

CCPA

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES
MANITOBA

It's getting great:

Government investment
in Gilbert Park and
Lord Selkirk Park

By Sarah Cooper

JUNE
2013

It's getting great: Government investment in Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park

By Sarah Cooper

ISBN 978-1-77125-075-7

JUNE 2013

This report is available free of charge from the CCPA website at www.policyalternatives.ca. Printed copies may be ordered through the Manitoba Office for a \$10 fee.

Please make a donation... Help us continue to offer our publications free online.

We make most of our publications available free on our website. Making a donation or taking out a membership will help us continue to provide people with access to our ideas and research free of charge. You can make a donation or become a member on-line at www.policyalternatives.ca. Or you can contact the Manitoba office at 927-3200 for more information. Suggested donation for this publication: \$10 or what you can afford.



CCPA

CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
MANITOBA OFFICE

309-323 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2C1
TEL 204-927-3200 FAX 204-927-3201
EMAIL ccpamb@policyalternatives.ca



Acknowledgements

Funding for this project was provided by Housing and Community Development, and NorWest Co-op Community Health.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of the staff at the Lord Selkirk Park Resource Centre, Gilbert Park Resource Centre, Gilbert Park Going Places, and the Boys and Girls Club of Winnipeg (Gilbert Park).

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the contributions of all the staff and tenants who participated in the focus groups, interviews and surveys.

Research team

Alex Nokonagos, Cassandra Golondrina, Corinne Murdock, Ibrahim Bangura, Marjorie Miller, Sarah Cooper (principal researcher).

About the author

Sarah Cooper is the Researcher in Housing and Community Development at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba.



manitobahousing



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada



Table of Contents

1	Introduction
3	Public Housing and Social Policy The Winnipeg Context
11	Methodology
13	Gilbert Park What Changed? Safety and Security Jobs and Education Community Well-being Summary and Recommendations
32	Lord Selkirk Park What Changed? Safety and Security Jobs and Education Community Well-being Summary and Recommendations
50	Conclusion
53	References
55	Appendix A—Research Guides and Survey Interviews—Tenants Interviews—Staff Focus Groups—Youth Survey—Tenants

61 Appendix B—Consent Forms

Interview Consent Form—Tenants

Interview Consent Form—Staff

Focus Group Consent Form—Youth Parent/Guardian

Focus Group Consent Form—Youth

68 Appendix C—Newsletters

Gilbert Park

Lord Selkirk Park

Introduction

Over the last few years, the Province of Manitoba has invested millions of dollars in renovating and providing resources in two public housing complexes in Winnipeg, Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park. These renovations were significant, and included complete interior and exterior renovations to all of the housing units as well as improvement in security services, area parks, and neighbourhood amenities and services.

This investment reflects the Province of Manitoba's commitment to "increasing the supply of quality, affordable housing for low-income Manitobans" (Province of Manitoba 2013). The Province recognizes that housing is increasingly expensive in Manitoba, difficult to find as vacancy rates drop, and that many households cannot afford housing in the private market (Province of Manitoba 2007). To address this, the Province has implemented an \$84 million action plan called *BUILDING Foundations*, which includes changes in Manitoba Housing operations as well as housing renovations, improvements in safety, and community supports, among others. The Province continued to build on these improvements by investing \$226 million into

social housing renovations under *HomeWorks!*, Manitoba Housing's two-year investment plan (2009-2011).

Anecdotal changes resulting from these investments have already been noted in the two communities. In the 1990s, Lord Selkirk Park was approximately 50 percent vacant; today all units are full, and there is a waiting list for units. Tenants have mentioned feeling safer, and are using the new resource centre and day care. Manitoba Housing and service agency staff have observed similar changes in Gilbert Park, and more people are walking around the area and using outdoor spaces.

Using interviews and focus groups with tenants and staff from service agencies and Manitoba Housing, this report looks at the impact of the renovations and other investments in Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park. The initial intent for the research was to examine the impact of the housing renovations, but it quickly became clear that although the impact of these is significant, it cannot be separated from the impact of the other investments and resources in the two communities. As a result, the report describes

the impact thus far of both the renovations and investments on the individuals and families that live in Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park, with a focus on how these changes have affected safety and security, jobs and education, and community well-being.

This report begins with a review of the role of public housing in meeting communities' hous-

ing and other needs. It then goes on to examine each community separately and looks at safety and security, jobs and education, and community well-being in each of Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park. These two sections also offer recommendations specific to each community. The report wraps up with a conclusion summarizing the research.

Public Housing and Social Policy

The Winnipeg Context

Housing is a key component of infrastructure in Manitoba cities. With freezing winter temperatures and hot summers, housing is essential for individuals and families. Stable and affordable housing is good for children's educational outcomes, helps new immigrants establish and integrate themselves, and helps lower-income families afford quality food, medications, and other necessities (Carter and Polevychok 2004). Moreover, when households do not live in good housing, other challenges they may face—such as poverty, illness, disabilities, low education, unemployment—are compounded and worsened (Carter and Polevychok 2004).

Although Winnipeg was known for many years as an affordable city for housing, this has not been true over the last few years. House prices have increased dramatically, as have rents. In 2005, the average rent for an apartment in Winnipeg was \$589; today it has increased by 33 percent, to \$783 (see Table 1) (CMHC 2006b; CMHC 2012).

Incomes have not increased at the same pace (see Table 2). Although the minimum wage in Manitoba increased by 41.4 percent from 2005 to 2012, from \$7.25 to \$10.25 (Province of Manitoba 2012), average individual incomes only increased

by 9 percent from 2005 to 2010 (the most recent year available), from \$33,000 to \$36,000 (Statistics Canada 2012a). For the 11 percent of Winnipeggers (88,000 people) who find themselves below the after-tax low-income cut off (Statistics Canada 2012b), this makes finding good quality, affordable housing a challenge.

As a result, housing is increasingly unaffordable for low-income families and households in Winnipeg. The shift in social and economic policy away from a welfare state model to an individualistic neoliberal model over the last 30 or so years means that the income gap between the lowest and highest earning families in Manitoba is growing, with 40 percent of Manitoban families earning the same or less in real dollars today as they did in the 1970s (Hudson and Pickles 2008). A number of factors have come together to create this income gap. Purdy (2003) mentions structural changes that have had a significant impact on poverty in Toronto:

...this pronounced rise in multifarious inequalities is due to wider economic developments such as the loss of central-city manufacturing opportunities and shifting supply and demand factors within the housing

TABLE 1 Average Rents In Winnipeg

	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom +	Total
2005	\$ 405	\$ 539	\$ 683	\$ 795	\$ 589
2012	\$ 527	\$ 704	\$ 911	\$ 1027	\$ 783

SOURCE: CMHC 2006b; CMHC 2012

TABLE 2 Minimum Wage and Average Incomes

	Minimum wage (Manitoba)	Average income (Manitoba)	Number of people below the LICO (Winnipeg)	Percentage of people below the LICO (Winnipeg)
2005	\$ 7.25	\$ 33,000	107,000	14.7 %
2010	\$ 9.50	\$ 36,000	88,000	11.0 %
2012	\$ 10.25	Not available	Not available	Not available

SOURCE: Province of Manitoba 2012; Statistics Canada 2012a; Statistics Canada 2012b

TABLE 3 Employment and Income Assistance Housing Benefit and Average Rents

	Bachelor (1 person)	1 Bedroom (1-2 people)	2 Bedroom (3-4 people)	3+ Bedroom (4-6 people)
Winnipeg Average Rents	\$527	\$704	\$911	\$1027
EIA Rent Allowance, including heat, lights and water	\$285+50 supplement		\$285-387	\$430-\$471
			\$471-\$513	

SOURCE: CMHC 2012; Province of Manitoba date unknown.

sphere. The latter factors include the changing workplace and familial roles of women, varying immigration trends, outright lack of affordable housing, tenant selection and rental policies favouring the most disadvantaged, and a retrenchment of welfare-state commitments. (Purdy, 47, following Murdie)

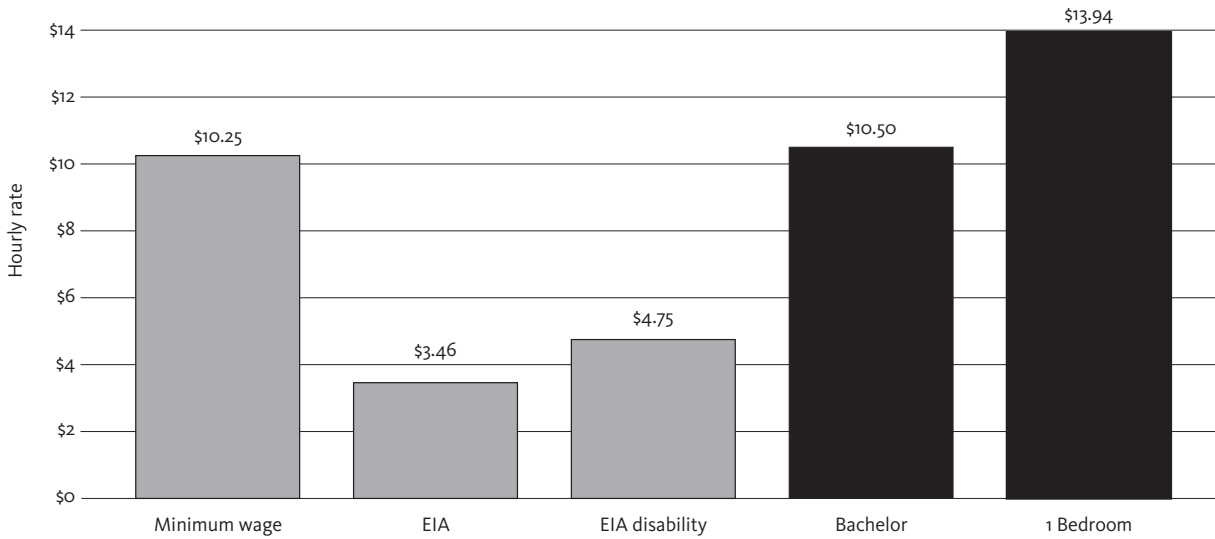
These same changes are visible in Winnipeg, and have been exacerbated by changes in the housing market. As rental construction in Manitoba has decreased, and formerly affordable units have been renovated into condos or demolished, the housing available to low-income households has decreased (Silver 2011). Rents have increased significantly faster than incomes, and in Manitoba, Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) housing benefits have hardly changed over the past 20 years. Today in Winnipeg rents are significantly higher than the benefits (see Table 3). Even households earning minimum wage would have difficulty affording rental housing: the aver-

age bachelor apartment in Winnipeg costs more than 30 percent of what a single person earning minimum wage would earn (Cooper 2012) (see Figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1 shows how much hourly income single people receive from minimum wage, EIA, and EIA disability (in grey), and how much a household must earn per hour for the average rent for a bachelor or one-bedroom apartment to be affordable, based on the 30 percent of household income affordability benchmark (in black).

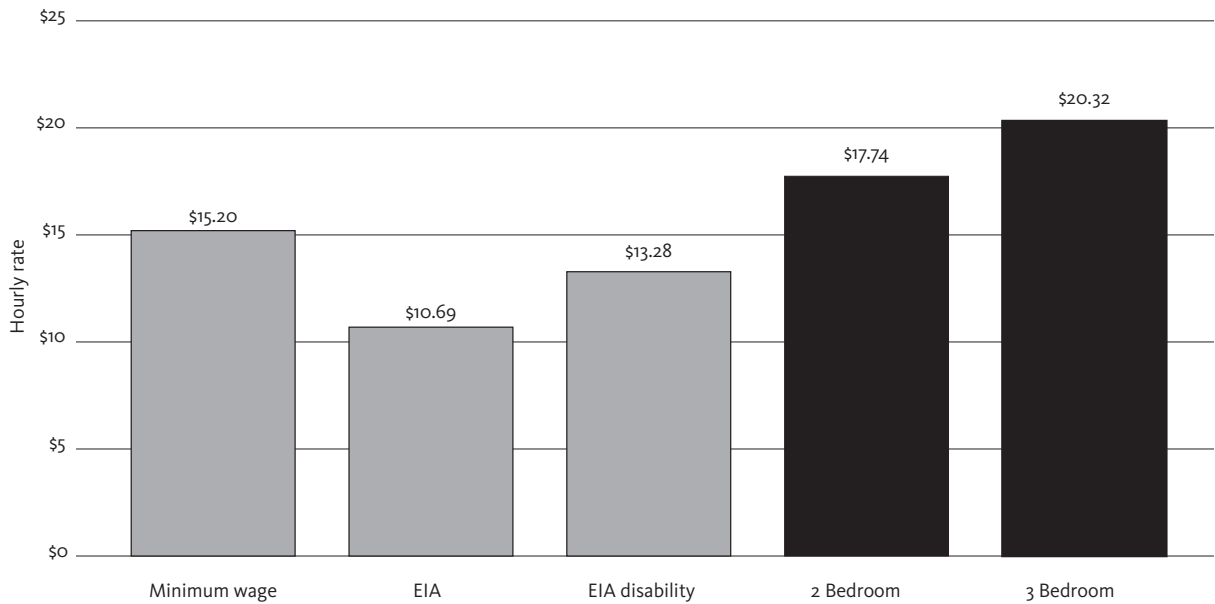
Figure 2 shows how much hourly income a single parent with two children under the age of six receives (including RentAid and federal benefits such as the Canada Child Tax Benefit, etc., where applicable. Housing benefits that only some households are eligible for, such as the Portable Shelter Benefit, are not included) (in grey). It also shows how much a household must earn per hour for the average rent for a two- or three-bedroom apartment to be affordable, based on

FIGURE 1 Hourly Housing Costs for a Single Person



SOURCE: Cooper 2012

FIGURE 2 Hourly Housing Costs for a Single Parent with Two Children Under the Age of Six



SOURCE: Cooper 2012

the 30 percent of household income affordability benchmark (in black).

As a result of increasing rents and stagnant incomes, the 24 percent of Winnipeg renter households that live in core housing need (CMHC 2006a)

have to find ways to house themselves and their families and still meet other basic needs, including food, clothing, transportation and medication. These are only the beginning of the challenges that many low-income households face.

Low-income households frequently have complicated lives: lives that are made complex by a variety of social structures and government systems. Studies have connected poverty with “poor physical and mental health, joblessness, lack of education and skills, developmental difficulties in children, crime, homelessness, racial discrimination and other issues” (National Council of Welfare 2001, 8). The restrictions and requirements of employment and income assistance, of child protection services and childcare, of food banks, of the cost of education, of health problems, of finding decent affordable housing, are all made worse by poverty and the lack of choices that accompany poverty (CCPA-MB 2009).

Because of these complicated lives, “social housing that provides only affordable housing without making concessions to other aspects of people’s lives in which they may need assistance only gets at half of the problem” (May 2007, 1). Although social housing¹—like many other parts of the ‘social safety net’—is often perceived as a short-term solution for households facing financial difficulties, social housing can be a good way to provide supports and services to households (Prince 1998; May 2007). In fact, to ensure that tenants have achieved stability and maximum benefit, social housing policies should enable people to stay longer (Prince 1998).

Without quality housing and a broader framework of supportive policy and programs, poverty results in higher costs for society as a whole. The National Council of Welfare (2011) identified three kinds of economic costs for societies:

- Direct costs of poverty, such as income supports (e.g., social assistance, working income tax benefits) and services specifically for people in poverty.
- Indirect costs, such as high use of emergency wards, police, courts, remedial

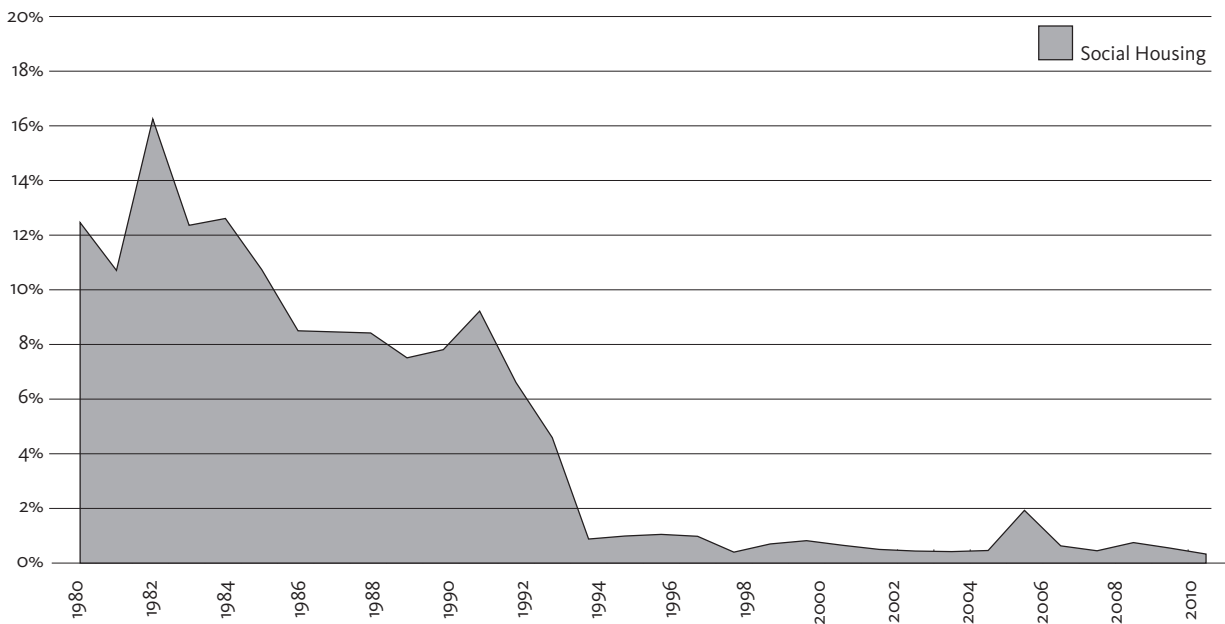
education and other specialized services that are among the most expensive parts of the public service systems on which we all rely. There are indirect private costs to individuals and businesses as well, such as increased need for personal insurance and security systems, including gated and privately policed communities for the wealthiest.

- Societal costs represent the loss of potential contribution to society and the strain that poverty and steep inequalities place on everyone along the income ladder. People in poverty often must devote a large part of their energy to finding enough food to eat, staying safe, traveling to and from part-time jobs and following the rules of various bureaucracies. Their time could be spent more productively in training and education, parenting and better jobs. The opportunities that are denied to children can carry especially long-term costs. Poverty and steep inequalities are connected to increased social ills and health problems that extend to the wider population. (8)

Studies of housing programs that focus on housing people quickly rather than gradually suggest that providing people with housing, particularly when supports are included, “resulted in a substantial reduction in homelessness, and a marked reduction in the use of shelters, hospitals and correctional facilities” (National Council of Welfare 2011, 52). Social housing is a key part of poverty reduction, and so although it is an upfront, direct cost, over the long term, social housing—particularly when combined with other supports—will help to reduce the indirect and social costs of poverty.

¹ Social housing is a broad term that refers to housing that receives ongoing government subsidies, and which subsidizes rents paid by tenants to a certain proportion of their income (usually 25-30 percent). Social housing may be managed by governments, co-operatives or by non-profit organizations. Public housing refers to social housing that is managed by a government, such as Manitoba Housing.

FIGURE 3 Social Housing Construction as a Percentage of All Housing Built in Canada



SOURCE: CMHC 2011a; CMHC 2011b

In Canada, social housing programs started soon after the Second World War, and continued with a variety of different housing programs through the '60s and '70s. In the beginning many of the projects replaced poor quality 'slum' housing with large-scale public housing developments (Hackworth 2009; Silver 2011). Later, the focus shifted away from larger public housing complexes to smaller projects initiated and completed by non-profit organizations. In the 1980s, federal funding began to wane, and in 1993 new funding for social housing was cut completely. Little social housing has been built across Canada since 1993. In Manitoba, the responsibility for social housing now lies with the provincial government.

