

# ABOUT THE STUDY

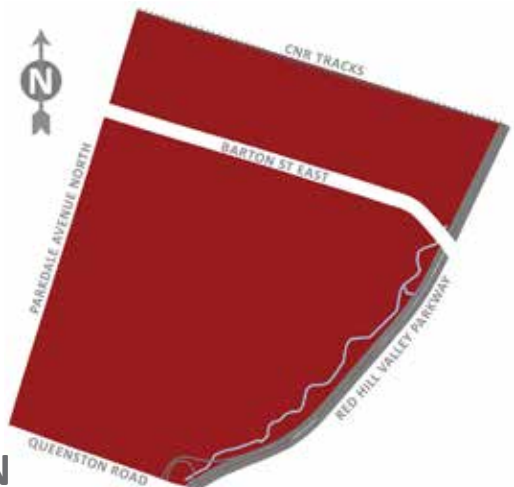
The City of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Action Strategy is working towards improving social, economic and health outcomes in targeted neighbourhoods in the city. The City is working with community partners, neighbourhood groups, and residents to develop neighbourhood action plans. These action plans lay 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

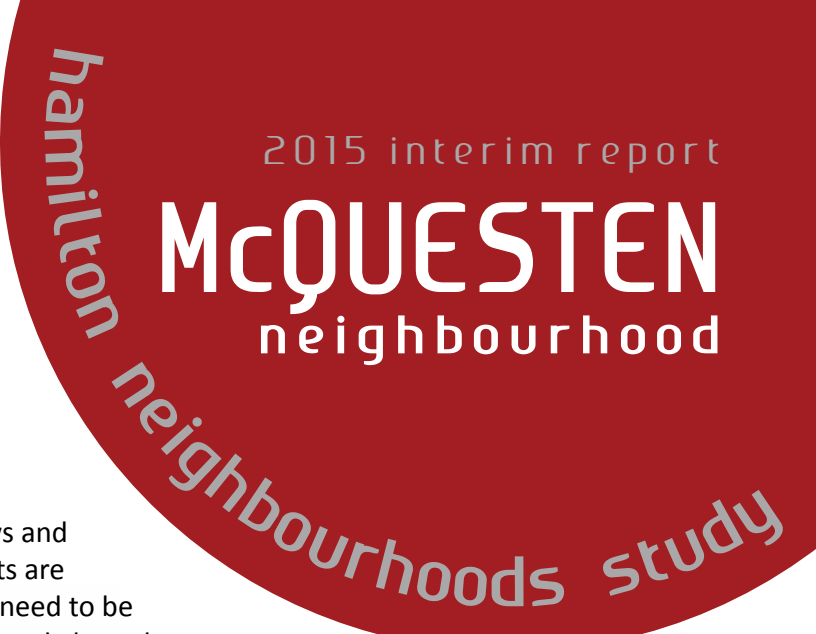
changed along the way, as well as what kind of impact the strategy has on residents in the neighbourhoods overall. Our research team at McMaster, led by Dr. Jim Dunn, has undertaken the Hamilton Neighbourhoods Study to help answer these questions.

**Between 2012-2014 we did surveys with residents in Beasley, Keith, McQuesten, Rolston, Stinson and Stipley. This report presents results from the 296 people who completed a survey with us in McQuesten 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 McQuesten's neighbourhood plan. We also present results on other areas that our survey asks about – housing, safety and security, and civic engagement.



## McQUESTEN NEIGHBOURHOOD



# WHO WE TALKED TO IN MCQUESTEN

McQuesten 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 296 residents in McQuesten. 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	70% female; 30% male	51% female; 48% male
average (mean) age	45 years	47 years*
Canadian born	81%	69%

\* excludes residents under 18

**There is a high degree of residential stability in McQuesten.**

On average, respondents had been living in the neighbourhood for almost **13 years**, and in their current dwelling for **10 years**.

**86%** had not moved residences in the past year.

	OUR 296 PARTICIPANTS LIVED IN...	COMPARED TO MCQUESTEN ON THE WHOLE...
detached house	45%	45%
semi-detached house	11%	7%
row house or town house	20%	12%
low-rise apartment (less than 5 storeys)	10%	12%
high-rise apartment (5 or more storeys)	14%	25%
other	<5%	<5%

# DWELLING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SATISFACTION

	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED
satisfaction with residence overall	32%	53%	11%	<5%
satisfaction with the neighbourhood overall	17%	61%	19%	<5%

