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Acknowledgements

lovemyhood was endorsed by Kitchener City Council in February 2017.

Thanks to Laura McBride for capturing many of the beautiful photos in this report.

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- Your Neighbourhood Credit Union (Title Sponsor)
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We believe communities are stronger when we know and support our neighbours. We’re proud to have supported lovemyhood, to help people get to know their neighbours and build a better place to call home.

– Kerry Hadad, CEO of Your Neighbourhood Credit Union

Cover photo: Forest Heights edible food forest

Guelph Street Community Garden
The

love
your
hood
vision

Helping people connect and work together to do great things in their neighbourhood

Residents take the lead and the City supports them along the way. It’s a principle as simple as it is powerful. And it’s the vision of lovemyhood.

You see, Kitchener residents don’t expect someone else to make their neighbourhoods great. They’re ready willing and able to do it themselves. Of course, the City should be there to help, but in the end, the best neighbourhoods are made by the people who live there.

Think of this guide as a collection of do-it-yourself (DIY) projects. Projects that are easy to complete and flexible enough to adapt to each of Kitchener’s unique and amazing neighbourhoods. You and your neighbours decide the projects you care about. Lovemyhood provides useful tips, some easy step-by-step processes, and perhaps some money to help you along the way.

After all, our neighbourhoods are more than just a physical location where we happen to live, and they are more than a boundary drawn on a map. Our neighbourhoods are a reflection of who we are - diverse, unique, interesting - and they are the foundation of the community we are working to build together.

This past summer, we hosted a beach party in an underused area of our neighbourhood through the City’s first Neighbourhood Placemaking Challenge. This was a new venture for us, but the City’s assistance in funding and staff support helped our volunteers create a new and welcoming event. I look forward to seeing even more neighbours start new initiatives - and receive helpful support from the City - just like we did.

– Melissa Bowman, Victoria Park Neighbourhood Association

Central Frederick “Walking on Sunshine” crosswalk

3

2

1

4

5
Belonging matters

A message from The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation – kwcf.ca

No matter where we were born, or where we live, we all want to belong to something bigger than ourselves. We want to belong to a family, a group of friends, a neighbourhood, a community. When we feel like we belong, we are happier and healthier – physically, mentally, and emotionally. And we are more likely to ask others for help in a time of need, and to lend our hand to them in return.

But, here’s the thing you might not know. Our annual community checkup, Waterloo Region’s Vital Signs®, shows that some residents don’t always feel like they belong in our community. As a result, these residents are more isolated and lonely, they have fewer people they can turn to for help, and they are less likely to get involved in our community.

We’ve identified the key building blocks to belonging: authentic interactions, feeling welcome and shared experiences. Neighbourhoods are key places to support these building blocks of belonging. When neighbours make efforts to welcome each other and become engaged in the activities and decisions of their neighbourhoods, they can increase their sense of belonging and pride in their community.

We host annual celebrations of Eid, Diwali and Christmas. People really appreciate being able to see how their neighbours celebrate these different holidays, which helps to create a sense of belonging in our neighbourhood. We are pleased to see #lovemyhood shares our values of diversity and inclusion, among other things.

– Nadia Muhammad, Victoria NIH Neighbourhood Association
The foundation of lovemyhood

Amazing people doing amazing things!

Kitchener has a long history of people coming together to make things. From buttons, shirts, and boots, to car parts, digital projection and wearable technology – we have made some amazing things. But perhaps the most important thing we make here just might be community.

For so many people living in Kitchener, playing an active role in the life of our community isn’t a question, it’s a passion – and it has been for a long time.

Our strong and diverse network of neighbourhood associations, and the City staff who work with them in our community centres, are often the heart of a neighbourhood. Thanks, volunteers! Neighbours are creating connections in many ways, like shovelling a neighbour’s sidewalk, hosting a potluck, or welcoming a new family who just moved in. Thanks, neighbours!

Still others are contributing their time and talents through valuable partners like the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council, United Way Waterloo Region Communities, Festival of Neighbourhoods, The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation, House of Friendship and many, many more. Thanks, community partners!

Kitchener’s tradition of coming together to make things is the foundation upon which #lovemyhood will succeed.

“This past Neighbours Day, a local artist painted our rink shed with flowers. Over 75 kids helped, adding their handprint and year they were born. It began a great conversation with kids and parents about our programming and how we can improve our community. #lovemyhood will really help us engage the community in these important conversations and encourage even more people to get involved.”

– Frank Prospero, Williamsburg Community Association
The making of #lovemyhood

An amazing project team leads the way

To create #lovemyhood – Kitchener’s first-ever neighbourhood strategy – a diverse group of volunteers and City staff formed a project team. Over 10 months and nearly 1,000 hours of meetings, this team researched and discussed a whole lot of exciting ideas and important information related to neighbourhoods. To ensure #lovemyhood is firmly rooted in the ideas of our community, they also led one of the City’s largest and most inclusive community engagement processes.

We are incredibly grateful to this passionate project team – and to the 150 additional volunteers who helped out at events, led street team interviews, hosted a focus group and participated in the placemaking challenge.

I simply can’t say enough about our volunteer-led project team. They care deeply about their neighbourhoods and that passion shone through their work. Every action and decision was made with the betterment of the community in mind. These folks have helped lay the foundation that will shape our neighbourhoods for years to come.

– Mike Farwell, neighbourhood strategy project team co-chair and Auditorium resident

THANK YOU PROJECT TEAM!

This passionate and talented team has earned a very enthusiastic THANK YOU from our entire community!

- Sarah Anderson
- Andrea Boston
- Melissa Bowman
- Nancy Bond
- Rachael Brown
- Camille Cantwell
- Michelle Drake
- Max Forrest
- Mark Hildbrand
- Graham Jeffrey
- Denis Krajcik
- Chris Law
- Matthew McLean
- Lisa McIndoe
- Doug McIlvain
- Joanne Merget
- Nadia Muhammad
- James Ouellette
- Frank Pappas
- Jodi Pearson
- Brooke Robson
- Brandon Sloan
- Paige Sweeney
- Robin Thompson
- Andrew Tolivo
- Tristan Wilkin
- Rebeca Winters
- Kathleen Woodock

Along with the project team, we are incredibly grateful to Wanda Kampijan and Wali Muhammad for their help on project team subcommittees.
How the community got involved

10,651 members of our community provided input into #lovemyhood. That’s three people for every street in Kitchener!
We talked to people for 3,942 hours. That’s like talking about neighbourhoods for 160 days straight!

We heard from many different community groups, such as neighbourhood associations, schools, faith communities, cultural clubs, sports teams, youth and seniors groups, to name a few. And we talked to people at parks, pools, splash pads, bus stations, soccer games, events and shopping centres across the city.

We are all connected to one another and this process has highlighted for me how committed my neighbours are to building an inclusive community.
– Andrew Tutty, Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee and Laurentian Hills resident

59 media stories about #lovemyhood

Beer and colouring!
100 attendees at a Beer & Colouring event

750 colouring books and hot chocolate given away at multiple locations across the city in a one day blitz

#lovemyhood stories

27 photographic stories posted on Facebook

You’ve got mail!
1,870 letters mailed to community groups

CULTURE AND FAITH

5,500 Colour my ‘hood adult colouring books designed by three local artists

SHOW OFF YOUR ‘HOOD

KIDS ACTIVITY BOOKS

15,000 children’s activity books

ADULT COLOURING BOOKS

11,500 children’s activity books

5,500 colour my ‘hood adult colouring books designed by three local artists

Kids activity books

100 childrens at a Beer & Colouring event

Media stories

99 and stories about #lovemyhood

Hot chocolate!

750 colouring books and hot chocolate given away at multiple locations across the city in a one day blitz

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5,500 colour my ‘hood adult colouring books designed by three local artists

Kids activity books

100 childrens at a Beer & Colouring event

Media stories

99 and stories about #lovemyhood
Making great neighbourhoods

Excited to make your neighbourhood great? Fantastic! The good news is you’re not alone. We heard loud and clear that our community wants a resident-led, City-supported approach to make our neighbourhoods even better than they are today. And, we heard three specific areas we should focus on:

Great Places
Create a variety of things to do at neighbourhood outdoor places, to attract lots of different people to spend time together.

Connected People
Strengthen relationships between neighbours by creating more ways for them to connect with one another.

Working Together
Help residents lead positive change in their neighbourhood, through cooperation with neighbours, organizations and the City.

Right now, our neighbourhood association sees too many barriers to hosting events, especially as our active volunteer base is relatively small. We’re not looking to do anything spectacular, just something enjoyable. Thanks to these #lovemyhood actions, it will be easier for us and others to take the initiative and have more say in how our neighbourhoods change.

– Graham Jeffery, Alpine Community Neighbourhood Association
Create a variety of things to do at neighbourhood outdoor places, to attract lots of different people to spend time together. Our neighbourhoods are diverse, made up of people of different ages, backgrounds and interests. By creating public places that have lots of different things to do, we can provide neighbours with more reasons to spend more time with one another – getting to know each other and building stronger relationships.

Think of it this way: a park can be much more than a playground for young kids. It could also be a place for young people to hang out, sports teams using outdoor equipment of people leaving to their accessible community garden plots. In other words, a park can be a place where the entire neighbourhood gathers.

Great public places are those that show off the unique personality of the neighbourhood. When neighbours design and create these features for themselves, they are more likely to bring them to life with activities that make people feel safer and more connected to their neighbourhood.

— Austin Metzger, Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council and Mount Hope resident

Actions to make Great Places

1. Neighbourhood Places Program
   You asked us to make it easier for you to lead popular improvements to public places, with less red tape and more support from the City. We’ll do that by providing simple steps to follow when working with City staff to make neighbourhood improvements. You identified these as the most popular projects, so we’ll get started on these first:
   • Neighbourhood community gardens
   • Resident-led traffic calming (like painted crosswalks and intersections)
   • Neighbourhood markets
   • Neighbourhood greening (like tree planting, adopt a park/trail/garbage can, clean up days)
   • Public seating (such as more benches or rest stops, improvements at bus stops, better shading or lighting)
   • Resident-led public art (like community murals)
   • Little Libraries in public spaces (simplify and grow program)
   • Neighbourhood signage (like identity signage or wayfinding signage)
   • Cul-de-sac enhancements (such as tree planting or activity space)

2. Neighbourhood Placemaking Guide
   Got an idea to create safe and thriving public places? We’ve developed a flexible, easy-to-use guide when you want to work with the City on a neighbourhood improvement project (like a Neighbourhood Places Program). Or in a specific place you would like to improve as a way of encouraging people to spend more time there together.

3. Neighbourhood Placemaking Challenge
   Are you still asking yourself – what the heck is placemaking and why does it matter? We’ll help answer that question by hosting an annual placemaking challenge. It will help everyone understand the power of placemaking and inspire more people to get involved in their neighbourhoods. This challenge will offer grants to complete temporary or permanent improvements to a public place.

4. Tree Planting on Private Property
   In Kitchener, we love our trees! We’ll partner with the private sector to help you improve the look, feel and function of your street. This could include greening incentive programs, tree giveaways or neighbourhood tree planting parties, as well as building awareness of the importance of trees and how to take care of them.

5. Parks, Playgrounds and Trails Community Engagement Review
   An essential way to make great places is changing the way we engage with you when developing or redeveloping neighbourhood parks, playgrounds and trails. We heard that we need to ensure these shared spaces serve the specific needs of area residents in terms of ages, interests, abilities and cultural backgrounds. We will:
   • Work with residents from the very beginning of a project to explore a number of options for multi-use spaces that respond to the needs of the local neighbourhood (examples could include a playground, sports field, picnic shelter, exercise equipment, natural areas, public art, etc.)
   • Be up-front with residents about constraints such as funding and maintenance, so the community understands what’s possible and what’s not for each specific project.

Create a variety of things to do at neighbourhood outdoor places, to attract lots of different people to spend time together.
Want ideas for Great Places in your 'hood? Check out some examples that create more things to do in Kitchener's neighbourhoods.

• Eden's Gate community garden in Laurentian Hills – Seventh Day Adventist Church and local residents
• Buddy Bench at Pioneer Park Public School – students and parents
• Neighbourhood market and cob oven – Highland Stirling Community Group
• Knollwood Park gazebo, trees and trails – Auditorium Neighbourhood Association
• Little Library on Muelken Court – local residents
• Natural playground, memorial bench and mosaic art wall in the park at Homewood Avenue and West Avenue – Brock Street residents
• “Gaga ball” court on Marl Meadow Court cul-de-sac – local residents
• Neighbourhood identity banner signs on street poles – Odle Berlin Towne Neighbourhood Association

“I think that this placemaking initiative is fantastic. It allows community members to see something improved, and to take action to get things done. I think that with time, it will outlive the movement.”
– Resident who planted a pollinator garden on the Iron Horse Trail at Mill Street, in the 2016 Neighbourhood Placemaking Challenge

“I think that this placemaking initiative is fantastic. It allows community members to see something improved, and to take action to get things done. I think that with time, it will outlive the movement.”
– Resident who planted a pollinator garden on the Iron Horse Trail at Mill Street, in the 2016 Neighbourhood Placemaking Challenge

WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT GREAT PLACES:

“Placemaking in our area involves building strong relationships with the community.”
– Resident who grew a community garden in the 2016 Neighbourhood Placemaking Challenge

“Build healthy neighbourhoods by revitalizing city parks and shared spaces in our community. Bring together seniors, adults, children, families. The parks are for activities for all ages - story time, yoga, tai chi, arthritis class, etc.”
– Focus group participant for Hidden Creek Drive residents

“What signs in street level welcoming our neighbourhood is. Each neighbourhood design their own signs. Make it unique.”
– Street team participant at John Darling Public School fun fair

“I think this placemaking initiative is fantastic. It allows community members to see something improved, and to take action to get things done. I think that with time, it will outlive the movement.”
– Resident who planted a pollinator garden on the Iron Horse Trail at Mill Street, in the 2016 Neighbourhood Placemaking Challenge

“Build healthy neighbourhoods by revitalizing city parks and shared spaces in our community. Bring together seniors, adults, children, families. The parks are for activities for all ages - story time, yoga, tai chi, arthritis class, etc.”
– Focus group participant for Hidden Creek Drive residents

CHECK THIS OUT!

