

i CANADIAN
ndex
OF WELLBEING

Measuring what matters
Making measures matter

A PROFILE OF WELLBEING IN OXFORD COUNTY

WITH COMPARISONS TO ONTARIO AND CANADA

MARCH 2018



UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO
FACULTY OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What is the ultimate purpose of a community, a province, or a country? Does it exist only for the sake of commerce and economy? Or is it founded on a broader vision of a place where families and communities can prosper?

In preparing a profile of people's quality of life, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) focuses on those things that Canadians have identified as being most important to them – thriving and vital communities; opportunities for lifelong learning and to engage in the democratic process; a sustainable environment; good health; economic security; leisure and cultural opportunities; and work-life balance. The interplay of these domains and the ways in which they interact and reinforce one another, define and influence our overall wellbeing as individuals and communities.

In this report, indicators of wellbeing for the eight domains of the CIW have been gathered from the most recently available national and provincial sources, and combined with measures from local sources to provide a profile of Oxford County and its residents. This portrait of wellbeing provides a population-level view of the Region and reflects its position relative to other regions – the West Region of Ontario, the province overall, and Canada. By doing so, we see where Oxford County is doing well and where it could be doing better.

Overall, here are some of the main findings from this profile of wellbeing in Oxford County:

-  **DEMOGRAPHICALLY** – Oxford County is both younger and older than other regions in the province – it has higher percentages of residents who are 0 to 17 years old and 55 years of age and older. It is also one of the least ethnically diverse regions in the province.
-  **MORE TIGHT KNIT COMMUNITIES** – residents have a higher sense of belonging to their community, greater feelings of safety, and experience less discrimination than elsewhere in Ontario, even though they volunteer somewhat less and report having fewer close friends.
-  **LOCAL CHALLENGE FOR DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT** – like elsewhere across Canada, Oxford residents turned out in higher numbers for federal and provincial elections, but did not show up for the most recent municipal elections in as great number. However, they did elect more women to Oxford County Council than in many other municipalities.
-  **LOWER MARKS FOR EDUCATION** – Oxford County has lower rates of both high school graduation and people with a university degree, and less access to childcare. However, the libraries offer more literacy and learning programs for children and more programs on careers and job advice for adults.
-  **PRO-ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS** – Oxford County residents enjoy higher air and water quality than those living in many other parts of Ontario, and they are diverting much more waste through recycling programs than elsewhere across the province.
-  **POSITIVE HEALTH SIGNS** – a greater percentage of Oxford County residents rate their overall health as very good or excellent and have gotten their flu shots in the past year, and very few teens are smoking, which is good news for their futures. However, a smaller proportion of people report that their mental health is very good or excellent, which remains a concern.
-  **LIBRARIES ENHANCE LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES** – Oxford County residents make far more visits to their libraries than almost every other rural and small urban region in the province, and have many more programs offered there than most Ontarians receive elsewhere.
-  **LIVING STANDARDS SHOW GOOD ECONOMIC SECURITY** – despite a lower median income, Oxford County has one of the highest rates of employment, lowest rates of unemployment, and lower percentages of residents living in low income and in food insecurity – although more men than women enjoy these higher living standards.
-  **LONGER WORK HOURS, BUT LESS TIME PRESSURE** – more Oxford County employees spend long hours at work and have less flexibility in the hours they do work, but they have much shorter commute times and a smaller percentage of them report feeling high levels of time pressure.

Overall, a slightly greater percentage of residents in Oxford County report a higher level of overall life satisfaction (86.8%) than residents of West Region (86.1%) and Ontario (85.6%), and only a slightly lower percentage than for Canada overall (87.1%). Despite some of the challenges to wellbeing described in this report, residents appear to be celebrating in the County's strengths and managing the challenges. This level of satisfaction reflects the ways in which the domains are connected and influence one another – as one aspect of our lives presents a challenge, another aspect provides support. Collectively, all of the domains define our wellbeing.

This population-level view of Oxford County helps to identify areas to celebrate as well as areas where more work needs to be done. As reflected in the results of the Community Wellbeing Survey, by diving more deeply into the data, we can better understand if some groups and communities within the County are at greater risk than others are. Are people living in low income feeling less connected and accessing fewer opportunities for employment, nutritious food, and other resources? Are new Canadians moving into the County facing greater challenges than longer-term residents? Are residents of some municipalities doing better than others?

In each case, by highlighting the challenges, we are better positioned to understand why some residents have higher levels of wellbeing, overall and in particular areas, while others may not. With that knowledge in hand, we can respond more effectively with programs, services, and policies that can lift everyone in Oxford County to higher levels of wellbeing.

WHAT IS WELLBEING?

There are many definitions of wellbeing. The *Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW)* has adopted the following as its working definition:

The presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to and participation in leisure and culture.

The Canadian Index of Wellbeing adopted this definition after extensive consultations with national leaders and organizations, community groups, research experts, indicator users, and importantly, the Canadian public. In those discussions, they clearly expressed what really matters to their wellbeing. They also re-affirmed the core values they believe are essential for a thriving and welcoming society – fairness, diversity, equity, inclusion, health, safety, economic security, democracy, and sustainability.

DOMAINS OF WELLBEING IDENTIFIED BY CANADIANS

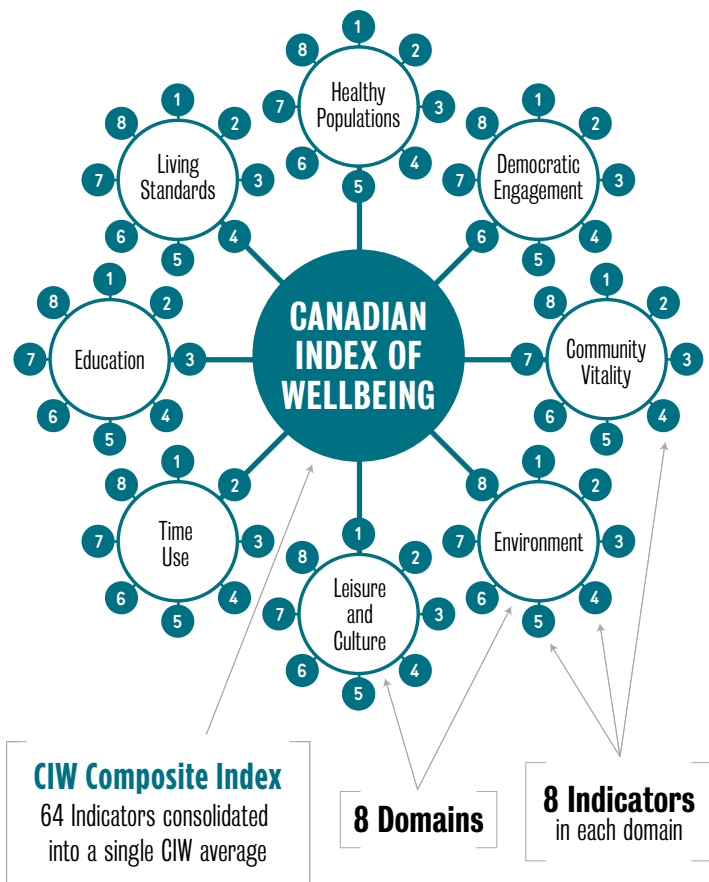
Since its inception and throughout its development, the CIW has been designed to ensure everyday Canadians hear their own voices and see themselves reflected in it. The consultation process culminated in the eight domains of life that contribute to and affect the wellbeing of Canadians: *Community Vitality, Democratic Engagement, Education, Environment, Healthy Populations, Leisure and Culture, Living Standards, and Time Use* (see Figure 1). This framework shifts the focus solely from the economy to other factors that affect the quality of life of Canadians.

Together, these eight domains provide a more complete picture of wellbeing, incorporating a comprehensive set of the key social, health, economic, and environmental factors contributing to overall quality of life. Teams of nationally and internationally renowned experts then identified eight valid, reliable, and relevant indicators within each domain that are directly related to wellbeing. By integrating the 64 indicators and eight domains and revealing their complex interconnections, the CIW composite index provides a comprehensive portrait of quality of life in Canada.

The CIW composite index tracks all indicators and domains of wellbeing to measure our progress over time, highlighting how we are doing – where we are doing well and where we could be doing better.

The CIW is not a static measure. As new issues emerge and new knowledge, understandings, and data become available, the CIW adapts to strengthen its measure of wellbeing without veering from the values on which it is grounded. Validating and continually improving the CIW is an ongoing process. It ensures that the Index is rooted in Canadian values, grounded in community experience, shaped by technical expertise, and responsive to emerging knowledge. It is a conversation starter about the things that really matter to individuals and communities as we strive to improve our collective quality of life.

FIGURE 1. THE CANADIAN INDEX OF WELLBEING FRAMEWORK



The CIW’s call to action is to encourage all sectors to be guided by solid evidence, and to empower Canadians to advocate for change that reflects their needs and values. By putting wellbeing at the heart of policy development, funding decisions, program development, and service delivery, we respond to our desire to know, “How can we do better?”

