



The Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie
Cultural Vitality Committee
Agenda

Thursday, November 6, 2025

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Thompson Room, Civic Centre

Pages

1. Land Acknowledgement

I acknowledge, with respect, that we are in Robinson-Huron Treaty territory, that the land on which we are gathered is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe and known as Bawating. Bawating is the home of Garden River First Nation, Batchewana First Nation, the Historic Sault Ste. Marie Metis Council.

2. Adoption of Minutes

3. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

4. Adoption of Agenda

Mover _____

Seconder _____

Resolved that the Agenda for Cultural Vitality Committee Subcommittee meeting for Community Committee for Graffiti Management for November 6, 2025 as presented be approved.

5. Business Arising

5.1 Introductions

5.2 Council Report

3 - 9

5.3 Terms of Reference

10 - 12

5.4 Graffiti Reframed Initiative

13 - 182

5.5 **Graffiti Management Practices**

6. **New Business**

7. **Correspondence**

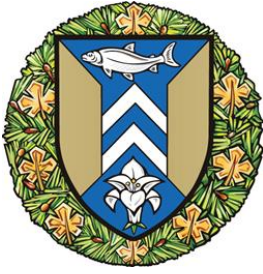
8. **Next Meeting**

9. **Adjournment**

Mover _____

Seconded _____

Resolved that this Committee now adjourn.



**The Corporation of the
City of Sault Ste. Marie**

COUNCIL REPORT

October 1, 2024

TO: Mayor Matthew Shoemaker and Members of City Council
AUTHOR: Brent Lamming, Deputy CAO Community Development &
Enterprise Services
DEPARTMENT: Community Development and Enterprise Services
RE: Graffiti Committee

Purpose

The purpose of this report is in response to a Council resolution to revitalize the Graffiti Committee.

Background

On November 18, 2013, Council passed the following resolution:

*Whereas graffiti or tagging is a community wide-problem; and
Whereas it will require a community-wide strategy in order to reduce or eliminate this "mischief crime"; and
Whereas the presence of graffiti detracts from the attractiveness of our naturally gifted community; and
Whereas there are examples of effective and creative solutions in other municipalities which engage a number of community organizations,
Therefore, Be It Resolved that City Council takes the lead in establishing committee of Council made up of members of Council, appropriate City staff and representation from Police Services, the Downtown Association, the Art Gallery of Algoma and others, to review best practices in other communities; and
Further Be It Resolved that the task force reports back to City Council within six months with preliminary findings regarding a made-in-Sault Ste. Marie approach to reducing this problem activity.*

As a result of this resolution, a community-minded approach was developed, and the Graffiti Committee was formed. In January 2014, the first meeting was held with representatives from City Council, City staff, Sault Ste. Marie Police Service, Downtown Association, Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District, Art Gallery of Algoma, NORDIK Research Institute, PUC Services Inc., Canada Post, Algoma District School Board, and Huron Superior Catholic District School Board. On February 9, 2015, a report was brought to Council to highlight and summarize the

Committee's activities and successes, including: the development of an educational brochure by Police Service; nuisance graffiti removal incorporated as part of the City's 20-Minute Sault Ste. Marie Makeover event; utility box wraps with designs by local artists and those with City-branding; graffiti inventory pilot project; Graffiti Forum held in partnership with local school boards; Graffiti Reframed project through NORDIK Research Institute; and the Black Book Project responsible for one mural. The last meeting of the Graffiti Committee was held in late 2016.

On September 18, 2023, Council passed the following resolution:

Whereas in November of 2013 then Councillors Myers and Butland presented a motion to create a committee addressing the incidents of nuisance tagging; and

Whereas this committee evolved into the Community Committee on Graffiti; Whereas multiple community organizations contributed, including Art Gallery of Algoma, Downtown Association, Arts Council of Sault Ste Marie, NORDIK Institute, Algoma University, Police Services, PUC, and others; and

Whereas the Graffiti Reframed Project was led and created due to outcomes of this committee; and

Whereas NORDIK published the Graffiti Reframed research paper in 2015; and

Whereas the City and community partners have invested in multiple public art projects; and

Whereas nuisance tagging is on the rise, most notably defacing public art installations; and

Whereas further education, outreach and advocacy needs to happen;

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Community Committee on Graffiti be revitalized and staff develop a Terms of Reference and Committee Structure.

Analysis

City staff from Community Development and Enterprise Services, Public Works and Engineering Services, and Clerks met with Councillor Vezeau-Allen to gain a better understanding of what is being requested, review past initiatives, and confirm what is currently underway to address graffiti. Below is a summary of current initiatives:

1. Downtown Association Graffiti Removal Program.
2. City staff remove graffiti from municipally owned facilities and spaces.
3. Adopt-a-Park program.
4. Public Art, including Summer Moon and Vivid Festivals murals, which include a youth engagement component.
5. Traffic Box Wrap program.

6. Community programming at the Northern Community Centre for youth and teens.
7. Regular programming to support teens at both the Library locations.
8. Algoma and Youth Wellness Hub on Dennis Street provides a range of supports, activities and programming.

It would be challenging for the City to lead a graffiti committee, especially with a focus on providing education in the schools and obtaining funding while balancing existing projects and duties. The Cultural Vitality Committee (CVC) does provide for works within the Cultural Policy for the City of Sault Ste. Marie to ensure equal access to all individuals, groups, and organizations to enjoy opportunities for the preservation, development and appreciation of cultural expression with the committed support of the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

The CVC oversees the Community Culture Plan, the Cultural Policy and the Public Art Policy. The City of Sault Ste. Marie recognizes that art in public spaces is a valuable asset that enhances the quality of life for its citizens, strengthens community pride, improves the aesthetic of the public environment, and contributes to the City's cultural aspirations, social well-being, and economic vitality. Public art helps the community celebrate its culture and heritage, reflect diversity, express shared values, and define the City's unique identity.

Currently the CVC is funded in the amount of \$144,500. An operating increase has been submitted to the 2025 budget in the amount of \$160,500. In 2018 the total available funding was \$53,900. The additional \$160,500, as recommended by the 2019-2024 Community Culture Plan, will allow the City to reach the target investment of \$5 per capita. The CVC developed a funding model to address the various needs of arts, culture, and heritage organizations in Sault Ste. Marie. Funding will be divided into various categories, Arts and Culture Assistance Program Funding, Public Art, and Heritage.

There was also \$8,000 for mural repair approved in 2023 budget deliberations which is now within the budget to address ongoing repairs.

The CVC oversees the Community Culture Plan which identified (four) 4 action items related to youth in goal #5. Further, specific action items related to developing youth mentorship programs, alleviating barriers to participation in arts and culture opportunities, and establishing partnerships with the arts and culture community, social service providers, and schools to support effective age-appropriate programs. Staff recommend that a new Graffiti subcommittee should fall under the purview of the CVC.

Staff does not have the capacity to engage all the youth in or outside the classroom for educational purposes on how art can be a great avenue to develop skills and providing low-cost opportunities; however, staff can definitely participate and lead under the existing CVC subcommittee group being suggested. This initiative

requires a variety of community partners to support the project. A proposed terms of reference and subcommittee structure is proposed in Appendix A.

Staff recommend the Arts and Culture Lead call a meeting with past Committee members and invite other parties interested in collaborating (as listed in the proposed terms of reference). Communication staff can create a dedicated space on the City's website to educate the public on reporting nuisance graffiti and additional messaging related to public art.

Financial Implications

There is no impact to the Operating budget currently.

Strategic Plan / Policy Impact / Climate Impact

The recommendation supports the focus area of the Corporate Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 in several ways.

- It exemplifies communication and stakeholder consultation to create an environment that encourages engagement and the exploration of mutual goals to grow our community. Collaboration with community partners and stakeholders is essential to our success.
- It demonstrates Fiscal Responsibility in managing municipal finances in a responsible and prudent manner.
- It supports the focus area of infrastructure in the Community Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 as it will assist in maintaining existing infrastructure.

Recommendation

It is therefore recommended that Council take the following actions:

Resolved that the report of the Deputy CAO, Community Development and Enterprise Services dated October 1, 2024 concerning a Graffiti Subcommittee of the Cultural Vitality Committee be received and that the terms of reference of the subcommittee be approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Brent Lamming, PFP, CPA, CMA
Deputy CAO
Community Development & Enterprise Services
(705)759-5314
b.lamming@cityssm.on.ca

Appendix A



TERMS OF REFERENCE - Draft **(Cultural Vitality Graffiti Sub-Committee)**

SUB-COMMITTEE NAME

Cultural Vitality Graffiti Sub-Committee

COMMITTEE TYPE

Ad hoc – Subcommittee under the Cultural Vitality Committee

PURPOSE

The CVC oversees the Community Cultural Plan, the Cultural Policy and the Public Art Policy. The City of Sault Ste. Marie recognizes that art in public spaces is a valuable asset that enhances the quality of life for its citizens, strengthens community pride, improves the aesthetic of the public environment, and contributes to the City's cultural aspirations, social well-being, and economic vitality. Public art helps the community celebrate its culture and heritage, reflect diversity, express shared values, and define the City's unique identity.

DUTIES

- To receive written communications from and liaise with interested parties regarding graffiti.
- Provide information to students in grades 7 to 9 on the opportunities available within the community as it pertains to art.
- Work together with both school boards to provide hands on experience for public art mentorship opportunities.
- Liaise with City Staff in response to inquiries from the community relating to art.
- Liaise with community partners as it pertains to graffiti removal and or enforcement.
- Establish partnerships to alleviate barriers to participation in arts and culture opportunities.

COMPOSITION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

Voting Members

Three members of the CVC Committee including one member of Council

Resource (As required)

Appendix A

Staff Lead:

Arts and Culture Lead

City Staff:

Director Community Services

Director Public Works and Engineering Services

Manager Recreation and Culture

Deputy City Clerk

Assistant City Solicitor, Legal Department

Chief Building Official, Building Division

Corporate Communications Officer

Indigenous Advisor

Community Members:

Other members of Council if interested.

CAO Social Services or delegate

Director, Algoma District School Board or delegate

Director, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board or delegate

Director, Art Gallery of Algoma

Deputy Police Chief or delegate

District Manager, Canada Post

Manager, Downtown Association

Marketing and Customer Communications, PUC Services Inc.

Corporate Communications, Sault Ste. Marie

CEO, Sault Ste. Marie Library

NORDIK Research Institute

ARTS AND CULTURE LEAD RESPONSIBILITIES

The Arts and Culture Lead responsibilities will include.

- In consultation with others, determine the agenda and ensure that the appropriate materials are distributed in advance of the meeting.
- Chair all meetings of the subcommittee.
- Monitor members' participation in the subcommittee.
- Guide the Subcommittee in addressing issues and concerns as they arise.
- Act as the official spokesperson for the subcommittee as required.

MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Subcommittee members are responsible for:

- Attending and actively participating in meetings.
- Declaring any conflict of interest regarding specific agenda items.
- Keeping confidential any relevant information.

MEETINGS

- The Arts and Culture Lead will call meetings in alignment with achieving the duties established.
- Subcommittee members may submit items to be included on the meeting agenda no later than seven days prior to the meeting.

Appendix A

- Minutes of meetings shall be kept as well as all papers and documents pertaining to the business of the Subcommittee.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Where a member has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest, the member shall;

- Disclose the interest and its general nature before the matter is considered at the meeting.
- Not take part in the discussion of or voting on the matter.
- Not attempt to influence the discussion before, during or after the meeting.

See Municipal Conflict of Interest Act for further information.

TERM

Will expire one year from the first subcommittee meeting date.



TERMS OF REFERENCE (Cultural Vitality Committee Graffiti Sub-Committee)

SUB-COMMITTEE NAME

Cultural Vitality Graffiti Sub-Committee

COMMITTEE TYPE

Ad Hoc – Subcommittee under the Cultural Vitality Committee

PURPOSE

The CVC oversees the Community Cultural Plan, the Cultural Policy and the Public Art Policy. The City of Sault Ste. Marie recognizes that art in public spaces is a valuable asset that enhances the quality of life for its citizens, strengthens community pride, improves the aesthetic of the public environment, and contributes to the City's cultural aspirations, social well-being, and economic vitality. Public art helps the community celebrate its culture and heritage, reflect diversity, express shared values, and define the City's unique identity.

DUTIES

- To receive written communications from and liaise with interested parties on public art.
- Provide information to students in grades 7 to 9 on the opportunities available within the community as it pertains to art.
- Work together with both schoolboards to provide hands on experience for public art mentorship opportunities.
- Liaise with City Staff in response to inquiries from the community relating to art.
- Liaison with Community partners as it pertains to graffiti removal and or enforcement.
- Establishing partnerships to alleviate barriers to participation in arts and culture opportunities.

COMPOSITION OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

Voting Members

Three members of the CVC Committee including one member of Council

Resource (As required)

Staff Lead:

Arts and Culture Lead

City Staff:

Director Community Services

Director Public Works & Enterprise Services

Manager Recreation and Culture

Deputy City Clerk

Assistant City Solicitor, Legal Department

Chief Building Official, Building Division

Indigenous Advisor

Corporate Communications, Sault Ste. Marie

Community Members:

Other members of Council if interested.

CAO Social Services, DSSAB or delegate

Director, Algoma District School Board or delegate

Director, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board or delegate

Executive Director, Art Gallery of Algoma

Deputy Chief of SSM Police Services or delegate

District Manager, Canada Post

Manager, Downtown Association

Marketing and Customer Communications, PUC Services Inc.

CEO, Sault Ste. Marie Library

NORDIK Research Institute

ARTS AND CULTURE LEAD RESPONSIBILITIES

The Arts and Culture Lead responsibilities will include:

- In consultation with others, determine the agenda and ensure that the appropriate materials are distributed in advance of the meeting.
- Chair all meetings of the Subcommittee
- Monitor members' participation in the Subcommittee
- Guide the Subcommittee in addressing issues and concerns as they arise.
- Act as the official spokesperson for the Subcommittee as required.

MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Subcommittee members are responsible for:

- Attending and actively participating in meetings.

- Declaring any conflict of interest regarding specific agenda items.
- Keeping confidential any information.

MEETINGS

- The Arts and Culture Lead will call meetings in alignment with achieving the duties established.
- The Subcommittee members may submit items to be included on the meeting agenda no later than seven days prior to the meeting.
- Minutes of meetings shall be kept as well as all papers and documents pertaining to the business of the Subcommittee.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Where a member has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest, the member shall;

- Disclose the interest and its general nature before the matter is considered at the meeting.
- Not take part in the discussion of or voting on the matter.
- Not attempt to influence the discussion before, during or after the meeting.

See Municipal Conflict of Interest Act for further information.

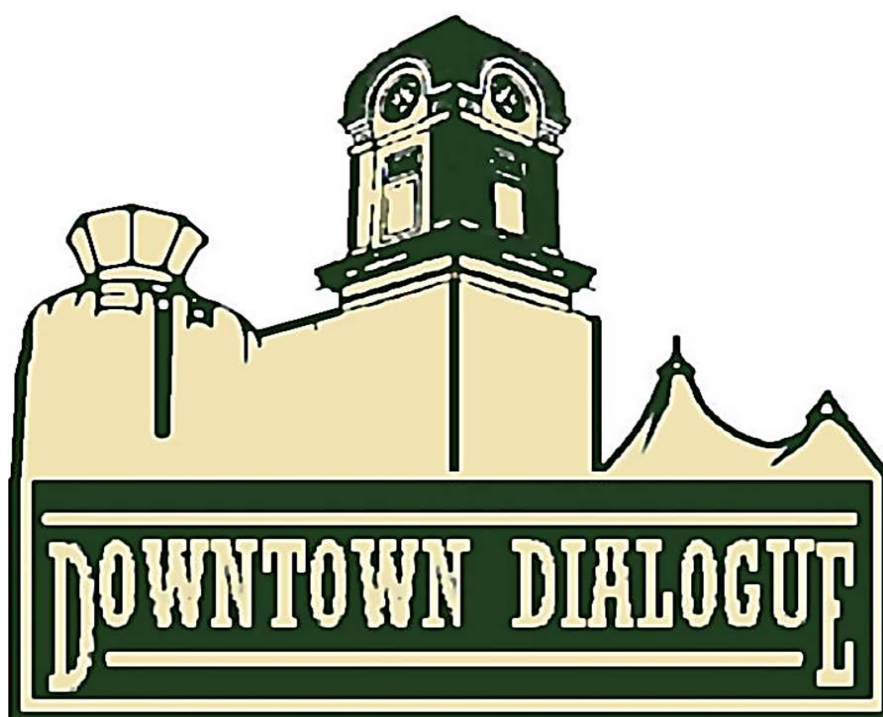
TERM

Will expire one year from the first Subcommittee meeting date.

Downtown Dialogue in Action

Crime Prevention through Social Development

December 31st, 2014



Northern Ontario Research, Development, Ideas and Knowledge



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank the following individuals and organizations who contributed to this study:

Candace Williamson for her design of the project logo; Crystal Strachan and Racheal Okai for their capable assistance in organizing events and providing logistical support;

The Community Advisory Committee who provided guidance and advice to the overall project;

Our partners, the **Sault Ste. Marie Police Service** and the **John Howard Society of Sault Ste. Marie** who provided leadership and vision to the project;

And to the many participants in this research, who shared their time and knowledge as we developed a vision, identified the challenges, strengths and opportunities of a vital, thriving downtown community in Sault Ste. Marie.

A Special Expression of Thanks

To Dr. Hugh Russell for his advice, presentations and guidance in placing our community and the Downtown Dialogue in Action in the broader societal context of changing perceptions and approaches to resolving crime;

We also gratefully acknowledge our funders:

Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' Proceeds of Crime Grant
Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation, and United Way of Sault Ste. Marie's Community Endowment Fund. Opinions expressed in this report are solely those of the authors and do not represent those of the funders.

Written By

Dr. Gayle Broad Sean Meades Tom Green Dana Chalifoux Jessica Bolduc

And by

Steffanie Petroni and Allyson Schmidt who provided research assistance and reached out to individuals whose voices would not otherwise have been heard;

NORDIK Institute is a community-based research institute affiliated with Algoma University. NORDIK promotes more vibrant, caring and sustainable communities through research, dialogue, analysis and reflection dedicated to the practice of holistic community development.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Like other cities of its size in Northern Ontario, Sault Ste. Marie is facing a number of challenges, including an aging population and rapid changes to a resource-based economy. The downtown area of the city, like other urban centres across North America, has been experiencing a decline due in part to a changing global economy. This has led to a general **loss of vitality in the City's core**, exacerbated **by increasing social needs**. The well-documented social needs led to a high demand for police services in the downtown area requiring a comprehensive approach that went well beyond the capacity of any one service to address.

Building on the province's "Community Mobilization and Engagement Strategy" (Hamilton, 2010) adopted by Ontario's Chiefs of Police, Sault Ste. Marie Police Service's former Chief Bob Davies, approached NORDIK Institute and the John Howard Society in the spring of 2012 to invite their support in addressing the challenges in the downtown core of the City. A community dialogue and action research process was undertaken commencing in early 2013 which engaged social service agencies, local boards of education, businesses and residents for over a year in developing a plan to **reduce crime through social development**. This report outlines the context for the effort, methodologies used, findings of the project, and the outcomes and recommendations.

Over 1000 individuals participated in surveys, interviews, focus groups, media and social media commentary, and action research initiatives throughout this year-long process. Participants were passionate about the city's downtown core. While many expressed concerns over issues documented in this report, still nearly 90% of survey respondents felt that the downtown core held a **promising future** or strong potential, and were enthusiastic about numerous new developments and initiatives, some of which were stimulated by the action research itself.

Contrary to some public suggestions of a crime problem in the downtown, the research and Sault Ste. Marie Police Service (SSMPS) statistics demonstrate that the higher than average police service calls stem from issues of "social disorder" that are best addressed by increasing **opportunities for social interaction** and providing **supports to those most in need**. Numerous organizations responded to the call for change both during and subsequent to the period of data collection, resulting in initiatives such as the *restorative justice training* sponsored by the John Howard Society; the *Graffiti Reframed* project which fosters local dialogue between artists and the wider community and provides skills development for graffiti artists; and the *Neighbourhood Resource Centre* (NRC) a collaborative designed to bring services closer to

downtown residents led by the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service, established in the Gore-Albert Street neighbourhood.

The SSMPs has been providing the much-needed backbone support to the large-scale change envisioned by the participants in the Downtown Dialogue in Action project. In brief, SSMPs has:

- Adopted a crime prevention through social development philosophy, and implemented a community mobilization and engagement strategy to achieve this goal;
- Allocated resources – human, financial and infrastructure – to make this happen;
- Raised awareness in the community of the mobilization strategy, and formed partnerships to implement it; and
- Continued to co-generate knowledge and action to support the strategy.

The project has demonstrated both the power of and the need for the City of Sault Ste. Marie and local public services to **work collaboratively** with service providers, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, and creative residents in a **multifaceted, holistic approach to revitalization**.

Rooted in the goals of crime prevention through social development, the recommendations coming out of the initiative focussed on employing a comprehensive, collaborative approach to resolving issues of public safety, security and well-being centred on four key theatres of action:

1. Strengthening social cohesion

- Including increased access to recreation opportunities, community spaces, and support for social enterprise, community events, and cross-cultural awareness;

2. Addressing the needs of ‘at-risk’ neighbourhoods and people

- Including expansion of the Neighbourhood Resource Centre, increased access to health and social services, organizing neighbourhood residents and businesses, and design solutions to crime and isolation;

3. Increasing access to the necessities of life

- Including greater access to food, housing, and childcare; and

4. Fostering a healthy downtown culture & economy

- Including greater support for the Downtown Association and local small businesses, increased walkability and accessibility, residential intensification, support for active transportation, and promotion of local heritage.

To fully support this approach, the report recommends striking a **coordinating committee composed of residents, business or property owners, service providers, and other diverse stakeholders** to advance the recommendations of the *Downtown Dialogue in Action* project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	6
FIGURES & TABLES	9
1.0 Introduction & Need for Change	10
1.1 Social Risk Factors	13
1.3 Health and Well-being Factors.....	14
1.4 Economic and Demographic Factors.....	15
1.5 Crime and Safety Factors	17
1.6 Need for Change Summary	17
2.0 Action Research Methodology – Community Dialogue and Mobilization	17
2.1 Study Area and Demographics.....	18
2.2 Engaging in a Community Dialogue	19
2.3 Interviews and Focus Groups	20
2.4 Survey	21
2.5 Media Review	21
2.6 Community Action.....	22
2.7 Collaborative Research.....	24
2.8 Literature Review Design	24
2.9 Research Limitations	25
3.0 Literature Review	26
3.1 Crime Prevention through Social Development and the Need for Urban Vitality	26
3.2 Local Studies and Reports	28
3.2.1 Reports on Crime	28
3.2.2 Reports on Vibrancy.....	29
3.2.3 Reports on Health and Social Services.....	30

3.2.4 Reports on Childhood and Early Development	32
4.0 Findings	35
4.1 Summary of Engagement	35
4.1.1 Survey Results	35
4.1.2 Interviews & Focus Groups	37
4.1.3 Media Review Results	39
4.2 Downtown Design and the Physical Environment	40
4.2.1 Downtown Geography	40
4.2.2 Redevelopment and Heritage Preservation	42
4.2.3 Vacant and Deteriorating Buildings	43
4.3 Downtown Vibrancy	44
4.3.1 Festivals and Events	46
4.3.2 Hours of Operation	46
4.4 Social Spaces	46
4.5 Parks and Recreation	47
4.6 Transportation and Parking	48
4.7 Graffiti	49
4.7.1 Community Actions: Graffiti Reframed	49
4.8 Voices from the Margins: Poverty and Social Exclusion	50
4.8.1 Poverty	51
4.8.2 Housing	52
4.8.3 Transportation Concerns	53
4.8.4 Food Security	53
4.8.5 Service Access	54
4.8.6 Marginalized Identities	55
4.8.7 Community Actions: Soup Ste. Marie	56
4.9 Perceptions of Safety, Crime and Social Disorder	57
4.9.1 Perceptions of Crime, Safety, and Security	57
4.9.2 Sex Trade Work	62

4.9.3 Mental Health and Addictions	64
4.10 Changing Perceptions and Approaches to Downtown Revitalization	65
5.0 Response to Research	67
6.0 Recommendations	68
6.1 Downtown Action Coordinating Committee	69
6.2 Comprehensive Collaborative Approach to Improving the Downtown	69
6.2.1 Strengthening Social Cohesion	70
6.2.2 Addressing the Needs of 'At-Risk' Neighbourhoods & People	71
6.2.3 Increasing Access to the Necessities of Life	73
6.2.4 Fostering a Healthy Downtown Economy	73
7.0 CONCLUSION	74
REFERENCES	76
Appendix A: Interview Questions	80
Appendix B: Focus Group Questions	81
Appendix C: Survey Questions, Responses and Results	82
Appendix D: Media Review Results and Summary	88
Appendix E: Focus Group and Interview Participants	89
Appendix F: Community Picture Report, 2011 Priorities and Recommendations	91
Appendix G: Record of Community Meetings, Events and Presentations	92

FIGURES & TABLES

Figure 1: Ontario's Mobilization & Engagement Model of Community Policing	11
Figure 2: Children's Social Risk in Downtown Area	14
Figure 3: Location of Municipal and School Playgrounds.....	15
Figure 4: Children living in low income families	16
Figure 5: Downtown Dialogue Study Area.....	18
Figure 6: Timeline of the Downtown Produced by Focus Group Participants	21
Figure 9: Percent of Children Vulnerable in 1 or More Domain	33
Figure 10: Location of Municipal and School Playgrounds	34
Figure 11: Children Living in Low-Income Families	34
Figure 7: Perceptions of Safety Downtown	36
Figure 8: Perceptions of Downtown Sault Ste. Marie's Future	36
Figure 12: Image from Soup Ste. Marie	57
Figure 13: The Restorative Justice Model.....	61
Table 1 Community Engagement & Research Activities.....	23
Table 2 Recommendations of SSMIC Study of Youth Crime.....	29
Table 5: Education Development Index - West Central Division.....	33
Table 3: Survey Responses.....	37
Table 4: Media Review Themes	39

1.0 Introduction & Need for Change

Sault Ste. Marie, a small city (population approx.: 75,000) in Northeastern Ontario, is located on the St. Mary's River at the hub of three of the Upper Great Lakes: Superior, Michigan and Huron. Its strategic location at the heart of North America's transportation route supported habitation long before Europeans arrived, and today two First Nations, Batchewana and Garden River, still border the city, while a relatively high population of Aboriginal people (11%) reside within the City limits (Statistics Canada 2006). Like other cities of its size in Northern Ontario, however, Sault Ste. Marie is facing a number of challenges, including an aging population and rapid changes to a resource-based economy.

The downtown area of the city, like other urban centres across North America, has been experiencing a decline due in part to a changing global economy, where 'big box' retail outlets challenge the survival and growth of smaller locally-owned businesses, and high residential density urban cores have filtered out into suburban developments. This has led to a general **loss of vitality** with empty storefronts, less traffic, and a lack of a full-service grocery store. The loss of economic vitality has been exacerbated **by increasing social needs**: an older housing stock in the downtown core has tended to deteriorate as newer subdivisions were built on the city's outskirts, so less affluent families, dependent on public transit, have clustered in the more affordable housing downtown. Further, the construction of several senior citizens' apartment towers has increased the need for health and social services while the hospital, among other health and social services, have relocated from the downtown to the outskirts of the City.

Sault Ste. Marie Police Service's Division 2, which encompasses the downtown and the study area for this research, is the smallest of the Service's four divisions in both population and land area, yet the division experiences a disproportionate number of calls for service. Residents and business people in the downtown core have regularly contacted police for assistance, often relating to '**social disorder**'¹ rather than criminal activity.

Recognizing the limitations of conventional policing resources to effectively respond to such 'social disorder' calls, the *Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police* in association with the *Government of Ontario* developed a **Mobilization and Engagement Model of Community Policing** (Hamilton, 2010). The model proposes a cycle of assessment, planning and action to foster cross-sector collaboration addressing the underlying issues that reduce social cohesion and thus contribute to increases in criminal behaviour (OACP, 2010). The model, visible in

¹ 'Social Disorder' calls for service include such issues as noise complaints, 'suspicious person(s)', landlord/tenant disputes, and concerns regarding intoxication or drug use. The majority of social disorder calls are resolved without resulting in an arrest.

Figure 1, consists of four colour-coded stages. The **Red Zone** reflects a high need for police assistance, where the community's problem-solving capacity is significantly reduced, and police assistance is needed for **law enforcement and crime suppression**. While police are engaged in patrolling and intelligence gathering, the 'community mobilization' phase of the model calls for **social development measures** to be implemented that address root causes of crime, including poverty, substandard housing, and insufficient supports for children and parents. Furthermore, police lead safety initiatives in collaboration with community members, always with an eye for identifying potential leaders who can take leading roles in reinstating community ownership over their own security. Amber and Blue Zones represent a transition toward safer communities and **crime prevention strategies**. Police services in the **Amber Zone** continue to focus on community mobilization to as a means of recruiting neighbours and stakeholders to deal more effectively with the root causes of crime within a neighbourhood. The **Blue Zone** represents a reduction in service calls and the success of some community efforts. Police services also shift their focus to **community engagement** whereby they encourage local citizens to play a larger role in raising their own standards of safety and well-being. The **Green Zone** reflects a low need for police assistance, where the community leads its own problem solving and safety initiatives, largely **preventing criminal behaviour** altogether.

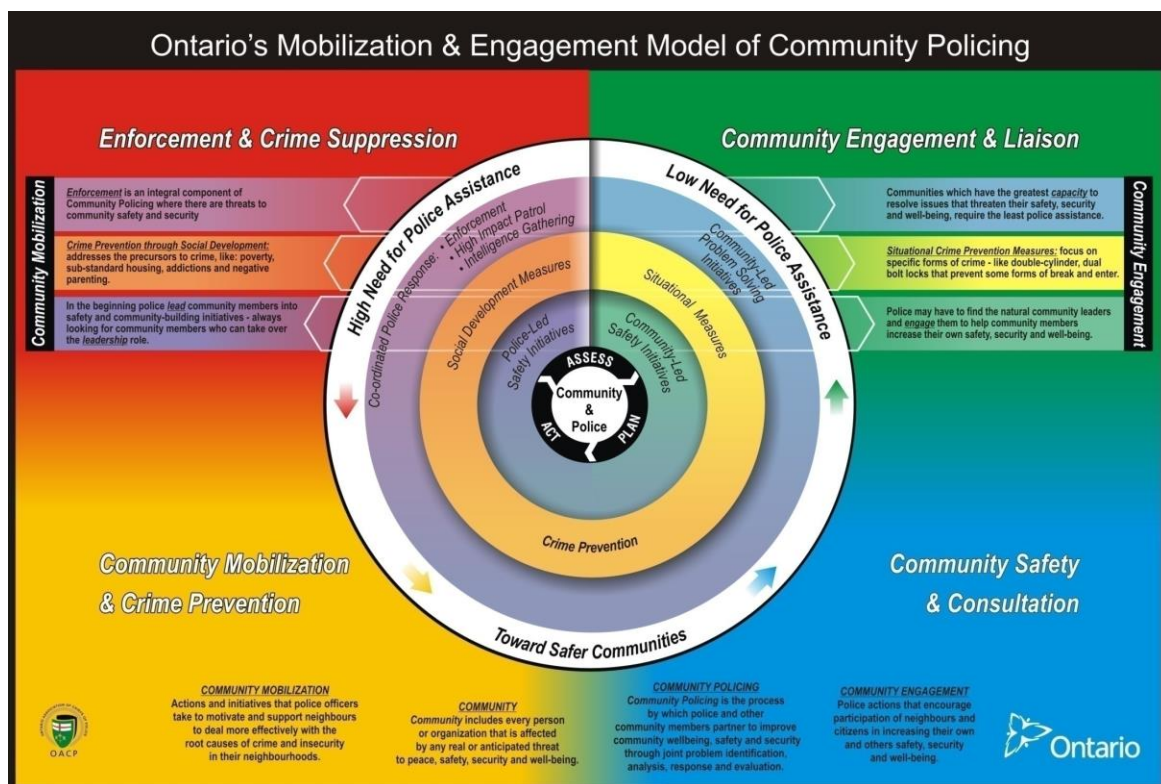


Figure 1: Ontario's Mobilization & Engagement Model of Community Policing (OACP, 2010)

The mobilization and engagement model of community policing requires a great deal of cross-sector collaboration and citizen-police cooperation. As the **Sault Ste. Marie Police Service** (SSMPS) examined the high rate and nature of calls for service in Division 2, it became increasingly apparent that community mobilization was needed to alleviate some of the pressures on the neighbourhood and police resources.

The SSMPS recognized that a permanent solution to the socio-economic issues prompting this demand for service required a more comprehensive approach and began searching for a longer lasting solution to the problem.

In May 2012 then-Chief of Police Bob Davies travelled to Montreal to attend a conference for police chiefs across the country. On the way there, two opportunities presented themselves to him to speak first with NORDIK Institute's Director of Research, Dr. Gayle Broad, and secondly with Suzanne Lajambe, Executive Director of the Sault's John Howard Society. Chief Davies discussed with both his concerns about the city's downtown area and the need to take a social development approach to resolving the problems the area was facing. Both Broad and Lajambe offered their organizations' support for taking an approach that would de-escalate criminalization and emphasize healthy social development.

Upon his return to Sault Ste. Marie, Chief Davies wasted no time. The following week, he contacted Dr. Broad and invited NORDIK to support the SSMPS in applying for a 'Proceeds of Crime Grant' that was due in just a few days. This first application was turned down in late August 2012, but this only seemed to strengthen Chief Davies' resolve. NORDIK assisted the SSMPS in coordinating subsequent meetings with the John Howard Society and then with a much larger group in March 2013, and a second application was submitted, this time successfully, which included both research as well as restorative justice training. Additional funding was obtained from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) as well as the United Way's Community Endowment Fund, to support the Downtown Dialogue in Action project.

By project start-up in May 2013, a group of approximately twenty individuals and organizations, including private businesspeople, residents, both school boards, and a number of service agencies, were committed to the project and the research, under the leadership of the SSMPS.

Shortly thereafter, a partnership was formed between the Police Services, NORDIK Institute and the John Howard Society to advance a community-based action research project called "Downtown Dialogue in Action". The partners met over the first year and brought other interested parties to the table, and in August, 2013, obtained funding to support this initiative. The partnership also developed a Steering Committee with other stakeholder groups. From May 2013 until May 2014 NORDIK employed a research coordinator, **Jessica Bolduc**, BA (Hons,

Econ) and two research interns, **Dana Chalifoux**, BSW, and **Tom Green**, MPL, to lead the action research and community engagement exercise. The Institute also provided research oversight and project coordination.

The vision for this project included four major components:

- Background research on the status of the city's downtown area and the engagement of residents, businesses, social service providers and consumers of services in a dialogue about the future of the downtown;
- Training of educators and police personnel in Restorative Justice practice;
- Exploration by all three partners of additional actions that could be taken to support social development;
- The development of a set of recommendations informing a comprehensive community plan for social development in the downtown area.

This report explores the outcomes of the research, dialogue and actions taken over the past year (March 2013 – April, 2014). **Section 2** reviews the methods used to engage the community in a dialogue and creating a vision for a comprehensive approach to change in the downtown area. **Section 3** outlines a review of literature pertaining to life in Sault Ste. Marie's downtown, as well as the role of social development in crime prevention. **Section 4** provides a summary of the research findings, including survey, focus group, and media review data. The section outlines participants' perceptions of the current challenges facing Sault Ste. Marie's downtown, together with an analysis of the strengths and opportunities to address these. Interspersed throughout this section are summaries of actions that were taken or are underway to advance the community's vision of a healthy and thriving downtown, including a community mobilization strategy adopted by the *SSMPS* and the emergence of a Restorative Justice community led by the John Howard Society, among many other projects. **Section 5** describes the public and official response to the research, dialogue, and action processes that have been carried out through the project. Finally, **Section 6** provides recommendations for further action to actualize social development within the downtown, while **Section 7** outlines the overall conclusions from the project.

1.1 Social Risk Factors

Significant risks for criminal involvement stem from limitations on the supports that children receive during early development.

In an effort to measure childhood wellbeing, the Best Start Network Report developed a metric based on a variety of indicators. According to the report, a child below the 10th percentile "has

poor overall social skills; has regular serious problems in more than one area of getting along with other children – accepting responsibility for his or her own actions, following rules and class routines, being respectful of adults, children and others’ property, having self-confidence and self-control, and adjusting to change; and is usually unable to work independently” (DSSMBSN, 2011, p.30). While several of these indicators are obviously culturally contingent, the Network’s report remains one of the few tools for measuring the impact of limited supports on children within Sault Ste. Marie.

Figure 2 outlines the level of social risk reported for children across Sault Ste. Marie. See section 4.8.1 for more information about the Social Risk Index.

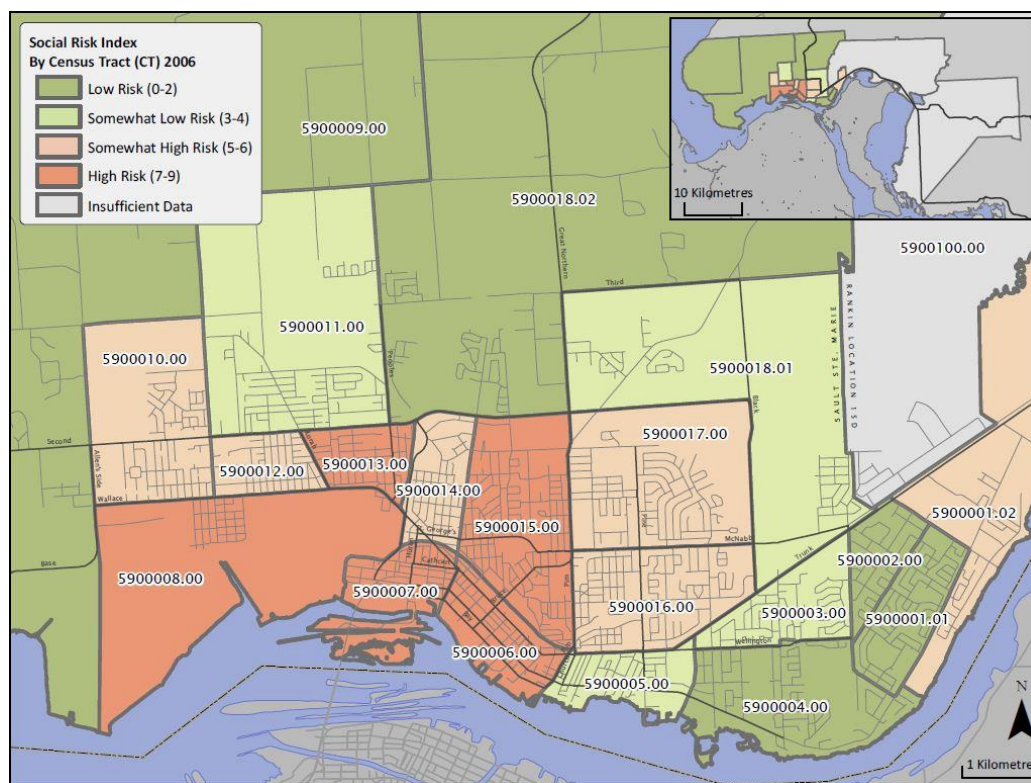


Figure 2: Children’s social risk in downtown area [tracts 5900007.00; 5900006.00; and 5900005.00]

The children growing up in the downtown area (tracts 5900007 and 5900006) are among the most at-risk children in Canada. Exacerbating this challenge is a lack of access to health services and recreational opportunities.

1.3 Health and Well-being Factors

Deficient health care and mental health services are also significant risk factors for criminal behaviour. Currently as a result of the Sault Area Hospitals and Algoma Public Health relocating

to Third Line and Willow Ave., respectively, the downtown is experiencing a depletion of these resources of care (Dutkiewicz, 2011; Lauzon & Kelly, 2013). The risk of isolation which can affect health is magnified by a lack of accessible transportation options (Dutkiewicz, 2011).

Insufficient access to recreation also has a negative impact on well-being by limiting opportunities for social contact and cohesion (DSSMBSN, 2011). Sault Ste. Marie has playgrounds and recreation opportunities in many parts of the city, however these are noticeably absent in the downtown core, as demonstrated by Figure 3 (DSSMBSN, 2011). *The Healthy Communities* partnership also noted a need for access to affordable physical activity opportunities, safe and proper recreation facilities and bike paths (Dutkiewicz, 2011).

