



BUILDING BETTER REVITALIZED NEIGHBOURHOODS

HEATHERINGTON



Community Consultation Report
June 2017

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THANK YOU!

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all those who supported and participated in this community consultation process. To all the residents and community members who took the time to participate, sharing their perspectives and providing thoughtful suggestions. To partner organizations who provided strategic guidance to this process, partnered to host consultation activities and also provided insightful feedback. To the outreach coordinators and resident facilitators who tirelessly worked to tell the community about the project, collected feedback from residents and shared their knowledge of Heatherington. Only together can we make real change happen in Ottawa's communities.

INTRODUCTION

This report provides a summary of the perspectives of residents, community members and others who live and work in the Heatherington community about what is important for their community, now and in the future.

This information will inform the development of a Neighbourhood Revitalization Strategy. This Revitalization Strategy will identify service, program and infrastructure improvements as well as redevelopment opportunities to enable the community to continue to grow as a place:

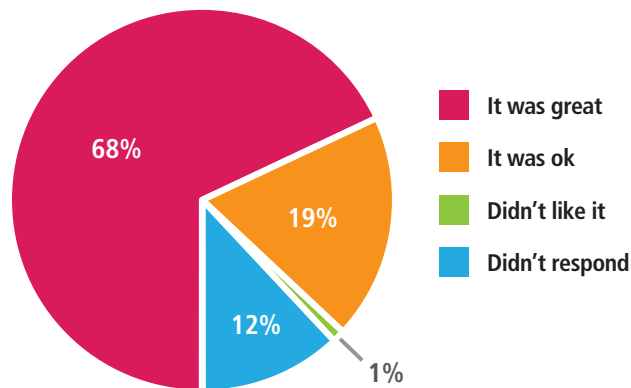
- Where residents can meet their everyday needs, participate in community life and succeed; and
- Which attracts new residents, businesses and investment to the area.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROCESS



887

responses were received throughout the consultation process including targeted input from children, youth, older adults, people living with low income and newcomers as well as service providers and businesses.



68% thought the ranking exercise was great; 19% thought it was ok; 1% didn't like it; and 12% didn't respond.

Between January and May 2017, a public engagement process with Heatherington residents, service providers and businesses took place. There were five key elements of the process.

- **A Champions Table** was formed and included 11 local partner organizations and seven City Departments (a full list of members is available in Appendix A). The Table has met three times to date and provided strategic guidance and support to the project.
- **Three resident facilitators** from the community were engaged to host discussions and focus groups with residents. This approach built on their existing knowledge of the community, relationships and trust with residents and provided a capacity building opportunity to these community leaders.
- **Two youth from the neighbourhood and surrounding area were employed** as outreach coordinators to provide information about the project to residents, conduct door to door engagement and support the project coordination activities.
- Information about the project and consultation activities was **multilingual** and available in English, French, Arabic and Somali. The project team also had the ability to speak with residents in these **four languages**.
- The engagement process took an **asset based approach**, encouraging feedback that built on the community's strengths and what was already working well.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

There were two phases of consultation, each with a different objective.

PHASE ONE

Phase One focused on asking open ended questions to get a broad range of ideas and feedback from participants. The discussion focused on:

- What do you love about your community?
- What three things would improve the community?
- What would you like to see built at 1770 Heatherington Road?

386 participants in total

8 engagement activities and focus groups with

265 people

11 key informant interviews with
17 participants

104 online survey responses from residents and staff who work for local agencies

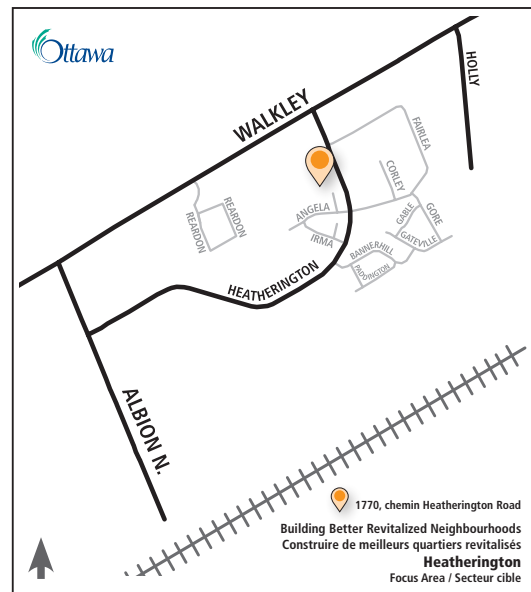


HEATHERINGTON

Heatherington was one of three communities across Ottawa identified for the Building Better Revitalized Neighbourhoods (BBRN) project.

The area of focus is illustrated on the map. Consideration is also being given to the broader community, its assets, planned developments and potential implications for the Heatherington community.

