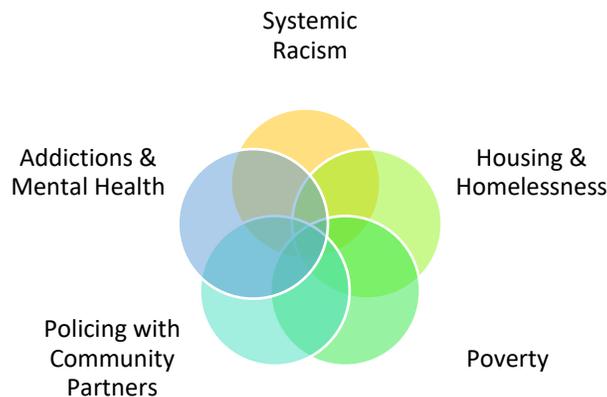


Lambton County Community Safety & Well-being Plan

Community Survey #2 – December 2021

1.0 BACKGROUND

A Population Survey was conducted as part of the planning process for the Community Safety and Well-being Plan (CSWB) for Lambton County in March of 2021. There was a strong response rate of some 874 individuals however, upon analysis, the respondents were skewed towards those of higher socioeconomic status and age, living in more affluent areas of the County. These survey results were considered, along with a Community Epidemiological Data Report and an Audit of Community Assets (existing relevant plans and groups/networks/"tables"), by our CSWB Advisory Committee, to establish the five community priorities outlined below. A working group was identified for each topic, if one was not already in place. Each group was asked to identify the Strategies of greatest priority in their topic for the next 3-5 years.



It was identified by representatives of the Poverty Reduction Network of Sarnia-Lambton that the voices of those with lived/living experience were missing from the identification of these Strategies. They proposed that a survey be targeted to these priority populations, to be done in person through service outlets in the community, which was becoming possible with a temporary break in the COVID pandemic in the fall of 2021. The CSWB Oversight Committee agreed to this approach.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Poverty Reduction Network members generated the areas of questioning and the agencies best suited to reach the intended population. The support of the County of Social Services was secured to be able to offer an incentive to approximately ten individuals in each of ten agencies who were seeing clients in person. The resulting survey of 11 questions was made available on Survey Monkey between October 20, 2021 and November 3, 2021.

3.0 FINDINGS

3.1 Respondents

There were 275 people who responded with an estimated 80% completion rate, requiring on average four minutes to complete. The specific variables of the respondents are described below:

a) Age

Respondents spanned every decade from the 20's through 80+, with the largest number (21.5%) falling in the 60-69 age bracket.

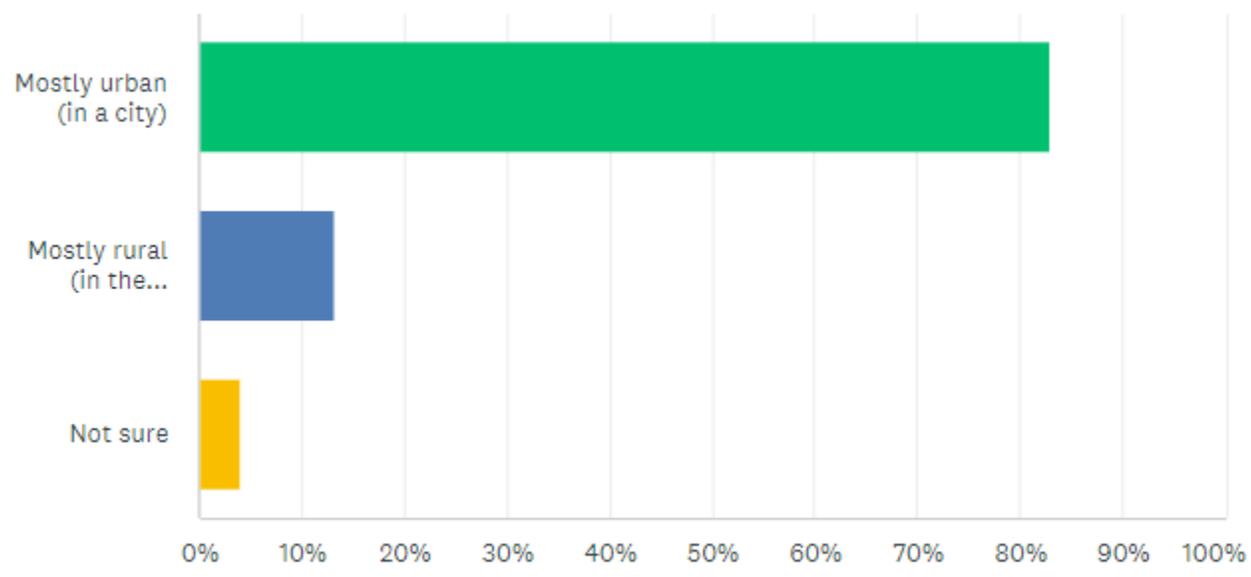
▼ 19 - 29	16.42%	45
▼ 30 - 39	13.14%	36
▼ 40 - 49	13.87%	38
▼ 50 - 59	16.79%	46
▼ 60 - 69	21.53%	59
▼ 70 - 79	14.23%	39
▼ 80+	4.01%	11
TOTAL		274

