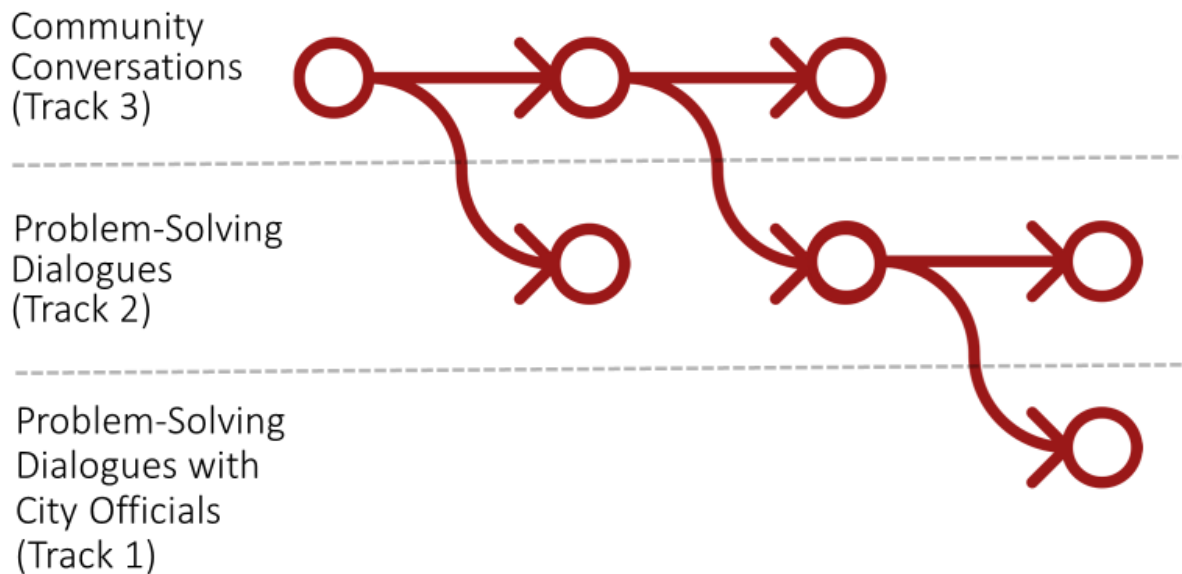## Summary

The Greater Forest Lawn Governance Model Project is a Council Innovation Fund Project that dates back to 2019. The UCalgary Pluralism Initiative was invited in 2022 to contribute to explore the application of Track Two diplomacy to municipal governance. We deployed Track Two diplomacy and Multitrack diplomacy – a model that facilitates dialogues and stewards progress from general community dialogues to focused problem-solving workshops where concrete ideas are co-created and executed.

This approach, stewarded by a third party of scholar-diplomats, built trust between participants and the facilitators, resulted in greater diversity of thought from campaign-style recruitment, strengthened participant agency and built connections between groups, sectors and geographical areas that had not regularly come into contact. Additionally, the project generated insights into how Track Two diplomacy methods helped to overcome a deficit of trust in local governing.

In this model, as general community ideas converged, they led to specific focused dialogues that brought in the right mix of policymakers, innovators, entrepreneurs, and community members who continued to steward their challenges or ideas until they achieved resolution.

Community Conversations (Track 3)

Problem-Solving Dialogues (Track 2)

Problem-Solving Dialogues with City Officials (Track 1)

While dialogue did not directly change institutional structures, it was able to provide a platform through which to build relationships, identify key issues, provide ways for the City to rebuild trust with residents and empower community connectors. We found that this dialogue format:

a) **built trust** and credibility with residents and community organisations due to the facilitators' position as a third party, though barriers to trust continue to exist;

b) resulted in **increased thought diversity among dialogue participants (not just cultural diversity)**, due to campaign-style recruitment strategies ("hungry inclusion"), even if initial results produced less diversity than desired;

c) allowed for a **greater degree of participant agency**, though this required reinforcement from the facilitation team to avoid backsliding into more passive, top-down engagement; and

d) provided a platform to **guide concerns and solutions through the policymaking process** in a way that included participants from diverse demographics, neighbourhoods and sectors of the city.

