

COMMUNITY TALK



WHAT WE HEARD

SOCIAL FRAMEWORK RENEWAL

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 STRATHCONA
COUNTY

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INTRODUCTION

Strathcona County's Social Sustainability Framework, adopted by Strathcona County Council in 2007, aimed to create a caring and connected community within the County. Since then, we have seen a 16% increase in population, increased diversity and changing community connections.

Over the last two years, the County has also been impacted by a province-wide economic downturn and noted changes within the community. We have seen increases in crime rates, mental health referrals, reported incidents of family violence, food bank usage and an increased demand for local supports. In this dynamic environment, it is now time to re-examine community social priorities and seek insights from residents on how we should collectively step forward. The *Community Talk* engagement campaign launched on October 18th, 2016, and invited open and honest conversation to re-examine the County's priorities as a means to renew our community's social direction.

From October 18 to December 31, 2016, citizens who live or work in Strathcona County were invited to share their thoughts and ideas on how we can best shape our community so that everyone has the opportunity to feel safe, supported and connected. Residents, businesses, associations, schools, support agencies and community groups took on an active role in this extensive public engagement resulting in nearly 8,000 citizens providing input through a survey, and over 600 individuals participating in 48 community conversations across the County. As it stands today, *Community Talk* is the largest public engagement campaign in Strathcona County's history.

Engagement methods

Eight departments and three community partners¹ collaborated to design and implement *Community Talk*. The design drew upon local perspectives, local and provincial data, observations and insights, all the while recognizing no one single person can see the entire community or County from every perspective. We have varied and different experiences from one another and, based on individual backgrounds and values, interpret different meanings from these varied experiences. It is when we bring these diverse perspectives and experiences together for consideration and discussion that we begin to have a better sense of the collective experiences in Strathcona County.

There was an intentional focus to create awareness about difficult and complex social issues happening right now in Strathcona County², while also inviting the sharing of personal experiences.

¹ Community Partners include the Information and Volunteer Centre, Strathcona County Library and Heartland Housing Foundation. The following eight departments from the County were also involved: Family and Community Services, Transit, Recreation, Parks and Culture, RCMP, Emergency Services, Communications, Corporate Planning and Inter-Governmental Affairs, Planning and Development Services.

² The fictional characters of Jack, Amir, Susan and Natasha were created for the *Community Talk* campaign based on local data and information. These characters were struggling with affordable housing, social inclusion, family violence and financial pressures, and were featured in a short video and on decals throughout the community.

Where and how we listened

THE REACH, COUNTY-WIDE

Remarkably, nearly 10% of eligible residents over the age of 11 provided input to *Community Talk*. This participation level is unparalleled in Strathcona County's history of public consultation.

Citizens became aware of and involved in *Community Talk* through:

- An extensive web and social media presence. The *Community Talk* webpage was viewed **7,894 times** and **181,028 Twitter accounts** were reached.
- Many groups throughout the County were active participants in *Community Talk* by encouraging their members to fill out surveys, hosting community conversations or distributing promotional materials. These local groups include:
 - » **Over 220 businesses**
 - » **33 community agencies**
 - » **25 faith communities**
 - » **16 schools which included 102 participating classrooms**
 - » **10 community hall associations**
 - » **7 service clubs**

In order to engage a broad number of County citizens, with the goal of capturing the voice of those less likely to be involved in such an initiative, staff and volunteers attended a number of locations and events across the County. Some of these locations included, but were not limited to, flu clinics, recreation centres, riding the buses, Bookmobile and rural events. Staff hosted conversations with Parent Link Centre participants and worked with businesses across the County to support the engagement. Municipal Councillors supported the initiative by hosting community conversations with residents. Family and Community Services (FCS) staff invited and supported each FCS client to have their voice heard through the survey. This included residents who live below the Low Income Cut Off and are accessing the municipal subsidy programs, seniors who are being served through the seniors outreach program, residents and families of residents who live in the senior lodges, and all residents who came into Family and Community Services for services over the course of the engagement.

COMMUNITY TALK SURVEY

7,815 people shared their thoughts and opinions by responding to the survey.

The purpose of the survey was to re-examine the 2007 Strathcona County Social Sustainability Framework, to broadly test its goals and their relevancy in 2016. The survey also sought to determine if, as a community, we are reaching these identified goals. This was done by asking respondents if they think that a particular goal is important for us to achieve as a community and whether this goal is being reached right now.

Below are the six goals that were included in the survey.

1. People in Strathcona County feel like they belong and are connected to others.
2. People in Strathcona County feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm.
3. People in Strathcona County are valued, respected and treated fairly.
4. People in Strathcona County are healthy (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness).
5. People in Strathcona County work together to make our community stronger.
6. People in Strathcona County have all their basic needs met (for example, adequate income, education, childcare, housing and transportation).

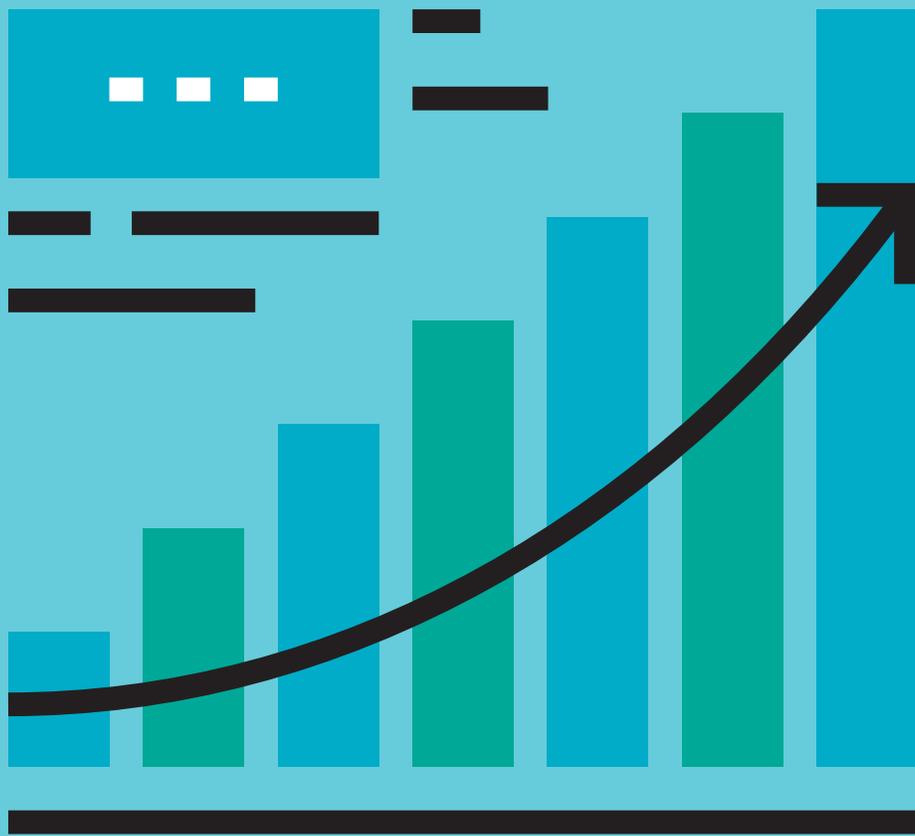
COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

622 individuals participated in 48 community conversations across Strathcona County.

A community conversation toolkit was designed to support small group conversations on what social priorities are most important to County citizens. Individuals and groups were encouraged to host a community conversation with their neighbours, friends, teammates and family to discuss the social issues and potential solutions that they see or experience. Community conversations were hosted by individuals, organizations, County departments and staff.

During these community conversations participants were invited to:

- Watch a short video that provided context to the *Community Talk* engagement
- Learn about relevant socio-economic results in Strathcona County
- Complete the survey
- Discuss as a group, one or more of the goals in depth by exploring:
 - » What ways are we doing this (goal) well in Strathcona County?
 - » How can we improve this as a community?



7,815

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS



Method

The first section of the survey and the community conversations introduced people to the six goals and enabled them to rate their level of agreement if they are important to our community and if we are currently achieving them.

Survey respondents were then given an opportunity to provide a written response to the questions: "How can we improve on any of the goals?" and "What can you do to help build a stronger community?" Over half (4,046) of respondents provided a written response to these questions. Participants at each community conversation also had facilitated discussions on the same topics. All survey responses and community conversation results were reviewed and categorized into descriptive themes. Many of the responses included a variety of themes; therefore each response was coded individually and was categorized into either one or more of the descriptive themes. A tally was completed to determine which themes were discussed and how frequently. Lastly, all the individual responses under each theme were analyzed together to determine what respondents had to say about each theme.

Analysis

The subsequent pages in this report provide an analysis of how the community responded through the survey and community conversations. It is important to note there was an over-representation of youth in the survey collection due to a deliberate effort to engage this age group through partnerships with Elk Island Public Schools, including Strathcona Christian Academy and Elk Island Catholic Schools

From a total of 7,815 survey responses, 2,919 were from citizens aged 11-17 years. For a complete analysis on how 11-17 year old responses varied from those eighteen and older, please refer to Appendix #2.

For a deeper look at how a person's age, place of residence and gender impacted the overall results, refer to Appendices #3, #4 and #5.

Responses

The chart on the following page shows how all respondents answered the first set of questions in the survey. The survey linked each goal to two questions.

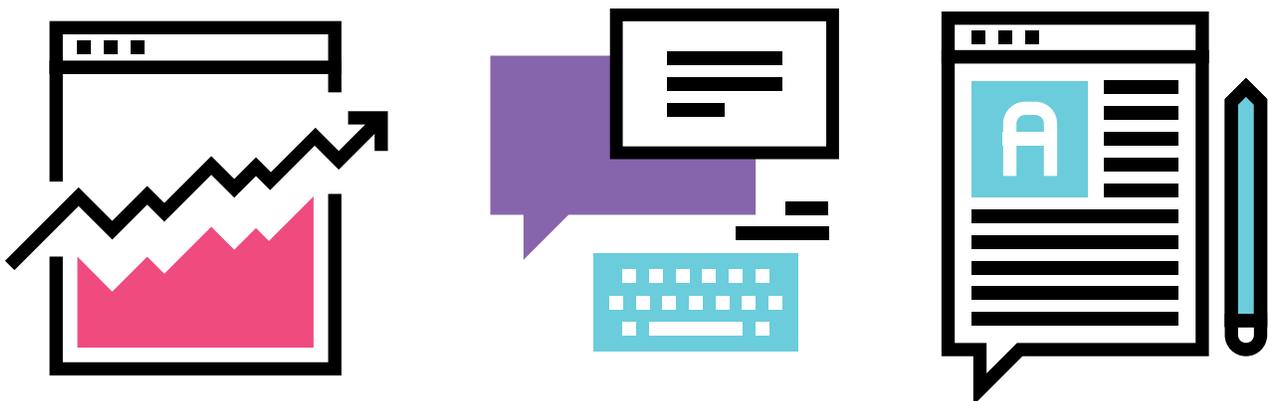
1. This is important for us to achieve as a community.
2. I think this is true right now.

