SOCIAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

February 2023

Acknowledgements

Project Support Team

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Consulting Support Team

Moorhouse & Associates Consulting Inc.
Objective Research and Evaluation Inc.

Special Thanks

The consulting support team would like to extend their deep thanks to Geoff Lynch and Erin Ballhorn for their leadership, guidance, and support throughout the project. Their willingness to build connections and open doors throughout the County was instrumental to the success of this project.

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Executive Summary

A social needs assessment was carried out in an effort to determine the social needs of residents and youth in the County of Wetaskiwin. This assessment involved the development of a community profile, a review of key documents, and the collection of data through a comprehensive engagement process consisting of resident surveys, working sessions, and in-depth interviews.

The information assembled during this assessment was summarized into findings and key themes. These findings and key themes suggested that a significant number of social needs within the County can be addressed if the following nine priority areas are attended to.

1. Mental health
2. Substance use and addictions
3. Isolation and loneliness
4. Bullying and abuse
5. Seniors supports
6. Basic needs
7. Affordable housing
8. Connections and collaborations amongst agencies
9. Communications

The results of this process were used to generate a Social Needs Assessment (SNA). This SNA can be used to improve the social wellness of the County and improve the quality of life of residents. For this SNA to realize its potential effective collaboration involving the municipalities, non-profit agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders is necessary. It is recommended that all partners unite their efforts and work as a collective to carry out the following seven implementation strategies.

1. Host a "launch", information, and implementation planning session for all SNA stakeholders in the County to increase awareness and knowledge of the SNA.
2. Form a SNA implementation Committee that will have responsibility for supporting the implementation of the plan and for providing oversight advice, over the long term, as the plan results are evaluated, and revisions considered.
3. Encourage all non-profit agencies, organizations, funders, and other stakeholders to incorporate the SNA priorities into their strategic and annual operational plans and identify key indicators from their organizations' perspective to measure progress toward priority outcomes.
4. Create an annual review process that engages all non-profit agencies, organizations, funders, the municipality, and other stakeholders in reviewing the progress made on the priorities and collectively plan for the upcoming year based on the results achieved.
5. Provide an annual progress report to the FCSS Board and County as well as to all agencies and organization so that they can update their respective boards and committees about the status of the plan and their respective current and anticipated contributions.
6. Develop additional, ongoing methods of engaging residents in providing information about portions of the plan and/or specific strategy areas under consideration and development including an ongoing SNA page on the County's website.
7. Plan and budget for a review of the plan and process to update the document based on current changes in the social, economic, and environmental environment in the County.

As an established, trusted, and well-respected entity in the County, FCSS is well-positioned to stimulate efforts to address the nine social priority areas. In some circumstances, FCSS may also be able to facilitate the development of services and resources that address these social priority areas.

It is important to note, when considering the context of the social priorities identified in the report, that when survey respondents were asked to identify the strengths that they felt currently existed in the County their top ranked responses included.

- The small-town atmosphere (62%)
- The welcoming nature of the community and presence of good neighbours (55%)
- The affordable cost of living (47%)
- The community spirit and pride in the County (35%)

In addition, more than three quarters of residents (76%) and nearly three quarters (70%) youth who participated in the surveys reported they were happy or very happy with their quality of life living in the County.

Project Description

In early 2022 the County of Wetaskiwin Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) sought the support of a consulting team to conduct a Social Needs Assessment (SNA) for the County of Wetaskiwin. The purpose of this project was to determine the preventative social needs of the residents of the County of Wetaskiwin and the level to which their needs are presently being met.

The key deliverable of the project was a SNA that the County of Wetaskiwin FCSS, in conjunction with key partners within the community, can utilize to address identified social needs in a thoughtful and strategic way. The consulting team assembled this SNA by carrying out the following key activities.

- Assessing the demographic and societal trends as they apply to the County of Wetaskiwin and creating a community profile.
- Reviewing key documents and resources provided by the County of Wetaskiwin.
- Implementing an engagement process which included resident surveys and in-depth interviews with representatives from human service and non-profit agencies.
- Identifying opportunities for collective impact and strategic partnerships to initiate the development and implementation of new services and resources.
- Exploring potential improvement relating to existing services and resources, volunteer and leadership development, staffing needs, and a suggested long-range timeline for future consideration.
- Evaluating existing social needs and gaps in programs and services aimed at addressing these existing social needs.

Values and Principles Guiding the Process

The consulting team adopted a core set of guiding values and principles to guide its efforts in the completion of the study. These values and principles were rooted in the team's previous experience developing and implementing needs assessments and social policy reviews. At a fundamental level, the team believed the project success would be driven by the following.

- Co-creating an approach, with the target sector, which builds an ongoing process to provide meaningful opportunities for engagement across a wide cross section in participating in the planning and engagement activities and that enables all parties to share ownership of the recommendations and directions.
- Integrating and building on principles, goals and strategies associated with social development found in existing strategic frameworks in the County of Wetaskiwin.
- Using evidence-based information, strategies, and recommendations to identify issues and their root causes as well as provide a foundation on which to build sustainable options and direction for consideration.
- Ensuring that the work of the project contributes to the ability to anticipate future issues and build capacity to both prevent and address issues and opportunities effectively and efficiently.

Further, the consulting team operated in accordance with the following principles:

- The definition of "preventive social services" was consistent with the definition set out in the FCSS Act and Regulation.

- Inclusion and diversity were supported by seeking to engage broadly with rural and urban residents, agencies, and organizations; and
- Deliverables and results would be co-created by sharing knowledge, providing education, and creating understanding of the information with residents, agencies, and organizations.

Finally, the consulting team believed that any policies, strategies, and recommendations that emerged from the project must lead to concreate, tangible, change-oriented action to have value and be effective. It is hoped that the results of this project will leave a legacy of community engagement and increase social wellness and well-being. The energy and resources that all parties who contributed to this project will have been well invested if this goal is achieved.

Methodology

The consulting team utilized a mixed method approach that consisted of both quantitative and qualitative strategies to gather, analyze, and interpret data from multiple sources. The specific strategies utilized for each component of the project are outlined below.

Community Profile

Data from Statistics Canada was used to construct a comprehensive community profile that accurately describes salient characteristics of the population that resides within the boundaries of the County of Wetaskiwin (e.g., size, age, ethnicity, family status).

Document and Resource Review

The County of Wetaskiwin provided four key documents and resources to review. The text, figures, and charts within these documents and resources were carefully scrutinized, and pertinent information related to social needs was extracted. This information was then themed and summarized to generate a clear summary of learnings and to formulate priorities for action.

Engagement Process

The engagement process consisted of semi-structured stakeholder interviews, an agency and community organization working session, and online surveys.

Two types of interviews were carried out: introductory, scoping interviews and in-depth interviews with representatives from human service and non-profit agencies within the County of Wetaskiwin and its surround jurisdictions. In total, 18 interviews were carried out with representatives from human service and non-profit agencies in the County of Wetaskiwin as well as County administration and Council members.

Two online surveys were administered: a resident household survey and a youth survey. To maximize response rates, postcards with URLs and QR codes directing residents and youth to the surveys were distributed. A total of 91 responses to the resident surveys were received and 149 responses to the youth survey were received. Overall, 240 unique individuals shared their input through a survey.

County of Wetaskiwin Community Profile

The County of Wetaskiwin is a municipal district in central Alberta and was historically home to the Plains Cree peoples. The name "Wetaskiwin" is a Cree word meaning "the hills where peace was made". The County stretches from Bittern Lake on the east boundary to the Alder Flats area in the west. As of 2021 the County's population was 11,212, representing a 3% increase since 2016. These individuals reside in the City of Wetaskiwin, the Town of Millet, or one of the eight hamlets and the surrounding rural area which is home to numerous communities.

The age distribution of the population, split by gender, within the County can be found in the graph below. Significant proportion of the population are older adults and seniors. Adolescents and young adults also comprise another large proportion of the population.

Age	Female	Male
90+	27	34
85-89	68	98
80-84	110	178
75-79	227	278
70-74	346	419
65-69	519	525
60-64	555	572
55-59	505	500
50-54	393	391
45-49	292	368
40-44	343	338
35-39	338	332
30-34	267	290
25-29	195	229
20-24	272	303
15-19	286	351
10-14	332	360
5-9	300	328
0-4	185	212
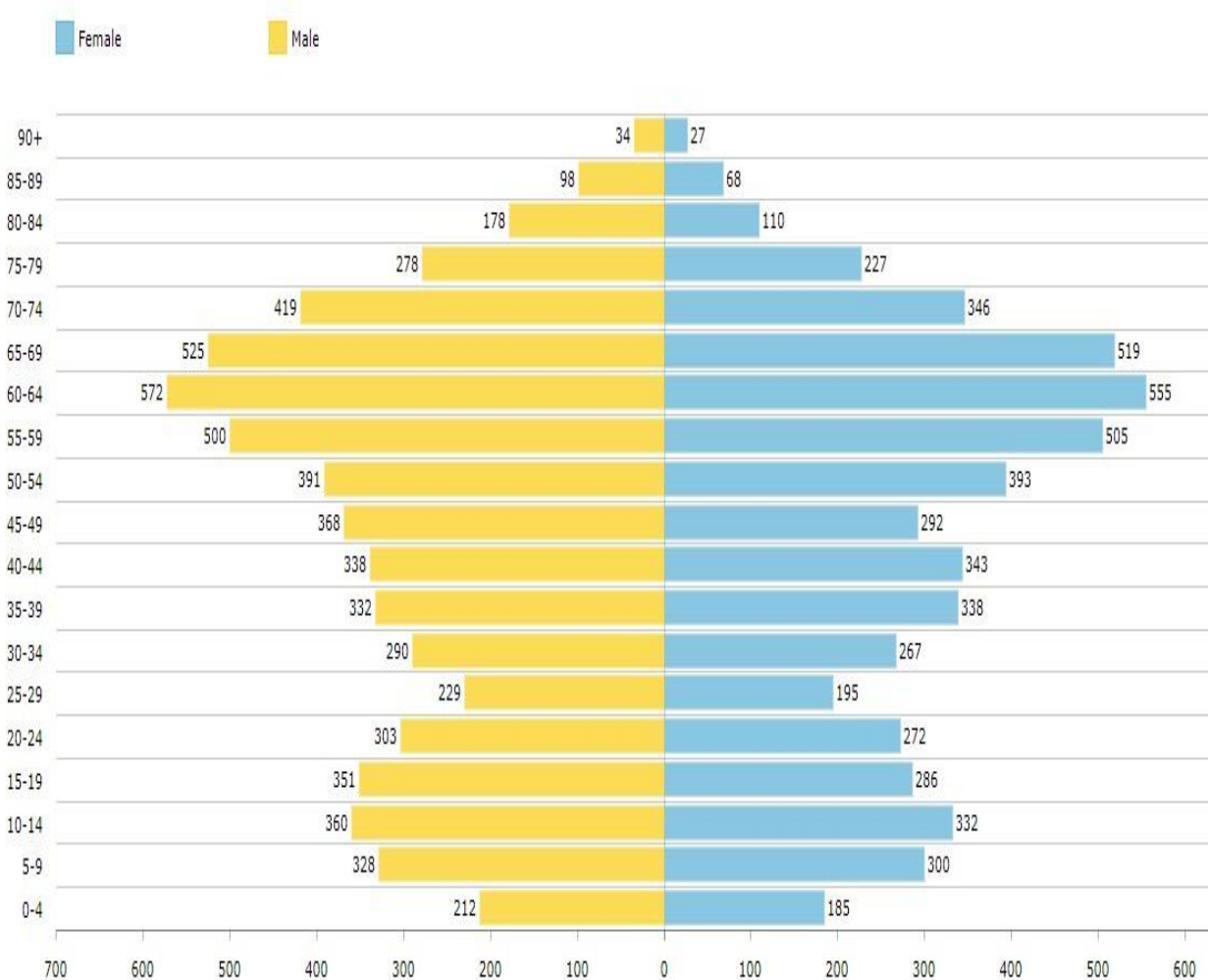
Source: Statistics Canada (2021)

Identified in the following chart are selected population and demographic characteristics from the 2021 Federal Census comparing the County to Provincial figures and trends.

