2019 Evaluation Report: Portfolio Analysis & Developmental Evaluation Executive Summary

Link to full report

Chapter 1 Background to RECOVER

RECOVER is a City of Edmonton sponsored initiative that seeks to mobilize organizations and residents to improve 'urban wellness' in the city's five downtown core neighborhoods and beyond. It is guided by a set of seven principles and stewarded and supported a variety of committees and teams.

The initiative employs a human-centred design approach. It focuses on developing, testing and scaling promising innovative initiatives that can shift the narratives, networks and systems that shape urban wellness. In mid 2018, scores of people participating in community innovation teams created twelve prototypes in five areas:

- Wellness as Service
- Working & Learning
- Vibrant Neighborhoods
- Open Collaboration
- Community Supports

These prototypes offered the team opportunities to learn – both successes and failures – and the ability to be nimble, adapt, and pivot from the original ideas when needed.

To support their efforts, RECOVER partners have already developed an evaluation framework which describes three levels of evaluation. They have completed several evaluation activities. These include, for example, developing indicators of urban wellness, getting feedback on diverse prototypes, and reflecting on the strengths and limitations of the RECOVER process to date.

The RECOVER Initiative has moved into the next phase of its work based on the four recommendations that the Edmonton City Council approved in August 2018:

1. That the City continue RECOVER in the five downtown core neighbourhoods for up to five years to allow more time to measure changes of the indicators of urban wellness.

2. That RECOVER begin work in the Strathcona neighbourhood.

3. That Administration, in collaboration with partners, develop a renewed RECOVER shared leadership structure and report back to City Council by the end of March 2019.

4. That Administration advance a distributed model for serving marginalized people to ensure facilities and services are available in other part of the city where need is evident; and that Administration explore tools and incentives that can contribute to more informed, human centred infrastructure to support wellness in the core.

Evaluation Framework

In 2019, RECOVER and Mark Cabaj (Here to There Consulting) developed an overarching Evaluation Framework[1] to assess and guide the work being undertaken. This iteration of the RECOVER evaluation is organized around an upgraded evaluation map that reflects the evolution of the initiative. It includes six clusters of evaluation that responds to the questions posed by RECOVER stakeholders.

- The stewardship & engagement of the process
- The evolution of prototypes
- The alignment of strategies and initiatives
- The changes in the drivers of urban wellness
- The population level impact on urban wellness
- The strategic learnings to emerge from the process

While the upgraded framework outlines several areas for evaluation, the RECOVER Core Team has prioritized the evolution of the prototypes for evaluation in 2019. This report is an evaluation of the prototypes and the collection as a portfolio. In addition, the processes of prototyping and social innovation in the context of RECOVER is being evaluated with a Developmental Evaluation approach.

Prototype Evaluation and Portfolio Analysis

Prototypes or innovations follow a process described by Cabaj (2019) as the Innovation

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[1] [1] Mark Cabaj. Here to There Consulting. *Edmonton RECOVER Initiative. Evaluation Scope of Work.* April 2019.

Continuum.[2] In short, the innovation process is divided into three phases.

Discovery Phase – this phase is characterised by exploratory research and the generation of ideas based on that research.

Experimental Phase – this phase is characterised by testing or experimentation. In Rapid Prototypes, the innovators gather reactions to rough representations of the innovative idea. In Field Prototypes, "working elements" of the innovations are tested in the real world. The intent in both is to learn from the experiment.

Performance Phase – this phase is characterised by prototypes becoming sustained Initiatives. Whether a pilot, adopted or scaled initiative, learning and impact are the focus of the evaluations.

A set of rubrics were developed to help evaluate innovations in each phase of the continuum "Rubrics offer a process for making explicit the judgements in an evaluation and are used to judge the quality, value or the importance of the service provided."

The rubric developed for the Discovery Phase is intended to assess ideas prior to testing. The ideas are evaluated against three criteria: line of sight to urban wellness (as defined by stakeholder's in the initiative's first year), embedded in research and stakeholder support.

In the Scaling Phase, the rubrics have five foundational elements to scaling: scaling out, scaling up, scaling deep, scaling scree and scaling infrastructure. Using the rubric encourages development of innovations that can scale for greater impact.

Due to the timing in which the rubrics were developed and the RECOVER prototyping process, the rubrics were only applied to prototypes in the Experimental Phase. The rubrics in this phase assessed the prototypes on four criteria:

Impact - the extent to which an innovation can contribute to the urban wellness of individuals and organizations in the six targeted neighborhoods. This includes (a) contributing to one or more domains of urban wellness, (b) the number of people and/or organizations that will benefit, (c) the depth of impact, (d) the durability of the impact and (e) the extent to which it will benefit the six "Recover" neighborhoods.

Within the Impact criteria, the rubrics acknowledge the linkage or line of sight to the domains of urban wellness, of which there are currently five. These include the following:
   A.   Built & Natural Environment – the condition of the physical environment, both

man-made and naturally occurring spaces. This includes streetscapes, buildings, parks, air quality,

B. Economic Vitality – the level of financial stability and success of individuals, families and businesses. This includes personal income, business revenue, employment, income supports (e.g. AISH, employment insurance, PDD) etc.
C. Physical & Mental Health – the well-being of individuals in both body and mind.
D. Safety & Security – the real and perceived protection from risks and dangers, unintended (safety) and intended (security).
E. Social Capacity – the ability of people to work together to organize public relationships rather than rely on government bodies or market influence to dictate actions.

Feasibility - the extent to which the team, organization or network meant to be the 'lead innovators' have the operational capabilities to effectively and efficiently manage and sustain the innovation. This includes (a) people with skills, knowledge and attitudes, (b) organizational structures/processes, (c) legitimacy and profile with key beneficiaries, neighborhoods and partners.

