Make A Better City

An Integrated Project
for Teaching About
Citizenship,
Responsibility and
Communities for
Alberta Grade 6
Social Studies,
Health & Life Skills,
Language Arts
and Mathematics

THE CITY OF Edmonton

2nd Edition

1. The City Scene

How do young people interact with the people and places in urban communities? **Set the context**: *The City Scene* encourages students to take a closer look at their immediate communities, including their neighbourhood and the relationships they have within it. Students identify what they like about their neighbourhoods now and what they would like to see changed. They are also introduced to the concept of volunteerism, including participation in events, projects and initiatives that are centred within their own communities.

Social Studies
The City Scene provides an effective context for a review of concepts associated with local government, rights and responsibilities. It encourages students to connect their understanding of these concepts with current issues relevant to quality of life in their communities.

Health & Life Skills
The activities in *The City Scene* support the development of outcomes relating to healthy relationships, community health and safety.

Language Arts
The City Scene provides students with opportunities to apply prior knowledge, express ideas and develop understandings, manage ideas and information and communicate through listening, sharing ideas and writing.

Mathematics
In *The City Scene*, students can apply skills to solve numerical problems and collect, organize and analyze data.

Time

Learning activities in **set the context: The City Scene** will require between 7 and 10 50-minute class periods.

❖ *prepare*

1. Make copies of the student handouts and graphic organizers for this section:

    - The City Scene (pp. 35-38)
    - Walk the Talk (pp. 39-40)
    - Spheres of Influence (p. 41)
    - Volunteering in the City (p. 42-43)
    - Quality of Life Survey (pp. 44-45)
    - Concept Web (p. 179)
    - Placemat (p. 182)
    - T-Chart (p. 186)

Use Technology

Preview the following website sources, which are referenced in the teaching and learning process notes.

Google Earth can be downloaded at http://earth.google.com.

Google Maps can be accessed at http://maps.google.com.

Community Walk is an online tool, found at www.communitywalk.com, where personal and community maps and routes can be created. Note that this website includes some advertising.

The City of Edmonton Archives provide photographs and contextual information in a fully searchable online catalogue at http://archivesphotos. edmonton.ca.

- Quad T-Chart (p. 184)
- Triple T-Chart (p. 187)
- Mind Map (p. 181)
- Venn Diagram (p. 188)

2. Plan a route through the neighbourhood around your school for students to walk as part of an urban neighbourhood walk activity. Students will be asked to identify public and private places, facilities, infrastructure and features of the natural environment.

 Organize students into small groups for the walk and obtain any necessary permission forms and parent volunteers.

 Alternatively, use online resources such as Community Walk, Google Maps and Google Earth to plan a virtual route.

3. Compile resources that can help students explore their urban environment:

- Copies of old and new maps
- Photographs, brochures, pictures, books
- Local newspapers or newsletters

4. Prepare for assessment:

- Check In #1 (p. 46)
- Assess Your Understandings (p. 47)

5. Allocate class periods:

- Comparison chart (1 class)
- Roundtable discussions (1-2 classes)
- Urban neighbourhood walk (2 classes)
- Spheres of influence organizer (1-2 classes)
- Change chart (1 class)
- Survey & action poster (1-2 classes)

6. Use the teacher background information that follows to support students' learning of the conceptual focus of activities in **set the context:** *The City Scene.*

❖ *teacher background*

Local government & community standards

Community standards are the guidelines, rules and norms that govern acceptable behaviour and conduct within communities. Community standards are set in place to encourage residents to treat each other with respect and make it possible to live together in an area. These standards encourage the safety and health of a community and its citizens.

Community standards dealt with in this resource refer to rules, guidelines and laws that influence behaviour in a geographic area. However, community standards can also refer to behaviours that are mandated in groups, teams and other types of communities, including, for example, those often established for web-based communities. Encouraging students to make these types of comparisons can provide a balanced context in which to explore the concept of "standards."

Quality of life

The Quality of Life Research Unit at the University of Toronto develops conceptual models and instruments for research, evaluation and assessment related to quality of life research.

The study of quality of life explores the "influences upon the goodness and meaning in life, as well as people's happiness and well being. From the perspective of this research project, the ultimate goal of quality of life study and its subsequent applications is to enable people to live quality lives – lives that are both meaningful and enjoyed." **Quality of life** is defined, in simple terms, as the answer to the question, "How good is your life for you?"

"Every person's life is different, and thus the way in which each person experiences a quality of life is unique. Individuals lead complex lives that have many dimensions. A quality of life approach recognizes that there are many different aspects of living that may contribute to quality."

