



CASE

BUSINESS

Mill Courtland Community Centre

A blueprint for expansion & equitable placemaking

Consultant: Jay Pitter Placemaking

Client: City of Kitchener

January 2023

INTRODUCTION

Redefining Expansion



The word “expansion” evokes a sense of spaciousness, growth and possibility. These concepts extend well beyond increasing the physical footprint of a place; they are rooted in our collective values and aspirations. This expanded definition is especially applicable to the reimagining of public spaces that go beyond the wrongheaded social and economic ethos of “bigger is better.” When we consider the dimensions of “expansion,” we are compelled to consider ways in which we can create more metaphorical space for growing community values, prosperity and agency for all. Relatedly, by embracing this multidimensional definition—which doesn’t focus solely on increasing our spatial footprint—we also reconcile our fractured relationship with the Earth and other living beings. In this way, the redefinition of the word “expansion” is radical and creates a virtuous cycle that reinforces the alchemy of place.

- Jay Pitter

Acknowledgements

Jay Pitter Placemaking would like to acknowledge the invaluable insights of the City of Kitchener, Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association, Highland-Stirling Community Group and a diverse range of community stakeholders who helped to inform this business case.

Jay Pitter Placemaking Contributors

Gelek Badheysang, Communications Lead
Nicole Martin, Researcher
Jake Tobin Garrett, Collaborating Sub-Consultant and Business Case Co-Author
Jay Pitter, Principal Placemaker and Business Case Lead Author
Jim Sheppard, Editor (Retired Executive Editor, Globe and Mail)
Debra Scott, Community Development and Design Lead

Cover Image: The rendering on the cover was developed by University of Waterloo students and edited by JPP.

Objectives

The purpose of the Mill Courtland Community Centre expansion business case is to provide the City of Kitchener with an equitable, evidence-based, actionable roadmap for the expansion and redesign of the facility and broader site.

Specifically, the objectives of this document are to:

- » Unpack the equitable placemaking principles and approaches that guided this initial, critical phase of the Centre’s redevelopment to establish a clear standard for all phases;
- » Respectfully acknowledge and respond to the Centre’s rich history and ethos of exceptional community care and responsiveness;
- » Contextualize the Centre using a nuanced spatial, social and economic lens, which responds to past and current community use while embracing future growth aligned with the dynamism of place;
- » Present critical key findings and establish expansion priorities informed by a series of site, programming and socio-economic audits;
- » Provide high-level design content, such as user group and stewards’ journey maps, design precedents and design guidelines to ensure that the immense community engagement, research and analysis is translated to the Centre’s built environment.

Please note that the area centralized in this business case appears in the following ways throughout this document:

- » Mill Courtland Community Centre, MCCC and Centre are used when specifically referring to the site.
- » A hyphen is added when referencing the two neighbourhood associations in alignment with the formal names for both groups—Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association and Highland-Stirling Community Group.
- » When referencing the two areas generally, hyphens are not used.

Our Approach and Process

All projects led by Jay Pitter Placemaking are guided by the practice's equity-based placemaking approach, which is informed by academic research, structural analysis and real-life urban design and development projects. Our approach and process are outlined below:

Equity-Based Placemaking

Placemaking is conventionally defined as a collaborative approach to the design, programming and policy of public and semi-public spaces. It brings community knowledge and vision to the forefront of public realm design processes, historically going beyond the urbanism status quo and hierarchy. Equity-based placemaking—an approach largely advanced by Jay Pitter Placemaking in both academic and practice contexts—builds on pluralism and recognizes power relations within communities, as well as the place-based histories of exclusion and socio-spatial dynamics that shape the character of public spaces. An equity-based placemaking approach explicitly acknowledges that urban planning, design and development sectors are not neutral; they either perpetuate or reduce urban inequities. Key approaches include but are not limited to the following:

- » Acknowledge the complex histories and socio-political dynamics of public spaces, and how they inform people's mobility, safety and joy;
- » Identify and address power imbalances and multiple dimensions of safety (physical, psychological and historical) throughout all stages of placemaking processes;
- » Embrace multiple forms of community power, cultural expressions and assets;
- » Develop strong social plans and programming that address competing interests among young families, elders, people experiencing homelessness, disabled people, sex workers and other groups that use and steward public spaces;
- » Co-create public spaces where community members are not simply "user groups" but respectfully recognized as stewards of public places;
- » Consider multiple dimensions of accessibility—physical, economic and social;
- » Recognize that the character of a place is shaped through interactions with humans, other living beings and the natural environment.

Equity-based placemaking deeply considers the spatial, psycho-social, economic and historical aspects of public spaces. This is why—despite being nascent and not yet fully codified—equity-based placemaking practitioners must have a broad knowledge of

theories such as urban design, human geography, place-based attachment and intersectionality. That said, everyone from residents to public health professionals to municipal decision-makers all have important roles in equity-based placemaking.

The key process steps that informed this business case hybrid master plan document are as follows:

- 1. Two-Phase Public Survey:** The practice co-created a two-phase survey with the Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association and the Highland-Stirling Community Group (hereafter referred to as the neighbourhood associations) to gain an understanding of the Centre's history, formal and informal uses, distinct community stewardship practice, governance model and priorities for future growth. After hearing from the current users and stewards most connected to, and invested in, the Centre, the practice opened up the survey to the general public and conducted one-on-one interviews with local organizations that are currently connected to the Centre or that may become future users and stewards of the Centre.
- 2. Equitable Community Engagement:** With the support of members of the neighbourhood associations, the practice led its signature place-based storytelling engagement. Members of Ms. Pitter's community engagement team and volunteers from the aforementioned groups gathered stories using a simple template developed by the practice. By involving local volunteers and experts, community members had the option to share their stories, some of which were profoundly personal, with someone they were familiar with, which increased comfort and participation levels. After individuals and families shared their stories, a professional photographer captured their images while members from the cob oven group grilled hearty snacks including roasted breadfruit, a Caribbean treat gifted to Ms. Pitter from a community member as a special welcome.
- 3. Site and Operations Data Collection:** The practice worked with City staff to collect information pertaining to the redevelopment and redesign of the Centre including, but not limited to: the site plan; programs and fees; staffing; and the current-year operating budget, including revenues and expenses. Additionally, the practice viewed both demographic information for the city of Kitchener and neighbourhood-level data related to both the Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling areas to perform a socio-economic analysis and to better understand the unique and diverse community members who use and volunteer at the Centre. Finally, an audit of surrounding land use and transportation use was done to fully understand the context of the Centre in terms of related amenities in the community, walkability and cycling safety, as well as rates of driving and transit use.

- 4. In-Depth Research in Collaboration with the University of Waterloo:** In addition to valuing the lived experiences and local knowledge of all of the communities with which we're privileged to collaborate, the practice places considerable significance on evidence-based practice as Ms. Pitter is also an urban planning scholar who lectures, develops syllabi and co-leads research with academic institutions across North America. While serving as Planner-In-Residence at the University of Waterloo's School of Planning, Ms. Pitter included this initiative in her PLAN 409 Urban Design Studio syllabus. Together with reputable Professor and Dean Markus Moos and Teaching Assistants Timothy J. Hunting and Victoria Mance, the practice engaged 90+ students in this initiative. This entailed inviting City of Kitchener staff, neighbourhood association representatives and community members to present to the class. This spirited and informative presentation was followed by a special student site tour hosted by Jay Pitter Placemaking and neighbourhood associations. Centring the practice's equitable placemaking and design approaches, and community contributions, University of Waterloo planning students contributed images, research data and precedents to help local stakeholders collectively visualize their future Community Centre.
- 5. Equitable Placemaking and Policy Analysis:** The practice specializes in equitable placemaking, planning and policy development. Throughout the process this lens was informed by theories such as critical urban planning theory, spatial feminism theory, environmental justice and human geography, and place-based theories asserted by sociologists such as Henri Lefebvre and W.E.B. Du Bois. Although distinct, all of these theories pose questions related to power, equity and ownership while striving towards human-centred, sustainable and just approaches for co-creating places where everyone prospers. In practical terms, the practice took considerable time to learn about the site's origin and ongoing story; invisible and visible barriers that impact meaningful participation at the Centre; how people move through and interact within the Centre; how important decisions pertaining to the Centre were made; and how well-reflected the community was across leadership roles at the City of Kitchener and in the neighbourhood association groups.

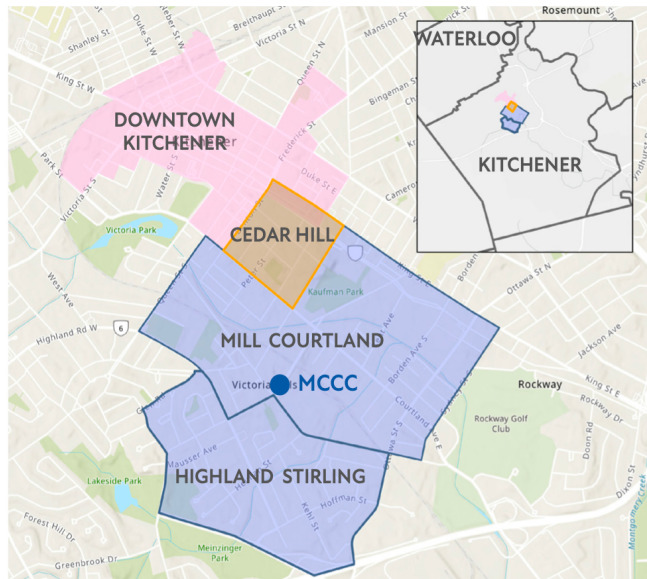
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PART ONE: BACKGROUND

Site and Service Boundaries

While the Centre is located within the Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association boundaries, it also services residents in the Highland Stirling and Cedar Hill neighbourhoods. Our public surveys, coupled with qualitative data, found that approximately one-third of the individuals and families who visit the Centre live outside of these neighbourhood boundaries. This is primarily attributed to the fact that community members who have moved outside the service boundaries continue



The MCCC Neighbourhood Context¹

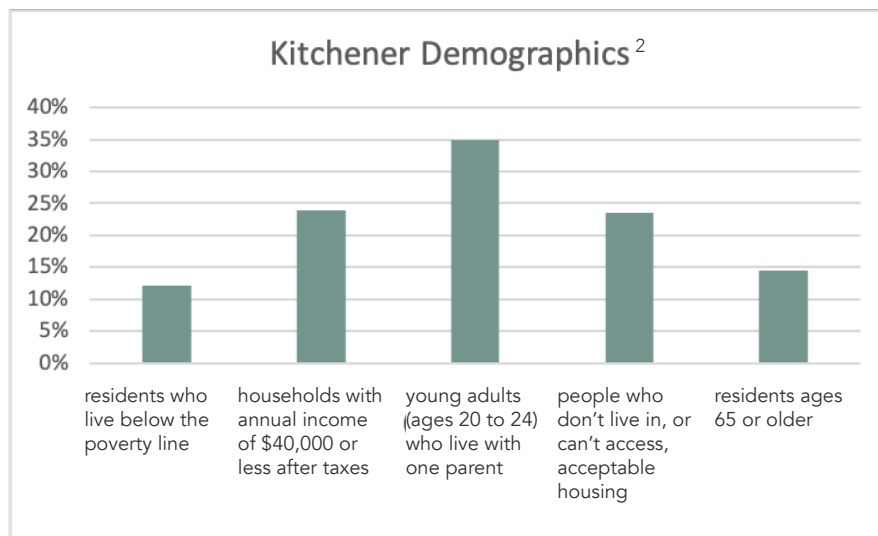
to frequent the Centre because they have long-standing and trusting relationships with City staff and volunteers at MCCC, and because of the range and type of supportive services offered there. In some instances, community members indicated they didn't have access to a local community centre or if they did, they didn't feel as welcomed there. Regardless of proximity to the MCCC, community members who visit the Centre do so for reasons related to respect, responsiveness and belonging, which are attributes that defy boundaries on a map.

Site and Project History

Kitchener is a vibrant, mid-sized city with a distinct character, closely connected to the broader Tri-Cities region. It is sited on the Haldimand Tract in the Grand River Valley, which was purchased by the British from the Mississaugas, who were the original Indigenous stewards of the land. The city is lauded for its lush green spaces, its connectivity to a major innovation hub and its strong social networks amid rapid urbanization. As a fast-growing region, Kitchener-Waterloo is experiencing both growing pains and opportunities. Many neighbourhoods are experiencing intensification, population growth and demographic changes such as:

1. Fluit, K., Garrard, G., Guo, J., Khan, A., Kim, D., Ma, A., Mo, A., O'Neill, L., Su, S., Yong, B. (Group 2). The MCCC Neighbourhood Context [Map] (2022, April 7). *Business Case: Mill Courtland Community Centre*, p.2

- » 12.2% of residents live below the poverty line
- » 23.9% of households have annual income of \$40,000 or less after taxes
- » 34.9% of young adults (ages 20 to 34) live with one parent
- » 23.5% of people are not living in, or not able to access, acceptable housing
- » 14.5% of residents are 65 or older



Places such as the Mill Courtland Community Centre play an integral role in responding to these complex challenges, which is why the City of Kitchener identified it as one of its priority sites in its recently approved recreational master plan.

Established in 1986, the Centre's origin story is defined by a grassroots approach, co-led by dedicated City of Kitchener staff and volunteer members affiliated with local neighbourhood associations. The construction of the Centre was the direct result of years of community advocacy for a centralized, physical space to accommodate the increasing number of community-led programs and services which had been run out of local schools and churches. This spirit of grassroots initiative and community care continues to define the character of the Centre. For example, over the past few years, the community financed and constructed a cob oven, a backyard social gathering space and raised-bed community gardens. These and other community-led interventions remain both a source of pride, and hold immense tangible and intangible community value.

Today, however, the Centre is bursting at its seams. The building envelope is 6,816 square feet, making it one of the smallest community centres in Kitchener. The small building envelope and overall site footprint are insufficient when contrasted with the large number of supportive services and dynamic programs delivered. Specifically, there

2. City of Kitchener. (2020) 2020 Kitchener Demographics. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/b228dc3a629b44498ce209bf7d822ce4/page/2020-Demographics/>

is a dire lack of storage space, flexible programming space, and space to accommodate assistive devices and other critical accessible-design features. The current spatial capacity challenge has been spurred by local population growth, new developments and demographic shifts. For example, the Mill Courtland neighbourhood is projected to grow rapidly—37% by 2041, outpacing the growth rate for the overall city of Kitchener, which is projected to be 24% by 2041.

To address these and other social, spatial and economic challenges, several studies have previously recommended the expansion and overall enhanced placemaking of the Centre. For example, a City-initiated Community Centre Facility Future Needs Review, published in 2018, noted the need for more multi-purpose space and a larger kitchen. The following year, the City published its Leisure Facilities Master Plan, which recognized the overall expansion of the Centre as a priority. Both public surveys and the community engagement initiatives conducted by Jay Pitter Placemaking validated the urgent need for more functional, flexible and accessible space. This document—a distinct hybrid business case and master plan conceived by our practice—is a response to years of studies and advocacy. It humbly acknowledges and builds upon previous efforts while integrating our internationally recognized practice approach for establishing good ground—principles, precedents, socio-economic analysis and design approaches—for all phases of the Centre’s expansion.

Building on Past Work: A Review of the 2006 Draft Business Case

Again, we believe that it is both professionally prudent and humble to build on past efforts related to the Centre’s expansion. Consequently, as part of our onboarding process, we reviewed an early, unpublished draft business case developed by another consultant in 2006. While the document employed a conventional business case approach and was never finalized, it provides a good jumping-off point. What is clear from that early draft is that within a mere 13 years after the Centre was constructed—much like an adolescent experiencing a growth spurt—the Centre’s supportive services and programming were already exceeding its size. Relevant observations and findings from the 2006 draft business case include:

- » The neighbourhoods served by MCCC are lower-income and the Centre cannot meet the demands for services from the community, including more space for youth programming, diverse programming for a growing “multi-ethnic” community and a lack of storage space.
- » The community survey found a demand for a number of new programs and services for all ages, including kids’ cooking, youth dance, volleyball, martial arts, strength training, ceramics etc., which the Centre could not accommodate.

- » The Centre expansion needs to include two multi-purpose rooms with a capacity of 50–75 people each, a full-sized gym and an industrial kitchen.
- » The cost of expansion was approximately \$475,000 and would necessitate a 22% increase in the 2006 operating budget.

Again, while our practice approach and scope of this particular document are significantly different from the work completed in 2006, themes pertaining to the socio-economic status of many of the individuals and families accessing programs and supportive services at the Centre, the changing demographic, demand for a wide range of programs for all, and increased flexible spaces are even more urgent today. In the spirit of building on previous efforts, our practice also adapted the following Mill Courtland Community Centre development and milestone table in collaboration with the 2022 Project Team, which included both City staff and neighbourhood association members:

This table has been adapted from the 2006 MCCC Business Case Review.

Time Period	Milestones
1977–79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Highland-Stirling Needs Assessment survey is conducted by Lutherwood, a non-profit health and social service agency. • Lutherwood starts a self-help organization in the community, with two staff members conducting outreach on behalf of the Highland-Stirling Community Group. • The Woodside Neighbourhood Association appeals to the City to upgrade area services in the Cedar Hills and Woodside neighbourhoods, including the cleanup of a scrap yard.
1982–83	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for a community centre is indicated in the City of Kitchener’s planning redevelopment plan. • The Highland-Stirling Community Group hires a co-ordinator, via funding collaboration with Lutherwood.
1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City of Kitchener allocates funding to purchase the Gailor Scrap Yard as a site for the development of a community centre.

Time Period	Milestones
1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City provides temporary portable space for programming until the end of the lease term for the scrap yard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Highland-Stirling Community Group initiates programming in the portable (including a lending library, a clothing room and office space) while continuing to run programs around the neighbourhood, in churches and schools. ◦ The Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association (MCNA) initiates programming in the portables and nearby schools. ◦ A Monteith Planning Study recommends a community centre for the Mill Courtland area as a priority, to be constructed within 3–5 years. ◦ The Neighbourhood Voice Committee—a partnership between the City of Kitchener, the Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association and the Highland-Stirling Community Group—is formed to co-ordinate discussion regarding the use of portable space and a permanent building for the future.
1988–89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public meeting is held to determine future community centre needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association and the Highland-Stirling Community Group make a presentation to the City Finance Department regarding the lack of space in the neighbourhood to run programs. ◦ A request is made to the City to keep the provision of a permanent building in mind for the 1990 budget. • A second portable is added for programming. • The Cedar Hill Community Group is formed due to a concern pertaining to the rising drug use in the neighbourhood.
1990–91	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several Parks and Recreation planning meetings are held, but the project is delayed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association and the Highland-Stirling Community Group make another deputation to the Parks and Recreation Committee regarding lack of community space.

Time Period	Milestones
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mill Courtland Community Centre breaks ground.
1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mill Courtland Community Centre’s main building opens in August; programs begin in September.
1994–99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services grow at the Mill Courtland Community Centre.
2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mill Courtland Community Centre Management Committee is formed to replace the previous Neighbourhood Voice Committee.
2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association submits an application to KW Counselling Services for an onsite National Child Benefit Outreach Worker at the Community Centre. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The program starts with shared office space between the Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association and program staff.
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mill Courtland Community Centre hosts its 10th anniversary celebration.
2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portable space is added to accommodate growing office and meeting space needs. • An advisory board is formed to start a youth tutoring/mentoring program, with Youth Education for Success funding from the Trillium Foundation.
2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A draft business case for the Mill Courtland Community Centre expansion is completed, but not finalized.
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An electronic sign supplied by Signs by Jukes is installed on Mill Street.

