

Wellbeing Waterloo Region

**Reference Group Meeting
Strategy Design Session
Thursday October 12, 2017**

9:00 am to 3:00 pm

**Woolwich Memorial Centre – Community Room
[24 Snyder Avenue South, Elmira, ON N3B 2Z6](#)**

Present:

Ann Lavender, Brock Hart, Debbie Hoekstra, Denise Squire, Dorothy McCabe, Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders, Erin Vandahl, James Bond, Jane Hennig, Jane Humphries, Jason Santo, Jeff Steckley, Kristine Allison, Laura Manning, Linda Terry, Lorie Fioze, Mathew Chandy, Mary Jane Patterson, Mike Murray, Nancy Bird, Rohan Thompson, Shannon Weber, Sharlene Sedqwich-Walsh, Shayne Turner

Tanya Darisi, Lisa Watson, Dean Marino – Openly
Bryan Smale, Linda McKessock – Canadian Index of Wellbeing

Regrets:

Bill Davidson, Brad Witzel, Bruce Lauckner, Bryan Larkin, Christiane Sadeler, Debbie Engel, Elizabeth Heald, Janet Howitt, Jennifer Fillingham, John Lord, Karen Spence, Jill Stoddart, Kathy Payette, Ken Seiling, Liana Nolan, Peter Ringrose, Peter Rubenschuh, Peter Sweeney, Susan Morrison, Tom Galloway, Tracy Elop

1. Welcome and Opening Comments

Mike provided an overview of the timeline and next steps for the overall planning process. The overall purpose of the meeting today is:

- To share Canadian Index of Wellbeing Profile for Waterloo Region and deeper dive on Engagement feedback
- To identify priorities and begin to craft a strategy for Wellbeing Waterloo Region

2. Canadian Index of Wellbeing Profile

Bryan Smale from the Canadian Index of Wellbeing provided an overview of some of the findings from the Profile of Wellbeing report based on the indicators identified by the measurement and monitoring working group. The report has been delayed and therefore not been circulated to the Reference group. It will be completed by the end of next week and will be circulated to the volunteer reviewers and then out to the group.

An issue was raised about the potential groups that are missing from the Profile E.g. indigenous communities. The weighting takes care of certain population representation. But it does not take care of all populations and therefore other methods need to be employed such as a community survey or other engagement methods like the ones that were implemented for WWR.

A question was raised about the Social determinants of health and if they are represented in the measurement system. The SDOH are embedded in the domains.

3. Community Engagement Overview & Feedback

Lorie Fioze provided an update on the overall engagement activities and the groups that focused outreach was conducted with. All of the data collected was submitted to Openly to analyze. Tanya Darisi provided an overview of the analyzed input which was circulated in advance of the meeting.

4. Priorities

Lisa Watson/Tanya Darisi / All

Tanya presents the qualitative data analysis

There was a general consensus in the room that it was too soon to attempt to find direct alignment between the quantitative data and our qualitative analysis. Participants were eager to discuss the qualitative analysis in more detail.

Tanya presented the analysis of the qualitative data up to this point. She reviewed why a framework around the CIW domains was used for coding the qualitative data and spoke to the alignment between CIW domains and the qualitative data.

Tanya focused on the top themes (or priorities) that make Waterloo region great and addressed the availability of and inequity/exclusion regarding those priorities (e.g., what cohorts are excluded, what cohorts are stigmatized, etc.)

- **Community vitality** – opportunities to connect and get involved; significant community assets
- **Environment** – urban/rural mix; opportunities to connect with nature
- **Standard of Living** – employment opportunities, innovation
- **Education** – colleges and universities

What does not make Waterloo Region so great?

- Inequity
- Exclusion

“The very things that make the region great *for some* are also the things that are lacking for others”

- **Community Vitality** – disconnected from the community though social norms and culture that drive exclusion, stereotypes, stigma and discrimination
- **Standard of Living** - lack of affordable housing; low income,
- **Healthy Populations** – inequitable access to health care and services; living with/risk of mental health and addictions

Where more focus is needed

- **Environment:** walkable/bike-friendly communities; parks and green spaces
- **Leisure and Culture:** Cultural diversity and inclusion; accessibility
- **Education:** early childhood education/literacy, adult literacy

Tanya addressed what we mean by “priority,” defining it as issues that are on the “top of citizen’s minds” and that “everything is a priority to someone,” meaning that these prevalent indicators/priorities could represent a “perk” to some while being a “gap” to others.

