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	Date of Approval:	Policy Number:
	Lead Role: Manager, Business & Community Services	Support Role: Recreation Coordinator
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### **1.0 Purpose**


The Neighbourhood Association policy provides a framework for establishing, managing, and supporting neighbourhood associations in the city. This policy reflects the values of inclusion, sustainability, and community engagement. The objective is to foster strong community ties, support local initiatives, and ensure collaboration between residents and municipal government.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Empower residents to actively participate in shaping their neighbourhoods.
- Encourage collaboration between neighbourhood associations and the City of Welland.
- Promote the social, economic and cultural well-being, safety, and inclusivity.
- Support the development of community-driven initiatives and projects.

This policy applies to:

- All residential neighbourhood associations in Welland, including those newly formed and those currently active.

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- City of Welland staff and departments involved in community engagement and support.
- Local businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders interacting with neighbourhood associations.

## 2.0 Policy Statement

The Corporation of the City of Welland (the “City”), through the Neighbourhood Association Program, recognizes the essential role that neighbourhood associations play in fostering vibrant, inclusive, and engaged communities. This policy affirms the City’s commitment to supporting residents’ efforts in building strong neighbourhoods, enhancing local participation, and addressing community needs. Neighbourhood associations serve as key partners in promoting social well-being, safety, environmental sustainability, and civic engagement.


The City of Welland is dedicated to empowering neighbourhoods to collaborate with local government, businesses, and other organizations to create positive change. In doing so, the City ensures that all residents have a voice in shaping their community’s future. The City will provide resources, guidance, and opportunities for neighbourhood associations to thrive while maintaining transparency, accountability, and fairness in all interactions.

This policy also underscores the City’s commitment to fostering inclusivity, equity, and diversity in all neighbourhood association activities and ensuring that all residents, regardless of background or circumstance, feel welcome and valued in their neighbourhoods.

## 3.0 Definitions

**Neighbourhood** - A neighbourhood is described as an area where people live and interact with one another. We leave it to each Neighbourhood Association to define their own geographical boundaries. This boundary can be based on a variety of factors including proximity to amenities, shared goals, and/or the overall feel and identity of their area.

**Neighbourhood Association** - a volunteer group of residents from the same neighbourhood who come together to promote social interaction, address common interests, advocate for the needs of the community, and engage in activities that improve the quality of life for all residents of the neighbourhood.

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Members – all individuals from within defined neighbourhood boundaries who participate in the association's activities, attend meetings, and contribute to decision-making processes that affect the neighbourhood.

#### 4.0 General Provisions

A Neighbourhood Association is a great way to meet fellow residents, identify both the strengths and weaknesses within a neighbourhood, and work together to improve the community. Connected neighbourhoods are resilient neighbourhoods.

Neighbourhood associations shall be open to all residents within the boundaries of the designated neighbourhood area, and all meetings shall be open to all residents to attend. Membership is voluntary, with no discrimination based on the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Regular general meetings should be held at least quarterly to discuss issues, review progress, and plan future initiatives. The Neighbourhood Associations should have a clear procedure for calling and running meetings, including the availability of meeting minutes to all in the neighbourhood.


Neighbourhood Associations must maintain clear and effective communication with their members. This may include email newsletters, social media platforms, and physical notice boards in common spaces.

#### 5.0 Reasons to become a Neighbourhood Association

The City of Welland acknowledges the important role that neighbourhood associations play in community building and will support them through:

- **Financial Assistance:** A small grants program to support community events and projects. All projects supported through this program must be free and accessible, hosted at a city-owned park or facility.

Approved applicants may be awarded between \$500 and \$1,500 annually for initiatives. This is subject to annual funding approval by City Council. Eligible uses include project materials and supplies, insurance costs, community room rental fees (over maximum annual allotment), park permit fees, planning and development, interpretation and translation for events and communications, fundraising for community benefit (e.g. Food Banks, local shelters, park or facility upgrades). Ineligible requests include fundraising for personal gain / use,

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donations to charitable causes, reserve funds, debt repayment, political or religious activities.

- **Technical Support:** Provision of resources or advice on matters such as governance, funding opportunities, event planning, and community outreach.
- **Space for Meetings & Events:** Provision of city-owned venues for meetings or public events, subject to availability. The maximum number of hours to permit city spaces is 50 hours annually. Any additional bookings, in excess of the 50 hours, will be valued at the non-profit rate. Note: Arena floor bookings are excluded under this space provision.
- **Consultation & Collaboration:** City staff will engage with neighbourhood associations during the development of city plans, policies, or projects that may impact residents.
- **Listing on the City Website:** The association will be listed on the City of Welland's website as a recognized neighbourhood association.

## 6.0 Application Process

The following outlines the application process for residents or groups wishing to establish a neighbourhood association under the City of Welland's Neighbourhood Association Policy. This process ensures that new associations are formed with clear objectives, structure, and support, in line with the city's goals for community engagement and development.


