



Bridging the Gap: Westlock and District Social Development Strategy

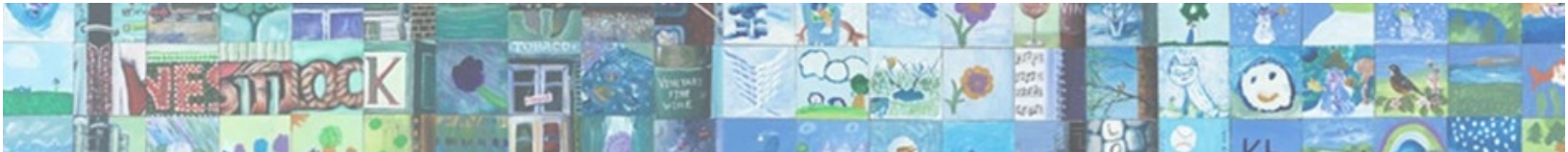
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Executive Summary

Westlock and District Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is a provincial/municipal partnership program that serves the Town of Westlock, Westlock County, and the Village of Clyde. In September 2021, Westlock and District FCSS engaged *bassa* Social Innovations Inc. to support their efforts in the development of a social development strategy. The project purpose was *to help identify the aspirations, challenges, strengths, needs, and barriers experienced by the community to help improve and inform future and current social priorities and programming.*

Bridging the Gap: A Social Development Strategy for Westlock and District is a community document – reflecting insights and perspectives of community members and organizations to inform and support a collaborative approach on five priority areas:

- Affordability
- Vibrant Local Economy
- Community Safety
- Active Living
- Connection and Collaboration

The process began in September 2021 with a focused effort to define the scope and purpose of the project. An engagement process was undertaken that included **discovery, exploration, and affirmation** – a process that used information and perspectives shared by participants in one phase to help inform the next phase of engagement. Engagement processes included key informant interviews, community conversations, a workshop with volunteers and the FCSS Board, and surveys. The community survey attracted almost 500 responses.

While the social development strategy identifies five priority areas, it does not specifically indicate tasks or next steps for each one. The strategy does, however, begin to connect the dots between people, groups and organizations, and government to work collaboratively on priorities to affect change – each with their own unique interests and capacities to contribute.

There is a tendency among human service organizations to develop programs when a community issue arises. This leads to a cycle of response and intervention when a process of connection, collaboration, and prevention may result in a range of diverse approaches and greater sustainability. A guide for roles and responsibilities is included in the report, and may serve not only FCSS, but other groups and organizations in the community seeking to identify different approaches to engagement and involvement.

A recommendation from the report suggests that by engaging in a collaborative process of community asset mapping, groups and organizations may discover new ways to focus their current efforts and resources toward the five priorities.

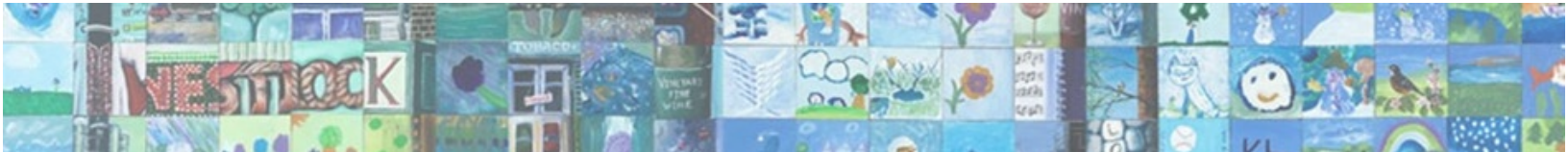
Further, the report identifies the opportunity to consider an expanded perspective of community safety to include education, prevention, and intervention in addition to the more traditional enforcement approach – attending to the root causes that lead to crime as well as dealing with crime as it happens.



Connection and belonging are a significant theme throughout this report. Activating neighbourhood connections can help to build rapport among citizens, increase community safety, and perpetuate the shared perspective among area residents that Westlock and District is a friendly place to live and raise a family.

Finally, the process used to generate the community social development strategy generated considerable data and information. Additional opportunities exist to further analyze the information collected and to use the data as a baseline to monitor future change.

Bridging the Gap: A Social Development Strategy for Westlock and District provides the community with a snapshot in time – a period in our collective history marked by a global pandemic. The ability to emerge from isolation, social distancing, and limitations on community gatherings with a set of community priorities helps Westlock and District find a collective energy to move forward. The report contains foundational concepts and strategies that can be used as community conditions change.



Beyond A Needs Assessment

Bridging The Gap: A Social Development Strategy for Westlock and District reflects a desire on behalf of Westlock and District FCSS to create something foundational for ongoing use by the community – not just the local FCSS program. While a needs assessment can generate a current gap analysis and time sensitive listing of focus areas for FCSS, a social development strategy extends more deeply into the community and helps create a foundational understanding of the community for use over the longer term.

The purpose of the project was to help identify the aspirations, challenges, strengths, needs, and barriers experienced by the community to help improve and inform future and current social priorities and programming.



Westlock and District FCSS (comprised of the Town of Westlock, Westlock County, and the Village of Clyde) engaged *bassa* Social Innovations Inc. for the purpose of developing a Social Development Strategy. The purpose of the project was to help identify the aspirations, challenges, strengths, needs, and barriers experienced by the community to help improve and inform future and current social priorities and programming in pursuit of the following underlying questions:

- What areas of social development pose the greatest future opportunities to help enhance the community?
- Who is currently engaged in social development within the community?
- What strategies and functions are proving effective for social development in the community?
- What is the unique opportunity for FCSS to affect change in the community?
- What roles and responsibilities can be taken by individuals, families, groups, and neighbourhoods to enhance positive social development in the community?

A strategy was designed to achieve the project objectives in a manner that would affirm the mandate of FCSS, support volunteerism, provide meaningful engagement opportunities for the community, and embed organizational learning throughout the process. Within the engagement process, there were three phases – discovery, exploration, and affirmation.

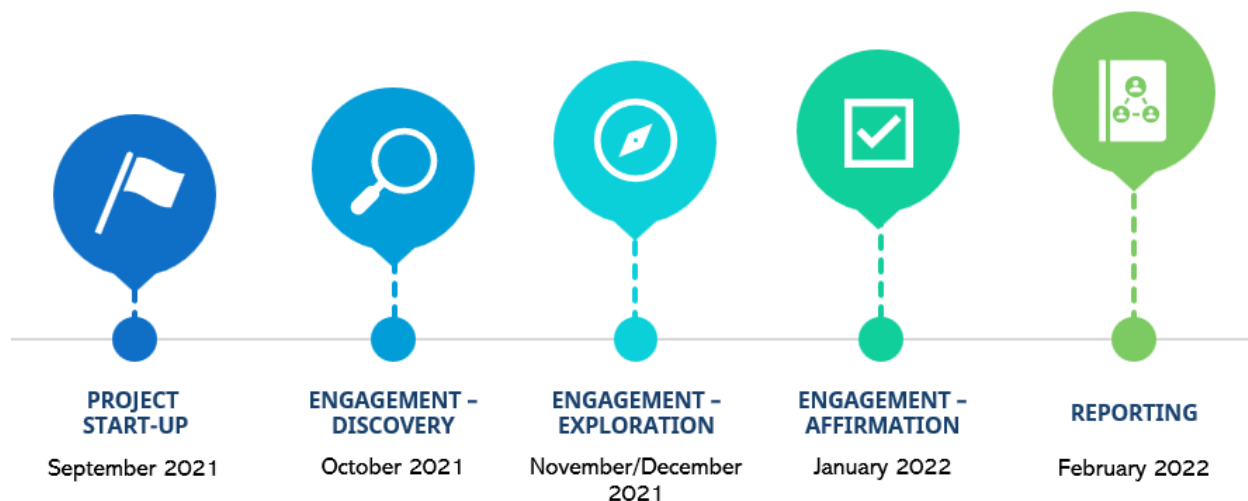


Figure 1 - Project Components and Timeline

The **discovery** phase consisted of five key informant interviews with six different community leaders – people living, working, and interacting within Westlock and District. Their insights and perspectives helped to create a baseline understanding of the community for the consulting team, and the interview format allowed for deeper exploration of ideas, concepts, and statements. While the discovery phase provided valuable information, the differences in perspectives and patterns across responses helped generate questions for further examination.

In the **exploration** phase, two methodologies were employed; community conversations, and an organizational survey. Given the strategic direction of the provincial FCSS mandate *to help people develop an awareness of social needs*, the exploration phase was designed to include a series of

community conversations.

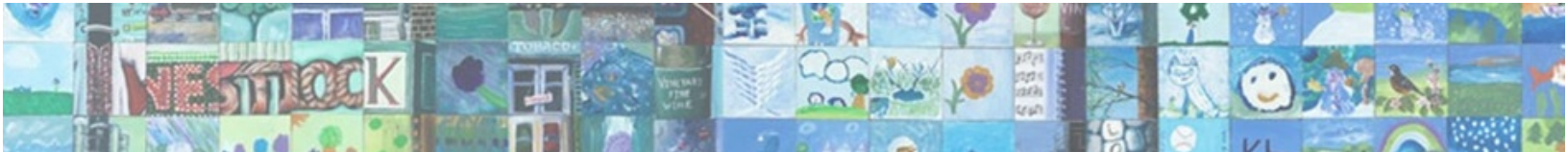
Discovery and Exploration by the Numbers

6 Key Informant Interviews

200 Community
Conversation Participants

15 Organizations Surveyed

Based partly on the insights from the key informant interviews and partly on the overall project objectives, a guide for community conversations (Appendix A) was designed. Westlock and District FCSS reached out to find approximately one dozen volunteers from across the region to participate in a training session for the purpose of hosting a series of interviews and conversations with community members. Over a three-week period,



almost 200 area residents provided their thoughts and perspectives to the volunteers. Qualitative data was collected using a survey tool (Appendix B) completed by the volunteers to reflect group conversations. The same online survey tool was available to participants that wanted to provide additional information or further insights. Thirty-six (36) surveys were submitted.

Analysis of the survey data was compiled and shared with the volunteer conversation hosts in a workshop designed to affirm themes and trends, and to dive a little deeper into their understanding of the conversation participants. The workshop also revealed new insights and thoughts about the Westlock and District community, perspectives that were woven into the community survey design.

The second component of the **exploration** phase was an organizational survey (Appendix C) sent out to a broad list of community groups and organizations identified by Westlock and District FCSS. Fifteen (15) organizational surveys were received representing groups ranging from recreation, faith, community halls, and culture. The survey information was collated, themed, analyzed, and compared with findings from the key informant interviews, community conversations, and volunteer insights.

The final phase of the engagement strategy was the **affirmation** phase. A community survey (Appendix D) was designed to be largely quantitative in nature and assess the extent to which community members agreed or disagreed with statements generated through the discovery and exploration phases.

Hearing from the Community

A successful engagement strategy results in the accumulation of insights and perspectives that create patterns of understanding to inform future decision-making. These insights can reveal underlying truths that are troublesome or knowledge about the community that is affirming or positive. In all cases, community engagement creates foundational knowledge about people and community culture that becomes a catalyst for change and growth.

The engagement strategy for *Bridging the Gap: A Social Development Strategy for Westlock and District* revealed four basic categories to explore community and social wellbeing:

Connection
and belonging

Health and
wellbeing

Access to
supports and
services

Community
wellbeing



Connection and belonging are foundational to community and social well-being, starting with the way in which people create social bonds with family, friends, and neighbours, and extending out to the involvement with community organizations, programs, services, and community activities.

Other things being equal, people who trust their fellow citizens volunteer more often, contribute more to charity, participate more often in politics and community organizations, serve more readily on juries, give blood more frequently, comply more fully with their tax obligations, are more tolerant of minority views, and display many other forms of civic virtue. (Putnam, 2001, p.137)

Exploring connection and belonging in Westlock and District provides a baseline from which other promotions and programs can be designed to encourage deeper bonds and support among people and organizations. A balance of *bonding social capital* (relationships among people sharing similar demographic characteristics or experiences) and *bridging social capital* (relationships among people from varied characteristics and backgrounds) is required to maintain a healthy sense of connection and belonging in the community.

Throughout the process, there was an underlying sense expressed by ‘newcomers’ to the community – people that may have lived in the area for decades, but still sensed a lack of belonging or acceptance. This highlighted the need to explore connection and belonging more deeply, as a potential mechanism to support enhanced community and social development.

Health and wellbeing are broad terms meant to capture indicators at the individual, organizational, and community levels. Community and social wellbeing reflect the presence of physical, mental, and spiritual health and “not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (WHO, 2022). According to John McKnight and Peter Block, “while genetic inheritance counts, the major factors determining our health are our individual behaviour, social relationships, and physical environment” (2012, p. 20). They go on to indicate:

When we act together in our neighbourhood, we produce the primary sources of health. When we are disconnected, we create business for the specialists in the medical system (McKnight, J. & Block, P., 2012, p. 20).



The engagement process for this project set out to explore the extent to which people may be experiencing unhealthy conditions or experiences and the availability of community supports or services. The intention of exploring health and wellbeing was to identify potential gaps, areas for improvement, and the presence of existing infrastructure or community to collaboratively address priority health needs.

Westlock and District exists as a service centre for area residents while, at the same time, relying on other larger centres to provide specialized supports and services. **Access to supports and services** are therefore an important factor in community and social development for the region. For this project, access was explored from two perspectives – the presence of supports and services in the community, and the extent to which barriers may exist for people to avail themselves of the supports and services. Both factors become a consideration for future program development.

Community wellbeing is the category used to explore a variety of broad social conditions that could serve as priorities for development in Westlock and District. Sustainable communities seek to find a balance of social, economic, and environmental priorities – many of which cross over because of how people feel or experience the priorities in their own lives.

The volunteers that conducted the community conversations were asked to consider a broad range of social, environmental, and economic factors they believed to be important to the people they interviewed. Using the STAR Communities Framework of Sustainability Goals and Objectives (Figure 1), community volunteers considered almost 50 different objectives across 8 different goal areas to help narrow down potential topics of concern to residents of Westlock and District.



STAR Framework of Sustainability Goals & Objectives

Built Environment	Climate & Energy	Economy & Jobs	Education, Arts & Community	Equity & Empowerment	Health & Safety	Natural Systems	Innovation & Process
Ambient Noise & Light	Climate Adaptation	Business Retention & Development	Arts & Culture	Civic Engagement	Active Living	Green Infrastructure	Best Practices & Processes
Community Water Systems	Greenhouse Gas Mitigation	Green Market Development	Community Cohesion	Civil & Human Rights	Community Health	Biodiversity & Invasive Species	Exemplary Performance
Compact & Complete Communities	Greening the Energy Supply	Local Economy	Educational Opportunity & Attainment	Environmental Justice	Emergency Management & Response	Natural Resource Protection	Local Innovation
Housing Affordability	Energy Efficiency	Quality Jobs & Living Wages	Historic Preservation	Equitable Services & Access	Food Access & Nutrition	Outdoor Air Quality	Good Governance
Infill & Redevelopment	Water Efficiency	Targeted Industry Development	Social & Cultural Diversity	Human Services	Health Systems	Water in the Environment	
Public Parkland	Local Government GHG & Resource Footprint	Workforce Readiness	Aging in the Community	Poverty Prevention & Alleviation	Hazard Mitigation	Working Lands	
Transportation Choices	Waste Minimization				Safe Communities		

Figure 2 - Star Communities Framework

To explore these categories further, the community survey incorporated questions about potential priorities identified by workshop participants. Using the STAR Communities established models of community wellbeing and sustainability, workshop participants (i.e. the volunteers that led the community conversations) reviewed a broad set of potential goal statements and identified those that appeared to best reflect input from conversation participants. In total, ten (10) potential priorities were identified (Figure 3).



Figure 3 - 10 Priority Areas



Bridging the Gap Community Survey

As the final piece of engagement for *Bridging The Gap: A Social Development Strategy for Westlock and District*, a community survey was available between January 4-20, 2022. The survey was completed by 470 residents from the target communities.

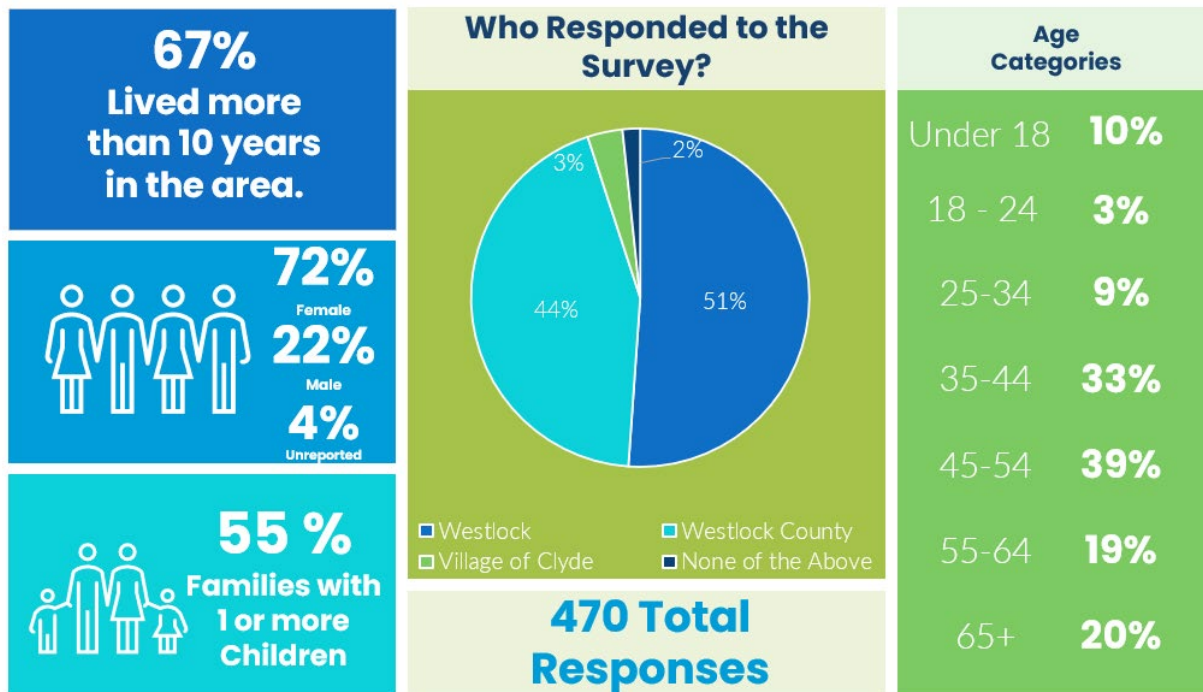


Figure 4 - Survey Demographics Overview

Statement on Survey Validity and Limitations

As with any survey, there are certain limitations with the data due to representation and volume factors. 470 responses represent approximately 4% of the population of Westlock and District. However, included in this sample size is a relatively accurate demographic sample as compared to the 2016 Statistics Canada community profiles. The 18–24-year-old demographic has the largest statistical deviation from the norm (41%).

With all research, it is important to state any limitations of the data. For this project, the results of the community survey hold the following limitations. The data collected is based off individual perspectives and feelings of connection, wellbeing, and community need. Therefore, the results, specifically around perceived need, are intended to be understood as only perception and not a statistically accurate statement of needs. Additionally, while access to and availability of public transportation arose as an issue of importance throughout all forms of engagement, in error, the survey did not provide individuals



with an opportunity to indicate it as a community priority. To accommodate for this oversight, a special section on transportation has been added.

We believe the survey results to be a valid representation of the community of Westlock and District as the sample size represents no greater than a 4.5% margin of error. The next section of the report explores findings from across the community engagement strategies for the top five priority areas identified through the community survey.

Top Priorities

As discussed above, the survey provided residents an opportunity to select their top 5 priorities from the provided list. In this section, we will explore the identified priorities and provide analysis for each one based on feedback from the survey, community conversations, and key informant interviews to provide context and build understanding.