Concretely, we stewarded three changes through this novel governance process:

1) We were able to find **free Early Childhood Development supports** (both in-person and virtual) for families who did not have local access. This was **budget neutral** – because we connected the clients to untapped resources from another district.
2) We were able to **crystallize and demonstrate the benefit and impact of community connectors**:
   a. The Community Social Work program has developed a Community Connectors program that empowers local residents to initiate connections and increase resident participation.
   b. Over 25 Community Connectors are working in neighbourhoods across the city, including six in Greater Forest Lawn in the following areas: 2 in Penbrooke Meadows, 1 in Dover, 1 in Southview and 2 in Forest Lawn as part of the Community Hubs Initiative at Bob Bahan Recreation Centre.
   c. Community Connectors engage with their neighbours to build relationships, identify local strengths and opportunities, and work on projects for community building.
3) **Community members felt empowered** that the City was governing differently – that their voices was powerful and shaped tangible changes.

*Enclosed is the interim report to City after the general community conversations (which was prior to the Track Two problem-solving workshops where ideas were converted to actionable steps).

Summary Report:
Track Two Diplomacy – Facilitated Discourse for the Greater Forest Lawn Governance and Communications Model
December 31 2022
Aleem Bharwani, Josh Nadeau

Highlights

What We Did:
- Preparation:
  - We curated a list of 389 contacts, reaching out to 300 and connecting with over 100 community members.
- Dialogues:
  - We hosted two formal sets of dialogues in 2022 (4 community conversations; 2 problem-solving dialogues) and over 100 informal preparatory conversations. We continue to host formal and informal dialogues in 2023 to crystallise conversations into action.

What We Heard:
- Community conversations surfaced key issues:
  - Current centralised, corporate-style communications approaches are not working. Enduring, informal, community-embedded models of communication are preferred. This perspective resonated across all groups, dialogue formats, and identities. We were told that an informal, embedded model facilitates awareness of opportunities and needs – while serving a broader purpose of connecting people vertically (power) and horizontally across communities and identities.
  - Volunteer capacity and Community Association revenue streams are drying up, impeding community-driven goals. Many groups see the value of learning about, and leaning into, existing resources rather than creating new ones.
  - Service and safety gaps are persistent and widespread.
  - If talking does not lead to action, then there is no point in talking.
- Problem-solving grants dialogue raised solutions:
  - Mass emails, the cumbersome City website, social media outreach, town halls, and flyers don't work – meaning community members do not know what is happening, when it is happening, or how they can participate and drive change.
  - Community members want grant-writing workshops.
  - Community members want to know what grants exist so that they can apply for the right grant at the right time for the right goal.
  - Civil society organisations would like help connecting and collaborating with other Civil Society Organisations and corporate partners to collaborate on grants.
- Feedback about this innovative facilitated dialogue process:
  - Participants appreciated authenticity; they saw how hard we worked to curate an inclusive conversation and appreciated that there were no sticky notes, whiteboards, or glossy pitches but a simple, casual, meaningful conversation that sought to engage and empower community members.
  - Participants (and facilitators) learned unique insights about each other's experiences.

- o Participants appreciated that a third party could steward a process where community conversations effectively identified consensus issues, which could then be escalated into problem-solving dialogues, which could then lead to actionable outcomes within the community whether initiated either by the City or by civil society.
- o Participants wanted to know specific details about how dialogues would translate into action and were noticeably discomforted by the possibility that the City might file away these insights thereby turning these dialogues into "just another meeting," which highlighted for us the need for clear action points.

What We Learned:
- Relationships drive understanding (of each other's differences) and sharing (of opportunities/needs) across identities; social media, emails, town halls do not do as good a job.
- We heard a need for an enduring, ongoing presence on the ground to steward common goals.
- An arms-length third party could act as a pseudo-community organiser to liaise between individuals, communities, decision-makers, and civil society organisations to find consensus and then sustain momentum and progress on key issues.
- "Fresh eyes" with distinct networks and understanding of the issues can add value by bringing a new perspective, by making available new networks to help solve the problem – or by simply injecting new energy.