University of Toronto Quality of Life Research Unit. www.utoronto.ca/qol/.
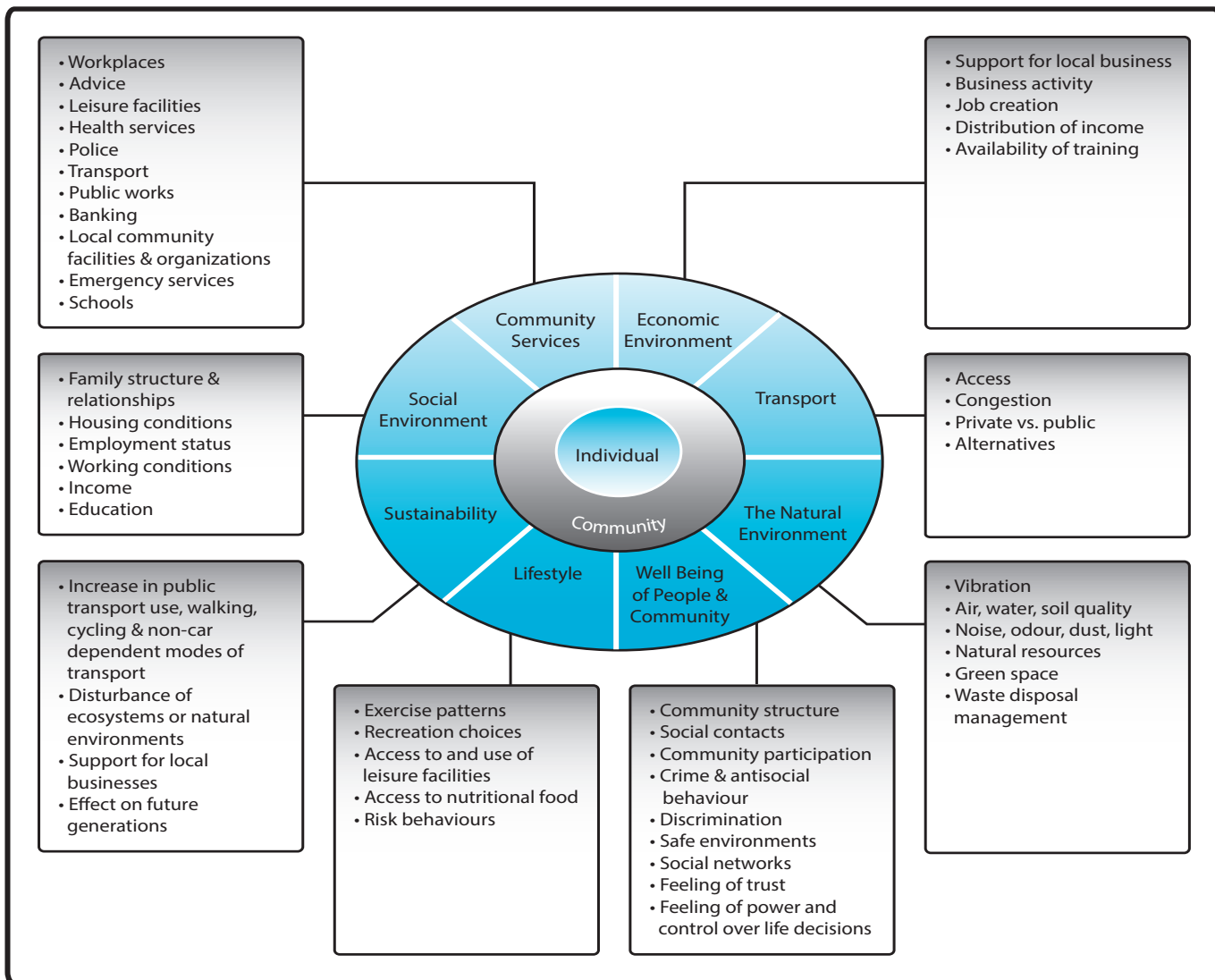
Use Technology

A number of tools and research studies are available on the University of Toronto Quality of Life Research Unit website, at www.utoronto.ca/qol/projects.htm.

Community health factors

Community-based health provides a perspective on community living that focuses on how all elements and factors of the community can contribute to the health, safety and well being of its residents. An exploration of community-based health encourages students to consider how their environment can affect and support their individual health.

The following framework provides an overview of the variety of elements and factors that influence public and community-based health. Students should be encouraged to discuss the many elements that influence what an urban community can provide to the people who live within it.

A Framework for Exploring Community Health

• Workplaces
• Advice
• Leisure facilities
• Health services
• Police
• Transport
• Public works
• Banking
• Local community
  facilities & organizations
• Emergency services
• Schools

• Support for local business
• Business activity
• Job creation
• Distribution of income
• Availability of training

• Family structure &
  relationships
• Housing conditions
• Employment status
• Working conditions
• Income
• Education

Community Services

Economic Environment

Social Environment

Transport

Individual

Sustainability

Community

The Natural Environment

Lifestyle

Well Being of People & Community

• Access
• Congestion
• Private vs. public
• Alternatives

• Increase in public
  transport use, walking,
  cycling & non-car
  dependent modes of
  transport
• Disturbance of
  ecosystems or natural
  environments
• Support for local
  businesses
• Effect on future
  generations

• Exercise patterns
• Recreation choices
• Access to and use of
  leisure facilities
• Access to nutritional food
• Risk behaviours

• Community structure
• Social contacts
• Community participation
• Crime & antisocial
  behaviour
• Discrimination
• Safe environments
• Social networks
• Feeling of trust
• Feeling of power and
  control over life decisions

• Vibration
• Air, water, soil quality
• Noise, odour, dust, light
• Natural resources
• Green space
• Waste disposal
  management

Based on a model developed by the Department of Health. Government of Australia.

❖ *teaching & learning process*

Comparison chart

Introduce students to *Make a Better City* by asking them to think about relationships that are important to them. What *is* a relationship? What relationships do they have within their communities? *(Revisit the concept of healthy relationships with students – review what they have learned in their Health & Life Skills classes. Remind students that communities can be more than geographic areas and can include groups to which people feel a sense of belonging. Discuss what a "sense of belonging" means – feeling comfortable and at ease, having things in common, feeling a part of a group, shared values within a group.)*

Focus on Health & Life Skills
Discuss and define what a healthy relationship means to students. *(In the Health & Life Skills program, students learn that healthy relationships are the basis for a healthy family and the connections they have with other people. Relationships are built through love, communication, cooperation, respect, understanding, appreciation and responsibility.)*

Do relationships in communities have the same **attributes**, or characteristics? Work as a class to create a **comparison chart** for the concepts of "family" and "community," such as the one below. Discuss how people in families and communities show different behaviours in a variety of ways. Share ideas by completing charts with the headings in the examples shown below.

