



**United Way
Centraide**
Windsor-Essex County

The 2015 Community Well-Being Report



WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY

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Introduction

"There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about"

– Margaret Wheatley

There is a growing trend, in Canada and internationally, to recognize well-being as an important indicator of how a community or a country is doing. It provides a broader picture of a community's progress than the traditional Gross Domestic Product. The Canadian Index of Well-being, first published nationally in 2011, uses the following working definition of well-being: *"The presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression, focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to and participation in leisure and culture."* The 2015 Community Well-Being Report will touch on many of the domains listed in that definition, to provide a glimpse of how Windsor-Essex County is doing as a community.

United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County has long recognized one of its central roles is as **community builder**. One of the essential ways to build community is to thoroughly understand the many facets of community. Data is one of the tools to observe what has been happening over time. The 2015 Community Well-Being Report is the third such report which builds on previous reports in 2009 and 2006, and creates a picture of life in Windsor-Essex County.

Inside the report

The 2006 Well-Being Report described a community in a growth period; the 2009 Well-Being Report described a community in the midst of a serious economic crisis.

The 2015 Well-Being Report will describe a resilient community that many consider has turned the corner and is on its way back to some prosperity. The characteristics of a vibrant community have always been an element of the report, which is divided into six (6) sections:

SECTION	ELEMENTS OF A VIBRANT COMMUNITY	DATA COLLECTED
1	Our People	Population, growth, family characteristics and ethno-cultural population
2	Our Health	Physical and mental health, lifestyle risk factors and access to family physicians
3	Our Economy	Income/low income, employment, housing affordability, home ownership, homelessness and transportation
4	Our Education	Primary and secondary education, university and college tuition rates and student loan default rates
5	Our Environments: Both Natural and Built	Sense of belonging, green space, air quality, water consumption, household waste and recycling, arts grants, voting and charitable giving
6	Our Safety	Crime against people, crime against property, domestic violence, drug use, road safety
7	Conclusion	Concluding comments and call to action.

Purpose of the Community Well-Being Report

While the 2006 report created benchmark data, the 2009 report started on a path to report trends over time; the 2015 report builds off these benchmarks and examines the evolution of factors in our community. Reports such as this one are invaluable resources to assist communities in many ways:

- Governments and funding organizations can utilize these reports to identify priorities and to ensure that funding is addressing emerging needs in the community;
- Organizations that provide services and supports can utilize the data to determine if they are addressing demand and whether new services need to be developed;
- Citizens can utilize the data to choose organizations to volunteer for, to donate to and to develop a better understanding of their community.

The intentions of the 2015 Well-Being are the same as those identified in the 2009 report and bear repeating:

- Synthesize data from a variety of sources to provide a snapshot of our community's state of well-being;
- Report on priority benchmarks that indicate progress over time and areas in need of improvement;
- Draw important connections among the different issues that influence well-being;
- Ignite community dialogue that will create change where change is needed;
- Facilitate community planning, policy change and community development efforts throughout Windsor-Essex County;
- Celebrate progress; and
- Serve as a call to action

Understanding the Data

The majority of data presented in this report is extracted from various sources including:

- a) Census 2011 data representing a five year period from 2006-2010; CANSIM, the socioeconomic database for Canada and the National Household Survey (NHS), a separate survey conducted between May and September 2011 which also replaced the previous census long form survey.
- b) Other Federal/Provincial/Municipal Government Sources
- c) The Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative
- d) Primary and Secondary data collected from a variety of research sources by United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County or its partner organizations

The 2011 year was the first time the National Household Survey (NHS) was implemented. A key difference between the NHS and the long form census is that participation in the NHS was voluntary. There were also some changes to questions previously found in the census long form and the unpaid work section was eliminated. Although the survey was voluntary, Statistics Canada reported the response rate as 68.6 percent which equates to participation of 21 percent of the Canadian population. Still, it will be difficult to compare data from the NHS with data that was derived from the previous long form census. Therefore the 2011 data from the National Household Survey will represent a new baseline for some data sets.

At the beginning of each section of the report a **Summary of Key Trends** is presented that highlights the major changes that have occurred since the last Community Well-Being Report. Each key summary point is accompanied by an arrow that indicates an improvement, decline or no change in the trend since the last Community Well-Being Report.



Means an overall improvement in our community over the period of data reviewed. This can mean that the indicator statistics declined over the period of study.



Means an overall decline in our community over the period of data reviewed. This can mean that the indicator statistics increased over the period of study.



Means no measurable or only a marginal change in the data in over the period of study.

Generally speaking only reliable data was selected for this report. However when the data was deemed important, some less reliable Statistics Canada data was used. The data within this report is often organized by various geographies. It is important to pay attention to which geography the data represents. The following table provides a description of the geographies found in this report.

GEOGRAPHY	DESCRIPTION	POPULATION*
WINDSOR	The data reflects the population of the municipality of Windsor	210,891
WINDSOR CENSUS METROPOLITAN AREA (CMA)	Windsor CMA means the data is based on the population of Windsor in addition to the communities that border on Windsor. The bordering communities included in the CMA are: Amherstburg, LaSalle, Lakeshore, and Tecumseh.	319,246
LEAMINGTON CENSUS AMALGAMATION (CA)	Leamington CA consists of data from the communities of Leamington and Kingsville. This data is not as readily available as the Windsor CMA due to its smaller size. ¹	49,765
ESSEX COUNTY	The data reflects the total population of the region including the municipality of Windsor and the seven county townships.	388,782
WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY HEALTH UNIT REGION	The data reflects the total population of the region including the municipality of Windsor and the seven county municipalities/townships.	388,782

*Population as per the 2011 Census

SECTION 1:

Our People

The six year period since the last Community Well Being report has been particularly difficult for the people of Windsor-Essex. The economic downturn and the uncertainty and hardship that accompanied it contributed to many of the trends that have been observed in the demographic data about our region.

What has emerged is that Windsor-Essex County is at a crossroads of sorts. Working age population decline during the recession has only just begun to reverse itself, placing pressure on the economic and social well-being of the community.ⁱⁱ Generally speaking, new immigrants and older individuals, who bring their own unique set of needs and demands on our communities, have replaced these fleeing workers. Ensuring that our region is adapting to these demographic trends in a productive and inclusive manner is vital to the future growth and overall well-being of our communities.



SUMMARY OF KEY TRENDS

- ↓ Windsor-Essex County's population experienced a decline across 5 of 8 communities totaling a loss of 4,791 citizens over the last census period.
- ↓ Region has experienced a net loss in migration over the last census period with over 4,000 people leaving Windsor-Essex since the year 2000. More concerning, over 10,000 youths (15-24) left Windsor Essex during a similar period.
- ↔ Across the region the composition of families has dramatically changed over the last 10 years, and it is clear that families have been moving from the city centre to the surrounding municipalities. While the number of lone parent families have increased across the region. It is difficult to determine if the positive impact of the growth in families is overridden by the increase in lone parent families.
- ↓ Across Essex County the percentage of lone parent families increased since 2001 with Windsor having the highest rate of lone parents at 23.1 percent.
- ↑ Generally speaking the overall percentage of young people (0-19) increased in 2011, reversing the trends from the previous census. However, youth population trends in individual municipalities vary widely.
- ↑ Over the last census the percentage of population over 55+ increased to 28.1 percent from 24.1 percent. All communities in the region experienced an increase in the population of older adults with Tecumseh experiencing the largest increase at 7.3 percent.

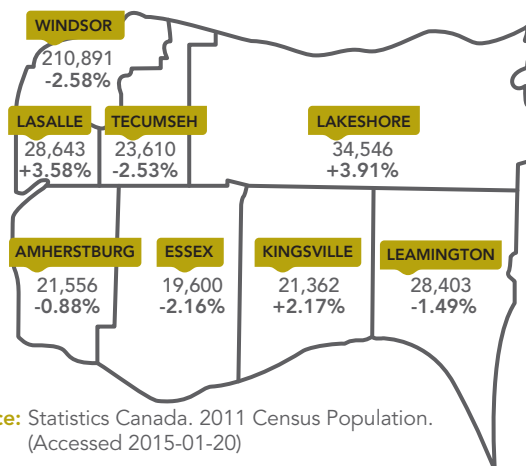
TOTAL POPULATION & POPULATION GROWTH

During the last census period, the population of the Essex County region declined by 1.21 percent from 393,402 (2006) to 388,611 (2011), with five out of eight municipalities experiencing declines in population. The City of Windsor experienced the sharpest decline at 2.60 percent while LaSalle, Lakeshore and Kingsville continued to experience growth albeit at lower rates when compared to the previous census period.ⁱⁱⁱ

As a comparison, from 2006 to 2011 Canada and Ontario experienced an overall population growth at a rate of 5.9 percent and 5.7 percent respectively.^{iv} Although there are some indications from regional migration data that the region is losing people overall, some of these fluctuations are caused by people moving to other communities within our region.

The impact of these shifts in population are important as some public services, the location of school or hospitals, and programs like children's mental health, consider demographic and socioeconomic factors when determining fiscal allocations or areas of service. Chart 1 shows the individual communities of Windsor-Essex region and their respective change in population between 2006 and 2011.

Chart 1: Population (2011) and percent population change, 2006-2011, by WEC municipality



Source: Statistics Canada. 2011 Census Population. (Accessed 2015-01-20)

More recent population estimates for the Windsor CMA have seen our region's population rise from approximately 320,000 people in 2011 after the census to 333,900 in 2014.^v Unfortunately there is no separate data for each community; the projected growth in the Windsor CMA population is in line with the slow recovery in our economy.

NET MIGRATION

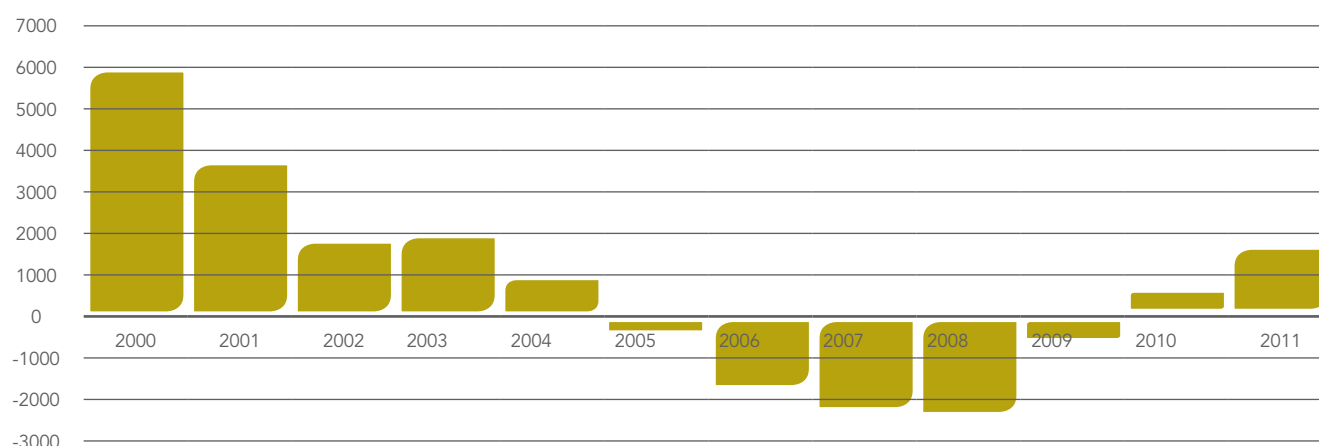
Net migration represents the movement of people into and out of our region. There are a wide range of factors that influence the movement of people but generally speaking economic opportunity and overall standards of living within a community are major drivers of migration.

Chart 2 illustrates net migration of the Windsor CMA since the year 2000. The data helps illustrate the depths of the hard times that were suffered by the Windsor-Essex region during the recent recession. Over the most recent census period, the Windsor CMA lost a total of 4,564 people.^{vi} This earlier trend is consistent with the

loss of jobs in the community and many individuals and families leaving to secure employment in other regions or provinces. Although data for the Leamington CA is not available, it would be expected that a similar if not a more severe trend would occur, as smaller communities tend to suffer more during economic downturns.

Thankfully there are signs of hope; in 2010 net migration began to shift into positive territory again. This trend mirrors the improvement that was occurring in the employment market and the tentative economic recovery overall.

Chart 2: Net migration from 2000-2011 in the Windsor CMA



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 111-0028 - In-, out- and net-migration estimates, by provincial regions and age group, annual (number), CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-01-20)

Within these numbers important subgroups like youth tell a different story. The Windsor Star series *"Windsor Gone"* published in December 2014, examined the flight of young people from the Windsor-Essex region, finding that over 30,000 young people aged 15-29 left the Windsor-Essex region between 2000 and 2013.^{vii} The actual number of young people who left the region between 2000 and 2012 is a shocking 35,101.¹ Juxtaposed to this exodus was 25,373 people of the same age group entering the region during the same period.^{viii}

The overall net loss of over of approximately 10,000 young people over 15 years is a significant blow to Windsor-Essex region and if the trend isn't reversed it could create demographic imbalances that could potentially lead to a wide range of social or economic issues including: declining property values; increased numbers of abandoned or derelict homes; and increased concentrations of local poverty.

¹ Note the 2013 values were projected at the time of the data collect and as a result were not included in this value.

FAMILY COMPOSITION

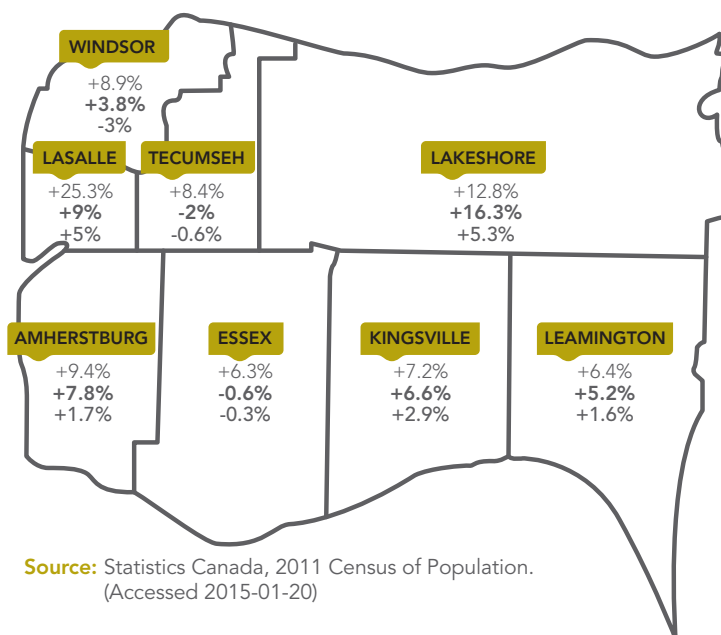
The loss of young people in our region has a major impact on families. Families make up the backbone of our communities and changes in family composition in a region can have a dramatic impact on the fabric of a community. The family (regardless of definition) is the primary social unit within society and it serves an important role in shaping and developing individuals within our communities. According to Statistics Canada a *family* refers to married/common law couples (no children); married/common law couples with children; and also lone parent families.^{ix} For purpose of this report, reference to family will refer to the Statistics Canada definition outlined above.

Our region has seen wide shifts in family compositions since 1996. Boom times in the 1990s saw family number skyrocket in the bedroom communities around the City of Windsor. As the new century dawned, growth began to slow across the region, in some communities (Tecumseh and Essex) declines in families began to occur. The declining growth in family composition continued through the economic downturn with the City of Windsor beginning to see an exodus of families.

The beneficiaries of the declines in many ways have been the suburban communities of Lakeshore and LaSalle.

The continued strong growth of families, even during the recession, supports what is common knowledge for many people from our region – that an exodus of middle and upper income families is occurring from Windsor, leaving behind a smaller and poorer city in its wake.

Chart 3: Percent Change Family Population:
1996-2001 | **2001-2006** | 2006-2011 by WEC municipality



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population.
(Accessed 2015-01-20)

LONE PARENT FAMILIES

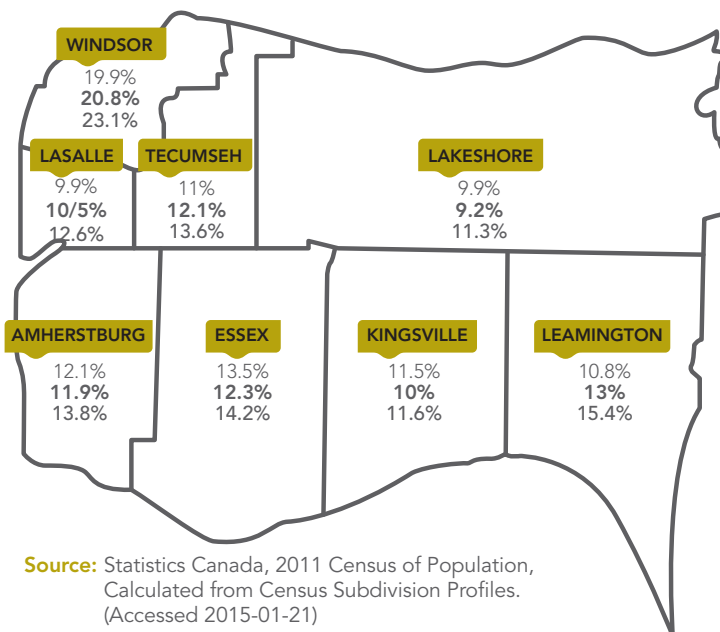
Lone parent families represent an important subdivision of families in our region as single parent families statistically make less than half the income of traditional two parent families (income will be discussed more in Section 3).^x With that in mind, the percentage of lone parent families increased across Essex County with Windsor experiencing a 2.3 percent increase of lone parent families while experiencing a 3 percent decline in the overall percentage of families living in the municipality.

This helps reinforce the narrative that Windsor is *bleeding* its middle and upper income families along

with people in general to the surrounding jurisdictions and beyond. This has resulted in the City of Windsor having the highest percentage of lone parent families in the region at 23.1 percent. This compares poorly not only with the rest of the region but rest of the province and country which have lone parent rates of approximately 16.2 percent. Drilling down further into the lone-parent statistics, there is a disturbing local trend with women making up 81.8 percent of lone parents in Windsor compared to 78.6 percent in the rest of Canada as female-led families are three times more likely than the general population to live in poverty.^{xi}

The impact of lone parent families looms large in Windsor-Essex. Statistically more likely to have lower income levels, single parent families often find themselves struggling and forced to turn to social services and community agencies to get by. These struggles are compounded by challenges overcoming barriers like access to reliable transportation. Children of a single parent also potentially start their lives at a disadvantage, having to try and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.^{xii} These factors, coupled with an exodus of *well off* families and young people could potentially be a cause of future social and economic strain.

Chart 4: Percent lone-parent families: 2001 | 2006 | 2011
by WEC municipality



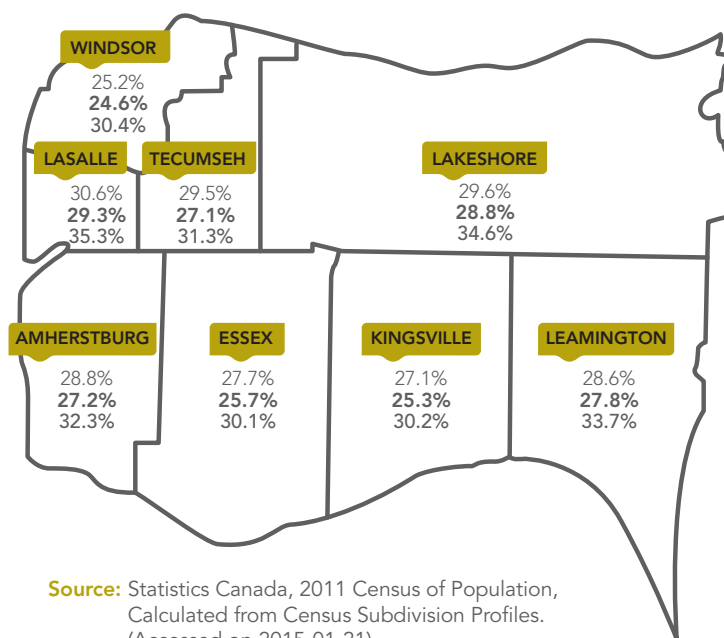
Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population, Calculated from Census Subdivision Profiles. (Accessed 2015-01-21)

CHILDREN AND YOUTH, 0-19 YEARS

The percentage of young people under the age of 19 is directly related to the family composition of a community and the demographics of the community. Between 2001 and 2006 every community saw a decline in young people. This trend reversed last census period. The distribution of young people within the community naturally impacts the availability of certain social and child services as well as schools.

Between 2006 and 2011, LaSalle saw the greatest increase of young people at 6.0 percent followed by Leamington at 5.9 percent and Lakeshore and Windsor at 5.8 percent. A portion of these shifts can be explained by changes in both LaSalle and Lakeshore population and percent population of families while Windsor and Leamington saw significant increases in lone parent families. Both of these trends would be contributing factors in the higher percent population of children and youth in these four communities in 2011.

Chart 5: Percent population ages 0-19:
1996-2001 | 2001-2006 | 2006-2011 by WEC municipality



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population, Calculated from Census Subdivision Profiles. (Accessed on 2015-01-21)

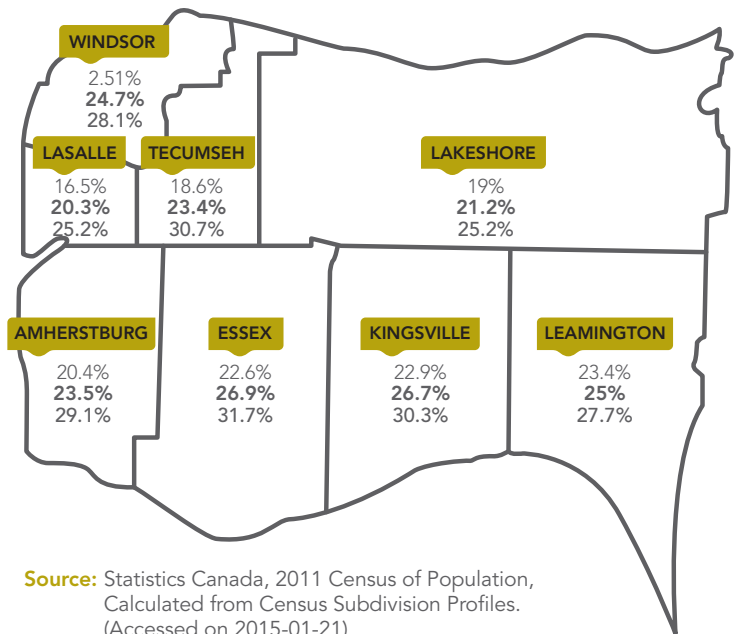
OLDER ADULTS, 55+ YEARS AND OVER

A total of 109,345 people living in Windsor-Essex County are age 55 or over, representing 28.1 percent of the total population; this is an increase from 2006 where the number of older adults was 95,125 or 24.1 percent.^{xiii} The percentage of older adults who are 80 and older compared to the total population has grown slightly since 2006 from 3.6 percent to 4.2 percent in 2011. It is likely that the trend of the *greying* of Windsor-Essex will continue as efforts to attract retirees to our region have increased in recent years.^{xiv}

Across the region of Essex County, the overall percent population of older adults continued to increase in the last census period (2006-2011); a trend which has been occurring since 2001. Tecumseh experienced the largest percentage population change at 7.3 percentage points; this is consistent with the fact that Tecumseh experienced the least change in its children and youth population. Conversely, two communities that showed high percentage population changes in their children and youth population (Windsor and Leamington) showed the lowest percentage increases in their older adult population.

Overall, this increase in population over the age of 55 aligns with provincial and national trends. As baby boomers continue to age and life expectancy increases, the percentage of the population in their *golden years* will increase.^{xv}

Chart 6: Percent population ages 55+:
2001 | 2006 | 2011 by WEC municipality⁶



Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 Census of Population, Calculated from Census Subdivision Profiles. (Accessed on 2015-01-21)



OUR MULTI-CULTURAL COMMUNITY

Note to Reader: Ethno-cultural and immigration data is derived from the new National Household Survey which means that data was provided on a voluntary basis compared to previous censuses where the data was part of the mandatory long form. Therefore, the data that is reported below represents a new benchmark for the community. For comparison purposes the National Household Survey presents data from previous census periods have been adjusted to align with the new methodology. The data that is reflected below cannot be compared to the data that was reported previously in the two Community Well-Being Reports (2006 and 2009).