Overall, almost 9 out of 10 respondents agreed to some degree (87–90%) it is important for us to achieve all of the first 5 goals. At the same time, on average, about 7 out of 10 respondents (68-74%) agreed we have reached these goals.

When asked about the 6th goal, almost all (93.4%) respondents felt that meeting all these basic needs are important for us to achieve as a community. Meanwhile, only 40% of adult respondents agreed that we have reached the stated goal of attaining quality and affordable childcare (39.9%) and affordable housing (40.4%).

The majority of respondents agreed that we have met our goals on quality education (83%), adequate income (73.3%) and reliable transportation (68.8%).

For a detailed description of how respondents answered this set of survey questions, refer to Appendix #6.



Goal	% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community *	% agreed they think this is true right now **	% difference between respondents ideal community and the current landscape
1. People in Strathcona County feel like they belong and are connected to others.	87.5%	69.8%	17.7%
2. People in Strathcona County feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm.	88.4%	70.3%	18.1%
3. People in Strathcona County are valued, respected and treated fairly.	90.4%	73.6%	16.8%
4. People in Strathcona County are healthy (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness).	87.4%	67.9%	19.5%
5. People in Strathcona County work together to make our community stronger.	88.9%	71.1%	17.8%
6. People in Strathcona County have all their basic needs met (for example, adequate income, education, childcare, housing and transportation). ³	93.4%	Income: 73.3% Education: 83.0% Affordable Childcare: 39.9% Affordable Housing: 40.4% Transportation: 68.8%	Income: 20.1% Education: 10.4% Affordable Childcare: 53.5% Affordable Housing: 53.0% Transportation: 24.6%

*% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community includes all respondents who either strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed.

**% agreed they think this is true right now includes all respondents who either strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed.

³ Data for this question was drawn from individuals 18+ for the categories of income, affordable childcare and affordable housing since this age group has the best understanding to accurately respond to this question. For the categories of education and transportation the data is reported on all survey respondents.

WHICH GOAL SHOULD WE FOCUS ON FIRST AS A COMMUNITY?

When looking at the results from the previous questions, it becomes clear most respondents believe all of the six goals identified are important for us to achieve together. The following is a list of the goals we should focus on first as a community, as indicated by respondents.

Goal	% of people who chose this goal as their first priority
People in Strathcona County have all their basic needs met (for example, adequate income, education, childcare, housing and transportation).	41.4%
People in Strathcona County feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm.	19.1%
People in Strathcona County are healthy. (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness).	9.6%
People in Strathcona County are valued, respected and treated fairly.	7.4%
People in Strathcona County work together to make our community stronger.	7.0%
People in Strathcona County feel like they belong and are connected to others.	6.4%
Other	7.9%
None of the above	1.3%

HOW CAN WE IMPROVE ON ANY OF THE GOALS MENTIONED?

Starting with the most frequently discussed, below is a list of the **top eight themes** emerging from this question.⁴

1. **Affordability** (housing, childcare, transportation, recreation, income)
2. **The need to work together for common goals**
3. **Feeling of safety**
4. **Fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance**
5. **Improvement to the transit system** (including routes/frequency)
6. **More community events-neighbourhood and County wide**
7. **Increase in mental health awareness and in services available**
8. **Better access to services and programs**

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP BUILD A STRONGER COMMUNITY?

Starting with the most frequently discussed, below is a list of the **top four themes** emerging from this question.⁵

1. **Citizenship**
 - Volunteerism
 - Community involvement
 - Help one another (empathy)
 - Work with each other to reach common goals (collaboration)
 - Neighbourliness
2. **Respect others and accept their differences** (inclusion, diversity, equity)
3. **Community awareness**
4. **Important issues are voiced** (advocacy)

⁴ The top eight themes are those that received at least 100 individual responses. For a detailed list of all the themes that were identified with the number of people who mentioned that particular theme refer to Appendix #7

⁵ For a detailed list of all the themes that were identified with the number of people who mentioned that particular theme refer to Appendix #8.

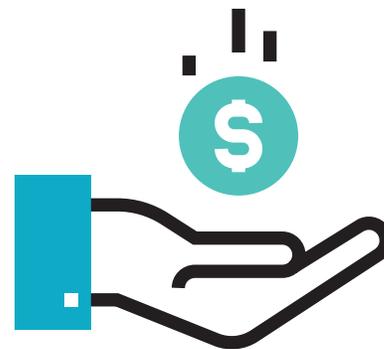
EMERGING THEMES

For many residents, Strathcona County is a wonderful place to live. This is exemplified by the results of a previous Strathcona County survey where 95% of residents would recommend Strathcona County to others as a place to live.⁶

The feedback received from *Community Talk* reveals there are still some key areas that require community focus in order for everyone to feel supported, safe and connected. Building on the top eight themes, the next section examines the areas respondents think need the most improvement.

1. Affordability

The overarching theme of affordability was the most frequently raised topic throughout *Community Talk*. Hundreds of individuals spoke of the importance of making our community more affordable, especially for the most vulnerable.



This is supported by the survey results where 93.4% of respondents agreed all people in Strathcona County should have their basic needs met and 41.4% of people thought this is the most important place to start.

The recent economic downturn has revealed that many families and individuals in Strathcona County are struggling to make ends meet. While a small minority who commented that if people cannot afford to live in Strathcona County that they should move to Edmonton, the vast majority of respondents indicated that we need to put policies and practices in place that support those who may be struggling.

"I think that basic needs should be more affordable and it shouldn't be as hard to survive."

"We need policies and practices that encourage a range of housing options, improve accessibility, support childcare and address the needs of traditionally marginalized groups as they are all important."

"I think we need to be more aware of our vulnerable people. Often I think we believe that because we are an affluent community that we don't have poverty, family violence and homelessness."

When all the responses from the survey and community conversations were analyzed, the topic of affordability can be broken into the following subcategories: **housing, childcare, transportation, recreation and income.**

⁶ Strathcona County Public Satisfaction Survey 2015

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The feedback received from *Community Talk* engagement clearly supports what has been articulated numerous times over the last few years - there is a lack of affordable housing options in Strathcona County. Research has shown quality and affordable housing can contribute to a community's health in several important ways, including improving the local economy.⁷

In 2015, a Mayor's Task Force on Community Housing⁸ was charged to investigate the current state of affordable housing in Strathcona County and recommend a desired future state and actions to achieve it. Through the process, the original term of 'affordable housing' was changed to 'community housing' to reflect all non-market housing options that exist within the continuum shown below.



Some responses received indicate support to increasing the housing options along the continuum starting with emergency shelters.

"The community needs an emergency shelter and/or emergency housing."

"A lot of youth end up having to go into Edmonton if they are homeless, and there should be something available in Strathcona County for them."

"Low income housing needs to be talked about. People aren't aware, it needs to be shared more and better communicated that it exists."

"More low income housing is needed, rental housing for new families or couples to start out."

"Stop raising rent in affordable housing units. We cannot afford to live if rents keep going up when we are on a fixed income."

"Housing is expensive, especially for single parents; sometimes it can be hard to pay the bills and get food as well."

⁷ Cohen, R and Wardrip, K (Summer 2011) The Economic and Fiscal Benefits of Affordable Housing: Planning Commissioners Journal, 83 ,1-4

⁸ <http://www.strathcona.ca/departments/corporate-planning/affordable-housing/mayors-task-force/>

As we collectively strive to be 'Canada's Most Livable Community', it is important to meet the housing needs for citizens in all stages of life - from families with children, single adults, couples without children, adults with disabilities, single parents and seniors that may require a continuum of support. Within the numerous written responses on affordable housing close to 25% of those responses specifically noted seniors housing.

Our population as a whole is getting older and this trend will continue for many years to come. Planning specifically for seniors housing will be important as many factors, including accessibility, type of care that is required and cost, need to be considered. Currently 298 people are on the waitlists for Silver Birch Lodge, Silver Birch Manor, Clover Bar Lodge, Apple Blossom Manor and Lakeside Legion Manor combined in Strathcona County.

"Affordable housing for seniors in Strathcona County is #1 issue!"

"I wanted to live in this community but could not afford to after retirement"

"Currently the wait time for senior housing is about two years. As time progresses the wait times will increase as the population of Strathcona County becomes greater."

QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE

A lack of affordable childcare was identified as the largest gap within the survey results as only 39.9% of respondents agreed we currently have quality and affordable childcare. Quality child care supports and influences physical, creative, cognitive, social and emotional growth that is the foundation for children's health, wellbeing and development throughout their life.⁹ There is a challenge in getting quality, accessible and affordable child care, as there is a high cost associated with quality child care and limited spaces, particularly for infants. Quality childhood experiences that take place in quality childcare settings have long term benefits to society.¹⁰

Currently there are 87 licensed and approved child care programs in Strathcona County that provide 2,257 spaces. Out of the 87 programs, 29 are licensed daycares and out-of-school care programs; the remaining 58 programs are approved Family Day Homes. All 87 licensed and approved programs adhere to provincial standards and regulations. Within the 29 licensed child care programs, there are six that currently have waitlists with a combined total of 103 children waiting for a childcare space.

⁹ Government of Alberta (2013). Alberta Childcare Accreditation Standards.

¹⁰ (2016). Retrieved from <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/>

The chart below provides the range of current fees for these programs.

Age	Range Cost in Strathcona County per month
Infant	\$700 - \$1150
19 months to 4.5 years old	\$840 - \$1015
Kindergarten	\$750 - \$925
School age (Before and After School)	\$375 - \$500

Respondents frequently noted their frustration and concern with the high cost of childcare in Strathcona County. Responses suggest that many citizens are having a hard time accessing childcare options that are both accessible and affordable.

“Finding childcare is a challenge for families with young children. Need more high quality options (that include outdoor play areas, literacy training, etc.) but that is difficult given the low wages those positions pay and the high cost to parents.”

“Affordable part-time daycare options needed to help mothers pick up part-time work.”

“Affordable and/or available childcare is inadequate. For a community of this amount of wealth, it is ridiculous how hard it is to find childcare.”

AFFORDABLE TRANSPORTATION

An affordable transit system is a critical service for citizens to get to work, shop for basic goods, attend appointments and participate in community life. A lack of mobility has been inextricably linked to social disadvantages and exclusion in society.¹¹ It is often those who have a low income who rely most heavily on public transportation and when cost is prohibitive, it can lead to making hard decisions about which basic need goes unmet. Some respondents noted that the cost of transit is a barrier and can be a burden for those living on a lower income.

“The bus system does not allow people to get from one area to another on all days easily or affordably. The cost for our family to use the bus is more than to own a car. We can’t afford either.”