Viability - the extent to which the innovation can thrive in the systems in which it is embedded. It refers to (a) the policy and regulations that influence the innovations, (b) the day to day practices and processes of administration and decision-making, (c) the availability of sufficient financial resources required to carry out the work, and (d) the formal structures and authority of who gets to make the 'decisions about the design, implementation and ongoing adaptation of the idea.

Stakeholder Support - the extent to which key stakeholders support the idea, including **(a)** the people and organization whom the idea is meant to benefit, **(b)** the 'prototype' teams meant to develop and test it, and **(c)** the community stakeholders whose support is required to develop and test it.

The rubrics provided to the prototype teams is included in Appendix A.[6] The scoring on the rubrics allows the prototype teams to make decisions on how the prototype should move forward, if at all. There are four options for prototypes after experimenting: Double Down, Pivot/Persevere, Stop or Spin-Off.

The RECOVER evaluation also incorporates two analytical frameworks which can help to illustrate the differences between prototypes and spectrum of all prototypes collectively. Prototypes from the first and second round of testing were examined using these frameworks.

The **Multi-Level Perspective (MLP)** framework demonstrates that there are different types

of scales of change required to lead to wellness outcomes. There are three structural levels where innovations can introduce disruptions to have impact.

Niche Initiatives are localized in its implementation and impact. Typically, niche initiatives build up internal momentum through learning processes, performance improvements and support from stakeholders. Its primary beneficiaries are those directly served by the initiative and aim to scale the initiative.

Nudge Systems are initiatives that create pressure on the predominant regime. The innovation introduced may still have impact at an individual level but is also able to create a disruption that pushes the system to respond by changing policies, regulations, structures, resource flows and practices.

Shift Landscape are initiatives that change public and leader's awareness, understanding and interest in issues and approaches. At the broadest scale, this relates to societal values and norms (e.g. civil rights, women's rights, climate change, etc.).

There is significant interplay across the three levels. Several niche initiatives may collectively lead to changes that nudges systems and with other initiatives may shift the landscape. Conversely, a shift in landscape can in turn nudge change in the system and guide policies and practices that impact niche initiatives.

The **Three Horizons** framework is traditionally used as a business model to plan strategic transitions from current activities to future activities. In a social context, it highlights different levels of risk, timeline and level of disruption and change.

Horizon 1 – Incremental Innovation: These innovations operate within the ***existing*** policies, regulations and guidelines that shape practice. The innovations are intended to be immediate in implementation and impact.

Horizon 2 – Reform Innovation: These innovations operate within a ***new*** set of policies, regulations and guidelines that shape practice. The innovations are intended to be implemented and impactful in the near future.

Horizon 3 – Transformational Innovation: These innovations create new practices from radically different paradigms for which policies, regulations and guidelines do net yet exist. These innovations are intended to be implemented and impactful far into the future.

This framework also speaks to the likelihood an initiative will be successful in each horizon

as adoption and implementation has greater uncertainty over time. Innovations targeted at Horizon 3 are less likely to come to fruition or conversely, many more Horizon 3 innovations need to be tested before one will be found to be successful.

Developmental Evaluation Methodology

Developmental Evaluation (DE) was first proposed by Michael Quinn Patton with the support of colleagues who have wrestled with the problem of dealing with complexity in human systems and the need to provide structured, useful, actionable information to make decisions in supporting innovations.

DE has been described as being akin to taking a classic "road trip" with a destination in mind, a planned route, but also a spirit of adventure and willingness to deviate when needed. DE is an *approach* to evaluation, not a specific method or tool, designed to support decision making for innovation. Innovation, in this case, is about the activities and decisions that allow an organization and its members to create value by design. The design may not turn out as expected or produce surprises, but it is part of an intentional act to create value through new thinking and action.

What Developmental Evaluation Is and Is Not

Developmental evaluation ("DE" as it's often referred to as), when used to support innovation, is about weaving design with data and strategy. It's about taking a systematic, structured approach to paying attention to *what* you're doing, *what is* being produced (and *how*), and anchoring it to *why* you're doing it by using monitoring and evaluation data. DE helps to identify potentially promising practices or products and guide the strategic decision-making process that comes with innovation. When embedded within a design process, DE provides evidence to support the innovation process from ideation through to business model execution and product delivery.

There are a lot of misconceptions about what a DE is and what it is not and it is worth addressing these as an introduction to DE.

1. DE is an *approach* to evaluation, not a method.
2. DE is about evaluation for *strategic decision-making*. If the evaluation is not useful in making decisions about a program or service then is it not a DE.
3. DE is not about product or service *improvement*, it's about product and service *development*. It involves a shift in mindset from growth and 'best practices' to one of mindful, strategic, adaptive strategy and developmental design.
4. DE is not separate from strategy, but a critical part of it.

5. DE does not make things easier, but it can make things better. DE helps programs innovate, learn, and adapt more fully, but that isn't always easy. A strong DE involves deep engagement with data, a commitment to learning, and a willingness to embrace (or at least accept) volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA).

6. DE can help document the innovation process. Through creating tools, processes, and
   decision-making structures to support innovation, DE also helps document the decisions and outcomes of those decisions. When people ask: "how did you get here?" DE provides some answers.

7. DE does not eliminate the risks associated with VUCA. DE provides a means of building the data set and decision tools to support strategy.

8. DE is not a panacea. Even with the mindset, appropriate decision-making structures, and a good design, DE is not going to solve the problems of innovation. It will give more systematic means to understand the process, outcomes, outputs, and impacts associated with an innovation, but it still means trials, errors, starts and stops, and the usual explorations that innovators need to experience.