Based on survey feedback, the top 5 priorities identified were:



Figure 5 - Five Community Priorities

Priority A - Westlock and District is an affordable place to live

Westlock and District residents strongly felt that affordability should be a priority for the community moving forward. Across all respondents, affordability was selected 60% of the time, the highest agreed



upon priority between all communities involved. When asked to rate Westlock’s affordability on a scale of 1 to 100 (1 being “we need work in this area” and 100 being “we are strong in this area”). The average answer was 42 with only 48% of respondents giving a score of over 50 and only 18% providing a score of over 70. This coincides with the feedback received through community conversations.

Participants in community conversations highlighted a variety of areas that impact affordability including high tax rates, economic security, affordable housing, food security, and recreation costs. Some of the feedback included “prices are high at our local groceries compared to the city” and that there is a need for free recreation opportunities. Participants suggested activities such as improved walking trails, additional parks or amenities (including a splash park, among others) and free evening classes. To increase understanding of affordability, this feedback was included in the survey in multiple ways.

What impacts affordability in Westlock & District?

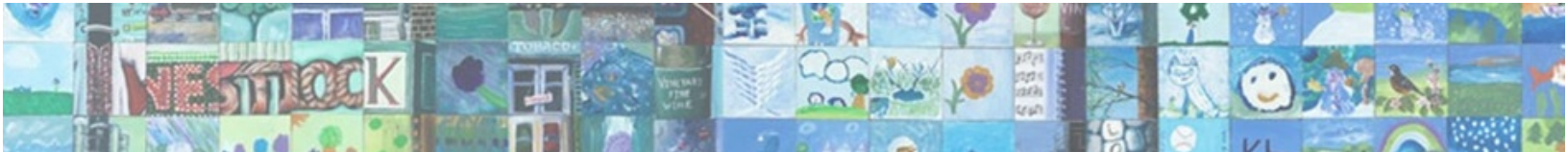
- High Tax Rates
- Economic Security
- Affordable Housing
- Food Costs
- Recreation Costs



Several questions were posed directly to help build a better understanding of affordability as a priority. **Importantly, 60% of respondents believe that the number of individuals experiencing low income or poverty is high and growing. Additionally, 52% of**

respondents believe the number of people needing affordable housing is high and growing and 45% of respondents believe the number of people experiencing unemployment or underemployment is high and growing. From an income segment analysis, this number increase to 65% of those making between \$15 and \$30,000 annually. From this, it can be understood that there is a shared perception that community needs are growing. It is important to identify that these represent the individual perceptions of poverty, affordable housing need, and employment - not the true statistical prevalence of these items. However, it is important to note that public perception can influence governance (and vice-versa), and therefore should be understood as an important force to consider when developing strategy.

From a demographic perspective, the importance of affordability can be understood through further analysis of survey demographics compared to the Statistics Canada 2016 community profile. In the last



community profile, 42% of community members (across all 3 communities) were making less than \$50,000 per year.

Based on survey responses, that percentage may have dropped as the survey indicated 39% at the same income level. However, those making \$30,000.00 or less may have increased from 22% in 2016 to 30% in 2022. However, these are only snapshots of current demographics, and *a complete demographics analysis is recommended to build a strong picture of the current state.*



Affordability was also identified through food security (food costs and availability of food bank support) and the access to basic needs. Survey responses indicate that most residents feel they can get their basic needs within Westlock and District (over 75%). It may be important to note that the most likely group to disagree with that statement (25%) are those living less than 1 year in the area. 28% of residents felt that they need to go to larger centres for most things, however the longer people lived in the area, the less likely they were to feel this way. Of note, those most likely to agree have incomes under \$30,000.00, this could be correlated with feedback from community conversations below.

Accessing Basic Goods: What's Missing?

- Lower Prices
- Thrift Opportunities
- Bulk Purchase Options

Most residents (63%) feel that local business provide the services or products they are looking for, however those in lower income levels (\$30,000 or less) are less likely to feel that way. These results correlate with what was heard in community conversations. Although many residents indicated the ability to get their basic needs, it appears that prices may be a barrier for some, requiring them to travel to larger centres. An additional push for shopping outside the community was the ability to buy bulk as indicated by multiple community conversation participants.

When asked if income is a barrier to access services or amenities, 35% felt income was a barrier for them. Those with a household income below \$30k were most likely to respond this way (65%), with a reduction as higher incomes were reported. This item also correlates



with community conversation feedback that indicated a desire for lower access fees to amenities, as well as additional opportunities for free access to public amenities.

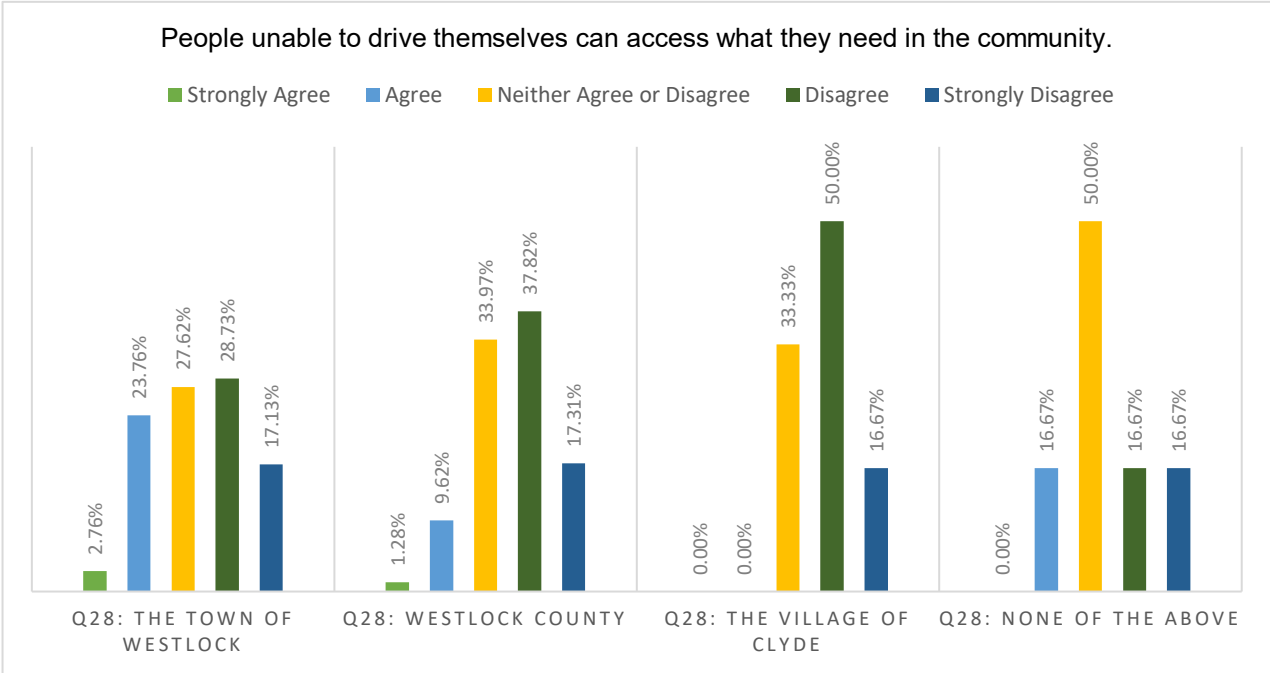


Table 1 - Transportation

Public transportation was reported as a significant issue for the community between all engagement formats. Key informant interviews and community conversations uncovered an agreed upon recognition that public transportation is an increasingly important need in the community. The survey indicates this is especially true for those in lower income brackets, however it was also recognized by those in the higher incomes as well. *Meaning, even those not in need of public transit recognize the lack of service and its importance, suggesting an opportunity for collaboration.* The questions explored not only their perspective on availability of public transportation, but also their reliance on a vehicle. Of note, County and Village of Clyde residents were slightly more likely to agree that a vehicle is needed to access services or amenities.

Those at lower income levels are less likely to own a vehicle but have equal needs for a vehicle. This could be reducing their ability to access services, education, or retain employment, perpetuating the cycle of poverty. More public consultation on this topic would be appropriate.



Priority B - Westlock and District has a vibrant local economy

Feedback from community conversations, interviews, and the survey found common ground in residents' interest and best hopes for Westlock and District having a vibrant local economy. When asked

What a Vibrant Economy means to the residents of Westlock & District

- Revitalized Downtown
- Vibrant Local Businesses
- Rebuilt Stores
- Manufacturing and other good job options
- Locally Owned Business
- Increased shopping selections



about their best hopes for the community, over two thirds of community conversations identified economic growth and economic revitalization as part of their vision. Themes of downtown revitalization, vibrant shopping, manufacturing, and high paying jobs were prevalent among participants. As a note, although the community survey provides some context for this priority, the survey was designed to assess social elements and is therefore limited to the human context of economic growth rather than functional economics.

Within the survey, 65% of respondents felt there is an increase in people experiencing unemployment or underemployment. This may have correlation with some of the feedback uncovered through community conversations. Some themes that emerged in those conversations were indicative of low confidence in the job market, or the ability of the area to bounce back.

Individuals identified a need to “entice manufacturing to broaden the tax base” as well as a need for “village stores rebuilt”. Participants tended to indicate a desire for a revitalized downtown with locally owned businesses.

As an exploration of current satisfaction, we can look at the access to basic needs through the economic lens, rather than affordability. In general, people felt they can access their basic needs in Westlock and District with the options available. However, those in lower income brackets are more likely to indicate they need to go to larger centres for the products and services they need. Some understanding can be gained through community conversation feedback as participants indicated that prices in town were occasionally a barrier to shopping within Westlock and District, however, to truly understand why, further research would be required. It is important to note that 60% of survey respondents from all communities felt that local businesses provided the services and products they need. From this, there

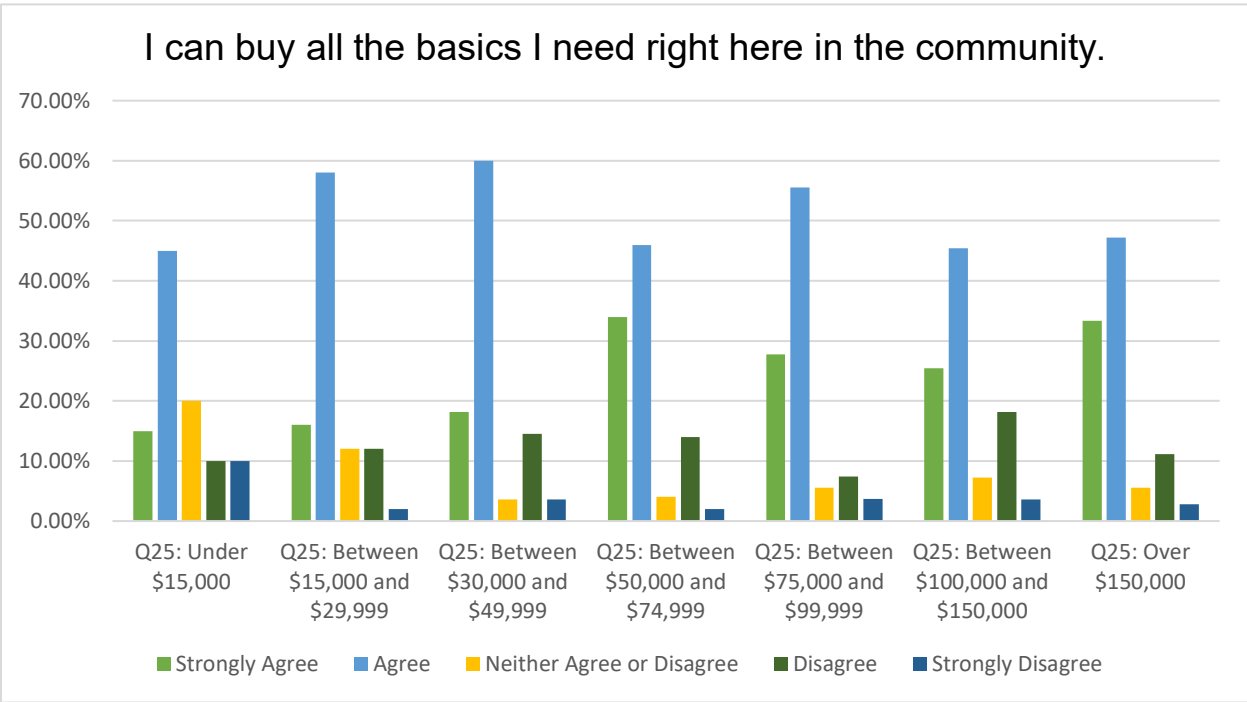


Table 2 - Local Access to Basic Goods

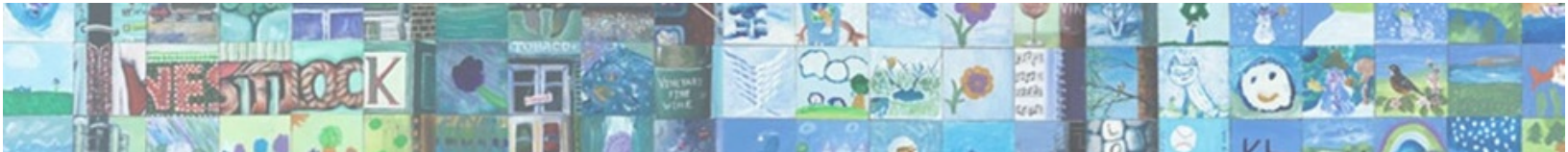
appears to be satisfaction and appreciation of the efforts of local businesses despite the desire for increased options and variety.

The relationship of economic growth and affordability

To add context to affordability and economic growth it is important to explore some of the existing interconnections between both systems. In many cases, economic growth through a vibrant local economy can help increase wages, which has a positive impact on elements of affordability including food security (Mudrak, R, 2020). However, with increased economic growth comes increased housing needs which can raise housing costs at a faster rate than income. There is significant academic and grey literature on the benefits of investing in affordable housing as part of a proactive economic growth strategy, rather than as a reactive measure.

Priority C - Westlock is a safe community where people watch out for one another.

Safety was a priority theme that reoccurred during key informant interviews, community conversations, and again in the community survey. Understanding safety in Westlock and District is vitally important as a strategy needs to be targeted to those in the community who feel most unsafe. The community survey had a dedicated section to personal and property security that will help to provide deeper context to the



individual perceptions of safety.

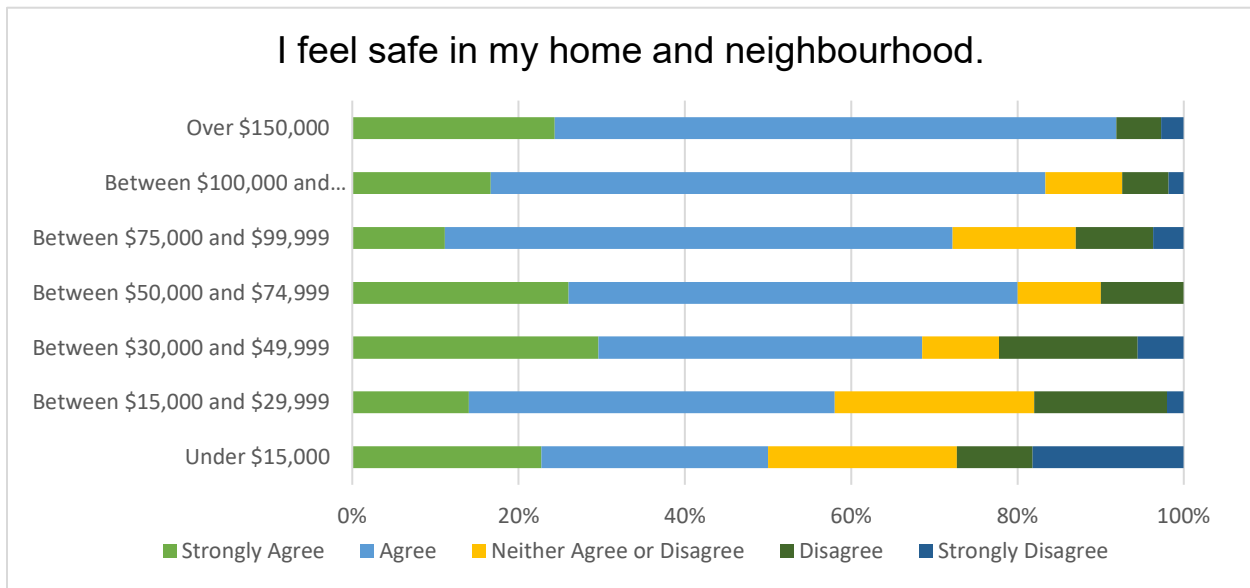
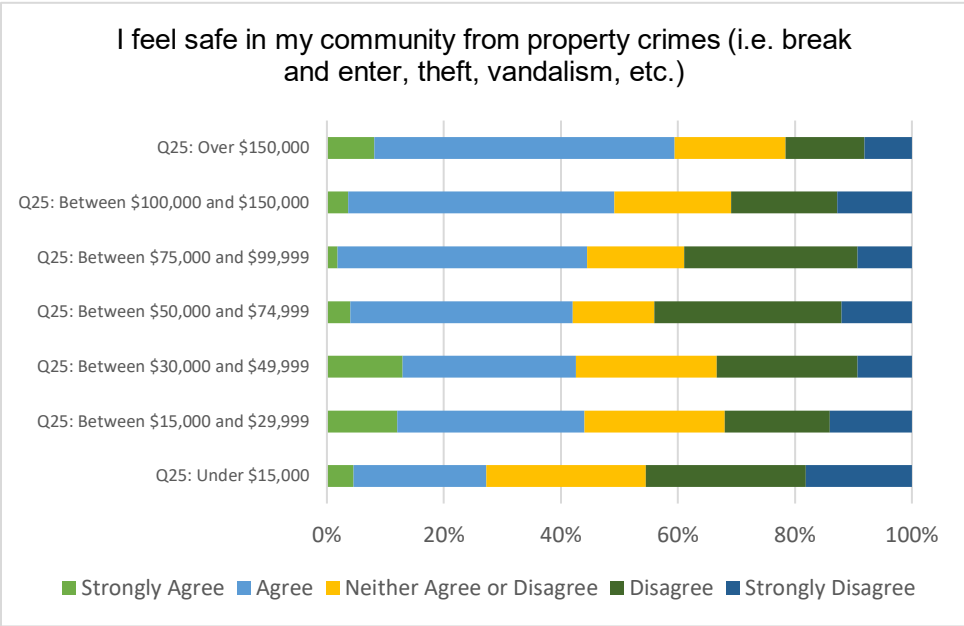


Table 3 - Perception of Safety by Income

Most residents (74%) either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement “I feel safe in my home and neighborhood”, demonstrating a high level of perceived safety. However, this is an area where some key demographic analysis shows important trends. The proportion of respondents who indicated feeling safe became lower as their reported income was lower, most notably those with reported incomes below \$15,000 were only 50% likely to agree with the statement (Table 3). The connection between income levels and feelings of safety have been academically researched in other communities and may hold some importance for understanding this dynamic in Westlock and District.

Community conversations and key informant interviews provided some framing for the survey. Individuals in community conversations identified property crime and personal safety in different ways with one participant stating, “This is a safe place to live, but I’m not so sure about it being secure”. As this statement implies some dynamic tension, the survey posed questions to discern between property and personal safety. In doing so, several areas of interest emerged that provide context to understanding safety.

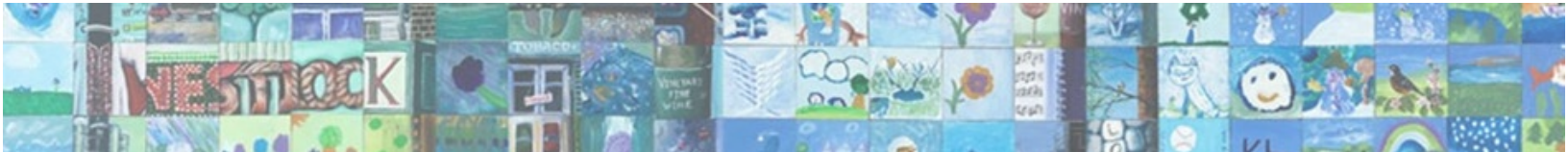


When asked their agreement to the statement “I feel my property is secure by taking reasonable precautions” most participants (70%) indicated an agreement. However, when presented with the statement “I feel safe in my community from

Table 4 - Perceptions of Safety (Property Crime)

property crimes” agreement dropped to 45%. In further analysis, those most likely to disagree with the previous statement (I feel safe in my community from property crime) are those with incomes below \$15,000. This gives indication that feelings of safety and security tend to improve as individuals report a higher household income. As community conversations also identified concerns about personal crime, a question to explore individual perception of personal safety was added. The majority of those surveyed, 69%, indicated feeling safe from personal crime, a 24% increase over the responses to property crime. As before, those with lower incomes were more likely to disagree with the statement.