Next Steps:
- Easy:
  - o (grants) Co-design and implement grant-writing workshops with community members and stakeholders.
  - o (grants) Compile a "systems map" exercise to summarise all relevant local grants in a single updated, publicly available resource.
  - o (grants) Consider new, collaborative approaches to grant adjudication, including collaborative granting or formative feedback that builds capacity, refines ideas, and directs applicants to appropriate opportunities.
- Hard:
  - o (communications) Re-imagine City communication procedures so as to embed communications personnel in the communities they intend to "serve," acting as conduits of information, and as general connectors in the community.
  - o (intergroup understanding) Facilitate specific dialogues about specific issues across the GFL/East Calgary or the city to broker trust and understanding on potentially polarising or challenging topics.
- Transformational:
  - o (intergroup understanding) Calgary Economic Development has suggested a scaled, Calgary Economic Development-supported, city-wide series of dialogues focused on "foresighting;" intended to surface needs and insights while fostering shared understanding of each other's experiences. The focus could be on common needs or aspirations and could also bring together people from different income brackets, sectors, identities, and neighbourhoods.

The project

Genesis:
The project *Track Two Diplomacy – Facilitated Discourse for the Greater Forest Lawn Governance and Communications Model* was launched to pilot a new model of governance and decision-making in Calgary's Ward 9, which empowers community members from all walks of life through facilitated conversations (or "dialogues").

The initiative grew out of the Urban Alliance, a relationship between the University of Calgary, including the UCalgary Pluralism Initiative and the O'Brien Institute for Public Health, and City representatives, who had previously worked together to facilitate conversations on contentious municipal issues like community water fluoridation. The use of informal diplomacy tools (expertly facilitated conversations) borrows from the spheres of peacebuilding and conflict resolution, where facilitators use specific tools to address deeply rooted conflicts and generate mutual understanding, respect and cooperation between groups who hold diverging interests, needs and positions on social and policy issues. That project's success prompted members of City of Calgary Community Services and Ward 9 to invite Dr. Aleem Bharwani to design a dialogue process for East Calgary communities, also known as the Greater Forest Lawn (GFL) area. Bharwani designed and facilitated the sessions in collaboration with Josh Nadeau of Ottawa Dialogue, a University of Ottawa-based non-profit specializing in Track Two Diplomacy (facilitated discourse).

Timeline:
In 2021, Bharwani and colleagues received a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Connection grant to co-design a Diplomacy Platform intended to facilitate cross-sectoral, cross-cultural, and transdisciplinary dialogues towards solving complex social problems. This funding envelope paid for a series of interviews with civil society organisations and policymakers, which in turn led to a series of insights that informed the creation of a 'diplomacy platform' that could be applied to any given societal issue.
In 2022, this model was then piloted in key areas, one of which was focused on the East Calgary/Greater Forest Lawn area. Separate conversations were facilitated amongst Community Associations, service agencies, business improvement areas (BIAs), City administration representatives, and Ward 9 representatives that provided a basis for planning further dialogues in the summer and fall supported by the Council Innovation Fund as a way to address the following four priorities:
- increasing participation and diversity;
- building trust and respect between stakeholders;
- capacity-building among citizens and organized community groups; and
- supporting the evolving role and needs of Community Associations.

Aim:
The aim of the project was to apply these innovative tools to facilitate contact and broker trust; enabling participants to jointly assess and solve municipal problems across sectors, interests, and identities. The team hypothesized that various community conversations across different levels (residents, service organizations, Community Associations, City representatives, etc.) could inform each other, build connections between these layers, and contribute to a more inclusive way of policymaking by addressing municipal tensions, creatively solving problems, and supporting the voices of Calgarians who often fall through the cracks.

Format

The facilitators adapted two types of dialogues for the project: **community conversations** that employ *track three diplomacy* methods to facilitate citizen-to-citizen understanding; and **problem-solving dialogues** that employ *track two diplomacy* methods to jointly assess and solve a defined problem amongst a mix of citizens and policymakers. While distinct, these dialogues do not occur in isolation; consensus in community conversations shape focused problem-solving dialogues – to help move talk to action.

