



Update Report: Barrie Community Safety and Well-Being Plan Working Group

Findings and Draft Actions

As of July 6, 2020

Background: Legislative Requirements

The Province has legislated municipalities under the *Police Services Act* to develop and adopt Community Safety and Well-Being Plans.

Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plans shall:

- identify risk factors that contribute to crime, victimization, addiction, drug overdose and suicide;
- identify which risk factors the municipality will treat as a priority to reduce;
- identify actions to reduce the prioritized risk factors; and
- set out measurable outcomes that the actions are intended to produce.

Background: Accelerating Collaboration

- CSWB Plans allow partners to set out shared goals that reflect community priorities.
- CSWB Plans build off existing efforts and encourage collaboration, as a way to achieve more, given the limits of available resources.
- Once the Plan receives Council's endorsement, partners can work to implement together.
- Continued consultation and collaboration with Barrie residents and community partners is integral as we move forward.

Background: What We Did

The Barrie Police Service established a Working Group to help develop Barrie's first Community Safety and Well-Being Plan.

The Working Group met three times in early 2020. Three community stakeholder roundtables were also held to gather additional perspectives.

Draft actions were developed by the Working Group at their final meeting on March 12.

Work was put on pause during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recent work has focused on refining draft actions through one-on-one conversations with Working Group members.

Members include:

- Barrie Food Bank
- Barrie Native Friendship Centre
- Barrie Police Service
- David Busby Centre
- Canadian Mental Health Association, Simcoe County
- Downtown Barrie Business Association
- Empower Simcoe
- Georgian College
- Mackenzie Health
- Salvation Army Bayside Mission Centre
- Simcoe County District School Board
- Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions
- Barrie Probation and Parole Services
- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

Aspirations for Barrie

When asked what a safe and healthy Barrie looked like, working group members identified 16 aspirations.

Working group members wish to see a Barrie that has **a foundation of strong and inclusive community bonds, improved working relationships amongst service providers, and improved supports for the most marginalized**, resulting in **a safe and thriving city enjoyed by all**.

Access to affordable and purpose built housing for marginalized populations

All care takes a trauma informed approach

A respectful, vibrant and diverse community enjoyed by every resident

A safe and welcoming city with a thriving downtown

Community where residents can age well

Human services that meet the complex needs of the most vulnerable residents

Informed and resilient residents who support themselves and one another

Safe and supported families

Safe working conditions for all frontline service providers

Services work together to provide a more seamless experience for the community

Significantly reduced drug use and overdoses, and an emphasis on harm reduction

Stronger collaborative culture among health, social, community and public service providers

Risk Factors in Barrie

Through research, stakeholder meetings, and working group meetings, we identified 21 risk factors that lead to poorer community safety and well-being in Barrie.

1. Addictions / opioid use	2. Caregiver and service provider burnout	3. Direct and vicarious trauma	4. Discrimination	5. Family violence	6. Fragmented services and inadequate transition supports
7. Food insecurity	8. Homelessness	9. Human trafficking, gang activity, & Organized crime	10. Inadequate developmental disability supports	11. Inadequate newcomer services	12. Lack of appropriate affordable housing
13. Limited mobility and public transit	14. Low paid and precarious employment	15. Mental illness	16. Poverty	17. Social isolation	18. Underfunding of social services
19. Vulnerability to online threats	20. Weak community bonds	21. Youth vaping			

Five Focus Areas

These 21 risk factors can be organized into five focus areas

A. Mental health and substance abuse	B. Housing, homelessness, and basic needs	C. Crime	D. Service gaps	E. Community resilience
Addictions / Opioid use	Lack of appropriate affordable housing	Family violence	Underfunding of social services	Social isolation
Direct and vicarious trauma	Homelessness	Vulnerability to online threats	Inadequate developmental disability supports	Weak community bonds
Mental illness	Low paid and precarious employment	Human trafficking, Gang activity, & organized crime	Limited mobility and public transit	Discrimination
Youth vaping	Food insecurity		Fragmented services and inadequate transition supports	Caregiver and service provider burnout
	Poverty		Inadequate newcomer services	

In order to better understand each risk factor and help determine where to focus the working group's draft actions, we collected and considered a range of evidence — qualitative and quantitative — from the working group's members, stakeholder roundtables, statistical sources, and other secondary sources.

