



Strathcona & Core Neighbourhoods

A shared view of the insights & opportunity spaces that emerged across Strathcona & Core Neighbourhoods (Boyle Street, Central McDougall, Downtown, McCauley, Queen Mary Park)



OVERVIEW

WHY RECOVER?

- Because we want to address the complex challenges of urban wellness differently.
- Because we believe in people and their ability to create solutions for themselves.
- Because we believe that people in communities can learn from each other, and that they want to help lead change.

THE BACKSTORY

Urban wellness is complex with many problems that have been in existence for a long time, with a lot of resources being utilized in tackling them - whether those resources are for proactive solutions (e.g. housing) or reactive (e.g. emergency response). While many people have been helped and a lot of good work is being done, homelessness, poverty and disorder continue to pose challenges.

WHAT IS RECOVER?

Urban wellness solutions that work for everyone in the community and promote thriving people and places, beginning in Edmonton's core neighbourhoods and Strathcona.

HOW WE'RE DOING IT

By providing a platform where:

- We co-design solutions starting from the perspectives of those most affected, backed by in-depth ethnographic research and other data.
- We provide the space to interact differently. We bring together people in different levels of government, agencies, citizens, communities and business sectors, surfacing tensions and understanding new perspectives so we can all contribute to solutions.
- We quickly test ideas, discarding those that aren't promising and elevating those that are - willing to take a chance, even if it means we fail.
- We fundamentally change the relationship between Edmontonians and the City in problem solving, moving to co-creation.

HOW YOU CAN BE INVOLVED

Bring your ideas and energy about what makes a city thrive to the RECOVER table and explore opportunities for change with us! You can:

- Become an implementer - join a rapid testing (aka prototype) team and help test an urban wellness solution idea
- Become a catalyst - make connections and create opportunities that help participants to think out of the box
- Become a champion - mobilize the capacities of your organization to convene, organize, facilitate and energize any part of the process
- Become an investor - channel resources and help strengthen legitimacy



STAY INFORMED

Join our email list and be kept up-to-date about various ways to participate.

Email: keren.tang@edmonton.ca
www.urbanwellnessedmonton.com
www.edmonton.ca/urbanwellness
[#urbanwellnessyeg](https://twitter.com/urbanwellnessyeg) [#recover](https://twitter.com/recover)

Our research

To have impact in the six neighbourhoods, it's critical that we understand the current context and to get a pulse check on what's happening. It is important to ground our work in data. The information we collected gave us a sense of the landscape and profiles of the issues and opportunities to improve urban wellness in these communities.

Our research has several streams, blending both quantitative and qualitative research with public engagement.

#1

Public Engagement

We used a variety of methods to engage the public, going out to where the people are and ensuring those who are hard to reach had the opportunity to share their voice and perspectives about urban wellness in their neighbourhoods. We hosted several discussions with a diverse collection of small groups. At times, the groups represented a particular stakeholder type and others were based on places where people naturally gather. In addition, interviews were conducted with 250 residents on their doorsteps, at cafes, libraries and parks.

We also hosted several neighbourhood walks and held two public realm workshops where we talked about existing place-based tools/assets and generated ideas for new tools and place-based approaches.

#2

Ethnographic Research

We also worked with social design organization InWithForward and MaRS Solution Lab to undertake qualitative, on the ground research by spending time, in context, with individuals and communities who are experiencing barriers and challenges to achieving wellness. We explored the needs, challenges and opportunities for urban wellness for all people in the six neighbourhoods.

This primary ethnographic research ("thick data") is rich in detail about people's everyday lives, the needs they articulate and their future aspirations. The goal of ethnographic research is to generate ideas for what could be different, from the perspective of the people experiencing challenges. What emerges are starting points for action, rather than top-down conclusions and recommendations.

#3

GIS Mapping

We had relatively easy access to traditional data from local and national sources – socio-economic measures, neighbourhood vulnerability indices, census data, crime rates, and so on. With the help of our RECOVER partners, we also had access to data related to social services and programming. Using an interactive mapping program, we mapped data geographically. We also layered different data sets to tell a more complete story. Interactive mapping has helped us see important patterns that have informed our approach.

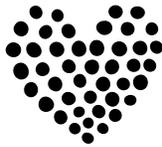
We have combined the typical neighbourhood profile data - demographic and vulnerability measures, such as income/low income, movers, renters, new immigrants, etc, with what we are calling demand indicators - data from our partners at Reach, 211, and Boyle Street Community Services, to map out where actual need is being demonstrated.

#4

Strategy Mapping

When it comes to the number and types of strategies, policies, programs and services connected to urban wellness, we know there is plenty of activity currently underway. We invited stakeholders (City of Edmonton, community, Provincial partners) to come together to explore how RECOVER can connect to the strategies and initiatives already impacting urban wellness – strategies like EndPovertyEdmonton, Just Getting Started, Abundant Communities, Leisure Access Pass and Capital City Clean Up.

This mapping work has allowed us to see how different activities are working towards similar results, like improving the well-being of marginalized and underserved people.



RECOVER continues to host discussions, connecting work and exploring ways partners can commit to making progress on shared goals and visions. We expect to grow participation, and to include other partners to understand ways we can connect the dots between existing work and build more impact together.