Within the community, 1770 Heatherington Road has been highlighted as a redevelopment opportunity. The 8.3 acre site is owned by the City of Ottawa and is currently vacant.



PHASE TWO

Phase Two asked community members to indicate which of the priorities identified were the most important to them. The suggested priority actions were divided into **short term** or **long term** actions. These were then categorized into **programs and services** or **infrastructure**. An additional question asked about priority uses for the land at 1770 Heatherington Road. For each question, residents picked up to three priorities.

501 responses received

242 door to door survey responses including 14 from business owners or managers

3 apartment lobby outreach sessions with

37 surveys conducted

6 focus groups with

108 participants

100 online survey responses

4,800+ PEOPLE LIVE IN HEATHERINGTON

– STATISTICS CANADA, 2011

WHAT WE LOVE ABOUT OUR COMMUNITY

As part of the first phase of consultation, participants were asked to identify what they love about their community. The Neighbourhood Revitalization Strategy will aim to build on these assets which are summarized below.

THE PEOPLE: A SUPPORTIVE AND DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Residents are described as nice and helpful and people value the relationships that have developed with their neighbours. Cultural diversity is one of the community's biggest assets adding character and richness.

THE PLACE: A CENTRAL LOCATION WITH LOTS OF AMENITIES AND GREENSPACE

There are large parks and nature trails located in the community as well as commercial development such as grocery stores, restaurants and banks. The community is also located close to many other key destinations and transportation services create convenient connections throughout Ottawa.

THE PROGRAMS: ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE FOR ALL

Affordable sports, recreation and leisure programs including after school programs for children and youth are available in the community. There is also local help for food and clothing, and family supports. Community events offer a great opportunity for residents to gather in the neighbourhood and connect with food and music.

THE POSSIBILITIES

At the first Champions Table meeting, all partner organizations were asked to describe Heatherington using one word. These words are shown below. The words echo the themes identified by residents above as well as highlight the community's great energy, strength and momentum.

“I love that there is different types of people and different cultures so that we can learn things about each other.”

“It's filled with children and laughter.”

“The thing we love the most about where we live is the close proximity to most parts of the city, in that we can get to most places by car within 15 or 20 minutes. We love that transit is so accessible and the ability to walk to Bank Street to do our shopping.”

“The renovation of the Heatherington mall has really improved the whole area with new businesses and attraction of a working class in the neighbourhood.”

“I like the fact that they have help for necessities such as fruits and veggies program and other programs that may be good for all ages.”



WHAT WE HEARD

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Feedback from participants included suggestions for how any future initiatives should be designed and implemented. Actions resulting from the Neighbourhood Revitalization Strategy should:

- **Be implemented with resident leadership and participation** starting early and continuing through all steps of the process.
- **Limit barriers to participation or access.** In particular, initiatives should have no or low fees to participate, be available in the community or address transportation barriers, be available outside of standard business hours, be designed to include childcare and be available in multiple languages.
- **Involve the entire community.** There are many smaller communities within the Heatherington neighbourhood and a desire exists to increase the interaction and strengthen the relationship between these communities.
- **View the community holistically:** Building on the above, services and major infrastructure should not be duplicated within the community but rather ensure that all the community's amenities complement each other and are distributed throughout the area.
- **Engage businesses as members of the community** to recognize their connections and investment in the community and support their involvement in community projects, events and discussions.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT THEMES

Eight themes arose from the feedback received during the first phase of community consultation when residents, community members and partners were asked "What three things would improve the community?". These themes are not listed in order of priority.

INCREASED RECREATION PROGRAMMING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Comments received often related to programming for a particular group of residents such as children, youth, women and older adults. A desire for arts programming was also specifically mentioned across all groups.

Feedback suggested that existing City and partner gym space could be used more effectively with an emphasis on use by local residents. Other recreation infrastructure that was frequently mentioned included soccer, basketball and pool facilities.

ROAD AND PATHWAY IMPROVEMENTS

Roadway safety and infrastructure improvements specifically along Heatherington Road were mentioned frequently as were improving pathways including doing better winter maintenance. It was also suggested that new walking and bike paths be established to connect key areas in the community such as Walkley Road, different housing sections, parks, schools and the Hydro corridor to the south of the community.

One neighbourhood revitalization association in Toronto invested in "improved outdoor lighting and landscaping and established a number of social programs including breakfast and after-school programs..." Over 4 years, "The number of respondents reporting that they were 'very satisfied' with living in their neighborhood increased by almost 200%." **Rigakos, 2006**



OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

Within all feedback themes, youth were specifically mentioned as a group that needs targeted services to remain engaged, active and successful. Initially, youth was defined as 14 to 19 years old but it should be noted that 20.5% of Heatherington residents are between the ages of 20 and 29.

