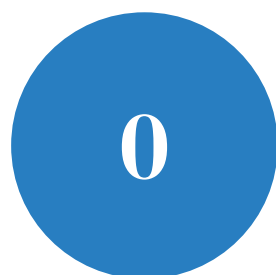
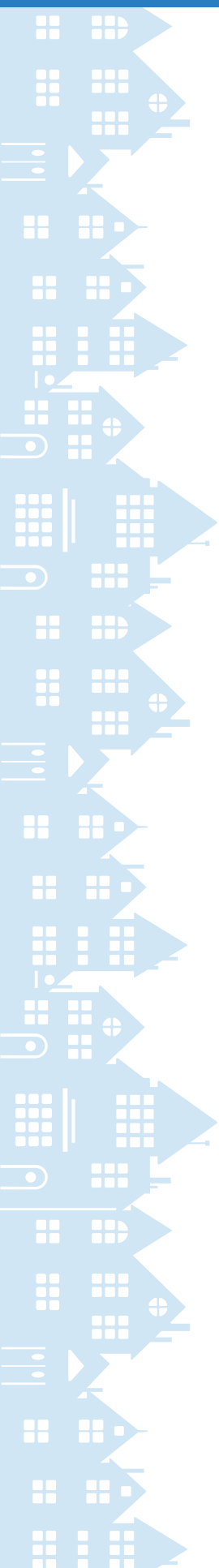


The Community Wellbeing Survey:

A community-informed approach to characterizing community wellbeing in Ontario

2021–2022





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Ethics declaration

The University of Toronto’s Human Research Ethics Board (REB) approved the research protocol (Protocol Reference #41048 & #41692).

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In academic and political settings, there has been a growing recognition that the state of one's community plays an important role in promoting wellbeing at both individual and societal levels. What is termed "community wellbeing" refers to a framework of environmental, social, economic, political, cultural, and spiritual domains that shape a community's goals and priorities. Therefore, community wellbeing research aims to understand these domains and evaluate the extent to which they advance or hinder a community's capacity to fulfil the needs of its residents.

In Fall 2021, The Community Wellbeing Survey was administered in four Northern and Southern Ontario communities: Greater Sudbury, Peel Region, Thunder Bay, and Toronto. The goal of the survey was to better understand how residents in Ontario defined the wellbeing of their communities. By asking questions across a wide range of topics, from social connection to local leadership, we aimed to gain a fulsome understanding of what matters to Ontario communities. We were also interested in seeing how perspectives differed across Ontario's diverse populations.

We designed survey measures to identify key services, amenities, and values that are significant to Ontario communities. Our measures focused on the following topics: (1) social connection and belonging, (2) public goods and accessible amenities, (3) community decision-making and leadership, and (4) flourishing as a privilege. Descriptive analyses and sociodemographic stratifications of survey responses were performed across participants (N=398).

Toronto was our most sampled region (37.7%), followed by Thunder Bay (23.9%), Greater Sudbury (17.3%), and Peel Region (11.3%). The vast majority of respondents had lived in their local community for 5 or more years (80.4%). As the majority of respondents identified as white and women (>70%), stratifications across subgroups of race and gender were limited by sample size.

Across all survey respondents, the most important reported aspects of community wellbeing were (1) cost of living (63.3%), (2) safety (55.5%), and (3) housing (51.8%). The least satisfactory public amenities were (1) housing (40.8%), older adult services (37.1%), and public transportation (31.9%). The plurality described their sense of belonging to their local community as "somewhat strong" (46.5%), with another 17.1% reporting a "very strong" sense of community belonging.



Discrimination was experienced by the majority of respondents (54.7%) and was felt across a wide array of personal, physical, and social identities. While most participants could afford their basic needs, fewer had sufficient income to afford their desired lifestyle or unexpected expenses. Indeed, the ability to flourish was seen as a privilege for participants – only for those with the time and material capacity to participate in their community. This resulted in feelings of exclusion for those without economic or material resources.

Key concerns in Ontario communities included the quality and availability of housing, older adult services, and public transportation. Respondents expressed overwhelming satisfaction with environmental indicators related to natural surroundings, such as greenspace, water, and air quality, compared to concerns about traffic and walkability. Recommendations for public amenities included reducing costs, increasing places of gathering and participation, improving housing, enhancing advertising for public services, expanding public transit, and ensuring culturally-accessible services.

Many participants expressed dissatisfaction and a lack of trust toward their local government's decision-making processes. However, this dissatisfaction did not diminish community engagement. Participants expressed an interest and desire to participate in local planning efforts, presenting an opportunity for collaboration between decision-makers and community members.

Direct consultation with community residents permitted multiple stakeholders' and subpopulations' needs to be understood, demonstrating a path for subsequent opportunities to improve their communities. As local governments gain interest in understanding the wellbeing of their communities, community wellbeing efforts should emphasize relationships and social/cultural connections, recognizing their essential role in building communities that support better lives.

What is Community Wellbeing?

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition that community-related aspects of daily life play an important role in promoting wellbeing and contribute considerably to community safety and functioning (Hilger-Kolb et al., 2019). In brief, **community wellbeing** is a construct that attempts to capture the many, complex values that emerge from collective life and that contribute to the wellbeing of a community, where "community" is broadly defined as any socially and/or geographically connected group of people (e.g., recreational group, neighbourhood, or municipality) (Phillips & Wong, 2017; Sung & Phillips, 2016). As communities encompass physical, social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental settings, conceptualizations of community wellbeing reflect both objective (i.e., levels of community resources) and subjective (e.g., satisfaction with amenities, good relationships) domains of those settings (Christakopoulou et al., 2001; Lee & Kim, 2015; VanderWeele, 2019).

It is therefore a goal of community wellbeing research to understand those factors that progress or hinder a community's capacity to fulfill the needs and desires of its residents (Sung & Phillips, 2016). As such, researchers have underscored the importance of considering a wide range of resident perspectives to develop bottom-up definitions (Lee & Kim, 2015; VanderWeele, 2019).

Given the shared roles that governments, municipalities, and residents play in improving the state of communities, local government's interest in compiling community wellbeing indicators has increased. Fostering community wellbeing and diverse social relationships is a promising target for local governments seeking to alleviate social isolation as it contributes to improved community belonging and engagement (Collins et al., 2022; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Indeed, improving community wellbeing and belonging can serve as an upstream and preventative measure for addressing health and social outcomes, particularly when concerning mental health (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015; Holt-Lunstad, 2022).









Measuring Community Wellbeing

Indicator frameworks, in the context of community wellbeing, refer to quantifiable or observable measures that can provide either an objective or subjective assessment of various aspects of a community. These measures are often based on data collected through systematic methods such as surveys or assessments of routinely collected administrative data. These data can then be quantified through direct observation, mapping, or by descriptive and inferential statistics.

Overall, indicator frameworks provide a quantifiable and empirical basis for understanding and evaluating different domains of community wellbeing, allowing for more accurate assessments and comparisons across communities. For example, when assessing the economic aspect of community wellbeing, measures may include average income levels, employment rates, poverty rates, or the availability of economic opportunities. They can also be used to assess other domains of community wellbeing, such as social, political, cultural, and environmental aspects. For example, social measures may include indicators like community belonging, educational attainment levels, or social capital measurements. Political measures might involve evaluating citizen participation rates, governance effectiveness, or access to public services. Environmental measures may involve assessing air and water quality, conservation efforts, or the presence of environmental hazards.

Example indicators, separated by domains, can be seen below.

Domains	Indicator examples
 Social	Community belonging, trust in neighbours, neighbourhood safety, etc.
 Political	Voting, democratic engagement, citizen satisfaction, etc.
 Environmental	Greenspace, transportation, built environment of the community, etc.
 Economic	Economic security, housing affordability, household income, etc.
 Cultural	Cultural facilities, places of worship, shared identity, etc.
 Health	Self-rated physical or mental health, access to healthcare services, etc.

Community Wellbeing and Public Policy



Researchers have also tried to understand the potential of community wellbeing to inform local policy and decision-making (Cox et al., 2010). For instance, how could the outcomes produced by community indicators be used to measure progress toward shared goals and outcomes? While opinions diverge, researchers have described several advantages to using community wellbeing indicators as tools for policy.

Here are some of their perspectives:

01

Sustainability and Equity

As community wellbeing assesses collectively experienced outcomes, it can help inform local planning that is **sustainable** (i.e., does not privilege the present over the future) and **equitable** (i.e., does not privilege one group over another) (Höltge et al., 2022; Kim & Lee, 2014)

02

Community Engagement

Community wellbeing indicators are often developed using inductive approaches, where domains are generated from the perspective of community residents or organizations actively engaged in their community. Such methods can:

1. **Enable** participatory engagement in decision-making,
2. **Empower** residents to shape their communities, and
3. Help **improve transparency** in policy decisions (Cox et al., 2010; Sirgy et al., 2010)

03

Local Evidence

As community wellbeing centers on the **community**, it can help produce policy that is based on local evidence. Adaptable measures can ensure that recommendations are specific to the community in question (Cox et al., 2010; Sung & Phillips, 2016)

Community wellbeing in Canada



In Canada, initiatives like British Columbia's Healthy Community Strategy have begun to incorporate community wellbeing principles to inform equitable and sustainable policy in the province (BC Healthy Communities, 2018). In Ontario, provincial legislation has mandated all municipalities to develop evidence-informed Community Safety and Wellbeing Plans (CSWPs) (Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General, 2021).

Challenges and Considerations

Any system for measuring community wellbeing is susceptible to bias as it inherently reflects the understanding of "what a community is" held by the specific group being studied (Kim et al., 2015). Some argue that this bias can be advantageous for community wellbeing. Unlike economic measures such as income or GDP, variations in the specific domains of community wellbeing among different communities can result in outcomes that are adaptable to those particular communities (VanderWeele, 2019). For example, while one community may prioritize improvements in leadership and transparency, another may prioritize increased opportunities for social connection and engagement.

However, individual and collective needs often exist in a state of tension. Therefore, any system that favors the perspectives of certain individuals may not adequately represent the needs of the entire community (Prilleltensky, 2008; Sirgy, 2018). Indeed, researchers emphasize that community wellbeing indicators must fundamentally serve as democratic tools that facilitate informed discussions among citizens and communities about shared goals and priorities (Cox et al., 2010). It is important to recognize that the opportunity to contribute one's perspective and participate in such planning efforts is a position of privilege, influenced by factors such as racism, gender-based exclusion, social class, or other forms of marginalization (Krieger et al., 1993). Therefore, without a systematic approach to capturing the diversity of perspectives from various community stakeholders, these efforts risk being unresponsive to the interests and needs of all subcommunities.

Given this, there are crucial considerations to be made when developing measures of community wellbeing:

1. The sample population should be representative of the communities under study. Indicators that identify potential inequities (such as demographic stratifications) and overt discrimination should be included.
2. When selecting domains or constructing measurement frameworks, both participatory and conceptual approaches should be employed:
 - **Participatory Approaches:** Consult community residents, organizations, and experts to identify the essential domains that are specific to each community.
 - **Conceptual Approaches:** Design frameworks and indicators based on existing validated literature.

