

# COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



PHOTO CREDIT: TOURISM KINGSTON

2016

# What is sustainability?

Over the last few years, the concept of what determines a sustainable community has been discussed by many municipalities in Canada. From large cities like Vancouver to Kingston's rural neighbours like the County of Frontenac and the Township of Lanark Highlands, local leaders have been thinking about the future that they want to see for themselves, their children and their

grandchildren. In 2008, the City of Kingston began a two-year process to develop a vision for sustainability in Kingston and a community plan for achieving it. The final plan, called the Sustainable Kingston Plan, was developed over a 24 month period with extensive input from individuals, municipal government, Kingston institutions, businesses and community organizations.

But what is sustainability?

To properly understand the dimensions of sustainability it must be understood that it is a discussion that has been defined in many ways. There are a variety of ideas and perspectives, with equal importance. The most often quoted definition for sustainability comes from the UN Brundtland commission: "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of

future generations to meet their own needs." In the Sustainable Kingston plan, a sustainable community is defined as: "a place where people want to live and work; it meets the needs of its citizens, now and in the future. It is sensitive to the environment and reaches for a higher quality of life." Regardless of the precise definition, it is widely accepted that while the foundation of sustainability is a concern for environmental stewardship, sustainability also has important economic, social and cultural dimensions.

One way to visualize sustainability is to use the four pillars model. The pillars are Cultural Vitality, Economic Health, Environmental Responsibility and Social Equity. The model reinforces the idea that all of the dimensions of sustainability are interrelated, and all are required for us to enjoy a high quality of life.



## Purpose of this report

A recurring theme that emerged during Sustainable Kingston's 2016 stakeholder consultations was the need for more information sharing about what is happening within the sustainability sector. By creating an annual Community Sustainability Report, Sustainable Kingston intends to help address part of the information gap by profiling notable organizations and initiatives that are helping to make our community more livable and resilient. We are planning to incorporate sustainability indicators into future reports, which will provide a way to monitor and evaluate progress towards our community's vision - Kingston, Canada's Most Sustainable City.



The Community Sustainability Report 2016 is organized around six topics - Sustainable Transportation, Economic Prosperity, Climate Action, Food Security, Sense of Community and Environmental Stewardship. Sustainable Kingston will be focusing on these topics between 2016 and 2020.

### About Sustainable Kingston

Our mission is to enhance the livability and resiliency of Kingston. We do this by sharing knowledge and providing resources and programs that drive community action.

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# WORDS FROM OUR STUDENT RESEARCHER

Our summer intern Georgina Preston was responsible for interviewing the many of the organizations featured in this report. Here's what she had to say about the project and what she learned about the Kingston community.

"As an environmental science student who had always been inspired by sustainability, social justice and community, the opportunity to be an intern at Sustainable Kingston was somewhat like a fairytale.

The Community Sustainability Report in particular was an amazing project to be a part of. Kingston has so much to offer the people who live here, and that is because of those same people. I met innovative, creative, passionate individuals this summer who are dedi-

cated to making their corner of the world a better place. It was an honour to have met them all, and to have heard the inspiring suggestions for where this great city should go next."



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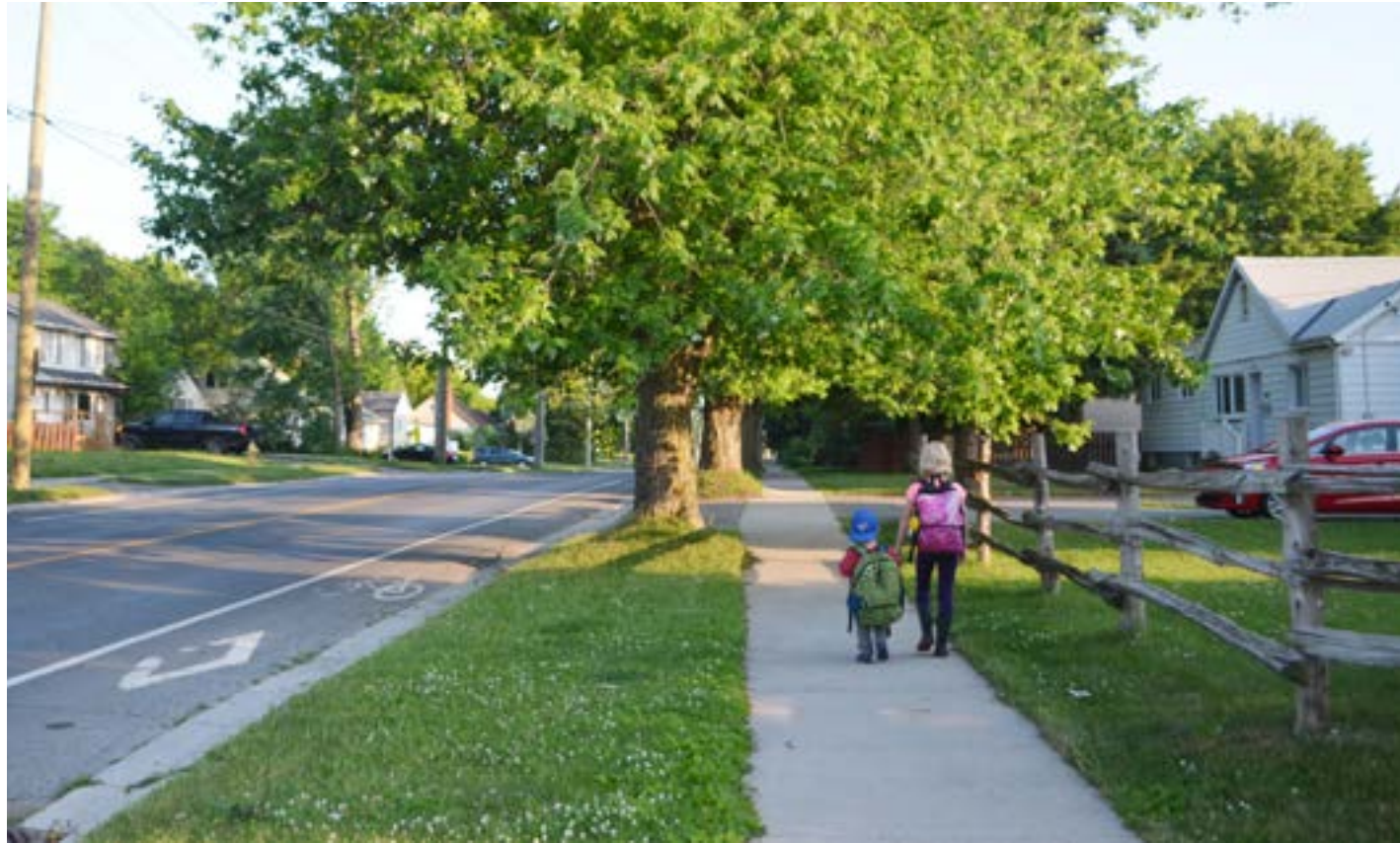


## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sustainable Kingston would like to thank the organizations and groups featured in this report for their time and insights.

We also gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the City of Kingston.





# SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION

Active and sustainable transportation enhances physical, mental, and emotional health, and provides economic and environmental benefits. A sustainable transportation system means building a city where people have the option to walk, cycle, or use public transit as the preferred means of moving from place to place. It also means addressing the social and institutional barriers that prevent people from choosing sustainable modes of transportation.

## DID YOU KNOW...

That 30% of Kingston's greenhouse gas emissions are created by our transportation choices?



Source: Kingston Climate Action Plan.

That the city of Kingston has established a target of a 20 per cent active-transportation mode share for peak travel times by 2034?



Source: City of Kingston.

That shifting to low-or zero-emission vehicles is vital to achieving Ontario's greenhouse gas pollution reduction target of 80 per cent below 1990 levels by 2050?



Source: Ontario Ministry of Transportation.

## TAXI COMPANY GOES GREEN

Mark Greenwood, the owner of Amey's Greenwood Taxi, was inspired to think about improving the sustainability of his business by his children, who at a young age began to ask questions about Amey's environmental impact. Since then, Amey's has worked hard to become a Taxi industry leader in sustainability.

Amey's Greenwood Taxi has implemented a wide variety of corporate sustainability initiatives. Since 2006, their office has been powered by Bullfrog green energy. Over 60% of head office waste is now recycled, and many of the outside lights were purchased primarily for their energy efficiency. Amey's was also the first taxi

company to add hybrid vehicles to their fleet, and today more than 80% of their vehicles are hybrids.

Amey's is also thinking about the future. When it becomes feasible to use electric cars commercially, Amey's is prepared to make that investment and already has already installed the electrical lines needed to support electric vehicle charging stations.



GEAR UP!  
RECYCLED BIKES

Gear Up! is Cycle Kingston's new initiative. The goal of the project is to provide local youth with valuable life skills and foundational work skills, while also helping to improve the accessibility of cycling by providing the community with affordable bikes. Gear Up! is a seasonal project, running from May until September.

How does it work? Gear Up! receives used bikes by donation, fixes them, and resells them to the community at a low price. Safe cycling information is distributed with the bikes. The program helps to promote cycling as a fun, affordable, active and environmentally conscious way of getting around the city.

## CAR POOLING & CAR SHARING AT QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

The Queen's campus carpooling program launched in 2002. To create a carpool, current parkers must be willing to surrender a valid parking permit and convert the remaining valid parking permit to a carpool permit. A list of the people participating in the carpool must be supplied. Registered carpool participants may park in any reserved Carpool space on campus. Carpoolers also split the cost of the parking permit, lowering the per-person cost.

Don't have your own car, but would

like access to one every now and then? A car sharing program offered by VRTUCAR is also available to the Queen's community. Car sharing provides flexible access to a car without the burden of ownership. The program is perfect for people who need to make short trips for groceries or other errands. There is a monthly membership fee and a time fee, but the car is easy to book online and it takes away all the added costs of actually owning a vehicle. VRTUCAR changed its insurance plan so that a person can be as young as 19 to rent

the car! These programs help reduce the number of vehicles on the road by reducing single-occupancy vehicle commuting and by making it possible for people to meet their mobility needs without having to own a car.





