



STAFF REPORT
Recreation & Facility Services

Title: Draft Neighbourhood Strategy
Report Number: COM2018-004
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Meeting Type: Committee of the Whole Meeting
Council/Committee Date: January 15, 2018
File: Neighbourhood Strategy
Attachments: Appendix A: Draft Neighbourhood Strategy
Ward No.: All Wards

Recommendations:

1. That Council approve COM2018-004.
2. That Council direct staff to gather community feedback on the draft neighbourhood strategy.

A. Executive Summary

The City of Waterloo is developing its first-ever Neighbourhood Strategy to clarify how the City can support community members in creating strong and connected neighbourhoods. This report provides an overview of the work completed to date on the project, presents the draft Neighbourhood Strategy, and outlines the proposed next steps to complete and initiate implementation of the Strategy.

On June 27, 2016, Council directed staff to develop a Neighbourhood Strategy. Staff, supported by a Steering Committee of community stakeholders, advanced the Neighbourhood Strategy project according to the timeline and approach approved by Council in June 2016.

Throughout the strategy development, community members shared ideas for how their neighbourhoods can be improved to better suit the needs of the community and help bring neighbours together. Over 1,600 community members shared their thoughts and ideas to inform the draft strategy.

The project staff team has also conducted two reviews to inform the draft Strategy:

1. Neighbourhood Matching Fund Program Review: to find ways to improve the overall success of this program.
2. Red Tape Review: to find ways the City can make it easier for residents to lead neighbourhood projects, while supporting resident safety and compliance with legislative and other necessary requirements.

The project staff team worked with the Steering Committee and other stakeholders over the fall of 2017 to develop the draft Neighbourhood Strategy based on public input and other supporting research.

Staff is seeking Council approval to conduct a final phase of public input on the draft strategy in January-February 2018. This consultation will help ensure the strategy reflects what was heard from the community and will help set implementation priorities. The draft strategy will be revised based on this input.

Staff will return to Council to seek approval of the final strategy in March 2018. The final strategy will include estimated financial implications and a high level implementation plan.

B. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications at this time. Staff will include financial implications and proposed budget impacts when the final strategy is presented to Council in March 2018. It is anticipated there will be new budget and staffing investments required to fully implement the strategy. These impacts will be considered as part of the 2019 budget process. To manage budget impacts, opportunities for collaboration with other organizations will be explored, and implementation will be phased over a 5+ year time period.

C. Technology Implications

There are no technology implications at this time.

D. Legal Considerations

Legal advice was solicited in relation to recommendations related to homes associations and to potential changes to current policy or practices related to public safety and risk management.

E. Link to Strategic Plan

(Strategic Priorities: Multi-modal Transportation, Infrastructure Renewal, Strong Community, Environmental Leadership, Corporate Excellence, Economic Development)

Strong Community: developing a strategy to strengthen ties within the community, build social capital at the neighbourhood level, and support vibrant neighbourhoods.

F. Previous Reports on this Topic

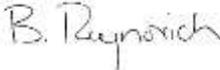
COM2016-013 City of Waterloo Neighbourhood Strategy – Proposed approach and scope

COM2017-002 Neighbourhood Strategy Workshop

COM2017-005 Neighbourhood Strategy – Public engagement summary

COM2017-023 Neighbourhood Strategy Project Update

G. Approvals

Name	Signature	Date
Author: Beth Rajnovich		January 5, 2018
Author: Janet Norman		January 5, 2018
Director:		
Commissioner:		
Finance:		

CAO



**Draft Neighbourhood Strategy
COM2018-004**

On June 27, 2016, Council directed staff to initiate work on the development of the Neighbourhood Strategy.

Since this time, the City of Waterloo has been developing its first-ever Neighbourhood Strategy to identify how the City can support community members in creating strong and connected neighbourhoods, where neighbours know each other, spend time together, and support each other.

The City recognizes that community members are well positioned to identify what could make neighbourhoods stronger and more connected, and are best positioned to actively build neighbourliness. The strategy identifies how the City can help community members achieve their neighbourhood goals.

The information below provides an overview of the draft neighbourhood strategy, the work completed on the project to date, and the next steps toward completing the Neighbourhood Strategy.

Neighbours are at the heart of neighbourhoods, and so community members are a central part of the development of the Neighbourhood Strategy. The project staff team has sought to involve the public in many different ways throughout all project phases. Over 1,600 community members have shared their thoughts and ideas to inform the draft strategy.

The strategy development is being guided by a Steering Committee comprised of City staff and community members representing various stakeholder organizations that play a role in building community in Waterloo.

The Neighbourhood Strategy Staff Team is also sharing relevant information collected through public engagement with staff to support other municipal projects including the Parks Strategy development and the implementation of the Culture Plan and the Built Heritage Strategy.

Overview of the Draft Neighbourhood Strategy:

Draft vision for Waterloo neighbourhoods:

Waterloo is a city of caring, vibrant, engaged neighbourhoods where everyone belongs.

Draft guiding principles, to guide the development of recommendations and their implementation:

1. Residents and neighbourhood volunteers are at the root of great neighbourhoods.
2. Every resident is a neighbour and can help build strong neighbourhoods.
3. Neighbours should drive the vision for their neighbourhood.
4. Neighbourhood community development should aim to be inclusive.
5. City departments must work together to help support resident-led and delivered neighbourhood initiatives.
6. Collaboration with community partners is key to achieving the strategy's vision.

The draft pillars describe the City's goals in relation to the Neighbourhood Strategy. The associated draft recommendations are included below:

Pillar 1: Encourage neighbourhood interactions

1. Encourage neighbourliness.
2. Help neighbours build genuine and lasting connections within their neighbourhood.
3. Nurture place-based neighbourhood pride, belonging, and identity.
4. Inspire those living in multi-unit buildings to connect with their neighbours.
5. Harness community capacity to further build neighbourhood cohesion in areas with a high concentration of post-secondary students.
6. Clarify the City supports available to homes associations and residents in these areas.

Pillar 2: Empower neighbours to lead

7. Provide opportunities for neighbourhood groups to connect and collaborate.
8. Develop and share information resources with neighbourhoods.
9. Pilot a program focused on building resident capacity to organize and lead neighbourhood initiatives.
10. Provide additional training and support to neighbourhood groups in volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition.
11. Provide neighbourhood groups with access to a supply of affordable event equipment.
12. Identify and improve access to existing indoor space in neighbourhoods for neighbourhood initiatives.
13. Strengthen existing financial and in-kind support to neighbourhoods.

14. Establish a micro-grant program that provides small amounts of financial and in-kind support for fledgling neighbourhood projects.

Pillar 3: Build a corporate City culture and policy environment that support neighbourhood-led and delivered initiatives.

15. Further shift focus from traditional bylaw enforcement towards enhanced bylaw education, prevention, and community collaboration.
16. Reduce municipal “red tape” that presents barriers to neighbourhood projects.
17. To better support neighbourhood-led initiatives, explore and articulate the City’s risk tolerance position, weighing risk against community benefit.
18. Adopt a “Let’s Explore” philosophy among City of Waterloo staff and across departments.

