

Strong Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhood life has changed. There is greater cultural and ethnic diversity. Our lives are less dependent on physical space. Work, education and entertainment opportunities are now spread across larger geographic areas. Communities of interest and convenience are taking over communities based on space and connections are made across the globe thanks to the Internet technologies. Having neighbourhood based supports for people in vulnerable life stages is important as ever, just as belonging and inclusion are necessary for a meaningful civic engagement.

How a neighbourhood is planned and built defines where people live and what is available nearby. This has an impact on how people live. Both the physical built community infrastructure and the social environment, including programs and services, are important to people's health, sense of wellbeing and ability to connect. A strong neighbourhood is one in which people feel they belong despite their differences. Not only can this foster meaningful civic engagement but greater safety and readiness in times of crisis.

Kitchener is broadening its strategy to encourage people to make their neighbourhoods safer, friendlier and more appealing so they will want to live there and do things with each other.

We've still got a way to go ...

- More public spaces that are accessible & welcoming (e.g. location, cost).
- Improve pedestrian safety and walkability for all ages and abilities.
- Plan for the needs of an aging population so people can choose where they live.
- Build the physical infrastructure of the community so it is equitable across neighbourhoods.
- Intentionally support vulnerable neighbourhoods (e.g. socially diverse, low income or going through major physical infrastructure changes).
- Provide support for problem solving in neighbourhoods.
- Invest in social infrastructure to build relationships (i.e. trust and reciprocity) among those living and working in neighbourhoods to increase safety and disaster readiness.
- Integrate and decentralize services in neighbourhoods to improve people's access to supports, thus creating healthier, more resilient and sustainable places to live.

Things to talk about:

- Why are neighbourhoods important?
- How do we more effectively support people to take initiative, or act collectively, on their concerns for their neighbourhood or on decisions that impact their neighbourhood?
- What role do public bodies, community organizations and community members have to ensure that neighbourhoods are healthy and resilient?



How, where, when & why to vote:
www.waterlooregion.org/municipal-elections-2014
contact spckw@waterlooregion.org
519-579-1096/*3010