In Edmonton, we value community wellness. We need the right systems in place for people and neighbourhoods to thrive.

Recover, is a City of Edmonton project where we are working to improve wellness for all Edmontonians. We are focused on finding solutions to improve neighbourhood urban wellness, starting in the five core neighbourhoods: Boyle Street, Central McDougall, Downtown, McCauley and Queen Mary Park.
MaRS Solutions Lab, an innovation lab that helps to solve complex social challenges and helps build a strong innovation economy. The lab develops new approaches and brings together stakeholders from across society to help solve these problems collaboratively. It uses systems and design thinking, and builds on leading practices from similar labs around the world. The lab also helps governments to modernize their policies and public services to keep pace with changes in society, and equips people and organizations with tools and techniques to create change. MaRS Solutions Lab is part of MaRS Discovery District in downtown Toronto.

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PURPOSE

To understand the diverse and complex views of those living in the 5 neighbourhoods (Boyle Street, Central McDougall, Downtown, McCauley and Queen Mary Park), our team undertook an ethnographic study meeting with people at their homes, workplaces, and favourite meeting spots.

This research was done shortly after InWithForward completed their ethnographic study which focused specifically on the Inner City's most marginalized residents — those living on the streets and experiencing mental health & addiction challenges. Although, the 44 individuals that we met are not living on the streets, they face other challenges in meeting their wellness needs.

The research was not meant to be comprehensive, rather it provides ample insights to start imagining ideas to prototype. This work also surfaced key themes that warrant further ethnographic study. Quotes from interview participants highlight these themes.
METHODOLOGY

Community interviews were conducted in two parts.

**Part 1** took place from Dec. 5 - 8, 2017. We visited the 5 neighbourhoods to engage with a range of stakeholders and identify contacts for more in-depth interviews as well as refine questions for further inquiry.

This phase included participant observation both in immersive (embedding ourselves in social gatherings and walking alongside them during their work day) and non-immersive ways (watching people's interactions from street corners, restaurant tables, and council meetings).

**Part 2** took place from January 22 to February 9, 2018.

We met with residents, business owners, and community volunteers.
NEIGHBOURHOOD WALKS

Activities included

- An evening walk with the City's neighbourhood coordinators from the new Rogers Place arena to the old Remand centre in Boyle and learning about the transformative activities that are underway.
- A morning walk with the North Edge BIA liaisons through the neighbourhoods as they spread holiday cheer to citizens and reported issues using the 211 app.
- Visiting chinatown businesses.
- Attending a City Council Budget Planning meeting and hearing from various community groups including: the Africa Centre, Edmonton Meals on Wheels, Kihciy Askiy, Edmonton Chinatown Revitalization Council, Health City, Abundant Communities Edmonton.
- An evening visit to the John A. McDougall School with a doctor from the Royal Alexandra hospital and Somali refugee women and children as they learnt about education savings plans and healthy eating.
- We had coffees with young professionals from the downtown Edmonton Public Library and the Action Lab and talked to them about what it is like to live in Edmonton.
FOCUSED INTERVIEWS

Part 2 of the research took place from January 22 to February 9. The MaRS team conducted 1 hour interviews with key contacts from part 1 of the research phase. Additional contacts came through members of the three RECOVER committees and further referrals from initial interviews. Using qualitative interviewing methods we explored participants’ connections to the five neighbourhoods, and issues related to wellness, safety, and social supports.

N=44 (10 informal and 34 formal interviews)

Breakdown of formal interviews
McCauley 9, Boyle 7, Queen Mary Park 5, Central McDougall 8, Downtown 5*

22 residents, 10 business owners, 12 community organizations*

*Note these categories include some overlaps, these interviews are in addition to InWithForward Ethnographic Work
SYNTHESIS

After conducting the interviews we analyzed our notes and transcripts from our conversations for moments when individuals talked about four areas of insights: aspirations, values, barriers, and enablers.

