

## **Attachment D: Social Development Centre Progress on Priorities – 2015-2019**

*The Social Development Centre is a non-government public benefit community leader committed to promoting social development in Waterloo Region.*

**Vision:** A healthy, fair and sustainable community where all can participate in finding solutions.

**Mission:** Advancing community through active participation and objective knowledge.

**Goals:**

1. Increase understanding of social resources, assets, issues, needs and context of the local community by those who need this knowledge to take action.
2. Increase citizen participation in social, economic and political life of the community.
3. Build social cohesion through relationships, collaboration and community action.
4. Reduce inequitable access to knowledge resources resulting from emerging technologies.
5. Develop the social infrastructure of the community – people, organizations, services and policies.

**Activities:**

- Actively engage and collaborate on issues important to citizens
- Gather, apply, distribute and archive information on human services and community needs

**Outcomes:**

People (individuals, groups and agencies), are more:

1. Informed and have more options for dealing with their concerns.
2. Connected and have stronger relationships so they have somewhere to turn.
3. Involved, have a voice and take action.

Systems and policies contribute to social development by:

1. Sustaining a livable community environment and
2. Responding effectively to address social needs.

### **Setting Priorities**

**Community Issue Review**

- Retrospective analysis of work since 1967
- Topics and discussions from community forums, kitchen table talks, and other community input over previous 10 years
- Review of issues raised by reference and action groups

**Priority Topics: Presented for Discussion during the 2014 Municipal Election**

**Follow up Consultations in early 2015**

- Newly elected councillors at Kitchener, Waterloo and Regional Councils
- Disabilities and Human Rights Group
- K-W Poverty Free Action Group

**Priorities Established for next 3-4 Years (2015-2019)**

- Strong Neighbourhoods
- Poverty Elimination
- Access to Information

# Progress Report to Community at the 49<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting June 2016

## Progress on Community Social Planning

Established a Community Social Planning Council

- In 2015 established the *Community Social Planning Council* to provide a community based perspective to guide SDC's work
- 18 community members from diverse backgrounds
- Seven (7) meetings since October 2015
- Varied perspectives, lots of great discussion and guidance:
  - Decent Lives, Strong Neighbourhoods consultation results
  - Feedback on definitions and assessment framework
  - Started community perspective for systemic analysis of poverty
  - Feedback for City of Kitchener Neighbourhood Strategy
  - Issues being identified for short term community memos
  - co-hosting national housing strategy consultation in October

## Progress on Strong Neighbourhoods & Poverty Elimination

- Launched the Decent Lives-Strong Neighbourhoods series in 2015:
  - 3 community forums, 10 kitchen table talks: preliminary plan set Integrated other topics : *Civic Engagement; Access and Inclusion, Healthy Environment*
  - *Preliminary plan set – developing an assessment framework*
- Continued Systemic Analysis of Poverty project
- Hosted policy analysis session and all candidate sessions during federal election – *used Poverty Elimination Framework tool*
- Created interactive map tool to assess neighbourhood need – *an excellent model for similar analyses; terms defined, measures and data sources identified, some data gathered, initial indices created for Decent Lives and Neighbourhood Diversity*
- Continued VisitAble Housing project with realtors, builders and planners
- Continued partnership in Festival of Neighbourhoods
- Continued Neighbourhood Connections program: *Traynor-Vanier and Cherry Park initial contact*

## Progress on Access to Information

- *Information Access* - incorporates *Digital Inclusion*
- Information services continue: *Blue Book published, phone inquiries continue to decline; web access remains high and is deeper than most (average 9 min per visit)*
- Municipal funding loss, impacts service capacity:
  - Duplication of effort – does not meet our needs
  - Misunderstanding of need for mediated support or digital inclusion
- Information focused projects:
  - Building local information supports to newcomer project – training & resources
  - Women Building Community Project – training & resources
  - Seniors Technology Training project – training & resources
- Poverty reduction funding proposals: aim to develop *peer to peer information and system navigation programs: workers and tenants*
- Pilot test of *Information Access Audit* summer 2016

## Next Steps

### Decent Lives: Preliminary Plan

1. Assess and monitor:
  - *Framework has been defined*
  - *Work has started to develop an interactive assessment tool – community wide, neighbourhood specific and individual (summer 2016)*
2. Set priorities on physical and social infrastructure gaps:
  - Define standards for ‘strong’ neighbourhood & ‘a decent life’
  - Determine what to tackle for city wide equity
3. Create community development programs:
  - Proactive projects to fill neighbourhood equity gaps
  - Support community initiatives to enhance physical and social environment through short term projects

### Access to Information: Action Needed

- Recognize that *information access* is a basic need, public good and human right in modern society
- Increase awareness and understanding of the importance of local, experienced mediated information access: *Google is NOT* the answer to human needs.
- Understand ‘community focused’ technical infrastructure is needed and must be anchored in the community i.e. not government nor business; SDC has this expertise and is well positioned to build on this
- Advocate for restoring and increasing SDC funding so innovative work can continue e.g. user friendly ‘apps’, system navigation and advocacy support to vulnerable groups: renters, low wage earners, persons with disabilities, seniors, immigrants

### Other Directions for Action

- Raise profile of human rights and social justice advocacy role: *develop a pool of advocates*
- Increase profile for innovative, inclusive processes:
  - Engagement in formal consultations
  - Lived experience advocacy & action
  - Policy and political analysis
- Provide social development training:
  - Information for problem solving and planning
  - Social data for planning and evaluation
  - Organizing and advocacy skills for social change
- Enlist investments in technical & knowledge management expertise to develop software applications for public good

### Community Feedback on Progress

#### We are on a good track:

- There was unanimous agreement that, yes SDC is on a good track.
- The priorities that have been identified are based on an assessment of community needs and reflect what is important to the community.
- Addressing *Poverty Elimination* and *Strong Neighbourhoods* through *Decent Lives and Strong Neighbourhoods* is a good direction.
- However, there are tracks that still need to be laid.

### **If we achieved one thing in the next year it would be:**

- Continue to work on the identified social issues:
  - Healthy neighbourhoods.
  - Ensuring there is adequate income for everyone.
  - The same standard for affordable housing regardless of whether this is privately owned or community housing.
  - Inclusiveness.
- Funding to ensure the organization's work is sustained.
- Community engagement to build a wider network.
- Market brand to ensure SDC has power to influence.

### **Activities to achieve these outcomes:**

- Raise advocacy profile and more advocacy.
- Deepen community involvement and widen constituency.
- Social media and communication.
- Fundraising.
- A concrete action plan and measurable outcomes.
- Grow business services.
- Use the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a way to raise profile.

### **To ensure SDC can sustain and build its work:**

- Communicate unique identity, especially with decision makers.
- Engage broadly and form relationships.
- Increase membership.
- Hold community forums 3-4 times a year.
- Social media, advertising.
- As a whole, speak loud and stay united!