

Strong Neighbourhoods

- Seniors are not on the internet.
 - Those not on the internet and they go out and walk, get to know other groups and individuals.
 - So it is really about building community.
 - Quick communication vs relationships.
 - Not age dependent.
- Some wave and other neighbours would not do much together.
 - No more neighbourhood watch
- It (neighbourhood) developed a lot. Bus routes changed.
 - Walking more to get to a bus take 2 buses to get to downtown Waterloo
 - LRT comes but we still have to drive there
- Commuted a lot.
 - Involved in community gardening project.
 - New development but it is a new life style,
 - Growing vegetables and healthy spending time with neighbours.
- Clean -up of the back yard.
 - Inspections of the dwelling- city in private homes.
- Efficient transportation is important.
 - Adequate wait times for buses.
 - Bus routes changing.
- We need more community spaces with “intensification” of the core.
 - Community gardens, garages and spaces downtown.
- Small – community feel.
 - People know each other
 - Giving assistance to each other.
- Government should not decide who moves in neighbourhoods
 - People need to approach newcomers and get to know each other.
 - It takes time & everyone has a role.
- Neighbourhood
 - Not easy to create- only say hi.
 - Going to the dog walking helps to say hi.
 - Sunnydale did a lot to build community.
- Composting and recycling is not available
- Downtown – what’s with “intensification”?
- Some buildings have recycling.
 - Depends on the owners.

- More coming at universities
- Composting at restaurants.

Some churches have (Community) gardens on church property

- Too many rules to start a community garden.
- Charges to introduce compost.
- A lot of change in a life time.
 - University communities.
- Schools outside residential area
 - School boards looking into partnerships with municipal government.
 - School and community centres = community hub.
- Using school spaces
 - Better use of their space
 - Classrooms repurposed to community activities
 - Schools stay open when demographics change
- Rules about community groups to use school spaces.
 - Cost and insurance
 - Parent involvement
- Neighbourhood Associations do a good job.
 - Involving new Canadians get a feeling of home
 - Welcome new people and let them see what is happening in a “hub”.
 - Do not worry about” legalities”.
 - Too many rules do not enhance connections.
- Opportunities for mentoring and partner through activities
 - Knowing and letting people know what is going on across neighbourhoods
- People need to be approached
 - We can inspire people (they would not necessarily come out)
- Homework takes a lot of family time.
 - That time can be used for volunteerism and being out in the community.
- Beachwood 12 presidents would be coming together to shape best practices and try different activities.
 - Start with similar and the go broad.
- Waterloo community council did not have clear mandate and died out.
- Youth- health neighbourhoods.
 - Graffiti – did youth do it? Stereotypes.
 - There are activities in neighbourhoods- are youth reached?
 - Cynicism- isolation- income, stretched resources.

- Big social problems.
- Crises bring people together.
 - Promotion of neighbourhood association, town halls.
- Case for prevention – be active, not only reactive.

Access to Information

- Transparency and access is important
- Waterloo is a very divided (by income levels) community-this affects access to information
- There is a divide between officials and those in need
- Access to information via paper vs. online/social media for information sharing – available to different groups
- Face to face outreach and discussion is important for information sharing and to connect as well as prevent exclusion
- Need to involve young people in political/civic discussions to bring different perspectives to issues like information access
- Lots of information out there- young people may be more used to the amount of information and how to access it effectively
- Central phone lines for information are appearing i.e. at Region of Waterloo
- It's necessary for government to know which people can address which issues to prevent duplication and to get people the information they need
- It's difficult to access online information if you don't have money for a computer—how do you know where to go?
- Public need to tell government what the gaps are=- need a process to collect this type of information- reps for areas need to be proactive and pass on feedback
- Multiple channels are needed for information – TV, radio, newspapers, print etc.
- Not a lot of public access to computer to access information
- Some access at community centres etc.
- Where to look for information during a crisis is not obvious, especially for students, newcomer and in times of mental illness/distress
- Information and systems change rapidly—it's hard to keep up

Community Social Planning

What are the social or 'people' needs in our community?

