



Where you live
is as important
as whom
you live with*



*Richard Florida
Author, *Who's Your City*

Our London is a city of *Neighbourhoods*.

Our London neighbourhoods will be empowered, sustainable, safe and active communities. We will care for and celebrate each other while encouraging diversity and inclusiveness.

Our neighbourhoods will be environmentally and socially responsible and will have available green space, vibrant local economies and accessible amenities of daily life.



The heart and essence of every city and community are its neighbourhoods!

This document contains the collective ideas of a group of London residents for creating the best city we can imagine. We came together in the fall of 2008 in response to a call by City of London staff for willing participants to join a task force composed of a broad cross-section of people who wanted to make and keep London and its community of neighbourhoods a wonderful place to live. Over 100 people from many different backgrounds, jumped at the opportunity – excited to take part in an endeavour that recognized, up front, that people generally know what's best for their neighbourhood, and, that their local wisdom would be valued.

In order to have a starting point, London was divided into 42 neighbourhoods. A very high percentage of them were represented on the Resident Task Force. Every resident has a particular and perhaps unique understanding of what it means to live in their neighbourhood. We also discovered that “neighbourhood” and “community” are not synonymous, although we often use the words loosely and interchangeably to mean the same thing.

On the surface all of London's neighbourhoods can and must be characterized by their uniqueness, underneath there are common identifiable qualities built and maintained around a framework of core elements. We all have concerns about heritage, walkability, beautification, adherence to bylaws, interactions with city hall and positive interactions with



neighbours, to name a few. It is the commonalities that we sought to come to terms with.

We wanted this to be a “made in London” document. So, over the past year and a half, we Londoners gathered our own ideas about people and places, embarked on our own process of discovery and examined in depth what we believe are the key underlying elements that must be addressed to foster strong neighbourhoods in London. This was accomplished through intensive discussions by those present at monthly meetings and by outreach to our neighbours.



Throughout the process we were aided enormously by the dedicated work of knowledgeable and supportive City staff. This document represents the results of our combined deliberations so far.

We like living in this city. We are proud of it. We want London to continue to be the kind of city we and others have chosen to live in. We also want London to continue to grow and evolve in positive ways which match the needs of all residents and neighbourhoods. In short, we want our city to be the best it can be. Are we there yet? Not quite. Through a process of neighbourhood conversations, access to the wisdom of community development resource people and discussions among ourselves, we have identified what we think are the significant dimensions of a vital and vibrant community, a method of evaluation and, as a consequence, areas for improvement. In brief, this document contains our idea of what London is now and our vision of what London can be in the future.

It identifies strategies for achieving this common vision as well as our projected timelines for the implementation of those strategies. We recognize that, like many endeavours of this complexity, it must be a “work in progress”. The elements, the means and the methods must continually evolve; in other words, the project does not end here, rather, it has just begun. You will see, however, that we have outlined an ongoing plan that will unroll, month by month and year by year, that employs the stated strategies to achieve our desired outcomes in a targeted and timely manner. As part of the design, progress will be monitored and reported on periodically to ensure that we are on the right track with regard to the key elements.

We dedicate this document to the past, present and future residents of the city of London.

