



Achieving a Healthy, Sustainable Community

Quality of Life in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Community-University Institute for Social Research:
Quality of Life Module

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***Research
Summary***

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Introduction

There continues to be a growing interest among academics, the social policy community and governments – in both Canada and abroad – in monitoring social progress. Much of this activity is focused on measuring quality of life, often times via the development and implementation of social indicators which go beyond the usual economic measures of inflation, interest rates, or the gross domestic product that dominate media and, often, policy attention (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1996). A recent review of indicator development concluded that, without policy relevancy, an interested constituency and, most importantly, stakeholder engagement in indicator development and selection, there is little likelihood of quality of life indicators being adopted or influential in policy decision-making (Hancock, Labonte & Edwards 1999). This is reiterated by Friedman (1997), who proposes a holistic scientific strategy for improving the quality of life. Such an integrated approach to quality of life research is crucial to furthering awareness about the impact of social, economic and political decisions and activities, while operating as a guide to decision-makers in both the private and public sectors. Given that neighbourhood inequality in Canadian cities has been growing since 1980, shown in the increasing gap between the lowest- and the highest-income neighbourhoods (Statistics Canada, 2000) and the growth in the number of high-poverty neighbourhoods in Canadian cities between 1980 and 1995 (Canadian Council on Social Development, 2000), the need for policy-relevant intra-city research on quality of life has never been stronger.

The research presented herein is part of a larger project that examines the process and results of a multi-stakeholder approach to the development and use of quality of life indicators in achieving a healthy, sustainable Saskatoon community. Saskatoon is a medium-sized city of 200,000 in the prairie province of Saskatchewan. Both municipal government and community-based organizations (CBOs), together with university-based academics, have shown readiness to address problematic areas and issues in partnership with each other. The envisioned outcome of this larger project is the ongoing sustainability of Saskatoon as a healthy city with an improving and a more equitably distributed quality of life. While determining residents' quality of life, the research examines how evaluations of quality of life differ across three neighbourhoods (each made up of a number of census tract clusters) representing low, medium and high socio-economic status (SES). After describing the research methodology, the results of the three research stages are presented.

Chapter 1: Methods

The research has proceeded through numerous phases. Each of these phases is cumulative, where information gathered in the previous phase informs the next. The participatory action research approach used throughout this project ensures the value of the outputs to the stakeholders and the likelihood of them using this research to change policy and programs.

Stage 1: Existing knowledge on the views of community members concerning factors that enhance and detract from their quality of life was collected and reviewed.

Stage 2: A telephone survey (Appendix A) was completed in the three neighbourhoods (census tract clusters) in December 2000 to January 2001 (Appendix B: Sample Frame Methodology). The survey draft was critically discussed at a Community Forum held in November 2000. Analysis of the survey data, together with the research instruments used in the qualitative research stages were presented to the community via a Community Forum in February 2001. The objectives of this forum were: to communicate the invaluable feedback received from the last Community Forum, to receive critical feedback on the survey data and qualitative data collection instruments, and to continue the knowledge sharing around the research process.

Stage 3: In addition, focus groups (n=9)² have been held to address the quality of life perceptions of community members representing specific groups whose voices or opinions have rarely, if ever, been heard on quality of life issues (including Senior Citizens, Disabled People, Children, Youth, Immigrants and Refugees, Aboriginal Peoples³, Un- and Under-employed People, Single Parents, and Lower-income Earners). Please see Appendix C for a description of the composition of these groups. These interviews took place in February 2001. Please see Appendix D for the Focus Group Question Guide. Qualitative analysis of the responses was conducted using a *grounded theory* approach. Simply put, significant themes, perspectives, and explanations emerge from experiences shared by respondents throughout the course of a discussion.

Stage 4: In-depth face-to-face interviews with a sub-sample of respondents from the telephone survey (n=90) have taken place in order to address each neighbourhood's quality of life in more detail. Approximately 30 face-to-face interviews were conducted in each of the three neighbourhoods in the Spring of 2001, giving a total of 90 interviews. Please see Appendix E for the interview schedule. Similar to the focus group analysis, a grounded theory methodology was used in the data analysis.

Stage 5: Results from the two qualitative stages illuminate the survey results while feeding into a policy forum held October 20, 2001, involving local community-based organizations, citizens, researchers, and local/provincial government.

² "n" refers to the number included in a sample or the number of people interviewed

³ In this document, *Aboriginal* includes First Nations and Métis peoples

Stage 6: The policy forum provided the opportunity for a Briefing Paper⁴ to be firmed up into a Community Action Plan, which the module will support in the final year of funding. Dissemination will also take place in the final year.

The results of stages two, three, and four will now be presented in the order in which they took place. Chapter 2 provides a summary of the telephone survey data. Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 provide a summary of the focus group data and face-to-face data, respectively. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the research results in the form of themes. The three themes in the briefing paper are the most representative of this list of summary themes (Appendix F).

⁴ The Briefing Paper is a reader-friendly document that both presents research and associated policy implication while providing the reader *workbook* strategies for action (— 2001. *Building a Caring Community: Quality of Life in Saskatoon*. Community-University Institute for Social Research, Saskatoon SK. A Briefing Paper for the Quality of Life Public Policy Forum, October 20)

Chapter 2: Summary of the Telephone Survey Data

The Quality of Life research team posed six research questions that guided statistical analysis of the survey data. First, the research team was interested in the relationship between particular aspects of quality of life and socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age group, sex, income and education level, and neighbourhood type. Second, the research team investigated the link between measures of place (e.g., feelings of safety and security) and overall quality of life. The third research question was related to changes in seven outcome measures: overall quality of life, self-rated health, stress, happiness, ability to provide for family, quality of life in Saskatoon, and quality of life in neighbourhood. We examined the association between socio-demographic characteristics and the changes in these outcome measures. Fourth, we were interested in what distinguishes people who evaluate their current overall quality of life as excellent or very good from people who say their quality of life is good, fair, or poor. Fifth, the relationship between *sense of place* and socio-demographic characteristics was considered. Finally, we explored the association between respondents' satisfaction with work and family balance and various socio-demographic characteristics, place-based measures, and satisfaction items.

These research questions, considered one at a time, and the statistically significant findings are presented below.

Q1: What is the relative importance of different dimensions of quality of life to overall quality of life? How does this differ by age group, sex, income level, education level, and neighbourhood type?

In order to assess the relative importance of different dimensions of quality of life, we first created summary categories for the satisfaction questions (see Appendix A items B3.1-B3.12 and B4.1), importance of personal life questions (see Appendix A items E1.1-E1.5), and community quality of life questions (see Appendix A items F1.1-F1.20) using a statistical data reduction procedure called principal components analysis. This analysis produced three summary categories for the satisfaction items: *satisfaction with external structures* (e.g., how satisfied are you with your neighbourhood?), *satisfaction with public relationships* (e.g., how satisfied are you with your treatment by store owners?), and *satisfaction with personal relationships* (e.g., how satisfied are you with your relationship with your spouse?). The importance of personal quality of life questions was then summarized into two categories: *personal quality of life* and *personal relationships*. Finally, the community quality of life items comprised four categories: *neighbourhood — perceptual* (e.g., the degree of neighbourhood neatness), *neighbourhood — programs and services* (e.g., social programs), *neighbourhood — amenities* (e.g., shops and services in neighbourhood), and *neighbourhood — physical* (e.g., condition of roads in neighbourhood).

Next, we performed a statistical analysis called analysis of variance (ANOVA) with these summary categories and the overall quality of life question to determine which categories were significantly related to quality of life. All the summary categories were significantly related, except *personal quality of life*, which was excluded from further analysis. In order to assess the relative importance of the summary categories and socio-demographic characteristics to overall quality of life, hierarchical regression analysis was used. This analysis provides an estimate of the degree and the direction of the association between an outcome

(i.e., overall quality of life) and predictors (e.g., summary categories, age group). Figure 1 illustrates the significant predictors of overall quality of life. Age group, income level, and satisfaction with external structures were significantly related to overall quality of life. The community quality of life items and importance of personal relationships items did not help to explain overall quality of life.

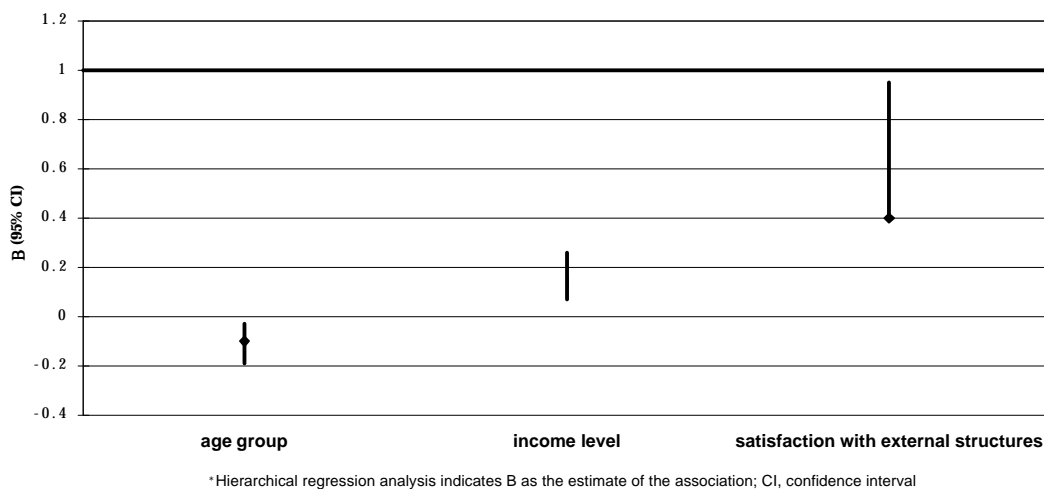


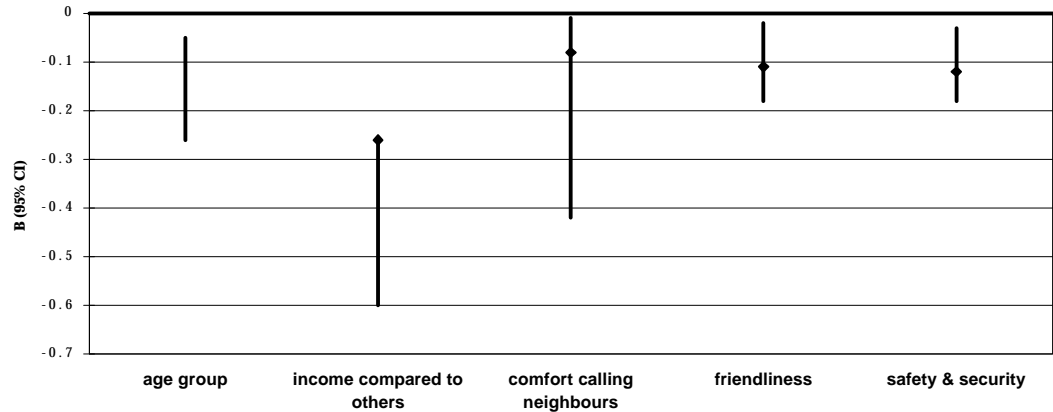
Figure 1. *Relative importance of quality life dimensions and socio-demographic characteristics to overall quality of life.**

In summary, according to these analyses, age group, income level, and satisfaction with external structures provide the best indicators of overall quality of life. Age group is negatively related to overall quality of life. That is, older age groups tend to evaluate their quality of life as poorer than younger age groups. Income category is positively related to quality of life. Those in higher-income categories rate their quality of life as more favourable than people in lower-income categories. Satisfaction with external structures such as neighbourhood and housing is also positively related to overall quality of life. The more satisfied respondents are with their neighbourhoods, their housing, their income, the city, their health, and their leisure activities, the more favourable their overall quality of life.

Q2: What is the net importance of place-related measures to overall quality of life? What characteristics of place are most important to quality of life evaluation?

The Saskatoon Quality of Life Telephone Survey (Appendix A) included several indicators of respondents' views about *place*. These place-related indicators included survey items: F4.1, F4.2, F4.3, F1.9, F6.1, F5.1, J21.1, J21.2, J21.3, F7.1, and F3.1. For example, place-related indices asked respondents about the friendliness and their overall feeling as part of the neighbourhood, their comfort in participating in neighbourhood projects and calling on neighbours in a crisis, and their feelings of safety and security. The research team wanted to determine how important these place-related measures and socio-demographic characteris-

tics were to respondents' overall quality of life. Similar to the first research question, hierarchical regression analysis was used to answer this question.



