



Preparedness Through Connectedness

Building Neighbour-to-Neighbour Resilience

Block Pilot Project Concept – DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION

Overview:

Preparedness Through Connectedness is a proposed pilot project to be developed and delivered in partnership between Building Resilient Neighbourhood's *Resilient Streets* program, and Victoria Ready, and in collaboration with other members of the Neighbour-to-Neighbour Connections Partners Roundtable (e.g. City of Victoria Neighbourhoods Team, Blockwatch, etc.) This project will test an approach to fostering block-level¹ resilience, emergency preparedness and social connectedness between immediate neighbours on residential streets and in residential buildings. As a pilot, this is an "action learning" initiative which emphasizes learning through doing, experimenting with delivery approaches, gathering resident feedback, and integrating learnings into a model that can potentially be implemented and scaled to other neighbourhoods and communities. Based on learnings from the pilot, the program materials and outline will be adapted and included as publicly available resources making up an Emergency Preparedness module in the Resilient Streets Toolkit which can be utilized by other communities and neighbourhoods.

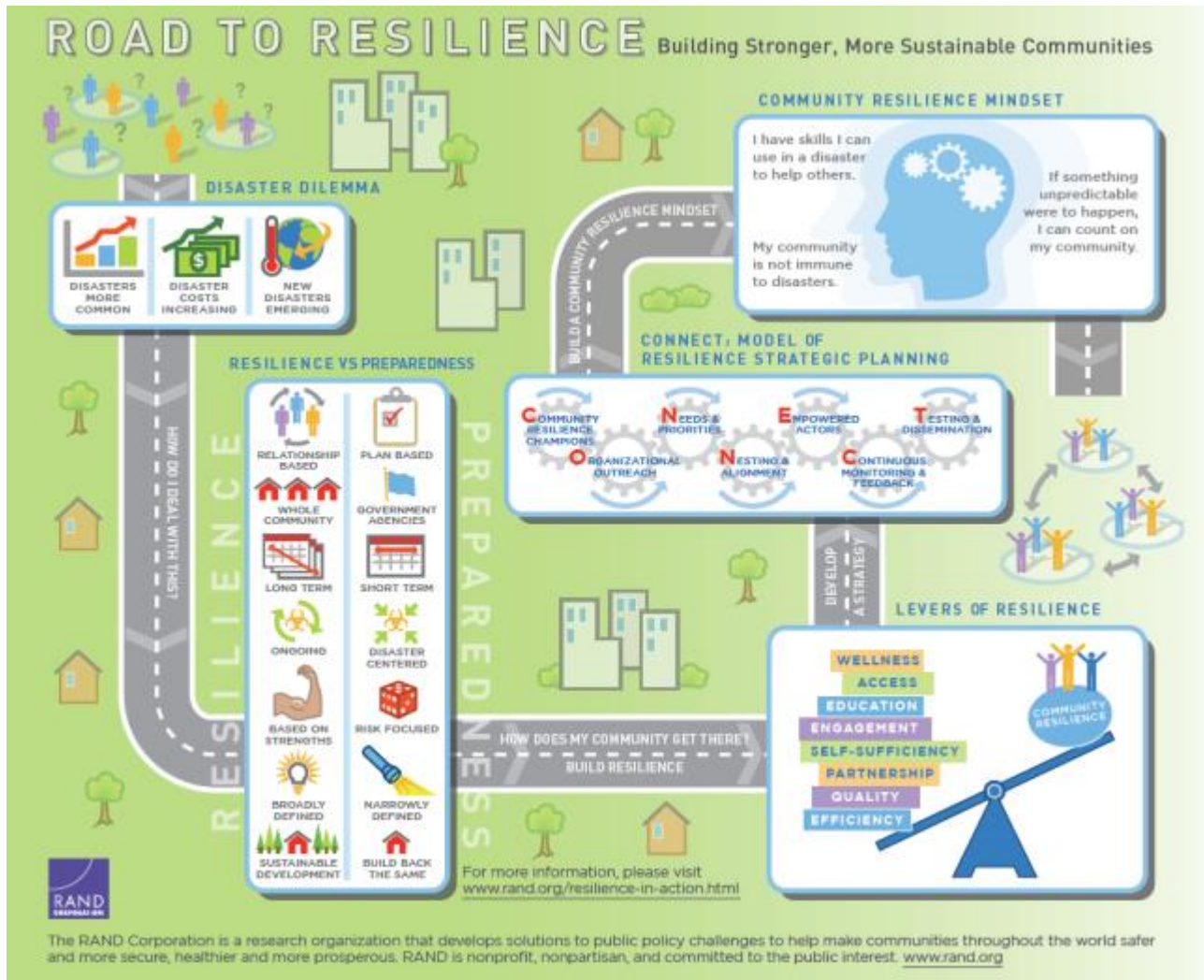
Approach:

The underlying premise of this pilot is that "social infrastructure" and connectedness between neighbours is a critical foundation for preparedness and resilience. Therefore, in addition to focusing on the more technical aspects of emergency preparedness (e.g. supplies, communication protocols, etc.), the program also supports neighbours to explore opportunities to become more connected on their block through a range of activities such as neighbour gatherings, creating a block directory and skills inventory, and other resident-led projects which support neighbour interactions and relationship-building such as placemaking projects or neighbour sharing initiatives.

