



Hamilton



Hamilton

NEIGHBOURHOOD
ACTION PLANNING
TOOLKIT



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Let's Get Started



Introduction

Hamilton has a long history of people and organizations working together to make positive changes through the process of community development. The City of Hamilton's Planning Department has been involved in developing neighbourhood plans since the 1970s. The Hamilton Community Foundation has been supporting neighbourhood development in the Hamilton community since 2002. This work has led to the creation of eight neighbourhood hubs where residents work together with community partners to strengthen their neighbourhoods.¹ In 2011, under the leadership of the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton Community Foundation, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy was formed when many organizations came together to build on this history of working collectively to make change. The strategy engages residents to improve conditions for everyone in the neighbourhoods where we live, work, learn, and play.

Based on research, newspaper series, and our own experiences, we know that the conditions of our everyday lives affect 50% or more of our health status. That is why health care is only one factor in determining a person's health. Things like income, housing, discrimination, and where we live all shape how healthy we are.^{2, 3} We also know that these things are connected, one to another.^{4, 5} For example, when people have limited income, they have fewer choices about where to live. This may mean they have to live closer to a highway or in an area with fewer parks than they would like. We know that there are huge differences in people's health because of these conditions. Most importantly, we know that we can do better.

People in all of our neighbourhoods deserve to be healthy and deserve to live in vibrant places. One important way to make this happen is to engage people within neighbourhoods to identify, plan, and lead the changes that they want to see.^{6, 7} We believe that all neighbourhoods have both strengths and problems, and that residents can build on the strengths to address the problems.

Throughout all planning processes, it is important to work together with people with different experiences. Sometimes this means working through ideas we have about people who are different from us in some way. Only by doing this can we get to a place where we can make our neighbourhoods better places for everyone to live.

The City's Neighbourhood Development Office was established to work with residents and local leaders to make neighbourhoods better and healthier places for all residents. Through funding from the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Best Start Network, and with the help of many partners, community development workers support neighbourhoods in making plans – and taking action – based on residents' lived experiences. The City of Hamilton is committed to building strong, healthy communities by focusing on integrating and coordinating City services within targeted neighbourhoods. Through this process it may become clear that some issues are common across neighbourhoods, and the need for policy change may arise.

“A resident-led planning team is fundamental to a grass-roots movement where residents' voices are heard and where they can put their plans into concrete actions. A Community Development Worker who is committed to helping neighbours find their voice, cultivate their dreams, and assist them in putting their words into deeds is important. When the neighbours find their voice and develop skills to articulate ideas into action, they give life to a community.”

- Pat Reid, Chair,
McQuesten Local Planning Team

Our purpose in preparing this toolkit is to show how we bring community development and secondary planning (*which is how neighbourhoods and the City decide on how land will be used in the future*) together into one process. This combination of people and place-based planning creates action plans to make Hamilton's neighbourhoods healthy, vibrant places for everyone. Our experience is that energy around actions in a neighbourhood can create its own momentum; sometimes it's because of a certain event, or a certain number of people being involved. It's not just about the math of how many people are involved – it's about the chemistry that happens when people who really care about their neighbourhoods and their neighbours get together to make change.

One of the key ways that neighbourhood planning can improve residents' health is by making healthy choices the easier choices. If a neighbourhood has few parks, no bike lanes, narrow sidewalks, few pedestrian-friendly destinations, and no recreation programs, it should not be surprising that people drive their cars more often than they walk or cycle. While neighbourhood planning doesn't control individual choices, it can help to shape the environment so that there are fewer roadblocks to people choosing healthy behaviours more often.

Bringing a health focus to neighbourhood planning helps clarify the connections between issues and can help get more residents behind the action plan as it develops. For example, calming traffic and adding bike lanes in a neighbourhood can reduce noise pollution and improve air quality, and adding community gardens can build relationships between neighbours, which helps reduce isolation and promotes community engagement, as well as providing access to healthy food choices.



Asset-based Neighbourhood Planning

We know that Hamilton is a great city made up of many neighbourhoods, each with their own unique assets as well as barriers to being healthy, vibrant communities. In order to strengthen our city even more, our neighbourhoods' assets need to be built upon to overcome some barriers. Transforming good neighbourhoods into great ones begins with a plan, and a great action plan is developed by residents. Our planning process uses an asset-based community development approach, which means seeing the glass as half-full rather than half-empty: asset-based community development builds on the skills, strengths, and supports of residents, groups, and institutions to build stronger communities.⁸ This approach, blended with a land use planning process, results in unique neighbourhood action plans that celebrate the strengths while working to address the weaknesses of Hamilton neighbourhoods.

Asset-based community development “starts with what is present in the community, the capacities of its residents and workers, the associational and institutional base of the area – not with what is absent, or with what is problematic, or with what the community needs.”⁹

In Hamilton, the community development workers and the City of Hamilton facilitate and support resident-led planning teams as they create the plans and put them into action. The development of the neighbourhood action plans depends upon the relationships between residents, the community development worker (CDW), City staff, and other neighbourhood stakeholders. The community development worker plays an essential role in building relationships with residents on the planning team and the wider neighbourhood. In the words from one community development project,

The process of creating a plan is part science and part art. The science involves making sure all the necessary elements are gathered together and properly assembled. The art of planning is a bit trickier. It involves making sure that every voice around the table is heard, that disagreements are handled with respect, and that the community comes together around a set of common goals. Success in this area isn't just the responsibility of the [CDW or] lead agency. Every participant should contribute.¹⁰

Each completed neighbourhood action plan will lay out a clear vision for the future of the neighbourhood and describe specific projects that are achievable and have widespread community support.

The action plan is just that, action-oriented; the plan details meaningful and measurable action items that can reasonably be implemented within the five year timeframe of the plan. The action plan also identifies who is responsible for each action item. Action items may be funded through the Hamilton Community Foundation or the City's Neighbourhood Development Office. Other foundations and funding bodies may also have programs to support the actions.

Principles to Guide the Process

- **Asset-based:** An asset-based community development approach is used to build on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, and the supportive functions of local institutions. It draws upon existing diverse community strengths to build stronger, more sustainable communities for the future.¹¹
- **Inclusive:** The planning team is committed to working with Hamiltonians from all walks of life. The planning process ensures that everyone participating feels a sense of belonging and feels respected and valued for their knowledge of their neighbourhood. The planning team is supported by a community development worker and City of Hamilton staff. The CDW communicates often with the larger neighbourhood and seeks feedback on the neighbourhood action plan as it emerges. (*See Section 2: The Planning Process*)
- **Resident-led:** The majority of participants on the planning team and the chair of the planning team are residents or long-time champions of the neighbourhood. The planning team members strive to reflect the diversity in the neighbourhood.
- **Action oriented:** The process generates ideas of what should be done to build on strengths and address barriers, and then produces meaningful and measurable actions that can be undertaken to improve neighbourhoods.
- **Do-able:** The actions in the neighbourhood action plan are realistic and can be implemented.
- **Resource availability:** Funds, people, organizations, and space are available to support the implementation of the actions.



The Planning Process

“Sometimes, all the well meaning intentions and hard effort in the community just won’t create the full success needed; the Community Development Worker and the City Planner help to establish the strong planning foundation needed to achieve success.”

*Steve Rowe, vice-Chair,
Keith Action Planning Team*

Overview

The purpose of the neighbourhood action planning process is to develop a comprehensive and representative Neighbourhood Action Plan that engages residents to build on the assets and address the health inequities in each Hamilton neighbourhood. This planning process is designed to be flexible because each neighbourhood is unique, and in some neighbourhoods residents may already be engaged and doing great things within their communities. Neighbourhoods that have already been working with a community development worker may not need to spend as much time developing a planning team or creating new venues for outreach. They may already have established committees, engaged with the community, gathered information, and developed asset maps and visions.