*Hierarchical regression analysis indicates B as the estimate of the association; CI, confidence interval

Figure 2. Importance of place-related measures and socio-demographic characteristics to overall quality of life.*

Figure 2 illustrates the statistically significant results of the regression analysis. Two socio-demographic characteristics, respondents' age group and their perspective of their income compared to others, were significantly related to overall quality of life. The relationship between age group and quality of life is negative — people in the older age groups tend to evaluate their quality of life as poorer than those in younger age groups. Respondents who said their income was poor as compared to others tended to describe a poor overall quality of life.

Understanding Figures 1, 2, and 4

These figures present a summary of the analysis of the relative importance of quality of life dimensions and socio-demographic characteristics to overall quality of life. On the horizontal axis of the graph are the dimensions that were included in the final model that showed a relationship with overall quality of life. The vertical axis presents information on the degree to which a particular variable is associated with the outcome, and whether or not the association is in a positive direction (example: when variable X increases variable Y also increases) or negative direction (example: when variable X increases variable Y decreases). This information is given by the coefficient of a variable, which is indicated by the letter "B" and the sign (+ or -) that indicates the direction of the association. For example, for age, the graph shows that with increasing age the quality of life reported decreases. But, the coefficients expressed in the graph are an estimate and therefore each coefficient is accompanied by a measure of how certain one can be of this estimate, which is indicated by "95% Confidence Interval" or CI. For example, our estimate of the association between age and quality of life, which is -.14, can in fact range between -.05 and -.26, 19 out of 20 times.

Three of the place-related measures were related to overall quality of life. The friendliness of the neighbourhood, feelings of safety and security, and comfort level in calling neighbours in a crisis were significantly related to overall quality of life. Better overall quality of life assessments were associated with a friendlier neighbourhood, greater feelings of safety and security, and being able to contact a neighbour in a crisis.

Q3: What characteristics distinguish people who report positive/negative change on outcome measures: overall life satisfaction, health, stress, happiness, future ability to provide for family, quality of life in Saskatoon, and quality of life in neighbourhood?

The Saskatoon Quality of Life Telephone Survey (Appendix A) gauged possible changes in respondents' assessments of their overall quality of life, health, stress, happiness, future ability to provide for their family, quality of life in Saskatoon, and quality of life in their neighbourhood. The research team analysed these responses to ascertain which socio-demographic characteristics were related to both positive and negative changes in these outcomes. Using a statistical procedure called logistic regression, we were able to determine the likelihood that one group of people would report either positive or negative changes in these outcomes compared to other groups. The results of this analysis are reported according to the nine socio-demographic characteristics identified by the survey. The nine socio-demographic measures were: sex, age group, marital status, employment status, level of education, home ownership, income adequacy, assessment of income compared to others, and neighbourhood designation.

When female respondents were compared to male respondents, women were approximately 3 times more likely to say their overall quality of life got worse over the last three years, and 2 ½ times more likely to say their happiness got worse over the last three years.

The older age group (age 65 years and older) was more likely than the younger group (age 18-25 years) to say that their health and their ability to provide for their family got worse. Moreover, the older group was less likely than the younger group to say that their overall quality of life, stress, happiness, their ability to provide, and quality of life in Saskatoon had improved. Retired people were almost 4 times more likely to say their health was worse than those working full-time.

Regarding marital status, divorced respondents compared to single people were more likely to say their overall quality of life got worse.

In terms of level of education, people with less education were less likely to say their stress level had improved than people with more education.

The socio-demographic characteristic, *income adequacy*, was derived by comparing reported level of household income to number of people living in the household. Those with greater income adequacy were more likely to say their health and happiness had improved compared with those with lower income adequacy. A second indicator of income level was respondents' assessment of their income compared to others. This income indicator was related to the greatest number of outcomes. In general, the perception of having a higher

income compared to others was positively related⁵ to improved outcomes and negatively related to things getting worse. Respondents who perceived their level of income as good compared to others were more likely to report positive outcome changes, such as improved health, quality of life, and stress level. These economically *better-off* respondents were more likely to report that quality of life in Saskatoon and in their neighbourhood had improved. Respondents who perceived their income as poor compared to others were more likely to also say that their quality of life, health, stress and happiness level, and ability to provide got worse. These respondents were also more likely to say that the quality of life in Saskatoon had gotten worse.

Home ownership was positively related to an improved ability to provide for family and negatively related to a worsened ability to provide for family. Finally, people living in a low socio-economic neighbourhood were 1.8 times as likely to say their neighbourhood was getting worse than respondents who lived in a high socio-economic neighbourhood.

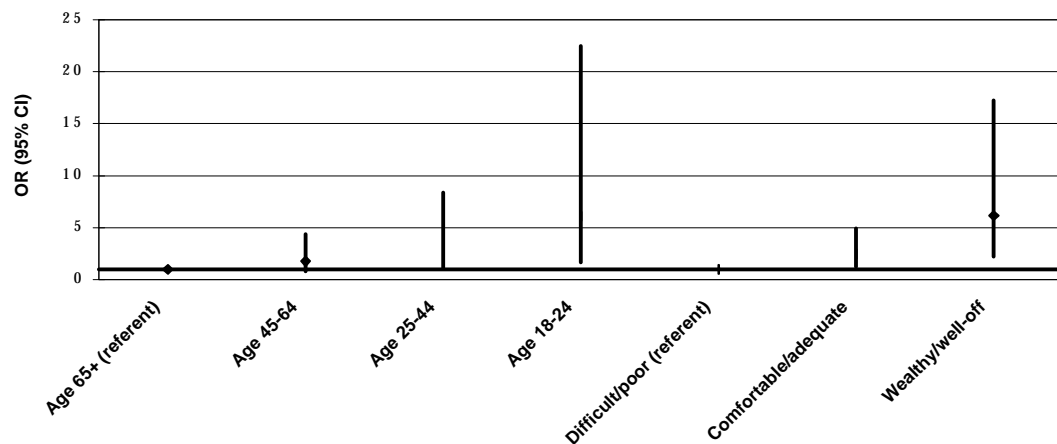
Q4: What characteristics distinguish people who evaluate their current quality of life as excellent/very good vs. good/fair/poor?

In order to answer this research question, we grouped respondents according to how they answered the overall quality of life question. We determined which characteristics were related to having an excellent/very good quality of life using logistic regression analysis. Logistic regression is a statistical procedure which tells us how closely one variable (predictor) is related to another variable (outcome) taking into account other variables that may be related to both the predictor and outcome. For example, using logistic regression we can express the association between the predictor, age (e.g., those who are 65 years and older compared to the youngest group, age 18-24 years), and the outcome, overall quality of life (excellent/very good).

We used the place-related characteristics from Question 2 for this analysis. These place-related indicators included survey items: F4.1, F4.2, F4.3, F1.9, F6.1, F5.1, J21.1, J21.2, J21.3, F7.1, and F3.1 (Appendix A). For example, place-related indices asked respondents about the friendliness and their overall feeling as part of the neighbourhood, their comfort in participating in neighbourhood projects and calling on neighbours in a crisis, and their feelings of safety and security. However, in our analysis, none of the place-related variables were significantly related to reporting an excellent/very good quality of life. Two socio-demographic characteristics were associated with this outcome. These characteristics were age group and income compared to others. The relationship between excellent/very good quality of life and age group and income compared to others is shown in Figure 3. In comparison to the oldest age group (age 65 years and older), the youngest group (age 18-24 years) were over 6 times more likely to say they experience excellent/very good quality of life. The middle group (age 25-44 years) were almost 3 times as likely to indicate they have excellent/very good quality of life as the oldest age group. People who indicated that they were wealthy/well-off compared to others were 6 times as likely to report excellent/very good quality of life as the reference

⁵ When A and B are *positively related*, it means that A is associated with more B. When A and B are *negatively related*, it means A is associated with less B. In this case, people who responded A (perceiving their income as being higher than others), were more likely to have *improved outcomes* and less likely to report *things getting worse*.

group (difficult/poor income compared to others). People who had a comfortable/adequate income compared to others were 2 ½ times as likely to report excellent/very good quality of life.



*Logistic regression analysis, OR, odds ratio; CI, confidence interval

Figure 3. Characteristics of respondents who evaluate overall quality of life as excellent/very good.*

It appears that age and perception of income compared to others distinguish those who evaluated their overall quality of life as excellent/very good from those who reported good/fair/poor. Measures of place do not appear to distinguish this particular quality of life outcome.

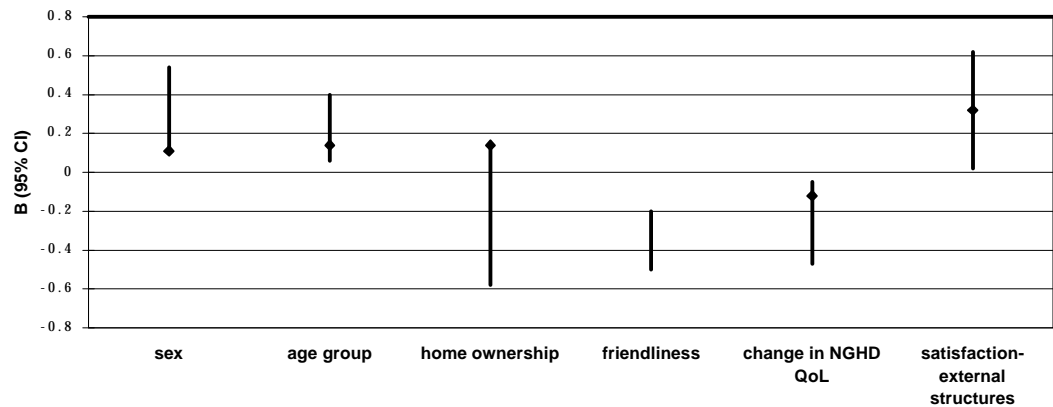
Understanding Figure 3

The Odds Ratio (OR) tells us the degree to which one variable is associated with another variable that takes on only two values (for example, yes or no). In other words, OR tells us how likely is a certain outcome to occur (for example, that quality of life is excellent or very good) given a particular category of another variable (for example, younger age). For instance, as the Figure shows the association between the particular age group of 65 years and older and group aged 18-24 years and quality of life, the OR is 6.1. This indicates that the youngest respondents are a little over 6 times more likely to report that their quality of life is either excellent or very good, compared to the oldest respondents. As mentioned before the OR, however, is accompanied by a measure that indicates how certain one could be of this estimate. So for the association between youngest respondents and excellent or very good quality of life, the estimate in fact could range from 1.66 to 22.5, 19 times out of 20.

Q5: What characteristics of people and place distinguish those who report a strong sense of place from those who don't?

We created a measure of *sense of place* based on principal component analysis of several place-related survey items. The items comprising this measure included feeling part of the neighbourhood, comfort in participating in neighbourhood projects and calling on neighbours in a crisis, and volunteering for organizations. The research team was interested

in the characteristics of people and place that are related to high scores on this measure. By using hierarchical regression analysis, we determined that sex, age group, owning vs. renting, friendliness, change in neighbourhood quality of life, and satisfaction with external structures were related to this variable, *sense of place*. Those who reported having a strong sense of place were more likely to be female, older, own their home, perceive the neighbourhood as friendly, feel that neighbourhood quality of life is getting better, and have a greater satisfaction with external structures in the neighbourhood. The relationship between the sense of place and these characteristics is shown in Figure 4.



*Hierarchical regression analysis, B indicates an estimate of degree of association; CI, confidence interval

Figure 4. Characteristics that distinguish a strong sense of place.*

Q6: What characteristics of people and place distinguish those who report that they are satisfied with work/family balance from those who didn't? What influence does satisfaction with other personal and community aspects of life have on satisfaction with work/family balance?

The final research question examined respondents' satisfaction with the balance between work and family. Respondents' satisfaction was determined by responses to survey item B3.12 (Appendix A). *Very satisfied* and *somewhat satisfied* responses were grouped together; *very dissatisfied* and *somewhat dissatisfied* responses were aggregated. Using the statistical procedure, ANOVA, we selected the socio-demographic characteristics, the place-based items, and the other satisfaction items that were significantly related to satisfaction with the work/family balance.

Age group, employment status, income compared to others, sense of place, feeling safe, length of time in neighbourhood, and satisfaction with the city, housing, friends, leisure, health, government, job, and money were included initially in the logistic regression analysis. However, in this analysis, the only significant predictor of satisfaction with work/family balance was the respondents' satisfaction with job. Those respondents who answered that they were very satisfied with their job/main activity were 17 times as likely to say they were satisfied with their work/family balance than those who were very dissatisfied with their job/main activity.