¹¹ Lucas, K. (2012) Transport and social exclusion: Where are we now? Transport Policy, 20, 105-113.

AFFORDABLE RECREATION

Physical activity plays an important role in the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of citizens. There are many benefits from physical activity, such as being healthier and stronger, preventing some chronic diseases, feeling more energetic, improving mood and increasing self image. Being active also improves quality of sleep, helps avoid injury while performing everyday tasks, and increases life expectancy.¹¹

Respondents repeatedly noted that the recreation facilities are exceptional in Strathcona County. While some respondents indicated they would like to see new facilities in specific areas (e.g. rinks, skate parks, etc.) the overall consensus was that the facilities we do have are appreciated. A large number of respondents also expressed concern about the affordability of the facilities and programs that are offered, particularly for lower income households.

“Keep the cost of recreation facilities as low as possible to allow maximum access to all.”

“Children's activities can be expensive - maybe more accessible activities are needed for families with several children (I have 3) or not as financially capable.”

INCOME

At a basic level, affordability is the balance between a household's money coming in versus money spent. While programs, policies and initiatives can look at decreasing the cost of basic needs, it is also important to look at income: the amount of money a household brings in.

Based on survey results, 73.3% of adult respondents agreed that people in Strathcona County have an adequate income. Strathcona County residents earn more than the average Albertan as the average per-person income is over \$61,000 a year and the average family income is around \$144,000.¹² The statistics from 2011 also tell us that about 5.5% of the County population lives below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO).¹³ In Alberta, the number of people who are currently on Employment Insurance and Income Support have dramatically increased over the last two years.

In two years there has been an increase of 220% more individuals accessing Employment Insurance in the Province of Alberta. Similarly, provincial Income Support numbers have grown by 184% over the past two years.¹⁴ Increased usage of local social supports, such as the Food Bank and Family and Community Services supports suggest that Strathcona County is not immune to this provincial reality. The feedback also illuminated a number of people who commute into Strathcona County to work for low income wages. These individuals choose to live in Edmonton where the cost of living is less. Many of these respondents indicated they would prefer to live in Strathcona County where they work.

“People who live in Strathcona County commute into Edmonton for the high paying jobs; meanwhile people commute to Strathcona County for lots of low paying jobs.”

“People who work in Strathcona County for minimum wage cannot afford to live here.”

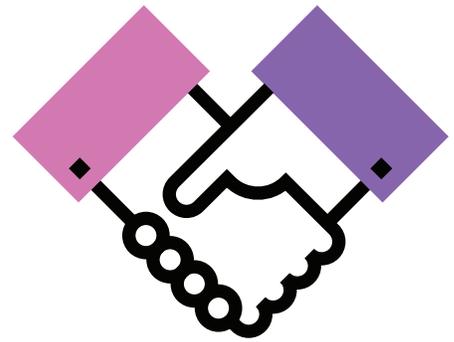
¹¹ 2011 Public Health Agency of Canada

¹² 2011 National Household Survey

¹³ 2011 National Household Survey

¹⁴ Government of Alberta website. Retrieved from: <http://open.alberta.ca/dataset/income-support-caseload-alberta>

2. The need to work together for common goals



The second most frequent theme in the written responses and community conversations was the importance of working together on important goals.

The advantages of collaboration in community development has been well documented. Benefits include an increase in trust, better use of community resources, improved communication, and increased ability to achieve community defined outcomes.¹⁵ In addition, communities in which there are many social connections are more resilient during emergency events and bounce back after crisis.¹⁶ The responses noted some local organizations have good working relationships with one another, where they freely share information and collaborate on important topics. Partnerships between the community and County departments was noted following the Fort McMurray fires as community organizations and municipal government pulled together to create a welcome centre that provided relief to those directly impacted by the fires. Alternatively, other comments described that silos exist between organizations in Strathcona County and that it is crucial that they become more connected and work more together.

Under the broad theme of working together, a notable sub-category emerged: the need to involve citizens at the ground level. There was an expression that initiatives are usually top down ventures and they do not allow for community based ideas. Coupled with this feedback was the suggestion to make an intentional effort to get people involved at the level they are at.

“Aid/empower residents to work towards achievement of neighbourhood-level and community-wide social goals of priority importance at their desired level(s) of participation.”

“Promote more involvement from residents on achieving goals (fundraising, volunteering, support, involvement).”

“Most people are indifferent or apathetic and many people are followers. So there needs to be opportunities to get involved or passionate about issues in the community.”

There were also a number of comments about how all citizens have a part to play in achieving social goals and how there are different roles for the many players in a community.

“There are personal responsibilities as well as societal/community responsibilities. Maybe we need to declare a “charter of rights and responsibilities” that all community members strive for that includes all of the above goals.”

¹⁵ Community Development Strategies, Ontario Health Communities Coalition. www.ohcc-ccso.ca

¹⁶ Community Foundations of Canada 2015 Vital Signs Report on Belonging

3. Feeling of safety



Following the priority of meeting basic needs, respondents listed this goal as the next highest priority (19.1%) and it was the third most discussed theme.

Most of the responses fall under two main categories: the importance of feeling safe and the need to increase our sense of community safety. Within these two categories there were some distinct differences among respondents in how they perceive Strathcona County. Some indicated they feel safe in Strathcona County and they appreciate the County as a safe place to raise their children. This sentiment is supported by the statistic that 86% of residents gave Strathcona County high/very high ratings as a safe community in which to live during the Strathcona County Public Satisfaction Survey.¹⁷ Others noted concerns with crime, a need for more police presence and that the economic downturn has led to a lower sense of safety.

Research shows when communities are made up of people who feel they belong and trust each other, neighbourhoods are safer. As connectedness among people increases, so do neighbourhood safety and a sense of community pride.¹⁸ Respondents articulated this idea various times throughout *Community Talk*.

“It’s our responsibility to take care of each other and notice “funny” or “off” things that might happen in the community and talk to neighbours about it.”

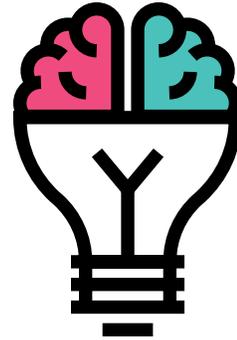
“We should create relationships with neighbours and people in each community and rally together to make sure everyone is safe and happy.”

In addition, it was frequently mentioned that being free from emotional harm is an important component of community safety. This concept is also closely related to goal #3 that people are valued, respected and treated fairly and illustrates the interconnectedness of each of the six goals.

¹⁷ Strathcona County Public Satisfaction Survey 2015

¹⁸ Community Foundations of Canada 2015 Vital Signs Report on Belonging

4. Fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance



The fourth most noted theme was the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance within Strathcona County.

This value was further reflected by 90.4% of people indicating that everyone should be respected and treated fairly. While it was noted that the majority of residents are respectful, many respondents indicated a strong desire to promote the dignities of everyone in Strathcona County regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, race, religion, or socio-economic status.

"You can tell the strength of a community by how they treat their most vulnerable."

"Breakdown stereotypes and be a champion for human rights so others know that WE ALL have a right to live our lives as we want as long as we aren't hurting anyone else."

"I think that the foundation of building a strong community is when citizens feel valued and respected. In turn, they will feel like the work they're doing to build community will 'count'"

Respondents also noted particular groups are at a disadvantage in Strathcona County.

"I feel like the County is strongly geared towards high income families and not very welcoming or accommodating to other type of people from a racial, ethnic, social status or income level perspective."

"Assumptions are made based on colour, LGBTQ, disability etc. This may come from a lack of conversation and connecting."

"I love Sherwood Park but find it has become a culture where if you don't fit in (wealth, sports, etc.) you are ostracized. If we respect each other all other goals are achievable."

There was a common sentiment in the written responses and community conversations that the way in which we engage and connect as a community has changed and in fact has decreased. Some of the factors that were identified that contribute to this feeling are the increased use of technology and social media, an observation that residents are becoming 'busier' and an overall shift in community attitudes away from the importance of community connectedness. While many residents attend community events the feeling is that they are not connecting to one another as a community.

“We are good at keeping people entertained (i.e. we are good at the big celebrations on December 31st and July 1st) but we are not necessarily connected.”

A number of participants in community conversations also mentioned how we have become more isolated within the neighbourhoods we live in. That many people simply drive into their garages at the end of the day and when the door closes, they are not seen or connected. This feeling is further supported by the fact that, on average, knowing six or more neighbours by name has decreased over the years in Strathcona County.¹⁹

“One place that people don’t seem to connect with each other is in their neighbourhoods, which are often filled with fences.”

When we feel a strong sense of belonging and connection to people around us, we are healthier. Belonging to social groups and networks is as important to our health as diet and exercise. People with strong support networks tend to have lower prevalence of mental health issues and better overall health.²⁰

5. Improving the transit system



The fifth most discussed theme in *Community Talk* was the need for overall improvement to Strathcona County’s transit system, including its routes and frequency. Affordable, reliable and safe transportation increases access to work, education, services and other socio-cultural activities that contribute to a sense of belonging or inclusion. Evening and weekend work is more common for those working at low incomes. Access to transportation for low-income workers and elderly residents, in particular, can make trips to work and medical appointments possible.

As part of the engagement, staff and volunteers attended the transit stations and rode buses to invite residents to complete a survey. Respondents discussed their concerns with the existing routes and frequently noted that the buses do not go to all the places that people need to go. Survey respondents further noted they would like to have more options between rural and urban parts of the County, stronger connections with other municipalities in the Capital Region (particularly Edmonton), and more bus stops within Sherwood Park. Respondents suggested that more buses are needed to post-secondary institutions in Edmonton and more buses would be beneficial in the evenings and weekends.

“I think Sherwood Park needs to establish a more affordable, reliable public transit system, that is intimately connected to the City of Edmonton.”

“The frequency is not adequate/convenient (night and weekend service especially) for those who rely on it as their sole way of getting around and taxi is too expensive.”

¹⁹ Strathcona County Public Satisfaction Survey 2015

²⁰ Community Foundations of Canada 2015 Vital Signs Report on Belonging

6. More community events—neighbourhood and County-wide



Several respondents mentioned that there are a number of activities and programs available, such as the Parent Link Centre, Strathcona County Library, and Recreation, Parks and Culture facilities. Respondents also made note of special events including Canada Day and New Year's Eve celebrations. While this topic came up frequently, it was prevalent that citizens would like to see more events, both locally and community-wide. Communities grow stronger when citizens are presented with the chance to connect with others, build trust and get involved.²¹

7. Increase mental health awareness and in services



This topic was the seventh most talked about theme throughout the *Community Talk* engagement. In spite of an increase in awareness campaigns and education about mental health, many stated the general public's current understanding of mental health is still lacking.