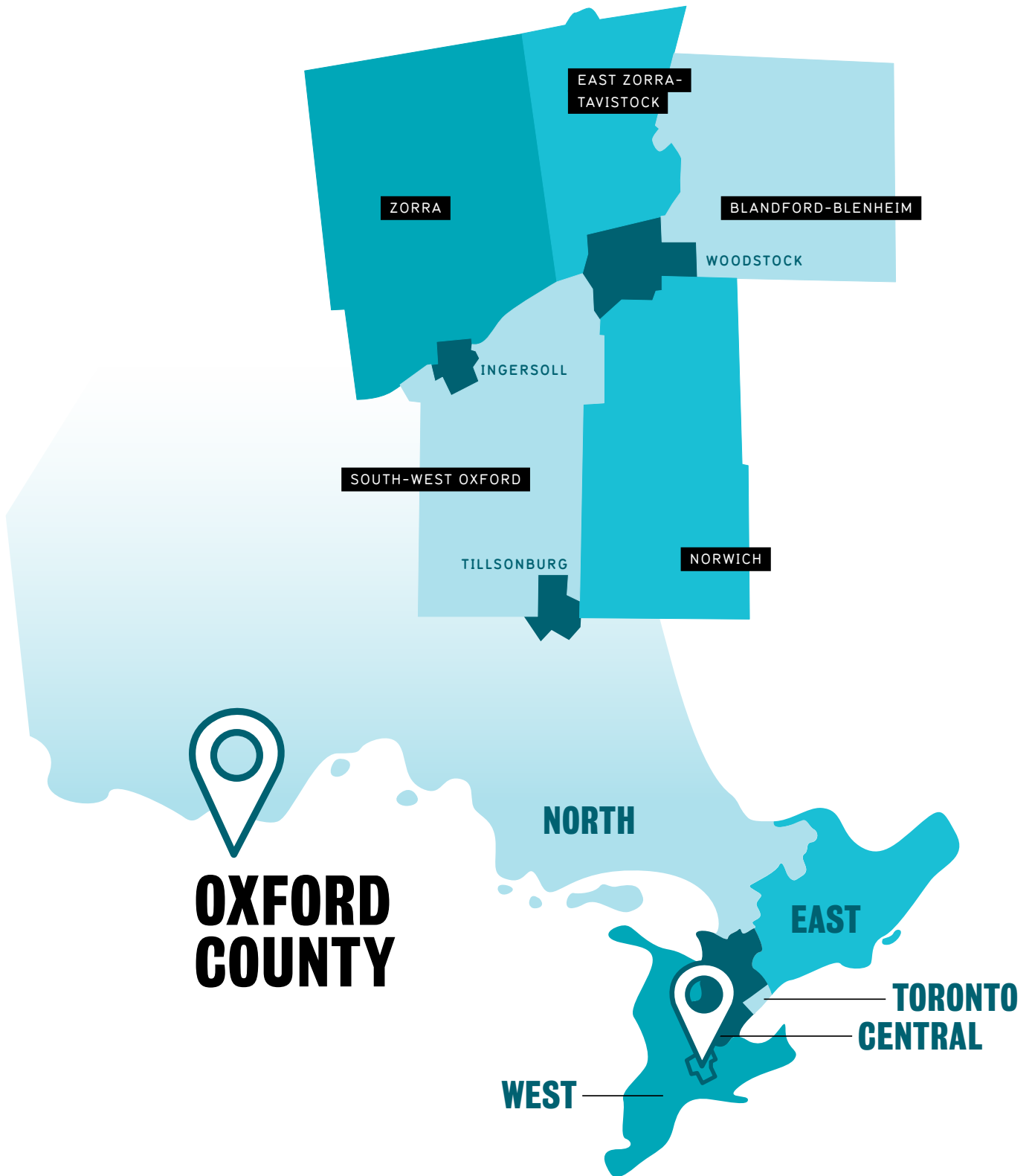
WELLBEING IN OXFORD COUNTY

In this report, we provide a portrait of wellbeing in Oxford County using the most recent data available on selected indicators for each of the domains of wellbeing. By examining indicators of wellbeing within and across the eight domains of the CIW, this portrait can help inform the planning, development, and implementation of programs and services that have greater potential to enhance the wellbeing of residents and of the County as a whole. Creating portraits based on the CIW also provides an opportunity to learn more about the complexity of wellbeing in people's lives.

The report also describes how wellbeing in Oxford County varies compared to the West Region of Ontario, and to Ontario and Canada overall. Based on boundaries used by several Ontario Ministries, the West Region of Ontario – of which Oxford is a part – includes Brant, Bruce, Chatham-Kent, Elgin, Essex, Grey, Haldimand, Hamilton, Huron, Lambton, Middlesex, Niagara, Norfolk, and Perth. The West Region is home to over 2.8 million Ontarians and is a mix of rural, small urban, and large urban areas. The over 110,000 people living in Oxford represent 4.0% of the region's total population.

We begin with a brief demographic profile of the region, highlighting characteristics that make it unique. In the sections that follow, we present the eight domains of the CIW with descriptions of indicators of wellbeing that reflect how well residents of Oxford County are doing and how they compare to other areas. Finally, a summary section highlights the distinctiveness of the County and points to potential interconnections among the domains. Three appendices are included that provide more detail on the methods and data sources (Appendix A), summary statistics for Oxford County, West Region, Ontario and Canada, when available (Appendix B), and a glossary of terms used throughout the report (Appendix C).

The comparisons of indicators of wellbeing to other areas help us understand how Oxford County's residents are doing relative to these other areas and focuses our attention on aspects where we are doing well and where we might choose to direct greater emphasis in planning and allocating resources.



DEMOGRAPHICS

Recognizing the unique socio-demographic profile of a region is an important first step in understanding the needs and circumstances of its residents. How many people live here? Are the residents generally younger or older than elsewhere in the province? What do their families look like? How diverse is the population? Answers to these questions allow us to make more informed decisions about the types of programs and services that will best contribute to the wellbeing of residents in Oxford County.

POPULATION

According to the 2016 Census of Canada, Oxford County is home to 110,862 people, which represents 0.8% of the total population of Ontario. Almost two-thirds of the County's population (62.7%) lives in one of the small urban areas (i.e., Woodstock, Ingersoll, and Tillsonburg) with the other third of residents (37.3%) calling home one of the five Townships – Blandford-Blenheim, Norwich, South-West Oxford, Zorra, and East Zorra-Tavistock.

From 2011 to 2016, the total population grew by 4.9% with the highest growth rates in Woodstock (8.3%), Ingersoll (5.0%), and East Zorra- Tavistock (4.3%). The lowest growth rates were in Blandford-Blenheim and Zorra, which grew by 0.5% and 1.0% respectively from 2011 to 2016. The overall growth in population in Oxford County (4.9%) is slightly greater than in Ontario (4.6%) and quite similar to the 5.0% average population growth across Canada.

AGE

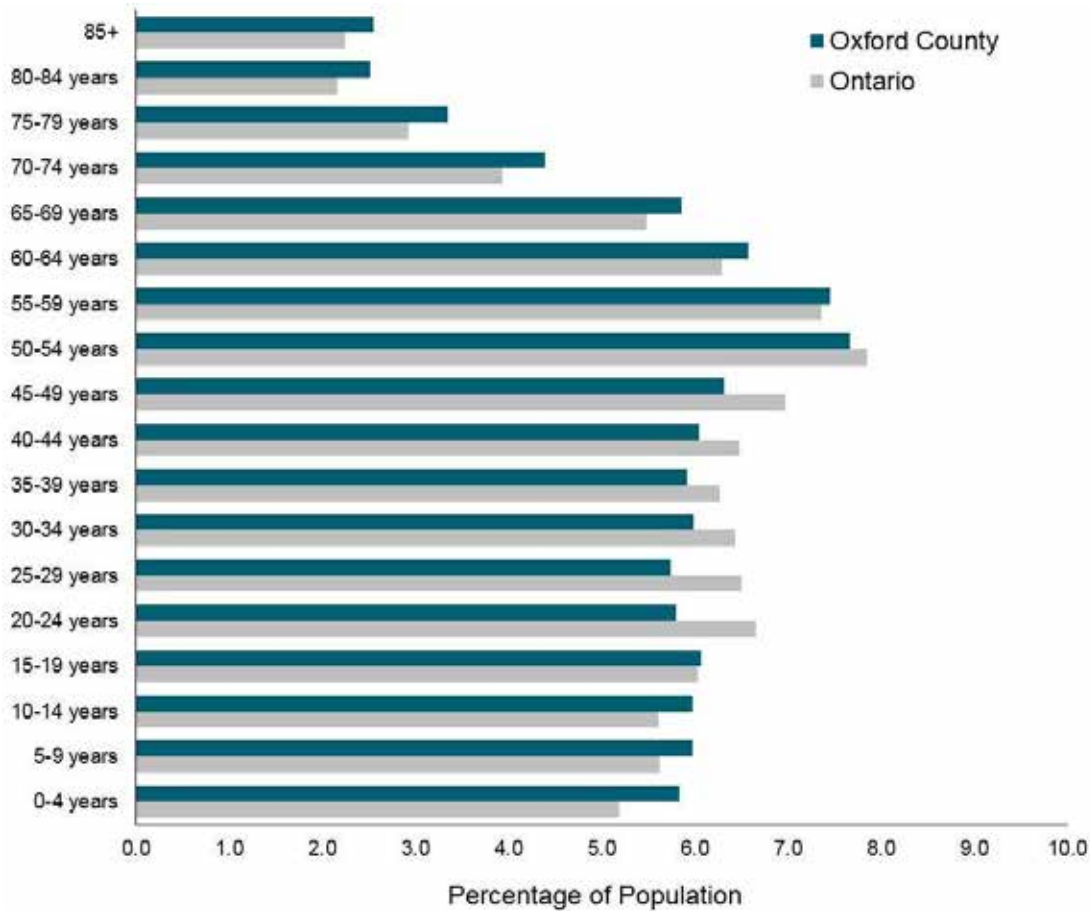
The population of Oxford County is generally older than in the rest of the province. The percentage of residents over the age of 54 years (32.7%) is similar to that in West Region, but much higher than in Ontario overall (30.4%). The higher percentage of older residents in Oxford County is reflected in the median age of 42.3 years, which is a full year greater than for the province and the country overall (with median ages of 41.3 years and 41.2 years respectively). Even though Oxford County also has a slightly higher proportion of children (17.8% from zero to 14 years of age) than Ontario as a whole (16.4%), it has a much lower percentage of residents from 20 to 54 years of age (43.5%) than the rest of Ontario (47.2%).



population growth
from 2011 to 2016

OXFORD	4.9%
ONTARIO	4.6%
CANADA	5.0%

OXFORD COUNTY HAS A LOWER PERCENTAGE OF RESIDENTS BETWEEN 20 AND 49 YEARS OF AGE THAN IN THE PROVINCE OVERALL



42.3 YRS

median age of residents in Oxford County

14.0%

families led by a lone parent

FAMILIES

Lower than the provincial average (17.1%), 14.0% of families in Oxford County are led by a lone parent. Three of four of the families led by a lone parent are women (76.6%), which is much lower than the rate for the entire province (80.4%). About 5 in 10 of residents are married or living in a common-law relationship (51.1%), which is markedly lower than the provincial and national rates (57.3% and 57.6% respectively). Families in Oxford County have an average of 2.9 persons living in the household, which is consistent with provincial and national patterns. More than 7 in 10 residents (73.8%) own their homes, which is slightly higher than the level in West Region (71.4%) and much greater than in Ontario (69.7%) and in Canada (67.8%) overall.

