

# Kitchener's Neighbourhood Strategy How Did We Make It?



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## **Introduction**

In 2015 the City of Kitchener initiated a project to develop Kitchener's first-ever Neighbourhood Strategy. A project team of staff and residents with diverse interests was brought together. Over an 18 month period, the project team met monthly, engaged the public and community partners, listened to the public's input and developed the Neighbourhood Strategy with a series of 18 recommendations. Many lessons were learned along the way, which may be useful to other municipalities and organizations undertaking neighbourhood work. This document details the process and work undertaken to create the Neighbourhood Strategy.

## **Before the Project Started**

Previous and existing City strategies and plans dating back to 2005 identified the need to develop a Neighbourhood Strategy. The City's 2014-2016 Business Plan included the development of a Neighbourhood Strategy as a corporate project to begin in 2014. Before the project commenced, staff report [CSD-14-047](#) was presented to the City's Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee to spark discussion and encourage members of the community to provide input on the scope, project governance and approach. Additional input was sought through a targeted online survey of individuals with specific knowledge of neighbourhood development and through meetings with community partners and key stakeholders. Based on this input, staff report [CSD-15-021](#) was presented to Council outlining the project objectives, governance and work plan. Figure 1.0 on the following page outlines the project governance, including the detailed makeup of the project team.

## **Project Start and Logistics**

The project team came together for the first time in May 2015. During the first meeting, project team members introduced themselves, highlighted why they joined the team and shared the questions they had about the work they'd be undertaking to help create the Neighbourhood Strategy. A number of logistics were confirmed, including: team member roles and responsibilities; meeting frequency, duration and location (e.g. monthly, 2-3 hours, City Hall); team member expectations (e.g. arriving on time, coming prepared, phones turned to silent, respectful discussions); and, preferred decision making tool (e.g. gradients of agreement). A further description of the project team member roles is provided in Figure 2.0 on page 3.

## **Project Management**

At the start of the project, the project manager developed a project charter that identified the project overview (e.g. objectives, scope, deliverables, measurable success indicators), the project parameters (e.g. cost/benefit, constraints, assumptions/risks, administrative assistant requirements) and work authorization (e.g. project start, end, cost, staff). The project charter informed the project plan. Weekly one-hour meetings were scheduled with the primary staff team (project champion, project manager, project co-chair (staff), engagement associate and project facilitator). These meetings were used to provide regular updates, seek advice and direction, brainstorm ideas, resolve conflicts and confirm next steps. Monthly one-hour meetings were also scheduled with the primary staff team and the Project Co-Chair (resident volunteer).

The purpose of these meetings was to plan and set the agenda for the upcoming project team meeting.

Figure 1.0 Project Governance

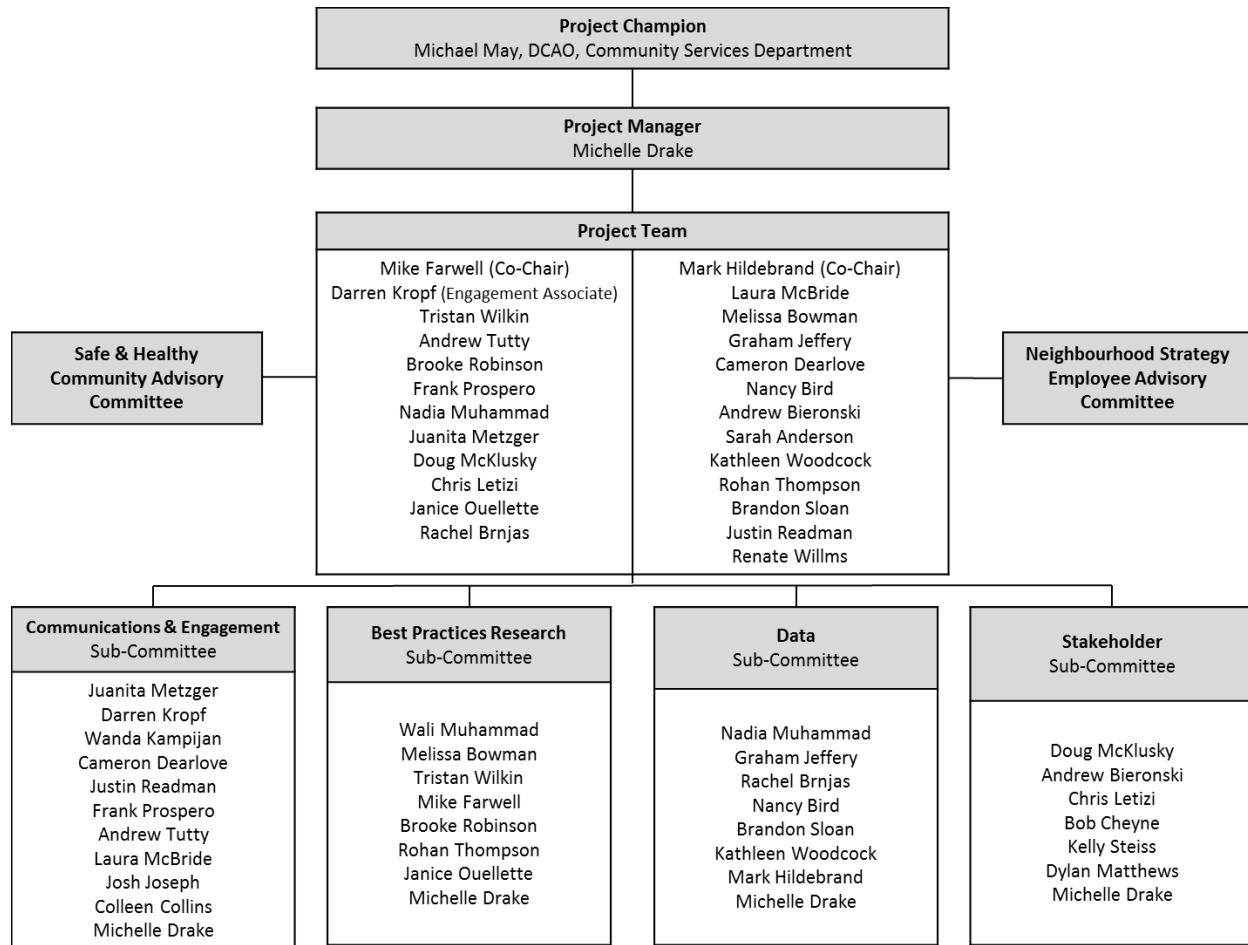


Figure 2.0 Project Team Member Roles

Project Champion	Project Co-Chairs
<p><b>Project Leadership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts as a vocal and visible champion with all major stakeholders (staff, Council, media, public, community partners).</li> <li>• Ensures project remains focused on City Council approved project objectives.</li> <li>• Project's primary connection with City's Corporate Leadership Team and Council.</li> <li>• Media spokesperson on issues regarding the overall strategy/project.</li> <li>• Approves project communications.</li> </ul> <p><b>Project Team Support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports the project co-chairs and project manager on major issues, removes obstacles, approves scope changes, and signs off on major deliverables.</li> <li>• Supports the acquisition of required resources as identified by the project plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Relationships:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible for maintaining positive relationships with major community partners.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Project Leadership:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages active and equal participation of all project team members.</li> <li>• Acts as a vocal and visible champion with all major stakeholders (staff, Council, media, public, community partners).</li> <li>• Media and public spokesperson on issues regarding project development and implementation.</li> <li>• Helps create common commitment amongst stakeholders and project team for the project outcomes and processes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Project Team Support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works with project manager to set project team meeting agendas.</li> <li>• Chairs all project team meetings.</li> <li>• Provides project leadership when changes are required to the project plan.</li> <li>• Reviews and provides input into all draft project communications.</li> </ul>
Project Manager	Project Team Members (Individuals)
<p><b>Project Planning and Implementation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads the creation and execution of a detailed project plan (in consultation with the project team).</li> <li>• Manages project deliverables in line with the project plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Project Tracking Reporting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Escalates issues to the project co-chairs and champion as necessary.</li> <li>• Oversees the creation and approval of all project communications.</li> <li>• Monitors project budget and makes recommendations when changes are required.</li> </ul> <p><b>Project Support:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts as a vocal and visible champion with all major stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Project Planning and Implementation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides subject matter knowledge and community experience to the development of an effective and achievable project plan.</li> <li>• Executes tasks between meetings and assists with producing project deliverables.</li> <li>• Actively participates in the implementation of the integrated communications and public engagement plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Team Meeting Participation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends project team meetings and actively participates in discussions.</li> <li>• Contributes to a project team culture that encourages diversity of thought and respects variety of experiences.</li> </ul> <p><b>Relationships:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acts as a vocal and visible champion with all major stakeholders (staff, Council,</li> </ul>

Project Manager	Project Team Members (Individuals)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attends all project team meetings.</li> <li>• Chairs the Staff Advisory Committee.</li> <li>• Writes reports to City Council as necessary.</li> </ul>	media, public, community partners).
Project Team (as a whole)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve project plan.</li> <li>• Approve communications and engagement plan.</li> <li>• Coordinate work of sub-committees.</li> <li>• Recommend final strategy to City Council.</li> </ul>	

### **Developing the Project Plan**

The entire project team developed a high-level project plan during monthly meetings over a four month period (July-October 2015). Initial project planning conversations covered the following topics:

- actions that would lead to the worst Neighbourhood Strategy,
- information that needed to be included in the Neighbourhood Strategy, and
- the steps required to develop a successful Neighbourhood Strategy.

