

# Report to Council



**Date:** December 2, 2015  
**Rim No.** 0610-53  
**To:** City Manager  
**From:** Louise Roberts, Community & Neighbourhood Services Manager  
**Subject:** Strong Neighbourhood Project Update

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from the Community & Neighbourhood Services Manager dated December 2, 2015, with respect to the Strong Neighbourhood Project.

## **Purpose:**

To provide Council with an update on the 2014-2015 Strong Neighbourhood Project activities including findings and outcomes, as well as the focus of the Strong Neighbourhood Program moving forward.

## **Background:**

The objective of the Strong Neighbourhood Project was to improve the quality of life in Kelowna by increasing citizen level of attachment to the community. The intent of the project was to be a catalyst for inspiring neighbourhoods that fostered a culture of connection and engagement.

Staff provided an update on the Strong Neighbourhood Project during the February 18, 2015, Council meeting.

## **Key points included:**

- A neighbourhood is more than a geographically localized area; it also has social and symbolic dimensions so for the purpose of this project "Neighbourhood" refers to the area surrounding a particular place, person, or object as defined by each individual
- Strengthening neighbourhoods for the purpose of enhancing neighbourhood life requires a multifaceted approach that involves improving the social, cultural, physical, environmental and economic assets
- It was anticipated that this work would establish the foundation for future initiatives that support strong neighbourhoods
- The scope of the project included: research, community and stakeholder engagement, qualitative analysis of information and input, pilot projects, and an evaluation.

## Activity Summary 2014- 2015

### Research

Staff reviewed current literature on building strong neighbourhoods and examined what was being done in other communities. This information established guiding principles for this project, including:

- Citizen attachment is cultivated not only by what the City provides, but also how the citizens themselves contribute to the community and their neighbourhood environment
- It takes citizens that are inspired, involved and empowered to create strong neighbourhoods

### Community and Stakeholder Engagement

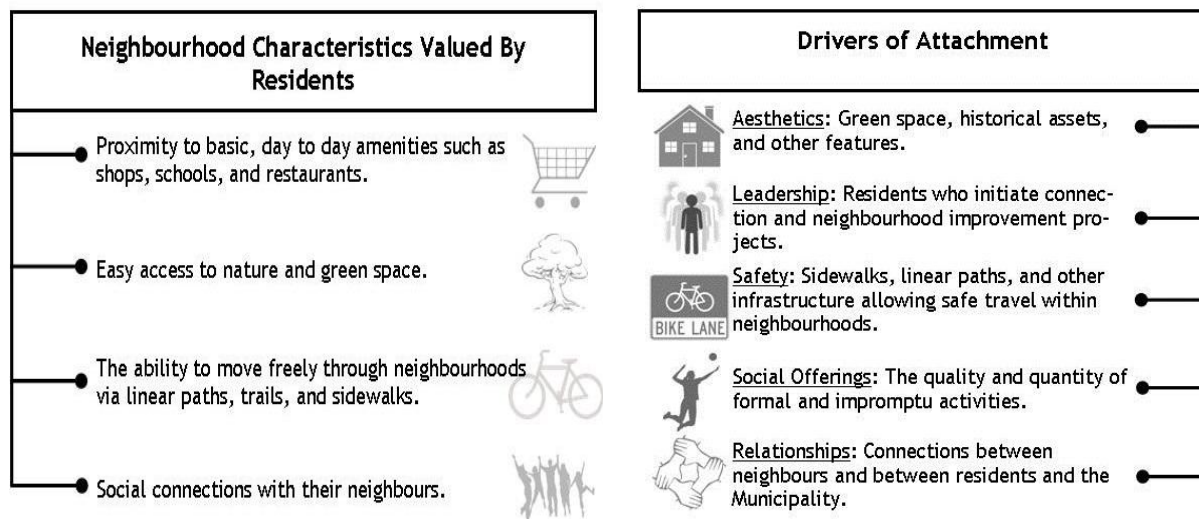
The City undertook an extensive community engagement process in 2014 with the objective to better understand residents' connection, engagement, and attachment to their neighbourhood. This included:

- Internal and community stakeholder meetings
- Community engagement events
- An online survey

### Qualitative Analysis of Information and Input

The information obtained through the community engagement was analyzed to:

- Gauge citizen connection, engagement and attachment
- Identify what residents valued about their neighbourhood
- Identify main drivers that contribute to attachment



Though each neighbourhood was unique, through this process a number of observations appear consistent throughout the community. Residents that reported:

- Higher levels of attachment indicated they had experienced actions of neighbourliness, ease of access to nature and natural amenities and had opportunities for social engagement
- Lower satisfaction with their level of interaction, reported lower interdependency and participation in social gatherings if they lived in their neighbourhoods three years or less, interact with their neighbours once a week or less and were between 20-35 years of age and over 80 years of age

## Pilot Projects

Based on the information obtained during the engagement and research, five pilot projects were developed and implemented in 2015. The intention was to foster neighbourliness, inspire leaders, and empower residents. In addition to the pilot projects, the existing Park & Play program was enhanced so that it also supported these focus areas.

A contributing element to the success of all of these projects was the input, collaboration and support provided by a numbers of City divisions.

#	Activity	Description
1	Good Neighbour Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages residents to be good neighbours, foster neighbourly actions and neighbourliness</li> <li>• Offers tips and creative ideas on how to meet and develop positive relationships between neighbours</li> <li>• Three tools have been produced &amp; distributed in print and online</li> <li>• Five tools are in the process of being developed in collaboration with Parks, Outdoor Events, Community Policing and the Snow Busters program</li> </ul>
2	Strong Neighbourhood Toolkit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowers individuals and neighbourhood-based organizations in planning and organizing events and projects</li> <li>• Contains practical tips, hands on tools, creative ideas and step by step guides for small scale projects and events</li> <li>• Two tools have been produced and distributed in print and online</li> <li>• Two tools are in the process of being developed</li> </ul>
3	Neighbourhood Events Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports resident-led events that provide residents the opportunity to plan and implement neighbourhood gatherings</li> <li>• Inspires residents to connect with their neighbours</li> <li>• Provides mentorship, access to the Mobile Event Unit equipment, and on-site event day support</li> <li>• 11 neighbourhood events were supported</li> <li>• 1,147 residents participated</li> <li>• 97 residents involved in the development &amp; delivery, 475 volunteer hrs</li> <li>• On average, attendees met 8 new neighbours</li> </ul>
4	Neighbourhood Grant Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports small scale, resident driven projects that foster connection and engagement at a neighbourhood level</li> <li>• Empowers residents and neighbourhood based organizations to make their neighbourhoods even better places to live</li> <li>• 12 projects funded, \$9,237 awarded</li> <li>• \$15,860 contributed by neighbourhoods</li> <li>• 101 residents involved in the development &amp; delivery, 900 volunteer hrs</li> <li>• 875 residents participated in activities</li> </ul>
5	Strong Neighbourhoods Webpage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Includes program information, toolkit resources, Neighbourhood Events and Neighbourhood Grant applications, and links to other City programs and services</li> <li>• Showcases Kelowna's Neighbourhoods in Action, which celebrates their efforts and inspires other residents</li> <li>• 6,780 visits to the Strong Neighbourhoods landing page</li> </ul>
6	Park & Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotes neighbourhood connection and fosters neighbourliness</li> <li>• Provides an forum for neighbourhood based organizations and internal stakeholders to connect with the neighbourhoods</li> <li>• 4420 residents participated</li> <li>• Six community-based stakeholders participated</li> <li>• Seven City internal stakeholders utilized this engagement opportunity</li> </ul>

## Evaluation

At the onset of the project there were several desired outcomes identified, the primary two being:

- 1) The City would have an enhanced understanding of citizen attachment and what drives it.
  - Through the qualitative analysis of information and input obtained from the community and stakeholder engagement, four neighbourhood characteristics residents valued and five drivers of attachment were identified.
- 2) There would be an increased level of citizen participation in neighbourhood based activities that contribute to the social fiber of neighbourhoods, and engagement in the development and delivery of initiatives that foster strong neighbourhoods and contribute to their vitality.
  - Through the 2015 pilot projects, there were 23 resident-led activities that over 2,000 residents participated in: 198 individuals were involved in the development and delivery of these initiatives and volunteered 1,375 hours to enhancing their neighbourhoods.
  - The intent of the 2015 projects was to foster neighbourliness, inspire leaders, and empower residents by focusing on the five identified drivers of attachment.