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

Oxford County has a considerably higher employment rate (63.5%) than in the province and country overall – it is more than 3% higher than both. The County also has a much lower unemployment rate (4.8%) than in the province (7.4%) and in Canada overall (7.7%). The after-tax median family income of \$76,275 is notably lower than in the province, but quite similar to that in the country overall. Between 2011 and 2016, median incomes rose in Oxford County (12.3%) slightly more than in Ontario as a whole (11.8%); however, the increase was lower than across Canada overall (13.9%).

ETHNICITY AND LANGUAGE

Only 1 in 30 residents of Oxford County is a member of a visible minority (3.2%). The level of diversity in the Region is significantly lower than in Ontario (28.9%) as well as in Canada overall (21.8%).

About 9 of 10 residents in Oxford County (89.6%) report one of Canada’s official languages as their mother tongue. The majority of the County’s residents (88.6%) identify English as their mother tongue, which is considerably higher than the percentage nationally (57.3%). Very few residents report French as their mother tongue (1.0%), which is lower than for the province (3.8%) and markedly lower than in Canada overall (21.1%). Consequently, very few residents of Oxford County (4.1%) have a working knowledge of both official languages.

The percentage of people in Oxford County that reports another language as their mother tongue (10.4%) is less than half of the rates for the province (27.4%) and for the nation (21.6%). Although they represent a smaller proportion of the total population, among the mother tongues reported most often by residents are Dutch, German, and to an even lesser extent, Polish.



employment rate

OXFORD	63.5%
ONTARIO	59.9%
CANADA	60.2%

after-tax median family income

OXFORD	\$76,275
ONTARIO	\$79,531
CANADA	\$76,372

visible minority population

OXFORD	3.2%
ONTARIO	28.9%
CANADA	21.8%



COMMUNITY VITALITY

Vital communities are those that have strong, active, and inclusive relationships among people, private, public, and non-governmental organizations that foster individual and collective wellbeing.

Vital communities are able to cultivate and marshal rich and diverse relationships in order to create, adapt, and thrive in the changing world. They do so by focusing on social relationships and support, including community safety and social engagement, and on social norms and values, including feelings towards others and residents' sense of belonging to their communities.



SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Like most Ontarians, residents of Oxford County generally feel a strong connection to their communities, which reflects the steady rise in sense of belonging in recent years throughout the province and country. About 7 of 10 residents of Oxford County (70.2%) report feeling a somewhat or strong sense of belonging to their communities, which is comparatively greater than that for West Region (68.5%) and Ontario (68.1%), and much greater than for Canada overall (66.4%). Such a connection to their communities in Oxford County suggests that the majority of residents feel supported, are better able to cope, and are more resilient when faced with challenging situations.

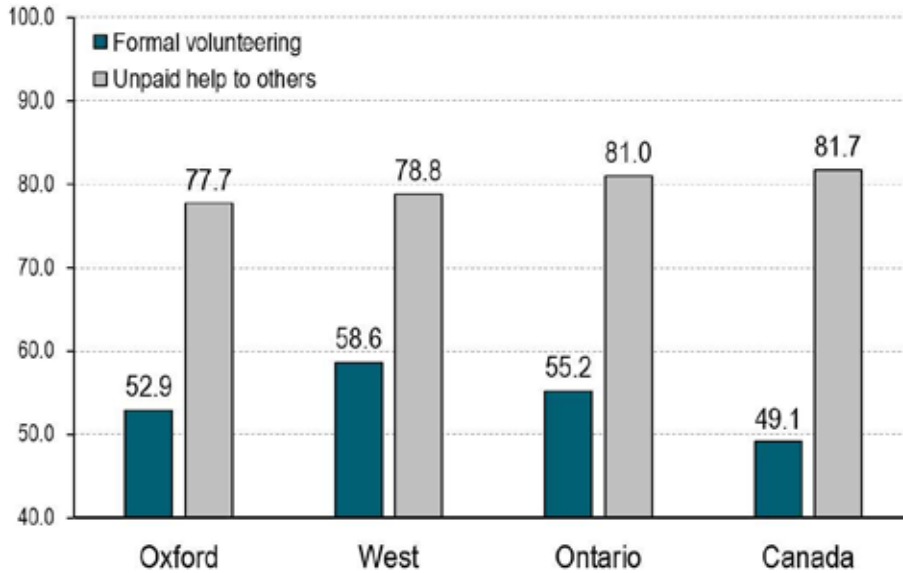
Residents of Oxford County feel this greater sense of belonging despite a higher percentage of people living alone (18.5%) compared to that in West Region (10.9%), in Ontario (9.6%), and in Canada (13.9%). Additionally, a lower percentage of residents (49.5%) report having five or more close friends on whom they can depend than for either the West Region or the entire province (53.8% and 53.7% respectively) or across the country (51.8%). Moreover, people in Oxford County participate in formal volunteering with organizations such as a union, a sport or recreation organization, or a cultural or educational group, to a lower degree (52.9%) than other Ontarians (55.2%), but more so than Canada as a whole (49.1%). These somewhat lower levels of social supports and social engagements represent a potential source of concern, despite the residents' stronger connection to the community. However, data for Oxford County was drawn from the Community Wellbeing Survey, which used questions with slightly different wording compared to those data from surveys conducted nationally, so this variation might partially account for the lower levels reported in Oxford County.



people with somewhat/strong sense of belonging to their communities

OXFORD	70.2%
WEST	68.5%
ONTARIO	68.1%
CANADA	66.4%

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE PARTICIPATING IN FORMAL VOLUNTEERING AND UNPAID HELP TO OTHERS IS LOWER THAN OTHER REGIONS



COMMUNITY SAFETY

Approximately 4 of 5 people in Oxford County (81.0%) feel safe walking alone after dark in their neighbourhood. This rate is quite similar to that in West Region overall (80.3%) and slightly higher than anywhere else in Ontario (79.2%). Higher feelings of safety in Oxford are notable because such perceptions of feeling safe in one’s community have been on the rise in recent years throughout the province.

SOCIAL NORMS AND VALUES

More than three-quarters of residents in Oxford County provide unpaid help to others (77.7%), such as helping an elderly neighbour. This rate is slightly lower than elsewhere in the province where over 4 in 5 people provide this type of help (81.0%). These forms of engagement could be serving to reinforce Oxford residents’ sense of belonging to their communities despite their generally lower levels of social support.

About 1 in 25 residents in Oxford County (4.1%) report experiencing discrimination due to characteristics such as one's ethnicity, race, or sexual orientation. This percentage of residents in Oxford County is lower than that for West Region (6.6%), and much lower than that for both the province (9.6%) and the country overall (9.3%). Even though this lower level of perceived discrimination may partially be due to the data being drawn from the Community Wellbeing Survey rather than a national data source, it is a positive sign. As a factor affecting not only the sense of belonging residents feel, but also their mental and emotional wellbeing, lower rates of discrimination are always encouraging.



people reporting experience of discrimination

OXFORD	4.1%
WEST	6.6%
ONTARIO	9.6%
CANADA	9.3%



DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

Democratic Engagement means being involved in advancing democracy through political institutions, organizations, and activities.

A society that enjoys a high degree of democratic engagement is one where citizens participate in political activities, express political views, and foster political knowledge; where governments build relationships, trust, shared responsibility, and participation opportunities with citizens; and where citizens, governments, and civil society uphold democratic values at local, provincial, and national levels. A healthy democracy needs citizens who feel their votes count, are informed, participate, debate, and advocate. It needs governments at all levels to be transparent, inclusive, consultative, and trustworthy. In essence, political leadership, citizen participation, and communication demonstrate the level of democratic engagement.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The most recent *federal* election in October 2015 saw over two-thirds of eligible voters in Oxford County (67.9%) come out to vote, which is a similar turnout to other areas across the country (68.3%). Like other regions, voter turnout for the federal election was up significantly from previous elections.

Voter turnout in Oxford County in the last *provincial* election was much lower with slightly over half of residents (51.9%) voting for their MPPs. Although, the voter turnout in Oxford County is slightly higher than the turnout across Ontario as a whole (51.3%), it represents a lower level than in West Region (53.4%). More troubling, voter turnout in Oxford County for the last election of regional council was only about one-third of eligible voters (37.6%). Oxford residents turned out less for their municipal elections than the average rate in Ontario overall (43.1%). These lower levels of engagement in regional and provincial elections are unfortunate because voting represents the most tangible means by which citizens can engage in the democratic process and shape the society they desire.

About 1 in 10 residents of Oxford County belong to a political organization, law or advocacy group (9.7%), which is notably higher than the percentages for West Region (4.2%), Ontario (3.8%) and Canada (3.7%). This higher rate of involvement by Oxford residents might be attributable in part to slight differences in the wording of the question on the Community Wellbeing Survey to that used in the national survey. Nevertheless, Oxford residents appear to be more actively engaged in the democratic life of their communities.