Based on these conversations, staff developed a first draft of the project plan.

The first draft outlined five sequential steps: project administration, research, baseline data collection, strategy development and implementation. This draft also outlined communications, engagement and information analysis as ongoing tasks beginning with project administration and leading into strategy development. Additional project planning conversations based on this draft covered the following topics: the steps to develop the Neighbourhood Strategy, the time required for each step and the links between steps. This input shaped the second draft of the project plan.

The second draft of the project plan outlined ten primary tasks with high-level start and end dates. The ten primary tasks included:

1. project set-up,
2. phase 1 community consultation,
3. research and best practices,
4. communications and engagement plan,
5. stakeholder list,
6. data review and baseline data,
7. phase 2 community consultations,
8. concentrated data analysis,
9. strategy report writing, and
10. strategy approvals.

Tasks began in June 2015 and ended in December 2016. Ultimately, the project team endorsed this second version of the project plan with minor modifications.

### **Project Visioning**

As part of the initial project planning conversations, the project team agreed that it was important to develop a vision that could apply to all neighbourhoods and guide their work to create a Neighbourhood Strategy. The project team developed a project vision during monthly meetings over a three month period (August-October 2015). The visioning exercise started with each individual project team member describing their ideal neighbourhood and identifying the elements that they believe create a safe and thriving neighbourhood. Staff compiled all responses and sorted them into themes with frequency of response:

- places and spaces,
- physical form and services,
- engaged and connected,
- creative,
- people and groups,
- pride,
- caring and welcoming,
- safety,
- inclusive and accessible,
- healthy,
- sustainable,
- diversity and variety, and
- supportive and balanced.

The project team divided into three smaller groups to discuss the themes. Discussions covered the following topics: do the themes feel right, do the themes make sense, are there any themes missing, are some themes more important than others, are there themes that could be blended together, are there themes that could be separated and are there themes that overlap. Following these discussions, each group was asked to draft a vision statement starting with "Kitchener's Neighbourhood Strategy will..." This information was then used to develop one collective draft vision statement.

The draft vision statement on the following page was divided into five parts: what the Neighbourhood Strategy will do, how the project team will make it happen, what it will not do, why the project team is dedicated to completing the work and when the project team wants to have the work done. The project manager facilitated a discussion with the project team to review each part of the vision. A dotmocracy exercise was used to help prioritize the reasons why the project team is dedicated to completing the work. These reasons were initially identified as the outcomes of the Neighbourhood Strategy and later rebranded in plain language as the characteristics of a great neighbourhood. The project team endorsed all parts of the vision with minor modifications.

*The Neighbourhood Strategy will...*

- *Help neighbours connect and work together to do great things in their neighbourhoods.*

*The Neighbourhood Strategy project team will make this happen by...*

- *Recognizing and building on the great things already being done in Kitchener's neighbourhoods.*
- *Engaging and listening to the community through one of the largest, most inclusive consultation processes in the city's history.*
- *Identifying physical and social assets within neighbourhoods.*
- *Exploring ways we can build on the people, places and services (government and non-government) that make up our neighbourhoods.*
- *Researching and sharing what is being done in other cities to help create safe and thriving neighbourhoods.*
- *Making recommendations to City Council on how to cut red tape to make it easier to do great things in Kitchener's neighbourhoods.*
- *Creating a "made-in-Kitchener" toolkit for neighbours to create Neighbourhood Action Plans.*
- *Identify supports for citizen-led, City supported implementation of the strategy.*

*The Neighbourhood Strategy will not...*

- *Create more red tape.*
- *Ignore what is already working.*
- *Take a top down approach.*
- *Only engage people who are already engaged in their neighbourhood.*
- *Be inflexible.*
- *Focus on problems.*
- *Presume to be able to tell neighbours what they need in their individual neighbourhood.*
- *Apply an inflexible, one-size fits all approach to all the city's neighbourhoods.*
- *Sit on a shelf and not be implemented.*

*The Neighbourhood Strategy project team is dedicated to completing this work because we want to help create neighbourhoods that are...*

- *Diverse*
- *Connected*
- *Inclusive*
- *Safe*
- *Engaged*
- *Resilient*
- *Accessible*

*And we want to have this work done by the end of 2016.*

### **Sub-Committees**

As part of project planning, the project team agreed to form four sub-committees to assist with specific tasks:

1. communications and engagement,
2. stakeholder list,
3. best practice research, and
4. data.

Additional resident volunteers and staff who were not members of the project team were invited to join the sub-committees. Each sub-committee met either bi-weekly or monthly for approximately two hours beginning in September 2015. A detailed description of each sub-committee is outlined below.

#### ***Communications and Engagement Sub-Committee***

Ten project team members representing diverse perspectives (e.g. accessibility, community development, community safety) formed the communications and engagement sub-committee. One additional resident volunteer active with a neighbourhood association also agreed to join the sub-committee. The sub-committee was chaired by a community volunteer and primarily supported by the City's Neighbourhood Strategy Engagement Associate. Meeting frequency varied between bi-weekly or monthly two hour meetings located at the Downtown Community Centre between September 2015 and June 2016.

The primary purpose of the communications and engagement sub-committee was to develop an integrated communications and engagement plan. This sub-committee was responsible for the following:

- defining the communication goals and principles,
- developing the key communication messages,
- researching best practices to communicate with and engage stakeholders with an emphasis on overcoming barriers to participation and reaching those who are not already engaged,
- selecting and implementing communication and engagement tools, and
- seeking opportunities for partnerships to coordinate and/or expand engagement with relevant stakeholders.

In order to communicate and engage with stakeholders, the sub-committee identified three streams of community engagement: (1) creative, (2) conversational and (3) online. The engagement streams were intended to help overcome barriers to participation and reach those who are not already or not typically engaged.

- 1) The creative stream focused on an arts-based approach that encouraged people to think differently about their neighbourhood and attract diverse audiences to join the conversation. The colouring books and the placemaking challenge were the primary tactics used in this stream.
- 2) The conversational stream was used to collect the deepest information through discussions on the street, at events and in group settings. Three tactics were used: a neighbourhood party/kick-off event, street teams and focus groups.
- 3) The online stream provided opportunities for the public to provide their input using a cell phone or computer. The City's Engage Kitchener platform hosted a survey and ideas forum to collect input.

### ***Stakeholder List Sub-Committee***

Seven project team members formed the stakeholder list sub-committee. The sub-committee was chaired by a resident volunteer and supported by the City's Neighbourhood Strategy project manager. The sub-committee met monthly for two hours at City Hall between September 2015 and January 2016.

The primary purpose of the stakeholder list sub-committee was to develop a comprehensive list of all stakeholders to be engaged as part of the creation of the Neighbourhood Strategy. The list was instrumental to help reach residents who are not typically involved in City engagement processes. Various types of organizations were included, such as: arts and culture, athletics / sports, businesses / stores, cultural, disability support, education / schools, environmental, faith-based, family counselling, heritage, municipal facilities, neighbourhood associations, politicians, public safety, recreational centres, service clubs, social services, sponsors and transportation. The final stakeholder list included 968 entries, each providing the organization's name, main contact person and relevant contact information (e.g. phone number, email, website).

### ***Best Practices Research Sub-Committee***

Six project team members and one additional resident volunteer formed the best practices research sub-committee. The sub-committee was chaired by a resident volunteer and supported by the City's Neighbourhood Strategy project manager. Generally, the sub-committee met monthly for two hours at City Hall between September 2015 and November 2016.

The primary purpose of the best practices research sub-committee was to research: (1) neighbourhood strategies, (2) neighbourhood action plans and (3) neighbourhood placemaking in order to identify best practices that could be adopted in the Neighbourhood Strategy.

The research was able to inform the process to create Kitchener's Neighbourhood Strategy and contribute to the work to create two guides: the neighbourhood action plan guide and toolkit and the neighbourhood placemaking guide and toolkit.