Characteristic	County of Wetaskiwin	Province of Alberta
Indigenous Population	7%	16%
Visible Minority	2%	11%
Average Age	45	38
Married or Living Common Law	58%	59%
Not Married or Living Common Law	26%	41%
Household Size	2.4	2.6
Couple Families	92%	84%
Lone Parent Families	8%	16%
Median After-Tax Income of Families	$75,500	$99,000
Unemployment Rate	9.9%	5.5%
Education – No Certificate, Diploma, or Degree	25%	21%
Education – Secondary School Diploma or Equivalent	39%	30%
Education – Post-Secondary Certificate, Diploma, Degree	36%	49%

Source: Statistics Canada (2021)

Document and Resource Review

Four foundational documents were reviewed as part of the Social Needs Assessment process. The documents were:

- County of Wetaskiwin No. 10 Municipal Development Plan – 2010, amended in 2016 and 2020
- Recreation Needs Assessment and Master Plan – 2014
- Community Consultation on Aging Well – 2016
- County of Wetaskiwin FCSS Annual Report – 2020, 2021
- Community Program and Events Guide – 2021
- County of Wetaskiwin No. 10 Municipal Policies – 2021

A detailed summary of the Document and Resource review can be found in Appendix 1.

Priorities and Alignment Identified from Document and Resource Review

There are several priorities and opportunities for alignment that are evident based on the review of the aforementioned documents. They include:

- Continue to build and support ongoing community engagement
- Promote citizen engagement and encourage volunteerism
- Build awareness of FCSS program, services, and results and how to access
- Increase community pride and identity
- Expand transport support for residents to attend social programs and services
- Build and sustain community partnerships and collaboration
- Acknowledge the importance of recreation in social development
- Focus on community safety

Engagement Findings – What We Heard

In-Depth Interviews

Introduction

A total of 18 in depth interviews were carried out with representatives from human service and non-profit agencies across the County of Wetaskiwin and the surrounding jurisdiction. These interviews were carried out over the duration of the project. Representatives interviewed included a diverse array of individuals with leadership, management, and front-line program and service delivery experience. These individuals possessed a high degree of experience developing and implementing programs and services aimed at addressing social needs within the County.

During the interviews individuals were asked to share their views on the strengths and assets that exist within the County of Wetaskiwin. They were also asked to describe how these strengths and assets could be leveraged to address social needs. The individuals were then asked to identify and comment on the issues, challenges, and barriers that they see in relation to social needs. Program and service gaps were explored. And finally, these individuals were asked to provide recommended course of action that the County of Wetaskiwin can take to overcome issues, challenges, and barriers and fill program and service gaps in the future.

Findings

The information collected during interviews was analyzed using a ground theory approach. This approach allowed themes to emerge from the results without undue bias from a preconceived set of theories or expectations. A summary of comments from the individuals who participated in interviews can be found in Appendix 2.

Agency and Community Organization Working Session

Introduction

One working session involving agency and community organization staff and volunteers was held in the County. In total 21 individuals attended and actively participated in the working session.

Participants worked through five question areas including identifying strengths, agency and organization challenges, social issues and opportunities, prioritization, and identification of high-level success indicators. The participants also discussed possible strategies and actions that may work to help resolve the identified social issues and take advantage of the potential opportunities. A summary comments from the individuals who participated in working session can be found in Appendix 3.

Resident Survey

Introduction

A survey was fielded with households in the County of Wetaskiwin. Through consultation with the County of Wetaskiwin FCSS, the questionnaire was finalized and programmed into an online platform. While the primary means of fielding was online, a hardcopy version was also developed.

To promote the survey, postcards were produced and distributed to residents within the County during various project engagement activities (e.g., interviews, working groups). Further, the survey was promoted heavily through the County's website and social media accounts. Agencies throughout the County also supported survey promotion by directing clients and other key stakeholders to the survey online.

In total 91 full and partial responses were gathering during the fielding window of June 15, 2022 and December 1, 2022. The findings are presented below in the order they were asked in the survey. The percentages shown are based upon the number of respondents who provided an answer.

Findings

Demographics

The demographic characteristics of the respondents who completed the resident survey are presented in the charts below.

Where Respondents Reside in the County
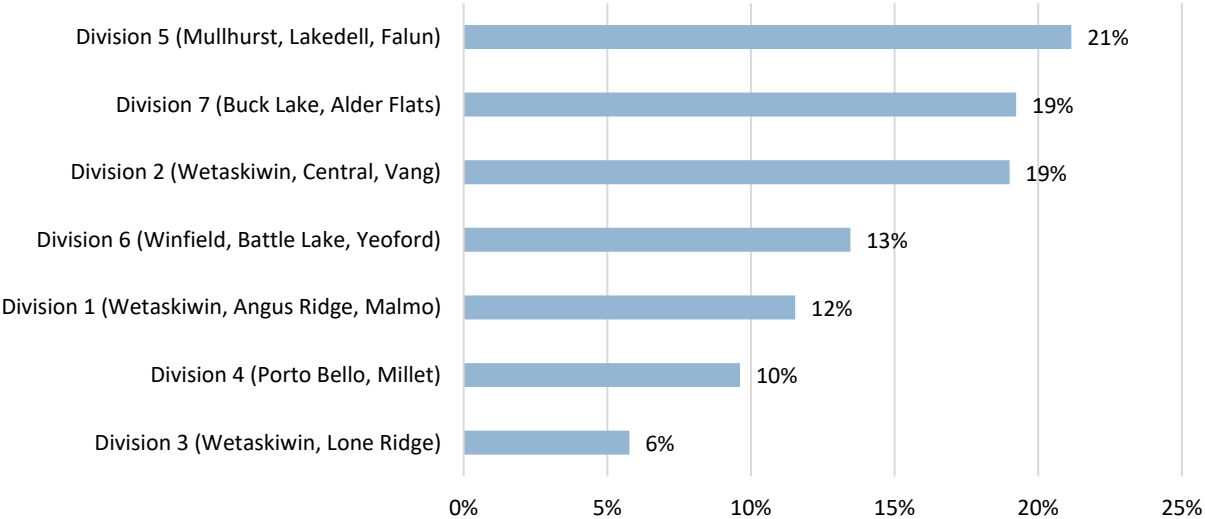
The majority of respondents the completed the survey reside in Division 5 (21%), Division 7 (19%), and Division 2 (19%).

Respondent's Age
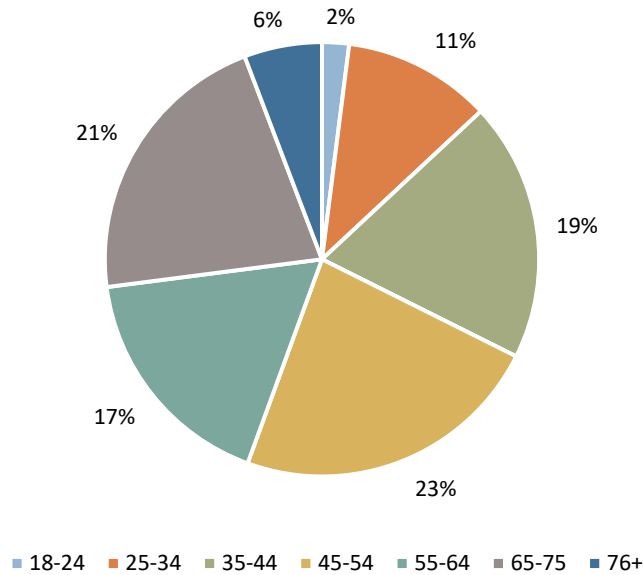
More than a third (40%) of respondents were between 45 and 64 years of age. Slightly more than a tenth (11%) of respondents were between 25 and 34 years of age. Nearly a third (27%) of respondents were greater than 65 years of age.

Respondents' Gender
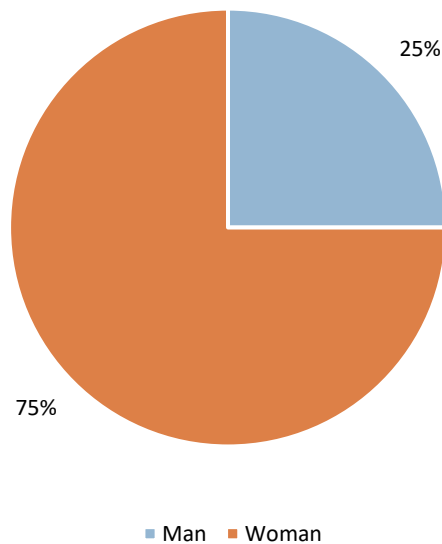
Three quarters (75%) of respondents were female. The remaining respondents (25%) were male. No respondents identified as transgender, non-binary, or two-spirit.

How Long Respondents Have Lived in the County

15%

4%

4%

12%

65%

■ Less than one year   ■ One to two years   ■ Two to five years   ■ Five to ten years   ■ More than ten years
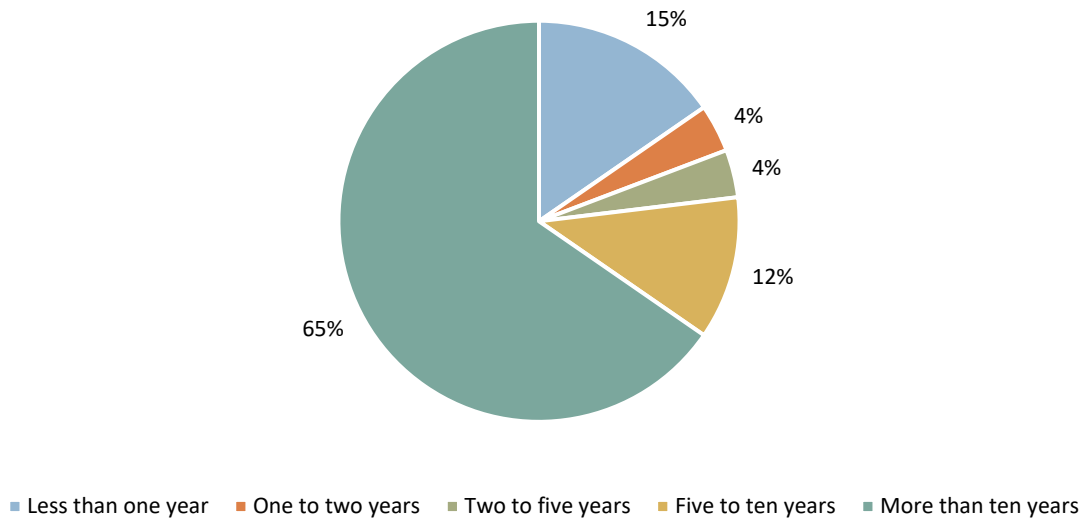
Nearly three quarters (65%) of respondents have lived in the County for more than 10 years. Nearly a fifth (15%) of respondents have lived in the County for less than one year. Slightly more than a tenth (12%) of respondents have lived in the County for five to 10 years.

Respondents' Employment Status

27%

4%

4%

4%

56%

■ Employed, working full-time   ■ Employed, working part-time

■ Not employed, looking for work   ■ Not employed, NOT looking for work
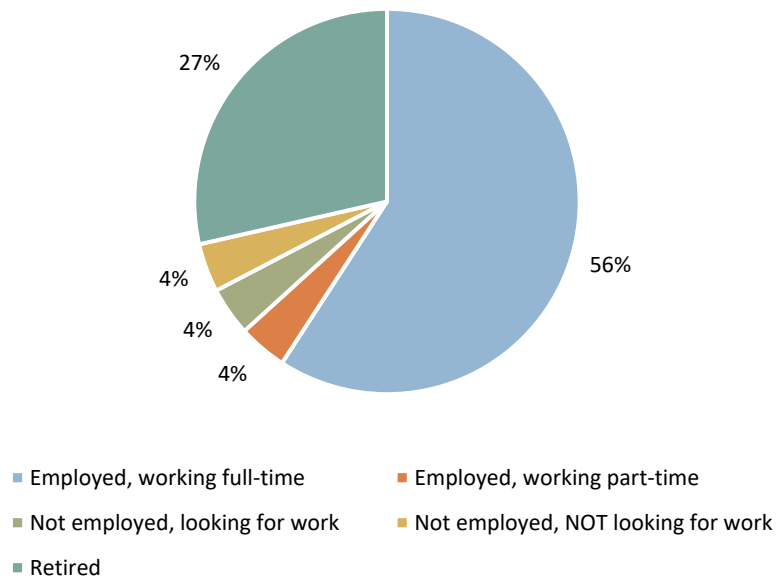
■ Retired

More than half (56%) of respondents were employed and working full-time. More than a quarter (27%) of respondents were retired. The remaining respondents were employed and working part-time, not employed and looking for work, or not employed and not looking for work.

Respondents were asked to identify the strengths of living in the County. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, more than half (62%) of respondents said that the small-town atmosphere is a strength of life in the County. Further, more than half (55%) of respondents indicated that living in a welcoming community with good neighbours is a strength of life in the County. Living close to a large city, the affordable cost of living, and high levels of County spirt and pride were the next most frequently identified strengths.