SAFETY

While some residents noted a reduction in crime in recent years, prevention continues to be a priority. In addition to being a continuous stress for residents, crime has created negative perceptions of the community. Feedback highlighted the need to continue to foster the relationship between police officers and residents at events and through community projects.

PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Comments identified a need to upgrade current infrastructure and install new amenities in order to beautify and increase usability of these areas. Examples included fixing and adding basketball courts, play structures especially the swings, splash pads, benches, trees, picnic tables and lighting. Additional public greenspace was also seen as desirable.

Garbage was highlighted as a significant issue in public spaces. Comments related to pick-up, lack of garbage cans, littering and unsightly and inefficient communal dumpsters in housing complexes.

LOCAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Feedback prioritized making employment opportunities available to those who live in the community but also mentioned attracting new businesses and investments that will create additional local jobs. Service providers were recognized as a significant source of local employment.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Current service gaps identified included services specific to populations such as newcomers and Francophones. Many other comments related to access to affordable, healthy food as well as to a variety of community events such as multicultural events and potlucks, workshops and information fairs and sports tournaments.

UPGRADES TO EXISTING HOUSING

In addition to comments about repairs and improvements to individual units, feedback focused on adding amenities, beautifying and increasing the accessibility of common spaces.

“As a home owner I obviously have a vested interest in the areas ‘value’. But I speak from my heart when I say the areas crime has been a problem for too long. My concerns about my property value are significantly less than my concern for people’s right to live in a safe community devoid of fear and danger.”

Employment in Heatherington is projected to increase by 22% over the next 20 years.
Ottawa Employment Surveys, 2001-2016

30% of the households in Heatherington own their home and 70% rent.
Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, 2011

“The park next to the Heatherington community centre is always filled with hundreds of kids on a weekly basis Spring/Summer. There is only one outdated play structure. KEEP PARK CLEAN and add more structures and swings for the kids. Add a splash pool or better water feature. Tons of kids use it. Also, on a regular night, there are often 30-50 teenagers playing basketball squeezed on one lot. Add other hoops, add soccer nets... Like the saying says... if you build it, they will come in this area. Heatherington park is always filled with families. Also, add picnic tables. Families are often lunching on the ground.”

PRIORITY ACTIONS

All of the following actions were identified by residents, community members and partner agencies during the first phase of consultation then prioritized as part of the second phase. Prioritization was completed within the subcategories of **short term** or **long term** and **programs and services** or **infrastructure**. The priorities across those groups are amalgamated and presented below to indicate the level of importance they were given by participants.

The top five priorities were consistent across all groups of residents engaged but there were slight variations in secondary priorities identified by different groups of residents (children, older adults, people living with low income, etc). The following prioritization takes into account these differences according to the make-up of the community.

FIX THE ROAD AND SLOW TRAFFIC DOWN ON HEATHERINGTON ROAD

Comments about the state of the roads related mainly to potholes. There was also mention of increasing the amount and safety of on street parking. There were repeated concerns of speeding in front of Prince of Peace Elementary School and the three way stop in front of the Albion-Heatherington Recreation Centre. This intersection is used highly by pedestrians and cars often roll right through the stop signs. Other comments received also suggested improving Fairlea Crescent.

ACCESS TO A POOL

There were two distinct purposes for a pool mentioned. The first being access for recreational use especially during the summer months and the second as a therapeutic or rehabilitation treatment option.

MAKE PATHWAYS SAFER IN THE SUMMER AND WINTER

Feedback indicated that walking paths are well utilized but require upgrades and better maintenance. In particular, residents identified that there is no snow removal on the pathway running beside the Albion-Heatherington Recreation Centre. Other comments related to the state of the sidewalk, lighting and visibility from adjacent areas to deter crime.

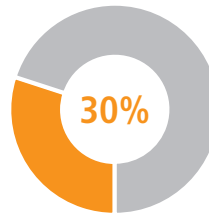
FREE PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

Suggested programming included recreation activities and playgroups/daycare but emphasized that it needed to be free in order to be accessible. Feedback received also indicated that it could be space where parents could be engaged along with their children.

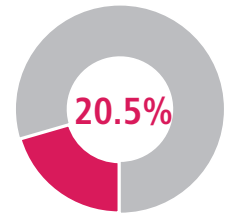
YOUTH DROP-IN CENTRE

The space is suggested as a place where youth can go both to access services and support but also to just hang out and use resources, games or recreation spaces.

“Research suggests a positive association between walkable land-use patterns and employment.”
Healthy Built Environment Alliance, 2014



under the age of 19



between the ages of 20 and 29

Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, 2011




REPAVE entire Heatherington road!!!
STOP patching and repave the entire thing.
We have too many big pot holes/huge puddles and gaps.”

