



GETTING TO KNOW **EAST HILL**

A Community Opportunity Scan

Prepared by

East Hill Community Church

3605 12th Street, Vernon, BC, Canada

February 20, 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Christian Reformed Church of Kelowna-Vernon was formed in November 1954. The church started as a typical Dutch immigrant church. A strong community was formed around shared values and shared need. People looked out for each other and made sure that everyone was taken care of.

Our church continues to grow and develop to this day. Our primary concern is no longer survival and we are no longer “that Dutch church” hidden in an orchard. We are now a thriving church placed in a growing neighbourhood and we are ready to make a difference in our community!

Changing our name to East Hill Community Church in Fall 2006 showed our desire to be part of the East Hill neighbourhood. We learned about the importance of working together with our neighbours from the “Power of With” Conference (2009) which introduced our church to the idea of “Asset-Based Community Development”. In time, this resulted in the initiation of our Community Opportunity Scan (COS) which we are reporting on now.

In the spring of 2012, our Deacons first requested that we undertake a COS. To this end the East Hill church council formed a COS Steering Team. This team initially consisted of Carmen Crum (at that time the chair of council) and our Lead Pastor, Andrew Vander Leek. Mrs. Crum had previously worked for Power to Change (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ) as a Production Manager and brought both experience in ministry development and connection to community contacts. The team was rounded out with the addition of John Richey and our Worship Pastor Dave Unrau. Mr. Richey was a logical choice because of his many years working for the Red Cross as well as serving with Diaconal Ministries Canada. Mr. Unrau was brought in both to provide leadership to the team and for his technical abilities. We later added Danielle Robert, who possesses a Degree of Law Studies and has extensive administrative experience working as a legal secretary. Additionally, Pastor Andrew, Dave Unrau and Danielle Robert all live within the East Hill neighbourhood.

The first task of our COS Steering Team was to define the physical parameters of our community. We soon realised that East Hill is a much larger neighbourhood than we had imagined! After limiting our target area to half of what the City of Vernon considers East Hill there were still approximately 900 homes represented (*see Appendix 2*). At this point we also applied for, and received, funding from Diaconal Ministries Canada.

Once these parameters were decided upon, we identified people from the East Hill Church congregation who lived within this area. We gathered them together to hear their impressions of living in East Hill. The majority of the 18 families of our church who live in East Hill attended our dessert social. This discussion was very informative – we learned that East Hill is a great place to live! We also learned that East Hill is not a safe place for some residents because of crime. The experience varies widely from street to street.

Our next phase involved interviewing local community leaders. We interviewed Wayne McGrath (East Hill resident and former mayor of Vernon), Mary-Jo O’Keefe (Vernon city councillor and former school board trustee), Annette Sharkey (Executive Director of the North Okanagan Social Planning Council) and Linda Spiller (now former principal of Silver Star Elementary School). Once again, East Hill was painted

as a very good place to live! However, we were also alerted that some of the properties in the neighbourhood have not been maintained well and there were some concerns with vandalism. Other concerns raised include an increase in the number of children being sent to school without breakfast and a lack of connectedness among the residents. Annette Sharkey planted the idea that forming an East Hill Neighbourhood Council could provide the means to tackle these issues and increase the effectiveness of government agencies working within the neighbourhood.

After reflecting on these interviews we realised that our target area was almost entirely residential in its makeup. The majority of the COS would need to focus on the residents of East Hill as opposed to businesses and organisations. With this in mind we asked Outreach Canada Ministries to provide us with localized Census 2011 projections for our target area (based on census data from 1996, 2001 and 2006). This information was broken up into rings from 1 – 4km away from our church (we focused on the 1 km ring). In reviewing this data we learned the following:

- This area is heavily populated with families
- There is a great diversity of income levels in East Hill
- There is not a lot of ethnic diversity
- Many of the residents are financially stressed

The biggest task of the COS came next. We assembled a list of 6 questions that we believed would help us get to know our neighbours better (*see Appendix 4 for a detailed account of our neighbour survey process*). Members of our congregation were recruited to go door-to-door in our target area and perform the survey. We went out both on a Thursday evening and a Saturday morning. We included an online option for those who were not able to complete the survey at the door. In total we received 137 responses to our survey (*see Appendix 5 for the summary report of the survey*).

Some of the answers did not surprise us. We already knew that East Hill was a good place to live, that our residents like to be active, and that traffic was a big concern. We were surprised to learn that 39% of residents had moved into the neighbourhood within the last 5 years (an additional 29% less than 10 years), and that being more connected to their neighbours was a desire of East Hill residents.

At this point, we thought that our Community Opportunity Scan was complete. Before writing our final report we shared the results of our survey with our East Hill neighbours. We called this public meeting “A Community Conversation” and invited Annette Sharkey to facilitate. There were approximately 32 adults (and 13 children) in attendance. At the meeting we were blown away by the excitement of the residents to make a difference in their community. As we shared the results of the survey and discussed their implications, we learned that crime was a bigger concern in East Hill than our survey had indicated. Following this, we set up a follow up meeting where Regan Borisenko, Crime Prevention Co-ordinator at the City of Vernon, presented on Block Watch and how it could help us combat crime. We have also taken the first steps towards forming an East Hill Neighbourhood Council.

When the City of Vernon heard about our desire to make a difference in our community, they asked to hold a workshop at our church as part of the “Master Walk and Bike Plan” that they are creating. We also assisted the City and Silver Star Elementary with promoting the “Pace Car Program” (an effort to

calm traffic in East Hill). These opportunities were publicized in the Vernon Morning Star Newspaper (See Appendix 6). Through these efforts and connections, we are starting to see East Hill Community Church become a central hub in East Hill in a way that way that was not possible in September 2012!

