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The Pursuit of Social Sustainability:
The Use of Quality of Life Indicators to inform Social Planning

Introduction

Canadian municipalities are increasingly adapting their planning practices to encompass sustainability planning. Sustainability has served as an ambiguous source of optimism in the face of seemingly imminent societal disaster. With climate change, global poverty, peak oil and other discourses on the limits to growth that we are facing on a global scale, sustainability is a concept that offers us hope that we can plan for a better future. As a result, sustainable development has become the catchphrase of both global and local planning pursuits over the past 2 decades and is adopted as one of the prominent frameworks from which to develop plans.

There is contention concerning definitions of sustainability, but one definition has dominated in acceptance globally, that of the Brundtland Commission from the Earth Summit in 1987. The Brundtland Commission's definition of sustainable development recognizes the need to "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development 43). It was from this definition that many policy makers and planners at various levels began to adapt their frameworks to encompass this concept. "Sustainable development, though notoriously vague as a concept and open to multiple interpretations, drove an intense, heated and productive dialogue from the international down to the local scale that has continued to this day" (Holden et. al. 306).

Discussions concerning sustainability brought more prominence to the ideas of social and environmental impacts of economic development. Based on a three-pillar approach, or the three
E's of economy, environment and equity, planners sought to incorporate all three within their community plans. "The sustainable development debate challenges simplistic notions of progress and demands a more holistic understanding of what contributes to a good quality of life, including considerations of sustenance, comfort, education, and a sense of belonging" (Fahy and Cinnéide 367). This third pillar of social quality of life has received less attention than those of economy and environment. One way in which it has gained some prominence in sustainability discourse is through the use of quality of life indicators.

The use of quality of life indicators is an attempt to bring a broader meaning to societal well-being as something greater than simply economics. They aim to develop a snapshot of social, economic and environmental well-being; however, more attention is typically paid to social well-being. Due to the subjectivity of a concept such as quality of life, quality of life indicators should reflect the values and perceptions of the constituents whose quality of life is to be measured, if they are to be successful. The development of a quantified measure of social well-being provides a common platform from which planners, policy makers and decision makers can discuss and evaluate this topic.

This paper will look at the concept of social sustainability and the use of quality of life indicators in informing the development of socially sustainable plans. Using a blend of rational planning and locality development models, quality of life indicators can inform social sustainability planning at the municipal level. An exploration of Vancouver as one of several cities in Canada that have committed to using a sustainability framework in their planning, and one of few that plans specifically for social sustainability, will serve as an example.

Social Sustainability

The concept of sustainable development has shifted from a predominantly environmental perspective into a more comprehensive, and complex, concept that attempts to integrate both
economic and social aspects alongside environmental. While the Brundtland definition of sustainable development touted a three pillar approach, it has been argued to have actually been a one-pillar approach in that it was arguing for the international community to "preserve the ecological systems and resources necessary for economic and social life" to continue into the future (Littig and Grießler 66). This definition rightfully brought people into the picture, but primarily as the cause of environmental degradation and therefore something that only needs to be changed in order to improve ecological sustainability (Littig and Grießler). However, it is argued that increasing the quality of life for people is more significant than simply an attempt to decrease environmental impacts; it is a worthy aspiration rooted in social justice and equality. Flynn et. al. point out that "inequities are not limited to wealth and income and more importantly that human well-being is heavily dependent on social relationships and social services" (8). As a result, it should play a more significant role in sustainability planning.

There is growing interest, in both literature and practice, in bringing social development into the sustainability discourse as an equally legitimate resource compared to the environment and the economy. Hodge and Hardi argue that the "idea of sustainability is the persistence of certain necessary and desired characteristics of people, their communities and organizations, and the surrounding ecosystem over a very long period of time...Achieving progress toward sustainability thus implies maintaining and preferably improving, both human and ecosystem well-being, not one at the expense of the other. The idea expresses the interdependence between people and the surrounding world" (7). This theory of social development leads to a more comprehensive definition of what social sustainability is and the role it plays in sustainable community planning.

