



MAYOR'S HEALTHIEST SMALL CITY Social resiliency collective



Summary Report

About the City of North Vancouver

The City of North Vancouver's vision is to be a vibrant, diverse and highly liveable community that strives to balance the social, economic and environmental needs of our community.

Born and shaped by our rich history, diverse culture and natural environment, we are a community with a long-term vision for the future and brimming potential. Our residents and businesses make us unique and we take pride in being a welcoming host, inspiring example and inviting home to people of all ages, backgrounds and interests.

About the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue

Simon Fraser University's <u>Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue</u> fosters shared understanding and positive action through dialogue and engagement. As a trusted convener and hub for community initiatives, we have engaged hundreds of thousands of participants to create solutions for many of society's most pressing issues.

About this document

The purpose of this document is to provide a detailed overview of the process, vision and outcomes of the *Mayor's Healthiest Small City Social Resilience Collective*. The contents do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Simon Fraser University or the City of North Vancouver. Any works referring to this material should cite:

City of North Vancouver and Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. (2020). Mayor's Healthiest Small City Social Resilience Collective- Summary Report.

Contact

Any media inquiries regarding the contents of this report or the *Mayor's Healthiest Small City Social Resilience Collective* should be directed to Mayor's Office at <u>mayor@cnv.org</u>

Acknowledgements

The *Mayor's Healthiest Small City Social Resilience Collective* was sponsored by the City of North Vancouver.

The following guest speakers provided valuable insight through presentations to the Collective members. Thank you to Lidia Kemeny, Director, Partnerships, Granting and Community Initiatives, Vancouver Foundation and to Lisa Cavicchia, Program Director, Canadian Urban Institute.

Special thanks to City Council for their support and the West Vancouver and North Shore Community Foundations for the grants provided.

Finally, and most importantly, thank you to the members who generously contributed their civic passion, expertise and commitment to strengthening community resilience and connectivity.



Message from the Mayor

To our City of North Vancouver Community,

Today we find ourselves tackling new and previously unimaginable challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we connect with loved ones, work, shop and so much more. Prior to this crisis, Council adopted its first ever <u>strategic plan</u>.

Our Council's vision is to create the healthiest small city in the world. While this pandemic has created new hurdles, we believe there are also new opportunities we can leverage to create long-lasting community health and resiliency.

Through COVID-19 we have seen unprecedented levels of hope, spirit,

civic engagement and generosity. We have also seen the veil lifted on the many challenges cities face, including poverty, homelessness, food insecurity and social isolation. How we respond as a community is important.

I believe this moment presents a unique opportunity to leverage, protect and learn from the enhanced collaboration we have witnessed over these last several months. Our focus must be on people, their stories, their needs and our collective well-being.

Establishing the *Mayor's Healthiest Small City Social Resiliency Collective* was one step forward on our community's recovery path. Mary Rowe from the Canadian Urban Institute put it best when she said: "It won't take just one action to solve the underlying challenges accelerated by COVID-19, but thousands upon thousands of collective actions."

Thanks to the hard work done by 20+ participating community leaders, we have assessed the assets and gaps in our social infrastructure, and have developed several quick start action items to improve our social connections and engagement with one another and work towards improving our overall resiliency.

I would like to thank our many 'collective members' for their commitment, passion and energy they brought to this process as well as the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue for facilitating our meetings. As the Collective begins to implement their projects, I look forward to engaging with our community further about how we can continue to work together to build better, more vibrant, connected, resilient communities.

On behalf of the collective, I invite you to get involved!

Sincerely,

Linda C. Queboran

Linda Buchanan Mayor of the City of North Vancouver

Executive Summary

The Mayor's Healthiest Small City Social Resiliency Collective (the Collective) was created as an initiative of the Mayor's Office for the City of North Vancouver and facilitated by Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. The Collective was comprised of community leaders with representation from community services, health, arts and culture, education, faith, business and other sectors, as well as citizens, local government, major employers, nonprofits and post-secondary institutions.