Project Steps Completed:

1) Define project scope and approach (March – June 2016)

Staff began work to develop the scope and approach for the Neighbourhood Strategy by reviewing the Corporate Strategic Plan, Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan, and other strategic documents, as well as examining neighbourhood strategies from other municipalities, and academic research and literature related to developing strong neighbourhoods.

Throughout the spring of 2016, staff consulted neighbourhood groups and community leaders to gather their input on the project scope and approach. 140 individuals were engaged at this time through meetings and surveys to neighbourhood associations and interviews with neighbourhood and community leaders.

Through the research and public engagement, five areas of focus were identified to guide the strategy development:

1. Social connections: neighbours know each other.
2. Neighbourliness: encourage people to be good neighbours who are kind, friendly, considerate, and helpful.
3. Inclusivity: everyone can participate.
4. Sense of belonging: everyone feels welcome.
5. Placemaking: spaces and events that bring neighbours together.

The project scope, including the areas of focus, and the approach to developing the Strategy were brought to Council for approval June 27, 2016. At this time, Council directed the Neighbourhood Strategy staff team to begin developing the Strategy.

2) Phase 1 (September 2016 – February 2017)

This first phase of work focused on understanding the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and trends in Waterloo neighbourhoods. Approximately 420 community members contributed their thoughts about what is great about their neighbourhoods,

challenges they encounter, and ideas for how their neighbourhoods can be strengthened.

Input was collected in the following ways:

- Resident Panel input.
- Steering Committee input.
- Focus groups with the general public.
- Targeted focus groups.
- Focus groups with staff teams.
- Online survey.
- Council Workshop.

A summary of the information collected during Phase 1 was presented to Council February 27, 2017 (COM2017-005).

During this phase of the project the following work was also advanced:

- A review of the current context was conducted, including existing City of Waterloo programs impacting neighbourhoods. This information was shared with Council (COM2017-002), the Steering Committee, and the Resident Panel to inform their input into the Strategy and future stages of the project.
- Staff researched how other municipalities are addressing opportunities, challenges and trends similar to the ones identified by the Waterloo community.

Guided by the research and public consultation, and with the support of the Steering Committee, a second phase of public consultation was planned.

3) Phase 2 (March – August 2017)

The second phase of the project explored in greater depth the ideas and information gathered through the first phase to better understand what matters most to Waterloo residents and what strategies would have the best impact for Waterloo neighbourhoods. An overview of what we heard from the community and a list of key themes identified were presented to Council September 18, 2017 (COM2017-023).

Several different consultation strategies were used to capture the opinions and ideas of community members, including:

- A Street Team (comprised of city staff and volunteers) attended a broad range of events and visited neighbourhood spaces in Waterloo to speak with residents about their neighbourhoods.
- Neighbourhood Association and Homes Association Summit.
- Online survey for the general public.
- Collaboration with the Arts & Culture team on the Artist in Residence Program.
- Kitchen Table Talks (community members volunteered to host a conversation with neighbours to contribute to the neighbourhood strategy).
- Neighbourhood Strategy contest about what makes a good neighbour held at University of Waterloo's Canada Day event.

In total, approximately 1,050 community members were consulted during this phase, including: community members of various ages, from different neighbourhoods, those who had recently moved to the city, as well as long-term residents.

This phase of the project also included advancement of:

- In-depth best practice research and exploration of other municipalities (including online research and phone interviews with other municipalities, regular participation in a nation-wide neighbourhood strategy community of practice, and attendance at a Neighbourhood Community Development conference).
- Exploration of what other Ontario municipalities similar to Waterloo are investing in neighbourhoods.
- Evaluation of the Neighbourhood Matching Fund program to determine how the program can be improved.
- Identification of “red tape” issues that create barriers to neighbourhood initiatives.
- Development of the draft vision and guiding principles for the Strategy in collaboration with the Resident Panel and Steering Committee.

4) Phase 3 - Developing the Draft Strategy (September – December 2017)

Building on all of the public consultation input and research completed to date, and guided by the key themes presented to Council in September 2017, the project Staff Team and Steering Committee worked together to develop the draft Neighbourhood Strategy (Appendix A). The strategy includes a vision statement, 3 pillars, and 18 recommendations focused on defining what the City can do to support neighbours to build stronger and more connected neighbourhoods.

Summary of Upcoming/Next Steps:

1) Developing Final Neighbourhood Strategy (December 2017 – March 2018)

Pending Council approval, staff will complete a final round of public engagement in January-February 2018 to ensure the draft Strategy aligns with community needs and goals for Waterloo neighbourhoods, and to help identify priorities for implementation. This phase of engagement will gather input through the engageWaterloo platform, a public open house, and by connecting with stakeholder organizations. The Strategy will be revised, in consultation with the Steering Committee, based on this feedback.

The project staff team will also work with finance department staff to identify budget impacts where new investment is required. The final Strategy report will include a 5+ year implementation plan for the Strategy. As part of the implementation plan, strategy elements that can be addressed right away, without additional resources will be identified. This could include development of a Neighbourhood Matching Fund Policy, addressing red tape issues, and beginning work on information resources to support neighbourhood activities.

Staff aims to return to Council March 2018 to seek Council support for the final Strategy.

Draft Neighbourhood Strategy

Introduction

The City of Waterloo has a long history of fostering strong and connected neighbourhoods. The City already supports neighbourhood initiatives through grants, staff resources, and other programs that community members value and that make an important contribution to our community's development. The city and its neighbourhoods are currently experiencing significant changes, including increasing ethnic diversity and newcomers, a growing aging population, a changing economy, new technology, and urban intensification. These factors are shaping how neighbourhoods look and how neighbours interact. As the city continues to change and grow, how the City can better support residents to create even stronger and more connected neighbourhoods has come to the forefront as a community priority. Since early 2016, the City has been partnering with the community to define a vision for Waterloo's neighbourhoods and the City's role in striving for that vision. This draft strategy is the result of this collaborative process.

How the strategy is being developed

At every stage of the project, community members shared their experiences and ideas; these have shaped this neighbourhood strategy.

A City of Waterloo staff team (Appendix B) was formed for this project to complete the behind the scenes work to develop the draft strategy. This work was done with direction from the project's steering committee. The committee includes representatives from organizations and neighbourhood groups with a direct interest in Waterloo neighbourhoods (Appendix B).

The project staff team also consulted over 1,600 community members to inform the neighbourhood strategy:

- A Resident Panel of 90 community members met seven times over the course of the project to provide in-depth input into the draft neighbourhood strategy.
- A street team of City staff and volunteers spoke with residents about their neighbourhoods in public spaces across the City (neighbourhood events, Waterloo Public Library pop-up sessions, Artist in Residence workshops, community festivals, and public square events, among others).
- Online surveys and engageWaterloo allowed community members to tell us about their neighbourhoods at their convenience.
- Focus groups included targeted sessions (i.e. secondary students, post-secondary students, older adults) and sessions open to the general public.

- A Canada Day contest asked participants to share what they appreciate about their neighbours.
- A youth contest asked participants to share what makes their neighbourhood great.
- Community volunteers hosted kitchen table talks (focus groups to gather input from their neighbours for the strategy).
- Heartwarming #neighbourloo stories and photos were shared on Facebook, showing examples of how kind and neighbourly Waterloo residents are.

