ABOUT THE STUDY

The City of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy is working towards improving social, economic and health outcomes in targeted neighbourhoods in the city. The City is working with community partners, neighbourhood groups, and residents to develop neighbourhood action plans. These action plans lay out a vision for the future of each neighbourhood, and the specific projects needed to get there.
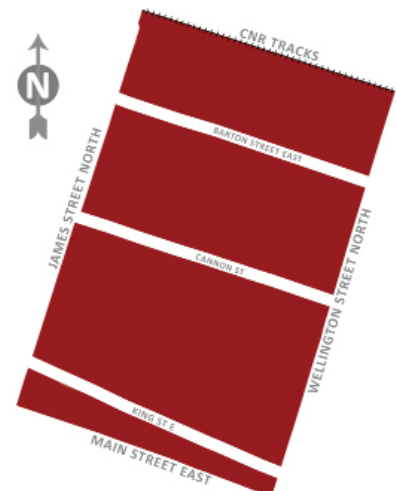
Another important part of this work is research and evaluation. We want to find out more about residents' views and priorities, how well the planning and neighbourhood projects are going and what might need to be changed along the way, as well as what kind of impact the strategy has on residents in the neighbourhoods overall. Our research team at McMaster, led by Dr. Jim Dunn, has undertaken the Hamilton Neighbourhoods Study to help answer these questions.

Between 2012-2014 we did surveys with residents in Beasley, Keith, McQuesten, Rolston, Stinson and Stipley. This report presents results from the 300 people who completed a survey with us in Beasley in 2013-14.

In this report, we've focused in particular on the questions we asked residents about how they feel about their neighbourhood now and their priorities and concerns. We talk about what we found in our survey in comparison to Beasley's neighbourhood plan. We also present results on other areas that our survey asks about – housing, safety and security, and civic engagement.

hamilton neighbourhoods study

2015 interim report
BEASLEY
neighbourhood

BEASELY NEIGHBOURHOOD

CNR TRACKS

BARTON STREET EAST

JAMES STREET NORTH

CANNON ST

WELLINGTON STREET NORTH

KING ST E

MAIN STREET EAST

N

crunch
Collaboratory for Research on Urban
Neighbourhoods, Community Health & Housing

Hamilton

McMaster University
SOCIAL SCIENCES

WHO WE TALKED TO IN BEASLEY

Beasley residents over the age of 18 were eligible to take part in our study. We selected residents at random in the neighbourhood, and knocked on their door to ask if they'd like to complete a survey. Some people also received a letter asking them if they'd like to participate. Interpretation assistance was available for respondents who required it. We talked to a total of 300 residents in Beasley. The following table describes our survey respondents with respect to certain characteristics of the neighbourhood as a whole, as taken from the most recent federal statistics.

	OUR SURVEY RESPONDENTS	2011 CENSUS
gender	53% female; 47% male	47% female; 51% male
average (mean) age	52 years	47 years*
Canadian born	72%	63%

*   excludes residents under 18

There is a moderate degree of residential stability in Beasley.

On average, respondents had been living in the neighbourhood for almost **8 years**, and in their current dwelling for **6 years**.

75% had not moved residences in the past year.

	OUR 296 PARTICIPANTS LIVED IN...	COMPARED TO BEASLEY ON THE WHOLE...*
detached house	12%	40%
semi-detached house	10%	4%
row house or town house	11%	7%
low-rise apartment (less than 5 storeys)	18%	37%
high-rise apartment (5 or more storeys)	48%	42%
other	<5%	<5%

DWELLING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SATISFACTION

	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED
satisfaction with residence overall	32%	51%	13%	5%
satisfaction with the neighbourhood overall	18%	59%	19%	<5%

Participants in Beasley felt positive about their residence and neighbourhood overall but were somewhat less positive about the neighbourhood as a place to bring up children. Note that all respondents were asked this question, whether or not they have children of their own.

	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
feelings about the neighbourhood as a place to bring up children	6%	15%	28%	28%	23%

Participants reported that their **most important** reason for moving into the neighbourhood was:

affordability	**31%**
convenient – close to downtown	10%
convenient – close to services or amenities	9%
knew people in the neighbourhood	9%
liked the residence	8%
convenient – close to work	6%
placed by social housing	5%
convenient – close to good schools	<5%
Roots in the neighbourhood	<5%
Residence was available	<5%
Convenient – close to public transit	<5%
Safety	<5%
Neighbourhood character	<5%
Moved in with family or friends	<5%
Other	<5%