Opportunity One

New pathways for learning & contribution in community

Addiction and housing programs often focus on immediate next steps: encouraging folks not to get ahead of themselves. For some folks, the inability to imagine a life worth living, let alone the step that comes after seeking help, generates too much uncertainty and anxiety. Others, avoid formal service offers as a way to maintain a sense of self. By limiting their exposure to and acceptance of help, they avoid a homeless identity. For both groups, appealing to aspiration versus just reality just might help.

When it comes to enabling people to develop or regain a sense of purpose, what if we diversified the role of services, workers, and clients? How might we shift from helper to catalyst roles, brokering people to new relationships, spaces, and concepts?

INSIGHTS

Identity Maintenance

Most people we met on the south side haven't been homeless long-term, though they may have had brushes with it in the past, from one week to a couple of years. Many have a sense of social mobility and work hard to present themselves in a way that would allow them to blend in, rather than be identified as homeless. Others put effort into differentiating themselves from homeless stereotypes, emphasizing their code of conduct, workman-like values, and their role helping others

In Search of Meaning

There are lots of high quality subsistence services, but existential services — that is, services explicitly focused on purpose & self actualization — aren't as diverse or pervasive.

Reciprocity

When you're on the receiving end of services, it can feel like you're always 'needing' and 'taking.' People wanting change are just as concerned with finding ways to give back.

DESIGN SPECS/POINTS OF DELIGHT

Mechanical.

We discovered a widespread interest in, and knowledge of, mechanics but people long for tools and shop space in Strathcona.

New abilities.

Some have been told they can never work again, due to a disability, but what does that mean? Their is a longing for new forms of contribution and self-expression.

Legitimacy.

Many want meaningful opportunities for incremental responsibility, a source of pride.

Member-run.

Especially in Strathcona, people wanted to play a role in collective governance and feel the agency to safeguard places they care about.

Shared passion.

There's a real desire for spaces that bring people together based on shared passions, not troubles. A place where people are there because they want to be, not because there is nowhere else to go.

Modelling.

Drop-ins and services for addiction or homelessness have more people in the same situation than not. There's appetite to learn from peers who have found alternative pathways through tough times, and who can teach, coach, and guide. (See The Phoenix Active Recovery Group).

Integrated.

"Not for me" is too pervasive a perception. There's opportunity to piggyback on great spaces that already exist and have a great culture such as bike workshops, makerspaces, co-ops, etc.

Contribution.

Weaving in opportunities to use (emerging) skills for the public good is key. E.g.. repairing appliances or bicycles for people in need, cooking for school breakfast programs, etc.



THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE



Assistant host

What if there was a new role to bridge service users to local venues by working with venues to create a welcoming and supportive environment with opportunities for deeper involvement? Venues might get access to grants solutions to frictions with other users of the space. E.g.. At the bicycle repair workshop, makerspace, community theatre, and museum & gallery space.

Local travel agents:

What if the role of the drop-in were to broker people out on legitimate missions to explore their own city, met along the way by welcoming accomplices? The travel agent would have an encyclopedic knowledge of events, and spaces in the city, a lot of bus passes & coupons, and a range of options, from healing journey to brain food to volunteer tourism.

Possible partnerships

- BikeWorks
- Edmonton Tool Library
- Harcourt House Vacancy Hall
- The Edmonton New Technology Society
- Edmonton Public Library Makerspace
- Norquest College (Intro to Indigenous Cooking)
- Edmonton Chefs
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hospice & palliative care volunteer program

Thematic fellowships

What if there were a range of ‘thematic fellowships’ that enabled people to have a structure and to build a network around something other than their struggles — but around interests, skills, and next career moves?

- writing & poetry fellowships building on some of the storytelling programs at the library
- sports fellowships for getting people back in shape, training, and working with youth
- furniture making & fashion fellowships - building on iHuman style programming for youth
- cooking fellowships - à la Jamie Oliver’s fellowships for youth



Good talkers

What if there was a roving team of trained individuals (particularly from the segment, Crafted Characters) to engage in short, reflective conversations about uncomfortable topics (addiction, vagrancy, shame, loss) at the BIA, Farmer’s Markets, Community Leagues, and with other local groups. These chats would help build agency & comfort to interact with others, and increase bonds of hospitality?

CORE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Boyle Street, Central McDougall, Downtown, McCauley, Queen Mary Park

Segments

Lonely Actors

People just on the cusp of action, navigating the loss of a former identity, weighed down by feelings of shame, and avoiding engaging with friends and families - lest they let them down, again. Without access to their natural support network, this segment is influenced by who they happen to meet on the streets - be that workers or peers. Their well-being and the sustainability of the changes they are starting to make is particularly shaped by the dynamic of new and old relationships.



People like: Patrick, Brett, Crazy, and Ko.

Newbies

People new to downtown Edmonton and fresh on the streets, trying to navigate services, build the right kind of alliances, and figure out their next moves. These folks have a desire not to get entrenched, but easy access to drugs & alcohol doesn't always help, nor does all the idle time, waiting for things to emerge.



People like: Matt, Brandon, Ko

Precarious Optimists

People just leaving the peak of crisis, with some aspirational language, but \$100 away from eviction or "one screw-up" away from a downward spiral. Their ups and downs leave them mistrusting themselves and feeling out of options for what could be next - after treatment, after securing a house, etc. They are searching for a next milestone on the path forward.



People like: Clare and Brett

Pain Points

Limited pathways

Too few people have a vision for their life after recovery from addiction and securing housing - it can seem like a big black hole. Without a future they can believe in, it can be hard to keep motivation up.