Questions/Comments

Q: In the “insights” portion of the “data sense-making session” section in your report, someone mentioned “a positive movement in belonging” (quotes from report). How did you come to that finding, where is it in the data?

Tanya: That was someone’s recollection during the sense-making session and it was not grounded in our data.

Q: In terms of the sectors (service sectors) that contribute to the “what makes the region not so great” side, in other words the apparent gaps in services, do you get a sense that those gaps arise because the much-needed services just don’t exist, or that they do exist and it’s more of an issue around access to those services?

Tanya: I think it’s both: There’s the issue of inequitable access to those services and supports, people having difficulty navigating the system, and then there’s the issue of cultural inclusion. While some people feel the community is inclusive, in terms of diverse cultures, there are people who belong to those cultures whose own experience does not tell the same story, they don’t feel that “sense of inclusion.”

Q: How do you address the issue of lack of services?

A: I may not be a lack of services so much as access issues.

Comment: You can be celebrated in a community but if you look at the bedrock institutions of the community and they are homogeneous in terms of culture/diversity, you may not feel a sense of inclusion. Although linked, the issue of inclusion is not the same as diversity. Inclusion means that those diverse folk can make in into the bedrock institutions – but when you look at those institutions today, they have not changed much (i.e., everyone looks the same).

Comment: Just an observation; the environment domain is interesting. I feel that the CIW did not crack the nut of environment. The Qualitative analysis shows a much more personal relationship, or places importance on interaction with, the environment, while the (quantitative) CIW profile is a more asset-based measurement. I’m hopeful that by connecting with the first nations community, we can have more dialogue around this.

Tanya: By and large the CIW indicators for environment don’t exist in input statements that were collected through the engagement process.

Rebuttal: We have a program: an urban forestry initiative. The data we are collecting from our initiative could feed into the CIW environment indicators in the qualitative data.

Lorie: But we would want region-wide data (ed. urban forestry program focuses on one region only) we can’t include it in the analysis but it might make a nice fact-based supplement to it.

Tanya discusses what the next steps might be in this strategy session

Tanya: In term of analysis and sense making, our next pass will involve looking at each cohort to see what themes and priorities cluster around the different cohorts (ed. the various cohorts were presented by Lorie in an earlier portion of the session)

Questions/Comments

Q: Was demographic information gathered during the community engagement/data collection process and if so, did it come up in sense making session?

Tanya: No demographic information was not used in analysis.

Lorie: We did not collect demographic information per say, but we did target our engagements around specific groups of interest (i.e. cohorts, such as older adults, youth, people living with disabilities, etc.) Rebuttal: a lot of these services have their own demographic data they collect, based on who they focus their services on. Maybe we could leverage that data, to clarify who is represented in the (qualitative) data.

Q: Was healthy early childhood development mapped under the healthy populations domain?

Tanya: yes

Q: Did high school graduation rates figure into the data as a theme or key priority?

Tanya: It was certainly present in the data but it was not mentioned with a high degree of frequency and so it didn't make the top priority list. We used an average mean to determine high-frequency indicators. It was mentioned in the data. Almost every issue was mentioned at least once (e.g. making it a high priority to *someone*).

Lorie: We made a request to include indicator in the (quantitative) CIW profile regional profile