Additional research was also undertaken to help understand if and how the name or physical boundaries of a neighbourhood should be identified and defined as a part of the project.

### ***Data Sub-Committee***

Seven project team members formed the data sub-committee. The project team co-chair and a community volunteer shared the chair functions of the sub-committee. Support was provided by the Neighbourhood Strategy project manager and the manager of service coordination and improvement for the City's Community Services Department. The sub-committee met monthly for two hours between September and December 2015. The need for additional meetings was identified so the sub-committee decided to generally meet bi-weekly between January and August 2016.

The primary purpose of the data sub-committee was to develop an approach to collect baseline information for Kitchener's neighbourhoods in order to understand their current state and evaluate the success of the Neighbourhood Strategy over time.

A research partnership with the University of Waterloo to use statistically representative data from the Canadian Index of Well Being as a baseline to understand the current City average for all neighbourhoods was explored. Unfortunately, project timing did not align.

As a result, sub-committee members researched existing measurement tools and investigated existing data sets (e.g. police calls for service, recreation program statistics) that could be used to measure each of the characteristics. After reviewing best practices in other municipalities, the sub-committee created a series of metrics to evaluate the impact of the Neighbourhood Strategy over time. The metrics considered the project vision and the characteristics of a great neighbourhood and included definitions, indicators and data sources. In addition to this, a survey tool was designed which asks questions related to each of the characteristics, including citizen perceptions.

The sub-committee and project team recommended that the data for each indicator be collected and reported on in 2017 and re-collected and reported on every four years.

Characteristic	Definition	Indicators
Accessible	People can equally enjoy and participate in the opportunities their neighbourhood provides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of low cost (&lt;\$20 or \$2/class) / no cost programs versus total programs</li> <li>• Number of calls to By-law regarding snow clearing</li> <li>• Number of bus stops in a neighbourhood</li> <li>• Sidewalk infill</li> <li>• Statistically representative survey</li> </ul>
Connected	Neighbourhoods have links between people and places.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence or absence of neighbourhood associations / business improvement areas and community garden groups</li> <li>• Connectivity index</li> <li>• Statistically representative survey</li> </ul>
Diverse	Neighbourhoods have a variety of people, places, activities and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographic composition (e.g. country of origin, family status, primary language spoken in the house, age by group/range and one parent families)</li> <li>• Number by type of programs offered from public facilities</li> <li>• Number by type of places</li> <li>• Cultural diversity index</li> <li>• Statistically representative survey</li> </ul>



## Community Engagement

### ***Phase 1: Lemonade stand consultations (July to September 2015)***

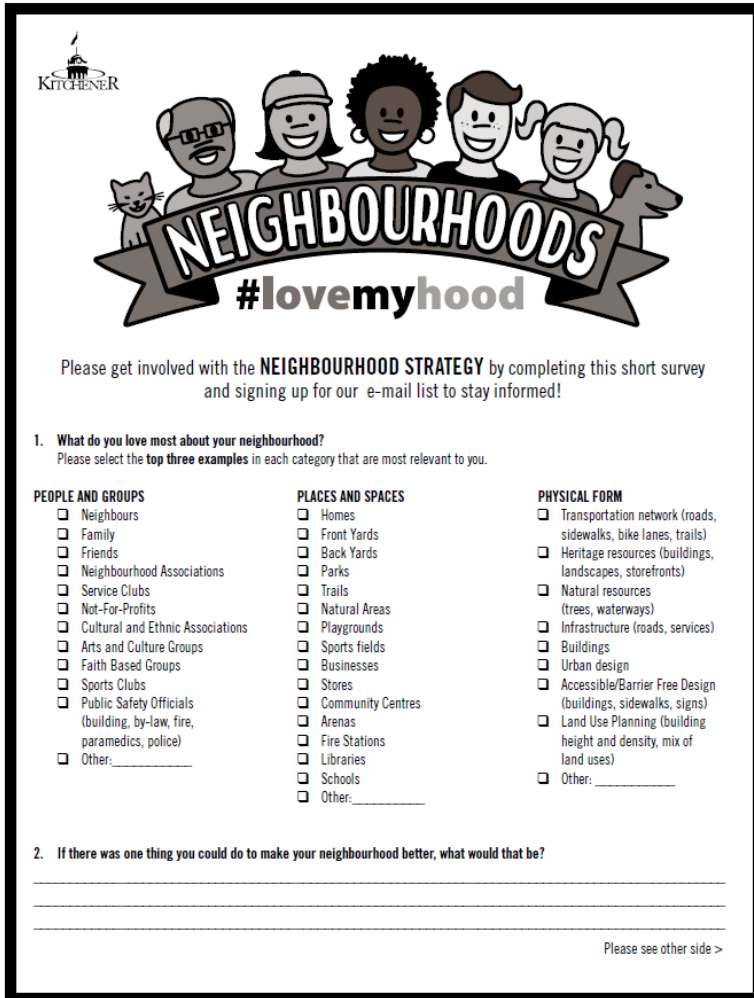
The purpose of the first major community engagement campaign was to inform and consult by creating awareness about the strategy with a travelling lemonade stand offering free lemonade and cookies in exchange for participating in a brief survey about neighbourhoods.

A copy of the survey is shown on pages 11 and 12. The questions asked were:

- What do you love most about your neighbourhood?
- If there was one thing you could do to make your neighbourhood better, what would that be?
- Help us to understand what you consider to be your neighbourhood by drawing the boundaries (edges) of your neighbourhood on the map.

The project team attended 27 events across the city and collected 1308 surveys from people of all ages. Events were primarily resident-led. Staff sought permission to bring the lemonade stand to each event. Staff and project team members volunteered their time to attend the

events, serve lemonade and cookies, and collect surveys. The surveys were collected in hard copy on clipboards and the responses were subsequently entered by staff into an Excel spreadsheet. The City's business analyst for the Community Services Department helped with analysis and reporting. The information was reported with an infographic developed by the City's internal communications and marketing staff. The infographic is shown on pages 13 through 15.



**NEIGHBOURHOODS**  
**#lovemyhood**

Please get involved with the **NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY** by completing this short survey and signing up for our e-mail list to stay informed!

**1. What do you love most about your neighbourhood?**  
Please select the **top three examples** in each category that are most relevant to you.

<p><b>PEOPLE AND GROUPS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Neighbours</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Family</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Friends</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Neighbourhood Associations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Service Clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Not-For-Profits</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Cultural and Ethnic Associations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Culture Groups</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Faith Based Groups</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sports Clubs</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Public Safety Officials (building, by-law, fire, paramedics, police)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>PLACES AND SPACES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Homes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Front Yards</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Back Yards</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Parks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Trails</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Natural Areas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Playgrounds</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Sports fields</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Businesses</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stores</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community Centres</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Arenas</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Fire Stations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Libraries</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Schools</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul>	<p><b>PHYSICAL FORM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation network (roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, trails)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Heritage resources (buildings, landscapes, storefronts)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Natural resources (trees, waterways)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure (roads, services)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Buildings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Urban design</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Accessible/Barrier Free Design (buildings, sidewalks, signs)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Planning (building height and density, mix of land uses)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</li> </ul>
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**2. If there was one thing you could do to make your neighbourhood better, what would that be?**