# COMMUTER CHALLENGE

The Commuter Challenge is a week-long event that during Canadian Environment Week (June). It's a friendly competition between Canadian cities and workplaces that encourages Canadians to leave their cars at home and choose more sustainable forms of transportation instead. KFL&A Public Health has been running the Commuter Challenge in our community for six years, and for the past five Kingston has earned first place in Canada for a city its size!

Workplaces who sign up for the competition can then track their carbon footprint reductions on the Commuter Challenge website and see the difference commuting makes. The hope of KFL&A Public Health is that Kingstonians like the lifestyle change enough in that week to consider taking part in a more active and sustainable transportation every day. Coincidentally, the challenge happens at the same time as Cycling Week, making it a great time of year to try biking to work.



SECURE BIKE PARKING

Fear of bike theft can deter people from cycling. To make it easier for people to choose healthier, more sustainable modes of transportation, the Queen's Sustainability Office has created a Secure Bike Storage Facility. Located in the space between Mac-Corry and Dunning Hall, the facility is enclosed by 10' fencing, which makes leaving a bike on campus much less of a risk. The facility costs \$20/year for students and \$30/year faculty. It can hold up to 70 bikes at one time and might soon include a bike repair station to make the space even more functional.



# ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Prosperous cities are cities that are not just productive; they are also inclusive, healthy, safe, resilient, and green. In Kingston, we are building on our strengths by fostering entrepreneurship and innovation. We acknowledge the important role culture and creativity play in wealth creation, and also in making Kingston a vibrant, vital community that retains students and attracts young professionals. We manage our environmental and built heritage and build creative experiences that are the basis of an authentic and successful tourism strategy.

## DID YOU KNOW...

Kingston's CAO Gerard Hunt has predicted that by 2022 there will be more jobs available in Kingston than people between the ages of 17 and 72 available to fill them.



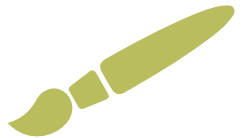
Source: The Kingston Whig-Standard.

Innovation plays a critical role in local economic development. Kingston's 2015 - 2018 Strategic Plan seeks to position Kingston as a leader in innovation.



Source: City of Kingston.

The Kingston Culture Plan envisions a city in which all sectors of the community work together to enhance Kingston's distinctive identity, enrich the cultural life of residents and attract newcomers.



Source: Kingston Culture Plan, 2010.



# KINGSTON TRANSIT

Since 2011, the City of Kingston has been making significant and ongoing investments in its public transit service in order to improve its speed, frequency, reliability, and ease of use. These investments have resulted in a significant growth in Kingston Transit ridership. Kingston Transit carried 1.1 million more passengers in 2015 than it did in 2011; an increase of 31% over that 5-year period. Service hours during that period also increased, from 158,000 to 236,000 hours annually. In 2015, ridership reached an all-time record of 4.6 million passenger trips. In partnership with the schoolboards Kingston Transit also implemented free high school bus passes (grade 9 to 12) including familiarization sessions every September for new Grade 9 high school users.

The majority of service and ridership growth has occurred since 2013, when Kingston Transit introduced its first Express Routes. Express Routes connect much of the city's urban areas with fast, reliable, frequent service providing at least 15-minute service frequency during weekday peak periods. These routes established a foundational "backbone" of the Kingston Transit network.

The 2015 Kingston Transportation Master Plan (KTMP) has established a target of 9% of trips made by transit by 2034. To achieve this target, the City of Kingston will need to continue to invest in the transit system and improve service levels.



# PROFESSIONAL MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

KEYS Job Centre’s Professional Mentoring Partnership program matches immigrant and refugee professionals with established local professionals in the same field for mentoring and networking purposes. Each mentoring match is designed to meet the individual needs of mentees and benefit from the experience of local mentors: Mentors share information about Canadian workplace cultures, employer expectations and occupation-specific requirements in the Canadian context. Mentors help mentees to establish/expand their professional network, prepare for professional exams and connect with the local or regional labour market. The program seeks to address challenges that new Kingstonians face in trying to access their professions, while providing an opportunity for local established professionals

to gain cross-cultural awareness, a global perspective on their field and leadership skills. The program is funded by the Federal government and powered by volunteers and the eagerness of mentees and mentors. Since its inception, approximately 200 matches have been made – assisting 200 local newcomer professionals to integrate into the local market, build valuable professional connections and, for many, begin working in their first professional Canadian job.



## STOREFRONT FESTIVAL

This year marked the beginning of Canada’s first ever Storefront Festival. The festival was inspired by the independent theatre movement, a desire for a Kingston Fringe Festival, and concern about empty storefronts in the downtown. Operating out of three empty storefronts and Brian’s Record Option (still in business!), it featured fifteen plays, with four to six performances each day in each space. This festival was an amazing way to showcase some of Kingston’s artistic talent, while also bringing traffic to the downtown. Initiatives like this help make Kingston a cultural destination, and demonstrate the power of artists and arts organizations to solve problems and drive community prosperity.

