

STRONG NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT

2014-2015 ACTIVITY REPORT



2014 - 2015 STRONG NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECT: ACTIVITY REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

The objective of the Strong Neighbourhood Project was to increase citizen level of attachment to the community by being a catalyst in inspiring neighbourhoods that foster a culture of connection and engagement. The project aimed to encourage resident participation in building on Kelowna neighbourhoods as great places to live, work and play.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Municipalities are under increased pressure to provide services, traditionally provided by other levels of government, with limited financial support from other governments and are often restricted to property taxes and user fees to cover these associated costs.¹ Balancing growing costs, the desire to keep taxes and service rates affordable and meet the infrastructure and social needs of a community is a difficult task, even for the most intrepid city councils.

During this time of economic pressure, a trend is emerging in many mid to large size communities. Many cities are investing in development at the micro-level; initiatives and programs aimed at supporting and mobilizing neighbourhoods are being implemented. These innovative programs all serve to enhance connections and engagement among neighbours which in turn fosters citizens' attachment to the overall community. This is important as the Knight Foundation indicates that "cities with the highest levels of attachment [have] the highest rate of GDP growth."² Therefore, by allocating resources at the micro-level, municipalities reap the rewards on a larger scale.

The City of Kelowna's vision is "to be the best mid-sized city in North America."³ Believing that "strong neighbourhoods make for great cities"⁴ the City of Kelowna has made Strong Neighbourhoods a priority. Supporting Kelowna's neighbourhoods is not just the focus of a single project, rather a city wide priority that can be evidenced through the interdepartmental collaboration demonstrated through the Strong Neighbourhood Project.

The Strong Neighbourhood Project began in the spring of 2014 with the overall intention of enhancing the quality of life for Kelowna citizens. The project scope included:

- Reviewing current neighbourhood development best practices.
- Conducting a community engagement process both in person and through online surveys.
- Implementing pilot projects
- Evaluating the community needs and how well the pilot project addressed these needs.
- Establishing the focus for moving forward.



DEFINITIONS

Neighbourhood

A neighbourhood is more than a geographically localized area; it also has social and symbolic dimensions. It is the place we call home and where we have the most invested financially and emotionally. For many people neighbourhoods are a source of their identities and sense of pride. Neighbourhoods are fluid and not necessarily experienced or defined the same way by all residents. For the purpose of this project “Neighbourhood” refers to the area surrounding a particular place, person, or object as defined by each individual.

Additionally, the following three key terms are central to our understanding of Strong Neighbourhoods:

- **Connection:** one’s relationship with others and the strength of those relationships.
- **Engagement:** one’s commitment to community and the willingness to take actions to solve problems or participate in activities that make our community better.
- **Attachment:** one’s emotional bonding to a particular environment and the social ties one has there.



RESEARCH

How well do you know your neighbours? This seemingly innocuous question deserves more attention than it might seem. The Vancouver Foundation polled 275 charitable organizations and more than 100 community leaders and “what people said concerned them the most was a growing sense of isolation and disconnection.”⁵ It is difficult to fathom that anyone in a metropolitan environment could feel lonely and more staggering to consider that loneliness would be the number one concern. Knowing that social isolation has a greater effect on a person’s health than physical inactivity and is comparable to habitually smoking cigarettes,⁶ and that lonely individuals are more prone to depression,^{7,8} and cognitive decline, the health impacts alone warrant making social connection a priority.

In addition to reducing social isolation, knowing your neighbours can reduce the sense of fear and distrust in neighbourhoods where crime and violence are prevalent,¹⁰ and can increase overall neighbourhood safety.¹¹ Neighbourhood connections can also affect a person’s safety during a natural disaster, as neighbours who know each other are more likely to look out for one another.

These are just a few of the benefits we encountered during the research phase. Municipalities already engaged in neighbourhood development, through their projects, demonstrated that fostering the development of neighbourhood social capital is essential. Communities we explored included: Seattle, Portland, Ottawa, Hamilton, Calgary, Edmonton, Victoria, and Vancouver.

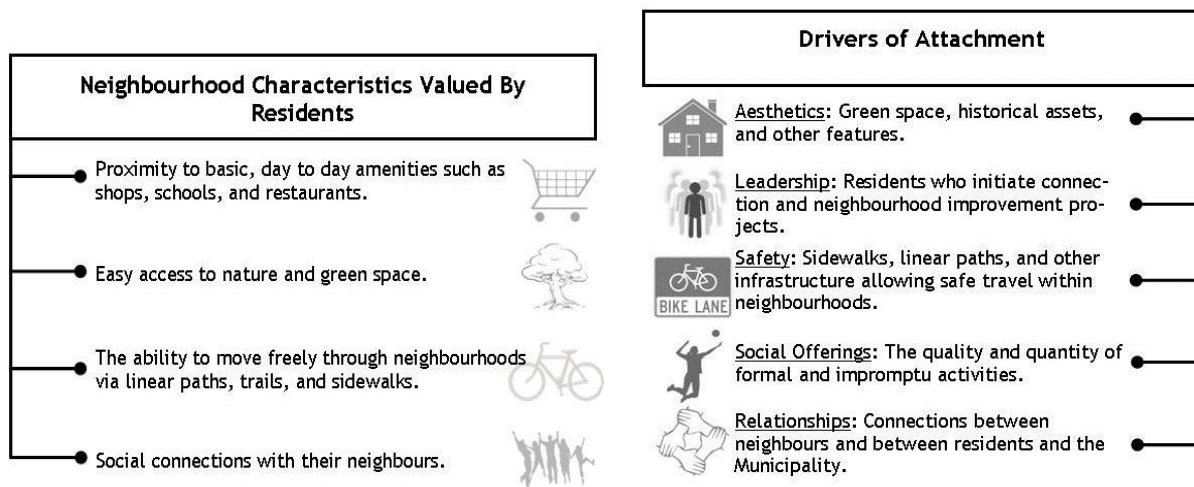
The literature and best practices that we came across, informed the guiding principles adopted for the Strong Neighbourhood Project:

- A resilient/vibrant community is made up of strong neighbourhoods.
- Strong neighbourhoods contribute to citizen level of attachment.
- Connection and engagement are contributing elements to citizen level of attachment.
- Citizen attachment is cultivated not only by what the City provides, but also how citizens themselves contribute to the community and their neighbourhood environment.
- It takes citizens that are inspired, involved and empowered to create strong neighbourhoods.
- Strong neighbourhoods are “a place where people are connected and engaged”.



Community Engagement

With a solid understanding of the value and importance of neighbourhoods and existing municipal practices, understanding local experience became the priority. The Strong Neighbourhood Project team set out to learn from residents about neighbourhood life in the City of Kelowna. Project staff designed a survey that was made available online and which they took with them to 24 community engagement events throughout the city. Over 1,500 people attended the community engagement events and 290 conversations took place. The facilitators of these events captured what they heard from residents, analyzed the information/feedback they had received; and noticed significant trends in what characteristics Kelowna residents value in our neighbourhoods and what drives attachment to where we live.



