



**10 YEARS OF QUALITY OF LIFE IN SASKATOON:  
SUMMARY OF RESEARCH 2010 ITERATION**

NICOLA CHOPIN, BILL HOLDEN, NAZEEM MUHAJARINE, AND JAMES POPHAM

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Community-University Institute for Social Research



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Summary of Research  
2010 Iteration*

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*Building Healthy Sustainable Communities*

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## Introduction

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Throughout the last four decades there has been a growing interest in developing measures for determining the quality of life (QoL) of communities. Researchers, academics, business leaders, and government officials from all walks of life have sought to establish a reliable set of indicators for gauging QoL; however these publications also have acknowledged that each community will have unique indicators that reflect local concerns. QoL can relate to various aspects of a person's life including their well-being, financial security, friends and family, health status, access to services, community conditions and opportunities for personal growth and advancement (Dunning et al. 2007; Craglia et al. 2004; Pacione 2003). Undertaking efforts to establish the QoL indicators for a community can provide a valuable tool for local research – for example city planners and policy-makers may be better equipped to address the concerns of various members of the community when devising social and economic programs. As outlined by Myers (1987), QoL refers to the overall enjoyment of life and is constructed as:

*characteristics residents experience in places (for example, air and water quality, traffic, or recreational ... of the shared opportunities), and the subjective evaluations residents make of those conditions. (p. 108-109)*

In recent years, a number of agencies in Canada have devised systems for measuring urban QoL, including the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC 1996) and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FMC 2001, 2004). These systems have normally involved the collection and analysis of indicators related to issues such as housing, health, education, employment, health, crime, transportation, community affordability, land use and recreation.

The reflexive nature of QoL research also provides a valuable tool for illuminating changes and improvements to the circumstance of participating populations. The development of these insights has been aided through the implementation of participatory action research (PAR) methods, which incorporate the voiced opinions of citizens into research direction. With a focus on community interests and needs as opposed to individual or clinical transformation (Macaulay, Paradis, Potvin, et al., 1997), PAR has been used in the context of this study to gain an understanding of QoL through the opinions voiced by members of Saskatoon's social mosaic. Furthermore, the areas of interest discussed with these citizens were themselves informed by the community-based research methods used in past iterations of this study.

Community-university partnerships play an essential role in bridging the gap between researchers and grassroots community members. One successful example of such a partnership is the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) based in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Created in 2000, CUISR is a partnership between community-based organizations and faculty and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan. CUISR serves as a focal point for community-based research and integrates the various social research needs and experiential knowledge of the community-based organizations with the technical expertise available at the university ([www.usask.ca/cuistr/](http://www.usask.ca/cuistr/)). CUISR's mandate is to promote and conduct applied social and economic research with the fundamental goal of improving community quality of life. The Institute receives funding from a number of sources including the Social Sciences

and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the University of Saskatchewan, the City of Saskatoon and Saskatoon District Health.

The CUISR QoL module has now completed four iterations of data collection (2001, 2004, 2007, and 2010) across three clusters of neighbourhoods in Saskatoon representing areas of High, Middle and Low socio-economic status (SES). This represents one of the most comprehensive and detailed time-series studies of QoL at the neighbourhood level in Canada. Furthermore, the research is unique in that it has successfully employed a mixed-method approach (quantitative and qualitative). In each of the study years, data collection has involved a telephone survey, face-to-face interviews, focus groups and discussions with key policy informants. In addition, a series of community policy forums have been held which have informed the research process and have initiated policies and strategies aimed at improving QoL in Saskatoon.

This document provides the results of a research program that has spanned a decade and has provided important information and unique insights into the quality of life and well-being of the citizens of Saskatoon. The current report is organized into three main sections. Section 1 describes the research methodology, data collection, and analysis. In Section 2, the results of a detailed analysis of the results of the Quality of Life telephone survey over the 2001-2004-2007-2010 study period. Section 3 summarizes the results of the face-to-face interviews conducted as a follow-up to the telephone survey. Section 4 provides a summary of the focus group results. Finally, Section 5 discusses key trends of a decade of Quality of Life research in Saskatoon.

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## **Section 1: Methods**

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The 2010 Quality of Life Research comprises three stages of data collection and analysis: a telephone survey, focus groups, interviews, and a community forum.

**Stage 1:** A telephone survey was conducted in 2001, 2004, 2007, and 2010 (Appendix B). In each year of the survey, approximately 1,000 Saskatoon residents in three groups of neighbourhoods, representing High, Middle, and Low socio-economic status (SES), responded. A total of nine neighbourhoods were studied in each year (see Appendix A for the sampling frame). Small modifications have been made to the survey over the years based on consultation with the research team and the Saskatoon Quality of Life Steering Committee.

For the 2010 telephone survey, FAST Consulting collected data from 1,000 participants in three neighbourhood clusters (333 from the High SES group, 332 from the Middle SES group, and 335 from the Low SES group). The survey had a response rate of 14.5 percent. During data collection, FAST Consulting ran out of telephone numbers prior to completing the required number of surveys. In order to complete data collection, 103 surveys were completed in person by surveyors traveling door-to-door to recruit participants, presenting a change in data collection from the previous iterations.

**Stage 2:** In-depth face-to-face interviews with a sub-sample of 43 respondents from the telephone survey were conducted to address specific dimensions of quality life ranging from personal concerns to neighbourhood and citywide issues. These participants were asked if they would participate in face-to-face interviews during the initial telephone survey, and had indicated their interest. The interviews were conducted between January and March of 2011, aiming to contact 15 residents in each of the three neighbourhood groups. Due to logistical difficulties two interviewees were unable to participate, resulting in a total of 43 respondents. The in-depth interview question guide is presented in Appendix E.

**Stage 3:** A series of 6 focus groups were conducted between December 2010 and March 2011. The groups comprised a cross-section of Saskatoon residents representing a number of marginalized socio-economic and cultural circumstances. These included core youth, urban youth, disabled persons, recent immigrants, Aboriginal persons, and single parents. The objective of the focus groups was to address quality of life issues of community members whose voices or opinions are rarely heard; the guiding questions were based on concerns voiced by similar groups in past iterations of the survey. These intimate group discussions have helped to provide context for developing programs and policies aimed at improving Saskatoon's QoL in past iterations of this survey. The six main questions and subsequent probing questions can be found in appendix F.

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## **Section 2: Tracking Quality of Life Themes from 2001 to 2010**

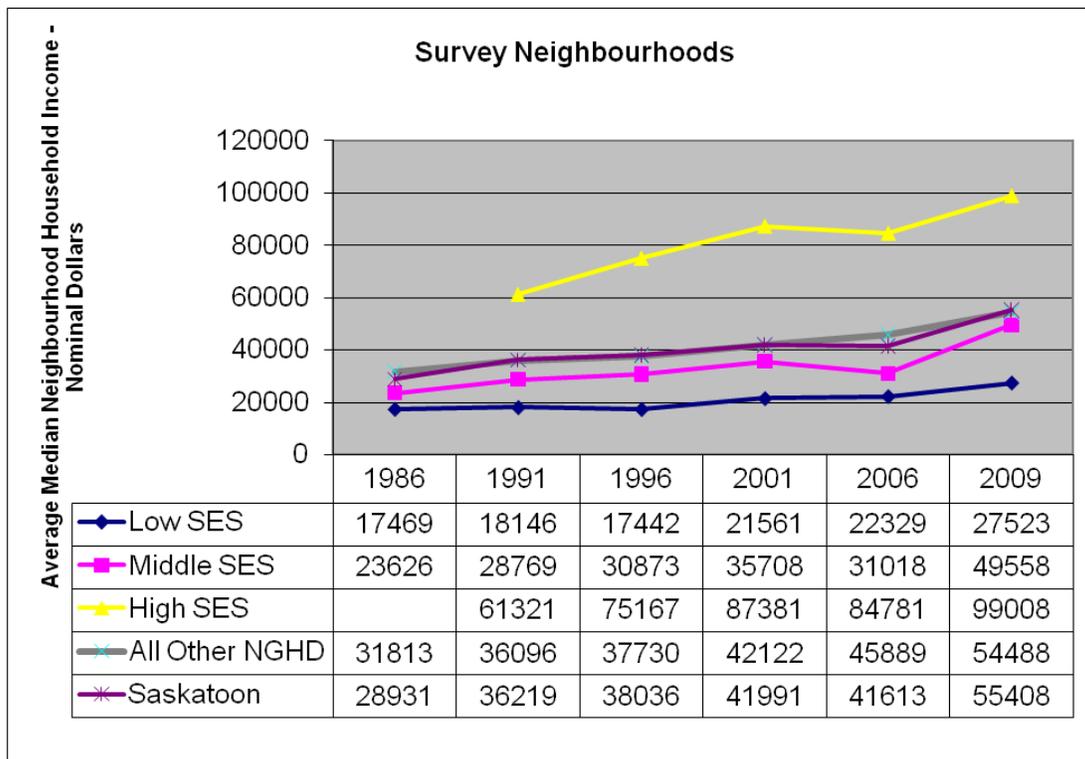
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### **A. OVERALL PERSPECTIVES ON QUALITY OF LIFE**

#### **Summary Points**

- The income gap remains an important issue in Saskatoon.
- Overall, perceptions of quality of life improved over the 2001-2004-2007 period and remained stable between 2007 and 2010. Perceptions of quality of life in Low SES neighbourhoods increased significantly between 2007 and 2010 although these perceptions continue to be lower than High and Middle SES neighbourhoods.
- Overall, self-rated health improved between 2004 and 2007 and but remained relatively flat between 2007 and 2010.
- Perceptions of quality of life and health improved slightly in High SES neighbourhoods but remained relatively unchanged in the Middle and Low SES neighbourhoods.
- A large majority of residents feel that things in Saskatoon are headed in the right direction. Perceptions in Low SES neighbourhoods increased substantially between 2007 and 2010 whereas this perception was stable in High and Middle SES neighbourhoods in the same time period.

The persistence of the income gap in Saskatoon has been highlighted in all iterations of Saskatoon’s Quality of Life research. Figure 1 shows that the income gap remained in 2009. The average median household income in the Low SES neighbourhoods was substantially lower than the median household income of the entire city and in the Middle and High SES neighbourhoods. Median household income increased by nearly 25 percent for all SES Neighbourhoods between 2006 and 2009, reflecting perhaps the effects of the economic boom. Those increases were larger for Middle and High SES Neighbourhoods (37% for Middle and 14% for High SES Neighbourhoods) than for Low SES Neighbourhoods (19%).

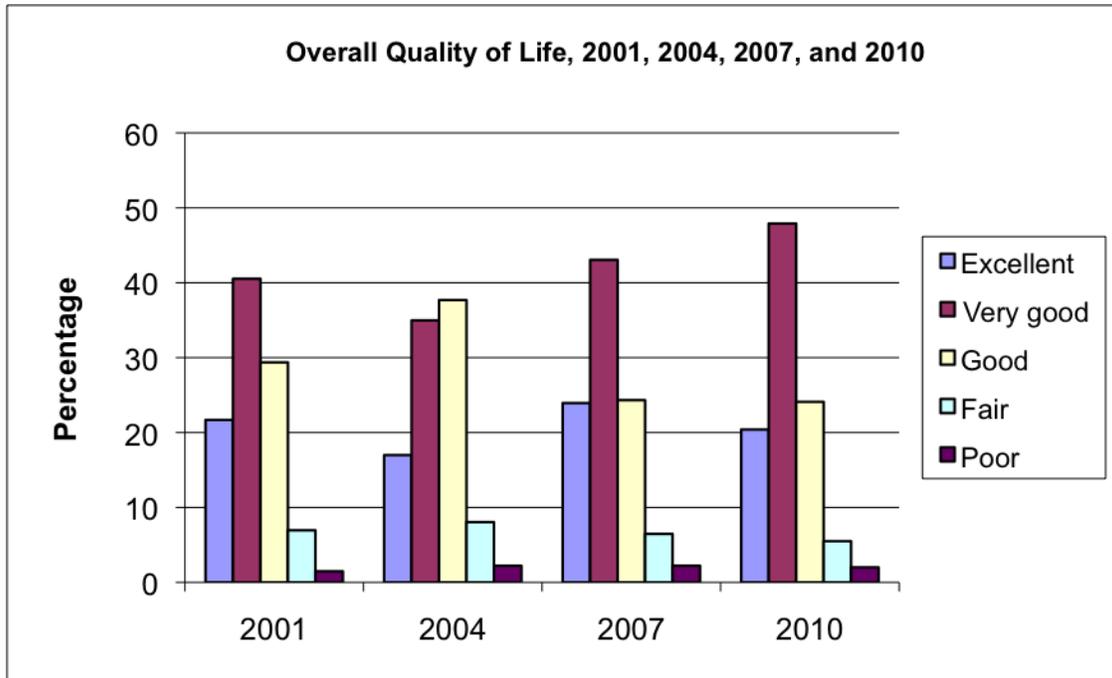


**Figure 1. Changes in Household Income, 1986-2009, Nominal Dollars**

**Source: 1986 to 2001 (Statistics Canada Census), 2006 and 2009 Generation 5 estimates**

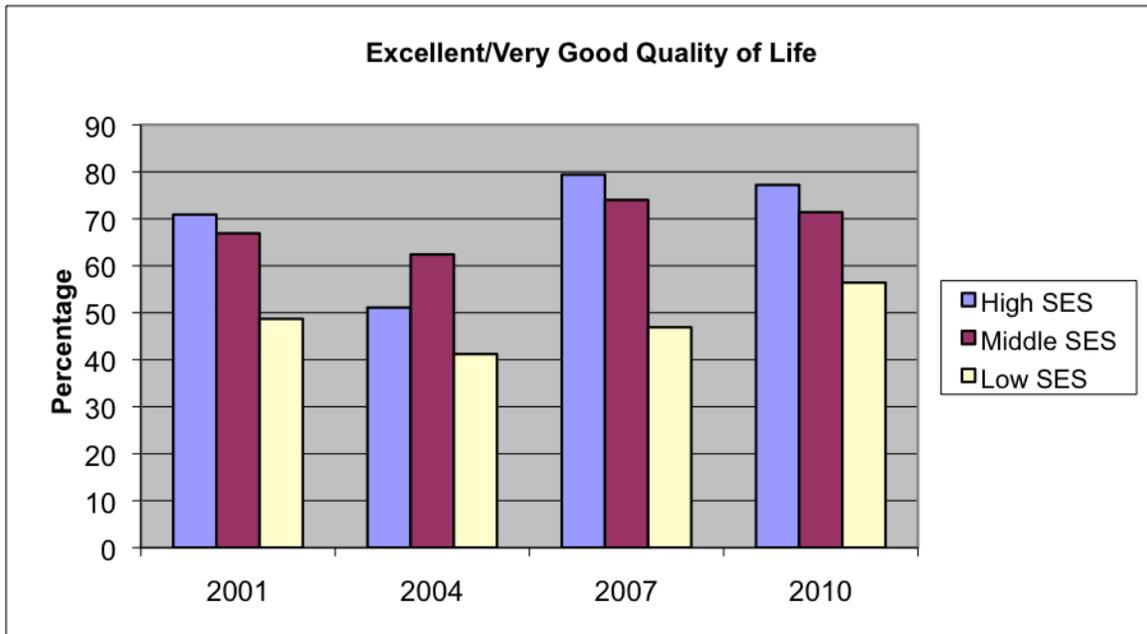
## Overall Quality of Life

In each of the 2001, 2004, 2007, and 2010 telephone surveys, respondents were asked to rate their overall quality of life. The 2010 survey results show ratings of QoL remained stable since 2007, with 68 percent of respondents in 2010 rating their QoL as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Very Good’—a trend that represented an increase from both 2001 and 2004.