Through this scan we have identified a number of opportunities for ministry in East Hill. Three specific concerns raised by residents of East Hill in our neighbourhood survey and follow up meeting were crime, traffic and a lack of connection between residents. According to our demographic information, supporting single parent families and financially stressed families in East Hill is another opportunity for ministry. We have also identified a number of organisations our church can partner with: Silver Star Elementary School, the newly formed East Hill Neighbourhood Council and the City of Vernon. As long as our church maintains connection with these organisations, opportunities to provide support should arise naturally and we can work together to build a stronger community in East Hill.

We are looking forward to seeing how God will use our church to bless East Hill in the coming months and years!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Unrau". The script is cursive and fluid.

Dave Unrau, Community Opportunity Scan Steering Team Chair
On Behalf of the East Hill Community Church COS Steering Team

APPENDIX 1 (Timeline)

Sept, 2012

- *Start of Community Opportunity Scan*
- *Request and receive Outreach Canada Census*

Sept, 19, 2012

- *Request letter sent to Diaconal Ministries Canada for funds*

September 20, 2012

- *Dessert social with congregation members who live in East Hill*

Sept - Nov, 2012

- *Interviews with community leaders*

February 5 & 6, 2013

- *Some members of East Hill Church attend the ABCD Conference in Calgary, AB*

February 27, 2013

- *Volunteer Training night (for door-to-door surveyors)*

March 7, 2013

- *Launch of the online survey (powered by www.surveymonkey.com)*

Thursday March 7, 2013 (4:30 - 7:30 pm) & Saturday March 9, 2013 (9:30 am - 12:30 pm)

- *Door-to-door surveys*

April - May, 2013

- *Review of results and "number crunching"*

May 8, 2013

- *Neighbour Survey Report completed*

May 28, 2013

- *"Community Conversation" meeting with East Hill Residents*

June 4, 2013

- *Presentation of COS results at East Hill Community Church congregational meeting*

June 18, 2013

- *Presentation on Block Watch by Regan Borisenko*

September 25, 2013

- *City of Vernon hosts East Hill Active Travel Plan meeting at East Hill Community Church*

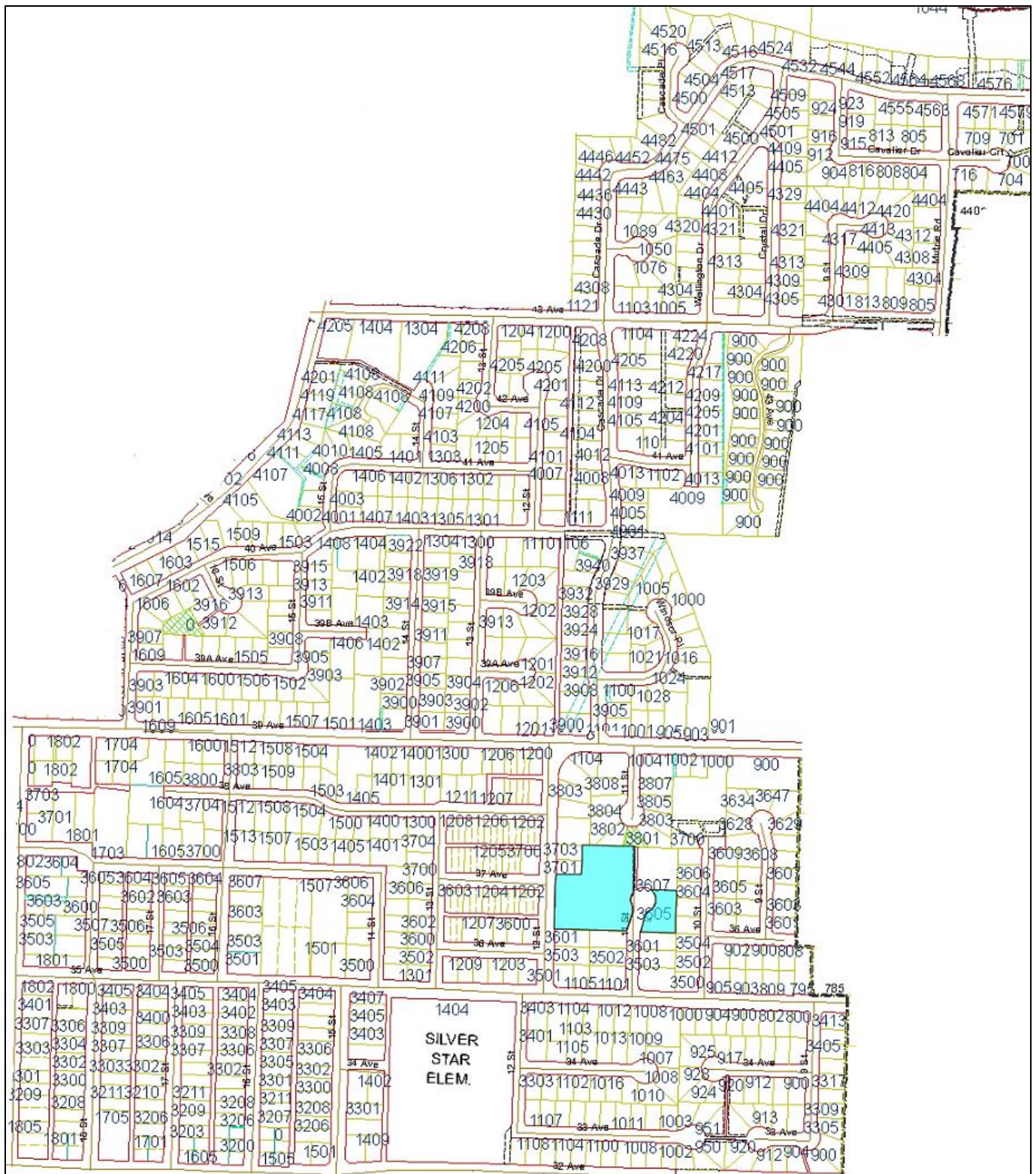
October 21, 2013

- *East Hill Community Church assists with Promoting the PACE Car program at Silver Star Elementary*