In Hamilton, eight of the 11 neighbourhoods participating in the neighbourhood action planning process already existed as Hamilton Community Foundation “Hubs,” with resident-led planning teams in place. In some of these neighbourhoods, the established team became the neighbourhood action planning team while other Hubs or neighbourhood associations struck sub-committees with expanded membership to engage in the planning process. Some of these existing groups were able to complete the neighbourhood action planning process faster than other neighbourhoods because they did not have to complete all of the steps in the planning process. Neighbourhoods without existing strong resident groups should start at the second stage of the planning process with a community engagement event (*see Figure 1 on page 8*) and take time to develop and nurture new relationships. The foundation of a successful neighbourhood action planning process is trust, which is built over time. This is achieved through a commitment to the process and to the neighbourhood.

Throughout the neighbourhood action planning process and the implementation of the Neighbourhood Action Plan, continuous engagement of residents is required to review, revise, monitor, and adjust the Neighbourhood Action Plan as it moves forward. Throughout each stage of the planning process, it is important to:

- Reach out to all members of your community
- Include everyone by making meetings and events accessible and inclusive
- Communicate clearly with the broader community, using a variety of methods, to reach diverse community members
- Recruit new members for sub-committees and/or the planning team to make the teams representative of the neighbourhood

Figure 1: Neighbourhood Action Planning Process¹²



Each step in the neighbourhood action planning process is described on the following pages. A template for a Neighbourhood Action Plan can be found in Section 3: The Toolkit, Tool A - Neighbourhood Action Plan Template.

Engage Existing Groups

Before the neighbourhood action planning process begins, residents and groups in the neighbourhood need to be ready to engage in this process. Strong resident-led groups with an active history of community engagement may have the networks and credibility within a neighbourhood to lead the planning process successfully. The City planner and community development worker should talk to these groups to discuss their willingness to participate in the neighbourhood action planning process. There may be many active organizations within a neighbourhood that contribute to a vibrantly engaged community. Neighbourhood organizations might include

- Neighbourhood associations
- Parent school councils
- Tenant associations
- Faith-based groups
- Business Improvement Areas
- Sports, culture, or environmental associations

These local groups will have community leaders to help champion and participate in the planning process. The greater the variety of experiences among community leaders, the more closely the Neighbourhood Action Plan will reflect the strengths of each neighbourhood. Ask to be included in the agenda of an existing group's upcoming meeting. At the meeting

- Present the main points of the project
- Talk about the relationship between the existing group and the new planning team
- Ask how the group could contribute to the planning process
- Invite the group to help organize a large community event (see Step 2) to let the neighbourhood know about the planning process and recruit new people to form the new planning team



Connect with existing groups
in a neighbourhood

In neighbourhoods where a strong planning committee or neighbourhood association already exists, it's recommended that the new planning team not be a stand-alone group without any ties to this existing association. There needs to be a clear and agreed upon relationship between the new planning team and the existing association. The planning team may become a sub-committee of the established association, or the established association itself may become the planning team. This relationship must be a clear and collaborative one so that the neighbourhood takes ownership of the creation and implementation of a successful Neighbourhood Action Plan.



His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada visits the McQuesten Local Planning Team, April 2012. The McQuesten Local Planning Team celebrated its 10 year anniversary in 2012.

Engage Residents Through Asset Mapping

The next step is to work with interested members to organize a large community engagement event to run an asset mapping exercise and recruit for the planning team. A community event is an excellent opportunity to talk about the neighbourhood action planning process and invite new people to join the planning team. At the event, the community development worker and City planner can give a brief explanation of the planning process to help people understand their role on the planning team.

The purpose of running an asset mapping exercise is to gather relevant information about the neighbourhood from the perspective of the people who live and work there.

It may be useful to group neighbourhood assets into categories such as

1. Physical Places and Spaces
2. Educational/Health Services
3. Economic/Employment assets
4. Safety assets
5. Cultural, Faith and Community Associations
6. Individual assets

See Section 3: The Toolkit, Tool B - Asset Mapping.



Stinson Neighbourhood

Individual Assets not shown on map

- Brian - Passion, Commitment, Knowledge, Cares
- Samantha - Organizer, Spearheader
- Adam - Music in the Park
- Natasha - Researcher
- 4 Real Estate Agents live in the neighbourhood - Promote Stinson
- Harry Stinson - Lofts, Revitalizing
- East Ave Residents - Have a lot of information "King of Stinson"
- Katherine's Daycare
- Career College - Tessie
- Hidden Treasures
- Dr. Chithalen (Dentist)
- Bookmobile



Institutions & Associations not shown on map

- Employment Hamilton
- Central City Soccer
- Citykidz (big part of Stinson)
- Programs at Central Memorial Recreation Centre
- Soupies in the Park
- Public Health Nurses
- Residential Care Facilities
- After-school at Central Memorial Recreation Centre



LEGEND

- Neighbourhood Boundary
- 🚲 Bike Lanes on Stinson St.
- 🌳 Large Trees
- 🚆 Rail Trail
- 🍷 Berries Along Rail Trail
- 👁️ Views and Vistas to the Escarpment
- 🌿 Escarpment
- ➡️ Great Access Across the City (Charlton Ave E.)
- 🚏 HSR Bus Route 5 - Delaware
- ★ Cutest Street in Stinson (Blythe St.)
- ★ Beautiful Streets
- 🏠 Beautiful Victorians
- 🌳 Parks and Open Space
- 🚶 Alleyways
- 🎵 Sounds of Train
- 🚆 Railway
- 🏠 Designated Heritage Properties
- 🏠 Listed Heritage Properties

Other great features of Stinson not shown on map

- ❄️ Unique Micro-Climate (Little Snow!)
- 🏠 Stained Glass Windows Throughout Stinson

Economic Assets

- 1 Convenience Store/Love Shop
- 2 Canadian Tire
- 3 Lawyer
- 4 Central Health Institute & School
- 5 Hearing Institute
- 6 Convenience Store
- 7 Stermann's Interiors
- 8 Lawyer
- 9 Jerelday Lodge
- 10 Doctor's Office
- 11 Nail Salon
- 12 Tae Kwon Do
- 13 Furniture Store
- 14 Medical Clinic/French Health Clinic
- 15 Clothing Store
- 16 Electrical/Lighting Store
- 17 Medical Office
- 18 Rosart Dental
- 19 Effort Trust Building
- 20 Employment Centre
- 21 Variety Store
- 22 Stinson Towers
- 23 Undermount Variety Store
- 24 Bakery Supply Store
- 25 Ontario Patient Transfer and Taxi/Limo Service

Physical/Institutional Assets

- 1 Carisma Pentecostal Church
- 2 Versa Care Centre (Nursing Home)
- 3 The Old Cathedral School/ St. Charles Adult Education
- 4 Residential Care Facility (Beautiful Victorian Building)
- 5 Bishop Park
- 6 Green Space
- 7 Central Memorial Recreation Centre
- 8 Carter Park
- 9 Hospice Building
- 10 Dr. Chithalen
- 11 English Garden
- 12 Rose Garden and Christmas Decorations
- 13 Alanson Street Lofts
- 14 Stinson School
- 15 Wentworth Stairs



It's important to be clear about what an asset is: an asset is anything that makes a neighbourhood a healthy, vibrant place to live.

Assets can be physical things like buildings, but also things that aren't physical, like relationships or skills. Use large colorful maps of the neighbourhood and sticky dots to engage people in the asset mapping exercise. Have the interested members explain and help residents participate in mapping the neighborhood assets. These volunteers can also ask people to complete a survey about the strengths and issues in the neighbourhood to complement the asset map. Neighbourhood maps can be obtained from your municipal planning department.

If possible, piggyback the asset mapping exercise onto another large community event like a BBQ or park clean-up. If there are no large events coming up in the neighbourhood, work with community leaders to organize an asset mapping event. Provide a fun venue, healthy food and refreshments, interesting icebreakers, and the asset mapping exercise to engage people and keep them coming back to future meetings and events.

A successfully completed asset-mapping exercise should leave the group feeling energized and validated for the first neighbourhood action planning meeting. Make sure to collect the names and contact information from people who express an interest in becoming members of the planning team and let them know when and where the first planning meeting will be held.