By incorporating these considerations, community wellbeing measures can be more inclusive, comprehensive, and better aligned with the diverse needs of communities.

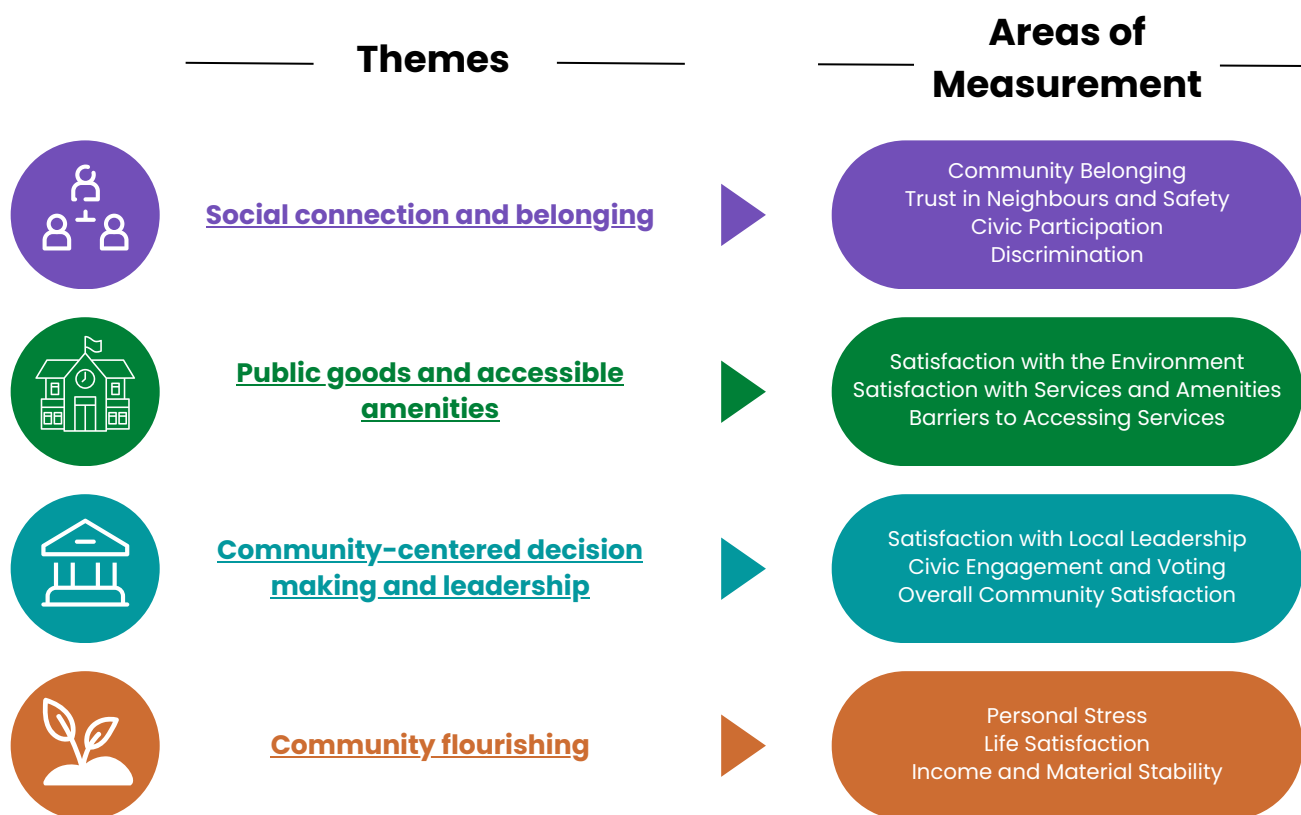
Relational approaches in community wellbeing



A recent contribution to community wellbeing as a theory is the adoption of a relational approach, which places at its center the relationships among individuals and groups within the community – antecedent to the singular individual (Atkinson et al., 2020; Choi et al., 2020; White, 2017). This occurs through the recognition that singular and group needs are often in tension, thereby questioning how relationships and existing structures shape community needs and the opportunity to fulfill those needs (Atkinson et al., 2020; Prilleltensky, 2008; Trickett et al., 2011). By focusing on relationships among community members, community wellbeing can begin to assess the interplay of community actors and their diverse priorities.

Research Aims

This research aims to explore variations in how residents conceptualize and prioritize varying domains of community wellbeing. In particular we are interested in how these perspectives differ across Ontario's geographical regions, considering variations in population density, diversity, public infrastructure, and development. Through the use of cross-sectional surveys administered across four Ontario cities (Greater Sudbury, the Region of Peel, Thunder Bay, and Toronto), The Community Wellbeing Survey explored those social, political, cultural, and environmental aspects that contribute to a community's capacity to fulfil the needs of its residents. **Separated into four themes, this report will investigate community residents' perspectives towards:**



The Community Wellbeing Survey aimed to capture perspectives on community wellbeing by focusing on key areas of measurement identified in a rapid literature review. The result of this review were a series of indicators encompassing community belonging, discriminatory practices, satisfaction with services and amenities, civic engagement, social/cultural access, and many more.

To assess these components, close-ended questionnaire items were adapted from validated surveys from various sources (Assari, 2017; Carpiano & Hystad, 2011; Christakopoulou et al., 2001; Government of Canada, 2013, 2022; Helliwell & Wang, 2010; Knack & Keefer, 1997; Morrone et al., 2009; Ryzin, 2004; Schellenberg et al., 2018; Sirgy et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 2016; Toronto, 2021; Villalonga-Olives et al., 2016). Additionally, specific items related to community wellbeing were developed using validated questionnaires and refined through consultation with community stakeholders and representatives (Christakopoulou et al., 2001; Lee & Kim, 2016; VanderWeele, 2019; Wilkinson, 2007). **A full list of indicators and questionnaire items can be found in Appendix 1.**

Recruitment and Partner Engagement

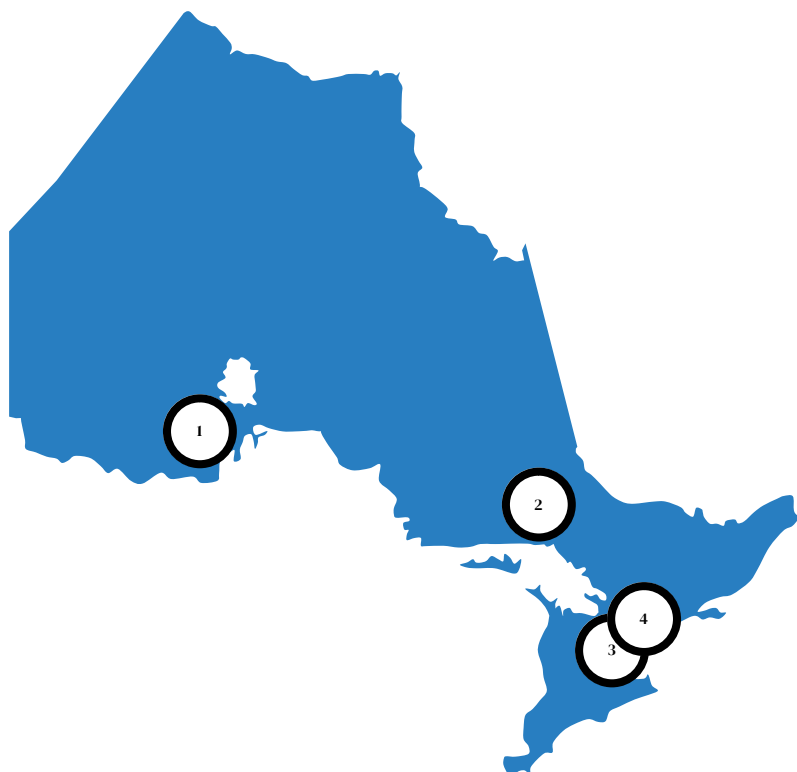
Administered from September 21st to October 31st, 2021, The Community Wellbeing Survey was a cross-sectional, online survey distributed to community residents who were 18 years of age or older, English-speaking, and currently residing in one of four focal regions in Ontario:

1. **The City of Thunder Bay**
2. **The City of Greater Sudbury**
3. **The Regional Municipality of Peel**
4. **The City of Toronto**

These four regions were chosen to assess geographical variation in perceptions of community wellbeing and how community prioritizations differed across Northern and Southern contexts in Ontario. Respondents outside of said regions were welcome to participate and were encouraged to indicate their census region in an open textbox. However, recruitment materials and advertisements were targeted specifically to the four regions mentioned.

Recruitment and outreach were conducted through community partnerships, sharing study materials via social media, email listservs, and word-of-mouth/snowball sampling. In addition, regionally specific advertising space was purchased on popular social media platforms (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram). All recruitment and survey materials were administered virtually to minimize the impact of COVID-19 on study participation.

Informed consent was required prior to survey initiation, notifying the participant on how the data would be de-identified. All study participants were offered to participate in a prize draw for one of four gift cards valued at CA\$25, which served as an incentive and remuneration for survey participation.



Partner Engagement

To facilitate recruitment, we engaged community partners with experience supporting community wellbeing initiatives in their respective regions, including Community Safety & Wellbeing committees.

In addition to helping with recruitment, they provided feedback to ensure that the study responded to any practical and contextual challenges. Overall, they served in an advisory role, having no direct contact with participants, nor access to any data.



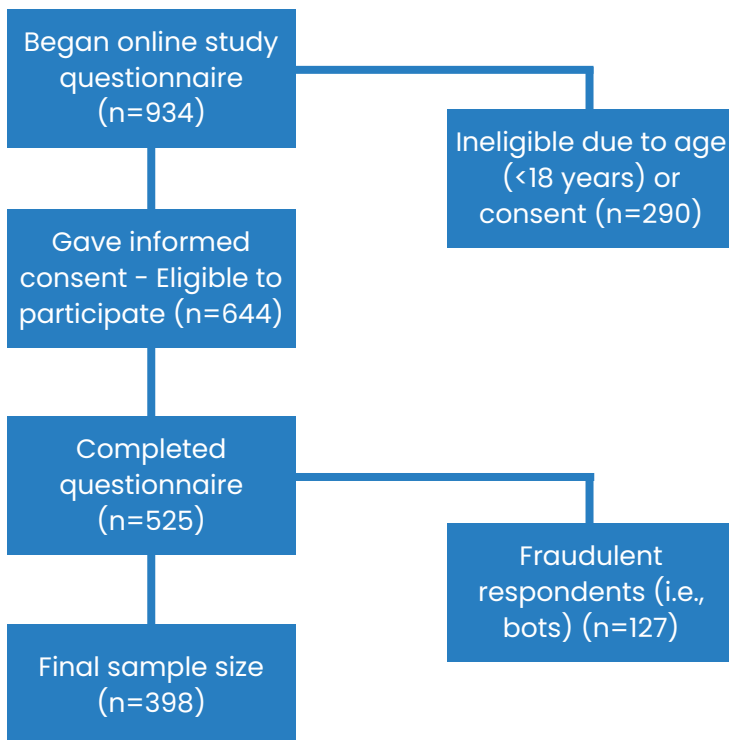
Enrolment and Analyses

The Community Wellbeing Survey was open for 63 days, from September 13th to November 15th, 2021.