- Feeling of belongingness
- Connection
- Engagement
- Diverse community – a multicultural community
- Build trust and transparency
- Improve communication
- Social assistance
- Ethnicity acceptance
- Improve poverty issue
- Improve quality of life
- Equality

How should these be dealt with?

- Programming
 - Find out what people need the most such as shelter
 - Food
 - Financial
- Encourage neighborhood associations to be engaging in the community
 - Talk about what the issues are
 - Understand what people most need
 - Effective engagement will create trust, transparency and solve disconnection.
Overall, it creates relationship
- How do we promote acceptance?
 - Host a neighborhood multicultural festivals to celebrate different cultures
 - To welcome new cultures in the community
 - To encourage “not to change how we live, but accept how we live”
 - This will promote diversity.
- Provide housing
 - To improve quality of life
- Local government should waive government fees to non-profit organizations
- Better coordination between government between the government and non-profit organization to provide social services to the community
- Provide better amenities
 - To improve quality of life
 - For example, fixing the road, improve transportation access

- Guarantee community safety by ensuring current construction is done efficiently and effectively
 - Make sure that needs are being addressed
- Embrace who we are – shows acceptance
- Create equality by considering citizens who are not privileged such as households who cannot afford cars, who cannot afford 3 meals a day, and other oppressed citizens
 - Improve transportation
 - Improving transportation is a great liberator/equalizer\
 - Rental Housing Regime that was passed last year
 - For people who cannot afford rental housing
- Improving social assistance
 - Direct assistance from the politicians by giving out personal contact number or emails
 - This shows that politicians are approachable
 - First hand assistance will enhance a better understanding of the real issue that citizens are facing
 - It also shows initiative as a public servant
 - Builds relationship between the politician and the community
 - Direct social assistance from the agencies available in the community.

Civic Engagement

- Volunteerism is the first step towards engagement
- Neighbourhood associations
 - Beachwood pool and tennis courts encourage communities to get together
- People need more information about forming neighbourhood associations
 - These need to form organically, from the community
- We need to keep community ties, which is hard in an increasingly fast paced world
- Use internet and telephone voting to:
 - Make voting easier
 - Expand the voting time period
- Controversial decisions make people get more involved
 - But, this may be negative timing
- Need more free opportunities to participate in sports and local activities
- Elected officials should use social media more
- Need to get kids involved earlier
- More polling stations
- Need to be able to easily access candidate information
 - This needs to also be easily searchable
- Permanent residents should get a vote because they also pay taxes
- Community centres should become hubs to encourage involvement
- Feelings of disconnect with the government
- Councillors need to connect more with locals on their level
- Neighbourhood gardens
- Regional office not designed well for connectivity
- Engage children to get parents involved
- Voter list not kept up with
- Need polling station in long term care facilities
- Lots of focus to get students involved
 - Neglects other groups
- Candidates need to be more visible in the community
- Better advertising and awareness of participation opportunities (such as this one)
- Allow 16 year old to vote?
 - Since they are the one in the school system and might have the best perspective on the needs of the school board

Poverty Free Region

What can elected municipal officials do to combat poverty?

- Reduce the wealth gap? → How?
 - Living Wages
 - Lobby municipal government
 - Stop cutting funds to local agencies
 - Stop making agencies compete for funding; instead, promote connectivity between social service agencies
 - Start addressing societal issues of poverty at a young age (elementary school)
 - Get to people before they get on the street
 - Help erase the stigma associated with poverty
- Focus on making schools an equitable place
- If all regional employees are paid 2% less, that would free up money for discretionary spending on poverty related issues such as social housing
- Need for dental service/coverage expansion
- Need stronger political will to act on poverty issues
- Minimum wage is not enough to live on
 - Living wages are necessary
 - The working poor exist in our community
- Housing is a foundational piece in fighting poverty
- Skills development also key in poverty prevention
 - Increase training programs run through the city
- Partnerships are important between levels of government and between agencies, community groups, and politicians

How effective is inter-agency and inter-government communication on poverty related issues?