To explore perceptions around creating safety, survey participants were presented with the statement “I believe my neighbours are an important part of community safety”. Overall responses were positive with more than 82% of participants agreeing with the statement. There was a strong response across all demographics with little disagreement, indicating an area of consistency. This strong belief in the role of neighbors can be understood through community conversations. Participants indicated a strong sense of community where residents looked out for each other, this was often correlated with the identity of a



small town.

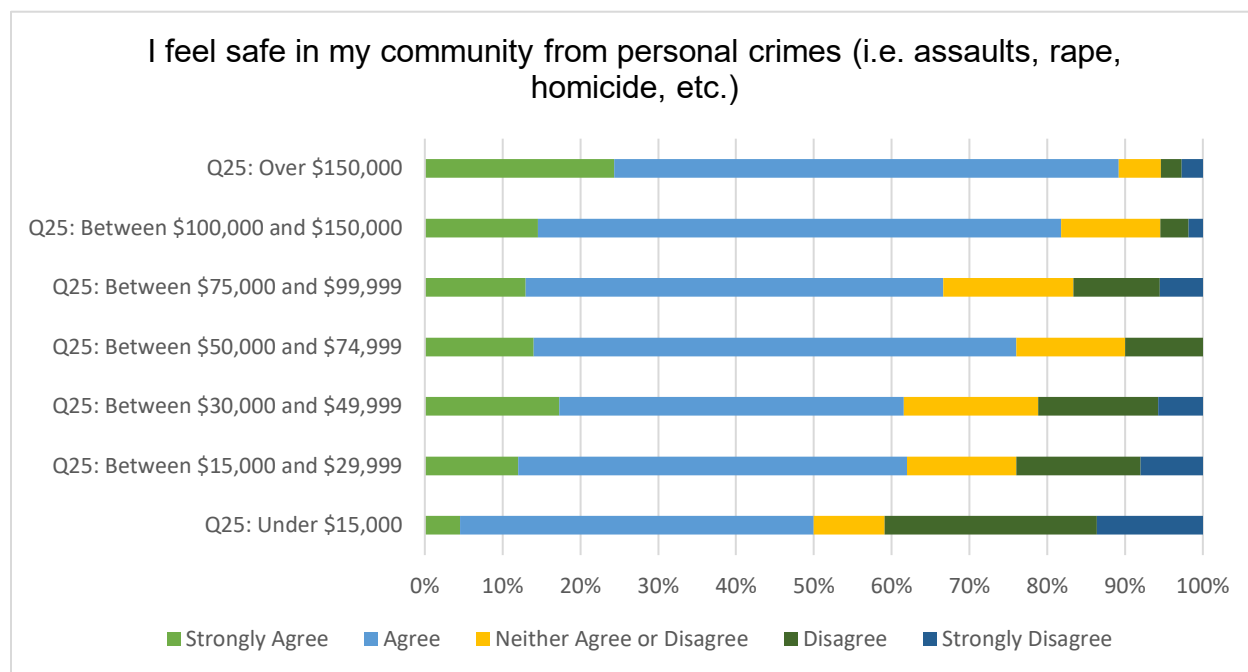


Table 5 - Perceptions of Safety (Personal Crime)

The topic of increased community safety emerged during the community conversations - one of the "best hopes" for the community. People indicated a strong desire **to build a community that looks out for one another where everyone feels safe.**

This was echoed in the survey. 82% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement -

"I believe my neighbours are an important part of community safety."

Priority D - Westlock has options for active living and makes it easy for people to have a healthy mind, body, and spirit.

Having a healthy mind, body, and spirit can be represented through many pieces of the survey and community conversations. The following sections will explore each layer to provide additional context.



Healthy Mind

A healthy mind can be explored in the survey through an individual’s ability to access high quality supports that meet their needs. The role of supports is important in maintaining a healthy mind as social connection developed through these relationships can support emotional regulation, improve self-esteem and empathy, and can improve immune functions (CMHA, 2019).

In Westlock and District, only 25% of respondents agreed that all the help and support that people need can be found in the community. Of note, 65% of those between 45 and 54 indicated disagreement or strong disagreement with the statement. Understanding access issues can be connected to the perception of available supports. Within the survey, participants were asked to provide their perception on the availability of services in the community for children, youth, adults, seniors, and families (Table 6).

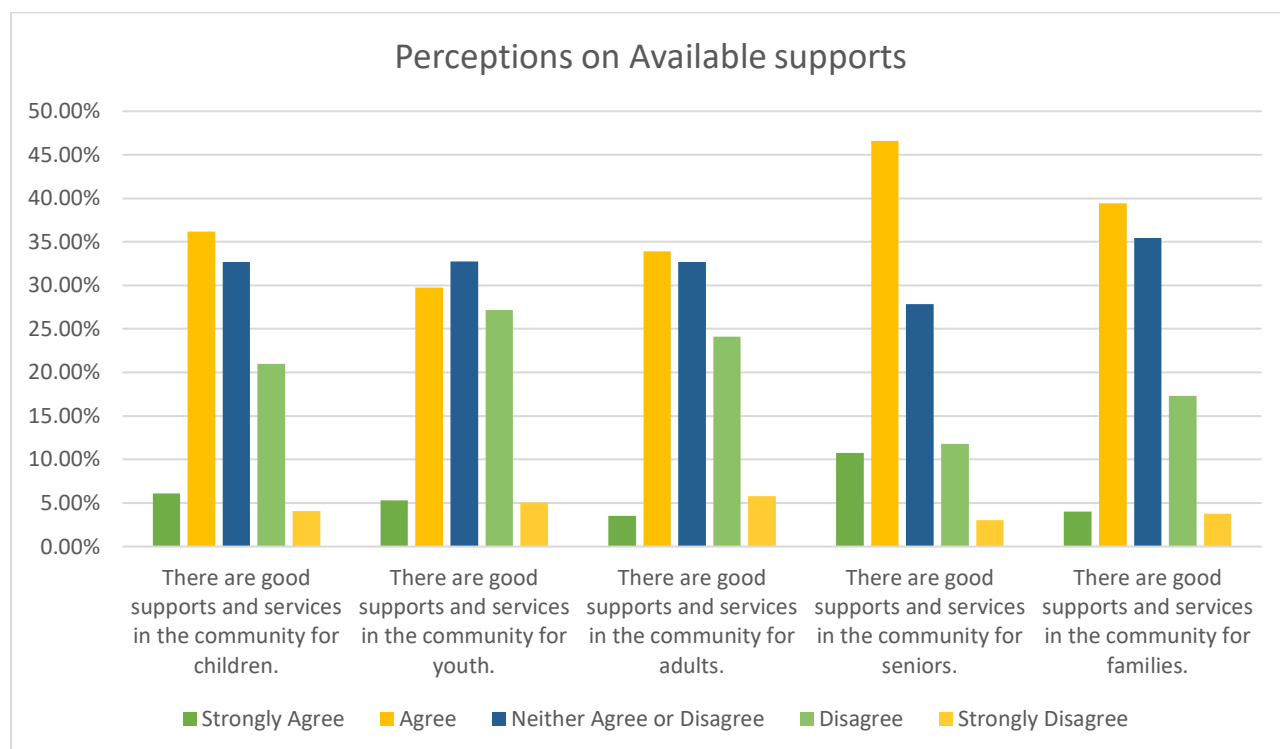
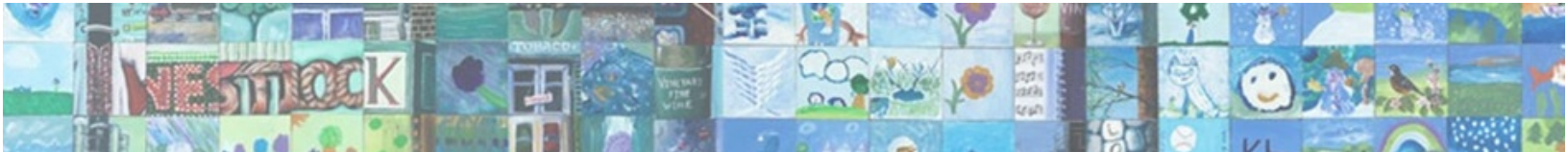


Table 6 - Perceptions on Available Supports

The most positive response was related to the availability of services for seniors - over 57% of respondents agreed there are good supports and services for seniors. This was followed by families (43%), children (42%), adults (37%), and youth (36%). However, a key understanding can be found in the



disagreement columns to add context, *for example nearly as many participants agreed and disagreed regarding the supports for youth, indicating a possible area of concern for future exploration.*

In addition to available supports, participants were asked to share their perspectives on the current levels of needs in the community regarding the following eight themes that emerged during key informant interviews and community conversations.



Figure 6 - Categories of potential need

The survey provided participants an opportunity to rate each theme through of lens of their individual perspective. Participants were asked to rate the needs of each theme on a scale from high and growing

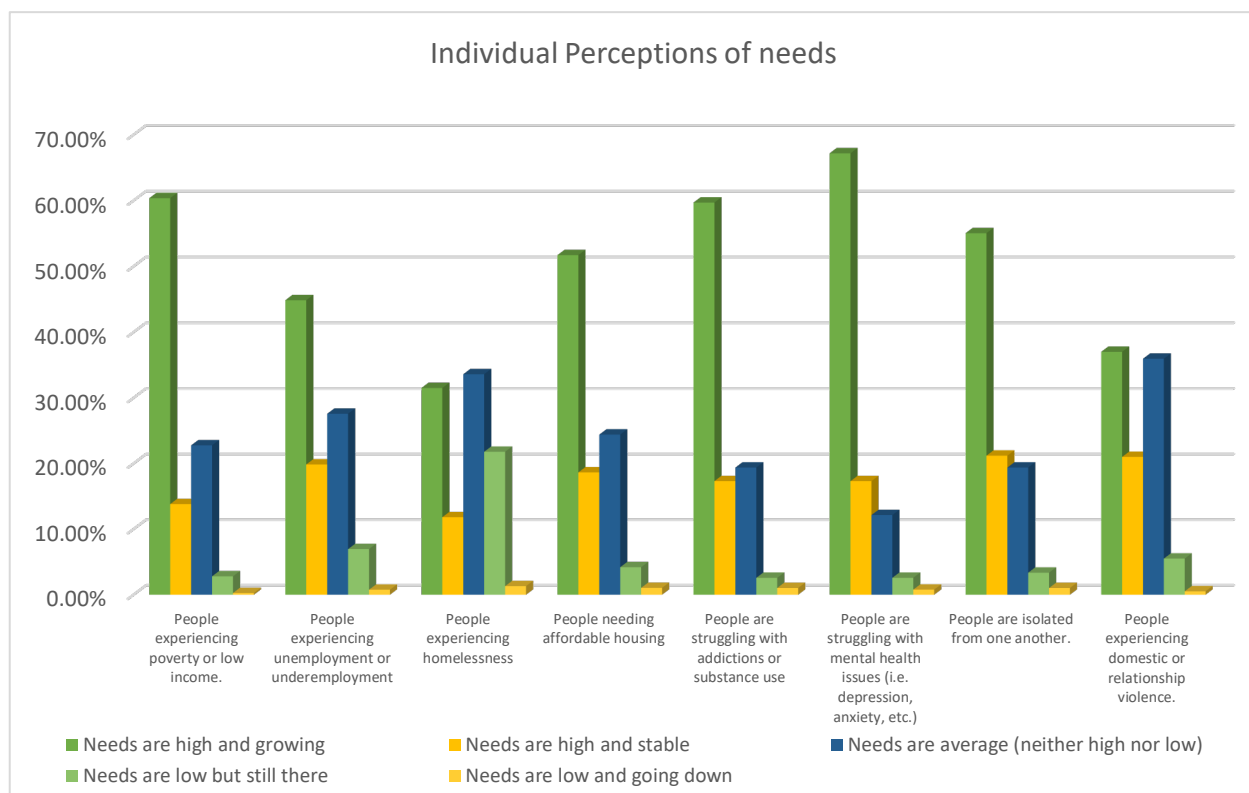
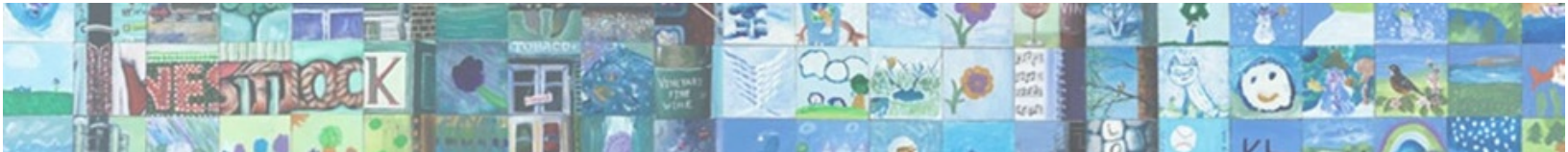


Table 7 - Perceptions on Needs. * It is important to state that these are individual perceptions of need and are not to be viewed as the current state of these social needs. There can often be a difference between the perception of a challenge and the statistical reality. To confirm the statistical or demographic challenges present more in-depth research would be needed.



The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on social wellbeing was a common theme between all forms of engagement. Isolation, mental health, service closures, and a lack of community gatherings were among the concerns shared and identified. The impacts of the pandemic are likely to have influenced the perceptions of community needs and access.

to low and going down. The individual perceptions provide a lens to understanding where survey participants feel there are significant needs in the community. Based on the feedback, there is a perceived high and growing level of need from those dealing with mental health issues, experiencing poverty, and who are living with addictions. This tends to correlate with what was heard in the community conversations and key informant interviews. A common theme emerging from community conversations was the impact of the pandemic on mental health and isolation, participants shared their concern over the potential impacts and service availability. Additionally, key informant interviews and community conversation participants made connections between the complex relationships of mental health, poverty, and addictions. **Important to consider is that only 2% of respondents felt that needs were low and going down in any category, this tends to connect with the concerns heard in community conversations.** There are likely to be many factors that influence this perception which were not captured in the survey. However, there could be an opportunity for increased education and awareness on not only the issues, but their prevalence and what interventions are available.

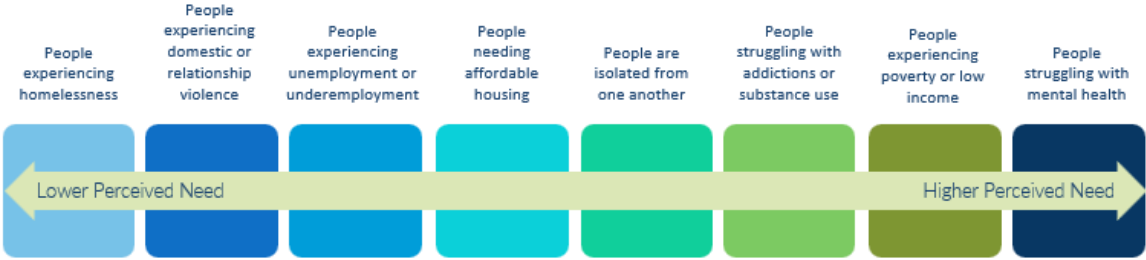


Figure 7 - Perceived Needs

The feedback in this area suggests that residents of Westlock and District feel that needs in the community are mostly growing or remaining steady but are not going away and that the available supports are meeting needs in some areas, but not others. Additionally, respondents felt that current supports were difficult to access due to transportation or their current availability within the district.



Together, this can identify an opportunity for reimagining the needed services, increasing an understanding of current needs, and increasing communication on prevalence and interventions.

Healthy Body

Having a healthy body in the context of the Social Development Strategy can be connected to access to sports and recreation facilities. Both community conversations and the survey have items that help create a deeper understanding of access to recreation for the citizens of Westlock and District.

When posed with the statement “We have all the recreation amenities we need” 54% of participants indicated they agreed, or strongly agreed, 18% were undecided, and 28% indicated they either disagreed or strongly disagreed. To understand the perspective deeper, it can best be viewed through the age demographic. *Important to note that over 50% of those between 18 and 34 disagree with the above statement, nearly double that of the overall sample size.*

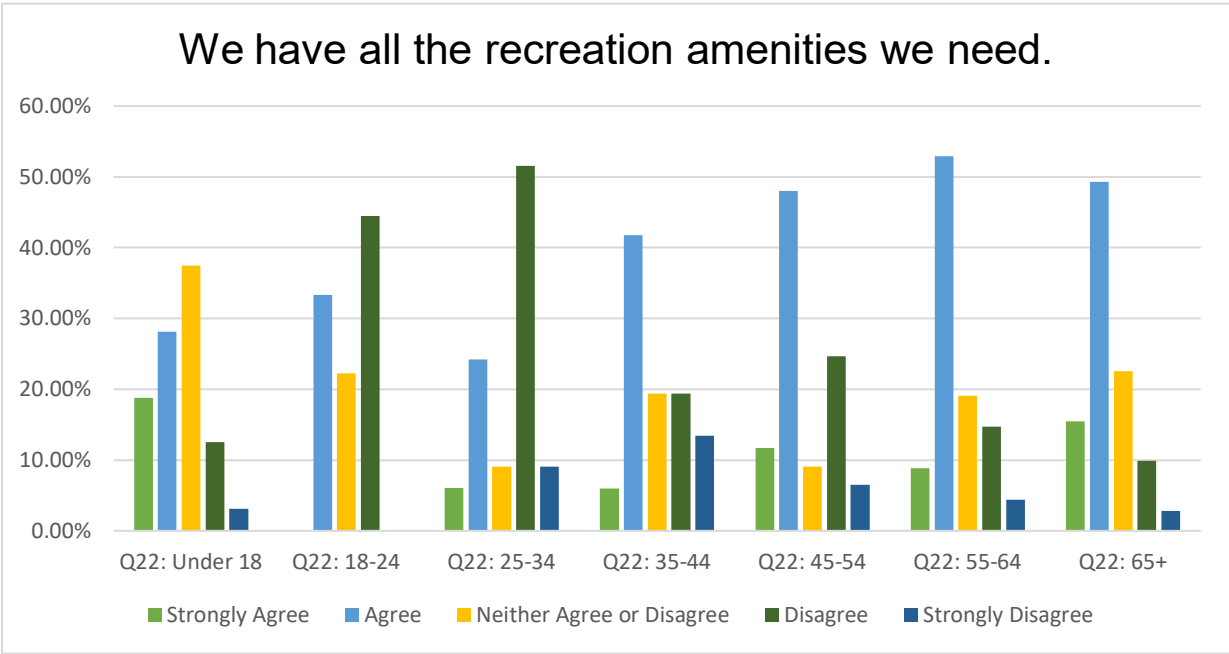
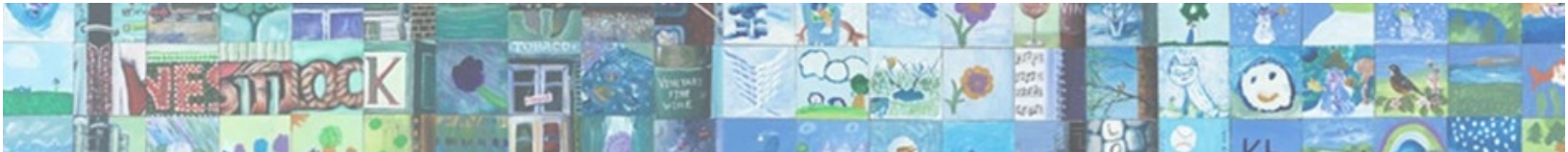


Table 8 - Recreation Amenities

The community conversations revealed that opening hours of recreation amenities was identified as a concern. Some indicated the current context (pandemic and restrictions) as a significant challenge, other indicated that the hours were insufficient for the times they, or their families, were available. This was brought forward in the survey as the statement “Recreation amenities are open at the times I can use them”. 46% of those who responded indicated agreement with the statement, 28% were undecided, and 26% disagreed. Community conversations suggested that there may be opportunities to provide



extra hours at recreation facilities on weekends or evenings to better accommodate those working multiple jobs, or who have complicated family situations.

