

SCOOP

Community Connectedness, Municipal Election and Communication Methods

December 2021



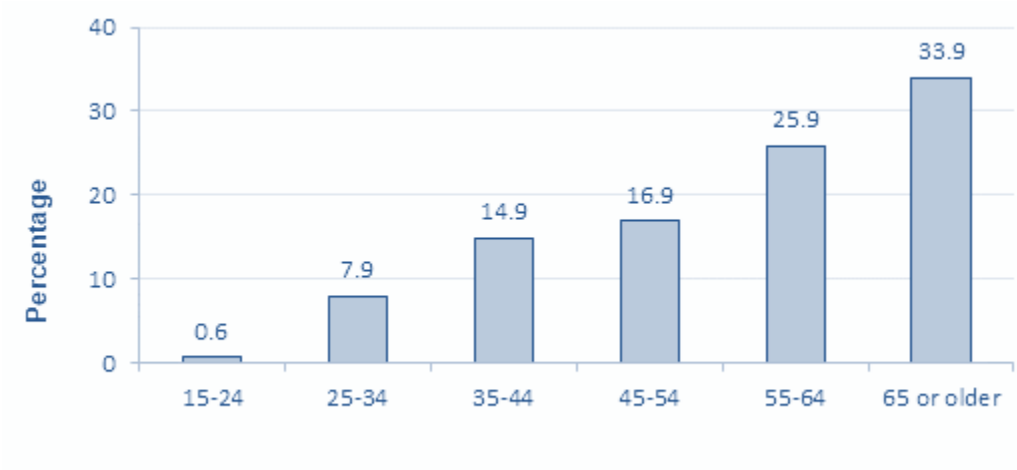
In December 2021, Strathcona County conducted a regular online survey as part of its Strathcona County Online Opinion Panel (SCOOP) initiative. This project consisted of different survey topics with a number of questions asked within each topic area. This survey was exclusive to residents who signed up to be part of SCOOP.

Survey Highlights

The December mixed-topic survey consisted of questions on community connectedness, the municipal election and communication methods. There were 551 responses to the mixed-topic survey.

WHO RESPONDED?

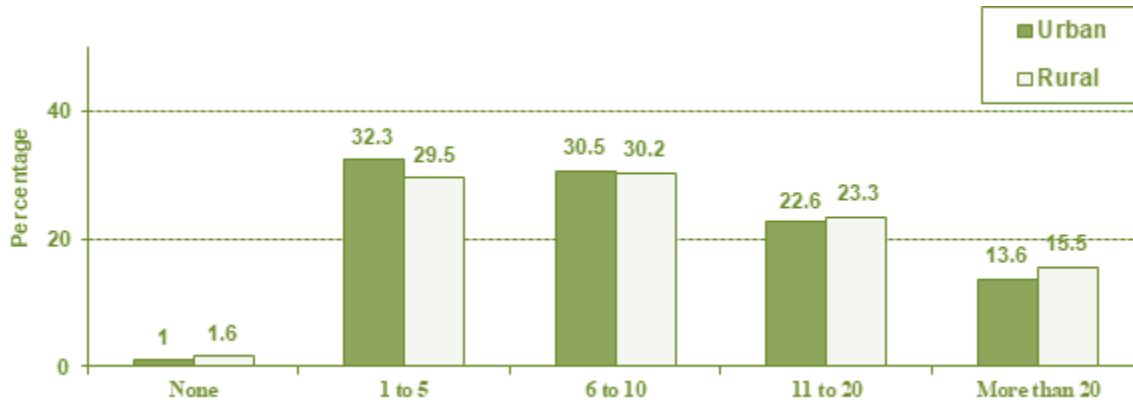
- 73.8% of the participants lived in Sherwood Park, 24.5% came from rural parts of Strathcona County, and the remaining 1.8% worked in Strathcona County but did not live there.
- Overall, of those who declared their gender, 56.9% of the participants were female while 43.1% were male.
- The age group breakdown of the survey respondents is shown below.



Community Connectedness

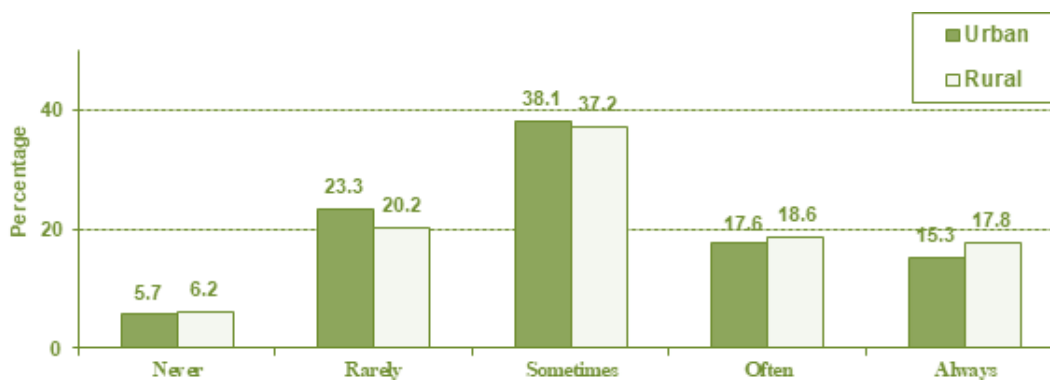
All of the respondents were asked to indicate how many adults they know by name in their neighbourhood. There is very little difference seen between those living in Sherwood Park and those living in the rural parts of the County with respect to the numbers of neighbours known. The percentage breakdown is shown below.