**Figure 2. Overall Quality of Life**

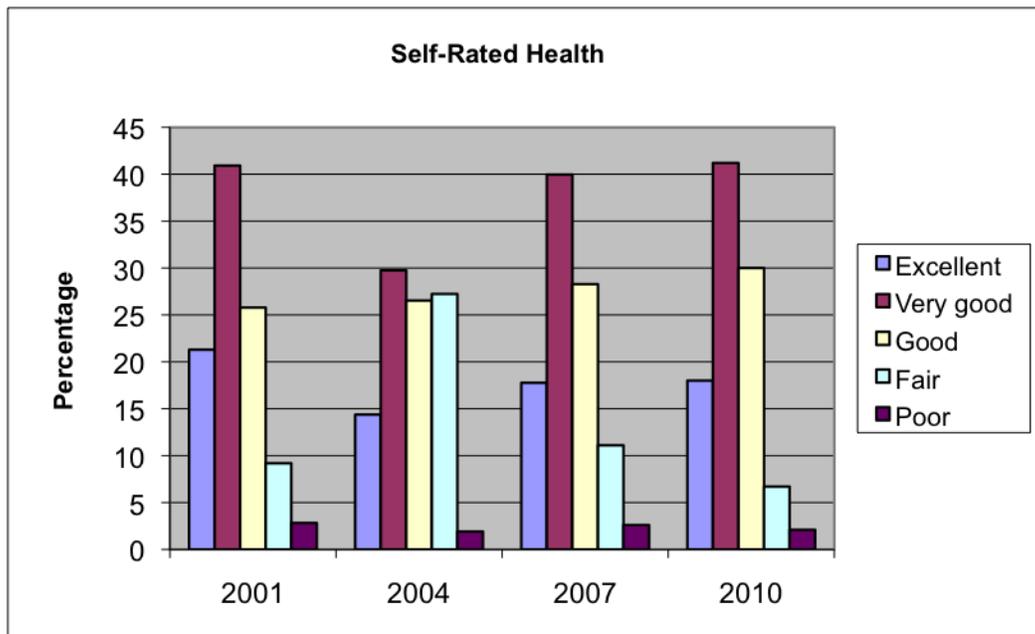
Perceptions of overall QoL differ among the three neighbourhood groups. Respondents in High SES neighbourhoods continue to rate their QoL as better than those in Middle SES and Low SES neighbourhoods. Figure 3 shows that, while respondents in High and Middle SES neighbourhoods perceptions of their QoL increased substantially from 2001 and 2004, the 2010 data show slight decreases in High and Middle SES neighbourhood respondents' perceptions of their overall QoL relative to 2007. However, there was a large increase in the percentage of Low SES neighbourhood respondents who rated their QoL as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good.' Despite this trend, Low SES neighbourhood residents remain much more likely to rate their QoL as 'Poor' or 'Fair' (13%) than High (3%) and Middle SES (6%) neighbourhood residents.



**Figure 3. Excellent/Very Good Quality of Life by Neighbourhood Group**

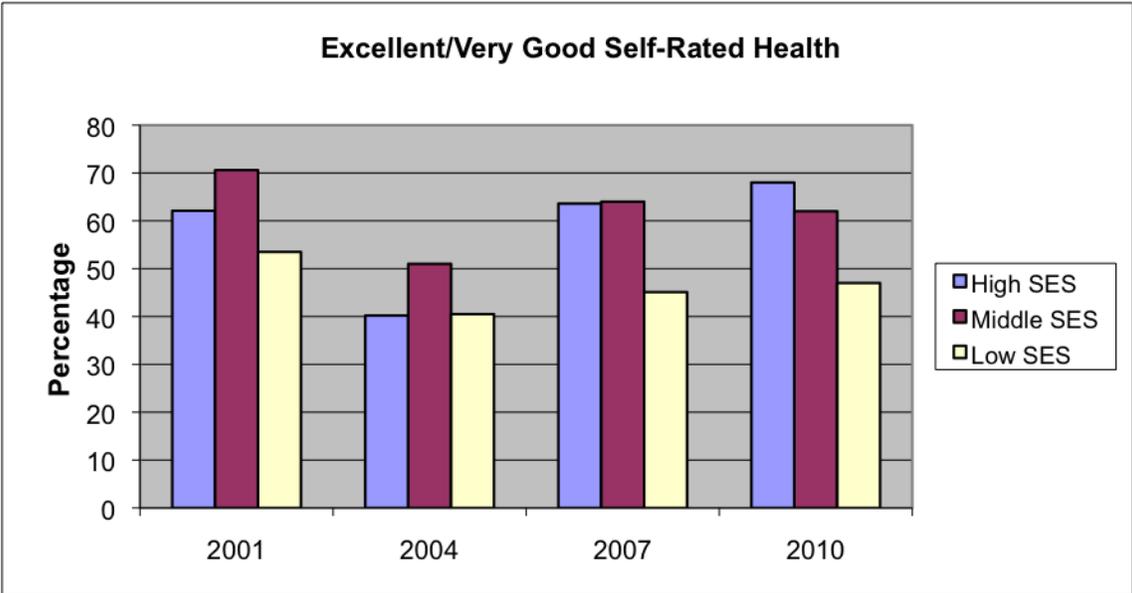
## **Overall Health**

Respondents' ratings of their health have fluctuated greatly over the past 10 years. Figure 4 shows that, while there was a drop in self-rated perceptions of their health between 2001 and 2004, there was a significant improvement in respondents' perceptions of health between 2004 and 2007. Ratings of health in 2010 remained stable between 2007 and 2010: while a total of 58 percent of respondents rated their health as either 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' in 2007, a total of 59 percent of respondents rated their health as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' in 2010.



**Figure 4. Overall Self-Rated Health**

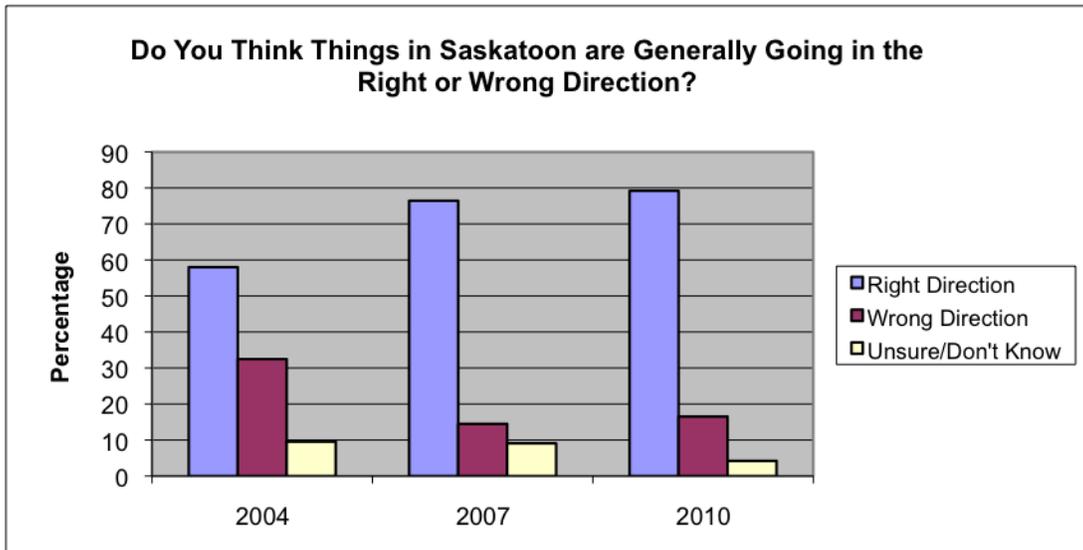
Figure 5 shows self-rated 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' health by neighbourhood. Self-rated health decreased between 2001 and 2004 overall and increased between 2004 and 2007. In 2007, 23 percent of Low SES neighbourhood respondents rated their health as 'Poor' or 'Fair' compared to approximately 10 percent of High and Middle SES respondents. In 2010, 17 percent of Low SES respondents rated their health as 'Poor' or 'Fair' relative to 10 percent of Middle SES respondents and 5 percent of High SES respondents, indicating self-rated health improved for Low and High SES respondents. In 2007, High and Middle SES neighbourhood respondents' ratings of 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' health were approximately even (at about 64 percent) whereas there was a disparity of approximately 20 percent between these two groups and Low SES neighbourhood residents. Figure 5 also reveals a slight increase in High SES neighbourhood respondents' ratings of health as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' health between 2007 and 2010 whereas the proportion of respondents in Middle and Low SES neighbourhoods rating their health as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' remained fairly stable. The results indicate the gap in health in Saskatoon according to socio-economic status has not lessened since 2007.



**Figure 5. Excellent/Very Good Self-Rated Health by Neighbourhood Group**

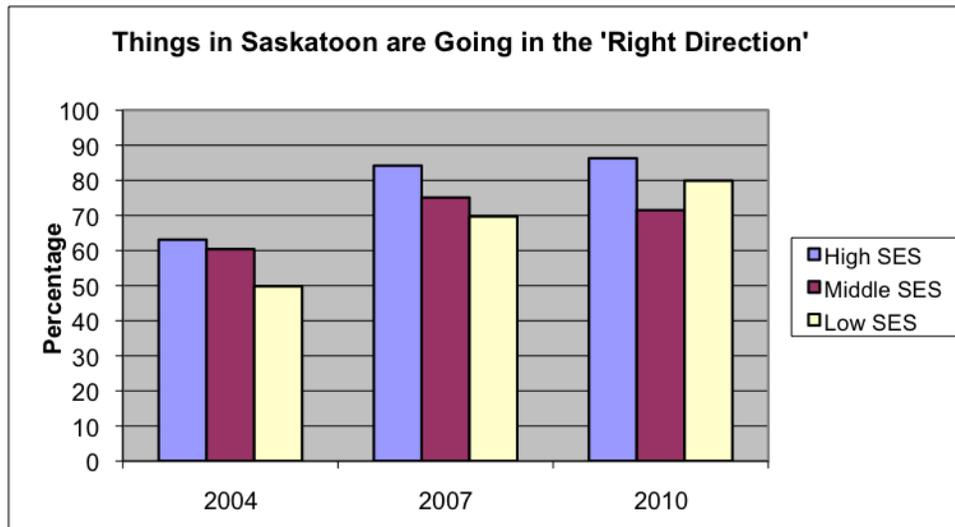
## Overall Direction of Saskatoon

In 2004, 2007, and 2010 respondents were asked a question about the general direction of Saskatoon. This question can be viewed as a useful barometer of how residents feel about their quality of life and the overall opportunities and conditions that exist in their community and in the City. While there was a significant increase in the proportion of respondents who felt things in Saskatoon were going in the 'Right Direction' in 2007 (76%) compared to 2004 (58%), this proportion had leveled out between 2007 and 2010 (79%).



**Figure 6. Overall Direction of Saskatoon**

As Figure 7 illustrates there were large increases in the number of respondents who felt things in Saskatoon were going in the 'Right Direction' between 2004 and 2007, with the largest increases being seen in the High and Low SES neighbourhoods (20 percent). In 2010, the percentage of High and Middle SES respondents who felt things in Saskatoon were going in the 'Right Direction' remained approximately stable whereas the percentage of Low SES respondents who provided this rating increased by approximately 10 percent. In 2010, High (86%) and Low SES (80%) respondents endorsed this response more than Middle SES respondents (71%).



**Figure 7. The Direction of Saskatoon by Neighbourhood Group**

## **B. SOCIAL INCLUSION & NEIGHBOURHOOD CONDITIONS**

### **Summary Points**

- Perceptions of social cohesion fell in the Low SES neighbourhoods between 2004 and 2007 but increased between 2007 and 2010.
- The gap seen in perceptions of neighbourhood physical conditions, particularly roads, housing and parks in 2007 improved in 2010, with Low and Middle SES neighbourhood respondents' approaching that of High SES neighbourhood respondents.
- Perceptions of neighbourhood safety have generally improved in Saskatoon over the last 10 years although perceptions of safety decreased slightly between 2007 and 2010, the gap in concern over safety from violent and property crime among SES neighbourhoods decreased substantially.
- Perceptions of schools improved but perceptions of recreation programs and services decreased slightly.
- Rates of volunteerism have fallen over time in Saskatoon although recent trends show a slight recovery in volunteerism rates, particularly in the High SES neighbourhoods.

### **Social Cohesion**

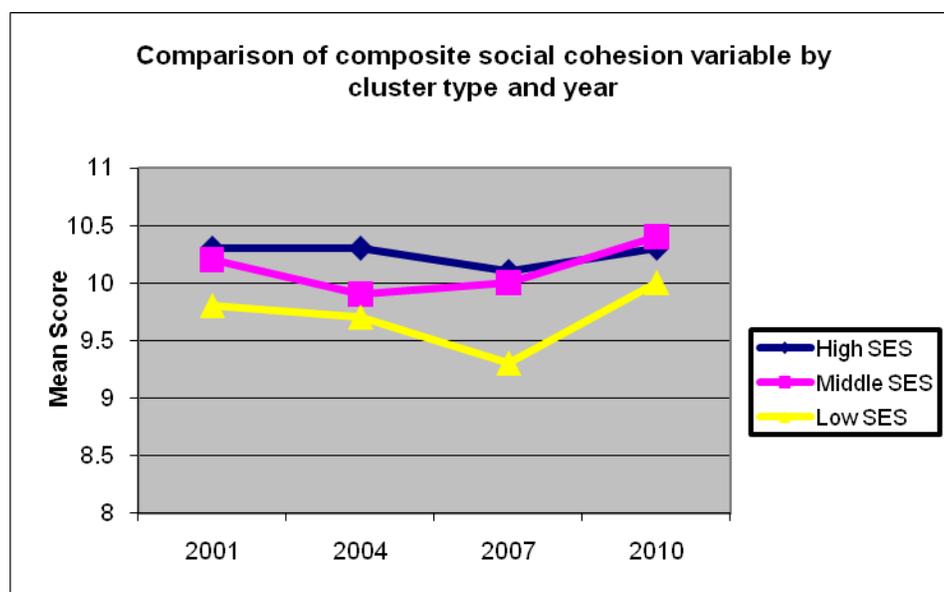
In 2001 and 2004, social inclusion was identified in Briefing Papers as a key component of quality of life in Saskatoon. A composite social inclusion variable was devised for each survey year that combined the following four questions from each of the 2001, 2004, 2007, and 2010 telephone surveys:

- How much do you feel a part of your neighbourhood?
- If there was a neighbourhood project organized, such as a block party or yard sale, how comfortable would you feel about participating?
- Do you feel comfortable calling upon your neighbours for assistance or help during a crisis?
- Have you volunteered in the last 3 years?

These factors measure the sense of belonging to a place that can have an influence on the perception of overall QoL.

Figure 8 shows the mean social inclusion score in the three neighbourhood groups over the 2001-2004-2007-2010 period. The graph indicates that participants' perceptions of social inclusion in the High and Middle SES neighbourhoods have remained relatively consistent over the last 10 years and were nearly the same in 2001, 2007, and 2010. Perceptions of social inclusion in the Low SES neighbourhoods have been lower than in the Middle and High SES neighbourhoods throughout all years of the survey although they were similar to the Middle SES neighbourhoods

in 2004. Perceptions of social inclusion decreased substantially between 2004 and 2007 but rose again between 2007 and 2010.

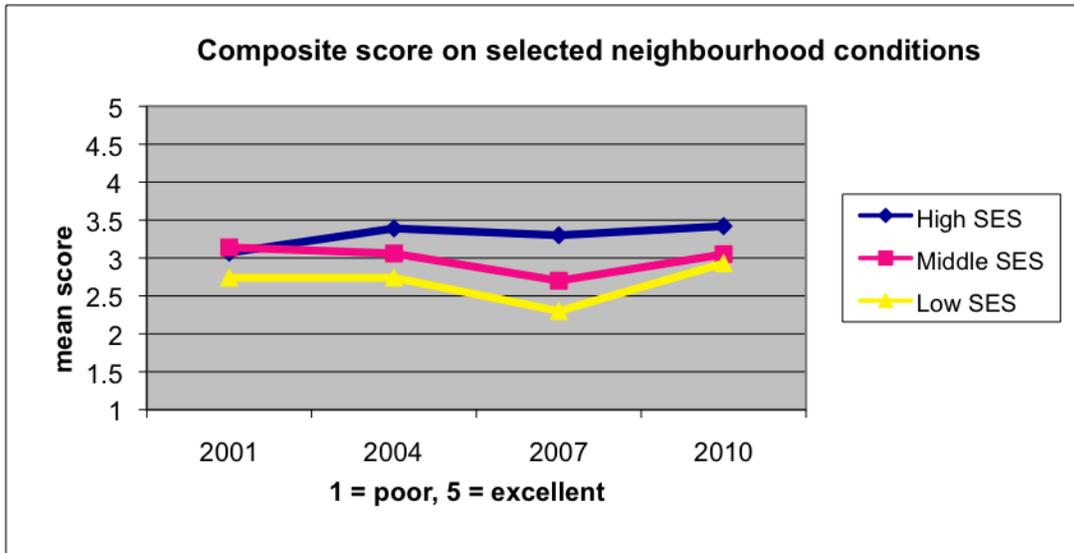


**Figure 8. Social Inclusion Composite Index**

### Neighbourhood Conditions

A composite variable combining several social inclusion factors related specifically to neighbourhood physical conditions was analyzed for 2001-2004-2007-2010. Similar to the social inclusion measure, this composite variable combined respondents' evaluations of the condition of roads and sidewalks, housing, parks, and other green spaces (such as boulevards or medians).