The mandate of the Collective was to support and strengthen the City of North Vancouver's social resiliency and connectivity during and beyond the ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery. More specifically, the Collective aimed to: identify a number of 'quick starts' to advance the City of North Vancouver's social connectivity and resilience, guided by the '<u>Healthiest Small City</u>' vision and strategy; invest in a shared understanding of assets, gaps and opportunities, particularly those made visible through the City's COVID-19 response; and set the stage for ongoing collaboration and a shared leadership model.

Over the course of six weeks the Collective met over five meetings, filled out surveys and collaborated in small self-organized groups. They developed a shared vision, generated a set of community assets and gaps and, designed five quick start projects. These projects are intended to advance equity and diversity while also helping people feel more connected, build their capacity through meaningful participation and set the stage for ongoing willingness to help others. The five projects are:

- **COVID-19 Community Connection Mosaic**: individual storytelling through images, organized into a community public art mosaic that explores our COVID-19 experiences
- **CityAlive:** reimagines artistic performances as random acts of 'pop-up' community art by animating outdoor public spaces and encouraging neighbourhood connections while maintaining physical distance
- NorthVanStories: captures and shares digital stories to foster deeper, more meaningful connections between individuals and communities across the city
- Hello Neighbour: a postcard campaign to encourage City of North Vancouver residents to connect with one another as well as to 'say hello' to people on a regular basis fostering a sense of community within neighbourhoods
- Expanding Technology Access: strengthens connection and reduces isolation by improving access for those with limited access to internet hardware and WIFI

The formal mandate of the Collective concludes with this report; however, members continue to advance the quick start actions presented in the following pages. Over the coming months, Collective members, with support from the City of the North Vancouver, will work with the broader community of residents and stakeholders to further develop, support and implement the projects.

As the Mayor's Office and the City of North Vancouver continue their COVID-19 response and recovery, as well as the broader vision for a more socially resilient and connected City, it can continue to build on the success of the Collective.

"We envision a resilient city of North Vancouver where people feel connected and included, and participate in compassionate acts of mutual support to help create an equitable and healthy community".

Introduction and Context

As a thriving and growing municipality, the City of North Vancouver has many social, economic and environmental resources and assets, including a diverse and vibrant population, dynamic workforce with the largest working age population on the North Shore, vast natural beauty in close proximity and important arts and cultural communities.

However, the City also faces several key challenges including housing affordability, climate change, transportation, child poverty and inequality. To address these challenges, City Council introduced its Strategic Plan for 2018-2022, a first for the City. Within this strategy, Council puts forth the vision to be the 'Healthiest Small City in the World' (hereafter referred to as the 'Healthiest Small City'), identifying five specific priorities. At the core of this vision are the people of North Vancouver and a commitment to a connected, liveable, vibrant and prosperous City.

Although the COVID-19 crisis has brought deep economic and social hardship to the City of North Vancouver, community leaders and social support organizations have bravely stepped up to meet the urgent needs of residents through a variety of innovative mechanisms and partnerships. This crisis has illustrated the resiliency, creativity, innovation and dedication of community leaders.

In response to Covid-19, City of North Vancouver community leaders are working together more than ever before to mobilize funds, coordinate programming, share information, encourage volunteerism, engage in advocacy and ensure that no one is left behind.

In addition, the response of community members themselves has been extraordinary. From connecting with isolated seniors, delivering groceries, setting up phone trees and beautifying the community with chalk art, painted rocks, as well as participating in the 7 pm cheer to thank essential service workers, residents have found ways to connect while still keeping the community safe and healthy.

This moment presents a unique opportunity to leverage, foster and learn from this enhanced collaboration, integration and sense of community. It also provides an opportunity to contribute to the City's vision to be the 'Healthiest Small City'. The challenges presented by COVID-19 are numerous and complex and the 'Healthiest Small City' vision is broad and ambitious. A single organization, including the City, cannot independently address these challenges. It is only through a coordinated, structured and collaborative approach that the City of North Vancouver and community stakeholders can act together to achieve their shared goals for a healthy city.

