



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Summary of Discussions from the Community Conversation WILMOT + WELLESLEY TOWNSHIPS

DETAILS

TUESDAY, MAY 23RD

Number of participants – 51

Interviewer - Susan Cook-Scheerer

Guest Speakers - Chief Bryan Larkin – WRPS, and Angie Hallman – ReNu Health Wellness/Community Volunteer

WHY COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation, Wellbeing Waterloo Region, Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation and the United Way Kitchener Waterloo & Area partnered to host a series of four **Community Conversations**.

The goals of the Community Conversations were:

- To continue the recent momentum related to the latest release of the Waterloo Region's Vital Signs® and other community priority focused discussions and work.
- To provide an opportunity for members of the community to provide input into the priority setting work of Wellbeing Waterloo Region.
- To discuss what wellbeing means to you!

HOW WILL THE INFORMATION GATHERED BE USED?

The information gathered from each of the four community conversations will be compiled with other input to help determine the priorities for Waterloo Region. The Kitchener and Waterloo Community Foundation will also use the information in the next cycle of Waterloo Region's Vital Signs® reports.

WHAT DID WE TALK ABOUT?

Each community conversation was structured in two parts. The first part featured a conversation with community leaders from Waterloo Region, which set the stage for the second part, where the participants were invited to have a conversation with others at their table.

The following questions were asked by a volunteer facilitator at each of the tables:

- What are the things that make living in Waterloo Region great for you and your community?
- What gets in the way of wellbeing for you and your community?
- What can you do for yourself or for your community to improve wellbeing?
- What do you think is the most important priority to focus on in order to improve wellbeing?

A volunteer scribe recorded conversations and the results are below.

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WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The following are the major themes that were discussed at this community conversation. The actual responses of participants from each discussion follow in the subsequent pages:

- 1. Equitable and Accessible Services:** Knowledge about and access to social services across the spectrum of the community, especially for the rising senior population is a strong theme. .
"Equity of all service – if you can afford to pay for long term care you can be placed in a nice facility, but if you can't afford, their facilities are not as nice. Long term care should be equitable across the board."
- 2. Connectedness and Change:** There is an existing connectedness in the community and a strong need to maintain it in the face of change.
"We stay connected – you don't see someone for a few days you wonder about them, if they are okay"
- 3. Aging Population:** The rising senior population and what change that entails for the community, especially in terms of housing and the high cost of living, is a common theme. .
*"Seniors – we have more seniors now and is only going to be getting bigger."
"The range of housing options – there aren't places for people to downsize to, options for people who aren't looking for houses with granite counter tops, options for people with disabilities to live independently"*
- 4. A Unique Environment:** The unique mix of urban and rural is highly valued. There is a strong need to protect that.
"Also – beautiful rolling countryside. On Wilmot Line – driving into a small piece of heaven coming home from work in Waterloo. Nice mix of urban and rural."
- 5. Inclusion/Belonging:** There is a strong need to welcome newcomers to the community while maintaining some tradition.
"The history of the community can make it harder for people to feel a part of the community when you don't have generations of family who grew up from here"
- 6. Education and Growth:** Higher education is valued and seen to be connected to economic growth and innovation, however, the prevalence of higher education may also be viewed as a shift away from traditional economic models.
"Lots of jobs but more for educated people. Less manufacturing jobs. Still lots of people who can't find employment."

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The following information was collected from participants.

What are the things that make living in Waterloo Region great for you and your community?

