Shape the future of your neighbourhood.
Thank you
We appreciate your efforts.

Kitchener’s Neighbourhood Action Plan guide and toolkit was written by a committee of residents and City staff, based on research and input by the Neighbourhood Strategy project team. The document borrows from the work of the Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit. Thank you.

Got questions?
Contact City staff anytime. We’re happy to help!

Neighbourhood Development Office, City of Kitchener
lovenmyhood@kitchener.ca
519-741-2200 ext. HOOD (4663)

Neighbourhood Action Plan WORD LIST
This guide uses some words that you may not be familiar with. If you find a word you’re not sure about, flip back to this page to get a description of what that word means.

ACCESSIBLE: All people can enjoy and participate in the opportunities their neighbourhood provides.

ASSET: Physical things such as material objects (e.g. community centre, library, grocery store) and personal qualities such as a person’s skills, knowledge and/or experience (e.g. leadership skills, local knowledge, academic experience).

ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A process that encourages community driven development by building on assets already found, rather than focusing on the needs, in the neighbourhood.

ASSET MAP: A map with information that identifies the strengths and resources of a neighbourhood and can help uncover solutions.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN: A plan to communicate with the neighbourhood by identifying who to target, when, with what message and how.

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION: A voluntary, not-for-profit, non-partisan, non-denominational group based in a geographic neighbourhood within the borders of the City of Kitchener that is: inclusive of and responsive to the needs of the community within the specific geographic area defined by the group; open to the public and makes this known through communications to the residents of that neighbourhood; active; and accountable.

COMMUNITY PARTNER: Groups or organizations that have an interest in great neighbourhoods (e.g. not-for-profits, school boards, police, etc.).

CONNECTED: Neighbourhoods have links between people and between people and places.

DIVERSE: Neighbourhoods have a variety of people, places, activities and services.

ENGAGED: People are involved and committed to activities, programs and places.

INCLUSIVE: People are welcomed and feel a sense of belonging in their neighbourhood.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN: A written document that identifies the priorities for a stronger neighbourhood.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION TEAM: The core group of people who are involved in creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION: A voluntary, not-for-profit, non-partisan, non-denominational group based in a geographic neighbourhood within the borders of the City of Kitchener that is: inclusive of and responsive to the needs of the community within the specific geographic area defined by the group; open to the public and makes this known through communications to the residents of that neighbourhood; active; and accountable.

NEIGHBOURHOOD MATCHING GRANT: A one-time grant, provided in partnership with United Way Kitchener Waterloo and Area, that provides support to people who want to make positive change in their neighbourhood through matching funds ranging between $500 and $15,000.

PARTICIPATORY APPROACH: A way of ensuring that everyone who has a stake in the neighbourhood has a voice, either in person or by representation.

RESIDENT CHAMPION: An individual resident or a group of residents with an interest in a specific neighbourhood who are willing to start conversations with others about creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan.

SAFE: People build trust and familiarity, look out for each other and are comfortable spending time out in their neighbourhood.

VISION: A statement that captures the neighbours’ dream of what their neighbourhood will be in the future.

VOLUNTEER: A range of formal and informal ways people contribute to their neighbourhood, like being a member of the Neighbourhood Action Team, being involved with a neighbourhood association or just being engaged and helping out your neighbours.

WARD COUNCILLOR: An elected official who represents a specific ward within the City.

WORKPLAN: A plan that establishes clear expectations and timelines for developing the Neighbourhood Action Plan, including dates and responsibilities for key tasks, meetings and major milestones.

* This information is available in accessible formats upon request. Please call 519-741-2200 ext. 7083 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.
Introduction to #lovemyhood
Kitchener’s Neighbourhood Strategy

In 2015, the City brought together a project team of residents from across the city to develop #lovemyhood - Kitchener’s first ever Neighbourhood Strategy.

#lovemyhood aims to build on the great things already happening in Kitchener’s neighbourhoods by giving residents tools, programs and resources to affect positive change in neighbourhoods.

One of the key deliverables from the project was to develop a framework to help residents create Neighbourhood Action Plans.