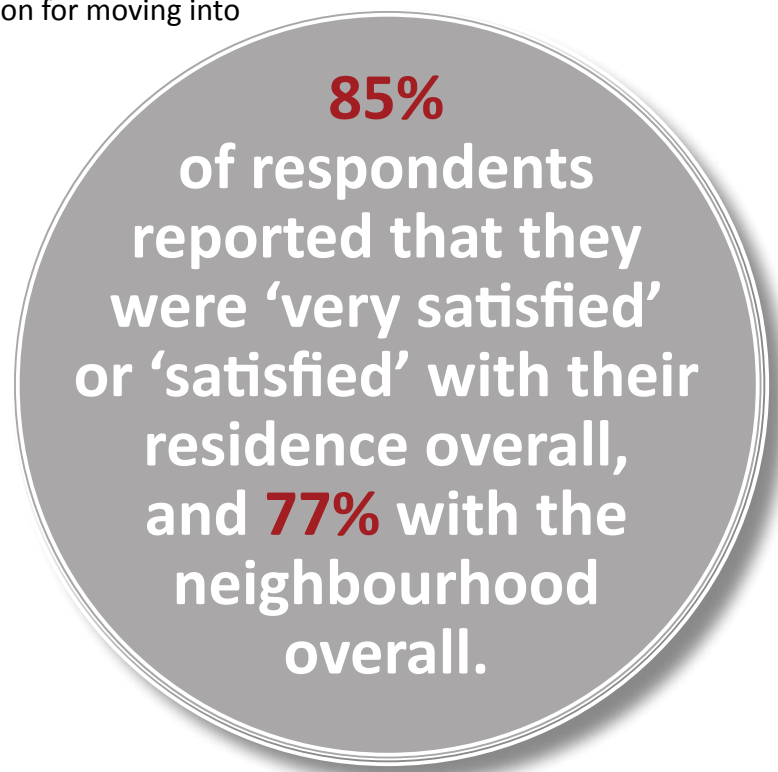
Participants in McQuesten felt positive about their residence and neighbourhood overall but were somewhat less positive about the neighbourhood as a place to bring up children. Note that all respondents were asked this question, whether or not they have children of their own.

	EXCELLENT	VERY GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	POOR
feelings about the neighbourhood as a place to bring up children	10%	14%	32%	27%	16%

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

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

affordability	38%
liked the neighbourhood	13%
knew people in the neighbourhood	7%
roots in neighbourhood	6%
convenient - close to good schools	5%
moved in with family friends	5%
placed by social housing	5%
neighbourhood had character	<5%
convenient - close to work	<5%
safety	<5%



# 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	37%	55%	<5%	<5%
Overall, I feel safe when I am outside in my neighbourhood at night	14%	41%	28%	17%

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

	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	9%	46%	19%	8%	18%

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

This question was not applicable for 65% 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.

# 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.

For **over half** the services/amenities that we asked about, at least **1 in 3** people felt that it was important to have in a neighbourhood but was lacking in McQuesten.

**42%** of respondents felt that **child-care** was important but lacking in the neighbourhood.

	SERVICE IS IMPORTANT BUT IS LACKING IN NEIGHBOURHOOD	SERVICE EXISTS, BUT IS INACCESSIBLE
family doctors or walk-in clinics	21%	<5%
childcare	42%	7%
places to buy healthy food	33%	<5%
public libraries	36%	5%
places for worship (e.g. churches, mosques etc.)	7%	<5%
parks	5%	<5%
banks	12%	<5%
public schools	<5%	<5%
public transportation (e.g. buses)	<5%	<5%
services for youth (employment services, counselling or recreation programs)	36%	<5%
places to get together with people you know (cafés, community centres etc.)	35%	<5%
places to have a meeting (café, community centre, library etc.)	35%	<5%
a place to exercise or be physically active (outside of the home)	34%	6%

# 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 McQuesten.

**TOP  
6 'SERIOUS  
PROBLEMS' IN  
MCQUESTEN:**

1. Drug dealing and use (31%)
2. Vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property (30%)
3. Litter in the streets (28%)
4. Traffic and road safety (24%)
5. Teenagers or youth hanging around on the streets (23%)
6. Poor air quality (22%)