Risk Factors: What We Learned

A. Mental health and substance use

Many expressed concerns about the harms of opioids. In 2018, Barrie had triple Ontario's rate of opioid overdose related emergency department visits and double Ontario's rate of opioid overdose related deaths.

Direct and vicarious trauma

A growing literature argues that trauma — direct and vicarious — is an key contributor to addiction and mental health issues

Service providers are aware of this relationship, and believe policies, training, and services need to become truly and consistently trauma informed

Addictions / opioid use

2018: Opioid Overdose Related Emergency Room Visits: More than triple the Ontario rate (201.1 per 100,000 residents, vs 63.9 for Ontario)

2018: Opioid Overdose Related Deaths, 2017-2018, are 22.9 per 100,000 - more than double the provincial average (Ontario rate is 9.6)

Stakeholders report that certain areas of the city are perceived to be less safe, in part due to drug and alcohol use

Mental illness

Current wait time for children and youth to access mental health therapy and counselling: 313 days

Stakeholders report that growing mental health needs are not always being adequately addressed with appropriate services

Youth vaping

2017-2018: Vaping among 16-19 yr olds increased by 74% in one year (Health Canada). Stakeholders suggests this number continues to rise

Oct 2019-June 2019: 13 fines issued to students caught using e-cigarettes on school property; 73 written warnings issued (Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit)

Risk Factors: What We Learned

B. Housing, homelessness, and basic needs

Poverty combined with rising costs of housing puts Barrie residents at greater risk of harm — between 2006-2016, the rate of poverty in Barrie increased 45%.

Poverty

2006-2016: 45% increase in poverty. % of low-income Barrie residents, after-tax, rose from 8.4% to 12.2% (Statistics Canada)

Stakeholders report growing gap between OW and ODSP rates and rising costs of living

Stakeholders suggested Barrie would benefit if institutions used an integrated population health approach to improve wellness and social care

Low paid and precarious employment

Living wage in Simcoe County: \$18/hour, \$4 more than Ontario minimum wage (Simcoe County Poverty Reduction Task Group)

As many as 25% of working Canadians are precariously employed (Statistics Canada)

Stakeholders report childcare is hard to access and often unaffordable

Appropriate affordable housing

Stakeholders report housing becoming less affordable for those with low incomes, as housing costs rise across Southern Ontario.

Feb 2019-Feb 2020: Avg. Barrie home sale price increased 9%. (Barrie and District Realtors Association)

Stakeholders described that unaffordable housing is major impediment for women wanting to leave abusive relationships

Homelessness

April 2018: Homeless Population: 305 (Simcoe County Homelessness Survey)

Nearly 1 in 3 of Barrie's homeless are Indigenous. Indigenous people are 8x more likely to be homeless than the average resident (Simcoe County Homelessness Survey)

Stakeholders report that more supportive housing is needed to help address the mental illness and addictions that keep people homeless

Food insecurity

2018-2019: 9% annual increase in number of meals served; from 33,000 to 36,000 (Barrie Food Bank)

2019: Number of first time food bank users increased for the first time in seven years (Barrie Food Bank)

Risk Factors: What We Learned

C. Crime

More needs to be done to protect youth and seniors from increasingly dangerous online threats — this risk may not be widely understood in Barrie.