February 20, 2014

- *Final Report completed*

APPENDIX 2 (Target Area)



East Hill Neighbourhood (North of 32nd Street), Vernon, BC, Canada

APPENDIX 3 (SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWS AND DEMOGRAPHICS)

Summary of demographic data

**Demographics are for a 0-1km radius around East Hill Community Church (3605-12 St) and are for 2011 projections*

	A brief summary of the information	Striking features of this information	Possible implications for community ministry
Age of population	0 - 4 years: 5% 5 - 19 years: 20% 20 - 24 years: 6% 25 - 35 years: 8% 35 - 44 years: 13% 45 - 54 years: 20% 55 - 64 years: 14% 65 - 74: 5% 75+: 12%	Children over 5 and Middle Aged largest demographics	Ministries for Middle Aged and Children
Household size	1 person: 31% 2 persons: 33% 3 persons: 16% 4 or 5 persons: 19% 6 + persons: 2%	Small families	
Family type/ Structure	Families with children at home: 44% Now married couples: 67% Common-law couples: 15% Lone female parent: 19%	Lone female parent families: 19%	Support/Ministries for women
Marital status	Single (never married): 32% Married: 46% Widowed: 7% Divorced: 12% Separated: 4%	High percentage of married, low percentage of divorced	Family related ministries
Children at Home	0-5 years: 13% 6-14 years: 31% 15-17 years: 22% 18-24 years: 22% 25 years & over: 11%	Largest percentage older teens and young adults under 25	Ministries for children and younger teens
Type of dwelling	Rented: 23% Owned: 78%	Houses built in 1971 – 1980: 35%	

Employment status	15 years and older (total): <i>68% in labour force, 32% not in labour force</i> 15-24 years: <i>71% in labour force, 24% not in labour force, 4% unemployed</i> 25+ years: <i>67% in labour force, 4% not in labour force, -2% unemployed</i>		
Occupation	Sales and Service: 25% Business, finance and administration: 16% Trades, transport and equipment: 15% Health occupations: 13%	Most workers involved in service industry	
Individual Income	Average: \$38,757 Median: \$32,174	Largest Income Categories: <i>\$60,000+: 18%</i> <i>\$50,000-\$59,999: 12%</i> <i>\$40,000-\$44,999: 10%</i> <i>\$15,000-19,999: 10%</i>	
Household Income	Private Household <i>Average: \$72, 854</i> <i>Median: \$67,111</i> One Person Households: <i>Average: \$35,721</i> <i>Median: \$30,678</i>	Largest Private Category: <i>\$100,000+: 27%</i> Largest One Person: <i>\$30,000-\$39,999: 14%</i> <i>\$10,000-\$19,999: 13%</i>	
Ethnic Origin	English: 33% Dutch (Netherlands): 7% German: 26% Polish: 7%		We are a Christian Reformed Church (strong ties to Holland) – good location!
Home Language	89% said their official language was English <i>German: 3%</i> <i>Punjabi: 1%</i> <i>Russian: 1%</i> <i>Ukrainian: 1%</i>	Primarily English	
Other	Immigrant Population by period of immigration: 1991 – 2000: 185/ 38%		

Summary sheet for visits to agencies in the community

Agency name Contact person	Primary people served	Services and programs offered	Possible connections
Social Planning Council <i>Annette Sharkey</i>		Suggested starting a Neighbourhood Council, community gardens, Early Childhood Index	<i>She passed on information for the coordinator of community gardens, VSS Go-Green Initiative</i>
Silver Star Elementary School <i>Linda Spiller</i>	Parents and students of Silver Star Elementary	Concerns are increase of children coming to school hungry and without food and increased vandalism (block watch needed)	

Summary of needs/opportunities identified by community leaders

Community Leader	Needs, gaps in service	Possible partnerships
Wayne McGrath	Need services for single parent families, need community unity, East Hill could use another park, concerned with long term residents neglecting their properties	
Mary-Jo O'Keefe	Silver Star Elementary transportation issues, need of community unity, Community Gardens.	<i>She would help facilitate a meeting with the community to form a Community Association, School Transportation Program, Neighbourhood Watch (Community Policing)</i>

APPENDIX 4 (DETAILED NEIGHBOURHOOD SURVEY PROCESS)

From the start of East Hill Church's Community Opportunity Scan, our team realised that a survey of East Hill residents would be the most important piece of the puzzle. We also realised that to get the quality results we were looking for would require a lot of planning and organisation.

After reviewing the process of a number of other churches we decided that we wanted to do face-to-face interviews. We hoped this would lead to more results and better results. Additionally, we recognized the need for an online component so that we could still receive responses from those who were unable to make an "at the door" interview work. To this end we developed a process to track which houses we visited (dividing the volunteers into zones) and what response we received (face-to-face, left survey to be filled out and picked up later, or online survey card).

We spent a fair amount of effort developing the best questions for the survey. John Richey drafted a set of questions that we tested at our "Dessert Social" with our church members who lived in East Hill. After this, we refined the questions as a team. We also sought input from our community leader contact Annette Sharkey (the Executive Director of the North Okanagan Social Planning Council).

To connect with as many East Hill residents as possible we aimed for two sessions of door-to-door interviews. After much discussion we decided on a Thursday evening and Saturday morning.

To cover the maximum amount of our target area in that time frame, we enlisted the help of our congregation. We used both announcements from the pulpit and sign up sheets as well as personal invitations from team members. We decided to give our volunteers the option to be "talkers" who asked the questions or "writers" who recorded the responses. We gave our volunteers the option to join for one or both of the survey sessions.

