

ABOUT THE STUDY

The City of Hamilton's new 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, concrete projects to be undertaken to get there.

Another important part of this work

is research and evaluation – finding out more about residents' views and priorities, about how well the planning and neighbourhood projects are going and what might need to be changed along the way, and about 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.

In 2012, we did surveys with residents in Keith, Stinson and Stipley neighbourhoods. This report presents results from the 310 people who completed a survey with us in Stinson in 2012, a neighbourhood located between Main and the Mountain and Wellington and Wentworth.

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 Stinson's neighbourhood plan. We also present results on other areas that our survey asks about – housing, safety and security, and civic engagement.



WHO WE TALKED TO IN STINSON

We surveyed slightly more female and Canadian-born respondents than is found in the Stinson neighbourhood as a whole.

Stinson residents over the age of 18 were eligible to take part in our study, and we selected residents at random in the neighbourhood by knocking on their door and asking if they'd like to complete a survey. Interpretation assistance was available for respondents who required it. We talked to a total of 310 residents in Stinson. The following table describes our survey respondents with respect to certain characteristics of the neighbourhood as a whole, as taken from the most recent census.

	SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STINSON AS A WHOLE
gender	47% male; 53% female	51% male; 49% female
average age	44 years	45 years*
Canadian-born	83%	71%

* excludes residents under 18

There is a moderate degree of residential stability in Stinson.

On average, survey respondents in Stinson had been living in the neighbourhood for 6.8 years, and living in their current dwelling for 5.3 years. Most people (74%) had not moved residences during the past year. One-third (33%) had been in the same dwelling for over 5 years.

	SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STINSON AS A WHOLE*
detached house	22%	15%
semi-detached house	4%	2%
row house	<2%**	1%
duplex apartment	12%	9%
apartment less than 5 storeys	29%	53%
apartment 5 or more stories	32%	21%

* these percentages do not total 100 because of the way Statistics Canada ensures data anonymization

** figure not reported due to small number of responses to protect participant anonymity

While we aimed to align our sample with census distributions for residence types, this was difficult in Stinson in the case of low-rise apartment buildings in particular, due to the challenges of contacting low-rise apartment residents. Although our survey respondents represent a smaller proportion of low-rise apartment dwellers than is the case for the neighbourhood overall, the proportion of our survey respondents who are renters vs. home owners is very close to proportions in the neighbourhood overall. Our "renter" category includes individuals who reported that they lived rent-free in a dwelling they did not own or pay rent for (4%).

	SURVEY RESPONDENTS	STINSON AS A WHOLE
renters	75%	72%
owners	25%	28%

DWELLING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SATISFACTION

	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED
satisfaction with residence overall	34%	52%	9%	5%
satisfaction with the neighbourhood overall	13%	59%	23%	5%

Survey participants in Stinson felt positive about both their residence and neighbourhood overall (see red numbers in the table above). However, participants felt somewhat less positive about their neighbourhood as a place to bring up children. All respondents were asked this question, whether or not they had children of their own. There is no appreciable difference in how men and women responded to this question.

	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
feelings about the neighbourhood as a place to bring up children*	7%	13%	30%	24%	26%

* asked of all respondents, whether they had children of their own or not

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

affordable	37%
knew people in the neighbourhood	13%
convenient - close to downtown	6%
convenient - close to work	4%
convenient - close to good schools	9%
convenient - close to services/amenities	3%
investment property	5%
neighbourhood had character	2%
liked the residence	2%
other	3%

86% reported that they were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their residence overall, and **72%** with the neighbourhood overall.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
Overall, I feel safe when I am outside in my neighbourhood during the day	44%	49%	5%	2%
Overall, I feel safe when I am outside in my neighbourhood at night	16%	40%	30%	14%

93% of respondents felt safe in the neighbourhood during the day. At night, respondents felt less safe in the neighbourhood.

At 93%, respondents overwhelming agree or strongly agree that they feel safe outside during the day in Stinson, while only 54% claim the same positive feelings for being outside at night.

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. Respondents tended to feel that it was not safe for their children to walk to and from school.