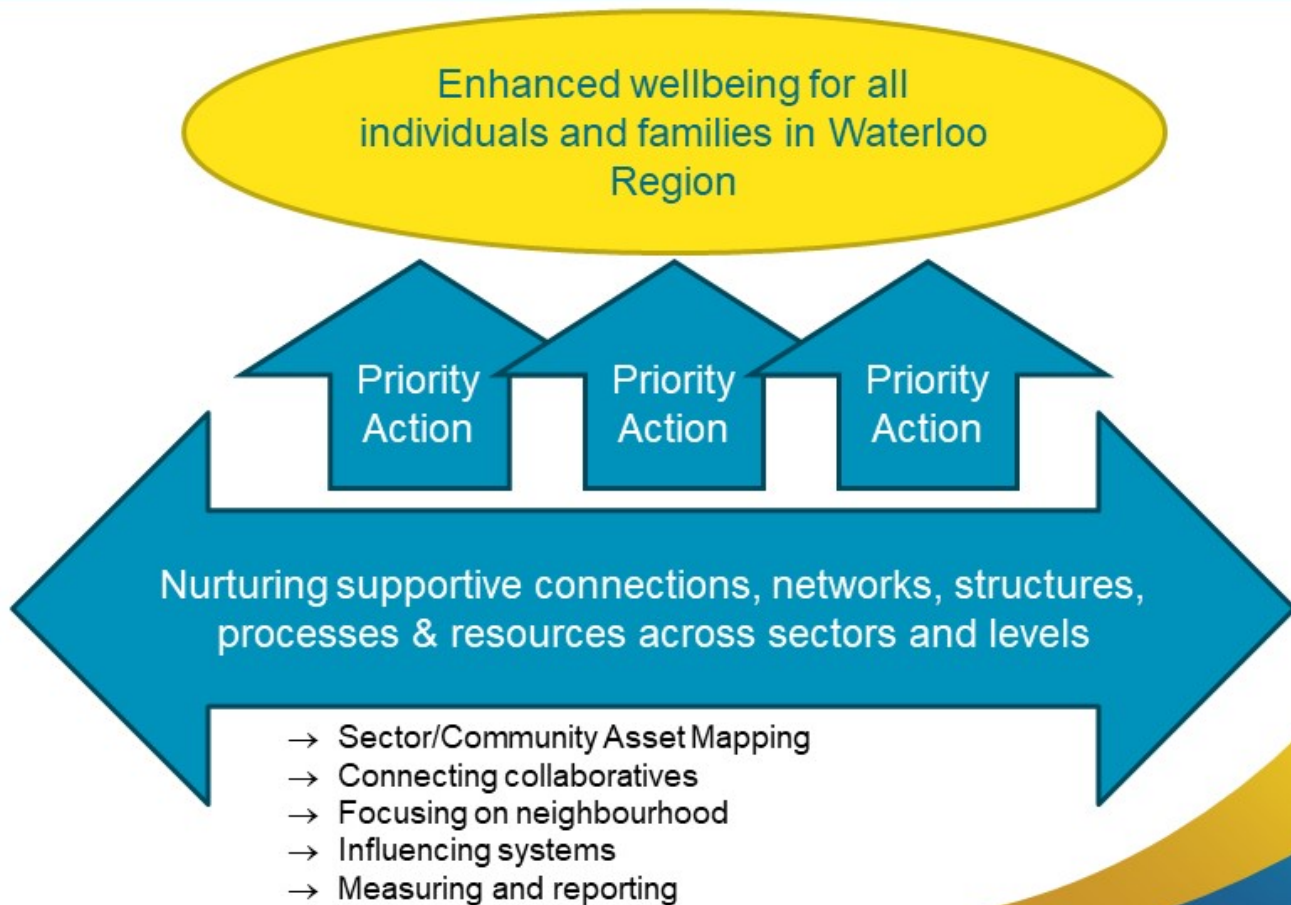
Q: In our board we are trying to focus on high school graduation rates and we are thinking, "what are the things we can do within the community to help make folks make it to graduation."

Rebuttal: (Doug) We have a program that helps students stay in school and make to graduation (and that's all well and good), but there is another concern we need to address here— in my board we find many adults who are the head of a households (i.e. partnered, parent and principle income earner) without a high school diploma – the trajectory for these individuals and their family is much worse than other types without an education, the concern being what the future bears not only for these individuals but also the children and spouses in that household.

Tanya presents the "emerging approach" foundational piece

Tanya: What do we need to add within the fabric of community to work towards wellbeing? (Tanya presents and describes foundational piece (theory of change or the parachute analogy). She reminds the participants about the interconnectedness of all efforts, how one individuals efforts will effect the outcome and course of other's efforts – that all action is interconnected.

Emerging Approach



Comment: This initiative (WWR) can do no wrong, regardless of what key priorities we choose, if asset mapping takes place – mapping that is transparent and accessible to public.