Establish the Planning Team

The next step is to establish the neighbourhood action planning team from existing group(s), new recruits, service providers, and business owners. Make the planning team and its meetings accessible and inclusive so that people with different experiences are able to contribute. As much as possible, make sure it is representative of the neighbourhood and inclusive for all. People to be recruited could include

- Residents
- City staff
- Educators
- Block club presidents
- Service providers
- Business owners
- People recruited for their knowledge of the community or a history of involvement

The neighbourhood action planning team should include people who can effectively reach out to the community, talk about the work being done, gather feedback, and help to develop and implement the Neighbourhood Action Plan. The experience of using this planning process in Hamilton has shown that strong resident involvement is crucial: **residents should make up at least half of the planning team.** It's important to make meetings and community events easier to attend for a wider range of community members by providing

- Convenient meeting times and locations
- Bus tickets
- Child care
- Refreshments
- Interpretation/translation

It is also important to remember that if the group is too large the process will become hard to manage and ineffective. An effective team is probably around 15 – 20 people.

See Section 3: The Toolkit, Tool C - Meeting Checklist.

Make the first planning team meeting fun! While it is essential to establish ground rules for the planning team, these administrative discussions can be dry and uninteresting. In the first meeting, run an ice-breaker so people can get to know one another, move around, and have fun before diving right into the work ahead. Then review the asset map that the community development worker or City planner will have put together from the information gathered at the community event. Have the planning team discuss the results and add any additional assets that were missed.

Lastly, create a Terms of Reference that outlines team leadership, practical details, including when the group will meet and where, and most importantly, how the group will make decisions. Decision-making should be agreed upon before planning begins. There are many different ways to make decisions, including consensus, voting, or a combination of the two.

See Section 3: The Toolkit, Tool D - Terms of Reference and Tool E - Decision Making model.

Create a Communication Plan

The neighbourhood action planning team needs to discuss and agree on a communication plan so that all residents can be kept informed of the planning progress and status of the work. The communication plan also needs to consider when and how resident feedback is gathered.



Keith Action Planning Team Kick-Off Meeting at local restaurant October, 2011.



There are many ways to communicate and get the word out!

- Face-to-face time is still the best - get out and meet the neighbours, business owners, and other people in the neighbourhood. The community development worker and resident leaders need to talk to people about the planning process and ways they can participate
- Use flyers, brochures and postcards for neighbourhood mailbox drops
- Put up bulletins or posters in places of worship, schools, community agencies, businesses, etc.
- Set up e-mail chat groups, facebook groups, e-mail distribution lists
- Contact local cable company for community service announcements
- Write an article for your community newspaper, or local news broadcaster

It is important to communicate often, in as many ways as possible, to all neighbours. The more people that know about the neighbourhood action planning process, the more likely people will get involved to make good things can happen in the neighbourhood.

See Section 3: The Toolkit, Tool F - Writing for the Media.

Neighbourhood Profile and Vision

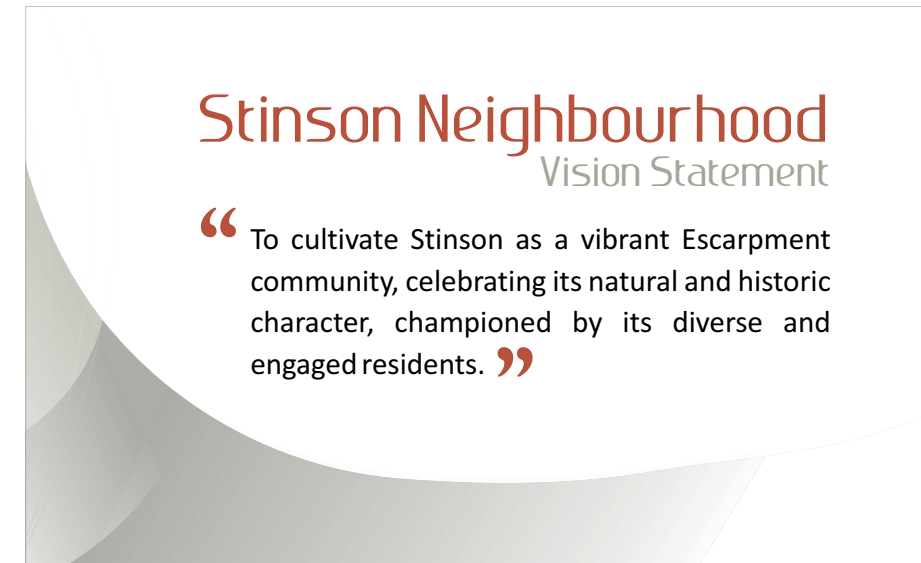
Any effective plan involves developing goals and objectives. This means starting with collecting as much information about the neighbourhood as possible. The members of the planning team will not know everything there is to know about their neighbours and their neighbourhood. To be able to understand all the issues they face as a community, a neighbourhood profile of population, health, and social statistical information is important to broaden understandings of their neighbourhood.

Information about the people who live in the neighbourhood, housing, income levels, and land uses should be presented and considered as the goals and objectives of the Neighbourhood Action Plan are developed. In Hamilton, the Social Planning and Research Council developed a statistical neighbourhood profile for each neighbourhood in the Neighbourhood Action Strategy (<http://www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca/reports>). When combined with the information gathered through asset mapping, the neighbourhood profile can serve as an important reference throughout the process because it can help highlight the conditions and experiences of large numbers of neighbours. Including interesting stories about the neighbourhood from the asset mapping exercise will put a human face on the statistics.

See Section 3: The Toolkit, Tool H - Creating a Neighbourhood Profile and Tool I - Data Collection.

As the asset map is summarized and the neighbourhood statistical information is presented and discussed, a vision of the neighbourhood's future will begin to develop. At this time, a visioning exercise will help to put words and phrases to these emerging ideas. The neighbourhood vision is important because it sets down on paper what the neighbourhood action planning team wants their neighbourhood to look like in the future. It serves as the foundation for all the goals, objectives, and actions that come after it. It should inspire and motivate the broader neighbourhood to get involved to achieve the vision. As with all the components of the Action Plan, the vision should be presented to and endorsed by the broader neighbourhood.

See Section 3: The Toolkit, Tool G - Running a Dotmocracy Process.



Vision Statement developed by Stinson Neighbourhood Action Planning Team, endorsed April, 2012 at a community event

Develop the Workplan: Creating Goals, Objectives, and Quick Wins

Once the vision has been drafted and approved, the neighbourhood action planning team can begin brainstorming as many ideas as they can think of to help them realize the vision. Put all the ideas on the table, including ones from the asset mapping and visioning exercises and any other information gathered through community engagement activities, surveys or research on the neighbourhood. The planning team, with facilitation from the community development worker and the City planner, can group the ideas into broad categories, such as "safety," "beautification," or "education." Using these broad categories, goals can be developed and prioritized, and then objectives and actions can follow. These goals, objectives, and actions form the initial stages of a workplan that will become the final section in the Neighbourhood Action Plan.

See Section 3: The Toolkit, Tool J - How to Develop Vision Statements, Objectives, and Quick Wins and Tool G - Dotmocracy Process.

City staff involved in the planning process should keep their departments and programs informed as the goals and objectives take shape. This gives City departments some lead time to explore how the objectives and actions may fit within their own workplans or strategic goals. As may be required, other City staff should be invited to the planning table to support the planning process with their areas of expertise.

As the goals and objectives begin to take shape from the ideas that have been generated, a few easy action items, or “quick wins,” may emerge. These actions should be small scale projects that can be completed within a few months by the planning team members and the community development worker. Choose a “quick win” that fits with a priority goal and have planning team members work with the community development worker to bring this quick win to fruition. Some ideas for quick wins include park or neighbourhood clean-ups, community BBQ’s, community gardens, and cultural or seasonal festivities.