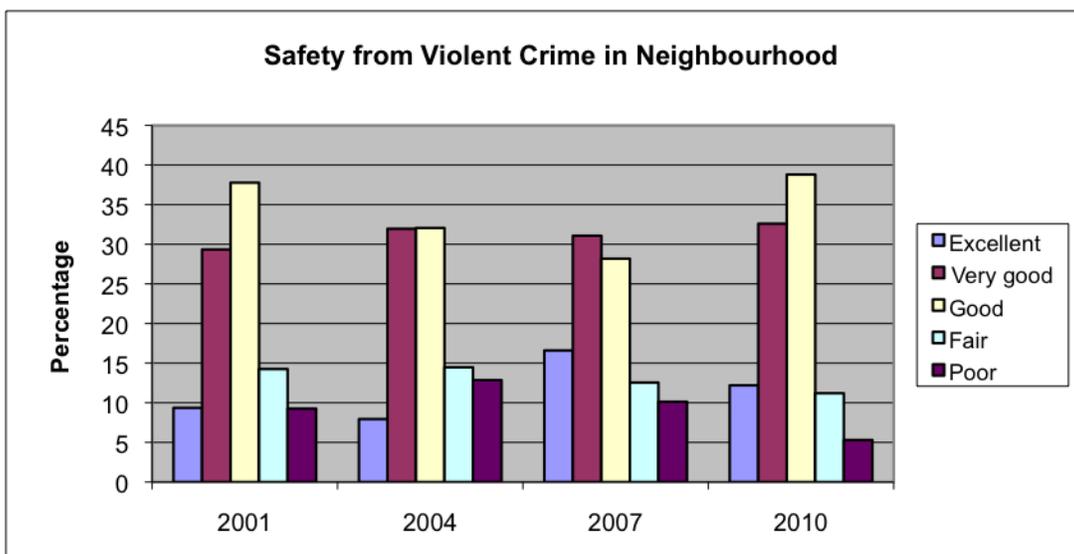
Figure 9 displays the mean score of these questions ranging from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). While perceptions of neighbourhood conditions were similar among the three neighbourhood groups in 2001, High SES neighbourhood respondents' perceptions improved in 2004 and have stayed relatively consistent since that time. Perceptions of neighbourhood physical conditions have fluctuated more widely among Low and Middle SES respondents between 2001 and 2010. The greatest gap amongst the three groups occurred in 2007, although this gap improved in 2010. Perceptions for Low and Middle SES neighbourhood respondents were nearly identical and approached the perceptions of High SES neighbourhood respondents.



**Figure 9. Neighbourhood Conditions Composite Index**

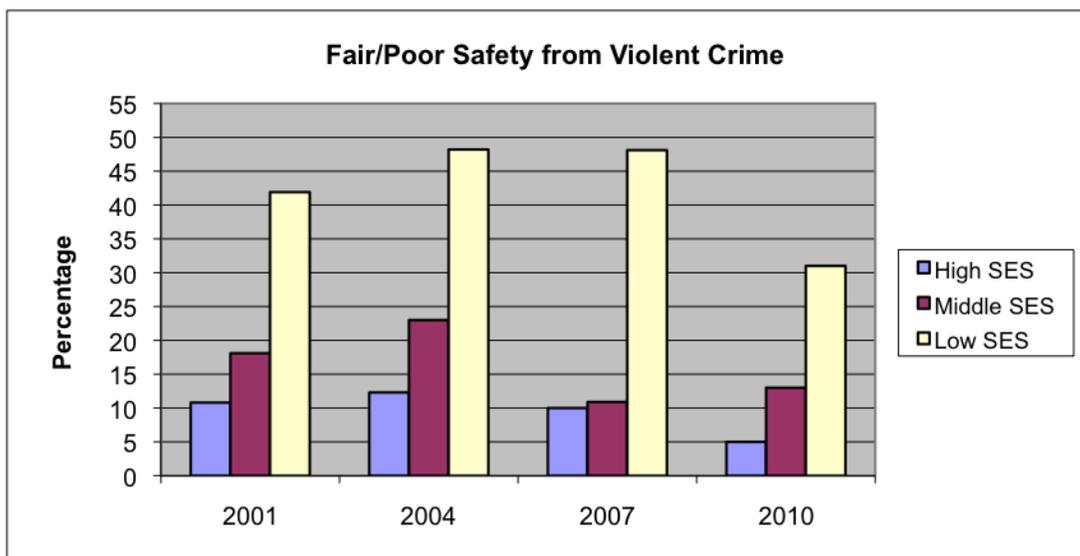
**Neighbourhood Safety**

Crime and safety have been identified as important issues in Saskatoon as the city has historically recorded one of the highest crime rates among urban areas in Canada (Dauvergne & Turner, 2010). Respondents have been asked questions about safety from violent and property crime since 2001. Figure 10 shows that, while respondents' ratings of their safety from violent crime as either 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' increased between 2001 (38%), 2004 (40%), and 2007 (48%), the percentage in decreased slightly in 2010 (45%). The majority of respondents (71%) rated their safety from violent crime as 'Very Good' or 'Good' in 2010.



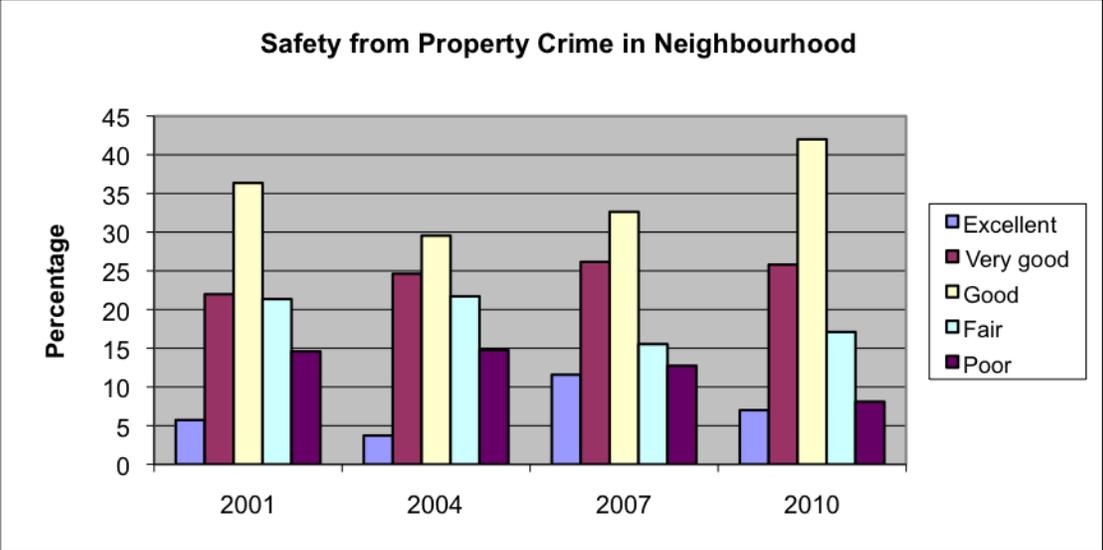
**Figure 10. Safety from Violent Crime**

Historically, a large gap has existed in perceptions of safety from violent crime in the Middle and High SES groups relative to the Low SES neighbourhood group. Figure 11 illustrates that, over the last 10 years, concern over crime has been far greater in Low SES neighbourhood residents than Middle and High SES residents. In the 2001-2004-2007 period, this gap was increasing in magnitude, culminating with nearly 50 percent of Low SES neighbourhood respondents reporting 'Fair' or 'Poor' safety from violent crime in 2007 relative to approximately 10 percent of Middle and High SES respondents. However, this gap substantially decreased in 2010, when 36 percent of Low SES respondents reporting 'Fair' or 'Poor' safety from violent crime. In addition, in 2010, the percentage of High SES respondents rating their safety as 'Fair' or 'Poor' decreased to 5 percent whereas Middle SES respondents' ratings of their safety as 'Fair' or 'Poor' increased to 13 percent.



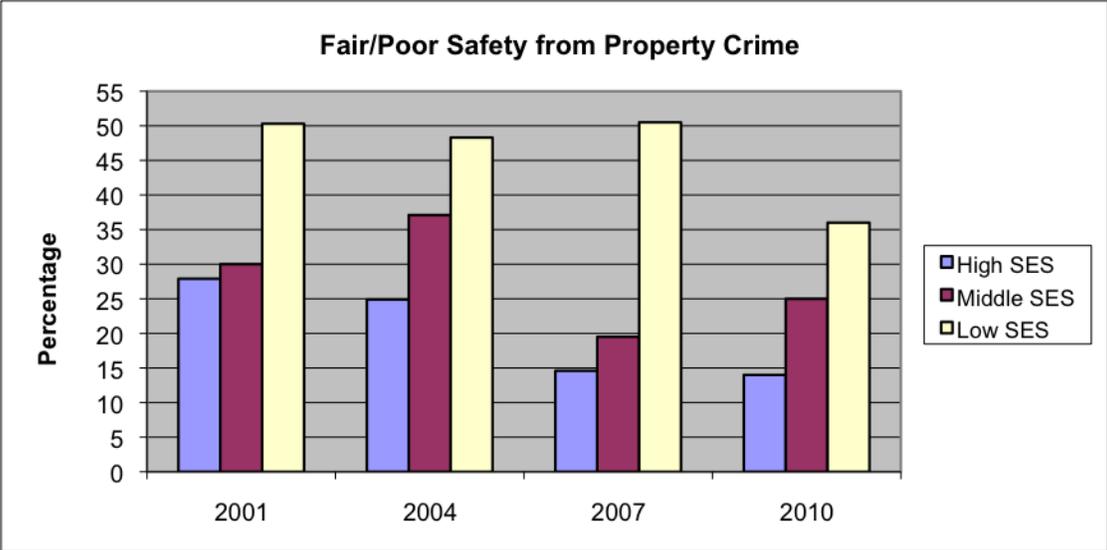
**Figure 11. Fair/Poor Safety from Violent Crime by Neighbourhood Group**

Figure 12 reveals that, as with other iterations of QoL, safety from property crime in Saskatoon remains a greater concern than safety from violent crime. Respondents' ratings of 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' safety from property crime increased from 28 percent in 2004 and 2001 to 38 percent in 2007, perceived ratings of safety from property crime in 2010 decreased to 32 percent. Ratings of 'Fair' or 'Poor' safety from property crime were fairly stable between 2001 and 2004, and have decreased steadily since then: 36 percent in 2001, 37 percent in 2004, 28 percent in 2007, and 25 percent in 2010. The net result has been an increase in the percentage of respondents rating their safety as 'Good' (42 percent of respondents in 2010).



**Figure 12. Safety from Property Crime**

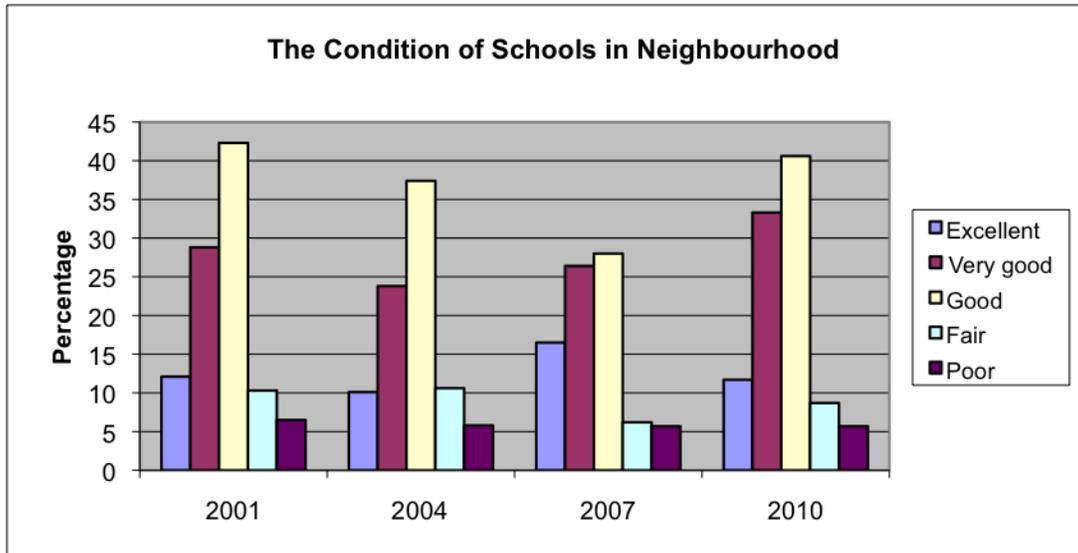
As shown in Figure 13, a similar pattern was also evident found for ratings of 'Fair' or 'Poor' safety from property crime although concern for property crime was higher than concern for violent crime overall. Again, a large decrease in concern related to property crime was seen in individuals in Low SES neighbourhoods whereas Middle SES neighbourhood respondents' concern increased.



**Figure 13. Fair/Poor Safety from Property Crime by Neighbourhood Group**

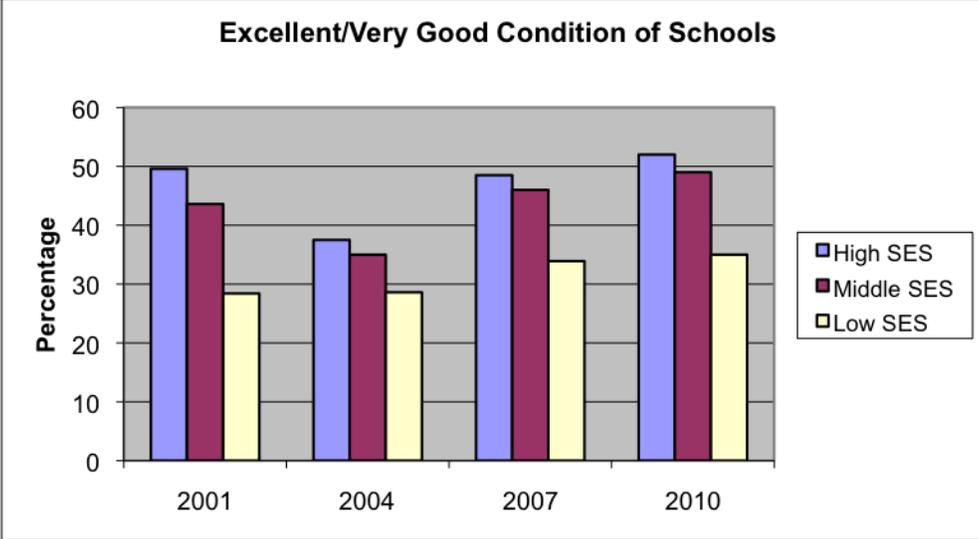
## **Schools and Recreation**

Schools as well as recreation programs and services are key components of a community's quality of life. Figure 14 indicates there was an increase in respondents' ratings of the conditions of schools as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' between 2004 and 2007 (from 34 percent in 2004 to 43 percent in 2007); this trend continued in 2010, with 45 percent of respondents rating the condition of schools as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good.'