# #FRESHMADEAILY

Tourism Kingston is shaking it up with a brand repositioning that uses the tagline called #freshmadedaily. It’s cool, it’s hip, and it is all about celebrating the old with the new. Based on focus group feedback from the past couple years, Tourism Kingston and its tourism partners have come to realize that there is a fun, creative momentum in city that deserves to be celebrated. The brand is very imagery based, reflecting the picture-sharing society we live in. It aims to use new ways to attract visitors by highlighting the artisan culture that resides in Kingston. It is evolving to accommodate a new wave of tourism that wants to be immersed in the vibrant and creative energy, what the creators have to offer while

exploring the historic city through the lens of a local.



## SUPPORTING HIGH-GROWTH STARTUPS

Innovate Kingston is a grassroots non-profit created and run by a group of local entrepreneurs. The organization is committed to making Kingston the premier destination for technology startups in Canada. With the active support of entrepreneurs and the Kingston community, Innovate Kingston’s vision is to help develop an ecosystem that will result in a \$100 million technology-related business in Kingston. As they work towards that goal they aim to help form many companies, drive job creation, and continue to enhance Kingston as a go-to location for entrepreneurs scaling world-class ICT (Information Communication Technology) businesses.

In 2015, Kingston City Council endorsed Innovate Kingston’s use of the former Portsmouth Town Hall for a five year pilot project to create a small business accelerator program. The program will focus on the acceleration of start-up small businesses in the ICT sector, with programming and support for businesses supplied by Innovate Kingston.



# YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY

In May 2015, Kingston City Council approved strategic priorities for its four-year term, including development of a youth employment strategy that would support a smart economy.

Last year, the City of Kingston and the United Way of Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington (United Way) launched a project to develop a community-supported Youth Employment Strategy. The vision is to empower youth with the skills and opportunities they need to build careers that create a better future for themselves and their communities.

Youth unemployment currently runs at 3 to 4 times the rate for older job seekers. The strategy can help the community identify and eliminate barriers to youth employment. City of Kingston is currently working on a separate but complementary plan that will formally address youth employment within Kingston’s municipal government.

“In 2014, the Ontario unemployment rate for youth 15 to 24 was 15.8%. We have a lot of young people looking for jobs and these meetings are the first step in developing a framework for our youth employment strategy.”

— Mayor Bryan Paterson  
announcing the Youth Employment Strategy project

# RISE ASSET DEVELOPMENT

Rise is a charity that provides low interest business loans, training and mentorship to men and women with a history of mental health, addiction and other challenges who are unable to access traditional financing. Rise stems from the fundamental truth that meaningful employment is important for ALL of us – for our self-esteem, our economic and personal lives, and our sense of community. In 2009, Sandra Rotman brought together CAMH and the Rotman School of Management

to jointly address these barriers through the creation of Rise Asset Development.

Rise arrived in Kingston in 2015 and works in collaboration with AMHS-KFLA to empower individuals who have faced employment barriers and stigma due to a history of mental health or addictions challenges. The Rise office supports local entrepreneurs and small business owners by providing access to low interest financing, assistance with business development and mentorship. Rise has been able to access "untapped potential" in Kingston, and has helped launch over a dozen new businesses. By investing in individuals with a history of mental health and addictions challenges, Rise Kingston has created almost 20 jobs within sustainable businesses, contributing to a healthier, stronger and more inclusive community.





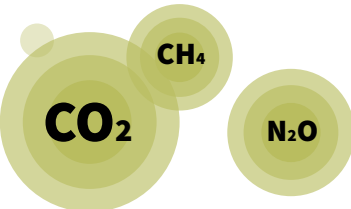


# CLIMATE ACTION

Climate change is today’s most significant global threat to our quality of life. This generation’s response to climate change will be our most important legacy. As a community, we have a responsibility to take action. This section features some of local businesses, organizations, and institutions that are working to shrink Kingston’s carbon footprint and reduce our vulnerability to the changing climate.

## DID YOU KNOW...

The our community’s greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction target is 352,500 tonnes by 2020 (from base year 2011 projections)?



Source: City of Kingston.

That 51% of Kingston’s GHG emissions are created by our workplaces?



Source: Kingston Climate Action Plan.

If you’re looking for ways to reduce your home or workplace carbon footprint, the Kingston Climate Action Plan is a great resource!



Source: City of Kingston.



DEBRA KRAKOW, PROJECT MANAGER, FACILITIES MANAGEMENT & CONSTRUCTION SERVICES

## SOLAR COLLECTION ON CITY ROOFTOPS

Since 2010, the City of Kingston has been installing solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on municipally-owned buildings. This initiative generates revenue for the City by creating clean, renewable energy that can be sold back to the electrical grid through Ontario’s Feed-In-Tariff (FIT) and micro Feed-In-Tariff (microFIT) programs. Currently there are thirteen sites that have been selected for installations, including fire halls and libraries. Looking into the future, the City is exploring the possibility of additional installation sites. These installations might not be part of the FIT or microFIT programs. Instead, they would use Net Metering, meaning the buildings with the panels would use the energy generated and sell any excess at current rates.

## THE TEA ROOM: KINGSTON’S CARBON-NEUTRAL CAFÉ

The Tea Room is a student-run cafe located at the corner of Union Ave and Division Street. Choosing the Tea Room means choosing zero consumer waste, 100% compostable, carbon neutral, Fair Trade certified, and bullfrog powered.