Lost souls

Too many people find themselves in downtown, following a stint in prison or hospital, without ID, belongings or a shortcut out of the social and service landscape.

Not using & losing

Too many people are running on adrenaline, caught exercising the primitive rather than rational parts of their brain, with few means to feed their intellectual appetites.

Idle nights & stultifying weekends

With little to do after dark or on weekends, too many people fall back in with the people and substances they're trying to avoid, or lose momentum towards their chosen goals.

STRATHCONA**Segments****The Crafted Characters**

The Crafted Characters present a carefully cultivated identity. They are blasé about being on the street, and either have few urgent aspirations or see no real barriers to the aspirations they have. They are too cool to be outwardly bothered by internal emotions. In order to maintain a high level of control over how they are interpreted by others, they may embellish, omit, and obfuscate. They put up barriers to being helped, because they are reluctant to present themselves as 'in need.'



People like: Bill, Bob, Cruz

The Edgeworkers

Copper-picking, bottle-picking, camping, stealing bikes, black market buying and selling, and sex work are all practices and skills that widen the gap between street life and the 'respectable life.' They come with risks of criminalization and bodily harm, but they also require one to use their intuition and survival skills, demonstrating toughness and contributing to status and self-worth. Getting housed and no longer needing to engage in survival work can create conflict for edgeworkers, who often have few other active sources of self-identification.



People like: Dakota, Earl, Renée

Pain Points**Indignity**

The perception that use of services means you are unable to cope, and concerns about having to wait outside in an exposing line up. It all feels like an assault on one's sense of self.

Lack of control

For example, reviewing or reflecting on the series of actions and events leading up to the present moment is emotionally uncomfortable and feels risky.

Invisibility

The feeling of being totally marginalized, below others' consideration, forgotten.

Disparaged

The feeling that others look down on you for the work you do, and can't recognize the value and skill of your work.

Shame

The feeling that you aren't helping community in any way, and might be detracting (because earnings are spent on drugs, or goods are stolen from people)

Unacknowledged

The failure to be recognized as a contributing part of community and social group, or having relationships that are based on receiving handouts

Opportunity Two

Expanded & bundled small jobs

Folks new to the streets are often hustling, looking to make some money. They are appreciative of temp work agencies, but frustrated by the limited number and type of jobs, as well as by the sense of ‘meaninglessness’ of the work. Those who’ve been around awhile have found informal ways to make money but sometimes feel they lack legitimacy. Often the work is hard, and can exacerbate physical injuries that lead to increasing drug use as a form of self-medication.

For people who are motivated to contribute and want work, what if we shifted from random assignment and discrete day labour gigs to matching people with roles that build positive identity and relationships?

INSIGHTS

Ambition

Many were drawn to Alberta by ambition and have had a taste of success. Most aren’t dwelling on the past; they’re future-oriented, but without a clear way to channel or act on their ambitions.

Just-in-time supports

Timely upstream interventions for common sources of trauma (i.e. the loss of a spouse or child) could prevent street engagement in the first place.

The freshman

With less of an entrenched street culture than Toronto or Vancouver, Edmonton boasts a larger ‘new to the streets’ population — and yet, for these newbies, it’s a bit of a crapshoot, who they meet, and where they end up.

DESIGN SPECS/POINTS OF DELIGHT

Night & Day.

Creating opportunities and tasks that can be done while others are sleeping.

Partnered.

Building-in the option to do work in trusting, complementary pairs.

In Kind.

Options to work in exchange for the privilege of hanging out in a warm quiet spot, and/or meals, during off time.

Recognition.

Designing awards & commendations for work well done, and personal gains made. Also, connection to, and recognition as part of a larger team.

Community benefit.

Trying alternative currencies: compensating community contribution in fresh ways.

Trust.

Designing interactions (e.g. orientations, get-to-know sessions) to build trust between worker and employer and community partners.



THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE



BIA Taskrabbit

What if there were more of a Task Rabbit based system, where one could maintain a profile with reviews, and take up small jobs from local BIAs, non-profits, government, housing associations, etc?

The Specialist

What if you could apply for a role like a 'Recycling Guru,' made up of small jobs from across organizations with a similar need?



Role Call

What if services had a role for everything, and having a role was the norm: table hosts, applied philosophers, hair stylists, etc. What if having a role led to introductions to professional contacts, to help you up your game?



Binners' Day

Take your local binner out for coffee day! To encourage business owners to meet the person who keeps containers from blowing around the back alley, and re-directs bottles mis-placed in the garbage (Think: secretaries day, but for binners and pickers.)

Possible partnerships

- BikeWorks
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CORE NEIGHBOURHOODS

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Segments

The Contemplators

People questioning their own status quo, and thinking about making a change, yet often bogged down by day- to- day realities, perceived obligations, internal fear, and emotional baggage.



People like: Wayne, Al, and Clare

Adventurers

People who choose to live on their own terms, unencumbered by institutional rules, and attracted to novelty, adventure, and movement. This segment rarely stays housed for long, and chooses to sleep rough. Their version of wellbeing can often clash with services' version of well-being.



People like: Jen, Nicki & Al

Opportunity Makers

People with future focused narratives, seeking out the 'next' thing, and with a natural inclination to make lemonade out of lemons. As opportunists, this segment is open to most things. Of course, not all opportunities propel forward movement. Finding the 'right' kind of opportunities can be the challenge.