Kitchener’s Festival of Neighbourhoods invites citizens to plan activities, projects, gatherings or events in their neighbourhoods that bring people together and are open to everyone. Its founding partners are John MacDonald Architect, the Social Development Centre Waterloo Region and the City of Kitchener. The City’s Festival of Neighbourhoods capital grant has helped make many great places. To learn more about this unique Kitchener initiative, visit waterlooregion.org/neighbourhoods.
Connected People

Strengthen relationships between neighbours by creating more ways for them to connect with one another.

Knowing your neighbours can make a huge difference to your sense of belonging and wellbeing – physical, mental and emotional. Friendly neighbours give you someone to ask for help, they make you feel safer, and, of course, they can be a whole lot of fun!

Picture this: more events that are easier to organize. More inviting community spaces and front porches that encourage casual conversations. And more information about things happening in your neighbourhood and ways to get involved.

We all have the potential to be a positive centre for inclusive neighbourhoods. The Festival of Neighbourhoods is a tool for us to engage with our surroundings and bring to life the important elements of strong neighbourhoods that guide the neighbourhood strategy.

We are pleased to work with the City to help achieve these goals.

– Festival of Neighbourhoods partners

Actions to support Connected People

6. More Neighbourhood Events

You told us that we could help you connect with your neighbours by creating a set of simple steps to follow when you want to work with the City to organize an event, especially street parties. We will also work with our Festival of Neighbourhoods partners to build upon their current program and resources such as the Neighbourhood Activity Guide.

7. Event-in-a-Trailer

You asked us to make it easier and more affordable for you to host your own events. We can help by creating a bookable Event-in-a-Trailer that will deliver equipment to neighbourhoods running their own events. Things like tables, chairs, tents, barricades or a sound system. This can be done by working with the City’s Festival of Neighbourhoods partners to expand their existing Neighbourhood Activity Trunk, which already includes a variety of games and crafts (it’s great by the way! You should check it out at waterlooregion.org/neighbourhood-activity-trunk).

8. Inviting Front Porches

How our neighbourhoods look can have a big impact on how people connect. We’ll improve and further implement zoning requirements and/or urban design guidelines to improve the functionality of front porches in new housing across the city. The goal here is to help spark more informal and casual conversations among neighbours.

9. Research into Best Practices for Community Spaces in Multi-Residential Buildings

But what if you don’t have a front porch? We can learn from the success of other cities by understanding how to encourage the creation of indoor and outdoor gathering spaces in mid and multi-residential buildings to create more connections between neighbours who live in these buildings. We’ll look to community partners to help us with this research.

10. Block Connectors

You told us that you need better ways of communicating with your neighbours and finding out what is happening. A “Block Connector” approach can help by identifying one or two individuals on a street or in a building to start conversations with neighbours and encourage them to get involved. These connections could provide a “Welcome to the Neighbourhood” package to new residents, delivering a warm welcome right from the start. We’ll be sure to work with community partners on this one, like our many neighbourhood associations, and United Way Waterloo Region Communities, who have already been using this approach.

11. Snow Angel Program

Let’s make neighbourhoods safer and more accessible through a program that encourages people to be good neighbours by helping clear snow from their neighbour’s sidewalk or driveway. We’ll be sure to promote this program and connecting volunteers with those who need assistance.

12. Neighbourhood Website

Let’s say you’ve heard about a cool project from another neighbourhood and you’d love to do the same thing in your own hood, but where can you learn more about how it worked?

You told us that a centralized website can help people connect in new ways by showcasing your ideas and highlighting your neighbourhood events. Plus, it will make it easier for you to find information on things like the neighbourhood places program, neighbourhood associations, matching grants and more. It’ll be a one-stop shop for all things neighbourhood in Kitchener!
Want ideas for Connected People in your 'hood?

Here’s just a few examples of how residents are strengthening relationships.

- Porch parties: Schneider Creek, Hohner Ave, East Village – local residents
- Neighbourhood activity trunk – Festival of Neighbourhoods
- Bike safety fun day – Stanley Park Community Association
- Choir concert – Forest Heights Community Association
- Family movie day – Settlement Groves Community Association
- Tree trimming party – Bridgeport Community Association
- Monthly cake and chat in Tramore Village – KW Tenants Group
- Parkvile Park clean up – Huron Community Association
- Book party on Buck Clover Crescent – local residents
- Summer BBQ – School Council at Lackner Woods Public School
- Carol sing and chili supper at Carlyle Circle – local residents
- Community connector approach in the Paaslander, King Street East and Centreville-Chicopee neighbourhoods – United Way Waterloo Region Communities

WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT CONNECTED PEOPLE:

“Make new neighbours feel more welcome by making it a welcome basket for them.”
– Street team participant at the Coalition for Muslim Women KW’s event

“I’m in a condo-based area of Kitchener that is growing drastically. I have many neighbours that are so friendly but we have no place to gather or eating to do in order to make our community friendly.”
– Resident from Ira Needles and Highland area, in Engage Kitchener online survey

“Give all neighbourhoods tools to help their own street party. Make it easy for them to do.”
– Focus group participant with the Kitchener Youth Action Council

“Steal the idea from your friends!”
– Street team participant at the Coalition for Muslim Women KW’s event

WE COULD CREATE MORE FRIENDSHIPS BY HAVING A PARTY IN EVERY NEIGHBOURHOOD!”
– Street team participant at Kitchener Girls Softball 50th celebration

Every year, on the second Saturday in June, Neighbours Day brings neighbours together to have fun and celebrate the vibrant and diverse city we live in. More than 6,000 people attended in 2016! There were 31 different events across the city, with 12 of them initiated by community groups, neighbourhood associations and non-profit organizations.

Check out kitchener.ca/neighboursday to get involved!
Working Together

Help residents lead positive change in their neighbourhood, through cooperation with neighbours, organizations and the City.

There are already a lot of people doing great things in their neighbourhoods, but there is always more that can be done. Since no one person, or one group, can do it all alone, we need more people chipping in and working together to make it happen.

Imagine a lively group of neighbours, community partners, neighbourhood associations, and the City all pulling together to maximize your volunteer efforts and help you make positive change in your neighbourhood.

Working Together


We’ll work with you to shape the future of your neighbourhood through resident-led, City-supported Neighbourhood Action Plans. These plans will help you develop a clear vision for your neighbourhood, identify specific actions to achieve that vision, and have widespread support from the neighbourhood. Starting with a pilot in two to four neighbourhoods in 2017-2018, the program will be available city-wide in 2019.

14. Neighbourhood Matching Grant Increase

You told us that the City can play an important role in supporting your neighbourhood efforts by providing some cash support. To help you pay for your awesome projects, we will triple the total amount of money available through the Neighbourhood Matching Grant to $60,000 per year, and triple the maximum grant available to any one application to $15,000. We’ll continue to partner with United Way Waterloo Region Communities to fund and oversee this grant.

15. Reduce Municipal Barriers

You made it clear that the City can make it easier - and way more enjoyable - for residents to play a positive role in their neighbourhoods, if we review and change some City policies and procedures. So that’s exactly what we’ll do. And we’ll start with these ones:

• Road closure requirements for events
• Insurance requirements for small events
• Crosswalk/painting approach
• Residential signage regulations
• Noise exemptions for small events

16. Neighbourhood Leadership Program

Lots of residents are keen to do things, but would like some training specifically designed for neighbourhood volunteers. Through the creation and delivery of a unique training program, residents can grow their knowledge and skills. Topics you told us you’d be interested in learning more about include: how to use social media, asset-based community development, volunteer recruitment and appreciation, etc. Of course, this is the kind of thing our community partners excel at, so we’ll work with organizations like United Way Waterloo Region Communities and local educational institutions to develop and deliver the program.

17. Neighbourhood Demographic Profiles

You shared a desire to be more inclusive of people in your neighbourhoods, but you’re not always sure who that includes. We’ll help you gain a more complete understanding of the diversity of your neighbourhood by providing demographic profiles (e.g. age, language) that are easily available, at no charge.

18. Neighbourhood Use of Schools and Faith-Based Facilities

You identified the important role schools and faith-based organizations can play in the life of your neighbourhood. We’ll engage schools and faith-based organizations in discussions that explore opportunities for you to gain greater access to their indoor and outdoor facilities.
Want ideas for **Working Together** in your 'hood?

Check out these great examples of cooperation and positive change.

- A neighbourhood plan called Making our Neighborhood Great! – Schneider Creek residents
- Use of Statistics Canada demographics for neighbourhood association programming
- Arts and sports programming in local churches and schools – Williamsburg Community Association
- Some past Neighbourhood Matching Grant recipients:
  - Local food market – Belmont Village
  - Willow Green cob oven – Cherry Ford Neighbourhood Association
  - Information boards in parks – Central Frederick Neighbourhood Association
  - Seniors program – Chandler Mowat
  - Diwali festival fireworks – Victoria Hills Neighbourhood Association
  - Winter carnival – King East Neighbourhood Association

**WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT WORKING TOGETHER:**

"It’s important to have people to talk to, to be inclusive, and to be open to new ideas."
— Street team participant from Grace Mennonite Brethren Church Vacation Bible School

"Remove red tape in closing a street for an event."
— Street team participant at the Kitchener Walker

"The leadership program should also have a youth component in it so that tweens and teens can get involved and be more connected to their ‘hood in positive ways."
— Online response from Engage Kitchener survey

**NEED CASH FOR A COOL IDEA?**

The Neighbourhood Matching Grant helps you pay for projects that renew a public place, foster neighbourhood pride or build relationships between neighbours. You can match the value of the grant with volunteer time, in-kind contributions or cash.

Just submit a proposal to apply – anytime!

Learn more at kitchener.ca/lovemyhoodgrant
So, how can you get involved?

Kitchener was built by and for neighbours. It will make it easier for you to get involved in your neighbourhood and add your own personal touch. But nothing will happen if you wait for others, or the City, to change your neighbourhood. We need everyone pitching in, taking initiative and being engaged.

Here are a few ideas to get you going:

• Say hi to a neighbour sometime this week. A friendly wave and hello can go a long way.
• Find out when the next event is happening in your neighbourhood and go meet your neighbours. Or, host your own event! Do something simple, like a potluck, BBQ or games night.
• Get in touch with your local neighbourhood association to see what they have coming up, and offer to lend a hand.
• Do you see an idea or project in this guide that captures your interest? Share it with your neighbours and see if anyone else gets excited by it too. Who knows? Maybe some people were already thinking about planting trees or picking up litter, and would love to do it together.

Regardless of whether you’ve been involved in your neighbourhood for years, or are just getting started, our community is so thankful, and so lucky, that you’re helping make your neighbourhood the best it can be.

My neighbours and I hide little painted fairy doors in our neighbourhood. It’s a lot of fun to keep them a secret. We don’t tend to make huge changes to the landscape to make people feel connected. Just work with what you have and find your own way to make it better.

– Laura McBride, Central Frederick resident

Chandler Mowat Community Centre
The City's commitment to you

Funding for Neighbourhood Projects
Dedicated funding will be available to neighbourhood groups through the Neighbourhood Matching Grant, Neighbourhood Action Plans, and the annual Neighbourhood Placemaking Challenge.

Staff Support for Neighbourhood Projects
We are ready to help make your next neighbourhood project happen. We’ll help you navigate city hall, bring partners together, and make it as easy as possible for you to get things done.

Monitoring & Reporting
As work is done, we will be monitoring progress and providing regular reports to the community so you can hold us accountable to the #lovemyhood vision.

Evaluating Our Work
A “State of Kitchener’s Neighbourhoods” report will show how we are all doing in creating and supporting neighbourhoods that are safe, connected, engaged, accessible, inclusive and diverse.

I have long believed in the power of neighbours connecting with one another, and working together, to build inclusive communities where everyone belongs. On behalf of City Council, I thank you, the many volunteers and residents who contributed their passion and their ideas to #lovemyhood. We are strongly committed to turning the ideas and actions of this strategy into reality.

– Mayor Berry Vrbanovic, City of Kitchener
What is the purpose of the Neighbourhood Placemaking Guide and Toolkit?

Neighbourhood Placemaking is already happening across the city. Sometimes the City needs to be involved. And sometimes it doesn’t. For those times when it needs to be involved, or you want them to be involved, this guide is intended to help you complete Neighbourhood Placemaking ideas by providing suggested steps, supports, resources and tools. If necessary and desired, City staff can support and facilitate you and your neighbourhood as you pursue your Neighbourhood Placemaking ideas and put them into action.

We’ve also collected a few tools that can help you along the way. To view them, contact City staff or visit lovemyhood.ca. Once you’ve had an opportunity to review the Neighbourhood Placemaking Guide and Toolkit, please contact City staff to talk about getting started.

Acknowledgements

Thank you for all your hard work!

Kitchener’s Neighbourhood Placemaking Guide was written by volunteers and staff from the Neighbourhood Strategy project team and best practices sub-committee. Thanks to all the volunteers for their time and energy researching and providing input on this guide. This guide was created in July 2017.

Got questions?

Contact City staff anytime. We’re happy to help!

Neighbourhood Development Office, City of Kitchener
lovemyhood@kitchener.ca
519-741-2200 ext. HOOD (4663)

* This information is available in accessible formats upon request. Please call 519-741-2200 ext. 7083 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.

Cover image: Residents in Tremaine Park love their outdoor ping pong table, which gives people of all ages another reason to hang out in the park.
Introduction

Kitchener’s Neighbourhood Strategy

In 2015, the City brought together a project team of residents from across the city to develop Kitchener’s first ever Neighbourhood Strategy, called Love My Hood: Kitchener’s Guide to Great Neighbourhoods. Residents take the lead and the city supports them along the way. It’s a principle as simple as it is powerful. And it’s the vision of Love My Hood.

Through three areas of focus – Great Places, Connected People and Working Together – Love My Hood builds on the great things already happening in Kitchener’s neighbourhoods by giving residents tools, programs and resources to affect positive change in their neighbourhood.

A key deliverable of Love My Hood, this guide provides a framework to support and facilitate a resident-led approach to Neighbourhood Placemaking.