Time Period	Milestones
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Chilean Village art installation created by artists Pamela Roja and Maca Suazo is erected in front of the Mill Courtland Community Centre. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The project is financially supported by the Region of Waterloo Arts Fund. ◦ The installation depicts the houses of fishermen and country folks from the island of Chiloé, built on stilts over the ocean to prevent flooding and the constant changes of the tides. • A cob oven is installed in the Centre’s green space. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The project was steered by the Highland-Stirling Community Group with financial support from the Mennonite Savings and Credit Union (now named Kindred). ◦ Members from the group KW Cobbers (part of the larger Transition KW collaborative) met with the Highland-Stirling Community Group and community volunteers to complete the cob oven installation in stages, over a period of three months.
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permaculture gardens are designed and installed in the green space, including a carved log armchair, a spiral park bench and four picnic tables. • A custom precast ping pong table is also installed, with support from a Love My Hood matching grant from the City of Kitchener. • A mural by The Firm Murals is installed in the back hallway of the Community Centre with the slogan “Together.” • The City completes its Community Centre Facility Future Needs Review, noting that an expansion of space at the MCCC will allow it to expand its focus from neighbourhood level to community level.
2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kitchen renovation is completed.

When leading placemaking projects, our practice conducts an extensive literature review of all relevant documents. The literature/document review for this particular process included the following:

MCCC Documentation

- » Site Plan and Building Floor Plans
- » Hydroelectric Bills
- » Fire Safety Plan
- » 2022 Operating Budget
- » Comprehensive List of Programs and Activities
- » Building Condition Assessment, 2020
- » Mill Courtland Community Centre Business Case (DRAFT), 2006

City Plans, Strategies and Bylaws

- » Cedar Hill and Schneider Creek Secondary Plan
- » Community Centre Facilities Future Needs Review, 2018
- » Leisure Facilities Master Plan, 2019
- » Purchasing and Materials Management Bylaw
- » Facility Booking Guidelines for Non-Profit Groups
- » City of Kitchener Neighbourhood Association Affiliation Policy

Demographic Information

- » Highland Stirling Community Demographic Profile, 2020
- » Mill Courtland Community Demographic Profile, 2020
- » City of Kitchener Demographic Profile, 2020

Maps

- » City of Kitchener land use map <https://www.kitchener.ca/en/council-and-city-administration/maps.aspx>

PART TWO: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A fundamental principle in the practice is respecting local knowledge. While design and development projects require considerable technical and policy expertise, we understand that our work must be anchored in the context of the community. Given that there are many communities within the community, we also seek to engage a wide range of people, including individuals with dissenting viewpoints, individuals historically excluded from placemaking processes and individuals with a healthy sense of skepticism. Through respectful, embodied and creative community engagement initiatives, we seek to earn trust and co-create safe(r) spaces where all community members feel comfortable and confident sharing their knowledge, concerns and aspirations. Finally, we consistently spark curiosity and ignite the spirit of collaboration throughout all phases of the community engagement process.

The Mill Courtland Community Centre equitable engagement activities included: Place-Based Storytelling; Two Public Surveys; 10+ Organizational Stakeholder Interviews; Three Site Assessments (Including University of Waterloo Students); Community-Led Neighbourhood Walk; Equitable Community Engagement Training Delivered to City Staff and Neighbourhood Association Members; One Participatory Open House; and Informal Conversations.



Photo Credit: Gelek Badheysang

Jay Pitter and Local Resident

Place-Based Storytelling

To truly understand the history, character and significance of a place, we must begin by listening to local stories. As such, Phase 1 of the Mill Courtland Community Centre expansion was focused on place-based storytelling, which contributes to:

- » Mitigating power imbalances and inequities inherent in traditional community engagement processes by guiding a creative, democratic and accessible way to explore the value and function of places;
- » Uncovering the intangible cultural heritage of the site, meaning the rituals, stories, celebrations, social networks, sites of significance, etc.;
- » Modelling the equitable placemaking practice of listening more than speaking, and acknowledging lived experiences as an important form of expertise.

Public spaces and amenities are storied sites. The Jay Pitter Placemaking Storytelling Engagement Method positions community place-based stories as valuable design and development data. Using qualitative research approaches and building on oral traditions across cultures, the practice collects, analyzes and validates this data, which is then translated into tangible design interventions and policies. With the support of members of the Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association and the Highland-Stirling Community Group, Jay Pitter Placemaking led the practice's signature place-based storytelling engagement. Members of Ms. Pitter's community engagement team and volunteers from the aforementioned groups gathered stories using a simple template developed by the practice.

By involving local volunteers and experts, community members had the option to share their stories, some of which were profoundly personal, with someone they were familiar with, which increased comfort and participation levels. After individuals and families shared their stories, a professional photographer captured their images while members from the cob oven group grilled hearty snacks including roasted breadfruit, a Caribbean treat gifted to Ms. Pitter from a community member as a special welcome. Also, members of the music program, both youth and adult instructors, provided live music.

Despite contending with COVID-19 restrictions and hosting the event outdoors in chilly temperatures, 100+ individuals attended, and dozens of powerful and informative community stories were collected—including the five below.



Every time I see pita bread, I think of the Centre's cob oven. That whole project is a great memory where an amazing group of people, including my sons, came together with their own sets of skills to be part of a community project. While building the cob oven, we learned about the lives of our neighbours, and where they came from, and they provided mentorship for my boys. Alfred led the group, sharing his knowledge, and helped one to gain the confidence to build his own wooden table. Mark gave back to the Centre by building the shelter for the oven. He went out of his way to make sure the design fit the space, protected the oven and all those who would cook in it. I've now watched my children go from participating in Centre programs to volunteering, instructing and even working at the Centre. They have matured and developed life skills from working with people of all different walks of life, cultures and ages, and I have made connections with so many people I would never have met otherwise. I'm looking forward to another season of community connecting around food from the oven: pitas, pizza, corn and potatoes prepared by volunteers to share with our neighbours. ~ Julie



Growing up, I didn't have a lot of guidance so I could pretty much go anywhere I wanted. I went to a lot of recreational facilities to play basketball, but they would either charge a fee or kick youth out at the first sign of tension. I ended up coming to the Mill Courtland Community Centre twice a week because they didn't charge and when things went down, they communicated with us rather than kicking us out of the facility. The Centre is known for its many excellent programs, including basketball, and for being a gathering place that brings people together across different cultures. I was viewed as a person here, not a stereotype, based on how I presented myself. That's what matters ... acceptance. In addition to being accepted, I learned structure at the Centre, developed skills and built relationships. I now work for the school board and with youth in the detention centre. It all started by running stuff here! I am so thankful for this place. ~ Jorge



This place is really meaningful to me because it was through the Centre that I met my husband. Alex and I met when we were both working here, me as a co-ordinator, and Alex running a basketball program. Since then, we've spent the last 20 years building our family together and volunteering at the Centre. Once my employment at the Centre ended, I started volunteering. I also started bringing my kids here for programming. It's such a safe place for kids to be kids. There's a sense of accountability for them, but people at the Centre don't hold things against them when they make mistakes. I don't worry about my kids when they are here because I know the community is raising them. Now we've come full circle, and my daughter and son have each run their own basketball program. There's just something so special about the way this community treats people. There's a commitment to meeting people where they are.
~ Jen



The Community Centre is close to home for us, and the staff here are awesome. We started attending the Community Centre because of the programs they offer for kids. At first, I (Cindy) was shy and nervous because the Centre was new to me, but I was soon overwhelmed by a sense of community and the energy of the youth through the Community Outreach Program. The Centre keeps evolving and things are always being added, like the Little Library and art projects. It's an open-minded and reliable place.

It's like going to mom's house. It was through participation in the Just for Girls program that I (Forrest) came to understand that I was transgender. I received support from staff and the Program Director as they grew in their understanding. There's always someone at the Centre to talk to. It's a welcoming environment for people my age, and there's always new friends to make. ~ Cindy & Forrest



I came to Canada from civil war-torn South Sudan during the winter of 1988. My father passed away early in my life. My mother thought that sending me to Canada with my uncle would be my best opportunity for a better life, so I travelled here with my uncle who became my dad. I didn't speak English but my uncle/dad spoke a little bit and worked hard to get us settled. We lived in a tight-knit community, but I wasn't always surrounded by the right influences. When I arrived at the Community Centre, I was a difficult seventh grader struggling with identity issues, and carrying so much trauma from my journey and the things I'd witnessed during the civil war. I acted out on a regular basis but Joanne, the Centre Co-ordinator, just pulled me closer to her. She and others saw something in me that I didn't see in myself. I was given leadership opportunities and they did little things like celebrate my birthday, Christmas cards and access to playing basketball in my spare time. I began to feel safe and valuable, and I developed a sense of accountability. Because of everyone's faith in me and my own efforts, I went on to graduate with a Bachelor's Degree in Communication Studies and a Minor in Religious Studies from Wilfrid Laurier University. Today, I am working with newcomers who are predominantly Black and racialized youth, coaching football at the local university and raising my three children alongside my wife. In fact, when my son and daughter were born, I brought them to see Joanne who still holds a motherly role for me and a nana role for my children. Although I no longer live in the neighbourhood, this is where I bring my children. I wouldn't consider going to a closer, fancier community centre. If you remove the Community Centre from my story, I wouldn't be the person I am today. ~ Nial

The story-based engagement process culminated in an informal walk with neighbourhood association members and Councillor Debbie Chapman.

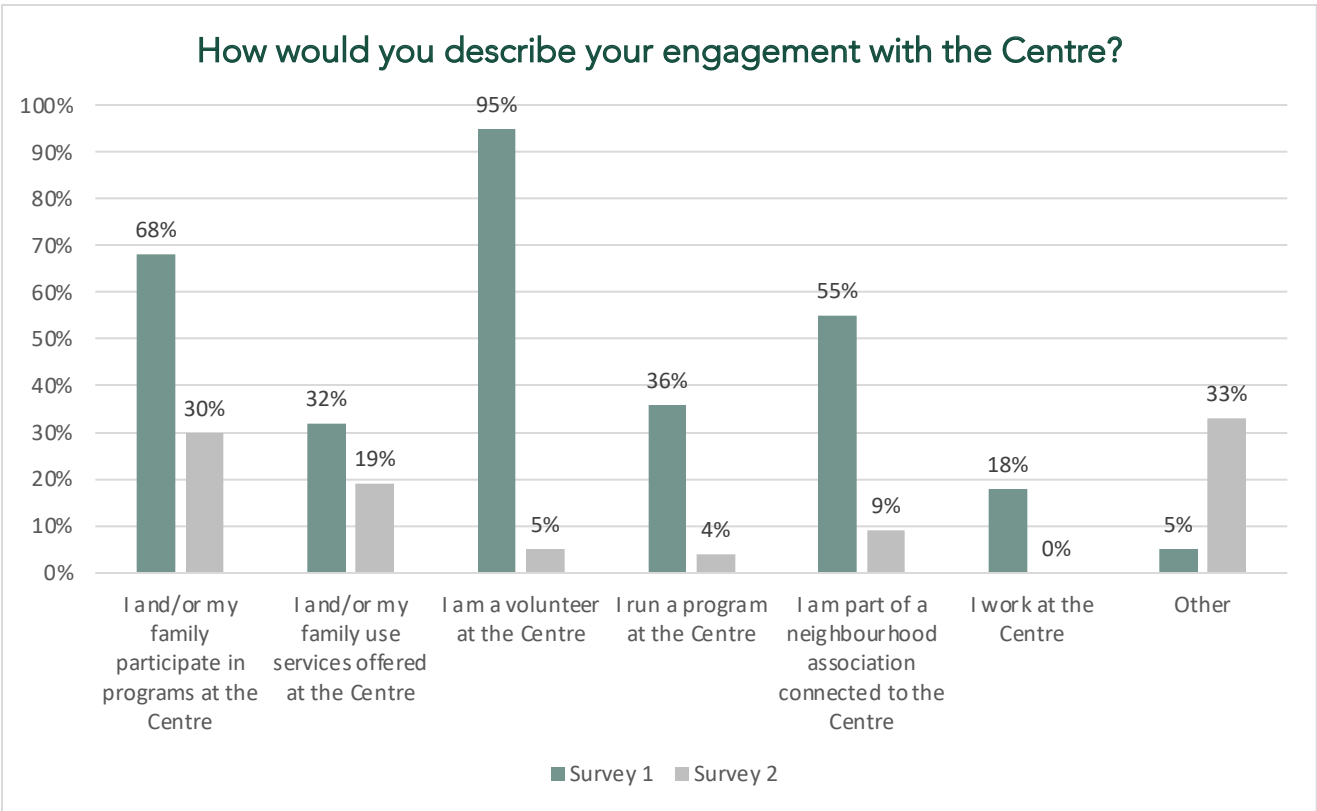
Public Surveys

Two public surveys, co-created with the neighbourhood associations, were conducted with community members and were designed to provide insight into how new, enhanced spaces could support the culture and values of the Centre.

The first public survey was geared towards community stakeholders with deep connections to the Centre, including staff, volunteers and neighbourhood association representatives. The second was geared towards community stakeholders who were casual or potential users.

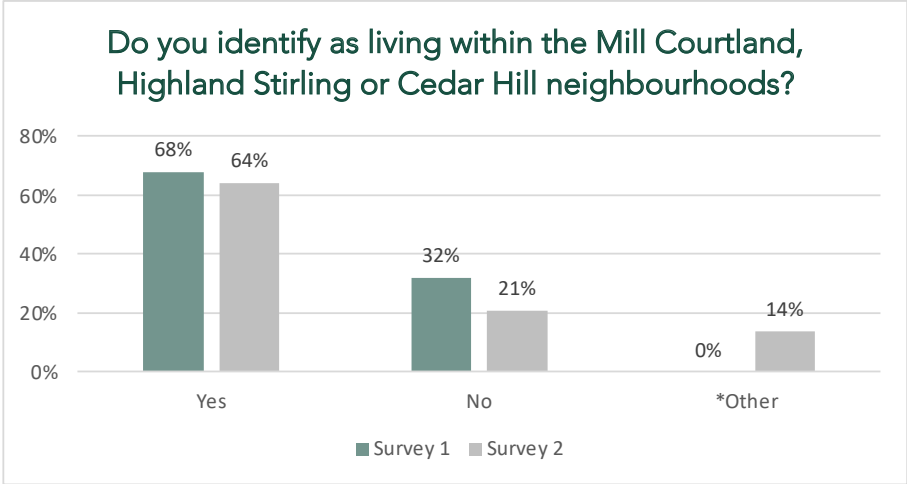
How would you describe your engagement with the Centre?

- » I and/or my family participate in programs at the Centre: 68% / 30%
- » I and/or my family use services offered at the Centre: 32% / 19%
- » I am a volunteer at the Centre: 95% / 5%
- » I run a program at the Centre: 36% / 4%
- » I am part of a neighbourhood association connected to the Centre: 55% / 9%
- » I work at the Centre: 18% / 0%
- » Other: 5% / 33%
 - For Survey 1, the other was a city councillor.
 - For Survey 2, the other category was people indicating they had previously used the Centre but don't anymore or that they live nearby and want to use the Centre but haven't yet.



Do you identify as living within the Mill Courtland, Highland Stirling or Cedar Hill neighbourhoods?

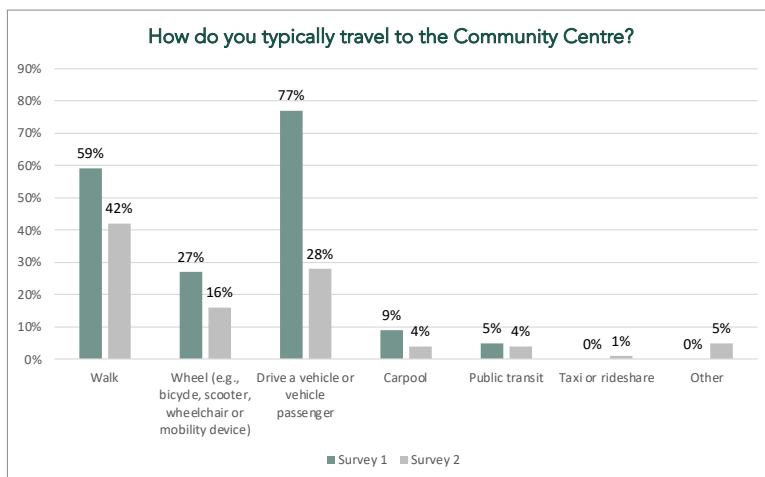
- » Yes: 68% / 64%
- » No: 32% / 21%
- » Other: 0% / 14%*



* For Survey 2, the other category was people who live outside those neighbourhoods but identified MCCC as their closest community centre.

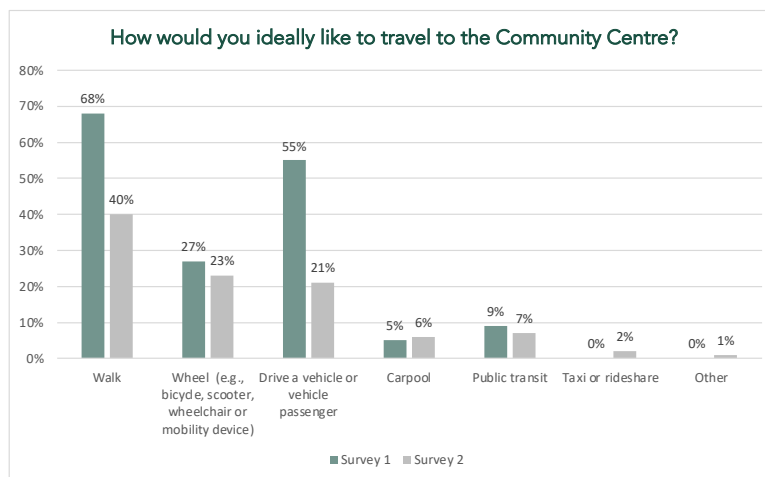
How do you typically travel to the Community Centre?

- » Walk: 59% / 42%
- » Wheel (e.g., bicycle, scooter, wheelchair or mobility device): 27% / 16%
- » Drive a vehicle or vehicle passenger: 77% / 28%
- » Carpool: 9% / 4%
- » Public transit: 5% / 4%
- » Taxi or rideshare: 0% / 1%
- » Other: 0% / 5%



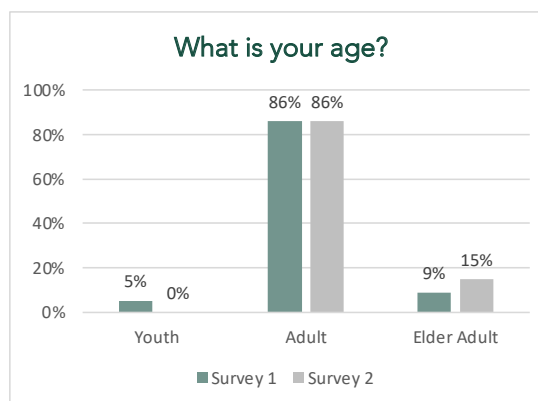
How would you ideally like to travel to the Community Centre?

- » Walk: 68% / 40%
- » Wheel (e.g., bicycle, scooter, wheelchair or mobility device): 27% / 23%
- » Drive a vehicle or vehicle passenger: 55% / 21%
- » Carpool: 5% / 6%
- » Public transit: 9% / 7%
- » Taxi or rideshare: 0% / 2%
- » Other: 0% / 1%



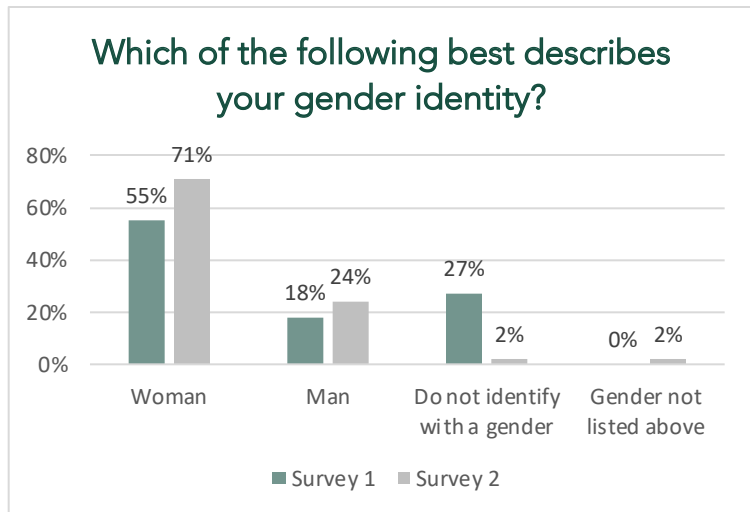
What is your age?