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Four of the ten members of Oxford municipal Council are women (40.0%). This level of representation is higher than the average percentage of women sitting as councillors in other municipalities across Ontario (21.6%), which is down from the one-quarter representation provincially following the 2010 elections (26.0%). It should be noted, however, that the ratio of females-to-males on Oxford County Council is based on a total of ten councillors, so a change in the sex of one person would result in a 10 per cent shift in the overall percentage of women. Nevertheless, with over 50% of Ontario's population comprised of women, our democratic and decision-making institutions should fairly reflect their values and opinions, so more work is needed to encourage women to become involved in our governments and to remove barriers to their involvement.



voter turnout to most recent elections by Oxford residents

REGIONAL	37.6%
PROVINCIAL	51.9%
FEDERAL	67.9%

COMMUNICATION

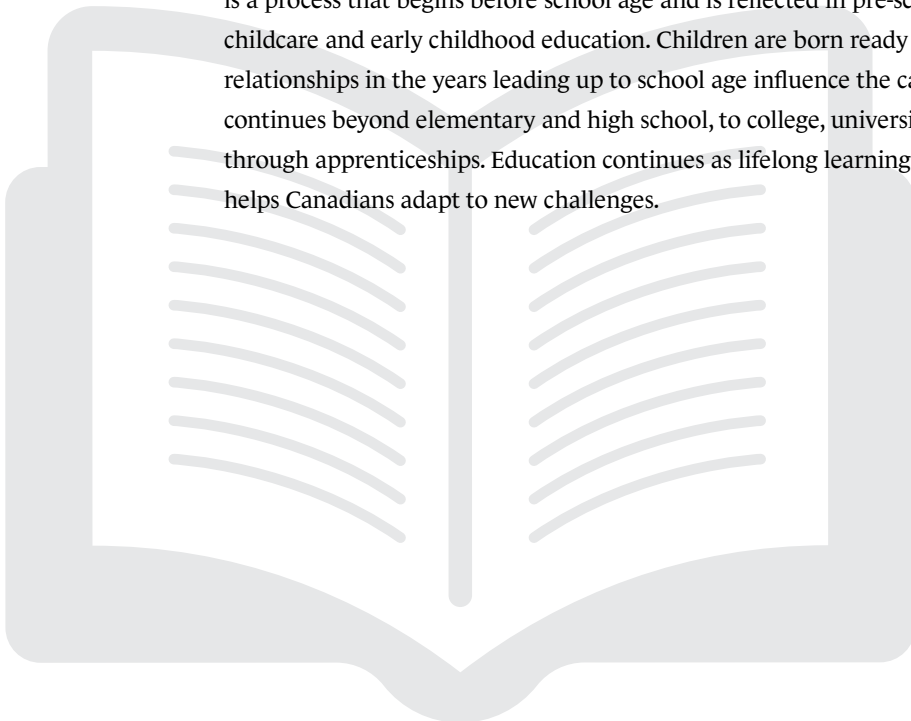
Members of Parliament (MPs) for Oxford County dedicate a greater percentage of their total expenses to communications (8.5%) than in other areas. Such communications typically take the form of newsletters or pamphlets mailed directly to householders in their ridings. This percentage is more than 3% higher than in West Region (5.4%) and more than 2% higher than the provincial and national averages (6.9% and 5.9% respectively). Politicians' investments in communications is a reflection of the strength of the connection between citizens and their local representative in Parliament, and a means of sharing activities and progress towards goals. As politicians increasingly turn to social media to communicate with their constituents, print materials are relied upon less, so the recent decline in budgets dedicated to this form of communication is not unexpected.



EDUCATION

Education is the systematic instruction, schooling, or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life, and by extension, similar instruction or training obtained in adulthood.

Societies that thrive encourage a thirst for knowledge – at every age and stage of life. Education is a process that begins before school age and is reflected in pre-school arrangements such as childcare and early childhood education. Children are born ready to learn – the experiences and relationships in the years leading up to school age influence the capacity for learning. It also continues beyond elementary and high school, to college, university, and professional training through apprenticeships. Education continues as lifelong learning. As the world changes, education helps Canadians adapt to new challenges.



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Even though high school graduation rates have increased over the last six years in Oxford County (78.3%), the completion rate in 2016 was still among the lowest in the counties making up the West Region (85.2%) and among the lowest in the entire province (86.5%).¹ Nationally, the high school completion rate among 20 to 24 year olds is even higher (89.3%).

The percentage of residents who receive post-secondary education has risen steadily in recent years. However, only about 1 in 8 of residents in Oxford County, 25 to 64 years of age, have a university degree (12.9%), which is almost 6% lower than that in West Region (18.7%) and much lower than in Ontario overall (28.5%). Participation in education is critical for preparation for work as well as for ongoing personal development, which has positive impact on our living standards and social networks. Creating more opportunities and encouraging greater participation in education-related activities would serve to enhance wellbeing because of these activities' influence across many domains.

MEASURING PROGRESS

Elementary schools in Ontario make important contributions to the early development of our children and their preparation for life. Indeed, in the past year, the Ontario Ministry of Education added “wellbeing” to its goals for the education system and many schools are now including softer skills such as creativity and social-emotional skills among its key measures of progress.²

Just under 4 in 10 elementary schools in Oxford County (39.5%) are measuring student progress in health and wellbeing, which is more than 10% lower than in West Region (50.7%) and over 15% lower than the provincial rate (55.7%). The percentage of schools in Oxford County measuring progress in the school learning environment (51.2%) is similar to that across West Region (50.7%) and Ontario (51.9%), and is even better in measuring progress in student's socio-emotional skills (51.2%) than both West Region and Ontario overall (39.4% and 44.4% respectively). Oxford County elementary schools are also doing somewhat more in measuring students' progress in developing their citizenship skills (32.6%) than across Ontario (29.0%), but not as much as in the West Region overall (35.3%). More troubling, however, is the percentage of schools in Oxford County that measure progress in student creativity (9.3%), which is significantly lower than in the West Region (18.1%) and across Ontario (19.7%).³

¹ High school graduation rates for Oxford County, West Region, and the province are based on Ontario Ministry of Education figures whereas the graduation rate for Canada is based on data provided by Statistics Canada; therefore, comparisons may not be valid because they use different definitions and reference groups.

² People for Education. (2015). *Ontario's Schools: The gap between policy and reality*. Annual Report on Ontario's Publicly Funded Schools 2015. Toronto, ON: People for Education. Available from: <http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/research/p4e-reports-bytopic/>

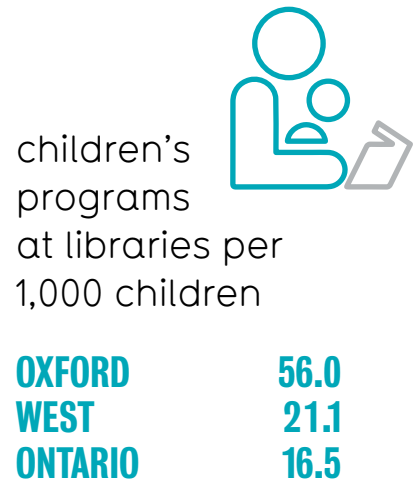
³ Data on measuring student progress in elementary schools provided by People for Education and are based on the results of their annual survey, conducted in 2015.

CONTRIBUTION OF LIBRARIES

Beyond their traditional role in providing citizens with the content they need to succeed, libraries in our communities have evolved to play a central role as a hub for community development, learning, and sharing. The many instructional programs and services they offer promote literacy, skills development, and access to technology for people of all ages.⁴

Public libraries in Oxford County offer an average of 34.0 early literacy and learning programs per 1,000 children, which is slightly higher than the 31.3 programs offered across the West Region, and much higher than 25.8 programs in the province overall. For other programs offered to children, such as arts and culture, health and wellness, and play groups, Oxford County leads the province. An average of 56.0 programs per 1,000 children are provided annually in the County compared to just 21.1 in West Region and 16.5 across Ontario.

In contrast to the offerings for children, libraries throughout the province, including in Oxford County, provide on average far fewer programs for adults. Libraries in Oxford County offer 2.5 programs per 1,000 adults concerned with career support and advice, job help, and skills training. This level of offerings far surpasses the average number of programs provided in both the West Region and in Ontario, both of which sit at 0.2 programs per 1,000 adults. In addition, libraries in Oxford County provide on average another 7.1 adult learning programs on other general topics of interest per 1,000 population, which is more than the 5.6 programs in West Region and considerably more than the 2.7 programs in Ontario. Even though the numbers of library programs dedicated to adults are comparatively lower across the province, Oxford County’s libraries have been giving even more attention to offerings in support of the development and training of adults.