9. Developmental Evaluation is a powerful way to help innovators learn, demonstrate and showcase the efforts that go into making change happen, and to increase the capacity of your organization to evolve its mindsets, skillsets, and toolsets for innovation.

Civitas Consulting was engaged and included as part of the process from June to November 2019.

For the purpose of this DE report the following is included:
• City Connectors insights from process at completion,

• Coaches insights from process at completion,

• A sampling of attendees at the Showcase and over July and August 2019, and

• Data mining of materials in RECOVER files

The Developmental Evaluation results are limited in that the following data was a gap.
• The DE report does not include any of the discussions regarding strategy and decision making that were made internally by COE and that included the social innovation lab lead Ben Weinlick,

• InWithForward Report Strategy Report, and

• Feedback from end users of the prototypes and participants in the testing /experimental process.

CHAPTER 2 Prototype Evaluation Results

The prototype teams applied the Experimental Phase rubrics to their innovations in October after completing the field tests. The results of the rubric were used to inform conversations in determining the next course of action for the prototype – i.e. double-down, spin-off, pivot/persevere or stop.

Experimental Phase Rubrics Scores and Decisions

Prototype Name	Impact (5)	Feasibility (5)	Viability (5)	Stakeholder Support (5)	Total Score (20)	Prototype Decision
Alley Arts & Gardens	3	4	4	4	15	Pivot/Persevere
City Centre Mall	5	5	3	5	18	Double-Down
Community Business Exchange	-	-	-	1	1	Stop
Data Sharing is Caring	5	2	1	4	12	Pivot/Persevere
Expectant	3	3	3	-	9	Pivot/Persevere
Good Sleep Kit	2.5	3	3	3	11.5	Pivot/Persevere
Housing Doula	4	4	3	5	16	Spin-Off
Mobile Workshop	2	3	5	4	14	Pivot/Persevere
Neighbour Connect	3	3.5	4	3.4	13.9	Spin-Off
Old Strathcona Odd Jobs	3	3	4	4	14	Spin-Off
Pop-Up Porch	3	5	4	4	16	Double-Down
Stow and Go Network	3	3	3	3	12	Pivot/Persevere
Mean Score	**3.3**	**3.5**	**3.4**	**3.7**	**12.7**	

Of the twelve prototypes, only two chose to double-down – City Centre Mall and Pop-Up Porch. These prototypes had the highest scores on the rubrics assessment. Three prototypes are targeted to be spin-offs, while six prototypes will pivot/persevere.

Only one prototype is being concluded at this point – Community Business Exchange, Benefits for All. This particular prototype couldn't get sufficient stakeholder support to develop a robust plan for testing.

Although the rubric is intended to be an informative tool for the teams, the scores could be good indicators of prototype trajectory.

Prototype Decision	Number of Prototypes	Average Rubric Score	Rubric Score Range
Double-Down	2	17.0	16 - 18
Spin-Off	3	14.6	13.9 - 16
Pivot/Persevere	6	12.3	9 - 15
Stop	1	1.0	-

Interestingly, only two of the prototypes scored the maximum score (5) on the impact criteria – City Centre Mall and Data Sharing is Caring. The City Centre Mall prototype has a line of sight to two outcome domains (Built & Natural Environment and Social Capacity), while Data Sharing is Caring also reflects two outcome domains (Physical & Mental Health and Social Capacity).

Although there are five outcome domains, they are intertwined. For example, an innovation that looks to modify the built and natural environment can in turn impact the domain of safety and security.

Analysis of prototypes from both rounds of exploration show that nearly all prototypes (except three) have a line of sight to more than one outcome domain. In the first round of social innovation, ten of the twelve prototypes target physical and mental health outcomes. The other four outcome domains are being impacted by less than half of the prototypes.

In contrast, the second round of prototypes indicate an emphasis towards social capacity. However, this emphasis was not as pronounced as only eight of the twelve innovations touched the social capacity domain. The outcome domains of built & natural environment, physical & mental health and safety & security are each reflected through 5 prototypes. Only Old Strathcona Odd Jobs prototype had a line of sight to economic vitality.

Combined, the 24 prototypes developed over two cycles of innovation touched all outcome domains. However, Physical and Mental Health seems to be a central tenet for prototypes, being an intended area of change in two-thirds of the prototypes.
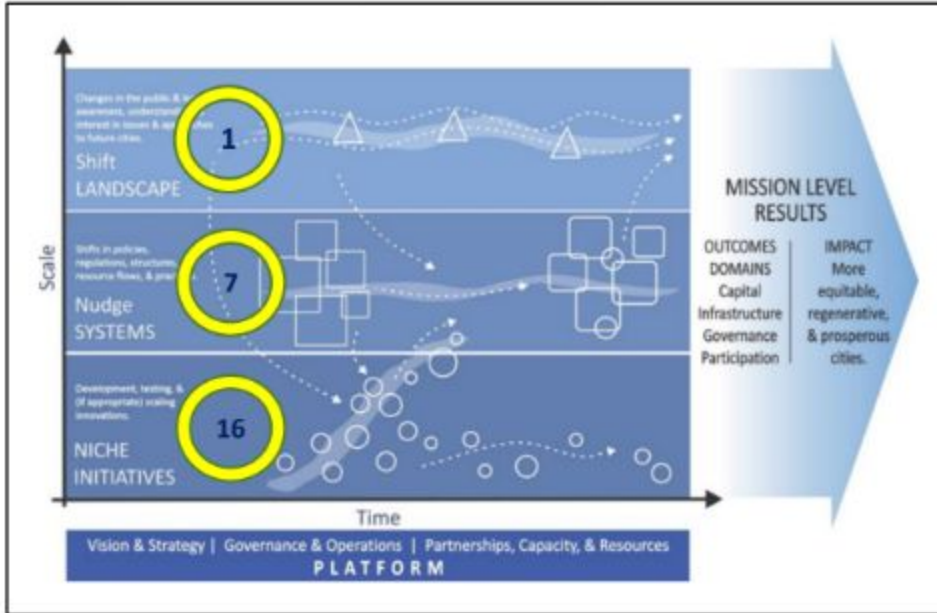
RECOVER Prototype: Outcome Domains