b) Gender

The majority of respondents were female (66.0%; n = 181). Males represented 31.0% (n = 85) with two identifying as gender diverse and 6 preferring not to answer. One comment identified this as a “stupid question”.

c) Living Location

Respondents were given three options and the results are presented below.



d) When asked “Who do you live with on most days?”, the overwhelming majority selected “Family” as depicted below.

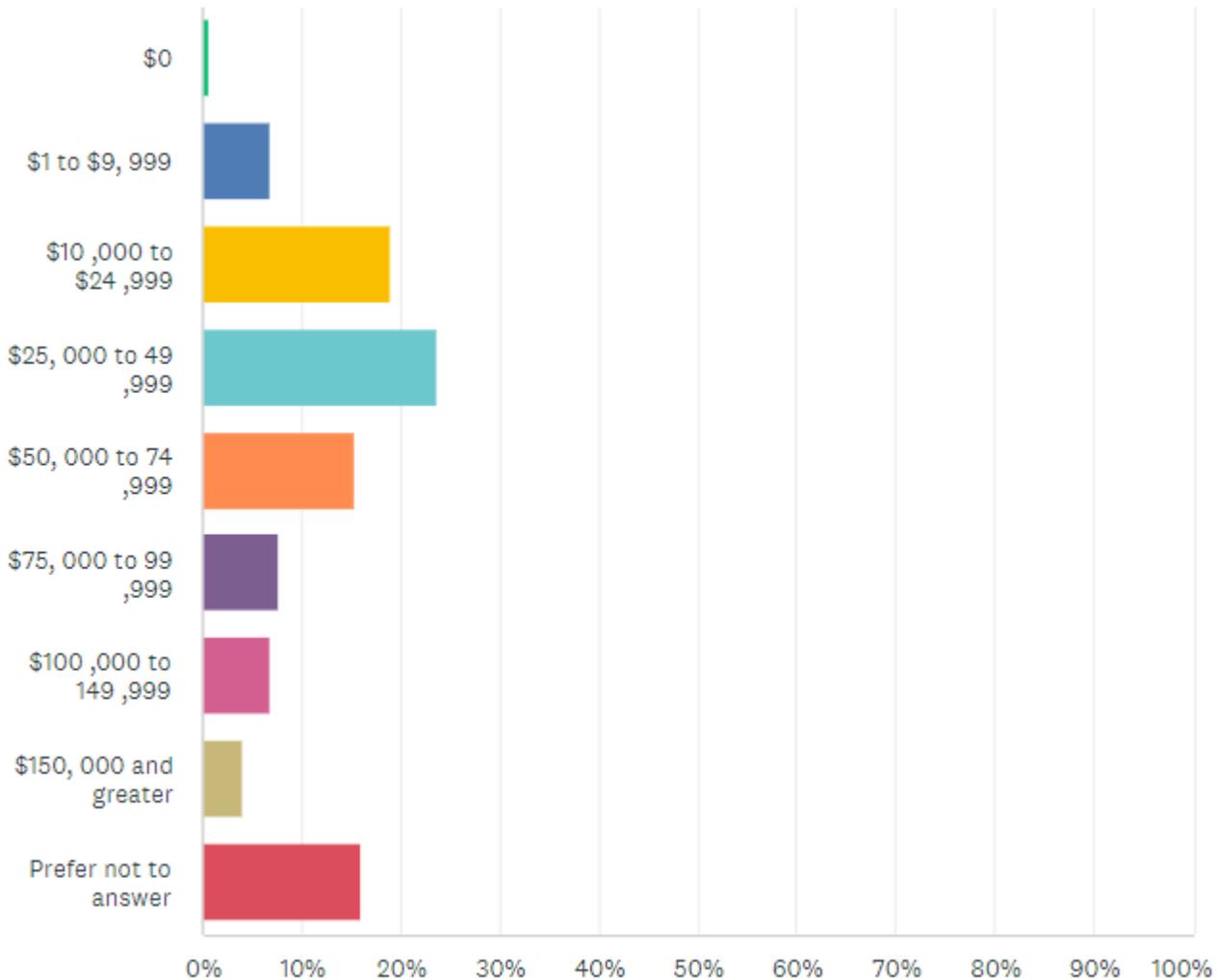
▼ Family	74.24%	196
▼ Friends	1.89%	5
▼ Group home environment (e.g., shelter)	0.76%	2
▼ On the street	0.38%	1
▼ Alone	21.59%	57
▼ Prefer not to answer	1.14%	3
TOTAL		264