Both theorists and planners have attempted to define social sustainability in a variety of ways, some more comprehensively than others. The Natural Step framework for sustainability
planning used by the Halifax Regional Municipality defines social sustainability as “the elimination of barriers that undermine people’s ability to meet their basic human needs.” (The Natural Step 14 - 15). Polèse and Stren define social sustainability as ‘development (and/or growth) that is compatible with the harmonious evolution of civil society, fostering an environment conducive to the compatible cohabitation of culturally and socially diverse groups while at the same time encouraging social integration, with improvement in the quality of life for all segments of the population” (15 – 16). Still, Seguin and Germaine discuss how a socially sustainable city is ensuring “inhabitants ... a basic level of financial resources, as well as access to public goods and services in areas such as education, health and culture; the socially sustainable city would also stimulate social integration by providing dynamic arenas for social and community interaction” (40). They go on to include an absence of socio-spatial segregation as a good index of social sustainability within larger cities. Examining these definitions, reveals a common thread among them that cities must strive to ensure basic needs such as housing, income, and safety, are met for all residents, as well as build upon their individual capacity along with the community’s capacity in order to build a socially sustainable environment.

What does this mean for social planners? A significant amount of planning for social sustainability will come under the umbrella of social planners. Working a concept such as social sustainability into planning frameworks will be essential if progress towards overall sustainability will be made. There is a need to integrate social sustainability into both policy and territorially based management issues in cities. Stren and Polèse argue that “the capacity of urban environments to be ‘inclusive’, and to promote social sustainability, will to a significant degree depend on such seemingly prosaic matters as the design of streets, the removal of garbage, the pricing of public transport, the adequate registration of property rights, the location of employment nodes, [and] the management of school districts” (14). While Bailly et al. expand this idea to
include processes that go beyond urban infrastructure planning. They envision social sustainability to "incorporate other issues related to urban development but that do not always have direct physical expression and are frequently taken into account in an isolated way: social exclusion, socio-spatial segregation, social citizenship building, urban communities and urban identities [which] like urban poverty, are at the core of urban governance relations and must be incorporated by the new urban planning approach" (7). It is a melding of these two areas of planning that will help cities work towards social sustainability.

This literature on social sustainability illustrates an agreement that there are six major components of social sustainability in relation to planning. The six main concepts that social sustainability must be built upon are:

1. Governance
2. Social and cultural policies
3. Public services
4. Urban land and housing
5. Urban transport and accessibility
6. Employment, economic revitalization, and the building of inclusive public spaces

Planners must strive to address all these issues if they wish to develop policy and proactive planning measures that will enable the social vitality of cities to flourish.

Planning for social sustainability primarily encompasses the social planning or rational planning theory. The focus is on planning for the greater good through an examination of various states and conditions within a city, and attempting to address the associated issues or problems through institutional or policy changes. Rothman states, "The social planning approach emphasizes a technical process of problem-solving with regard to substantive social problems...Rational, deliberately planned, and controlled change has a central place in this model" (22). As shown in the six areas of concern for social sustainability, the social planning model is a
relevant framework from which to examine a city's social sustainability. Morris and Binstock are quoted in Rothman saying that social planning aims “to alter social condition by changing the policies of formal organization. It is undertaken to modify the amount, the quality, the accessibility, and the range of goods, services, and facilities provided for people” (23). Issues such as housing, employment and economic revitalization, and urban transport represent what Rothman considers substantive problems of the social planner, who can then seek solutions for them through gathering “pertinent facts about the problem, then decide on a rational and feasible course of action” (28). Measuring a city's ability to provide these infrastructures and relevant policies is by definition a rational process.

However, UNESCO's MOST programme on socially sustainable cities calls for a mix of not only rational planning but also locality development. Rothman defines locality development as a community organization method that “presupposes that community change may be pursued optimally through broad participation of a wide spectrum of people at the local community level in goal determination and action” (21). Part of addressing governance is not only developing policies that are more inclusive and mindful of the diversity within urban populations, but also encouraging participation from that diversity. The MOST programme calls for use of an integrative model that incorporates “the political principle of 'autonomous urban management': governance based on democracy, endogenous and bottom-up decision-making, autonomy, subsidiarity, co-operation, [and] partnership” (Bailly et. al. 150). So if rational planning is the way to pinpoint the barriers to social sustainability, then locality development is perhaps the method of addressing those barriers and enacting a solution.