Data indicates one in five of us will experience a mental health problem or illness this year²² and 40% of us will not seek the help that is needed.²³ Stigma (defined as holding a negative stereotype around those with mental health issues) may prevent those who are experiencing mental health challenges from reaching out for support and assistance. While in 2015, 57% believe stigma associated with mental illness has been reduced compared to 5 years ago²⁴, stigma remains a barrier in accessing services and support. Meanwhile, the accessibility and availability of services impacts the ability of those experiencing mental health issues to seek out and access necessary supports and services in a timely way. For residents who decide to find the treatment that they need, it was noted the services and supports in Strathcona County for mental health concerns are lacking.

"We need to improve access to mental health resources here in the Park, and make more people aware of the struggles that some are suffering so silently."

²¹ Actions that Build Community by John O'Brien - <http://inclusion.com/downloads/actionsthatbuildcommunity.pdf>

²² Smetanin et al. (2011). The life and economic impact of major mental illnesses in Canada: 2011-2041. Prepared for the Mental Health Commission of Canada. Toronto: RiskAnalytica

²³ Shoppers LOVE. YOU. Run for Women Poll (2016). Online survey conducted by Environics Research.

²⁴ CAMH Mental Health And Addictions: Facts and Statistics Accessed from: http://www.camh.ca/en/hospital/about_camh/newsroom/for_reporters/Pages/addictionmentalhealthstatistics.aspx

“Mental health wait list was very long, waited for months in a very vulnerable time. Ended up having to go to emergency as it was the only place to get help which is not the way it should be.”

“Mental health is a real challenge. I would like to see easy access for youth, adults and families to mental health care providers.”

Respondents also noted a number of concerns about the current health care system. Most of the comments were around the need for a fully functioning hospital and the ability to access the appropriate medical services needed in a timely manner.

“Getting proper medical care can be a problem in the community. It can be difficult to access assistance that is meaningful and helpful.”

“I feel we need to push for a full hospital in Sherwood Park. We have a very large population that supports the needs for a full-fledged hospital.”

8. Better access to services and programs

During community conversations and in the written portion of the survey, many people were appreciative of the wide variety of programs and services available in Strathcona County, particularly for young families.



Parent Link Centre and the Strathcona County Library (including the Bookmobile) were frequently mentioned as program options. Respondents felt that unless you are already connected to the programs and services in the community, that it can be difficult to know about what other opportunities are available.

“Family and Community Services and Information Volunteer Centre needs to be more visible in the community. I have lived here for years and never knew about them.”

“It can be difficult to access or know about the services available.”

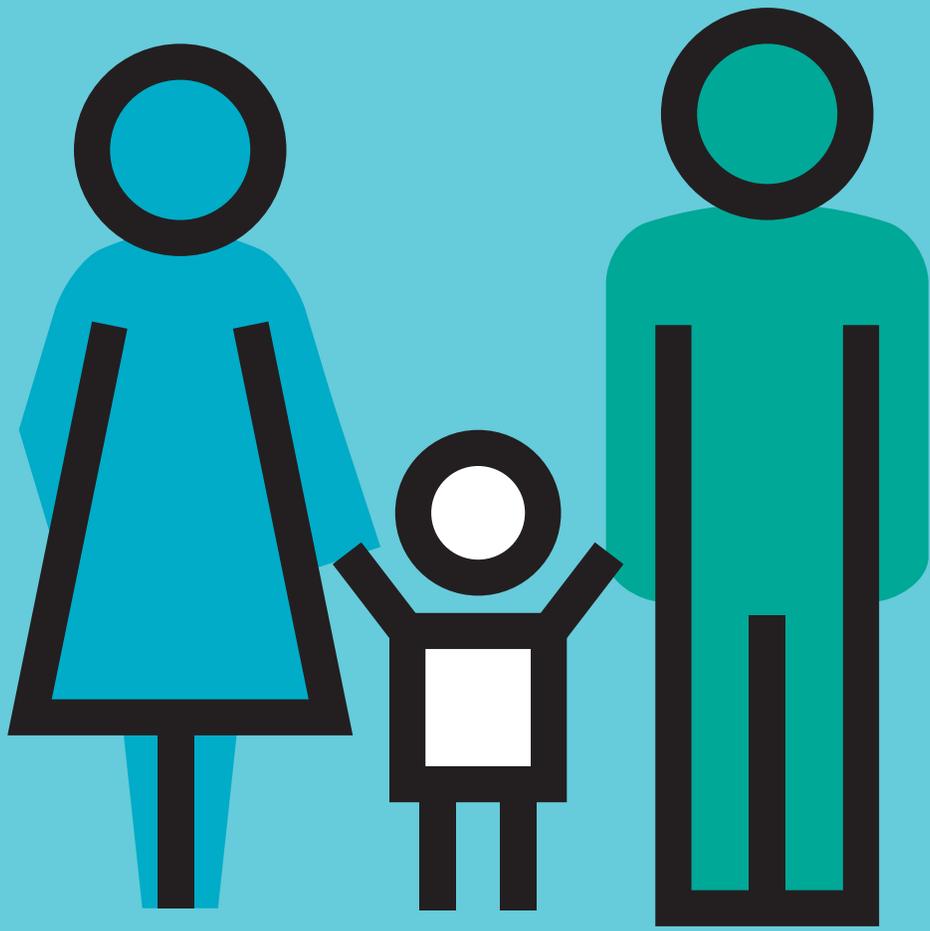
While people are aware of some of the programs and services available in Strathcona County, there was strong indication that navigating these programs and services is difficult. It was also noted that transportation between service sites can be a challenge. Respondents further explained that when they found the right service, the application process was overwhelming.

There are many ways social service navigation and experience can be improved. A number of respondents suggested a single location could be created where all the programs and services would be available under one roof.

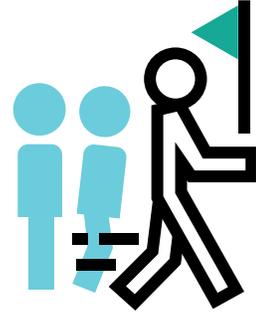
“Bring services together so it’s a one stop shop.”

“Have a central location where people can access information and support.”





IT TAKES ALL OF US



No single person, organization or level of government can tackle social issues alone; it will take all of us working together to attain the goals and address the needs noted by respondents.

The goal of *Community Talk*, and in part the renewed social framework will be, to raise awareness and share results with businesses, citizens, local leaders, local organizations and all levels of government about the complex and interrelated issues our community faces.

Once the relevant issues have been identified, we can begin the work of uniting and mobilizing the entire community to address these issues together. Authentic partnerships and integrated approaches are integral to our collective success.

What can you do to help build a stronger community?

"We can do for each other instead of expecting a service or program to provide for us. There needs to be more empowering of neighbours to talk to each other and help each other rather than calling the County for neighbour disputes. Pick up a shovel, stop by and say hi, empower people to help each other."

Community conversation participants and all survey respondents were asked the question "What can you do to help build a stronger community?" This question not only expands on the concept of 'It takes all of us' but it is also directly tied to Goal #7 in the Strathcona County Strategic Plan (2013-2030) to 'Build strong neighbourhoods/communities to support the diverse needs of our residents.'

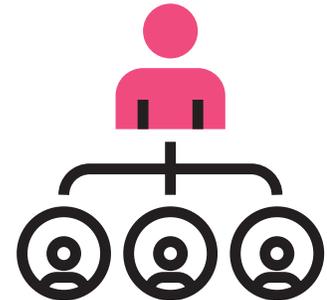
The most frequent answers to this question were:

1. CITIZENSHIP

Being an active citizen is more than having a passport, obeying the law and paying taxes. While these are aspects of citizenship, other key characteristics include being active participants in one's community, helping others and accepting differences.²⁵ These are the means respondents identified to increase citizenship and to become part of the solution.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is a value as well as a practice of giving one's time and talents for a greater good. Volunteer involvement strengthens communities and promotes change and development by identifying and responding to community needs. Volunteer participation is vital to a just and democratic society as it fosters civic responsibility, participation and interaction.²⁶



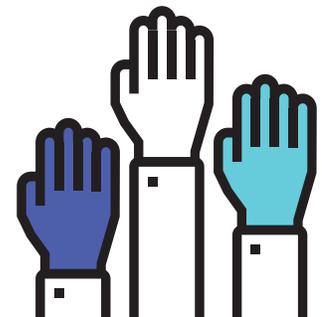
Freely giving one's time for the common good, is one way that people make Strathcona County stronger.

"I volunteer within our community. It helps me understand what is going on and I get to meet people with different backgrounds and experiences."

Community Involvement

One of the main messages of *Community Talk* is it takes all of us to build a strong community. Many people have indicated that they would like to get more involved but don't know where to start.

Community involvement and participation can be understood as a process where individuals, families or communities assume responsibility for their own welfare and develop a capacity to contribute to their own and the community's development.²⁷



"If we all want to work together to make the community stronger, everyone should spend some of their time helping"

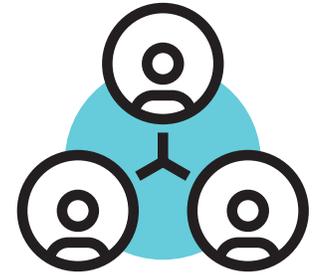
²⁵ The Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement: An Audit Tool (2006) www.volunteer.ca/resource.

²⁶ Community Tool Box Addressing Social Determinants of Health and Development. www.ctb.uk.edu

²⁷ Oakley and Marsden, 1987. Approaches to participation in rural development. Geneva: ILO.

Help one another (empathy)

Empathy is often described as the ability to recognize and identify with another person's feelings and experiences. It is important in building a stronger, more connected community as it allows us to see each other as people and encourages acceptance and tolerance towards one another. Acting in an empathetic way towards one another can create deep and lasting connections that humans yearn for. As we connect and care for one another, the world (and our community) becomes a nicer place to live.²⁸



"I genuinely stop and listen to people - their joys, their anger, their sorrows, their confusions. I link them informally to people and places that can bring out the best in them and their passions."

"I will be a resource for all the residents that I meet. I will connect them to the person that can assist them within Strathcona County; even if the concern is not directly connected to my work I can be a 'connector'."

Work with each other to reach common goals (collaboration)

Collaboration is a process in which individuals, groups, and organizations work together to achieve desired results. The goal is to address existing and emerging challenges that cannot be easily solved by one group alone. It is through collaboration that communities can effectively share their expertise, skills, talents and passions with one another for the greater good.²⁹



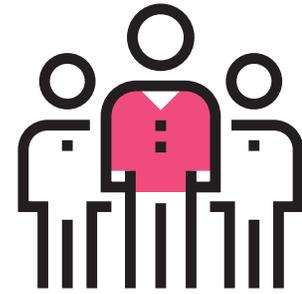
"I can choose a goal that I would like to work towards to achieve and set up a plan to achieve it and then achieve it with my fellow citizens."