- We are diverse in terms of urban and rural. You can choose where you want to live. The urban amenities are nearby if you live in the rural area. If you want to live in the urban area, you can also experience the rural areas
- The green spaces. There are so many different things you can do eg. Cross country skiing, canoeing, etc.
- You don't have to go very far to do things
- It is such a nice community. Everyone is here to help others.
- We are a good size of a community as a Region so that we have access to lots of amenities but we don't lose the sense of connection and relationship
- We don't feel like a big place until you look at the population numbers
- There are real connections in our communities and neighborhoods
- People will go out of their way to make connections
- There are lots of examples of the "small town" feel throughout the community
- We have lots of access to fresh fruits and vegetables – farmers markets
- The feeling of having a small community is shifting because the recent growth is coming from outside the Region whereas growth in the past has come from natural growth so everyone still knew everyone else
- There are two universities and a college in our area. It opens the doors to a lot of kids who can live at home and pursue post-secondary school in a more affordable way
- In the smaller communities, there is a real sense of history and connection to the past. People have really held on to that history and are passing it down to younger generations. This plays out in our values.
- The resource center in New Hamburg [for new moms] is an amazing place to connect people
- There is a sense of pride in our community – people take pick up garbage, take care of gardens, etc.
- The connections that people have to service clubs and churches are very strong. This fosters community involvement, connections, community service
- The people – Wilmot Township operates mainly because of the great volunteers here
- This great facility was built with no debt, largely due to fundraising efforts, shows commitment of residents
- Sense of generosity of residents in time and effort. Highly involvement in community events and initiatives, including when there is a tragedy, everyone comes together
- Appreciate the "things" that are here, transit developing, great trails for walking – promotes interaction with others and physical activity
- Groups meet at places like McDonalds and Tim Hortons – would be nice to perhaps have a bus that could take residents between the different "towns"
- Family, friends, in the area – connections
- Benefits from being a part of Waterloo Region – i.e. there are some things the Region looks after, yet we are still able to have a local government where residents feel they can come talk to someone – this gives people a connection to their community



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- In the cities each counsellor is responsible for such a large catchment that they don't have the same opportunities to connect with residents the way that counsellors can in the Townships.
- Being part of the larger Waterloo Region allows the area to pull in individuals for employment opportunities, but the townships provide a great alternative to living in the larger cities. Can seek great employment but can reside in a small community
- The different communities are connected by a "values perspective"
- Some voice concerns that buses will bring "trouble" from the cities into the Township – that's the small town perspective
- Initiatives tend to move faster in the Townships versus the cities, less process to go through
- Townships can be "movers and shakers". Tend to have a "will do" attitude – let's do this and make it happen versus a "can do" attitude looking at all the components that need to be in place first before embarking on a new initiative.
- There are excellent opportunities to improve trails in the rural areas which is exciting
- Residents volunteer to take care of flowers, trails, run community events, etc.
- 6 optimist clubs, 2 lions clubs, TONS of volunteers
- Access to education is excellent – universities
- Walkable areas are convenient...coffee shops, streetscapes
- Integration of trails, are providing routes to enable people to get out
- Community pools/tennis courts, great for kids/community, safety and security
- So many community events, arts and culture, recreation, leisure....
- Element of caring, community, pitching in to get things done, place to raise family
- Community that cares about people, 'Barn Raising' spirit
- Positive communities
- Access to amenities is good
- Warm and inviting area
- City feeling but lots of rural areas
- Rural to high-tech... a little mind-blowing
- Community centres are a great resource, hidden gems, helps the issue of isolation
- Waterloo Region is competing on the world stage
- Loves New Hamburg b/c everyone knows everyone. They feel safer.
- Grew up in London, England, and didn't have time to create the relationships that are established here.
- The availability of the higher education makes this community very attractive. Great interactive with all age levels
- Moving into this region, the people make her feel very at home in WR.
- The connection to people here is special compared to other communities. Here organizations make it work for people to get involved whereas other places they give more emphasis to the wealthy who want to volunteer.
- One of the great things about our region is the amount of amenities but also creating a small town feel. For the police, there is still a lot of trust and confidence that they police have in the people within the community.
- As a parent you don't fear where your children are. You trust the people in the community here to look after your children if you aren't around.
- You don't want for anything except Walmart and higher end clothes.
- Canada Day Celebrations, Mennonite Relief Sale