The survey had a total of 934 respondents, of which 290 were ineligible due to age (being <18 years old) or not providing informed consent. Within-survey drop off was high, with 119 out of 644 (18.5%) individuals who gave informed consent not completing all survey items. Of those who began the survey, 525 individuals completed all survey items, as well as reported their sociodemographic information (e.g., age, ethnicity, education attainment, etc.). However, secondary analyses discovered 127 fraudulent responses within those that completed the full survey (fraudulent referring to automated responses from “bot” accounts).

Descriptive analyses and sociodemographic stratifications across survey responses were restricted to those genuine participants who had completed all survey items (N=398).

Flow diagram of study enrolment and questionnaire completion



Analyses were limited to descriptive representations of survey statistics

Summaries of survey responses and sociodemographic measures included proportions, means, and standard deviations (where relevant). Survey responses were stratified across sociodemographic measures to observe differences and divergences across subpopulations. These were further stratified across regions to investigate geographic variation, with participants residing outside our four focal regions being classified as “other”.

When necessary, cell sizes with less than five participants were collapsed with similar categories to protect the privacy and anonymity of survey respondents. As the aggregation of response categories limits the interpretability of group differences, all collapsed categories were noted with their relevant findings and figures. Participants were informed that personal characteristics would be disaggregated from their survey responses and kept on password-protected, encrypted computers to protect their privacy.

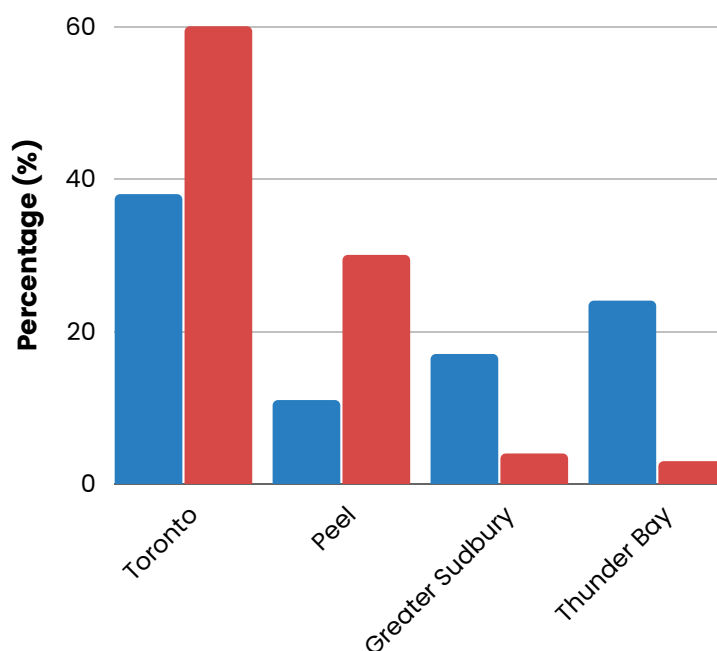


Survey Demographics

Toronto was the most prominently represented city among the four sampled focal regions, comprising 37.7% of the total sample population. This aligns with the population statistics from the 2021 Canadian census, as Toronto accounts for approximately 60% of the entire Ontario population. Thunder Bay (23.9%) and Greater Sudbury (17.3%) were also well-represented, exceeding their relative proportions in the Ontario population (2.8% and 3.8% respectively). However, despite being the second-largest region in Ontario in terms of population (30.1%), only 11.3% of survey participants were from Peel Region.

The vast majority of respondents stated that they lived in their local community for 5 or more years (80.4%), with 5.3% having lived in their community for 3-4 years, 7.8% for 1-2 years, and 6.3% for less than a single year.

Sampling distribution of survey respondents across focal regions (blue), as compared to 2021 Canadian census statistics (red)



Age

18-40 years: 40.7%
41-60 years: 34.6%
61-70 years: 17.6%
71+ years: 7.0%



Education

Less than high school: 1.5%
High school: 10.3%
Post-secondary: 56.8%
Graduate school: 29.1%



Gender

Women: 70.4%
Men: 21.4%
Gender-Expansive or Two-Spirit: 5.5%



Race & Ethnicity

White: 74.4%
East & Southeast Asian: 9.0%
South Asian: 4.8%
Indigenous: 4.3%
Black: 3.3%
Latino/Latina/Latinx: 1.5%
West Asian: 1.5%

Limitations of the sample population:

- Toronto residency was overrepresented in comparison to other communities
- Youth perspective was missing from this sample as respondents under the age of 18 were not eligible
- The sample was majority white (>70%), meaning that stratifications across subgroups of race and ethnicity were limited by sample size. This is a significant limitation as a key aim of this research was to identify intracommunity differences in what composed community wellbeing and how marginalization and racism may have impacted it
- Men were also underrepresented in comparison to their representative population
- As we did not explicitly ask for household income, education was used as a proxy for socioeconomic status

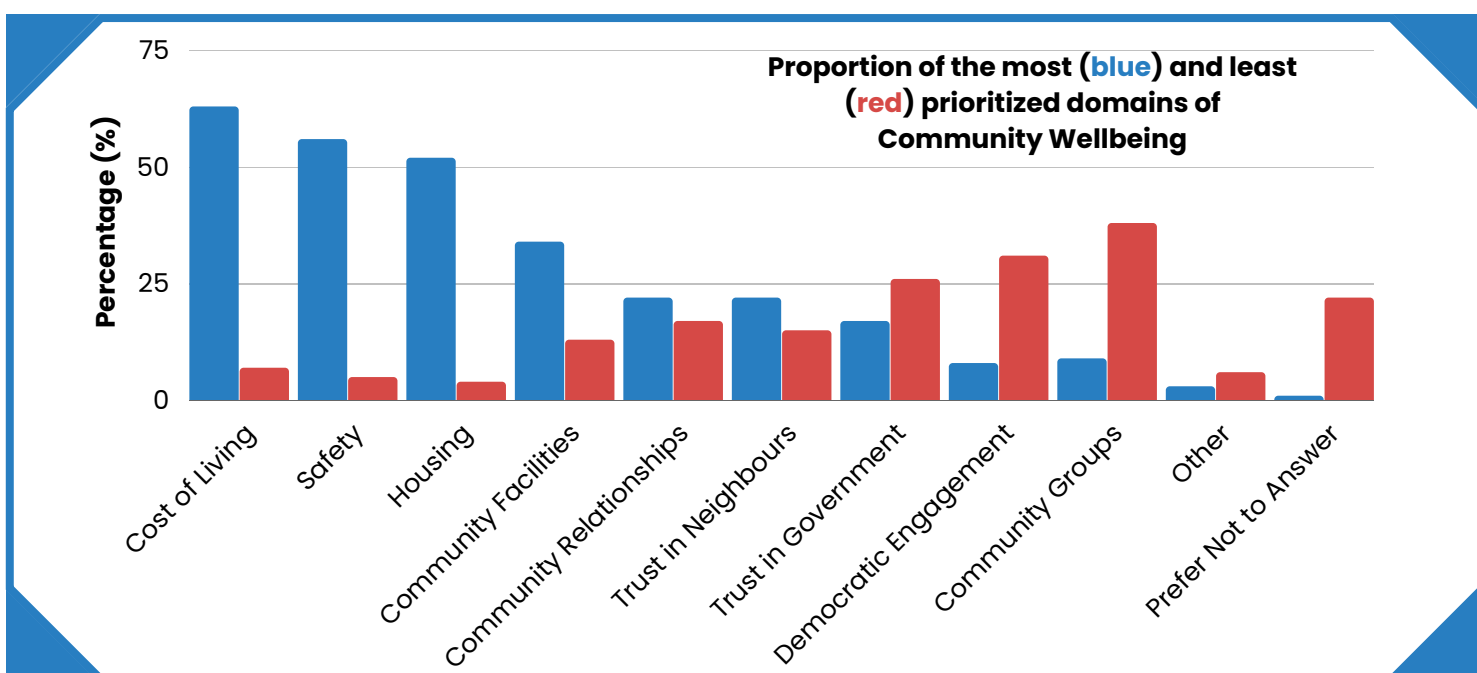
Study Overview

Respondents were asked to rank their most and least prioritized components of community wellbeing, as provided in a list of nine response options (as well as "other" and "prefer not to answer"). Respondents could select up to three that they believed were the most and least important to the wellbeing of their community. Each of the three responses was pooled across all participants and ranked based on the number of selections.

Among all survey respondents, the aspects of community wellbeing that were deemed most important were the (1) cost of living (63.3%), (2) safety (55.5%), and (3) housing (51.8%).

Notably, components relating to economic factors and affordability were rated highly, suggesting that financial stability was a concern for participants. Community and social engagement aspects followed as the fourth and fifth ranked components, including (4) community facilities, selected by 33.7%, and (5) community support and relationships, as well as trust in neighbors, both chosen by 21.6%.

On the other hand, **the components considered least important for community wellbeing were (1) participation in community groups (37.7%), (2) democratic engagement (30.9%), and (3) trust in government (26.4%).** When asked to list their bottom three community wellbeing components, respondents were significantly more likely to choose "prefer not to answer" compared to their top three components (21.9% versus 0.3%).



Part 1: Social Connection

A sense of community belonging is cultivated through shared spaces, routines, support, and identities



Key Takeaways

01

Discrimination was experienced by the majority of participants, across an array of personal, physical, and social identities. Respondents reported feeling discrimination in institutional settings (in healthcare, schools, etc.), suggesting a need to implement antidiscriminatory practices.

02

As community belonging was not equitably experienced across all groups, local planning ought to integrate initiatives that facilitate **social connection**, particularly for equity deserving and traditionally marginalized communities.

03

Our findings indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic had lasting impacts on community participation. Moving forward, community wellbeing efforts should emphasize rebuilding community relationships and social/cultural connections.



Community Belonging

Survey respondents were asked to evaluate how they viewed their socially bound communities (i.e., friendships, acquaintances, family, and transient interactions). Categorized into 4 sections, we asked respondents to consider the following:

1. Sense of belonging to one's local community
2. Trust in neighbours and the safety of their community
3. Antidiscrimination and discriminatory practices/norms
4. Community participation and engagement



Across all survey respondents, the plurality described their sense of belonging to their local community as "somewhat strong" (46.5%), with another 17.1% reporting a "very strong" sense of community belonging. Less than a third of respondents reported a "somewhat weak" (23.6%) or "very weak" (12.1%) sense of belonging.

These results can be further stratified across sociodemographic axes.

Age. When stratified by age, older participants (≥ 45 years old) were more likely to report a "very strong" (19.2%) and "somewhat strong" (50.5%) sense of community belonging when compared to younger respondents (14.7% and 42.1%, respectively).