Extend

Have students expand on the types of relationships they have within their community by completing a **personal relationships web,** using a graphic organizer such as a **Concept Web (p. 179).**

How people in families show…

Love	Communication	Cooperation	Respect	Understanding	Appreciation	Responsibility

How people in communities show…

Love	Communication	Cooperation	Respect	Understanding	Appreciation	Responsibility

Adapted from Alberta Education (2002): *Health & Life Skills Guide to Implementation (K-9): Grade 6 Illustrative Examples,* p. 441.

Differentiate

Discussions can be organized around different contexts, depending on students' learning needs and preferences:

• Discuss questions as a whole class, ensuring adequate wait time and equal opportunity for individual students to respond.

• Record the discussion questions on the interactive whiteboard or overhead and ask students to discuss them in small groups.

• Organize students to work individually or in small groups to respond to questions displayed on posters around the classroom. Use a **carousel** activity structure to have groups rotate through each poster. In a carousel activity, students move around the classroom to address questions on each poster.

• A strategy such as **inside/outside circles** can encourage students to share one-on-one. Divide the class into two groups. Have one group form an inside circle and the other group an outside circle. Have students face each other and discuss a question with the student facing them. Rotate the outside or inside circle with each question.

As an alternative to the roundtable discussion, use a **placemat discussion** to have students record and share their ideas. Ask each individual in the group to write or illustrate their ideas in one quadrant of the **Placemat (p. 182).** Then, have groups share and discuss their ideas, placing common ideas in the middle of the graphic organizer.

Roundtable discussions

Use discussion questions such as the following to introduce key concepts and set the context for *Make a Better City.* The concepts in these questions will be explored in further depth in **The City Scene** student resource, which should be provided to students after this initial discussion.

• What is a **community?** Why are communities important? How are the relationships you have important to the communities to which you belong? *(Students may have already discussed the concept of community in depth. If so, ask them for insights about the importance of community to living in Edmonton and the types of relationships they form and maintain within this urban community.)*

• How do you think the communities to which you belong affect your **quality of life?** *(Review the concept of quality of life with students. The University of Toronto's Quality of Life Research Unit describes quality of life as factors that influence the goodness and meaning in life, as well as happiness and well being.)*

• What does it mean to be an "active" member of a community? In what ways do you think individuals can contribute to a community?

• What are some responsibilities that you think individuals should have within their communities? How important do you think it is for people to take responsibility in and for their communities? *(**Responsibilities** involve obligations, duties or actions for which there is a sense of accountability and trust. For example, obeying laws is an important responsibility. A **law** is a rule that is established by a community to guide behaviours and actions. Different communities may have different laws.)*

• What rights do you think individuals should have within their communities? *(A **right** is a freedom that is protected, often by rules and laws. Students may find this question challenging. Pose examples, such as whether everyone has the right to a clean, safe, healthy and livable environment in which to live; whether anyone has the right to own a pet no matter how they treat it; if everyone has the right to own their own home; if everyone has the right to use public places like parks and playgrounds in any way they choose.)*

• What do you think is meant by "common good"? Should there be rules to protect the common good – or the majority – in a community? *(**Common good** refers to an action or conditions that benefit the majority of people living in a community. Encourage students to identify examples of when and where rules should exist to protect the common good, such as in parks or on sidewalks and roadways that everyone shares. Challenge students further by asking them what types of rules exist now or what these rules should be.)*

• Can individuals have rights without responsibilities? Why or why not? *(Ask students to think about their rights and responsibilities in school. Every student has the right to learn; however, every student has a responsibility to arrive at school and to class on time, complete their homework and follow school and classroom rules. Use other examples. Can home owners have rights without responsibilities? Can pet owners have rights without responsibilities?)*

Provide students with **The City Scene (pp. 35-38)** and a **Triple T-Chart (p. 187)** and ask them to explore different perspectives on living in a city and factors that influence quality of life and community health. Ask students to complete the questions with a partner. Have each pair discuss their responses and ideas with another pair. Then, have students work in these small groups to hold their **roundtable discussions**, using the process and questions provided at the end of the student resource.

Conclude the activity by discussing how being a citizen comes with rights and responsibilities. If everyone had only rights and no responsibilities, what would happen to communities? Would people contribute to and care about their communities? If everyone had responsibilities but no rights, what would happen to individuals? Tell students that they will continue to explore the balance between rights and responsibilities.

How to use the interactive whiteboard app with this activity

The *Pets in the City* **interactive whiteboard app**, which can be launched at www.edmonton.ca/makeabettercity, includes a whole class activity that helps to develop and support understandings of rights, responsibilities, local government, common good and citizenship. Situations in the City, located in the Community Centre, asks students to explore situations that can develop between pet owners and people who don't own pets. In this activity, students match an individual and community-centred response and consequence to each situation.

Situations in the City provides an opportunity to reinforce the conflict that can sometimes exist between individual's rights and responsibilities and the rights and responsibilities of the community as a whole – or the common good. Students can be encouraged to compare rights and responsibilities of pet owners they learn about in this activity to other contexts, including home and property owners, businesses and local governments.

Use the discussion questions that are provided in the activity to challenge students to explore how pet owners' decisions can affect the individual as well as the community as a whole.

Use this interactive whiteboard app to build deeper understandings of the connection between rights and responsibilities and the roles of local government. As students make matches and receive feedback from the Animal Care & Control Officer, encourage them to discuss and compare the roles of individuals, communities and local government.

Assess

Have groups hand in their placemat organizers and look for evidence of individual contributions to the group product.