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- What we have in this community is us, not a thing but us as people. It is organic growth that gives a sense of belonging.
- The rural settings gives you a better opportunity to get to know your neighbours and your community
- After people go to school here, they end up staying here and settling here in this community.
- WR is the hub of innovation. Not just through tech, but even through Corizon is innovative. The innovation has really filtered from the education sector to all other sectors of the community.
- Not all townships are treated equally, example is the fire services.
- Even the chains stores here act like small town stores, because the people who run them are from here and love their community as well. You work, you live and you engage within this community.
- As the region grows, what is there to do in the region? In a local way, there is so much to do here that makes this place amazing, like the market, the symphony, the Schneider house.
- Change gives hope for the future---hub of industry---now gone---tech sector growing and employing locals---economy is moving forward, increased confidence---hope for my grand children
- Beautiful place to raise children---opportunities to build relationships, access to country and rivers
- Great collaborative approach between denominations of Christians in Ayr---focus on what unites people rather than what divides---I love to see the collaboration---also between service clubs in Ayr
- See neighbours outside a lot more---BBQs, ---people are more willing to meet people, walking the dog, talking with each other
- Big cities---scared to talk to people---my town we talk to each other
- Small steps---saying hi, smiling at someone---the little things are the big things
- Waterloo region is being talked about outside of Waterloo Region---innovation
- Counselling agencies collaborate to serve the community best together---people want to come together
- Walking trails, space, splash pad, rec. complex---places to come together---legion, grocery stores
- Abundance mentality
- Mennonite influence has created opportunities for food based events; legion has monthly dinners, churches have weekly luncheons
- When your children leave, you have to start again to find how to connect with others---Ayr has new community centre that helps to connect people, Lang's building in North Dumfries
- Need more intergenerational connection opportunities
- Opportunities to get involved; openness of people to trust, interact, relate---confidence to open the door to know others
- Patronizing local businesses shows commitment to the community and its people
- People notice neighbours and reach out to them
- Swimming group, book club---do have to put forth some effort
- Neighbours help connect neighbours to each other, invite each other over
- Street BBQs build relationships, shared "maps" of who lives where
- Rich in social services. Looking at other communities, we are rich in these services. People do have places to reach out for help.
- Social services also work hard with each other so services are coordinated and not duplicated.
- Not necessarily easier to access, but collaborated and intentional efforts to better coordinate services.



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- Interestingly, we all come from social services. Raising children here, excellent teachers and school system. Social services would not be the first thing that made this the place to choose – more because of closeness to Toronto, border, universities, hospitals, regional cancer clinic – opportunities because of proximity to many things. Husband and I and 4 adult children have all been employed – a lot of cluster of “good stuff”. If you are doing well, don’t necessarily get to the need for social services (even if they are there and available). Opportunity here.
- Holistic approach – multi dimensional and holistic approach. Was just up in Thunder Bay trying to downsize my Mom, and realizing what they don’t have – not just proximity but holistic approach here to services. Move here from Thunder Bay to raise my kids here because of all the resources. University, college – e.g. in Thunder Bay couldn’t get grade 13 biology because there was no teacher there that could teach it. Options to get you what you need e.g. Kiwanis transit.
- Kiwanis transport is excellent. Same price as GRT.
- Volunteer organizations that do real things- e.g. community care concepts. Wilmot Wellesley and Woolwich – have personal experience and it was a life saver. Looked after him after he got out of hospital and took him to Freeport when needed. Beautiful organization totally supported by volunteers here.
- Also – the music. More music per capita in this area than anywhere. Classical and jazz – we have one of the best concert halls and companies that produce concerts. Blues festivals, jazz festivals, enrich the experience. Some places just don’t have this.
- Also – beautiful rolling country side. On Wilmot Line – driving into a small piece of heaven coming home from work in Waterloo. Nice mix of urban and rural.
- Culture – music, people, countryside, - all of these are part of our overall culture. And lots of sports too. + Universities. Also speaks to the diversity in our community.

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What gets in the way of wellbeing for you and your community?