An important element of conducting the survey effectively was orientating our volunteers. When sent door-to-door in the community they would become the face of East Hill Community Church. We wanted to make sure that they would be friendly and relaxed. We wanted it to be clear that they did not need to push people just to "get more" from them. If someone was not interested in doing a survey, that was totally fine! If they only had time for one question we wanted them to ask, "If YOU had a magic wand, what would YOU change about your neighbourhood?" We made it clear to our volunteers that if someone at the door was hostile there was no need to argue or get into a heated debate. Just say thank you and move on!

Our COS team was a little surprised by the amount of push back we received from our church members at our volunteer training night. It was clear that many people at the meeting were uncomfortable with the idea of "just showing up" at people's homes without warning. Some people were very concerned that by going door-to-door we would be seen as religious fanatics. We responded by drawing the focus back to how important this survey would be in getting to know our neighbours better. We also decided to give all the teams lanyards with our church logo and their names to clearly identify ourselves at the door and created a checklist to help our volunteers understand the interview process better.

On the Thursday night of the survey we started by gathering our volunteers together, giving each team a “zone” to work through and a brief orientation (a review of the checklist). Each team was given a clip board that included East Hill Community Church lanyards, the checklist, a stack of interview sheets, a stack of online survey handouts and a summary sheet identifying the zone they were to cover.

The zone sheet also had space for the “writer” to record detailed information about what houses had been visited and any follow up that was required. Some of these teams joined us again on Saturday morning. We went through a similar orientation for those volunteers who only joined us Saturday morning.

Our fifteen volunteers (four COS team members and eleven volunteers from the congregation) came back with many stories about the conversations they had with our neighbours. There were a few unfortunate encounters, but overall they found a lot of people who loved living in East Hill and were excited that someone was trying to make a difference in their neighbourhood. It was exciting to hear our volunteers passionately describe their encounters and demonstrate genuine care for our neighbours. We even had one team volunteer to spend extra hours handing out more online survey handouts to the zones were not able to visit face-to-face.

Having conducted the survey, our team and survey volunteers felt a great sense of accomplishment. In total we received 121 face-to-face responses and 16 online survey responses. We had exceeded our target! Our sense of accomplishment was soon comprised by the realisation that we somehow had to compile these responses into something comprehensible.

Danielle Robert took home a sampling of the surveys and created an Excel spreadsheet that we could use to input the survey responses. We created a separate spreadsheet for each zone we visited. Danielle took the initial steps in identifying some key themes in the survey and created a dropdown list in the spread sheet that we could use for entering data. If a response did not fit one of these descriptions we marked it as “Misc” followed by the exact response. After all the responses were entered, we revisited all the “Misc” responses and added some of the more common responses (a number of items were simply left “Misc” because they were unique).

Once all the data was entered, Dave Unrau assembled all the responses into one master document (still divided by zone) and created the tables and formulas necessary to output graphs of the responses. These graphs were included into the “Neighbourhood Survey Final Report” document.

After the final report was complete, we emailed (or mailed) the report to those who had requested it on the survey. Follow through communication was important for members of the neighborhood to know that we took the survey seriously! We also shared these results with Annette Sharkey and the other community leaders we interviewed. Ms. Sharkey in turn shared this report with the City of Vernon. A date was set to hold a “Community Conversation” meeting at East Hill Church to discuss the results. A press release was printed in the Vernon Morning Star Paper (*included in Appendix 6*) and an “East Hill Residents” Facebook page was created (facebook.com/EastHillResidents).

We were blown away by the response of the East Hill residents. Many in attendance had taken the survey themselves, but there were quite a few who came out just because they had heard that someone was trying to make a difference in East Hill. It was at this meeting that our team heard that crime was a major concern in East Hill. We took the opportunity to gather email address from those who wanted to be informed about ongoing community development in East Hill.

We have learned a lot from this process! As a team, we recommend to any other organisations undertaking a COS that face-to-face interview is the best way to conduct this type of survey and it is well worth the time and effort.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Unrau". The script is cursive and fluid.

Dave Unrau, Community Opportunity Scan Steering Team Chair

On Behalf of the East Hill Community Church COS Steering Team

House Address: _____



1. What do you like BEST about your neighbourhood?

2. How long have you lived here?

3. What are some community activities that your family participates in?

4. What are some challenges facing your neighbourhood?

5. *If YOU had a magic wand, what would YOU change about your neighbourhood?

6. If some people were getting together to address one of these issues would you be interested in participating? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. Would you like to receive the results of this survey by email?

Email Address: _____

Thank you for helping us get to know our community better!
You can also complete this survey online at: EASTHILLCOMMUNITY.COM/SURVEY

East Hill Community Church
3605 12th Street
Vernon, BC, V1T 3S7
Phone: (250) - 545 - 3926
Email: office@eashillcommunity.com

Volunteer Signup Sheet

THURSDAY MARCH 7, 5:30p-8:30p

Name: _____ ☐ talker ☐ writer

Name: _____ ☐ talker ☐ writer

Name: _____ ☐ talker ☐ writer

Name: _____ ☐ talker ☐ writer

Name: _____ ☐ talker ☐ writer

SATURDAY MARCH 9, 9:30a-12:30p (babysitting available for volunteers)

Name: _____ ☐ talker ☐ writer

Name: _____ ☐ talker ☐ writer


Name: _____ ☐ talker ☐ writer

Name: _____ ☐ talker ☐ writer

Name: _____ ☐ talker ☐ writer

CHECKLIST

1. Breathe a prayer as you ring or knock at each door (not for you, but as intercessory for the person answering and the household behind that door)
2. SMILE and introduce yourselves
3. Say something like:
"Hi, I'm _____ and this is _____. We're your neighbours from East Hill Community Church on 12th Street. We're trying to get to know our neighbourhood better. Do you have time to answer some quick questions about living in East Hill?"
4. If they are willing, go through the questions orally. If not, ask if they would be willing to fill out a written survey and leave it in their mailbox (we'll pick it up in an hour).
5. If neither of these options work (or if they are not home) leave a card and let them know they can complete the survey online.
6. Say "Thank you!" and offer a gift pen regardless of the response you receive.
7. Leave quietly and let the HOLY SPIRIT do the rest!
8. (Make sure the recorder gets the address, the responses and any other information provided.)