Project timeline and milestones

1) Define project scope and approach (March – June 2016)

To determine the scope, areas of focus, and work plan, the project team:

- Reviewed City of Waterloo plans and strategies (such as the Corporate Strategic Plan and the Recreation and Leisure Services Master Plan).
- Examined neighbourhood strategies from other municipalities.
- Explored academic research and other literature related to developing strong neighbourhoods.
- Consulted 140 individuals (neighbourhood groups and community leaders) to gather their input on the project scope and approach.

2) Phase 1 (September 2016 – February 2017)

To understand the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and trends in Waterloo neighbourhoods, the project team:

- Reviewed what is currently happening in Waterloo neighbourhoods, including existing City of Waterloo programs impacting neighbourhoods.
- Consulted 420 community members to learn about great things happening in their neighbourhoods, challenges they encounter, and ideas for how their neighbourhoods can be strengthened.
- Researched how other municipalities are addressing opportunities, challenges, and trends similar to the ones identified by the Waterloo community.

3) Phase 2 (March – August 2017)

The ideas and information gathered through the first phase was further explored. The project team:

- Consulted 1,050 community members to better understand what matters most to Waterloo residents and what strategies could have the best positive impact for Waterloo neighbourhoods.
- Expanded best practice research.
- Reviewed the Neighbourhood Matching Fund program to determine how the program can be improved.

- Inventoried municipal “red tape” to begin exploring how the City can make it easier for residents to lead neighbourhood projects, while also supporting resident safety, risk mitigation, and compliance with legislative and other requirements.

4) Phase 3 - Develop Draft Strategy (September – November 2017)

Building on public consultation input and research completed, the project staff team worked with the Neighbourhood Strategy Steering Committee and other key stakeholders to develop the draft Neighbourhood Strategy.

Development of the draft recommendations

Throughout the neighbourhood strategy development, over 1,600 community members shared many great ideas for how the City could come alongside residents to help them strengthen their neighbourhoods. Key themes that surfaced most frequently throughout consultation were identified. To develop the recommendations contained in this report, the steering committee explored each theme, considering what was heard from the community, related best practice approaches, and consideration of feasibility and community impact.

Broadening our support for all neighbourhoods

The recommendations in this strategy, collectively, point to a need for the City to broaden its scope in relationship to support for neighbourhoods. While City staff supporting neighbourhoods is available to work with any neighbourhood group, historically staff and financial resources have been focused on affiliated neighbourhood associations, with less involvement in neighbourhoods without an affiliated group.

This strategy recognizes that affiliated neighbourhood associations have been the key stone of the City’s approach to neighbourhood community development, and should continue to be provided with the existing range of supports they receive from the City to be successful. There are, however, many neighbourhoods in Waterloo that do not want, or have not been able to, establish a neighbourhood association. This strategy points to the need for more City support in these neighbourhoods, and in particular looking at approaches beyond neighbourhood associations to build community in these areas. This includes areas with homes associations, non-affiliated neighbourhood groups, or no neighbourhood group at all. Unless otherwise indicated, the recommendations for action below pertain to supports intended to be open to all neighbourhoods across the city.

Draft vision for Waterloo neighbourhoods

The City of Waterloo’s vibrant neighbourhoods make the city a great place to live, work, learn, and play. That is why the City set out to develop a neighbourhood strategy – to see how the City can best support community members to create stronger and more connected neighbourhoods.

Based on community input, the draft vision for Waterloo neighbourhoods over the next ten years is:

Waterloo is a city of caring, vibrant, engaged neighbourhoods where everyone belongs.

The City of Waterloo has a strong foundation for the neighbourhood strategy to build on already – all thanks to ongoing activities of affiliated neighbourhood associations, homes associations, community agencies, City staff that support neighbourhoods, and the kind and thoughtful residents of Waterloo. The draft neighbourhood strategy outlines how the City can best support the community to achieve a shared vision for Waterloo neighbourhoods going forward.

Draft Guiding Principles

The following principles guided the development of the draft recommendations and will continue to guide the implementation of the neighbourhood strategy:

1. Residents and neighbourhood volunteers are at the root of great neighbourhoods.
2. Every resident is a neighbour and can help build strong neighbourhoods.
3. Neighbours should drive the vision for their neighbourhood.
4. Neighbourhood community development should aim to be inclusive.
5. City departments must work together to help support resident-led and delivered neighbourhood initiatives.
6. Collaboration with community partners is key to achieving the strategy's vision.

Residents and neighbourhood volunteers are at the root of great neighbourhoods.

Residents care about their neighbourhoods, and many invest their time and energy into making local neighbourhoods even better. Each resident's wellbeing is influenced by their neighbourhood, and all residents have a vested interest in collectively shaping the direction of their neighbourhood. The genuine and devoted efforts of residents form the foundation of great neighbourhoods.

Every resident is a neighbour and can help build strong neighbourhoods.

Every resident has knowledge, ideas, skills, and abilities to contribute to strengthening their neighbourhood. Efforts to develop community within each neighbourhood must focus on these assets within the neighbourhood itself and must aim to include all neighbours.

Neighbours should drive the vision for their neighbourhood.

Residents understand their own neighbourhood best. Community building in neighbourhoods is most successful when residents make the changes they want to see in their neighbourhoods. The City's role is to support grassroots and neighbourhood initiatives.

Neighbourhood community development should aim to be inclusive.

Waterloo neighbourhoods are filled with residents from various backgrounds, including those who have moved from other cities, provinces, or countries. They have different abilities, education, and income and are of different ages. Neighbours also have a variety of interests and experiences. All neighbours are important contributors to the neighbourhood. Community development in the neighbourhood should be inclusive and should welcome involvement from all neighbours.

City departments must collaborate to help support resident-led and delivered neighbourhood initiatives.

The city is more lively and vibrant when great things are happening in its neighbourhoods. Residents have great ideas about what they want in their neighbourhoods, and have skills and abilities to contribute; neighbourhood initiatives are most successful when they are planned and delivered by the neighbours directly. As such, the City of Waterloo follows a model where the City supports resident-led and delivered initiatives instead of going into a neighbourhood and delivering programs and services directly.

When residents bring forward an idea to City staff, and the idea is supported by their neighbours, relevant City departments will explore the idea together and with the residents. The intent is to help residents do great things in their neighbourhood. When an idea is not feasible due to legislative or policy constraints or public safety concerns, the City will help the residents explore other options in order to help them achieve their neighbourhood's goals.

Collaboration with community partners is key to achieving the strategy's vision.

The neighbourhood strategy is founded on the efforts of residents in building strong and connected neighbourhoods across Waterloo. Other community organizations and groups are a part of the community and have insight, expertise, and resources that could be invested in Waterloo neighbourhoods to make them even stronger. These partners could include: post-secondary institutions, the United Way Waterloo Region Communities, the Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation, and the Volunteer Action Centre, to name a few. The implementation of the strategy will consider collaboration with various community partners, as appropriate. Additionally, as the City of Kitchener has recently begun implementing a neighbourhood strategy of its own, opportunities to work together will be explored.

