

Characteristics of a
Resilient Community or Neighbourhood

 **CHECKLIST**



Attitudes & Values

Infrastructure
& Resources



Leadership &
Community-Wide Planning

Local Economy



Resilience is our ability to respond and adapt to change in ways that are proactive, build local capacity, and ensure essential needs are met.

How to Use the “Characteristics of a Resilient Community or Neighbourhood” Checklist

Building Resilient Neighbourhoods has developed this checklist framework as a tool for helping understand the level of resilience capacity that exists in a neighbourhood or community.

It is divided into four broad dimensions: Attitudes and Values; Infrastructure and Resources (Natural and Built Environments); Local Economy; Leadership, Engagement and Community-wide Planning. Within each dimension, a number of key characteristics of resilience are highlighted, and in some cases these are further described with suggested

examples of specific indicators of resilience that could be measured.

The tool is designed to be used by individuals, groups and communities in any of a variety of different, complementary ways. It can be used as a citizen questionnaire, to promote discussion in focus groups, or as a guide for conducting a formalized community resilience study and assessment. Below we briefly describe some of these different ways that the “Characteristics of a Resilient Community or Neighbourhood” tool can be used.

1. INDIVIDUAL DISCUSSIONS

Adapt the framework into a brief questionnaire for door-to-door or other types of one-on-one discussions.

Different possibilities include:

- a) using topics and questions to generate open-ended discussions and inspire interest and shared learning,
- b) using topics and questions as engagement tools, to help identify where people’s interests lie, what they think is most important, and what they personally would most likely give leadership to or provide active support for, and in what ways,
- c) using topics and questions to discover what skills and resources people have to offer and what they need, and move towards developing an asset map.

2. GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Use the framework to guide a series of group discussions focused on resilience strengths and vulnerabilities of the community. What is known? What is perceived or believed to be true? What is unknown? How do people’s beliefs, the knowns, and the unknowns relate and influence each other in developing resilience?

3. ASSET MAPPING

Use the framework at both individual and community levels to move towards developing a comprehensive “map” of assets, skills, resources etc. (Community asset mapping is a powerful tool that can also be used in collaboration with a group of stakeholders to identify what assets and gaps currently exist in critical aspects of the neighbourhood and what actions can be taken to address them.)

4. FOCUS ON INDICATORS

Use the framework without the suggested possible indicators included. Work with others to discuss, identify and fill-in the measurable indicators that are most important for the neighbourhood or community in relation to each of the characteristics.

5. GATHER STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON INDICATORS

Use the framework to guide research into statistical indicators, and discover what data can be found and what the data shows about the neighbourhood or community and its resilience capacity. How does the neighbourhood compare with trends in the surrounding region or with comparable regions elsewhere, and how are these factors changing over time?

6. SURVEY PEOPLE ABOUT PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

Use the framework to guide qualitative or quantitative surveying into people’s attitudes, beliefs or perceptions related to resilience. Understanding how the residents in a community feel and act in relation to the community is a critical component of understanding resilience. It can also be valuable to compare and contrast what individuals in a community say versus what the statistical data says.

7. FOCUS ON ORGANIZATIONS

Use the framework to develop questions for individual organizations or to guide group meetings of organizational representatives. Organizations often have a different vantage point from which to observe the neighbourhood than citizens have. These

discussions can be focused on gathering general information about the community, identifying the resilience strengths and vulnerabilities of the community or alternatively the resilience of the organizations themselves, or sowing seeds for future collaboration between organizations.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF A RESILIENT COMMUNITY OR NEIGHBOURHOOD: One Way to Use the Checklist

Circle the number that best reflects your perspective on how true the particular statement is about your neighbourhood or community, or circle “DK” for “Don’t Know.”

The indicators below each statement are **EXAMPLES ONLY** – they are intended simply to provide additional ways of considering the meaning of the statement or possibilities for how it might be observed or measured in some circumstances.

RATINGS:

- 1 - not at all present in the community;
- 2 - somewhat present;
- 3 - present but could use improvement;
- 4 - consistently present;
- DK - don’t know about this.



ATTITUDES & VALUES

1. People have a sense of neighbourhood pride.

Examples:

- There is evidence of care for public and private spaces
- There are public celebrations and events which are well attended
- Residents speak highly of their neighbourhood

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

2. People have a “can do” attitude.

Examples:

- Citizen work parties and projects are common
- Identified needs tend to get addressed
- There is not much “blaming” that goes on
- People work together and cooperate to solve problems in the neighbourhood.