YOUR OPINION MATTERS

**We share a common goal.
East Hill is a **good** place to live,
We want it to be a **GREAT** place to live!**

**You can help by filling out a three minute
survey online. We would appreciate your
response by March 15. Thank you!**

EASTHILLCOMMUNITY.COM/SURVEY

**For more information please
call 250.545.3926 or email
office@easthillcommunity.com.**



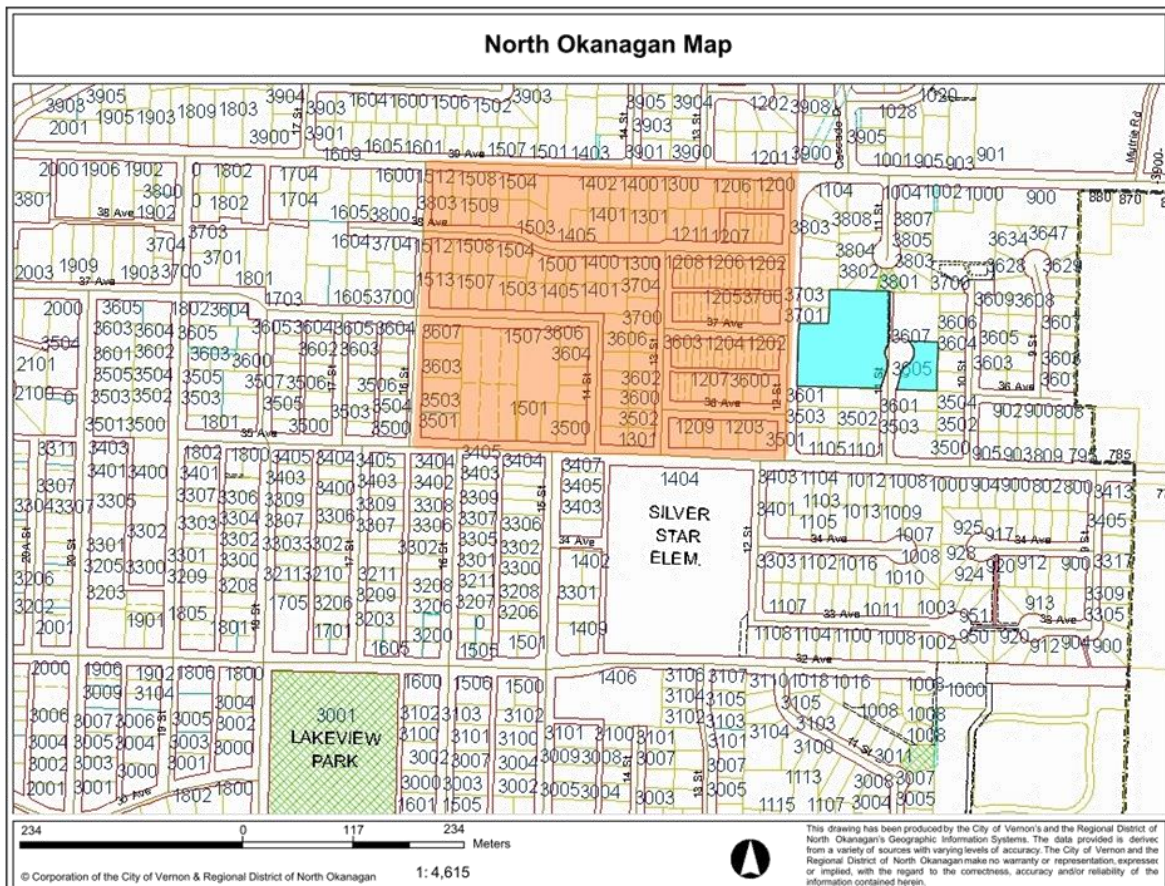
East Hill Community
A Christian Reformed Church

Online Survey Handout (front and back)

SUMMARY SHEET

Team: _____

STREET:	32 nd Avenue						
VERBAL	5555 (HOUSE NUMBER)						
WRITTEN (to pickup)							
CARD							



APPENDIX 5 (NEIGHBOURHOOD SURVEY – Published May 8, 2013)