What is Neighbourhood Placemaking?

In short, placemaking brings a neighbourhood to life by turning everyday spaces into destinations and gathering places.

Project for Public Spaces, a world-leader in placemaking, describes the qualities of successful places in its thought-provoking Placemaking 101 resource section at pps.org. They offer principles like “lighter, quicker, cheaper” and giving people at least ten reasons to visit a place. To them, placemaking is a community-driven process that “capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential, and it results in the creation of quality public spaces that contribute to people’s health, happiness, and well-being.” In other words, it’s your ideas and presence that make a great place (Project for Public Places, 2009. Learn more at pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking).

You don’t need to worry if you’re new to Neighbourhood Placemaking. It’s something that happens regularly, whether you go about it intentionally or not. Chatting with neighbours, building a community garden and hanging out at a park all contribute to Neighbourhood Placemaking. These actions can help you change the way you feel about the places in your neighbourhood. You’re encouraged to think of ideas that will purposefully change the places in your neighbourhood for the better. Ideas may be permanent or temporary, big or small. Need some ideas to get you started? Check out our toolkit of resources.

SEE TOOLKIT:

Tool A – List of Neighbourhood Placemaking Resources & Ideas

“There are lots of residents in Kitchener with fun and unique ideas for placemaking. My hope is that this guide assists these residents who want to strengthen connections between the people and places in their neighbourhood but need some help to get started.”

- Tristan Wilkin, Neighbourhood Strategy project team volunteer, Mount Hope Breithaupt resident
Why Neighbourhood Placemaking?

Through Neighbourhood Placemaking, you may experience:

- Increased knowledge of your neighbourhood
- Places that respond to the needs of you and your neighbours
- Opportunities to get to know your neighbours
- Feeling welcomed and comfortable in your neighbourhood
- A sense of ownership and pride for your neighbourhood places
- A new perspective of your neighbourhood from your neighbours
- How your actions make a difference in your neighbourhood

Through Neighbourhood Placemaking, neighbourhoods may experience opportunities to:

- Create destinations and gathering spaces in neighbourhood places
- Identify and celebrate the unique identity of the neighbourhood
- Build relationships by working together

Who can participate in Neighbourhood Placemaking?

Anyone who lives, works, learns or plays in the neighbourhood can get involved in Neighbourhood Placemaking.

Residents, individuals and groups, such as neighbourhood associations, can lead and enjoy Neighbourhood Placemaking initiatives. Everyone is encouraged to seek support and participation from the broader neighbourhood.

If required, the City’s role is to help by providing the tools, supports and resources necessary to complete Neighbourhood Placemaking ideas. Community partners may also be engaged to provide valuable ideas, experience, support and resources.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool B – List of Community Partners

“A cob oven in N8 Courtland neighbourhood brings neighbours together for cooking, conversation and delicious treats. Cherry Park neighbourhood has one too!”

“It used to be our places were created largely by planners, developers, architects. And now people are starting to shape their own places.”

- Jim Diers, author of Neighbor Power
When can **Neighbourhood Placemaking** occur?

Neighbourhood Placemaking can occur anytime, and indeed it already does, throughout the year. In order to create awareness, inspire change and spark action, the City also hosts an annual placemaking challenge where you are encouraged to pitch your ideas and get cash grants to make them come to life. Detailed information regarding the annual placemaking challenge are available on [lovemyhood.ca](lovemyhood.ca).

Where can **Neighbourhood Placemaking** occur?

Neighbourhood Placemaking can take place on public lands owned by the City. Examples of City-owned sites to consider might include cul-de-sacs, boulevards, roundabout medians, greenways, parks, trails or parking areas. Land owned by other public entities such as school boards and the Region of Waterloo may be an option too. Privately owned land may also be an option. It’s up to you to propose a site in the neighbourhood and obtain appropriate approvals from the owner whether publicly or privately owned.

“**It takes a place to create a community, and a community to create a place.**”

- Fred Kent, founder and president of Project for Public Spaces

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Uniroyal Goodrich Park in Mount Hope-Breithaupt Park neighbourhood has more than just green space and a play area. There’s also a community garden and little library, providing more reasons for people to enjoy the park and meet their neighbours.
Six principles for Neighbourhood Placemaking

Six principles have been identified to guide Neighbourhood Placemaking in your neighbourhood. Recognizing that each neighbourhood is unique, the principles are provided to establish some common ground for all neighbourhoods to incorporate and work towards. Neighbourhood Placemaking can help you build a stronger neighbourhood that is more safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged.

Neighbourhood Placemaking is:

ASSET-BASED: This means you focus on the assets that are already found in your neighbourhood and you mobilize your neighbours and community partners to come together and build on those strengths. Assets are both things (material objects) and people (skills, knowledge, experience). Examples may include physical elements such as buildings, social connections such as personal relationships with your neighbours, or people’s skills such as leadership. Strengths and successes in your neighbourhood can be used as a starting point for change.

PLACE-BASED: This means you will get to know your neighbourhood spaces. Starting with a specific space or an idea, you’ll use your ideas to transform a space into a place. You’ll create a destination or a gathering place that is specific and unique to your neighbourhood. Ideas are encouraged to include a combination of public art (e.g. mural), temporary or permanent physical interventions (e.g. seating), and social interactions (e.g. event).

RESIDENT LED: You’re the expert in your neighbourhood. You’ll help to identify the collective needs, aspirations and visions for the spaces in your neighbourhood. You or a group of your neighbours may take the lead but you’re strongly encouraged to provide opportunities for all neighbours to participate. Community partners may be able to help with ideas, planning or financial support. The City will observe, listen and ask questions in order to learn from you and your neighbours.

ABOUT CREATING A ‘PLACE’ WITH SIMPLE, SHORT-TERM ACTIONS: Creating a great place doesn’t need to be complex. Spaces should welcome all people and provide a range of reasons for you to spend time in your neighbourhood place. Think about different uses, activities, events and programs. You’ll also want to think about creating a place that is accessible and inclusive. Start with some simple, short-term actions to test what attracts your neighbours to a space. A few simple, short-term action examples include flowers, seating, public art and sidewalk or street murals.

LAYERED: Neighbourhood places can have different layers. The spaces themselves may be big or small, or provide a few or many things to do. The key is to ensure there are multiple things to attract you and provide a reason for you to stay and interact with your neighbours. Experience in other cities suggests that groupings of three, also known as triangulating, can help create a great place. For example, placing a bench and garbage bin beneath a tree and beside a community garden may encourage gardeners and those passing by to take a break from the beating sun to chat.

AN ONGOING JOURNEY: One good idea often leads to another! Amenities wear out. Needs, aspirations and visions may change. Be open and flexible to this change.

“A piano in Weber Park brings music to residents’ ears.”

— Project for Public Spaces
Four steps to Neighbourhood Placemaking

There are many ways to turn a space into a great ‘place’. The following steps to Neighbourhood Placemaking are provided as general guidance to do just that. They are broad and flexible in an effort to provide guidance for any type of idea. The steps do not necessarily have to be completed in order.

An example of the Neighbourhood Placemaking Process

1. Find a space

- Become familiar with the spaces in your neighbourhood, visit those with potential and choose one for Neighbourhood Placemaking.
- Find out who owns the property. If it’s not clear, check with City staff. Please note: Where lands are held under private ownership, the City may not be able to release personal information about the owner.
- Seek permission from the land owner to use the space for Neighbourhood Placemaking.

Remember: Additional approvals from the land owner may be required once the specific details of the Neighbourhood Placemaking initiative are known.

Marl Meadow Court residents came up with a unique idea for their cul-de-sac: a “gaga ball” court! They received a grant to build the court through the City’s first Placemaking Challenge.

“It’s really wonderful to wake up in a city where every day you realize that today the city is a little bit better than yesterday.”
- Jan Gehl, architect
2. Generate ideas for the space

- Consider the current and desired function of the space.
  - What is it currently used for? What do residents want it to be used for?
  - What’s there now? What’s happening now?
  - What works well? And what doesn’t?
  - Who uses it? And who doesn’t?
  - What could it look like in 5 years? What do you want it to look like?
- Talk to people in your neighbourhood. Find out what they think. Don’t forget to ask the property owner what they think too!
- Neighbourhood Placemaking needs to involve as many people as possible who live, work, learn and play in your neighbourhood, so that everyone can get behind it.
  - Ask your neighbours for their input and how they want to be involved.
  - Talk to children, youth, adults and older adults in your neighbourhood.
  - Seek input from your neighbours who may have disabilities.
  - Reach out to your neighbours who are new to your neighbourhood and who have been long-time residents of your neighbourhood.
  - Include your neighbours who you have not met or don’t normally get a chance to connect with.
  - Think about the diversity of your neighbourhood and make sure everyone’s voice is heard. Check out Tool C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood for more tips on how to involve everyone in your neighbourhood.
  - Encourage your neighbours to help spread the word about your Neighbourhood Placemaking idea.

Once full of litter, this forested section of Shantz Park - nicknamed “Fairyposa” - turned magical thanks to the creative expression of local residents.

“A sense of place is built up from many little things, some so small people take them for granted, and yet the lack of them takes the flavour out of the city.”
- Jane Jacobs
• Identify your neighbourhood’s needs, aspirations and visions for the space.
  > Be open to different peoples’ needs in your neighbourhood.
  > Acknowledge that there may be multiple ideas for the same space.
  > Check out Tool D – Asset Mapping: Neighbourhood Gathering, Walk and Asset Chart and Tool E – How to Develop Vision Statements, for more tips on how to identify your neighbourhood’s needs and vision.
• Check in with City staff before moving on to the next steps, so they can:
  > Flag any by-laws that may impact your ability to make your idea happen.
  > Let you know if any approvals are required.
  > Share other ideas that are being implemented by other neighbours in the area or by the City.
  > Highlight potential funding sources.
  > Connect you with people who can help – neighbours, neighbourhood associations, community partners or other City staff.
• Research interesting ideas from Kitchener and other cities.
• Choose the idea(s).
  > Select short-term, quick wins but don’t forget about some long-term ideas too.
  > Prioritize each idea. What should happen first? When should it happen?
  > Identify the steps required to make the idea(s) happen.

“In placemaking the important transformation happens in the mind of participants, not simply in the space itself.”
- Susan Silberberg

Artists in Kingsdale enjoyed chatting with many residents passing by as they painted the mural on Wilson Community Pool.
3. Make it happen

- Create a description of your Neighbourhood Placemaking idea to share with others.
  > This could include a simple sketch, drawing or picture to show what is planned.
- Determine how much it will cost.
- Seek funding sources
  > Check out the City’s Neighbourhood Matching Grant - Kitchener.ca/lovenymyhoodgrant.
  > Check out the City’s annual Neighbourhood Placemaking Challenge - lovemyhood.ca
  > Check in with City staff to learn about easy ways to fundraise.
- Obtain approvals from the land owner and/or the City. If necessary, City staff can help.
- Make a list of things to do to complete your idea.
- Bring your idea to life!

4. Use the neighbourhood place

- Host an opening celebration.
- Tell your neighbours about the place.
- Visit it often.
- Keep it maintained and looking good.
- Host gatherings and events.
- Share stories.
- Keep it animated.
- Think about the future of the place:
  > Is it temporary or permanent?
  > Who will maintain it?
  > What might be done when it wears out?

Winter rinks are popular places for neighbours to gather - like this one in River Ridge - proving that placemaking is a year-round opportunity.

“Great places are not created in one fell swoop, but through many creative acts of citizenship.”

- Project for Public Spaces
Neighbourhood Placemaking Toolkit

Tools to help you

Sometimes it helps to see what other people have come up with to get the creative juices flowing. We’ve collected a number of resources and tools to help you brainstorm ideas and involve your neighbours. To access these tools, contact City staff and they will be happy to assist you.

Tool A – List of Neighbourhood Placemaking Resources & Ideas
Tool B – List of Potential Community Partners
Tool C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood
Tool D – Asset Mapping: Neighbourhood Gathering, Walk and Asset Chart
Tool E – How to Develop Vision Statements

HAVE FUN!

So many residents in Kitchener have already put their own personal touch on their neighbourhood in countless, creative ways. Remember, City staff is here to help, but we also know that the best neighbourhoods are made by the people who live here. Through placemaking, you too can make the places in your neighbourhood something to be proud of for years to come. Enjoy!

“Great cities know that streets are places to linger and live, not just move through.”
- Brent Toderian

Streets can be places too! Residents in Westmount neighbourhood transform Duchess Avenue into a place for music and fun.
Kitchener’s Neighbourhood Placemaking Toolkit

lovemyhood.ca

*** This information is available in accessible formats upon request. ***
Please call 519-741-2200 ext. 7083 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.

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Tool A – List of Neighbourhood Placemaking Resources and Ideas

Examples of Placemaking in Kitchener
• Cob ovens: Willow Green/Cherry Park and Mill Courtland Community Centre
• Night/Shift
• Tremaine Park ping pong table
• Shantz Park fairy village
• Lancaster Street painted crosswalk
• Marl Meadow Court gaga ball court (temporary) and tree planting
• Willow Lake Park historical map workshop (temporary)
• Iron Horse Trail near Mill Street pollinator garden
• Lemonade stand and community message board at the Ferdinand Street entrance to the Spur Line Trail (temporary)
• Victoria Park beach picnic (temporary)
• Hartwood Court soccer, live music and food (temporary)
• Tetherball, horseshoes and more at the grassy lot next to the community trail entrance off of Vanier Drive (temporary)
• Forest Heights Community Centre Edible Food Forest Shed Mural

Resources
Love My Hood: Kitchener’s Guide to Great Neighbourhoods – lovemyhood.ca
Project for Public Spaces – pps.org
100in1Day – 100in1day.ca
Placemaking Chicago – placemakingchicago.com
City of Surrey PARKit Program Website - surrey.ca/community/10971.aspx
Better Block - betterblock.org
The City Repair Project - cityrepair.org
Resilient Streets Toolkit – resilientneighbourhoods.ca
Walk Your City Website - walkyourcity.org
More Ideas

We're open to your creative ideas! You know your neighbourhood best and how people would like to interact with the places within it. We've come up with a starting list of ideas just to get you thinking:

- Community gardens
- Edible trails
- Neighbourhood sheds complete with a tool swap
- Pop-up parks
- Benches, hammocks, umbrellas, etc.
- Chalk designs on sidewalks or streets
- Community-made identifying or wayfinding signs along trails or on street light poles
- Physical art or sculptures
- Unique features at bus stops
- Naturalizing an area: bird houses, butterfly gardens, panels for learning about the natural environment
- Summer beach party in a parking lot
- “Park”ing day – turn a parking lot/spot into a mini-park
- Outdoor reading room, complete with a little library, seating, carpet
- Lifesize games
- Host improv acting classes
- “Yarn-bombing” or costuming benches, fences, posts, etc
- Popup craft markets
- Movable planters to beautify a space or mark it differently
- Historic interpretation panels or re-enactments of what the site may have looked like in the past
- A dance party, complete with a dance floor, jukebox and maybe even some instructors
- Community bulletin board, advertising the quirky and usual things happening in your ‘hood
- Set up love letter writing stations – addressed to all the great places in your ‘hood!

