# WE CAN DESIGN BELONGING

**Final Report for
The Kitchener and Waterloo Community
Foundation**

**COMMUNITY EDITION**

# WE CAN DESIGN BELONGING

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project was commissioned by The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation (The KWCF) to explore belonging in Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich. By doing so, The KWCF hopes to strengthen community and increase the involvement of residents across locations and demographics.

## The project has two goals:

1. **To understand the state of belonging in Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich;**
2. **To develop and prototype an approach for improving on the current state of belonging in Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich.**

## The project used a qualitative approach to capture detailed and contextualized data through structured exercises and guided discussion. In total, we consulted with 160 residents through Stakeholder Labs, Street Teams, a Community Camp and One-On-One Interviews.

## In our research, we saw that belonging benefits individuals and communities. People generally agree on what it feels like to belong: happy, safe, content, relaxed, supported, valued and accepted. Based on what we heard from participants, belonging is associated with good outcomes, such as relationship building, self-growth, helping others, collaborating, being cared for and having fun.

**However,** these good feelings and outcomes are sometimes threatened. Global changes, including new technology, increasing diversity and greater mobility are creating challenges for belonging. On an individual level, belonging can also be threatened by major life changes. This indicates that we should provide support for people during their transitional periods, such as moving, graduating, job searching, starting a family, sending kids away to school or retiring. In our community, we saw that many people are willing to celebrate diversity and welcome newcomers. However, we still have work to do to be a more welcoming and accepting place. Although we've seen a lot of improvement over the past decade, we need to continue developing our support for those with English as a second language. We found that people living in the suburbs face more challenges than those living in the cores because their chances to interact with people on the street are reduced, so these neighbourhoods need to offer other opportunities for engagement (parks, community centres, etc.) We also saw that the academic portion of Kitchener-Waterloo is considered very separate from the rest and more could be done to integrate students and faculty into the community.

**We also saw that a large challenge** for Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich (and Waterloo Region in general) was our lack of identity. When asking people to tell the story of Kitchener, Waterloo and area, we received answers that were numerous and conflicting, as well as some answers that explicitly referred to this lack of identity. As well, people generally associated themselves with either Kitchener or Waterloo, and indicated a preference for one city over the other. This fragmented identity is a challenge because belonging is dependent on how people perceive their connection to the broader community, which is dependent on how people perceive the broader community. At present, that perception is ambiguous.

**Finally,** we found that whenever someone is feeling a strong sense of belonging, they are engaging in authentic interactions, having or discussing shared experiences or feeling welcome. If we can create environments in our community for these things to occur, we can help people develop a sense of belonging here. This is the rationale behind the Belonging Toolkit, a tool that will allow organizations and individuals to design belonging into their projects.

# THE BACKGROUND

# WHY IS BELONGING IMPORTANT?

### INDIVIDUALS NEED BELONGING

Belonging is a human need. Maslow identifies it in his hierarchy, above only physiological and security needs[1]. After conducting an extensive review of the empirical evidence on the subject, psychologists Leary and Baumeister declare that "human beings are fundamentally and pervasively motivated by a need to belong."[2] A strong sense of community belonging is associated with better health, particularly mental health.[3;4] According to social identity theory, some of our sense of self is derived from the groups and organizations we belong to.[5] Just as we need food to eat and a warm, safe place to sleep, we need to feel included, connected, accepted and valued. And just like community programs offer food and shelter for those in need, we should strive to provide belonging as well.

### COMMUNITIES NEED BELONGING

Belonging is not purely an individual need. It is also a need of communities and organizations. When people feel a strong sense of belonging to a group, they are more willing to contribute and they take ownership of the group's struggles.[6] They show concern for other members of the group and will try to help them overcome their problems. For a community, civic engagement and belonging go together: citizens who feel like they belong will be more likely to be involved in the governance of the community, donate their time and money to improving the community, and show caring for the other people who live there.[7]

## The Project

This report is the culmination of 'Belonging Is, a project for The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation' (The KWCF). The project emerged as a result of Waterloo Region's Vital Signs®, an annual checkup through which The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation measures the vitality of our Region, identifies significant trends and examines the priority areas critical to Waterloo Region's quality of life. One of the categories in the report is Belonging and Leadership. For this category The KWCF assesses community engagement, with measures such as donation rates, volunteer rates and voter turnout, and belonging, with measures such as sense of belonging to the community and general satisfaction with life. In 2010, they found that 66% of the population expressed a sense of belonging that was 'somewhat strong' or 'very strong.'[8] In 2012, this decreased to 62%.[9] As well, they noted that our charitable donations are coming from a more and more narrow bracket of people: older adults with an annual income over $80 000.[10] Our

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community's volunteer rate has fallen below the national and provincial averages and is now less than 42%.[11] They also noted that youth and immigrants were under-represented among volunteers and donors and notably absent from community leadership positions.

With each publication of the Waterloo Region's Vital Signs® Report, The KWCF identifies the four priority areas most in need of funding and support over the next three years. As a result of findings in 2010, one of the four areas chosen as a focus was Belonging and Leadership. To really make progress in this area, The KWCF determined that it needed a more meaningful foundation to work from; it needed to have a better understanding of the unique difficulties facing our region, how residents describe belonging, how their experiences here affect their feelings of belonging, and what could be done to improve those experiences. This report is the result of a four month project to locally explore belonging.

## PROJECT GOALS

The 'Belonging Is' project for The KWCF has two main goals:

1. To understand the state of belonging in Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich— what does belonging mean to people in the community? Do they feel like they belong here? Why or why not?
2. To develop and prototype an approach for improving on the current state of belonging in Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich—how can we create an environment that encourages people to feel a strong sense of belonging to their community? How can The KWCF take action?

By answering these questions, The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation plans to outline a few actionable initiatives that will result in an overall increased sense of belonging in the area. It is The KWCF's hope that by doing so they will have a positive impact on the level of civic engagement displayed by the residents of Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich.

## TARGET COMMUNITIES

The KWCF serves primarily The City of Kitchener, The City of Waterloo and Woolwich Township. For that reason, those communities were the focus of this research.

## The Difference between Belonging, Social Inclusion and Social Capital

Any thorough discussion on belonging cannot help but bring up two highly-related concepts: social inclusion and social capital.

### SOCIAL INCLUSION

In a socially inclusive society, all people are able to secure a job, access services, connect with the local community, and have their voice heard, regardless of race, ability, family background, income, age, gender, belief, etc.[12] Inclusion is providing people with the basic access and respect that will allow them to feel belonging to a place. For those who are most often socially excluded from society (for example, those not working, those who must rely on public transport, the elderly, those with a disability, the mentally ill and those for whom English is a second language[13]) promoting social inclusion should be the first step to helping them feel like they belong. However, the accounts of socially included individuals who report no sense of belonging[14] demonstrate that inclusion is not enough to generate a strong sense of belonging. It is an important place to start designing for belonging, but it is not where one finishes.

While Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich are not perfectly socially inclusive, social inclusion is well understood in comparison to belonging and further progress is being made all the time. The focus of the Belonging Is project is not to repeat social inclusion research that has already been done, but to explore community sense of belonging, which is not as well understood.

### SOCIAL CAPITAL

The relationship between social capital and belonging is a very close one. Robert Putnam defines social capital as "connections among individuals—social networks and norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them."[15] Putnam's definition emphasizes social connections, which are also an integral part of belonging,[16] A study by Carpiano and Hystad found that "In general, social capital in a variety of forms is positively and significantly associated with increased sense of community belonging"[17]. In particular, they found that community sense of belonging—the kind of belonging of most interest to this project—is strongly associated with neighbourhood social capital.[18]

The effects of social capital and belonging on a community are very similar. Putnam provides evidence that in communities with high social capital, children are healthier, safer and better educated, people live longer, happier lives and democracy and the economy work better[19]. Feeling a sense of belonging is associated with a better quality of life.[20] Research demonstrates a significant and consistent

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association between sense of belonging and health.[21] Both belonging and social capital are expressed through higher civic engagement[22;23]. In short, a community with high social capital will be a community where most experience a strong sense of belonging, and vice versa.

What this means is that measuring social capital is an excellent way of measuring belonging. Norms for conducting social capital surveys have already been established by a number of bodies, including fourteen indicators used in the Social Capital Index by Robert Putnam[24] and six in a social capital questionnaire created by The World Bank.[25] These are comparable to the questionnaire distributed by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing on behalf of The KWCF to measure belonging in Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich. All three examine volunteerism, participation in community events or organizations, political engagement and informal social networks. The only social capital indicator missing from the survey is trust (Interestingly, the Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council has been taking measures of trust for the past two years, broken down by neighbourhood[26]). This provides an excellent starting point for ongoing measurement of social capital in the community.

Another important aspect of social capital is that it can be divided into two types: bridging and bonding. Bridging social capital is about connections that go between organizations or large, diverse, all-inclusive groups. In contrast, bonding social capital is about forming bonds between group members in exclusive, usually homogenous groups. Both are necessary and good for society: bridging for tolerance, inclusivity, and successful community-wide initiatives, bonding for tightly knit friend groups and strong interest-based organizations.[27] However, bonding social capital and belonging can also have their dark sides. Bonding social capital can create exclusive groups that behave poorly towards outsiders. An individual who lacks belonging in other areas of their life can find it in a gang. This negative aspect of belonging only emphasizes the need to promote a community sense of belonging; elsewise, people may seek to find belonging in other, more destructive organizations.