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

3. People in the neighbourhood demonstrate mutual assistance.

Examples:

- People in the neighbourhood help each other
- People show support for those in need
- Volunteerism is strong

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

4. People feel connected to their neighbours.

Examples:

- People know their immediate neighbours by name
- People have regular conversations with their neighbours.
- Neighbours regularly do favours for each other
- People trust their neighbours

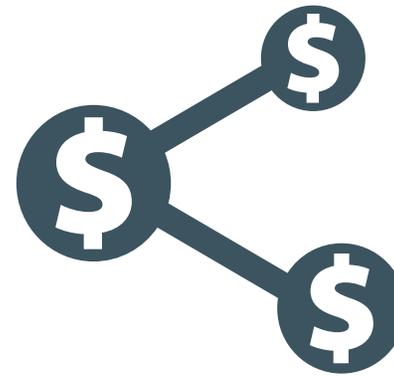
☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

5. People in the neighbourhood are welcoming and encouraging of diversity.

Examples:

- There is welcoming and integration of newcomers and different kinds of people
- People and organizations intentionally reach out to those at the margins (e.g. people who are disabled, youth, isolated seniors)
- An openness to new ideas is common

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK



A LOCALIZED ECONOMY

6. There is action to ensure the basic needs of citizens are being met, including those most vulnerable.

Examples:

- There are local programs and services that support marginalized and vulnerable citizens
- There is ongoing action to reduce income inequality and poverty
- Social agencies and other stakeholders collaborate around a common agenda to reduce poverty

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

7. There is action to strengthen economic diversity in the neighbourhood.

Examples:

- There is a high percentage of locally owned businesses
- There is ongoing action to strengthen local ownership and entrepreneurship
- There is access to locally sourced and/or controlled investment and finance opportunities.
- Employment opportunities with local businesses exist within the neighbourhood

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

8. There are informal types of exchange.

Examples:

- Neighbours informally share items such as tools, equipment, gardens, food, etc.
- There are opportunities for residents to share skills and knowledge (e.g. canning bees, skills shares, workshops)
- There are formal sharing programs/services such as car-share, tool libraries, or alternative currencies

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

9. There is access to learning and skills development.

Examples:

- There is active succession planning to ensure the continuation of local businesses.
- There are education and training opportunities that are relevant for potential local work and business opportunities.

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

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INFRASTRUCTURE & RESOURCES

(NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENTS)

6. There are opportunities for residents to access and engage with greenspace and the natural environment.

Examples:

- Greenspace is accessible
- Environmentally sensitive areas are protected to preserve biodiversity
- There is sufficient vegetation to reduce urban heat islands and contribute to air quality

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

7. There is action to conserve, protect and steward the environment.

Examples:

- Conservation and/or environmental education groups exist and are active
- There is support for recycling, waste reduction, compost
- Water conservation is evident

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

8. There is action to strengthen local food systems and food security.

Examples:

- Healthy, sustainable food is readily available at local food retailers or markets
- Residents produce their own food through backyard, community and/or school gardens
- Neighbours share and develop food skills together (such as cooking, preserving, growing) through community kitchens and informal exchange

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

9. There is action to reduce non-renewable energy use and emissions.

Examples:

- Active, sustainable transportation (cycling, walking, etc.) is common
- Local businesses invest in retrofitting and renewable energy
- Citizens undertake household energy audits and retrofitting

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

10. There is adequate healthy, safe and affordable housing.

Examples:

- Average rent and housing prices are affordable for residents at varying income levels
- There is a diversity of housing types available
- Housing stock is in good, safe condition

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

11. Neighbourhood design allows for connectivity and active/sustainable transportation

Examples:

- New development is focused on complete and compact design supporting mixed land use and densification
- Street networks connect to support walking, cycling and use of public transit

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

12. There are spaces to meet and gather.

Examples:

- There are public & private spaces/facilities available for community gatherings of all types
- There are "bumping places" for neighbours to informally interact
- There has been recent effort to beautify or make gathering spaces accessible

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

13. There is ready access to essential services.

Examples:

- Village core (s) exists and is accessible
- Essential services exist (retail, health services, recreation, daycare)

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK



18. There are a common vision and goals for the future of the neighbourhood.

Examples:

- A vision and plan exists or are being developed through a public process
- There is an evaluation process to track progress on neighbourhood goals
- There is a strong, complementary relationship between the neighbourhood's own plan and vision for its future and the plans and visions for the neighbourhood at the municipal government level.

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

19. There is proactive citizen engagement in planning and action.

Examples:

- Organizations proactively invite participation
- A number of citizen groups exist and take action
- Turn out for neighbourhood planning and projects is high

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LEADERSHIP, ENGAGEMENT, AND PLANNING CONT'D

20. Groups and organizations collaborate with each other around common goals

Examples:

- Sector-based tables/coalitions exist for joint planning/work (e.g. food security, active transportation, placemaking collaboratives)
- There is a structure for cross-sector leadership within the neighbourhood (e.g. Multi-sector neighbourhood roundtable, neighbourhood agency network, etc.)
- Formal partnerships and joint projects exist between groups.

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

21. There is proactive leadership recruitment and development

Examples:

- Leadership is diversified and represents the population (age, gender, cultures)
- Youth council exists
- Leadership development programs are available

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

22. There is a culture of learning and experimentation.

Examples:

- Groups and organizations assess impacts and progress of their work
- There is openness to adapting mid-course, or to “trying something new”
- There is a means of communicating best practices and lessons

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

23. The neighbourhood looks outside itself to collaborate, seek and secure strategic resources, co-develop policies, etc.

Examples:

- Skills, expertise and finance gaps get filled
- Partnerships exist with organizations outside of the neighbourhood/community
- Relationships with various levels of government exist

☹️ 1 2 3 4 😊 DK

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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