²⁸ Agosta, L. A rumor of empathy (2015). Center for Building a Culture of Empathy.

²⁹ Collaboration Framework - Addressing Community Capacity: National Network for Collaboration

Neighbourliness

There are considerable benefits associated with being a good neighbour that can include an increased sense of belonging, social inclusion, enhanced personal safety and neighbourhood security, lower crime rates, reduced neighbour disputes, and added benefits to our overall health and well-being.³⁰



Jane Jacobs, a renowned community developer, said, "A safe street is produced by eyes on the street."³¹ This means people walking around, talking and getting to know one another. One of the most effective ways to increase community safety is by getting to know each other and looking out for each other's best interests.

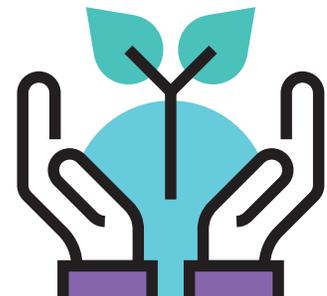
"We are connected to our neighbours and know who they are. We are able to help them when requested. (E.g. check on their homes when they are away, help with pets , bring in mail)."

"I like to help build a stronger community by making personal connections with my neighbours."

"We've made strong connections already with our neighbours. We support each other and the kids are building lasting friendships with other kids on our street."

2. RESPECT OTHERS AND ACCEPT THEIR DIFFERENCES (INCLUSION, DIVERSITY, EQUITY)

Strathcona County is becoming more diverse each year as our population continues to grow. Ensuring we are both welcoming and inclusive to all people regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ability, race, religion, or socio-economic status will help foster a healthy and vibrant community.



"Accept people for who they are and build people up, instead of bringing people down."

"I think having an open mind and being accepting and understanding of the differences of everyone is the first place to start."

"I give dignity and respect to every person I meet. Every single person has value and it is important for them to know that."

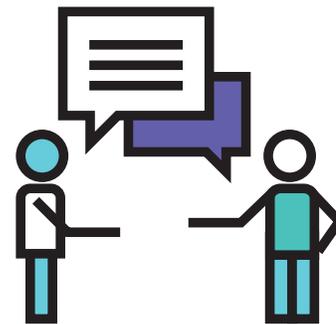
³⁰ St. Albert, Alberta Cultivate the Good Neighbour in you (2012). www.stalberta.ca

³¹ Jane Jacobs. The Death and Life of Great American Cities (1961)

3.COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Respondents felt that collectively, we are able to identify solutions and work together towards creating a supported, safe, and connected community. One frequently mentioned drawback was a general lack of knowledge and awareness about what is happening in the community.

Community engagement means people working together collaboratively, through inspired action and learning, to create and realize bold visions for their common future.³²



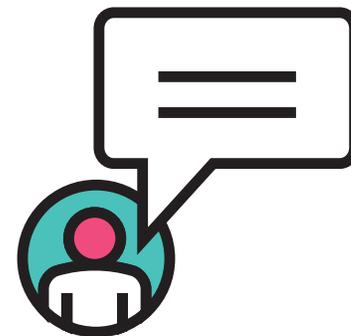
“Leverage what connections I have in the community to have conversations about where we live and what we want it to be. Discuss what a shared responsibility looks like.”

“I can listen and read about things I don’t understand in our community.”

4. IMPORTANT ISSUES ARE VOICED (ADVOCACY)

Many respondents expressed the importance of having issues raised, particularly for those who are most vulnerable and may not otherwise have a voice.

Becoming an advocate helps people have their concerns heard and considered when decisions are made that affect their community. People can advocate on behalf of their families, friends, children, or others in society to ensure they receive the care, services, rights or privileges they need to thrive. When a group of citizens come together to advocate for specific issues (e.g. affordable housing, quality education, livable incomes, disability rights, minority inclusion, etc.), they do so with the hope that their actions will change both public opinion and policy.³³



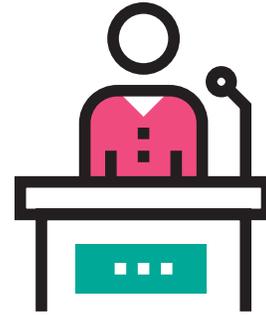
“I can have conversations with people in the community and advocate for their interests and needs.”

“By being an advocate for myself, my family and my community. Working to put into place policy that will help preserve and build up family and community.”

³² Tamarack - An Institute for Community Engagement www.tamarackcommunity.ca

³³ seAp Advocacy (Support, Empower, Advocate, Promote) <http://www.seap.org.uk>





NEXT STEPS

The *Community Talk* community engagement completed in late 2016 is just the start of our collective journey together. In the Winter/Spring of 2017 there will be additional opportunities for residents to be engaged. A group of community leaders have also come together to review the feedback received in *Community Talk* and propose how we step forward.³⁴

All the information collected will inform the creation of a new social framework for Strathcona County. This renewed framework will be presented to the public and County Council at the May Priorities Committee with an anticipated return to a Council in June 2017. This framework will become a roadmap on how we can create a supported, safe and connected community together.

The invitation is to re-imagine our ideal community and to identify how we, as a community, can create it. As articulated in this report, there are numerous areas where the majority of respondents have suggested areas for improvement and refocus. If we continue to do the same as we have always done, it will be certain that we will get the same results. The hope is that *Community Talk*, and the subsequent renewed social framework, becomes the catalyst for a new journey where we leverage all assets, personal and collective, to address social challenges and co-create a community that supports its citizens to achieve their highest and best potential.

³⁴ This group of community leaders includes change agents from local school divisions, non-profit organizations, Chamber of Commerce, Alberta Health Services, RCMP, faith community, library, and County staff from numerous departments.

APPENDIX #1



Community Talk Survey

Introduction

We want to know your thoughts on how together we can create a supported, safe and connected community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. By completing this survey, you are identifying the social goals that are most important to you as a community member and are providing valuable feedback on how we can accomplish them together.

Personal information is protected under authority of section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and will be used in the management and administration of Strathcona County's Community Talk program. If you choose to provide us with your contact information, Strathcona County may contact you to provide you with information regarding future engagement opportunities related to this program as well as other public engagement opportunities. If you have any questions regarding the collection or use of your personal information by Strathcona County, please contact (780) 464-4044.

Where do you live?

- Sherwood Park
- Antler Lake
- Ardrossan
- Collingwood Cove
- Half Moon Lake
- Hastings Lake
- Josephburg
- North Cooking Lake
- South Cooking Lake
- Other rural Strathcona County
- Other, but work in Strathcona County
- I don't live or work in Strathcona County

How old are you?

- 11-17 years old
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65-74 years old
- 75 years old or older

Are you?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other, please specify, if you wish: _____

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Goal: People in Strathcona County feel like they belong and are connected to others.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This is important for us to achieve as a community.	<input type="radio"/>						
I think this is true right now.	<input type="radio"/>						

Goal: People in Strathcona County feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This is important for us to achieve as a community.	<input type="radio"/>						
I think this is true right now.	<input type="radio"/>						

Goal: People in Strathcona County are valued, respected and treated fairly.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This is important for us to achieve as a community.	<input type="radio"/>						
I think this is true right now.	<input type="radio"/>						



Goal: People in Strathcona County are healthy (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness).

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This is important for us to achieve as a community.	<input type="radio"/>						
I think this is true right now.	<input type="radio"/>						

Goal: People in Strathcona County work together to make our community stronger.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This is important for us to achieve as a community.	<input type="radio"/>						
I think this is true right now.	<input type="radio"/>						

Goal: People in Strathcona County have all of their basic needs met (for example, adequate income, education, childcare, housing and transportation).

Right now I think people in Strathcona County have:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
An adequate income.	<input type="radio"/>						
Quality education.	<input type="radio"/>						
Quality and affordable childcare.	<input type="radio"/>						
Affordable housing.	<input type="radio"/>						
Reliable transportation.	<input type="radio"/>						
These are all important for us to achieve as a community.	<input type="radio"/>						



In your opinion, which goal should we focus on first as a community?

That people in Strathcona County:

- Feel like they belong and are connected to others.
- Feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm.
- Feel valued, respected and are treated fairly.
- Are healthy (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness).
- Work together to make our community stronger.
- Have their basic needs met (for example, adequate income, education, childcare, housing and transportation).
- Other, please specify: _____
- None of the above.

How can we improve on ANY of the goals mentioned?

It will take all of us working together to continue to build a supported, safe and connected community.

What can you do to help build a stronger community?

Thank you for completing this survey! If you would like to be part of further community talks in early 2017, please provide your contact information on the separate sheet provided. Your survey responses will not be linked to your name.

APPENDIX #2

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN YOUTH (11-17 YEAR OLDS) AND ADULT (18+) RESPONSES

During the two months of *Community Talk* an intentional effort was made to make sure the youth voice was captured. This led to multiple youth orientated community conversations and hundreds of students completing the survey in Elk Island Catholic and Elk Island Public school classrooms.

When comparing the results for youth (age 11-17) versus adults based on their responses to the six goals, it became apparent youth had a less optimistic view of our current state compared to adults. In general, youth were less likely than adults to feel these goals were as important to achieve and also less likely to feel we have already met these goals.

When the youth responses were analyzed, a common theme was they would like to see more amenities (rinks, skate parks, recreation spaces, etc.), age-specific activities and youth-friendly spaces within the community where they feel welcome and safe. It was also mentioned cost can be an inhibiting factor when it comes to participating in local sports, recreation or other local activities.

Many youth respondents talked about the negative effects of bullying and the impact it has on themselves and the rest of the community. This idea is supported by the fact that 83% of youth agreed it is important for people to feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm. But when asked if this is true right now, only 56% of youth agreed that people currently feel safe.

Another common theme was the need for support and mental health services for youth. In a number of instances, youth said they would benefit from mental health training and education along with peer counselling and mediation.

The six goals

In this section, a closer look was taken to review the differences between youth and adults, when comparing the six goals discussed during the survey. It is important to highlight these differences because there was an over-representation of the youth in this survey at 38% of the total sample size. As a result, their responses have an influence on the final result. It is important for the readers to be aware of such differences that exist between the two demographic groups.

Goal #1:

When looking at the first goal “People in Strathcona County feel like they belong and are connected to others”, the results show that the gap between *how important this goal is to achieve as a community* in relation to whether *we have currently reached our goals* are significantly wider for youth as compared to adults (22.7% versus 14.7% gap respectively). Overall, youth were less likely than adults to feel that this goal was as important (83.8% compared to 90.0% respectively) and even less likely than adults to agree we have currently reached this goal (61.1% compared to 75.3% respectively).

People in Strathcona County feel like they belong and are connected to others.