- The history of the community can make it harder for people to feel a part of the community when you don't have generations of family who grew up from here
- In New Hamburg, if your kids don't play hockey, they are limited in their social opportunities – there are fewer subsidies for families who can't afford these activities
- While the communities are very friendly, they aren't necessarily welcoming to people from outside the community
- It's very difficult for isolated seniors – if someone has lost their spouse and they used to do everything as a couple, it's very hard to shift social groups – or if you aren't a member of the church, you're "nobody"
- Transportation to the city for services such as medical service can be a challenge some, especially the elderly
- The resources in the townships haven't kept pace with the growth in the Region. It is always a struggle to get a share of the regional resources. There isn't equal access to resources and so people have to move outside the community for affordable housing options, healthcare options, etc.
- The range of choice is more narrow for aging in place, recreation, housing, nice rental housing (for people who are fresh out of school, not sure if they are staying, etc.), subsidized housing
- Some areas are becoming commuter communities so people moving in aren't developing the connections to the communities
- If you don't have a car, it's difficult to get a job, access resources, get kids to daycare or recreation activities
- Most people have to drive to the city for good paying jobs and it's hard to get kids to part-time jobs
- There are some challenges with a multi-tier government –the Region needs to understand the unique concerns of the Townships.
- Need sidewalks and trails that are accessible for all – children to seniors
- Snow removal is not consistent on sidewalks – as someone who walks regularly this is very frustrating. Every business and every home is responsible for snow removal on the sidewalks out front. Residents need to report areas that are not shovelled so that bylaw can enforce.
- Technology is a disturbance to wellbeing – individuals are constantly distracted, miss opportunities to learn and experience things with others; miss opportunities to connect with others in a meaningful way
- There are also some issues of connectivity to technology in the Townships (access to service)
- Parenting comes into play in terms of use of technology – parents are using technology as "babysitters".
- Screen time is a key concern in today's society – how does that influence wellbeing, mental health, connectivity. Need to engage more face to face conversation and fellowship.
- Generationally, millennials don't have "experiences" so they are using technology to buy these things
- Need to connect the younger generations with elders more – this is a rich experience for both children and seniors. Need to encourage more intergenerational settings. Housing affordability



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plays a role in this. Grandparents want to stay close to children and grandchildren, but cannot afford a house, smaller townhouse, condo near their families. Don't want to move into a seniors' home, but cannot afford other options.

- Do not want to become a "sleeper community" as many people work outside of the Townships and may not spend as much time here. Can we increase employment opportunities within the Townships?
- Millennials, difficult to meet people in younger age group
- Not a central location to find information about the community
- Difficult to find out what is happening in the community for millennials
- Volunteer recruitment is getting difficult
- Disconnect between what companies are promoting for volunteerism and what is actually needed by the agencies
- Disconnect for Millennials as to what 'Well Being' is
- Secure housing
- Price of housing, less rental properties, house prices are very high
- Culturally, Mennonite culture is very closed in the rural community
- No senior's housing, retirement homes etc. ... in Wellesley
- Wilmot Township is too big geographically. There isn't enough attention paid to the outlying areas. It can be a catch 22 because they have been ignored for so long that they don't bother anymore.
- There is a pettiness between the fire services within the community, and that gets in the way of wellbeing for individuals. Farmers shouldn't be penalized for where they live that they can't get services.
- It has taken a lot of time for some of the services to get spread out. There seems to be more from the urban who can help, but it should be available where you live. It's a "who pays?" issue.
- There is a very traditional view rurally and therefore things will get shutdown. There are not many visible minorities. There aren't services for the transgender students who live in this community. It's difficult for an urbanite to live in a rural area. Living in Wellesley it's very "vanilla".
- The townships can be a little resistant to change.
- Woolwich has done a great job of welcoming the Mennonite population.
- The people here value tradition. Which gives sense of belonging and security.
- The tradition can get in the way of being intolerant of people and of change.
- There can be pushbacks to when someone says there is a problem here, it's not as quick want to change
- "This is the way we have always done it", "this is the way it is", this is what happens in volunteer places and pushes people always from wanting to volunteer.
- At times people don't feel like they are being listened to because we live in a rural area and aren't taken seriously.
- The biggest problem that prevents me from getting in the way of wellbeing is 'me'. I am the one who needs to be doing something and not just letting something down. It's important that I need to get out more to understand what is available and what the hidden gems are in the area. The onus is on me.
- Definitions of wellbeing
- Physical, emotional, spiritual health—connection to other living things---makes wellbeing to me