Aspirations are important because they hint at a future direction or enhanced state that people desire; values help define how they want to get there; enablers help think about the nature of the support that might be provided, therefore something to maximize; and barriers, elements that need to be minimized.

We compiled a “community voices” card deck of over 100 quotes curated from the interviews that highlighted the insights and brought the deck to the February prototyping workshops with the three RECOVER committees. This allowed for more voices from the community to be in the room.
We attributed each quote with a made-up name but identified the neighbourhood and role of the individual (resident, business owner, and/or community organization).

Beyond the workshop setting, the community voices deck can continue to be used as an ideation tool to generate potential solutions. Quotes may be reviewed by a particular neighbourhood or they may be sorted by themes across various neighbourhoods. The full deck can be seen [here](#). Here’s two example cards from the deck:

**COMMUNITY VOICES**

I see the park being the centre of wellness in the neighbourhood it's the only green space around. I want it to be safe for kids and parents to go to anytime for a picnic - have an ice cream. I wanted it to be surrounded by shops, a place to get gelato. But now I wouldn’t let my kids stay in that space past 4pm now.

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When I think about the Quarters, I'd like to see only local businesses in here. I'd like to see some incentives for local Edmontonians, entrepreneurs to build businesses. Instead of spending money on streetscaping projects, revitalization could come from incentivizing business owners. Abandoned buildings could be repurposed and put to good use, perhaps an artists’ quarter. I’d love to see the Farmer’s Market returned to the neighbourhood and do it in a way that the funds get re-invested back into the community.
What If

We used the data from the community interviews to identify opportunity areas for action in the form of “What if” statements. In addition to those generated by the IWF research, we identified 8 more along with multiple ideas for solutions. We developed a set of posters to display these ideas during the RECOVER prototyping workshops.

Here is an example of one of the posters.

Workshop participants used the posters and the “community voices” deck as inspiration for their own ideas. In total 209 ideas have been collected as part of RECOVER and can be found here.
OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Opportunity areas 1-8 were generated as part of the IWF’s research on the very vulnerable population, however, our conversations with community members signal that solutions in those areas would be welcomed by all. Opportunity areas 9 - 16 were generated after analysis of the community interviews.

1. Redefined wellbeing
2. New learning pathways
3. Curated peer and place based networks
4. Expanded and bundled small jobs
5. More upstream supports and relationship help
6. More vibrant things to do at night and weekends
7. More ways to taste healing, and gain a bit of distance from what ails you
8. Tweaked the service experience
9. Improved coordination between services
10. Platform to share data, information, and evidence
11. Increased accessibility: of family recreational activities, for seniors, during the winter, & of affordable fresh food?
12. An open list of community needs
13. More support to refugees and new immigrants
14. Activated latent human and physical assets
15. Inner city as a destination for cultural exploration, social businesses, and a place to live across all stages of life
16. More support for community grassroots initiatives to spread
Through our interviews we tried to understand at a deeper level people’s goals and motivations and how they relate to particular challenges and tensions in each neighbourhood. The themes displayed on the neighbourhoods map emerged as part of this analysis.

These themes are not meant to categorize or reduce people’s experiences. Rather themes help us explore areas of action and opportunities for innovation.

Each of the neighbourhood profiles includes “how do we” opportunity statements.
NEIGHBOURHOOD PROFILES

We also learned that “community” boundaries extend across and are divided within ward or formal neighbourhood boundaries. There are more natural community lines between parts of Queen Mary and Central McDougall, Boyle and McCauley, and Boyle and Downtown. While ‘neighbourhood’ profiles are provided, these should be viewed as general areas where such activities are happening, but not meant to be generalizable to a particular ‘ward’ boundaries.

