



A New YMCA Community Hub in the City of Barrie: Working Together to Build a Safe, Vibrant and Welcoming Downtown

With our partners we are building a new YMCA – a community hub in downtown Barrie providing programs and services to residents in the City of Barrie and across the County of Simcoe. This Centre of Community is the investment in social infrastructure that allows the Y to build on its 100 year tradition of building healthy communities. In collaboration with our partners, the Y will be able to expand our reach to more of the City's growing population and will support priorities such as youth homelessness, recovery from chronic illness and improve the health and well being of our residents.

YMCA's Community Reach

Through amalgamation in 2007, the YMCAs of Barrie, Collingwood, Midland and Orillia became the entity of the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka (one set of financial statements, one budget, one governing Board of Directors) with one centralized head office in Barrie. All program development, administration for all centres, and management of the organization resides here.

The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka is one of the longest standing charities serving Barrie and the surrounding area. We are the largest provider of human services across Simcoe County, the District of Muskoka, and the District of Parry Sound, one of Simcoe County's largest employers with over 1,000 employees, and, more specifically, one of the largest employers of youth in the region.

The Y provides a wide range of services from health and fitness to child care and camps, as well as supports for recent immigrants, youth at risk, and adults facing barriers to employment. All of our programs are accessible, regardless of ability to pay, age, race, physical ability, or background.

Collaborating with our Community Partners to Expand our Reach

Partnerships will be core to this project, allowing organizations to work together to expand our reach and impact, while maximizing the use of limited resources.

Our new Downtown Barrie Y will create space for:

- Licensed child care to support young working families.
- Aquatic programs to promote health, fitness, and water safety.
- Cardiac and cancer rehabilitation programs in partnership with the RVH.
- A youth hub to provide a variety of organized and drop-in programming.
- Opportunities for young and old to engage in active living and amateur sport.
- Transitional housing and supports for youth at risk in partnership with Youth Haven.
- Employment and volunteer opportunities for hundreds of members of our community.
- Fitness amenities to connect people to the resources they need to live a healthy lifestyle.
- A safe and inclusive community that brings together people of all ages and lived experience.
- Shared program space for other community based organizations to meet and serve their clients.



YMCA Positively Impacts Community Health, with a Focus on Prevention

The YMCA is more than a gym. Research has shown that being involved with a YMCA program not only increases general health, but also mental health and life satisfaction. As we come out of the pandemic, this holistic approach to wellness and connection will be even more important. We need to bring people together in a place that is inclusive and safe. In this way, the Y is very much in the business of upstream health measures in line with the City's "Barrie Health Accord". All of these elements contribute to creating a safe, vibrant, and welcoming downtown.

Data shows that Simcoe County has higher than provincial average rates of cardio-pulmonary disease and cancer; our youth have lower than average levels of mental health and our youth homeless rates are disproportionately high based on demographics. A focus on prevention is needed to reverse the curve on these alarming trends.

Stronger positive, long-term health outcomes can contribute to lower costs for other social services. The Centre for Disease Control and Prevention connects higher levels of "well-being" to the following long-term health outcomes:

1. *Greater life longevity;*
2. *Decreased risk of illness and disease;*
3. *Improved immune functioning;*
4. *Improved recovery from sickness and injury;*
5. *Improved likelihood high levels of civic engagement;*
6. *Increased productivity at work.*

Request for Support

With a population anticipated to reach 210,000 by 2031, this is the Y we need today for the Barrie we want tomorrow.

In June of 2021, the Provincial Government committed \$29.9 million in support of this project – this commitment, along with the generosity of so many donors, has been critical in moving this important community investment forward - we are close to making this vision a reality, but we need your help.

With the City's support....

- You are increasing the Y's capacity to deliver programs that inspire people to reach their full potential
- You are maximizing the impact of community partners delivering programs and services onsite
- You are contributing to the overall redevelopment of our downtown core
- You are investing in the health and vitality of Barrie's future

The projected cost of this important investment in community infrastructure is approximately \$50 million. With the significant commitment of \$29.9 million from the Provincial Government, along with \$2.5 million from the



County of Simcoe, and community support through our 100 Reasons Y capital campaign we are close to meeting this goal.

We are asking the City of Barrie to match the County's \$2.5 million in in-kind financial support so that we can proceed with this significant investment in community infrastructure. Barrie's investment in the new Y is a good investment that will leverage almost \$30 million of provincial tax money for the benefit of residents. Ontario's capital investment will not happen without success at raising our local share.

Finally, we believe that building on the site adjacent to the library supports the City's vision for the downtown core. We will create both short term employment opportunities through the construction phase, but also long term permanent part time and full time jobs. The Y will bring increased foot traffic into the core to support local small businesses. With intensification coming to this neighbourhood, it is important to provide amenities to support this development (health and wellness options, licensed child care, public meeting spaces, etc.). This location will also serve the rest of Barrie, in particular the East End that does not host a City-owned recreation centre.

The YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka and the Board of Directors extends their appreciation to the City of Barrie for their past and continued support and partnership, enabling us to expand our services in the communities we serve.