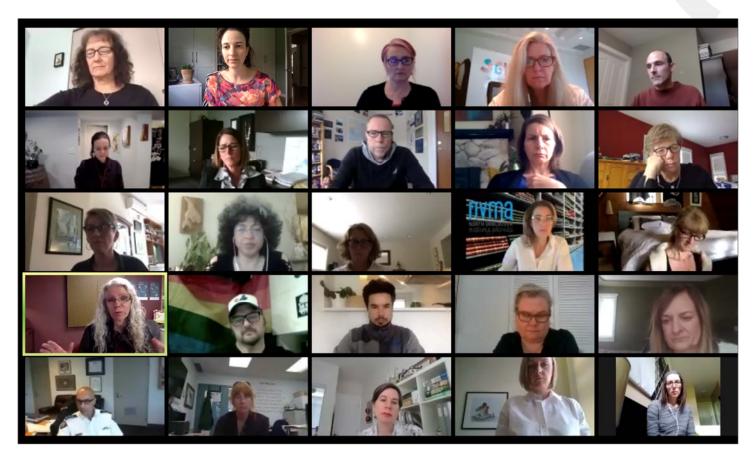
It is within this context that the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue worked with the Mayor's Office of the City of North Vancouver, to design and facilitate the *Mayor's Healthiest Small City Social Resilience Collective*, henceforth referred to as the Collective.

Collective Members

The Collective convened to develop a collaborative plan for strengthening North Vancouver's social resiliency and connectivity during and beyond the COVID-19 response and recovery. The Collective, was comprised of representatives from community services, health, arts and culture, education, faith, business and other sectors, as well as citizens.

Collective Members (in no particular order)

Mayor Linda Buchanan	City of North Vancouver
Wendy McCulloch	North Shore Multicultural Society
Julia Staub-French	Family Services of the North Shore
Deb Koep	City of North Vancouver Library
Michelle Dodds	North Shore Women's Centre
Kim Winchell	United Way of the Lower Mainland
Annwen Loverin	Silver Harbour Seniors Centre
Gary Woods	North Shore Pride Alliance
Supt. Ghalib Bhayani	North Vancouver RCMP
Erin Black	Vancouver Coastal Health
Nancy Cottingham Powell	North Van Arts
Jessica Bushey	North Vancouver Museum and Archives
Brad Martin	Capilano University
Alison Brookfield	Citizen
Kamelia Abadi	North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues
Anna Hardy	Blue Shore Financial
Andrew Chong	Youth City Fest Organizer
Barb Pearce	City of North Vancouver
Stephen Muir	St Agnes Church
Christie Sacre	North Van School District 44
Dave Sattler	North Shore Alliance Church
Lisa Hubbard	North Shore Neighbourhood House
Olivia Bornik	North Shore Immigrant Inclusion Project



Collective Process

The work of the Collective was conducted over a series of five, three-hour, virtual meetings. The meetings took place over 6 weeks and were chaired by Mayor Buchanan and facilitated by Susanna Haas Lyons, Associate at SFU's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue.

The **purpose** of the 'Collective' was to support and strengthen the City of North Vancouver's social resiliency and connectivity during and beyond the ongoing COVID-19 response and recovery.

More specifically, the Collective was created to:

- Identify a number of 'quick starts' that advance the City of North Vancouver's social connectivity and resilience, guided by the '<u>Healthiest Small City</u>' vision and strategy;
- Invest in a shared understanding of assets, gaps and opportunities, particularly those made visible through the City's COVID-19 response; and
- Set the stage for ongoing collaboration and a shared leadership model.