Quotes from individuals in each neighbourhood follow each profile to highlight the themes. We have changed the names of the individuals and paraphrased some of the quotes to reflect the broader context of the interview.
This neighbourhood sits between the cheapest rental properties in Edmonton closest to Central McDougall, and the relatively well-to-do Oliver neighbourhood. It is a transitional community in more ways than one, parts of which we were told are referred to as “Little Somalia,” and intersects with the Avenue of Nations where many different ethnic groups live and operate small businesses.

A theme of “establishing yourself” arose from our interviews in Queen Mary Park. Grassroots organizations that work with newcomers told us that many come “chasing the oil and gas dream” and refugees land in this neighbourhood either by choice or they are placed here. In the past couple of years, there seems to be an increase in housing and employment supports that are not being met by traditional service agencies. This has lead to overcrowding and a perceived lack of security in the neighbourhood by some.

In response to this demand, local small business owners have stepped up out of necessity, becoming “accidental social workers”, and brokering relationships between agencies and local residents to overcome language and cultural barriers. Some are even paying for job safety training and speaking directly with employers.

The theme of “establishing yourself” is about gaining a sense of stability and connection to the community around you.
Community groups are partnering together to provide ESL and health and nutrition training programs for women and children in their community, to share space and resources, with an emphasis on integration into the broader community.

However, space for community organizers in this neighbourhood is limited and high demand programs are mostly run on personal funds and time. Location in the neighbourhood is important for these organizers so that residents can easily access their services. Sustainability for these organizations means they can continue to serve their neighbours and lower their risk of burnout.

How could we help newcomers to establish themselves in their new neighbourhood beyond traditional settlement agencies’ offerings?

How could we better support grassroots organizations that have already established themselves achieve sustainability or increase their resiliency?
The uniqueness of this neighbourhood is that 60% of people that live in this area are new Canadians - and then a whole lot of the other chunk are internally displaced Canadians so they're coming from Ontario, Quebec, way more out East and they're coming to chase the Oil and Gas dream... and this is where they land.

People started coming to us not only for safety training but also wanted help with jobs, and a lot of people, they have language barriers and they don't know where to get information. We started becoming kind of ‘accidental social workers’ so we started providing meals in the mornings like breakfast in our space because one day some guy asked to share my breakfast. But we saw the need, so now we provide loaves of bread, Nutella, peanut butter and coffee. no toaster ‘cause that's a fire-hazard - that's the number one complaint.

“Andajii” - resident, business owner, and accidental social worker
I came here for Nova Scotia for work, my main criteria was cost and I signed a 1 year lease with a blind eye.

When I told my coworkers where I was living they were shocked and told me its called "Little Somalia."

I try to interact with all the wives who live at home in the units - husbands are off working multiple jobs - but there is a language barrier there... I don't feel safe in my neighbourhood - it's not the homeless, it's the drug dealers and predators that make me feel unsafe. More police presence might help, maybe put them in plain clothes. I think the North Edge Ambassador walk is good - that you would have more people patrol the area. A lot of corporations own the buildings and don't put a lot of money into making it safe. I had to complain to get the lock on the front door fixed.

"Natalie" - resident
That problem [of people needing to stay temporarily with friends and family due to prolonged unemployment] has tripled in the past two years - it's the economy - lack of jobs - all the people thought they would find jobs are not - cost of living is not going any lower, it's going higher actually.

...what’s happened in the last few years is that the settlement agencies have been moving out- which is why all these businesses like Andaji’s are stepping up, just because of desperation.

“Gaurav” and “Kalvina” - community organizers
This neighbourhood, like parts of Queen Mary, is home to many migrants trying to settle into a life in Edmonton. New businesses catering to MacEwan University students are starting to develop the land close to the school, but it is still largely a residential neighbourhood. It is home to many young families, who have made great efforts at grassroots organization of family friendly programming to help bring their neighbours together.

The desire for a “nurturing environment” was brought up in all of our interviews in Central McDougall. Not surprisingly at the heart of this theme is the idea of supporting the development of children by offering them rich programming, especially in the outdoors.