Though each neighbourhood was unique, through this process a number of initial observations appear consistent throughout the community.

- Neighbourhoods with higher levels of attachment also reported the presence of an individual or group who organized a social offering at the neighbourhood level.
- Neighbourhoods where residents experienced actions of neighbourliness reported a greater sense of social connection, belonging and had a higher level of engagement.
- Neighbourhoods that were more aesthetically pleasing and/or had ease of access to nature and natural amenities reported higher levels of attachment.
- Neighbourhoods with higher attachment levels also identified their ability to access community events and opportunities for social engagement.

For more information, see the full Community Engagement Summary Report at kelowna.ca/neighbourhoods.

Data Analysis

Six hundred thirty nine surveys were completed. Although the data gathered through the survey is not statistically valid, survey respondents did represent a cross section of the community in age, gender, years lived in the community, renters and owners, and sectors of the community.

The survey questions were designed to gauge levels and indicators that influence connection, engagement and attachment. Encouragingly, 73 per cent of respondents indicated their level of attachment as either moderately strong or strong and 82 per cent were satisfied with their level of interaction with their neighbours.

Respondents tended to report lower levels of satisfaction with their level of interaction and reported lower levels of interdependency and participation in social gatherings if they:

- Lived in their neighbourhoods three years or less;
- Interacted with their neighbours once a week or less;
- Intended on moving in the next five years; and/or
- Were between 20 -35 years of age and over 80 years of age.

For those respondents who reported being dissatisfied with their level of interaction with neighbours, the top three things they indicated they would like to see enhanced in their neighbourhoods were:

- Neighbourliness;
- Opportunities to interact; and/or
- Public space in which to interact.

Respondents also reported that they would be more likely to interact if they:

- Had fewer resource constraints;
- Experienced more neighbourliness; and/or
- Had more in common with their neighbours.

For more information, see the full Data Analysis at kelowna.ca/neighbourhoods.



PILOT PROJECTS

Recognizing that connection and engagement are fundamental to fostering attachment to a community, the 2014 research and engagement data was carefully analyzed in order to determine how best to support residents of Kelowna in connecting and engaging at the neighbourhood level. Through this analysis, three key focus areas emerged and formed the foundation on which the pilot projects were developed.

Foster Neighbourliness

Kelowna residents' survey responses indicated that they wished they knew their neighbours better, and cited that part of the reason they do not know their neighbours is because they are uncomfortable initiating conversations and/or believe they have nothing in common with their neighbours. Current literature and best practices purport that providing opportunities for neighbours to come together is fundamental to strengthening neighbourhoods. Even more to the point, bringing people together for the sake of getting to know each other, initiating conversation, and establishing common interests are essential building blocks to neighbourliness. The dichotomy between resident experience and the research on neighbourliness led to the development of the first priority: *support social offerings that foster neighbourliness.*

Inspire Leaders

During the community engagement sessions, neighbours could identify a current or past neighbourhood leader. These leaders were described as the people who would organize social activities, champion local projects, or advocate for neighbourhood needs. Residents noted that if these individuals had moved away, neighbourhood engagement tended to decline and eventually so did the social connection among neighbours. Learning from residents how invaluable these organic leaders are to the vibrancy of neighbourhoods, the second priority was established: *inspire, encourage and support individuals to become initiators of connection and engagement in their neighbourhoods.*

Empower Residents

The community engagement process uncovered key drivers of attachment for Kelowna residents. Since the overall objective of the Strong Neighbourhood Project was to increase citizen level of attachment to the community, it naturally follows that any initiative designed to strengthen neighbourhoods would need to address at least one of these areas. However, each neighbourhood is unique and residents are in the best position to know what could be enhanced in their neighbourhoods and often have innovative ideas on how to go about it. With these understandings, a third priority was determined: *assist and empower residents to develop and implement initiatives that enhance neighbourhood aesthetics, safety, leadership, social offerings and/or relationships.*

In order to address these priorities, five pilot projects were developed and implemented:

- Good Neighbour Toolkit
- Strong Neighbourhood Toolkit
- Neighbourhood Events
- Neighbourhood Grant
- Strong Neighbourhood Webpage

In addition to these pilot projects, the City's existing Park & Play program was expanded to assist in addressing the focus areas.

GOOD NEIGHBOUR TOOLKIT



Good Neighbour TOOLKIT

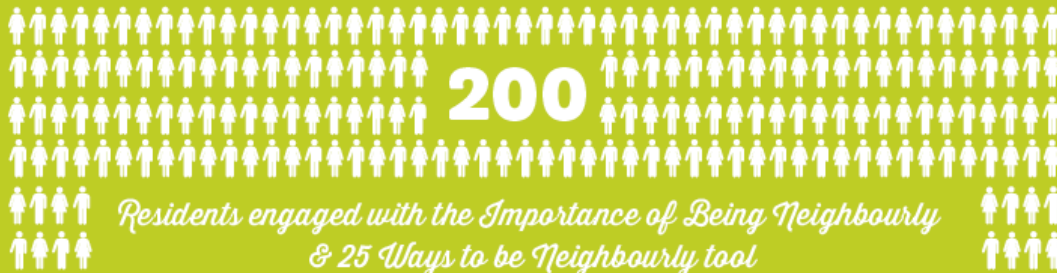
The purpose of Good Neighbour Toolkit is to help encourage residents to be good neighbours, foster neighbourly actions and enhance neighbourliness.

TOOLS CREATED

IMPORTANCE
OF BEING
NEIGHBOURLY

25 WAYS
TO BE
NEIGHBOURLY

EASY WAYS
TO MEET YOUR
NEIGHBOURS



235 residents engaged with
the Easy Ways to Meet
Your Neighbours tool

*The postcard-size
brochures work well to
stimulate conversations
with residents*



THERE ARE MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS TO CREATE TOOLS. COLLABORATION RESULTS IN GREATER DISTRIBUTION AND CONTENT THAT SUPPORTS MULTIPLE MANDATES.

Background

Purpose: The purpose of the Good Neighbour Toolkit is to encourage residents to be good neighbours, foster neighbourly actions and neighbourliness.

Focus Areas: The Good Neighbour Toolkit is designed to foster neighbourliness, and empower residents in strengthening relationships.

Description: Offers tips and creative ideas on how to meet and develop positive relationships between neighbours.