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- Wellbeing---all connected to the social determinants of health---being purposeful, feeling like you're contributing---can you live and work in your community?
- What is your value---just what you produce in work? Or how you relate to others in your community and how you contribute to your community?
- Living alone is not loneliness---you can be alone in a crowd
- Holistic, feeling fulfilled
- Safety and security---had three break-ins in two years when we lived in the city---so we moved to New Hamburg to feel safer
- Now our concern is response time from ambulance, police, fire, etc. because we live so far from the services
- No local bus service in Ayr
- Finally have bus service to New Hamburg---20 mins from New Hamburg to Ira Needles---expansion is on horizon
- Accessibility due to physical constraints----only 1 disabled parking spot in town and it is in a very bad spot in downtown New Hamburg, service Ontario
- Ayr also has problems with accessibility for those with vision, hearing, ambulatory limitations
- In rural areas, youth who are not into sports have difficulty finding activities---places to hang out are not in supervised areas
- Many people do not know all that is available to take advantage of---difficulty getting out the information---social media helps but not all people are on social media
- Segregated communities by age---creates isolation
- Complexity. Perhaps way too much – e.g. services e.g. libraries. Seven branches of libraries. A lot of information to get through. Too much choice? Counter-side to being resource rich.
- Growing gap between those that have and those that don't have. This is a challenge and causes concern. Those who are experiencing life well vs. those that don't e.g. Syrian refugees whose government subsidies have now ended. Some now struggling to find their place in this community.
- Living costs – real estate going up. Cost of living going up. Lots of jobs but more for educated people. Less manufacturing jobs. Still lots of people who can't find employment. Will be difficult for young people to buy houses. Getting harder to make enough to survive and live in Waterloo Region. Also may be why we are seeing a shift more into rural areas because of cost of housing.
- Not sure if living in rural is any cheaper – trading expenses as then more travel expenses. Seeing people moving further out because cost of housing. Then further away from supports and then end up more with bedroom communities.
- Observation: in terms of social services... we now have lots of layers, are there gaps or is it just an agency we haven't discovered yet? If filling this gap, am I filling another barrier for others to now circumnavigate. Maybe we look at one size fits all, then if it doesn't fit then we create another entity which morphs into its own being. Are we further ahead to get rid of layers and put "more boots on the ground". Questioning the overall system structure – this is a challenge to wellness – who to call?
- Talked to a gentleman recently from England. He said in his old community, he called one number and they connected him wherever he needed. Now we all have our own numbers, and agree that sometimes management levels create more layers than necessary. E.g. CCAC – if someone doesn't need "bathing" support then they have to go somewhere else. Navigating the system – who's helping? Or is the system so complex that you need help to navigate it.

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- I get in trouble for not sending people to our website – I won't do this.
- Our systems are getting complicated. I use computer everyday. Websites these days can be hard just to find a phone number. Hard to find out how to call – need to be mindful. This is especially tricky for those that have immigrated here, or can't afford a computer or get to the library to use the computer. Need to consider these limitations.
- A lot of websites don't give peoples emails.
- In terms of Accessibility – biggest problem is not just one point of contact but access to all the information.
- It can be a huge step to reach out e.g. food bank – need to make it as easy as possible.
- Being retired, and not wanted automated chequing, e.g. try calling Service Canada and get through the automated number – trying to get an actual cheque. Ongoing frustration to find service or to talk to a person. How many people give up? Service Canada eventually failed to get me my cheque.
- What gets in the way of maintaining a well state or a lack of wellbeing.
- Children not getting access to services. Eg. Class trip skating. What if a child doesn't go because he doesn't have skates. Does he call in sick so his friends don't know? Has to be a way for all to play. This breaks my heart.
- A personal example: lived in country hills... very diverse community and school. My absolute pet peeve was field trips that were outside the reach of a lot of kids in the school. No advance warning to prepare for additional expenses knowing many families were on fixed incomes. Knowing have many used the food support at school. I know our education system is excellent but it is noticeable that some schools have and some schools don't have. Even though education is a right – you would think it would be equitable but I know its not. Experiences in different schools are not equitable. I would choose to address this for wellbeing – we are not setting up our children to have the same experiences.
- Prevention – the earlier we can start to help our kids get the best start is essential. We need to be committed to make these investments earlier in a child's and family's lives.