Social connections seem to strongly contribute to the wellbeing of residents. Especially for non-English speaking residents that need guidance in accessing healthcare. We learned that a supportive network is particularly important for those who have fled trauma and may have even been abandoned by family after locating to Edmonton.

The theme of “nurturing environment” is about supporting healthy child development and creating supportive social connections between families.
CENTRAL MCDougALL (CONT’D)

- We learned that a great strength of this community is that most members value integration of these groups and collaborate well. Members include talented, skilled and committed individuals volunteering several hours of their already busy days to support engaging programming for families or helping to secure the resources to do so.

- However, we heard frustrations are mounting as these community members’ energy and efforts have been increasingly met with barriers to accessing community resources like the local gym and public washrooms, which seem to be governed under an outdated model that is no longer responsive to the actual needs of the community today.

- How could we better support grassroots family-friendly initiatives and networks in their efforts to provide rich programming for families?
- How could we better meet the healthcare needs of newcomers with different cultural and language needs?
There is certainly a passionate group of individuals that are really working hard to improve the health of the community. And that’s a key plus. I know that the different organizations are interested in working collaboratively and working together because resources are limited and that certainly is a strength. I never feel that they’re competing for dollars. There is a core group that have really started developing the community aspect of the neighbourhood. And its diversity, ethnic and cultural and language provides a real richness to experiences in the community so that is a strength. A lot of it is the parents that have students at the schools within the community, that are working to try and support it. Some are higher educated, health professionals or teachers, who have more skill set to navigate the system and advocate for the community.

“Dr. Kaplan” - community organizer
The Central McDougall area doesn't have a community hall. There's no community league building for people to use. But there are the schools and some of the infrastructure that's already there. But the whole city has access to them and often June tends to be booked out, two different sorts of sports teams, things like that then end up just renting out the gym. We should be reserving that gym space and making that gym space available for the community that is there and for those community organizations that are working in the community. There is a massive amount of development and massive amount of funding that has gone into that Rogers arena and just a couple of blocks away is a neighbourhood that is struggling, that doesn't have a community halls, it doesn't have any public bathrooms.
One of the things we've tried to engage with the community league in the area on is getting our own kids involved in activities. There's been a lack of really accessible spaces and planned activities to bring your children too. Around here there is a lot of the women that just take their kids to the park. There's a lot of separation and not a lot of organization. So we've just been trying to access spaces and build relationships with different people and connecting with different organizations, to find ways to offer things for people in the community to get together so that you’re not so isolated.

“Dominic” - resident and community organizer
I've done a lot of different things - music clinics here and there. For the specific one that I did with John A. McDougall, I brought a marching snare drum that I own. Basically I wanted to get them thinking about all the different sounds you can make on things that you don't normally think of. So I had a stick, I had a brush. I had a twig bundle, called a broomstick. Had a mallet. So with each group at the end, I get each student to choose one of the things and hit it once and it's like, 'wow, okay that's my sound'. So it's really cool because it gets them thinking about all this stuff and I demonstrate all these things in a inquisitive manner. All the kids love it. Part of is that they get to play at the end too. Kids get excited when they get to do stuff themselves. Kids don't like to be held back or like treated like kids, if you know what I mean?

“Jason” - resident and community organizer
One of things with the Community League is that the demographics of the community have changed over time. Because the way the city has the Community League is set up, they speak on behalf of the community no matter how many people you have associated, and funding as well. They're given an open door for funding and the trump card for the voice of the community, regardless of the actual representation. We actually went to the Federation and explained, this is the situation, and discussed the barriers - we put a lot of effort into articulating these problems and the message we got was, 'yes we know it's a problem' - not just our Community League but many - but just no willingness to actually address it. They're either really high functioning or they're not-- and around here you have a lot of the newcomers coming in so, you got language barriers, unemployment - so there's too much for them. Compared to somewhere like Oliver - they know the politics, the system. And when new people try and join, it's really hard to get your voice across.