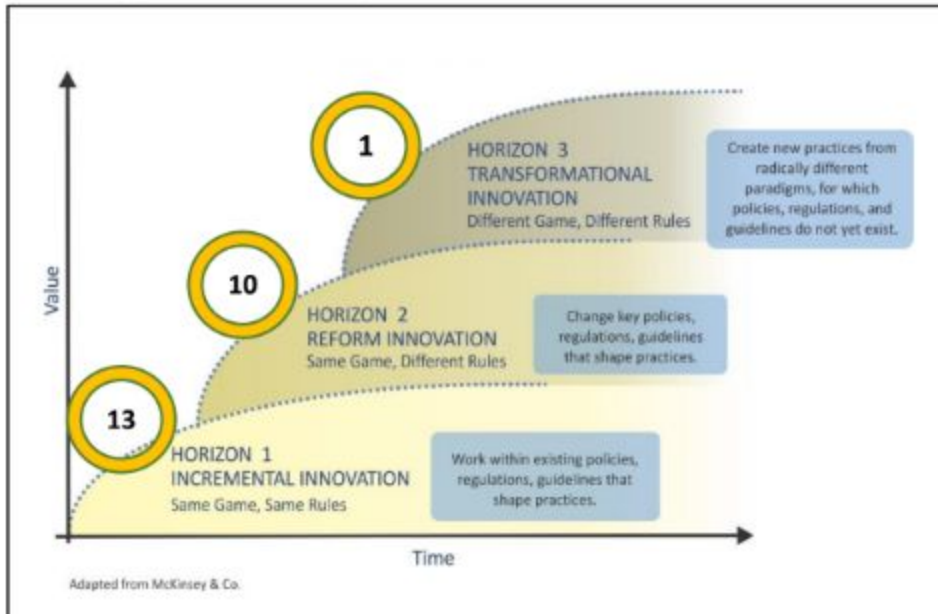| Prototype Name	Built & Natural Environment	Economic Vitality	Physical & Mental Health	Safety & Security	Social Capacity
Round 1					
Culture Club			✓		
Empty Storefronts	✓		✓		
Greenhouse Community Hub	✓				
It Takes A Village			✓	✓	
It's All About Connections		✓	✓		
Job Skills Matching		✓	✓		✓
Meet & Eat			✓	✓	
Project Welcome Mat	✓		✓	✓	
Public Washrooms	✓		✓		
Socially Conscious Businesses		✓	✓	✓	✓
Universal Basic Income		✓	✓	✓	
Wellness Council					✓
Round 1 Total	4	4	10	5	3
Round 2					
Alley Arts & Gardens	✓			✓	✓
City Centre Mall	✓				✓
Community Business Exchange				✓	✓
Data Sharing is Caring			✓		✓
Expectant			✓		✓
Good Sleep Kit	✓		✓		
Housing Doula			✓		✓
Mobile Workshop	✓		✓		
Neighbour Connect				✓	✓
Old Strathcona Odd Jobs		✓		✓	✓
Pop-Up Porch	✓				
Stow and Go Network				✓	
Round 2 Totals	5	1	5	5	8
Overall Totals	9	5	15	10	11

Portfolio Analysis

Analysis of the portfolio using the two descriptive lenses (Multi-Level Perspective and Three Horizon Framework), shows that the majority of prototypes fall within Niche Initiatives (67%) and Horizon 1 – Incremental Innovation (54%). This is to be expected as these innovations are the most tangible in the current environment. They require no changes to policies and guidelines, and the impact typically manifests for the end user.

Fewer prototypes are categorized as Nudge Systems (29%) and Horizon 2 – Reform Innovation (42%). The timelines for these prototypes to be actualized is much longer as they require formal changes to policies. For example, for the Public Washrooms prototype to be realized, it would require a review of and/or changes to safety policies and health regulations.

Prototype Distribution by Multi-Level Perspective Framework

Prototype Distribution by Three Horizon Framework

HORIZON 3
TRANSFORMATIONAL
INNOVATION
Different Game, Different Rules

Create new practices from radically different paradigms, for which policies, regulations, and guidelines do not yet exist.

HORIZON 2
REFORM INNOVATION
Same Game, Different Rules

Change key policies, regulations, guidelines that shape practices.

HORIZON 1
INCREMENTAL INNOVATION
Same Game, Same Rules

Work within existing policies, regulations, guidelines that shape practices.

Value

Time

Adapted from McKinsey & Co.

Only one prototype fell into the Shift Landscape and Horizon 3 – Transformational Innovation categories. The Wellness Council prototype looked to shift the paradigm of decision making when it comes to community impact. This would require a reimagining of a new set of legislation, policies, processes and practices. The timeline in this situation is stretched out far into the future.

Of the 24 prototypes, five chose to Double-Down after testing. They are all categorized as Nudge Systems and Horizon 2 – Reform Innovations.
  • It's All About Connections
  • Project Welcome Mat
  • Public Washrooms
  • City Centre Mall
      • Pop-Up Porch This might reflect the desire of community members to push systems change and still feel the impact at an individual and neighbourhood level.

Thirteen (54%) prototypes decided to continue prototyping (whether led by RECOVER or another stakeholder). These prototypes, for the most part, are Niche Initiatives and in Horizon 1 – Incremental Innovations. Six (25%) prototypes have formally concluded. These prototypes represent all categories. Although only one prototype from this year has concluded, it is likely that more will come to a decision to stop. This might be a result of waning stakeholder support, sufficient learnings being generated or a change in context or

environment.

