Discovery Meetings

Summary of the Conversations

Updated September 22, 2016

Purpose of the Discovery Meetings

Discovery meetings with current collaboratives, area municipalities, and other community stakeholders involved in measuring well being in Waterloo Region took place from July 2016 – September 2016 (see Table 1). The purpose of the meetings was to create awareness about the Community Wellness Initiative and gather feedback to inform the overall process and structure. These meetings also helped to establish interest in moving forward and methods to connect and engage with the collaborative/partner in the future. Some meetings were held with the collaborative as a group and others were held individuals that represented their organization. See appendix 1 for the complete list of collaboratives and or individuals that participated in a discovery meeting.

Table 1: Group or individual discovery meetings:

Collaborative / Community partner	Number of meetings Completed
Collaboratives	8
Individual meetings with area municipalities	7
Partners connected to the measurement of wellbeing	20
Measurement and monitoring working group	2

This document provides an overview of the discussions that took place during the Discovery Meetings.

Support

The following were themes of support:

- **Support for initiative**: Every group supported the initiative and felt they would find value in the proposed plan. It was also hoped that the process would help partners share resources and knowledge while at same time helping to reduce duplication.

- **Have shared ownership:** Create a sense of shared ownership and commitment to the plan and actions so no one organization is seen as solely responsible. Also there was the recognition that having a backbone organization would help to provide the infrastructure to make this work happen.
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- **Build on existing collaboratives and research:** There is a strong history of collaboration and partnerships in Waterloo Region which have made significant progress towards dealing with complex issues and different population needs at a systems level. There was support to build on this collaboration to complement and enhance the work already underway.

- **Raise the profile of wellness:** It was felt that the Community Wellness Initiative would raise the profile of wellness in Waterloo Region (what is working well and not so well), and help to create awareness of the larger issues and their interconnectedness. This would help to increase clarity about the bigger picture, build connections and help inspire and invite collaboration and joint integration amongst the partners.

- **Developing a community wellness report card:** Measurement and monitoring was strongly supported to be included in the initiative. A consistent data set and community indicators would give us a solid foundation for planning and decision-making, as well as investments. This would help to communicate what the issues are and track and measure the outcomes/progress. It would also provide information to educate the community on wellness issues and the complexity and how we all work together to make change.

Concerns

The following themes were concerns cited by participants as they either did not see them in the background document or because in general it was a concern about the initiative.

- **Already too many coalitions and collaboratives:** There are already many planning tables, and collaboratives in Waterloo Region and this just adds another one to attend to divide attention. Some concerns that this would take away from the work of their collaborative.

- **Share data measurement, collection and sharing:** We need a collective solution and report card that the community can buy into. Some of the challenges of developing shared data measurement include the number and complexity of reporting and data collection systems across different sectors, agreement on the indicators, capturing the contributions of partners, and telling the story of collective impact. It will be better to do this work well and obtain agreement than do this work quickly and not obtain buy in and agreement.

- **Need for citizen engagement:** There doesn't seem to be a strong plan for citizen engagement described in the background document. There needs to be a strong engagement plan including multiple methods to engage the public. Make it easy for citizens to provide input, and provide methods that support a diversity of participation. Use "iengage" municipal platform as one of the tools to engage the public online.

- **Social Inclusion:** Need to ensure this process is inclusive and includes voices of all community groups e.g., youth, people with disabilities, LBGTQ, rural, lived voices, Aboriginal etc. Need to ensure citizens have a voice in the wellness initiative desired outcomes. Create an inclusive process vs. mobilizing quickly and efficiently. Community neighbourhoods and informal community leaders should have role in the initiative due their influence on community involvement in programs, volunteerism, etc. Need to make it clear and invite the contribution of the community (every day citizens). It is not just about "what they want" in terms of engagement but also "what they can do to help improve outcomes."

- **Top down approach:** Some felt that the initiative was being outlined and determined by decision makers and paid staff, when the direction needs to be determined by citizens –

making community engagement critical. Addressing power imbalances will be key to success → this can't be another venue where people who are in positions of power get to continue to set priorities and drive what work happens.

- **Specific sectors need to be involved:** In order to create a holistic picture and plan for community wellness, other sectors need to be invited to participate. E.g., environmental sector, recreation, economic development, the media, business sector, planning and the built environment, municipalities etc.

- **Sustainability**: Some raised concerns that the initiative might not continue if political and organizational leadership changed. This initiative is a long term process and will need long term commitment in order to be successful.

Considerations and recommendations

The following themes were provided as suggestions or considerations to the initiative and overall process:

- **The structure:** Without having the vision and priorities identified many felt that implementing a structure was premature. Many suggested that this should be delayed until we are clear about the priorities. Also many suggested that the Reference group be expanded to include people with lived experience as well as other stakeholder groups that are not at the table. There were a variety of suggestions about potential structure and governance models and how they could relate to the other collaboratives, however there was no common model suggested.

- **Title of initiative**: The tile of "Community Wellness Initiative" was not supported. Many felt that wellbeing better reflected the work.

- **Definition of wellness and indicators of wellness:** Need a definition of what a thriving and well community looks like so we know what we are aspiring to. Use the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and the Social Determinants of Health as a starting point for discussion about the definition of community wellness and the development of a measurement system.

- **Promotion and messaging:** We need to get clear about the messaging around the planning process and what this initiative is all about. Some made suggestions around the narrative that could help with the messaging:
    - Improving the quality of life for all in our community.
    - We care and we will leave no one behind.
    - Creating a vibrant and thriving Waterloo Region.
    - Healthy communities.
    - Wellbeing for all.
  Some suggested that we need to brand the initiative with something that captures the public's imagination e.g., Hamilton: "Creating the best place to raise a child in Canada".