⁴Federation of Ontario Public Libraries. (2012). *Annual Report on the State of Public Libraries 2012*. Toronto, ON: FOPL. Available from: <http://fopl.ca/news/2011-annualreport-on-the-state-of-public-libraries/>



children with
licensed childcare
available

OXFORD	10.1%
WEST	18.4%
ONTARIO	20.7%
CANADA	24.1%

CHILDCARE

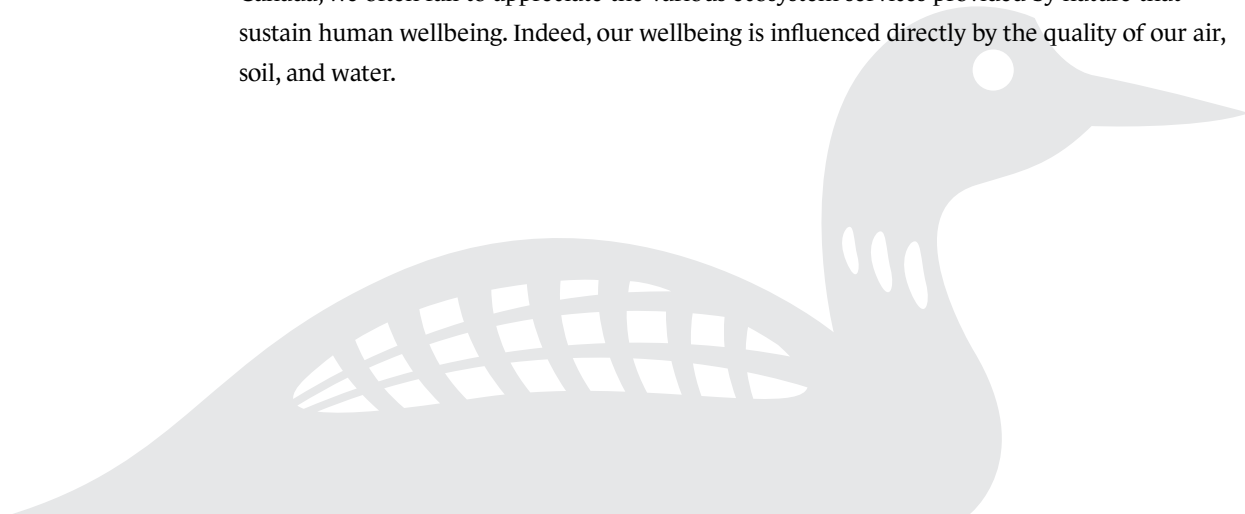
The availability of quality childcare, which has expanded in Ontario in recent years, contributes to our pre-school children’s social, emotional, developmental, and educational outcomes, especially for children living in lower income families. In Oxford County, there is a lower proportion of children from zero to 4 years of age for whom licensed, centre-based childcare is available (10.1%) than almost anywhere else in the province. Across Ontario, about 1 in 5 pre-school children have access to such spaces (20.7%), and nationally, the percentage is even higher (24.1%). Clearly, more could be done to ensure that a greater number of spaces are available to pre-school children. Doing so would extend the positive benefits derived from quality childcare to more children, especially those most marginalized by income or access, and also provide families with more opportunity to allocate their time differently and reach work-life balance.



ENVIRONMENT

The environment is the foundation upon which human societies are built and the source of our sustained wellbeing. On a broader level, environmental protection involves the prevention of waste and damage while revitalizing our ecosystems and working towards the sustainability of all of our natural resources.

The environment is the basis for our health, our communities, and our economy. Despite its fundamental importance to human existence and the natural resource wealth it provides to Canada, we often fail to appreciate the various ecosystem services provided by nature that sustain human wellbeing. Indeed, our wellbeing is influenced directly by the quality of our air, soil, and water.



AIR QUALITY

Greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) – a major contributor to climate change – have been declining slowly in recent years in Ontario. Much of this reduction is due to the slowing of manufacturing, increased energy efficiency, and especially the closure of coal-fired electricity generation plants in recent years. In addition, the reduction of household emissions through conservation efforts has been, on a proportional basis, a significant factor in helping to reduce overall emissions. Ontarians are doing their part.

Total greenhouse gas emissions from the largest facilities in Oxford County were 0.8 megatonnes of CO₂ in 2015, which represents a small portion of the provincial total (1.8%). Oxford County is therefore not a major contributor to the overall provincial total of GHG emissions. By way of comparison, all of the large facilities throughout the West Region generated 26.4 megatonnes of CO₂ in 2015, which represents more than half (57.9%) of the total emissions for the province as a whole.⁵ The West Region's contribution to the provincial total is due largely to a few significant areas with a concentration of GHG generating facilities, and Oxford County represents just 3.1% of the regional total. Areas within the West Region that are principally responsible for the GHG emissions are Hamilton (steel plants) and Lambton County (City of Sarnia, which is a chemical and gas production centre).

WATER QUALITY

The relative abundance of fresh water in the province is a tremendous benefit enjoyed by all Ontarians, including residents of Oxford County, which draws much of its drinking water from ground water. The quality of fresh water in West Region, as measured by its pH level, is 8.3, which is slightly alkaline, but well within acceptable limits. Fresh water in Oxford County has a pH level of 8.2, which is identical to the province as a whole.

⁵Data on greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) are taken from the *Reported Facility GHG Data* available from Environment and Climate Change Canada (<http://www.ec.gc.ca/ges-ghg/default.asp?lang=En&n=8044859A>), and represent only one part of total GHGs in Ontario; that is, only emissions generated by the largest operations in the province are reported.

WASTE REDUCTION

In Ontario, the percentage of all residential and non-residential waste diverted from landfill, mainly through recycling programs, is about 25%. About 60% of all waste in Ontario is generated by the non-residential sector (e.g., factories, shopping malls, universities), yet it diverts only about 13% of the waste from landfill.

In contrast, residential waste accounts for about one-quarter of the provincial total, yet Ontarians are diverting 47.3% of their waste from landfills, mainly through recycling via the Blue Box and Green Bin programs, and this rate has been improving in recent years.⁶ While residents of Ontario are doing their part, recycling rates overall have remained largely the same over the past decade.

In Oxford County, the residential waste reduction rate (55.1%) is significantly higher than the rates for West Region (43.2%) and Ontario overall (47.3%). This higher rate is likely due both to a rapid expansion of recycling programs in the County and greater awareness of recycling programs and feelings of environmental responsibility among residents. In addition, the County has a comparatively lower concentration of heavy industry, which as a sector, recycles less than residents do.



waste
diversion rate

OXFORD	55.1%
WEST	43.2%
ONTARIO	47.3%

⁶ Government of Ontario. (2015). *Strategy for a waste free Ontario: Building the circular economy*. (Draft for consultation). Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer of Ontario. Available from: http://www.downloads.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/er/documents/2015/012-5834_DraftStrategy.pdf



HEALTHY POPULATIONS

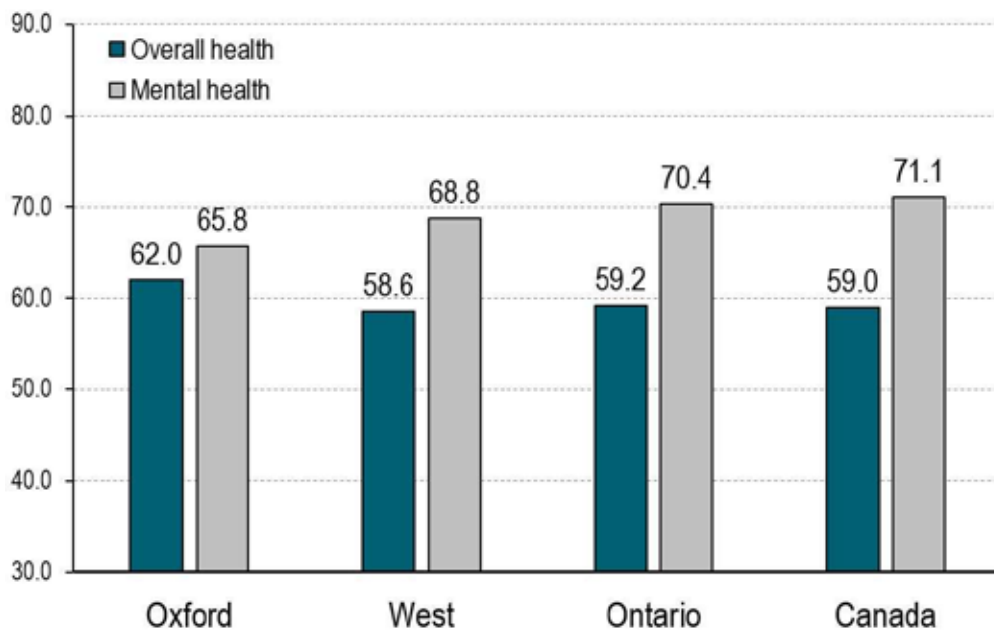
The Healthy Populations domain considers the physical, mental, and social wellbeing of the population. It examines life expectancy, lifestyle and behaviours, and the circumstances that influence health such as access to health care.

Healthy Populations captures both the overall health of the population (“health status”) as well as factors that influence health (“health determinants”). This broad perspective is used because peoples’ lifestyles and behaviours are constrained and shaped by broader social factors such as how food is distributed and priced, how houses are constructed and located, how urban transportation is designed, how easily people can access health care and recreational services, and how we interact with the natural environment.

SELF-REPORTED HEALTH

In terms of overall health, 6 in 10 residents of Oxford County say their overall health is very good or excellent (62.0%), and even more residents report that their mental health is very good or excellent (65.8%). In fact, for overall health, the percentage in Oxford County is higher than percentages reported in the West Region (58.6%), in the province (59.2%), and across the country (59.0%).

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE RATING THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AS VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT IS HIGHER THAN THEIR RATINGS OF OVERALL HEALTH



However, the percentage reporting very good or excellent mental health in Oxford County is lower compared to anywhere else in West Region (68.8%), or compared to other places provincially (70.4%) and nationally (71.1%). In other words, these numbers suggest that almost one-third of residents in Oxford County feel their overall and mental health is only “good” – or worse. In this sense, resident’s ratings of their health, especially their mental health, could be an area of concern.

people without any health or activity-related limitations

OXFORD	65.9%
WEST	64.8%
ONTARIO	67.9%
CANADA	78.5%



teens who are smoking occasionally or daily

OXFORD	0.9%
WEST	6.0%
ONTARIO	5.8%
CANADA	7.7%

Approximately two-thirds of the residents in Oxford County report they are living without any health or activity limitations (65.9%). This percentage is quite similar to the rate in the West Region (64.8%) as well as for Ontario overall (67.9%). However, the percentage for Canada overall is significantly higher (78.5%) than across Ontario, including Oxford County, indicating that many fewer residents in Oxford County are living without health-related limitations in their day- to-day living. Looking at these results in another way suggests that approximately one-third of residents do have some limitations that might be interfering with the quality of their lives.