Community conversations are open-ended conversations where participants voice concerns on issues that matter to them. The facilitators limit themselves to prompting participants with questions, guiding the conversation in constructive directions, inviting all those present to contribute and inviting diverse perspectives to add texture to the collective's understanding. When moments of tension or conflicting positions emerged, the facilitators focus on the needs "buried" beneath the stated positions and frame ensuing discussions in a non-adversarial manner that encourages collaboration amongst participants. These community conversations have no specific agenda, and themes discussed are driven entirely by the participants.

What We Did: We conducted four conversations; each lasted for two hours and included almost entirely unique participants for each session: they took place on October 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 25th at an anonymous community hall, Dover Community Association, Penbrooke Community Association, and Erin Woods Community Association. The anonymous community hall hosted ethnic/cultural/religious representatives that participated on the condition of anonymity.

Problem-solving dialogues differ from community conversations in that problem-solving dialogues have a specific agenda and are facilitated in a way that encourages creative and collaborative brainstorming aimed at addressing a specific problem. Participants are typically recruited for their relevance to the issue at hand, and facilitators help the parties better understand each other's needs, perceptions, and histories; this approach aims to build rapport, strengthen mutual understanding, and open the floor to more collaborative approaches. Multiple dialogues with the same participants are held to deepen engagement on a given issue and generate creative solutions that participants can then take back with them to their stakeholder groups to generate deeper insights or to initiate change from within or in collaboration with other participants.

What We Did: We ran a set of problem-solving dialogues in parallel to the community conversations. The problem-solving dialogues focused on improving granting approaches, a topic that arose as the enthusiastic consensus issue during the SSHRC-funded conversations in early 2022. The problem-solving dialogues took place with representatives of Civil Society Organisations and the City of Calgary on October 6th and 24th, 2022.

Intersections Across Conversations and Dialogues

As facilitators, we quickly identified common themes that emerged in the community conversations and problem-solving dialogues. By informing participants that similar thoughts were expressed in other dialogues, a broader picture of common needs in the East Calgary/GFL area began to emerge for all participants that informed the project as it progressed: the facilitators were able to ask more relevant prompts in later dialogues and lean into issues that emerged across the neighbourhood. A model emerged in which open-ended community conversations would not only identify issues to be eventually discussed in a more direct, problem-solving format, but also gave the facilitators an idea of who

precisely should be invited to the table. What's more, the inclusive facilitation style allowed for otherwise marginalized voices to express themselves alongside more confident or established actors. Dialogues across all levels also served to build relationships between social groups that may not otherwise have encountered each other.

Participant Recruitment and Motivation

We prepared for the conversations by curating a list of 389 community organisations from neighbourhood community groups or from city-wide civil society organisations with a mandate or interest in the people from the area. Groups included local schools, Community Associations, businesses, religious and ethnocultural communities, and post-secondary student groups/associations. Our team reached out by phone, email, or direct messages to around 300 publicly available contacts (websites, Facebook, Instagram pages) and contact information made available from the City. Through these contacts, we held over 100 conversations or digital exchanges through which we curated a list of participants for the community conversations.

Participants in the community conversations included teachers, low-income residents, Community Association volunteers, sports team volunteers, new parents, youth workers, ethnocultural community coordinators, health care professionals, religious centre administrators, activists, pastoral workers, volunteers with AA or with high-needs children, and representatives of city-wide organizations looking to make connections in the neighbourhood (culture, health, economic development). Participants were diverse with regard to gender and racial makeup. Participants told us that they came to vent frustration, make their needs visible, and to revitalize their communities; interestingly, participants who were familiar with the CIF each had very different perceptions of what the project was originally intended to achieve. Civil society representatives were particularly interested in understanding local participants' needs and perspectives. All participants were compensated for their time ($50 gift cards), and some residents said that it was this compensation that prompted them to participate; we found that these participants came from lower income conditions and contributed unique perspectives and needs that would not otherwise have been present.

For the problem-solving dialogues, we recruited from the original SSHRC participant pool of East Calgary/GFL service agencies and the City representatives identified appropriate grants influencer(s) to participate.