Chapter 3: Summary of Focus Group Results

Comments from the focus group respondents were shaped by their various life circumstances and experiences. Even though respondents were assigned to one focus group, these groups were not homogenous in their experiences and opinions. Many of the respondents could have contributed with ease to the discussion in the other focus groups, sharing experiences of their lives as single parents, Aboriginal⁶ people, or low-income earners. The following sections will summarize the respondents' definition of *neighbourhood*, the factors common to all focus groups, the factors important to each focus group and will discuss the areas that need change and the onus of responsibility for these changes (from the focus group results).

A. Diversity in Neighbourhood Opinion

For this project, neighbourhoods are defined as the political boundaries used by the City of Saskatoon's Planning Department (Appendix B). However, many respondents do not necessarily think of their neighbourhoods in this singular way. Many think of their neighbourhoods as defined by social boundaries, physical boundaries, or more commonly, a combination of both. The following are some of the significant characteristics respondents discussed when asked to define their neighbourhood boundaries:

Social influences

- Degree of *neighbourliness* of a neighbourhood
- Proximity to friends and family support
- Culture
- Participation in, and location of, neighbourhood and community activities

Physical influences

- Geographical location defined by house groupings, particular streets, or community name
- Level of personal mobility
- Characteristics of the public transportation system (routes, frequency)
- Location of shops and services.

Clearly, when policy directions and decisions are made to improve the quality of life in Saskatoon neighbourhoods, it is important to understand how residents themselves define the boundaries of their neighbourhood in relation to the city's political boundaries. This may ameliorate misunderstandings between policy makers and residents regarding who will benefit from proposed changes.

⁶ In this document, *Aboriginal* includes First Nations and Métis peoples

B. Quality of Life Issues Common to All Focus Groups

QUALITY OF LIFE THEMES	DESCRIPTION
1. Perceptions of People and Neighbourhood	<i>stereotypes, misconceptions, friendliness, safety</i>
2. Housing	<i>access, affordability, quality; responsibility for housing</i>
3. Basic Needs, Services, and Leisure Activities	<i>access, affordability, and quality of programs and services</i>
4. Education and Employment	<i>access, affordability and quality; individual agency in quality of life</i>
5. Informal and Formal Supports	<i>importance of support networks, balancing informal and formal sources</i>

Table 1. *Quality of life issues important to all focus groups.*

Perceptions of People and Neighbourhood

Focus group respondents identify the desire to feel a part of their neighbourhood as an important quality of life factor. The common thread throughout all of the focus groups is that the perceptions that people have of one another play a large role in the degree to which Saskatoon residents feel a part of their neighbourhood.

The following quote from a focus group participant suggests that how we see one another can affect the cohesiveness of a neighbourhood, despite the presence of active community organizations offering opportunities for involvement, for example. Several focus group participants see some organizations as exclusive or exclusionary. Residents who do not feel accepted or part of their neighbourhood may be less likely to participate in community events.

I went out to baseball games, I went to all day barbecues that they were having and all this kind of stuff and I was always willing to volunteer my time to help with community activities but for some reason, maybe this part of it was me, but I always felt like I didn't fit in. And I don't know if it was the community as a whole or just certain people, but I was always made to feel that I wasn't good enough for that community.

Respondents, in the Aboriginal People's Focus Group in particular, express frustration and reluctance with the degree of personal initiative, effort, and investment required to break down misconceptions and prejudices among their neighbours in order to become accepted as part of the neighbourhood. The following focus group story highlights this issue:

There's a lot of assumptions made about us as Indians that to me, I mean, that's probably one of the biggest barriers for those of us that are people of color that we really have to go through. You know, where they don't think we are going to look after the house or that we're going to let our kids run wild.

Many consider the process of neighbourhood investment worthwhile only as long as they are raising young children and in their later years focus their energies on the Aboriginal peoples' community of Saskatoon. Aboriginal people are not, however, alone in their concerns

about how their neighbours view them. While not a visible minority, another respondent fears that in *exposing* herself as a single parent in her neighbourhood, she will acquire a negative stigma:

You know, a lot of times you get involved and your start exposing that you're a single parent, you start exposing some of this stuff and then people start thinking there's something wrong with you when there isn't.

Most un- and under-employed respondents feel that they are not on the same *level* as *others* in Saskatoon. One un- and under-employed respondent perceives that, "... we don't feel that we have the same rights as any one, you know." A respondent from the same group feels that, "... we have a caste system almost." In essence, these respondents feel that they are not afforded the same level of respect as others.

One of the significant ways in which this lack of respect is revealed is through the quality of rental housing. Landlords are perceived as not providing timely attention to structural problems with their rental property simply because their tenants are on Social Assistance.

I guess the kind of beefs I have about where I am right now is things like being on Social Services, like is [that] something that the landlord knows and I wonder if that is why it takes so long to get anything fixed... They don't fix anything. It's like we don't matter, like my daughter doesn't matter, my wife doesn't matter. It's a really weird feeling not to feel like a person.

Perceptions of others affect with *whom* people communicate, *how* they communicate, and the *level of trust* afforded to others. These perceptions influence feelings of neighbourhood inclusion and quality of life for Saskatoon residents. The level of inclusion will also determine the success of neighbourhood and community programs. This simply means that greater consideration should be given to how to facilitate the delivery of more effective and appropriate neighbourhood activities. The more diverse a community, in terms of culture, lifestyle, and ethnicity, the more effort is required to bring about a common level of understanding, respect, and inclusion in a neighbourhood.

Perceptions that residents have of their neighbourhood can be divided into two types: social relations, as already discussed, and physical/structural characteristics. From the focus group discussions, these two concepts appear to be interrelated in the construction of neighbourhood cohesion. Neighbourhood can be viewed as either a physical place *and* a social space or each of these characterisations can be viewed separately. For example, several focus group participants note that a neighbourhood may look physically shabby but may have residents with excellent social relations. Conversely, a neighbourhood may have attractive housing and green spaces but lack *neighbourliness* because of the disposition of certain residents.

Focus group respondents discussed various balances between the physical and social make-up of neighbourhood and the degree of neighbourhood cohesion. Some maintain that clean neighbourhoods and housing are essential to the promotion of community activity. Others say, that despite living in a physically unattractive part of the city, a collective desire to improve the neighbourhood creates a sense of cohesiveness.

Respondents had different perspectives on who should be responsible for cleaning up the litter in their neighbourhoods. Some respondents believe that their neighbourhood would be a cleaner place if there were an increase in the enforcement of pollution and littering by-laws. Regarding everyday litter, respondents believe that there is a lack of individual responsibility to clean it up or to control it.

In general, focus group respondents stress the importance of having clean, safe neighbourhoods, and parks and green spaces as important elements in their quality of life. A clean environment makes a neighbourhood physically appealing, while providing a safe environment in which to get to know your neighbours. Comments from focus group respondents also indicate that clean environments also encourage more outdoor activities for children and adults. For many of the focus group participants – including children – the concept of a clean neighbourhood involves more than just litter, garbage pick-up, and well-maintained green space. Clean also means no prostitution, no drug trafficking, no drunks, and none of the detritus associated with these activities. Focus group respondents expand on this by indicating that an unclean neighbourhood can create poor perceptions of the neighbourhood and, as a consequence, residents are not as likely to put as much back into the community because there is a sense that nobody cares.

Focus group respondents perceive an imbalance between the *Westside* and *Eastside* of Saskatoon in terms of greenery and cleanliness. Considering the far-reaching effects of a good physical environment, addressing this perception would greatly improve the quality of life for residents living in the core neighbourhoods. Secondly, lack of trust in a neighbourhood and its residents affects participation in neighbourhood activities. Residents in some of the core neighbourhoods, for example, are afraid to involve themselves in the Block Parent program or to contribute to other similar proactive activities because they are afraid they will be harassed, robbed, or taken advantage of.

Some respondents argue that the most negative characteristic of their neighbourhood is the negative manner in which people who do not live there perceive it.

Well, I think the most negative thing, I live in X. I live just down here off the stroll. I think the most negative thing about my community is people's perceptions of it. I think the negativity here is terribly, terribly blown out of proportion (pause). I don't go around picking up needles and condoms off my front yard. I don't want to be chasing prostitutes down the streets (laughs). It's just, it's blown way out of proportion so the way people perceive the heart of the city communities is really ahh not the reality of it, not the reality I see and I live it everyday so I think that is the most negative thing about it.

How residents feel people from other parts of the city perceive their neighbourhoods also has a profound influence on how they see themselves individually. This disempowerment has implications for both individual and collective efforts to improve quality of life.

It's self preservation for us and it's such a stigma. People in the core communities are seen to be scum or poverty stricken. Everyone says I'm this way, so I must be, so why not.

Negative perceptions of a neighbourhood (whether justified or not) compelled several focus group participants to move to another neighbourhood (or to contemplate moving). Focus group participants also comment that frequent moving can increase neighbourhood instability and reduce the amount of informal support available in a neighbourhood (e.g. helping your neighbour out and vice versa). For some focus group respondents, these effects reduce quality of life.

Housing

Affordability, access, and quality are three key and interrelated elements of housing that respondents say play a significant role in their quality of life. One respondent notes that in a prosperous country like Canada, people should have access to quality housing, regardless of their income level. The experiences of many respondents underscore another reality. Low-income earners comment that living in quality housing and safe neighbourhoods is mostly beyond their financial reach but can be obtained by some if significant trade-offs are made. These trade-offs include cutting already skimpy budgets for food and basic needs.

But, where I stay I more or less I pay an extra \$100.00 or something out of my own pocket just because, uhhh, uhh, just because it's so nice out there. I'd rather pay that extra money out of my own pocket, from my food money, than to live down this way because it's reminds me too much of the north end of Winnipeg, it's rough and you know, I don't want my kids to be around that.

Underlying issues of housing quality and affordability are access and availability. With the recent trend of converting apartments into condos and the gentrification of previously affordable neighbourhoods, low-income earners and people with special needs fear their limited choices are becoming even more scarce.

According to respondents, most of the responsibility for the upkeep of rental properties lies with the landlords. This upkeep should also be timely. For example, several respondents complain that it often times takes weeks for repairs to take place. In terms of neatness and cleanliness of the housing properties, the majority of responsibility is seen to lie with the tenant, whether they rent or own their dwelling. One respondent explains that after taking the initiative to plant flowerbeds in her front yard, others in her neighbourhood followed suit with theirs. Incentives for a resident to take additional personal responsibility for the upkeep of their dwelling may be harder to provide in areas where attachment to neighbourhood is low. Respondents nonetheless iterate that they do feel motivated to make improvements to their neighbourhoods but that they are discouraged when their efforts are destroyed by petty crime or they fear they risk their safety by becoming involved.

Basic Needs, Services, and Leisure Activities

Observations regarding the lack of services, shops, and grocery stores in neighbourhoods generally come from respondents residing in the core of the city.

There's a lot of pawn shops, there's no grocery stores, there's no laundromats, there's no reasonable places where people can access quality food at a reasonable price...

Broader access to shops and services requires these people to travel distances that minimally require unrestricted personal mobility or some form of transportation. However, the same people who claim limited local access to services and resources are also often limited in their transportation options. Personal mobility is a challenge for senior citizens and disabled people, while others who have no access to a car find bus and taxi service expensive.

People appreciate that there are a range of programs and services available, but would like them re-examined to determine how delivery can be improved to better accommodate a range of access issues. For example, one respondent states that services should be offered throughout the whole city and not just in specific “problem” areas. Others suggest that the Food Bank could be decentralized into “mini” food banks distributed throughout the city.

Several respondents also express their desire to have a police station re-opened because it was a highly visible, reassuring presence in the neighbourhood.

Even when certain basic services are offered across the city, there is still some perception that these services are delivered on a priority basis, tied to a neighbourhood's average income. For example, some perceive that garbage and snow removal happens first in *well-to-do* neighbourhoods because those people pay more taxes.

It just seems like our area, we are the last ones to get anything, like snow removal or other things like garbage removal and stuff like that. It just seems like the well-off ones get everything first and then the lesser, poorer areas of town get everything last, like “we do the east ones because they pay more taxes and then these ones aren't paying so much so we'll do them last” or “ we'll see if we really have to do them” or whatever.

The most important factor in improving the quality of life of children and youth is the availability of *things to do*. Keeping children and youth *busy* and *involved* is seen as one of the most effective ways to mediate potentially negative intrusions in their lives. The following comment by a youth respondent highlights this importance.