“Kalvina” - resident and community organizer
Women come to me for help with banking and health needs. I translated for this women who had spent 20 days in the hospital with gestational diabetes- she didn’t understand how to document her food properly. The issue with women is breaking isolation - having something for kids to do while [the mothers] are in the ESL class. That’s why we partnered with the camp. The kids play outdoors while the women are learning. Took us a long time to get ourselves a space. We asked the city for a container and thought that maybe we turn that into an office but that doesn’t work if it’s too cold outside.

“Sarah” - community organizer
The theme of “vibrancy” is about creating a sense of excitement and activity and also being resilient to negative influences.

† A mixed neighbourhood of residential and commercial spaces alongside a large number of social service agencies. The many diverse restaurants of Chinatown and Little Italy in this area are attractive to people from around the city, yet many avoid visiting during evening hours due to safety concerns.

† In our interviews in McCauley, we heard a desire for the neighbourhood to exude “vibrancy.” Beyond just being a safe space, a vibrant neighbourhood is one that is exciting and lively throughout the year and both during the day and at night. Vibrancy attracts more businesses and encourages more families from all economic backgrounds to visit and live in the neighbourhood.

† To promote vibrancy, many interviewees cited a need for more robust ways to prevent crime and effectively deal with aggressive and violent behaviours that residents and business owners are witness to on a recurring basis.
McCAULEY (CONT’D)

- Business owners told us that they invest all they have into their operations, yet still face high anxiety about the security of their assets as well as their customers’ safety.

- Vacant outdoor spaces like empty lots and parks along with abandoned and poorly managed properties also seem to pose a particular problem as they are viewed as areas that invite criminal activity.

- How could we take an effective stand against crime and violence to build strong businesses and communities?

- How can we invite more positive activity to the neighbourhood at night and on the weekends.
I moved to McCauley 14 years ago. I bought a detached house for $96K. The week that my son was born I learned of problem properties nearby. A member of the Red Alert gang was in front of my house grabbing his crotch and shouting obscenities. There’s a notorious landlord that owns hundreds of properties in the neighbourhood. He slaps paint on it and leases to low income people with addictions issues. To cope with this problem the neighbourhood is trying to take a strong unified voice - to stand up to intimidating people acting aggressively. The City has been trying to take him down; he’s been charged but no resolution yet. It’s not unique to this neighbourhood - it’s everywhere - having to interact with people like this - but McCauley does have a lot of violence, gang activities. The first 2017 murder was in my block.

“Mike - resident and community organizer
[My neighbourhood] is a wasteland of parking lots... [we need] green spaces where everyone feels safe going so people can’t hide their criminal activity. Parking lots sit empty and become an open space for any kind of criminal activity with people producing litter and garbage.

Parking lots - empty spaces - really get to be dead zones - especially at night and holidays and weekends - vacant spaces are major problem.

“Amikani and Jeanine” - residents and community organizers
I often see shady people hanging around in the back parking lot, wearing dark clothing and a hood, looking for an opening; I see their tracks in the snow ..., one customer was from Saskatoon and they had left their bag in their car and forgot to lock one of their doors and it was gone, with all their ID and everything. I felt terrible about that.

“Antanu” - restaurant owner
We need to make sure that the communities around the Downtown are desirable. We can build connectedness among these neighbourhoods, maybe put up way-finding designs for people to make their way from Downtown to here and make things more festive like when they put the lights up in the holiday time we need density and need not such a huge gap between houses... I'd like to see something like the Ritchie market, everyone from all areas goes there.

“Keith and Mariam” - residents, business owners, and community organizers
The Boyle area has a rich history as one of the original neighbourhoods making up the town of Edmonton. It has some of the oldest buildings in the city, and is the site of the original Chinatown, as more recent development has moved north, closer to McCauley. Its history also includes some of the longest operating social agencies (some going back 30 to 150 years), serving some of the most vulnerable populations. Today Boyle is home to approximately 60 different social agencies including shelters, and serves a range of vulnerable people, many of them street involved, and many who identify as indigenous.