Age Demographics:	% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community*	% agreed they think this is true right now**	% difference between respondents ideal community and the current landscape
Youth (11 - 17 Years Old)	83.8%	61.1%	22.7%
Adults (18+ Years Old)	90.0%	75.3%	14.7%

Goal #2:

When looking at the second goal “People in Strathcona County feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm”, the results show that the gap between *how important this goal is to achieve as a community* in relation to whether *we have currently reached our goals* are significantly wider for youth as compared to adults (26.4% versus 12.8% gap respectively). Overall, youth were less likely than adults to feel that this goal was as important (82.6% compared to 91.8% respectively) and even less likely than adults to agree we have currently reached this goal (56.2% compared to 79.0% respectively).

People in Strathcona County feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm.

Age Demographics:	% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community*	% agreed they think this is true right now**	% difference between respondents ideal community and the current landscape
Youth (11 - 17 Years Old)	82.6%	56.2%	26.4%
Adults (18+ Years Old)	91.8%	79.0%	12.8%

*% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community includes all respondents who either strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed.

**% agreed they think this is true right now includes all respondents who either strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed.

Goal #3:

When looking at the third goal “People in Strathcona County are valued, respected and treated fairly”, the results show that the gap between *how important this goal is to achieve as a community* in relation to whether *we have currently reached our goals* are significantly wider for youth as compared to adults (23.5% versus 12.8% gap respectively). Overall, youth were less likely than adults to feel that this goal was as important (85.6% compared to 93.4% respectively) and even less likely than adults to agree we have currently reached this goal (62.1% compared to 80.6% respectively).

People in Strathcona County are valued, respected and treated fairly.

Age Demographics:	% agreed this is important for us to achieve as community*	% agreed they think this is true right now**	% difference between respondents ideal community and the current landscape
Youth (11 - 17 Years Old)	85.6%	62.1%	23.5%
Adults (18+ Years Old)	93.4%	80.6%	12.8%

Goal #4:

When looking at the fourth goal “People in Strathcona County are healthy (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness)”, the results show that the gap between *how important this goal is to achieve as a community* in relation to whether *we have currently reached our goals* are significantly wider for youth as compared to adults (22.3% versus 17.7% gap respectively). Overall, youth were less likely than adults to feel that this goal was as important (81.7% compared to 90.8% respectively) and even less likely than adults to agree we have currently reached this goal (59.4% compared to 73.1% respectively).

People in Strathcona County are healthy (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness).

Age Demographics:	% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community*	% agreed they think this is true right now**	% difference between respondents ideal community and the current landscape
Youth (11 - 17 Years Old)	81.7%	59.4%	22.3%
Adults (18+ Years Old)	90.8%	73.1%	17.7%

Goal #5:

When looking at the fifth goal “People in Strathcona County work together to make our community stronger”, the results show that the gap between *how important this goal is to achieve as a community* in relation to whether we *have currently reached our goals* are significantly wider for youth as compared to adults (21.5% versus 15.8% gap respectively). Overall, youth were less likely than adults to feel that this goal was as important (83.7% compared to 92.3% respectively) and even less likely than adults to agree we have currently reached this goal (62.2% compared to 76.5% respectively).

People in Strathcona County work together to make our community stronger.

Age Demographics:	% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community*	% agreed they think this is true right now**	% difference between respondents ideal community and the current landscape
Youth (11 - 17 Years Old)	83.7%	62.2%	21.5%
Adults (18+ Years Old)	92.3%	76.5%	15.8%

Goal #6:

When looking at the 6th goal on having all the basic needs met, a lower percentage of youth agreed (65.4%) that we currently have adequate income as compared to adults (73.3%). Similarly, a lower percentage of youth agreed (79.8%) that we currently have quality education compared to adults (85.1%). On the other hand, a significantly higher percentage of youth agreed (63.3%) that we currently have quality and affordable childcare compared to adults (39.9%). Similarly, a significantly higher percentage of youth agreed (51.5%) that we currently have affordable housing in Strathcona County as compared to adults (40.4%).

People in Strathcona County have all of their basic needs met (for example, adequate income, education, childcare, housing and transportation).

	Youth (11 - 17 Years Old)	Adults (18+ Years Old)	% difference between Youth & Adults
	% agreed they think this is true right now**	% agreed they think this is true right now**	
An adequate income	65.4%	73.3%	7.9%
Quality education	79.8%	85.1%	5.3%
Quality and affordable childcare	63.3%	39.9%	23.4%
Affordable housing	51.5%	40.4%	11.1%
Reliable transportation	70.2%	68.0%	2.2%

Overall, adults were slightly more likely than youth to agree that these basic needs/goals are all important for us to achieve as a community (95.1% compared to 91.0% respectively).

APPENDIX #3

ANALYSIS OF SENIOR (AGES 65+) RESPONSES

We know that currently, 1 in 7 Strathcona County residents is a senior and this segment of the population will continue to grow. As the feedback from seniors (people age 65 and older) was collected, it was observed that there was differing opinions on how seniors experience Strathcona County.

“Not all seniors are isolated, there are many seniors who are active, engaged and we need to be engaging with seniors where they are at because some are still quite youthful.”

“Silver Birch has great activities for seniors to connect with each other to reduce isolation.”

“Recreation opportunities for seniors are good.”

Alternatively, many seniors painted a bleaker picture on how they experience Strathcona County. There was a common sentiment that we have great services and opportunities for young families; however, the quality of life for seniors is much lower. One of the largest concerns is the lack of affordable housing - specifically designed and built for senior living.

“We need another 3-4 or more Silver Birch type residences for seniors.”

“Seniors homes are great, but not enough room.”

In addition to the housing concern, seniors also pointed out that programs and services could be advertised better, a need for more opportunities to connect with one another to help reduce isolation and difficulty with transportation to get around the community.

Goal #1:

When looking at the first goal “People in Strathcona County feel like they belong and are connected to others”, the results show that the gap between *how important this goal is to achieve as a community* in relation to whether *we have currently reached our goals* are significantly wider for adults (18-64) as compared to seniors 65+ (16.1% versus 9.3% gap respectively).

People in Strathcona County feel like they belong and are connected to other.

Age Demographics:	% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community*	% agreed they think this is true right now**	% difference between respondents ideal community and the current landscape
Adults (18 - 64 Years Old)	90.6%	74.5%	16.1%
Seniors 65+	87.4%	78.1%	9.3%

Goal # 2:

When looking at the second goal “People in Strathcona County feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm”, the results show that the gap between *how important this goal is to achieve as a community* in relation to whether *we have currently reached our goals* are significantly wider for adults (18-64) as compared to seniors 65+ (14.3% versus 7.7% gap respectively).

People in Strathcona County feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm.

Age Demographics:	% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community*	% agreed they think this is true right now**	% difference between respondents ideal community and the current landscape
Adults (18 - 64 Years Old)	92.4%	78.1%	14.3%
Seniors 65+	90.1%	82.4%	7.7%

*% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community includes all respondents who either strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed.

**% agreed they think this is true right now includes all respondents who either strongly agreed, agreed, or somewhat agreed.

Goal # 3:

When looking at the third goal “People in Strathcona County are valued, respected and treated fairly”, the results show that the gap between *how important this goal is to achieve as a community* in relation to whether we *have currently reached our goals* are slightly wider for adults (18-64) as compared to seniors 65+ (13.5% versus 10.0% gap respectively).

People in Strathcona County are valued, respected and treated fairly.

Age Demographics:	% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community*	% agreed they think this is true right now**	% difference between respondents ideal community and the current landscape
Adults (18 - 64 Years Old)	93.9%	80.4%	13.5%
Seniors 65+	91.4%	81.4%	10.0%

Goal # 4:

When looking at the fourth goal “People in Strathcona County are healthy (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness)”, the results show that the gap between *how important this goal is to achieve as a community* in relation to whether we *have currently reached our goals* are significantly wider for adults (18-64) as compared to seniors 65+ (19.6% versus 11.7% gap respectively).

People in Strathcona County are healthy (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness).

Age Demographics:	% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community*	% agreed they think this is true right now**	% difference between respondents ideal community and the current landscape
Adults (18 - 64 Years Old)	91.4%	71.8%	19.6%
Seniors 65+	89.3%	77.6%	11.7%

Goal # 5:

When looking at the fifth goal “People in Strathcona County work together to make our community stronger”, the results show that the gap between *how important this goal is to achieve as a community* in relation to whether *we have currently reached our goals* are significantly wider for adults (18-64) as compared to seniors 65+ (17.2% versus 10.8% gap respectively).

People in Strathcona County work together to make our community stronger.

Age Demographics:	% agreed this is important for us to achieve as a community*	% agreed they think this is true right now**	% difference between respondents ideal community and the current landscape
Adults (18 - 64 Years Old)	91.4%	71.8%	19.6%
Seniors 65+	89.3%	77.6%	11.7%

Goal # 6:

When looking at the 6th goal on having all the basic needs met, a higher percentage of adults (18-64) agreed (74.5%) that we currently have adequate income as compared to seniors (68.9%). On the other hand, a significantly higher percentage of seniors agreed (49.3%) that we currently have affordable housing in Strathcona County as compared to adults (38.0%). All other differences between the two age groups were insignificant.

People in Strathcona County have all of their basic needs met (for example, adequate income, education, childcare, housing and transportation).

	Adults (18 - 64 Years Old) % agreed they think this is true right now**	Seniors 65+ % agreed they think this is true right now**	% difference between Adults & Seniors
An adequate income	74.5%	68.9%	5.6%
Quality Education	85.1%	84.7%	0.4%
Quality and affordable childcare	40.6%	37.7%	2.9%
Affordable housing	38.0%	49.3%	11.3%
Reliable transportation	67.9%	68.2%	0.3%

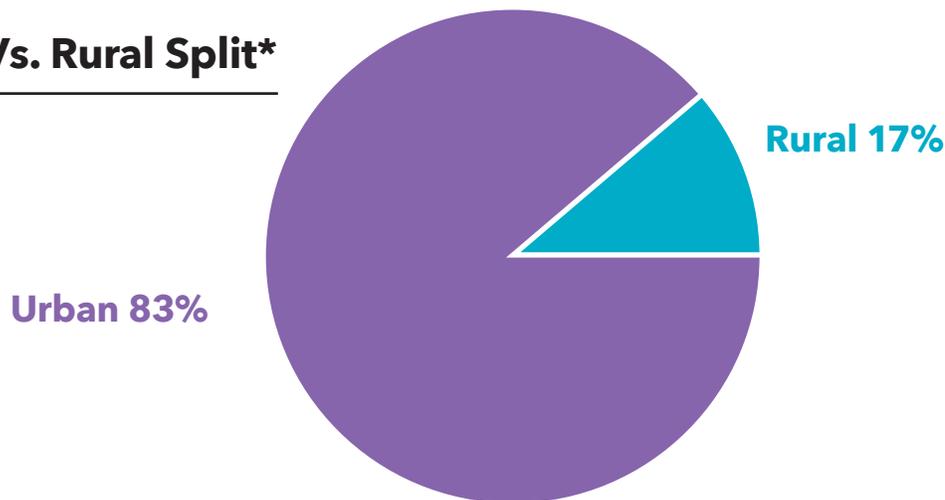
Overall, adults (18-64) were slightly more likely than seniors (65+) to agree that these basic needs/goals are all important for us to achieve as a community (95.5% compared to 93.6% respectively).

