

# County releases preliminary report on community wellbeing survey

By [Bruce Chessell](#), Woodstock Sentinel-Review Thursday, July 14, 2016 2:40:42 EDT PM



The survey, which was presented to council by the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) and Community Oxford, was completed by a random sample of county residents in April and May.

Questions in the survey were divided into eight different sections that correspond with the CIW's framework for 'eight domains.' These sections included community vitality, healthy populations, democratic engagement, environment, leisure and culture, education, living standards and time use.

"(The report) details different aspects of each one of those domains and reflects essentially what the residents of Oxford County are saying about their quality of life in each of those respects," Bryan Smale, director of the CIW at University of Waterloo, said. "Even though we do measure overall wellbeing, these are sort of the factors that effect it."

According to the survey, about four in 10 Oxford residents rated their overall quality of health care serviced in their community as very good or excellent, although access to health care services was not rated as highly.

Six in 10 residents also expressed 'a lot' of interest in federal, provincial and local politics, but fewer than 10 per cent attended a municipal council meeting, wrote a letter to the editor about a local issue or attended a public demonstration or protest during the past 12 months.

Almost 90 per cent of residents agree that they have a responsibility to protect the environment and about the same percentage recycle materials quite often or all the time, and half of residents also participated in local events to help protect the environment.

As for living standards in Oxford County, fewer than seven per cent of residents reported being unable to pay their mortgage or rent on time once or more frequently in the past year, while almost 22 per cent in the same timeframe had difficulty paying for shelter-related costs like water and hydro.

Between half and two-thirds of Oxford residents who work for pay feel their current occupational position reflects their education and training, while one-fifth of residents working for pay have two or more paid jobs.

Smale said that by providing this comprehensive data about the residents and from the residents, you're getting insights about their desires and ambitions from the people themselves.

He added that this way, “you could design services, programs and policies that are more reflective of the things that they need and want.”

County CAO Peter Crockett said the preliminary results show that overall that the community is satisfied with where we are and where we’re headed.

“We’ll do some more in depth research on the numbers and try and pinpoint some of the issues that are critically important,” he said. “Where we’re doing extremely well, and more importantly, where we can up our game if you will and advance ourselves towards that sustainability goal.”

The next step of the survey process will be the development of a second report by the CIW for county council in September. This report will feature further analysis, as well as implications for next steps to act on the survey results through Oxford’s community sustainability work.

Smale said this next report will break down the sample into unique groups, particularly groups that are marginalized, in order to zero in on their needs.

The full preliminary report and appendix of participant comments can be read online on the Oxford County website at [www.oxfordcounty.ca/Your-Government/Speak-up-Oxford/Campaign-Details/ArticleId/6269/Wellbeing-in-Oxford](http://www.oxfordcounty.ca/Your-Government/Speak-up-Oxford/Campaign-Details/ArticleId/6269/Wellbeing-in-Oxford).

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