**One problem, LITTER, was deemed a 'somewhat or serious problem' by 73% of respondents.**

**More than half of the issues (12 of 18) were seen as 'not a problem' in McQuesten by over 50% of respondents.**

	NOT A PROBLEM	SOMEWHAT OF A PROBLEM	A SERIOUS PROBLEM
litter in the streets	27%	45%	28%
poor air quality	37%	41%	22%
problems with dogs	66%	18%	16%
noise from traffic	69%	22%	10%
lack of entertainment (cafés, cinemas, pubs etc.)	44%	37%	19%
traffic and road safety (including speed of traffic)	46%	30%	24%
lack of places to shop	61%	27%	13%
vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage to property	38%	32%	30%
problems with neighbours	65%	23%	13%
run down or boarded up properties	73%	17%	10%
racial harassment or discrimination	77%	15%	6%
people being attacked or harassed	59%	21%	18%
household burglary	57%	25%	16%
drug dealing or use	47%	20%	31%
sexwork	69%	14%	16%
teenagers or youth hanging around on the streets	51%	27%	23%
disturbance from gangs or crowds	69%	19%	12%
lack of police protection	67%	21%	12%

# 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.

Amenities needed TOTAL: 150	More and/or better parks and green space	22	More/better retail shopping options (not grocery)	8
	Community or recreation centre	22	More and/or better schools	8
	Other, single responses	18	Services for seniors	7
	Events and activities for the neighbourhood	13	More and/or better entertainment	6
	More and/or better grocery stores	12	More cafes, restaurants, bars and places for people to meet	6
	More and/or better social services	11	Employment services	<5
Crime and safety TOTAL: 128	Greater police presence needed	40	Address issues related to sex work	7
	Address drug use and drug dealing	30	Address property crime problems (theft, break & enter)	6
	General/non-specific, e.g. “too much crime”	16	Address gang activity	6
	Other, single responses	16	Address violent crime problems (assault)	5
Beautification TOTAL: 94	Clean up litter on the streets	21	General/non-specific, e.g. “make the neighbourhood prettier”	12
	Improve run-down residential properties	21	Plant more flowers and trees	7
	Improve garbage pick-up	17	Address issues with industrial and commercial properties	<5
Children/youth TOTAL: 76	Resources needed for children and youth	54	Other, single responses	9
	Problems with children and youth, e.g. loitering on streets	13		
Sense of community TOTAL: 60	General/non-specific e.g. “people should be nicer”	28	Neighbourhood association needed	7
	More/better communication needed among neighbourhoods and neighbourhood institutions	17	Neighbourhood watch needed	6
Traffic and road safety TOTAL: 50	Traffic calming measures needed	20	Other, single responses	6
	Too much speeding; slow down traffic	9	More and/or better snow removal needed	5
	Address other traffic and road problems, e.g. potholes	9	Trucks in the neighbourhood	<5
Housing and tenancy TOTAL: 29	Negative attitudes towards social housing	18	Address problem landlords	5
	Improve housing stock	8	Improve affordability of housing	<5
	Address problem renters/tenants in the neighbourhood	8	Address derelict and abandoned properties	<5
Other	Problems with neighbours, neighbourliness	26	Problems with animals	17
	Nothing, no improvements needed	20	More and/or better economic development	13
	Infrastructure improvements needed	19	Improve pedestrian infrastructure	13



# SOCIAL COHESION AND TRUST

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



	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
My neighbourhood continually looks for solutions to local problems rather than being satisfied with the way things are	5%	41%	34%	12%
My neighbourhood has good leaders who look out for the best interests of our neighbourhood	7%	41%	33%	11%
I know about a local neighbourhood or business association or group that meets regularly in my neighbourhood	<5%	29%	51%	16%
Our neighbourhood has ways of sharing information (talking to neighbours, newsletters etc.)	8%	51%	29%	11%
I have influence over what this neighbourhood is like	<5%	22%	57%	18%
There are opportunities for celebration and fun in my neighbourhood	7%	42%	39%	10%
If there is a problem around here, neighbours get together to deal with it	5%	32%	43%	16%
In my neighbourhood, neighbours watch over each other's property	17%	58%	17%	7%
People in this neighbourhood can be trusted	5%	52%	30%	12%
People in this neighbourhood share the same values	<5%	45%	38%	11%
My neighbours and I want the same things for the neighbourhood	8%	66%	17%	6%



# COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT AND PRIDE

**66%**  
of respondents  
would like to stay  
in their neighbour-  
hood for years  
to come.

Residents in McQuesten have a strong level of attachment to their neighbourhood. The majority feel that living in McQuesten gives them a sense of pride and that their neighbourhood has a distinctive character.