Vulnerability to online threats

- Police, educators and youth workers are concerned about young people taking risks online, in an ever-changing social media landscape
- In Canada, child pornography crimes increased 233% from 2006-2016 (Statistics Canada)
- Advocates and police expressed concerns about phone scams that continue to target seniors and other vulnerable residents.
- In three years (2015-2017), Canada saw a doubling of financial losses due to scams (Statistics Canada)

Family violence

- The Women and Children's Shelter of Barrie refers 500 women and children to other shelters in Simcoe County every year
- The Women's and Children's Shelter is partially funded for 27 beds but regularly houses 35 women and children

Human trafficking, gang activity, and organized crime

- Human trafficking is an ongoing concern in Barrie, in part due to its location on Highway 400 (Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions)
- Barrie, along with other small southern Ontario cities, may be an area of expansion for criminal organizations based in the GTA that are active in the drug trade and in human trafficking

Risk Factors: What We Learned

D. Service gaps

The lack of municipal and provincial resources is a major challenge — service providers are working on ways to have a greater impact with limited resources, but gaps remain.

Underfunding of social services

The City of Barrie took on \$2.3 million in additional costs due to reduced provincial transfers to municipalities, including a \$600,000 reduction in homelessness programs. (City of Barrie)

In 2019 the province announced \$1 billion in cuts to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (Ontario Gov't)

Social service workers report high rates of burnout due to growing demands and shrinking resources

Fragmented services and inadequate transition supports

Stakeholders report that social and public services are struggling to adapt to increased client complexity

Stakeholders report, in spite of growth of collaborative tables and initiatives, many key services remain uncoordinated

Stakeholders described how vulnerable community members lacked necessary supports as they transitioned between life stages

Inadequate developmental disability supports

Stakeholders report that caps imposed on autism services will undermine the ability of families to meet the needs of their loved ones who are on the autism spectrum

Many residents with mental illnesses are also diagnosed with developmental disabilities

Limited mobility and public transport

Stakeholders report that limited transit options increased the risk of social isolation for seniors, youth, low income residents and other vulnerable residents.

Seniors expressed concerns with availability and timeliness of accessible transit options

Inadequate newcomer services

International student body at Georgian College has increased over tenfold since 2015 (from ~300 to over ~3000) (Georgian College)

Stakeholders report that newcomers are often forced to seek out culturally-appropriate resources in neighbouring communities.

Risk Factors: What We Learned

E. Community Resilience

As Barrie grows, residents want to foster greater connection with each other and strengthen Barrie's social fabric.

Caregiver and service provider burnout

Stakeholders report that decreasing funding and an increased need for services has resulted in caregiver and service provider burnout in Barrie

33% of Ontario caregivers struggle with their own mental and emotional health (Ontario Caregiver Association)

Weak community bonds

Stakeholders report that many community members wish to build a stronger sense of community and connection in Barrie, as Barrie continues to grow

2011-2016: Barrie's growth rate (5.4%) exceeded Ontario's (4.6%) (Statistics Canada)

Social Isolation

Stakeholders report concern about growing isolation amongst seniors and young people

Seniors — already vulnerable — may be at growing risk of social isolation, in part due to lack of funding for homecare and long waits for beds in supported living facilities

Discrimination

In 2018, anti-gay protesters attempted to disrupt Barrie's Pride Parade. In 2019 someone defaced a rainbow crosswalk.

Stakeholders suggest that a lack of public understanding of social issues like poverty and addiction contributes to mistreatment

Stakeholders report discrimination against newcomers and racialized people in Barrie's. Georgian College's International students, for example, have reported experiencing racism in the community.

Examining Existing Programs, Considering Potential New Initiatives

Actions in the CSWB Plan should complement and build off existing services and initiatives that are already making important contributions to the safety and well-being of Barrie residents.

Our work identified a number of initiatives that should be considered during the development of the CSWB Plan's actions.

EXISTING SERVICES WE CAN BUILD ON

Crisis Outreach And Support Team (COAST)	Collaborate Barrie	Rent Smart	The Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Team
211	Neighbourhood Policing	Peer Navigators	Recreation Access Pass
Healthy Barrie	Simcoe County Drug Treatment Court	YMCA Expansion	School Success Program

Examining Existing Programs, Considering Potential New Initiatives

The working group also discussed and considered a number of potential new initiatives that could be included in the CSWB Plan.