This “doing while planning” is important “because it creates momentum and provides visible evidence of change within the neighbourhood.”¹³ These quick win actions allow residents to work on concrete, short-term tasks that show positive change in the community, while still engaging in the planning process. To make sure the quick win stays on track, updates at each planning team meeting should occur - ask “**What is still needed to accomplish the quick win project?**”

Well-established neighbourhoods may not need a quick win component of the Neighbourhood Action Plan for two reasons; they may take less time to develop a plan, and they may have already tackled quick win projects within their neighbourhood prior to the action planning process occurring.



Keith neighbourhood volunteers work to clean up an alley way during the Keith Action Planning Team “Quick Win.”

Communicate the Neighbourhood Action Plan

Once the Neighbourhood Action Plan is drafted, engage the neighbourhood again to review, provide feedback, and to endorse the vision, goals, objectives, and quick win(s). Use these opportunities to gather information and test the ideas being discussed. This ensures that the group does not waste time on something that will not work or is not a priority. Time spent on outreach will pay off when the Neighbourhood Action Plan is finished because community members will feel they were part of the process. Engagement could take a variety of forms and should be tailored to the unique groups of people within a neighbourhood. Have the residents rank the goals and objectives most important to them to help guide the neighbourhood action planning team as they begin to fine-tune the workplan.

It is quite possible that the residents rank the objectives and actions differently than the neighbourhood action planning team. If this is the case, the [planning] team will need to carefully consider why they have prioritized the goals, objectives, and actions in the order that they have, will need to review the neighbourhood profile information, and ultimately wrestle with deciding on the final order of goals, objectives, and actions within the workplan.

At a minimum, the neighbourhood action planning process should engage the neighbourhood at the following points: once the vision is drafted; when the goals/objectives are identified and when the workplan is complete. Face-to-face conversations, attending other committee meetings in the community (e.g., Parent Council in schools, other organizations or associations), town hall-style meetings, and regular written updates via a newsletter or e-blast are tried and true methods for communicating and gathering information. Whatever methods are used, touching base regularly with the neighbourhood is essential to the development and success of the Neighbourhood Action Plan.



Stinson Neighbourhood Action Planning Team members discuss their Park Make-over plan with residents at their Community Engagement BBQ. July, 2012.

Refine the Workplan

The City planner and community development worker can help the neighbourhood action planning team fine-tune its objectives and develop and prioritize specific actions for the workplan based on the feedback from the community. When refining the objectives and actions, remember to

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

Implementing a Neighbourhood Action Plan requires an understanding of what organizations are available within the community to be involved in specific actions, identify which organizations take the lead on specific actions, what is an achievable time frame, and where resources can be accessed. Responsibility for each action is assigned to at least one neighbourhood action planning team member who then needs to contact agencies or individuals that were not directly involved in the planning but have been identified as potential partners in moving the action item forward. The community development worker can support the planning team member in these discussions. Once each objective and resulting action items are agreed upon, roles and responsibilities can be assigned.

Finalize the Neighbourhood Action Plan

At this point, all the information that has been generated during the process can be documented using the Neighbourhood Action Plan template, including the Asset Map, Neighbourhood Profile, Terms of Reference for the neighbourhood action planning team, Vision, Goals, Objectives and Workplan. The Neighbourhood Action Plan should then be approved by the planning team and endorsed by the neighbourhood. Finally, an approved Neighbourhood Action Plan will be produced.

The neighbourhood action planning team needs to put in place a five-year process to monitor and adjust the workplan regularly. This should include a clearly documented transition of responsibility from the neighbourhood action planning team back to the existing neighbourhood group. Including the Neighbourhood Action Plan as a standing item on the existing group's agenda will ensure that the plan remains a priority.

Monitoring the progress of each action to ensure that barriers are addressed and that successes are documented will keep the workplan on track. As well, when calls for funding proposals come up unexpectedly, the team has an updated version of the plan ready for submission to bring new resources into the neighbourhood.

The Neighbourhood Action Plan is a living document. It will evolve and change over its five-year lifespan as positive change happens and new challenges emerge. Having a process in place to review and revise the plan annually will ensure it remains relevant and transformational.

Make sure the neighbourhood action planning team organizes a celebration to acknowledge the hard work that has gone into developing the Neighbourhood Action Plan. This celebration can also be a time to communicate and engage with more residents and bring a larger number of people into the implementation of specific actions identified within the Neighbourhood Action Plan.

Evaluation

McMaster University has partnered with the Neighbourhood Action Strategy researchers to create the Hamilton Neighbourhoods Study in identified Hamilton neighbourhoods. The study consists of face-to-face survey interviews with residents on quality of life and other neighbourhood indicators. Over time, it is hoped that positive change will be seen in neighbourhoods as the community begins to realize the actions in the Neighbourhood Action Plans. The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton and University of Toronto have partnered with the Neighbourhood Action strategy to monitor and track the action plans throughout implementation.

See Section 3: The Toolkit, Tool M - Activity Tracker.



Keith Neighbourhood Planning Team celebrates the completion of the Neighbourhood Action Plan with cake! July, 2012.



The Toolkit

Tool A - Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) Template

This template outlines all of the sections that should be included in the final Neighbourhood Action Plan.

[Insert Name of Neighbourhood] Neighbourhood Action Plan

The Planning Team and Support to Planning Process

Provide a short description of the members of the planning team, including residents, service providers, business owners, and others. Take note of who facilitated and supported the planning process.

For example:

We, the South Sherman Community Planning Team, developed this plan in 2011-2012. We were supported in the planning and implementation process by our Community Development Worker and the hard work and dedication of several members of our team (South Sherman Neighbourhood Action Plan, 2012).

How the Neighbourhood was Engaged

Describe how the planning team reached out and engaged residents, business owners, and key stakeholders in their neighbourhood. Include as many numbers as you can. Describe how the planning team engaged diverse residents in the neighbourhood.

Story of the Neighbourhood

Write about the neighbourhood, its history, interesting characteristics about the neighbourhood or events that have occurred, and a history of the neighbourhood association or planning team. Include statistics (e.g., SPRC Neighbourhood Profiles) and stories from the people who live there.

The Neighbourhood Action Plan Process

Provide a clear and detailed description of the process that the group undertook. Include why the group engaged in the planning process, how the plan was developed (the process), who participated on the planning team, who was consulted and when, and lastly, when the planning took place.

Terms of Reference

Before the planning process begins, discussing and agreeing upon the structure and processes of the planning team are essential.

Vision Statement

Develop a Vision statement to capture the neighbours' dream of what their neighbourhood will be in the future.

For example:

“ Together we unite as a community, where everyone is respected and supported to live a healthy and fulfilled life. ”

- Riverdale Neighbourhood Plan, 2012

Asset Map

Create an asset map of the neighbourhood that includes physical, institutional, social, and individual assets of the neighbourhood. This lays the foundation for asset-based community development and change.

Goals and Objectives

Based on the vision of the neighbourhood, develop major theme areas (goals) that residents want to address. Once goals are set, brainstorm the specific objectives and actions that will make that goal a reality.

Evidence

Use available research and literature to support the goals and objectives, and look to best practices to guide the development of specific actions.

Workplan

The last step in the development of the Neighbourhood Action Plan is to clearly identify each action, who is responsible, how long the action will take to accomplish, and when the action will begin.

Implementation of the Neighbourhood Action Plan

Describe the process put in place to track and monitor each action in the plan for the length of the plan. This might include amending the planning team's Terms of Reference to have the Neighbourhood Action Plan become a regular agenda item at meetings and assigning one person to keep track of all the actions for reporting purposes.

Evaluation/Monitoring of the Neighbourhood Action Plan

Develop a monitoring template to track each action's progress from the beginning through to completion.

Acknowledgements

Make sure to acknowledge all the people and organizations who contributed to the creation and implementation of the plans and the actions.

Tool B - Asset Mapping

A community asset mapping event is a fun way to engage residents and to document the many assets that are important to the health and well-being of the neighbourhood. It also lays a positive foundation for the beginning of the neighbourhood action planning process and the creation of the Neighbourhood Action Plan. Use this event to explain the neighbourhood action planning process to all the residents who attend and encourage them to participate in the process.