Recent immigration

Recent immigrants are a population at significant risk within our region. Provincial data in Ontario has shown that in their first year since landing in Canada, only about half of immigrants manage to have income with a mean of \$18,700 in 2008. By their second year in Canada, the data shows some improvement with approximately 71 percent of immigrants having income, and the mean income increasing to \$23,000 which is still well below the low income cut off in Canada.^{xvi}

In 2011, there were 84,640 people who were not born in Canada living in the Windsor CMA and Leamington CA representing 21.6 percent of the population.^{xvii} According to the National Household Survey, a total of 10,100 people arrived from 2006-2011 slightly higher than the 9,795 immigrants that arrived in the previous five year period (2001-2005). Over the last decade 19,815 arrived compared to 19,075 in the previous decade (1991-2000). This stability in immigration is important as Statistics Canada projects that by 2031, 80% of all population growth in Canada will come from new immigration.^{xviii}

From 2006 to 2011, just over half (52 percent) of immigrants were from Asia with 44.6 percent of those immigrants arriving from West Central Asia/Middle East. The greatest number of immigrants is arriving from Iraq (12.9 percent). Southern Asia had the next highest number of immigrants at 1,170, primarily from India (500) and Pakistan (320).^{xix}

Visible minorities

Visible minorities make up an important part of our community. A total of 57,795 people self-identified as a visible minority in the Windsor CMA and Leamington CA with the three predominant statuses identified as Arab (23.7 percent), Black (19.1 percent) and South Asian (16.7 percent).² The visible minority population represents 15.1 percent of the total population in private households or 14.8 percent of the total CMA and CA population.^{xx}

"Canada is not a melting pot in which the individuality of each element is destroyed in order to produce a new and totally different element. It is rather a garden into which have been transplanted the hardiest and brightest flowers from many lands, each retaining in its new environment the best of the qualities for which it was loved and prized in its native land."

– John Diefenbaker,
Prime Minister of Canada, 1957-1963

² Visible Minority are defined by the Employment Equity Act as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour".

DISCUSSION AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The demographic trends in the Windsor-Essex County Region point to a number of challenges for our region going forward. Between an aging population with fewer young people remaining in our community, to an increasing reliance on new immigrants to maintain population stability, the Windsor-Essex region is undergoing a slow but steady transformation.

What is key is acknowledging this transformation and managing change in a manner that ensures that it is inclusive for all members of our communities. Social exclusion of population has a direct impact on individuals' health, income and overall well-being.^{xxi}

Stemming the tide of young people leaving our communities

The loss of young people and families from Windsor and the surrounding communities is of concern. Youth engagement programs like YKNOT Windsor Essex are important at connecting young people with opportunities and assisting them staying in our region.^{xxii} Unfortunately, the hollowing out of Windsor's city centre and the migration to the bedroom communities surrounding Windsor has taken away the connectivity in our region that many young people crave.

With few promising career opportunities and the inability to access the larger population centres through transit. This may be driving young people to move onto greener pastures elsewhere, stemming this tide will take time and effort from parties across our region as a single economic shock could easily shatter years of work. County youth may also be disenchanted at not being able to access limited opportunity in Windsor due to a lack of regional transit.

The first steps of this change could be occurring with the University of Windsor following St. Clair College in establishing campuses in the city core. By bringing young people to the downtown during the school year presents a tremendous opportunity for the schools, businesses and the citizenry to engage one another in an effort to revitalize this area. Unfortunately only time will tell if these actions will draw young people back to the centre of the city and get them to set down roots.

Engaging seniors

Ensuring that seniors do not become marginalized within their communities is going to be vital in the years to come. As the population continues to age and additional retirees are attracted by the temperate climate and inexpensive housing of Windsor-Essex County we must make sure that our community's social services adapt to the needs of this growing demographic group. Although organizations like Life After Fifty, are actively engaging this age group through programs like the Promoting Seniors Independence which does community outreach with seniors in low-income neighbourhoods, more needs to be done.^{xxiii}

As the population continues to age, additional strain will be placed on health care and social services to assist seniors. If our region does not take pre-emptive measures to ensure that this population remains healthy and active within our communities we could face difficult choices in the future as to how we support this population in our urban and rural communities.

Integrating new arrivals

Statistics Canada has estimated that by 2031, migration could account for 80 percent of Canada population growth.^{xxiv} What this means is that structures and mechanisms need to be in place to assist new arrivals to Canada so they can properly integrate into our communities while still maintaining their distinctive culture. As outlined in this section, the first few years after arriving in Canada are some of the hardest, with the lowest earning potential.

Initiatives like the Windsor Essex County Local Immigration Partnership are an important tool and first step in ensuring immigrants are successful in transitioning to life in Canada. Specialized programming like Place du Partage's Youth Agora Homework Club which provides an afterschool program for francophone African youths in our region is an example of the type of specialized programming that will become important as we move into the future. We will need to expand types of programming to ensure the new arrivals of all ages can obtain the language and employment training to make their joining of our communities as easy as possible.

SECTION 2:









Our Health

The physical and mental health of the citizens of our community plays an important role in the quality of life in Windsor-Essex. Health not only impacts people of our community but their economic and social well-being. Since the last Community Well-Being report in 2009, overall progress has been made in numerous indicators but in many cases we still remain below Ontario averages.

For a different perspective and additional data on the physical and mental health in Windsor-Essex, please refer to the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit's 2014 Social Determinants of Health Report.^{xxv}



SUMMARY OF KEY TRENDS

-  Overall self-reporting of the general health of citizens in Essex County has improved since the last community well-being report with the percentage of people describing themselves as in good or very good health increasing from 56.9 percent in 2009 to 64.1 percent in 2013.
-  Overall obesity rates have increased in Essex County since 2008 resulting in Windsor-Essex remaining above the provincial average both in 18+ and over 65+ age groups. Unfortunately local data on youth obesity rates is considered unreliable by Statistics Canada
-  The overall trend in citizens of Windsor-Essex suffering pain or discomfort that prevents them from carrying out activities has improved, with a decline of 6.5 percent over the period of study.
-  The total number of suicides has declined both in Windsor and Essex County between 2008 and 2013.
-  The number of people consuming at least 5 fruits and vegetables per day remained relatively unchanged over the 6 years reviewed but still below the provincial average. Unfortunately for older adults there was a clear downward trend in fruit and vegetable consumption.
-  There was a slight decline in smoking rates in Windsor-Essex from 19.3 percent to 18.1 percent.
-  Overall reports of excessive alcohol consumption declined over the six years reviewed. Unfortunately due to a change in definitions, the 2013 data (and all data moving forward) will use a slightly different definition that earlier years and previous Community Well-Being Reports.
-  Overall access to a regular medical doctor has declined for most age groups in Windsor-Essex but, nine out of ten citizens can still have access to regular medical doctor.

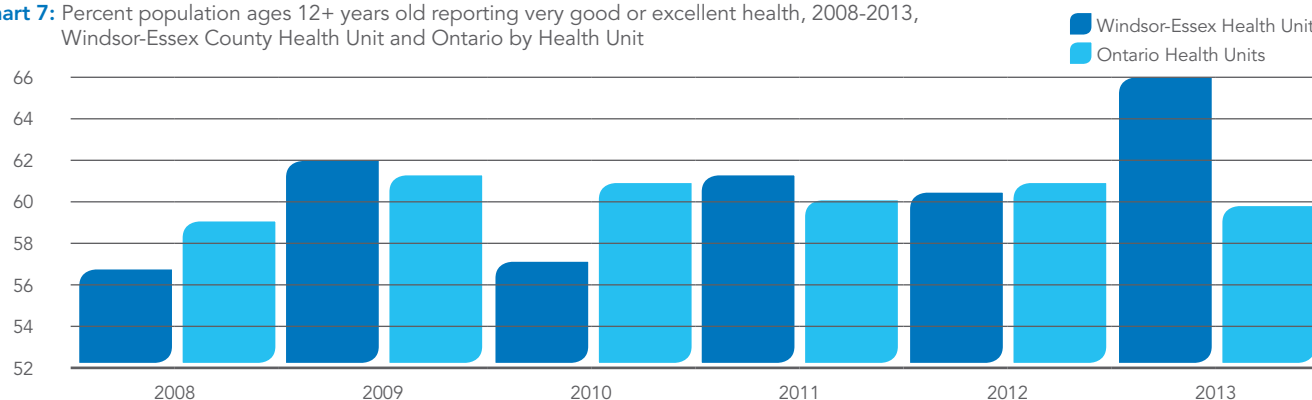
PHYSICAL HEALTH

Self-reported general health

If a person feels in good health they are more likely to be active and productive members of our community. Although this statement doesn't always hold true (a person who feels healthy but is unaware of a sickness) the self-reported general health of a community is an excellent baseline to measure the feelings of individuals about their health.

Self-report of general health as very good or excellent experienced some fluctuation from 2008 to 2010 where in 2009 the highest percent population ages 12+ reported very good or excellent health (62 percent). In 2010 this dropped to 57.1 percent. Over the next three years (2011-2013), the percent population who reported good or very good health increased reaching 64.1 percent in 2013. This recent score is the highest Windsor-Essex has scored compared to the province (64.1 percent vs 59.8 percent) in the years examined.

Chart 7: Percent population ages 12+ years old reporting very good or excellent health, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit

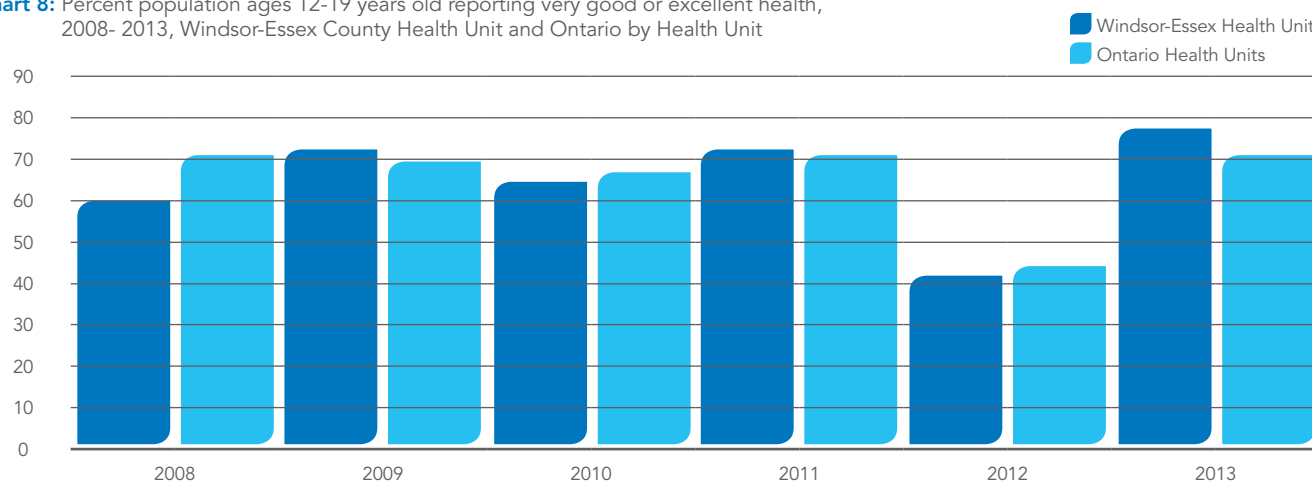


Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-01-23)

The data on health indicators have also been examined for two age cohorts, 12 – 19 years and 65+ years and older. Since 2010, the percent population 12 – 19 years reporting very good or excellent health has been steadily increasing; in 2012 the highest percent

population reported very good to excellent health at 76.7 percent which was also higher than 71.1 percent for Ontario. In 2013, these numbers declined slightly but Windsor-Essex's youth still rate themselves as in better health than the provincial average.

Chart 8: Percent population ages 12-19 years old reporting very good or excellent health, 2008- 2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit

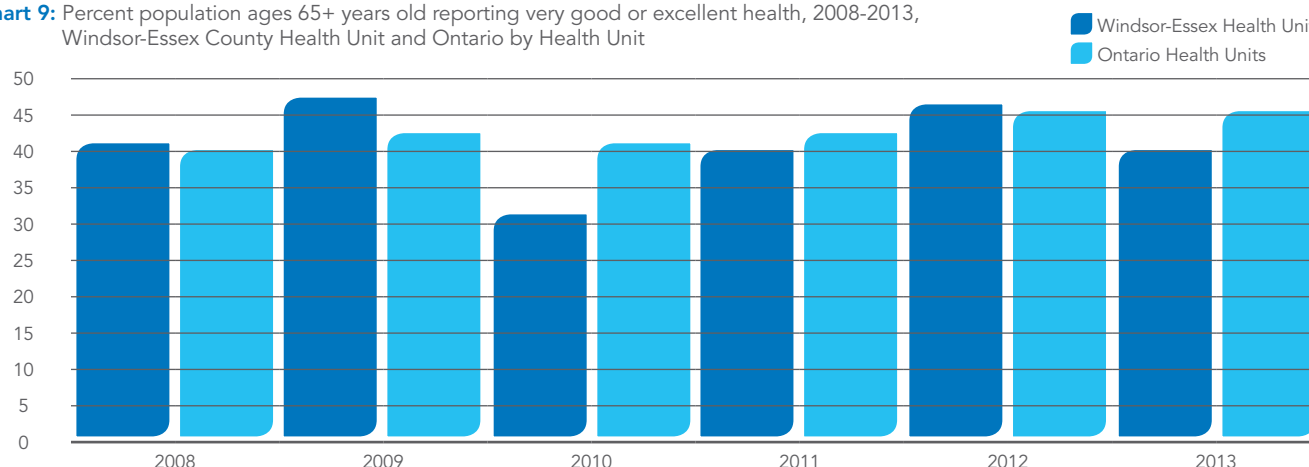


Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-01-23)

The 65+ cohort showed a decline in their self-reported health from 2009 to 2010 from 46.8 to 31.8 percent; this was also 10 percentage points lower than the Ontario comparison. Since 2010, this trend reversed and the percent population of older adults reporting very good

or excellent health has been on an upward trend. By 2013, 40.7 percent of older adults reported very good or excellent health – a 10.9 percent decline from 2012 at 45.7 percent, and below the provincial average of 45.5 percent.

Chart 9: Percent population ages 65+ years old reporting very good or excellent health, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit



Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-01-25)

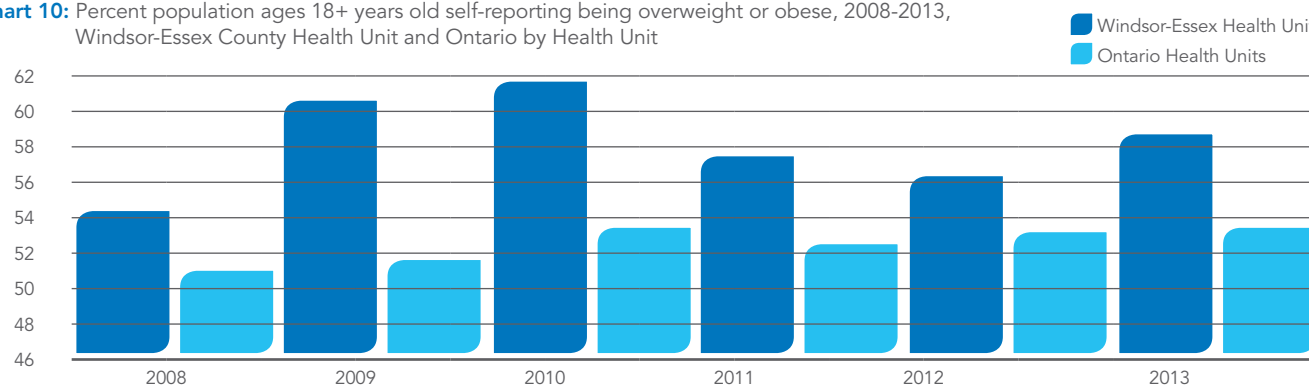
Body weight

A person's body weight impacts their physical and mental health. Individuals with a higher body mass index (BMI) are at greater risk for a number of chronic and debilitating diseases.^{xxvi}

Overall, the percentage of the population 18+ years

reporting as overweight or obese has decreased slightly since a high of 61.6 percent in 2010; to 58.7 percent in 2013. Each year since 2008, the percentage of self-reported obese individuals in Windsor-Essex County has been higher than the percentage for Ontario which remained at a fairly stable level during that period.

Chart 10: Percent population ages 18+ years old self-reporting being overweight or obese, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit

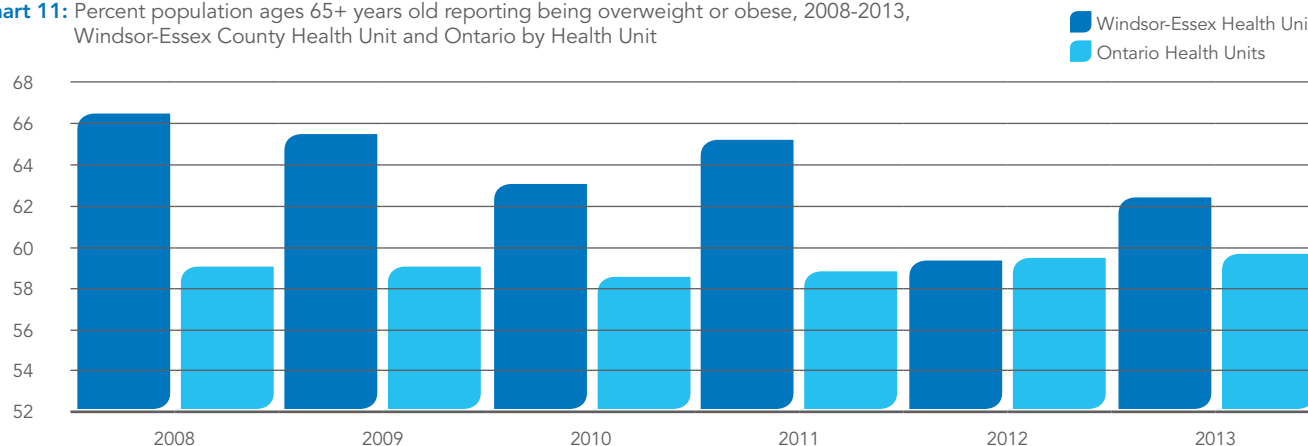


Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-01-23)

For older adults in Windsor-Essex obesity rates remain above the regional average despite declining from a high of nearly two-thirds of respondents self-reporting as obese in 2008. At 62.8 percent, the older adult

obesity rate is still almost 3 percentage points higher than the provincial average for that age group and almost 10 percent higher than the Ontario's general population's self-reported rate.

Chart 11: Percent population ages 65+ years old reporting being overweight or obese, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit



Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-01-23)

Unfortunately the self-reported data on obesity rates for those aged 12-19 was deemed too unreliable to be released by Statistics Canada. For this reason we have

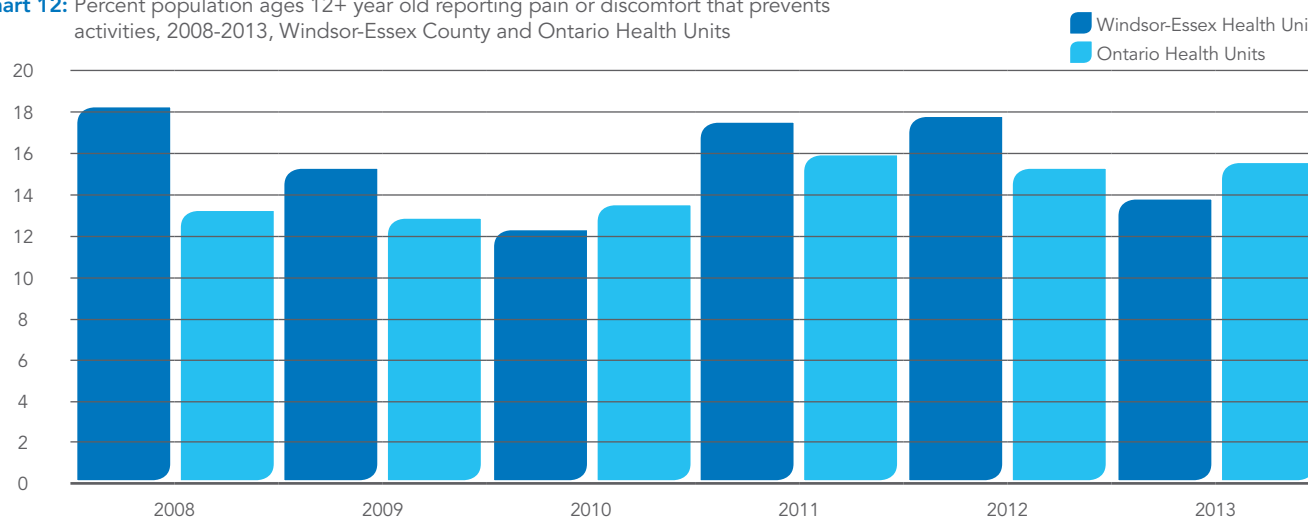
not reported on this data but overall our region finds itself on a losing end of the “battle of the bulge”.

Persons living with pain or discomfort that prevents activities

There are a variety of reasons why an individual could be living with pain or discomfort; whether injury from the workplace or personal life, or an accident that was no fault of their own. When discomfort or pain interferes with the lives of people its impacts ripple out from the individual across our communities. Whether through lost time on the job or benefits paid out by taxpayers through disability insurance, the impact of pain and discomfort on the lives of the people of Windsor-Essex is important.

What the Windsor-Essex data illustrates is that more than one of every nine residents in the Windsor-Essex region suffers from some sort of pain or discomfort that prevents them from completing activities. Although this rate is down from a high of over 18 percent in 2008 to 11.8 percent in 2013, the size of the annual fluctuations is a reason to be cautious about a future rebound, particularly since provincial rates have held relatively steady the past few years.

Chart 12: Percent population ages 12+ year old reporting pain or discomfort that prevents activities, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County and Ontario Health Units



Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-01-23)

MENTAL HEALTH

Quite often people not only suffer physically but they suffer mentally in far more subtle and severe ways.

Mental illnesses and the stigma they carry have dramatic impacts on peoples' lives and well-being.

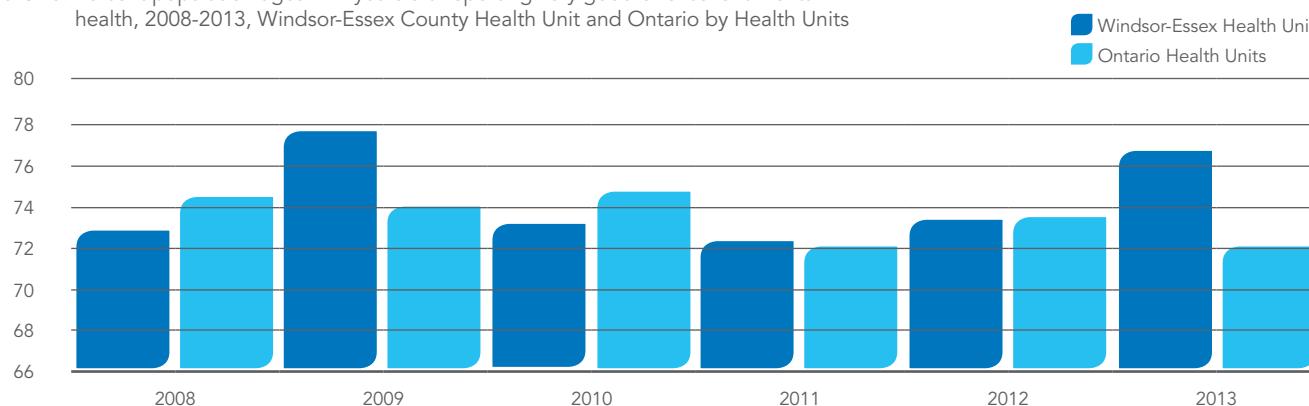
Self-reported mental health

Much like physical health, self-reported mental health and well-being acts a baseline for how the community is feeling about itself. Although a person's mental health may not show physical signs like an injury the impact of mental health challenges can be just as difficult if not more so for a community to overcome.