Some cities in Canada have attempted to examine social sustainability within their populations. This can be seen in the growing use of quality of life indicators as a baseline of data from which to assess or plan for social sustainability. Social sustainability is inherently about
improving quality of life on some level. Using quality of life indicators to develop a snapshot of the state of a city's social well being provides a platform from which to begin a discussion about the need for increased social sustainability or to pinpoint the aspects of social sustainability that need to be improved within a community. The resulting snapshot can also be used as an advocacy tool with which to discuss social sustainability with other decision makers and the greater population at large.

Quality of Life Indicators

Like the concept of social sustainability, the use of quality of life indicators is an attempt to look beyond the traditional conceptualization of economic growth equalling a better life for all. One key difference is that social sustainability explicitly "refers to the importance of intergenerational equity, while quality of life does not or only does so implicitly" (City of Winnipeg 1-2). It can be argued that the "invisible hand" of our market economy has not resulted in the trickle-down effect that is espoused by economists. As seen with the growing income gap in Canadian cities, resources are not evenly distributed amongst populations (FCM 22). Traditional measures of a nation's progress and well-being focused largely on normative economic statistics, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, but did little analysis of the distribution of this wealth and the conditions in which this wealth was generated. These measures tell us little beyond how efficient countries are in production. And economic growth comes with a price. "[Economic development] undermines the contributions of households, communities and nature, on which all economic activity depends" (Aslaksen, Flaaten and Koren 80). There is a need to account for these externalities in order to find an appropriate course of action to limit or eliminate them, which would ensure that our development is more sustainable.

But how does one measure this phenomenon? The United Nations Development Program developed the Human Development Index in response to the need to measure factors beyond
economic well-being due to knowledge that economic wealth was not equally distributed across populations and that social ills such as crime were not decreasing with increased national wealth, among other things (UNDP). Mark McGillivray points out that the HDI shows, "[That while] there is a high correlation between income per capita and the standard non- or non-exclusively economic indicators in large and diverse samples of countries, some countries perform better in the latter than predicted by the former and some countries perform worse" (338). This measure has been primarily used to compare nations or regions across the globe and is a macro level planning tool, primarily for use in planning for international development issues. Quality of life indicators, on the other hand, encourage analysis on smaller scales and may therefore be more appropriate to municipal planning.

Various groups have been attempting to compile a list of indicators that would measure quality of life since the 1970s (Kitchen and Muhajarine 2). However, quality of life is a subjective concept in general. Qualify of life "is dependent on values and beliefs of the people doing the measuring and is often heavily influenced by comparisons with similar people in similar circumstances" (City of Vancouver 5). This means that municipalities that wish to use quality of life indicators must develop indicators that are relevant to their municipality. In order to do this, indicators need to have a theoretical basis or they may lose any value. Janzen states, "Attempts at measurement without theory are of questionable value in that they do not greatly improve our understanding of social and economic phenomena" (5). Basing quality of life indicators on the measurement of social sustainability would provide a conceptual basis for their development.

Like sustainability, quality of life has variable definitions. Fahy and Cinnéide discuss some of the varying definitions of quality of life in their work (371). Cutter explains quality of life as "an individual's happiness or satisfaction with life and environment including needs and desires and other tangible and intangible factors which determine overall well being" (371). Sin and Johnson
define it as “the possession of resources necessary to the satisfaction of individual needs, wants and desires, participation in activities enabling personal development and self-actualisation and satisfactory comparison between oneself and others” (371). Other theorists envelope concepts such as employment, health care, childcare, housing, and community safety and participation into their definitions (Kline and Seasons in Fahy and Cinnéide 371). From these definitions it is apparent that quality of life can be looked at in both the individual and societal scale.

It is also apparent that some quality of life indicators may be easier to measure than others. Some aspects such as housing, income levels, incidents of crime, are easier to measure than other aspects. This is primarily due to the greater availability of statistics collected by government agencies (John Burrett in lecture notes Nov. 11). Quality of life indicators are critiqued in that they, like social sustainability, focus on normative social aspects of a city, more than the subjective experiences of individuals (Fahy and Cinnéide 371). “For all their attempt at holism and a desire to incorporate the richness of humankind’s complex interrelationships with nature, SI’s [sustainability indicators] are still a classic reductionist set of tools based on quantification” (Fahy and Cinnéide 370). Using quality of life indicators follows a rational planning method of measuring, and advocating for, social sustainability. This allows the topic of social well-being to be discussed in a normative language that is familiar to most. However, to be really successful, quantitative quality of life indicators must be complemented by qualitative indicators to ensure that they encompass the experiences of residents at the individual level, or at least capturing the diversity of individuals, in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the state of social sustainability within a city.