The result of this devolution is that there is no strategy for housing and little attention being paid to social housing at the national level. The amount of social housing being built dropped dramatically (see Fig. 3), from more than 10 percent of all housing in the 1980s to less than 1 percent over the last decade (Shapcott 2007; CMHC 2011a; CHMC 2011b). As the population continues to grow, and as rents increase faster

than incomes, there is an increasing shortage of housing affordable to lower and even middle-income families (Shapcott 2007). Although the need continues to grow, little affordable and social housing is being built.

Social housing was originally seen as a solution to the overcrowding and social problems that faced many cities during the second World War and for years afterward. Initially public housing programs were intended to provide housing for working-class households, but quickly became "housing of last resort for the poorest of the poor" (Silver 2011, 37). In complexes housing hundreds of families, where households were expected to leave—or wanted to leave—once they had experienced any small measure of success, and new poor families moved in, poverty was normalized. Since at least the late 1960s, public and social housing has been stigmatized by the broader public and increasingly marginalized (Hackworth 2009).

In part, social housing has been stigmatized because it is associated with the concentration of poverty and the many social problems that often

accompany poverty, such as violence, gangs, drugs and drug dealing, as well as challenges faced by single parents, the unemployed or under-employed, and those with low levels of educational attainment. In Winnipeg, these are compounded by racist and colonial attitudes towards Aboriginal tenants, and result in serious quality of life issues for many communities in public housing complexes (Silver 2011). These concerns can also create barriers that stop people from achieving their goals or moving out of poverty.

In many parts of Canada and the United States, public housing complexes have been redeveloped into mixed-income housing following concerns about concentration of poverty. Mixed-income housing is housing that includes a range of incomes; the theory is that since concentration of poverty has brought with it so many social problems, dispersing poverty and bringing middle-income households into lower-income neighbourhoods will help to eradicate these problems. Thibert (2007) argues that “while admittedly not a panacea in solving the problems of discrimination, exclusion, and isolation of the underprivileged, social mixing has been shown to be what housing experts refer to as a precautionary measure in the prevention of social segregation and ghettoisation” (11).

However, this approach has been widely criticised by housing advocates. Often the public housing that is redeveloped in this way is located close to the centre city, in areas that are or have potential to gentrify. Housing advocates have argued that mixed-income housing represents more of a neoliberal approach to gentrifying inner city areas for middle income households than improving housing and neighbourhood conditions for low-income households (August 2008). There is little evidence that such projects benefit lower-income households, who may be forced to move and find new housing in the private market.

Whether living in poor neighbourhoods or mixed-income neighbourhoods, many low-income households experience barriers that are reflective

of and compounded by social exclusion (see Box 1 for a definition of social exclusion). Galabuzi and Labonte (2002) note that social exclusion has four primary aspects:

- Exclusion from civil society: disconnection through legal sanctions, institutional mechanisms or systemic discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation and religion.
- Exclusion from social goods: failure of society to provide for the needs of particular groups, such as housing for the homeless, language services for immigrants, and sanctions to deter discrimination.
- Exclusion from social production: denial of opportunities to contribute to and participate actively in society.
- Economic exclusion: unequal or lack of access to normal forms of livelihood. (1)

Low-income people’s experiences are intertwined with each of these areas, and each area is connected to housing as well. Without good housing, it is difficult to participate in democratic forms of governance, access social programs (including educational opportunities or drivers’ licenses), maintain social relationships and raise a family, or hold down a job.

Poverty—or economic exclusion—is particularly difficult when “the ability of poor individuals to work towards their own inclusion in the absence of market equality is hampered further by the inability of governments to sufficiently provide for people economically when they need assistance” (May 2007, 11). The ongoing neoliberal approach of reducing government spending and supports only increases social exclusion, and increases the barriers to full inclusion.

A common approach to addressing the social exclusion faced by low-income communities involves building social capital. Social capital means the networks that people build and use to support themselves and each other in commu-

Box 1: What Is Social Exclusion?

Social exclusion is a term that is used to explain how people or groups are prevented from participating fully in their society. For example, the social and physical aspects of a neighbourhood can have an impact on the quality of life and levels of social inclusion experienced by its residents (May 2007).

Following Ellen, Mijanovich and Dillman, May (2007) describes how neighbourhoods can affect individuals' access to basic needs, agencies and supports (e.g. healthcare, healthy food and exercise, spaces for social interaction), their experiences of the physical environment (e.g. infrastructure that is not well maintained, pollution, age and quality of housing) and the social environment (e.g. crime, social interactions), as well as social and communications networks (e.g. information sharing about health or other neighbourhood issues, social supports).

nity. It is one way that low-income communities can mitigate some of the gaps described above:

First, local networks are significant for poor people because due to their poverty, mobility is limited. Secondly, local networks might provide informal resources that they do not have access to otherwise. In this manner, they establish informal networks of work, doing things that might otherwise have to be paid for. Individuals' roles may be multiple as their social networks dictate that they play a role in the social network of the neighbourhood. (May 2007, 13)

In addition, social capital helps people meet their emotional and spiritual needs (MacKinnon and Stephens 2008). However, where the physical and social environment does not enable households to meet their needs in these aspects, policies are required to help households mitigate these gaps.

Policies and programs that work to create and reinforce social capital are critical in supporting low-income households and communities, and must enable people to connect to other services and supports (May 2007). They can also help people to deal more effectively with the government systems that affect their lives (MacKinnon and Stephens 2008). These programs and policies are increasingly important in a context where labour markets and government social programs have changed over the last few decades (through individualistic neoliberal approaches),

leaving supports and services increasingly underfunded and difficult to access, even as need for them grows (May 2007).

As such, housing is related to many areas of social policy, including health, education, immigration, community economic development and income security. Housing and poverty—income insecurity—are especially interconnected: households with low incomes often cannot afford good-quality housing in the private market, and households without good housing often have difficulty accessing employment. Social housing is one way that these families can meet their housing needs. By making housing affordable and providing households with good quality housing, social housing is intended not only to provide the benefits associated directly with housing, but also to strengthen the impact of other social policies, such as health, education, or food security. Ensuring that households have access to affordable housing

is the backbone of any good social policy mix. Housing is not solely an end unto itself but is a means to other ends. Research findings emphasize the strategic position that social housing occupies as an important social resource aimed at alleviating the detrimental effects of poverty for low-income households. (Pierre 2007, iii)

In order to address poverty, governments must address the array of challenges that low-income

households face. Housing is an essential foundation, and when households cannot afford housing in the private market, social housing becomes essential.

Many low-income households have found affordable housing in Manitoba's social housing stock. The Province subsidizes approximately 35,000 units of social housing, about half of which are owned by non-profit and Urban Native housing organizations and co-operatives. About 13,000 of the units are owned and managed directly by Manitoba Housing (Manitoba Housing and Community Development 2010).

In Manitoba, social housing is a strong asset for the province. However, during the 1990s, as the federal government withdrew from housing, so did the provincial government (Province of Manitoba 2007). Over the last few years, this has shifted, and in 2007, the Province announced a strategy of "increase[ing] funding for the maintenance and repair of the public housing stock and enhance[ing] services to, and creat[ing] opportunities for, residents" (Province of Manitoba 2007). This led to the recent changes in Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park.

Rather than taking the approach of redeveloping the complexes into middle- and low-income housing, Manitoba Housing has embarked on a process of reinvestment. This includes a complete renovation of all units, new amenities in the neighbourhoods such as lighting, security cameras, playgrounds and community gardens, a childcare centre and resource centres, and increased presence of Manitoba Housing Security and contract security (Manitoba Housing, personal communication, February 24, 2012).

Manitoba Housing has also implemented some policy changes to improve tenants' ability to maintain housing in these complexes. To apply for Manitoba Housing units, tenants fill out an application form, including circumstances that affect their housing situation, and providing identification and proof of income. There is

a waiting list for units, but once units are available, tenants are offered a choice of up to three units (Manitoba Housing date unknown). If their household income increases after they have moved in, tenants are no longer obliged to move out into the private market: instead, their rent is adjusted relative to their income and a rent cap—a ceiling for the maximum rent the tenant can be charged under rent-geared-to-income—is established to ensure that the housing remains affordable. This enables people to afford food, clothing and other necessities and have a decent quality of life. It also means that if people later lose their jobs, having had to move out, they do not have to go back on a waiting list for social housing. This also helps to keep households in the neighbourhood for longer, building community cohesion and social capital (Manitoba Housing, personal communication, February 24, 2012; March 12, 2013).

Other policies that have recently been implemented include taking a holistic approach to social housing provision: rather than acting purely as a landlord, Manitoba Housing is partnering with non-profit organizations and others to meet tenants' needs, including education and employment preparedness, social engagement, childcare, and community development (Manitoba Housing, personal communication, April 24, 2012; August 20, 2012). Manitoba Housing has also become much more concerned with community safety: tenants who do not follow the rules and the law are dealt with quickly and directly, with warnings and evictions (Manitoba Housing, personal communication, August 28, 2012).

This is a significant change in Manitoba Housing's approach to housing provision. Previously, Manitoba Housing operated primarily as a landlord; its focus has now shifted to providing housing, supporting stable tenancies, and building community capacities. This more holistic perspective is intended to better serve the tenants who live in Manitoba Housing.

Methodology

This project was initiated by Manitoba Housing, which approached the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba (CCPA-MB) to look at the impact of the changes that have taken place in Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park over the last few years. The CCPA-MB, in turn, approached the Lord Selkirk Park Resource Centre and the Gilbert Park Resource Centre, both of which expressed interest in the research and agreed to partner with the CCPA-MB to conduct the research. The focus for the project—looking at safety, employment, and community well-being—was developed through initial conversations with staff at both resource centres and Manitoba Housing.

Although it examines two communities, this research is not comparative. Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park are different communities, with different histories and current contexts. Although they face many of the same challenges, the two communities have different needs and priorities. The perspectives and stories shared here reflect a moment in time in the two communities, and should not be taken as a reflection of all Manitoba Housing complexes.

To gather the information for the project, we conducted interviews and focus groups, and dis-

tributed a survey to tenants and service providers in Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park (see Appendix A for the research guides and survey, and Appendix B for the consent forms). The resource centres' support was invaluable in coordinating interviews with tenants and meetings with staff. Two community interviewers were hired from each complex, and they received training on confidentiality and interview techniques, as well as support in setting up and carrying out the interviews as needed. The interviewers also contributed to the analysis of the results, through a discussion to debrief and analyse what they heard through the interviews.

A total of 36 interviews were completed (18 in each of Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park). The interviews were approximately 30 minutes long, and focused on tenants' perspectives on the changes that have taken place over the last few years in each complex. Tenants were recruited through the resource centres in each complex, and received an honorarium to recognize their contribution to the study.

As the number of interviews conducted in each complex is very small relative to the total number of households, a short survey was distributed to each unit, and was available in the

resource centres. The survey asked questions about what people liked and did not like about the complexes, and offered an opportunity for people to express their opinion of the changes they had seen. Thirty-six surveys were received from the tenants in the two complexes. Many tenants took the time to write detailed responses to the questions, and although tenants in both communities had the option of dropping the surveys off at the local resource centre, many took the time and expense of mailing them or dropping them off at the *CCPA-MB* office.

In Gilbert Park, youth were identified by the Resource Centre as a demographic that should be included in the research. Working with Gilbert Park Going Places and the Gilbert Park Boys and Girls Club, we hired a youth facilitator to conduct two focus groups with youth, one with boys and one with girls. Nineteen youth participated in the two groups, and received an honorarium to recognize their contribution to the study.²

The principal researcher conducted individual and group interviews with staff working in community organizations or for Manitoba Housing at each complex. These interviews focused on the changes that have taken place in each complex, and the impact these have had on the community organizations or Manitoba Housing work in the complex, as well as changes staff have seen in the wider community.

The interviews, focus groups and surveys were transcribed and analysed using *HyperRESEARCH 3.0*. Once the initial analysis was completed, the principal researcher made presentations at the two communities to share the research and offer an opportunity for community members to add more detail, ask questions, or correct misunderstandings and misinformation. These presentations were open to the public; a newsletter summarizing the presentation was compiled for each community, and copies were left at the resource centres for people who were not able to attend the presentation (see Appendix C for the newsletters).

² The idea of talking with youth was also raised in Lord Selkirk Park, but as there are no youth-serving agencies focused specifically on Lord Selkirk Park, there was no forum for organizing such a process.

Gilbert Park

Gilbert Park is a housing complex located in the Burrows-Keewatin area of Winnipeg, about a 20-minute drive north-west of downtown. Burrows-Keewatin is a primarily residential neighbourhood, with an industrial area to the north and north-east, and residential and commercial areas to the south and west. There are numerous shops and services nearby, including a school, health clinic, grocery stores and pharmacies.

There are a number of service agencies within the Gilbert Park community, including the Gilbert Park Resource Centre, NorWest Co-op Community Health Centre, Boys and Girls Club, Gilbert Park Going Places, and Four Feathers daycare. There are also various service agencies that come into the community on an occasional or regular basis, including the Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, and Employment and Income Assistance (Province of Manitoba).

In 2006, the most recent year for which statistics are available, Burrows-Keewatin had 2,760 residents, of whom approximately 1000 live in Gilbert Park (see Table 4) (City of Winnipeg 2008a). In Burrows-Keewatin, 29 percent of the population identifies as Aboriginal, compared with 10 percent in all of Winnipeg, and 22 percent

identifies as visible minority, compared with 16 percent in Winnipeg (City of Winnipeg 2008a). Forty-three percent of area residents do not have a high school diploma, compared with 23 percent of Winnipeggers (City of Winnipeg 2008a).

The unemployment rate is similar in Burrows-Keewatin and Winnipeg, at 6.2 percent compared with 5.2 percent, but household incomes are significantly lower in Burrows-Keewatin (City of Winnipeg 2008a). Average household incomes are \$42,582 in Burrows-Keewatin, and \$63,023 in Winnipeg, while median household incomes are \$35,807 and \$49,790 respectively (City of Winnipeg 2008a). As well, the percentage of the population falling below the after-tax low-income cut-off is more than twice as high in Burrows-Keewatin, at 33 percent, as in Winnipeg at 16 percent (City of Winnipeg 2008a).

Gilbert Park is a family complex, which means that its units are geared towards families. At the end of November 2012, 228 of the 254 townhouse units in Gilbert Park were occupied; most of the vacant units were due to turnover (Manitoba Housing, personal communication, December 4, 2012). Of the families that lived there in November 2012, 72.4 percent received Employment and Income Assistance (EIA); the other 27.6 percent

TABLE 4 Burrows-Keewatin and Winnipeg

	Burrows-Keewatin	Winnipeg
Number of residents	2760	633,451
Aboriginal identity	29.2 %	10.2 %
Visible minority	22.1 %	16.3 %
Education — no certificate, diploma or degree	43 %	23.1 %
Unemployment rate	6.2 %	5.2 %
Average household income	\$42,582	\$63,023
Median household income	\$35,807	\$49,790
Low income cut off after taxes	33.2 %	15.7 %

SOURCE: Adapted from City of Winnipeg 2008a.

received income from other sources and paid a rent geared to income (Manitoba Housing, personal communication, December 4, 2012).

In Gilbert Park, 18 tenants took part in interviews for this project. Of the participants, two were men and 16 were women. Participants were between 31 and 69, with nine participants in their 30s and two over 65 (one participant declined to share their age). Ethnic backgrounds varied, with participants identifying as Aboriginal, Caucasian, Congolese, Cree, Métis, Native American, Saulteaux, Status Indian, and white. All participants had children: fifteen had children at home, one had children in care, and others had children that are grown up and no longer living at home. Participants had lived in the community from six to 35 years. Nine had lived in Gilbert Park from six to ten years, and seven had lived there for 11 or more years (two people did not answer the question).

Twelve surveys were received from Gilbert Park. Respondents had lived in Gilbert Park from ten months to 19 years. As well, two focus groups were held with youth in Gilbert Park. Nine boys, aged 11 to 16, participated in the first focus group, and 10 girls aged 12 to 17 participated in the second. Two of the girls did not live in Gilbert Park, but come to visit friends. Most of the youth had lived in the area for 5 or more years.

What Changed?

Change has been coming to Gilbert Park gradually. The NorWest Co-op Community Health

Centre and Boys and Girls Club have been working in the community for many years. The Gilbert Park Resource Centre, which is operated by NorWest in a space provided by Manitoba Housing, opened in 2005, and offers employment and EIA resources, as well as other programs and supports. Gilbert Park Going Places was established as a new resource to support youth and their families in 2009.

In 2008, Manitoba Housing began the renovations of the Gilbert Park development. The renovations included:

- major renovations on the interiors of all townhouses including an energy efficiency program (water, lighting, heating and insulation upgrades and geothermal heating system for 28 homes)
- all townhouse exteriors, including fences around the yards, and
- a new playground and skateboard park.

Tenants described a number of changes in their housing units over the past three years. These included everything in the units being new, including appliances, drywall, doors, kitchens, bathrooms, and flooring. The fences around the yards are new, and many households moved around the area, some to bigger or smaller units.

Tenants also talked about changes they had seen in the broader neighbourhood, many of which stem from the Manitoba Housing renovations. These included new community gardens,

security cameras, picnic tables and the gazebo in the park, the new look of the area with fresh paint on the outside of the buildings and how people use their yards now that they are fenced. People also mentioned the new amenities for children and families, including the park and play structure, skate park, the splashpad, and the basketball courts.

As these physical changes were taking place, some broader changes were also taking place in Manitoba Housing. As the renovations process got underway, Manitoba Housing worked to engage tenants in the renovations process and to inform them of what was happening. The Manitoba Housing offices were reorganized, bringing maintenance staff and a tenant services coordinator directly into Gilbert Park (instead of being at the head office). Manitoba Housing Security also changed its services, adding patrols in the community at night, security cameras and better lighting. Tenants also mentioned that some tenants had been evicted because they were partying or dealing drugs, and commented that this makes the community quieter and a better place to live.

Perceptions of the changes

Overall, most people liked the renovations in their units. Eleven interviewees said their unit was better than before, five said it was the same or both better and worse, and one person said it was worse than before (one did not answer the question). Of those who answered the survey, nine said their current unit was better than three years ago, one said it was the same, and one said it was worse (one did not answer the question).

People mentioned the exteriors and new paint:

The renovations are nice, the new paint jobs, it looks brand new. They're nicer than before.

I like the colours, the painting on the outside.

Different, they don't look all the same anymore.

The people who moved into bigger units were pleased to have more space:

I like my home, it is big and lots of room for everyone.

Bigger, more space.

They also liked the fact that everything was new and updated:

It's just nicer and cleaner. Like my place, I lived there for 12 years, it wasn't painted once. And here it's nice...

Newness: I like that everything is in there is new, better washers and dryers.

And especially, people liked the kitchens and the appliances.

The new kitchen cupboards are nice.

I like the kitchen.

The island in the kitchen.

I like the new washers and dryers, stove and fridge.

The new bathrooms are good, especially the showers [some old units didn't have showers].

Although most people were happy that their units were renovated, there were also many complaints about the quality of the renovations. Six interviewees and five tenants who filled out a survey mentioned problems they had encountered, including things breaking or cracking, or unfinished parts of the renovations (see Box 2 for more details).

For the most part, people also spoke positively about the changes they observed in the area. Eight interviewees mentioned that they like the gardens:

We have the garden. Before we didn't have. Now we have the garden and a chance to grow more food.

and the fences around their yards:

The fenced in yards, nice, that way you can have your own gardens and privacy, barbecues, and stuff like that.

Box 2: Problems Some Tenants Encountered With the Renovations

- The handles or doors of kitchen cupboards, or the cupboards themselves, fall off (this was by far the most common complaint)
- The difficulty of replacing the fluorescent light bulbs in the kitchen
- Doors that do not fit the frames and letting draughts in from the outside
- Cracking drywall
- Tiles cracking and/or lifting off the floor
- Poor caulking in the bathroom
- Gaps between countertops and the wall
- Less cupboard space in new kitchens
- Smaller units—the perception that renovations just went over the old drywall

Some people said that the area as a whole looks better:

The whole look of the complex is better than it was.

There is great environmental improvement. I like that.