bonding
social
capital
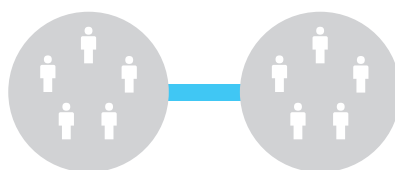
bridging social capital
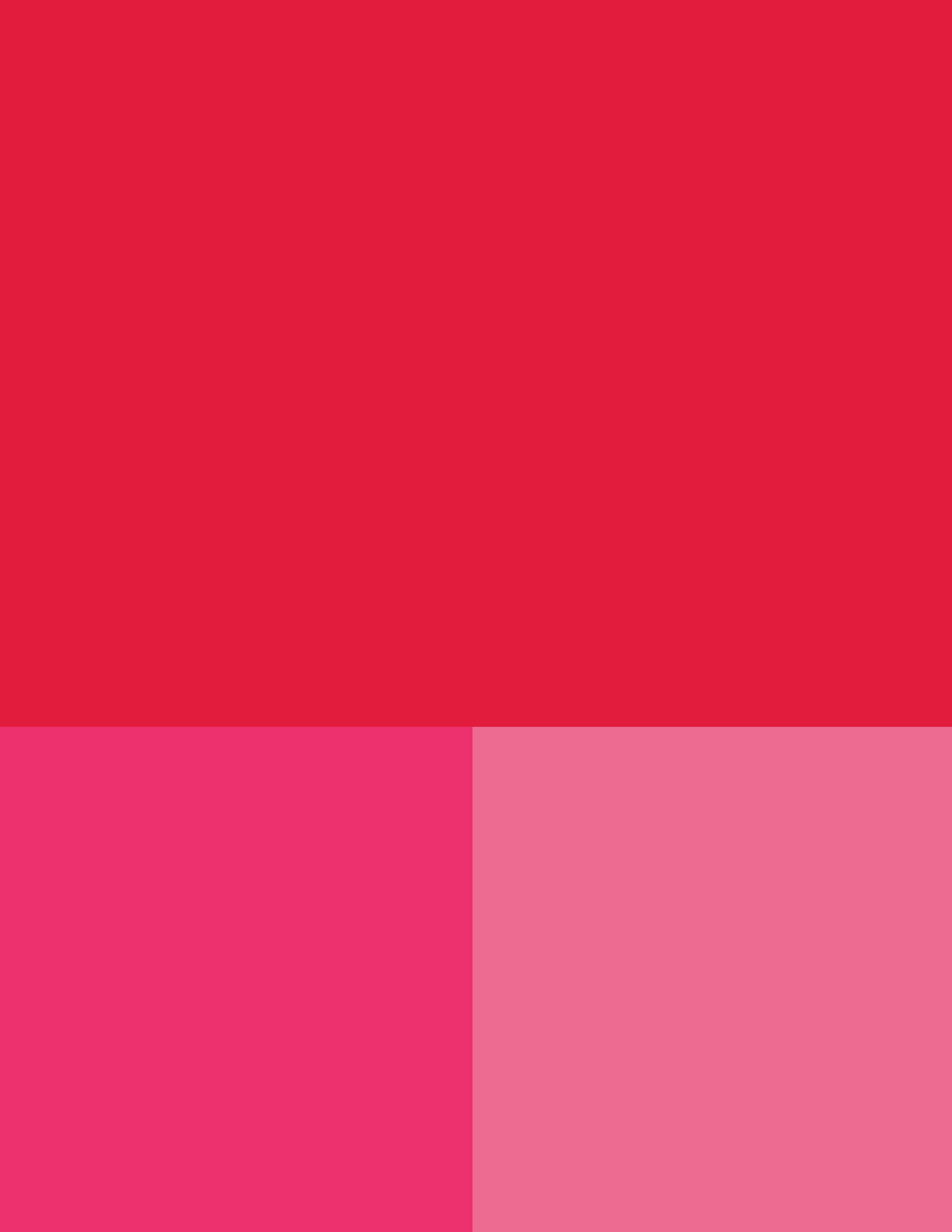
# THE OPPORTUNITY SPACE

Clearly, belonging is an important issue. Before going further, it is useful to understand the state of belonging globally and locally, particularly why there are more challenges and opportunities for belonging than ever.

# GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND CHANGE

The many changes we've seen in our society over the past few generations have produced a number of challenges for belonging.

### TECHNOLOGY

Technology is playing an ever more important role in our lives and producing drastic effects on the way we interact with people. As online communities spring up, they create new ways for people to communicate, share interests, and to belong. Our online interactions replace some of the face-to-face interactions that have traditionally been considered essential to building community and feeling belonging. There is a question of whether these new communities and new types of interaction will allow people to strongly feel that they belong. Gerard Delanty labels the internet as a thin community because it is made up of a network of strangers lacking direct relations[28], but the debate about whether online communities create a "thin" or weak form of belonging is ongoing.[29]

Television is another influential technological development. According to Robert Putnam, hours spent watching television are wreaking havoc on the number and the richness of our social ties, and are one of the chief contributors to the decline in social capital that America has experienced beginning in the 1960s[30]. In addition, Derrick, Gabriel and Hugenberg argue that the quasi-relationships formed with one's preferred television shows can provide the experience of belonging.[31] This surrogate belonging presumably does not strengthen one's sense of belonging to the community, and instead might supplant that sense, and all the benefits that it provides to the individual and to the community.

### MOBILITY

Our increased mobility is also a factor that influences belonging. Once, people might settle into a community intending to stay for the rest of their lives. They would make a corresponding investment getting to know their neighbours and contributing to community life. Now, people regularly transition between places in search of work and other opportunities, causing a transition of the groups they belong to as well. For instance, a recent study done in England found that only 13% of people still feel a sense of belonging to the town they were born in.[32]  As Hopper says, "Regularly moving for work can disconnect us from our surroundings, making it difficult to establish meaningful attachments and deep-rooted ties. Above all, greater geographical mobility further disrupts communities and can weaken social bonds and ties, placing strains on families and friendships."[33] This places immense stress on an individual's feeling of belonging.

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## DIVERSITY

As cities grow larger, they create melting pots of people who are different along many lines, including their interests, ethnicities and beliefs. Since empathy (shared values and shared experiences) is an important part of forming belonging[34], all kinds of diversity can sometimes pose challenges for belonging.  For example, it has been shown that in the short term, ethnic diversity can actually cause us to have less trust in our neighbours, fewer close friends and a smaller likelihood of contributing to charity, cooperating with others or working on a community project.[35] However, whether a certain difference divides a community is dependent on whether citizens perceive that difference as socially salient. In the long term, people are able to overcome the negative effects of ethnic diversity by seeing those who are ethnically different from them as similar in other ways and assigning more importance to the similarities.[36]

In the long term, diversity offers individuals the opportunity to pick and choose from a number of groups they might like to join,[37] which is good for belonging in the sense that we may all find our niche this way. Among millions of people, it is easier than ever to form groups that perfectly suit our interests. However, this also poses a challenge because belonging to a niche group does not usually translate into feeling part of the broader community. There must be connections formed to bridge these small groups and create a broad and cohesive community, but this is not easy. What is needed to create a new and all-encompassing sense of 'we'? The challenge is to build a community that meets this ideal.

# Local Challenges

These global changes are producing challenges for belonging everywhere, including Waterloo Region. The Region also faces its own unique challenges as well.

### OUR MIGRANTS AND COMMUTERS

As an area with significant tech, finance, education and business sectors, we often see people coming to our community at the behest of companies such as BlackBerry, Manulife, Deloitte, or the universities.  In 2011, Waterloo Region had slightly higher portions of movers (those who have changed locations within the last five years) and migrants (those who have changed cities in the last four years) than both Ontario and Canada.[38;39;40] What can we do to help them feel at home here when they hail from across the globe? In addition, we have people living in Kitchener-Waterloo but traveling elsewhere for employment—12% of the Region's residents regularly commute to a place of work that is outside of the Region, and 30% work in a different municipality within the Region.[41] Work is one place where people anchor their sense of belonging; many identify with their profession and feel a sense of belonging to the company they work for.[42] Those who commute to Toronto for work no longer have that sense of belonging associated with the place that they live. As well, lack of time is a frequently cited reason for low civic participation[43], and time spent commuting back and forth is time that cannot be spent engaging with the community—time that would help develop a sense of belonging.

### OUR DIVERSITY

We are a diverse community: 18% of Kitchener's population[44] and 20.4% of Waterloo's population[45] consist of visible minorities. Nearly a quarter of Waterloo Region's population was born in a foreign country[46]. Do these people find belonging here? Can we make it easier for them to do so? People regularly cite multiculturalism and diversity as a characteristic of our community. It is true that we have some success stories in this area. Still, there are some who don't feel welcome here because of their background, and we should seize this opportunity for improvement. One resident captures this well. She describes her experience here as "defined by me being characterized as the Other," but also professes a hope for the future, believing that "As a younger generation matures, their more global outlook and acceptance of all types of people...will be the key to an inclusive, integrated, welcoming and sustainable community."

## OUR STUDENTS

The presence of a number of institutes for post-secondary learning also makes itself felt; roughly a third of those living in the City of Waterloo are students[47]. The student population is very transient, and many are struggling to identify where their home is. How do we make them feel part of our community, when they're likely returning to their hometowns for the summer or travelling every four months on co-op, and living inside the bubble of their campus? Many students report a general feeling of disconnect from Waterloo, and especially from Kitchener, saying things like "There's not much about the actual area of KW I'm connected or feel attached to." However, these sentiments don't necessarily mean that students do not want to be a part of the community. If the greater community made more of an effort to reach out to students, they might respond. As one student puts it, "I would like to see more community created between UW/WLU and KW/The Region."

## OUR IDENTITY CRISIS

Perhaps the greatest challenge for Kitchener, Waterloo and area is our "split personality." Kitchener strives to be distinct and different from Waterloo, and vice versa. The townships are part of the same region, yet they are often excluded when one considers our regional identity. We're sometimes referred to as the "Silicon Valley of the North", but we still sport strong agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Many want to see Kitchener-Waterloo move towards a bustling, urban, big-city feel, while others are fighting to remain a quiet, peaceful small town. Some people call our community "disconnected" and "segmented." They see this lack of one clear, unified identity as a problem for us. But if we think about it positively, as others do, we can see that problem as a possibility. One resident describes the area like this: "It's quirky and eclectic and most people either love it or hate it. It's a crazy mix of people and scenarios and events. It's got depth and discovery. And…I LOVE IT." Why do some of us see our muddled identity as a flaw, while others see it as endearing? How might we all be able to see the appeal?

## Challenges are Opportunities

These local and global changes create challenges for those seeking to belong to their communities and for the communities seeking to welcome them. Framed in a different light, they also provide opportunities to improve on the current state of our community. These changes reveal our assumptions about belonging (e.g. belonging must always be tied to place), allowing us the chance to ask questions and explore our understanding. The changes also put us in a position to add to our current ways of belonging, by leveraging new technology or increased cultural diversity that wasn't present fifty years ago.

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# THE METHODS

# SOFT SYSTEMS METHODOLOGY

The state of belonging in Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich Township is an incredibly complex situation to understand. It requires that one be intentional in order to enact positive change, but there is a question of what that intention should be. For this reason, the research conducted employed a soft systems methodology.

Soft systems methodology (SSM) is a creative, iterative, flexible way of researching real world problems. It is an action-oriented approach, developed to study a complex situation and then act purposefully to improve it. SSM is based on the premise that the people involved will adopt many different worldviews—different ways of perceiving the situation based on internalized assumptions formed from previous experience. SSM promotes structured thought and discussion by making these worldviews explicit. The discussion enables us to answer questions about the situation and propose changes that all parties involved will be able to accept.

For the project, worldviews were uncovered through Stakeholder Labs and Street Teams. Care was taken to incorporate The KWCF's worldview as well, through meetings and discussions with staff. This first stage of inquiry led to the creation of a model for conceptualizing community and belonging. The model can be used to generate prompting questions that facilitate design for belonging. Aspects of this model were presented to over 50 people at a Community Camp, where they used it to structure a discussion on design for belonging and then gave feedback on the process they experienced.