Quality of life indicators have an innate challenge as to what they are supposed to measure. It would appear difficult to measure a subjective condition such as quality of life through entirely quantitative data. One of the major critiques of quality of life indicators is the lack of
qualitative data within the measures, which some would argue to be a more appropriate method for measuring such subjective data. "The rise of community participation in QoL projects has increased the use of combined quantitative (e.g. telephone surveys) and qualitative (e.g. interviews) methods" (Dunning et al. 146). The goal of introducing qualitative data into quality of life indicators is to increase comprehension of a phenomenon and/or explain certain anomalies within these data (Dunning 147). This would be particularly relevant for Vancouver and Canadian cities in general, where visible minorities make up close to 50% of the population, and each of these groups may have a different understanding, or place different value, on certain aspects of social life. In a study of the use of quality of life indicators in Galway, Ireland, it is proposed that quality of life indicators must be based upon goals developed through public consultation; not a reflection of expert opinion (Fahy and Cinnéide 372). Likewise, the City of Winnipeg and the Bristol Local Authority both used public consultations to develop the basis of what should be measured to determine quality of life in their city (City of Winnipeg 7 – 8 and McMahon 178). This locality development process of public participation provides an opportunity for many stakeholders to identify and select the most meaningful quality of life indicators for them.

In the Canadian context, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities defines quality of life as being enhanced and reinforced by municipalities that:

1. "Develop and maintain a vibrant local economy;
2. Protect and enhance the natural and built environment;
3. Offer opportunities for the attainment of personal goals, hopes and aspirations;
4. Promote a fair and equitable sharing of common resources;
5. Enable residents to meet their basic needs;
6. Support rich social interactions and the inclusion of all residents in community life."
   (FCM 2)

Like the definitions mentioned above, this definition is consistent with the six defining dimensions of social sustainability, with the addition of natural environment. It attempts to encompass all three
pillars of sustainability, economy, environment and social well being, with social aspects receiving the greatest focus. They address economic vitality, access to beneficial public services, social and cultural policies that encourage inclusion, and meeting basic needs such as housing and food, and participation in community life. The results are to be used as a planning tool by municipalities, better enabling municipalities to join public-policy debates, and serve as a tool for community groups, researchers and other levels of government, to promote awareness of factors that affect social well-being in Canadian municipalities (John Burrett in lecture notes November 11).

This study found that quality of life in many Canadian municipalities is at risk. Despite increased education levels, home ownership and improved employment opportunities, various groups in Canada have actually experienced a decrease in quality of life over the study period. The study looked at the national situation and offered a comparison across municipalities as well. Trends shown in the study were that despite progress in many aspects of the quality of life, an increasing income gap between the rich and poor was continuing to emerge, housing affordability issues continued to grow for a number of people, and decreased social programming were degrading Canada’s quality of life (FCM 2). Vancouver’s attention to this report will serve as a case study in the use of quality of life indicators for the development of their social development and sustainability plans.

**Vancouver – A Case Study**

The City of Vancouver, a city of nearly 600,000 people, has repeatedly ranked within the top three cities in the world for quality of life. Yet, there are many social problems affecting the city that affect the quality of life of its residents. Vancouver is home to Canada’s poorest neighbourhood, the Downtown Eastside, where quality of life would not be ranked highly on the
world scale. Soaring housing costs, limited access to childcare, high levels of property crime, and increasing food costs are just some of the challenges facing Vancouver’s residents (City of Vancouver). “Increasing economic disparity between the rich and poor, serious and complex social problems, including substance abuse and homelessness, declining rates of civic engagement and a lack of affordable housing are evident in Vancouver” (City of Vancouver 4). In May 2005, the City of Vancouver adopted a definition for social sustainability and commenced a planning process to try to address some of these issues in a manner that would complement their overarching sustainability planning framework of the city.