POTENTIAL IDEAS

Cyber seniors training

Justice Centre

Harm Reduction and
Overdose Prevention
Services

Community Services
Conference

Red Bag

Seamless services

Cultural Centre

Youth Advisory Council

Front line worker training

Volunteer Hub

Community Hubs

Georgian College
Homeshare program

Life skills education for
youth

Examining Existing Programs, Considering Potential New Initiatives

Given limited resources and time, attempting to address all risk factors through the CSWB Plan is likely to be unsuccessful. Instead, 13 draft actions have been developed by the Working Group that:

1. Respond to risk factors of particular concern
2. Complement existing services and supports that are already working well
3. Are feasible to achieve through collaborative effort, given limited resources

In March the Working Group developed 12 draft actions that:

- improve the quality of key services in Barrie,
- help Barrie's most vulnerable,
- mend and strengthen Barrie's social fabric, and
- improve our cross-sector working relationships.

While they do not address every risk factor and every potential harm, we believe these 13 actions are strong first steps that we can take together.

They will save lives, prevent harm, make Barrie a better place to live, and build momentum for our next CSWB Plan.

MARCH: DRAFT ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

Mental health and substance abuse

1) Invest in harm reduction, treatment, and overdose prevention services

2) Develop trauma-informed mental health training, practice and support for community and public service providers

3) Increase support for local Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams and look to expand the model to priority areas beyond mental health interventions

Service gaps

4) Launch an annual community safety and well-being event to strengthen relationships among service providers

5) Expand the use and membership of collaborative tables to better coordinate services

Affordable housing, homelessness, and basic needs

6) Enhance the civic leaders task force on affordable housing options for Barrie

7) Promote the RentSmart Landlord and Realtor Education program and Empower Simcoe's landlord forum

Crime

8) Build community support for the community justice centre model

9) Share and promote courses on online and phone safety for young people, seniors and newcomers

Community resilience

10) Create and recruit 1,500 new volunteer positions across community organizations to promote cohesion and resilience

11) Accelerate the development of new community infrastructure

12) Launch community dialogues to address simmering tensions and articulate a positive, shared vision

Recent work has focused on refining these draft actions through one-on-one conversations with Working Group members, as well as other key stakeholders.

We are currently working to:

- **Identify a lead for each action, who will take responsibility for coordinating and advancing the work**
- **Identify key partners who will work with the lead to implement the action**
- **Refine each action, its rationale, the supporting step, and the anticipated outcomes.**

This work is ongoing.

AS OF TODAY: DRAFT ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

Mental health and substance abuse

1) Work together to increase investments in harm reduction and treatment, including overdose prevention services

2) Work together to see that training and support on trauma-informed practices is offered to a wider range of community and public service providers

3) Work together to expand the use of intensive, flexible, community-based care teams that serve residents facing serious and intersecting challenges, such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams

Service gaps

4) Launch an annual event to strengthen relationships among service providers and community leaders working to improve community safety and well-being in Barrie

5) Expand the use and membership of tables like Collaborate Barrie to better facilitate how service providers work together to respond to situations where an individual is at risk of significant harm

Affordable housing, homelessness, and basic needs

6) Establish a quarterly City of Barrie Roundtable on Affordable Housing Solutions that builds alignment, shared commitment, and a strong united voice across sectors and communities in Barrie

7) Collaborate to expand the impact of low-cost initiatives that improve access to housing for the vulnerable, such as the RentSmart Program and the Housing First Landlord Forum

Crime

8) Develop a proposal and build community support for a community justice centre in Barrie

9) Work together to help at-risk residents learn how to better protect themselves from scams and other internet and phone threats

Community resilience

10) Work together to renew and expand the ranks of Barrie's volunteers after COVID-19, creating and filling 1,500 new volunteer positions across community organizations