Action

Four tools have been created to date:

- The Importance of Being Neighbourly
 - Highlights the physical and mental wellbeing, safety, money-saving, and social benefits associated with getting to know your neighbours.
- 25 Ways to be Neighbourly
 - Provides simple, inspirational ideas that can enhance neighbourliness.
- Easy Ways to Meet Your Neighbours
 - Offers five different ideas for getting to know your neighbours including ways to introduce yourself without having to initiate a conversation.
- Snow Busters
 - Invites residents to be good neighbours by clearing snow for people in their neighbourhood who may have difficulty with this task.

The hard copy versions of The Importance of Being Neighbourly and 25 Ways to be Neighbourly tools were published as one, with a perforated edge between the two. This allows the 25 Ways to be Neighbourly to be separated and posted somewhere visible.

Four tools that are currently being developed:

- Casual Use of Parks
 - Encourages the use of neighbourhood parks by providing activity suggestions and information about what is permissible.
- Who to Call, When to Call
 - Assists residents in determining whether an incident is an emergency versus a non-emergency and provide the appropriate contact information to meet their needs.
- Neighbourhood Safety
 - Offers suggestions of ways to enhance neighbourhood safety and contain a list of non-emergency contact numbers.
- How to be a Good Neighbour
 - Provides key information on how to be a Good Neighbour from a Bylaw perspective.

Collaboration

The City of Kelowna's Communications Department has played an important role in developing the tools and connecting the Strong Neighbourhoods Project with other City initiatives/programs that are relevant at the neighbourhood level so as to stretch all of our resources further through the creation of multi-purpose tools. Bylaw, Community Policing and Parks have requested multiple copies of the tools to display in their front offices and/or distribute to residents. These departments, and other Active Living & Culture programs, have also expressed an interest in collaborating to create new tools that would tie-in useful information about the department's service and the aspect of being neighbourly.

Impact

It is difficult to measure the impact of the tools. In terms of sharing the tools,

- 200 residents were reached with The Importance of Being Neighbourly and 25 Ways to be Neighbourly.
- 235 residents were engaged through The Easy Ways to Meet your Neighbours tool.
- Tools have been distributed at Park & Play and various City and Neighbourhood Events.

However, in using the tools to open conversations at Park & Play and other City and neighbourhood-based events, a positive response to the tools has been observed. The Easy Ways to Meet Your Neighbours tool has generated a lot of conversation and residents often identify at least one of the ideas that they could put to use almost immediately.

Evaluation

In considering both how we were distributing and using the materials, and the feedback we received from residents, we learned that:

- The postcard-size brochures are visually appealing, quick reads and popular.
- Print materials are great tools for initiating conversations with residents.
- Tangible ideas that demonstrate a tool's concept in action generate discussion.
- Collaboration with internal stakeholders generates content that supports multiple mandates and expands the reach of each tool.

Moving Forward

The next steps for the Good Neighbour Toolkit are:

- Continue to collaborate with different departments to create multi-purpose tools.
- Develop tools in response to recurring themes that emerge in our work with residents.
- Distribute print materials and publish tools on the Strong Neighbourhood webpage.
- Ensure every tool contains actionable ideas.



STRONG NEIGHBOURHOOD TOOLKIT



Strong Neighbourhood TOOLKIT

The Strong Neighbourhood Toolkit provides residents with the information and resources to help build the skills necessary to develop and facilitate successful neighbourhood projects.

TOOLS CREATED



PROJECT PLANNING TIPS

basic steps involved in
planning a neighbourhood
project + project ideas

SO YOU WANT TO PLAN A BLOCK PARTY

outlines steps involved in
planning a block party



Over 50 copies of each tool printed
and distributed at Park & Play and
other City of Kelowna outreach events

10 NEW TOOLS IN THE PIPELINE



Background

Purpose: The purpose of the Strong Neighbourhood Toolkit is to empower individuals and neighbourhood-based organizations in planning and organizing events and projects.

Focus Areas: The Strong Neighbourhood Toolkit focuses on inspiring leaders and empowering residents to undertake small-scale projects and events that strengthen one or more drivers of attachment.

Description: Contains practical tips, hands-on tools, project ideas and step-by-step guides for small scale projects and events.

Action

Two tools have been created to date:

- **Project Planning Tips**
 - Provides an outline of the basic steps involved in planning a neighbourhood project and offers ideas for projects.

- **So You Want to Plan a Block Party**
 - Outlines the essential steps involved in planning block party-type activities.

Collaboration

Internal stakeholders have also shown an interest in the Strong Neighbourhood Toolkit and have requested the tools for their lobbies and other dispersal points.

Impact

Once again, we are faced with the difficult task of measuring the impact of the tools. We do know that:

- 50 copies of each tool were printed and distributed.
- Tools have been accessed by residents at Park & Play and various City and Neighbourhood Events.

Evaluation

Anecdotal feedback for both tools has been favorable. The Project Planning Tips pamphlet has been seen as a valuable resource for those who might apply for a Strong Neighbourhood Grant. The So You Want to Plan a Block Party! pamphlet seems to be most commonly picked up and read by residents when they are looking through program media without a Neighbourhood Development Coordinator discussing which tools they might find useful.

Moving Forward

Next steps for the Strong Neighbourhood Toolkit include:

- Collaborate with internal stakeholders to develop multi-purpose tools.
- Expand the “So you want to plan a...” suite of simple tools.
- Create a series of worksheets to support residents through a project planning process.
- Distribute print materials and publish tools on the Strong Neighbourhood webpage.

NEIGHBOURHOOD EVENTS



Neighbourhood Events

Neighbourhood Events are designed to:

- 1.** Inspire residents to connect with their neighbours
- 2.** Stimulate resident initiated neighbourhood get-togethers
- 3.** Reach residents who are the least connected and engaged
- 4.** Encourage residents to get to know who lives next door and promote interdependency

Neighbourhood Events combine mentorship and access to the Mobile Event Unit

(tables, chairs, tents, sound system and games)



Events supported throughout the community

1,147 RESIDENTS PARTICIPATED

97 residents volunteered 475 hours to Neighbourhood Events



EVENT RESULTS

81% first time attending a neighbourhood event

95% met a neighbour for the first time

97% got to know their neighbours better

42% exchanged contact info with their neighbours

56% made plans for after the event

8 new neighbours met, on average

The program required the collaboration of multiple internal stakeholders. Parks, Roadways, Bylaw and Community Policing departments as well as other Active Living and Culture programs all provided support to one or more events.

Background

Purpose: Support residents in organizing and hosting neighbourhood-based events.

Focus Areas: The Neighbourhood Events program addresses all three focus areas: Fostering neighbourliness, inspiring leaders and empowering residents through strengthening relationships and providing neighbourhood-base social offerings.

Description: Neighbourhood Events combines mentorship, access to the Mobile Event Unit, and on-site event day support. The Mobile Event Unit contains tables, chairs, tents, garbage and recycling cans, a sound system, and a variety of games.

