 - i. Very likely
 - ii. Somewhat likely
 - iii. Neither likely nor unlikely
 - iv. Somewhat unlikely
 - v. Very unlikely

 - c. The local school
 - i. Very likely
 - ii. Somewhat likely
 - iii. Neither likely nor unlikely
 - iv. Somewhat unlikely
 - v. Very unlikely

L. Access to Public Amenities

1. Are there places in the neighbourhood where people gather casually?
 - a. Yes - Where?

b. No

2. Are there places in the neighbourhood where people can hold community events or celebrations?

a. Yes - Where?

b. No

O. Safety

1. Relative to other place in Toronto do you think this area is:

- a. More safe
- b. Less safe
- c. About the same

2. Over the last few year do you think this neighbourhood has been:

- a. Getting safer
- b. Getting less safe
- c. Staying about the same

3. How safe do you feel walking alone after dark?

- a. Very safe
- b. Somewhat safe
- c. Not Safe

4. Do you feel like the police are around when you need them?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

Appendix 4: Sample Business Survey

T. Business Connection

1. What is the home neighbourhood of owner?

2. What is the home neighbourhood of manager?

3. Would you like to hire more local residents?

- a. Yes
- b. No

4. Does your business participate in any community organizations or events?
a. Yes - Which?

b. No

V. Business Climate

1. If you had a friend who was starting a business, would you encourage them to locate here?

a. Yes - Why?

b. No - Why?

2. If you had the money to expand would you do it here?

a. Yes - Why?

b. No - Why?

3. Would you leave a young employee alone in your business after dark?

a. Yes

b. No

4. Relative to other place in Toronto do you think this area is:

a. Safer

b. Less safe

c. About the same

Appendix 5: Sample Resident Outreach Survey

E. Skills

1. Are there people or organizations in your neighbourhood you can count on to help solve community problems or conflicts?

a. Yes - Who?

- b. No
- 1. Are there people or organizations in your neighbourhood you can count on to make sure everyone knows about an important issue or event?

- a. Yes - Who?

- b. No

F. Participation in Community Structures

- 1. Do you currently belong to any neighbourhood groups or organizations?

- a. Yes - Which?

- b. No

- 2. How many times in the last year have you attended community events in the neighbourhood?

- 3. Do you attend religious services in the neighbourhood more than once per month?

- a. Yes - How often?

- b. No

- 4. "Are there groups or organizations outside the neighbourhood that you participate in?"

- a. Yes - Which?

- b. No

G. Collective Efficacy

- 1. How strongly do you agree with the following statement "In this neighbourhood, when someone is not at home, their neighbours will watch over their property?"

- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Somewhat agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Somewhat disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

2. In an average week, how often do you and your neighbours visit or stop to chat with each other?
-
-
3. How often do you and others in the neighbourhood ask each other advice about personal things such as childrearing or job openings?
- Always
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
4. How strongly do you agree with the following statement: “people around here are willing to help their neighbours?”
- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Strongly disagree
5. How strongly do you agree with the following statement: “people around here are willing to help their neighbours, even if they are from different backgrounds?”
- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Strongly disagree
6. How strongly do you agree with the following statement: “people in this neighbourhood generally don’t get along with each other?”
- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Strongly disagree
7. How likely do you think it is that your neighbours would intervene in some way if they saw an older child bullying a younger child?
- Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Somewhat disagree
 - Strongly disagree
8. How likely do you think it is that your neighbours would intervene in some way if they heard that the City was planning to close

[use one that reflects existing local community services]

- a. The local community centre
 - i. Very likely
 - ii. Somewhat likely
 - iii. Neither likely nor unlikely
 - iv. Somewhat unlikely
 - v. Very unlikely
- b. The local fire hall
 - i. Very likely
 - ii. Somewhat likely
 - iii. Neither likely nor unlikely
 - iv. Somewhat unlikely
 - v. Very unlikely
- c. The local school
 - i. Very likely
 - ii. Somewhat likely
 - iii. Neither likely nor unlikely
 - iv. Somewhat unlikely
 - v. Very unlikely

L. Access to Public Amenities

- 1. Do you feel welcome at your local school?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never

- 2. Do you and your family feel welcome at the local recreation centre?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never

- 3. Are there places in the neighbourhood where people gather casually?
 - a. Yes - Where?

 - b. No

- 4. Are there places in the neighbourhood where people can hold community events or celebrations?
 - a. Yes - Where?

- b. No
- 5. Are the parks in your neighbourhood a place you or your neighbours like to go with their families?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never
- 6. Are the parks in your neighbourhood a place you or your neighbours feel comfortable after sunset?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never
- 7. How long does it take to get to the nearest subway station or major transit hub at rush hour?

N. Connection to Community Services

- 1. Do you think you might ever need immigration or settlement support?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Maybe
 - c. No
- 2. Who would you turn to for help with immigration and settlement problems?

- 3. Are you satisfied with the immigration and settlement help you are able to get?
 - a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never
- 4. Where would you go to get help when someone in your family is ill?

- 5. Are you satisfied with your health care arrangements?
 - a. Always

- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

6. How often do you need childcare?

7. Who do you turn to for childcare?

8. Are you satisfied with the childcare you are able to get?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

9. Does you or your family use other services in the neighbourhood?

a. Yes - Where?

b. No

10. Where do you go to buy most of your meats, fruits and vegetables?

11. Are you satisfied with the groceries you are able to get at your local store?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

O. Safety

1. Relative to other place in Toronto do you think this area is:

- a. More safe
- b. Less safe
- c. About the same

2. Over the last few year do you think this neighbourhood has been:

- a. Getting safer
 - b. Getting less safe
 - c. Staying about the same
3. How safe do you feel walking alone after dark?
- a. Very safe
 - b. Somewhat safe
 - c. Not Safe
4. Do you feel like the police are around when you need them?
- a. Always
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Rarely
 - d. Never

S. Access to Employment

1. Where do you go to get help with finding a job or with training to help you get a job?

2. Was it helpful in getting a job?

I. Neighbourhood Characteristics

1. What do you think are the boundaries that best describe the neighbourhood, where people share a sense of community or share key elements of the community, like schools, parks, shopping and public spaces?

2. How would you describe the diversity of the neighbourhood?

3. In your opinion what are the particular challenges you think this area faces?

4. Does anyone or any group in the community face those challenges more than others?

5. What are the strengths of this neighbourhood? What works well here? What makes it feel like home?

6. Who do you think we should talk to in the neighbourhood?