People like: Leroy, Monique, and Yvonne

Pain Points

Menial work

Too many people with high motivation and desire to work find themselves waiting for inconsistent temp jobs that can exacerbate physical pain and which don't typically offer a greater sense of camaraderie or purpose.

Not using & losing

Too many people are running on adrenaline, caught exercising the primitive rather than rational parts of their brain, with few means to feed their intellectual appetites.

Idle nights & stultifying weekends

With little to do after dark or on weekends, too many people fall back in with the people and substances they're trying to avoid, or lose momentum towards their chosen goals.

STRATHCONA

Segments

The Nychtophiles and Insomniacs

People who work at night, often picking copper or binning, or who are more lively at night. This group may use drugs purposefully, to insulate them from cold, help them stay awake, avoid nightmares, and/or get work done. Staying awake can also be the unintentional side effect of drug use, or chronic pain.



People like: Dakota, Gil, Earl

The Edgeworkers

Copper-picking, bottle-picking, camping, stealing bikes, black market buying and selling, and sex work are all practices and skills that widen the gap between street life and the 'respectable life.' They come with risks of criminalization and bodily harm, but they also require one to use their intuition and survival skills, demonstrating toughness and contributing to status and self-worth. Getting housed and no longer needing to engage in survival work can create conflict for edgeworkers, who often have few other active sources of self-identification.



People like: Dakota, Earl, Renée

Pain Points

Left out

No warm, dry, welcoming place to be after a hard night's work.

Bad sleep

Often plagued by nightmares, PTSD, physical pain.

Unsafe

If without a partner, feel more vulnerable to attack.

Abandoned

Often camping is a last ditch option for day-time sleepers, where a preferred option has been denied

Physical pain

Incidence of injury and chronic pain are high.

Disparaged

The feeling that others look down on you for the work you do, and can't recognize the value and skill of your work.

Shame

The feeling that you aren't helping community in any way, and might be detracting (because earnings are spent on drugs, or goods are stolen from people)

Unacknowledged

The failure to be recognized as a contributing part of community and social group, or having relationships that are based on receiving handouts rather than exchange.

Opportunity Three

Upstream supports & relationship help

Relationships matter. Behind nearly every bout on the street is a relationship loss or breakdown. And yet, there are few services and supports that directly focus on failing and broken relationships, or take practical steps to strengthen and repair them, before shit hits the fan

What if we shifted our focus from the individual to their relationships: strengthening the bonds between people? How might we move from treating emotions and trauma discreetly, through mental health services, to integrating emotions into every day practices that enhance resiliency?

INSIGHTS

Grief & Loss

Grief & loss strikes again, and again, and again. Relational pain and trauma are driving so many people on the street, for whom upstream supports were unknown, ineffective, insufficient, or non-existent. Downstream, we bring people in crisis together in shelters, but rarely take part in intentionally healing conversations and interactions with each other.

Shame

Latent support networks abound (old friends, relatives you've lost touch with), but how to reach out and tap into them when you're ashamed by the ups and downs in your progress?



DESIGN SPECS/POINTS OF DELIGHT

Reflective conversation.

Many have little opportunity to get thoughts out of their head in a context where they can be vulnerable, and get some help

Shared experience.

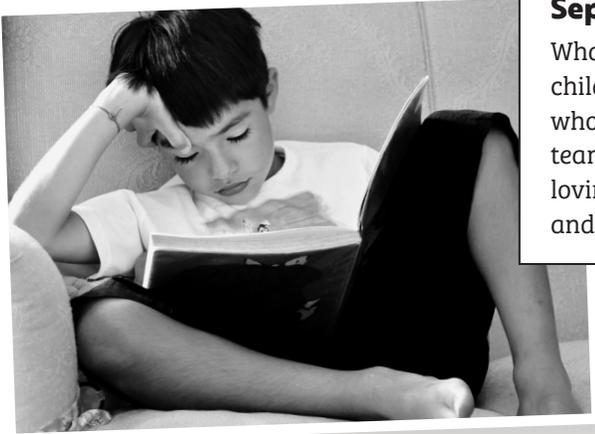
For many, it's important to know that someone trying to help has some similar experience of their own, though the 'experts' and their peers rarely seem to overlap.

Loss of a parent/child.

People want to end this intergenerational cycle but experience it as a personal rather than a collective weight.



THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE



Separation story bus

What if narrative therapists, children's illustrators and parents who have lost access to their children teamed up to make some honest, loving, age appropriate storybooks, and toured schools to share them?



Darn relationship

What if we created a relationship repair service, where you could turn to wade through the messy morass of expectations and shame?



Friendbook

What if there were shareable campaigns, workshops & resources for friends to play a stronger, better supported role in the life of someone on the verge of crisis?

Bridgers

What if community members were trained-up to notice people going through a rough patch, and perfected the art of introducing people to different networks of support?

Micro-boards

What if there were micro-boards and circles of supports (like in the disability space) for folks making it through recovery? These are orgs set-up around one individual to develop a collective mission for change.

Family doula

What if there was a role like a Family Doula, to help families weather a big change or transition and emerge stronger?