Part of Chinatown’s legacy has been the ways in which they have supported the vulnerable members of their own community, whether through the housing and wellness centres they have developed for seniors, employment support programs for newcomers, or a unique bilingual school program that allows Chinese Canadians to compete in a global context.

The theme of Boyle is “paying it forward.” It is a recognition of this neighbourhood’s history of caring for others and one’s past struggles and wanting to give back to society.

The theme of “paying it forward” is about continuing the tradition of caring for one another and contributing to society.
BOYLE (CONT’D)

› Social agencies in the area today are also managing a public health crisis regarding Fentanyl and opioids.

› At the same time, some local businesses struggle to create a vibrant commercial district where many street involved people loiter in their entranceways, and the businesses face penalties for not cleaning up needles and other wastes. They fear the impact on the broader community in terms of how the harm reduction strategies are being implemented.

› Some residents and business owners are also worried about the displacement effects of gentrification of continued redevelopment in the area.

✴ How could we evolve services to meet new challenges faced by vulnerable populations and minimize negative effects on others?

✴ How can we celebrate and preserve the tradition of caring for one another as development continues?
There's a crisis with Fentanyl right now - opiates. Each and every one of our organizations experience people overdosing on drugs - on Fentanyl, on opiates, on a regular basis. We've tried to provide the services to meet the needs of the community, in particular the health services. And most recently we've got the safe consumption sites happening. This is a health response to a health crisis.

“Florence” - community organization
A lot of the complaint would be the needles. They distribute needles to the people. That needs to inject themselves. And they got nowhere to go and they inject themselves in the open space and then they throw the needles all over. My view is, if your organization is given the funding to distribute, you should be responsible to do the clean up. Right? Just in the vicinity. Why is it they're not responsible for the cleanup? Why families and businesses have to put up with that - finding needles in the park, backyard. And it would attract a lot of drug dealers 'cause you know they know these people need drugs - it's a marketplace for them. And if they don't have the money to buy drugs, you know what they will do? They will start attacking the people in Chinatown and property damage - could be high. That's why we're so concerned. So that's why we say, one could be acceptable, can be manageable. But three? Within walking distance of 10 minutes of each other?
If we lose Chinatown that means we have nothing to tell our children, grandchildren, down the road. Where your ancestors came from. How they suffered through those times and how they protect themselves by working together and supporting each other. That's how Chinatown started. That's why you have the gate that signifies the entrance into Chinatown. You're telling the history to whoever comes to visit that there's a China Town here - and how it flourished. At one point in time, even if you're a very successful business in China Town, you were not allowed to employ white people to work for you. So there's a lot of discrimination. So I think that the new generation, the descendants, needs to understand what the Chinese been through and how they elevate themselves and work hard and were successful.

"Jie" - community organization
For businesses, they're not doing great - they probably don't have money to invest for upkeep so when I think of a well community it's on the one hand getting people engaged and seeing value in those communities and on the other hand offering real, meaningful help to get people off the streets - and helping them as individuals to better themselves and build a better life for themselves. As someone that's ethnically Chinese, one of the worse things you want to hear is when people say, "oh, the Chinese don't like the homeless" or "they're fighting the homeless" or "Chinatown vs. the homeless people" - that's not how we feel, that's not the way we want to be seen. We do care about the social well-being of Edmonton as a city and give our time to helping these people get back on their feet. We can be volunteering, building better relationships with social agencies and we could be running services and programs and look at whether there are any gaps that can be filled.
I'm against “gentrification” and for “integration and revitalization”. To me gentrification may create aesthetically nicer places or buildings but it displaces people - if people can no longer afford to live in a neighbourhood they have to leave; if only big box stores or large corporations can afford the spaces, smaller local businesses are driven out; even with park benches, if they have guards put on them they make such spaces not welcome for whole groups of people. Integration and revitalization has to do with bridging - communities, ideas and people so that everyone feels welcomed.