Tool B – List of Potential Community Partners

- Colleges and universities
- Cultural groups
- Faith-based groups
- Festival of Neighbourhoods
- Foundations (e.g. charitable foundations)
- Housing co-operatives
- Law enforcement
- Libraries
- Local businesses
- Neighbourhood associations
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Government
- School boards & local schools
- Service clubs
- Social media networks
- Social service agencies
The following tool provides tips and exercises for being inclusive in your neighbourhood. The tips encourage you to think about the different types of people who live in your neighbourhood – youth, people with disabilities, seniors and people of diverse cultural backgrounds. The purpose of the exercises is to help the Neighbourhood Action Team recognize the value and wealth of diverse experience and involve people from diverse backgrounds.

Invite Everyone in Your Neighbourhood
Inviting everyone in your neighbourhood helps to ensure that everyone feels truly welcome and builds a stronger community. Here are some tips to help you have a more inclusive neighbourhood gathering.

Reaching Out to Youth
Get your neighbourhood youth involved. Consider having fun acts and attractions at the event such as clowns, fireworks and/or music (possibly by youth). Consider planning physical activities such as tug-of-wars, baseball, basketball and street hockey. Consider advertising using social networking websites such as Facebook, Twitter, MSN Messenger and YouTube. Say hi to any young people who attend and welcome them. Offer community service hours (if applicable) to high school students who are involved in planning and/or helping out with the gathering. This is a great way to get volunteers!

Reaching Out to People with Disabilities
Consider accessibility to make it easier for people with disabilities to participate. For example, is the information about the event being distributed in large font or alternative formats, upon request, for people with visual disabilities or for people with different reading skills? Is the location of your gathering barrier free? If the event is outdoors, is the ground level enough for people with physical disabilities to access? Review the Planning Accessible Events: So everyone feels welcome document for tips on how to make your neighbourhood meetings and events more accessible. This document is found here: bit.ly/2KWNQ0M.

Reaching Out to Seniors
Consider ways to include seniors and support senior participation in neighbourhood events. Seniors might have mobility or other barriers to participating. Be attentive to their needs, offer them a chair if they want to sit, bring the food or the activity to them, or simply ask if there is anything that they might have something special to share.

Reaching Out to People of Diverse Cultural Backgrounds
Be sure to include neighbours who may not share your language or cultural background. Can you make invitations in the spoken languages of your neighbourhood or simple, plain English? Can you reach out to someone in the neighbourhood to help you with translations? You might want to encourage your neighbours to share their culture through the neighbourhood activity being organized. For example, if the activity involves food, music or dance, people from all backgrounds might have something special to share.

Varied Diets
If food is involved, be sensitive to the diet preferences of your neighbours by ensuring that there is a variety of food choices.

The tips were excerpted and adapted from the Neighbourhood Activity Guide produced by Kitchener's Festival of Neighbourhoods. View the guide at bit.ly/2ymrYmI.

Community Bundle Exercise
The main objective of this exercise is to recognize and value the wealth of experience that each person brings to the Neighbourhood Action Team. Each Neighbourhood Action Team member will be asked to bring an object that represents something important to them or that gives them strength. Members will sit in a circle facing one another with a clothed table in the centre. Each member is asked to place their object on the table, and in a few words explain how the object relates to their background, culture or life experience, and why this is important to them or gives them strength. Once everyone is finished, ask them to take a look at the display of objects and reflect. Questions for reflection may include: What do you notice about who we are, what is important to us, what objects give us strength and courage, what do we have in common, what diversity is among us, or how does this diversity enrich our group?

Diversity Wheel Exercise
The main objective of this exercise is to draw upon the experiences of the Neighbourhood Action Team in order to know how to engage people from diverse backgrounds. Each Neighbourhood Action Team member will be asked to think about their own experiences and complete their own individual diversity wheel by underlining social factors that have been an advantage and circling those that have been a disadvantage. Once complete, members may share in small pairs before participating in a larger group discussion. Questions for discussion may include: what did you notice, how can we use our advantages to reach out and engage people, how might these disadvantages affect people's ability to engage in our Neighbourhood Action Plan process and who is missing in our Neighbourhood Action Plan process? Members should then identify actions that the team can take to include those who are missing.

The exercises were summarized from the Creating the Change We Want: A Guide for Building Neighbourhood Capacity (3rd edition) produced by Community Development Framework (CDF), Ottawa, 2016. The full Community Bundle exercise is available on pages 20 – 21 and the full Diversity Wheel exercise is available on pages 23 – 25. View this guide at bit.ly/2KMP300.
Tool D – Asset Mapping: Neighbourhood Gathering, Walk and Asset Chart

Neighbourhood Gathering
A neighbourhood gathering is a fun way to engage residents and to document the many assets that are important to the neighbourhood. Use a neighbourhood gathering to get people excited about placemaking and eager to get involved.

One asset mapping activity gathers information from residents 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 assets - things (material objects) and social assets - people (skills, knowledge, experience)] and place them on a map to identify the location of the particular asset within the neighbourhood. Use the chart on the next page as a guide for explaining the types of assets that might exist in the neighbourhood.

Helpful Hint: Number each dot and, on a separate legend 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 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?”

A successfully completed asset-mapping exercise should leave neighbours feeling energized for neighbourhood placemaking.

Helpful Hint: In order to be as inclusive as possible, it is a good idea to provide culturally appropriate and healthy refreshments, childcare and transportation (e.g. bus tickets) so that all members of the neighbourhood have a chance to attend and participate in the asset mapping exercise.

The asset mapping section related to neighbourhood gatherings was adapted in part from the Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit, Tool B – Asset Mapping. View Hamilton’s Toolkit at bit.ly/2hRLt6H.

Neighbourhood Walk
A neighbourhood walk can be scheduled before or after a neighbourhood gathering in order to start to understand the assets of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood walk may include residents, City staff, the ward Councillor and other relevant community partners. An added bonus of the neighbourhood walk may be the opportunity to meet some neighbours you haven’t met before.

The neighbourhood walk will also help to develop a picture of the neighbourhood. This picture will include both the physical and social assets in the neighbourhood. You will want to think about such things as the history of the neighbourhood, what has already been done and what is being planned in the neighbourhood. City staff are one resource for identifying what is being planned in the neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood Asset Chart
Every neighbourhood has a collection of assets that make it unique. The chart below can help you identify all the different assets that can be found within your neighbourhood. It is expected that many assets will cross categories as they serve multiple functions within a neighbourhood. This chart can also help residents focus on and identify what the benefits of each asset are for the neighbourhood.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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| Places                       | Assets that serve as a meeting place to encourage residents to connect and spend time together | • Parks and playgrounds  
• Natural areas and green space  
• Community centres  
• Recreation facilities  
• Community gardens  
• Farmers’ markets |
| Education, Health and Social Services | Assets that contribute to residents’ quality of life | • Libraries  
• Literacy centres  
• Early years centres  
• Schools, colleges and universities  
• Hospitals and clinics  
• Mental health facilities  
• Elder care facilities  
• Housing services  
• Social and income assistance programs |
| Amenities                    | Assets that provide goods and services to residents                          | • Shopping malls/centres  
• Grocery stores  
• Markets  
• Restaurants, cafes and bars  
• Entertainment centres |
| Economic                     | Assets that generate income and economic well-being in the                  | • Employment training centres  
• Small and large businesses |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Transportation** | Assets that help residents get around within their neighbourhood and to reach destinations beyond their neighbourhood | • Sidewalks  
• Trails  
• Bike lanes  
• Transit (stations, stops and lines)  
• Roads |
| **Cultural** | Assets that help residents enjoy and celebrate life through history, culture, recreation and sport | • Events  
• Faith communities/places of worship  
• Cultural or ethnic groups  
• Historical or heritage sites/buildings  
• Architecturally significant buildings  
• Museums  
• Sports teams and recreation clubs  
• Arts groups  
• Public art and monuments |
| **Community** | Assets that help residents foster belonging in their neighbourhood and address neighbourhood needs | • Neighbourhood associations  
• Advocacy groups  
• Not-for-profit organizations  
• Service clubs |
| **Safety** | Assets that help residents feel safe and increase neighbourhood safety | • Police  
• Fire  
• Bylaw  
• Neighbourhood watch or crime prevention initiatives  
• Street calming features  
• Lighting |
| **Individual** | Assets that residents contribute to the wider neighbourhood | • Skills  
• Talents  
• Experiences  
• Leadership  
• Networks |

The asset mapping section related to the neighbourhood asset chart was adapted in part from the Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit, Tool B – Asset Mapping. View Hamilton’s Toolkit at bit.ly/2hRLt6H.

**Tool E – How to Develop Vision Statements**

**Vision Statement**

Residents can drive the change that they want to see in a particular place when they clearly articulate a vision for the future of their neighbourhood or for the place.

The vision should:
- Be concise, identify what is possible and create a picture of the future of the neighbourhood.
- Be inspiring and inspirational.
- Explain why the neighbourhood is doing placemaking.
- Explain where the neighbourhood is heading and what they are trying to achieve.

Steps to create a vision statement:
- Select a facilitator and recorder
- Make sure sticky notes, pens, flip chart paper and markers are available

The facilitator will:

1. Explain to the group the purpose of the vision statement.
2. Ask the team to review the asset map and neighbourhood profiles. Ask the team to consider the following questions: Based on our assets and issues, what do we want this place to look like in 5 years…10 years…20 years? How do we build and enhance our assets? How do we address our needs? What is possible?
3. Give each team member 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 team 10 minutes to think, reflect and complete.
4. Facilitate a "go around" by asking each team member to speak to their idea. Have the team discuss each idea. The recorder will capture the main ideas on flip chart paper. The facilitator will then ask the team to group ideas together into major themes. Get agreement on the major themes. Ask the group, “Did we miss anything?”
5. Write each theme on a flip chart and post around the room. Give each team member 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 team not wordsmith a vision statement as part of this exercise. Have one or two team members, the facilitator and City staff take away the major themes, put some sentences around these themes and bring this work back to the group for discussion. Once your vision statement is complete, do a REALITY CHECK. ASK: Can this be achieved?

The How to Develop Vision Statements, Objectives, Quick Wins and Actions tool was adapted from the Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit, Tool J – How to Develop Vision Statements, Objectives and Quick Wins. View Hamilton’s Toolkit at bit.ly/2hRLt6H.
Shape the future of your neighbourhood.
Thank you
We appreciate your efforts.

Kitchener’s Neighbourhood Action Plan guide and toolkit was written by a committee of residents and City staff, based on research and input by the Neighbourhood Strategy project team. The document borrows from the work of the Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit. Thank you.

Got questions?
Contact City staff anytime. We’re happy to help!

Neighbourhood Development Office, City of Kitchener
lovemyhood@kitchener.ca
519-741-2200 ext. HOOD (4663)

Neighbourhood Action Plan WORD LIST

This guide uses some words that you may not be familiar with. If you find a word you’re not sure about, flip back to this page to get a description of what that word means.

■ ACCESSIBLE: All people can enjoy and participate in the opportunities their neighbourhood provides.

■ ASSET: Physical things such as material objects (e.g. community centre, library, grocery store) and personal qualities such as a person’s skills, knowledge and/or experience (e.g. leadership skills, local knowledge, academic experience).

■ ASSET BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A process that encourages community driven development by building on assets already found, rather than focusing on the needs, in the neighbourhood.

■ ASSET MAP: A map with information that identifies the strengths and resources of a neighbourhood and can help uncover solutions.

■ COMMUNICATIONS PLAN: A plan to communicate with the neighbourhood by identifying who to target, when, with what message and how.

■ COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION: A voluntary, not-for-profit, non-partisan, non-denominational group based in a geographic neighbourhood within the borders of the City of Kitchener that is: inclusive of and responsive to the needs of the community within the specific geographic area defined by the group; open to the public and makes this known through communications to the residents of that neighbourhood; active; and, accountable.

■ COMMUNITY PARTNER: Groups or organizations that have an interest in great neighbourhoods (e.g. not-for-profits, school boards, police, etc.).

■ CONNECTED: Neighbourhoods have links between people and between people and places.

■ DIVERSE: Neighbourhoods have a variety of people, places, activities and services.

■ ENGAGED: People are involved and committed to activities, programs and places.

■ INCLUSIVE: People are welcomed and feel a sense of belonging in their neighbourhood.

■ NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION TEAM: The core group of people who are involved in creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan.

■ NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION: A voluntary, not-for-profit, non-partisan, non-denominational group based in a geographic neighbourhood within the borders of the City of Kitchener that is: inclusive of and responsive to the needs of the community within the specific geographic area defined by the group; open to the public and makes this known through communications to the residents of that neighbourhood; active; and, accountable.

■ NEIGHBOURHOOD MATCHING GRANT: A one-time grant, provided in partnership with United Way Kitchener Waterloo and Area, that provides support to people who want to make positive change in their neighbourhood through matching funds ranging between $500 and $15,000.

■ PARTICIPATORY APPROACH: A way of ensuring that everyone who has a stake in the neighbourhood has a voice, either in person or by representation.