#	Drivers	Activities
1	<i>Aesthetics</i>	4 projects enhanced neighbourhood aesthetics
2	Leadership	23 projects/events demonstrated neighbourhood leadership
3	<i>Safety</i>	2 project & 2 tools focused on safety
4	<i>Social Offerings</i>	23 projects/events provided social offerings (plus Park & Play)
5	<i>Built Relationships</i>	23 projects/events built relationships between residents and City staff (plus Park & Play)

## Strong Neighbourhood Program

Building relationships between neighbours, as well as with the municipality, is a key component to building strong neighbourhoods. The initial project aimed to inspire, involve and empower resident participation in building Kelowna neighbourhoods as great places to live, work and play.

Moving forward the Strong Neighbourhood Program will focus on ways to strengthen the City's relationship with residents and neighbourhood-based organizations as it continues to be a catalyst for inspiring neighbourhoods that fostered a culture of connection and engagement.

Focus moving forward (2016-2017)

#	Focus	Action item
1	Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide multiple means of fostering neighbourhood connection (events, grants, tools)</li><li>• Educate residents and neighbourhood-based organizations about the various resources the City has to help empower them</li><li>• Support residents and neighbourhood-based organizations in the area of social capacity building</li><li>• Work with internal stakeholders to enhancing the relationship between the City and residents</li></ul>
2	Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide resources, mentoring and tools that foster neighbourhood engagement</li><li>• Support residents and neighbourhood-based organizations in the area of neighbourhood capacity building</li><li>• Expand opportunities for neighbourhood-based organizations to become involved in activities</li><li>• Encourage past event and project organizers/leaders to mentor new groups</li></ul>

3	Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue opportunities to work with internal stakeholders on initiatives that strengthen neighbourhoods as well as the development of new tools</li> </ul>
4	Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to evaluate programs to ensure they are meeting their intended outcomes</li> <li>• Follow up with the previous year's event and grant project teams to assess impact</li> </ul>

Ultimately, the goal of the Strong Neighbourhood Program will be to foster an engaged community and spark additional neighbourhood projects and initiatives that enhance the quality of life in Kelowna.

**Internal Circulation:**

Director, Active Living & Culture; Communications Advisor, Communications & Information Services; Manager, Policy & Planning

**Financial/Budgetary Considerations:**

Council approved a one-time Strong Neighbourhood budget submission of \$80,000 with a \$40,000 contribution in both 2014 and 2015. The 2014 contribution was used towards the research and the initial community engagement and the 2015 contribution was used for the development and delivery of the pilot projects.

Ongoing funding of \$20,000 to support the program's continued development will be included in the 2016 Provisional Budget FOR Council's consideration.

**Personnel Implications:**

A key role of the Neighbourhood Development Coordinators will be to continue to advance the Strong Neighbourhood Program. The Neighbourhood Development Team will also collaborate with other City divisions in the area of strengthening neighbourhoods such as participating in related Project Charters such as the Healthy City Partnership.

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

- Legal/Statutory Authority
- Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements
- Existing Policy
- External Agency/Public Comments
- Communications Comments
- Alternate Recommendation

Submitted by:

L. Roberts, Community & Neighbourhood Services Manager

**Approved for inclusion:** J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture

Attachments:

- 2014- 2015 Strong Neighbourhood Project Activity Report
- PowerPoint presentation

cc: Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture  
 Divisional Director, Communications & Information Services  
 Divisional Director, Community Planning & Real Estate