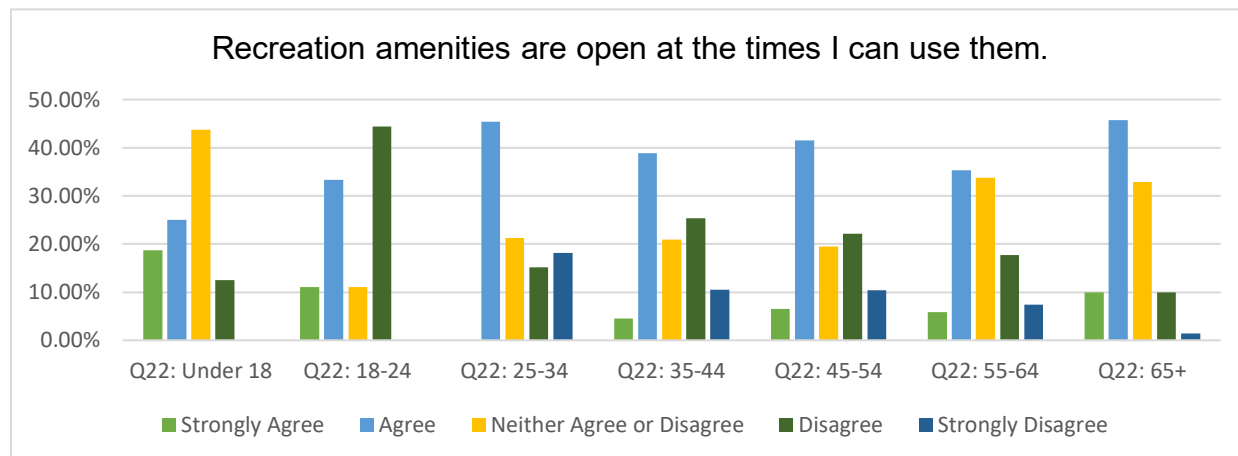


Table 9 - Open Times of Recreation Facilities

Access to community amenities was assessed through two contexts: income and transportation. When presented with “Income is a barrier for me/my family to access community amenities”, 36% of respondents agreed with the statement, 38% disagreed, and the remaining 24% were undecided.

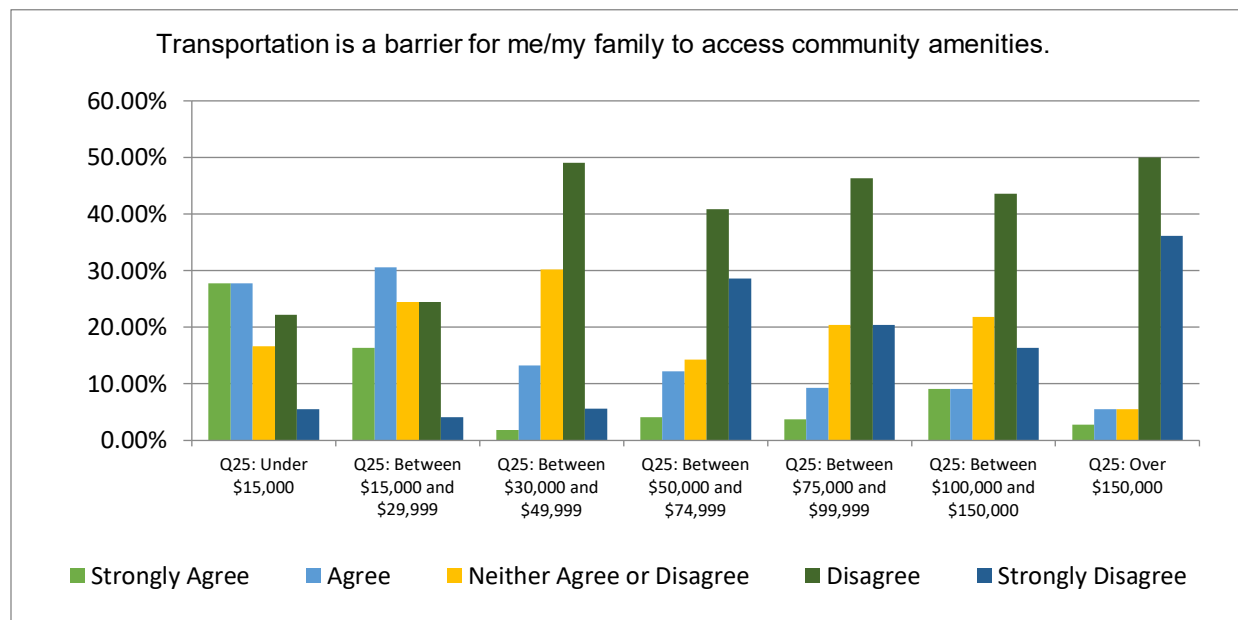


Table 10 - Transportation and Amenities

When analyzed through a lens of income, 65% of those with reported incomes less than \$30,000 per year were likely to agree with the statement, nearly double that of the other income demographics. When explored through transportation, a similar income/response trend can be observed. This seems to



indicate that when considering access to community amenities, additional consideration may be necessary to ensure more community members can benefit.

Healthy Spirit

Community conversations indicated the important role that faith organizations play in Westlock and District, particularly around belonging, support, and identity. 50% of those surveyed indicated they identify as a person of faith, the majority of which (90%) indicated they can find a place of worship that aligns with their beliefs.

Many community conversation participants identified the important role faith organizations played in their lives and the overall community. This has been reinforced in the survey results; those who identified as a member of a religious organization were up to 23% more likely to report feelings of connection to the community than those who do not carry a religious identity. Additionally, those with a religious identity are twice as likely to agree that in Westlock and District “It is easy to meet new people”.

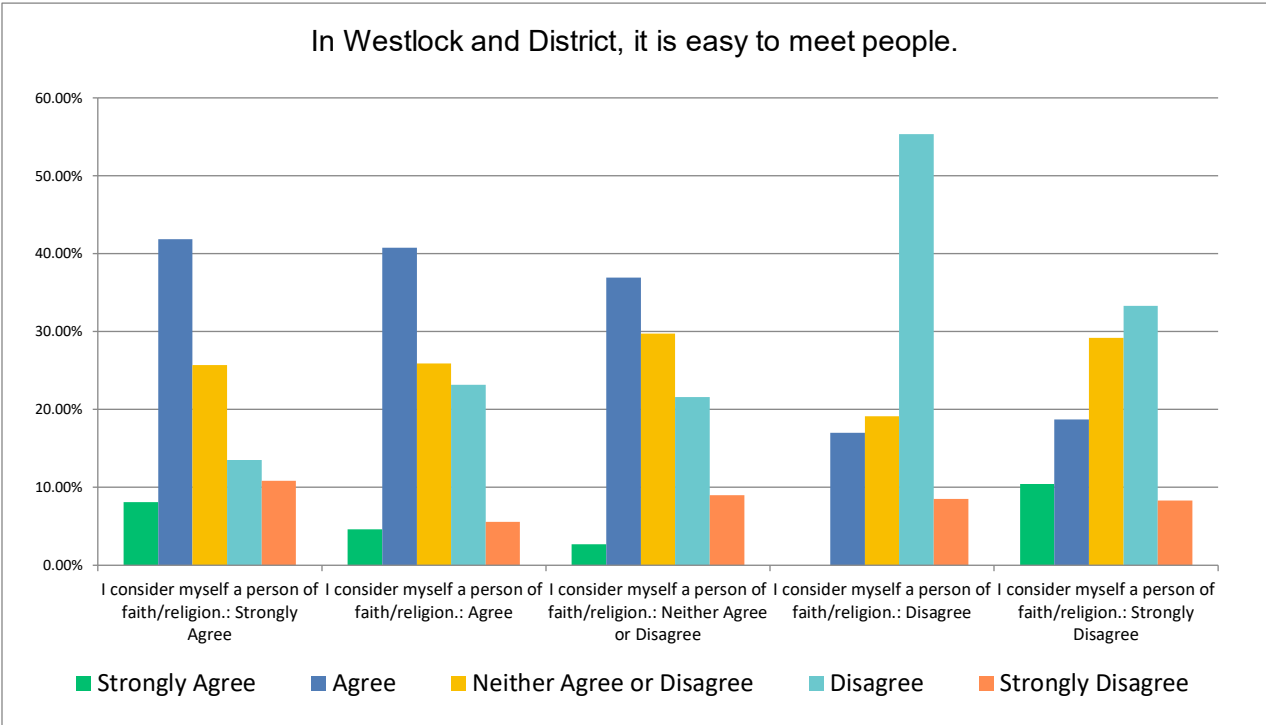


Table 11 – Ease of meeting people

The role of religious affiliation can therefore be understood to hold a correlation with feelings of belonging and connection, increased ease in meeting people and increased feelings of inclusion in groups and organizations throughout the community.



Priority E - Westlock encourages and values connection and collaboration between people, groups, and organizations to achieve its vision.

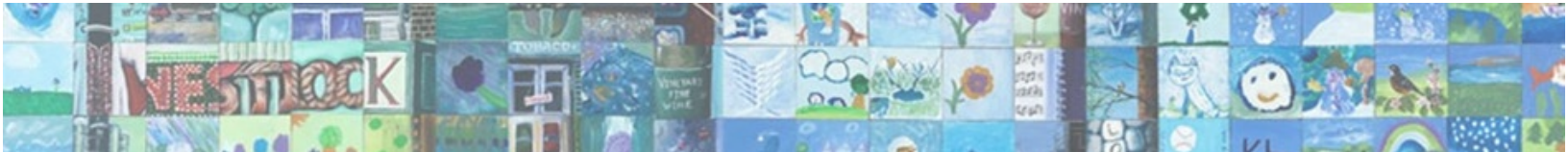
Our Best Hopes

- “A community that looks out for each other”
- “A community where people step forward with vision and are allowed to try new things.”
- “A community where we communicate and share information to help each other.”
- “Increased inclusion, equality, respect and understanding.”
- “That people aren’t going without and falling through the cracks.
- “That as we grow bigger, we grow kinder.”
- “Families and youth staying in the community”
- “More residents stepping up and volunteering”

Central to community wellbeing is a sense of belonging and connection among residents as discussed above. An important dynamic to connection is not only a sense of connection with family and friends, but also within groups, organizations, and even within municipal governance. This is often referred to as the community systems model of social belonging (APPENDIX E). Connection within groups can be facilitated through cooperation and collaboration of their members, with results coming from working toward a shared goal. There are academic theories available to support this identified priority as citizens want to see a community that is connected and collaborates towards a compelling vision.

This priority was shared between all demographic groups that responded to the survey which affirms what was expressed through the community conversations. Community conversations identified

that social inclusion and community support were two primary areas capturing participants “best hopes” for the community. Items such as “looking out for each other” and “we just need people with vision to step forward and be allowed to try new things” were shared and captured by volunteers. Additionally, some community members indicated an increased need to “communicate and share information to help each other”. Additionally, community conversations often identified the importance of activity groups, social groups, and service groups to their sense of belonging in the community.



These underlying feelings were reflected in survey design and provided context around organizational and group belonging, collaboration, and feelings of connection and personal belonging. Survey

Where Residents Find Belonging

- 70% - Family
- 44% - Groups and Organizations
- 28% - Neighbourhood

respondents gave an average score of 46 when asked to rate how “Westlock encourages and values connection and collaboration between people, groups, and organizations to achieve its vision” (1 representing needs lots of work, 100 representing “an area of strength”).

Further understanding about this result can be found in the perceptions of where people find belonging - over 70% of survey respondents indicated that family was a primary connection source for them. 28% indicated neighborhoods were a primary source of connection, and 44% indicated groups and organizations were a primary connection source. **For BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Person of Color) and LGBTQ+ community members, the importance of groups and organizations almost doubles, indicating the relative importance of bonding social capital (the ability to connect with others having shared backgrounds and experiences).** The results affirm the importance of groups and organizations for feelings of social belonging and therefore the social wellbeing of its citizens.

The survey also explored the perceptions of participants regarding their awareness of groups, how open and welcoming groups are, along with how well they work together. 47% indicated they agree that “Groups and organizations in the community are open and welcoming to new members” 38% were unsure, and 15% indicated disagreement.

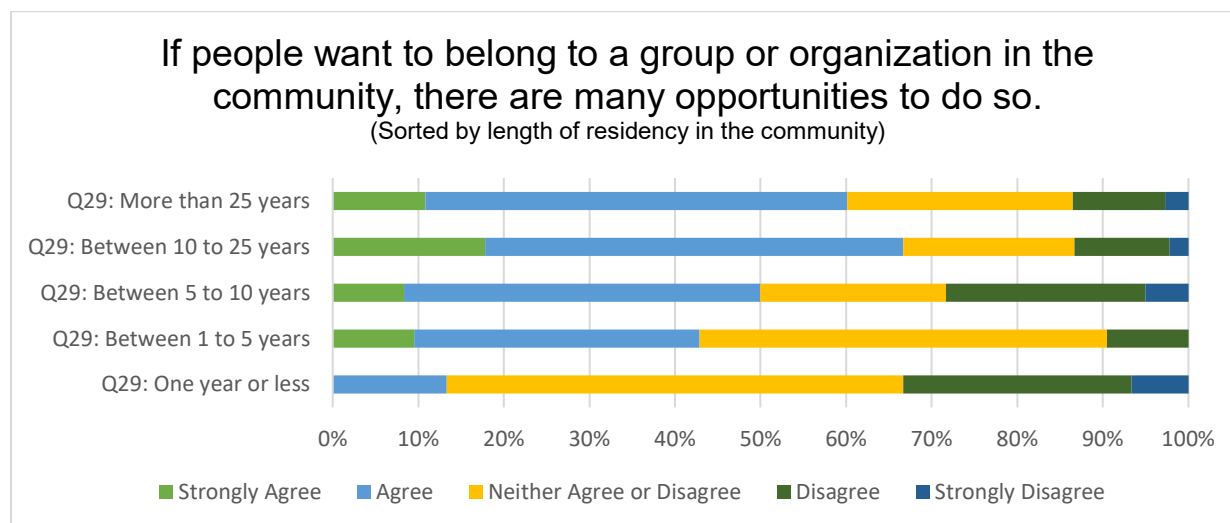


Table 11 - Group Membership



When presented with the statement “if people want to belong to a group or organizations in the community, there are many opportunities to do so” 44% indicated their agreement with the statement, 29% were undecided, and 17% indicated disagreement. When doing deeper analysis, the predominant differentiator appears to be length of time living in the community. Those living the community one year or less are much more likely to disagree or be undecided. This could be due to pandemic related factors, but also indicates a leverage point for groups and organizations to outreach to new community members.

When asked to provide their response to the statement “Groups and organizations in the community work well together” the largest group (46%) responded with neither agree, nor disagree, 37% indicated agreement, and 17% expressed disagreement. This indicates there are likely positive examples of collaboration present within the community, but most people have not been made aware of them. Captured in the community conversations were some examples of collaboration.

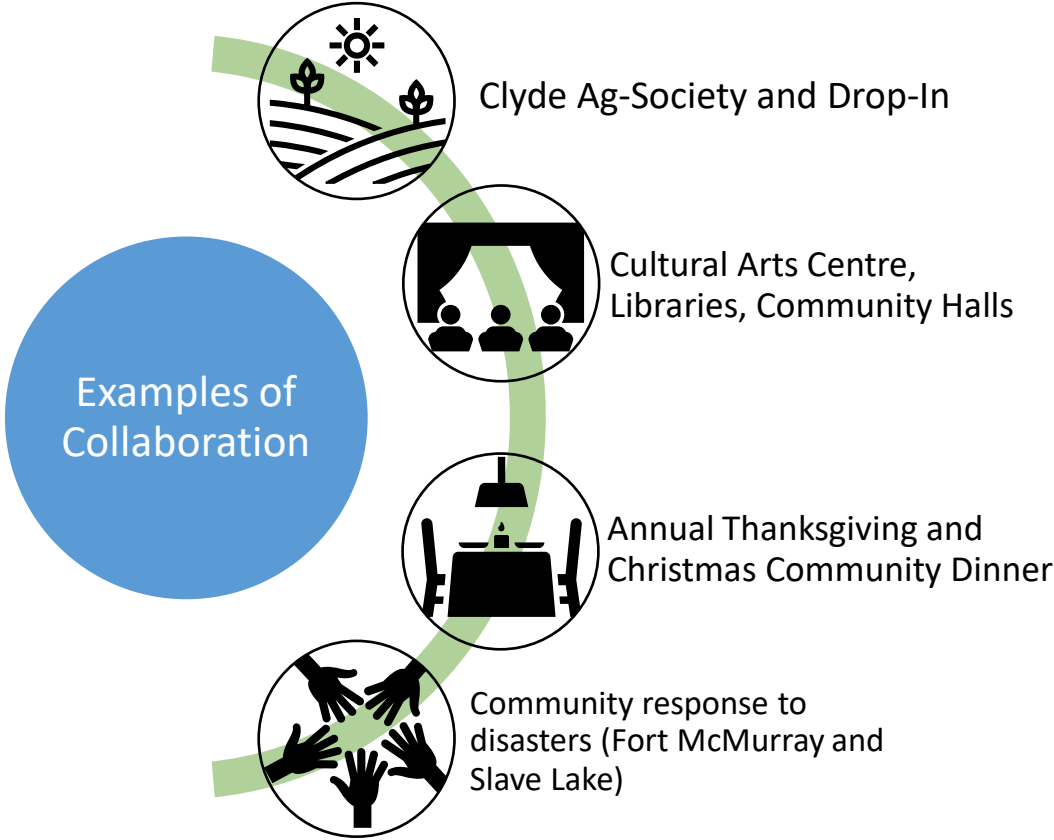
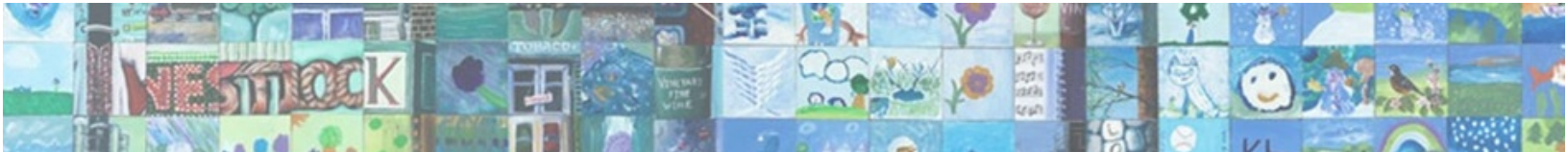


Figure 8 - Examples of Existing Collaborations

The above examples of collaborative success are celebrations where the community has succeeded. Further work to understand why and how they found success could help inform future collaborations, ensuring the necessary components are in place.