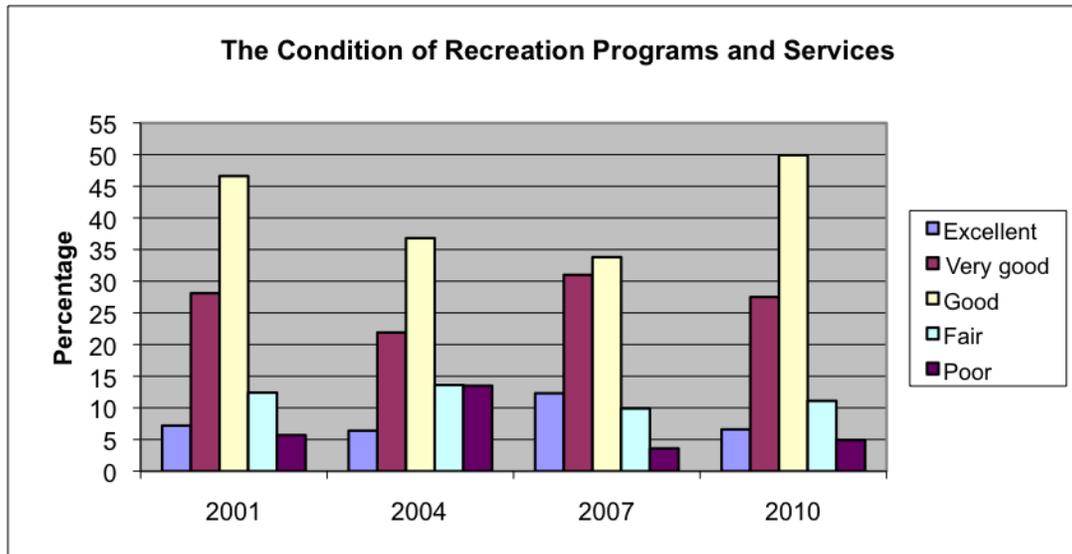
**Figure 14. The Condition of Schools**

Figure 15 shows slight increases in perceptions of neighbourhood schools being in ‘Excellent’ or ‘Very Good’ condition between 2007 and 2010 occurred primarily in the High and Middle SES neighbourhood groups. Ratings increased from 49 percent to 52 percent between 2007 and 2010 for High SES neighbourhoods and from 46 percent to 49 percent in the same period for Middle SES neighbourhoods. A stable proportion of Low SES neighbourhood respondents rated the quality of their schools as ‘Excellent’ or ‘Very Good’ in 2007 (34 percent) and 2010 (35 percent). Importantly, the largest increase in perceptions of quality of schools since 2001 has been in Low SES neighbourhoods. Low SES neighbourhood respondents’ ratings increased by 7 percent between 2001 and 2010 whereas this increase was 2 percent and 5 percent in High and Middle SES neighbourhoods, respectively.



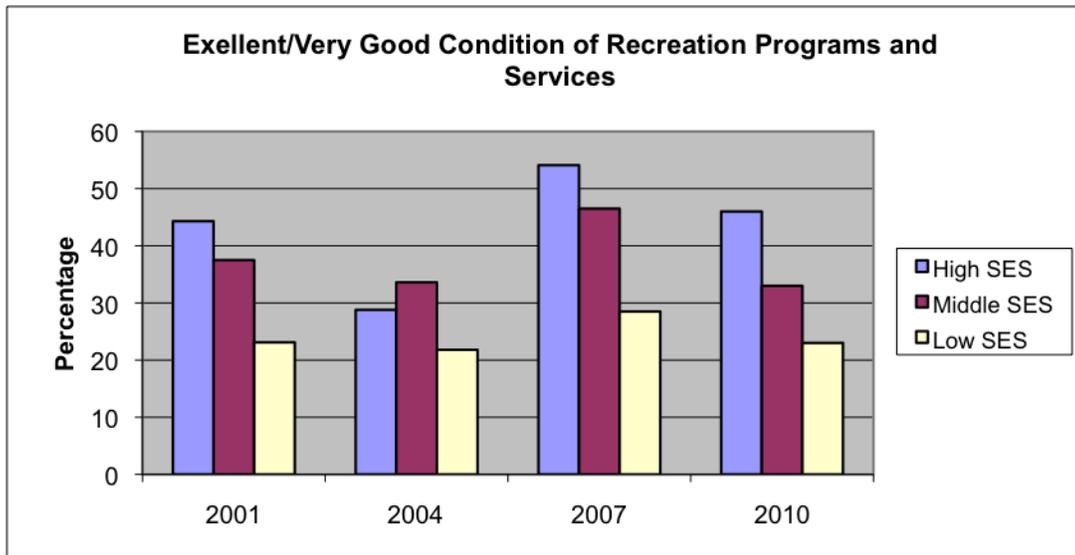
**Figure 15. Excellent/Very Good Condition of Schools by Neighbourhood Group**

Perceptions of recreation program and service quality have been variable over the last decade. Figure 16 illustrates that the proportion of respondent's rating conditions as either 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' decreased between 2001 (35 percent) and 2004 (28 percent), increased between 2004 and 2007 (to 43 percent), and decreased again in 2010 (to 34 percent).



**Figure 16. The Condition of Recreation Programs and Services**

Figure 17 reveals that decreases in ratings of recreation program and service conditions as being 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' between 2007 and 2010 decreased among all SES neighbourhoods. The largest decreases were in Middle SES neighbourhoods (47 percent in 2007 and 33 percent in 2010) and High SES neighbourhoods (54 percent in 2007 to 46 percent in 2010). Low SES neighbourhood respondents' ratings of 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' decreased from 29 percent to 23 percent in the same period.

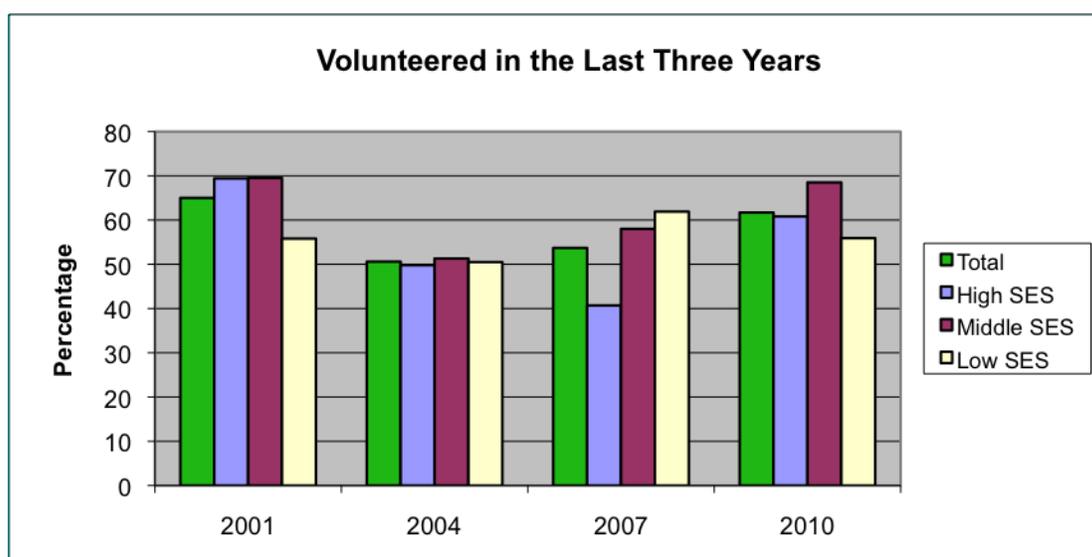


**Figure 17. Excellent/Very Good Condition of Recreation Programs and Services by Neighbourhood Group**

## Volunteerism

Volunteerism remains an important contributor to quality of life of Saskatoon. As a result, the telephone survey included several questions about volunteerism.

Figure 18 shows that, overall the percentage of respondents who indicated that they volunteered in the last three years increased between 2007 and 2010 (from 54 percent to 62 percent) although this still remains lower than the 2001 rate of 65 percent. The largest increase in self-reported volunteering between 2007 and 2010 was in the High SES neighbourhood respondents (41 percent in 2007 to 61 percent in 2010). Low SES neighbourhood respondents' self-reported volunteering decreased from 62 percent in 2007 to 56 percent in 2010. Overall between 2001 and 2010, High SES neighbourhoods saw the greatest decline in volunteering (69 percent in 2001 to 61 percent in 2010) whereas the percentage of respondents who volunteered was similar in 2001 and 2010 in Low SES neighbourhoods (56 percent in 2001 and 56 percent in 2010) and Middle SES neighbourhoods (70 percent in 2001 and 69 percent in 2010).



**Figure 18. Volunteered in the Last Three Years, Total and by Neighbourhood Group**

In 2007 and 2010, survey respondents were asked additional questions about volunteer activities, such as the type of volunteer work per month and the type of the organization or group where this activity took place. In both years, the top four volunteer activities cited by respondents were: 1. 'canvassing, campaigning, fundraising', 2. 'organizing/supervising events', 3. 'teaching/coaching' and 4. 'sitting as a board member'.

## **C. RESPONSIBILITY FOR CHANGE**

### **Summary Points**

- The top two government spending priorities listed by respondents in 2010 were roads and health services.
- Respondents consistently feel that poor families with children and the elderly should be given priority for funding to improve their quality of life.
- The most preferred funding options for spending on quality of life in 2010 were re-allocating money from existing government programs and increasing corporate taxes. Support for increasing spending in all areas increased between 2007 and 2010.

### **Spending Priorities**

The telephone survey asked respondents to identify government spending priorities for improving the quality of life of people in Saskatoon. Table 1 displays the top 10 priorities for all iterations of the survey. In 2010, the top three priorities were roads, health services, and protection services, continuing a trend of shifting priorities over the last decade. Roads were by far the highest priority for respondents, with between 31 percent and 40 percent of respondents in all three SES neighbourhoods in 2010 ranking this as their top priority. Health services, which were the top priority in 2001 and 2004, were the second-highest priority in 2010 for all three SES neighbourhoods (despite not appearing at all in the top 10 priorities in 2007). Housing moved from the number two priority in 2007 to the number six priority in 2010. Other priorities appearing across each year of the survey include protection services, schools, and safety from violent and property crime. Snow removal was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in 2010 and was a new priority that appeared only in the 2010 iteration of the survey.

<b>Government Spending Priorities</b>			
<b>2001</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2010</b>
1. Health services	1. Health services	1. Roads	1. Roads
2. Protection services	2. Schools	2. Housing	2. Health services
3. Social programs	3. Roads	3. Caregiver services	3. Protection services
4. Recreation programs	4. Protection services	4. Neighbourhood organizations	4. Social programs
5. Schools	5. Social programs	5. Protection services	5. Schools
6. Care-giver services	6. Housing	6. Safety from violent crime	6. Housing
7. Safety from property crime	7. Safety from property crime	7. Religious and spiritual activities	7. Snow removal
8. Roads	8. Recreation programs	8. Schools	8. Safety from violent crime
9. Safety from violent crime	9. Safety from violent crime	9. Safety from property crime	9. Safety from property crime
10. Environment	10. Environment	10. Shops and services	10. Recreation programs

**Table 1. Government Spending Priorities to Improve the Quality of Life of People in Saskatoon**

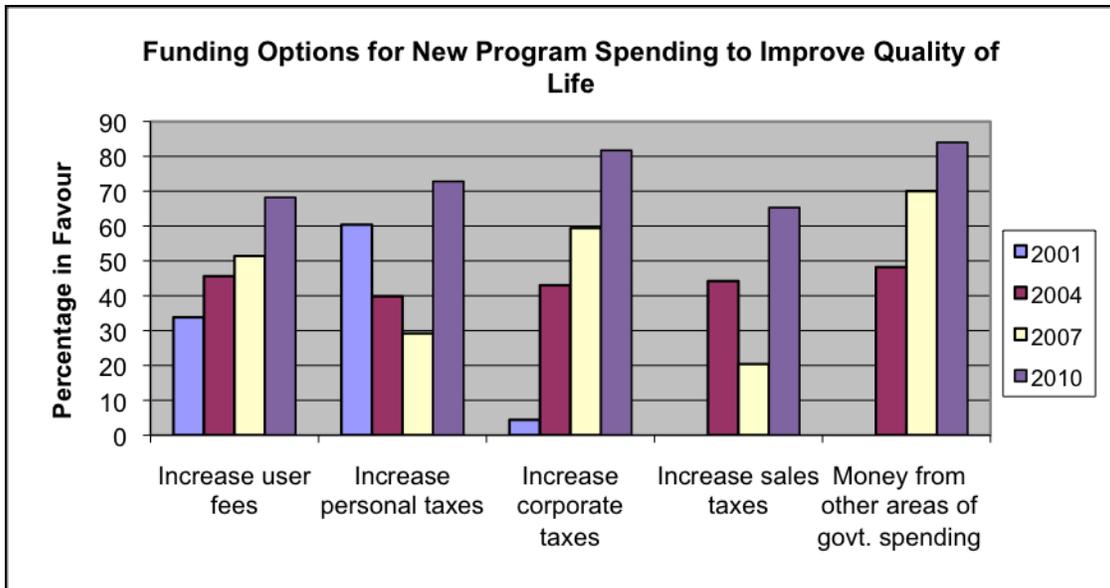
Respondents also identified groups of people that should be given priority for funding programs to improve quality of life. Table 2 shows the top five groups identified as priorities in each iteration of the survey. Poor families with children were identified as the top priority group for funding in each survey year (a priority group that was consistent among all neighbourhoods - Low SES, Middle SES and High SES). While in 2007, approximately 80 percent of respondents in each of the SES neighbourhoods prioritized poor families with children, this percentage decreased to about 35 percent in 2010. A nearly equal percentage of respondents (about 34 percent) supported the elderly as a funding priority in 2010 (equally identified in the three neighbourhood groups). Finally, poor individuals were the third-ranked priority in 2010 with about 28 percent of participants for all three neighbourhood groups.

<b>Priority Groups</b>			
<b>2001</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2010</b>
1. Poor families with children			
2. The elderly	2. Poor individuals	2. Persons with disabilities	2. The elderly
3. Single parents	3. The elderly	3. The elderly	3. Poor individuals
4. Persons with disabilities	4. Persons with disabilities	4. Single parents	4. Persons with disabilities
5. Aboriginal people	5. Single parents	5. Poor individuals	5. Single parents

**Table 2. Priority Groups for Funding Programs to Improve Quality of Life**

### **Funding Options**

The past ten years has seen a large shift in attitudes with respect to the options for funding new programs to improve quality of life. As displayed in Figure 19, while the majority of respondents (60 percent) favoured increasing personal taxes to improve quality of life in 2001, a larger majority of respondents (84 percent) favoured re-allocating money from other areas of government spending in 2010. Increasing corporate taxes was also an extremely popular option among respondents (82 percent) in 2010. Support for increasing personal taxes increased from 29 percent in 2007 to 73 percent in 2010 to be the third-ranked option. Support for increasing sales taxes was supported by the fewest respondents (65 percent) in 2010 although support for this option increased from 20 percent in 2007.



**Figure 19. Funding Options to Improve Quality of Life**

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## **Section 3: Summary of Face-to-Face Interviews**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

*There is a real divide, the river divides our city and somehow we need to break down that barrier. We need some understanding of their lives.*

The face-to-face component interviewed 43 individuals across three socio-economic status (SES) clusters. The sample was drawn from telephone survey participants who had indicated that they would be interested in a follow up interview. Fifteen individuals from each SES cluster were contacted, most of whom participated in the second component. Most interviews took place at the University of Saskatchewan Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) offices, with the remaining interviews conducted at the respondent's residence. These interviews were conducted by two undergraduate students.

The interview questions covered five major components addressing the respondents' quality of life (QoL) in Saskatoon. Participants were asked about: Satisfaction with the city and themselves; their neighbourhood and its characteristics; their participation in the city and their neighbourhood; thoughts on government spending; and their opinion on how Saskatoon can facilitate a community of shared values. A copy of the questions can be found in Appendix E.

### **A. CITY AND INDIVIDUAL QUALITY OF LIFE**

#### **Optimism in Saskatoon**

Face-to-face interviews indicated that the residents of Saskatoon are optimistic about their QoL in Saskatoon. Saskatchewan's booming economy was often cited by the participants as being the driving force behind this feeling of optimism. Many respondents expressed the opinion that Saskatchewan's strong economy has encouraged people to move to Saskatoon in search of employment opportunities.

*The economy is a good part that brings a lot of people [to Saskatoon] either if they've left or if they've never been here in the first place. I think there's a lot of good quality jobs*

However, respondents also expressed concern about the rising cost of housing and rental accommodation in Saskatoon. There was a general consensus among respondents that these rising costs are particularly troublesome for seniors living on fixed incomes, single-parent families, and students. Many low SES participants were worried that housing costs have been rising at a rate significantly greater than their increase in wages.

*The older population is getting older and older and there is a point where they can't live in the houses they started in. But there is no place for them to go unless they have a lot of money.*

*I'd like to see low income housing come in for single people and single people with disabilities that are under a certain age, right now we do not have that, we only have rental properties. I'm seeing parents that are under the age of 50, their kids have left home, they've always lived in low income housing and now they are left in the cold because there is no place for single parents to go that no longer have kids at home.*

Participants from Low SES neighbourhoods also felt that the rising price of food has affected their sense of optimism.

