

Think BIG for Vanier Community Forum

October 19, 2013

Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health

299 Montreal Rd.

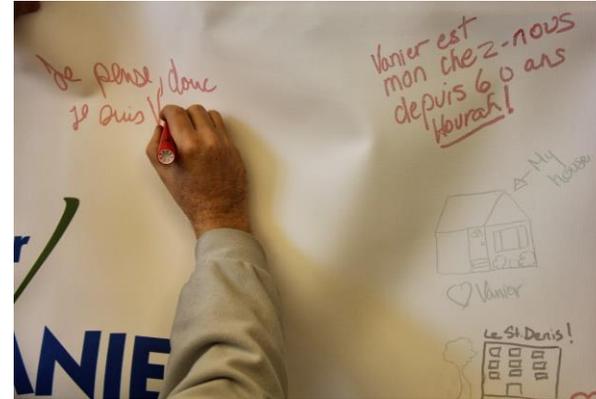
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1.0 Goals, Participants and Agenda

1.1 Goals for the Community Forum:

The Community Forum was organized as an opportunity to consult and engage the Vanier community. The organizers felt it was appropriate at this time to get a sense of community interests and priorities, and they wanted a way to bring additional energy and ideas to the work. A community survey had been conducted over the winter of 2013, and the results of the survey were used to stimulate discussion.

The goals for the Forum were:

- To celebrate the Vanier community's accomplishments;
- To tap into new ideas and energy to guide the future direction of community initiatives in Vanier;
- For participants to become engaged community members.

1.2 Participants:

- Approximately 72 community members

1.3 Process and Agenda:

When participants arrived they were able to have breakfast, mingle, and visit the information tables that had been established by a variety of Vanier community groups and organizations that are part of Together for Vanier. Early in the session they were also given very brief presentations on the role of some key community groups in Vanier, so participants would know who to talk to if they wanted to get involved.

For the more formal part of the day, participants were given a presentation of the highlights from the most recent Vanier Community Survey. They then had the opportunity to engage in two small group discussions on topics that emerged from the survey as priorities. Each of these discussion tables had a facilitator and a note taker, so the main themes from the discussions were captured. The intent in the discussions was to identify actions that community members could take to address the various issues under discussion. Finally, the participants gathered in plenary where each group presented a highlight from its discussion. After a short period for general comments from participants, and summarizing comments from the facilitators, the session ended.

On leaving, participants were encouraged to follow up with the various groups and organizations represented at the Forum. It was emphasized to them that the intent was not simply to generate ideas for others to do; in order to realize these ideas the community groups need new energy and participation from the community.



2.0 Main themes from discussion groups

The following is a summary of the main themes coming from the discussion groups.

2.1 Safety and Crime Prevention

What drew people to the topic?

- Some had direct experience or had witnessed criminal activity (people mentioned drug dealing and prostitution most frequently)
- Desire to see more emphasis on crime reporting and prevention

What strengths can we build on to address this issue?

- Small size of community (only 1 square mile)

- Neighbourhood Watch
- Community Police
- City Councillor/staff
- Call 311
- BIA – bike and foot patrols
- Community spirit
- Rogers community services
- 94.5 FM Community Radio
- increasing level of community awareness
- Share improvements made on North side with South – provide moral and practical support
- Neighbours exchanging license plates of Johns and share with police; also share info about prostitutes working in the area.

What are the main challenges related to acting on this issue?

- Residents afraid to go out at night
- Cash stop business
- Strip clubs
- Pawn shops
- Drugs
- Prostitution
- Irresponsible landlords (don't comply with safety issues)
- Apathy
- Need to give Vanier a positive voice – challenge nay-sayers
- Bilingual police service to address emergencies
- Recruiting neighbours – helping them feel they can change the situation
- Lack of communications between Ottawa Community Housing (OCH) and police – info on incidents not shared
- Need to find balance between privacy and security
- Connecting to renters who are not part of OCH

- Some people reluctant to support campaigns that address negative issues because they might reinforce negative stereotypes of Vanier
- Currently no Health and Safety Committee
- Lighting not bright enough to deter crime
- Problem properties
- Methadone clinics

What can residents do to address the issue?

