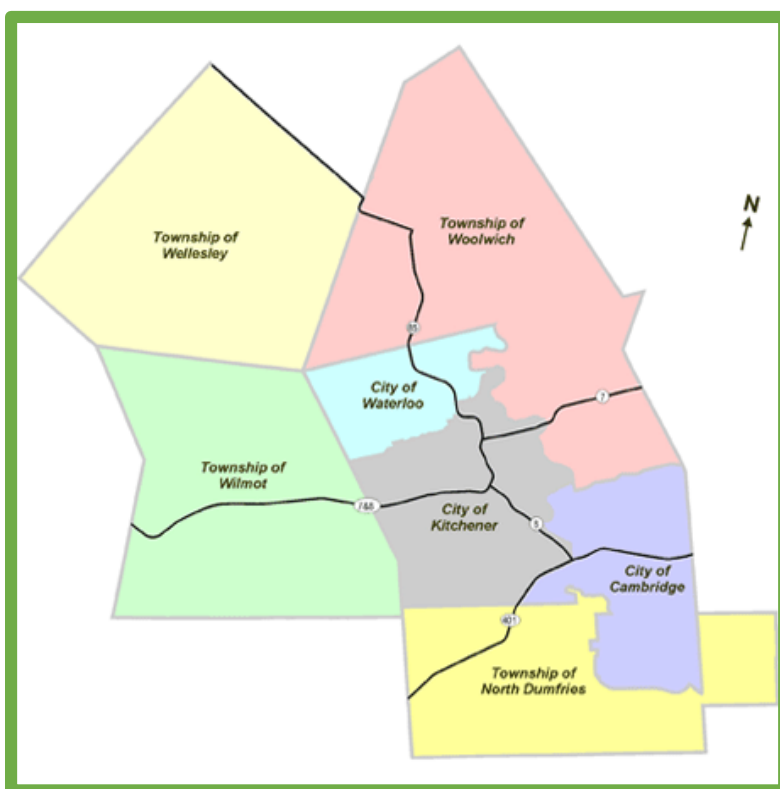


Rural Townships Community Wellbeing Assessment 2019

**North Dumfries, Wellesley,
Wilmot and Woolwich Townships**



This Report was prepared in Partnership with:



**Wilmot Family
Resource Centre**



**WOOLWICH
COMMUNITY SERVICES**
Together Making A Difference

**COMMUNITY
CARE
CONCEPTS**
of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot

Rural Townships Community Wellbeing Assessment

**North Dumfries, Wellesley,
Wilmot and Woolwich Townships**

October 2019

This report was written by the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries

www.spcnd.org



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Executive Summary

The Woolwich Community Health Centre conducted the *2019 Rural Townships Community Wellbeing Assessment* in partnership with Community Care Concepts (CCC), North Dumfries Community Health Centre (NDCHC), Woolwich Community Services (WCS) and Wilmot Family Resource Centre (WFRC). This partnership was established to provide a shared commitment to receive feedback from a variety of perspectives across the four rural townships as well as a shared commitment to using this assessment to guide the work of these organizations.

The ***Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey*** was conducted in the Spring of 2018 by Wellbeing Waterloo Region, this process, supported by the Woolwich Community Health Centre along with 15 other community partners, replaced the need for a separate Township survey. It was **designed to gather citizen perceptions on a variety of topics found in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing's (CIW) eight domains of wellbeing**. The survey collected responses from 5,029 people in Waterloo Region including 661 (13%) from the Townships.

The 2019 Rural Townships Community Wellbeing Assessment is intended to be a supplement to the Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey, providing an overview of each rural Township combining information from the most recent census and focus groups conducted as a way to provide more local detail to the regional data.

Overall it can be seen residents **of the Townships are generally satisfied with their way of life** and value what the rural setting offers them. Living in a rural community contributes to a positive sense of wellbeing.

According to the 2016 Census, **the rural Townships** (population 67,026) **are 12.5% of the Waterloo region population** (535,154), they are **growing at a faster rate than the cities**, and at a higher growth rate than the province and country.

The Townships are home to many couples and families with children, and **have lower proportions of lone-parent families** and single-person households — but this is on the rise. The Townships are also supporting an **ageing population** that is continuing to grow.

The **levels of education among the Townships are slightly higher than the Region for university educated but for “no certificate” higher rates** in Woolwich (25.4%) and **much higher in Wellesley** (44.4%). Education levels have a close correlation to literacy levels which in turn is significant in access to health and participation in health promoting and preventative activities.

More people, both men and women, **participate in the workforce in the Townships than in the Region**. While **the Townships have higher median household incomes and lower prevalence of low-income earning household than the cities**, poverty in rural communities is accentuated by the geographic spread and frequent lack of infrastructure resources such as public transportation and other services.

There are **lower proportions of immigrants and recent immigrants** to this part of the region yet, the Townships have a **high prevalence of non-English languages** spoken most often at home — **mainly German in Wellesley and Woolwich**. This is likely due to the high Mennonite population in those communities.

Given the government directed acknowledgement of the need to address healthcare concerns of aboriginal people it is important to note 775 Aboriginal people were identified in the census across the Townships: 505 First Nations, 250 Metis and 20 Inuk. Few or no service recipients have been identified as Aboriginal by the participating service organizations.

Over the spring and summer of 2019 seventeen Focus Groups were held, with 105 participants, using the findings from the *2019 Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey* for discussion points. The Focus Groups are especially valuable for providing details and examples that elaborate on responses to the survey questions. The partner agencies found some of the most vital information gathered from the Focus Groups was a result of connecting with the people they serve and having a unified rural voice in Waterloo Region.

Focus Group participants value the strong links to the community in the rural setting most of all and feel this contributes to their wellbeing. Additionally, what is unique to the rural setting in Waterloo Region is the proximity one has to urban areas, such as the City of Waterloo, the City of Kitchener, the City of Cambridge, and for some, Stratford, Fergus, and Guelph. So, **while there is a concern about urban encroachment on rural life, there are also feelings of appreciation for access to services, entertainment, and cultural events found in the urban setting.** This is true for most focus groups participants.

Despite all of the positives, there is also a **general feeling of insecurity** that has been expressed by residents. People in the rural setting feel **unsettled about the rising cost of living and rising unaffordability** and other **general societal shifts such as social media, feelings of isolation.** This can be said of most residents in Ontario, but feelings of insecurity among rural communities tend to be focussed on how their **way of life seems to be experiencing an upheaval due to urban encroachment.**

Transportation continues to be an on-going issue, including **access to a reliable public transportation system.** This impacts how well people of access to services especially if not offered in their community. People also experience a sense of **social and geographical isolation.**

Findings from the Focus Groups show that **while there is a stigma around mental health, this is changing.** Many participants showed openness to discussing mental health in the community and their willingness to consider accessing services. The close-knit qualities of the rural population, however, can interfere with accessing mental health services due to a lack of anonymity. Another key point that was raised by Focus Group participants about mental health services (and health services in general) was that **residents need help with system navigation.** Participants and service providers, often indicated that they did not have full knowledge of services and programs available to them and how to access them.

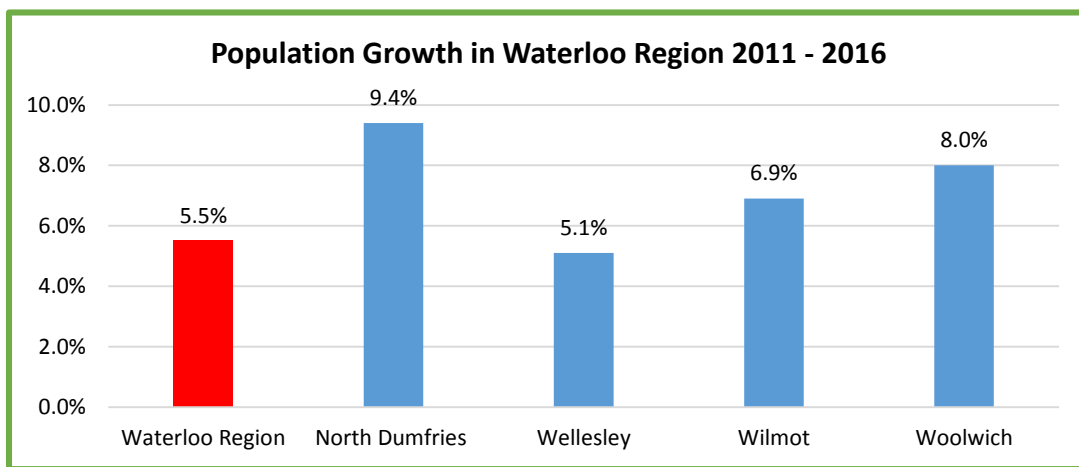
1.0 Social Profile: An examination of the Canada Census data from 2011 and 2016

1.1 Population Composition – This section explores population growth and the population by age groups using population pyramids. The population pyramids reveal different growth rates among the various age groups and between males and females. The age distribution profile shows the overall age distribution of the population in the Townships from 2011 and 2016.

Key Findings

- **The Townships are growing at a faster rate than the Cities**
- **Townships are home to many young children and youth**
- **The Townships all show an outmigration of young adults**
- **The Townships are supporting an ageing population**

Population Growth

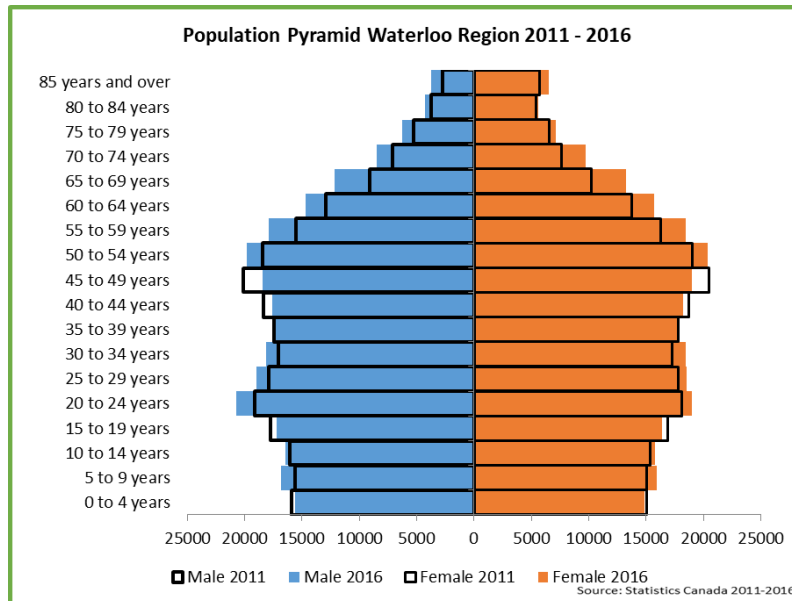


Source: Statistics Canada 2011-2016

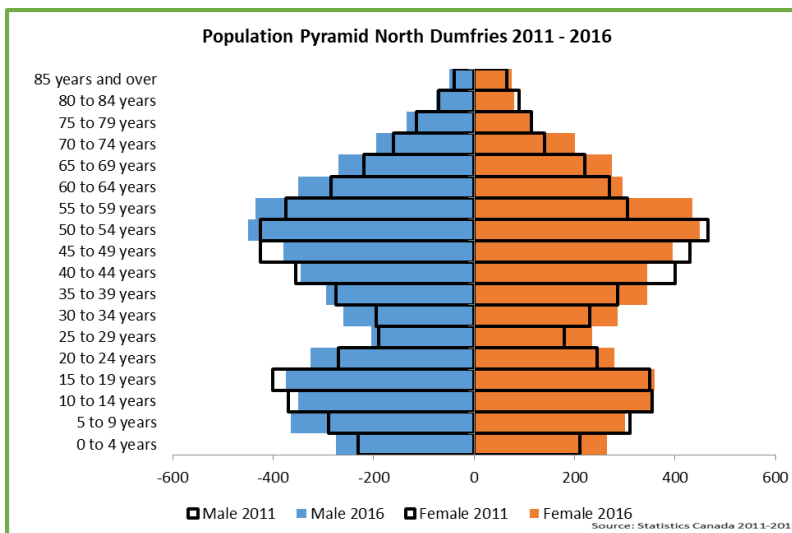
In 2016, Waterloo Region, which includes the three cities as well as the Townships of Wellesley, Wilmot, Woolwich, and North Dumfries, had the 10th largest population in Canada and was the fourth largest in Ontario. Between 2006 and 2011 the Townships experienced significant growth with a growth rate of 17.8 percent in Woolwich Township, 12.5 percent in Wilmot Township and 9.4 percent in Wellesley Township. North Dumfries saw a growth of 3.0% in the same time frame.

In 2016, Waterloo Region had a growth rate of 5.5 percent exceeding both the provincial (4.6 percent) and the national (5.0 percent) growth rate. Since 2011 the Townships have experienced growth rates at or above the growth rate of Waterloo Region as shown in the chart above.

Population Pyramids



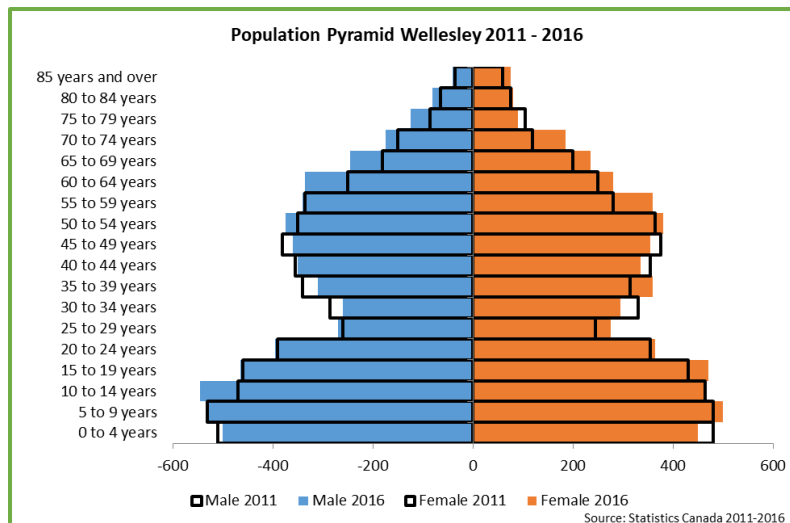
The population of Waterloo Region in 2016 was 535,154, a growth rate of 5.5% (28,058 people) since the previous census. The change in population composition between 2011 and 2016 does not indicate any major shifts in the population. There is a noticeable increase, however, in the number of residents who are 50 years and older as the baby boomers continue to move up the population pyramid. There is also a slight increase in adults between 20 and 34 years of age.



In 2016, the total population of the Township of North Dumfries was 10,215 representing an increase of 9.4% (881 people) from 2011. The median age is 41.7 years – down slightly from 42.1 years in 2011. There is a significant proportion of children and youth aged 0 to 19. However, the 20 to 24-year-old cohort is smaller than the 15 to 19-year cohort, and adults aged 25 to 29 are the smallest age cohort in the Township. There is a significant increase in adults over 30 years old in North Dumfries from the 2011

period. The two largest segments of the population in North Dumfries are the 50 to 54 and 55 to 59 cohorts. When compared with the 2011 data, we see that the population of older adults has increased in 2016. We also see a large increase in youth between the ages 0-9 suggesting that young families have settled in the Township.

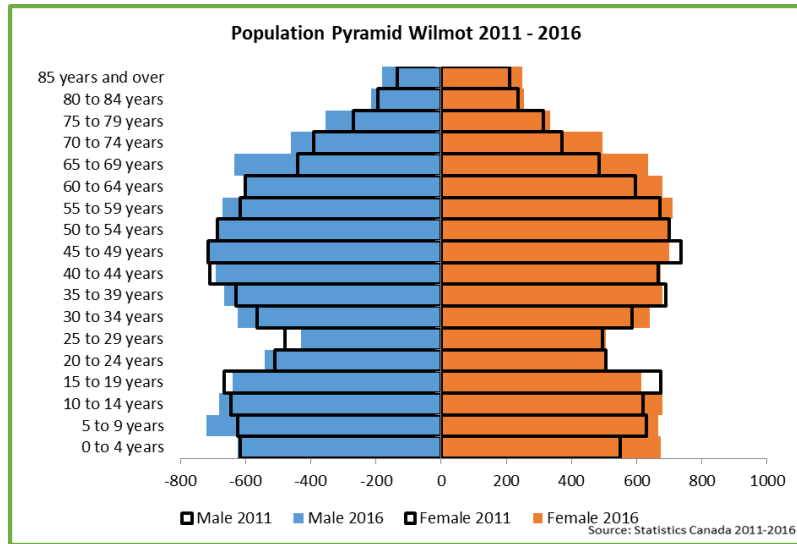
Residents in the Township of North Dumfries are aging. There are considerably fewer younger adults (aged 20 to 49) within the Township compared to the City. The demographics of the Township of North Dumfries are similar to the other Townships in the Waterloo Region which point to the rural Townships as being home to families.



