

CONCEPT LETTER

Imagine Barrie

Stated in the City of Barrie's Strategic Plan for 2010 – 2014 is the ultimate aim of **building a healthy and vibrant community**. That is, to strive towards excellence “in making our City the very best place it can be”. (Jeff Lehman).

There is most definitely a strong overlap of goals and focus areas between that of the City of Barrie's strategic plan, and the primary goals of the Resilience Collaborative as it pertains to the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (see attached brochure).

This being the case, the obvious question is might there be an opportunity for greater collaboration? Or put yet another way, might there be a way that the Resilience Collaborative might better serve, and add value, to the City of Barrie by applying the Canadian Index of Wellbeing at the municipal level?

For, as of this point in time, the City of Barrie really has no means by which to gauge its current level of wellbeing and vibrancy. Neither has it really received adequate support from its partners in terms of setting into motion an effective means by which to engage the community toward the realization of its ultimate goal.

Enter the Resilience Collaborative, along with the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, and one idea for consideration. This being, to work in collaboration on a joint *Imagine Barrie* campaign that would have as its main objectives:

- to use the Canadian Index of Well Being as a template for reporting on community health and wellbeing;
- to prepare a special Imagine Barrie supplement that draws upon several of the major domains that are in sync with the City of Barrie's strategic priorities and departments i.e. Community Vitality, Recreation & Leisure, etc..;
- to organize an Imagine Barrie multi media campaign, quite possibly employing Tedx format and Youtube technology in which citizens could submit a two minute pitch for what they would like to see;
- to integrate student journalism contest under the Imagine Barrie umbrella, such as occurred with Eco Pulse.

While there will be a data component to this work, it should be stressed that the intent here is **not** to create a report card. On the contrary, the primary aim is to do what the title suggests; that is, to propose alternatives such as are already under consideration by the City of Barrie in the context of its strengths.

Central to this entire endeavour would be the question WHAT IF? For instance, “**what if**, the bus terminal could be converted into a food terminal?”, “**what if**, we could expand active transportation choices?”, and. “**what if**, we could promote mixed land use in the downtown?” What would such choices actually look like?

In terms of what the Resilience Collaborative might bring to the table, there are a variety of assets, ranging from gathering pertinent data to organizing forums. However, our greatest asset is the partnership we have secured with the National Office of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing, and the credibility and profile that this might bring to a proposal such as this kind at both the national and international levels.

Moreover, one of the real strengths of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing is the manner in which it connects the dots between various seemingly unrelated initiatives, such as the connection between recreation and culture, community vitality, and population health; thereby making a stronger case for generating support for various initiatives under consideration.

As for our “ask” of the City, it is essentially, quite simple. Where we would most definitely appreciate support is from your communications department; whether it be regarding the publication of an Imagine Barrie document, and/or organizing some type of Tedx event; doing so in a way that is in accordance with your communications protocol.

In closing, on behalf of the Resilience Collaborative, I believe there exist some exciting opportunities associated with the application of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing as a communications and community engagement tool for the City of Barrie: ones that for a minimal investment of time and resources could have a tremendous upside.

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