

Burlington-Area Problem Outline / Fishbone

[created June 2024 by Gerald George, Chelsey Aagard & Hannah Winters]

After considering what the general goal for our (wider) community should be, we settled on SUSTAINABILITY.

Discussing what sustainability looks like for Burlington and the surrounding area, we thought about the following items (there are surely others we didn't have time to discuss):

1. Having a solid, up-to-date infrastructure (drinking water, sewer, fiber, electric, gas, raw water, streets and roads, etc.)
2. Keeping healthy and strong the things that are good about the area (families, schools, churches, farms, businesses).
3. Creating and maintaining an appearance of vitality (welcoming storefronts, greenery, weed-free, trees, lack of trash and clutter)
4. Seeing young families return or move into the area on a consistent basis.
5. Seeing older people who remain in the area throughout their lives.

Below is an outline of the various threats to sustainability as we saw them. It was called a problem outline or fishbone chart in our meetings. The three areas we thought were of the most importance and of which we thought we could make an impact in, were HOUSING, SUSTAINING EXISTING BUSINESSES, and QUALITY OF LIFE.

We decided to focus on HOUSING in the next few months and see where that led us. We will be collecting information in the next few months so we know what the situation is and understand better how we can help it. We want to test or prove our assumptions. For instance, we are assuming we need more housing, that people want to live here and would move here if more housing were available. We are gathering information to move assumptions into knowledge.

SUSTAINABILITY

1. HOUSING

- a. There is a limited supply of starter homes (quality issues, inventory issues)
- b. There is a limited supply of permanent family housing (affordability issues)
- c. There are no handicapped accessible senior housing options (inventory, demand?)
- d. There are no multi-family options (apartments, duplexes)
- e. There is limited available land (in town and out of town)
- f. The cost of utility hook-ups is prohibitive (inside and especially outside of town)
- g. There may be zoning issues within town
- h. There may need to be some survey work in town to facilitate buying and selling
- i. There are vacant lots that could be developed, but have not been. Why?

- j. No one wants to live in an area without good drinking water. What could we do, especially for out of towners, to remedy this situation?
- k. Many homeowners need affordable access to gravel and concrete. Is there a role in this process for us?

2. MAINTAINING HEALTH OF CURRENT BUSINESSES

- a. Lets invest in those who have already taken risks to invest in the community.
- b. Many businesses lack local support (shopping elsewhere, timely paying bills)
- c. Farmers have grown and grown until there are few of them, and they are still at risk. What could be done to help here?
- d. Many businesses operate in facilities that need to be improved or maintained better.
- e. We need a more inviting business appearance.
- f. Many (businesses and farms) need professional support (marketing, accounting, taxes, managing personnel, dealing with technology). Can we help?
- g. Some businesses are content to stay small. Is this from fear of growth challenges (employing more people), lack of vision, or lack of desire?

3. QUALITY OF LIFE CONCERNS

- a. Rather than worry about attracting new people, maybe we should make life great for those who already live here.
- b. Safety issues (fire suppression, insurance, speeding, open canal, sidewalks)
- c. Condition of roads (dusty, etc)
- d. Mosquitoes
- e. Snow removal
- f. A walking/biking path
- g. Winter activities and facilities
- h. Inclusion issues (new Latino and Mennonite families)
- i. Volunteerism (EMTs, firefighters, boards, coaches, encourage newer generation)

4. NEW BUSINESSES

- a. Innovations in agriculture
- b. Availability of loans in a small community

5. EARLY CHILDHOOD ISSUES

- a. No daycare facilities
- b. Government regulations to using homes as daycares
- c. Facilities for a daycare

6. RETAINING OUR OLDER RESIDENTS

- a. If children leave, why remain?
- b. Need for assisted living help (facilities, apartments to rent)
- c. Need for services demanded by older residents (medical, pharmacy, hair, cleaning, home-health nurses, exercise equipment, maintaining property)

- d. Housing that meets the needs of older people
- e. Caretakers who can help older residents