



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Members of Emergency and Community Services Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	July 6, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Neighbourhood Action Strategy Refresh (CES16033) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Suzanne Brown 905-546-2424 ext. 5598
SUBMITTED BY:	Suzanne Brown, Director Neighbourhood and Community Initiatives Division Community & Emergency Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Not applicable

Information:

Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy (NAS) was launched in 2011 in response to the social, economic and health concerns of specific neighbourhoods within the City of Hamilton (GIC report (CM11007)). Employing an asset-based community development approach, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy utilized the voice of residents to intentionally focus dialogue around the positive aspects in the community. By blending the foundations of asset-based community development and the Social Determinants of Health with strategic planning principles, residents, supported by community developers and City and community partners developed Neighbourhood Action Plans (NAPs) that built on social capital and addressed the health inequities in 11 Hamilton neighbourhoods. All eleven plans, totalling 481 discrete actions, were universally endorsed by Council ((CM12013), (CM12013(a)), (CM12013(b)), (CM12013(d)), (CES16009)). Actions are tracked by the City of Hamilton and reported annually.

Findings from the Hamilton Neighbourhoods Survey two-year follow-up, to baseline results in the six neighbourhoods, revealed that the majority of residents still reported high levels of satisfaction with their neighbourhood. Of significant change between the two years, residents felt that job opportunities in their neighbourhood had increased (job opportunity actions were identified in nine NAPs), although the perception of safety at night had decreased (safety at night was not identified in any NAPs). Of neighbourhood concerns noted in the baseline, traffic and road safety (identified in seven NAPs) as well as litter in the streets had improved (identified in two NAPs).

As of 2015, of the 452 actions over ten neighbourhood action plans, 23 were completed and 232 were underway.

As the NAS initiative approaches its fifth anniversary, it is clear that there continues to be a need for key institutions to address neighbourhood health inequity at the neighbourhood level, through a framework of community development, community planning and project management. Interest and engagement in the NAS continues to grow, with City of Hamilton staff and Social Planning and Research Council community developers continuing to engage and meet with new neighbourhood groups. With solid evaluation regarding the value of community development work in neighbourhoods, with some improvements seen in neighbourhood well-being, and with five years of experience developing the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, the NAS partner organizations (City of Hamilton, Hamilton Community Foundation and Best Start Network), believe it is a good time to review, consult and plan for the future of the Strategy.

A research team, made up of representatives from the Neighbourhood Leadership Institute, Hamilton Community Foundation, City of Hamilton staff and independent researchers (graduate students from McMaster University and York University), with expertise in theoretical approaches, policy development, participatory methods to community engagement and communications will guide the development of the review. The research team will work in partnership with the NAS Steering Committee and a Resident Action Team struck for this purpose, to ensure the development of the review is sound, as well as connected and informed by the input from various communities and stakeholders, as well as the committee.

Starting in August, the team will work with a communications firm to formalize the way the information is shared across the community, specifically in developing a series of visually succinct and clear communication products. Once a framework and communications plans are established by all parties, a renewed operational plan for NAS will be developed. An outline for the operational plan will be finalized by the end of year 2016.

Expected Outcomes:

- Understanding of the underpinning of community development work;
- Clarity of role for community developers;
- Clarity of role for residents and resident planning teams;
- Training for community developers in theory and practice of community development;
- Renewed operational framework to deliver community development work in neighbourhoods;
- Increased participation by residents in Neighbourhood Action Strategy; and,

- Increased access to City of Hamilton staff, support and resources for neighbourhood improvement.

Timelines:

- Review July – August 2016;
- Communications August – December 2106;
- Renewed Operational Framework September – November 2016; and,
- Implementation of Framework – December 2016