Those who reside in the area between Dennis and Pilgrim Streets have no access to school or municipal playgrounds within reasonable walking distance, thus creating barriers and limiting opportunities for youth and families. Without such access residents are more likely to experience a lack of healthy activity and are at a higher risk of social isolation, which results in higher risks for social disorder and crime (DSSMBSN, 2011).

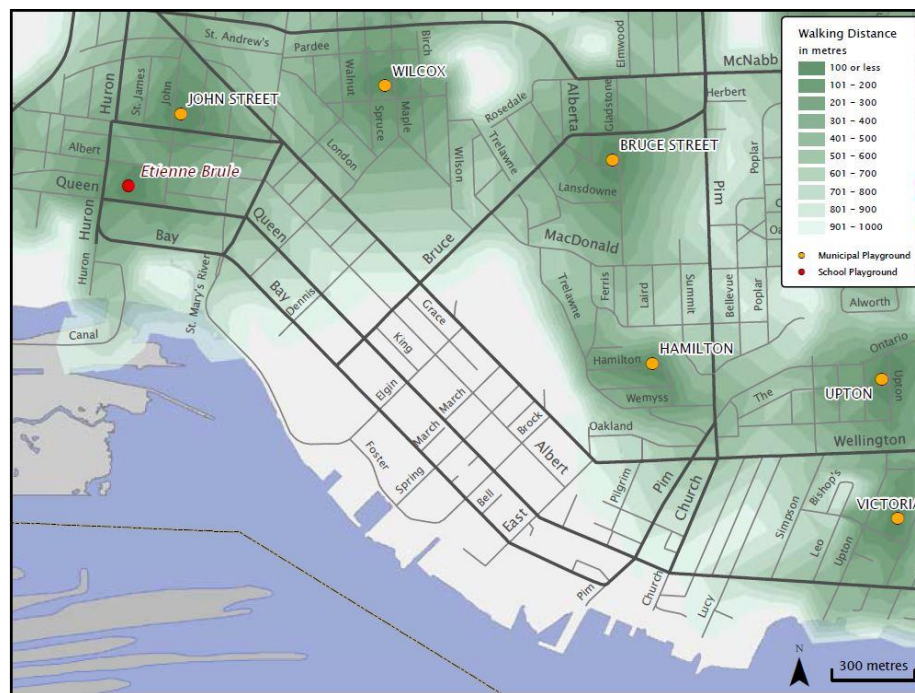


Figure 3: Location of Municipal and School Playgrounds

1.4 Economic and Demographic Factors

Poverty and related factors have been consistently demonstrated to have a momentous impact on the prevalence of crime (Russell, 2014). The city's downtown residents experience a lower

socio-economic status than the city's general average and lower income levels within households. Average per capita income in the study area is less than \$30 000 per year, and average family income is less than \$50 000 per year (Statistics Canada, 2012). A shocking 50% of the children living in the downtown live below the low-income cut-off (LICO) poverty measure. Figure 4 demonstrates the distribution of child poverty across Sault Ste. Marie.

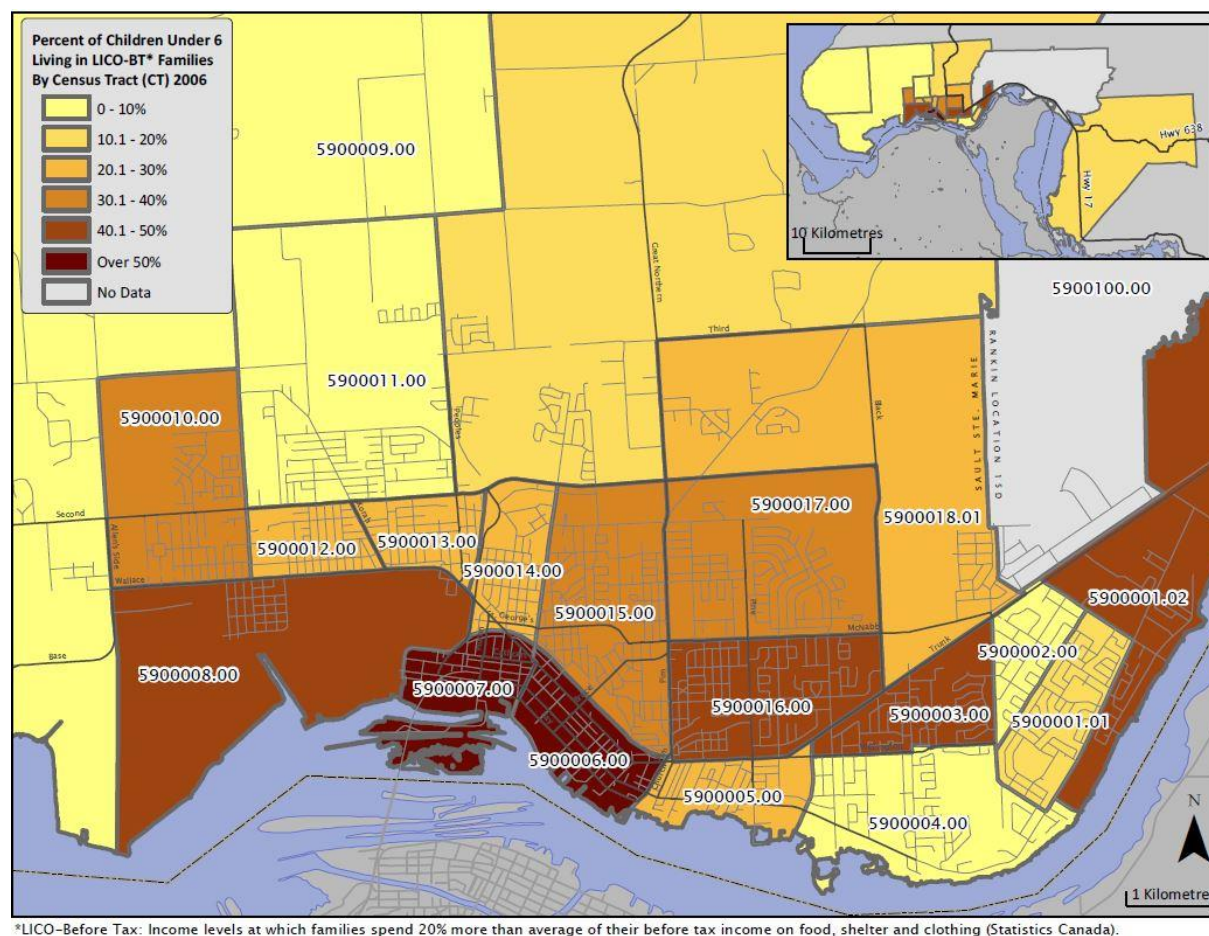


Figure 4: Children living in low income families (Best Start Network 2011)

Residents also have lower levels of education than the city's average, and a higher percentage live in rental units (DSSMBSN, 2011; Statistics Canada, 2012). A 2007 Economic Feasibility Study of the downtown found that the factors contributing to its decline were the dilapidation and vacancy of infrastructure, including housing and storefronts; limited ownership opportunities; and inaccessibility or lack of retail choices in the area.

1.5 Crime and Safety Factors

The downtown core suffers from the perception of reduced safety, due at least in part to the higher than average calls for service received by police (IBI Group, 2007). This perception is intensified by the presence of vacant and unmaintained store fronts, property crime such as graffiti, and an absence of life and vibrancy in the area (m.i.&fg.²).

A lack of pedestrian presence in the downtown can increase criminal activity, or the perceptions of criminal activity. Creating a thriving downtown with people utilizing the space puts ‘more eyes on the streets’ and can therefore decrease crime or change the negative perceptions of safety in a given area (Jacobs, 1961). The limited public presence in the neighbourhood consequentially limits the perception of safety.

1.6 Need for Change Summary

As the local studies from the health, economic, and social service sectors indicate, many people residing in the downtown core are marginalized with limited incomes, supports, and resources (DSSMBSN, 2011; Dutkiewicz, 2011; Lauzon & Kelly, 2013; IBI Group, 2007). Substandard housing, lack of access to recreational facilities, and a general lack of business vitality in the area further exacerbate the social exclusion of residents in this area. High numbers of ‘social disorder’ calls to the police (see S.3.1) demonstrate a need for change, and indicate that the downtown area needs a longer-term, comprehensive approach to crime prevention through social development.

2.0 Action Research Methodology – Community Dialogue and Mobilization

The Sault Ste. Marie Police Service, the **John Howard Society** and the **Steering Committee** members provided valuable leadership and oversight to the project, encouraging participation and mobilizing community members. Over 1 000 people participated in the *Downtown Dialogue in Action* through the use of diverse and inclusionary research methods. Some of the methods were more traditional, such as interviews, focus groups and surveys, while others engaged and targeted specific groups through public, inclusive actions within the population such as *the Jamestown Flowerbombing*, and *Graffiti Reframed*, a collaboration with youth, local

² This short form signifies that data or statements have been gleaned from **multiple interviews and focus groups**.

artists, residents and businesses to support the development of youth street art. Efforts to engage particularly marginalized groups such as sex trade workers, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual and queer (LGBTQ) community and people living in poverty used trusted intermediaries to reach these populations. Other research currently underway or recently completed in the downtown served to augment and verify the results of this project. The following is a detailed description of the methodologies and approaches used by the research team to collect data in support of the *Downtown Dialogues in Action* project.

2.1 Study Area and Demographics

The study area for the *Downtown Dialogue* project was determined by the community partners as well as by examining mapping used by the City of Sault Ste. Marie and the *SSMPS* as well as through criteria used by the Canadian Urban Institute to define downtowns in its national downtowns study (Canadian Urban Institute, 2012). The study area is comprised of *SSMPS*'s Division 2 and the City's Downtown Community Improvement Policy Area. The area includes main streets, a cohesive mix of commercial and mixed use buildings complemented by civic, religious and residential buildings and public spaces, has high levels of pedestrian activity, and is well served by public transportation. It is defined by hard boundaries such as the St. Mary's River to the South, railway tracks and Cathcart St. to the North, West St. to the west and Simpson St. to the East.

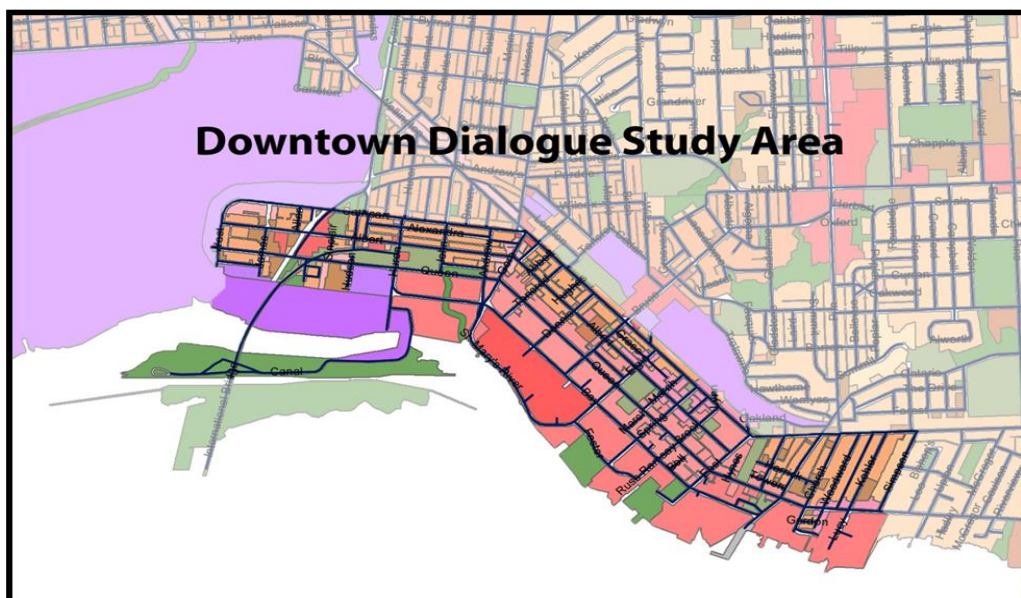


Figure 5: Downtown Dialogue Study Area

The downtown dialogue study area coincides fairly well with two of the city's census tracts. By examining the data available for these two census tracts (5900007.00 and 5900006.00) from

Statistics Canada we can get a general demographic profile for the area's resident population. The **population of the area in 2011 was 4 692 people**. This is **down 4.2% from 4 901 in 2006**. The area has a high proportion of both youth (0-14) and older adults (65+). It also has a high proportion of renters and a relatively large population who walks or takes transit to work (Statistics Canada, 2012). Many of the people who work or spend most of their day downtown, however, reside in other neighbourhoods, resulting in two different populations with distinct priorities and issues. Consequentially, the methods used in this research attempt to reach both populations in various ways.

2.2 Engaging in a Community Dialogue

NORDIK recognized that several different research methods would be necessary to engage the diversity of research participants, i.e., residents, business owners/staff, service providers, and visitors to the downtown.

The partnering organizations formed a **Community Advisory Committee** to guide the research project consisting of members from 28 organizations, private businesses and non-profits that operate out of or service Sault Ste. Marie's downtown. Members included the Boards of Education, City staff and officials and a number of service providers and businesses. The advisory committee met three times during the course of the project, in March, June, and October of 2013, to **periodically receive updates on the status of the project and provide guidance for areas of further study and action**.

Prior to receiving ethics review approval, the researchers attended public meetings and events such as City Council meetings, public open-houses for the City's **Downtown Improvement Program** and **Housing and Homelessness Strategy**, **Rotaryfest**, **Buskerfest** and others (See Appendix G). The researchers also set-up an information table and displays at the **Station Mall** for two days in July.

To ensure the rights and wellbeing of participants were thoroughly protected and in keeping with NORDIK's standard research ethics procedures, a full ethics review was completed in the summer of 2013 by Algoma University's Research Ethics Board.

Both traditional and social media outlets were used to reach out to the community. Press releases announced the project, its partners, and the receipt of funding, and were reported by four local media outlets including the Sault Star, Sootoday.com, Local2.ca, and CTV. The project obtained nine separate occasions of coverage during the project.

The *Downtown Dialogue* Project created its own Facebook page and Twitter account. These sites were used to update the public on the progress of the project, and to receive feedback

and share information about services and initiatives that were taking place in the downtown. A *Downtown Dialogue* page was also established on the NORDIK website. The researchers' contact information was posted on these sites and the public was encouraged to contact them regarding any questions, comments or suggestions.

Three public presentations of the research findings were made in late March, 2014 to community leaders, front-line workers, and residents and business owners in the downtown area. Feedback from these presentations was incorporated into this final report.

2.3 Interviews and Focus Groups

Interviews and focus groups were conducted to glean more in-depth, qualitative responses from a diverse cross-section of those who live, work, provide or access services in the downtown.

Interview and focus group participants were recruited by distributing recruitment posters to local service agencies and businesses and by posting the announcements on the project's social media pages, through snowball sampling, and through the Steering Committee. Research Participants were limited to those who live, work, and provide service or access services in downtown Sault Ste. Marie.

Participants represented a wide cross-section of ages, genders, institutional affiliations, ethnicity, and abilities among other demographics, and included residents, businesses, social service providers, and equity seeking groups. Some groups, including urban Aboriginal residents and service providers, sex trade workers, those in conflict with the law, youth, seniors, the LGBTQ community, and individuals who experienced mental illness and addiction, were specifically recruited to ensure that their voices were elevated in this research. Focus groups and interviews with sex trade workers, people accessing food services, and the LGBTQ community were conducted by research consultants with previous experience working with these groups who had developed a rapport and trusting relationship. These consultations took place in safe spaces to reduce participants' concerns regarding confidentiality. Potential participants were notified via posters, word of mouth and email that food, refreshments and bus passes would be offered at the sessions, and service providers made available space for the focus groups, improving accessibility.

The interviews and focus groups were designed to elicit participants' connections to the downtown core, how they used that space, how they felt about the area and what they thought could/should be improved. Interviews and focus groups were either hand or audio-recorded

and transcribed. Focus group participants were able to record a substantial amount of their input themselves through the use of post-it note brainstorming exercises.

Figure 6: Timeline of the Downtown Produced by Focus Group Participants

2.4 Survey

2.5 Media Review

³ With over 100 community-based research projects completed, many within the City of Sault Ste. Marie, its listservs are quite extensive.

of what issues, activities, and events were deemed to be of particular significance to people in Sault Ste. Marie. A **key word search**, based on issues discussed at the project's Steering Committee meetings, was used to find articles that may be relevant to the *Downtown Dialogue* Project. Key words included **downtown, Jamestown, Queen, Bay, Gore, Gateway, Waterfront, Boardwalk, Prostitution, Housing, Crime and Police**.

A total of **55 articles** written within the period of August 14, 2013 – August 14, 2011, with a total of **463 comments** from the public, were reviewed. The articles were summarized in an excel spreadsheet and comments transcribed. A content analysis was performed and identified the major themes and issues about which commenters were most concerned or most opinionated regarding the downtown area (See Appendix D).

2.6 Community Action

Action research is a methodology often used to achieve social change and involves the full and active participation of the community in the research process, usually resulting in a more accurate and authentic analysis of social reality (Greenwood & Levin, 1998; van de Sande & Shwartz, 2011). Action research involves examining issues and problems but also initiating opportunities for change during the research process, and assists in creating improved conditions and environments while providing important information for the outcome of the final research (ASCD, n.d.). Given the goals of this research project, i.e., to engage the downtown community in a comprehensive planning process, action research was identified as an ideal method.

While many of the research activities could be termed 'action research', there were also several discrete community actions which were prompted by the research itself. These included a **flowerbombing in the Jamestown area; restorative justice training** for 41 participants, conducted by the John Howard Society of Sault Ste. Marie in collaboration with the John Howard Society of Hamilton; a crowd-funding event called '**Soup Ste. Marie**'; a collection of activities to address **graffiti in the downtown** area; and the sponsoring of activities designed to promote social enterprises as a response to high unemployment of youth and others in the study area. The **Sault Ste. Marie Police Service** was also taking a number of actions to re-direct its support for change and to mobilize the community. These actions are not yet complete and are outlined more fully throughout **Section 4 in subsections designated as "Community Actions."** Together, these actions engaged almost 300 people.

Table 1 Community Engagement & Research Activities

Name of Activity	Type of Engagement	Number of participants
Community Engagement		
Native Nation Youth Council	Introduction and Dialogue	19
Soup Kitchen: I dream. I see. I remember.	Introduction and Dialogue	15
Social Development Council	Introduction and Dialogue	19
Community Advisory Committee Meetings	Presentation on project goals and timeline	40
Station Mall Display	Introduction to Project	25
Email and Private Message Suggestions	Correspondence	8
Art Gallery Expansion Meeting	Consultation	9
Crime Prevention Seminar	Presentation and Dialogue	100
NORDIK AGM	Presentation and Dialogue	30
Downtown Association Board Meeting	Introduction and Dialogue	13
Social Enterprise Stakeholder Meeting	Facilitation & Dialogue	21
World Aids Day	Information & Dialogue	50
Subtotal		349
Research		
Individual Interviews	Research	43
Focus Groups	Research	131
Media Scan	Research	40
Survey	Research	150
Subtotal		363
Actions		
Jamestown Flowerbomb	Action Research, Community Gardening	50
Restorative Justice Training	Training	41
Soup Ste. Marie	Community Event	100
Graffiti Reframed	Facilitation & Dialogue	8
Community Committee on Graffiti	Presented project, proposed actions, developed funding proposal	20
Graffiti Reframed	Presented to City Council & Staff, obtained Motion to support Funding Application	80
Subtotal		299
Total		1012

2.7 Collaborative Research

The Downtown Dialogue researchers collaborated with two other studies that were being undertaken at the same time as the Downtown Dialogue project, and which were either partially or wholly including the same study area, the Canadian Urban Institute's 'The Value of Investing in Northern Ontario's Downtowns' and the 'Urban-Aboriginal Communities Thrive' (U-ACT) study by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. The sharing of data and information further informed the dialogue and actions of this research.

The Urban Aboriginal Task Force (Phase II): Urban-Aboriginal Communities Thrive (U-ACT), research project driven by urban Aboriginal communities and Friendship Centres in North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Timmins, is a two year community-driven research project. This action oriented research project continues to address the community determined needs and priorities through an asset-based approach, focusing on the strength and resiliency of these communities and their individual members to overcome challenges in a manner that can inspire positive change and social transformation (Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, 2013).

The Canadian Urban Institute's study is also a two year research project. It examines and promotes revitalization efforts in Northern Ontario's five largest downtowns - North Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, Timmins and Thunder Bay. This project will deliver detailed research and analysis on the evolution of Northern Ontario's downtowns, a comprehensive community engagement program to help develop innovative and targeted approaches to revitalization and a web portal to create a platform for knowledge ex-change across the five cities (Canadian Urban Institute, 2013).

2.8 Literature Review Design

An ongoing literature review was conducted over the course of the research project. Literature was reviewed regarding social development and crime prevention, and downtown revitalization in Canada and small urban and northern communities.

The literature review consisted of Academic peer-reviewed articles, governmental reports and reports from local organizations in Sault Ste. Marie. Academic articles were searched using the Algoma University Wishart Library Catalogue and Academic Databases such as Scholars Portal and EBSCO. A key word search narrowed the results to the most relevant articles. Key words used in the search were: **crime prevention, social development, downtown, and revitalization.**

A number of studies have also been conducted within Sault Ste. Marie and the Algoma District on such topics as **crime, vibrancy, and health and social services**. Findings from these reports are summarized following the literature review.

2.9 Research Limitations

While the research design endeavoured to reach and report from as broad a swath of the community as possible, a number of technical and logistical limitations curtailed either the reach of the researchers or the documentation of data.

Several focus groups were not audio recorded due to technical difficulties, and some participants being unwilling to have the session audio recorded. These issues were mitigated through hand written recording and the focus groups were facilitated in a way which allowed for participants to record a substantial amount of input themselves through the use of adhesive notes.

The online survey respondents were limited to 150 because this was the maximum allowed by the service provider, FluidSurveys, who had not activated the proper account. There was further interest in participating in the survey and a larger number of respondents could have been sampled, but unfortunately, by the time this was recognized, the survey period was closed.

The media review examined the comments posted by the public on news articles related to the downtown by one small locally owned and operated media company, Local2. The Local2 website is configured in such a way that it is possible to see which news articles have been commented on and it is also possible to search for articles based on keywords. Comments can be made anonymously and could be made multiple times by the same person. It is also apparent that there is a small community of 30-40 people who are regularly commenting on articles on the website.

We were unable to speak with anyone under the age of 18 or anyone who was currently incarcerated as per the conditions of the Algoma University Research Ethics Board.

3.0 Literature Review

3.1 Crime Prevention through Social Development and the Need for Urban Vitality

Crime, defined as charges brought under the Criminal Code of Canada, is showing a downward trend while police services are experiencing increasing demands for assistance, and increasing costs. Over 75% of calls for police service involve 'social disorder', something other than a chargeable offense. Social disorder is a signal of the presence of conditions that can evolve into self-destructive and criminal activity (Russell & Taylor, 2014).

Dr. Irwin Waller has demonstrated that prevention measures and improved pro-social settings for youth yield greater return on investment than enforcement and incarceration options (Waller, 2006). In Ontario, cuts by former governments to healthcare, welfare, and employment insurance have contributed to social disorder. More people are being harmed by lack of social service supports from the government than are being protected by a shift in policy towards more aggressive policing and strict incarceration policies (DeKeseredy, 2009).

Russell and Taylor posit that Canada's human services should take an approach of focusing on the root causes of crime in order to make communities safer (2014). They contend that the roots of crime, anti-social behaviour, disease and illness are the same: economic and social exclusion, substandard housing, addictions, inequitable distribution of social power, and what they deem as 'ignorance and illiteracy' and 'negative parenting,' however problematic these terms may be, as they are based on cultural assumptions. Yet each of these 'roots' have their own determining causes. Focusing on positive ways to influence social conditions can produce far more opportunities to reduce harm and victimization and reduce costs of emergency response than only targeting offenders. **Social development is a long term strategy for increasing the safety and well-being** of people living in marginalized conditions; and thereby, reducing the demand for police assistance. Russell (2012) states that crime is a symptom of social exclusion and that safety and well-being can only be achieved when community cohesion is achieved. If there are some people in a municipality who feel unsafe because of the actions and behaviours of others, they argue, then there is no community (Russell & Taylor, 2014).

A fundamental attribute of a successful city district is that a person must feel personally safe and secure on the street among all of the strangers there. If people fear the streets, they will use them less, which make the street even less safe. A sense of personal belonging and social cohesiveness comes from well-defined neighbourhoods and crowded multi-use streets (Jacobs, 1961).

According to renowned urban theorist Jane Jacobs, safety comes from having ‘eyes on the street’ or having well-used streets and neighbours engaged in watching the street. This is most effective when done casually and voluntarily. Jacobs argues that you can’t make people use streets they have no reason to use and that you can’t make people watch streets they don’t want to watch. Having diverse uses, including stores, restaurants, bars, and other public places interspersed along the sidewalk, works in several complex ways to make the area safer:

1. *They give people a concrete reason to use the street.*
2. *They draw people along the sidewalk past places that have no attraction to the public. The influence doesn’t carry very far so it is important for enterprises to be frequent.*
3. *Storekeepers and business people become guardians. They watch the street and care for customers.*
4. *The activity generated by people on errands or getting food or drink is itself an attraction to other people.* (Jacobs, 1961)

A recent study by the Canadian Urban Institute (2012) has taken a comprehensive look at downtowns across Canada. The study shows that while downtowns had been in decline for some time, they are now making a resurgence. **Strategic partnerships and multi-sector collaboration** are critical for implementing visions for downtowns, **residential development** is bringing vitality back to downtowns, and revitalization is happening on many scales.

Downtowns do have to overcome perceptions and concerns over lack of safety. The busier and more vibrant a downtown is, the safer people tend to feel (Canadian Urban Institute, 2012).

Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) in Canada have been taking a ‘clean and safe’ approach to security in their districts. ‘Clean and safe’ refers to ensuring an environment is free of litter and risk for consumers to pass through unscathed (Lippert, 2012). The approach uses security, signage, beautification as well as environmental design to increase perceptions of safety (Sleiman & Lippert, 2010; Lippert, 2012; Bookman & Woolford, 2013). Cleaning up litter and removing graffiti is important for the perception of safety and the image and reputation of an area. Way-finding signage also plays a role in the feeling of safety and attracting people to an area (Bookman & Woolford, 2013). Design interventions such as installing appealing light standards and benches to attract pedestrian traffic are found to help save insurance costs from fixing broken windows etc. (Lippert, 2008). Ambassadors programs are another security measure that has appeared across North America in recent years. The Ambassadors patrol BIAs with a blend of cleaning, interactive customer service, and surveillance aims (Lippert, 2012). They also contribute to adding ‘eyes on the street.’

Based on the review of the literature best practices for improving safety in downtowns and reducing crime are to focus on **improving social conditions, building communities and social networks, and changing negative perceptions** of the areas and its residents.

3.2 Local Studies and Reports

There have been a number of studies and reports conducted on the Algoma District, Sault Ste. Marie, and the downtown area which help inform this research. These reports come from the health, social services, business, and municipal service sector but their recommendations remain relevant to crime prevention and social development.

3.2.1 Reports on Crime

In 2009, Sault Ste. Marie's City Council commissioned a study on youth crime in the municipality. The Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre (SSMIC) used GIS to determine which neighbourhoods experienced crime and to pinpoint where young offenders resided (SSMIC, 2009). The report suggests that while there were multiple crimes being reported that were committed by young offenders, the rate of youth crime in Sault Ste. Marie was not extreme and was committed by only a few individuals. Crime was spread relatively evenly throughout the city, with a slight concentration around schools and low income neighbourhoods (Hoffman, 2010). These findings are consistent with other studies of mid-sized Canadian cities (LaGrange, 1999). The SSMIC report had several recommendations, one of which was to set up **recreational activities in low income neighbourhoods**. They have a low rate of participation in sports and recreation which may be due to an inaccessibility of transportation to recreation centres. This finding is consistent with the Community Picture Report published by Healthy Communities Partnership Algoma in 2011 (Dutkiewicz, 2011). SSMIC held community meetings where a number of local service providers made recommendations in response to the report. Many of these recommendations have since been addressed or are being addressed (See Table 2).

Table 2 Recommendations of SSMIC Study of Youth Crime (Adapted from SSMIC, 2009)

Recommendation	Action
Identify where high risk youth live	Our Children their Future Report (DSSMBSN, 2011)
Include youth in the development of any strategies	Sault Youth Association and Downtown Dialogue
Identify gaps in services and develop a central database for social services	211 Service (211 North, 2012)
Emphasize prevention and remediation	Downtown Dialogue, Restorative Justice Training, <i>SSMPS</i> embracing provincial Community Mobilization and Engagement policing model
Provide community busses from low income areas to recreation centres	None to date. Similar suggestions to subsidize transit service for youth involved in recreation were found in Downtown Dialogue Research

3.2.2 Reports on Vibrancy

The *Downtown Association* commissioned a ‘planning and visioning’ workshop for the development of the downtown in 2004. The workshop was facilitated by *Possibilities Group* and was attended by a broad cross section of stakeholders and interest groups from the downtown area. The conclusions were that:

- Downtown needs to become a neighbourhood where people can live, work, and play;
- Downtown needs to be more active in the evenings and weekends; and that
- Safety should be increased in the downtown, especially at night and pedestrian and transit connections should be improved (Jaehrling, 2004).

A 2007 Economic Feasibility And Downtown Improvement Study commissioned by the City of Sault Ste. Marie found that the factors contributing to the decline of the downtown were **out-migration** of people and business to newer urban and suburban areas, **dilapidation and vacancy** of existing infrastructure, perception of **property crime and reduced safety**, **inaccessible retail and lack of retail choice** compared to suburban retail centres, **limited**

ownership opportunities, small lots and accessibility issues for multiple car families (IBI Group, 2007).

From (2007-2009) The City operated a **Downtown Development Initiative** to address concerns regarding dilapidated infrastructure and decreasing property values. It built on the vision that was established by the *Possibilities Group* report (Jaehrling, 2004). The Initiative provided \$1.355 million in the form of grants and rebates to the downtown area. The city has reviewed the programs and determined that they were extremely successful, achieving a private/public sector investment ratio of 7:1. The initiative **leveraged \$10 million in private investment** in the downtown and resulted in **physical improvements to buildings, improved pedestrian laneways, and new residential development** in the downtown (Downtown Development Initiative, 2012). The City is now working on a second phase for this initiative. The second phase will include Gore Street and initiate streetscape and street **furniture improvements**. This second phase will also include the development of **parkettes** and **public art installations** along with grants to improve infrastructure in the area (Downtown Community Improvement Plan, 2014). These Downtown Development Initiatives should help to address some of the crime and safety issues in the downtown through design and social development.

A number of reports and studies conducted by *Destiny Sault Ste. Marie* were also reviewed (Destiny Sault Ste. Marie, 2003; Krmpotich, 2007; Gravelines, 2009). Destiny is a think tank that identifies priorities for economic direction in Sault Ste. Marie. Many of the priorities for the downtown have been accomplished in the last ten years such as constructing the **Essar Centre** and developing **Clergue Park**. Others were identified but have not yet been realized, such as the proposal to create a downtown trolley, which could address some of the transportation and accessibility issues that will be discussed in subsequent pages.

A report on Sault Ste. Marie's Age Friendly Initiative detailed the City's age-friendly assessment and status from the *World Health Organization* (Pagnucco, 2011). The report states that all master plans and city projects will now have Age-Friendly considerations built into them. This is important because there are several projects in the downtown as well as the Canal District Master plan which will have to **take accessibility into consideration** of their design.

3.2.3 Reports on Health and Social Services

The Community Picture Report, 2011 by *Healthy Communities Partnership Algoma* highlights some similar findings to our own study. The report notes that the risk of isolation, which can affect health, is magnified by the **lack of public transportation** within and between communities in the Algoma District and that there are challenges in bringing stakeholders together (both public and private partners) (Dutkiewicz, 2011).

The study examined the demographic profiles of the communities in the Algoma District and also distributed a survey regarding health issues. The study found that in Sault Ste. Marie there is a need for access to **affordable physical activity** opportunities, safe and proper **recreation facilities** and **bike paths**. Decreasing alcohol and substance misuse and increasing resiliency skill in youth is a priority. There is a lack of **mental health supports** and health services for people with mental illness in the community (See Appendix F for priorities and recommendations).

A 2011 Report by the Best Start Network, the *Sault Ste. Marie District Social Services Administration Board* and the *Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre* examined children under 6 in Sault Ste. Marie and their risks and vulnerabilities. The study used a GIS approach and examined demographic information to get a better understanding of the city's population and where children are located. It also examined social risk and health indicators. It is apparent from the report that children in the downtown have **higher social and health risks**, tend to live in **low income households**, and generally have **limited access to playgrounds** (DSSMBSN, 2011).

The *Soup Kitchen Community Centre*, whose mandate is to address the needs of those who live in poverty, has identified health care service gaps in the downtown in recent years as a result of the *Sault Area Hospitals* and *Algoma Public Health* relocating to the city's north end. In response, the organization's Board of Directors has decided to expand its operations and to examine the feasibility of owning and operating a **community child and health care facility** located in the downtown (Lauzon & Kelly, 2013; Schmidt, 2013). The Soup Kitchen report shows that there is a **lack of service support the vulnerable population** that lives in the downtown core. The creation of a child and health care centre in the downtown would also help to address some of the priorities and recommendations outlined in the Community Picture Report (Dutkiewicz, 2011).

A research project undertaken in Sault Ste. Marie by the *Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres* has examined urban service agencies and First Nations communities, and coordinated Aboriginal and mainstream services. The study found that there was a relatively high degree of social inclusion of urban Aboriginals in the community. The **Alternative School** in the downtown was highlighted for regularly hosting and promoting cultural events. While the after-effects of the Indian Residential Schools are still very present in the city, a large number of non-Aboriginal institutions have also demonstrated understanding of this need and make efforts to improve cultural competence. Sault Ste. Marie boasts a vibrant **Indigenous Art community** exemplified by such groups as The Sault Indigenous Writers' Collective and a recently-opened Anishinaabe art vendor on Gore Street. A second report by the research team examined mental health services available in Sault Ste. Marie. The team found that there is a variety of mental health services available in Sault Ste. Marie, with **limited psychiatric services**. The *Sault Ste. Marie Indian Friendship Centre* (IFC) is the only organization in Sault Ste. Marie that delivers

Aboriginal specific services. The study recommends providing more resources to the Sault Ste. Marie Indian Friendship Centre, as it is the only organization that provides culturally appropriate services for both adults and youth specifically geared to the urban Aboriginal population (U-ACT, 2013).

211 North releases an annual report that outlines the top reasons that people access 211 services in Northern Ontario, including Sault Ste. Marie. The service connects people to non-emergency services and programs and often prevents problems from spiraling into crises. It promotes early intervention, prevention and self-sufficiency which make for a healthier community. The top reasons for contact are: **Health Programs/Services, Government Services/Programs, Individual /Family Services, Consumer/ Commercial Services, Income & Financial Assistance, and Mental Health and Addictions.** The report also indicates any gaps in service (211 North, 2012). 211 has only been available in Sault Ste. Marie since 2009, most of the service users currently are in Thunder Bay.

3.2.4 Reports on Childhood and Early Development

According to the Best Start Network's 2011 report, socioeconomic risk factors for child development in the downtown core are very high. The **Social Risk Index** measures nine indicators, including the percentage of lone-parent families, families with low income, knowledge of an official language, immigration status, rental vs. ownership rates, residential mobility, unemployment rates, level of formal education, and percentage of families receiving government income transfers (Best Start Network, 2011). **Both downtown census tracts were ranked as high risk**, in contrast to the city's average ranking of "somewhat low risk" (2011).

These socioeconomic factors contribute to how the neighbourhood fairs on the Early Development Index that evaluates five domains as a means to measure "readiness to learn among kindergarteners" (2011). On this measure, the downtown, encompassed by the "West Central" region of the study, is consistently at higher vulnerability than the city's average on all but one measure. The breakdown listing the selected domains is provided in Table 5.

Table 3: Education Development Index - West Central Division Compared to City Average (Best Start Network 2011)

Domains	West Central Score	City Average
Physical Health & Well Being	18	16.8
Social Competence	17	13.3
Emotional Maturity	16	13.45
Language & Cognitive Development	8	4.6
Communication Skills & General Knowledge	8	8.2

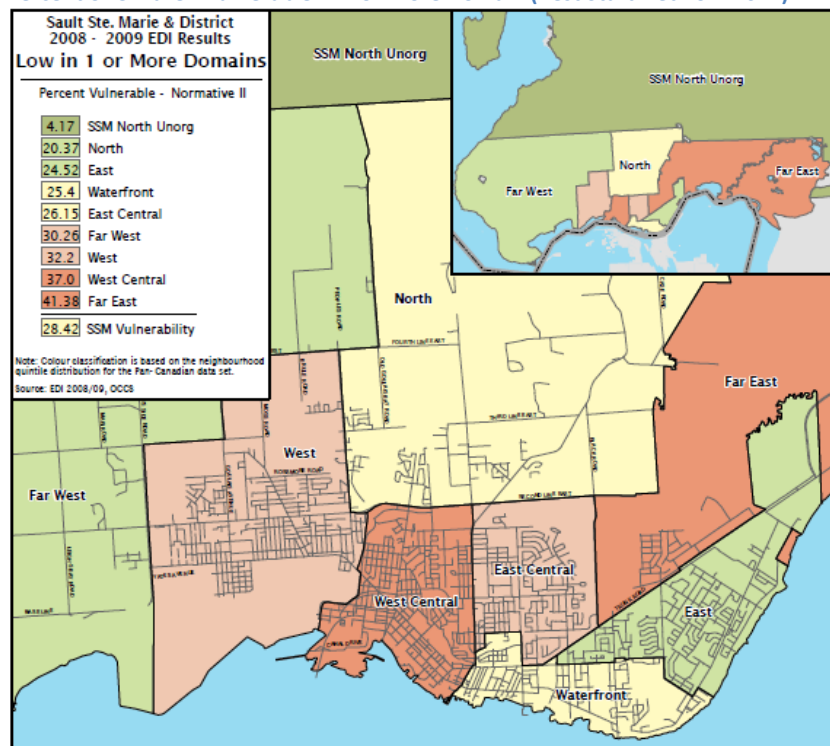
Legend: Vulnerability of Selected Domains Measured Against Provincial Average.

Highest	High	Average	Low	Lowest
---------	------	---------	-----	--------

Sault Ste. Marie's downtown fell within the worst 20th percentile of all neighbourhoods across Canada for high risk vulnerability on the Early Development Index (Best Start Network, 2011). Figure 9 demonstrates the percent of children in each Division who are deemed vulnerable in one or more domain.

While a number of the indicators used to measure the score in various domains tend to be culturally relative (e.g. 'following rules and class routines' and 'able to work independently' as indicators of social competence) and do not necessarily represent a holistic image of "childhood development," it is important to remember they are selected based on a child's readiness for the provincial school system that has a number of cultural barriers of its own.

Figure 7:
Percent of Children Vulnerable in 1 or More Domain (Best Start Network 2011)

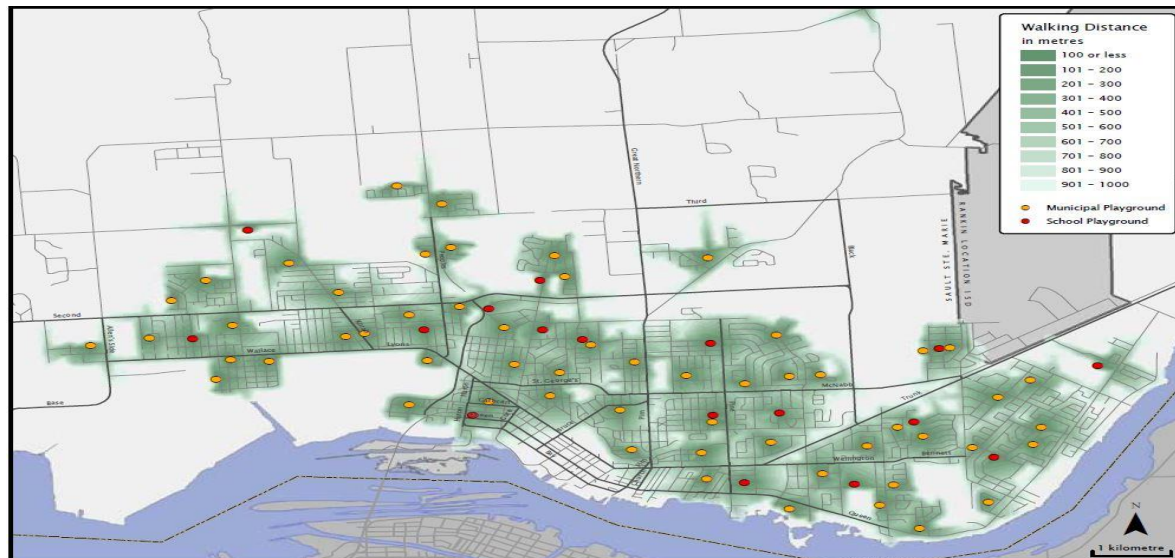


This research demonstrates that the children growing up in the downtown area of Sault Ste. Marie are among the **most vulnerable to risks impeding development** in Canada. Exacerbating this challenge is a lack of access to recreational opportunities.

