



Social Needs Assessment

April 2022



CROSSFIELD & DISTRICT

COMMUNITY CENTER



Executive Summary

The Town of Crossfield is a vibrant farming-based community that offers residents the comfort of a rural setting with access to urban services including an array of education, recreation and retail services while being in close proximity to larger centres such as Airdrie and Calgary. The Town of Crossfield, through Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) have been providing services to residents for many years to help strengthen the community.

To help ensure resources are being allocated effectively, Crossfield completed this social needs assessment. This assessment examined the community to identify priority areas and gaps to gain greater insight into the current and future needs of its residents. The report presents the findings of the research and conclusions drawn and, in turn will provide direction to the Town of Crossfield.

A varied program of engagement was implemented to gather the thoughts from an array of groups, organizations and residents. Combined, these engagement findings present a fulsome perspective on the social needs of Crossfield. The tactics utilized included a household survey, a group survey, a youth survey and a series of discussion sessions with agencies and stakeholders.

Conclusions

Based upon the research presented, several recommendations have been identified with a focus on social needs of the community and improving the quality of life of residents. Ultimately, it is up to the Town of Crossfield to determine how to address these recommendations or whether they have a role in the community. For additional text for each item below, please refer to the full section of the report.

- **Community Congress.** Convene a community congress from several key organizations to discuss the social needs in the community, share resources and develop a shared vision for Crossfield.
- **Food Security.** A broad approach can help address food security. Providing fresh food, educating residents, and educating the whole community about the issue of food security will aid in awareness. Community gardens, town gardens, cooking classes, promotion, education and collaboration with farmers markets are planks that can be used to help with food security in Crossfield.
- **Crossfield Community Event.** There is lack of awareness of services, programs and organizations that are available in Crossfield. A community information night, which would include agencies, voluntary organizations, non-profits and government organizations that provide services would have the ability to explain their programs and services to the broader community.
- **Mental Health Conference.** The awareness for mental health issues is more prevalent than ever. A mental health conference should be held in Crossfield. The conference can educate and recognize the causes of mental health issues and destigmatize the issue in the community.
- **Youth Council.** There is a gap in engaging youth in the community. The youth council will be able to determine how to address issues that are directly affecting youth in Crossfield. The creation of the council will send a message to the community that the Town is dedicated to building youth leaders in the community.
- **FCSS Promotion.** FCSS is an important service provided by the Town of Crossfield and it is vital that residents understand the services they present to the community. FCSS should ensure that their name and brand is on all material they produce, in turn, agencies that receive funding should be mentioning FCSS on all their marketing avenues to ensure recognition is given.

Based upon the findings of this social needs assessment, the Town of Crossfield can determine what they would like to address and therefore, develop implementation plans. Consideration should be given to presenting the findings to the public as well as the steps taken to address the findings.



CROSSFIELD
FIRE
DEPARTMENT

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1.0 Introduction

The Town of Crossfield completed this assessment to better understand the social needs of residents in the area. This understanding will, in turn, allow the Town to make more informed decisions about resource allocation in order to more effectively address the identified needs. While social needs are addressed through a myriad of ways, a primary mechanism for the Town is through its Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) programs. Through FCSS, the Town of Crossfield supports many community programs and collaborates with a variety of social agencies towards the goal of strengthening the community and the individuals and families within it.

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is a program, funded 80% by the Province and 20% locally, that believes local solutions are the best means of addressing community issues. In particular, FCSS is intended to fund preventative programs and initiatives to build capacity and resilience so people and communities are better able to help themselves.

A thorough and balanced program of research was undertaken to complete this Needs Assessment. Presented in the following sections, this research included an examination of Crossfield to understand the context within which services are provided. A review of Town plans and studies was also conducted. Trends, leading practices, and significant issues experienced elsewhere in the provision and need for social services was completed and presented. An inventory of community assets was completed that identified the agencies providing services to residents. Finally, a program of engagement was fielded to gather thoughts from residents, agencies, stakeholders, and the community's youth. After the presentation of this research, conclusions and recommendations are offered.