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If you could choose one issue to address wellbeing in our community what would it be?

- Affordable housing – it is a basic need to have a decent, safe and affordable home – it applies to all ages (kids, seniors, single people, single parents, families)
- The range of housing options – there aren't places for people to downsize to, options for people who aren't looking for houses with granite counter tops, options for people with disabilities to live independently
- If we are promoting Wellbeing Region, we need to expose people to the great diversity of Waterloo Region that includes the rural communities
- Rural people are very proud and don't like to ask for help – "they take care of their own"
- Access to rural mental health services that is integrated into the ways the communities work – the services need to be located in the rural areas and meet the needs of the people
- Access to Services for kids with disabilities in the rural areas
- Services can be mandated to provide services across the region but the mandate doesn't speak to how the services are provided – rural people have to drive into the city
- Accessibility to services, housing, recreation
- The urban centers are trying to replicate the rural services providers in their ability to come together and meet the needs of the community but the ways that rural service providers do business is almost looked down upon
- Flexibility of our systems to meet diverse needs
- Transportation - connectivity
- Putting different generations in the same spaces – some of the schools are working on this
- Building communities with the focus that all spaces are accessible, welcoming, and geared towards residents of all ages. Physically build the spaces that will encourage intergenerational mingling and connectivity.
- Facilitate sharing of stories from different generations. Have elders share their stories – maybe capture these in video or letters. Share these stories at community events. Culture/heritage. "Excavate the foundation of this Township"
- Volunteerism is declining. All the optimist groups etc. are having increasing challenges of sourcing volunteers. Have schools put "volunteering" into curriculum. Could be a business project to look at how to increase volunteerism.
- Mental health
- Connections, feeling welcome
- Cultural diversity
- The idea of feeling connected, being a part of something
- Affordable housing
- Really difficult to buy first home
- Prevention is more relevant, need to start people when they are younger, learning about well-being
- The importance of high school completion/graduation. You don't stand a chance if you do not complete
- In this area, there are no women representing our community at municipal, provincial and federal. We need more woman in politics



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- Learning what the different faith based religions are. We need to share and learn about what we don't know so that we can build relationships with others who aren't the same as us.
- It's breaking down the tradition of the culture.
- In politics, people are skeptical if you're not "from here" even though people running have been here for over 25 years.
- One person here would like to change the counsel, because there is a lack of vision here and aren't progressive.
- The bus systems don't run on the weekends here. It's only during the day hours when the kids can't use it. It's not available for use on weekends for the kids to use.
- Get better connected with neighbours
- Stop so many roadblocks that can't bring positive change to the community. Work with our citizens to make a better community.
- Affordable housing and food. Not just in the larger communities but in the rural areas as well. We need some more forward thinking on many issues that affect the larger population.
- Accessibility for physical limitations
- Timely access to emergency services
- Communication—people getting to know what is available and how to access what they need when they need it (biggest problem with communication is the illusion of it)
- Always the same volunteers who work in the different organizations---how do you get everyone engaged (Volunteering on a regular basis staves off dementia—study from Calgary showed)
- We need more resources to address the mental health needs
- Poverty
- More educational supports in schools for students with higher needs
- Adults with low literacy
- Deal with addictions, overdose issues
- Involve all the generations in solving the issues---help everyone to see the value of all the differing opinions
- Shift to prevention-How do we prevent the big issues like addiction? Promote intergenerational relationships? Decrease isolation?
- Helping children early when adults see they need help with social determinants of health
- Encourage every individual to take responsibility to help their neighbour, one on one, to step up
- Invest in community mentors (e.g. Safe Talk) to help them help their neighbours
- Early intervention
- Equity of all service – if you can afford to pay for long term care you can be placed in a nice facility, but if you can't afford, there facilities are not as nice. Long term care should be equitable across the board.
- I go to a church in Waterloo, amazes me in our church that we provide xmas presents and breakfast to children in the community around the church. It seems like an affluent neighbourhood, but there are kids that don't dress warmly or their kids won't admit they don't have breakfast.
- Treatment of Elderly in Homes – the ones where the government takes all their money and they can't get out because they don't have enough. Have had the need to visit some elderly in different places, and it is frightening to me to see people sitting like potatoes lined up 2 hours before supper. This gets in the way for wellbeing for our community and is an issue that should be addressed. And this is the fastest growing portion of our population.