The population of Wellesley in 2016 was 11,260, representing a change of 5.1% (545 people) from the previous census. Wellesley is shown to have a large youth population as well as an increase in older adults. The median age for Wellesley is 33.7 years – up slightly from 32.3 in the previous census.

The Township of Wellesley is the only municipality in the Region whose younger population is its most populous age-cohort. Like the other municipalities, we do see a spike in adults in their middle age, but the population of youth and younger adults significantly outweighs older cohorts. This would suggest there is a large proportion of families in Wellesley.

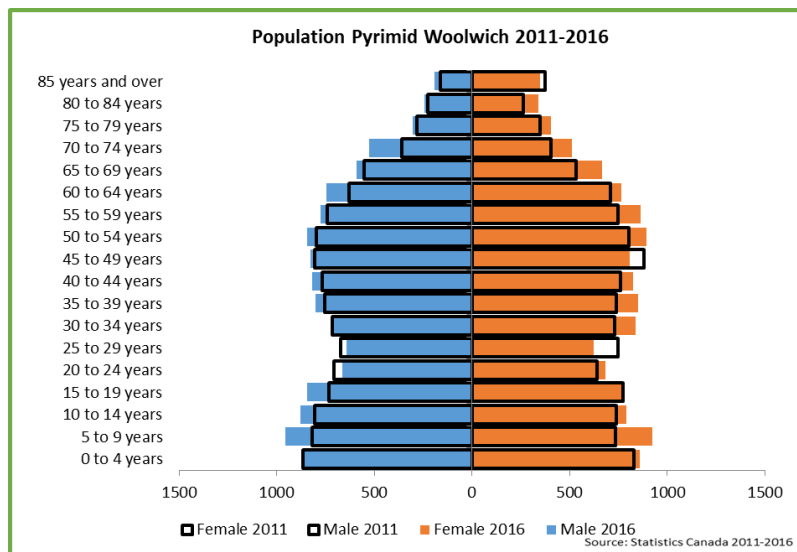
We also see a growing population of older adults from 2011 - 2016, as the baby boomers move up the population pyramid, this is a noticeable difference in Wellesley's population between the two census periods.



The population of Wilmot in 2016 was 20,545 representing an increase of 6.9% (1,320 people) since 2011. The median age is 41.4 years up from 40.4 in the previous census. Wilmot's population is aging, showing an increase in older adults since 2011.

There is a noticeable decline in young adults between ages 20-29, much like the other Townships. This can be attributed to the departure of students from the Township to pursue post-secondary education elsewhere, as well as outmigration for employment opportunities.

The large proportion of adults and youth suggests that Wilmot is populated by many families. The population growth seen among residents from ages 5-9 and 10-14 would also suggest that families have begun to migrate to Wilmot from elsewhere. Likewise, the aging population shows that older cohorts have increased since the 2011 data, indicating that older adults have remained in the Township or are moving here to reside.



The population of Woolwich in 2016 was 25,006, representing an increase of 8% (1,861 people). The median age is 39.4 years, an increase from 38.6 last census.

The change in composition between 2011 and 2016 shows an increase in adults and youth suggesting that there has been a migration of families to the Township. Similar to other Townships, we also see a lower population of young adults between 20-29 who have left for educational and employment purposes. The Township of Woolwich is also home to a larger population of adults over the age of 65 which follows similar trends with the Region and Townships.

1.2 Education: The following section is a breakdown of educational attainment and of post-secondary education

Key Findings

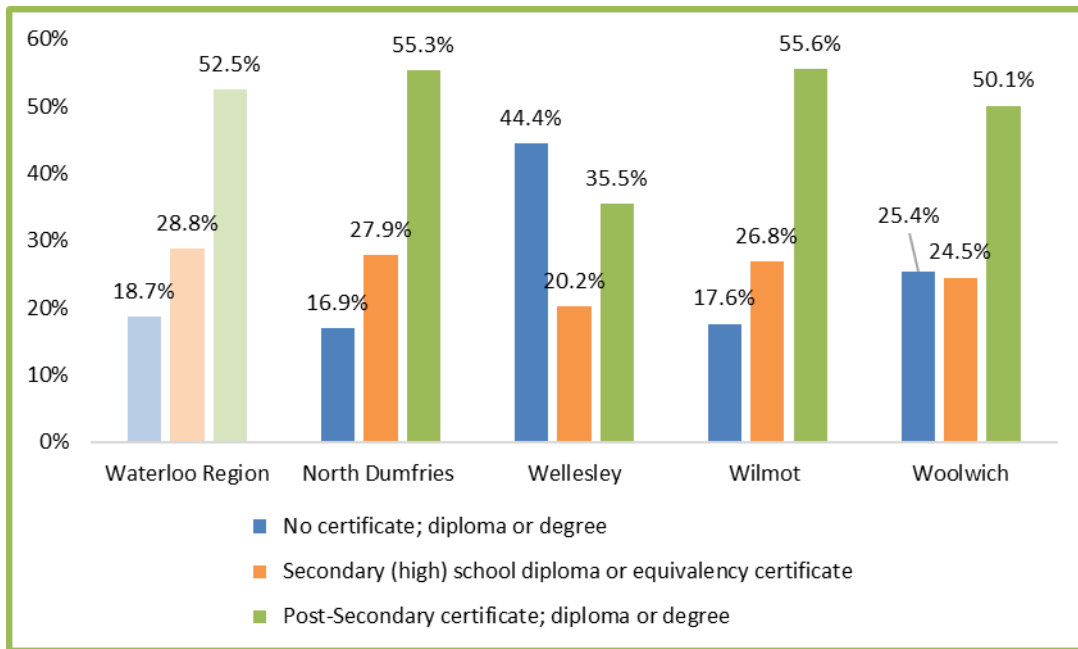
- **The attainment of secondary school education is consistent across the Region and the Townships**
- **All of the Townships (excluding Wellesley) show a high attainment of university level education**
- **The number of Residents in Wellesley and Woolwich who have no formal certificate of education exceeds the Regional level**

Waterloo Region

Across the Region, we see that the majority of residents have attained some form of post-secondary education (52.5 percent). An additional 28.8 percent have achieved at least a secondary school certificate. While we generally see high levels of education, almost 20 percent of residents have no formal certificate of any kind.

When we examine the breakdown of post-secondary education, we see that 23.4 percent of the population in the Region has university-level education while 21.2 percent have college-level education. Nearly all of the Townships have a higher proportion of residents who have a college education, versus a university education. The Region overall has a lower proportion of residents educated in the trades or an apprenticeship (6.3 percent) than residents in the Townships.

Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree for the population aged 15+



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

North Dumfries

North Dumfries has a high proportion of residents who have earned a post-secondary certificate at 55.3 percent. The proportion of residents who have “no certificate” is 16.9 percent.

Wellesley

The proportion of residents in Wellesley who have a post-secondary certificate is 35.5 percent. Wellesley’s proportion of residents who have a secondary school certificate is 20.1 percent. The proportion of residents who have “no certificate” is 44.4 percent.

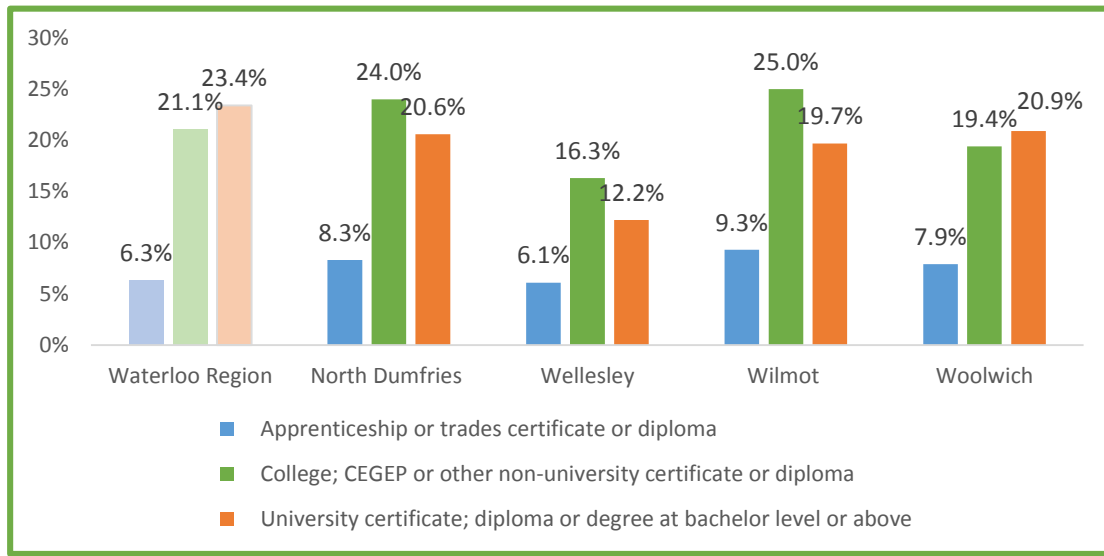
Wilmot

The proportion of residents who have some post-secondary education is 55.6 percent. The proportion of residents whose highest certification is high school equivalency is 26.8 percent. The proportion of residents who have “no certification” is 15.6 percent.

Woolwich

The Township of Woolwich has a high proportion of its residents with post-secondary education at 50.1 percent. The proportion of residents who hold a secondary school certificate is 24.5 percent. Woolwich is the only other Township besides Wellesley that has a higher proportion of residents with “no certificate” than with secondary school education at 25.4 percent. This may be a reflection of the Mennonite population who generally finish school at age 14.

Post-Secondary Achievement 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

North Dumfries

When we break down levels of post-secondary education, we see that 20.6 percent of the population has university-level education. The proportion of residents who have college-level education is 24 percent, which is higher than those who went to university. North Dumfries also shows a high proportion of residents who have an apprenticeship or training in the trades at 8.3 percent.

Wellesley

As shown in the chart above, the breakdown of post-secondary education attainment in Wellesley shows that 12.2 percent of the population has university-level education, 16.3 percent of the population has college-level education, and 6.1 percent has training in an apprenticeship or trade.

Wilmot

When we analyze the numbers of residents who have earned a post-secondary certificate, we see that in Wilmot the attainment of university-level education among residents is 19.7 percent. Those who have college-level education represent 25.1 percent of the population. The proportion of residents who have training in an apprenticeship or a trade is 9.1 percent of the population.

Woolwich

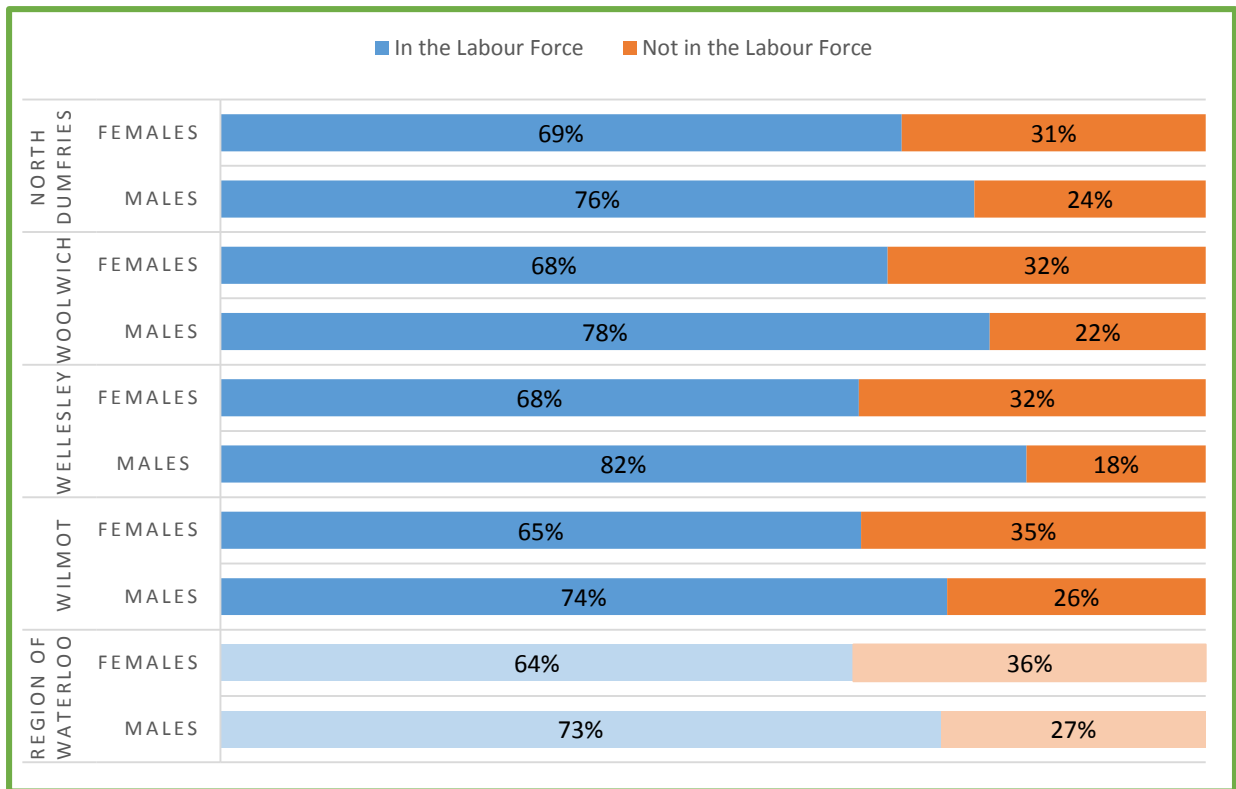
Woolwich has a high proportion of residents who have university-level education at 20.9 percent. The proportion of residents who have college-level education is 19.4 percent. The proportion of residents who have training in trades or an apprenticeship is 6.3 percent.

1.3 Employment: This section examines labour force participation

Key Findings

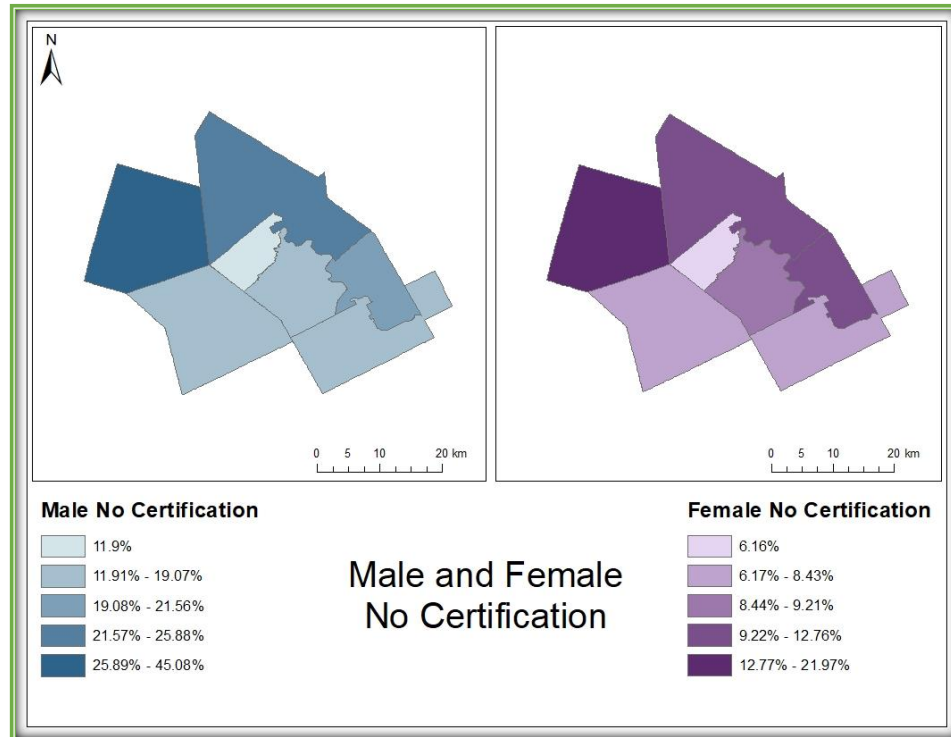
- **Wellesley has the highest labour force participation rate in the Region among males and females**
- **The Townships all show a higher labour participation rate for females than the Region's Cities**
- **North Dumfries shows the smallest gap in labour participation between males and females in the Region**

Labour Force Participation



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Statistics Canada defines Labour Force participation as: Whether a person aged 15 years and over was employed, unemployed or not in the labour force during the week of Sunday, May 1 to Saturday, May 7, 2016.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

North Dumfries

The participation rate of males in the labour force is 76 percent. The participation rate of females in the labour force is 69 percent. The gap between males and females participating in the labour force in North Dumfries is 7 percent.