The youth like all the new amenities and resources for youth. They talked about both Gilbert Park Going Places and the Boys and Girls Club as places to go for fun activities, field trips, and to get snacks. They also mentioned the new basketball court and the skate park as amenities that they enjoy taking advantage of. One parent said that

I'm more comfortable, 'cause there's more things for the kids to do. They've got the wading pool at the school, they've got the skate park that they put in, they've got the watering pad that they put in, they put the new basketball courts that keep my kids busy, they've got the Boys and Girls Club, they've got [Gilbert Park Going Places]. I like it because it keeps the kids busy and off the streets.

People also talked about changes they saw relating to safety, especially the increase in Manitoba Housing presence at the complex (discussed

in more detail below). The main changes that people did not like related to staff turnover and safety concerns for youth in the area (also discussed below).

All of these changes, including both the renovations and the broader changes in the neighbourhood, have had a significant impact on the tenants of Gilbert Park, especially on safety and security, jobs and education, and community well-being in the area.

Safety and Security

Safety and security is a big concern for many people living in Gilbert Park. Tenants identified a number of different concerns relating to safety and security, and talked about the changes that they had seen and that they would like to see in the community relating to community safety issues.

Of the interviewees, nine said that they always feel safe walking around Gilbert Park, but seven people said that they feel somewhat safe or only safe at some times of day. At night, after dark, many people do not feel safe walking around the area:

It depends what time of the day or night it is. If it's night, then no. But during the day, yes.

Two interviewees said that they do not feel safe, no matter what time it is:

When I take out my garbage, I lock my door.

I used to walk quite a bit, but not now. Too many drugs around here. Too many drugs in this place, lately.

Reasons for not feeling safe vary, but are primarily related to fear of others in the area, particularly those who may be drunk or high:

Some of the people in the area are very scary and aggressive.

When they're all drinking [at the park at night], you can't walk around there.

The drugs and the drunk people in the area. My children are very scared of them.

Six interviewees mentioned concerns about the children and youth in the area; three people also mentioned it in their survey responses. The concerns range from concern for the wellbeing of the children and youth who are at risk of being pulled into gangs and drugs:

I don't like the involvement and encouragement of neighbours' kids into drug, alcohol and sexual activities.

My only concern is that my kids are getting to that—they're in the teenage years, that's the gang activity, trying to recruit the younger ones.

Drugs, the alcohol, the people that are not supposed to be in this neighbourhood, that are banned out of this neighbourhood that are still in this neighbourhood. Kids drinking, doing drugs, and fighting and some of the gangs and stuff like that. [Okay. And they're underage kids drinking?] Absolutely ... I have to watch my son. If he's outside I have to watch him all the time, because there's bullies and there's also a lot of other people that are trying to give them drugs and alcohol.

to concerns that children running around unsupervised will get into trouble:

Just the children have changed. So much different than 10 years ago, or it's just—it's just more violence and disrespect from the kids. ... But I think it's just society changing. 'Cause it's even changed here in the last 10 years to now, it's a lot different. [So you see it as part of the bigger societal shift?] Yeah... I think it's just a lack of parent involvement, like some of the kids around here are just bored, and we've got so many programs for them, and it's just—I think lack of parent involvement.

A lot of kids in the area have bad mouths on them and are really bad and get my kids in trouble. And then my kids get grounded 'cause they're just wanting to play follow the leader and play copycat. And that's why I'm very strict on where they go and they have to tell me where they go and who they're going to be with and I'm very picky when it comes to dealing with the kids.

These kids, running around, like I see them running around late at night and it really upsets me. You know, they're alone, and that upsets me. You know, 11 o'clock at night, there's 5 and 6 year olds, that stresses me. ... The kids. It's—the kids are so—they don't listen. I've told kids to get out of my yard, and they'll tell me that it's not your yard, it's Manitoba Housing. And these are like six and seven year-old kids, and I'll say "it's my yard, I pay my rent". "No you don't, you're on welfare". You know, and I just look at them and I think what, what is wrong with you guys, like I have grandchildren and great grandchildren you don't talk—but that's what they do. And like, Boys and Girls Club is great, I think they are great people, I've talked to them, you know, and they try, but soon as they leave Boys and Girls Club, kids are on their own.

The issue of children playing outside unsupervised was raised by a few people, but one per-

son commented that there are fewer children out at night:

The changes I've noticed is a lot of the kids in the area are starting to be less at night, you don't see a lot of the younger children out late, that's part of the things I've noticed when it comes to young kids.

Others mentioned that they would like to see a curfew in Gilbert Park, especially for children and youth.

Security has improved a lot. And I'm happy for that. I just wish the curfew would start kicking in, that they said was supposed to kick in.

There's a lot of people that want to see a curfew for the young kids, well, we need to have a group of people that agree on a time and, you know, how they'd like it enforced and they need to go to Housing and they will enforce it.

At one point there was a curfew, set at 9pm for children under 14. Manitoba Housing Security, the Winnipeg Police, and child protection agencies worked together to first educate tenants about the curfew, and then to enforce it. The curfew is no longer in effect, but some people think it is still present.

Despite the concerns expressed by the adults, many youth are comfortable walking around at any hour of the day or night, but others identified specific behaviours that made them feel unsafe, such as bullying, fighting, or drunk or high people.

It's mostly safe, some kids are fighting.

Certain times are more dangerous, like at night—you can walk around late at night, but when it gets boring you go home.

It's mostly safe. Sometimes it's not safe, like at night, or in some places like Shaughnessy Park.

It's not safe—people are drunk sometimes.

The youth are aware of the violence, gangs and drugs in the area, but mostly still feel that it's

a safe area. The youth also talked about the increased presence of Manitoba Housing Security, and said that it makes the community safer. However, some youth also said that Security staff follow them around and take photos of them, which makes them uncomfortable. A few youth said that they enjoy walking around at night, and are not in favour of a curfew.

Tenants noticed a number of changes relating to safety and security in the Gilbert Park area over the last three years, mostly relating to a stronger Manitoba Housing Security presence:

Now that we've got Security it's a little bit better, and now that we're getting cameras, that'll be a lot better. Those are the two things.

I noticed that the Security started to improve, and now when your kids get hurt the Security's there to support you in all sorts of ways. And they don't put up with anybody's crap. So it's good. I hope it improves a lot better.

There's a better overall sense of safety, just because of the presence of Security and we see them quite often, and they provide a sense of security to more people.

Biggest change I've seen is in the Security. Number 1, having it. And watching them become part of the community, it's kind of cool. Changes the relationship, changes the safety dynamic as well. ... That's a big thing. [Like the patrols?] We have on foot Security and then we have mobile Security. We have contract Security and we have Manitoba Housing Security. So it's kind of cool. Manitoba Housing Security has invested a lot of time and energy in building relationships, which is awesome. Contract Security is getting better, but they don't have the same connection to the community so. Big difference.

At the same time, however, many people feel that Manitoba Housing Security should be doing more. Seven interviewees mentioned a need

Box 3: Roles of Security Staff and Volunteers

Manitoba Housing Security: the main security staff on-site. Will intervene in incidents on Manitoba Housing property.

CORS Security: contract security, providing back-up services. Act as 'eyes and ears' and report to Manitoba Housing Security.

Winnipeg Police Services: providing emergency services. Should be called in all safety-related emergencies.

Citizens on Patrol: community volunteers who patrol the neighbourhood and act as 'eyes and ears', watching out for community safety.

for more Security personnel or for Security to be more active:

There's Security, but sometimes they're basically here for nothing. When they are needed for help they walk away.

Some say the Security is safety, but I don't see the safety of the Security, it doesn't seem that they do anything, to me anyway. What I see. They walk around, sure they walk around, but they don't go bother anybody, like I had a fellow like this, why don't you get them, like the dealers, we've got two here and we've got three here, we don't want these guys, we want the big guy, what's wrong with these guys.

As noted above by one tenant, there are two types of security patrols in Gilbert Park. One is the official Manitoba Housing Security, and the second is the CORS contract security. These two groups play different roles in maintaining safety in Gilbert Park, along with the Winnipeg Police Services and the Citizens on Patrol (see Box 3). However, there is some confusion among tenants about these roles and where they may be limited. For example, when hearing a complaint that Manitoba Housing Security were not getting involved in a situation, the interviewer asked what colour shirt the security staff were wearing. She then explained the difference between Manitoba Housing Security and CORS to the tenant, which helped the tenant to under-

stand why sometimes the security staff do not get as involved as the tenants might expect. This confusion may be part of the reason that some tenants think that more Manitoba Housing Security or more active security staff are needed in Gilbert Park.

Two interviewees and some of the staff also mentioned the Citizens on Patrol Program (COPP), where community members are trained to patrol the neighbourhood, taking notes and talking to people about safety and security. The COPP volunteers wear brightly coloured jackets, and are very visible as they walk around the community. In Gilbert Park, the COPP volunteers are two women who have been part of the community for many years. Although not discussed in depth, it seems that having COPP volunteers visible and available in the community brings a sense of security. One staff said:

We're hearing from kids that they don't like [the COPP volunteers] when they are telling them not to do something, but they do know that they're there as 'safe people'.

The staff suggested that having the COPP volunteers present

Probably does prevent a lot of things without them even realizing.

Another factor that has changed the sense of safety in Gilbert Park is the removal of people

who do not uphold their tenancy agreement. Often this means people who are partying excessively, doing or dealing drugs, or acting violently:

Kicking out the bad people, around Gilbert Park, drug dealers.

Although the tenants considered this a good thing, the process can take a while:

There's still a lot of gang activity and stuff. I mean, they are trying to crack down on all of that, from what I hear, but I don't know. I had a neighbour that was constantly partying and breaking things and there were stabbings there and stuff like that, it's like wow, and they've had so many warnings and stuff and it took a long time before they were actually evicted. It almost... over a year. They got evicted eventually, but...

Although there are obvious benefits for the community to evicting troublemakers, Manitoba Housing staff identified some challenges with this process. The first is that unless Manitoba Housing is aware of the issues, they cannot take steps to evict tenants. This requires tenants to talk to Manitoba Housing and Security staff and let them know what is going on. However, there is a strong culture in Gilbert Park of not wanting to be seen as an informer, and so tenants may not talk to Manitoba Housing for fear of retribution. To address this, Manitoba Housing staff described how they work to make it as easy as possible for tenants to contact Manitoba Housing about any concern, through the Housing Communications Centre. They are also working to build trust with the community, by having an office in the community, and organizing soccer games and community events with Security staff and community members.

The second challenge is the tension between supporting families whose teenagers may be acting out, and supporting the safety of the community as a whole. One staff member pointed out that:

... the idea of evicting a family of five, because of the child's behaviour, it's very challenging for a bunch of reasons, 'cause where do they go? But then having to weigh the safety of the community, so.

Manitoba Housing staff will continue to struggle with this tension, but hopefully it will be reduced if safety continues to improve in the area.

The final change that tenants discussed relates to the security cameras that were to be installed soon after the interviews took place. Most people were pleased and hopeful that the cameras would help make the community safer:

I heard cameras are supposed to be coming in. [What do you think about that?] I love it. It just makes me want to stay more in the community, because then they make me feel more safer out there, and then you'll know what's what and who's what and so that will be good.

Overall, there is a sense that the community is getting safer, though perhaps not quickly enough. There have not been any significant safety incidents in the last few years at Gilbert Park; now seeing a couple of police cars in the area is a major event. However, many staff made a point of noting that although visible crime may have been reduced, and the community may feel safer, there is still a significant amount of domestic violence in Gilbert Park, which may not be reported and may not be visible. For these households, the perception that the area is safer may not be true inside their homes, although there is no way to quantify this without further research.

Jobs and Education

As noted above, in Gilbert Park about 72.4 percent of the households rely on Employment and Income Assistance (Manitoba Housing, personal communication, December 4, 2012). Of the 18 tenants who were interviewed for this study, six had jobs or were in school, five were look-

ing for jobs or educational opportunities, and others are retired or on disability. One tenant identified their work as an unpaid caregiver and community volunteer. Three years ago, nine of the 18 had jobs or were in school. Some tenants mentioned barriers that stop them from being able to participate in jobs or education:

I'm actually in the processes of hoping to get into education. But that's at a standstill right now 'cause I have to get childcare for my kids.

I'm currently looking for a job; educational opportunities I cannot go for because I'm on welfare. They put me through school a few years back and they told me that because they put me through college I can't take anymore schooling. If I want schooling I have to get my own funding, which means my own living expenses and my own tuition. Which sucks.

Despite these barriers, staff said that the two resource centres in the area (Gilbert Park and Blake Gardens) have high rates of educational engagement (e.g. people attending or going back to upgrading programs, high school, college, university), and according to staff, people are accessing more educational resources now than before. In addition to employment or education, four people mentioned volunteering and participating in community activities or being a caregiver for others as their way of contributing to the community:

I have a job at home. I'm a community volunteer here at Gilbert Park, and I have a son who has disabilities. And needs me to be there for him.

When I was volunteering I was getting \$100 a month, but now that's it. [Oh, and you were volunteering where?] At the senior home, I go there every week... Yeah, I go there Mondays and Wednesdays. Sometimes Fridays. Set the tables and things like that. Going on four years I think. And I go down to the Harvest on Thursdays, that's seven years.

The role of volunteers cannot be underestimated, both for the organizations that benefit and for the community itself. One staff shared an example of the important role that volunteers, especially community leaders, play in building and supporting community in Gilbert Park:

One client came in with a problem she was trying to solve. The staff talked with her, but it was another tenant who spoke up, in a leadership role, and helped to advocate for a solution for this person. This resulted in two learnings: the leadership is recognized by others in the community, and it is recognized by service providers, so these community leaders can mediate between the two groups.

Recognition and pride in the work of other tenants can be seen in how people talk about the renovations. During the renovations, one side of the community was primarily renovated by contractors, while the other side was renovated by community members who were hired and trained to work on the renovations. The work that the community members put in is a source of pride for themselves and for the community, to be able to say 'so-and-so built this'.

[Were you hired to work on the renovations?]

No. I know lots of people who were though, it was awesome. There's a lot of pride in this community over that. ... They contracted a company to do some of it, and they didn't take so much pride in their work. Big difference between the two sides.

One of the tenants who was hired to work on the renovations pointed out fixtures in their home and described their pride in their work:

Actually I made these here, I installed them here. [In your house?] Yeah. [How does that feel?] Awesome! I can say I actually did this here. [What do your kids think about it?] They love it. They're proud of it. Everybody's proud of it.

One staff mentioned this sense of pride as well:

We did have a few community members who were involved with [the renovations], and I don't know necessarily what they're doing work-wise now, but I can say that, you know, it could have been two people, I'm sure it was more than that, but even if it was two people, there is a sense in the community that there was more than two. So when people talk about it, they're like, oh yeah, there was people from Gilbert Park working on the renos, and so you know, it's kind of like, and that in itself, whether it was two people or not, I think people really feel like there was an opportunity for them.

Staff also mentioned that some of the people hired to work on the renovations continued to build on their training and found work in construction afterwards, whether as general labourers or with a specialization.

Youth in Gilbert Park also participate in educational programs in the community. Gilbert Park Going Places is a relatively new centre, and it works in partnership with the well-established Boys and Girls Club to provide opportunities for children and youth to participate in programs.

When asked what the youth do when they're not at school, the two youth clubs feature highly. They talked about fun activities and events in the clubs, going on field trips, and eating snacks. There are homework clubs and a chance to play Xbox, and perhaps most importantly, a place to hang out. Many of the boys talked about going to the clubs and participating in sports and other activities. The girls said that sometimes they go to the clubs, but sometimes they prefer to walk around outside because there's nothing to do.

One girl, who had moved away from Gilbert Park, said that since she moved away:

I don't have all the opportunities I had when I lived here, like meeting new people, a fun place to hang out with friends.

The girls also identified a need for programming designed specifically for girls, such as soccer, non-sports activities like music or dancing, and "a good place to chill". The boys enjoy the sports programs, but one or two boys asked about programs for youth who do not like sports. Staff described how these programs offered by Gilbert Park Going Places and the Boys and Girls Club can be an important space for youth who otherwise might fall through the cracks:

It's also positive having kids be really involved in a program—we had a girl who came to every single peer mentor group, and there was 15 sessions, and she would miss school all the time and was not doing well in school at all, but she was really doing a great job in this program, so there are ways to engage.

Despite these successes, there are not enough spots in the clubs for all the children and youth who would want to participate. Although some youth are able to participate, when staff have to turn youth away

It breaks relationships, the more we have to shut the door on somebody and say we're full. I just learned your name, you almost didn't swear at me, but then I told you you couldn't come in three times, now you hate me and you're not coming back, like you might not come back at all.

Both the youth and the staff talked about the need to increase the size and hours of the clubs, to make it possible for more children and youth to participate.

Community Well-being

There is a strong sense of community in Gilbert Park. Many of the tenants talked about the sense of community as one of the reasons they like living there. The youth said that "everyone knows everyone", and of the adults, half said they know many or most of the people in the neighbourhood. This sense of community has been around for a long time, as evidenced

by the Jigtown³ Facebook group, where people share memories and comment on photos of the Gilbert Park area and community; some of the photos go back as far as the 1980s.

One staff member noted that people move to Gilbert Park for different reasons: in some cases, it was the fastest housing they could get, but in other cases people moved in because they have networks of friends, or grew up in the area and wanted to move back. Staff also talked about how friendly the neighbourhood is—walking around the area, people will lean out their windows to shout greetings, and the children know everyone in the area. One tenant said:

My neighbour is very, very good. We talk, we exchange some ideas, sometimes, and we exchange some culture.

These strong community relationships are not necessarily new, but they are being felt and expressed in new ways. There are opportunities for people to get together and get to know each other as a community:

A bunch of community gatherings, you know, a lot of people get, have to get to know your neighbours, right? So I agree with all these barbecues that they're having. Like we even have one this weekend where all the neighbours have theirs...

and the new spaces for people to gather, to hang out, are well-used by families:

Absolutely, the park is fantastic, it's nice to have a new park that's a nice place for the kids to play. With that as well is the common areas being more welcoming to families and community members, they're able to get out and converse with their neighbours more.

One of the first stages in the renovations was the building of fences around each house's front and back yard. The fences are wooden, about three feet

high, and clearly define the boundaries of people's yards. The yards were always there, and people could have used them, but because they were so open, people would walk through the yards or children would run and play through them. Litter would blow along the street and into the yards.

On a practical level, the fences make child-care easier for parents:

I like the fact that they have the fences now. It helps a lot, a great deal especially when two of my kids wanted to run out the door all the time, the only difference now is I gotta buy a lock for the gate!

Along with the fences, Manitoba Housing gave each household responsibility for maintaining the yard.

The gardening is a good one, the flower beds that we're allowed to have is a good one, and the fences, I like because then everybody's responsible for their own yard, and then it takes a lot of stress off of Manitoba Housing, but they just gotta learn how to take care of their yards.

I think the sense of community, you know, people have more ownership and more pride, and there's more things in common—I think people are finding out that they have more things in common with the people around them, just based on how they care for their yard, and they're finding they have the same interest, like community gardens, you know what I mean, they're finding that they're people that have the same interests and might not have had that connection before.

As this tenant mentions, the fences also provide an opportunity for people to connect as they see what their neighbours are doing with their yards. Some people planted flowers or vegetables in garden boxes, others have barbecues and chairs for sitting outside, and others have toys or play structures for children. One staff mem-

³ Jigtown is a nickname for Gilbert Park.

ber described their favourite front yard and the impact it has had on the community:

One resident has a heart-shaped pond with fish in it, and he's so proud of it and there's so much traffic and people are going and stopping by, and that's positive, I think. I've brought people there, people are checking it out, they're bringing friends ... I think that's positive, and really, that's a hole, with water and fish, and it's bringing people together and it's a sense of pride.

This sense of pride was evident through many of the interviews. The renovations, the area looking nicer, the fences, and the personal touches that people have added to their yards all combine to generate a positive feeling about the neighbourhood.

It's a better place to live, but it, like it's not, it had to do with the renovations, but I think it was like an overall feeling because there's still so many long term tenants there, like who have been there since before the renovations and they kind of uplifted those long term tenants, you know to be more prideful.