Time lived in the community. Participants who had lived in their local community for 5 or more years were more than twice as likely to report a "very strong" sense of community belonging (19.1%), when compared to those who had lived in their community for less than 5 years (9.1%).

Ethnicity. Racialized respondents were more likely to report a "somewhat weak" (27.4%) or "very weak" (15.1%) sense of community belonging when compared to white participants (22.3% and 11.0%, respectively).

Gender. Men were nearly twice as likely to report a "very strong" sense of community belonging when compared to women (25.9% vs. 13.9%).

Thoughts on social connection



Familiarity

"I feel connected when interacting with people, families, dog walkers, nature. Those informal neighbourhood gatherings"

Recognition

"I feel very connected - I see people walking down the street that have been here as long as I have. I value those long-standing relationships"

Community support

"The amount of advocacy that happens in this city (Toronto) is phenomenal. There are a lot of people doing work to make people feel connected"



Trust in Neighbours and Safety



Borrowing from Helliwell and Yang's research on the connection between trust and wellbeing (2010), survey participants were asked to consider the following scenario to measure their level of trust in their neighbours:

In the city or area where you live, imagine that you lost your wallet or something holding your identification or address and it was found by someone else. How likely do you think your wallet would be returned to you if it were found by neighbours?

The proportion of survey respondents who expressed that it was "very likely" that their wallet be returned was 29.6%, with 36.7% stating that it was "somewhat likely". Another, 17.1% and 16.1% responded that it would be "somewhat unlikely" or "unlikely", respectively. **These findings can be further stratified by sociodemographic markers:**

Age. Respondents ≥45 years of age were much more likely to express trust in their neighbours, with 38.5% stating that it would be "very likely" that their wallet would be returned to them if found by a neighbour, compared to 20.0% of respondents <45 years of age.

Geography. Respondents from Greater Sudbury and Thunder Bay were more likely to state that it was "very likely" that their wallet would be returned by a neighbour (32.9%) when compared to Southern cities (25.6%). However, Southern respondents were more likely to express tempered trust, with 39.5% stating that it would be "somewhat likely", compared to 32.3% of Northern respondents.

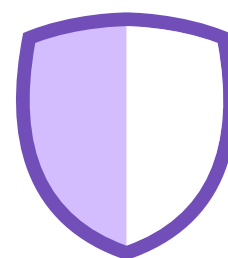
Time lived in the community. Those respondents who had lived in their community for 5 years or more were marginally more likely to report "very likely" (30.6%) and "somewhat likely" (36.9%) trust when compared to those who had lived in their community for less than 5 years (26.0% and 35.1%, respectively).

Safety

Participants were asked to reflect on the following statement:

I feel safe from personal attacks in my local community.

When evaluating how true they felt that statement was, 18.3% stated that it was "very true", 38.4% stated "mostly true", 25.6% stated "somewhat true", and 17.3% stated that it was "not at all true". Respondents from Northern Ontario cities were more than twice as likely to state that it was "not at all true" when compared to respondents from Southern Ontario cities (26.2% vs. 12.3%). Additionally, 29.4% of men stated that it was "very true", compared to only 15.4% of women.



"I feel safer in the neighbourhood where I work, where there is less visible public disturbances in services/facilities. In the neighbourhood where I live, there is more unpredictable behaviour from both residents and visitors. I would like to move, but cannot due to the challenging housing market."

Discrimination

Participants were asked *in the past two years, have you experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly by others in your local community*, for which they could then describe the form of discrimination from a list of options, further supplemented with an open text box for further clarification.

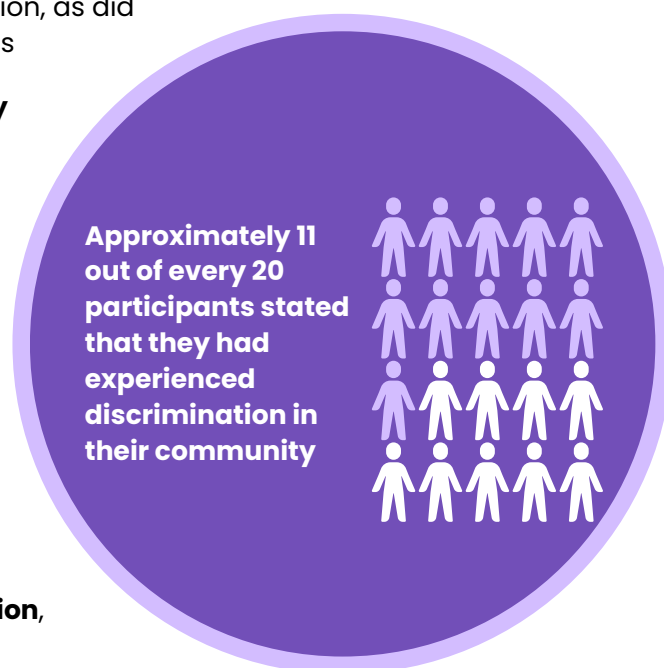
In total, discrimination, of any kind, was experienced by 54.7% of respondents. Less than half of respondents stated that they did not know (33.7%) or that they did not experience discrimination (11.6%).

- **62.7%** of racialized respondents experienced discrimination, as did **62.1%** of respondents with a high school education or less

The most common forms of discrimination experienced by participants were related to:

1. Age (12.6%)
2. Race (12.3%)
3. Sex (10.8%)
4. Ethnicity and culture (10.1%)
5. Discrimination towards disability (7.0%)
6. Sexual orientation (5.8%)
7. Gender identity (5.5%)
8. Religion (2.8%)
9. Language (2.3%)

Additional forms of discrimination identified by participants included **weight-related discrimination**, **class discrimination**, and **anti-homeless discrimination**.



In order to capture experiences of social isolation, participants were asked ***are there specific times or circumstances when you feel ISOLATED from your community?*** and ***what kind of experiences make you feel like you DON'T BELONG to your community?***

While not explicitly asked to identify experiences of discrimination, the questions prompted some respondents to recall times when they were excluded or treated differently on the basis of their personal, physical, or social identity.

"When I walk on the street people target me because of my race. They yell at me and call me names. Sometimes I don't feel safe or think that people may get physical"

"Nurses in my local community hospital were rude and lacked skill. I, and the person I took, felt looked down on because of our ethnicity and inability to speak English"

"I'm a queer man living in downtown Toronto, Canada's largest LGBT community. Despite this, most health care institutions have done insufficient work to systemically eradicate homophobia as it is expressed implicitly and explicitly in their systems"

"I have matted hair and a severely scarred body. I've never stolen anything in my life, but I get followed 50% of the time I go into the store"



Community Participation

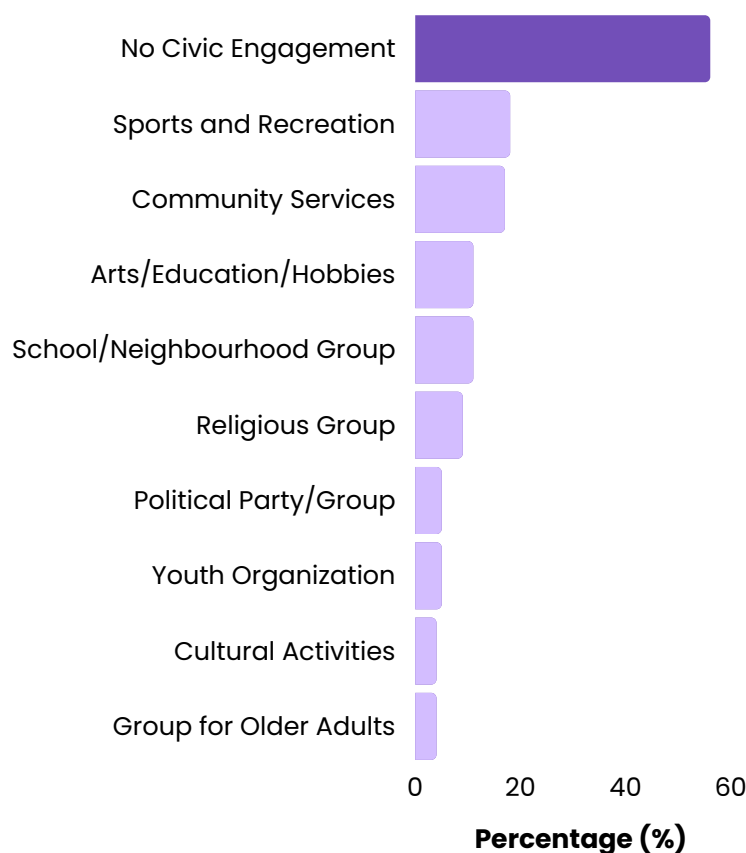
Overall, the majority of participants (55.8%) stated that they engaged in *no civic activities* from September 2019 to the day that they completed the survey (Fall 2021).

When stratified across sociodemographic markers, two differences emerged. First, men were more likely to engage in civic activities than women (57.6% vs. 40.0%). Second, those who had lived in their community for less than 5 years were less likely to participate in civic activities when compared to those who had lived in their local community 5 or more years (33.8% vs. 46.6%, respectively).

Across all study participants, the top four most frequented civic activities were:



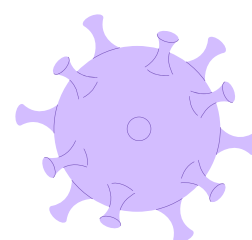
Participants were asked to identify which kinds of community activities they engaged in the two years previous to survey administration. This time closely aligned with the two-years from which COVID-19 protective measures (e.g., closures of facilities, capacity limits for participation, etc.) were initiated in early 2020. The list included the following 10 activities:



Community Participation during the Pandemic

When asked whether they believed communities were more engaged during the pandemic, opinions diverged with:

1. 15.8% stating that their community was *more involved*
2. 45.5% stating that community involvement was *the same*
3. 37.9% stating that their community was *less involved*

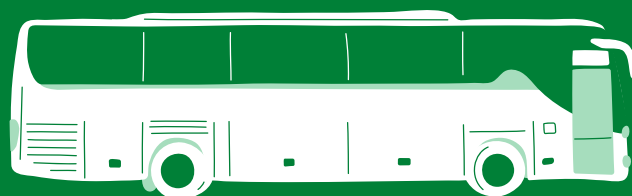


"Since the pandemic started I've stayed close to home and still work from home full time"

"I would like to see our community centre open again for cultural and local use. It has been closed since the beginning of the pandemic, only outdoor activities are happening"

Theme 2: Accessible Amenities

A community constitutes the amenities needed by residents to live, and the accessibility of these amenities impacts community wellbeing



Key Takeaways

01

The quality and availability of **housing, older adult services,** and **public transportation** are key concerns for Ontario residents.

02

Satisfaction was overwhelming across the three environmental indicators that reflected natural environments (quality of greenspace, water, and air) - more so than traffic and walkability.

03

Commonly expressed **recommendations for public amenities included:** reduced cost of public services, more places of gathering and participation, housing, improved advertising for public services, improved public transit, and culturally-accessible services.