Additional project objectives included:

- Bringing together community leaders to build shared ownership, leadership and collaboration to support the vision of the 'Healthiest Small City' within the context of the city of North Vancouver's COVID-19 response;
- Working towards a common understanding of the challenge and opportunity for social connectedness in the city of North Vancouver; and

• Exploring opportunities to advance the city of North Vancouver's social connectivity and resilience that both support COVID-19 response and recovery and help realize the 'Healthiest Small City' vision and strategy.

To fulfill this mandate, the Collective's meetings were designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Explore a Shared Understanding
 - Explore a common understanding of the challenge and opportunity for social connectedness and resiliency in the city of North Vancouver, by drawing on strengths and gaps and building on the 'Healthiest Small City' vision.
- Establish Goals

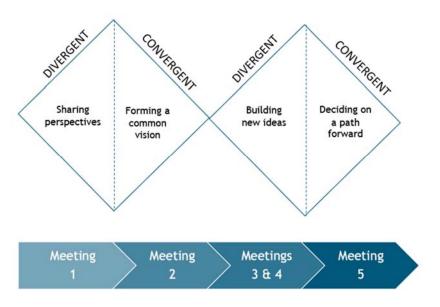
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- Develop shared goals for the city of North Vancouver's social resilience and establish criteria for evaluating the Collective's ideas for action.
- Generate Action Ideas
 - Brainstorm and build upon ideas that might be promising quick-starts and medium-term opportunities to advance city of North Vancouver's social resiliency.
 - **Develop and Prioritize Action Ideas**
 - Refine and prioritize ideas for collaborative action.
- Plan for a Path Forward
 - Develop an action plan to implement and bring the Collective's priorities to life and set the stage for continued collaboration.

The Collective process followed a flow of divergence and convergence, drawing on a model from Lisa Attygalle (Tamarack Institute).

Each Collective member contributed their own experiences, perspectives and expertise.

Members worked collaboratively to develop a common vision and shared quick start actions.

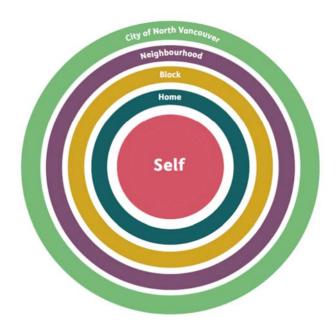


The Collective also used the following definitions to guide their work and discussions:

Community Resilience: The capacity of our community to constructively adapt.

Community Connectedness: The number and strength of connections that an individual has with others in their community and the community as a whole.

Community Connectedness



Collective Secretariat

A Secretariat consisting of the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, the City of North Vancouver and two Collective members was created to support the work of the Collective by coordinating planning activities between meetings and ensuring Collective members had the information and resources required to successfully complete their mandate. The Secretariat did not serve as a decision-making body.

The Secretariat's roles were to:

- Review upcoming meeting agendas to determine the required preparation and support;
- Identify and provide feedback on information inputs into the Collective's work; and
- Connect the work of the Collective to emerging issues and understandings in the broader community.

Secretariat membership included:

- Collective sponsor: Mayor Buchanan, City of North Vancouver
- Collective facilitator and lead designer: Susanna Haas Lyons, SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue
- Collective member: Brad Martin, Capilano University
- Collective member: Julia Staub-French, Family Services North Shore

Step 1: City of North Vancouver Assets and Gaps

The COVID-19 response and recovery has illustrated the resiliency, creativity, innovation and dedication of community leaders, residents and businesses. At the same time, COVID-19 has also brought to light and in some cases exacerbated, important needs and gaps.

To ensure that the Collective quick starts were responsive to the City's current reality; Collective members discussed important City of North Vancouver assets and gaps during COVID-19. Top responses included:

What North Vancouver community ASSETS have meaningfully strengthened our social resiliency during the COVID-19 response?