*Having decent food prices. I mean everything is going up now. I've noticed even in the last year you would go to buy a loaf of bread for \$1.19 or whatever, now it is a \$1.89. Everything is going up and the wages are staying the same. You've gotta [sic] really budget.*

Optimism was not universally experienced. Individuals in Low SES neighbourhoods cited a lack of policing in their area as a cause for concern, while other respondents felt that they had been left out by Saskatoon's economic growth.

*There is still a lot of hardship. My brother is looking for a job and he can't really get a job. They talk about how there is so many jobs [sic]...*

It must be noted that these views only represent a small sample of Low SES respondents. Many had felt their neighbourhood had drastically improved since the boom.

### **Factors Important to Individual Quality of Life**

Interview respondents were asked about factors that contributed to their individual QoL; this question produced a number of key themes relevant to all SES clusters. For instance respondents saw green spaces and public parks as being important contributors to their QoL. Respondents from each cluster also noted that Saskatoon provided many basic amenities (schools, hospitals, grocery stores). Most of the participants noted that they enjoy Saskatoon's cultural amenities, such as the Mendel Art Gallery. A large source of optimism across all clusters was that Saskatoon has not experienced growth comparable to other cities, allowing for the maintenance of its small city atmosphere.

*A small city where you don't have to commute an hour every day is important to me, I didn't want to be stuck in my car all the time. Saskatoon offered that to me. I lived in Ottawa for a few years after University and really didn't like the 'big city atmosphere', so I came back here.*

*We have great opportunity in Saskatoon, I think we are a small city with a large city attitude; we have tons of opportunities here as far as housing, education entertainment, social networks and that sort of thing.*

*It's a good place to live. It has all the basic amenities of a small city [...] the city is still not too large and by and large the aggravations of a large city, traffic, crime that kind of thing is still relatively minor here.*

QoL for participants dwelling in Low SES neighbourhoods was most affected by their access to public spaces. They noted that green spaces and destinations like River Landing provided them with an opportunity to enjoy Saskatoon.

### **Factors that Would Improve Quality of Life**

Generally, respondents in High SES neighbourhoods believed an improvement in municipal services would lead to the greatest increase in their QoL. Infrastructure was cited by numerous respondents as being important factor. Many believed that better maintenance of roads in the summer and snow removal in the winter would best improve their QoL.

Those of Middle SES neighbourhoods shared similar sentiments as High SES respondents. They too placed great emphasis on improving the city's infrastructure. Many noted that the sidewalks were crumbling in their neighbourhoods which made it difficult for them to walk to their destinations. These respondents felt that the QoL gap between Low SES neighbourhoods and their own could be addressed through capital and social investment in marginalized communities. Respondents also noted that their QoL would improve if their neighbours took better care of their properties; however, they stressed that some homes have become rental properties ultimately impacting the aesthetic of the neighbourhood.

*"There is not much I can fault except for streets. It's dangerous out there. Ruts and such that you end up slipping and sliding. Last year I got into a rut and clipped someone's mirror [...] in the summer potholes"*

*"Lack of pride in the neighbourhood. I think particularly where I live, we have moved from single family dwellings to rental units and clearly the people who are there don't look after the property nearly as well."*

Many Low SES respondents noted that their neighbourhoods had become safer within the last five years; however, they felt that potential improvements to safety could still be made. They often communicated the need for a greater police presence in their neighbourhood. Respondents also noted that some amenities were nearby, but their access to them was still affected by difficulties with the transit system. Additionally, many respondents felt that they had not yet found sustainable work paying a living wage despite the economic boom.

*I'd like to see a higher wage bracket, that's something that just goes with the economy you know. I've seen housing prices just triple just because they've seen [...] a little economic boom.*

## **B. NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTERISTICS**

### **Neighbourhood versus City**

The telephone survey indicated that residents are generally less satisfied with their neighbourhood than they were with the City of Saskatoon. During the face-to-face interviews, participants were asked what contributed to this sentiment and how they felt about their own neighbourhood. Responses to this question produced varying results, dependant on the participant's SES.

Respondents of High SES neighbourhoods often contrasted their living situation and the safety it provided with that of Low SES neighbourhoods. Many individuals living in High SES neighbourhoods saw the Low SES neighbourhoods as dangerous, under-policed communities. This contradicted responses given by Low SES participants who expressed a marked improvement in their quality of life.

*It is so localized to what the neighbourhood is, having worked for a number of years in the west side, certainly the level of violence and the lack of security would contribute hugely to peoples' dissatisfaction.*

*This neighbourhood I'm in was a bad neighbourhood but it is slowly starting to improve that is because people are starting to come in and are taking pride in their neighbourhood ... I don't notice as many hookers around ...*

Low SES respondents felt it was important to be a part of their neighbourhood. A common feeling was that individual stewardship within a neighbourhood will greatly improve their QoL. Unlike High SES respondents, participants from the Low SES cluster felt their neighbourhood was safe because community members looked out for each other's safety.

*I have a neighbour across the street and she is better than any security system you can put in. She has the TV turned on at certain times. She comes over and turns the radio on. She comes over turns different lights on in addition to what I have on timers. She watches the house all the time.*

### **View of and Attachment to Neighbourhood**

Individuals across all SES groups explained the importance of feeling like part of one's own neighbourhood. They often noted that humans are social beings, and felt that we can attain personal fulfillment by interacting with others.

*One of the basic human needs is to have interaction with other people and when you don't have that you feel lonely.*

High SES respondents put less emphasis on being a part of the community; many felt that their community had been displaced from the local neighbourhood and instead transposed to other social settings. As such, they place less emphasis on knowing and interacting with their neighbours and more on being friendly.

There was a greater sense of social cohesion among Middle SES neighbourhoods. Many respondents had noted that they had lived there for their entire life and had matured with the neighbourhood. This has resulted in strong bonds among neighbours who then look out for each other. Some respondents have noted that this tends to be changing with the younger generation of homeowners who spend more time in the work place.

*Across the street, something's happening, you can investigate, you can go over and have a conversation and find out if it is legit or not [...] if that is not there you don't have a community so a neighbourhood is just a collection of houses.*

Respondents in Low SES neighbourhoods felt safer when they knew everyone in their neighbourhood. This reinforces the idea that individuals in Low SES neighbourhoods look out for each other in order to improve the QoL of the community as a whole.

*I notice if I don't get out and see people in my neighbourhood I feel like, if someone walks by 'do they look shady? or not?' I just feel nervous and don't feel at ease. But when I get out and involved in the community ... I feel more at ease.*

## Neighbourhood Belonging

During the face-to-face interviews, participants were told that some telephone survey respondents did not feel 'very much a part' of their neighbourhood. The interview participants were then asked why they thought these people would feel this way. Interviewees often explained this neighbourhood detachment as a symptom of increasing workloads and less free time at home.

*So you've got kids in daycare, mom and dad come home from work and they get the kids to activities. They aren't really into the neighbourhood. How can you be part of a social group when you are tied up with your work and kids. I've seen it in my own kids. They have difficulty with their neighbours; they don't have time to socialize with them.*

Several participants also felt that citizens of Saskatoon had not made efforts to become involved in their neighbourhood.

*They've probably never bothered to get to know people. They probably have never tried to help a neighbour. I have friends in an apartment and they say 'There is nothing to do here, no one comes to see us.' Well you always have to make the first step always [...] If you're not going to be friendly no one is going to bother with you.*

An increasing focus on individualism in society was also cited by many respondents as causing this lack of belonging in one's neighbourhood.

*We see on TV how you are supposed to be able to take care of everything yourself. You're no longer supposed to borrow a ladder but rather buy one yourself. We are told as a society to be self-sufficient.*

Many people living in High SES neighbourhoods believed areas of the city stricken with high rates of crime, drugs, homelessness and prostitution may lead to community detachment. They noted that areas close to the university and core neighbourhoods play host to transient populations. The participants explained that students moving and personal financial advancement prevented individuals from becoming active participants in their neighbourhood's community.

### **Important Neighbourhood Factors**

Individuals residing in High SES neighbourhoods placed a great deal of importance on the cleanliness of their neighbourhood as a contributing factor to their QoL. Additionally, several High SES respondents enjoyed the infrastructure within their neighbourhood citing the importance of things like parks and schools.

Respondents of Middle SES neighbourhoods had similar sentiments. However, they placed great importance on their ability to walk wherever they need to go. Many respondents indicated that they were able to walk to both the downtown and neighbourhood grocery store quite easily.

Residents in Low SES neighbourhoods valued close proximity to amenities in their neighbourhood. Many individuals enjoyed the fact that it was possible to access many different services.

*We have the grocery store, pharmacy, doctor's office, eye specialist everything I need is on this side of town.*

Respondents across High and Middle SES neighbourhoods emphasized the value of social activities like block parties in their neighbourhood and street. This response changed based on the age of the respondent and the demographic make-up of their neighbourhood.

*We used to, but people moved away, we used to have a block party which included our neighbourhood. That was a good thing because people would get out and the kids were around.*

### **Detracting Neighbourhood Characteristics**

The most significant detractor for the QoL of High SES residents emerged from concerns about municipal infrastructure and its maintenance. These concerns carried over to the QoL indicators for residents of Middle SES neighbourhoods as well. Both groups felt they did not receive adequate municipal services in comparison to their tax contributions.

A secondary concern for people residing in Middle SES neighbourhoods referenced the high number of rental properties in their community. Specifically, they felt that the upkeep of these properties was affecting their property value and investment in the area.

*If people didn't care about their homes, and I hate to generalize too much, but renters typically fall into that category because they're transients. I prefer to live*

*where people own their homes. If people own their homes they generally tend to take better care of them.*

This issue was unique to the Middle SES residents, who felt that rental properties were more likely to pop up in their communities due to the relatively inexpensive neighbourhood housing costs.

Individuals in certain Low SES neighbourhoods, specifically the core neighbourhoods on the West side of Saskatoon, felt their quality of life was diminished by a lack of grocery or convenience stores in their neighbourhood. They noted that it was very difficult to get groceries in the winter because of economic factors limiting their access to personal vehicles, and a lack of nearby shops. Respondents in the Low SES cluster were also concerned about crime and illegal activities in their neighbourhood.

*We really have no stores. I would like to see even a little corner store. They just closed the ESSO down on Ave. W and 22nd. For me to go get gas for my lawn mower or whatever, I need to run to avenue P or up to Witney Avenue.*

### **C. CITY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTICIPATION AND VOLUNTEERISM**

The face-to-face interviews revealed that persons of High SES were more likely to be involved in city-wide organizations rather than organizations within their neighbourhoods. Many High SES respondents with young children were involved in youth sports activities and youth programs, such as Cubs and Scouts. Other High SES participants were engaged in cultural activities, like theatre and the arts, and economic development initiatives such as the Saskatoon Chamber of Commerce.

Within their own neighbourhoods, several High SES respondents reported that they contributed to the QoL by attending block parties and neighbourhood functions, maintaining their property, and looking after their neighbours' property. This included actions like picking up litter, shovelling neighbour's driveways and sidewalks during the winter and watching over their neighbour's property when they were away. High SES participants who reported taking part in these activities felt that these actions contributed to a sense of community.

*It feels like you actually have a community rather than just a name on a map. You have a community of people that you know and you've watched the kids grow up [together]. You have a bond [with your neighbours].*

As addressed in a previous section, sentiments about community involvement were not universal amongst participants from the High SES cluster. There was a clear divide within this group

wherein some participants felt that belonging to the community was an important factor in maintaining a high QoL, while others felt that their own community was displaced from their neighbourhood locale and instead took place in various social settings like organized sports, recreation, and with colleagues. However, this type of interaction was essential for those that did report community belonging as an important contributor to their QoL.

Persons who reside in Middle SES neighbourhoods felt that they contributed to the QoL of their neighbourhood through a variety of measures, including: recycling, maintaining their property, canvassing and fundraising for local organizations, donating to charities, voting in civic, provincial, and federal elections, and by participating in political organizations. Amongst Middle SES respondents, there was a feeling that these activities contributed to the QoL of their neighbourhood by building trust within their community. Additionally, many Middle SES interviewees believed that their involvement in local organizations, politics and charities contributed to QoL by increasing awareness and education of social, political and economic issues within their community.

*I think, sometimes, our involvement has got others involved and we get to know our neighbours a little better. We share interests with many of our neighbours.*

While a few Low SES respondents reported that they were involved with community organizations such as the Food Bank and EGADZ youth centre, many other respondents felt that they contributed to the QoL of their neighbourhood through non-traditional measures. Several noted that they were involved in neighbourhood crime-watch groups. Other participants felt that they contributed to the QoL through their actions and direct involvement with people in their neighbourhood.

*When I go wait for a bus and stuff, people come and talk to me, but I'll have no idea who they are. But they will come and talk to me just because I'm willing to talk to them, and I will greet them with a smile. I've got street people—that I wouldn't let into my house—but I will go out there and socialize with them. [...] The more you interact with these people the more you get to know where they come from, what they are, and the more you can help direct them into things that can help them with their way of life.*

The face-to-face interviews illustrated a strong feeling of community in the respondents' neighbourhoods. Respondents felt that picking up trash and shovelling their neighbours' driveways and sidewalks during the winter contributed to the QoL by improving the aesthetic of their neighbourhood. High SES and Low SES participants alike felt an obligation to watch over their neighbours' property and to ensure that their neighbourhoods were safe. Many respondents

reported that the strong sense of community and safety in their neighbourhood was a result of neighbours reciprocating those feelings and actions.

*We're like everywhere else, you know, we have our gang element, but they are not that vocal around here because nobody really tolerates them. [...] I can get up in the middle of the night and go to the store and nobody bothers me. You know, four or five years ago, you took something with you.*

Contribution to the QoL of the City of Saskatoon was very traditional for persons living in High SES and Middle SES. Respondents who lived in these neighbourhoods were more likely to be involved in city-wide sports, cultural, and social organizations. Many High SES and Middle SES interviewees felt that they also contributed to QoL by paying taxes and recycling. Aside from voting, several Low SES respondents felt that they did not do much to contribute to the QoL in the city.

### **Concerns Noted to Decision Makers**

The interviews showed that the majority of respondents who had concerns about their QoL, whether personal, neighbourhood or city, would not hesitate to make these concerns known to decision makers. Many respondents in all SES groups indicated that they would make these concerns known to civic, provincial and federal politicians through various mediums of communication. Most High SES participants were satisfied with their QoL, but several indicated that when previously faced with a concern they had phoned, written letters and composed e-mails to councillors and politicians. The interviews showed that respondents from Middle SES and Low SES groups were just as likely to voice their concerns through these mediums. Additionally, several High SES and Low SES respondents said that they frequently attended council meeting and voted in civic, provincial and federal elections.

### **D. FINANCIAL SITUATION**

During the face-to-face interviews respondents were asked to describe their financial situation and how they felt their financial situation compared to other people in the city. Three themes emerged among the respondents, including: an above average financial situation, a 'comfortable' financial situation, and a below average financial situation. High SES respondents were the most likely to feel that they had an above average financial situation. These participants felt that their 'fortunate' financial situation was the result of hard work and proper budgeting of their finances.

Many Middle SES participants felt that their financial situation was adequate and comparable to many other people in the city. Some respondents said that while their financial situation was

average, they felt they were in a better position than others because they had fewer needs. Maintaining proper management of finances was also cited as contributing to their situation.

*I guess I am comfortable, I'm not rich by any means, I got a GST rebate cheque, but I'm comfortable because I don't have great demands.*

The interviews showed that about half of the Low SES respondents felt that their financial situation was adequate to meet their needs. Many Low SES homeowners cited low or no mortgage payments as being a factor contributing to their comfortable financial situation. Other Low SES respondents mentioned that government subsidies, such as low-income housing rebates and social assistance programs had improved their financial situation. Some Low SES respondents felt that their financial situation was below average or below the poverty line. Unemployment, single-family incomes, and the rising cost of housing contributed to this perception. Despite this feeling, several respondents maintained that they felt better off than other people because they were able to live within a strict budget.

*Everything considered mine is good. Nobody else could live on what I'm living on because I'm good at running a budget. If I don't live on a budget, I'll go broke.*

### **Areas of Spending and Funding Options for Social Programs**

For this segment of the research participants were asked where they thought governments should be spending to get the greatest improvement in QoL. High SES respondents felt that increased spending on education, health care, and public areas such as parks and libraries would be beneficial. Concerns about infrastructure were often cited by respondents in all three SES groups, indicating the importance of these factors to one's QoL.