Differentiate

Three "situation" stories, selected randomly from eight different stories, appear each time the Situations in the City activity is started. Use one whole set of situations to model and guide students through the matching process. Use varying group structures to have students build understandings of key concepts.

- Have pairs or small groups of students take turns leading the activity by reading each situation and matching the best response and consequence.

- As a class, read and make jot notes about each situation. Review the responses and consequences together and have groups select and record those they think are the best matches.

- Provide groups with the opportunity to lead class discussions using the questions in each response and consequence.

- Have students volunteer to take turns matching responses and consequences to each situation and presenting the discussion questions to the class.

Source-Based Research

Use Technology

Have students collect or gather a variety of other resources that can help them explore their urban environment:

- Maps of the neighbourhood, including street maps, transit maps or those found on Internet sites by searching "Edmonton neighbourhood maps"

- Photographs, brochures, pictures, documents

- Local newspapers or newsletters.

The City of Edmonton Archives provide photographs and contextual information in a fully searchable online catalogue at http://archivesphotos.edmonton.ca.

The City of Edmonton's *Community Walking Maps* provides a series of neighbourhood-based walking maps that are available free of charge. These maps can be accessed on the City of Edmonton's website at www.edmonton.ca/community-walking-maps.aspx. The community walking maps are part of the City of Edmonton's *Communities on Foot* map series and are created as a joint project between the City and local community leagues or groups to promote walkable, vibrant and sustainable neighbourhoods and create a more livable city. **Decide and take action: Make It Real** provides additional suggestions for having students create their own walking maps.

Urban neighbourhood walk

What responsibilities should all people have within their communities? Organize students into pairs or small groups to participate in an **urban neighbourhood walk** – a walking tour that explores places, facilities and services in the neighbourhoods around the school. The neighbourhood walk will provide students with an opportunity to observe and think about how people's actions and behaviours affect public and private places.

Invite each pair or small group to first brainstorm "signs" or indications that people take responsibility for the health, safety and livability of a neighbourhood. Students can be asked to revisit factors that influence health, safety and livability from the previous activity. They can also be provided with some initial starting ideas, such as the following examples. Students may also have their own definite ideas and should be encouraged to express them.

- The appearance of a neighbourhood or absence of litter or junk

- Safe places in which to play

- Places for animals or pets

- Green areas and places to enjoy

- Neighbours who talk to one another

- Lighting for areas at night

- Sidewalks for walking

- Things to do and places to play

- Buildings and homes that are cared for and well-maintained

Provide some time for students to share their ideas as a class.

Provide each pair or small group with **Walk the Talk (pp. 39-40)** and a **Venn Diagram (p. 188)**. Set the context for the neighbourhood walk by discussing similarities and differences between the concepts of **neighbourhood** and **community**, as presented in the opener of the student resource. Have students use the Venn Diagram to explore this comparison. *(Students often equate neighbourhood with community and, in many cases, this is not an inaccurate comparison. However, the concept of community has a broader meaning and can encompass both geographic areas as well as social, cultural or religious affinities, teams and groups that share language, interests and activities.)*

Work as a class to establish observation guidelines for the neighbourhood walk. Encourage students to look specifically for places and features in their neighbourhoods such as the following:

- **Public places,** or places that are available to everyone in the neighbourhood

- **Private places** or **properties** that belong to individuals or groups

- **Facilities** that provide services that benefit everyone

- Features that provide the **infrastructure,** or the basic structures or features of the neighbourhood, such as roads, lights, power structures and sidewalks

- Features of the **natural environment.**

These examples are also provided in the student resource to help students look for a range of features and places. Invite the class to brainstorm examples of each type of place before they go on the walk.

Conduct the neighbourhood walk, providing groups or pairs with a **T-Chart (p. 186)** in which to record their observations. A sample T-Chart is also provided in the student resource.

Invite students to share their neighbourhood walk findings with another small group, including any products you may have had them create, such as the composite photo essay, podcast or video prospectus.

Focus on Social Studies

The urban neighbourhood walk and follow-up discussions can provide a context in which students review their understandings of local and provincial governments. Once students complete the urban neighbourhood walk, have them identify places that are the responsibility of local and provincial governments. Students can be asked to transfer their Neighbourhood Walk Observation T-Chart to a **Triple T-Chart (p. 187)**, with the additional heading "Level of Government Responsibility." *(Encourage students to revisit core textbook and other supplementary resources that provide in-depth information on structures, functions and responsibilities of local and provincial government. This background information is not provided in this resource.)*

Extend

Use a graphic organizer such as a **Mind Map (p. 181)** to explore the link between quality of life and the indicators of health, safety and livability of a neighbourhood that students identified at the beginning of the walk. Place "quality of life" in the middle of the mind map and organize each indicator around it. Then, map ideas and examples that describe how each indicator influences quality of life.

Differentiate

Spend some time exploring the concepts of public and private places, facilities and infrastructure. If students need additional support with these concepts, provide them with pictures or photographs that illustrate these types of places and spaces in a community. Search the City of Edmonton website to find some examples of photographs or conduct an Internet search.

Use Technology

The urban neighbourhood walk can be a "virtual" walk. Students can be asked to take photographs or video clips of different places in their neighbourhoods and create a **composite photo essay**, a **podcast** or **video prospectus**.

Using Internet tools such as Google Earth, Google Map or Community Walk, students can map different places within their neighbourhoods.

Google Earth can be downloaded at http://earth.google.com. Google Map can be accessed at http://maps.google.com.

Community Walk is an online tool, found at www.communitywalk.com, that can be used to create personal and community maps and routes.