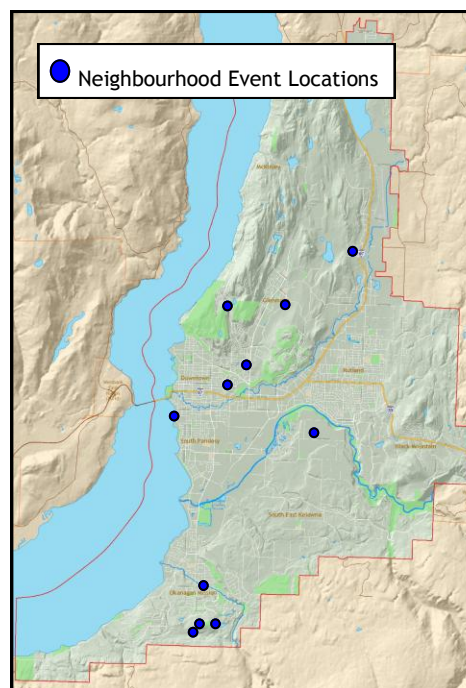
Action

During the inaugural year of the project, the goal was to support eight to ten resident-led events across the community. With a launch day of May 15, 2015, this did not leave much lead-up time for events to happen at the onset of summer. However, once the community began hearing about the Neighbourhood Events program and seeing it in action, applications began to arrive. In total:

- 11 neighbourhood events were supported.
- 1,147 residents participated.
- 97 residents assisted in planning and delivering events.
- 475 volunteer hours were contributed.

Events took place in multiple subsectors of the City:

Project	Neighbourhood
Lombardy Park - Block Party	South Glenmore
GVCA- Family Fun Day	Glenmore Road
Lake Ave Beach Access	South Central
Operation Meet & Greet	Southwest Mission
Terrace Drive Potluck	Glenmore Rd
Ayre Ave Neighbourhood Party	South Glenmore
UBC-O Kick Start Event	Hwy 97 South
Cantina Court Block Party	Southwest Mission
Beyond the Block	North Mission
Fall Fest	Southwest Mission
Family Picnic	Hall Road



Collaboration

The program required the collaboration of multiple internal stakeholders. In the course of the first year, Parks, Roadways, Bylaw and Community Policing departments as well as other Active Living & Culture programs all provided support to one or more events.

Impact

During each Neighbourhood event, participant surveys were available and residents were encouraged to provide their feedback. Of those who completed and returned the participant surveys:

- 81 per cent indicated that this was the first time that they had attended a neighbourhood event.
- 95 per cent indicated that they had met a neighbour for the first time.
- 97 per cent indicated that they got to know their neighbours better.
- 42 per cent indicated that they had exchanged contact information with their neighbours.
- 56 per cent indicated that they had made plans to get together after the event.
- On average, attendees met 8 new neighbours.

In response to the question regarding what the highlight of the event was, the vast majority of comments were: “meeting all my neighbours.”

Evaluation

At every event, participants commented on how much they valued the event and the support of the City to make it happen. There is an appetite for getting together with neighbours and the mentorship and equipment support are both appreciated. Some event organizers were hesitant to plan an event until they learned that the Strong Neighbourhood’s staff would be available to walk them through the planning process and would be present on the day of the event to provide any additional support. Other organizers were grateful for the equipment support provided as this answered a number of logistical questions that would normally prevent them from hosting a gathering.

Here is what residents had to say:

“It was really great, many people finally got to put a name to a face - the name tags were really helpful! It was really great to see lots of people having conversations and the children making new friends. We also had a really great turn out with people of all ages attending; we had families with young children, teenagers/preteens and also seniors as well and it was great to see everyone having fun together. We also had a lot of new people to the area come and it was great for them to meet new people since they are new to the city.” - Tim B.

“The team truly goes above and beyond what one would expect. We used all the resources available and without them it would have been a very hard and costly thing to pull this kind of event together. Getting the invites and posters was great along with the event kit of course too. I also got advice on the time of day, best location and overall planning of the event which was so helpful. Our neighbourhood was really impressed with this program.” - Alison C.

Moving Forward

Based on comments and inquiries from residents, next steps for the Neighbourhood Events program include:

- Expanding the number of events that are supported.
- Encouraging greater diversity in the types of gatherings being held; expanding the timeframe will naturally support this by allowing for events through multiple seasons.
- Accepting applications in April to better accommodate May and June events.

NEIGHBOURHOOD GRANT



Neighbourhood Grant

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Grant is to spark neighbourhood enhancement initiatives.



Small scale, resident driven projects that foster connection and engagement at the neighbourhood level

Empower residents and neighbourhood-based organizations to make their neighbourhoods even better places to live

GRANTS SUPPORT

Enhance the five drivers of resident attachment
**identified through the community engagement phase of the project*



aesthetics



leadership



safety



social offerings



relationships

✓ RESULTS

3 YEAR, \$15,000 PARTNERSHIP



MATCHING GRANT
-up to- \$1,000

12 projects supported & implemented in 2015

3 intakes per year

\$15,860 in matching funds was contributed

\$9,237 in matching grants were awarded

875 NEIGHBOURS PARTICIPATED

Background

Purpose: The purpose of the Neighbourhood Grant is to spark small-scale neighbourhood enhancement initiatives.

Focus Areas: The Neighbourhood Grant addresses all three focus areas: Fostering neighbourliness, inspiring leaders and especially empowering residents to strengthen one or more of the drivers to attachment.

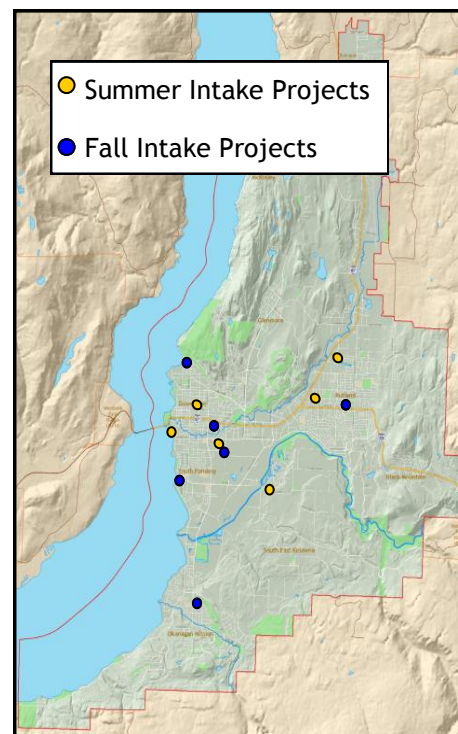
Description: The Neighbourhood Grant provides up to \$1,000 in matching funds to support resident-driven projects that foster neighbourhood connection and engagement. It is designed to empower residents and neighbourhood-based organizations to make their neighbourhoods even better places to live by actively enhancing drivers of attachment. Intakes for grant applications take place three times a year, with a total of \$5,000 available per intake.