Further research included a literature review and a series of one-on-one interviews. The literature review was used to support decisions made in the design of the labs, and for validation of the themes that emerged from the labs. The one-on-one interviews were used to explore the feasibility of some ideas that came out of Community Camp, and again to validate some of the themes emerging from the Stakeholder Labs.

# Qualitative research

The intention of the project was to develop an understanding of a somewhat un-explored and ambiguous topic within the specific context of our community. This required learning about the experiences of people in the community, the meaning and value that they attributed to belonging and their opinions about what could be improved. Qualitative research is particularly apt when capturing "culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours and social contexts of particular populations"[49]. It can provide a detailed picture of a subject based on individual experiences, relationships and group norms.[50] These attributes made it well-suited to the project. In addition, qualitative methodology is more flexible, allowing researchers to adapt the line of inquiry and data collection techniques in response to what is learned in the initial stages. This fit our project well, allowing us to use Street Teams to collect information from those who would not attend the in-depth Stakeholder Labs. It also meant we could ask new questions in response to the answers of our participants.

We used purposive sampling for our research, which involves grouping the population according to criteria that are relevant to the research question and then sampling from these groups.[51] For this project, participants were grouped according to the neighbourhood they lived in. We also took care to reach people of various demographics. We spoke with people at different stages of life, of differ-ent cultural backgrounds and with different relationships to Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich. Including Street Teams and one-on-one interviews, our sample size was 107. At this point, we had reached theoretical saturation: "the point in data collection when new data no longer brings additional insights."[52] This is typically the basis for determining a sufficient sample size in purposive sampling. We found that our core questions—what are the important parts of your community, what does belonging feel like, what are outcomes and obstacles of belonging, what do you think of Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich—produced few novel results after the 7th Stakeholder Lab and none after the 8th.

Please note that qualitative research does not produce statistical information. As such, any numbers provided in this document are given for illustrative purposes only. The conclusions that these numbers are used to support come from the comments and discussion of our participants. (e.g. after categorizing community maps, people was the largest category, but it is also what participants often told us is most important to them).

# Stakeholder Labs

**PARTICIPANT SELECTION**

Groupings for the Stakeholder Labs were done according to the neighbourhood of the participants. The eight Labs were held in locations dispersed across Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich. In our area, this is a particularly apt way of forming participant groups, since we recognize that separate areas have different characteristics and identities. The residents of Uptown West are hesitant to integrate with the student community that is encroaching on their space, the suburbs of Doon and Pioneer are quite isolated from the rest of Kitchener,[53] and the township of Woolwich is usually perceived as an entirely different entity from the twin cities.

By situating the labs this way, we wanted to explore the differences between neighbourhoods and their consequences for the belonging of residents. Using such neighbourhood groupings to collect participants for Stakeholder Labs is not unprecedented. A study done on belonging and social inclusion in Canberra, Australia, used neighbourhoods to group participants because "Examining the lives of people in the context of their neighbourhoods and 'local territory', and how they feel about their local area, is crucial to understanding the strengths and weaknesses of particular neighbourhoods."[54] We believed that each neighbourhood might have its own strengths and weaknesses as an environment for belonging. We did not anticipate a lack of diversity in our participants since neighbourhoods are often already stratified according to demographic differences.

| TARGET NEIGHBOURHOOD | LOCATION | DATE & TIME |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Northdale | University of Waterloo | Mon. May 27th 2013, 6-8pm |
| Elmira | Elmira Library | Wed. May 29th 2013, 6-8pm |
| Downtown Kitchener | 305 King St, Overlap Offices | Thurs. May 30th 2013, 6-8pm |
| Forest Heights | Forest Heights Library | Mon. Jun 3rd 2013, 6-8pm |
| Uptown Waterloo | Waterloo Library, main branch | Tues. June 4th 2013, 6-8pm |
| Westside Waterloo | Harper Library | Mon. June 10th 2013, 6-8pm |
| Doon and Pioneer | Doon and Pioneer Park Community Centre | Tues. June 11th 2013, 6-8pm |
| Eastbridge | Millen Woods Public School | Wed. June 12th 2013, 6-8pm |
| Downtown Kitchener | Nexus Church Group Meeting | Mon. Aug 12th 2013, 7-9pm |

## RECRUITMENT

Recruitment for the labs involved a number of approaches. Information about the Stakeholder Labs was provided to City Councillors and Neighbourhood Associations of those neighbourhoods chosen, to be distributed to their contacts. Information was also provided to local libraries and distributed at the The KWCF's annual town hall. As an incentive, those who attended the Stakeholder Labs were offered a chance to win one of two iPod Touches. We also held a Stakeholder Lab held with the Nexus church group, for which participants were recruited via that organization. In total, 61 community members were consulted in the Stakeholder Labs.

## DESIGN

The purpose of the Stakeholder Labs was to gather information to accomplish the first project goal: understanding the state of belonging in Kitchener, Waterloo and area. Thus, the focus was on learning about the opinions and experiences of participants regarding belonging. Participants were given worksheets on which to record some of this information (*Fig 1*) and during group discussion, notes were taken to capture any other information divulged by participants.

*Fig 1. Empathy Map*

The Labs were divided into two sections. In the first, participants were asked to describe a time that they felt a strong sense of belonging using an empathy mapping exercise. This exercise gave us valuable insight into the feelings and actions that people associate with belonging, perceived obstacles to belonging and desired outcomes of belonging. As well, having participants record a time when they felt a very strong sense of belonging provided a good picture of what activities and environments encourage people to feel that they belong.

In the second section of the Lab, participants were asked to think about groups or places where they belong, in order to list all of the things, people, places and experiences that make up their community. Participants were encouraged to define community broadly, and think of it not solely in terms of the local community. They placed these things, people, places and experiences on Post-it® Notes of three different sizes, assigning importance to the elements of their community through the sizes of the Post-it® Notes. The Post-it® Notes were placed on a large sheet of chart paper, in a way that made the most sense to them (*Fig 3*). In this way, we learned how people structure their community, and what they place the most importance on.

*Fig 2. Empathy Map detail*
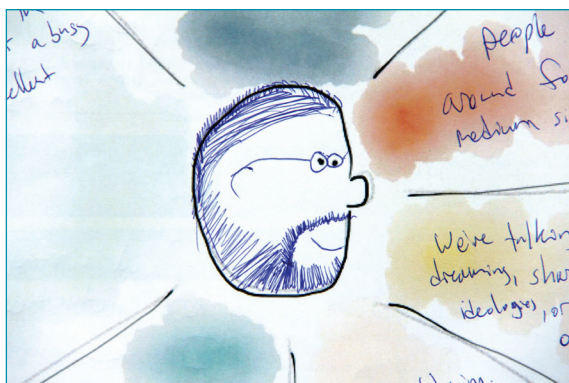


*Fig 3. sample of how participants structured their community*
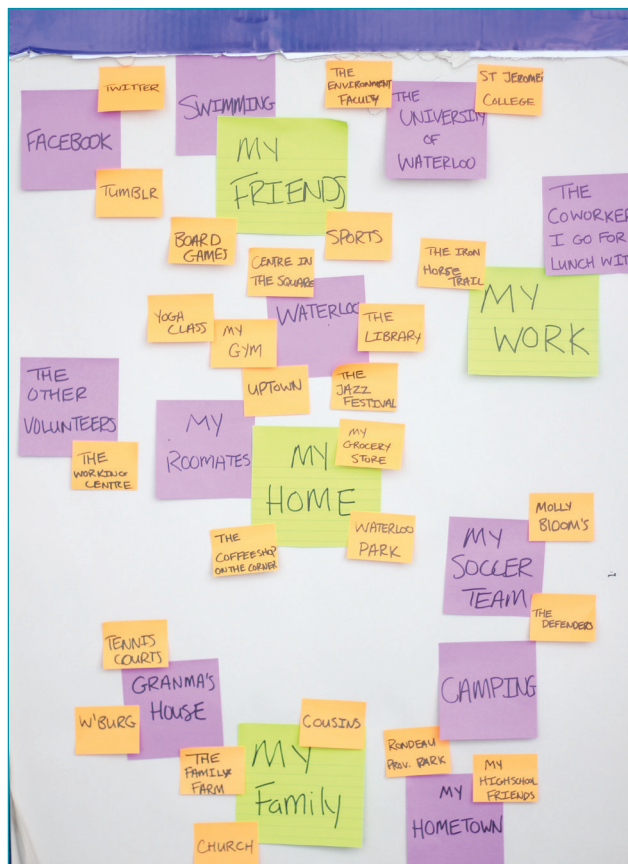
# Street teams

Despite our best efforts promoting the Stakeholder Labs, we recognized that many people would not choose to attend a two hour event to give input on a community issue. For this reason, the project team employed other methods for seeking input from those individuals, namely Street Teams. Street Teams are short-burst interviews with people approached at random in a public place. For this project, the interviews were filmed for later review and for use in a short film presented at the Community Camp.

## PURPOSE

We used Street Teams to seek out those people who did not choose to attend the labs in order to check that those who did come were representative and make certain that we were not missing any important demographic differences. In our forty interviews, we found that the words that people used to describe belonging were fairly uniform and no surprising descriptors of Kitchener or Waterloo were identified. When people spoke about the most important part of their community, their responses mirrored what was seen in the community maps generated in the Labs. We did glean some new information about the experiences of immigrants to the area, specifically those who did not speak English upon their arrival. This is discussed in the section on New Canadians (page 41). Overall, street teams aligned with the findings of the Stakeholder Labs and confirmed the validity of that data.

## LOCATIONS

Participants were approached at one of four locations:
· Outside the Working Centre on Queen St.
· In front of City Hall in Downtown Kitchener
· At a multicultural event outside of the Harper branch of Waterloo Public Library
· At the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Festival in Victoria Park

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

In total, 40 interviews were conducted. Every participant was asked:
· Where do you live?
· How long have you been living there?
· How strong is your sense of belonging to the community of Kitchener, Waterloo and area?

Participants were then asked some combination of the following questions, to keep the interviews between 2-5 minutes.
· Why do you think your sense of belonging is _____ (strong, weak, etc.)?
· In just a few words, what does belonging mean to you?
· In just a few words, how would you describe the community of Kitchener, Waterloo and area?
· What is the most important part of your community?

# Community Camp

The Community Camp was a large gathering of community members to generate awareness of the project, to present preliminary findings, and to test concepts developed as a result of the Stakeholder Labs and Street Teams. After conducting Stakeholder Labs and Street Teams, we developed concepts of belonging and community, and a framework for using these concepts to design for belonging.  During the Community Camp, attendants were led through an exercise to generate ideas for how to increase belonging in our community, using the framework that had been developed. They were also invited to provide feedback on the experience, so that the framework could be improved.