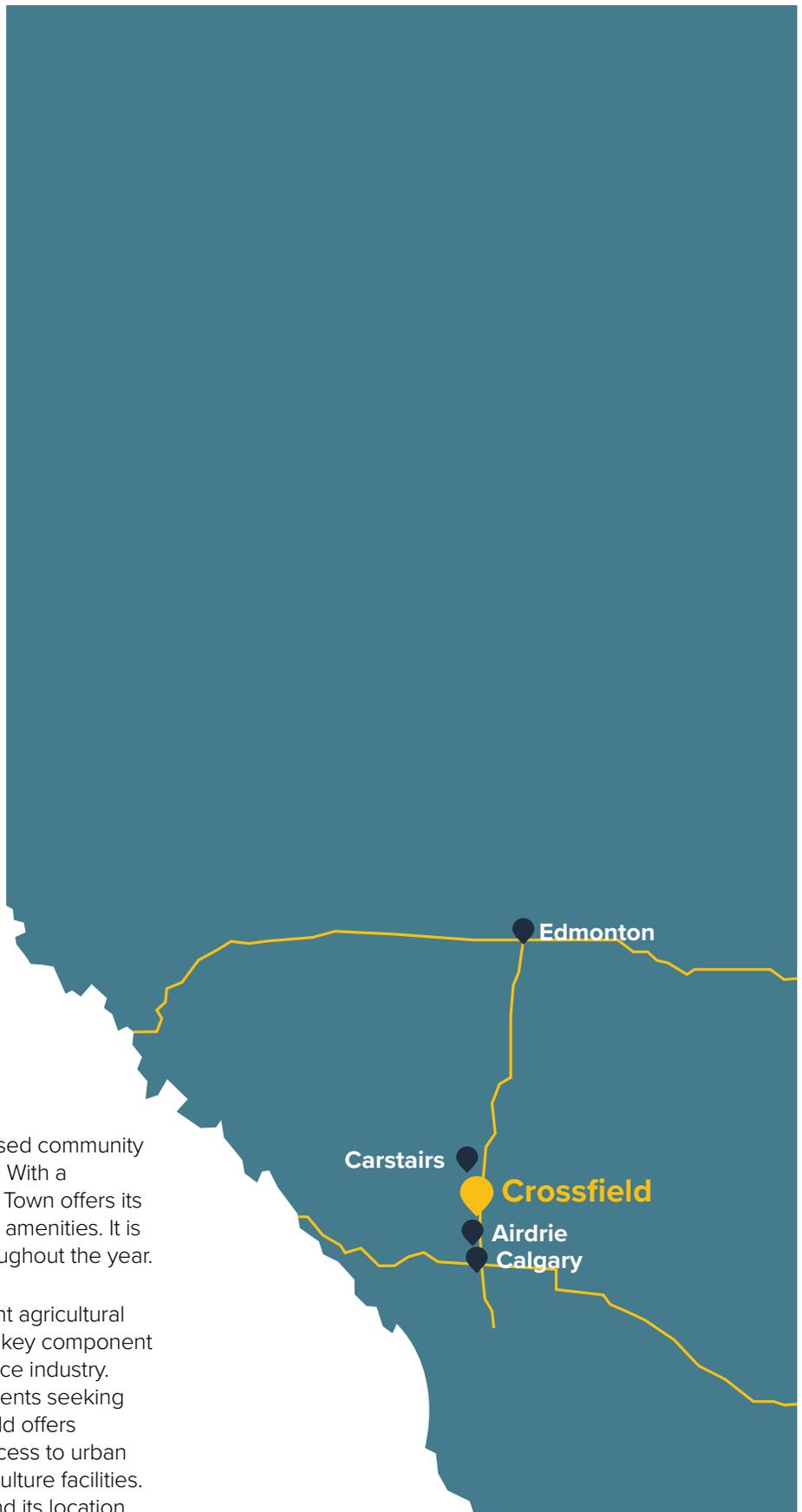




2.0 About Crossfield

The Town of Crossfield is a vibrant farming-based community located approximately 50 km north of Calgary. With a population of 3,599 (2021 federal census), the Town offers its residents and visitors a variety of services and amenities. It is also host to numerous community events throughout the year.