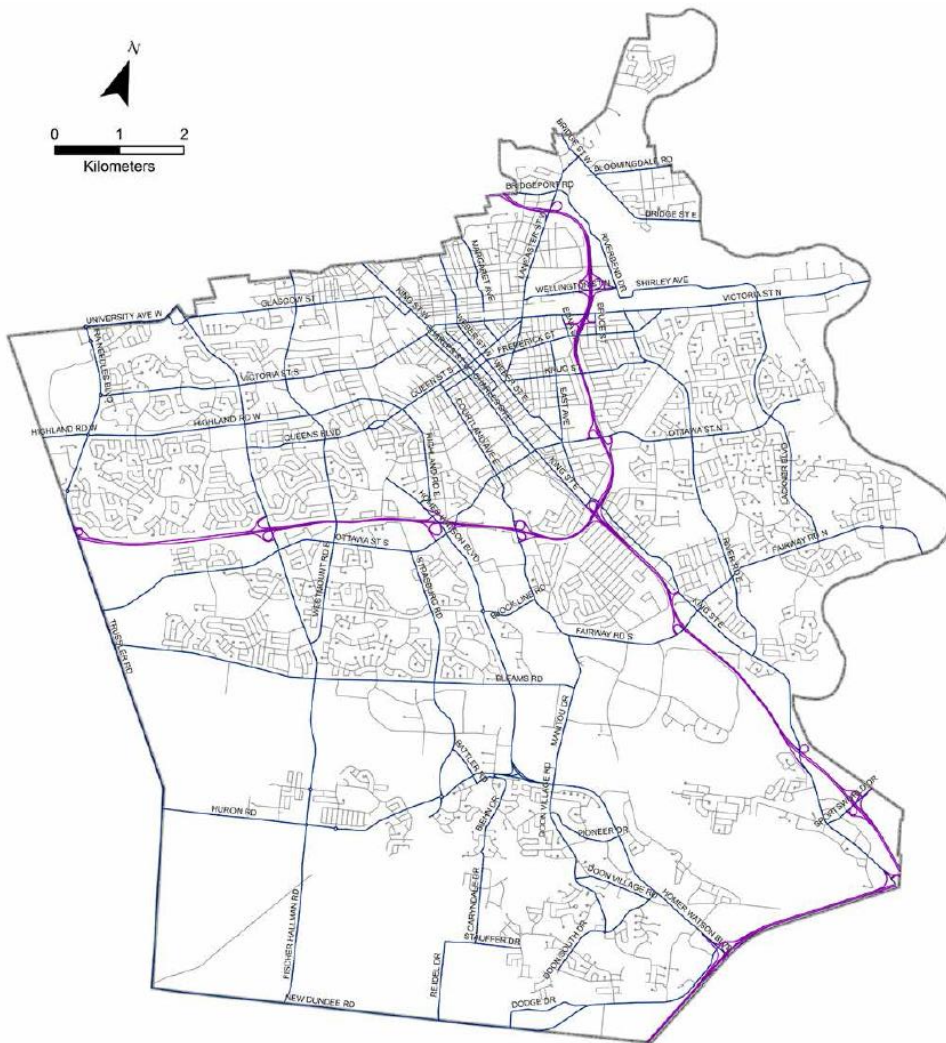
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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please see other side >

3. We want to know how people define the size of their neighbourhoods. Help us understand what you consider to be your neighbourhood by drawing the boundaries (edges) of your neighbourhood on the map.



Please provide your e-mail address if you would like to stay informed about Kitchener's Neighbourhood Strategy. In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M56, your e-mail address will only be used for this purpose. For more information or to request that your e-mail address be removed, contact Michelle Drake by e-mail ([michelle.drake@kitchener.ca](mailto:michelle.drake@kitchener.ca)) or phone (519-741-2200 ext. 7082).

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* This survey is available in accessible formats upon request. \*\*\*Please call 519-741-2345 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.

CONNECTING WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS TO DO GREAT THINGS!



What makes our NEIGHBOURHOODS GREAT?  
To find out, Kitchener's Neighbourhood Strategy Project Team asked YOU!

OUR TEAM  
ATTENDED

27 EVENTS!



We handed out

2,000  
(THAT'S A LOTTA LEMONS!)

 glasses of  
LEMONADE  
and collected

1,308



SURVEYS!

(WHOA! AND A LOTTA DATA)

WHO  
PARTICIPATED IN OUR  
SURVEY?



130

Aged 13 or under



140

Aged 14 - 24



509

Aged 25 - 49



154

Aged 50 - 64



123

Aged 65 or over



252

Not specified

AND HERE IS WHAT **YOU** HAD TO SAY ABOUT **YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD!**



**YOU** consider **YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD** to be this big:

MY STREET 8%  
MY CITY WARD 8%

**MEDIUM BLOCK**  
(approx. 6 - 20 streets)



**37%**

**LARGE BLOCK**  
(bound by major roads)



**24%**

**SMALL BLOCK**  
(approx. 2- 5 streets)



**23%**

HERE ARE THE THINGS YOU LOVE **MOST** ABOUT **YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD!**

**PEOPLE** you love spending time with in **YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD**.\*

**24%**  
NEIGHBOURS

**21%**  
FRIENDS

**17%**  
FAMILY

**11%**  
NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATIONS



\* Based on top four answers.



**PLACES** where you love to hang out in **YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD**:

**15%**  
PARKS

**15%**  
HOMES

**10%**  
TRAILS

**7%**  
PLAYGROUNDS

**7%**  
NATURAL AREAS

**6%**  
COMMUNITY CENTRES

**6%**  
FRONT YARDS

**6%**  
BACK YARDS

**6%**  
LIBRARIES

**6%**  
STORES

**5%**  
SCHOOLS

**4%**  
SPORTS FIELDS

**2%**  
ARENAS

**2%**  
FIRE STATIONS

**2%**  
BUSINESSES

(THAT'S A LOTTA HANGOUTS!)

Parts of **YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD** that are most important to **YOU** :\*



**29%** TRANSPORTATION NETWORK



**25%** NATURAL RESOURCES



**11%** HERITAGE RESOURCES

\* Based on top three answers.

HERE ARE **YOUR IDEAS** TO MAKE **YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD** BETTER!



IMPROVE OUR **PARKS!**

**#1 OVERALL IDEA**

(THAT'S A GREAT IDEA!)

POPULAR IDEAS, BASED ON **YOUR AGE**:

BASKETBALL COURTS & POOLS



MORE TRAILS & BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMUNITY SPIRIT & EVENTS



MORE AMENITIES

THANK YOU!

WE **LOVED** HEARING FROM **YOU!**

THANK YOU!

We'll be back some time next year to ask **HOW** to put these ideas in **ACTION**.

[www.kitchener.ca/neighbourhoodstrategy](http://www.kitchener.ca/neighbourhoodstrategy)

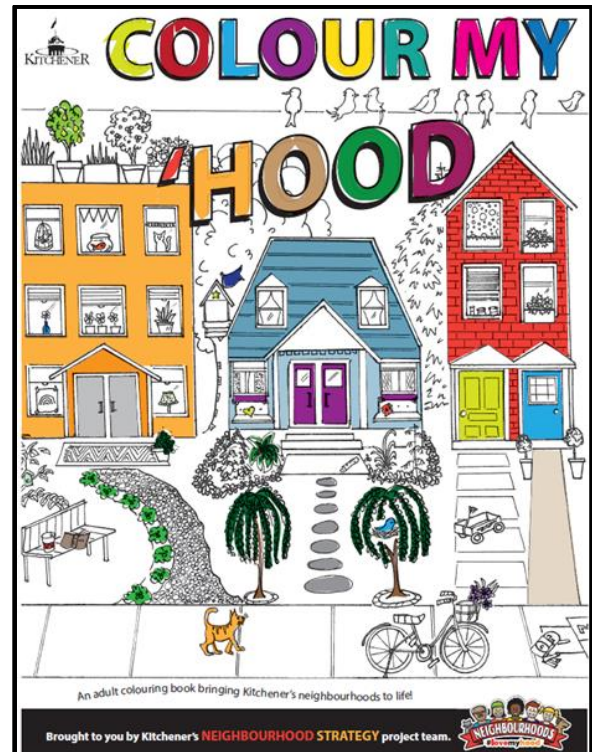
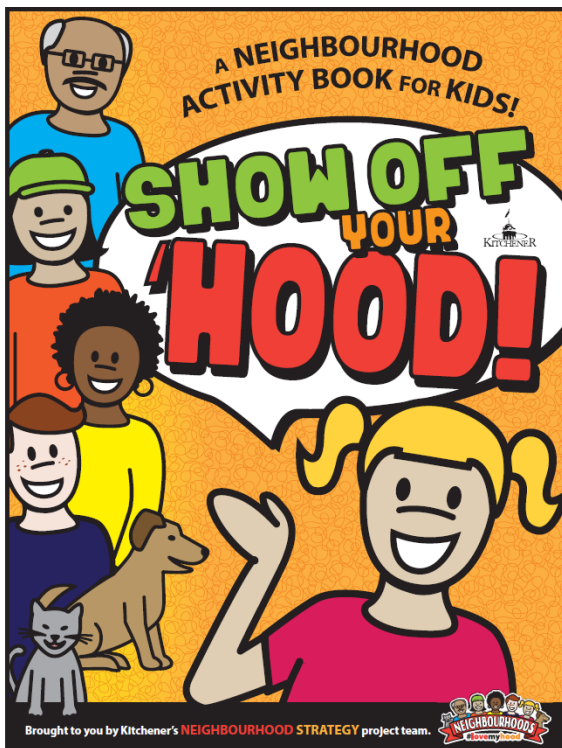


#lovelyhood

Phase 2: Stories, colouring books and hot chocolate (December 2015 to March 2016)

The purpose of the second community engagement campaign was to inform residents and maintain awareness of the strategy through stories, colouring books and a one day hot chocolate blitz. These were identified as methods not traditionally used by the city.

