

Community Social Planning

The community needs concrete ways for people to contribute to decision making and be encouraged to take personal responsibility for creating the community they want.

“Social planning is a local, democratic system for setting priorities, arriving at equitable compromises and taking action. It supports community needs and interests in social, cultural, economic, and environmental affairs. It is a process for building community well-being.”¹ Social planning is also community development and capacity building, as it brings together individuals, groups, communities, and governments to work toward enhancing a community’s quality of life. Social planning encourages residents to become active in their community and to develop their full potential.

Social planning was introduced locally through the formation of the Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo (SPCKW) to provide a community-based foundation for this work in Kitchener, Waterloo and surrounding communities. SPCKW shares four key values² in common with other groups concerned about social justice, environmental sustainability and democratic renewal:

- *Equality*
- *Legacy for the future*
- *Compassion*
- *Community of voices*

Since the 1960’s, the needs of various population groups have been explored and discussed and significant social issues have been tackled from affordable housing, homelessness and the widening income gap to digital inclusion and neighbourhood engagement. Work of the Social Planning Council has helped to establish Kitchener’s ward system and Compass Kitchener, the Region’s Social Services Department, and Waterloo’s selection as Intelligent Community of the world. In short, the work of this community organization has been instrumental in planning a healthy and viable community.

We’ve still got a way to go ...

- Funding cuts have eroded local community capacity to plan.
- There are multiple entities engaged in social planning, but few have a direct or clear accountability to the community or to those who are most vulnerable within it.
- Significant changes continue to happen in the physical, social and economic environment that impact people’s lives and attempts to respond are often not known, sporadic or not seen as credible by decision makers.

Things to talk about:

- What are the most important social or ‘people’ needs to deal with now?
- How can local social planning processes be better supported, especially for those issues that are not easy to deal with or must have diverse perspectives to resolve (e.g. poverty; inclusion)?
- What needs to be in place now to ensure our community, as a whole, is better prepared to respond to continuing and emerging social needs and concerns?



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

¹ Michael Clague (1993). *A Citizen’s Guide to Community Social Planning*. Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia, p. 4.

² SPCKW (Feb, 2013) *What Drives Your Community Action Forum*