



Hamilton



Hamilton

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION STRATEGY

2015

ANNUAL UPDATE

Measuring Success

Hamilton

NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION STRATEGY

Vision

Vibrant, healthy and inclusive neighbourhoods built on opportunity and trust by an engaged community.

Mission

Mobilize, encourage and support Hamilton residents and community partners to work together for positive neighbourhood change.

Principles/Values

Equity
Integrity
Innovation

Asset-Based
Collaborative
Inspiring & Fun



The honourable Mayor Fred Eisenberger and Hamilton City Council

We see evidence of the progress being made in Hamilton's neighbourhoods every day. This is due in large part to the work of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy and positive partnerships with our community organizations and educational institutions. Residents are experiencing increased satisfaction with their neighbourhoods, civic engagement and access to information on city services and activities. Most importantly, more residents than ever feel that their neighbourhood is a good place to raise a child.

Community development is a complex process and there is much work to be done, but I am proud of the positive changes we are seeing as a result of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy.

Mayor Fred Eisenberger, City of Hamilton



Hamilton

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIPS...

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy is about partnerships; between residents, planning teams, funders, service providers, businesses, anchor institutions and the City of Hamilton. Each partner brings their own assets to the table; resources, knowledge, expertise and passion for neighbourhoods and each play a role in the ongoing success of the Strategy. In 2002, Hamilton Community Foundation launched the Growing Roots...Strengthening Neighbourhoods program, piloting the use of Community Development (CD) workers and small grants in Jamesville, Beasley and McQuesten neighbourhoods. Following the \$3M Tackling Poverty Together initiative launched in 2004, Hamilton Community Foundation continued with the Tackling Poverty Together II program and expanded to include the Riverdale and Crown Point neighbourhoods.

In the 5 years since the Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS) launched, it has become much more than just the sum of its parts. The Neighbourhood Action Strategy has evolved, organically and with some growing pains, into a project that welcomes all contributors and utilizes the brainpower of all partners to create innovative and inclusive projects, programs and events that build healthy and vibrant communities.

Hamilton Community Foundation, Best Start Network, and the City of Hamilton have provided funding to the Neighbourhood Action Strategy since its inception in 2010. This funding supports community development work, neighbourhood-based projects and programs and evaluation. As funders, our continued commitment to neighbourhood work is based on the belief that residents know their neighbourhoods best and are the most invested in living in healthy places and spaces; that everyone has a part to play in building healthy neighbourhoods and that together we can co-create and support solutions that are changing the neighbourhoods and institutions equally. We look forward to all that can be and will be accomplished as the Strategy matures and moves into the future.



*Suzanne Brown, Director
Neighbourhood & Community Initiatives
City of Hamilton*



*Matt Goodman, Vice-President
Grants & Community Initiatives
Hamilton Community Foundation*



*Grace Mater, Director
Children & Home Management Services
City of Hamilton*



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SOCIAL PLANNING AND RESEARCH COUNCIL

The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton provides Community Developer (CD) support to the Neighbourhood Action Strategy. The CDs are assigned to the neighbourhood hubs and work with residents, planning teams and service providers using an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) framework. Over the past year, CDs have provided support to projects such as the Pipeline Trail in Crown Point, Carter Park in Stinson, community events in Riverdale, the start-up of a planning team in Rolston, development of the McQuesten Urban farm, Jamesville's Sunset Cultural Garden, and the great Beautiful Alleys work in GALA.

The CDs have also spent a year learning more about working from an Anti-Oppression/Anti-Racism framework. We have worked with experts in these areas to bring a more inclusive lens to the work of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy. Engaging residents in this way helps us understand the systemic barriers that exist in neighbourhoods, helps people overcome these barriers while enriching the involvement of a diverse range of people with a variety of approaches and values.



*CD team members pictured here are
(clockwise from left):
David Derbyshire, Lyna Saad,
Judy Kloosterman, Laura Ryan,
Brandon Braithwaite, Kelly McKinney, and
CD manager Renée Wetselaar.
Absent from this photo are
Syed-Hamid Yazdani and Nazia Zeb.*



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NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION STRATEGY

Evaluation

Update

*By Colin McMullan, Manager
Performance Planning and Evaluation*

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS) is an innovative and complex program aimed at improving the lives of Hamilton residents. Since the beginning, the City of Hamilton, along with a number of community partners (McMaster University, The University of Toronto and the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton) has made a strong commitment to evaluating the success of the strategy over time. The evaluation captures both the outcomes of the Strategy as well as the process of developing and implementing the Strategy. While it will take many years for the full effects of NAS to be seen, initial findings from the research paints a picture of how residents feel about the neighbourhoods in which they live, how they are engaging with the strategy, what actions they are undertaking, and the challenges they face in trying to implement those actions. This report presents an overview of key evaluation-related activities to date, highlighting some of the key findings thus far. While it is evident that much progress has been achieved, sustained effort is required to continue the success.

From November 2013 to June 2014, McMaster University's CRUNCH (Collaboratory for Research on Urban Neighbourhoods, Community Health & Housing), led by Dr. Jim Dunn, has conducted baseline surveys as part of the Hamilton Neighbourhoods Study (HNS), in six of the eleven NAS neighbourhoods: Beasley, Keith, McQuesten, Rolston, Stinson and Stipley (part of the Sherman neighbourhood). This work investigates the impact of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, specifically how and in what ways, the neighbourhoods are changing over time and what changes can be attributed to the work of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy. This report presents selected baseline findings from all six neighbourhoods, and change data from residents in the two neighbourhoods (Stinson and Stipley) that have completed the first 2-year follow-up survey. Findings from this work include the fact that the majority of residents are satisfied with their neighbourhoods as well as their neighbours. Results in the two neighbourhoods where follow-up surveys have been completed indicate that while challenges still exist, particularly regarding the availability of job opportunities within their neighbourhood, residents reported increases in neighbourhood and civic engagement, social cohesion and trust and community attachment and pride.

Since 2013, researchers, led by Dr. Sarah Wakefield (University of Toronto), in collaboration with the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (the Neighbourhood Action Evaluation team), have conducted interviews with 67 participants (neighbourhood residents, service providers and City staff), participant observation at neighbourhood meetings, progress tracking of neighbourhood action plans, and focus groups with neighbourhood residents. This report summarizes some of the key findings to-date from the interviews and focus groups. Common themes to emerge include: the changing culture of community engagement, the importance of inclusion and equity, and the long-term nature of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy. In addition, staff from the City of Hamilton, along with neighbourhood residents themselves, have been tracking the implementation of the priorities identified in the Neighbourhood Action Plans.

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy is an ambitious and complex initiative. Its evaluation has been a priority from the beginning and has brought City, community/university and neighbourhood partners together in an effort to monitor progress and learn from our experiences. Initial findings to-date reveal both challenges and successes, and the information provided is helping inform and ultimately improve specific neighbourhood actions in Hamilton. That said, neighbourhood development is a long term process and there remains much more work to be done. The pages that follow document in some detail the evaluation efforts and highlight some of the emerging findings.

HAMILTON NEIGHBOURHOODS SURVEY

McMaster

CRUNCH

*Dr. Jim Dunn, Professor and Chair, Department of Health,
Aging and Society, McMaster University*

What is the impact of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy?

That is the question the Hamilton Neighbourhoods Study (HNS) asks. This study will investigate how neighbourhoods are changing over time, and what changes can be attributed to the Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS).

The survey includes questions on:

- Housing & Physical Environment
- Community
- Safety & Security
- Civic Engagement
- Health
- Employment, Education, & Demographics

How was the study done?

From November 2013 to June 2014, we conducted “baseline” survey in six of the eleven NAS neighbourhoods: Beasley, Keith, McQueston, Rolston, Stinson and Stipley (part of Sherman).

We recruited approximately 300 residents from randomly selected houses and apartments in each neighbourhood. 1,896 participants have completed a baseline survey, and are currently being contacted for a 2-year follow up. This report presents some baseline findings from all six neighbourhoods, and change data from two neighbourhoods.

What have we learned?

The survey asks questions about several important aspects of neighbourhood life, including Neighbourhood Engagement, Civic Engagement, Social Cohesion & Trust, and Community Attachment & Pride. This report presents some of the survey questions that fit within the context of the City of Hamilton's vision statement. In all six neighbourhoods, the majority of residents reported high levels of satisfaction with their neighbourhood. Participants from all neighbourhoods felt less strongly as their neighbourhood as a good place to raise a child, regardless of whether they had children of their own. Responses to questions about citizen engagement and local businesses in the neighbourhood were generally positive. However, the majority of respondents did not agree that there are job opportunities in their neighbourhood. The neighbourhood concerns most frequently identified as "a serious problem" by participants were: drug dealing or use; poor air quality; and vandalism/graffiti or other deliberate damage to property.

Stinson and Stipley are the two neighbourhoods where 2-year follow-up is complete. In these two neighbourhoods, there is an overall increase in people's perceptions of the positive aspects of their neighbourhoods and a decline in the negative aspects.

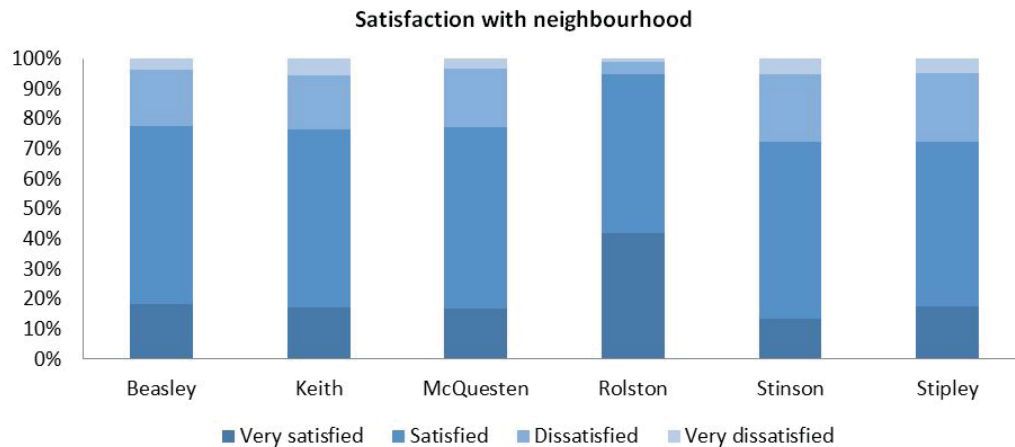
How will the information be used?