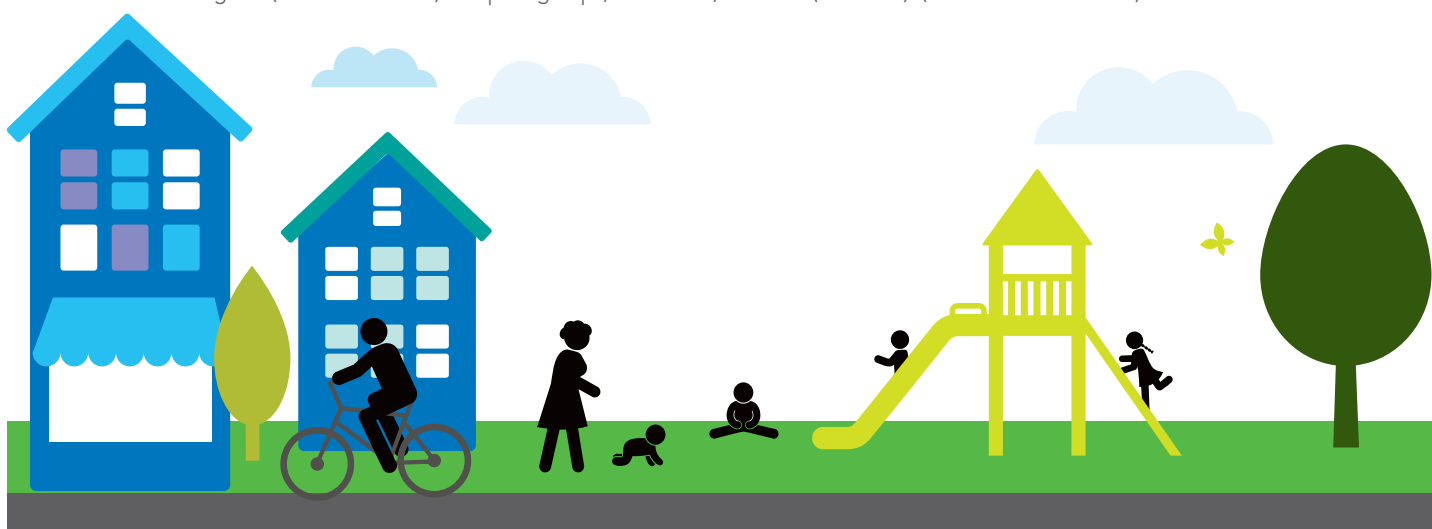
The percentage population 12+ years old reporting very good to excellent mental health has fluctuated

over the six years reviewed from a high of 77.7 percent in 2009 to a low of 72.6 percent in 2012. In 2013, the percentage rebounded to 76.4 percent but whether this is a statistical anomaly or a trend remains to be seen. Self-reported mental health in the region is consistently better than provincial sentiments over the last three years; Windsor-Essex has scored better than Ontario, while provincial rates continue to decline.

Chart 13: Percent population ages 12+ years old reporting very good or excellent mental health, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Units



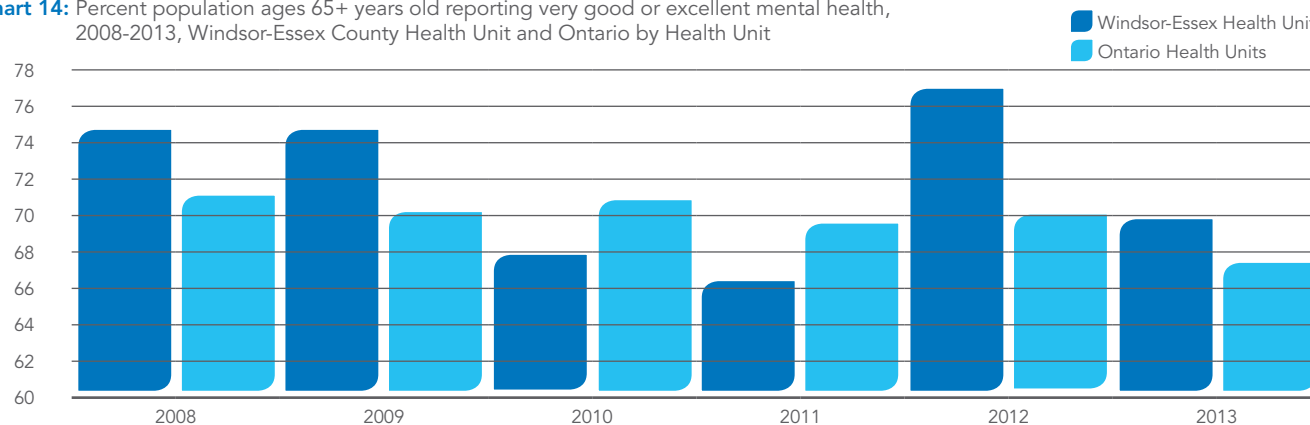
Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-01-23)



When mental health was examined for the population 65+, results indicate some differences over the six year period from 2008 to 2013. In the early years, the percent population 65+ reporting very good to excellent mental health in the region of Essex County was higher than that of Ontario at 74.5 percent for both years. In 2010, a decline of 6.5 percentage points was experienced

to 68.0 percent; a decline continued in 2011 to the lowest percent population 65+ reporting very good to excellent mental health at 66.0 percent. In 2012, a significant increase has occurred to 76.8 percent before declining back to 70.9 percent in 2013 both of which remain higher than that of Ontario at 70.2 and 67.6 percent respectively.

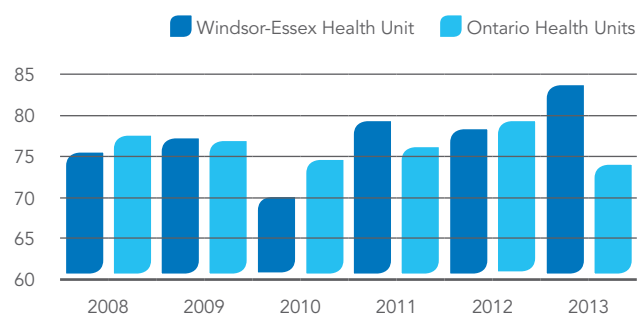
Chart 14: Percent population ages 65+ years old reporting very good or excellent mental health, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit



Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-01-23)

The pattern for those 12 to 19 years reporting very good to excellent mental health mirrors that of the 65+ population. In 2010 to 2011, the lowest percent population reporting very good to excellent mental health in our community was experienced at 70.1 percent respectively and this was lower than the results for Ontario (74.7 percent). In 2012, significant increase occurred to 76.8 percent and continued in 2013 at 83.4 percent.

Chart 15: Percent population ages 12-19 years old reporting very good or excellent mental health, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit



Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-01-23)

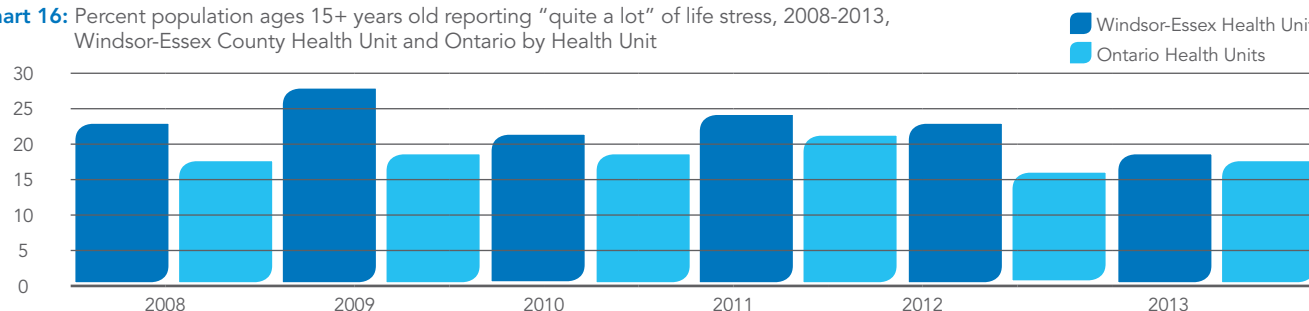
Self-reported life stress

There is a wide array of literature that points to the connection between life stress and a decline in mental health.^{xxvii} Over the last six years results of self-reported life stress have fluctuated up and down from year to year but a concerning fact is that Windsor-Essex consistently scores higher than the provincial averages. Strangely, this trend seems to contrast the self-reported good or very good mental health reporting. Unfortunately there is no readily apparent explanation to reconcile these

two trends other than how the respondents interpreted the question or possibly feeling that having “quite a lot” of life stress wasn’t weakening their overall mental health.

In 2009, self-report responses with “quite a lot” of life stress peaked at a high of 27.6 percent of the 15+ population. From this high, the local response of “quite a lot” fluctuated in the low to mid 20 percent range before finally falling below this level to 18.7 percent in 2013.

Chart 16: Percent population ages 15+ years old reporting “quite a lot” of life stress, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit



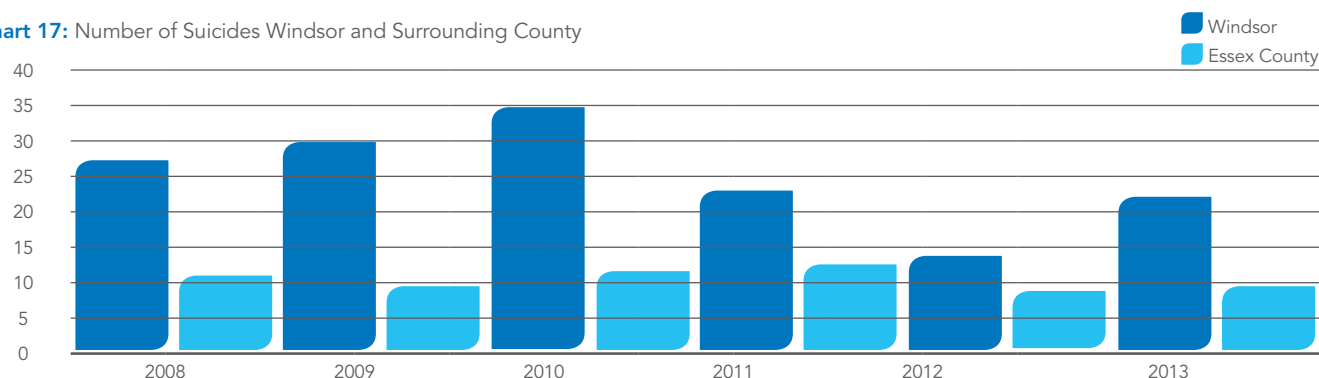
Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-01-23)

Suicides

Unfortunately for some, they are unable to find the help that they need when dealing with stress or mental illness. This can result in people hurting themselves or taking their own lives. The number of suicides fluctuates on an annual basis. There is little correlation between the numbers of suicides each year as the causes of these unfortunate acts are as diverse as people themselves.

The table illustrates that the number of suicides in the City of Windsor range from a high of 35 in 2010 to a low of 14 in 2012. For the rest of Essex County the number of suicides fluctuates to approximately 11 suicides per year. The province of Ontario averages approximately 1,156 suicides per year between 2002 and 2012.^{xxviii}

Chart 17: Number of Suicides Windsor and Surrounding County



Source: Data retrieved through correspondence with the Office of Chief Coroner of Ontario. (Accessed on 2015-03-04)

LIFESTYLE RISK FACTORS

Many physical and mental health risks are impacted by the lifestyle of the individual. Making healthy food choices, physical activity, avoiding smoking and limiting

excessive alcohol consumption can impact the physical and mental health of members of our community.

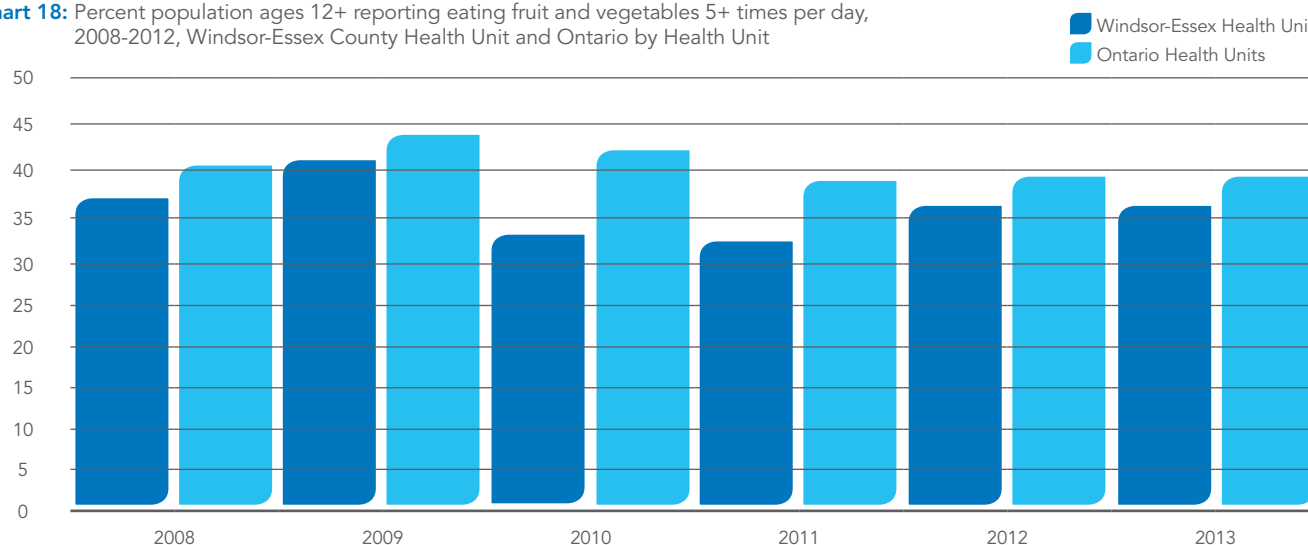
Fruit and vegetable consumption

There is a wide body of literature that examines the connection between individuals' health and poverty.^{xxix} One of the key determinants of poverty is limited access to, or an inability to afford, fresh fruits and vegetables. People with lower income who have less access to fruit and vegetables consumption tend to live less healthy lifestyles, which in turn often increase society's costs of their care. This correlation means that fruit and vegetable consumption is not only an indicator of a healthy lifestyle but also of the overall health of our residents. It is also a proxy for overall economic well-being in a community as fruit and vegetables tend to be more expensive than

canned or processed foods, which in turn gives some indication on consumer spending patterns and the willingness to spend money on high quality, healthy food.

Over the last six years, the percent population 12+ years old reporting they consume fruits and vegetables, 5 or more times a day has lagged behind the Ontario average every year. In 2009 of 40.7 percent of the population reported consuming fruits and vegetables five or more times per day, declining to 36.4 percent of the population consuming fruits and vegetables five or more times in 2012 and 2013.

Chart 18: Percent population ages 12+ reporting eating fruit and vegetables 5+ times per day, 2008-2012, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit

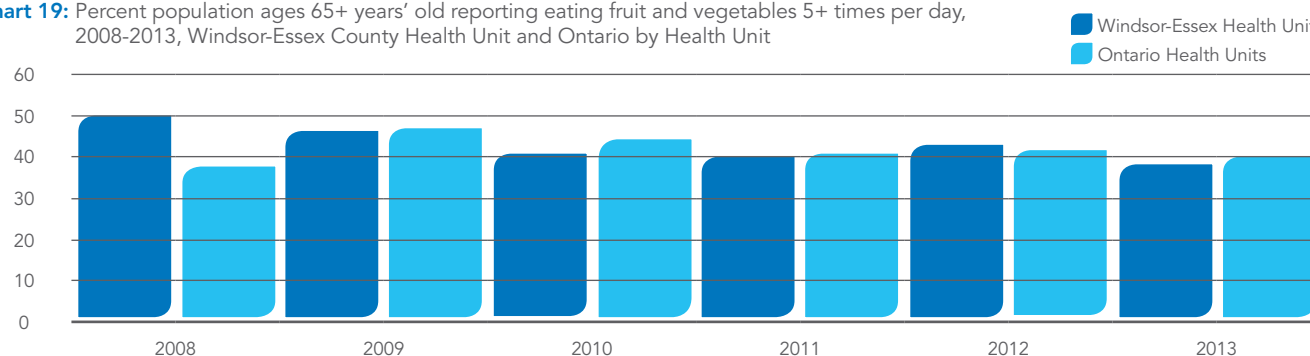


Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-01-23)

There are some discouraging results when those over the age of 65+ are examined. Although the percent population of 65+ in Essex County has been in line with Ontario average over the last six years the trend in fruit consumption has been declining annually. In 2008,

a high of 50.3 percent reported consuming fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day. Fast-forwarding to 2013, consumption has declined to 38.2 percent and 40.7 percent in Windsor-Essex and Ontario respectively.

Chart 19: Percent population ages 65+ years' old reporting eating fruit and vegetables 5+ times per day, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit



Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-01-23)

The data for younger people is considered “use with caution” for all data years in the Windsor-Essex County region. Generally speaking, the data does align with the pattern of the population 12+ years where local data indicates youth in Essex County have lagged behind

Ontario for consuming fruits and vegetables. Provincially, 2008-2013, a slow decline was shown in the data with consumption of fruits and vegetables falling from 44.2 percent to 42.9 percent.^{xxx}



Physical activity

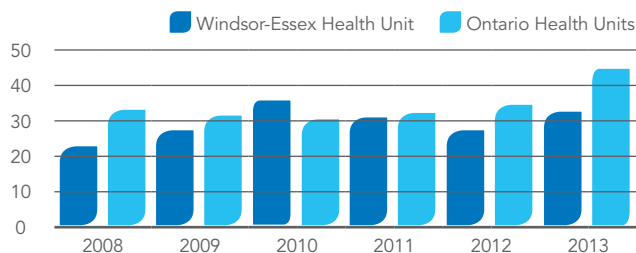
Physical activity is intrinsically tied to overall quality of life as it contributes to mitigating many physical health risks (obesity, heart disease, diabetes etc.) which can accompany a sedentary lifestyle.^{xxxi}

Since 2008, both the province of Ontario and Windsor-Essex have seen increases in reported leisure time activity levels. Windsor-Essex saw an increase of 45.3 percent to 53.4 percent from 2008 through 2012, while the province saw activity rates during leisure time rise from 49.5 percent to 54 percent during this period. Unfortunately for Windsor, a decline from 53.4 percent in 2012 to 48.9 percent in 2013 is concerning and it will be important to see if there is a rebound moving forward.

Young people tend to be more active than the general population. Unfortunately the rate for young people reporting physical activity in their leisure time in Windsor-Essex is relatively flat, if not downward trending. The significant decline in youth activity from 84.7 percent in 2012, to 62.1 percent in 2013 may be a cause for concern. Whether this is just a statistical anomaly or a major shift in young peoples' activity levels remains to be seen.

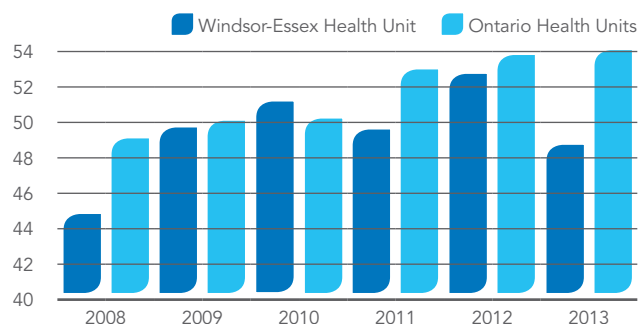
Given the aging population across Canada, Ontario and our region, keeping aging adults active during their leisure time is vitally important to maintaining their health and longevity. Although there has been an upward trend in activity in Windsor-Essex from 30.3 percent in 2008 to 44.1 percent in 2013, our region still lagged behind the provincial rates of activity every year except in 2010.

Chart 22: Percent population ages 65+ years old reporting physical activity during leisure-time, moderately active or active, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit



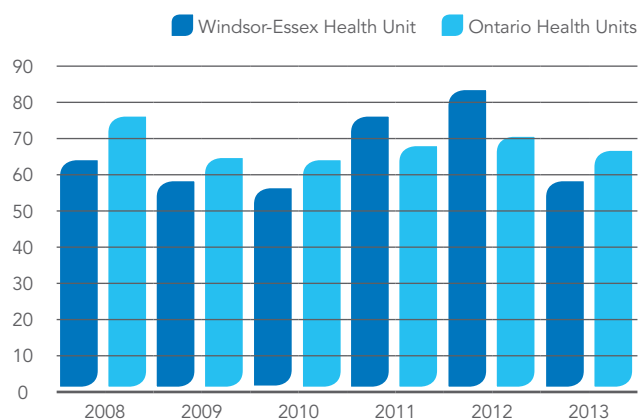
Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-03-05)

Chart 20: Percent population ages 12+ reporting physical activity during leisure-time, moderately active or active, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit



Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-03-05)

Chart 21: Percent population ages 12-19 years old reporting physical activity during leisure-time, moderately active or active, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit



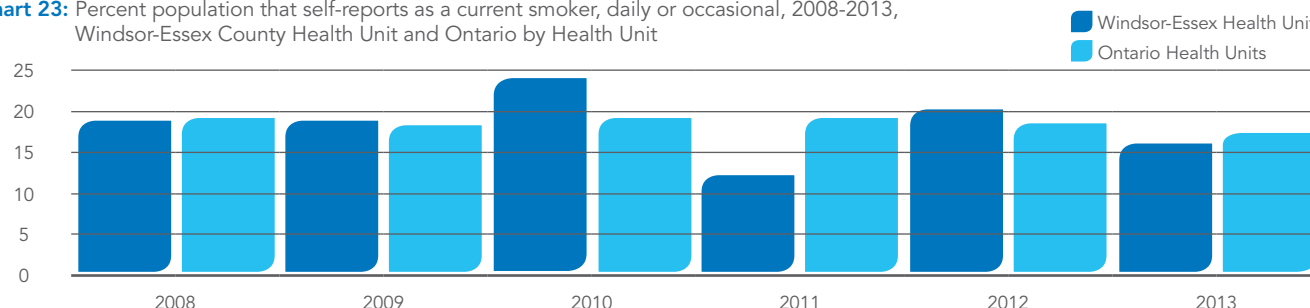
Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-03-05)

Smoking*

Smoking has long been considered one of the leading causes of poor public health around the world.^{xxxii} Unfortunately for Windsor-Essex the number of residents who smoke has fluctuated on either side of the provincial averages most years, except in 2010 when Windsor-Essex was 5.4 percent above the provincial average

and in 2011 when it was 6 percent below the provincial average. These outlier years, are likely statistical anomalies as in 2012 the smoking levels returned to the near 20 percent level with slightly lower levels of 16 percent and 18.1 percent reported in 2013.

Chart 23: Percent population that self-reports as a current smoker, daily or occasional, 2008-2013, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-03-05)*

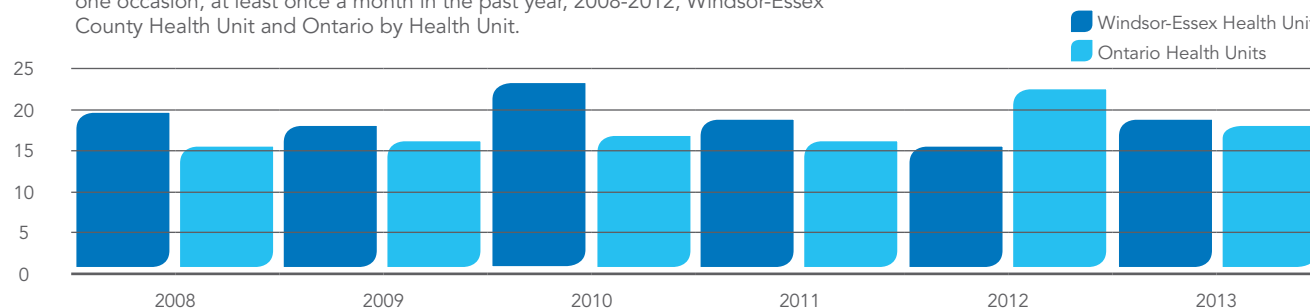
Alcohol consumption/heavy drinking*

For the years 2008-2012 alcohol consumption is measured as the percent population 12+ that reports consuming 5 or more drinks on 1 or more occasions at least once a month in the past year. In 2013, the Alcohol Consumption tracking was terminated and replaced by Statistics Canada with a measure of Heavy Drinking. The reason for this change was to bring the definition of heavy drinking in line with the World Health Organization and Health Canada Guidelines with males having 5 drinks or women having 4 drinks, on one occasion, at least once a

month in the past year. As a result, gender specific data is not directly comparable.^{xxxiii}

Over the six years the percent population has fluctuated up and down with a high of 22.5 percent in 2010. Since then, the percent population reporting heavy consumption has decreased to a low in 16.8 percent (2011) and 16.9 percent (2012). In 2013, under the new definition of heavy drinking, Windsor-Essex reported a rate of 17.6 percent.