The asset mapping activity gathers information by asking simple questions such as,

“What do I like about my neighbourhood?” and “What are the assets in the neighbourhood?”

The results are displayed by using colourful dots on large maps.

Each resident will use different coloured dots that correspond to a specific type of asset (i.e. physical asset or individual asset) and place them on a map to identify the location of the particular asset within the neighbourhood. Use the chart on page 29 as a guide for explaining the types of assets that might exist in the neighbourhood.



Helpful Hint:

Number each dot, and on a separate ledger posted beside the map have the resident clearly write what asset the numbered dot represents. You can also include a separate sheet for non-physical assets that residents identify, for example, “we appreciate the teenagers in the neighbourhood who shovel our driveway in the winter.”

- On a large planning map ask, “What is your favourite place in your neighbourhood?” Put a dot on this place on the map. Then ask, “What is your least favourite place in your neighbourhood?” Put a dot on this place on the map.
- Ask, “Why?”
- Ask residents, “What stories can you tell about your neighbourhood?”

Lastly, on a comment sheet or survey, ask residents,
“What is the one thing I would change about my neighbourhood?”
 This will give residents the opportunity to outline some of the issues that are creating barriers to healthy neighbourhoods while providing the planning team with a list of preliminary actions to consider.

A successfully completed asset-mapping exercise should leave the group feeling energized and validated for the next meeting. It will bring new people into the neighbourhood action planning process and provide information from which the planning team can begin to formulate the Neighbourhood Action Plan.



Helpful Hint:

As with all community meetings, make sure you provide culturally appropriate, healthy refreshments, childcare, and transportation for the community asset mapping event.

Community Asset Chart

By Carla Klassen, Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton

The chart below offers a framework for the types of assets that should be part of an asset-mapping inventory. It is expected that many assets will cross categories as many assets serve two or more functions within a neighbourhood. The advantage of using a framework such as the one below is that it engages residents to focus on and identify what the benefits of each asset are for the neighbourhood.

<p>Physical Places and Spaces Assets that help residents stay healthy and diversify neighbourhoods</p> <p>Grocery stores, Farmers’ markets, Community gardens, Trails and bike lanes, Transit (bus stops, transit lines), Parks and green spaces, Recreation centres, Sports teams, Hospitals/clinics, Mental health facilities, Eldercare facilities</p>
<p>Educational/Health Services Assets that help residents engage in life-long learning and access health care</p> <p>Libraries/bookmobiles, Parenting and family literacy centres, Early years centres, Schools, Colleges and universities, Hospitals/clinics, Mental health facilities, Eldercare facilities, Community organizations</p>
<p>Economic/Employment Assets that help residents be part of the labour force</p> <p>Employment training centres and job search clubs, Small and large businesses, Home-based enterprises, Non-profit organizations, Social enterprises</p>
<p>Safety Assets that help residents feel safe and increase neighbourhood safety</p> <p>Police department/patrols (CPPTED – Crime Prevention through Environmental Design), Fire department, Neighbourhood watch groups, Street calming features, Lighting</p>
<p>Culture, Faith and Community Assets that help residents connect to each other, to history, to culture, to sport and to community action</p> <p>Places of worship, Historical sites/buildings, Architecturally significant buildings, Museums, Sports teams, Arts groups, Public Art, Resident and tenant associations, Citizens groups/clubs, Community centres, Community organizations</p>
<p>Individual Assets that residents bring to their immediate or larger community</p> <p>Skills, Talents, Experiences, Leadership, Networks</p>

Adapted in part from Connecting to Success, Neighbourhood Networks Asset Mapping Guide. US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

<http://www.hud.gov/offices/hsg/mfh/nnw/julyconfcall/nnassetmapping.pdf>

Tool C - Meeting Checklist

Item	Who	By When	Completed
1. Organizing invitations			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation List (consider diversity of neighbourhood) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation Message and Package <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agenda ▪ Date of meeting ▪ Time of meeting ▪ Previous minutes ▪ Map to location ▪ How and when to RSVP 			
2. Where, when and how long to hold meeting			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Check out venue in person Consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Size and space ▪ Enough tables and chairs ▪ Electrical outlets ▪ Parking ▪ Accessibility ▪ Location in neighbourhood ▪ Space for childcare ▪ Access to washrooms 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When Consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When people work ▪ School hours ▪ Time of year (seasonal activities, weather, holidays) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long is needed Consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Time to achieve purpose ▪ Time that is good for residents ▪ Distance people have to travel ▪ Meal breaks 			

Item	Who	By When	Completed
3. Equipment, meeting materials, refreshments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whiteboard or flipchart stands ▪ Chairs and tables ▪ Laptop, projector ▪ Power cords • Meeting Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agenda and minutes ▪ Sticky notes ▪ Flipchart sheets ▪ Whiteboard markers and eraser ▪ Markers and pens ▪ Masking tape, scissors ▪ Instructions for any activities ▪ Name tags or desk name plates ▪ Sign-in sheets with contact information ▪ Direction sign on building guiding people to meeting • Refreshments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Healthy and culturally appropriate ▪ Caterer or restaurant booked ▪ Beverages ▪ Food appropriate to meeting time and length ▪ Special dietary needs, culturally responsive ▪ Plates, cutlery, serviettes, cups, table cloth 			
4. Agenda and meeting process			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of meeting • Welcome/introductions • How long each agenda item will take • When/if to have breaks • Different learning styles • Interactive 			
5. Evaluation of meeting			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback sheets prepared • Box for completed sheets 			

The Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition has "developed a Tool Kit to assist community organizations in becoming more equitable, diverse and inclusive than they are at present." Visit the link below for helpful tips to planning inclusive events.

<http://www.ohcc-ccso.ca/en/inclusive-community-organizations-a-tool-kit>

Tool D - Terms of Reference

Planning Team Name

Date

When the Terms of Reference was approved.

Goals

Describe the planning team's primary [2-3] goals.

Objective statement

Describe the planning team's primary [3-5] objectives. The objectives describe how the planning team will accomplish its goals.

Membership

Describe positions of members (not members' names), term of serving as a member (if applicable) and, member selection process (if applicable).

Chair

Name of chosen chairperson and length of term for chair.

Meetings

Describe how often the planning team will meet, when, and where.

Minutes

Describe who will take the minutes, how they will be taken, reviewed, and shared and determine length of term for minute-taker.

Decision-Making

Describe the process by which decisions are made, e.g. consensus model.

Sample Terms of Reference

Keith Neighbourhood Planning Team

Date

November 17, 2011

Membership

Members of the Planning Team will be anyone who lives, works or provides service in the neighbourhood. The majority of members will be residents.

Goals

The goal of the team is to create a Keith Neighbourhood Action Plan

1. This will be based on what the Team & the community would like to see for their neighbourhood (a vision to be created together)
2. To regularly update the community on the Neighbourhood Action Plan's progress
3. To inform the City of Hamilton on the ongoing status of the Action Plan

Objectives

1. The Planning Team will complete a Neighbourhood Action Plan
2. To create the Neighbourhood Action Plan, the Planning Team will work together with:
 - local residents
 - neighbourhood associations
 - businesses
 - other stakeholders (such as service providers, schools and other local institutions)
 - funders
 - anyone willing to helpand engage everyone to help carry out the plan once it's completed.

3. The Planning Team will regularly communicate and update everyone involved through a variety of ways, which could include:
 - Door to door, face-to-face conversations
 - By phone
 - Newsletter articles
 - Website & Social media (Facebook, Twitter etc)
 - Mail drops
 - Posters
 - Town hall-style meetings
 - Hub meetings
4. The Planning Team will consult and communicate with City of Hamilton staff and City of Hamilton resources will be available for this initiative.

Chair

Gerry Polmanter will chair the Planning Team for the length of time necessary to complete the plan.

Meetings

The Keith Neighbourhood Planning Team meets:

- Monthly, on the third Thursday of every month
- from 6.00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
- at the Eva Rothwell Centre

Minutes

Minute-taking will be provided by a City of Hamilton staff person. Meeting minutes will be sent out by email (or by regular mail if requested) and reviewed at meetings

Decision-Making

The Planning Team will make decisions by consensus, which allows input from everyone in the Team. The Team will come up with ideas together, identify any concerns raised, modify the plan and then do a round-table agreement or disagreement of the idea.