What we learn from this survey will help the City of Hamilton and different social service groups make decisions about future services and activities, both city-wide, and within specific neighbourhoods.

The City of Hamilton’s vision is “to be the best place to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide economic opportunities.” The HNS asks a number of questions that relate to this vision statement as part of the baseline research.

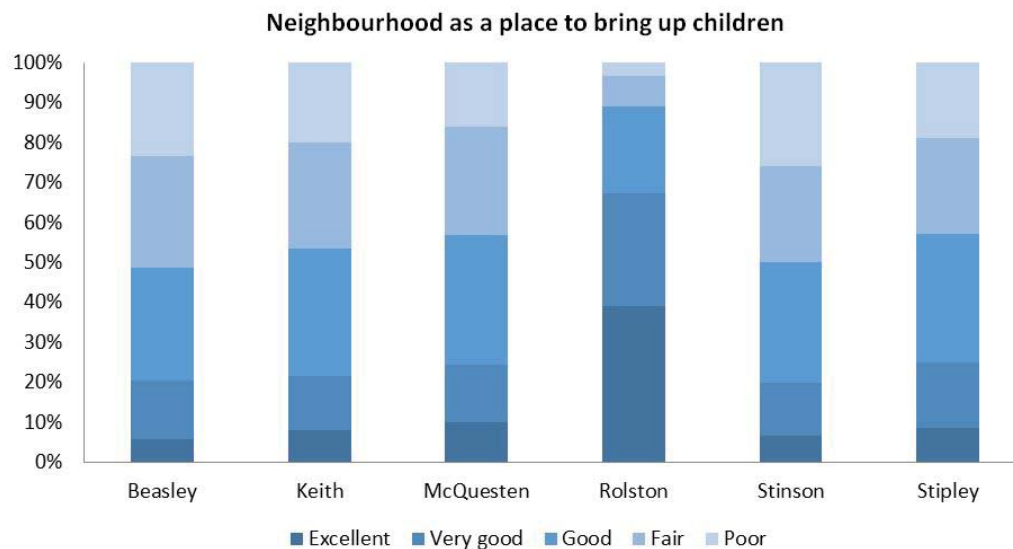
Neighbourhood Satisfaction

Participants across all neighbourhoods reported that they felt positive about where they were living. 79% of respondents were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with their neighbourhood.



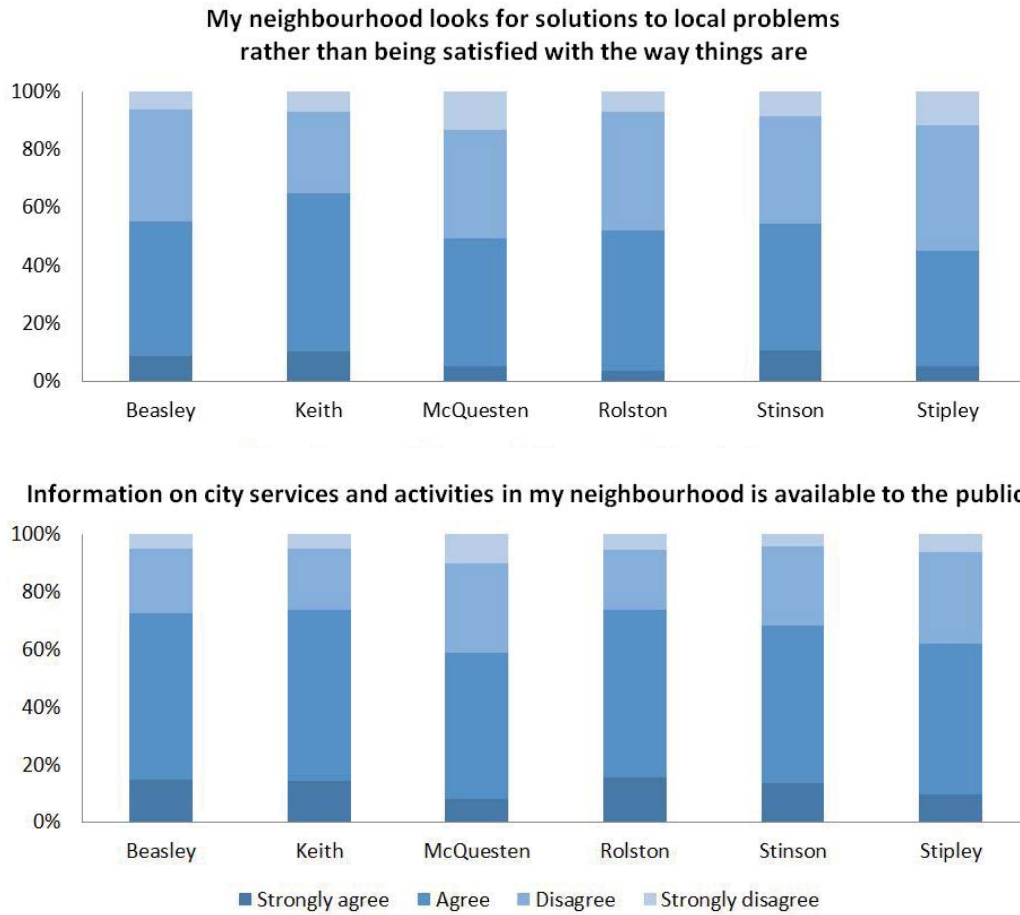
Raise a Child

When asked how they felt about their neighbourhood as a place to bring up children, 59% of respondents stated it was “excellent”, “very good” or “good”. This question was asked of all respondents, whether or not they had children of their own.



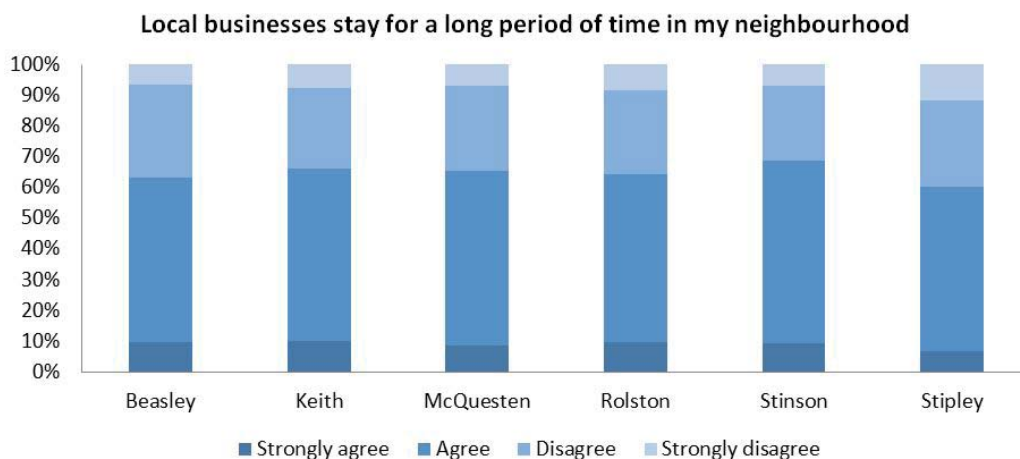
Engage Citizens

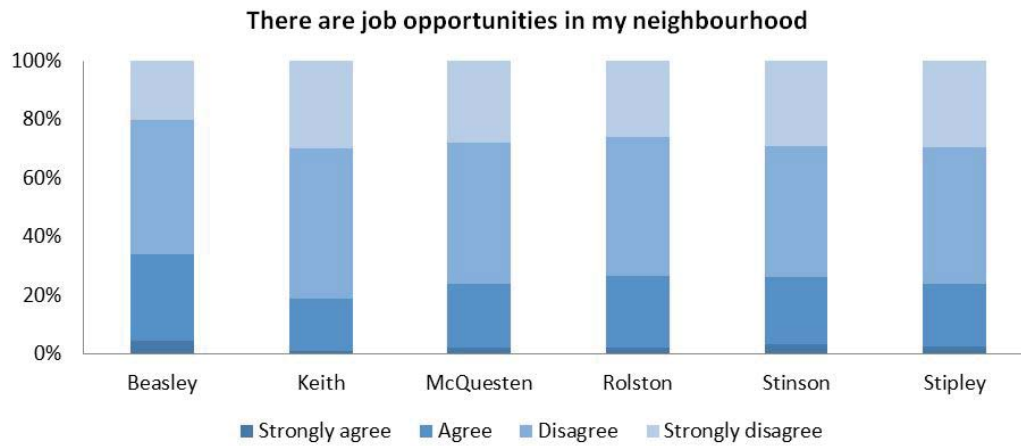
Slightly over half of the respondents (53%) reported that they “strongly agree” or “agree” that their neighbourhood continually looks for solutions to local problems rather than being satisfied with the way things are. 68% of participants “strongly agree” or “agree” that information is readily available to the public on City services and activities that take place in their neighbourhood.



Provide Economic Opportunities

Many respondents (64%) told us that they strongly agree or agree that local businesses stay for a long period of time in their neighbourhood. They felt less secure about job opportunities in their neighbourhood.