Comment: I think this framework has some big advantages. We as a community can identify the common issues around which we can align our (services) efforts and make, I think, some real/systematic-level change. This framework allows a few organizations and service providers to opt out, because not everyone will see themselves as an integral part of a particular cause or issue, and that's ok, but this framework can also allow anybody who wishes to play a part at the community-level, and hopefully we can identify one or two key priorities around which we can determine actions that can point to broad, cross-cutting priorities that are meaningful to everybody - one or two issues that are great enough that everyone can rally around them.

Tanya: In light of what we know at this point (i.e. the data) we are we ready to begin clarifying specific priority areas?

Lisa has the session group take a vote

Lisa: Everybody please stand up. ((Everyone stands)) If you are Feeling ready to start discovering key issues or priorities right now, please sit down. ((A few sit down)). If you are feeling somewhat ready please sit down ((Many more sit down)). Now, if you do not feel ready at all you should remain standing ((a vast majority are sitting down by “somewhat ready.” Only a few (2) remain standing at end of exercise.))

Comment: I think we have to start, let's get on with it.

Lisa: Nevertheless, some people have remained standing. I feel part of the reluctance may be caused by the changing composition of this group – not everyone attended the previous meetings and I feel they have a valid concern and wish to honour that.

Comment: I'm Not ready to pick definitive priority actions, but I'm ready to start exploring and talking about them. I'm ready to start talking about them given the research conducted and the qualitative data collected to see if there are early opportunities (i.e. direct actions) we can take right away.

Comment: Isn't that your priority? ((Points to “Nurturing Supportive...” on the slide “Emerging Approach” slide)) How do we actually do that? We need to build a connection between service providers, not just us, the ones in this room, but all of them.

Comment: We keep looking for the “right” answer and that's the problem. The data won't tell us what the right answer is although it may lead us in the right direction. Part of the tension here is the notion of “are we the group that should be deciding?” It comes down to leadership. I think the funding group should stand up and say, “this is where we are taking this.” Yes, we need to increase the level of connectedness between our various organizations/tables/boards. but that's just part of the solution. It comes down to a leadership gap.

Comment: I like what Brock said, but there's nothing linear about this process. The reality is that all of these elements/priorities move at the same time (describes the parachute analogy in a different way). My thought is, that we are ready to start discussing it...we are all at a junction where having a discussion about the networks is possible among the social work and services community. We can all point to 82 different issues but we need to just choose one. Whether it's the “right one” or not is not that important, (the “parachute” framework tells us that) it will impact change regardless, the one on the left will affect the three on the right and so on. My fear is that we need to get to specifics very soon or this will all fall apart.

Comment: I sat down first because I need to discuss aspects and assets. I feel ready to start broadening the networks now, while we are waiting on CIW profile. I find the CIW profile is useful in terms of gauging the community vitality domain, but not necessarily the specific issues we all need to look at and deal with. We all need to remind ourselves that this is complex and we can't do it on our own.

Comment: It would feel good to start making progress and start narrowing things down.

Comment: The community vitality domain (quantitative) data is important, but we should not stop ourselves there. I feel we should continue our discussion to find out if there's something else in the CIW profile we can align our work around to use as a measure of success. Also, at this juncture and with what we know from the qualitative analysis, I feel we are ready to begin discussing key priorities

((Openly framed these as “Areas of Certainty”)), perhaps we can get down to 3 to 5 key issues where we get to a critical mass in terms of consensus and agreement.

Comment: Perhaps if we focus on “what makes the region not great,” we can create a differential approach to support those groups, those would be the groups we need to support most.

Comment: My issue with this process is adequately addressing the life cycle of these priorities. If we define some priorities and work on them for 2 years, that means new issues/priorities will certainly arise. That is where I’m tripping up on defining specific priorities. And this domain-level priorities piece – how are we going to communicate this in an understandable and meaningful way to the community in general?

Comment: These may be “Initial reactive priorities.” The life cycle needs to be somewhere in the middle. 1 year is too short and 5 years is too long. We need a timeframe where we can assess and then move on. Something more like 2 years.

Lisa: Issues will bubble up from cross-priorities and things will be emergent. Trying to get to “perfect” is paralyzing. There’s been so much engagement in this process so far and now there’s a palatable collective will to do something. We can coarse correct as we go. There will be “emerging areas of certainty” but at least, at this juncture, we can identify, based on that engagement, where there’s some certainty that we can agree on.