- Organize crime prevention committee
- Organize community meetings to discuss; also, activities to help neighbours get to know each other
- Neighbourhood watch
- Report incidents
- Phone tree – to resources
- Porch light initiatives
- Support farmers' market
- Increase distribution of Perspective Vanier
- Create “who to call” list
- Improve communication between Neighbourhood Watch, Beautification, Community Police, etc.
- Improve communication, info transfer between police, OCH and Bylaw, community resource centre



2.2 Build a Better Community

What drew you to this topic?

- Feel there is already a good sense of community – how can we build on it
- Interest in promoting local artists
- “Ici à Vanier, c’est la vraie vie.”
- Appreciates French and Indigenous heritage

What strengths can we build on to address this issue?

- Planters
- Community sense of pride and ownership that didn't exist before in Vanier
- Many young families coming to neighbourhood
- Jean Coutu, Wabano, AEFO great buildings to make Montreal Road better
- Crime Prevention Ottawa
- CSCV
- Strong sense of place and identity in Vanier
- Neighbours talk to each other
- Diversity in the community, yet strong sense of coming together
- “C’est chill de vivre à Vanier, un village urbain.”
- So much potential here!

What are the main challenges related to acting on this issue?

- Insufficient residences for seniors, especially the poor
- Get rid of Cash Place
- Roads and sidewalks – Montford between Granville and Baribeau

- Noise at night – corner Granville and Montreal
- Improve bilingual services
 - Fire and police
 - City report on Eglise St.-Charles
- More publicity for Cabane à sucre
- BIA should be more involved in the community and helping businesses
- Montreal Rd. should become our Main St.
- Need things to bring people to the streets
- Need to make bike traffic safer
- Better bus service, easier access to Vanier

What can residents do to address this issue?

- Call 311
- Report incidents
- Use services of CSCV
- Event to involve the shops, like the Summer Solstice on Beechwood – maybe a Winter Solstice on Montreal Rd.
- A horse carriage ride to the Sugar Shack, from different points: Montreal Road, McArthur, Beechwood.
- Centralized database for service groups in Vanier.
- Politique de dévantageur comme on a fait à St. Sauveur
- Create artistic village, Latin Quarter, “doorways” to Vanier
- More effective use of social media
- Campaign to promote Vanier

2.3 Economic Development



What drew you to this topic?

- Concern about development without consultation; should enhance the neighbourhood
- Ottawa gives Vanier a bad name
- By working on economic development we can solve some of our other problems
- Desire for community to be self-sustaining
- Important to create jobs for youth
- What kind of businesses do we want – small independent stores or big stores?
- Need to change our image – e.g. too many cash stores and pawn shops on Montreal and McArthur
- What kind of housing do we want? How do we keep a good mix?

What strengths can we build on to address this issue?

- Proximity to downtown
- Tourism is a business
- Build on existing bus service and improve routes around LRT
- Build on signage project
- Vanier is clearly defined – could develop small retail that caters to our needs
- Proximity to facility for festivals, sugar bush
- We are a main street – encourage walkabouts, café houses, etc.
- Sell the advantages of a Francophone environment (e.g. immersion)

- Redevelopment of Rockcliffe will attract people
- Zuffa Home
- The river
- Residents want to support local businesses
- Many lots available for development
- Potential to support businesses that want to relocate (e.g. high tech companies that want to relocate from Kanata or the Market)
- Vanier could develop as a walkable community to draw people from neighbouring areas (e.g. Manor Park, Beechwood, Overbrook, new CFB Rockcliff development)
- How to build on different strengths of Beechwood, Montreal Rd and McArthur
- Sugaar Shack and festival
- Vanier is a walkable, bikeable community, close to downtown, close to hospitals, many resources
- Vision idea:
 - Marier the connection between Montreal Rd and Beechwood
 - Beechwood the high end area
 - Montreal the funky arts spot
- Montreal Rd as area for lower-end service jobs
- Many artists and creative people in Vanier
- Canvas en couleurs was a fantastic event last year, with 60 artists

What are the main challenges related to acting on this issue?