A social media campaign entitled #lovemyhood stories was launched to share inspirational stories about neighbourhood pride across the city. The campaign was inspired by the Humans of New York blog. A project team resident volunteer and another volunteer captured the photos. The project team resident volunteer also captured all 52 stories. Staff helped the volunteer connect with diverse residents from across the city. Each photo along with its story was posted on the City's Facebook page with #lovemyhood.



Neighbourhood-themed colouring books were launched as a fun and exciting way for people to reflect on their own neighbourhood. The idea was inspired by the recent adult colouring craze. An open call for artists resulted in the selection of three local artists who designed the adult colouring pages in the "Colour my 'hood" colouring book. In addition to the adult colouring book, a kids' activity book titled "Show off your 'hood" was designed by the City's communications and marketing staff. Staff was responsible for the final design of both books including artist biographies, introduction, colouring pages, advertisements and sponsorship recognition. A printing sponsorship with Cober Solutions was sought to help offset the cost. The adult books were launched at a beer and colouring event at THEMUSEUM and the kids books were distributed to 7100 children in grades 3 through 5 across the city in both the public and Catholic school boards. The Kitchener Market also distributed 500 colouring books at a March Break

kick-off event. Both colouring books were made available at community centres, KPL branches, select Little Libraries and on the City's website.

Building on the earlier lemonade stand concept, a hot chocolate blitz was scheduled in March 2016. The purpose was to continue to inform the community about the work to create a Neighbourhood Strategy. Staff and project team members volunteered to distribute hot chocolate and colouring books at eight locations across the city, including credit unions, libraries, pools and parks.

### ***Phase 3: Neighbourhood party and community engagement (April to August 2016)***

The purpose of the third community engagement campaign was to gather extensive community input to inform the creation of the Neighbourhood Strategy. This phase involved developing the community engagement questions, hosting the neighbourhood party/kick-off event and seeking input using four different tactics: street teams, focus groups, Engage Kitchener and a city-wide placemaking challenge.

#### *Question development*

This phase began by developing community engagement questions. Developing the questions began with a review of existing information pertaining to Kitchener neighbourhoods, such as: the neighbourhood questions and data collected by Environics as part of the City's 2015-2018 Strategic Plan; the questions and results of 2014 preliminary online survey regarding the Neighbourhood Strategy objectives, scope, processes and governance; and, the questions and results of the 2015 lemonade stand survey.

The project team's first question development exercise was structured like a world café and completed with the Neighbourhood Strategy project team and employee advisory committee. The exercise involved project team members participating in three different café discussions. Café 1 helped understand how the 2015 lemonade stand survey results could be used to strive towards the Neighbourhood Strategy vision and characteristics of a great neighbourhood. Café 2 focused on placemaking with specific reference to places and spaces that are assets in our neighbourhoods. Café 3 focused on the connections between people.

Results from this exercise were summarized into four themes:

- (1) places and spaces;
- (2) vision and characteristics of a great neighbourhood;
- (3) roles and collaboration; and,
- (4) connections.

An additional exercise to further refine these themes was completed with the communications and engagement sub-committee. Questions for the street teams, focus groups and Engage Kitchener were drafted under each of the four themes.

The draft street team questions were piloted at a meeting with approximately 50 Neighbourhood Association representatives. Attendees were divided into pairs and asked to interview each other using the questions. A debrief exercise gathered feedback to help refine the questions. Attendees were also asked to complete an exercise to help prioritize the questions under each theme and identify any gaps.

The draft focus group questions for organizations were piloted at a meeting with approximately 45 community partners. Attendees were divided into groups of 8-10 and asked to participate in a small focus group discussion. A debrief exercise gathered feedback to help refine the questions.

Feedback from the street team and focus group pilots was used to refine and finalize the questions for the community engagement campaign (April-August 2016).

### Neighbourhood party

Once the questions were finalized, a neighbourhood party/kick-off event with over 400 attendees was held on April 26, 2016 between 5:00 and 8:30 pm at the Stanley Park Community Centre. Invitations were sent to a stakeholder list of nearly 1000 organizations representing diverse interests such as arts and culture, sports, businesses, faith-based and cultural, disability support, education, heritage, environment, Neighbourhood Associations, public safety, service clubs, social services and transportation. An invitation in The Record, radio advertisements on 570 NEWS, colouring books, posters and bookmarks were used to inform and invite the broader community. The event “sold out” very quickly.



The party program included opening activities, an introduction to the Neighbourhood Strategy, a keynote speaker, three local speakers sharing their neighbourhood stories, several focus groups and closing remarks. The purpose of the opening activities was to have fun and recognize existing neighbourhood initiatives. The opening activities included: a free

neighbourhood BBQ, a porch party featuring the Dave Rozell band, storytelling and a tech bar with the Kitchener Public Library, a collaborative “tree troll” art project with artist-in-residence Sarah Granskou, a cardboard forest by Mindful Makers, a placemaking ideas swap, a Little Library workshop, Kirby the Kangaroo from Your Neighbourhood Credit Union, the Revera passport to fun, and free face painting and popcorn.

Attendees were provided an introduction to the Neighbourhood Strategy by the project champion, Michael May, and Kitchener Mayor Berry Vrbanovic. The keynote speaker, Jim Diers, provided an inspirational presentation about why residents should get involved in their neighbourhood along with some unique neighbourhood placemaking examples. Three local speakers participated in an “ignite style presentation” where they were each provided five minutes to share their inspirational neighbourhood stories:

- Carin Lowerison spoke about the work of several neighbourhoods to welcome and embrace Syrian refugees into their neighbourhoods.
- Laura McBride spoke about the magic of fairy doors in the Central Frederick neighbourhood.
- Nicola Thomas spoke about the work to plant an edible food forest that is available to everyone at the Forest Heights Community Centre.

Inspiration from all speakers got attendees thinking about their role and the potential opportunities in their neighbourhoods. Attendees were then asked to participate in a 40 minute focus group, facilitated by City staff, to share their ideas for making Kitchener's neighbourhoods great. Attendees were able to contribute to group notes and were also able to contribute their individual notes. Altogether 15 different focus groups ranging from five to a dozen people participated. All notes were collected to help inform the creation of the Neighbourhood Strategy.

The party ended with a prize draw for some Little Libraries and closing remarks thanking everyone for attending, encouraging them to spread the work and informing them about the next steps in creating the Neighbourhood Strategy.

### Street teams

A series of five questions was specifically designed for use by street teams.

1. Thank you for taking the time to chat with us about the great things happening in Kitchener!
  - a) Where do you spend time in your neighbourhood?
  - b) What do you currently do in these places?
  - c) What is something you'd like to do in one of these places?
2. When choosing a neighbourhood to live in:
  - a) What are the 'big things' that you want in a neighbourhood?
  - b) What are the 'little things' that you want in a neighbourhood?

3. Think of a person or group in your neighbourhood that you respect or admire. What is it that you respect or admire about them?
4. Think about your neighbourhood:
  - a) What ideas do you have to make your neighbourhood better?
  - b) To help make one of these ideas happen, what would YOU be prepared to do?
  - c) Who would you reach out to, for help?
  - d) What could the City do to help you make this idea happen?
5. The Neighbourhood Strategy project team, which includes volunteers and City staff, completed a series of exercises to identify characteristics of a great neighbourhood. Seven characteristics were identified and are being presented to the public for input. Your input is being sought on just one of these characteristics today. When thinking about your neighbourhood:
  - a) What does (accessible, connected, diverse, engaged, inclusive, resilient or safe) mean to you?
  - b) What can be done to make your neighbourhood more (accessible, connected, diverse, engaged, inclusive, resilient or safe)?

The street teams consisted of staff and volunteers who were responsible for having conversations about neighbourhoods and gathering input to help create the Neighbourhood Strategy. Part-time staff was hired on a temporary basis who were responsible for attending as many community events and gatherings as possible between May and August 2016 in an attempt to reach residents who do not usually get engaged in municipal consultations. Approximately 15 volunteers signed up to assist with conducting street teams during this timeframe. Street team staff and volunteers were provided a two hour training session and a training kit, which included the ten minute street team survey.

The street teams reached 90 different events/locations throughout the City and collected 182 hours of input from 1093 residents. As a small thank you for their participation, residents were provided with a Neighbourhood Strategy beach blanket. An [interactive map](#) is available online that provides a visual depiction of the locations of all street teams. This map also shows the locations of all focus groups, lemonade stands, meetings, the neighbourhood party, and the placemaking challenge sites.