There's more community pride, which made a huge difference in this community. We don't feel the way we're portrayed in the media so much. It's not run down. There's some people that don't take care of their stuff, that's everywhere. But I think it brought out community pride. Huge. Fences, people have put stuff in their yards. Washer, dryer. Oh my God, they trusted us! Brand new, washer and dryer. It was like wow! ... Before they put the fences, number one, every house looked the same. Brown and white. And you didn't have a yard. My row has 13 units in the row, before there's a break. And I would have garbage, like garbage would go all the way down the row, and you couldn't clean your yard because it wasn't your yard, it was a 13-family yard, and some people, well, Housing would cut the grass which was good. But you had no sense of yours. No space that was yours other

than inside your house. And the fences went up and people were like, oh, this is my space. And I don't have to put up with that guy's garbage or I don't have to have their kids running through my yard and I saw barbecues and picnic tables and you know, umbrellas and people started to take pride in their yard. I have gardens, and finally got a gate, 'cause when I moved, my gate was broken and I finally got a gate and now people don't sit in my yard drunk on my doorstep which they have. And it was the first visual thing.

Not only are the changes creating a sense of pride in the community, but also it seems that the changes are proactive rather than reactive, working to address the challenges in Gilbert Park rather than responding to a crisis. One tenant talked about how this time, it seems that there is a genuine change afoot in the community, and that the changes are coming from a good place.

I think [the fence] was the first improvement that was made here in a very long time. That and the park. But the park we got from a negative, the fences we just got, I think. [What do you mean you got the park from a negative?] Every time something bad happens here, we get something good. The boy that was locked in the shed, in the Four Feathers park area, and it was set on fire, international news, we got a park, because of the regular, like most kids in our community had a very, very old and basic play structure. And in Four Feathers they had this cool one, and it's all fenced off and all these kids would climb over it and they'd want to play on the cool play structure. So after that we got a really good play structure. And then the incidents with the two babies that were hurt here, we got Security. So like, a negative had to happen so that we got the positive. It may not be completely the reason, but it coincided, and most people here feel like something bad had to happen before something good. But in the end, fences were different from that. They just gave

them to us, I think, and it was nice, and I like my yard. I'm proud of it.

This sense of pride and community also extends into action and leadership on behalf of the community. One tenant said that the community is coming together and working to address the issues facing it.

When it does come down to it, I think if need be the community would pull together and you know kind of solve a problem, because usually if there's a problem it's a common problem, so it's not just one person's problem. That's what we try to get through to Housing: just because I put the complaint in doesn't mean it's just my problem, it's a wide-range problem.

One staff noticed a re-energising of many tenants after the renovations, as people saw the changes happening around them and became active in working for more change:

When I started here, there were some tenants who were just tired of being the people who always were involved and always doing things. And so you know, for the first year here, I never saw them, then all of a sudden they kind of started coming out and that was interesting. They kind of felt like 'I'm the person who's always kind of stepping up and doing things and volunteering' and they just were tired of it, now they're kind of coming around again. And I think that there's a feeling that, I mean, these people in particular are really excited about their new places, and the renovations have made tenants who've always been good and respectful of the property, it makes them feel even better because they took care of their old unit, which was not in the best shape but they took care of it, and now they've got this brand new place and they're excited. And it's sort of like they earned that after, you know, being there for so long. And I think that they're seeing it and it sort of makes them feel better, it makes them feel like they own it ... It's like I said that people are

coming out and who didn't used to be involved. And I think that they also think that maybe Housing is listening to them.

These changes are also helping to create a sense of 'home' for many people who may previously have seen Gilbert Park as a stop on their way somewhere else:

I think in regards to the community it just makes more people want to stay. Like more people—they view the community as being their home. You know whereas maybe a lot of people didn't really feel like that they could call it home, like I know that I call Gilbert Park home, and I plan on staying for a while, I have no intention of going anywhere, I enjoy being there.

Actually, I had put in a transfer to move out of this area, and now with all the changes going on in this area, I find myself wanting to stay more.

Although this strong sense of community is beneficial in many ways, there are two ways in particular that it has both a positive and a negative impact on the community. The first, identified by seven tenants and discussed above, is children playing unsupervised in the parks or around the area, both during the day and at night. One staff said

The strong community also feeds that problem of unsupervised children, but at the same time, it's a safety net—if there's a 2 or 3 year old running around who can't speak or know where they live, ask another kid or someone on the street where the child lives, they'll generally know.

Some parents are clearly comfortable with their children playing outside, because of this sense of community, but at the same time, many parents and staff expressed concern about the children, particularly young children, running around without supervision.

The second issue was mentioned by staff, though not by tenants. Gilbert Park is, in many

ways, isolated from the surrounding community and the rest of the city. People living in Gilbert Park are unlikely to leave Gilbert Park to access resources or supports, and there is significant stigma (and often racism) directed towards tenants. Children from the communities surrounding Gilbert Park almost never participate in programs through Gilbert Park Going Places or the Boys and Girls Club. The strong sense of community mitigates this, to a certain extent, as people feel they belong in Gilbert Park, even if not outside. The isolation helps to foster the strong sense of community, but also means people do not necessarily take advantage of programs or supports that may be available outside the area.

At the same time, five tenants mentioned that they particularly like having service providers and resources right in the community. Given that Gilbert Park is a half-hour bus ride from downtown, it would be difficult for many tenants to access services that are only available downtown or in other parts of the city. One staff described the benefits of having EIA staff working out of the resource centre a few days a week:

For EIA, people are used to coming to see their EIA worker here, and otherwise would have to go down to Market Street in the Exchange, which would be really far. And I guess for their cheque they would go, but I think it'd be less likely that they'd make another trip on top of that to go look into counselling or whatever else it is. So right here, we give that chance to encourage people before they're looking for it. And then be able to say, 'oh, it's right next door to you.' You're really taking a big barrier out of the way.

Having a health centre, resource centre, and other supports close by makes it easier to address concerns before they become crises:

If they're having a really bad day, they know that they can pop in and somebody's here to help them out, which normally if you have to

go to a counsellor or talk to somebody, like you probably wouldn't be able to do it the same day.

Similarly, staff talked about how Manitoba Housing's new organizational structure—an office with a Tenant Services Coordinator and maintenance staff in Gilbert Park—makes addressing maintenance issues in the area much easier, as staff are onsite. If something is missed or if a tenant needs to talk to someone about their concerns directly, the Tenant Services Coordinator is available, and the Regional Director for Manitoba Housing is also available.

Three tenants talked about how important the relationships between the community and the service providers are, and how it can disrupt the community when the staff changes. Over the interview period, a number of staff in Manitoba Housing and the service agencies changed positions or left, and new staff were hired.

I think the only, I wouldn't say bad, but I think like the turnover, like staff turnover, having new people come in and adjusting to like new people, like for example the new [Manitoba Housing staff], like 'cause the last one was here for a long time and you kind of form a relationship and now you have to try and form a relationship with somebody who doesn't completely know the background of the people who live there or of the community itself, you know what I mean? So that's kind of a down point is having to form new relationships and form new understanding with these new staff people.

I think the change that affects us the most, that's sometimes negative, is the transition people... we are a very strong community and everybody knows everybody, and everyone looks out for everybody and some people come in and don't really care. And that makes it difficult. And some people come in and do some stupid stuff. Apparently they leave quite quickly though, which also, you know, the new staff changes with Housing, good and bad in

that, because they're getting rid of the people that aren't, you know, paying attention, but now it's hard to approach them, like it's changed the dynamic. And then the resources, we have lots and lots of resources, but there's lots of transition. Between employees, so the kids get used to someone and comfortable with someone and then they're gone, so there's some trust issues. But I don't see anything like negative in the community as a whole, it's just the transition of people in and out that seems to cause a ripple, but it also changes the community for the better sometimes.

As this tenant mentions, there can be good and bad in the staff changes, but all the changes are to some extent disruptive while relationships settle and are re-established.

Although the comments from the tenants suggest that overall, the impact of the renovations and other changes in Gilbert Park over the last three years has been positive, 15 interviewees and six survey respondents said their lives are as or more stressful now than three years ago; only three interviewees and five survey respondents said their lives are less stressful. The most common stressors in people's lives are

- Money:
...just how much it takes to live and money seems to be a stress for everyone, but trying to rob Peter to pay Paul and keep everything going and keep my kids happy and make sure there's food in the house which is number one priority, but still have a life outside of that worth living.
- Children:
When you have a family of seven, I would say extremely stressful, because if you have a family of seven kids!
- Violence in the community:
I find that welfare day and child tax day are really bad around here. That's when I think they should have extra Security. They know, but like with the family violence, I try to stay—I'm too

old to interfere. [So this is family violence that you're seeing outside of your home?] Yeah, oh yeah.

Some people also mentioned addictions (including alcohol and drug abuse), relationships, government systems and an overall lack of support as major stressors. One person, who has had a rough time over the last few years, said:

My life hasn't really changed much over the last year, because of lack of support and lack of knowing where to go, so, I don't know how it's going to look in the near future, 'cause everywhere I've turned to they basically turned away, so I don't know what else to do.

Others talked about how although the renovations are good, they're not necessarily enough:

I think having them renovated is better, but when things break down, it doesn't feel any better.

In respect to renovations I think it's better.

Other issues, well, it stayed the same.

Despite this, overall there is a sense that the community is in better shape than it was before and that the renovations and other neighbourhood changes are helping to make Gilbert Park a better place to live.

The fact that everything is new, it kind of made for better—a feeling of being more comfortable living where you are.

Yeah, the fences, the yards, the Security, little things, I guess that add up to make it a little better. Every year, a little bit more.

Each small change moves the community in a good direction; and people are feeling more optimistic and hopeful now than three years ago. When asked "Overall, how would you describe your hope for the future?", all the tenants said their hope is good, very good, or excellent. When asked if their hope for the future has gotten bet-

ter, worse or stayed the same over the past three years, four tenants said it was the same; the rest said it had gotten better. There is still a great deal of work to be done, but progress is being made and community members are looking forward to the next steps on the journey.

Although in large part these changes are due to the renovations and new amenities in the Gilbert Park area, they are also connected to organizational changes and approaches in Manitoba Housing and the service agencies that serve the area.

As noted above, Manitoba Housing changed its office structure to provide more direct, local support to Gilbert Park (and other complexes), making staff more accessible to tenants and helping staff to keep on top of maintenance. The Tenant Services Coordinator (TSC) is a new position that liaises with tenants to direct them to resources, mediate conflicts, and generally provide support to both tenants and Manitoba Housing staff. The TSC can also advocate on behalf of tenants to Manitoba Housing Security and maintenance staff, helping to navigate the system to ensure that tenants get a faster response.

The resource centre, which was established in the mid-2000s, also helps to provide services to Gilbert Park. Staff feel that tenants see the resource centre as their own space, that organizations come into to provide them with services. It provides shared office space for the TSC and numerous other supports, including Employment and Income Assistance, CAHRD, and NorWest Co-op Community Health.

This means that not only can the organizations coordinate and work together to address individual or community issues, but tenants can also be easily referred to other organizations for supports. One staff member commented that Gilbert Park was a difficult community to build trust in, because before all of these changes there was a sense that no one from Manitoba Housing was in the community; having all the

staff working out of the resource centre enabled relationships of trust to build as tenants got to know the staff.

Staff also commented numerous times on the good working relationships between organizations. There is good communication and collaboration between the various agencies, ranging from a simple awareness of each others' work and referring tenants to the appropriate service as needed to partnering and working together on projects.

These factors, combined with Manitoba Housing's new communications approach of informing people about the changes in their community, their commitment to get rid of graffiti within 72 hours, and the newly renovated suites seem to make Manitoba Housing more friendly, and less like a distant corporation. The service agency staff also mentioned that having Manitoba Housing offices in the community creates opportunities for collaboration that were not previously available.

Summary and Recommendations

The renovations and other changes in Gilbert Park have had many positive impacts on the community. Most people feel safer now, although there are still many safety issues to address. Many people are employed, in school, or volunteer and demonstrate leadership in the community. There is a strong sense of community in Gilbert Park, which has been strengthened as people enjoy their new front yards and take advantage of the new common areas for children and families. Having resources in the community, including the Manitoba Housing office, make it easier for tenants to access supports. Although there is still a lot of work to be done, tenants feel, for the most part, that Gilbert Park is a better place to live now than three years ago.

Taken together, the changes thus far in Gilbert Park have created a lot of momentum. Below are some recommendations to maintain the momentum moving forward.

Continue to maintain the quality of the renovated housing units

(Who: Manitoba Housing, Gilbert Park Resource Centre)

Although the renovated units are new, many tenants who were interviewed expressed concerns with the quality of the construction. Manitoba Housing must continue to budget an adequate amount of funding and staff time to repair and maintain the units, to make sure that the units stay in good condition for a long time.

Manitoba Housing, in partnership with the NorWest Co-op Community Health, should consider holding workshops on basic housing maintenance and repairs. NorWest Co-op Community Health offers supports for parents; Manitoba Housing should partner with NorWest to provide additional supports to parents whose teenagers are acting out and causing damage.

Continue to support the Gilbert Park Resident Advisory Committee

(Who: Tenants, with support from Manitoba Housing and NorWest Co-op Community Health)

The Gilbert Park Resident Advisory Committee is a forum for tenants to discuss and make decisions about community issues, with support from the staff at NorWest Co-op Community Health. It also acts as a process for talking to Manitoba Housing about community issues. This enables tenants to be more involved in decisions relating to Gilbert Park.

Continue to support the youth advisory body

(Who: Youth, with support from Gilbert Park Going Places, Boys and Girls Club, Province of Manitoba)

Youth have opinions about the programming and other aspects of community life that affect them in Gilbert Park, and have shown leadership in expressing these perspectives through the youth programs offered in the community and through the Youth Advisory body coordinated

by Gilbert Park Going Places and the Boys and Girls Club. There may be an opportunity for this group to advocate for youth in the community.

Provide more supports for children, youth and parents

(Who: Province of Manitoba, Gilbert Park Going Places, the Boys and Girls Club of Gilbert Park, NorWest Co-op Community Health, tenants)

Staff, tenants and youth all identified a need for more programming and supports for children and youth in Gilbert Park. Many tenants also talked about the challenges they face raising children and youth. Additional supports (e.g. parenting programs, youth self-esteem programs, stronger relationships with preventive services of mandated agencies) would help families to deal with conflicts and challenges.

Build relationships and trust between community members and child welfare agencies

Many families have had negative experiences with the child welfare system. This has led to distrust and hesitation to reach out for supports that could help mitigate the many pressures and challenges that many families experience. Having onsite supports through the resource centres from non-mandated agencies that provide family supports and parenting programs (e.g. Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, The Family Centre of Winnipeg) and preventive services of mandated child welfare agencies (e.g. Child and Family Services) would help to strengthen parents and families, and address questions before they become issues.

Increase the hours, staff and space for existing child and youth programs

Although there are already significant resources dedicated to children and youth in Gilbert Park, these supports should be expanded. Funding for longer hours, more staff, and more space would help the existing youth-serving agencies provide more resources to more children and youth. It

would also enable the agencies to provide more specialized programs (e.g. non-sports programs, programs for girls).

Continue to improve safety and security

(Who: Manitoba Housing Security, Manitoba Housing, tenants, service agencies)

Although there have been many improvements to safety and security in the Gilbert Park area, tenants identified many ongoing concerns as well, especially relating to gang violence, drugs and addictions.

Establish a safety committee to discuss safety issues

A safety committee would create a forum for tenants to discuss and make decisions about safety issues in Gilbert Park as well as a process for talking to Manitoba Housing Security. The committee could be a sub-committee of the Gilbert Park Residents Advisory Committee (see above) or a stand-alone committee.

Come together to discuss a curfew for youth

Many tenants suggested that a curfew for youth would be a good idea. Manitoba Housing Security is willing to work with the community to enforce it, but the directive for the curfew must come from the tenants. If tenants are interested in establishing a curfew, the first step is to meet and discuss what the curfew would look like (or discuss alternatives, such as signage indicating that the park is closed after a certain time). Part of this work would also be to increase awareness of the need to supervise children, and to get parents engaged and involved in advocating for their children.

Research the possibility of establishing a youth justice committee to address graffiti and vandalism

Vandalism and graffiti are ongoing issues in Gilbert Park, often instigated by youth. Rather than dealing with it through the legal system, having

a process where youth have to take responsibility for their actions (e.g. by washing off the graffiti) could help youth recognize the impact of their actions. Manitoba Justice supports youth justice committees; this would be a complex program to set up, but has many potential long-term benefits. Research would be required to establish if this type of program is feasible. Possible partners include Manitoba Justice, Mediation Services, and Onashowewin Inc.

Hold workshops to clarify the role of the different security staff

Many tenants were not clear about the different roles played by Manitoba Housing Security and CORS Security in patrolling Gilbert Park. Regular presentations by Manitoba Housing Security, perhaps as part of other events, could help to clarify the difference and help tenants to feel more comfortable with the different security staff.

Regularly review safety reports and protocols to ensure that the Security presence is appropriate

Many tenants said they would like to see more security patrols, particularly by Manitoba Housing Security. Manitoba Housing Security should continue to review safety reports from Gilbert Park as well as its own internal protocols to ensure that it is providing an appropriate level of service.

Continue to support community action to make Gilbert Park safer

Community members are actively engaged in making Gilbert Park a safer place to live. These efforts should be supported, particularly through the Citizens on Patrol Program.

Provide resources to address domestic violence

Domestic violence continues to be an issue for many households in Gilbert Park. Tools and resources are needed to help households identify and prevent domestic violence, as well as

to deal with it when it happens. The resource centre and other agencies around the area are well placed to support tenants in addressing domestic violence.

Explore new ways to share information about programs and policies

(Who: Manitoba Housing, service agencies, tenants)

Reaching out and sharing information with as many community members as possible was identified as an ongoing challenge. Manitoba Housing and service agencies should continue to develop new ways to connect with people, and should use as wide a range of communication options as possible (e.g. email lists, social

media, signs, flyers, texting, community gatherings, meetings). These tools can also be useful in connecting with other organizations to share information and discuss upcoming issues.

Support staff to minimize turnover, and develop mechanisms to manage the impact of staff turnover on the community

(Who: Manitoba Housing, service agencies)

Transition among staff can be disruptive for community members. Although some level of staff turnover is inevitable, Manitoba Housing and service agencies should consider what kinds of supports they can offer to staff to help provide continuity in supporting tenants.

Lord Selkirk Park

Lord Selkirk Park is a public housing complex located in the Lord Selkirk Park neighbourhood in Winnipeg's North End, about a five-minute drive north of downtown. The North End is an area that has historically been poor and marginalized, and over the last few decades, a combination of suburbanization, poverty, racism and discrimination have worked to further marginalize and concentrate large numbers of Aboriginal people and low-income people in the North End (Silver 2008).

Today the Lord Selkirk Park neighbourhood is primarily residential, bounded on all sides by residential neighbourhoods, and with the CP railyards a block to the south-west. Within Lord Selkirk Park is the housing complex itself and other residential clusters. The housing complex is primarily made up of low townhouses in a park-like setting, and one eight-storey apartment building that tenants often refer to as 'the building' or 'the highrise'. In the housing complex, there are numerous service agencies, including the Lord Selkirk Park Resource Centre, Kaakiyow li moond likol Adult Learning Centre, the Lord Selkirk Park Adult Literacy Program and

the Lord Selkirk Park Childcare Centre. A few blocks away, on Selkirk Avenue, Main Street, and other streets, there are numerous service agencies, including health clinics, employment programs, cultural organizations, and resource centres. Neechi Foods is a small supermarket close to Lord Selkirk Park, and there are many shops and bars in the area, although there are also many empty storefronts. The area is well-served by Winnipeg Transit.

