

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

Jason Cabaj¹, John Brown², David Down³, Carolyn Emery⁴, William Ghali¹, Jennifer Hatfield¹, Brenda Hemmelgarn¹, Gavin McCormack¹, Nancy Pollock-Ellwand², Barry Phipps⁴, Peter Sargious¹, Jackie Sieppert⁵, Nishan Sharma¹, Christine Walsh⁵



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

¹Cumming School of Medicine, ²Faculty of Environmental Design, ³City of Calgary ⁴Faculty of Kinesiology, ⁴Office of the Vice-President (Research), ⁵Faculty of Social Work

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.