- Encourage upper levels of government to make more incremental changes towards combating poverty
- The bus to the food bank was cancelled: this was justified by explaining that the extra money saved from the unsustainable bus route was used to improve discretionary benefits to people in the community
 - So, we need to ask, was there enough public consultation

- Should upper level government be providing funding for these bus routes that are very important for some members of the community, but are not heavily travelled?
- Can we move food banks downtown instead?
- Can we have a food distribution system instead?
- LRT is creating jobs and will provide transit which can benefit those living in poverty
- Lack of trust and inclusion at the regional government level;
 - Participation in council meetings can be very intimidating ot member of the public
- Constant shuffling and deferral of responsibility for poverty issues between tiers of government
- The importance of language
 - Need to use plain language to encourage an inclusive atmosphere at all levels of government
 - Need to allow people who are experiencing issues of poverty to participate in finding the solutions
- Need supports geared to cost of living in our community
- Housing and food allowance costs should be calculated for each municipality

Digital Inclusion

What are the benefits of having public bodies such as governments and school boards providing more services on-line?

- Easy access and dissemination of information
- Environmental benefits
- Benefit to access things in one place if you have resources and skills to have access to computer/device and internet> but inclusion for all in a very important aspect
- There is a lot of communication online.
 - It's becoming a right to access communication online
 - Many European countries are moving that way (right to access information online)
 - Basic human right
- Drawbacks: - Employment industry hit. No jobs for online services

Who benefits from having this online access and who does not?

- Suggestion: tablets to sign out for students at schools/libraries (virtual libraries)
- Big problem: a lot of people have no access and there are things you can only access online.
- Big corporations (Rogers etc.) don't recognize those on social assistance

Who has a role to ensure barriers and challenges to access are reduced or removed?

- Large telecom/some type of social assistance that recognize digital divide
- Community Access Program (CAP) played big role in connecting community and Canadians as a whole
- Solutions there is broadband in community centres > but what about the problem of limited numbers of community centres in City
- Limited funding; access hubs have limited hours (those who need it most can't use after work or school because hubs are closed), out of date systems (no standards of service)
- Manufacturers provide hardware and resources to help and support community staffed by volunteers

How can public officials work with community organizations and networks (such as ConnectKW) to ensure our community is digitally inclusive?

- If you don't have access to broadcasts on the internet, where do you go?
 - Free Wi-Fi in public places
 - Not all have ability and resources/devices to access Wi-Fi or keep up with natural movement and upkeep of things
- Movement in schools and virtual libraries and information
 - Bring your own device
 - Online homework, YouTube videos
 - What about the child/parent without access to computer or internet at home
- Community engagement through events like this is best way to do this
- Community has duty to each other
 - Public grants from City
 - Volunteer time experience
 - Initiatives > community development
- Work with private sector and government
 - Wi-Fi hotspots throughout City
 - lack of literacy and numeracy as well
 - how do we include this sector of the population into the digital world
 - get rid of fear of technology
- The Region and the City hire someone to help non-profits write grants
 - 'digital inclusion exclusion' > internet security
 - Free Wi-Fi in all government buildings providing online services
 - Kiosks as well for people to access services online
- Government has a responsibility
 - If there is limited hardcopy access to government services therefore the government has to make online access to its services is available to all

Environment

What environmental issues should be a priority?

- Air> too much smog
- Stop urban sprawl
- Clean air and water
- Cutting Co2 emission down
- Landfill issue> can smell dump
- Not isolated issues but rather we are part of the environment as a whole
- Waterloo> concerned about growth plan
- Other ways to get around the city> more public transportation
- Reduce carbon emissions

Who has a role in dealing with these concerns and how can they be supported to play their role and to work together with others?

- Everyone has a role
- Turn off lights, use less water
- Compost food
- Collect leaves
- Walk more> short distance walk instead of drive up the street
- Environmental grants
- System has to change> begin here
- More transparency and involvement from the Municipality
- Look to local NGO's
- Local and Provincial government has a role to play
- Listen to all opinions and work together as a team
- Reach people who aren't knowledgeable about the topic
- Need engagement from all levels and community
- Municipality push change> declaration role

What role should public bodies play to support the most vulnerable as adaptation to climate change becomes more of an issue?