82% of respondents reported that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their residence overall, and **78%** with the neighbourhood overall.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Most respondents felt very safe in the neighbourhood during the day – less than 10% told us that they did not feel safe during the day. At night, respondents felt somewhat less safe in the neighbourhood.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Overall, I feel safe when I am outside in my neighbourhood during the day	39%	53%	7%	<2%
Overall, I feel safe when I am outside in my neighbourhood at night	13%	38%	34%	14%

Residents who had children in school (kindergarten to grade 12) were asked if they felt it was safe for their children to walk to and from school; the results of that question reflect only those respondents who have children in this age category living in their dwelling.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	MY CHILDREN NEVER WALK HOME FROM SCHOOL
Overall, I feel that my children are safe walking to and from school	14%	35%	16%	14%	20%

*asked only to respondents with children in school, K-12
This question was not applicable for 83% of participants, as they did not have school-aged children.

92% of respondents felt safe in the neighbourhood during the day.

At night, respondents felt less safe in the neighbourhood-hood.

NEIGHBOURHOOD AMENITIES

Our survey asked people about what kinds of services and amenities they feel are important to have in a neighbourhood, whether those services currently existed in their neighbourhood, and (if they do exist in the neighbourhood now), if the services or amenities were accessible.

Overall, for services and amenities that do exist in the neighbourhood, the respondents felt they were accessible.

40% of respondents felt that child-care was important but lacking in the neighbour-hood.

	SERVICE IS IMPORTANT BUT IS LACKING IN NEIGHBOURHOOD	SERVICE EXISTS, BUT IS INACCESSIBLE
family doctors or walk-in clinics	21%	5%
childcare	40%	5%
places to buy healthy food	8%	<5%
public libraries	17%	<5%
places for worship (e.g. churches, mosques)	10%	<5%
parks	9%	6%
banks	19%	<5%
public schools	9%	<5%
public transportation (e.g. buses)	<5%	<5%
services for youth (employment services, counselling or recreation programs)	30%	<5%
places to get together with people you know (cafés, community centres etc.)	14%	<5%
places to have a meeting (café, community centre, library etc.)	18%	<5%
a place to exercise or be physically active (outside of the home)	23%	<5%

NEIGHBOURHOOD PROBLEMS

We asked respondents to rate a list of common issues in terms of how much of a problem they felt these things were in Beasley.

One problem, LITTER, was deemed a 'somewhat or serious problem' by 80% of respondents.

More than half of the issues (10 of 18) were seen as 'not a problem' in Beasley by 50% of the respondents.

Top 5 'Serious' Problems in Beasley:
1. Drug dealing or use (46%)
2. Litter in the streets (36%)
3. Sex work (35%)
4. Poor air quality (31%)
5. Vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property (30%)

	NOT A PROBLEM	SOMEWHAT OF A PROBLEM	A SERIOUS PROBLEM
litter in the streets	20%	44%	36%
poor air quality	34%	35%	31%
problems with dogs	65%	18	17
noise from traffic	54%	24	21
lack of entertainment (cafés, cinemas, pubs etc.)	72%	18	10
traffic and road safety (including speed of traffic)	46%	28	26
lack of places to shop	73%	19	9
vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property	35%	35%	30%
problems with neighbours	67%	20	13
run down or boarded up properties	43%	35	22
racial harassment or discrimination	66%	22	10
people being attacked or harassed	45%	37	18
household burglary	65%	22	12
drug dealing or use	27%	26	46%
sex work	35%	28	35%
teenagers or youth hanging around on the streets	51%	29	20
disturbance from gangs or crowds	67%	22	11
lack of police protection	72%	17	11

NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIORITIES

Participants were asked: **"What do you think are the two most important things that would make your neighbourhood a better place to live?"**, to which they could give two short responses. The table below shows the broad categories of responses, and, for the top categories, the most frequent specific themes that are included in that category.
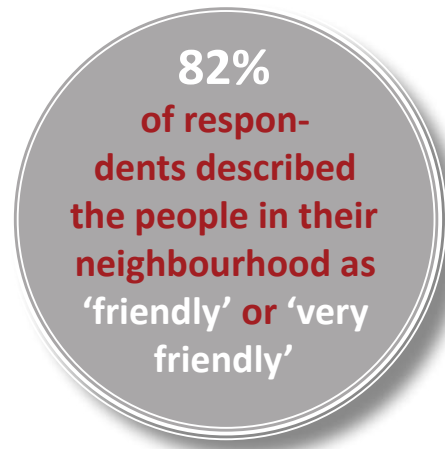
Top 5 Neighbourhood Priorities:
1. Address drug use and dealing (57)
2. Greater police presence needed (46)
3. Address issues related to sex work (33)
4. Resources needed for children and youth (30)
5. More and/or better parks and green spaces