The Tea Room was established by a group of engineering students in 2006, spearheaded by Michele Romanow, who is now the youngest Dragon on Dragon’s Den. The Tea Room’s business model is founded on three pillars: Environmental Responsibility, Community Education, and Fiscal Sustainability. Since then, it has worked continuously to refine its environmental performance and has introduced a series of eco-projects and campaigns.

The Tea Room reached the carbon neutral milestone in 2014. The organization developed a partnership with the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority through which trees are purchased and planted in local ecosystems to offset its carbon emissions.

The Tea Room also provides customers an opportunity to offset their carbon footprint through their Teas4Trees annual campaign. The Tea Room purchases two trees for every five coffees or teas sold during that week. A student fee supports this project by helping with the costs of purchasing trees.

Without this support from the student body, the Tea Room would have to increase prices in order to continue to offset its greenhouse gas emissions in this way.





# GREEN ECONOMY KINGSTON

Since launching Green Economy Kingston on March 10, 2016, Sustainable Kingston has been building a network of local businesses and organizations that are committed to taking action on climate change. Members of the program are supported in measuring their greenhouse gas emissions and setting and achieving emissions reduction targets.

The Green Economy Kingston program belongs to a network of eight programs in communities across Ontario that are supported by Sustainability CoLab, a non-profit whose mission is to help businesses thrive by reducing their environmental impacts. Together,

we're demonstrating that a more sustainable economy is possible.

As of November 2016, the program is working with 7 businesses and organizations as members. Each one brings its own sustainability story to the program – from organizations that are just starting out on their sustainability journeys to businesses that are well regarded as sustainability leaders. Moving forward, we're looking forward to supporting and recognizing our current members while growing participation in the program.



GREEN ECONOMY KINGSTON PROGRAM  
MEMBERS (DECEMBER 2016)

## LEMOINE POINT ASSISTED MIGRATION PROGRAM


If you've ever been to the Lemoine Point Conservation Area, you may have noticed 5 acres of land surrounded by deer fence near the south parking lot. That area is home to 2700 tree seedlings that are part of the Assisted Migration Program.

Ontario's climate seems to be changing so rapidly that trees from our own seed zone, like bur oak, may not be able to adapt fast enough to survive those changes. One way

to test that theory is to plant and research the survival rates of trees like our native bur oak and compare with oaks planted from warmer climates. In our case, trees from south western Ontario as well as from Pennsylvania and Tennessee! Should the oaks from the southern seeds zones thrive at this site in the future, acorns could be collected from these trees and be used to grow seedlings for planting elsewhere in our area.

Partners in this project include the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Forest Gene Conservation Association, Natural Resources Canada, Forests Ontario, Frontenac Stewardship Council, Lennox and Addington Stewardship Council and Friends of Lemoine Point.





GREENOVATIONS

Greenovations is a student-run AMS service that provides free energy retrofits to student housing. Retrofits most often include new light bulbs, low-flow shower heads, and sealing windows and cracks. Last year, Greenovations retrofitted 30 houses! The retrofits help shrink the carbon footprint of student housing, while at the same time saving students money on their utility bills.



## FOOD SECURITY

Most of the food we buy comes from outside of the Kingston region and travels long distances to get here. A strong local food system is important for local economic development, climate resilience, and for providing healthy and sustainable food to our community. Supporting local farmers and ensuring access for all to healthy, nutritious food contributes to a healthy, equitable society and healthy environment.

### DID YOU KNOW...

That 1 in 12 households in the Kingston, Frontenac, and Lennox & Addington (KFL&A) area live with food insecurity?



Source: KFL&A Public Health and Partners in Mission Foodbank.

\$31 billion worth of food is wasted in Canada each year. This is approximately 40% of food produced yearly in Canada.



Source: Toronto Food Policy Council.

Climate Change has the potential to disrupt both global and local food systems.



Source: Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan.



# ENHANCING ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

Approximately 20,000 people in Kingston live below the poverty line. Thousands more are also unable to buy the healthy food that keeps minds and bodies working. Loving Spoonful is a charitable organization working towards achieving a food-secure community by facilitating fresh food access, skills and engagement in a collaborative, empowering and environmentally sustainable manner.

Loving Spoonful's Food Reclamation and Grow-a-Row programs target the issue of food access. Food reclamation works with grocery stores, restaurants, and many other local businesses to acquire excess food that would otherwise go to waste. Loving Spoonful volunteers deliver this food to more than 30 local

agencies that feed people in need. The concept of Grow-a-Row is similar. Local gardeners and farmers are encouraged to grow an extra row of food for the same organizations and people in need. Between 2008 and 2015, these projects resulted in the collection of 250 000 pounds of food. Each year collects more than the year before it, a growing momentum that is appreciated by the people who rely on these contributions.



MEMORIAL CENTRE FARMERS' MARKET

2016 is the Memorial Centre Farmers' Market's fifth year in operation. This is the only market in Kingston that operates year-round, moving indoors during the winter months.