- Parks, trails and outdoor recreation
- Collaboration and information/resource sharing between social services organizations
- Responsive and innovative social service organizations
- Libraries and their ability to innovate and respond
- Regular and effective communications to residents
- Our residents and community collective mobilization and diversity!
- Funding: municipal funding, core funding, donations and resident income
- Responsive and generous business community
- Strong City-wide/shared response to COVID-19

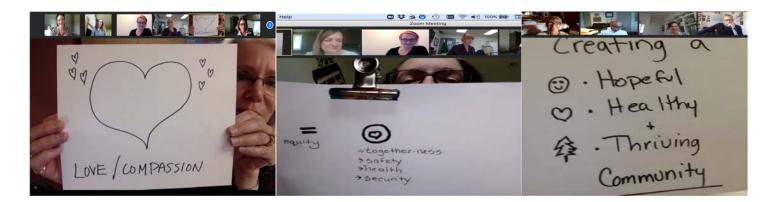
What community support NEEDS or GAPS have become even more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Loneliness and isolation (esp. seniors, youth)
- Support for services for seniors
- Support and services for youth
- Food security
- Community access to IT and telecommunications
- Mental health support and services (esp. youth)
- Access to safe, affordable and supportive housing
- Availability of virtual resources to connect and access services
- Anti-racism educational tools, resources and services
- Closure of public washrooms and lack of hygiene products
- Access to childcare
- Access to public facilities and space

Step 2: Collective Vision

Through a visioning exercise, Collective members identified personal and shared goals for the City of North Vancouver's social resilience and connectivity. Over the course of two meetings and an online survey, the Collective arrived at the following **vision statement** to guide its work:

"We envision a resilient city of North Vancouver where people feel connected and included and participate in compassionate acts of mutual support to help create an equitable and healthy community".





Step 3: Quick Start Criteria

Prior to developing the ideas for possible quick starts, Collective members generated a set of criteria to guide creation and selection. Together, members suggested more than 40 options for possible criteria. From this list, members voted on the most important criteria and a total of seven final criteria emerged.

Quick-starts must be (listed in order of priority):

- **Feasible:** The quick start is feasible, given available human and financial resources (or has a clear pathway to attract additional resources in the near future), with few required approvals.
- Accessible and inclusive: The quick start engages the diversity of our community (physical, financial, social, cultural), including those most vulnerable, though low-barrier and equitable approaches.
- Fast results: Quick starts can take place quickly to create immediate results for the community.
- **Safe:** The quick start honours COVID-19 best practices and sets examples for successful socially distant programming.
- **Strength-based:** The quick start leverages the Collective's existing strengths and other existing resources.
- Collaborative: The quick start involves a mix of groups as partners in implementation.
- **Inspiring and Fun:** The quick start motivates participants to be actively engaged with one another and the issue and is exciting, uplifting and fun.

Step 4: Quick Start Actions

Over the course of meetings 3-5, Collective members brainstormed a list of over 65 possible quick start action ideas. Following the ideation phase, members worked to narrow down the ideas and ultimately selected five quick start projects to move forward. Projects were selected based on:

- Possibility to implement immediately or within a five-month window;
- Ability to address the immediate context, needs and gaps;
- Likelihood of advancing the Collective's vision;
- Extent to which it meets each of the seven criteria;
- Members' collective level of interest and commitment for implementation;
- Incorporation of an equity and diversity lens, particularly a design to include and involve diverse and vulnerable populations; and

• Degree to which the projects help people feel more connected, build capacity through meaningful participation and set the stage for ongoing willingness to help others.

The Quick Start Projects are:

- **COVID-19 Community Connection Mosaic:** individual story-telling through images, organized into a community public art mosaic that explores our COVID-19 experiences
- **CityAlive:** reimagines artistic performances as random acts of 'pop-up' community art by animating outdoor public spaces encouraging neighbourhood connections while maintaining physical distance
- NorthVanStories: captures and shares digital stories to foster deeper, more meaningful connections between individuals and communities across the City
- Hello Neighbour: a postcard campaign to encourage City of North Vancouver residents to connect with one another as well as to 'say hello' to people on a regular basis fostering a sense of community within neighbourhoods
- **Expanding Technology Access:** strengthens connection and reduces isolation by improving access for those with limited access to internet hardware and WIFI