In their administrative report to Vancouver City Council, the Community Services Group Directors, advocated the need for the city to develop a social development plan within a sustainability framework. This plan is to “build upon the City’s current contributions and provides for long term planning to address quality of life issues for Vancouver” (City of Vancouver 3). One of the contributing factors to this was the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ (FCM) Quality of Life Reporting System. The FCM’s series of reports was born out of a concern about the changes in federal transfer payments to municipalities across Canada. The quality of life reporting system serves as an advocacy tool through the presentation of data that could be used in debates about this issue. Upon examination of these reports, Vancouver developed a report on the particular performance of Vancouver in terms of quality of life. They found that while some trends were going up, they were not doing so to the same degree as the rest of Canada, and that declining trends were more pronounced in Vancouver and/or applied to a greater number of Vancouver’s residents than elsewhere (see Fig. 1) (City of Vancouver 2).
### Figure 1 – Summary of Vancouver’s Quality of Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QoL Indicator</th>
<th>Vancouver’s response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vibrant local economy</td>
<td>Some economic and corresponding employment growth. Unemployment rates remained higher than average for Aboriginal people and new immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and built environment</td>
<td>Doing well or better than other municipalities in Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attainment of personal goals, hopes or aspirations</td>
<td>1990s - increase in residents with higher education, but corresponding increases in employment, income or home ownership did not happen for most residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equitable sharing of common resources</td>
<td>Economic gains in 1990s were not shared equally. Smaller proportion of population saw income increases compared to Canadian average and gap between top and bottom incomes grew twice as much as occurred elsewhere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic needs met</td>
<td>Declining incomes, rapidly increasing costs of housing, and reductions in social assistance are a problem for a growing number of residents. Affordability of basic needs is an increasing problem for a large proportion of the population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction and inclusion</td>
<td>General decline in civic engagement. Lack of social inclusion measured by labour force participation continues for a large proportion of the population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from City of Vancouver’s FCM Quality of Life Indicators – Implications for Vancouver report

Vancouver found that the FCM quality of life report showed that “despite improvements in the economy and environment, there ha(d) been a decline ... in many [social] indicators of QOL” (City of Vancouver 14). This proved that while the sustainability framework for planning was working in the pillars of environment and economy, a comprehensive social sustainability plan would be needed in order to address the lack of performance within the social pillar.

Vancouver’s definition of social sustainability is based on three required components and four guiding principles. The City of Vancouver’s website states that the required components are:
1. The ability for residents to meet their basic needs through
   a. accessibility of appropriate health care
   b. availability of local nutritious and affordable food
   c. availability of jobs that utilize residents skills and abilities
   d. sufficient income for residents to support themselves and their families
   e. safe communities
2. The ability to maintain and enhance their individual or human capacity through
   a. skills upgrading
   b. variety of employment opportunities
   c. opportunities to be creative and artistic
   d. formal and informal life-long learning
   e. access to affordable recreational, cultural and leisure facilities and programs
   f. and opportunities to contribute to the well-being of the community
3. And the ability to maintain and enhance their social or community capacity
   a. support for community economic development
   b. community identity is reflective of the community’s diversity
   c. community involvement in public process including government
   d. opportunities for social interaction
   e. access and engagement in a variety of arts, cultural and community activities
   f. support for community organizations and networks (City of Vancouver website)

Their guiding principles are equity, social inclusion and interaction, security, and adaptability.

While not exactly the same, the above components appear to cover all six aspects of social sustainability as outlined earlier in this paper. If one looks at the FCM's quality of life indicators as listed in Appendix A, there is an overall correlation between these indicators and Vancouver's definition of social sustainability. However, upon further examination, it is apparent that they must not be seen as providing a complete picture of Vancouver's social sustainability, but rather a point from which to begin the discussion.

If one looks at the FCM's list of quality of life indicators that were used to assess cities in Canada, one can see how Vancouver came to use them as a starting point for their social development planning process. Under the first list of components affecting basic needs, as listed above, there are a number of indicators that directly inform the status of these in Vancouver. For instance, where Vancouver was looking at the ability of residents to meet their basic needs, the FCM indicators (see Appendix A) measure personal and community health, employment and
personal financial security, and quality of employment, as well as percentage income towards housing, rental vacancy rates, and homelessness. However, these indicators put an emphasis primarily on housing and income, and provide no insight into the basic need of food, which is one of Vancouver's social sustainability components. It is also apparent that the FCM indicators do not measure the accessibility of health care, nor the appropriateness of the care available.