Strengths of Life in the County

Category	Percentage
Small town atmosphere	62%
Welcoming community / good neighbours	55%
Close to a large city	41%
Affordability	41%
County spirit and pride	35%
Green spaces / walkability	30%
Variety of recreational and social opportunities	26%
Good access to health care	25%
Safe community	20%
Accessible businesses and services	18%
Good access to social supports and services	12%
Diversity and inclusion in community	11%
Economic stability	9%

90% of respondents indicated that having access to the social programs and services they need is of high importance to them when it comes to social life in the County. Nearly 90% of respondents indicated that kindness and mutual support are also of high importance to them. Opportunities to provide input into civic matters (83%) and a sense of belonging in the community (81%) were also items of high importance to respondents when it comes to social life in the County.

How Important Different Items are to County Residents

Item	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not at all important
Kindness and mutual support	58%	31%	9%	2%
Acceptance of cultures, disabilities and individual differences	33%	41%	19%	7%
Access to the social programs and services you need	48%	42%	7%	1%
Input into the social programs and services you need	36%	44%	16%	2%
Connections to others from other cultures or generations	16%	41%	34%	8%
Opportunities to participate in community activities	26%	49%	20%	3%
Opportunities to volunteer	16%	36%	38%	10%
Opportunities to provide input into civic matters	34%	49%	16%	1%
Opportunities to know your neighbours	32%	38%	25%	4%
A sense of belonging to the community	34%	47%	18%	1%

■ Very important ■ Important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not at all important

More than three quarters (76%) of respondents indicated that they are happy living in the County. Only 7% of respondents indicated that they are unhappy living in the County.

County Residents' Happiness

Very happy 13%, Happy 63%, Neutral 16%, Unhappy 5%, Very unhappy 2%

■ Very happy ■ Happy ■ Neutral ■ Unhappy ■ Very unhappy

Respondents were asked to express their views on how important it is to have different social issues address in the County. More than 90% of respondents indicated that having mental health issues addressed in the County is of high importance. Further, 90% of respondents believed that ensuring residents' personal safety was of high importance in the County. Isolation and loneliness (81%), meeting basic needs (80%), and family and domestic violence (79%) were also identified as issues of high importance to address in the County.

Importance of Having Social Issues Addressed in the County
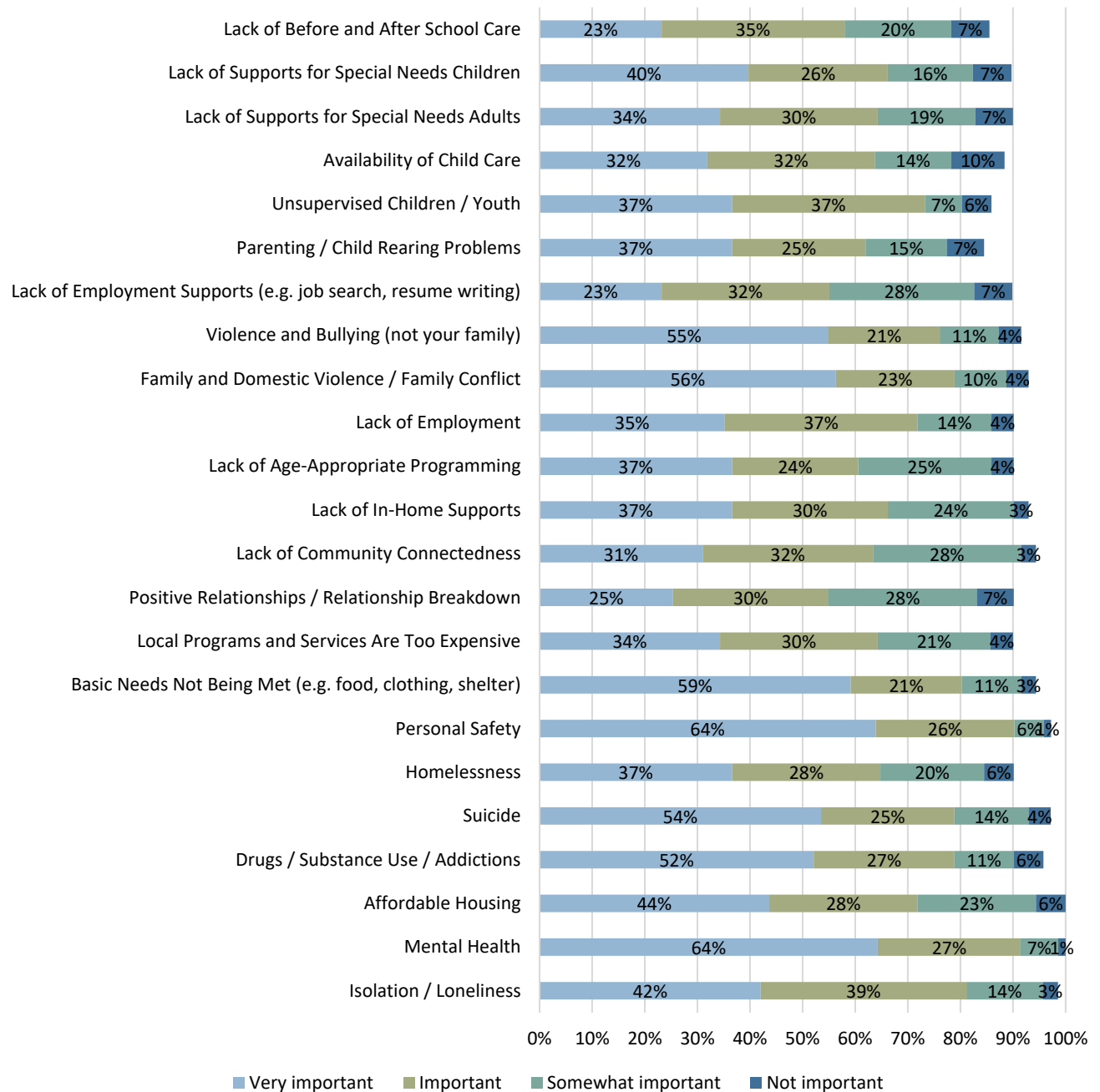
Respondents demonstrated a high level of awareness of the social issues that children and youth, adults and families, and seniors face in the County. The top five social issues identified for each age group are presented below.

Children and Youth

1. Mental health
2. Violence and bullying, not in the child or youth's family
3. Drugs, substance abuse, addictions
4. Personal safety
5. Suicide

Adults and Families

1. Mental health
2. Drugs, substance use, and addictions
3. Basic needs not being met
4. Personal safety
5. Isolation and loneliness

Seniors

1. Isolation and loneliness
2. Mental health
3. Personal safety
4. Affordable housing
5. Basic needs not being met

The top five issues identified for each age group are representative of the issues that respondents would like to see address in the County in the next five years.

Respondents were provided with a list of social issues and asked if the issues exist within the County. Specifically, they were asked if the issue exists within the children and youth, adults and families, and seniors of the County. Secondly respondents were asked if they are aware of local programs and services to address the issues for each population group.

Children and Youth

As illustrated in the graph below more than half (64%) of respondents said that the mental health issues are experienced by children and youth in the County. A similar amount or respondents said that children and youth experience violence and bullying outside of their families (63%) and that drug, substance abuse, and addictions is an issue (59%). However, only a small minority of respondents indicated that they are aware of programs that exist to address these issues.

Social Issues Experienced by Children and Youth in the County and Residents' Awareness of Programs

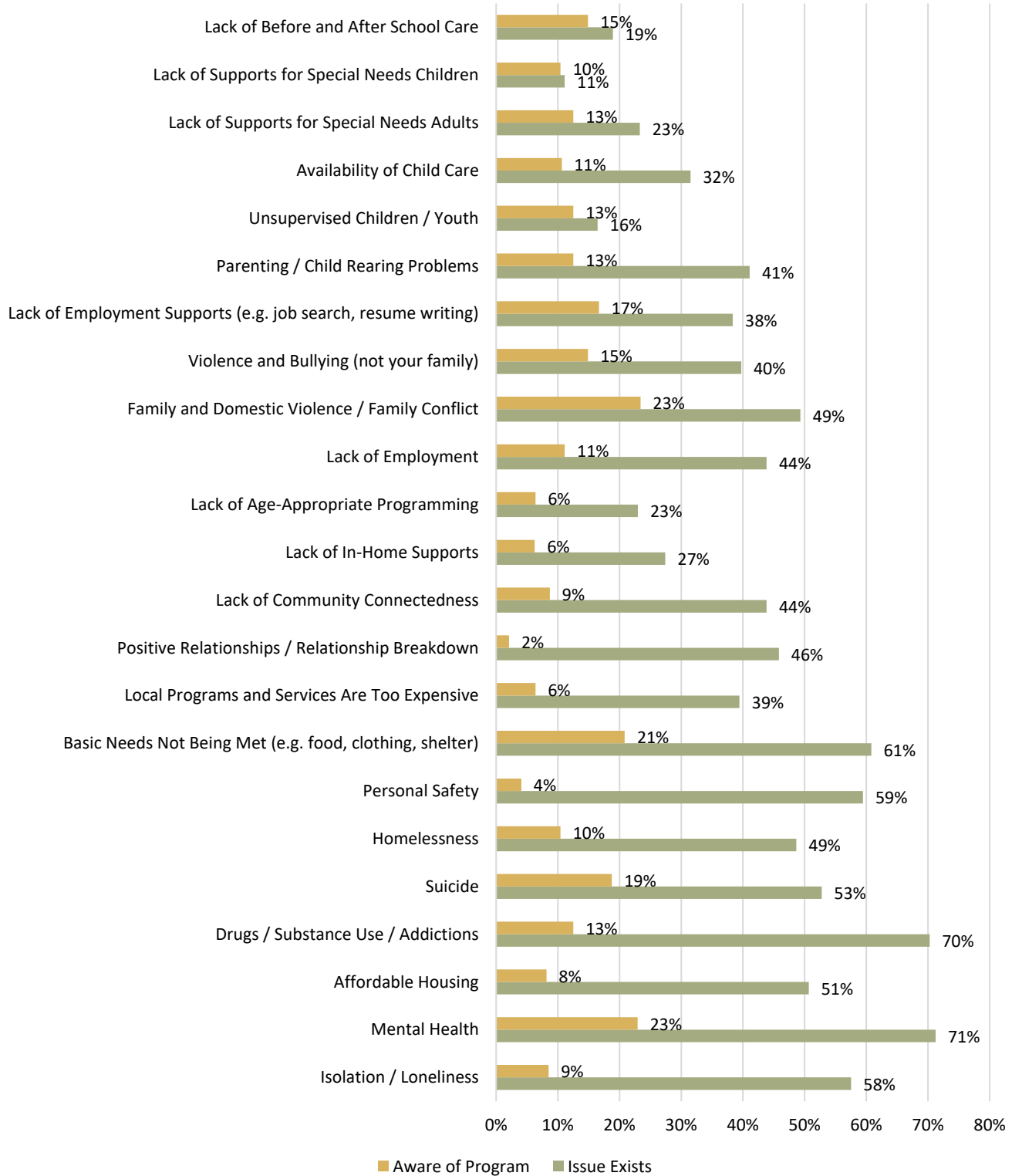| Social Issue	Aware of Program	Issue Exists
Lack of Before and After School Care	15%	38%
Lack of Supports for Special Needs Children	8%	26%
Lack of Supports for Special Needs Adults	4%	5%
Availability of Child Care	9%	34%
Unsupervised Children / Youth	17%	42%
Parenting / Child Rearing Problems	6%	21%
Lack of Employment Supports (e.g. job search, resume writing)	4%	21%
Violence and Bullying (not your family)	19%	63%
Family and Domestic Violence / Family Conflict	17%	38%
Lack of Employment	7%	21%
Lack of Age-Appropriate Programming	15%	38%
Lack of In-Home Supports	6%	19%
Lack of Community Connectedness	7%	30%
Positive Relationships / Relationship Breakdown	2%	32%
Local Programs and Services Are Too Expensive	9%	35%
Basic Needs Not Being Met (e.g. food, clothing, shelter)	13%	43%
Personal Safety	6%	55%
Homelessness	8%	24%
Suicide	15%	54%
Drugs / Substance Use / Addictions	6%	59%
Affordable Housing	4%	22%
Mental Health	23%	64%
Isolation / Loneliness	15%	48%