- » Youth: 5% / 0%
- » Adult: 86% / 86%
- » Elder Adult: 9% / 15%



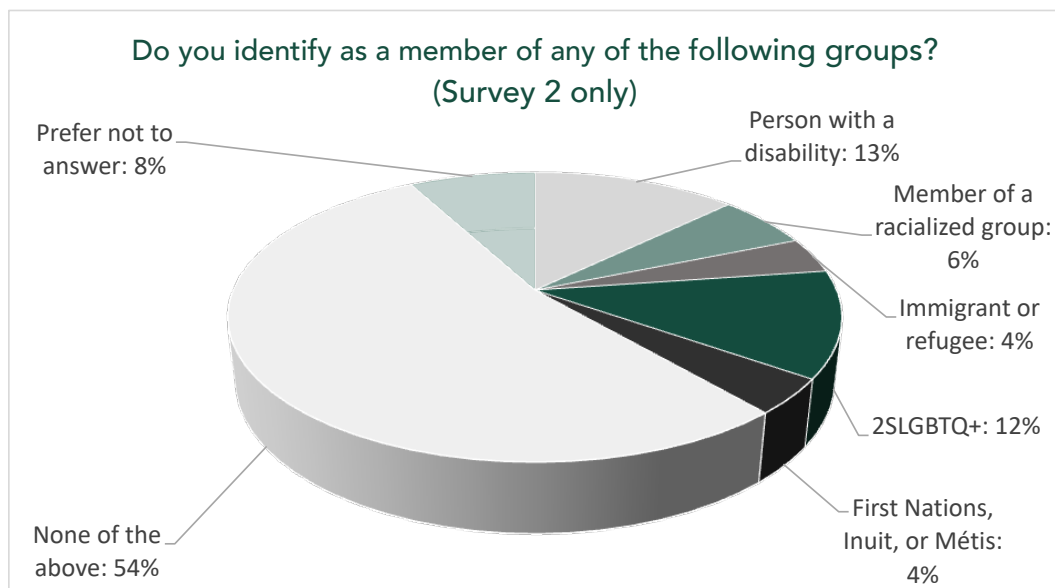
Which of the following best describes your gender identity?

- » Woman: 55% / 71%
- » Man: 18% / 24%
- » Do not identify with a gender: 27% / 2%
- » Gender not listed above: 0% / 2%



Do you identify as a member of any of the following groups? (Survey 2 only)

- » Person with a disability: 13%
- » Member of a racialized group: 6%
- » Immigrant or refugee: 4%
- » 2SLGBTQ+: 12%
- » First Nations, Inuit, or Métis: 4%
- » None of the above: 54%
- » Prefer not to answer: 8%



Community Survey Responses

The following unedited responses were selected from both surveys to provide further context and information.

Legend

- Survey One: people closely connected to the Centre
- Survey Two: casual users of the Centre

What would you say is the most important or valuable function of the Community Centre?

- » The people who come to MCCC and the staff working at the Centre are the most valuable function of the Community Centre. Everyone is made to feel valued and represented. The atmosphere is always open, inviting and friendly. The Centre is warm and accessible. Everyone is welcome and treated with respect.
- » It offers a place for the most vulnerable (youth, homeless, low-income) to access resources and supports, like food, clothing, showers, internet, child care, cooking classes, wellness programs.

- » I love the various programs being offered. They are diverse and affordable.
- » A place to belong. A place to meet neighbours. A place to connect to City staff, who might be able to help a person and/or their family connect to other community/municipal supports.
- » Room to be active. I live in an apartment near the Centre.

What would you say is the most usable space at the Centre right now and why?

- » The gymnasium is the most versatile room. It is used for large events like the Christmas Dinner, craft sales, exercise programs, play area for pre-schoolers.
- » There are multiple usable spaces. The front parking lot where the market is held, the back where the cob oven is and other amenities, and the newly renovated kitchen are all important usable spaces.
- » Gym: The open space is easy for people to use with lots of space to run around.

- » The outdoor space is AWESOME and is available to all in the neighbourhood, even those of us with pre-existing conditions that make being indoors with others who may be unmasked unsafe right now in the sixth wave of the pandemic. It is gorgeous, full of learning opportunities for small children, and is very welcoming/inviting.

- » Honestly, we stopped going because it didn't grow with our family, not good youth programs or space to play sports or green space. I know it's a small area to work with, so limited; what can be done.

What space(s) at the Centre desperately need improvement?

- » Portable. The guitar club is in need of a space. The portable was only ever intended as a temporary solution and 16 years later is showing its age. There have been leaks. There was a break-in. There are pests. There is no bathroom. It is accessible, but not user-friendly. It has no internet connection. The HVAC system is makeshift. It is disconnected from the rest of the MCCC.
 - » The outdoor greenspace is wonderful because it can be used any time but could do with many improvements. Making the space more physically accessible and improving/adding outdoor infrastructure would be beneficial. The basketball nets in the back parking lot are also an issue. While it is great to have them, the parking lot surface is not ideal. It is difficult to play on (uneven surface) and can also be a safety issue (with gravel and sand on the surface).
 - » Storage space is of great importance, as you have to move so much to get out what you need.
- » There was a problem with ants every spring/summer, which is part of the reason I discontinued attending programs. Not entirely comfortable working out on the floor or even laying down an exercise mat knowing I might be bringing an ant problem home with me. If there was some way to seal the exterior better to eliminate this problem.
 - » Kitchen and all the small rooms, offices—poor lighting, cramped, meeting rooms, child-care facilities and supply areas with inadequate storage facilities. Little insulation in outer walls, inconsistent heating and air conditioning flow.
 - » The entrances are somewhat crowded (front more so) and it is not easily identified when we should use the front or rear entrance. Also, the parking is limited at certain times.
 - » From a mobility perspective, some of the rooms when set up can be a little hard to navigate. Hallways narrow ... especially when busy and full of bodies.

What is currently the #1 space in the Centre for community-building and community care?

- » The back space has become a great space for community-building. The cob oven allows for food and conversation. It has beautiful gardens, and a play space beside it, and a ping pong table, and raised-container gardening in front of it.
- » Also, a large green area to allow for activities and play. Casual gatherings, summer camps, celebrations, outdoor programming including sports all allow for community-building and making connections with others.
- » I can't think of a specific space within the Centre that is the #1 space for community-building and community care. I see that as positive as community-building and community care happen everywhere inside and outside the Centre. I think the most important thing is to have a variety of options, or versatility of the spaces. The lobby is a good space because it allows people to congregate, mingle and connect. But it is also important to have smaller meeting rooms and areas where people can have smaller, more intimate conversations. I think having different options and spaces allows community-building/community care to occur in different ways at different times.

- » Clothing room, community members are able to get clothes for free.
- » The front where everyone comes in and feels welcomed. That's where it all begins.
- » Gym and kitchen interactive activities, classes and a variety of recreational/sports.
- » Outside areas. Community events happen. I play with my kids at the outdoor table tennis and basketball net.

What components of the building could be improved as part of this expansion?

- » The outdoor space—perhaps a roofed shelter and group gathering space in the rear and a more conducive front area for market/events.
- » Physical accessibility in the front and back parking lots, in and around the green space. People with special needs cannot get to the cob oven, skating rink, container gardens.
- » Lighting, heating & cooling need upgrading. Some areas of the building have baseboard heaters. Improved lighting in the front parking lot & repaving of parking areas.

» Parking lot: it is a challenge to use this space for outdoor activities, such as the market, because it lacks shade and safety (for example, children have to walk through the lot and compete with cars to access the front door).

» I think more character and warmth could be added into some of the rooms where classes are held. The layout is confusing at times; for example, you have to walk through a long windy hall to get to the gymnasium. There are many side rooms that I have never seen open.

» Definitely parking lot flow, especially at the side and rear. Lighting can always be improved for safety and utilizing energy-efficient fixtures.

» It is awesome to have the cob oven and ping pong table, however there are many people who can't use them. I definitely appreciate that not everything is accessible to every person. Perhaps it is about adding more features that are accessibility-minded to complement the other outdoor features.

» The air conditioning can definitely use an upgrade and so can the heating to provide maximum relief and coverage. The water fountain needs to not only be replaced but also upgraded to allow refilling of personal water bottles and for its usual purpose. The parking lot could be somewhat more flexible, unless there were to be an alternate parking area close by for convenience. The building also needs to be greened with LEED standards and EnerGuide appliances with a solar network dynamic roof for lowering energy costs and generating energy to be sent back to the grid.

Are there any components of the building or the exterior that should not be changed as part of the expansion?

» The back area with its basketball courts, skating rink, community garden, woodfired stove, and naturalized spaces should not be changed.

» Cob oven—Volunteers put many dedicated hours into this structure and look at it as a piece of art.

» I think it is very important to keep the front offices at the front door. It is crucial to have staff welcome people as they come in. Many people who come to the Centre are accessing it for the first time and it is very important they are immediately welcomed and can be helped by staff.

» I love the huge green space in the back—please keep that! The gardens in the summer and the ice rink in the winter are awesome.

» Please keep the oven out back, the lovely gardens, game tables, grassy area for play, etc. and improve on them rather than taking them out. I also love the rainbow bench and bike rack with all of my heart.

- » The green space at the back. Need an open space to run around, but I could see the space having more flowers or designed garden where people can sit and enjoy. Pollinator garden.

What future spaces would you like to see added to the Centre?

- » Secure bike lockup/outside storage with video surveillance. Bicycles have been stolen when locked up to the rails and bike racks at MCCC. Building a green community means bikes, scooters, etc., but it also requires assurances that people can use the Community Centre without their property being stolen right out from under their noses.
- » More storage because a lot of the programs and services require a lot of storage space and it is hard to keep it organized.
- » Expansion of the pollinator gardens in the back space, along with more raised vegetable beds, would allow for those living in apartments or places with little or no outdoor area a chance to be in nature. Kids can learn about growing food, seniors who have downsized can still use their gardening skills and connect with others. A path encircling the back space would provide exercise, meditation, etc.
- » More multipurpose rooms would help a great deal. We need rooms to house the music program, a room for the youth group, and a maker's space for people who want to learn and create.

- » Computer lab for new Canadians to develop skills usable in a work environment (résumé labs and such).
- » Perhaps an expansion of the gardens, another outdoor game or workout equipment, some multilingual signage to better represent the languages spoken in our community (including Arabic and Tigrinya to represent our large populations, and possibly Persian and Ukrainian, depending on which newcomers settle in our area from Afghanistan and Ukraine). A survey of users may be helpful in determining which languages are spoken/in which languages families are literate.
- » There have been comments that the sitting area of the Centre feels underused.
- » Instead of a place where people come just to "hang out," it felt like a waiting area. Indoor and outdoor spaces that encourage folks to linger and talk and just be.
- » More rooms. It's a very small community centre compared to others.

How do you want to feel and what would you like to experience in the new, expanded space?

- » Friendly, welcoming, kind, caring and creative staff who have the autonomy and flexibility to meet the needs of community members. I want to feel that people care about each other and the staff have always modelled that for the rest of us.
- » I want to feel the same inviting, warm, supporting atmosphere that has always been there, but with upgraded touches. Décor and artwork purchased from local artists. Easily accessible for those living with physical disabilities.
- » The sense of community and connection that already exists with the potential to offer more to our community and to those who don't have a lot of other alternatives. One of the amazing things about this Centre is that it is welcoming to the underdog. While I would love new fancy stuff, I think it is far, far, far more important to remain accessible to those who are unable to access the larger organizations (due to finances, special needs/behavioural concerns/mental health, ESL, and all the other reasons I can't think of right now). I want the space to remain low-key and understated enough to remain a place for those who don't fit into the fancier places.

- » Clean! Updated flooring and paint. Properly sealed.
- » Clear and visible anti-racist principles, Indigenous cultural involvement and land acknowledgement, physical accessibility. It should be unambiguously inclusive for people who are usually marginalized from public spaces.
- » Physically safe and free to move; have a more spacious floorplan and room to move around. Energized, warm, inviting; bright lights and warm colours, comfortable surroundings.
- » Don't care about how it makes me feel, just want cost-effective, usable space with facilities and programming that's free of charge. It should have good natural light where possible.

In addition to serving the existing community and user groups, which new communities could benefit from the expansion of the Centre and how?

- » Our neighbourhood is seeing greater numbers of BIPOC and LGBTQ2IA+ residents request inclusivity. They are letting everyone know that they have been excluded in the past and they want in now. I think that we need to take

action to create more space that is designated for programs geared to the historically marginalized.

- » Many cultural groups do not have dedicated meeting space. They could benefit from a meeting room to be used on dedicated times/days that they are comfortable in, or space in the back for religious rituals, fires, prayer/meditation paths, drumming circles, etc.
- » As the neighbourhood changes, the Centre has adapted to meet the needs of the community. I have seen this over and over again through the years. The challenge at this time is that with new intense development I hope that in scaling up, the flexibility and adaptability of the Centre is not lost.
- » There are now many residents and residents in the future in high-rise apartments and condos who are not really served by the Centre.

- » As a new parent, I would like this to be a place where I can connect with other new parents in my geographical area, and support each other/connect.
- » We have a large new immigrant component in our community, so kitchen facilities, closet and storage for donations for the clothes closet and personal care/home necessities. Child-care needs are essential.
- » The development where Schneiders used to be sure is going to add a lot of people in the community. I'm sure sad to see a part of heritage going in this city but hopefully there will be some remembrance left there from part of the old buildings. That is just one of the sites that made this city thrive and grow the way it is today. For that be thrown away and forgotten is sinful, but this city is well-known for that. If Schneiders' name is good and there were no bad doings in the past, the name and picture of what was there should be included.

Additional responses

- » Our Centre needs more permanent additions to house more programs and to create spaces for marginalized neighbours. We don't need a swimming pool or a weightlifting space, or a tech lab. We need rooms that are connected to the main building. We need versatile spaces that allow us to store equipment for multiple programs. Thank you.

- » Compared with other community centres, MCCC is a smaller, more intimate space. It has a warm and welcoming atmosphere where people's needs come first. I hope that any changes will reflect the neighbourhood's needs and continue to be open to help all those who come through the doors with resources, programs and support.
- » I think the focus should be on improvement and enhancement. I think Mill Courtland is an incredible place that helps many, many people. But it is far from perfect and there is always space for improvement. My ideal vision for the Centre would be to continue providing the services we do, while investing in change that allows us to broaden our reach. I want to see Mill Courtland continue to be a hub in the community, where people from all backgrounds and walks of life can grow together. Any type of change to the Centre that allows us to be an accessible resource for all would be a win in my book.

- » Honestly, I think the Centre runs INCREDIBLE programming. I just never find out about it, despite living around the corner. They have a toddler and parent drop-in program, and I follow that on Instagram, but they never say when it's running, they just post random pics. They need better info and communication.
- » As the area is undergoing expansion with high-rises along the Iron Horse Trail, the facility needs to expand the building and services to meet the needs of a growing community. There needs to be more variety of programs for seniors and others in the community.

Organizational Stakeholder Interviews

To further expand engagement, the practice collaborated with City of Kitchener staff and the neighbourhood associations to compile a list of local organizations. The purpose of these interviews was to understand usage needs as well as potential barriers to use faced by local organizations that are within the Centre's catchment area and/or to serve community members who may be located in the catchment area. By broadening the engagement in this way, the interviews helped provide insight into potential and future uses of the Centre by these organizations, and their stakeholders who could either use space in the Centre themselves for running programs and services, or refer clients to programs and services provided at the MCCC.

Interviews were conducted in August and September 2022. Organizations included were:

- » Spectrum, which services and supports LGBTQ2IA+ people in the Waterloo Region;
- » Carizon, which provides services including mental health and education programs;
- » Immigration Partnership, which provides immigration services under three pillars—settle, work and belong;
- » KW Counselling Services, which provides mental health services and training;
- » KW AccessAbility, which is a resource centre supporting adults with physical disabilities;
- » Sanguen Health Centre, which offers health services, outreach and support, including to people who are precariously housed.

The following learnings emerged from the external organizational interviews:

Consider how an expanded Centre could host organizational programming.

Most organizations indicated they had not used the MCCC for their own programs and services, but expressed interest in potential uses, depending on what spaces were available. For example, one organization said it needed a kitchen space for its cooking program, while another mentioned that food distribution and computer programs are helpful for its clients. One organization that said it relied on outside space for its programs, indicated it had used the MCCC for an event several years ago and said that it would require rooms with a capacity of at 20–40 people to accommodate events and meetings.

Share MCCC programs/services offerings more widely with organizations.

Several organizations noted that they were interested in relaying programming and service/resource offerings to their clients. For example, one organization said a “food distribution program” would be helpful to its clients—something the MCCC already offers in some form but could advertise more.

Ensure programs and staff are inclusive of LGBTQ2IA+ people.

Two organizations that specifically serve the LGBTQ2IA+ community indicated that a renovated Centre should consider including gender-neutral washrooms, trans and non-binary recreation programming, and ensure that all staff have training in LGBTQ2IA+ needs. One organization also indicated that forms should have spaces for chosen names and be written in neutral language (i.e., not gendered).

Design spaces for accessibility.

One organization said it was key to ensure that the building and any expanded spaces are universally accessible. This sentiment and critical priority was also echoed by the neighbourhood associations and other local stakeholders, both individuals and organizations.

Create inclusive spaces, programs and services.

One organization said it is key to ensure all people feel welcome in spaces such as community centres and act as a “safe drop-in space” particularly in colder weather months. They suggested the Centre could include providing programs where people learn to make harm-reduction kits, therapeutic program offerings and access to meals and personal hygiene products.

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Consultant Reflection

Speaking to long-time Community Centre users and stewards, it is clear that the Centre is a supportive services hub for the community and broader city. A diverse range of community stakeholders spoke about important, oftentimes long-term relationships with staff and each other, placing emphasis on the fact that it is the people who make the place special. Themes and values pertaining to inclusion, flexibility and community care were recurring across all surveys and conversations. Community members repeatedly emphasized that their priorities for expansion are squarely focused on creating internal and external spaces that, above all else, foster established and new relationships.

PART THREE: AUDITS AND ANALYSIS

Predicated on our equitable approach, the following social, spatial and economic audits are intended to ensure that all development decisions are made using a holistic lens that privileges community care, responsiveness and functionality over sleek design or the bottom line. This assertion isn't intended to create a polarized either/or approach, but rather is a statement of value and priority, both fundamental aspects of the business case process. Each of the following audits are tethered to correlating analysis and recommendations.

Community Profile Audit

The Centre is a hub, distinctly situated amid diverse neighbourhoods with divergent socio-economic realities, which differ from the city as a whole. This community profile was composed using data from the 2020 Neighbourhood Profiles of both the Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling communities³—the two main communities that the Centre serves. This was then compared to the overall city of Kitchener profile using census data from 2016. While some of these numbers have likely changed with the 2021 census, the overall trends regarding population, income and education levels likely continue to be relevant. As aforementioned, some of the data and analysis were informed by University of Waterloo urban planning students in a course taught by Jay Pitter and have been explicitly cited to acknowledge their important contributions.

Demographic Audit

Population Growth⁴

City of Kitchener:

254,300 (2021) to 315,100 (2041), a 24% increase

Mill Courtland: 5,773

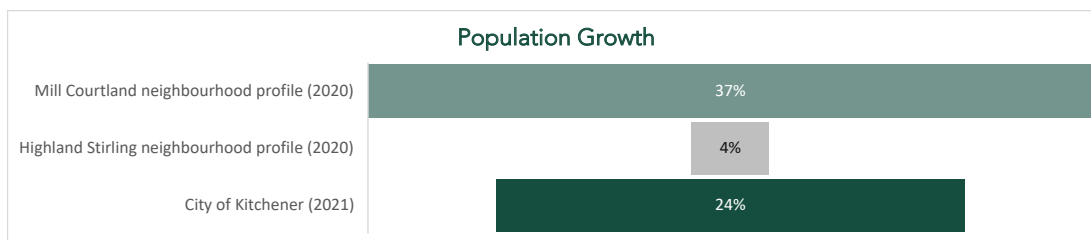
Forecast to grow to 7,900 by 2041, a 37% increase

Highland Stirling: 4,704

Forecast to grow to 4,900 by 2041, a 4% increase

Combined: 10,477

Forecast to grow 12,800 by 2041, a 22% increase



³ All demographic data, unless otherwise noted, was derived from official 2020 City of Kitchener demographic profiles for the Mill Courtland neighbourhood, Highland Stirling neighbourhood, and City of Kitchener.