Neighbourhood Problems

We gave residents a list of common concerns and asked them to say how much of a problem each item was in their neighbourhood. Concerns most frequently identified as “a serious problem”:

1. Drug dealing and use (32%)
2. Poor air quality (28%)
3. Vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property (27%)

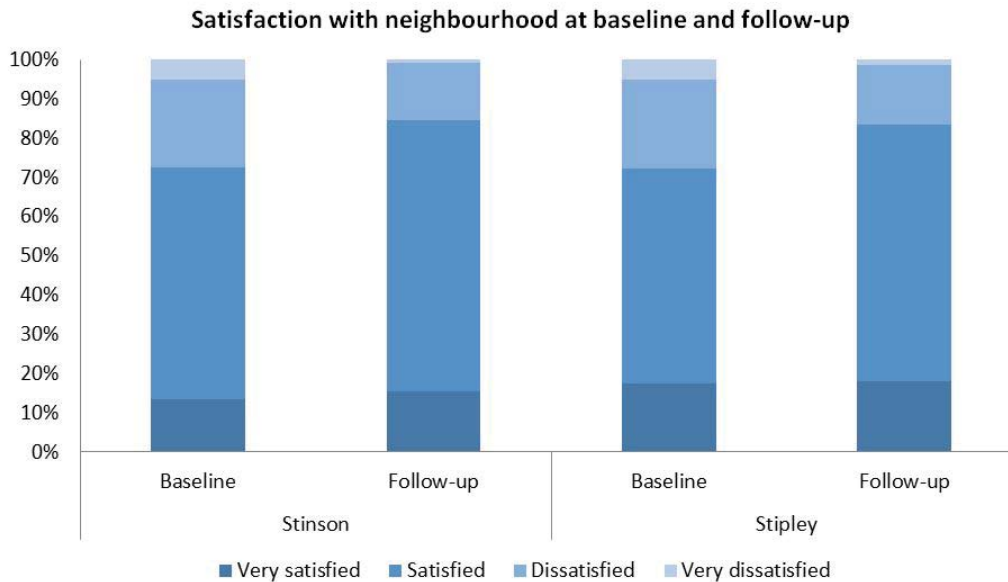
| Neighbourhood | Drug Dealing or Use | Poor Air Quality | Vandalism, Graffiti or other Deliberate Damage to Property |
|---------------|---------------------|------------------|--|
| Beasley | 46% | 31% | 30% |
| Keith | 26% | 52% | 24% |
| McQuesten | 32% | 22% | 30% |
| Rolston | 7% | 5% | 15% |
| Stinson | 40% | 22% | 27% |
| Stipley | 39% | 32% | 36% |

What has changed?

A two-year follow-up survey has been completed for 267 residents of both Stinson and Stipley, with the other four neighbourhood follow-up surveys underway. We are seeing positive change in many of the questions that speak to the City of Hamilton's vision.

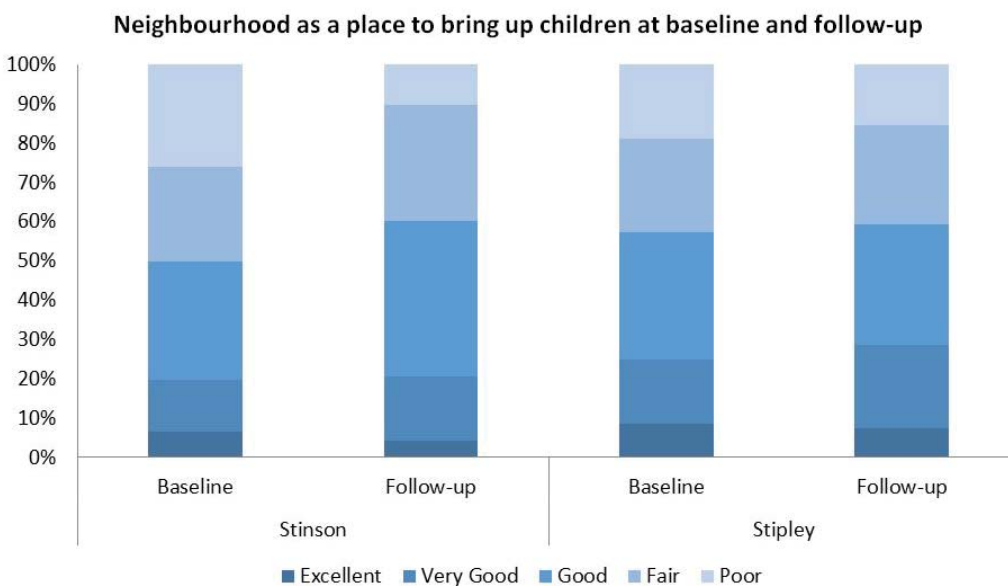
Neighbourhood Satisfaction

Participants' questionnaire responses indicate greater satisfaction with their neighbourhoods.



Raise a Child

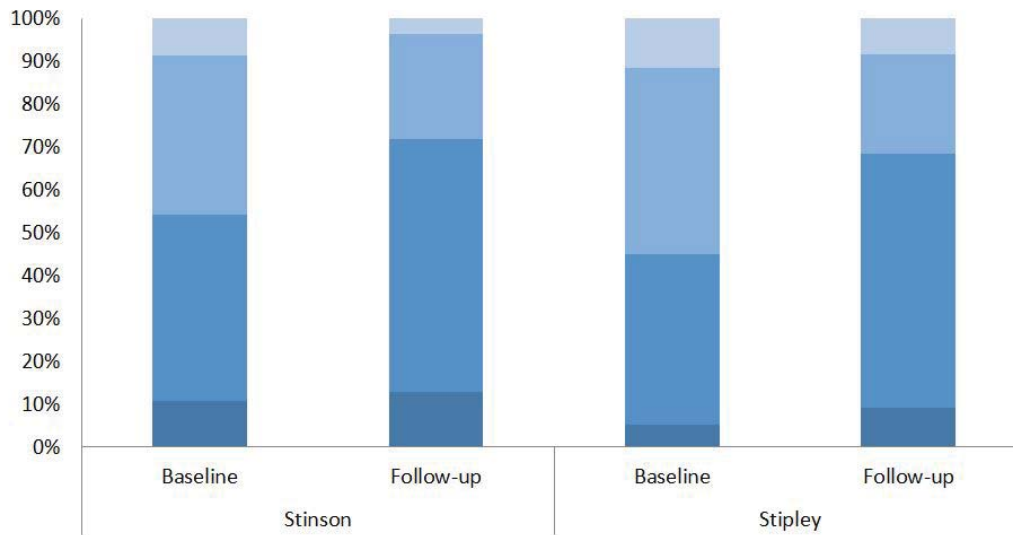
Participants reported that they feel more positive about their neighbourhood as a place to bring up children, whether or not they have children of their own. Two years ago, 54% of respondents stated their neighbourhood was either an "excellent", "very good" or "good" place to raise a child; at follow-up 67% gave one of these positive responses.



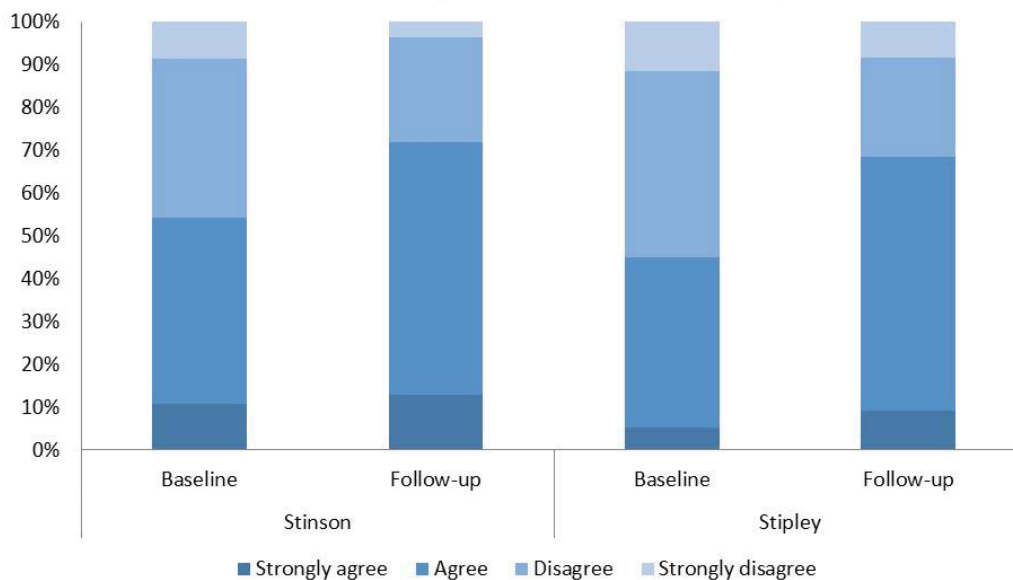
Engage Citizens

Participants' responses about their engagement with their community have also improved. Two out of three respondents either "strongly agree" or "agree" that their neighbourhood continually looks for solutions to local problems rather than being satisfied with the way things are. 72% of participants "strongly agree" or "agree" that information is readily available to the public on City services and activities that take place in their neighbourhood. These are both increases from baseline where less than half (49% and 64% respectively) "strongly agree" or "agree" with those statements.

Neighbourhood looks for solutions to local problems rather than being satisfied with the way things are at baseline and follow-up



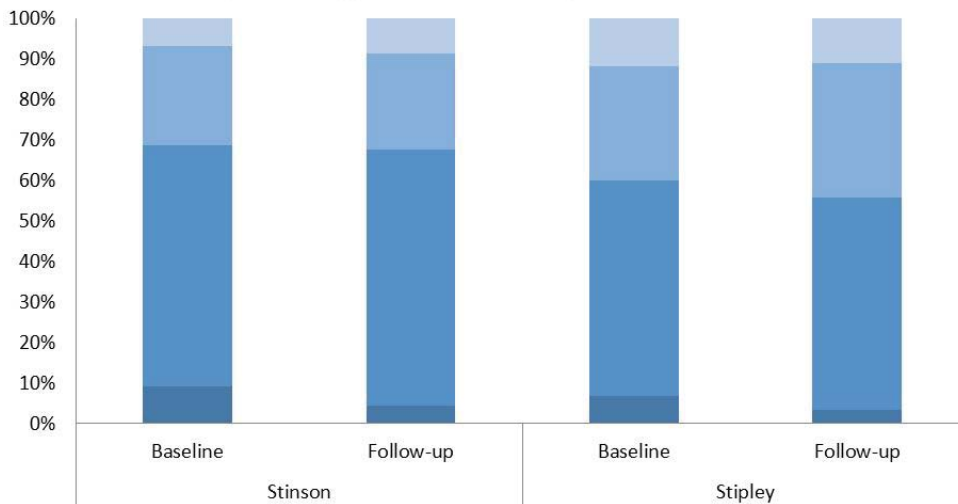
Information on city services and activities in my neighbourhood is available to the public at baseline and follow-up



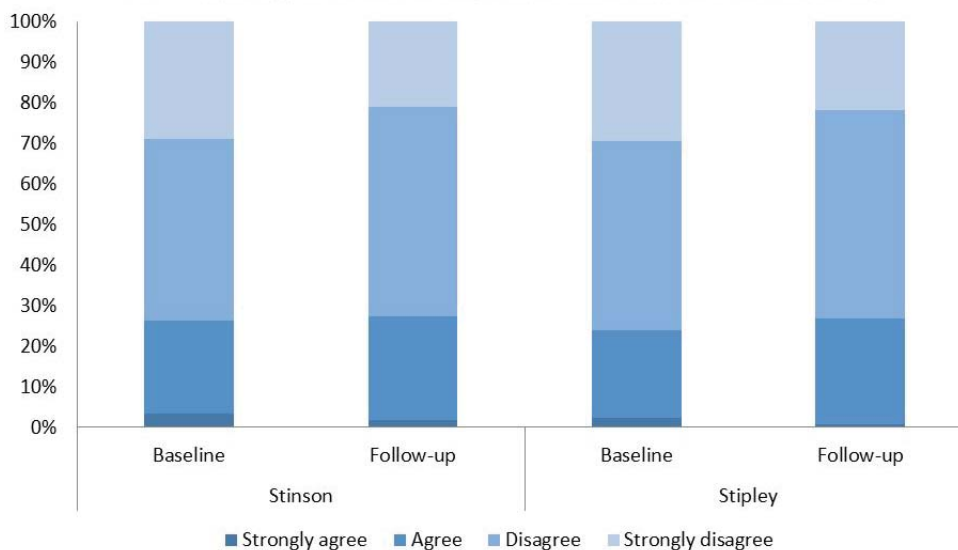
Provide Economic Opportunities

Views towards economic opportunities have declined. When asked if businesses stay open for a long time, two years ago, 64% of respondents answered affirmatively. At follow-up, this decreased to 60%. Respondents' view that there are job opportunities in their neighbourhood remained unchanged over the two years with a quarter (25%) indicating they either "strongly agree" or "agree" with that statement.