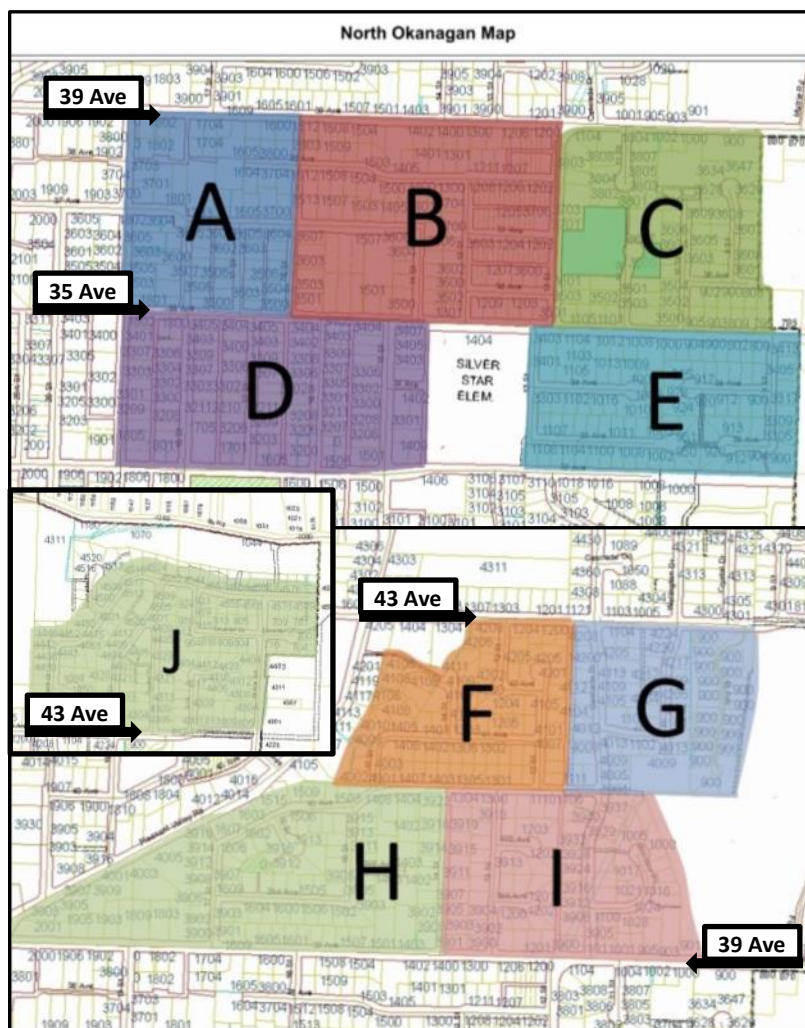
A SURVEY OF EAST HILL RESIDENTS

In March 2013 teams from East Hill Community Church headed out into East Hill to conduct a “Neighbourhood Survey”. Our goal was to get to know our neighbours better and discover how to become better neighbours to our community. This survey is one piece of a larger “Community Opportunity Scan” that our church is undertaking. Through this scan we hope to get to know the people, organisations, resources and needs of our community first-hand.

A necessary step to make this task possible was to narrow the scope of our “neighbourhood”. East Hill is a very large area. We chose a smaller area to focus our efforts. We then divided it into zones and sent interview teams to each zone.

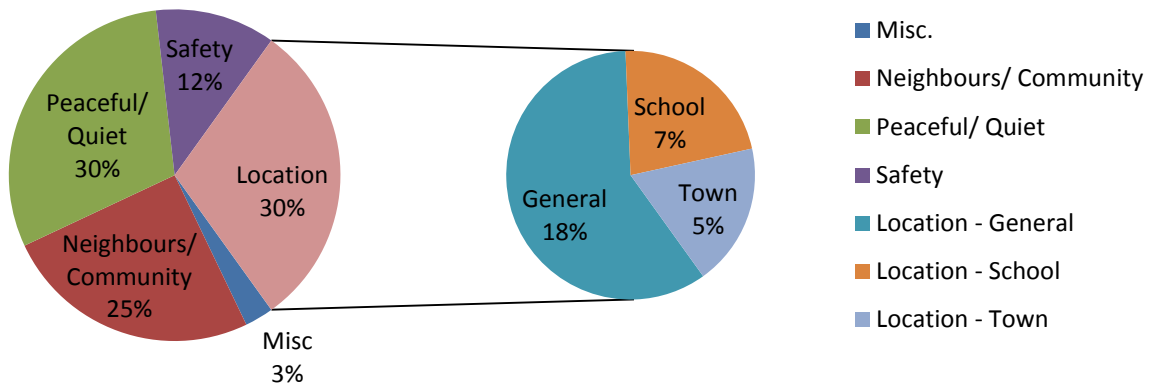
Through this process we learned a lot about the people of East Hill. We regret that we were unable to send teams to zones H and J but we did distribute handouts so that residents could submit surveys online.

Number of Respondents per Zone	
Zone	Respondents
A	15
B	17
C	17
D	13
E	8
F	22
G	10
H	<i>(only online)</i>
I	18
J	<i>(only online)</i>
Online	16



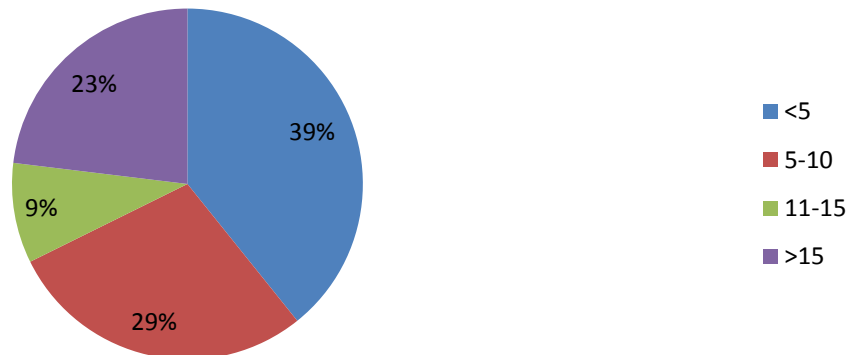
We did our best to balance our desire for results with the need to be respectful of those we were interviewing. This meant that many of the surveys were incomplete. The open-ended nature of the questions meant that we often received multiple answers. These multiple answers were recorded as separate results. The following charts reflect actual responses to questions as opposed to fully completed surveys. The text in italics is some commentary on the results.

1: What do you like BEST about your neighbourhood?