- Statistics for Rideau-Vanier do not reflect correct numbers for Vanier
- Pawn shops not recording items
- How many drug treatment centres do we need?
- Financing – need a shared model
- Differentiate ourselves – French Quarter
- Collaboration with residents
- Coherence/consistency – development should complement what exists

- Beechwood – upscale
- Montreal – midscale
- Macarthur – commercial
- Balance BIA and community. The BIA is not participating directly in this meeting. What is their vision? BIA is not well connected to residents. They need to approach people and encourage them to open new businesses here.
- Loss of Farmers' Market
- Montreal Rd. not seen as very appealing now
- Need space for children's sports to get people more involved in and connected to their neighbourhoods. Support activities such as baseball, hockey, scouts.
- Proliferation of cash stores on Montreal Rd
- BIA does not do enough to support economic development and does not partner with neighbourhoods
- Not enough services for youth or seniors
- McArthur a challenge because gaps between buildings are large
- St. Laurent Shopping Centre – when it went up a lot of smaller shops in the area closed
- Sports store replaced by clothing distribution centre
- High cost of rent on Montreal Rd
- Need more trees and small parks
- Public transit service is not strong, buses don't come on time. No North-South service.
- Corporate landlords not doing a good job maintaining property

What can residents do to address this issue?

- Report crumbling sidewalks, take care of our own space, get tough with absent landlords
- Shop local
- Develop services for local residents e.g. hardware, shoe repair, etc.
- General education re the possibilities
- Get involved
- Take advantage of buildings like Wabano to hold showcase events
- Need a destination store (e.g. MEC) to spark development

- Residents need to realize what they can do
- Publicize great events happening in Vanier
- Positive redevelopment of Rideau St. should spill over into Vanier in time
- Residents create a more positive partnership with BIA. Or, alternately, go around the BIA and push forward ideas on their own.

2.4 Think Big for Vanier



What drew you to this topic?

- Strong desire to show off community
- Interest in beautification
- Would like different vision for development – Think Big, not Tall (buildings)!
- Need something vibrant in Vanier
- Need to change our reputation

What strengths can we build on to address this issue in Vanier?

- Small town, village feel
- Lots of community involvement
- Lots of community hubs where people can meet, share ideas

- Highlight Architectural/artistic highlights: murals, buildings (e.g. Wabano)...
- Multicultural diversity – wonderful learning/growth opportunity
- Multifaith housing initiative
- New development that involves everyone
- Need more entertainment for seniors (280 Montfort)
- Art COOP (participant's idea)
- Small businesses that are working hard and doing well (Vanier Snack Shack, Bobby's Table) – they are isolated but should be better known
- 2 rivers – beautiful setting
- parks and paths
- population is dense, but not too dense
- heritage sites and a rich history
- architecture of our streets (cute streets, unique houses)
- bilingualism
- community spirit

What are the main challenges related to acting on this issue?

- Montreal Rd. – beautification of main arteries
- Need to find ways to support newcomers to find employment – there are many in Vanier. Look at how to help them live their dreams. Need to look at initiatives like microfinance rather than Cash stores.
- Harmonize publicity and visibility of positive happenings in Vanier with campaign to work against the negative stereotypes of Vanier
- Need more programs for seniors, and ways to support participation in existing programs. One major issue is mobility of seniors in winter – how to support better walking conditions as sidewalks can be dangerous
- An undeserved (negative) reputation
- Rideau-Vanier statistics not reflective of actual life in Vanier
- We are looked down on by other neighbourhoods (New Edinburgh, Rockcliffe, Lindenlea)
- Security, walking outside

- Try to get bus shelter outside seniors residence (280 Montfort)
- Need better public transit
- Cash stores
- Need new businesses; BIA should be here
- Domicile is listening; Minto not open to community input

What can residents do to address this issue?