This is a community public art project exploring the subject of COVID-19 resilience, connection and hope. This project creatively engages individuals to tell their personal COVID-19 stories and create an art piece from those stories. In the short term, participants will be invited to upload their image to a project website. An artist will take all the individual images and create a larger mosaic image. As a long-term goal, the Collective will explore ways to transform this digital mosaic into the physical realm through options such as transferring the individual images to create a community public art piece for people to gather and reflect on this extraordinary period for years to come, and/or printing the digital mosaic image on vinyl wrap that can be placed on a wall or object.

This project will create an important legacy for the community to help them understand and articulate, through artistic expression, how COVID-19 has impacted us all, creating a focal point where people can share a 'common' thought, provoke conversation, invite memory sharing and experience multi-generational interactions. The Collective will work to engage those less likely to participate in artistic creation through active involvement of diverse community members in the project design and promotion. The project will support community connection, combat social isolation and create commemorative site(s) where resiliency and hope

can be celebrated moving forward. The physical mural will provide a gathering place for the community, accessible to all. The physical art piece will be tactile, inviting physical touch for the visually impaired and children to enjoy long before they have an understanding of what the mural represents. This project will help people feel as though they are a part of a positive community story, connecting participants and viewers.



CityAlive reimagines music, art and dance performances as random acts of community art in the city, within the new normal of physical distancing and safety for performers. This project will reach out to our vulnerable populations who have been hardest hit by COVID-19, providing engagement and a sense of joy and hope in their day. Normally, the City hosts lively, free, community gatherings around music, dance, art and celebration, supported by the City's placemaking team in keeping with our healthy city plan of being a vibrant city. This year all gatherings have been cancelled, due to COVID-19, which has led to a sense of community loss. CityAlive aims to inject some cultural life and vibrancy back into the community, on a smaller scale and connect with our most vulnerable.

Coordinated by North Van Arts, with support from the Collective's community partners, random acts of art will pop up in locations such as the food bank line up, outside seniors' homes, at the community shelter and in public corridors where vulnerable populations like seniors or the homeless often frequent. CityAlive will also work with agencies who have small groups of people they can bring to a park where they can watch kites being flown, chalk artists, dancers, or listen to music. This initiative will include a wide diversity of performers and artists throughout summer and fall 2020. There is an opportunity to partner with the "Hello Neighbour" initiative to encourage those we engage through this project to say hello and reach out to others they come in contact with. Positive encounters in someone's day changes their mood and mindset, shifting how people interact with each other. The intended outcome of this action is to promote community connections, vibrancy, health and well-being, especially for those most impacted by COVID-19 isolation.



NorthVanStories is about the power of personal storytelling to foster resilience in our communities.

This quick start action will engage North Shore youth, seniors and other marginalized and under-represented communities to create and share personal stories. An online platform will be used to disseminate the stories and provide participants and visitors with a virtual community that will grow over time as more stories are added. The process of creating and sharing stories will develop meaningful connections between individuals and communities throughout North Vancouver. It will also provide an opportunity for participants to improve their communication skills and digital literacy. The desired long-term outcome is to increase empathy and connections across genders, socioeconomic classes, age and ethnicity.

NorthVanStories builds upon an earlier social media project "#NorthVanStories"

(https://nvma.ca/northvanstories) led by the North Vancouver Museum & Archives at the outset of the pandemic. The current objective is to involve additional North Vancouver organizations and draw upon their respective communities and networks to ensure that different stories are captured and told, with a distinct emphasis on engaging vulnerable populations and others who may not typically participate in this type of project.