Action

The Neighbourhood Grant was launched on May 15, 2015. Grant application intake dates were June 1, 2015, August 1, 2015, and December 1, 2015. To date:

- 12 projects have been supported and implemented.
- \$9,237 has been awarded.
- \$15,860 in matching funds has been contributed by the neighbourhoods.
- 900 volunteer hours have been invested in Kelowna's neighbourhoods.
- 101 residents have actively engaged in planning and implementing projects.
- 875 neighbours have participated in Neighbourhood Grant activities.

Projects were diverse in scope and in neighbourhoods served throughout the City.



Project	Project Description	Neighbourhood
Boulevard Beautification	Transformed a boulevard into a colourful and drought-tolerant xeriscape.	North End
Capri Area Neighbourhood Dinner	A neighbourhood dinner to facilitate getting to know each other and discussion regarding establishing a skill exchange.	Highway East
Findlay Road Connecting	A Friday after work BBQ to build connections and rapport between industrial businesses and residents.	Hwy 97 North
Kaslo Court Little Free Library	Construction and celebration of Kelowna's first registered Little Free Library.	Benvoulin
Kelowna Quality Shores Projects	Park clean-up, water quality discussion, and neighbourhood get together.	Richter/ Pandosy
Lake Ave Beach Access - Public Space Animation	Series of events aimed at bringing neighbours together and animating a public space with activities that neighbours identified as ones they would like to engage in regularly.	South Central
Nickel Road Entrance Improvement	Revitalizing a shared entrance way and boulevard in order to enhance the neighbourhood's aesthetics.	Hwy 33 East
Pancake Breakfast with Santa	Bringing the community together for a pancake breakfast and early holiday celebration with the side benefit of collecting children's toys for the Kelowna Community Food Bank.	North Mission
Rutland Artful Shenanigans	An interactive arts-based event that brought neighbourhood artists and residents together in Roxby Plaza during Culture Days.	Rutland
Share a Meal Meet Your Neighbour	A back alley, sit down meal designed to facilitate connection between neighbours who share the alley.	Downtown
Woodland Crescent Library Box	Construction and celebration of a neighbourhood micro-library.	Hall Road
Workshop Series in the Greens Community	Provided opportunities to engage seniors through informative and relevant workshops, beginning with xeriscape basics.	Benvoulin

Collaboration

The Neighbourhood Grant is made possible through a partnership with the Central Okanagan Foundation (COF). COF has generously provided \$15,000 per year in funding for the Neighbourhood Grant for up to three years.

Collaboration among City departments has been paramount to the implementation of many Neighbourhood Grant projects. Parks, Active Living and Culture, Roadways, Policy & Planning, Communications, Bylaw and Community Policing provided critical information, guidance and support. These internal stakeholders assisted the Neighbourhood Development Coordinators in reviewing the applications to determine project feasibility, identifying potential issues, and preemptive problem-solving. It is the dedication of City staff and the collaboration among departments that has, in many instances, stretched how far one thousand dollars, or less, can go.

Impact

Every Neighbourhood Grant recipient is asked to submit a final report once their project has been fully implemented. From these final reports:

- 100 per cent of organizers reported that their project or event assisted in building connection among their neighbour.
- 100 per cent of organizers reported that their project or event increased the level of engagement among neighbours.
- 83 per cent of organizers report that they are highly likely to organize another project or event in their neighbourhood.

Evaluation

Central to the Neighbourhood Grant's mandate is strengthening the drivers of attachment. Of the projects that were funded:

- 4 projects enhanced Aesthetics.
- 12 project strengthened Leadership.
- 2 projects impacted Safety.
- 12 projects provided Social Offerings.
- 12 projects fostered Relationships.

One question that emerged during the development of the program was: will \$1,000 per project be enough? The answer to this question appears to be yes. Of the 12 grants awarded, five required the full \$1,000 while the others required an average of \$500.

Here is what residents had to say:

"People were engaged with the process, and even more after the installation of the Little Free Library. People are coming by many times a week looking at the library. People that I have never seen before come by as well." - Eve L.

"The Strong Neighbourhood grant helped to fund events that encouraged residents to take pride again in the neighbourhood and meet their fellow neighbours. Through the grant, this neighbourhood organized three different events that demonstrated how strong a neighbourhood we are. We

welcomed the community of Kelowna to our neighbourhood to participate in our events and to experience what a great neighbourhood we live in.” - Julie C.

“This project gave community association members a chance to work together for the day doing something fun in the outdoors. There was a sense of community spirit as neighbours worked side by side. Some were meeting each other for the first time, others enjoying socializing with neighbours they already knew. Everyone pitched in fantastically in both the planning and implementation. A lot can be accomplished with many hands!” - Lisa M., Kelowna Downtown Knox Mountain Neighbourhood Association.



101 RESIDENTS HAVE INVESTED 900 HOURS IN KELOWNA'S NEIGHBOURHOODS

\$\$\$ Resulting in doing more with less money \$\$\$

DEPARTMENTS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO SUCCESS:

Parks // Active Living & Culture // Transportation & Mobility // Bylaw
Policy & Planning // Communications // Community Policing

“People were engaged with the process, and even more after the installation. People are coming by many times a week looking at the library. People that I have never seen before come by as well.” -Haslo Court - Little Tree Library

Moving Forward

The two-stage application process has provided opportunities for the Neighbourhood Development Coordinators to support residents in developing their project ideas and completing the application requirements. Moving forward, the following action items will enhance the application process:

- Establish an initial application deadline to create a window of time for the Strong Neighbourhoods team to work closely with applicants in developing their ideas and understanding and completing the various components of the Neighbourhood Grant.
- Offer a grant application workshop to address the frequently asked questions and common areas of confusion.
- Review the feedback and common issues that emerge and modify the application process accordingly.

The Neighbourhood Grant has received input and support from a wide variety of internal stakeholders. In order to efficiently use these resources, proposed future actions are to:

- Establish a Review Team involving a cross section of City staff.
- Consult with Review Team to ensure that only feasible projects are approved.
- Consult with the appropriate City departments to determine if resources are available to support collaborative projects.

In the next six to twelve months, Strong Neighbourhoods staff will follow-up with Neighbourhood Grant recipients to gauge the lasting impact of project activities on their respective neighbourhoods.

STRONG NEIGHBOURHOOD WEBSITE



Background

Purpose: The purpose of the Strong Neighbourhood website is to promote program information, provide resources, and link to other City pages pertinent to neighbourhood life.

Focus Areas: The Strong Neighbourhood website is a platform that supports the other pilot projects and, as a result, supports all three focus areas: Fostering Neighbourliness, Inspiring Leaders and Empowering Residents.

Description: Provides program information, toolkit resources, Neighbourhood Grant and Event application forms, links to relevant resources and showcases Kelowna's neighbourhoods in action.