Chart 24: Percent population 12 years and older which consumes 5 or more drinks on one occasion, at least once a month in the past year, 2008-2012, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and Ontario by Health Unit.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-03-05)*

*Unfortunately, Statistics Canada recommends that data for both youth (12-19 years) and older adults (65+ years) be withheld or use with caution.

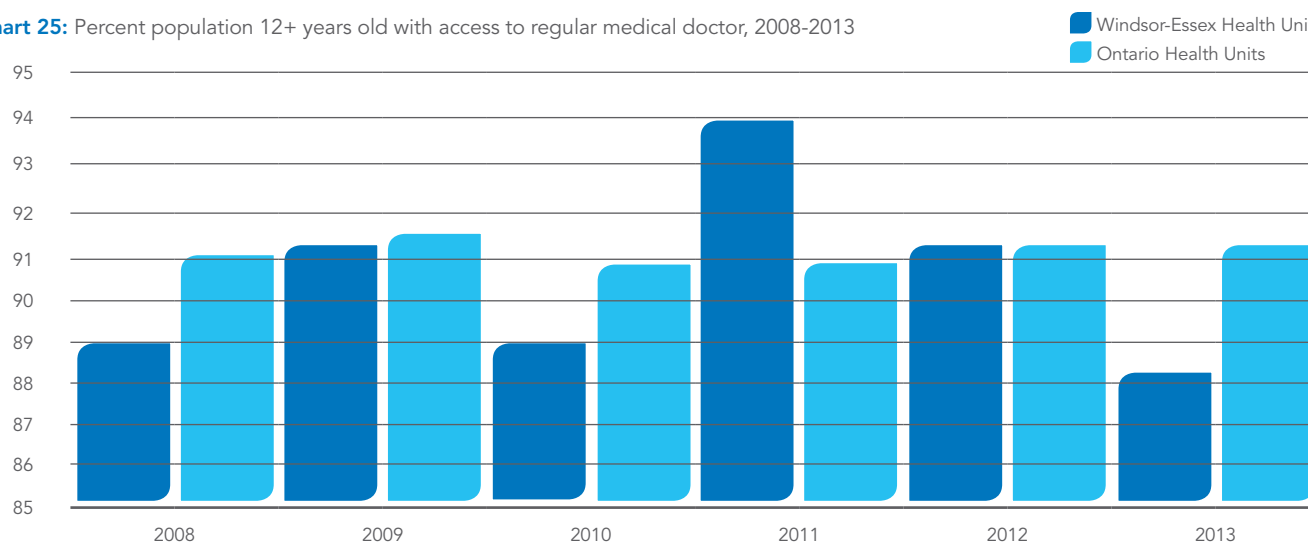
HEALTH CARE

Access to a regular medical doctor

For those who do fall ill or suffer an injury, having access to a doctor is a vital first step on the road to recovery. The term 'medical doctor' refers to a family or general practitioner, or specialist such as a psychiatrist, gynecologist, or pediatrician for respondents' age 12 to 17 years.^{xxxiv}

Although over 88 percent of the Windsor-Essex population has access to a doctor, we have seen a marginal decline from 2008 through 2013, from 89 percent to 88.2 percent. Unfortunately for residents of Windsor-Essex, in every year but 2011 our region experienced lower rates of access to a regular medical doctor than the province which has an average rate over 91 percent.

Chart 25: Percent population 12+ years old with access to regular medical doctor, 2008-2013

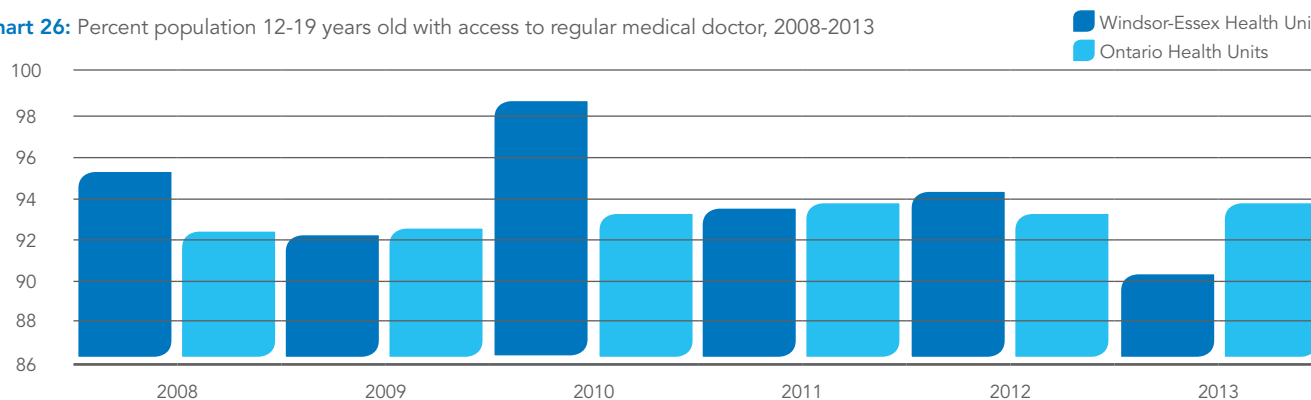


Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-03-16)

For young people age 12-19, Windsor-Essex performs slightly better than the broader population. Unfortunately, the rate of access did decline over the six year period from 95.1 percent to 90.8 percent.

This decline has fluctuated above and below the provincial averages and could possibly have to do with young people generally being healthier and not requiring regular medical doctor visits.

Chart 26: Percent population 12-19 years old with access to regular medical doctor, 2008-2013

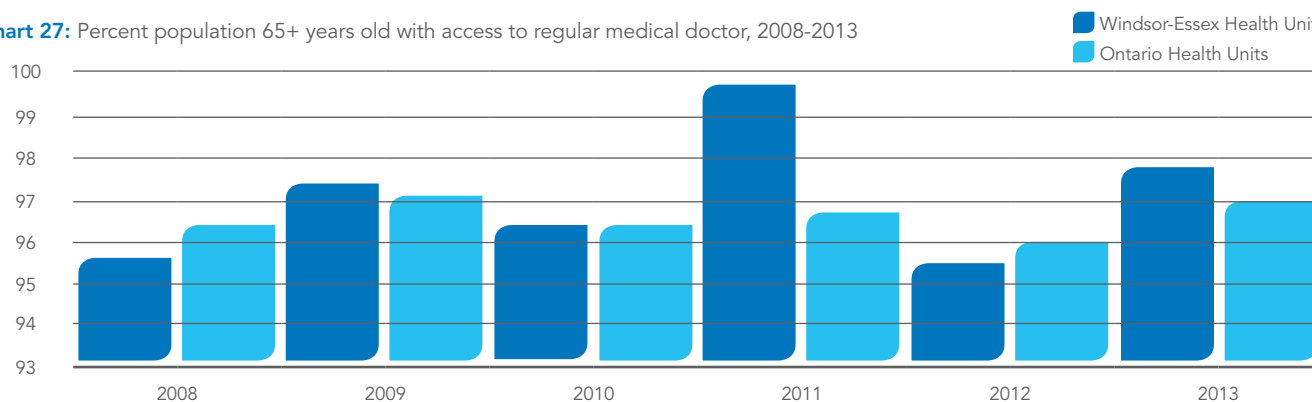


Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-03-16)

With over 95 percent of older adults having access to a regular medical doctor, the 65+ age group is the only group that has seen improved access over the last six years. In 2008, 95.5 percent of 65+ year olds had access

to regular doctors which increased to 97.6 percent in 2013. Compared to provincial averages, Windsor-Essex experienced higher rates of doctor access for this age group in four of the last six years.

Chart 27: Percent population 65+ years old with access to regular medical doctor, 2008-2013



Source: Statistics Canada. Table105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2012 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-03-16)



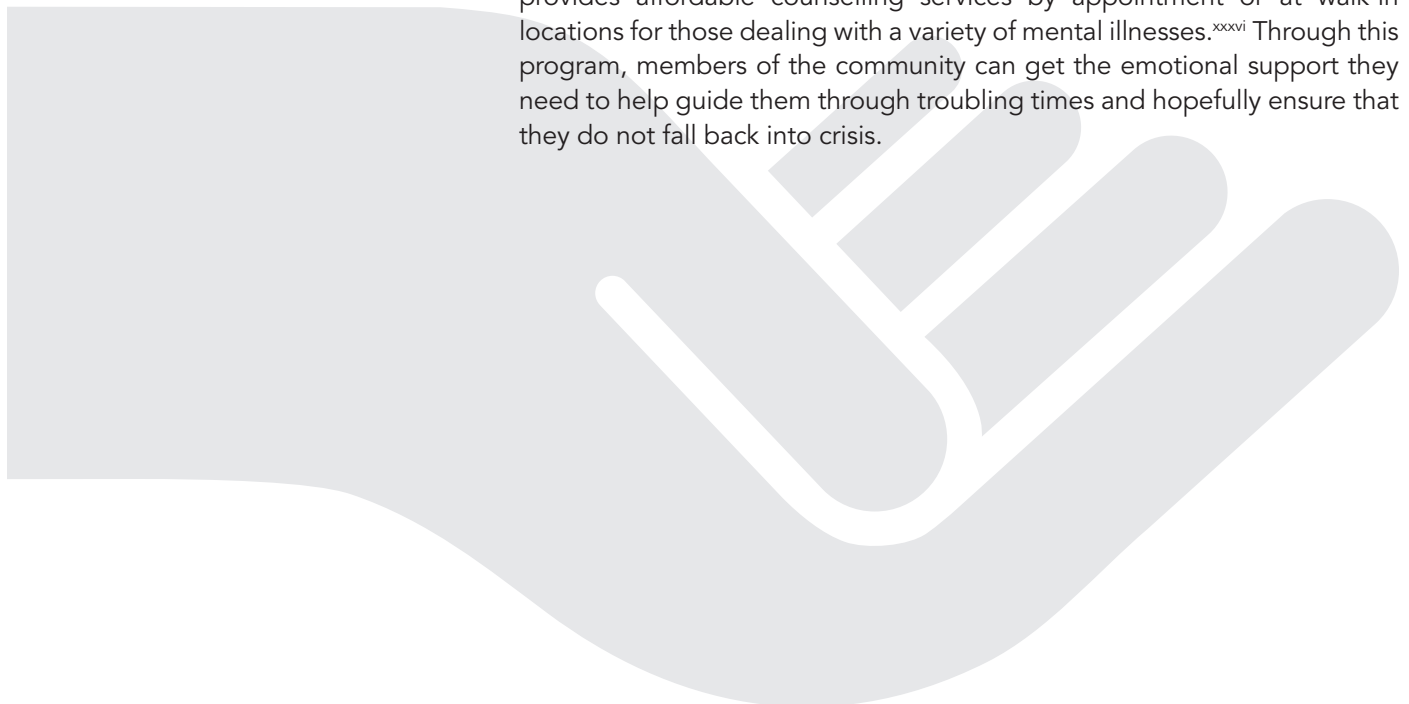
MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The overall health of the residents of Windsor-Essex County has improved over the last six years of this review. Yet there is still work to be done. In many cases the Windsor-Essex region still lags behind provincial averages in key self-reported indicators, as year to year fluctuations have stymied progress and made positive trends difficult to identify. To prevent further declines, we must remain vigilant and work with partners from across the region to ensure that our residents have access to physical and mental health supports, as well as appropriate preventative education and programming.

Ensuring access to services

Having access to a doctor or other medical professional is vitally important in maintaining a high quality standard of living in our region. Although data shows that over 90 percent of residence in the Windsor-Essex Health Unit region have regular access to a doctor, there certainly is more that can be done. Having access to a doctor is only the first step in a treatment plan. Depending on the ailment, the wait times for emergency and elective surgery treatment in Ontario can vary.^{xxxv} Obviously recruiting additional doctors is a vital first step but ensuring other community supports like counselling services and emergency dental care are just as important to keeping people out of the emergency room.

With United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County support, Family Service Windsor-Essex offers the Community Counselling Partnership which provides affordable counselling services by appointment or at walk-in locations for those dealing with a variety of mental illnesses.^{xxxvi} Through this program, members of the community can get the emotional support they need to help guide them through troubling times and hopefully ensure that they do not fall back into crisis.



Mitigating lifestyle risks

Residents of all ages in Windsor-Essex need to be aware and take steps to mitigate lifestyle risk factors that can prevent poor health. Engraining this behavior at a young age is important which is why all Ministry and United Way/Centraide of Windsor-Essex County After School Programs ensure that attendees participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day, as well as receive a healthy snack. By fostering good habits with children and students at a young age, we can give them a head start on a long and fulfilling life. That being said, healthy lifestyle choices need to be reinforced at home by parents by offering healthy meals and encouraging outdoor activities and physical exercise.

Planning for our future to support the community

It is likely that between the time that this report is published and the next report is prepared a decision will be made on the location of the new “mega hospital”. The hospital has the potential to become an anchor in the community, strengthening neighbourhoods and attracting residents and businesses. Its location will have a large impact on health care accessibility, in addition to re-shaping health services for our entire region. Citizens must be involved in its placement and decisions about the services that are offered in and around this new facility.

We can strengthen our community by placing the “mega hospital” in Windsor’s city centre, with potential satellite facilities situated in community hubs around the city and county. Frontline services will be strengthened by including local neighbourhood access points to ensure the broader health and well-being of our region’s citizens.

For service providers and funders in our community, planning for the transition to these new facilities will be vitally important. From determining exactly what services will be offered where, to ensuring the seamless integration of services so that users do not fall through the cracks, while effectively communicating these changes to the community as a whole, a community wide strategy will be needed for funders and service providers to engage these changes are effectively made.

SECTION 3:

Our Economy

"Fifty years ago, Lester Pearson, John Robarts and Jean Lesage and their contemporaries helped build a Social Union that strengthened our federation and bound us closer together. Today, our generation needs to take inspiration from that as we work in co-operation to build a better Economic Union for all Canadians. We know that when we are investing in infrastructure we are building, and when we are building roads and transit, or hospitals and schools, or energy networks and ports, we are growing."

– Kathleen Wynne
Premier of Ontario



SUMMARY OF KEY TRENDS

Many of the social challenges that plague the Windsor-Essex region can be traced back to the prolonged struggles of our local economy. Since 2008, the Windsor CMA did not experience overall gains in employment until December 2013, mainly due to the region's inability to replace or recover job losses in the manufacturing sector. Efforts are underway to diversify our economy and attract or grow

new businesses in different sectors. WindsorEssex Economic Development Corporation,^{xxxvii} WEtech Alliance^{xxxviii} and the newly formed Institute for Border Logistics and Security^{xxxix} are all examples of organizations trying to broaden Windsor-Essex's economic footprint, diversify our economy and ensure good jobs come and stay in our region.

- ↑ There have been some modest improvements in median income for both single and two parent families.
- ↑ Consumer bankruptcies have declined from a high in 2009 of over 8 percent to 3.5 percent in 2012.
- ↓ The number of low income families and youth in Windsor-Essex increased over the last census period.
- ↓ From January 2008 through January 2015 unemployment rose from 8.7 percent to 9.7 percent with wild spikes in between. For youth, modest improvements have occurred with the rate declining from 20.2 percent unemployment to 16.9 percent, but our region still sustains some of the highest unemployment rates in Canada.

- ↑ Homeownership increased in the Windsor-Essex region and remains above provincial and national averages
- ↑ Based on the most recent data, there has been a modest decline in homelessness in Windsor-Essex
- ↓ The number of people using Food Banks is increasing in Windsor-Essex.
- ↓ The level of commuters using alternative forms of transportation to get to work in the Windsor CMA is lower than most comparable jurisdictions.
- ↓ Public transport use per capita in Windsor is lower than other comparable municipalities.

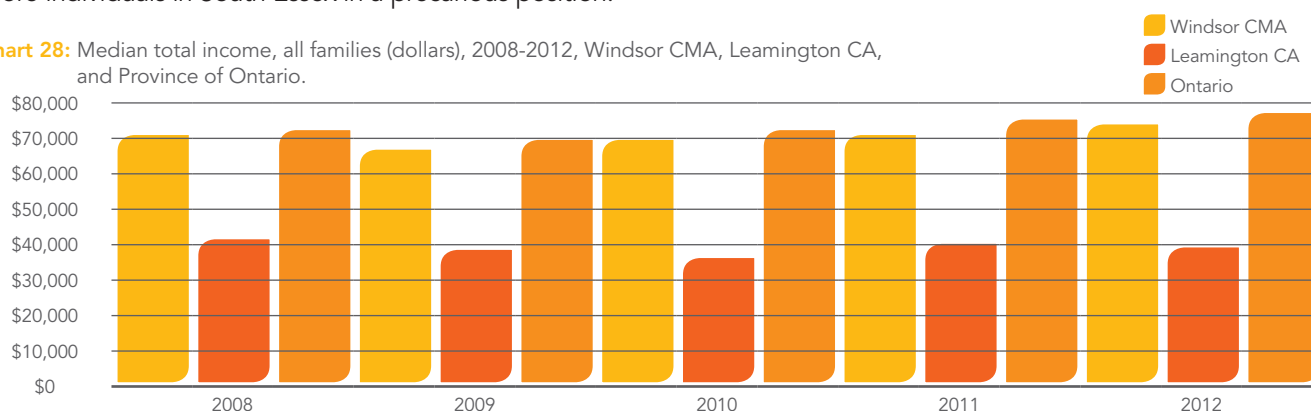
INCOME

Total median income

Total median income represents the midpoint of incomes for families in our region. What this data shows is that families in the Windsor CMA and the province are nearly equivalent in their income level (\$72,220 vs \$74,890) while the Leamington CA lags well behind at \$40,480. Naturally the impact of this income difference is dramatic, placing more individuals in South Essex in a precarious position.

Although there is no single reason for this difference between city and county communities, it is a fact that most of the employment opportunities are situated within the city limits. The lack of a regional public transit system creates barriers to accessing those work opportunities, for county-based residents.^{xl}

Chart 28: Median total income, all families (dollars), 2008-2012, Windsor CMA, Leamington CA, and Province of Ontario.

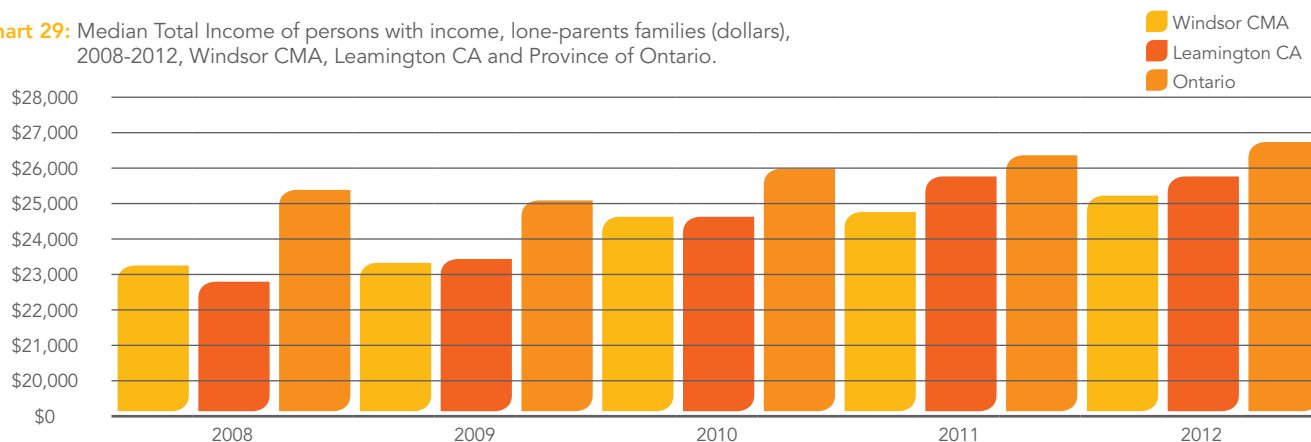


Source: Statistics Canada. Table 111-0009 - Family characteristics, summary, annual. (Accessed on 2015-03-12)

Highlighted earlier in this report, lone parent families are at a distinct economic disadvantage across Canada. The following chart clearly shows that in our region, this holds true with the median income for lone parent families lagging well behind the incomes of all families.

Surprisingly, the Leamington CA shows greater improvement in the median income of lone parent families when compared to the province and Windsor CMA. Since this growth seems to be in contrast to the overall trends in median income it is possible that this outcome is a result of the movement of people into and out of the region rather than improving financial circumstance for single parents.

Chart 29: Median Total Income of persons with income, lone-parents families (dollars), 2008-2012, Windsor CMA, Leamington CA and Province of Ontario.



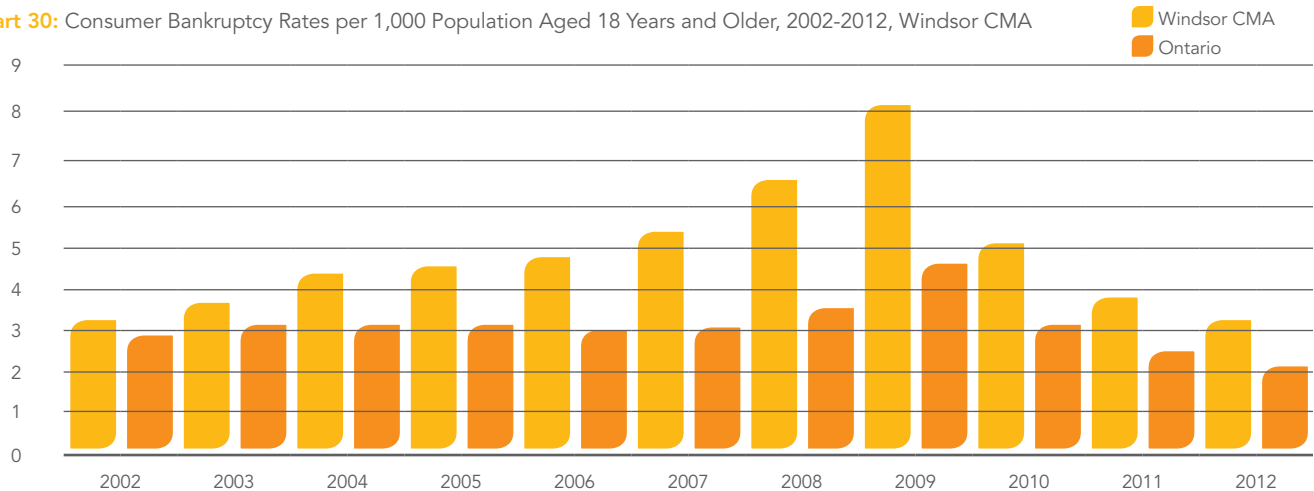
Source: Statistics Canada. Table 111-0009 - Family characteristics, summary, annual. (Accessed on 2015-03-12)

Consumer bankruptcies

Consumer bankruptcies are a primary indicator of financial distress, representing not only the collapse of a person's financial well-being but also the overall strength of the regional economy, as debt accumulation is exacerbated by an economic downturn or mass job losses.

In the Windsor CMA, bankruptcies peaked at 8.1 per 1000 population in 2009 at the height of the economic collapse and downturn of the auto industry. Local bankruptcies were double the provincial average of 4.6 bankruptcies per 1000 in the same year. Since then, the rate has declined steadily and in 2012, the rate was 3.3 per 1000 population, still higher than Ontario at 2.2.

Chart 30: Consumer Bankruptcy Rates per 1,000 Population Aged 18 Years and Older, 2002-2012, Windsor CMA



Source: Industry Canada, Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada (2014). Annual Consumer Insolvency Rates. (Accessed on 2015-03-12).