What is a Neighbourhood Action Plan?

Residents + Vision + Actions = Neighbourhood Action Plan

A Neighbourhood Action Plan is a written document that identifies the priorities for a stronger neighbourhood that is more safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged. Residents define their neighbourhood boundaries and create their own plans that represent the many diverse voices of their neighbourhood. The plans are action-oriented, resident-led and supported by City staff. The plans lay out a clear vision for the future of a neighbourhood and identify meaningful and measurable goals with action items that have widespread neighbourhood support and can reasonably be implemented within a 5 year timeframe. The plans also identify who will be responsible for each action item. Action items may be partially, or fully, funded by the City through programs such as the Neighbourhood Matching Grant. Other funding bodies and sources may also support the actions.

Who can create a Neighbourhood Action Plan?

Any group of residents.

Virtually anyone, in collaboration with their neighbours, can create a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Residents don’t need to belong to an existing group, conform to particular geographical boundaries or have expertise in this type of planning. City staff is available to support efforts and help make it happen.

We made this guide to help residents make positive change in their neighbourhood. If you’re ready to put a plan in motion but are unsure of where to start, need help recruiting volunteers or wondering about an Implementation plan - it's all in here! You can follow this guide in the order given or flip directly to the information that's most helpful to you. You’ll even find helpful contact information if you want additional support.

– Brooke Robinson, Neighbourhood Strategy project team volunteer and Tremaine Park resident
Why create a Neighbourhood Action Plan?

Shape the future of your neighbourhood.

Creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan will help residents connect and work together to shape the future of a neighbourhood. Residents who contribute to the creation of a plan may experience the following benefits:

- Increased knowledge of their neighbourhood
- Increased opportunities to connect and get to know their neighbours
- Increased sense of belonging, including a sense of neighbourhood identity and pride
- Increased opportunities for residents to be involved and engaged in their neighbourhood
- Increased ability to create positive change by addressing neighbourhood issues and opportunities
- Stronger neighbourhood leadership
- A stronger neighbourhood that is more safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged

What is the purpose of the Neighbourhood Action Plan Guide?

To help you create a vision for change and a plan to make it happen.

This guide is intended to help residents create their own Neighbourhood Action Plan by providing suggestions, tools and advice. It is not intended to tell residents how they must create their own plans. Instead, this guide is flexible, recognizing that different neighbourhoods have different capacities and needs, or may be at different stages of development.

Once you’ve had an opportunity to review the Neighbourhood Action Plan guide, please contact City staff to talk about getting started.
Principles to guide Kitchener’s Neighbourhood Action Plans

Common ground for all neighbourhoods.

Eight principles have been identified to guide the creation of Neighbourhood Action Plans in neighbourhoods across the city. Recognizing that each neighbourhood is unique, the principles are provided to establish some common ground for neighbourhoods to incorporate and work towards. Residents are encouraged to build stronger neighbourhoods that are more safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged.

FOCUS ON ASSETS: Residents will focus on the assets that are already found in their neighbourhoods and mobilize neighbours and community partners to come together and build on those strengths. Assets are both things (material objects) and people (skills, knowledge, experience). Examples may include physical elements such as buildings, social connections such as personal relationships with your neighbours, or people’s skills such as leadership. Strengths and successes in a neighbourhood are used as a starting point for change.

ACTION ORIENTED: Residents will generate ideas of what could be done to build on their strengths and then produce meaningful and measurable actions to make their neighbourhood even better.

RESIDENT-LED: The majority of participants on the Neighbourhood Action Team will live in or have a personal interest in the neighbourhood. All participants have a sense of ownership in the process and their neighbourhood.

CITY SUPPORTED: The City has an important role to play in helping residents build their Neighbourhood Action Plan by providing resources and tools to support the process. The City will make it as easy as possible for residents to make great things happen in their neighbourhoods.

INCLUSIVE AND COLLABORATIVE: The Neighbourhood Action Team members will strive to include as many people as possible representing the diversity of their neighbourhood. The process of creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan should ensure all participants feel a sense of belonging and know that their perspectives are respected and valued. Participants will work together to foster change in their neighbourhood through full and equal participation in discussion and decision making.

RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE AND IT IS DO-ABLE: People, existing neighbourhood groups, community partners, funding and spaces are available to support the development and implementation of the actions identified in the Neighbourhood Action Plan. The actions should be responsible, realistic and implementable.

LEADS TO POSITIVE CHANGE: The process of creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan should welcome change and see it as an opportunity.

MEASURABLE: Processes and actions should tell a story. The Neighbourhood Action Team is encouraged to report on simple measurements when available and relevant. For example, what was accomplished and learned? How did they feel? Were there any unintended outcomes?

The residents of the Schneider Creek area have a vision for their neighbourhood. We have had two events where the people who live in this area had opportunities to give their feedback about what kind of community and environment is important to them. There is nothing that creates a vibrant, healthy city more than residents who care about and love where they live.

– Linda Bender, Schneider Creek resident commenting in their plan called Making our Neighbourhood Great
An overview of how to create a Neighbourhood Action Plan

Be flexible and engage residents every step of the way.

The creation of a Neighbourhood Action Plan is not a step-by-step process, and it does not require a one-size fits all approach. It has been designed to be flexible because neighbourhoods are unique and may be at different steps in the process. Some neighbourhoods may not need to complete all of the steps.

Throughout the development and the implementation of the Neighbourhood Action Plan, continuous engagement of residents is required to provide input, review, revise, monitor, and adjust the Neighbourhood Action Plan as it moves forward. Throughout each step, it is important to:

• Reach out to as many members of your neighbourhood as possible
• Involve everyone by making meetings and events accessible and inclusive
• Communicate clearly with the broader neighbourhood, using a variety of methods, to reach diverse neighbourhood members
• Recruit new members for the Neighbourhood Action Team to make the team representative of the neighbourhood

Need a refresher on a meaning? Click the N.A.P. WORD LIST tab and you’ll jump to the definitions found at the front of this guide.

Each TOOL tab indicates which template(s) you will need to complete that step. The TOOLKIT starts on page 24 and come with instructions and links to examples for creating your Neighbourhood Action Plan.

Each STEP tab indicates which step you’re at in the Neighbourhood Action Plan process.
1. Get started

Generate interest and enthusiasm.

Conversations around creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan can start with an individual resident or a group of residents with an interest in a specific neighbourhood. This guide refers to these individuals or groups as resident champions. The resident champions do not require any special skills, simply an interest in starting a conversation with others. The resident champions can start the process by following these steps.

Talk with City staff

The resident champions should talk with City staff to let them know they are interested in creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan for their neighbourhood. The role of City staff is to provide support. City staff can help avoid duplication, coordinate efforts, and provide resources (e.g. meeting space, funding). Involving City staff will help to ensure that the neighbourhood’s vision and actions are embraced by the City. This is extremely important for the successful implementation of those action items that may require approvals or resources from the City.

Confirm interest in creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan

Before a group can start to create a Neighbourhood Action Plan, it should be determined if enough residents and others with a personal interest in the neighbourhood are ready and willing to participate. The resident champions should talk to their neighbours, existing resident led groups, City staff and their ward Councillor to confirm their interest. For example, are people willing to participate on the Neighbourhood Action Team, are people willing to attend neighbourhood gatherings, and are people willing to provide input? City staff can help initiate conversations with existing groups and organizations and the ward Councillor. Click here to find information about the ward Councillors. www.kitchener.ca/en/insidecityhall/whosmycouncillor.asp

Once interest is confirmed, existing resident led groups and other neighbourhood organizations may have the networks and experience to lead, help the resident champions lead or participate in the resident champions process of creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan.