11) Work together to accelerate the development of places and facilities that strengthen community bonds

13) PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

Work with Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit to identify Barrie's key pandemic preparedness gaps and developing measures to address them

12) Launch a collaborative multi-year 'Campaign for Inclusion' that encourages all Barrie residents play a positive role making Barrie a safe and welcoming place for all

Draft Actions and Potential Supporting Steps

A. MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

DRAFT ACTIONS

1) Work together to increase investments in harm reduction and treatment, including overdose prevention services

2) Work together to see that training and support on trauma-informed practices is offered to a wider range of community and public service providers

3) Work together to expand the use of intensive, flexible, community-based care teams that serve residents facing serious and intersecting challenges, such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams

POTENTIAL SUPPORTING STEPS

- Expand and enhance naloxone training
- Develop an updated service model for an overdose prevention site in Barrie that would save lives and expand access to treatment and recovery
- Identify and work to address the most pressing treatment gaps for those undertaking dangerous drug use
- Consult with community and public service providers who are untrained but who are increasingly expected to work with vulnerable populations, to understand their training and support needs
- Establish training for frontline community and public service providers that is trauma informed and that supports their interactions with vulnerable populations in a safe and compassionate manner
- Consider whether embedded mental health workers in high-priority locations would be an effective use of resources
- Support the existing Barrie mental health ACT team so that it can effectively take on as many appropriate cases as possible
- Examine ways in which such a team model can be expanded to other groups of at-risk individuals not appropriately served by the existing ACT team

Draft Actions and Potential Supporting Steps

B. SERVICE GAPS

DRAFT ACTIONS

4) Launch an annual event to strengthen relationships among service providers and community leaders working to improve community safety and well-being in Barrie

5) Expand the use and membership of tables like Collaborate Barrie to better facilitate how service providers work together to respond to situations where an individual is at risk of significant harm

POTENTIAL SUPPORTING STEPS

- Organize an annual event that will bring together Barrie city government, provincial and federal public servants, Barrie Police Service and other community agencies and organizations
 - Use this annual event to work towards the successful implementation of the Barrie Community Safety and Well-Being Plan and evaluate its successes
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- Refresh membership and practices at the Collaborate Barrie Situation Table to sustain and increase its effectiveness in responding to situations of acutely elevated risk
 - Explore ways to create a Situation Table-like model that coordinates responses aimed at preventing individuals from entering into situations of acutely elevated risk

Draft Actions and Potential Supporting Steps

C. HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS, AND BASIC NEEDS

DRAFT ACTIONS

6) Establish a quarterly City of Barrie Roundtable on Affordable Housing Solutions that builds alignment, shared commitment, and a strong united voice across sectors and communities in Barrie

POTENTIAL SUPPORTING STEPS

- Appoint a chair, either from a senior city staff member or a member of council, and representatives of relevant sectors and organizations, including the County, anti-homelessness advocates, service providers, realtors, developers, business leaders, and community associations
- Meet on a quarterly basis to share and receive updates, uncover shared priorities, build shared commitment regarding relevant initiatives, explore new ideas, and create a strong united voice
- Strengthen united calls for increased funding of innovative housing models, and work towards a renewed City of Barrie Affordable Housing Strategy in 2025

7) Collaborate to expand the impact of low-cost initiatives that improve access to housing for the vulnerable, such as the RentSmart Program and the Housing First Landlord Forum

- Through the roundtable and via other means, coordinate support for existing initiatives like the Rent Smart Tenant Education Program run by Youth Haven and Empower Simcoe's Housing First landlord education and information program
- Identify and seek to launch or expand the impact of other low-cost initiatives that improve access to housing for the vulnerable in Barrie

Draft Actions and Potential Supporting Steps

D. CRIME

DRAFT ACTIONS

8) Develop a proposal and build community support for a community justice centre in Barrie

9) Work together to help at-risk residents learn how to better protect themselves from scams and other internet and phone threats