Part 2: Accessible Amenities

Satisfaction with Services and Facilities

The Community Wellbeing Survey asked respondents to evaluate their satisfaction with the public goods and amenities within their communities. These amenities encompassed publicly accessible facilities or services such as public transportation and schools, as well as commonly shared needs essential for living, including housing and medical services.

While the relative priorities may vary depending on the characteristics of a community and its residents (e.g., childcare services may be more relevant for residents with small children), respondents were still asked to evaluate their relative satisfaction with facilities and services that are commonly found in Ontario cities. If the participant felt they could not provide an opinion on a particular amenity, respondents had the option to select "not applicable."

Across all participants surveyed:

The most satisfactory amenities were

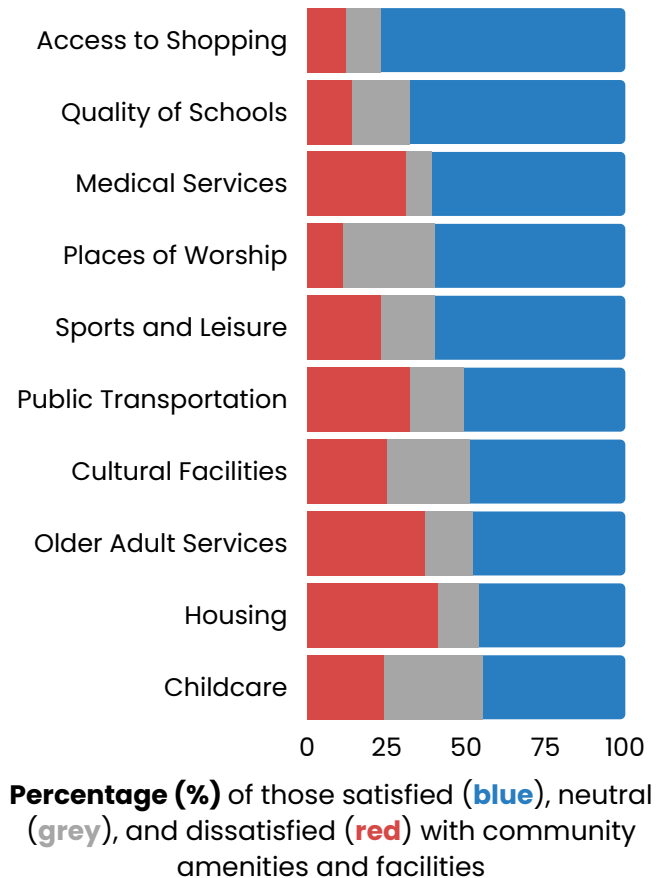
1. Access to shopping (77.0%)
2. Quality of schools (67.7%)
3. Medical services (61.3%)

and

The most unsatisfactory amenities were

1. Housing (40.8%)
2. Older adult services (37.1%)
3. Public transportation (31.9%)

The presence of neutral responses suggests that respondents may not have regularly utilized those amenities, which limits our ability to accurately interpret their satisfaction regarding those specific amenities that they may benefit from.



Note: Respondents were free to state that a service was "not applicable". For the purposes of analysis, the presented statistics report proportions of satisfaction only for those for which the amenities were applicable.

Thoughts on community facilities and amenities



"I feel more connected when I can get outside and explore my community - access to parks, libraries and community activities help me feel connected. I feel like I belong to my community when I can be out and see people"








"I feel like I belong when I am Interacting with people, families, dog walkers, and nature. Going to the local pool, library, school with family and neighbours"



Part 2: Accessible Amenities

Satisfaction with Services and Facilities

Additionally, participants were asked to **expand on the ways in which services/facilities can be improved in terms of availability, accessibility, quality, or cultural safety**. These were some of their ideas:

	Reduce cost of public services	"Public infrastructure such as common sitting areas, walking trails, public facilities such as washrooms and water fountains. Nearly all activities mentioned above involve spending money"
	Establish places of gathering and participation	"More public or private spaces for recreation are needed"
	Housing	"There is a profound housing crisis in [Toronto] where the real estate and rental market is increasingly impossible for most. This has a destructive impact on health, life, and community"
	Improved advertising for public services	"The advertising for services is poor. Not everyone is resourceful enough to chase down services. More printed literature should be available in public spaces"
	Improved public transit	"Public transit should be designed with the knowledge that many people commute from Mississauga to downtown Toronto. We need a mass transit solution to connect Mississauga to [Toronto]"
	Improved accessibility	"Accessibility is my main concern - I need a walker to get around. There are many areas that are not readily accessible"
	Culturally-accessible services	"For seniors, they need more services in their mother tongue to understand & receive better care"



Part 2: Accessible Amenities

The Environment of the Community

Residents were asked to evaluate the quality of and their satisfaction with the environment of their communities. **Environmental indicators included:**



Greenspace



Water



Air



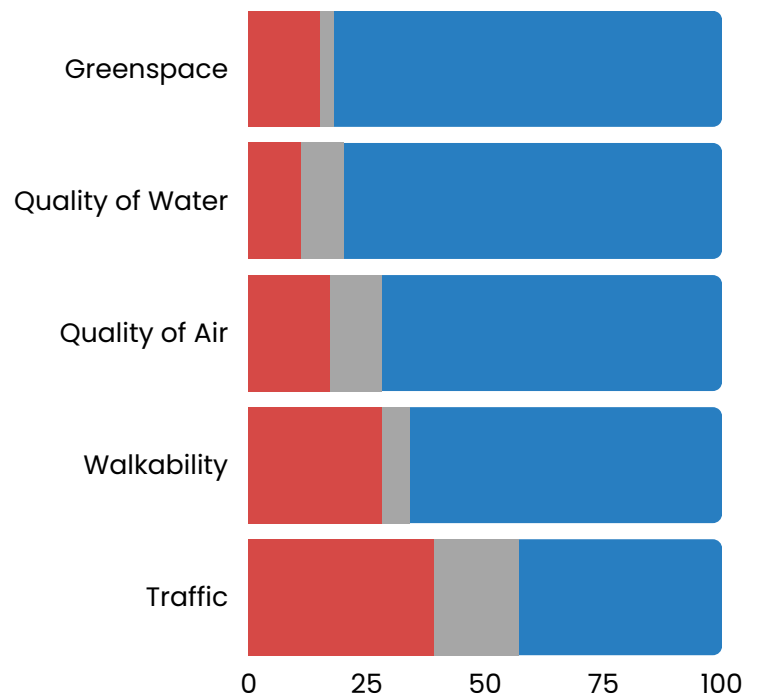
Walkability



Traffic

The highest levels of **satisfaction** were observed for the three environmental indicators related to natural environments, namely greenspace, water, and air quality. Among the respondents, the majority expressed being satisfied with: (1) **quality of greenspace (81.6%)**; (2) **quality of water (79.6%)**, and; (3) **quality of air (72.1%)**.

Respondents reported the highest **dissatisfaction** with the following environmental indicators in their community: **traffic (36.9%)** and **walkability (27.4%)**. However, it is worth noting that 64.4% of respondents reported being satisfied with their community's walkability.



Percentage (%) of those satisfied (**blue**), neutral (**grey**), and dissatisfied (**red**) with the environmental quality of their community



Thoughts on natural community spaces

"I live by the lake and I love going for walks on warm evenings and seeing people gather to watch the sunset. Everyone being there to appreciate nature makes me feel connected to others in the area"

"Admiration for natural spaces and support for Indigenous communities hold strong presence here and bring people together"

"The community garden offers me the chance to get to know my neighbours and it is wonderful"



Part 2: Accessible Amenities

Health and Healthcare Access

When asked to rate the quality of healthcare services in their community, perspectives were mixed. **Across all respondents, the quality of healthcare was perceived as:**

- **Excellent** (12.1%)
- **Very good** (21.1%)
- **Good** (26.1%)
- **Fair** (22.1%)
- **Poor** (15.3%)

Additionally, the survey asked respondents to rate the **cultural safety of their healthcare services**. To help respondents evaluate cultural safety, they were prompted with the following description:

Cultural safety can refer to whether the health care services were offered in your first language as needed, or whether the approach in care respected and was tailored to align with your cultural values, needs, and practices

Perspectives towards cultural safety were broadly distributed across response options. In total, 13.6% stated that the cultural safety of healthcare services was "excellent", 22.9% stated that it was "very good", and 22.6% stated that it was "good". A total of 14.3% and 11.8% stated that it was "fair" or "poor", respectively. A relatively large proportion (14.1%) of respondents noted that cultural safety was "not applicable" to their reception of healthcare services.

Notes on the health and health habits (diet, physical activity, sleep, alcohol and smoking habits, etc.) of participants across sociodemographic characteristics:

- **Age.** Younger respondents (<45 years) were more likely to report "poor" mental health when compared to those who were older (≥45 years) (17.9% vs. 9.6%, respectively)
- **Geography.** Respondents from Southern cities (Toronto and Peel) were more likely to report "excellent" health habits than those from Northern cities (Thunder Bay and Greater Sudbury) (10.3% vs. 4.3%). Southern respondents were also more likely to report "excellent" general health when compared to Northern respondents (14.4% vs. 8.5%)
- **Gender.** Men were more than twice as likely to report "poor" general health than women (10.6% vs. 5.0%)

Additionally, residents were asked to reflect on **the ways in which their local health services can be improved in terms of availability, accessibility, quality, or cultural safety**. These were some of their responses:

"Health services have been transactional, fragmented, delayed, I have fallen through the cracks in the system. No focus on broad social determinants or even the full body physical wellbeing. Just one issue per visit or one disease at a time"

"The two major forms of healthcare that I need are not covered by OHIP. I am lucky that my partner's job has coverage for some of these expenses"

"Our community is working hard to educate about appropriate cultural healthcare services and culturally appropriate training for healthcare providers. I think we have a long way to go. I have heard stories of racism still happening in health care settings, though many are working hard to combat this"

"There is always a struggle to attract doctors to our rural area so there are people without a doctor... We have to travel quite a distance to see our's in the city"



Theme 3: Community-Based Decision Making

Effective community decision making must be community-informed



Key Takeaways

01

The plurality of participants felt dissatisfaction and a lack of trust towards their local government when it came to community decision making. However, **dissatisfaction with government did not lessen community engagement.**

02

Participants expressed both an interest and desire towards participating in local planning efforts – **indicating an opportunity for collaboration between decision-makers and community residents.**

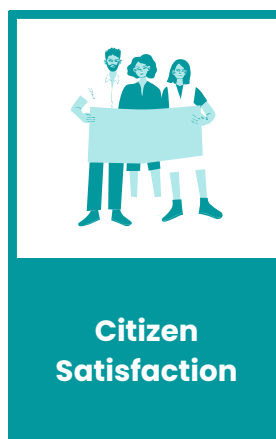
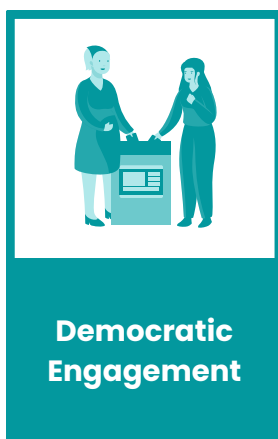
03

Direct consultation with community residents permitted multiple stakeholders' and subpopulations' needs to be understood, demonstrating a path for subsequent opportunities to improve their communities.