The downtown library
City Hall
Hawrelak Park

The soccer centre
My school

My neighbourhood store
The off leash dog park
The community centre &
summer green shack

My home
My dog
My family

Me

My Spheres of Influence

Spheres of influence organizer

Invite students to revisit the first question they responded to in **The City Scene** student resource – what it means to be a citizen in the city, as well as the captions they wrote for the photographs on the first page. Ask them to consider how these photographs represent different types of roles in the city. *(Encourage students to start by identifying the neighbourhood view pictured in the first photograph, and then the individual pictured in the second photograph. Ask students to think about the differences between the way an individual "participates" within the city and the roles that groups of people living in a neighbourhood or community can play. Are there any conflicts that they think could arise?)*

Ask students to think about their sense of belonging and involvement within their "spheres of influence," including their homes and families, in their neighbourhoods and with facilities, services and places in the larger city. Provide students with **Spheres of Influence (p. 41)** and ask them to construct their own **spheres of influence organizer**, using descriptive words, phrases, sketches or illustrations.

Have students identify themselves in the middle circle. Ask them to use the inside circles to identify people and animals, places, services and features that are closest to them and most important to their quality of life. Then, use the expanding circles to add people and animals, places, services and features that are further but still important. Encourage students to consider personal and relevant ideas from their urban neighbourhood walks.

Ask students to share their spheres of influence organizers with a partner and discuss how they think an individual can contribute to everyone's quality of life. Ask some pairs to volunteer to share their ideas with the class.

Use this "volunteer sharing" to introduce and discuss the concept of "volunteerism" with students. (***Volunteerism*** *refers to the willingness of people to give their time or services to take part in activities that benefit others. Point out to the students that many people think that time and talents have a monetary value as well. When people volunteer, they donate their time for free, and so may be saving the community the cost of paying someone to do that job. Many people believe that if individuals benefit from their community, they are also responsible to give something back to help the community as a whole.*)

Provide students with **Volunteering in the City (pp. 42-43)**. Students may be asked to complete the questions individually, but conduct the Think Aloud at the end of the student resource as a class.

Differentiate

Accommodate different learning needs by accepting varying levels of details, illustrations and examples in each circle of the spheres of influence organizer.

Great lead into volunteering, getting [students] to ask questions such as what do we need in our community, what does that look like and what can we do now to help.

~Melissa G., Edmonton Catholic Schools

Change chart

Ask students to individually reflect, by writing responses in their notebooks, on questions such as the following:

- What are some problems, challenges or issues that you think the neighbourhood faces?

- What types of changes do you think would most benefit the neighbourhood?

- Who should be responsible for implementing these changes? Why?

Invite students to share what they think local government's responsibility should be in dealing with issues, problems and concerns in neighbourhoods by discussing questions such as the following:

- What do you know about community standards? How and why do you think community standards are established? How do you think they can be **enforced** or ensured? *(**Community standards** are guidelines, rules and policies that establish standards of behaviour, actions and conduct that people follow so that everyone can live together peacefully in a community.)*

- What community standards and bylaws are you aware of? How do these standards and bylaws deal with some of the neighbourhood issues you identified? *(**Bylaws** are guidelines and rules that help people live together peacefully in diverse neighbourhoods of a city.)*

- Why do you think we have bylaws? How do you think bylaws are made?

- What role does the local city government play in making these bylaws?

- Why would the local government have this role?

- What do you think your role is in making your neighbourhood and city a better place to live? *(Remind students of their spheres of influence, and encourage them to consider how meeting community standards can often start at home, as individuals and families can contribute to the health, safety and appearance of their own neighbourhoods. These contributions can then spread to other neighbourhoods and communities.)*

- Why do you think it is important to be aware of and understand existing laws and community standards in considering any action for change?

Ask students to use a graphic organizer such as a **Quad T-Chart (p. 184)** to describe what they like about what they have observed in their neighbourhoods and what they would like to change.

Focus on Health & Life Skills

Ask students to define and discuss the concept of **community health,** including facilities and services provided in a community that affect the health of its residents. Ask students to explore what contributes to, or negatively affects, a community's "health." Challenge students to further explore and brainstorm ways in which community health can be protected. Who should be responsible for protecting a community's health – individuals, communities or governments? Why? *(Consider ideas such as access to healthy activities and health care professionals and facilities, adequate and affordable housing, public transit, roads and sidewalks with adequate safety signage, environmental protections and programs such as recycling, opportunities to get involved with community and recreational activities and educational programs, and laws that protect public health, such as smoking bans. Community health is often associated with quality of life.)*

Extend

Students who live in different neighbourhoods can be encouraged to compare observations, issues and challenges.

What I Like	What I Would Like to Change	How This Change Would Benefit the Neighbourhood	How a Bylaw or Community Standard Could Help Support this Change

Extend

Make a class list of the issues and have students discuss the consequences of the four issues that they believe are the most important for residents of the *Make a Better City* web neighbourhood to change or resolve. How could these issues be addressed through community standards or bylaws? Compare and compile results. Reinforce mathematics skills by using tables or grids.

Field-Based Research

Ask each student to administer the quality of life survey to one or two other individuals – community members, family or friends. Discuss how you can ensure that diverse individuals are surveyed. Discuss how a "sample" of the community's population can be reflective of the whole.

Focus on Mathematics

As a class, compile survey results into a table or grid. If there is sufficient data, use class-constructed graphs to compare perspectives and ideas. Make a class list of ideas that reflect ways to make a better city.

How to use the web app with this activity

The *Make a Better City* **web app**, at www.edmonton.ca/makeabettercity, provides an additional opportunity for students to identify and explore examples of issues, problems and challenges that communities can face.