*I think they need to spend some money on infrastructure. There are roads that are absolute disasters in this city. Well, they should be proactive instead of reactive.*

Participants residing in Middle SES neighbourhoods felt that the QoL in Saskatoon could be best improved by prioritizing spending on education, health care, revitalizing the downtown core of the city, and through supporting cultural events such as the Fringe Festival.

*They should be spending more money on social services. There are a lot of people in our city, in our province and in our country who are not doing very well through no fault of their own. And I think we should be giving them more opportunity to enhance their quality of life.*

Low SES participants felt that priority should be given to low-income families, crime prevention, young children, and green spaces.

*I think they should spend it within the neighbourhood, like parks for instance; they could use a few more of them. I think the kids would use them instead of the streets, right now they play ball in the streets. Make a park where they can play instead of do mischief. I think the kids would use it then. We have some deaf and dumb kids down the street and you can't tell me they would hear a car going by.*

### **Spending on Groups**

Participants were asked which groups they felt should receive the most benefit from government spending. High SES participants mentioned students, seniors, poverty stricken and homeless people. Middle SES respondents felt that spending priority should give given to education, health care and low-income families. Low SES residents emphasized that education, health care, seniors on fixed incomes, children's sports programs, and people in poverty should be the primary recipients of government spending. The interviews revealed that about one fifth of Middle and Low SES participants felt that no particular group should receive priority for government spending.

### **Funding Options**

Participants were asked what they felt was the most appropriate way to fund social programs, and a dichotomy of user fees or taxation was given for context. Some High SES residents felt that certain cultural activities, recreational activities and city services should be funded by taxes because the long-term benefits outweigh the short-term costs.

*My wife and I jog. On cold days we go over to the recreational centre where they have an indoor track and they wanted about six or seven dollars to run around this little thing on the inside. You go in there and the place is completely empty and they have a person collecting money from us, and I'm thinking 'fitness reduces costs in the long run and it should be free' ... They charge you six or seven dollars unless you've had a heart attack or a heart condition, then they let you in for free.*

Some High SES residents were in favour of funding some social programs through increased personal taxes as long as they felt they would receive a level of service relative to their increase

in taxes. Other High SES participants thought that the implementation of user fees was fairer as people would be only be paying for the services that they would use.

*I don't think that everything should be free because people take advantage of it.*

For the most part, Middle and Low SES residents did not favour the implementation of user fees to fund the majority of social programs. These participants were generally against user fee implementation because they discriminated against people of Low SES. There was a general consensus among Middle and Low SES residents that the user fees would deter many people of lower SES from accessing important social programs.

*I think it benefits everybody, it doesn't matter if you use a ton and you don't use as much. It will all even out in the end.*

Some High, Middle, and Low SES residents reported that taxes should not be the sole source of funding for social services and that there should be a good balance between increased personal taxes and user fees for funding social programs.

*It depends what the issues are, there has to be a basic social network that will benefit and help everybody and everyone ... You don't want to exclude people based on economics alone.*

Most residents in all three SES neighbourhoods believed that increased personal taxes were favourable to fund most basic social services such as health care, education, social programs and cultural activities. The interviews revealed that many residents in all three SES neighbourhoods believed that the implementation of affordable user fees were justifiable for some cultural and recreational programs. In general, respondents believed that funding options varied with different social programs.

## **E. RECOMMENDATIONS: A COMMUNITY OF SHARED VALUES & OPPORTUNITIES**

Participants were asked if they had any suggestions that would facilitate a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity across different ethnic and cultural groups. The complexity of the question confused many participants; this misunderstanding was consistent across all SES clusters. It is difficult to identify any recurring themes due to the ambiguity of the question, which produced a wide range of recommendations and suggestions. As a result, analysis of this section has been omitted from the report and the question will be reviewed in subsequent research.

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## Section 4: Summary of Focus Groups

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### INTRODUCTION

During the winter of 2010-2011 a series of focus groups were conducted with identified marginalized groups in the city of Saskatoon. Each session ranged in length from 1 to 2 hours, and involved at minimum five members of the represented group. The focus groups were directed by a series of five categorical questions and conversation was further elicited through several probing questions (Appendix F). Participants were encouraged to develop a natural conversation between themselves and the interviewer; they were also asked to reflect upon the concerns of their peers and respond to them to develop a dynamic flow of information.

The identified groups targeted for the focus group research in this iteration of the quality of life survey included:

- Core Youth:* Participants were made available with the assistance of the White Buffalo Youth Lodge (WBYL). Their ages ranged from 15 to 19 years, and the group was made up entirely of females. Given the WBYL's proximity to many of Saskatoon's core neighbourhoods, this focus group offered valuable input from a marginalized population.
- Urban Youth:* This group was assembled with the help of Aden Bowman Collegiate, and was comprised of high-school aged students. This group offered an interesting mix of students from various backgrounds and communities within the Eastern half of Saskatoon
- New Immigrants:* The Open Door Society of Saskatoon significantly aided this report by connecting the researchers with a number of recently landed Canadians. This group of eight men represented many of the facets of Saskatoon's international community.
- Disabled Persons:* Developed through a snowball sampling technique, this group of individuals living with disability included participants with a range of debilitations.
- Aboriginal Persons:* Due to logistical challenges this group was largely comprised of students at the University of Saskatchewan with the assistance of the Aboriginal Students Centre. Despite this limitation, this group represented a number of the Aboriginal communities in Saskatoon.
- Single Parents:* With the assistance of the Central Urban Métis Federation Incorporated, this focus group was comprised of single mothers of various backgrounds living in marginalized areas of the city.

## **A. CORE YOUTH**

Despite facing significant barriers to their quality of life, the core youth participating in this focus group maintained an optimistic perspective on their community. A number of community-based initiatives were cited as important aspects for the youths' quality of life, particularly the respite and recreational activities made available through the White Buffalo Youth Lodge. However, two predominant areas of improvement became apparent through the youths' conversation; specifically increasing safety within the community, and also increased access to community based resources for recreation and support.

The importance of personal and public safety to the participants was immediately apparent. This was communicated through direct references to security of the person, and also through indirect concerns such as neighbourhood health and cleanliness. Most of the youth participating in this focus group had been in contact with the police, often resulting in negative experiences:

*The police don't have a presence in this part of the city... no one has respect for them, and they don't respect us. One time they busted me for drinking and instead of arresting me they beat me up.*

The youth also described a lack of community outreach from representatives of the police services. They cited a lack of familiarity with neighbourhood police officers, and felt that the services offered at the Little Chief Community Police station were inadequate:

*There's nothing happening at the little police station [Little Chief Community Police Station]. It's not really a place where I'd go for help.*

Youth also noted the presence of indirect factors that detract from community safety. This was particularly evident in their concerns for the appearance of their neighbourhood; excessive graffiti, empty and decrepit housing, and prostitution in the core neighbourhoods. All were considered circumstances that impact the quality of life for the youths' community.

*The hookers make it [20<sup>th</sup> St.] look really bad. Then the guys that come to pick them up are even worse, they're not from the neighbourhood, and they're really creepy.*

The youth readily identified the importance of recreation and community events as important factors for developing a better quality of life in the City of Saskatoon. They described a need for organized sports leagues within the core neighbourhoods, as well as adequate facilities and parks for these and other uses. Several of the youth felt that a good quality of life started with community-building initiatives and a sense of neighbourhood – by breaking down the traditional barriers of multi-culturalism.

*There's no other place like the White Buffalo to go, so it's really important for connecting everyone to the neighbourhood... They can do a lot for the community, they used to do a lot, but now it's all been cut back. If they started doing that stuff again it would really help the community.*

For the core youth participating in this focus group, the key to a better quality of life in their community was fairly straightforward. They felt that their life could be improved through a revitalization of the core neighbourhoods with efforts such as community-based policing strategies; removal of unwanted businesses and introduction of job-creating businesses; and redevelopment of housing and recreation facilities. Most of the youth expressed a feeling of connection with their communities, but felt that efforts were needed to extend understanding of their community to outlying areas of Saskatoon.

## **B. URBAN YOUTH**

Much like the core youth, the urban youth were very much aware of detractors to the quality of life in Saskatoon. In particular this group developed a stronger emphasis on public services than had been discussed with core youth, while their concerns regarding safety and security were somewhat reduced. A second interesting topic introduced by the urban youth was the concept of sustainability within urbanized lifestyles – areas of concern for them included community gardens, recycling programs, transit services, and local business development. While certain aspects dovetailed with the ideas brought forth by core youth, the discussions from urban youth provided adequate divergence to warrant a second section.

While discussing quality of life the conversation frequently returned to accessibility within the city. Specifically, the participating youth were concerned with the quality of service offered by Saskatoon Transit. While this reflected personal experiences and perceived hardships, the urban youth did provide insight into some areas of greater depth. For instance, when discussing the importance of public access, one participant noted that

*Our city is spreading is so fast, that's what's making it so hard [to get around].  
We don't build vertically, we build horizontally.*

A second issue voiced by the students regarded the sustainability and longevity of the City of Saskatoon. These roughly fell into two categories; namely environmental concerns and developmental concerns. When discussing the environment the urban youth were very aware of its impact on the quality of life for Saskatoon. They envisioned a number of initiatives championed by grassroots organizations.

*Our city's... kind of happening in this teenager-hitting-puberty type of thing,  
where some parts are growing way faster than other parts; these things need to be  
addressed individually by accessible organizations.*

The students were also aware of the need for developmental planning in order to maintain the quality of life in Saskatoon. This topic included areas such as snow removal, transit planning, revitalization of commercial areas, recreational facilities, and affordable housing to maintain youthful populations.

*We need some more, like, free-based activities to enjoy*

*I mean there's cool stuff during the summer, like the Fringe... but during the winter there's not a whole lot happening. There's ice climbing at the Farmer's Market, but that's not everyone's cup of tea. In Prince Albert there's a Winterfest and that's huge... we don't have anything like that in Saskatoon.*

While the urban youth had been somewhat insulated from recent economic turmoil and the challenges faced in some of the core neighbourhoods of Saskatoon, they were nonetheless aware of the importance of developing and maintaining feasible resources for future generations. Several of the students were concerned with the lack of recycling services in the city, and the group developed a consensus that more environmental initiatives were needed.

### **C. DISABLED PERSONS**

Amongst the opinions offered on the quality of life in Saskatoon, those offered by persons living with disabilities proved to be the most individual-specific and divergent. The focus group primarily discussed challenges unique to their health situations, however these points often proved salient within the wider array of quality of life concerns. For instance most participants reflected on issues with public transportation. While their concerns were largely centred on accessibility, they nonetheless illustrated the importance of a reliable transit system to their quality of life. Their immediate concerns for the quality of life in Saskatoon included communication about equality, accessibility to private and public areas, and related economic hardships.

A significant concern for the participating disabled persons was public transportation within the city; specifically the reliability of service within the city. While the participants were supportive of the Access Transit program, scheduling proved to be a significant detractor to their quality of life.

*I think a big thing is putting funding into Access Transit, having more vehicles on the roads and drivers available. Right now I have to plan things a week in advance just so that I can be sure to have a ride. There are a lot of things in life that you don't get seven days to prepare for. Access transit is a big issue.*

Accessibility within the city proved to be a major and disconcerting factor affecting the quality of life for people living with disability in the city of Saskatoon. This concern was most frequently espoused as inadequate snow removal services. Participants cited mobility difficulties in the winter which frequently occurred because of inadequate snow removal on public sidewalks and roadways.

*I understand that city recently put one million dollars into snow removal, but things haven't changed in my neighbourhood. It's something that I've dealt with every year ... and I'm sick of it. I don't bother with it anymore, nothing happens. In my opinion I shouldn't have to – it's preventing you from participating in life.*

One participant even discussed the frustrations he faced when requesting assistance from the municipal government; he considered a lack of action from city employees as an unnecessary additional barrier to his quality of life.

*Two summers ago I was put in touch with somebody from city infrastructure. I emailed him a list [about accessibility issues in neighbourhood] and was told that [my locale] was at the bottom of a priority list.*

Accessibility was also often defined as equal access to buildings, public areas, and recreation facilities. Given their physical limitations, many of the participants related past difficulties entering buildings or even navigating the city's sidewalks. To them immediate action to rectify these barriers seemed obvious and necessary.

*I would definitely improve access to communities. I know in Vancouver if you're not accessible you have 60 days or face a large fine. Snow removal – plow the sidewalks and don't leave it up to the citizens – it works for Yorkton. At the provincial level I'd like to see action for support dogs.*

Central to this group's understanding of a quality life was a feeling of equality and understanding within the local community. The disabled persons participating in this focus group explained numerous frustrations when seeking employment, and an overall feeling of being ignored within the city. They recommended education initiatives to share their difficulties with the able-bodied persons surrounding them. They also felt that their quality of life could be drastically improved were citizens of Saskatoon to become aware of the fact that despite physical limitations, persons with disability are very much capable of contributing to society through meaningful employment.

*Public education [about our abilities] – you have to believe in your fellow man that if they were aware of the issues they would come up with solution.*

While many of the concerns that were discussed by the participants in this focus group could not be directly applied to other demographics, the underlying implications offered valuable insight into more systemic issues. This is most readily explained through their concerns with educating the public on personal ability. Emerging from their contributions was the importance of realizing a sense of community amongst all of Saskatoon's citizens.

#### **D. NEW IMMIGRANTS**

Much like the persons living with disability, the focus group comprised of new and recent immigrants to Canada expressed the importance of community integration in measures of quality of life. For this focus group, integration incorporated fair access to services, equitable treatment in the workforce, and equality amongst neighbours. Given the financial hardships often faced by new Canadians, areas of concern for these participants also included access to medicine and reliable transportation within the city.

Many of the participants in this group stated the importance of developing a connection to their community when considering how they might improve their quality of life. This was explained through anecdotal discussions of neighbourhoods in their country of origin, and the intimate knowledge that they had of their neighbours.

*When I was living in [country of origin], I was living in a refugee camp, and whenever we needed something we knew we could depend on our neighbours to help ... In Saskatoon it's like everyone in my building will smile at me but I don't know their names, it's not that important unless you spend time with them.*

*People are many different traditions and customs [sic]. It is very important. Maybe they didn't know about our customs, our family. [This is] a very big problem.*

While they felt that this was lacking in Saskatoon they also expressed belief that neighbourhood connection was only a conversation away.

These concerns also carried over to their ability to find reliable work in Saskatoon. Most of the participants agreed that a good quality of life does not necessitate personal wealth, but did contend that maintenance of a good life requires some level of financial security. Many of the new Canadians present at this focus group expressed concern that they were being overlooked as potential employees because of personal and systemic prejudice. Despite having years of education and high-level employment in past lives, several of the participants cited an inability to find sustainable work and were instead living off of the wages from menial positions.

*In [country of origin] I was a successful business man. I had seven years of experience. I came here and could only find work as a taxi driver.*

*When I'm walking down the street, people, they'll cross the street instead of walking past me. They don't know that I'm here as a student to study [graduate level research]. When I was looking for work it was the same thing, I never felt like I got considered.*

Although they face many barriers, the members of this group were quick to praise the supportive programming available to them. They felt that organizations like the Open Door Society helped their quality of life by offering employment and community support. Many of the participants felt that organizations like this had eased their transition from their homeland to Canada; one participant had only been living in Canada for a few days and was quite enthusiastic about the opportunities made available to him.

In discussing the quality of life this group also touched on two other themes: access to medicine and access to transit. When discussing medicine it seemed that most had had fair experiences with the Canadian system, but like most people relocating from areas with different practices, felt somewhat confused by the Canadian style of health management. On the other hand this group offered up concerns consistent with themes that have been developed elsewhere in this report when discussing transit. This service had led to many frustrations in their various communities, and affected them specifically as many were without the means to purchase private modes of transportation.

*It's cold in Saskatoon! I have to catch the bus sometimes, and I'll be ready at the stop on time, but the bus has already left ... I don't know when the bus has come. Even though there's many buses, waiting for 5 minutes in the cold weather! The distances are so far that you have to rely on the bus though, in small places it's not so important.*

*In our country, if you want to catch the bus you have to wait. How long, it doesn't matter. If you pay money you can stop bus. Here if you are on time you can catch the bus ... so that is difficult some time.*

The focus group representing new immigrants to Canada offered a number of important perspectives to the quality of life, with the added bonus of being framed from an outsider's point of view. Having struggled through various hardships in their countries of origin, the members of this group took a decidedly optimistic approach to the quality of life in Saskatoon and suggested that a few changes will improve it even more.