Yeah, I think we should have more activities. The more activities, the less drugs but there might be a possibility of more violence though. There is that competitiveness.... The more you do, the less time we have to think about getting high. My point is that I want some pool tables up in the auditorium at school because there are kids that get high here.... If they had something to do here they wouldn't be getting high and coming to school all stupid.

While the availability of recreation opportunities is very important to the quality of life of children and youth, these activities must also be affordable and give equal access to all families and children regardless of income level. There also seems to be a gap for affordable organized activities for certain age groups. One youth respondent mentioned the lack of affordable activities for the 15-18 years age group.

Education and Employment

To me quality of life is when people have jobs. ...For me I think it is a job so I can provide good housing and everything else after that. If you have something, you can do something.

Education is viewed as the means to improve personal quality of life both for respondents themselves and their families. The challenge, many say, is access not only to formal education (universities, technical colleges) but also to informal education opportunities such as parenting and life-skills classes.

The low-income earners and the un- and under-employed people focus groups and especially the immigrants and refugees focus group express the need for *equality* in access to both education and employment. Higher education is seen to be increasingly available only to the *rich* and out of reach for those on a low income.

Having quality employment is particularly important to the immigrants and refugees focus group because they view this as the pathway to providing for their immediate and extended families – both in Canada and in their countries of origin. Many immigrants and refugees are frustrated that the experience and education they bring with them to Canada appears to count for little or nothing in their new home, as they continually find employers asking for *Canadian* work experience. Despite their foreign university degrees and work experiences, many claim they are not hired even for jobs in the unskilled labour market.

Informal and Formal Supports

Access to the means and opportunity to improve quality of life lies in the nature of informal and formal supports available to focus group respondents and in the nature of the balance between these systems of support.

The issue of childcare permeates most focus group respondents' comments on education and employment opportunities. Having access to affordable childcare not only provides respondents with the opportunity to seek employment and further their education but it also allows them to have a mental and physical break from their children, reducing the amount of stress in their lives and allowing them to be better parents over the longer term.

A number of respondents express their good fortune in having inexpensive or even free childcare available to them through family members, friends, and neighbours. For those without this all-important informal network, formal daycares are often beyond their financial means, or there is some concern about the quality of childcare that their means can afford them. Many respondents therefore feel that they do not have access to the employment or education opportunities critical to a better quality of life.

I think one particular thing would be really making sure you have a good support system ... Your port of entry into anything is going to be as good as what your support system is.

For the senior citizens focus group, informal support systems, such as family and friends, are very important in allowing them to access the health and other services that allow them to maintain their independence.

I guess the basic health services that help keep us mobile. I think good health care. I think that's kind of taken for granted as far as it is needed but in the sense that health care that will help older people to continue to be mobile, to continue to be on their own. That kind of gift. Right. Maintain independence.

Friends, family, and neighbours help both the senior and disabled focus group respondents get to doctor and other important appointments as well as do tasks around the house, and provide much-valued companionship. Seniors look to formal supports, such as homecare or long-term care-homes when they feel they have exhausted all their informal supports, however, they feel that availability is limited and that the costs are prohibitive. Some senior citizens claim that their savings and income place them beyond access to service subsidy programs but is nonetheless too modest to afford them full-cost access. One route some take is to transfer control of their finances to their children, thereby allowing them to qualify for the formal supports they feel they couldn't otherwise afford.

Many respondents are entirely lacking in informal supports because they have no friends and family nearby and have limited connections in their neighbourhoods. This is particularly the case for some Aboriginal people who have migrated on their own from Reserves, or immigrants and refugees who have left their support networks in their countries of origin. The immigrant and refugee respondents especially appreciate the Open Door societies, and Aboriginal respondents talk about programs to help them with negotiating the legal system or dealing with landlord-tenant issues.

In a number of cases, respondents who had been through periods without sources of support were sensitive to helping others who are experiencing similar situations – sometimes by getting involved in formal programs, other times by simply offering assistance on an informal basis:

... One girl, she's got a job. She's always thanking me because I told her I would baby-sit for nothing. I told her I would rather see her reach her goals than be held back and wait. I told her...if you keep waiting then by the time you're my age you'll be like, "Oh, I want to go back to school" ...

All respondents speak about the importance of both informal and formal supports to their quality of life and the range of experiences that shape their reliance on one or the other, or both at various points in their lives. Most often, formal supports and services are a last and crucial resort when there are no other options. For these people, availability, access, and affordability of formal supports are critical.

The last couple of years have been stressful... During that time a lot of my [informal] support system disappeared and I had to look for another kind of support system utilizing some of the services out there.

C. Quality of Life Issues by Group

While most of these quality of life concerns are common to all the focus group respondents, it is valuable to highlight also the concerns and experiences each group felt were most significant to their unique circumstances.

Aboriginal, First Nations, and Métis Peoples

Like the immigrant and refugee respondents, the Aboriginal⁷ respondents describe themselves as people in transition. The former have recently moved to a new country and the latter are new to the urban environment.

You have to realize that prior to this it was illegal for us [Aboriginal people] to even move here. You know we've only had forty years of urbanization... What does it mean? I mean, a lot of people don't understand that even.

Both the Aboriginal and immigrant and refugee groups express a lack of belonging and attachment to their neighbourhoods that can perhaps be alleviated only by time and by educating the general public about the challenges of their unique circumstances.

The most significant quality of life concerns that emerged during the discussion in the Aboriginal peoples' group centered on access to affordable and quality housing and confronting widespread prejudice and stereotyping. The perceptions that people have of each other significantly affects sense of belonging to a neighbourhood and, consequently, personal and financial investment in a neighbourhood.

Informal and formal support systems were discussed extensively also. Informal support from the Aboriginal community is very important in terms of providing quality role models for the younger generation, providing timely and culturally sensitive health information, and culturally appropriate counselling services. As more and more Aboriginal people become familiar with various bureaucratic systems, they are able to share their knowledge with those who are unfamiliar or who are wary of government procedures and regulations.

Supporting Aboriginal cultures and, more importantly, productively incorporating them into quality of life improvements and in the education of non-Aboriginal people, is a critical starting point for policy-makers.

Immigrants and Refugees

The immigrant and refugee focus group stresses the importance of equality in accessing employment and education opportunities. Providing for their families in Saskatoon and, in some cases, for their families in their countries of origin is a fundamental quality of life concern. Obtaining education and employment are the pathways they feel will allow them to fulfill this obligation. However, there is a high degree of frustration in this group because the qualifications they brought to Canada are not even good enough for jobs in the unskilled labour market. Employers often ask for *Canadian* work experience. In the absence of informal support systems, the most significant initial improvement to quality of life for these people lies in the provision of more formal supports, such as Open Door societies.

Children and Youth

Crucial to the quality of life of children and youth is the availability and affordability of recreation opportunities. As expressed by the respondents themselves, having a safe place to socialize and to *keep busy* is one of the best preventative youth crime measures. During their younger years (approximate ages 6-12 years), activities such as organized sports and

⁷ In this document, *Aboriginal* includes First Nations and Métis peoples

recreation facilities with balls and hockey sticks etcetera or a place just to run around in are very important. As they get older (approximate ages 13-19 years), the goal is to offer them opportunities for recreation (e.g. lunch-hour, after-school and summer activities) as well as opportunities for training (e.g. life-skills courses). Many appreciate also safe places to seek guidance or support for personal problems and feelings.

Single Parents

For the single parents group, many of the issues important to their quality of life revolve around their children's quality of life. Affordable, accessible, and quality childcare and recreation activities are important, as is accessible and quality informal support from friends and family. Being a parent also heightens the importance of living in safe neighbourhoods with quality housing. It is not uncommon for this group (as well as other low-income groups) to draw money out of their food budgets to subsidize this desired neighbourhood environment.

Low-income Earners and Under-employed and Unemployed People

In the low-income and un- and under-employed groups, equality and dignity are paramount quality of life characteristics. Issues of access to employment, education, and programs were tied to the removal of the stigma associated with either being working poor or on social assistance. These groups also feel strongly that despite being low-income earners, they have the right to clean, affordable, and safe housing. They also believe that there is a lack of appropriate housing in Saskatoon.

Senior Citizens and Disabled People

Quality of life for senior citizens and disabled people focuses on the importance of maintaining their independence. Difficulties in accessing shops, services, and transportation impinge on their level of independence. Barriers hindering accessibility include the location of their dwelling with respect to shops and services, personal mobility, and the availability of public transportation. Informal supports and, in their absence, access to formal supports are critical to their independence – for these groups independence is considered highly important.

Housing quality is also important to senior citizens and disabled people, particularly with respect to their healthcare needs. Housing quality is connected to the health of most senior citizens because healthcare and housing are often times available in one building complex. Housing quality is also important to the health of disabled people because many require modifications such as ramps and wider doorways. The affordability of medication and basic needs is also an issue in these groups, especially for respondents on fixed or low incomes.

D. Responsibility for Change

Respondents see the responsibility for creating a good quality of life at a number of levels: themselves or neighbours, schools and formal community organizations, police services, or various levels of government. A small minority of respondents believes that only government has the power to effect positive change, discounting the strength of their individual and collective agency. More commonly, respondents see responsibility sitting with a collaboration of these various agencies. They identify the problem as achieving a mutual agreement on the *balance* of responsibility.

All respondents stress especially the importance of improving the quality of life of children, inferring that improvements in the quality of life of these most vulnerable citizens will translate into a better life for all. Many place the burden of responsibility with the parents. Several respondents perceive that parents are not taking adequate responsibility for the health and actions of their children. However, it is also evident that, to a significant degree, the explanation lies with a failure of informal and formal supports. These failures are located in the numerous gaps between the informal and the formal, the latter lacking the flexibility to meet fluctuating and diverse needs.

The following points summarize the gaps that focus group respondents would like to see addressed to improve their quality of life as well as whom they believe is responsible for these changes:

- ◆ Government implementation (or creation) of stricter landlord regulations to prevent deterioration of housing in Saskatoon as well as an increase in affordable, accessible, quality housing for all residents of Saskatoon, regardless of income level.
- ◆ Improved neighbourhood safety: accomplished by the city through increased police presence (foot patrols, bike patrols, or numbers of cars travelling through the area) and provision of cleaner neighbourhoods. Residents are also seen as playing a role in improving safety. Factors hindering social inclusion must be considered also.
- ◆ Creation and maintenance of clean and safe parks and green spaces. This was seen mainly as the responsibility of the city.
- ◆ More activities to promote a feeling of community and neighbourhood. These community activities must also be affordable and accessible, regardless of income level. Respondents see the city and other formal community organizations initiating and organizing these activities. Only a small number of respondents see the impetus for such initiatives ultimately lying with residents themselves.
- ◆ All levels of government, as well as formal community organizations, should re-examine the location of community and social services. For example:
 - Respondents with children saw the need for more *mini* community/recreation centres for children to increase accessibility and affordability.
 - Services such as the Saskatoon Food Bank may better serve people by setting up satellite food banks to alleviate problems of accessibility to this service.
 - Greater distribution of support groups and counselling services throughout the city; not concentrated in only one deserving location. Problems on the Westside of Saskatoon are sometimes just as common on the Eastside, but may be less visible. Several single parents and low-income earners now live in *good* areas of the city but still require these services to be accessible.
 - An increase in the availability of life-skills and parenting classes for adults and youth.
 - More financial support from governments for charities, community organizations, and grassroots organizations whose aim is to improve Saskatoon's quality of life. For example, the United Way, community housing projects, information campaigns, grassroots community support groups etc.

Chapter 4: Summary of Face-to-face Interview Results

Six main themes emerged from analysis of interviews with respondents living in the high, middle, and low socio-economic status neighbourhoods. Comments on themes such as satisfaction with individual and city quality of life, neighbourhood views, and volunteerism produced a *continuum of satisfaction* across the three neighbourhood types. For example, most respondents living in the high socio-economic neighbourhoods have a positive view of their neighbourhood, but this majority decreases across the middle and low socio-economic neighbourhoods respectively. Job satisfaction, satisfaction with work/family balance, and opinions on government funding also displayed this continuum across neighbourhood types. The quality of life of women was the only theme that did not follow this trend.

A. City and Individual Quality of Life

Optimism in Saskatoon

The majority of respondents are optimistic about the quality of life in Saskatoon. A wide range of reasons were given such as the economy, employment opportunities, the availability of community/city activities, the *good* size of the city, the physical environment (notably appreciation of the South Saskatchewan River and the Meewasin Trail and the benefits these provide), the friendly and co-operative nature of residents, the level of safety and crime, and the presence of the university. Most respondents across all neighbourhood types express these attributes.