53 people attended the Community Camp. The Camp was held on June 26th, from 6–8pm. It began with a presentation about The KWCF and the findings of the project to date. As part of this, participants were shown a 3 min video compiled from interview footage collected by Street Teams. The attendees were then introduced to a number of concepts that foster belonging—we refer to them as Belonging Building Blocks—that emerged from the Stakeholder Labs: Authentic Interaction, Feeling Welcome and Shared Purpose. A sheet giving a definition of one of the three building blocks was provided to each participant, and they were asked to generate ideas from one of five "How Might We..." questions related to that concept. They chose their three best ideas and, in groups of three, shared these ideas and exchanged feedback. Afterwards, they were asked to produce three new or improved ideas. Participants were also instructed to record ideas and feedback on the worksheets, so that their products of their discussions could be reviewed later. Upon finishing these activities, participants were given a worksheet to help them provide feedback on the exercise they had just completed.

# 1 on 1 interviews

Six one-on-one interviews were conducted as part of the project. These interviews were used to explore possibilities for projects The KWCF could support as part of its commitment to improving the strength of belonging in Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich.

The interviews ranged in length from 45 minutes to 2 hours and covered topics that related to the specific area of focus for the interviewee. A set of common questions were asked of each participant, including:

· How would you describe belonging?

· What is your sense of belonging in this community?

· How could a project like this be important to your work or area of focus?

From this point, interviews focused on specific ideas coming out of the project. Using the interviews in this way, we were able to test some assumptions and ideas to begin a validation process and provide some direction for possible initiatives.

**INTERVIEWEES**

The interviewees were David Pfrimmer, Mike Kirkup, Anna Maste, Leslie Joslin, Janet Howitt, Ryan Connell and Steve Farlow.

Mike Kirkup is Director at Velocity and highly involved in Kitchener-Waterloo's startup scene. We spoke with him to discuss the possibility of creating a Lab at Communitech that would explore using technology to foster belonging in Kitchener-Waterloo.

Anna Maste received a Waterloo Region Top 40 Under 40 award for her community involvement, especially her work with the Victoria Park Neighbourhood Association. Her interview was used to explore the challenges and benefits of promoting neighbourhood-based belonging.

Janet Howitt is the staff support for the Belonging Pillar of the Region of Waterloo's Immigration Partnership. The purpose of this interview was to discuss the alignment of her work with this project and to learn whether her experiences corresponded with findings from the Stakeholder Labs.

Leslie Josling is Executive Director at KW Counselling Services. KW Counselling Services is one avenue of support for those in our community who may be struggling to belong. Leslie's interview explored belonging from a mental health perspective.

Ryan Connell has spent the last five years as Student Life Programmer at Conestoga College. The purpose of this interview was to learn about how post-secondary institutions promote belonging on campus and explore the potential for an advisory committee to apply that belonging expertise to the broader community.

Steve Farlow is the Executive Director of the Schlegel Centre for Entrepreneurship at Wilfred Laurier University. The interview with Steve was used to explore the possibility of using belonging as a theme for a future entrepreneurial competition or challenge.

David Pfrimmer is a professor at Wilfred Laurier University whose area of expertise includes belonging in faith-based organizations. This interview was conducted to learn about the emotional experience of belonging, the needs that belonging addresses and how it develops in a faith-oriented setting. It was used to inform the design of the Stakeholder Labs.

## Analysis

Research was done qualitatively, so some of the analysis consisted of combing through notes and looking for interesting anecdotes or emerging themes. More structured techniques were also employed and these are described below.

### CLUSTERING

Much of our analysis uses a technique called clustering. To work with the data, we require a method for making sense of the many individual responses we received from the Stakeholder Labs and Street Teams. Clustering involves grouping these responses into categories, naming these categories, and providing a written description of what's covered by each of these categories. This way, we are able to work with the 4-6 themes that emerged, rather than the 50-60 individual responses.

Clustering changes the way we look at responses, "by making connections, by exploring and building an understanding of a solution space, and by enriching ideas towards further steps of development."[55] Through this process, we develop a deeper understanding of the data, and can begin to make sense of it.

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Ideas form a cluster when they have something in common. We focus on the theme of the ideas—rather than the content itself. Grouping based on the theme of the response has more value than grouping responses by a single shared word (e.g. all responses about the need for more restaurants and cafés that act as public gathering places is a useful group, all responses mentioning Uptown Waterloo is not). Clustering was done for the obstacles to belonging, desired outcomes of belonging, the stories of Kitchener, Waterloo and area, and the ideas that were generated during Community Camp.

## COMMUNITY MAPS

To learn about the things that make up the most important parts of a community, each sticky note, which represented a part of a participant's community, was categorized. The categories were created based on clustering results from the first Stakeholder Lab, and compared with six categories generated by a study done in Britain on where people anchor their sense of belonging.[56] The maps from the remainder of the Labs were then coded according to these categories. They generally fit nicely into the framework that was created. To account for the three sizes of the Post-it® Notes, which denoted importance, the largest Post-it® Notes were given a weight of three, the mid-sized Post-it® Notes a weight of two and the smallest a weight of one.

In addition, the maps were reviewed at a higher level to look for additional insights. Observation was made of how the Post-it® Notes were arranged, whether any differences could be seen in maps from different neighbourhoods, if there were things that were common across most of the maps, and how a map compared with the other responses of the person who had created it. This was done while comparing notes taken during the Stakeholder Lab discussions to add context.

## BELONGING WORD CLOUD

To create the word cloud, words written in the participants' empathy maps were recorded and counted. Common words (with, the, and, to etc.) and words obviously not related to belonging (actually, often, footsteps etc.) were excluded and alternate forms were consolidated (e.g. comfy became comfortable). Only the top twenty-five most common words were included. All words which received at least four mentions were included.
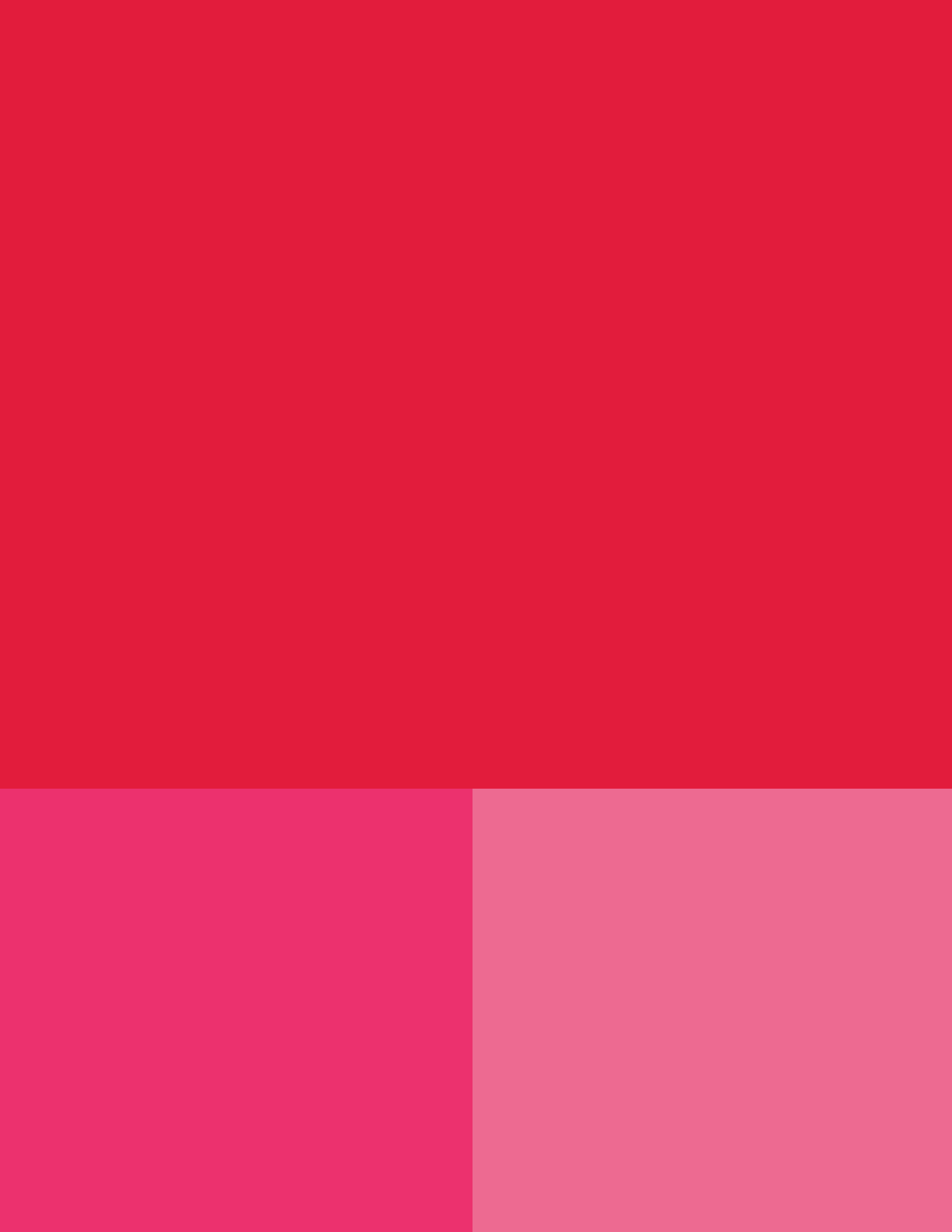
# KEY DISCOVERIES

A number of insights came out of the Stakeholder Labs and Street Teams research. In general, these insights are supported by the available literature on belonging. Our greatest insights were identifying three factors that, individually or together, will most often lead people to feel like they belong, and identifying the three most important parts of a community. There were also important discoveries that came out of the literature review, such as the relationship between belonging and social capital.

# MOMENTS OF BELONGING

We found that people most often reported feeling happy, content, relaxed, included, valued and excited during a time when they were experiencing a strong sense of belonging. They were generally engaged in activities such as talking, smiling, laughing, helping, playing and collaborating. Common environments included parks, backyards and other natural settings, comfortable, intimate places, such as pool sides, living rooms and dinner tables, and large crowds at festivals, concerts and other celebrations. People generally felt that when they truly belonged, they were able to be themselves and did not have to fear the judgment of others in the group. Interestingly, belonging is not always dependent on spending large amounts of time in a place or with people; many participants reported belonging when meeting new people or exploring a new space.

Not all of our participants chose happy moments.  Some experienced a strong sense of belonging when their friends and family rallied to support them during a trying time, such as, after receiving a serious injury or experiencing the death of a spouse. There were also a number of participants who described a time when they were actively working towards a goal, such as running a successful event or solving a problem. One participant mentioned that for her, belonging sometimes came as a surprise—a sudden realization that a group of people did matter and did care about her—but only as she had to leave that group.

**BELONGING WORD CLOUD**

Fig. 4 is a Word Cloud depicting the frequency with which certain words appeared in the empathy maps that participants in the Stakeholder Labs created.

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*Fig 4. Word Cloud*

# Obstacles to Belonging

Participants were asked to list three obstacles that, at the time, might have prevented them from belonging during the moment they described. These obstacles were clustered to create five different categories.