*London Strengthening
Neighbourhoods Strategy
Resident Task Force*



| | STRATEGY | YEAR 1 | YEAR 2 | YEAR 3 | YEAR 4 | YEAR 5 |
|---------------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|
| PEOPLE: ENGAGED | Support existing & development of new community/ neighbourhood associations | Develop a neighbourhood network (web portal) City support of neighbourhoods (space, assistance at meetings etc.) | | | | |
| | Develop a process for & develop neighbourhood action plans (NAP) | Investigate best practices for NAPs | | Create agenda for association sustainability Develop guidelines & tool kit for developing NAPs | | |
| | Develop a neighbourhood resource centre (NRC)/hub model | Investigate best practices for NRCs/hub model | Develop & implement a NRC/hub model Promote NRCs/hubs | All neighbourhoods develop Neighbourhood Action Plans | Implement community improvement plans | |
| PEOPLE: CONNECTED | Engage residents with associations | Neighbourhood after 5:00 networking events City staff help neighbourhoods coordinate events | Promote fun social events in neighbourhoods | | | |
| | Encourage & promote neighbourhood celebrations/events | Investigate funding & support mechanisms Yearly get to know your neighbour/street party day | Hold small-scale meetings with neighbours | Neighbourhood showcase competitions | | |
| | Develop a neighbourhood matching fund program for community projects | Investigate best practices to develop a funding strategy & support mechanism | Investigate opportunities for corporate sponsorship | Implement the neighbourhood matching fund program | Yearly reporting and evaluation of matching fund program | |
| PEOPLE: ACTIVE | Develop model to guide management of community gardens | Review existing community garden program Investigate best practices | Establish steering committee to guide model development Define priority locations with need/demand | Identify potential spaces/sites for community gardens Define priority locations with need/demand | | |
| | Promote community gardens | Build a network of community garden "leaders" Encourage donating of food to food bank/meal prog | Build a network of community garden "leaders" Develop a community garden recipe book | Approach media to do positive stories on the benefits | | |
| | Increase political engagement & voting | Campaign around benefits of voting Promote voting with employers in London | Investigate best practices to increase voter turnout | | | Campaign around benefits of voting Promote voting with employers in London |
| PEOPLE: PROUD | Engage youth in political process | Encourage youth to get out and vote (variety of initiatives) | Engage schools in political process Invite Councillors to speak to classes Engage youth leadership groups to advocate importance of voting to youth | Determine who doesn't vote & why Introduce a "Youth Day" at City Hall | | |
| | Develop a measure of being active | | | | | Evaluate & measure participation rates |
| | Provide opportunities for mural, public & performing art, etc. | Support investment in programs for at-risk youth to engage them to build pride/respect for where they live | Develop a competition for public art that challenges neighbourhoods to demonstrate their pride | | | |
| PEOPLE: EMPOWERED | Celebrate City & neighbourhood gateways | | | Develop creative & unique gateways | | |
| | Neighbourhood specific signage | Develop process for simpler/less costly access to signage | | Signage/identity in place when neighbourhoods built | | |
| | Improve & expand upon Local Clean & Green initiatives in neighbourhoods | Build media awareness Track who participates at neighbourhood level | Involve more high school students Engage students to lead &/or participate in initiatives | Extend initiative throughout the year Target neighbourhoods that don't participate | | |
| PLACES: SUSTAINABLE | Promote naturalization projects | Ensure by-laws don't prevent people from naturalizing | Improve support & promotion of naturalization projects | Increase number of garbage cans & recycling receptacles available on street | | |
| | Create & develop more "adopt-a" programs | | Develop creative "adopt-a" programs Encourage residents to care for boulevards & trees | | | |
| | Promotion of "little gems" in neighbourhoods | Inventory "little gems" in all neighbourhoods and develop a virtual neighbourhood to promote gems | Profile & promote "little gems" | | | |
| PLACES: SAFE | Better connection between voters & elected officials | Investigate how Councillors can connect with residents Investigate possibility of Councillors holding bi-annual community gatherings | Provide resources to educate public who are not currently connected with their elected officials Have Councillors' votes publically available | | | |
| | Develop a "people assets inventory" that highlights community leaders | Increase the opportunities for attendance at neighbourhood events Develop a web database of community leaders that could assist Councillors & City staff in engaging | | | | |
| | Increase support of local businesses at the neighbourhood level | Develop a Walk to Shop Awareness initiative | | Explore ways local businesses can be supported | | |
| PLACES: CONNECTIVITY | Increase number of car poolers | | Continue to encourage more carpooling & share-a-ride systems in the city; create more park & ride programs in all areas of the city (north, south, east & west) as well as along Hwy 401 | Explore ways local businesses can be supported | | |
| | Increase sustainable technologies & programs used throughout the city | Investigate use of sustainable technologies and programs in city facilities & projects | Build on best practices (green roofs, solar & geo thermal technology) for use in projects | Create specific prime parking spots for car poolers | | |
| | Promote use of public transit | | Trade in expired bus pass for a recreation pass Subsidize trips to specific destinations (ex. food bank) | | | |