Wellesley

The participation rate of males in the labour force is 82 percent. The participation rate of females in the labour force is 68 percent. Male participation in the labour force in Wellesley is 14 percent greater than women.

Wilmot

The participation rate of males in the labour force is 74 percent. The participation rate of females in the labour force is 65 percent. Male participation in the labour force in Wilmot is 9 percent greater than women.

Woolwich

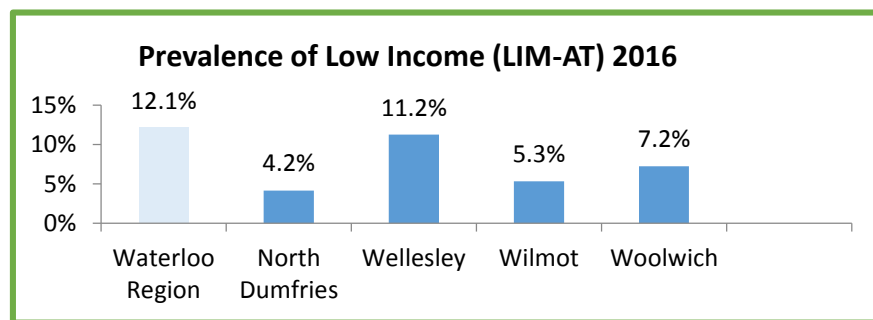
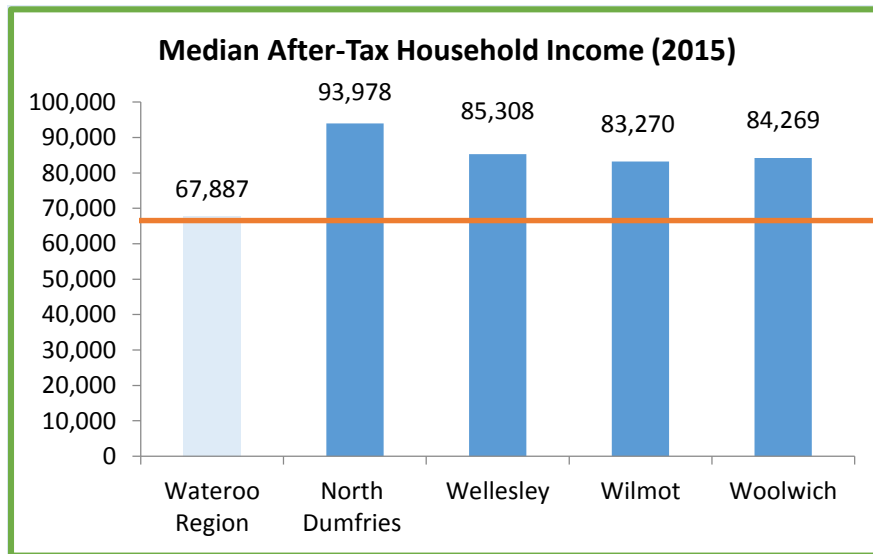
The participation rate of males in the labour force is 78 percent. The participation rate of females in the labour force is 68 percent. Male participation in the labour force in Woolwich is 10 percent greater than women.

1.4 Income: This section examines median after-tax household income and prevalence of low- income

Key Findings

- The median household income is higher in the Townships than the Region
- All of the Townships have a lower proportion of residents living on low income than the Region (12.14 percent) but still represent a noteworthy proportion of the population. Wellesley has the highest percentage at 11.2 percent while North Dumfries has the lowest at 4.2 percent.

Median After-Tax Income and Prevalence of Low Income



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Breakdown by age of those who are living on a low-income

	North Dumfries	Wellesley	Wilmot	Woolwich
0 to 17	85 (20.2%)	555 (43.9%)	315 (29.3%)	600 (33.9%)
18 to 64	245 (58.3%)	540 (42.7%)	595 (55.3%)	870 (49.3%)
65 and over	85 (20.2%)	170 (13.4%)	170 (15.8%)	295 (16.7%)
Total	415 (100%)	1,265 (100%)	1,080 (100%)	1,765 (100%)

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Region of Waterloo

The Townships exceed the median income figures found in the Region showing that there is a contrast when comparing the urban and rural communities. In general, the Townships have a lower percentage of residents in low income categories when compared to the Region which has 12.1 percent of the overall population living on low income. However, living on a low income is a reality for many people in the Townships. While poverty is not unique to rural communities it is accentuated by the vast geography and frequent lack of resources such as, public transportation and other services.

In Wellesley, Wilmot, and Woolwich it is children and youth who make up the highest proportion of residents living on a low income (ages 0 to 17). Whereas in North Dumfries the highest proportion of low income individuals are age 65 and over.

North Dumfries

In North Dumfries, 416 people are living on a low income which represents 4.2 percent of the population. Of those living on a low income, 85 (20.2 percent) are aged 0 - 17, 245 (58.3 percent) are aged 18-64, and 85 (20.2 percent) are 65 years and over.

Wellesley

In Wellesley, 1,265 people are living on a low income which represents 11.2 percent of the population. Of those living on a low income, 555 (43.9 percent) are aged 0 -17, 540 (42.7 percent) are aged 18 - 64, and 170 (13.4 percent) are 65 years and over.

Wilmot

In Wilmot, 1,080 people are living on a low income which represents 5.3 percent of the population. Of those living on a low income, 315 (29.3 percent) are aged 0 - 17, 595 (55.3 percent) are aged 18 - 65, and 170 (15.5 percent) are 65 years and over.

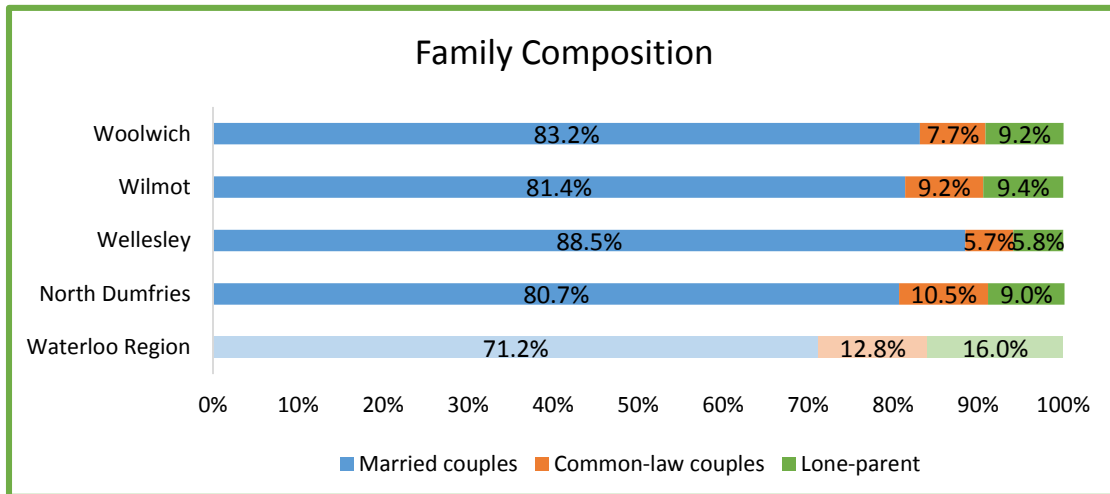
Woolwich

In Woolwich, 1,765 people are living on a low income which represents 7.2 percent of the population. Of those living on a low income, 600 are aged 0 - 17 (33.9 percent), 870 are aged 18 - 64, and 295 (16.7 percent) are 65 years and over.

1.5 Family Composition: Refers to the classification of census families according to the number and/or age groups of children at home

Key Findings

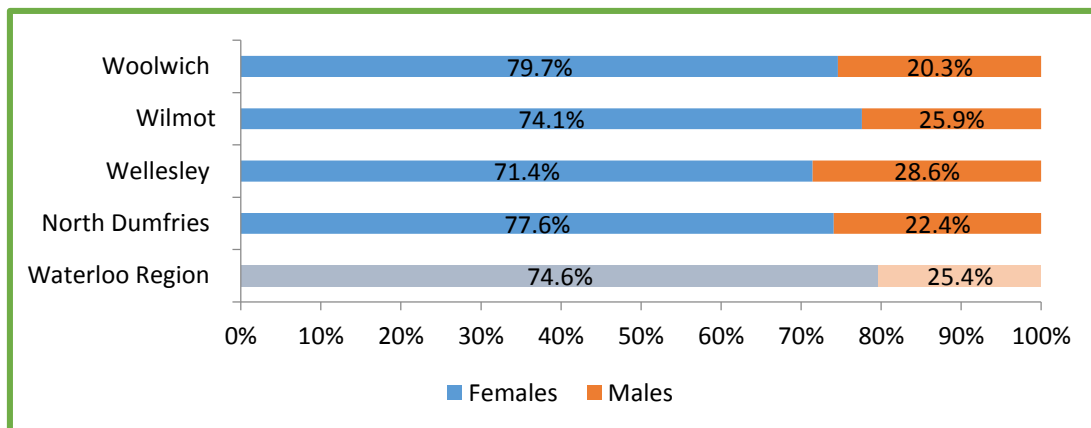
- North Dumfries has the highest proportion of lone-parent households with 3 or more children
- Wellesley has the highest proportion of male-led lone-parent households in the Region representing 28.6 percent of the lone-parent families in the Township
- Wellesley has much larger families, both two-parent and lone-parent households, than the rest of the Townships and the Region



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

The composition of families is shifting. In 2016, as with provincial and national trends, legal marriages were on the decline, while common-law relationships and divorce rates were increasing. Common-law families and lone-parent families are becoming more prevalent in Waterloo Region – including the Townships. Of the three types of families, the most prevalent family composition is married couple families, however, this demographic is growing at a slower rate than the other two family types.

Lone-Parents by Gender



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

The female-led lone-parent family has remained fairly consistent over the years but the proportion of male-led lone-parent families is continuing to rise.

Family Characteristics of Lone-Parent Households

	Waterloo Region	North Dumfries	Wellesley	Wilmot	Woolwich
1 child	14,070	140	35	335	390
2 children	7,240	100	30	190	200
3 or more children	2,685	35	5	65	60

Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Region of Waterloo

In Waterloo Region, 71.2 percent of all families are run by a married couple, 12.8 percent of families are run by a common-law couple, and 16.0 percent are run by a lone-parent. There are 23,995 lone-parent households in Waterloo Region. Of these, 19,120 (79.7 percent) are female-led and 4,875 (20.3 percent) are male-led. The Region overall has a lower proportion of male-led lone-parent households than what is found in the Townships.

In Waterloo Region, 14,070 of the lone-parent families consist of one child, 7,240 consist of two children, and 2,685 consist of three or more children.

North Dumfries

In North Dumfries, there are 3,060 families. Broken down by family composition, 80.7 percent of families are led by a married couple, 10.5 percent are led by a common-law couple, and 9 percent are led by a lone-parent. Of lone-parent families, 200 (74.1 percent) are female-led, and 70 (25.9 percent) are male-led.

One hundred and forty of lone-parent households consist of one child, 100 consist of two children, and 35 families consist of three or more children.

Wellesley

There are a total of 875 families in the Township of Wellesley. 88.5 percent of these are led by a married couple, 5.7 percent are led by a common-law couple, and 5.8 percent are led by a lone-parent. Of those lone-parent led households, 125 (71.4 percent) are female-led, and 50 (28.6 percent) are male-led.

In Wellesley, 35 of the lone-parent households consist of one child, 30 consist of two children, and 5 consist of three or more children.

Wilmot

In Wilmot, there are 6,230 families. Broken down by family composition, 81.4 percent of all families are led by a married couple, 9.2 percent are led by a common-law couple, and 9.4 percent are led by a lone-parent.

Of the lone-parent households, 450 (77.6 percent) of these are female-led, and 130 (22.4 percent) of these are male-led. There are 335 lone-parent households with one child, 190 with two children, and 65 with three or more children.

Woolwich

There are a total of 7,065 families in the Township of Woolwich. Broken down by family composition, 83.2 percent are led by a married couple, 7.7 percent were led by a common-law couple, and 9.2 percent were led by a lone-parent. Of the lone-parent households, 485 (74.5 percent) are female-led, and 165 (25.4 percent) are male-led.

There are 390 lone-parent households with one child, 200 with two children, and 60 with three or more children.

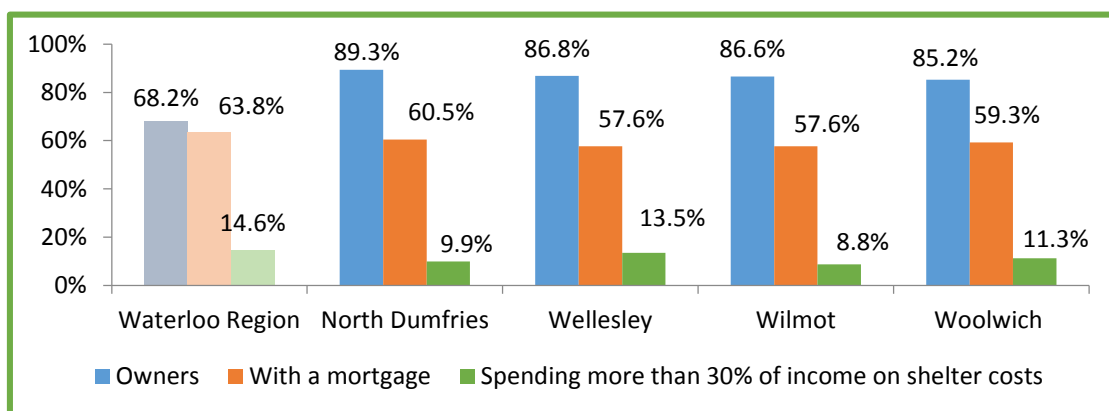
1.6 Housing Affordability: This section examines housing affordability and suitability in the Townships

Statistics Canada gathers data on housing affordability. To be considered affordable, a household should spend no more than 30% of its income on housing costs. When an individual household spends 30% or more of their total household income on shelter expenses it is defined as a housing affordability problem. The housing affordability indicator identifies a population that is under financial strain due to their housing costs.

Key Findings

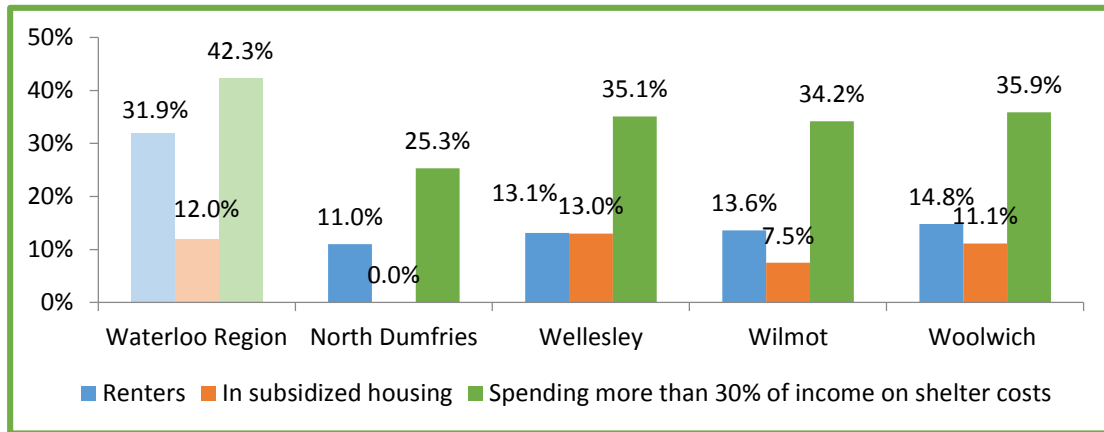
- **Home Ownership is more prevalent in the Townships**
- **Approximately 10% of homeowners pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing**
- **Over a quarter of people who rent in the Townships pay more than 30 percent of their income on housing**
- **Among the Townships, residents of Wellesley are more likely to identify a lack of enough suitable housing in the municipality**

Home Owners Spending more than 30% of Income on Housing



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Renters Spending more than 30% of Income on Housing



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Region of Waterloo

In Waterloo Region, approximately 68 percent of housing is occupied by owners. 63.8 percent of owners have a mortgage, and 14.6 percent of owners are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

In the Region, 31.9 percent of households are occupied by renters. Of those renting, 12 percent are living in subsidized housing, and 42.3 percent are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

North Dumfries

In North Dumfries, 89.3 percent of housing is occupied by owners. Of those owners, 60.5 percent have a mortgage, and 9.9 percent spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Renters occupy 11 percent of housing in North Dumfries. Of those renting, none live in subsidized housing and 25.3 percent spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Wellesley

