

Annual Report 2020

urban
matters

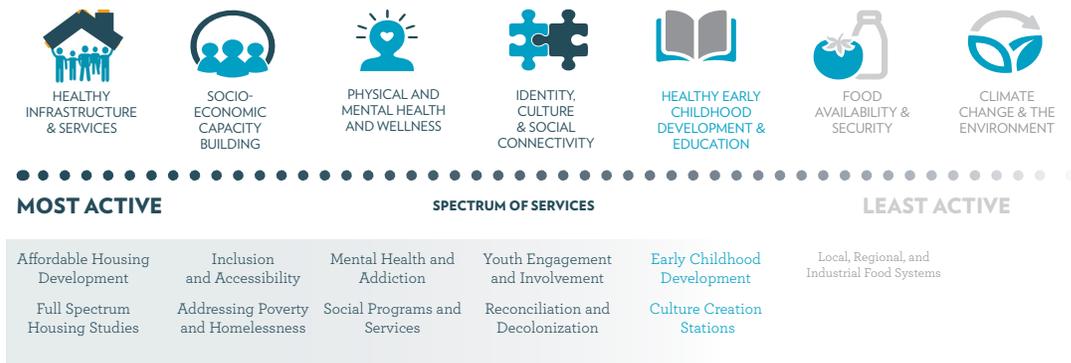
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to 2021! This last year has been unprecedented in many ways – the worldwide pandemic has not only impacted our everyday lives, it has shined a light on the critical work we do around social well-being in communities. As we emerge from our 7th year in operation, we find ourselves more focused and clear on who we are, what we do, and where we deliver real outcomes in community. Now our challenge becomes communicating that to all of you! To that end, we have moved forward with a series of branding exercises to focus our impact goals, areas of focus and tactics around how we work. Stay tuned for more on this as 2021 progresses.

2020 saw us deepening our impact in a number of our core areas of focus. For example, our affordable housing practice saw us delivering solutions labs with North Vancouver, YMCA, and Indigenous housing partners in Surrey. This approach lets us work through key housing issues in collaborative settings and challenges the groups to prototype solutions with real implementation potential – something we know is critical in getting to impactful outcomes. Also, our social planning practice was instrumental in delivering significant project resources to address the opioid overdose crisis through our work facilitating Community Action Teams, while we continued to support 13 municipalities in Alberta in understanding and addressing the overdose crisis collaboratively across and within their communities.

Our work continues to address the spectrum of Social Well-Being; the social determinants of health and associated spectrum of services offer a useful way of describing the areas we find ourselves working in.

Social Determinants of Community Health



This last year our team broadened to include two professionals with expertise we think will be critical to moving the dial on complex social projects in communities – namely in solutions labs and narrative and culture shifting. Both individuals have added considerable depth to our team and expanded how we think about change in community.

I hope you find this Year End Report as interesting and illuminating as we do. Thanks for your attention and we wish you a connected and impactful 2021.

Sincerely,

Ken Gauthier
President
Urban Matters CCC



COVID-19

While the team primarily worked remotely before COVID-19, they also found themselves adapting to an ever-changing world.

Despite the distance, this team has always been a tightly supportive and interactive group of practitioners who rely on each other. The nature of the work that we aspire to undertake is inherently emotional and this team shares those emotions, and they share in their humanity. It comes as no surprise then, that we also struggle with the realities of separation. We are settling in to the notion that this may more closely resemble the 'new normal' for some time to come, and taking steps to discuss this openly as a team and thinking about new ways to stay connected in a pandemic-driven society.

We see now, perhaps more than ever, that our work is crucial to improving social outcomes for everyone. In 2020, we continued to build and deepen our relationships with our community partners and worked alongside them to keep essential services and projects running for those who need it most. We're constantly inspired by those working everyday in communities around us.

defining our impact

OUR IMPACT GOALS

In 2020, the Board of Directors and the front line practitioners spent some time working on some common language to describe our goal as an organization or our 'north star.' We've landed on the following three impact goals for Urban Matters.

- 1** Support community-led systems change efforts intended to cultivate social cohesion and foster community resiliency.
- 2** Leave the systems that we interact with in better shape once we move on.
- 3** Inspire and educate others to be systems focused and to value lived experience.

The first statement is really our overall descriptor of the work we aspire to do, the second and third statements outline key considerations in how we do the work, with the intention of being a net overall contributor to the systems we work in and to very specifically build capacity in that system, to deploy and share our privileges at every opportunity.

We also learned that we needed a means to measure how well we're progressing against these impact goals. We need to measure what matters to us. To address this, a series of 9 qualitative filtering questions were developed, and then applied to the entire inventory of UM projects since 2015, as described on the following page.