I find that Saskatoon is just the right size. You have all the amenities that you get in larger cities and yet they have the convenience of getting to a particular area in the city in very quick time because it's all very close by... The traffic is manageable. It's not too bad like it is in Vancouver and Calgary... Saskatoon is a very beautiful city. We have the river which provides many recreational activities because it is so close by.

However, reasons for optimism given by respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods differ slightly from those who live in the other two neighbourhood types in that comments regarding the physical environment, cleanliness, and activities are not emphasized.

Approximately 50% of respondents living in the low socio-economic neighbourhoods have mixed feelings about Saskatoon's quality of life. Reasons for this include: perceived high level of crime, safety issues, feelings of frustration and depression, and views that governments respond only to a certain class of people, as stated by this respondent:

I think in general that the city, in terms of its administration and government, are much more middle class. There's not a lot of concern for people in working class/lower class income situations. I think most of the city planning is for a certain group of people. Things like policing have always been a force that is representative of a certain class of people and that's not only here in Saskatoon.

Factors Important to Individual Quality of Life

A neighbourhood *continuum* appeared when respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their personal quality of life. The majority of respondents living in the high socio-economic neighbourhoods are satisfied with their quality of life, respondents living in middle socio-economic neighbourhoods slightly less, and respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods even less so.

Family support is extremely important to the quality of life of all respondents. Other common factors include: financial stability, health, housing, safety, and the physical environment. However, the emphasis that is placed on these common factors differs by neighbourhood type. The main factors of concern to respondents living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods include: family, health, and financial issues. Middle and low socio-economic neighbourhood respondents highlighted the following: affordable and accessible city/neighbourhood activities, employment issues (accessibility, affordability), financial stability, and safety from crime factors.

Factors that Would Improve Individual Quality of Life

High Socio-economic Neighbourhoods

When asked what changes would be needed for an improved personal quality of life, respondents from the high socio-economic neighbourhoods state that they already have what is important to their quality of life. A small number of respondents living high socio-economic neighbourhoods mention they would like an improvement in their financial situation.

Middle Socio-economic Neighbourhoods

Middle socio-economic neighbourhood respondents would like to see neighbourhood or city improvements in the following areas: condition of the sidewalks and streets (not just *patchwork* improvements), safety, physical surroundings (cleanliness etc.) and a reduction in the number of children living in poverty. They would like to see also better co-ordination and prudent investment in the planning of costly infrastructure projects (respondents in the low socio-economic neighbourhoods also share this opinion). Other issues include: the need for wiser decision-making by politicians and a more equitable distribution of resources across the city.

Low Socio-economic Neighbourhoods

Factors that are important to respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods parallel factors that they would like improved to enhance their personal quality of life. Respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods desire an improvement in their financial situation. This connects to the need for an improvement in their employment situation (availability and quality). Other factors mentioned include: improved response and accountability by city officials to neighbourhood issues, improved garbage collection, and the enhancement of community clinics and city services such as community policing (bike patrols, neighbourhood police stations etc.).

Police are not visible in this neighbourhood. I would like to see some foot patrols of the cops, just something that says he is there in the neighbourhood. We had a Police Station here in the neighbourhood and we were all

very upset to see it go because there was that sense that somebody was watching.

B. Neighbourhood Views and Characteristics

View of, and Attachment to Neighbourhood

The majority of respondents in the high and middle socio-economic neighbourhoods have a positive view of their neighbourhood. Mixed or negative views of neighbourhood slightly outweigh the number of positive views from respondents living in the low socio-economic neighbourhoods. In general, respondents from all neighbourhoods feel a *part of* or *somewhat a part of* their neighbourhood. However, there was a range of responses defining *feeling a part of the neighbourhood*. For example, some respondents define it as feeling welcome in neighbourhood activities where others define it as simply maintaining their house and lawn (as a non-verbal expression of neighbourhood pride).

One third (1/3) of respondents living in high and middle socio-economic neighbourhoods state that it is *not* important to their quality of life to feel a part of their neighbourhood. Meanwhile, respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods overwhelmingly state that feeling a part of their neighbourhood *is* important to their quality of life. The majority of respondents, across all neighbourhood types feel that they live in a friendly neighbourhood. A small number of respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods state that they do not live in a friendly neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Belonging

When asked why someone would not feel a part of their neighbourhood, the most common answer across all neighbourhoods was that such people lack initiative to take part in neighbourhood activities or in developing neighbourhood friendships. A secondary factor noted by respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods is the lack of safety and trust felt by people in the neighbourhood. A shared response in the middle and high socio-economic neighbourhoods is that people are probably too busy with work, family activities, and other responsibilities. This reduces the amount of time and energy people have to invest in their neighbourhood. The following two comments highlight these concerns:

I do not think that people trust one another. I don't trust this one; the other one doesn't trust the next one. I can talk to most of my neighbours. I can joke with them, I can talk to them. But some I never talk to.

We don't have a society that values being part of the neighbourhood and most people in this city they get in their car to go to work... They don't know their neighbours and they don't particularly care to know their neighbours. You go to the new neighbourhoods and it's all indoor garages and you don't even have to go outside to go to work. You just get in your car and drive away and you stop at Superstore on your way home for groceries. There is no connection with your neighbourhood. Your house could be anywhere.

Important Neighbourhood Factors

Neighbours

Common across all neighbourhoods was the importance of good neighbours. A few respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods state that they appreciate the diversity of people (ages, lifestyles, cultures) in their neighbourhood, while respondents in certain middle and high socio-economic neighbourhoods note the lack of diversity in their neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Appearance

The appearance of the physical surroundings (e.g. housing character, mature trees, clean parks and streets) is also an important factor across all neighbourhoods, although what respondents use as a benchmark for comparison differs across neighbourhoods. For example, respondents in the high socio-economic neighbourhoods would like neighbours to keep up their existing gardens and flowerbeds, while respondents in the low socio-economic neighbourhoods would like residents to maintain to a minimum neighbourhood standard the physical appearance of their house. However, as the following resident living in a low socio-economic neighbourhood recounts, this is not always possible:

We worked really hard last year. We built a planter and we put flowers in it. Last year we had no problem with it, and this year – twice now – we've had to replace flowers in it because of vandalism... Like you do things to try and improve the neighbourhood and it's like they [residents] don't care.

Parks and Green Spaces

Parks and recreation spaces are also important to all respondents. Respondents living in certain middle and low socio-economic neighbourhoods place more emphasis on this factor, expressing the need for additional parks and cleaner green spaces. The majority of respondents living in middle and high socio-economic neighbourhoods are generally happy with the quality and location of parks. Several respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods also enjoy the mature look of their neighbourhoods (e.g., older trees and character homes), but they note also the problem of litter in the parks and streets.

Basic Services

Accessibility to basic services and activities is also important to most respondents. An extension of *accessibility to basic services* is the importance of *service location*, which is important again across all neighbourhood types. This is especially emphasized in certain low socio-economic neighbourhoods which are lacking locational advantages. The middle socio-economic neighbourhoods, especially in the Broadway area, stated that they have excellent locational advantages – close to schools, shops, basic services, the downtown core, and the Meewasin Trail!

Actually having a neighbourhood that has basic needs within the neighbourhood, like groceries, like very simple things like that, that can keep people within, like I was saying earlier, we are very car dependent.

Neighbourhoods where people can walk to get what they need are a lot stronger. You get to know each other, you feel more at home.

Detracting Neighbourhood Factors

Answers to this question were generally the opposite of what people stated was important to neighbourhood quality of life. Respondents living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods did not voice any common detracting factors, although singular concerns included: problems with garbage collection, traffic volume, lack of age diversity, and lack of responsibility taken by pet owners.

The following factors were common to most respondents living in both middle and low socio-economic neighbourhoods.

Loitering

Problems of latch-key kids and youth wandering around with *nothing to do* are common negative characteristic expressed by most respondents, with more emphasis added by respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods. The problem of disengaged youth contributed to perceptions of unsafe or unpleasant neighbourhoods.

Traffic and Safety

The noise, disruption, and safety issues caused by the volume and type of traffic have negative impacts on the quality of life of respondents living in middle and low socio-economic neighbourhoods. A connected concern is the land use conflicts in certain low socio-economic neighbourhoods. Examples include industrial areas that are located too close to residential areas or too many industrial trucks *short-cutting* through residential areas.

Basic Services

Access to services, grocery stores, and schools are very important to respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods. Some low socio-economic neighbourhoods have good accessibility but others do not. Many respondents from this neighbourhood type commented on the contrast between the excess number of pawnshops and minimal number of grocery stores. One respondent from a low socio-economic neighbourhood extends the lack of accessibility to basic services as hindering their sense of neighbourhood:

We've got a liquor store down the street but we can't get groceries without a car. ... Neighbourhoods where people can walk to get what they need are a lot stronger. You get to know each other, you feel more at home.

The quality of services is also a concern. The quality and frequency of garbage services is a major complaint from the respondents living the low socio-economic neighbourhoods and is a concern for those living in the middle socio-economic neighbourhoods.

Clean Parks and Green Spaces

The respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods also point to the unclean state of their neighbourhoods as detracting from their quality of life. Unclean is described as ranging from un-kept houses to problems associated with overflowing garbage cans in back alleys. This problem is seen as contributing to decreased neighbourhood pride and to prob-

lematic safety and crime issues. Respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods would also like more wide-open green (and clean) spaces through which to stroll, pointing to several parks and green spaces that are too compact.

Neighbours

The type of people who live in neighbourhoods impacts the quality of life of all who live there. This is especially emphasized by respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods who note the following as negatively impacting on their quality of life: lack of people participating in outdoor activities, the presence of social problems, and the lack of respect displayed by certain residents.

C. City and Neighbourhood Participation and Volunteerism

The interview data showed that respondents living in middle and low socio-economic neighbourhoods volunteer and donate their time and money on a city-wide basis more so than those living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods. Respondents living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods are more involved in community associations. Compared to those in middle and high socio-economic neighbourhoods, respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods engage in more neighbourhood volunteer activities. In general, the amount of volunteer time/activities peak when respondents' children are in elementary school, and then decline as their children progress through their education. This trend is shared among most neighbourhood types.

The majority of respondents living in middle and low socio-economic neighbourhoods believe that volunteering in their neighbourhood makes a difference in the quality of life of their neighbourhood. Almost one third (1/3) of respondents living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods believe that the neighbourhood activities in which they participate do *not* affect the quality of life in their neighbourhood.

Many respondents observe that volunteer activity is done by the same people over and over again, noting the danger of relying on one person to keep a volunteer program afloat. If that one person decides to step down, there may be nobody to continue the program, as expressed by the following respondent:

And I feel bad that I'm walking away from this program [I started], and it may collapse or it may suffer because I'm not there. Kids aren't going to get taken to the [park] anymore and I'm not going to be there to volunteer coach for them anymore. But it's time for somebody else to step up to the plate.

Concerns Noted to Decision Makers

If respondents have concerns with their neighbourhood or the city, the majority of them make their concerns known to decision makers. Approximately one third (1/3) of respondents living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods state that they have no pressing reasons to call their city councillor or MP (Member of Parliament). Across all neighbourhoods, respondents mainly communicate their concerns via telephone, a personal meeting, or by writing a letter.

D. Job Satisfaction and the Balance Between Work and Family

Job Satisfaction

Most respondents living in the low socio-economic neighbourhoods enjoy their employment, even though it may not necessarily pay very much. One third (1/3) of respondents living in the middle socio-economic neighbourhoods have mixed or negative feelings towards satisfaction with their job. Half of respondents living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods are satisfied with their job but nearly 50% are not:

My job gives me personally a lot of satisfaction but the stress and the demand of my job is incredible. That's what I mean when I say, when I work, I work. When I work my shift that is all I am doing is working and coming home to sleep and then going back to work the next day. My job is very demanding.

When asked how satisfied they are about the balance between their work and family life, the middle and low socio-economic neighbourhood respondents mostly were satisfied to somewhat satisfied. The majority of high socio-economic neighbourhood respondents were satisfied with the balance between their work and family life.

When asked to speculate on why someone may be dissatisfied with the balance between work and family life, most respondents provided the following reasons: the type of job (e.g. number of hours/shifts involved or job responsibilities required), materialism (comparison to others, and wanting more), being unable to find a balance between family and work, and finances (needing dual incomes to fulfill financial obligations). Another reason expressed equally among the neighbourhoods was that people are too busy with too many activities. Examples of this included: having your children involved in several activities simultaneously and the pressure to become an *involved* parent.