■ Aware of Program   ■ Issue Exists

Adults and Families

As illustrated in the graph below nearly three quarters (71%) of respondents said that mental health issues are experienced by adults and families in the County. Nearly three quarters of respondents also said that drug, substance abuse, and addictions is an issue (70%). Finally, the more than half of respondents indicated that the lack of basic needs is an issue for adults and families (61%). However, only a small minority of respondents indicated that they are aware of programs that exist to address these issues.
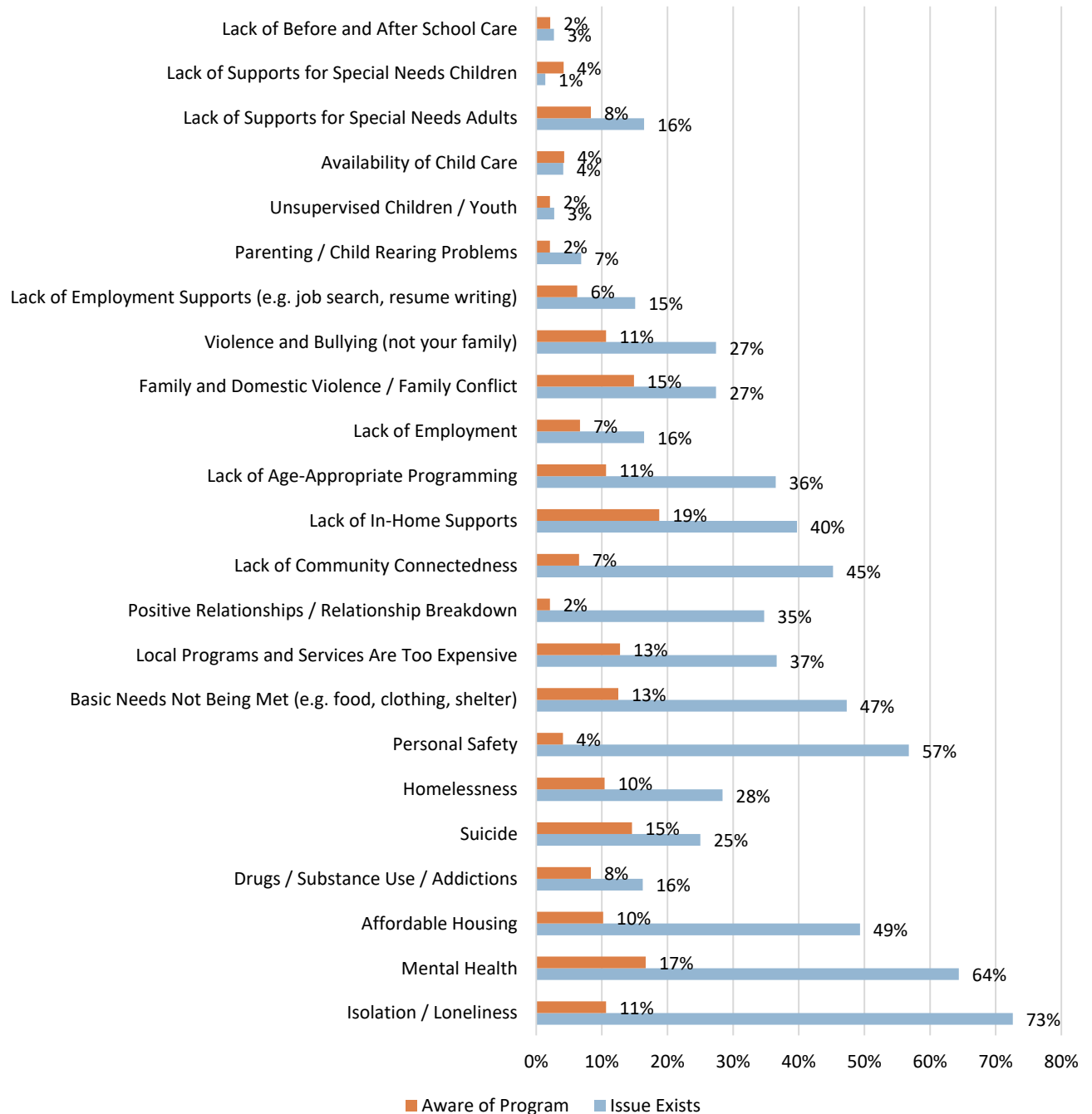
Social Issues Experienced by Adults and Families in the County and Residents' Awareness of Programs
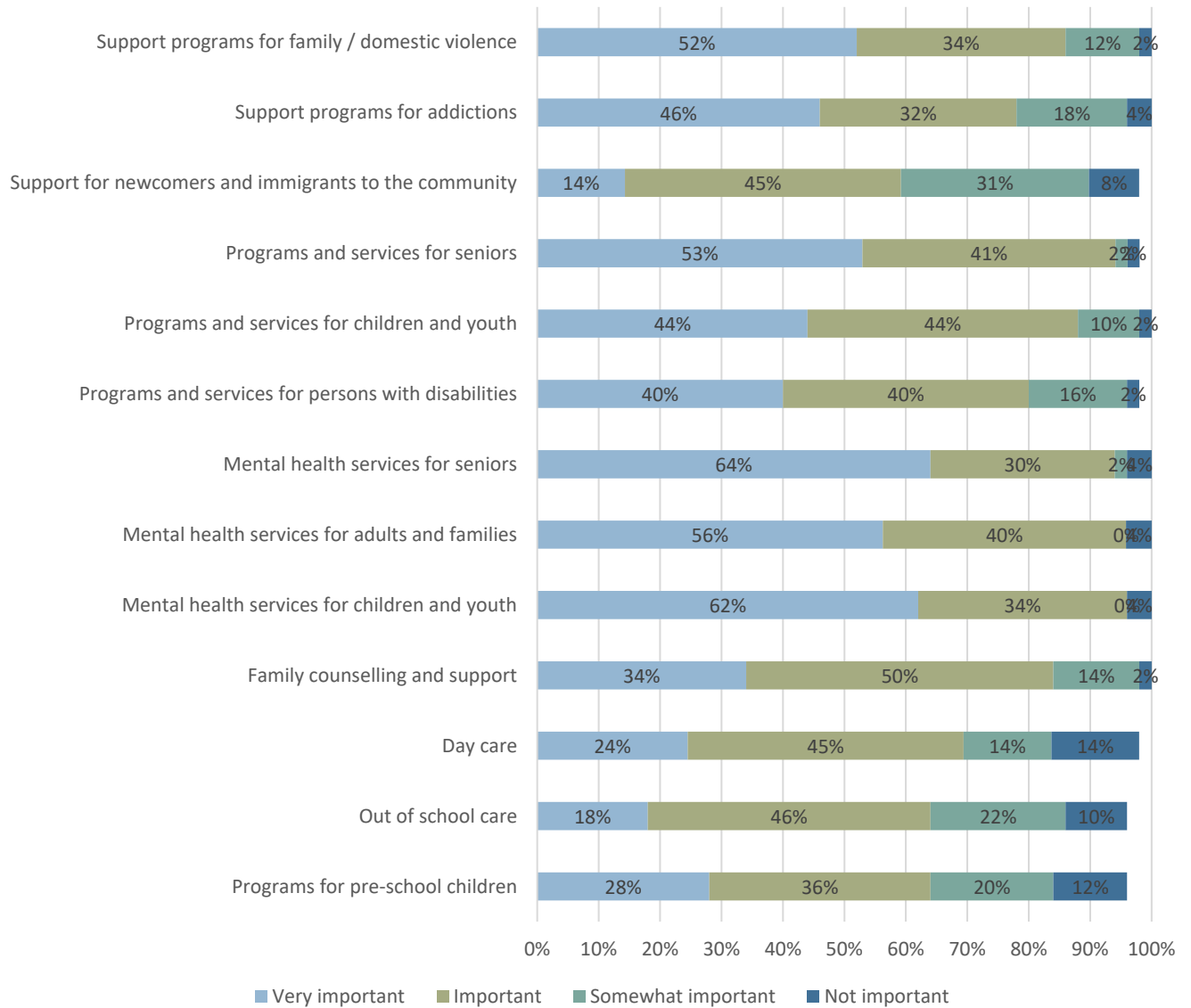
Social Issue	Aware of Program	Issue Exists
Lack of Before and After School Care	15%	19%
Lack of Supports for Special Needs Children	10%	11%
Lack of Supports for Special Needs Adults	13%	23%
Availability of Child Care	11%	32%
Unsupervised Children / Youth	13%	16%
Parenting / Child Rearing Problems	13%	41%
Lack of Employment Supports (e.g. job search, resume writing)	17%	38%
Violence and Bullying (not your family)	15%	40%
Family and Domestic Violence / Family Conflict	23%	49%
Lack of Employment	11%	44%
Lack of Age-Appropriate Programming	6%	23%
Lack of In-Home Supports	6%	27%
Lack of Community Connectedness	9%	44%
Positive Relationships / Relationship Breakdown	2%	46%
Local Programs and Services Are Too Expensive	6%	39%
Basic Needs Not Being Met (e.g. food, clothing, shelter)	21%	61%
Personal Safety	4%	59%
Homelessness	10%	49%
Suicide	19%	53%
Drugs / Substance Use / Addictions	13%	70%
Affordable Housing	8%	51%
Mental Health	23%	71%
Isolation / Loneliness	9%	58%

■ Aware of Program ■ Issue Exists

As illustrated in the graph nearly three quarters (73%) of respondents said that isolation and loneliness are issues experienced by seniors in the County. More than half also said that mental health issues are experienced by seniors (64%) and that personal safety is an issue for seniors (57%). However, only a small minority of respondents indicated that they are aware of programs that exist to address these issues.

Social Issues Experienced by Seniors in the County and Residents' Awareness of Programs

Social Issue	Aware of Program	Issue Exists
Lack of Before and After School Care	2%	3%
Lack of Supports for Special Needs Children	4%	1%
Lack of Supports for Special Needs Adults	8%	16%
Availability of Child Care	4%	4%
Unsupervised Children / Youth	2%	3%
Parenting / Child Rearing Problems	2%	7%
Lack of Employment Supports (e.g. job search, resume writing)	6%	15%
Violence and Bullying (not your family)	11%	27%
Family and Domestic Violence / Family Conflict	15%	27%
Lack of Employment	7%	16%
Lack of Age-Appropriate Programming	11%	36%
Lack of In-Home Supports	19%	40%
Lack of Community Connectedness	7%	45%
Positive Relationships / Relationship Breakdown	2%	35%
Local Programs and Services Are Too Expensive	13%	37%
Basic Needs Not Being Met (e.g. food, clothing, shelter)	13%	47%
Personal Safety	4%	57%
Homelessness	10%	28%
Suicide	15%	25%
Drugs / Substance Use / Addictions	8%	16%
Affordable Housing	10%	49%
Mental Health	17%	64%
Isolation / Loneliness	11%	73%

■ Aware of Program ■ Issue Exists

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of providing various social programs and services in the County. The top five social programs and services that respondents wish to see offered in the County were as follows.

1. Mental health programs and services for children and youth, adults and families, and seniors
2. Programs and services for seniors
3. Programs and services for children and youth
4. Family and domestic violence programs and services
5. Drugs, substance abuse, and addictions programs and services

The graph below illustrates how respondents view the importance of all social programs and services.

Importance of Providing Each Program and Service in the County

Program / Service	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important
Support programs for family / domestic violence	52%	34%	12%	2%
Support programs for addictions	46%	32%	18%	4%
Support for newcomers and immigrants to the community	14%	45%	31%	8%
Programs and services for seniors	53%	41%	2%	2%
Programs and services for children and youth	44%	44%	10%	2%
Programs and services for persons with disabilities	40%	40%	16%	2%
Mental health services for seniors	64%	30%	2%	4%
Mental health services for adults and families	56%	40%	0%	2%
Mental health services for children and youth	62%	34%	0%	2%
Family counselling and support	34%	50%	14%	2%
Day care	24%	45%	14%	14%
Out of school care	18%	46%	22%	10%
Programs for pre-school children	28%	36%	20%	12%

More than half (56%) of respondents indicated that they are able to access programs and services when needed in the County. Less than 20% of respondents indicated that they are unable to access programs and services when needed in the County. A quarter (25%) of respondents were unsure whether they are able to access programs and services when needed in the County.