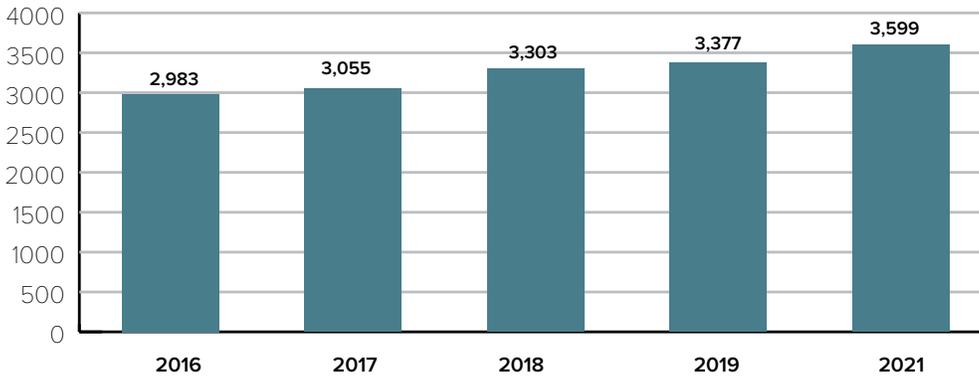
The land surrounding Crossfield is an important agricultural area in southern Alberta, making agriculture a key component of the region's economy along with the resource industry. The Town is a centre for the surrounding residents seeking education, health, and retail services. Crossfield offers residents the comfort of a rural setting with access to urban services including an array of recreation and culture facilities. The Town's proximity to Airdrie and Calgary and its location near Highway 2 influences the lives of Crossfield's residents.



2.1 Population

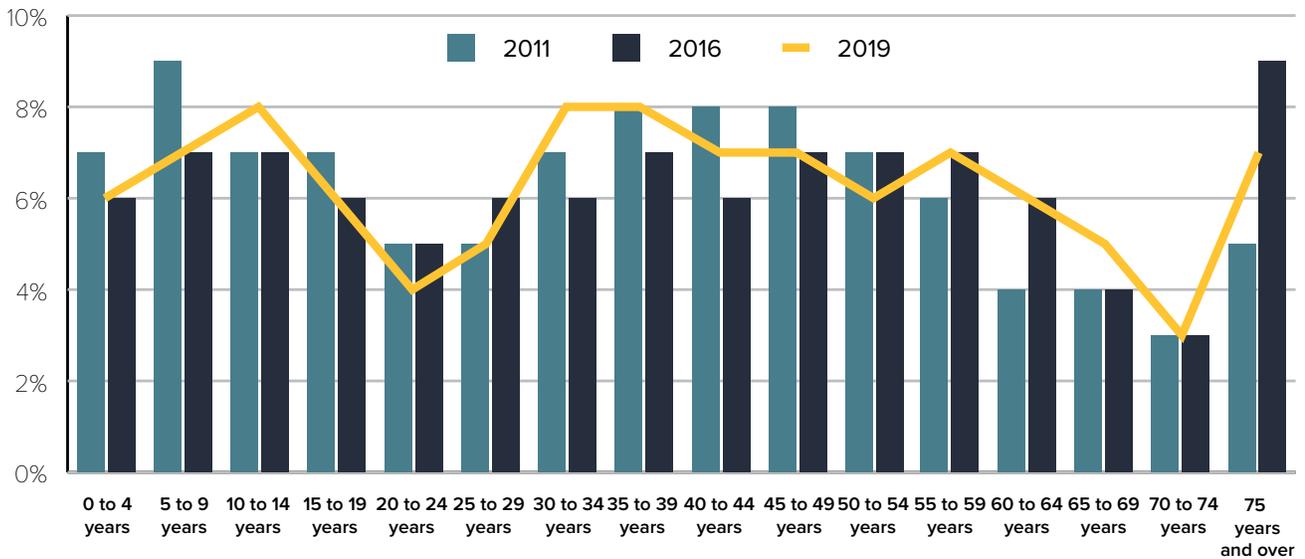
Crossfield is a rapidly growing community. From the 2016 Federal Census to the 2021 Census the Town grew by 20.7%, an average annual growth rate of 4.1%. This growth rate makes Crossfield one of the fastest growing municipalities in Alberta.