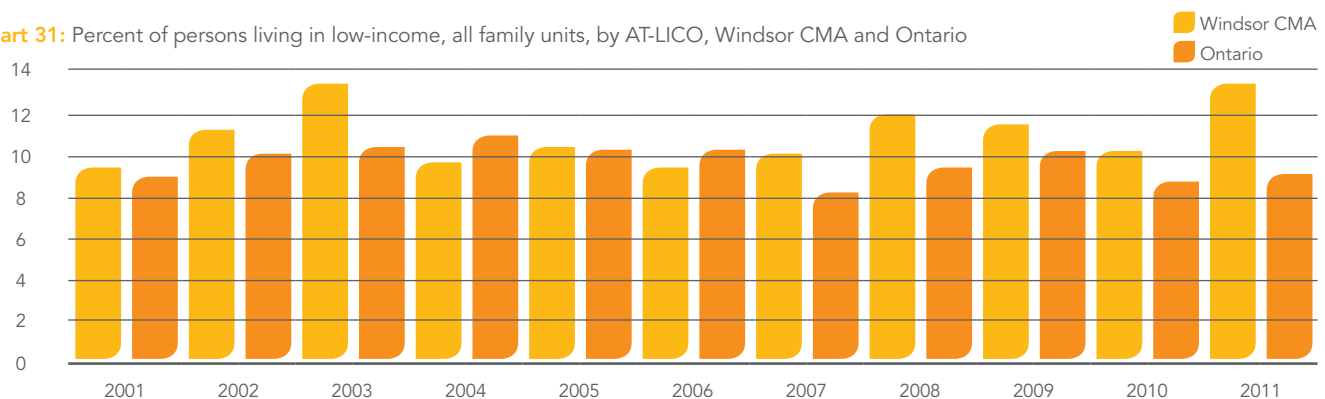
LOW INCOME

Percentage of persons living in low income

Having people living with a low income is not only a personal struggle but it weighs on society as a whole through increased need for social assistance and government transfers, weaker purchasing power in a community, and an overall decrease in economic activity. This report uses the After-Tax Low Income Cut-Off (AT-LICO). This measure identifies the income level where a family would spend a large share of their income on necessities such as food, shelter and clothing. In Windsor CMA, the AT-LICO for a family of four in 2011 was \$30,871.^{xli} This means that a family of four that made less than that amount was considered to be living in low income.

The percentage of people living in low income has fluctuated in Windsor CMA, from a low of 9.3 percent in 2006, to a high of 13.3 percent in 2011. Ontario's rate for person living in Low Income has fluctuated between 8 and 10 percent with it being 9 percent in 2011. Note that due to the implementation of the new National Household Survey more recent years have not been included. Additionally due to poor data quality Statistics Canada has withheld most low-income data on Seniors (age 65+) and as a result it is not part of this report.

Chart 31: Percent of persons living in low-income, all family units, by AT-LICO, Windsor CMA and Ontario

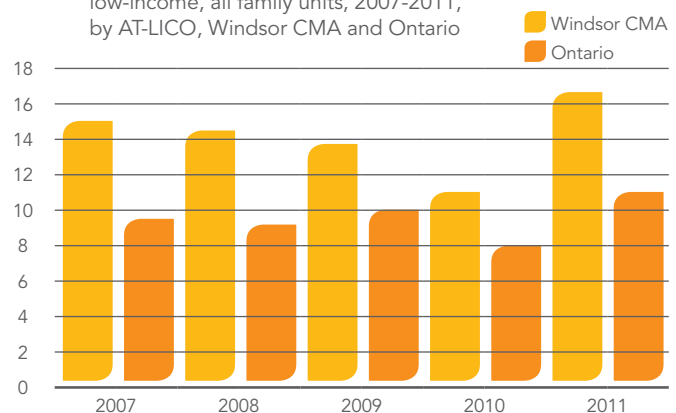


Source: Statistics Canada. Table 202-0802, Persons in low income families, annual, CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2015-05-25)*

Percentage of Children < 18 years living in low income

The percentage of children living in low income is an important indicator of generational poverty. Research shows that 25 percent of children who grow up in low income households will not break the cycle of poverty when they become adults.^{xlii} Since 2007, there has been a slight increase in the percentage of children under 18 living in poverty to 16.5 percent. There was a steady decline in 2008, 2009 and 2010, although this trend reversed in 2011. Whether this increase was a statistical fluctuation or a shift in our community only time and additional data will tell.

Chart 32: Percent of persons under 18 living in low-income, all family units, 2007-2011, by AT-LICO, Windsor CMA and Ontario



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 202-0802, persons in low income families, annual. CANSIM (database). (Accessed: 2014-06-05)*

* Note: Windsor CMA data labeled as "Use with Caution" by Statistics Canada.

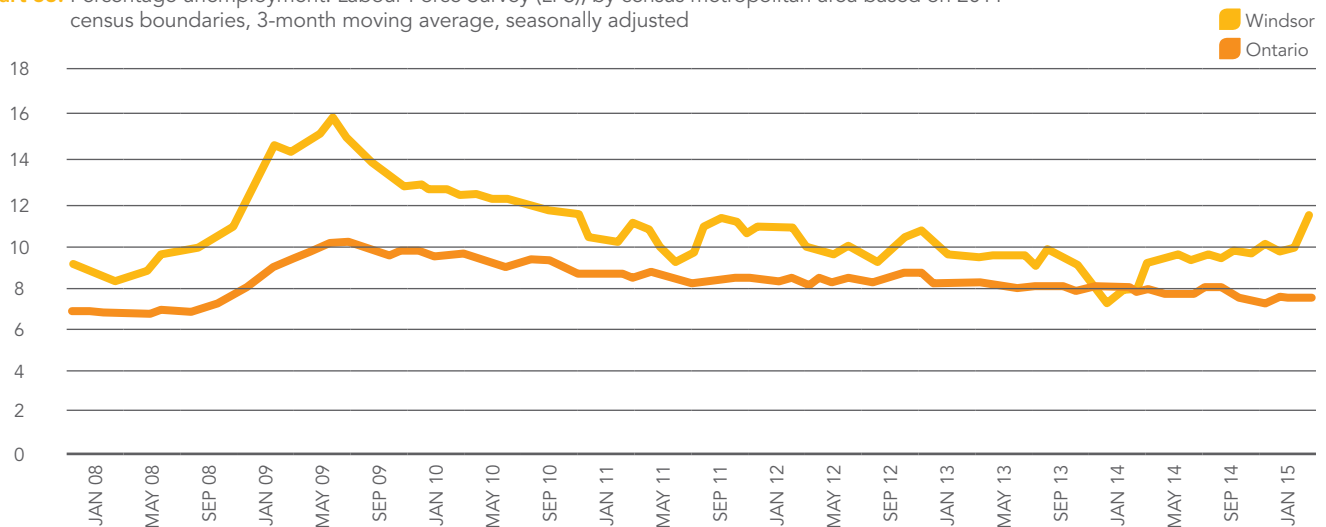
EMPLOYMENT

For many individuals, having a job is the key to maintaining an acceptable standard of living. Unfortunately, it hasn't been that easy to find a job in Windsor-Essex. As recently as March 13th, 2015, The Windsor Star and other news outlets reported that Windsor maintains the highest unemployment rate in Canada.^{xliii}

Since 2008, through the depths of the recession and the automotive manufacturing "crash" our region has been battered by some of the highest levels of unemployment in Canada. Between July 2009 with

15.9 percent unemployment, to almost a year and half later in February 2011, Windsor stubbornly maintained double digit unemployment rates. With the exception of January 2014, when the unemployment rate dropped to 6.9 percent – below the provincial average – Windsor has been plagued with rates that exceeded the rest of the province, and in many cases the country. The most recent unemployment numbers for Windsor hovered at 11.1 percent as of March 2015, 4.2 percentage points above the provincial average.

Chart 33: Percentage unemployment. Labour Force Survey (LFS), by census metropolitan area based on 2011 census boundaries, 3-month moving average, seasonally adjusted

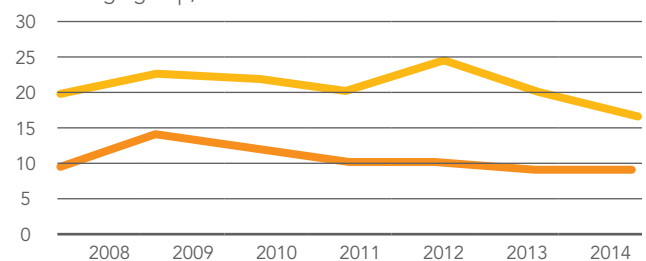


Source: Statistics Canada. Table 282-0135 - Labour force survey estimates (LFS), by census metropolitan area based on 2011 census boundaries, 3-month moving average, seasonally adjusted and unadjusted, monthly (persons unless otherwise noted) (Accessed on 2015-04-10)

Youth unemployment

As outlined in Section 1 of this report, the exodus of young people from the Windsor-Essex region can be attributed to an inability to find gainful employment. Youth unemployment has remained over 20 percent consistently since 2008 until this past year. After reaching an annualized high of 24.3 percent in 2012, the youth unemployment rate declined to 15.3 percent in 2014, still 6.3 percentage points above the regional unemployment average. With nearly 1 of 5 young people unable to find local work, it is no surprise that they are packing up and leaving the region.

Chart 34: Percentage unemployment. Labour Force Survey (LFS), by census metropolitan area based on 2011 census boundaries, sex and age group, annual



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 282-0129 - Labour force survey estimates (LFS), by census metropolitan area based on 2011 census boundaries, sex and age group, annual (persons unless otherwise noted) (Accessed on 2015-04-10)

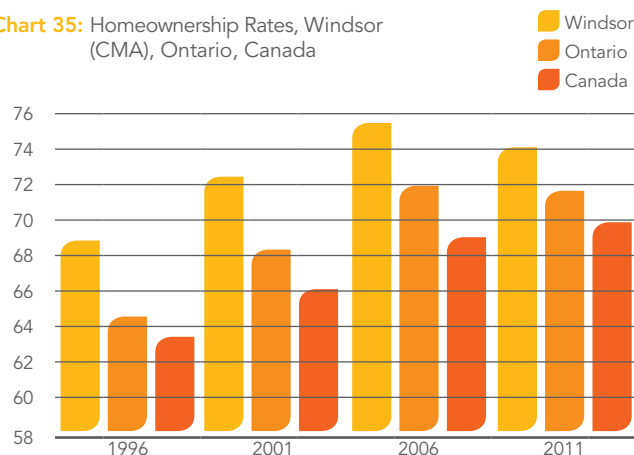
HOUSING

Homeownership

Homeownership is one of the pinnacles of financial security and stability. Many people consider home ownership to be a benchmark of personal success and prosperity. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, homeownership rates have gradually increased since 1996.^{xiv}

Homeownership in the Windsor (CMA) ranks very well when compared to the province and country with rates at 73.1, 71.4 and 69 percent respectively.^{xiv} The local homeownership rate has declined slightly from a high from 74.3 percent in 2006, may be due to the impact of the economic downturn.

Chart 35: Homeownership Rates, Windsor (CMA), Ontario, Canada

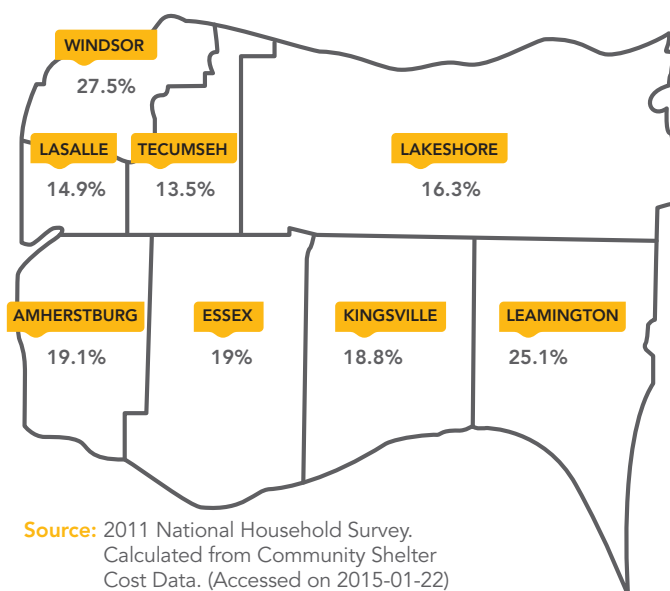


Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2013). Canadian Housing Observer data tables. Homeownership Market. (Accessed on 2015-03-19)

Shelter affordability

Unfortunately for many, the dream of homeownership is out of reach, and simply keeping a roof over ones heads is a challenge. Given our region's economic challenges and high unemployment rate, the fact that a portion of our population struggles to afford housing is not surprising. The City of Windsor has the highest rate in the region, with 27.5 percent of households spending more than 30 percent of their income on shelter. Leamington follows just behind Windsor at 25.1 percent of their residents needing to dedicate one third of their income towards housing. Other municipalities are comparably more affordable, with the bedroom communities of LaSalle and Tecumseh having the lowest rates.

Chart 36: Percent owner/tenant households spending more than 30 percent of income on housing, 2011, by WEC municipality



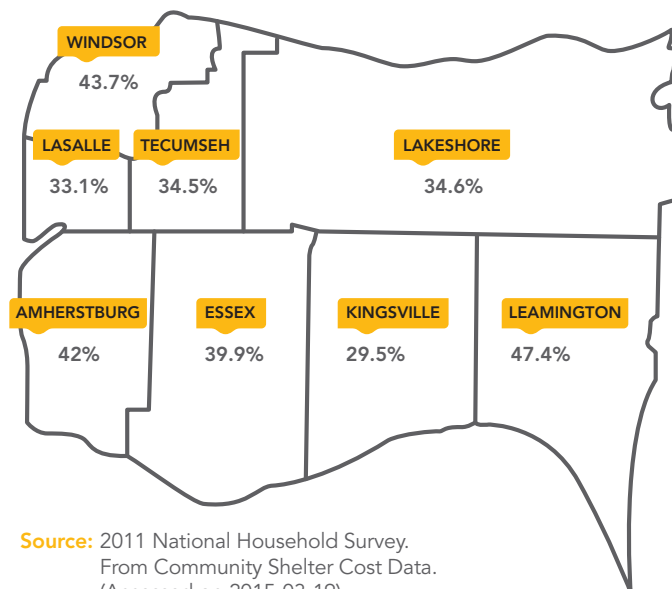
Source: 2011 National Household Survey. Calculated from Community Shelter Cost Data. (Accessed on 2015-01-22)

Rental housing affordability

When homeownership is out of reach for families, renting becomes the only option. Vacancy rates in the private rental market have been decreasing since its high in 2008 and are predicted to continue to decrease through 2014 and 2015. The vacancy rate in October 2012 was 7.3 and had decreased to 5.9 as of 2013. Generally as the vacancy rate decreases, average market rents increase especially for prime size 1 bedroom and 2 bedroom units.^{xlvi} Given that the majority of rental units are located in the City of Windsor there is a distortion in the number and the availability of units across the region as the supply of units is far more constrained outside of the city creating market fluctuations.

Leamington and Windsor once again have the highest rate of spending on housing with 47.4 and 43.7 percent of tenants respectively spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing. In contrast, shelter costs in the rest of the county, with the exception of Kingsville, run between 33.1 and 42 percent. These higher rates are may be due to limited rental options in the county.

Chart 37: Percent renter households spending more than 30 percent of income on housing, 2011, by WEC municipality

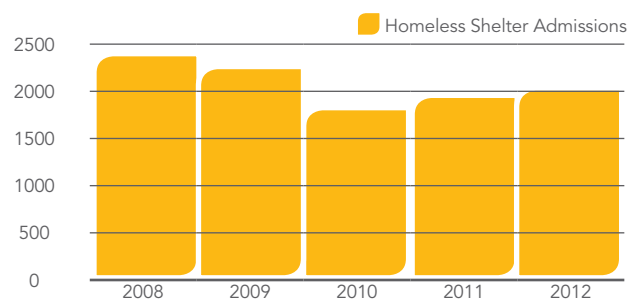


Source: 2011 National Household Survey.
From Community Shelter Cost Data.
(Accessed on 2015-03-19)

Homelessness

The Homeless Coalition of Windsor-Essex County tracks homelessness and housing issues in our region. In their most recent report, they tracked a total of 1,830 admissions to emergency shelters and motels in 2012, which was up from 2010 at 1,605. However there were 1,364 unique individuals admitted to these resources in 2012 indicating that there are some readmissions occurring which may indicate a degree of ongoing use of shelters by some individuals.^{xlvi}

Chart 38: Homeownership Rates, Windsor (CMA), Ontario, Canada



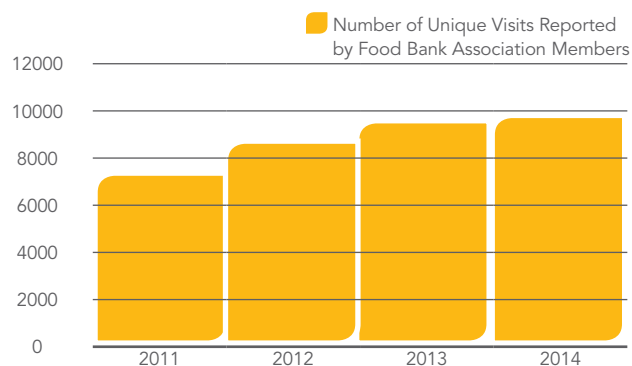
Source: Homeless Coalition of Windsor Essex County. (2013) Annual Report on Homelessness and Housing in Windsor-Essex County.

FOOD SECURITY

Having access to healthy and nutritious foods is one of the first casualties for families living in low income. As a person's or family's income declines, nutritious food, which can be more expensive, tends to get passed over for quicker and cheaper alternatives. In some cases people are forced to turn to food banks to put food on their table. The Windsor-Essex County Food Bank Association maintains a database which tracks food bank usage among its 15 members. Unfortunately these totals do not show the complete picture, but do illustrate a trend in our communities as not all food banks are members of this association.

In 2014, 9,722 unique visitors went to Food Bank Association, food banks in Windsor-Essex County taking 117,503 food packages. The number of unique visits to food banks has steadily increased over the past three years from a low 9,188 in 2012 and 9,642 in 2013.

Chart 39: Number of Unique Participants Served by Food Bank Association Members in Windsor-Essex 2012-2014.



Source: United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County. (2015) Accountability Report 2012-2014.

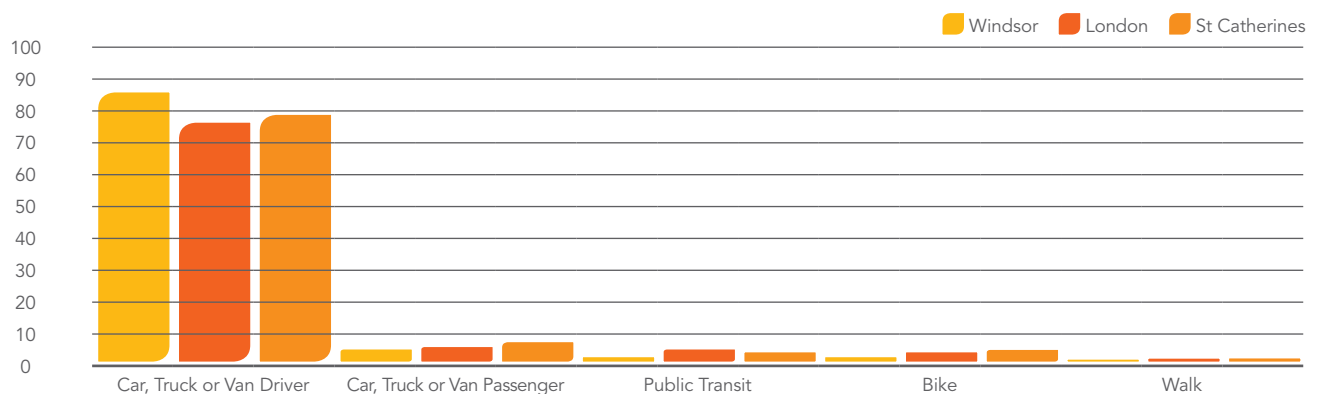


MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

The ease and method of how people move through a city is an important factor in the habitability and overall economic well-being of a community. The data clearly shows that in all communities, driving a personal vehicle remains the primary mode of transport, with it rating 5 percentage points higher than other compared CMAs. This translates into lagging rates for carpooling, public transit usage, biking and walking to work, compared to other regions in the province.

There are a number of reasons why Windsor lags behind other jurisdictions including the geography of the CMA, personal preferences of workers, and the capacity of the transit system. Part of the issue facing the Windsor CMA is that it includes "rural" areas of Lakeshore and Amherstburg in its boundaries. Although other CMAs may include some rural areas our region also lacks a regional transit system to tie our communities together meaning individuals must drive from the outlying communities to work.

Chart 40: Employed labour force by mode of transportation, Windsor, London and St Catharines (CMA), 2011



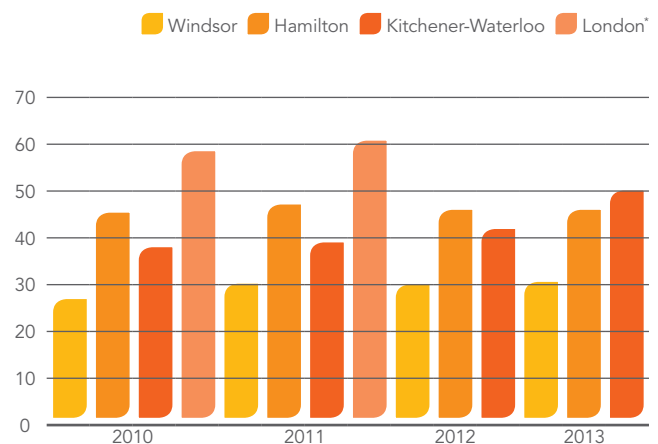
Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Focus on Geography Series, Windsor (CMA) (Accessed on 2015-04-02)

Public transport

Having an efficient and effective public transportation system is especially important for people who do not own a vehicle and/or are living in low income. Having a public transportation system ensures residents have a means to attend school, obtain and retain employment and remain connected to the community.^{xlviii} Unfortunately Windsor-Essex County does not currently have a regional transit system in place and despite reports of a local pilot program to expand transit beyond the city, it may be several years before such a program is implemented, if at all.^{xlix}

According to Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative, which brings together comparable data from municipalities across the province and country, Windsor lags well behind many comparable communities when it comes to transit use. The provincial median for public transit trips is 39 transit trips per year compared to only about 30 trips per year in Windsor. Hard questions have to be asked about transit in Windsor-Essex to encourage ridership and usage while maintaining accessibility.ⁱ

Chart 41: Number of Conventional Transit Trips Per Capita



Source: Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative (2014) Transit & Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative 2013 - Transit. (Accessed on 2015-04-10).*

* Note: London Ontario data is only available for 2010 & 2011

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Windsor-Essex faces a wide variety of economic challenges that are demonstrated by a number of indicators within this report. The recovery from the depths of the 2008-2009 recession has been tepid, at best, and has failed to produce stability for many people in our community. As a result our region still faces a number of challenges before we can clearly state that the region is on the road to full economic recovery.

Economic diversification

According to a recent report by Workforce Windsor-Essex, one in six members of our region's labour force or approximately 33,910 people work in the manufacturing sector.^{li} Given the uncertainty around this sector which has long been the foundation of our region's economy there are several troubling signs on the horizon. With the Ford Engine Plant having no scheduled production after 2017; a recent Derosier Automotive Report predicting that all automotive assembly will leave Canada by 2040; and the overall lack of a strategy on this file at a provincial and federal level; the fact that we still have such a large proportion of our economy invested in this sector is very concerning.^{lii}

We need to link people with the training, transit and jobs in those sectors that hold promise while ensuring that those who are in precarious employment situations have opportunities to better themselves and move into other fields of employment. We also need to continue to find ways to bring community stakeholders together to develop a cohesive, collective strategy for revitalizing the local economy.