Whether Residents are able to Access Programs and Services in the County
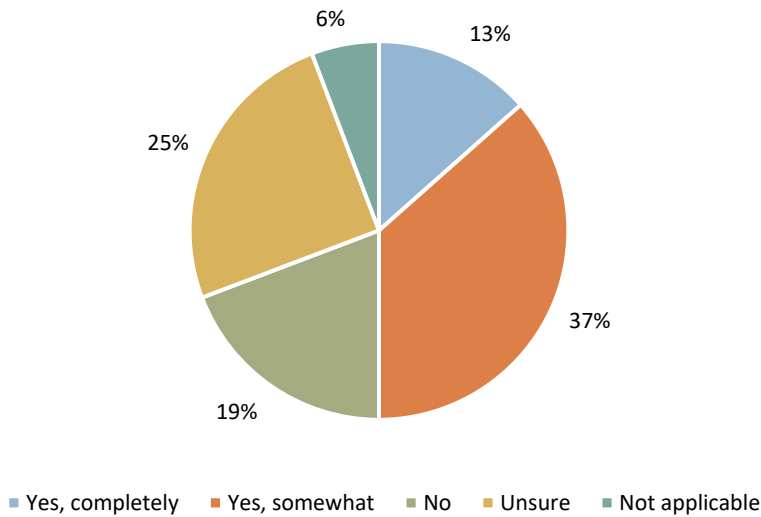
Nearly three quarters of respondents (70%) indicated that lack of awareness of programs and services available in the County was a factor in them not accessing programs and services when need. Nearly a third of respondents (30%) indicated that high cost prevented them from accessing programs and services when needed. Nearly a quarter of respondents (24%) the lack of specialized services tailored to their individual needs was a barrier to access.

Factors that Prevent Residents from Accessing Programs and Services in the County
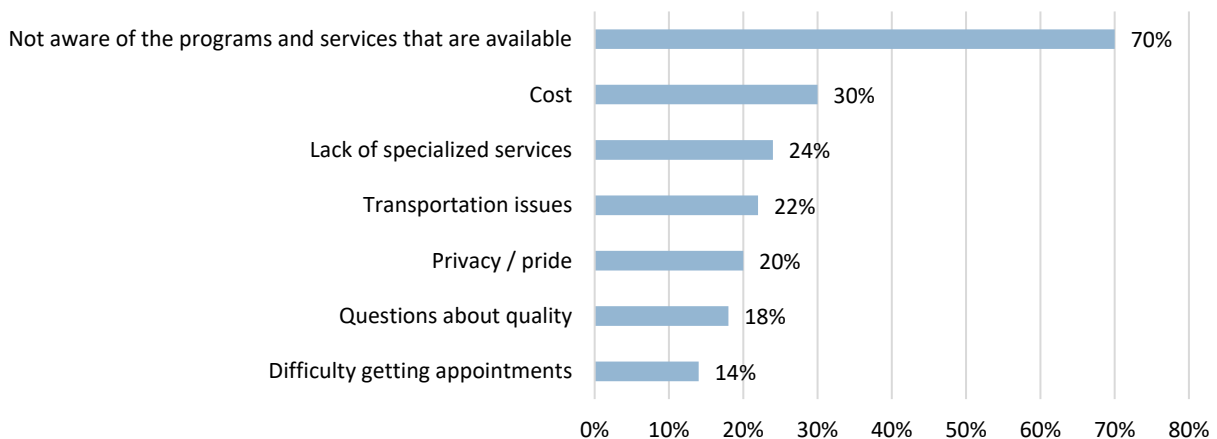
More than half of respondents (58%) indicated that municipal newsletters and social media postings through media like Facebook and Instagram are their preferred methods to receive information about existing social programs and services in the County. Nearly half of respondents (43%) email or the municipal website would be an effective way to share information about programs and services. Nearly a quarter of respondents (21%) said that road signs are also a preferred way to receive this information.

Residents' Preferred Methods to Receive Information About Existing Programs and Services

Method	Percentage
Municipal newsletters	58%
Social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	58%
Email	43%
Municipal website	43%
Road signage (e.g. electronic sign)	21%
Gatherings in the community	19%
Posters around town	17%
Community directory	13%
School newsletters	13%
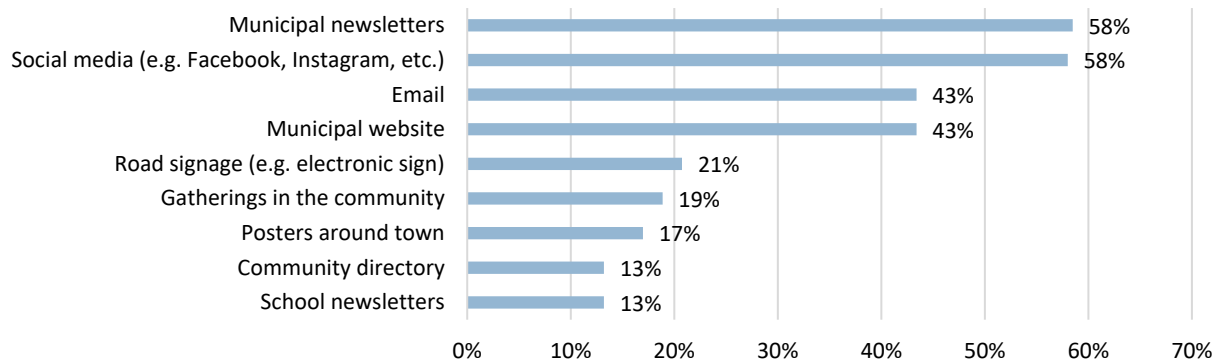
Close to the conclusion of the resident survey respondents were asked to identify what they believe would constitute success and progress in the County, post social needs assessment. More than half of respondents (63%) indicated that increased awareness of social programs and services amongst residents would demonstrate success

What Respondents Believe Would be Indicators of Improvement of Quality of Life in the County

Indicator	Percentage
Increased awareness of available services	63%
Low crime rate continues as population increases	63%
Increased quality of life	53%
Increased social programs, services, and supports in the County	51%
Young adults remain in the community	43%
People able to access services locally	37%
Decreased wait times for programs and services	33%
Number of new businesses increase	31%
Reduced levels of family violence	29%
Decreased unemployment	27%
Decreased use of food bank	25%
Decreased people accessing income supports	24%
Increase in volunteers	24%
Decreased homelessness	20%
Increased transit options and use	18%
Increased child and youth fitness and activity levels	18%
Increased green spaces	12%

Youth Survey

Introduction

To gain insight into the social needs of youth in the County of Wetaskiwin, an online survey was fielded directly with youth. The questionnaire was programmed and fielded online; youth in the County were invited to participate through local schools and engagement at other community venues. In total 149 responses were gathered between June 15, 2022 and December 15, 2022. A synopsis of the survey findings is presented below.

Findings

The demographic characteristics of the respondents who completed the resident survey are presented in the charts below.

Where Youth Reside in the County

■ Division 2 (Wetaskiwin, Central, Vang)   ■ Division 3 (Wetaskiwin, Lone Ridge)

■ Division 5 (Mullhurst, Lakedell, Falun)   ■ Division 6 (Winfield, Battle Lake, Yeoford)

■ Division 7 (Buck Lake, Alder Flats)
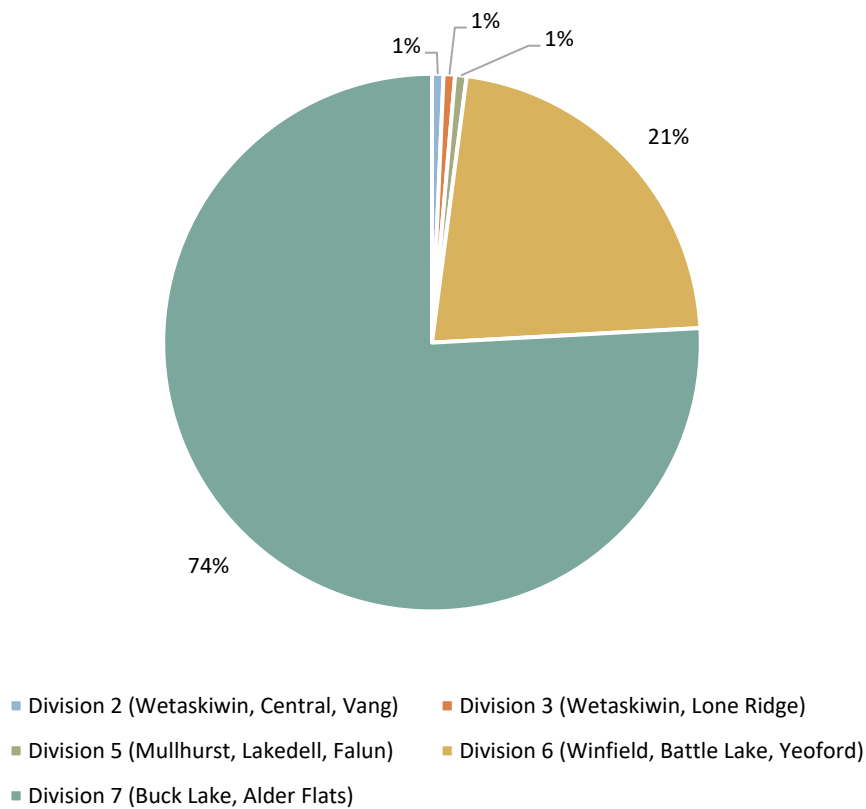
The majority of youth that responded to the survey reside in either Division 7 (74%) and Division 6 (21%).

Youth Age
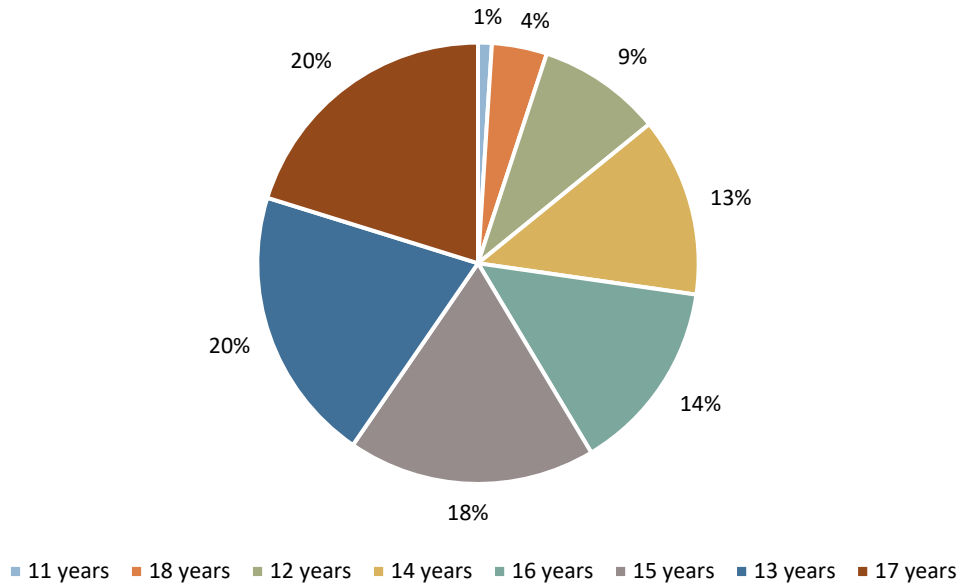
Youth who were 13 years of age (20%), 17 years or age (20%), and 15 years of age (18%) comprised more than half of the sample.

Youth Gender
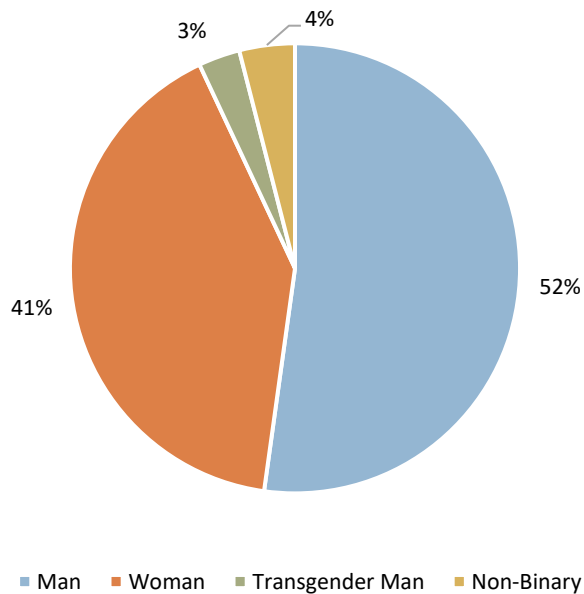
More than half (52%) of youth were male and nearly half (41%) of youth were female. The remaining respondents (7%) were transgender male and females.

Living in the County of Wetaskiwin

Youth were asked to identify what the best things about living in the County are. The following themes emerged from responses.

