



**Committee of the Whole Report
For the Meeting of August 3, 2017**

To: Committee of the Whole
From: Jocelyn Jenkyns, Deputy City Manager
Subject: Update on Neighbourhood Team Workplan

Date: July 14, 2017

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Neighbourhood Team was formed in response to the 2015 Strategic Plan's Objective 2 to establish a team to *"to work with community / neighbourhood associations to inform and collaborate with these organizations and staff on City processes, expectations and opportunities."*

The team has made significant progress on the work plan and related outcomes identified in the Strategic Plan. The team's efforts are directed towards providing a resource to neighbourhood associations and residents in their understanding of and participation in local government; providing a resource to staff in improving engagement with, and service delivery to, residents; and acting as a catalyst for community development and building social capital.

To date the team has:

- Developed a strong working relationship with neighbourhood associations
- Made improvements to the neighbourhood website
- Managed two intakes for the My Great Neighbourhoods Grant program
- Connected staff from across the City in meeting the needs of residents in the community
- Begun developing tools and events to empower residents and improve their participation in local government
- Started developing a Terms of Reference for neighbourhood associations in collaboration with residents
- Taken steps to establish a City interdepartmental working group which is neighbourhood focused
- Started developing a template for neighbourhood action plans to help focus resident-led community improvement strategies

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a workplan update for the Neighbourhood Team.

BACKGROUND

In 2015, Council identified as a strategic priority, Objective 2: Engage and Empower the Community. One of the outcomes was the creation of a dedicated team of staff *"to work with community / neighbourhood associations to inform and collaborate with these organizations and staff on City processes, expectations and opportunities."* Three staff members who have served as liaisons and outreach to various stakeholders and community groups were brought together to form the Neighbourhood Team. Since its formation, the team has researched best practices from across North America and identified issues and opportunities for how the City can establish stronger relationships and better support residents in the coming years.

The key duties for the Neighbourhood Team have been organised into three main categories:

1. Community Development
 - a. Build social capacity in neighbourhoods;
 - b. Initiate and facilitate discussions aimed at helping local communities problem-solve issues and identify opportunities for building sense of community and place;
 - c. Identify and bring together neighbourhood groups and individuals that share an interest in, ideas for, and a desire to contribute to, neighbourhood-led efforts designed to strengthen community; and
 - d. Help neighbourhood associations and other groups involve and engage community members, including members of groups that are often under-represented in neighbourhood discussions.
2. Resource for Residents
 - a. Attend monthly meetings of neighbourhood associations;
 - b. Present information on City initiatives, answer questions, provide input and assistance on resident initiatives; and
 - c. Communicate to City staff about issues and opportunities in the neighbourhoods.
3. Resource for the City
 - a. Develop and implement innovative methods for City staff and decision-makers to learn about and better understand the neighbourhoods and their needs;
 - b. Help build relationships with neighbourhood groups and residents; and
 - c. Track and monitor neighbourhood issues, and actions taken by the City to address issues.

Workplan items for 2017 focus on all three areas.

1. Community Development

My Great Neighbourhood Grants - Staff launched the spring intake of the grant program with the My Great Neighbourhood Ideas Fair in April. This event brought inter-departmental staff, external funding partners and placemaking organizations together with members of the public for an inspiring and fun event. Approximately 100 people attended to learn more about the City grant program, discuss ideas with staff and discover what it takes to have a successful project in the public realm. Plans for this event to be repeated are being considered. As well, consideration is being given to

another similarly formatted event be held in the fall to showcase great placemaking and other citizen-led initiatives.

In the 2017 spring intake, the City received 21 applications which, if all are approved will expend \$69,127 of the fund. Staff are now preparing for a fall intake. Monitoring and supporting projects from the 2016 program is ongoing.

Reaching Out

An important part of the Neighbourhood Team's role is to build social connections by reaching out to members of the community who may not have previously been engaged. Working with neighbourhood associations and other community organizations, staff are identifying practices that are being used in other cities across North America to build community. Ideas for initial projects are being developed by the Neighbourhood Team for introduction late in 2017.

2. Resources for Residents

Neighbourhood Liaison

The team has been focussed on developing good working relationships with all of the neighbourhood associations, providing them with timely information and responding to their queries and requests. Staff provide monthly updates on City initiatives, attend neighbourhood association meetings, answer questions, and assist with resident initiatives. The team also tracks neighbourhood issues and responses taken by the City to address them.

Improving Online Presence

Providing accurate and valuable online information for residents is an ongoing priority for the Neighbourhood Team. Early work on this project has included interim improvements to the city website, with a more in-depth redesign to be launched in late 2017. It is recognized that keeping this resource current and relevant will be an ongoing, important activity.

Neighbourhood Walkshops

Neighbourhood walkshops provide an opportunity for City staff and residents to walk through their neighbourhood and share information regarding City programs and services. They help build relationships with residents who want to be involved in their neighbourhood, and give them a stronger sense of what issues staff face when looking after infrastructure and planning in the public realm.

The first walkshop took place in the Hillside Quadra neighbourhood in June. Residents, neighbourhood association board members and city staff representing Engagement, Transportation, Parks, Sustainable Planning and Bylaw Services walked a route that was identified by residents who attended Quadra Village Day. Constructive conversation and feedback was heard from all parties involved, with issues ranging from quick fixes to complete streets being discussed. The next step for Hillside Quadra is to prioritize these items as a building block for neighbourhood improvements before their Local Area Plan is started.