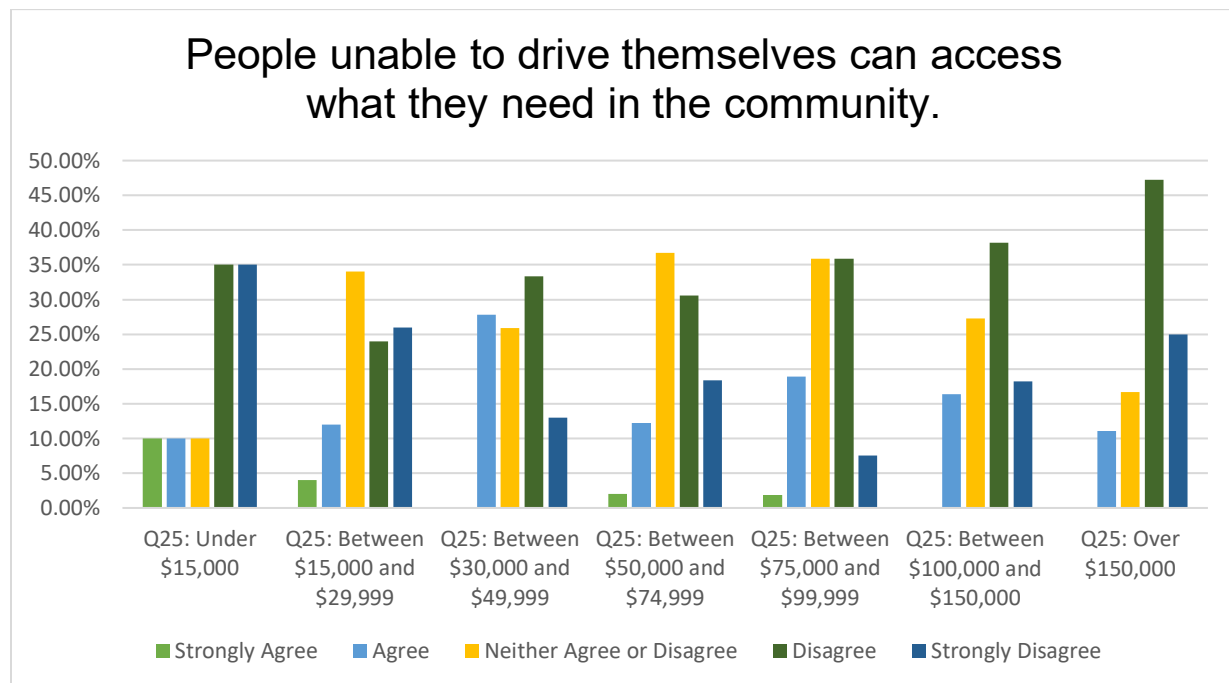


Survey and Engagement Observations

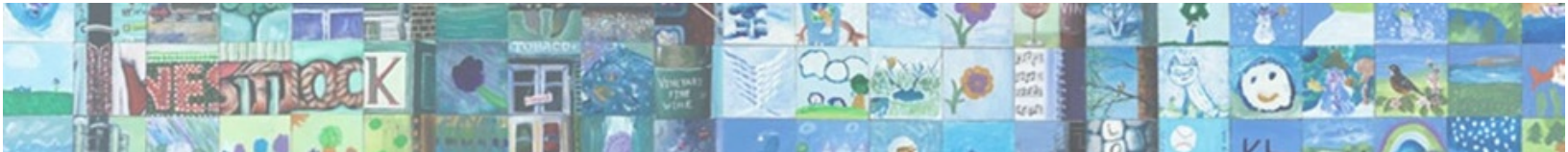
The Importance of Transportation

Access and availability of public transportation became a common theme throughout the entire consultation process. It was identified in key informant interviews and the theme continued throughout. Due to this, it became important to input a section on transportation in the report.

When asked “I can access what I need without my own car” only 20% of respondents agreed with the statement and 58% disagreed. When asked if public transportation is adequate for their current needs the responses were mostly neutral (42%) with the balance split between agree (27%) and disagree (31%). Although it was anticipated that age would play a factor in understanding the data, the differences of experience between age brackets was not statistically significant. However, individuals most likely to disagree were from lower income brackets. The issue of public transportation is recognized quite openly. When asked if “people unable to drive themselves can access what they need in the community” 49% of participants indicated disagreement. ***These results indicate that public transportation is a priority for the people of Westlock and District.***



Access to transportation can impact several areas of individuals lives. Community conversations and key informants shared stories of individuals missing medical appointments, missing work, and being stranded in the area due to transportation challenges. The issue can then be understood through the



lens of transport poverty, an emerging field helping to understand the complex challenge of transportation access and equality (Lucas, Mattioli, Verlinghieri, & Guzman, 2016). Transport poverty can be experienced by one or all members of a household who lack access to movement and is not always connected to income levels. The existence of transport poverty can also have an influence on the centralization of poverty (when those experiencing poverty tend to live in the same area), leading to further social inequality (Glaeser, Kahn, & Rappaport, 2008).

Current research recommends that policy makers gain an understanding of the issue and its downstream effects prior to addressing through subsidy or other means. This can help ensure that interventions are targeted to those who need them most.

An Emerging Trend

An unanticipated trend that emerged from the data was the existence of a 5-10 year “dip” in feelings of belonging and connection

that became present in the survey data through segmentation. When presented with the statement “I feel connected to other people in the community” those living in the community between 5 and 10 years were 35% likely to disagree as

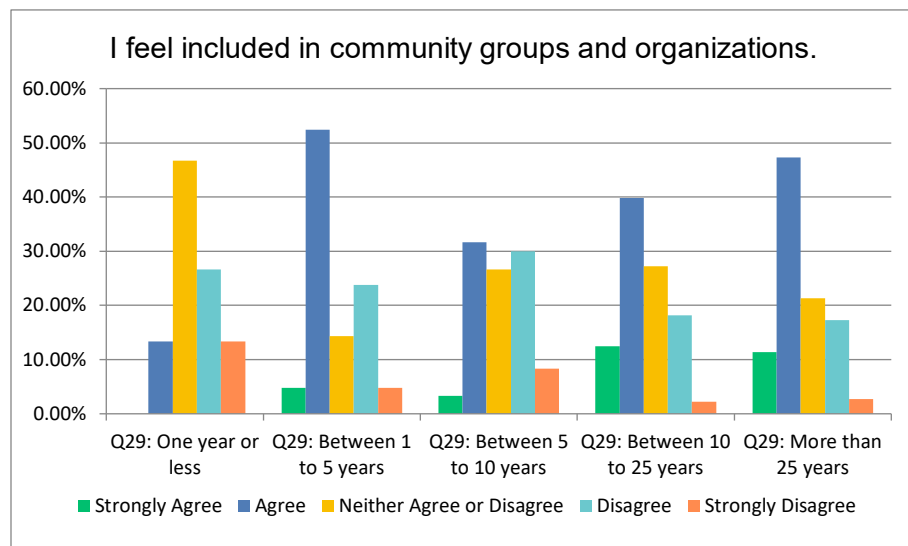


Table 13 – Inclusion in Groups and Organizations

compared to 23% for those 1-5 years and 16% of those with more than 10 years. This trend continued through the connection and belonging survey and was most noticeable in assessing the connection to groups or organizations.

As indicated on table 13, there is a sharp rise in agreement between 1 and 5 years, a significant dip from 5-10 years, and then a gradual increase. This trend was consistent in other areas of connection and belonging, but also came up in assessing the availability of support services. Those in the 5-10 year demographic tended to agree less and disagree more than those with 1-5 years experience living in the community.

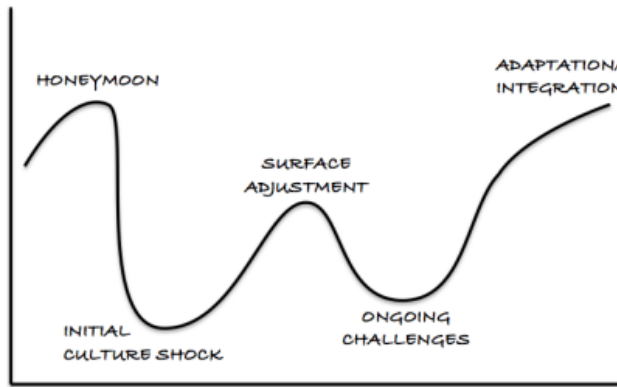


Figure 9 - "W" Model of Culture Shock

This can possibly be understood through the lens of culture shock (the adjustment period of individuals moving and integrating into a new culture). Although most common in academic adjustment of international students and immigrants, it may hold some understanding for this emerging phenomena. Culture shock can be understood in one format as a "w curve" where individuals move through phases of

adjustment. Although the timelines can be different for everyone, this can help explain why there may be a dip in positive responses between 5-10 years. Individuals in this time-frame are beginning to understand the ongoing challenges at a deeper level and can begin adjusting to them.

This observed trend was an unexpected result as community conversations and key informant interviews hadn't indicated this direction. However, key informant interviews and community conversations participants indicated there were factors that influenced belonging. Participants often referred to the importance of generational connections, meaning that they felt those with generational ties were more likely to feel belonging, or participate in groups and organizations. This led to the demographics questions on generational history. Interestingly, when used as a segmentation tool, there was less variance between generational connection than there was in the 5-10 year dip.

Understanding this dip in engagement, connection, and belonging can be important as a social development strategy is identified and implemented.

Many times programs and engagement services are targeted for newcomers to a community when there is also work that needs to be done for retention and engagement of existing residents.



Addressing the Project’s Underlying Questions

The beginning of any successful community development process starts with critical questions that, when answered, provide important insights for future growth and positive change. Westlock and District FCSS identified five questions for exploration – each deserving a specific response as a result of the community engagement process.

What areas of social development pose the greatest future opportunities to help enhance the community?

The greatest future opportunities for Westlock and District appear to be grounded in the five priorities identified through the engagement process, and by considering the many people, organizations, and systems in the community that can help to achieve those priorities. Described earlier in the report, the five social development priorities identified by the community include:

- Westlock is an affordable place to live
- Westlock is a safe community where people watch out for one another
- Westlock has a vibrant local economy
- Westlock encourages and values connection and collaboration between people, groups, and organizations to achieve its vision
- Westlock has options for active living and makes it easy for people to have a healthy mind, body, and spirit

A visual aid was used throughout this project to help describe the component parts and relationships that represent community (see Appendix E) - the Community Systems Model (Figure 10).

The Community Systems Model acknowledges the individual as the central figure in community. Very simply, communities and community systems are comprised of people. The family is the first significant structure, or system, that exists for people. Individuals are born into families, and regardless of the functionality, people create relationships with families of origin, choice, or assignment.

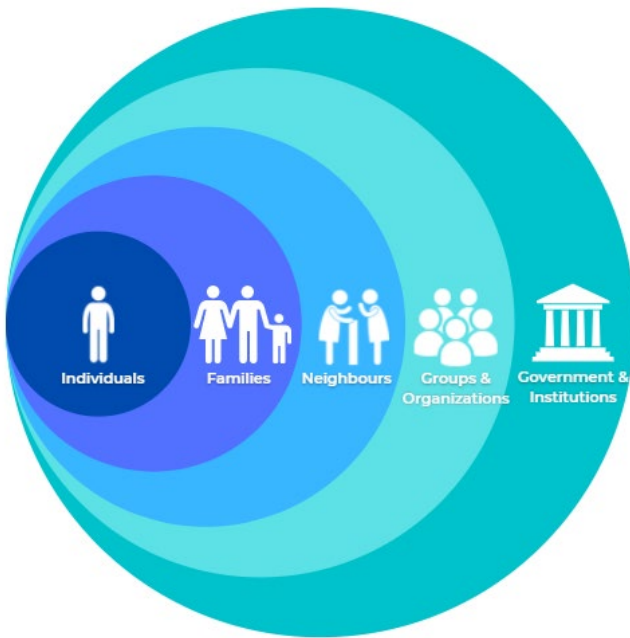


Figure 10

The next layer of this diagram represents the importance of location – where people live and how they associate with others that live around them. In Westlock and District, this includes those living in both urban and rural settings.

The fourth level in this model identifies the influence of groups and organizations on community. People strive to associate with others that share similar values, experiences, and interests through affiliation; therefore, groups and organizations become entities that contribute significantly to community culture and wellbeing.

While other models of relational hierarchy extend beyond government and institutions, this project recognizes that local, provincial, and federal government departments and programs are a logical end point.

This model is being introduced in the report at this point and will be referenced in other sections to help provide context and a framework for understanding connections and relationships.

Who is currently engaged in social development within the community?

In all fairness, every level described in the Community Systems Model are engaged in social development within Westlock and District as evidenced by the individuals that took time to volunteer in community conversations and complete the community surveys, groups and organizations that participated in the project, and government personnel that contributed knowledge and expertise to help generate new insights. Specifically, however, there are several clusters of groups and organizations that merit special mention.



Church and faith organizations – appear to play a significant role in the community by offering connection, spiritual wellbeing, and a variety of programs and services. There are opportunities for church and faith organizations to identify strategic initiatives to help advance the five priorities of affordability, safety, vibrant local economy, connection, and active living in a manner that is collaborative and targeted.



Neighbourhood groups – reference to neighbourhood development emerged through the key informant interviews, community conversations, and the survey of organizations – specifically related to rural areas. Whereas urban neighbours have greater opportunities to ‘bump into’ one another through daily living, rural neighbours work together to help create spaces and activities for social interaction.



Sport, recreation, and leisure organizations – bring people together based on shared interests and experiences. When people participate in the arts, sports, and activities they build connections with others that can lead to friendships and relationships beyond the organizations. When children and youth are active in local recreation endeavors, parents also have new opportunities to meet people and feel a sense of connection with other people and the community.



Service clubs and social groups – service clubs were identified by name throughout this process and associated with positive efforts targeted at improving community wellbeing. Further, there are other groups and networks established in the community designed to bring people together that have shared experiences. These groups enable participants to address issues or concerns in their lives or celebrate aspects of their diversity.



Institutional networks – in this context, institutional networks are groups that exist due to professional or personal affiliations, often through work. These might include a local chamber of commerce, the local network of human service organizations, or even parent groups at the schools. By identifying community priorities, institutional networks can adopt strategic initiatives.



What strategies and functions are proving effective for social development in the community?

The engagement process revealed both formal and informal structures and strategies for effective social development in the community. Broadly, local recreation facilities and amenities were acknowledged for the important role they place in bringing people together for connection. Within the survey, 43% of respondents indicated they use recreation facilities to connect to others. Amenities and public spaces provide opportunities for people to participate in programs, services, clubs, leagues, drop-in, and open activities. These facilities promote cross-generational and bridging connections between people of diverse backgrounds.

Community organizations were also acknowledged as an important mechanism for social development in Westlock and District – specifically those that provide programs and services, engage in community supports, and groups that exist to build connection within diverse populations (i.e. LGBTQ+ groups, newcomers, Indigenous people, etc.). Specifically, church and faith organizations continued to emerge through the engagement process as important groups effective at social development.

In addition to the more formal functions of community amenities, facilities, and organized groups, respondents identified two other informal structures in the community – people working in the personal services industries (i.e. hairdressing, manicurists, massage therapists, etc.) and the public realm of downtown, coffee shops, grocery stores, etc.

While these spaces may seem logical when mentioned, strategic social development initiatives often overlook the potential of existing community structures. These natural connections could be leveraged within social development strategy in many ways, for example to improve supports for mental health, personal service providers could be trained in Mental Health First Aid or other preventative methods.

What is the unique opportunity for FCSS to affect change in the community?

From the beginning of this project, the Westlock and District Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) was clear about its intention to create a social development strategy that could benefit the entire



community, including but not exclusively informing the FCSS program. To that end, there are few direct references to FCSS roles and responsibilities within the final report. Alternatively, the specific opportunities for FCSS are captured in Appendix F. The materials shared in the appendices, while designed to contextualize the social development strategy for FCSS specifically, contain relevant tools and perspectives useful for other groups, networks, governments, and institutions.

What roles and responsibilities can be taken by individuals, families, groups, and neighbourhoods to enhance positive social development in the community?

Identified earlier in the report, one of the Province of Alberta’s strategic directions for Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is *to help people develop an awareness of social needs*. Awareness of social needs and opportunities to engage in social development is the first step in building a strong and vibrant region. Explored below is the local context of these different dynamics. Additional detail on each group is provided below followed by an analysis of the pre and post survey responsibility question.

Individual, Family, and Neighborhood

The Community Systems Model described earlier in the report positions the individual at the centre of community and social development. In that position, people have the option to engage in positive social relationships and connection or to withdraw and assume or hope that others will take up the challenge. At the individual level, small choices to be welcoming and positively engaging with family, neighbours, and other people in the community can lead to significant community wellbeing.

Although the initial hypothesis was that generational connection played a significant role in belonging, the survey indicated that the length of time in the area and religious affiliation played a more significant role.

Families, and specifically families with a generational presence in the community, were identified as a significant factor in community and social wellbeing in Westlock and District. On a positive note, generational families contribute historical knowledge, are known to be major influencers, volunteers, and donors to community initiatives and have much to be proud of in terms of existing community and social infrastructure. For newcomers to the community, some of whom have been living in the area for twenty years or more,



still report feeling a sense of being ‘outsiders’. Although the initial hypothesis was that generational connection played a significant role in belonging, the survey indicated that the length of time in the area and religious affiliation played a more significant role. As discussed above, individuals who are within their first year in the community and between 5 and 10 years have lower overall feelings of belonging and connection.

Neighbourhoods serve as place-based locations for community and social development. There is a strong sense from respondents that Westlock and District is a friendly community where people care for one another through small acts of kindness like saying “hello”, checking in on people that may need a helping hand, or creating opportunities for small gatherings. Especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, there appears to be a growing desire among people to reconnect.

Groups and Organizations

At a micro level, groups and organizations provide important opportunities for people to connect and participate in activities that enhance relationships. At a macro level, groups and organizations should be encouraged to find opportunities for collaboration and to consider ways in which they can deliberately support the priorities identified in this social development strategy. Further, groups and organizations should be encouraged to consider how they communicate their openness to new members. In some cases, respondents shared a sense that some groups and organizations are not open to new participants. In that case, perceptions become reality and then groups suffer from declining membership.

In some cases, respondents shared a sense that some groups and organizations are not open to new participants. In that case, perceptions become reality and then groups suffer from declining membership.

Government

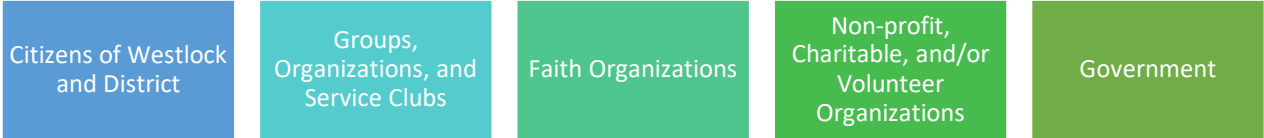
Finally, government and institutions are often considered to hold the penultimate responsibility for community and social wellbeing. While there are important roles and responsibilities that include policy, funding, program delivery, and regulations that rest with government and institutions, there is greater ability outside the government realm to influence change. The most significant functions available to governments and institutions include the removal of redundant policies and regulations that serve as barriers to engagement, and the creation of a supportive and engaging community environment. If



interested community members and groups seek to engage in community and social development only to experience a closed system, they will turn away and tend not to seek further involvement.

Survey Perspectives on Responsibility

To assess the overall perspectives on responsibility, the survey provided respondents the opportunity to indicate their perceived level of responsibility for improving social wellbeing held by five different groups.



The method used to indicate their perceived level of responsibility was a slider type questions that gave participants the opportunity to indicate any level between not responsible and very responsible. Each question was posed twice during the survey, once at the beginning, and again at the end. This pre and post model of question was used to assess if there was any difference in participants perspectives of responsibility after completing the survey. In total, 338 participants provided both pre and post data.

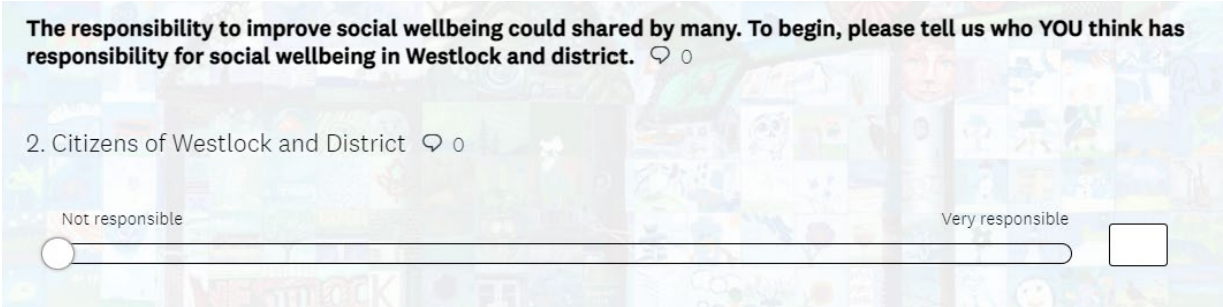


Figure 11 - Slider Type Question

The slider position (Figure 10) coincided with a numerical value; 0 being not responsible and 100 being very responsible. Below are the pre and post averages expressed in the numerical values (Figure 11).