In 2006, the most recent year for which statistics are available, the Lord Selkirk Park neighbourhood had 1,365 residents, of whom the majority live in Lord Selkirk Park (City of Winnipeg 2008b) (see Table 5). Sixty-six percent of the population identifies as Aboriginal, compared with 10 percent in all of Winnipeg, while only 1 percent identifies as visible minority,⁴ compared with 16 percent in Winnipeg (City of Winnipeg 2008b). Fifty-eight percent of area residents do not have a high school diploma, compared with 23 percent of Winnipeggers (City of Winnipeg 2008b).

The unemployment rate is significantly higher in Lord Selkirk Park than in Winnipeg, at 18.7 per-

⁴ It is likely that this number is significantly higher now, as many newcomer families have moved into Lord Selkirk Park over the last few years.

TABLE 5 Lord Selkirk Park and Winnipeg

	Lord Selkirk Park	Winnipeg
Number of residents	1,365	633,451
Aboriginal identity	66.7%	10.2%
Visible minority	1.1%	16.3%
Education — no certificate, diploma or degree	58.7%	23.1%
Unemployment rate	18.7%	5.2%
Average household income	\$21,559	\$63,023
Median household income	\$15,552	\$49,790
Low income cut off after taxes	74.1%	15.7%

SOURCE: Adapted from City of Winnipeg 2008b.

cent compared with 5.2 percent (City of Winnipeg 2008b). Average household incomes are \$21,559 in Lord Selkirk Park, and \$63,023 in Winnipeg, while median household incomes are \$15,552 and \$49,790 respectively (City of Winnipeg 2008b). As well, the percentage of the population falling below the after-tax low-income cut-off is much higher in Lord Selkirk Park, at 74 percent, than in Winnipeg at 16 percent (City of Winnipeg 2008b).

Lord Selkirk Park is primarily a family complex, which means that its units are geared towards families, though it also includes a significant number of units for seniors and singles. At the end of November 2012, 295 of the 306 units in Lord Selkirk Park were occupied; most of the vacant units were due to turnover (Manitoba Housing, personal communication, December 4, 2012). Of the families that lived there in November 2012, 60 percent received Employment and Income Assistance (EIA); the other 40 percent received income from other sources and paid a rent geared to income (Manitoba Housing, personal communication, December 4, 2012).

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Lord Selkirk Park was facing a lot of challenges. The vacancy rate was extremely high, and almost half the units were empty. Gangs, violence and drugs were common. Many tenants were often afraid to leave their homes. The resource centre had closed and the service agencies in the area were scrambling to address the needs.

In Lord Selkirk Park, 18 people took part in interviews for this project. Of the participants, three were men and 15 were women. Participants were between 21 and 69, with five participants in their 30s and three over 65 (one participant declined to share their age). Ethnic backgrounds varied, with participants identifying as Aboriginal, Afghani, Cree, English, French, Métis, Ojibwe, Treaty Indian, and white. Most participants had children: five had children living at home, four had children in care, and others had children that are grown up and no longer living at home. Participants had lived in the community from five months to 20 years. Five had lived in Lord Selkirk Park for less than two years, three from two to five years, six from six to ten years, and four had lived there for 11 or more years. Twenty-four surveys were received from Lord Selkirk Park. Survey respondents had lived there from one and a half to 32 years.

What Changed?

To respond to these challenges, in 2005, the North End Community Renewal Corporation began working with tenants, neighbourhood organisations and Manitoba Housing to find ways to make the community a better place to live. Through this process of bringing the community together, a vision emerged: that Lord Selkirk Park would be a place where people wanted to be rather than a place of last resort; it would be, in the words of a staff,

One big support system.

It would be a place where if a household is lucky enough to get in, then they would have access to all kinds of supports and opportunities.

This discussion and vision kickstarted a number of changes in the community. The Lord Selkirk Park Resource Centre, childcare centre, Lord Selkirk Park Adult Literacy Centre and Kaakiyow li moond likol Adult Learning Centre were established, first temporarily and now permanently, as resources for the community. The Community Advisory Committee—a monthly gathering for service agencies, government departments and interested community members—was set up to share information and happenings in the neighbourhood.

As these changes took place, Manitoba Housing was also in the process of changing its approach to housing provision in Lord Selkirk Park. A few years earlier, Manitoba Housing had established an office in Lord Selkirk Park, as a pilot project for having offices onsite in public housing complexes. The idea was to make staff more accessible to the community so that issues could be addressed and worked out directly. Today that office is bigger, and includes maintenance staff and a tenant services coordinator. The staff all work together to share information and ideas, but also to connect with tenants one-on-one to build trust and relationships.

As momentum in the community began to build, in 2009, Manitoba Housing began its renovations of the housing in Lord Selkirk Park. The renovations included:

- all building exteriors
- major renovations on the interiors of all townhouses and apartments
- development of a new childcare centre and family resource centre

Manitoba Housing also increased the Manitoba Housing Security presence in the community.

The tenants who were interviewed discussed a number of changes in their housing over the

last three years. They noted that everything in their suites is new, including new kitchen cupboards, new appliances including washers and dryers, and new paint jobs inside and outside the buildings. Tenants in the apartment building also mentioned the new heating system and an entryway buzzer system.

The tenants also described changes they saw in the community over the last few years. These include a greater Manitoba Housing Security presence, the newly renovated space for the resource centre and the new childcare centre, community gardens, and benches outside to sit on. Tenants also talked about demographic changes in the community: tenants who were involved in drugs or violence being kicked out, and new people, including many newcomers to Canada, moving in.

Perceptions of the Changes

Generally, tenants were happy with the changes they saw in their units. People mentioned the new appliances, the paint job, and the kitchen renovations most often as positive changes:

I like the colour and the new appliances.

Looks nice, it's all new stuff and that fridge and stove and the cupboards and that.

Paint job and flooring, better appliances, window, warmer in winter

Tenants also like that everything is new:

Because they did everything new. I love the place... Now I have three big bedrooms, two washrooms, and they are brand new, everything is so clean, and the area is good too, I have, in front of my door, I have space where my kids can play, and before, no.

Another tenant likes how quiet it is in their suite:

[It's] less stressful, you don't want to hear drunken people yelling all day. That's the nice thing here, is the walls are soundproof, upstairs,

Box 4: Problems Some Tenants Encountered With the Renovations

- Door handles falling off
- Paint flaking off
- Drywall cracking
- Tiles cracking, lifting and coming off the floor
- Doorways that are too narrow for wheelchairs
- Cheap appliances
- Baseboards coming off
- Lack of adequate ventilation in the kitchens or bathrooms
- Lack of central air conditioning
- Moved into units that are too small
- Long waits for building maintenance

like I can't hear my neighbours unless they have their music up to frickin' max or something. So it's very soundproof. Except for the person across from you, then you can hear their music. I like it.

One tenant who was concerned about moving to Lord Selkirk Park was very pleased with their choice:

They had vacancies, to be honest, Ma Mawi is the one that told me to put Lord Selkirk on my application because nobody wanted to live here because of the murders that happened upstairs. There was people that had a very bad reputation, but I didn't personally find it like that when I came here, you know, I felt I was so blessed coming here. There was brand new, everything was painted like, it surpassed all my expectations. I felt really blessed to be a part of this.

Although most people felt the renovations were an improvement, there were many comments and complaints about the quality of the renovations (see Box 3). Five of the tenants who were interviewed and six of the survey respondents also expressed frustration and disappointment with the renovations.

I guess a little better, yeah, the walls are nice and they're painted and they did their best with what money they can, I know there's a lot of that they have to, yeah, kinda a little bit better.

My tiles are all lifting, they're not sealed, they're coming off, why? Because I'm mopping my floor, I'm a clean person, so... they're actually lifting, and they're peeling off and pieces are coming off and the baseboards are moving in, like, curved... I'm not even using much more than water, so it's like, just the water is lifting it and I don't know if they were sealed... I have more space, and yeah, I have a washer and dryer, which is a really big benefit, and everything was renovated brand new. But it doesn't matter if it's brand new or not if it's not high quality stuff and it's not going to last, then, you know, it's gonna break down just from living.

Some remain sceptical about how long the positive changes would last:

It looks better, but I don't know how long it's gonna last so.

Tenants like the changes that have taken place in the neighbourhood:

Yeah, I think there's been some good changes, there's, they—I don't know if the Security was around 24, like all the time, 24 hours, seeing police walking around on foot is a good thing. They have a new daycare for, at the highrise there, yeah. I guess it's good, they have the TI [Turtle Island], the upgrading, the resource, everything is pretty convenient around there. Yeah, there's some good changes.

All of these changes, including the housing renovations and the changes in the broader community, are having an impact on the individuals and the community in Lord Selkirk Park relating to safety and security, jobs and education, and community well-being.

Safety and Security

This past summer was a difficult one in Lord Selkirk Park. Although it seems to ebb and flow, summer is often a time when there is more violence in the community. This summer, guns were visible throughout the area, creating a sense of unease and danger. Seven of the tenants who were interviewed, five survey respondents and staff talked about violence and tension; staff who have worked in the community for years said there was nothing to do but ride it out.

There is a cycle of violence that happens—a time of calm, then the gangs come out and start fighting, then people start ratting on each other, then the cops come in and sweep the area, then it calms down again and the cycle starts again.

When asked whether the community is safer now than three years ago, nine of the tenants who were interviewed said they felt safer:

Now I do. Very safe, now. Back when I first moved here, there was a lot of gang members and everything, and I used to just remain inside with my family when I lived with my mom. But ever since the new changes, like when they said they were gonna start renovating and doing all the projects that we did... now we feel safe.

It's family-oriented now, there's not much gang members in the developments no more.

Very safe, because now they have many security guards, they're going around every day for 24 hours around the houses and look for, looking for the peoples.

When I first moved in here, around that time, I felt unsafe because of all the people around my age and older people, I felt threatened by them. I feel less threatened by people now.

I think this is a very good spot, actually. I know that they just built the daycare, and when I moved in here, the renovations were done, so I think that it has Security and I feel very safe here. Like in the building itself.

Others said that it is somewhat safer, but there are still times when they are concerned for their safety:

Well, it got better, no gangs, a lot of families now, but you still have the intoxicated people.

I don't know. 'Cause there's a lot of incidents that goes on, and you don't know what you'd probably run into. Look at when these people ask you for a smoke, and you tell them you don't have any, they kinda get mad.

Others said that they do not feel safe at all, especially in the evenings or at night. Some people are concerned about drugs and alcohol:

I'm just finishing moving to a unit, but I only have one good neighbour, the rest are into cocaine and everything and crack and they're all drinking. And that's the serious part of the neighbourhood is the drinking and the drugs.

Since the Merchant Hotel has been closed, we've had more partying, more drinking, more unsafe individuals, more police. [Is that inside...] Oh it's in the complex, yeah. [Is it the people in the complex that live there, or people coming...] It's people that live here, and then the people from the community coming.

Others mentioned the violence that often accompanies drug and alcohol use:

Just the big drunks and stuff on Main Street all the time, and they're, I always see them, like if I catch the bus all the time, there's always somebody scrapping or they're being idiots, and plus since the Merchants closed, all the trouble they had has come to Main Street. It's getting worse. Now there's always fights on Main Street all the time. I don't even want my kids to go out by themselves, how do you even catch the bus? I'm even scared to walk by myself.

The violence in the area, I noticed it's gotten better but during the summer time it gets worse, but recently it's been getting kinda... Since they closed down the Merchants, there's a lot of people coming up this way and towards Main Street there, where those two bars are, there's a lot of bars along there.

It's like it's getting worse, it always seems like there's somebody getting beat up or get shot at every weekend round here. The violence is getting worse.

Manitoba Housing has undertaken a number of steps to make Lord Selkirk Park safer, including Manitoba Housing Security patrols and having a visible Security presence in the highrise and around the community.⁵ In addition to having a more visible Security presence, Manitoba Housing also closed the walkways (often called tunnels) that run between some houses in the area. A few people mentioned this change, although with different perspectives on the impact on the community:

They closed all the tunnels, that's helped.

There's more Security around, I noticed, that helps somewhat.

There's nothing like looking out your window seeing bars like the ones on the breezeway. Do

you know what that says to the poor and Native people of Lord Selkirk Park? Know your place.

Eight tenants mentioned the more visible Manitoba Housing Security presence in the community. Security officers patrol around the area, and tenants can contact them with concerns or issues.

Our Security people have gotten a lot better, we have more rounds on the outside, and we have Security in for the building as well, so it's a lot safer.

I know [Security is] always there, 'cause I call them a lot, 'cause I don't drink and I don't use or whatever, and before when I first moved in, there was a lot of stuff happening, and that was like three years ago and I'd have to call Security. They came, you know, within seven minutes.

It has gotten better, because when we first moved here there was no Security, now we have Security. [What have you noticed about the Security? Like they do rounds?] Oh yeah, they do rounds and they even go up and down the elevator, and one, like say I forgot my keys one time, eh, and I told Security and they came right up and let me in.

At the same time, however, many tenants feel that the increased Security presence is not enough. One tenant mentioned that often the Security officers drive around or walk around the perimeter of Lord Selkirk Park, but do not actually walk through the area.

The Security should walk around more in the Developments, 'cause I see them driving around in the car. You can't see anything when you're driving in a car, 'cause most of the stuff happens in the Development, not around.

Others say that sometimes the response time is slow, especially when the complaint is not per-

⁵ Security cameras and lighting were also installed, although this took place after the interviews in Lord Selkirk Park were completed.

ceived as serious, and by the time Security or the police arrive, the issue is over.

The only problem is you can't rely on police services, right? If you call them for something, misdemeanour or something like that, they won't come, like they won't come for three or four hours and by that time the person might be gone or sleeping, eh. Like they're active, doing right now, say somebody gets robbed right now, by the time they come that person's not even around. They don't usually believe you.

And you know, I've been the person to call when things are suspicious, but the time for, the time that the Security comes, or the police comes, or whoever comes, is lapsed, and by the time they actually answer the call, the problem has moved on, or escalated or stopped even, so it needs to be like a higher response time.

Along with Manitoba Housing Security, the Neighbourhood Ambassadors have also had a visible presence in Lord Selkirk Park over the last few years. Similar to the Citizens on Patrol Program, the Neighbourhood Ambassadors is a program organized by the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC). Volunteers wear bright jackets that identify them as volunteers and walk around the North End, keeping an eye out for trouble. One tenant explained how they help to make the community safer:

I feel safer. I feel safer, because we also have people that do their own type of neighbourhood watch—so they know what to look for, so it's a lot safer.

Other tenants, although perhaps not knowing much about the Ambassadors program, had noticed the patrols and saw them as a change in the safety of the neighbourhood:

I see, those people walk around, those ones with the orange jackets, the Ambassadors, yup. I noticed them walking around now.

Since I've lived here, they've increased the Security, and they've increased the police presence, and I think it's NECRC, but I don't know, it's like the neighbourhood people with the yellow jackets or whatever... I don't know who it is, some kind of neighbourhood ambassador or whatever. They help a lot... I know they walk around here, and I know they kind of keep an eye, but I don't know exactly what their position is.

At the same time, one tenant said that they'd rather see more police on patrol, because

It's nice to have the yellow coats, but you run out of your house because something's going on or whatever, and I'd rather see a police officer than a yellow coat.

However, the police do not represent safety for everyone. Another tenant talked about their concern for their son who comes to visit from his home downtown:

At night time I don't feel safe, I worry for my son especially, when he's, he's an Aboriginal teenager, you know, and I worry for him walking around, you know, not only from other gang members, and other kids, but I also worry, get worried for his safety from the police, you know, it's, that's been—I try and think of that, shouldn't be, but it's true and it's a fact and I do worry for his safety because of that.

Staff at service agencies in the area talked about the tensions between the community and the police. Although there can be good relations with the police, they are often strained. One staff talked about the need for police to spend more time in the community, getting to know people and building a better understanding of the community.

People get into tough situations because of life circumstances, not because they decide to piss off the police. People deserve dignity and respect.

A better relationship between the community and the police would help the police to do their jobs more effectively, and help to make the community safer.

Manitoba Housing staff also talked about the benefits of having an office right in the community, and being able to build relationships with community members. Staff work as a team, keeping an eye out for potential trouble and responding as quickly as possible.

Everything is in easy reach, so you can just walk—so if a problem does arrive, you just let people know exactly where you're going and it's within easy reach, so if there's a concern, there's a problem, you are there.

Although many tenants are justifiably concerned about safety and security in Lord Selkirk Park, staff noted that there has been a change in how people relate to Manitoba Housing and Manitoba Housing Security over the past few years.

People are getting to know the Manitoba Housing staff and are starting to bring them information, even if not in writing.

People can call the Housing Communications Centre with any concerns relating to housing or to security, and Manitoba Housing Security will respond and call the police if they need backup. Staff said that being able to call anonymously makes people feel safer, and enables Security to have a better understanding of what's going on and address issues before they escalate.

Tenants also talked about some of the demographic changes that had been happening in the neighbourhood. Since the renovations, all the units in Lord Selkirk Park are full, and there is a waiting list. Manitoba Housing has also made a concerted effort to remove individuals or households that were involved in gangs and drugs. Tenants talked about how this has helped to make it more family-friendly and quieter.

It's all family now, there's hardly any thugs running around no more, so yeah, it's quiet down quite a bit.

I think they're trying to put in people who aren't too party-ish, you know, who won't wreck their—like, they just renovated so I think they're trying to find a good blend of ethnicities and also people who aren't going to really mess up their places 'cause they just put in a lot of money to renovate them. They've kind of kicked out a lot of the partiers, with good reason, so, not just 'cause they partied, you know, because they're really not, not really respectful [sic] of their property.

However, although the situation may be improving, staff said that there is still a lack of trust between tenants, Manitoba Housing, and police, and that frequently tenants will not talk to Manitoba Housing Security or the police—in some cases they will not even be seen in the same room. Gang affiliations are common throughout Lord Selkirk Park, and many tenants are afraid of being seen as a 'rat' if they complain or turn someone in, as they know what could happen: families' suites are smashed up, they leave in the middle of the night, and never come back.

The on-going violence has serious impact for many tenants and their families. For tenants, seeing the violence first-hand, or having their children see violence, is an unavoidable reality, but one that can be scary and traumatizing.

I don't necessarily trust everybody in the community, because in different times, during the day, it doesn't matter, there's drinking going on, and partying going on, or there's broken glass, so I have to be really vigilant. So I try to keep my daughter in our front yard while I'm outside, and that's kind of hard to do with the toddler and a seven-year old... Since I've lived here, there's been five times, directly, where my children have crossed into a crime scene, seen the crime scene, been a part of it, and things like that. So that's scary, that's nothing I've ever experienced before.

With seeing the violence around there it triggered back memories and so it's kinda—

so that kinda brought things out for me... and seeing a lot of, seeing the poverty you know and all the poverty, the racism, and just and trying to put it in the back and think right now it can't be, but it's there and I see it in my work, and sometimes I try and I can't ignore it and it bothers me a lot to see that, you know, and just to, I don't know, just to prepare my kids [for] the harsh reality out there. How people are to each other... Sometimes I don't feel all that safe, just lock all the doors and just you know, I just feel kinda trapped inside that little unit sometimes. And then I feel like helpless sometimes, eh.

Although there is clearly a valid concern about violence and safety in Lord Selkirk Park, sometimes sharing gossip and stories along social networks can increase fear and anxiety. People talk with friends and acquaintances, and while this can be a good way to share information about neighbourhood issues, it can also create a sense of danger that may or may not be justified. For example, one tenant said that:

Security downstairs, they let—I heard stories that they let drunks in, and people that live here, they don't let in, and they know that they live... And then they turn around and let the drunks that they don't even know and they're, obviously, they're drunk, they let them in. I don't like that.

It can be difficult for tenants to know what is actually happening in the community when the stories and media reports emphasize the violence in the area.

I don't know, I'd like to say that crime is going down, but then you listen to the news, and then you hear the stories from like just down the street.

In general my feeling of safety has gotten worse, because just society in general has gotten worse. So you can't help but not feel that impact on me, you know?

Even as they identified the safety challenges in the neighbourhood, tenants were also thinking

of solutions to address these challenges and support neighbourhood residents:

Well, you know when people apply for these places... they should let them know right away, these kind of things are not tolerated and let them know, like right up front or give them strict warnings, you know. And if they do... have meetings with them as there's any, if they have a warning, you know, bring them in, or give them the resources to find how to get help in that area. [Like do interventions?] Yeah, interventions, life skills, and offer them where they can go to get their mental health back on track or their physical, you know, more information, get them involved.