What We Heard and What We Have Done
Community conversations

See appendix for detailed summary.
High-level themes included:
- **Communication:** The single most consistent recurring theme across all conversations was the need to reimagine how the City and residents communicate. Emails, social media, flyers, and town halls do not work and attract the same non-representative, vocal minority. But a relationship-oriented approach would be effective – especially if City-supported "connectors" were grounded in relevant communities. The outcome would be the increased use of existing resources (e.g., Alex bus; neighbourhood grants; etc.) and tightened, personalised feedback loops between "feedback" from residents and "action" by City-representatives. A City-supported, informal, network-based approach has potential to cut through the noise of everyday life to improve communication efficiency, serve

as community connectors that leverage and support existing relationships within community and between community and the City, and could be an amplifier for Community Social Workers that could stabilise relationships in the typically high-turnover Community Social Workers environment. These insights led us to hypothesise that Engage/Communications could partner with Community Social Workers as pairs that are embedded in communities. The idea is to be hungry (that is, assertive, persistent, and relentless), active, and embedded in a way that leverages and supports existing informal connectors and facilitates relationship building across identity groups for shared problem solving.

- **Volunteer Resources:** Volunteerism is down and there seems to be a shift towards individualism, compounded by personal economic pressures. This means a lack of capacity in the community and much burnout among remaining volunteers. Participants wondered how to shift mindsets from the individualistic toward the public good; and they noted that people are more likely to volunteer if they get quid pro quo discounts for their families, which is different than having a communal outlook.
- **Income:** The area needs to increase its income level and external appeal, but solutions seem out of reach to community members, whether related to police presence and safety; clean streets, parks and walls; or mixed income housing (residents wondered whether it would actually help). *[Editorial: I was struck that while security and safety concerns are lower in many parts of Calgary, concerns are rising and are centrally prominent in this community; the service gaps between "have" and "have-not" areas is remarkable – and I don't think people across the city realise the role they could play to help improve this community's quality of life].*
- **Programmatic Gaps:** Specific programmatic gaps were identified that seem to have simple solutions – like the absence of low-cost or free early childhood development (ECD) resources for young, low-middle income families; unsafe or poorly maintained walkways or bike paths; the value and need to expand school lunch/support programmes. Regarding sports, participants were concerned about run-down sports facilities, maintenance duties falling to volunteers in communities, and unaffordable activities.
- **Community Members Care:** Participants, especially Community Association representatives, seemed to genuinely love their neighborhood, work exceptionally hard, and care about the people in their communities.

Action Steps:
- Two sets of dialogues are booked for January 2023. One will be a problem-solving dialogue that brings together young parents (low income or racialized) with ECD service agencies to explore potential live or virtual service offerings for the area. Another community conversation will bring together Community Associations and Community Social Workers to explore resourcing questions, especially by drawing attention to and troubleshooting any issues with the undersubscribed neighbourhood grant stream.
- Informal discussions are ongoing with Calgary Economic Development representatives who expressed interest in using this model of dialogue to host city-wide conversations aimed at finding common purpose while collaborating on the specific task of "foresighting" needs and opportunities – which will help consolidate an equity-focus for future innovation and planning initiatives.
- Several topics for future problem-solving dialogues were identified, including:
    o Optimizing existing community resources.
    o Clarifying expectations regarding maintenance of public property.
    o Identifying and consolidating "community connectors" and "connective tissue."
    o Mixed-income housing.

- o   Facilitating ECD programming and other supports to households in need.
  - o   Imagining a new future for the city or specific areas.
- And specifically, when conducting these dialogues, it is important that they be done in a way that helps residents understand each other. It seems insufficient to gather information about building communities without also engaging in community building.

Problem-solving dialogues (funding mechanisms)