The Market's goals are to expand the local foodshed for Kingstonians while providing a venue for local food producers. In order to be a vendor, you must be selling your own products that come from less than 100 km away. Between 25-30 vendors operate out of the Market each week, along with activities and entertainment such as weekly yoga, occasional cooking demos, live music, and family friendly fun.



# KINGSTON COMMUNITY GARDENS NETWORK

The Kingston Community Gardens Network is a partnership between the City of Kingston and Loving Spoonful. It supports community gardens across Kingston so that they may flourish, and assists in the creation of new community gardens on public or private lands.

Community gardens have many benefits, including beautifying neighbourhoods, fostering a sense of community identity and helping to reduce social isolation. They act as catalysts for a more vibrant, connected city and food secure community. Lilith Wyatt, the Food Access Coordinator from Loving Spoonful, states that these gardens are a transformative starting point for building community around food.

A map of Kingston's community gardens can be found on Kingston Community Garden Network's website ([www.kingstoncommunitygardens.ca](http://www.kingstoncommunitygardens.ca)).

# LOCAL SEED GARDENS

Has it ever occurred to you that while you may buy and eat local food, the seeds your food grew from could have come from far away places? In the past, most farmers grew their crops with their own seeds, but that isn't very common anymore. In fact, three corporations control almost 70% of global proprietary seed.

The Kingston Area Seed System initiative (KASSI) is attempting to address this issue through their programs, including their Seed Gardens. KASSI believes that locally grown seeds are important because they help preserve genetic diversity, which is nature's insurance policy against catastrophic crop failures. The Seed Gardens are garden plots that volunteers plant, tend, and harvest

solely for the production of seeds. This helps increase the quantities of seeds available for distribution to Kingston's farming community. Periodically growing stored varieties

from time to time allows them to adapt to the most current conditions. Our changing climate makes this especially important.



# ROOTED FOODS CO.

Queen's student Jason Hawkins was inspired to create Rooted Foods Co. after experiencing his first Kingston winter, long line-ups at Metro, and an almost non-existent selection of quality, local food. Wouldn't it be great, he thought, if students could have access to local, affordable food all year round? Better yet, what if the food was delivered right to their door for free?

After winning a business plan competition through the Queen's Centre for Social Impact in early 2015, Jason took his idea from concept to

reality. Rooted Foods really took off after Jason met Wendy - the owner of Wendy's Country Market. Wendy is a thought leader for the local food movement and was already delivering farm fresh food from over 70 local producers to communities between Kingston and Ottawa. Rooted Foods became the intermediary that Wendy's Country Market needed to reach Queen's University students. Jason and his partners Graham Stirling-Moffet and Nick Harrison officially launched their year-round local food delivery service in January 2016.

Over 200 customers signed up during Rooted's first four months of operation and the team is working with Wendy to increase its numbers in the 2016/17 school year. The group is excited to explore opportunities of expanding Rooted Foods Co.'s reach to the greater Kingston community.



FOUNDER JASON HAWKINS

# THE GOOD FOOD BOX

The Good Food Box aims to make healthy, good quality fruit and vegetables available to everyone. People can order food boxes through 34 sites, from Kingston to Cloyne, Napanee to Gananoque. All the food is provided by Deodato's, a local wholesaler, and is picked carefully to work within the price for each size of box. Packing is done by Good Food Box coordinators and volunteers.

While this program was originally started as a way to assist people who find it difficult to access healthy food because of their income, it is also ideal for those who have trouble physically accessing a grocery store or who just love good food!





# SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Sense of community refers to people’s perception of interconnection and interdependence, shared responsibility and common goals. This Priority Area considers actions that improve civic engagement, lower barriers to inclusion, and make Kingston a welcoming and supportive community. Having a strong sense of community is important because it helps build social capital among residents and encourages volunteerism and citizen involvement. Also, a community that is rich in social capital provides a wealth of intelligence, sensitivity, and wisdom that will underpin and support community sustainability efforts.

## DID YOU KNOW...

That people who participate in their community and who are civically engaged have a higher quality of life, feel a stronger sense of belonging, and have better self-reported mental health?



Source: CFKA Vital Signs, 2014; Canadian Mental Health Ass. Ontario.

That in 2013/2014, 67.8% of children and adults in the greater Kingston area felt a sense of belonging to the community?



Source: CFKA Vital Signs, 2016

That in 2015, Kingston welcomed over 150 government assisted and privately sponsored refugees?



Sources: KCHC - Immigrant Services Kingston and Area.



# THE FRIENDSHIP ROOM

Martha’s Table provides low cost nutritious meals to those in need, in a safe and accepting environment. This local charity opened in 1997, and initially was only operational three nights of the week for meals. After people started gathering on non-meal days, the Friendship Room began.

With computers, wifi, a telephone and couches, the Friendship Room is a relaxing place to socialize, do art and puzzles, read, and relax. It’s a positive space that is available to everyone. 40-80 people filter in and out each day. Many people are dealing with a variety of issues and benefit greatly from being able to use this facility. Tina, one of the employees of Martha’s Table, notes that the groups that gather in the room form a little family, making it a valuable addition to the community.