Draft Strategy

Over the years, the City of Waterloo has demonstrated its commitment to building strong neighbourhoods through grants, programs, and in-kind supports. The community has changed, and will continue to change; existing approaches might not be the best way of meeting current and future needs of the community. The following draft neighbourhood strategy includes 18 recommendations to strengthen the City's dedication to neighbourhood community development. Each recommendation falls

under one of the draft strategy's three pillars. These pillars are rooted in community input on roles the City can take to best support neighbourhood development:

1. Encourage neighbourhood interactions;
2. Empower neighbours to lead; and
3. Build a corporate City culture and policy environment that supports neighbourhood-led and delivered initiatives.

Pillar 1: Encourage neighbourhood interactions

Encouraging neighbours to interact is important to building strong and connected neighbourhoods. When neighbours know neighbours:

- They have someone nearby they can go to for help.
- They feel safe because they recognize and know the people on their street.
- They feel a stronger sense of belonging as they develop friendships in the neighbourhood.

The City will further encourage neighbourhood interactions amongst residents who want to get to know each other, and raise awareness of the importance of being a good neighbour. Currently the City offers support to affiliated neighbourhood associations so they can organize more neighbourhood events and activities that bring neighbours together. The draft recommendations in the strategy will build on and enhance the City's current approach.

Draft recommendations to encourage neighbourhood interactions:

1. Encourage neighbourliness.
2. Help neighbours build genuine and lasting connections within their neighbourhood.
3. Nurture place-based neighbourhood pride, belonging, and identity.
4. Inspire those living in multi-unit buildings to connect with their neighbours.
5. Harness community capacity to further build neighbourhood cohesion in areas with a high concentration of post-secondary students.
6. Clarify the City supports available to homes associations and residents in these areas.

Pillar 2: Empower neighbours to lead

Many residents want to be more involved in their neighbourhood – whether it is organizing a neighbourhood activity or volunteering for a neighbourhood association event. Residents do not always know where to start; they may be unsure where to go for information, what help is available, or what they can do in their neighbourhoods.

The City is committed to empowering residents to lead and deliver neighbourhood initiatives to achieve their neighbourhood's goals. Currently, the City offers capacity-

building, financial, and in-kind supports to affiliated neighbourhood associations. The City also provides supports that are open to all neighbourhoods, not just affiliated groups. For example, the Neighbourhood Matching Fund grant program encourages grassroots neighbourhood projects. Additional City guidance, information, resources, and programs could build even more community capacity to lead neighbourhood initiatives.

Draft recommendations to empower neighbours to lead neighbourhood initiatives:

7. Provide opportunities for neighbourhood groups to connect and collaborate.
8. Develop and share information resources with neighbourhoods.
9. Pilot a program focused on building resident capacity to organize and lead neighbourhood initiatives.
10. Provide additional training and support to neighbourhood groups in volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition.
11. Provide neighbourhood groups with access to a supply of affordable event equipment.
12. Identify and improve access to existing indoor space in neighbourhoods for neighbourhood initiatives.
13. Strengthen existing financial and in-kind support to neighbourhoods.
14. Establish a micro-grant program that provides small amounts of financial and in-kind support for fledgling neighbourhood projects.

Pillar 3: Build a corporate City culture and policy environment that support neighbourhood-led and delivered initiatives.

Neighbours have a lot of creative ideas for neighbourhood projects. City policies and practices impact the types of resident-led neighbourhood projects implemented, and sometimes create barriers to doing great things in neighbourhoods.

To encourage neighbourhood projects, the organizational culture of the City of Waterloo will need to shift to become even more neighbourhood-focused. This could include revising or developing better methods of communication, improved processes, policy changes, or new programs that are focused on supporting neighbourhood-led initiatives.

Draft recommendations to build an organizational culture that better supports neighbourhood initiatives:

15. Further shift focus from traditional bylaw enforcement towards enhanced bylaw education, prevention, and community collaboration.
16. Reduce municipal “red tape” that presents barriers to neighbourhood projects.
17. To better support neighbourhood-led initiatives, explore and articulate the City’s risk tolerance position, weighing risk against community benefit.
18. Adopt a “Let’s Explore” philosophy among City of Waterloo staff and across departments.

Draft Neighbourhood Strategy Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Encourage neighbourliness.

We heard neighbours can be an important source of day to day help and community connection. This might mean saying hello, helping out with snow shoveling, or dropping off a meal to provide comfort or support. We also heard that residents feel that collectively we are not as friendly and helpful with our neighbours as we were in the past.

Encouraging neighbourliness and positive interaction between neighbours can increase wellbeing – as residents have people in close proximity they can call on if they need help. It can also increase sense of safety, as people will know more faces in their neighbourhood.

How could the City help?

- Support neighbourhoods and neighbours to take a more active role in encouraging neighbourliness. Collaborations between the neighbourhoods, the City, and partners could include:
 - Sharing ideas for how to be more neighbourly. This could involve collaboration with neighbourhood groups as well as providing how-to guides.
 - Developing a campaign(s) to increase awareness of what it means to be a good neighbour. This could involve collaboration with existing campaigns such as Random Act of Kindness day.
 - Recognizing people who do something great, big or small, in their neighbourhood.

Recommendation 2: Help neighbours build genuine and lasting connections within their neighbourhood.

We heard that in some areas of Waterloo, particularly those without a neighbourhood association, the sense of community and neighbourhood connection is not as strong. Neighbours know their neighbourhood best and are the best people to bring neighbours together to help each other out, but making those initial connections can be a challenge.

To achieve neighbourhood connectedness, other municipalities have successfully implemented a community connector approach; United Way Waterloo Region Communities has established support for a Community Connector program in a few neighbourhoods across the region. For this program, United Way Waterloo Region Communities provides funding through community partnerships to support a resident

who is already an active presence in the neighbourhood. They would be offered resources to help get to know the residents of their street, apartment building, block, or neighbourhood, and learn about their interests, abilities, and needs. If neighbours express interest, the connector could put neighbours in touch with each other and create those linkages that enable neighbours to access the supports they need from the people who live right next to them and create resident-led activities and greater resident engagement in the development of their neighbourhood. Resources include money for small activities, tools and ideas to get things started, and learning opportunities with other Community Connectors from other neighbourhoods.

Programs to strengthen neighbourhood connections would need to be further explored to determine what approach would be most successful in Waterloo neighbourhoods. The United Way Waterloo Region Communities program is one to consider. Any programs to help build connections within neighbourhoods should be focused on neighbourhoods where other neighbourhood-building approaches have not taken root.

How could the City help?

- Investigate existing programs to help strengthen neighbourhood connectedness, and work with partners to build on these programs and celebrate them.

Recommendation 3: Nurture place-based neighbourhood pride, belonging, and identity.

We heard that neighbourhood identity is strong in areas of the city that have a commonly used neighbourhood name, and in particular in areas with an established neighbourhood association. However, residents in other areas do not always have a strong neighbourhood identity, and sometimes feel “neighbourhoodless,” identifying where they live not by a neighbourhood name, but by major intersections or other features. Encouraging awareness and celebration of neighbourhood identity can strengthen the connection to place as well as the sense of pride in the neighbourhood.

How could the City help?