### THEY WON'T ACCEPT ME

People worry that they will not be welcomed and accepted by the group. This obstacle might be real or perceived. It can take the form of an initial worry that turns out to be unfounded, a misinterpretation that leads an individual to believe they are unwanted, or very negative and intimidating behaviour from group members who are actively trying to keep an individual from belonging. To overcome this obstacle, people in the group need to be open-minded and welcoming, and the individual seeking to belong must overcome their doubts and fears.

### I'M DIFFERENT

People are more likely to belong with people who have something in common with them, so being different from the group can be an obstacle for belonging. This includes things like being unable to enjoy group activities because you have different abilities, struggling to communicate because of a language barrier or lack relevant knowledge, or feeling out of place because you have a different physical appearance, cultural background, faith, etc. To overcome this obstacle, groups have to focus on being inclusive, communicating that all are welcome, and celebrating similarities while respecting differences.

### IT'S ALL NEW AND SCARY

To expand our community and find new groups to belong to, we have to take a leap. We may join a club where we have no connections, or start an activity where we lack experience. One of the most challenging times to belong is when we move to a new community and have to start rebuilding our networks of friends and our lists of favourite places. Trying something new is scary, and it is an obstacle for most people. To overcome this obstacle, an individual will need to brave the unknown, but there should be lots of resources made available to support them during this process.

### I'M THE PROBLEM

Many people create their own obstacles to belonging. This includes when people think they can't belong because of perceived shortcomings, such as if they think they are shy, withdrawn and awkward when meeting new people. It also includes when people are not willing to put in the effort to belong, such as when they are not willing to try connecting with others or work to maintain existing relationships. To overcome this obstacle, the individual's desire to belong must outweigh their self-doubt or apathy.

**CIRCUMSTANCES BEYOND CONTROL**

Sometimes we get unlucky and things don't work out. Unhappy coincidences can prevent belonging, such as when a sports game is cancelled because of weather or an event goes wrong and it's out of our control. A bad environment can make one uncomfortable or distracted, such as when it's cold outside, or people are talking loudly across the room. The timing might not work out, and one could be busy on the day set aside to volunteer, socialize or attend an event. A friend might be moving to another city, or you might be forced to choose between two relationships. This obstacle can't really be overcome, but it's a good reminder that we must be persistent, and we should build a strong community of many groups, so we don't lose it all in one fell swoop.

# Desired Outcomes of Belonging

Overcoming the obstacles to belonging is well worth it. As discussed above, people need to belong, and they report many positive feelings when they are experiencing a strong sense of belonging. We asked each participant to describe three desired outcomes—in other words, the things that they were trying to achieve—during a moment when they felt a strong sense of belonging. These outcomes were clustered, to create six different categories. These are both activities that will lead to a strong sense of belonging, and the activities that people are more willing to engage in when they feel like they belong.

**RELAX, HAVE FUN AND BE MYSELF**

When experiencing a strong sense of belonging, people talked about being comfortable, forgetting worries, relieving stress and relaxing. They said that they could express themselves without fear of judgement. Many people said that their goal during that time was simply to have fun.

**LEARN, GROW AND DEFINE MYSELF**

People often achieved personal growth as a result of belonging to a group. They were able to learn new knowledge, improve on skills and refine their identities by engaging in meaningful conversations and experiences.

**FEEL LOVED AND CARED FOR**

One of the desired outcomes of belonging was to feel loved and cared for. This happened when people connected with one another, accepted one and other, and came to shared understandings. People talked about feeling safe and at home with the people who cared for them and made them feel accepted.

**STRENGTHEN OLD RELATIONSHIPS AND START NEW ONES**

During moments of strong belonging, people were generally trying to spend time with other people—people like friends, family or neighbours. This included making new friends and taking time to become closer or catch up with people they had known a long time.

**WELCOME OTHERS AND SHARE THE GOOD**

People who belong usually want to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for other people as well. People wanted to share the experience that they have belonging to a group. People listed goals such as being kind, supportive and encouraging, helping others improve, making people laugh and sharing their community.

**WORK TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE GOALS**

Many people chose their moment of belonging to be one where they were collaborating with other people to solve a problem. People wanted to organize great events, resolve a concern in their neighbourhood, or come together to support a cause.

# Building Blocks of Belonging

After analyzing the commonalities of the reported belonging moments and reviewing the discussions on the subject, we concluded that there were three elements, at least one of which was present in all of the moments described to us. It is not necessary for all three to be present, nor does the presence of these elements guarantee that someone will feel belonging.

**AUTHENTIC INTERACTION**

Authentic interactions are all about building relationships with the people around you. They go beyond scripted phrases such as "Hello", "How are you?" or "Nice weather today, eh?" but often begin as a result of seeing the same person on the street, at the grocery store or from your front porch. When you take the step toward authentic interaction you learn something about the person you are talking to. After an authentic interaction, you're likely to empathize more with that person and feel a personal connection to them. You'll probably feel some desire to speak with them again. Authentic interactions can happen anywhere, generally take a few minutes to get into, and ideally will lead to long-lasting relationships.

### FEELING WELCOME

People feel welcome every time they believe they are being acknowledged and included. Making someone feel welcome in our community can be as simple as smiling at them on the street or wishing them a nice day as they leave an elevator. Both social interactions and physical environments can make you feel welcome. In particular, comfortable, familiar and beautiful environments result in this. Feeling welcome can sometimes be a first step that leads to authentic interactions and shared purpose, but it also contributes to a sense of belonging all by itself.

### SHARED EXPERIENCE

Shared experiences can contribute to the sense of belonging that one feels in a group. These experiences can include common interests, goals and traits. It is not necessary for people to interact with each other in order to feel belonging because of shared experience—just knowing that you have something in common with other people can contribute to a sense of belonging. Imagine being at a concert with an audience that is collectively intent on listening to and enjoying the music. Many people can feel a sense of belonging in a crowd like that, even though they aren't talking to anyone at all.

## Support for the Belonging Building Blocks

The fact that Authentic Interactions, Feeling Welcome and Shared Experiences are important prerequisites to belonging is demonstrated in our research and supported by external sources.

### SHARED EXPERIENCES IN NORDIC ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

Howell[57] conducted research on the formation of community between Nordic adoptive families to learn about the factors that must be present to develop a community and encourage belonging. This community was of interest to him because it was not one where every member knew each other or had any chance for face-to-face contact, and it was only weakly oriented around place. He states that shared experiences that generated empathy were important in forming the bonds between members and creating belonging. Face-to-face time was the other important factor, but an individual only had to interact with a few other adoptive families to feel that they were connected to the broader community. In our model, Feeling Welcome and Authentic Interactions represent those face-to-face communications.

## BELONGING IN PUBLIC, SOCIAL, PRIVATE AND INTIMATE SPACE

Myers[58] claims that there are four different ways, or spaces, to belong to something or someone. He calls these spaces public, social, private and intimate. For an individual to feel fulfillment, they need belonging distributed across the four spaces. Myers says that public belonging happens when people are united by some shared experience and they acknowledge and welcome each other, with hi-fives at a sporting event or smiles and nods as they pass on the street.  The social space is where you are able share a small snapshot of who you are, engage in pleasant small talk, and determine whether you would like to get to know someone better. To a community, having citizens who belong in the public and social spaces is very important. Private and intimate belonging is important as well, but these spaces are generally reserved for very close friends, family and spouses, and largely up to an individual to cultivate, rather than a community. In Myers's concept of the four spaces, we see the importance of making a distinction between authentic interaction and feeling welcome. Feeling welcome generally provides public space belonging, and authentic interactions promote social space belonging (they may even eventually lead to private space belonging). As Myers discusses, lacking one space or the other will cause people to feel like they don't belong in general, or that the community they have is incomplete. For this reason, opportunities for both Authentic Interactions and Feeling Welcome should be provided in the community.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE FOR FEELING WELCOME

According to Pallavi Shrivastava[59], an Indian architect, feeling welcomed by place is also very important to belonging. She points out that in parts of India women do not have the same access to public places as men do. She calls for a more welcoming physical environment, one where everyone can feel safe, enjoy the same amenities, and participate equally in society. She believes that feeling a sense of belonging in a community place contributes greatly to overall sense of community belonging, saying "It is our public spaces that communicate a city's attitude towards its citizens. The presence of well-designed infrastructure and inviting places are a measure of its inclusiveness."[60] This is supported by Kearney who found that the availability of less developed nature areas (e.g., nature preserves and lakes) and areas containing amenities (e.g., playgrounds and ball fields) has a benefit for sense of community.[61] There are many other examples where place can help or hinder a sense of belonging. For example, a person using a wheelchair would not feel they belong in a store with narrow aisles, and a young family choosing to include a park as part of their community will opt to belong to the one with a playground and splash pad rather than one with hiking trails. To help people feel like they belong, a place must be welcoming, provide all necessary and desired amenities, and make the user feel safe, comfortable and included.

# Mapping Community

## PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE

In general, participants enjoyed the activity of physically mapping their community. A few individuals even came to realizations that might change the way they think about their community. One participant expressed surprise at the large number of people, places and experiences that composed her community, which was incongruous with the small number of connections she thought she had and the belief that she needed more to be living her best possible life. Another looked at her community, and was shocked by the number of places or activities that had made it onto the board, but which she didn't actually enjoy. She resolved to frequent those places less in the future. Another participant was disappointed by the smallness of his community, but felt this was normal since he had just moved to Waterloo Region and resolved that he would work to become more involved in the future. Some Stakeholder Lab participants bonded over the similarities between their maps, or expressed interest in visiting the places or trying the activities they saw on others' maps. Overall, participants expressed satisfaction when seeing the important people, places and activities in their life arrayed in front of them.

## COMMUNITY MAPS AND CONVERSATION

Even though the primary purpose of the activities and discussion in the Stakeholder Labs was to learn about belonging from participants, the activities benefited the participants as well. The community maps provided a way to share insider knowledge of the best places in the community, helped people find shared interests, which sparked conversation and connection, and helped people find out more about the many organizations and events that are available. In one Stakeholder Lab, participants had an in-depth conversation about the reasons they did or did not volunteer in the community. Not only was this discussion highlighting a few interesting barriers to volunteerism, but it gave participants a chance to think about actions they could take as individuals to overcome those barriers.

Peter Block[62] believes that the route to successful community is moving away from defining a community by its deficiencies and towards a community focused on possibility. Central to this change is the idea that citizens must move from a mindset of entitlement (the expectation that someone else is responsible for meeting your needs and those of others) to accountability (the realization that one must demonstrate a willingness to care and contribute to the well-being of the whole). Block states that the first step to creating such change in a community is to change the conversation that is happening there. The best kind of public conversation changes attitudes and outlooks, and it brings new possibilities into being. The community mapping exercise can reveal assumptions that participants have about community, spark new discoveries, and change the conversation. In some ways, it is an excellent starting point for change.