“Laila” - resident, business owner, and community organizer
DOWNTOWN

› The downtown is primarily a commercial district that includes large institutions such as municipal and provincial government offices. MacEwan University is also in close proximity. Recent developments in this neighbourhood have opened major cultural venues and attractions, including the new stadium that drives a lot of traffic in and out of the neighbourhood.

› A theme of “connectedness” arose from our conversations in the Downtown. People seem to desire a vibrant downtown core that is inclusive; one that can help nurture social networks and provide enriching experiences for ambitious young professionals.

› Although, this area has a lot to offer young professionals seeking like-minded people to pursue their life goals. Some feel that it doesn’t do enough to create an inclusive community for the more vulnerable population or seniors who also live there.

› The theme of “connectedness” is about fostering social connections and helping one another achieve personal goals.
Business owners expressed that the city has provided all their wellness needs and should focus on serving the vulnerable in the community.

Seniors that we spoke to at community centres and retirement homes expressed a desire to travel to destinations within and outside the city for rich entertainment and do so in the warmer weather with relative ease. Yet some with mobility issues seem to miss out on opportunities to explore, especially during the winter when navigating unplowed sidewalks become an issue.

- How could we enhance access to third spaces in and beyond the core, that nurture social networks for young and old?
- How can we create connections between diverse people to support each other’s personal goals?
What keeps me in Edmonton is that it’s progressive - when I get up in the morning and I look out the window I just wanna get out there and just continue to work on myself and achieve my goals. I like being around a vibrant group or vibrant environment and keeps me going - and pushes me to just go after what I want to achieve and goals and be abreast of what's going on. It's hard for me NOT to know what's going on. I know everything that's taking place in the city and it's perfect for me.

"Kayode" - resident and community organization
I hire only the neighbourhood people. It’s hard to find the people from the vulnerable population or someone with a disability, the city should have a list for us that they have screened. Customers need to understand that they need to help these people and build empathy for everyone, they need to understand that somethings are not his fault- not in his nature - DNA did it. We are not a hospital but my cafes are community centres. That's why I never reserve my cafe for anyone - Trudeau asked if he could come here and speak and I said no. I never want people to be separated by class. Everybody comes sit down everyday.
We need better designed facilities - drop in spaces for the vulnerable. Everybody else has enough space, there’s tons of coffee shops, great bars and restaurants. We have all the amenities we want. The challenge is for the people who are not welcomed in those spaces. At City Centre, I could have my grandson running around the shopping mall but no one will say anything because I look like I have money to spend, but if I’m sitting on a bench beside someone who looks like they are vulnerable they are the ones who get spoken to and asked to leave.
A family restaurant would be nice. We've got these fast food places and you know, coffee shops, but apart from that we don't have anything else...somewhere where you can take a group of people in sit down that's not a fast time... Sometimes we have a social [in the building] and one of the ladies does all the cooking and we go down there. Have a good chatter. Community supper. Yeah. That's good for getting to know your neighbours...

"Jason" - resident
Do you miss work?

Yeah, miss the mountains, working in the mountains where there's nobody around, but wildlife.

Does this place have ever organized outings? Like to the mountains?

To the mountains? No, we just talk about work or books or go to Ikea.

What if there was a bus that allowed visits to the mountain?

Yeah, if there was one I probably wouldn't come back.
Our research generated a significant amount of insight and ideas for prototyping new initiatives related to urban wellness. Some of them have already been prototyped by the RECOVER committee teams. Many more ideas are waiting for others to take them on. The themes generated from this research offer promising areas to focus future prototypes as they are centred around the goals and motivations of those living in the neighbourhoods.

We recommend further ethnographic research in the 5 neighbourhoods to uncover additional insights and to continue building relationships with the public.