City of Kitchener. (2020) 2020 Kitchener Demographics. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/b228dc3a629b44498ce209bf7d822ce4/page/2020-Demographics/>

⁴ Monteith + Brown Planning Consultants, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (2018) *Community Centre Future Facility Needs Review (CCFFNR)*. City of Kitchener. p. 5

Population Growth (continued)



Immigration

Mill Courtland
(neighbourhood profile, 2020)

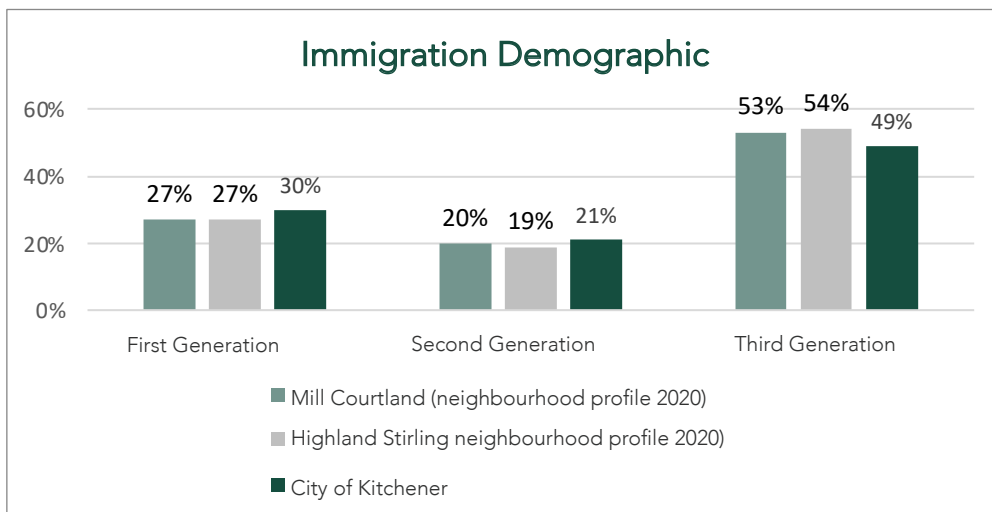
First gen: 27%
Second gen: 20%
Third gen: 53%

Highland Stirling
(neighbourhood profile, 2020)

First gen: 27%
Second gen: 19%
Third gen: 54%

City of Kitchener

First gen: 30%
Second gen: 21%
Third gen: 49%



Top non-official home languages (neighbourhood profile, 2020)

Mill Courtland: Arabic, Portuguese, Serbian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Mandarin

Highland Stirling: Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, German, Arabic

City of Kitchener: Spanish, Arabic, Serbian, Romanian, Mandarin

Age profiles

Mill Courtland⁵

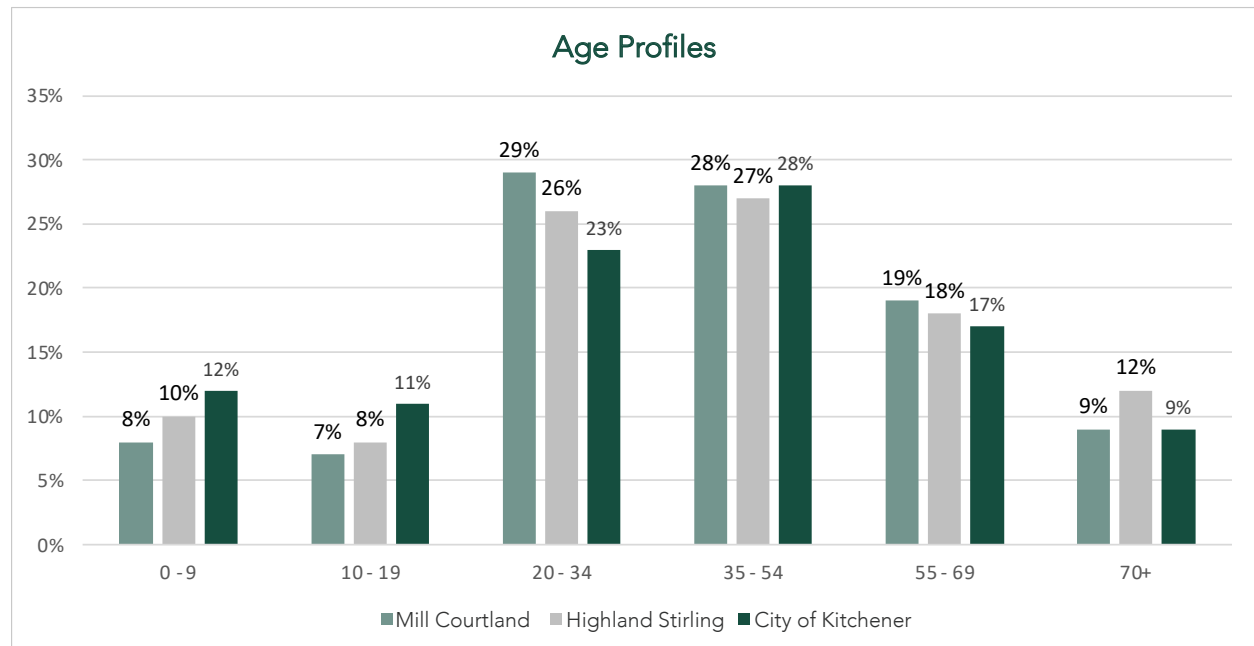
0–9: 8%
 10–19: 7%
 20–34: 29%
 35–54: 28%
 55–69: 19%
 70+: 9%

Highland Stirling⁶

0–9: 10%
 10–19: 8%
 20–34: 26%
 35–54: 27%
 55–69: 18%
 70+: 12%

City of Kitchener⁷

0–9: 12%
 10–19: 11%
 20–34: 23%
 35–54: 28%
 55–69: 17%
 70+: 9%



5. City of Kitchener (2020). Environics Analytics DemoStats. p.477. <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/b228dc3a629b44498ce209bf7d822ce4/page/2020-Demographics/>

6. City of Kitchener (2020). Environics Analytics DemoStats.

7. Monteith + Brown Planning Consultants, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (2018) Community Centre Future Facility Needs Review (CCFFNR). City of Kitchener. p. 9 (2016 numbers)

Demographic Analysis

Mill Courtland is a fast-growing community.

Forecasted 2041 population growth for the combined Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling communities mirrors the forecast for the city of Kitchener. However, the bulk of the population growth will happen in Mill Courtland, where growth is projected to outstrip the city's average. Mill Courtland is projected to grow by 37% by 2041, while Highland Stirling is projected to grow by just 4% in the same period. This can be attributed to the planned development potential within the Mill Courtland neighbourhood boundaries, such as the Schneider development.

The MCCC serves a large immigrant population.

In both Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling, the number of first-generation immigrants makes up 27% of the overall population.

The proportion of visible minorities is growing in the city.

In the city of Kitchener as a whole, visible minorities increased from 15% of the population to 22% from 2006 to 2016. South Asians represent the largest and fastest-growing population group within the city of Kitchener, as well as the larger region.⁸

Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling have lower levels of older youth and teens.

Compared to the city of Kitchener, the Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling neighbourhoods have lower levels of youth aged 10–19.

There's a high proportion of seniors, with many living alone.

Approximately 15% of the people living within Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling neighbourhoods are seniors (aged 65 and older), which is slightly higher than the city of Kitchener as a whole. Approximately 6% of seniors in each neighbourhood live alone.

8. Monteith + Brown Planning Consultants, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (2018) *Community Centre Future Facility Needs Review* (CCFFNR). City of Kitchener. p. 15

Economic, Workforce and Education Audit

Income Distributions

Mill Courtland household income

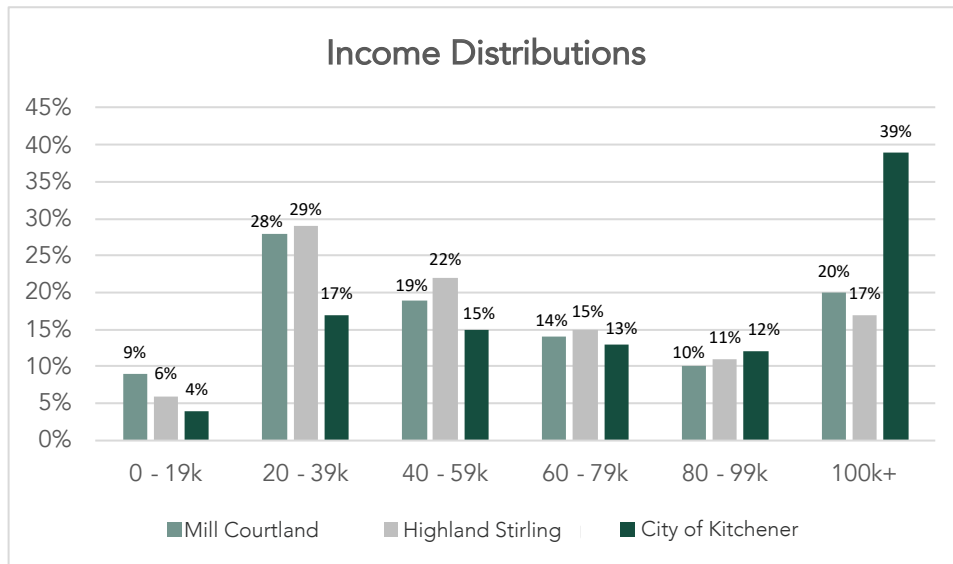
0-19k: 9%
 20-39k: 28%
 40-59k: 19%
 60-79k: 14%
 80-99k: 10%
 100k: 20%
 median household income: \$54,182

Highland Stirling household income

0-19k: 6%
 20-39k: 29%
 40-59k: 22%
 60-79k: 15%
 80-99k: 11%
 100k: 17%
 median household income: \$53,766

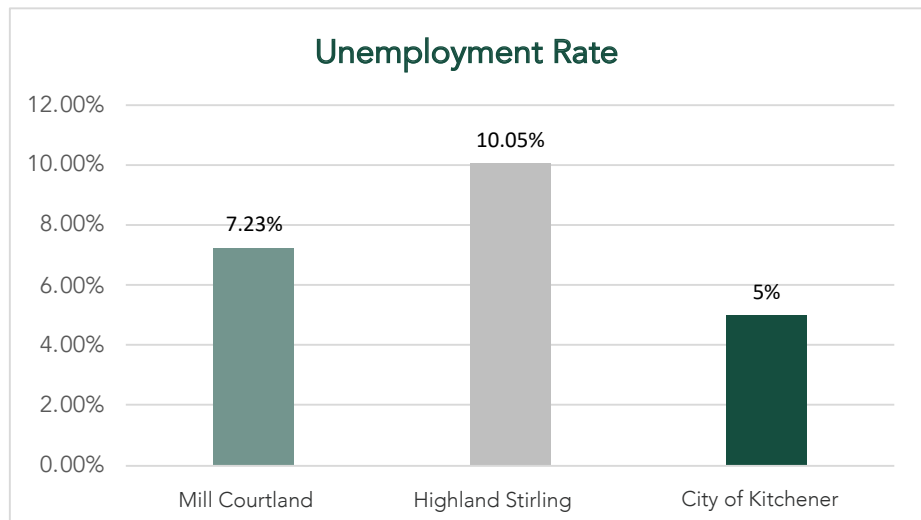
City of Kitchener household income

0-19k: 4%
 20-39k: 17%
 40-59k: 15%
 60-79k: 13%
 80-99k: 12%
 100k: 39%
 median household income: \$80,395

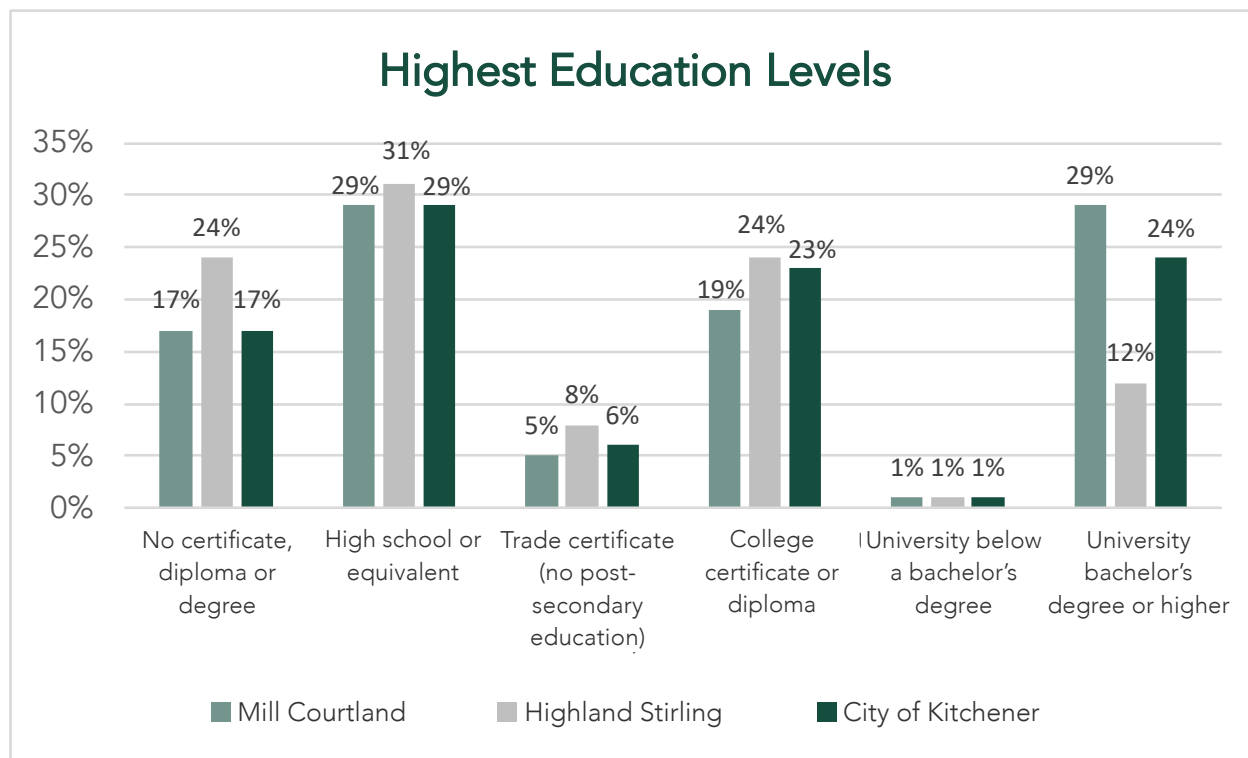


Unemployment Rate

Mill Courtland: 7.23%
 Highland Stirling: 10.05%
 City of Kitchener: 5%



Highest Education Levels



Mill Courtland

No certificate, diploma or degree: 17%

High school or equivalent: 29%

Trade certificate (no post-secondary education): 5%

College certificate or diploma: 19%

University below a bachelor's degree: 1%

University bachelor's degree or higher: 29%

Highland Stirling

No certificate, diploma or degree: 24%

High school or equivalent: 31%

Trade certificate (no post-secondary education): 8%

College certificate or diploma: 24%

University below a bachelor's degree: 1%

University bachelor's degree or higher: 12%

City of Kitchener

No certificate, diploma or degree: 17%

High school or equivalent: 29%

Trade certificate (no post-secondary education): 6%

College certificate or diploma: 23%

University below a bachelor's degree: 1%

University bachelor's degree or higher: 24%

Economic, Workforce and Education Analysis

Both neighbourhoods have higher levels of people who are unemployed.

In Mill Courtland, the unemployment rate is slightly higher when compared to the city of Kitchener as a whole, but the unemployment rate in Highland Stirling is double that of the city of Kitchener (10% compared to 5%).

Both neighbourhoods have higher levels of people living on lower incomes.

Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling both contain higher proportions of lower-income households compared to the wider city of Kitchener. For example, Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling have 28% and 29% respectively of households with an annual income between \$20k and \$39k, while the figure is 17% for the city of Kitchener. Following from this, both neighbourhoods also contain fewer households earning middle and higher annual incomes than the city as a whole, especially when it comes to those earning \$100k and more.

Education levels diverge between the two neighbourhoods.

Highland Stirling has higher proportions of people with no certification, diploma or degree as well as those whose highest education level is high school or equivalent when compared to the city of Kitchener average. However, Mill Courtland has a higher proportion of residents with a bachelor's degree and above than the city average, with the neighbourhood showing higher education levels than the city average.⁹

Dwelling Type

Mill Courtland

Apartment: 61%

Single-detached house: 32%

Semi-detached house: 3%

Row house: 4%

Highland Stirling

Apartment: 59%

Single-detached house: 27%

Semi-detached house: 4%

Row house: 10%

City of Kitchener

Apartment: 34%

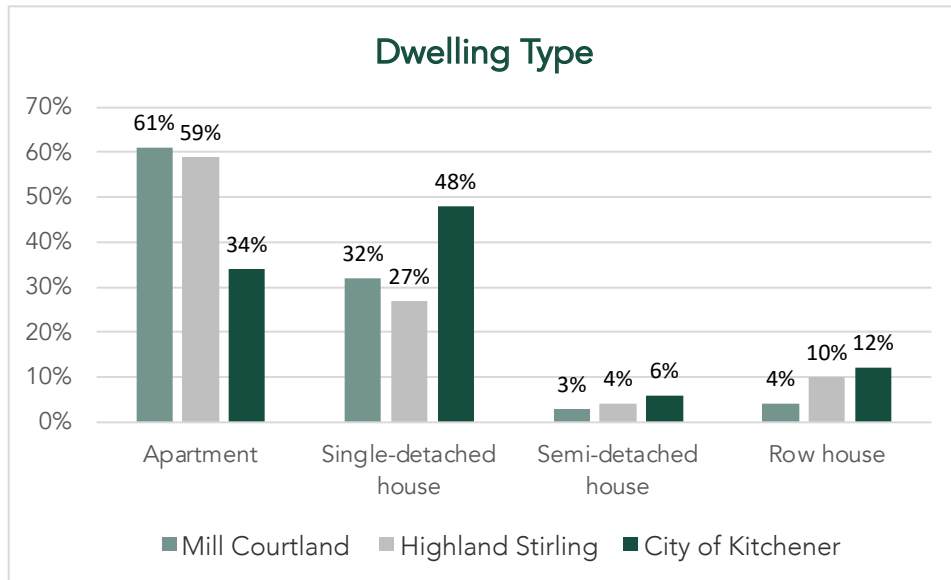
Single-detached house: 48%

Semi-detached house: 6%

Row house: 12%

9. Budiwarman, R., Chen, A., Cheung, S.J., Coulis, H.J., Hao, R., Mittelstaedt, M.R., Rosatone, S.D., Salidas, L.M., Vandermeulen, P.E. (Group 7). (2022). *Mill Courtland Community Centre*, p.6

Dwelling Type (continued)

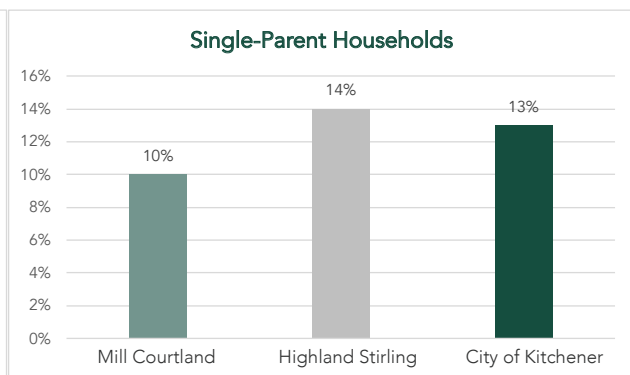
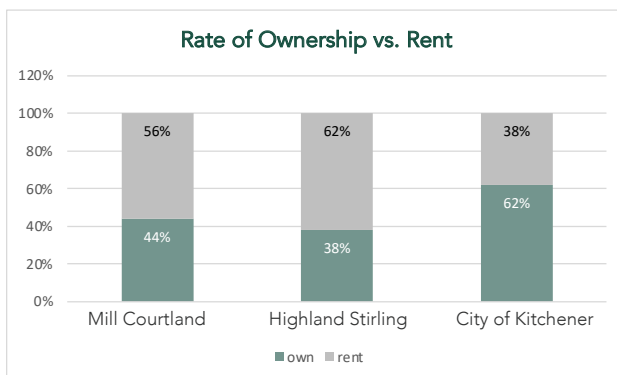


Rate of Ownership vs. Renter

Mill Courtland: 44% own / 56% rent
 Highland Stirling: 38% own / 62% rent
 City of Kitchener: 62% own / 38% rent

Single-Parent Households

Mill Courtland: 10%
 Highland Stirling: 14%
 City of Kitchener: 13%



Household Make-up Analysis

Most residents live in apartment buildings.

Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling have more people living in apartment buildings than is the case in the broader city of Kitchener. Apartments account for 58% of dwelling types in Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling combined, while they account for just 27% in the city of Kitchener as a whole.¹⁰

Most people are renters.

Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling contain more renters compared to the city of Kitchener as a whole, where more homeowners are found.¹¹

Single parent-led households differ between neighbourhoods.

Mill Courtland has a slightly lower level of single-parent households (10%) when compared with the city of Kitchener (13%), while Highland Stirling sits slightly higher (14%). However, MCCC staff have commented that the Centre's programs draw a large number of single parents for programming and activities.

Community Profile Recommendations

Expand both internal and external spaces to meet future population growth needs.

Rapid neighbourhood growth, specifically within the Centre's neighbourhood boundaries, suggests that expanding both internal and external spaces is a pressing requirement. The Mill Courtland neighbourhood is projected to grow by 37% by 2041, outpacing the growth rate of the city of Kitchener, which is projected to grow by 24% during the same period. While an emphasis has been placed on the expansion of the building envelope, the entire site must be enhanced.

Continue to offer high-quality indoor and outdoor communal spaces.

For renters, especially those living in apartments, public spaces act as a critical extension of personal living space. For these stakeholders, access to quality public spaces significantly contributes to mental health, physical health and an overall sense of spaciousness. There are more people living in apartment buildings in the Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling neighbourhoods (58%) than on average within the city of Kitchener (27%). Similarly, there are far more renters located within the two neighbourhoods than in the city as a whole, with renters representing approximately two-thirds of households in Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling, but only one-third of households within the city. Given these statistics, the Centre must continue to function as the community's public living room.

10. Group 7. (2022). Mill Courtland Community Centre, p.5

11. Group 7. (2022). Mill Courtland Community Centre, p.5

Ensure increased operating costs do not drive up supportive service and program fees. Ensure programs and services are accessible to those on lower incomes.

The Centre already offers a range of accessible and free programs and services, which remains critical because there are higher proportions of households living on lower incomes in both Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling than in the city. As such, when selecting specific design interventions, careful attention must be paid to not only development and design costs, but also ongoing operation costs. While expansion will naturally inflate annual operating costs, supportive services and program fees cannot be relied upon to generate revenue to cover this increase—unlike at other community centres in the city.

Consider expanding employment-related support services.

Higher unemployment rates and the arrival of newcomers in the adjacent neighbourhoods suggest that greater access to employment-related programming such as skills training, culturally responsive networking opportunities, and workforce onboarding skills would be beneficial to current and future Centre users and stewards. Additionally, establishing a partnership with an academic institution may also be beneficial because while the Mill Courtland neighbourhood ranks higher in education than the city average—with more people reporting bachelor's degrees and higher—the Highland Stirling neighbourhood has higher proportions of people who report having no certificate, diploma or degree, and less than half of people reporting bachelor's degrees and higher than the city average.

Partner with more ethno-racial organizations to produce multilingual program materials.

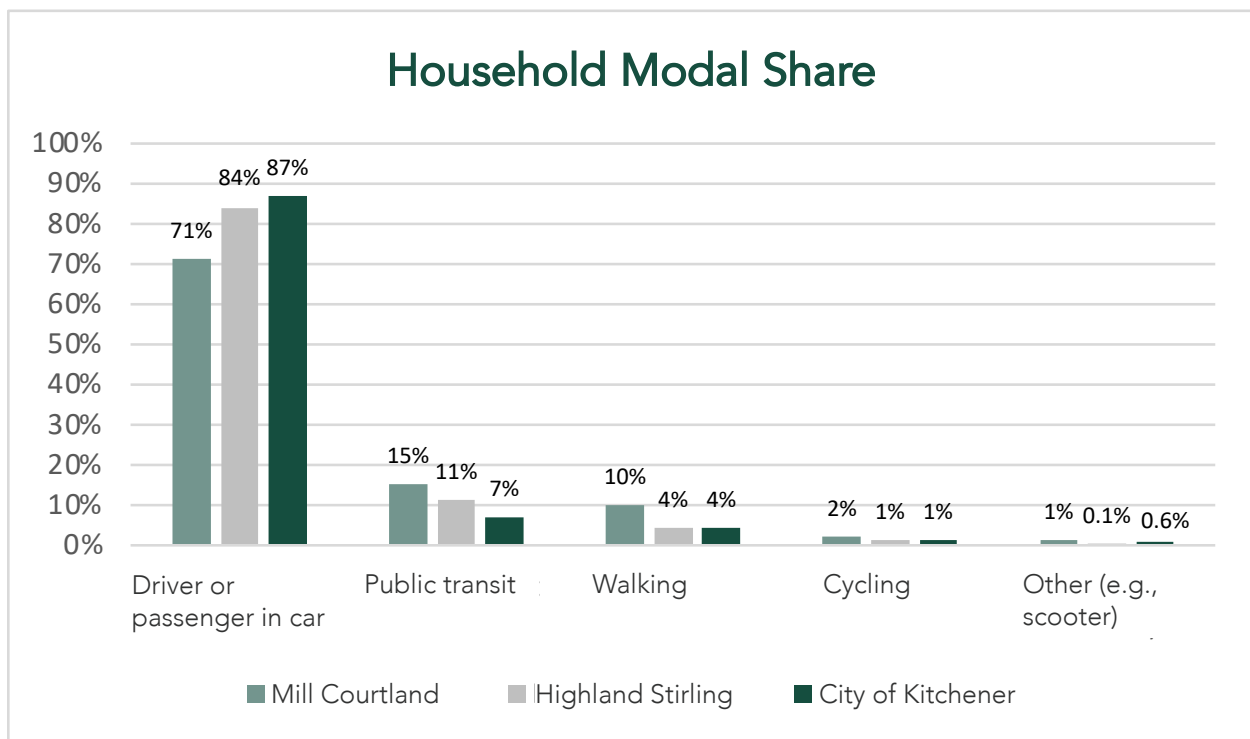
The top spoken languages, outside of English or French, in both Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling are Arabic, Spanish and Portuguese, with smaller numbers of people speaking Serbian, Romanian, German and Vietnamese. Providing current and future Centre users and stewards with programs and communication materials in their first languages is an important form of accessibility, and reduces barriers for many.

Understanding the costs of translation, it is advisable to employ both pragmatic and creative methods such as forging partnerships with ethno-racial organizations to co-lead specific programs and to translate prioritized communications materials.

Active Transportation Audit

A key aspect of ensuring that the Community Centre is socially, economically and physically accessible is ensuring that people are able to access it through safe and accessible transportation options. For some, this may be carpooling, while for others it may be cycling, walking, rolling or catching a reliable bus. In this section, we compared statistics gathered from the demographic profiles of Mill Courtland, Highland Stirling, the city of Kitchener as a whole, as well as results from the community surveys conducted as part of this business case. For more in-depth statistics related to transportation use from these surveys, see the Community Engagement section on page 16 of this report.

Household Modal Share



Mill Courtland

Driver or passenger in car: 71%
 Public transit: 15%
 Walking: 10%
 Cycling: 2%
 Other (e.g., scooter): 1%

Highland Stirling

Driver or passenger in car: 84%
 Public transit: 11%
 Walking: 4%
 Cycling: 1%
 Other (e.g., scooter): 0.1%

City of Kitchener

Driver or passenger in car: 87%
 Public transit: 7%
 Walking: 4%
 Cycling: 1%
 Other (e.g., scooter): 0.6%

Active Transportation Analysis

Most people drive, but more people walk, compared to the overall city.

The vast majority of people drive within both Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling at 71% and 84%, respectively, which is close to the city of Kitchener as a whole where 87% of people drive or are a passenger. However, the number of people who walk as a mode of transportation was higher in Mill Courtland than it was in the city of Kitchener as a whole at 10% compared to just 4% (the number of people who walk in Highland Stirling was the same as the city at 4%). Cycling use overall remains very low at 1–2% between the neighbourhoods and city.

Transit use is higher within the Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling neighbourhoods.

The proportion of people who use transit is higher in Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling at 15% and 11%, respectively, than that of the city of Kitchener as a whole (7%). The area around the Community Centre is serviced by regional transit, including an LRT which opened in 2019 and runs along Charles Street with stops at Mill Street & Ottawa Street, Borden Avenue & Charles Street, and Cedar Street & Charles. Additionally, there are five bus lines that operate within the area, including two that have a stop directly in front of the MCCC.

More people want to cycle and walk to the Centre.

As noted within the Community Engagement section of this report, while driving to the Centre remains the main mode of transportation, it's clear that people would walk and cycle more if they felt those options were safe and accessible to them. On average when individuals were asked how they would like to travel to the Centre, most said they would rather walk, cycle, or take transit more often than they do—with the option to drive to the Centre coming in lower in people's preferences. However, the current infrastructure around the Centre (e.g., lack of protected bike lanes) as well as facilities at the Centre (e.g., lack of safe bike parking) is hindering the community's ability to use active and sustainable modes of travel.

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Active Transportation Recommendation

Create a safer, more sustainable cycling and pedestrian experience.

While most people drive within the Mill Courtland and Highland Stirling neighbourhoods, the public survey responses indicated that many current and future Centre users and co-stewards would like to walk, roll and/or cycle to the Centre.

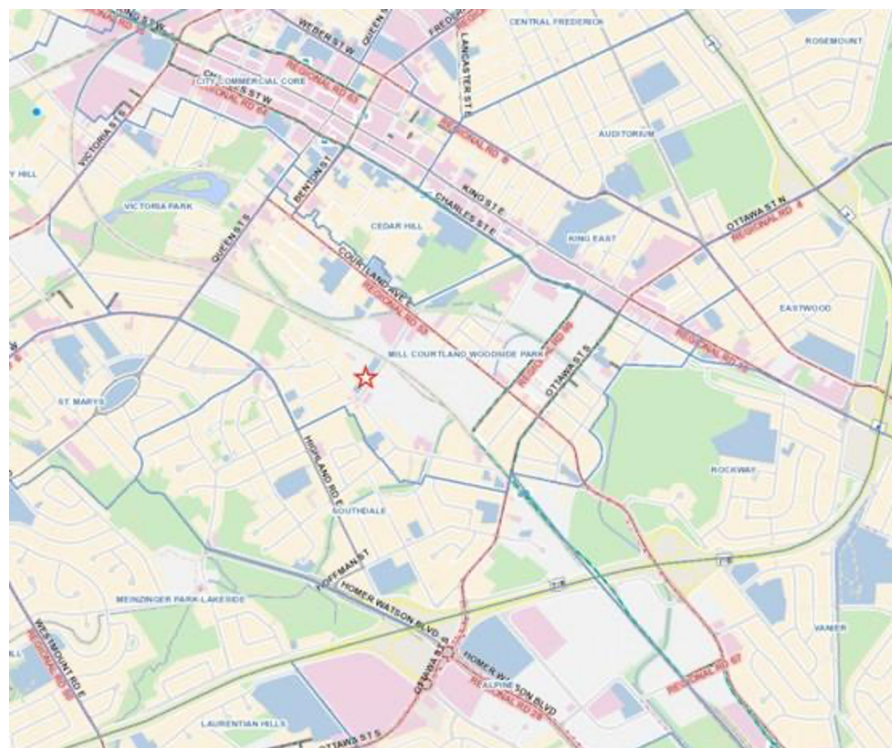
Active Transportation Recommendation (continued)

Encouraging these and other forms of active transportation is not only aligned with external public survey responses but also supports municipal imperatives focused on addressing the climate crisis. Simple design interventions such as installing secure bike parking at the site will partially facilitate greater active transportation. However, a more structural approach, including the provision of continuous, protected bike lanes and improved public transit access, is required to meaningfully respond to both community and environmental imperatives.

Local Amenities Audit

An in-depth local amenities audit was done to better understand the surrounding neighbourhood context within which the Centre is situated that may impact design interventions and programs offered. This was done through neighbourhood walks as well as online research using various mapping applications. The local amenities audit included an exploration of land use, housing typologies, as well as parks and recreation spaces. We would like to specifically acknowledge the work of the University of Waterloo Urban Planning students in informing this section.

Land use surrounding the Community Centre is largely residential, however there is also a large pocket of industrial sites, storage facilities, offices and a strip of commercial use along the King Street East corridor to the north.



Source: City of Kitchener. (n.d.) [base maps] powered by: ROLTA OnPoint™.
<https://maps.kitchener.ca/OnPointExternal/RMap/Default.aspx#>

Residential Use

Residential use in the immediate surrounding area is mostly low-rise, detached, single-family homes and townhomes, as well as some mid-rise apartment buildings.



Corner of Russell Street and Woodland Avenue.



Spadina Woods Development
(301 Spadina Rd. East).



Stirling Place apartment building
(403 Stirling Ave.).

Business and Commercial Use

The neighbourhoods surrounding the MCCC contain a number of cultural-specific amenities that hold special significance for Mill Courtland residents, such as supermarkets. For example, Torreense Store is an important site for the Portuguese community, which opened in 1972 and provides specialty grocery goods. Additionally, Roua Halal Food Market is a similar institution for the area's large Arab community.



Auto repair shop across from Mill Courtland Community Centre.



The Community Centre is 800 metres north of downtown Kitchener, with the surrounding area including several locally owned, multicultural grocery stores as well as bakeries, cafes, restaurants and a number of auto repair shops. Approximately 55% of businesses are in the food, beverage and convenience goods sector; 25% are in automotive and home improvement; and 20% are a mix of entertainment and leisure.

Industrial Use

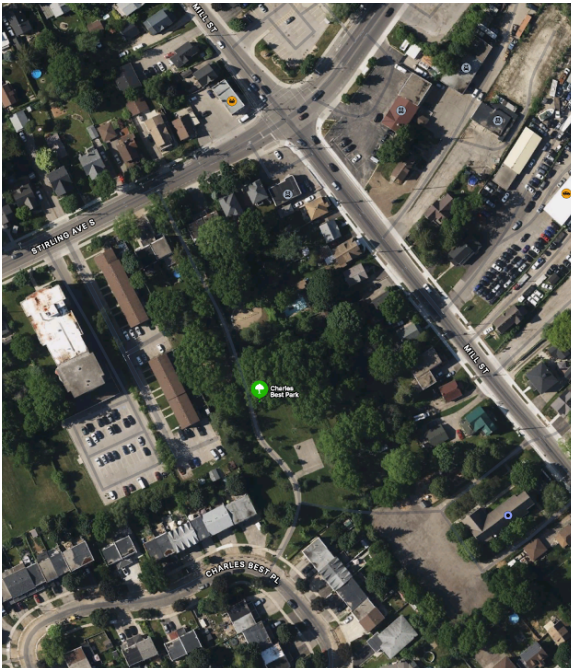
The neighbourhoods surrounding the MCCC have a long history of industrial use that continues today with both small- and large-scale active and disused industrial facilities and infrastructure found in the area. This includes the now-closed Scheniders Plant, which is slated to become a new, mixed-use development contributing to the population growth in the Mill Courtland neighbourhood area.

Parks and Green Spaces

The Mill Courtland Community Centre is located within walking distance of several nearby parks and green spaces, including Charles Best Park and Veterans’ Park. There are also school green spaces nearby, such as Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute, which includes a large field area with an outdoor running track, as well as St. Bernadette Elementary School, which includes a small baseball diamond. Finally, the Centre is located in between two creeks—Schneider Creek and Shoemaker Creek—which wind their way through the residential and industrial areas around the Centre.



Aerial photo of Cameron Heights Collegiate Institute and Schneider Creek. (Apple Maps).



Aerial photo of Charles Best Park adjacent to MCCC. (Apple Maps).

Amenities Audit Analysis

High-density living necessitates high-quality communal spaces.

From our neighbourhood context analysis, as well as from the statistical data for the neighbourhoods surrounding the Centre, we know that many people live in apartments and lack their own personal outdoor space. This makes the green space at the Centre all the more vital in serving community members as a place for leisure and recreation. Additionally, people who live in apartments, especially families, may require more indoor communal space for leisure as well as studying, which the Centre also provides.

Green space is gathering space.

While the Centre is surrounded by several green spaces, many of them are smaller parks or school-related outdoor spaces with sports facilities, such as running tracks. It's clear the Centre plays an important role as an outdoor gathering space for the community, which is also reflected in the community feedback we heard during our surveys. The additions of the ping pong table, gardens, cob oven, seasonal ice rink and seating areas help to fill the green space gap in the surrounding community.

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Amenities Recommendation

Ensure green space is programmed and designed for comfort and use in all seasons.

As an important communal outdoor space in the community, the green space at the Centre should be programmed to be active all year round (an example of this is the already well-used seasonal ice rink). Supporting this use would mean ensuring design elements that support all-season, all-weather enjoyment such as additional seating and protection from the elements (e.g., sheltered spaces from wind and rain). Finally, the community survey indicated a strong interest in expanding the community garden spaces, which would also increase use and contribute to food security in the neighbourhood.

Site Program and Building Envelope Analysis

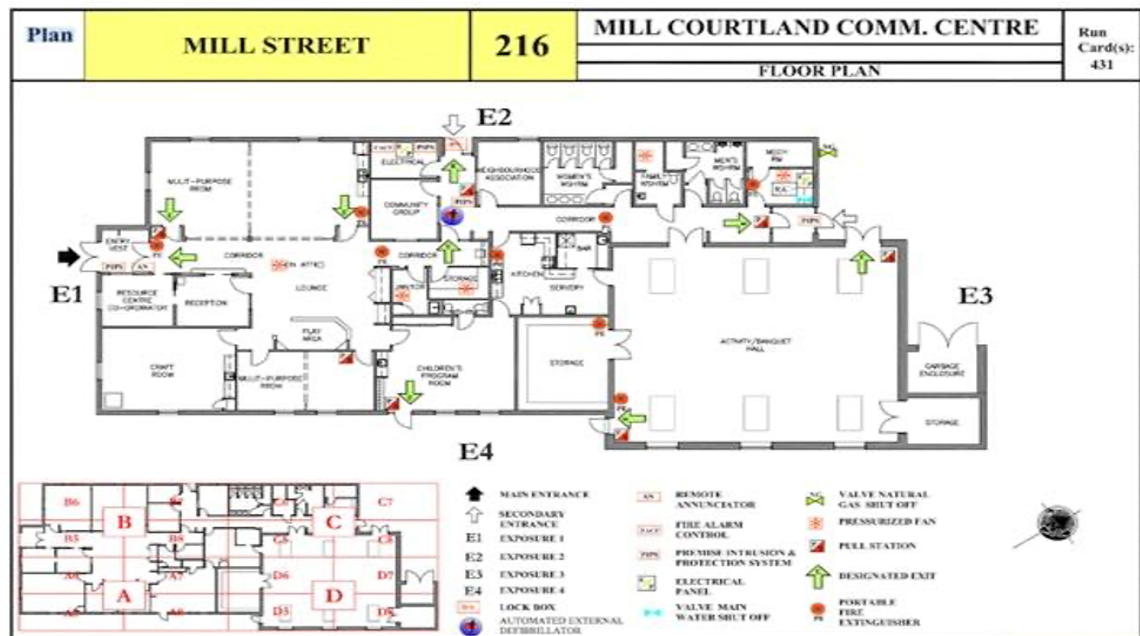


Image: [Mill Courtland Community Centre Site and Floor Plan](#). Courtesy of City of Kitchener

Outdoor/External Spaces

The main features of the Centre's outdoor/external spaces include:

- » Two parking lots—one in front and one behind the building;
- » A sheltered cob oven constructed by Centre users and co-stewards;
- » A small, backyard-style skating rink constructed and maintained by Centre users and co-stewards;
- » A permagarden that is now home to several living beings/species constructed and maintained by Centre users and co-stewards;
- » A ping pong table;
- » A back green space connected to the adjacent Stirling Avenue sidewalk with a ramp;
- » A small, fenced-in children's playground extending off the children's playroom;
- » Two portables providing space for overspill programming from the building;
- » Four storage sheds along the property line;
- » An art installation at the front entrance installed by a newcomer artist;
- » A rainbow-painted bench and bike rack adding vibrance and conveying solidarity with LGBTQ2IA+ communities;

- » A temporary shack/shed located close to the building in the parking lot;
- » A shared pedestrian and car driveway connecting the back and front of the building;
- » A wooded area where unhoused individuals are currently seeking refuge.