Enhancing access to recreation helps:

- Children and youth to have opportunities to succeed and reach their full potential
- Break the cycle of poverty
- Promote healthy and active living
- Build safer communities and reduce behaviour that can lead to violence

Parks and Recreation Ontario, n.d.

Next 11 Priorities

- Improve the reputation of our community
- Programs for youth age 14-19 
- Increased positive police presence
- More flowers and trees
- Free wifi
- Local businesses hire people who live in our neighbourhood including youth

- Programs only for women 
- New bike lanes 
- After-hours access to mental health supports 
- Fix the basketball courts 
- Immigrant and newcomer services 



A top priority for people living with low income



A top priority for private market home owners



A top priority for children and youth



A top priority for newcomers and service providers

Remaining 7 Priorities

- More access to gyms
- Make lobbies and common areas nicer and accessible for people with disabilities
- More benches with shade in parks
- More garbage cans and better dumpsters
- Make it safe for kids walking to school
- Local food bank program
- Improve transit services

"A single project will not revitalize a core community but it may show a transformation sufficient to spark developer interest and change lenders' perceptions of the area."

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, n.d.

Note about Business Priorities: Feedback was also received from some local businesses. Many of the actions they identified as important aligned with what was prioritized by residents. Businesses further ranked the following highly: multicultural events, information fairs and workshops, and new businesses opening in the community. Improvements to common areas were equally highlighted, such as, plaza areas.

Other Suggested Priorities

- Programs only for older adults
- Arts, dance and music programs
- Multicultural events and potlucks
- Sports tournaments
- Information fairs and workshops
- Community clean up events
- English classes
- More fruits and veggie programs
- Access to library services
- More community gardens
- Update play structures
- Francophone services
- Help residents start their own businesses

- Employment counselling
- Enhance Turtle Head trails
- Build a skate park
- Build an indoor soccer field
- Build more gym space
- New businesses opening in our community



PRIORITIES FOR A COMMUNITY HUB AT 1770 HEATHERINGTON ROAD

When asked what residents thought should be developed at 1770 Heatherington Road, the overwhelming majority replied that it should be a multipurpose, multi-use site. There were 13 types of services, infrastructure or developments that were suggested be part of that Community Hub. In order of overall priority, those suggestions were:

1. **Sports centre**
2. **Medical clinic**
3. **Affordable housing**
4. **Youth centre**
5. **Middle income housing**
6. **Community garden**
7. **Cultural centre**
8. **Outdoor public spaces**
9. **Mental health and social supports**
10. **Training centre for job readiness**
11. **Stores and restaurants**
12. **Employment centre**
13. **Space for entrepreneurs to start their businesses**

Amongst the different resident groups engaged, some of the top ranked priorities differed, notably:

- Children and youth ranked stores and restaurants highly.
- Private market home owners wanted to see more private housing developments.
- Service providers identified green space and community gardens as being amongst the top priorities for the space.
- Businesses prioritized space for entrepreneurs to start their businesses and a cultural centre.

“ Build housing for other new families to invest, own and take part to the whole community. Currently the neighbourhood is aging with more singles and seniors living, therefore, it is essential to bring newer families and balance.”

“In order to attract private investment and stimulate economic activity, local government leaders should establish one high impact community revitalization priority in a key geographic location with existing assets. Identifying this single redevelopment area as the target for public and private investment offers the municipality as a whole the best opportunity for significant new development with the ability to jump-start the local economy and improve quality of life.”

Pennsylvania Department of
Community and Economic
Development, n.d.

CONCLUSION

The community consultation process successfully generated 887 responses to inform the Building Better Revitalized project in Heatherington. That feedback provides a clear understanding of the community's assets and priorities and provides a ranked list of suggested short and long term actions for the City and

its partners to consider as part of the Neighbourhood Revitalization Strategy. Residents will be invited to provide feedback again when the draft strategy is available for comment in September and October 2017.

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APPENDIX A: HEATHERINGTON CHAMPIONS TABLE MEMBERSHIP

The following organizations and City of Ottawa departments participated on the Heatherington Champions Table.

- Chair: Councillor Diane Deans
- Office of Councillor Deans
- Councillor Jean Cloutier
- Office of Councillor Cloutier
- Office of Councillor Brockington
- Boys and Girls Club
- Canadian Friends of Somalia organization
- Charles H. Hulse Public School
- Fairlea Community Association
- Hydro Ottawa
- Ottawa Community Housing
- Prince of Peace Catholic School
- Ridgemont High School
- Somali Centre for Family Services
- South East Ottawa Community Health Centre
- United Way
- BBRN Resident Facilitators
- BBRN Outreach Coordinators
- Ottawa Police Services
- Ottawa Public Health
- Ottawa Public Library
- Project Lead: Community and Social Services, City of Ottawa
- Corporate Real Estate Office, City of Ottawa
- Project Support: Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development, City of Ottawa
- Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services, City of Ottawa