As a class, complete Challenge Activity One. This activity asks students to:

- Start a virtual neighbourhood walk by selecting a character and finding problems, challenges and issues that affect the health, safety and well being of residents.

- Select, and add to their WhyPods, at least four issues that they believe are the most important for residents of the neighbourhood to change.

The *Make a Better City* website is session based. If students do not complete an activity within a class period, they must start over by clicking the Restart bar at the bottom of the screen.

Survey & action poster

Challenge students to identify actions they think citizens can take to "make a better city." Provide students with the **Quality of Life Survey (pp. 44-45)** and ask them to work with a partner to respond to the questions in the **survey** and generate action ideas that could improve quality of life.

Create a master list of action ideas as an **action poster** and post it in the classroom. Encourage students to keep track of these and additional action ideas in their notebooks, as they may be asked to revisit and use them in **decide and take action: Make It Real**.

❖ *assessment*

Select from the following summative assessment tasks and activities.

- Ask students to think about one thing in their neighbourhood that they would like to change. Encourage students to revisit their notes and work from individual and class discussions, the different community issues they identified and their action posters to help them.

- Provide students with **Assess Your Understandings (p. 47)** and have them complete the four-square assessment tasks:

  - Create a sketch to show one thing you would like to change in your neighbourhood.

  - Make a list, a mind map or a web of the benefits of this change.

  - Identify facts and opinions that are related to the change you would like to make. *(For example, a fact could be the litter in the park in the neighbourhood. An opinion could be that higher fines should be given to people who litter.)*

  - Write a paragraph proposing the change and why you would like to see it take place.

- Assess the paragraph using a checklist such as the one provided below.

- Have students complete **Check In #1 (p. 46)** as a self-assessment of their communication skills.

Paragraph Checklist

	Yes	Somewhat	Not yet
Paragraph is focused on topic of change			
Clearly explains personal point of view			
Facts are used to support need for change			
Opinions from reliable sources are used to support the need for change			

Focus on Language Arts

The paragraph assignment provides an opportunity to assess students' ability to present a position and support it with reasons and evidence. Share and discuss the checklist with students before they complete their paragraphs.

The City Scene

set the context

explore and research

decide and take action
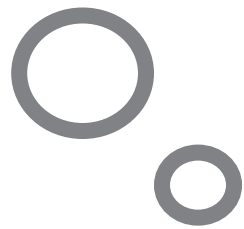
What does it mean to be a citizen in a city? Describe what you think it means in the box below. When you are finished the tasks in this resource, create captions for each bubble visual!

What It Means to Be a Citizen in a City

❖ Quality of Life in the City

Many people believe that Edmonton provides a good quality of life for its residents. This quality of life is affected by factors and conditions in the communities and neighbourhoods that make up the city. Communities and neighbourhoods provide opportunities for families and social relationships to grow and develop.

What opportunities does your community provide for you and your family?

_____

_____

Do you think the City of Edmonton is a "good" place to live? Why or why not?

_____

_____

How would you describe or define a "good" city? Why?

_____

_____

Many daily and recreational activities that make a community and neighbourhood a great place to live happen in different places – like parks, arenas, playing fields, swimming pools and bike paths. Being able to get from one place to another means that public transit is also important to a community or neighbourhood. These are all examples of **public** or shared facilities or services. As communities grow, public places must be **maintained,** or kept up, so that everyone in the community can continue to use them.

The City of Edmonton has a plan called *The Way Ahead.* This plan was developed by the city government and identified factors that are important for the quality of life and health of city residents. **Quality of life** can be influenced by the availability of facilities and services that affect the "goodness" and meaning in people's lives, as well as their happiness and well being.

How do you think each of the factors in the chart below can affect quality of life?

Streets, paths, roads and sidewalks	
Public facilities, services, parks and open spaces	
Places to live	
Access to healthy food	
Freedom, or right, to use public places	

Do you think there are other factors that are essential to consider for a good quality of life? What would these be?

_____

_____

Why are these factors essential? How can they benefit citizens?

_____

_____

❖ Community Health

Community health is a factor that can make a community a "good" place to live. Community health can be influenced by different conditions, including those that go beyond clean air and environmental health.

What do you think each of the following community health factors look like? Make a sketch or create descriptive words for each factor in the grid below.

Community **diversity** (communities with individuals who have a variety of languages, interests, nationalities, backgrounds and ways of life)	Places to rest and play	Safe environments
Health services	Air, water and soil quality	Services and facilities for daily living
Companions, including animals and pets	Groups and teams to join and belong to	Community participation

Are there other factors you would add? Name and describe them in the squares below.

Hold a **roundtable discussion.** In a roundtable discussion, each student is given a chance to share his or her opinion. Prepare your individual responses to each of the questions below. Then, discuss your responses as a group.

Would you consider your community to be a healthy, safe and clean community? Why or why not? Support your answer with evidence and examples.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Common good refers to conditions and actions that provide a good quality of life for the majority of people living in a community. When do you think individual actions and behaviours might interfere with the common good of the community? How do you think individual actions and behaviours can contribute to the common good?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What kinds of things do citizens in a city need to live well? **Why** do they need these things? **Where** would or should you find these things? Use a **Triple T-Chart** to answer each question. Ask your teacher for this graphic organizer or make your own like the one below.

What	Why	Where

Walk the Talk

set the context

What makes up an urban neighbourhood? And what makes one neighbourhood in a city different from or similar to another? Consider the places and features that are part of the **human environment** – things that are made by and for people. Think about the features of the **natural environment** – the outdoor spaces in a community, such as urban forests, parks, air quality, the climate and bodies of water.