The incidence of self-reported diabetes has been rapidly increasing across Ontario in recent years. Currently, 7.4% of Ontarians report living with diabetes. In Oxford County, the incidence of self-reported diabetes is identical to the national level (6.7%), which is markedly lower than the percentage in West Region (7.3%) and the province overall. Both locally and provincially, the growing incidence of diabetes is a concern because it is a critical marker of other health-related issues such as cardiovascular disease, and kidney and vision problems.

HEALTH-RELATED BEHAVIOUR

Over the past decade, the percentage of individuals across the country immunized against influenza each year has remained relatively unchanged at approximately one-third of the population. The immunization rate in Oxford County is notably higher (44.8%) than in West Region (37.8%) and in Ontario (35.4%). National trends indicate that a greater percentage of older adults and children tend to get immunized than young and middle-aged adults. The slightly larger percentages of both of these age groups in Oxford County than elsewhere in the province could explain in part the higher immunization rate.

Smoking is widely recognized as an unhealthy behaviour associated with a variety of illnesses that could otherwise be prevented. Preventing and reducing smoking at an early age, when such behaviour typically is adopted, is a strategy that ensures better health in later life.

Smoking rates among teens (aged 12 to 19 years) have been steadily decreasing across Ontario for several years. In Oxford County, only 1 in 100 teens (0.9%) report smoking occasionally or daily, which is one of the lowest rates in both Ontario (5.8%) and Canada (7.7%). This is good news and points to better overall health for young people as they enter adulthood.

HEALTH CARE ACCESS

Having access to a regular health physician, such as a family doctor, is a useful indicator of the capacity and appropriateness of the primary health care system. Access to a family doctor is a more effective means of sustaining good health than is the episodic use of emergency care.

The vast majority of residents of Oxford County have access to a regular health physician (95.1%), which is 10% higher than that in Canada overall (85.1%). In fact, access to a regular family physician is generally higher for all Ontarians (92.5%).

Considering all of the various health behaviours and resources available to people, life expectancy provides a sense of overall population health based on quantity of life rather than quality of life. It helps to inform how the health of Canadians is shifting as improvements to systems and services are made. Life expectancy (in years from birth) in Oxford County is 81.1 years, which is slightly shorter than the national average (81.8 years) and about one year shorter than the provincial average (82.3 years). As a broad marker of population health, more favourable conditions and health care access can contribute to longer life expectancy in Oxford County.



LEISURE AND CULTURE

By participating in leisure and cultural activities, whether arts, culture, or recreation, we contribute to our wellbeing as individuals, to our communities, and to society as a whole. The myriad of activities and opportunities we pursue and enjoy benefit our overall life satisfaction and quality of life.

As forms of human expression, leisure and cultural activities help to more fully define our lives, the meaning we derive from them, and ultimately, our wellbeing. This remains true throughout our lives regardless of age, gender, or social group. The impact of participation in leisure and cultural activities is even greater for people in marginalized groups, such as those living with disabilities, living in poverty, and as members of a minority population.

LEISURE PARTICIPATION

An active lifestyle has numerous physical, social, and psychological benefits. In Ontario, over 90% of the population reports participating in some form of regular physical activity during leisure time, and like elsewhere across the country, participation has been rising steadily over the years.

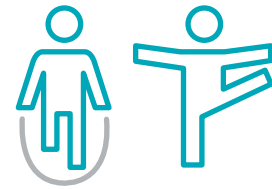
In Oxford County, residents report participating in physical activity lasting at least 15 minutes once every day (27.0 times per month on average). This level of activity is only marginally lower than elsewhere in Ontario (28.2 times per month) and in Canada (27.6 times per month).

OPPORTUNITIES

As noted earlier in the Education domain, libraries provide much more than just content to advance people’s education and interests. Indeed, they are important community hubs where people meet, engage in activities, and attend events, thereby strengthening community bonds.

For every 1,000 people in Oxford County, 119.6 in-person visits are made each year to public libraries, a rate of usage that is among the highest of any region in the province. By way of comparison, about 100 visits per 1,000 people are made by residents of West Region (99.5 visits per 1,000 people) and only slightly more are made by Ontarians overall (103.2 visits per 1,000 people).

In the past year, libraries in Oxford County offered 28.6 library programs of various types to every 1,000 people, which is notably higher than that in West Region (23.9) and much higher than that in Ontario as a whole (16.6). In contrast, the County’s libraries offered less than one (0.8) arts and cultural event and show (e.g., Culture Days, poetry and story readings, art shows) per 10,000 people in the past year. This level of offerings is significantly lower than the rate for West Region (5.8) and the province overall (4.4). Indeed, the number of annual culture programs in Oxford County is one of the lowest in Ontario.



average number of times per month participating in physical activity lasting over 15 minutes

OXFORD	27.0
WEST	28.2
ONTARIO	28.2
CANADA	27.6



in-person visits to libraries per 1,000 people

OXFORD	119.6
WEST	99.5
ONTARIO	103.2



annual library programs per 1,000 people

OXFORD	28.6
WEST	23.9
ONTARIO	16.6

Attendance at arts and cultural events are beneficial both to individuals and to the community overall. Consequently, looking at the potential to offer more programs to local residents through the libraries is a means of increasing wellbeing.

Making computers and internet connections freely available in public libraries provides access to information and resources, especially to people who might otherwise not have it due to financial constraints or other access limitations. Access is comparatively higher in Oxford County (an average of 9.0 internet connections per 10,000 people) than West Region and Ontario as a whole (7.7 and 7.2 connections per 10,000 people respectively).



LIVING STANDARDS

Living Standards examines Canadians' average and median income and wealth, distribution of income and wealth including poverty rates, income fluctuations and volatility. It considers economic security, including labour market security, and housing and food security.

Our living standards should reflect our capacity to transform economic growth into stable current and future income streams for everyone. Economic growth does not automatically translate into better living standards. A higher average income, for example, may be achieved at the cost of increased social inequality or greater economic insecurity. In contrast, achieving greater job quality, reducing poverty, and providing affordable housing and food security to individuals and families will raise wellbeing for everyone.



persons in
low income

OXFORD	10.8%
ONTARIO	14.4%
CANADA	14.2%

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Oxford County has higher full-time employment rates (63.5%) than the province on average, exceeding the rate across Ontario (59.9%) and Canada (60.2%). Its unemployment rate (4.8%) is almost 3% lower than for the province (7.4%) and the country (7.7%) overall. Taking both of these employment measures into account suggests that the job market in Oxford County is reasonably robust, and that it might also be evolving and diverse, reflecting an economy that provides opportunities for many residents.

In contrast, after-tax median income of families in Oxford County (\$76,275) is lower than both the provincial (\$79,531) and national levels (\$76,372). The lower median income is, in part, a reflection of the quality of working population's situation. Monitoring these characteristics is helpful in understanding the conditions affecting residents' feelings of economic security, through opportunities for a secure and stable job, and more access to the necessities of life like food and shelter.

The after-tax low income measure (LIM-AT) is a fixed percentage (50%) of median adjusted household income, where "adjusted" indicates that household needs are taken into account (e.g., the number of persons living in the household). About 1 in 10 people in Oxford County (10.8%) are living with low incomes. This rate is lower than that in Ontario (14.4%) and in Canada overall (14.2%). Despite the comparatively lower percentage of people living in low income households, this represents approximately 11,000 people living in Oxford County who are struggling economically. Equally of concern, the incidence of persons living in low income has edged up slightly in recent years indicating a decline in economic security.

While comparing women and men who are in the labour force market in Oxford County, the percentage of women living in low income (11.9%) is greater than the percentage of men (9.8%). Although the percentage of women who are long-term unemployed (4.6%) is slightly lower than that for men (4.9%), the percentage of men who are employed (68.6%) is 10% higher than that for women (58.6%). These indicators suggest that women in Oxford County are likely less economically secure and have more precarious employment in the job market.

FOOD INSECURITY

Food insecurity occurs when nutritious food is not available to people, the amount of food is insufficient, and/or there are barriers to safe and effective food preparation, such as poor drinking water quality or sanitation issues. The number of people who are moderately or severely food insecure in Ontario has been rising in recent years, and now, just under 10% of households in Ontario are food insecure (8.3%). A smaller percentage of households in Oxford County are food insecure (6.0%), and this rate is much lower than for residents of West Region (9.4%). Even though national trends suggest food insecurity has been edging downwards in recent years, an estimated 3,600 households in Oxford County may be experiencing food insecurity.



households that
are food insecure

OXFORD	6.0%
WEST	9.4%
ONTARIO	8.3%
CANADA	7.7%

HOUSING SECURITY

For housing to be considered affordable, housing costs should be less than 30% of a family's before-tax household income. About 1 in 5 households in Oxford County (21.6%) are spending 30% or more of their income on housing, which is markedly lower than that in Ontario overall (27.7%) and across the country (24.1%). Housing is a major part of a family's expenses, so residents of Oxford County are arguably somewhat more secure in this respect than elsewhere. Still, affordable housing is potentially out of reach for approximately 1 in 5 families. This is an issue that should not be ignored.



people
reporting
high levels
of work stress



WORK-RELATED STRESS

High levels of stress attributed to work can be related to variety of factors including poor job quality and low stability – and hence, security – as well as longer hours of work and poor working conditions. In Oxford County, 1 in 4 working residents (25.2%) report feeling high levels of work-related stress, which is significantly lower than the rate for West Region (29.1%), as well as for the province (28.2%) and the country (28.9%) overall. Higher levels of stress are concerning, not just because of its link to feelings of security, but also because stress can have a serious effect on one's physical and mental health.