Tanya reviews the “SMART” criteria from the February 2nd session

Tanya revisited “SMART” criteria (developed in the February 2 Session) and spoke to the balance between varying factors listed therein.

Criteria for Selecting Priority Actions

FROM EARLY ENGAGEMENT CONVERSATIONS

- Evidence-based, is grounded in the data
- Builds on existing energy, assets and initiatives
- Engages community, is inclusive

- **S** - specific, significant, stretching, sustainable
- **M** - measurable, meaningful, motivating
- **A** - agreed upon, achievable, action-oriented
- **R** - realistic, relevant, rewarding, results-oriented
- **T** - time-based, short-term and long-term

Q: The three points at the top (name them here) flowed out of February discussion?

A: Yes, they all did

Comment: I'm wondering, maybe we are not at the stage of setting specific goals. Maybe we're at the stage to find out "what realm" or area our goals should be. I'm not sure that SMART criteria is relevant to this. I agree that the priorities should be evidence based and flow out of data (i.e. grounded in data) ((holds up qualitative themes summary page))

Discovering Areas of Certainty

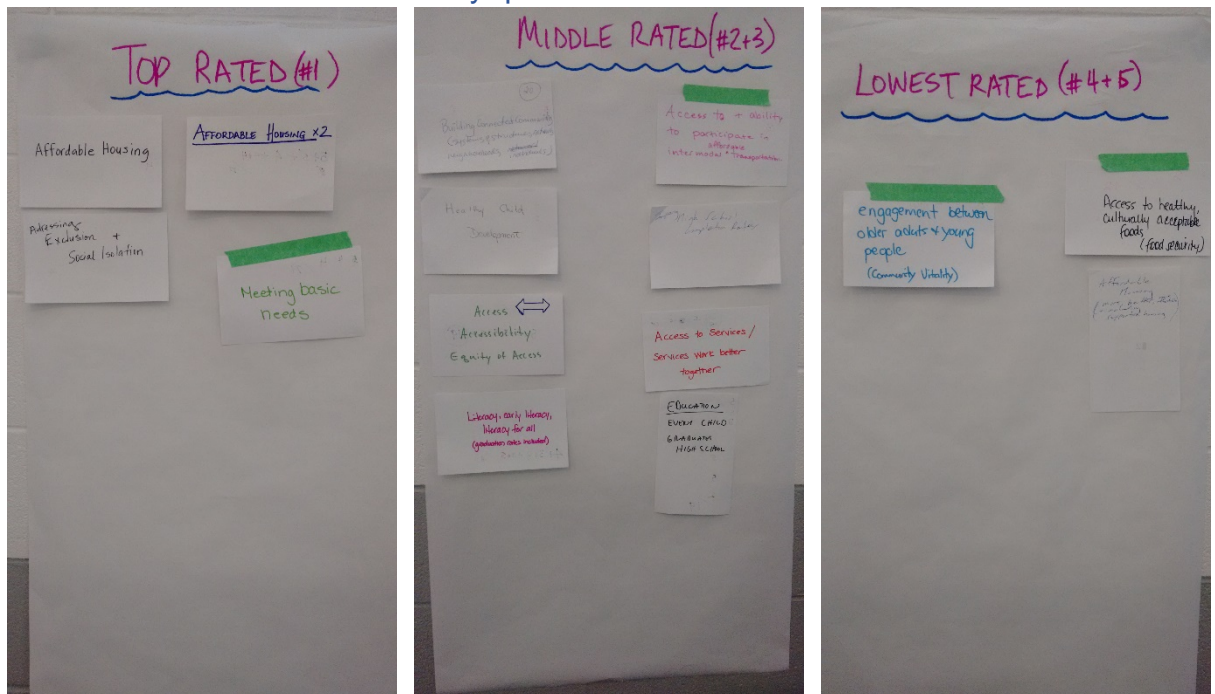
Discovering Areas of Certainty

GROUP EXERCISE

- Write your top priority for action on an index card
- Pass and share around
- Read & score the idea in your hand from 1 to 5 where 1= YES, BEST IDEA EVER! and 5 = MMM, NOT SO SURE?
- Repeat

Lisa gave the instructions to this activity, which were further clarified in-progress. You can certainly use the qualitative themes summary as a guide, but feel free to write any issue you believe is a top priority.