A fair and livable wage

Ensuring those who work for a living are able to earn a wage that allows them to adequately provide for themselves and their family is key to the future economic health of our community. Although the Ontario minimum wage is scheduled to rise to \$11.25 an hour (\$23,400 per year before tax) in October of 2015, this rate is well below a sustainable living wage.^{liii}

Pathway to Potential has been advocating for a fair and livable wage for workers in Windsor-Essex, having calculated our local living wage at \$14.15 per hour (or \$13.10 per hour with benefits). They have been recruiting local businesses to offer their employees a living wage.^{liv} Research has shown that well-paid workers experience lower absenteeism, and less life stress, leading to improved health and decreased rates of employee turnover. Companies should be encouraged to pay more than the current minimum to their employees as well paid employees, to foster a more productive workforce.

Supports for individuals who are in transition

As the data shows, there is a significant portion of the Windsor-Essex population that is struggling economically. These challenges include decreased access to jobs due to a lack of regional transit, and displaced workers who have been unable to find new employment

Fortunately, our region has a number of government programs from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and University and other provincial and federal programs that support these individuals through organizations like the Unemployed Help Centre, Ontario Works or the Small Business Centre. As our economy continues to transition to a knowledge-based economy, more people will fall into these disadvantaged positions. Ensuring that there are adequate supports for them to find new employment will remain a necessity in the near term.

SECTION 4:

Education

Ensuring that our young people enter school and gain the necessary skills to become functioning members of society is one of the most vital roles of our government. Windsor-Essex County features several major school boards with Public and Catholic schools teaching in English and French as well as a number of private schools specializing in different educational methods and outcomes. Although this evaluation is not comprehensive it, allows for simple comparisons between schools in our region.^{lv} The Fraser Institute offers its own rankings of schools our region based on these scores to provide parents insight into their child's school performance.^{lvi}



SUMMARY OF KEY TRENDS

The statistics show is that there is a wide variation in achievement within schools in our region. Some of the causes of this variation can be traced back to a range of socio-economic factors that are

outlined in this report from demographic shifts; to correlations between concentrations of poverty in neighbourhoods and poorer performing schools; to the impact of the health and well-being of students.

↔ There has been some divergence in the Ontario Literacy Test Scores in Windsor Essex County over the researched period. Between 2008 and 2014, the Public and Catholic Boards have gone from nearly identical first pass rates of 83 and 85 percent respectively to 80 and 90 percent respectively.

↓ The Windsor CMA indicates higher levels of lower educational attainment compared to the rest of the province.

↓ Although there has been a decrease in the default rates of students' loans since 2005, both University of Windsor and St. Clair College have seen a recent increase in student loan default levels well above provincial averages.

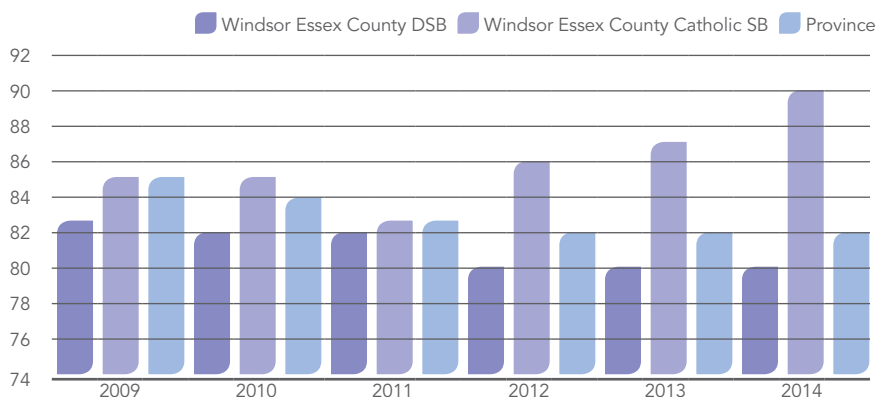
HIGH SCHOOL LITERACY TEST (OSSLT)

The purpose of primary and secondary education is to prepare students to enter the workforce. Obtaining a basic level of literacy is vital if a student wishes to enter the workforce and maintain minimum wage employment. In Ontario, Grade 10 students write a standardized literacy test to measure their basic competencies in reading and writing. For Ontario, the percentage of students passing the literacy test for the first time has been decreasing since 2008/2009 when it was 85 percent. In 2013/2014, 83 percent of Grade 10 students across Ontario passed the OSSLT.

Locally, there has been some fluctuation in patterns. For the Catholic Board, the percentage rose from a low point of 83 percent in 2010/2011 to 90 percent in 2013/2014. The pattern for the Public board mirrors that of Ontario; with marginal declines from 83 percent in 2008/2009 to 80 percent in 2013/2014. The divergence between the public and catholic boards is interesting and could partially be due to the declining enrollment in the catholic board as well as the specific demographic make-up of the specific schools.

Chart 42: Percentage of Fully Participating First Time Eligible Students Who Were Successful on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test

Source: Queens Printer for Ontario (2015) Education, Quality and Accountability Office: School, Board and Provincial Results. (Accessed on 2015-03-25)



Data from the other standardize tests are also available on the EQAO website for both literacy and mathematics tests for Grade 3 and 6 levels and mathematics at Grade 9 level.^{lvii} Unlike these tests, only the Grade 10 literacy test is a requirement for graduation and although results on

earlier tests could be an indication of a student's strengths or weaknesses in a subject area, they do not carry the weight or impact on a student's future prospects like the 10th Grade Literacy test.

HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ATTAINMENTS

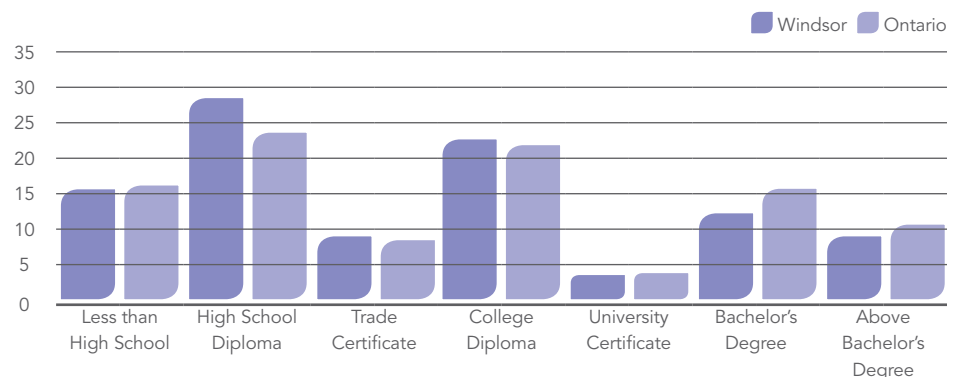
The level of education attainment by local residents offers insight to a region's economic potential. Employers need to understand the skillsets that are available within the community. In our region, over 44 percent of our population have only achieved a high school diploma which is well above the provincial average 39.7 percent.

The Windsor CMA has slightly higher percentages of 25+ adults attaining trades certificates (8.8 percent)

and college diplomas (22.2 percent) than Ontario at 8.3 and 21.6 percent respectively. When it pertains to university education at the Bachelor level (12.3 percent) our region's attainment is lower than Ontario at 15.7 percent. University levels (Master and PhD) locally are 8.9 vs 10.3 percent for Ontario. Unfortunately this data cannot be easily compared to 2006 due to different age thresholds and responses rates between the Census and the National Household Survey.

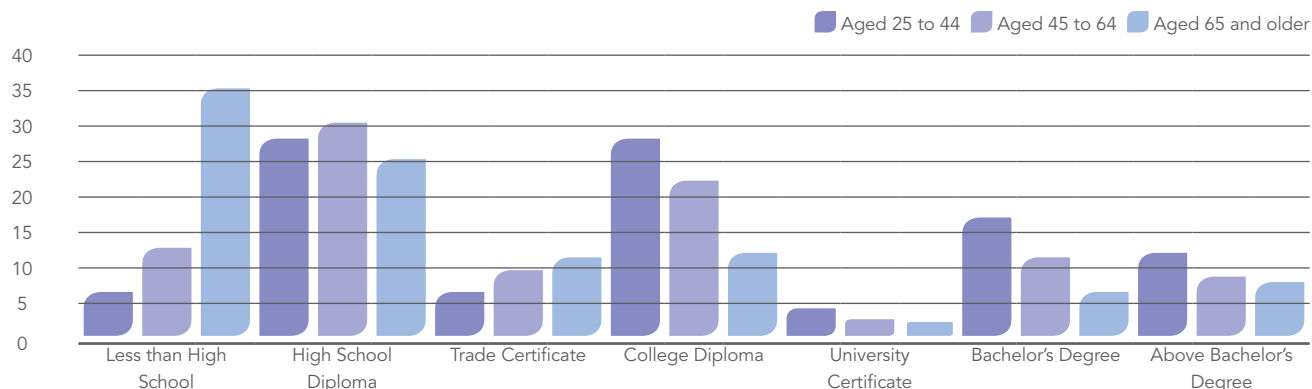
Chart 43: Percent population ages 25+ years old by highest educational attainment, 2011, Windsor (CMA)

Source: Statistics Canada, (2011) National Household Survey, Focus on Geography Series- Windsor: Education. (Accessed on 2015-03-25)



When education attainment is examined by age group there is a demonstrated shift to higher education among the 25 to 44 year old cohort. In this group, 27.3 percent of adults have a college education, 16.8 percent have a Bachelor education and 11.6 percent have achieved Master or PhD education. This growth in education amongst younger people is a "double edged sword". Although a university degree does tend to increase these individuals earning potential, it is also creates an imbalance in our economy, where only 6.3 percent of the same age group hold high demand skilled trades certificates while nearly 17 percent have a lower demanded University education.

As older workers retire and local demographics continue to shift, fewer jobs will be open in the higher education field while demand will grow for specialized skilled individuals. A recent report authored by Ken Coates who is a Canada Research Chair in Regional Innovation in the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy recently called for a 30 percent reduction in university enrollment across Canada and channeling those students into college and skilled trade programs.^{lviii} The author of this report is highlighting the same educational imbalance that we see in the educational attainment by age group data. As older skill trade workers begin and continue to retire it will create greater demand for those positions. Meanwhile universities are graduating students in record numbers, only for them to find few employment opportunities in their chosen field.

Chart 44: Percentage of the population aged 25+ years old by level of educational attainment and age group, Windsor (CMA), 2011

Source: Statistics Canada, 2011 National Household Survey, Focus on Geography Series. (Accessed on 2015-03-30)

STUDENT LOAN DEFAULTS

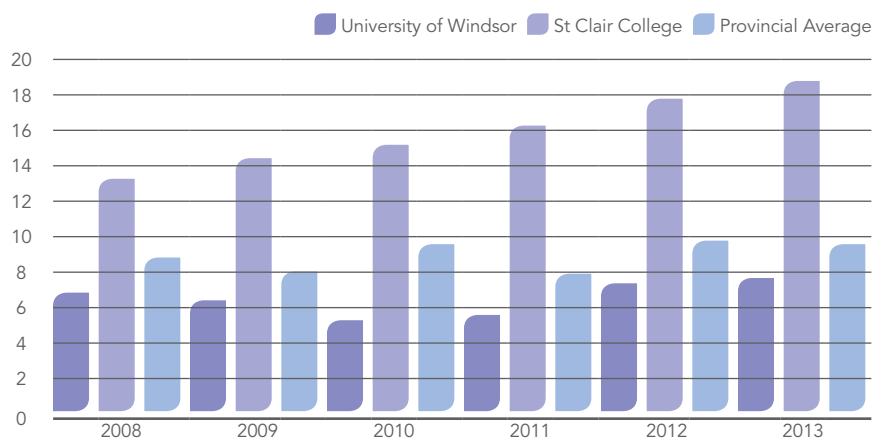
With a growing number of young people entering higher education, the risk that they will not find a job and will be forced to default on their loans increases. Default rates of student loans are a commonly used metric which universities and colleges are measured against. Generally speaking, student default rates lag behind the economic cycle and tend to rise in periods shortly after economic downturns. As individuals choose to further their education during the economic down periods and as the economy begins to recover and students graduate, the competition for new positions increases leaving some individuals unable to find employment.

The shortage of local employment opportunities creates challenges for recent grads to maintain the required monthly student loan payments. St. Clair College has seen a steady rise in default rates of its students from 13.2 percent in 2008 to 18.4 percent in 2013. In contrast the University of Windsor has maintained a default rate ranging from 5.3 percent to 7.2 percent which is below the provincial averages for all institutions but above the provincial university average of 4.5 percent.^{lix}

Both St. Clair College and the University of Windsor program-specific default rates vary widely depending on the demand in the field of employment as well as the number of graduates entering the workforce.^{lx}

Chart 45: Canada-Ontario Integrated Student Loan Default Rates 2008-2013

Source: Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and University, Canada-Ontario Integrated Student Loan Default Rate. Calculated from examining annual institutional default rates. (Accessed on 2015-01-22).
NOTE: The provincial average also contains default rates for private skills colleges and other institutions.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Education is a “silver bullet” in the battle against poverty and lifting young people out of the trap of intergenerational poverty. That being said, there are challenges: ensuring schools are properly funded and equipped, making sure that students are prepared to learn, and ensuring that the skills students learn are applicable to post-secondary education or the workforce.

Ensuring a literate workforce

According to the 2009, Literacy in Ontario report 4.3 million people are not sufficiently literate to participate in the modern economy.^{lx} Research has established that there is a clear connection between literacy rates and likelihood to participate in criminal activity.^{lxii} If we are not successful in improving the ability for these individuals to enter the workforce in a productive and engaging manner, we are dooming them to a cycle of low paying work while risking that they will become involved in criminal activity.

The Tri-County Literacy Network brings together educational institutions in our region and beyond in an attempt to ensure that individuals have sufficient levels of literacy to enter and be productive parts of the workforce.



Giving children equal opportunity

If a child is coming to school hungry or they are worried because their parents have been laid off work it isn't surprising that they may be distracted at school. There is significant evidence that socio-economic background has an impact on the ability to learn and engage in the classroom. Studies have also shown that there are links between income inequality and increased bullying in schools.^{lxiii}

Across the City of Windsor and in the County, United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County supports afterschool programs that provide healthy snacks, physical activity and homework help to students, at no cost to their parents. Through programs like these we are attempting to provide a foundation to children in Windsor-Essex and ensure that no child is left behind.

Increasing educational attainment

As the data on education attainment showed, over 44 percent of individuals in Windsor-Essex have a high school diploma or less. Although portions of this population are older, in the 21st century economy, education is the foundation for success. If we don't prepare all of our youth for post-secondary programs, we will limit our community's ability to participate in the evolving economy. We need to guide young people into appropriate college diplomas, skilled trades, apprenticeships, or university degrees that are applicable to our job market, while making training and skills development opportunities available to older members of our communities.

United Way is championing a new program in Leamington in hopes of improving high school graduation rates and providing students with the wrap around supports they need to succeed. On Track to Success is a new pilot program that provides multi-year tutoring, mentorship and financial incentives to high school students from low income families to achieve educational outcomes and move onto post-secondary education in fields where jobs are available in our community and pay a living wage.

SECTION 5:

Our Environments

BOTH NATURAL AND BUILT










Humans interact with their environment in a number of ways and unlike almost any other species on the planet, we possess the ability to alter our environment. Our environment, whether natural or built, can play an important role in building thriving communities.



SUMMARY OF KEY TRENDS

The Windsor-Essex County region is endowed with over 150 km of shoreline in the most southerly latitude in Canada, making its environment unique in our country.^{lxiv} With this distinctiveness comes additional responsibility to safeguard our regions natural environment while constructing a positive and habitable environment for residents. The City of Windsor's Strategic Plan prioritizes a wide variety of built and natural environmental efforts and the city has annual report cards to track the progress on these initiatives.^{lxv}

The reader should note that in this section of the paper, comparisons are made to similar communities over time, rather than to the province or nation as a whole. Provincial and national comparisons with many of the environmental factors can be skewed by large population centres that have economies of scale advantages over our region. As result in this section we compare Windsor-Essex to comparable CMAs in Ontario.

-  Overall feelings of a sense of belonging within Windsor-Essex County have risen over time when compared with Ontario.
-  The amount of parkland and green space hasn't changed over between 2010 and 2013.
-  The number of smog days experienced in Windsor-Essex has declined but it is unclear if this is a result of human action or climatic shifts. Windsor tends to record more smog days than other comparable regions in Ontario.
-  Overall water use in Windsor-LaSalle-Tecumseh is down over the period of the study.
-  The amount of residential solid waste generated in Windsor is largely unchanged over the years of study. Windsor residents produce slightly more waste than other communities.
-  The amount of household waste diverted to recycling has increased in both the county and city.
-  Windsor has seen a significant decrease in per capita art grant spending. Other communities have managed to maintain their spending levels.
-  Overall voter turnout rates are down across Windsor-Essex County.
-  Overall charitable giving is on the rise in both the Windsor CMA and Leamington CA with growth in both the total amounts given and the median donation.

OUR CONNECTION TO OUR ENVIRONMENT

Sense of belonging

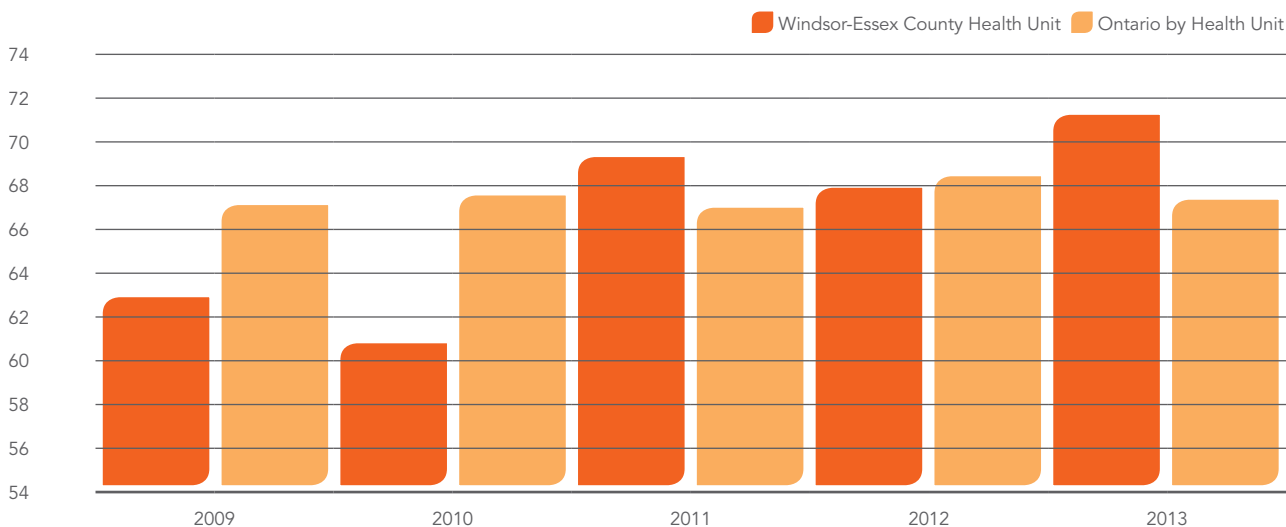
A feeling of belonging to a community is the bedrock of an engaged citizenry and a positive community environment. The ability for citizens to connect to people, place, policies and events within their community can have a powerful impact. Whether through visiting a park with their family, being conscious of their local environment, enjoying cultural events or voting in an election, having a strong sense of belonging is the foundation for a strong community.

From 2009 to 2013 the number of people experiencing a strong or very strong sense of belonging in Windsor-Essex County rose from 62.9 percent to 71.5 percent.

This places our region well above the provincial average of 67.7 percent. Unfortunately due to the collection method this data cannot be broken down by the individual communities of Windsor-Essex.

Despite this above average sense of belonging in our region, a recent report by Statistics Canada showed the Windsor CMA having the third lowest average life satisfaction score from 2009 to 2013 in Canada, ahead of only Toronto and Vancouver.^{lxvi} Although these two figures are not necessarily mutually exclusive, the fact that many people seem to have a strong sense of belonging, yet a low life satisfaction rate is troubling.

Chart 46: Percent of individuals 12 years of age and over reporting a somewhat strong or very strong sense of belonging to local community



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 105-0501 - Health indicator profile, annual estimates, by age group and sex, Canada, provinces, territories, health regions (2013 boundaries) and peer groups, occasional, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-04-10)

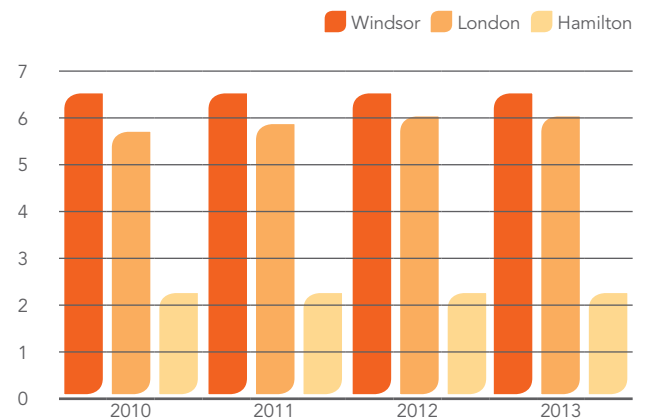
OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Green space

Green space refers to any municipally-owned natural open space such as ravines and nature reserves as well as parkland. One measure relevant to green space is the percentage of parkland available in municipalities. Having accessible green space plays an important role in a city's overall livability for residents, as well as providing a connection to the natural environment.

Data from the Ontario Municipalities Benchmarking Initiative shows that since 2010 the percentage of parkland in Windsor has remained unchanged at 6.5%. London is comparable at 6.0% and is significantly better than 2.3% for Hamilton. With the completion of the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway expected in 2015 it is anticipated that the percentage of parkland and green space in Windsor will be increase in the coming years.^{lxvii}

Chart 47: Percent of total area of a municipality which is park land compared with other Ontario cities, 2010-2012, Windsor, London, Hamilton.



Source: Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative. (2013). (Accessed on 2015-03-21)

Air quality

The quality of a region's air plays an important role in how a local environment is perceived and how citizens interact with it. Poor air quality and smog can have a dramatic impact on the health and wellbeing of residents from increasing to risk of health complications to mortality rates.^{lxviii} One of the most commonly used measures of air quality in a region is by counting the number of days when smog advisory is issued. The Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change is the responsible for the declaration and tracking of the number of smog advisories issued each year.^{lxix}

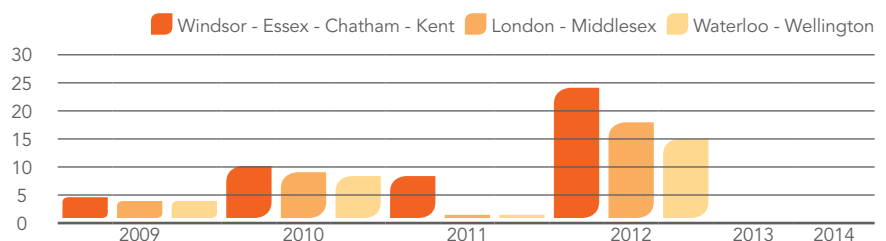
As with all weather related phenomena there are wide annual fluctuations based on weather patterns and local climate. This means comparing the actual

number of smog days per year is less valuable than comparing between locations. Windsor's southerly location, proximity to the United States (where much of the smog originates) and traditionally warmer climate compared to the rest of Ontario, places our region at greater risk for smog days than other parts of Ontario.

The data supports this trend. Windsor-Essex-Chatham-Kent (Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change groups Windsor-Essex and Chatham-Kent as one region) has had a higher occurrence of smog days than London or Waterloo. Exceptions to this were in 2013 and 2014 when the regions were devoid of smog days and Ontario as a whole only had two days with smog advisories over two years.