You will participate in a neighbourhood walk to identify what makes your neighbourhood unique and what affects the ways people live in it.

As you plan your walk, think about recording observations about these different types of places and features:

- **Public places,** or places that are available to everyone in the neighbourhood

- **Private places** or **properties** that belong to individuals or groups

- **Facilities** that provide services that benefit everyone

- Places that provide the **infrastructure,** or the basic features of the neighbourhood, such as roads, lights, boulevards and sidewalks

- Features of the **natural environment**, such as a river or stream, ravines and hills.

What caption could you add to this photograph?

What is the relationship between a neighbourhood and a community? Some people think a neighbourhood and a community can mean the same things. Some think they are quite different. What do you think?

Write what you think a neighbourhood means in the first circle of a Venn diagram and what community means in the second. Describe how they are similar in the middle intersection of the circles. Ask your teacher for this graphic organizer.
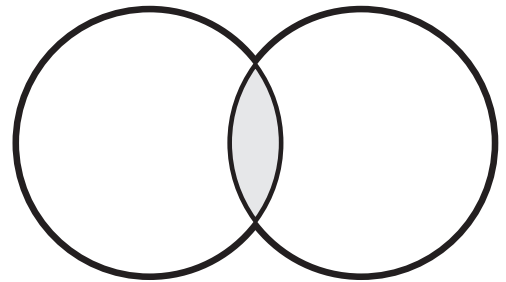
Consider the following questions as you complete your walk. Are each of these places and features necessary in a neighbourhood? Why? How would quality of life be affected if one or more was missing?

💻 Use Technology

Explore your neighbourhood online. Use a web tool such as Google Earth, which can be downloaded at http://earth.google.com. Ask your teacher or parent before downloading and saving this tool on your computer.

Neighbourhood Walk Observation T-Chart

Places and Features	Observations
Public places that are available to everyone in the neighbourhood	
Private places or properties	
Facilities that provide services that benefit everyone	
Features that provide the infrastructure of the neighbourhood, such as roads, lights and sidewalks	
Features of the natural environment	
Other places?	
Other features?	

Spheres of Influence

set the context

explore and research

decide and take action

Start with yourself in the middle of the spheres of influence organizer. Illustrate or briefly describe where you live in the city. Use the inner circles to identify people and animals, places, services or features in the city that are closest to you and most important to your quality of life. Use the expanding circles to add people and animals, places, services and features that are further away but still important. Use extra circles if you need to.

Me
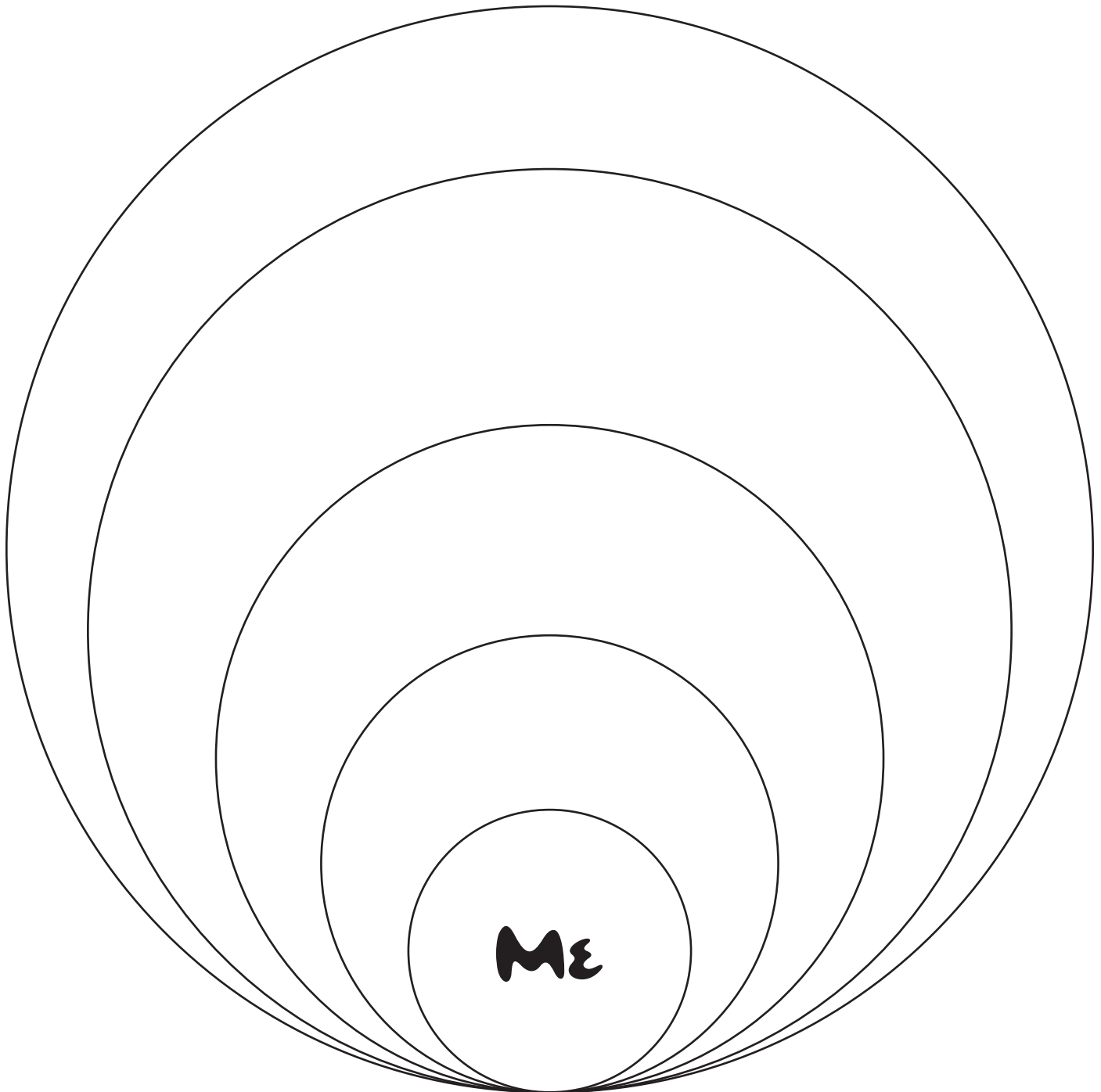
Volunteering in the City
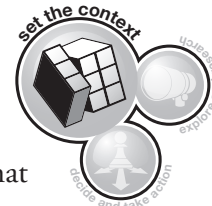
Some think that a "good" place to live is also affected by the extent that people **volunteer,** or provide their time and expertise for free. Volunteerism is a way that individuals can participate and make their city a better place to live.