Maybe just—I don't, this is a big thing to do, but the programs on people getting out of jail, they sometimes don't know right from wrong and they keep on doing stuff. Maybe they should, there should be programs on how to act and how to get a job and stuff, how to behave.

Others talked about reducing businesses that have a negative impact on the area:

Maybe reduce the amount of pawnshops and alcohol places. [Okay, like those hotels?] Yeah, no hotels, maybe just reduce them, not get rid of them, if you get rid of them altogether, they'll get rowdy and... maybe just reduce them, not get rid of them altogether.

And still others discussed the importance of increasing the Security presence and making sure that Security officers are well-trained:

...Making it so that security guards are also here in the daytime—like we've got them now from 4-12 and 12-8, 8-4 would be nice as well.

They could improve the security guards. More training. Training the existing ones. Just the Security around here.

Three people mentioned having meetings to bring community members together to develop

strategies to address safety and security in the community. One person also mentioned the importance of connecting with Manitoba Housing and Manitoba Housing Security to share concerns and hear about the strategies they're implementing to improve safety in Lord Selkirk Park:

Talk to the people in charge of the building. And that, and know they're listening and actually attempting to help you out. 'Cause it's good if you can turn to somebody and tell them your concerns about something and then they'll actually do it.

Manitoba Housing staff mentioned a safety plan that is being developed for the area—the idea for it came from a community member who is taking initiative to act on their safety concerns. It's clear from these conversations that community members are concerned about safety issues in Lord Selkirk Park, and are engaged in finding solutions and making Lord Selkirk Park a safer place to live.

Jobs and Education

In Lord Selkirk Park, about 60 percent of the households receive EIA. Of the 18 tenants interviewed for this research, four are students or working, and five are either retired or receiving disability benefits. Three years ago, five of the 18 were working, and six were full- or part-time students. Most people who are not currently employed, retired or disabled are looking for either jobs or educational opportunities. Four tenants mentioned participating in community activities and volunteering as ways that they contribute to their community.

I'm also a volunteer, I've been a volunteer ever since I've been a part of this community. [Oh, that's good, where do you volunteer at?] I used to volunteer here at Lord Selkirk, I volunteer at Andrew Place, Indian Family Centre, Sage, and Mount Carmel. I also did the Ambassador program.

I'm on the committee for the building, for our building, and I help out at the food bank we have here, in our building. For the food bank it's every second week and I come down and I help out, set it up and distribute the Harvest for everybody in the building.

I participate as much as I can. I do whatever I can for my community, which is also including Point Douglas, 'cause that's where I lived for like eight years prior, and then I lived on Broadway. So it's kind of like that's my first home, here's my second home, but I'm kind of getting used to this place, but I actually do things for another women's centre as well, Point Douglas Women's centre, so I take advantage of both.

Many service agencies in the area rely on volunteer labour to provide many services. Some of these volunteers receive additional benefits from EIA in recognition of their contribution, but many do more than is required for these benefits.

As noted above, Kaakiyow li moonk likol Adult Learning Centre and the Lord Selkirk Park Adult Literacy Program are new, and provide opportunities for those who want to complete their Mature Student Diploma or do some upgrading. Along with the childcare centre, they bring new possibilities for the tenants of Lord Selkirk Park:

When the daycare opened, with 47 children from 19 families, all of whom were on EIA, the staff anticipated working to encourage the parents to consider school and/or jobs but in fact about half the parents right away took the opportunity to go to school on their own, and the staff aren't having to motivate them at all... They go to the adult learning centre, to Kaakiyow, to the Aboriginal centre programs, whatever program makes sense to them. Others have found jobs, or have joined treatment programs, now that their children are being cared for.

Making these programs accessible to the community is key. One tenant said her goal is to finish high school:

... with Turtle Island [Kaakiyow], right next door, like I just throw on some clothes and I'm out the door.

Having the education programs right in the community takes away a barrier; having childcare available takes away a second barrier. Together, they make it possible for people to consider education, employment, or addressing other life goals that previously may have been out of reach.

During the renovations, some tenants were hired to work on the construction crews. They were provided with training and an opportunity to gain experience in a trade. One tenant who worked on the renovations said that it has given them new opportunities for work:

I was a drywall finisher, that was my big thing, drywall finisher... I have a trade now. My trade, I can—like, sometimes I get hired on weekends to go do odd jobs, and it's with the trade that I have. My friends' parents will hire me to go do their basements and everything.

Staff from the area mentioned that although it was positive that Manitoba Housing hired so many local people, there was not enough human resource support provided to the employees and the employers. Complications arose throughout the renovations, often relating to drugs or addictions, and workers were often fired because there was not the capacity to address the issue. These same challenges arise for other agencies in the area that would like to hire local people but do not always have the capacity to provide supports to address the complicated lives many potential employees have.

Community Well-being

Lord Selkirk Park is a community that has experienced a lot of transition in the past, including periods of time when the vacancy rate in the complex approached 50 percent. At the same time, however, many tenants have a strong connection to the area and to the community. Mani-

toba Housing staff noted that at the beginning of the renovations process, when tenants were offered the option of staying or moving to another complex, very few tenants chose to leave.

I was absolutely amazed at the number of people who chose to stay. We probably only had 10 families who chose to move to a different area of the city. That was really quite phenomenal.

For tenants who have lived in Lord Selkirk Park for a long time, there is a sense of personal history that makes it hard to leave:

I think the Lord Selkirk Park has come a long way, and it's a good place to live. Like a lot of people told me to move out, but I can't move out because I know too many organizations, and too many people, some moved, and some died. It's sad, but at least we know each other as a family.

Over the last few years, new tenants have been moving in, and the complex has been filling up again. Tenants noticed changes in who lived in the community, and see these changes as good for the community.

Meeting new people is a big plus for me. New people moving in to the area I live in, and getting rid of the bad ones that are not around here no more, it's changed a lot, it's a positive change... There's more families in here, and plus, more cultures. And more children playing around... More cultures moving in, that's what's been changing. 'Cause now a bunch of cultures living together, playing together. Never seen that before.

We got most of the gang members out, and we have new people in which is from like, from Africa and we all have different nations now, like it's so good to find out, to learn about their culture, eh.

Manitoba Housing staff said that many newcomers to Canada are moving to the Lord Selkirk Park area because of all the resources that

are available there. As well, many newcomer families are big, with eight or even more family members, and Lord Selkirk Park has large units, up to five bedrooms, offering an affordable housing option for these families.

For large families, and for many other tenants, the changes in Lord Selkirk Park over the last few years have had a positive impact. One big impact is the security that comes from having a stable, affordable, quality place to live.

Because I was looking for house, so family income was very low. I can't afford the apartment rent, so I applied for everywhere, and I got the house here. And now I love the area and the houses, so. Very nice area.

I'm stable and I'm in housing. So even if I, say I did get off of welfare and I had to find a job, they would probably lower my rent a lot, so it would probably be affordable, so that makes me feel a little more secure, knowing I wouldn't be on the street. Or have to go live with my mom again. She's probably pay a hotel somewhere, like no, you're not staying with me!

For some, this security and stability offers a good place to start working on rebuilding their lives. As described above, the vision for Lord Selkirk Park was, in part, to make it a desirable place with all sorts of supports and resources available for the area residents. In many ways, this vision is being accomplished: many tenants spoke about the services they access in the community and how these services are a big strength in the community.

I like the fact that there's a daycare here for the people that work in the area, that they have some place where the kids can go sit and know they're safe. And the resource centre helps, 'cause you got a place that, if you have to, you can sit down and come down here and talk to people, so it's a good thing to have. And it's good that Harvest is here 'cause it's a lot of elderly people that couldn't go that far, so it's handy for that.

I pretty much know where to go with all these resource centres around. They have all the, they have a lot of information, so you can access it and you ask them and they will help you...

Yeah, where things are going on and schooling and resource centres and if you have a problem they'll help you, you just ask, with landlord-tenants or even to go back to school and finding jobs and stuff so they'll help you out.

For a woman, or even a man, they should do that, or even couples, you know something happens, go and seek help. Now there's lots of help, and before there wasn't. I come from Portage and [when] I was first married I was abused, there was nowhere to go. But today there's so many organizations where you can go for help. And even for spiritually, traditionally, it's there.

Having resources close by, and even directly in the community is especially important for tenants who have disabilities or mobility issues and would not otherwise be able to access resources.

The Lord Selkirk Resource Centre helps me lots. Like I can't travel too far by myself on a bus.

Funding for the Lord Selkirk Park Resource Centre, childcare centre and adult literacy program, as well as for Kaakiyow li moond likol, is now permanent, rather than term-based, which provides a sense of security and stability for both the centres themselves and for the tenants who use them. For many people, the Lord Selkirk Park Resource Centre is the hub of the community. Many tenants might otherwise be isolated, but the resource centre provides a gathering place to sit and meet neighbours, as well as programs and opportunities to learn and grow.

The resource centre is good, I have somewhere to go during the day. That's one good thing...

We always have a bunch of stuff to do during the day, and activities that they plan like going to the zoo or... they just had a men's breakfast,

my brother liked that. And they had a women's event where they cut all the women's hair, or sell the hair where they wanted to, and that was good, I got my hair cut then. So they plan the nice activities for people in that community.

No, beside all the renovations, it's really good, I can see it in people. Especially the mothers seem to benefit, because a lot of times before they're probably sitting in their units without anything to do and now you see them [in the resource centre] every day and they got like bonds, too with their friends and all the kids know each other, and that's a good way to start a community.

As the population of the area has changed over the last few years, the resource centres and other organizations in the community provide neutral spaces where people can talk and learn from their neighbours. Even small changes, like benches for people to sit on, can have a big impact:

We get more benches and now we can sit outside eh... I would say that you, when you go out and if you're sitting on a bench and somebody comes around, like I mean you don't know the person but then somebody else comes along and sits beside you, so you feel safer that way. [Yeah, 'cause they live in the building and you're, it's like a little community] Yeah.

Staff also talked about the difference having the resource centre and other programs right in the community made for people who attended:

Because when you tell somebody and you try to have a referral for individuals and you have to send them 20 or 30 miles, nobody's gonna go. So you can actually set up the appointment which is quite useful, you can actually have it within walking distance.

Another tenant talked about how living in the highrise and dropping by the resource centres helped her to meet people and get to know people in the neighbourhood, even if just to say hello:

Actually, it's made me be more aware of, I have to be more respectable [sic] of just living around people. Because I'm used to living in a place where maybe you don't even talk to your neighbours, you don't even know who they are. But you have to be more aware of that, of who's living around you and you're in the elevator all the time, so you get to know your people, so I don't know if this is a good thing or not, but it's a good thing I think to know who you're living around. I'm more of a loner, so now I get to meet people... I've met some good people through resource centres, like here and through Point Douglas Women's Centre, you know, and even through the Friendship Centre.

One tenant, whose children are in care, described Lord Selkirk Park as a place where she can start to address some of the challenges she's facing and work to get her children back:

Personally, it's—they have met all my needs in terms of me being stable, having my own place to live and a place that I can call home. I feel really good here. And there's a lot of—there is resources, but I think it's more or less CFS things that I'm kinda having problems, just getting my kids back and CFS kinda puts this area down, it's kinda run down and stuff, but they don't really know how it is to live here... I'm sober, and I don't drink, I don't do drugs or anything, and I'm just focusing on my life and my education, I feel this would be a good place for me to focus on my inner, like my own personal, as a woman, besides my kids, I feel that this is a very, very good place to be.

Staff talked about the changes they've noticed in the feel of the neighbourhood: seeing people out and about, instead of hiding in their houses, and many people have taken time and effort to plant vegetable gardens or set out play structures or barbecues and seating areas in their yards. One tenant said that only newer tenants are using their yards in this way; nevertheless, it creates

a sense of openness and community. Staff also mentioned a small but significant impact: after the renovations, people talked about being cleaner, and being able to clean their clothes, with the new washers and dryers in every unit.

All these changes and impacts for adult tenants are also having an impact on the children in the community. Some tenants talked about the positive impacts that living in Lord Selkirk Park and all the recent changes in the area have had for their children:

Altogether, like just [my family's] general demeanor, is like, they're happy all the time. And compared to what they were before, so I mean, it just brought up everything. It made them much happier.

Now my kids actually have somewhere to go where I can keep an eye on them. Where we used to live they couldn't play in the front yard because there was traffic. Like, they had nowhere to play. Over there I never talked to anybody, I just kinda stayed to myself, so here the kids have friends and stuff like that now, and I mean, our last place was smaller, it was smaller altogether, so we couldn't do really anything, so yeah, it's much better now, they've got their own rooms and yeah.

It's really affected my family. I've had to, first of all, in the good changes, I see my daughter growing more, getting more comfortable, way more friendly. She's more accepting of things. I like the way the school and community and Lord Selkirk Park and other things are working together for the same thing, which is helping, because each one is supporting each other.

At the same time, this last tenant also talked about changes that are not happening quickly enough, especially relating to safety issues in the neighbourhood, and the impact this has on their family.

But in a bad way, I feel like I've had to expose my child to something that I never wanted to

expose her to. Like she sees more drinking, more partying, more children out late at night unsupervised, in dangerous situations... this is really sad, is that sometimes the kids and the young girls who are around us from the weekend, they end up on the news the next week. So she's like 'I've seen that person, I know that person...' and it's just a safety thing, so I want to allow her to go outside and play, but I don't want her to see the things that are going on, I want to keep her kind of sheltered from that and let her be a kid. Some of these adult concepts she shouldn't have to know about.

As noted above, more work remains to be done to address the safety issues in the area. Nevertheless, tenants observed the changes that have taken place, and some noted that each change by itself might not have had much of an impact, but all together, the changes are much more significant:

They've thrown all the riff raff out, and you know, with the renovations, I think people like to live here. They like their home, they're appreciative of it, and that's about it. They've put in gardens and you know, plus this big renovation of Lord Selkirk's Resource Centre here, and then all their offices, you know, we've got a great lounge and I think it added, it's given people some hope, you know, that things will get better. You know what I mean? Like if it stayed the same, nothing changes when nothing changes, but when something changes it kinda makes a little chain reaction that'll, oh yeah, that's nice, so things are happening, right? So it gives a positive outlook.

Like they have a lot more programs, and people are more friendly, and it's easier to get help and things like that, and I feel more comfortable with the resources and things that are around, but as everything happens in a community, one change makes something else happen.

Yes, I do see a lot of positive change, I see that the parks that we have, we have, from what I

see right here in Lord Selkirk Park, there are some of the best young ladies [at the resource centre] that really genuinely care for the people that live in this neighbourhood. They always have a warm place of welcoming, newcomers and the people that are here, are always coming, they're consistent, so that shows a lot about how people within this neighbourhood are really caring for their people that live right here in our neighbourhood. So I feel that for the Lord Selkirk area, I see so much hope, I see so much colour and I see a place of healing and branching out to what we need right here in our homes.

These comments suggest that even as there is more work to be done, work that will take time, effort, and commitment, a start has been made and some momentum is building to continue on.

For most of the tenants who participated in the interviews, life is less stressful now than three years ago. Eleven tenants said life is less stressful now, while three said it was more stressful and three said it was the same (one person did not answer the question). Tenants identified a wide range of stressors, including

- Money:

With what my husband gets in pension and the little difference you get from provincial disability, it's not much... Because we can't afford to get half the diabetic stuff he needs for food, so we live with what we can get.

- Government systems:

I think it has to do with the way the systems are, like CFS... when they're done I won't even have a legacy to leave for my kids, and I feel that they're really uprooting my entire life.

- Family:

It's hard being a single parent, you know, especially when I want to go to school and want to work and I have to miss because either I get sick or they get sick.

Some tenants also talked about stress arising from their relationships, especially with part-

ners. Others talked about violence in the community, addictions in the community or in their families, and lack of support to deal with all of these issues. One tenant noted the connection between poverty, violence and drugs, and that there are many factors that affect people's decisions to do drugs.

It's not to do with the Lord Selkirk Park, it's to do with drugs... Our people, especially, I always tell the young people, look, I even talk to the gang members, people are afraid of them, but to me, I talk to them and I tell them, you know, you're killing your own kind. You're selling drugs to them. But I said and I know you're doing it because something must have happened to you or something like that... I don't think they get up one morning when they're born and say I'm going to be a sniffer. Something must have happened to them when they were young. And then they just gave up and went to the easiest thing they can do, just drown it all.

Other tenants also drew connections between different areas, noting for example that government systems such as EIA and CFS are connected to stress relating to money or children in care.

Tenants also expressed a good deal of optimism about the future. When asked "Overall, how would you describe your hope for the future?", 12 tenants said their hope was very good or excellent, and five said their hope for the future was good (one did not answer the question). Eleven tenants said that their hope for the future was better now than three years ago, while four said it was the same, and one said it was worse than three years ago (two did not answer the question). Staff noted that

there is a sense of security and stability in the community now that wasn't there before—it used to be hopeless, depressive, but now it is quite lively.

It has been a long process of building this sense of optimism in Lord Selkirk Park, beginning with

trust and relationships in the community. This process began before the physical changes and renovations, and is connected to the resource centre and other service agencies as well as the Manitoba Housing presence in the community. Staff talked about how slow the process was, and that as people see the resource centre or other agencies supporting their sisters or girlfriends, they might consider coming in themselves.

Service agency staff also commented on the structural changes in how Manitoba Housing operates. Staff said that Manitoba Housing has come a long way in building relationships and is respectful in dealing with tenants and service organizations. One staff noted that

When Kerri Irvin-Ross became the Minister of Housing, she made sure that everyone was community-oriented, kind, and customer-service oriented...She has shown strong leadership, and has a heart for this community.

These changes have enabled many of the other changes in the community to take place. Much of the change has been gradual, a long-term collaboration of governments and service providers along with residents. This partnership approach to rebuilding Lord Selkirk Park has provided motivation to continue to build momentum and change to fulfill the vision of making Lord Selkirk Park into a place where people are lucky to live because of all the supports that are available to them.

Summary and Recommendations

Safety and security continue to be a big concern for many tenants in Lord Selkirk Park. Although there have been significant changes in how Manitoba Housing and Manitoba Housing Security address safety issues, drugs, alcohol, and gangs were identified by tenants as on-going safety issues. Although many service agencies would like to hire local staff, they often lack the human resource capacity to support people's complex needs, though many tenants volunteer and contribute their time and energy to

the community. Lord Selkirk Park is living into its vision as a place where people can access the supports they need: with the new resources in the area, some people are finding it to be a stabilizing place where they can take care of themselves and their families. For those that have lived there for many years, the changes are helping to strengthen the community.

The changes that have taken place in Lord Selkirk Park over the last few years have had a significant impact on the community. As the tenants and staff noted, though, there is still more to be done.

One factor which would strengthen the tenants' voice in Lord Selkirk Park would be some form of neighbourhood association. There is currently a tenants' advisory committee in the highrise, which makes decisions about social events, but there is no forum for tenants to come together and discuss issues affecting the community, and liaise and advocate on their collective behalf to Manitoba Housing or other organizations. There are numerous different models for what this forum could look like, but ideally, it would emerge from tenants themselves, and be supported administratively by one of the service agencies in the area. This is an idea that would require further exploration.

Continue to maintain the quality of the renovated housing units

(Who: Manitoba Housing)

Although the renovated units are new, many tenants who were interviewed expressed concerns with the quality of the construction. Manitoba Housing must continue to budget an adequate amount of funding and staff time to repair and maintain the units, to make sure that the units stay in good condition for a long time.

Manitoba Housing should consider holding workshops on basic housing maintenance and repairs, and should provide supports to parents whose teenagers are acting out and causing damage.

Provide more supports for individuals, families and the community as a whole
(Who: Province of Manitoba, service agencies, tenants)

Tenants and staff identified individual and community supports as a need in Lord Selkirk Park.