	STRONGLY AGREE	DISAGREE	MY CHILDREN NEVER WALK HOME FROM SCHOOL
Overall, I feel that my child/children are safe walking to and from school*	35%	46%	19%

* asked only of respondents with children in school, K-12

NEIGHBOURHOOD AMENITIES

50% of respondents felt that a public library was lacking.

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

Close to 2 out of 5 people felt that family doctors/walk-in clinics and childcare were lacking.

Our survey asked people about what kinds of services and amenities they felt were important to have in the neighbourhood, whether those services currently existed in their neighbourhood, and whether existing services were accessible. Highlights are on the previous page. The table below gives the details.

	SERVICE IS IMPORTANT BUT IS LACKING IN NEIGHBOURHOOD	SERVICE EXISTS, BUT IS INACCESSIBLE
family doctors or walk-in clinics	39%	7%
childcare	39%	3%
places to buy healthy food	23%	3%
public libraries	50%	5%
places for worship (e.g. churches, mosques etc.)	9%	3%
parks	4%	3%
banks	19%	9%
public schools	22%	6%
public transportation (e.g. buses)	0%	<2%
services for youth (employment services, counselling or recreation programs)	20%	2%
places to get together with people you know (cafés, community centres etc.)	36%	2%
places to have a meeting (café, library, community centre etc.)	29%	5%
a place to exercise or be physically active (outside of the home)	18%	3%

NEIGHBOURHOOD PROBLEMS

No issue was deemed a 'serious problem' by more than 50% of respondents. More than half of the issues (11 of 18) were seen as 'not a problem' in Stinson by over 50% of respondents.

TOP 5 'SERIOUS PROBLEMS' IN STINSON:

1. Drug dealing or use (40%)
2. Sex work (32%)
3. Vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property (27%)
4. Litter in the streets (24%)
5. Poor air quality (22%)

We asked respondents to rate a list of common issues in terms of how much of a problem they felt these things were in Stinson. The highlights are on the previous page, while details (including notable results in red) are in the table below.

	NOT A PROBLEM	SOMEWHAT OF A PROBLEM	A SERIOUS PROBLEM
litter in the streets	28%	48%	24%
poor air quality	38%	40%	22%
problems with dogs	63%	25%	12%
noise from traffic	57%	28%	15%
lack of entertainment (cafés, cinemas, pubs etc.)	49%	30%	21%
traffic and road safety (including speed of traffic)	46%	33%	21%
lack of places to shop	54%	28%	18%
vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property	34%	39%	27%
problems with neighbours	66%	24%	10%
run-down or boarded-up properties	54%	30%	17%
racial harassment or discrimination	80%	13%	7%
people being attacked or harassed	55%	29%	17%
household burglary	65%	25%	10%
drug dealing or use	34%	26%	40%
sex work	46%	22%	32%
teenagers or youth hanging around on the streets	60%	24%	16%
disturbance from gangs or crowds	82%	12%	7%
lack of police protection	71%	21%	9%

NEIGHBOURHOOD PRIORITIES

RESPONSES UNIQUE TO STINSON: Concerns unique to Stinson included the concentration of institutional homes, the noise and debris associated with the construction of the Stinson Lofts, and train noise, particularly at night. There was also concern about the inadequacy of garbage pick-up. Because many of the larger homes have been sub-divided into multi-unit dwellings, when waste collectors enforce a two-bag limit, many garbage bags end up being left behind. The resulting debris contributes to residents' litter (as opposed to formal, municipal waste removal) and beautification concerns.

Participants were asked: **“What do you think are the TWO most important things that would make your neighbourhood a better place to live?”** Responses could be assigned to more than one theme. The table below shows the broad categories of responses, and, for the top categories, the most frequent specific themes included in that category.