In the second set of social sustainability components, we again see that the FCM indicators provide a partial representation of human or community capacity. As outlined above, this includes skills upgrading, employment that utilizes individual's skills, learning opportunities, as well as cultural, recreational and leisure opportunities. While the FCM's quality of life indicators measure participation in education at various levels, they do not measure the types or quantity of the opportunities available, nor whether residents are aware of these opportunities, and therefore taking advantage of them. There is also a distinct lack of measures for cultural, leisure or recreational opportunities. There is a measure for the outdoor recreation areas, however, there is no measure for community centre programming, local sports associations, gym facilities, public cultural events, art classes, or green space per resident, which all might add a more complete picture of Vancouver's social resources.

This is again reflected in the third aspect of social sustainability; that of community capacity. Civic engagement plays a prominent role in FCM's quality of life indicators and helps to illustrate Vancouver's community involvement in public process. It can also be said to measure opportunities for social interaction, to some extent, through the indicators of volunteerism and participation in education; however, this would not encompass all opportunities Vancouver offers for social interaction. To better measure this, there would need to be indicators that measure social, recreational, professional and other types of clubs and associations; perhaps looking at neighbourhood associations and active membership in them, along with others. Likewise, there is
a lack of indicators measuring cultural interactions and community identity. There is a need to incorporate other measures and supplement the current quality of life indicators with qualitative research in order to better understand Vancouver's status on these components of social sustainability.

Vancouver's use of the FCM's quality of life indicators showed that even though the city was ranked in the top three cities in the world for quality of life, this quality of life was not experienced equally amongst all residents. The City of Vancouver's Social Planning department used these indicators to gain support for their own desire to develop a social development plan that would help the city improve their social sustainability to a level comparable to both economic and environmental sustainability within the city. The FCM's report helped the City of Vancouver to focus attention on the cumulative effects of all the programming relevant to social sustainability that they currently have in place, and begin a discussion with City Council to develop a comprehensive social plan. The quality of life report from FCM, not only illustrated that Vancouver was performing well in environmental sustainability, and to a certain extent in the economic sustainability, but that social factors were eroding these successes and the overall quality of life in Vancouver.

The FCM's index of quality of life indicators did not fully encapsulate the components of Vancouver's social sustainability framework, but they were never meant to. Vancouver will need to go through a process of developing new quality of life indicators that reflect the perceptions of Vancouver's diverse residents. With 49% of the population being a visible minority, it will be essential to take on such an exercise. Because of this diversity, it will be most beneficial if Vancouver also engages in more micro level research seeking out qualitative responses from varied groups, along cultural and income lines, within the city. This will lead to a greater understanding and serve as a true baseline from which to measure progress. Once a social sustainability plan is in place, these same indicators can be used to measure any change that has
occurred over the course of the plan's implementation. While quality of life indicators may not serve as a direct measure of the specific actions and programs of the plan, they can serve as a measure of change, be it positive or negative, to bring to light any areas that may need to be addressed within the plan.

Conclusion

Social sustainability is an essential part of any sustainability-planning framework. The social status of a city is equally as important as their environmental and economic status. While economic growth will result in a better quality of life for many, it will not necessarily be the result for all, as witnessed in many areas of the world, including Vancouver. Vancouver's desire to develop a social development plan was corroborated by the findings of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' report of Quality of Life in Canadian cities. Despite having a high global ranking for livability, it was still apparent that many residents of the city did not benefit from these perceived advantages.

While limited in their scope, quality of life indicators do provide significant information to inform social sustainability planning in Canada, particularly if they work to include more qualitative data within them. Municipalities who are interested in endeavoring to produce social sustainability plans should develop a set of indicators that encompass all aspects of their goals. While it is more time consuming and complex to seek out data for concepts that are less accessible, doing so would provide a more comprehensive illustration of quality of life in a given city. In this way, a quality of life survey would serve as a baseline of information from which to develop plans and monitor progress. Of course, quality of life indicators cannot be considered a complete picture of the social sustainability of a city. Quality of life indicators provide a normative approach to social sustainability that can be drawn largely out of statistics already gathered, but must also strive to include qualitative data and public participation to truly reflect the city. Knowledge and experience
of the planners, local social organizations and service providers, and the community at large will also have to inform the plan beyond statistics. Providing this snapshot of quality of life will help others, both decision makers and the public, understand the need and the content of any social sustainability plan.
## FCM QOL Indicators

