

COMMUNITY CORNERSTONES:

Neighbourhood Planning Initiative Baseline Findings

In September 2006, Carleton University's Centre for Urban Research and Education network conducted two baseline surveys.

- **Neighbourhood Survey:** Perceptions and ideas about the neighborhood, recent planning events, and their relationship with the city.
- **City Survey:** Perceptions and ideas about current linkages with other departments, relationships with neighbourhoods, and the impact of neighbourhood engagement on decision-making

NEIGHBOURHOOD SURVEY FINDINGS:

What are the key priorities for the NPI process?

- To actively engage the neighbourhood in planning
- To better co-ordinate across city departments
- To reach out to residents who have not traditionally participated in planning
- To improve access to City of Ottawa staff, services, and planning processes

What are the desired results from the NPI?

- Strengthen communications, outreach & accessibility
- Greater community presence (among the media, in the neighbourhood, city etc).
- Improved visual aspects of community space
- Foster a shared vision and identity in the neighbourhood
- Listen to the community, use feedback and follow-up
- Build community capacity to get involved
- Improved city planning
- Crime reduction
- Proceed proactively
- Clarify the boundaries of Hintonburg
- Development of vacant properties
- Pay attention to public spaces

Over the last 12 months, survey respondents:

- Shopped at a store or the market in the community **(95%)**
- Spent time in public space in the community **(81%)**
- Attended a neighbourhood event of festival **(75%)** or participated in a sport, recreational or cultural activity in the community **(59%)**

Connection with City of Ottawa: Majority has not had any contact with the City of Ottawa over the last two years, and satisfaction with services was 3 out of 5.

Connection with community groups: Majority are unaware of activities, but many feel groups have made important contributions to the community but have challenges in securing funding and/or making an impact.



What you had to say:

"Across neighbourhood planning, include a "common look and feel," despite differences. For example, street lights, and other street furniture (garbage cans, signs, benches, flowers, etc.)"

"My concerns relate specifically to making the neighbourhood safer (more policing) to improving quality of life for residents (especially by reducing crack houses and street people) and any infrastructure improvements. I was really concerned in recently renting a house that several people indicated they would not want to live in the area due to 'hooligans' and crack users, crack houses. That should be THE priority, not galleries or peripheral social improvements..."

"To better integrate the services from the City so that it is not such a battle all the time. Community energy and staff energy and city resources are wasted by the lack of integration..."

"We need a cultural change within the bureaucracy at City Hall so that there would be staff who are knowledgeable of different neighbourhoods who could act as watchdogs for the neighbourhood and explain to us, in plain language, what the impact of such initiatives would be in our neighbourhood. At present, we are always reactive to City changes and not in on the ground floor."

"Neighbourhood planning requires broad based representation and consultation in order to build a shared and coordinated vision...They include urban design quality, economic opportunity, social support systems, etc. All the pieces have to be in a self sustaining balance for a community and the larger city with it to thrive."

The **Carleton Urban Research and Education (CURE) Network** brings together researchers from a wide range of disciplines who share an interest in municipal and urban affairs and carrying out collaborative research in:

- community governance
- citizen engagement
- local capacity building around planning for infrastructure to support social, economic, and environmental sustainability

The CURE network has been researching and monitoring the progress of the NPI pilot project in Hintonburg. If you would like to get involved through an interview or would like more information, please contact Chris Stoney at chris_stoney@carleton.ca or 613-520-2600 Ext. 2640

CITY OF OTTAWA SURVEY FINDINGS:

How well do city departments engage with neighbourhoods on planning and development?

- Highest scores: inclusion of stakeholder groups, responsiveness to local wishes and concerns, the meaningful participation of stakeholder groups
- Lowest scores: avoiding duplication, setting priorities, efficiency

Impact of neighbourhood engagement:

- 77% say that engaging with local communities impacts public support for development
- 62% thought that involving local communities has an impact on the quality of decisions made
- 49% believe that community engagement made an impact on the equity of decisions about planning and development

Effectiveness of current consulting processes: (av. rating out of 5)

- Knowledge of processes the City currently uses to consult on land use and infrastructure development issues – **3.31**
- Processes are efficient (i.e. cost effective use of resources) - **2.90**
- Processes are effective (i.e. produces desired and timely results) – **2.89**
- Processes result in good outcomes (i.e. generally result in good planning and/or investment decisions) – **2.88**



Neighbourhood Planning Initiative Meeting

~ Hintonburg Community Centre

What you had to say:

"The public needs to become more self-reliant when it comes to gathering information...There are too many requests for individual CA meetings across the City and we simply do not have the resources to do this."

"...I've determined that it is the members of the public with their own agenda who are the ones that get involved. This agenda is too often contrary to established City policies and when public consultation occurs, these people end up becoming disillusioned and embittered with planning... If you want to make community input more productive, effort should be made to educate the public on what City policies are for the future."

"Planning in this city, which HAD so much potential for great development using best practices, is horrible. The developments we have ended up with, often not connected intelligently to each other, and lacking in true "community planning", are most often soulless, a barrier to good "community", poorly laid out, and mistakes which will cost 10 times more to correct, yet we continue to build the same way, making the same mistakes even though everyone bemoans the previous developments."

"The City has a very extensive consultation process that varies from project to project. Some is legislated some others are not. Unfortunately the City is not always successful in creating an interest and important issues do not receive the public attention they require. Communicating the importance and consequences of the projects is a delicate balancing act."

WHO RESPONDED TO THE SURVEYS?