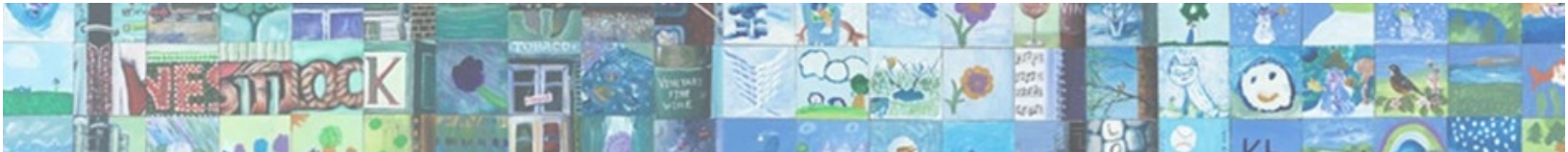
Group	Pre Average	Post Average	Result
Citizens of Westlock and District	73	66	-7
Groups, Organizations, and Service Clubs	68	63	-5
Faith Organizations	63	59	-4
Non-profit, Charitable, and/or Volunteer Organizations	63	61	-2
Government	71	68	-3

Figure 12 - Pre and Post Averages

There is not a significant deviation between both pre and post averages, however it may be of interest to note that all 5 groups experienced a reduction in overall sentiments of responsibility. This could be due to many factors, and further research would be needed to identify why.

There are two areas that hold relevance to the Social Development Strategy for Westlock and District. Primarily, it can be observed that the community understands there is a shared responsibility for social wellbeing. Although not a large change, the post answers demonstrate a compression in the overall range of answer (narrowing the scope from a maximum of 10 points different down to 9). This small change may have some correlation to gaining a deeper understanding of the dynamics of social wellbeing through the survey. As individuals become aware of the complexity, they may recognize the responsibility for social wellbeing is shared among all groups.

Secondly, the scope of responsibility shared between individuals and government experienced some shift in the pre and post process worth nothing. The post responses indicate that although the gap between stayed the same (2 points), there was a flip where individuals moved the responsibility more into government than individuals. This could be a response to the increased understanding of the wide range of dynamics that build social wellbeing. ***With this increased understanding, residents may be looking to the municipalities for leadership and guidance. The opportunity that presents itself is to ensure that strategic tactics and interventions provide simple pathways for individuals to effect change in their communities, leveraging the shared responsibility between government and individuals.***



Recommendations and Future Considerations

The following section is not designed to create a roadmap or ‘to-do’ list for the municipalities and/or organizations in the community, but rather serve to share insights from the consulting team that can be difficult to identify from within the community.

Asset Mapping

Community social development is a process comprised of dynamic and fluid conditions and priorities. A change in leadership within an organization, for example, can bring progress made on a topic to a grinding halt or open doors to new possibilities. Awareness of changing conditions is an important aspect of community social development. Asset mapping can be done by groups to help ascertain who the key players are in the community, what they may have to contribute, and how their unique perspectives might be helpful and positively influence social development.

A great resource available to learn more about asset mapping can be found at <https://www.fnhma.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Asset-Mapping.pdf> - a resource that provides the additional layer of context relative to Indigenous perspective.

Engaging and Recruiting New Players in New Ways

Residents of Westlock & District recognize social development is a shared responsibility where everyone can ask:

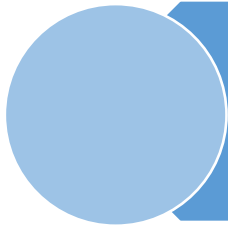
"How can I play a role?"



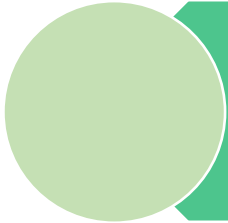
It is natural to think of community groups and organizations operating within the silos they have created for themselves – church organizations do church things, business organizations do business things, sports groups do sports things, and social agencies do social development things. That is, unless groups and organizations consider that they share one common factor – people.

The community social development strategy challenges groups and organizations to consider their own unique opportunities to contribute to the lives of people through the five social development strategies – affordability, safety, a vibrant local economy, collaboration and cooperation, and active living.

Consider the following three examples:



A church organization partners with a local sports group to support the participation of youth that might not otherwise have the means to afford registration fees, coaching, or equipment. Youth benefit through the development of skills, connections, and an active, healthy lifestyle.



A seniors group partners with a settlement agency that supports new Canadians arriving from international destinations to the Westlock area to provide a welcoming introduction to the community and connection to other groups and organizations.



Where legitimate needs may exist among people with limited incomes, the business community may have the skills and resources needed to help support social enterprise development - creating skills training and work experience for people that find it challenging to participate in the mainstream business environment while offering important products and services in the community.

Community Safety

For many, community safety is often viewed through the lens of enforcement – more police, more rules, and greater presence. Literature on community safety points to four key factors – education, prevention, intervention, and enforcement. When crime is viewed as a symptom of other underlying conditions, a focused effort on those root causes can dramatically impact crime rates and improve quality of life – for people committing trauma related crime and the community overall.

The community social development priorities identified by Westlock and District in this document align with the principles of community safety. By allocating a portion of the resources required for enforcement to education, prevention, and intervention, a shift in feelings of community safety can result.

Safety can also be considered to influence, and be influenced by, the access to appropriate mental health, victim support services, and other supports (shelters, housing etc.). Some communities are leveraging existing support networks (such as personal services as identified above) and providing training on mental health first aid, recognizing the signs of abuse, and other ways of guiding individuals into appropriate services and treatments.



Encourage Neighbourhood Connections

Particularly following public health mandates to curb the spread of COVID-19, people are eager to find connection, and local neighbourhoods are ideal places to help activate a sense of belonging. Over time, social norms have resulted in narratives like:

- Be aware of strangers
- What happens behind closed doors is none of my business, or
- Don't ask, don't tell

Each of these narratives result in a society conditioned to keep their private lives private, including within our own neighbourhoods where we build fences and confine ourselves to backyard activities. People in Westlock and District have identified the community's friendliness as one of its major assets – yet there are many in the community that do not share a strong sense of connection and belonging.

When people are encouraged and supported to activate their neighbourhoods, community members can shift the narrative and create community spaces where people know and help one another, feel comfortable letting their children play outside, and enjoy a shared sense of belonging.

Deeper Analysis

The collected data from key informant interviews, community conversations, and the community survey are a wealth of data regarding social wellbeing in Westlock and District. The analysis and report were focused on, and limited to, the 5 main priorities discussed above, leaving a wide range of analysis opportunities.

Some opportunities for deeper analysis include:

- Comparative analysis of survey perceptions against demographic indicators. Leading to a better understanding of which social issues are perceived as greater, or lesser, of a need than they truly are.
- Cross-segment analysis of survey responses could be completed to seek understanding of intersectional forces. This can help understand the different layers of identity that can support or hinder social belonging.
- Analysis of other priorities – As this document focused on the 5 top priorities, the data can also be analyzed to leverage understanding of the other priorities indicated as options within the



survey. This could provide deeper understanding when creating a long-term social development strategy.

These opportunities could be leveraged internally by Westlock and District FCSS and their staff, or through contracting an external consultant to review and analyze the data.

Leveraging Data

As discussed above, there is a significant wealth of data found within this project. In addition to deeper analysis opportunities, there is also the opportunity to leverage the data into a community well-being and belonging baseline, helping to develop a strong evaluation strategy for any future development.

For example, the overall feedback of connection and belonging could be used as baseline indicators to be re-assessed in one, three, and five years, helping to understand what interventions may be working in the community.

A strong evaluation strategy could be developed in partnership with other communities involved and could be supported internally, or through a qualified consultant.



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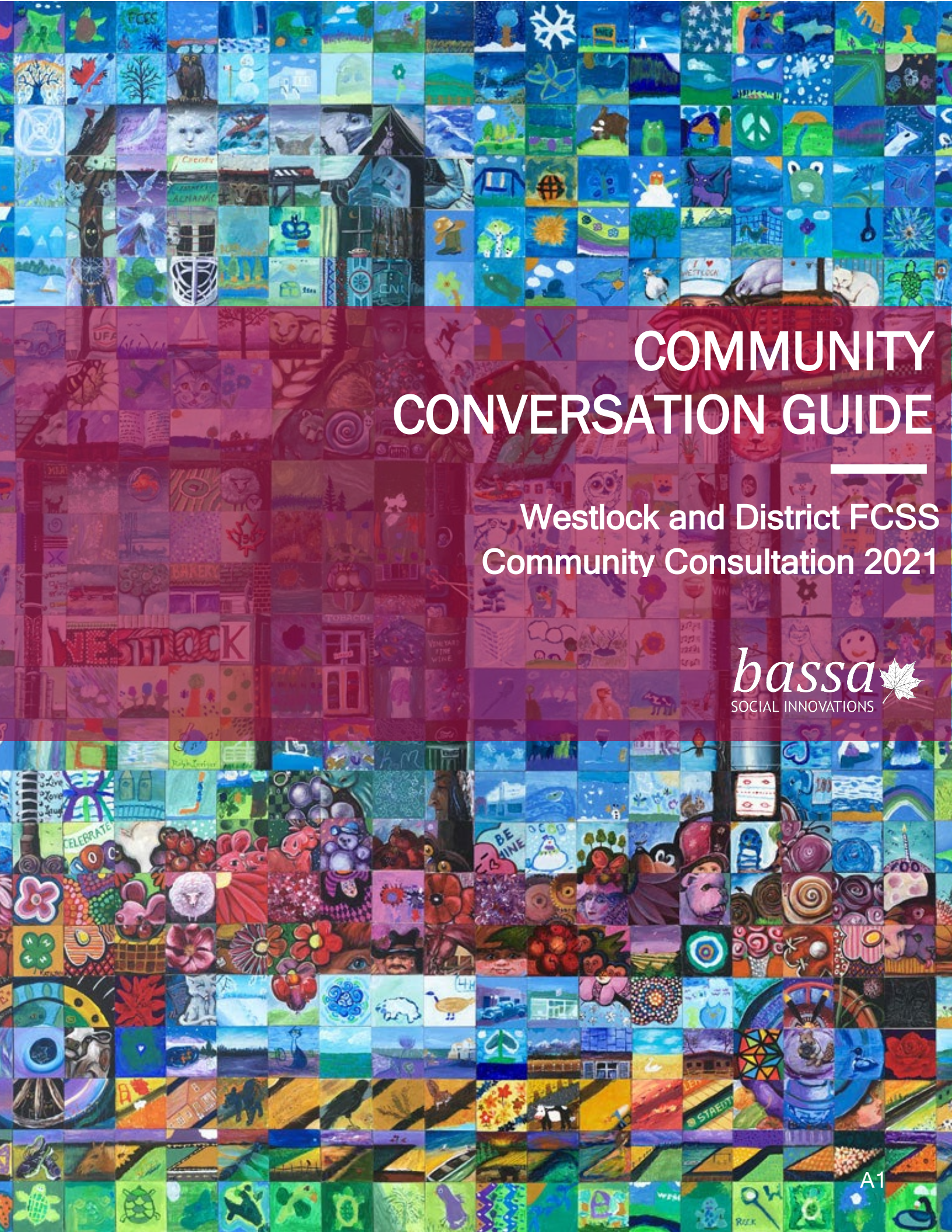
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COMMUNITY CONVERSATION GUIDE

Westlock and District FCSS
Community Consultation 2021

bassa 
SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

Community Conversation Guide

Westlock and District FCSS is working to complete a Social Development Strategy that will help guide the work of FCSS in the region over the coming years. To inform the strategy, we are working with *bassa* Social Innovations Inc. to complete a community needs and strengths assessment and would like your help.

To involve as many residents of Westlock, Westlock County, and Clyde as possible, we are asking you to hold one or more conversations with your networks to help gather feedback for the Social Development Strategy. These conversations are meant to be somewhat informal, and can be hosted over coffee, during a sports game, at the park, in your home, or wherever you choose to gather safely.

This guide will provide you with all the materials and information you need to host an incredible conversation. If you need any additional support after receiving this guide and the training, you are welcome to contact Scott Cameron or Avery Acheson from *bassa* Social Innovations Inc. anytime.

Thank you for volunteering, your support means the world to this project.

Sincerely,

Tracy Proulx - Executive Director Westlock and District FCSS

To Contact *bassa* Social Innovations Inc.:

Scott Cameron CEO

scott.cameron@bassasocialinnovations.com

Avery Acheson, Associate Consultant

avery.acheson@bassasocialinnovations.com

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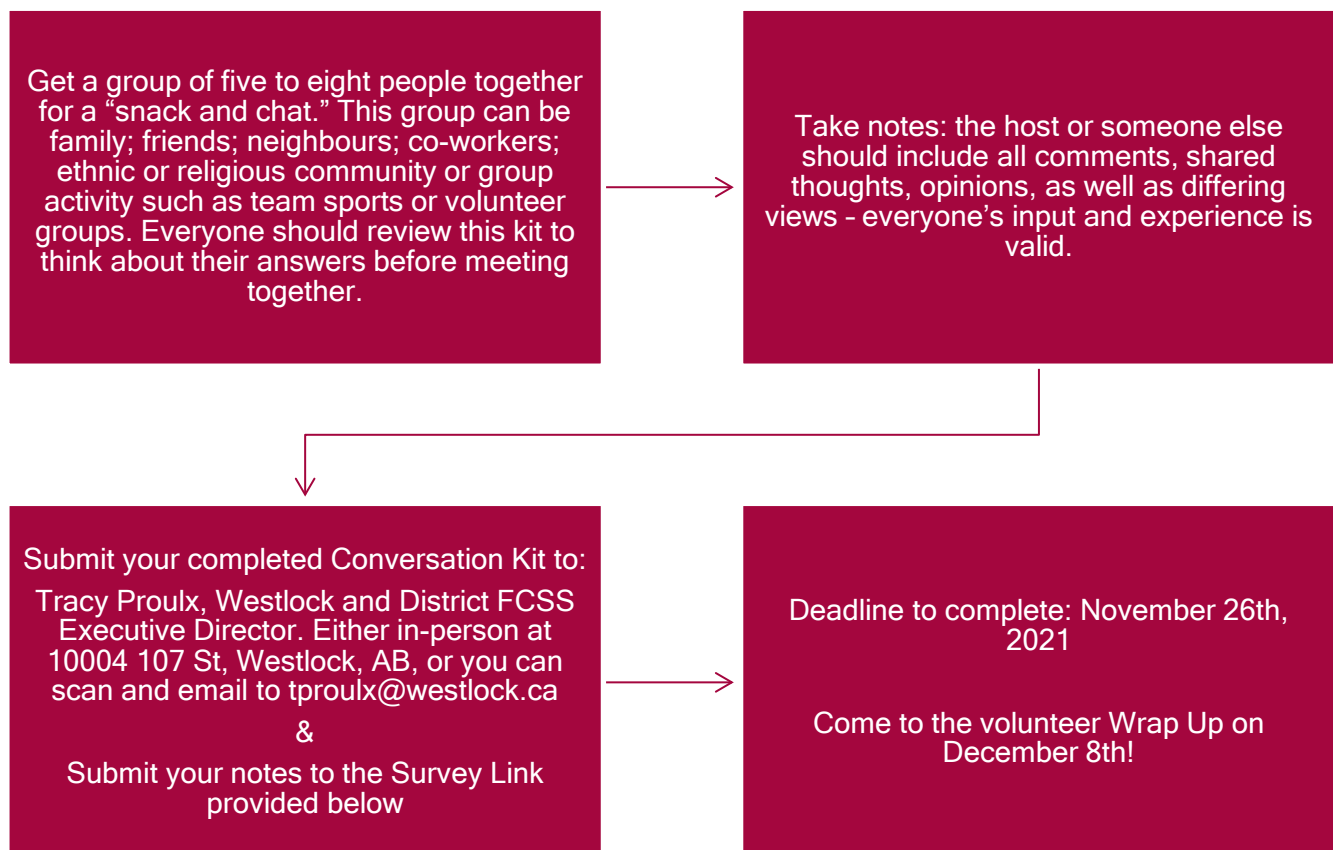
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What is a Community Conversation?

A community conversation is a process designed to be a comfortable way for communities to share their hopes and desires for improvement. The conversations are hosted by community volunteers who use guiding questions provided to gather feedback. The hosts take notes of emerging themes and ideas that help create context and data for a robust Social Development Strategy. This model has been used successfully across Canada in different communities to broaden feedback and reach a wide range of community members.

How to complete a community conversation?

We have tried our best to make this process as simple as possible. To complete a community conversation, just follow these steps!



Who should I invite?

We suggest hosting one or more conversations with your social, work, family, or activity groups. Groups can be of any size, but usually no more than 8 people at a time (more than that can make it difficult to take notes!). When you are deciding on who you would like to involve, here are a few guiding questions that can help you:

1. Who do I most often connect with and what groups do I participate in?
2. Is there an existing group connection I can use without starting something new?
3. Out of those I connect with, who would not likely participate without my invite?

These can help you identify groups that would benefit from a personal invitation to participate. Throughout this process we want to hear from seniors, parents, single parents, youth, young adults, New Canadians, business owners, people experiencing homeless or other forms of isolation, and more. The broader the feedback, the more robust the final product. But remember, although the hope is to have many different voices participate, whoever shows up to participate is welcome.

If you're having trouble identifying people to invite, please reach out for support!



What information is important to collect?

Well, in short, all information is important, but some is more important than others! Following the provided template will help you identify questions to ask and key information to collect, but here are some hints we can share.

First, we suggest only recording (writing) down information that is non-identifiable. As an example, if Stella (who owns the only toy store in town) is participating and is sharing a story about her store, we suggest not writing down the store name. By avoiding any non-identifiable information, it helps keep the process as confidential as possible.

Second, we suggest taking themed notes rather than detailed conversation notes. This means that instead of writing down everything someone says, we suggest letting themes emerge from the group. For example, if Stella is talking about her observations regarding the lack of parking in front of her store, you may want to let the conversation unfold to see if others have the same observation or have agreement. In this case, your notes would include a theme of “lack of parking in front of downtown stores” with some of the evidence from the stories shared. This can help you simplify your notes so you aren’t having to madly jot down everything being said!

Third, when in doubt, ask for clarification or details. If Stella is sharing her concerns about downtown parking and you don’t hear much conversation, you can ask “does anyone else have an observation about downtown parking to share?” or “would anyone like to share anything about what Stella just shared?”. These types of open ended questions can help you get more detail and clarification for notes. Just as important, ask for clarification, or confirmation as much as you need. A common tool here can be to paraphrase and say “Stella, to make sure I have captured your feedback, what I heard you say was you hope for increased parking downtown to help increase store traffic. Is that correct?”.

Finally, at the end of your conversation we encourage you to do a round of sharing your notes back. By reading your collected themes back to the group and allowing them to add any clarification or correction as necessary, you are providing participants with the opportunity to affirm what they have said and leave with confidence that they have been heard. This can be as simple as saying “Before we leave, I’d like to share back some of the themes I captured from your discussion. When we were talking about our desires for the community I heard XYZ”. We suggest leaving about 10 minutes at the end for this process.



When gathering feedback, it’s important to remain as impartial as possible. People may provide feedback or ideas you may not agree with, but this is not the forum for debate. This is not to say that anything goes, you are encouraged to set ground rules for your conversations that include “no bullying, no blaming, and no badgering”.

Community Conversation Guiding Questions

All about you

What do you love about Westlock/County/Clyde that makes it work for you?

What's missing for you in your community?

All about your circle (who you define as your circle, family, friends, etc.)

Where do you and your circle find belonging in your community?

What is missing in the community that would strengthen your circle's quality of life?

All about the community

Are there individuals in the community who have a difficult time finding belonging? and why?

Who are the support groups (formal/informal) in the community doing great work to help support others?

What groups or services are missing?

All about the "structures"

How does the community come together to support one another? Can you provide examples?

What's your best hope for the community?

Conversation Tips and Tricks

Facilitating a community conversation is a rewarding and exciting endeavor but can have some difficult moments that we hope these tips and tricks can help avoid. The most likely challenges you may encounter are incomplete answers, or a lull in the conversation.