Street team events/locations included:

- Ward 5 Open House, Williamsburg Community Centre
- Association of Liberian Immigrants in Kitchener Environs Mother's Day event
- Street Team Volunteer Training
- Environmental Advisory Committee
- Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Hohner Ave Porch Party
- Stanley Park Bike Safety Fun Day
- Forest Hill United Church Food Truck Frenzy
- Kingsdale Splash Pad
- Max Becker Commons/ Lisboa Bakery
- Kiwanis Park
- Chandler Mowat Community Centre splash pad
- Harry Class Pool
- Eid Festival
- Tame the Lane

- Victoria Park Neighbourhood Association Garden Swap
- Bikefest
- Youth Forum (City of Kitchener)
- Lyle Hallman Pool
- Neighbourhood Strategy Employee Advisory Committee
- Breithaupt Centre
- Safe & Healthy Community Advisory Committee
- Breithaupt Centre
- Chicopee Ski & Summer Resort Schools Out KW Event
- Kitchener Market
- Coalition for Muslim Women public event
- Heritage Kitchener
- Business Heritage Awards
- John Darling Public School event
- Settler's Grove - Neighbours Day
- Chandler Mowat Community Centre - Neighbours Day
- First Mennonite Church - Neighbours Day
- Fire Station 7 - Neighbours Day
- Bridgeport Community Centre - Neighbours Day
- Victoria Hills Community Centre - Neighbours Day
- Country Hills Community Centre - Neighbours Day
- Boardwalk Neighbourhood Association - Neighbours Day
- Westmount Neighbourhood Association - Neighbours Day
- St. Anne's Church
- Lackner Woods School BBQ
- Cycling & Trails Advisory Committee
- King East Neighbourhood Association Community Yard Sale
- JW Gerth Public School Fun Fair
- Forest Heights Community Association Family Fun Day
- Arts & Culture Advisory Committee
- House of Friendship Strawberry Social
- Kitchener Minor Girls Softball 50th Anniversary
- Kitchener Soccer Club games at Biehn Park
- Sai Bhakti Dham Festival
- Cherry Festival
- McLennan Park
- Forest Heights Pool
- Grace Mennonite Brethren Church Vacation Bible School
- Southwest Kitchener Church of Christ Family Event
- Huron Natural Area
- Newcomer Youth Pathway to Belonging
- Kitchener Panthers baseball game and Aud Skate Park
- AR Kaufman YMCA
- Doon Presbyterian Church Food Truck
- Neighbourhood Market at Mill Courtland Community Centre
- Centreville Chicopee COPS youth program
- Doon Splash Pad/Basketball courts
- Tennis Camp
- Pioneer Park Shopping Plaza
- Schneider Creek Porch Party
- Bread & Roses Housing Cooperative stuff swap and porch party
- Waterloo Region Museum Sunday Family Fun Day
- Discovery Square
- Christian Horizons' Neighbourhood Lunch and Open House
- St John's Soup Kitchen
- KidsAbility
- Forest Glen Plaza GRT bus station
- Fairview Mall GRT bus station
- Sunrise Centre
- Body, Mind & Movement program by Dancing with disAbility
- Healing of the Seven Generations potluck lunch
- Chandler Mowat Community Centre food bank distribution day
- Budd Park Soccer House League
- Royal Canadian Legion card games
- St. Luke's Lutheran Church
- Doon Village Retirement Residence
- Belmont Village

- Mount Hope Breithaupt Soccer
- Kitchener Minor Baseball Association Bench Dedication
- Get Out on the Water Day by Kitchener Waterloo Rowing Club
- Kingsdale Early Start Program
- Centreville Chicopee splash pad and skate park
- Kitchener Public Library Country Hills
- Shantz Park
- Kitchener Public Library Central

### Focus groups

A series of questions was specifically designed for use by two different types of focus groups. The first type of focus group was a resident focus group with five steps designed to take a total of one hour. A moderator's kit was designed as a resource for residents hosting a focus group. The Neighbourhood Strategy e-newsletter, the stakeholder list and social media were used to encourage residents to host their own focus group. As an incentive to host a focus group, residents were advised that refreshments were available on a first serve basis. A total of 20 resident focus groups contributed to the creation of the Neighbourhood Strategy.

The 'Neighbourhood News' worksheet on the following page was provided in the kit as a tool for participants to write down their ideas – headlines, quotes, point form descriptions – and draw their ideas.

The resident focus groups with the number of participants in brackets are outlined below:

- Bridgeport Youth Girls Drop In (5)
- Breithaupt Centre (2)
- Nexus Church (7)
- Extend-A-Family – Mount Hope (5)
- Rockway Craft Group (8)
- Hidden Creek residents #1 (23)
- Hidden Creek residents #2 (29)
- Schneider Ave residents (7)
- United Filipino Canadian Society of Waterloo Region (8)
- Environics #1 (6)
- Environics #2 (6)
- Environics #3 (7)
- Friends of Crime Prevention (5)
- Mill Courtland Community Centre (10)
- Extend-A-Family - Stanley Park (7)
- Homewood Ave residents (7)
- Changemakers Housing Co-operative (5)
- Pine Valley Drive residents (4)
- Neighbourhood Camps - Victoria Hills Community Centre (59)
- Neighbourhood Camps - Forest Heights Community Centre (62)

The second type of focus group was developed for organizations with five steps designed to take anywhere from one hour to one and a half hours. A moderator's kit was designed as a resource for organizations hosting a focus group. The Neighbourhood Strategy e-newsletter, the stakeholder list and social media were used to encourage organizations to host their own focus group. Organizations were also offered refreshments on a first serve basis. A total of 15 organization focus groups contributed to the creation of the Neighbourhood Strategy. Altogether, 35 focus groups were held and 408 people contributed 408 hours of input.

The organization focus groups with the number of participants in brackets are outlined below:

- Economic Development Advisory Committee (8)
- Downtown Action Advisory Committee (10)
- Mayor's Advisory Council for Kitchener's Seniors (11)
- Kitchener Youth Action Council (15)
- REEP Green Solutions (7)
- Children's Planning Table (30)
- Extend-A-Family (8)
- Cherry Park Neighbourhood Association (4)
- Sexual Assault Support Centre (3)
- Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council (18)
- Waterloo Regional Police Service (15)
- Waterloo MB Church Victoria Hills outreach (4)
- Multicultural Centre (6)
- Waterloo Region Nepalese Association (6)
- KW Habilitation and the Stirling/Ottawa/Charles/Courtland neighbourhood (7)

# NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS

[www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood](http://www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood)

APRIL 26, 2026

#lovemyhood

## INSPIRING NEWS!

*What IDEA do you have to make your neighbourhood even better?*



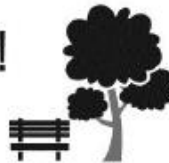
## OUR AWESOME NEIGHBOURS!

*Think of a neighbour you respect or admire. How are they helping your neighbourhood in 2026?*



## HANGING OUT IN THE 'HOOD!

*Tell us about the new or improved places, events or programs that will enhance your neighbourhood experience in 2026.*



## PERFECT PARTNERSHIPS!

*Who is working together and what are they doing to address challenges and opportunities in your neighbourhood?*



### Engage Kitchener survey and ideas forum

A series of questions was also specifically designed for use with two tools on Engage Kitchener: an online survey and an online ideas forum. The online survey consisted of a total of eight questions with seven closed-ended questions and one open-ended question. The questions were similar to those used by the street teams. Using closed-ended questions minimized the time required to complete the survey.

1. Take a minute and picture yourself in your neighbourhood. What are the top three places that you spend time in?
  - Businesses: cafés, restaurants, shopping centres, stores
  - Community centres
  - Front yards
  - Libraries
  - Natural areas
  - Paths and trails
  - Playgrounds
  - Sportsfields
  - Streets and sidewalks
  - Recreational facilities: arenas, pools, dance halls, music studios, etc.
  - Other
  
2. a) Is there a specific place in your neighbourhood you don't tend to go?
  - Businesses: cafés, restaurants, shopping centres, stores
  - Community centres
  - Front yards
  - Libraries
  - Natural areas
  - Paths and trails
  - Playgrounds
  - Sportsfields
  - Streets and sidewalks
  - Recreational facilities: arenas, pools, dance halls, music studios, etc.
  - Other
  
2. b) What could be done to get you to spend more time there?
  
3. a) When was the last time you interacted with one of your neighbours?
  
3. b) What did you do with this person?
  