Town Population



As illustrated in the following graph, Crossfield has a higher proportion of the population 19 years and younger in 2019 than it did in 2016. The proportion of adults 75 years and older declined from 2016. The proportion of the population 55 years and older has increased since 2011 although those 75 years and older has declined.

Population Composition



2.2 Community Descriptors

Using ESRI's Business Analyst, a profile of Crossfield was developed. This profile was developed through the analysis of publicly available data - including the latest census results.

It shows that the population is expected to continue to grow including a sizeable population of immigrant families.

Crossfield Key Facts



Population

3,477

With growth of 392, the population is expected to reach 3,869 by 2025.



University Degree or Higher

287

436 have no High School Diploma, 883 are High School Graduates, and 633 have College.



Labour Force

1,923

There are 337 self-employed individuals, and 284 working from home.



Households

1,250

An estimated 195 of households live below the poverty line, while 145 households have an income over \$200,000.



Visible Minority

110

There are 266 first generation immigrant population, and 70 immigrating to Canada since 2017.



Median Household Income

CA\$91,040

With an average of 2.7 people per household, the average household income is CA\$109,322.38.



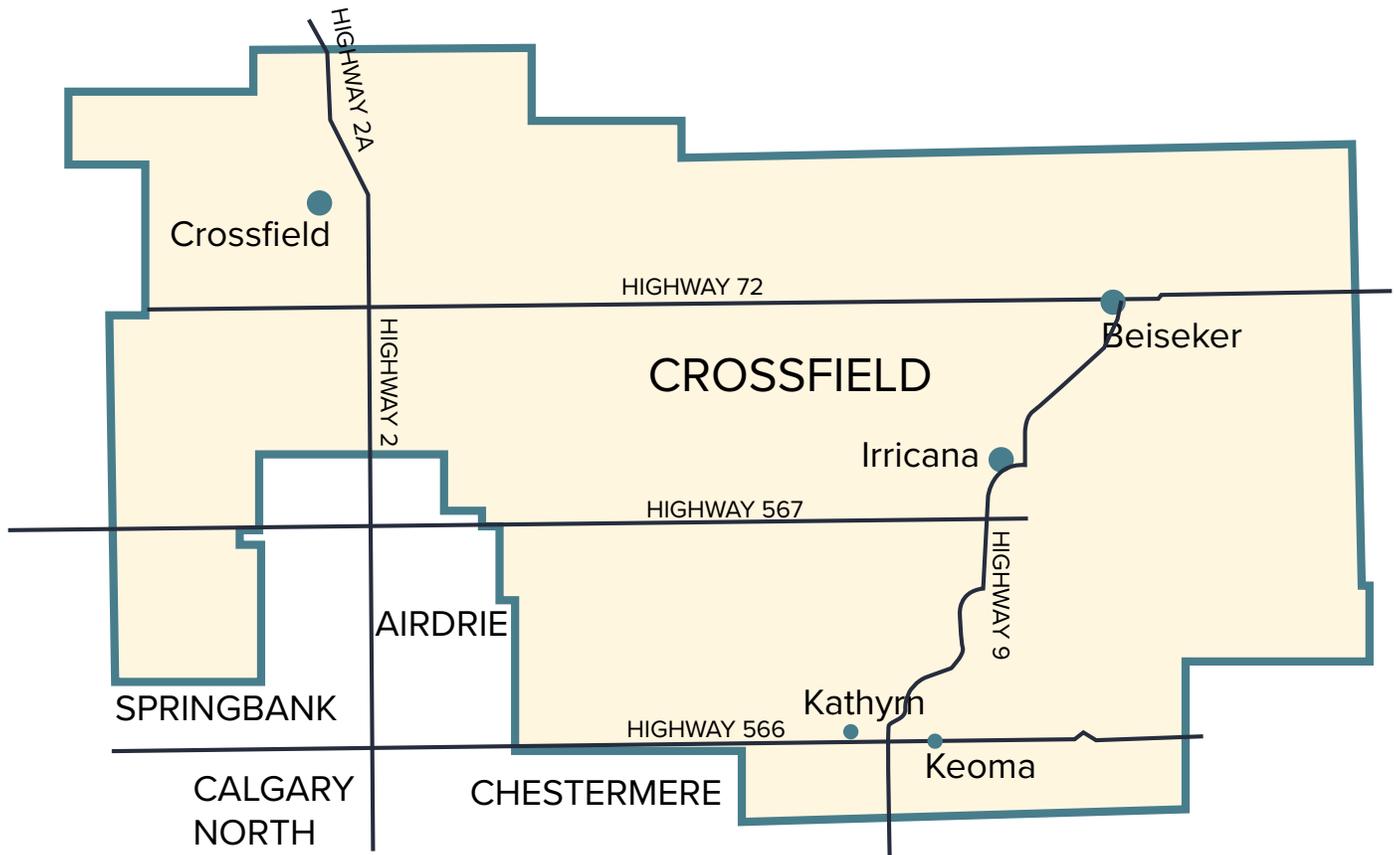
Median Age

39.6

902 are under 19, 2,032 are 20 to 64, 543 are 65 and older

2.3 Health Indicators

Alberta Health has developed community profiles¹ at the Local Geographic Area. Each of the five large health service zones in Alberta are further divided into smaller areas called Local Geographic Areas (LGAs). While the LGA that includes Crossfield covers an area substantially larger than the town, an examination of it can provide some insight into the health indicators of Crossfield itself. It is important however to take some caution when considering the information reported. The area included in the Crossfield LGA is presented in the accompanying map.



Some selected data from the Community Profile

- Percentage of LGA's recipients' family physician claims reported outside the LGA (2017/2018) is 90.4% compared to 50.8% for the province. This indicates a lack of access to primary care services within people's communities.