Resident led groups and other neighbourhood organizations might include:

- Community and neighbourhood associations
- School councils
- Housing cooperatives
- Tenant associations
- Business improvement associations
- Faith based groups
- Cultural or ethnic groups
- Recreational and service clubs
- Non-profit and social service organizations

These groups may have leaders who can help champion and participate in the creation of a Neighbourhood Action Plan. The greater the variety of experiences among these leaders, the more closely the Neighbourhood Action Plan will reflect the strengths of the individual neighbourhood. In order to facilitate communications and build relationships, the resident champions can ask to be included on the agenda of an existing group’s upcoming meeting. At the meeting, the resident champions can:

- Present the main purpose of creating the Neighbourhood Action Plan
- Talk about the relationship between the existing group and the proposed Neighbourhood Action Team
- Ask how the existing group could contribute (e.g. lead, help lead, participate or provide financial support)
- Invite the existing group to help organize a neighbourhood gathering to let the neighbourhood know about the development of a Neighbourhood Action Plan, generate an asset map and recruit new people to volunteer on the Neighbourhood Action Team

SEE TOOLKIT:

Tool B – Engaging the Neighbourhood
Tool C - Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood

Confirm relationships:
Neighbourhood Associations and Neighbourhood Action Teams

Many neighbourhoods across the city have existing community or neighbourhood associations with interests that vary. Some community or neighbourhood associations may primarily be interested in offering recreational programs while others may be involved in both recreational programs and neighbourhood development. Either way, these groups have experience and local knowledge that others may find helpful when creating and implementing a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Where a community or neighbourhood association already exists, the resident champions are encouraged to speak with the neighbourhood association to determine if and how they may be able to work together to support and help one another. This discussion should explore the potential relationship between the neighbourhood association board and the soon to be established Neighbourhood Action Team. It should be clear whether the Neighbourhood Action Team will work with, or independently from, the neighbourhood association board. For example, will the neighbourhood association become the Neighbourhood Action Team? Will a representative of the neighbourhood association sit on the Neighbourhood Action Team? Will the neighbourhood association simply provide input? Or, will the neighbourhood association choose not to participate? These questions should be explored in the hopes of fostering a collaborative relationship where residents take ownership in the creation and implementation of the Neighbourhood Action Plan.
2. Host a neighbourhood gathering

Host a fun event. Recruit volunteers. Identify assets.

The next step is to work with interested neighbours and groups to organize a neighbourhood gathering. The purpose of the neighbourhood gathering is to run an asset mapping exercise and seek volunteers to sit on the Neighbourhood Action Team. Hopefully, residents will get to meet some new neighbours too!

This guide encourages residents to use an asset-based community development approach because it encourages positive change in neighbourhoods by building on the skills, strengths and supports of residents, groups and institutions.

A fun neighbourhood gathering with food is a perfect way to attract people to participate in the asset mapping exercise. The asset mapping exercise provides the first opportunity to engage people, identify physical boundaries of the neighbourhood and gather relevant information about the neighbourhood from the perspective of the people who live, work, learn and play there. The City is not telling residents how to define their neighbourhood. Instead, it’s up to residents to define their own neighbourhood and its boundaries. The asset mapping exercise can be quite informal so as not to detract from the fun atmosphere.

The information collected from this initial asset mapping exercise will help to develop a picture of the neighbourhood as it exists today.

Assets may be grouped into categories such as places and spaces, groups and organizations and individuals’ gifts and skills. Examples of things to identify during the asset mapping exercise include:

- Buildings
- Public places, like parks and trails
- Neighbourhood associations or other formal groups
- Activities and programs
- Events and festivals
- Skills
- Relationships and partnerships

The neighbourhood gathering can also be used to generate awareness around the creation of the Neighbourhood Action Plan and seek additional volunteers for the Neighbourhood Action Team. A brief explanation of the purpose and process can be provided to attendees so that potential volunteers understand the role of Neighbourhood Action Team members. City staff is available, if needed, to help with planning and running the neighbourhood gathering. Residents won’t want to forget to invite their ward Councillor.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool B – Engaging the Neighbourhood
Tool C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood
Tool D – Community and Neighbourhood Association Map
Tool E – Asset Mapping: Neighbourhood Gathering, Walk and Asset Chart

3. Establish the Neighbourhood Action Team

Build your team.