Category	Theme	#	Theme	#
Crime and safety TOTAL: 167	Address drug use and drug dealing	57		
	Greater police presence needed	46		
	Address issues related to sex work	33		
	General/non-specific, e.g. "too much crime"	15		
	Safety, general	8		
	Other, single responses	5		
	Address violent crime problems (assault)	5		
	Address gang activity	<5		
Amenities needed TOTAL: 153	More and/or better parks and green space	26	More/better retail shopping options (not grocery)	7
	Community or recreation centre	14	Services for newcomers	5
	Other, single responses	19	Services for seniors	6
	Events and activities for the neighbourhood	13	More and /or better entertainment	16
	More and/or better grocery stores	6	More cafes, restaurants, bars and places for people to meet	6
	More and/or better social services	14	Employment services	5
Beautification TOTAL: 80	Clean up litter on the streets	24	eneral/non-specific, e.g. "make the neighbourhood prettier"	9
	Improve garbage pick-up	16	Plant more flowers and trees	7
	Improve run-down residential properties	12	Other, single responses	5
Sense of community TOTAL: 58	General/non-specific e.g. "people should be nicer"	33	Neighbourhood association needed	<5
	More/better communication needed among neighbourhoods and neighbourhood institutions	13	Neighbourhood watch needed	<5
Housing and tenancy TOTAL: 51	Address derelict and abondoned properties	19	Address problem landlords	7
	Improve affordability of housing	8	Address problem renters/tenants in the neighbourhood	7
Other responses	Traffic & road safety (grouped responses)	46	Resources needed for children and youth	30
	Neighbours, Neighbourliness (grouped responses)	43	Social issues (e.g. homelessness, income inequality, poverty)	15
	Economic Development	30		

SOCIAL COHESION AND TRUST

Respondents felt positively overall that their neighbourhood has opportunities for celebration and fun, has ways of sharing information and good leaders. People also felt positively that neighbours are friendly, watch out for each other's property, can be trusted and want the same things for the neighbourhood.

71% of respondents agreed that **the neighbourhood has opportunities for celebration and fun.**

82% of respondents described **the people in their neighbourhood as 'friendly' or 'very friendly'**

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
My neighbourhood continually looks for solutions to local problems rather than being satisfied with the way things are	8%	44%	36%	6%
My neighbourhood has good leaders who look out for the best interests of our neighbourhood	9%	46%	31%	6%
I know about a local neighbourhood or business association or group that meets regularly in my neighbourhood	12%	32%	48%	8%
Our neighbourhood has ways of sharing information (talking to neighbours, newsletters etc.)	9%	49%	31%	6%
I have influence over what this neighbourhood is like	5%	32%	45%	16%
There are opportunities for celebration and fun in my neighbourhood	19%	52%	21%	6%
If there is a problem around here, neighbours get together to deal with it	8%	32%	43%	12%
In my neighbourhood, neighbours watch over each other's property	12%	39%	33%	11%
People in this neighbourhood can be trusted	7%	42%	35%	12%
People in this neighbourhood share the same values	<5%	36%	45%	10%
My neighbours and I want the same things for the neighbourhood	10%	53%	28%	<5%

70% of respondents would like to stay in their neighbourhood for years to come.

Residents in Beasley have a strong level of attachment to their neighbourhood. The majority would like to stay in their neighbourhood for years to come, felt that Beasley has a distinctive character, that living there gives them a sense of pride and it is important for them to live in the neighbourhood.
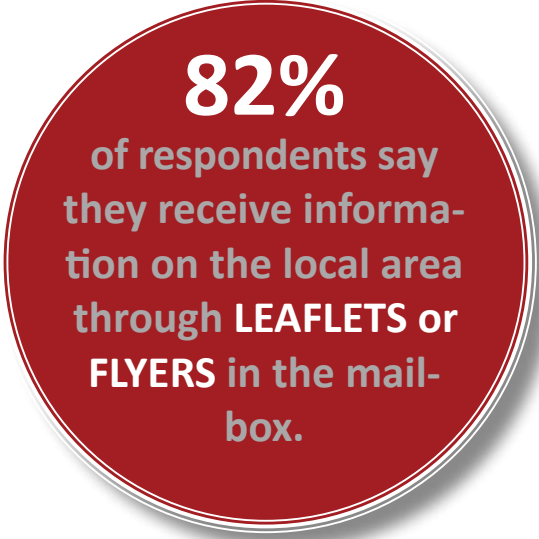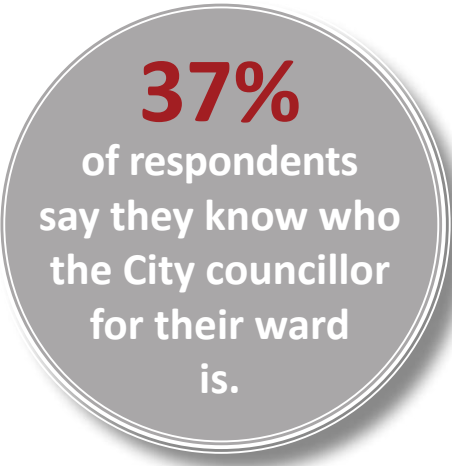
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I would like to stay in my neighbourhood for many years to come	21%	49%	18%	12%
Living in this neighbourhood gives me a sense of pride	15%	44%	30%	10%
It is very important to me to live in this particular neighbourhood	15%	42%	34%	9%
My neighbourhood has a distinct character it is a special place	20%	50%	24%	5%

CIVIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

Results indicate a moderate level of civic engagement, awareness and involvement. 70% of Beasley respondents either "agreed" or "strongly agreed" that information about their neighbourhood's services and activities was available to them. However, they feel less strongly that the City is responsive to their inquires and requests and that residents are invited to be involved in decision-making in the neighbourhood.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
Information is readily available to the public on City services and activities that take place in my neighbourhood	8%	49%	31%	10%	<5%
The City is responsive to residents' inquiries, input and or requests	5%	40%	34%	10%	10%
Residents are invited to be involved in decision-making in my neighbourhood	<5%	42%	38%	8%	7%

MORE ON CIVIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

37% of respondents say they know who the City councillor for their ward is.

82% of respondents say they receive information on the local area through **LEAFLETS or FLYERS** in the mailbox.

We also asked respondents to tell us more about how they get information about the local area, (for example information about events and meetings happening in the neighbourhood, or information on issues of concern in the neighbourhood).

	YES	NO
through friends or family	55%	45%
through work or colleagues	28%	72%
leaflets or flyers in the mailbox	82%	18%
posters on telephone poles, in shops or community buildings	68%	32%
free newspapers or community language newspapers	60%	40%
radio stations	41%	59%
television stations	46%	54%
websites or email	50%	50%
on buses	42%	58%
at public meetings	24%	76%
through volunteer or community organizations	35%	65%

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

When asked if there was anything that made it difficult to participate in community events and organizations, respondents were invited to state up to two barriers. The results are grouped into categories below.

		TOTAL COUNT
Busy with...	Work	42
	Children	15
	Other family	9
	School	9
	Hobbies/interests	5
Barriers	Health reasons/mobility concerns	39
	Transit/access/distance	12
	Feels excluded/marginalized	9
	Financial	6
	Language	<5
Lack of...	Interest	41
	Awareness: don't know what's available	32
	Time	15
	Opportunity: nothing is available	9
	Childcare	<5
Other reasons	No barriers/nothing preventing particpation	80
	Feels shy or anxious around other people/mental health	18
	Different values/opinion/conflicts with groups	10
	Age	7
	Safety	6

This table below lists the top four barriers in Beasley and the proportion of respondents by gender.

	TOTAL COUNT	MALE	FEMALE
Busy with work	42	16%	13%
Lack of interest	41	17%	11%
Health reasons/mobility concerns	39	10%	16%
Awareness: don't know what is available	32	10%	11%

CONCLUSIONS – COMPARING OUR RESULTS WITH THE BEASLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN

The Beasley Neighbourhood Action Plan's goals:

1. Improve neighbourhood design
2. Increase sense of health, safety and security
3. Improve social and cultural connections
4. Strengthen business and economic opportunities

The Beasley Neighourhood Priority Actions:

1. Garbage and dumping
2. Food security
3. Road/Traffic Safety, Walkability
4. Recreation and healthy living, park cleanup
5. Building cultural/social captial, compact and mixed income-housing

Overall, the survey responses to the question about neighbourhood priorities mirror those priorities that are identified in the Beasley Neighbourhood Plan. The Plan's goals include improving neighbourhood design while the survey respondents prioritize improving parks, green spaces and resources for children and youth. Priority Action #1, "Garbage and dumping" and the Objective "Enhance pride and ownership through beautification" mirror respondents' concerns over litter.

Beasley respondents also identified the need to address drug use and dealing, sex work and increasing police presence. These themes are not as well represented in the NAP. While the goal of increasing sense of health, safety and security with the objective to reduce effects of crime, the specific actions are focused on crime prevention through environmental design, creating a crime awareness package and neighbourhood walk around.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

This report is based on a research study by Dr. James Dunn and staff at McMaster University. If you have any questions, please contact us.

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