Provide resources and programs for adults and children

As discussed above, the Lord Selkirk Park resource centre is an important place for tenants. It acts as a hub for many in the community, offering programs and supports. This important role must be recognized, and the Province should continue to support the resource centre and its work.

In addition, tenants mentioned a few different types of programs they would like to see for adults in Lord Selkirk Park, such as adding an exercise bike or treadmill to the lounge in the apartment building, and offering recreational programming for single adults. There are few programs for youth in the area, but there are resources (e.g. school gyms) that could be used by service agencies to provide programming for youth. Parents and staff noted that there is a need for more programs to support children and youth, right from birth to adulthood, to avoid children getting pulled into gangs and violence.

Provide resources and programs to support and build community

Many tenants and staff mentioned that there is a need for community-building supports, to strengthen and enhance social capital and networks in the area. Suggestions include community gatherings and events, and block parent and neighbourhood watch programs.

Build relationships and trust between community members and child welfare agencies

Many families have had negative experiences with the child welfare system. This has led to distrust and hesitation to reach out for supports

that could help mitigate the many pressures and challenges that many families experience. Having onsite supports through the resource centres from non-mandated agencies that provide family supports and parenting programs (e.g. Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, The Family Centre of Winnipeg) and preventive services of mandated child welfare agencies (e.g. Child and Family Services) would help to strengthen parents and families, and address questions before they become issues.

Continue to improve resources to address and deal with addictions

Addictions have been identified as a major issue affecting many households in Lord Selkirk Park. Providing resources to help people overcome addictions is essential, as are resources to support those who live with addicts. Stopping addictions at their source—removing drug dealers from the area and ending poverty—are also crucial.

Continue to improve safety and security

(Who: Manitoba Housing Security, Manitoba Housing, tenants, service agencies)

Safety continues to be an important issue in Lord Selkirk Park. Tenants, Manitoba Housing, and Manitoba Housing Security all have roles to play in addressing safety concerns.

Establish a Safety Committee

Many tenants mentioned having meetings to discuss safety issues, but also noted that often these meetings are poorly attended. A safety committee would create a forum for tenants to discuss and make decisions about safety issues in Gilbert Park as well as a process for talking to Manitoba Housing Security.

Regularly review safety reports and protocols to ensure that the Security presence is appropriate

Some tenants said that Manitoba Housing Security should have a stronger presence, and re-

spond more quickly. Manitoba Housing Security should continue to review safety reports from Lord Selkirk Park as well as its own internal protocols to ensure that it is providing an appropriate level of service.

Continue to support community action to make Lord Selkirk Park safer

Community members are actively engaged in making Gilbert Park a safer place to live. These efforts should be supported, particularly through the Neighbourhood Ambassadors program (run

by the North End Community Renewal Corporation).

Provide resources to address domestic violence

Domestic violence continues to be an issue for many households in Lord Selkirk Park. Tools and resources are needed to help households identify and prevent domestic violence, as well as to deal with it when it happens. The resource centre and other agencies around the area are well placed to support tenants in addressing domestic violence.

Conclusion

The renovations and other changes that have taken place in Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park over the past three years have had a significant impact on the two communities. Although there are still numerous issues and challenges in both communities, there is momentum and a sense that things are changing for the better.

This study was limited by a few factors. First, although the research focused on the changes that were brought about by the renovations and other investments in the two communities, the parameters were broad, and the three areas that were examined—safety, employment and education, and community wellbeing—would each benefit from more intensive study. Second, the tenants who participated in interviews were identified by the resource centres, and so may represent a sub-section of the population of the complexes as a whole. Finally, as is clear even from this report, each Manitoba Housing complex has its own character and context; as such, the conclusions reached in this report would not necessarily be true in other housing complexes.

This paper is not comparative; Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park are two very different communities with different histories and different contemporary contexts. Nevertheless, both

communities face challenges in ensuring safe environments for community members, and in supporting community members to live their lives as fully as possible.

All of the investments in Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park over the last few years have had a significant impact on the two communities. It is difficult to pin the impacts on any one element: the Manitoba Housing renovations; new Manitoba Housing Security protocols, cameras and lighting; Manitoba Housing's broader client-oriented tenant services approach to housing provision and community development; new community amenities, including play structures and parks, childcare and resource centres; the programs and supports offered by service agencies; or the ongoing leadership and engagement of tenants who work to improve their communities.

However, the renovations did provide a significant spark to the ongoing work in the two communities. As a major project, the renovations were a significant investment in the communities, and provided—as tenants mentioned—a reassurance and sign of commitment on the part of Manitoba Housing to the community. As one staff at Lord Selkirk Park said,

The renovations were the physical uplift that resonated into everything.

This spark enlivened the two communities, and provided hope that things are getting better. It energized the service agencies, and created opportunities for partnerships and better communication between service agencies and with Manitoba Housing.

Safety continues to be a big concern in both communities. Although a few research participants alluded to domestic violence, the main focus was on violence in the community. It is likely that violence in the home is a part of life for some tenants in Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park and would have a strongly negative impact on individuals and families living in the community. Tenants expressed different levels of comfort about safety, but at least some of the time significant numbers of people are not comfortable with walking around the area or letting children play outside unsupervised. Safety concerns include the prevalence of gangs, drugs and addictions, and violence between or aimed at community members.

Manitoba Housing Security has increased its presence, and there are also community volunteers taking action on safety in both communities. Although these steps are helping many people to feel safer, tenants still have serious concerns. As this project was proceeding, cameras and additional lighting were being installed in the two communities; it remains to be seen what impact these have on crime and violence, as well as perceptions of safety.

In both Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park tenants talked about the contributions they make to the community through caregiving and volunteerism. In addition, many people work or study, or are looking for work or educational opportunities. For people with complicated lives, moving towards full-time work or education is a multi-step path with many twists along the way. It is difficult to draw a direct connection between the

renovations and other changes in the two complexes and people's work experience.

Although not reviewed in-depth here, the stories of people who were hired to work on the renovations and now have careers in construction, as well as the human resource challenges experienced by the employers in maintaining staff for the project, offer opportunities for research and practice on future projects.

Wrap-around supports are integral for people who are sorting out complicated lives. The approaches modelled in these two communities—including making sure that people have access to good quality housing, Manitoba Housing's broader approach to housing provision through client-oriented tenant services, and the supports provided by service agencies—offer a starting place. These supports help to create spaces for people to then take advantage of educational or work-related opportunities.

The social changes that tenants noticed in Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park—people seeing and getting to know neighbours, using their front yards, feeling safer and more hopeful than a few years ago, among others—suggest that the renovations and other changes are having an impact on the quality of life in the two areas. Both complexes had a strong sense of community going into the renovations, which was reflected in the small proportion of the population who chose to move away.

It is likely, as noted by many of the tenants and staff, that most of the impacts felt by individuals and the community come from all of the changes acting together and building upon each other. Many of the service agencies have been in their respective communities for years, and have developed strong working relationships with the tenants and other agencies in the area. These relationships, along with the sense of community in both complexes, provide a solid foundation for the other changes to build on.

There have been many changes in Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park over the last few years,

creating momentum as new ideas build on each other and on each community's strengths. Although the changes are significant, there is still much more work left to be done. Ending poverty is a long-term goal, which requires a multi-pronged strategy. Access to good quality, affordable housing is an essential component of this strategy, as are the investments in Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park, especially the opportuni-

ties afforded by the resource centre, Kaakiyow li moond likol and the adult literacy program, and the childcare centre. The model identified for Lord Selkirk Park—a place with wrap-around services, where households can access all the supports and opportunities they might need—is slowly coming to fruition, in both Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park. It is a long process, but one that is worth continuing to invest in.

References

- August, M. 2008. Social Mix and Canadian Public Housing Redevelopment: Experiences in Toronto. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 17(1) Supplement: 82-100.
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba (CCPA-MB). 2009. *State of the Inner City Report 2009: It takes all day to be poor*. Winnipeg, MB: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba.
- Carter, T. and C. Polevychok. 2004. *Housing is Good Social Policy*. Research Report F/50, Family Network. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Policy Research Networks.
- City of Winnipeg 2008a. *2006 Census Data—Burrows-Keewatin*. Accessed at winnipeg.ca/Census/2006/City%20of%20Winnipeg/City%20of%20Winnipeg/City%20of%20Winnipeg.pdf
- City of Winnipeg 2008b. *2006 Census Data—Lord Selkirk Park*. Accessed at [winnipeg.ca/Census/2006/City%20of%20Winnipeg/City%20of%20Winnipeg/City%20of%20Winnipeg.pdf](http://winnipeg.ca/Census/2006/City%20of%20Winnipeg/City%20of%20Winnipeg/City%20of%20Winnipeg/City%20of%20Winnipeg.pdf)
- CMHC. 2006a. Census-based housing indicators and data. *Housing in Canada Online*. Accessed at www.cmhc.beyond2020.com/HICOLegal_EN.html
- CMHC. 2006b. *Rental Market Report: Winnipeg CMA*. Accessed at www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca
- CMHC. 2011a. *CHS – Public Funds and National Housing Act (Social Housing)*. cmhc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda
- CMHC. 2011b. *CHS – Residential Building Activity*. cmhc.ca/en/hoficlincl/homain/stda
- CMHC. 2012. *Rental Market Report: Winnipeg CMA*. Accessed at www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca
- Cooper, S. 2012. *Winnipeg and Manitoba Housing Data*. Winnipeg, MB: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba.
- Galabuzi, G.E. and R. Labonte. 2002. *Social Inclusion as a Determinant of Health*. Summary of presentations at the The Social Determinants of Health Across the Life-Span Conference, Toronto, November 2002. Public Health Agency of Canada. Accessed at www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/oi-ar/03_inclusion-eng.php
- Hackworth, J. 2009. Political Marginalisation, Misguided Nationalism and the Destruction of Canada's Social Housing Systems. In *Where the Other Half Lives: Lower income housing in a neoliberal world*. Ed. S. Glynn. New York: Pluto Books. 257-277.

- MacKinnon, S. and S. Stephens. 2008. *Is Participation Having an Impact? Measuring Progress in Winnipeg's Inner City through the Voices of Community-Based Program Participants*. Winnipeg: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba.
- Manitoba Housing and Community Development. 2010. *Annual Report 2009-2010*. Accessed at www.gov.mb.ca/finance/pdf/annualrep/2009_10/housing.pdf
- Manitoba Housing and Community Development. Date unknown. Programs, Eligibility and How to Apply for Housing. *Housing and Community Development*. Accessed at www.gov.mb.ca/housing/howtoapply.html
- May, J. 2007. *Social Lives in Social Housing: Resident connections to social services*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Policy Research Networks.
- National Council of Welfare. 2011. *The Dollars and Sense of Solving Poverty*. National Council of Welfare Reports, 130. Ottawa, ON: National Council of Welfare.
- Pickles, A., & Hudson, I. 2008. *Stuck in Neutral: Manitoba Families Working Harder Just to Stay in Place*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.
- Pierre, N. 2007. *A Safer Haven: Innovations for Improving Social Housing in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Policy Research Networks.
- Prince, M.J. 1998. Holes in the Safety Net, Leaks in the Roof: Changes in Canadian Welfare Policy and Their Implications for Social Housing Programs. *Housing Policy Debate* 9(4): 825-848.
- Province of Manitoba. 2007. *BUILDING Foundations: Ten point action plan*. Accessed at www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/fsh/10_point_action_plan.pdf
- Province of Manitoba. 2012. *Historical Summary of Minimum Wage Rates in Manitoba*. Accessed at www.gov.mb.ca
- Province of Manitoba. 2013, January 25. *Governments of Canada and Manitoba celebrate affordable housing for families in Winnipeg*. News Release. Accessed at news.gov.mb.ca/news
- Province of Manitoba. Date unknown. *Employment and Income Assistance Facts*. Accessed at www.gov.mb.ca/fs/eiafacts/rental.html
- Purdy, S. 2003. "Ripped off" by the System: Housing Policy, Poverty, and Territorial Stigmatization in Regent Park Housing Project, 1951-1991. *Labour / Le Travail*, 52, pp. 45-108
- Shapcott, M. 2007. *Ten Things You Should Know About Housing and Homelessness*. Toronto, ON: Wellesley Institute.
- Silver, J. 2008. *The Inner Cities of Saskatoon and Winnipeg: A New and Distinctive Form of Development*. Winnipeg, MB: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba.
- Silver, J. 2011. *Good Places to Live: Poverty and public housing in Canada*. Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing.
- Statistics Canada. 2012a. *Table 202-0402 - Distribution of total income of individuals, 2010 constant dollars, annual, CANSIM (database)*.
- Statistics Canada. 2012b. *Table 202-0804 - Persons in low income, by economic family type, annual, CANSIM (database)*.
- Thibert, J. 2007. *Inclusion and Social Housing Practice in Canadian Cities: Following the Path from Good Intentions to Sustainable Projects*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Policy Research Networks.

Appendix A—Research Guides and Survey

Interviews—Tenants

Hello, my name is [NAME]. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The interviews are part of a research project being conducted by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Manitoba (CCPA-MB), about the impact of government investment in social housing in Winnipeg. The research intends to learn about what the tenants think about the changes that have taken place in Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park over the last few years.

The staff from the CCPA-MB will make a presentation about the research at the resource centre when the project is finished, which will probably be in November 2012.

Before we start the interview, I would like you to sign a consent form. The consent form means that you agree to participate in the interview and that the interview can be used for the research project. The interview will be recorded and transcribed, and used to develop a report.

[show the interviewee the recorder, explain how it works if they're interested]

START RECORDER.

[Go through the consent form with the interviewee, and offer to read it to them. Explain about

confidentiality. Take some time to ensure that the interviewee has a copy of the consent form and has signed one. Ask if the interviewee has any questions.]

We'll start with some background questions.

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your gender?
4. What ethnic background do you identify with (e.g. Cree, Aboriginal, White, Sudanese)?
5. Do you have children?
 - At home?
 - In care?
 - How old are they?
6. How long have you lived in Gilbert Park/ Lord Selkirk Park?

Next we have some questions about your well-being.

1. Would you say your physical health is
 - Poor
 - Average
 - Very good
 - Excellent

2. Would you say your emotional health is
 - Poor
 - Average
 - Very good
 - Excellent
3. Would you say your spiritual health is
 - Poor
 - Average
 - Very good
 - Excellent
 - Not applicable
4. In the last 3 years, has your physical health
 - Gotten better
 - Gotten worse
 - Stayed the same.
5. In the last 3 years, has your emotional health
 - Gotten better
 - Gotten worse
 - Stayed the same.
6. In the last 3 years, has your spiritual health
 - Gotten better
 - Gotten worse
 - Stayed the same.
7. If you are comfortable, please tell me what has changed for you in terms of your physical, emotional or spiritual health over the last three years.
8. Do you have access to childcare that meets your needs?
 - Yes
 - No
9. How much do you agree with the following statement: If I need services or supports from the government or other organizations, I know where to go and I will ask for what I need.
 - Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Disagree
10. Would you say that over the past 3 years your knowledge of services has
 - Gotten better
 - Gotten worse
 - Stayed the same.
11. How much do you agree with the following statement: I have safe places to go when I need help.
 - Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Disagree
12. Would you say that over the last 3 years your access to safe places has
 - Increased
 - Decreased
 - Remained the same
13. If you were sick at home, is there someone who would look after you or that you could call for help?
 - Yes
 - No
14. How much do you agree with the following statement: If I feel overwhelmed or in need of a break, I can get help to take care of my children to give me a break.
 - Strongly agree
 - Somewhat agree
 - Disagree
15. How often do you participate in activities in your community? (e.g. bingo, church activities, community centre, other)
 - Several times a week
 - Once a week
 - Several times a month
 - Once a month
 - Less than once a month
 - Never
16. Do your children participate in sports or other recreation or community programs or activities?
 - Yes
 - No.
 - *If no, why not?*

17. Would you say that you know
 - Most of the people in your neighbourhood
 - Many of the people in your neighbourhood
 - A few of the people in your neighbourhood
 - Nobody else in your neighbourhood

Next we have some questions about safety and security.

1. Do you feel like you have control over your life?
 - Often
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - *If sometimes or rarely, please explain.*
2. Over the last 3 years, have your feelings of control over your life
 - Gotten better
 - Gotten worse
 - Stayed the same.
 - *Please explain.*
3. Do you feel safe walking around Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park?
 - Very safe
 - Somewhat safe
 - Not safe at all
 - *If somewhat or not at all, please explain.*
4. Are you comfortable letting your children play outside unsupervised?
 - All the time
 - Some of the time
 - Never
 - *If some of the time or never, please explain.*
5. In the last 3 years, have your feelings of safety
 - Gotten better
 - Gotten worse
 - Stayed the same.
 - *Please explain.*

6. Have you noticed any changes relating to safety in Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park over the last 3 years? What changes have you noticed?
7. Do you have any particular concerns about safety in Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park that you would like to share?
8. What do you think would be the best way to address the safety issues in Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park?

This next section deals with employment and education.

1. Do you currently have paid employment?
 - If yes, what is your job?
2. Are you currently a student?
 - If yes, what are you studying?
3. If no to current paid employment and education, are you looking for a job or for educational opportunities?
 - Yes
 - No
 - *If no, please explain further (e.g. childcare issues, working at home, disability)*
4. 3 years ago, did you have paid employment?
 - If yes, in the same job or a different job? What was your job then?
5. 3 years ago, were you a student?
 - If yes, what were you studying?
6. Were you hired to work on the renovations here in Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park over the last 3 years?
 - If yes, what was your job?
 - What was your experience working on the renovations?
 - Has your experience working on the renovations had an effect on your decisions about work or education since then?
 - *If yes, please elaborate.*

The next series of questions are about housing in Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park.

1. Did you live in Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park before the renovations?
 - If yes:
 - Do you live in the same suite as before the renovations?
 - Would you say where you live now is
 - better than before (or better than your previous suite, if it was different),
 - worse than before or
 - the same as before?
 - What has changed in your suite or house (what do you like or not like)?
 - Compared with before the renovations started, would you say Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park is
 - a better place to live,
 - a worse place to live,
 - or the same?
 - Have there been good changes in the neighbourhood over the last 3 years or so? What are they?
 - Have there been bad changes in the neighbourhood over the last 3 years? What are they?
 - How have these good and bad changes affected you, your family and the community?
 - If no:
 - Where did you live before (what neighbourhood)? How long did you live at your last place for?
 - Why did you decide to move to Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park?
 - Would you say your current suite or house is better, worse, or the same as the place you lived before?
 - What do you like about the house/suite and neighbourhood where you live now, compared with the last place you lived?

- What do you not like about the house/suite and neighbourhood where you live now, compared with the last place you lived?
- How has the move to Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park affected you and your family?

The last set of questions deals with general life conditions.

1. How stressful is your life at the moment?
 - Not stressful
 - Moderately stressful
 - Extremely stressful
2. Compared with 3 years ago, how stressful is your life today?
 - Less stressful
 - More stressful
 - The same
3. What would you say causes the most stress in your life? (pick and rank the top 3)
 - Money
 - Relationships
 - Lack of support
 - Children
 - Addictions
 - Family violence
 - Violence in my community
 - Government systems (e.g. welfare, CFS, others)
 - Other (please name)
 - *Is there anything else you'd like to say about these stressors?*
4. How would you best respond to the following statement: I look forward to good things happening for me in the future.
 - Very much
 - Somewhat
 - Not at all
 - *Please explain why.*

5. What is one of your dreams for the future?
6. Overall, how would you describe your hope for the future?
 - Excellent
 - Very good
 - Good
 - Poor
7. Over the past 3 years, would you say that your hope for the future has
 - Gotten better
 - Gotten worse
 - Stayed the same.
8. Is there anything else that you have noticed that has changed in Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park over the last 3 or so years?
9. Are there any other changes you would like to see in the area in the next few years?
10. Do you have any other comments to add about Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park?

Thank you very much for your time and contribution. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call Sarah Cooper. Her contact information is on the consent forms.