Chart 48: Number of smog advisory days issued in Windsor and Ontario, 2008-2014

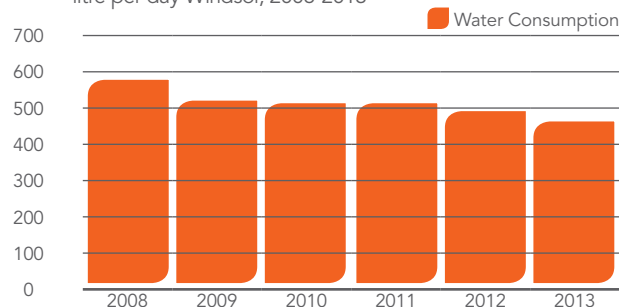
Source: Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change. (Accessed 2015-04-07)



Water use

Despite our ready access to fresh water via the Great Lakes, water is still a precious commodity. The amount of water consumed in our region has been declining from 580 litres per capita per day to 472 litres per capita per day. This decline can partially be attributed to conservation efforts at a local level while population declines across our region have reduced base load demand.^{lxv}

Chart 49: Per capita water consumption per litre per day Windsor, 2008-2013



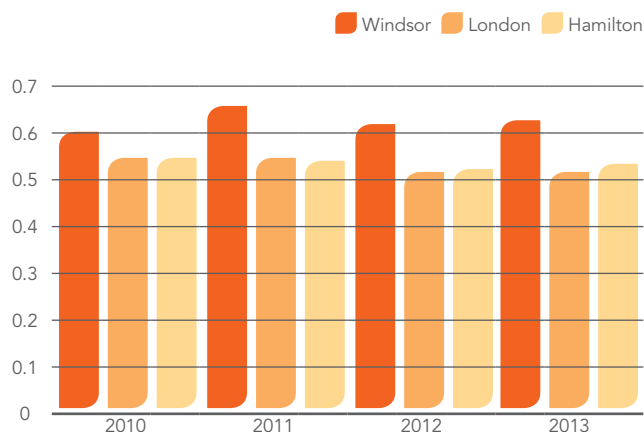
Source: Water Consumption Indicator. Environmental Master Plan.
Note: This value is the total amount consumed in Windsor, Tecumseh and LaSalle.

Household waste and recycling

How much and how often we put out our garbage in our community has a dramatic impact on the environment. Gone are the days when we could frivolously throw everything into the trash and watch it be hauled off to the landfill. When compared to other communities, Windsor has modestly higher rates of residential solid waste. It disposed of 0.62 of a tonne of waste in 2013 compared to 0.51 and 0.53 tonnes collected in London and Hamilton respectively. Solid waste disposal rates have remained steady over time.

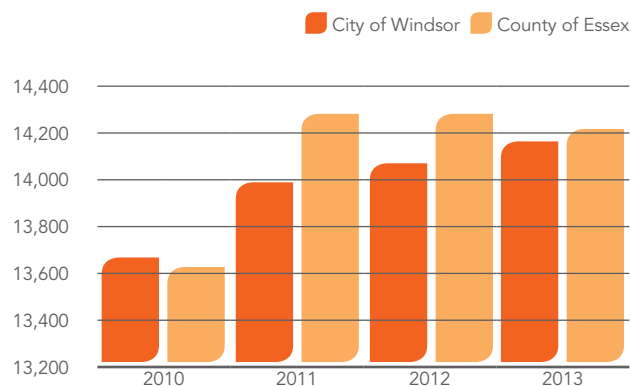
Of the household waste that is collected a portion of it is recycled. Each year over 28,000 tons of residential recycling has been collected from the curbside in communities across Essex County. Waste diversion is measured as the percentage of waste material diverted from landfills or incinerators to recycling, composting, or repurposing. The region's waste diversion rate has been hovering around 36% since 2010. In 2010 the average waste diversion rate in Ontario was 45% and it increased to 47.2% in 2013, well below the provincial average of 36 percent.^{lxxi}

Chart 50: Tonnes of Solid Waste Disposed per Residential Household 2010-2013



Source: Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative. (Accessed 2015-04-20)

Chart 51: Residential Recycling Program Tonnage 2010-2013.



Source: Essex Windsor Solid Waste Authority. Residential Waste Diversion Report. (Accessed on 2015-04-10). **Note:** County of Essex include all communities but City of Windsor. Comparable data was not available for other communities.

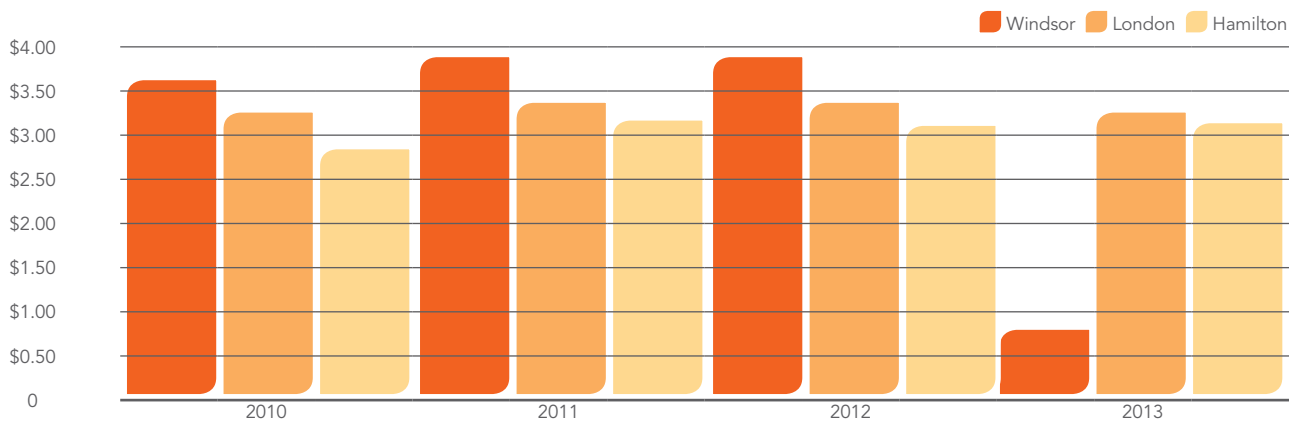
OUR COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT

Arts grants per capita

A community cannot be considered vibrant without a rich, dynamic and evolving arts and culture sector. The region of Essex County has many cultural resources—from historic properties, cultural facilities, and natural areas such as parks, to a full schedule of annual festivals and events. One symbol of success is the area's prominence on the Festival and Events Ontario (FEO) Top 100 list.^{lxixii} As the metropolitan centre of the region, many of our cultural resources can be found in the city of Windsor. The city's Cultural Master Plan has provided both data and a framework for many cultural initiatives in our region.^{lxixiii}

Unfortunately the funding for some of those initiatives is in question. In 2010, Windsor was providing funding for the arts at a rate of \$3.65 per resident. That changed in 2013 when dramatic cuts to discretionary Art and Cultural grants took place, reducing the amount to 69 cents per capita. These cuts were as a part of a broad re-evaluation of arts funding in the city. In 2014, the City of Windsor introduced a new arts granting program. This data has not yet been published but it is anticipated that new granting levels will be more comparable to 2012 rates, or at least more in line with other Ontario cities.

Chart 52: Arts grants provided per capita compared with other Ontario Cities, 2010-2013, Windsor, London, Hamilton.



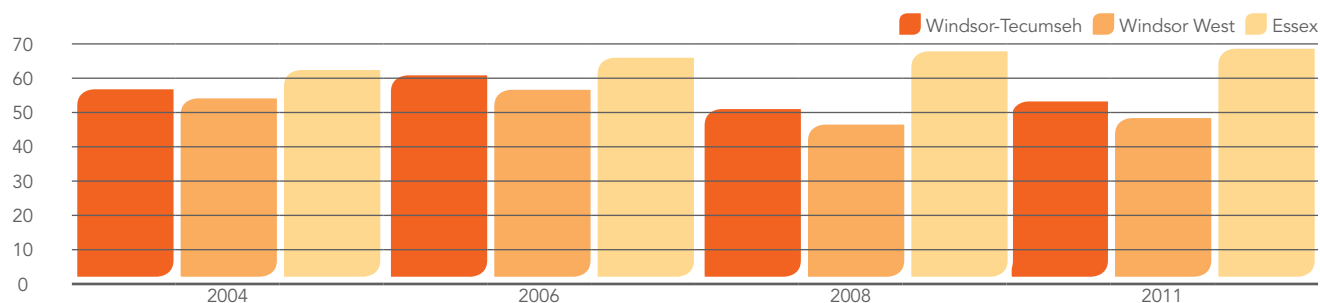
Source: Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative. (Accessed: 2015-04-20)

Voting

Unfortunately our community's sense of belonging has not influenced voter turnout during elections. Across Canada voter turnout rates have been declining and generally speaking Windsor-Essex County is no exception.^{lxxiv} Traditionally, Federal elections have the highest voter turnout rates (between 50 and 60 percent). Those rates decline in provincial

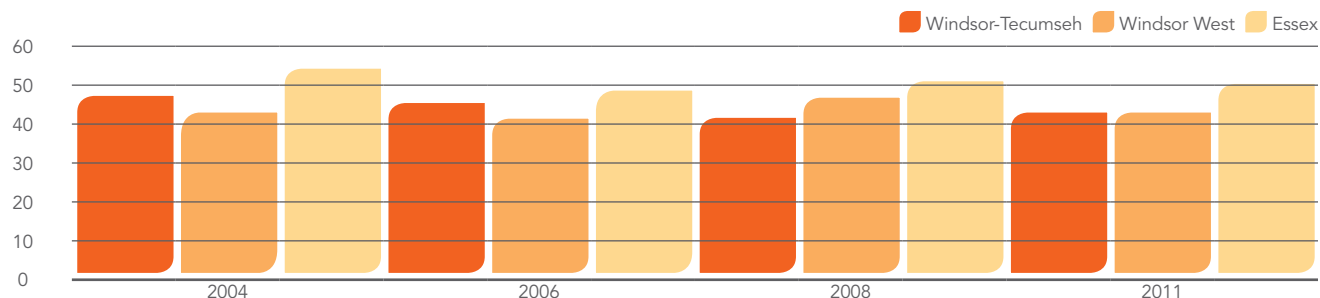
elections to between 40 and 50 percent. Municipal results vary widely based on community size and local engagement levels. Unfortunately many of the communities do not have historical voter turnout rates readily available and as a result only Windsor's data is published.

Chart 53: Percent of voter turnout at the 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011 federal election, Windsor-Essex County



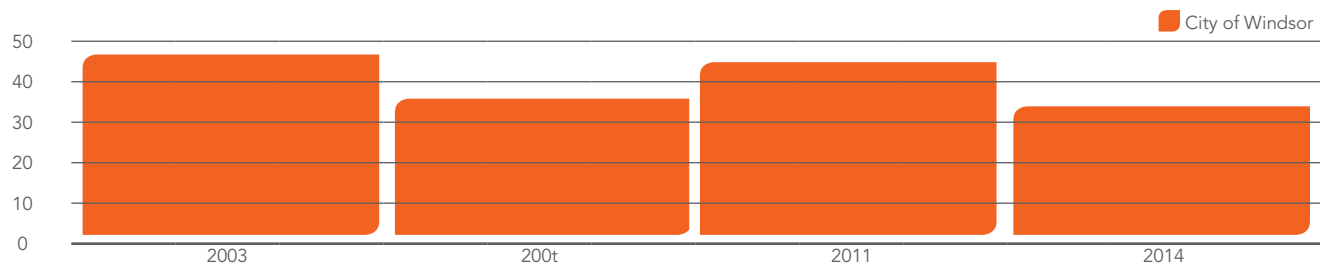
Source: Elections Canada (2003, 2007, 2011). Elections Summary. (Accessed: 2015-04-16)

Chart 54: Percent of voter turnout at the 2003, 2007, 2011, 2014 provincial election, Windsor-Essex County



Source: Elections Ontario (2003, 2007, 2011). Elections Summary. (Accessed: 2015-04-16)

Chart 55: Percent of voter turnout at the municipal election, Windsor, 2003, 2006, 2010, 2014

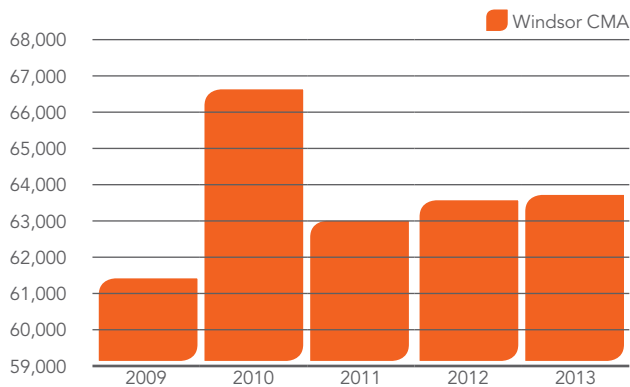


Source: City of Windsor Corporate Services (2005); City of Windsor (2010). Election Summary Report, Municipal Election: Official Results (Accessed on 2015-04-16)

Charitable giving

Where and how people give to charity provides us additional insight into the connection between citizens and their community. If people perceive a need and are willing to donate their hard earned money to help combat that need, it illustrates a deeper connection to community. In both the Windsor CMA and the Leamington CA there have been measurable increases in charitable giving since 2009 but due to the comparative sizes of the communities the totals are vastly different.

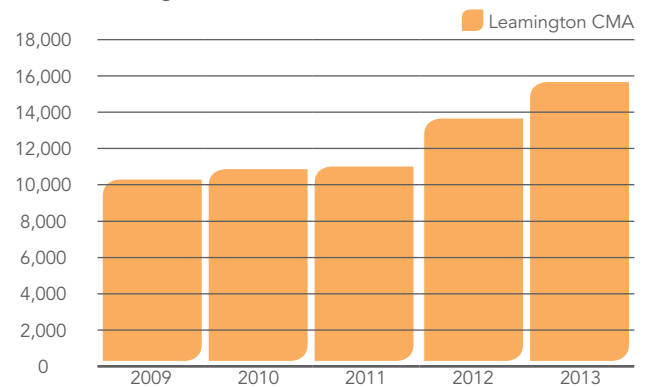
Chart 56: Total donation dollars in thousands, 2009-2013, Windsor (CMA)



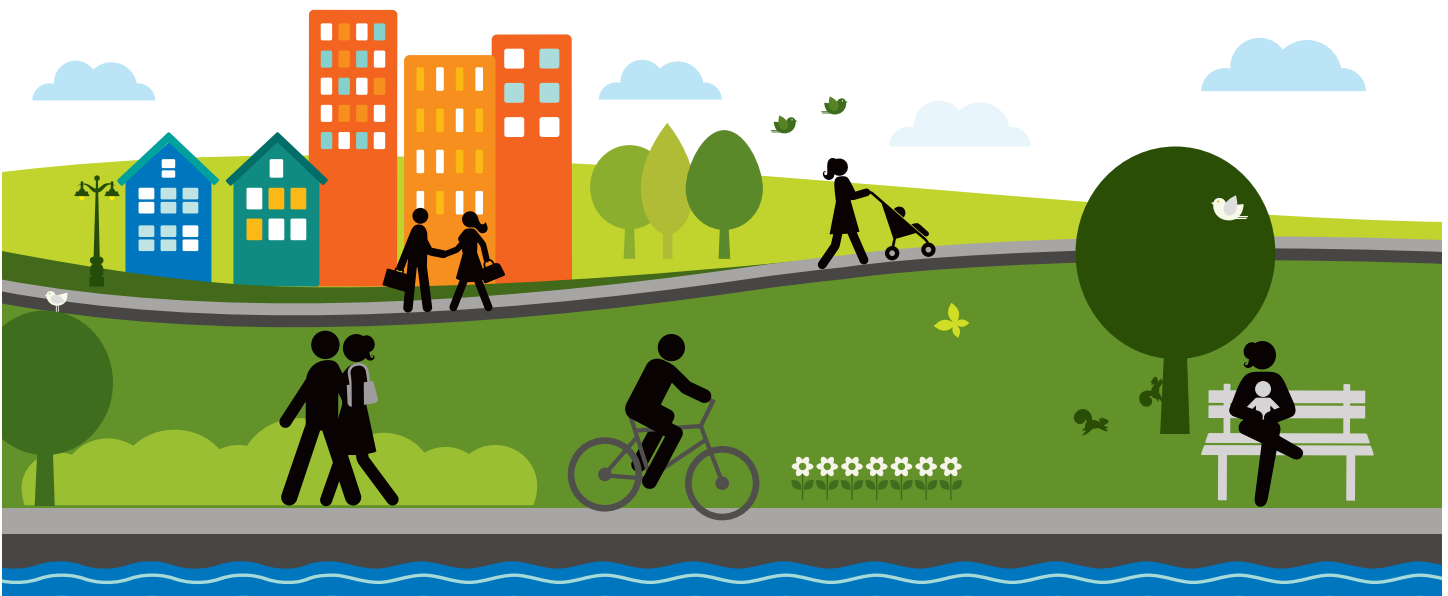
Source: Statistics Canada. Table 111-0003 - Charitable donors, by income group, annual (number unless otherwise noted), CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-04-16)

The Leamington CA saw steady growth – total charitable donations grew from \$10,510,000 in 2009 to \$15,650,000 in 2013 with the median gift size growing from \$330 to \$400.^{lxxv} In the Windsor (CMA), there was some fluctuation in charitable growth. A spike in 2010, likely related to hardship of the automotive collapse, saw a high in charitable giving at \$66,665,000. This value declined in 2011 of \$63,063,000 and continued to grow at modest rate to \$63,770,000 in 2013, with median donations growing marginally from \$270 to \$290.

Chart 57: Total donation dollars in thousands, 2009-2013, Leamington (CA)



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 111-0003 - Charitable donors, by income group, annual (number unless otherwise noted), CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-04-16)



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Our relationship our communities and the environment of our region is a complex one. Whether the environment is a wetland on the shores of Lake Erie or the local political process, our environment evolves based on how we as residents interact with it. It is ever-evolving over time. The goal is that our connection to the environment and its evolution positive, forward looking change that is inclusive of all residents.

Ensuring belonging

For individuals to feel any sort of sense of belonging and engagement with their community basic needs must be met and those who are new to our communities or barely making a living have little time, energy or resources to engage with their environment or community. This inability to connect to their community can lead to isolation and marginalization of new arrivals or low-income individuals and families trapping them in a cycle of poverty.

The Multicultural Council of Windsor and Essex County, YMCA and the New Canadian Centre of Excellence are leaders in ensuring those who arrive in our communities are able to develop a sense of belonging by offering education and translation services as well as community events like the Multicultural Council's Carrousel of Nations that bring together numerous ethnic/cultural community groups from across the region in a celebration of food and culture. The Migrant Worker Community Program in Leamington offers social, cultural and recreational engagement for migrant labourers who work in the county. Family Service Windsor-Essex and its partners work with individuals and families dealing with financial difficulties. Programs like these and many others can ensure that newcomers or long time residence and feel a sense of belonging and engage their community.

Environmental stewardship

Effective stewardship of our natural environment is an important part of ensuring a strong community. A resilient environment will help create social and economic opportunities across our region. A perfect example of the community coming together for the greater good is the Essex Region Conservation Authority's annual Earth Day tree planting which saw 2,000 trees planted in our region in 2015.^{lxvii}

Small activities like neighbourhood clean-ups or community gardens not only beautify and strengthen neighbourhoods and environment, but also create cherished memories engraining a sense of self-worth and well-being that can become an intergenerational legacy for a community.

Shaping our future

Having the community engaged in shaping its future is a fundamentally important to ensuring that an inclusive and accepting community emerges. Shortly after being elected Mayor Drew Dilkens called for Windsorites to consider what they want their city and by extension our region to look like in 2035.^{lxxvii} Since this announcement the city and members of council have undertaken a number of community consultations efforts regarding this strategic plan. If residents are not given a voice to share their vision of their region, we cannot build the necessary levels of resident engagement to produce positive change over time.

There is a broad group of community stakeholders to speak for those who may not have a voice. Whether the Windsor-Essex Health Unit speaking out on physical or mental health issues; to the City taking the lead on battling homelessness and shelter insecurity; to private businesses that give generously to community organizations and programs. Across our region, individuals and groups have realized that we face a number of challenges going forward. United Way looks forward to working with these partners and other in advocating for a clear plan to reduce poverty, cost-effectively strengthen social supports, and making Windsor-Essex as a whole a better place to live, work, and play.



SECTION 6:

Our Safety

"Whether we live together in confidence and cohesion; with more faith and pride in ourselves and less self-doubt and hesitation; strong in the conviction that the destiny of Canada is to unite, not divide; sharing in cooperation, not in separation or in conflict; respecting our past and welcoming our future."





- Lester Pearson







SUMMARY OF KEY TRENDS

The perceived safety of our communities plays an important role in the lives of citizens and visitors to our region. Regardless of whether actual criminal activity occurs, the perception of the levels of criminality within communities changes people's attitudes about pride of place and belonging and can influence how people engage with their neighbours.

Fortunately for Windsor-Essex County, we are home to some of the safest communities in Canada. According to data published in 2013, four local communities (Amherstburg, LaSalle, Tecumseh, and Lakeshore) ranked among the ten safest in Canada.^{lxviii} Unfortunately for the City of Windsor, it lags behind its Essex County counterparts. The disparity is partially related to the differences in population size as well as social and demographic configurations of the communities.

-  Crimes against people and property have decreased by 18 percent and 16 percent respectively over the years studied.
-  Youth crime rates declined from 2008 through 2013 and are well under the rates in provincial and other examined cities.
-  The rate of drug violations in the Windsor CMA is not only lower than the province and other CMAs but it has continued to decline over the period of study.
-  The overall rate of crimes against property in the Windsor CMA has declined between 2008 and 2013 but still lags behind the province and some other comparable communities.

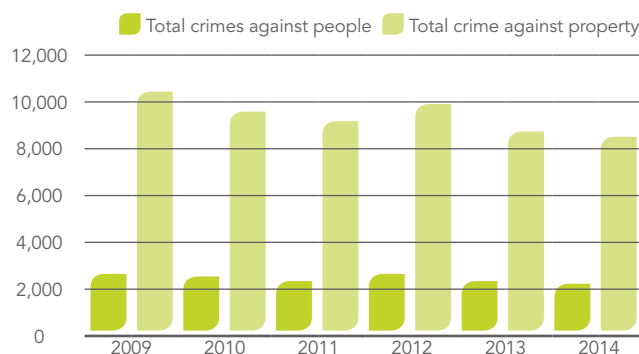
-  Despite the recent level of media attention, statistics show that the arson rate in Windsor has remained relatively consistent over the 6 years evaluated.
-  The incidence of domestic violence has increased over the years studied.
-  The rate of traffic violations has increased in the Windsor CMA bringing us from well below the provincial average in 2008 to even with the average in 2013.
-  Although still below provincial averages, the number of traffic violations has increased in the Windsor CMA. Fortunately we remain well under the London CMA but above the Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo CMA.

CRIMES AGAINST PEOPLE AND PROPERTY

Crime totals in Windsor

One of the basic measures of criminality in a community is the number of crimes that occur against people and property. Generally speaking in 2014, there was about three and a half times more property crime than crimes against people (8686 incidents vs 2344 incidents) in Windsor. Although these figures seem high (over 11,000 incidents last year) the vast majority of these incidents were minor in nature – “soft” drug possession, public intoxication or minor vandalism. The overall trend for both of these figures has been in the downward direction with some minor variation year over year.

Chart 58: Number of crimes against the person, 2009-2014, Windsor



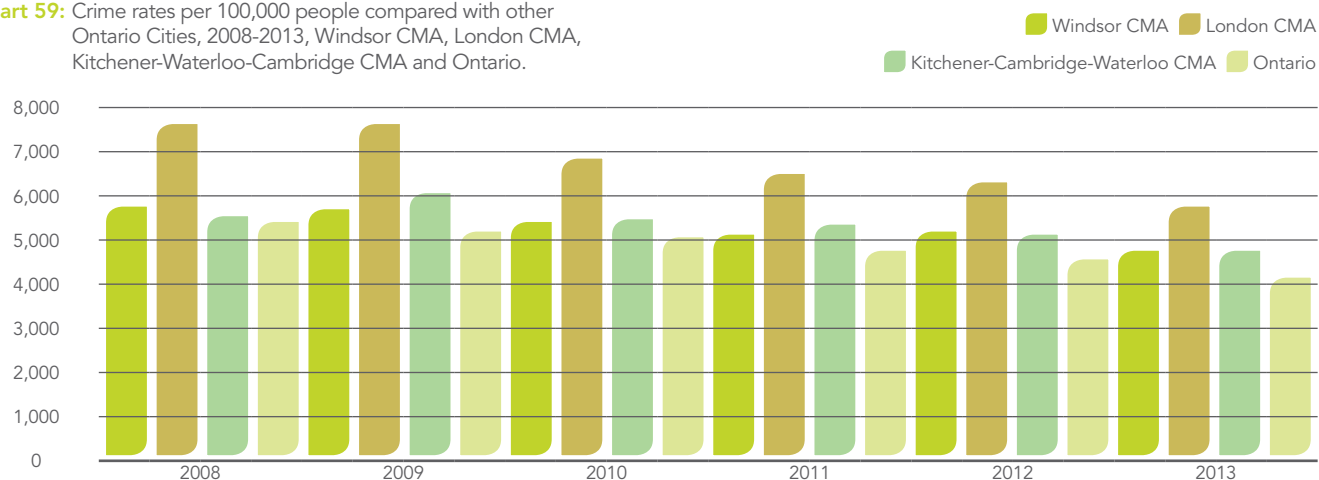
Source: Windsor Police Services. (2014) Crime Statistics.