Breakdown of Prototypes by Multi-Level Perspective Framework

	Round 1 Prototypes	Round 2 Prototypes
Shift Landscape	• Wellness Council	
Nudge Systems	• It Takes A Village • It's All About Connections • Project Welcome Mat • Public Washrooms	• City Centre Mall • Data Sharing is Caring • Pop-Up Porch
Niche Innovations	• Culture Club • Empty Storefronts • Greenhouse Community Hub • Job Skills Matching • Meet & Eat • Socially Conscious Businesses • Universal Basic Income	• Alley Arts & Gardens • Community Business Exchange • Expectant • Good Sleep Kit • Housing Doula • Mobile Workshop • Neighbour Connect • Old Strathcona Odd Jobs • Stow & Go Network

Breakdown of Prototypes by Three Horizon Framework

	Round 1 Prototypes	Round 2 Prototypes
Horizon 3	• Wellness Council	
Horizon 2	• Greenhouse Community Hub • It Takes A Village • It's All About Connections • Project Welcome Mat • Public Washrooms • Universal Basic Income	• Data Sharing is Caring • City Centre Mall • Neighbour Connect • Pop-Up Porch
Horizon 1	• Culture Club • Empty Storefronts • Job Skills Matching • Meet & Eat • Socially Conscious Businesses	• Alley Arts & Gardens • Community Business Exchange • Expectant • Good Sleep Kit • Housing Doula • Mobile Workshop • Old Strathcona Odd Jobs • Stow and Go Network

Conclusions

Overall, the impact of the current prototype portfolio is limited to the participant or end user and perhaps some neighbourhood level changes. Realistically, population level changes are not likely to occur. There are two reasons for this. First, the number of Shift Landscape prototypes is insufficient, and the likelihood of their success is low due to the challenges of

complexity and constriction of timelines. Second, the progress and scale of Niche Initiatives and Nudge Systems prototypes are too isolated and small to have significant cumulative impact.

> *Recommendation:* If the intent is to impact population level change, increase the number of prototypes categorized as Shift Landscape or Transformational Innovations. These seem to have the greatest potential for broader impact but require greater investment of time and resources to achieve success. Expect the success rate of these prototypes to be very low.

The evaluation showed that, of the twelve prototypes tested in this cycle, only two were adopted to be scaled and only one was concluded. Conversely, the other nine - 75% - are being further tested by RECOVER or another stakeholder. This raises several questions....

1. Is there capacity, resources and accountability to oversee the continued testing and experimentation of so many prototypes?

2. How much testing and experimentation is enough? What criteria can be used to allow teams to "let go" of a prototype? There is the potential to fall into a trap of constant testing and the desire to make a prototype successful.

> **Recommendation:** Implement a regular routine for standardized evaluation of the prototypes. This would include processes and structures for data collection, analysis and sense-making. One specific component in this would include common guidelines for assessing when prototypes are concluded, adopted or undergo further testing.

For those that have transitioned into the Performance Phase of the Innovation Continuum, it is too early to expect impact. A good evaluation of these initiatives is needed to capture further learning and to measure significant changes.

> **Recommendation:** Implement use of the rubrics developed for the Discovery and Performance Phases of the Innovation Continuum. Applying the rubrics in the Discovery Phase assists in understanding the potential for success of prototypes. Therefore, more prototypes are likely to be successful. The rubrics in the Performance Phase offer a window into the context in which prototypes can be scaled. Again, this increases the likelihood of success.
>
> In addition, share the overarching evaluation framework with all stakeholders and engage them to actively participate in the process.

CHAPTER 3 Developmental Evaluation Results

2019 was a continuation of the prototyping process as twelve innovations were selected to be tested. This next iteration of RECOVER prototyping integrated some new aspects and looked to be more explicit about others. The expansion into Old Strathcona challenged RECOVER to engage stakeholders in this new area and launch the human-centred design process with what they learned from before and additional supports.

1. InWithForward (IWF) implemented more ethnographic research at City Centre Mall and

in Old Strathcona to better understand the lived experience.

2. The Social Innovation Institute (MacEwan University) supported the innovation process

and is linking with social entrepreneurs in Edmonton.

3. Here to There Consulting and Civitas Consulting are supporting an enhanced evaluation of the prototypes and RECOVER overall.

This Developmental Evaluation has structured learnings and results in three phases – Pre-Lab, Prototype Testing & Exploration and Post-Lab.

PHASE 1: Pre-Lab – Research and Engagement

The Pre-Lab phase included:

• Ethnographic research and training conducted by IWF

• IWF report back on Strathcona and City Centre

• Coach Work plan Process Developed

• Guiding Principles developed

• Evaluation Framework developed and adopted

• Coaches recruited March 25

• Kick off sessions for Coaches and Connectors in June

• Prototype selection and co-design sessions. Stakeholders are asked, "What if we used social innovation to improve urban wellness in Edmonton?"

The RECOVER Core Team provided the following feedback:

Highlights:

The Core Team appreciated the richness of the ethnographic research and the importance

of adding Strathcona and City Centre to broaden the understanding of these communities. Great appreciation was expressed of IWF and the human centred design approach. The January 29th community meeting in Strathcona was highlighted and the team appreciated the ability to see how so many stakeholders and community had "aha "moments from the research insights. The fact that the research focuses on those with lived experience and the importance of including those with lived experience in the process was highlighted. This in turn was reflected in the importance of the diversity of the teams that are part of RECOVER prototypes.