# BETTER BEGINNINGS FOR KINGSTON CHILDREN

Better Beginnings for Kingston Children (BBKC), a program of Kingston Community Health Centres offers programs and supports for families that are pregnant and have children up to the age of 5. Most of the families live in north Kingston. When BBKC started in Kingston in 1991 they used a community development model to find out what the community needed and wanted out of a program like this. Because of this model the program is always evolving to meet the community’s needs. Two of the identified needs addressed by BBKC are transportation assistance and healthy food for every program. Parents want to give back and participate in many volunteer opportunities that for some have led to employment at KCHC.

Current BBKC programs include prenatal support,

individual support, early learning parent child groups, parenting programs and school readiness. BBKC would not be possible without their wonderful dedicated staff and eagerness of the people attending wanting to be the best parents they can possibly be and raise happy healthy children!



OUR FUTURE WORKFORCE



# NEWCOMER TRANSIT TRAINING SESSIONS

Kingston Transit has been working with various community organizations and institutions to increase the accessibility, ease of use and ridership of the public transit system and to support a sense of community. One way that it is doing this is by hosting transit travel training sessions to help newcomers become familiar with the transit system.

The sessions are delivered in partnership with the Kingston Community Health Centres’ Kingston Immigration Partnership program. Newcomers who participate in the transit travel training sessions are given a free Kingston Transit bus pass for one-month at the end of the session. This program is similar to the successful program already being offered to seniors at the Kingston Seniors Centre.



# SHOWCASING OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITY

COGECOTV's DiverseCity aims to bring to light the wonderful multicultural community that exists within our region, and to share what newcomers experience when coming to our community.

DiverseCity began as an idea from community producer Joe Santos, and with help from the Kingston Immigration Partnership program the show has been running for around six years. The show helps educate local Kingstonians about various multicultural associations, events and traditions, and encourages people to check them out and get involved themselves. Because many new Kingstonians are actively involved within the community, lately the show has been focusing on the contributions newcomers make toward building a caring community.



RAYMONDE DEGBEY. RECORDED AT THE KINGSTON AFRICAN CARIBBEAN COLLECTIVE'S BLACK HISTORY MONTH EVENT.

# Dia de los Muertos Festival Kingston

Dia de los Muertos Festival Kingston is a celebration of community spirit that draws inspiration from Dia de los Muertos, a Mexican tradition that celebrates life and pays tribute to ancestors and loved ones who have passed on. People who attend this family-friendly festival get the chance to experience some elements of traditional Mexican culture, as well as music, Mexican food, poetry, art, and activities. Ojibway Elder Bernard Nelson will be opening the 2016 festival with a prayer and song. The event is organized by Yessica Rivera Belsham, a local multidisciplinary artist who embraces her Mexican heritage and her connection to her ancestry. Among other projects, Yessica is also responsible for Quetzalcoatl Kingston, which highlights indigenous and folk Mexican traditions and promotes awareness of indigenous traditions

and causes around the world.

Dia de los Muertos Festival Kingston is a grassroots community-created event that relies on the help and participation of many different individuals, groups, and organizations. Last year the festival attracted over 700 people. Festival supporters this year include Mexico Lindo y Que Rico, the Kingston branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Kingston National Aboriginal Day Committee, the Kingston Latino Association, and the Kingston Youth Shelter. Because the festival has no guaranteed funding, it depends on fundraising, donations,

and the support of local artists and performers.

Events like Dia de los Muertos support the sustainability of our community by helping to bring beauty and meaning into our lives, and by nurturing individual identity and sense of community.



YESSICA & CHILDREN AT THE 2015 DIA DE LOS MUERTOS FESTIVAL



# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The idea of stewardship stems from responsibility to remain accountable for the consequences of one's actions. In understanding the interconnectedness of our ecology, we know that our human activities have direct consequences on the physical environment. Environmental stewardship calls upon the community to share the responsibility of protecting and sustaining our shared environment.

## DID YOU KNOW...

The City of Kingston wants to help green the city by intensifying the urban forest? The goal is to double the tree canopy by 2025.



Source: Kingston Strategic Plan 2015-2018

By keeping our ecosystems healthy we are allowing the natural ability of our trees and plants to convert carbon dioxide into oxygen?



Source: Kingston Climate Action Plan

That almost 2500 Kingstonians pitched in to help clean up our community during Pitch-In Kingston 2015?



Source: Sustainable Kingston



# INNER HARBOUR TURTLE PROJECT

Each year, Friends of Kingston Inner Harbour chooses one big project to focus on. These projects have ranged from historical and cultural appreciation to the stewardship of the waterfront's wildlife.

2016's project is about protecting the Inner Harbour's turtle populations. These include snapping, painted and northern map turtles. The northern map turtle has been of particular interest to the group because of the species' "Special Concern" status under the Species at Risk Act.

Monitoring the turtle populations this year has led to many exciting discoveries about species specific behaviours, challenges and biology. 110 turtle nests have also been

safeguarded with covers made of wire mesh and wood in order to prevent predators from disturbing the eggs. Throughout this project, Friends of Kingston Inner Harbour have been working closely with the

Kingston Aboriginal community. The turtle is a notable feature in many different Aboriginal cultures, so their conservation is of great importance to many Aboriginal groups in this area.