The almighty dollar. I look and I see moms working because they have to work because they can't make it on one salary. But then I look at what they are trying to give their kids. They are trying to send them to basketball, to volleyball, to dance, to horseback riding, to clubs, you name it. When you get too involved in things then everybody has to have two things and your kids have to have designer jeans and shoes and all that. If you go after those types of things, then you're not going to have the time for family time. I think it's a matter of choices for people.

E. Comparisons to Others and its Effect on Individual Quality of Life

Findings from the Saskatoon Quality of Life Telephone Survey (Appendix A) showed that *regardless* of a person's income level, people still felt that their quality of life was poor if it compared poorly to others. Respondents in the face-to-face interview sessions were asked to speculate on why this comparison affects a person's quality of life (regardless of income level) and to define the comparison group.

One common reason given across most neighbourhood types is that people are engaging in *competition* with neighbours, friends, family, or with people who have more material wealth

– the phenomena of *keeping up with the Jones'*. A second, similar response was the issue of materialism. People want more *stuff*, feeding into people feeling that they do not have a good quality of life if they lack material objects.

F. Areas of Spending and Funding Options for Social Programs

Areas of Spending

Respondents were asked for their opinion on where governments should focus spending in order to receive the greatest improvement in people's lives. Respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods have a broad range of concerns including, but not exclusive to, the areas of education, health, infrastructure/appearance, recreation programs, services, housing, and police services. Respondents living in middle socio-economic neighbourhoods hold similar opinions and want governments to focus spending on the areas of health, education, infrastructure, reduction of government waste, police, and social services. Respondents living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods desire government spending in the areas of health, education, infrastructure, and reduction of government (financial) waste. From this, most neighbourhoods share the opinion that government spending should be in the areas of education, health, infrastructure/appearance, and social services.

Spending on Groups

When asked which groups should receive the most benefit from government spending, residents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods state that the focus should be on improving the lives of children, senior citizens, *deserving* low-income earners, and people with certain disadvantages in life. Respondents living in middle socio-economic neighbourhoods suggest that Aboriginal people, children, *deserving* low-income earners, and disadvantaged people, students, and senior citizens should receive the most benefit from government spending. Respondents living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods state that government spending should be focused on deserving low-income earners, as well as senior citizens. From this, most interview respondents share the opinion that *deserving* low-income earners, children/youth, and senior citizens should receive the most benefit from government spending.

Spending on Individuals

Respondents were also asked which areas of government spending would improve their *personal* quality of life. Spending areas that would improve personal quality of life for respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods are: health, infrastructure/appearance, and services. Respondents living in middle socio-economic neighbourhoods highlight the importance of spending on health, education, and infrastructure issues to improve their quality of life. Respondents living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods are generally satisfied with their quality of life. However, a small number of respondents in high socio-economic neighbourhoods want government spending in the areas of health and education to improve their personal quality of life.

A respondent living in a high socio-economic neighbourhood speculated that it would take a lot more resources and money to improve their personal quality of life than it would to improve the quality of life of someone who is struggling to meet the basics of a comfortable life. Several respondents living in low and middle socio-economic neighbourhoods echo this sentiment, expressing that improvements in small things (such as clean and safe streets and

parks, improvement in garbage collection, and so on) can lead to immeasurable improvements in their personal quality of life.

Funding Options

There were many different opinions regarding the most appropriate method of funding social programs. Respondents living in low socio-economic neighbourhoods are divided approximately across three options: implementing user fees, raising taxes, or a combination of both. Respondents living in middle socio-economic neighbourhoods state a preference for raising taxes or a combination of fine-tuning the tax system and implementing user fees. Respondents living in high socio-economic neighbourhoods also suggest the implementation of user fees, a combination of taxes and user fees, a decrease in taxes, as well as an increase in corporate taxes and an increase in the involvement/responsibilities of the private sector for funding social programs. With regards to the option of increasing taxes, most respondents state that there must be *visible* results from the increase in their personal taxes.

Some increase in taxes is fair and some incentive or user fees would be appropriate. I would think some of that would have to be based on income levels again. I don't think it would be fair to ask everybody to pay user fees for everything. As a family I would be willing to pay more in taxes if I knew that it was going to benefit the areas that I am concerned about.

It is important to highlight that all respondents place a caveat on the suggestion of implementing user fees and raising taxes. Respondents stress that if user fees were implemented, they should be applied only to certain programs and services and decision-makers should ensure that people on low and fixed incomes are not deterred from using a service that requires a user fee. Respondents across all neighbourhood types value the universality of Canada's healthcare system and are very cautious about suggesting implementing user fees for the healthcare sector (even though they perceive that emergency room visits are being *abused*).

Chapter 5: Summary

Much progress has been made so far in examining the process and results of a multi-stakeholder approach to ensuring sustainability of Saskatoon as a healthy city with an improving and a more equitably distributed quality of life. Using quantitative (telephone survey) and qualitative (focus groups and face-to-face interviews) methods of analysis this research has examined the quality of life across three neighbourhoods made up of a number of census tract clusters that represent low, medium, and high socio-economic status (SES) neighbourhoods in Saskatoon.

The following main themes synthesize the research results obtained thus far:

1. Growing Gap Between Rich & Poor

The growing income gap between the high SES and low SES is paralleled by the growing dissatisfaction of the low SES with the individual and neighbourhood quality of life. Characteristics such as old age, disability, low level of education, and being a single parent significantly affect quality of life for people; the effect is more profound when the several characteristics are found in combination.

2. Social Support and Inclusion

Notwithstanding the growing income disparity, overall quality of life of the disadvantaged can be positively affected by: social cohesion within the neighbourhood, quality and affordability of housing, satisfaction with basic needs, provision of essential social services and leisure activities, level of education, employment, and informal and formal supports. Residents of low socio-economic status neighbourhoods place additional value on social relations and are more likely to participate in volunteer activities that are believed to contribute to the quality of life of their neighbourhood.

3. Social Pressures

People's perception of individual quality of life and neighbourhood quality of life is sensitive to how other people perceive them and their neighbourhoods. Both high SES and low SES report poorer quality of life if they think that their situation compares poorly to others, or if people who are not residents of their neighbourhood perceive their neighbourhood as a bad place to live.

4. Responsibility for Change

There seems to be consensus among groups of different socio-economic status in Saskatoon regarding the strategies for creating a good quality of life. Most of the residents see that the success of such efforts lies in collaboration with various agencies. As far as funding options, the majority of residents agree on a combination of fine-tuning the tax system and implementing user fees. However, there is an understanding that if user fees were implemented, they should be applied only to certain programs and services. Decision-makers should ensure that people on low and fixed incomes are not deterred from using a service that requires a user fee.

These themes provide the foundation for the work needed to maintain the ongoing sustainability of Saskatoon as a healthy city with an improving and a more equitably

distributed quality of life. The impact this work has had on public policy and health promotion strategies has yet to be determined. Approaching the change process with these and other detailed results (Williams et al., 2002a, 2000b) provides the *evidence* that many policy and decision makers require, given the recent interest in evidence-based decision making.

A participatory action research strategy has and continues to be used in the project, with three community forums specific to the knowledge-transfer process held. In addition to the wide distribution of the various research products (such as the special section, *Taking the Pulse*, published in the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, January 20, 2001), the CUISR web-site continues to provide yet another medium for dissemination and knowledge transfer (see <http://www.usask.ca/cuisr/>). As a result of the time and resources invested in the development of a community partnership, CUISR has built strong linkages with both CBOs and government and consequently is well-placed for further progress in this project.

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Telephone Survey

Saskatoon Quality of Life Survey

December 2000/January 2001

Quality of Life Co-Leaders

Bill Holden and Allison Williams, CUISR

Team Members

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collected from you will be destroyed. If you have any further questions about your rights as a subject participating in a study of this nature, I have a few Numbers where you can talk to someone further. If you would like these numbers at any time during the survey Please let me know.

You may call the Office of Research Services at the University of Saskatchewan at (306) 966-8576. For more information on the study itself, you could contact _____ at Community-University Institute for Social Research at (306) 966-2121 or _____ at _____.

Please note that this survey has no connection to the general elections and is not supported by any of the political parties or candidates. At the end of the survey, you will be asked if you would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview.

Personal Quality of Life

The first set of questions asks about how you feel about your personal quality of life. It includes questions about your health, your satisfaction with different aspects of your life, your happiness and your experience with stress.

Overall quality of life

B1.1	How would you describe your overall quality of life? Would you say it is...						
	...excellent	...very good	...good	...fair	...or poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22

Health

B2.1	Compared to other persons your age, would you describe your health, as...						
	...excellent	...very good	...good	...fair	...or poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22

Satisfaction domains

B3.0 How do you feel about each of the following? Please tell me if you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied.

B3.1	...your neighborhood					
	very satisfied	somewhat satisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	21	22

B3.2	...your city					
	very satisfied	somewhat satisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	21	22

B3.3	...your housing					
	very satisfied	somewhat satisfied	somewhat dissatisfied	very dissatisfied	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	21	22

B3.4 ...your friends
 very satisfied 1 somewhat satisfied 2 somewhat dissatisfied 3 very dissatisfied 4 Refused 21 N/A 22

B3.5 ...your relationship with your spouse or partner
 very satisfied 1 somewhat satisfied 2 somewhat dissatisfied 3 very dissatisfied 4 Refused 21 N/A 22

B3.6 ...your relationship with the rest of your family living with you
 very satisfied 1 somewhat satisfied 2 somewhat dissatisfied 3 very dissatisfied 4 Refused 21 N/A 22

B3.7 ...your leisure activities
 very satisfied 1 somewhat satisfied 2 somewhat dissatisfied 3 very dissatisfied 4 Refused 21 N/A 22

B3.8 ...your health
 very satisfied 1 somewhat satisfied 2 somewhat dissatisfied 3 very dissatisfied 4 Refused 21 N/A 22

B3.9 ...your treatment by people who work for the government, such as police or city services
 very satisfied 1 somewhat satisfied 2 somewhat dissatisfied 3 very dissatisfied 4 Refused 21 N/A 22

B3.10 ...your treatment by store owners
 very satisfied 1 somewhat satisfied 2 somewhat dissatisfied 3 very dissatisfied 4 Refused 21 N/A 22

B3.11 ...your job (or main activity)
 very satisfied 1 somewhat satisfied 2 somewhat dissatisfied 3 very dissatisfied 4 Refused 21 N/A 22

B3.12 ...the balance between your job or main activity and family home life
 very satisfied 1 somewhat satisfied 2 somewhat dissatisfied 3 very dissatisfied 4 Refused 21 N/A 22

B4.1 How satisfied are you with the amount of money you have to meet your own or your family's needs for food, housing and clothing?
 Very satisfied 1 Somewhat satisfied 2 Somewhat dissatisfied 3 Very dissatisfied 4 Refused 21 N/A 22

B4.2 Do you think your ability to provide for your family in the future will become better, stay the same, or get worse?

become better	stay the same	get worse	refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

Happiness

C1.1 Would you describe yourself as being usually:
Happy and interested in life? Somewhat happy? Somewhat unhappy? Unhappy with little interest in life? So unhappy that life is not worthwhile? Refused N/A

1	2	3	4	5	21	22
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Stress

D1.1 How stressful would you say your life usually is?

Extremely stressful	Moderately stressful	Not stressful at all	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

Personal Evaluation

E1.0 Now I'm going to ask you some questions about how important certain things are for your personal quality of life. Please tell me if you think it is very important, moderately important, or not important.

E1.1 ...your job or main activity

Very important	Moderately important	Not important	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

...your ability to provide for yourself or your family in the future

Very important	Moderately important	Not important	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

E1.3 ...your housing

Very important	Moderately important	Not important	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

E1.4 ...your friendships

Very important	Moderately important	Not important	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

E1.5 ...your family relationships

Very important	Moderately important	Not important	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

E2.0 For you personally, have the following improved, stayed the same, or gotten worse over the past 3 years?

E2.1 ...your health	Improved	Stayed the same	Gotten worse	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	21	22

E2.2 ...your overall life satisfaction	Improved	Stayed the same	Gotten worse	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	21	22

E2.3 ...your level of stress	Improved	Stayed the same	Gotten worse	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	21	22

E2.4 ...your happiness	Improved	Stayed the same	Gotten worse	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	21	22

Community quality of life

Next I am going to read you a list of conditions and services that affect quality of life in your neighbourhood. I want you to rate each condition as either excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor.