In Wellesley, approximately 86.8 percent of housing is occupied by owners. Of those owners, 57.6 percent have a mortgage, and 13.5 percent spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Renters occupy 13.1 percent of housing in Wellesley. Of those renting, 13 percent live in subsidized housing, and 35.1 percent spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Wilmot

In Wilmot, approximately 86.6 of housing is occupied by owners. Of those owners, 57.6 percent have a mortgage, and 8.8 percent spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Renters occupy 13.6 percent of housing in Wilmot. Of those renting, 7.5 percent live in subsidized housing, and 34.2 percent spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Woolwich

In Woolwich, 85.2 percent of housing is occupied by owners. Of those owners, 59.3 percent have a mortgage, and 11.3 percent spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Renters occupy 14.8 percent of housing in Woolwich. Of those renting, 11.1 percent live in subsidized housing, and 35.9 percent spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

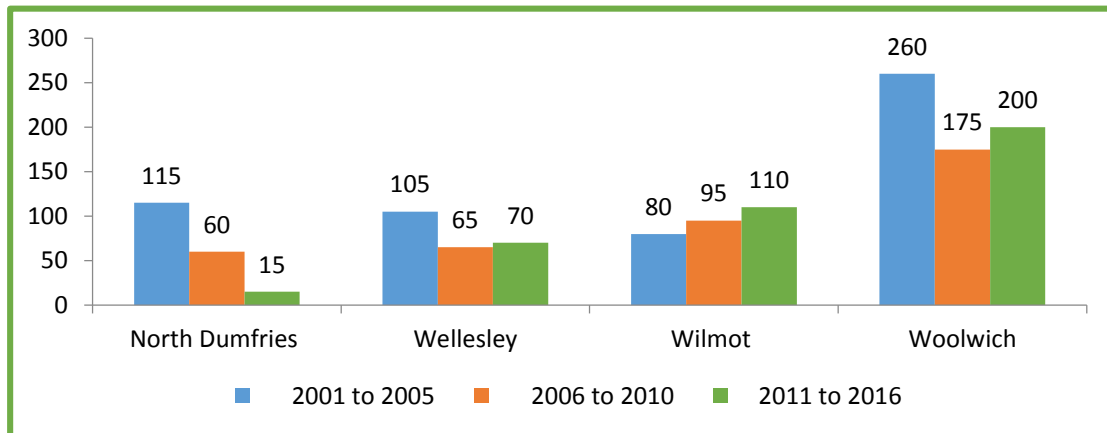
According to Statistics Canada, Household size refers to the number of persons in a private household. Housing suitability refers to whether a private household is living in suitable accommodations according to the National Occupancy Standard (NOS); that is, whether the dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household. A household is deemed to be living in suitable accommodations if its dwelling has enough bedrooms, as calculated using the NOS.

1.7 Immigration: An examination of immigration patterns. An immigrant is defined as someone who has moved here from another country during their lifetime

Key Findings

- **The Region is experiencing an increase in immigration, but this is mostly centred in the Cities**
- **While the Townships' immigration numbers may be small compared to the city centres – it is important to recognize the important role of the Townships have in attracting, retaining and integrating newcomers**

Immigration Patterns from 2001 - 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census – 2016 Census

Waterloo Region

In Waterloo Region, there are approximately 119,335 immigrants. This represents 22.6 percent of the total population. The proportion of immigrants in Ontario is 29.1 percent, therefore the Region does not quite match the provincial average. Of the immigrant population in the Region, 48.5 percent are male and 51.5 percent are female. While this data represents all immigrants, including those who have settled here before 1981, data shows that there has been a steady increase in the proportion of immigrants in recent years. Since the 2001 census, there has been an increase of over 14,000 immigrants every census period. The immigrant population in Waterloo Region is growing.

North Dumfries

In North Dumfries, there are approximately 1,215 immigrants. This represents 12 percent of the total population of North Dumfries. Of these immigrants, 49.0 percent are male, and 51.0 percent were female.

When we look at the last three census periods, we see that 115 immigrants arrived between 2001 and 2005, 60 immigrants arrived between 2006 and 2010, and 15 immigrants arrived between 2011 and 2016.

Wellesley

In the Township of Wellesley, there are approximately 720 immigrants. This represents 6.4 percent of the total population of Wellesley. Of this population, 50.7 percent are male, and 49.3 percent are female.

When we look at the last three census periods, we see that 105 immigrants arrived between 2001 and 2005, 65 immigrants arrived between 2006 and 2010, and 70 immigrants arrived between 2011 and 2016.

Wilmot

In the Township of Wilmot, there are 2,100 immigrants. This represents 10.3 percent of the total population of Wilmot. Of this population, 47 percent are male, and 53 percent are female.

When we look at the last three census periods, we see that 80 immigrants arrived between 2001 and 2005, 95 immigrants arrived between 2006 and 2010, and 110 immigrants arrived between 2011 and 2016.

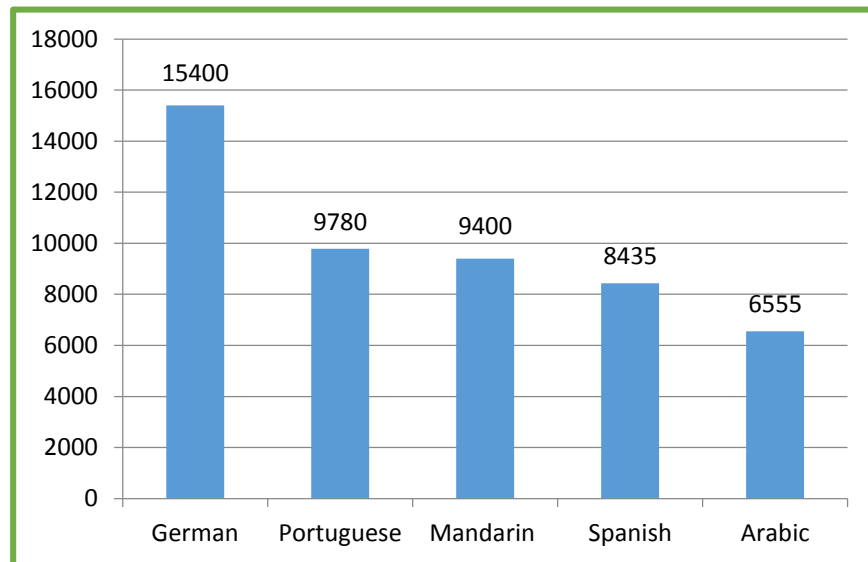
Woolwich

In the Township of Woolwich there are approximately 2,625 immigrants. This represents 10.7 percent of the total population of Woolwich. Of this population, 48 percent are male, and 52 percent are female.

When we look at the last three census periods, we see that 260 immigrants arrived between 2001 and 2005, 175 immigrants arrived between 2006 and 2010, and 200 immigrants arrived between 2011 and 2016.

1.8 Language: An examination of mother tongue and languages spoken at home

Waterloo Region Mother Tongue, 2016



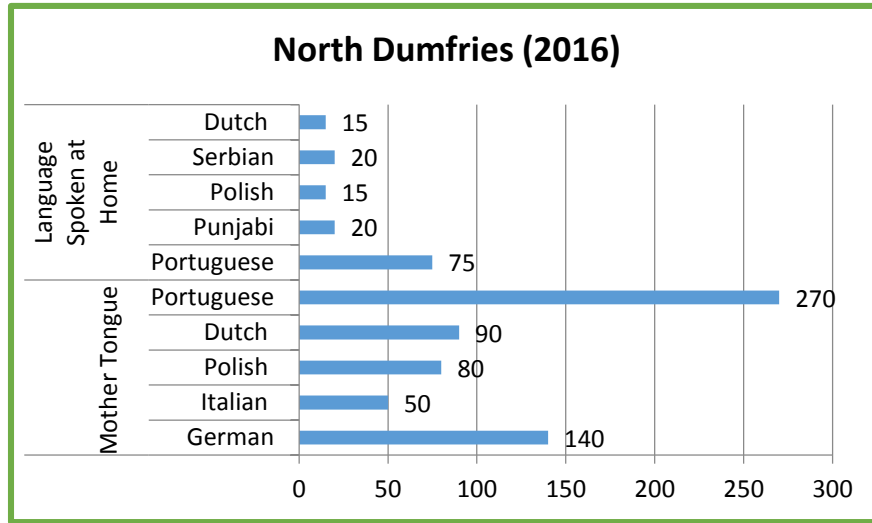
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Region of Waterloo

In Waterloo Region, the 5 most common languages, other than English and French, as determined by their mother tongue, are: German, Portuguese, Mandarin, Spanish, and Arabic.

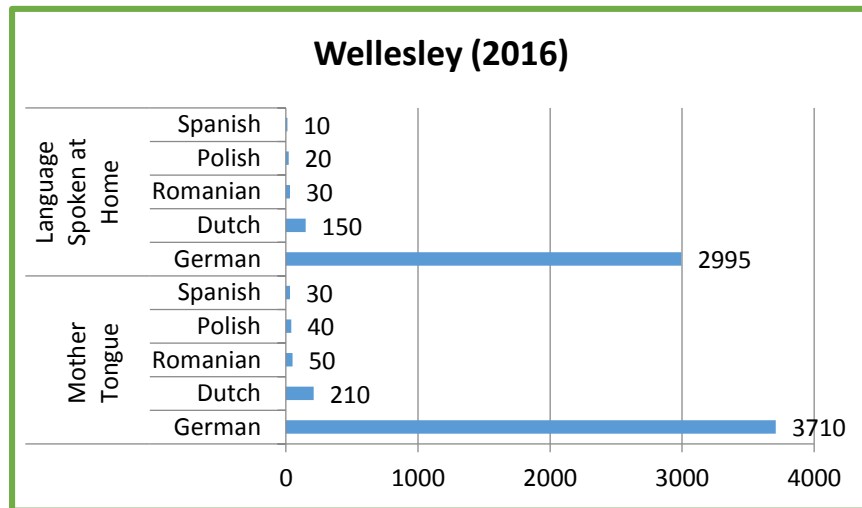
There is a small proportion of residents in the Townships whose mother tongue is French. According to Statistics Canada Census Data, there are no residents in the Townships who have claimed an Indigenous language as their mother tongue.

Language Spoken at Home and Mother Tongue



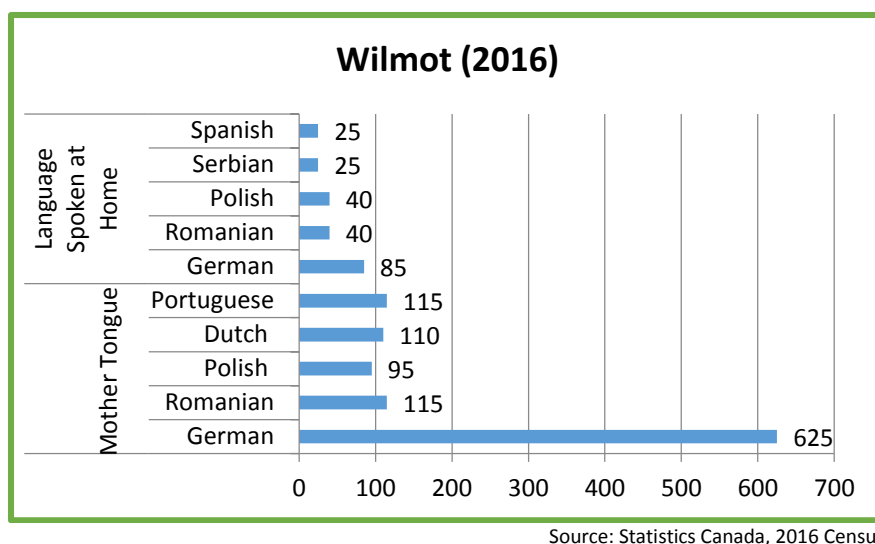
Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

North Dumfries differs from the other Townships significantly in that its major language besides one of the official languages is Portuguese. As such, North Dumfries has a different composition of residents than the remaining Townships.

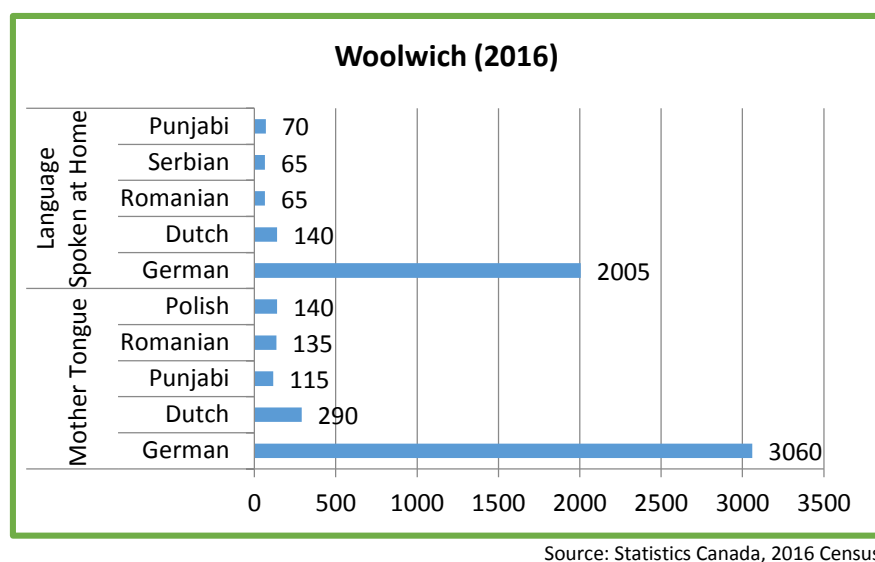


Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Wellesley has the largest population of residents whose mother tongue is German at 3,710. This figure represents over 30 percent of the population. In addition to this, a large proportion of these individuals report that German is the language that they speak most often at home. However, this should not overshadow the fact that there is also a significant community who speak Dutch.



In Wilmot, we see that there is a large presence of residents whose mother tongue is German. However, unlike other Townships in the Region, only some of these residents indicate that it is the language that they speak most often at home.

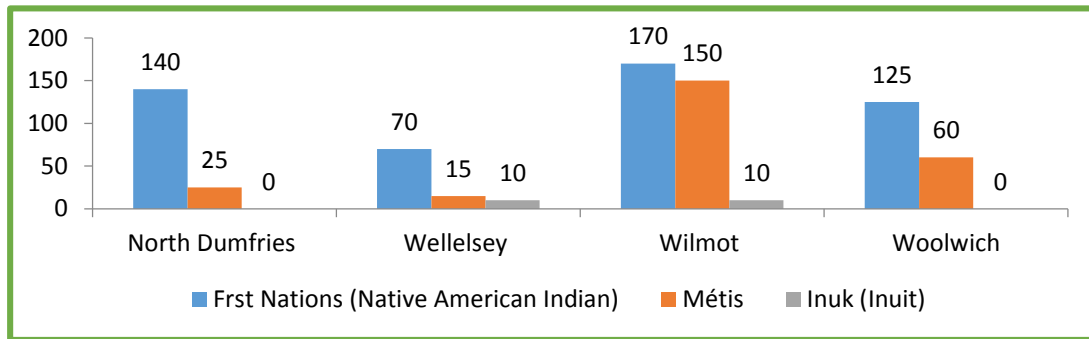


Woolwich maintains the second highest population of residents whose mother tongue is German. As with Wellesley, there is a large proportion of these individuals who speak German most often at home. Likewise, Woolwich also has a significant population of Dutch speakers. Where Woolwich differs is that there are also a substantial number of individuals who speak Romanian, Serbian, and even more common, Punjabi. These populations must not be overlooked due to the presence of large German-speaking communities.

1.9 Aboriginal Identity

According to Statistics Canada, Aboriginal identity refers to whether the person identified with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. This includes those who are First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who are Registered or Treaty Indians (that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada), and/or those who have membership in a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada.

Single Aboriginal Responses, 2016



Source: Statistics Canada, 2016 Census

Region of Waterloo

Statistics Canada data does not indicate that there are any residents in the Region whose mother tongue is an Aboriginal language. There is, however, a considerable presence of those who have an Indigenous origin. In the Region, the largest Aboriginal presence is those who identify as First Nations (Native American Indian) who are 5,525 in number. Next, those who identify as Metis are 2,825 in number. Additionally, 175 residents identify as Inuk (Inuit).

North Dumfries

In North Dumfries, there are 140 residents who identify as First Nations (Native American Indian) followed by 25 residents who identify as Metis and 0 who identify as Inuk (Inuit).

Wellesley

In Wellesley, there are 70 residents who identify First Nations (Native American Indian) followed by 15 residents who identify as Metis and 10 who identify as Inuk (Inuit).