- Share ideas with the community regarding ways in which to build neighbourhood identity (such as community projects and events, community art, use of neighbourhood names, signage, etc.).
- Embrace and support neighbourhood-led placemaking projects as opportunities to grow the identity of a neighbourhood.

Recommendation 4: Inspire those living in multi-unit buildings to connect with their neighbours.

As Waterloo's population intensifies, buildings with multiple dwelling units, such as apartment buildings and condominiums, are becoming more and more common. This impacts how neighbours interact.

We heard that residents living in single-detached homes and townhouses find it difficult to make connections with their neighbours living in multi-story buildings. The ways neighbours connect in low-rise neighbourhoods, where neighbours chat while doing yard work, or can walk up the front steps and knock on the door to make a connection, do not work in vertical neighbourhoods with their secure front door access.

Residents in multi-unit buildings are also a part of a vertical neighbourhood. The ways in which neighbours within a vertical neighbourhood meet and interact are different (i.e. in the parking lot or elevator). Some, but not all, multi-story residences' have active social committees or condo boards organizing activities for residents, encouraging connections amongst neighbours. Residents of multi-unit buildings do not always see themselves as neighbours, and may not connect as easily with each other as do those living in neighbourhoods of detached or semi-detached homes and townhouses.

Some of the most common residents of multi-unit dwellings (post-secondary students, older adults, and lower income residents) are the most vulnerable to social isolation.

Those who own their unit and/or are planning to live in the unit long-term may have more opportunity and incentive to develop neighbour relationships than those who are transient.

How could the City help?

There are actions the City can take to inspire interested residents to build neighbourhood connections within multi-unit dwellings:

- Help those living in multi-unit buildings who want to connect with neighbours by sharing creative ideas to encourage connections between neighbours (ex. How to organize a high rise "block party", progressive dinner party, signs for apartment doors).
- Seek opportunities to help vertical neighbourhoods connect with the broader neighbourhood, starting with connecting landlords and condo boards with the broader neighbourhood groups
- Promote existing neighbourhood programs to those living in multi-unit buildings.

Recommendation 5: Harness community capacity to further build neighbourhood cohesion in areas with a high concentration of post-secondary students.

Waterloo's large post-secondary student population is an asset to our community, and makes our city unique and vibrant. There tends to be a high concentration of post-secondary students living around the universities and community college.

There are already a number of projects underway in these areas to improve the physical form and amenities in the Northdale neighbourhood such as streetscape improvement, WCI/WLU project, park development, and a focus on new buildings with mixed use, all of which will help strengthen this neighbourhood. There have also been initiatives in the MacGregor Albert area aimed at improving relationships between student and non-student neighbours. Additional attention needs to be focused on the social environment.

The Town and Gown Committee, composed of post-secondary representatives, non-student residents, student leaders, and City staff, has been working over the years to align stakeholders' visions for this community. Building community cohesion has come to the forefront of their terms of reference. Waterloo's student population is an asset to the greater community, and we hope they stay as long term neighbours in this community after completing their formal education.

Residents in these neighbourhoods, both students and non-students, have indicated that they want to get to know each other, to develop relationships and a shared sense of community. We heard concerns from residents, both students and non-students, regarding issues such as garbage, noise, property maintenance, and safety in neighbourhoods.

We know that solutions to these challenges are not simple. We also know that not all approaches tried in the past have been as successful as we have hoped in increasing community cohesion in these neighbourhoods. For example, it has not been possible to date to establish a resident-led neighbourhood association in the Northdale area; as this area has a high concentration of students, and students tend to be more involved in school activities and less able to make long term commitments in the community. These neighbourhoods are different and need different approaches to building community cohesion.

A collaborative approach is needed, supported by the City, which focuses on harnessing the neighbourhoods' social assets to actively improve community cohesion.

What can the City do?

- Through the Town and Gown Committee, focus efforts on tangible action aimed at enhancing community cohesion and neighborliness among all residents.
- Engage student leaders as fundamental directors and implementers of these activities.

- Review best practices from other cities with post-secondary institutions.
- Leverage existing community events and initiatives that can engage student residents and non-student residents.
- Engage student residents and groups, non-student residents and groups, and building owners and managers in these efforts.

Recommendation 6: Clarify the City supports available to homes associations and residents in these areas.

The same supports that are available to all neighbourhoods city-wide, regardless of affiliation status, are also available to neighbourhoods that have a homes association. For example, all neighbourhoods can access the following programs aimed at supporting neighbourhood community development, depending on the scope of their neighbourhood project: Community Cash Grants, Neighbourhood Matching Fund, and the Partners in Parks program. However, not all residents in homes association areas are aware they can apply for these programs like other neighbourhoods. Support from the City's Neighbourhood Coordinator is also available to all neighbourhood groups. Pending the approval of the neighbourhood strategy, City supports for all neighbourhoods would be further broadened.

Some homes associations have expressed interest in pursuing affiliation status with the City. These groups can approach the City to explore the benefits of affiliation to determine whether it is the right approach for them. It should be noted however, that affiliation status relates only to support for neighbourhood led and delivered recreation, leisure, and community events that are open to all; it does not support operational or capital issues related to shared assets on private property.

Through the neighbourhood strategy consultation, residents living in homes association areas told us that they are concerned about their covenant expiry and how to sustain their neighbourhood's shared assets (e.g. pool, tennis court). Given that these assets are on private property, the City has determined that its only role in response to covenant expiry is to offer an opportunity to initiate a Special Service/Area Levy in the neighbourhood if there is appropriate community support, in accordance with Policy A-031 Neighbourhood/Home Association Special Service/Area Levy Implementation and Administration Policy. Home association leaders indicated they want to better understand this policy and what it means to them, and they also want to know what their options are should the Special Service/Area Levy not have sufficient resident support.

We also heard that neighbourhood cohesion is a concern in some of these neighbourhoods, particularly the ones that have undergone or will soon undergo a vote for a Special Service/Area Levy. Differing opinions among neighbours on this issue can lead to tension. Pending approval of the draft strategy, energy could be focused on implementing recommendations related to encouraging neighbourliness and community connectedness in these neighbourhoods.

How could the City help?

- Actively promote to homes association neighbourhoods the City supports and resources available to all Waterloo neighbourhoods to support neighbourhood community development such as grants, affiliation, and in-kind supports.
- Offer an information session for homes associations to educate on the City of Waterloo's policy A-031 Neighbourhood/Home Association Special Service/Area Levy Implementation and Administration Policy, and what it means for homes associations that want to explore this option.
- Clarify other options available to a homes association that does not wish to pursue a Special Service/Area Levy, or does not secure resident support for a Levy, in relation to the future of the homes association's private assets. This could involve options such as land donation to the City, awareness of rezoning viability for redevelopment, a membership model, etc.

Recommendation 7: Provide opportunities for neighbourhood groups to connect and collaborate.

We heard that neighbourhood groups have a lot of knowledge around what neighbourhood initiatives have worked well in the past, challenges they have faced, and how they have overcome these challenges. Neighbourhood groups could do even more for their neighbourhoods if they could share ideas and lessons learned with each other and help each other overcome challenges and achieve success. Face to face interaction is still very important to get to know each other and to help each other out. Also having a method of on-going communication is helpful to address challenges and share advice quickly and outside of a formal networking environment. Collaboration between neighbourhoods can lead to stronger neighbourhoods individually, as well as fostering joint neighbourhood initiatives.