A key section of the Community Wellbeing Survey focused on capturing residents' perspectives regarding leadership in their community and assessing whether their interests and priorities were taken into account in local decision-making. Participants were asked to express their satisfaction with and trust in local leadership, as well as reflect on their own involvement in decision-making bodies and democratic institutions. **The objective of this section was to evaluate the extent to which participants felt empowered to participate in local decision-making or whether they perceived limitations on their potential for engagement.**

Community-centered decision making and leadership was evaluated in three parts:



Democratic Engagement

Democratic engagement at the municipal level was high amongst respondents, **with 81.2% stating that they voted in their community's previous municipal election.** However, those respondents less than 45 years of age and who were racialized reported voting at lower rates than the average survey respondent (72.6% and 68.9%, respectively). **There were no observable differences across other reported sociodemographic characteristics.**

Participants were also asked to share whether they saw the COVID-19 pandemic as an influencing factor on their opinion of local government. Most respondents were neutral (53.0%), saying that the pandemic did not impact their opinion of their local government. However, **nearly two times as many participants stated that the pandemic impacted their opinion negatively (26.6%) versus those who stated that it impacted their opinion positively (13.6%).**



Perspective toward local leadership from a resident of Thunder Bay:

"There is a beautiful waterfront in Port Arthur [in Thunder Bay] so the temptation is understandable but **I feel city administration should make considerably more effort at inclusion.** There is a great deal of poverty here and I rarely use a bus ticket for a single outing, but try to return from shopping using a transfer obtained with the same ticket. If I attended a Port Arthur event, it would last longer than the transfer would and cost me 2 tickets. Yet virtually all of the cultural events take place there. In Southern Ontario cities [where] I lived, there were sometimes free school buses to and from events that were out of town. **I wish the city would realize that if you are poor [and] on the wrong side, you live without any access to culture whatsoever.**"



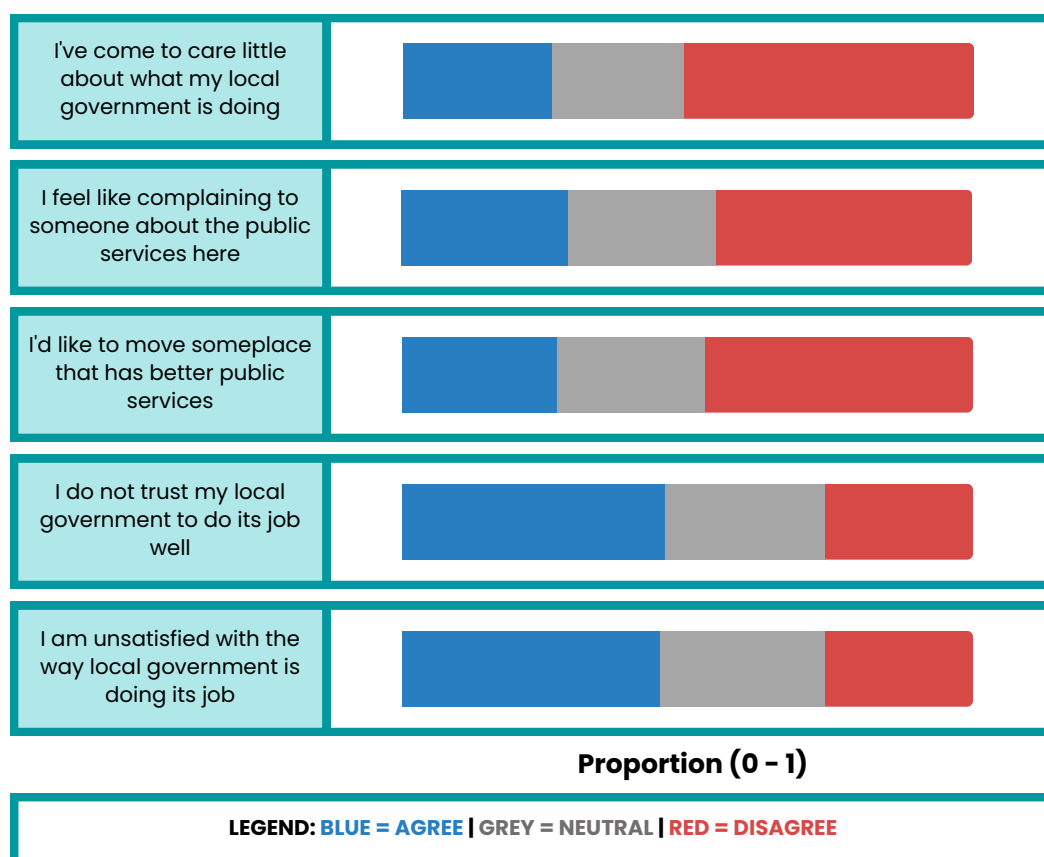
Citizen Satisfaction

To gauge citizen satisfaction, residents were presented with five concise statements and asked to indicate their level of agreement based on how well they aligned with their personal perspective towards local leadership (refer to the figure below).

The statements reflecting the lowest levels of citizen satisfaction were those pertaining to trust (i.e., "I trust my local government to do its job well") and overall satisfaction (i.e., "I am satisfied with the way local government here is doing its job"), with 45.7% and 45.2% respectively expressing disagreement with these statements.

Regarding the statement "I've come to care little about what my local government is doing," the majority of respondents disagreed, with 20.1% strongly disagreeing, 30.9% disagreeing, and an additional 21.6% expressing neutrality. **This suggests that most respondents still maintain a level of care and engagement in local government affairs.**

When assessing the relative quality of public services (such as waste disposal, public transit, fire services, policing, community centres, and libraries), positive opinions outweighed negative ones. For instance, when presented with the statements "I feel like complaining to someone about the public services here" and "I'd like to move someplace that has better public services," 44.3% and 46.0% respectively disagreed, while 29.4% and 26.7% agreed.



Perspective toward local leadership from a resident of Toronto:

"I reside in a Toronto neighborhood improvement area that has been historically underfunded, stereotyped, and neglected. Add COVID-19 on top of this... My community had been hit hard and is bearing the brunt of inequity. For example, access to primary care is already so scarce, now family doctors in my area are no longer accepting patients or have too many patients. Food insecurity has always been a huge issue here, but the only response we get are food banks. Not to mention housing, Toronto rent is constantly rising and the amount of neighbours I have who have to lease their basements or rooms in order to meet ends meet. Within all this, **the support provided by the Toronto government has been insufficient and unable to reach the diverse amount of people who reside in my area.**"



Community Satisfaction

Residents were asked to share *how the conditions of their community have changed in the past, to anticipate how it will change in the future, and to rate their local community as a desirable place to live*. **Perspectives varied across different sociodemographic groups:**



Across age: Younger participants (<45 years) were more likely to state that the conditions of their community improved in the past (12.1%) and will continue to improve into the future (27.4%) when compared to older participants (5.8% and 12.5%, respectively)



Across race and ethnicity: Key differences were seen across race and ethnicity, with racialized respondents stating that community conditions have improved in the past and will continue to improve into the future (13.2% and 26.4%, respectively), more so than white respondents (7.1% and 17.4%, respectively)



Across geography: Participants from Northern cities (Thunder Bay and Greater Sudbury) reported that their communities were less desirable, with 33.0% stating that their community was "not very" or "not at all desirable", compared to 14.9% of participants from Southern cities (Peel and Toronto)



Across gender: Men were more likely to state that community conditions had improved in the past and will improve in the future (16.5% and 29.4%, respectively) when compared to women (6.8% and 17.1%, respectively).

Community-led leadership during the pandemic

"During crisis, we take care of each other always because we understand that governments won't and [don't] live through the same struggles. COVID-19 pop up clinics were a beautiful example of the vibrancy that is my community. People would hold my space in line, offer me water, make conversation, and wish me well once I left. **What makes me feel like I belong to my community is how much people genuinely care about each other, even in their smallest actions.**"



Theme 4: Community Flourishing

The wellbeing of a community relies on equal opportunity for engagement and participation



Key Takeaways

01

While most participants stated that they could afford basic needs, **fewer had enough income to afford the lifestyle they wished to live, and fewer still could afford unexpected expenses.**

02

The ability to flourish was seen as a privilege for participants – only for those with the time and material capacity to participate in their community, resulting in feelings of exclusion for those without economic or material resources.

03

Future community wellbeing planning in Ontario must include diverse resident perspectives. Participatory engagement, democratic processes, and indicators that identify potential inequities should be considered.



As evident in the section addressing **Satisfaction with Services and Facilities**, numerous residents expressed their concerns regarding the inadequacy of services in terms of availability, accessibility, quality, or cultural safety. Although our survey did not explicitly measure flourishing, a concept defined uniquely in wellbeing research, participants consistently highlighted the economic and social conditions that constrained their own and their community's ability to thrive. **This was clearest in respondents' long-form responses:**

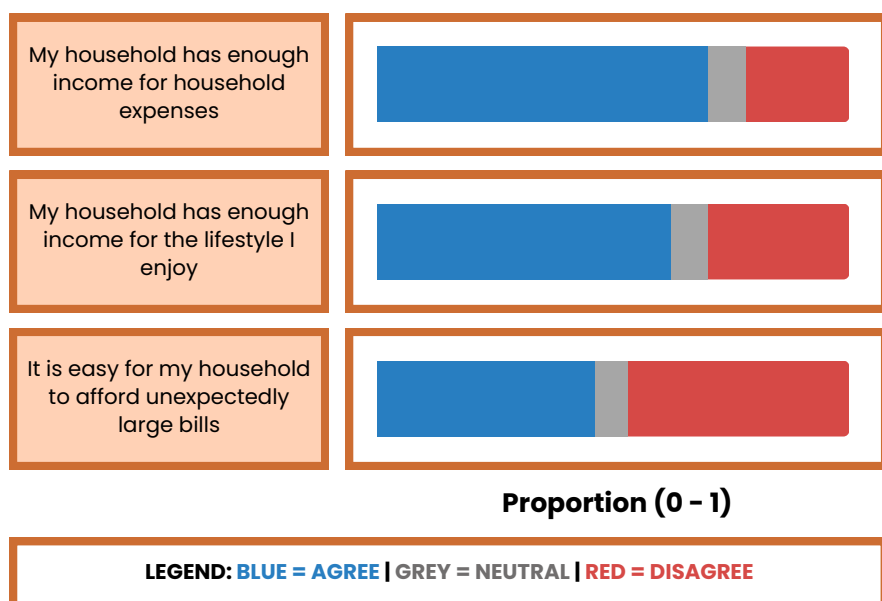
Barriers to flourishing

Unavailability of public services	"There are very few free activities for the community... Numerous people are unhoused who need supports that don't get them. [There] is no rapid busses or improved bike lanes, [limiting] safe travel"
Housing	"The tensions between property owners, tenants and encampment residents makes this neighbourhood feel less livable and welcoming for those who are unable to afford property "
Cultural accessibility	" Indigenous services should be offered in the language of the First Nations... While some Indigenous people are speakers, the offer to learn the languages is limited due to federal funding and political will, or the lack thereof"

Participants' accounts revealed a clear connection between equal opportunity for engagement and participation and community wellbeing. While privilege and opportunity encompass more than just income, income still serves as a useful indicator of an individual's material stability, which can extend to other aspects of their life such as social opportunities and the ability to participate. To measure participants' perceptions of their income, we assessed their agreement with three statements (refer to the figure below).