Local businesses stay for a long period of time in neighbourhood at baseline and follow-up



There are job opportunities in neighbourhood at baseline and follow-up



Neighbourhood Problems

The percentage of respondents who indicate that these common concerns are "serious problems" has decreased slightly from two years ago, and the order of issues has changed. Of interest, sex work is no longer one of the top three concerns in Stinson but it is in Stipley. Vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property is no longer one of the top three concerns in Stipley but it is in Stinson.

Stinson "serious problems":

1. Drug dealing or use (↓ 13%)
2. Vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property (↓ 5%)
3. Litter in the streets – NEW (21%)

Stipley "serious problems":

1. Sex work (↓ 14%)
2. Drug dealing or use (↓ 7%)
3. Poor air quality – NEW (28%)

EVALUATING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION STRATEGY

University of Toronto/SPRC

*Dr. Sarah Wakefield, Associate Professor, University of Toronto
and Director of the Health Studies Program*

A number of university and community partners, including researchers at McMaster University, the University of Toronto, and the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC), are working in partnership with the City and the Hamilton Community Foundation (HCF) to evaluate the Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS). This evaluation captures both the outcomes as well as the process of developing and implementing the Strategy. While it will take many years for the full effects of NAS to be seen, this initial research shows how residents and other stakeholders are engaging with the strategy, what actions they are undertaking, and the challenges they face.

Who are we?

The Neighbourhood Action Evaluation (NAE) is based out of the University of Toronto, led by Dr. Sarah Wakefield and in collaboration with the SPRC. Since 2013, the NAE has conducted in-depth interviews with 67 participants (residents, service providers, and city staff), participant observation at neighbourhood meetings, progress tracking of neighbourhood action plans, and focus groups with neighbourhood residents.

This section of the report summarizes key findings from NAE interviews and focus groups. Data collected from participant observation and focus groups were compared with each other in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the initiative and to ensure accuracy of the results. This section provides an update on the status of actions in the neighbourhood plans as a whole (e.g. complete, underway, not started, etc.), and then discusses the common themes from the interviews and focus groups.

Theme 1: Changing the culture of community engagement

NAS involves learning a new way of doing business as residents develop capacity to tell the City what they need. City staff highlight how internal culture is changing to welcome new ideas and innovation. Consensus and buy-in from all stakeholders is facilitated through the Neighbourhood Action Strategy office and other committed partners. Trust is developing through enhanced relationships between city and residents, but many residents still feel there is a disconnect between themselves and city staff and stakeholders who don't live in their neighbourhoods.

[W]e're learning new ways of doing business with citizens and neighbourhood groups that we've not done in the same way before."

- City Staff

"..the fact that they [the City] are keeping us directly involved in a very democratic process is really a thing to be admired. Generally it's just protocol and people just say 'Well we're going to do something but we're going to tell you what we're going to do'. And to directly involve us I think is a grand experiment. And it's going to be rife with problems I'm sure, because everybody has their own idea. But it's our community and why shouldn't you involve us?"

- Resident

"[W]e are a siloed organization... when your job is this big you have to... compartmentalize things in order for it to get done... [Now] everybody's on the same page because we have a neighbourhood action plan.... It creates that consensus and we know it's a priority and we know we have the support from the City Manager's office to get it done."

- City staff

"I think from a city point of view we're not as flexible as some people would want us to be as in moving quicker. The challenge is, I may be the rep that goes to that meeting but I may not be the ultimate decision maker as to the budget or program change or so forth so [it takes] some time to go back."

- City staff

"It's always an obstacle that we have to overcome and I know that the city really thinks they're assisting us and in a lot of ways they are but in other ways they're not. They're really squashing initiative."

- Resident

"It can't be, 'we're up here and you're down here' – that is not acceptable. We need to be treated as equals."

- Resident

Theme 2: Who's at the table? Inclusion and Equity

Inclusion is a core value/aspiration for many of those involved. For example, almost all planning team action plans and many individuals involved acknowledge the importance of inclusion.



“That diversity of voices is really, really important. So, not having people who are all homeowners with the same interests, who are only advocating for those interests. Realizing who's in your neighbourhood, and how do you try to hear from everybody, it's really hard. It's almost impossible but I think that should always be what neighbourhoods are aspiring to, is to be inclusive and not avoid the tensions.”

- Resident



Many Planning Teams have taken steps to reach out to their neighbours, and to make their meetings and events welcoming to everyone. In addition, support staff have all worked to bring a wider range of people into the strategy.

Some of the steps taken to support broader engagement

- ✓ CDs help introduce new members to planning teams and support members to stay involved
- ✓ Many planning teams provide childcare at meetings
- ✓ Translation of some materials and at some events
- ✓ Focused tenant and newcomer outreach by community animators, CDs and CD assistants
- ✓ Diversity training for staff and NLI participants
- ✓ Halal and vegetarian options at events in some neighbourhoods
- ✓ Providing multiple ways to people to get involved

However, some less welcoming behaviour and activities were observed by the research team, and some people are still left out. All stakeholders must work to acknowledge this issue and develop a strategic approach to inclusion and equity.

“I genuinely believe that [the planning team] would like to be a strong representation of the entire neighbourhood, they just don’t know how. They cannot fathom how to bridge the gap ... the idea of reaching out to people who aren’t actively reaching out to you, it’s alien to them.”

- Resident

“There hasn’t really been a strategic or ...an expressed approach to bring in cultural diversity. Everybody’s invited but you also recognize that there’s some gaps here ... So that could be improved upon [...]it’s a work in progress and you’re looking at opportunities to reimagine parts of this.”

- Stakeholder

Theme 3: Playing the long game

Residents, community developers, city staff, and community stakeholders all mentioned the importance of patience in neighbourhood development.



“I think for a lot of the ‘not started’ actions, they are big picture issues. I think they are ambitious for one neighbourhood alone to address. We need support about how we can be a part of this work, or how to align with what others in the community are doing to address these issues. Not that we can’t do them.”

- Resident

“Change doesn’t happen overnight. They talk about some of the quick wins that can happen with this type of work, but ultimately I think it’s going to be changes that we see over the long run that really are going to impact and make a difference in the various communities and in Hamilton overall.”

- City staff

“I think if a whole group of people are going to change and undergo new things [it takes time], and I’ve been impressed with city councillors who have patience to bring about new things. And if you stay with it for a while you can look back and say look at this and this and this. And be encouraged by small steps.”

- Resident



While many participants wanted to do more to tackle the root causes of neighbourhood concerns, they also felt that the Neighbourhood Action Strategy was an important way to build relationships and prepare for larger-scale work.



“What I’m constantly wondering about with the neighbourhood strategy and all these great events and initiatives happening is just the higher level stuff which is people don’t have jobs, people don’t have good housing, people feel really disconnected. And I think a huge potential for the Neighbourhood Strategy and the neighbourhood associations to make change is people, actually... less isolation and more connection among neighbours and hopefully people feeling they belong in the neighbourhood.”

- Resident



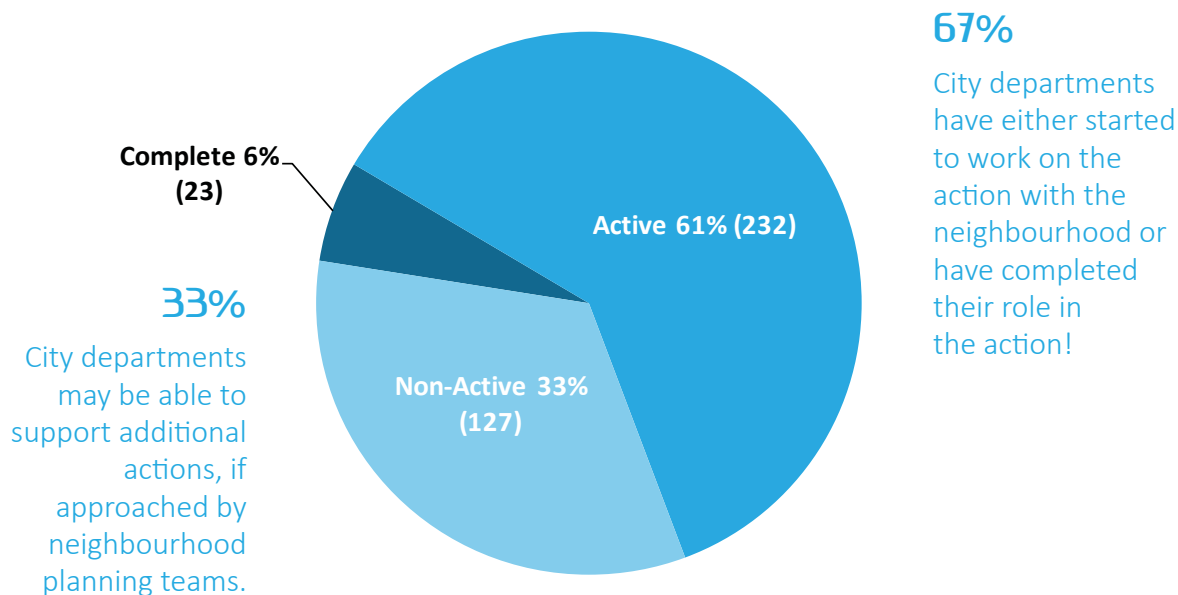
City Departmental Tracking

The Neighbourhood Action Strategy works with residents to create, refine and implement the actions identified in the completed Neighbourhood Action Plans, and facilitates the implementation of the neighbourhood actions across City departments. The City monitors its contribution in relation to each action and provides an update on its progress status annually.