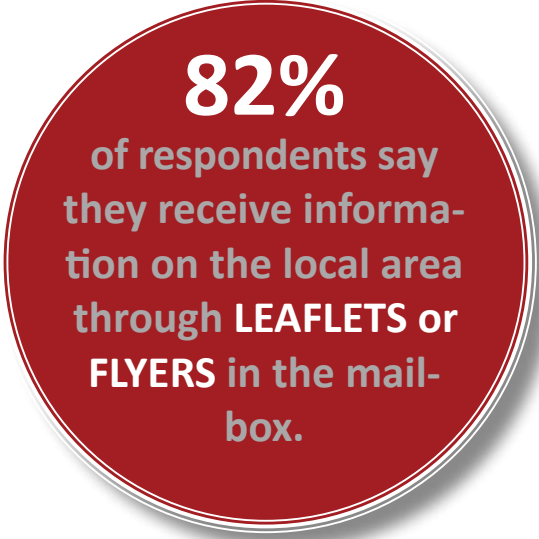
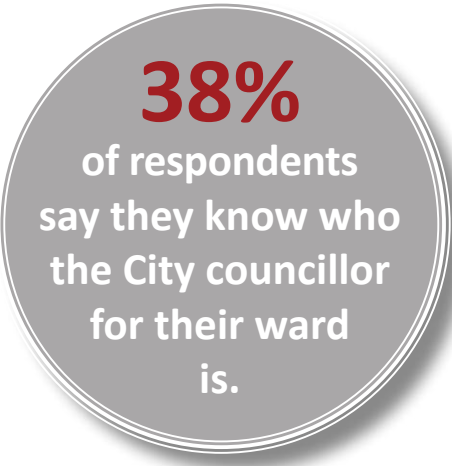
	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I would like to stay in my neighbourhood for many years to come	22%	44%	22%	12%
Living in this neighbourhood gives me a sense of pride	9%	43%	36%	12%
It is very important to me to live in this particular neighbourhood	8%	40%	39%	13%
My neighbourhood has a distinct character it is a special place	11%	45%	36%	8%

# CIVIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

Results indicate a moderate level of civic engagement, awareness and involvement. 57% of McQuesten 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 queries 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



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	56%	44%
through work or colleagues	17%	83%
leaflets or flyers in the mailbox	82%	18%
posters on telephone poles, in shops or community buildings	46%	54%
free newspapers or community language newspapers	43%	57%
radio stations	34%	66%
television stations	44%	56%
websites or email	38%	62%
on buses	33%	67%
at public meetings	16%	84%
through volunteer or community organizations	24%	76%

# 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	27
	Other family	21
	School	5
	Home and/or home repairs	<5
Barriers	Health reasons/mobility concerns	37
	Transit/access/distance	18
	Financial	20
	Feels excluded/marginalized	<5
	Language	<5
Lack of...	Interest	53
	Awareness: don't know what's available	27
	Time	17
	Opportunity: nothing is available	12
	Childcare	<5
Other reasons	No barriers/nothing preventing participation	52
	Feels shy or anxious around other people/mental health	19
	Age	7
	Lazy	<5
	Different values/opinion/conflicts with groups	<5

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

	TOTAL COUNT	MALE	FEMALE
Lack of interest	53	17%	19%
Busy with work	43	30%	14%
Health reasons/mobility concerns	37	10%	14%
Busy with children	27	6%	11%

# CONCLUSIONS - COMPARING OUR RESULTS WITH THE MCQUESTEN NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION PLAN

By and large, our results with regards to neighbourhood priorities mirror the priorities identified in McQuesten's Neighbourhood Action Plan. Resources for children and youth, parks, greens space, beautification and community or recreation centre/activities were dominant themes in our survey responses.

Both the Action Plan and the survey have a focus on youth, perhaps a reflection of the fact that 31 % of McQuesten's population is under 20 years of age. Respondents to the survey expressed desires for more places to buy healthy food, while the Action Plan considers a spectrum of food security programs and services, including community garden and kitchens, and access to local grocery stores. Litter, the dumping of garbage, and improving the neighbourhood's overall appearance are reflected in both survey responses and the Action Plan.

Some concerns raised by survey respondents are not clearly reflected in the Action Plan. For example, respondents expressed a desire for increased policing which could relate to the broad goal of "increase neighbourhood safety and security" (Goal A). Respondents also have strong concerns about drug use and dealing; while Action A.1.1. refers to developing an anti-drug campaign for neighbourhood children, it does not refer to current drug use and dealing. Another survey theme that is less well represented by the Action Plan is child care. The Action Plan refers to "programming for families and children" which would support parents, and additional action items could also consider increasing child care for working parents.

## The McQuesten Neighbourhood Action Plan's goals:

- A. Increase neighbourhood safety and security**
- B. Strengthen economic opportunities and investment**
- C. Enhance community health and well-being**
- D. Strengthen neighbourhood pride and promote community beautification**
- E. Promote, strengthen and encourage education opportunities**

## HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

Dr. James Dunn and staff at McMaster University are doing the research study this report is based on. If you have any questions, please contact us.



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