Sault Ste. Marie has playgrounds and recreation opportunities in many parts of the city however these are noticeably absent in the downtown core (DSSMBSN, 2011; see also Section

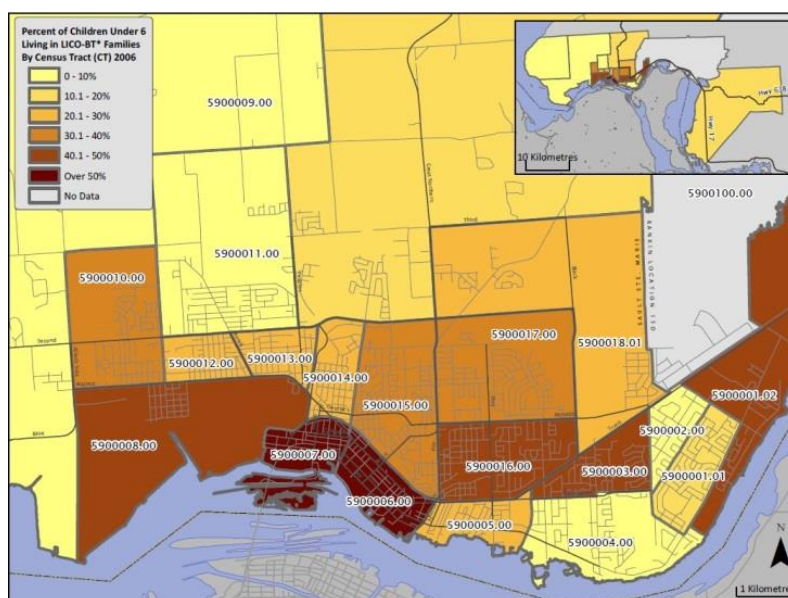
4.5 Parks and Recreation). Those who reside in the area between Dennis and Pilgrim Streets have **no access to school or municipal playgrounds** within reasonable walking distance, thus creating barriers and limiting opportunities for youth and families accessing spaces for outdoor play. Without such access residents are more likely to experience a lack of healthy activity and are at a higher risk of social exclusion (DSSMBSN, 2011).

Figure 8: Location of Municipal and School Playgrounds (Best Start Network 2011)



The lack of playground in the downtown core is particularly shocking when compared to the geographic distribution of low-income families across the city, as demonstrated in Figure 11 (Repetition of Figures 4 of Section 1.4). Clearly there is a **lack of public play infrastructure** in the very neighbourhoods **that need such free opportunities the most**.

Figure 9: Children Living in Low-Income Families (Best Start Network 2011)



*LICO-Before Tax: Income levels at which families spend 20% more than average of their before tax income on food, shelter and clothing (Statistics Canada).

Figure 11 demonstrates that downtown residents experience a lower socio-economic status and report lower income levels than the city's overall averages. Average per capita income in the study area is less than \$30 000 per year, and average family income is less than \$50 000 per year. A shocking **50% of the children living in the downtown live below the low-income cut-off (LICO) poverty measure**. Residents also have lower levels

of formal education than the city's average, and a higher percentage live in rental units, suggesting home ownership remains unattainable for many (DSSMBSN, 2011).

Substandard housing, lack of access to recreational facilities, and a general lack of business vitality in the area further exacerbate the social exclusion of residents in this area. That these features overlap with the geographic distribution of higher numbers of 'social disorder' calls to the police indicates a need for **longer-term, holistic approaches** to crime prevention through social development.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Summary of Engagement

Among the first tasks of data collection were to identify the populations that go to or live in the downtown, as well as why they do so. A survey was distributed among city residents online and garnered 150 responses. Interviews and focus groups targeted both general and specific populations to ensure the widest possible diversity of voices were being captured within the limitations of the research, as well as to glean more qualitative data pertaining to people's experiences of the downtown. A media review was also conducted early in the research process to identify issues or themes of significant public concern related to the downtown.

4.1.1 Survey Results

A significant majority of people responding to the survey (84%) reported that they access services in the downtown while roughly a third indicated that they work downtown or provide services in the downtown (38% and 32% respectively), and a small share (14%) indicated that they live downtown.

An overwhelming number of respondents (87%) indicated they had lived in the city for more than 10 years but some newcomers (4%) did participate. The number of female respondents was almost double that of males. Respondents were also largely middle aged, however, youth (12%) and seniors (5%) did participate. A full breakdown of respondent demographics is available in Appendix C.

When participants were asked to indicate

how often they found themselves downtown the most popular response was 'everyday' (29%). In total, more than 82% of the respondents were downtown at least once a week if not more frequently, compared to 14% that indicated 2 to 3 times per month, and 4% that indicated less than once a month.

The majority of respondents (77%) also indicated that they felt 'moderately' to 'very' safe downtown, as indicated in figure 5.

Respondents also had a generally positive outlook on the future of the downtown area. Figure 7 indicates that nearly three quarters of respondents felt the future was 'extremely,' 'very,' or 'moderately' promising for the neighbourhood.

When respondents were asked to rank a number of optional factors with respect to which would be most important for creating a safe, secure, and thriving downtown, there was clear consensus **that local stores and businesses** played a dominant role. There was also significant support for a **greater police presence**, with the highest number of respondents (26%) indicating it was the most significant, yet it also proved to be a polarizing option, as 32% indicated it was the least or second-to-least significant. **Events and activities** to bring people downtown, **recreational opportunities**, and **galleries, theatres, and cultural activities** followed on the priority scale. **Accessible transit** was a lower priority, with 34% indicating it in 5th or 6th position. **Community/social services** and **schools** had somewhat varied support, though the bulk of respondents positioned both options toward the bottom of the priority scale, with 34% indicating social services in 6th or 7th position, while nearly half placed schools in the final 7th and 8th positions. Full results appear in Table 3.

When solicited to provide their own suggestion of what changes would most improve the downtown, 133 unique responses were generated, with factors relating to increasing the presence of people in the neighbourhood ranking highest (18.2%). Improving cleanliness

Figure 10: How safe do you feel downtown?

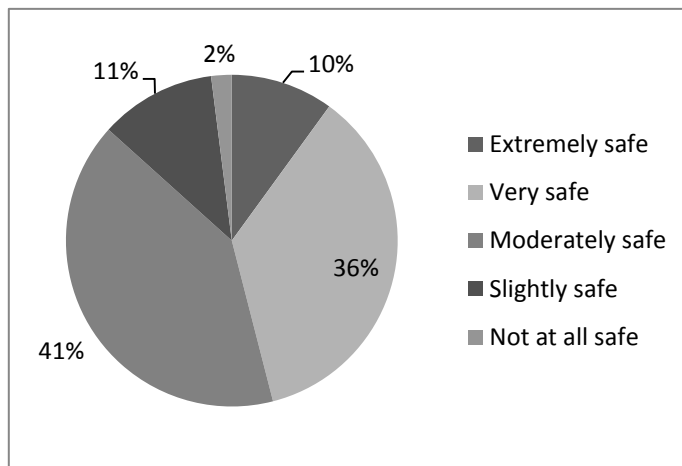
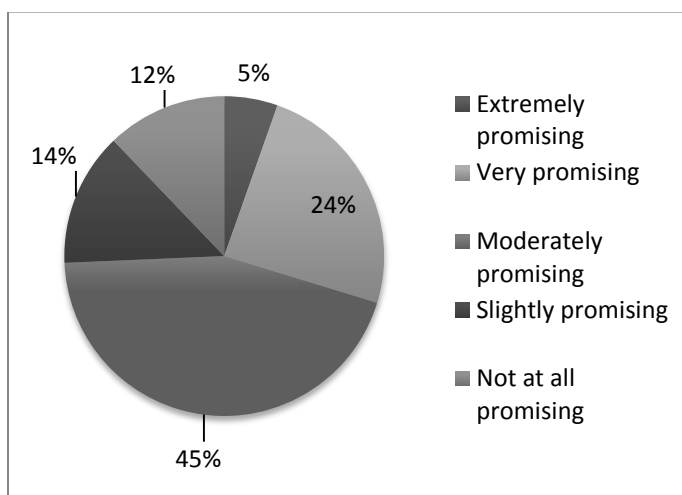


Figure 11: How promising is the future of downtown?



(17.5%), having longer store hours (15.2%), and increasing the police presence (14.4%) were also frequently cited, with housing (11.4%) being another strong contender that was not anticipated by the survey. For a comprehensive list, see appendix C.

Table 4: Please rank the following based on your opinion of what is most important for creating a safe, secure, and thriving downtown. 1 = Greatest importance, 8 = Least importance.

VARIABLE / WEIGHT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Schools	17 12.3%	9 6.5%	11 8%	5 3.6%	17 12.3%	11 8%	22 15.9%	46 33.3%
Social services	14 10.2%	16 11.8%	17 12.5%	18 13.7%	15 11%	23 16.9%	25 18.4%	8 5.9%
Accessible Transit	10 7.8%	18 14%	13 10.1%	13 10.1%	22 17.1%	22 17.1%	13 10.1%	18 14%
Cultural activities	7 5.3%	19 14.5%	18 13.7%	23 17.6%	17 13%	18 13.7%	13 9.9%	16 12.2%
Recreational opportunities	6 4.7%	19 14.8%	20 15.6%	25 19.5%	17 13.3%	18 14.1%	14 10.9%	9 7%
Events & activities	12 9.4%	16 12.5%	24 18.8%	22 17.2%	21 16.4%	14 10.8%	13 10.2%	6 4.7%
Local stores & businesses	28 21.2%	26 19.7%	14 10.6%	13 9.8%	11 8.3%	16 12.1%	12 9.1%	12 9.1%
Police presence	35 26.1%	3 2.2%	11 8.2%	10 7.5%	18 13.4%	14 10.4%	19 14.2%	24 17.9%

Legend: Colour Gradient Values - Number & Percent of Survey Respondents

>30	25-29	20-24	15-19	10-14	6-9	0-5
-----	-------	-------	-------	-------	-----	-----

4.1.2 Interviews & Focus Groups

Interviews and focus groups provided significant insight into the profile of those who live, work, seek services or provide services downtown.

A number of people who live and work downtown find that they rarely need to leave the area. These people report trying to lead a more sustainable lifestyle and are very conscious of supporting the local economy, preferring to patronize smaller local businesses and buying locally produced wares and food (m.i.&fg.). They enjoy walking and biking and drive less than other respondents (m.i.&fg.). When they do leave the downtown, they report that it is for items that are more difficult to locate in the neighbourhood, such as construction materials and larger grocery purchases (m.i.&fg.).

Among those that travel to the neighbourhood, most say they go downtown to shop, attend events, go to restaurants and use the Boardwalk and Hub Trail, as well as to access facilities such as the Art Gallery, the Essar Centre, and the Centennial Library (m.i.&fg.).

Downtown social services played a significant role in the lives of many vulnerable or marginalized populations. Services that were mentioned included the Soup Kitchen Community Centre, St. Vincent de Paul Society, the John Howard Society, the needle exchange, Ontario Addictions Treatment Clinic, the Sault Community Career Centre, Women in Crisis, Pauline's Place, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Children's Aid Society, the Group Health Association's HIV/AIDS Resource Program, Ontario Works and ODSP offices, and detox programs (m.i.&fg.).

Overall, many perceived that the downtown was in a period of growth and redevelopment, however several expressed that the neighbourhood appeared deserted and unkempt (m.i.&fg.). Some of the participants talked about the stigma of the downtown, that there is "nothing to do," that it is unsafe and "run down" (fg. 4 & 5). Others pointed to recent events or change in the downtown that have brought them to the area and changed their perceptions. One participant expressed:

[I]t seem like a lot of the younger generation want to be downtown and a lot of the older generation tends to have a negative view of [the] downtown area, there's like a stigma left in their mind with it (i.11a).

Many participants exhibited or discussed a lack of awareness about the projects and programs that are happening in the city, reporting that they did not feel engaged enough by decision makers, including businesses, politicians, and community organizations. This trend suggests a greater need for dialogue and information sharing. Several participants stated that they learned something new about the community simply by participating in this research project.

Downtown revitalization has been identified as a priority by the City of Sault Ste. Marie and a number of other organizations within the area (Sault Ste. Marie, 1996; Sault Ste. Marie, 2012, 2014). Currently, the City's Downtown Development Initiative, Canal District Neighbourhood Plan, Economic Diversification Strategy and Cycling Master plan, as well as the Algoma Farmer's Market Business Plan, developments at the former site of St. Mary's Paper, and the Animation of the John Rowswell Hub Trail, to name just a few initiatives, will significantly impact the downtown over time. Participants expressed the importance of the City, as well as local agencies and organizations informing the public and including them in dialogue to ensure that projects and initiatives address the needs and concerns of the widest possible representation of the community (m.i.&fg.).

4.1.3 Media Review Results

The media review (see Section 2.5 for methodology) identified twelve major Issues or themes of concern to those responding to local news reports (See Table 4).

Table 5: Media Review Themes

Crime/ Policing	Pedestrian and Bike Friendly	Vacant and Older Buildings	Parking
Development	Community	City Council	Multiculturalism
Activity	Age Friendly	Recreation and Green Space	Social Development

The themes are explained in greater detail below:

Crime/ Policing – The downtown is perceived to have a high crime rate, with Gore and Albert Streets assumed to be the most dangerous. Some commentators requested a greater police presence, especially foot patrols. There are some traffic safety concerns as well.

Development – The public responded with both positivity and skepticism to reports of development projects in the downtown. People are supportive of most developments but often express uncertainty if such projects will be successful.

Activity – This theme encompasses events, attractions, and promotions in the downtown. Commentators also voiced their desires for cafés, sidewalk patios, open air markets (craft and farmers) and having longer store hours downtown.

Social Development – There is an expressed need for funding and programs to address unemployment, low incomes, a lack of affordable housing and mental health issues.

Pedestrian and Bike Friendly – There are pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns in the downtown. Commentators also expressed that increasing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure can improve quality of life and provide a positive impact on downtown businesses.

City Council – Several commentators felt that they did not receive enough information about what the City is doing downtown.

Recreation and Green Space – Many expressed the need for more parks, trees, playgrounds, and recreation opportunities in the downtown.

Multiculturalism – Exposure to different cultures through new downtown restaurants was highlighted. Some suggested celebrating multiculturalism through events, festivals, and themed blocks as a means for attracting and retaining businesses and investment.

Age dynamic – Several commentators expressed a need for suitable housing and activities for both youth and seniors.

Parking – Many expressed a desire for increased free parking downtown and there is interest in removing the paid parking on Queen Street.

4.2 Downtown Design and the Physical Environment

4.2.1 Downtown Geography

The geography of the downtown was found to be a factor that affects the safety and vibrancy of the area. The downtown core is long and stretches many blocks. Some landmarks, social spaces, and commercial activities in the downtown are located quite far from each other and there are many vacant spaces in between. One participant noted:

It's a big distance. We have a very long stretched out commercial area. Whereas you look at most municipalities there is the main street and then off the side streets, and in the streets behind the main street, you have a collection of blocks. It may go from the main street and back a block or two in each direction but we just have Queen St., that's it, and I think that's to the detriment of our downtown commercial core (i.1).

This leads many people to drive to multiple destinations in the downtown rather than walk. This contributes to the downtown being deserted and people's feelings of being less safe in the area.

4.2.1.1 Growth of the City in the North

In the last few years, much of the growth in the City has taken place north of its urban core. This type of growth has typically been in the form of **low density** residential subdivisions and '**Big Box**' retailers who concentrate in suburban peripheries (Morgan 2005, 11). With its reliance on automotive transportation, this type of growth discourages pedestrian traffic, and its isolation from dense and diverse commercial zones and reliance on low-wage labour and low-priced, high-volume sales undercuts locally owned competitors while limiting the

recirculation of profits within the local economy (Morgan 2005, 10; Evans-Cowley 2008, 330). One participant expressed:

I hate to see that everything is moving up on the hill and I think the downtown is losing by that. It would be nice to keep things downtown that are already there (i.6).

Many service providers have also migrated away from the centre of the city to areas that are less accessible to the public that they serve. The relocation of the *Sault Area Hospital*, the *Public Utilities Commission* (PUC), *Algoma Public Health* (APH), and the *Greyhound Bus Terminal*, for instance, provoked strongly negative reactions from several participants (m.i.&fg.). While each of these services either employed large numbers of people and brought them to work in the downtown, or otherwise functioned as a drawing force for residents, those effects are now being exerted on the city's periphery.

Schools are also being closed throughout the city and being amalgamated into larger, consolidated '**superschools**' located outside of the city's centre, with the new *St. Mary's College* straddling the boundary between residential and rural neighbourhoods. The consequence of these choices is an increased reliance on bussing and the loss of the neighbourhood function of schools (Irwin & Seasons, 2012).

Housing developments in the city's northern periphery tend to be higher end, fully detached homes on larger lots in subdivisions carved out of existing woodland. This type of growth is less sustainable and it takes away from the downtown by providing a residential base for commercial expansion in the city's north end, encouraging vehicular traffic while discouraging active and public transportation, diminishing the city's residential density, and taxing city resources by increasing the number of roads and services that need to be maintained in the periphery (Sault Ste. Marie, 2014). One participant commented on this style of development, noting:

There are a lot of spaces in that downtown area that are not being utilized to their fullest, yet we see subdivisions popping up everywhere, well I think we can better use space in this community. In speaking with people I'm sure they wouldn't say 'well Jamestown is my ideal place to live' but it could be (i. 8).

While the City is invested in the downtown and has provided incentives to promote growth in the area, **little has been done to discourage expansion** further from the city's centre.

4.2.1.2 Commercial Neighbourhoods and Space

Some participants also felt that the Station Mall had a generally negative impact on the other businesses downtown, drawing shoppers away from Queen Street, though there was a sense of appreciation for the independent businesses that make their home in the Mall. One participant noted:

I would like to see less mall and more downtown, even though I also spend a lot of time at the mall. I mean I'd like to see businesses like the bookstore at the mall, the kitchen gadget store, and Hilltribe, (...) come, move into downtown storefronts (i. 26)

On a similar theme, while there was a *strong* general preference for more small, entirely locally controlled businesses, there were a handful of notable exceptions with respect to franchises that some respondents wished to see branch into Sault Ste. Marie (e.g. Old Navy, H&M, etc.)

4.2.2 Redevelopment and Heritage Preservation

There have been a number of positive developments in the built environment of downtown in the last several years and there are a number of major projects in the works that have the potential to dramatically change the downtown. Participants stated that a number of infrastructure projects had significantly improved the downtown's image, functionality, and attractiveness. These included the redevelopment of the former scrap yard located on the current *OLG Casino* site and the construction of the *Hub Trail*. Focus group participants expressed their support and excitement for future projects such as the redevelopment of the *St. Mary's Paper Mill*, the expansion of the *Hub Trail*, the construction of the International Bridge Plaza and the creation of the *Canal District* (m.i.&fg.). Study participants felt that these infrastructure projects would create a more attractive downtown and create more opportunities for them to use the downtown.

Many participants did express concern for the preservation of **heritage buildings** with the prospect of so much redevelopment in the near future. Many participants were disappointed that buildings like the Royal Hotel and Cornwall building had been demolished instead of being preserved and repurposed (fg. 4 & 9). Others also wished to see a greater role and support for the **Sault Ste. Marie Museum** in promoting local heritage and a common sense of place and belonging (fg. 4).

There were also concerns that the redevelopment projects in the downtown could displace marginalized groups. The downtown area is one of the primary locations of **affordable housing** within the city. *The Royal Hotel* was again brought up as an example where affordable housing

was lost due to redevelopment (fg.9). The building, which was demolished, contained eight apartments and an office building was constructed in its place. The construction of Carmen's Way and the *International Bridge Plaza* have also resulted in the loss of further affordable housing units in the downtown area, as well as physically dislocating Jamestown, a lower-income neighbourhood between Carmen's Way and West St., from the geographic continuity of the rest of the downtown study area.

4.2.3 Vacant and Deteriorating Buildings

Many participants pointed out that there are a number of **vacant and derelict buildings** in the downtown (fg. 5). Several expressed that the state of such buildings did not make the area feel safe and was detrimental to creating a vibrant downtown. Derelict buildings can also be a safety hazard to the public as they increase the risk of accidents and fires. They also make the downtown a less walkable and inviting place by interrupting the streetscape and creating voids in downtown blocks where there is little to attract people. Sault Ste. Marie's downtown is physically very long and narrow which makes it **less walkable** but consecutive vacant buildings add to this problem. Several people expressed that they do not feel safe walking by empty and deteriorating buildings:

I would emphasize that there needs to be some things in place to prevent the decay of infrastructure down there. Because it's our first impression when people are visiting from out of town. We have Tourism Sault Ste. Marie, we have the charity casino, we have a lot of things to offer. We have beautiful scenery, we have all this stuff. I think first impressions are first impressions and you come into the city and this is what you are met with. It's a sad thing really. Someone's first impression of Canada is worn out building and back alleys and sort of a ghost town area. I think that can be changed (i.8).

Many of the small business and service agencies that are lease holders of downtown storefronts do not have the funds to renovate these buildings. Many of the city's oldest buildings remain in the downtown and they are difficult and **expensive to renovate** because of their age (Sault Ste. Marie, 2014). They are also difficult to heat and are often not well insulated, making affordability an issue for prospective tenants (Sault Ste. Marie, 2014). A number of participants suggested that buildings in the downtown be 'fixed-up' or get a 'facelift,' however others pointed out the difficulty associated with taking on a high-cost renovation while attempting to maintain the affordability of the property:

But how do you renovate these places? If you have been in a lot of them they need a lot of work, how do you do that and keep the price affordable (i.2)?

4.2.3.1 Community Action: Jamestown Flowerbomb – Beyond Neighbourhood Beautiful

Downtown Dialogue in Action researchers worked to mobilize community members to create positive environmental changes in the Jamestown area of downtown Sault Ste. Marie by holding a **'Flower Bombing.'** A Flower Bombing is a guerrilla community initiative and form of tactical urbanism that involves mobilizing community members while beautifying a less utilized public space. It follows the principle that citizens can undertake direct, low-cost, high-reward actions that immediately improve some aspect of a community's public life and demonstrate to city leaders that there are opportunities for easy, successful changes.

Through generous donations from *Green Grass Yard Care*, *Downing's Greenhouse*, *New North Greenhouse*, *Habitat for Humanity*, *Spadoni's Furniture*, the *Social Work Club* at Algoma University, and private donations it is estimated that over \$5,000 in material and labour was donated.

The event was able to provide community members with flowers and tools to complete the Flower Bomb, with live music, children's activities, food and beverages. The Flower Bomb was a huge success with approximately 50 people that participated. Since being completed, the area has received maintenance support from the *City of Sault Ste. Marie Public Works Department* which has added the Jamestown flower beds to its watering schedule. The Jamestown Flower Bomb also received several nominations for the *City's Beautification Awards*.

Ultimately, however, the action was less about beautification than it was about fostering social connections, changing negative perceptions, and people mobilizing to take ownership of their neighbourhood. The action's greatest success stemmed from the community-building process that brought dozens of local residents together to affect social and political change in their own back yards.

4.3 Downtown Vibrancy

For many participants the downtown was seen as a **destination** rather than a neighbourhood or community. In order for the downtown to truly be a community it must have places for people to live, work, play, and access their basic needs. Participants did identify a number of community building actions that have taken place in the downtown in recent years. These include events hosted by the ***Downtown Association***, the opening of **new businesses and restaurants**, and **improvements of the alleyways and public spaces** (m.i.&fg.). The opening of the ***Algoma University Residence*** in the former Windsor Park Hotel was noted by many participants as something that brought vibrancy to the downtown because of the students that it brings to the area.

Actually that has been good because you see the kids walking along the street that live at the residence. So it's kind of nice, it gives us more people downtown and using the services (i. 6).

Options identified by participants for increasing the 'neighbourhood' character of the downtown included restoring two-way traffic on downtown streets, making the area more 'pet friendly,' having more open-air markets, and restricting some portions of the downtown to pedestrian-only traffic (fg. 3 & 4).

Participants also noted several barriers to creating a downtown community including lack of housing options, lack of a grocery store, and the closing of schools in the area (fg.5 & 11). The need for neighbourhood schools and grocery stores also limits localized social contact due to fewer occasions to meet one's neighbours.

Many participants noted the lack of housing options in the downtown and stated that if there are more people living downtown, those people will support the businesses in the area.

I think businesses that would stay opened later gets people walking and spending more time downtown at night. Then you have some of the people living there that aren't just driving in and out, there's more promotion of walking or cycling and there's more visible bodies there (i. 11-1).

A number of participants expressed concern over **school closures** in the area, believing that it will be harder to attract residents – particularly young families – to the downtown core if the neighbourhood does not have sufficient local schools.

Yes when you have a school downtown, like right now St. Mary's is downtown and you see all the school kids there and it's a nice community feeling because they are there, and they're walking around in the area. So you get that community look and feel. Whereas if there's no schools then who is there? And then who's going to move there? There are no schools; their kids will have to take the bus. People move away from the downtown if there are no schools for their kids to go to (i. 6).

Currently *St. Mary's College* (Secondary Catholic School) and *Etienne Brule Public School* (Elementary) are slated to be repurposed or moved, leaving the Urban Aboriginal Alternative High School on Kohler Street, and the *Holy Angels Learning Centre* on Wellington St. East as the only schools within the study area, both focussing on alternative secondary education.

4.3.1 Festivals and Events

Festivals and events in the downtown area are very successful and well attended. This was evident to the researchers when they witnessed the crowded streets at **Rotaryfest**, **Buskerfest**, the **Downtown Street Party**, and **Moonlight Magic**. At these events the streets were temporarily closed to vehicular traffic to make way for food stands, music, vendors and other displays to attract people. Research participants stated that they enjoyed and attended these events and that they would attend more of them, should more occur⁴. They also felt that these events enhanced the downtown and should happen more regularly.

Buskerfest, I think that brings a lot of families downtown and it's an awesome thing but if it was more regular, instead of once a year, every couple months or monthly. It seems to be a real popular thing. I don't know how expensive it is to do but if there were local people to do a smaller type instead of a huge Buskerfest (i.5).

4.3.2 Hours of Operation

Many participants cited the **limited hours of operation** of downtown businesses as a barrier to the neighbourhood's vibrancy, noting it was a disincentive to being downtown in the evenings.

[T]o me the big thing with the shops are, I like to shop in the shops, we like to go there but they are not good hours. Even on weekends, if it's a long weekend a lot of them are closed because it is a long weekend (fg. 13-1).

They also expressed disappointment that many downtown businesses do not open during large events such as Buskerfest or the Rotary Day Parade.

4.4 Social Spaces

For groups at risk of isolation, the research found that there are important social spaces in the downtown that they access. For seniors and people living with mental health issues, places like the Essar Centre, where they can walk for free and interact with others, are very important for their social lives and mental health. For instance, the restaurant in Zellers (now closed) had been an important social space for many seniors because, as they explained, the food was good, affordable, and the environment was friendly (fg.7).

⁴ Post data collection for this research, in June 2014, this potential for increased vibrancy was realized at the 'Eat Algoma' local food event. All 500 tickets to the 'Pulled Pork Contest' were sold, and it was estimated that well over 1000 people attended the street party celebrating local foods, crafts and music.

A common theme in every focus group was that the downtown area needed **more social spaces to attract people**. Participants indicated that socializing and meeting new people were factors that drew them to events and businesses in the downtown, and stated they would go downtown more often if there were more places that offered spaces for social interaction and for community groups to meet. Some felt that a **multi-purpose community centre** was needed in the downtown to fill this void (fg.4, i. 26).

Outdoor patios and **markets** were the types of places that participants stated would attract them to the area. One participant stated:

I certainly feel like we need more of a, I'm not going to say nightlife but, we have some great restaurants but we need more of a presence downtown. You just don't really see it that busy or that exciting when it's supposed to be like the highlight of the city. I hear stories about how the downtown used to be twenty or thirty years ago from people I work with and people who are a bit older and obviously they say in 1990 they used to drive downtown and meet all of their friends and their used to be like 18 places you could walk down and there was just people everywhere. If you look now it's non-existent at all and that would be nice to see (i.29).

4.5 Parks and Recreation

The parks and recreation opportunities that do exist in the downtown are well used and many participants expressed that they enjoy using the **Hub Trail, Boardwalk, Sault Ste. Marie Canal and National Historic Site**, and **Whitefish Island trails**. However the opportunities for recreation are limited in the downtown and of those that exist, many felt they were not well advertised, as the following excerpts from focus groups demonstrate:

More advertising about nature and museums and stuff like that (fg.12-3)

There's nothing about Whitefish like the new stuff they put up to walk (fg.12-2).

No one knows about it (fg.12-2).

The Greco public pool and the Esposito rink are also well used and participants opined that the high usage was related to the fact that these activities are free (m.i.&fg.). Apart from these services, participants felt that there was a **lack of affordable recreation** opportunities for kids in the downtown, echoing the findings of the Innovation Centre (2009) and the Healthy Communities Partnership (Dutkiewicz 2011). *The Rotary Club* and the City are currently examining the feasibility of constructing and maintaining a 'splash pad,' which numerous

participants felt could be a fun, safe and low cost attraction that would benefit the community (fg.9).

The **cost of sports equipment** was identified as a barrier for youth in the downtown, in addition to **limited access to recreation centres and sports fields** (m.i.&fg.). Most of the recreation centres in the city are located outside of the downtown and are difficult for youth to access by transit. Several participants expressed concern that the East End location of the City's skateboard park is too far away for youth from the downtown to access easily (m.i.&fg.). Boxing was cited as one of the few accessible and affordable recreation opportunities found in the downtown.

There was concern about the safety of the few parks that are located downtown. Several participants had concerns about drug paraphernalia being found in the parks and felt that they should have better lighting, be **patrolled**, and **cleaned** more frequently (fg.3, 5, & 11).

4.6 Transportation and Parking

Transportation is an issue especially for older adults and people facing barriers to accessibility. Participants felt that the bus service in the city is **inconsistent** and that the hours of service are **limited**. Some expressed that the routes make it difficult to access certain areas of the city, particularly the hospital (m.i.&fg.). For some participants the cost of transit services was prohibitive but it was often their only option. Participants also found it difficult to get a taxi when bus service was unavailable and that the cost of taking a taxi did not allow this to be an option for many people.

Yes the way the buses run... they run fairly often down Queen but the bus doesn't seem that convenient to people, people will say that the bus routes are not that convenient. A lot of people that go downtown and use the downtown services are getting there by bus (i.6).

Parking was identified by many participants as an issue in the downtown. People feel that there is enough parking in the downtown for shoppers and tourists but there is a lack of parking for those who live outside the area and commute to work (m.i.&fg.). A major dilemma centres on citizens not wanting to pay for parking, yet parking spaces take up much of the valuable real estate in the downtown. One service provider had this to say about the on-street parking on Queen Street:

I think it's useless really because they semi-malled Queen St. so they got rid of a bunch of it, for the better, but the few parking spaces that are left on Queen St. only create an illusion that if someone comes downtown they can park in front of this commercial use.

Chances are, that space, because there's so few is going to be filled... The other thing is if parking is harder to find in the downtown area then you encourage the use of public transit. People use public transit to come downtown (i.1).

Several focus group and interview participants mentioned concerns about traffic accidents in the downtown area, which were echoed in the Media Review. Many participants also expressed that they felt unsafe walking or biking in the downtown (m.i.&fg.). They also mentioned cases of interaction between cyclists and motorist and cyclist and pedestrians. One participant expressed:

I find when I'm biking, it's completely fine biking on Wellington but biking on Queen St, is when you have the most people trying to run you over and stuff like that. Or run you off the road (i.11-1)

Participants felt that the downtown would be safer and that there would be fewer accidents if there were more **bike paths** and greater **pedestrian infrastructure** (m.i.&fg.).

4.7 Graffiti

The City of Sault Ste. Marie recently established a *Committee on Graffiti* to look at the causes and develop comprehensive solutions to graffiti tagging in the downtown core. Despite this call to action, research participants did not highlight graffiti as being a major theme for improvement in the study area and the incidence of respondents highlighting this is a concern was statistically insignificant. City officials and staff are passionate about the topic, however, with one participant noting that "Graffiti is an issue in the downtown that many people feel strongly about, and something needs to be done about it" (fg.11).

Graffiti was brought up sporadically throughout the research. A participant from one focus group noted "Every time something is new it just gets ruined with Graffiti".

Some survey respondents suggested that a greater police presence would discourage graffiti, while others impressed upon the need to 'clean up Gore Street' when they were solicited for changes that would improve the downtown.

4.7.1 Community Actions: Graffiti Reframed – Skills Development through Community Arts

In response to calls for action on graffiti, further research led to the creation of a working partnership with many stakeholders from Sault Ste. Marie's arts and culture sector and as noted above a municipal committee was formed. NORDIK initiated a partnership with the Arts

Council of Sault Ste. Marie, applying to the *Ontario Trillium Foundation* with a letter of support from the City of Sault Ste. Marie, for a project entitled *Graffiti Reframed*⁵. The goal of the project is to support the development of a multi-technique/medium youth street art project in collaboration with youth, local arts institutes, individuals and businesses in the downtown core. The project will allow youth to express their feelings and provide them with a positive and productive outlet to deal with community issues that are important to them. The action research project is also designed to create more positive perceptions of graffiti within the broader community as well as amongst taggers themselves. It is hoped that the project will be a positive and restorative action that will make the downtown a more livable and inclusive space for everyone.

4.8 Voices from the Margins: Poverty and Social Exclusion

During the process of creating a presence in the downtown, conducting focus groups and interviews, and events such as the *Jamestown Flower Bomb*, *Graffiti Reframed*, and *Soup Ste. Marie* (see S. 4.2.3.1, 4.7.1, and 4.8.7), it became apparent that **empowering** and **engaging** community members of marginalized groups and taking time to understand their strengths and barriers is imperative to creating a safe, secure, and thriving downtown. Marginalized groups often face challenges in trying to voice their concerns, navigate oppressive systems, or create positive changes within their communities.

People that grow up in an unhealthy environment where mental health issues, addictions, violence is involved end up in a cycle where they continue these patterns. These issues need to be addressed, people need to be educated and assisted and supported for issues they are experiencing. There needs to be more positive and healthy outlets for youth such as a youth centre, or a safe place (i.14).

During the process of gathering data and information from participants, researchers were able to gain a better understanding of issues faced by marginalized groups, such as transportation, housing, affordability of events and recreation, and outreach. Many participants shared their experiences of stigma and feelings of isolation from the community (m.i.&fg.). Without proper resources and supports, resorting to crime can feel like the only option for people living in poverty (fg.11). Community mobilization, partnerships, and engagement can assist in addressing the root causes of crime. Creating a **shift from intervention to prevention** can assist in reducing poverty and issues of poverty, and in turn reducing crime and decreasing calls for service.

⁵ Funding for this project was obtained from the Ontario Trillium Foundation in July 2014 and it is now underway.

4.8.1 Poverty

During the research process many participants shared their experiences of poverty and feelings of marginalization. Issues raised included a limited income through employment or social assistance, lack of employment opportunities available in the community, and not being able to meet their basic needs (m.i.&fg.). People living in poverty can be at a higher risk of being involved with crime due to **financial pressures**, along with other conditions contributing to poverty such as **mental health and addictions, intergenerational trauma, abuse, and inequality** (Nurius, Uehara & Zatzick, 2013).

One research participant, a former escort, shared her experiences of poverty and how a lack of supports created many barriers and challenges. She moved to the Sault when she was 17 years old, completed high school and became pregnant. However, without any family to support her and a very small network in Sault Ste. Marie, she felt very isolated. When she had only peanut butter left to feed her 16 month old baby she made the decision to call a local escort agency for employment. Another former sex trade worker shared that she became involved in the sex trade to provide food for herself and her two children (i. 17).

4.8.1.1 Actions: Social Enterprise – Poverty Reduction through Employment Opportunities

The Downtown Dialogue project and Social Entrepreneurship Evolution (SEE) facilitated a meeting with organizations involved in **social enterprise** to discuss how these types of enterprises could be encouraged and supported and also the possibility of creating a Social Enterprise Incubator in the downtown core. Another project led by NORDIK, SEE is an innovative collaborative of diverse partners from across Northern Ontario that engages and works alongside young social entrepreneurs aged 13-35 to develop and connect the sustainable infrastructure they need to both make a living and address social, economic and environmental issues in their communities.

The first social enterprise meeting took place on November 25th and the group met again on January 2nd. Participants at the meeting included the Economic Development Corporation (EDC), SSMIC, John Howard Society, the Soup Kitchen, Community Living Algoma, and Gangplank. Community Living Algoma currently runs several social enterprises and the Soup Kitchen and John Howard Society are interested in starting up social enterprises as well. The EDC and SSMIC are currently renovating a building on Queen St. in the downtown core for the purpose of expanding SSMIC's existing business incubator and it is hoped that at least some small area may be designated for social enterprise start-up.

While the group has not continued meeting, several social enterprise initiatives are underway, and SEE's efforts to both raise awareness and obtain funding sources for these initiatives are ongoing. Additionally, River's Edge Developments, a private-sector developer of a brownfield site within the catchment area, has collaborated with Ontario Works to sponsor two social enterprises that have contributed to the creation of the 'Mill Market', a farmer's market located at the corner of Huron and Bay Streets. SEE's collaboration with partners across Northern Ontario resulted in an application being submitted to the Social Enterprise Demonstration Fund through the Office of Social Enterprise at the Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure that would provide much-needed start-up funding for social enterprises in the region.

4.8.2 Housing

Housing has been a predominant theme throughout the research process, especially among marginalized and low-income groups. Recurring issues include **housing costs, lack of safe, affordable housing, maintenance, and landlord and tenant issues**. Existing stocks of subsidized or rent-geared-to-income housing are insufficient to address local need, leaving many people on long wait lists, and in turn living in unaffordable housing. The cost of housing in Sault Ste. Marie can be expensive and unattainable, especially for marginalized and low-income groups. Data from the National Household Survey (2011) indicates that while 26% of tenant households in Sault Ste. Marie are in subsidized housing, 37.8% of tenants are putting more than a third of their income towards shelter costs. And while median monthly shelter costs for rented dwellings in Sault Ste. Marie were \$590 in 2006, they have risen 12% to \$658/month in 2011 (Statistics Canada 2006; National Household Survey 2011). For people relying on social assistance, it can be impossible to find safe, affordable accommodation, leaving many people living in less than adequate housing with many health and safety concerns.

Several tenant participants expressed that they have had issues with landlords not maintaining rented properties, a concern which was echoed by service providers who called attention to a great number of poorly maintained buildings in the core (fg.11). SSMPS also listed landlord/tenant disputes among the many social disorder calls that they receive and over which they have little jurisdiction. Landlord and tenant issues often become complex because of laws and regulations, issues navigating the system, and people being unaware of their rights. An interview with a service provider shared that many people who seek assistance do not understand their rights (i.9). Making a complaint can also be costly, and many tenants cannot afford to do so. The service provider also shared that there need to be more supports for low-income people and marginalized groups, such as people coping with mental health issues.

4.8.3 Transportation Concerns

Transportation issues were a common theme throughout the focus group process, especially with marginalized and low income groups. They shared their experiences of **rude** bus drivers, the **rising cost of transportation, inadequate hours of operation, and infrequency of service**. Many people shared how difficult it is to access needed services and run every day errands because of the inadequate transit system (see also S. 4.6). With the outmigration of many health and social services from the downtown, especially the hospital, it leaves people without proper access to services and supports. Focus group participants shared that transportation is a huge issue that creates daily struggles, and that transit should be more affordable and accessible (m.i.&fg.). Recommendations from participants included increased parabus service, free public transit on special occasions, eliminating public transit service reductions or interruptions on weekends and public holidays, and eliminating ads that cover bus windows and cause difficulties for visually impaired riders (fg. 4).