In total, 452 actions are identified within the ten completed Neighbourhood Action Plans. City departments reviewed the actions and indicated that there are 382 actions that align with their departmental responsibilities. That accounts for 85% of the total number of actions! There are just 70 actions (16%) that are not applicable to any City department (e.g. the City has no role/jurisdiction in supporting that action).

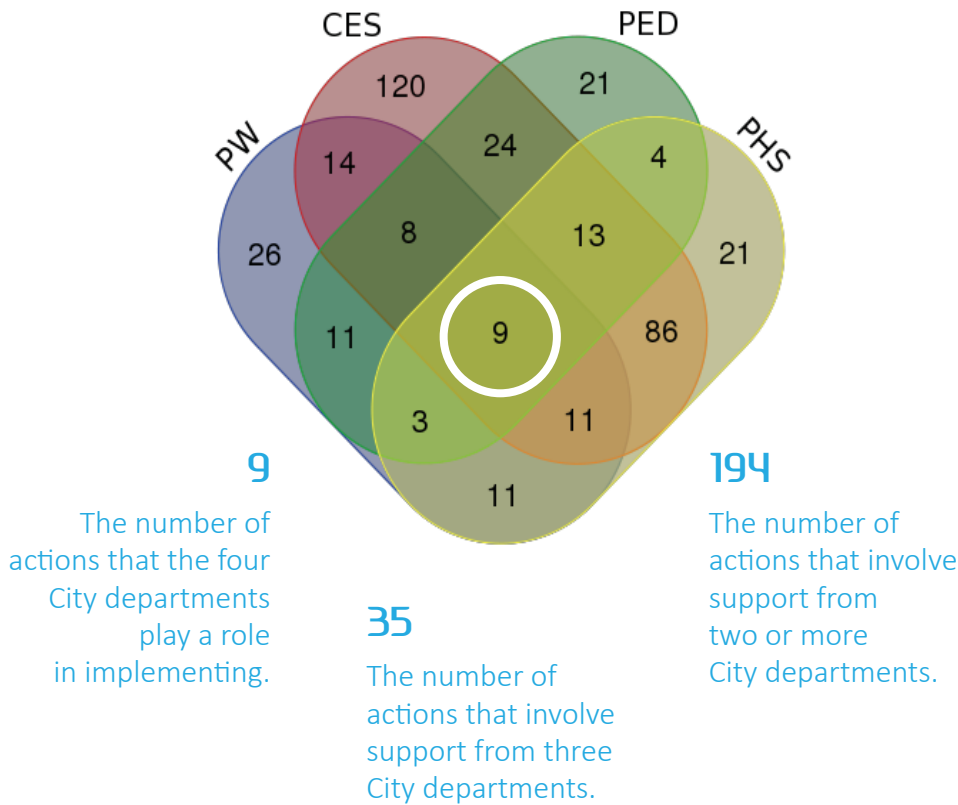
How are we doing?

2014 City of Hamilton Response Progress Status* (n=382)

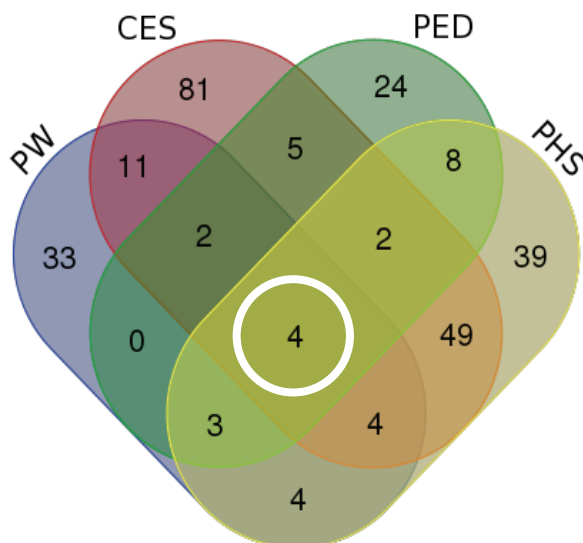


* Complete: responses equal to "completed" or "completed but reoccurring"
Active: responses equal to "underway"
Non-active: responses equal to "on hold", "not started", "discontinued" or blank progress status.

The NAS departmental tracking is a valuable tool to show where areas of collaboration are occurring or have the potential to occur.



Of those nine actions where all four City departments play a role in implementing, four have been initiated.



Collective Ownership: Beasley Alleyway Project

The Beasley Alleyway Project looks at improving alleyways in the neighbourhood. These spaces are often sites for illegal dumping and anti-social behaviours. In Beasley, neighbours worked together to develop creative uses for the unused alleyway spaces, and secured funding through the Ward 2 Participatory Budgeting process to undertake the clean-up. Working with the Beasley Neighbourhood Association, staff from public health provided information and training on safe needle pick-up, municipal law enforcement provided support around enforcement of illegal dumping and public works provided support through both the Downtown Alleyway Improvement Pilot and the Team Up to Clean Up programs. The Neighbourhood Action Strategy supported the BNA and facilitated the internal connections to City departments. The Beasley Alleyway Project has resulted in community events, such as movie and gaming nights and art walks down the alley, all designed to reanimate the space. This project is an example of how residents and staff can work together to bring about positive change in the community.

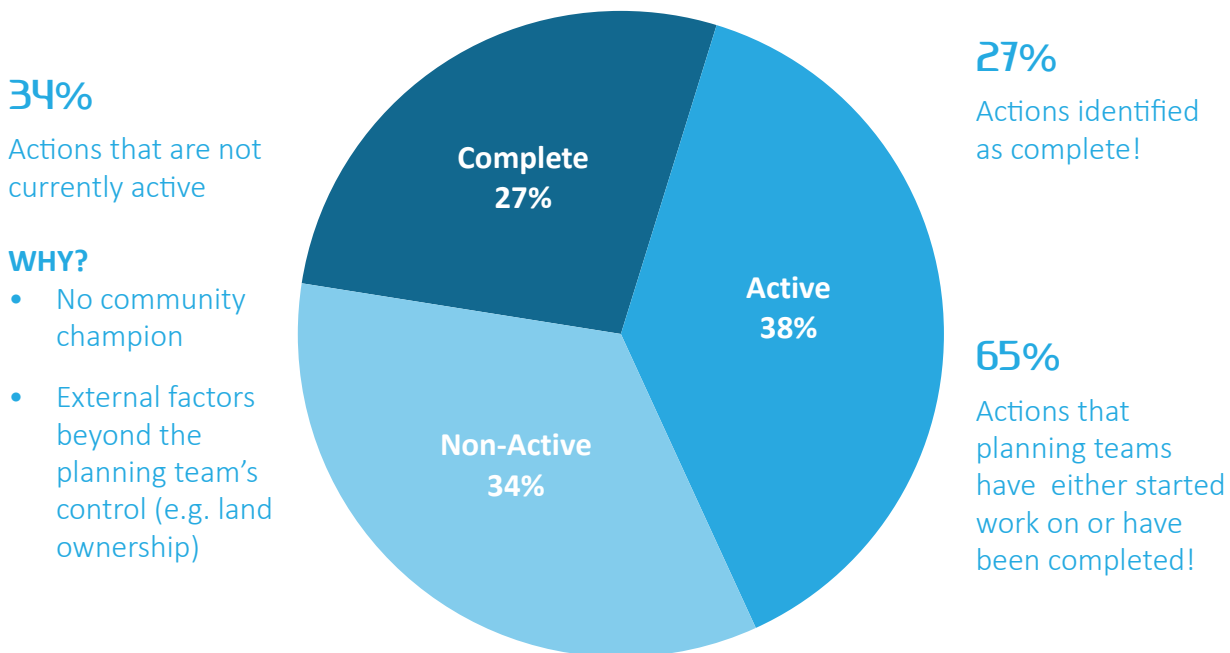
The information gathered from the departmental tracking allows for enhanced collaboration and communication within and between departments. It also allows City departments to clearly identify and measure outcomes in support of the neighbourhood work across the City. This results in the City of Hamilton being more accessible and responsive to resident needs and assets.

Resident Tracking

As part of the Neighbourhood Action Evaluation, conducted through the University of Toronto, residents are supported in tracking the implementation of their individual Action Plans.

Resident Plan Implementation

2014 Resident Response Progress Status (n=421)



In total, 421 actions are tracked by resident trackers for the ten completed Neighbourhood Action Plans. This process promotes the celebration of successes and identifies opportunities for additional community engagement to occur around the implementation of specific actions. It allows the planning teams to build capacity amongst residents and use their individual assets to achieve the vision developed for the neighbourhood.

N.B. The ten completed Neighbourhood Action Plans contained 452 discreet actions. In order to evaluate the city departmental response to these actions, Public Health Services developed the database to include all 452 actions. When the residents began to track their Plan implementation through the Neighbourhood Action Evaluation work, some of the discreet actions were identified as components to a larger action. These components have been combined in some instances with other actions. The total number of actions that remain as part of the resident tracking work is 421.

NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS -
THE HEART OF ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The NEIGHBOURHOODS





BEASLEY

Neighbourhood

What was your biggest accomplishment over the past year?

After surveying kids at the Dr. Davey Elementary school it was apparent that Beasley wanted to be able to play more basketball and develop their skills. With that goal in mind the City of Hamilton with the help of Wesley Urban Ministries, McMaster, Dr. Davey Parent Council and the Beasley Neighbourhood Association set out to create a unique basketball program that fit their neighbourhood. Neighbourhood Hoops touched a wide variety of youth from grade 4 to 9 all living in the downtown Hamilton community. This program was designed to give youth who have either never played basketball or have limited basketball skills the opportunity to develop and improve their both their comfort level and skills in basketball. Every Saturday morning close to 50 Beasley youth would participate in multiple active skill stations that not only challenged the participants, but were fun and increased their comfort level with playing basketball. All participants surveyed said they loved the instructors and would love to take part in a summer street ball league. A key point is that 100% of the youth surveyed said after the Hoops program they now feel more comfortable on a basketball court, and understand the game of basketball better. We have completed our first season of the summer street ball league and expect to see expansion in the upcoming season.