Action

At the beginning of 2015, the Strong Neighbourhoods Project's web presence was limited to one page of text on the City's website. Over the course of this year, this has grown to nine pages detailing the project itself, its pilot projects, media coverage, and other resources related to neighbourhood development. The pages have been designed in an easily navigable, visually pleasing style. To create more accessible application processes, Neighbourhood Grant and Events Programs applications were included online and as a downloadable PDF to maximize accessibility, and the various project tools were created in both print and web-friendly PDF versions.

Collaboration

The Strong Neighbourhood Project website provides another platform for the program to support the work of other City programs by providing links to their information.

Impact

Comparing the number of visits and unique visits to the Strong Neighbourhoods landing page in 2014 and 2015, we see that:

- Visits grew from 2,150 to 4,630, for a total of 6,780 visits.
- Unique visits grew from 1,887 to 3,885, for a total of 5,772 visits.
- 528 people have e-subscribed to the Strong Neighbourhoods e-bulletin.
- There is a 31 per cent click through rate on e-bulletin updates.

Evaluation

The Strong Neighbourhood website has been expanded and populated with the resources necessary for the public to learn about and access Strong Neighbourhood programs online. As the site has grown, so has the number of people accessing the site suggesting, that residents are keen to learn more about the Strong Neighbourhood Project and the resources it has to offer.

Moving Forward

In addition to design changes and the addition of new content, 2015 has established a variety of baseline statistics that staff can now use to set goals for 2016. With this in mind, the following goals will be pursued heading into and through 2016:

- Work with the Communications Department to grow visits to the landing page.
- Continue to expand and redesign resource, news, and testimonial pages to accommodate more information without overpopulating pages.
- Highlight and support other City initiatives that support neighbourhoods.



PARK & PLAY



Park & Play

Park & Play is a series of free family events running weeknights throughout July and August. Providing interactive activities and music in neighbourhood parks, Park & Play encourages activity, connecting neighbours to each other and their surroundings and helps turn neighbourhoods into communities.

40 Park & Play events were held in 10 Kelowna City parks in 2015 and included four collaborative events with Festivals Kelowna's Parks Alive! program.

4,420 people attended Park & Play events this year; average attendance just over 100



8.5% ↑

at Park & Play events in 2015 over 2014

City departments and other stakeholders were invited to attend Park & Play events to conduct neighbourhood outreach by providing information to the public on programs and services

13 different stakeholder groups attended Park & Play events over the summer and all found the opportunity to interact with Kelowna residents useful for their programs.



Background

Purpose: The purpose of the Park & Play is to encourage physical activity, promote the use of neighbourhood parks, and to spark connection among neighbours.

Focus Areas: Park & Play's primary area of focus is Fostering Neighbourliness.

Description: Park & Play is a high energy, free, outdoor recreation program that brings inflatables and a large range of games and activities to neighbourhood parks on weekday evenings through July and August.

Action

Under the coordination of the Strong Neighbourhood Project, the mandate of Park & Play was expanded to include a focus on fostering neighbourliness. To this end, Neighbourhood Development Coordinators attended nearly all forty events to share resources from the Toolkits and to begin to build relationships with Kelowna's citizens. Additionally, internal stakeholders and neighbourhood-based organizations were invited to participate in Park & Play as the program provided a natural site for public engagement.

Collaboration

Overall, 13 stakeholder groups attended averaging one stakeholder per event. Stakeholders that attended are listed below, along with the number of dates they attended:

Number of Events Attended by City Stakeholders	Number of Events Attended by External Stakeholders
4 - Water Smart	11 - FortisBC
3- Ambassadors Program, Community Policing	8 - Canadian Blood Services
2 - Canada 150, ALC Neighbourhood Programs	2 - Kelowna Museums
1 - Fire Department, Kelowna Community Theatre	1 - BC Golf, Okanagan Basin Water Board, K96.3 Classic Rock Radio

Impact

As in past years, Park & Play visited a total of 10 neighbourhood parks. Over the course of the 40 evenings:

- 4,420 residents participated, up 8.5 per cent from 2014.
- 13 stakeholders engaged, participating a total of 40 times.

Evaluation

As a key focus for Park & Play this year was to invite stakeholders to participate, it is their feedback that is invaluable. Here is what stakeholders had to say:

Park & Play was *“a really great opportunity for FortisBC to engage with the Kelowna community at different venues than we have. The audience was great and engaged in the messaging we were providing.”* - FortisBC Representative

“We were very pleased with the level of interaction we had at these events. The events provided us with the opportunity to speak with residents one on one about our programming and safety issues impacting our neighbourhoods.” - Community Policing