Wilmot

In Wilmot, there are 170 residents who identify as First Nations (Native American Indian) followed by 150 residents who identify as Metis and 10 who identify as Inuk (Inuit).

Woolwich

In Woolwich, there are 125 residents who identify as First Nations (Native American Indian) followed by 60 residents who identify as Metis and 0 who identify as Inuk (Inuit).

2.0 Needs Assessment Background

Woolwich Community Health Centre (WCHC) conducts a community assessment every 4 to 5 years as part of its strategic planning cycle. This current assessment was conducted in partnership with Community Care Concepts (CCC), North Dumfries Community Health Centre, Woolwich Community Services (WCS) and Wilmot Family Resource Centre (WFRC) over the Summer of 2019. This partnership was established to provide a shared commitment to receive feedback from North Dumfries, Wilmot, Wellesley and Woolwich Townships from a variety of perspectives as well as a shared commitment to using this assessment to guide our work.

A steering committee was established to guide the assessment process. The steering committee includes members from North Dumfries, Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot Townships, community agency representatives, a WCHC board member and staff from WCHC. The steering committee met regularly throughout the process.

The Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries was contracted to compile and analyze Focus Group results, Census data, and the findings of the Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey to produce the *2019 Community Wellbeing Assessment*.

Methodology

The Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey was conducted in the Spring of 2018 by Wellbeing Waterloo Region. It was designed to gather citizen perceptions on a variety of topics found in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing's (CIW) eight domains of wellbeing. The survey collected responses from approximately 5,000 people in Waterloo Region and was then weighted by sex, age grouping, and municipality to match the 2016 Census profile (N = 439,750) for those residents 16 years of age and older.

Using the Community Wellbeing Survey findings as a tool for discussion – the community leaders from the Steering Committee conducted a total of 17 Focus Groups with priority populations across the four Townships. The steering committee identified the most significant information about wellbeing in the community from each of the eight interconnected domains outlined in the CIW framework. These eight domains are: Community Vitality, Democratic Engagement, Education, Environment, Healthy Populations, Leisure and Culture, Living Standards, and Time Use.

The Steering Committee selected five of the eight domains and two key indicators from each of the selected domains to prompt discussion about perceptions of wellbeing in the Townships. Together the findings from the Community Wellbeing Survey and the Focus Group findings form the basis for this report and will be used to help better understand citizens' perceptions of wellbeing in the Townships and to improve wellbeing in Waterloo Region as a whole.

In analyzing these two sets of data, this report aims to highlight key themes from the experiences, feelings and perceptions that respondents shared in the surveys and in the Focus Groups about their current state of wellbeing and the factors that positively or negatively impact this. Individual's perceptions are "just their perceptions" and in this study are not substantiated by hard statistics about

crime rates, traffic counts, or urban sprawl. However, having large numbers of citizens (5,000) complete surveys and a smaller number of community members (105 individuals in 17 groups) describe their experiences of living in the rural municipalities of Waterloo Region in Focus Groups, is extremely valuable for service providers, funders and policy makers.

Focus Groups are especially valuable for providing details and examples that elaborate on responses to the survey questions and can bring up emerging trends that were not anticipated when the survey was designed. Focus Group, or “qualitative”, data including the responses in this assessment also provide personal accounts that are more compelling and specific than survey, or “quantitative”, responses. That is, verbal reports by citizens in Focus Groups can provide clear, relatable guideposts for service providers and decision makers who strive to be responsive to the constituents in their communities.

This report has organized the material under the headings of the six domains selected for this report from the CIW. These domains are: Community Vitality, Healthy Populations, Leisure and Culture, Living Standards, Time Use, and Environment. As noted, the Steering Committee prioritized the top five domains for the Focus Groups and chose to omit Democratic Engagement, Environment, and Education to ensure that Focus Group discussions centered on key areas of influence. That being said, several Focus Groups willingly discussed their perceptions of the Environment. As a result, this domain has been incorporated into the findings of this report. Organizing the report in this way allows for compiling results in accordance with the current research priorities of each municipality. This organization also allows for readers to understand the unique feelings of wellbeing held by residents in the rural Townships.

The results from the CIW report published here have been taken from two sources. First, findings from the *Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey: A Prompt for Discussion* have been included. The Region of Waterloo published this comprehensive report which provides key figures and infographics in a concise and clear manner for members of the public. As such, these findings have been used to give a brief outline of how each domain is perceived across the Region.




Next, we have compiled more detailed results found in the CIW’s publication *Wellbeing in Waterloo Region: A Summary of Results from the CIW Community Wellbeing Survey (2019)*. This publication offers a more in-depth review of respondents and their perceptions of wellbeing. Here, there is a division of results into different subcategories such as by municipality, age, income, and living arrangement. Such data provides a layered analysis of how respondents in the Region understand their wellbeing. Key findings from this document have been included in this report so that readers can understand how the Townships in Waterloo Region have fared in the Survey.






Here to support the findings of the Survey is some of the commentary offered by residents through Focus Groups conducted by community leaders in Waterloo Region’s Townships. The structure of these Focus Groups follows the structure of the Survey in that they were organized in accordance with the domains. This applies to how the questions were constructed and to how the results have been presented here. We conducted a total of 17 Focus Groups (105 participants in total) bringing together participants from various towns and hamlets within the four Townships. The Focus Groups included the

voices of different interest groups ranging from seniors, to young farmers, low-income individuals and others.

When including responses from the Focus Groups, readers will find that we have not included every group that we met with in each domain. We highlighted key examples to emphasize the points shared by participants. This is intended to avoid redundancies. For example, nearly every group highlighted how they value their rural way of life. In such instances, we only included one or two statements from participants in order to avoid being repetitive. That being said, careful attention has been paid to making sure that there are a variety of voices being heard and heard clearly.

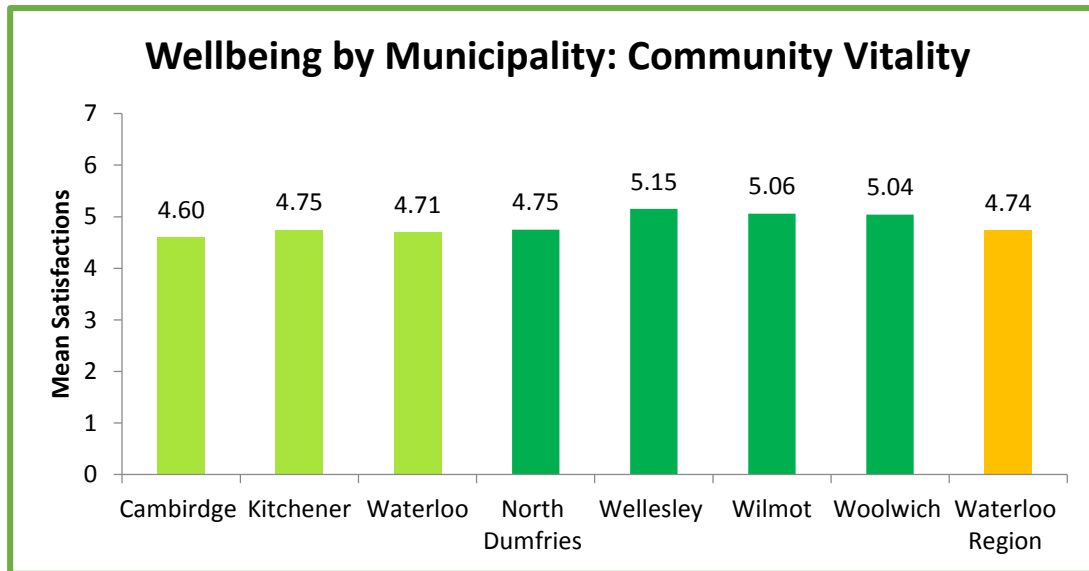
Overall Findings - 2019 Waterloo Region Community Wellbeing Survey

CIW Indicator	Above Average Well-being	Below Average Well-being
Community Vitality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More confidence in institutions • Greater trust in others • Feel help is available if needed • Strong sense of belonging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less civic engagement • More socially isolated • Lower needs fulfillment • Experience discrimination • Feel less safe walking alone after dark
Healthy Populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better self-rated physical and mental health • Higher perceived quality of health care services • Higher perceived access to health services • Eat healthy meals more often 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to experience negative impacts due to mental health issues • More likely to experience negative impacts from substance abuse • Participate less in vigorous or light exercise
Leisure and Culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in more arts and cultural activities, and in social leisure activities • Use community recreation centres, libraries and arts facilities more • Perceive better access to recreation and culture facilities (easy to get to/are welcoming) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in more home-based and computer-based leisure activities • Use parks, playgrounds, and trails less often • Perceive recreation and cultural facilities as less accessible

Living Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to have regular weekday schedule • Have better job fit • Less likely to work long hours • Have enough money to buy things they needed and wanted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work at multiple jobs • Lower job security • More people could not pay their mortgage or rent on time • Work interferes with personal life
Time Use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to have flexible work schedules • More time to: Keep in shape; Nurture spiritual side; Be with children; form/sustain relationships • Higher perceived work-life balance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More often feel rushed • Have longer commutes • Less time to: Get enough sleep; Prepare healthy meals; Be with partner; Be together with family Socialize • Work interferes more with personal life
Democratic Engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to attend local or regional council meeting • More likely to participate in local event supporting community • Feel they have good understanding of important issues in Waterloo Region • Feel they are well informed about politics/government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to participate in public demonstration or protest • More likely to join social media on local issue • Feel they have less say in what government does • Feel they are ignored by public officials
Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceive quality of nature/environment as higher • See more opportunities to enjoy nature in community • More likely to reuse and recycle materials, and to reduce waste • More likely to walk or bike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceive air quality and water quality as lower • Perceive traffic congestion as worse • Less likely to conserve energy or water • Less likely to purchase local foods
Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher perceived availability of courses of interest • More likely to have taken courses to improve skills or prepare for job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower perceived availability of formal education opportunities • Courses seen as offered at inconvenient times • Courses seen as too expensive

2.1.0 Community Vitality: This domain looks at our quality of life with regard to the communities we live in. It tells us what is happening in our neighbourhoods, how safe we feel, and whether or not we are engaged in community activities or becoming socially isolated

Definition: “Social engagement, social support, community safety, attitudes towards others and community”



Source: Wellbeing in Waterloo Region 2019

The Region’s overall satisfaction with Community Vitality averages at 4.74 out of 7. Among the Townships, Wellesley ranks first with a score of 5.15, Wilmot is second with a score of 5.06, Woolwich is third with a score of 5.04, and North Dumfries is fourth with a score of 4.75. All of the Townships rank higher than the Regional average.

Across the Region, 25 percent of respondents feel that they lack companionship. In addition to this, 19 percent of respondents indicate that they feel isolated from others in the community. Seventy percent of respondents indicate that they have trust in their neighbours. In addition to this, 80 percent of residents feel safe from crime when walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark.

Community Vitality also measures how respondents interact with the institutions and services in daily life. While more than half of residents have confidence in the services and institutions in their communities with 62.4 percent indicating that they have confidence in the health care system and 68.5 percent reporting that they have confidence in the Waterloo Region Police Service. These figures indicate that residents believe there is room for improvements in these important areas.

2.1.1 Isolation

There is a strong relationship between income and whether or not one has feelings of isolation. For example, only 32.4 percent of respondents who earn \$10,000 or less indicate that they feel “less isolated,” whereas 78.4 percent of respondents who earn \$150,000 or more indicate that they feel “less isolated.” There is a linear relationship between income and isolation.

Among the Townships, Wilmot ranks first with 83.3 percent of respondents feeling “less isolated.” Woolwich ranks second with 79.8 percent of respondents feeling “less isolated”; Wellesley ranks third with 73.6 percent of respondents feeling less isolated, and North Dumfries ranks fourth with 66.1 percent of respondents feeling “less isolated.”

2.1.2 Safety

The survey asked participants how safe they feel when walking home alone at night in one’s municipality. This question has been separated into two: feelings of safety in one’s neighbourhood, and feelings of safety in the downtown area.

The results of this question show that 4.8 percent of respondents from Woolwich indicate that they feel unsafe in their neighbourhood when walking home alone at night; 4.0 percent of respondents from Wilmot indicated that they feel unsafe in their neighbourhood walking home alone at night; 3.7 percent of respondents from North Dumfries indicated they feel unsafe in their neighbourhood walking home alone at night; and 0.6 percent of respondents from Wellesley indicate that they feel unsafe in their neighbourhood walking home alone at night.

Regarding feelings of safety in the downtown centre, 12.3 percent of respondents from North Dumfries indicate that they feel unsafe in their municipality’s downtown when walking alone at night; 10.2 percent of respondents from Wilmot indicate that they feel unsafe in their downtown walking alone at night; 9.7 percent of respondents from Woolwich indicate that they feel unsafe in their downtown when walking alone at night; and 3.2 percent of respondents from Wellesley indicate that they feel unsafe in their downtown when walking alone at night.

2.1.3 Focus Groups

For Community Vitality, Focus Group participants emphasized that they have strong feelings of belonging in their community. Respondents value their neighbours and the feeling of safety that they provide. This sense of community was expressed through feelings of friendliness and openness among residents: this is true of lifelong residents and newly arrived residents. However, while these connections are valued, participants indicate that a lack of anonymity and privacy in a small community can be an issue when seeking health services. In particular, those seeking mental health services feel that the social stigma associated with mental illness, or seeking counselling, makes the lack of anonymity a problem.

In general, participants did not indicate any strong feelings of isolation, with the exception of some low-income residents, who feel marginalized in their community. The CIW does not clearly define the

term "isolation," however, it is understood to refer to feelings of social isolation. Some respondents talked about people being "lonely" but felt the rural community was accommodating and neighbours are there. Seniors talked about how distance contributes to loneliness as well as the loss of friends and spouses as they age. In one group a participant expressed the view that if people are isolated it was a result of the individual's actions. Focus Group participants indicated that geographic isolation can be an issue. This is true for youth, as well as those living on low income, both of whom are limited to public transportation (which offers limited service in rural settings). Isolation can affect individuals who live in isolated hamlets such as Breslau, which have very few of the amenities or facilities that are available to those who live in more populated areas, such as St. Jacobs or Elmira. Residents indicated that factors that increase isolation limit their wellbeing.

Overall, participants feel safe in their rural communities. However, there are perceptions that crime is rising in rural settings. Several participants referred to the increasing thefts from cars. Others referred to the presence of drugs in their community or high schools, showing concern. Other participants, however, provided contradictory views suggesting that, compared to the cities in Waterloo Region, crime in the rural setting is quite minimal. It is important to recognize that in such instances, references to crime are based on perceptions rather than actual statistics.

There is a growing concern among locals regarding increased population growth and changes in the community. Respondents in nearly every group reported concerns over tension between urban and rural communities as a result of growth in the Region. One specific concern was road safety and how the increased congestion on the streets will interfere with pedestrians.

Farming Community

One participant from this group stated that the **"Townships have the best of both worlds. We get to live in the country but can take advantage of services in the city."** Focus Groups tended to agree with this sentiment showing that they value rural life, both in terms of the lifestyle and in terms of urban proximity.

One participant claimed that in rural life, **"If you need a hand, you can always get one or two."** This statement captures the importance of community in the rural setting. This connection was also expressed as having **"security in neighbours."** This remark suggests that community engagement not only addresses feelings of social isolation but also contributes to feelings of security and safety, an essential component of Community Vitality.

Participants discussed the issue of urban encroachment on rural life. One participant stated that **"My problem is that I live on a farm surrounded by millionaires who don't understand farm life."** This statement highlights the increasing presence of urbanites in the rural setting that may contribute to a lack of social mixing due to the different life experiences of residents.

One farmer said that his new neighbour complained that noise from the farm scared his race horse. In another instance, a new neighbour built a berm around his property, restricting the air circulation needed for nearby crops (fruit trees).