4.8.4 Food Security

Food security, defined as everyone having adequate access to food (Allen 1999), was identified by many participants as a major issue for marginalized and low income groups within the community. There are very few services that provide food, and most have restrictions on their access, be it their hours of operation or transportation issues. Many people shared that they access food programs but could not always do so when needed because of these restrictions. Services that do provide food, such as the *Soup Kitchen Community Centre*, are also often **stretched to their limits**.

Some also shared that *Walmart's* arrival at the Station Mall has provided an **accessible and affordable grocery** option in the downtown core, where before all large-scale grocers were outside of the study area. Still, even Walmart was not always an option for those on strictly limited budgets.

One focus group participant shared that **food insecurity** led her into the sex trade so that she could provide food for herself and her two children. Women working in the sex trade shared that a mobile food delivery service or a place to access healthy, perishable food outside regular business hours would fill some of the needs they experience (m.i.).

Several respondents expressed an interest in **community gardens** that can provide fresh fruit and produce at low or no cost in the downtown core (m.i.&fg.).

4.8.5 Service Access

There are many programs and services in Sault Ste. Marie that assist marginalized groups, however many felt that outreach gaps were causing some to fall through the cracks. In most cases if a person is connected to a service, they have better chances of navigating systems, identifying, and utilizing the services they need. Those who are not connected to any services are left vulnerable and at risk.

During a focus group, one man shared his experience of finding a very young pregnant female eating out of a garbage can downtown (fg. 10). He shared that he talked to her, informed her about various services, and expressed his hope that she reach out for support. Consequently he felt that there needs to be more community **outreach programs** that engage potential clients in the community and on the streets, outside of stationary service settings. Improved case management was also raised as an issue of concern. Many people shared their experiences of being pushed from one service to the next, of gaps and overlapping services, as well as with some service providers not being up to date on the services and programs offered through the city (fg. 10 & 12). All of these concerns and experiences create major challenges and barriers for people who are accessing services.

The accessibility of **health and social services** in the downtown core was a great concern for the majority of people who participated in focus groups and interviews. Many services have migrated out of the downtown (most notably the *Sault Area Hospital* and *Algoma Public Health*), creating transportation barriers for people in need of support, and leaving many without access to the services they require. A social service provider in the downtown core stated:

It would be easier to have more centralized services, and central not being on top of the hill because most of the client groups that we work with are downtown. So a lot of people won't follow up with referrals because they don't have access to the stuff that is on top of the hill like the Hospital, and [Algoma] Public Health (i.3).

Another focus group participant echoed concerns with the location of services, particularly with the new Sault Area Hospital site on Third Line, stating:

It is hard for people that are on low incomes especially to get up there like I dread the thought of it, if I got sick and had to take the cab up to the hospital and back, it would cost me fifty dollars (fg 13).

4.8.5.1 Community Actions: Community Health Care Centre – Access to Services and Social Inclusion

The Soup Kitchen Community Centre, whose mandate is to address the needs of those who live in poverty, has identified **health care service gaps** in the downtown in recent years as a result of the relocation of Sault Area Hospitals, Algoma Public Health, and other health services. In response, the organization's Board of Directors began exploring the feasibility of expanding its operations to include owning and operating a **community child and health care facility** located in the downtown (Lauzon & Kelly, 2013).

Allyson Schmidt was contracted through the NORDIK Institute to coordinate project development for the Community Health Centre project, under the direction of an Advisory Committee. A subsequent community engagement project shows that there is a lack of service support for the vulnerable population that lives in the downtown core. Ultimately, however, the Soup Kitchen Community Centre board of directors decided in 2014 that creating and operating the community child and health care facility was beyond the Centre's mission. Nonetheless, a group of local citizens continue to carry the vision forward.

While the Neighbourhood Resource Centre on Gore Street may help to address some of these service gaps, the creation of a child and health care centre in the downtown would also help to address some of the priorities and recommendations outlined in the Community Picture Report (Dutkiewicz, 2011).

4.8.6 Marginalized Identities

Marginalization, discrimination, and prejudice based on race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation were identified both by participants and researchers as ongoing challenges facing the entire community. Incidents such as a violent attack on an Algoma University student of African descent and Islamophobic public reaction to a woman-only designated swim time at the YMCA stood out as the most recent examples of this ongoing problem (Purvis, 2012; Ougler, 2013). Yet events such as **Passport to Unity** and growing annual festivities for **National Aboriginal Day** stood out as positive forces, among others, to increase and improve public dialogue on issues of diversity, inclusion, and respect (fg. 4).

In consultations with the LGBTQ community, increased visibility at major community events stood out, particularly Sault Pride's participation in the Rotary Day Parade, seen as the city's largest public celebration. Commenting on that participation, one participant noted:

That made me feel a lot better about the downtown core, like there was some acceptance city wide about it. There was a lot of controversy, but I think that that's good. That gets people talking, it creates dialogue (i.25)

Since the interview, **Sault Pride** has since hosted the first Pride Festival in local history (see 4.8.8 for further details).

Summing up her perception of prejudice in the community generally, one participant expressed:

Prejudice exists here, right? Homophobia exists here. Of course my feeling of it has been that it's not really based on hatred or fear so much as ignorance, and really innocent ignorance. Not nasty ignorance, just like "Oh, I never thought about that, and I didn't know, and why would I? Because I've never had any reason to think about that, but now that you've brought it to my attention, you're totally right, and you've changed my mind." (i.26)

Participants especially underscored the need for greater collaboration, connections, and cultural awareness between indigenous & non-indigenous people.

4.8.7 Community Actions: Soup Ste. Marie – Crowd Funding for Social Innovation

The social issues confronting Sault Ste. Marie are multifaceted and complex, and require creative solutions when public resources are tight. This context stimulated the development of Soup Ste. Marie, a public dinner designed to use community-driven financial support to **democratically fund projects** led by individuals, businesses or groups of community members. It is a micro-grant model based on the international *Sunday Soup* program that uses crowd sourcing to finance creative projects through community meals.



Figure 12: Participants listen to presenters at the inaugural Soup Ste. Marie

The inaugural **Soup Ste. Marie** took place on November 14th, 2013 at 180 Projects, on Gore Street. The event's theme was 'How will you Change the Downtown?' Attendees paid a \$10 entrance fee for which they received a bowl of soup and a vote on which community project they thought should receive the proceeds of the event. A call for submissions went out several weeks prior. Interested parties were encouraged to submit an idea for a project that would benefit the downtown. There were no entry fees for submissions. Seven parties were chosen to present their ideas, showcasing their proposals through a 5-minute presentation and a 5-minute Q&A period. Attendees listened, asked questions, and then cast their vote to grant the proceeds to the most inspiring project. The winning presenter, Teddy Syrette on behalf of the **Sault Pride Committee**, received over \$1000 for projects to increase LGBTQ visibility and create a more welcoming atmosphere for LGBTQ population in Sault Ste. Marie.

Since the award was given, the Sault Pride Committee has hosted regular all-ages drop-in coffee nights and the city's first ever Pride Festival that took place from September 5th to 7th, 2014.

4.9 Perceptions of Safety, Crime and Social Disorder

4.9.1 Perceptions of Crime, Safety, and Security

Participants had somewhat **divergent perceptions** of safety and security in the downtown, as survey findings in section 4.1 have indicated earlier. Some expressed no concern over crime, as the following interview excerpt indicates:

In the city of Sault Ste. Marie I feel as safe in the downtown area as I would walking in a rural setting. I don't believe we have a high incidence of crime. We do have an incidence of crime but that can happen anywhere (i.1).

Some participants felt that the perception of the downtown is very different from the reality. One resident and business owner who stated that he felt very safe and had never had any issues in the area had this to say:

I also think that a lot of times people think that just because something has happened on a street that it's unsafe there, but a lot times those occurrences are just from certain groups of people that are involved with maybe criminal activities and it's just that particular group that ends up with problems between each other. They're not really worried about anybody else. You might possibly have harassment or something but that's usually as far as it goes (i.11-2).

Other participants also identified the issues that people experiencing **poverty**, **addictions**, and **mental health issues** are being associated with crime whether that is the case or not. This was consistent with our survey and media review findings where several people said that they felt unsafe when someone had asked them for spare change in the downtown, while others attributed crimes in the downtown to youth and methadone clinic users.

Most participants in the study, however, stated that they felt safe downtown but less so at night and in certain areas. **Albert Street**, **Gore Street**, alleyways and the bus terminal were places that people commonly identified as feeling less safe. One focus group participant shared:

I live on Albert Street and the last couple of years, the last five years, it was pretty safe to go out at night. But right now it is very scary to go out after six o'clock because of the prostitution and the drugs. And there has been four murders close to that street. So we don't go out anymore (fg.13-2).

A number of participants commonly stated that they felt the downtown was deserted after 5 o'clock and that consequently they didn't feel safe. A lack of adequate **lighting** in alleys, parking lots and parks also contributed to feeling less safe in the downtown.

During business hours I feel quite safe. In the evening I feel a little unsafe around the Gore area, the James Street area. A little unsafe I'd say (i.5).

I feel safe during the day. And in the evening not so safe (i.6).

I would say that evening time is a little bit more intimidating. Going to get milk at Mac's Mart [on the corner of Gore & Wellington] is a little bit more questionable (i. 8).

Many respondents felt that if businesses stayed open later, they would feel safer and would be more inclined to be downtown later in the evening. Having **businesses open later** in the evening improves safety and can prevent crime in two ways: first, it gives people an accessible place to go if they need assistance and creates more 'eyes on the street' through the presence of business owners and employees. Second, the open businesses attract people to the area, creating even more 'eyes on the street,' or would-be witness deterrents. Some participants drew these same connections, as one person shared:

More 24/7 coffee or open shops. So at least you know you have places to go if you need [help] (i. 12-3).

One downtown resident told a story about how she had her purse stolen while walking downtown. One of the most upsetting things about the situation, she expressed, was that there was **no one around to help** her or witness the attack.

I thought okay... and then all I heard was the bike behind me and him trying to grab my purse. No one around and I yelled 'Rape, Help, Terrorist, Bomb, Fire.' No one came up (fg.12-2).

Most participants wanted to see a **greater police presence** in the downtown area; however they were very specific about the type of police presence that they wanted. Participants felt it should be a **visible, interactive presence** that takes a proactive approach to crime prevention (fg. 3, 5, & 11). Participants wanted to see police officers on foot and they would like to be able to communicate with them. Several participants stated that the only time they see a police officer is when someone has called and there is a problem. They stated it would be nice to see the police patrolling and engaging in the community to prevent problems. Having a police storefront in the downtown was mentioned by several participants, as they felt it would decrease crime in the area and increase safety.

Again, I think that if the police services had office space downtown, it might decrease the crime rate, but I'm not 100% sure of that. Police cannot be everywhere at all times, so crime may continue downtown or move to another location. Everyone needs to take responsibility and do their due diligence to make sure their vehicles, etc. are not targeted. Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) could be taught to businesses to assist them (i. 15).

Many participants stated that the *Crime Stoppers* patrollers make them feel safer and that they notice a difference having them in the community. The **Crime Stoppers Patrol** is a partnership between *Sault College Justice Studies*, *Crime Stoppers*, *SSMPS*, and the *Downtown Association*. Patrollers are 1st and 2nd year students from Justice Studies/ Police Foundations at *Sault College*, and cover an area including the Boardwalk, Bay St., Queen St., Albert St., from Gore to

Bruce Street. They are highly supervised and go through a screening process based on their skills as well as personality. Rather than law enforcement, the patrol is designed to be proactive, deterring crime by their mere presence in the neighbourhood.

The program has been reported on favorably in the media and several participants in interviews and focus groups stated that property crimes have decreased in the patrolled areas (m.i.&fg.).

Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, mentioned by the above participant, helps to discourage crime through physical modifications that make certain kinds of crime more difficult and increase the number of eyes on the street through measures such as low-intensity but frequent lighting fixtures, design measures to increase pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and increasing the number of trees or other foliage to render the neighbourhood more attractive to visitors.

4.9.1.1 Community Actions: SSMPS – Mobilizing the Community for Change

The SSMPS has adopted Ontario's *Mobilization and Engagement Model of Community Policing*, which in this instance, is risk-focused, police initiated, police mobilized and agencies partnered (OACP, 2010). In brief, this model suggests that the police, through mobilizing and partnering with other agencies to develop interventions in high-risk neighbourhoods, can reduce crime through social development (see the introduction, Section 1.0, and the literature review for crime prevention through social development, Section 3.1, this report for a more detailed outline).

The SSMPS began the mobilization process through partnering with NORDIK Institute in undertaking an extensive, community-wide dialogue and research process, to identify a vision for the downtown area. As the research evolved, the SSMPS continued the mobilization process, by meeting with various agencies and encouraging them to form a plan to address the social needs in the downtown core; by obtaining the support of City Council for a budget and strategy to allocate resources directly to this high-risk neighbourhood; and by mobilizing residents and businesses in the neighbourhood to work with them to address numerous issues.

One of the outcomes of this strategy has been the **Neighbourhood Resource Centre (NRC)** that opened up in storefront space on Gore St. in May 2014. The NRC is a collaboration with various service providers, including the *Algoma Community Legal Clinic, Canadian Mental Health Association, Algoma Public Health, Ontario Works, Victim Services Algoma, Women in Crisis*, and the children's *Best Start Program*. It is staffed by a police officer between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., but also provides space for community services and public events to foster dialogue between residents and service providers.

Quoted in an August 12, 2014 *Sault This Week* article, then-Police Inspector Art Pluss explained:

This is non-traditional policing. Traditionally we react; we get a call and we arrest someone [...] but we can't just keep arresting people [...] We need to work hard at immersing ourselves in the community. We need to become part of the community and to listen, to bring about change (Pearson 2014).

The SSMPs is also changing the way that it responds to calls related to sex work related offences (Mills 2013). Then-police Chief Bob Davies has indicated that the force was looking to Sudbury for models with a greater focus on building trust and targeting those that harm sex workers.

In March 2014, the SSMPs brought Dr. Hugh Russell to Sault Ste. Marie to participate in the release of the Downtown Dialogue findings, and to provide an introduction to the community of the concept of community mobilization. The three separate presentations to everyone from the Mayor to downtown residents, businesses and service agencies, resulted in a resolution by City Council to support the mobilization strategy and endorse the efforts of the SSMPs in creating the Neighbourhood Resource Centre.

4.9.1.2 Community Actions: Restorative Justice – Crime Reduction through Conflict Resolution

One of the significant challenges facing both business and residents in the downtown core is the need to increase local conflict-resolution capacity in order to better address criminalization arising from socio-economic marginalization, mental health issues, and other social factors.

Figure 13: The Restorative Justice Model



To that end, the *John Howard Society* hosted “train-the-trainer” workshops to 41 service providers in the use of **restorative justice practices**. The SSMPs, the *Algoma District School Board*, and the *Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board*, and other community stakeholders were among the participants in the workshops led by the *John Howard Society*’s Hamilton branch that has already successfully implemented Restorative Justice Practices in their own community. Those who successfully completed the training

have the ability to train others within their organizations and the community as a whole. Figure 13 provides an overview of the distinguishing features of Restorative and Non-Restorative approaches to Justice.

The *John Howard Society* has created an Operational Committee with the *SSMPS*, the *Algoma District School Board*, and the *Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board* to apply for further funding to continue the implementation of these practices in Sault Ste. Marie⁶.

4.9.2 Sex Trade Work

Among the ‘social disorder’ calls discussed in Section 3.1, disputes between residents and sex trade workers have often resulted in police intervening in situations beyond their skill set and scope of practice. The result has been numerous arrests and charges against sex trade workers where other interventions rooted in **social development** would be more productive. While not universally so, a number of underlying issues play a contributing factor in driving individuals to the sex trade as a means of income. These issues can include poverty, mental health and addiction issues, inequality, intergenerational trauma, and abuse to name a few. Reframing sex work in a way that focuses on **safety** and **addressing workers’ underlying needs** in a **non-judgemental setting** instead of focussing on intervention and punishment is important to creating positive, lasting, and holistic changes.

Focus groups and interviews were conducted with women who engage in the sex trade who shared their experiences of addictions, poverty, gaps in services, stigma, and many other barriers. Several participants indicated that they found it difficult to access health services when they needed to do so (m.i.&fg.). Interviewees used words like ‘**stigmatized**’ ‘**disrespected**’ and ‘**humiliated**’ when talking about using local healthcare services in Sault Ste. Marie.

One participant briefly described an incident on a small side street that runs west of Gore Street. After a confrontation with an individual known to her, she was badly injured. She called out for help but nobody came to her aid or called the police. She doesn’t remember how long she was lying on the side of the road before she was able to get up and stumble to a friend’s house. Another participant shared their experience in terms of health services:

If there was a safe place where I could have gone for health services- check-ups or to get condoms or whatever, that was just for sex trade workers and run by sex workers I would have gone to them for help. I’m friends with women that used to do it and are still

⁶ Funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation was obtained to support this initiative in the summer of 2014, and the project will train many more ‘trainers’ over the next 2 years.

doing it. It's just easier to trust someone that understands what you're going through and doesn't judge where you are in life (i. 21)

During the research process, several women admitted to struggling with **addictions**. Three women attend the methadone clinic on Queen St. and also access the needle exchange program. These three women disclosed that the pressure to turn tricks in addition to a need to feed a drug habit can turn sex workers against one another. One woman shared that when she was going through a hard withdrawal that she physically attacked another street worker for her small stash of drugs.

It's not something I'm proud of. I tried quitting so many times that I've lost count. I still see that girl and we still hang out. It's just the way it is. She'll jump me next time and the next day we'll be good. It's like it never happened (i.22)

There are **major gaps in services** in terms of sex trade work in Sault Ste. Marie which creates barriers for people trying to find support or work in a safe environment. Many people who engage in the sex trade experience abuse. The risks associated with sex work are magnified for these women who are working on the streets and risk violence at the hands of their clients. Two participants also described violence that they experienced at the hands of their boyfriends when they didn't make enough money or used drugs that were paid in lieu of cash. Each woman expressed the need to extend hours for services, pointing out that the nature of their work keeps them up most of the evening. Not only do they suggest hours of operation in the evening, but also that these services be available seven days a week. One participant shared her idea on how to make sex trade work safer:

I want to start a safe stroll project and outreach for the girls. If somebody goes missing who will know? I'd like to put together a list of the girls and emergency contacts or something. And I'd like to make a more formal, more recognized way of reporting people who are unsafe in the area. Like if there is a guy in the area that's creeping the girls out they could report what he looks like, what colour his car is. Stuff like that (i.17).

4.9.2.1 Community Actions: CWIN, NWC, and Stop the Arrests – Sex Work is Work and Needs to be Safe

Currently in Sault Ste. Marie there are no prevention, education, rehabilitation or recovery programs for women who have been involved in the sex trade, nor are there any sex worker organized and driven safety and support programs, such as the one described above. To address these gaps, a number of groups have emerged in the last three years:

The Northern Women's Connection (NWC) works with women who have experienced sex work and are trying to exit the trade. NWC aims to fill the gap of missing services directly aimed at the intersecting issues that are faced by women involved in the sex trade, while encouraging the development of the skills necessary to build their lives outside the trade.

The Coalition of Women in Numbers (CWIN) is a collective of local women focused on the needs of women involved in or at risk of involvement in the sex trade. The coalition envisions providing harm reduction, non-judgmental support and exit strategies for those involved in the sex trade. CWIN maintains that "it is the lack of choice in society that drives a woman into the sex trade industry and not the often believed stance that women enter and remain in the sex trade by their own freewill" and aims to "engage community members to be a part of developing strategies that will improve the quality of life for all women" (CWIN 2013). Since its inception, members have partnered with the Neighbourhood Resource Centre to conduct outreach and distribution of harm reduction supplies, and have issued commentary on developments pertaining to the debate over Canada's prostitution laws (CWIN 2013).

Stop The Arrests!!! Sault Ste. Marie (STA) is a collective composed of current and former sex workers and their allies that formed in September 2012 in response to a police sting that charged 9 women with prostitution-related offences. The coalition advocates harm reduction practices, sex worker mutual support and advocacy, and the decriminalization of sex work. STA sees criminalization as a barrier to safe working conditions and social inclusion of sex workers. Since its inception, STA has organized educational presentations, Sault Ste. Marie's first ever International Day Against Violence Against Sex Workers (December 17th), and launched the local 'Red Umbrella Campaign' to draw attention to the rights of sex workers. The collective has also participated in sex worker conferences, and issues commentary on both police response to sex work within Sault Ste. Marie and to the larger debate over Canada's prostitution laws, vocally opposing the government's Bill C-36.

4.9.3 Mental Health and Addictions

Many research participants shared that they perceived a lack of mental health and addictions services in the community, especially in terms of rehabilitation for people coping with addiction issues (m.i.&fg.). There is no full rehabilitation facility in Sault Ste. Marie, with the closest option located in Elliot Lake. The lack of rehabilitation support in the community can create challenges for those trying to access treatment. Research participants shared that they would like mental health and addictions services to be accessible and remain in the downtown to better address the needs of those accessing these supports (m.i.&fg.).

By contrast, some participants shared that they felt the **methadone clinic** located on Queen Street was undesirable, expressing that the number of people standing outside the clinic creates an uneasy atmosphere for others in the downtown (fg. 4). Nonetheless, given the shortage of mental health and social services, a majority shared that they still feel the clinic needs to be accessible and located in the downtown core.

Not surprising given some of the commentary about the methadone clinic, some participants who access mental health and addiction supports shared experiences of stigma and discrimination (fg. 6 & 13). Those accessing services can be less inclined to do so when they experience discrimination and shame for doing so. Working to reduce stigma and discrimination through education and advocacy can help create a safer environment for those coping with mental health and addictions issues, thus increasing chances for success and fostering positive, supportive relationships.

4.10 Changing Perceptions and Approaches to Downtown Revitalization: Other Community Initiatives

Numerous other businesses, agencies, organizations, and individuals have been active in fostering community and trying to revitalize the city's downtown. Even small actions, such as choosing to walk down a less commonly traveled street, contribute to the vitality of a neighbourhood. Consequently, capturing all the initiatives to improve the city's downtown core would be impossible. What follows is a brief profile of some of the more public, visible, and larger-scale initiatives that continue to foster downtown revitalization.

The Downtown Association is a Business Improvement Area devoted to “improving and promoting downtown Sault Ste. Marie through investment, advocacy and events” (Downtown Association n.d.). Covering an area along the Queen Street corridor from Pim to Dennis Streets the *Downtown Association* not only represents the interests of downtown business owners and stakeholders, but spearheads a number of initiatives to bring people to the neighbourhood to live, work, play, and shop. Some of the Association's recurring projects include the *Sault Ste. Marie Walk of Fame* that profiles Saultites who have made outstanding contributions to the community, Moonlight Magic that kicks off the holiday shopping season with a tree lighting, late-night shopping, and a hot-chocolate competition, and a summer-time Downtown Street Party featuring late-night shopping, bands on every block, and ‘pop-up’ patios. The *Downtown Association* also works collaboratively with other businesses and groups to facilitate special events and festivals.

In 2012, developers purchased the former St. Mary's Paper Mill site near the International Bridge and founded **Riversedge Developments**. Since then, Riversedge has spearheaded the

restoration and revitalization of the **Mill Square**, as it is now known and encouraged the City in its recent designation of the Canal District. **The Machine Shop** at the site has hosted numerous concerts, banquets, and other special events, particularly in concert with the Algoma Fall Festival. In 2014, the **Mill Market** opened in the adjacent former Fish Hatchery site at 35 Canal Drive, offering “fresh food, culinary and craft for the everyday to the extraordinary” (Mill Market 2014). The market building also functions as an incubator for **Entomica**, Northern Ontario’s only insectarium. Also in April of 2014, *Algoma University* and the Algoma Conservatory of Music signed agreements with Riversedge to move the Conservatory and the university’s music program to the Mill Square (Purvis 2014). In October, the university signed another agreement moving its Fine Arts program to the site as well (Northern Ontario Business 2014).

Animating the John Rowswell Hub Trail is a joint project of NORDIK and the City of Sault Ste. Marie’s Planning Department in collaboration with over 15 other community groups. The project will provide “information regarding the rich historical, cultural and environmental ecosystems adjacent to the Hub Trail” (NORDIK 2014). Information will be accessible through a printed guide, a web portal, and mobile devices and will be accessible in English, French, and Anishinaabemowin. The project will also provide information on healthy, active living, and hopes to be a platform for future cultural and tourism development.

Following public consultations in February 2014, the City of Sault Ste. Marie released its **Canal District Neighbourhood Plan** in July. Focussing on the western end of the Downtown between Dennis Street and Carmen’s Way and inclusive of its namesake, the Sault Ste. Marie Canal, the newly envisioned district plan outlined a number of key projects necessary for achieving its vision of leveraging existing community assets, linking disconnected parts of the city fabric, guiding appropriate built form, and animating and programming the public realm (City of Sault Ste. Marie & Greenberg Consultants Inc. 2014). Projects range from streetscape improvements, to trail and park development, to road reconstruction, and facilitating a greater presence for post-secondary education institutions, building on Algoma University’s collaboration with Riversedge Developments.

Eat Algoma is a local food festival organized by the *Rural Agri-Innovation Network (RAIN)* (a joint collaboration of NORDIK and the Innovation Centre). Located on Block 1 of Queen St., the event features “farm-fresh food vendors, children’s activities, live music, a pop-up patio, and the Restaurant Food Challenge Competition” (Downtown Association n.d.) In addition to bringing hundreds of people downtown, the festival raised awareness about local agricultural producers and fostered stronger connections between farmers, restaurants, and consumers.

The City’s much awaited **Heritage Discovery Centre** opened its doors in 2014, offering displays and interpretation services for the *Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site* and increasing the

city's heritage tourism infrastructure. Also adding to the city's cultural scene, the Algoma Fall Festival spearheaded Sault Ste. Marie's first participation in the international **Nuit Blanche** arts festival that sees art installations from local and international artists accessible throughout the late night.

Some **residential intensification** has also been underway in the last year, with the construction of the River Park Manor apartment building by Sar-Gin Developments, on the corner of Bay and East Streets, near the Centennial Library. Further, the TVM Group purchased the former Plummer Hospital site on Queen Street, and received City Council backing to build a condominium complex, named Riverwalk Condos, with units ranging from 830 to 1800 square feet (Della-Mattea 2014).

Several new businesses have also opened their doors in the downtown or are in the process of development. **Shabby Motley Handcraft** specializes in yarn and craft supplies while offering a café and baked goods; **Outspoken Brewery** and **Union Jack Brewery** have recently filled a gap in the local market by offering locally brewed craft beer; **Q Bakery & Café** has recently opened in the downtown, and also offers light lunches, while next door **Atrebla** and has joined local clothing retailers and producers, specializing in handmade garments; **Low and Slow** and the **Gore Street Café** have also helped re-establish the City Centre as a destination for diners. **Homespun Treasures** also opened in the Heritage Block, offering handmade crafts and gifts.

Likewise, due to support from the Downtown Association, local entrepreneurs, activists, and organizations like the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre, numerous festivals and special events have proliferated, including the **Java Jamboree**, **Diversity Downtown**, the **Pumpkin Weigh-Off**, and the earlier-mentioned **Downtown Street Party**. There has been such strong public appreciation for such events that faced with the end of RotaryFest's Second Stage and Buskerfest's one-year hiatus in 2014, local entrepreneurs from Loplops and Case's Music organized **The Emergency Festival**, featuring four stages with live bands along with craft and farmer's markets.

5.0 Response to Research

Presentations of the initial findings of this research in late March 2014, were enthusiastically attended by over 150 community leaders, front-line workers, residents and business owners, and on April 7, 2014, City Council passed a resolution recognizing the role of social development in crime prevention, and committing to:

capitalizing and building on municipal expertise, embracing innovations in policing and social services with the goal of socially inclusive community development, and supports partnerships that promote the improvement of community safety and crime prevention (City of Sault Ste. Marie 2014).

The research team made three presentations to stakeholders – one each to community leaders, front-line staff and property owners and residents - in March 2014, outlining the research design and responses from the community. Themes generated by the research included reframing approaches to crime, restorative justice, the importance of downtown and its resident community, social space and activity, parks and recreation, redevelopment, safe streets, appearance and cleanliness, accessibility, poverty, safe and affordable housing, food security, outreach in health and social services, sex trade work, and mental health and addictions. These recurring themes highlight the most urgent dimensions of social development needing to be addressed by future action.

6.0 Recommendations

The recommendations stemming from the research are rooted in strategies of crime prevention through social development. While some recommendations obviously address the roots of crime (e.g. increasing access to appropriate housing, providing supports for people living with addictions, etc.) others stem from the need to build community and to empower residents by promoting their vision of what they wanted their downtown to be.

Each recommendation includes the identification of proposed leaders to move the measures forward. The leader identified is based on an evaluation of who is currently well placed to mobilize around identified issues, and does not necessarily reflect the will of the identified agency, government body, or stakeholder.

Some measures that support the recommendations are already commencing or underway, yet they are reiterated here to underscore their importance. This is indicated in parentheses where applicable.

6.1 Downtown Action Coordinating Committee

To maintain the momentum of the *Downtown Dialogue in Action* project and to foster further actions, the community must:

- Strike a **coordinating committee composed of residents, business or property owners, service providers, and other diverse stakeholders** .
(action: Mayor & Council of Sault Ste. Marie [particularly Ward 4 councillors], *United Way of Sault Ste. Marie*)

Without a body to coordinate ongoing efforts and direct the existing momentum toward the ongoing goal of crime prevention through social development, we risk losing that momentum while the constructive dialogue that the project generated fades into memory. Such a committee could also foster greater communication and collaboration between service providers and other downtown agencies and encourage the sharing of resources and information across sectors.

6.2 Comprehensive Collaborative Approach to Improving the Downtown

Based on public input, actions, and the investigations carried out through this research, the following recommendations should be initiated, monitored, and maintained:

Employ a comprehensive collaborative approach to resolving issues of public safety, security, and well-being through various measures of community development. The *SSMPS* has initiated such a process, as exemplified by its collaboration with the John Howard Society, NORDIK, the Arts Council, Algoma Public Health, and numerous other agencies and community members with its Neighbourhood Resource Centre on Gore St. Such collaborations must continue, while other stakeholders in the community, including Municipal government, must draw on similar approaches to tackle complex issues including a scarcity of affordable housing, economic diversification, youth retention, counteracting forces of marginalization, and meeting the increased needs of senior citizens to name just a few. The approach, informed by the principles of crime prevention through social development, can be defined by four distinct, but interconnected strategic directions:

5. Strengthening social cohesion;
6. Addressing 'at-risk' neighbourhoods;
7. Increasing access to the necessities of life; and
8. Fostering a healthy downtown economy

6.2.1 Strengthening Social Cohesion

Keys to crime prevention through social development include measures that **strengthen social cohesion** throughout the city by engaging citizens from all walks of life in the activities, social life, development, and planning within the community. Measures include:

- Expanded ‘train-the-trainer’ Restorative Justice project led by John Howard Society to include wider array of participants, including business people, landlords & tenants, other service providers, and any interested citizens (CURRENTLY UNDERWAY)
(action: *John Howard Society*);
- Development and support for social enterprise and social innovation (CURRENTLY UNDERWAY)
(action: *NORDIK Institute, Social Entrepreneurship Evolution, District of SSM Social Services Administration Board, SSM Innovation Centre, SSM Economic Development Corporation, SSM Community Development Corporation*);
- Encouraging collaboration with Service Clubs to support aesthetic improvements and recreation infrastructure development
(action: *SSM Planning Division, SSM Parks Division, SSM Recreation & Culture Division, various service clubs⁷, Downtown Association*);
- Increased support for cultural events and festivals, including:
 - Creating a single office at the City of Sault Ste. Marie for event organizers to coordinate street closures, necessary permits and licenses, and to inform event organizers about various funding & collaboration options.
(action: *Chief Administrative Officer of the City of Sault Ste. Marie in collaboration with the SSM Traffic Division, SSM Economic Development Corporation, SSM Recreation and Culture Division, SSM Community Development Corporation, and Algoma Public Health*);
 - Increasing funding available to artistic and cultural events through the cultural financial assistance program, and creating a new pot of funding for festivals that are not necessarily arts-related
(action: *Mayor & Council of Sault Ste. Marie, SSM Recreation & Culture Division*)

⁷ Including Business and Professional Women’s Club, Elks Lodge, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Girl Guides, Kiwanis Club, Knights of Columbus, Lion’s Club, G. Marconi Society, Moose Lodge, Rotary Club, Royal Canadian Legion, Royal Canadian Legion Ladies’ Auxiliary, Royal Purple Lodge, Sault Shrine Club, SSM Chamber of Commerce, Scouts, and Zonta Club.

- Creating more social/community spaces downtown, especially safe spaces for youth (action: *SSM Community Centres Division, various local businesses, social service providers, and social entrepreneurs*);
- Addressing current and historical examples of racism, prejudice, and intolerance and promoting greater connections and cultural awareness, especially between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples (action: *SSM Police Service, Indian Friendship Centre, New to the Sault Settlement Services, local education sector*⁸, various social entrepreneurs);

6.2.2 Addressing the Needs of ‘At-Risk’ Neighbourhoods & People

‘At-risk’ neighbourhoods, notably during the time of this study Gore Street and Jamestown, require specific targeted efforts to mitigate the marginalization experienced in these neighbourhoods and to correct the neglect that they have faced over the preceding recent decades. Measures include:

- Expanding the Neighbourhood Resource Centre on Gore St. to serve as a community or social services ‘hub’ (CURRENTLY UNDERWAY).
(action: *SSM Police Service, Canadian Mental Health Association, Algoma Public Health, District of SSM Social Services Administration Board, Group Health Association, Sault Area Hospital, Community Care Access Centre, other various social services*);
 - Provide patrol officers specialized training in dealing with individuals with mental health issues ;
 - Providing space for health & social services outside of the neighbourhood to have a point-of-contact in the Downtown.
- Drawing on artistic practice or a ‘festival’ model to promote community enthusiasm, engagement, dialogue and exchange (CURRENTLY UNDERWAY).
(action: *Arts Council of SSM & District, Soup Kitchen Community Centre, 180 Projects space for artists and curators, local community arts practitioners & social entrepreneurs*)
- Creating Neighbourhood Associations or Business Improvement Areas.
(action: *area businesses, residents, service providers and property owners*)

⁸ Including Algoma University, Sault College, Algoma District School Board, Huron Superior Catholic District School Board, Conseil Scolaire Catholique du Nouvel Ontario, Conseil Scolaire du District du Grand Nord de l’Ontario.

- Increasing the accessibility of physical activity, sport, and recreation programs, especially playgrounds for young children;
(action: *SSM Parks Division, SSM Recreation and Culture Division, Algoma Public Health, various service clubs*)
- Cross-sector collaboration to implement design and landscaping changes in line with *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* principles
(action: *SSM Planning Division and area businesses, residents, and property owners*)
- Exploring planning and design solutions to mitigate the physical isolation that has afflicted Jamestown since the construction of Carmen's Way;
(action: *SSM Planning Division*)
- Pursuing affordable housing policies that support the creation and maintenance of mixed-income neighbourhoods;
(action: *SSM Planning Division, District of SSM Social Services Administration Board*)

While Gore Street and Jamestown currently require specific attention, we must be cautious not to assume that the problems experienced in these neighbourhoods begin and end within their boundaries. Neighbourhoods are constituted by the people that live and spend time in them. Consequentially, lasting solutions require responding to the needs of at-risk individuals and groups of people. These measures include:

- Creating more services for people living with mental illness or dual diagnoses;
(action: *Ministry of Health & Long Term Care, Sault Area Hospital, Group Health Association, Algoma Public Health*)
- Promoting greater understanding of the lives and working conditions of sex workers; Provide non-judgemental outreach and support services that focus on empowerment, self-determination, and safety (both for those who wish to exit the sex trade and those who do not);
(action: *HIV & AIDS Resource Program, Stop the Arrests, Coalition of Women in Numbers, Northern Women's Connection*);
- Increasing access for and creating more services for people living with addictions, including:
 - Creating an Addictions Treatment Centre or Program;
(action: *Ministry of Health & Long Term Care, Sault Area Hospital, Group Health Association, Algoma Public Health*)
 - Increasing resources for harm-reduction outreach and education programs;
(action: *HIV & AIDS Resource Program, Group Health Association, Algoma Public Health*)

- Promoting greater understanding of addictions across the community;
(action: *HIV & AIDS Resource Program, Group Health Association, Algoma Public Health*)

6.2.3 Increasing Access to the Necessities of Life

A holistic approach to resolving the issues faced in our community also requires acknowledging their roots in the prevalence of poverty and by corrective measures to create equitable access to the necessities of life. **Addressing poverty** entails understanding that economic marginalization is not a product of geography (though the built environment can both aggravate and mitigate the effects of poverty), but of complex, interconnecting social and economic relationships. While many of the forces that aggravate poverty stem from provincial, national, and international policy and actions, there are some measures that can be taken by local stakeholders to relieve some of the pressures faced by people living in poverty and meliorate the related effects that contribute to ‘social disorder.’ Measures include:

- Increasing the stock of affordable housing through alternative partnerships;
(action: *District of SSM Social Services Administration Board, Habitat for Humanity, local property owners, local housing developers*)
- Increasing options for affordable childcare;
(action: *District of SSM Social Services Administration Board, SSM Day Care Division*)
- Augmenting the number and programming of community gardens to facilitate access to healthy foods and cultivation skills;
(action: *District of SSM Social Services Administration Board, various social service agencies, social entrepreneurs*)

6.2.4 Fostering a Healthy Downtown Economy

Fostering a healthy downtown economy involves a series of measures ranging from modifications to the built environment that encourage public use of certain spaces to various supports for business development. Measures include:

- Providing more comprehensive support for the work and efforts of the Downtown Association, including promoting the diversity of small businesses in the neighbourhood;
(action: *local businesses, SSM Economic Development Corporation, SSM Community Development Corporation, SSM Traffic Division*)
- Promoting walkability and an intensification within the downtown through measures such as infill, expansion and improvements to cycling and active transportation

infrastructure, returning one-way streets to two-way traffic, promoting sidewalk patios, encouraging mixed-use buildings and zoning, and encouraging street festivals.

(action: SSM Planning Division, SSM Recreation & Culture Division, local property and housing developers, SSM Traffic Division)

- Expanded use of heritage designation and greater effort to preserve historic buildings; Greater visibility and collaborative involvement from the Sault Ste. Marie Museum and other heritage organizations;

(action: SSM Municipal Heritage Committee, SSM Recreation & Culture Division, SSM Museum, Ermatinger-Clergue National Historic Site, Parks Canada, Historic Sites Board, various property owners and social entrepreneurs)

- Greater role for education institutions in contributing to the local arts & culture community;

(action: Algoma University, Sault College, Art Gallery of Algoma, Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie & District)

- Improve accessibility to the downtown by providing free and/or more frequent public transportation on special occasions, eliminating service reductions or interruptions on weekends and public holidays (particularly for the para-bus), and eliminate advertisements that cover bus windows (which cause difficulty for visually impaired riders);

(action: SSM Transit Division)

- Encourage a more pet-friendly atmosphere with dog-parks, public fountains, and increasing the number of garbage cans located beyond Queen Street.

(action: SSM Public Works Division, SSM Parks Division)

7.0 CONCLUSION

Downtown Dialogue in Action sought to bring divergent populations in the community together in dialogue about the future of the city's downtown, and thanks to the project's creative methodology and collaboration between various agencies, stakeholders, and individuals throughout the community, the project has been largely successful in achieving this end.

The use of Action Research as a methodology both fostered local leadership development while necessitating the collaboration that made inter-community dialogue possible. Actions such as the *Jamestown Flowerbomb*, *Soup Ste. Marie*, and *Graffiti Reframed* inspired individuals across the community (a large proportion of whom are youth) to become actively **engaged with their community** on a variety of fronts. The interaction that was generated through these activities

created space for dialogue about a variety of topics of local concern, including poverty, conflict resolution, marginalization, and the inequitable distribution of resources and attention across the city to name just a few, and broadened participants' understanding of their surrounding community. Significant media coverage also expanded the reach of these community actions to reach hundreds more people than could have feasibly participated. A number of activities also helped **develop skills among their participants**, most obviously evidenced by the *Restorative Justice Training* provided by the John Howard Society. *Graffiti Reframed* likewise helped develop artistic skills among youth, while actions originating outside of the project but connected to its themes, including those mobilized around Sex Workers, encouraged some of the city's more marginalized (and often vilified) citizens to advocate and organize on their own behalf and in their own interest. Community engagement efforts also helped many individuals and agencies articulate visions for positive change within the community, such as the pursuit of a community health & child care centre spearheaded by the board of the *Soup Kitchen Community Centre*.