How could the City help?

- Host a neighbourhood summit each year, encouraging all neighbourhood groups (whether homes associations, affiliated associations, or other neighbourhood groups) to come learn about and discuss topics related to neighbourhoods. The topics would be suggested by neighbourhood participants. The summit would include a networking opportunity.
- Convene and lead a Neighbourhood Leaders Council for neighbourhood association board members to share information, ideas, and best practices and to offer each other advice, as well as to learn more about City policies, processes and projects relevant to neighbourhoods.

- Provide online space where neighbourhood groups can share ideas and tips with each other.
- Promote peer mentorship opportunities between neighbourhood groups.

Recommendation 8: Develop and share information resources with neighbourhoods.

We heard that neighbours want to do great things in their neighbourhoods, but may not know what kind of things they could do, or how to plan and make it happen. Having this information in an easy-to-read format could help neighbourhood groups and neighbours organize great neighbourhood initiatives. Helpful templates and checklists could also be shared alongside the information resources. Sharing successful neighbourhood-led events and activities in Waterloo or other cities would encourage other residents to initiate neighbourhood projects or events and give them ideas for what they could do. This would create more neighbourhood capacity to develop and implement ideas.

How could the City help?

- Develop information resources, including:
 - Toolkit and an idea bank for neighbourhood initiatives.
 - Guides and best practices around board governance, volunteer management, inclusive activities/events, how to engage youth/older adults, etc.
 - Information on grants and other supports for neighbourhoods.
 - Staff contact information for concerns/topics relevant to neighbourhoods.
 - Links to websites/public contacts for neighbourhood associations and homes associations.
- Provide a space where community members can share ideas and success stories related to neighbourhoods.
- Share the information resources online in a centralized location/webpage, and have materials available in print format (at municipal facilities, libraries, etc.). Implementation of the recommendation would involve active promotion of the resources.

Recommendation 9: Pilot a program focused on building resident capacity to organize and lead neighbourhood initiatives.

We heard that neighbours may have great ideas, but do not always have the skills and experience to plan and implement their ideas. A capacity building leadership program would give them the tools to organize and implement these ideas.

Other cities, such as Brantford and Hamilton, run a capacity-building program in collaboration with other partners, such as post-secondary institutions and community organizations.

A program like this could lead to more neighbourhood initiatives being organized by neighbours and to the development of new neighbourhood leaders. There could be opportunity to develop a new program or tailor an existing program to the Waterloo context and what the community wants to learn more about. The intent would be to encourage grassroots initiatives and to build neighbourhood leaders in areas of the city that do not have an active neighbourhood group.

How could the City help?

- Partner with regional organizations, institutions, and programs with expertise in community projects, neighbourhood development, and leadership to pilot a capacity-building program tailored to the Waterloo region community.
- Promote the program to community members who are not already actively engaged in community development, to encourage grassroots initiatives and foster neighbourhood leaders.

Recommendation 10: Provide additional training and support to neighbourhood groups in volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition.

We heard that volunteers are essential to strengthening neighbourhoods, whether they are on a neighbourhood association executive, or neighbours who help out with a neighbourhood activity once per year. Some neighbourhood groups would like to learn more about volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition - as this takes a lot of time, energy, and expertise. Offering more information and training sessions related to volunteers would support neighbourhood groups in recruiting and retaining their volunteers.

How could the City help?

- Collaborate with the Volunteer Action Centre (VAC) and the City of Waterloo Volunteer Services to broaden the volunteer-related tools and supports available to neighbourhood groups.
- Deliver volunteer training in areas requested by neighbourhood groups, using innovative approaches to training.
- Improve affiliated neighbourhood groups' access to the bank of resources available through the VAC site.

- Support neighbourhood volunteer recognition. Ideas could include offering neighbourhood groups resources in order to recognize their volunteers, or strengthening the City's recognition of neighbourhood volunteers.

Recommendation 11: Provide neighbourhood groups with access to a supply of affordable event equipment.

We heard that residents appreciate the events their neighbours organize in their neighbourhood. These events bring neighbours together and contribute to vibrant neighbourhoods. Neighbours want easy and affordable access to equipment for their events, such as tables, tents, chairs, A-frame signs, and PA systems. By making these types of equipment available to our neighbourhoods in an affordable and simple to access way, neighbourhood events and activities will be easier to organize and may happen more frequently.

How could the City help?

- Facilitate access to affordable event equipment such as tents, tables, chairs, PA system, etc. for neighbourhood events, including exploring options such as securing discounts from local event equipment rental companies, subsidizing event equipment rental for neighbourhood groups, and/or purchasing a supply of equipment available to neighbourhood groups for low or no cost.

Recommendation 12: Identify and improve access to existing indoor space in neighbourhoods for neighbourhood initiatives.

We heard that while neighbours often use City parks to hold neighbourhood events and activities, they would appreciate more access to indoor spaces in their own neighbourhoods. Parks are neutral and safe spaces to hold events, but this means that the neighbourhood activities are dependent on favorable weather and mainly occur in the spring and summer months.

By helping neighbours find indoor spaces to meet within their neighbourhoods, programs and activities can happen all year round.

More information about how to access outdoor spaces in neighbourhoods, such as booking neighbourhood parks or school grounds for an event, could also be provided alongside information about indoor spaces.

How could the City help?

- Work with the Waterloo Region District School Board and the Waterloo Catholic District School Board to explore opportunities to allow more neighbourhood access to school space, particularly indoor spaces, where there is demand and where it is feasible.

- For each neighbourhood, develop an asset map of available indoor spaces within public and private facilities, along with contact information and rental information.

Recommendation 13: Strengthen existing financial and in-kind support to neighbourhoods.

We heard that financial and in-kind supports provided through the City are important to our neighbourhood groups. The City of Waterloo currently offers financial support to neighbourhoods through programs such as the Community Cash Grants and the Neighbourhood Matching Fund. Some affiliated neighbourhood associations can also receive foundational funding through affiliation agreements. Strengthening the existing supports will allow neighbourhoods to better access the resources they need to help make their neighbourhood initiatives happen.

How could the City help?

- Allocate more funds to the Partners in Parks program to better respond to community interests.
- Based on the program review outcomes, make improvements to the Neighbourhood Matching Fund program (see Appendix C).
- Provide base level operational funding to all affiliated neighbourhood associations.
- Increase budget for in-kind supports for affiliated neighbourhood association initiatives (i.e. printing, meeting space, etc.).

Recommendation 14: Establish a micro-grant program that provides small amounts of financial and in-kind support for fledgling neighbourhood projects.

We heard that there are neighbours who want to put forward the time and energy to organize activities or events for their neighbourhood, but cost is a barrier. A small amount of cash or in-kind support from the City of Waterloo for expenses such as flyers, snacks, venue booking, and other supplies could go a long way to helping neighbours do great things in their neighbourhoods.

How could the City help?