e) Ethnicity

Of the 271 responses to this question, 82.6% (n=224) identified as Caucasian, and 11.8% (n=32) as Indigenous. Nine preferred not to answer. The other responses were two as Arab and one each as Black, Filipino, Korean, and South Asian.

f) Personal Income

There was a broad variation in reported income by the 275 respondents as illustrated in the chart below.



Using the 2021 Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) rates for Canada for a one-person family unit of \$26,426¹, and clustering the first three response categories in the table above, at least 73 respondents (26.55%) are living below the LICO line.

3.2 Feelings about the Community

a) Community Safety

Respondents were asked to select a number between 0 and 100 on the sliding scale below regarding how safe they felt in their community. This point on the scale was then awarded a numerical response

¹ [LICO Table 2021 - Low Income Cut-Off Canada \(settler.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-627-x/2021001/article/00001-eng.htm)



The average score of the 267 respondents was 69, falling within the “safe” and “very safe” range. Responses ranged from 0 to 100. Of note with the individual scores:

- 100 was the most commonly selected value (7.5%; n=20) and 50 was the second most frequently chosen (6.7%; n=17).
- Broken down by four quartiles:
 - Ratings of 0-25 represented 3.3% of the total
 - Ratings of 26-50 represented 21.8% of the total
 - Ratings of 51-75 represented 28.9% of the total
 - Ratings of 75-100 represented 45.9% of the total.

Respondents who selected “somewhat safe” or “very unsafe” on the continuum, were asked for comments regarding what it was about the community that makes them feel this way. The 164 comments received are presented as themes below. There was a fair bit of crossover between the themes such as people commenting about speeding often remarked as well about the lack of police presence.

- Crimes / theft (n=68). Often attributed to drug use.
- Substance users (n=31). This included unregulated cannabis retailers, many who also mentioned perceived related thefts and a lack of supports for those with substance use problems.
- Lack of police presence or response (n=17)
- Speeding (n=12)
- Time of day – feeling less safe when out at night (n=9)
- Discrimination (i.e., of teenagers, non-whites, LGBTQ+, vaccination status, gender, weight shame) (n=8)
- “Street people” (n=8). Most often referred to as “homeless” but generally described as people acting oddly in the streets. Often this was related to mental health challenges and/or drug use.

b) Likeable Things in the Community

Five options were provided which were taken from the top responses to the first community survey undertaken. Respondents could select as many as applied and there was the opportunity for comments. The five choices and responses from 257 people are listed below:

▼ The general feel of the community (e.g., quiet, friendly, clean, peaceful etc.)	69.26%	178
▼ The natural environment (e.g., beach, lake, trails, fresh air etc.)	84.05%	216
▼ The programs and services available in the community	37.74%	97
▼ The supports I have available to me in the community	31.52%	81
▼ The safety of the community	35.02%	90
Total Respondents: 257		

Seventeen comments were generated regarding what they like about the community:

- Close to amenities; close proximity to stores; close to bus terminal; close to downtown; close to amenities but not quite in the city
- Everyone looks after each other

- Location is good and the size is good; small town familiarity
- Good neighbours
- Can't afford rent
- Community spirit
- The Health Centre helps me with food and bus tickets; Municipal office and staff are responsive with a personal touch
- Family and friends

Some negative comments were also generated:

- Mostly safe during the day but I don't go out at night
- Would feel safer if I didn't border Front St. where it is definitely not quiet and peaceful
- The natural environment is under continual threat of developers

c) Your Current Situation in the Community

Respondents were asked to think about their current situation and identify which of 12 supplied responses apply to them. These are listed in descending order of frequency of response.