The outdoor features and areas at the Centre are critical for creating welcoming, informal interactions among community members. These spaces also become platforms for community events throughout the year that help build connections within the community and draw people in, including the holiday market, winter ice rink, cob oven and outdoor camps.

Indoor/Interior Spaces

Main features of the building envelope, constructed in 1993 with gross floor area of 8,704 square feet, include:

- » Semi-open staff offices that double as a reception area;
- » A central open-concept lounge area that accommodates important informal connections and relationship-building outside of structured programs;
- » Two main multi-purpose rooms—which accommodate large gatherings and multiple supportive services, programs and special events—that open up to the open-concept lounge;
- » A small children’s library nook with child-scale seating;
- » A neighbourhood association shared office;
- » A children’s program room with access to a fenced-in playground;
- » A newly renovated kitchen classified as a server kitchen, but not a commercial kitchen.
- » Multiple small storage rooms;
- » Restrooms for women and men, and a single-family/all-gender restroom with zero sightlines or connectivity to the front area of the building;
- » A narrow, inaccessible corridor at the back of the building;
- » Two vaulted ceilings that have the potential to be main conduits for passive lighting—generally speaking, the windows are small and the lighting low;
- » A small- to mid-sized gymnasium adjacent to a small storage room, kitchen and doors leading to the exterior of the building.

The indoor spaces of the Centre serve multiple purposes, providing space for various events, activities, classes and community meetings. It's important that these spaces remain flexible and adaptable to accommodate the large and diverse range of programs the Centre offers, such as the guitar club, youth group, seniors groups, camps and other activities, as well as providing critically-needed additional space for safe storage of program materials. (See page 56 for a comprehensive list of programming.)

The Mill Courtland Community Centre provides the third-highest rate of square footage by population at 1.4 square feet per-capita, with the Chandler Mowat and Downtown community centres being the highest and second-highest, respectively. However, it's important to highlight that this number is based on the population of the Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association boundaries, while the MCCC actually serves populations from other neighbourhoods, such as Highland Stirling.¹² The Mill Courtland Community Centre, along with Centreville Chicopee Community Centre, had the least-used gyms out of 13 community centres surveyed for the Community Centre Facility Future Needs Review 2018. However, they are both also under-sized gyms.¹³ Program room hours increased at MCCC between 2015 and 2017. The only other community centres that saw program hour increases were the Downtown and Stanley Park community centres. This reflects the growing use of the MCCC as the neighbourhood around it, particularly the Mill Courtland community, expands in population.¹⁴

Moreover, the 2019 Building Assessment Study Report found the following:

- » Building replacement cost (main building only, includes demolition cost, does not include any contingency costs): \$3,481,600;
- » Full facility replacement cost (including demolition and 48% contingency costs): \$5,729,968;
- » Site elements replacement cost: \$390,000;
- » All site-element conditions rated as "good" currently and as "fair" for the following 10 years (to 2029) if no capital investment is done, except for the portable and one of the sheds which were rated as "poor" in the next 10 years;
- » Did not do a detailed accessibility audit but found main building entrances to have low-slope approach, main door with auto-opener, and all internal doorways accessible. Washrooms also met accessibility requirements.

12. Monteith + Brown Planning Consultants, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (2018) *Community Centre Future Facility Needs Review* (CCFFNR). City of Kitchener. p. 19

13. Monteith + Brown Planning Consultants, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (2018) *Community Centre Future Facility Needs Review* (CCFFNR). City of Kitchener. p. 18

14. Monteith + Brown Planning Consultants, Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. (2018) *Community Centre Future Facility Needs Review* (CCFFNR). City of Kitchener. p. 21

Operating Budget, Programming and Fees Audit

As shown above, the demographic groups who reside within and beyond the Centre's service area boundaries face disproportionate social and economic barriers, and have access to fewer public spaces. The Centre is currently addressing big needs with a small amount of space and resources. Gaining a clear understanding of the Centre's context, social role and economic outputs—including, and perhaps especially, the sweat equity and in-kind labour extended to meet a complex range of community needs—is paramount for ensuring its future prosperity.

The Centre currently leads programs in collaboration with organizations such as: Shore, Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC), Waterloo Public Health, House of Friendship, Reep Green Solutions, African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region, Waterloo Regional Police, RED Academy of Soccer, Out of the Box Theatre, Community Support Connections, Organic Pantry, Schneider Haus, Inter Arts Matrix and Globe Studios. The following tables reflect an impressive range of affordable and impactful programs, supportive services and special events with correlating fees offered at the Centre.

Programs, Services & Special Events

Table 1.1 Programs, Services & Special Events

PROGRAMS	Activity/Initiative	Description	Cost/Duration	
	Children & Youth			
	Creative Kids	This playgroup provides children with experiences such as arts and crafts, adventure play, music and movement, books, and story time as well as the opportunity to socialize with other children. Children must be toilet-trained.	Unsure 14 weeks	
	Family Time	This group facilitates making new connections and friends. It offers toys and activities for children that inspire imagination while parents and caregivers can find support and engage in peer-led discussions around health and child-focused topics in a family-friendly and welcoming space. Parents must remain on site.	No Cost Ongoing	
	Ballet Dance	This program teaches beginners the basic positions and techniques of ballet.	\$30.00 8 weeks	
	Jazz/Hip Hop Dance	This program teaches participants the principles of jazz and Hip Hop, starting with jazz moves then picking up the beat with Hip Hop.	\$30.00 8 weeks	
	Irish Dance	This program teaches participants various Celtic rhythms in this unique soft-shoe style of dance. Participants will be encouraged to learn new jigs and reels at their own pace.	\$30.00 8 weeks	

PROGRAMS

Activity/Initiative	Description	Cost/Duration
Youth & Teens		
Junior Basketball	This program provides time to enjoy playing basketball while also developing new skills and drills in a fun-inclusive atmosphere.	\$25.00 8 weeks
Basketball and Black History	This hybrid program explores Black excellence while shooting hoops. This program is led by Black youth for teens self-identifying as Black or of African descent.	No Cost Ongoing
Girls Empowerment/ Running Group	This hybrid group for girls includes a weekly run. Participants will discuss empowering one another, healthy habits and means of maintaining physical and mental health.	No Cost 4 weeks
Jazz/Hip Hop Dance	This program teaches participants the principles of jazz and Hip Hop, starting with jazz moves then picking up the beat with Hip Hop.	\$30.00 8 weeks
Guitar Club	This music club teaches participants how to play guitar, drums, piano and organ.	No Cost Ongoing
Drama	This program teaches participants what it takes to put on a play (onstage and behind the scenes) and how to work together to create a short performance for family and friends. It is available to anyone able to commit to the full 12 weeks who has an interest in drama and a willingness to work and have fun.	\$40.00 12 weeks
Empower and Allyship	This hybrid program encourages leadership and ending gender-based violence through activities, discussions, crafts and games. Snacks will be provided. Youth have the opportunity to create a community project.	No Cost 10 Weeks
Homework Hub – Tutoring	This academic support program is a student-led, digital tutoring platform dedicated to providing free, quality help to students currently requiring academic assistance in multiple subjects. Visit: homeworkhbtutoring.org	8 Weeks

PROGRAMS

Activity/Initiative	Description	Cost/Duration
Adult Fitness & Leisure		
Restorative Yoga	This program teaches participants increased flexibility, strength and body awareness in a gentle yoga class. Participants will improve their mental concentration and learn new deep-breathing techniques.	\$65.00 12 weeks
Pilates	This program will help participants develop strength, flexibility and balance. Participants will increase muscle tone, using fluid body movements in a safe and gentle way.	\$50.00 8 weeks
Yoga	This program builds strength, stamina and flexibility. Participants will learn new breathing and relaxation techniques, while strengthening and toning muscles.	\$65.00 12 weeks
Power Pilates	This program will help participants strengthen and tone the entire body. Participants will improve posture, core strength and flexibility, using weights and bands.	\$50.00 8 weeks
Zumba	This program is a total body workout! Participants will take part in aerobic fitness routines that offer fast and slow rhythms that help tone and sculpt.	\$65.00 12 weeks
Pound	This program will help participants get energized, let loose, tone up and rock out! It is great for all fitness levels.	\$65.00 12 weeks
Herbal Wellness	This naturopathic program is a weekly study of herbal remedies, healthy alternatives and options you can make at home.	\$50.00 6 weeks
Advocate Yourself	This program is a peer-led support group that focuses on bringing women from various backgrounds together to support each other.	No Cost Ongoing

Activity/Initiative	Description	Cost/Duration
Adult Fitness & Leisure (continued)		
Walking Group	This program consists of a low-impact and weather-permitting walk around the neighbourhood, different parks and landmarks. Participants will meet at Mill Courtland Community Centre. A waiver form will need to be filled out at the Centre.	No Cost Ongoing
Lunch, Conversation, and Community	This program is available at the Centre with Coffee and Conversation or for takeout if preferred. These lunches take place between 11:30am and 1:00pm on designated Wednesdays. Registration is required due to supply issues.	No Cost
Family/Other Programs		
Family Outreach	This program connects low-income families who have children 17 and under in the downtown Kitchener area to community programs and resources. This program is not an emergency service and there is an intake process to determine eligibility.	No Cost
Family Time	This group facilitates making new connections and friends. This program offers toys and activities for children that inspire imagination while parents and caregivers can find support and engage in peer-led discussions around health and child-focused topics in a family-friendly and welcoming space. Parents must remain on site.	No Cost Ongoing
A Temporary Open-Air Studio in Sandhills Park	This archaeological evaluation of Sandhills Park was commissioned by Inter Arts Matrix. Archaeologists will work in collaboration with community members and artists exploring artifacts in a 5x5-foot parcel. One of the confirmed projects is called A Hole in the Ground. Twelve artists will be involved in a serial collaboration.	No Cost

Activity/Initiative	Description	Cost/Duration
Family/Other Programs (continued)		
Internet Access/ Wi-Fi/Public Access Computer/Printer/ Scanner	This service enables community members to check e-mails, surf the web, finish homework or update résumés on public access computers or bring your own device (BYOD). Access is via Wi-Fi. Daily limit is one hour. Availability is not guaranteed. Community members must call ahead to book a time for the public access computers.	No Cost
Outdoor Little Library	This facility encourages community members to take a new book or leave an old favourite for someone else to enjoy. This service is always available, even when the Centre is closed.	No Cost
Little Diverse Library	This facility is dedicated to amplifying and celebrating the voices of Black, Indigenous and other racialized writers. Community members are encouraged to take a new book or leave an old favourite for someone else to enjoy.	No Cost
Clothing Room	This program offers a good selection of all-gender and children's clothing. Gently used seasonal clothing donations are gladly accepted. When the weather permits, racks of clothes are made available in the front of the Centre.	No Cost
After-School Snack Shack	This program runs on Wednesdays from 3:00pm to 4:00pm starting every September. School-age children will receive healthy after-school snack options. This program is donation-based. Community members can contact the Centre for information about snacks and/or monetary donations.	No Cost
St. Andrew's Memorial Anglican Church Neighbourhood Food Cupboard	This food-security program provides community members with basic groceries, toiletries, diapers and baby products, toys, books, cleaning and paper products, limited frozen entrees and bread. Community members can call to arrange a pickup time, which is by appointment only.	No Cost

PROGRAMS

Activity/Initiative	Description	Cost/Duration
Family/Other Programs (continued)		
Community Angel	This program assists low-income families by providing food and gifts during the holiday season. Donations of new toys, PJ's, gift certificates, cash or non-perishable food items are accepted. Community members can contact the Centre for information on sponsoring a family or to drop off donations at the front desk prior to the winter holidays.	No Cost
Halloween Hut	The Halloween Hut is situated in the front parking lot of the Centre where little ghosts and ghouls can get some candy and fill out a ballot to enter a draw for even more treats.	No Cost
PD Day S.T.E.A.M.	This professional development day program is a fun day of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math. Elementary school-aged students will enjoy an art activity and challenges with LEGO that cover six simple machines! Pizza lunch is included!	\$40.00
Community Dinner	This event creates an opportunity for neighbours to get to know each other over a hot meal. It also includes games and carol-singing. Registration is required and seating is limited.	A canned food item or cash donation is greatly appreciated.
Winter Rink	Outdoor skating is open to community members. Individuals who require skates may be accommodated.	No Cost
Schneider Creek Porch Party	The Schneider Creek Porch Party neighbourhood live music and arts festival takes place in downtown Kitchener in early fall. This family event creates an opportunity for community members to explore the Schneider Creek neighbourhood while enjoying wonderful local talent.	No Cost
St. George Sidewalk Gallery	This facility is a public art installation on St. George Street. Community members and artists come together to engage in a community arts initiative.	No Cost

Operating Budget

The total operating budget for 2023 is \$292,392 and the most substantive lines items are:

- » Part-time salaries: \$123,559
- » Full-time salaries: \$104,659
- » Benefits for all salaried staff: \$51,659
- » Program/office supplies: \$4,040

The total projected revenues for 2023 are as follows:

- » Room Rentals: \$15,205
- » Some programs are offered free of charge, while others have a nominal fee for participation (see: services and program audit above). Revenues from programs organized by the neighbourhood associations go directly to the neighbourhood associations and are therefore not reflected in the City's community centre budget for the MCCC. If the City did run any programs at the MCCC, revenues would be reflected in the City's Programs and Services Budget and not the MCCC operating budget.

In-Kind Community Contributions and Accommodations

Although unconventional within the business case development process, we feel strongly as an equity-based placemaking practice that it is important to quantify the approximate value of volunteer labour. This calculation is particularly important in the case of the Centre because we suspect that operating costs would be significantly higher except for the following contributions of neighbourhood association members and other stakeholders:

Volunteer Data

Deeply Engaged Volunteers: 30

Occasional Volunteers Annual Basis: 60+

Weekly Volunteer Hours: 30

Annual Volunteer Hours: 3,000 approximately

The Centre also provides the following accommodations and program supports: refreshments; food containers; resources; printed materials; instructors/training orientation; clothing; household items; hygiene products; sports equipment; games; program equipment; gardening supplies, plants and flowers; holiday food and gifts; gift cards; transit fare; gas money; child care; skates; backpacks; craft and art supplies.

ASSET MAP



Business

Torreense
Portuguese Store
TWB Brewery*
Kieswetter Demolition
City Café Bakery
Grand River Rocks
Pizza Express
The Frugal Decorator
Gateman Milloy
John MacDonald
Architect
Signs by Jukes
The Medicine Shoppe
Pharmacy

↓
J and P Filipino Store
Liaison College (of
Culinary Arts)
Astrodog Media
Bird Packaging
Lisbon Auto Service
UniglassPlus/Ziebart
3 Bay Sales and Service
NAPA AUTOPRO
Guru Motors and Auto
Serv

↓
Keyko's Auto Service
↓
Big Bear Food Mart
Bad Ass Ladies
#livefitbabe training
Short Finger Brewing
Co.
Sherwood Music
Kwartzlab
Tim Hortons
Nougat Bakery and
Delicatessen
Little Short Stop
The Wine Butler
Concordia Club

* temporarily closed
** permanently closed

Parks & Amenities

Harry Class Pool*
Cameron Heights Pool
Iron Horse Trail
Kitchener Market
Cameron Heights
Tennis Courts
The Kitchener Lawn
Bowling Club
Highland Courts Park
Tennis & Pickleball
Courts
Woodside Park Soccer
Fields

↓
Sandhills Park
Charles Best Park
Kaufman Park
Woodside Park
Multisport Fields
Mike Wagner Green
Lakeside Park
Mausser Park
Mill Saint Parkette
Highland Courts Park

Little Libraries

The Queen's Greens
Community Garden
185 Benton Street
216 Mill Street
St. Andrew's
Presbyterian Church
244 Lorne Avenue
17 Whitney Place

Community Gardens

Queen's Greens
St. Andrew's
Presbyterian Church
St. Stephen Lutheran
Church—raised beds
St. Bernadette
Elementary School
MCCC—raised beds

Youth Groups

MCCC Youth Group
Highland Baptist
Church
St. Joseph Roman
Catholic Church

MCCC Projects

Neighbourhood
Association Programs
& Special Events
March Break & Summer
Camps
The Lunch Connection
Community Angel
Neighbourhood
Market
Community Dinner
Cob Oven
Food Hut
After-School Snack
Shack

↓
Guitar Club
Winter Rink
Tools for School
Clothing Giveaway
Hygiene Supplies
Drives

Government

City of Kitchener
Region of Waterloo
Public Health
Waterloo Regional
Police
Service Canada—
Summer Jobs Grant

Partnerships

Out of the Box Theatre
CNIB
ACCKWA
SHORE Centre
Male Allies

Partnerships (con'd)

KW Counselling
Services
Schools and Churches
The Firm Murals
African Women's
Alliance of Waterloo
Region
Rainbow Reels
Kitchener Public Library

↓
Carlzon
Reep Green Solutions
Reception House
MCC Thrift on Kent
Ray of Hope
Millwood Manor
United Way
Kindred Credit Union
Cycling Into the Future
Children & Youth
Planning Table

↓
KW Habilitation
Community Support
Connections
Victoria Place
House of Friendship
Schneider Haus
Region of Waterloo
Public Health
Family & Children
Services
Mamas for Mamas
Get Set Learn

Neighbourhood Market

Herrle's Country Farm
Market
Barrie's Asparagus
Hoffman's Strawberries
Nith Valley Apiaries
Martin's Family Fruit
Farm
The Chopped Leaf

Neighbourhood Associations

Mill-Courtland
Neighbourhood
Association
Highland-Stirling
Community Group
The Cedar Hill
Community Group
Schneider Creek
Neighbourhood Group

Schools

St. Bernadette
Elementary School
Queen Elizabeth Public
School
Courtland Avenue
Public School
Cameron Heights
Collegiate Institute
J.F. Carmichael Public
School
MAC Maple Grove
School
Wilfred Laurier
University
University of Waterloo
Conestoga College
St. Mary's High School
Resurrection Catholic
Secondary School

Churches

Lamplight Church**
St. Andrew's
Presbyterian Church
St. Stephen Lutheran
Church
St. Joseph Roman
Catholic Church
Highland Baptist
Church
Al Zahra Shia
Association
Bahá'í Community of
Kitchener

Governance Model

Governance models are living documents that outline how a group of people in leadership positions make decisions about policy, programs and places. Some of these models are hyper-focused on business operations, product and innovation. Governance models pertaining to public places like the Mill Courtland Community Centre should explicitly focus on serving public good, engender public participation, and outline the process for participatory public decision-making and power-sharing. However, many conventional governance models lack the equitable placemaking analysis and approaches to achieve these goals. Along with numerous good approaches and intent, this common gap is apparent in the Mill-Courtland Neighbourhood Association Bylaws and the Highland-Stirling Community Group Constitution and Bylaws. The following serves as a combined, high-level assessment of the governance model guiding the programming and informal day-to-day interactions at the Mill Courtland Community Centre.