Challenges:

The primary challenge experienced by City Connectors was in finding individuals to join the prototype teams. Recruitment, engagement and retention were all highlighted as issues. However, there was some sentiment that agencies and communities could help with this if enough lead time was given. With greater support for prototypes through the testing and evaluation, other organizations could be better positioned to take over the next steps.

The demand on City staff involved in RECOVER was overwhelming. City staff served multiple roles including Core Team Members, City Connectors, facilitators and stakeholder liaisons, just to name a few. In these roles, they were being asked to support Prototype Coaches, implement and integrate research, document information, collect data for evaluation, make sense of the data, coordinate contracts, build trust and relationships with stakeholders, and perform typical administrative functions. City staff felt spread thin at times, as they were pulled in multiple directions to test twelve prototypes.

Learnings:

Recruitment to the teams was seen as a real challenge with the need to spend time building relationships, momentum and engagement practices. It was outlined in the work plan by the city to build a toolkit that would assist Coaches, Connectors and team members with roles and responsibilities. Based on feedback, the toolkit needs to be more deliberate with more training given to Coaches in learning and sense making sessions.

Planning for this phase was substantial and as a result the team spent most of their time preparing for the launch of the prototype testing. The Evaluation framework was also being developed between the Core Team and Mark Cabaj during this time. The framework was useful for the Core Team as it coalesced components (i.e. governance, prototypes, strategy, stakeholders, urban wellness) of RECOVER into a more cohesive structure. In addition, a set of prototype rubrics was being developed. It was clear that evaluation and evaluative thinking provided greater clarity and direction.

The Connectors implemented reflective sessions - one in February, three in March, one in July and one in September. They covered topics from coach skills, relationships, communications, social media communications, and storytelling. These practices could be improved by adding more deliberate developmental evaluation elements.

It was suggested that including Connectors, Coaches, those assisting with internal and external communications and developmental evaluators in this phase would help to strengthen the process.

The Prototype Coaches provided the following feedback:

The Coaches valued having an opportunity to coach in a social innovation context and this is grounded in their desire to give back to community. The Coaches came from diverse backgrounds, with some having knowledge of social issues and others with design or business experiences. Overall, they highlighted gaining something through this process – knowledge, skills or new perspective on issues.

A more robust onboarding process for prototype teams was articulated. This means clearer roles and responsibilities and greater intentional use of toolkits, templates and data collection. This would also assist in recruiting stakeholders to the prototype teams.

There was a discussion as to how to choose who is on the various teams. This discussion is also reflected in the conversations from the City Connectors, "Is this public engagement a highly democratic process or a key stakeholder process or a hybrid?" Do stakeholders self-select the prototype that interests them or are specific stakeholders actively recruited to a prototype?

PHASE 2: Prototype Exploration & Testing

The Prototype Exploration phase included:

- 12 prototypes were tested in the field (July to October 2019) to explore each of the challenge areas. The 12 teams were comprised of 5-10 people, including a Prototype Coach and a City Connector, who kept the team organized and guided the process.
- Development of evaluation rubrics, testing and revision to the tools (June to October 2019).
- Two-day strategic session with IWF and City of Edmonton (August 2019)

The RECOVER Core Team provided the following feedback:

Highlights:

It was generally agreed that this phase was stressful and very busy with all the details but that it was exciting to see theory emerge into practise. A key success indicator for the field-testing process was that relationship building emerged as essential to the entire process. The stronger the relationships at all levels the better the outcomes. The Connectors saw that the city tools and knowledge were more refined this year and that gave the connectors a greater feeling of confidence. This is in contrast to the Coaches, who would have liked more tools and templates.

Prototypes were seen to be spaces where deeper dives could be taken and were viewed as safe spaces for testing and failing. In contrast, typical public engagement processes can result in conflict, with opposing views and perspectives being unresolved.

Challenges:

Human-centred design and prototyping are a new and different way of working within the community for the City of Edmonton. It is an iterative and emerging process and is not linear. The RECOVER team is rapidly learning and adapting. The team reflected that at times it felt quite overwhelming to implement all the aspects of the prototypes – meetings and logistics related to confirming the concept, conducting initial concept testing, implementing field tests, evaluating the prototype, and preparing for the showcase.

Within prototype teams, the greatest challenge seemed to be stakeholder engagement and retention. Some prototype teams experienced inconsistent membership, which made it difficult to delegate duties, action plan and report back to the group. Scheduling and time of year may have been a factor in this. In essence, there was an underlying tension between inclusion (the desire to be sure all voices were heard and included in decisions) and accountability (the need to move forward on the process, knowing that testing needed to be completed for the Showcase event).

The demands of prototype testing increased through the summer and required more time to be dedicated to the process. Although there were structures and processes in place, including weekly team meetings, technology (e.g. Hangouts, WhatsApp) and documentation templates, this may not have been enough to optimize communications and knowledge transfer. The process could be more consistent with prototypes to collect data, learn and adapt?

Integrating the IWF research with on the ground realities was challenging and at times even questioned by prototype team members. However, the Core Team agreed that having the IWF research was essential to the success of RECOVER. There was some scepticism expressed as to whether this is real co-design with the community and the most vulnerable.

Continuous communications between various participants were absent and the need to build these aspects into the process as well as a more robust communications plan and strategy for both internal and external audiences are needed. It is important to ask ourselves, "Are we all making the same movie?"

Learnings:

Testing twelve prototypes at one time exceeds the capacity and resources available. In the future, there is a need to streamline the selection of prototypes and have more support for data collection, logistics etc. Alternatively, prototype teams could implement several smaller field tests as opposed to one big test.

Equity and diversity remain an integral part of RECOVER. The work needs to be intentional to ensure that Indigenous and newcomer voices are included.