▼ None of these apply to me		54.83%	142
▼ I don't have enough money available every month to live on.		20.08%	52
▼ I don't feel safe in my community.		12.74%	33
▼ I don't have regular, low-cost access to the internet.		12.36%	32
▼ I don't have enough food to support myself and/or my family.		11.97%	31
▼ I cannot get to places I need to (e.g., appointments, grocery store) because I don't have transportation.		11.20%	29
▼ I don't have a regular doctor.		11.20%	29
▼ I don't have anyone to rely on for on-going support.		10.42%	27
▼ Other barriers I face (please specify):	Responses	10.04%	26
▼ I can't complete my education the way I would like to.		7.72%	20
▼ I don't have a safe and consistent place to live.		3.09%	8
▼ I don't have the supports I need to stop using drugs or alcohol.		0.77%	2
Total Respondents: 259			

For the 26 people who offered "other barriers", these are themed below.

- **Mental health challenges** (n=5). This included such things as more one-on-one support services, agoraphobia, anorexia, PTSD, ADHD, ASD, and DID.
- **Cost of Living** (n=5), which related to the provided choice of "not having enough money every month to live on". This included:
 - Not enough money for gas
 - ODSP is too low
 - Rent is too high everywhere
 - More to do at low cost (e.g., water park, zoo)
 - \$700/month for 2 people is not enough to live on
 - Internet access is too expensive.
- **Transportation** (n=3). Transportation both within town and between communities is unaffordable.

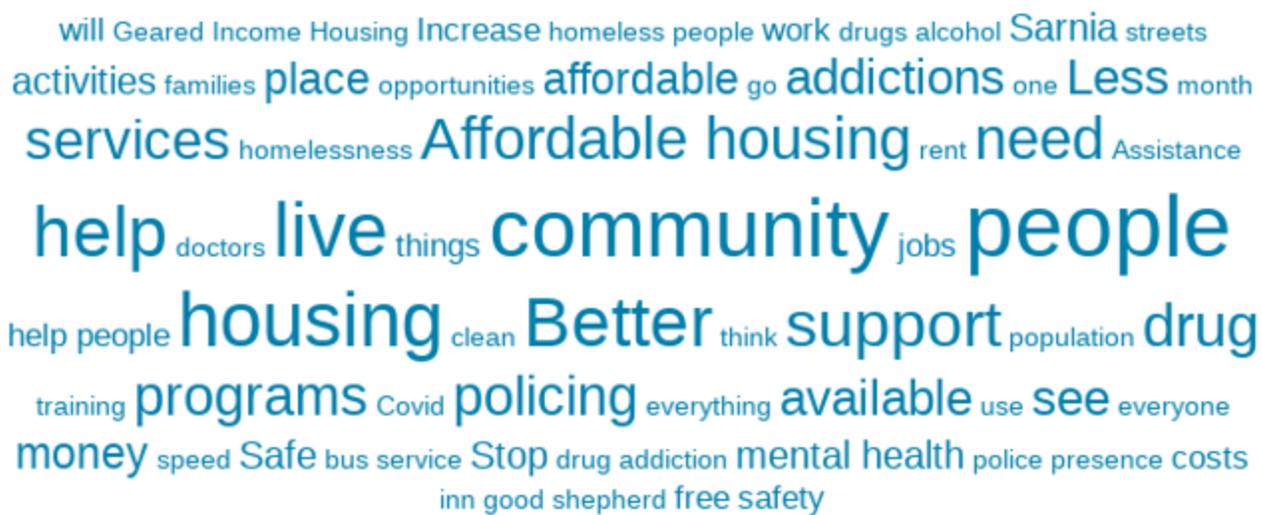
- **Housing (n=2).** *“There is a need for transitional housing.” “The methadone clinic is too far away from where I camp out.”*
- There were several single mentions of barriers:
 - Sometimes re: doctor availability
 - Lack of training opportunities in my age bracket
 - Childcare for a complex special needs child to pursue my career
 - Racism
 - Disability but that's no one's fault.
 - Criminal record; Convictions
 - Mobility issues
 - I lost my health card and debit card in my wallet
 - As a white male I am very, very entitled in our culture
 - Noise and pollution

d) One Desired Change

Respondents were asked “What ONE thing would you most like to see change in Sarnia-Lambton that would have the greatest impact on your life”?

Fifty people skipped this question and ten who responded indicated they did not want to see any change.

The Word Cloud below illustrates the relative frequency of responses:



More specifically, the themes of the 225 responses are provided below, in rank order by frequency. Single mentions have not been included.