- Volume of Family Physicians (per 1,000 population) 2017/2018 is 0.1 compared to 1.2 provincially. This indicator can be linked to continuity of care, access to care, wait times, and general patient satisfaction.

¹ <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/5227a008-04e4-4c73-b779-c789c1c1d09b/resource/54a9b33e-966c-472f-8d5a-496eca2deedd/download/health-pcih-community-profile-crossfield-2019.pdf>

2.4 Education

As presented in the “Community Profile 2020”², Crossfield is very similar to the provincial statistics when it comes to the proportion of the population with no certificate, diploma or degree (18% versus 17% provincially) and the proportion with a high school diploma or equivalency (31% versus 28%). There is a significantly greater proportion in Crossfield with a trades certificate or diploma (17.5%) compared with the provincial figure (9.5%). Refer to the table.

	CROSSFIELD	CROSSFIELD %	ALBERTA
Highest certificate, diploma or degree	2,310		3,206,050
No certificate, diploma or degree	420	18%	17%
Secondary (high) school diploma or equivalency certificate	725	31%	28%
College, CEGEP, other non-university certificate or diploma	515	22%	19%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	405	17.5%	9.5%
University cert., diploma, degree bachelor level or above	220	9.5%	23%
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	30	1.3%	2.9%

2.5 Crime Statistics

The RCMP detachment based in Airdrie provides community policing services to Crossfield. Regularly, the Officer in Charge provides an update to Crossfield Town Council. The items reported below have been sourced from the Community Policing Report representing the period of October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021. It is important to note that the information presented herein is a snapshot of crime statistics; it is not intended to represent the activities of the RCMP within Crossfield nor other RCMP initiatives. Its purpose is to provide some crime statistics data.

The information presented here is focussed on property crime; property crime includes break & enter, theft, possession of stolen goods, fraud, and mischief. The most frequently attempted or committed crime is for fraud (14 incidents in 2021) and theft under \$5,000 (10 incidents in 2021). Fraud saw a sizeable increase from 2020 (1 case) although 2019 had 11 cases. The 10 cases of theft under \$5,000 is a decrease from 14 in 2020 and 20 in 2019.