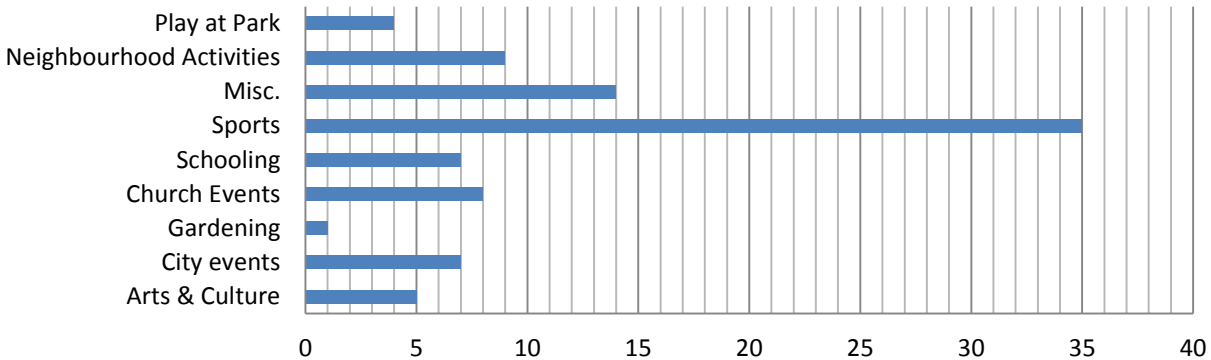
Respondents were generally very positive about East Hill. The location is close enough to town to give convenient access to work/amenities but far enough away to promote a safe and peaceful environment. It varies by zone but mostly residents are positive about their neighbours.

2: How long have you lived here?



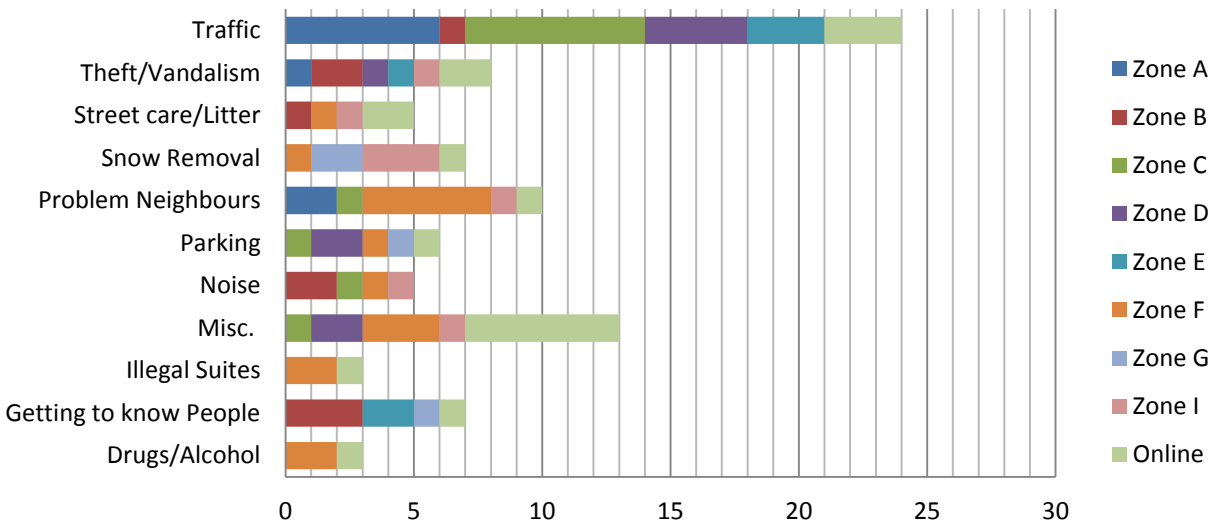
We were surprised by this result! The largest cross-section of respondents have only lived in East Hill less than 5 years while 68% have lived here less than 10.

3: What are some community activities that your family participates in?



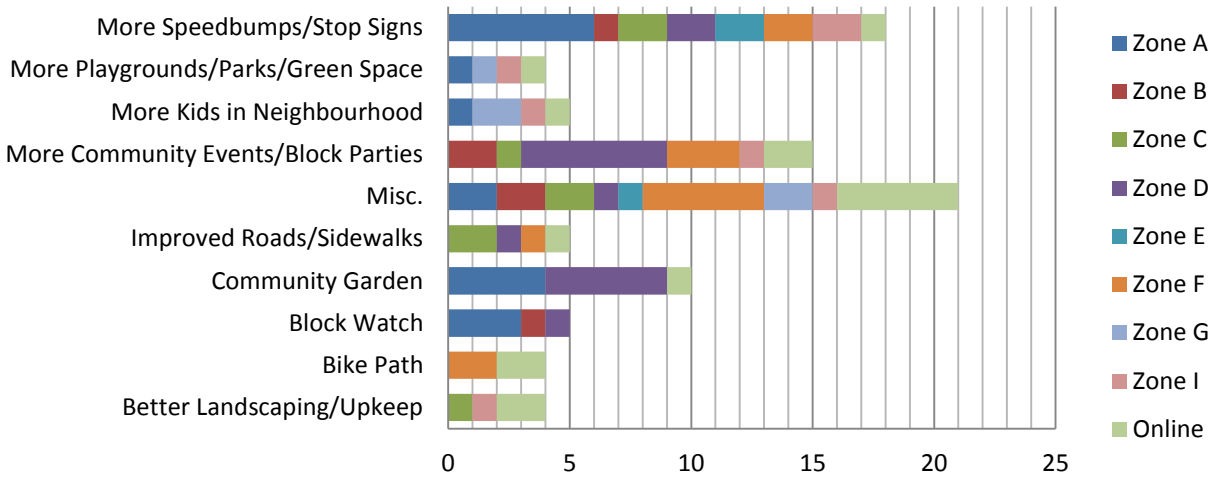
It comes as no surprise that sports is the most common activity. One important note: “schooling” and “gardening” were probably not common answers because of the wording of the question (few people would consider these “community” events).

4: What are some challenges facing your neighbourhood?