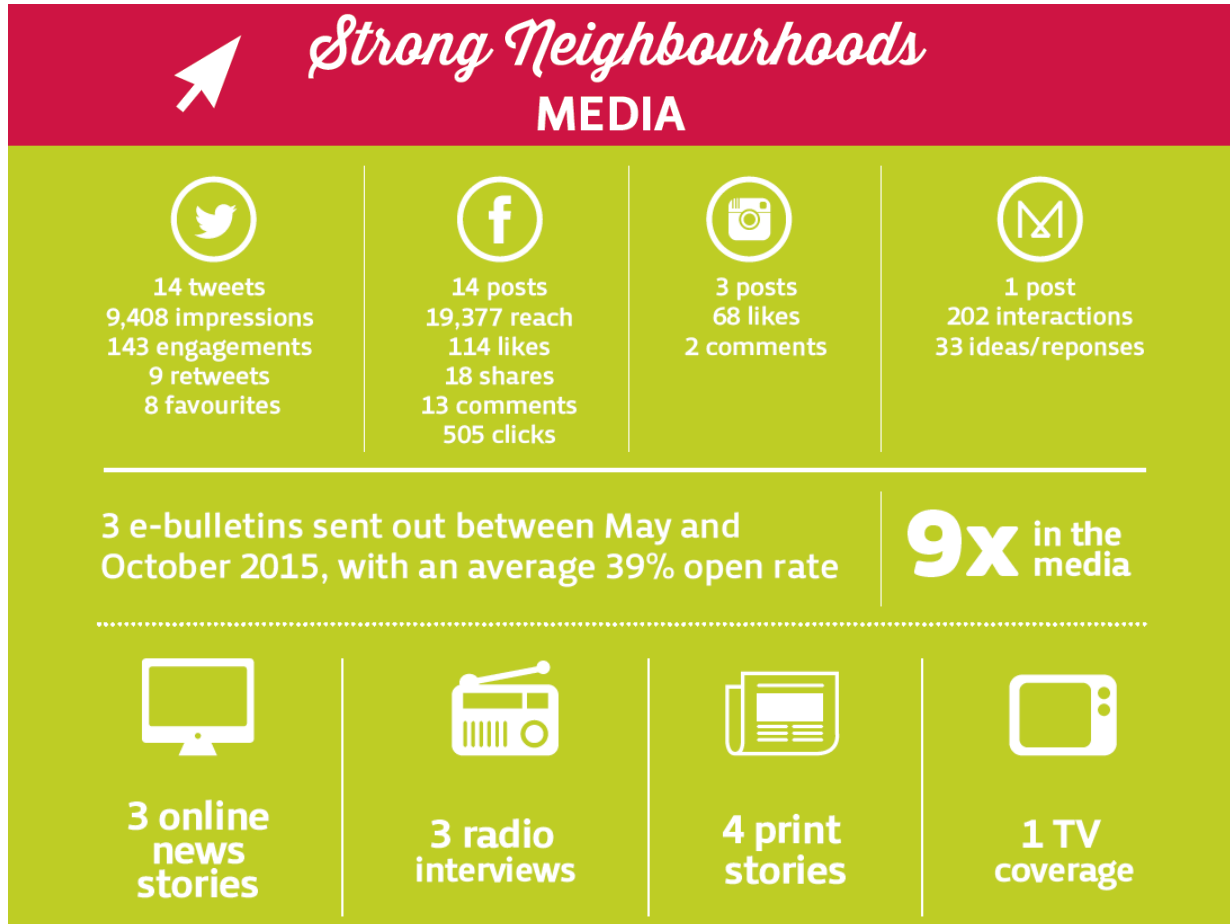
Moving Forward

To build on the program's successes and address areas of improvement, the following strategies will be looked at for 2016:

- Reworking the Park & Play participant survey as well as Neighbourhood Grant and Events applications so that participants in all programs can report whether they intend to apply for a program or if their application stems from participation in Park & Play.
- Diversification of program offerings to make Park & Play a more appealing destination event for those without young children, i.e., seniors, youth, or couples without children.
- Continue to invite City departments to participate in Park & Play as it provides an opportunity for departments to engage with residents.
- Continue to encourage neighbourhood-based organizations to participate as Park & Play as an excellent opportunity to engage with their neighbours.
- Fine-tune the program's communication strategy and improve advertising signage, realizing that a majority of people who attend Park & Play do so because of online advertisements or seeing the events as they are in progress.



MEDIA RESPONSE & SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE



Multiple forms of media reported on the Strong Neighbourhood Project. Media coverage was overwhelmingly positive; many sources used the Neighbourhood Grant as a good news story. Below is a summary of the articles and interviews:

Print		
Capital News	May 05, 2015	Kelowna proposes new neighbourhood grants
The Daily Courier	May 22, 2015	Seattle idea welcome here
snapped Okanagan	October 2015	Easy ways to meet your neighbour - City of Kelowna
The Daily Courier	August 21, 2015	Taking back the sand
Online		
Kelowna Now	May 05, 2015	Grants available for Kelowna citizens who want to better their community
Castanet	May 07, 2015	Neighbourhood Grants
Infotel	May 15, 2015	City puts cash behind Strong Neighbourhoods Program
Radio		
CBC - Day Break	May 07, 2015	Daybreak South interview re: neighbourhood grant
CBC - Radio West	July 19, 2015	City of Kelowna offers neighbourhood improvement grants
CBC - BC Almanac	September 26, 2015	Do you know your neighbours? Interview alongside Jim Diers, founder of Seattle's Department of Neighbourhoods.
Television		
Shaw TV Okanagan	September 21, 2015	Community Dinner

In addition to its presence on the City of Kelowna's website, Strong Neighbourhoods made use of social media and other online advertising to promote its programs with the following results:

- Twitter: Ten tweets reached 7,388 feeds and had 121 engagements (i.e., likes, retweets, and responses).
- Facebook: Ten posts reached 6,026 feeds and received 191 post clicks.
- Instagram: Two posts received 48 likes.
- Mind Mixer: In two months, 202 interactions and 33 responses were generated.
- Castanet: Two advertisements (one up for 16 and another for 30 days) generated 469 click-thrus and 1,571,751 impressions.
- Kelowna Now: One advertisements (up for 19 days) generated 48 click-thrus and 60,440 impressions.

EVALUATION

Throughout the Strong Neighbourhood Project, evaluation has been essential. Every aspect of this project has been based on research, community data and resident feedback. Now that the Strong Neighbourhood Project has come to completion, it is important to return to the original objective and intended outcomes to consider whether these have been achieved.

As the outcomes were designed to support the overall objective, we will first explore how the outcomes were addressed.

Understanding

The Strong Neighbourhood Project set out was to enhance the City's understanding of:

- Citizen attachment and what drives it;
- What makes our community a great place to live through the eyes of its citizens;
- Neighbourhood strengths and community identity; and
- What type of strategic initiatives will contribute to increasing levels of citizen attachment and connection at a neighbourhood level.

Through the research and engagement activities, an understanding of the characteristics Kelowna residents value in their neighbourhoods as well as what tangible and intangible elements affect the strength of the emotional bond residents have to where they live was gained (see Community Engagement). Dialogue with residents informed staff that these features form the foundation of what residents identify as their neighbourhood's strengths and community identity. Having learned from residents about which are the key drivers of attachment in Kelowna, and having scanned other municipalities' best practice programs, the Strong Neighbourhood Project team was able to strategically develop and implement a series of pilot projects to strengthen citizen attachment and connection.

Participation

A second desired outcome for the Strong Neighbourhood Project was to increase the level of citizen:

- Participation in neighbourhood based activities and initiatives that contribute to the social fiber of neighbourhoods;
- Engagement in the development and delivery of programs, services and initiatives that foster strong neighbourhoods and contribute to their vitality; and
- Ownership in making Kelowna the best city they can imagine.

Throughout the duration of the Strong Neighbourhood Project, public engagement has been a priority. Stakeholders were informed right from the beginning about the project and invited to join the discussion at a community meeting. The community engagement phase involved citizens by holding public events, inviting dialogue and encouraging residents to have their say by completing surveys either in person or on-line. After the data was analyzed, project staff reported the key findings back to the community.

The input received from citizens guided the development of the various pilot projects. Additionally, the new projects were designed with the intention of supporting residents in enacting their ideas and

initiatives for bringing people together and enhancing the drivers of attachment in their neighbourhoods.

Awareness

The third intended outcome was that the City and the community would have:

- A common vision for Kelowna's neighbourhoods;
- A clear understanding of the key components that foster a strong neighbourhood; and
- An increased awareness as to what both the municipality and the community are doing at a neighbourhood level that foster strong neighbourhoods.

In addition to regular communication about what the City is doing to support neighbourhoods, developing strong relationships between the municipal staff and neighbourhood-based organizations and residents has been central to building awareness about the initiatives and activities amongst all parties.

Through the research and community engagement activities, essential elements for fostering strong neighbourhoods were discovered. On the basis of these, a vision for Kelowna's neighbourhoods was established as "a place where people are connected and engaged."