Crime and safety TOTAL: 135	Address drug use and drug dealing	53	Non-specific e.g. “Too much crime; unsafe neighbourhood”	12
	Greater police presence needed	30	Other	10
	Address sex work and sex workers	26	Address break-ins, burglaries, theft of personal property	<5
Amenities needed TOTAL: 102	More parks and green space needed; take better care of existing parks and trees on public property	18	More social services needed in neighbourhood	7
	More neighbourhood activities and events needed so we can know our neighbours better	17	Library needed	<5
	Community/recreation centre needed	14	More elementary schools within walking distance needed	<5
	More cafés, restaurants, places to meet friends needed	11	Dog park or leash-free zones needed	<5
	More shopping options needed	8	More services for seniors needed	<5
	Other amenities needed e.g. banks, post office, dollar store, beer/liquor store	8	Walk-in clinic, doctor’s offices and other health care services needed	<5
	More and/or better grocery stores needed	7		
Beautification TOTAL: 98	Clean up litter on the streets	25	Improve garbage pickup services/increase bag limit	12
	General/non-specific e.g. “make the neighbourhood prettier”	23	Clean up graffiti and vandalism	10
Sense of community TOTAL: 58	General e.g. “people should be kinder to each other; increase the sense of community”	32	Neighbourhood Watch needed	6
	More/better communication needed among neighbourhoods and neighbourhood institutions	17	Neighbourhood association needed	<5
Housing and tenancy TOTAL: 37	Deal with derelict properties	11	Too many houses converted to multi-unit rentals	<5
	Too many renters/tenants in the neighbourhood	9	Increase the affordability of housing	<5
	Landlords need to maintain their properties better	9	Other	<5
Other	Stinson Lofts: construction is loud, messy and has taken too long	6	Increase public transit	<5
	Improve roads, lights and other infrastructure	5	Too many trains/too much train noise, especially at night	<5
	Address lack of on-street parking	<5	All other, with single responses	16
	Address pollution, air quality and environmental concerns	<5		
Traffic and road safety TOTAL: 30	E.g. traffic calming measures needed, address high-speed traffic through neighbourhood streets			
Children and youth TOTAL: 26	E.g. address problems caused by children and youth hanging out on the streets, more resources needed for children and youth			
Neighbours, Neighbourliness TOTAL: 26	E.g. neighbours should be kinder to each other, problems with specific neighbours			
Institutional homes TOTAL: 25	E.g. there is too high a concentration of institutional homes, get rid of institutional homes, tenants in the homes need more to do and more services			
Problems with animals TOTAL: 7				

The top 10 specific themes in Stinson were equally important to men and to women, and across age categories. The very modest differences in responses by gender are highlighted in red in the table to the right.

PRIORITY	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
drugs	53	38%	62%
general sense of community	32	47%	53%
policing	30	47%	53%
sex work	26	50%	50%
litter	25	32%	68%

SOCIAL COHESION AND TRUST

Over 50% of respondents indicated that they don't know about local neighbourhood or business associations, and that they don't feel that they have influence over their neighbourhood.

87% of respondents described the people in their neighbourhood as 'friendly' or 'very friendly'

Our results indicate that respondents felt positively overall that their neighbourhood had ways of working together to solve problems, that people in the neighbourhood were friendly towards each other, and shared common goals for the neighbourhood.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DIS-AGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
My neighbourhood continually looks for solutions to local problems rather than being satisfied with the way things are	10%	41%	35%	8%	7%
My neighbourhood has good leaders who look out for the best interests of our neighbourhood	9%	50%	26%	8%	7%
I know about a local neighbourhood or business association or group that meets regularly in my neighbourhood	12%	32%	46%	10%	<2%
Our neighbourhood has ways of sharing information (talking to neighbours, newsletters etc.)	17%	53%	24%	6%	<2%
I have influence over what this neighbourhood is like	6%	39%	40%	16%	<2%
There are opportunities for celebration and fun in my neighbourhood	9%	50%	34%	6%	<2%
If there is a problem around here, neighbours get together to deal with it	9%	33%	41%	13%	5%
In my neighbourhood, neighbours watch over each other's property	15%	55%	21%	8%	<2%
People in this neighbourhood can be trusted	7%	50%	29%	11%	<2%
People in this neighbourhood share the same values	4%	42%	40%	10%	5%
My neighbours and I want the same things for the neighbourhood	7%	63%	23%	4%	3%

60%
of respondents
would like to stay
in their neighbour-
hood for years
to come.

COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT AND PRIDE

Residents in Stinson generally have a moderate level of attachment to their neighbourhood. 60% would like to stay in their neighbourhood for years to come, and 52% felt that living in Stinson gave them a sense of pride, while 66% felt that their neighbourhood had a distinctive character.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I would like to stay in my neighbourhood for many years to come	21%	39%	23%	17%
Living in this neighbourhood gives me a sense of pride	11%	41%	34%	14%
It is very important to me to live in this particular neighbourhood	13%	30%	41%	15%
My neighbourhood has a distinct character—it is a special place	18%	48%	26%	15%

CIVIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

Results indicate a moderate level of civic engagement, awareness and involvement. 68% of Stinson respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that information about their neighbourhood’s services and activities was available to them, and 47% stated that they were invited to be a part of decision-making activities. Only 54% similarly agreed or strongly agreed that the City was responsive to their queries and requests.

	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	14%	54%	27%	5%	<2%
The City is responsive to residents’ inquiries, input and/or requests	8%	46%	29%	8%	9%
Residents are invited to be involved in decision-making in my neighbourhood	7%	40%	37%	7%	8%

MORE ON CIVIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

66%
of respondents
say they know who
the City councillor
for their ward
is.

**LEAFLETS
or FLYERS in the
mailbox and POST-
ERS in public areas were
reported as the top two
ways respondents got
information about
the local area.**

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	57%	44%
through work or colleagues	26%	74%
leaflets or flyers in the mailbox	80%	20%
posters on telephone poles, in shops or community buildings	66%	44%
free newspapers or community language newspapers	48%	52%
radio stations	40%	60%
television stations	49%	51%
websites or email	49%	51%
on buses	45%	55%
at public meetings	22%	78%
through volunteer or community organizations	28%	72%
other ways	11%	89%

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	43
	Children	20
	Other family	7
	Other reasons	7
	School	5
Barriers	Health reasons/mobility concerns	32
	Financial	13
	Feels excluded/marginalized	9
	Transit/access/distance	7
	Language	<5
Lack of...	Time	55
	Interest	33
	Awareness: don't know what's available	21
	Opportunity: nothing is available	11
	Childcare	<5
Other reasons	No barriers/nothing	28
	Other	25
	Anxiety/shy/other people/ mental health	21
	Age	5
	Lazy	<5

The table below lists the top four barriers in Stinson, and the proportion of respondents by gender.

	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
lack of time	55	38%	62%
busy with work	43	53%	47%
lack of interest	33	58%	42%
health reasons/mobility concerns	32	44%	56%

CONCLUSIONS—COMPARING OUR RESULTS TO THE STINSON NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN

The Stinson Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAP) identified eight broad goals:

- A. Create a Space where Neighbours Can Connect with Each Other, Be Safe and Engage in Physical and Social Activities
- B. Enhance Pride and Ownership of the Neighbourhood through Beautification and History
- C. Enhance Livable and Walkable Communities
- D. Improve Social and Health Outcomes through Building Connections and Relationships
- E. Strengthen Education and Skills Training
- F. Address Poverty and Housing Issues
- G. Engaging RCFs (Residential Care Facilities) as Neighbours
- H. Connecting with Businesses

The NAP has a productive phrasing of “engaging RCFs as neighbours”; the more common response in the survey was concern about the large number of such facilities that are concentrated in the neighbourhood, and that some of the residents disturb the peace and need more support or services than they currently receive, especially when they are out in public.

Respondents in the survey unambiguously expressed concerns related to drug use and dealing, the presence of sex work, and a desire for increased policing and a general lowering of the crime rate. These themes are not as well represented in the NAP. (While Goal A includes the phrase “be safe,” its specific objectives are focused on the creation of community spaces, rather than overall crime or safety.)

Residents want specific amenities, festivals/ events and resources for children and youth. These responses align closely with Goals A and D.

Many themes related to beautification, care for derelict properties and enforcement of property standards speak to Goal B.

The desire for traffic calming measures aligns with Goal C.

Residents were concerned about drugs and sex work and wanted to see more policing and a lower crime rate. These themes are not as well represented in the neighbourhood action plan.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

Dr. Jim Dunn and his staff at McMaster University are doing the research study this report is based on. If you have any questions, call the study hotline or email us.



905-525-9140 ext. 23375



hnstudy@mcmaster.ca

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