The majority of participants (69.7%) reported being able to afford their basic needs within their regular household expenses. However, a lower proportion (61.6%) stated that they could afford the things they desired beyond their basic needs.

The greatest level of economic instability was reflected in participants' ability to afford unexpected expenses, with 47.0% stating that it would be difficult to manage such expenses.

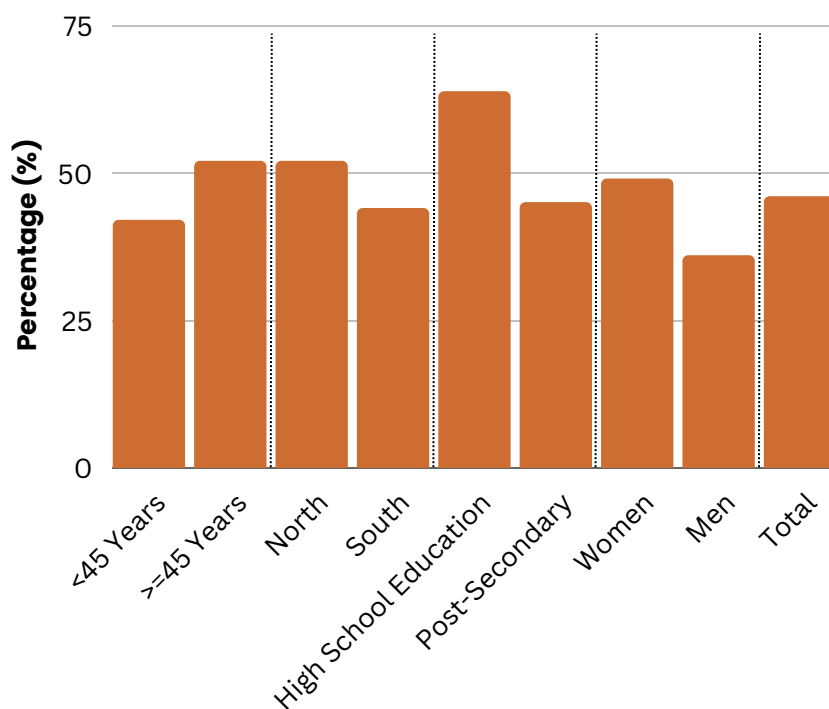




Across all sociodemographic measures, those participants with a high school education or less reported the lowest capacity to endure unexpected expenses or bills (63.8%), when compared to those respondents with a post-secondary education (45.1%).

Key differences were also seen across gender, with women being 12.0% more likely to state that they could not afford an unexpectedly large bill than men. Similarly, respondents from the North (Thunder Bay and Sudbury) were 7.7% more likely to be unable to afford unexpected expenses than Southern respondents (from Peel and Toronto).

Percentage of respondents who stated that they **COULD NOT** afford unexpected bills



Personal Stress

To assess levels of **personal stress**, respondents were asked *thinking about the amount of stress in your life, would you say that most days are...?* for which they could respond "not at all stressful" to "extremely stressful". **Responses differed across groups:**

Across education: Respondents with a high school education or less were more than twice as likely than those with post-secondary education to say that their life was "extremely stressful" (21.0% vs. 9.4%, respectively).

Across gender: Women reported their lives as being "extremely stressful" 11.4% of the time – nearly twice as much as men, of which 5.9% stated that their lives were "extremely stressful".

They were no observable differences in personal stress across age, geographical region, race/ethnicity, and across immigration status.

Conclusions



In this survey, we sought to identify those community factors – whether they be spaces, services, people, or values – that shape the priorities of Ontario residents in Greater Sudbury, Peel, Thunder Bay, and Toronto. In doing so, we did not want to treat these communities as monoliths, but rather nuanced social spaces where different views are held and shared. Therefore, from the outset, we wanted to understand key subgroup differences that existed within these communities.

We recognize our limitations in making concrete and causal connections between social identity (e.g., age, gender, race/ethnicity, etc.) and community wellbeing due to our lack of inferential statistics and limited sample size. However, this study still observed broad differences in how subcommunities accessed and valued community factors, including social connection, trust, health/healthcare, community satisfaction, and material privilege.

In addition to identifying differences across communities and subcommunities, this study observed those values and challenges that were congruous across Ontario cities. Challenges facing housing, access to healthcare, participation in local decision making, and cost of living were experienced throughout each of these communities. However, while these challenges were common across our sampled regions, potential solutions were much more varied. In interrogating long-form responses, we observed that effective solutions must be tailored to specific regions and informed by the citizens themselves. Indeed, access to transit, greenspace, housing, and many other community amenities looked vastly different across communities – especially across regional boundaries (within and outside of cities, across Northern and Southern Ontario, etc.).

The ability to access spaces was not solely determined by geography, but also by social identity. A significant finding was that over half of the respondents reported experiencing discrimination or being treated unfairly in social and institutional settings, which hindered their sense of safety and equitable treatment within their communities. Discrimination spanned social and cultural identities, being expressed towards age, race, gender, ethnicity and culture, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and language. This discrimination often manifested as marginalizing behaviors and systemic biases.

A key insight from our research was that the opportunity for engagement and participation within communities was inequitable for many individuals, often considered a privilege. While income and material stability played a crucial role, the privilege to participate in community life extended to other essential resources such as time, knowledge, social connections, and social status.



The findings suggest many participants lacked a sense of community flourishing, which we defined as when “all aspects of a person’s life are good, including the contexts in which that person lives” (VanderWeele, 2019; VanderWeele & Lomas, 2022). Flourishing should not be viewed as “surplus to requirements” or a reward that is granted once you fulfil your basic needs. Rather, flourishing is a basic need in its own right, allowing community residents to live nourishing lives.

The inequities identified in our analysis reflect observations that communities exist as complex systems, where collective and individual interests often exist in a state of conflict (Prilleltensky, 2008; Sirgy 2018). As has been observed across community wellbeing research, such conflicts often reflect the structural and historical inequities that exist within the community. Despite these inequities, there was not a diminished interest in community engagement for respondents. Indeed, many expressed a desire in participating in local planning efforts, presenting an opportunity for collaboration between decision-makers and community members.

As highlighted in the beginning of this report, community wellbeing has traditionally focused on the development of indicators as objective tools for measurement. These indicators categorize community wellbeing into distinct constructs (social, economic, political, cultural, etc.), encompassing the services, amenities, and social resources available in the community, such as healthcare facilities, public transportation, and gathering places. Objective measures provide a quantifiable and empirical foundation for understanding and evaluating different dimensions of community wellbeing, enabling more accurate assessments and comparisons across communities.

However, relying solely on objective indicators often falls short in capturing the full story and context of a community. The diverse range of regional, social, and historical contexts necessitates community wellbeing measures that incorporate local evidence and reflect the perspectives of residents living in the community. Without a rigorous and systematic approach that involves a broad spectrum of stakeholders, there is a risk that efforts aimed at enhancing community wellbeing may not effectively address the genuine needs of the community or cater equally to different subpopulations.

Direct engagement with residents allows for a deeper understanding of their diverse needs, opening avenues for subsequent community improvements. Future community wellbeing planning in Ontario should prioritize the inclusion of diverse resident perspectives, employing participatory engagement, democratic processes, and indicators that identify potential inequities.

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Appendix 1: The Community Wellbeing Survey, separated by indicators and questionnaire items.

Indicator	Questionnaire Item	Response Options
Age	Please indicate which age group you belong to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 years old or younger • 18 to 25 years old • 26 to 30 years old • 31 to 35 years old • 36 to 40 years old • 41 to 45 years old • 46 to 50 years old • 51 to 55 years old • 56 to 60 years old • 61 to 65 years old • 66 to 70 years old • 71 to 75 years old • 76 years or over
Province or Territory	Which province or territory do you currently live in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta • British Columbia • Manitoba • New Brunswick • Newfoundland and Labrador • Nova Scotia • Ontario • Prince Edward Island • Quebec • Saskatchewan • Northwest Territories • Nunavut • Yukon • I do not live in Canada
Municipality	Which municipality do you currently live in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toronto • Mississauga • Brampton • Caledon • Greater Sudbury • Thunder Bay • I live in a municipality that is not listed above. Please specify
Time Lived in Municipality	How long have you lived in your local community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than a year • 1-2 years • 3-4 years • 5 years or more • Prefer not to answer

Appendix 1 (continued): The Community Wellbeing Survey, separated by indicators and questionnaire items.

Indicator	Questionnaire Item	Response Options
Community Belonging	How would you describe your sense of belonging to your local community? Would you say it is ... ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Very strong</i> • <i>Somewhat strong</i> • <i>Somewhat weak</i> • <i>Very weak</i> • <i>Prefer not to answer</i>
Trust in Neighbours	In the city or area where you live, imagine that you lost your wallet or something holding your identification or address and it was found by someone else. How likely do you think your wallet would be returned to you if it were found by neighbours?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Very likely</i> • <i>Somewhat likely</i> • <i>Somewhat unlikely</i> • <i>Unlikely</i> • <i>Prefer not to answer</i>
Civic Participation	In the past two years (i.e., September 2019 to today), were you a member or participant in any community groups? For example, sports, recreation, neighbourhood, service, cultural groups, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yes</i> • <i>No</i> • <i>Prefer not to answer</i>
Civic Groups	In the past two years (i.e., September 2019 to today), what kinds of groups were you a member or participant in? Select all that apply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A political party or group</i> • <i>Sports or recreational organization</i> • <i>An arts, educational, or hobby group</i> • <i>A religious-affiliated group</i> • <i>A school association or neighbourhood association</i> • <i>A community service group</i> • <i>A group for older adults</i> • <i>A youth organization</i> • <i>A cultural, immigrant, or ethnic association</i> • <i>Other – a group or organization that has not been mentioned. Please specify</i>
Bridging Social Capital	Generally, in this community activity (or activities), are other group members like you or different from you in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Ethnic or cultural group • Gender 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mostly similar to you</i> • <i>Somewhat similar to you</i> • <i>Somewhat different from you</i> • <i>Mostly different from you</i> • <i>Prefer not to answer</i>

Appendix 1 (continued): The Community Wellbeing Survey, separated by indicators and questionnaire items.