- **Ongoing communication:** Keeping everyone informed will be critical to the success of the initiative. Providing a variety of methods and forums for people to participate and collaborate will be important to the work. Being clear around why we need to create a community wellness plan and having a clear story line will act as a catalyst to mobilize efforts.

- **Identify and be clear about the "why":** This initiative needs to be courageous and have a strategic focus on what will make the most difference to the community. It should act as the statement for wellness in Waterloo Region. It needs to be clear, concrete, broadly supported and inspiring. There will be a tension on where to focus - intervention or prevention. Need to make a shift and be really clear about the "why".

- **Be bold and innovative**: We need to develop new ways of doing things. Identify what will make the difference. We need to spend sufficient time creating innovative solutions so we don't do the same things over and over again. Consider using the "U" theory as described by Dr. Frances Westley to support a learning community initiative and build community capacity. Others suggested creating and implementing a "social innovation lab" process in order to signify that we are developing new ways of working together.

- **Need to have tangible and measureable actions that add value**: The plan needs to have a clearly identified shared vision and goals with achievable outcomes that will contribute to increased wellness in Waterloo Region. The actions need to be focused and closely tied to a multi-domain model of wellness that is staged and adds value to what each organization does. There was a bit of skepticism that this may not be achievable.

- **Build community learning and capacity:** As the process evolves we need to ensure the community is provided with opportunities to share information and tools in order to build strength and capacity. There were many suggestions on how to build community capacity e.g., hold a series of workshops on topics to help "level the playing field" e.g., collective impact, social innovation, etc.

- **Review other community's wellbeing plans:** It is important to review similar community wellness initiatives in order to understand what has worked and the benefits achieved. Some suggested inviting groups such as Wood Buffalo, Hamilton, Windsor, Guelph to present on their plans and invite those interested to attend. The Measurement and Monitoring working group also expressed an interest in bringing in other communities who measure wellness well e.g. Toronto.

- **Need to have key influencers support**: In order for this to be successful we need key influencers to say, "*we agree and will work together to move the needle.*"

- **Data sharing:** With the community wellness report card it will be beneficial to implement an open data portal and process to share the data with the community and partners. This will drives openness and transparency and highlight the value of openly releasing date. It will also help reduce the duplication around secondary data sources.

- **Alignment of citizen survey**: Most municipalities as well as other community partners e.g., K-W Community Foundation, conduct citizen surveys to assess citizen perceptions on some components of well-being. Is there the willingness to align these efforts so that this work could be conducted together?

- **Developmental evaluation:** Conduct a developmental evaluation of the process in order to learn and capture process, design, strategy and emerging outcomes.

- **Develop a glossary of terms:** Consider creating an ongoing glossary of terms and definitions will be helpful to keep everyone on the same page.

Questions to be addressed

- How do we ensure this initiative aligns with provincially mandated community wellbeing and safety plans?
- How does this relate to the community hubs?
- How can we leverage/integrate the work of the Data Working Group with the Children's planning table?
- What is the relationship with the community?
- How will the work of the community wellness initiative be sustained?
- Can we collaborate on a collective citizens survey to measure wellbeing in Waterloo Region?
- How will decisions be made?
- How will you get commitment from organizations? Will it be from boards and councils?

Appendix 1: Discovery Meeting Participants (September 22, 2016)

Collaborative/organization	Date of meeting
Crime Prevention Council	June 17
Homelessness to Housing Umbrella Group (HHUG)	July 6, 2016
Children's Planning Table	July 6, 2016
Immigration Partnership	June 27th
Grand River Accessibility Advisory Committee	August 9th
Community Health Centers – executive directors	July 5
Area municipalities CAOs	July 14
Township of Wilmot Vicky Luttenberger	July 15
Township of Wellesley Brad Voisin	July 19
Township of Woolwich Ann McArthur	July 12
City of Waterloo Jim Bowman Beth Rajnovich Lori Ludwig	July 13
City of Kitchener Mark Hildebrand	July 12
City of Cambridge Nicole Cichello	July 19
City of Cambridge neighbourhood organizations - Joe-Ann McComb: Greenway-Chaplin Community Centre: Michelle Henderson - Silverheights Neighbourhood Association: Faye Wilson - Preston Heights Community Group: Sandy Roxborough - Langs: Nancy Mykitschak - Kinbridge Community Association: Joe-Ann McComb - Hespeler Village Neighbourhood Association: Amanda Horne - Fiddlesticks Community Centre: Kim Fowler - Alison Neighbourhood Community Centre: Courtney Didier/ Ashley Fournier	July 20
Township of North Dumfries Michelle Poissant	August 10

Collaborative/organization	Date of meeting
Other organizations related to measurement • Community Fit for children - Christine Holliday • University of Waterloo – Community Index for Wellbeing - Linda McKessock and Bryan Smale • Cambridge and North Dumfries Social Planning Council - Kristine Allison • Woolwich Community Health Centre - Lynda Kohler • Local Health Integration Network - Jenny Flagler George • Waterloo Region Police Services - Corporate Services Department - Erin Vandahl • Kitchener-Waterloo United Way - Nancy Bird • Waterloo Region Catholic School Board - Derek Haime • Waterloo Region District School Board - TBD	July and August
Staff at the Region of Waterloo • Lucille Bish • Michelle Sergi • Margaret Parkin • Matthew Chandy • Kris Fletcher • Oriana Sharpe • David Roewade • Chris Gosslin • Marie Morrison • Deb Schlichter • Alison Pearson • Jessica Deming	July and August
Rainbow Community Council Colin Boucher	September 8
Seniors collaboratives – Cambridge – Linda Terry and Sharon Livingstone	September 13
Rural Realities Kristine Alison	September 22