COVID-19 has increased the isolation, loneliness and social disconnectedness of City residents and has made many hesitant to engage others in conversation. Hello Neighbour will increase City residents' feelings of inclusion and connectedness, encourage the growth of compassionate acts of mutual support and reduce the stigma of asking for or offering connection. People will be encouraged to say hello to one another through an awareness raising campaign, supported by assets such as buttons and postcards, as well as encouraging local agencies to adopt the practice. This campaign can tie into existing small events, other projects and programming offered by organizations in the City, including leveraging the I Love My City campaign and can be worked into other community initiatives such as the 7 o'clock cheer. Assets like postcards can include the offer to connect back at another time with the person giving it or can include information about helpful community services.

Hello Neighbour will look to existing initiatives like Hello Neighbour Day in Australia, Calgary and Thunder Bay as well as the United Way Local Love teams as resources in refining, implementing and assessing the success of specific project elements. The campaign will aim to engage those less likely to participate by developing assets in languages other than English and getting input from organizations that serve new immigrant and vulnerable populations.



Expanding Technology Access

COVID-19 has shed light on the existing and growing digital divide in our community. Technology powers nearly every aspect of day-to-day life. North Vancouver residents who do not own or cannot afford their own devices/laptops and internet access are limited in their capacity to connect with government, community and health services, to access education, to search for work or housing and to maintain social connections. Sources of public computer access and free WiFi have been disrupted (schools, libraries, drop-in centres, workplaces). Even as these facilities reopen, access will be limited due to COVID-19-related measures and a second wave of the pandemic on the North Shore could result in future facility closures.

In response, this project seeks to increase access to the internet and technology hardware and build community relationships and awareness around access to technology. Focusing on the short term, this project will map existing public access points to WiFi and charging stations and work with local businesses and community agencies to expand these resources. This project will also engage community volunteers as "tech buddies" to support individuals who need assistance getting online. In addition, the project will lay the foundation for more comprehensive community responses to this problem by collecting data about specific impacts on and needs of vulnerable individuals and groups in the community.

Step 5: Next Steps for Shared Leadership and Project Implementation

With the closing of the fifth Collective meeting and publication of this report, the official mandate of the Mayor's Healthiest Small City Social Resiliency Collective is now complete. The Collective members' work to advance and implement the five quick start projects presented in this report however, is just getting started.

Over the coming weeks and months, Collective members, with support from the City of the North Vancouver and the broader community of "I hope this is just the beginning of beautiful things we can do TOGETHER!"

Collective Member

residents and stakeholders will continue to work together to further develop, support and implement the projects.

Continued collaboration to enable success for the quick start actions

To support successful implementation of the quick start actions, Collective members have identified the need to:

- Keep all members informed and engaged in the projects through regular updates and opportunities to connect;
- Continue to share our resources, knowledge and information;
- Support the Collective as a whole, as well as the projects, by continuing to foster the connections developed through this effort;

"I now know each of you better and understand your work and service to the community in a deeper way. thank you all".

Collective Member

- Evaluate the quick start actions and publicly celebrate and communicate our progress; and,
- Stay connected to the Mayor and the City of North Vancouver.

Shared Leadership

Collective members highlighted the following priorities and next steps to guide even greater collaboration:

- Explore opportunities to improve collaboration in the City of North Vancouver's social sector and to address the larger issues
- Establish a communications channel to support continuous collaboration;

"It has been a privilege to be involved in this process. Thanks everyone for your creativity and ideas! I'm excited about next steps".

Collective Member

- Keep the Collective thriving and seek out financial resources to sustain and continue the work of the Collective;
- Build community capacity to share their 'gifts' and connection with others;
- Identify possible strategies to incorporate additional and diverse voices, including those who are missing from the discussions and the voices of residents and communities;
- Plan to involve other organizations and stakeholders; and
- Reconvene regularly to focus on important issues facing our city.

"It's been such an honour to get to know such a passionate group of individuals. Thank you all for your service to our community and for sharing!"

Collective Member

The City of North Vancouver will present this report to City Council

and will continue to monitor and support the Collective's progress. As the Mayor's Office and the City of North Vancouver continue their COVID-19 response and recovery, as well as the broader vision for a more socially resilient and connected City, they can continue to build on the success of the Collective.