4. Think of a person in your neighbourhood that you admire or respect. What three things do you admire or respect about them?
  - Their creativity

- Their ability to make things happen
  - Their skills: communication, leadership, organization, etc.
  - Their helpfulness in caring for and supporting their neighbours
  - Their knowledge and involvement in the neighbourhood
  - Their ability to build relationships
  - Other
5. The Neighbourhood Strategy project team, which includes volunteers and City staff, completed a series of exercises to identify characteristics of a great neighbourhood. Seven characteristics were identified and are being presented to the public for input.
- Accessible
  - Connected
  - Diverse
  - Engaged
  - Inclusive
  - Resilient
  - Safe
6. Congratulations! You have a really great idea to make your neighbourhood better. If you need help with your idea, who will you reach out to first?
- Other levels of government
  - City of Kitchener staff
  - Neighbourhood associations
  - Faith or cultural group
  - Non-profit or social service organization
  - Service club
  - City Councillor
  - Neighbours
  - Friends
  - Family
  - I wouldn't ask for help
  - Other

The online idea forum contained one question: Do you have a great idea to make your neighbourhood even better? Residents were able to post their idea, describe it and explain how the City could help make it happen. Residents could also express their support and add comments to other ideas. Ninety-nine ideas were submitted. Collectively, the two tools on Engage Kitchener resulted in 961 people providing 39 hours of input.

### Placemaking challenge

As part of the development of the Neighbourhood Strategy, staff was directed to focus on achieving two specific objectives. One of these objectives was to create a framework to facilitate and support a resident-led approach to placemaking in the city's neighbourhoods. The

placemaking challenge offered an opportunity to determine how to support resident-led placemaking by providing a chance to test and practice it.

Residents were challenged to temporarily transform or reinvigorate a place in their neighbourhood on August 13, 2016. Successful submissions were provided a maximum of \$1,000 to make their ideas happen. Helpful resources and links about placemaking were provided to help get people thinking about the possibilities. In total, 12 applications were received with the following eight participating in the challenge:

- A secret fairy village, with hidden and magical discoveries at Shantz Park (at River Road and Manchester Road);
- A “gaga ball” court and tree planting at Marl Meadow Court cul-de-sac;
- A historical map workshop featuring local landmarks of Lower Doon at Willow Lake Park;
- An interactive mural painting, featuring local youth collaborating with an artist to paint a storage shed at the Forest Heights Community Centre edible forest;
- A beach picnic in Victoria Park, complete with beach games, sandboxes and tunes;
- A pollinator garden of raised beds with plants friendly to bees in a vacant lot just off the corner of Wellington Street and Lancaster Street;
- Soccer nets and a food truck on the massive cul-de-sac at Hartwood Court; and,
- A lemonade stand and community message board at the Ferdinand Street entrance to the Spur Line trail.


Lessons learned from the placemaking challenge will be incorporated into the future release of a neighbourhood placemaking guide and toolkit as well as future neighbourhood placemaking challenges.

#### ***Phase 4: Analysis (July to November 2016)***

The infographic on the following page was developed by the City's internal communications and marketing staff in order to report on the public input numbers and the high-level themes.

#### ***Analysis of public input***

Input received from the public was summarized in an insights report that identified the key themes along with key findings and examples. The project team used this report to help analyze the public input between July and September 2016. The project team completed a gap analysis to help draft the recommendations by considering the input received and working through a process to identify what could be done to respond to the input that aligns with the project vision and characteristics of a great neighbourhood. Once an initial list of draft recommendations was developed, the project team reviewed this list and completed a dotmocracy exercise to help identify a reasonable number of the most important recommendations. The project team endorsed sharing the draft recommendations with the public to receive their comments and help prioritize implementation.














## MASSIVE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS TO CREATE KITCHENER'S NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY

So many involved! **5,343 PEOPLE**  
That's one person for every three streets!

Really deep conversations! **3,842 HOURS** of input.  
That's like talking neighbourhoods for 160 days straight!

Lots of diversity! **145** different organizations  
and informal groups were consulted!

<p><b>LEMONADE!</b></p>  <p><b>1,308</b> people spent <b>65</b> hours drinking lemonade and completing a survey at 27 events.</p>	<p><b>NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTY!</b></p>  <p><b>400</b> people spent <b>1,000</b> hours talking neighbourhoods at our Neighbourhood Party.</p>	<p><b>STREET TEAMS!</b></p>  <p><b>1,093</b> people spent <b>182</b> hours being interviewed across the city at 86 locations.</p>	<p><b>FOCUS GROUPS!</b></p>  <p><b>408</b> people spent <b>408</b> hours participating in 35 focus groups.</p>
<p><b>ONLINE STUFF!</b></p>  <p><b>961</b> people spent <b>39</b> hours commenting online through a survey, ideas forum and on social media.</p>	<p><b>MEETINGS!</b></p>  <p><b>111</b> people spent <b>222</b> hours providing input at meetings with neighbourhood associations and other community partners.</p>	<p><b>PHONE SURVEY!</b></p>  <p><b>600</b> people spent <b>150</b> hours sharing their perspectives through a statistically-valid phone survey.</p>	<p><b>BRAINSTORMING!</b></p>  <p><b>134</b> people spent <b>268</b> hours identifying the red tape that limits people from acting on neighbourhood ideas.</p>
<p><b>PLACEMAKING!</b></p>  <p><b>310</b> people spent <b>620</b> hours testing and practicing placemaking at 9 different sites throughout the city.</p>	<p><b>TEAM EFFORT!</b></p>  <p><b>18</b> volunteers spent <b>888</b> hours guiding the creation of this strategy at 53 project team and subcommittee meetings.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>WHAT DID WE HEAR?</b></p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed white;"/> <p><b>OVERALL =</b> YOU WANT easy-to-use city programs for <b>RESIDENT-LED ACTION</b> </p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed white;"/> <p>YOU WANT more <b>GREAT PLACES</b> </p> <p>YOU WANT more <b>CONNECTED PEOPLE</b> </p> <p>YOU WANT everyone <b>WORKING TOGETHER</b> </p>	

Based on **YOUR INPUT**, the project team created a bunch of **RECOMMENDATIONS!** See them all at:

### Prioritization of draft recommendations

A survey was made available (October 27 – November 28, 2016) on the City's online engagement platform, Engage Kitchener, in order to circle back with the public to confirm that we heard them correctly during our community engagement process and to seek their input on prioritizing the implementation of the draft recommendations. The public was asked to prioritize the recommendations within each theme as well as the specific programs within the proposed Neighbourhood Places Program. The public was also asked to provide any other thoughts or comments that they may have on the draft recommendations.

City staff from across the corporation were also consulted to seek their input on prioritizing the implementation of the draft recommendations. Meetings were held with individual staff, teams and divisions whose work may be impacted by the draft recommendations. These discussions considered business plans, staff resources and funding.

Input from the public was combined with input from staff to identify a three year implementation schedule with a series of recommendations being prioritized for implementation each year.

### ***Other engagement exercises and meetings (October 2015 to August 2016)***

#### Statistically representative survey (July 2016)

A statistically representative survey was administered by land line and cell phone with a selection of the engagement questions used for the street teams, focus groups and Engage Kitchener survey. The purpose of the statistically representative survey was to ensure that the results of the larger engagement process accurately reflected diverse people from across the City. Six hundred surveys were collected from three geographic areas of the City generally identified as northeast, northwest and south.

#### Engaging municipal staff

Municipal staff were engaged to varying degrees during different stages of the project. The Neighbourhood Strategy project team included 11 staff members from across the corporation. An employee advisory committee with 23 staff members from across the corporation was established and met seven times to seek input at key stages throughout the project. The employee advisory committee helped to develop the engagement questions, piloted the street team questions, discussed the culture change required to support resident-led initiatives, identified policies and processes for improvement and reviewed the draft Neighbourhood Strategy recommendations.

Additional staff were involved in the following ways:

- Approximately 180 staff attended a one hour inspirational talk by Jim Diers where he shared his experience as a municipal employee supporting neighbourhoods in the City of Seattle.

- Approximately 74 staff participated in a two hour interactive forum where input was sought on how to support resident-led initiatives.
- Approximately 31 staff participated in an exercise to identify the top 10 municipal barriers to doing great things in neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood supporter versus rule enforcer exercise

Beginning in October 2015, the project manager initiated conversations with the Neighbourhood Strategy employee advisory committee to discuss the internal culture changes required amongst staff to better support residents and neighbourhoods.

The conversation began by asking staff to define a culture of neighbourhood supporters and describe what it looks like, how it operates, how it is perceived and what do residents have to say about it. Staff were also asked to identify what the City is doing that is, or could be perceived as being, a neighbourhood supporter. Staff were then asked to define and describe a culture of rule enforcers along with what the City is doing that reflects the image of a rule enforcer. Once staff completed the definitions and descriptions they were then asked to indicate where on a spectrum the City currently operates and where they would like the City to operate in the future.

The project team participated in the same conversation at their monthly meeting in December 2015. The project team was asked to define and describe a neighbourhood supporter and a rule enforcer. They were also asked to indicate what role municipal staff currently play and what role they would like municipal staff to play in the future.