By focusing on community resilience-building, the program emphasizes an approach to preparedness that is relationship-based, focused on leveraging neighbourhood and resident assets, and which supports neighbours to come together collectively to build skills and capacity to respond to a range of challenges and opportunities they may face together. See The "Road

¹ For the purposes of this proposal, "block" refers to both residential streets and/or buildings.

To Resilience” infographic below for more information on the community resilience-building approach and how this differs from a traditional emergency preparedness approach.



This project responds to an identified gap in resources and initiatives supporting emergency preparedness at the block-level. While there are a vast array of resources and programs which support community-wide preparedness, and numerous toolkits to support household preparedness, our research through the Resilient Streets program and feedback from Resilient Streets participants has demonstrated a lack of resources and approaches which focus on preparedness and resilience between neighbours at the block level.

Selection of Pilot Blocks:

The Resilient Streets program offers a broad menu of ideas and supports for different ways neighbours can enhance connections. Through this initiative, there has been a great deal of interest from Greater Victoria residents in engaging in emergency preparedness as a means to enhance connections and resilience with their neighbours. BRN currently has a waitlist of

residents from several neighbourhoods who have expressed interest in participating in a block emergency preparedness pilot.

As part of the initial pilot project planning, a block selection process will be developed determining the number and characteristics we are looking for from participating blocks. Depending on resources and capacity, BRN and Victoria Ready will work together to determine the desired scope of the pilot initiative (e.g. number of streets/buildings/number of neighbourhoods, etc.), and outline readiness factors that streets/buildings must have in place in order to participate (e.g. Block champion identified, willingness to host neighbour gatherings, willingness and interest in participating in the pilot development and evaluation process, etc.)

Program Components – Draft Ideas

The following are draft ideas for the foundational components of the pilot project. These ideas will be further developed and refined by BRN and Victoria Ready in the pilot development phase. Through our preliminary conversations with interested participants, residents have indicated that they would benefit from a structured approach to connecting neighbours through emergency preparedness. This model suggests a “step by step” approach with flexibility for each street/block to customize for their own context.



1. Block Champions

Similar to other Resilient Streets initiatives, each participating block will have one or more “block champion(s)” who is interested in bringing the program to their street and providing the collaborative leadership to make this happen. In some cases, there may be a single block champion who takes this initiative, and in others, they may work in pairs or small groups to provide this block level connection and leadership. Key roles of the block champions are to:

- Outreach to neighbours on their block to encourage participation
- Organize and host neighbour gatherings (or work with neighbours to identify a host(s))

- Work with neighbours to facilitate the development of block activities and/or projects that enhance neighbour connections, resilience and preparedness (i.e. street map, skills/equipment inventory, placemaking projects, etc.)
- Share their experience, provide feedback and engage in pilot project evaluation & learning activities

Depending on the number of participating pilot blocks, Block Champions may be invited to form a Champions Network while participating in the pilot. This “community of practice” would enable Champions to provide each other with peer support and share learnings throughout the program. In this case, Champions could come together for “kick off” workshop at the beginning of the pilot, which would orient them to the program and their roles. An end of pilot gathering of Champions could also bring them together to evaluate and harvest learnings across their experiences.

2. Neighbour Gatherings & Learning Sessions

Following a similar model to Transition Network’s successful [Transition Streets](#) program, the main structure of *Preparedness through Connectedness* will involve Block Champions organizing a series of 2-3 neighbour gatherings which empower and support neighbours to come together to build connections and enhance their block resilience and preparedness. In this model, typically one resident agrees to host the gathering in their home or community space, and another acts as the session facilitator/organizer, with these roles rotating between neighbours for each gathering. This arrangement can be customized based on the local context, size and appropriate scale for each block. For example, Champions can help decide options for location including outdoor gatherings in “public space” (such as a “block party with a purpose”, or use of other neighbourhood gathering spaces (such as community centres or building common rooms) if it does not seem feasible to host in neighbours’ homes.