F1.1 ...the condition of roads and sidewalks in your neighborhood.	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22

F1.2 ...the condition of housing in your neighborhood.	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22

F1.3 ...the condition of parks in your neighborhood	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22

F1.4 ...the condition of other green space (such as boulevards or medians)	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22

F1.5 ...public transportation	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22

F1.6 ...traffic conditions	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22

F1.7 ...environment (such as air and water quality)	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22

F1.8	...degree of neighborhood neatness (such as amount of litter or graffiti)						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.9	...friendliness						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.10	...safety from violent crime						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.11	...safety from property crime						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.12	...neighborhood organizations (such as neighborhood watch or neighborhood associations)						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.13	...shops and services						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.14	...religious and spiritual activities						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.15	...schools						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.16	...health services						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.17	...social programs (such as counseling and child protection)						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.18	...recreation programs & services						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.19	...care-giver services (such as childcare and homecare)						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22
F1.20	...protection services (such as police and fire)						
	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	4	5	21	22

F2.1 Thinking back on the list of neighbourhood conditions and services I just asked you about, please name 3 that are very important to your own quality of life.

(Instructions to surveyors: Do not read list unless asked by respondent as a reminder. Select all that apply.)

- 1 ...the condition of roads and sidewalks
- 2 ...the condition of housing
- 3 ...the condition of parks
- 4 ...the condition of other green space (such as boulevards or the medians)
- 5 ...public transportation
- 6 ...traffic conditions
- 7 ...environment (air and water quality)
- 8 ...degree of neighborhood neatness (such as amount of litter or graffiti)
- 9 ...friendliness
- 10 ...safety from violent crime
- 11 ...safety from property crime
- 12 ...neighborhood organizations (such as neighborhood watch or neighborhood associations)
- 13 ...shops and services
- 14 ...religious and spiritual activities
- 15 ...schools
- 16 ...health services
- 17 ...social programs (such as counseling and child protection)
- 18 ...recreation programs and services
- 19 ...care-giver services (such as childcare and homecare)
- 20 ...protection services (such as police and fire)
- 21 Refused
- 22 N/A

F3.1 Over the last 3 years, would you say the quality of life in Saskatoon has:

Improved	Stayed the same	Become worse	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

F4.1 How much do you feel a part of your neighborhood?

Very much a part	Somewhat a part	not very much a part	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

F4.2 If there was a neighbourhood project organized, such as a block party or yard sale, how comfortable would you feel about participating?

Very comfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Un-comfortable	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

F4.3 Do you feel comfortable calling upon your neighbours for assistance or help during a crisis?

Yes	No	Refused	N/A
1	2	21	22

F5.1 Have you volunteered in any organizations or associations such as school groups, church groups, community centres or ethnic associations in the last 3 years?

Yes	No	Refused	N/A
1	2	21	22

F6.1 How would you describe your feelings of safety and security in your neighbourhood for you and your family?

Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	21	22

F7.1 Over the last 3 years, would you say the quality of life in your neighborhood is:

getting better	staying the same	becoming worse	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

Social Evaluation

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about how well governments are doing in areas that affect people's quality of life.

G1.0 Over the past 3 years, in general, how well are our governments doing in the following areas. Have they gotten better, stayed the same, or become worse:

G1.1 ...in the area of health

Become better	Stayed the same	Become worse	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

G1.2 ...in the area of environmental protection

Become better	Stayed the same	Become worse	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

G1.3 ...education

Become better	Stayed the same	Become worse	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

G1.4 ...job training

Become better	Stayed the same	Become worse	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

G1.5 ...unemployment

Become better	Stayed the same	Become worse	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

G1.6 ...recreation

Become better	Stayed the same	Become worse	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

G1.7 ...income support (such as employment insurance, social assistance)

Become better	Stayed the same	Become worse	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	21	22

G1.8	...housing				
	Become better	Stayed the same	Become worse	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	21	22
G1.9	...support to volunteer organizations (such as United Way)				
	Become better	Stayed the same	Become worse	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	21	22
G1.10	..improving the business climate				
	Become better	Stayed the same	Become worse	Refused	N/A
	1	2	3	21	22

Making Choices

Now I'm going to ask you some questions about how you think governments should spend our money to improve people's quality of life.

- H1.1 Thinking back on the list of neighbourhood conditions and services, please choose three areas you think government spending will do the most good for the quality of life of Saskatoon people.
(Instructions to surveyors: Do not read list unless by respondent as a reminder. Select all that apply.)

- 1 ...the condition of roads and sidewalks
- 2 ...the condition of housing
- 3 ...the condition of parks
- 4 ...the condition of other green space (such as boulevards or the medians)
- 5 ...public transportation
- 6 ...traffic conditions
- 7 ...environment (air and water quality)
- 8 ...degree of neighborhood neatness (such as amount of litter or graffiti)
- 9 ...friendliness
- 10 ...safety from violent crime
- 11 ...safety from property crime
- 12 ...neighborhood organizations (such as neighborhood watch or neighborhood associations)
- 13 ...shops and services
- 14 ...religious and spiritual activities
- 15 ...schools
- 16 ...health services
- 17 ...social programs (such as counseling and child protection)
- 18 ...recreation programs & services
- 19 ...care-giver services (such as childcare and homecare)
- 20 ...protection services (such as police and fire)
- 21 Refused
- 22 N/A

H2.1 Programs to improve people's quality of life can be funded in different ways. Which of the following 5 ways of supporting new spending on programs to improve quality of life would you choose? You can choose more than one. (Choose all that apply.)

Enter 1 if yes, 2 if no, 3 if don't know, 9 refused for each of the following

- 1 Increase user fees
- 2 Increase personal taxes
- 3 Increase corporate taxes
- 4 Increase sales taxes
- 5 Take money from other areas of government spending
- 21 Refused
- 22 N/A

H3.1 We'd like to know which groups you think should be given priority when it comes to funding programs that improve quality of life. Could you name three?

(Do not read list. Choose all that apply.)

- 1 poor families with children
 - 2 poor individuals
 - 3 unemployed youth
 - 4 Aboriginal/Métis/First Nations people
 - 5 new immigrants and refugees
 - 6 the elderly
 - 7 persons with disabilities
 - 8 single parents
 - 9 other
 - 21 Refused
 - 22 N/A
-

Demographics

Now I'm going to ask you a few questions about yourself. Please be assured again that your answers are confidential and will not be reported in any way that could be traced back to you.

Age

J1.1 Please stop me when I come to the age category that you fit into:

18 - 24	25 - 34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and over
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Refused	N/A					
21	22					

Sex (Do not ask.)

J2.1 Male Female Refused N/A
1 2 21 22

Ethnicity

J3.1 In terms of racial origin, how would you identify yourself? Are you...
(Please refer to list of Ethnic Origins attached)

Immigrant status

J5.1 Were you born in Canada?

Yes	No	Refused	N/A
1	2	21	22

J5.2 (If no:) How long have you lived in Canada?

Less than 1 yr.	1 - 2 yrs.	3 - 5 yrs.	5 - 10 yrs.	Over 10 yrs.	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	21	22

Marital status

J6.1 What is your marital status? (Read only if needed.)

1	Single/never married
2	Married, common law, or living with a partner (Do not read: and does not mean separated.)
3	Separated
4	Divorced
5	Widowed
21	Refused
22	N/A

Education

J7.1 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

(Surveyor: Don't read.)

1	Less than grade nine
2	Some high school
3	High school diploma
4	Some trade, technical or vocational school, community college, business college
5	Diploma or certificate from - trade, technical or vocational school, community college, business college
6	Some university
7	University graduate
8	University Post-graduate
21	Refused
22	N/A

Employment

J8.1 During the past 12 months, were you mainly...

(check all that apply)

1	working full-time
2	working part-time
3	Unemployed
4	Retired
5	homemaker/caregiver
6	Student
7	on disability leave, maternity leave, etc.
21	Refused
22	N/A

J8.2 How many people contribute to your household income?

Zero	One	Two	Three	Four or more	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	21	22

Income

J9.1 What is the best estimate of your total combined household income, before taxes, in the past year? Stop me when I come to the category that best describes your total household income: (Read the list.)

- 1** Less than \$10,000
- 2** \$10,000 to less than \$20,000
- 3** \$20,000 to less than \$30,000
- 4** \$30,000 to less than \$40,000
- 5** \$40,000 to less than \$50,000
- 6** \$50,000 to less than \$60,000
- 7** \$60,000 to less than \$70,000
- 8** \$70,000 or more
- 21** Refused
- 22** N/A

J9.2 In comparison with other people in Saskatoon, would you describe your family's financial situation as:

wealthy	well-off	comfortable	adequate	difficult	poor
1	2	3	4	5	6

Refused	N/A
21	22

Household

J10.1 How many people live in your house?

	Refused	N/A
type in number _____	21	22

Children

J11.1 How many children under age 18 do you have living with you?

0	1	2	3	4 or more	Refused	N/A
					21	22

Home ownership

J12.1 Do you own or rent your home?

Own	Rent	Other (specify)	Refused	N/A
1	2	3 _____	21	22

Residency

J21.1 How long have you lived in this, or a nearby, neighborhood?

Less than 1 yr.	1 - 2 yrs.	3 - 5 yrs.	5 - 10 yrs.	over 10 yrs.	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	21	22

J21.2 How long have you been a full-time resident of Saskatoon?

Less than 1 yr.	1 - 2 yrs.	3 - 5 yrs.	5 - 10 yrs.	over 10 yrs.	Refused	N/A
1	2	3	4	5	21	22

J21.3 How many different homes have you lived in, in the last 12 months?

0	1	2	3	4 or more	Refused	N/A
					21	22

Permission for follow-up interview

K1.0 The next steps in this project are personal interviews. We will be contacting a limited number of people for these interviews. Participants will be given \$20 each in appreciation of their time. The interviews will last 1 hour at a place convenient for you.

K1.1 Are you willing to participate in a later interview?

Yes	No
1	2

K1.2 *If yes: What is the best phone number to reach you at?*

Type number in first Cell _____

K1.3 *If yes: What is the correct spelling of your name?*

Type name in first Cell _____

Although we wish we could interview everyone interested in talking to us, we will only be contacting a limited number. If you are not contacted, please accept our thanks for offering to be interviewed.

That's all the questions I have. Thank you for your time.

List of Ethnic Origins

White	Black	Korean	Filipino	Japanese	Chinese
1	2	3	4	5	6
Native	South Asian	Southeast Asian	Middle East or North African	Other	Refused
7	8	9	10	21	22

Appendix B: Sample Frame Methodology

The first step was to group neighbourhoods according to socio-economic indicators known to have an impact on quality of life. Selected neighbourhood demographics from the 1996 census were analysed using SPSS (computer software for statistical analysis). The variables selected were: median household income, percentage of the neighbourhood population which is Aboriginal¹, percentage of the labour force that is employed, percentage of households that are single-parent families, and percentage of housing that is owned. The standardized scores of these variables were submitted to the K-Means Cluster routine. A three-cluster solution was specified to facilitate the interpretation of the groups. Summary statistics for each group's component neighbourhoods were obtained with the SPSS report routine and the neighbourhoods were mapped according to group membership.