<p>Young Women working in Agriculture</p> <p>One participant stated that “I like the family farm lifestyle”, despite the stressful nature of farm life.</p>
<p>Mennonite Community</p> <p>The discussion from this group highlights how perceptions can contribute to feelings of Community Vitality. When discussing the increasing encroachment of urban life in rural communities, one respondent stated that public transportation and buses bring “bum-type” people to the community. It was also said that there is an increase in crime such as, “more theft of trucks and farm equipment.”</p> <p>Both statements, while not dependant on one another, highlight a growing perception of crime and degradation of life in the rural setting. These statements are not substantiated by statistical data, but rather are perceptions. But, as per the CIW Survey, we can see that such perceptions do affect how individuals feel overall about Community Vitality.</p>
<p>People Living on Low Income</p> <p>Low income residents indicate that they often feel marginalized as a result of having a low income. As one participant stated, “So many things come from being marginalized.” However, participants also showed how much they valued the community that they were a part of. One respondent stated, “I have a wonderful group of people around me,” and another claimed that the “Connection with... generous people that have got me far.”</p> <p>Participants in this group generally do not interact with the Region's urban communities due to lack of transportation. Most low-income individuals either lack a car or depend on sparse bus service in the rural setting. One participant indicated that they “Would like some [services] closer to downtown.” This group was very vocal in acknowledging the importance of community and their sense of belonging.</p>
<p>Mental Health Support Group and Workers</p> <p>Some respondents from this group were from a small hamlet and highlighted their feelings of geographic isolation. One said that living in this hamlet is “like living in a fishbowl.” That being said, this group showed that there is value in rural life, indicating that there was less traffic, less noise, and much more community support.</p> <p>There was considerable sentiment expressed in this group pertaining to the sense of community and its value in one's life. Statements such as “People make eye contact” and “People are friendly” indicate that participants value the community in which they live. Regarding safety in the rural setting, one participant stated: “I appreciate this. I was from Kitchener.”</p>
<p>Seniors</p> <p>The seniors indicate that they feel “very connected.” One participant claimed that he/she “would not want to live anywhere else.” These sentiments were expressed several times, including recognizing the role of one's neighbours, the “Sense of community,” and that “Living in the country</p>

creates deep roots for its residents.” There are concerns about crime and safety with one participant discussing how residents in the country used to leave their doors unlocked but not anymore. Another participant, however, did say that there was a **“Greater sense of safety. Feel safer.”** This was reiterated by another participant who stated: **“Police services seem to have improved, more visible in the community.”**

Some seniors identified what they felt was a social gap between seniors and younger people. One participant indicated that **“Youth don’t say hi.”** In addition to this, some seniors felt that the more traditional rural clubs and groups were no longer appealing to youth such as the 4H Group or the Lions Club.

Families with Young Children

It is clear that young families value the rural lifestyle. One participant stated that **“People help keep an eye on each other – there is safety and trust.”** Feelings of belonging are closely tied to feelings of security.

Families with Children who have Disabilities

This group felt that the rural community was very welcoming. A participant indicated that when their daughter is struggling, **“People will ask us how she is.”** This participant also felt that his/her neighbours were helpful, often ensuring that the **“House is taken care of”** in the event of hospital visits.

There are perceptions of increasing levels of crime as one participant stated: **“Bloomington, Bridgeport, Maryhill has kids come in from the city to break and enter... So we are not feeling safe right now.”**

LBGTQ2 Community

Participants in this group value the rural life for being **“Quieter”** and more **“Peaceful.”** But participants feel that their community was not very welcoming to them. A participant stated, **“My neighbours are not all supportive of the LBGTQ community.”** Another noted that the **“Only place they feel safe is the library.”** One participant was open in discussing a more troublesome event, stating: **“Two ropes were hanging in the tree in front of our house one morning.”** A key point made by this group is that communities are not as welcoming and accepting to everyone as we may like to think.

Participants also identified the fact that there are political leaders in the Region who are either not supportive or are anti-LBGTQ. One participant stated, **“We need allyship”** in the community.

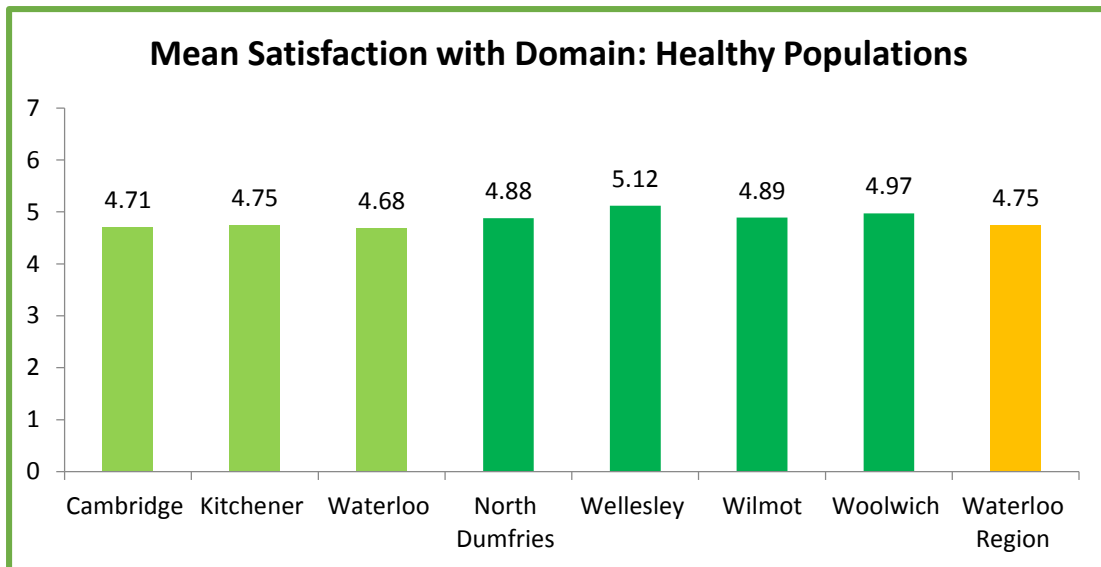
One lesbian couple described **“Our boys (from previous marriages) were in hockey. We came out when we had a son in Bantam hockey. Even our (former) husbands sat down with other fathers and asked them to help our boys – to be supportive of them – to speak up”.**

Youth Group

The youth in this group value rural life and find a great connection in their community. One participant stated: **“In a rural community you have mostly the same interests.”** The downside of this, unfortunately, contributes to feelings of no privacy and lack of separateness: **“You see everything your neighbour does.”**

2.2.0 Healthy Populations: This domain looks at the health of the Canadian population to assess whether different aspects of our health are improving or deteriorating

Definition: “Personal wellbeing, physical health conditions, life expectancy/mortality, mental health, functional health, lifestyle and behaviors, public health, health care”



Source: Wellbeing in Waterloo Region 2019

The Region’s overall satisfaction within the Healthy Populations domain is 4.75 out of 7. Wellesley ranks first with a score of 5.12, Woolwich ranks second with a score of 4.97, Wilmot ranks third with a score of 4.89 and North Dumfries ranks fourth with a score of 4.88. All of the Townships rank higher than the Region.

More than 30 percent of respondents from the Region have experienced negative impacts due to mental health challenges in their own life, in the life of a family member, or the life of a friend. For example, 31.1 percent of respondents indicate that they have dealt with negative impacts of their mental health, and 39.2 percent report that they have dealt with the mental health issues of a family member.

In addition to this, 20 percent of respondents indicate that they have experienced negative impacts related to substance abuse in the last 12 months either in their own life, the life of a family member, or the life of a friend. Of these respondents, 6.4 percent indicate that they have dealt with their substance abuse, 14.5 percent have dealt with a family member's substance abuse, 17.3 percent have dealt with substance abuse issues of a friend. Furthermore, 59.7 percent of respondents indicate that the issue of abuse involved alcohol, while 25.6 percent report that substance abuse involved opioids.

The three main areas of concern for the domain "Healthy Populations" are physical health, mental health, and perceived quality of health services. All of these indicators are self-assessed.

2.2.1 Physical Health

In terms of physical health, Woolwich ranks first with a score of 3.49 out of 7. Wilmot ranks second with a score of 3.45, North Dumfries ranks third with a score of 3.42, and Wellesley fourth with a score of 3.39. The report indicates that one's physical health does not vary depending on geography. In addition to this, the report shows that one's rating of physical health increases as household income increases and that self-assessed physical health is higher for those in a relationship than those who are not.

2.2.2 Mental Health

When scoring mental health, Wellesley ranks first with a score of 3.87 (out of 7). Wilmot and Woolwich both rank the same with a score of 3.59, followed by North Dumfries at 3.52. Positive self-assessed mental health correlates to increased household income. In addition to this, self-assessed mental health is affected by geographic location in that the Townships have more people reporting good mental health, higher than the Region. These figures are important because "A higher self-reported mental wellbeing is related to higher overall wellbeing."

2.2.3 Health Services

The survey also asked questions about how respondents perceive the quality of health services in the Region. Results show that Wilmot ranks first with a score of 3.37 (out of 7); Wellesley ranks second with a score of 3.36; Woolwich third with a score of 3.26; and North Dumfries fourth with a score of 3.15. Low-income residents have a more negative perception of the quality of health services compared to those in mid and high-income groups. Also as these scores show, perceptions of quality of health services vary by geographic location. These factors are important because "A higher perceived accessibility to health care services is related to higher overall wellbeing."

2.2.4 Focus Groups

In general people felt that there are good services offered in the rural communities especially centralized services in one-stop hubs. A common theme that emerged from the Focus Groups was the need for more help with better system navigation. Participants indicate that there is a lack of information regarding what services, programs, and facilities are available for health, be it for physical wellbeing or mental health. This information shows that participants are not necessarily reluctant to access help, but that there is a need for better promotion of programs and services to raise awareness and better assistance navigating the health care system.

While participants clearly express the benefits of community connectivity, it is seen as a negative when accessing health services. Many participants indicated that the lack of anonymity offered in a rural setting prevents them from accessing mental health services due to the stigma that is associated with it. Proximity to the city ensures access to services but is dependent on transportation. Participants, particularly farmers, however, indicated that they want more people from their community to have official training in counseling. Having trained professionals from the community would ensure that they can discuss their issues with someone who understands the hardships of rural life while also guaranteeing privacy.

The farming community expressed that their mental health was being greatly affected by stress associated with the agricultural industry. For example, financial stress due to declining profits and increasing costs of farming; stress associated with family succession planning; concerns over the newly renegotiated NAFTA Agreement; and stress induced by animal activists who have a negative perception of the agricultural industry. Farmers indicated that the negative attitudes towards agricultural practices are largely uninformed or inaccurate and affect farmers' wellbeing. Physical health was not a main point of conversation among focus groups.

Participants often discussed the issue of substance abuse. However, these conversations were often based on perceptions of substance abuse in their community as opposed to personal experience. There is a particular concern about drugs and alcohol in high schools: a concern expressed by both adults and youth. There was also concern about pornography and online sports betting and the negative impacts they are having on rural people.

Farming Community

In Focus Groups, farmers noted that a lack of anonymity when accessing social and health services was an issue. One of the biggest sources of stress noted by this group had to do with the educational gap in farming practices between rural and urban communities. They found that critical voices are quite loud online. One respondent stated: **"Social media is hard to counterbalance."** The educational gap also puts financial pressure on farmers who are expected to **"Go green."** One example, was that urban communities put pressure on farmers to avoid using plastic bags. This requires farmers to invest in organic or paper bags if they wish to sell at farmers' markets, which is a cost that those outside of the industry are unaware of.

This group discussed the issues of accessing mental health in their communities. One participant stated: **"Years ago I was looking for mental health help for myself; I went into the city because I wanted anonymity."** They followed this statement by explaining that **"There are certain things you don't want to share with people around you."**

Young Women working in Agriculture

This group noted the clash between rural and urban communities claiming that there is a **"Huge disconnect"** in regard to urbanites knowing where their food comes from. One participant suggested that schools **"Need a basic agriculture class"** to address this gap in understanding.

Participants showed that they are open to discussing mental health, but that there are limitations that prevent some from dealing with it. Seeking out counselling or other services is costly and time-consuming, time and money are resources that may not be readily available.

The most significant cause of poor mental health discussed was the financial stress of operating a farm. One participant indicated that financial stress is typical in the industry and that **“You keep it to yourself.”** In addition to this, one participant felt that even if they chose to reach out to a counsellor, they **“Wouldn’t understand farmers anyway.”**

Mennonite Community

This Focus Group indicated a willingness to at least discuss mental health. One participant was clear in indicating that there is a stigma around accessing mental health services, stating: **“If I had a mental health problem, I wouldn’t tell anyone.”** This stigma is compounded by the intimate nature of the Mennonite community. One respondent stated, **“We are such a close community that it is likely to get out. Important to keep it to yourself.”**

This group showed that the issue of mental health is not one that is easy to discuss, because as with other groups, there is an issue of anonymity and general social stigma. But participants also showed **“Cautions about going to outside people”** when addressing mental health. This is reiterated by other participants who stated: **“I wish there were more people in our community with training.”** There is a desire for there to be qualified individuals who can guarantee expertise and confidentiality while also being able to relate more specifically to the lifestyle of the community.

People Living on Low Income

Low-income respondents indicated the need for better system navigation for accessing services. One participant stated: **“We need more/better advertising for programs and social opportunities available.”** That being said, one participant noted that the **“Service is better here than KW”** and another stated that **“The services are good.”** Another participant indicated that she prefers to live in the Region’s rural setting because of the available services. The participants told the interviewer that **“One of the reasons I moved here is that my son has a learning disability.”**

Concerning this, a participant stated that in regard to accessing services for mental health, **“My biggest barrier is me.”** This is one of the only groups where participants discussed their feelings of isolation. This participant was very open to discussing it but also indicated that feelings of isolation are related to poor mental health.

Mental Health Support Group and Workers

Issues of anonymity were mentioned here as was the need for better system navigation: **“You’re on your own to figure things out.”** One participant experienced a concussion, after which he/she felt cut off. The individual discussed how **“There are no buses in Breslau and I couldn’t drive”** (as a result of the injury). Such statements show how physical health can severely impact mental health, particularly in regard to isolation.

Seniors

In regard to isolation, some felt their **health gets in the way of a good life**. They indicated fear of falling in winter and lack of ability to get to programs (transportation) and isolation due to loss of peers and spouses which **negatively affects their mental health**.

One participant stated that **"If you are isolated, it is your own fault,"** while another said that **"Some people choose to be isolated."** One participant suggested that in the rural setting, it merely **"Takes time to get established."** This group did feel, however, that youth, in particular, seemed to be facing issues of isolation, suggesting that being online results in more disconnect and **"Ghosting."**

Other participants took a different stance, discussing how their environment had a positive effect on their mental health. This included access to trails and parks. Other participants identified the importance of churches and community support services in aiding community mental health.

None of the participants had any direct experience with substance abuse, but one claimed: **"I know addictions are out there, but it is hidden."** Additionally, it was felt by one participant that **"Drug abuse is prevalent in teenagers and younger generation in their 20s."**

Families with Young Children

Participants here were not explicit in expressing feelings of isolation; however, some felt that there is a lack of social mixing in the rural setting. One participant stated that even after living there for a while, they felt a lack of acceptance. The participant said: **"I have to inject myself as a new person to the community."**

Other participants felt more included but indicated that having kids **"Makes you more involved."**

Participants felt that having the Community Health Centre provided valuable health services to the community. It is a resource that people are aware of and have a need for.

Families with Children who have Disabilities

Participants here felt that in the rural setting there are often **"Cliques"** formed. One participant stated that it is **"Very hard to fit into groups that are already made."** While this group felt positively about the services available in the community, they were continually having to work to find, and access, services as the needs of their children changed, navigating various criteria and waiting lists to gain access to the services their children need.

LBGTQ2 Community

When asked about feelings regarding community services, participants indicated a lack of confidence in the **"School system."** Some school staff misunderstood transgender students as **"going through a phase"** or seeking attention.

For dealing with mental health issues, one participant made it clear that if one's parents are not supportive, **"It makes it hard."**

Youth Group

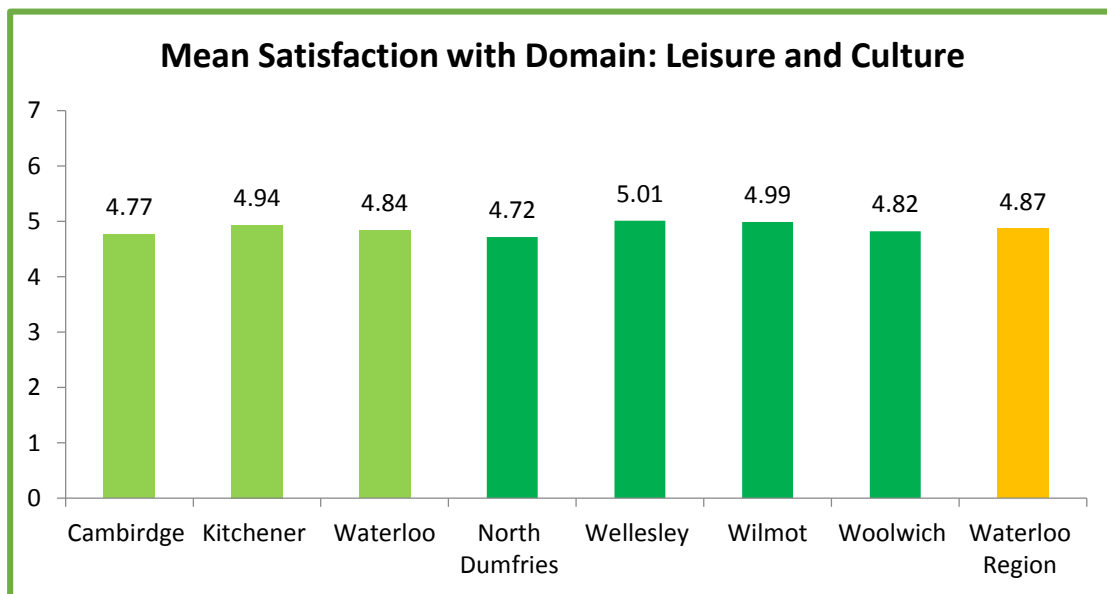
The youth group provided insight into the health issues present in high schools. One respondent discussed the number of suicides that have occurred at their school. There were about 2 or 3 suicides that had happened in recent years. These have had a significant impact on the youth population. In the rural setting, there tends to be a compounding effect due to the close-knit quality and size of the rural community. (Such events are sure to be felt more than in urban communities.)