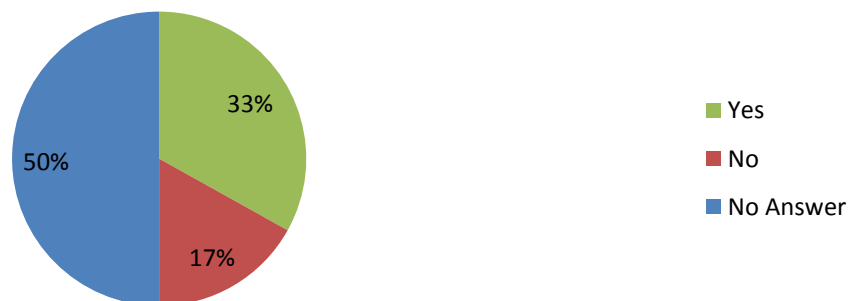
The chart above shows the breakup by zone. Traffic is one of the biggest challenges in East Hill. It's important to note that Zone A and C are along 39th Ave. Zone D and E are along 35th Ave. Problem neighbours ranks highly because Zone F specifically ranked it as a major challenge (as well as illegal suites and drugs/alcohol). “Miscellaneous” results included a cross walk needed on 12th street, resistance to change, after school events for kids, clay cracks in houses, lives too busy, seniors with health concerns, lack of work opportunities, transportation, and high utilities & taxes.

5: If YOU had a magic wand, what would YOU change about your neighbourhood?



The correlation between the largest challenge “Traffic” and the largest wish “More Speed bumps/Stop Signs” is not surprising. While East Hill residents were generally positive about their neighbours there was also a desire for more/better connections. “Miscellaneous” results included a water refill place, a place to go fishing, more young people, daycare, sports improvements, skate park, pet control, coffee shop, less hills, no crime, more good jobs, and lower speed limit.

6: If some people were getting together to address one of these issues would you be interested in participating?



This final question was designed to gauge how much interest there was in working together to better our neighbourhood. Of those who responded a slight majority said “yes.” It’s interesting that 69 out of the 137 surveyed asked for a copy of the results (50%) which would indicate some interest in the process.

Thanks again to all of you who took part in the survey! We hope that you have found these results helpful and informative. This survey is only the first step in a much longer process of community development. East Hill is a good place to live; we want it to be a great place to live! We can only get there by working together. Here are two great ways to get involved that you can get involved:

The first is to you to join the “East Hill Residents” email list and like the Facebook page. This is the best way to keep informed about what’s happening in East Hill. *We promise to only send updates related to community development in East Hill!* Here are the links:

East Hill Residents Email List: <http://eepurl.com/yrn1z>

East Hill Residents on Facebook: <http://facebook.com/EastHillResidents>

The second is to offer your feedback. We want to hear from you what next steps to take! To this end we are calling a general meeting to discuss the issues raised by this survey. Annette Sharkey (the Executive Director of the North Okanagan Social Planning Council) has agreed to facilitate this meeting on Tuesday May 28 from 7:00p – 8:30p. The meeting will be held at East Hill Community Church (3605-12 Street, Vernon, BC).

Looking forward to working together to make East Hill an even better place to live!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Moran". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

On behalf of East Hill Community Church

250-545-3926, worship@easthillcommunity.com

The MorningStar

Connect with Us  

NEWS

East Hill urged to engage



Tweet



SHARE

posted May 26, 2013 at 1:00 AM

East Hill residents are encouraged to engage in change.

Following a survey done in March, residents are invited to discuss the findings and help identify possible projects or action to take in the area.

The neighbourhood conversation takes place Tuesday at the East Hill Community Church (3605-12th Street) from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Annette Sharkey, executive director of the Social Planning Council, will help facilitate the discussion for the evening. She is excited to see the neighbourhood come together to “work, plan, and play” and further build the East Hill community.

Childcare is available for those who request it by email (office@easthillcommunity.com).

The conversation will follow up on the more than 135 responses received in March from the Community Opportunity Scan survey.

“Volunteers went door to door for interviews within a one-kilometre radius of the church (near Silver Star School),” said Dave Unrau, church worship director. “Asking questions like ‘what do you like best about your neighbourhood?’ and ‘what would you change about your neighbourhood?’ produced great information and a starting point for more discussion.”

Traffic was the leading concern, followed by miscellaneous – which was a culmination of a crosswalk needed on 12th Street, resistance to change, after school events for kids, clay cracks in houses, lives too busy, seniors with health concerns, lack of work opportunities, transportation and high utilities and taxes – and problem neighbours.

Survey results are available on the church website at www.easthillcommunity.com/survey.

“East Hill residents are now being invited to come together in a broader conversation about the findings of the survey and to identify possible projects or action steps they want to take together.”

Original article: <http://www.vernonmorningstar.com/news/208891621.html>

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Silver Star school keeping pace



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by Roger Knox - Vernon Morning Star
posted Nov 8, 2013 at 1:00 AM



Vernon Mayor Rob Sawatzky (from left), Silver Star Elementary principal Tracy Godfrey and City of Vernon Community Policing Office coordinator Rachael Zubick lead a group of students and parents to the school from Lakeview Park Tuesday to launch the pace car program. — Image Credit: Roger Knox/Morning Star

awareness around speed reduction in the community, especially in school zones and pedestrian-dense areas.

Parents sign pledge sheets when joining the program and receive a window decal or bumper sticker to display on their vehicles.

Silver Star becomes the second Vernon school to take part in the pace car program, joining Okanagan Landing Elementary.

Dave Unrau has two good reasons for enthusiastically signing up to be involved with Silver Star Elementary School's pace car program.

The worship director at East Hill Community Church wants his church to be a good neighbour. And Unrau is also the parent of a Silver Star student.

"Our church has heard that the safety of Silver Star students is very important," said Unrau at the official launch of the program at the school Tuesday morning.

"As a parent, I expect my son to be able to walk to school safely. I don't think safety is an option. I think it's a right. I like the pace car program. It's something we as parents can do now. It's up to us to set the example for others to follow."

The pace car program is a locally delivered, nationwide program that focuses on raising