■ RESIDENT CHAMPION: An individual resident or a group of residents with an interest in a specific neighbourhood who are willing to start conversations with others about creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan.

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

■ VISION: A statement that captures the neighbours’ dream of what their neighbourhood will be in the future.

■ VOLUNTEER: A range of formal and informal ways people contribute to their neighbourhood, like being a member of the Neighbourhood Action Team, being involved with a neighbourhood association or just being engaged and helping out your neighbours.

■ WARD COUNCILLOR: An elected official who represents a specific ward within the City.

■ WORKPLAN: A plan that establishes clear expectations and timelines for developing the Neighbourhood Action Plan, including dates and responsibilities for key tasks, meetings and major milestones.

* This information is available in accessible formats upon request. Please call 519-741-2200 ext. 7083 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.
Introduction to #lovemyhood
Kitchener’s Neighbourhood Strategy
In 2015, the City brought together a project team of residents from across the city to develop #lovemyhood - Kitchener’s first ever Neighbourhood Strategy.
#lovemyhood aims to build on the great things already happening in Kitchener’s neighbourhoods by giving residents tools, programs and resources to affect positive change in neighbourhoods.
One of the key deliverables from the project was to develop a framework to help residents create Neighbourhood Action Plans.

What is a Neighbourhood Action Plan?
Residents + Vision + Actions = Neighbourhood Action Plan
A Neighbourhood Action Plan is a written document that identifies the priorities for a stronger neighbourhood that is more safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged. Residents define their neighbourhood boundaries and create their own plans that represent the many diverse voices of their neighbourhood. The plans are action-oriented, resident-led and supported by City staff. The plans lay out a clear vision for the future of a neighbourhood and identify meaningful and measurable goals with action items that have widespread neighbourhood support and can reasonably be implemented within a 5 year timeframe. The plans also identify who will be responsible for each action item. Action items may be partially, or fully, funded by the City through programs such as the Neighbourhood Matching Grant. Other funding bodies and sources may also support the actions.

Who can create a Neighbourhood Action Plan?
Any group of residents.
Virtually anyone, in collaboration with their neighbours, can create a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Residents don’t need to belong to an existing group, conform to particular geographical boundaries or have expertise in this type of planning. City staff is available to support efforts and help make it happen.

We made this guide to help residents make positive change in their neighbourhood.
If you’re ready to put a plan in motion but are unsure of where to start, need help recruiting volunteers or wondering about an Implementation plan - it's all in here! You can follow this guide in the order given or flip directly to the information that's most helpful to you. You'll even find helpful contact information if you want additional support.

– Brooke Robinson, Neighbourhood Strategy project team volunteer and Tremaine Park resident
Why create a Neighbourhood Action Plan?

Shape the future of your neighbourhood.

Creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan will help residents connect and work together to shape the future of a neighbourhood. Residents who contribute to the creation of a plan may experience the following benefits:

- Increased knowledge of their neighbourhood
- Increased opportunities to connect and get to know their neighbours
- Increased sense of belonging, including a sense of neighbourhood identity and pride
- Increased opportunities for residents to be involved and engaged in their neighbourhood
- Increased ability to create positive change by addressing neighbourhood issues and opportunities
- Stronger neighbourhood leadership
- A stronger neighbourhood that is more safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged

What is the purpose of the Neighbourhood Action Plan Guide?

To help you create a vision for change and a plan to make it happen.

This guide is intended to help residents create their own Neighbourhood Action Plan by providing suggestions, tools and advice. It is not intended to tell residents how they must create their own plans. Instead, this guide is flexible, recognizing that different neighbourhoods have different capacities and needs, or may be at different stages of development.

Once you’ve had an opportunity to review the Neighbourhood Action Plan guide, please contact City staff to talk about getting started.
Principles to guide Kitchener’s Neighbourhood Action Plans

Common ground for all neighbourhoods.

Eight principles have been identified to guide the creation of Neighbourhood Action Plans in neighbourhoods across the city. Recognizing that each neighbourhood is unique, the principles are provided to establish some common ground for neighbourhoods to incorporate and work towards. Residents are encouraged to build stronger neighbourhoods that are more safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged.

FOCUS ON ASSETS: Residents will focus on the assets that are already found in their neighbourhoods and mobilize neighbours and community partners to come together and build on those strengths. Assets are both things (material objects) and people (skills, knowledge, experience). Examples may include physical elements such as buildings, social connections such as personal relationships with your neighbours, or people’s skills such as leadership. Strengths and successes in a neighbourhood are used as a starting point for change.

ACTION ORIENTED: Residents will generate ideas of what could be done to build on their strengths and then produce meaningful and measureable actions to make their neighbourhood even better.

RESIDENT-LED: The majority of participants on the Neighbourhood Action Team will live in or have a personal interest in the neighbourhood. All participants have a sense of ownership in the process and their neighbourhood.

CITY SUPPORTED: The City has an important role to play in helping residents build their Neighbourhood Action Plan by providing resources and tools to support the process. The City will make it as easy as possible for residents to make great things happen in their neighbourhoods.

INCLUSIVE AND COLLABORATIVE: The Neighbourhood Action Team members will strive to include as many people as possible representing the diversity of their neighbourhood. The process of creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan should ensure all participants feel a sense of belonging and know that their perspectives are respected and valued. Participants will work together to foster change in their neighbourhood through full and equal participation in discussion and decision making.

RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE AND IT IS DO-ABLE: People, existing neighbourhood groups, community partners, funding and spaces are available to support the development and implementation of the actions identified in the Neighbourhood Action Plan. The actions should be responsible, realistic and implementable.

LEADS TO POSITIVE CHANGE: The process of creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan should welcome change and see it as an opportunity.

MEASURABLE: Processes and actions should tell a story. The Neighbourhood Action Team is encouraged to report on simple measurements when available and relevant. For example, what was accomplished and learned? How did they feel? Were there any unintended outcomes?

The residents of the Schneider Creek area have a vision for their neighbourhood. We have had two events where the people who live in this area had opportunities to give their feedback about what kind of community and environment is important to them. There is nothing that creates a vibrant, healthy city more than residents who care about and love where they live.

– Linda Bender, Schneider Creek resident commenting in their plan called Making our Neighbourhood Great
An overview of how to create a Neighbourhood Action Plan

Be flexible and engage residents every step of the way.

The creation of a Neighbourhood Action Plan is not a step-by-step process, and it does not require a one-size fits all approach. It has been designed to be flexible because neighbourhoods are unique and may be at different steps in the process. Some neighbourhoods may not need to complete all of the steps.

Throughout the development and the implementation of the Neighbourhood Action Plan, continuous engagement of residents is required to provide input, review, revise, monitor, and adjust the Neighbourhood Action Plan as it moves forward. Throughout each step, it is important to:

- Reach out to as many members of your neighbourhood as possible
- Involve everyone by making meetings and events accessible and inclusive
- Communicate clearly with the broader neighbourhood, using a variety of methods, to reach diverse neighbourhood members
- Recruit new members for the Neighbourhood Action Team to make the team representative of the neighbourhood

Need a refresher on a meaning? Click the N.A.P. WORD LIST tab and you’ll jump to the definitions found at the front of this guide.

Each TOOL tab indicates which template(s) you will need to complete that step. The TOOLKIT starts on page 24 and come with instructions and links to examples for creating your Neighbourhood Action Plan.

Each STEP tab indicates which step you’re at in the Neighbourhood Action Plan process.
1. Get started

Generate interest and enthusiasm.

Conversations around creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan can start with an individual resident or a group of residents with an interest in a specific neighbourhood. This guide refers to these individuals or groups as resident champions. The resident champions do not require any special skills, simply an interest in starting a conversation with others. The resident champions can start the process by following these steps.

Talk with City staff

The resident champions should talk with City staff to let them know they are interested in creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan for their neighbourhood. The role of City staff is to provide support. City staff can help avoid duplication, coordinate efforts, and provide resources (e.g. meeting space, funding). Involving City staff will help to ensure that the neighbourhood’s vision and actions are embraced by the City. This is extremely important for the successful implementation of those action items that may require approvals or resources from the City.

Confirm interest in creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan

Before a group can start to create a Neighbourhood Action Plan, it should be determined if enough residents and others with a personal interest in the neighbourhood are ready and willing to participate. The resident champions should talk to their neighbours, existing resident led groups, City staff and their ward Councillor to confirm their interest. For example, are people willing to participate on the Neighbourhood Action Team, are people willing to attend neighbourhood gatherings, and are people willing to provide input? City staff can help initiate conversations with existing groups and organizations and the ward Councillor. Click here to find information about the ward Councillors. www.kitchener.ca/en/insidecityhall/whosmycouncillor.asp

Once interest is confirmed, existing resident led groups and other neighbourhood organizations may have the networks and experience to lead, help the resident champions lead or participate in the resident champions process of creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Resident led groups and other neighbourhood organizations might include:

- Community and neighbourhood associations
- School councils
- Housing cooperatives
- Tenant associations
- Business improvement associations
- Faith based groups
- Cultural or ethnic groups
- Recreational and service clubs
- Non-profit and social service organizations

These groups may have leaders who can help champion and participate in the creation of a Neighbourhood Action Plan. The greater the variety of experiences among these leaders, the more closely the Neighbourhood Action Plan will reflect the strengths of the individual neighbourhood. In order to facilitate communications and build relationships, the resident champions can ask to be included on the agenda of an existing group’s upcoming meeting. At the meeting, the resident champions can:

- Present the main purpose of creating the Neighbourhood Action Plan
- Talk about the relationship between the existing group and the proposed Neighbourhood Action Team
- Ask how the existing group could contribute (e.g. lead, help lead, participate or provide financial support)
- Invite the existing group to help organize a neighbourhood gathering to let the neighbour know about the development of a Neighbourhood Action Plan, generate an asset map and recruit new people to volunteer on the Neighbourhood Action Team

Confirm relationships:
Neighbourhood Associations and Neighbourhood Action Teams

Many neighbourhoods across the city have existing community or neighbourhood associations with interests that vary. Some community or neighbourhood associations may primarily be interested in offering recreational programs while others may be interested in both recreational programs and neighbourhood development. Either way, these groups have experience and local knowledge that others may find helpful when creating and implementing a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Where a community or neighbourhood association already exists, the resident champions are encouraged to speak with the neighbourhood association to determine if and how they may be able to work together to support and help one another. This discussion should explore the potential relationship between the neighbourhood association board and the soon to be established Neighbourhood Action Team. It should be clear whether the Neighbourhood Action Team will work with, or independently from, the neighbourhood association board. For example, will the neighbourhood association become the Neighbourhood Action Team? Will a representative of the neighbourhood association sit on the Neighbourhood Action Team? Will the neighbourhood association simply provide input? Or, will the neighbourhood association choose not to participate? These questions should be explored in the hopes of fostering a collaborative relationship where residents take ownership in the creation and implementation of the Neighbourhood Action Plan.
2. Host a neighbourhood gathering

Host a fun event. Recruit volunteers. Identify assets.

The next step is to work with interested neighbours and groups to organize a neighbourhood gathering. The purpose of the neighbourhood gathering is to run an asset mapping exercise and seek volunteers to sit on the Neighbourhood Action Team. Hopefully, residents will get to meet some new neighbours too!

This guide encourages residents to use an asset-based community development approach because it encourages positive change in neighbourhoods by building on the skills, strengths and supports of residents, groups and institutions.

A fun neighbourhood gathering with food is a perfect way to attract people to participate in the asset mapping exercise. The asset mapping exercise provides the first opportunity to engage people, identify physical boundaries of the neighbourhood and gather relevant information about the neighbourhood from the perspective of the people who live, work, learn and play there. The City is not telling residents how to define their neighbourhood. Instead, it’s up to residents to define their own neighbourhood and its boundaries. The asset mapping exercise can be quite informal so as not to detract from the fun atmosphere.

The information collected from this initial asset mapping exercise will help to develop a picture of the neighbourhood as it exists today.

Assets may be grouped into categories such as places and spaces, groups and organizations and individuals’ gifts and skills. Examples of things to identify during the asset mapping exercise include:

- Buildings
- Public places, like parks and trails
- Neighbourhood associations or other formal groups
- Activities and programs
- Events and festivals
- Skills
- Relationships and partnerships

The neighbourhood gathering can also be used to generate awareness around the creation of the Neighbourhood Action Plan and seek additional volunteers for the Neighbourhood Action Team.

A brief explanation of the purpose and process can be provided to attendees so that potential volunteers understand the role of Neighbourhood Action Team members. City staff is available, if needed, to help with planning and running the neighbourhood gathering. Residents won’t want to forget to invite their ward Councillor.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool B – Engaging the Neighbourhood
Tool C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood
Tool D – Community and Neighbourhood Association Map
Tool E – Asset Mapping: Neighbourhood Gathering, Walk and Asset Chart

3. Establish the Neighbourhood Action Team

Build your team.

Once the resident champions have established interest from the neighbourhood, the next step is to form a core group of people that serve as the Neighbourhood Action Team.

Look for people who have expressed an interest in making their neighbourhood great and are dedicated to making things happen. Seek out some new people to bring creative ideas to the table. As much as possible, make sure they represent the diverse demographics and viewpoints within the neighbourhood. Remember to be accessible and inclusive. Don’t forget about non-residents such as businesses, community partners and schools. To help make the process as easy as possible, one City staff person will be assigned to liaise between the neighbourhood and other City staff. One of their main roles will be to keep other City staff informed so that the proper resources can be put in place to support neighbourhoods. It is also a good idea to invite the ward Councillor to participate.

TIP:
Most people will need a personal invitation to get involved. Share with them why you’re excited about creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan and why they would be valuable members of the team.

Although there are no hard and fast rules, experience in other cities suggests that somewhere between 8 and 15 people should form the Neighbourhood Action Team with residents comprising at least half of the members. Ultimately, these numbers are flexible based on the needs of the neighbourhood.

The resident champions may also want to consider the skills that volunteers bring to the team. Residents and others with a personal interest in the neighbourhood may not have all of the required skills to develop and implement a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Volunteers from outside the neighbourhood can be invited to participate when skills are required and not available within the neighbourhood.