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"THUS, IF WE SPEAK OF CHANGE OR TRANSFORMATION IN OUR CITY OR TOWN…
WE ARE REFERRING TO THE CONVERSATION THAT IS OCCURRING IN THAT TOWN.
WE DO THIS NOT BECAUSE IT IS THE WHOLE PICTURE, BUT BECAUSE IT IS THE
PART OF THE PICTURE THAT IS MOST AMENABLE TO CHANGE." *- Peter Block*

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### IMPORTANT PARTS OF COMMUNITY

Some people thought of their communities almost entirely in terms of locations.
For others, they described their community as the people they interacted with.
Some people had communities that centred on activities they engaged in and the
events they went to. In general, the people we interacted with said that places
assumed significance because of the people they met there or went there with.
Activities and events were a very common way of bringing people together to
forge a community in the first place, so they retained significance in the commu-
nity map. Here again, these activities and events were often important because of
the people who participated in them.

These observations were reflected in the breakdown of the community maps.
Based on the counting system described in Analysis, which incorporated the im-
portance of a thing to the individual, communities were: 32% places, 33% people
and 23% activities and events. The remaining 12% was: 10% formal organizations
and 2% online. As well, considering only those things on the map that were ranked
as most important, 45% were people, which makes sense given the emphasis that
many of the participants put on the people in their community.

### ONLINE COMMUNITIES

Online communities (Facebook, Twitter, Skype, etc.) were only a small portion of
those listed, and only 2 of 61 participants categorized an online entity as a very
important part of their community. However, 40% of our participants did have an
online part to their community, and for those under 55, the number jumps to 49%.

*Fig 5. Community Pie Chart*
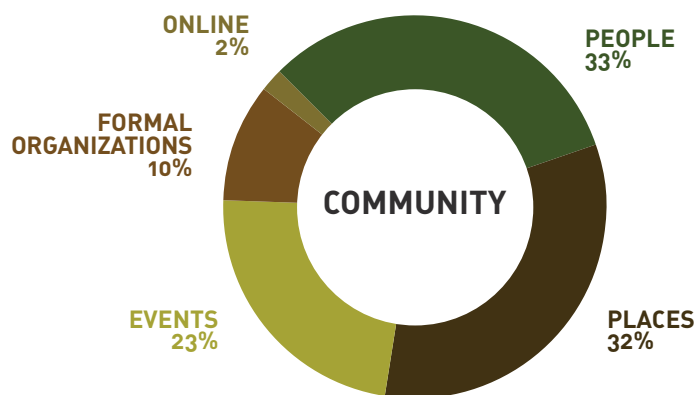
# Neighbourhoods

## THE SUBURBS

People living in the suburbs had mixed feelings about their neighbourhoods. On one hand, they loved the safety, peace and quiet that suburbia offers. They were happy with many of the amenities in their area. In Forest Heights, participants mentioned how much they loved spending time at the library, and in Doon Pioneer Park people praised the Community Centre for providing programming for toddlers, children, youth and adults, free internet and computer use, ESL support, outreach services and volunteer opportunities. They felt that all of these things contributed to their community sense of belonging.  On the other hand, they felt that programs at the community centre filled up very quickly, it was frustrating that the library was not in walking distance and that there wasn't enough public green space.

### Knowing Your Neighbours

In the suburbs, there seemed to be an even split between those who knew their neighbours and those who did not. People agreed that this was an important factor in determining sense of belonging. One person had an excellent experience moving in and being welcomed by the people next door, while another reported living in the same place for years and not getting to know his neighbours until he went door-to-door and recruited them to attend a city council meeting out of concern for a local issue. Afterwards, he reported feeling a much stronger sense of community belonging and he used that event as the time he felt a strong sense of belonging in the empathy mapping exercise.

### Sprawl

One theme that came up repeatedly in the Labs (even some that were conducted in urban neighbourhoods) was that suburban sprawl pushed people into their cars and caused the streets to lack the interactions needed to form a strong sense of community belonging. They called for the return of 'mom-and-pop' shops and small cafés on street corners where they could exchange pleasantries with familiar staff, saying that the few experiences they did have of being greeted and recognized in stores and restaurants made them feel like they belonged. People also wanted parks, libraries, pools and shops within walking distance and better public transit so that people would rely less on their cars and be out on the streets, interacting more often. These concerns we heard about suburbia from the residents of Kitchener and Waterloo are seconded by Putnam, who says that sprawling suburbs, impersonal shopping malls and private transit are partly responsible for declining levels of social connectedness.[63]

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## THE URBAN CORES

People felt the urban cores each had their own identities, and they appreciated this. One participant remarked that when she lived in Vancouver, every neighbourhood had a clear idea of who they were, and took pride in it. She said that she could see that somewhat in Downtown Kitchener and Uptown Waterloo, but not in the rest of the community. Uptown Waterloo appeared on a number of community maps, and is generally seen as more of a destination in itself. Downtown Kitchener did not appear on any maps, although many places in Downtown, such as the Working Centre, Queen Street Commons, City Hall, The Museum, Matter of Taste and Victoria Park, did.

Participants applauded the changes they have been seeing in Downtown Kitchener in recent years. Themes of improvement and renewal came up frequently. As one participant put it "In the past, Kitchener has been in some rough times. However, now we're seeing people take back their city." This change in perspective is hugely important, as people reported being more willing to take care of their city (e.g. pick up litter) when they saw that organizations and their fellow citizens were also making an investment in the community (e.g. the colourful chairs outside city hall).

People emphasized the importance of the ability to walk places that comes with living near Uptown or Downtown. Residents in these areas talked about how important spending time out in the streets was to them. They talked about beginning to recognize a few of people they passed and being familiar enough with the space to notice small changes, and said that those things contributed to their sense of belonging. They went on to say that the same connection to a place doesn't happen when you are driving a car.

## RURAL NEIGHBOURHOODS

We had fewer interactions with people living in rural Woolwich, so it is difficult to draw conclusions about how their experiences differ from those living in urban and suburban area; However, across the Canadian population, people living in rural places are more likely to know all or most of their neighbours, trust their neighbours more, volunteer more and feel a stronger sense of belonging than people living in urban environments, even when controlling for socio-economic and demographic factors.[64] If residents of Woolwich reflect this trend, they are more likely to have a strong sense of community belonging than residents of Kitchener or Waterloo. However, based on the people we did speak to in Woolwich, it is likely that they feel belonging to Elmira, Breslau or another nearby small town much more than Kitchener-Waterloo or Waterloo Region.

**COMPARING WATERLOO AND KITCHENER**

In terms of level of belonging, whether one lived in Kitchener or Waterloo did not seem to make a difference. The city that one resides in is likely less of a factor in determining sense of belonging than neighbourhood and length of residence. Some people expressed a preference for one city over another, saying things such as "I like Kitchener better than Waterloo, Kitchener has more culture". This indicates that people perceive the two cities as separate, and associate different qualities with each. In other words, the identities of Kitchener and Waterloo are different. Participants reported that they belonged to one or the other—Kitchener or Waterloo—but almost never both. Waterloo and Kitchener were both included on community maps a few times, but never Kitchener-Waterloo or Waterloo Region. If we are trying to create a single community of Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich, then we need to overcome this issue of separate identities.

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## Demographics

**NEW CANADIANS**

Moving to Kitchener-Waterloo is especially challenging for anyone who is coming from a different culture, who is perceived as a minority or who does not speak the language. One of the obstacles to belonging that we identified was being different, another lack of acceptance from the greater group. These obstacles affect the New Canadians in our community more than most others.  In the Stakeholder Labs and Street Teams, we spoke to people who felt that their physical appearance, language and other differences from the majority of the population (and the judgment this incurred) were a serious obstacle to their ability to feel at home in Waterloo Region.

# "WE NOT LIVE FOR OURSELVES, RIGHT? WE LIVE FOR EVERYONE."

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At the same time, there have been many improvements to how welcoming our community is to newcomers. One woman said that she and her husband were successful in settling into the community forty years ago, but emphasized the importance of knowing the language and of their own hard work. She reported seeing a lot of good transformation in the community during the time she had been living there.  Another man, arriving thirteen years ago, spoke about how incredibly difficult it was coming to Waterloo. He was unable to speak English and had no support from the community, but feels that things have since improved for newcomers. "Now, it's much better", he says, "lots of people helping." He went on to stress the importance of the growing ethnic communities here, and the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre. Many of the people we consulted spoke about the importance of continuing the programs we have to welcome New Canadians, offering ESL services and expanding on the programs we already have.

We also talked with a number of people—not just those who were new to Canada or who belonged to a minority—who felt that the diversity in our region is something to be celebrated. The vast majority of the long-time residents we spoke to appreciated the multicultural aspects of our city and enjoyed the events that happened as a result. Most of the New Canadians interviewed were also fairly happy with the culture. In general, they said that Kitchener-Waterloo is a friendly and accepting place, and even those that felt otherwise were hopeful for the future.

"WE SHOULD STRIVE FOR HARMONY, TO LIVE TOGETHER PEACEFULLY, AND GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER TO ELIMINATE ALL BIASES."

"I think everybody has common things with other people. It is not only about my scarf or my clothes or my religion. When you have the same feeling about the place, you can live together. Community means community. It should not mean some ethnic groups… we should not be divided into groups. We are one, and that's the beauty of us."

## STUDENTS

Students struggle with belonging because their lives are so transitory in nature. One student described his experience as "A life in transition—always moving around, without getting the opportunity to really settle in one community." Most students will live in Waterloo only 4 or 8 months every year, moving back in with their parents while not in school, or travelling to find a co-op job. They have no permanent residence and they have difficulty identifying where 'home' is. We saw this in our Stakeholder Labs, where responses to the question, "Where's home?" ranged from "As temporary a place as [Waterloo] feels, it is the closest thing to home I have" to "I don't know where home is. [It makes me feel] panicked." As a group, students had the weakest sense of belonging to the community, and a third of them choose the "I don't know" option when asked to rate their sense of belonging to the community on a scale from 1 to 5.

That is not to say that students in Kitchener-Waterloo feel no sense of belonging to their university or college. They are given many opportunities to connect with their post-secondary institution— during Orientation Week, through intramurals and clubs, at libraries, lounges, and in on-campus coffee shops. In fact, post-secondary institutions should be considered as a model for belonging. Every year they welcome thousands of new students, and attempt to integrate them into the university and college communities, so they have amassed considerable strategies for making the students feel at home there. However, this is different from connecting students with the broader community.  There remains a strong disconnect between academia and the rest of Kitchener-Waterloo. One fourth year student remarked on this. "The region itself is pretty separated by residents of Waterloo and academic portion. I feel this separation splits the community in two," he said, "This separation means that when students graduate and sever ties with their school, it leaves them without much connection to the local community, and not much reason to stay."