- Beautification:
 - bring back Christmas lights, solar Christmas lights
 - hanging flower pots
 - Maison Funéraire likes to be involved – donating flowers, helping with Christmas lights around Legion
- Need to find ways to support newcomers to find employment – there are many in Vanier. Look at how to help them live their dreams. Need to look at initiatives like microfinance rather than Cash stores.
- Develop market in Vanier (for many newcomers, markets are part of their culture)
- Show off our community to others – better publicity
 - Festival des nations
 - Sugar shack
- For elderly – tap into energy that exists at Centre Pauline-Charron. Shuttles to bring people to Centre Richelieu. Restos, dinner and dance.
- Talk to media; make problems visible
- Beautify businesses
- Develop Montreal Rd in better way (more lights, flowers, restaurants, coffee shops)
- Try to attract desirable businesses to Vanier
- For youth to be engaged in their communities, we should have a community youth house (like the Rideau-Rockcliffe Center). a meet up spot. Many unoccupied stores that could be rented out.



3.0 Summary

3.1 Cross-cutting themes

Although the discussion groups were talking about diverse topics, there was a great deal of overlap in the discussions. The following are some of the cross-cutting themes that emerged from the discussions:

Strengths that were mentioned most frequently:

- Small size of the community
- Proximity to Downtown
- Proximity to two rivers
- High level of community spirit and engagement
- Strong sense of history, identity and pride
- Young families coming back to community

Challenges most frequently mentioned:

- Proliferation of Cash Stores, especially on Montreal Road

- Drug dealing and prostitution as the crime/safety issue mentioned most frequently
- Concern over lack of bilingual police and fire services
- Negative stereotypes of Vanier
- Lack of employment opportunities, especially for youth
- BIA not engaging with the community
- Lack of services for youth and seniors

What can residents do?

- Encourage residents to report incidents to police or City
- Encourage residents to get involved with local groups/organizations
- Many individual ideas that could be followed up with different working groups

3.2 A new vision for Vanier



There is a feeling that this is a crucial time in the development of the community. Many of the significant problems that have plagued the community (such as drug dealing and prostitution), while not totally eliminated, have drastically decreased. The area is poised for significant development over the next few years.

There is a very strong sense of pride and identity in the community. In almost every group, participants talked – often in passionate terms – about a new vision for the development of Vanier. This is a vision that builds on the strengths of the community, and gives the guidance for future development. The following are some of the key values and opportunities that were starting to emerge from the discussions, followed by some of the opportunities that were identified.

Key values:

- Human-scale development and mix of housing that is accessible to wide range of families, not just the wealthy. (Think Big, not Tall!)
- Diversity a great asset that we want to preserve in our community
- A walkable, bikeable community
- Many community meeting places
- Parks and Pathways
- Build on the successful festivals that have started in recent years
- Celebrate local heritage, art and architecture
- Improve services; opportunities for youth, families and seniors to engage in the local community
- Business development should occur in synch with community vision (well-connected, as opposed to development in isolation)
- Buy local, support local business

Key opportunities:

- Need to take control of development before it takes off – want to develop a clear vision for Vanier
- Develop Montreal Rd. as our Main Street
- Take advantage of different strengths of Beechwood, McArthur, Montreal Rd.
- Redevelopment of CFB Rockcliffe
- Create gateways to the community
- Build on existing festivals

- Latin Quarter
- Artistic village – support for local creative class
- Improve public transit; better service and North-South service
- Develop businesses that will support local economy – businesses that local residents will use. BIA should play stronger role in attracting new businesses.
- Strategy to support residents in developing business ideas (e.g. microfinance, not Cash Stores!)
- Continue beautification work