POTENTIAL SUPPORTING STEPS

- Work with a range of partners to examine domestic and international justice centre models and identify relevant inspirations for Barrie
 - Identify the relevant challenges at the intersection of criminal justice and social services that a Barrie Justice Centre would seek to address
 - Identify pre-existing resources that could be brought together to create a justice centre, as well as potential additional resource requirements
 - Develop proposal with, and build support amongst, a diverse cross-section of Barrie
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- Identify the online risks that are to be mitigated and the populations that are most at risk - considering, for example, the needs of newcomers, young people, and seniors
 - Examine existing online safety, social media awareness, and telephone fraud prevention resources available to residents
 - Develop and implement one or more method for helping vulnerable residents access existing resources in order to learn how to better protect themselves

Draft Actions and Potential Supporting Steps

E. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

DRAFT ACTIONS

10) Work together to renew and expand the ranks of Barrie's volunteers after COVID-19, creating and filling 1,500 new volunteer positions across community organizations

11) Work together to accelerate the development of places and facilities that strengthen community bonds

12) Launch a collaborative multi-year 'Campaign for Inclusion' that encourages all Barrie residents play a positive role making Barrie a safe and welcoming place for all

POTENTIAL SUPPORTING STEPS

- Build a coalition of organizations and individuals seeking to strengthen community resiliency and promote community participation by mobilizing volunteers.
- Set a 1% goal: measure the baseline of filled volunteer positions currently in Barrie, and establish a way to track towards 1,500 newly filled volunteer positions, which would represent approximately 1% of Barrie's population volunteering.
- Develop strategies and tools to achieve the 1% goal; including building off neighbourhood self-help efforts in response to COVID-19 and involving Georgian College computer science students to build a volunteer website and app to help match interested residents with appropriate organizations

- Connect organizations who work to create places and facilities that strengthen communities, along with key representatives of the City of Barrie and the County of Simcoe
- Share updates and seek ways to support existing and new community infrastructure that will promote community well-being like the new Barrie YMCA and the proposed Multicultural Centre
- Examine social planning models that could be used to build, prioritize and promote the development of such spaces

- Create a collaborative table of organizations who will work together to develop and run the campaign, including organizations such as the Ethnic Mosaic Alliance, the Barrie Chamber of Commerce, Georgian College, and the Barrie Public Library.
- Together the table selects, for the year ahead, a key theme of pressing concern, shared strategies, and specific activities. Activities are then undertaken and coordinated by table members
- Based on successes and challenges, table members identify lessons learned and develop revised plans for the subsequent year, with new theme, updated strategies, and updated activities.

Draft Actions and Potential Supporting Steps

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

ACTION

Work with Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit to identify Barrie's key pandemic preparedness gaps and developing measures to address them

POTENTIAL SUPPORTING STEPS

- *TBD*

AS OF TODAY: DRAFT ACTIONS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING

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3) Work together to expand the use of intensive, flexible, community-based care teams that serve residents facing serious and intersecting challenges, such as Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) Teams

Service gaps

4) Launch an annual event to strengthen relationships among service providers and community leaders working to improve community safety and well-being in Barrie

5) Expand the use and membership of tables like Collaborate Barrie to better facilitate how service providers work together to respond to situations where an individual is at risk of significant harm

Affordable housing, homelessness, and basic needs

6) Establish a quarterly City of Barrie Roundtable on Affordable Housing Solutions that builds alignment, shared commitment, and a strong united voice across sectors and communities in Barrie

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Anticipated Next Steps

1. Continue to seek additional implementation advice from working group members (Q3 2020)
2. Seek additional implementation advice from CSWB Committee, other key partners and community members (Q3 2020)
3. Prepare final draft of CSWB Plan (Q3 2020)
4. Hand off final draft Plan to Community Safety and Well-Being Committee (Q4 2020)
5. Committee finalizes Plan and presents to Council, for approval
6. City publishes and works with partners to implement Barrie's first CSWB Plan