## NEW TO THE AREA

There was general agreement that those who are new to the area will struggle to belong here at first. While this is considered normal, there are many things that can be done to help smooth the process. Some initiatives are in place to help welcome newcomers to the community, but some comments from the Stakeholder Labs suggest that more can be done. One participant reported that it took her about ten years to feel at home here. Many others said that they felt the region had many opportunities, but did not know where to find them. Similarly, people who had been here for a while believed that Kitchener-Waterloo has a lot of 'hidden gems' that you'll only find out about after living here for a while, doing some exploring and talking to people who have been here longer. One improvement to address this could include new ways to inform people about our cool places, events and opportunities.

# Belonging and Stage of LIfe

In stakeholder labs, many participants observed that they had a primary 'mechanism' for connecting with their community. This served as an anchor for their sense of belonging. For example, one mother said "my community revolves around my children's activities and keeping them happy." This sentiment was echoed by another mother, who wondered how those without children would ever meet people, as she had built her community around the activities she did for her children. Another participant mentioned that the reason she felt connected to her community was because her job allowed to interact with so many different people every day and offered her ways to get involved. Those who volunteered, attended church or participated in a local club couldn't imagine building a community for themselves without their involvement in organized groups. Similarly, people who walked their dogs around the neighbourhood each morning and evening saw 'Fido' as the only way to connect with their neighbours.

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The challenge this presents is that as people transition from one stage of life to the next it can threaten their mechanism of belonging, forcing them to find a new way to connect with the community or else weakening their sense of belonging. One participant spoke about how when she retired, she found she needed to redefine her role in the community by taking leadership training and entering a new role as a volunteer. Most students we spoke to felt that they were part of the broader community only because they were connected to the universities. Upon graduation, that connection will be severed and they will not feel that they belong here. People with children who get involved in school councils, sports teams, and other clubs for the sake of their child will be unlikely to continue that involvement when their child leaves home. Offering programs that support retirees, empty nesters, graduated university and high school students, divorcees, the newly unemployed, etc. as they try to find a new way to connect with their community could be one way to help improve belonging in Kitchener, Waterloo and Woolwich.

# How people describe our community

One of the greatest challenges for our community is that we do not have a single mutually understood identity—no common thing that unites us all. People in the Stakeholder Labs mentioned this multiple times, often calling it our "identity crisis." The Region has grown by 6.1% in the last 5 years,[65] which is slightly higher than the provincial average and a larger growth rate than Hamilton and Toronto. It seems like we're constantly in a period of transition. One person called us "A growing community…trying to support its citizens—all with different ideas of what community is and what they need from it."

"KW is the story of an area without a strong identity. Not a small town, not a big city. It is the story of a region without deep roots or traditions that define it. It is the story of a region in search for identity."

Here's what we heard when we asked people to tell the story (not the history) of Kitchener, Waterloo and area.

### WE HAVE OPPORTUNITIES AND CULTURE, IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND IT

Some people love the events, the restaurants and the arts and culture our community has to offer. They see our community as "a vibrant, cool, happening place" and "full of heart". They believe that there are myriad opportunities out there for the taking—opportunities for learning, for fun and for creating great things.

### BUT…WE DON'T ADVERTISE OUR AWESOME VERY WELL

Some participants reported that they didn't know much about the community, weren't aware of the opportunities out there, and either weren't inclined to learn more or didn't know where to find it. Some typical responses from those not here for very long were "for me, unexplored" and, "I know so little about it'.

### WE'RE DIVERSE, WE NEED TO BE MORE PROUD OF THIS

Many of the people we spoke to felt that one of our community's defining characteristics was diversity. We are growing more multicultural all the time. Our residents are equal parts young people just starting lives for themselves, newly made families, seniors making the most of their retirement, and people of all the generations in between. Our primary industry can be manufacturing, technology, education, finance and insurance, or agriculture, depending on who you ask. People also believe that this characteristic is something that should be celebrated. As one participant put it "KW is multilayered, and this is not showcased enough"

### BUT...WE'VE STILL GOT SOME WORK TO DO TO BE INCLUSIVE AND ACCEPTING

Although many people perceive multiculturalism as a benefit to community and are willing to welcome newcomers, not all of us share this view. There are still instances of racism and ignorance in our society, and work to be done to make this a more welcoming and inclusive place for all.

### WE'RE CONNECTED AND WE CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER

Some people see a strong, supportive and connected community in Kitchener-Waterloo. They see this place as one where people have always cared about each other and been willing to offer help to those who need it. They see it in our start-up culture, our not-for-profit sector and our Mennonite heritage.

### BUT...WE'RE ALSO DIVIDED

Some people used words like "disconnected", "segmented", and "divided" to talk about what they saw in our community. We're divided into Kitchener, Waterloo and the townships. We are a hotbed of technology with Mennonite origins. We're growing into a big city, while maintaining some elements of our small town past. One person referred to it as our "split personality." While it isn't inherently a bad thing, it can be when it prevents people from perceiving us as a single, united community.

### WE'RE SMART, INNOVATIVE, CUTTING EDGE

Our region is often celebrated for innovation. A number of people mentioned how we are a forward-thinking group of people, striving to do more, know more, and be more. We want to forge ahead, growing, changing and being on the cutting edge. It's just important that we don't leave behind our past.

### BUT...WE'RE QUIET, QUAINT, SAFE AND PRETTY

At the same time, some people want to preserve the parts of our community that move at a slower pace. They celebrate the area for its small, safe and familiar neighbourhoods, its laid-back and down-to earth attitude, and its comfortable, easy living.

# Connecting to a Community

## LARGE COMMUNITIES ARE NETWORKS OF SMALL GROUPS

One participant perceived his community as a collection of very different groups, but still connected, with himself as the common link. If people from the groups got to know one another, it was because he had introduced them. He conceived of the whole community as a network of small groups, connected by individuals with multiple memberships. He said that "People can find the groups which share the same interest...and offer help, care and love to each other. And groups connected together, form a city-wide network for people to build deep relationships to others." This participant saw that he his involvement in small groups connected him to the larger community.

## HOW WE PERCEIVE OUR CONNECTION TO THE COMMUNITY AFFECTS BELONGING

In contrast to his view, some participants reported feeling very connected to their family, close friends and immediate neighbourhood, but didn't see how this made them a part of the broader community. One participant raised an interesting point that might explain the difference between the former view and the latter. She believes that belonging relies on an individual's perception. Some individuals see that groups are connected while some do not, and this affects their sense of belonging. She offered the example of a student joining a club at university: they now belong to the club, but are also part of the university community as well. Whether or not the student is conscious of their connection to the university through the university club determines whether they feel a sense of belonging to the university.

## LARGE COMMUNITIES REQUIRE RELATIONSHIPS TO SMALLER GROUPS

Douglas Atkins[67], former Partner and Chief Community Officer of Meetup, says that while it is possible to build a large community (one containing thousands and thousands of people), it is more challenging because ties weaken when the community is too large for members to know everyone in it. When a group grows too large, people want to split off from the larger group and form a smaller one. This happens for two reasons: in a large group, members can no longer know everyone involved and will break off to retain the feeling of intimacy; and the greater diversity of a large group will support the creation of smaller, more specialized groups. Atkins suggests that the trick to building a large community lies in maintaining a relationship between these smaller groups and the larger one.

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## HOW CAN WE CONNECT TO OUR COMMUNITY WHEN ITS IDENTITY IS ILL-DEFINED?

What a few of our participants realized and what Atkins points out is that large communities are built from networks of small groups. To form a sense of belonging and have it be meaningful, members of the small groups must perceive their connection to the larger community. Atkins suggests that this takes intentional action from the larger community to manage the connection and make it readily apparent. Here again, our lack of identity may pose a problem. It leaves us without a strong conception of what the larger community is. This can cause some people to struggle with belonging, because it is more difficult to form connections when one of the entities is so ambiguous. People cannot connect themselves with something they can't understand.

# COMMUNITY
# CAMP
# RESULTS

# COMMUNITY CAMP RESULTS

At the Community Camp, we led over fifty people through an exercise to generate ideas for ways that we could improve belonging in our community. These ideas were clustered and named. The full results have been included in Appendix A for reference. The principles used at the Community Camp were in many ways a truncated version of the Belonging Toolkit and the ideas created at the Camp demonstrate the diversity of ideas that the belonging toolkit can produce. As in the toolkit, participants used the belonging building blocks to focus their efforts. Highlights for each building block have been included here.

### AUTHENTIC INTERACTIONS

People developed ideas for celebrating local culture, helping people get to know their neighbours, designing public spaces, and starting community conversations. Some interesting ideas included:

- Walk your 'hood tours
- More seating in parks and public spaces
- How-to kits for running block parties
- Neighbourhood sharing programs for bikes and tools
- Community contests to describe a space—give results to a landscape designer
- Physical or online booths for leaving messages to other visitors
- Meet Your Neighbour Day
- Sidewalk chalk contests

### SHARED PURPOSE

People developed ideas for making it easier to start community initiatives, having more spaces available for public use, learning and sharing interests, and spreading the word about what our community has to offer. Some interesting ideas included:

- Provide mentors for people starting new organizations
- Enable alternate payments for space—like volunteer hours
- Centralized database of clubs/organizations, prominent at libraries
- Radio jingle for how KW gets involved
- Gamification—reward for bringing new people out
- Create a culture of "what's your #1 interest?"
- Have a community lawyer to help groups become official organizations

**FEELING WELCOME**

People developed ideas for building a more welcoming culture, getting businesses involved, creating incentives to be welcoming, and trying out new initiatives to welcome newcomers. Some interesting ideas included:

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- Ambassadors in bright shirts at every event
- Twitter chat with community building sessions
- Contest for best greeting recorded on video
- Add more colour, like downtown bike racks
- Welcome people more than once
- Flash dance initiatives
- Create a newcomer twitter account
- New button: "TTM" (talk to me)

For a full list of results from the Community Camp, see Appendix A.

# RECOMMENDED READING

# RECOMMENDED READING

For those who wish to find out more about belonging and community or develop their own project to build community these resources may be especially useful.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MY COMMUNITY?

