# The makeCalgary Network: A Collaborative Research Platform for Healthy Cities

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# Background

- Launched in 2011, *makeCalgary* is a multi-faculty, cross-sectoral initiative to:
  - Build understanding of the link between urban design, municipal policies, and health
  - Create WALKABLE, VIBRANT, RESILIENT, EQUITABLE, and healthy 21st century cities
  - Conduct relevant research that is translatable into impactful policies and programs within the Canadian context

# Three Formal Streams for Action

The initiative has defined streams of activity in domains of:

- Education
- Community engagement
- Research

# Structure/Partners

- makeCalgary steering committee representing multiple faculties (Environmental Design, Medicine, Kinesiology, Social Work)
- Closely aligned with the Urban Alliance (a formal research partnership between University of Calgary and the City of Calgary)
- Engagement with Alberta Health Services and community agencies that contribute to municipal policies and programs that define Calgary's socio-cultural fabric.

# Three Priority Research Themes



#### **Active Cities**

- Interplay between social/structural determinants of physical activity
- Human element: incentives for active living
- Economics of structural interventions

#### **Mitigating Social Vulnerability**

- 'Municipal literacy' of social determinants of health
- Progressive housing policies for health
- Resources for refugees and displaced citizens



### Vibrancy and Leisure

- Value of public infrastructure investments
- Social justice considerations
- Assessing green spaces, bike paths, dog parks
- Economic considerations

# Recent/Current Activities

- A project coordinator was hired to:
  - support project teams
  - broker partnerships
  - support external funding applications
  - conduct knowledge translation activities.
- Fall 2016 networking and convening event
- Ongoing stakeholder "Coffee Chat" sessions
- Spring 2017 symposium and International Walk21 conference

# Research Seed Funding

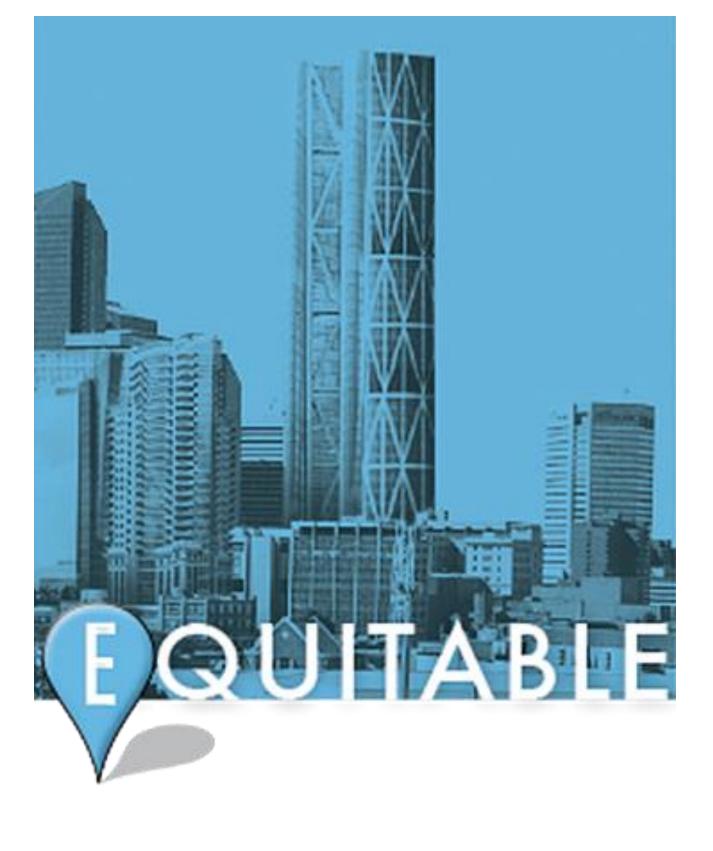
- Catalyst funding from UofC's Office of the Vice-President (Research) was obtained to accelerate research activities
- Funding for team-based catalyst project awards (~\$25K each)
  was allocated in a competitive and transparently-adjudicated
  allocation process
- Explicit mandate for interdisciplinary teams to conduct early phase work with particular focus cross-sectoral collaborations that create pathways to societal impact.

# The *makeCalgary* Platform









## Implications

**Community Engagement - Networking - Collaboration** 



The launch of large-scale research platform demonstrated the transformational potential of UofC's Human Dynamics in a Changing World priority theme and will aim to catalyze further internationally-relevant design and research activities.

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