What are some of the positives you've seen over the past year?

Lots of great things have been going on in the Beasley community, such as seeing the success of the Beasley Neighbourhood Charter and Plan come to fruition.

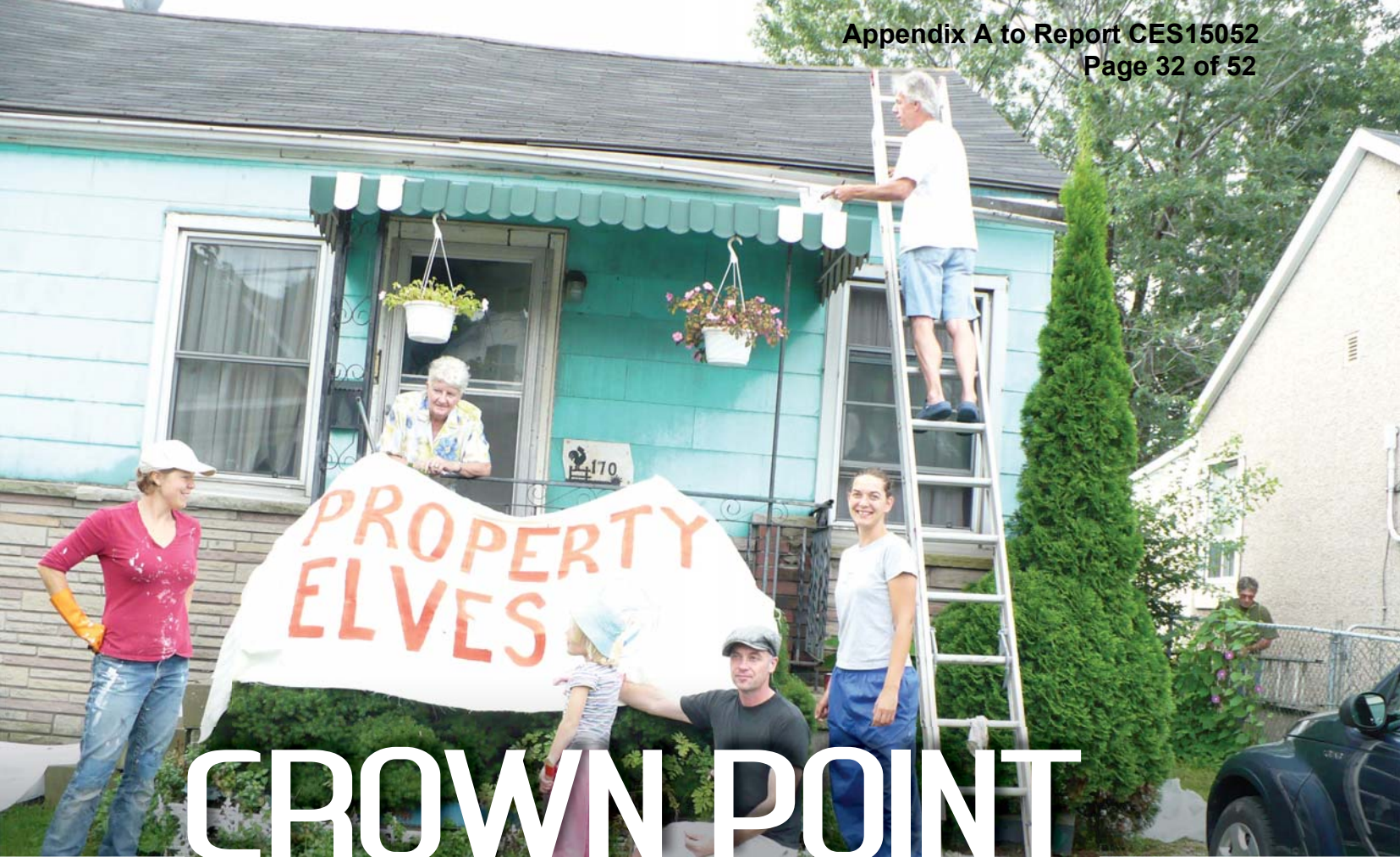


What have been some of your challenges over the past year?

Some challenges were coming up with activities that developed kids' skill in basketball but were also fun at the same time. We didn't want the program to feel like it was competitive and only for skilled basketball players. We wanted it to be very inclusive and fun for everyone. We overcame this challenge by getting together as a team and brainstorming ways to incorporate fun with skill development and being open to adjustments as the program moved along.

What has made the biggest difference over the past year?

One of the biggest differences we made this year was in the lives of the kids that had an opportunity to take part in a fun environment that helped them develop skills and get better at a game they love. This is something every child should have a chance to do.



CROWN POINT Neighbourhood

What was your biggest accomplishment over the past year?

Over the last year the Crown Point Planning Team was able to grow and support many community ideas. The Pipeline Trail team was formed and received funding to complete a Master Plan through collaboration with City of Hamilton's Public Works department, a design consulting firm, the Crown Point Garden Club, Neighbourhood Action Strategy staff and residents who live alongside the trail. The Pipeline Trail master plan received funding through the area rating funds from Wards 3 & 4. The Pipeline Trail also built awareness around the trail through its first annual Pipeline Trail Parade which attracted over 150 people and highlighted the trail's potential as a linear park. Another group established was the Crown Point Garden Club which planned a Pollinator Garden along the trail in collaboration with the Hamilton Naturalists Club.

What are some of the positives you've seen over the past year?

The Point community paper was launched, with neighbourhood-wide door-to-door circulation and dozens of contributors and volunteers. In its first year The Point effectively reached and engaged new volunteers and sparked dialogue and awareness around pressing issues. The launch was made possible through a Hamilton Community Foundation grant, and was made sustainable through ad sales and community support.

The Kenilworth Avenue revitalization team was also formed and organized resident participation in the Barton Street/Kenilworth Avenue Commercial Corridor Study led by the City of Hamilton's Economic Development department. This team brings together a unique coalition of residents, businesses and city departments in addressing revitalization along Kenilworth Avenue.

Another huge success is a youth-sponsored bike pump track in Gage Park which was approved by City Council and completed in 2015. The team of three pre-teens presented their plan to Council, neighbourhood groups and residents to build community support around their vision of creating a healthy and active space for youth in Gage Park.

The Giving Closet hosted by the Crown Point Community Church gave away 5,000 pieces of clothing in 9 hours to over 200 families! This was made possible by community donations, volunteers, and support from Hamilton Community Foundation small grant funds.

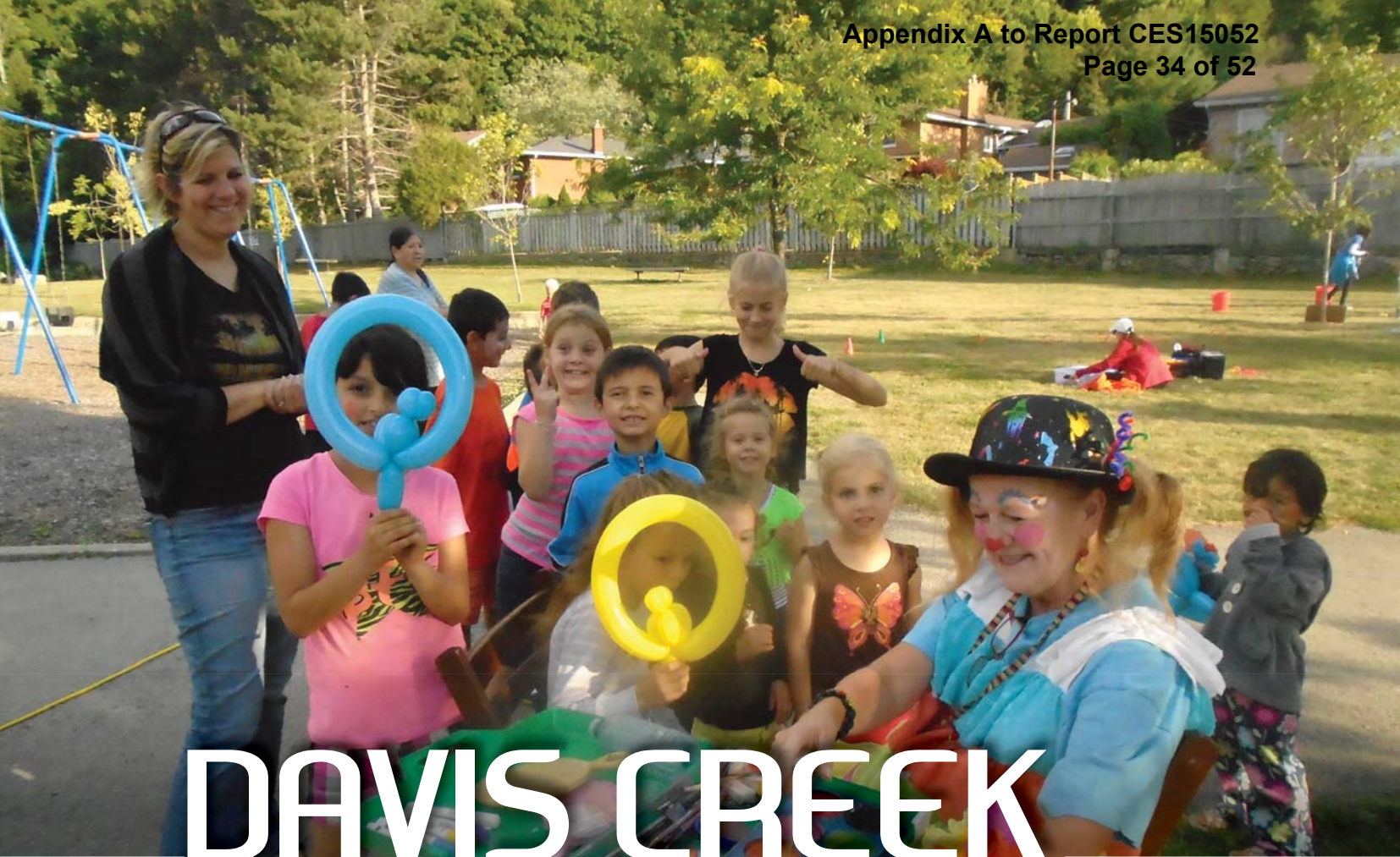


What have been some of your challenges over the past year?