A list of forty simple ways to build community in your neighbourhood

http://mommygoesgreen.com/2013/07/40-simple-ways-to-build-community-in-your-neighborhood/

A list of 150 things you can do to build social capital

http://www.bettertogether.org/150ways.htm

An overview and collection of resources on Placemaking: a movement that's all about designing city and neighbourhood spaces for community and belonging

http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/

## ARE THERE ANY SUGGESTIONS OUT THERE FOR POLICY MAKERS?

"Building a civic nation through civic engagement" A document published in 2007 containing twenty policy recommendations for building civic engagement by:

1. Fostering shared civic identity
2. Making political involvement more accessible
3. Supporting non-profits
4. Improving public space
5. Extending engagement beyond Canadian borders

http://www.civicengagement.org/agingsociety/links/canada25.pdf

The power of belonging: Identity, citizenship and community cohesion

A document that discusses challenges for belonging and lists several local and national policy recommendations for fostering a shared sense of belonging in Britain.

http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2011/05/power_of_belonging_summary_1603.pdf *(The executive summary)*

**CAN I READ SOME REPORTS SIMILAR TO THIS ONE?**

**Neighbourhood and Belonging: Living in the Communities of Canberra**
A report on social inclusion and belonging in the capital city of Australia, which
is faced with many challenges similar to those of our community (car-oriented
geography, largely suburban, considerable student and migrant populations)

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http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2011/05/power_of_belong-
ing_summary_1603.pdf

**Belonging**
A British study on the ways that belonging has changed over the past century and
the groups where people now find a sense of belonging.

http://www.sirc.org/publik/Belonging.pdf

**WHAT IF I'M LOOKING FOR A LONGER READ?**

**Community by Peter Block**
The chief message of this book is that we need to alter our mindset and our ap-
proach to community to generate the best outcomes for belonging. Block believes
that we must move from our dwelling on problems to imagining possibilities and
from isolation and self-interest to connectedness and caring for the whole. He
lays out a number of strategies for transforming communities by adopting this
mindset.

**Bowling Alone by Robert Putnam**
This book discusses the decline of social capital in the United States. It analyses
the trends in civic engagement and social capital to provide proof for the decline,
discusses several possible reasons for this and the likelihood of each, examines
the consequences of lower social capital, and proffers suggests for how to begin
solving the problem.

# APPENDIX A:

# COMMUNITY CAMP RESULTS

## Authentic Interactions

### SHARE THE FUN

Sharing the Fun is about engaging in enjoyable activities with your neighbours. These ideas get people out of their houses, in to the streets, parks, and community spaces that they have in common. Most of the ideas focus on casual get-togethers or events for utility.

1. Community garage sales
2. Scheduled black outs
3. Structured activities (party games, Community Camps, speed dating)
4. Neighbourhood yard sales and BBQs
5. Community gardens
6. Sharing programs for bikes and tools
7. Block gatherings
8. How-to kits for running block parties
9. Go by yourself to events

### DESIGN THE PLACE

Designing the Place is about ensuring that people feel comfortable wherever they are in their community. It means giving them opportunities for input, making them feel safe, and building the places to be readily accessible. By designing the place well, we can encourage people to linger in public places and increase their chances of engaging in authentic interactions.

1. Take away zone laws for small business (corner stores, veggie stands, lemonade)
2. Idea boxes at entrance of public places
3. More common spaces (skate parks, dog parks)
4. More seating in parks and public spaces
5. Small, frequent areas for neighbourhood activities
6. Lingering space—purposeful loitering places

7.   Mixed use space

8.   All weather seating

9.   New seating in unusual public places

10.  Increase use of public transit and sidewalks—make them attractive

11.  Make the city more pedestrian friendly

12.  Barrier free sidewalks and pathways

13.  Keeps paths and trails well lit

## CELEBRATE LOCAL CULTURE

Celebrating Local Culture is about recognizing what makes a place unique and publicizing its special qualities. It involves actively building that culture by adding public art, educating new arrivals and documenting the history of public places.

1.   Neighbourhood maps of interesting points

2.   Walk your 'hood tours

3.   Signs with local history

4.   Jane Walks

5.   Highlight cultural stories and change

6.   Mapping app

7.   Micro-libraries in neighbourhoods

8.   Radio/TV spots on neighbourly activities

9.   Community contests to describe a space—give results to landscape designer

10.  Public art display

11.  Rotating public art

12.  Real estate agents involved in informing new arrivals

## ENCOURAGE SPONTANEITY

Encouraging Spontaneity is about making it simple to do something new, different, unexpected, yet also community-building. These ideas should make it easy to spontaneously attend an event, or to spontaneously reach out to other people once you're there.

1. Sidewalk chalk contests
2. Random Act of Kindness days, focused on neighbours
3. Open mic night or lunch
4. Shovel snow past your property line
5. Front porch visits and invitation
6. Random act of kindness everyday
7. Promoting a meet your neighbour day
8. App for suggesting new people to go to certain events
9. Party bus to events
10. Puzzle piece coupons—only valid with a match!

## GENERATE CONVERSATIONS

Generating Conversations is about giving people something meaningful to talk about with others. It's about using all available tools to help spark conversations and provide outlets for people who have something to say.

1. Daily community word (buses, buildings, inboxes, newspaper)
2. Video message booth for future visitors to booth (or online)
3. Belonging "check-in" on twitter
4. Create conversation pieces through flexible/changing environments
5. Things that make you think and promote conversations
6. Education campaign on what/why/how of starting conversations
7. Index cards for posting thought of the day
8. Programming for kids to teach them social skills for authentic interactions
9. Enable people to have more conversations in public spaces

# Shared Purpose

**DEVELOP STRUCTURE**

Developing Structure is about putting in place procedures and guidelines that make it easier to begin community initiatives and easier for pre-existing community groups to work cooperatively. It focuses on organizing what's already existing and offering resources for those who are starting something new.

1. Organizational speed dating
2. Online portal with inter-agency access and development
3. Communication structure for creating new clubs/leagues/groups
4. A group for groups to connect
5. University does clubs very well—model after UW FedS
6. Governing body for clubs/groups/leagues
7. Create a guide to start a new club
8. Provide mentors for people starting new organizations
9. More opportunities for organizational leaders to work together
10. Use large organizations to promote smaller ones more effectively
11. Twin with another city for ideas
12. Do research on successful shared purpose models
13. Create hierarchy of interest groups
14. Don't make them wait for funding, give bank account before article of incorporation
15. Provide a lawyer for article of incorporation

## SPREAD THE WORD

Spreading the Word is about ensuring that people know the opportunities that are out there. It establishes new ways of communicating to the public so that people who are starting new initiatives have some way to advertise and people wanting to engage in something specific have a better chance of finding it.

1. Centralized database of clubs/organizational, make it prominent at libraries
2. Online directory of local organizations
3. Common interest groups invite public to open houses
4. GRT bus stops have panels of upcoming events
5. Event advertising should focus on residents, not tourists
6. Greeters/community ambassadors at grocery stores—event details
7. Radio jingle for how KW gets involved
8. Online survey for directing people to clubs

## MAKE SPACE

Making Space is about better utilising the spaces that we already have and making some changes to existing space so that they are more desirable places to be. These ideas create more opportunity for interactions and make public buildings (schools, churches, etc.) more accessible to those running events with a budget.

1. Give people multiple reasons to use a space, at multiple times in a day
2. Transform Tannery into district rather than parking lot
3. New team focused on planning public spaces
4. Leverage great places that have been created
5. Community café with comfortable chairs
6. Meet somewhere different every time
7. Enable alternate payments for space—like volunteer hours
8. Use volunteer hours to pay for space
9. Make it easier to use space, without hassle of insurance
10. Create working agreement for shared organizational space

**CARE ABOUT PEOPLE**

Caring about people is about being interested in talking to and learning about others, actively trying to get them involved in events, and demonstrating that you care whether or not they feel like they belong.

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1. Create smaller communities within broader community
2. Five people talk to five people
3. Information package for people new to KW, tailored to people's interests
4. Face to face networks of people to explore interests
5. Ask people about interests in census
6. Use shared purpose groups to explore other shared purposes
7. Talk to your neighbours, create a culture of "what's your #1 interest?"
8. Gamifaction—reward for bringing new people out
9. Make a series of events building from tonight
10. Continue with thinktanks, build on this project

**HOLD AWESOME EVENTS**

Holding Awesome Events is simply about holding events that draw people out, get them interacting with the community, and help them share experiences and purpose.

1. More slow days—King closed for art market
2. Expand and enhance Neighbourhood associations
3. Create purposeful places for lingering, slow days
4. Host a festival for people to get involved in their interests
5. Brown bag lunch&learn at City Hall, TED+talk
6. Coffeehouse-like discussions
7. More carless days with programming
8. Explore the community day
9. Doors open, on issues
10. More forums similar to Community Camp

11. Sense of belonging day—T-shirt with "I feel it in KW because…"

12. Overlap facilitates a networking meeting

13. More Community Camps

14. Interactive game tables at events

# Feeling Welcome

**IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE**

Improving Infrastructure is about making sure there are concrete systems and objects in place to welcome people into the community.

1. Create a newcomer twitter account

2. Everyone wears nametags

3. Kijiji for interest groups

4. Community radio for new comer youth

5. Educational campaign on how to greet people

6. ad for event is coupon for free bus ride

7. Hi hats—to make it ok to say hi

8. New button: "TTM" (talk to me)

**EXPERIMENT WITH EVENTS**

Experimenting with Events is about trying new events and new initiatives at existing ones that help people feel welcome in the community. It's also about encouraging people to try out events and discover what they like.

1. Create events via twitter to raise awareness online

2. Face to face events

3. Special events for newcomers, regularly scheduled

4. Flash dance initiatives

5. Neighbourhood associations to host local welcoming/networking

6. Ambassadors in bright shirts at every event

7. Make new friends hour/day

8. Event suggestions based on what you have done and liked

**CREATE A CULTURE**

Creating a Culture is about making feeling welcome part of our daily life. It involves instilling certain behaviours, changing our environment to be more welcoming and supporting people who make an effort to welcome others.

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1.  Say thank you a lot
2.  Use smile epidemic model
3.  Public figures need to be valued and appreciated
4.  Community art at regular places
5.  Create a culture of customer service for public figures
6.  Welcome people more than once
7.  Ask deep questions: "What did you see today that was beautiful?"
8.  Branding for public spaces
9.  Add more colour, like downtown bike racks
10. Twitter chat with community building sessions

**OFFER CHALLENGES AND REWARDS**

Offering Challenges and Rewards is about providing people with some incentive to be welcoming. It turns greetings into a game in order to make being welcoming a playful and fun experience.

1.  Saying hi" challenges amongst public figures
2.  Recognise people who make a difference
3.  Recruit students and youth to make it cool to say hi
4.  Random reward (mystery shopper) at regular places
5.  A race to say hi first
6.  Contest for best greeting recorded on video
7.  Name tags get you perks
8.  Kudos for being welcoming
9.  Hi games at community events
10. Increase public award opportunities

**BUILD BUSINESS BUY-IN**

Building Business Buy-in is about recruiting employers to help make this a more welcoming community. These ideas are about how businesses can help everyone feel welcome, how they can promote diversity and how they can encourage employees to get involved in the community.

1. Train staff at regular places to be welcoming
2. Employers to ask employees to join twitter
3. Businesses get involved in welcoming initiative
4. Time off work to volunteer
5. Training and education for happiness and welcoming
6. Sensitivity training, leadership, language
7. Embrace diversity at regular places
8. Hire multilingual staff at regular places
9. Grocery stores have multicultural food sampling

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## Notes