- Establish a program to provide a small amount of cash or in-kind services from the City to support fledgling neighbourhood initiatives.
- Develop guidelines/policy to clarify the intent, eligibility, accountability, and other criteria of the grant. Make the application process simple.

- Focus support towards small groups of neighbours that want to have a new event or start a project in their neighbourhood in order to encourage more residents to get involved in community building in their neighbourhood, rather than towards more established neighbourhood groups.

Recommendation 15: Further shift focus from traditional bylaw enforcement towards enhanced bylaw education, prevention, and community collaboration.

We heard that neighbours care a lot about living in peaceful, safe, and beautiful neighbourhoods. When a resident's property is not well cared for (e.g., snow is not shoveled, or there is excess noise) neighbours can call the City's Municipal Enforcement Services Division to respond. However, traditional enforcement methods can contribute to tension among neighbours as they may wonder which neighbour reported the violation. Additionally, there are often circumstances where failure to comply with a City by-law is unintentional. Residents are moving from other cities, provinces, and countries, and may not be aware of the regulations unique to the nature of our city.

The Municipal Enforcement team has already piloted collaborative efforts with local neighbourhoods to identify potential issues and take proactive steps towards prevention. For example, the team worked with the Laurelwood neighbourhood to educate neighbours on the importance of clearing sidewalks in the winter. A similar approach could be taken to allow neighbourhood associations and neighbours to remind/inform others about by-laws in ways that contribute to a strong community and avoid the potential to cause tension in the neighbourhood.

How could the City help?

- Collaborate with neighbourhood groups to raise awareness around municipal standards and expectations within the neighbourhood.
- Educate residents on how they might resolve issues with neighbours themselves, and raise awareness of the mediation services currently available.
- Continue to participate in neighbourhood/community outreach efforts to share information about municipal by-laws.
- Consider a campaign to reach new residents to explain relevant municipal by-laws and community standards.

Recommendation 16: Reduce municipal "red tape" that presents barriers to neighbourhood projects.

The community has many great ideas for neighbourhood projects and events; we have heard, however, that City processes or policies occasionally prevent projects from

taking place or are circumvented. Reducing unnecessary “red tape” will allow residents and staff supporting neighbourhood groups to invest more time and energy into making great things happen in Waterloo neighbourhoods.

City processes, policies, and by-laws are established to protect citizens and minimize risk, and to be consistent and transparent. However, some processes, policies or by-laws do not always make sense from a neighbourhood context. As such, resolution of various “red tape” items listed below would happen in conjunction with the exploration of risk (recommendation 17), pending council approval of this strategy.

Some of the red tape items that could be explored first, as they relate to neighbourhood initiatives, include:

- Vendor permits and associated fees.
- Business licensing and associated fees.
- Noise by-law exemption application process.
- Process improvements for community events in parks.
- Access to garbage cans for events.

How could the City help?

- Communicate why specific permits and by-laws exist and how they impact neighbourhood activities. Standardize application and exemption processes where appropriate; make it simple and clear.
- Simplify forms to reduce duplication.
- Simplify process for common neighbourhood initiatives.
- Consider barriers created by fees.
- Educate the community about policy and processes to support better planning by neighbourhood groups.
- Improve communication streams to allow neighbourhoods better access to information regarding City projects in their neighbourhoods.
- Promote the City’s Neighbourhood Coordinator to residents and City Staff as the first point of contact for all neighbourhood inquiries and supports.

Recommendation 17: To better support neighbourhood-led initiatives, explore and articulate the City’s risk tolerance position, weighing risk against community benefit.

We heard that neighbourhood groups often have unique and fun ideas for neighbourhood activities and events. Sometimes, when ideas are brought forward to the City, the City will not allow it because of the perceived risks. The City recognizes that neighbourhoods want to participate in activities that may be seen as having a higher degree of risk than currently supported by the City. Understanding the benefits to the community in contrast to the possible risks, and better defining our collective risk tolerance, will provide staff with clearer direction on the level of acceptable risk for neighbourhood initiatives. The City will continue to be committed to protecting public safety, and to manage insurance and legal costs.

How could the City help?

- Explore rules and restrictions placed on neighbourhood activities and volunteers.
- Engage the Municipal Insurance Pool, Legal Services, Finance Division, Senior Management, and Council as part of the process.
- Increase community awareness of the importance of managing risk.
- Balance public safety with allowing neighbourhoods to organize the activities they want. Continue to work with neighbourhood groups to mitigate risks.
- Develop a policy framework that articulates the City's risk tolerance related to common neighbourhood initiatives.

Recommendation 18: Adopt a “Let’s Explore” philosophy among City of Waterloo staff and across departments.

We have heard that neighbours want to do great things in their neighbourhoods, sometimes involving activities on public land and/or requiring approval and support from the City. We have also heard that staff sometimes says “no” to the community when approached with unique/one-off ideas, without fully understanding the idea or exploring different opportunities to achieve the neighbourhood’s goals.

A City corporate-wide change in philosophy is needed that provides more flexibility to respond to residents. Staff would dialogue with the community to understand the underlying goals and/or concerns and explore the options together. While the response to the initial idea may be “no,” the community member will understand why the answer was reached and will have the opportunity to explore alternatives.

How could the City help?

- Encourage and empower staff to work with the community to explore options, including allocating time in staff work plans for unexpected neighbourhood project requests.

- Develop customer service standards for staff when responding to inquiries from the community and from other staff (i.e. response times, collecting information, etc.).
- A collaboration of staff from different divisions across all City departments examines feasibility of neighbourhood initiatives and figures out how to make it happen, with a central location to receive neighbourhood requests.

Other comments we heard related to neighbourhoods

The community shared many important ideas and comments related to neighbourhoods; while not all of these were in scope of the neighbourhood strategy, the information has been passed on to the appropriate staff teams. We heard a lot about neighbourhood parks in particular.

Neighbourhood-related input for the upcoming Parks Strategy

Neighbours in Waterloo turn to parks and green spaces as gathering spaces, as they are commonly the only public space in their area; additionally parks are seen as inclusive spaces where everyone is welcome. These spaces are used for a range of activities from tossing around a Frisbee, to having a family picnic, to larger neighbourhood events. When speaking with the community, it was clear that parks and other green spaces are very important to residents.

As the project to develop the Neighbourhood Strategy was nearing completion, the City was beginning development of a Parks Strategy focused on longer term, strategic planning for existing and new neighbourhood parks across the City. As this project will begin shortly, it was determined that any recommendations related to neighbourhood parks should be further explored within the Parks Strategy process.

Based on public consultation completed for the Neighbourhood Strategy, high-level items for consideration in the Parks Strategy include:

- Create more opportunity for the neighbourhood to be involved in shaping the look and feel of their parks.
- Adapt parks to respond to changing neighbourhood demographics (including amenities for youth).
- Increase capacity for neighbourhood parks to be used as gathering spaces for community events and activities (ex. identify more opportunities for booking space in parks, and add additional park amenities such as potable water, electric service, storage, picnic shelters, gazebos, etc.).
- Improve park maintenance.
- Assess park rental fees for community affordability.
- Develop additional off-leash areas.