See appendix for detailed summary.
High-level themes included:
- **Communication and Connective Tissue:** Participants expressed that they want to see enduring, natural, and embedded contact points between the City and community members that would allow organic, longer-term, networked and nurtured relationships to facilitate natural feedback loops and bridges. We heard loud echoes regarding communication that resonated with what we heard from community conversations – including the notable need to reimagine communication. None of the common methods of communicating with members (email blasts, website updates, social media posts, large town halls) were felt to be effective; rather, we heard a strong desire to focus on community-centred approaches where communicators are honest brokers who engage in proactive exchange of opportunities, ideas, and insights. Some even suggested that the communications team members should be hired from the areas in which they would serve. Some suggested pairing them as dyads with Community Social Workers so if one changes roles or goes on leave (for any reason), relationship continuity persists. This approach would nudge the ethos of communications from a more corporate-ish model to a more community organiser-ish model. This reimagination might help answer questions raised like: What grants are available? How are grants promoted? Where is grant information visible? Why doesn't the City report back sooner or at all? Why is the report of what you heard buried in the unnavigable City website? Can opportunities be mapped and shared with those who need them when they need them, or shared with and through existing community connectors who may work on a volunteer basis?
- **Grant Skill-Development and Opportunity Awareness:** Participants told us that they were concerned by issues of accessibility in the application process, including format (language, structure, confusing forms), knowledge of opportunities, lack of skills, lack of connectedness (don't have anyone to give feedback or vouch for them) and lack of registered charity status (to qualify for some grants). Some of these issues are communications matters (above); others are can hopefully be addressed with a grant-writing workshop and grant-mapping exercise.
- **Value in Collaborative Granting:** We were told that organisations are spending too much money hiring staff to chase grants or spending time chasing grants; is there a collaborative approach to grant distribution that could redirect grant-writing resources to services;and also encourage strategic collaboration? How can granters facilitate connections among and within civil society and the private sector to collaborate and achieve more effective, efficient, or scaled programmes, products, and services? This was thought to improve quality of grant applications as well.

Participants wished for these dialogues to go beyond static reports, instead giving rise to actionable subsequent steps to continue stewarding progress towards achieving results as determined by community consensus.

Action Steps:
- We enlisted the Community Development Learning Initiative (CDLI) to host co-design workshop booked for January 2023 where participants will co-create a community-shaped grant-writing workshops that Community Development Learning Initiative would later regularly deliver to the broader community.
- Arising from this body of work, Community Development Learning Initiative has successfully recruited a professor at Mount Royal University for a student to conduct a grant-mapping project.
- Community Social Workers and neighbourhood residents will join both above activities to help inform and shape their outcomes.
- We are aware of the pending consultant report about granting; we expect the consultant report will find similar themes as we found for this report, including a desire for more collaborative granting and stronger communications. We are open to stewarding ongoing dialogues with Engage/Communications and other policymakers and stakeholders towards meeting community's needs.

Facilitated Dialogues – Feedback and Reflections

Based on participant feedback and facilitator reflection, we conclude that this model of dialogue was:
- **Authentic**: "I like that you aren't pitching me a glossy package with post-it notes and white boards and all that crap." Participants appreciated how hard our team worked to curate diverse attendance. We were told that participants appreciated sitting eye-to-eye and having an honest conversation that was clearly aimed at listening to understand and understanding to act. They appreciated that the exercise wasn't facilitated by a detached communications team but a group that would continue to steward the process and help move needs and action points through the policymaking cycle – from talk to action, maintaining contact along the way.
- **"Hungry Inclusion"**: We took great effort to draw in as diverse a group as possible, casting a broad a net as possible. We expected to get more interest than we received for the first round, but what we heard was that once people participated, they felt heard and hopeful and then suggested others who joined in subsequent sessions. They opened up their networks and we expect this cycle could continue with a durable, on the ground presence. We were also given great advice that we should show up where people are already convening (and where childcare has already been taken care of) like Little League events, parent-teacher events, schoolteacher retreats/meetings, and even showing up to bottle drives to help volunteer while having conversations with volunteers and others along the way. *In essence, we were told to act like we were campaigning, but to campaign for common purpose.* This mode of "hungry inclusion" could fall under the umbrella of "communications" or could be outsourced to a non-profit third-party partner like our group.

Reflections on Dialogue as a Way Forward

As mentioned above, many of the more "concrete" issues (public safety, relationship with the City, grant-writing workshops) are underpinned by key issues that kept surfacing as barriers: the **lack of financial and volunteer resources** in communities, **communication gaps**, and a need for more **connective tissue** between different groups and sectors.