### **E. ABORIGINAL PERSONS**

The group of people representing Saskatoon's Aboriginal community provided a wide range of perspectives, reflecting the various backgrounds and personal histories of each participant. Despite this variance, the focus group was able to come to consensus on a number of issues central to the quality of life within the city and reflective of the findings from past iterations of this project. By far the most common issue raised was that of housing; however the participants also showed great concern for Saskatoon's sustainability.

Each of the Aboriginal participants was able to recall stories about the barriers faced when finding affordable housing within the city. This included issues with landlords, soaring rental costs, and lack of availability. The respondents also voice concerns about the state of the neighbourhoods they lived in – they had seen many rental houses condemned and others destroyed with very little investment in new housing. They noted that not only was housing decaying but so too were areas for public recreation, like parks, and streets.

*Well I live right in Confederation. The Mayor spent all this money on digging up this big hole, and then tore down the whole neighbourhood... The Mayor spent all kinds of money building some sort of sewage system to drain the hole. It was kind of like a park, and now it's a great big hole. The City spent all kinds of money to take out this entire townhouse neighbourhood ... this still didn't fix the problem.*

This group was very aware of the city's political processes, and was critical of what they considered poor investments of funds. They considered developments like the River Landing project as expenditures that could otherwise have been used to bolster the quality of life for Saskatoon's less fortunate communities. The emerging theme from this discussion was a sense of inequitable funds allocations; in general the participants in this group felt that more funds should be earmarked for social programs rather than capital investments.

*It's just like they're spending all the money on the east side to build more, build more, and meanwhile the west side is just degrading.*

*I, like, read in the paper that they could feed every family, or like, every impoverished family for a year with the amount of money they're spending on the river, the River Landing project. And on the lights on the bridge that's going to get torn down!*

The group also connected these practices with barriers to employment – they felt that out-of-province companies operating in Saskatoon use exclusionary hiring practices, and that a lack of investment in western portions of the cities had limited the viability of business located there, ultimately limiting job creation.

*Around here it seems like there's only two or three companies that get all the work, and they're based in Calgary. It's almost like there's bias against the smaller companies, they can't pay what these big companies do for land. There's so much work for construction, but they're all getting brought in by these big companies so there's no real new jobs.*

On the other hand a number of positive themes also emerged from this focus group. The members described their neighbourhoods and their surrounding communities as misunderstood by the public. They felt that many of the contributors to a higher quality of life were already addressed through local support, and that community initiatives would help both the neighbourhood and the individuals thrive within Saskatoon.

*What I really, really believed in at that Station 20 West was taking in unemployable people and helping their lives. Like taking unemployable people- you may not have your education or your grade 8 – but they put them still to work and its empowering them.*

Participants in the Aboriginal focus group also valued the importance of leaving a green legacy for future generations. Like other groups they stressed the importance of developing a recycling program in Saskatoon, and also expressed the need for other environmental initiatives and downtown development. Another key area of importance was restructuring the transit system. Due to the lack of grocery options in the core neighbourhoods, most of the participants stated that they had struggled to find efficient means of transportation, and that the bus routes serving the area were inadequate.

*Saskatoon is seriously lacking in curbside recycling programs. We need to work on producing a sustainable plan for the future*

*There was an article... talking about urban sprawl and how the community is moving and it shouldn't. Money should be spent on re-developing downtown, developing vertically... There should be more affordable development downtown.*

Despite the challenges faced by this group, they maintained a high level of confidence in Saskatoon's quality of life. Rather than condemning institutions, the Aboriginal persons participating in this focus group maintained a balanced view of the Quality of Life in Saskatoon.

## **F. SINGLE PARENTS**

The participants in this group face a number of barriers, and many of their concerns reflected this situation. The single parents present at this interview had experience using many of the support services offered in the city of Saskatoon and these proved to be their primary concern when discussing their quality of life. To them, maintenance of healthy living standards equated with a better quality life, with major concerns including transportation, affordable housing, and safe neighbourhoods.

The participants shared a number of frustrations with transportation in the city. They noted that this was not simply an indicator of transit services but also an effect of poverty and urban design. Several participants related the inaccessibility of affordable grocery stores as a mitigating factor. In order to acquire food for their family they were tasked with either taking a long bus ride or paying for an expensive taxi service.

*See I find the bus routes are ridiculous. I think whoever's planning the routes should go stand outside and freeze while they're waiting. It's just like you're screwed if you're too early, screwed if you're too late; sometimes the buses come way too early, and you've missed it and it's your fault, and you have to be out there 15 minutes early or wait for the next one, and it's an hour sometimes.*

*They moved Walmart way out to that new location, like way on the far West, so now you have to get a ride or take a taxi to get cheap groceries. It's like you spend all of the money you're saving by shopping there before you even get in the door.*

Like several other focus groups, housing proved to be an area of concern for these participants. The single parents voiced a number of significant barriers to their quality of life, many of which were due to financial constraints. Higher-cost residential expansion within the city over the past five years has limited the affordable housing market, as has neighbourhood decay in many of the core neighbourhoods. With finances tied up in familial obligations, the single parents cited long waiting lists for rental assistance and inflexible housing corporations as significant obstacles to their quality of life

*The waiting list for housing with the city is so long. Like some people, I know, waited for six years before they got an opportunity and they found out that their family was too big anyway. There are not very many options when you're in that situation.*

The single parents also discussed the importance of neighbourhood and community attachment within what they believed made up a good quality life. These conversations included concerns about neighbourhood safety, drug and alcohol issues, and policing. Most of the participants had at one time or another encountered a dangerous situation within their neighbourhood – to them living in fear near their own home significantly detracted from their quality of life. These fears were also carried over by the persistence of drug crimes within their communities. The

participants also communicated concerns with the quality of policing services in core neighbourhoods.

*A lot of the cops in the neighbourhood have been doing the same beat for like years, so you know when they have bad habits, they just don't go away, you know? Like they will pull up to people and just talk to them through their window and confiscate stuff, but they won't really do anything about the problems.*

Despite their concerns the participants all agreed that their quality of life was on the upswing. Although gaining entry to various support services proved initially challenging for these single parents, they felt that once they had gained momentum, adequate supportive services were available to help improve their lives. In general they saw potential for a greatly improved quality of life in marginalized communities contingent upon further development of services such as those to be offered by Station 20 West, the revitalization of 22<sup>nd</sup> street, and services such as the Central Urban Métis Federation, Incorporated.

## **G. PERSISTENT THEMES**

Throughout the development of the qualitative research used in this report a number of themes emerged as persistent concerns across all demographics and SES clusters.

*Infrastructure Development:* Including areas such as road maintenance, snow removal, sidewalk clearing, drainage, and maintenance of public spaces. This theme repeatedly emerged as an area of redress for many of the participants that detracts from the quality of life for citizens of Saskatoon.

*Policing:* This concern emerged amongst all participating groups, however the perspective changed relative to their location or SES. While those in more privileged neighbourhoods felt that law enforcement was inadequate in core neighbourhoods because of under-policing, persons living in marginalized areas felt that policing levels were adequate but ineffective due to apathy.

*Housing costs:* This concern was most frequently present in conversations with persons in marginalized groups and up to mid-level SES. Given the recent urban growth in the city of Saskatoon, many people voiced concerns about its implications for affordable housing.

*Downtown revitalization:* With an eye to the future, many of the respondents felt that an important legacy for Saskatoon would be the re-development and beautification of its downtown commercial sections and waterfront. This included hopes for vertical development, such as condominium and rental housing, and also an emphasis on maintaining local commercial diversity through projects aimed at developing business.

*Transit Services:* Amongst all of the issues discussed during this research, concerns about the public transportation were the most frequent. Citizens from all walks of life expressed a number of frustrations with the routing, scheduling, and customer services offered by Saskatoon Transit, and emphasized its impact on morale and Quality of Life.

Despite these few consistent themes it should be noted that above all, most people took a positive outlook on the quality of life in Saskatoon. Like any other major urban centre, life in Saskatoon is not without its challenges and barriers, however, participants frequently assessed their life and communities as having improved over the last few years.

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## **Section 5: Conclusions from a Decade of Quality of Life Research in Saskatoon**

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Quality of Life research in Saskatoon has tracked the well-being of the city's citizens for 10 years. This longitudinal study has provided us with important insights into how the people of Saskatoon perceive their quality of life.

The telephone survey shows us that, overall, Saskatonians continue to be optimistic about their quality of life in all areas including self-rated health, neighbourhood safety, and condition of schools. Perceptions of quality of life have remained particularly stable among participants in Middle and High SES neighbourhood throughout the past 10 years. However, the data show that a disparity between Low SES neighbourhoods and Middle and High SES neighbourhood continues to exist in most facets of quality of life. This disparity has remained over the last decade although the 2010 data indicate improvements in nearly all areas relative to previous iterations of the survey.

A similar pattern has been noted during the face-to-face interviews conducted throughout past iterations of the Quality of Life survey. Overall, personal optimism climbed steadily throughout the 2000s with the exception of interviews occurring during the 2004 iteration. Variance has always existed between the SES neighbourhoods within Saskatoon; persons dwelling in the highest SES communities repeatedly voiced the fewest detractors to their Quality of Life while those in the middle and low SES neighbourhoods faced additional challenges like employment and transportation. Regardless of SES, several factors to quality of life remained universal: adequate diversion of city funding to deserving groups, an emphasis on improving public parks and infrastructure, and maintenance/improvement of public safety, particularly in core neighbourhoods.

Although the focus group methodology used throughout all QoL iterations has been guided by a structured set of questions, the results have constantly varied relative to the participating group. Despite these outcomes, an important and occurring theme has been developing cohesion and equality amongst all of Saskatoon's demographic groups. Furthermore, many of the focus groups held a firm belief that public spending for support services should be at the very least maintained, or increased if economically feasible. Despite the economic busts and booms experienced over the past decade, these two themes persisted universally.

As Saskatoon enters the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, its citizens faced new and renewed challenges based on local, national, and international developments. They face certain economic challenges as Canada's economy rebuilds itself following the 2008 financial crises, and the city itself must face the logistical challenges of keeping pace with a booming population. Despite these and many other challenges, the citizens of Saskatoon participating throughout the past decade of Quality of Life research have always looked to the future with optimism, and continue to do so in this most recent iteration.

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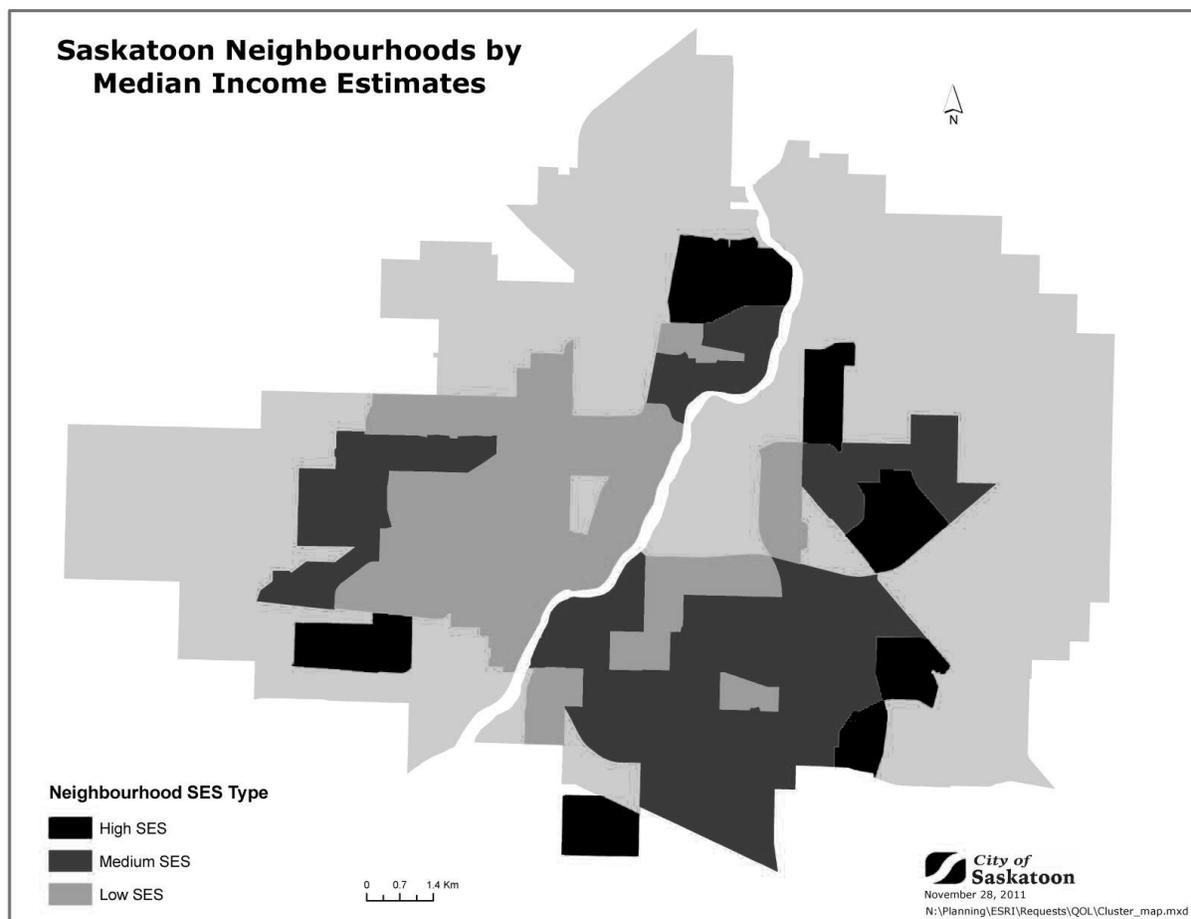
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## Appendix A

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### SAMPLE FRAME METHODOLOGY

The 2001 iteration of the quality of life data employed a sampling strategy to identify three clusters of Saskatoon neighbourhoods according to socio-economic status. The 2004 and 2007 iterations used the same sampling strategy but produced three different clusters of neighbourhoods. The only change occurred when two high SES neighbourhoods in 2001, College Park and College Park East, were replaced by Erindale and Arbor Creek in 2004 and 2007. The middle and low SES neighbourhoods were unchanged over the 2001-2004-2007 study period. Selected neighbourhood demographics from the 2001 census were analyzed using SPSS (computer software for statistical analysis). Two variables were selected: median household income and percentage of the labour force that is employed. The standardized scores of the two variables were submitted to the K-means Cluster routine. A three-cluster solution was specified to facilitate the interpretation of the groups.



**Figure 20. Saskatoon Residential Neighbourhoods grouped by selected socio-economic characteristics**

The summary statistics for the two variables are shown in Table 3. Figure 20 is a map of Saskatoon displaying the three clusters of neighbourhoods according to socio-economic status. There are a total of 58 neighbourhoods within the Saskatoon city limits (n=58) with 7 categorized as high socio-economic status (n=7), 33 categorized as middle socio-economic status (n=33) and 18 categorized as low socio-economic status (n=18).

<b>Component Variable</b>	<b>Saskatoon (N=58)</b>	<b>High SES (N=7)</b>	<b>Middle SES (N=33)</b>	<b>Low SES (N=18)</b>
Median Income (\$)	\$36,957	\$79,493	\$43,815	\$25,192
% Employed	63.5	80.2	71.3	50.1

**Table 3. Summary Statistics for all neighbourhoods (n=58) and the three clusters of neighbourhoods classified according to socio-economic status (2001 Census data).**

The cluster analysis identified neighbourhoods that have common socio-economic characteristics but that represent relatively diverse physical and developmental characteristics. In each of the three clusters (High SES, Medium SES and Low SES) three representative neighbourhoods were selected for the telephone survey. Therefore, the survey was conducted in a total of nine out of Saskatoon's 58 neighbourhoods. These nine neighbourhoods are identified in Figure 20.

The City of Saskatoon GIS (Geographic Information System) was used to develop the base for the survey sample. By using Statistics Canada's Postal Code Conversion file, a database listing all of the postal codes lying within the boundaries of the nine neighbourhoods was created. All of the telephone numbers matching these postal codes were selected. The result was a database of telephone numbers for each neighbourhood group.