### Eligibility:

To establish a neighbourhood association, a group of residents must meet the following criteria:

- The group must be volunteer based and represent a geographically defined neighbourhood within the City of Welland.
- The group must have at least 5 voting members who are residents of the neighbourhood, 50% of members over the age of 18.
- 1 vote per household.
- The group must demonstrate a clear purpose for forming the association (e.g., to address specific community issues, promote events, or advocate for local improvements).

### Application Process:

To formally apply for recognition as an official neighbourhood association, applicants must submit the following information in their online application to the City. The City

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will support neighbourhood applicants through discussions, if needed, to meet requirements including:

- **Constitution or Charter:** Provide the draft document outlining the association's goals, structure, and governance.
- **List of Founding Members:** A list of the initial 5 or more founding members, including their names, addresses, and contact information.
- **Proposed Association Name and Boundary:** The name of the association and a clear description or map of the neighbourhood boundaries it represents.
- **Statement of Purpose:** A summary of why the neighbourhood association is being formed, including the key community issues or goals the association intends to address.
- **Contact Information:** Designate a primary point of contact (e.g., President or Chairperson) for the application process.

## 7.0 Evaluation & Approval Process


Once the application is submitted, staff will review the application to ensure it meets the criteria and aligns with the objectives outlined in the Neighbourhood Association Policy.

### Review Process:

1. Initial Review: City staff will review the submitted application for completeness, compliance with the policy, and clarity of objectives.
2. Consultation: City staff may contact the applicants for further information or clarification if needed. Applicants may also be invited to a meeting with the Recreation Coordinator to discuss the application and next steps.
3. Evaluation Criteria: The application will be evaluated based on:
  - Clear and achievable objectives that support the broader goals of community development.
  - A transparent governance structure that ensures accountability.
  - The potential for positive community engagement and inclusion.

### Timeline:

The City will acknowledge receipt of the application within 5 business days. A decision will be made within 30 days of receiving the completed application. The intention of this review and evaluation is to provide support as required to the Neighbourhood Association to establish themselves.

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## 8.0 Renewal and Re-evaluation

Neighbourhood associations will be periodically re-evaluated to ensure they remain active and effective. This includes:

**Periodic Review:** The City will assess the association's compliance with the Neighbourhood Association Policy every 3 years, ensuring the group remains in good standing.

**Reapplication:** If there are significant changes to the association's structure or activities, a new application or amendment may be required.

## 9.0 Responsibilities

### Council

Welland City Council is accountable for:

- Approving the Neighbourhood Association policy.
- Approving the annual funding envelope for the financial assistance portion of the Neighbourhood Association program.

### Director of Community Services

The Director of Community Services is accountable for:


- Ensuring applicable staff are aware of this policy and any subsequent revisions

### Manager of Business & Community Services

The Manager of Business & Community Services is accountable for:

- Administration of the Neighbourhood Association Program;
- Promotion of the Neighbourhood Association Program, including an annual information session;
- Reviewing all Neighbourhood Association applications for completeness;
- Ensuring the Neighbourhood Association Policy is reviewed and updated as required.

### Recreation Coordinator

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- Processing the Neighbourhood Association application by meeting with group to review application and provide support within 30 days of the application.
- Ensuring all conditions are met by the Neighbourhood Association and/or provide the appropriate support for the group to meet program requirements.
- Meet with the Neighbourhood Association (minimum of once annually, maximum of 4 times) to support needs and provide guidance.
- Provision of resources or advice on matters such as governance, funding opportunities, event planning, and community outreach.
- Coordinate and/or connect Neighbourhood Associations with internal and external resources, as required.
- Connect City staff with Neighbourhood Associations during the development of city plans, policies, or projects that may impact residents.

### **Neighbourhood Associations**


Neighbourhood Associations are accountable for:

- Ensuring the accurate completion of the Neighbourhood Association application form;
- Addressing conflicts amongst neighbourhood association members using peaceful and collaborative methods. Seek external mediation if necessary.
- Providing any supplementary information, as required.
- Completing a request for funding form annually, as required; and
- Providing an annual summary of projects and events, surveys or feedback on the association's activities and impact, and any other relevant documentation that demonstrates the association's work in fulfilling its mandate.

Neighbourhood Associations are encouraged to:

- Foster a sense of community by organizing events including social gatherings, and opportunities for residents to interact. Examples include block parties, clean-up events and/or political debates as needed.
- Promote environmentally sustainable practices within the neighbourhood, such as tree planting, waste reduction, and sustainable gardening.
- Participate and provide feedback in public engagement, including issues related to infrastructure, zoning, parks, transportation, and other city services.
- Encourage crime prevention, safety programs, CPTED education, and neighbourhood watch initiatives to improve residents' safety.
- Raise funds as they see fit through membership fees or other means to operate the association



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## 10.0 Appendices

N/A

### Revision History

Date	Description of Change	Initials