The skills that may be required include:

- facilitation
- leadership
- communication
- knowledge of city hall
- knowledge of neighbourhood history
- land use planning
- technology
- project planning/management
- networking/creating partnerships
- hospitality (food)
- artistry/creativity (fun)
- people skills/conflict resolution/team building
- accessibility awareness

Once established, Neighbourhood Action Teams are welcome to identify their own team name and/or neighbourhood name. This will help establish their unique team and/or neighbourhood identity and foster a sense of ownership and belonging.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool B – Engaging the Neighbourhood
Tool C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood
Host the First Neighbourhood Action Team meeting

Make sure that meetings are accessible and inclusive (View the Planning Accessible Events guide: bit.ly/2kWNGiM so that all people are able to contribute. Promote a participatory approach whereby people who have an interest in the neighbourhood have a voice in creating the Neighbourhood Action Plan. Meetings and events can be easier to attend for a wider range of people within the neighbourhood when some or all of the following things are considered:

- convenient meeting times
- convenient and accessible locations (barrier free and multiple modes of transportation)
- bus tickets
- child care
- refreshments
- interpretation/translation

TIP:
Give extra attention to being accessible, inclusive and fun in your first meeting, to set the tone for the rest of your meetings.

The City’s Neighbourhood Matching Grant can help the resident champion and/or Neighbourhood Action Team reach a wider range of people. The grant provides support to people that want to make positive change in their neighbourhood. Matching funds ranging from $500 to $15,000 are awarded to people who invest in their community. Investments include financial contributions, volunteer time, and in-kind resources and services.

Make the first Neighbourhood Action Team meeting fun! Purely administrative discussions can be boring and discourage people from participating from the start. 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.

Lastly, it is helpful for all team members to agree in writing about the team leadership and practical details such as when, how frequently and where the group will meet 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.

4. Create a workplan
Identify key tasks, timelines and responsibilities.

During the first or second meeting of the Neighbourhood Action Team, a brief workplan can be developed, in order to establish clear expectations and timelines for developing the Neighbourhood Action Plan. This will help keep things on track and ensure Neighbourhood Action Team members are available and committed. Workplans usually outline dates and responsibilities for key tasks, meetings and major milestones. Key tasks include such things as establishing a vision, identifying goals and objectives, creating a communications plan, determining how success will be measured, drafting the Neighbourhood Action Plan and finalizing strategies to take action. Major milestones include such things as key tasks once they have been endorsed by the broader community.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool H – Workplan Template

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool F – How to Plan and Run Meetings
Tool G – Decision Making Tools
5. Develop a communications plan

Keep residents informed.

The creation of a communications plan will help inform residents about their work and engage more people in the process. The communications plan identifies when and how the Neighbourhood Action Team will communicate with the neighbourhood and gather their input. When to communicate should align with the key tasks and major milestones identified in the workplan. Recognizing the diverse makeup of a neighbourhood, it will be important to communicate and seek input in different ways. Some examples could include events, meetings, newsletters, website and social media.

TIP:
Always try to communicate in plain language. Use words and sentences that are appropriate for a Grade 6-8 reading level, so everyone can understand and remember your message quickly and easily.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool B – Engaging the Neighbourhood
Tool C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood
Tool I – Communications Plan

6. Engage the neighbourhood

Understand your neighbourhood today. Create a vision for the future.

What do residents know about their neighbourhood?

One of the first Neighbourhood Action Team meeting agenda items should focus on further developing the asset map of the neighbourhood. The team should take some time to review the asset map that the community started at the neighbourhood gathering, discuss the information and add any additional assets that were missed. The asset map is simply one tool that the team can use to help develop a picture that represents what residents know about their neighbourhood.

A review of social and demographic statistical information may help to broaden everyone’s understanding of their neighbourhood. Information about the people who live in the neighbourhood, housing, income levels and land uses can be considered. Information about how safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged neighbourhoods are will be made available and can also be considered. All of this information can be requested from City staff.

Asset mapping combined with statistical information can serve as an important reference throughout the process because it can help highlight the conditions and experiences of others. Interesting stories from the asset mapping exercise may help put a human face on the statistics.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool E – Asset Mapping: Neighbourhood Gathering, Walk and Asset Chart
Tool F – How to Plan and Run Meetings
Tool J – Neighbourhood Statistical Information

What kind of neighbourhood do residents want?

Once residents have developed a complete picture of their neighbourhood, a vision for the future will begin to develop. The vision describes what the Neighbourhood Action Team wants the neighbourhood to be in the future. In 5 years, what will the neighbourhood look and feel like? Think about the actions that can be taken to make neighbourhoods safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged. An effective vision will inspire and motivate the broader neighbourhood to work together to achieve it. It will inform all goals, objectives, priorities and actions moving forward. Remember to get endorsement by the broader neighbourhood so everyone gets behind it. Eventually, residents may want to share their vision with Kitchener City Council. City staff can help with this.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool K – How to Develop Vision Statements, Objectives, Quick Wins and Actions
7. Make an implementation plan

Identify actions to achieve your vision.

Once residents have a vision for the future of their neighbourhood, the Neighbourhood Action Team can fine-tune its objectives in order to develop and prioritize specific actions for implementation based on the feedback from the neighbourhood. For instance, an objective may be to create an inventory of residents’ strengths while the specific steps to achieve the action may include creating and distributing a survey, collecting and analyzing the survey and sharing the information with the neighbourhood.

If necessary, City staff can assist with this step. When refining the objectives and actions, remember to:

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

The implementation plan should:

• consider what organizations are available to be involved in specific actions
• identify which individuals, groups or organizations should take the lead on specific actions
• determine what can be achieved within a short, medium or long-term timeframe
• confirm where resources can be accessed

Make sure at least one Neighbourhood Action Team member is responsible to lead an action item and get others involved to move it forward. If necessary, City staff can support the Neighbourhood Action Team member in these discussions. Once each objective and resulting action items are agreed upon, roles and responsibilities can be assigned and confirmed.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool K – How to Develop Vision Statements, Objectives, Quick Wins and Actions
Tool L – Implementation Plan Template

8. Develop a plan to measure your progress

What does success look like?

The Neighbourhood Action Team should take some time to determine what success looks like and how it might be measured. Statisticians are not required!

Developing a plan to measure progress should be thought about early on in the process so that there is a clear understanding of how changes will be measured. Think about why the neighbourhood wanted to create a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Think about how the neighbourhood will know if it is more safe, accessible, connected, inclusive, diverse and engaged. Think about the vision, goals, objectives and actions. Decide how these things will be measured.

Simple measurements may include:

• confirming what actions were completed on time and within budget
• identifying the number of new things within the neighbourhood
• increasing the number of residents participating in neighbourhood events

It may also be helpful to use before and after photos or resident satisfaction surveys.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool L – Implementation Plan Template
9. Write your Neighbourhood Action Plan

Put everything together. Monitor how it’s going. Let the plan evolve and change!

Use the Neighbourhood Action Plan template to bring together and document the information that has been collected throughout the process. The Neighbourhood Action Plan should be approved by the Neighbourhood Action Team and endorsed by a significant number of residents in the neighbourhood. A final document should be produced and shared. Don’t forget to consider sharing the plan with City Council so they are aware of the good work. City staff can help with this.

The Neighbourhood Action Team is encouraged to put in place a process to monitor and adjust the implementation plan as needed. This can include a clearly documented transition of responsibility. Will the Neighbourhood Action Team or an existing neighbourhood group, such as a neighbourhood association, drive the implementation and monitoring? Where existing neighbourhood groups take on responsibility, including the Neighbourhood Action Plan as a standing agenda item 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 implementation plan on track. As well, when calls for funding proposals come up unexpectedly, an updated version of the Neighbourhood Action Plan will be ready for submission to bring new resources into the neighbourhood.

The Neighbourhood Action Plan is a living document, meaning it will evolve and change over its lifespan. Having a process in place to review and revise the Neighbourhood Action Plan will ensure it remains relevant and transformational.

SEE TOOLKIT:
Tool A – Neighbourhood Action Plan Template, Instructions and Examples
Tool B – Engaging the Neighbourhood
Tool L– Implementation Plan Template

10. Celebrate with your neighbourhood

Have fun along the way. Constantly thank volunteers and residents.

There are many opportunities to celebrate progress along the way. Build in times to acknowledge the great work being done, by both the Neighbourhood Action Team, volunteers and the wider neighbourhood.

Once the Neighbourhood Action Team, with the support of the neighbourhood, has finalized their first Neighbourhood Action Plan, take the time to organize a celebration. Use the celebration as an opportunity to communicate and engage with more residents and bring a larger number of people into the implementation of specific actions identified in your Neighbourhood Action Plan.

As key actions are achieved, residents will probably want to celebrate again. Go for it! Don’t be surprised if this attracts more attention from people outside the neighbourhood, who will want to hear the neighbourhood’s story and learn from the neighbourhood’s experience.

It’s also a good idea to take some time to think about what the Neighbourhood Action Team and the neighbourhood have learned throughout the process. What worked? What didn’t? How can this be used in the future? What is next for your neighbourhood? Refer back to your agreed upon approach for measuring success in your neighbourhood and share your stories.

READY TO GET STARTED?

Now that you’ve read this document and understand the process to create a Neighbourhood Action Plan, it’s time to get started. Circle back to the beginning of this document and remember, it’s okay to start small. Talk with neighbours about the benefits of creating a Neighbourhood Action Plan. Share examples of quick wins and long-term ideas. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. City staff are more than happy to get you going!
Neighbourhood Action Plan Toolkit

Tools to help you along the way.

We have collected and categorized a number of tools from a variety of residents, neighbourhood groups and City staff. To access these tools, contact City staff and they will be happy to assist you.

- TOOL A – Neighbourhood Action Plan Template, Instructions and Examples
- TOOL B – Engaging the Neighbourhood
- TOOL C – Valuing Inclusion and Diversity in the Neighbourhood
- TOOL D – Community and Neighbourhood Association Map
- TOOL E – Asset Mapping: Neighbourhood Gathering, Walk and Asset Chart
- TOOL F – How to Plan and Run Meetings
- TOOL G – Decision-Making Tools
- TOOL H – Workplan Template
- TOOL I – Communications Plan
- TOOL J – Neighbourhood Statistics
- TOOL K – How to Develop Vision Statements, Objectives, Quick Wins and Actions
- TOOL L – Implementation Plan Template

Thanks City of Hamilton!

We want to acknowledge the incredible leadership provided by Hamilton residents and staff when it comes to Neighbourhood Action Plans. They’ve been doing this stuff for years! We’ve learned a lot from their leadership, and many of these tools have been adapted from the Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit. Thanks for sharing your experience with us - and keep up the great work Hamilton!
Your guide to
Community Gardens

loovemyhood.ca

Kitchener's guide to great neighbourhoods

great places  connected people  working together
What are Community Gardens?
Community gardens are places where people come together to grow vegetables, herbs, fruits and flowers in designated plots. The gardens are coordinated and maintained by volunteers, and the produce is not for commercial use.

Benefits of Community Gardens
Community gardens can provide you with:

- fresh herbs, fruits and vegetables.
- an opportunity to learn from others and share knowledge on gardening and cooking.
- a chance to meet your neighbours.
- a way to be active and enjoy the outdoors.

Community gardens are great for the neighbourhood too! They:

- provide an inclusive gathering place for people of all ages and cultural backgrounds.
- build welcoming, safer communities.
- improve the look of neighbourhoods.
- support pollinator habitats and a healthy environment.

About this guide
This guide will make it easier for you to start a new community garden. It walks you through each step and explains how city staff can help.

Generally, this guide is focused on community gardens on city-owned land. Of course, most of the steps will apply to other properties as well. Just keep in mind you’ll need different permissions from the land owners.

Meet the Community Garden Council!
The Community Garden Council of Waterloo Region is a volunteer-driven organization dedicated to supporting community gardens. We are extremely grateful for their leadership role in our community.

Throughout this guide, we point to even more helpful resources and templates they’ve put together, especially related to the everyday management of community gardens and the nitty gritty details of actually getting things to grow! You can find these resources at community-gardens.ca.

If you want to find a plot and garden on your own, please contact the Community Garden Council. They’ll be happy to help!

Who do I contact to get started?
City staff is here to help.
Darren Kropf
Neighbourhood Development Office
lovemyhood@kitchener.ca
519-741-2200 ext. 7083

This information is available in accessible formats upon request.

Please call 519-741-2200 ext. 7083 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.
How much will this cost?
Community gardens can cost several thousands of dollars depending on the size, layout, features and proximity to services. Typical start-up costs include:

- Water connection
- Locates
- Soil testing
- Site preparation
- Shed and other storage
- Fencing or other delineation like shrubs
- Signage
- Tools, hoses, hand tools, wheelbarrows
- Plot construction and/or raised beds
- Common amenities like seating, shade or art

We offer a Community Gardens Grant to help with start-up costs. For gardens on city-owned land, you can receive up to $1,000 in cash plus in-kind services related to water connection, locates, soil testing and preparation of the garden. Gardens not on city land can receive up to $1,000 in cash.

How long will this take?
Overall, the entire project to start a community garden can take about one year from start to finish (with no unexpected complications).

We recommend you start planning in April, so your garden can open in the spring of the following year. If you’re looking for financial and in-kind assistance from the city, please note that grant applications are due on June 1 every year, for installation in the spring of the following year.

Also, the Community Gardens Grant currently supports only one to three new gardens a year. If you’re not approved, don’t let this stop you! We’ll check in with you in the following year to see if you are still interested in receiving a grant and starting a community garden. You won’t have to complete the entire application form again.
10 steps to start a community garden

Shaping a vision
Depending on your comfort level, you might want to do the first two steps in a different order. Up to you!

1. Form a group of keen gardeners
Start by getting four to six people involved and ready to work together. As a group, come up with a list of goals you hope to achieve or a vision for what your garden might look like.

2. Contact city staff & the Community Garden Council
Express your interest to city staff (contact information is on page 2). We’ll walk you through this guide and grant opportunities, as well as provide some advice on engaging the whole neighbourhood in your community garden project.

