

The goal of REACH-Cities is to advance research, tools, and partnerships that increase gender equity in our cities.

What is REACH-Cities?

REACH-Cities is a 6-year, \$1.1 million research program supported through Dr. Meghan Winters' Canadian Institute of Health Research Applied Public Health Chair, Sex and Gender in Healthy Cities. It is 1 of 7 grants nationally. The REACH-Cities program is responsive to the needs of partners, to address urgent questions and timely opportunities. Ultimately, the work aims to identify and implement practical ways to incrementally embed gender considerations into city planning processes and advance the work of healthy and equitable cities.

Why does equity matter?

An equitable city is one where all residents have fair access to and participation in the life of the city. Our social identities, including gender, shape our everyday experiences in our cities. However, women, girls, and gender-diverse people are often not prioritized, represented, or engaged in city design. Women and gender diverse people face many unique challenges in cities related to mobility, transportation, housing, childcare and safety. For example, these groups take on more of the mobility of care (travel related to household responsibilities, including escorting children or supporting elders) and are more likely to experience harassment in public spaces. City design, including land use (e.g., where services, schools, and community centres are located) and transportation (e.g., safe infrastructure for walking and cycling) can support or impede one's experience of a city. For example, design features like lighting and social environments are especially important for women, girls, and gender-diverse people to be able to access transportation and public amenities .

REACH-Cities' Three Connected Themes of Work

- 1 Population Health Intervention Research:** Developing case studies to create evidence on the implementation and impacts of city policies, programs, or changes to the built environment.
- 2 Methods and Tools for Intersectoral Action:** Developing and/or sharing novel approaches for integrating equity into decision-making in local, national, and international settings.
- 3 Training for Healthy Cities:** Fostering a generation of researchers and practitioners who are equipped with the expertise to catalyze action toward cities that promote health and health equity.

Case Studies (2022-2023)

Examples of case studies that we are beginning to explore include:

- A social equity analysis of 15-minute neighbourhoods in Surrey
- An analysis of census data to map demographic change in the region over 25 years
- A scan of equity frameworks being used in Canadian municipalities

Partners

REACH-Cities' primary partner is the City of Surrey. Surrey is home to 591,700 people and is the largest city in Metro Vancouver by land area. Its tagline, "The future lives here", reflects its fast-growing population: 10,000 people move to Surrey every year, and a quarter of Surrey's population is under 20 years old. Surrey is also among the most culturally diverse cities in Canada, with 47% of residents speaking languages at home other than English and French.

REACH-Cities activities and outputs will involve and support a much larger audience: community groups, city staff, and health practitioners working in the Metro Vancouver region, as well as a broader network of provincial, national, and international audiences.

We recognize a lot of excellent initiatives are already underway. As we build out REACH-Cities we hope to connect with current and potential partners who share our interest healthy, equitable cities. If you are interested in working with us, please reach out.

Team, Collaborators and Funding

The REACH-Cities program was designed in discussion with numerous SFU Faculty members, including Jen Marchbank, Tiffany Muller Myrdahl, Lyana Patrick, Travis Salway, Julia Smith, and Travers. SFU has provided great support for the project, including from the Faculty of Health Sciences, SFU Surrey, Community Engaged Research Initiative (CERi), and the SFU Library.

Meghan Winters is one of 7 CIHR Applied Public Health Research Chairs in Canada: the program is also connected with the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the National Collaborating Centres for Public Health.