People learnt about each other:

Over the course of the community conversations in particular, representatives of sectors that would never otherwise encounter each other not only expressed themselves but listened to each others' stories. As facilitators we noted several "aha" moments where the mood in the room shifted or where participants clearly learned something new about fellow community members:

- residents and community volunteers were shocked to learn that a specific ethnocultural community in the area "loses 2-3 kids a year to misfires or drug use;"
- some were unaware that some schools in our city go into regular lockdown due to gun violence;
- a young mother lamented limited "mom & tot" programs and limited interest in helping her, only to be contacted by a community volunteer shortly after the dialogue who ended offering up space if the mom could help find the resources;
- a participant from a cultural institution connected our team to Calgary Economic Development (CED), whose representative jointed a subsequent dialogue and began to brainstorm sustainable approaches to support these dialogues going forward with eye to driving equitable innovation.

Connective Tissue:
While dialogue participants tried to identify "connective tissue" during the conversation itself, very often it was us facilitators who provided such tissue behind the scenes, brokering new relationships, and recruiting relevant players to the table.

Diversifying Dialogues:
Another question is how to further diversify the dialogues: at the community conversations, for example, members of particular communities were less vocal than other participants (trying not to take up too much space, concerned that they would be seen as complainers, appear ungrateful, or perhaps even become stigmatised) which may mean that special dialogues will need to be organized to highlight these voices and help them contribute to the process. These six dialogues were held in community centres, and participants have expressed that it may be useful to "go to the community where they already are," for example organizing conversations in schools, at sporting events or among online communities. But diversity does not just concern the marginalised; others are just busy and preferred meeting 1:1, effectively participating outside of the group setting where the facilitators acted like "shuttle diplomats," sharing their insights, driving creativity, and opening up a window to the experiences of others who would have otherwise not been able to contribute.

Third-Party Community Organisers?:
While early results are promising, the aim of the project was to facilitate a "co-constructed" encounter between members of different groups where participants are empowered to make change in their communities, but many participants are instead used to moving within vertical power structures where they feel disempowered and are used to appealing to certain groups or parties to drive change. Many participants, then, looked to the facilitators rather than to each other to initiate change, creating certain expectations on the organizers which positions the facilitators as a type of "professionalised" third party community organiser rather than merely facilitators. This might very well be a necessary and appropriate role in the short-to-intermediat term presumably as a bridge to identifying, formalising, and supporting local community members to inhabit this role for themselves.

Space for the Existential Questions (but only if done right):
Another issue are the hints of polarizing sociocultural issues that emerge in conversations around policing, drug use, Indigenous issues, or attitudes to COVID-19 protections. While the municipal-level nature of the proceedings encourages collaboration, future facilitators will have to be aware of how

such dynamics can further polarise participants if a sense of connection and trust has not yet been established in that group. As the "us vs them" mentality becomes further entrenched, and identity gaps become wider than perceived commonalities, these conversations will become increasingly challenging, if not impossible; which adds a degree of urgency to conduct such conversations soon and at scale.

Talk to Action:
Participants are sick of talk. The most jaded participants were the most open to our proposed mechanism that identified issues with community members and then stewards those issues with community members through the policy cycle toward inclusive, strategic, problem-solving dialogues to further build relationships and engage in creative brainstorming. Having another "escalated dialogue" be an output of previous dialogues is more dynamic than publishing reports, especially if they are easy to miss on the City website. These dialogues are a forum to share back but to continue to grind forward, bringing together the right mix of participants from those with lived experience to those with the power and authority to make change.

Final Reflections

While several participants were inspired by the format, most nevertheless recognized that much work still has to be done to continue building relationships and solving issues collaboratively.

Many participants said that they felt heard and listened to but warned that if there was no follow up from the dialogue, then it would prove to them that "business was the same as usual," highlighting the need for a relatively quick follow up in order not to delegitimize the process.

Looking back to the core goals of the CFI:
- We saw that this approach increased participation and diversity; though we have learned that the most effective approach requires an enduring and embedded approach – something that we would hope to build capacity towards.
- We witnessed (cautious) trust in the process and a genuine warmth and willingness to listen to other community members no matter how different from themselves.
- We are too early in the process to assess for increased capacity among community members for co-stewarding change in their communities and contexts, but believe the ideas presented here have the potential to achieve this goal.
- We were struck by the commitment and passion of Community Association representatives – and believe that this process has potential to play a supporting role in creating vibrant, safe, and hopeful communities – however, it is too early to tell if this has been achieved.