1. Partnerships

Is the project partnership based? Were most key systems stakeholders directly impacted by the issue represented, consulted, or partnered with in some way?



2. People-Focused

Was the project designed with a clear understanding and/or representation from those that the project is meant to serve?



3. Valuing Lived Experience

To what extent did the project prioritize and value the perspective of those with lived experience central to the issue being considered?



4. Reflecting and Learning

To what extent were resources allocated for reflecting on the project key learnings and process documentation and/or were some of those learnings shared outside of the project team to improve the impact of other similar work?



5. Systems Understanding

Did the UM Team involved have a deep understanding of the systems the assignment was working within, and/or were any gaps were filled in by further research, mapping, and/or knowledge partnerships?



6. Systems Gap

Was the project designed to fill a clear system gap? Could the project unlock the impact potential of other nodes in the system?



7. Schedule

Was sufficient time allocated to project planning, implementation, and follow up to both execute and monitor progress effectively?



8. Team Match

Was the UM Team the right/best team for the job?



9. Monitoring & Evaluation

Were sufficient M&E planning, timelines, and budgets in place and were M&E outcomes directly used to adjust project planning towards better system outcomes?

After having passed our project list through these filtering criteria, we realized that while we're on the right track, we still have some work to do in communicating these metrics across our team and beyond.

A key area of focus for us is in 'Reflecting and Learning' as we think that sharing our stories will not only help deepen understanding of our impact but will also have great potential for impacting others in the system. We began our work bolstering our efforts in 'Reflection and Learning' in 2020 by hosting a series of external webinars to share learnings. More details are described on the following page.

Another key area of focus for us is continuing to empower and engage the voices of people with lived or living experience in the social issues that we're aiming to tackle. We believe that citizens are fundamental to designing the systems and solutions that shape our lives and communities. We understand that the best and most equitable solutions come from diverse voices and multiple perspectives and we will continue to strive towards inclusion of a lived experience voice in all that we do.

We're looking forward to having this framework to measure ourselves up against for years to come and invite you to follow along on our impact journey.

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION



Urban Matters donates \$100K to the Urban Systems Foundation

Urban Matters is proud to once again announce its annual community contribution. As a result of the team's colossal efforts in 2020, we are excited to announce our biggest contribution to date of \$100,000 to be directed to the Urban Systems Foundation.

In 2020, we determined that we would have sufficient profits to once again make a financial community contribution, in line with our purpose as a CCC. You'll recall that previous contributions were aimed at investing in an up and coming social venture (PEOPLE Employment Services), boosting funds for the development of a housing authority (Grand Forks) and hosting a contest to reward innovative housing ideas (ReFrame Housing Competition). This year, Urban Matters has decided on a different approach. Instead of searching beyond the Urban family for an opportunity to distribute our impact dollars, we've decided to bolster the efforts of our well established Urban Systems Foundation. The Foundation has been a vehicle for Urbanites to give back to their communities for over 20 years.

Urban Systems employees in 10 branches across Western Canada actively serve in a variety of programs through the Foundation. Themes and activities are based on the following categories: youth, adults, family, and environment. For more information on the Urban Systems Foundation and their backyard projects, please visit their website.

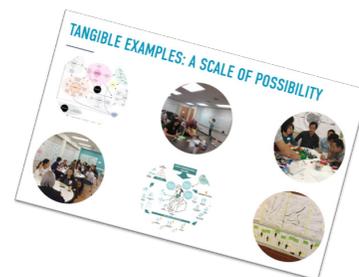
While Urban Matters was never expected to directly contribute to the Foundation, this collaboration is an important milestone that signals the deep integration amongst our family of companies.

Because of its incorporation as a community contribution company, Urban Matters builds social impact into its very core. The Urban Systems Foundation shares this vision by working to create a healthy thriving community for all- in our own backyards and beyond. This \$100,000 contribution to the Foundation means that our collective efforts will reach even more members of the communities in which we live, work and play. These dollars are more than dollars. They're the result of countless Urbanites working together in service for vibrant communities.

Webinar Series

This year, our team put together a series of webinars around key topics of interest for clients and community. Webinars ranged in subjects from new skills and approaches to deep subject matter presentations on intersecting crises. We look forward to continuing to host more of these sessions in 2021.