For the momentum and dialogue generated by the project to continue, a **Coordinating Group must be struck** to carry forward the vision and collaboration embodied throughout the first phase of this project. This *Coordinating Group* will facilitate ongoing collaboration between individuals and various stakeholders throughout both the downtown and the city at large. To avoid losing the momentum generated thus far by the *Downtown Dialogue in Action* initiative, we need individuals to continue to come forward to take up leadership roles, both with existing projects and processes engaged in the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service's Community Mobilization and Engagement Strategy, and with new initiatives that complement those aims of social development. In order for individuals to come forward, however, they **need a place to come forward to**, and without a Coordinating Group for the next phase of this initiative, the opportunities to strengthen both those individuals as well as our own collaborations will be squandered. The *Coordinating Group* should also build on the **collaborative structure** that made Downtown Dialogue in Action so successful, ensuring that the vibrancy of the neighbourhood's residents is embraced and that the downtown's potential is fully realized.

REFERENCES

- 211 North (2012). *Annual Report*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.lspc.ca/uploads/documents/2012-211AnnualReport.pdf>
- Allen, P. (1999). Reweaving the food security safety net: Mediating entitlement and entrepreneurship. *Agriculture and Human Values*. 16. 117-129.
- Bookman, S., & Woolford, A. (2013). Policing (by) the urban brand: Defining order in Winnipeg's exchange district. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 14(3), 300-317.
- Coalition of Women in Numbers [CWIN] (2013). Accessed on October 30, 2014 at
<<https://www.facebook.com/CoalitionOfWomenInNumbers/info>>
- City of Sault Ste. Marie (2014). Regular Meeting of City Council Minutes, April 7, 2014.
<http://www.cityssm.on.ca/contentadmin/UserFiles/File/Agendas_Minutes/2014/2014_04_07_MINUTES.pdf>
- City of Sault Ste. Marie & Greenberg Consultants Inc. (2014). City of Sault Ste. Marie: Canal District Neighbourhood Plan. Accessed October 31, 2014
<<http://cityssm.on.ca/contentadmin/UserFiles/File/CityDepartments/Engineering/Planning/Planning%20Documents/Canal%20District%20Final%20Report.pdf>>
- DeKeseredy, W. S. (2009). Canadian crime control in the new millennium: The influence of neo-conservative US policies and practices. *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*, 10(4), 305-316.
- Della-Mattea, E. (2014, April 29). 'Council backs condo development.' *The Sault Star*. Accessed October 31, 2014 <<http://www.saultstar.com/2014/04/29/council-backs-condo-development>>
- Destiny Sault Ste. Marie. (2003) Destiny SSM Diversification Strategy, March 2003.
<http://www.destinyssm.com/>
- District of Sault Ste. Marie Best Start Network (DSSMBSN) (2011). Sault Ste. Marie: Our Children, Their Future.
- Dutkiewicz, A. (2011) Community Picture Report: Healthy Community Fund Partnership – Algoma District 2011
- Evans-Cowley, J.S. (2008). Thinking outside the big box: Municipal and retailer innovations in large-scale retail. *Journal of Urban Design*. 13(3). 329-344.
- Gravelines, L. (2009). Destiny Sault Ste. Marie 2009 Progress Report. Sault Ste. Marie Innovation Centre. Retrieved from: <http://www.destinyssm.com/>
- Hamilton, L. (2010). 'Embracing Ontario's New Community Policing Model.' *H.Q. The Official Publication of the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police*. Winter. 6-9.

- HanleyBrown, F., Kania, J. & Kramer, M. (2012) *Chaneling Change: Making Collective Impact Work*. Stanford Social Innovation Review.
- Hoffman, K. (2010). Investigating Youth Crime in Sault Ste. Marie Using GIS. URISAOC. Winter 2010.
- IBI Group. (2007). Economic Feasibility And Downtown Improvement Study Phase 2: Downtown Community Improvement Strategy.
- Irwin, B. & M. Seasons (2012). 'School closure decision-making processes: problems and prospects.' *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*. 21(2). pp.45-67.
- Jacobs, J. (1961). The Use of Sidewalks: Safety. The Death and Life of Great American Cities. Reprinted in LeGates, R & Stout, F. (2007) *The City Reader*. Fourth Edition.
- Lauzon, P. & J. Kelly (2013). The Sault Ste. Marie Soup Kitchen Community Centre: Keeping Our Promises for the Next 30 Years. Results from the retreat attended by Soup Kitchen Board of Directors and Staff. Sault Ste. Marie, ON: The Aberdeen Group.
- Lippert, R. (2012). 'Clean and safe' passage: Business improvement districts, urban security modes, and knowledge brokers. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 19(2), 167-180.
- Lippert, R. K. (2008). Urban revitalization, security, and knowledge transfer: The case of broken windows and kiddie bars. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, 22(2), 29-53.
- Mill Square (2014). Mill Market Home. Retrieved October 31, 2014 from:<<http://www.millmarket.ca/>>
- Mills, T. (2013, April 19). New approach to prostitution. *The Sault Star*. Retrieved from: <<http://www.saultstar.com/2013/04/19/new-approach-to-prostitution--mills>>
- Morgan, J.P. (2005). The big box in the small town. (Dissertation). Ottawa, ON: Carleton University.
- National Household Survey (2011) <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3557061&Data=Count&SearchText=sault%20ste.%20marie&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=All&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1>
- NORDIK (2014). Animating the John Rowswell Hub Trail. Retrieved from: <<http://www.nordikinstitute.com/archives/project/animating-the-john-rowswell-hub-trail>>
- Northern Ontario Business (2014, October 28). Algoma moving arts program to St. Mary's property. Northern Ontario Business. Retrieved October 31, 2014 from: <<http://www.northernontariobusiness.com/Regional-News/sault-ste-marie/2014/10/Algoma-moving-arts-program-to-St--Marys-property.aspx>>

- Nurius, P., E. Uehara & D. Zatzick (2013). 'Intersection of stress, social disadvantage, and life course processes: Reframing trauma and mental health.' *American Journal of Psychiatric Rehabilitation*. 16. pp. 91-114.
- Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police & Government of Ontario [OACP]. (2010). *Ontario's Mobilization and Engagement Model of Community Policing*. Retrieved from <<https://kpf.ca/photos/custom/COMMUNITY%20POLICING%20WHEEL.pdf>>.
- Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) (2013). U-ACT: Urban Aboriginal Communities Thrive North Bay, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie.
- Ougler, J. (2013, May 28). 'Deputy police chief Kates pledges full police support if needed when YMCA continues female-only swim Sunday.' *Sault Star*. Retrieved from <<http://www.saultstar.com/2013/05/28/deputy-police-chief-pledges-full-police-support-should-ymca-continue-female-only-swim>>
- Pearson, A. (2014, August 12). Police, agencies, residents campaign on Gore. *Sault This Week*. <<http://www.saultthisweek.com/2014/08/12/police-agencies-residents-campaign-on-gore>>
- Purvis, M. (2012, November 30). 'Town hall hears tales of racism, discrimination.' *Sault Star*. Retrieved from: <<http://www.saultstar.com/2012/11/30/town-hall-hears-tales-of-racism-discrimination>>
- Purvis, M. (2014, April 30). 'More music to be made at Mill Square.' *SooToday.com*. Accessed October 31, 2014 < <http://www.sootoday.com/content/news/details.asp?c=72392>>
- Russell, H. (2012). Community Policing in 30-Zone: A Stew of Healthy Ingredients.
- Russell, H., & Taylor, N. (2014). New Directions in Community Safety: Consolidating Lessons Learned about Risk and Collaboration. Ontario Working Group on Collaborative, Risk-driven Community Safety. Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police. Retrieved from: <http://www.oacp.on.ca/news-events/resource-documents/ontario-working-group-owg>
- Sault Ste. Marie (2012). Downtown Development Initiative. July 23, 2012. [PowerPoint Slides]
- Sault Ste. Marie (2014). Downtown Community Improvement Plan. Retrieved February 3, 2014 From: <http://www.cityssm.on.ca/contentadmin/UserFiles/File/CityDepartments/Engineering/Planning/Downtown%20Development/Downtown%20Community%20Improvment%20Plan%20V10.0.pdf>
- Sault Ste. Marie Planning Division (1996). Official Plan (Office Consolidation). Author. Retrieved from: <http://www.cityssm.on.ca/contentadmin/UserFiles/File/CityDepartments/Engineering/Planning/Planning%20Documents/officialplanconsolidation.pdf>

- Sault Ste. Marie Urban Aboriginal Communities Thrive (U-ACT) (2013). Sault Ste. Marie Aboriginal Communities Mental Health Priorities: Best Practices, Strengths, Gaps and Partnerships.
- Schmidt, A. (2013). Project Coordinator Report. Sault Ste. Marie, ON: Sault Ste. Marie Soup Kitchen Community Centre and NORDIK Research Institute.
- Sleiman, M., & Lippert, R. (2010). 'Downtown ambassadors, police relations and 'clean and safe' security.' *Policing & Society*. 20(3), 316-335.
- Statistics Canada (2012). 5900007.00, Ontario (Code 5900007.00) and 5900006.00, Ontario (Code 5900006.00) (table). Census Profile. 2011 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE. Ottawa. Released October 24, 2012. Retrieved from: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
- Statistics Canada (2006). <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/details/page.cfm?B1=All&Code1=3557061&Code2=35&Custom=&Data=Count&Geo1=CSD&Geo2=PR&Lang=E&SearchPR=01&SearchText=Sault+Ste.+Marie&SearchType=Begins>
- Waller, I. (2006). *Less law, more order: The truth about reducing crime*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Downtown Dialogue Interview Questions

1. Do you live downtown?
2. Do you own property downtown?
3. How often are you in the downtown core?
4. What activities do you do in the downtown?
5. What services do you access downtown?
6. How safe do you feel downtown?
7. What changes would you like to see more of downtown?
8. What changes would most improve the downtown?
9. How promising is the future of downtown?

Others

- What barriers and challenges have you experienced in the downtown area?
- Are there services you may need, but don't have access to?

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

Focus Group Questions

1. Please write down anything that you think is significant about the downtown, positive or negative, that has happened in the last ten years.
2. What does your ideal vision of Sault Ste. Marie's downtown look like?

Appendix C: Survey Questions, Responses and Results

Downtown Dialogue

Top of Form

Project Overview and Consent

The Downtown Dialogue in Action study is a community based project being led by NORDIK, a research institute affiliated with Algoma University. The purpose of the study is to develop an Action Plan for creating a safe, secure, and thriving downtown Sault Ste. Marie. Through dialogue with people who live, work, or access services downtown we can gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the area and identify opportunities for positive change.

Your participation is strictly voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity by NORDIK staff is guaranteed, and only the researchers will have access to the surveys responses (which will be securely stored in the NORDIK Institute office). Written reports of the study will not identify you personally as a project participant.

If you have any questions or concerns about the study or about being a subject, you can call us at (705) 949-2301, ext.4357 or 4229 or Dr. Gayle Broad, Director of Research, NORDIK Institute, Algoma University at (705)949-2301, ext. 4351.

I understand the purpose of the research and what my participation will entail. I am willing to participate and I give my permission to the NORDIK Institute to use the information in the project report for distribution and possible publication in scholarly journals.

Yes

No

Downtown Dialogue Study Area

For the purposes of this study the downtown is bounded by Simpson Street in the east and West Street in the west (near the Essar Steel gate). The area extends from Wellington Street in the north all the way to the waterfront.

Question 1

Check all that Apply. Do You?

☐

Live downtown

☐

Work downtown

☐

Access services in the downtown

☐

Provide services in the downtown

Question 2

How often are you in the downtown core?

☐

Everyday

☐

Monday to Friday

☐

Once a week

☐

2 to 3 times a month

☐

Less than once a month

Question 3

How safe do you feel downtown?

☐

Extremely safe

☐

Very safe

☐

Moderately safe

☐

Slightly safe

☐

Not at all safe

Question 4

Please rank the following based on your opinion of what is most important for creating a safe, secure, and thriving downtown

Accessible transit

Greater police presence	---
Recreational opportunities	---
Local stores and businesses	---
Galleries, theatres, cultural activities	---
Community/social services	---
Schools	---
Events and activities	---

Question 5

What changes do you think would most improve the downtown?

Question 6

How promising is the future of downtown?

- ☐ Extremely promising
- ☐ Very promising
- ☐ Moderately promising
- ☐ Slightly promising
- ☐ Not at all promising

Question 7

Select your gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Question 8

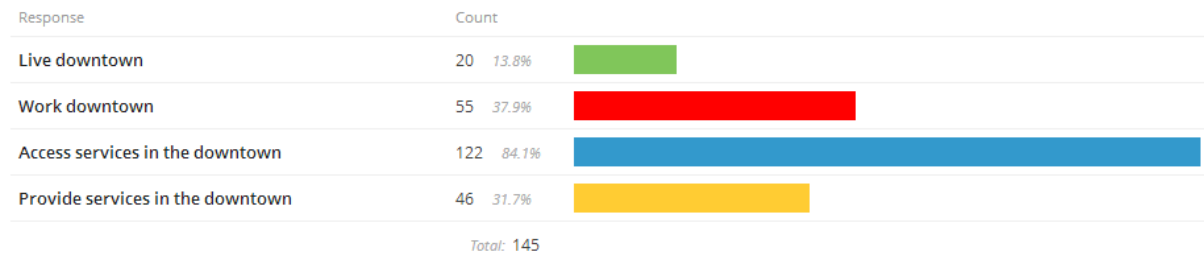
Select your age range

Question 9

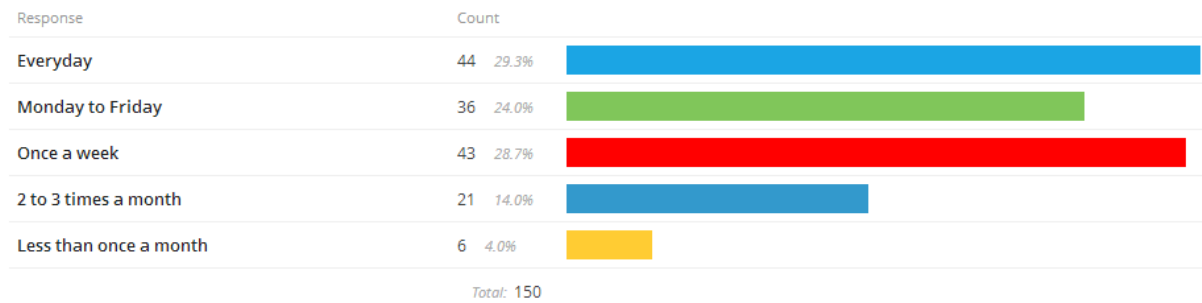
Length of residence in Sault Ste. Marie

Survey Responses

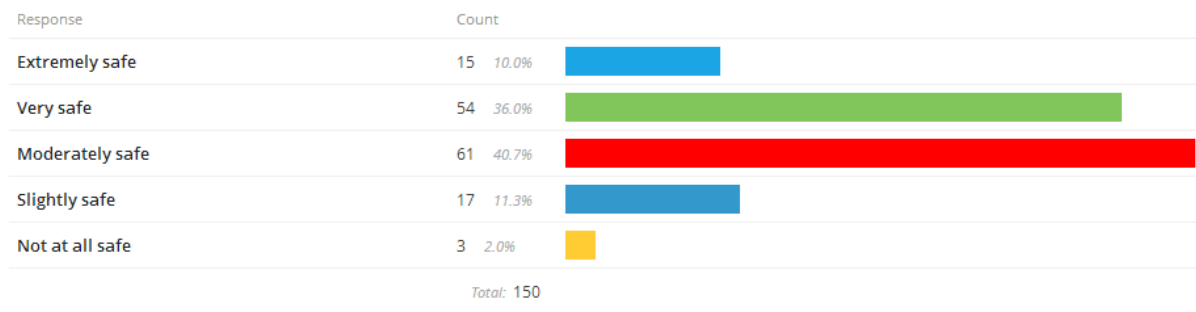
Question 1



Question 2



Question 3



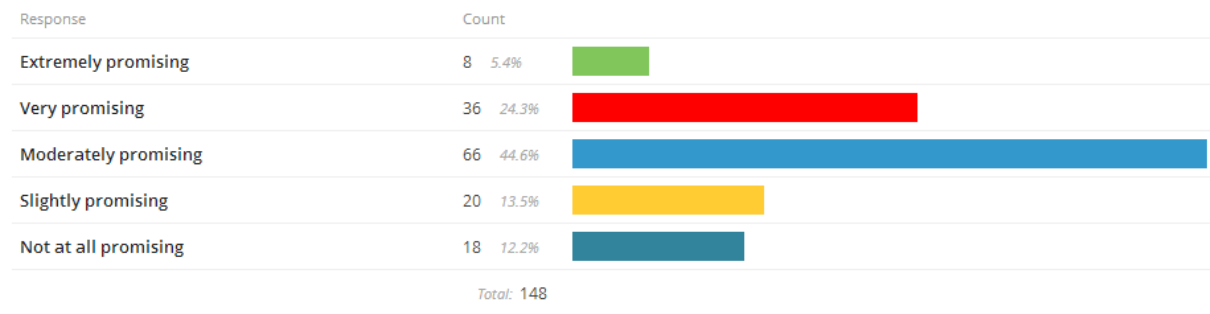
Question 4

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total:
Greater police presence	35 26.1%	3 2.2%	11 8.2%	10 7.5%	18 13.4%	14 10.4%	19 14.2%	24 17.9%	134
Schools	17 12.3%	9 6.5%	11 8.0%	5 3.6%	17 12.3%	11 8.0%	22 15.9%	46 33.3%	138
Community/social services	14 10.3%	16 11.8%	17 12.5%	18 13.2%	15 11.0%	23 16.9%	25 18.4%	8 5.9%	136
Events and activities	12 9.4%	16 12.5%	24 18.8%	22 17.2%	21 16.4%	14 10.9%	13 10.2%	6 4.7%	128
Accessible transit	10 7.8%	18 14.0%	13 10.1%	13 10.1%	22 17.1%	22 17.1%	13 10.1%	18 14.0%	129
Recreational opportunities	6 4.7%	19 14.8%	20 15.6%	25 19.5%	17 13.3%	18 14.1%	14 10.9%	9 7.0%	128
Local stores and businesses	28 21.2%	26 19.7%	14 10.6%	13 9.8%	11 8.3%	16 12.1%	12 9.1%	12 9.1%	132
Galleries, theatres, cultural activities	7 5.3%	19 14.5%	18 13.7%	23 17.6%	17 13.0%	18 13.7%	13 9.9%	16 12.2%	131

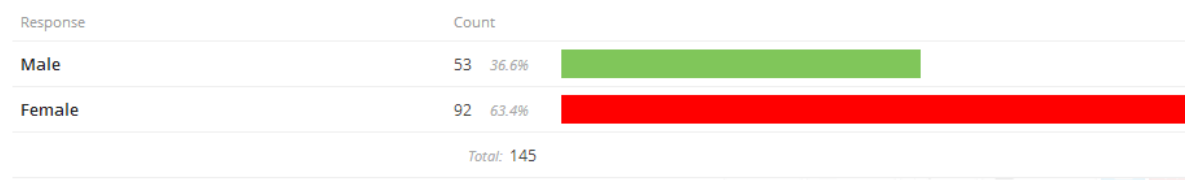
Question 5

Response	Count	
Show 133 responses to this question »		
People Downtown	24 18.2%	
Clean	23 17.4%	
Hours	20 15.2%	
Police Presence	19 14.4%	
Housing	15 11.4%	
Local Business	10 7.6%	
Community Engagement	10 7.6%	
Pedestrian	6 4.5%	
Methadone	5 3.8%	

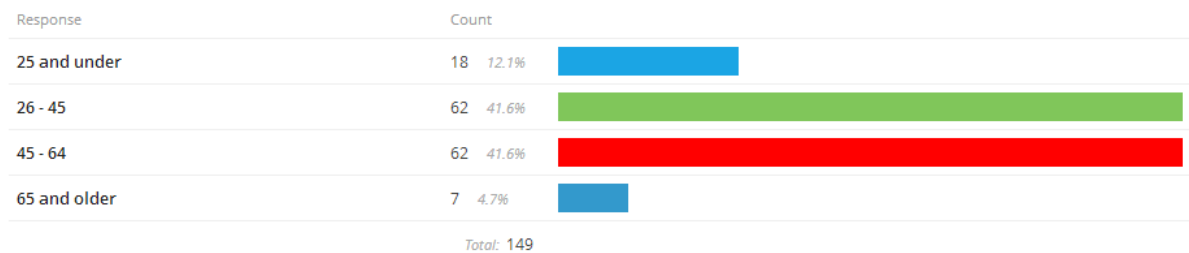
Question 6



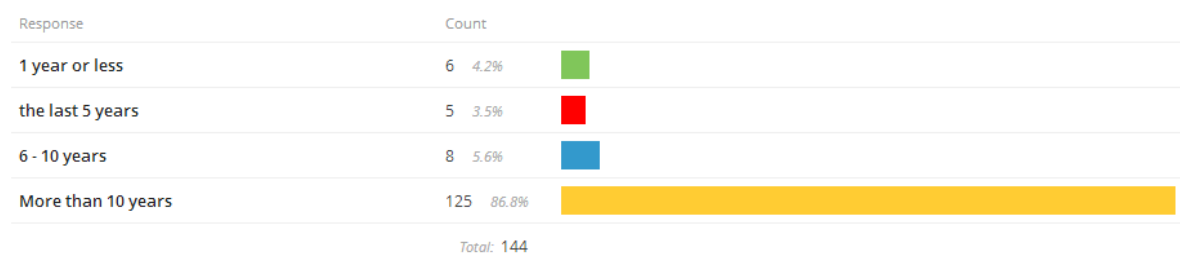
Question 7



Question 8



Question 9



*Question 5 was open ended. There were 133 responses to the question that were coded. The results typically fell under 9 categories.

People Downtown - Respondents indicated that having more people downtown or attracting people to the downtown would most improve the area.

Clean – Improving the cleanliness and general appearance of the downtown. Cleaning up litter, removing graffiti, fixing deteriorating buildings.

Hours – There is little open in the evening and on weekends. Leads to less foot traffic, less activity and feeling less safe.

Police Presence – Having an increased police presence and more foot patrols in the downtown.

Housing – More housing options, affordable housing. Renovating older buildings for safety and energy efficiency. By-law enforcement and landlord responsibilities.

Local Business – Provide support to small local businesses

Community Engagement – Encourage community engagement, involvement and events. Also support information sharing between agencies, organizations and the public.

Pedestrian – Increase walkability, build and improve pedestrian walkways, close streets more often for events.

Methadone – Move or shut down the methadone clinic

Summary of Survey Results

The majority of people responding to the survey were those who access services in the downtown. Responses from those who live downtown, work downtown, and provide services in the downtown were captured as well. Most respondents indicated they had lived in the city for more than 10 years but some new comers did participate. The number of female respondents was almost double that of males. Respondents were largely middle aged, however, youth and seniors did participate.

When participants were asked to indicate how often they were downtown the most popular response was 'everyday'. 80% of the respondents were downtown at least once a week if not more. The majority of respondents also indicated that they felt moderately to very safe downtown.

Having a greater police presence and encouraging people to come downtown by having events and activities, cleaning up the area, supporting local businesses, and having longer store hours were viewed as the most important aspects for improving the downtown. Overall the future of the downtown appeared promising to respondents

Appendix D: Media Review Results and Summary

The media review resulted in identifying 12 Major Issues or themes that people responding to local news reports are concerned about.

Crime/ Policing	Pedestrian and Bike Friendly	Vacant and Older Buildings	Parking
Development	Community	City Council	Multiculturalism
Activity	Age Friendly	Recreation and Greenspace	Social Development

Crime/ Policing – The downtown is perceived to be a high crime area, Gore and Albert Streets being the worst. More police presence is wanted in the area especially foot patrols. There are some traffic safety issues as well.

Development – The public responded with both positivity and skepticism to reports of development project in the downtown. People are supportive of most developments but are unsure if they will be successful.

Activity – This theme encompasses events, attractions, and promotions in the downtown. Commenters also voiced their desires for cafes, sidewalk patios, open air markets (craft and farmers) and having longer store hours downtown.

Social Development – There is an expressed need for funding and programs to address employment, low income, affordable housing and mental health issues.

Pedestrian and Bike Friendly – There are pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns in the downtown. Commenters also feel that increasing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure can improve quality of life and impact downtown businesses.

City Council – The public felt that they did not receive enough information about what the City is doing downtown.

Recreation and Greenspace – There needs to be more parks, trees, playgrounds, and recreation opportunities in the downtown.

Multiculturalism – Exposure to different cultures through new downtown restaurants was highlighted. Suggestions came from commenters to embrace business was multiculturalism and celebrate it through events, festivals, and themed blocks

Age friendly – There should be suitable housing and activities for youth and seniors

Parking – The public want increased free parking downtown and there is interest in removing the paid parking on Queen Street.

Appendix E: Focus Group and Interview Participants

During the research process interviews and focus groups were conducted from August 2013 to December 2013. 16 focus groups were conducted with 131 participants and 28 interviews were conducted including 42 participants. Focus groups were held with youth residing downtown, people in conflict with the law, downtown employees and residents, the LGBTQ community, health service providers, people who access mental health services, seniors, women on fixed incomes, business owners, urban indigenous people, various service providers, and city officials among other groups.

Focus Group	Date	Number of Participants
#1	August 20 th , 2013	8
#2	August 22 nd , 2013	11
#3	August 28 th , 2013	5
#4	August 30 th , 2013	3
#5	September 12 th , 2013	18
#6	September 25 th , 2013	7
#7	September 30 th , 2013	9
#8	October 1 st , 2013	8
#9	October 2 nd , 2013	6
#10	October 9 th , 2013	20
#11	October 9 th , 2013	9
#12	October 21 st , 2013	4
#13	October 22 nd , 2013	7
#14	October 23 rd , 2013	6
#15	November 4 th , 2013	6
#16	November 7 th , 2013	4
16 Focus Groups		Total 131

Interviews Conducted	Date	Number of Participants
#1 Downtown Service Provider	August 8 th , 2013	1
#2 Service Provider Downtown	August 26 th , 2013	1
#3 Social Service Provider	August 27 th , 2013	1
#4 Service Provider	August 28 th , 2013	10
#5 Service Provider	August 29 th , 2013	1
#6 Downtown Service Provider	September 1, 2013	1
#7 Community Advocate	September 5, 2013	1
#8 Social Service Provider	September 10, 2013	1
#9 Downtown Service Provider	September 17, 2013	1
#10 Advocacy Group	September 18, 2013	3
#11 Business Owners/Residents	September 23, 2013	2
#12 Service Provider	October 22, 2013	1
#13 Downtown Resident	November 5, 2013	1

#14 Downtown Service Providers	November 14, 2013	2
#15 Downtown Service Provider	November 18 th , 2013	1
#16 Downtown Service Providers	November 18 th , 2013	2
#17 Sex Trade Worker 1		1
#18 Sex Trade Worker 2		1
#19 Sex Trade Worker 3		1
#20 Sex Trade Worker 4		1
#21 Sex Trade Worker 5		1
#22 Sex Trade Worker 6		1
#23 Sex Trade Worker 7		1
#24 Sex Trade Worker 8		1
#25 LGBTQ 1	October 1 st -November 30 th	1
#26 LGBTQ 2	October 1 st -November 30 th	1
#27 LGBTQ 3	October 1 st -November 30 th	1
#28 LGBTQ 4	October 1 st -November 30 th	1
#29 Business Owner/Resident	November 22 nd , 2013	1
29 Interviews		43 Participants

Appendix F: Community Picture Report, 2011 Priorities and Recommendations

Priorities	Recommendations
Physical Health 1. Access to affordable physical activity opportunities 2. Access to bike paths or bike routes on roadways	• Increase access to physical activity, sport and recreation programs and services by improving the availability of opportunities in the community especially in high risk populations • Increase and improve existing access to bike paths and routes on city roadways by supporting active transportation & improve the built environment initiatives.
Substance & Alcohol Misuse Top Priorities 1. Increasing resiliency skills in youth (coping skills, social engagement) 2. Decrease in risky drinking behaviours such as driving, crime, violence	• Increase resiliency skills in youth through prevention programming strategies, services and professional access • Reduction in risky drinking behaviours through communication, education, programming strategies to improve personal skills to prevent and reduce binge drinking
Mental Health Promotion 1. Destigmatize mental illnesses in youth and adults 2. Drop-in centres in communities for people in need 3. Open “community hubs” where multiple organizations provide health, social services, and recreational programs	• Reduce the stigma of mental illness in youth and adults through increasing knowledge and awareness of mental health issues, education and programs • Increase access to local community health services and support for people with mental illness. • Increase central access to services that provide health, social services, recreational programs and other healthy lifestyle information to those with mental illness
Healthy Eating 1. Access to healthy, affordable foods 2. Sale of healthy food choices at concession stands and vending machines at recreational facilities and parks 3. Local community Farmer’s Market	• Increase access to healthy affordable foods in multiple settings such as schools, workplaces and the community especially for high risk populations • Increase choices for healthy eating at recreational facilities and parks • Increase support for local community Farmer’s Market to purchase locally grown food
Injury Prevention 1. Maintain community parks and fields in good condition (e.g. remove uneven surfaces, poor lighting, proper and safe play equipment) 2. Maintenance of sidewalks for pedestrians (e.g. marking hazardous sidewalks, snowplowing)	• Decrease injuries by maintaining local community areas (i.e. parks, fields, sidewalks) in good condition through Municipal Parks and Recreation and Official plans policies or overall maintenance strategies.

Appendix G: Record of Community Meetings, Events and Presentations

April 23, 2013 – Native Nation Youth Council

Three NORDIK staff attended a meeting held by the Native Nation Youth Council at the Indian Friendship Centre on East Street. The event was attended by 19 people including NORDIK staff. The Council is a non-profit organization that engages youth through traditional methods such as sharing circles and sweat lodges. They are dedicated to protecting the environment and Aboriginal culture. During a sharing circle the council expressed their concerns regarding youth living in the downtown. They focused on getting youth away from alcohol and drugs and promoting traditional teachings and practices to engage the youth in having a healthier life.

April 29, 2013 – Teleconference Canadian Urban Institute

NORDIK staff had a conference call with the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI). CUI is conducting a research project on Investment and Revitalization in Northern Ontario's downtowns. Both groups agreed to collaborate where possible throughout the projects. NORDIK staff would be attending the Canadian Urban Forum in Ottawa on June 18 hosted by CUI and would receive an update on the project then.

April 30, 2013 – Soup Kitchen: I dream. I see. I remember.

NORDIK staff attended this event at St. John's Church Hall. The Soup Kitchen and Thinking Rock Community Arts collaborated on a participatory art project. People were invited to share their thoughts, memories or ideas about the West End on a fabric square that would become part of a community quilt celebrating the stories of the West End. NORDIK staff shared their ideas by creating their own squares for the quilt.

April 30, 2013 – Bushplane Museum Executive Director

NORDIK staff met with the Executive Director of the Bushplane Heritage Museum at the Bushplane Museum. The Director expressed interest in partnering with other local culture groups and attractions creating a cultural corridor or district on the east side of the downtown. The group included the Bushplane Museum, Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site, Sault Ste. Marie Museum, Sault Ste. Marie Library, and the Art Gallery of Algoma.

June 04, 2013 – Social Development Council

NORDIK Staff attended the final meeting of the Social Development Council before their summer break. The YMCA gave a presentation on a Youth Engagement Program that they provide. The United Way gave an update on the Action for Community Change Project. They held a number of 'community conversations' and were in the process of analyzing the data.

NORDIK staff introduced the council to the Downtown Dialogue project and invited the members to share their thoughts on the project.

June 11, 2013 – John Howard Orientation

The John Howard Society provided an introduction to their staff and the programs and services that the agency offers. We attended an orientation at the John Howard Society. They offer employment services, social skills courses, conflict resolution, anger management, and other training. They aid people with discharge plans from jail, community service, and bail supervision. They have a very close relationship with the court services in Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma Public Health runs a needle exchange out of the office. The John Howard Society is a partner in the Downtown Dialogue Project and provided space and support for the project.

Some staff mentioned concerns with biker gangs entering the city and also mentioned that the city has a large drug problem.

June 11, 2013 - Soup Kitchen AGM

A Soup Kitchen employee gave a presentation regarding the Board's decision to pursue the creation of a Community Health and Child Care Centre in addition to their current facility. The next phase for the project will be a Feasibility Study and Business Plan.

June 12, 2013 - Meeting with Gangplank

Gangplank is a collaborative working group that is being hosted in Main Branch of the Public Library. Gangplank encourages entrepreneurs and innovators to work together. They trade skills rather than money. People with expertise in web development may help someone make a website for a business and in return get help making their own business plan. Gangplank was originally a member of the Downtown Dialogue Steering Committee. They are currently looking for a new space to hold their meetings.

June 13, 2013 - Meeting with Tony Martin (Soup Kitchen Board Member)

As part of the feasibility study for the Health and Child Care Centre the Soup Kitchen is doing a public consultation process and indicated they would like to collaborate with Downtown Dialogue where possible. Tony Martin talked about the importance of child care to allow people to work. He also talked about the difficulty that people have when taking the bus to health care appointments.

June 13, 2013 - Downtown Association

The Downtown Association stated that they were excited about the project and some of their members are as well. The Association was willing to collaborate with the project wherever

possible. They indicated that the downtown is portrayed as having problems with crime and drugs in the news. In their opinion the downtown is actually doing well. The population is up and there are more new businesses. Some businesses have closed but it is not always for a negative reason. One business owner retired and another outgrew their location, which are both success stories.

June 18 – 19, 2013 - Canadian Urban Forum

NORDIK Staff attended the Canadian Urban Forum in Ottawa. The Forum was presented by the Canadian Urban Institute, a stakeholder in the Downtown Dialogue Project. The goal of the conference was to start a conversation among decision makers and other urban stakeholders to reignite interest in Canada's urban agenda. The conference focused on addressing Canada's infrastructure deficit and highlighted new models for funding infrastructure, new models for strategic partnerships, and new models that leverage underutilized assets, and the value of investing in Canadian Downtowns.

June 20, 2013 – Meeting with United Way

The United Way has been working on a project called Community Conversations. The project is funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The Community conversations use protocols of the Harwood institute for conducting its research. The conversations have no more than 15 people per group. It is an open format 'kitchen table' style conversation. The facilitator asks what are your hopes, dreams, aspirations and challenges. The conversations take place at non-traditional sites such as the YMCA and the library. There are equal numbers of men and women and people from all walks of life. First Nations and seniors were represented as they are a high proportion of the population in the city.

Some initial findings were that the community wants safe, affordable housing; good employment opportunities; an inclusive community offering respect and equality; and a safe community free of crime and drugs. Based on the research the Sault Ste. Marie is categorized as "the waiting place" according to Harwood protocols, which means that people want to make changes but don't know how.

June 21, 2013 – Meeting with Coalition of Women in Numbers (CWIN)

CWIN is an advocacy group that works with women engaged in the sex trade. They discussed having a larger public meeting in the future and the possibility up setting up a hotline or support network to aid people in the sex trade. It was also discussed that they may be applying for funding to do these projects.

June 21, 2013 – Meeting with School Board

NORDIK staff met with staff of the Algoma District School Board. Organization of Restorative Justice training for school board employees was discussed.

June 21, 2013 – Meeting at Riversedge Developments

Riversedge Developments purchased the former St. Mary's Paper site and is planning to redevelop the area. They are interested in partnering with the arts community, local businesses, Sault College, Algoma University, the Innovation Centre, and the Soup Kitchen among others. They recognize that they need to engage the local community and make the site attractive to locals in order for it to be successful. Riversedge was a part of the Downtown Dialogue stakeholder committee.

June 25, 2013 – Steering Committee Meeting

Over 40 people from the community were in attendance and there more than 20 different groups, organizations, agencies and associations represented.

Issues discussed: Police presence in the downtown, safe and affordable housing, affordable office space, youth engagement, the need for addictions treatment facilities, negative perception of downtown, definition of downtown boundaries.

June 26, 2013 – John Howard AGM

NORDIK Staff presented an overview of the Downtown Dialogue project and partnership to the John Howard Society Board.

July 09 – 10, 2013 – Station Mall Display

For two days NODIK set-up a project display in the Station Mall. The display provided and overview of the project and its goals. Staff engaged the public to answer any questions regarding the project.

July 11, 2013 – Meeting with City Planning Department

The City Planning Department staff stated that city council is exploring a second phase of the downtown revitalization strategy and grant programs. The city is also planning three priority cycling routes that will be part of the Hub Trail.

July 16, 2013 – Jamestown FlowerBomb

NORDIK staff organized a community event to plant flowers outside the Soup Kitchen. All of the soil, mulch, flowers, and materials were donated by local businesses and citizens. Neighbours and Soup Kitchen patrons planted flowers, weeded beds and repainted dilapidated benches.

NORDIK staff also provided a barbecue and activities for children during the event. Several local news provided covered the event.

July 18, 2013 – Teleconference with John Howard Society Hamilton

A coordinator from John Howard Society Hamilton explained how they had implemented Restorative Justice Training in their city and provided guidance as to how it could be implemented in Sault Ste. Marie. It was recommended that an Operational Committee be formed to oversee the Restorative Justice Program to ensure that it is maintained and sustainable.

July 22, 2013 – Meeting with researcher from Urban Aboriginal Communities Thrive

The Urban Aboriginal Communities Thrive project that is taking place in Northern Ontario. The researcher gave us an overview of his project and was introduced to the Downtown Dialogue Project.

July 23, 2013 – Downtown Dialogue Partners Meeting

The partners discussed a press release announcing the Proceeds of Crime funding and ways of engaging other stakeholders in the project. An Operational Committee consisting of the Police Services, ADSB, and John Howard would be formed to oversee the Restorative Justice Training Program.

July 23, 2013 – Teleconference with CUI

Canadian Urban Institute will be releasing a new project newsletter soon. They received good responses from the survey in the Sault and North Bay.

July 24, 2013 – Meeting with Bushplane Museum Executive Director

The Director discussed the creation of a Cultural Corridor group which consists of the Bushplane Museum, the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site, the Museum, the Art Gallery, the Library, and the Norgoma. The goal of this group is to create an Arts/Culture and Entertainment Strategy for the City and to create an identifiable Cultural District in the Downtown.

The Bushplane Museum has partnerships and agreements that go beyond the scope of a museum. They provide space for weddings, community groups, festivals, and high school and college Media Arts Programs.

July 25, 2013 – Meeting with Bichler Developments

Bichler Developments manages a number of properties in Sault Ste. Marie. They have converted several former churches into boarding houses. They also provide food programs for their tenants and are hoping to expand their operations. Many of the tenants are on Ontario Works or Disability Pensions. The owner mentioned that they have a close relationship with the police and John Howard Society. They sometimes have difficulty with people having addictions. They mentioned that the food program has seemed to alleviate some of the incidents that happen because access to food and hunger is no longer an issue for the tenants.

July 29, 2013 –Thinking Rock Arts: Community Conversation

Thinking Rock Arts held a Community Conversation at the Riversedge site. There was representation from many community groups and local social service organizations. There were also many members of the Arts Community. The session introduced the community to grants and community building projects that use art as a catalyst. The session helped to connect local organizations and increase communication. People responded well to the session and indicated that they would be receptive to more workshops like that.

August 1, 2013 – Meeting with United Way Community Liaison

The community liaison works with tenants and housing providers to preserve tenancy and solve tenancy issues. The worker stated that quality of housing in the downtown is substandard and many of the clients live in atrocious conditions but cannot afford better. Some areas of the downtown are becoming gentrified and there is not enough affordable housing. Many low income people are being displaced to areas located farther from the services they need. The idea of creating a Tenants Association and a Landlords Association could be helpful to provide people with information, supports and advocacy.

August 13, 2013 – Downtown Association Board Meeting

The Downtown BIA Coordinator asked NORDIK Staff to present the project to the Downtown Association Board members.

August 14, 2013 – Cultural Corridor Group

The Cultural Corridor Group met to discuss putting forward a grant to develop a strategy for their organizations to collaborate more effectively. It was decided that the group would wait until next year to put forward the application.