A NORTHERN MAP TURTLE [PHOTO CREDIT: D. GORDON E. ROBERTSON, WIKIPEDIA]

## BELLE PARK PHYTOREMEDIATION

Belle Park (also known as Cataraqui Park) is a landfilled marshland that extends into the Kingston Inner Harbour from the west bank of the Great Cataraqui River to Belle Island. The site was used as a municipal landfill from 1952 to 1974. Following its closure, the Belle Park landfill site was converted to a multiple use recreational facility. To handle the leachate – the water that drains or 'leaches' from the landfill – the

City of Kingston planted 12,5000 hybrid poplar trees and over 16,000 live stakes, bareroot seedlings and potted shrubs. Water-loving poplars pull in large volumes of groundwater and lock away many of the contaminants. This approach is called phytoremediation, which means the direct use of living green plants for the removal, degradation, or containment of contaminants in soil, surface water and groundwater.

In addition to reducing leachate seepage into the river, the trees and shrubs help improve air quality. And by reducing the need to use leachate collection pumps, they also save money and reduce GHG emissions. In 2013, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities awarded this project a Sustainable Community Award.



BELLE PARK [PHOTO CREDIT: K7WATERFRONT]

## PITCH-IN KINGSTON

Each Earth Day (April), thousands of Kingston residents participate in Pitch-In Kingston, our community's annual clean-up event. The event, coordinated by Sustainable Kingston, brings local workplaces, sports teams, community groups, schools, and individuals together each year in a day of collective action that helps beautify our community and improve the environmental health of its public spaces.

2016 was the first time participants were asked to register for Pitch-In, allowing Sustainable Kingston to track not just participation, but the amount of garbage that was collected. This year participants filled around 525 garbage bags!



## PLANT A TREE, MAKE OUR CITY COOL

The "Plant a Tree, Make our City Cool" program engages students to become more environmentally responsible by taking action and participating in school ground greening. Western Landscape Services' certified Arborist/Horticulturalist and his team teach children the importance of trees in an urban setting. After the presentation, students help plant one mature tree in their school yard. Each student is also given a seedling to take home to plant at a location of their choice.

The program runs ten times each year, five times in the spring and five times in the fall. The program is free for participating schools – dedicated sponsors supply the trees, seedlings, and educational materials. Schools can register to participate on Western Landscape Services' website at [www.westernlandscapeservices.ca](http://www.westernlandscapeservices.ca).

## FISH & FROGS FOREVER PROGRAM

Fish and Frogs Forever is an educational program for schools and youth groups in Kingston that is designed to provide information about the impacts of water pollution on local aquatic ecosystems. In Kingston, storm drain runoff enters Lake Ontario without filtration or treatment. This means it ends up directly in the ecosystem, affecting native species, as well as Kingstonians since our drinking water comes from Lake Ontario

Children participating in Fish and Frogs Forever paint yellow fish and green frogs beside storm drains within their community, and

participate in activities related to the effects of storm pollution. Students are provided with door hangers to bring home and discuss with family, friends and neighbours. The goal is to provide a lasting reminder about local aquatic ecosystems, and the importance pollutants play in them.

The program is a joint program between the Society for Conservation Biology and the City of Kingston that has been running since 2008, reaching hundreds of K-8 students in the Kingston area."





# About Sustainable Kingston

*Our mission is to enhance the livability and resiliency of Kingston. We do this by sharing knowledge and providing resources and programs that drive community action.*

## Who We Are

We are a small, dedicated team motivated by a shared passion for progress towards sustainability in Kingston. We work together with our volunteers and community partners to realize our community's vision for sustainability: Kingston, Canada's Most Sustainable City.

## 2016 - 2020 Priorities

Until 2020, Sustainable Kingston will be focusing on sharing stories and measuring community progress around six priorities for action in our community - Climate Action, Sustainable Transportation, Economic Prosperity, Food Security, Sense of Community, and Environmental Stewardship.

## Initiatives

**Green Economy Kingston:** A program for businesses and organizations that are committed to taking action on climate change by setting targets to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

**Hub for Community Change:** The goal of the Hub for Community Change is to build capacity in Kingston's non-profit sector by provide affordable desk and meeting room space, capacity-building educational workshops, and networking opportunities for small organizations with a strong social purpose.

**Sustainable City Lab:** The Sustainable City Lab will give students real-world experience by connecting them to identified community sustainability interests and needs through research projects.

**Sustainable Kingston Plan:** The Sustainable Kingston Plan is a community-built Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP). The purpose of Sustainable Kingston Plan is to help our community realize the sustainability objectives it has for the environmental, cultural, social, and economic dimensions of its identity

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## Share your organization's story

The stories featured in this report were selected by Sustainable Kingston staff and volunteers from a much longer list of organizations, businesses and programs that are making a difference in our community.

Is your organization working on a changemaking project that you want to share with the community? Let us know by emailing [info@sustainablekingston.ca](mailto:info@sustainablekingston.ca) so we can share your story through social media!

### About Sustainable Kingston

Our mission is to enhance the livability and resiliency of Kingston. We do this by sharing knowledge and providing resources and programs that drive community action.

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