The first challenge can be experienced as incomplete answers, or what you may call “surface” level questions. As an example, someone may answer “Parking” as an issue holding the community back. However, that may need some expansion to help with analysis. One of the best ways to get people to expand on their answers is to ask some follow up questions such as:

- “Tell me more about that”
- “What example can you share about that”
- “What about _____ is most important for you right now”

Questions such as these are open ended and encourage the person to dig a little bit deeper.

The second challenge is often experienced as “dead space” in the conversation, where no one is speaking, or feeling ready to speak. A few tips you can use here are:

1. Move to the next question! If one question is not resonating for people, that’s ok! Move to the next and then come back after a while.
2. Start with your own example. Sometimes you may need to provide a spark to the conversation! That’s ok! You’re allowed to participate too!
3. Let silence do its work. Silence tends to make people uncomfortable, let that work for you! Someone will eventually fill the space with their thoughts.



Gathering Information

A survey tool has been designed for use by conversation hosts and participants.

Conversation Hosts

Feel free to handwrite your notes on the pages provided at the end of the Community Conversations Guide or, if you prefer to gather information electronically, you can do so by logging onto the online survey tool.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WestlockConversationHosts>

or scan this QR Code:



Individual Participants

If there are conversation participants that wish to provide additional information following the discussion, they are welcome to do so by logging onto the same online survey tool.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WestlockCommunityMember>

or they can scan the following QR Code:



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is a Social Development Strategy?

A social development strategy is a high-level strategic planning document that communities use to guide social programming and other decisions regarding the social health of their community. At their best, they are informed by a wide range of community residents and focus community strengths on addressing gaps.

Where will this information be going?

All the information provided in this community assessment process will be collected by *bassa* Social Innovations Inc. They will analyze the data to create a thematic analysis and report that can will serve as a foundation for a Social Development Strategy.

Will this be Confidential?

Yes! All information collected is meant to be non-identifiable in nature. As an additional safeguard, *bassa* will be reviewing all the data during the analysis process to ensure there will be no identifiable information in the final report.

Why is my opinion Important?

A social development strategy is only as strong as the data that serves as its foundation.

Conversation Notes:

All about you

What do you love about Westlock/County/Clyde that makes it work for you?

What's missing for you in your community?

Conversation Notes:

All about your circle (who you define as your circle, family, friends, etc.)

Where do you and your circle find belonging in your community?

What is missing in the community that would strengthen your circle's quality of life?

Conversation Notes:

All about the community

Are there individuals in the community who have a difficult time finding belonging? and why?

Who are the support groups (formal/informal) in the community doing great work to help support others?

What groups or services are missing?

Conversation Notes:

All about the “structures”

How does the community come together to support one another? Can you provide examples?

What's your best hope for the community?



Westlock FCSS - Community Conversation

1. This survey tool can be used by volunteer conversations hosts **and** individuals to provide input to the Social Development Plan. Please identify whether the information is summative (i.e. the results of a group conversation) or individual. Thank you.

- Individual
- Summative
- If summative, please identify the Conversation Host.

2. What do you love about the Westlock community that makes it work for you?

3. What's missing for you in your community?

4. Where do you and your circle find belonging in your community?

5. What is missing in the community that would strengthen your circle's quality of life?

6. Are there individuals in the community who have a difficult time finding belonging, and why?

7. Who are the support groups (formal or informal) in the community doing great work to help support others?

8. What groups and/or services are missing?

9. What examples can you share about ways your community works together to improve social wellbeing?

10. What's your best hope for the community?



Westlock and District Social Development Strategy - Organization Survey

Organization Survey

Westlock and District FCSS is engaging community organizations to help develop a Social Development Strategy for the Town of Westlock, Westlock County, and the Village of Clyde. Thank you for providing your thoughts and insights to support this process.

bassa Social Innovations Inc.

1. What is the name of your organization? Please note, the answers you provide on the survey will not be publicly attributed to your organization.

2. Diverse perspectives are critical to the success of the Social Development Strategy process. Please identify the category that best describes the work of your organization. (Choose one)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous Peoples |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> International Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning and Education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Benefit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | |

3. From the list below, please choose the words that best represent the people your organization is designed to serve. (You can choose more than one)

Children (under 12 years of age)

LGBTQ+

Youth (ages 13 - 21)

Families

Adults (ages 22 - 64)

People with low income or employment challenges

Seniors (ages 65+)

People coping with mental health and/or addictions

New Canadians

Individuals or families facing domestic violence

Indigenous People

Other (please specify)

4. Provide a brief description of the programs and/or services your organization offers to the community of Westlock and District.

5. What is the difference your organization wants to make in the lives of people from Westlock and District?

6. What other organizations do you work with in the community to make Westlock and District a great place to live?

7. To help make Westlock and District the best possible place to live, please identify three community issues that, if addressed, could improve the quality of life for many people.

8. Westlock and District FCSS supports the needs of local organizations. What role(s) or functions could FCSS play to further support all Organizations in the district?

9. What is your best hope for the community?



Bridging the Gap - Community Survey

We want to hear from you.

How we live our lives and interact with other people in the community are important to our quality of life – our social wellbeing.

Westlock and District FCSS is asking community members from the Town of Westlock, Westlock County, and the Village of Clyde for their input on matters of social importance to the community.

Your participation in this survey will help plan for better programs, services, and supports for people in the community. The information will help guide community organizations, government, and each of us as community members to set priorities and work to improve the quality of life for residents.

This community survey is the final step in a process designed to hear from residents in Westlock and district.

To help design this survey, our consulting team has conducted interviews with community leaders, worked with volunteers to host conversations that involved over 200 residents, and surveyed local groups and organizations.

Now it is your turn to share your thoughts, ideas, and perspectives to help in the planning process.

There are five categories of questions in this survey designed to help better understand topics important to social development in Westlock and District:

•Connection and belonging – how do people get involved in the community and connect with one another?

•Health and wellbeing – how do people feel about the health and wellbeing of self and others?

•Access to supports and services – how do people get help or support when they need it?

•Community wellbeing – how well does our community help one another and create a place where everyone can thrive?

•Demographic information – about me, my family, and where I live.

1. What is your Postal Code?

The responsibility to improve social wellbeing could be shared by many. To begin, please tell us who YOU think has responsibility for social wellbeing in Westlock and district.

2. Citizens of Westlock and District

Not responsible Very responsible

3. Groups, organizations, and service clubs (e.g. neighborhood groups, sports clubs, Rotary, etc.)

Not responsible Very responsible

4. Faith organizations (e.g. churches, youth groups, member groups, etc.)

Not responsible Very responsible

5. Non-profit, charitable, and/or volunteer organizations.

Not responsible Very responsible

6. Government (e.g. Province of Alberta, Town of Westlock, Westlock County, etc.)

Not responsible Very responsible



Bridging the Gap - Community Survey

About Confidentiality

The questions in this survey are mostly multiple choice or rating-type questions that will be used to help understand what is most important to residents. The results of the survey will be shared as a summary – an overview to better understanding the community overall.

Near the end of the survey, there are questions that gather demographic information about you (i.e. age, sex, income levels, etc.) This information is collected to help determine if the input accurately reflects the diversity that exists in the community and whether certain responses are more consistent with certain demographic characteristics. There is no ability to link specific responses to specific people.

Finally, to determine potential volunteers and community members that may be interested in helping to improve social wellbeing in the community, there is a question that asks for contact information. You are not required to answer this question. As the survey is being administered by a third-party consulting firm contracted by Westlock and District FCSS, this information will be separated from the survey data and shared with Westlock and District FCSS for community development purposes to ensure that survey responses cannot be traced back to specific people.

The information you provide on this survey is anonymous.



Bridging the Gap - Community Survey

Connection and Belonging

How we connect with one another, groups, and organizations is an important part of how we live our lives in community. The following questions will help us better understand the way people in Westlock and District interact with one another.

7. Living In Westlock and District...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel connected to other people in the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel included in community groups and organizations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy to meet people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I know my neighbours	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My family is my primary source of connection.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My neighbourhood (i.e. where I live) is my primary source of connection.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Groups and organizations (like churches, recreation groups, service clubs, school, etc.) in the community are my primary source of connection.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Newcomers to the community are made to feel welcome and included.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Groups and organizations in the community are open and welcoming to new members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Groups and organizations in the community work well together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If people want to belong to a group or organization in the community, there are many opportunities to do so.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Bridging the Gap - Community Survey

Health and Wellbeing

Physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing are all important parts of our ability to live well in community. The following questions will help us better understand some of the community priorities and where additional supports may be necessary in the future.

8. In Westlock and District...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
There seems to be a growing number of people needing help or support to live a good life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All the help and support that people need can be found in the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People needing help or support have to travel outside the community to get it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support services are easy to find in the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are good supports and services in the community for children .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are good supports and services in the community for youth .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are good supports and services in the community for adults .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are good supports and services in the community for seniors .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are good supports and services in the community for families .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I consider myself a person of faith/religion.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to find a faith/religious organization (i.e. church) in the community that aligns with my beliefs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faith organizations in the community are open and welcoming to new members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faith organizations in the community contribute to the wellbeing of their members .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Faith organizations in the community contribute to the wellbeing of all residents .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel safe in my home and neighbourhood.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel my property is secure by taking reasonable precautions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe my neighbours are an important part of community safety.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel safe in my community from property crimes (i.e. break and enter, theft, vandalism, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel safe in my community from personal crimes (i.e. assaults, rape, homicide, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying areas of community need.					

9. Based on your knowledge and understanding, please rate the extent to which the following needs are important to people in Westlock and District?

	Needs are high and growing	Needs are high and stable	Needs are average (neither high nor low)	Needs are low but still there	Needs are low and going down
People experiencing poverty or low income.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People experiencing unemployment or underemployment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People experiencing homelessness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People needing affordable housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People are struggling with addictions or substance use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People are struggling with mental health issues (i.e. depression, anxiety, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People are isolated from one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People experiencing domestic or relationship violence.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Bridging the Gap - Community Survey

Access to Supports and Amenities

Access to basic needs, supports, and amenities (i.e. library, recreation facilities, public spaces, etc.) is important to community wellbeing. The following questions will help us better understand how people access services required to live well.

10. In Westlock and District...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I can buy all the basics I need right here in the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have to go to larger centres for most things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local businesses provide the products and services I am looking for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
We have all the recreation amenities we need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recreation amenities are open at the times I can use them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I/we use the recreation amenities to connect with other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can get the health care I need right here in the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have to go to larger centres for the health care I need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I need help, there are organizations here in the community I can reach out to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is easy to find support here in the community when I need it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
If I need help and I'm not sure what is available, I can easily find timely and accurate referrals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Income is a barrier for me/my family to access community amenities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation is a barrier for me/my family to access community amenities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Public transportation in the community is adequate for my needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can access what I need without my own car.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
People unable to drive themselves can access what they need in the community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Bridging the Gap - Community Survey

Community Wellbeing

People thrive in communities where they feel supported, included, and engaged. To achieve a level of community wellbeing requires people, groups, organizations, and government leaders working together toward a common vision.

The following question will help us better understand your thoughts on the current strengths and areas for improvement in Westlock and District.

Consider the following statements and move the slider to reflect your understanding of the current situation in Westlock and District.

11. Westlock is an affordable place to live (i.e. affordable housing, taxes, food and income security, etc.)

We need work in this area

We are strong in this area



12. Westlock is a beautiful community (i.e. parks, buildings, downtown, streetscapes, etc.)

We need work in this area

We are strong in this area



13. Westlock is a safe community where people watch out for one another.

We need work in this area

We are strong in this area



14. Westlock takes care of the environment (i.e. recycling, clean energy, waste minimization, etc.)

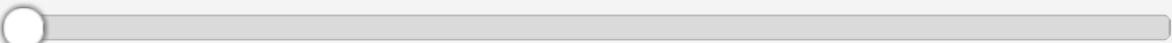
We need work in this area

We are strong in this area



15. Westlock has a vibrant local economy (i.e. business incentives, job opportunities, living wages, etc.)

We need work in this area We are strong in this area




16. Westlock is a community that celebrates diversity and welcomes all people regardless of age, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, gender, etc.

We need work in this area We are strong in this area



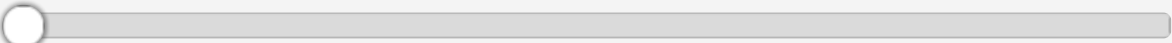
17. Westlock encourages and values connection and collaboration between people, groups, and organizations to achieve its vision.

We need work in this area We are strong in this area



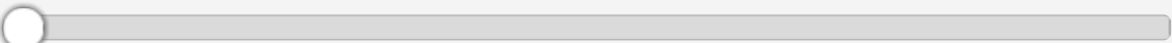
18. Westlock values education and makes it accessible for people of all ages and at all levels (i.e. public education, advanced education, lifelong learning, etc.)

We need work in this area We are strong in this area



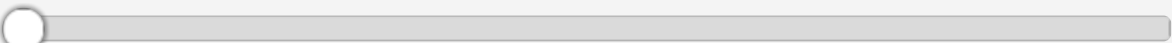
19. Westlock has options for public transportation (i.e. taxis, community assistance bus, intermunicipal transportation, etc.)

We need work in this area We are strong in this area



20. Westlock has options for active living and makes it easy for people to have a healthy mind, body, and spirit.

We need work in this area We are strong in this area





Bridging the Gap - Community Survey

Understanding Priorities

Setting priorities will help Westlock and District focus community effort and attention on topics of interest and importance to residents, and create opportunities for collaboration and cooperation between people, groups, and organizations.

* 21. To be the best community possible, I think we need to focus on the following priorities for Westlock and District (choose up to five):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Westlock is an affordable place to live (i.e. affordable housing, taxes, food and income security, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Westlock is a community that celebrates diversity and welcomes all people regardless of age, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation, gender, etc. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Westlock is a beautiful community (i.e. parks, buildings, downtown, streetscapes, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Westlock encourages and values connection and collaboration between people, groups, and organizations to achieve its vision. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Westlock is a safe community where people watch out for one another. | <input type="checkbox"/> Westlock values education and makes it accessible for people of all ages and at all levels (i.e. public education, advanced education, lifelong learning, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Westlock takes care of the environment (i.e. recycling, clean energy, waste minimization, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Westlock values education and makes it accessible for people of all ages and at all levels (i.e. public education, advanced education, lifelong learning, etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Westlock has a vibrant local economy (i.e. business incentives, job opportunities, living wages, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Westlock has options for active living and makes it easy for people to have a healthy mind, body, and spirit. |



Bridging the Gap - Community Survey

About You

The following questions are being asked to help ensure the survey information being collected represents a broad cross-section of the community. Your responses remain confidential and cannot be used to attribute your earlier responses to a specific individual.

22. Age

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Under 18 | <input type="radio"/> 45-54 |
| <input type="radio"/> 18-24 | <input type="radio"/> 55-64 |
| <input type="radio"/> 25-34 | <input type="radio"/> 65+ |
| <input type="radio"/> 35-44 | |

23. What is your gender?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Female | <input type="radio"/> Non-Binary |
| <input type="radio"/> Male | <input type="radio"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="radio"/> Transgender | |

24. I identify as (Please select any that apply to you):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrant or Refugee | <input type="checkbox"/> Indigenous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Person of Colour | <input type="checkbox"/> Member of the LGBTQ+ Community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Metis | <input type="checkbox"/> Person with a Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any identification we missed | |

25. What is your household income (before tax)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Under \$15,000 | <input type="radio"/> Between \$75,000 and \$99,999 |
| <input type="radio"/> Between \$15,000 and \$29,999 | <input type="radio"/> Between \$100,000 and \$150,000 |
| <input type="radio"/> Between \$30,000 and \$49,999 | <input type="radio"/> Over \$150,000 |
| <input type="radio"/> Between \$50,000 and \$74,999 | |

26. How many adults live in your household?

27. How many children live in your household?

28. Which municipality do you live in?

- The Town of Westlock
- Westlock County
- The Village of Clyde
- None of the above

29. How long have you/your family lived in Westlock and District?

- One year or less
- Between 1 to 5 years
- Between 5 to 10 years
- Between 10 to 25 years
- More than 25 years

30. Family legacy has been identified as an important in Westlock and District. Please identify the length of time your family has lived within Westlock County, the Village of Clyde, or the Town of Westlock.

- First generation (no parents/grandparents born and/or raised in the area)
- Second generation (parents born and/or raised in the area)
- Third generation (parents and/or grandparents born and/or raised in the area)
- Fourth generation or more (parents, grandparents, and/or great grandparents born and/or raised in the area)



Bridging the Gap - Community Survey

Understanding Responsibility

Now that we have reached the end of the survey, we would like to know if your thoughts on responsibility for improving social wellbeing have shifted or changed.

31. Citizens of Westlock and District

Not responsible

Very responsible

32. Groups, organizations, and service clubs (e.g. neighborhood groups, sports clubs, Rotary, etc.)

Not responsible

Very responsible

33. Faith organizations (e.g. churches, youth groups, members groups, etc.)

Not responsible

Very responsible

34. Non-profile, charitable, and/or volunteer organizations.

Not responsible

Very responsible

35. Government (e.g. Province of Alberta, Town of Westlock , Westlock County, etc.)

Not responsible

Very responsible



Bridging the Gap - Community Survey

Creating Community Wellbeing

Responses to the following section will be separated from the rest of the survey to protect the confidentiality of the survey responses from personal contact information.

By providing contact information, you are agreeing to have the information shared with Westlock and District FCSS for the purpose of future engagement in community development efforts.

36. Individuals, groups, organizations, and governments all play important roles in creating community wellbeing. How would you like to be involved?

- I think I could make a difference and would like to be more involved
- I belong to an organization that could probably make a difference
- Thank you. I think this is important but I don't see myself getting involved at this time
- I think this type of work is the responsibility of others. I don't want to be involved.



Bridging the Gap - Community Survey

Further Engagement

Because of your answer on the previous question, please provide contact information so you can be invited to participate further by Westlock and District FCSS.

The following information will be separated from your survey responses and shared with Westlock and District FCSS to keep your input strictly confidential.

37. Contact Information

Name

City/Town

Email Address

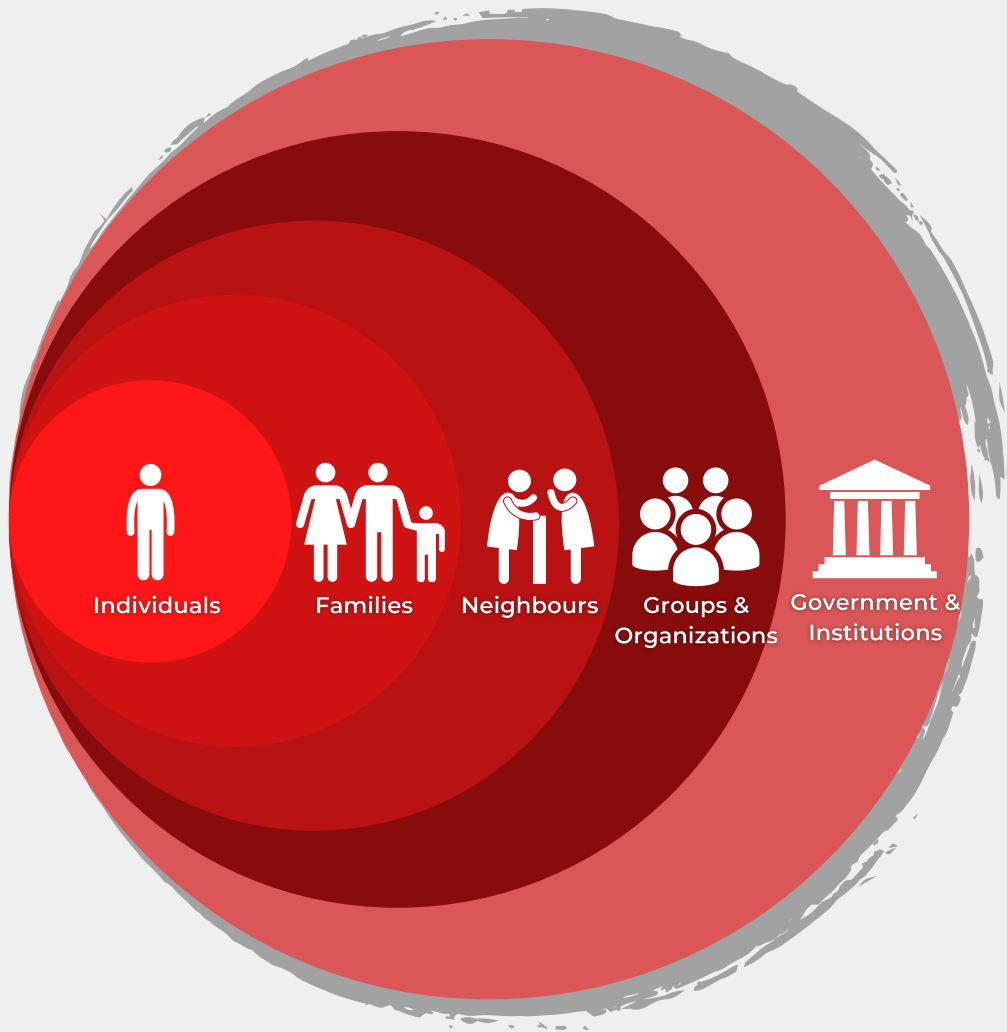
Phone Number

Community Systems Model

Individuals don't emerge out of thin air. Nor do they prosper disconnected from other human beings. All of us come from some kind of family, and all of our families had patterns of thinking, of human relations, of beliefs and values, and of physical survival that shaped us.