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- Talked earlier about building our communities differently so more integration of ages in homes in our communities and park design.
- If I couldn't access Mobility Plus, then you have to live somewhere near groceries. Unless I could afford the tower above Vincenzo's.
- Seniors – we have more seniors now and is only going to be getting bigger. Equitableness. See people everyday who are in a good spot now (e.g. 40s), and then something happens to them (financial or health) and then their whole world falls apart. Numbers alone make this a priority. Move 100 years from now – we will have all these vacant luxury retirement homes – what will they turn into? A retirement home used to be affordable, now \$4000 per month gets you hardly any services.
- CPP and other is about \$18,000 per year – this isn't \$4000 per month if you do the math.
- Good in our community – 2 excellent universities.
- I would focus on accessibility for kids – participate regardless of finances, access.
- Where are the municipal politicians? They are the ones who puts the checkmark on neighbourhood design and where LRT is going, where parks are going. Don't seem to be fully engaged as they should be.
- We have Regional and Township Official Plan – these are not drawn up by politicians but by staff.
- Don't elected bodies deal with budget? Yes – approve the budgets. Peter is municipal politician. Hurdles in place to get something done are incredible. In my 3rd term just to get one project in place. Similar to the layering hurdle – there are lots of layers of government.
- LHIN has now taken over CCAC. So now different bodies taking over budgets of other service provides.
- Too many layers of government that add too much complexity in these systems. E.g. local levels dealing with parks and recreation – who to call for roads? Adds to much system complexity – would be more efficient and streamlined to have one level. Need to keep it simple.
- Ease of service navigation is a theme in many areas.

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Community Conversation Flags

Participants were asked to write one thing they could do for themselves or for their community. The following responses were placed on flags and were hung up around the room.

- Volunteer for community events
- Tell my story of my life and encourage others to do the same
- Support more local activities, events and businesses
- Serve
- I can ask when I need help/resources. I can offer help/resources when someone needs it
- Encourage my children to be active volunteers and engage with members of all generations
- Continue to be a voice for accessibility especially for those with physical challenges
- Invite more organizations to meet and talk to the children of our groups
- Be an advocate for community engagement
- Advocate for those in the township facing inequity of services, such as fire services, affordable housing, and/or bus service improvement
- Advocate for improved public transit (better bus service)
- Inspire young professionals to get more involved in the community
- Participate in public dialogues on mental health, senior services, environmental policing, affordable housing issues
- Make every possible effort, small or large, to connect with others in my community
- Adapt a community outreach perspective. Engage with neighbours and be mindful of my civic responsibilities
- Decrease barriers
- Neighbourhood BBQ @ our local park!
- Get out of my house and mingle with the neighbouring community more often
- Be a voice to speak up/speak out for a mom in my community who doesn't feel like she has a voice. To help ensure all kids have equal opportunities in our community.
- Introduce someone new in the community to my friends/colleagues/networks in the community
- Connect with my community (and others in the region) in a more meaningful way
- I could reach out more and build relationships with and between those in my community
- Participate
- I will find out what others think about wellbeing and have conversation to improve momentum
- Talk to my kids about what wellbeing means to them
- Advocate and shift public policy around wellbeing!
- Volunteer more often
- Invite my neighbour to go for an evening walk with me
- Spend less time in front of a screen and more time reaching out to my neighbours and with my family
- Sponsor a local child to play sports or participate in a field trip
- I could encourage my children to become more involved in this community: to find something they are passionate about, and make it happen!
- Consider getting involved in government
- Remember to always be welcoming
- Have a conversation with someone in my community each and every day
- Check in on the neighbour who hasn't cut their grass in a while
- Volunteer in a way that puts you in touch directly with others
- Knock on my neighbour's door, don't assume someone will forward the email to them!

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