Next Steps

Pending approval from Council of the draft neighbourhood strategy, the project staff team will initiate a final round of public engagement to assess if the community feels the right priorities and strategies have been identified and if the community believes they will have the desired impact. In collaboration with the Steering Committee, revisions will be made to the draft strategy based on public feedback. In March 2018, the project team will return to council with the final proposed strategy and financial impacts for each recommendation. The final strategy will include an implementation plan for the next 5+ years and budget impact estimates.

Appendix A

Definitions

Asset based community development

Community development that occurs by “building on the resources that are found in every community” (Diers, 2004, p. 14).

City (capitalized): refers to Corporation of the City of Waterloo.

city (lower case): refers to geography and/or all residents of the City of Waterloo.

Foundational operating funding

Funding determined through affiliation service agreements, to contribute towards ongoing operating expenses. Non-affiliated groups may apply for operating funding through the cash grants program.

Homes association

Neighbourhood group established by the land developer to maintain private, shared assets in the neighbourhood such as pools and tennis courts.

Neighbourhood

“A district where people live” (Collins English Dictionary). Please note: the draft Neighbourhood Strategy acknowledges that neighbourhood boundaries can be flexible and can be defined differently depending on each individual.

Neighbourliness

Neighbourliness, as defined by the project’s Resident Panel, is when neighbours are: kind, considerate, helpful, friendly, caring, respectful, and accepting.

Neighbourhood association

Neighbourhood group affiliated with the City under the affiliation policy. These groups tend to be formal in nature, with a board that operates under a governance framework.

Resident-Led Placemaking

Placemaking inspires residents to collectively reinvent public spaces as the heart of their community through events, activities, and community projects. Resident-led placemaking is when the neighbours collectively lead or help decide how their public spaces will look and be enjoyed.

Appendix B

Neighbourhood Strategy staff project team

Jim Bowman, Director of Community Programming and Outreach
Beth Rajnovich, Policy & Performance Analyst
Janet Norman, Jr. Policy and Research Analyst
Lori Ludwig, Manager Community and Neighbourhood Services
Julie Legg, Coordinator Neighbourhoods
Leta Campbell, Manager Business Services
Shelly Reed, Communications Specialist

Steering Committee members

External Stakeholders

- Laurelwood Neighbourhood Association: Tim Osland
- Eastbridge Neighbourhood Association: Cindy Watkin
- Beechwood Homes Association: John Loncar
- Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee (former): D'Arcy Farlow
- Kitchener-Waterloo Community Foundation: Shannon Weber (former representative)
- United Way Waterloo Region Communities: Kristen Feduck (current representative)/Jonathan Massimi (former representative)
- University of Waterloo: Kelly McManus
- Volunteer Action Centre: Jane Hennig
- Waterloo Public Library: Laura Dick
- Wilfrid Laurier University: Adrianna Crusoe/Shannon Weber (current representatives)/Sheldon Pereira (former representative)
- Waterloo Regional Police Service: Reid Pridham (current representative)/Andrew Abra (former representative)
- Waterloo Region District School Board: Shawn Callon
- Region of Waterloo: Katherine Pigott (current representative)/Sanjay Govindaraj (former representative)

Internal Staff

- Policy & Performance Analyst: Beth Rajnovich
- Jr. Policy and Research Analyst: Janet Norman
- Manager, Community and Neighbourhood Services: Lori Ludwig
- Director, Municipal Enforcement: Shayne Turner
- Coordinator, Neighbourhoods: Julie Legg
- Cultural Planning Specialist, Amy Ross

Appendix C

Neighbourhood Matching Fund Review

The Neighbourhood Matching Fund (NMF) grant program was developed by the former Safe and Healthy Community Advisory Committee (SAHCAC), with initial funding from the City of Waterloo. Subsequently, United Way Waterloo Region Communities became a funding partner. The NMF helps support groups of residents with projects that address a community need and build an inclusive community. The funding request must be matched through the group's equal contribution of cash, volunteer labor, donated materials, supplies and/or services such as qualified trades. Since the NMF program was established in 2012, it has supported over 50 resident-led neighbourhood projects including events, community gardens, and much more.

A review of the NMF program, conducted over the summer 2017, explored how we can build on the program's strengths and address challenges to make it even more beneficial to the community. The review was led by the Neighbourhood Strategy staff project team, in collaboration with the NMF committee members, United Way Waterloo Region Communities staff, and NMF program City staff. To understand the NMF program, application process, project implementation, and impact on the community, the team also sought input from NMF grant applicants and reviewed project applications and final reports. Similar grants offered in other municipalities were also explored.

Review findings

Over the years, the NMF program has shifted as the program has gained popularity in the community, and to respond to community need.

Year	Application rounds	Total funding	Funding cap per project
2012	Summer	\$10,000	\$2,000
2013	Spring, Fall	\$20,000	\$2,000
2014	Spring, Fall	\$20,000	\$3,000
2015	Spring, Fall	\$30,000*	\$3,000
2016	Spring, Fall	\$30,000*	\$3,000
2017	Spring, Fall	\$30,000*	\$3,000 (Spring), \$7,500 (Fall)**

*\$20,000 from the City of Waterloo and \$10,000 from United Way Waterloo Region Communities.

**Applications typically requested maximum amount, so the funding available per project was increased.

On average, there are over 50% new applicants each year. Applicants typically learn about the grant through word of mouth, NMF committee members, City staff, and email lists. Applicants are often established neighbourhood groups or organizations.

The matching component of the grant is integral to the program, showing the value of community contributions, including the time invested in planning and the initiative. Some residents found the NMF application form to be daunting and final report lengthy.

A citizen committee comprised of members of the former SAHCAC reviews the applications to determine which to fund. The former SAHCAC chose the committee

members, and there is no formal succession plan. A United Way Waterloo Region Communities representative also participates on the committee. A City of Waterloo staff support helps with the grant administration and meeting preparation and facilitation.

DRAFT NMF program recommendations

Draft recommendations for the future of the NMF program have been developed as a result of the review process:

1. Develop a NMF policy to clarify eligibility and to provide transparency and consistency. A few new program items to be included in the policy are:
 - To encourage new groups to apply: prioritize new applicants and those that have not applied in the last two rounds.
 - To encourage new projects: fund expansion to existing events only if all new projects that meet program requirements are funded.
 - Allow refreshment expenses to be eligible.
 - After a project is approved, any changes to the project plan require permission from the City.
2. Enhance program promotion – create a budget for NMF promotion; promote year-round; include both application deadlines in the promotion; focus promotion on encouraging grassroots projects; and encourage past participants to tell others about the program.
3. Improve application process – simplify application form; and move up the spring deadline so that funding is released in time for May and June projects.
4. Simplify project report to make reporting on completed projects easier.
5. Establish a staff feasibility review process – have a staff team representing relevant departments to review applications and examine feasibility, figuring out if/how we can make it happen. The team should identify permits/approvals required before the grant is review by the citizen committee.
6. While operating as two separate grant programs with different policies and goals, establish a single committee with a new Terms of Reference to support decision making for the Community Cash Grants program and the Neighbourhood Matching Fund.
7. Encourage applicants to invite ward councillor to the project or event.
8. Celebrate successes by sharing NMF stories on social media.
9. As application numbers increase for the NMF as a result of these changes, explore opportunities to increase the program budget.