Staff response by department



Staff response by department

NOTE: red dots represent Community Services, blue dots represent Finance and Corporate Services, yellow dots represent Chief Administrator's Office and green dots represent Infrastructure Services

### Neighbourhood Association meetings

Staff hosted and attended various Neighbourhood Association meetings in order to collect their input. Staff attended the Neighbourhood Association Summit in November 2015 and 2016. During both meetings, the project team was able to host a table talk on the Neighbourhood Strategy. The 2015 discussion focused on whether there is a need to define neighbourhoods and what are the best practices to engage residents in neighbourhoods. The 2016 discussion focused on the draft recommendations and helped to identify priorities for implementation.

Staff hosted invited representatives from all Neighbourhood Associations to a Neighbourhood Strategy meeting on February 18, 2016 between 6:00 and 8:00 pm at the Rockway Golf Course. A light dinner was provided and attendees had the chance to hear a presentation explaining what the Neighbourhood Strategy is, how it is going to be developed and how Neighbourhood Associations can help. Attendees were provided an opportunity to ask questions before they were asked to help by participating in a pilot of the street team questions. This pilot and the feedback received from the Neighbourhood Associations was instrumental in the final questions used by the street teams.

Staff were invited to a number of Neighbourhood Association board meetings to provide a presentation on the Neighbourhood Strategy and seek their input. Many Neighbourhood Associations also invited the project team to host a street team at one or more of their events. Some Neighbourhood Associations also hosted their own focus group to provide input.

Lastly, the project team contained seven members who either sit on, or are actively involved with, their Neighbourhood Association board. This accounted for almost half of the residents participating on the project team ensuring that Neighbourhood Associations had a large voice around the table to help create Kitchener's first Neighbourhood Strategy.

### Community partner meetings

Early on in the process, the project team developed a list of the amazing community partners already providing various resources and supports to Kitchener's neighbourhoods. These community partners represent diverse interests, including: education (e.g. school boards), public safety (e.g. fire, police, Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council), not-for-profit organizations (e.g. Festival of Neighbourhoods, Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation, United Way Kitchener Waterloo and Area), social services (e.g. Extend-A-Family, House of Friendship) and government (e.g. Region of Waterloo).

These community partners were invited to two separate community partner meetings to discuss the Neighbourhood Strategy and their role in supporting neighbourhoods. During the first meeting, the community partners were introduced to the Neighbourhood Strategy vision and the results of the lemonade stand consultations. Attendees participated in three discussions that focused on: (1) sharing current efforts in strengthening neighbourhoods, (2) seeking advice on how best to engage the community and (3) exploring ways that the City and community partners can work together to better support neighbourhoods.

The purpose of the second meeting was to provide an update on the Neighbourhood Strategy and pilot some of the focus group questions before use by the broader community. Feedback from the focus group pilot contributed to the final questions in the resident and organization focus groups. A complete list of the community partners who attended these meetings is provided below.

- Bridges to Belonging
- Carizon
- Central Ontario Cooperative Housing Federation
- City of Kitchener
- Children's Planning Table
- Country Hills Recreation Association
- Extend-A-Family
- Festival of Neighbourhoods
- Highland Stirling/Cedar Hill Community Groups
- House of Friendship
- Kitchener Citizen
- Kitchener Public Library
- K-W Community Foundation
- KW Counselling
- Ray of Hope
- Region of Waterloo
- Salvation Army
- Social Development Centre (formerly Social Planning Council of K-W)
- Tamarack
- United Way Kitchener Waterloo and Area
- Waterloo Region Catholic District School Board
- Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council
- Waterloo Region District School Board
- Waterloo Regional Police Services
- Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network
- YMCA

#### Reduce municipal barriers meetings

Recognizing that the Neighbourhood Strategy is about finding ways to help neighbours do even more great things in neighbourhoods across the city, an important theme emerged that required further exploration. Staff heard clearly that one of the best ways that the City can help neighbours do even more in their neighbourhoods is to make it easier for them to get stuff done – in other words, reduce the red tape. In response to this theme, the City hosted a meeting with the public and a second meeting with staff to discuss how a better balance can be struck between the need for rules and processes that protect the municipality, the community and volunteers, while ensuring that the rules do not get in the way of making our neighbourhoods even better. During these meetings, community members and staff were asked to draw on their own experiences to help identify a list of the top City Hall processes or rules that are getting in the way of people doing great things in neighbourhoods. From these discussions, one recommendation to review and change seven City policies and procedures was developed (Strategy Recommendation #15). A worksheet showing the top three red tape ideas identified by community members is provided below.

**Top 3 'Red Tape' Ideas**  
August 23, 2016




Table #1	Table #2	Table #3	Table #4	Table #5	Table #6
Risk management in combo with legal have zero tolerance for any risk	Access for people & nbhds to use spaces (meeting/indoor space, room availability, outdoor event space) for nominal cost/free	Multiple places/ staff/orgs for licenses (eg. markets, special events)	Permits - putting something on public space	Permits - Street Closures, etc. - Licensing - Multiple forms	Permits - check documents - fees - water - buses - insurance expenses
Ease of entryway and the user experience - difficult to find the right person: Needing 100% approval	Not knowing who, what, where... when you want to do something or that you can ask someone	Difficult to get bylaw exemptions (eg. noise, urban camping)	Too difficult and costly to use public space.	Response Time - Delays in hearing back (Parks, Trees, Horticulture)	How to Navigate City Website
Related to city staff ↳ slow response time; power imbalance thru their tone; communication	The challenges, including timelines and permission requirements, to actually do stuff. (frustration may exceed value or ability to move forward)	Facility hours (programs in community centres) - only NA approved groups	No communication from City to Neighbours. Neighbours not hearing what they need to know from city.	Info-access - Who is responsible for what (unclear) - Complicated website	Lack of Events Kits for Neighbourhoods - send system - take - games

Working sheet: Top three red tape ideas identified by community members

### Strategic session with Council

Staff attended a strategic session with City Council on March 21, 2016 in order to inform and consult with them regarding the development of the Neighbourhood Strategy. A staff presentation provided an update on the Neighbourhood Strategy and then sought their input on three topics: (1) engaging members of the community who do not normally provide input in municipal consultations, (2) engaging a diverse range of people and (3) reviewing the draft street team questions. Council's input was used to help shape the community engagement process and the final street team questions.

### Sponsorships

The project team set ambitious plans to reach different age groups, cultural backgrounds and neighbourhoods. In order to do this, an engagement process that went beyond an online survey and open house was required. It was determined that the three streams of engagement (outlined on page 6 of this report) would best be achieved with additional funding. As a result, sponsorships were sought to help lead one of the deepest and most inclusive community engagement processes in the City's history.

A sponsorship goal of \$25,000 was set and surpassed with a combination of \$23,998.67 cash and \$76,910.40 in-kind contributions. The sponsorship funds were used to increase the city's efforts to reach and engage a broader, more diverse section of the community. Sponsorships helped reach diverse audiences across the City in non-traditional ways such as bus shelter advertisements and colouring books. They also helped us provide light refreshments, including an amazing #lovemyhood cake, to fuel residents participating in focus groups and other community meetings. With the sponsorships we were able to entice residents to provide their input through a street team or focus group by rewarding them with a neighbourhood picnic blanket. Perhaps most importantly, they enabled us to thank our volunteers who were instrumental to the success of the project. This helped keep them motivated as they contributed their time and energy over 18 months.



Our sponsors were:

**Title Sponsor**  
Your Neighbourhood Credit Union



**Presenting Sponsors**

570 News, CHYM 96.7, Country 106.7

**Contributing Sponsors**

Revera Retirement Living, Kitchener Golf, Kitchener Cemeteries

**Colouring Book Sponsors**

Cober Solutions

Skyzone Trampoline Park

Chicope Ski & Summer Resort

City of Kitchener Aquatics

## **Glossary**

**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).

**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 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 Placemaking:** A collaborative process by which residents can shape public spaces in order to maximize shared value. Neighbourhood Placemaking inspires residents to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces and, in so doing, strengthens the connections between the people who live, work, learn and play in the neighbourhood and the places they all share.

**Placemaking:** A collaborative process by which residents can shape public spaces in order to maximize shared value. Neighbourhood Placemaking inspires residents to collectively reimagine and reinvent public spaces and, in so doing, strengthens the connections between the people who live, work, learn and play in the neighbourhood and the places they all share.

**Places:** Spaces that have meaning to the people who live, work, learn and play in the neighbourhood.

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

**Spaces:** Physical locations within a neighbourhood (e.g. parks, sidewalks, squares).

**Vision:** A statement that captures the neighbours' dream of what their neighbourhood will be in the future.