- The quiet and peaceful environment
- The people and close relationships with friends and neighbours
- The variety of recreational activities to participate in

County Youth Happiness

- Very happy   - Happy   - Neutral   - Unhappy   - Very unhappy
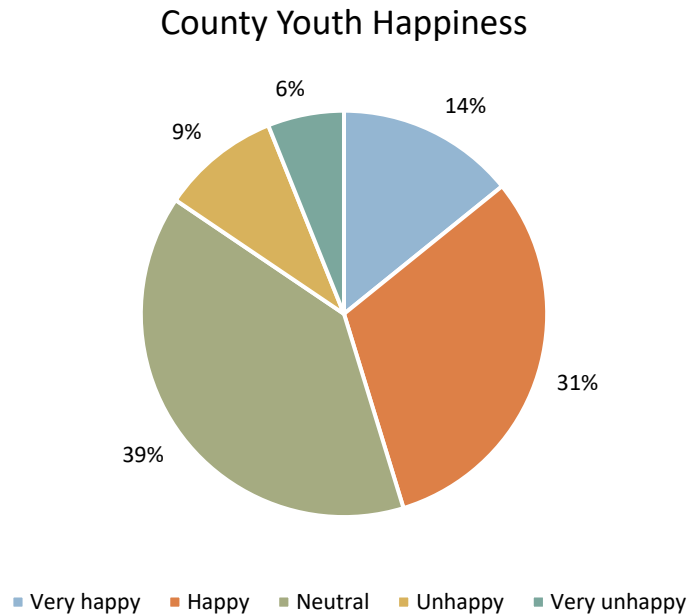
The majority of youth (70%) indicated that they are happy living in the County. Only a small proportion of youth (15%) indicated that they were not happy living in the County.

Youth were asked to identify what could be done to improve their quality of life. A wide variety of responses were provided. However, the following themes consistently emerged.

- More amenities, services, and restaurants
- More parks and places to walk
- Better roads (i.e., paved, not gravel)
- More mental health programs
- Supports for people who are being bullied or abused

- More recreational facilities (e.g., field house for hockey, basketball courts, baseball diamonds, swimming pools)
- A mall and movie theatre
- More place for youth to hangout and socialize

Social Issues in the County of Wetaskiwin

Youth were asked to express their views on how important it is to have different social issues address in the County.

Importance of Having Social Issues Addressed

Social Issue	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important
Lack of Before and After School Care	20%	27%	31%	9%
Lack of Supports for Special Needs Children	24%	31%	21%	11%
Lack of Supports for Special Needs Adults	23%	31%	21%	11%
Availability of Child Care	28%	28%	22%	8%
Unsupervised Children / Youth	23%	31%	18%	11%
Parenting / Child Rearing Problems	28%	27%	25%	5%
Lack of Employment Supports (e.g. job search, resume writing)	30%	27%	23%	6%
Violence and Bullying (not your family)	33%	26%	21%	8%
Family and Domestic Violence / Family Conflict	35%	29%	15%	7%
Lack of Employment	32%	32%	18%	5%
Lack of Age-Appropriate Programming	16%	23%	32%	14%
Lack of In-Home Supports	19%	32%	25%	11%
Lack of Community Connectedness	19%	29%	29%	10%
Positive Relationships / Relationship Breakdown	15%	31%	31%	9%
Local Programs and Services Are Too Expensive	20%	27%	30%	9%
Basic Needs Not Being Met (e.g. food, clothing, shelter)	35%	27%	21%	5%
Personal Safety	39%	30%	13%	6%
Homelessness	30%	28%	17%	11%
Suicide	40%	22%	16%	7%
Drugs / Substance Use / Addictions	43%	24%	13%	4%
Affordable Housing	40%	27%	13%	7%
Mental Health	42%	26%	13%	4%
Isolation / Loneliness	16%	28%	27%	13%

The top three social issues that youth believe are personal safety, mental health issues, drugs / substance use / addictions, and affordable housing. Additionally, youth believe that family and domestic violence, lack of employment supports, and suicide are also important social issues to address.

Youth were also asked to identify programs and services that they believe are important to have access to in the County. Programs and services that support people of all ages with mental health issues and addictions were of the greatest importance to youth. Youth also believe that programs and services for individuals with addictions issues are important as well.

Half of youth (50%) indicated that cost was a factor that prevented them from access programs and services when needed. Nearly half of youth (41%) indicated that lack of awareness of programs and services available in the County was a factor in them not accessing programs and services when needed. More than a third of youth (39%) indicated that lack of transportation and having to leave the community to access programs and services was a barrier to access.

Factors that Prevent Youth from Accessing Programs and Services in the County

Factor	Percentage
Cost	50%
Not aware of the programs and services that are available	41%
Transportation issues	39%
Questions about quality	26%
Lack of specialized services	22%
Privacy / pride	19%
Difficulty getting appointments	17%
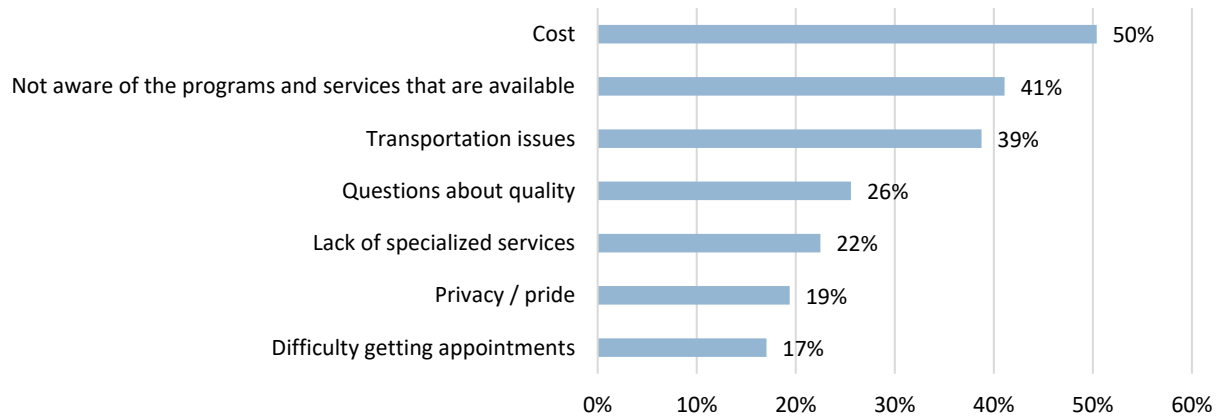
More than half of youth (62%) indicated that social media postings through media like Facebook and Instagram are their preferred methods to receive information about existing social programs and services in the County. Nearly half of youth (47%) indicated that school newsletters are also a preferred way to receive this information. For nearly half of youth (42%) posters in the community would be an effective way to share information about programs and services too.

Youth Preferred Methods to Receive Information About Existing Programs and Services

Method	Percentage
Social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	62%
School newsletters	47%
Posters around town	42%
Email	34%
Road signage (e.g. electronic sign)	31%
Gatherings in the community	25%
Municipal website	19%
Municipal newsletters	16%
Community directory	12%
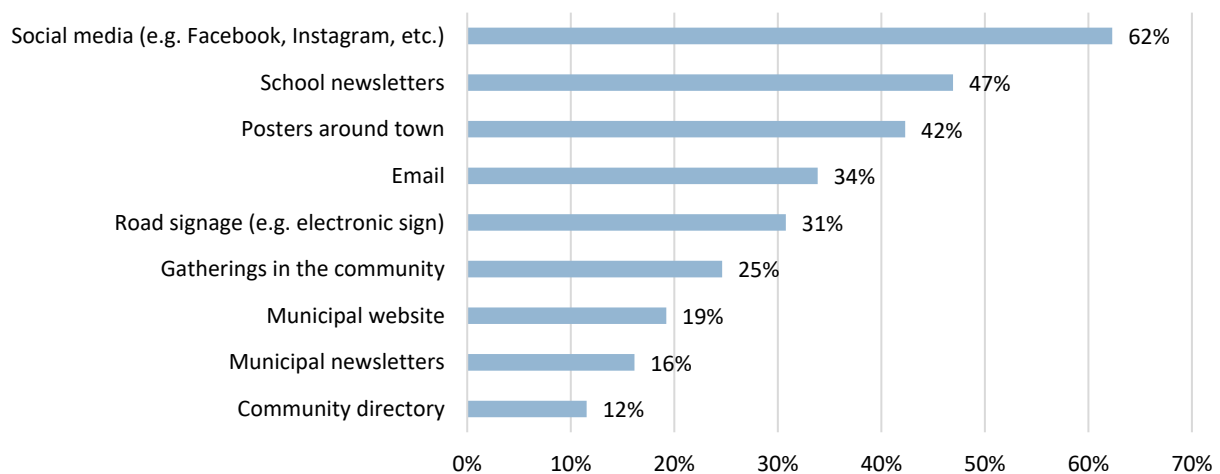
Vision, Values and Principles

The vision, value and principle statements in this section are summarized from information collected during the engagement interviews, surveys and from the document and resource reviews.

Vision of Social Wellness for the County of Wetaskiwin

Vision statements describe the County of Wetaskiwin as it will be when the work of the SNA is completed. A vision statement is a powerful tool to help align goals and strategies and ensure that they work together to achieve the intended outcomes and results identified in the Plan. The vision "elements" have been summarized as:

- The County achieves inter-dependent social, economic, and environmental wellness
- Residents have access to education and employment opportunities, housing, transportation, and have barrier free access to programs and services designed to address key social needs

Community Values That Support Social Wellness

The following statements were gathered throughout the various engagement activities and reflect the participant's sense of the values needed to support social wellness for individuals, communities, and the County.

- The County values citizen engagement, community building, collaborative and collective action, health and well-being of community residents, advocacy, and alignment between social, economic, and environmental development factors
- Diversity is recognized, acknowledged, and capitalized on
- All individuals deserve to be treated fairly and equally and be provided with the opportunities to utilize their unique strengths and abilities

Principles that Work to Achieve Social Wellness

Principles help to describe the ways of working that support, and are consistent with, the vision and values reflected in the SNA. The principles listed below were identified by participants as needing to be in place and practice to support implementation of the SNA and to help guide policy, practice, and operational decisions.

- Strength comes from true collaboration and shared accountability within the community and County (i.e., stronger together)
- Communication is the bedrock for meaningful resident engagement
- Volunteers play a crucial role in addressing social needs
- All parties advocate for a safe, healthy, and sustainable community
- Agency leadership must work to interact, collaborate, and jointly address existing social needs
- No resident should confront barriers to programs and services due to financial deficits
- All residents who can work should have access to employment opportunities that provide a fair, living wage

Social Priorities and Recommendations

Participants in the various engagement activities (i.e., interviews, working sessions, surveys) responded to all or part of a common set of questions. The data resulting from these engagement activities has been systematically analyzed to identify key social priorities within the County of Wetaskiwin.

The social priorities identified in this section are not intended to represent all the issues that require attention in the County of Wetaskiwin. Rather, these priorities represent the things that have most often been identified by residents and youth during the engagement process that if addressed, lead to the greatest positive social impact, and change in the community.

Nine social priorities were identified. These nine priorities are as follows.

1. Mental health
2. Substance use and addictions
3. Isolation and loneliness
4. Bullying and abuse
5. Seniors supports
6. Basic needs
7. Affordable housing
8. Connections and collaborations amongst agencies
9. Communications

Each of these priorities are further described below and recommendations strategies to attend to each priority are provided as well.

Social Priority #1: Mental Health

Description:

Needs for mental health services were identified across all forms of engagement for the needs assessment. People indicated that while there is a reasonable level of services available for the size of the community, there still are several significant gaps in mental health supports. Long wait times and uncertainty about access to an availability of qualified mental health providers were noted as significant concerns. Many respondents also noted that other social needs such as housing, education, parenting, and the development positive interpersonal relationships need to have the mental health issues resolved first before success in the other areas can be achieved. It was further noted by many respondents that mental health needs (e.g., anxiety, depression, difficulties with social situations) for individuals of all ages have soared due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making this a key priority area to address going forward.

Recommended Strategies:

- Collaborate with mental health providers and organizations in the community to seek additional funding for mental health program and services. Any additional funds secured should be used to create low-cost mental health services for all age groups. Building mental health services that are accessible in the evenings and on weekends would be of great benefit to the community.

- Encourage organizations that offer mental health programs and services to review and adjust the eligibility criteria for their programs and services. The goal of this review and these adjustments should be to eliminate restrictions and barriers to programs and services, increasing the likelihood that those in need of mental health supports will obtain access to these supports.

- Facilitate the development of a community-based helpline to enable easier navigation of existing mental health programs and services. By providing people with an initial contact point, they will be better positioned to self-refer or support others when mental health issues arise, and programs and services are needed.

- Develop and implement a communications campaign to raise awareness of mental health issues within the community. This campaign should focus on normalizing the occurrence of mental health issues. This campaign should stress that anyone, regardless of their social or financial circumstances can be confronted by mental health issues at some point in their lifetime. It would be crucial for this campaign to promote relevant mental health programs, services, and resources available in the County or other nearby geographic areas.