Results of the “areas of certainty” poll



Top Rated (#1 priorities, read from left to right)

- Affordable housing ((three cards represented here))
- Addressing exclusion and social isolation
- Meeting basic needs (e.g. food and shelter)

Middle Rated (#2 & #3 priorities, read from left to right)

- Building a connected community (systems, structures, networks, neighbourhoods, individuals)
- Access to and ability to participate in affordable inter-modal transportation
- Healthy child development
- Improving high school graduation rates
- Access, accessibility, equity of access ((includes a drawing of horizontal element from model))
- Access to services, services work better
- Literacy, early literacy, literacy for all (graduation rates included)
- Education, every child graduates high school

Lowest Rated (#4 & #5 priorities, read from left to right)

- Engagement between older adults and young people (community vitality)
- Access to healthy, culturally acceptable foods (food security)
- Affordable housing (more, better, more affordable, including supportive housing)

Lisa: What does this (poll) tell you?

Comment: my observation: there's only a handful, truly, five or six from this group of 30 ppl. So that says there's some alignment here – this is progress

Comment: It shows a relativeness and there are linkages - they relate to each other

Lisa: Be aware that we are probably not going to see wellbeing change on a population level (e.g. CIW profile) if any of these areas of certainty or issues are improved, per say,

Comment: Regarding affordable housing, which is clearly the highest ranked issue, the vertical divisions of housing came together recently and said “why do this in separate envelopes,” there’s three different envelopes that are coming together right now – this is an issue of timing and opportunity, if we want broader influence we should act on this now.

Comment: Yes, it is a timely issue. For example, the recent purchase of the Schnieder lands, the development there could be made into affordable housing.

Some of the priorities we have identified are being worked on by other collaboratives. How do we build on and support their existing work while creating new actions?

Rebuttal: There are a couple of “tables” (he means service organizations) that can should together but we also need to involve some outside players (i.e. the private sector).

Comment: We should ask, “is there work already underway?” and, “how can we add to and support their work?”

Comment: I’d like to add that at some time while engaging those existing groups and talking plans, we need to identify who will carry the action it forward. I’m eager to have that conversation.

Comment: The business community can see themselves having a positive impact on this.

Q: OK, we’ve identified a top-rated area of certainty, but are there notable gaps or surprises here, from this exercise? We should pause and ask that question before we move forward.

Tanya: We want to contextualize these priorities. If there are initiatives in affordable housing that are currently working then we should ask how they are aligned with wellbeing – what issues do we have to think about when we build affordable housing, or create new initiatives? What existing initiatives do we have to include and who do we include / aim towards?

Comment: Affordable housing is a very overarching issue that is linked with many other issues/priorities. One example of a linkage: youth with disabilities. Affordable housing can help foster independence and self-sufficiency.

Comment: In terms of gaps, I’m surprised mental health is not posted up here.

Rebuttal: I think mental health is linked to many of these priorities, especially housing and meeting basic needs. I think if we address these issues we are addressing mental health in a preventative way.

Comment: Another gap I’m surprised is not up here is quality of sleep

Comment: Looking at the qualitative and quantitative I get a sense that they do jive. I was able to map at least 12 items from the CIW draft report onto the qualitative data summary and many of them relate directly to housing. So there are some real overlaps on this ((points to qualitative data summary sheet)) to the priorities.

Comment: Some gaps I see are healthy lifestyles and prevention.

Comment: Minimum income is an obvious gap.

Comment: I don't think we should be looking for "right answers" but rather, there may be a few issues that are the "weavers" (i.e. directly linked to many other issues).

Comment: My concern is around how to message a key priority effectively. We've all heard consistently that affordable housing is a problem – it's an old problem, I've been working in the region for 15 years and it's always been an issue, and no one would be surprised to hear that it's an issue and so it becomes easy to shrug off – I fear people might go "Really, everybody knows that." So how do we message it so it becomes universally important?

Comment: I'll remind everyone that "the key area of certainty" may not be housing – we haven't made that decision yet, but frankly the reason we might want to re-message "housing" as a key issue is because we've been doing the same thing, using the same approaches, for years and it's not working. The current housing waiting list is at 3000 households and it's been that way for 10 years. Housing could really benefit from collective community focus (re-focusing). If, for example, we committed to ending the housing issue in the next 3 years that would require a lot of organizations (both non-profit and the private sector) aligning their efforts and getting together – it would create a huge opportunity to say, "lets do something different."