Once the resident champions have established interest from the neighbourhood, the next step is to form a core group of people that serve as the Neighbourhood Action Team.

Look for people who have expressed an interest in making their neighbourhood great and are dedicated to making things happen. Seek out some new people to bring creative ideas to the table. As much as possible, make sure they represent the diverse demographics and viewpoints within the neighbourhood. Remember to be accessible and inclusive. Don’t forget about non-residents such as businesses, community partners and schools. To help make the process as easy as possible, one City staff person will be assigned to liaise between the neighbourhood and other City staff. One of their main roles will be to keep other City staff informed so that the proper resources can be put in place to support neighbourhoods. It is also a good idea to invite the ward Councillor to participate.

TIP:
Most people will need a personal invitation to get involved. Share with them why you’re excited about creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan and why they would be valuable members of the team.

Although there are no hard and fast rules, experience in other cities suggests that somewhere between 8 and 15 people should form the Neighbourhood Action Team. Participants should be local residents, community leaders, and others with a personal interest in the neighbourhood. Residents and others with a personal interest in the neighbourhood may not have all of the required skills to develop and implement a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Volunteers from outside of the neighbourhood can be invited to participate when skills are required and not available within the neighbourhood.

The skills that may be required include:

- facilitation
- leadership
- communication
- knowledge of city hall
- knowledge of neighbourhood history
- land use planning
- technology
- project planning/management
- networking/creating partnerships
- hospitality (food)
- artistry/creativity (fun)
- people skills/conflict resolution/team building
- accessibility awareness

Once established, Neighbourhood Action Teams are welcome to identify their own team name and/or neighbourhood name. This will help establish their unique team and/or neighbourhood identity and foster a sense of ownership and belonging.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool B – Engaging the Neighbourhood
Tool C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood
4. Create a workplan

Identify key tasks, timelines and responsibilities.

During the first or second meeting of the Neighbourhood Action Team, a brief workplan can be developed, in order to establish clear expectations and timelines for developing the Neighbourhood Action Plan. This will help keep things on track and ensure Neighbourhood Action Team members are available and committed. Workplans usually outline dates and responsibilities for key tasks, meetings and major milestones. Key tasks include such things as establishing a vision, identifying goals and objectives, creating a communications plan, determining how success will be measured, drafting the Neighbourhood Action Plan and finalizing strategies to take action. Major milestones include such things as key tasks once they have been endorsed by the broader community.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool H – Workplan Template

TIP:
Give extra attention to being accessible, inclusive and fun in your first meeting, to set the tone for the rest of your meetings.

The City’s Neighbourhood Matching Grant can help the resident champion and/or Neighbourhood Action Team reach a wider range of people. The grant provides support to people that want to make positive change in their neighbourhood. Matching funds ranging from $500 to $15,000 are awarded to people who invest in their community. Investments include financial contributions, volunteer time, and in-kind resources and services.

Make the first Neighbourhood Action Team meeting fun! Purely administrative discussions can be boring and discourage people from participating from the start. In the first meeting, run an ice-breaker so people can get to know one another, move around, and have fun before diving right into the work ahead.

Lastly, it is helpful for all team members to agree in writing about the team leadership and practical details such as when, how frequently and where the group will meet and, most importantly, how the group will make decisions. Decision-making should be agreed upon before planning begins. There are many different ways to make decisions, including consensus, voting, or a combination of the two.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool F – How to Plan and Run Meetings
Tool G – Decision Making Tools
5. Develop a communications plan

Keep residents informed.

The creation of a communications plan will help inform residents about their work and engage more people in the process. The communications plan identifies when and how the Neighbourhood Action Team will communicate with the neighbourhood and gather their input. When to communicate should align with the key tasks and major milestones identified in the workplan. Recognizing the diverse makeup of a neighbourhood, it will be important to communicate and seek input in different ways. Some examples could include events, meetings, newsletters, website and social media.

**TIP:**
Always try to communicate in plain language. Use words and sentences that are appropriate for a Grade 6-8 reading level, so everyone can understand and remember your message quickly and easily.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool B – Engaging the Neighbourhood
Tool C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood
Tool I – Communications Plan

6. Engage the neighbourhood

Understand your neighbourhood today. Create a vision for the future.