August 14, 2013 – City Council Meeting – Riversedge/Blue Forest Proposal

The City is paying for a feasibility study for Riversedge to develop as a tourist destination. They are working with them to transfer the \$5 million in NOHFC funding, which had been earmarked

to develop the Gateway site, to Riversedge. The City is also contracting Ken Greenberg and the Planning Partnership to create a Public Realm Master Plan for the 'Canal District' which would include the Gateway site, Riversedge, the proposed Bridge Plaza and parts of Gore Street. The Plan will dictate what develops in the area and how it will look.

August 20, 2013 – Crime Stoppers Patrollers Supervisors

The Crime Stopper Patrollers in the downtown are a partnership between Sault College, Crime Stoppers, SSMPS, and the Downtown Association. The Program coordinator stated that the patrollers are student volunteers from Justice Studies/ Police Foundations. They patrollers are highly supervised, highly visible (fluorescent jackets) and non-confrontational. They are a pro-active patrol meant to prevent crime. They are a deterrent to crime and do not intervene in any crimes.

The program focuses on preventing/addressing property crime, mischief, break-ins and theft from vehicles. The program has been a success. It gives the volunteers a great opportunity. It makes people feel safer and has been reported on favourably in the media.

August 21, 2013 – Meeting with Downtown Association and Sault Ste. Marie Police Service

Through a literature review NORDIK found case studies regarding the relationship between Business Improvement Associations, Police, and safety. These findings were presented to the Police Service and Downtown and discussion took place around implementing some of the ideas and programs that exist elsewhere in Canada. The Police are able to provide training to downtown merchants if interested (safety tips, reporting to police, etc.). The idea of creating Ambassador Patrols for the downtown was also discussed.

August 26, 2013 – Meeting with United Way

Through their Community Conversation project the United Way identified 4 major themes areas that the community is concerned with. The United Way will try to address one of the themes – they have chosen to work on improving access to good employment opportunities and addressing the mismatch between the skills people possess and those currently sought in the job market.

August 30, 2013 – Conference Call CUI

The Canadian Urban Institute will be doing some consultations in Sault Ste. Marie and they are recruiting interns for the project.

September 3, 2013 – Meeting with Community Geomatics Centre

NORDIK Staff met with staff at the Community Geomatics to discuss the Youth Crime Report they had completed in 2009. The report was commissioned because the City appeared to have a huge spike in youth crime. Once the report came out and it was apparent that the issue had been misrepresented the Youth Crime Committee disbanded. One of the recommendations of the report was to create a database of the community and social services in the area. The 211 service now addresses this need and also releases an annual report that identifies service gaps. It was also discussed that the Rotary Club had recently been discussing actions that they might be able to implement in the downtown.

September 4, 2013 – Meeting with 211 Coordinator

In meeting with the local 211 coordinator we discussed improving the search methods on the 211 website. We were also given promotional materials to distribute to raise awareness of the service.

September 5, 2013 – Meeting with Tony Martin (Soup Kitchen Board Member)

Discussion focused on the Soup Kitchen's interest in social enterprise. At the moment they are focused on creating a Community Health and Child Care Centre. Within that project they would like to have an incubation space for social enterprise but there is no one spearheading that initiative at the moment.

September 10, 2013 – YMCA Services and Facilities

NORDIK staff met with staff from the YMCA and toured the facility. The facility has expanded its services and has become more of a community centre than just a fitness centre. It could be a good model for creating a community centre in the downtown. They offer opportunities for socializing and recreation and also provide child care and financial assistance.

September 11, 2013 – Meeting with Sault Ste. Marie Police Service

Met with Police Service staff and were asked to speak about Downtown Dialogue at upcoming Crime Prevention Conference.

October 15 -17, 2013 – Restorative Justice Training

The John Howard Society has created partnerships and an Operational Committee with the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service, the Algoma District School Board, and the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board to provide 'train-the-trainer' workshops in the use of Restorative Justice Practices as a tool for conflict resolution.

October 24, 2013 – Meeting with Art Gallery Consultant

The Art Gallery is looking to expand and update its current building. NORDIK staff were invited to a consultation session to discuss how the Gallery could be better integrated with the downtown. It was discussed how the building could be better integrated with the downtown physically. It was also discussed how the Gallery could engage youth in the downtown. This could help decrease youth crime in the area by giving them other outlets. It could be especially helpful for dealing with the graffiti issue downtown.

October 29, 2013 – Crime Prevention Seminar

The Downtown Dialogue Project presented at the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service's Annual Crime Prevention Seminar on the project, its goals, and some of the actions and findings to date. The conference was attended by over 100 people including representatives from social services, the City, and the Canadian Urban Institute. A representative from the John Howard Society also presented on Restorative Justice Training.

November 6, 2013 – Public Open House: City Downtown Revitalization Plan

The City held an Open House at the Downtown Association office to receive feedback on their draft Revitalization Program. The public were interested in accessing the proposed grant to improve properties in the area. They also gave feedback about improving the transit services downtown to better travel from stores and restaurants and also making it safer and easier to travel from bars and restaurants at night.

Some business owners stated that they needed more support from the city. City council members stated that the council has clearly stated that the downtown is a priority. The city can only do so much to help the businesses there are things like store hours that are the responsibility of the business owner and the city has no influence over.

November 7, 2013 – NORDIK AGM

Downtown Dialogue presented their research and findings to date to the public and the NORDIK Board. The director of the City's Planning Department was interested in having a presentation for city staff once the findings are finalized to help inform their Community Improvement Plan for Downtown.

November 14, 2013 – Soup Ste. Marie

This event was organized as part of the Downtown Dialogue project. This was a crowd funding event to support a community project that could help revitalize the downtown. It was held at 180 Projects, and art gallery in the downtown and the event was attended by over 100 people. The winning project idea received over \$1000 to support their cause.

November 15, 2013 – Treatment and Remand Centre

NORDIK Staff toured the Algoma Treatment and Remand Centre to learn more about those in conflict with the law. The treatment section of the facility holds inmates from all over Ontario and has access to many resource including psychologists, social workers, and recreational facilities. Many of the reasons for people being in the center are drug related. There is a lot of recidivism for those in remand and they often end up in the facility regularly.

When someone is released from the facility they often don't have a home or job. Often times they must stay at a shelter and for those with addictions it is not a good option because they are often in close proximity to people who are using.

November 25, 2013 - Social Enterprise Meeting

NORDIK facilitated a meeting with stakeholders involved in Social Enterprise development. This included the EDC, SSMIC, CLA, the Soup Kitchen, JHS, and Soogoma. Community Living Algoma and Soogoma currently have Social Enterprises. John Howard and the Soup Kitchen are interested in developing a Social Enterprise. The Innovation Centre is interested in housing Social Enterprises and the EDC is interested in funding Social Enterprises. The EDC suggested that the groups write a proposal to access funding for Social Enterprise and that SSMIC might be able to distribute the money to Social Enterprise start-ups.

November 27, 2013 – World Aids Days

Downtown Dialogues was invited to host an information booth at the World Aids Day Presentations and Conference held by The Algoma Public Health Unit, Group Health Centre, and HARP. The event was attended by about 50 people. Some issues that were brought up were the lack of education and awareness that kids and even service providers have regarding transmittable diseases such as HIV and HEP C. It was also brought up that it is difficult to bring this education into the schools.

December 11, 2013 – Meeting with Indian Friendship Centre (IFC)

The Aboriginal Criminal Court Worker at the IFC indicated that the IFC is interested in Alternative Justice Models. They would like to participate in Restorative Justice Training.

December 20, 2013 – Graffiti Project Meeting

We participated in a meeting at 180 Project s with stakeholders that were interested in creating a graffiti project. Participants included 180 Projects, the Art Gallery, the Art Council, CTD Designs, and Blackbird. The group decided they would apply for an Ontario Trillium Fund Grant to do a mural project in the downtown.

January 15, 2013 – City Council Community Committee on Graffiti at City Hall

The committee was formed to bring together a number of stakeholders and experts in the community to discuss how to deal with the graffiti issue in the city. There was a consensus that a "Made in Sault Ste. Marie" approach is to be positive and to engage the graffiti community to work toward positive expression, leading to community enhancement outcome. Most attendees identified most graffiti is created by youth so youth related strategies need to be developed. The next step is to bring an inventory of specific initiatives that can readily be initiated. For example the Skatepark as a site for a mural and the City's Green Committee Community 20 minute makeover may focus on graffiti removal.

February 11, 2014 – Youth Forum

Downtown Dialogue attended the Sault Ste. Marie Youth Forum. The set out to engage youth and youth workers to gain information about the barriers, gaps and opportunities that exist related to education, employment and entrepreneurship, and to mobilize the community to act on the opportunities and challenges identified.

March 21, 2014 – Executive Stakeholder Presentation

Final presentation of Downtown Dialogue findings and recommendations to community leaders and executives of agencies.

March 26, 2014 – Public Forum

Final presentation of Downtown Dialogue findings and recommendations to the public.



Graffiti Reframed

Final Report



Jude Ortiz, Sean Meades, Dr. Gayle Broad, Liz Cooke and André Brown

November 2015



Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the following organizations and individuals who contributed to this study:

The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District for their partnership, administrative support, and assistance with the logistics of a number of project events;

Cinema Politica Sault Ste. Marie for their collaboration on the screening of *Roadsworth: Crossing the Line*;

Steel City Motor Sports, Case's Music, and 180 Projects for donating wall space for the Graffiti Reframed mural projects;

The Neighbourhood Resource Centre, Shabby Motley Handcraft, and the Downtown Association for donating their spaces for meetings, workshops, and other events;

Sharon Hunter, Cameron Dutchak and Mister Tahti for developing and delivering skills and mural development initiatives;

Katie Huckson, and Jude Ortiz for sharing their skills with artists during workshops National Youth Arts Week (NYAW) and Alicia Hunt for her assistance in coordinating the week's events.

The research team was composed of Research Coordinator Jude Ortiz, Action Researcher Elizabeth Cooke, Researcher Sean Meades, Director of Research at the NORDIK Institute, Dr. Gayle Broad, and André Brown, a placement student from the Community Economic and Social Development (CESD) program at Algoma University.

We also gratefully acknowledge our funders: The Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation.

Opinions expressed in this report are solely those of the authors and do not represent those of the funders.

Front cover photo credit: Shane Ericson

NORDIK Institute is a community-based research institute affiliated with Algoma University that promotes more vibrant, caring and sustainable communities through research, dialogue, analysis and reflection and is dedicated to the practice of holistic community development. www.nordikinstitute.com

Executive Summary

Graffiti Reframed, spearheaded by NORDIK Institute in partnership with the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District, was intended to engage the community in developing a shared understanding of graffiti and its place in Sault Ste. Marie. Earlier research demonstrated a need for a better collective understanding of this form of creative expression. Graffiti Reframed consisted of both **creation** and **research** components. The initiative engaged more than 350 citizens, exceeding its **engagement** target of 200 people, with artists, business owners, community stakeholder and the public at large all being implicated throughout the initiative.

The project was funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation's (NOHFC) internship program, injecting \$88,500 of new monies into the Sault's economy, leveraging approximately \$11,525 in arts education and training for youth and a minimum of \$5,925 in-kind donations from numerous local businesses, with the largest items, the walls and media, unaccounted for in this sum. Government agencies, merchants and community participation each contributed to a culture of inclusion and creative place making.

The activities ran from Summer 2014 – Summer 2015 and included:

- Creation of **three graffiti-style murals** by young artists under the guidance of peer mentors, and 15" x 20" art pieces commissioned by downtown businesses for the **National Youth Arts Week (NYAW) Window Exhibition in May 2015;**
- Skills development workshops on topics including **graffiti writing**, artistic **techniques**, **concept development**, and the processes associated with **commissioned work**; and
- Community engagement was accomplished through an info booth at **Mill Market**, **film screenings** followed by panel discussions, **interviews** and **focus groups**, presentations and the **Graff Café**, a series of youth-focused community open houses for artistic activity and dialogue at the Neighbourhood Resource Centre on Gore Street.

The research component took place concurrently and explored the following:

- Impact of building **artistic capacity** on the place of youth within the city's social fabric;
- Any **changes in attitudes** about graffiti and those who practice its various forms;
- Youth opportunities for engagement and employment in the **creative economy**; and
- Cultivation of community pride, **place making**, and long-term tourism opportunities.

The project was especially successful in cultivating **youth empowerment** both through the intergenerational peer mentoring process involved in the mural creation, as well as through activities that encouraged mentees to take on leadership roles. The engagement strengthened

artists' agency, sense of identity and capacity for producing unique, expressive and meaningful artwork.

Graffiti Reframed also had a high profile in the neighbourhood around Gore Street. The neighbourhood hosted two of the murals, several workshops, the Graff Cafés and other activities, contributing to **neighbourhood vitality**.

Many of those engaged by the project expressed a need for **more public art** in order to foster a sense of local identity (i.e. **place making**), to showcase young artists more frequently, and to create more tourism opportunities and improve visitors' experience. Many expressed a sense of '**creative opportunity**' emerging in Sault Ste. Marie that needs to be nourished.

The project not only highlighted opportunities within the **creative economy** for future local development, it facilitated 7 artists earning a greater percentage of their income from their artistic skills through mentorship initiatives, while over 64 local artists took part in programming to either develop their skills or showcase their work and more than 70 participated in the Graff Cafés. Additionally, 20 businesses interested in commissioning a variety of forms of artwork were identified and five were connected to young local artists.

Interviews and community engagement initiatives revealed important shifts in the public dialogue about graffiti throughout the project. Significantly, stakeholders and the general public increasingly made distinctions between '**nuisance tagging**' and other forms of **street art**. Indeed, many stakeholders expressed a growing appreciation for the **artistic merit** of street art and the graffiti-style more generally.

The Graffiti Reframed process underscored the importance of understanding the motivations of graffiti artists (ranging from taggers to those who do exclusively commissioned work) in order to develop effective and appropriate responses from the Police Services and other community stakeholders. Graffiti artists ought not to be considered a monolithic group, and similarly their motivations are diverse. The factors that contribute to unwanted tagging or place making, story-telling and beautification situates it within a largely bi-polar spectrum of positive and negative social capital, each contributing to a sense of community, power, and identity and belonging. Communities bridging the divide, i.e., redirecting those creating unwanted occurrences and capitalizing on artistic aspirations underpins the development of healthy, inclusive and resilient communities.

The research demonstrated that providing **greater opportunities for creative expression** and using **art and design to discourage tagging** and vandalism are effective deterrents for unwanted graffiti. For others, their involvement in illicit graffiti practices stems from a sense of **isolation** that can only be addressed through social development to foster a greater sense of inclusion. Interventions that allow the formation of new peer networks supporting more socially

productive artwork was identified as an important step in creating a culture of inclusion, i.e., places and spaces for youth to engage in the life of the community, see themselves reflected in the community through murals and public art as well as participants in planning and delivering other arts programming.

The impact of a project like Graffiti Reframed on **promoting the creative economy**, strengthening **arts community capacity**, and implicating the arts more in concerted **place-making efforts** were apparent, but still in their nascent stages. Additional community engagement and investment will be necessary to maintain the momentum achieved through Graffiti Reframed, to attain maximal future economic impact and ongoing community dialogue that proactively engages and support youth in building healthy relationships and leadership opportunities, creative or otherwise.

Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Executive Summary	2
1.0 Background	7
1.1 Origins	7
1.2 Goals	8
1.3 Partners	8
2.0 Literature Review	9
2.1 Definitions	9
2.2 Motivations	10
2.3 Criminalization and Management	11
2.4 Economic Value	13
3.0 Methodology	17
3.1 Organizational Structure and Research Design	17
3.2 Action Research Activities	19
3.2.1 Graffiti Murals and ‘Reveals’	20
3.2.2 A Day at the Wall	20
3.2.3 Graff Cafés	20
3.2.4 Documentary Film Screening: <i>Roadsworth: Crossing the Line</i>	21
3.2.5 Community Economic and Social Development Student Engagement	21
3.2.6 March Break Workshops	21
3.2.7 Information Booth at Mill Market	21
3.2.8 National Youth Arts Week	22
3.2.9 Communications and Marketing Strategy	23
3.2.10 Graffiti Reframed Documentary Video	23
3.2.11 City Council Community Committee on Graffiti	24
4.0 Building Capacity and Community Vitality	25
4.1 Changes in Knowledge	25
4.1.1. Increasing Knowledge through Engagement	26
4.1.2 Discerning between Tagging and Graffiti Murals	27
4.1.3 Defining and Addressing the ‘Graffiti Problem’	29
4.1.4 Understanding Motivational Factors	30

4.1.5 Understanding Graffiti as an Artistic Practice	31
4.2 Perceptions of Graffiti in Sault Ste. Marie	33
4.2.1 Perceptions Among Project Organizers	33
4.2.2 Perceptions Among Youth Focus Group Participants	35
4.2.3 Documentary Film Screening Participants	36
4.2.4 Mill Market Information Booth Participants	37
4.2.5 Summary of Initial Perceptions	37
4.3 Increased Individual and Community Artistic Capacity	38
4.4 Youth Empowerment	42
4.5 Place Making and the Creative Economy	45
4.5.1 Public Engagement	46
4.5.2 Neighbourhood Revitalization	48
4.5.3 Community Culture and Identity	51
4.3.3 Localized Culture-based Economy	54
5.0 Future Opportunities: Building on Graffiti Reframed's Success	59
6.0 Conclusion	62
References	64

Tables and Figures

Table 1: Approaches and Methods of Graffiti Management	12
Table 2: Action Research Activities	19
Table 3: Fostering Knowledge Growth	25
Table 4: Knowledge Self-Assessment of Participant Interviewees	26
Table 5: Contributions to the Creative Economy	55
Table 6: Economic Impact of Graffiti Reframed	56
Figure 1: Intergenerational peer mentoring	39
Figure 2: Case's Music wall mural development and reflection	44
Figure 3: Laying the foundation of paint	41
Figure 4: NYAW Graffiti/Mural Window Exhibition artwork	42
Figure 5: Increased confidence through artistic practice	43
Figure 6: Graff Café Poster	44
Figure 7: Steel City Motor Sports' wall before and after Graffiti Reframed	49
Figure 8: Graffiti Reframed mural at 180 Projects	52
Figure 9: Case's Music completed commission	53

Graffiti Reframed

1.0 Background

Graffiti Reframed emerged from the cross-pollination of actors in two research and development projects located in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, *Animating the John Rowswell Hub Trail*¹ and the *Downtown Dialogue in Action*², and the social entrepreneurs and community organizations engaged by each respectively. Gradually, the Graffiti Reframed project became a community engagement strategy spearheaded by the NORDIK Institute in collaboration with the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District to develop a broad community-shared understanding of graffiti and its place in Sault Ste. Marie.

1.1 Origins

The *Downtown Dialogue in Action* was an action research partnership between the John Howard Society, the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service and NORDIK Institute, which investigated crime prevention through social development, and informed the Graffiti Reframed project. Among the themes that emerged from the *Downtown Dialogue*, popular perception and understanding of graffiti practices indicated a need for better collective understanding of this form of creative expression.

Likewise, *Animating the John Rowswell Hub Trail* informed the project with its focus on developing and promoting cultural points of interest along the 22.5 km, non-motorized trail that encircles the City of Sault Ste. Marie.

The City of Sault Ste. Marie also struck the City Council Community Committee on Graffiti in 2013 to address the perception of rising reports of ‘graffiti vandalism,’ most notably in the form of nuisance tagging. Graffiti Reframed endeavoured to address some of the issues raised by the task-force, as well as complement aspects of the City’s *Downtown Development Strategy*³, the *Canal District Master Plan*⁴, and the *Animating the John Rowswell Hub Trail* project, as well as the City’s tourism planning.

¹ <http://www.hubtrail.com/>

² <http://www.nordikinstitute.com/publications-2>

³ <http://www.saultstemarie.ca/City-Hall/City-Departments/Engineering-and-Planning/Planning/Strategic-Long-Range-Planning/Downtown-Development.aspx>

⁴

<http://www.saultstemarie.ca/City-Hall/City-Departments/Engineering-and-Planning/Planning/Strategic-Long-Range-Planning/Downtown-Development/Canal-District.aspx>

Similarly, the 2010 report, *A Study of Youth Out-Migration in Sault Ste. Marie*, underscored the need for greater entertainment opportunities and youth-based activities in Sault Ste. Marie as a means of stemming negative perceptions many youth may have of the community in order to combat youth out-migration.

1.2 Goals

Graffiti Reframed aimed to bring together a diversity of people and organizations to engage with graffiti in thoughtful ways and challenge preconceptions about those who produce it. By using both art and dialogue as a platform for meaningful engagement, the project endeavoured to create space for relationship building between and across the community's diverse spectra.

The project addressed the identified need for greater understanding of graffiti in terms of the forces driving its creation; community perspectives (crime, mischief, vandalism and/or art); ways of leveraging artistic skills within the creative economy; and fostering community pride, place-making and tourism opportunities.

Ultimately the project aspired to leverage the power of the arts for positive social change, building community and new relationships, and to provide youth with new skills that can eventually serve to expand and strengthen their participation and role in the development of a localized, culture-based creative economy, thereby increasing Sault Ste. Marie's and areas' sustainability.

1.3 Partners

A number of community organizations and initiatives were commissioned through Graffiti Reframed to facilitate activities or provide space, including Black Bird Art⁵, CTD Designs⁶, 180 Projects⁷ and the Art Gallery of Algoma⁸.

Community organizations such as the Downtown Association⁹, the Sault Ste. Marie Police Services¹⁰, and a number of local businesses and agencies also provided invaluable contributions of their time, space, and materials.

⁵ <http://www.blackbirdnortharts.com>

⁶ Cameron Dutchak: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLPNcw1Z1mo>

⁷ <http://oneeightyprojects.ca>

⁸ <http://www.artgalleryofalgoma.com>

⁹ <http://www.saultdowntown.com/>

¹⁰ <http://www.ssmps.ca/>

2.0 Literature Review

A review of literature was conducted examining definitions of graffiti, motivations, management and its economic value.

2.1 Definitions

Initially a 19th century loanword from Italian signifying an ‘inscribed image’ or ‘a scribbling,’ graffiti came to refer to a particular aesthetic associated with spray painted images or words in public spaces in the late 1970s in New York City (WordReference.com 2015, n.p.; Etymology Online 2015, n.p.; DeNotto 2014, n.p.). In this sense, graffiti is often considered a form of vandalism, however understanding graffiti as a public art practice necessitates an appreciation for how art is conceived in relation to the spaces that it occupies.

Graphics displayed outside of conventional ‘Fine Arts’ spaces, such as museums and galleries, often fail to be recognized by the general public as art forms at all. Those who attend such venues go to these destinations with intention, while graffiti that appears in public space is experienced and viewed regardless of the viewer’s intent. Likewise, as Waclawek (2008) explains, “without validation in galleries or museums, [...] public artwork is frequently dismissed.” The curatorial authority of the galleries, museums, or even businesses, as well as the viewer’s intent to experience art, shape and limit the ways in which public expressions of art are interpreted.

‘Tags’ are an especially common form of graffiti that are often associated with vandalism. Tags can be a form of artists’ ‘signature,’ not always of a name or initials, but alternatively an iconic word, phrase, or image (DeNotto 2014, n.p.).

By contrast, ‘street art’ is considered a distinct form of graffiti that, while not always performed with permission, typically has a “pictorial focus” and is deliberately engaging (DeNotto 2014, n.p.).

Central to the distinctions between various forms of graffiti are their underlying intents. As Denotto explains in contrasting ‘tags’ and ‘street art,’ “The intention behind a tag is the rebellious proliferation of the artist’s signature, akin to brand name advertising [...] street art is an open invitation for anyone to interact, consider, and discuss. Furthermore, street art is [...] rebellious but not purposefully destructive as there is intent to beautify the urban environment” (2014, n.p.).

2.2 Motivations

Several scholars have postulated various underlying motivations for why people engage in acts of graffiti, including **belonging to a subculture**, the cultivation of a **sense of identity**, the desire for **respect**, **peer imitation**, the **thrill** associated with risk or provocation, and acting out of **boredom**.

In her study of graffiti sub-cultures and practices, Anna Waclawek highlights the significance of the sense of belonging to a community within graffiti subculture(s) that is not ascribed to mainstream culture (2008). Drawing on work by Nancy Macdonald, Waclawek argues that many graffiti artists enjoy a sense of dual identity, explaining:

the writer's real name becomes reserved for all of the tasks and responsibilities associated with the writer's non-graffiti life, while graffiti colleagues and the citizens of a city identify the writer by their tag. Thus, the self accommodates two self-contained personas: one real life and the other subcultural. (2008, 63)

Likewise, many artists, potentially especially those engaged in tagging, enjoy the paradoxical and competing senses of visibility and anonymity. As Waclawek continues, "writers are cognizant that most people cannot read their graffiti, and this positions them as members of an exclusive scene - a scene that is visible to everyone but insignificant to most." (2008)

Highlighting young graffiti artists' desire for respect, Wilkinson explains:

youth want respect and believe they can demand it by impacting their environment through tags. They demand respect from others by tagging with skill, often, and in difficult spots. This respect is given in the graffiti community when other graffitiists' do not tag over another's work – recognizing each other's time and effort (2014, 27).

Wilkinson's study of graffiti artists in Halifax also notes "common reasons stated for graffiti creation were the desire for power, independence and the feeling of invincibility" (2014, 28). Similarly, Taylor's 2012 study of early adolescent graffiti artists foregrounded six motivating factors for their involvement with graffiti culture, including "alleviation of boredom, emulation of others, the rush derived from committing an illegal act, the rush gained from engaging in acts of aggression, the satisfaction derived from retaliation, and the reward of a non-conforming social identity" (2012, 57). Elaborating on the 'rush,' Taylor went on to explain:

According to these early adolescents, the inherent risk of detection and subsequent police apprehension is what stimulates the release of a euphoric rush of adrenaline into

their bodily systems. Moreover, they contend that over time this rush experience becomes addictive (Taylor, 2012, 58)

Thus, the aforementioned 'reinforcing' factors, (sense of community, desire for power, rush, etc.) are motivational drivers contributing to graffiti subculture that present challenges in responding to and managing unsolicited occurrences.

2.3 Criminalization and Management

Municipalities have adopted a variety of responses to graffiti, often informed by the "broken windows theory," that the presence or occurrences of social disorder, when left uncorrected, encourages further disorder. According to this theory, disorder is defined as:

Aggressive panhandling, street prostitution, drunkenness and public drinking, menacing behaviour, harassment, obstruction of streets and public spaces, vandalism and graffiti, public urination and defecation, unlicensed vending and peddling, unsolicited window washing of cars ("squeegeeing"), and other such acts. (Kelling and Cole 1996)

The association of graffiti with the other actions described above portrays graffiti as an activity emanating from the fringes of society, and its association with other, more dangerous or threatening activities evokes a necessity to criminalize and regulate this form of disorder (Alger 2013).

Municipalities in Canada and abroad have used four broad approaches to graffiti management based on Alger (2013) as detailed below: removal, criminalization, welfarism, and acceptance.

Table 1: Approaches and Methods of Graffiti Management

Removal	Criminalization	Welfarism	Acceptance
• Removal on public property • Removal on private property required • Paint vouchers/ Graffiti kits • Community paint-outs • Incentives to stay graffiti-free • Anti-Graffiti coatings • Hotlines/Apps/ Online forms	• Fines for Graffiti Writing • Controlling graffiti tools	• Education programs • Youth engagement programs • Restorative justice programs	• Murals • Temporary art opportunities • Sanctioned walls/Designated areas • Graffiti instruction • Community education on graffiti • Celebrations, events or festivals

These methods of management can all be useful depending on the circumstance, however the perspectives of all stakeholders should be considered for the purpose of choosing an appropriate response.

Proponents of criminalization have advocated “zero tolerance” stances that penalize all types of graffiti with jail time, fines, and/or mandatory education and community service. Such an approach, however, can leave perpetrators unable to afford the fines. Likewise, jail sentences are often seen as overly punitive for what the judicial system sees as petty crime, while incarceration also runs the risk of exposing the perpetrator to further antisocial habits and behaviours. In addition to the moral questions associated with such an approach, these strategies have often been proven to be ineffective at preventing graffiti from occurring (Wilkinson, 2014).

More recently, Graffiti policies have been changing, and some communities may now accept some forms of graffiti and street art in contrast to previous zero tolerance policies. Inconsistencies in beliefs related to street art versus graffiti, however, make it difficult for artists to discern the acceptable parameters of art in public spaces (Wilkinson, 2014).

Community service and education programs are often relatively effective as they can redirect youth into more socially acceptable activities (Gomez, 1992).

The most commonly used strategy, however, is the quick removal of graffiti from surfaces to dissuade writers from tagging, often removing work before it is seen (Wilkinson, 2014). This

method speaks to the ‘broken window’ hypothesis, that eventually the speedy and repeated removal of graffiti conveys the message that a space is cared for, and discourages taggers as they become convinced that any mark they leave will be removed.

2.4 Economic Value

Paradoxically, street art murals, graffiti style or otherwise, has become increasingly commoditized and embraced by mainstream consumers while it continues to pose a problem for municipalities who battle its unwanted presence on private buildings.

While contemporary graffiti styles emerged in underground hip-hop subcultures, notably in New York and other major urban centres, by the mid-1980s its commodification was in full swing (Currid 2007, 36-7). As Elizabeth Currid describes of New York’s creative scenes, “This transformation of New York’s art and culture from bohemia to a creative economy was perhaps most evident in the rapid rise to stardom of graffiti artists and hip-hop musicians.” (2007, 36).

Graffiti artists such as Haring, Basquiat, Quinones, and Futura created cross-disciplinary, highly commodifiable works on products ranging from hand bags to sneakers (Currid 2007, 40). The proliferation of graffiti style and street art murals in other realms of cultural production reflected the increasing desirability, and thus the increasing symbolic capital, of otherwise underground subcultures and illicit activities (39). Increasingly throughout the 80s and 90s, the symbolic capital of street art was commodified and commercialized, transforming graffiti from an illegal past-time to a source of income for artists with the right connections (38-39).

The greater aesthetic appreciation for street art has spurred graffiti artists in cities across Ontario, from Windsor, to Ottawa and Toronto, to create community-sanctioned art installations, solicit commissioned works, and even to cover up unwanted graffiti with something more aesthetically pleasing (Pearson 2013; Wright Allen 2014; Torontograffiti.com 2015). The City of Toronto’s Graffiti Plan, which lays out the city’s strategy for removing and discouraging graffiti, even encourages residents to commission graffiti murals, and provides funding through the StreetARToronto program to “increase awareness of street art and its indispensable role in adding beauty and character to neighborhoods across Toronto, while counteracting graffiti vandalism and its harmful effect on communities” (Toronto 2015a; Toronto 2015b).

These changes in public discourse about graffiti have added elements of complexity to the perceived motivation, ownership, and creativity underlying the art form. Where graffiti had historically been criminalized as a form of vandalism, the public at large and municipal

governments have begun to have a much more nuanced understanding of and approach to graffiti and other forms of street art (Wilkinson, 2014).

To deter and limit graffiti tagging, Take Pride, Winnipeg!¹¹, a non-profit organization, launched the Mural Project in 1994 to inspire civic pride, raise public awareness and promote citizen responsibility in making the city of Winnipeg clean and beautiful. The initiative has gathered together local artists, community groups, government agencies and local businesses, collectively commissioning over 200 award-winning murals through the city. Take Pride, Winnipeg!'s murals are included on The Murals of Winnipeg¹² website that houses over 400 murals, including graffiti style, dotted around the city on stores, community centres, schools, stadiums, etc. that express and promote the local diversity, history and special interests. Awards are given out annually for the best mural of the year with new creations welcomed.

In Thunder Bay, public art (in general) is situated within the Culture and the Environment cluster of the City's Municipal Cultural Plan¹³ playing an important role in place making, creative industries and tourism. In terms of youth and graffiti, the community's Definitely Superior Art Gallery¹⁴, a nationally recognized professional artist-run center and winner of the 2013 Ontario Premier's Award for Excellence in the Arts, has a very active youth collective named Die Active. The initiative mentors and supports future artists in acquiring creative and leadership skills to develop their own projects that contribute to enriching the community. Capacity building includes the creation of unique and contemporary graffiti murals, publications, performances and public art. It boasts a membership of more than 540 emerging artists ranging in age from 14-30 years old. In 2012, based on the youth group's successful transformation of a local Mac Milk store the manager of the Mission Terminal sought out the group to paint a locomotive with urban graffiti style art. "Being invited to legally paint graffiti on a train is pretty much an artist's dream" (Renee Terpsta quoted in Chronicle Journal, July 3, 2012).

A number of cities have taken to providing dedicated space for graffiti art as a means of discouraging tagging and leveraging the creative energy of youth to create murals. In 1996, the City of Toronto launched a Graffiti Transformation Program¹⁵ providing a model for other large urban centres, including Ottawa. Toronto's initiative funds community organizations to hire youth to paint murals in graffiti-prone areas with the intention of increasing community pride, encouraging a sense of safety through more community use of public areas, and reducing opportunities for graffiti. The program provides employment for young people, with

¹¹ <http://www.takepride.mb.ca>

¹² <http://www.themuralsofwinnipeg.com>

¹³ <http://www.thunderbay.ca/Assets/Living/Culture/Culture+Plan/Culture+Plan+--+Final.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.definitelysuperior.com>

¹⁵ <http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/cd/bgrd/backgroundfile-31487.pdf>

participants receiving training in technical skills and business development, graffiti removal and outdoor art installations. It targets marginalized youth who face barriers to employment, supporting their development through team work, customer service and mural production. For many young people it is their first work opportunity providing critical life skills and strong work habits, and positive community attention and recognition through a variety of expressions of interest, drawing them into the fabric of the community in ways they may not have previously experienced.

Ottawa's Graffiti Management Strategy¹⁶ is a partnership between the City's Public Works Department, the By-law and Regulatory Services Branch (BLRS), and the Ottawa Police Service (OPS). The collaborative was formed in 2003 to take a multi-faceted approach to managing graffiti and has since been enhanced to further support mural development in communities experiencing high rates of graffiti vandalism and to provide meaningful employment opportunities for at-risk youth. Ottawa's research indicated that successful mural strategies respond to neighbourhood needs, build on current programming to foster partnerships, and identify and engage key stakeholders.

As cultural planning in several cities has encouraged greater investment in public art and as jobs flourish in the creative sector, the place of graffiti in the urban landscape and social fabric becomes increasingly complex compared to the latter 20th century, leaving municipal governments, media, and graffiti artists themselves with a more volatile and multiform perception of graffiti (McAuliffe 2012, n.p.). While the boundaries of public palatability with respect to graffiti remain in flux, the burgeoning market demand for graffiti style and street art murals leaves ample opportunity for elevating the creative economy while discouraging unwanted forms of graffiti, such as tagging. Commissioned works also exhibit strong potential for infusing marginalized spaces with a sense of vibrancy and place (Wilkinson 2014).

An example of utilizing mural art to create neighbourhood identity and a sense of place, entice residents and tourists to explore different parts of the city and encourage healthy, active living is Toronto's Pan Am Path¹⁷, a legacy of the 2015 Pan Am Games. It harnessed the power of art and sport to create a living path across Toronto. During the Games the 80 km pathway linking the various athletic venues became the site of a city-wide relay of numerous art installations and events to celebrate the community's greatest assets: diversity, nature and arts. The cross-sector initiative brought together arts organizations, environmental groups, city planners and funding agencies. Notably lead partners included Arts for Children and Youth¹⁸ (now Vibe, Arts for Children and Youth) mandated to build sustainable localized partnerships in leveraging the

¹⁶ <http://ottawa.ca/calendar/ottawa/citycouncil/trc/2009/09-03/09-ACS2009-COS-PWS-0013%20-%20Graffiti.htm>

¹⁷ <http://www.panampath.org>

¹⁸ <http://vibearts.ca/>

artistic agency of young people to collaboratively develop and implement meaningful, innovative and impactful hands-on arts education programs for children and youth who identify with the margins, and the Centre for Urban Ecology¹⁹.

Sault Ste. Marie youth participated in Welcome 41, a parallel project undertaken by Arts for Children and Youth that engaged over 500 youth throughout Ontario in a collaborative mural-making project. It aimed to welcome and celebrate visitors and communities from the 41 nations participating in the Toronto 2015 Pan Am & Parapan Am Games. The Sault was one of eight communities across Ontario selected to participate in this initiative that collectively created 60 murals, with the original art work hanging in the Toronto subway system and digitized copies included as part of the Welcome Package for all athletes. Students from the Urban Aboriginal High School, under the guidance of Kim Edmond and graffiti artist Sharon Hunter, created two murals: one theme was Local Narrative and the other was Inspiration (SooToday.com Staff, April 8, 2015).

Huntsville is building on its Cultural Strategy and Unity Plan to become a leading creative community in Ontario. It has leveraged its historic connection as a painting location frequented by the Group of Seven to establish The Group of Seven Outdoor Gallery, a collection of over 80 hand painted murals by Canadian artists depicting the famous artwork. Commissioning contemporary artists to interpret the iconic images, the community has linked past traditions to present times, instilling new life and meaning while simultaneously creating a sense of place. The murals are displayed on the exterior walls of business and public buildings in the area and are organized into a self-guided tour²⁰.

In sum, motivational factors driving graffiti, from unsolicited tagging and its sub-culture to its place making and creative economy potential, situates it within a largely bi-polar spectrum of positive and negative social capital contributing to a sense of community, power, and identity and belonging. Communities bridging the divide, i.e. redirecting those creating unwanted occurrences and capitalizing on artistic aspirations underpins the development of healthy, inclusive and resilient communities. Many are taking proactive approaches including leveraging people's connection to place to minimize unsolicited incidents.

¹⁹ <http://www.humberarboretum.on.ca>

²⁰ <http://www.downtownhuntsvilleadventures.ca/arts-culture/>

3.0 Methodology

Graffiti Reframed was a community-based participatory action research (PAR) initiative. The design of the project was initiated in collaboration between NORDIK Institute and the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District.

3.1 Organizational Structure and Research Design

There were two distinct components to the project:

- i) the creation and skills-building component, which included the creation of three wall graffiti/murals, youth art commissioned by downtown businesses for National Youth Arts Week (NYAW), and a series of skills-building and mentoring workshops; and,
- ii) dialogue around the perspectives of graffiti through youth engagement, community conversations, and public forums.

Both NORDIK and the Arts Council collaboratively wrote the successful funding application to the Ontario Trillium Foundation that supported the project.

Both partners also drew on their respective established media and networks to engage youth, as well as the community at large in the work of the project and discussions about graffiti generally.

NORDIK took the lead on the collection and analysis of data pertaining to the research goals of the project and the writing of the research report.

The Arts Council was responsible for reporting to the Ontario Trillium Foundation, managing the budget, and assisting with the logistics of some project events.

NORDIK and the Arts Council collaborated on community reporting including two presentations to City Council, participation in the City Council Community Committee on Graffiti, public celebrations at the completion of the murals, and presentation of the research findings of this report.

The creation component ran for over a month and a half in 2014 and over several months in 2015, and was underpinned by peer mentorship in building capacity and engaging diverse people in experiencing large-scale graffiti/art making including current graffiti artists/mural makers, business owners, youth and the general public.

The research component took place concurrently, monitoring the dialogues and engagements that the project facilitated. The **principal interests** of the research component of the project were:

1. To assess the impact of building artistic capacity on the place of youth within the city's social fabric;
2. To identify any changes in attitudes about graffiti and those who practice its various forms; and,
3. To enhance and expand opportunities for youth engagement and employment in the creative economy.

Attitude and opportunity assessments took the form of pre- and post-event or activity surveys and in the form of interviews and focus groups.

Surveys were distributed for the film screening and panel organized in partnership with Cinema Politica Sault Ste. Marie, and the March Break Workshop series.

In interviews and focus groups participants were asked to provide a self-assessment of their level of knowledge about graffiti at both the beginning and later stages of Graffiti Reframed. Participants were also asked about their changing perceptions about graffiti. All interviews and focus groups were semi-structured and conducted by NORDIK Institute's research staff. A broad cross-section of the community involved with graffiti-related discussions was interviewed, while focus groups were conducted for Graffiti Reframed organizers as well as youth workshop participants.

The project was underpinned by a broad and diverse inter-generational and cross-cultural community engagement strategy outlined in the following section and summarized in Table 2. Sharon Hunter of Black Bird Arts oversaw much of the logistics of the creation part of the program. She worked collaboratively with Cameron Dutchak of CTD Designs during the first mural in 2014 and with other graffiti artists to mentor youth and build their artistic capacity during 2015.