Finalizing a Decision

A decision is finalized when a two-thirds majority (66%) of the members at the meeting agree by vote.

Tool E - Decision-Making Model

Throughout the neighbourhood action planning process there will be many times that the planning team will need to make decisions. The agreed-upon process should be documented in the Terms of Reference for the planning team. A model that works well for most groups is the consensus decision-making model.

Consensus decision-making places value on individuals thinking about the good of the whole group. Participants are encouraged to voice their personal perspectives fully so that the group benefits from hearing all points of view. But participants are also expected to pay attention to the needs of the whole group. Ultimately, personal preferences are less important than a broader understanding of how to work together to help the group succeed¹².

The Process of Consensus Decision Making

There are multiple models explaining how to make decisions by consensus. They vary in the amount of detail each step involves. They also vary depending on how decisions are finalized. The basic model involves collaboratively generating an idea, identifying unsatisfied concerns, and then modifying the idea to generate as much agreement as possible.



Finalizing a Decision

The level of agreement necessary to finalize a decision is known as a decision rule. The range of possible decision rules varies as follows:

- Unanimous agreement
- Unanimity minus one vote
- Unanimity minus two votes
- Super majority thresholds (90%, 80%, 75%, two-thirds, and 60% are common)
- Simple majority

Some groups require unanimous consent (100% or unanimity) to approve group decisions. If any participant objects, he or she can block consensus. These groups use the term 'consensus' to mean both the discussion process and the decision rule. Other groups use a consensus process to generate as much agreement as possible, but allow decisions to be finalized with a decision rule that does not require unanimity.

Tool F - Writing for the Media

Releases, Advisories, PSAs, Photo-Ops, Letters to the Editor, News Conferences

Media Release

A Media Release is sent out for a specific newsworthy item. Examples of newsworthy items include: a grant being awarded; the launch of a new program; an upcoming event; major planning team leadership or staff changes.

The following guidelines should be followed in writing the content of the Media Release:

- Title the Media Release to describe the news item using short, catchy language
- Include the current date and the date for release of the information
- Double-space body of Media Release
- Avoid sub-headings, bolding and underlining
- Keep the release to 250-300 words. If the release runs onto a second page, indicate "more" or "continued" at the bottom of page 1
- The first paragraph of the Media Release should answer the questions "who," "what," "where," "when," "why," and "how"
- Ensure that your organization's name appears throughout the release
- Write clearly, without technical jargon
- Include your website address on the release
- Provide references for all statistics
- End the release with "-30-". This means that the content of the media release is complete
- At the end of the release, place the contact information, including the name, title and telephone number of each contact
- Follow a pre-determined process for proof reading. Ensure all statistics and telephone numbers are correct. Ensure correct spelling of names and organizations
- If your story hasn't been covered in the following day or two, a telephone call to the media outlet to determine whether the release has been received is appropriate

The "Contacts" for the Media Release must be available for interviews and to answer questions. In his or her absence, back-up provisions must be made. The contact person person(s) must be completely familiar with the subject matter and the content of the Media Release.

To distribute the Media Release, refer to your organization’s media list, determine whether the issue is relevant to local, provincial or national media, and choose your list accordingly. For important media releases, make follow-up telephone calls to ensure receipt and to discuss coverage.

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INSERT HEADING

HAMILTON, ON, - INSERT DATE - *Opening paragraph: Summarize the most important and most interesting points. Keep brief and simple.*

Background information. Provide more details, explanations, quotations, descriptions. Keep paragraphs short, usually no more than two to three sentences (4-6 lines).

Background information: Quotations help to add depth and detail. Try to anticipate pertinent questions in the reader’s mind – and provide answers.

Summary/closing.

- 30 -

Media Contact:

Name

Title

Phone

Email

Media Advisory

A Media Advisory is a short “teaser” sent to media outlets to inform them of an upcoming story or news conference, and/or gain their interest in attending an event. Examples of Media Advisory topics include: the launch of a communications campaign; a Public Forum; a neighbourhood event.

Media Advisory

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INSERT DATE

INSERT HEADING

Why:

Who:

What: Brief overview of event/media conference

Where:

When:

Admission/Program Cost:

Program/Agenda:

Directions:

Public Information:

- 30 -

Media Contact:

Name

Title

Department

Phone

Email

Photo Opportunity

A Photo Opportunity is a launch, opening or event that may not be newsworthy on its own, but has strong visual appeal. Send this information to the photo editor of newspapers and to local TV stations, if appropriate.

Public Service Announcement (PSA)

A PSA can be used for two purposes. First, the PSA can be used to announce upcoming public events, programs and activities. The content should include who, what, where, when, why and how. Second, a 'social marketing spot' could be submitted as a PSA. Thus, if selected, the spot would be run without charge, but the department would have no control over when it was run (e.g., it could be 2am). Social marketing spots are often accepted and run as PSAs during "special events" or weeks (such as National Non-Smoking Week).

Send your PSA request to the Public Service Announcement Editor at the radio and TV stations, the cable "bulletin board" and the "upcoming" events column at the newspapers, at least two weeks prior to the target date. If approved, you may need to provide the media with a television-quality video, a cassette audio tape, a reel-to-reel audio tape, camera-ready artwork or written text. If you do not have a PSA already produced, you may need to provide the media with the key points or draft text for a 30-second audio spot. The media will then develop the written or audio spot, which you should be able to review prior to release.

Tool 6 - Dotmocracy

*Dotmocracy helps people quickly recognize their collective preferences, which can then lead to the crafting of popularly supported plans.*¹⁴

The Neighbourhood Action Planning process uses dotmocracy to make group decisions on many components of the Neighbourhood Action Plan, from endorsing a Vision Statement to prioritizing goals, objectives, and actions. Dotmocracy is also used at community engagement events to invite broader neighbourhood participation in prioritizing, revising, and endorsing each component of the neighbourhood action plans.

Using large colourful panels and sticky dots, the facilitator directs planning team members to place dots on their preferred vision statement (there should be more than one version on the table), goals, objectives, and actions. In this way, the whole planning team can clearly see where the emerging preferences and priorities are. This form of participation is fun and helps the entire group provide input into decision-making by giving voice to all those around the table, not just those who commonly speak out.

Steps

1. The facilitator explains the dotmocracy process to participants and receives agreement on the process.
2. The facilitator presents a clear question or issue for group discussion.
3. A list of ideas is captured on flip chart paper by a recorder during the discussion.
4. Major themes/ideas are agreed upon by group.
5. Each theme/idea is written on one piece of flip chart paper and affixed to the wall.
6. Each participant receives one dot and a marker and places it on the theme they most strongly agree with. Participants can add comments to the theme with their marker.
7. The theme or idea with the most dots is chosen by the group and further refined.

For a step-by-step handbook on how to run a dotmocracy session that prioritizes data in a unique way, please go to <http://www.dotmocracy.org/>

Tool H - Creating a Neighbourhood Profile

By Sara Mayo and Carla Klassen, Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton

Why data is important for neighbourhood planning

No one person can fully understand the complexity of a neighbourhood. Each person has their own unique perspective and their network of residents they know. While everyone can see the same buildings in the neighbourhood, that is only one small part of what makes up a neighbourhood. Large-scale data collection gives a more complete picture to help build towards understanding the demographics and social conditions of the people who live in the buildings.

The gold standard of data collection in a neighbourhood is the census, as it counts everyone in the neighbourhood and asks detailed questions of residents. The census, though, is only completed every five years, and does not ask all the questions that are important for developing a neighbourhood plan. Other drawbacks to census data are the non-participation of Aboriginal people in data collection and the change from mandatory to voluntary collection of future data. Other types of data are useful to complement census data, and the planning team may also consider collecting their own data through surveys or focus groups to get even more information.