(Bopp & Bopp, 2011, p.28)

bassa 
SOCIAL INNOVATIONS



Individuals are at the centre of social change in community - their relationships, connections, and interactions with others shape social infrastructure.

Many people look to government and institutions to "fix" social challenges. However, true change comes through our other "systems" that have more influence and ability to build protective factors that prevent social issues from developing.

How we engage with one another, our families, neighbours, groups and organizations, and government and institutions will help to build connection and a sense of belonging - the building blocks of our community social system.

"A key strategy in working within complex systems ripe with interdependence, interconnectedness and ever changing conditions is to see things from multiple perspectives – to understand the different parts, to see the connections between parts, to ask questions about our preferred future, and to be creative and courageous about redesigning the systems; each way of seeing allows our knowledge of the wondrous world in which we live to become a little more complete"

(Cameron. S. 2014)

APPENDIX F

Bridging the Gap: Westlock and District Social Development Strategy Westlock and District FCSS Roles and Responsibilities

UNDERSTANDING FCSS:

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is a provincial program that is cost-shared (80/20) with Alberta municipalities and Metis Settlements. Its purpose, as defined by the FCSS Act (Province of Alberta) is to:

- a. *Promote and facilitate the development of stronger communities;*
- b. *Promote public participation in planning, delivering, and governing the program and services provided under the program;*
- c. *Promote and facilitate the involvement of volunteers;*
- d. *Promote efficient and effective use of resources;*
- e. *Promote and facilitate cooperation and coordination with allied service agencies operating within the municipality.*

Services provided under a program must be of a preventive nature that enhances the social well-being of individuals and families through promotion or intervention strategies provided at the earliest opportunity, and do one or more of the following:

- i. Help people to develop independence, strengthen coping skills and become more resistant to crisis;
- ii. Help people to develop an awareness of social needs;
- iii. Help people to develop interpersonal and group skills which enhance constructive relationships among people;
- iv. Help people and communities to assume responsibility for decisions and actions which affect them; and
- v. Provide supports that help sustain people as active participants in the community.

In addition to defining the purpose, the FCSS Act also identifies that services provided under a program **must not**:

- i. Provide primarily for the recreational needs or leisure time pursuits of individuals;
- ii. Offer direct assistance, including money, food, clothing or shelter, to sustain an individual or family;
- iii. Be primarily rehabilitative in nature, or

APPENDIX F

- iv. Duplicate services that are ordinarily provided by a government or government agency.

It is important, therefore, to understand that priorities and initiatives within the realm of *Bridging the Gap: Westlock and District Social Development Strategy* may not ‘fit’ with the provincial mandate and purpose of FCSS. This document is intended to provide a framework for the Westlock and District FCSS Board, its partner municipalities, and other community organizations that may have an interest in being more involved, but searching for alternative ways to engage or show support.

UNDERSTANDING PREVENTION:

Prevention, and early prevention as identified in the FCSS purpose statement, can be challenging to define and articulate.

The City of Edmonton defines prevention as *the existence of individual, family and community protective factors that lead to the well-being of self and others* (May 2020).

The Red Deer and District FCSS Board acknowledges prevention on a spectrum that includes both early stage prevention and later stage prevention. They further establish roles and responsibilities for their FCSS program indicating that funding measures and community development functions may exist within early stage prevention, and that only community development approaches can be used to address later stage prevention.

Early Stage Prevention		Later Stage Prevention	
The focus is on “before” problems occur and strategies are likely to focus on whole populations.	The focus is on early prevention where problems are already beginning to be noticeable, and action is needed to prevent them from becoming serious or worse.	The focus is on multiple, complex, and long-standing difficulties that require individualized services.	The focus is on restorative prevention where reducing the impact of complex intervention strategies and restoring protective factors are key.

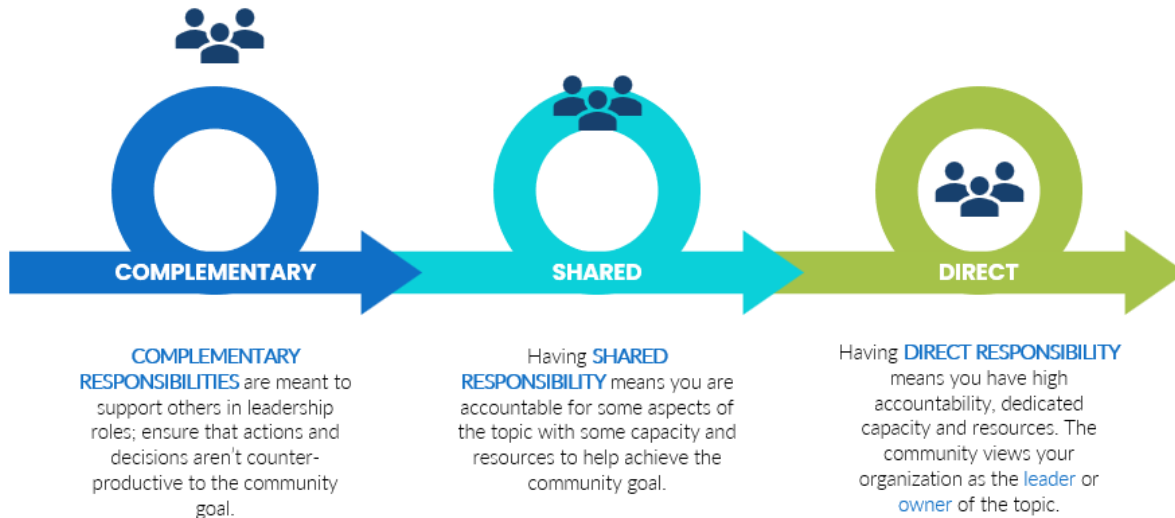
The process of developing the *Bridging the Gap: Westlock and District Social Development Strategy* did not include the confirmation of a working definition for Westlock and District FCSS. The two examples provided above are for reference and context purposes only.

LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY:

According to the Province of Alberta’s FCSS Act and Regulation, and the subsequent focus on early prevention, there are priorities within the *Bridging the Gap: Westlock and District Social Development Strategy* that do not clearly align with the purpose or mandate of FCSS. To aid in

APPENDIX F

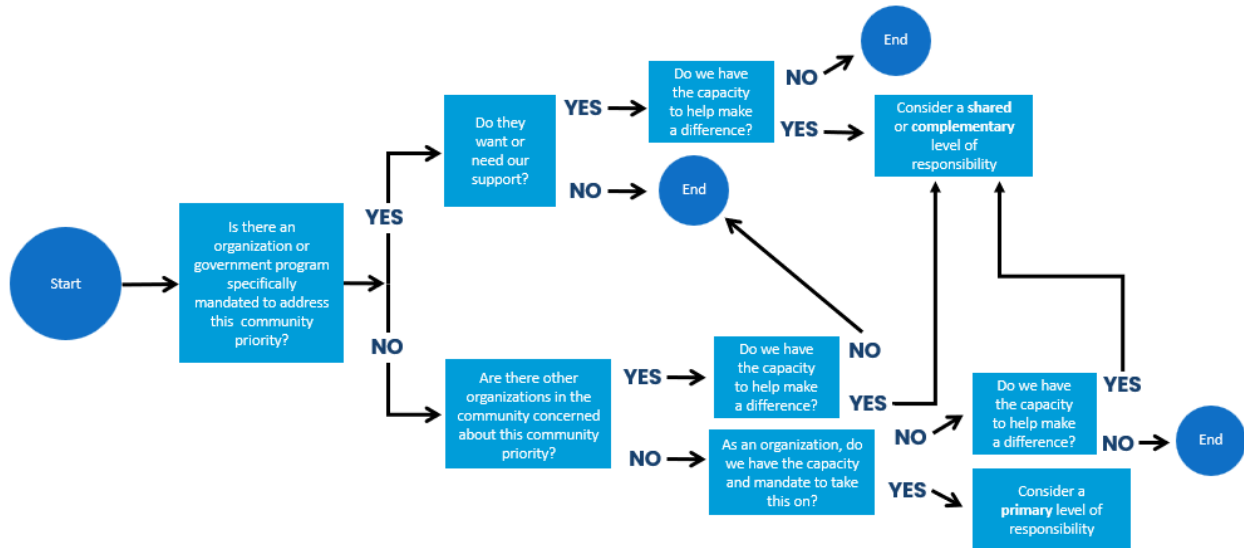
the assessment process, the Westlock and District FCSS Board considered a model presented to help establish potential levels of responsibilities to better define their involvement on a wide variety of social topics.



For many organizations, faced with a critical issue, it is their temptation to assume responsibility for the issue and begin designing programs and services to address the issue. The model above identifies three distinct levels of responsibility that can be considered by Westlock and District FCSS and other levels of government or community groups seeking to get involved.

By working through the following flow chart, an organization can quickly determine whether they have a direct level of responsibility for a community priority outside their specified mandate, or whether a shared or complementary level of responsibility might be more appropriate.

APPENDIX F



In the Direct level of responsibility, an organization clearly identifies themselves as the lead group on a particular community priority. This organization acknowledges that dedication of resources and capacity align with their central mandate.

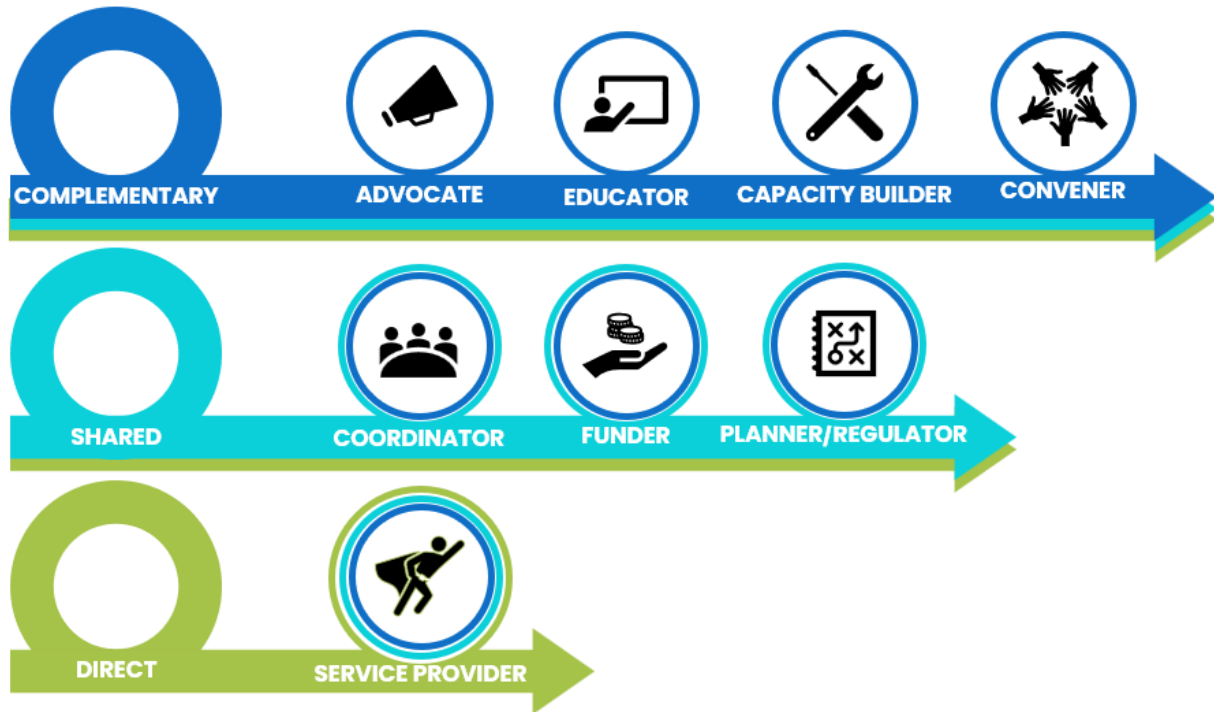
In the Shared level of responsibility, groups and organizations gather to provide support and resources to help advance the efforts of the lead organization to affect positive change on a community priority.

In the Complementary level of responsibility, groups and organizations help to ensure that their own priorities and policies aren't in direct conflict with those of the lead organization, or that they are not actually contributing to the issue the community priority it attempting to address. A complementary level of responsibility may be active or passive.

CONTRIBUTING ROLES:

There are eight identified roles that align with each of the three levels of responsibility. The chart below links each of the roles to a level of responsibility. It should be noted that an organization assuming a Direct level of responsibility might choose any of the eight roles. An organization taking a Shared level of responsibility might choose seven of the eight roles, not including the service provider role. Finally, an organization taking on a Complementary level of responsibility might perform any of the four roles identified at that level.

APPENDIX F



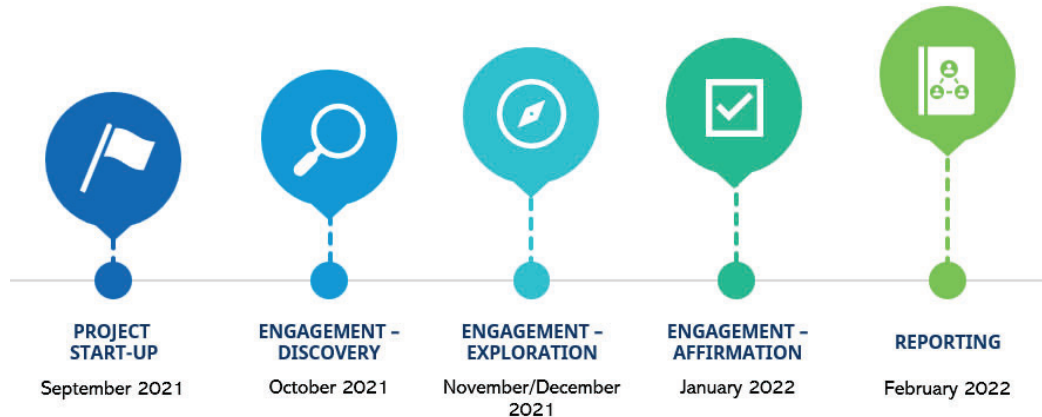
These roles, or functions are further explained in the chart below.



Bridging the Gap: Westlock and District Social Development Strategy



Process and Timelines



Community Priorities

AFFORDABILITY

Affordability relates to the personal or family level capacity to acquire basic needs including housing, food, clothing, and transportation – factors that impact quality of life

VIBRANT LOCAL ECONOMY

A vibrant local economy helps to ensure access to quality employment opportunities, goods, and services.

Balancing a vibrant local economy with affordability is critical to a strong social development strategy.

SAFETY

Maintaining Westlock and District as a community safe from personal and property crime through education, prevention, intervention, and enforcement.

CONNECTION

When people find connection with other people having similar and diverse backgrounds, experiences, and characteristics, it strengthens the entire community.

ACTIVE LIVING

Opportunities to engage in activities that support healthy mind, body, and spirit improves individual and community health and wellbeing.



growing opportunity



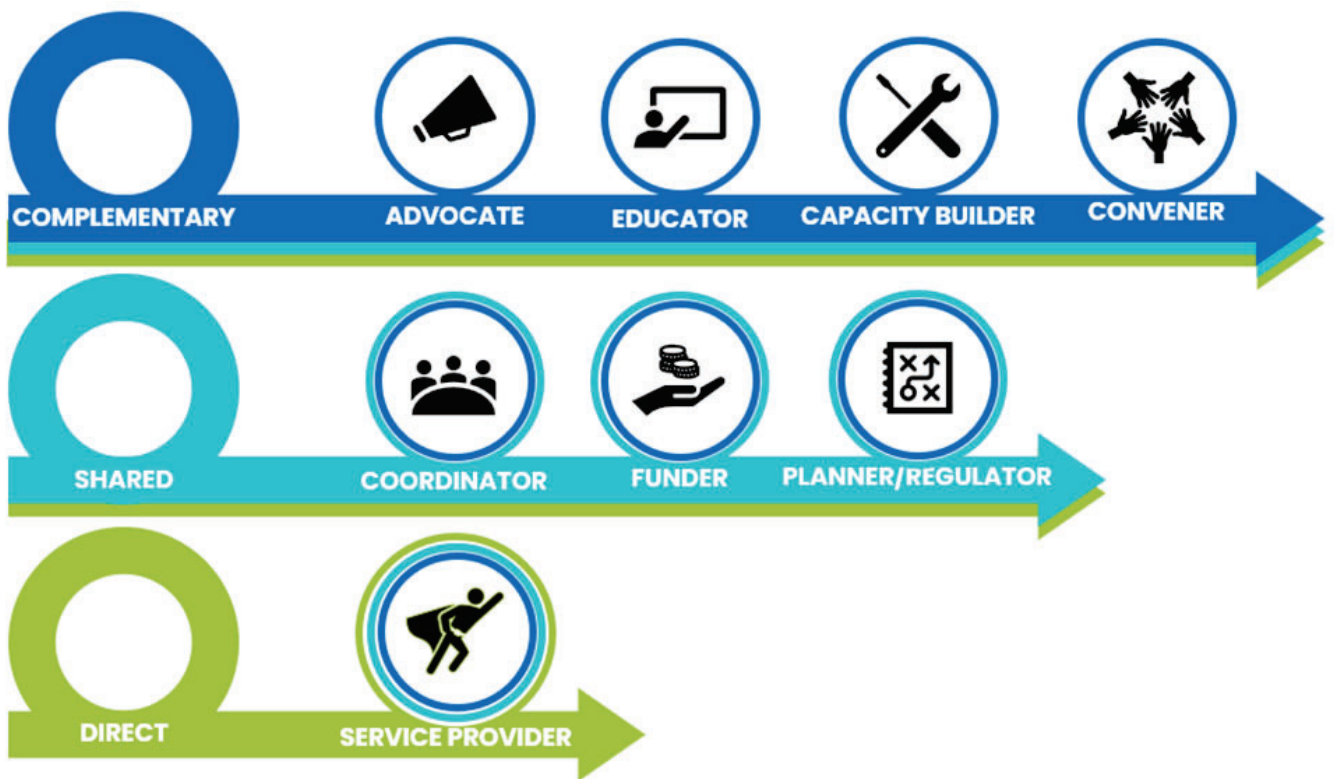
Community building functions

Groups and organizations can make a difference. These eight community building functions provide a few ideas about ways to get involved.

The complementary functions of advocacy, education, capacity building, and convening can be used to support groups and organizations that are taking on community projects. These functions are meant to 'complement' the work of others.

Coordinating, funding, and planning are community building functions that can be used when you have a shared responsibility for a project.

When your group or organization is directly responsible for a project, providing community programs and services are appropriate.



How can your organization or group help to make a difference?

Contact us at <https://www.westlock.ca/p/fcss>