Social Priority #2: Substance Abuse and Addictions

Description:

Substance abuse and addictions are a concern within the County. However, there is limited knowledge in the community as to the degree of the issue because the issue is seldom discussed openly and there is a prevailing belief that people with substance abuse issues should take care of themselves without intervention or support. As a result, a limited number of resources are invested on programs and services to support persons struggling with substance abuse, which prevents the community from effectively addressing the issue.

Recommended Strategies:

- Develop resources that shed light on the negative impacts of substance abuse. These resources should also incorporate information that dispels the notion that substance abuse is an individual issue that should be managed discreetly without support.

- Collaborate with social agencies and health organizations in the community to seek opportunities to secure resources that would allow substance abuse and addictions programs and services to be offered in the County.

- Identify and distribute information that will help all members of the community prevent the onset of substance use and addictions issues.

- Stimulate the development of follow up services and supports for those who are post substance abuse treatment to ensure that people can safely reintegrate into community life, without stigma or judgment.

Social Priority #3: Isolation and Loneliness

Description:

Issues related to isolation and loneliness were identified as a significant concern to adults, seniors, children, youth, and families by almost half of the individuals involved in the engagement process. Many of these individuals indicated that this has always been an issue in the community due to its rural location. However, the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically exacerbated and complicated the issue for many people. As people start to emerge from the pandemic attention must be paid to this issue. Re-building social ties and the fabric of the community depends on a strong and consistent effort to bring all members of the community together. Through these efforts new ways of living and socializing will emerge and people can start to heal and mend relationships with their friends, family, and neighbours after such a lengthy time apart.

Recommended Strategies:

- Make a concerted effort to create inclusive social events that provide all members of the community with opportunities to mix, mingle, socialize, and build relationships. Acknowledgement that people's level of comfort with in-person social events may vary post-pandemic is crucial to ensure strong, positive uptake and participation.

- Consider local events including opportunities for arts and cultural expression and activities, information on programs, services and businesses that are open to all residents and include support systems such as transportation, childcare, etc.

- Support agencies and organizations as they work to socialize the programs and services that they offer and invite people to participate in new activities.

- Consider ways to ensure welcoming and engaging practices that consider language, culture, and other real or perceived barriers to people who would want to get involved.

- Explore the possibility of conducting an annual community engagement survey or study to assess people's level of interactivity and to determine what types of events they wish to see planned and offered to residents. Delving deep into the specific needs of all age groups will be important to ensure that adults, seniors, children, and youth are all provided with meaningful opportunities to connect with each other.

- Consider undertaking a process to develop a diversity and inclusion plan.

Social Priority #4: Bullying and Abuse

Description:

Violence and bullying are most often discussed in relation to children and youth. However, the information generated through the needs assessment process includes all ages of people from children

through to seniors. The types of violence and bullying cited in the response include physical, emotional, financial, and gender based. During discussions of bullying and abuse, family and domestic violence concerns were also raised. Strategies to address this collective set of issues should be multifaceted and responsive to all forms of abuse.

Recommended Strategies:

- Facilitate community conversations about the harm that bullying and abuse cause within the County. Invite adults of all ages as well as children and youth to participate.

- Develop community-based value statements and messaging on violence and bullying and include information on accessing a community-based help line. Linking these values statements to existing statements on family and domestic violence is also advised.

- Continue to support the existing work in the community, schools, workplaces, clubs, and organizations on informing people what violence and bullying is and what possible actions and support resources may be helpful and available.

- Support educators and those who interact with children, youth, and families so they are equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to quickly identify incidents of bullying and other forms of abuse. Help these professionals build their expertise so they can aid those in need.

- Source and promote provincial bullying prevention resources and training while also promoting the provincial bullying helpline.

- Establish linkages with existing bullying, abuse, and family and domestic violence collaboratives within the province to obtain and promote resources.

Social Priority #5: Seniors Supports

Description

Individuals who participated in the engagement process and completed surveys expressed concerns about seniors and their capacity to safely live as comfortably and independently as possible in the community. While there are programs and services for seniors in the County a substantial proportion of these programs and services are aimed at low-income seniors and seniors who are isolated or have difficulties leaving their homes. Programs and services need to be tailors to meet the unique needs of all seniors, not just those with complex, high-need circumstances.

Recommended Strategies:

- Support agencies that offer programs and services for seniors with varying levels of need. Advocate for seniors so they can access services that suit their needs is essential to safe, comfortable, independent living.

- Actively engage seniors in community social life. Find ways to bring seniors together with different generations, including children and youth, to support intergenerational connections and diminish feelings of social isolation.

- Monitor the volume of seniors in the community and actively engage these seniors in discussions about their needs and what they believe should be built to meet their needs. Providing seniors with opportunities to share their input and perspectives in settings that they find comfortable is a key consideration.

Social Priority #6: Basic Needs

Description:

This priority refers to the ways and means that residents in the County can access items that support their basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, health care, and education. These basic needs are building blocks upon which all strong, healthy, and vibrant communities are built and can grow. Respondents indicated that there are large number of individuals and families in the community that struggle to have their basic needs met. This is even the case for individuals and families with financial resources. Breaking the myths that only those who are economically disadvantaged have basic needs issues is a crucial priority for the County to address.

Recommended Strategies:

- Educate members of the community about what basic needs are and make it the norm that anyone who is struggling can reach out to agencies that provide basic needs support for help.

- Encourage agencies that provide basic needs supports to operate using non-traditional hours, increasing accessibility for persons needing the services and supports on evenings and weekends in the process.

- Campaign for community members to consider basic need donations (e.g., food, clothing, etc.) outside of peak donation times (e.g., traditional holiday times).

- Build food security in the County including incorporating community gardens, fruit bearing trees, and shrubs into neighbourhood and community design. Educate community members about how to use things like community gardens responsibly (e.g., only taking what is needed, cleaning up after use, etc.)

- Encourage the distribution of excess food from restaurants, food stores, school lunch programs.

- Facilitate the development cooking and nutrition programs for community members that include social opportunities (e.g., community kitchens - one meal for many families) and other life skills information and resources.

Social Priority #7: Affordable Housing

Description:

A significant number of interview participants and survey respondents indicated that lack of access to affordable housing is a critical issue facing residents of all ages. Some respondents noted that seniors looking to relocate from their homes to a supported living environment also face challenges. For all ages, finding suitable housing that is both affordable and sustainable in the County are difficult. For those facing this reality the risk of either moving away to where suitable, affordable housing exists is a common outcome.

Recommended Strategies:

- Support the evaluation of current housing levels in the County and assist in determining what proportion of existing housing is affordable for those who meet or are below a living wage.

- Consider a housing planning group that would further define the needs of persons and families experiencing difficulties finding affordable housing or are facing homelessness and look for short and longer-term options.

- Consider options for emergency and/or transitional housing including emergency housing for residents and youth in the community. Special attention should also be paid to seniors' housing needs.

- Encourage the development of housing options are accompanied by programs and services that foster the development of basic life skills and financial management.

- Investigate the suitability of a housing support program for the County that adopts a "Housing First" model or approach.

Social Priority #8: Connections and Collaborations Amongst Agencies

Description:

The data collected throughout the needs assessment process indicates that agencies and organizations in the County are committed to interacting and collaborating with each other. This has been noted as a strength of both organizations and the individuals involved. The value and principles of working collaboratively are well supported by the County and FCSS.

Recommended Strategies:

- Facilitate the development of an interagency table that provides organizations with an opportunity to engage in regular discussions about their successes and challenges. Through active, open, and consistent dialogue at the table shared services and joint problem-solving will occur, facilitating opportunities to collectively address social needs.

- Facilitate movement to a case-based interagency service model for individuals and families who require programs, services, and supports from multiple agencies.

- Create semi-annual or annual opportunities for joint action planning in relation to the priorities in the SNA and any other emerging issues in the community.

- Simulate the development of a process for those who access social programs and services to be part of the ongoing joint action planning processes.

- Actively enlist current and future community leaders to champion social development in the County (i.e., a Social Development Council).

Social Priority #9: Communication

Description:

A significant number of individuals who participated in the engagement process believed that there is room to improve both the quantity and quality of the communication about programs services. At present the mechanisms in place for agencies to share information about what programs and services they offer are limited. Technological deficits and the lack of a coordinated social media strategy were noted as being problematic. Further, the limited number of opportunities for agencies to connect with each other and discuss how they are working to address identified social needs was identified as a significant issue to overcome.

Recommended Strategies:

- Facilitate the development of a multipronged approach to communication. This approach should consist of opportunities for agencies to meet and discuss their programs and services as well as distribution of information using both traditional print methods as well as social media.

- Foster a culture of continuous open communication. Without this type of communication social needs are overlooked and people in the community lose sight of those who are impacted by social issues. Bringing attention to social issues and the programs and services that are in place to address these issues will have a positive impact on multiple level. Further, it will reduce the burden on the individuals in the social sector who have assumed responsibility for communications and create a more sustainable approach to move forward.

Implementation Plan

A fundamental premise of the SNA is that social wellness and improved quality of life result from meaningful and effective collaboration involving the municipalities, agencies and organizations, community, and other stakeholders. The responsibility for implementation requires the collaboration of a wide range of partners working effectively together on common priorities to achieve shared goals. It is

critical to the successful implementation of the plan that all stakeholders and interested parties be engaged from the beginning in contributing to the actions, results, and successful outcomes.

Roles and Responsibilities

The strategies, potential actions and outcomes identified in the plan will be achieved through working with agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders collectively to achieve common goals. Roles and responsibilities will vary depending on the positioning, current priorities, capacities, and available resources of each potential partner.

Community-based planning, development and delivery assume the following primary roles:

Initiator role—responsible for convening those who have an interest and capacity to undertake the work involved.

Primary role—responsibility for development and implementation is undertaken by one party who is uniquely positioned to design and deliver the initiative.

Shared role—participate as one of a number of stakeholders.

Supporting role—other stakeholders hold most of the responsibility for the development and delivery of the initiative. Supporting participants have no formal mandate, however, they have some capacity to contribute to the work and to the results; and

Resource role—primary contribution to the initiative is as a source of funding, human resources, or other forms of resource support.

Stakeholders in the SNA play a variety of roles and take on differing responsibilities based on the implementation needs of each priority, potential action, and outcome area.

Participants in the engagement activities were asked to identify possible actions that could help to address the priority challenges and opportunities that had been raised to ensure successful outcomes.

Near term strategies and actions have the following characteristics:

- Actions that can be done immediately
- Actions where all the required information and best solutions are known
- Partners and their respective roles are clear
- Actions that may require collaboration but that do not require policy or budget processes and approvals to be implemented

Longer term strategies and actions require:

- Additional information and development of best solutions
- Proposal development for policy and/or budget application or approval
- A process to clarify the challenge at hand and the agencies and organizations required as partners

- Other strategies or actions need to occur first before they can be implemented

Implementation Strategies

A summary of the recommended elements of the SNA implementation include:

1. Hosting of a "launch," information and implementation planning session for all SNA stakeholders in the County to increase awareness and knowledge of the SNA results to develop collaborative immediate, mid- term and long-term strategies and actions and strategies for long term engagement in the SNA.

2. Formation of a SNA implementation Committee that will have responsibility for supporting the implementation of the plan and for providing oversight advice, over the long term, as the plan results are evaluated, and revisions considered. The current Advisory Committee will remain in place to assist the development of the Implementation Committee.

3. Encourage all non-profit organizations, funders, and other stakeholders to incorporate the SNA priorities into their strategic and annual operational plans as well as identify key indicators from their organizations' perspective to measure progress toward achieving the priority outcomes.

4. Create an annual review process that engages all non-profit agencies, organizations, funders, the municipalities, and other stakeholders in reviewing the progress made on the priorities and collectively plan for the upcoming year, based on the results achieved.

5. Provide an annual progress report to the FCSS Board and County as well as to all agencies and organization so that they can update their respective boards and committees about the status of the plan and their respective current anticipated contributions.

6. Develop additional, ongoing methods of engaging residents in providing information about portions of the plan and/or specific strategy areas under consideration and development, including an ongoing SNA page on the County's website.

7. Plan and budget for a three and five-year review of the plan and process to update the document based on current changes in the social, economic, and environmental environment in the County.

Results / Evaluation Framework

A parallel process of evaluation and specifically outcome-based evaluation of the SNA priorities, strategies and actions is essential to creating social change and quality of life improvements.

Evaluation often takes the form of taking a snapshot of outcomes at the end of a program to prove to decision makers and funders that the program worked. However, evaluation can, and should, be used as an ongoing strategic and learning tool that improves the ability of a program or service to meet the intended change identified at the beginning of the planning process. This is particularly important when working in collaborative, multi-partner environments. Evaluation enables demonstration of a program or service's success or progress.