There was mention of drugs in the high schools, most notably **“Heroin.”** Although students’ stated that the drugs that are most prevalent changes over time.

For mental health, the participants feel that the **“Local churches are pretty supportive.”** Being in the agricultural industry also allows for participants to connect with specific networks. One participant informed the group that the **“Dairy Farmers of Ontario has a hotline now.”**

2.3.0 Leisure and Culture: The leisure and culture domain explores Canadians’ participation and engagement with the arts, culture, and recreation. Participation in these activities can be highly beneficial to wellbeing by contributing to better physical and mental health, and creating opportunities for socializing, relaxation, and learning new things

Definition: “Participation, perceptions, experiences, opportunities in social leisure, arts and culture, physical activity”



Source: Wellbeing in Waterloo Region 2019

The survey shows overall satisfaction with the domain “Leisure and Culture” in the Region averaging at 4.87 out of 7. Among the Townships, Wellesley ranks first with a score of 5.01, Wilmot second with a

score of 4.99, Woolwich with a score 4.82 and North Dumfries fourth with a score of 4.72. In this category, all of the Townships with the exception of North Dumfries have a score above the average.

Responses to the survey indicate an increase in participation in social and cultural events since 2013. Just over 85 percent of respondents (85.3) indicate that they feel their local park is easy to get to. 73.3 percent indicate that recreation programs, cultural activities, and facilities are easy to get to, but only 58.2 percent indicate that they feel that these facilities and activities are welcoming. Twenty-five percent of respondents indicate that the cost of public recreation and cultural programs prevents their participation. Finally, 74.6 percent of respondents indicate that leisure activities provide opportunities for social interaction with others.

2.3.1 Facilities

Facility use has three different categories: local parks (including playgrounds and trails), community complexes (and recreation centres), and performing arts facilities. Across the Townships, we see high usage of local parks. North Dumfries ranks first with 92.4 percent of respondents indicating that they use local parks. Woolwich ranks second with 88.6 percent of its respondents indicating that they use local parks, Wellesley third with 87.5 percent of respondents indicating that they use local parks and Wilmot fourth with 86.5 percent indicating that they use local parks.

When we assess the usage of community complexes, the survey shows that Wilmot ranks first with 79 percent of respondents indicating that they use these facilities, Wellesley ranks second with 76.7 percent of respondents indicating that they use these facilities, Woolwich third with 72.2 percent of respondents indicating that they use these facilities, and North Dumfries fourth with 61.2 percent of respondents indicating that they use these facilities.

When we assess attendance at performing arts activities, the survey shows that Wellesley ranks first with 71.4 percent of respondents indicating attendance, Woolwich ranks second with 59.7 percent of respondents indicating attendance, Wilmot third with 56.4 percent indicating attendance, and North Dumfries fourth with 47.7 percent indicating attendance.

2.3.2 Accessibility

The issue of accessibility of facilities is divided into three indicators: 1) whether they are easy to get to; 2) whether they offer a convenient schedule; 3) and whether or not the cost of programs prevents participation.

When we look at how respondents in each Township assess whether or not these facilities are easy to get to, we see that Wilmot ranks first with a score of 5.38 (out of 7). Woolwich ranks second with a score of 5.08, Wellesley third with a score of 4.83, and North Dumfries fourth with a score of 4.72.

As to whether or not these programs or facilities offer a convenient schedule, Wilmot ranks first with a score of 4.46 (out of 7), Woolwich ranks second with a score of 4.35, Wellesley third with a score of 4.15, and North Dumfries fourth with a score of 3.97. In this case, the higher the score, the more accessible respondents find these facilities.

As to whether or not the costs of programs prevents participation the scores are notably lower. Woolwich ranks first with a score of 3.33 (out of 7). North Dumfries ranks second with a score of 3.16, Wilmot ranks third with a score of 3.11, and Wellesley fourth with a score of 2.89. In this case, the higher the score, the more accessible respondents find their facilities in regard to cost. These numbers seem to reflect some concern regarding program costs in all four Townships.

2.3.3 Focus Groups

Across the Focus Groups, a common theme that arose was the problem of accessing programs and facilities due to lack of transportation. For those without vehicles, local transit is seen as inadequate, in both its frequency and the routes that are offered. This was emphasized as residents who would like to access the Cities more frequently often avoid public transportation due to the risk of being stranded after services end in the early evening.

Others found that the proximity to the Region's Cities was great as it offered alternatives for programs, entertainment, and culture. "Culture" was identified as a topic for one Focus Group. Participants highlighted that towns such as Elmira lack much in the way of amenities such as cultural facilities or nice restaurants (rather than a diner) open in the evening. Concern about the outdated facilities and technology at the Elmira Library was also expressed.

There was also a degree of dissatisfaction with facilities found in rural communities. Some participants were from communities and/or hamlets that lacked community centres and therefore found that there was no location available to them that acted as a gathering point for the community where they could start their own card group or social time for seniors. There was also a feeling that more variety in cultural programming should be offered as well.

Satisfaction with leisure and culture in the rural setting depends on a few variables including which hamlet one lives in, access to transportation, affordability of programs, and expectation of what is offered in the rural setting.

Young Women Working in Agriculture

This group noted that the proximity to the City that exists in Waterloo Region is positive in that it offers the opportunity to access entertainment.

People Living on Low Income

The participants often cited the need for more affordability of programs. They indicate that there is a need for more free and low-cost activities: one participant stated that **"If there were more subsidies, I would do more."**

Participants indicated that certain facilities are inadequate. For example, the children's Splash Pads close too early, and libraries do not offer enough programming for kids. Such responses indicate that those parents who have low income feel those services are not adequate in meeting their family's needs.

One participant who suffers from poor mental health indicated that physical activity is a tool to remedy this. But this individual suggested that some services and programs are not accessible for those who have disabilities, either physical or mental. The participant stated that this is a problem in that **“I need to release energy to improve my mental health.”**

Mental Health Support Group and Workers

Similar to the low-income group, participants here addressed the issue of accessibility of services and programs. Particularly for those who live in Breslau. One participant stated that living in Breslau can be isolating and that **“For those without a car, it can be hard.”**

Some participants rely more on parks and trails for their leisure time. One participant stated that **“Benches on trails really help”** for accessibility. This is important because the installation of benches increases accessibility to those of old age and with disabilities.

Some participants expressed concern with what they see as a lack of “culture” in rural communities. One respondent quipped that the only difference between here and yogurt (the food) is that **“Yogurt has culture.”** These feelings were expressed several times with one participant suggesting that there is a **“Need to attract business to come to our township”** such as **“Restaurants and places to meet.”**

There were also concerns expressed that certain hamlets lack community meeting spaces, for example: **“In Winterbourne, there is nothing there – no community centre.”** One respondent reiterated this concern stating that **“There is no central spot.”**

Seniors

Participants showed appreciation for community facilities such as the Wilmot Recreation Centre – including a Splash Pad for kids. This was an example of a facility built on the edge of town with no sidewalks on part of the route to reach it. One participant indicated that there is a need for more accessible services downtown since some residents are affected by old age or disabilities.

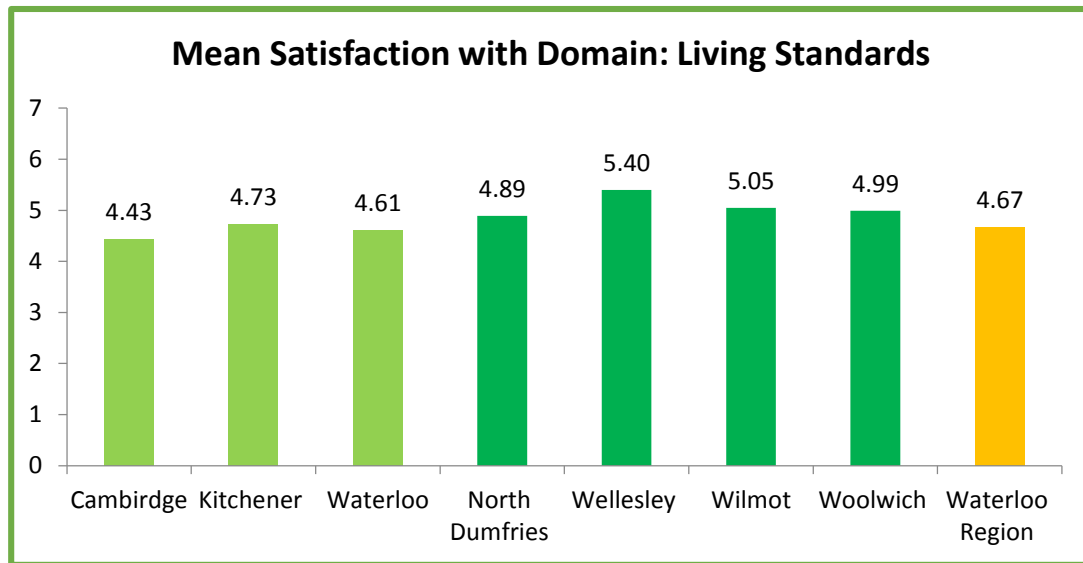
Participants recognized that there are **“Barriers to access public transportation”** in the rural setting. Another participant acknowledged that in the rural setting, participation in leisure and cultural events can be quite difficult, stating that **“You can do what you want, but if you can’t get there it’s an issue.”** However, some participants suggested that there are ways to get around this even if one does not have a vehicle. One participant suggested that residents should access the services of Kiwanis Transit while another suggested that **“You can ask your neighbour to drive you places.”**

Seniors implied a strong correlation between the amount they participated in recreation and their quality of life. They were involved in activities like lawn bowling, walking groups, card groups, and horticulture groups. One participant stated: **“I’m more busy now that I am retired than when I was working.”**

<p>Families with Children who have Disabilities</p> <p>This group valued facilities such as the accessible park in Gibson Park (and accessible splash pad in Bolender Park) in Elmira. These facilities are not only geared towards families who have children with disabilities, but are also free. Some families of disabled children described needing to have one parent leave the workforce in order to care for their child and to be available to take them to appointments, sometimes to Sick Kids in Toronto, while the other parent would work longer hours or extra shifts to make ends meet. Participants in this focus group indicated that they “Don’t have the funds to do a lot” and that “Everything costs so much.”</p>
<p>LBGTQ2 Community</p> <p>Participants mostly discussed the importance of looking for programs and facilities that were welcoming to the LBGTQ community. One participant stated: “I look out for the rainbow symbol when looking for activities and services like counseling.” Another said that “More places should have the symbol.” And in Kitchener-Waterloo, there are “Not many programs for the gay community – Spectrum – but that’s it.” Such discussions provide insight into the importance of people feeling welcome when participating in leisure and cultural activities. One couple indicated that they moved to Wilmot partly because of Roller Derby was held there, although it later moved to Kitchener.</p>
<p>Youth Group</p> <p>Transportation was the biggest limitation for this group when participating in leisure activities or cultural events. Youth are required to either depend on their parents from rides (since public transit services are so limited) or friends who can drive. Even then, however, youth find the price associated with vehicle ownership to be financially prohibitive.</p>

2.4.0 Living Standards: The Living Standards domain measures the level and distribution of Canadians’ income and wealth by monitoring poverty rates, income fluctuations, labour market security and job quality. It also considers basic necessities such as food security and affordable housing

Definition: “Average and median income and wealth, income and wealth distribution, income volatility, economic security”



Source: Wellbeing in Waterloo Region 2019

The Region's level of satisfaction with the Living Standards domain averages at 4.67 out of 7. Among the Townships, Wellesley ranks first with a score of 5.40, Wilmot second with a score of 5.05, Woolwich third with a score of 4.99, and North Dumfries with a score of 4.89. The Townships all rank above the Regional average.

Almost 10 percent of respondents in the Region struggle to pay their bills on time. According to the Survey, 17.8 percent of respondents indicate that they are working 2 jobs or more to sustain themselves: this increased from 8.8 percent in 2013. However, respondents indicate that perceptions of job security have improved since the 2013 survey. Additionally, the percentage of those who feel that their job makes life difficult has decreased from 32.2 percent to 26.2 percent.

2.4.1 Job Fit

Those with a higher income show greater satisfaction with job fit (meaning their job matches their education and training). For example, of those earning less than \$10,000 only 12.6 percent feel that they are "more fit" for their job, whereas, among those who earn \$150,000 or more, 57.1 percent feel that they are "more fit" for their job.

Among the Townships, North Dumfries ranks first with 42.6 percent of the population feeling that they are "more fit" for their job. Woolwich ranks second with 41.4 percent of its population feeling that they are "more fit"; Wellesley third with 34.9 percent of respondents feeling that they are "more fit"; and Wilmot ranks fourth with 33.7 percent of respondents claiming so. Those who are in a relationship (couple) show a higher satisfaction with job fit (regardless of whether they have children or not).

2.4.2 Work-life Imbalance

For perceptions of work-life imbalance, Wellesley ranks first with a score of 41 (out of 100). Woolwich is second with a score of 33.2, Wilmot third with a score of 32.7, and North Dumfries fourth with a score of

25.1. In this case, a lower score correlates with stronger feelings of work-life imbalance. The report also indicates that those who are in a relationship have a better work-life balance. These figures are important because “A higher perceived work-life imbalance is related to lower overall wellbeing.”

2.4.3 Focus Groups

Participants generally seem to express a sense of insecurity for the future when considering the rising costs of living. These concerns have taken hold of each group differently. For example, farmers sometimes maintain off-farm jobs to secure benefits and a more secure income, which can have adverse effects on their lives.

There is a general concern regarding the rising unaffordability in the community. Participants recognize the increasing cost of housing, which is a concern particularly for those with a low income and seniors.

Feelings regarding Living Standards can best be described as a sense of insecurity. Participants seem to be unsure of how to perceive the changes around them, regarding how they will navigate through these changes. This corresponds to the sense of nostalgia that some participants articulated.

Farming Community

One participant indicated that **“Farming is a low margin, high-stress lifestyle.”** Others agreed and many discussed the tendency for at least one member of the family to have an off-farm job to counterbalance this. One participant explained the reason for this: **“The farm couldn’t sustain us.”** Another participant stated that **“All farmers I know have off-farm jobs.”** Often it is the wife in a family who will work off farm to bring in a steady income.

Participants indicated that there is now a lower financial turnaround in farming with their costs rising while and most of their equity is tied up in their land and the high price they have paid for their quota. As one participant stated, **“The costs have gone up and the profits have gone down.”**

Some of the concerns regarding financial security are tied up in the uncertain outcome of NAFTA (formerly the USMCA). Farmers are unsure how they will be able to continue to adjust to changing global markets.

Young Women in Agriculture

This group highlighted the effect of financial stress. Financial stress is due to declining profit margins in modern farming along with the increasing level of debt taken on by farmers. Both of these factors have an observable impact on mental health. However, as one participant indicated, counselling is expensive, and **“If you are having financial trouble, it doesn’t make sense.”**

Mennonite Community

One participant indicated their frustration with people from the city moving into the Townships, stating: **“The farmers build the cities, and then the farmers are driven out.”** This statement captures the lack of appreciation and sense of insecurity about the future felt by rural residents.

Similar to the Farmers Focus Group, Mennonite participants indicated that there is a need for off-farm jobs for financial support.

Mental Health Support Group and Workers

This group discussed their concern regarding how the **“Cost of living”** has increased. Like some other Focus Group, participants in this group pointed out they see materialism playing a role in society now, leading people to acquire more belongings, from a second car to technological devices, that they really can’t afford. Agency directors leading some Focus Groups confirmed that schools and agencies are unable to accurately spot the families who need assistance.

One participant highlighted the rising costs of living, stating that **“It is very expensive to eat healthy.”** This captures the general feeling of insecurity regarding increasing cost of living.