- Fire departments play a role
- Front line workers should have a disaster plan ready
- 'Poor' will suffer the most
- More funds for programs to help poverty
- Private buildings need to be accessible to public
- Climate change action is a good example of what Municipality can do

- Environmental Advisor Committee> city level
- What funding options are available for environmental causes?
- More interaction with people in homes> directly contacting citizens
 - Automated messages to people advising them about poor climate (hot days> smog alerts)
- Replanting
 - Urban areas have limited types of trees
- City partnership with private organizations to replant stressed trees
- Private land owners and corporations should be more involved

What policies, programs and incentives should be continued or created?

- ‘Bike to work’ days
- Designation to environmental land
- Bi-weekly garbage pick up
 - Push green bins
- Education on green bin is important, as well as education around different uses for all bins
- Recycling matters
 - Reduce paper waste
- Compost
- Start small> community groups and co-ops, however bi-laws restrict this
- Rules and legislations about building projects
 - Rules about types of materials used> are they environmentally friendly?
 - Should cost more if builders go outside of these guidelines
 - Give incentive reasons for builders to want to build within these rules

What environmental, social and economic benefits should we expect?

- Care about people for our future generations

Accessibility and Inclusion

What limits our community from being fully accessible and inclusive, physically and socially?

- Bus services are a barrier due to high cost, low efficiency; especially for seniors, students and those with mobility concerns
- More routes and increased frequency would help
- Servicing students after 10PM would be useful as some classes end at 10PM
- East and west routes under serviced at off peak times
- Peak services are packed and need more buses (sometimes waiting as three packed buses go by and don't stop)
- City sidewalks not fully cleared and salted (enforcement allows for up to 48 hours to clear without penalty; this makes mobility after a snowstorm very difficult for some)
- Snowbanks large issue for accessing snowbanks, buses
- Wet leaves on sidewalks also difficult to manage as well as clearance (trees, bushes overhanging on sidewalks)
- Sidewalks less accessible, not clearly marked during high construction times - increased signage and alternate walking routes would help
- Overall - year round sidewalk maintenance can be improved
- When roads/sidewalks are closed it's helpful to better coordinate the closures (especially when two streets are closed together so people have to walk a full block to get around).
- Building Accessibility
 - Courtrooms at new courthouse not accessible
 - University not fully accessible
 - Ramps into building not enough
 - Important for politicians to be champions for understanding, promoting and improving rules and regulations for building accessibility
- Socially - cost of W-Loo programs and activities not accessible (cost and mobility) for all citizens

What responsibilities do local elected officials have for ensuring all people are able to participate fully, year round, in the day to day life of our community now and in the future?

- In regard to language in the question - the responsibility should be to provide opportunity_ to be included, not to _ensure_ as some people choose not to participate
- Follow regulations and legislation already in place
- Officials listen to communicate concerns and understand legislation to provide new ideas/solutions
- Societal inclusion; difficult to engage everyone in our community due to the "busy-ness" of today's society...how do we make time to think about this?
- Are solutions to accessibility and inclusion issues (i.e. ION construction website) accessible to all citizens?
- Do people know where/how to access this information?

- Bylaw enforcement/cost of by-law enforcement prohibitive and sometimes invasive

What is needed to make it possible for public bodies, community organizations and citizens to raise concerns and work together to create a more accessible and inclusive community?

- Forums like this
- Networking at a community/grassroots level
- Politicians have regular meetings with community groups/individuals (work in the community as well as on the community).
- Accessible Gov't buildings
- Not just "talk" about concerns - listen, understand and act
- If you have great programs, but no accessibility (for people to get there)
- Important for programs/services to have a high level, start-to-finish, "holistic" perspective on accessibility and inclusion
- Think with an inclusion and accessibility lens

What is most important to be done now?

- Understand and embrace local diversity and engage all citizens
- Housing cost for more vulnerable populations prohibitive (i.e. cost of student housing since permit fees introduced)
- Some excellent changes for the positive locally, but still a long way to go on:
 - o Transportation
 - o Sidewalks
 - o Cost of services and housing
 - o Communication and education about accessibility concerns in area