OXFORD	25.2%
WEST	29.1%
ONTARIO	28.2%
CANADA	28.9%



TIME USE

Time Use measures how people experience and spend their time. It means how the use of our time affects physical and mental wellbeing, individual and family wellbeing, and present and future wellbeing. It examines the length of our workweek, our work arrangements, our levels of time pressure, and the time we spend with friends and in other free-time activities.

The implicit assumption with Time Use is the notion of *balance*. Most activities are beneficial to wellbeing when done in moderation, but are detrimental when done excessively or not at all. There are only 24 hours in a day, so too much time directed towards one activity can mean not enough or no time at all allocated for other activities that are also critical for our wellbeing. Not only does the amount of time matter, but the pace of and relative control over timing of activities throughout the day can affect overall quality of life.

TIME

How much time Ontarians devote each day to certain kinds of activities may be beneficial – or detrimental – to their wellbeing. While some people might have the ability to allocate their time to achieve greater work- life balance, too often, factors beyond their control dictate how that time is allocated.

In Oxford County, 15.2% of residents are working 50 hours or more each week, which is well beyond the maximum 35 to 40 hours most full-time employees work. Indeed, this percentage is among one of the highest rates in Ontario, which sits at 14.3%, and well above the national rate (8.7%). The number of residents working long hours in Oxford County represents a departure from recent national trends that show fewer people are working longer hours.

While residents living in Ontario and across the country have average workday commute times of nearly an hour (53.7 minutes and 52 minutes respectively), round-trip commutes in Oxford County are shorter. In Oxford County, workers spend almost 20 minutes less commuting to and from work each day (36.2 minutes) than those workers residing elsewhere in Ontario. This indicator on commute time for Oxford County was drawn from the recent Community Wellbeing Survey, so the reference group and specific question are slightly different from national sources of data. In this sense, direct comparisons to Oxford County with other areas must be made with caution. Nevertheless, lower commute times should be encouraging, because it can contribute to a greater sense of work-life balance, less time pressure, and higher overall life satisfaction.



people working
50+ hours per week

OXFORD	15.2%
WEST ONTARIO	15.2%
ONTARIO	14.3%
CANADA	8.7%

TIMING

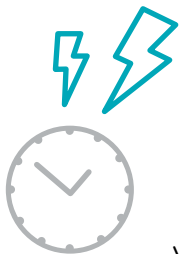
Timing considers when activities occur during the day, and how easy or difficult it might be for people to schedule activities like work, leisure, meals, or volunteer commitments. The more easily people can control their time, the greater their wellbeing.

Having regular, weekday work hours increases the sense of stability and security people feel about their jobs. In Oxford County, just under two- thirds of employees (63.0%) have regular weekday



working people with flexible work hours

OXFORD	37.6%
WEST	41.4%
ONTARIO	46.1%
CANADA	43.2%



15 to 64 year olds reporting high levels of time pressure

OXFORD	17.4%
WEST	21.3%
ONTARIO	19.8%
CANADA	17.4%

working hours, which is somewhat lower than the provincial level (65.9%) and much lower than the national rate (67.3%). Further, the percentage of residents in Oxford County (37.6%) who have access to flexible work hours (i.e., when they choose to begin and end their workday) is notably lower than in West Region (41.4%) and much lower than anywhere else in Ontario (46.1%) and across Canada (43.2%). Overall, these measures of timing for working people in Oxford County suggest people have a lower degree of control over their time than others do.

TEMPORALITY

Temporality focuses on the natural rhythms associated with time such as our sleep and waking time rhythms, transitions from day to night, and activities associated with the changing of the seasons. Sleep is a biological necessity – we need good quality sleep in order to function. Adults require between seven to nine hours of sleep per day, and too much, too little, or poor quality sleep is detrimental to our wellbeing.

Approximately one-third of residents in Oxford County (32.5%) report getting between seven and nine hours of quality sleep. This percentage is slightly below the rate for West Region (34.4%) and Canada (35.9%), but comparatively above the rate for the province (30.5%). Nevertheless, as is seen elsewhere in the province and country, about two-thirds of residents of Oxford County are not getting adequate sleep and this is a concern for the overall health and wellbeing.

A high level of perceived time pressure may break people’s work-life balance and even further affect individual life quality. Just under 1 in 5 residents of Oxford County report high levels of time pressure (17.4%), which is identical to the percentage across Canada overall (17.4%). This percentage of people feeling higher levels of time pressure is lower than the percentages reported both in West Region (21.3%) and provincially (19.8%). Even though the reported degree of time pressure has been decreasing nationally in recent years, with about 20% of the people still feeling time stressed, the ongoing challenge of achieving work-life balance for people in Oxford County remains.

APPENDIX A: METHODS

To create a report on the wellbeing of residents of Oxford County, the *most recent data available* have been drawn from four main sources. These sources of data provided demographic characteristics and indicators for each of the eight domains comprising the CIW's framework identified as critical to our overall wellbeing (i.e., *community vitality, healthy populations, democratic engagement, the environment, leisure and culture, education, living standards, and time use*).

1. NATIONAL SURVEY DATA AND OTHER FEDERAL SOURCES – wherever possible, indicators used for the CIW's national index comprising the eight domains are used. The most recent data, principally from Statistics Canada and other federal agencies (i.e., Ministry of Environment and Climate Change; Legislative Assembly of Canada; Elections Canada) are the main sources for creating portraits of wellbeing. Many of the indicators come from national surveys, including the Canadian Community Health Survey, the General Social Surveys (various cycles on Time Use; Victimization; Social Engagement; Canadian Survey on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating), and the Ethnic Diversity Survey;

2. PROVINCIAL DATA SOURCES – when national data were not available, we chose proxy indicators for several of the domains from provincial agencies and not for profit organizations. The agencies from which indicators were drawn included the Government of Ontario's Public Library Statistics; Government of Ontario's Provincial Water Quality Monitoring Network; Ministry of Children and Youth Services; Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport's After-School Program; Ontario Provincial Park Statistics; and People for Education;

3. CENSUS OF CANADA – primarily for the section describing the demographic characteristics of Ontarians, data have been taken from the 2016 Census of Canada. The Census also provided the means to adapt selected indicators from national and provincial sources to per capita measures thereby allowing for direct comparisons between regions with quite different population sizes; and

4. OXFORD COUNTY COMMUNITY WELLBEING SURVEY – conducted in the spring of 2016, the Oxford County Community Wellbeing Survey was administered by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing in partnership with Community Oxford. The results of the survey based on a random sample of 1,304 respondents from across the County were released in the report, *A Profile of the Wellbeing of Oxford County Residents*. In some instances, questions used in the survey were identical to those used in national surveys, but results from those national surveys for Oxford County were not available.

Almost all of the data from national sources are for the year 2014. We also used a few data sources from 2013 and whenever possible, from 2016. For the section on demographics, we used the most recent Census of Canada (2016). To ensure comparability across regions of different population sizes, some indicators have been converted to per capita measures (e.g., number of incidents per 100,000 people). In these cases, we base our population estimates on Statistics Canada guidelines. Results from the Community Wellbeing Survey were only used when the measures were identical to those drawn from national and provincial sources or could be sufficiently validated. Nevertheless, when survey results from Oxford County are reported, direct comparisons across different geographic scales should be made with caution because they might be based on slightly different question format and/or represent different time periods when the data were collected.

The greatest limitation to securing indicators for all of the domains was availability of data at the regional level. While indicators could typically be taken from national sources and reported for Ontario as a whole, they could not be disaggregated to the regional level, both for the West Region of Ontario and for Oxford County specifically. This limitation occurred for two main reasons. First, the national data simply may not have been available at the regional level, or second, when data were available, the sample was too small for valid reporting on the indicator. For example, some of the indicators requested from Statistics Canada specifically for Oxford County could not be provided due to low reliability (i.e., too small a sample from a national survey for the Region). We addressed this limitation by seeking out provincial sources of data that could provide appropriate proxy indicators. Provincial sources were scrutinised carefully for conceptual fit, accuracy, and comparability across all provincial regions.

Once we identified, validated, and aggregated the data sources for Oxford County, a portrait of wellbeing emerged. This portrait offers a more comprehensive and interconnected understanding of different aspects of wellbeing and how they vary for residents of Oxford County.

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR OXFORD COUNTY



DEMOGRAPHICS

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	REGIONS			
		Oxford	West	Ontario	Canada
POPULATION	Percentage of provincial population	0.8	20.9	–	–
	Percentage of provincial land area	0.2	3.9	–	–
AGE	Median age in years	42.3	43.3	41.3	41.2
	Percentage of population under 15 years of age	17.8	16.2	16.4	16.6
	Percentage of population 50 years of age and older	40.4	41.1	38.3	38.5
FAMILIES	Percentage of population 15 years of age or older that is married or living common-law	51.1	57.7	57.3	57.6
	Percentage of families led by lone parent	14.0	16.9	17.1	16.4
	Percentage of lone-parent families led by females	76.6	79.3	80.4	78.3
HOUSEHOLDS	Average number of persons per family	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9
	Percentage of population that owns their homes	73.8	71.4	69.7	67.8
LANGUAGE AND ETHNICITY	Percentage of population with English as mother tongue	88.6	60.1	68.8	57.3
	Percentage of population with French as mother tongue	1.0	1.1	3.8	21.1
	Percentage of population with another language as first language	10.4	38.8	27.4	21.6
	Percentage of population with knowledge of both English and French	4.1	6.9	11.2	17.9
	Percentage of visible minority population	3.2	39.2	28.9	21.8
EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME	Percentage of labour force employed	63.5	–	59.9	60.2
	Percentage of labour force in long-term unemployment	4.8	–	7.4	7.7
	After-tax median family income	\$ 76,275	–	\$ 79,531	\$ 76,372

COMMUNITY VITALITY

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	REGIONS			
		Oxford	West	Ontario	Canada
SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT	Percentage of population reporting somewhat/strong sense of belonging to community	70.2	67.6	68.1	66.4
	Percentage of population reporting formal volunteering for organizations ^a	52.9	52.7	55.2	49.1
SOCIAL SUPPORT	Percentage of population with five or more close friends	49.5	52.6	53.7	51.8
	Percentage of population living alone ^a	18.5	6.0	9.6	13.9
COMMUNITY SAFETY	Percentage of population who feel safe walking alone after dark ^a	81.0	80.3	79.3	79.5
SOCIAL NORMS AND VALUES	Percentage of population who provide unpaid help to others on their own ^a	77.7	78.8	81.0	81.7
	Percentage of population reporting experience of discrimination ^a	4.1	6.6	9.6	9.3

Note: ^aIndicator taken from Oxford County Community Wellbeing Survey. Direct comparisons to other areas should be made with caution.

DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	REGIONS			
		Oxford	West	Ontario	Canada
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION	Percentage of eligible population that voted in last <i>federal</i> election	67.9	66.1	67.8	68.3
	Percentage of eligible population that voted in last <i>provincial</i> election	51.9	63.4	51.3	–
	Percentage of eligible population that voted in last <i>municipal</i> election	37.6	–	43.1	–
	Percentage of population that belong to a political organization, law or advocacy group ^a	9.7	4.2	3.8	3.7
POLITICAL LEADERSHIP	Percentage of female councillors on municipal councils	40.0	–	21.6	–
COMMUNICATION	Percentage of total expenses used by Members of Parliament (MPs) to send communications to householders in their ridings	8.5	5.4	6.9	5.9

Note: ^aIndicator taken from Oxford County Community Wellbeing Survey. Direct comparisons to other areas should be made with caution.

EDUCATION

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	REGIONS			
		Oxford	West	Ontario	Canada
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	High school graduation rate (percentage)*	78.3	85.2	86.5	89.3
	Percentage of 25 to 64 year olds in population with a university degree	12.9	18.7	28.5	28.5
MEASURING PROGRESS	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in <i>student health or wellbeing</i>	39.5	50.7	55.7	–
	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in <i>citizenship skills</i>	32.6	35.3	29.0	–
	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in <i>creativity</i>	9.3	18.1	19.7	–
	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in <i>socio-emotional skills</i>	51.2	39.4	44.4	–
	Percentage of elementary schools measuring progress in <i>school learning environment</i>	51.2	50.7	51.9	–
LIBRARIES	Average number of early literacy and early learning programs per 1,000 children	34.0	31.3	25.8	–
	Average number of other children's programs per 1,000 children	56.0	21.2	16.5	–
	Average number of careers, job help, and skills programs per 1,000 adult population	2.5	0.2	0.2	–
	Average number of adult learning programs per 1,000 adult population	7.1	5.6	2.7	–
CHILD CARE	Percentage of children aged 0 to 4 years for whom there is a regulated/licensed centre-based childcare space	10.1	18.4	20.7	24.1

*High school five-year graduation rates for Oxford County, West Region, and the province are estimates based on figures published by the Ontario Ministry of Education whereas the graduation rate for Canada is based on data provided by Statistics Canada; therefore, comparisons may not be valid because they use different definitions and reference groups. The high school graduation rate for Oxford County is based on 2016 figures for the entire Thames Valley District School Board.

ENVIRONMENT

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	REGIONS			
		Oxford	West	Ontario	Canada
AIR QUALITY	Overall total GHG emissions (megatonnes of CO ₂ per year)	0.8	4.4	45.6	–
	Percentage of provincial GHG emissions (megatonnes of CO ₂ per year) contributed by region	1.8	9.6	100.0	–
WATER QUALITY	pH levels (based on 1 to 14 scale where 7 is considered neutral)*	8.2	8.3	8.2	–
WASTE REDUCTION	Percentage of total residential waste diverted by municipalities (includes Blue Box and other materials)	55.1	43.2	47.3	–

Note: * Pure water is neutral and has a pH level of 7.0. As values fall below 7.0, water is increasingly acidic; as values rise above 7.0, water is increasingly alkaline.

HEALTHY POPULATIONS

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	REGIONS			
		Oxford	West	Ontario	Canada
SELF-REPORTED HEALTH	Percentage of population who rate their <i>overall health</i> as very good or excellent	62.0	58.6	59.2	59.0
	Percentage of population who rate their <i>mental health</i> as very good or excellent	65.8	68.8	70.4	71.1
	Percentage of population with no health or activity limitations	65.9	64.8	67.9	78.5
	Percentage of population with self-reported diabetes	6.7	7.3	7.4	6.7
HEALTH-RELATED BEHAVIOUR	Percentage of daily or occasional smokers among teens aged 12 to 19 years	0.9	6.0	5.8	7.7
	Percentage of population getting influenza immunization	44.8	37.8	35.4	32.5
HEALTH CARE ACCESS	Percentage of population with a regular health physician	95.1	94.1	92.5	85.1
	Life expectancy in years from birth	81.1	–	82.3	81.8

LEISURE AND CULTURE

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	REGIONS			
		Oxford	West	Ontario	Canada
LEISURE PARTICIPATION	Average monthly frequency of participation in <i>physical activity</i> lasting over 15 minutes	27.0	28.2	28.2	27.6
OPPORTUNITIES	Number of annual library programs in past year per 1,000 population	28.6	23.9	16.6	–
	Number of Culture Days, poetry and story readings, and arts shows in past year per 10,000 population	0.8	5.8	4.4	–
	Number of in-person visits made to the library in past year per 1,000 population	119.6	99.5	103.2	–
	Number of library internet connections per 10,000 population	9.0	7.7	7.2	–

LIVING STANDARDS

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	REGIONS			
		Oxford	West	Ontario	Canada
ECONOMIC SECURITY	After tax median income of economic families	\$ 76,275	–	\$ 79,531	\$ 76,372
	Percentage of persons in after-tax low income (LIM-AT)	10.8	–	14.4	14.2
	Percentage of labour force employed	63.5	–	59.9	60.2
	Percentage of labour force in long-term unemployment	4.8	–	7.4	7.7
FOOD INSECURITY	Percentage of households that are moderately or severely food insecure	6.0	9.4	8.3	7.7
HOUSING SECURITY	Percentage of households with shelter costs exceeding 30% of before-tax household income	21.6	24.3	27.7	24.1
WORK-RELATED STRESS	Percentage of population reporting quite a bit or extreme self-perceived work stress	25.2	29.1	28.2	28.9

TIME USE

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	REGIONS			
		Oxford	West	Ontario	Canada
TIME	Percentage of population reporting working 50 hours or more per week	15.2	15.2	14.3	8.7
	Average workday commute time (both ways) for individuals working for pay (minutes per day) ^a	36.2	44.7	53.7	52.0
TIMING	Percentage of labour force with regular, weekday work hours ^a	63.0	62.2	65.9	67.3
	Percentage of individuals working for pay with flexible work hours	37.6	41.4	46.1	43.2
TEMPORALITY	Percentage of population who report 7 to 9 hours of good quality essential sleep ^a	32.5	34.4	30.5	35.9
	Percentage of 15 to 64 year olds reporting high levels of time pressure ^a	17.4	21.3	19.8	17.4

Note: ^a Indicator taken from Oxford County Community Wellbeing Survey. Direct comparisons to other areas should be made with caution.

OVERALL LIFE SATISFACTION

CATEGORY	INDICATOR	REGIONS			
		Oxford	West	Ontario	Canada
WELLBEING	Percentage of population reporting being somewhat to very satisfied with life ^a	86.8	86.1	85.6	87.1

Note: ^a Indicator taken from Oxford County Community Wellbeing Survey. Direct comparisons to other areas should be made with caution.

APPENDIX C: GLOSSARY

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS (GHGs)

Greenhouse Gases are any gaseous compounds in the atmosphere that absorb infrared radiation, which results in heat being trapped and held within the atmosphere. As trapped heat increases in the atmosphere, the greenhouse effect results, which leads to global warming. Some forms of human activity (e.g., burning fossil fuels, deforestation) lead to certain types of gas released into the atmosphere, which leads to more warming. Carbon dioxide is the primary gas responsible for the greenhouse effect, but methane, nitrous oxide, and water vapour also contribute to the effect.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Affordable housing should cost less than 30% of a family's after-tax household income. Shelter costs include, as applicable, mortgage payments (both principal and interest), property taxes, condominium fees, and payments for electricity, fuel, water, and other municipal services (CMHC, 2015).

LOW INCOME MEASURE

The low income measure (LIM) is a fixed percentage, typically 50%, of a household's median adjusted income. By "adjusted", LIM takes into account household needs such as, for example, household size because a household's needs increase as the number of members increases. A household of six persons likely has greater needs than a household of two persons, although their specific needs would not necessarily be three times as costly. LIM is most often reported based on after-tax household income, hence the acronym LIM-AT (Statistics Canada, 2015. For more information about the low income measure, see: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/2015001/lim-mfr-eng.htm>).

pH LEVEL

pH level is a measure of the acidity of water and therefore its quality. Pure water is neutral and has a pH level of 7.0. As values fall below 7.0, water is increasingly acidic; as values rise above 7.0, water is increasingly alkaline. Changes in the pH level of water are important for the health of many organisms. Most organisms have adapted to life in water of a specific pH and may die if it changes even slightly. Factors that can affect the pH level include the type bedrock and soil composition over which water flows; the amount of organic material in the water as it decomposes; and the release of chemicals into the water, typically from human sources.

WASTE DIVERSION RATE

The waste diversion rate is the percentage of the total amount of waste material that is kept out of landfills. In other words, the rate represents that part of all waste materials diverted as a percentage of the total amount of waste disposed.

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