This vision leads to the Strong Neighbourhood Project's overall objective:

To increase citizen level of attachment to the community by being a catalyst in inspiring neighbourhoods that foster a culture of connection and engagement.

While we know that the Understanding, Participation and Awareness outcomes all supported this vision, it is important to look more closely at how the Strong Neighbourhood Project activities fostered connection and engagement.

Connection

Fostering social relationships between neighbours was at the heart of the Strong Neighbourhood Project. Since launching the pilot projects in May, 2015:

- 6,179 Residents participated in the Strong Neighbourhood Project.

Of the residents who planned or participated in a Neighbourhood Grant or Event:

- 95 per cent indicated that they met new neighbours.
- 97 per cent indicated that they got to know their neighbours better.
- 100 per cent of Neighbourhood Grant recipients indicated that connection among their neighbours increased.

These results suggest that the pilot projects were successful in bringing people together and creating inviting spaces for people to meet.

Engagement

Inspiring and empowering residents to be actively engaged is crucial to fostering resilient neighbourhoods. The pilot projects were designed to provide opportunities for engagement, and since the May 2015 launch:

- 33 neighbourhoods have been involved.
- 198 residents engaged in the planning and organizing of projects and events.
- 1,375 volunteer hours were contributed to the planning and implementation of projects and events.
- 19 community and neighbourhood-based organizations engaged in one or more aspect of the Strong Neighbourhood Project.
- 100 per cent of Neighbourhood Grant recipients indicated that engagement within their neighbourhood increased as a result of their project.

Drivers of Attachment

In addition to supporting connection and engagement, it was crucial that the Strong Neighbourhood Project use the pilot projects to enhance the drivers of attachment identified by the community. Through the Neighbourhood Grant and Neighbourhood Events initiatives:

- 4 projects enhanced neighbourhood Aesthetics.
- 23 projects and events demonstrated neighbourhood Leadership.
- 2 projects and 2 tools focused on Safety.
- 23 projects and events provided Social Offerings.
- 23 projects and events built Relationships between residents and City staff.

Collaboration

The Strong Neighbourhood Project recognized that strong relationships with City and community stakeholders, was critical to understanding neighbourhood strengths and possibilities. And, that collaboration was necessary in order to effectively support strong neighbourhoods. Examples of collaboration with external stakeholders include:

- \$15,000 provided by the Central Okanagan Foundation for the Neighbourhood Grant.
- 5 Neighbourhood Associations actively engaged in the project.
- Staff worked alongside multiple community stakeholders as a steering committee member for the Community Hub.

Here is what one external stakeholder had to say:

“The stories that have been shared about the neighbourhood grant projects have highlighted that small projects can have a big impact! It was important to the Central Okanagan Foundation that the projects offered through the neighbourhood grants were free, accessible, welcoming and engaging.”

- Cheryl M. Director of Grants and Community Initiatives, Central Okanagan Foundation.

Results of collaborating with internal stakeholders include:

- 4 Policy and Planning public engagement events were supported.

- 5 tools are being developed with Parks, Bylaw, Community Policing, and the Snow Busters program to support mutual goals.
- Neighbourhood Grant review and implementation support from Parks, Bylaw, Community Policing, Communications, Policy & Planning, Roadways, and Active Living and Culture.

Here is what one internal stakeholder had to say:

"As part of the City of Kelowna's Crime Prevention Unit, I was thrilled to be a part of the Strong Neighbourhood Program. Not only did the project facilitate interdepartmental collaboration, but it served as another vehicle for community engagement, bringing forward fresh ideas and enthusiasm to addressing neighbourhood issues." - Colleen C., Community Policing



STRONG NEIGHBOURHOOD PROGRAM - MOVING FORWARD

In order to continue to foster neighbourliness, inspire leaders and empower residents, the Strong Neighbourhood Program will want to focus on how to support neighbours in establishing, maintaining and enhancing connection and engagement. Collaboration with internal and external stakeholders will be vital to this process; and, ongoing evaluation and reflection will help ensure the Strong Neighbourhood Program continues to impact citizens' level of attachment to where they live.

Connection

Fostering social relationships is at the heart of the Strong Neighbourhood Program's mandate as this is where neighbourliness begins. As the program moves forward, recommendations for encouraging neighbourhood connection include:

- Continue to provide multiple means of fostering neighbourhood connection.
 - Neighbourhood Events
 - Neighbourhood Grant
 - Develop and distribute more Good Neighbour Tools
- Continue to reach out to Kelowna's least connected residents.
- Connect with neighbourhood-based organizations and share with them the information gained from the project and invite them to become involved in various City programs.
- Ensure residents and neighbourhood-based organizations are aware of the various resources the City has available to help empower them
- Support neighbourhood-based organizations and residents in the area of neighbourhood social capital capacity building.
- Assist residents in navigating to the specific information and/or City staff; facilitate positive relationships.

Engagement

When citizens are inspired and empowered to take action in their neighbourhoods, engagement will naturally occur. In order to encourage and support engagement, recommended actions include:

- Continue to provide the following resources and tools to support neighbourhood-based organizations in fostering neighbourhood engagement:
 - Mentoring
 - Resources
 - Neighbourhood Events
 - Neighbourhood Grants
 - Additional Strong Neighbourhood tools
- Work with neighbourhood-based organizations and residents in the area of neighbourhood capacity building.
- Convene peer-to-peer workshops and networking opportunities for neighbourhood leaders and neighbourhood-based organizations.
- Involve past event and project organizers to become mentors and provide support and training for them.
- Continue to invite neighbourhood-based organizations to participate in Park & Play.
- Expand opportunities for neighbourhood-based organizations to become involved in other neighbourhood activities.

- Continue to engage the public regarding the activities and results of the Strong Neighbourhood Program and provide opportunities for public input into potential new initiatives or ways of enhancing the impact of existing programs.

Collaboration

Strengthening neighbourhoods, for the purpose of enhancing neighbourhood life, requires a multifaceted approach that involves improving the social, cultural, physical, environmental and economic assets of a neighbourhood. This is only possible with collaboration. As the Strong Neighbourhood Program looks ahead, it will be important to:

- Pursue opportunities to work with internal stakeholders on initiatives that strengthen neighbourhoods;
- Co-develop positive, action-oriented tools;
- Support other departments in their public engagement events;
- Participate in project charters that affect neighbourhoods; and
- Provide information and resources to other departments.

Evaluation

In order to stay on course, keep initiatives responsive to neighbourhood needs, and monitor impact over time, the Strong Neighbourhood Program will need to:

- Continue to evaluate programs to ensure they are meeting their intended outcomes;
- Develop a common set of questions that can be used across the suite of programs so as to track the community's feelings of connection, engagement and attachment over time; and
- Continue to track participation rates.



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