When gathering data it is important to assess each data source for validity - the extent to which the results are a reflection of the neighbourhood, or the part of the neighbourhood that a planning team is trying to better understand. For example, if the planning team wants to gather data on the seniors in a neighbourhood but only surveys people living in homes for the aged, information will be missing from a large number of seniors who live scattered throughout the neighbourhood in regular homes. That doesn't mean the survey data can't be used, but it does mean that the results will likely be different from the results if all seniors in the neighbourhood were surveyed. The planning team's interpretation of the data should make that clear.

In addition, when planning teams do their own data collection, they are more likely to get answers from people who really like something or who have a complaint about something, and less likely to get responses from people who are indifferent to a situation. The perspectives of the "silent majority" are harder to measure because those people are less likely to participate in a focus group or return an email questionnaire, for example.

The documents available through links in the following section are helpful when deciding what data to use how to go about getting the best data you can, and then how to transform the data to useable information to communicate to the planning team.

Where to Find Existing Data

1. Use the **Statistics Canada website**. Look for census tract profiles, which give demographic information at the neighbourhood level (boundaries will not likely be the same as how you define your neighbourhood, but the data will still be useful).

Census Tract (CT) Profiles, 2006 Census

<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-597/index.cfm>

When using census tract information, it is often useful to compare your city to other cities of similar size. Community profiles give data on municipalities and larger areas.

2006 Community Profiles

<http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/index.cfm>

During 2012-2013, Statistics Canada will be releasing data from the 2011 Census and National Household Survey.

2. **City of Hamilton Planning and Economic Development Department**

The Planning Department posts a number of useful data sets on their website. Visit the link below to see the latest information:

<http://www.hamilton.ca/CityDepartments/PlanningEcDev/Divisions/StrategicServicesSpecialProjects/GISPlanningAnalysis/index.htm>

In Hamilton, the Social Planning and Research Council provides many reports on their website: <http://www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca/>

Tool I - How to do your own data collection

There are now simple web-based survey tools that can be accessed for free to groups wanting to survey their residents or key stakeholders. While this type of data collection will never tell the whole story in a neighbourhood, it is one option of data collection that is fairly easy to use.

Survey Monkey web survey tool

<http://www.surveymonkey.com>

How to analyze results

Survey Monkey

http://help.surveymonkey.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/428/~how-to-analyze-your-data-tutorial

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Tool J - How to Develop Vision Statements, Objectives, and Quick Wins

Vision Statement

The foundation of any neighbourhood plan is the vision for the neighbourhood that is created by its residents. We can create significant improvements in our neighbourhoods when the vision clearly articulates the differences we want to make; the dream of our neighbourhoods' brightest potential.

The neighbourhood vision statement is a concise statement of what is possible, and illustrates the picture of the future we want to create for our neighbourhood. It should be inspiring and inspirational and should answer the big question – “WHY are we doing what we are doing?” Our vision will tell us where we are heading and what we want to achieve.

It is a vision for the neighbourhood, created by the planning team and endorsed by the neighbourhood.

Steps to Creating a Vision Statement:

You will need a facilitator and a recorder, along with sticky notes, pens, flip chart paper and markers for this exercise.

The facilitator will:

1. Explain to the planning team the purpose of the vision statement.
2. Ask the group to review the asset map and neighbourhood profiles discussed in previous meetings. Ask them to consider the following questions: Based on our assets and issues, what do we want our neighbourhood to look like in 5 years...10 years...20 years? How do we build and enhance our assets? How do we address needs? What is possible?
3. Give each resident a sticky note and pen and ask them to write down ONE idea of what they want their neighbourhood to look like in the future. Give the group 10 minutes to think, reflect and complete.

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- Facilitate a “go around” by asking each resident to speak to their idea. Have the group discuss each idea. The recorder will capture the main ideas on flip chart paper. The facilitator will then ask the residents to group ideas together into major themes. Get agreement on the major themes. Ask the group,

“Did we miss anything?”

- Write each theme on a flip chart and post around the room. Give each resident one sticky dot and have them place it on the theme they think is most important. The themes with the most dots are most important for prominent inclusion in the vision statement.

It is important that the group not wordsmith a vision statement after this exercise. Have one or two resident volunteers, the facilitator, and the CDW take away the major themes, put some sentences around these themes and bring this work back to the group for discussion at the next planning team meeting. This will save the group time and frustration and allow them to move on with the development of goals and objectives.

Once your vision statement is complete, do a **REALITY CHECK**.



Can this be achieved?

Goals and Objectives

Once the Vision Statement is created and endorsed by the planning team, the next step is to create the goals for the Action Plan, based on the main themes developed during the vision exercise. People often get confused about what is a goal, an objective and an action.

Goals are general guidelines that explain what you want to achieve in your community. They are usually long-term and represent global visions such as “protect public health and safety.”

Objectives define strategies or implementation steps to attain the identified goals. Unlike goals, objectives are specific, measurable, and have a defined completion date.

www.michigan.gov/documents/8-pub207_60743_7.pdf

Actions are more specific and provide the “how to” steps to attaining the objective.

Here is an example of what a vision statement, goal, objective and action might look like.

Vision: We want our neighbourhood to be known for its safety, walkability and friendliness.

Goal: Create a safe environment for pedestrians in our neighbourhood.

Objective: Increase pedestrian-friendly features on Main Street.

Action: Plant trees; install benches and calm traffic through bump-outs along Main Street.

Is there a Quick Win? A quick win is an action that can be achieved in a couple of months using minimal resources, shows early success in the neighbourhood and creates a “buzz.”

While the final Neighbourhood Action Plan will clearly present the vision, goals, objectives and actions in a way that makes sense to the reader, the creation of this work is often less systemic and cohesive. Often residents will focus on the immediate tasks or behaviours they would like to see change in their neighbourhood to meet their vision, without being able to speak about how these ideas fit into broader goals and objectives. It is our experience that sometimes the goals and objectives emerge out of a number of concrete actions that can be grouped together to create the goals and objectives. Because of this, it is important to keep a record of all ideas that emerge during discussions so that no idea gets lost.

Steps to developing goals, objectives and actions:

For this exercise, you will need flip chart paper, markers and pens, blank dotmocracy templates and sticky dots.

Session 1

1. Using the main themes developed during the visioning exercise, break the planning team into small groups (ideally 4-5 residents).
2. Give each group one theme each and have them brainstorm as many ideas as they can think of that would help achieve the vision/theme. Have the group record all these ideas as clearly as possible on flip chart paper and appoint a spokesperson to present these ideas back to the larger group.
3. Once all groups have reported back, post each flip chart paper theme with ideas around the room and give everyone a chance to walk around, make comments or additions to each piece and discuss informally.
4. Give the flip chart paper themes, including any additional ideas back to the small group and have them group the ideas that seem to go together into broad objectives. Next, discuss the objectives and come up with some ideas on potential goal statements. If the group does not have time to refine the goal statement and objectives to their satisfaction, have them get together between meetings to work on the statements (or have the facilitator and CDW do this).

Session 2

1. Start the meeting with a quick reminder of the vision and themes that were created at previous meetings. Present the dotmocracy sheet and explain how to fill the sheet in, one sheet per objective.
2. Re-convene the same small groups and have them review the work from the last meeting, make any changes and then present the goal statement and objectives to the larger group for clarification. Do NOT wordsmith the goal statement during the discussion but do ask “So what?” – what is the difference that this goal/objective could have on the lives of residents or the neighbourhood?
3. Have each group fill in a dotmocracy sheet for the goal statement and one for each objective.
4. Post each goal statement around the room, give the residents 2-3 minutes per goal statement (so if there are 6 goal statements, allot 15 – 20 minutes for this exercise) to write any comments or revisions on the statement and fill in their dot. Have them initial the sheet.