Between January 15 and March 31, 2007, a total of 4,738 telephone numbers in the nine neighbourhoods were called. From these calls, 1,036 completed surveys were derived producing a response rate of 21%. Of the 1,306 surveys, 349 were from the high SES neighbourhoods, 350 from the middle SES neighbourhoods and 337 from the low SES neighbourhoods.

The focus group discussions took place in February and March of 2007 and were organized with the assistance of local non-government organizations (NGOs). Approximately 30 face-to-face interviews were conducted in each of the three neighbourhood groups between March and June 2007.

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## **Appendix B**

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### **TELEPHONE SURVEY**

#### Introduction

Hello my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling from Fast Consulting, a professional public opinion research firm in Saskatoon that gathers information from people. Today we are talking to residents of Saskatoon on behalf of the University of Saskatchewan. Our survey takes approximately 5-8 minutes to complete.

May I continue?

Yes            No

Are you 18 years of age or older?

Yes - Continue

No - "Is there someone in the household who is?"

If not, thank & terminate

If respondent is not interested at this time

" Your household's response is really valuable for statistical purposes. Would there be a better time to call another member of your household who is 18 years of age or older to complete the interview? When would be a good time for me to call?"

1. Yes - Will complete the interview
2. No - not interested

Although you have said so, would you be willing to answer 3 questions for statistical purposes?

1. yes
2. no

A1.1.ii

Age: 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  
Refused  
N/A

A2.1.ii

INTERVIEWER: Do not ask, but record Sex

Male  
Female

A3.1.ii

How would you describe your overall quality of life? Would you say it is...

excellent	poor
very good	Refused
good	N/A
fair	

A4.1.ii

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Less than grade nine	Diploma or certificate from - trade, technical or vocational school, community college, business college
Some high school	Some university
High school diploma	University graduate
Some trade, technical or vocational school, community college, business college	Refused
	N/A

### Introduction Script

You are free not to respond to any of the questions, and free to withdraw at anytime from the study. If you withdraw, then data 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 telephone numbers where you can talk to someone further. If you would like these numbers at any time during the survey, please let me know.

INTERVIEWER: Telephone numbers are given out at respondent's request at any time during the survey.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, you may call the Office of Research Services at the University of Saskatchewan at (306) 966-2084. For more information on the study itself, please contact the Community-University Institute for Social Research at (306) 966-2120.

### 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.ii

How would you describe your overall quality of life? Would you say it is...

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

### Health

The next question is about your personal health. What we mean by health is not only the absence of disease or injury, but also your physical, mental, and social well-being.

#### B2.1.ii

In general, would you say your health is:

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

#### Z.1.ii

Does a long-term physical or mental condition, or any other health problem, limit in any way the kind of activity you can do in your home, at work or school, or elsewhere? “Long-term” refers to conditions that have lasted, or are expected to last, 6 months or more.

always	never
often	refused
sometimes	N/A

### Satisfaction Domains

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.ii

...your neighborhood

very satisfied	very dissatisfied
somewhat satisfied	Refused
somewhat dissatisfied	N/A

B3.2.ii  
...your city

very satisfied  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied

very dissatisfied  
Refused  
N/A

B3.3.ii  
...your housing

very satisfied  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied

very dissatisfied  
Refused  
N/A

B3.4.ii  
...your friends

very satisfied  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied

very dissatisfied  
Refused  
N/A

B3.5.ii  
...your relationship with your spouse or partner

very satisfied  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied

very dissatisfied  
Refused  
N/A

B3.6.ii  
...your relationship with the rest of your family living with you

very satisfied  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied

very dissatisfied  
Refused  
N/A

B3.7.ii  
...your leisure activities

very satisfied  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied

very dissatisfied  
Refused  
N/A

B3.8.ii  
...your health

very satisfied  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied

very dissatisfied  
Refused  
N/A

B3.9.ii  
...your treatment by people who work for the government, such as police or city services

very satisfied  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied

very dissatisfied  
Refused  
N/A

B3.10.ii  
...your treatment by store owners

very satisfied  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied

very dissatisfied  
Refused  
N/A

B3.11.ii  
...your job (or main activity)

very satisfied  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied

very dissatisfied  
Refused  
N/A

B3.12.ii  
...the balance between your job or main activity and family home life

very satisfied  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied

very dissatisfied  
Refused  
N/A

Z2.1.ii  
What do you expect in general of the next year? Will it be..

better than 2003?  
worse than 2003?  
about the same as 2003?

refused  
N/A

Z2.2.ii

Do you think things in Saskatoon are generally going in the right, or in the wrong direction?

right direction  
wrong direction  
refused  
N/A

B4.1.ii

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  
somewhat satisfied  
somewhat dissatisfied  
very dissatisfied  
refused  
N/A

B4.2.ii

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

Stress

D1.1.ii

How stressful would you say your life usually is?

extremely stressful  
moderately stressful  
not stressful at all  
refused  
N/A

Z3.ii

What is your main source of stress?

Work  
Financial Concerns  
Family  
School or other education  
Other  
Refused  
N/A

Personal Evaluation

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.ii

...your job or main activity

very important  
moderately important  
not important

refused  
N/A

E1.2.ii

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

very important  
moderately important  
not important

refused  
N/A

E1.3.ii

...your housing

very important  
moderately important  
not important

refused  
N/A

E1.4.ii

...your friendships

very important  
moderately important  
not important

refused  
N/A

E1.5.ii

...your family relationships

very important  
moderately important  
not important

refused  
N/A

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

E2.1.ii

...your health

improved  
stayed the same  
gotten worse

refused  
N/A

E2.2.ii

...your overall life satisfaction

improved  
stayed the same  
gotten worse

refused  
N/A

E2.3.ii

...your level of stress

improved  
stayed the same  
gotten worse

refused  
N/A

### 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.ii

...the condition of roads and sidewalks in your neighborhood.

excellent  
very good  
good  
fair

poor  
refused  
N/A

F1.2.ii

...the condition of housing in your neighborhood.

excellent  
very good  
good  
fair

poor  
refused  
N/A

F1.3.ii

...the condition of parks in your neighborhood

excellent  
very good  
good  
fair

poor  
refused  
N/A

F1.4.ii

...the condition of other green space (such as boulevards or medians)

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

F1.5.ii

...public transportation

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

F1.6.ii

...traffic conditions

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

F1.7.ii

...environment (such as air and water quality)

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

F1.8.ii

...degree of neighborhood neatness (such as amount of litter or graffiti)

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

F1.9.ii

...friendliness

excellent	fair
very good	poor
good	refused

F1.10.ii

...safety from violent crime

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

F1.11.ii

...safety from property crime

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

F1.12.ii

...neighborhood organizations (such as neighborhood watch or neighborhood associations)

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

F1.13.ii

...shops and services

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

F1.14.ii

...religious and spiritual activities

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

F1.15.ii  
...schools

excellent  
very good  
good  
fair

poor  
refused  
N/A

F1.16.ii  
...health services

excellent  
very good  
good  
fair

poor  
refused  
N/A

F1.17.ii  
...social programs (such as counseling and child protection)

excellent  
very good  
good  
fair

poor  
refused  
N/A

F1.18.ii  
...recreation programs & services

excellent  
very good  
good  
fair

poor  
refused  
N/A

F1.19.ii  
...care-giver services (such as childcare and homecare)

excellent  
very good  
good  
fair

poor  
refused  
N/A

F1.20.ii  
...protection services (such as police and fire)

excellent  
very good  
good

fair  
poor  
refused

F3.1.ii

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

improved	refused
stayed the same	N/A
become worse	

### Making Choices

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

H1.1.ii

Thinking about your neighbourhood conditions and services, where do you think Government spending will do the most good for the quality of life of Saskatoon people?

DO NOT READ - SELECT ALL THAT APPLY

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

- ...the condition of roads and sidewalks
- ...the condition of housing
- ...the condition of parks
- ...the condition of other green space (such as boulevards or the medians)
- ...public transportation
- ...traffic conditions
- ...environment (air and water quality)
- ...degree of neighborhood neatness (such as amount of litter or graffiti)
- ...friendliness
- ...safety from violent crime
- ...safety from property crime
- ...neighborhood organizations (such as neighborhood watch or neighborhood associations)
- ...shops and services
- ...religious and spiritual activities
- ...schools
- ...health services
- ...social programs (such as counseling and child protection)
- ...recreation programs & services
- ...care-giver services (such as childcare and homecare)
- ...protection services (such as police and fire)
- Refused
- N/A
- Other (specify)

Programs to improve people's quality of life can be funded in different ways. How would you respond to each of the following options for new program spending to improve quality of life? Would you support..

Z4.1.ii

...increase in user fees

support  
not support

do not know  
refused

Z4.2.ii

...increase in personal taxes

support  
not support

do not know  
refused

Z4.3.ii

...increase in corporate taxes

support  
not support

do not know  
refused

Z4.4.ii

..increase in sales taxes

support  
not support

do not know  
refused

Z4.5.ii

..take money from other areas of government spending

support  
not support

do not know  
refused

H3.1.ii

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

INTERVIEWER: Do not read list. Circle all that apply.

poor families with children  
poor individuals  
unemployed youth  
Aboriginal/Metis/First Nations people  
new immigrants and refugees  
the elderly

persons with disabilities  
single parents  
other  
Refused  
N/A  
Neighbourhood Quality of Life

Z5.1.ii

In general, what kind of neighbourhood would you say you live in? Would you say it is a neighbourhood in which people do things together and try to help each other, or one in which people mostly go their own way?

help each other out	refused
go their own way	N/A
mixture	

F4.1.ii

How much do you feel a part of your neighborhood?

very much a part	refused
somewhat a part	N/A
not very much a part	

F4.2.ii

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

very comfortable	refused
somewhat comfortable	N/A
un-comfortable	

F4.3.ii

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

Yes
No
Refused
N/A

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Z5.2.ii

..this is a close-knit neighbourhood.

strongly agree	strongly disagree
tend to agree	refused
neither agree nor disagree	N/A
tend to disagree	

Z5.3.ii

..people in this neighbourhood can be trusted.

strongly agree	strongly disagree
tend to agree	refused
neither agree nor disagree	N/A
tend to disagree	

Z5.4.ii

..people around here are willing to help their neighbours.

strongly agree	strongly disagree
tend to agree	refused
neither agree nor disagree	N/A
tend to disagree	

Z5.5.ii

..people in this neighbourhood do not share the same values.

strongly agree	strongly disagree
tend to agree	refused
neither agree nor disagree	N/A
tend to disagree	

Z5.6.ii

..people in this neighbourhood generally do not get along with each other.

strongly agree	strongly disagree
tend to agree	refused
neither agree nor disagree	N/A
tend to disagree	

F6.1.ii

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

excellent	poor
very good	refused
good	N/A
fair	

F7.1.ii

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

getting better	refused
staying the same	N/A
becoming worse	

### 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.ii

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

18 - 24	65-74
25 - 34	75 and over
35-44	Refused
45-54	NA
55-64	

### Ethnicity

The next question asks about whether you are of aboriginal ancestry.

Aboriginal peoples are persons in Canada who identify themselves to be Status or Treaty Indian, Non-Status Indian, Metis, or Inuit

J3.1.ii

Do you consider yourself to be an aboriginal person?

No	Inuit
Status or Treaty Indian	Refused
Non-Status Indian	N/A
Metis	

### Immigrant status

J5.1.ii

Were you born in Canada?

Yes	Refused
No	N/A

J5.2.ii

INTERVIEWER: If response to above question is 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

Marital status

J6.1.ii

What is your marital status?

(INTERVIEWER Read list only if needed.)

Single/never married

Married, common law, or living with a partner

Separated

Divorced

Widowed

Refused

N/A

Education

J7.1.ii

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

(INTERVIEWER Read list only if needed.)

Less than grade nine

Some high school

High school diploma

Some trade, technical or vocational school, community college, business college

Diploma or certificate from - trade, technical or vocational school, community college, business college

Some university

University graduate

University Post-graduate (Masters, PHD)

Refused

N/A

Employment

J8.1.ii

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

(INTERVIEWER: check all that apply)

- working full-time
- working part-time
- unemployed
- retired
- homemaker/caregiver
- student
- on disability leave, maternity leave, etc.
- refused
- N/A

J8.2.ii

How many people contribute to your household income?

- |       |           |
|-------|-----------|
| ZERO  | 4 or more |
| ONE   | refused   |
| TWO   | N/A       |
| THREE |           |

Income

J9.1.ii

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:

(INTERVIEWER Read the list.)

- |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Less than \$10,000             | \$80,000 to less than \$100,000 |
| \$10,000 to less than \$20,000 | \$100,000 or more               |
| \$20,000 to less than \$40,000 | Refused                         |
| \$40,000 to less than \$60,000 | N/A                             |
| \$60,000 to less than \$80,000 |                                 |

J9.2.ii

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

- |             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| wealthy     | difficult |
| well-off    | poor      |
| comfortable | Refused   |
| adequate    | N/A       |

Household

J10.1.ii

How many people live in your house?

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Refused

N/A

Children

J11.1.ii

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

ZERO

ONE

TWO

THREE

4 or more

refused

N/A

Z6.ii

INTERVIEWER: Ask this question only if there are children under age 18 living with the respondent.

Think of your youngest child under age 18 living with you. Would you say his/her health is ...

excellent

very good

good

fair

poor

refused

N/A

Home ownership

J12.1.ii

Do you own or rent your home?

Own

Rent

Other (specify)

Refused

N/A

Residency

J21.1.ii

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

Z7.ii

How many months per year, on average, do you reside in Saskatoon?

Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Refused

N/A

J21.2.ii

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

How many times have you moved homes in the last 12 months?

0

1

2

3

4 or more

Refused

N/A

F5.1.ii

Have you volunteered in any organizations or associations such as hospitals, sports or school groups, religious organizations, community organizations or ethnic associations in the last 3 years?

yes

no

refused

N/A

Z5.7.ii

Thinking about the volunteer organization you were most active in, can you think of up to three examples of the kinds of volunteer work you performed? Select more than one

Organizing or supervising  
events

Sitting as a board member

Canvassing, campaigning,  
fundraising

Office work

Providing information

Teaching, coaching

Providing care or support

Collecting/serving/delivering  
food

Driving

Maintenance/repair

Don't know

Z5.8.ii

Thinking about the volunteer organization you were most active in, did you spend most of your volunteer time

in your local community or  
neighbourhood?  
in other  
neighbourhoods/other parts

of the city?  
Do not know  
N/A

Z5.9.ii

In the past 12 months, how many hours (per week, month) did you spend on volunteering?

Number:\_\_\_\_\_

Z5.10.ii

In the past 12 months, what organization would you say you have volunteered with the most?

Name:\_\_\_\_\_

Z5.9.

Permission For Follow-Up Interview

K1.1.ii

In the next few weeks, we will be contacting random respondents to participate in face-to-face interviews. Are you interested in being on this list of potential participants?

Yes  
No

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## Appendix C

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### QUALITY OF LIFE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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## **Appendix D**

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### **SUMMARY OF RESEARCH - 2007 ITERATION**

The 2007 Summary of Research is available electronically from the Community University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) website: [www.usask.ca/cuisr/](http://www.usask.ca/cuisr/)

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## **Appendix E**

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### **FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (ITERATION 4, 2010)**

#### OVERALL SATISFACTION

1. Generally speaking, the telephone 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. In comparison with other people in Saskatoon, how would you describe your financial situation? Why?

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD

5. 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?
6. What neighbourhood characteristics are important to your quality of life?
7. What neighbourhood characteristics reduce your quality of life?
8. 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?
9. How important is feeling a part of your neighbourhood to your quality of life?

#### EMPOWERMENT

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

#### 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

19. What types of recommendations or suggestions would you make to facilitate a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity across different ethnic/cultural groups?

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## **Appendix F**

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### **FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS (INCLUDING PROBES)**

1. You are here today to discuss quality of life in Saskatoon. What does Quality of Life mean to you?
  - a. How would you describe a community with a good quality of life? How does this compare to the quality of life in your community?
  - b. Have you noticed any negative or positive changes to your neighbourhood in terms of conditions (roads, housing, parks?)
2. Do you feel connected to your neighbourhood?
3. Has the economic situation of your community improved?
  - a. Do you feel that the economic status of most people in your neighbourhood affects their quality of life?
4. What sort of initiatives do you think are needed to improve your community's quality of life?
  - a. What sort of organizations do you think should be involved in developing these initiatives?
  - b. What needs to be done to improve the quality of life of your community?
5. How would you recommend improving the quality of life across all communities in Saskatoon?





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