The Community Garden Council can point you to more helpful resources and connect you with experienced gardeners to learn from. Visit community-gardens.ca.

Finding the right location
3. Identify two to three potential locations
Factors to consider include:
- Accessibility
- Visibility and sightlines
- Soil condition and quality
- Underground services
- Water access
- Adequate sunlight
- Storage space
- Existing and/or potential use of the site

Sharing your vision
4. Do a “pulse check” in your ‘hood
Do others share your vision? Will a community garden be supported by the neighbourhood? Start these conversations early to build broad support.

Share your vision and possible locations with your ward councillor and neighbourhood association, as well as schools, faith communities, businesses or non-profits.

Confirming city and neighbourhood support
5. Prepare a grant application
By June 1, prepare a grant application for the city’s Community Gardens Grant. The application form will ask you to identify preferred locations, in order of priority, and describe how the garden can have a positive neighbourhood impact. Check the grant guidelines for more details. Approval by the city will include confirmation of the best location.

6. Engage the neighbourhood
At minimum, we ask that you inform residents within 120 metres of the proposed location and host a public information meeting.

Sometimes, there may be differences of opinion between residents. We can help you respond to any potential challenges or concerns that may arise.
Planning garden coordination

7. Develop a layout, create a budget and look for funding

Once your garden has been approved, you’ll need to determine the layout of your garden plots and other amenities. The Community Garden Council has great templates from other gardens and it’s probably a good idea to visit an existing community garden or two as well.

Talk with city staff to discuss how to design your garden to be accessible, such as raised beds and barrier-free pathways.

This is also the time to make key decisions that will dictate the cost of your garden, like:

- Pathways and access to the garden
- Fencing or delineation
- Type of storage, if any
- Gathering spaces, seating or art

While the city’s grant support is substantial, it will not cover the full start-up costs of a new community garden. Additional funds could be raised through member fees, donations, fundraising, sponsorships or other community grants. Remember to build a “rainy day” fund for unexpected costs in the future.

8. Complete a Community Garden Agreement

This agreement, between your community garden group and the city, will lay out clear roles and responsibilities for both the start-up phase and long-term care and ongoing maintenance of the garden.

This agreement also includes insurance requirements that are necessary to protect your garden planning group and the gardeners themselves.

9. Plan how to run your garden

Key decisions include:

- On-going volunteer roles
- Annual maintenance and operating budget and garden plot fees
- How people sign up for plots
- Gardener guidelines
- Annual work days, potlucks or celebrations
- Ways to give back to the community

Again, city staff and the Community Garden Council can provide templates for these details. Once you have plans in place, you can start receiving gardeners, assigning plots and clearly defining roles and responsibilities of all gardeners.

Building the garden

10. Prepare the site and build the garden

We’ll work with you to create a schedule of who is doing what for garden construction.

Build community and a sense of ownership in the garden by hosting a work day for all gardeners. Assign tasks, such as building the plots, installing fences, organizing tools, etc. Try to find something that meets everyone’s skill levels and abilities. Don’t forget lunch breaks or fun stuff like live music.

Start gardening!

You did it! Your community garden is ready to go. Host an official opening and take lots of pictures to remember this special day. And don’t forget to thank all the amazing volunteers who made it happen!
Community Gardens in Kitchener

The community garden at Trinity Village features raised beds so people with different physical abilities can participate.

*How can your garden be accessible to all?*

The Gzowski Park Community Garden brings together many different cultures, helping to form residents’ sense of belonging.

*How can your garden reflect diversity?*

---

Rosemount Millennium Community Garden has a communal plot for gardeners to tend to, with the produce being donated to the local foodbank.

*How can your garden give back to the local community?*

Guelph Street Community Garden hosts regular potlucks for the whole neighbourhood, not just gardeners themselves.

*How can your garden be a gathering place for the neighbourhood?*
Resident-led Traffic Calming
What is Resident-led Traffic Calming?

Resident-led Traffic Calming projects temporarily or permanently change a residential street or streetscape, in order to improve safety, slow traffic or add beauty to a neighbourhood. Residents work together to initiate, plan, lead, design and implement these projects using their own creativity and collective efforts.

You may come up with your own ideas that are unique and specific to your particular street, but here are some of the most common examples:

- Painted crosswalks
- Roadway painting, like intersection murals
- Planter boxes on the boulevard
- Neighbourhood lawn signs
- Temporary or “pop-up” measures
- Alternative uses of parking spaces

Benefits of Resident-led Traffic Calming

- Bring awareness to traffic safety issues in your neighbourhood.
- Reduce vehicle speeds.
- Enhance the overall look and feel of the streetscape.
- Add some creativity and beauty to your neighbourhood.
- Bring residents together to work on something fun and beneficial for their neighbourhood.

Who do I contact to get started?

City staff is here to help.

Darren Kropf
Neighbourhood Development Office
lovemyhood@kitchener.ca
519-741-2200 ext. 7083

This information is available in accessible formats upon request.

Please call 519-741-2200 ext. 7083 or TTY 1-866-969-9994 for assistance.
Nine easy steps

Generate ideas and support

1. Meet with city staff
Meeting with you in your neighbourhood, we’ll discuss how city staff can make it easy for you to make your idea happen, as well as:

- Your goals for this project
- Your current idea and proposed location
- Safety guidelines and road legislation that might impact your project
- Costs and funding opportunities

2. Talk to your neighbours
Discuss possible ideas for your specific street(s) with your neighbours. Involve as many people as you can, as you’ll need their support in step #6.

3. Gather community support
You may be able to get help with recruiting volunteers, securing financial support and more by involving your ward councillor, neighbourhood association, schools, faith communities, businesses or other organizations.

Create a design

4. Draft a design and share with staff
Based on what you’ve heard from your neighbours, draft a design – or two! Rough drawings or sketches are okay. City staff will provide feedback on safety and accessibility.

5. Finalize your design
Create a final design in colour, with enough detail, such as approximate measurements, to make your ideas clear and easy to understand.

6. Confirm neighbourhood support
Share the final design and collect signatures of support from your neighbours. Staff will provide a form and explain how many residents need to sign it, depending on your street and project.

Make it happen

7. Get things ready
Create a list of things that need to be done leading up to installation day, such as purchasing materials, recruiting volunteers or securing funding. Staff will help with all of this!

8. Plan your installation
Sketch out a written and visual description of what will happen on the street for the day of your installation and provide it to staff, so they can arrange a road closure permit.

9. Install and celebrate!
In advance, send everyone involved an update on how things will proceed on installation day. Then make it happen! This is an exciting day. Celebrate with food or music and invite the whole neighbourhood. Have fun!
How much will this cost?

Costs will vary significantly depending on your street and the specific idea. Here’s an approximate price range of the most common projects:

- Road painting:
  - Thermoplast - $15,000 (life span of 7-10 years)
  - Asphalt paint - $1,000 (life span of 1-3 years)
- Planter boxes - $50 - $500 per box
- Lawn signs - $5 - $100 per sign

To help you pay for your project, funding may be available through the City’s [Neighbourhood Matching Grant](https://example.com), or a number of other sources. Just ask City staff to help you explore options.

How long will this take?

Overall, the entire project will take around two to six months.

The most time consuming part of the project may be gathering support from your neighbours. You’ll need to inform 100% of your neighbours about this project, and collect signatures of support from 50% +1 of neighbours directly adjacent, and 60% of neighbours within a block (or up to 100 meters). City staff will explain these requirements at your first meeting.

Keep in mind, the best times for installation are April to October.

Also, previously scheduled road maintenance may delay your project slightly (to ensure we don’t rip up the road right after you finish your beautiful design!).

How will we work together?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your role</th>
<th>The city’s role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reach out to your neighbours to get others involved and gather their support.</td>
<td>Clarify which neighbours need to be contacted, depending on the details of your project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come up with a fun and creative design that the neighbourhood supports.</td>
<td>Ensure the design is safe and accessible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine how you’ll pay for the project and complete grant applications or fundraise.</td>
<td>Help you access city grants that your project may qualify for, and provide some tips for fundraising.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase supplies and install your traffic calming idea. This could include recruiting volunteers or hiring artists or contractors.</td>
<td>Provide contact information of companies that provide approved equipment or supplies for street use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be responsible for any maintenance, if needed.</td>
<td>Notify you if your project has suffered any damage or vandalism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celebrate with a party! Inspire others by sharing pictures on social media, using #lovemyhood.</td>
<td>Tell other residents about your project and encourage them to go check it out!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Things to think about

You may have seen other traffic calming measures in Kitchener, like speed humps, roadway narrowings or raised crosswalks. These measures require formal traffic studies to determine if they qualify, and are largely led by city council and city staff.

In contrast, the traffic calming projects that qualify for this program can be led by residents at any time of year, without formal traffic studies. Please [click here](#) for more information on other City of Kitchener traffic calming policies.

A few tips to consider:

- Remember, your neighbours will want to see your design and discuss how it will look, so be prepared to chat.
- If it’s difficult to get in touch with your neighbours, leave a copy of your design in their mailbox with a note that outlines your plan and how to reach you.
- Some traffic calming measures may need to be seasonal or require maintenance by the community. City staff will advise you, if needed.
- If you’re hiring a contractor to install your project, you may need a drawing made to scale. City staff can help with this.
- Some streets are managed by the Region of Waterloo and may not qualify for this program. Staff will let you know.
- Don’t forget to schedule a rain date for your installation day, just in case.
- Remember to take pictures and share on social media with #lovemyhood!

Safety first

- Remember to think about how your design can improve safety and accessibility for all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and motor vehicles.
- Don’t forget to have a first aid kit available on the day of your event.
- Plan for the weather on installation day.

Want some ideas?

- [Project for Public Spaces](#) has an excellent “Streets as Places” website with case studies, how-to manuals and ideas for reimagining the role of streets in a neighbourhood. Visit [pps.org/transportation](#),
- Halifax has several creative murals designed to bring beauty to a neighbourhood. Their website has many pictures of completed designs, as well as a time lapse video of an intersection mural.
- London has an [Adopt-A-Street program](#) that includes planting flowers and beautifying boulevards.
- The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) [Design of Public Spaces Standards](#) describes the accessibility requirements for outdoor public areas.
- “How to build a better block” includes open source ideas and designs.
- Search “traffic calming” on Pinterest or google images for pictures of projects like planter boxes, sheep bollards and more.
Resident-led Traffic Calming in Kitchener

Lancaster Street, at Chapel Street, is walking on sunshine! In 2016, residents in Central Frederick designed a decorative crosswalk to improve pedestrian safety on a busy school route.

The whole neighbourhood came out to watch contractors install the crosswalk in Central Frederick.

A pilot project in 2015, residents in Mount Hope Breithaupt Park designed and painted a mural on the intersection of Wilhelm Street and Ahrens Ave. Young and old enjoyed working together to add some beauty to their ‘hood, as seen in this time lapse video.

In 2014, residents in Westmount neighbourhood put up lawn signs to remind drivers they are on a residential street with children playing.
An adult colouring book bringing Kitchener’s neighbourhoods to life!

Brought to you by Kitchener’s NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY project team.
CATHERINE BRENNAN

I grew up on a street full of amazing neighbours who were warm and funny and kind. There were lots of bicycle adventures, porch hangs, street potlucks, and playing on top of snow mountains in the middle of the court. I now live in the Schneider Creek/Cedar Hill neighbourhood and love all the small bits of everyday magic it offers up. I enjoy putting ink to paper, creating crisp black linework and seeing where it leads. For more of my work, check out thistlebloompress.carbonmade.com.

JULIAN VAN MOSSEL-FORRESTER

I am an artist and designer based in Kitchener where I live with my family in the Mount Hope Breithaupt neighbourhood. Every December we have a lantern walk that we help organize. I’m grateful to our dog Nomi for introducing me to lots of our neighbours during our daily walks. My artwork focuses on themes close to my heart and daily life through adventurous colour, and spontaneous gestures in line and brush stroke. I also offer private art lessons and website design and graphic design services. See my website at www.julianvmf.com.

LORI ZENKER

I live with my husband and three teenagers in a really old house in a great neighbourhood. There is such an interesting, eclectic mix of people here. We exchange baking at Christmas, have had summer block parties, played lots of road hockey, and look out for each other’s wayward pets. On Halloween our house is known for shelling out hundreds of hot dogs barbecued on our front porch. I work as a writer and artist, and sell old toys and junk online. My daughter and I designed a colouring book this fall and I’ve really enjoyed working on this project.

WIN GREAT PRIZES!

Show off your amazing works of art. You can submit any of these pages to be entered into a draw to win these cool prizes for you and your friends. Maybe you can invite your neighbours?! 
- 8 VIP Summer Passes courtesy of Chicopee Ski & Summer Resort
- 8 sixty minute Jump Passes to Skyzone Trampoline Park
- 8 Swimming Passes at any City of Kitchener pool

TO ENTER THE CONTEST, FOLLOW 3 EASY STEPS:
1. Colour or complete one page from this book (that’s the fun part!)
2. Fill out a ballot at your local community centre or online at www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood
3. Attach the ballot form to the completed page and submit to the City of Kitchener in ONE of the following formats:
   - Drop off your completed page and the ballot form at any participating community centre
   - Email your completed page and ballot form to lovemyhood@kitchener.ca
   - Complete the online ballot form and share a photo of your completed page on social media with the hashtag #lovemyhood. Tag the City of Kitchener on:
     - Twitter: @citykitchener
     - www.facebook.com/cityofkitchener (share on our wall)
     - www.instagram.com/cityofkitchener

Front cover illustrated by Lori Zenker.
Why this book?

What better way to capture the excitement behind Kitchener’s Neighbourhood Strategy than by embracing the most exciting pop culture trend in modern history?! Ok, a bit of an exaggeration there. But there’s no exaggeration behind the enthusiasm that has been growing for years to create a strategy that builds on the great things happening in our neighbourhoods and makes them even better.

This adult colouring book features many aspects of our neighbourhoods and the cool stuff people are doing in them. There’s everything from creative placemaking ideas to fun neighbourhood events to neat ways to meet your neighbours. As you colour, we think you’ll be inspired to apply some of the ideas back in your ‘hood.

Why a Neighbourhood Strategy?