The community agencies involved in RECOVER were quite accommodating. However, their participation may have been constrained by their capacity, resources and staff hours. In addition, the diversity of community agencies was limited. Several non-profits within the RECOVER neighbourhoods were not engaged with the prototyping. It is not clear why these agencies were not involved – whether it be due to a lack of interest or capacity, or a lack of knowledge of the initiative.

There was a recognition that the teams can improve decision making and communication between all involved in the process. One approach suggested was to have prototype teams, City Connectors and Coach's meet to share updates, issues and learnings. In processes such as these, collecting data and communication is vital in showing progress and success. Beyond that, the group also needs to capture reflections, strategies and rationale for adaptations.

A significant question is beginning to emerge: "If the 'System' is not ready to change can this work be done properly?" Systems are difficult to change and are often seemingly immovable. However, having the support of community members, city staff, agencies and business result in more momentum and hopefully more pressure to change.

Feedback from Prototype Coaches formed several themes:

Prototype Development & Process Coaches identified a disconnect in the transition of prototype selection to team selection as those who were on the teams didn't have the chance to review the full complement of opportunities. This also meant that Coaches didn't have a line of sight to the desired outcomes for urban wellness.

During the process of prototyping, the Coaches gained skills and an appreciation for facilitating meetings. With the number and diversity of team members, Coaches needed to find the most effective form of communication for the team.

The Coaches expressed concern for community members that are marginalized, stemming from the multitude of prototypes and field tests, and repeated ask of them to participate in prototyping.

Prototype Team Composition Some prototype teams had a small group. This allowed the team to move the prototype forward quickly. However, a single person/voice could shift the direction/definition/understanding of the prototype. Group dynamics can also be a concern. Coaches had to be attuned to and navigate the power dynamics at times.

It was also identified that attendance to team meetings was inconsistent. This made the prototyping process challenging as the resources weren't available to take action. Even though there was diversity on the team, Coaches shared that there was a lack of the right members e.g. by-law, service providers, etc.

Supporting the Team For the Coaches and many team members, this was their first experience with RECOVER. Coaches suggested that there needed to be a proper onboarding of people to the process and projects. Part of the onboarding process would be laying out the scope of the prototypes and the introduction of the evaluation frameworks and rubrics. The evaluation framework/rubrics helped to coalesce the project and make decisions and it was noted that this was a significant moment that brought greater clarity.

Through the testing phase, Coaches were supported by City Connectors that made linkages to resources and other stakeholders. Regular check-ins from the very beginning is desirable. The Coaches would also like to connect with other Coaches to share experiences and support each other.

Role Clarification Coaches struggled at times with their role. Some Coaches needed to remind themselves they were there to guide the process rather than participate in the process. This can be challenging, yet an important boundary to maintain.

The Coach and City Connector dynamic played out differently in different prototypes. In some cases, there was a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities. In others, the responsibilities of each role was not so clear. There was a mix of supporting the prototype team through the testing and the administrative activities i.e. bookings, equipment, supplies, etc. The unique connector duty was to bring external resources and linking with other City staff or community agencies as needed. Ultimately, whatever activities are needed, the Coach and City Connector need to be explicit about their roles together up front.

PHASE 3: Post-Lab – Showcase & Scaling

The Post-Lab phase included:

- Prototype Showcase hosted at MacEwan University's Round House (October 22, 2019). Prototype teams prepared posters summarizing their prototypes and presented these in an open house showcase to others interested in the work. Attendees were invited to ask questions and provide feedback to the prototypes to support further development and refinement. This was followed by a panel discussion with a community member with lived experience, a service provider, a Coach, and a prototype team member. The discussion was led by an Indigenous facilitator who opened with a Cree creation story about learning and innovation from the Indigenous worldview. The showcase was opened and closed by Metis and First Nations Elders.
- A celebration and feedback session with Prototype Coaches and City Connectors (November 4, 2019).
- Some teams are meeting to move forward on the 'next steps' of the prototypes.

The RECOVER Core Team provided the following feedback:

Highlights:

The RECOVER Showcase resulted in high level data being crystallised and the consistency of presentation allowed for excellent reflection and engagement as to how far the teams had come over the past few months. It also allowed for the stakeholders to engage and show interest at the showcase with the potential for new resources both human and financial. The Indigenous worldview and the panel's reflections were considered core to the event and very well received.

The Coaches' feedback session was valuable - from providing toolkit suggestions to strategies on how they navigated the systems. The session also served as a celebration and

appreciation of their efforts. Overall, City staff were impressed with the Coaches' reflections.

Challenges:

Although the RECOVER Showcase was successful, there was the sentiment that it felt like an end and didn't present any next steps. The Showcase missed an opportunity to build momentum for RECOVER. Comments reflected the difficulty in maintaining momentum but especially when there seems to be no real planning or that planning is done by a small select group and does not include the entire team. The team highlighted the need for a more deliberate and integrated approach at all levels (governance clarity is vital here) in order to make sense of the work.

Learnings:

Roles, responsibilities and processes need more clarification by everyone involved and team tensions need to be addressed. There was also a core question by some of the team whether RECOVER and social innovation is something that works and really moves needles.

The team wants to see a governance and stewardship process that is inclusionary with visions aligned amongst other initiatives.

Stakeholder Feedback

Feedback from various stakeholders was collected from July to October 2019. The feedback was gathered through informal, unstructured conversations. Stakeholders include prototype team members and participants, community members, City staff and government officials.

The feedback generated several themes which complement the feedback from Coaches and Core Team.

Awareness – RECOVER and its prototypes garnered positive media coverage in 2018 with the Project Welcome Mat prototype at Boyles Street Community Services, for example. However, little was mentioned publicly in the aftermath and left some wondering what was happening. There is also a genuine desire by some to participate and engage in the process, but it was not clear how, when or where they could do so. This lack of awareness in 2019 left some feeling like there was a loss of momentum in the broader community. The RECOVER Showcase is a highlight of the process that could be leveraged more to raise awareness.