Possible partnerships

- Therapeutic professional associations
- Spiritual organizations
- Possible intervention points: courts, schools, real estate agencies, funeral homes, seniors' residences, social housing offices

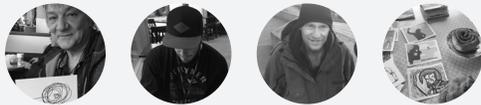
CORE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Boyle Street, Central McDougall, Downtown, McCauley, Queen Mary Park

Segments

Lonely Actors

People just on the cusp of action, navigating the loss of a former identity, weighed down by feelings of shame, and avoiding engaging with friends and families — lest they let them down, again. Without access to their natural support network, this segment is influenced by who they happen to meet on the streets — be that workers or peers. Their well-being and the sustainability of the changes they are starting to make is particularly shaped by the dynamic of new and old relationships.



People like: Patrick, Brett, Crazy, and Ko.

Pain Points

Housing for companions

For many people in recovery, being alone is a trigger. And yet, inviting friends over is an unsupported risk, while having a roommate can be out of procedural bounds.

> Leroy, Al

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Segments

All segments experience grief & loss.

Pain Points

Guilt.

For not being present, providing, and living up to the (imagined) expectations of a child, spouse, or parent; or, for not having prevented the loss.

Regret

For mistakes made.

Anger.

About having been abandoned or unsupported.

Sadness.

For the loss.

Opportunity Four

A taste of healing & some distance

Healing services that bring people with shared trauma together around a set of rituals and practices, are powerful, with some beautiful examples in religious and Indigenous-run services. What if spiritual healing -- feeling connected to something greater than oneself -- wasn't just the domain of culturally specific services? How might we extend healing spaces to those with different backgrounds or belief systems? How might we share healing practices with a mix of people from different walks of life?

What if we stopped thinking about spiritual practice as the domain of culturally specific groups and embraced it as a basic human need, for everyone, everyday?

INSIGHTS

In Search of Meaning

There are lots of high quality subsistence services, but existential services — that is, services explicitly focused on purpose & self actualization — aren't as diverse or pervasive.

Grief & Loss

We bring people in crisis together in spaces (drop-ins/shelters), but there's often not the time or space to engage in intentionally healing conversations and interactions. Yet, grief & loss is a reality that connects many of us in a community.



DESIGN SPECS/POINTS OF DELIGHT

Shared experience.

For many, it's powerful to come together with people who've had similar experiences — and losses — to you.

Touch.

Hugs and other affectionate, platonic contact are a highlight of many spiritually-based services.

A continuum of practice.

For some it might be some quick guided breathwork to music, upon waking, and for others it's a committed nightly session of ecstatic dance that builds high trust.



THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE

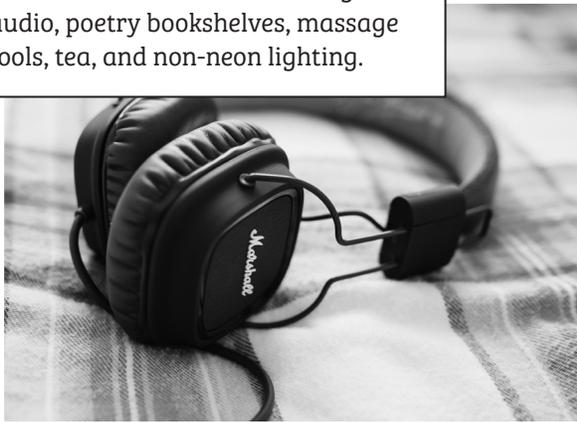
On the spot healing

What if places that triage symptoms of trauma (Emergency rooms, police, 24/7 Diversion Teams) had healing spaces to welcome people into?



Zen wait rooms

What if services transformed waiting rooms into space designed to bring calm? From intake interactions, to headsets with choice of calming audio, poetry bookshelves, massage tools, tea, and non-neon lighting.



Morning after awakening

Take your local binner out for coffee day! To encourage business owners to meet the person who keeps containers from blowing around the back alley, and re-directs bottles mis-placed in the garbage (Think: secretaries day, but for binners and pickers.)



Somatic healing

What if every shelter bookended the day with a somatic healing routine? To start the day and night off by relieving some pain and anxiety?

Humans talk

What if there were a neighbourhood wide campaign, with the BIA, local health practitioners, for example, to promote deep conversations, that bring us closer to what makes us human, and interrupt the endless parade of consumer attractions?

Possible partnerships

- Somatic Practitioners (yoga, pilates, dance, vocal work, massage)
- Hospitals, drop-ins, shelters, community centres, Municipality (parks & rec), police, YMCA, retreat centres

Expectant

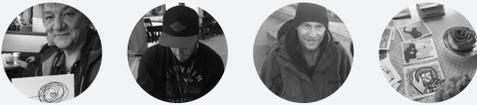
What if co-parents expecting a child could access a range of spiritual and healing supports together? From art therapy, to guided virtual reality trips home, to help them gain a sense of clarity and vision for the parent and childhood experience they want.

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People like: Patrick, Brett, Krazy, Ko

Old Timers

People who have been around for years, and see inner city Edmonton streets as their home, intertwined with their identity. They've got local know how and history, but are finding there are fewer places to spend time without threat of public intoxication tickets, etc.



People like: Jen, Nicki

Precarious Optimists

People just leaving the peak of crisis, with some aspirational language, but \$100 away from eviction or “one screw-up” away from a downward spiral. Their ups and downs leave them mistrusting themselves and feeling out of options for what could be next - after treatment, after securing a house, etc. They are searching for a next milestone on the path forward.



People like: Clare and Brett

Pain Points**Not using & losing**

Too many people are running on adrenaline, caught exercising the primitive rather than rational parts of their brain, with few means to feed their intellectual appetites.