Given the community-responsive nature of the PAR framework, some of the groups who had been targeted for involvement in the project shifted over the course of time. While youth that were already active in graffiti production were the original primary target for artistic capacity development workshops, Graffiti Reframed received more interest from youth who had not been involved in graffiti, many of whom had never participated in any arts programs before.

3.2 Action Research Activities

To investigate and foster a collective understanding of graffiti as a form of creative expression and its potential for building youth artistic capacity, the creative economy, community pride and a sense of place, a variety of opportunities were designed to engage diverse artists and community members across sectors in conversation, dialogue and action. Activities included the completion and ‘revealing’ of 3 murals, multiple technical skills-development workshops, a documentary film screening, the “A Day at the Wall” event that encouraged broader public engagement in graffiti/mural-making, an information display at the Mill Market, a presentation and dialogue with Algoma University’s Community Economic and Social Development students, and business development workshops focused on commissioning artwork that culminated in a window exhibition along Queen St. East. The activities and participation levels are outlined in Table 2 below.

More than 350 people participated in the project, exceeding the anticipated target participation of 200 community members, indicating a considerable interest in the initiative and the desire to engage in dialogue and action around the subject of graffiti.

Table 2: Action Research Activities

Action Research Activities		
Date(s)	Activity	No. of Participants
Aug. ‘14 – July ‘15	3 Murals	11
Sept. 20 & 27, ‘14	2 Focus Groups	10
Sept 27, ‘14	A Day at the Wall	29
Oct. 18, ‘14	1 st Mural ‘Reveal’ Event	28
Oct. – Dec. ‘14	Graff Cafés	70 (min.)
Nov. ‘14 – Mar. ‘15	Interviews	12
Feb. 25, ‘15	Film Screening	15
Mar. 11, ‘15	AU CESD Engagement	25
Mar. 17 – 19, ‘15	March Break Workshops	30
Mar. 21, ‘15	Mill Market Display	47
Mar. 31 & Apr. 13, ‘15	NYAW Workshops	13
May 1 – 7, ‘15	NYAW Exhibition	34
May 30, June 6 & 20, ‘15	Skills workshops	5
July 22, ‘15	2 nd & 3 rd Murals ‘Reveal’	21
Total	Participants	350 (min.)

3.2.1 Graffiti Murals and ‘Reveals’

The commission and design of three graffiti-style murals was among the principle deliverables of the Graffiti Reframed project. Youth were engaged in the design process and painting of murals, guided by one lead mentor and a youth mentor.

The launch of the mural initiative at the Art Gallery of Algoma included an overview of the project, a graffiti walk, and some initial skills development exercises. The first mural was designed and painted by 6 youth, with mentorship provided by recognized visual artist and proprietor of Black Bird Northern Art, Sharon Hunter, with contributions from local street artist Cameron Dutchak. The space for the mural was donated by George Wilson, owner of Steel City Motor Sports at 188 Gore Street, and subsequent skills and design workshops took place at the Neighbourhood Resource Centre on Gore Street.

Hunter also coordinated the second and third along with youth mentor, Jayke Carter, and two student participants, Jessica Morin and Hailey McMillian. One was located on the rear wall of Case’s Music, at 636 Queen St. East, while the other adorned 180 Projects, an independent project space for artists and curators who have long provided space on their exterior walls for street artists to practice their craft.

To further foster communication and exchange between the youth participants and the broader public about the creation experience, lessons learned and gain feedback from others, the mentoring process included planning a ‘reveal’ event to celebrate the completion of the murals.

3.2.2 A Day at the Wall

During the completion of the first mural at Steel City Motor Sports in the late summer of 2014, the community was invited to take part in an act of collective, spontaneous mural making at the Neighbourhood Resource Centre. Canvasses were made available for the public to paint, and youth who were painting the mural at Steel City Motor Sports came to the Neighbourhood Resource Centre to provide instruction based on what they had learned through their skills development workshops.

3.2.3 Graff Cafés

Stemming from the first mural workshop, youth participants expressed a strong desire for a youth-focussed space accessible in the early evening hours in the downtown core. The Graff Café, as it would become known, offered youth-focussed activities from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the

Neighbourhood Resource Centre, and ran from November to December 2014. Attendance at the six Cafés ranged from 8 to 12 youth per evening, with two Hip-Hop Nights attracting closer to 20 youth each.

3.2.4 Documentary Film Screening: *Roadsworth: Crossing the Line*

Graffiti Reframed and Cinema Politica Sault Ste. Marie collaborated to deliver a screening of the documentary *Roadsworth: Crossing the Line* as a means of generating public discussion about graffiti and its place in the urban landscape. The documentary centred on a Montreal-based stencil artist and his efforts and motivations to transform the urban landscape.

The February showing was followed by a panel including graffiti artist, Mister Tahti, and André Brown, an Algoma University, Community Economic and Social Development (CESD) field placement student with the Graffiti Reframed project. Tahti contextualized the film through his experience as a graffiti artist, while Brown related the film to a review of relevant literature as well as his experience within the graffiti subculture in Toronto.

3.2.5 Community Economic and Social Development Student Engagement

To capture diverse perspectives of the role of graffiti in community-building and place making from those interested in community economic and social development, Liz Cooke, Graffiti Reframed Action Researcher, engaged approximately 25 Algoma University students. A PowerPoint presentation provided an overview of the research including a review of literature and key issues, followed by group discussion regarding its potential contributions and limitations.

3.2.6 March Break Workshops

Graffiti Reframed organized three arts workshops throughout the March Break of 2015, hosted by local graffiti artist, Mister Tahti, at the Neighbourhood Resource Centre on Gore St. focussing on wheat pasting, stencilling, calligraphy and other writing styles.

3.2.7 Information Booth at Mill Market

Graffiti Reframed Action Researcher, Liz Cooke, set up a display at the community booth at the Mill Market, a craft and farmer's market located on Canal Drive on a Saturday during March

Break to engage local residents in conversations about graffiti in Sault Ste. Marie. The display consisted of images of graffiti and street art from around the world, which were used to generate discussion about the place of street art in Sault Ste. Marie.

The information table also proved to be a useful means of engaging more people within other Graffiti Reframed activities, as 3 passers-by expressed a desire to enter the NYAW Exhibition, while others expressed a desire to commission graffiti murals for their own property.

3.2.8 National Youth Arts Week

To celebrate National Youth Arts Week a series of workshops and events was organized to build creative and business capacity and foster relationships between youth and store owners along Queen St. East, in the downtown core.

A public exhibition of artwork was facilitated by the Graffiti Reframed project to coincide with NYAW, from May 1st to 7th, 2015. Alicia Hunt, a recent BFA graduate of the Algoma University Visual Arts program, was contracted to provide coordination support. Business owners were asked to commission a 15" x 20" art piece to promote their business, or a mutually agreed upon design that they would like to see on a larger scale in the community. Participant artists were able to take part free of charge and had their materials supplied by Graffiti Reframed. An information session for both business/commissioners and artists was held at a downtown business site, Shabby Motley Handcraft. The project aspired to recruit 8 to 10 artists to take part in the exhibition, but far exceeded this target with a total of 17 pairs of artists and businesses.

The Graffiti/Mural Window Exhibition was designed to encourage a culture of commissioned art work within the city of Sault Ste. Marie, building on the strong role that the commissioning process has had in arts patronage in other communities across North America.

To encourage the capacity of local artists to commission work, the first workshop was held at another downtown business, Café Natūra. Arts community developer and visual artist, Jude Ortiz, led artists through the process of preparing art commission contracts.

The second workshop was led by local artist, Katie Huckson, focussing on developing the design and meeting the requirements of a commission. The workshop was also held at Café Natūra.

After being showcased in participating businesses' windows from May 1 – 7th the work was gathered together for a closing exhibition and a final reception at the Downtown Association on May 8th. There the pieces continued to be displayed until the end of May 2015.

3.2.9 Communications and Marketing Strategy

Two presentations were delivered to the Sault Ste. Marie City Council: one to inform them of the development of the project and garner support for the initiative, and the other at the conclusion of the study providing an executive summary of its impact.

A dedicated webpage was established on NORDIK's website providing an overview of the research, activity posters and video. A Facebook page was created that served as a key recruitment and promotional tool as well as a space for ongoing dialogue. Posters announcing the launch of the initiative were widely distributed.

The research team prepared a number of articles for *ARTiculations*, the Arts Council's monthly newsletter. Media releases and events informed the public about the various activities and opportunities to directly engage with the youth during the revealing of the murals. The media coverage played an important role throughout the project, providing very positive project promotion specifically and contextualizing the research within other articles regarding tagging over the course of the initiative, contributing to the community dialogue about graffiti culture. A total of 33 news articles referenced the Graffiti Reframed project between May 2013 and August 2015.

3.2.10 Graffiti Reframed Documentary Video

A video about the Graffiti Reframed project was intended to act as a recruitment and public education strategy on an ongoing basis, however this objective was revisited due to technical challenges. Bushplane Productions was contracted later in the initiative to create a high quality video complete with interviews of participants and organizers of the research. The video had been viewed more than 200 times at the time of publication, and is accessible on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/AbGYG6SxXHY>.



3.2.11 City Council Community Committee on Graffiti

While Sault Ste. Marie's City Council Community Committee on Graffiti was a separate endeavour spearheaded by the municipal government, Graffiti Reframed staff, organizers, and stakeholders were actively engaged in the committee's processes, reporting on the project's progress and contributing to broadening perspectives and understanding of the motivations, and challenges regarding the various aspects of this genre.

The committee was struck by a motion of Sault Ste. Marie City Council on November 18th, 2013, moved and seconded by Ward 1 Councillor Steve Butland and Ward 2 Councillor Susan Myers. Both councillors served on the committee and coordinated meetings with the support of the City of Sault Ste. Marie staff. Other stakeholders taking part in the committee included city staff, representatives from the Downtown Association, the Art Gallery of Algoma, the Public Utilities Commission, and City Police among others.

Upon the formation of the committee, the Sault Star reported that the issue of graffiti had been raised at Council previously in 2008 and 2010, noting that "attempts at that time to create a graffiti wall or rehabilitate culprits by forcing them to remove the graffiti as part of their punishment have not been successful" (Della-Mattia, Nov. 19, 2013)

The existing committee has served as a meeting point for stakeholders to discuss and share strategies for addressing the issues of unwanted graffiti. Representatives from Graffiti Reframed provided updates on the work that was underway throughout the project, focussing on the cultivation of more opportunities for youth to be engaged in the arts.

Other initiatives that have flowed from the work of the committee include efforts spearheaded by the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service, along with downtown business owners, volunteers from City and PUC staff, and with materials provided free of charge by Home Hardware, have focussed on removing and painting over graffiti in the downtown core (Taylor, Aug. 9, 2015). Similarly, the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Environment Initiatives Coordinator has spearheaded a number of 20 Minute Makeover events that have focused on removing graffiti, removing litter, and similar efforts to clean up city streets.

Work by stakeholders on the committee has demonstrated that "one quarter of downtown graffiti," in the shape of nuisance tagging, "is the work of just three taggers," according to Chief Keetch of the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service (Helwig, Aug 18, 2015).

The City Council Committee of Graffiti reported to Council in late 2015 receiving a further mandate to continue with its multi-pronged approach to address unwanted tagging and graffiti, inviting NORDIK researchers to continue to participate.

4.0 Building Capacity and Community Vitality

The year-long strategy engaged the community in dialogue and action around graffiti, bringing forth a number of key themes that contributed to individual and community level social and economic resilience and sustainability including participation, social capital development, entrepreneurship and place making. Collectively these elements underpin the ability to build on local strengths in innovative ways leading to the development of a localized culture-based creative economy and tourism opportunities (Florida, 2002; Murray & Baeker, 2006). This section unpacks the themes, organizing them around changes in attitudes, perceptions and knowledge; artistic capacity; empowerment; and, place making and the creative economy.

4.1 Changes in Knowledge

Participants in the research indicated changing perceptions, knowledge and attitudes about graffiti resulting from engaging in activities. Evidence of shifting understanding included nomenclature, means of addressing tagging, the need for further articulation of the genre in particular and artistic practice in general.

Table 3: Fostering Knowledge Growth

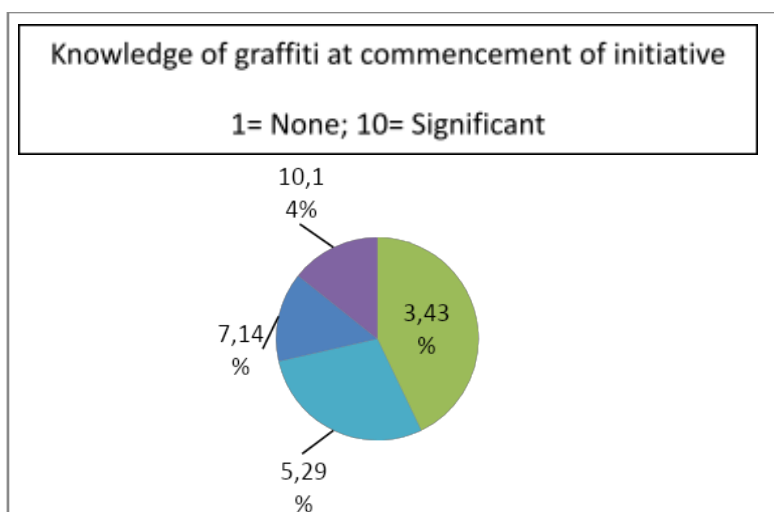
Fostering Knowledge Growth		
Feb. 3, '14	City Council Presentation: Project support	12 Councillors, Mayor and the viewing public
Oct. 13, '15	City Council Presentation: Project Report	12 Councillors, Mayor and the viewing public
Jan '14 - ongoing	City Council Community Committee on Graffiti	15+ organizations
May '13 – Aug '15	Media Coverage	33 articles/news reports
Sept 2015	YouTube video	200+

Several project activities increased knowledge about graffiti and the social and cultural issues related to the activity. Many of the interviewees noted changes in how the general public viewed graffiti over the course of the initiative. These changes were notable across three broad themes, including increased understanding of graffiti culture terminology, awareness of means for engaging with or managing graffiti, and understanding the motivations of graffiti artists.

4.1.1. Increasing Knowledge through Engagement

Among the interviews conducted with a number of stakeholders involved in Graffiti Reframed programming or the City Council Community Committee on Graffiti, participants were asked to assess their level of knowledge about graffiti at the commencement of the Graffiti Reframed project on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 signifying no knowledge at all and 10 signifying a significant amount of knowledge.

Table 4: Knowledge Self-Assessment of Participant Interviewees



Not surprisingly, those who were engaged in coordinating graffiti-related workshops ranked their knowledge level as either 7 or 10, while those stakeholders who were not involved in program delivery itself ranked their knowledge within the 3 to 5 range.

Among those who attended the March Break Workshops, 23% agreed and 70% strongly agreed with the statement “I learned something new about graffiti.”

Participants of documentary film screening of *Roadsworth: Crossing the Lines* were asked to rate their knowledge on a scale of 1-to-10, with 1 representing limited knowledge and 10

representing considerable knowledge. Initial responses revealed a relatively even distribution, with an average score of 5.5. Following the screening and the discussion panel, audience members were asked again to assess their level of knowledge about graffiti. The film and panel had a noticeable positive impact on participants' knowledge of graffiti, with the average score increasing from 5.5 to seven. This was not replicated in response to questions about viewers' usual response to graffiti, as answers remained relatively stable, 70% still purporting to enjoy graffiti while the remaining 30% selected "other."

Thus, the initiative provided important space for participants to experience graffiti culture through film, dialogue, and/or creative expression and reflect on personal cultural values that contributed to increased knowledge about the genre.

4.1.2 Discerning between Tagging and Graffiti Murals

The distinction between tagging, graffiti, and murals was a central aspect of changing attitudes about how to engage with or react to graffiti in public space.

A crucial differentiation that began to emerge in public discussions about graffiti in Sault Ste. Marie has been the distinction between **tagging, graffiti as a style** or concept, and **murals**. Tagging was consistently raised as a concern, even among those who expressed favourable opinions about graffiti more generally. One such interviewee noted "the tags [...] make me angry sometimes, because I think you're taking away from local business owners, especially in the downtown core, who are actually really trying hard and probably struggle quite a bit more than others" (GR02).

The growing distinction was especially evident in media coverage of Graffiti Reframed initiatives or news items related to graffiti or nuisance tagging more generally. In a press release from the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service discussing 'clean-up' initiatives in August, 2015, local Chief of Police Robert Keetch discussed the nature of the markings being removed:

Chief Keetch emphasized that the tags that were being removed was different than the street art that was created by community improvement projects such as Graffiti Reframed. The tags removed during the clean-up were not art; but were indeed the criminal activity of mischief. (SooToday.com, August 21, 2015)

While the Sault Ste. Marie Police Service still uses the word 'graffiti' to describe acts where one or more individuals use paint or markers on buildings or surfaces unsolicited by its owners or tenants, they are increasingly drawing an important distinction between a **graffiti art form** and **nuisance tagging**. At the clean-up initiative in August, Chief Keetch stated, "Tagging is not art

[...] but rather involves criminal behaviour by certain individuals,” in contrast to street art (Helwig, 2015, August 18).

Likewise, Ward 2 Councillor Susan Myers was quoted acknowledging the **artistic value** of some graffiti in an article about the unveiling of two Graffiti Reframed murals, noting:

We all recognize ... there is another side [to graffiti] [...] we really need to reframe it and I’m very grateful for this [Graffiti Reframed] project. [...] We really need to embrace it and do something. We want to make it positive and move forward. (Hopper, 2015, July 23).

One organizer expressed a personal change in perspective over the course of the project stating:

Now I have a very strong desire to really delve into the concept of graffiti, and really understand the terminology of it... What I think is really important is to have people understand that there’s taggers, there’s graffiti and there’s wall murals, so those are the three things that I would like people to understand more clearly. And I hadn’t really thought about that prior to starting the project. But when I hear people speaking about the project, or about graffiti, or about tagging, I really think there needs to be a clear distinction between groups. (GR01)

Reflecting on the evolving local discourse around graffiti, one organizer emphasized the need for continued education and greater specificity and **thoughtfulness** in public discussions of graffiti, and how these discussions tie in to larger discussions about art more generally:

What I’d like to see is that education piece around tagging, graffiti style wall murals. I’d like people to be more aware that those three elements are currently being unumbrella’d under graffiti. I think it’s important that we have more in depth capacity to articulate the differences between them. So I guess underlying this is the ability to speak about art, i.e. to articulate it. What is art, and the different genres? More diverse language rather than just the umbrella word of art. (GR01)

The capacity to articulate between tagging and graffiti has contributed to community discourse, thereby increasing understanding of the various components of the sub-culture, impacting participants’ responses.

4.1.3 Defining and Addressing the 'Graffiti Problem'

The more nuanced understanding of graffiti has in turn influenced how different players in the city react and engage with graffiti as well. One participant noted:

I think from the beginning to the end, we've really redefined, what the concept actually means, and how to handle it, because originally a few people were like, 'yes, change the bylaws', really restrictive discipline type stuff, and now it's like, okay, social engagement, let's do projects, let's do murals, how do we, let's do wraps, even the city is doing wraps around utility boxes, and we want to engage local artists to develop wraps of their own design, and I feel like we've kind of gone from a really disciplinary focused, now more of a social engagement side. (GR02)

Another participant similarly expressed that the dialogue that occurred through the project helped to develop a better understanding of the nature of the 'graffiti problem' within the city, which in turn will facilitate more **effective decision-making**:

I think [Graffiti Reframed] broadened their perspective of what graffiti is, it's brought it to the forefronts in their [the public's] minds, it's got people noticing it, it's got people aware of what's out there, it's got people understanding that's the spectrum, right, so seeing that something as art, seeing that something that's inspiring, seeing that something that's creative, and good for our community... And countering that with the nuisance side of it, I think it's brought awareness, and then hopefully [will be] able to use that diverse group of people and come up with some good options on what we do going forward. (GR11)

Considerable attention has been directed to the use of murals and graffiti-style street art to combat or dissuade unsolicited tagging in a variety of places. The example of Parkland Public School **using murals to counteract the prevalence of unwanted graffiti** on the building was one of the most significant examples of the success of such initiatives. Discussing the public reaction to the endeavour, an official from the Algoma District School Board stated:

I think everyone the principal spoke to last night spoke to the positive comments he has from the community, this being an innovative and creative way they haven't seen before, because it's very noticeable, it's 2500 square feet that was covered in walls, over 5 or 6 walls, of the area. It's not the whole school, but almost one side of the school, so yes, I would say it has positively affected the kids, and the parents of young kids love to come to school. (GR13)

There is reason to believe there is greater public up-take of the use of public art as a **deterrent** of nuisance tagging. As one audience member at the *Roadsworth: Crossing the Line*

documentary screening noted, “There can be arguments for graffiti and art in public space, maybe help to take away from vandalism of private property.” Likewise, one participant at the Mill Market Information Table discussed the role of commissioned street art in larger cities, stating:

You know it [graffiti] is going to be there, and graffiti artists will respect each other, so if you’ve got a beautifully painted graffiti wall [...] other graffiti artists that are tagging will respect that and not tag, [...] if you encourage public graffiti and public art, not only is it beautiful to walk around the city, you’re also reducing the kind of graffiti that might be negative. (MMIT P1)

While the public discourse concerning graffiti has evolved in positive, more nuanced ways over the course of the Graffiti Reframed project, this does not entail a unified or universal understanding of the concept across the City. There has been growing awareness of the importance and usefulness of artistic engagement, particularly with respect to discouraging nuisance tagging, but organizers caution that there remain complex **underlying motivations** underpinning unsolicited graffiti. As one noted in reference to ‘wraps’ being used on PUC utility boxes and Canada Post mailboxes to discourage tagging:

I think we also have to keep in mind that this means they might be doing it somewhere else. It’s not changing the graffiti artist’s methods, it’s just moving them to a different location. So it’s not getting to the root cause of why people make graffiti. (GR01)

Increased participants’ capacity to identify the various components of graffiti subculture was seen as an important step in dealing with unsolicited occurrences of tagging and promoting the positive elements that contribute to the development of place and a culture-based economy.

4.1.4 Understanding Motivational Factors

Identifying, or at least discussing the root causes of graffiti, was seen as a strength of both Graffiti Reframed and its relationship with the City Council Community Committee on Graffiti. As one participant noted, “now that I’ve been part of the project, and doing our training, it’s certainly a much bigger picture of graffiti, and the underlying root causes.” (GR07)

Those causes of graffiti were difficult to articulate, particularly for those who don’t engage in graffiti activities themselves, but responses generally reflected the belief that the causes underlying unsolicited graffiti were multifaceted and variable. One stakeholder posited youth were engaging in graffiti:

Because they're bored in this community. [...] In general it's an outlet, it's an artistic expression, and there's nowhere else for them to do that. [...] it's like a form of rebellion, or a protest. It's like running up against government. (GR03)

Another local stakeholder proposed there were a multiplicity of reasons for people to engage in graffiti:

They make it for a number of reasons, I don't profess to know exactly what motivates people to do graffiti, I would say a few things: a form of self expression, their 15 minutes of fame, to get their work out there, because they can, to perhaps rebel, I think maybe because someone's angry, to have a voice and again. (GR11)

Conversely, for some the onus remained on those engaging in graffiti to understand the impact of their actions on property owners

I hope that this project, re-framing graffiti, will do what we're trying to do at our committee level, which is, quite frankly, most of all re-frame it for those who are doing it; it's not re-framing it for the public's understanding, the public understands pretty well that you're destroying their property, or you're doing something that's taking away from a general good that I enjoy, you know, if I go down and walk down Queen street and see all kinds of erratic markings on a building, maybe is that building still aesthetically pleasing? Do I have that sense of dis-ease? Does that impact that business; do I want to go in there? 'They can't take care of their building'. So, there's a whole level of social interest to this. (GR06)

All of the perspectives on motivations for graffiti, however, necessitate ongoing engagement. The research findings indicate that where motivations for graffiti include a sense of exclusion from the community's mainstream, the City and civil society must make a concerted effort to ensure the community is and remains an inclusive place with opportunities for all. Where motivations include a lack of opportunities for creative expression, the community needs to create more accessible opportunities in the arts and culture sector.

4.1.5 Understanding Graffiti as an Artistic Practice

The initiative provided space for diverse participants to discuss graffiti as an artistic practice and track changes in knowledge and perceptions of the genre as the project progressed. The research indicated an increased appreciation of graffiti as a unique, expressive style.

Reflecting on the public discourse on graffiti in Toronto as compared to Sault Ste. Marie, one organizer expressed:

There's no comparing it, because that's [Toronto] a big city, they've been doing these graffiti transformation projects, and graffiti's been pretty prolific out in that area for a longer time. [... in Sault Ste. Marie] there's a lot more people [...] just getting to know what it [graffiti] is. (GR09)

A number of participants expressed changes in their own attitudes as they began to understand graffiti as more than a form of vandalism. One participant in the City Council Community Committee on Graffiti commented, "as the project went on, and as my research went on and I'd see 'okay, there's another side to this', and there's some value to looking at capturing some of that artisticness" (GR07). This participant went on to add:

At the beginning [of my involvement on the committee] I popped up a picture from one of the ones down in the east end saying 'you might think this is art, but it's actually a crime (mischief)'. So there I am, five months later, popping up, then saying 'cool street art' (GR07)

Regarding the evolution of attitudes on the City Council Community Committee on Graffiti, one organizer commented:

Even within that committee there have been attitudinal changes as a result of people listening to the dialogue of the people that attended that meeting, those series of meetings. There was a significant uptake in people becoming enthused about graffiti. And I'm using 'graffiti' as graffiti style murals ... And, and the uptake with Parkland School and what Cameron has done there, so again, suddenly there's an interest in it as an art medium that can lead to positive change, at an individual and community level. (GR01)

Many participants expressed a growing interest and appreciation for the artistic qualities of graffiti. Following the screening of *Roadsworth: Crossing the Lines*, one participant commented, "I have a newfound interest in the more abstract styles of graffiti artwork," while another expressed "Give us a forum to be creative. Let people express themselves and be a part of our environment."

More opportunities to dialogue about graffiti as an artistic practice within the arts community and with the broader public was identified as a factor in shifting community culture toward being more inclusive and understanding of the motivations behind unsolicited work, effective reduction and management, and incorporation into place making, planning and development of a localized creative economy.

4.2 Perceptions of Graffiti in Sault Ste. Marie

To assess qualitative changes in attitudes about graffiti across a spectrum of community stakeholders, focus groups were conducted and surveys distributed to establish benchmarks from which to relate any changes in attitudes over the course of the project. One focus group was conducted with organizers of the initiative, one focus group engaged youth participants in the project, and surveys were distributed before and after the documentary film screening. Surveys were also employed at information booths, during the Graff Cafés and March Break Workshop initiatives to gain insight into the general public's and youth's perspectives respectively; however, these surveys did not involve before-and-after sampling.

4.2.1 Perceptions Among Project Organizers

Participants in the development and implementation of the Graffiti Reframed project participated in a focus group to assess their own beliefs about graffiti and aspirations for the project.

Discussing the contributions that graffiti can make to the community, the participants placed a strong emphasis on themes of **expression**, **communication**, and **identity**, both of the community and the individual artist. Other themes included: Energy & urban life; Aesthetic improvement; Marking & making history; Cultural economy; Democratizing public space; Encouraging more art; and Enjoyment.

Participants felt that the opportunities for **dialogue** inherent in the project contributed greatly to the potential for changing attitudes about graffiti. Describing one such dialogue, one of the painters stated:

We're not trying to change each other's mind, we were just talking about how he perceives it from his job as being the person who has to go and remove it (...) and so him and I were basically getting into some of that discussion about where we see each other in that. He's the person that I compete with as that type of artist. So it was interesting to have a conversation with somebody that had that very different perspective. (FG1 P 1)

Similarly, the **visibility** that the project would afford deeper issues pertaining to graffiti and the **engagement** of youth and the community connected to the project were also significant themes among the responses. **Skills development** was a unique means by which the project could contribute to changing public discourse. Discussing the importance of developing writing skills, one focus group participant explained:

We really need people who can write about various arts in order to advance the sector. That's one of the key pieces, you can have all great artists, but if nobody's writing about it and putting it in a way that people can read in the newspaper, or ARTiculations [a publication of the local Arts Council], or however, then we're not being able to advance it to any significant degree. (FG1 P 2)

Writing skills were seen as crucial for developing public discourse about art by widening the accessibility and depth of the conversations that can take place, both in and beyond the cultural sphere.

Other themes included: Individuals' experience of public space changed by the project; Challenging boundaries between art and vandalism; and Promotion.

The participants foresaw a number of potential changes emerging from the project.

The growth and development of the arts and culture community was a major focus of discussion, as all hoped to see greater internal diversity within the community and increased space for graffiti and street art. Echoing the need for greater resources, one participant described the need for additional art space:

A space that is there, that's not a shared space (...) like a lot of different artists and arts organizations in the building, but that it's theirs. So you create that energy into the space and then it's a constant, and you keep all your materials. It just makes it one home. (FG1 P 3)

Related to development of the arts community, participants wished to see **a growth in graffiti culture** within the city, both with respect to its acceptance within the larger community, as well as its own internal strength, diversity, and visibility. Such growth, complemented by a stronger, more insightful public discourse about the arts, could potentially spark a uniquely Northern or uniquely Sault-based style of graffiti.

Given the focus of the project, not surprisingly, participants expressed a desire to see an expansion of public discourse about arts, culture and graffiti both within the arts community as well as among the public at large. Emphasizing the importance of graffiti to the art world, one participant explained:

Graffiti is the one type of art that every person sees in every city they ever visit. It's the biggest art movement the world has ever seen. (...) Throughout history it's the one thing that's reached a global scale so quickly. (FG1 P 1)

On a related theme, participants also hoped that this wider and more sophisticated dialogue would create **greater city and public support** for street art.

Participants also saw the Graffiti Reframed Project as an opportunity to **improve the standing of the Downtown and City Centre neighbourhoods** through beautification and generating more respect for local residents through those dialogue processes mentioned earlier. Numerous initiatives pursued through Graffiti Reframed attempted to engage local neighbourhood residents (ultimately with considerable success), including the Graff Cafés and mural development workshops.

Other potential changes identified by research participants included: Youth social development; Development of the creative economy; Empowerment of marginalized voices; School-based education; and Intergenerational dialogue

4.2.2 Perceptions Among Youth Focus Group Participants

Youth taking part in the skills development workshop were also surveyed to assess why they chose to engage in graffiti and what they hoped to get from the project. All of the participants attributed their engagement with graffiti as stemming from a desire **for personal and artistic expression**:

I like hip hop because it's just another form of self-expression, whether it be break dancing, DJing, writing graffiti or rapping, it's all expressing how you feel, and most of the time it comes from the heart. I like stuff that comes from the heart. (FG2 P1)

You can do anything, instead of just doing what the teacher tells you (...) No one can judge you, how you draw it. (FG2 P2)

Aesthetic appreciation for graffiti styles and its unique location was also common:

I find it so interesting and a unique style which I love. (FG2 P3)

Because it looks cool. (FG2 P4)

It's different from other art, because you're doing it on a wall, not on a piece of paper. (FG2 P5)

Participants also emphasized the role of **community and belonging** in their motivations:

I do graffiti to meet a community of people with the same interest! Doing so makes for a fun atmosphere while creating art! (FG2 P6)

I guess too you could say getting support from everyone else. Because when you're in a group of people that understands what you're doing and that enjoy the same thing, I

guess there's a certain support that you know you're safe and you're happy and everyone (...) is family... (FG2 P2)

Other themes discussed by participants included **developing their artistic practice**, **defying expectations**, **standing out**, and how it provides them with **purpose** or 'something to do.'

When asked what they wished to get out of the project, participants emphasized the desire to acquire and build on their **artistic skills** and the desire for **personal growth** through the process.

The participants exhibited significant overlap between their rationale for engaging in graffiti and their desired outcomes from the project. Other desired outcomes included: the desire to **find community** and friendships; the desire to **create something meaningful** or beautiful; develop **inspiration** for their work; to **defy expectations**; to develop **appreciation for art**; and to **have fun**.

4.2.3 Documentary Film Screening Participants

The public film screening of *Roadsworth: Crossing the Line*, a film about a graffiti artist who provokes debate about the significance of art in urban spaces and the following panel discussion was intended to assess changes in attitudes based on viewing the film. Surveys focusing on attitudes, knowledge and perceptions of graffiti were distributed both before and after the discussion.

Highlights of pre-viewing survey responses relating to perceptions included:

- 65% identified "I enjoy it" as their usual response to graffiti.

Other responses highlighted distinctions based on the form of the graffiti or the participant's aesthetic assessment.

In answer to the question "I think that graffiti is..."

- 35% selected "a beautiful addition to my city,"
- 30% selected "I enjoy all graffiti,"
- 20% selected "Only welcomed when artistic."

When asked about their changing attitudes toward graffiti post-viewing, the percentage who identified that "graffiti is only welcome when artistic" dropped from 20% to 14% with the remainder roughly evenly distributed between "I enjoy all graffiti" and those who consider it "a beautiful addition to my city."

Post-screening survey results indicated a marginal increase in peoples' understanding and appreciation of graffiti suggesting educational and dialogical opportunities contribute to shifting attitudes, knowledge and perceptions.

4.2.4 Mill Market Information Booth Participants

The information booth consisted of images of graffiti from around the world and information about the Graffiti Reframed initiative attracted a large audience of people anxious to converse including curious onlookers and those passing by. Of the 47 local residents engaged in conversations about street art and graffiti at the Mill Market Information Table, 24 (51%) indicated that they liked graffiti, **appreciated its aesthetic**, or wanted to see **more street art in Sault Ste. Marie**.

Seventeen (36%) of those engaged expressed appreciation for street art with some caveat, most commonly that they **didn't like tagging**, while some expressed that they felt it "**depended where it was located**," presumably expressing sympathy with private property owners whose buildings experienced unsolicited graffiti.

Five (11%) expressed that they didn't like graffiti at all, while one person expressed no opinion.

Thus, a large number of participants at this public event were appreciative of and have an interest in seeing more aesthetic, well-appointed street art in the community contributing to a sense of place.

4.2.5 Summary of Initial Perceptions

Organizers emphasized numerous opportunities with respect to the project's contributions to urban life, aesthetic improvement, place-making, supporting the cultural economy, democratizing public space, encouraging more public art and increased opportunities for the enjoyment of art and the artistic process. Organizers had a number of hopes for the project, particularly to support the growth of graffiti culture in the city, to foster greater city and public support for street art, and to contribute to improving perceptions of the Downtown and City Centre neighbourhoods. Other aspirations included greater youth social engagement in the city, contributing to the growth of the local creative economy, empowering marginalized voices, incorporating graffiti into school-based education, and fostering intergenerational dialogue.

Youth participants identified a number of reasons for their engagement with the project, including a desire for personal and artistic expression, aesthetic appreciation for the graffiti-style, and the desire for community and belonging. Youth were also motivated by a

desire to develop their artistic practice, to stand out, and to defy conventional expectations. Some also expressed that the workshops provided a sense of purpose or were “something to do,” and spoke to the desire to create something meaningful but to have fun while doing so.

A significant majority of those attending the film screening reported enjoying and appreciating graffiti, however a number of participants expressed that they felt graffiti had to be aesthetically pleasing or “done well.” Some also distinguished street art from tagging, identifying the latter as a nuisance. This was also evident among the conversations that took place at the Mill Market Information Table, where a slim majority expressed uniquely positive attitudes toward graffiti, while a significant portion of those engaged drew a distinction based on either property owners’ consent or aesthetic considerations.

4.3 Increased Individual and Community Artistic Capacity

The research demonstrated that opportunities for youth to engage in artistic practice and develop relations with others outside of the arts sector contributed to increased individual and broader community artistic capacity. The intergenerational peer mentoring process, a foundational principle of the initiative, contributed to knowledge sharing and social capital development between and among artists. The diverse activities offered space for exploring and learning across communities of interest that developed confidence and sparked desire for further engagement.



Figure 1: Intergenerational peer mentoring

(Sharon Hunter and Hailey McMillan, Photo: Bushplane Productions, 2015)

Peer-led artistic and business skill workshops helped to build capacity within the local community of artists assisting them to hone the income-earning potential of their craft as well as helping aspiring artists acquire new techniques.

Prior to the commencement of the mural making, youth participated in an educational program tailored to the group's ability. Each part of the program aimed to support the youth in the upcoming creation process. It included drawing and design, a variety of graffiti techniques and a history of the subculture to contextualize the Graffiti Reframed project and provide space for dialogue about its origins and the positive and negative aspects associated with the art form. The historical perspective proved to be quite important to the youth, with ongoing discussions contributing to understanding their own interest in the genre and the ways their values aligned with or countered others' motivational factors. Dialogue also informed their perceptions of 'graffiti artists' and their personal identification as an artist – graffiti or otherwise.

The March Break Skills Workshops attracted people who had not previously experienced graffiti writing in particular and/or had limited artistic practice in general, i.e., **one third of the participants had never participated in visual arts activities** before, while another third indicated that they had taken part in the visual arts before, but not very often. Learning cursive writing was particularly engaging for younger participants as this style of writing is no longer taught in school. It enabled them to experience the flow of letters being formed into expressive thoughts as they wrote them across the large-scale drawing paper, moving from individual letters to a powerful art form.

Evaluations from the workshops demonstrated that they had a considerable, positive impact on the participants. In response to the statement, "I experienced something new," 45% of participants rated their experience as "Excellent" while another 45% selected "Very Good," demonstrating 90% of participants felt they had experienced "something new." One participant expressed that "I learned new facts about the history of art," while another shared that they had "learned more about my favourite thing to do."

Furthermore, workshop leaders' also experienced increased capacity in areas that will advantage them in their careers including: working with more diverse age ranges and youth with limited prior art experience; and, idea development with a targeted outcome of meeting clients' expectations and preferences.

The mural creation process provided youth with important opportunities to gain a spectrum of skills necessary for working collaboratively with others, from the initial development of ideas to the completion of a large-scale public art piece. The art-making fostered commitment and perseverance, the capacity for multiple and on-going decision making required at each stage of implementation, personal and group reflection skills and the ability to articulate meaning.

Hunter explained some of the skills that artists gained included "... learning how to take their drawings and combine them together, using the elements of design, to make something cohesive" (Allard, July 7, 2015).

The imagery for Case's Music wall evolved through discussions between the youth graffiti artists and store owners who wanted a music theme illustrated. The youth came up with the ideas and drawings and transferred them to the wall.



Figure 2: Case's Music wall mural development and reflection

(Photo: Bushplane Productions, 2015)

Jayke Carter, youth mentor for the second and third murals, referred to the process as collaborative and organic:

"We all started drawing something," he said. "We just sat around, we drew for a little while, we came up with ideas together, we collaborated, and we figured out what we wanted to do next. And slowly but surely, we started putting pieces on the wall."

(Hopper, July 23, 2015)

Hunter added, "It becomes not about the individual at that point. It's more about how the images work together and what they say. How it reflects the community." (Hopper, July 23, 2015). In contrast to tagging, typically a solo, late night activity, mural making and street art focus on **collaboration and engagement with other artists and the broader public**. Relationship

building is an essential part of the process. The youth learned how to get along with and support each other in meeting the end goal.



Figure 3: Laying the foundation of paint

(Photo: NORDIK Institute, 2014)

Many business people participating in the NYAW exhibition expressed an increase in their artistic capacity as a result of working with youth through the commissioning processes. Most indicated they had no prior experience collaborating with artists or knowledge of how to request a piece of work; however, the programming laid out a clear step-by-step process, increasing confidence and the likelihood of undertaking future commissioning endeavours. They enjoyed meeting with the young entrepreneurs and learning how to articulate and communicate their ideas and feedback on designs to them in constructive ways.

The photo below depicts a detail shot of Jordon Tabobondung's image for the Neighbourhood Resource Centre and three of the murals on display during the NYAW exhibition at the Downtown Association's office on Queen St. The small image shows Lizz Pearson's graffiti design for Case's Music (left), Heather Pearson's image for Camera Craft (centre) and Jordon with her artwork.



Figure 4: NYAW Graffiti/Mural Window Exhibition artwork

(Photo: Pearson, Sault This Week, May 8, 2014)

Although the NYAW event was geared to youth, a number of mid-career artists were very interested in participating, stating a desire to increase their ability to secure commissioned work. This speaks to a **need for education in the business of the arts across the sector** to further develop creative entrepreneurship and the sustainability of culture-based livelihoods.