5. Post the objectives under the goal statement and again give the residents time to walk around the room, read each statement, add any comments and fill in their dot. Make sure they initial each sheet they vote on.
6. The facilitator will wrap up the meeting by summarizing where the major priorities in the group are and let the group know that at the next meeting the goals and objectives will be presented back, in order of priority, as identified on the dotmocracy sheets.
7. The facilitator, CDW and one resident from each small group take away the goal statements and objectives, with comments and revisions, to prioritize and wordsmith before the next meeting.
8. Present back the first draft of the goals and objectives, with preliminary action ideas captured within the objectives. Once agreement is reached that these are correct, it is time to consult with the community to get their input.

This is a good time to take your vision statement, goals and objectives out to the broader neighbourhood for consultation. You can use this consultation to refine the goals and objectives and collect more ideas for actions for achieving the vision and goal statements. This consultation should let the group know if they are on the right track. If the consultation gives you results that are very different from the vision, goal statements and objectives drafted by the group, the group needs to take this new information into consideration and “course correct” their vision and goals.

Keith Neighbourhood Planning

Vision Statement
 “Keith neighbours care about the people who live, work and play in the Keith Neighbourhood. Keith neighbours are involved and engaged in creating a safe, clean and friendly community in the Keith Neighbourhood.”

Do you:

Agree with this vision?





Disagree with this vision?



Sample table of invented Goals and Objectives

What?	So What?	How?
<i>List objectives based on community consultations and planning team meetings organized by categories.</i>	<i>Explain what difference achieving this objective could have on the lives of residents or the neighbourhood as a whole and help realize the vision.</i>	<i>List, if possible, a quick win that would be a first step to achieving the objective.</i>
Goal A: Create a safe environment for pedestrians in our neighbourhood		
Goal A: Objective 1: Increase pedestrian friendly features on Main Street	Traffic calming and slower car speeds would make walking in the neighbourhood safer and more enjoyable. This would increase the number of people choosing to walk which would both increase safety in the neighbourhood and improve people's health.	
Goal A: Objective 1: Action 1: Plant trees; install benches and calm traffic through bump-outs along Main Street.		A larger number of trees on busy streets have been shown to reduce speeds, so we could hold a public meeting for resident where city staff talk about the process of having the city plant trees on their front yard. Have residents sign up to request trees at the meeting.
Goal B: Enhance educational and skill building opportunities for youth		
Goal B: Objective 1: Promote increased educational attainment for youth	More kids graduating from high school would increase their ability to find work. More youth in school or working would help increase safety in the neighbourhood.	
Goal B: Objective 1: Action 1: Promote Education with elementary school children		Strengthen the relationship between our 2 elementary schools and Pathways to Education to raise awareness of program among parents and increase enrollment of students in Pathways when they enter secondary school.

Selected Quick Win Based on community consultation: Work with city and other partners to plant trees in a park.

Table to record vision, goals, objectives, and actions

Vision:

What?	So What?	How?
<i>List objectives based on community consultations and planning team meetings organized by categories.</i>	<i>Explain what difference achieving this objective could have on the lives of residents or the neighbourhood as a whole.</i>	<i>List, if possible, a quick win that would be a first step to achieving the objective.</i>
Goal A		
Objective 1:		
Objective 2:		
Goal B		
Objective 1:		
Objective 2:		
Goal C		
Objective 1:		
Objective 2:		
Goal D		
Objective 1:		
Objective 2:		
Goal E		
Objective 1:		
Objective 2:		
Other		
Objective 1:		
Objective 2:		

Tool K - How to Develop a Workplan

The final step in completing the Neighbourhood Action Plan is the development of a workplan. The workplan is essential to Plan implementation. It will keep residents, the planning teams and stakeholders focused on the concrete work they need to do to turn this plan on paper into a reality in the neighbourhood.

Much of the work has been done. You will need to fill in the sections on goals, objectives and actions, in the order of priority identified by the planning teams and in broader community consultations. Then the planning team will need to decide how long they think an action will take to complete (a short term action might take between 6 months to 2 years, a medium term action might take between 2 and 3 years and a long term action will take the whole 5 years and maybe longer) and fill in the timeframe accordingly.

For each action in the workplan, at least one resident should be involved and if appropriate, the organization or municipal program that is supporting the action should also be identified.

Tool L - Fundraising

By Sharon Charters, Hamilton Community Foundation

It's important to recognize that there are a number of different ways to raise funds to support the work you want to do. Each will have its "pros" and "cons" for you to consider. For example:

- **Membership fees** – this is when each "member" of an organization commits to paying a yearly fee to support the organization. While this can provide an ongoing, stable source of support, care must be taken to ensure it does not preclude anyone from participating.
- **Fundraising Events** – the list of fundraising events is practically limitless and people have shown great creativity in this area. Fundraising events can also be great community building activities, however they often require a lot of planning and many volunteers.
- **Corporate Support** – corporate support may come from local small businesses or may be accessed by grant applications to larger corporations. Both may be appropriate for either financial or "in-kind" contributions. "In-kind" refers to a product or service provided at no charge.
- **The Faith Community** – many organizations are supported by their local church, temple, synagogue, mosque, or other faith-based institution.
- **Foundations** – there are different types of foundations that provide grants to support charitable work. They include: public foundations, community foundations, and private foundations, each with its own focus areas, application forms and deadlines.
- **Government funding** – all levels of government present opportunities for funding and post deadlines and application information on their websites. Government funding is generally provided through "contribution agreements" and is generally for requesting larger sums of money.
- **Service Clubs** – there are a wide variety of service clubs such as Rotary, Lions Club, Optimists Club, Junior League, etc. that support local initiatives.

Generally speaking, it is helpful to have a variety of funding supports to increase your chances of sustaining your work. In this way, if you lose one funder, the work is still supported by other sources.

So You Need to Write a Funding Proposal/Application

The following are some general guidelines when you are considering submitting a funding proposal:

- Writing a proposal is a lot of work – call the funder before starting to make sure your idea fits with the type of proposals they can support. Check that your group is eligible for granting. For example, do you need to be incorporated? Do you need to be a charity or need a fiscal sponsor? Even if a funder is not able to help you, they may have suggestions for whom else to approach.
- Take the time to thoroughly plan out what you want to do. This is your biggest piece of work – the actual writing should flow easily after that.
- Most funders have their own application forms although the questions may be similar. For some funders you will be able to submit your application on-line, however some may then require you to print it out and submit it in hard copy.
- Pay attention to deadlines and the attachments required, funders are strict about this.

What needs to be included in your proposal:

- You need to answer the questions of who, what, where, why, when, and how you know you have been successful. The answers to these questions will demonstrate you have done the planning that needs to happen for an initiative to be successful.
- The reviewer will look for evidence that you are familiar with the community and understand where your project fits into the bigger community picture.
- Have you thought about others you could work with? Funders want to ensure they are not funding duplicate services and also recognize that the impact is often greater when groups work together.
- You and the funder share a goal of wanting to make a difference in the community. Explain how your idea will make a difference and how you will know when that has happened.
- Use good, local statistics and research to back up your explanation of why the initiative is needed.
- Always be transparent and honest in your application. If you have received funding from other funders, whether financial or in-kind, include it in the budget. It's actually seen as a stronger proposal when there is more than one funder involved. Use the template provided by the funder for budget information.

If You Are Successful:

- Congratulations and take a moment to celebrate!
- Be sure you understand the requirements of the grant. Sometimes funders will put a condition on a grant and all funders will have reporting requirements.
- If anything major happens with the project, let the funder know.

If You Are Not Successful:

- Remember, don't be discouraged and don't give up. The number one reason for a proposal not being funded is because the need for funds is far greater than the funds available. Call the funder to better understand the reason you were not successful.



Tool M - Implementation Activity Tracker

Vision Statement								
Goal								
Objective								
Action identification # ¹								
Action description or new working title ²								
Implementation Activities	Timelines				Residents Involved	Supporting Partners Involved	Resources Required	Outcomes
	Jan - Mar (year)	Apr - Jun (year)	Jul - Sept (year)	Oct - Dec (year)				

¹ List all applicable Action Identification Numbers (from the original Neighbourhood Action Plan)
² Have a number of Actions been grouped together and renamed? If yes, please describe the new working title for this group of Actions



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Website address:

www.hamilton.ca/neighbourhoods

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