APPENDIX #4

SUB SEGMENT ANALYSIS ACCORDING TO PLACE OF RESIDENCE

When comparing the results for urban versus rural residents based on their responses on the first 5 goals, there were no significant differences found apart from the fact that urban residents were slightly more likely (3%–5% range) to rate these goals higher on the importance level as compared to rural residents. At the same time urban residents were also more likely to agree by a few percentage points that we are currently meeting our goals.

Urban Vs. Rural Split*



When asked about the 6th goal, a lower percentage of rural residents agreed (35.6%) that we currently have quality and affordable childcare compared to urban residents (41.2%). A lower percent of rural residents (35.6%) agreed that we currently have affordable housing compared to urban residents (42.0%). Similarly, a lower percentage of rural residents agreed (61%) that we currently have reliable transportation compared to urban residents (71%):

Quality and affordable childcare

Urban - 41.2% Vs. Rural - 35.6%

Affordable housing

Urban - 42.0% Vs. Rural - 36.5%

Reliable transportation

Urban - 70.8% Vs. Rural - 60.6%

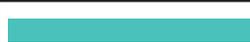
* Data for this analysis was drawn from individuals 18+ for the categories of affordable and quality childcare and affordable housing since this age category has the best understanding to accurately respond to these areas.

APPENDIX #5

SUB SEGMENT ANALYSIS ACCORDING TO GENDER

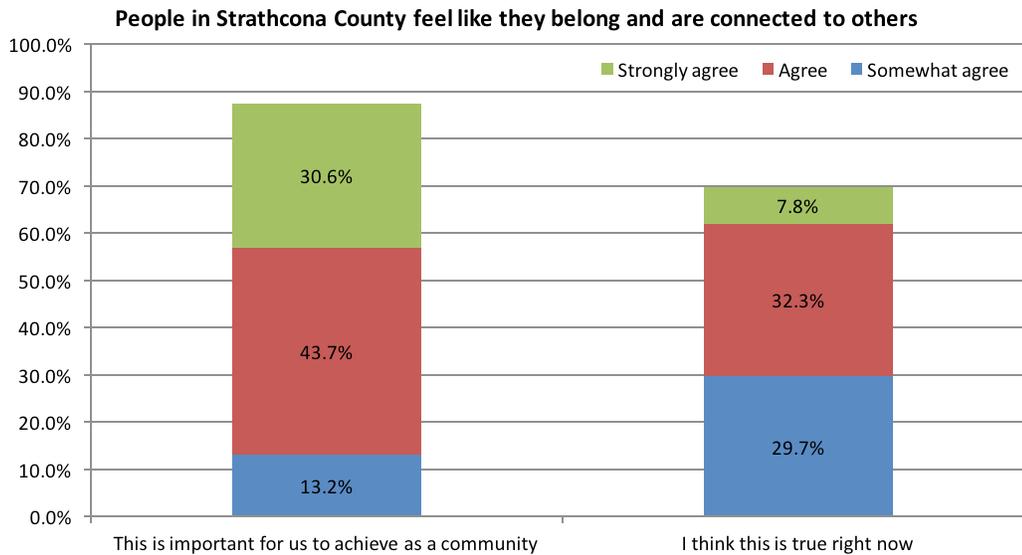
When comparing the results for males versus females based on their responses to the first 5 goals, there were no significant differences found between the two genders apart from females being slightly more likely to rate these goals higher on the importance level to achieve (2%-4% higher range) as compared to males. Females were less likely to agree citizens' basic needs have already been met. In addition, females were more likely to feel it is more important for us to concentrate first on the 6th goal of meeting people's basic needs compared to males (45% compared to 37% respectively).

Are you?

Response	Percent	
Male	36.7%	
Female	59.6%	
Prefer not to say	1.7%	
Other, please specify if you wish:	1.9%	

APPENDIX #6

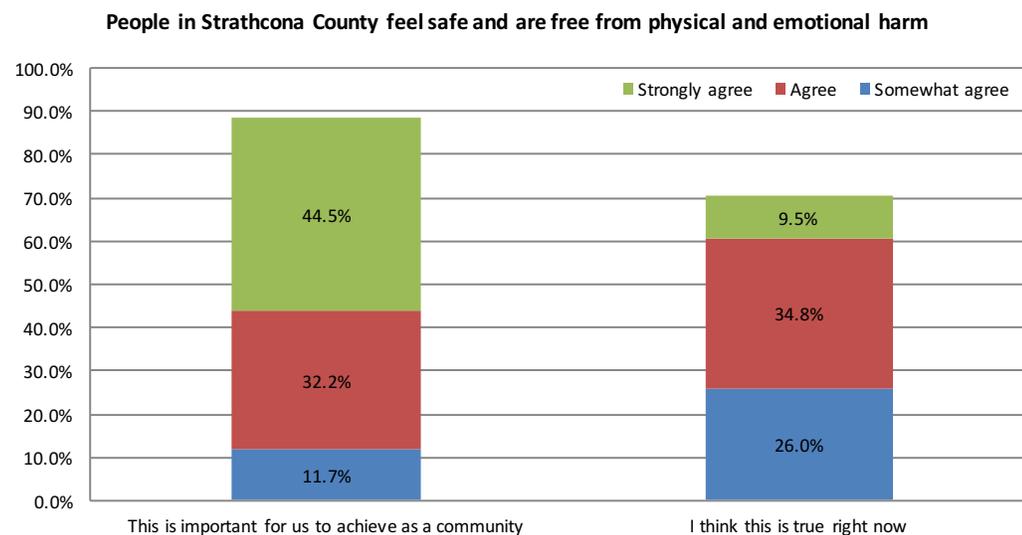
Goal 1: People in Strathcona County feel like they belong and are connected to others.



This is important for us to achieve as a community = 87.5% somewhat agreed/agreed/strongly agreed

I think this is true right now = 69.8% somewhat agreed/agreed/strongly agreed.

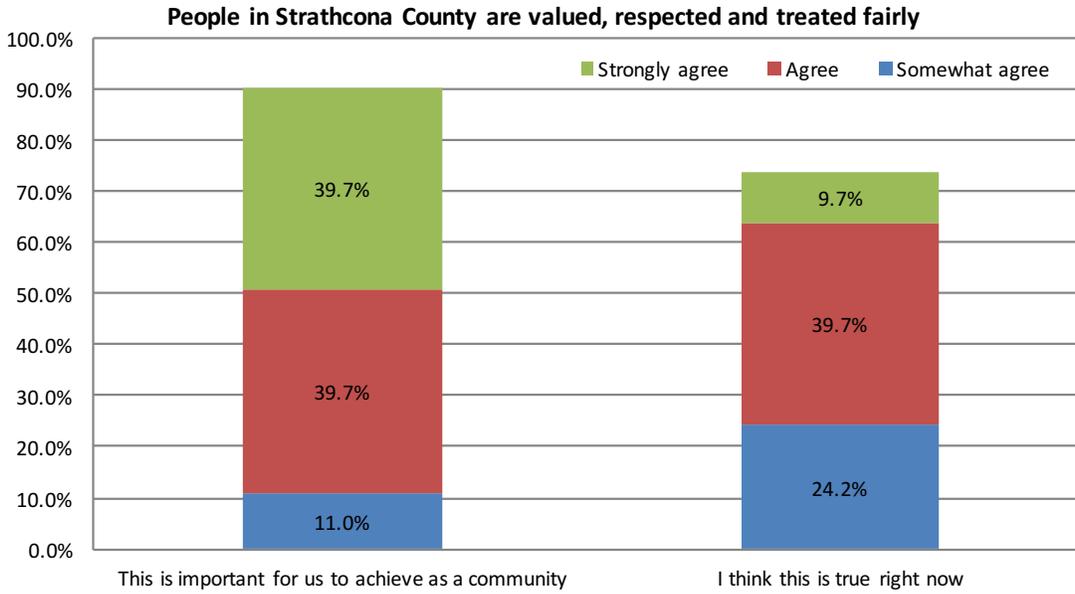
Goal 2: People in Strathcona County feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm.



This is important for us to achieve as a community = 88.4% somewhat agreed/agreed/strongly agreed.

I think this is true right now = 70.3% somewhat agreed/agreed/strongly agreed

Goal 3: People in Strathcona County are valued, respected and treated fairly.

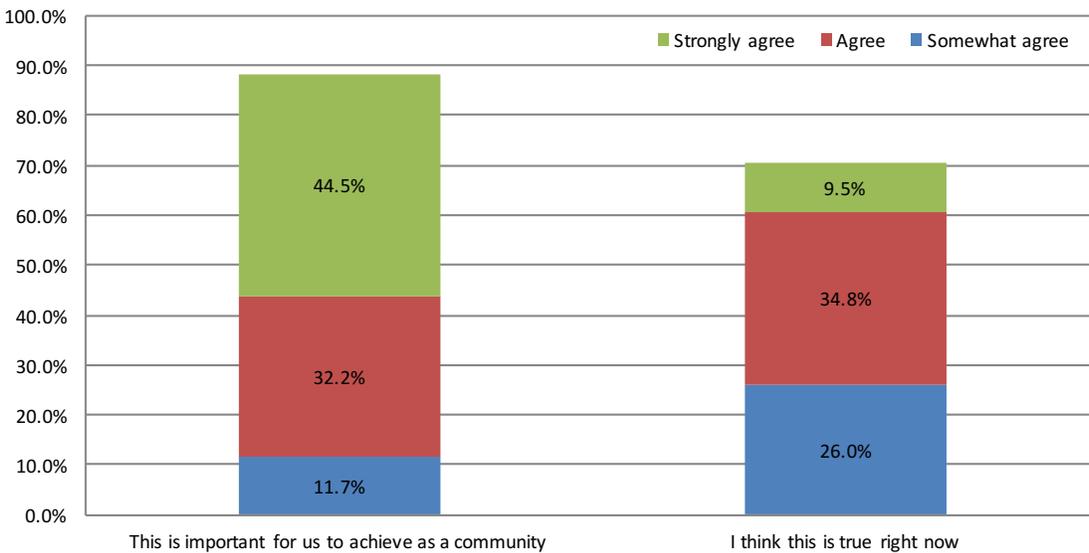


This is important for us to achieve as a community = 90.4% somewhat agreed/agreed/strongly agreed

I think this is true right now = 73.6% somewhat agreed/agreed/strongly agreed

Goal 4: People in Strathcona County are healthy (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness).