Total crime rate

Unfortunately the county communities do not readily publish local crime statistics and as a result the remainder of this section generally focuses on the Windsor CMA. Overall, Windsor compares well with other Ontario CMAs, with lower rates of criminal activity (4,872 per 100,000 in 2013) than the

London CMA (5,811), and comparable rates to the tri-city CMA of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge (4,838). Unfortunately, all three communities find themselves above the provincial averages for crime (4,183) and despite the slight downward trend there is clearly still work to be done.

Chart 59: Crime rates per 100,000 people compared with other Ontario Cities, 2008-2013, Windsor CMA, London CMA, Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge CMA and Ontario.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 252-0051 - Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations. CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-04-13)

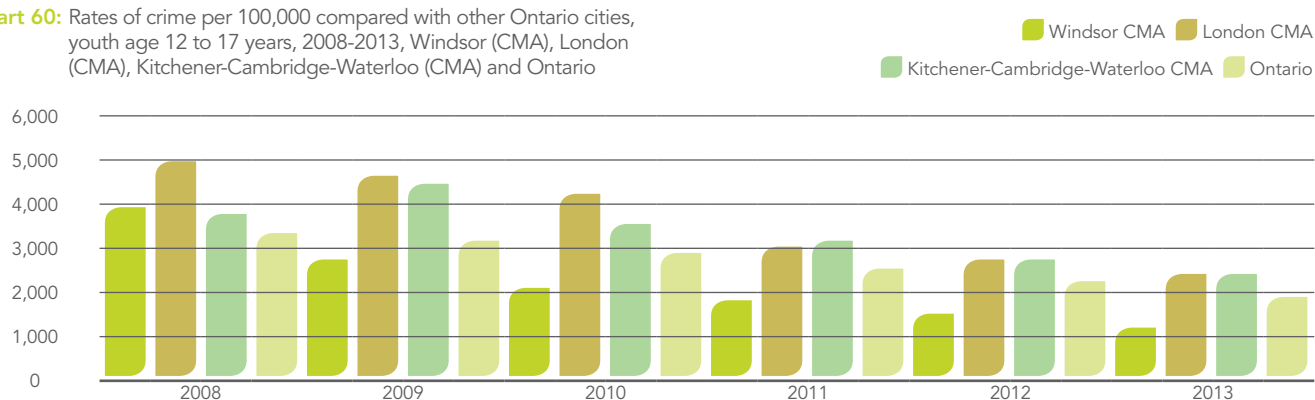
Crimes by youth age 12 to 17

The rate of criminal activity perpetrated by young people is not only an indicator for potential future criminal activity, but also a sign that points to underlying socio-economic issues. For young people trapped in the cycle of poverty, engaging in criminal activity can be perceived as a means to escape poverty.

Fortunately, the Windsor CMA fares well compared to London, Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo and the province in rates of youth crime. From a high of almost

2,941 criminal incidents per 100,000 people in 2008, that rate has declined by more than half to only 1,206 in 2013. This puts the Windsor CMA well ahead of the rates in comparable cities and the province. Whether this decline has to do with the shift in Ontario towards diversion of youth offenders away from the courts and into community programs remains to be seen as the Ontario government is currently preparing a database and report on this issue.^{lxix}

Chart 60: Rates of crime per 100,000 compared with other Ontario cities, youth age 12 to 17 years, 2008-2013, Windsor (CMA), London (CMA), Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo (CMA) and Ontario



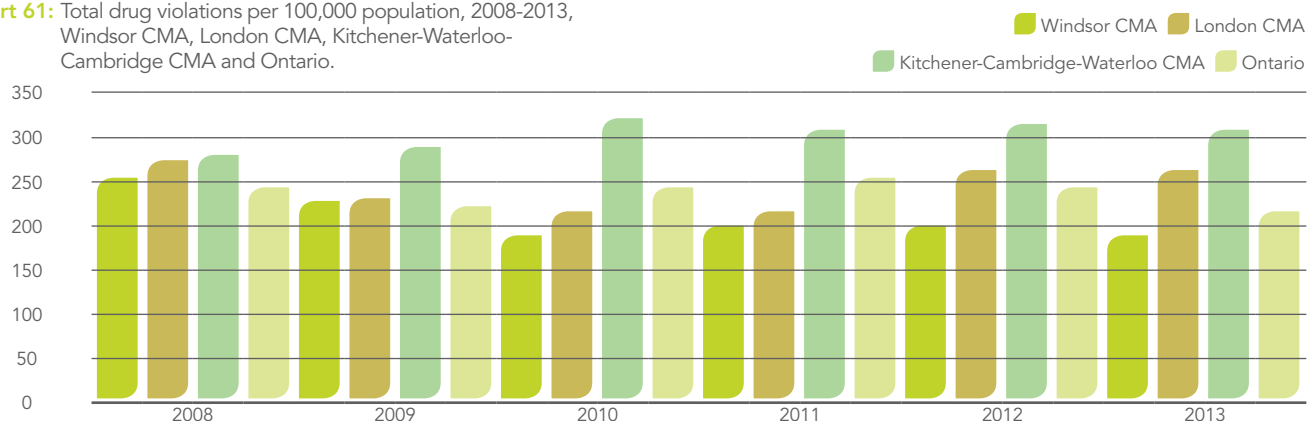
Source: Statistics Canada. Table 252-0511, Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations. (Accessed on 2015-04-13)

Drug violations

The destructive impact of drugs on people and communities has been well documented in Canada and around the world.^{lxxx} What the regional data shows is that Windsor seems to be doing well compared to the province and other communities on the issue of

drugs. The number of drug related incidents declined from a high of 257 per 100,000 people in 2008 to 184 per 100,000 people in 2014. This 2014 total is 85 incidents less than London and 132 less than Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo.

Chart 61: Total drug violations per 100,000 population, 2008-2013, Windsor CMA, London CMA, Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge CMA and Ontario.



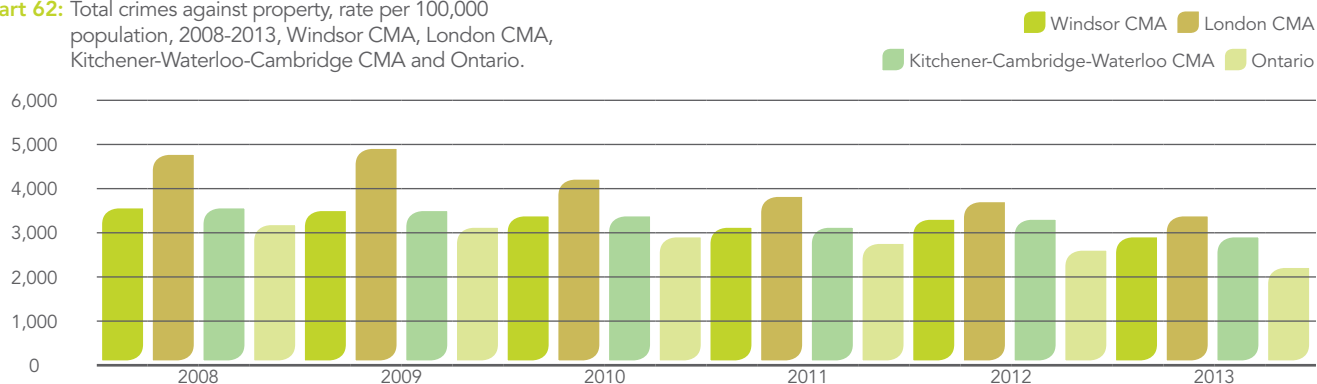
Source: Statistics Canada. Table 252-0051- Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-04-13)

Total crimes against property

Property crime whether a break-and-enter, arson, to a smashed window or graffiti on a wall has a pronounced impact on a community, leaving a visual scar that can easily be seen by all. These crimes not only affect the victims but the wider community as abandoned and damaged properties languish.

All three communities fare poorly when compared to the province despite a downward trend property crime statistics. Although the Windsor CMA rate of property crime fell from 3,598 to 2,966 incidents per 100,000 people, it remains well above the provincial average of 2,361 incidents in 2013.

Chart 62: Total crimes against property, rate per 100,000 population, 2008-2013, Windsor CMA, London CMA, Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge CMA and Ontario.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 252-0051 - Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-04-13)

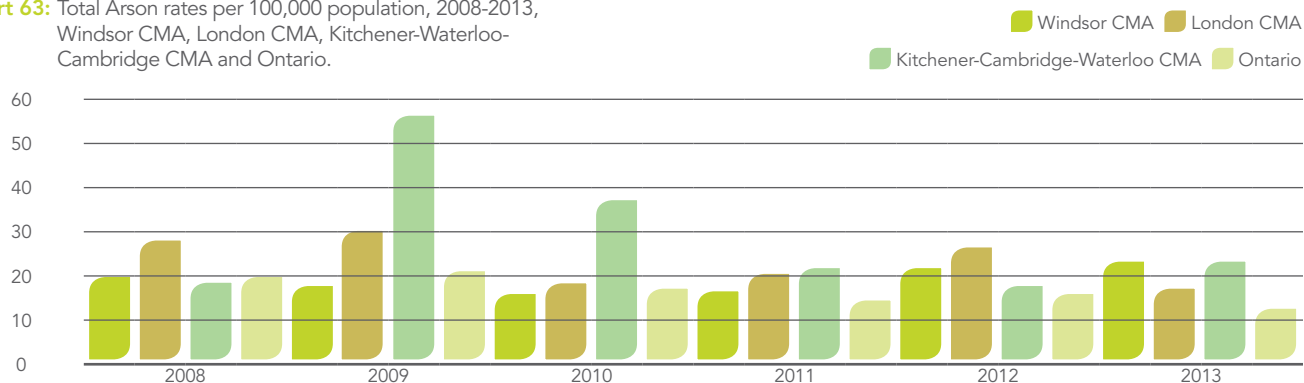
NOTE: Crimes against property include breaking and entering, possession of stolen property, theft, fraud, mischief, and arson.

Total arsons

Arson is an obvious and dangerous form of property destruction.^{lxvii} Despite the concentration of media reporting on arson in recent years, the overall number of arsons in the Windsor CMA has remained in a range of 53 to 74 annually in the years of study and the 2014

preliminary number reported in the media seem on track to remain in that range.^{lxviii} Overall the Windsor CMA generally finds itself around the provincial average for arson while Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo CMA and London CMA have larger fluctuations.

Chart 63: Total Arson rates per 100,000 population, 2008-2013, Windsor CMA, London CMA, Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge CMA and Ontario.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 252-0051 - Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations, CANSIM (database). (Accessed on 2015-04-13)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Windsor Police Services categorizes domestic violence under two categories, sexual assault – family, and assaults – family. In 2010, a low of 439 assaults occurred and since then, assaults against family have steadily increased. In 2012 they were at their highest at 522 before declining slightly to 482 in 2014. Sexual assaults against family have remained constant, averaging around 32 per year with a slight decline from a high of 41 in 2010 to a low of 24 in 2013, then a slight increase to 29 in 2014. Unfortunately comparisons to other communities are difficult as Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative does not track this data and local police services in London and Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge categorize these crimes in different manners.

Chart 64: Number of assault-family and sexual assault family. City of Windsor, 2009-2014.



Source: Windsor Police Services. (2014) Crime Statistics.

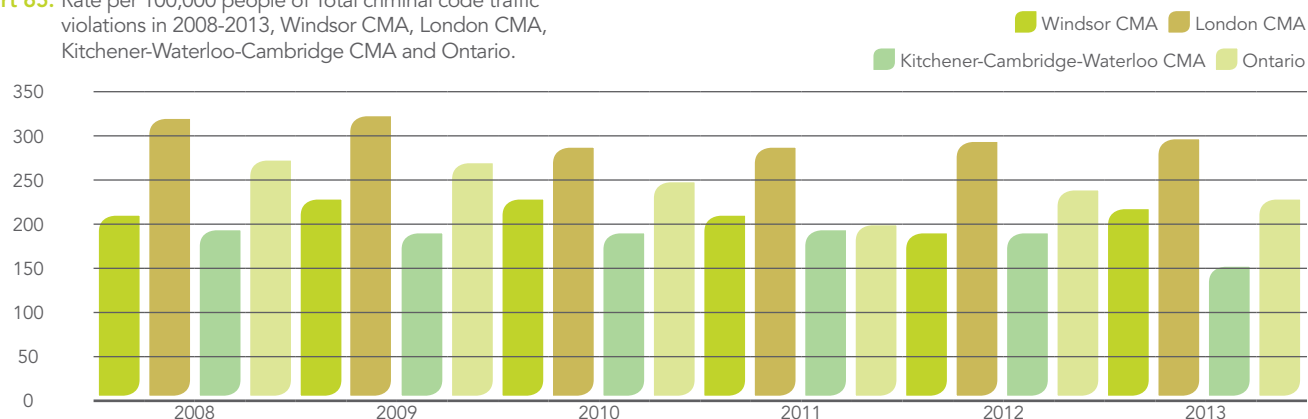
ROAD SAFETY

Roads are an important community asset. If people do not feel safe travelling from point A to B it impacts community safety, and the ties that bind us together.

Traffic violations include impaired driving, failure to comply, dangerous operation of a vehicle and fail to stop. The data that is available for the Windsor CMA indicates that violations in this area are lower than Ontario. Although the provincial average for traffic violations has been on a steady decline from 264 to

231 violations per 100,000 people, the Windsor CMA has seen fluctuating results. There was an increase in violations from 207 in 2008 to 229 per 100,000 people in 2013. The Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo CMA seems to be the gold standard having maintained a sub-200 violation level for all of the years reviewed. Part of the reason for this variation could be due to the discretion that local law enforcement has in enforcing road safety.

Chart 65: Rate per 100,000 people of Total criminal code traffic violations in 2008-2013, Windsor CMA, London CMA, Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge CMA and Ontario.



Source: Statistics Canada. Table 252-00511, Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations. (Accessed on 2015-04-15)

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Crime in many cases is a symptom of broader societal problems. Criminality can be statistically linked to lower income levels – whether people turn to alcohol and drugs to battle depression or steal when they can't make ends meet. Criminal activity can quite often be traced back to a common societal issue or root cause.

Although there will always be random and senseless acts of crime, poverty and hopelessness impact levels of crime and criminality in our communities. A report by United Way Calgary on Alberta's prison population illustrated this – it found that an overwhelming number of incarcerated women, 39 percent, were imprisoned for failure to pay a fine that they could not afford.^{boxiii} Although the Calgary study was limited in scope, its findings have huge implications. Incarceration comes with a huge cost to society and in many cases could be prevented with proper community supports, awareness programs, poverty reduction strategies and better, more integrated access to services.

Engaging the community

Research shows that when a community values itself and is engaged in its well-being criminal activity tends to decline. Whether it is a neighbourhood watch, painting over graffiti or promptly repairing vandalized property, activities like these help residents feel connected to their neighbourhoods and feel a sense of belonging. They will also be more likely to intervene or prevent criminal activity.

Strategies such as Ford City Renewal, Our West End, the Downtown Windsor Community Collaborative and The Initiative: Glengarry to Marentette is directly engaging residents in these communities in Windsor. Over the next five years, these programs with their partner organizations will attempt to broaden neighbourhood engagement in their respective communities by building the leadership skills of residents, and strengthen the social, economic, and physical elements to revitalize low-income neighbourhoods. These programs are engaging residents more than ever before, and residents are already telling us that they feel hope and possibility for their neighbourhoods' future.

Violence against women

Although domestic violence primarily targets women, specific statistics for our community are not readily available. While Windsor Police Services statistics are able to distinguish between family and non-family incidence there are no readily available gender-based data.

One insight that is available comes from the Hiatus House women's shelter which has seen from a low of 262 women sheltered in 2010/11 to 339 in

2011/12. From this high a modest decline has occurred to 287 admissions in 2014/15.^{lxxxiv} These numbers are almost doubled when child admissions are included. Unfortunately data from other shelters in our community were not readily available so a complete picture cannot be constructed but violence against women remains a pressing issue.

Another area that largely goes unreported is physical and sexual violence against students at university and college. Again there is little readily available data but the University of Windsor is currently developing a broader strategy on sexual assault and violence on campus and has launched a website with resources for students.^{lxxxv}

Community safety

Ensuring that our communities are safe is of paramount importance. As was outline earlier in this report, Essex County is home to four of the safest communities in Canada. But there is still work to be done. If we are unable to mitigate the impacts of poverty and help people find pathways out of poverty, we will be challenged to address neighbourhood safety and crime prevention issues.

Children's Safety Village of Windsor-Essex County is a leader in this field. Not only do they provide in school programming in partnership with the school boards to educate youth on a variety of safety concerns in our community (Road Safety, Bike Safety etc.) they are now planning to expand into more mature age groups in the fall of 2015 with programming related to Sexting, Cyberbullying and being safe online.

A key partner with any community safety program is the Windsor Police Services who have been adapting in their own way to better address the community needs. Windsor Police Service has fully embraced the policing model endorsed by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police (OACP) which places a pronounced emphasis on full community mobilization. In this regard, police service delivery is focused at a neighbourhood level to recognize the unique and variable conditions for public safety that each individual neighbourhood exhibits. Patrol officers on all shifts have received specialized training, allowing them greater capability to engage all residents and property owners to optimize the community mobilization opportunities that exist in each neighbourhood of the community.

Ensuring a safe and vibrant community requires a wide coalition of partners to be successful. United Way is but one partner amongst dozens who seek to improve the safety and quality of life in Windsor-Essex. This process is undertaken through bringing key partners to the table so they can directly engage these community members and ensure that disenfranchised voices are heard.

Conclusion

Since the 2009 Community Well-Being Report, Windsor-Essex County has endured a number of significant challenges. Our region has a declining population and a changing demographic makeup. Our economy is weak, and still heavily reliant on a single sector for growth. Our people are generally healthy but lag behind provincial averages in certain categories like obesity. Our communities have lower levels of educational attainment and students graduating without the skills needed for the jobs that are available locally. We have a citizenry that has a strong sense of belonging yet is failing to engage in the electoral process, and crime rates which, despite improvement in Windsor, still rank higher than provincial averages in many areas.



Despite these ominous trends, progress has been made but these indicators suggest that much work still needs to be done in our community. We must work together to fight poverty and give people the supports they need – education, counselling, mentoring, etc., to end the cycle of poverty. With such a wide array of issues that risk pushing people into a poverty, no one person or group can solve the challenges our community faces.

There is a growing awareness in our citizenry that action needs to be taken to deal with poverty in our community. Other community actors like Pathway to Potential, WEtech Alliance, the City of Windsor, County of Essex, Homeless Coalition of Windsor-Essex County and Windsor-Essex Food Bank Association, to name a few, along with United Way are stepping forward to do their part. Together, we will collaborate in a variety of ways in the fight for lasting social change – to eliminate poverty and build a better community.

The Welcoming Communities Report (2014) by Dr. Glynis George, Dr. Jane Ku and Erin Selimos identifies six benchmarks to enhancing the welcoming community capacity in Windsor-Essex County for new comers.^{lxvii} This report has been adapted by the Local Immigration Partnership along with local settlement agencies to ensure that new arrivals feel welcome and are able to adapt to life in Windsor-Essex County.

Pathway to Potential's market dollar initiative gives subsidized dollars to families living in low income to buy fresh food at local farmers markets and is an example of social innovation. Not only do those most in need gain access to quality fresh food, but local farmers earn additional income, thereby stimulating the economy.

The City of Windsor has released a ten year housing and homelessness plan that outlines the key steps forward in the battle against housing insecurity and homelessness in our community. In their plan they will be developing and implementing a "Housing First" strategy to provide intensive supports for individuals battling chronic homelessness.^{lxviii}

WEtech Alliance's trailblazing First Robotics program promotes the STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) subjects through hands-on learning and competition. Secondary school youth from all socio-economic backgrounds can participate in the program. Each team, with the assistance of industry mentors, builds a robot and competes against other teams to determine which performs more effectively. This will hopefully help to put students on a pathway to an effective education and prosperous career.

Provincial agencies have also been stepping up with funding and support. Ontario Trillium Foundation has refocused its funding efforts by supporting organizations that are battling against poverty, social exclusion and social entrepreneurial ventures in our communities.

For over a decade the Ontario Early Years Program has brought together parents/caregivers and children in 24 different locations across our region, promoting play and reading in families and providing access to early learning professionals. These opportunities assist in healthy development during a child's early years.

The implementation of full day kindergarten has built on these Early Years Centres by providing a strong learning foundation to better prepare children for grade one.

The Ontario government's creation of a poverty reduction fund in April 2015 is an exciting development. This \$50 million dollar fund is designed to support community organizations' implementation and delivery of poverty reduction strategies. With additional funding opportunities in 2016 and 2017 this provides access to funding for local organizations to partner with the province in the battle against poverty in our region.^{lxviii}

Federally, the government has been active in ensuring that our growing senior populations remain active and recognizing them as an important part of the community by funding a variety of programs in our region.^{lxix} The government has also been aggressive in implementing incentives to assist local companies to find and hire skilled labour, expand their businesses and recover the cost of capital depreciation, particularly in the manufacturing sector.^{xc} Arguably the greatest impact by the Federal government has been its support for the new bridge connecting Windsor and Detroit. Although it likely will not be open until 2020, this project along with the provincially funded Parkway, are going to dramatically reshape how people go about their lives in region.

United Way supports a wide range of programs in concert with a number of partners from across our community in the battle against poverty. Our strategy for After School Programs gives young people a "leg up" on education, and supports mentors who guide youth through their adolescence. Our Counselling and Supports strategy supports walk-in clinics to assist individuals and families with mental health issues and provides ongoing group support. Our Food Security Strategy supports community gardens which provide nutritious foods for those who most need it. Our Neighbourhood Engagement strategy aims to engage citizens in their communities while improving community conditions.

Dozens of stakeholder across our region are working in concert with these programs and others to ensure the most vulnerable have the supports they need, and to provide a foundation for future improvements. But we can't do it alone. A broader coalition is needed to combat poverty and social issues in our community and this report is a first step in achieving these goals. By updating the baseline data on our region, we can prioritize our community needs so that individuals, organizations and governments can effectively plan how to combat the challenges we face.

What citizens can do:

GIVE

Make a donation to support your local community.

VOLUNTEER

Get involved by offering up your time and skills to help organizations.

ACT

Let your voice be heard about how you believe we can make Windsor-Essex a better place to live, work, and play.

LEARN MORE

Since the release of the 2009 Community Well-Being Report, other community reports have been produced to enrich the quality of information that is available in Windsor-Essex County. These include the 2014 Social Determinants of Health in Windsor-Essex County report produced by the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.^{xci} The Windsor-Essex Community Foundation's Vital Signs report is published annually, and was first produced in 2013.^{xcii} The City of Windsor also produces a number of reports that monitor the progress of their social, cultural and economic initiatives. These reports can be used in a complementary fashion with the 2015 Community Well-Being Report to provide a more comprehensive picture of our community.

What community organizations can do:

TURN DATA INTO STRATEGY

Use the data in this report to focus your programming and to seek applicable funding to achieve targeted objectives.

FORM A COLLABORATIVE

Join together with other organizations and funders to create community-wide, integrated solutions to community problems.

What government can do:

FOCUS RESOURCES

Respond to the needs of your constituents by focusing resources where they are needed most in each community, based on both community input and data.

LEVERAGE EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

Many organizations bring expertise and knowledge to the table on specific issues that can assist and calibrate government action.

LEAD THE WAY

Government can and should be a flag bearer for the community and the issues that it faces – from acting as a resource to providing a mandate for community groups to deliver services directly – all of these roles are needed.

End Notes

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