Toolkits and Workshops

Neighbourhood associations have expressed a need to better understand local governance and how they can help shape their community. The Neighbourhood Team has begun to develop a series of "City Hall 101" primers to address this need. The first modules focus on the structure and operation of local government and the process for developing the City budget – both with the resident in mind.

Other tools for building capacity of community groups and individuals will be identified in consultation with neighbourhood associations. Based on the outcomes, the Neighbourhood Team will, as appropriate, identify local organizations that currently provide training to develop offerings best suited to community organizations (e.g. leadership, organizational development). Smaller information brochures (e.g. traffic calming), links to useful external resources and other helpful approaches will also be incorporated into this program.

Neighbourhood Association Terms of Reference

In order to fulfill Strategic Plan outcomes to work with and build the capacity of neighbourhood/community associations, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the associations' role. The current lack of clarity has been the subject of discussion at recent community association network meetings. As the designated and supported community organizations for the neighbourhood, what does the City expect them to achieve? How are they to contribute to decision-making at City Hall?

The Neighbourhood Team is preparing a Terms of Reference in collaboration with neighbourhood associations and City staff to provide needed clarity. Neighbourhood associations will then better be able to plan their activities, focus their efforts and direct their communication with City Hall more effectively. City staff will be better able to respond to neighbourhood associations and support their work in the community.

Neighbourhood Key Priorities Plans

The goal in creating a Neighbourhood Key Priorities Plan is to assist residents to develop a list of citizen-initiated projects for improving their neighbourhoods. These plans would outline the goals and objectives that are within the residents' jurisdiction which would be reviewed and assigned necessary actions, resources and champions to achieve them. Residents would determine priorities and scheduling in their plan.

Once a model is developed, a pilot will be initiated to test the template with one of the neighbourhoods that has expressed an interest in creating a plan. The Neighbourhood Team will assist with the development of the plan. If a Local Area Planning process is underway or recently completed, the Neighbourhood Action Plan will be informed by the engagement that has already taken place. Resources required for achieving plan objectives will come from a wide variety of sources.

3. Resources for City staff

Inter-Departmental Working Group

A staff Working Group will be formed to focus on connecting with residents and identifying efficiencies between departments. The working group will meet monthly to exchange information on needs, concerns, issues and opportunities in neighbourhoods. Where possible, coordination of capital projects and the delivery of City services to neighbourhoods will be identified. The Working Group will also act as the departmental point of contact for reviewing My Great Neighbourhood Grant applications. Terms of Reference for this group have been drafted and should be finalized by the end of the summer, with the first meeting scheduled for September.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan

The work of the Neighbourhood Team meets Objective 2: Engage and Empower the Community.

Impacts to Financial Plan

Although the staff resources for the Neighbourhood Team were already in place, Council has, committed to a significant investment in community to carry out this focused work. Allocation of funds to support events and projects will be considered in the 2018 proposed financial plan.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

Taking a neighbourhood focus to planning and outreach is consistent with Goal C as outlined in Section 15 of the Official Community Plan "Victorians know their neighbours, are connected to communities of interest and have diverse opportunities for social interaction."

Accessibility Impact Statement

There are no accessibility concerns related to the proposed recommendations in this report.

CONCLUSIONS

Since its formation, the neighbourhood team has worked to assist Councillors in supporting residents and their neighbourhood associations. Through their liaison role, the team has made efforts to provide more complete and meaningful information to neighbourhoods and to communicate residents' needs to City staff. This is not only intended to improve customer service to residents, but through more effective collaboration, to help staff fulfil their work in the community.

Staff are now turning their attention towards more effective outreach with residents and community organizations at large in order to increase engagement amongst community members and strengthen social capital.

The life and activity of Victoria's neighbourhoods make Victoria a great City. The work of the Neighbourhood Team will continue to enhance and support neighbourhoods, connect people and groups in the community and help shape and focus City programs and services on neighbourhood priorities.

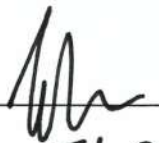
Respectfully submitted,



Jocelyn Jenkyns
Deputy City Manager

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:


July 21, 2017



July 2017 Update
Downtown

In Your Neighbourhood

Downtown Public Realm Plan

The draft [Downtown Public Realm Plan](#) is now complete and was presented to Council. It had a number of comments on the plan and requested that staff consider their value with an amended plan in the near future.

Marijuana Dispensaries

On July 13, Council approved a [resolution](#) proposed by Councillors Thornton-Joe and Councillor Brown. The resolution requested that staff consider their value with an amended plan in the near future. The resolution requested that staff consider their value with an amended plan in the near future. The resolution requested that staff consider their value with an amended plan in the near future.

Ship Point

A design direction for the Ship Point site will be presented for public consideration.

My Great Neighbourhood Grant Program

The My Great Neighbourhood Grant program was created to help residents of Victoria animate public space, develop and enhance a sense of community and leave a positive legacy in our neighbourhoods.

What qualifies as a good project for this grant program?

Qualifying Projects:

- Are initiated and implemented by local residents
- Help animate community spaces
- Create gathering spots or provide activities that bring people together
- Contribute to neighbourhood pride and enhance quality of life



Fort Street Mural – 2016 Grant



Tamarack Conference – June 2017



Yates Street Community Garden – 2016 Grant