| PLACES: SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES | Increase opportunities & encourage biking as a means of transportation | Increase # of buses that accommodate bikes | Develop an awareness campaign about bike paths Continue to include bicycle lanes as part of road reconstruction. More dedicated & separate bike lanes throughout the city | Campaign for secure bike storage at workplaces | | |
| | Increase opportunities & encourage walking as a means of transportation | Continue to promote London's trails & pathways | Investigate & implement a bike lending program | | | |
| | Increase awareness & promote creative initiatives for a greener environment | Encourage more "re" development in the City through incentives (instead of building on greenfields look at vacant lots & buildings & brownfield & greyfield opportunities) | Promote walking school buses in neighbourhoods; Promote walk-to-work initiatives Promote corporate responsibility for things like the environment, active healthy lifestyles, etc | | | |
| PLACES: RESPONSIVE CITY | Increase participation in Neighbourhood Watch & Block Parent | | Address barriers to participation | Provide incentives for doing the "right" thing for environmentally Promote Neighbourhood Watch & Block Parent Investigate linkages for common program goals Increase recruitment & membership in targeted neighbourhoods | | |
| | Report neighbourhood crime stats | | Explore development of a neighbourhood safety index | | | |
| | Develop a Pedestrian/Cyclist Safety Strategy | Research awards related to transportation plans to provide an incentive to better coordinate plans | Establish resident led group to lead development of Pedestrian/Cyclist Safety Strategy | Identify issues through Neighbourhood Traffic Studies (qualitative and quantitative profiles) | | |
| PLACES: CONNECTIVITY | Improve safety & walkability around schools | Examine best practices of crosswalk use for persons with disabilities Ensure standards implemented for safety & pedestrians in and around construction zones Educate motorists & cyclists about rules of road Refer strategies to Transportation Master Plan Partner with schools/busing/police to improve safety | Evaluate and make sure City operated snow removal doesn't impede pedestrian crossings Target neighbourhoods identified in the traffic studies for improvement | Investigate best practices to slow traffic through | | |
| | Improve safety in the downtown | Determine the need & target schools to increase number of crossing guards &/or school student patrols Work with City/police to reduce speed in school zones Develop strategies to encourage walking to school Investigate providing vacancy rebates | Identify schools to pilot initiatives developed in year 1 Examine & extend no parking zones in school areas and/or opportunities for "kiss & ride" and/or "pull-offs" Increase consistency of police presence on the streets | | | |
| | Identify & improve lighting in neighbourhoods | Develop campaign for people to leave porch lights on Develop strategy to improve streetlight bulb replacement Require improved standards in new developments | Decentralization of social services in the core (creation of satellite offices/neighbourhood hubs) in order to provide services where people live (place based services) Continue to promote the City's incentive programs for Downtown Revitalization | | | |
| PLACES: PARKS | Increase enforcement of City's By-Laws | Ensure by-laws are transparent, accessible and understood by the general public | | | | |
| | Develop more informal programs at community centres and other gathering places | | Increase availability of free programming in neighbourhood community centres, parks, etc; Dedicate a percentage of time at community centres for low fee/no fee programs or drop-ins Work with partners in neighbourhoods to offer programs in non-traditional places such as plazas, malls, places of worship, open spaces etc; Increase opportunities for drop-in activities (versus registered activities) at community centres, parks, etc Investigate opportunities for volunteers to deliver programs – look at neighbourhood skill inventory; Build on models such as the Cherryhill Mall seniors programming in other neighbourhoods | | | |
| | Increase awareness of programs & services | | Develop a "Do you know your city?" awareness campaign to promote city-wide & neighbourhood-based services & activities | Increase use of vacant parking lots for activities like basketball, markets, etc. Increase opportunities for the community to create &/or run new programs (participants share costs of rental & responsibilities for materials etc.) | | |
| PLACES: AMENITIES | Increase usability of City Spectrum Program Guide | Increase promotion through all forms of media | Review distribution of Spectrum Program Guide to include availability in community gathering places | | | |
| | Increase services & activities for youth | | Re-vamp the current Spectrum Program Guide, exploring possibility of separating adult & older adult programming with larger print, translating into other languages, categorizing programs by neighbourhood, etc Work with schools & seniors homes to adopt each other & do activities together which could turn into larger community projects such as a shared Community Garden project | | | |
| | Develop a Walkability Master Plan | Develop a campaign for residents to submit ideas for making neighbourhoods more walkable | | | | |
| PLACES: CONNECTIVITY | Improve connectivity between neighbourhoods & to other parts of city | Enforce rights & responsibilities of pedestrians Subdivision designs to address walkability Review policies/building codes to allow gates in fences | | Improve sidewalk access at entrances to amenities Ensure connectivity of all neighbourhoods by trails/pathways | | |