Overall, it is clear that the Mill Courtland Community Centre is a welcoming space. A welcoming space invites, includes and represents community members. However, welcoming spaces are not synonymous with equitable spaces. Equitable spaces redistribute power to historically excluded and marginalized groups. To transition to becoming both a welcoming and equitable space, both neighbourhood associations and the City should consider the following:

Governance Model Strengths	Governance Model Growth Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Both neighborhood associations clearly articulate a desire to create a welcoming environment.» Both neighbourhood associations clearly articulate a desire to respond to community needs.» Both neighbourhood associations list conventional roles related to similar groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» While both associations are committed to serving the community, there are very few opportunities for the community to participate in decision-making processes.» Both neighbourhood association groups do not reflect the community members it serves in terms of racial and class identities.

Governance Model Strengths

(continued)

- » Both neighbourhood associations reference a commitment to accessibility and related accommodations.
- » Both neighbourhood associations are committed to creating a platform for community members to voice concerns.

Governance Model Growth Opportunities

(continued)

- » Both neighbourhood associations are operating under a conventional governance model that centres language such as “supervises” “control” and “direct,” which isn’t in keeping with more contemporary participatory, co-creation and consensus-based governance models.
- » Both governance models omit tenure of roles and role descriptions could be more comprehensive.
- » While both governance models suggest good intent, there is very little content and approaches aligned with equitable engagement and power-sharing.

Overall, it is clear that the Mill Courtland Community Centre is a welcoming space. A welcoming space invites, includes and represents community members. However, welcoming spaces are not synonymous with equitable spaces. Equitable spaces redistribute power to historically excluded and marginalized groups. To transition to becoming both a welcoming and equitable space, both neighbourhood associations and the City should consider the following:

.....

Governance Recommendation

- » The neighbourhood associations should explore community governance models, which create the conditions for greater transparency, participatory decision-making and succession planning, to ensure that no one individual or small group of people maintain an inordinate amount of power or control.
- » The neighbourhood associations should consider integrating a mutual aid approach, which places an emphasis on a reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit rather than a traditional charitable approach, which can reinforce power imbalances and inadvertently diminish the agency of individuals being “served.”
- » The neighbourhood associations should explore equitable communication approaches, which focus more on the inherent strengths and capacity of community members and less on need and empowering community members.
- » The City should institute participatory program development, program facilitation and program evaluation templates to ensure that community members, especially those from historically marginalized groups, are being equitably engaged and have decision-making power across all community centres in its portfolio.
- » The City of Kitchener should conduct a review of neighbourhood association governance documents, specifically assessing decision-making models, broader community participation, succession planning, transparency and equitable practice to ensure that public property is optimally utilized for public good. It is also advisable to create additional ways for community members to participate and be heard outside of the neighbourhood association model, as no one group can accurately and authentically speak on behalf of or represent the diverse priorities of a wide range of community members.

PART FOUR: DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT



Good design is not simply a matter of aesthetics; it should be functional in terms of facilitating connectivity between people and other living beings; it should be sustainable in terms of respecting the divine, life-giving force of the Earth; and it should be aspirational in terms of revealing the alchemy of place. As with the previous sections of this hybrid business case and master plan, this section considers inputs from City staff, the neighbourhood associations and the broader community.

-Jay Pitter

Precedents & Prioritized Placemaking Interventions

The following precedents on the boards were collected by University of Waterloo students using criteria established by the practice, and information collected through a special student site tour and a classroom lecture featuring neighbourhood association members, City staff, and Centre users and stewards. Building on this initial research, and community and client engagement, the following prioritized placemaking interventions have been developed by the practice to enhance sustainability, social cohesion, safety and equity throughout the site program.

Mill Courtland Community Centre

Established in 1986, Mill Courtland Community Centre's origin story is defined by a grassroots approach, co-led by dedicated City of Kitchener staff and volunteer members affiliated with local neighbourhood associations. Many of the centre's well-attended and beloved initiatives have emerged in response to community needs and aspirations. Today, the centre is bursting at its seams. The relatively small building envelope and site footprint are insufficient when contrasted to the large number of services and dynamic programs delivered, and the centre's distinct intergenerational legacy. The current Mill Courtland Community Centre and site configuration can no longer contain the community-building that has characterized this special place for over three decades.

Centring Jay Pitter's equitable placemaking and design approaches, and community contributions, University of Waterloo planning students contributed images and precedents to help local stakeholders collectively visualize their future community centre. We are committed to deeply considering the community's preferences, priorities and concerns. We also welcome additional insights and ideas.

Let's get started...

Review the overview statement, and equitable placemaking and design interventions unpacked on each community engagement board.

Assess the equitable placemaking and design interventions, keeping in mind that they are for illustrative purposes only. This means that an emphasis should be placed on the general concepts and principles, not finite design details.

Express the equitable placemaking and design interventions that resonate with you or cause concern. Also, please provide us with additional concepts and insights.

Imagine... We invite you to contribute a bold and/or hopeful idea outside the bounds of concepts presented on the thematic boards. Please note that while these (and all other ideas) will be deeply considered, final decisions will be made based on a 3-5 collective community priorities, available resources and existing municipal policies.

Precedent Category: Exterior Front and Side

Prioritized Placemaking Interventions

- » All-season design interventions centring covered, flexible spaces that can be heated to facilitate activities such as community markets, the clothing giveaway program and the foot hut located at the front of the Centre;
- » Design interventions that create focal points and better boundaries between parking and programming spaces;
- » Additional bike parking that provides more secure bike parking and storage;
- » Improvements to pedestrian safety and flow from sidewalk through the parking lot to front entrance, which could include special paving treatment or walkway signage;
- » A protected pedestrian walkway to increase safety when accessing the back green space along the side of the building that currently connects the front and back parking lots.

Exterior - Front and Side

The front and side of the buildings articulate an invitation. Proposed placemaking and design interventions include creating a more welcoming front entrance, dramatically improving pedestrian safety at the side of the building, integrating better access and noise control through landscaping and addressing parking flow.

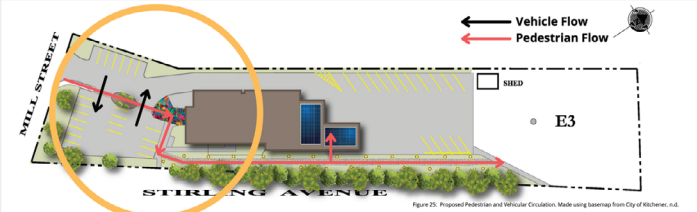



Figure 25. Proposed Pedestrian and Vehicular Circulation. Made using base map from City of Kitchener, n.d.

✍	Which equitable placemaking and design concepts resonate with you?
	Which equitable placemaking and design concepts concern you?
	Which equitable placemaking and design concepts would you like to add?

Pedestrian Walkway: Connecting the Front of the Building to the Back to Create a Pedestrian and Cyclist-Oriented Design

Improve the parking area for better car flow into and out of the centre's parking lot as well as pedestrian safety for those crossing the parking lot to get to the building.



Pre-School Play Area Improvements

Update the pre-school side play area with new, accessible play equipment and surfaces as well as improved safety fencing.

Improved Front Signage



Update the front building signage to be a more visible welcome to the community centre, which could also better display and advertise activities and programs.

Vegetative Buffer Along Stirling Ave

Install a vegetative buffer such as bushes and trees planted in a linear, dense manner to create a natural "fence," which would also create a sound barrier between the roadway and building.

Bike Parking Shelter

Install a covered and protected bike parking area to increase bike safety and encourage more cycling to the centre.

Precedent Category: Exterior Back

Prioritized Placemaking Interventions

- » Replace the current portable with a flexible, single-storey multi-use building envelope extension;
- » Add a covering to the building extension and central gathering area with seating to create a more comfortable outdoor programming environment;
- » Maintain the existing permaculture gardens, which are now home to multiple species, and add additional small gardens;
- » Reimagine the parking spaces as flexible programming space; this may include a small fold-away stage extending from the property line fencing;
- » Strategically leverage landscaping to create a safety and sound barrier between the busy main street, and the programming and gathering area;
- » Consolidate multiple outdoor storage sheds in a single, more secure exterior storage area;
- » Given the unhoused population adjacent to the site, consider the installation of an exterior restroom with restricted hours to mitigate both safety and maintenance challenges;
- » Address numerous accessibility challenges such as uneven surfaces, poor lighting, lack of noise barrier and non-existent wayfinding.

Exterior - Back

The back of the community centre contains many well-loved, grassroots placemaking elements such as the permagardens and cob oven that are critical to integrate into the enhanced design. Also, this area of the site presents the best opportunity to expand the building's footprint while enhancing flexible, external placemaking space for all-season activities.



Building Extension
Expand the indoor building space, which could house activities such as the music program and contain more storage space, as a replacement for the portable.



Improved Green Space and Parking Area
Improve the green space area (e.g., seasonal skating rink and lawn area) as well as the parking area (e.g., flexible basketball play area) to better facilitate outdoor activities.



More Community Gardens
Increase space for urban agriculture through the introduction of more community garden opportunities.



Shaded/Sheltered Gathering Space
Enhance the cob oven to better facilitate outdoor gathering by ensuring space for social gathering (e.g., picnic tables and seating) is sheltered from the elements and accessible to all users.

✎

Which equitable placemaking and design concepts resonate with you?
Which equitable placemaking and design concepts concern you?
Which equitable placemaking and design concepts would you like to add?




Precedent Category: Interior

Prioritized Placemaking Interventions

- » Open up the space between the front and back of the Centre to increase safety by improving interior sight lines and overall connectivity;
- » Include signage to enhance internal wayfinding to help community members navigate the various program areas and quickly locate amenities such as restrooms and water fountains;
- » Increase and strategically design storage space to accommodate a diverse range of programming while considering requirements such as temperature, security and accessibility;
- » Build on good existing approaches to multi-use spaces;
- » Widen the corridor adjacent to restrooms and the kitchen to create accessibility—addressing physical accessibility is paramount throughout the entire building envelope;
- » Install a dedicated music room with soundproofing and secure storage for musical instruments;
- » Maintain small nooks currently used for informal gathering and connection.

Interior

Improvements to the building envelope (roof, windows, foundation etc.) and interior spaces should prioritize responsiveness to existing and future programming, enhancing all building envelope sub-systems (heating, ventilation, electricity etc.) and promote comfort for community stakeholders engaged in both formal and informal activities.



Natural Light
Improve natural light opportunities within the building so fluorescent lighting is not always required.



More Storage Areas
Increase the amount of storage space inside the building to support various activities and programs.



Air and Water Purification
Install drinking fountains that have filtered water and air purification systems to improve indoor ventilation and air quality.



Improved Building Flow and Navigation
Enhance indoor building areas, such as hallways and rooms, so they are easily navigated and are not too narrow.



Consistent Heating and Cooling
Update heating, ventilation and cooling systems so temperatures remain consistent and comfortable across all seasons.



Flexible, Multi-Purpose Spaces
Ensure new, expanded, or improved indoor spaces are designed in a way that allows for multi-purpose flexible use that supports different types of programming.

✎

Which equitable placemaking and design concepts resonate with you?
Which equitable placemaking and design concepts concern you?
Which equitable placemaking and design concepts would you like to add?





Precedent Category: Accessibility

Prioritized Placemaking Precedents


- » Ensure surfaces such as parking lot, walkways, interior hallways are smooth and free of incline or barriers;
- » Install accessibility features that respond to a myriad of disabilities including visual impairment and neurodivergence;
- » Create barrier-free access to all amenities such as green spaces, the cob oven, gardens and ice rink;
- » Create a quiet space for prayer, time out and quiet reflection;
- » Purchase interior and exterior accessible seating options such as benches with backs and picnic tables that can accommodate assistive mobility devices;
- » Ensure community gardens are raised-bed gardens that accommodate those who have trouble bending down and those using assistive mobility devices;
- » Expand accessible design thinking to extend beyond merely providing physical access to ensure that disabled people and those requiring accommodations also have access to the full range of social and economic opportunities at the Centre.

Accessibility


Ensuring a place is universally accessible benefits everyone. An accessible space responds to both visible and invisible disabilities and diverse ways of navigating the world. Placemaking and design interventions such as ramps, clear wayfinding, stable surfaces and thoughtful lighting design contribute to accessibility. Equally important, accessibility is also predicated on social and economic factors that allow everyone to experience a sense of belonging, agency and joy in spaces.




Tactile Elements
Install tactile elements, which could include braille signage as well as textures on walls and other surfaces, to help orient people who are blind or have low vision.




Accessible Building Elements
(e.g., light switches, door openers)
Ensure elements like light switches, drinking fountains, and building doorways are universally accessible, including lowered buttons and wide doorways to accommodate assistive mobility devices.




Accessible and Inclusive Outdoor Amenities
Extend access to amenities such as washrooms and drinking water to outside the building. This includes the provision of appropriate lighting for community stakeholders who require visibility without making other community stakeholders hyper-visible in ways that diminish their safety and dignity.




Improvements to Outdoor Space
Ensure outdoor spaces are accessible to all users, including leveling surfaces so they are easily used by people with assistive mobility devices and strollers, installing external railings on the building for those who need extra support, and including ramps to help people navigate any grade changes.



Accessible Outdoor Seating
Increase accessible seating, which includes elements designed for the comfort of all users, such as a back rest, but not elements designed to inhibit use, such as a middle arm rest that discourages lying down.





Wayfinding Improvements
Update wayfinding with indoor and outdoor signage to improve site navigation, such as a map of the centre and directional elements to point to different rooms and spaces.



Improvements to Outdoor Amenities
(e.g., gardens, playground, cob oven)
Enhance outdoor amenities to be universally accessible, which could include creating raised garden beds as well as installing accessible playground equipment for children of all abilities, both physical and cognitive.

✍	Which equitable placemaking and design concepts resonate with you?
✍	Which equitable placemaking and design concepts concern you?
✍	Which equitable placemaking and design concepts would you like to add?

Precedent Category: Sustainability


Prioritized Placemaking Interventions

- » Increase energy efficiency by installing solar panels on the exterior building addition, opening up the roof above the front of the Centre and employing other approaches that will reduce energy use and increase the benefits of passive solar design;
- » Install a green roof and/or a rainwater harvesting system that collects rainwater runoff from roof structures into a rain barrel that can be used for irrigation;
- » Engage community members in sustainability initiatives such as waste management education workshops, tool share programs, bike and electronic equipment repair programs and creative upcycling events;
- » Consider the installation of rain gardens/bioswales to reduce rainwater runoff from impermeable surface areas (e.g., parking lot areas) into the stormwater system—a demonstration rain garden could be included in the back garden area where there is currently a storm drain in the grass near the parking lot edge.

Sustainability


Sustainable placemaking and design interventions reduce the negative impact of buildings on the environment, foster local biodiversity and combat the climate crisis. Responding to these and other complex sustainability imperatives includes expanding/improving green spaces, increasing building efficiency and proactively designing to address extreme weather events. Sustainability also refers to contributing to the overall longevity of places, people and all living beings.

	Which equitable placemaking and design concepts resonate with you?
	Which equitable placemaking and design concepts concern you?
	Which equitable placemaking and design concepts would you like to add?




Solar Panels

Update the building roof with solar panels to transform the sun's light into energy that can be used to power elements within the building in a more sustainable way.



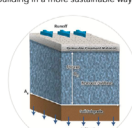
Onsite Composting

Increase waste diversion through a compost system for organic waste from the building, which could then be used for fertilizing community gardens.



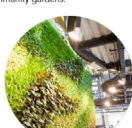
Bird and Bat Boxes

Improve wildlife habitat onsite by introducing bird and bat boxes, which are small structures that provide shelter.




Permeable Pavement

Install permeable pavement to allow rainwater to penetrate surfaces, such as a parking lot, rather than run off into storm sewers, which will lessen strain on stormwater infrastructure and allow groundwater to recharge.




Green Wall

Install a green wall close to the entrance to create connectivity between the permagardens and other exterior greenspaces while creating an informal focal gathering point for community members.




Green Roof

Install a green roof and/or a green wall, which can help keep buildings cool, reduce stormwater runoff and contribute to local biodiversity.



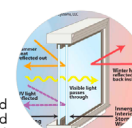
Rainwater Harvesting

Improve rainwater capture through installing bins that collect rainwater from impermeable surfaces, such as a building roof, and direct the water to be stored and used for irrigation.




Bioswales and Rain Gardens

Plant bioswales and/or rain gardens to increase local biodiversity, but also help capture, clean, and store excess rainwater and divert it from the stormwater system.



Better Sealed Windows and Building Insulation

Reduce thermal bridging, which is when heat is transferred from inside to outside the building, and improve energy efficiency by installing double-glazed windows and better building insulation.



High-Level Design Guidelines

The following high-level design guidelines are intended to ensure that equitable placemaking principles are tangibly integrated within the built environment.

Accessibility

- » All interior and exterior surfaces should be firm, stable and slip-resistant;
- » All interior and exterior seating should have enough solid and clear space to accommodate assistive devices such as wheelchairs, scooters and strollers;
- » 80% of interior and exterior seating should be devoid of defensive architecture approaches and should provide back supports and armrests;
- » Depressed curbs and curb ramps should be provided to accommodate mobility devices and strollers;
- » Shared-access aisles should be installed between two accessible parking spaces instead of having single accessible parking spaces beside non-accessible parking spaces;
- » All accessible bathrooms and pathways should accommodate wheelchair, scooter and large stroller turning radiuses;
- » Wayfinding signs should be installed, clearly marking all primary interior and exterior spaces;
- » Where possible, ensure that signage includes braille, print and pictograms;
- » Use contrast in colour to indicate contrast in space function, type and boundaries;
- » Interior and exterior spaces should be designed with private spaces, quiet spaces and spaces with “low stimulation” to accommodate neurodivergent individuals;
- » Places of pause and rest should be created.

Cultural Responsivity

- » Together with Indigenous communities, identify meaningful ways of recognizing their distinct status and stewardship on the land;
- » Ensure wayfinding signs include visual cues for individuals who do not speak English as a first language;
- » Observe desire pathways and formalize them within flexible, permanent design interventions;
- » Incorporate intangible cultural heritage (place-based stories, rituals, traditions) into the built environment;

- » Balance grids and linear lines with curvatures and organic lines;
- » Create a flexible design feature where various cultural contributions and expressions can be featured throughout the year;
- » Include a room that functions as a non-denominational quiet space for prayer, reflection and/or meditation;
- » Incorporate native and “invasive” species in landscapes within the site program;
- » Consider ways that spaces can be designed to accommodate a wide range of ethno-cultural sports, everyday practices and celebrations.

Functionality and Flexibility

- » Employ interior and exterior design approaches that are both multi-purpose and changeable for future use;
- » Separate main building systems from sub-systems so individual alterations and repairs can be targeted/isolated;
- » Ensure all systems are designed to accommodate increased future capacity;
- » Purchase mobile furnishings that can be utilized across interior and exterior spaces;
- » Implement interior and exterior design approaches that facilitate free movement;
- » Select durable materials aligned with the diverse range of demographics and programs;
- » Use partitions to change the size and configuration of internal spaces to accommodate various functions;
- » Identify 3–5 primary storage zones—both independent rooms and built-in storage spaces;
- » Increase shade with strategically placed trees and awnings;
- » Ensure exterior design interventions facilitate year-round placemaking, programming and informal activities.