> Ko, Clare

Limited pathways

Too few people have a vision for their life after recovery from addiction and securing housing — it can seem like a big black hole. Without a future they can believe in, it can be hard to keep motivation up.

> Brett, Ko

STRATHCONA

Segments

The Unattached Unravellers

When a relationship ends or is cut short by death, there are few automatic interventions, especially when there are no young children involved. Grief, loneliness, guilt, inability to address feelings of being undervalued or inadequate, and a desire not to play 'the bad guy' can lead people to make choices with devastating consequences.



People like: Renée, Bob, Earl, Bruno, Marilyn

The Unroutined

Those who are housed or have a place to stay for awhile, but have no acquaintance with good sleep hygiene. Drugs, coffee, noise, unbroken alone-ness, and lack of rhythm and routine lead to erratic sleep schedules, and declining mental health.



People like: Christopher (home), Earl's roommate, Stewart

Pain Points

Alone-ness

No social structure to time, or to reinforce rituals of home.

Fear of sociality /broken trust

The conventional wisdom is not to invite people over, but how is a house home without friends and family? Damned if you do and damned if you don't.

Exhaustion, caused by disrupted sleep cycles

Drug use, coffee, poor mental health, and pain all upset sleep routines and cycles.

Being alone

They may not miss many things about the company their used to but being alone is a trigger.

Negotiating difficult emotional terrain

Some would sooner 'lose everything' than negotiate unarticulated feelings and find some workable ground through a mysterious process they don't much believe in.

Longing

An overwhelming desire for comfort and human connection that seems impossible to attain but drives a lot of behaviour.

Opportunity Five

Sleep Hygiene Regime

What if the City of Edmonton followed the science and made a good night's sleep an urgent area of inquiry, testing, and learning? Starting with the principle that good sleep matters, and serves as the foundation from which we act and experience, what if we worked to facilitate great sleep hygiene, and reduce barriers to sleep as the first source of healing?

What if we strove for a culture that values and invests in cultivating good sleep practices and opportunities, to promote the conditions for flourishing, moving past a minimum entitlement to a warm, dry, environment at night.

INSIGHTS



Sleeplessness

Almost nobody's getting a good night's sleep on the streets. Shelters offer disrupted sleep, at best, and during the day everywhere else wakes you to scold or check for vital signs. Camping or staying with friends may offer a better rest, but then there's nightmares, anxiety, party-ers, and systems out of whack with stimulants... which culminates in moodiness, memory loss, the feeling one can't get anything done or think straight, and quite likely, an increased experience of pain.

DESIGN SPECS/POINTS OF DELIGHT



Sense of communal ownership

Southside shelter goers noted that the 40 bed church hall stayed pretty quiet, because its users felt invested in the pilot, and wanted to keep it a civil space.

Quarantine

For some, shelters were out of the question because viral illnesses travel too easily. How to make it feel hygienic?

Sleeplessness the greater danger

Always find a way to mitigate risks and allow sleep when needed

Personal awakening.

Some need to tell the story of their day and share some artifacts; some like waking to a bible reading; others a warm morning call: can we segment by preferred start and end of day routines?

Lonely nights.

Whether new apartment dwellers or shelter goes: feel more connected before bedtime, and feel purpose in the morning

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE

Rituals for Rest

To make good sleep hygiene a communal practice marked by routines and rituals in emergency, temporary, and new housing situations, what if support staff worked with people to try out and consistently practice helpful rituals? It might look like a herbal tea and journaling/ list-making group, to unwind and feel ready for the next day, massage training to address pain and injuries, or a guided stretching and breathing group, with gentle music. At the shelter it might look like loaning mp3 players for goodnight podcasts, massage bartering, and lockers that allows people to store personal items that help with sleep: a certain pillow or blanket, sleep mask, ear plugs, water bottle, etc.

Minimum Sleep Hygiene Standards.

Minimum sleep hours, space between beds, storage for people's belongings, air quality and bedding standards to ensure people have the best chance at a good night.

Rancho Relaxo

To vet and match people to sleep and relaxation opportunities: maximize good sleeping spaces, fill yoga and tai chi classes last minute, get to know potential roommates by sharing a temporary space, and help insomniacs find each other to fulfill shared aspirations around wellness. Connections focused on building a relational basis for trust and true respite.

Possible partnerships

- Radio stations
- Fast food restaurants
- Edmonton Public Library
- Community Centres
- Landlords
- Somatic therapeutic practitioners
- Shelters
- Mattress companies
- Ikea
- Biotech companies

Inemuri, Edmonton Style

Take it from the Japanese: sleeping in public isn't anti-social, disruptive, or a sign of moral weakness, but the opposite: a dedication to being present, and persevering, even when tired. Called Inemuri (meaning, present but sleeping) a nap in a public place (a meeting, a subway station, a mall) is totally normal. What if Edmonton encouraged its citizens to shift their thinking, from sleeping in public as taboo to sleep as a precious resource people need to combat pain, mental health challenges, and addiction? What if we thought of it as a collective responsibility to nurture and prioritize sleep hygiene at a cultural and community level?

Sleep monitors

There are wireless gadgets to monitor heart rate, blood sugar, and blood pressure. What if libraries, shelters, and other community spaces could issue these to people who are going to sleep so that risk of diabetic coma or overdose are no longer a reason to promote sleep deprivation? After all, poor sleep can throw blood sugar out of whack and appears to drive increases in self-medication

Sleep vouchers

Instead of hassling people sleeping in public spaces or moving them outside, police and fast food restaurant employees could issue sleep vouchers, to a local sleep spot (pods, day shelters, etc.)