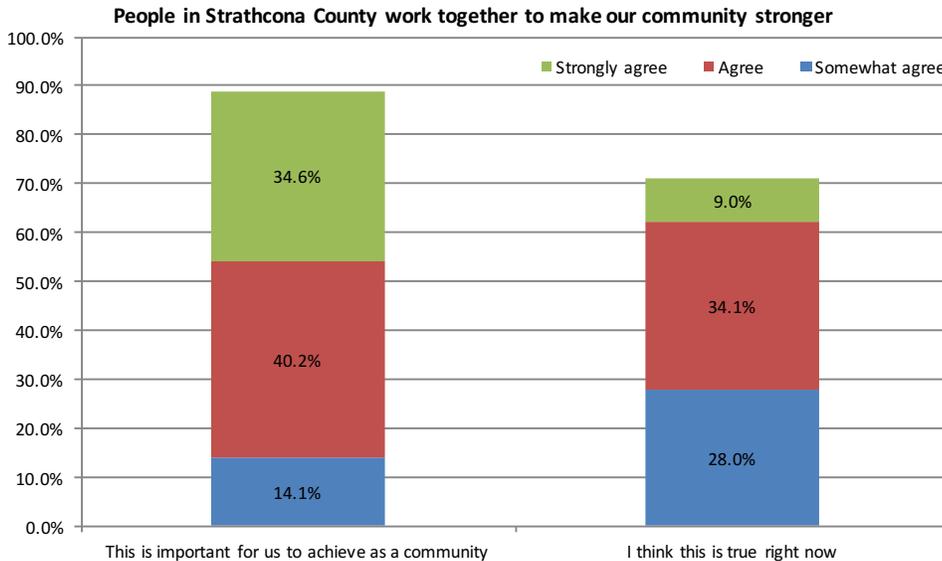
People in Strathcona County feel safe and are free from physical and emotional harm



This is important for us to achieve as a community = 87.4% somewhat agreed/agreed/strongly agreed

I think this is true right now = 67.9% somewhat agreed/agreed/strongly agreed

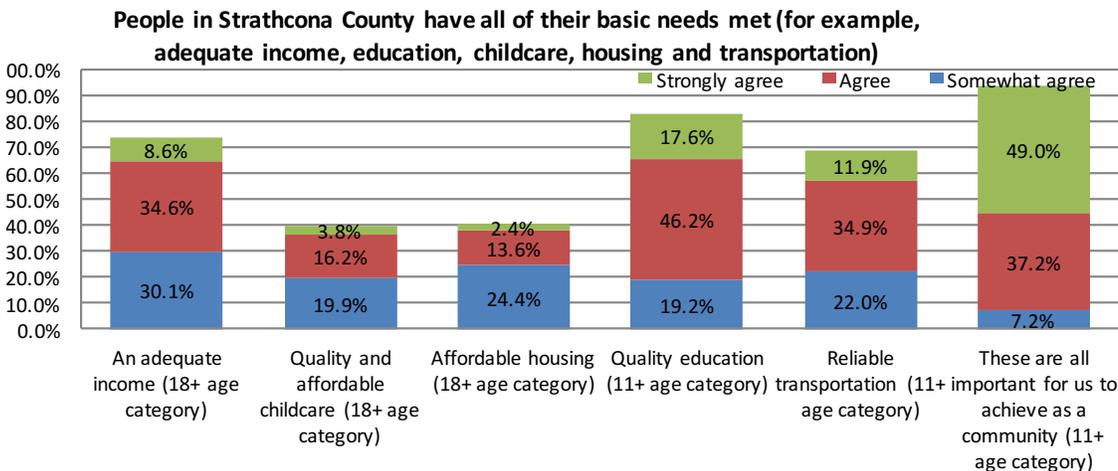
Goal 5: People in Strathcona County work together to make our community stronger



This is important for us to achieve as a community = 88.9% somewhat agreed/agreed/strongly agreed

I think this is true right now = 71.1% somewhat agreed/agreed/strongly agreed

Goal 6: People in Strathcona County have all their basic needs met (for example, adequate income, education, childcare, housing and transportation).³⁵



When asked to prioritize the six goals, respondents overwhelmingly chose this goal as the first priority that our community should focus on first (41.4%). Respondents indicated a relatively favourable attitude towards our current achievement of quality education (83%), adequate income (73.3%) and reliable transportation (68.8%). Those who were surveyed also noted a significant need for improvement in the areas of affordable housing (40.4%) and quality and affordable childcare (39.9%).

³⁵ Data for this question was drawn from individuals 18+ for the categories of income, affordable childcare and affordable housing since this age group has the best understanding to accurately respond to this question. For the categories of education and transportation the data is reported on all survey respondents.

APPENDIX #7

QUESTION: HOW CAN WE IMPROVE ON ANY OF THE GOALS MENTIONED?

Over half (4,046) of respondents provided a written response to this question and hundreds more provided their input at community conversations. As all the comments for this question were analyzed the responses were categorized by themes. The following list is the most frequently talked about themes and number of respondents who mentioned each particular theme.

Theme	# of responses
Affordability (housing, childcare, transportation, recreation, income)	918
The need to work together for common goals	398
Feeling of safety	235
Fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance	218
Improvement to the transit system (including routes/frequency)	184
More community events-neighbourhood and County wide	183
Increase in mental health awareness and in services available	115
Better access to services & programs	101
More recreation facilities	76
Number of health services available (e.g. hospitals, doctors, clinics)	76
Communicate information more effectively	75
Need to have the public's opinion more often	64
Increase in mental health services and access	61
Need for education and awareness building	58
Communicate all the resources that are available	57
Lower taxes	56
Youth programs/activities/services	44

Theme	# of responses
Inclusion of minorities	43
Seniors programs and services	41
Childcare spaces and facilities available	35
Bullying as a community issue	34
Need more funding for community organizations & services	34
Importance of volunteering	34
General traffic concerns	33
Community safety	33
Number of spaces available for affordable housing	32
More reliable education	31
Need more jobs in the County	31
General health and wellness concerns	30
Keep our environment clean/environmentally friendly	29
Lack of recreation programming availability	28
Affordable health programming	26
Unemployment	24
Advocating for alternate forms of transportation	23
Food security	20

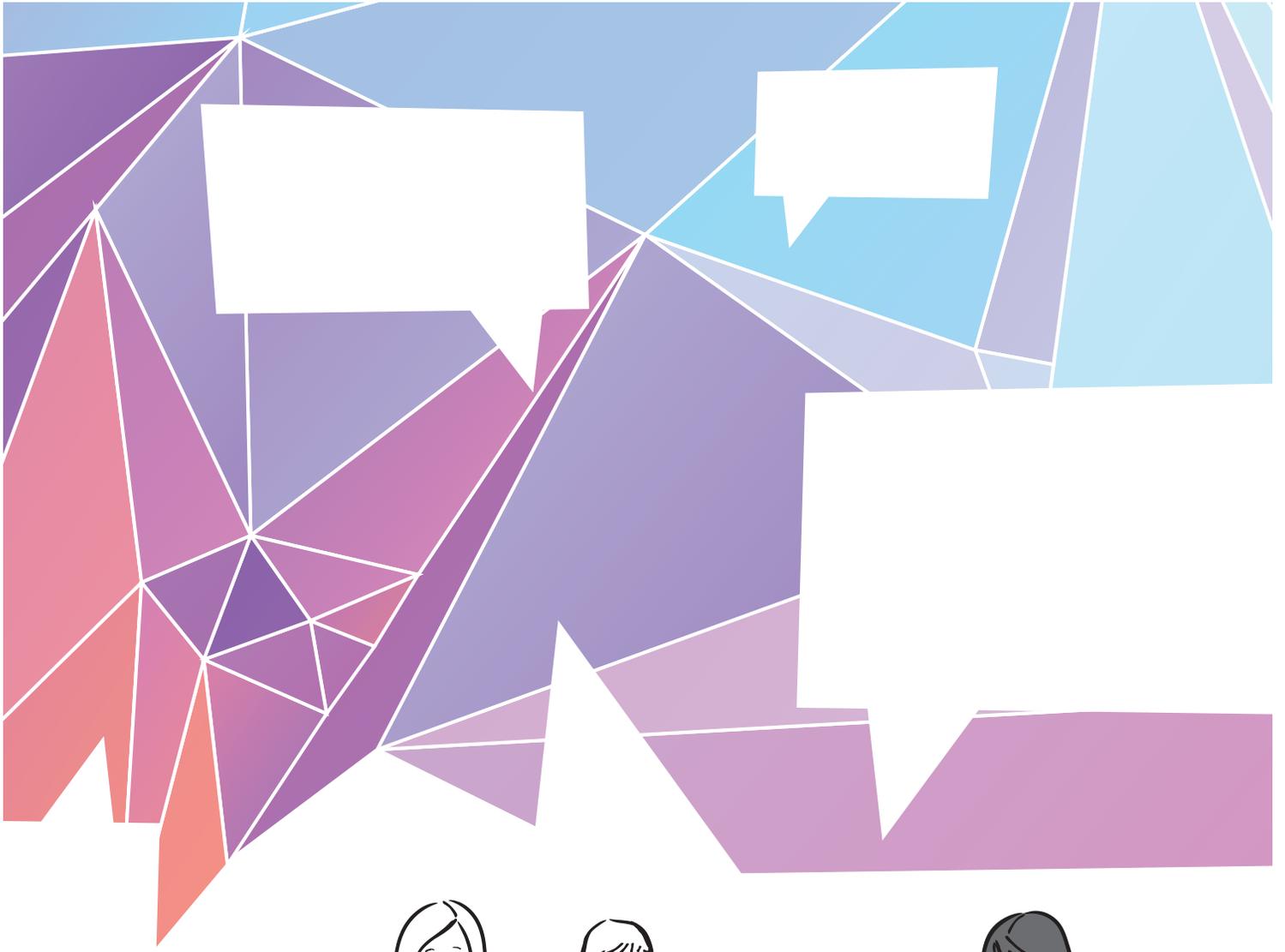
For reporting purposes this list includes all the themes that had at least 20 different comments.

APPENDIX #8

QUESTION: WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP BUILD A STRONGER COMMUNITY?

Over half of respondents provided a written response to this question and hundreds more provided their input at community conversations. As all the comments for this question were analyzed the responses were categorized by themes. The following list is the most frequently talked about themes and number of respondents who mentioned each particular theme.

Theme	# of responses
Volunteerism	819
Community Involvement	559
Help one another (empathy)	568
Respect others and accept their differences (inclusion, diversity, equity)	432
Work with each other to reach common goals (collaboration)	295
Community awareness	261
Neighbourliness	233
Important issues are voiced	211
Attend community events	204
Be a good citizen/ caring member of the community	173
Donate	72
Host community events	49



**COMMUNITY
TALK**