| | Increase connectivity of bus routes | Refer ring-road idea to the Transportation Master Plan Improve resident involvement in Transportation Master Plan Encourage LTC to survey users on gaps in transit Investigate connectivity of routes Refer rapid rail idea to Transportation Master Plan Investigate potential partnerships with local businesses | Address gaps in transit identified in survey Investigate possibility of small community buses to pick up & drop off within neighbourhoods | | | |
| | Increase amount of park space | Investigate opportunities for "pocket parks" | In areas lacking park space investigate innovative opportunities to create or share park or play space through partnerships (shared space with school or other land owners) &/or purchase of vacant lots/derelect buildings for new park space | | | |
| PLACES: AMENITIES | Improve accessibility, walkability, playability & connectivity of park spaces | Inventory park space, identify gaps & accessibility | Create spaces in parks for artists to display/sell work Info on accessibility of parks posted on website | Increase use of parks not just for children but for teens as well (programming &/or "play equipment that attract youth/teens) | | Develop signage listing amenities available in each park (as part of the "entrance" signage) |
| | Promote parks & Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) | Define ESAs & the benefits they provide | Promote parks & ESAs through awareness at local events (Doors Open London) & develop an educational campaign targeting individuals & families to promote parks & ESAs | | | |
| | Create more informal gathering places | Inventory informal gathering places | Engage schools/environmental groups to use local parks & ESAs | Investigate corporate matching initiatives for park amenities (ex. Saturn Playgrounds) | | |
| PLACES: RESPONSIVE CITY | Increase use of parks & trails | All parks to have shade & benches as a first priority Identify areas in each park for community gardens | Develop strategies to increase number of gathering places Promote dog parks as gathering places Designate park times when dogs can be off-leash | Pilot informal activities (chess) in parks & facilities Develop opportunities for activities like cafés & markets in parks (likely district parks) | | |
| | Create more partnership opportunities to build amenities in parks & along trails | | Develop criteria & create opportunities for neighbourhoods/communities to come together & fundraise to build amenities in parks & along trails | | | |
| | Ensure schools are open to the community for services and programs | Improve access to school spaces with school boards Create community hubs in underutilized schools | Increase evening programs, events in schools | Invite more partnership opportunities to build amenities in parks & along trails | | |
| PLACES: RESPONSIVE CITY | Create, gain access & promote community spaces in neighbourhoods | Examine barriers to use of City facilities (insurance, fees, permits) | Conduct an age-based investigation on use of community centres to identify how to make community centres places for everyone (change the perception that community centres are only for children) Dedicate free space in community centres, libraries etc. for groups to hold meetings & programs | Advocate government for incentives to open up other gathering places (places of worship, apartment buildings) | Build more small-scale community centres as opposed to large, drive-to centres | |
| | Increase use of libraries | Inventory free meeting spaces Encourage partnerships with surrounding businesses | Support London Public Library in their ongoing campaign to increase use of facilities, programs, etc (increase use of libraries by providing a book amnesty day/week, supporting community events & programs in libraries, etc) | Develop strategy to create informal gathering places in community centres & libraries | | |
| | Promote Book Mobile | | | | | |
| PLACES: RESPONSIVE CITY | Improve public access to City services | Investigate single point of contact for all City services Explore best practices for City neighbourhood support Identify central city staff contacts & key point of contact | | | | |
| | Increase usability of the City website | | Explore navigation & create new web based tools Develop Community Portal on City website | | | |
| | Enhance promotion of the city by highlighting neighbourhoods | | | Promote uniqueness & strength of London's neighbourhoods as a method to "sell" the city | | |
| PLACES: RESPONSIVE CITY | Generate awareness & support of LSNS Strategy & Implementation Plan | Develop communications strategy | Yearly report card highlighting successes of LSNS Use the City & other community websites to connect stakeholders | | | |
| | Better urban design of new subdivisions | Develop strategies to connect new neighbourhood to rest of city | Review planning practices against new attitudes about sustainability and provide input through Official Plan Review | | | |
| | Strengthen the current Planning Process | Educate residents about Planning Process | Develop Planning Education workshops/provide resources/teach skills to improve awareness & involvement Generate opportunities to enable small businesses to enter neighbourhoods | Hold Neighbourhood Planning Summit | | |
| PLACES: RESPONSIVE CITY | Improve resident engagement | City to build on current engagement processes | | | | |

Neighbourhoods are about people and places and how they work in partnership to make great places to live, work and play.

London's Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy is a resident driven strategy that invites and encourages resident participation and engagement to help make all of London's neighbourhoods stronger.



For the full London Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy and Implementation Plan documents go to www.london.ca/neighbourhoods

*Supported
by the
City of London*