SOCIAL INNOVATION/ SOLUTIONS LAB



Hosted by: Brent Wellsch

THE HOUSING CRISIS, COVID-19 AND MUNICIPAL HOUSING RESPONSES



Hosted by: Matt Thomson

A PANDEMIC IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE

Hosted by: Jen Casorso and Sarah Ravlic



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Solutions Labs - Community Housing

CONSULT



Urban Matters was hired to support a partnership between the City of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver and Squamish First Nation, through a Balanced Housing Lab. The purpose of the Balanced Housing Lab is to innovate solutions that meet the growing affordability gap for households earning a moderate to middle income. The project is guided by a Steering Committee with representation from officials from all three core project partners, a North Shore MLA, and a North Shore MP, and BC Housing.

The lab convened a diverse group of participants representing developers, non-profits, academics, local government planners, financial institutions, business owners, and residents with lived experience to identify challenges and barriers, map assets, and co-create solutions. The Lab started testing prototypes intended to be implemented through policy changes. These include testing new opportunities for moderate to middle-income housing through combined local government incentives and senior government funding programs and piloting an alternative development approvals process. The project is also testing opportunities for increasing collaboration across First Nations and local government jurisdictions.

LOOKING AHEAD

Our team is hopeful and excited about our ability to deliver tangible solutions to complex social challenges in communities. Our strong year in 2020 leaves us well positioned to evolve and scale our impact and geographic reach. Our Impact Goals and the associated filtering questions are setting us up to measure what matters to us- all with an end goal of supporting enduring solutions that heal communities and build social well-being.

Some of our goals for 2021 include:

✓ **Scaling Into Other Geographies:** We anticipate deliberately growing our geographic focus- think Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, with practitioners experienced in affordable housing and social planning and development.

✓ **Brand Deep Dive:** With greatest clarity on who we are, what we do, and where we create impacts to social well-being in community, we have started a branding refresh exercise that we will complete and launch later in 2021.

Opioid Response

CONVENE

The City of Grand Prairie contracted Urban Matters CCC to convene representatives from local governments across Alberta to share knowledge, experience and challenges related to their response to the overdose crisis. The Collaborative membership comprised of members from 11 Alberta municipalities including: Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Spruce Grove, Cold Lake, Strathcona County, Wood Buffalo, Red Deer, Grande Prairie, and Leduc.

The Collaborative provided a platform for local governments to develop a collective understanding of the diverse approaches being applied across communities to address the challenges of the overdose crisis. Members attended 4 sessions to date where they shared updates from their communities and discussed the viability of solutions on the ground. The last five sessions of the Collaborative (January-June 2021) are designed to focus on five priority areas: Communication on Impact, Anti-stigma Initiatives, Lived and Living Experience Engagement, Overdose Prevention Services and Sharps Clean up, and Local Government Policies and Plans. Resource guides on each topic are being developed and there is desire to build capacity among all the members to enhance their response to the overdose crisis in meaningful ways with the tools available to them. The final result in June will be a complete resource guide that contains best practices, data tools, case studies, and Collaborative reflections on local government approaches and new opportunities for reaching hidden populations at risk of overdose.

The exercise will then allow us to become deliberate with our overall storytelling and communications – and allow us to be more strategic and consistent with the stories we are telling about our work.

✓ **Market Growth in Solutions Labs & Culture Shifting:** With the addition of leaders in solutions labs and strategic communications tactics to support shifting culture and narrative, we anticipate a strong market push to apply these tactics to our range of focus areas in social well-being. With a deeper toolbox for impact, we will be working with all of our practitioners to explore how we incorporate these tactics in service of our communities.

We look forward to the year ahead and invite you to join along with us on our social media pages and on our website.



THE FINE PRINT

Financial Statements

With that comes our annual disclosure statements, in legal ease for clarity, and coincident with our 2020 fiscal year end (December 1st 2019 to November 30th 2020). Each and every year, Urban Matters CCC must disclose:

1. The remuneration and position held of each person whose remuneration during that year was at least \$75,000, or, if there are more than 10 persons whose remuneration during that year was at least \$75 000, the remuneration and position held during that year of each of the 10 most highly remunerated persons

Urban Matters CCC held no positions in fiscal 2020 for which the remuneration exceeded \$75,000.

2. The financial position of the company in that year by attaching to the report the financial statements prepared in relation to that year

Urban Matters CCC's net-profit, after-tax, financial earnings were: \$42,943. The following information about dividends declared in relation to shares of classes or series of shares:

i. For each of those classes and series of shares, the aggregate amount of the dividends declared in that year in relation to shares of that class or series of shares.

ii. The identity of all entities that hold or beneficially own shares of that class or series of shares

Urban Matters CCC did not declare any dividends in fiscal 2020.

4. The amount prescribed for a transfer of all money and other assets transferred to a single transferee during a financial year, whether by way of one or more than one transaction in that financial year, is \$10 000.

Urban Matters CCC did not transfer any money or other assets in fiscal 2020.