((This sentiment, re-framing and messaging an old problem so it becomes clear that change and engagement is necessary, is echoed by a few other participants))

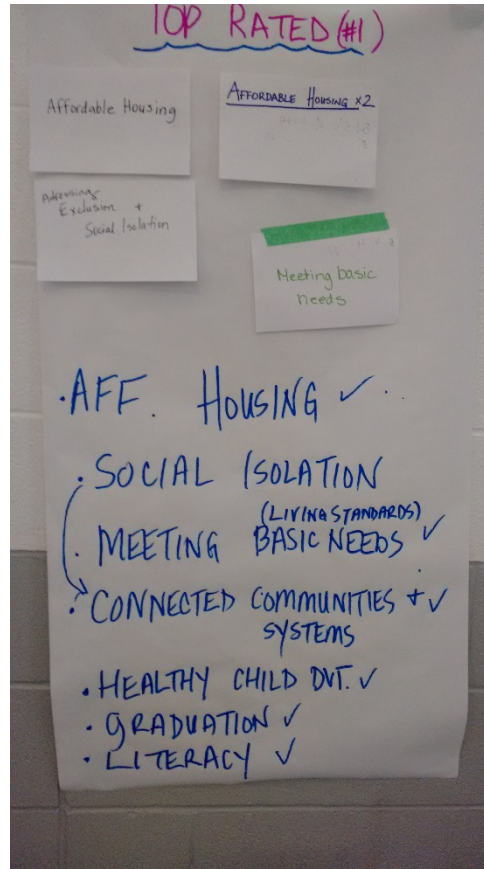
Comment: Housing has been topic of discussion for years, but we've been using the old same dialogue, terminology and measures. The waitlist is not a good measure of anything. There are not 3000 households living on the streets. These people, by and large, already have housing. When we talk about the housing issue we not necessarily talking about the same people. We need to have a more informed dialogue about who/what we're talking about when we talk about "affordable housing" as a key issue. We need to change the dialogue on our (service providers) end: here's what we need to talk about, here's who were talking about. Obviously, the processes we've been using for past 10 years hasn't helped us at all – the housing portfolio is a tough one to understand and we've been talking about it wrong. We need to correct that and then we can begin to talk about shifting away from shelters to supportive housing and permanent housing.

Comment: Also, we need to take into consideration people who are not like-minded – people who hold certain assumptions about the disadvantaged and homeless. When we held a donation drive to help the refugee families we got an overwhelming response (more donations then they could handle) but that issue was framed way that had mass appeal and reduced stigma – to have the same kind of energy as the refugee crises we need to work on the framing/presentation of the issue and combat the stigma associated with lack of housing and poverty.

Tanya: There are still a lot of pieces of this puzzle a lot of threads to pull together. But I feel we do have a bit of emergent clarity happening today. Let's move forward and test our next set of assumptions. We may have chosen housing today but we certainly have not made a final decision.

Comment: Can some of these issues be collapsed so we can come up with five or six top issues to take away with us?

((The group worked on linking/collapsing some of the issues down to a "Top 6"))



1. Housing

Q: Is this priority affordable housing full stop, or are we being more specific, like people who need housing but have income vs people who need housing but have no income, or both?

Lorie: The qualitative data speaks of affordable housing in general.

Doug: Yes, I think this qualitative summary covers the full waterfront of housing

2. Social Isolation

3. Meeting Basic Needs: (income, shelter, food security)

Mike: Is this issue related to poverty and poverty reduction?

Tanya: Yes, absolutely, it's a placeholder for all things poverty reduction.