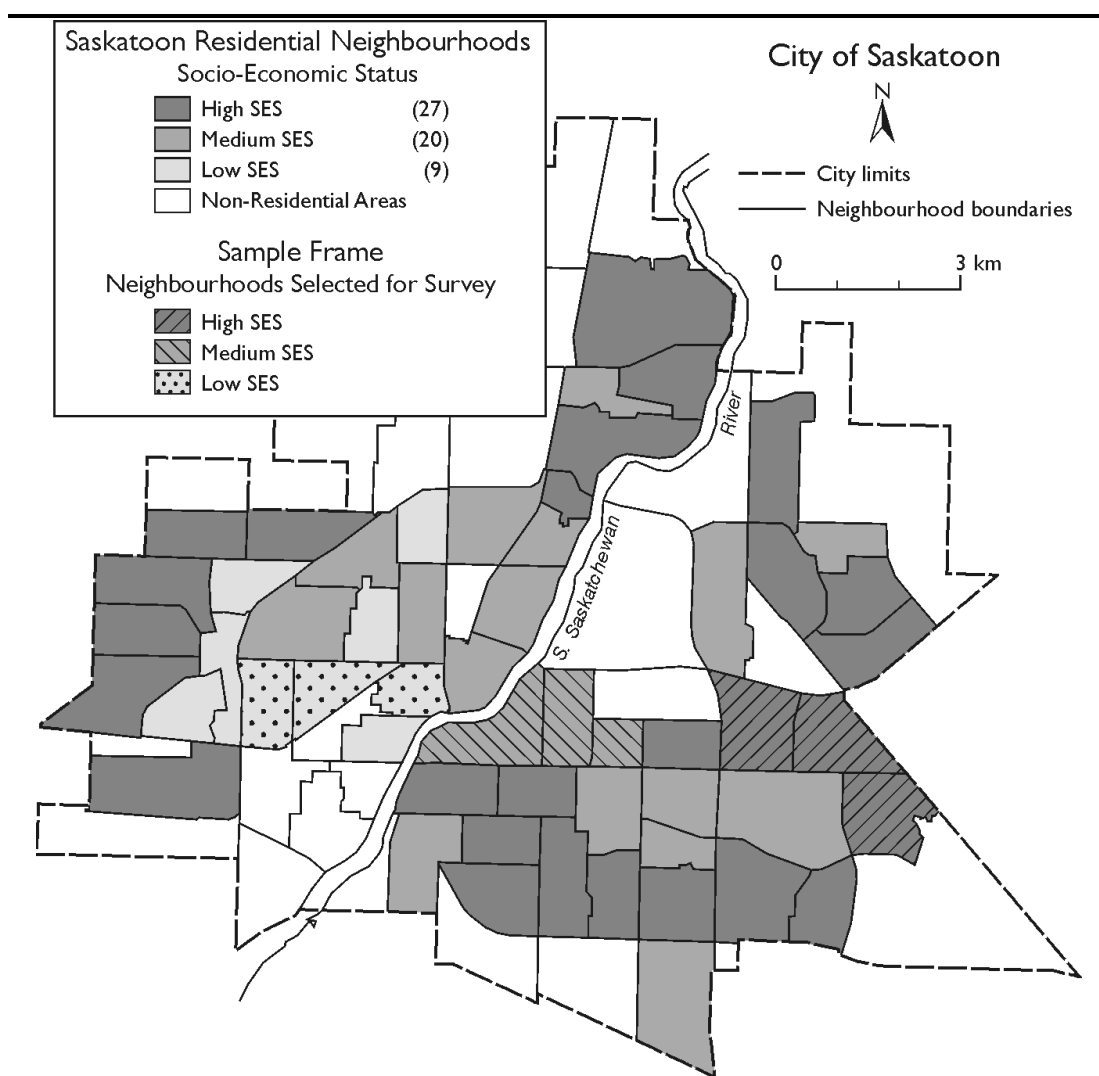


Figure 1: Saskatoon Residential Neighbourhoods grouped by selected socio-economic characteristics.

¹ In this document, *Aboriginal* includes First Nations and Métis peoples.

Summary statistics for the five component variables are shown in Table 1 below. Figure 1 shows the results of the cluster technique. The results group Saskatoon neighbourhoods according to the typical socio-economic scale from highest to lowest. There are 56 neighbourhoods in total within the Saskatoon city limits (n=56), with 27 categorized as high socio-economic status (n=27), 20 categorized as middle socio-economic status (n=20) and 9 categorized as low socio-economic status (n=9).

All Neighbourhoods	Range	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.Dev
Percent Aboriginal	44.37	0	44.4	8.2	9.64
Median Income (\$)	70,522	14,390	84,912	38,954	15,531
% Lone Parent	37.7	0	37.7	10.5	6.42
% Owned	90.9	9.1	100.0	62.7	21.47
% Employed	85.6	11.5	97.1	67.9	15.66

Table 1. Summary Statistics for All Neighbourhoods, 1996 (N=56).

The High Socio-Economic Status (SES) cluster includes the highest median income neighbourhoods in the city. The high rate of employment combined with the low score for single-parent families in this group suggests that two-income families characterize these neighbourhoods. As shown in Table 2, home ownership is about 14% above the average for all city neighbourhoods.

High SES Cluster Neighbourhoods	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std.Dev	Kurtosis
Percent Aboriginal	4.32	0	16.4	4.4	1.98
Median Income (\$)	51,068	33,785	84,912	12,496	.74
% Lone Parent	9.4	0	18.9	4.25	.04
% Owned	77.6	56.5	100	13.66	-1.06
% Employed	77.9	56.2	97.1	8.03	1.38

Table 2. Summary Statistics for High SES Neighbourhoods, 1996 (N=27).

The Middle SES cluster represents a diverse middle ground in the socio-economic and demographic make up of Saskatoon neighbourhoods. As shown in Table 3, these neighbourhoods have moderate incomes and lower rates of home ownership and employment; this reflects the level of multiple-unit dwellings and the high rates of single-person households in these neighbourhoods.

Middle SES Cluster Neighbourhoods	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std.Dev	Kurtosis
Percent Aboriginal	5.5	0	13.9	4.01	-0.30
Median Income (\$)	29,792	17,432	41,540	6,734	-0.92
% Lone Parent	7.8	0	16.7	4.53	-0.37
% Owned	51.3	12.2	85.7	17.56	0.76
% Employed	58.8	11.5	75.9	17.65	1.97

Table 3. Summary Statistics for Middle SES Neighbourhoods, 1996 (N=20).

The Low SES cluster identifies the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the city. As shown in Table 4, the group has the lowest income, the highest representation of Aboriginal peoples, the lowest rate of home ownership, the lowest rate of employment, and the highest rate of single-parent households.

Low SES Cluster Neighbourhoods	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Std.Dev	Kurtosis
Percent Aboriginal	25.9	15.7	44.4	10.71	-1.06
Median Income (\$)	22,970	14,390	35,290	7,120.00	-.62
% Lone Parent	19.9	11.3	37.7	7.36	5.06
% Owned	43.4	9.1	63.1	18.38	-0.23
% Employed	58.6	41.0	71.3	9.75	0.12

Table 4. Summary Statistics for Low SES Neighbourhoods, 1996 (N=9).

The cluster analysis identified neighbourhoods that share socio-economic characteristics but that represent relatively diverse physical and developmental characteristics. For the purpose of representing the effect of place on quality of life, the sample was focused on contiguous neighbourhoods within the three clusters. The neighbourhoods from which the survey sample was drawn are shown in Figure 1.

The City of Saskatoon GIS (Geographic Information System) was used to develop the base for the survey sample. For each cluster, the neighbourhood boundaries of each selected contiguous neighbourhood were used to access Statistics Canada's Postal Code Conversion file. The result was a database of all postal codes in the selected neighbourhoods for each group. All the telephone numbers matching these postal codes were selected from another database. The result was a database of telephone numbers for each neighbourhood group.

Out of 4,469 called, 968 responded, giving a response rate of 21.7 percent². For the multivariate statistical analysis, 917 complete responses were used, including 303 from the high SES neighbourhoods, 332 from the middle SES cluster and 282 from the low SES neighbourhoods. The telephone survey was conducted between December 14, 2000 to January 08, 2001 inclusive, except for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, and January 7, 2001. The nine focus group discussions took place in February 2001 and were organized via local NGOs (non-government organizations). Approximately 30 face-to-face interviews were conducted in each of the three neighbourhoods in Spring 2001, giving a total of 90 interviews.

² Differences in the number of responses later in the analysis reflect the fact that cases with missing values were excluded from the multivariate analysis to give an n=917. In total, only 917 respondents answered all the questions.

Appendix C: The Composition of the Focus Groups

Even though respondents were assigned to one focus group, this does not imply that these groups were homogenous in their experiences and opinions. For example, some Aboriginal Focus Group respondents had lived on Reserves, while others had not. Many respondents also differed in the degree to which their various cultural traditions played a role in their lives. At the same time, many of the respondents could have just as easily contributed to the discussion in a number of groups, sharing experiences of their lives as single parents, Aboriginal people, or low-income earners, just to name a few.

Respondents in the Aboriginal Peoples' Focus Group live across the city in a variety of neighbourhood areas. Many are in different stages of their lives; ranging in age, marital status, and parental roles. These respondents have a shared background in common that includes a history of systemic oppression and contemporary urban conditions that continue to impinge on the process of negotiating a meaningful and rewarding quality of life that includes social and cultural affirmation.

The Immigrant and Refugee Focus Group respondents have varying experiences and opinions that are influenced by their own ethnic backgrounds, by their reasons for coming to Canada, and by the length of time they have been here. Most respondents in this group have been in Canada or Saskatoon for less than 2 years and live in low socio-economic neighbourhoods. The experiences of those who have been here for a longer period of time were not discussed because there were no respondents in this category.

The Children's Focus Group respondents are mostly from Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods. Because of their young age, they have a lot of difficulty articulating what they like to do or what makes them happy. They nonetheless provide provocative observations on their quality of life.

Respondents in the Youth Focus Group are again mostly from Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods and seem to have many more *mature* experiences than the majority of their peers. Some youth respondents are single parents or living on their own. They provide a much-needed perspective on the challenges of adolescence in Saskatoon.

The Lower-Income Earners' Focus Group respondents are quite varied in their backgrounds; ranging in age, ethnicity, and marital status. Some of the lower-income respondents live in more affluent parts of the city while others do not. Similarly diverse char-

Focus Group	Number
Aboriginal Peoples ¹	5
Immigrants and Refugees	9
Children	8
Youth	8
Lower-Income Earners	8
Disabled People	8
Single Parents	7
Un- and Under-Employed People	8
Senior Citizens	6

Table 1. List of Focus Groups and the number participating in each Focus Group.

¹ In this document, *Aboriginal* includes First Nations and Métis peoples

acteristics describe the respondents in the Single Parents' and the Un- and Under-employed People's Focus Groups, although there are some notable differences in their quality of life concerns.

Respondents in the Disabled People's Focus Group have varying degrees of mental and physical disabilities and live in a variety of Saskatoon neighbourhoods. Their quality of life concerns are therefore also highly variable, reflecting their special needs and the daily conditions of their lives.

The Senior Citizens' Focus Group respondents include people with various living and family situations, again from a range of neighbourhood types. Comments from this group include observations and concerns about quality of life in their own homes, their residences, or care homes.

Appendix D: Focus Group Question Guide

1. What aspects of your life are essential to an adequate quality of life?
2. How would you describe a community with a *good* quality of life?
3. Describe the quality of life of your community.
4. Do you feel that the quality of life of your community has *improved* or *become worse* over the past five years? Why?
5. What needs to be done to improve the quality of life of your community?

Appendix E: Face-to-Face Interview Schedule

Overall Satisfaction

1. Generally speaking, the Star Phoenix [Saskatoon Quality of Life Survey] survey showed that Saskatoon residents are optimistic about their quality of life. What do you think contributes to this overall feeling of optimism? How do you feel personally?
2. What are the important things that contribute to your quality of life?
3. What would you want changed for an improved quality of life?
4. Some of those surveyed are dissatisfied with the balance between work and family life. What do you think contributes to this? How do you feel about the balance between work and family in your life? How satisfied are you with your job? (PROBE: locus of control, degree of flexibility)
5. In comparison with other people in Saskatoon, how would you describe your financial situation? Why?

Neighbourhood

6. When compared to satisfaction with their city, survey respondents were generally less satisfied with their neighbourhood. What do you think contributes to this? How do you feel about your neighbourhood? Why?
7. What neighbourhood characteristics are important to your quality of life?
8. What neighbourhood characteristics reduce your quality of life?
9. Some survey respondents didn't feel *very much a part* of their neighbourhood. Why do you think people feel this way? How do you feel personally? (PROBE: friendliness of neighbourhood)
10. How important is feeling a part of your neighbourhood to your quality of life? Why?

Empowerment

11. What ways do you contribute to the quality of life of your neighbourhood? (PROBE: volunteering, fundraising, recycling, block parent etc.)
12. How does this make a difference to the quality of life of your neighbourhood?
13. What ways do you contribute to the quality of life of your city?
14. How do you make your concerns about your quality of life, whether personal, neighbourhood, or city, known to decision makers (i.e. politicians)? (PROBE: contribute to charitable organizations, vote etc.)

Spending

15. Where do you think governments should spend to get the greatest improvement in people's quality of life? Why?
16. Which groups do you think should receive the most benefit from government spending? Why?

17. What kind of government spending is most important to your own quality of life?
18. When it comes to government spending, most people surveyed chose increased personal taxes, but many other respondents chose implementation of user fees, such as what are paid for leisure services. What are your feelings about the most appropriate ways to fund social programs? Why?

Last Question

In the survey results, women were three times more likely than men to say their quality of life in Saskatoon had gotten worse over the past three years. Why do you think this is?

Appendix F: Briefing Paper

Electronically, this appendix is available as a second link entitled *Building a Caring Community* from the website <http://www.usask.ca/cuisr/Publications/Publications.html>