Safety

- » Open up the interior of the building to increase sightlines;
- » Install an increased number of windows to create greater line of sight between interior and exterior spaces;
- » Create a protected pedestrian pathway towards the back of the building;

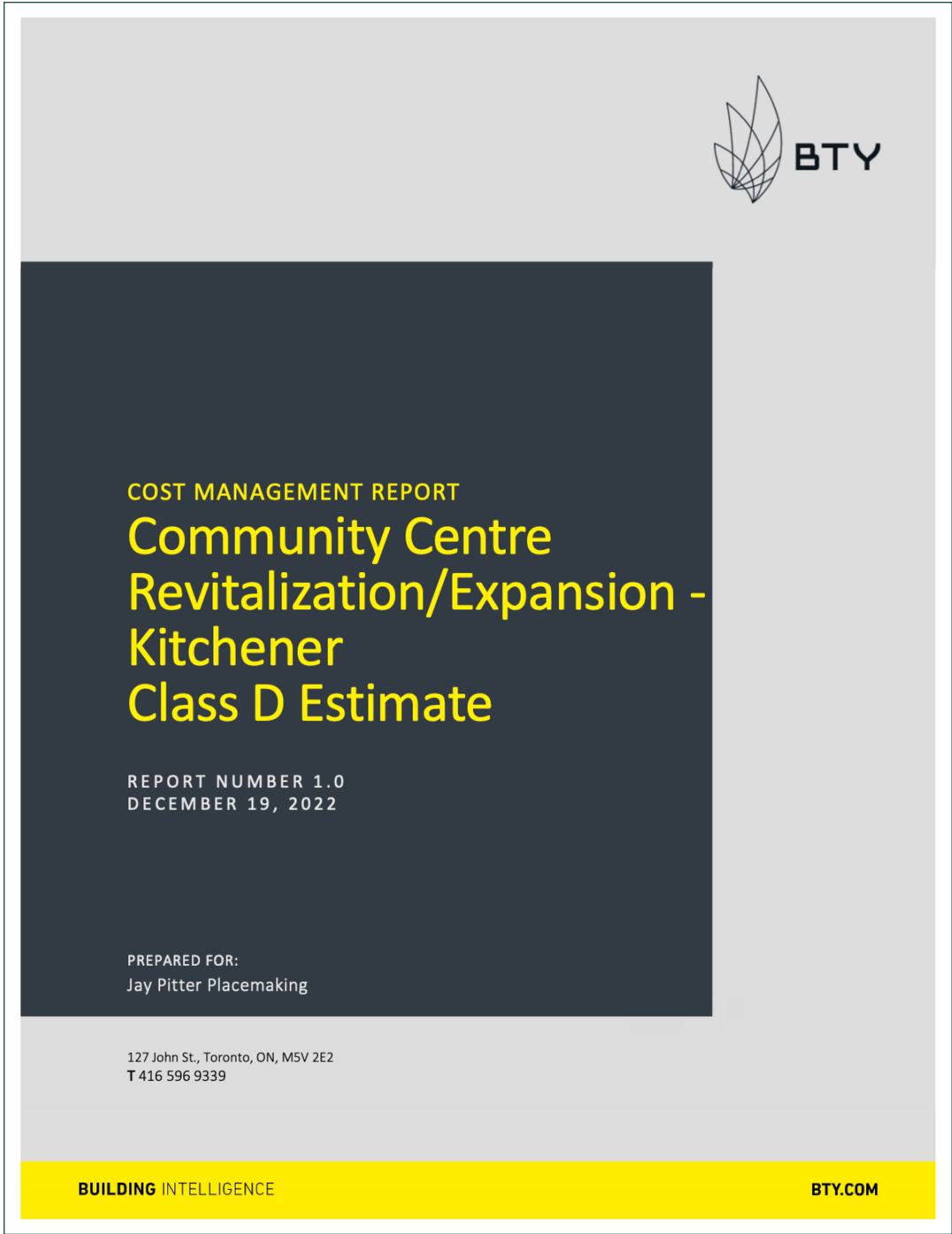
- » Increase lighting at the back of the building, while being mindful of glare, light pollution, eliminating direct upward lighting and light spill;
- » Examine all interior and exterior spaces through the lens of a gender-based spatial audit.

Sustainability

- » Employ passive daylighting strategies such as increasing the number of windows, maintaining vaulted roofs, adding skylights and opening up the interior spaces, clerestories, light shelves and solar tubes;
- » Implement high-efficiency plumbing, HVAC, electrical and other systems;
- » Daylight native plant species and paved-over ecologies;
- » Update the building roof with solar panels to transform the sun's light into energy that can be used to power elements within the building in a more sustainable way;
- » Improve wildlife habitat onsite by introducing bird and bat boxes, which are small structures that provide shelter;
- » Reduce thermal bridging, which is when heat is transferred from inside to outside the building, and improve energy efficiency by installing double-glazed windows and better building insulation.

DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS COST PROJECTIONS

The following report was developed by BTY Group.¹⁵ The appendices (Elemental Summary and Cost Plan), not included in this document, have also been submitted to the City of Kitchener. According to City of Kitchener staff and the building condition assessment (BCA), completed in 2019, all major building components are in good to fair condition.



15. BTY Building Intelligence (2022, December 19). Cost Management Report Community Centre Revitalization/Expansion - Kitchener Class D Estimate, Report Number 1.0



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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX I	Elemental Summary	8 pages
APPENDIX II	Cost Plan	33 pages

Prepared By	Reviewed By	Date
Aashir Khan	Lee Harkin	12/19/2022



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Instructions Received

This report has been prepared by BTY Group (“BTY”) at the request of Jay Pitter Placemaking (the “Client”).

Jay Pitter Placemaking has appointed BTY to provide a Class D estimate developed for the project at 216 Mill Street, Kitchener, ON. (the “Project”). The Project will be delivered using a Stipulated Price Contract construction model and, therefore, BTY strongly recommends that estimates are prepared at each of the key design milestones. This report has been prepared in accordance with the scope of our Fee Proposal, dated November 16, 2022, and is subject to the terms of that appointment.

Information related to the Project for the purposes of this report was received by BTY on November 23, 2022. Please refer to Section 13.0 for a list of information received in producing this report.

1.2 Report Reliance

This Report is owned by BTY Group, and it is provided for the benefit and sole reliance of the Client. BTY Group, its directors, staff, or agents do not make any express or implied representation or warranty whatsoever as to the factual accuracy of the information provided to us on behalf the Client, its subcontractors or agents, upon which this Report is based. This Report contains confidential, proprietary information and related intellectual property rights of BTY Group which is licensed on a non-exclusive and limited basis to the Client and the Report may not be reproduced, transferred, copied, shared, or distributed, in whole or in part, to any party, without the express prior written permission of BTY Group.

1.3 Reporting Qualifications

This Report has been prepared based on information provided to us by the Client up to the date of issue of this Report. BTY Group does not accept any liability or accountability for information that has not been provided, or made available to us, at the time of preparing this Report. Any advice, opinions, or recommendations within this Report should be read and relied upon only in the context of the report as a whole. The contents do not provide legal, insurance or tax advice or opinion. Opinions in this report do not an advocate for any party and if called upon to give oral or written testimony it will be given on the same assumption.

1.4 Contacts

Should you have any queries regarding the content of this report, please do not hesitate to contact either of the following:

Aashir Khan
Cost Consultant
Tel: 416-596-9339
Email: aashirkhan@bty.com

Lee Harkin
Associate Director
Tel: 416-596-9339
Email: lee.harkin@bty.com

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2.0 Executive Summary

2.1 Report Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a realistic estimate of the Project cost based on the information available at the time of writing.

The opinion expressed in this report has been prepared without the benefit of detailed architectural, mechanical, electrical or processing system drawings and should, therefore, be considered a Feasibility Study/Functional Program (Class D) estimate. Based on the documents reviewed, our estimate should be correct within a range of approximately +/- 30% to 35%.

In order to provide an accurate cost estimate for the Project, BTY Group strongly recommends that a professional Quantity Surveying organization, such as BTY Group, be retained to provide a detailed analysis of any design information produced on behalf of the Client during the remaining stages of design.

2.2 Project Background and Description

The proposed development consists of two-single storey buildings providing for a small single gym, a multi purpose room, a small meeting room, kitchen, lobby area, washrooms, 4 offices, pre-school room, clothing room and a toy lending library & a music room. The works include renovation to the existing facility to widen the corridor and other areas, to make the building accessible, and construction of a new extension of similar design.

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Executive Summary (Cont'd)

2.3 Project Overview

Construction Budget Status	Details	
Budget	N/A	
Current Estimate	\$6,063,100	
Current Cost / m ²	\$6,137 /m ²	\$570 /ft ²
Project Specifics		
GFA	988 m ²	10,635 ft ²
Construction Start	January-2024	
Construction Completion	December-2024	
Duration	12 months	
Escalation	12.90%	
Design Contingency	15.00%	
Construction Contingency	10.00%	

3.0 Development Cost Summary

The current estimated cost of the project may be summarized as follows:

Item	Estimated Costs (\$)
A Land Cost (Excluded)	0
B Construction	4,245,400
C Contingencies	1,125,100
D Professional Fees	0
E Municipal & Connection Fees	0
F Management & Overhead	0
G Project Contingency	0
H Furnishing, Fittings & Equipment	0
I Financing Costs	0
J Goods & Services Tax	0
Total Project Cost	\$5,370,500
K Escalation (12.9%)	692,600
Escalated Project Cost	\$6,063,100

Please note that, where zero-dollar values are stated, BTY has excluded these costs and the values should be carried in a separate budget (if applicable).

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4.0 Basis & Assumptions

The construction estimate is based on the following list of assumptions:

1. Basis of estimate developed from items highlighted within pdf titled '2022 Biz Case Design Priorities Only'
2. It is assumed no adverse ground conditions exist that would inhibit new construction works
3. Site area has been assumed for purposes of study
4. Concrete typical strip and pad footing with concrete grade slab construction considered for extension
5. Community center renovation works are limited to 50% of the total GFA (scope to be determined by client)
6. Typical steel stud GWB partitions considered for interior works
7. Interior doors are considered to be solid wood core, exterior doors are considered as hollow metal doors
8. Demolition works for community center are limited to 50% of total GFA (scope to be determined by client)
9. For range of assumptions, please refer to Appendix II for details

Please note that BTY is not qualified to act as design consultant. The assumptions in our estimate should be reviewed and corrected by the design team.

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5.0 Exclusions

The construction estimate includes all direct and indirect construction costs derived from the drawings and other information provided by the Consultants, with the exception of the following:

1. Land costs
2. Professional fees and disbursements
3. Planning, administrative and financing costs
4. Legal fees and agreement costs / conditions
5. Building permits and development cost charges
6. Temporary facilities for user groups during construction
7. Removal of hazardous materials from existing site and building
8. Loose furnishings and equipment
9. Unforeseen ground conditions and associated extras
10. Environmental remediation outside / beneath building footprint
11. Servicing outside the project site boundary (Main hydro service)
12. Phasing of the works and accelerated schedule
13. Decanting & moving
14. Costs associated with "LEED" certification
15. Project commissioning
16. Erratic market conditions, such as lack of bidders, proprietary specifications
17. Cost escalation past December 2024

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6.0 Construction Cost Summary

The estimated construction cost of the project may be summarized as follows:

Description	Estimated Cost \$	Cost/GFA \$/m ²	Cost/GFA \$/ft ²	%
Structural	371,300	376	35	9%
Architectural	1,398,800	1,416	132	33%
Mechanical	765,800	775	72	18%
Electrical	460,200	466	43	11%
General Requirements & Fees	599,200	606	56	14%
Net Building Cost	\$3,595,300	\$3,639 /m²	\$338 /ft²	85%
Site Work	425,000	430	40	10%
Ancillary Work (Demolition)	116,700	118	11	3%
General Requirements & Fees	108,400	110	10	3%
Net Construction Cost	\$4,245,400	\$4,297 /m²	\$399 /ft²	100%
Design Contingency (15%)	636,800	645	60	
Construction Contingency (10%)	488,300	494	46	
Total Construction Cost	\$5,370,500	\$5,436 /m²	\$505 /ft²	
Escalation Allowance (12.9%)	692,600	701	65	
Escalated Construction Cost	\$6,063,100	\$6,137 /m²	\$570 /ft²	
Gross Floor Area	988 m ²		10,635 ft ²	
Net Building Cost /GFA	\$3,639 /m ²		\$338 /ft ²	
Net Construction Cost /GFA	\$4,297 /m ²		\$399 /ft ²	
Total Construction Cost /GFA	\$5,436 /m ²		\$505 /ft ²	
Escalated Construction Cost /GFA	\$6,137 /m ²		\$570 /ft ²	

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7.0 Areas

The gross floor area of the project, measured in accordance with the guidelines established by the Canadian Institute of Quantity Surveyors, is:

Location	Community Centre - Renovation	Community Centre - Expansion	Site Area (Assumed)
Main Floor	756 m ²	232 m ²	2,000 m ²
Total Gross Floor Area	756 m²	232 m²	2,000 m²

8.0 Taxes

The estimate excludes the Harmonized Sales Tax (H.S.T.).

9.0 Project Schedule & Escalation

For the purpose of identifying and quantifying the escalation allowance for this project, BTY has assumed the following schedule:

Activity	Start	Finish	Duration
Construction	Jan-01-2024	Dec-30-2024	12 months

Based on the above schedule, the mid-point of construction for the project is projected to be July 1st, 2024, which is 20 months from the date of this estimate. On this basis, BTY has calculated the escalation for this project to be 12.90%.

Our current projected escalation rates are shown below. In the event that there is slippage in the schedule, further escalation based on the projected escalation rate per annum should be included in the estimate.

Current BTY Group Forecast	2022	2023	2024
	11% - 13%	7% - 9%	5% - 7%

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10.0 Pricing

The estimate has been priced at current rates considering the size, location, and nature of the project. The unit rates utilized are considered competitive for a project of this type, bid under a stipulated lump-sum form of tender in an open market, with a minimum of five (5) bids, supported by the requisite number of sub-contractors.

The estimate allows for labour, material, equipment and other input costs at current rates and levels of productivity. It does not consider extraordinary market conditions, where bidders may be few and may include in their tenders' disproportionate contingencies and profit margins.

11.0 Risk Mitigation

BTY Group recommends that the Owner, Project Manager and Design Team carefully review this document, including exclusions, inclusions and assumptions, contingencies, escalation and mark-ups. If the project is over budget, or if there are unresolved budgeting issues, alternative systems/schemes should be evaluated before proceeding into the next design phase.

Requests for modifications of any apparent errors or omissions to this document must be made to BTY Group within ten (10) days of receipt of this estimate. Otherwise, it will be understood that the contents have been concurred with and accepted.

It is recommended that BTY Group design and propose a cost management framework for implementation. This framework would require that a series of further estimates be undertaken at key design stage milestones and a final update estimate be produced which is representative of the completed tender documents, project delivery model and schedule. The final updated estimate will address changes and additions to the documents, as well as addenda issued during the bidding process. BTY Group is unable to reconcile bid results to any estimate not produced from bid documents including all addenda.

12.0 Contingencies

12.1 Design Contingency

A design contingency of Ten Percent (15%) has been included in the estimate to cover modifications to the program, drawings and specifications during the design.

12.2 Construction Contingency

An allowance of Three Percent (10%) has been included in the estimate for changes occurring during the construction period of the project. This amount may be expended due to site conditions or if there are modifications to the drawings and specifications.

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13.0 Documents Reviewed

The list below confirms the information that we have reviewed in order to prepare our opinion contained within this report:

Description		Received Date
Drawings & Specifications		
	Mill Courtland Community Centre Floor Plans (3 Sheets)	November 23, 2022
	Mill Courtland Floor Plan (1 Sheet)	November 23, 2022
Report		
	MCCC Building Elements Summary (4 Sheets)	November 23, 2022
	2022 Biz Case Site & Building Analysis (3 Sheets)	November 23, 2022
	Facility Needs Review (3 Sheets)	November 23, 2022
	2022 Biz Case Design Priorities Only (5 Sheets)	November 23, 2022
	2006 Draft Business case costing (2 Sheets)	November 23, 2022

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Potential Funding Opportunities

In addition to the approved \$4 million budget for this initiative, the following potential funding opportunities may be helpful in achieving the community's aspirations for the Mill Courtland Community Centre expansion:

1. The Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program (GICB)¹⁶ has \$1.5 billion in federal funding available to support retrofits, repairs and upgrades to existing publicly accessible community buildings.
 - a. Applications are open for small and medium retrofit projects, ranging in total eligible cost from \$100,000 to \$3 million. Applications are accepted on a continuous basis and projects are funded on a rolling intake basis.
 - b. All retrofit projects must be planned to be completed before March 31, 2026.
2. The Ontario Trillium Foundation—Community Building Fund¹⁷ provides support for non-profits, Indigenous communities and municipalities in the community sport and recreation sectors, with funding ranging from \$10,000 to \$500,000 per project. Applications are currently closed but may be available again later in 2023.
3. The Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program¹⁸, a part of Infrastructure Canada, has approved more than 3,600 projects. Its Investments go toward supporting public transit¹⁹, green and inclusive buildings²⁰, and other community infrastructure projects. Funding may be available for 2023 through different streams.
 - a. One project in the City of Kitchener was approved in 2022 through the Community and Recreation Infrastructure Stream²¹.

16. Government of Canada. (2022). *Green and Inclusive Community Buildings*. <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/gicb-bcvi/index-eng.html>

17. Ontario Trillium Foundation. (2022). *Community Building Fund - Capital Stream*. <https://www.otf.ca/our-grants/community-building-fund/community-building-fund-capital-stream>.

18. Government of Canada. (2022). *Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program*. <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/icp-pic-INFC-eng.html>

19. Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau (2021). *New public transit investments to build strong communities, fight climate change, and create new jobs across Canada*. <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2021/02/10/new-public-transit-investments-build-strong-communities-fight-climate>

20. Government of Canada. (2022). *Green and Inclusive Community Buildings*. <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/gicb-bcvi/index-eng.html>

21. Government of Canada. (2022). *Canada and Ontario invest in community and recreation infrastructure*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/office-infrastructure/news/2022/04/canada-and-ontario-invest-in-community-and-recreation-infrastructure.html>

Ontario Newsroom. (2022). *Canada and Ontario invest in community and recreation infrastructure*. <https://news.ontario.ca/en/backgrounder/1002129/canada-and-ontario-invest-in-community-and-recreation-infrastructure>

- b. There is also an opportunity to pursue funding from the \$3 billion **COVID-19 Resilience Stream**²², which is designed to support near-term, quick-start projects that begin between September 30, 2023 and the end of 2023. Projects include retrofits, repairs and upgrades, COVID-19 response infrastructure, active transportation infrastructure and ventilation improvements.
4. **The Canada Community-Building Fund**²³ is a permanent source of funding provided twice a year to provinces and territories, that in turn then channel this money to their municipalities to support local infrastructure priorities. Municipalities can pool, bank and/or borrow against this funding, providing significant financial flexibility.
5. **Community Services Recovery Fund**²⁴ is a one-time, \$400 million investment to help charities and non-profits adapt and modernize.
6. **The Green Municipal Fund**²⁵ consists of several grants for municipal environmental projects, loans available at competitive rates, and applications for competitive, long-term financing. There are many options, including:
 - a. **Capital project: GHG impact retrofit**²⁶ program is available to help local recreation or cultural facilities reduce their GHG emissions. The maximum is \$5 million per project, with up to 25% of the funding as a grant and the remainder as a loan. The combined loan and grant can cover up to 80% of total eligible project costs.

22. Government of Canada. (2022). *Investing in COVID-19 Community Resilience*. <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/covid-19-resilience-eng.html>

23. Government of Canada. (2022). *The Canada Community-Building Fund*. <https://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/plan/gtf-fte-eng.html>

24. Canadian Red Cross. (2022). *Community Services Recovery Fund*. <https://communityservicesrecoveryfund.ca/resources>

25. Green Municipal Fund. (2022). *Funding opportunities*. <https://greenmunicipalfund.ca/funding>

26. Green Municipal Fund. (2022). *Capital project: GHG impact retrofit*. <https://greenmunicipalfund.ca/funding/capital-project-ghg-impact-retrofit>

Jay Pitter Placemaking is an award-winning, bi-national practice mitigating growing divides in cities across North America. The practice leads institutional city-building projects focused on public space design and policy, mobility equity, cultural planning, gender-responsive design, transformative public engagement and healing fraught sites. Additionally, Jay Pitter, Principal Placemaker, shapes urgent urbanism discourse through media platforms such as the Los Angeles Times and Canadian Architect. Ms. Pitter is a sought-after speaker who has delivered keynotes for organizations such as United Nations Women and the Canadian Urban Transit Association, and is also an urban planning lecturer who has engaged students at Cornell University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Princeton University and numerous other post-secondary institutions. Guided by Ms. Pitter's expertise, which is located at the nexus of urban design and social justice, the team translates community insights into the built environment and urban policy.

Jay Pitter Placemaking

Jay Pitter, Principal Placemaker

Adjunct Professor and Practitioner-in-Residence, University of Waterloo

Visiting Fellow, University of Windsor Law Centre for Cities

Forthcoming books with McClelland and Stewart, Penguin Random House Canada



jaypitter.com