The shift in Community Developers posed a bit of a challenge, but Crown Point is incredibly resilient and has developed a solid working relationship with the new Community Developer.

What has made the biggest difference over the past year?

There was a massive momentum throughout 2014 thanks to all these incredible initiatives. 2014 was an excellent year for Crown Point, and this momentum will only continue to grow in 2015.



DAVIS CREEK Neighbourhood

What was your biggest accomplishment over the past year?

The Davis Creek Community Planning Team has had a very busy year with many accomplishments! Our first Winterfest was a wonderful success, and the support of Green Venture made it even better. This year's clean-up was the most successful yet, with 60 volunteers and over 200 bags of garbage collected. The Davis Creek Community welcome signs whose designs were approved by planning team members are being installed by the City at all neighbourhood entrance points and are a beautiful sight. Thanks to the hard work in 2014 pushing for a railroad crossing arm at Quigley Road, the installation was finally done in 2015, helping residents feel safer at that dangerous crossing.

Our first Movie Night under the Stars was held at Veevers Park and was incredibly successful, leading to future Movie Nights during the nice weather months. These types of events help bring the community together and provide for opportunities to promote the Planning Team, engage residents and encourage them to bring forth their ideas on matters related to the neighbourhood. The Planning Team saw the addition of its first Youth member as well as 4 new adult members. In addition to support from the Community Developer, this past summer the Planning Team received additional support by a university student funded through the Canada Summer Jobs program.



What are some of the positives you've seen over the past year?

Davis Creek has been fortunate to see an increase in volunteer support over the past year, more community members getting involved in neighbourhood events and a more positive attitude among community members in Davis Creek. As a result, Planning Team members have been engaging more residents to join the Team. The Team has also developed tighter relationships with community service providers, staff from a variety of City of Hamilton departments and the Ward Councillor, Chad Collins.

What have been some of your challenges over the past year?

Our biggest challenge over the past year seems to be communicating and advertising our special events and promoting the work of the Planning Team. Finding appropriate meeting/community space has also been a challenge.



What has made the biggest difference over the past year?

A few things have made big differences over the past year. We are learning more about grants and services, which is extremely helpful in terms of the things we are trying to accomplish. Establishing partnerships with organizations such as Green Venture and the Hamilton Public Library (HPL) has resulted in donations for our Winterfest and special Bookmobile visits. This relationship with the HPL has also resulted in a summer literacy camp that continues in the Davis Creek area with two locations. There has also been a noticeable difference in people - people are becoming more involved. Everyone has fun and they enjoy what they are doing. It is true a group effort. Planning Team members are willing to put in the time, dedication and commitment into activities that support their community through the monthly meetings, sub-committee meetings, events and promotion.



GALA

Neighbourhood

What was your biggest accomplishment over the past year?

GALA has had a busy year with many accomplishments which makes it difficult to focus on just one. Some of our proudest moments include the Extreme Make-over of Powell Park (filmed by TVO) plus the installation of the new clubhouse with City support. GALA's newspaper "The Herald" completed its 2nd year as a self-sustainable project, and continues to grow. Birch Park was inaugurated under the Beautiful Alleys auspices, and the Spring clean-up included over 500 residents this year. Speaking of Beautiful Alleys, the Beautiful Alleyway project was nominated for an award this year! GALA's Commercial Corridors Action Team hosted a Safety Walk with the Police, local leaders and residents through the GALA neighbourhood. Another successful event was the Jane's Walk facilitated by GALA members that highlighted 4 local parks.



What are some of the positives you've seen over the past year?

GALA has also seen some wonderful engagement activities happening both within the Planning Team and external to it. Action Teams on Parks Clean-up, Alleyways and Safe Community gained momentum. Coordination of the GALA team with other active local residents groups including GLNA (Gibson-Landsdale Neighbourhood Association). There was a willingness among the members to work closely with key stakeholders including SPRC, HCF and the City, which definitely speaks to our engaged residents. Regular monthly Community Planning Team meetings and Action Teams meetings were held, including the recruitment of new Team members. We've also seen an increased interest in the Gibson-Landsdale history, which always makes us proud.

What have been some of your challenges over the past year?

Every neighbourhood has its challenges, but GALA continues to rise to these challenges and deal with them in a positive manner. Some of these challenges included an initial resistance to accept the ideas of inclusiveness, varied opinions, and the distribution of authority by some executive members. The issue surrounding the GALA/Sherman boundary is an ongoing concern, and there was also some initial confusion and misunderstanding around the role of a CD and the SPRC. We continue to work positively through these challenges.

What has made the biggest difference over the past year?

Communication and resident engagement are key to developing great neighbourhoods, and GALA saw positive differences in many areas. We saw more residents involved in projects run by GALA teams, with local residents and business owners working together to improve the neighbourhood. There was an increased awareness around beautification of the neighbourhood, along with residents/GALA members/teams working in collaboration with other local organizations and businesses to gather support in order to achieve their goals. Speaking of engagement, the first-ever networking session/movie night for Street Level Sex Workers was supported by GALA Powell Park Community Garden and is being adopted by GALA members.





JAMESVILLE Neighbourhood

What was your biggest accomplishment over the past year?

The Jamesville Community Hub spent the better part of the year reorganizing their Terms of Reference and adding new members to their steering committee. Since then we have seen a sense of direction come out of our new steering committee, having a new mission, vision, and values and understanding our purpose has helped to steer us in a new positive direction.

Now that we have a more solid foundation and direction forward we have been able to focus on activities that help us reach our mission of “Engaging the Jamesville Community and bringing people together, using our strengths to plan and act on strategies that will improve the quality of life for all.” New investment and intensification downtown comes with good and bad outcomes. As we see much needed investment coming to the downtown we must also take measures to prevent the displacement of people who have lived in the community for years. The Hub aims to support current tenants by providing resources and networks to get the information that people need.

In the Central Neighbourhood our team helped support the creation of the Market Street Tenants’ Association, an association that was created to provide guidance, information and mutual support for the tenants of three buildings on Market Street.

So far they have seen great success in working as a team to approach the landlords and property managers of their buildings with various issues that were not being addressed. The Hub hopes to continue to support the development of groups like this.

What are some of the positives you've seen over the past year?

Working together has made these developments possible. Without the team we have around the table we wouldn't be able to accomplish what we have. Going forward there is a positive buzz that will enable us to continue doing great things in the community.

What have been some of your challenges over the past year?

Getting people out isn't a problem but getting them to commit and continue to be involved has been difficult. To try to get more people interested we have decided to focus on making some changes ourselves and will continue to work on ways to engage our community.



What has made the biggest difference over the past year?

Having a clear vision, mission and values has made it possible for our team to focus outwardly with a direction and focus on what we do.





KEITH Neighbourhood

What was your biggest accomplishment over the past year?

The Keith Neighbourhood Action Plan (KNAP) saw several successes; the biggest was embracing different ways to engage residents. Last year the Keith Kestrel became our neighborhood mascot. We felt that the Kestrel, the smallest and mightiest hawk in North America, was the perfect reflection of the Keith neighbourhood. He is a rallying point for our efforts and is a favourite of the local kids.

June saw our inaugural “Keith Patio Party” where we took engagement to the local streets. Residents were encouraged to come out to any of six locations and discuss what they love about the area and also what could use some work. 47 residents came out and shared with us, allowing us to establish two new potential actions for our plan and four of them chose to become new fulltime members.



What are some of the positives you've seen over the past year?

The Hub completed several items to insure our neighborhoods safety, beautification, and economic prospects:

- A collaborative plan with the HFD to have smoke detectors in all homes in Keith; done with Hub volunteers assisted by Pathways to Education.
- A pick-up and drop-off location was established at the Eva Rothwell Resource Centre (ERRC) for the neighborhood children to enable participation in the before and after school activities at the ERRC (a cooperative effort between the ERRC, Hub and both school boards). Current estimates have 150 breakfasts per week, and an average of 650 kids in the after-school programs.
- Between the late Bernie Morelli, the developers of the Studebaker property, and both the NCCA and Hub a large expansion of North Central Park is planned in conjunction with the conversion of Victoria Ave to two-way traffic. We also have three community gardens going strong, and support a fourth.
- Job creation and readiness have also seen movement. Joint efforts between the City, the Port Authority, and Hub have 4 businesses exploring locating within the area. All have expressed hiring from Keith to be important and two businesses would provide training if required. Also Mohawk's 'Cityschool', a program to make post-secondary education and training accessible began in cooperation with the ERRC.

What have been some of your challenges over the past year?

Our biggest challenge this year was differing impressions on how to best move our actions forward to increase employment in the Keith hub. We've had a lot of engagement with other hubs to determine how to best approach the employment needs in our community and although there are differing values and interests, as a hub we do feel that our residents know best on how to have their needs met. We are happy to keep this conversation open to get the best results in creating more jobs.

We have also been challenged to bring in more residents to our planning team, and were given some direction in this area from both the City and the Hamilton Community Foundation. We rose to it and made change happen.

What has made the biggest difference over the past year?

The Keith Hub saw did showcase one of our greatest attributes: the ability to band together and meet any challenge. We are now stronger and better prepared to meet any, and all, future challenges. We have new members participating, reviewing our Terms of Reference, and like the mighty but small Kestrel, we are stronger and poised to take on new challenges!



McQUESTEN Neighbourhood

What was your biggest accomplishment over the past year?

The greatest accomplishment has been the McQuesten Urban Farm. This project requires an extraordinary number of resources from community members and organizations, and it is a beautiful feature and incredible bounty of nourishing food.

What are some of the positives you've seen over the past year?

McQuesten has experienced many positive results over the past year. We have relied on our most important supporter, the Catholic Child Care Centres for being our host location for the Planning Team, community events, programs and meetings, as well as Urban Farm including Sprouts Camp and the Farm Fresh Market.