Micro-shelters

Private unused heated spaces could receive tax deductions if used to create temporary/ emergency shelter for five people or fewer, charging in the range of \$0-\$30/ night. With social organizations sharing some responsibility for monitoring and support. A move away from large, unsegmented, impersonal homeless shelters towards micro-shelters and temporary housing that can be used to facilitate more segmented supports.

STRATHCONA

Segments

The Unroutined

Those who are housed or have a place to stay for awhile, but have no acquaintance with good sleep hygiene. Drugs, coffee, noise, unbroken alone-ness, and lack of rhythm and routine lead to erratic sleep schedules, and declining mental health.



People like: Christopher (home), Earl's roommate, Stewart

The Nyctophiles and Insomniacs

People who work at night, often picking copper or binning, or who are more lively at night. This group may use drugs purposefully, to insulate them from cold, help them stay awake, avoid nightmares, and/or get work done. Staying awake can also be the unintentional side effect of drug use, or chronic pain.



People like: Dakota, Gil, Earl

The Never-Enoughs

Those who find they can never achieve the quality and quantity of sleep needed to function at their best. For some, the need is modest but it's hard to catch more than 6 hours of broken sleep at the south-side shelter. For others, especially those coming down off drugs like meth, or dealing with depression, round-the-clock sleep is an uncontrollable urge.



People like: Bill, Jailene & Hunter, Marilyn, Christopher (shelter)

(Could apply to any segments from Downtown)

Pain Points

Alone-ness

No social structure to time, or to reinforce rituals of home.

Fear of sociality/ broken trust

The conventional wisdom is not to invite people over, but how is a house home without friends and family? Damned if you do and damned if you don't.

Exhaustion

Caused by disrupted sleep cycles: drug use, coffee, poor mental health, and pain all upset sleep routines and cycles.

Left out

No warm, dry, welcoming place to be after a hard night's work.

Bad sleep

Often plagued by nightmares, PTSD, physical pain.

Unsafe

If without a partner, feel more vulnerable to attack.

Abandoned

Often camping is a last ditch option for day-time sleepers, where a preferred option has been denied

Physical pain

Incidence of injury and chronic pain are high.

Loss of dignity

sleeping in public is taboo, treated as 'unsafe' at best, and depraved, at its worst. Those who drift off are accustomed to being awoken, kicked out of establishments, verbally abused, and often banned from returning.

Hopelessness

It's hard to strategize, stay calm, on the ball, and make smart choices through the fog of sleep deprivation.

Physical Pain

Incidence of injury and chronic pain are high.

Opportunity Six

In-home restarts

After repeated housing-eviction-homelessness cycles, it's only natural to give up. While Housing First advocates have long recognized that, in addition to case management, more supports are needed, there aren't too many models for long-term, socio-emotional help. Similarly the detox-rehab-release cycle can engender resignation and hopelessness. Despite research showing treatment centres don't really work, there are few other models. What if we developed a suite of in-situ supports, coaching, and community networks for new renters? How might we enable people work through emotions, relationships, and behaviours that have threatened their housing and wellbeing in the past and present?

What if we made some shifts, from addiction treatment as a one-size fits all approach to addiction treatment customized in place? From housing supports as pragmatic to emotional support and co-learning?

INSIGHTS



House Relations

A considerable number of people frame 'giving up on housing' (whether in the short or the long term) as primarily a relational failure - a breach of trust - either with themselves, the people around them, they would like to be able to have as part of their home, or a homemaker who they felt wasn't prepared to go the distance.

DESIGN SPECS/POINTS OF DELIGHT



Intensity-metre.

Testing for the right intensity and dosage of supports will be key.

Opportunism.

How not to make supports feel like a check-up or evaluation, but part of one's own evolving routine?

Connection with boundaries.

Test ways to leverage phone and internet to bring people together without ever crossing a threshold.

Working towards home.

Keep the ultimate goal of home in view: is it a hub of family activity? A quiet sanctuary? And build pathways there.

Neighbours Now.

Focus on development of positive neighbourly relationships of different depths, and building relational capital to draw on during difficult times.

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE



Adopt for Recovery

A matchmaking platform that creates circles of ex-addicts within neighbourhoods to provide support, inspiration, and bridges to new social contexts, for someone currently struggling to stop addictive behaviour.

Gezellig boxes

Gezellig is a Dutch word which means cozy, relaxing, enjoyable and gregarious. What if new residents were enrolled in a subscription box service with DIY activities to do at home, vouchers for home supplies, inspirational quotes, meal kits, and stories from others who are newly housed? Delivered by a network of community members who could offer encouragement & troubleshooting.



Help a friend vouchers.

Folks who are newly housed often feel an immense responsibility to help out friends who aren't yet housed. Too often, they find their friend's baggage detracts from their own housing stability. What if new renters could be part of a cooperative that provides more ways for folks to continue helping friends without compromising their own situation -- vouchers for them to give friends to stay at local hostels, storage options, etc.



Homemaker doulas

Just like a doula helps women have a memorable & empowering birth and early motherhood experience, what if there was a homemaker doula to help residents through the transition from homelessness to housed, attending to the emotional matters that can get lost with all the pragmatics, and creating a vision for what one's home should be? Could be plant therapy, feng shui, sweeping away troubles, and a range of other routines & rituals drawn from cultures around the world.