**What do residents know about their neighbourhood?**

One of the first Neighbourhood Action Team meeting agenda items should focus on further developing the asset map of the neighbourhood. The team should take some time to review the asset map that the community started at the neighbourhood gathering, discuss the information and add any additional assets that were missed. The asset map is simply one tool that the team can use to help develop a picture that represents what residents know about their neighbourhood.

A review of social and demographic statistical information may help to broaden everyone’s understanding of their neighbourhood. Information about the people who live in the neighbourhood, housing, income levels and land uses can be considered. Information about how safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged neighbourhoods are will be made available and can also be considered. All of this information can be requested from City staff.

Asset mapping combined with statistical information can serve as an important reference throughout the process because it can help highlight the conditions and experiences of others. Interesting stories from the asset mapping exercise may help put a human face on the statistics.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool E – Asset Mapping: Neighbourhood Gathering, Walk and Asset Chart
Tool F – How to Plan and Run Meetings
Tool J – Neighbourhood Statistical Information

**What kind of neighbourhood do residents want?**

Once residents have developed a complete picture of their neighbourhood, a vision for the future will begin to develop. The vision describes what the Neighbourhood Action Team wants the neighbourhood to be in the future. In 5 years, what will the neighbourhood look and feel like? Think about the actions that can be taken to make neighbourhoods safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged. An effective vision will inspire and motivate the broader neighbourhood to work together to achieve it. It will inform all goals, objectives, priorities and actions moving forward. Remember to get endorsement by the broader neighbourhood so everyone gets behind it. Eventually, residents may want to share their vision with Kitchener City Council. City staff can help with this.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool K – How to Develop Vision Statements, Objectives, Quick Wins and Actions

**KEY QUESTION:**

WHAT WILL THE NEIGHBOURHOOD LOOK AND FEEL LIKE?
7. Make an implementation plan

Identify actions to achieve your vision.

Once residents have a vision for the future of their neighbourhood, the Neighbourhood Action Team can fine-tune its objectives in order to develop and prioritize specific actions for implementation based on the feedback from the neighbourhood. For instance, an objective may be to create an inventory of residents’ strengths while the specific steps to achieve the action may include creating and distributing a survey, collecting and analyzing the survey and sharing the information with the neighbourhood.

If necessary, City staff can assist with this step. When refining the objectives and actions, remember to:

- Create objectives that
  - use action verbs (such as write, solve, build, produce)
- are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely)
- Ensure the objectives include quick wins, short term actions and long term actions
- Rank the objectives in order of priority (i.e. which ones should be done first)
- Prioritize actions within each prioritized objective

The implementation plan should:

- consider what organizations are available to be involved in specific actions
- identify which individuals, groups or organizations should take the lead on specific actions
- determine what can be achieved within a short, medium or long-term timeframe
- confirm where resources can be accessed

Make sure at least one Neighbourhood Action Team member is responsible to lead an action item and get others involved to move it forward. If necessary, City staff can support the Neighbourhood Action Team member in these discussions. Once each objective and resulting action items are agreed upon, roles and responsibilities can be assigned and confirmed.

8. Develop a plan to measure your progress

What does success look like?

The Neighbourhood Action Team should take some time to determine what success looks like and how it might be measured. Statisticians are not required!

Developing a plan to measure progress should be thought about early on in the process so that there is a clear understanding of how changes will be measured. Think about why the neighbourhood wanted to create a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Think about how the neighbourhood will know if it is more safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged. Think about the vision, goals, objectives and actions. Decide how these things will be measured.

Simple measurements may include:

- confirming what actions were completed on time and within budget
- identifying the number of new things within the neighbourhood
- increasing the number of residents participating in neighbourhood events

It may also be helpful to use before and after photos or resident satisfaction surveys.