Generally, these gatherings involve a combination of social time for neighbours, as well as “light touch” focus on learning & discussion. The gatherings will follow a somewhat structured curriculum which provides residents with a menu of learning topics and activities related building connections, resilience and preparedness. BRN will assist with facilitating the first gathering, and Block Champions will receive materials for the subsequent gatherings to help them to self-facilitate these sessions, and draw Victoria Ready’s emergency preparedness expertise as needed. In between gatherings, neighbours will be encouraged to undertake follow up activities they prioritize together that build on the discussions at the gatherings. Specific curriculum resources and tools for the gatherings and activities carried out in between sessions will be developed by BRN and Victoria Ready and will include topics such as:

- Experiential games/scenarios to explore and map block resilience/preparedness (e.g. Neighborhood Empowerment Network’s “Map Your Resilientville”)
- Developing a Street Directory & Communication list
- Developing a Street Map & Inventory (e.g. skills, resources, equipment, etc.)
- Forming a Street “Hub” system, links to City emergency resources & protocols
- Household and block preparedness supplies

- Other Resilient Streets activities to build connection and resilience (celebrations & gatherings, placemaking, neighbour sharing, etc.)

3. Program Materials & Resources

Participants will be equipped with materials and resources to support their gatherings and activities, and through the pilot the goal will be to develop and refine a “toolkit” that enables future blocks to largely self-facilitate the program with some support from BRN/local Resilient Streets Hosts and the local emergency management organization.

4. Facilitation Support/Resource People

Through the pilot, “light touch” facilitation support will be provided by the Building Resilient Neighbourhoods Team and emergency preparedness expertise will be provided by Victoria Ready to assist residents in exploring opportunities for greater connection between neighbours and learning about block level preparedness and resilience. BRN will also provide facilitation of the Champions Network and pilot evaluation to harvest and share learnings across pilot blocks.

5. Micro-grants & Incentives

To incentivize and remove financial barriers to participation, pilot blocks will have access to a package of Resilient Streets micro-grants. BRN will provide each block with up to three \$50 “neighbour gathering” micro-grants, as well as access to a larger Resilient Streets project micro-grant (amount TBD, current micro-grants are \$200 but could be increased for this special pilot.) If participating blocks have a larger initiative they wish to undertake, BRN will link them with other neighbourhood grant opportunities such as the City of Victoria My Great Neighbourhood Grants and/or Victoria Foundations’ Neighbourhood Small Grants program.

In addition to these grants, (pending BRN’s funding confirmation for this prototype project), two interested blocks will be invited to work with BRN to prototype a “Block Emergency Supply Bench”. These benches will provide participating blocks with the co-benefits of a gathering spot for neighbours to interact and connect, while at the same time enhancing their block’s emergency preparedness through shared emergency supplies.

If sufficient resources are available through Victoria Ready or other funding partners, we propose an additional incentive for each participating block to receive a bin of block emergency supplies similar to San Francisco Neighborhood Empowerment Network’s [“Big Red Bin”](#).

6. Block projects & Activities (Optional)

Depending on the specific interests of each block, they may choose to undertake additional projects or activities to build connection and resilience between neighbours. Resilient Streets micro-grants may be used to support this.

DRAFT Workplan:

PHASE	TIMELINE	ACTIVITIES	ROLES (LEAD)
Pilot Project Development	November-December 2017	Determine size and scope of pilot	BRN & Vic Ready
		Pilot Project Design	BRN (with input from Vic Ready)
		Develop Pilot modules/ activities	BRN & Vic Ready (based on topic expertise)
		Develop Outreach & Program Materials/Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content • Graphic Design 	BRN & Vic Ready (TBC based on topic expertise)
		Develop Pilot Evaluation Framework & Tools	BRN (with input from Vic Ready)
		Develop Pilot Budget and Cost-sharing agreements	BRN & Vic Ready
		Secure additional funding resources for pilot (as needed)	BRN & Vic Ready
		Development of Block Emergency Supply Bins	Vic Ready
Identification/ Selection of Pilot Blocks	November-December 2017	Develop Call for Pilot Blocks	BRN
		Distribute Call for Pilot Blocks	BRN, Vic Ready, N2N Partners Roundtable
		Select and confirm Pilot Blocks	BRN & Vic Ready
		Block Champions Kick off	BRN
Pilot Project Delivery	January-March 2018	Neighbour Gathering #1 - Facilitation	BRN
		Neighbour Gatherings – Content Support	Vic Ready
		Support/Coordination of Block Champions	BRN
		Coordination & Distribution of micro-grants	BRN
		Development of Block Emergency Bench Prototypes	BRN (with input from Vic Ready)
		Pilot Project Developmental Evaluation Activities (e.g. monthly check in with Block Champions)	BRN
		Wrap up evaluation/celebration activity with Block Champions	BRN

Pilot Evaluation & Adaptation	March-April 2018	Summative Evaluation (e.g. participating residents, block champions, program partners, etc.)	BRN
		Summary of evaluation findings & recommendations	BRN
		Adapt program based on pilot findings and include in Resilient Streets Toolkit	BRN
		Explore opportunities and resources to scale out program based on pilot learnings	BRN & Vic Ready