Possible partnerships

- Community business
- Edmonton Public Library
- Community Leagues
- Faith-based orgs

CORE NEIGHBOURHOODS

Boyle Street, Central McDougall, Downtown, McCauley, Queen Mary Park

Segments

The Contemplators

People questioning their own status quo, and thinking about making a change, yet often bogged down by day- to- day realities, perceived obligations, internal fear, and emotional baggage.



People like: Wayne, Al, and Clare

Opportunity Makers

People with future focused narratives, seeking out the 'next' thing, and with a natural inclination to make lemonade out of lemons. As opportunists, this segment is open to most things. Of course, not all opportunities propel forward movement. Finding the 'right' kind of opportunities can be the challenge.



People like: Leroy, Monique, and Yvonne

Pain Points

Housing for companions

For too many people in recovery, being alone is a trigger. And yet, inviting friends over is an unsupported risk, while having a roommate can be out of procedural bounds.

Idle nights & stultifying weekends

With little to do after dark or on weekends, too many people fall back in with the people and substances they're trying to avoid, or lose momentum towards their chosen goals.

STRATHCONA

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People like: Dakota, Gil, Earl

The Unattached Unravellers

When a relationship ends or is cut short by death, there are few automatic interventions, especially when there are no young children involved. Grief, loneliness, guilt, inability to address feelings of being undervalued or inadequate, and a desire not to play 'the bad guy' can lead people to make choices with devastating consequences.



People like: Renée, Bob, Earl, Bruno, Marilyn

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Abandoned

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Physical pain

Incidence of injury and chronic pain are high.

Being alone

They may not miss many things about the company they used to but being alone is a trigger.

Negotiating difficult emotional terrain

Some would sooner 'lose everything' than negotiate unarticulated feelings and find some workable ground through a mysterious process they don't much believe in.

Longing

An overwhelming desire for comfort and human connection that seems impossible to attain but drives a lot of behaviour.

Opportunity Seven

Vibrant Neighbourhoods

Development can create a divide between the haves and the have nots. How might we develop the inner city so that everyone has a chance to thrive? Sometimes it's hard for people to access the services and places that support their wellness needs, whether its do to physical barriers like unshoveled sidewalks and distance or availability at an affordable price.

What if all neighbourhoods became known as a destination for cultural exploration, social businesses, and a great place to live



“Edmonton talks a lot about being leaders ..it’s an entrepreneur city. I’d like to see us take that same passion and apply it to this healing relationship”

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- What if every new business application had to meet community benefits criteria?
- What if every new residential building had to have a mix of market and non-market housing?
- What if we create a social enterprise incubator?
- What if we incentivized building owners with empty storefronts to temporarily support new social business while they test ideas?
- What if we built a network of support for business owners to share ideas and advice on how to manage tension and conflict with patrons?
- What if there was roaming food van that brought fresh produce to each neighbourhood?
- What if there was dedicated fun bus service that takes families after school to the rec centres or seniors to spots in the city for fun, to people watch, or to volunteer?
- What there were family fun passes at the library that gives free admission to the theatre, museum, and gyms?
- What if there was a night mayor responsible for supporting nightlife culture like in European cities?
- What if there was a night market showcasing different cultural street foods?
- What if we had wayfinding signs that highlighted areas and paths to go to throughout the 6 neighbourhoods?



Opportunity Eight

Community Supports

There is an informal network of Edmontonians that devote a lot of their time and resources to support their community. Can we make better use of what already exists? How might we tap into the creativity, energy and friendliness that Edmontonians are known for to activate spaces. How might we support them in ways that allows them to keep their autonomy and avoids “institutionalizing” their work?

What if the city provided more support for community grassroots initiatives to spread?

What if we activated the latent human, physical and cultural assets in our communities?

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- What if we provided incentives to organizations to open their spaces for community programming?
- What if there was a philanthropy matching services that connects Edmontonians to grassroots organizations to donate monetary and in-kind services?
- What if we could create community hubs that also serve as back-offices for grassroots community initiatives and also serve as places to gather and to store supplies for programming?
- What if there were workshops or services to help community organizations find funding and write business cases or proposals and plan for succession?
- What if there was a city wide community volunteer base that is vetted and updated on a regular basis?
- What if we had a neighbourhood buddy program where volunteers sign up to visit and accompany neighbours on walks, errands, or appointments?
- What if we used empty, vacant lots and rooftops as spaces for community raised garden beds, urban bee farms, greenhouses, or places for new playgrounds?
- What if we filled empty storefronts with public art installations that families in the neighbourhood create together or with pop-up gyms, jam spaces, or markets?
- What if we had an easily accessible list of community priorities and initiatives that would help keep those who are unable to attend community meetings informed?



Opportunity Nine

Open Collaboration

There are many amazing organizations serving Edmontonians - what can we do collectively to help ensure people are meeting all of their wellness needs and not falling through the cracks? How might we provide an integrated service? How might we tap into our networks and share data sources across organizations and geographies so that we can leverage each other's insights?

What if we improved coordination between services?

What if we had a platform to share data, information and evidence?

OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- What if there were system navigators that could provide warm handovers between services?
- What if there were grants to foster collaboration between community-serving organizations?
- What if we agreed how many people were experiencing homelessness because we collaborated to create a single, shared approach to measurement?
- What if there was a software portal that allowed health care and community organizations to exchange case management information?