The McQuesten Bistro, which is a drop-in social opportunity at St. Helen Centre that runs concurrent to the hours that the Roxborough Food Bank is open. Residents can enjoy a comfortable place to sit, have a snack, sip a warm drink and enjoy some warm conversation with neighbours and service providers. The Bistro has an average of 20 people visiting each day, with a high of nearly 40 in a single morning.

Our farm partners, Farm Animator and Hamilton Victory Gardens Farmer have worked tirelessly. The Farm Animator has brought us volunteers, organized and run Sprouts Camp for our littlest urban farmers, and engaged with residents to promote the farm.

The Hamilton Victory Gardens Farmer has managed this garden (and 14 others) by planning, planting and harvesting, and she has also supported the planning process for the future Urban Farm.

Our neighbourhood youth from the McQuesten Youth Opportunities Creators are extremely active and have spent the preceding year gathering data from youth through the Jobs 4 Jobs project. They are learning about what youth need as they look for work and volunteer opportunities, and plan for their future education and employment.

The Clothing Closet also runs concurrently to the hours that the Bistro and the food bank are open. Residents are bringing clothes to donate, and shopping for clothing for themselves and their families. The Closet has also partnered with St. Matthew's House to ensure consistent donations and stock in McQuesten.

What have been some of the challenges over the past year?

The greatest challenges have been overcoming the perception imposed upon our neighbourhood, and working with volunteers and service organizations that share common goals with the planning team, but utilize diverse methods to achieve those goals. We cultivate deep and lasting relationships so that we have the support and energy to nurture growth here, and we need folks to believe in the assets and potential of each other and the community to achieve that growth.

What has been the biggest difference over the past year?

Our biggest difference has been the support people that we have lost. Our Community Developer was transitioned to a new position after 12 years serving in this neighbourhood, and our Community Nurse Navigator has also been transitioned into another role within her department. The loss of these vital people and personalities, and the loss of the position of Nurse Navigator, has meant the loss of some consistent resident supporters who no longer participate to the level that they once did, and it means a change in the culture and spirit of our work because their presence is no longer influencing us. However, we grow and we survive and we THRIVE!





Photo Credit:
Laura Lennie, Stoney Creek News

RIVERDALE Neighbourhood

What was your biggest accomplishment over the past year?

Riverdale is incredibly proud of the successful launch of their Riverdale Salad Bowl Community Garden. This exciting and nutritional venture will allow residents to grow and harvest fresh produce. It's a wonderful collaboration with residents, Green Venture, Councillor Chad Collins and the SPRC.

What are some of the positives you've seen over the past year?

The Riverdale Planning Team has been meeting regularly, and it is exciting to see that some of the Planning Team's sub-committees have been re-established including the garden committee, safety and security committee and housing committee.

The suggestion of a Riverdale community newsletter was well received by the Planning Team, and progress has been made on the launch and sustainability of this value communication tool.

In the fall last year, we were thrilled to host a bike tour of Riverdale with the City's G.M. of Planning and Economic Development, Jason Thorne and a visit from the Public Health staff as they toured the neighbourhoods in the Neighbourhood Action Strategy.



To support the youth of our neighbourhood, a Youth Focus Group was initiated and will be working over the next year to help youth become more engaged in their neighbourhood and community.

The summer was kicked off with the opening of the two new cricket practice cages on the school grounds at Lake Avenue. This collaborative effort with the City, Public School Board, the Crescent Cricket Club, the Social Planning and Research Council and financial support from the Royal Bank, Hamilton Community Foundation via Ontario Endowment Fund for Children and Youth has allowed both local residents and elementary students access to cricket practice cages with the hope of introducing more people to the sport.

What have been some of the challenges over the past year?

As with many volunteer-run groups, recruitment and retention of new members (especially ethno-culturally diverse residents) to the Riverdale Community Planning Team continues to be a challenging endeavour. The RCPT team struggled somewhat with grasping the concept of a resident-led and inclusive approach to neighbourhood planning, but continues to work toward utilizing the skills and experience of local residents to create a stronger and sustainable local community. We are also challenged by the vast housing needs of residents in Riverdale as rental housing becomes less available and the cost of housing rises.

What has made the biggest difference over the past year?

The Riverdale Community Planning Team is working hard to improve its image as a welcoming and diverse community through participation in a variety of engagement activities, and some of these included:

- Building Momentum Hamilton 2015 display with a Henna Art corner
- Tenant Housing Conversation
- Jane's Walk
- Media interviews (Globe and Mail feature)
- Cricket practice cages inauguration
- Multicultural Festival
- Holiday Dinner
- Connection with Kerala ethnic community
- Youth Focus Group
- Spring clean up





ROLSTON Neighbourhood

What was your biggest accomplishment over the past year?

The establishment of our Rolston Neighbourhood Planning Team, with a strong core group. The team works together well to accomplish goals that we have set out.

What are some of the positives you've seen over the past year?

Engaging the neighbourhood has been extremely well received, and the amount of people who want to help and be involved is growing exponentially.

Successful community events included a successful park clean-up of Captain Cornelius Park, and a rocking first AGM.

What have been some of your challenges over the past year?

There were times in the winter especially when we did not have enough neighbourhood representation to have a quorum.

What has made the biggest difference over the past year?

Our Community Developer, Laura Ryan, kept our excitement going, and our Neighbourhood Action Strategy representative, Jocelyn Strutt, kept us organized and on track. We would not be where we are without them!



Rolston Neighbourhood Vision Statement

Rolston is a vibrant, engaged and welcoming neighbourhood that values inclusivity and celebrates diversity. We are a community where healthy relationships, natural spaces and opportunities flourish.





SHERMAN

Neighbourhood

What was your biggest accomplishment over the past year?

The Sherman Hub exhibits a strong recognition of the power of our values. The Sherman Hub has proven that asset-based community development (ABCD) based on core values of respect, inclusion, stewardship and caring is a sustainable path forward that helps us maintain a forward momentum and overcome challenges and changes.

What are some of the positives you've seen over the past year?

The Sherman Hub is a very active organization and this year past has been exceptionally positive. The community has rallied together around issues that affect our neighbourhood, providing access to information and creating venues for resident voices to be heard.

The Hub partnered with other hubs to put on all-candidates debates for municipal election, helping residents get a better view of their future leaders. The hub also hosted an information meeting regarding the Gasification Plant, to help residents better understand the impacts that facility might have on the community.

It's been a year of changes as the Sherman Hub elected new members to its executive this year, with a seamless transition and fresh new ideas coming alongside. The Hub has also relocated its meeting space to Tim Hortons Field after many years at St. Giles Church.

We continue to hold community events like All-Things Pan-Am Community BBQ at Gage Park, and we continue to partner with other organizations on incredible events like the Building Momentum celebration at Tim Hortons Field.

The Hub has continued its commitment to our action plan, creating three new action teams around environmental concerns, healthy housing, and businesses and services directory. All existing actions teams have continued their important work in the community.

Sherman Hub is also looking forward. We have formed a Future Steps Subcommittee to work towards developing a strategic plan to help the hub evolve as an organization.

What have been some of your challenges over the past year?

A key challenge is finding the resources to implement the many great ideas residents have about how make the neighbourhood a great place to live, work and raise a family.

What has made the biggest difference over the past year?

Several key factors have made a significant difference this year. The planning team has enthusiastically pressed into difficult topics and issues. Having the willingness to work to solutions to very challenging and divisive issues has only strengthened the hub, allowing us to grow and be more effective in our mission and help us get that much closer to our vision. This is accomplished by the hub's unwavering commitment to continue with ABCD and adherence to our core values in conjunction with support and encouragement from the City's Neighbourhood Action Strategy and the City Manager's office.





STINSON

Neighbourhood

What was your biggest accomplishment over the past year?

In 2014 the Stinson Community Association (SCA) saw many successes and worked through challenges that allowed the association to grow stronger. The SCA organized the Voice of the Community to support the Carter Park renovations (made possible through the Ward 2 area rating and NAS funds), and the tender for Phase I renovations was completed in 2014.

What are some of the positives you've seen over the past year?

One method of building community pride and cohesion was through a series of exciting events. All events were free and welcoming. The Easter Egg Hunt celebrated its second year in the neighbourhood and attracted over 100 children, \$200 in donations to keep the event going and dozens of canned goods that were donated to a local youth shelter. Songs from the Bishop presented free performances from Bishop Park on Thursdays in August at sunset. In its fourth year, Songs from the Bishop established itself as a neighbourhood staple event as residents integrated Songs into their summer routine. Another great success was adopting Carter Park and bringing an ice-skating rink to the neighbourhood! Volunteers worked tirelessly on some of the coldest nights of the winter to build the rink, and it was immediately loved and utilized.

The SCA also adopted a new Terms of Reference and a new Vision Statement. This process allowed for a stronger and re-engaged membership and new practices that will increase the sustainability of our work, and create a space for resolution around group challenges and disagreements.

In 2014, SCA launched the StinZine. The team wanted to come up with a way to communicate to the neighbourhood, start a dialogue, and capture the creative spirit of Stinson with the delivery of a Zine. Five issues were published in its successful first year.

What have been some of the challenges over the past year?

These successes came during a time when the SCA had a more challenging year than usual due to the need to hire a new Community Developer and work through some internal disagreements. In the end, the team made it through the challenges, retaining and growing a membership, solidifying SCA events and introducing new opportunities and tools.

What has made the biggest difference over the past year?

All of the above-noted examples of our successes over the past year made a difference in one way or another, including the challenges faced. Stinson is looking forward to the completion of the Carter Park renovations and an exciting year of positive opportunities for all Stinson residents.



“In a group situation, I’m more open to other people’s opinions. Everyone’s input is valuable. You may not use it, but at least you can use it in some context.”

- Neighbourhood Leadership Institute Graduate

“I’m far more appreciative of the idea that anybody can do anything. It’s one of those things that kind of changes you. And now I appreciate that wherever I go.”

- Neighbourhood Leadership Institute Graduate

“Discovering that I’m not the only one who sees value in this [is what keeps me going]. It was interesting to watch and see the other people and see how really quite different projects were. They were strongly committed and really believed in what they were doing.”

- Neighbourhood Leadership Institute Graduate

“In these volunteer positions, the fact that people are different is a good thing. Because you need all sorts of talents and abilities and personalities to make this all work.”

- Neighbourhood Resident

“It’s a place where people from other neighbourhoods could come together. And the relationship building is part of everything we do.”

- Neighbourhood Leadership
Institute Graduate



Hamilton

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