Think of the best things happening in your neighbourhood. Then imagine more of those great things:

• more vibrant community gathering spaces
• more relationships between neighbours
• more people hanging out on their front porches, on their street or in the park
• more people engaged in a positive and proactive approach to neighbourhood development
• more support for vital community partners in the work they’re already doing

Wouldn’t that be awesome?!

Ultimately, Kitchener’s first-ever Neighbourhood Strategy will help people connect and work together to do great things in their neighbourhoods.

Admittedly, we have a hard time convincing people that this strategy has not grown out of major problems or concerns within our neighbourhoods. Rather, it’s about building a positive vision for planning, building and supporting safe and thriving neighbourhoods. To be honest, we feel pretty lucky to have some really awesome ‘hoods right across the city. And by working together, we can make them even better!

Have your say!

To be clear – there is no strategy yet! Obviously we can’t create a strategy without asking everyone for their input first. That’s why we’re planning one of the largest and most inclusive community engagement processes in the city’s history! We’d love to get input from every neighbourhood across the city. Check out page 12 for ways you can get involved. You can also learn more and sign up for e-newsletter updates at [www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood](http://www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood)

Michelle Drake  |  Michelle.Drake@kitchener.ca
Neighbourhood Strategy Project Manager  
519-741-2200 ext. 7082  |  TTY 1-866-969-9994

Darren Kropf  |  Darren.Kropf@kitchener.ca
Neighbourhood Strategy Engagement Associate  
519-741-2200 ext. 7083  |  TTY 1-866-969-9994
Illustrated by Catherine Brennan.
Engaged inclusive resilient safe diverse connected accessible

Illustrated by Julian Van Mossel-Forrester.
Illustrated by Catherine Brennan.
Help us create the Neighbourhood Strategy!
Finished colouring? Great! Now that you’ve got your creative juices flowing, share your ideas for planning, building and supporting safe and thriving neighbourhoods. Here are just a few of the opportunities to get involved. And more are coming too!

Host a discussion
Get some people together to share your ideas through a facilitated, focus group discussion. Invite your baseball team, your ballet instructor and don’t forget that sweet ol’ granny down the street. Sign up online to host your discussion this spring.

Get online
Starting this spring, our new engagement platform will have a series of questions focused on many aspects of great neighbourhoods. It only takes a few minutes to have your say and make a real difference in the future of your ‘hood!

Learn more
Want to know more about all these opportunities? Sign up for e-newsletter updates at www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood

STANLEY PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE
505 Franklin St. N, Kitchener

For full event lineup and to register, visit www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood

Darren Kropf | Darren.Kropf@kitchener.ca
Neighbourhood Strategy Engagement Associate
519-741-2200 ext. 7083 | TTY 1-866-969-9994
You like to choose local, so you shop local, and support local.

What if you could bank local, too….?

Your Neighbourhood Credit Union is a community-based, member-owned financial institution. At Your Neighbourhood Credit Union, you’ll find all the things you’d expect from a bank, plus a few you didn’t! We cater to your personal, business or agricultural banking needs, and offer professional wealth management, too.

With 18 branches and a network of surcharge-free ATMs, you can bank close to home across southwestern Ontario. We’re 42,000 members strong and growing. Ready for a change? Make the move to Your Neighbourhood!

www.yncu.com

The Dedication Centre at Williamsburg
~ A place where life’s moments are remembered ~

www.kitchenercemeteries.ca
Mark your calendars, **NEIGHBOURS DAY** is coming back!

**Saturday, June 11, 2016**

This year, #NeighboursDay is expected to be even bigger than the last!

Not only will you see **NEIGHBOURS DAY** events held at community centres and facilities across the city, but residents are gearing up to host events of their very own too!

Stay up to date with news about #NeighboursDay by following City of Kitchener Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

**Join the fun in your neighbourhood!**

For locations, activities or how you can get involved, email neighboursday@kitchener.ca or visit Kitchener.ca/neighboursday

#lovemyhood

Thanks to our incredible partners for investing in the **NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY**!

**TITLE SPONSOR:**

**PRESENTING SPONSORS:**

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Brought to you by Kitchener’s **NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY** project team.
A NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTIVITY BOOK FOR KIDS!

SHOW OFF YOUR 'HOOD!

Brought to you by Kitchener’s NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY project team.
Kitchener’s Neighbourhood Strategy

Think of the best things happening in your ‘hood. Then imagine more of these great things:

• more places to play with your friends
• more relationships between neighbours
• more support for vital community partners in the work they’re already doing

Wouldn’t that be awesome?! You’d want to show off your ‘hood to everyone!

Kitchener’s first-ever Neighbourhood Strategy will help people connect and work together to do great things in their neighbourhoods.

Obviously we can’t create a strategy without asking everyone for their ideas first. That’s why we’re planning one of the largest and most inclusive community engagement processes in the city’s history! Check out page 9 for ways you can get involved.

Learn more and sign up for e-newsletter updates at www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood

Win great prizes

Show off your amazing works of art. You can submit any of these pages to be entered into a draw to win these cool prizes for you and your friends. Maybe you can invite your neighbours?! Prizes include:

• 8 VIP Summer Passes courtesy of Chicopee Ski & Summer Resort
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   • Complete the ballot form on our website, share a photo of your completed page on social media with the hashtag #lovemyhood and tag the City of Kitchener on:
     ✨Twitter: @citykitchener
     www.facebook.com/cityofkitchener (share on our wall)
     www.instagram.com/cityofkitchener

www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood
Lemonade gets people talking!

In 2015, we asked people what makes their neighbourhoods great and how we can make them even better. We received a lot of great ideas and enjoyed many cool, refreshing cups of lemonade. Here are just a few of the things we learned. We can’t wait for your neighbourhood to share even more ideas this spring and summer!

**OUR TEAM ATTENDED** 27 EVENTS!

**WHO PARTICIPATED IN OUR SURVEY?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 or under</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 - 24</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 64</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 or over</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We handed out 2,000 glasses of lemonade and collected 1,308 surveys!

(That’s a lot of lemons!)

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

* Based on top four answers.

**PEOPLE you love spending time with in YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD:**

- 24% Neighbours
- 21% Friends
- 17% Family
- 11% Neighbourhood Associations

*That’s a lot of hangouts!*

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parks</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homes</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playgrounds</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Areas</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Centres</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Yards</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backyards</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libraries</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stores</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Fields</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arenas</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Stations</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesses</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**IMPROVE OUR PARKS!**

- **#1 OVERALL IDEA**
  - Based on top four answers.

- **POPULAR IDEAS, BASED ON YOUR AGE:**
  - Under 13
  - 13 - 24
  - 25 - 49
  - 50 - 65

**BASKETBALL COURTS & POOLS**

- Under 13
- 13 - 24
- 25 - 49
- 50 - 65

**COMMUNITY SPIRIT & EVENTS**

- Under 13
- 13 - 24
- 25 - 49
- 50 - 65

**MORE TRAILS & BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE**

- Under 13
- 13 - 24
- 25 - 49
- 50 - 65

**MORE AMENITIES**

- Under 13
- 13 - 24
- 25 - 49
- 50 - 65

Enter this page in our contest to WIN GREAT PRIZES!

Full contest details at www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood
Hey, I’m Sabine. I’ve lived in this neighbourhood my whole life and I love it! So many great things are happening in our ‘hood. What’s your favourite part?

Sabine is proud of her neighbourhood and the awesome things that are happening in it.

Help Sabine colour her neighbourhood.
Hi! My name is Olivia. I just moved down the street. Could you show me around?

Kitchener has a lot of cool places to hang out!

Draw your favourite neighbourhood spot where Olivia can visit.
Hello! My name is Abby. I’ve lived in your neighbourhood for five years but I’d love to meet more people. Who are your neighbours?

It’s great when we can spend time having fun with people in our neighbourhood. Write in the first names of people who are your neighbours. Then, complete the maze to help Abby connect with your neighbours too.

Can you show Abby around your neighbourhood?
Help Shadow write a silly story about your neighbourhood!

HELPFUL HINTS!  
NOUN: Person, place or thing (if it is not a proper noun like Mary or Victoria Park, add “the” first)  
PLURAL: More than one, ADJECTIVE: Describes a noun, VERB: Action word

My neighbourhood is a little _________. It has _______ houses and ______ apartments. You’ll notice there’s lots of _________ and _________ in my neighbourhood, but that’s what makes us so special. I love going down to the _________ to watch people walking their _______. Sometimes my friend _________ will come with me to go to the _________ to eat _______.

My neighbourhood is the best during _______ because we get to _________ at the _________. Once I tried to convince _________ to move here so that we could _________ every _________, but it didn’t work, so now I _________ every _________ with my _________. My community loves hosting special events. My favourite one is _________. I hope that next year they host it at _________.

I should let you in on a little secret; the best place in the neighbourhood is the _________. Last time, I went there with my neighbour _________ and we got covered in _________! It was really _________! Above all, my favourite thing to do in my neighbourhood is play _________ _________ _________ _________ _________. If you ask me, this is a pretty _________ place that has lots to see and do!
Hola! My name is Eduardo. In my ‘hood, I love making a regular place into a destination by creating new things to see and do.

Have you ever heard of the word ‘placemaking’? Placemaking encourages you to use your imagination and think of new and different ways to make parts of your neighbourhood more exciting and fun by creating more things to see and do there.

Circle 10 differences you can find in Eduardo’s neighbourhood. Feel free to colour it too!
Ruff! I’m Bruno. Playing in the park is the highlight of my day. I meet so many new friends there!

Your Neighbourhood Credit Union presents the KIRBY KANGAROO® CLUB! A free, interactive and fun program for kids aged 5 - 12! Join the club and learn about saving, spending and budgeting through stories, games and other activities. Visit our website to hop on over to the Kirby Kangaroo Club. www.yncu.com

Enter this page in our contest to WIN GREAT PRIZES! Full contest details at www.kitchener.ca/lovementhood
Hi there! The name’s Nik. I love playing games with my neighbours: tag, cricket, road hockey, jump rope, golf... so many to choose from!

Nik has made a fun find-a-word for you!
Can you search out all the words about golf that he has hidden?

ACE
APPROACH
BACKSPIN
BACKSWING
BIRDIE
BITE
BOGEY
BREAK
BUNKER
CHIP
CHUNK
CLUB
COURSE
DIVOT
DRIVE
DUFFER
EAGLE
FAIRWAY
FORE
GOLFBALL
GREENS
HANDICAP
HAZARD
HOOK
LAYUP
LINE
MULLIGAN
PAR
PULL
PUTT
ROUGH
SANDTRAP
SHANK
SLICE
SWING
TEE
WEDGE

O H N M T L N R S H A N K V W R P
Q C O L E G N I W S K C A B O R X
E S H O L Q R I F C O U R S E F J
K X M Z K A T A H M E R O F H E X
S E C H I P B E P W F V E S O Y S
S E V I R D R F I Z K C R K A M W
P X Q B G F E V L D F K X W A B I
U R N A M Y F M P O R A R E P M N
T H W C U F F B T M G I C A D H G
T A B K L Q U X V J A I B I W H F
S Z X S L H D P S F L Q V D Z W L
A A Z P I E B W E S M W O U P U
N R Z I G Z L U E A T B P U Q F Q
D D N N A D L G N Z O T P T A H P
T H A M N H T F A K E C L P N V A
R E R C T W Y Y S E E G P B O C C
A T I W E S E S N E E R G P L D I
P I P H Y Z G R U R O B U I H C D
T B K Y G X O P Y A X Y N P L A N
L V R A J U B M C C A E U U Z H A
C I O Y E G O H H L I L B I S R H
P N S H X R U R W D L C H U N K R
P Q Q A N K B I V J E G D E W T U

GET OUT AND GET ACTIVE!
Bring your family for a FREE round of PITCH AND PUTT!
(Think mini-golf but bigger!) This coupon includes a FREE round of golf on our 9-hole pitch and putt course, complete with loaner golf clubs at our Doon Valley Golf Course.

Kitchener Utilities
Free club rental courtesy of Kitchener Utilities.
Redeem this coupon at Doon Valley Golf course, 500 Doon Valley Drive, Kitchener. Valid through 2016.
To learn more visit kitchenergolf.ca/pitchandputt

Enter this page in our contest to WIN GREAT PRIZES!
Full contest details at www.kitchener.ca/loverymyhood
Ok, kiddos, we know you’ve got some great ideas to make our neighbourhoods amazing places to enjoy. Ask your parents or guardians if you can share those ideas through a few of these opportunities. We bet they’ve got some ideas too!

**Host a discussion**

Get some people together to share your ideas through a facilitated, focus group discussion. Invite your classmates, your sports team, your ballet instructor and don’t forget that sweet ol’ granny down the street. Sign up online to host your discussion this spring.

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**Help us create the Neighbourhood Strategy!**

Get online

Starting this spring, our new engagement platform will have a series of questions focused on many aspects of great neighbourhoods. It only takes a few minutes to have your say and make a real difference in the future of your ‘hood!

**Learn more**

Want to know more about all these opportunities? Sign up for e-newsletter updates at www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood

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**STANLEY PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE**

505 Franklin St. N, Kitchener

For full event lineup and to register, visit www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood

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**NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTY!**

Tuesday, April 26

5:00 - 8:30 p.m.

FREE food! Fun! Inspiration!

Inspiration! FREE food! Fun!

Tuesday, April 26

5:00 - 8:30 p.m.

STANLEY PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE

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For full event lineup and to register, visit www.kitchener.ca/lovemyhood
Mark your calendars, **NEIGHBOURS DAY** is coming back!

**Saturday, June 11, 2016**

This year, #NeighboursDay is expected to be even bigger than the last!

Not only will you see **NEIGHBOURS DAY** events held at community centres and facilities across the city, but residents are gearing up to host events of their very own too!

Stay up to date with news about #NeighboursDay by following City of Kitchener Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

Join the fun in your neighbourhood!

For locations, activities or how you can get involved, email neighboursday@kitchener.ca or visit Kitchener.ca/neighboursday

#lovemyhood

Thanks to our incredible partners for investing in the NEIGHBOURHOOD STRATEGY!