- **Housing (n=42)**
 - Affordability
 - Availability
 - *“Affordable cost of living. By week two in the month, I run out of money. ODSP be 2200.00 that was given in Covid. The government set that as the standard of living why do we live on so little 1500 for two, one adult and a 17year old. Rent is 900.00 and gov pays like 100.00 food we get help from the inn of the good shepherd outreach Weekly. I pay for basic gas needs for travel and run out. How can I enjoy life? Everything costs money. Still lack food for lunches in high school. Kids should not go hungry even at 17 years old. Internet, I didn't even have until Covid. Phone I can't afford data. Ow Ontario works is even worse, and you have to try to live off it before accepted to ODSP. Why should I*

have to use inn of the good shepherd every month. This is living poverty. I should only have to use the Inn of the good shepherd as back up here or there not multiple times and in each month."

- **Policing / Justice System (n=28)**
 - Increased / better presence (n=12)
 - Address thefts (especially of bicycles and homes and those related to drugs) (n=7)
 - Enforce punishment for offenders
 - *"GET THESE BUMS OFF THE STREET, DRUGS ARE NOT AN ADDICTION, THEY'RE A CHOICE!!!!"*
 - *"Charge and jail the people supporting the petty criminals, buying the material they steal. Jail for second third and frequent offenders. The Jail should be outside our community. Eventually if the crime wave locally does not stop the community will degrade further into anarchy. Judges who do not act should be retired from the system."*
 - *"The ongoing level of crime by perpetrators who remain unpunished by the courts and know they can continue their activities without consequence. We actually moved out of our home in Sarnia to a smaller community partly because of the activity in our neighborhood."*
 - Enforce speeding limits (n=3)
- **Lack of Supports (n=26).** There was a wide range of potential supports named based on specific populations such as youth, those with addictions and/or mental health challenges, and the homeless (the most often mentioned population) as well as such things as neighbourhood supports to get to know neighbours, drop-in programs, employment services, drug rehabilitation, and financial supports.
- **Infrastructure (n=23).** This included such things as clean sidewalks, trails, bike lanes, better restaurants, more/better cultural events, more places that offer a sense of community, noise barriers, more family-oriented aspects rather than retirement-oriented, more things for teens and seniors to do, more local amenities (e.g., pool, walking track, indoor soccer, outdoor skating, banks, gas station, grocery store). Restaurants on the waterfront, more downtown parking without time limits, and an increase in light to heavy industry / manufacturing were also mentioned.
- **Transportation (n=17).** The most common transportation aspect mentioned was affordability followed closely by accessibility, especially outside the city of Sarnia for appointments as well as the opportunity to attend community events and attractions. Accessibility was related to places such as healthcare and groceries, as well as the timing of services.
- **Substance Users (n=14).** All comments focused on the need for more rehabilitation supports.
 - *"For the drug pandemic to stop, drug addiction is a big issue in Sarnia, it makes it unsafe in many different areas of Sarnia, it's sad to see, especially when you have family dealing with it and not knowing how to help. When we stayed in the hotel before getting our place, it was nice that there's people willing to help everyone, but it wasn't very family friendly, there was scary people although it, people in the hallways drinking, it didn't feel like a safe place to have children at all."*
- **Activities / Opportunities (n=13).** All were in favour of more programs and activities, most often for youth or seniors. Drug and alcohol-free spaces to gather were recommended.
- **Acceptance and Respect for Diversity (n=12).** Ending racism and discrimination was the most common recommendation, particularly with respect to First Nations people.

- **COVID-19 (n=8).** Comments focused on restoring compassion while reducing negativity, opinions regarding mandatory vaccinations and a general desire to lift restrictions.
- **Mental Health (n=7).** Similar to the topic of Substance Use, most comments addressed the need for more and more accessible supports in the community. One mentioned, *“The ability of the various resources available to work together to ensure the Assistance to community members with Mental Health issues is followed up on to their completion. Perhaps through a permanent advocate being assigned to an individual - to assist with the many steps needed to achieve access to programs.”*
- **The Environment (n=7).** Specifics included clean energy sources, increasing public green spaces and trails, greater awareness about flaring and chemical spills, climate change approaches, better air quality and using farmland and forests for commercial and residential development.
- **Government (n=7).** All seven comments were distinctly unique, so no themes were evident.
- **Health Care (n=6).** Four identified the need for more accessible doctors. Also mentioned was the need for more timely emergency services at the Sarnia hospital.
- **Internet (n=4).** Better and cheaper internet access was the desire of all four respondents.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

These survey results will be shared with the Working Groups, Advisory Committee and Oversight Committee as input to the final version of the CSWB Plan.