4. Connected communities and systems

(Collapsed with equity and access, connected people communities, might draw in social isolation)

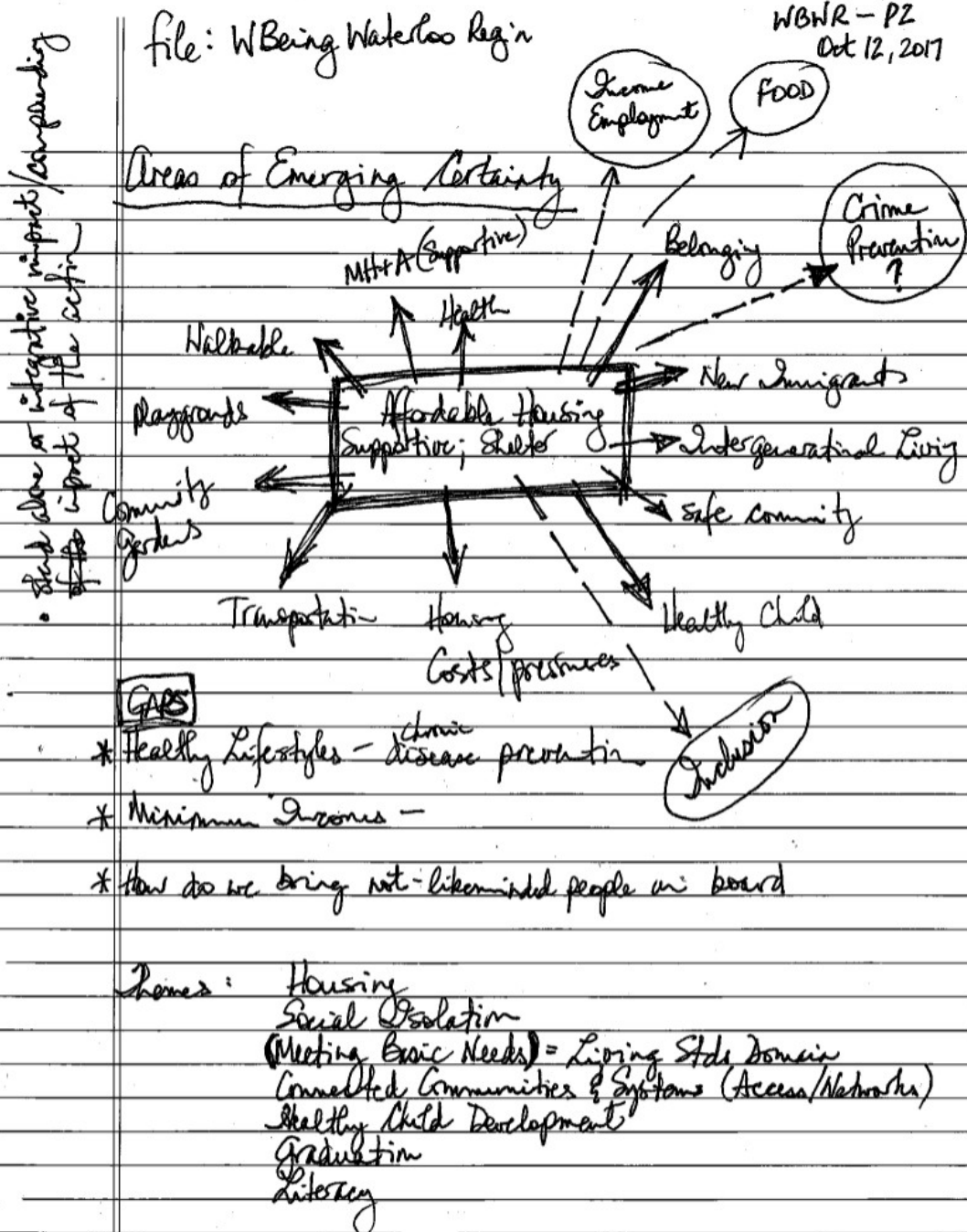
5. Healthy Child development

6. High School graduation (literacy, may link to graduation rates)

Comment: All this falls under the same CIW domain, "living standards." Can we agree on that? There are all kinds of intersections to explore within "living standards"

Comment: Here, there are six broad themes – to me that feels like progress. The CIW data will help inform this. I expect to see some convergence in the qualitative and quantitative data with regards to these priorities.

Douglas Bartholomew-Saunders made a drawing linking these priorities together which is found below:



Comment: What about the “focusing on one CIW domain” approach just mentioned?
Rebuttal: I think a domain-wide approach is too broad. We need to find something “in between” the domain-level and these bullet point issues.

5. Updates from members about their wellbeing related initiatives and activities

Reference group members provided updates and will send documents and links to Lorie to circulate to the whole group.

6. Next meeting – November 23, 2017

Victoria Park Pavilion, Kitchener

1:00 – 4:30

Meeting will include all working groups and Reference Group members