TURN OFF RECORDER

Interviews—Staff

1. Name, position, organization
2. What is the role of your organization? How long has it been involved at Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park? (How long has the office been here)
3. Have the needs or priorities in the community changed over the last few years? Has your organization's work changed its focus or approach?
4. What changes have you seen in the community over the last 3 years? This might include
 - a. Safety and security

- b. Labour market and educational outcomes
 - c. Well being and social inclusion
 - d. Relationships among community members
 - e. Engagement in programming and events in the community
 - f. Day to day life in the community
5. What are the main challenges in the community? What are the community's main strengths? Have these changed over the last 3 years?

6. What do you see as the priorities for future investments in Gilbert Park/Lord Selkirk Park?

Focus Groups—Youth

1. Introductions—name, how long have lived in complex
2. Set context: renovations, security changes, resource centre
3. What are the best things about living in Gilbert Park?
4. What are the worst things about living here?
5. Have these things changed over the last 3 years — gotten better, gotten worse?
6. What other changes have you noticed in the community over the last 3 years?
7. Depending on what people bring up, questions might include
 - a. Do you know more people in the area, whether as friends or just to say hi to?
 - b. Do you participate in more community events?
 - c. Is your house or suite better or worse than where you were living 3 years ago? What has changed?
 - d. What kinds of resources are available for youth? What other resources or supports are needed?

- e. In the last 3 years, have your feelings of safety changed?
 - Why is this? Have you noticed any changes relating to safety in Gilbert Park over the last 3 years? What changes have you noticed? Do you have any particular concerns about safety in Gilbert Park that you would like to share?
8. Do you have any other comments to add about Gilbert Park? Are there any other changes you would like to see in the area in the next few years? What are your hopes for the future?

- b. Compared with where you lived 3 years ago, would you say Gilbert Park /Lord Selkirk Park is:
 a better place to live
 a worse place to live the same

3. What do you like about your current house/suite? What do you not like?

4. What do you like about Gilbert Park /Lord Selkirk Park? What do you not like??

5. Compared with 3 years ago, how stressful is your life today?
 less stressful more stressful
 the same

6. What would you say causes the most stress in your life? (pick 3)
 money relationships
 lack of support children
 addictions family violence
 violence in my community
 government systems (e.g. welfare, CFS, others)
 other _____

7. How many people live in your household?
 _____ How many children? _____

Survey—Tenants

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-MB is conducting a survey to learn more about what tenants think about the recent renovations and changes in Gilbert Park /Lord Selkirk Park. The survey is anonymous, and results will be kept confidential. Participation in this survey is voluntary.

The results will be used to develop a report about the impact of government investment in Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park. This report will be shared with the Government of Manitoba, and will be posted on the CCPA’s website (www.policyalternatives.ca).

Please complete the questionnaire by July 30, 2012. Drop the completed survey into the envelope at the resource centre, or mail it to:

Sarah Cooper, CCPA—MB
 309-323 Portage Avenue
 Winnipeg, MB R3B 2C1

1. How long have you lived in Gilbert Park /Lord Selkirk Park?

2. Did you live in Gilbert Park /Lord Selkirk Park before the renovations?
 Yes No

- a. Compared with where you lived 3 years ago, would you say your current house/suite is:
 better worse the same

Other comments

Do you have any other comments to add about the changes in Gilbert Park /Lord Selkirk Park over the last 3 years? (Use the back of the sheet if needed).

Appendix B—Consent Forms

Interview Consent Form—Tenants

Restoring More Than Just Housing: Community and Infrastructure Revitalization in Public Housing

You are invited to participate in a research study called “Restoring More Than Just Housing: Community and infrastructure revitalization in public housing”. It is being conducted by:

Sarah Cooper
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba
309-323 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, MB, R3B 2C1
Phone: 946-0932
Email: sarahc@policyalternatives.ca

Project Description

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) is a charitable research institute which focuses on issues of social and economic justice.

In this project, the CCPA-MB is looking at tenants’ experiences of the investments made by the government of Manitoba in Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park over the last few years, especially relating to

- Safety and security;
- Labour force attachment (including engagement in training/education programs);
- Well-being and social inclusion.

The research will also present policy recommendations for future investments.

The benefits of participating in this interview include a chance to talk about your experiences and to offer recommendations for future investments. The risk of participating in the interview is no greater than you would experience in your everyday life.

The interview will take about 45 minutes to complete. It will be recorded and transcribed. Please note that your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question(s) and are free to stop participating in the study at any time before the final research paper is completed without consequence.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Any information you share will be confidential. Only the interviewer and researcher will have access to the audio recording and transcripts. Your name and identity will not be made public at any time. Personal information will not be included in the final report. The recordings and transcripts will be stored in locked filing cabinets or on password-protected computers at the CCPA offices for two years after the release of the final report (December 2012) and will be disposed of by shredding or deletion after this time.

How the Information You Share Will Be Used

The information from the interviews will be written up into a report produced by the CCPA. This report will be shared with the Government of Manitoba, and will be posted on the CCPA's website (www.policyalternatives.ca). The information may also be used in university courses, or included in media or journal articles.

Do you object to any of these uses of the information that we gather in doing this research?

_____ I have no objection to these uses of information gathered in this research.

_____ I object to the use of information gathered in this research (please specify).

Questions

If you have any concerns about the way this study is conducted, you may contact the Senate Committee on Ethics in Human Research and Scholarship Program Officer, at 786-9058 or by email at ethics@uwinnipeg.ca.

If you have any questions about the research please contact Sarah Cooper.

Do you agree to participate in the interview?

_____ I **do** agree to participate in the interview, including being recorded.

_____ I **do not** agree to participate in the interview.

_____ I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sarah Cooper

If you would like to receive a copy of the final report, please check here: _____ and provide contact information (email, phone, or mailing address) below:

Interview Consent Form—Staff

Restoring More Than Just Housing: Community and Infrastructure Revitalization in Public Housing

You are invited to participate in a research study called “Restoring More Than Just Housing: Community and infrastructure revitalization in public housing”. It is being conducted by:

Sarah Cooper
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB
Phone: 946-0932
Email: sarahc@policyalternatives.ca

Project Description

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) is a charitable research institute which focuses on issues of social and economic justice.

In this project, the CCPA-MB is looking at tenants’ experiences of the investments made by the government of Manitoba in Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park over the last few years, especially relating to

- Safety and security;
- Labour force attachment (including engagement in training/education programs);
- Well-being and social inclusion.

The research will also present policy recommendations for future investments.

The benefits of participating in this interview include a chance to talk about changes you have seen in the community and to contribute to the recommendations which will be put forward in the final report. The risk of participating in the focus group is no greater than you would experience in your everyday life.

The focus group will take about 1 hour to complete. It will be recorded and transcribed. Please note that your participation is voluntary. Your participation in this study will not affect any relationship you have or do not have with the resource centre or Manitoba Housing. You may refuse to answer any question(s) and are free to stop participating in the study at any time before the final research paper is completed without consequence.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Any information you share will be confidential. All participants in the focus group will be asked to maintain confidentiality about the discussion. Only the focus group facilitator and researcher will have access to the audio recording and transcripts. Your name and identity will not be made public at any time. Personal information will not be included in the final report. The recordings and transcripts will be stored in locked filing cabinets or on password-protected computers at the CCPA offices for two years after the release of the final report (December 2012) and will be disposed of by shredding or deletion after this time.

How the Information You Share Will Be Used

The information from the focus group will be written up into a report produced by the CCPA. This report will be shared with the Government of Manitoba, and will be posted on the CCPA's website (www.policyalternatives.ca). The information may also be used in university courses, or included in media or journal articles.

Do you object to any of these uses of the information that we gather in doing this research?

_____ I have no objection to these uses of information gathered in this research.

_____ I object to the use of information gathered in this research (please specify).

Questions

If you have any concerns about the way this study is conducted, you may contact the Senate Committee on Ethics in Human Research and Scholarship Program Officer, at 786-9058 or by email at ethics@uwinnipeg.ca.

If you have any questions about the research please contact Sarah Cooper.

Do you agree to participate in the focus group?

_____ I **do** agree to participate in the focus group, including being recorded.

_____ I **do not** agree to participate in the focus group.

_____ I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form.

If you would like to receive a copy of the final report, please check here: _____.

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sarah Cooper

Focus Group Consent Form— Youth Parent/Guardian

Restoring More Than Just Housing: Community and Infrastructure Revitalization in Public Housing

Your child is invited to participate in a research study called “Restoring More Than Just Housing: Community and infrastructure revitalization in public housing”. It is being conducted by:

Sarah Cooper
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB
Phone: 946-0932
Email: sarahc@policyalternatives.ca

Project Description

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) is a charitable research institute which focuses on issues of social and economic justice.

In this project, the CCPA-MB is looking at tenants’ experiences of the investments made by the government of Manitoba in Lord Selkirk Park and Gilbert Park over the last few years, especially relating to

- Safety and security;
- Labour force attachment (including engagement in training/education programs);
- Well-being and social inclusion.

The research will also present policy recommendations for future investments.

The benefits of participating in this interview include a chance for your child to talk about their experiences and to contribute to the recommendations which will be put forward in the final report. The risk of participating in the focus group is no greater than they would experience in everyday life.

The focus group will take about 1 hour to complete. It will be recorded and transcribed. Please note that your child’s participation is voluntary. Their participation in this study will not affect any relationship you or they have or do not have with the resource centre, youth centre or Manitoba Housing. They may refuse to answer any question(s) and are free to stop participating in the study at any time before the final research paper is completed without consequence.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Any information your child shares will be confidential. Only the focus group facilitator and researcher will have access to the audio recording and transcripts. All participants in the focus group will be asked to maintain confidentiality about the discussion. Your child’s name and identity will not be made public at any time. Personal information will not be included in the final report. The recordings and transcripts will be stored in locked filing cabinets or on password-protected computers at the CCPA offices for two years after the release of the final report (December 2012) and will be disposed of by shredding or deletion after this time.

How the Information You Share Will Be Used

The information from the focus group will be written up into a report produced by the CCPA. This report will be shared with the Government of Manitoba, and will be posted on the CCPA's website (www.policyalternatives.ca). The information may also be used in university courses, or included in media or journal articles.

Do you object to any of these uses of the information that we gather in doing this research?

_____ I have no objection to these uses of information gathered in this research.

_____ I object to the use of information gathered in this research (please specify).

Questions

If you have any concerns about the way this study is conducted, you may contact the Senate Committee on Ethics in Human Research and Scholarship Program Officer, at 786-9058 or by email at ethics@uwinnipeg.ca.

If you have any questions about the research please contact Sarah Cooper.

Do you agree to allow your child to participate in the focus group?

_____ I **do** agree to allow my child to participate in the focus group, including being recorded.

_____ I **do not** agree to allow my child to participate in the focus group.

_____ I acknowledge receipt of a copy of this consent form.

If you would like to receive a copy of the final report, please check here: _____.

Child's name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian's name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sarah Cooper

Focus Group Consent Form—Youth

Restoring More Than Just Housing: Community and Infrastructure Revitalization in Public Housing

You are invited to participate in a research study called “Restoring More Than Just Housing: Community and infrastructure revitalization in public housing”. It is being run by:

Sarah Cooper
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives – Manitoba
Phone: 946-0932
Email: sarahc@policyalternatives.ca

Project Description

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) is an organization that does research on social and economic issues.

In this project, we want to hear what you think about how the neighbourhood has changed in the last few years, especially relating to safety, education, and how people get along in the community. Based on what we hear from you, we will make recommendations to the government of Manitoba about what they can do to make the neighbourhood better.

Participating in this project gives you a chance to talk about what life is like here, and to say what you think should be changed in the neighbourhood. What you talk about in the group will be used to write a report that will be sent to the government of Manitoba and will be available online. It might also be used in schools or in the media.

If you don't want to answer a question you can pass, and you can stop participating at any point. Your name and identity won't be used in any reports. The recording of the focus group will be deleted two years after the end of the project.

Questions

If you have any questions about the project, you can call or email Sarah Cooper.

Do you agree to participate in the project? YES NO

Name (please print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sarah Cooper

Appendix C—Newsletters

Gilbert Park

December 2012



Report to the Gilbert Park community about the research project called: *Restoring More Than Just Housing: Community and infrastructure revitalization in public housing*

Photo: Christian Cassidy

Restoring More Than Just Housing: Project Overview

In the last three years, Manitoba Housing renovated all the housing units in Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park, and committed to funding for other neighbourhood amenities, such as security and resource centres.

The CCPA-MB was asked by Manitoba Housing to look at how these two communities have changed over the last few years.

The purpose of the research is to hear what kind of impact these changes are having for the people who live in the two communities, especially relating to jobs and education, safety and security, and well-being and participation in the community.

Community interviewers talked to 16 people who live in each community. A survey was distributed to every household and was available at the resource centres so that people who could not take part in an interview had an opportunity to contribute. Staff from Manitoba Housing and service agencies around the

communities were also interviewed.

The final report will be completed in early 2013. It will be published online at www.policyalternatives.ca, and will be shared with Manitoba Housing. Copies will be available at the resource centres.

What changed?

During the renovations the units were completely redone, including new appliances, drywall, doors, kitchens, bathrooms and flooring. Manitoba Housing also put fences around all the yards.

A number of changes in the neighbourhood took place at the same time. Some of these changes were started by Manitoba Housing, and others were started by other organizations. These include:

- community gardens where people can grow food
- Two picnic tables in the gazebo
- A new play structure for kids, as well as a splashpad, a skateboard park, and basketball courts
- New paint colours for the buildings
- A new Manitoba Housing office in Gilbert Park with a Tenant Services Coordinator
- Security cameras and lights, and increased security patrols, especially at night.

There is also a sense that the community is changing, as new people, including newcomers to Canada, move in.

What did people have to say?

Here's what people said in the interviews and surveys about jobs and education, safety and security, and well-being and connection to the community.

Jobs and education

Some people work or go to

Gilbert Park

school; others don't. In some cases this is because they are retired or on disability, in others they are looking for a job or educational opportunities. A few people volunteer and participate in community activities.

Many tenants worked on the renovations, and people are proud to see the work done by community members.

Safety and security

Most people feel Gilbert Park is as safe or safer now than three years ago. Most people feel safe walking around Gilbert Park, but many people don't feel as safe at night, and a few people don't feel safe at all.

People noticed that there is more of a Manitoba Housing Security presence now than before, but some people said that the security guards don't do as much as they should. At the same time, people said there should be more security guards, especially to walk around the area, and there should be more community involvement in safety and security issues.

Concerns were mentioned about children and youth's safety, especially in the evenings. There are concerns about children and youth having access to drugs and alcohol, and getting involved in gang activities. Some people also mentioned concerns about children and youth being outside unsupervised, especially at night.

Youth said that although the area is mostly safe, they are very aware of violence, drugs and gangs in the community. They also said that while Security makes it safer, they don't like that the security guards sometimes follow them around.



Well-being and connecting to the community

Gilbert Park has a strong sense of community, and many people commented on this. Everyone interviewed knows at least a few people, and about two thirds of the people said that they know many or most of the people in the community.

About half the people said they participate in community activities or organizations more than once a week; everyone said they participate at least occasionally. Many of the children and youth in the area participate in community activities or programs.

People also talked about the changes in the common areas, like benches and parks. These give people a place to socialize and get to know their neighbours.

The new fences offer a way for people to have their own private outdoor space. Many people have flowerbeds or garden boxes, barbecues and chairs in their yards. People can connect with neighbours as they sit in

their yards and chat with people passing by.

Conclusion

Some people feel that Gilbert Park is getting better; others think it's more or less the same. There are many resources and supports in the community, and most people know where to go and would ask for help if they needed it.

Safety is an ongoing concern in Gilbert Park. Many people feel safe most of the time, but others do not. Drugs, gangs and violence continue to be issues.

Community members like the area, and some who had wanted to leave before now are thinking about staying. Overall, there is a sense of pride in the Gilbert Park community.

If you have questions or comments about this project, please contact:
Sarah Cooper, CCPA-MB
204-946-0932
sarahc@policyalternatives.ca

Lord Selkirk Park

November 2012



Report to the Lord Selkirk Park community about the research project called: *Restoring More Than Just Housing: Community and infrastructure revitalization in public housing*

Restoring More Than Just Housing: Project Overview

In the last three years, Manitoba Housing renovated all the housing units in Gilbert Park and Lord Selkirk Park, and committed to funding for other neighbourhood amenities, such as security and resource centres.

The CCPA-MB was asked by Manitoba Housing to look at how these two communities have changed over the last few years.

The purpose of the research is to hear what kind of impact these changes are having for the people who live in the two communities, especially relating to jobs and education, safety and security, and well-being and participation in the community.

Community interviewers talked to 16 people who live in each community. A survey was distributed to every household and was available at the resource centres so that people who could not take part in an interview had an opportunity to contribute. Staff from Manitoba Housing and

service agencies around the communities were also interviewed.

The final report will be completed in early 2013. It will be published online at www.policyalternatives.ca, and will be shared with Manitoba Housing. Copies will be available at the resource centres.

What changed?

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Lord Selkirk Park was facing a lot of challenges. The vacancy rate was extremely high. Gangs and drugs were common. Community members were often afraid to leave their homes. The resource centre had closed and the area resources were scrambling to address the needs.

To respond to these concerns, in the mid-2000s, the North End Community Renewal Association began working with residents and other neighbourhood organisations to find ways to

make the community a better place to live.

This resulted in a number of changes in the community:

- Manitoba Housing renovated all the housing units in the community, increased the security presence, and changed its approach to include more supports for tenants
- the resource centre, daycare, adult learning centre and Kaakiyow li moond likol were started, first temporarily and now permanently, as resources for the community.
- the Community Advisory Committee was set up to share information and happenings in the neighbourhood.

As a result of these changes, other changes have started to happen in the neighbourhood. There is now a waiting list for housing in the area, and there is a sense that things are getting better.

What did people have to say?

Here's what people said in the interviews and surveys about jobs and education, safety and security, and well-being and connection to the community.

Jobs and education

Some people work or go to school; others don't. In some cases this is because they are retired or on disability, in others they are looking for a job or educational opportunities. Many people contribute to the community by volunteering with service providers.

Service providers also noticed that having the daycare, the adult learning centre and Kaakiyow right in the community enabled many people to go back to school to get their GED.

Safety and security

Some people feel very safe walking around or letting their children play outside; others don't feel safe or keep their children close. The biggest safety issues people identified are addictions, gangs, and violence.

Although these are big issues, most people feel safer than they did three years ago. People can see changes relating to safety in the community, such as the increased presence of Manitoba Housing security and the Ambassador program, the new security cameras, and Manitoba Housing taking action to kick troublemakers out of the area.

Some signs that the neighbourhood is safer now include that people now spend more time in their yards, and leave chairs and barbecues outside without fear that they will be stolen. People also leave their doors open, rather than peeking from behind a curtain or refusing to



open the door to a knock.

Well-being and connection to the community

At the beginning of the renovations process, most tenants chose to stay rather than move to another Manitoba Housing complex. The community's demographics changed as some households left, and new ones arrived. The high vacancy rate has changed to a waiting list as word of all the positive changes spread.

Most people say they know many other people and families in the community. Over the last three years, resources in the area have gotten better, and people have a better sense of where to go if they need help.

Many people participate in community activities, such as bingo, church, community events or programs run by service providers. This gives a sense of Lord Selkirk Park as a well-connected community with active, engaged community members.

Conclusion

Overall, there is a sense that Lord Selkirk Park is slowly becoming a better place to live. It's safer than it was three years ago; there's a sense of community, and people have a better sense of what resources there are in the area; and the neighbourhood resources are providing more options for people who want to go back to school or look for a job.

Manitoba Housing's investment in Lord Selkirk Park is clearly having an impact. However, this impact is enhanced by the work and contributions of the tenants and service providers in the community. As these three groups work together, the changes in Lord Selkirk Park are magnified, making it a better place to live for everyone.

If you have questions or comments about this project, please contact:
Sarah Cooper, CCPA-MB
204-946-0932
sarahc@policyalternatives.ca



CCPA

CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
MANITOBA OFFICE

309-323 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3B 2C1
TEL 204-927-3200 FAX 204-927-3201
EMAIL ccpamb@policyalternatives.ca
WEBSITE www.policyalternatives.ca