People Living on a Low Income

Those living on a low income expressed a high level of insecurity regarding their present and future livelihood. One respondent stated that they had **“A lot of insecurity and less hope.”** Another respondent spoke about the nature of our current economy, stating that **“In the 1960s, you got a job right away.”**

When asked if life over the last 5 years (since the previous assessment) had become more difficult, one participant stated: **“It is (speaking for) single moms.”** This individual went on to say they she usually does not get the child support that she needs.

Participants discussed how they are living pay-cheque to pay-cheque and living on minimum wage jobs, a cycle that is challenging to get out of. Also, the rising price of housing is seen as increasingly burdensome. As one participant stated, they **“Need more affordable housing.”** A shortage of rental units in communities such as New Hamburg and Baden were seen as keeping rental costs high.

Finally, living on a low income has broader social and health implications. One participant stated that **“I am afraid of people who have money and that they will judge me.”**

Seniors

This group was aware of some growing financial hardships in the rural setting. Several participants acknowledging the insecurity of employment for young people and that there is **“Probably not enough subsidized housing.”** The issue of affordability was also seen as an issue affecting seniors. There is a need for more low income retirement homes as it is not affordable to remain in the Townships. Additionally, one participant stated that **“There are not enough nursing homes.”**

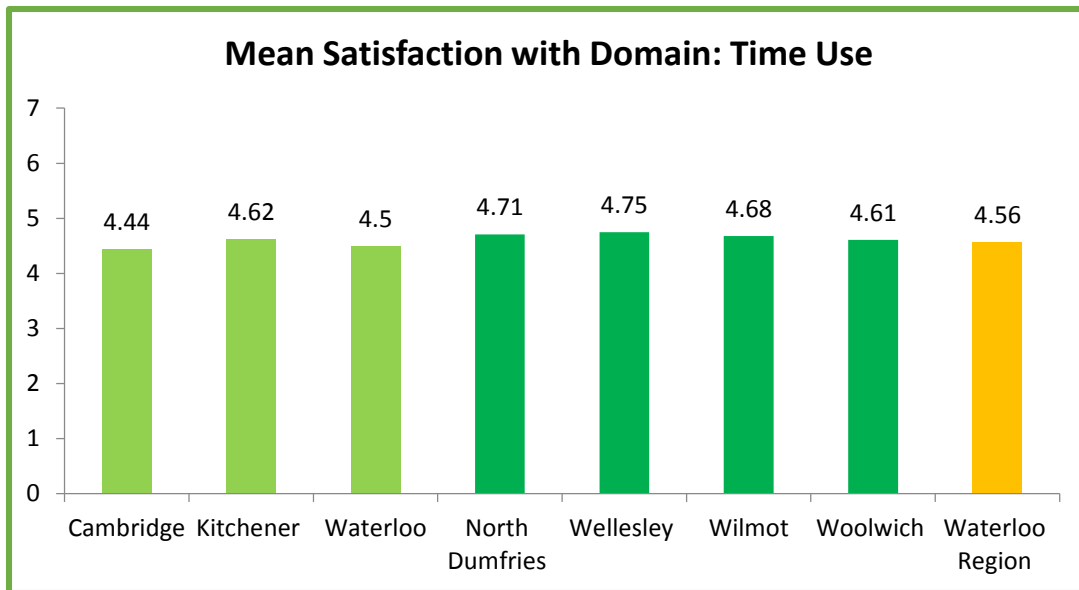
One man discussed how he chose to hold off on his retirement due to his wife’s health. He decided to keep working to maintain his health benefits. He stated: **“It’s very stressful with the cost of living increasing and health issues. The idea of retiring early is going.”** The change in the cost of living has been affecting seniors as well.

One issue that is unique to this group was the costs that families incur after a death. Participants expressed concern regarding what will happen when they die and how they or their families will

cover the inevitable costs. More information regarding options for funeral and burial costs would be helpful to this demographic and their families. More knowledge regarding options around bereavement costs needs to be available to this demographic.
<p>Families with Young Children</p> <p>“Need a certain income to move here... Have to be financially secure”</p> <p>“In the township we do have affluent families and they are valued and provide resources to support those who struggle financially”</p>
<p>Youth Group</p> <p>Youth involved in farming expressed general concerns for the future of the industry, including issues like robotics and automation. More specifically, one participant indicated how the industry depends more and more on machinery that relies on internet connection – a service that can be very costly or unreliable in the rural setting.</p> <p>This group also indicated that many families in farming seem to be struggling. One factor contributing to this is that “A lot of people invest their money back in their farm” rather than see the profits from their yield.</p> <p>This group also identified the concerns over succession planning. When pursuing a career in agriculture, there is an issue of affordability: “Prices are astronomical now.”</p>

2.5.0 Time Use: Indicators in the time use domain measure how Canadians spend their time; how they perceive or experience time; what factors affect time use; and how time use affects wellbeing

Definition: “Time, timing (control over timing of one’s day), tempo (pace), temporality (biological rhythms)”



Source: Wellbeing in Waterloo Region 2019

Across the Region the average level of satisfaction with the domain of “Time Use” is 4.56 out of 7. Among the Townships, Wellesley ranks first with a score of 4.75, North Dumfries ranks second with a score of 4.71, Wilmot ranks third with a score of 4.68, and Woolwich ranks fourth with a score of 4.61. All of the Townships rank higher than the Regional average.

Twenty-six point two percent of respondents indicate that their job makes their personal life difficult; however, this is an improvement from the previous survey conducted on 2013. Almost 40 percent of respondents struggle to juggle work and non-work activities and almost 30 percent indicate that they struggle to find time to be active. Additionally, 28.3 percent of respondents say that they do not have enough time to participate or be to be active in their community.

2.5.1 Time Adequacy

In terms of time adequacy, Woolwich ranks first with 54.1 percent of respondents indicating that they feel good about the amount of time they have to do the things they need to. Wilmot ranks second with 50.1 percent of respondents indicating that they have a sense of time adequacy, Wellesley third with 49.2 percent of respondents indicating that they have a lot of time adequacy, and North Dumfries fourth with 38.2 percent of respondents indicating that they feel positively about their time adequacy.

2.5.2 Focus Groups

Regarding time use, free time is a luxury that residents living in a rural setting often do not have. Farmers in particular have a lifestyle that does not really allow for leisure as might be the case for professionals working the city. But concerns about time-use are not limited to the agricultural sector: such concerns were expressed by those finding it necessary to work multiple jobs to support themselves.

There was also a criticism of our culture as a whole expressed by some participants. This consisted of a critique of what is seen as a “go, go, go” North American lifestyle. Such statements reflect a notable level of stress that occupies residents’ lives. As such, the dialogue around time use fell into two streams: the lack of spare time in the agricultural industry as well as dissatisfaction with “busyness” North American culture.

Farming Community

Farmers made it clear that viewing their “time use” as a measurement of wellbeing overlooks the nature of the agricultural industry. Farming is a demanding vocation and lifestyle. Participants were candid in expressing this reality. Additionally, the tendency to have off-farm jobs to compensate for the financial insecurity negatively affects time use.

Participants also explained how the difficulty in finding reliable and capable workers negatively affects time use. **“Finding help can be difficult,”** which can affect farmers as this requires them to work additional hours to meet the output of their farms.

One participant spoke of general trends, stating that **“Everybody is in a hurry.”**

Young Women in Agriculture

Participants described how they are **“Always busy”** and that time management and work-life balance is not necessarily a realistic expectation in agriculture. Participants also critiqued what they saw as the North American **“Go, go, go”** lifestyle.

Speaking of their own lives, one participant told the group: **“We try in winter to have every other weekend off,”** to compensate for the demanding season behind them.

Mennonite Community

Participants explained how they typically have off-farm jobs to support their income. They also expressed a general dislike for the **“Rat race”** and the **“Go, go, go”** mentality that they see in their community.

People Living on a Low Income

Those living on a low income generally experience poor work/life balance. There is a need to hold multiple jobs to pay bills and therefore they have little spare time. Participants expressed their concern for younger adults and their lack of free time: **“I know people 22-23 years old with 2 jobs... They have to get out of debt.”**

Mental Health Support Group and Workers

Concern was expressed that the younger generation is becoming **“Too busy.”** It was suggested that future generations will have no time for leisure and **“No time to build family relationships.”** Services may be available, but people may not have time to benefit from them. **“If you have a support group, they don’t come because they don’t have time.”**

When participants were asked if they were maintaining two jobs or more, they said that **“Farming families are.”** This reflects the general point made throughout the focus groups, which is that farming now requires off-farm employment.

Seniors

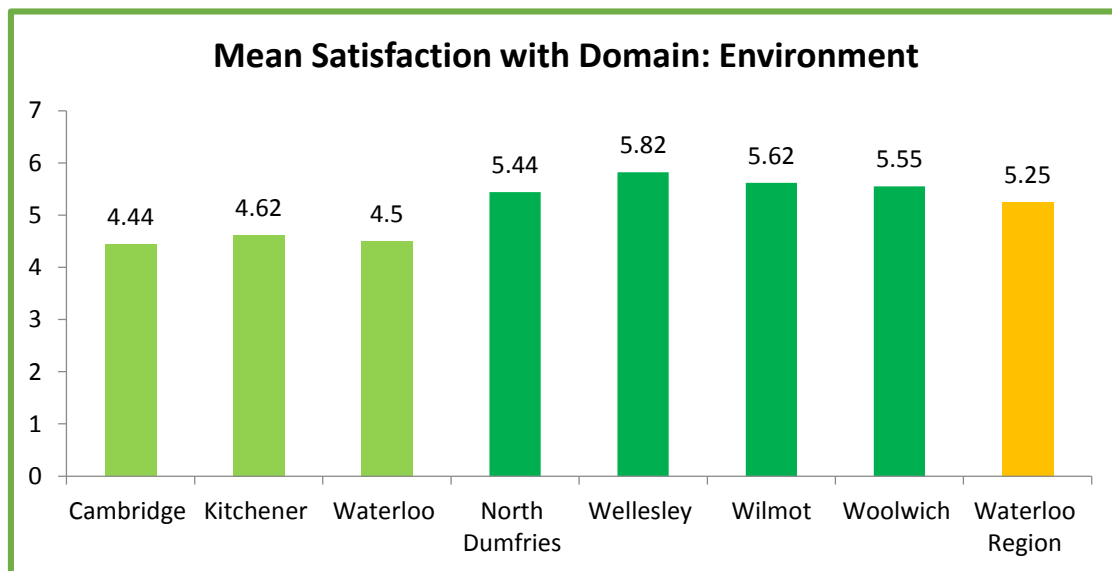
Participants expressed how they felt that younger generations are **“Too busy.”**

Youth Group

Youth indicated they have **“Almost no free time.”** This is due to living and working in agriculture. For one, they have time-intensive farming chores. But another point made by one participant was that they are taking on more because there is a labour shortage. As a result, they take on more duties on the farm. As one participant stated: **“Workers for the farm is what is not available.”** Young farmers noted that “robots” are now being used in Waterloo Region farms, and that more are planned for farms they work in.

2.6.0 Environment: The Environment domain identifies trends in the availability and use of natural resources in Canada’s environment. From the resources that fuel our economy to the food (and medicines) that heal us, and from the happiness of outdoor enthusiasts to the lessons that guide many religious or spiritual beliefs, the wellbeing of humans depends on the state of the environment. This domain is not an analysis of the sustainability of Canada’s environment; instead, it explores natural assets available to Canadians, the flow of these resources over time, and some of the impacts of human activity on the environment

Definition: “Natural resources, clean air, clean water, available energy and raw materials, the amount of wilderness, diversity of species, and natural assets”



Source: Wellbeing in Waterloo Region 2019

Among the Townships, Wellesley ranks first when measuring the level of satisfaction with the domain of Environment with a score of 5.82 (out of 7). Wilmot ranks second with a score of 5.62, Woolwich third with a score of 5.55, and North Dumfries fourth with a score of 5.44.

The perceptions of the quality of the environment are broken down into three areas: quality of the natural environment, opportunities to enjoy nature, and traffic congestion. When evaluating perception of the natural environment's quality, we see Wilmot rank first with a score of 5.26 (out of 7). North Dumfries ranks second with a score of 5.10, Wellesley third with a score of 5.06, and Woolwich fourth with a score of 5.05.

Wilmot ranks first in assessing whether the opportunities to enjoy nature are high, with a score of 5.32. North Dumfries ranks second with a score of 5.28, Woolwich ranks third with a score of 5.24, and Wellesley fourth with a score of 4.63.

Regarding concerns about traffic congestion, North Dumfries ranks first with a score of 5.01 (out of 7). Woolwich ranks second with a score of 4.2, Wilmot third with a score of 3.63, and Wellesley fourth with a score of 2.91.

2.6.1 Focus Groups

The domain of Environment captures issues concerning the quality of the natural environment; opportunities to enjoy nature, and explore natural assets available to Canadians, the flow of these resources over time, and some of the impacts of human activity on the environment. Concerns about the natural environment are expressed mostly by the farming community. Some Township residents were concerned about how their financial wellbeing will be affected by new legislation (such as banning certain insecticides) and changing climate.

Many participants mentioned that they appreciate the trails and natural areas near their communities and make use of them.

Across the Focus Groups, however, increased traffic congestion was seen as a sign of the rural and urban clash. This is of course a safety concern, but is also an environmental one. Residents were displeased with how road conditions seem to be becoming more stressful. There was also concern that road design is conceived by urban planners with little regard for the realities of rural life i.e. driving tractors and other farm equipment through beautified main streets and roundabouts. A boulevard recently added to a street in Elmira which makes it difficult to turn with a large vehicle was one example of this.

Farming Community

Farmers expressed concerns about how changing weather patterns may affect their output, which of course affects their livelihood. One participant said that they **"Worry most about changes due to weather and climate and the impacts."** Participants also noted that there seems to be an increase in extreme weather and storms, which has caused a degree of worry among the community. Such storms bring on a **"Higher chance of flooding downriver."** These weather events are seen as a threat to crop yields, but one participant also discussed concerns as to how the weather could damage

<p>greenhouses and cause power outages. As the participant stated: “If the power goes out, it can take a long time to be attended to compared to the City, and there is a cost to that for us.”</p> <p>This group also commented on the increase in rural road congestion. Participants showed concern for how the urban community has encroached on the rural population and has affected road conditions.</p> <p>When asked what aspects of the rural setting contribute to their quality of life, one participant responded: “Quality of the water. Quality of the air.”</p>
<p>Mental Health Support Group and Workers</p> <p>This group noted concerns about the increase in traffic congestion in the rural municipalities, and concerns about crosswalks and pedestrian safety.</p>
<p>Seniors</p> <p>Participants in this group noted the importance and value of fresh air and the healthier environment that they find in the rural setting.</p>
<p>Youth Group</p> <p>Participants in this group were aware of looming environmental issues and supported the need to protect the land and animals to ensure that local agriculture and food production continues to flourish.</p>

2.7.0 Focus Group Summary

Overall, we see that residents in Waterloo Region’s Townships are satisfied with their way of life and value what the rural setting offers them. Focus Group participants value the strong links to the community in the rural setting most of all and feel this contributes to their wellbeing. Additionally, what is unique to the rural setting in Waterloo Region is the proximity to urban areas, such as the City of Waterloo, the City of Kitchener, the City of Cambridge, and for some, Stratford, Fergus, and Guelph. So, while there is a concern about urban encroachment on rural life, there are also feelings of appreciation for access to services, entertainment, and cultural events found in the urban setting. This is true for most Focus Groups.

Despite all of the positives, there is also a general feeling of insecurity that was expressed by residents. People in the rural setting people feel unsettled about the rising cost of living and rising unaffordability. This can be said of most residents in Ontario, but feelings of insecurity among rural communities tend to be focussed on urban encroachment.

Transportation continues to be an on going issue, including access to a reliable public transportation system. This impacts access to services, especially services offered in their community. People also experience a sense of social and geographic Isolation.

Low-income individuals expressed concern that there is not enough affordable housing.

Lesbian, gay and transgender participants emphasized that their primary “issues” are making a living and raising their families, like everyone else. They indicated that there is more progress to be made in acceptance of differences in rural areas.

Findings from the Focus Groups show that while there is a stigma around mental health, this is changing. Many participants showed openness to discussing mental health in the community and willingness to consider accessing services. The close-knit qualities of the rural population, however, can interfere with accessing mental health services due to a lack of anonymity. Another key point that was raised by Focus Group participants about mental health services (and health services in general) was that residents need help with system navigation. This need was magnified for families of disabled children. Participants and service providers, often indicated that they did not have full knowledge of services and programs available to them and how to access them.

3.0 References

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