FIGURE 1
Number of adults known by name within one's neighborhood
Urban and rural comparisons



It can be seen below that there was very little difference between urban and rural residents with respect to perceptions for being able to count on their neighbours for help. On a proportionate basis, a slightly higher percentage of rural residents indicated that they could always count on their neighbours for help compared to urban residents.

FIGURE 2
Extent that one can count on neighbors for help
Urban and rural comparisons



Municipal Election

Respondents were asked if they voted in the last election. Overall, 93.3% said that they did. Respondents were then asked which tools were helpful in getting them out to vote. The overall results are shown in the table below. The “where to vote” card was considered the most valuable tool for residents, followed by the Sherwood Park News and the County website.

TABLE 1
Tools provided to help people vote

		Yes	No
	N	%	%
The “where to vote” card	491	80.2%	19.8%
Information in the Sherwood Park News	491	38.7%	61.3%
Strathcona County website	491	30.8%	69.2%
Road signage	491	23.6%	76.4%
Social media	491	16.3%	83.7%
The “where do I vote” app	491	4.5%	95.5%
Democracy in Action brochure	491	1.6%	98.4%
Other	491	7.7%	92.3%

In terms of “other”, many people indicated that they voted as it was their civic duty to do so. Others mentioned candidates coming to their door (or seeing candidate signs) as a way of reminding them about the election. Others mentioned word of mouth from neighbours or from members of their family prior to the upcoming election.

Those people who said that they didn't vote in the last election were asked to indicate the reasons why they did not do so. The overall results are shown in Table 2. No particular reason stood out, though there were some who found it inconvenient on the day of the election to vote (and may or may not have considered the advance polls).

TABLE 2
Reasons for not voting in the 2021 municipal election

		Yes	No
	N	%	%
No convenient time to vote	37	16.2%	83.8%
Municipal elections are not important to me	37	10.8%	89.2%
I didn't support any of the candidates	37	10.8%	89.2%
No convenient location to vote	37	8.1%	91.9%
Didn't know there was an election	37	0.0%	100.0%
Other	37	51.4%	48.6%

In terms of "other", many people indicated that they were away on the day of the election, or they were sick and couldn't go and vote. A few cited COVID-19 reasons, while one person was ineligible to vote.

Communication Methods

Respondents were asked to rank the different ways that the County provides information to its residents. Table 1 presents the ratings for each type of media source, based on how each source was ranked by respondents from one to eight. As such, every source would be a “first choice” for somebody. Percentages for each type of information source add up to 100% by row.

TABLE 1
Ranking of how Strathcona County provides information

	Ranking Choices							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Strathcona County website	29.0%	19.8%	14.1%	13.3%	9.1%	9.7%	4.0%	1.0%
Social media	20.3%	15.9%	11.2%	7.8%	10.1%	5.3%	9.7%	19.7%
County ads in the Sherwood Park News	17.3%	19.3%	16.7%	11.6%	13.2%	10.0%	6.9%	5.1%
Sherwood Park News editorial	16.5%	17.9%	12.2%	14.7%	12.6%	9.8%	11.0%	5.3%
Digital signs (in County facilities)	11.6%	11.0%	18.8%	15.0%	15.0%	11.8%	9.7%	7.2%
Utility bill inserts	7.4%	12.2%	13.9%	13.3%	9.5%	11.4%	14.6%	17.7%
Brochures or marketing materials	4.8%	9.1%	11.7%	18.4%	16.8%	21.4%	12.3%	5.6%
Virtual open houses/public meetings	0.4%	1.3%	3.9%	6.3%	10.8%	16.3%	28.0%	33.0%

For example, 29.0% of respondents picked the Strathcona County website as their first choice, while 1.0% picked it as their eighth (or last choice). A strong percentage also picked social media as their first choice, but it wasn’t as strong as the percentage who selected the County website as their number one pick. County ads in the Sherwood Park News was the second choice by 19.3% of the respondents, while editorials pertaining to County activities was the second choice by 17.9% of respondents.

Brochures or marketing materials was the sixth choice of respondents, while virtual open houses/public meetings tended to be picked by the majority of respondents as their seventh or eighth choice.

Compared to 2020’s study, social media (which was first overall last year) is now second overall in 2021 and the Strathcona County website is again the first choice overall (last year it was number 2). Although respondents have different preferences as to where they will turn for information, it can be gleaned from Table 1 that the most popular sources were as follows:

Social media was an option that was popular among residents as a first (20.3%) or second choice (15.9%). There was also a sizable percentage (16.1%) who chose it as their last choice (19.7%).

The *Strathcona County website* was an option that was popular among residents as a first (29.0%), second (19.8%), or third choice (14.1%).

Editorial stories from the Sherwood Park News were the first, second or fourth choice for the majority of respondents, while *The Sherwood Park News (County advertisements)* was identified as a second choice.

Digital signs at County facilities were the definitive third choice that rose from the various sources of information.

Brochures were a possible fourth, fifth or sixth choice among residents. This has been the case for some years now.

Virtual open houses/public meetings were something that most people would turn to after the other options had been exhausted, and as such were seen as a seventh or eighth choice. This pattern has also been seen for a few years now.

What's Next?

The SCOOP Mixed Topic Surveys usually run monthly and cover a variety of topics. Our next Mixed Topic Survey results will feature topics covered in our January 2022 release.