Alignment – There remain questions as to how RECOVER aligns with other initiatives and activities, whether it be social programs, business communities or grassroots movements. Articulating these linkages would support the narrative of making this a safer city and the commitment to urban wellness.

Sustainability – There are questions as to whether these prototypes can be scaled to be more impactful. And if so, are there resources to sustain the innovation? The common sentiment in the sector is that pilot projects are implemented and end when funding shifts regardless of outcomes.

Diversity – The integration of Indigenous and Ethnocultural perspectives could be strengthened. Participation and engagement of diverse groups could offer greater opportunities not yet fully understood and realized.

Governance – The governance and stewardship structures are unclear. With a proposed governance structure only going to Council in mid-2019, it's not surprising that some felt RECOVER is a city initiative. Furthermore, the Core Team is comprised of City staff, who serve a backbone function for the project.

Conclusions & Recommendations

As a collective, we are challenged to tackle three main issues.

- How do we best meet the needs of people who are highly marginalized?
- How do we support thriving communities?
- How do we plan wellness services that consider the cumulative effects on neighbourhoods and community?

RECOVER is tasked to deliver:

- A framework for urban wellness innovation,
- An approach grounded in data,
- Uncovering tensions and building relationships, and
- Opportunities for solutions-based collaboration.

In the past year, RECOVER and all those involved have built on the previous round of prototypes to gain greater understanding of the three main issues. People are keenly aware that changing our way of working with community takes time and involves a steep learning curve. It is a different language and a different mindset. As RECOVER continues its work, these are the emerging considerations based on feedback and evaluation results.

Communication - While RECOVER staff are living out this strategy over time, the informal and formal communication of this approach does not always keep pace. In the first year, RECOVER focused on strategic communications, providing information on the objectives and intent of RECOVER to the broader public and direct stakeholders. This year's communications were more tactical in nature, sharing more detailed information on the processes and results from RECOVER.

A communication plan moving forward will need to include both a strategic and tactical approach. Being clearer and more consistent in communicating with key internal and external partners will help to broaden the base of support and engage those with limited or no past participation. There are a variety of ways to accomplish this, including the development a list of key messages, a glossary of key terms, metaphors, illustrative anecdotes and Frequently Asked Questions.

> **Recommendation:** Engage stakeholders through traditional and non-traditional methods to inform, educate and engage groups that are not represented in the RECOVER process – namely, Indigenous and cultural minority groups. Although RECOVER has made significant attempts to draw these groups into RECOVER, there is either a barrier or gap that results in lack of participation. Broader engagement is critical to the principle of Inclusivity.

Evaluation & Impact – The evaluation framework and rubrics are useful in creating an understanding of how prototypes fit in the bigger picture. RECOVER is beginning to understand how the prototypes, as a collective, form a portfolio that can catalyse community change. Initial results would indicate that getting to population level change is unlikely to occur if RECOVER continues in this format. In fact, more questions have emerged through the evaluation, namely:

➢ Are there too many prototypes or not enough? ➢ How many prototypes are needed to transition to the Performance Phase of the

continuum to have broader impact? ➢ When an innovation is adopted, what type of scaling is required – scaling out, up, deep,

scree, infrastructure, or some combination of these? Answering these questions is part of the continuing process defined within the Evaluation Scope of Work.

Recommendation: RECOVER can implement periodic cross-project reflection sessions to identify and make sense of the learnings and results from all the projects and use the insights to inform changes in RECOVER's overall strategy. Prototyping Teams, the Core Team, and supporting stakeholders can formalize and implement data collection procedures as part of the formal evaluation.

Capacity Building & Capacity – RECOVER has done a good job in developing capacity in the city with Connectors and Coaches. Furthermore, RECOVER has supported the training of ethnographers with InWithForward leading the process.

Members of the Core Team seem to be stretched as they have been responsible for oversight of RECOVER and act as City Connectors in addition to their other projects. This begs the question of "What level of dedicated human resources are necessary to ensure RECOVER is implemented effectively and with greatest impact?" The RECOVER Core Team, with its stakeholders, have been having strategic conversations to determine the path forward.

> **Recommendation:** Explore what a "demand side" platform looks like for RECOVER. Rather than have RECOVER develop the opportunities to move forward for prototyping, have opportunities in community be brought forward to RECOVER as a prototyping platform. This implies that these opportunities have the appropriate stakeholder support needed. RECOVER applies its rubrics to ensure it aligns with the intent and mandate of the overarching initiative.

Governance – In 2019 RECOVER was reiterating its governance structure and the process to oversee progress. As a result, the oversight duties fell to the Core Team. In the absence of a stewardship team, the gap could lead to tensions amongst stakeholders struggling to define roles and responsibilities.

The evolution of the structure of RECOVER for 2020 and beyond will need to ensure it is clear on role and alignment. Are RECOVER's goals and objectives still relevant and what can it do to contribute to the emerging issues at hand? How does RECOVER fit with other initiatives? Do we apply the same decision-making process to RECOVER as we do with prototypes? Is it time to Stop, Pivot/Persevere, Spin-Off or Double Down on RECOVER? The governance structure will be tasked with the overarching strategy.

> **Recommendation:** Strategize collaboratively with stakeholders to determine how RECOVER will proceed in 2020 and beyond. If RECOVER is a test in and of itself, then stakeholders play a role in determining the progress of the initiative. The governance structure is central to this activity.

RECOVER, to date has explored 24 prototypes with varying degrees of success. What remains constant is the willingness to try something different with a group of people focused on human- centred design and see what happens. The mantra for RECOVER (and maybe for life) ... "Learn and Adapt."