See Toolkit:
- Tool K – How to Develop Vision Statements, Objectives, Quick Wins and Actions
- Tool L – Implementation Plan Template
9. Write your Neighbourhood Action Plan

Put everything together. Monitor how it’s going. Let the plan evolve and change!

Use the Neighbourhood Action Plan template to bring together and document the information that has been collected throughout the process. The Neighbourhood Action Plan should be approved by the Neighbourhood Action Team and endorsed by a significant number of residents in the neighbourhood. A final document should be produced and shared. Don’t forget to consider sharing the plan with City Council so they are aware of the good work. City staff can help with this.

The Neighbourhood Action Team is encouraged to put in place a process to monitor and adjust the implementation plan as needed. This can include a clearly documented transition of responsibility. Will the Neighbourhood Action Team or an existing neighbourhood group, such as a neighbourhood association, drive the implementation and monitoring? Where existing neighbourhood groups take on responsibility, including the Neighbourhood Action Plan as a standing agenda item will ensure that the plan remains a priority. Monitoring the progress of each action to ensure that barriers are addressed and that successes are documented will keep the implementation plan on track. As well, when calls for funding proposals come up unexpectedly, an updated version of the Neighbourhood Action Plan will be ready for submission to bring new resources into the neighbourhood.

The Neighbourhood Action Plan is a living document, meaning it will evolve and change over its lifespan. Having a process in place to review and revise the Neighbourhood Action Plan will ensure it remains relevant and transformational.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool A – Neighbourhood Action Plan Template, Instructions and Examples
Tool B – Engaging the Neighbourhood
Tool L – Implementation Plan Template

10. Celebrate with your neighbourhood

Have fun along the way. Constantly thank volunteers and residents.

There are many opportunities to celebrate progress along the way. Build in times to acknowledge the great work being done, by both the Neighbourhood Action Team, volunteers and the wider neighbourhood.

Once the Neighbourhood Action Team, with the support of the neighbourhood, has finalized their first Neighbourhood Action Plan, take the time to organize a celebration. Use the celebration as an opportunity to communicate and engage with more residents and bring a larger number of people into the implementation of specific actions identified in your Neighbourhood Action Plan.

As key actions are achieved, residents will probably want to celebrate again. Go for it! Don’t be surprised if this attracts more attention from people outside the neighbourhood, who will want to hear the neighbourhood’s story and learn from the neighbourhood’s experience.

It’s also a good idea to take some time to think about what the Neighbourhood Action Team and the neighbourhood have learned throughout the process. What worked? What didn’t? How can this be used in the future? What is next for your neighbourhood? Refer back to your agreed upon approach for measuring success in your neighbourhood and share your stories.

READY TO GET STARTED?

Now that you’ve read this document and understand the process to create a Neighbourhood Action Plan, it’s time to get started. Circle back to the beginning of this document and remember, it’s okay to start small. Talk with neighbours about the benefits of creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Share examples of quick wins and long-term ideas. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. City staff are more than happy to get you going!
Neighbourhood Action Plan Toolkit

Tools to help you along the way.

We have collected and categorized a number of tools from a variety of residents, neighbourhood groups and City staff. To access these tools, contact City staff and they will be happy to assist you.

TOOL A – Neighbourhood Action Plan Template, Instructions and Examples
TOOL B – Engaging the Neighbourhood
TOOL C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood
TOOL D – Community and Neighbourhood Association Map
TOOL E – Asset Mapping: Neighbourhood Gathering, Walk and Asset Chart
TOOL F – How to Plan and Run Meetings
TOOL G – Decision-Making Tools
TOOL H – Workplan Template
TOOL I – Communications Plan
TOOL J – Neighbourhood Statistics
TOOL K – How to Develop Vision Statements, Objectives, Quick Wins and Actions
TOOL L – Implementation Plan Template

Thanks City of Hamilton!

We want to acknowledge the incredible leadership provided by Hamilton residents and staff when it comes to Neighbourhood Action Plans. They’ve been doing this stuff for years! We’ve learned a lot from their leadership, and many of these tools have been adapted from the Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit. Thanks for sharing your experience with us - and keep up the great work Hamilton!
lovemyhood.ca