

The Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework and Assessment Kit

Part III: Guide to Tool Choice



This guide helps users to choose the most appropriate approach for their particular neighbourhood. It offers a set of key questions to guide decision making about which set of tools to use, based on whether the neighbourhood being assessed is pre-existing or new.

IS YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD NEW OR EXISTING?

For the purposes of assessment with these tools, neighbourhoods are clusters of both residential and non-residential spaces that typically comprise of between 200 and 500 households, although some neighbourhoods may be smaller. Planned developments of less than 50 households are considered to be within existing neighbourhoods.

Determining the boundaries of your neighbourhood can be tricky. As well as considering the number of dwellings, consider function and access. For example, consider the inclusion of places residents go to fulfil daily life needs – e.g. local shops, parks, playgrounds, schools and other amenities. At the same time, however, consider the connecting and dividing features present. Physical aspects such as streams, ridges, main roads and motorways can help to delineate neighbourhoods. Typically most neighbourhoods are approximately 800m in diameter.



EXISTING NEIGHBOURHOODS

This section is for neighbourhoods that already exist, or developments within existing neighbourhoods. These areas may include smaller brown- or green-fields developments and management of particular existing neighbourhoods. Existing neighbourhoods offer the opportunity to undertake a full assessment of both the observed and measurable environment as well as the self-reported behaviours of people who reside in the neighbourhood and, in some cases, also in the surrounding areas.

You should apply both the Observational Tool and the Resident Self-Report Tool in existing neighbourhood situations. The Resident Self-Report Tool results need to be looked at in combination with the results of the Observational Tool. It should be noted that the tools are not designed to be numerically combined. Rather, the output of each should be discussed and interpreted alongside each other.

Our testing has shown that typically the two tools give very similar assessments. Sometimes a 'split assessment' occurs, usually where the Resident Self-Report Tool gives a lower band than the Observational Tool. Where this happens, it is important that users explore the reasons for this. It sometimes indicates that a community development approach is required in that community to improve its resilience and sustainability.

Relevant documents

- *Part 4. Guidelines for Using the Observational Tool*
- *Observational Tool Calculator.xls*
- *Part 5. Guidelines for Using the Resident Self-Report Tool*
- *Part 5a. Resident Self-Report Survey – Telephone Interview Questionnaire*
- *Part 5b. Resident Self-Report Survey – Self-Complete and Face-to-Face Interview Questionnaire*
- *Part 5c. Interviewer Ethics and Behaviour*
- *Part 5d. Safety Protocols*
- *Resident Self-Report Tool Calculator.xls*

NEW NEIGHBOURHOODS

This section is for planned and neighbourhoods and those about to be built. These are likely to be larger green- or brown- fields developments that are disassociated from existing neighbourhoods

New neighbourhoods do not have an existing population so only the Observational Tool is applied here. There is, however, the opportunity to apply both tools over time, as the new neighbourhood becomes populated, to create an ongoing assessment of sustainability. This can be particularly valuable in staged master planned developments, as well as to monitor changes as residential populations change (in relation to age and stage of life, for example) and as the neighbourhood environment grows and adapts (with changes in public transport or use of the built and open space environments, for example).

You should apply the Observational Tool in new neighbourhoods.

Relevant documents:

- *Part 4. Guidelines for Using the Observational Tool*
- *Observational Tool Calculator.xls*

All information and tools associated with this Kit are free to use and to share. They are available from http://www.beaconpathway.co.nz/neighbourhoods/article/the_neighbourhood_sustainability_framework

NOTE: The tools provided here have been developed in good faith and on the basis that every endeavour has been made to be accurate and not misleading, and to exercise reasonable care, skill and judgement in providing them.

The usefulness of the Neighbourhood Sustainability Framework and tools is, of course, dependent on the accuracy and validity of inputted data. This Kit provides guidance to support a robust process by which users should gather, input and interpret data about individual neighbourhoods.

This information is freely given and so the user has responsibility for the quality of surveying, data inputting, interpretation of outcomes and any subsequent decision-making. Neither Beacon Pathway Limited nor any of its employees, subcontractors, agents or other persons acting on its behalf or under its control accept any responsibility or liability in respect of any interpretation of outcomes / subsequent decision making.