4.4 Youth Empowerment

The research indicated increased youth empowerment is deeply intertwined with artistic capacity. The youth-centred focus of the Graffiti Reframed initiatives fostered opportunities not only for youth to engage in the creative process, to experience an outlet for their self-expression and creativity, but also cultivated **leadership skills** and affirmed **youth ownership** over their acquired knowledge.

When asked about the personal benefits gained through the initiative at the revealing of Case's Music wall, one graffiti artist stated, "I learned that I could do better than I thought I could do. I can believe in myself more when I try to do stuff ... I'll actually try harder now because I know I can do it" (Patterson, CTV News, July 22, 2015).



Figure 5: Increased confidence through artistic practice

(Hailey McMillan, Photo: Allard, 2015)

Another organizer remarked, after witnessing how youth participants in the first mural project helped guide the general public in graffiti techniques at the Day at the Wall event:

The youth artists that participated in the project, really talked about how it's a positive impact on them, and when I was working with them during one of the events you could clearly see that they really enjoyed taking charge, by themselves, building their own capacity for leadership positions. While Sharon Hunter, who was the lead graffiti artist, mentor, was at a different location, two youth participants were at the location where I was at and clearly they had it under control. They knew what they were doing, they were taking the lead, they were getting the paint out, they were taking charge. Which is really, really exciting to see [...] Watching them just pick up that spray paint, it was like, woosh, like that power, that sense of release of their own energy, of who they are into the graffiti making. So that's really exciting. (GR01)

The Day at the Wall was also a remarkable occasion for building understanding. Several participants from Children's Rehabilitation Centre – Algoma, which provides programs and services for those aged 0-18 years with long-term disabilities, took part and learned from youth mentors, while the youth mentors developed reciprocal relationships and increased their awareness about the conditions of youth living with long-term disabilities.

The Graff Cafés that emerged through the creation of the first mural provided youth the opportunity to drive their own arts programming. They were responsible for planning each event, recruiting key workshop leaders and designing advertising posters. These high energy, drop-by, semi-structured events greatly contributed to empowering youth, providing space for them to consolidate skills and learn new ones. Having diverse opportunities to explore other disciplines, for example hip hop, contributes to cross-pollinating ideas and the development of unique signature styles, a critical factor in artistic development and success.

Figure 6: Graff Café Poster



A related case demonstrates how youth engagement ensues from the finished products of the murals as well. In preparation for the fall return to classes in 2014, Parkland Public School commissioned several graffiti murals from Cameron Dutchak of CTD Designs as a means of deterring vandalism while providing students with a bright and engaging environment for play (Petz, January 15, 2015). Reflecting on the impact of commissioned graffiti to dissuade vandalism at Parkland, an official from the Algoma District School Board remarked:

It allows our kids to be involved in that process and grow and give them opportunities that they may normally not have, so although this was a pilot for us, we'll be testing that pilot theory as it relates to maybe negative graffiti in certain schools, or around certain neighborhoods. (GR13)

Student involvement with the murals at Parkland extended beyond enjoying the final project, however. In an interview with the Sault Star, Dutchak discussed the input the several students offered during the creative process:

They were trying to offer me suggestions the whole time, and a lot of the time they were great because they were things that I would not have thought about, but coming

from the eyes of a young child, they were able to easily see some things to put in there that I wouldn't have thought of. (Petz, January 15, 2015)

The visibility of the production process as well as the collaborative capabilities of street art innately create opportunities for community engagement and dialogue between parties who might otherwise not have had any meaningful interaction. One organizer explained:

I think there's a lot of changes happening in the community and I think that graffiti style murals[...] is a wonderful opportunity to really highlight, to engage the community in that transformation process that art can do. So it really allows for engaging a diverse group of people in community building. (GR01)

Another focused on the dialogue that took place during the mural completion, stating "when we were painting on the wall, and that's a really key element when you've got a legal mural project going on, that the community, people pass by and talk." (GR09)

The empowering impact of the workshops were particularly significant for young women. Commenting in a story by Donna Hopper of SooToday.com, Susan Hunter expressed satisfaction in seeing more young women taking part in the Graffiti Reframed project, noting that similar workshops she had led in Southern Ontario were attended almost exclusively by young men. She said "Encouraging young girls to think big and do big is really important" (Hopper, July 23, 2015). The Graff Cafés similarly bucked the trend of male predominance in various arenas of Hip Hop subculture. (GR09)

Also of note was the contribution these activities made to creating a 'happening' for youth in the downtown core, an area of concern raised in previous research conducted in the *Downtown Dialogue*.

4.5 Place Making and the Creative Economy

Rural communities in Northern Ontario are facing many challenges including employment loss due to restructuring of extractive industries, declining and aging populations, retention of younger people, limited social opportunities, reduction of local services and increasingly urban-focused policies.

Building on community assets by developing local resources (people, financial, cultural, historic and natural) into new sustainable sources of wealth is paramount. Duxbury and Campbell (2011, p.112) purport a growing recognition of the importance of community redefining itself in support of community-based self-determination. Implicit in successful transitioning to diverse economies is the need to understand the community, its assets and strengths, and how it

celebrates and expresses itself. Place making, i.e. – fostering community identity and a localized economy that connects globally, leading to increased competitive advantage – is described by Duxbury and Pepper (2006, p.6) as a:

... process of transforming the physical environment into something culturally meaningful and collectively personal. It's about transforming space into place. In an inclusive and culturally sustainable society it is important for citizens to see themselves reflected in their environment.

The research indicated three inter-related clusters of impact that Graffiti Reframed initiatives have affected or instigated that underlay the community's capacity to transition through change and foster a vibrant, culture-based economy: public engagement; neighbourhood revitalization; and, place making and the creative economy.

4.5.1 Public Engagement

Public art, through its ability to engage citizens, plays an important role in place making and revitalization. It provides a 'creative action space', interrupting current dialogue about community perceptions, identity and aspirations, thereby enabling the public to envision new ways of portraying and understanding place, current and past, and alternative perspectives of urban space use (Percy-Smith and Carney, 2011).

Mural making assists to express and define intangible qualities of lived experience and the tangible results enable others to confirm, accept and /or appreciate the work and the message. Discussion creates space to articulate and discover what is uniting, the common values across diverse populations, and areas that are challenging. These processes create space and allow for individual and often hidden voices to be heard, learn from each other and reconceptualize place.

The initiatives pursued through Graffiti Reframed illuminated the importance of arts-based activities, particularly graffiti, in engaging with particular segments of the population. Furthermore, the nature of street art created important intersections between the public and artists that contributed to educational and community building capacity.

The research indicated being visible and accessible to the public provided opportunities for discursive educational experiences with other artists and citizens during the creation process, informing the development of the work and impacting individual and collective meaning and identity. Art-making in real-time creates space for citizens to express divergent perspectives of place, bridging understanding between diverse people and fostering a broader sense of community, i.e. who lives here, their history, and aspirations.

In an interview Hunter stated,

"That interaction [between diverse people] is a really key element in painting on the street and having street art," she said. "That community engagement, questions and responses. That was really great for everybody to have that." (Hopper, July 23, 2015).

Skill and mural development workshops created opportunities for dialogue that would normally not be accessible to those who would otherwise tag, stencil, or do other forms of graffiti work illegally and without witnesses. One organizer noted:

My experience of working with youth is that, our graffiti artists, it's a nice experience for them, it's like 'okay, I get to just show up and do this work, and design it, and put it in a place that's pretty visible, people get to see it, and also, people, there's communication too,' that is a little bit different than doing an illegal piece, at night, nobody sees you. So there can be communication with people passing by, 'what are you doing?' 'Oh, I didn't know that...' whatever questions that people have, so it's kind of a nice way of breaking down myths and barriers that people can have with graffiti artists. (GR09)

Commenting on the respect that illicit graffiti artists demonstrate for murals and general efforts at community improvement, one police officer noted:

I just had to see those two sides, because as a police officer, your mindset is 'graffiti = mischief, damage, ugly, destroying property' because that's what we're used to. But, when you start seeing street art, and the fact that when you do those nice murals ... They don't get vandalized. Very little is vandalized. Even the flower bombing sign over there that went up on July 2nd, and there has been nothing put over it since, and prior to that there was graffiti upon graffiti (GR07).

The appeal of graffiti culture to diverse youth and the public nature of street art present effective opportunities for engaging citizens in the life of the community. It creates space for youth and the public to bridge divergent perspectives regarding the spectrum of graffiti from tagging to an artistic art form and gain a deeper understanding of the desire and necessity for creative expression – legal or otherwise – and the impact these activities have upon people and place.

4.5.2 Neighbourhood Revitalization

The community building capacity for art, and especially street art and other forms of collaborative public art, has been particularly evident in **the City Centre** neighbourhood around Gore Street. The neighbourhood has been a major hub of activity for the Graffiti Reframed project, with two of the three Graffiti Reframed murals being located in the neighbourhood and with the Graff Café and most skills workshops taking place at the **Neighbourhood Resource Centre** on Gore Street. **180 Projects** has also been a landing base for several Graffiti Reframed activities, most notably its exterior walls which have been made available to graffiti artists to practice their skills and contribute their work.

Describing the role of Graffiti Reframed in the neighbourhood, one of the organizers explained:

I've found that area of Gore street there ... people are working together, we're changing in positive ways, putting more of a positive light on it, for people that live in the community, I think for having that, there was a lot of positive response, like 'great seeing the youth out,' 'this looks really great' (GR09).

Participants' role and place within the community played an important role in their experience. One noted, "I've been happy and confident with my work, and it's great being around people who are interested in you and are willing to help." Another participant expressed, "This program is good because we are helping make the community look beautiful."

George Wilson, owner of Steel City Motor Sports, the site of the first mural, reported feedback on the art work was very positive adding, "It's been great to see these talented artists working in an organized and controlled environment. I would eventually like to have this building covered with graffiti" (Pearson, March 31, 2015). He did explicitly request, however, that people contact him prior to painting the property.

Figure 7: Steel City Motor Sports' wall before and after Graffiti Reframed

(Photo: NORDIK Institute, 2014)



Before Graffiti Reframed



After Graffiti Reframed

Another interviewee who frequently works out of the Neighbourhood Resource Centre noted a distinct change in the state of the neighbourhood, remarking:

But it's in the alleys up there, and that's where you can see the difference between what Gore Street was before a lot of that artwork [went] up, and after. Like, the alleyways are clean and spotless right around in that area, whereas before they [were] dirty, full of garbage. (GR07)

Reflecting on their preconceptions about the neighbourhood at the opening of the NRC and following events such as the Gore Street Flower Bomb, which encouraged residents to seize control of urban design by planting their own flowers, planters, and other aesthetic contributions in public space, the interviewee noted:

I've been proven wrong and wrong again in this area, because I thought our bench would get taken, we were bringing it in at night, finally we said 'lets just leave it'. We never had a rock through our window, we never lost our bench, the flower boxes weren't destroyed. And it's just a difference between March and April when you walked up and down Gore Street and looked down the alleyways, [compared] to now, garbage that was where the artwork is in those alleyways, you're not seeing. There's some pride slowly taking place, and pride happening, slowly, in the neighbourhood. (GR07)

The public creative process that was facilitated through Graffiti Reframed has provided a means for neighbourhood residents to engage in dialogue with one another, as well as with the city at large and counter the stigma that has afflicted the area in recent history. One organizer notes:

If community members can say 'hey, no, this is my community, I like my community, and I want to speak about what's going on in my community, and make it into an image', then that reflects back, and it also reflects back to people who don't live there. (GR09)

Still, another contributor offered a warning about the need for long-term relationship building and consistency:

It's positive that Graff Café was born out of this, but it's going to take time to establish relationships in that neighbourhood. It's going to take a lot of effort to get people out, to come and be trustful of it. And if the community or if organizations don't invest in it, then all that area, just going to become even more sceptical, or even just youth in general in this community are going to be, well it's just another thing that came up, started and then stopped. (GR03)

The study provided evidence of neighbourhood revitalization through mural creation and the delivery of arts programming in the area with citizens expressing the desire for continued use of culture-based activities to further build a sense of belonging and community.

From an economic perspective, one organizer noted, the project supported the City's and Downtown Association's Business Improvement Area's (BIA) efforts to enhance consumers' experience when utilizing the public parking lots at the rear of storefronts. The Graffiti Reframed murals contributed to beautifying back lanes, an often forgotten urban space that - based on the City's previous research - many perceived to be less safe. Artwork in rear corridors animates the space, creating a sense of life and vitality, a pleasant, planned transitional space to

the commercial district, increasing the likelihood of patronizing Queen St. merchants and revitalizing the area.

4.5.3 Community Culture and Identity

Each community is unique, embedded in cultural values that shape all aspects of individual and community life, and thus, sustainability. Place is a space that is made meaningful and culture plays a significant role in its construction. Culture informs place and reciprocally, place informs culture (Cresswell, 2006; Lippard, 1997). Having opportunities to participate in the life of the community, to see oneself reflected in place, is key to a sense of belonging and attachment, underpinning the development of healthy, resilient communities.

Graffiti Reframed created space for youth to participate in the community through ways that were meaningful to them, i.e., creative expression, storytelling and mural making and leaving a ‘visual mark’, thereby increasing a sense of belonging and agency within the broader community. The murals —a visible and lasting commentary of their participation — represent inclusion, being important, being seen, and shaping communal urban space, thus impacting individual and community identity and belonging.

The initiative has also assisted in promoting the need for the **greater visibility and presence of public art** in Sault Ste. Marie. Murals portray a sense of community and identity by drawing attention to specific places and highlighting community assets, whether it is a particular business, the commons or the natural environment, providing residents and tourists insight into the locale’s cultural values and vibrancy.

A member of the City’s Committee on Graffiti expressed, “I think it's infused [into the public discourse], this idea that we need more public art, and we need to look at it, and it's something that's lacking in our community in my opinion” (GR02).

One youth participant spoke of individual and community benefits gained through graffiti murals. A key theme in this vein was the youths’ understanding of the importance of murals in terms of storytelling and expressions of place, considering them much more than ‘just pictures’. “You get to express yourself in drawing and other people get to see it... [The murals] make it more welcome because they are really nice...” (McMillan quoted in Allard, July 7, 2015).



Figure 8: Graffiti Reframed mural at 180 Projects

(Photo: Patterson, CTV News, July 22, 2015)

Staff at Case's Music indicated murals help to create a more welcoming environment in the City's core stating, "It breathes a whole new kind of life into the downtown area. The graffiti in this town is all over the place. This [the mural] gives it a nice clear focus for them to practice and do it in a constructive way" (Rendell quoted in Allard, July 7, 2015).

A number of participants at the Mill Market Information Table underscored the importance of **creative space**. One expressed a need for large-scale mural space where artists could legally practice their craft and develop their skills, similar to the wall at 180 Projects space on Gore Street, which had functioned as a free mural art space for several months. She noted that the space needed to be bigger than that provided by the city in the alleyway on Block 1 of Queenstown, which includes 3 legal graffiti canvases, approximately 3'x 2' each.

Another participant at the Information Table expressed a desire to see the older, **well-worn advertising murals** which had existed for years in the downtown area touched-up or incorporated into new designs. She explained, "What would be cool is if someone finished it, not exactly the way that it was, but maybe 'here's what it was, and here's a model,' bring it back together so you see the whole thing" (MMIT P2). Her observation speaks to the power evoked by glimpses into the every-day stories of the past, and the impact they have in constructing a sense of place.

The need for more public art locally was noted both with respect to its potential impact on the **creative economy** and the **tourism** sector, as well as its place in dissuading nuisance tagging from certain surfaces. The same interviewee noted:

If you look at communities outside Sault Ste. Marie, [...] they're using it as a tourist attraction. 'Yeah, let's have murals that outline the history of Sault Ste. Marie, and we can bring people here, and while they're here, they might enjoy that artwork too, ' right? And I'm not saying people will come here necessarily to see a specific mural, but it's part of the overall tourist attraction to coming to Sault Ste. Marie, making it a beautiful city to visit. (GR02)



Figure 9: Case's Music completed commission

(Standing, from left to right: Hailey McMillan, Jessica Morin and Carrie Suriano-Case, business owner. Jayke Carter, kneeling; Photo: Hopper, SooToday.com, July 22, 2015)

Even more importantly, however, the promotion of public art through Graffiti Reframed has encouraged a sense of creative opportunity within the city, as one contributor explained:

When we have graffiti style wall murals, visible – because they are not in somebody's art gallery, they are not in somebody's home, they are out in the street – when they are so highly visible, that signifies a change, that there's something happening here ... I think it's a part of that movement, of cracking open that 'opportunity space,' in the Sault. (GR01)

Similarly, the programming delivered through Graffiti Reframed helped to foster a greater sense of belonging. Among participants in the March Break Workshops, for instance, 62% rated their

experience as ‘Excellent’ in response to the statement, “I felt engaged in the community,” demonstrating opportunities for greater **social cohesion**. Comments from participants emphasized their enjoyment of the shared experience, with words ranging from “lots of laughs” to “it was very fun.” Another 23% selected “Very Good,” while the remaining 15% selected “Good.” In response to a related question, 15% agreed and 61% strongly agreed that the workshop provided **opportunities to connect with others**.

The Graff Cafés emerged from the first mural workshop as a result of listening to youth participants’ strong desire for additional opportunities to engage in a variety of art forms, and take leadership and have ownership over the programming. Space was arranged for them through the Neighbourhood Resource Centre and Graffiti Reframed youth participants planned, promoted and hosted the very successful Cafés. **Supporting young people in identifying and meeting their own needs increases appreciation and respect** for their lived experience and knowledge of where and how they wish to engage with other youth, and by extension the broader community, while building their social networks and leadership capacity.

4.3.3 Localized Culture-based Economy

Place-making is also intricately tied to community sustainability and tourism opportunities in Sault Ste. Marie and across Northern Ontario, as prospective mobile businesses, labour and investment and visitors seek destinations with unique and compelling stories that undergird their physical experience of space. Florida (2008) frames place competitiveness within the context of the role culture and happiness play in local and regional revitalization with people choosing locations that align with their quality of life values. Physical infrastructure and taxes—the competitive advantage of the industrial age – are being replaced by lifestyle amenities that are culturally, rather than geographically, based: the culture of place and its physical beauty matters more than where the mine or mill is located. Consequently, the investment in creating that sense of place has economic repercussions.

Rural communities often undervalue the potential of the creative economy; however, Duxbury and Campbell (2011, p.115) argue every community has creative people engaged in the arts that could be leveraged to strengthen the sector, realizing broader community benefits, specifically, citizen recruitment and retention in three key mobile populations: younger people; artists, and creative entrepreneurs; and, urban-to-rural migrants.

The creative economy, dependent on creativity and innovation to provide novel goods and services, is underpinned by the opportunity to participate, the capacity to think creatively,

acquire skills, and develop critical knowledge and promotional networks in manifesting the work and getting it to the market (Currid, 2007; Florida, 2002).

Table 5: Contributions to the Creative Economy

<i>Contributions to the Creative Economy</i>		
<i>Quantitative Impact:</i>		
Deliverables	Target	Actual
Number of people engaged	200	350+
Number of local artists participating in peer workshops	10	48
Taggers engaged	10	Exact No. unknown
Skills Development Workshops	4	11
No. of artists employed	3	7
Full Time Equivalent Employees	0.5	1.5
Large-scale wall murals	3	3
Additional building owners request murals	3	5

The Graffiti Reframed initiative contributed to building the Sault’s creative economy, specifically, a culture-based economy, in each of these categories. The project activities created critical tangible and intangible drivers that underpin resilience and a healthy sustainability community. The intangible assets, i.e. engagement in the life of the community; social capital development; innovative ideas; youth confidence; a sense of belonging to a community of artists; a ‘scene’ – there was something exciting happening in the Sault for, and with, young people; and, community identity and pride. The tangible assets included financial investment; education and training; materials and supplies; meeting and exhibition space; and, the production of 3 large scale cultural products, i.e. wall murals.

The project’s activities were focused in the downtown core, with an emphasis upon engaging youth in the area, thereby providing opportunities for artistic endeavours where few currently exist. The 11 artistic and business development skills-building workshops collectively built a foundation in the graffiti genre thus expanding the range of artistic opportunities young people can undertake in the future. Moreover, it further increased the capacity of mentors and workshop leaders, with 4 of the 7 artists employed having never engaged in graffiti culture prior

to the project. Thus, the initiative enabled mentors and leaders to transfer and apply skills to a related area – a fundamental competency in the creative economy.

Specifically, youth participants increased their drawing capacity, learned how to utilize and apply new media safely, and gained an understanding of the history and context of graffiti, and the development of the sub-culture into an art form. The NYAW workshops focusing on commissioning art work provided foundational knowledge regarding ‘how to’, the process of entering into a business arrangement with prospective clients including what is expected and what a contract should include. The experience greatly increased their confidence to meet business owners and undertake this type of work. Moreover, it demystified the process for artists and business owners, increasing the likelihood for engaging in commissioned work – art or otherwise- in the future. Thus the project contributed to fostering a desire for unique goods portraying individual expression and/or uniqueness of business and place.

Table 6: Economic Impact

Economic Impact		
Ontario Trillium Foundation	\$60,500	
NOHFC Internship Program	\$28,350	
Total	\$88,850	
Leveraged		
Education and training		\$11,525
Donated materials and supplies		\$250
Donated meeting space		\$3,175
Donated exhibition space		\$2,500
Donated wall space for 3 murals		Value N/A
Media coverage		Value N/A

Intergenerational and youth-based network development was a foundational piece of the initiative, with participants sharing and generating knowledge between and among themselves. Adult mentors gained further insight into Sault Ste. Marie youth, the community context and young peoples’ lived experiences and perspectives on ways to improve the situation. Youth felt heard. Incorporating these learning into arts community development planning, specifically, and broader development initiatives, in general, is invaluable in creating a culture of inclusion and responsibility to young people’s health and well-being.

Relationships fostered through project activities frequently extend well beyond the life of the initiative. Networks facilitate reconnecting that facilitates offering or gaining further guidance in the arts and/or collaborating in future projects. Social capital development is key to amassing the necessary resources — knowledge, skills, finances — when creative opportunities arise and/or in making things happen. Cross-pollination of skills, and networks builds capacity for innovation and the production of unique cultural products that characterize the creative economy.

The initiative illustrated how investment in the arts contributes to building capacity and community vitality through place making and the fostering of a localized culture-based creative economy. New monies entered the local economy through two main sources: Ontario Trillium Foundation (\$60,500) and the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC)'s Internship Program (\$28,350) for a total of \$88,850, all of which was retained locally. These funds facilitated more than 350 citizens' active participation in the first-ever community dialogue and action focused on graffiti and its subculture.

The project employed 7 artists in total, 5 which were youth, for a fulltime equivalency of 1.5 over the course of the yearlong initiative, providing important social and economic contributions to increasing the sustainability of each person's culture-related enterprises. Each participating youth received an honorarium and a 'Graff Pack', a backpack chocked full of art supplies to support them in continuing to draw and design.

Funding enabled the delivery of free workshops to 64 young people, the majority who would very likely not have been able to participate otherwise. The total youth-dedicated education and training was valued at \$11,525. Unpacked, 35 people took part in the daytime artistic and technical skills development workshops valued at approximately \$100 per person. The shorter evening business workshops valued at \$25 per person had 13 youth participants. The engagement of 11 young artists in the creation of three wall murals extended over four weeks. Based on the average value of \$350/ per week of art instruction at summer school this aspect of the project offered a value of \$7,700.

All project materials and supplies including art materials, lunches, snacks and refreshments were purchased by locally owned businesses. Space rental paid to non-profit organizations and small business operators provided an important revenue stream, contributing to their sustainability.

The contribution of the business community to the NYAW Graffiti/Mural Window Exhibition through exposure and promotion was valued at \$2,500. The week-long display of five murals was worth approximately \$350 of advertising per person and the Downtown Association's hosting of the month-long exhibition was considered to be at least \$750. It is important to note

that exhibition space in Sault Ste. Marie is very limited, thus this initiative provided critical space to have artwork seen by the broader public. Moreover, it provided participating youth with their first exhibition — a foundational step in creating an artistic profile and resume to leverage employment, additional exhibition opportunities, and/or arts funding.

The financial contribution associated with local business owners' donation of wall space was difficult to determine, as was the significant media coverage the project received, and thus was not included in the economic impact figures.

The project, in addition to employing artists outright, has contributed to the creative economy in Sault Ste. Marie by increasing the exposure of local artists and fostering relationships between businesses and young artists, as was exhibited during the NYAW initiatives. The mural window displays raised the profiles of artists and business for the benefit of the broader community. Owners indicated that feedback was very good with numerous citizens commenting on the enlivened windows. The majority of owners expressed a strong desire to continue the event next year, perhaps making it an annual feature as a means of developing and retaining youth talent and boosting the buy-local economy. A couple of long-established owners fondly referred to the former Bon Soo event that featured art work in windows during the carnival suggesting that it would be wonderful to see an exhibition component to the winter festival reinstated, and perhaps focus on diverse genres including graffiti.

Discussing the work and success of one particular graffiti artist, one interviewee explained:

Cameron Dutchak, he's [...] in the process of establishing his business as a graffiti artist, and receiving commissioned work from this. He's received a lot of positive feedback about this project, and other work that he's done. Now he's shifting, now he's definitely earning a higher percentage of his income through his graffiti art, and becoming recognized in the community as the graffiti artist, the go to person, which is really exciting. (GR01)

Public interest and demand for murals increased as a result of the project as well. NORDIK Institute received three requests via its website for additional murals as the project was wrapping up. Workshops focussing on how to draw up contracts for commissioned work and how to meet the requirements of commissions also contributed to the feasibility of artists to treat their artwork as a source of income.

5.0 Future Opportunities: Building on Graffiti Reframed's Success

A resounding theme in rural arts literature is the close connection between the arts and community vitality. They are the 'glue' and the 'fabric' that hold the periphery together, providing space for civic and social participation — the cornerstone of rural community health and resilience. As a result, the arts are being revalued as a predictor in this regard (Anwar McHenry, 2011, p.246). In terms of fostering a localized creative economy in smaller centres Markusen and King (2003) posit artists are more likely to have entrepreneurial drive in comparison to other creative economy workers such as scientists or architects who are almost always employed through large firms, government or institutions. Rural communities tend to have limited formal research opportunities and large-scale infrastructure needs; thus, retaining and leveraging artists' creativity and innovation may be a better return on investment when revisioning place by building on community strengths to diversify the economy.

There was considerable community interest and support for this project, indicating graffiti arts is an area that could be leveraged to further culture-based entrepreneurship. The Graffiti Reframed initiative exceeded its original targets with many of the project activities being oversubscribed. The March Break artistic skills development workshops were in high demand, and far more business owners expressed an interest in participating in the NYAW Graffiti Window Exhibition than available youth, given the short time frame for marketing and reaching potential participants for this particular event. Furthermore, building owners' requests for additional murals were also received and remain outstanding.

The impact of a project like Graffiti Reframed on **promoting the creative economy**, strengthening **arts community capacity**, and implicating the arts more in concerted **place-making efforts** were apparent, but still in their nascent stages.

Where Graffiti Reframed workshops have assisted in advancing artistic skills as well as the business skills of those artists who participated, there remains a **need to promote critical writing skills** within the arts community so that artists can not only market their work more effectively, but strengthen their work through thoughtful, critical dialogue, both with the public and with other artists. One participant noted:

I find in order for people to progress [in their artistic development], there needs to be that challenge — that it's not just the same tree over and over again, and it's not just based on technique. You need to be able to look at that tree you've drawn, for example, and you need to be able to understand that tree in a different way in order to make that advancement. (FG1)

The importance of graffiti style was also identified as potentially contributing to place making in Sault Ste. Marie. One participant expressed a desire to see a “**Sault Style**” of graffiti emerge from the project, explaining:

I would really like the opportunity for the Sault artists to develop a ‘Sault style’ of graffiti. [...] that they have a chance of finding what it is about this place that they can really take up into themselves, or express themselves through graffiti that is specific to this place. To delve into that dialogue, that personal dialogue of who they are. So when they take up the spray paint, or the chalk, or the acrylic paints to create — not just graffiti but all artists — that there is something meaningful that is going to occur; [...] that ‘waking up’ of potential, to have that inner dialogue and really pull out what is meaningful, what’s important to you to express. So rather than capturing the surface layer, get down to the core of it. And let’s have a style that can emerge from each young person. (GR01)

The organizers recognize there are many high quality and diverse artists in the community and encourage networking within and across disciplines to further support the development of artistic capacity and unique signature styles that underpin successful entrepreneurship, the creative economy and community identity.

The insights gained by engaging young artists in creative expression and dialogue, i.e., listening to their needs, aspirations and their sense of place within the fabric of the community, can contribute to future community planning initiatives — arts-based or otherwise — and inform the development of creativity, entrepreneurship, new economies, and individual and broader identity, through inclusionary practices. Many youth indicated they would like to have more opportunities, a voice and an active leadership role in their design and implementation.

Despite the many successes of the Graffiti Reframed project, many Interviewees noted the need for **longer-term engagement**. A participant from one of the partnering organizations expressed, “you cannot have an absolute mind shift in the way people view it from a yearlong project. It just doesn’t happen that fast, it happens over time” (GR03). They went on to elaborate:

Are they [the City] willing to embrace it? Maybe over time, but it’s going to take a shift in mindset, because in the same meeting [of the City Council Community Committee on Graffiti] it then just reverts back to hunting people down, and finding these “perpetrators” and locking them up. Right. So, they’re willing to embrace a young artist, who is out there helping a school board or, Sharon and the offshoot of this with Graff Café, or they’re willing to kind of, semi-embrace it. (GR03)

Expressing a similar sentiment tied to collective understanding of graffiti and its causes, a member of the City Council Community Committee on Graffiti expressed, “to me, we’re still in the midst of trying to re-frame understanding, so we haven’t arrived yet” (GR06). Reflecting on

the nature of graffiti, they added, “I don't think they'll ever eradicate it, because I think the issues attached to it, as we said, are issues that we're probably never going to resolve as human kind” (GR06).

The multi-layered impact of Graffiti Reframed played an important role in the project's success and tapped into ongoing needs within the community. As one interviewee noted:

This is an opportunity to do more than just paint on a building. It's an opportunity to engage youth, it's an opportunity to give youth a voice in the community, it's an opportunity to put in place tourism by having walking tours of our local street art.
(GR03)

The City's continued investment in the downtown core and Canal District indicates a commitment to enhancing the lived experience and quality of life of its citizens and broader community as well as increasing tourism. The commissioning of graffiti and public art would contribute to these important goals. A number of cities are reimagining back lanes and alleyways, envisioning them as a 'second city' (Simon Fraser University, 2005), places to explore and utilize as alternative non-motorized transportation routes and in some cases, sporting community gardens along the verge. The beautification of the rear facades and laneways along Sault's City Centre would assist in reshaping the space, generating interest for residents and tourists alike. The downtown's close proximity to the John Rowsell Hub Trail could capitalize on such beautification efforts, increasing attention to the commercial district by providing more active lifestyles opportunities through additional walking routes and trails that would attract wider demographics.

Furthermore, as one of the oldest settlements in Canada, Sault Ste. Marie is historically rich, culturally significant, and ecologically diverse. These assets could be explored and portrayed through murals. Other places have capitalized on their past to maintain connection to it and/or foster new commentaries. The community's many advertising murals, as Mill Market participants noted, could be revitalized and/or themes expanded to enliven the City Centre. Dedicated space for graffiti art was identified as a need, encouraging artists to locate their work in particular areas.

The Neighbourhood Resource Centre (NRC) expressed a strong desire to continue the Graffiti Reframed activities, offering space to deliver arts programming on an ongoing basis. The NRC noted the importance of providing youth a space to meet and be creative and foster building new peer relationships that would contribute to shifting unwanted tagging activity to more positive artistic expression. The NRC's Gore St location could also serve as a bridge to link youth artists, taggers writing unsolicited graffiti with business owners and the broader community as a means of addressing the management and removal of tags.

There are a number of opportunities and directions for the community to consider to further develop an understanding of graffiti that would promote its positive community-building, place making attributes and collective resilience while reducing the undesirable aspects of this particular subculture.

6.0 Conclusion

The Graffiti Reframed research provided diverse opportunities for community members to participate in thoughtful dialogue and action around graffiti, gaining a deeper understanding of the motivational factors and the art form's potential for positive social change. The project captured the interest of people from beyond the arts including those in the justice, business and social sectors. It engaged more than 350 people, either in dialogue or as participants, and attracted 43 artists to take part in the project, far exceeding its initial target of 200 citizens. Funding through the Ontario Trillium Foundation and NOFHC contributed \$88,500 to the local economy that leveraged \$11,525 in education and training for youth and was further supported by downtown merchants through donations of materials and supplies, meeting and exhibition space, and walls for the creation of three graffiti murals. The project strengthened the Sault's culture-based creative economy, providing opportunities for youth to contribute to place making through shaping the urban landscape, and thus, community identity.

Public discourse concerning graffiti, particularly at the institutional levels of the municipal government and city policy, has demonstrated a noticeable shift. Both groups are increasingly distinguishing between 'nuisance tagging' and graffiti as a much larger style, practice, and sub-culture. The growing use of this distinction has been paired with changes in the approach to addressing nuisance taggers altogether, with a stronger focus on community engagement and providing opportunities for youth to engage in public art.

The initiative was particularly successful in fostering greater involvement in the arts. Substantial opportunities for artistic engagement were created in the city's Downtown and City Centre neighbourhoods. A sizable portion of youth participants reported that they had never previously been engaged in the arts, and among those who had, they had not done so on a habitual basis.

Eleven skills development workshops were held with locations ranging from the Art Gallery of Algoma to the Neighbourhood Resource Centre and 180 Projects. Workshops helped increase the artistic capacity of young artists as well as providing some business skills to support them in making their artwork a source for a larger share of their income. The connections that were

fostered between young artists and local businesses also strengthened the professional networks of both groups while providing potential opportunities for future commissions. The activities increased the youth participants' sense of inclusion, artistic identity and agency for producing unique, expressive and meaningful artwork.

The aspiration of working specifically with taggers proved difficult to monitor or assess. Given that graffiti artists who pursue their craft illegally — painting or marking the property of others without permission — would be putting themselves at risk of increased surveillance and potential arrest. Consequently, they have a strong disincentive to self-identify in public spaces. With this reality in mind, it is impossible to state unequivocally whether or not the project involved active taggers or other illicit graffiti artists. Nonetheless, the project certainly did reach participants who were at least at risk of engaging in illegal graffiti activity, and some organizers expressed that they were aware some of the participants were active taggers.

Similarly, assessing whether unwanted graffiti had increased or decreased over the course of the project would require a time-consuming and resource-draining cataloguing and monitoring process. Yet the research and mural projects undertaken through Graffiti Reframed have demonstrated the effectiveness and strong feasibility of using commissioned art and design, as well as various forms of community engagement, for providing people on the margins and those interested in art-making with means for expressing themselves in a socially acceptable way.

Graffiti Reframed presents a number of opportunities for future development, with a growing demand for commissioned murals, desire for additional skills development workshops, and the need to buttress the communicative strength and depth of intellectual engagement within and among the arts community in Sault Ste. Marie. Graffiti Reframed has provided momentum for increased outreach, capacity development, and investment in place making and the creative economy. Building on these opportunities will foster further engagement with residents— particularly youth — and hasten economic, social, and artistic development within Sault Ste. Marie, creating a more vibrant, resilient and attractive place to live, work and visit.

References

- Alger, M. (2013). *The City in Colour: Alternative Approaches to Graffiti Management for Kingston, Ontario*.
- Allard, J. (2015). 'Tackling Graffiti'. Retrieved July 7, 2015 from:
<http://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=652039&playlistId=1.2484317&binId=1.810401&playlistPageNum=1&binPageNum=1>.
- Chronicle Journal.com (July 3, 2012). 'On the right track'. Retrieved, January 10, 2015 from:
http://www.chroniclejournal.com/on-the-right-track/article_97d8e281-5529-594f-a2b3-0c057d8a832f.html
- Currid, E. (2007). *The Warhol Economy: How Fashion, Art & Music Drive New York City*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- DeNotto, M. (2014) Street art and graffiti. *College & Research Libraries News*, 75(4), 208-2011.
- Etymology Online (2010-2015). Keyword search "Graffiti." Retrieved October 29, 2015 from:
http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=graffiti&searchmode=none.
- Florida, R. (2002). *The rise of the creative class: And how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Florida, R. (2008) *Who's your city? How the creative economy is making where to live the most important decision of your life*. Toronto: Random House Canada.
- Helwig, D. (2015, August 18). Picture of Home Hardware paint cans with hat on top (updated). *SooToday.com*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.sootoday.com/content/news/details.asp?c=96563>
- Hopper, D. (2015, July 23). The other side of graffiti. *SooToday.com*. Retrieved from:
<http://www.sootoday.com/content/arts/details.asp?c=95404>.
- Kelling, W. and Cole. (1996). *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities*. (New York: The Free Press).
- Markusen, A., & King, D. (2003). *The artistic dividend: the arts' hidden contributions to regional development*. University of Minnesota. Accessed May 18, 2014.
- McAuliffe, C. (2012). Graffiti or Street Art? Negotiating the Moral Geographies of the Creative City. *Journal of Urban Affairs*. 34:2. 189-206. Accessed online:
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9906.2012.00610.x/full>.

- Murray, G., & Baeker, G. (2006) Culture + place = wealth creation. *Municipal World*. 116 (9), pp. 13-17.
- Pearson, A. (March 31, 2015). 'Organizers count gains in graffiti project'. *Sault This Week*. Retrieved from: <http://www.saultthisweek.com/2015/03/31/organizers-count-gains-in-graffiti-projects>.
- Pearson, C. (October 11, 2013). 'Alleys are turning into galleries.' *The Windsor Star*. Retrieved from: <http://blogs.windsorstar.com/news/alleys-are-turning-to-galleries>.
- Patterson, J. (July 22, 2015). 'Murals'. Retrieved from: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=662908&playlistId=1.2484317&binId=1.810401&playlistPageNum=1&binPageNum=1>
- Percy-Smith, B., & Carney, C. (2011). Using art installations as action research to engage children and communities in evaluating and redesigning city centre spaces [online]. *Educational Action Research*, 19(1), pp.23-39.
- Petz, Sarah. (January 15, 2015). 'Public art wards off graffiti.' *Sault Star*. Retrieved from: <http://www.saultstar.com/2015/01/15/public-art-deters-graffiti>
- Simon Fraser University (2005) Transforming Vancouver's back lanes and alleys. Retrieved, Sept 10, 2015 from http://www.sfu.ca/archive-university-communications/news_releases/archives/news04190501.htm
- SooToday.com (April 8, 2015). 'Local artists to have work shown in Toronto transit (4 photos)'. Retrieved, October 10, 2015 from: <https://www.sootoday.com/local-news/local-artists-to-have-work-shown-by-toronto-transit-4-photos-179775>
- SooToday.com (2015, August 21). '16-year old youth charged with mischief in relation to graffiti'. Retrieved from: <http://www.sootoday.com/content/news/details.asp?c=96755>
- Taylor, M. (2012) Addicted to the Risk, Recognition and Respect that the Graffiti Lifestyle Provides: Towards an Understanding of the Reasons for Graffiti Engagement. *International Journal of Mental Health & Addiction*. 10 (1)54-68. doi: 10.1007/s11469-010-9301-6
- Torontograffiti.com (2015). About. Retrieved September 24th, 2015 from: <http://torontograffiti.com/about/>.
- Toronto (2015a). Graffiti Plan – Graffiti Management – Transportation. Retrieved September 24th, 2015 from: <http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=e667a37fa9922410VgnVC>

[M10000071d60f89RCRD&vgnextchannel=6b8d2412f4422410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD](http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextchannel=6b8d2412f4422410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD)

Toronto (2015b). StreetARToronto – Transportation. Retrieved from:

<http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=bebb4074781e1410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD>

Waclawek, A. (2008) *From Graffiti to the Street Art Movement: Negotiating Art Worlds, Urban Spaces and Visual Culture, c. 1970-2008*. Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Wilkinson, E (2014) Graffiti in Halifax: Policy and Practice. *Bachelor of Community Design Urban Design Honours Thesis*

WordReference.com (2015). Keyword Search Italian-English “Graffiti.” Retrieved October 29th, 2015 from <http://www.wordreference.com/iten/graffiti>.

Wright Allen, S. (September 7th, 2014). ‘Street art and city colour: Ottawa’s graffiti culture starting to bloom.’ *Ottawa Citizen*. Retrieved September 24th, 2015 from <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/street-art-and-city-colour>.