Outcome evaluations assess the effectiveness of a program or service in producing individual and community change. Outcome evaluations focus on difficult questions that ask what happened to program participants and how much of a difference the program or service made for them and for the community in which they reside.

Outcome evaluation is effective in showcasing the effectiveness of a program to potential collaborative partners, to the community and funders and in building ongoing trust with clients, partners, and community members.

Outcome based evaluation increases a program's ability to conduct a critical self-assessment and plan for the future by assessing "what works" and "what does not work." Building the capacity for self-assessment early in the plan implementation allows for ongoing reflection and creates an evaluation and planning cycle that helps create a continuous learning environment which is essential to sustainability.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Document and Resource Review

Summary of Document and Resource Review

Source	Key Points	Learnings for 2022 Social Plan
County of Wetaskiwin No. 10 Municipal Development Plan – 2010, amended in 2016 and 2020	The County's overarching vision includes safe communities Stated value related to the protection of farmland and farming in the County Goal 3 • To support a high quality of life – to weigh the needs of individuals in relation to the greater public interest Objective 6 – Commercial / Recreational • 6.2 – Recreation developments respect the existing community character Objective 7 – Intermunicipal • 7.1 – Coordinate development in the fringe areas (1.6km from the County boundary) with adjacent municipalities and First Nations Objective 8 – County Services • 8.1 – The transportation network in the County is well maintained • 8.2 – Community services are provided in a manner that is fair to all county residents The County is moving toward user pay for some services in an effort to achieve financial sustainability Hamlets in the County include Alder Flats, Buck Lake, Falun, Gwynne, Mulhurst Bay, Village of Pigeon Lake, Westerose and Winfield	• Farming and rural lifestyles are important aspects of the County social make-up • Quality of life considers the greater good of the community • Recreation, social developments respect the existing community character • Collaboration with adjacent First Nations and municipalities is important • A well-maintained transportation network is important to growth and development in the County • The County is considering user pay for some services to help to achieve fiscal sustainability • Initiate discussions on increasing the level of content for social infrastructure, programs, and services in relation to their importance in developing the County and their contribution to achieving the goals and objectives in the Municipal Development Plan
Recreation Needs Assessment and Master Plan – 2014	Focus on recreation trails, parks, open spaces, and programs	• Where possible consider Social Master Plan alignment with the Recreation Master Plan findings and principles including:

Source	Key Points	Learnings for 2022 Social Plan
	Widespread agreement that small community centres and a highly decentralized model of recreation facility provision that has emerged over many years in the County is no longer a viable model. A more centralized, regional serving approach was a better option for the future. The problems of access were noted due to the large service area Agreement that volunteer groups should receive additional support from the County (50%); and only 40% agree that 'volunteers alone can provide a full range of programs.' Major barriers to participation noted included: • Lack of awareness of what's available (55%) • Access (40% report facility locations not convenient) • Transportation/access major constraint for youth • Affordability/cost not a major barrier Priority Outcomes • Active and Healthy Community - Providing opportunities for all County residents to have active and healthy lifestyle • Community Development - Fostering community development, creating stronger community organizations and community leaders • Community Cohesion - Providing opportunities for social interaction and building stronger, more cohesive communities • Sustainable Communities - Creating an attractive community with a high quality of life that retains our youth and attracts new residents, businesses, and visitors Principles • Partnerships with other service providers is the County's preferred	• A regional serving approach for programs and services • Increased County support to volunteer groups • Contribution to resident's healthy lifestyles and quality of life • Positive and sustainable community development outcomes • Program and service delivery partnerships • Acknowledging and respecting local community identity • Increased County role in initiating collaboration between communities, program and service providers and County administration

Source	Key Points	Learnings for 2022 Social Plan
	approach to delivering recreation services • Community based, volunteer organizations will continue to play the major role in the delivery of recreation programs and services in the County, but these community efforts will be increasingly supported by the Municipality • Service provision will respect local identity and access while recognizing the realities of the market and the necessity to concentrate some services at a limited number of locations • The County will continue to partner with adjoining municipalities • Recreation services [contribute to a] higher quality of life • The County will assume the overall responsibility for planning, management and evaluation of parks and recreation services	

Community Consultation on Aging Well – 2016	Explore the current reality and future needs for older adults within our region.
	
	Recommendations
	• Work more closely with stakeholders and community groups on initiating community development initiatives including the development of events such as Seniors' Travelling Café or Seniors' Movie and Popcorn
	• Identify gaps in seniors' transportation for medical appointments, social events, and accessing services outside the community
	• Identify gaps in the delivery of health services in the County of Wetaskiwin.
	• Assist seniors' groups with the delivery of healthy lifestyle information sessions, workshops, events, and activities
	
	Survey respondents were asked about the areas of their life that they felt most prepared for the future.
		• Where possible consider Social Master Plan alignment with the recommendations and findings including:
		   • Collaboration with stakeholders and community groups
		   • Gaps in transportation services
		   • Focus on contribution to healthy lifestyles

Source	Key Points	Learnings for 2022 Social Plan
	The three areas ranked lowest (least prepared) were: • Home – 54% • Supports and services – 58% • Transportation – 63%	
County of Wetaskiwin FCSS Annual Reports – 2020 / 2021	2020 • Total revenue - $434,554 • Programs and services direct delivery - $301, 020 • Programs and service indirect delivery - $30,772 • Outputs – 28 programs/services, 1936 participants • 657 volunteer hours 2021 • Total revenue $449,967 • Programs and services direct delivery - $299,522 • Programs and service indirect delivery - $22,408 • Outputs – 36 programs/services, 2459 participants • 538 volunteer hours • 99% of outcome survey respondents report the FCSS program/service resulted in a positive change	• Consider allocation of direct and indirect program and service resources based on the findings of increasing the County administration role with respect to initiating and supporting collaboration and social planning • Also consider the resources allocated to recruit and support volunteer resources with respect to the delivery of program and services • Acknowledge the vey positive response of FCSS program and service participants to the positive changes related to: • Individuals experience personal well-being • Children and youth develop positively • Healthy functioning within families • Families have social supports • The community is connected and engaged • Community social issues are identified and addressed
Community Program and Events Guide – 2021	Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) provides preventative programs and services that enhance the social well-being of families and individuals FCSS is a cost shared program between the County of Wetaskiwin No. 10 and the Province of Alberta The programs and services provided through FCSS are intended to promote and enhance safe and healthy family and community life.	• Consider the utility of the Program and Events brochure as a means of acknowledging FCSS and Community successes, educating County residents on the FCSS Program and engaging / recruiting volunteers
The County of Wetaskiwin No. 10 Municipal Policy	The County recognizes the importance of providing a Family and Community Support Services Grant Program, to enhance and enrich preventative social	• Consider ways to align the Social Development Master Plan with the following tenants of the municipal Policy

Source	Key Points	Learnings for 2022 Social Plan
Family and Community Support Services **Grant Program Policy**	programs and services throughout the County To be eligible for funding, the program must: • Promote, encourage, and facilitate the involvement of volunteers • Promote efficient and effective use of resources • Encourage and facilitate cooperation and coordination with other service agencies operating within the County of Wetaskiwin • Promote, encourage, and facilitate the development of a stronger community • Promote citizen participation in planning, delivery and governance of the program and of services provided under the program	• Enhance and enrich preventative programs and services • Encourage and facilitate cooperation and coordination with other service agencies • Promote citizen participation [engagement] in the planning, delivery and governance of programs and services
The County of Wetaskiwin No. 10 Municipal Policy **Community Services** **Home Support Program Policy**	Philosophy of the Home Support Program • For many individuals and families, independence can be restored or maintained with a given amount of support in the home. The loss of one's ability to function independently due to sickness, aging, diminished physical and/or cognitive ability, or other circumstances, does not necessarily mean that the person has lost their ability to be independent. The objectives of the Home Support Program are to provide eligible residents of the County of Wetaskiwin access to qualified individuals, under responsible supervision, who are able to engage in light housekeeping services and allow the resident to maintain independence and remain in their home The Home Support Program is intended to act as a compliment to existing community services Home Support Workers are paid employees of the County, are trained and supervised by a Co-ordinator,	• Consider actions and strategies that support residents to remain in their own homes • Collaboration with existing community services

Appendix 2 – Interview Participant Comments and Summary

Summary of Priority Social Needs and Priority Process Needs

Priority Social Needs Identified by Interview Participants

- Youth building and maintaining positive peer relationships
- Understanding and supporting positive family dynamics
- Youth and family mental health including anxiety and grief and loss
- Transportation support to access programs, services, and events
- Smaller events and activities that build family engagement and community participation
- Building and supporting (acknowledging) community spirit, pride, and beautification
- Childcare including increased day care spaces and out of school care
- Continued need to develop and support the County's volunteers
- Youth drop in program opportunities
- Increasing use of food banks and need for programs addressing food security

Priority Process Needs Identified by Interview Participants

- Collaborative discussions on the balance of direct and indirect programs and services (FCSS Funding Allocation Model)
- Engage with First Nations and adjacent municipalities and collaborative planning and program/service delivery
- Consider the need for local print communication and promotion as well as online and social media communication
- Review the Social Development Plan in the context of the Municipal Development Plan for alignment opportunities
- The County to engage more with schools and school districts
- Look at the possible social contributions to acknowledging schools as community Hubs include the potential of a joint use agreement
- Consider funding to family school liaison program
- Consider designated County resources, serving the entire county with information and referral services
- Develop practice/policy around lower cost programs and services and/or a subsidy program
- Increase collaboration between schools and the public library

Appendix 3 – Working Session Participant Comments and Summary

Summary of Social Strengths and Issue / Opportunity Themes

Strengths	
• People know their neighbours, open and safe communication • Passion for the community and community pride • Good networking between multiple organizations • Great community leaders • Great volunteers who share a willingness to work together • Small town feel and still able to access a larger centre • Strong farming industry and rural values	• Good employment • Diverse natural environment • Great schools • Local government and administration are approachable and accessible • Support for seniors' including home care, home support, adopt a senior program • Agricultural Societies, 4 H programs, youth recreational programs
Program and Service Priorities	**Opportunity Priorities**
Food Security • Identify who is able to provide services and locations • Options in addition to food banks i.e., collection and distribution of unused food, community gardens. Diversify the options of an overall food security program **Program and Service Affordability** • Across all age groups • Develop free / affordable programs and services in addition to mainstream services • Consider a cost subsidy policy **Transportation** • Support to get to and from programs and services, connect isolated/lonely residents (seniors and others) **Mental Health** • All ages • Reduce stigma related to participating in mental health services • Concern over youth mental health, safety in the community, youth suicide	**Community facility operations** • Strategies to support operating costs including utilities, insurance, and center operation • Work with communities to identify the County's vision for community facilities • Develop a social infrastructure plan for the County **Volunteer recruitment and support** • Develop and support a culture of volunteerism including youth and older adults in the County • Volunteer coordination and support on a county basis **Succession Planning** • Agencies and organizations to document program and service planning and delivery so that new people can step in and deliver as needed **Program and service catchment areas** • Develop catchment areas for programs and services that will enable sufficient attendance to allow then to be viable • Potential for viable catchment areas so that programs and service have sufficient numbers to run

Child Care • Day care and before and after school care • Increased spaces and affordability **Community identity and spirit** • Consider and how to engage new residents into the community • Support for community identity, beautification, and "welcoming" strategies • Increase active engagement of newcomers to the County **Programs for Children and youth** • Increase number and diversity of opportunities • Collaborate on "area" delivery approach rather than each community run their own • Family programs to engage parents and children • Early childhood development support for young families **Accessing programs and services** • Engage residents in helping to understand barriers to accessing programs and services and identifying possible strategies	• Collaborate with the Towns of Wetaskiwin and Drayton Valley relating to program and service offerings **Communication of program and service opportunities** • Collective action on media materials to use through informal sources i.e., posted at local gathering points, libraries, churches, schools, newsletters, etc. • County lead program and service information coordinator **Regular and ongoing social engagement (see Implementation Plan)** • Increase the number of resident engagement means and opportunities for residents to express their interests and needs in social programs and services **Agency and organization planning and collaboration** • Facilitate opportunities for collaborative strategy and action planning focused on the priorities in the Social Needs Assessment • "Whole community" approach • County to coordinate social demographic information and social planning for County including specific information to various areas to support collaborative work **Community Expertise** • Identify and tap into residents that have expertise related to social issues, facility management and operation, specific program and service areas (i.e., social media, youth suicide, communication, resident engagement, financial management, etc.)