What does volunteerism mean to you?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Approximately 46% of Edmontonians volunteer. There are more than 4 000 **not-for-profit organizations** in Edmonton – organizations that do not make a **profit,** or more money than they need to pay their expenses. More than half of these organizations are completely run by volunteers. In 2012, over 13 000 volunteers contributed over 200 000 hours to City of Edmonton programs and services.

When have you volunteered for something? What did you do? How did it make you feel?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What events or organizations do you think need volunteers to help them? What kinds of volunteer jobs do you think exist? List two or three examples.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Why do you think it is important to volunteer? What could happen if people did not volunteer to help with community or city events or activities?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you think even five or ten minutes of participation in a community event or activity is volunteering? Or would you have to give more time to be considered a volunteer? The fact is, you are a volunteer for any time you spend helping others.

When you help even for a short period of time, it is called microvolunteerism. **Microvolunteering** is the latest idea in volunteering and encourages people to contribute whatever time they may have to something that benefits others, even if it is only five or ten minutes!

Microvolunteering is also happening through online, or Internet based, communities. Projects are posted online and people join up to contribute ideas, skills or money. Here's what Volunteer Canada said about Canadian volunteers:

" *Volunteering is part of our identity as Canadians — we value civic participation and embrace a spirit of community. The tremendous efforts of our 12.5 million volunteers help make Canada a vibrant, safe place to call home. Across the country, Canadians are getting involved and leading positive change in a variety of ways, all of them vital — from quick bursts of mobile micro-volunteering on smartphones to front-line disaster relief efforts overseas. The work of volunteers is essential to maintaining healthy, dynamic communities at home and around the world.* "
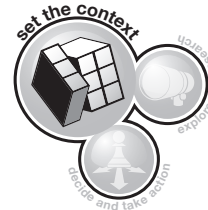
National Volunteer Week April 15-21, 2012: http://nationalvolunteerweek.ca.

What effect do you think five or ten minutes of volunteer time could have? Why do you think this?

_____

_____

_____

_____

EDMONTON
edmonton.ca/volunteers

GREAT VOLUNTEERS
**BUILDING A
GREAT CITY**

volunteer with **THE CITY OF Edmonton**

Quality of Life Survey

set the context

Many people believe the quality of the natural environment is important to people live in a community. Do you think there is a good natural environment in your community?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Maybe

The **natural environment** would be better if…

_____

_____

_____

Many people believe that living conditions must be equal and fair for everyone. Do you think there is equality in your community?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Maybe

My community would be more **equal and fair** if…

_____

_____

_____

Do you think members of your community have good job opportunities, facilities and services?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Maybe

The **job opportunities, facilities and services** would be better in my community if…

_____

_____

_____

Do you think you live in a community where people get along with each other and work for the common good?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Maybe

My community would have stronger **relationships** if…

_____

_____

_____

One aspect of living together in a community involves managing it and making good decisions that benefit everyone. Do you think your community is well managed? Can you identify the leaders and decision-makers in your community? Who are they?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Maybe

My community would be **managed** better if…

_____

_____

_____

My community's leaders and decision-makers are...

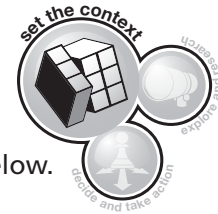_____

_____

_____

Do you think residents in your community respect its standards and bylaws?

☐ Yes   ☐ No   ☐ Maybe

My community's **standards and bylaws** would be better respected if…

_____

_____

_____

Check In #1

Check your communication skills. Score yourself on each statement using the scale below.

	almost never	sometimes	almost always
I am comfortable sharing new ideas with others.			
I apply my problem solving skills when I discuss ideas.			
I make sure that I provide reasons for my ideas and opinions.			
I apply good listening skills during discussions.			
I am comfortable asking questions of others during a discussion.			
I respect others' opinions and perspectives.			
Think about one more thing that is important when you work in a group. Write it down and score yourself on it.			

What are two goals you would like to set to improve your communication skills?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are two actions you can take to help you reach those goals?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Assess Your Understandings

Create a sketch to show one thing you would like to change in your neighbourhood.	Make a list, a mind map or a web of the benefits of this change.

Identify the facts and opinions that relate to the need for change.

Facts [Think about the conditions that are creating a need for change. Is there a bylaw that relates to this condition?]	**Opinions** [What do you think about the conditions that exist? Do you support or oppose the bylaw?]

Write a paragraph describing the change, the benefits of the change and why you would like to see it take place. Use facts to support your opinion. Plan your paragraph below and then write it on a separate page.