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DBI1 * Population</td>
<td>AAH1 * 30%+ Income on Shelter</td>
<td>CE1 * Voter Turnout</td>
<td>CS81 Social Service Professionals</td>
<td>ED1 * Education Levels</td>
<td>EM1 * Unemployment/employment Rates</td>
<td>LE1 * Business Bankruptcies</td>
<td>NE1 * Air Quality</td>
<td>PCH1 Low Birth Weight Babies</td>
<td>PFS1 Community Affordability</td>
<td>PS1 Young Offenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBI2 * Foreign Born</td>
<td>AAH2 Vacancy Rates</td>
<td>CE2 Women in Municipal Government</td>
<td>CS82 Government Health-Care Expenditures</td>
<td>ED2 Literacy Levels</td>
<td>EM2 Quality of Employment</td>
<td>LE2 Consumer Bankruptcies</td>
<td>NE2 * Urban Transportation</td>
<td>PCH2 Teen Births</td>
<td>PFS2 * Families Receiving EI/Social Assistance</td>
<td>PS2 Violent Crimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBI3 * Visible Minorities</td>
<td>AAH3 Core Housing Need</td>
<td>CE3 Newspaper Circulation</td>
<td>CS83 Private Health Care Expenditures</td>
<td>ED3 Adult Learning</td>
<td>EM3 Long Term Unemployment</td>
<td>LE3 Hourly Wages</td>
<td>NE3 Population Density</td>
<td>PCH3 Premature Mortality</td>
<td>PFS3 * Lone Parent Families</td>
<td>PS3 Property Crimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBI4 * Language Spoken at Home</td>
<td>AAH4 Substandard Units</td>
<td>CE4 * Volunteering</td>
<td>CS84 Subsidized Child Care Spaces</td>
<td>ED4 Education Expenditures</td>
<td>EM4 * Labour Force Replacement</td>
<td>LE4 * Change in Family Income</td>
<td>NE4 Water Consumption</td>
<td>PCH4 Work Hours Lost</td>
<td>PFS4 * Incidence of Low Income Families</td>
<td>PS4 Injuries and poisonings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBI5 * New Immigrant Groups</td>
<td>AAH5 Changing Face of Homelessness</td>
<td>CE5 * Charitable Donations</td>
<td>CS85 Social Assistance Allowances</td>
<td>ED5 Classroom Size</td>
<td>LE5 * Building Permits</td>
<td>NE5 * Wastewater Treatment</td>
<td>PCH5 Suicides</td>
<td>PFS5 * Child Poverty</td>
<td>PFS6 * Children Living in Poverty</td>
<td>PS7 Government Transfer Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBI6 * Aboriginal Population</td>
<td>AAH6 50%+ Income on Shelter</td>
<td>CS86 Outdoor Recreation Areas</td>
<td>CS86 Student / Teacher Ratio</td>
<td>ED6 Post-Secondary Tuition</td>
<td>NE6 * Solid Waste</td>
<td>PCH6 Infant Mortality</td>
<td>PFS7 Economic Dependency Ratio</td>
<td>PFS8 Government Income Supplements</td>
<td>DB18 * Household Income</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DBI7 * Migration</td>
<td>AAH7 * Rental Housing Starts</td>
<td>CS87 Public Transit Costs</td>
<td>CS87 Ecological Footprint</td>
<td>ED7 Post-Secondary Tuition</td>
<td>NE7 Ecological Footprint</td>
<td>PFS9 Government Income Supplements</td>
<td>DB18 * Household Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBI8 * Households</td>
<td>AAH8 Monthly Rent</td>
<td>CS88 Social Housing Waiting Lists</td>
<td>CS88 Rent-Governed-to-Income Housing</td>
<td>ED8 Spending on Private Education</td>
<td>NE8 Recreational Water Quality</td>
<td>PFS9 Government Income Supplements</td>
<td>DB18 * Household Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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* Indicators that were used in the "Highlights Report"
Works Cited


City of Winnipeg. City of Winnipeg Quality of Life Indicators. 2000.