Indicator	Questionnaire Item	Response Options
COVID-19 Pandemic Support	Please select all the types of support that you have received or provided to people in your local community during the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Running errands or completing tasks for others (for example, food shopping, delivering groceries, taking care of pets, taking care of gardens) Child-care related activities Sharing information (for example, advice about coronavirus, information about food availability) Window art Borrowing or lending items Identifying other local helpers (such as connecting a community member with someone else who can provide support) Helping with COVID-19 screening, testing, or vaccination efforts Donating money or goods/services to an organization Other – the kind of support I have given or received is not listed. Please specify
Community Involvement during the COVID-19 Pandemic	Has the pandemic changed how involved you are in your community, and/or how involved you are with the people in it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I've become MORE involved during the pandemic My involvement is the SAME as before the pandemic I've become LESS involved during the pandemic Prefer not to answer
Services and Facilities	<p>Next, we would like to know about your level of satisfaction with the services and facilities in your community. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects in your community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Public transport Access to cultural facilities Access to medical services Access to sports and leisure facilities Access to shopping areas Quality of shopping Quality of schools Places of worship Childcare facilities Services for older adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very satisfied Satisfied Somewhat satisfied Neutral Somewhat dissatisfied Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied Not applicable – I haven't interacted with this service Prefer not to answer
Expanding on Services and Facilities	Please expand on the ways in which the above services/facilities can be improved in terms of availability, accessibility, quality, or cultural safety.	Open text response.

Appendix 1 (continued): The Community Wellbeing Survey, separated by indicators and questionnaire items.

Indicator	Questionnaire Item	Response Options
Environment	<p>Next, we would like to know about your level of satisfaction with the environment of your community. Please rate your satisfaction with the following aspects in your community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amount of traffic Walkability Quality of air Quality of water Quality of greenspace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Very satisfied</i> <i>Satisfied</i> <i>Somewhat satisfied</i> <i>Neutral</i> <i>Somewhat dissatisfied</i> <i>Dissatisfied</i> <i>Very dissatisfied</i> <i>Not applicable – I haven't interacted with this service</i> <i>Prefer not to answer</i>
Safety	<p>Please indicate how true the following statement is about your local community: I feel safe from personal attacks in my local community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Very true</i> <i>Mostly true</i> <i>Somewhat true</i> <i>Not true at all</i> <i>Prefer not to answer</i>
Discrimination	<p>In the past two years (i.e., September 2019 till today), have you experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly by others in your local community because of any of the following characteristics? Select all that apply:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Your gender identity or expression</i> <i>Your ethnicity or culture</i> <i>Your race or skin colour</i> <i>Your religion</i> <i>Your sexual orientation</i> <i>Your age</i> <i>A physical or mental disability</i> <i>Your language</i> <i>Your sex</i> <i>For another reason. Please specify</i> <i>I have not felt discriminated against</i> <i>Don't know</i> <i>Prefer not to answer</i>
Quality of Healthcare Services	<p>Overall, how would you rate the quality of the health care services that are available in your community?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Excellent</i> <i>Very good</i> <i>Good</i> <i>Fair</i> <i>Poor</i> <i>Not applicable – I have not received any care services</i> <i>Prefer not to answer</i>

Appendix 1 (continued): The Community Wellbeing Survey, separated by indicators and questionnaire items.

Indicator	Questionnaire Item	Response Options
Cultural Safety of Healthcare	Overall, how would you rate the cultural safety of the health care services that you have received? Cultural safety can refer to whether the health care services were offered in your first language as needed, or whether the approach in care respected and was tailored to align with your cultural values, needs, and practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Excellent</i> • <i>Very good</i> • <i>Good</i> • <i>Fair</i> • <i>Poor</i> • <i>Not applicable - I have not received any care services</i> • <i>Prefer not to answer</i>
Expanding on Healthcare	Please expand on the ways in which your local health services can be improved in terms of availability, accessibility, quality, or cultural safety.	Open text response.
General Health	Overall, would you say your general health is ...?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Excellent</i> • <i>Very good</i> • <i>Good</i> • <i>Fair</i> • <i>Poor</i> • <i>Prefer not to answer</i>
Mental Health	Overall, would you say your mental health is ...?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Excellent</i> • <i>Very good</i> • <i>Good</i> • <i>Fair</i> • <i>Poor</i> • <i>Prefer not to answer</i>
Health Habits	Thinking of your health habits (which include your eating habits, level of physical activity, sleep schedule, alcohol and smoking habits, and so on) would you say your health habits are...?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Excellent</i> • <i>Very good</i> • <i>Good</i> • <i>Fair</i> • <i>Poor</i> • <i>Prefer not to answer</i>
Health Improvements	Is there anything you intend to do to improve your physical or mental health in the next year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yes</i> • <i>No</i> • <i>Prefer not to answer</i>

Appendix 1 (continued): The Community Wellbeing Survey, separated by indicators and questionnaire items.

Indicator	Questionnaire Item	Response Options
Maintaining Health Habits	How confident are you that you can maintain your current health habits even during times of stress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extremely confident Quite a bit confident A bit confident Not very confident Not confident at all Prefer not to answer
Changing Health Habits	How confident are you that you can implement these changes to your health habits, and then maintain these changes, even during times of stress?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extremely confident Quite a bit confident A bit confident Not very confident Not confident at all Prefer not to answer
Leadership	<p>We would like to know how you feel about the leadership in your city/town. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'd like to move someplace that has better public services I feel like complaining to someone about the public services here I trust my local government to do its job well I am satisfied with the way local government here is doing its job I've come to care little about what my local government is doing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree Prefer not to answer
Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic on Leadership	How has the pandemic changed your opinions about your local municipal government?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I had the same opinions about my local municipal government before the pandemic Before the pandemic I viewed my local municipal government more positively Before the pandemic I viewed my local municipal government more negatively Prefer not to answer
Voting	If you were eligible to vote in the previous municipal election (which occurred on October 22, 2018), did you vote?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes No I was not eligible to vote Prefer not to answer

Appendix 1 (continued): The Community Wellbeing Survey, separated by indicators and questionnaire items.

Indicator	Questionnaire Item	Response Options
Satisfaction with Community	Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of life in your city/town?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly satisfied Satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied Prefer not to answer
Enjoyment of Community	To what extent do you enjoy living in the local area you currently live in?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extreme enjoyment Quite a bit of enjoyment A bit of enjoyment Not much enjoyment No enjoyment at all Prefer not to answer
Community Improvements	When thinking about conditions in your local area, have conditions worsened, stayed about the same, or improved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Worsened Stayed about the same Improved Prefer not to answer
Community into the Future	In the years to come, do you believe the conditions in your local area will be worse than today, about the same as today, or better than today?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will be worse than today Will be about the same as today Will be better than today Prefer not to answer
Desirability of Community	How would you rate your local community as a desirable place to live?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the best communities in Canada Very desirable Somewhat desirable Not very desirable Not desirable at all Prefer not to answer
Isolation in Community	Are there specific times or circumstances when you feel ISOLATED from your community? What kind of experiences make you feel like you DON'T BELONG to your community?	Open text response.
Connection in Community	Are there specific times or circumstances when you feel MORE CONNECTED to your community? What makes you feel like you DO BELONG to your community?	Open text response.

Appendix 1 (continued): The Community Wellbeing Survey, separated by indicators and questionnaire items.

Indicator	Questionnaire Item	Response Options
Life Satisfaction	Using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means "very dissatisfied" and 10 means "very satisfied", how do you feel about your life as a whole right now?	0: Very dissatisfied to 10: Very satisfied
Personal Stress	Thinking about the amount of stress in your life, would you say that most days are ...?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not at all stressful • Not very stressful • A bit stressful • Quite a bit stressful • Extremely stressful • Prefer not to answer
Most Important Parts of Community Wellbeing	We are interested in hearing about which ones you consider to be the MOST IMPORTANT to the wellbeing of your community. Which parts do you think are the MOST IMPORTANT? You can select up to three answers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of living • Housing • Community facilities such as transportation, cultural centres, leisure areas • Safety • Trust in government • Trust in neighbours • Giving and receiving community member support/social relationships • Participation in community groups • Democratic engagement such as voting in elections or attending public meetings • Other, please specify • Prefer not to answer
Least Important Parts of Community Wellbeing	We are interested in hearing about which parts you think are the LEAST IMPORTANT to the wellbeing of your community as a whole. Which parts do you think are the LEAST IMPORTANT? You can select up to three answers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of living • Housing • Community facilities such as transportation, cultural centres, leisure areas • Safety • Trust in government • Trust in neighbours • Giving and receiving community member support/social relationships • Participation in community groups • Democratic engagement such as voting in elections or attending public meetings • Other, please specify • Prefer not to answer

Appendix 1 (continued): The Community Wellbeing Survey, separated by indicators and questionnaire items.

Indicator	Questionnaire Item	Response Options
Perceptions of Household Income	<p>Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your household income:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My household has enough income for the lifestyle I enjoy My household has enough income for household expenses It is easy for my household to afford unexpectedly large bills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Neutral Somewhat disagree Disagree Strongly disagree Prefer not to answer
Immigration Status	<p>Please indicate which one of the following immigration designations applies to you:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-immigrant (persons who are Canadian citizens by birth) Immigrant (persons who are or have ever been landed immigrants or permanent residents, as well as immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship) Non-permanent resident (persons who have a work/study permit to live in Canada, or are refugee claimants) Prefer not to answer
Time in Canada	<p>In what year did you first arrive to Canada?</p>	<p>Date.</p>
Education Status	<p>What is the highest certificate, diploma, or degree that you have completed, or are currently completing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less than high school diploma or equivalent High school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate Post-secondary (e.g., trade certificate/diploma, college, university certificate, Bachelor's degree) Graduate degree Prefer not to answer

Appendix 1 (continued): The Community Wellbeing Survey, separated by indicators and questionnaire items.

Indicator	Questionnaire Item	Response Options
Race and Ethnicity	<p>We know that people of different races do not have significantly different genetics. But our race still has important consequences, including how we are treated by different individuals and institutions.</p> <p>Which race category best describes you? Select all that apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black (e.g., African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent) • East/Southeast Asian (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent or Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian, other Southeast Asian descent) • Indigenous (e.g., First Nations, Métis, Inuk/Inuit descent) • Latino, Latina, Latinx (e.g., Latin American, Hispanic descent) • Arab, Persian, West Asian descent (e.g., Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish) • South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean) • White (e.g., European descent) • Another race category (I would like an option to specify) • Prefer not to answer
Indigenous Identity	<p>Do you identify as First Nations, Métis and/or Inuk/Inuit? Select all that apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, First Nations • Yes, Métis • Yes, Inuk/Inuit • No • Prefer not to answer
Gender	<p>What is your gender identity? Select all that apply.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woman (cis, trans) • Man (cis, trans) • Genderfluid • Non-binary • Gender-queer • Two-spirit • Agender • Exploring, questioning • Gender not listed (please specify) • Prefer not to answer
Postal Code	<p>Please enter the first three digits of your postal code [This information will NEVER be shared with anyone outside of the research team].</p>	<p>Three-character string.</p>



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