² Economic Development publication. <https://www.crossfieldalberta.com/Home/DownloadDocument?docId=7d3a359b-ea1d-467b-b862-42da94b5f0a5>



3.0 Plan Review

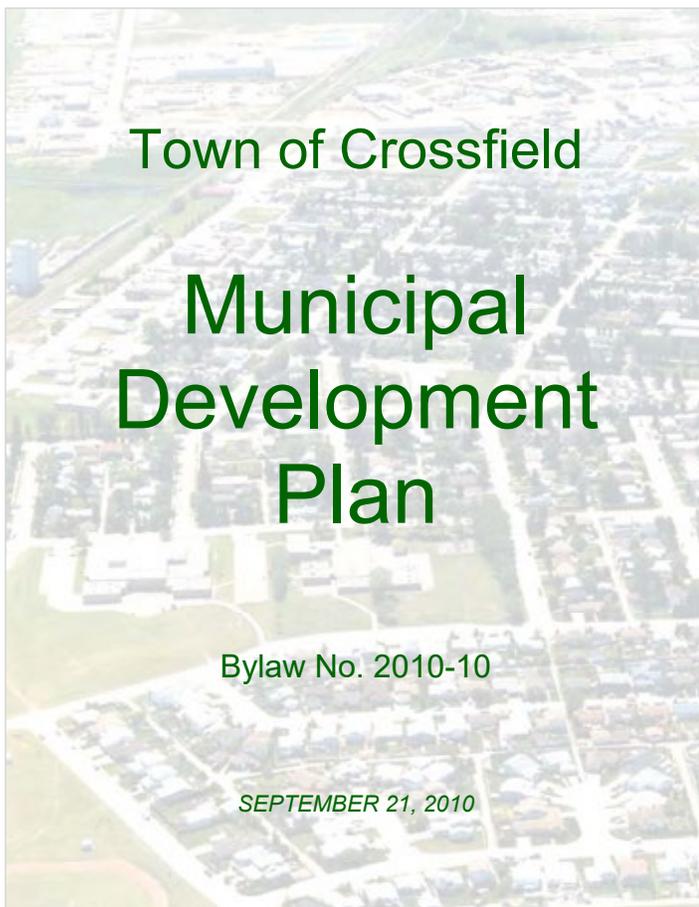
In this section of the report an overview of pertinent elements of various Town plans and strategies is presented. A review was conducted with elements pertinent to the social needs of residents identified.

One of the outcomes of Council's Strategy is to grow Crossfield's population 7% annually. Specific initiatives include the development of, "...innovative market-based social programs in partnership with community organizations, business and public agencies to attract young families."

3.1 Municipal Development Plan – Bylaw No. 2010-10

As described in the Municipal Development Plan, "(T)his MDP is a long-range policy document intended to guide the Town of Crossfield Council and administration in making sustainable, responsible, and accountable decisions with respect to land use, development, and service provision. The MDP also serves to inform government agencies, public and private utilities and service providers, other authorities such as local school jurisdictions and Rocky View County, non-governmental organizations, developers, residents, and local businesses of the major policy directions that the Town of Crossfield has established.

The MDP references the desire to ensure that, "...all families, senior citizens, youth, and employees in Crossfield have access to a high quality of social services. It references affordable housing, civic pride and constructing facilities to ensure quality of life is met for all residents of Crossfield.



3.2 Crossfield Sustainability Plan (December 2009)

This Plan describes a vision for Crossfield as well as outlines six strategic areas that, combined, point to a desired future for the community. The Plan was built upon community input and, as such, is a plan for the community and built by the community.

Crossfield Sustainability Vision

*This safe and peaceful place,
Surrounded by fields,
With a view of the mountains,
And the city within reach
By road, rail, and trail;
This is my home town.
Everything I need
For work, for recreation,
For shopping, for learning,
For health, for family, and for my spirit
Is right here.
As my community and I welcome the growth that brings
A wide range of neighbours, businesses, and industries,
We continue to cherish our small town ways
By beautifying our downtown, streets, and pathways,
Honouring and celebrating our heritage, culture, and arts,
And finding solace in our wetlands, creeks, trees, and parks.
While we work together to serve our community,
Raise our children, support our youth, and care for our elders,
Some of us may move on,
But we'll always come back to Crossfield.*

Crossfield Sustainability Plan



December 2009
Version 1.0

One of the six strategic areas is **Quality of Life** with the following goal.

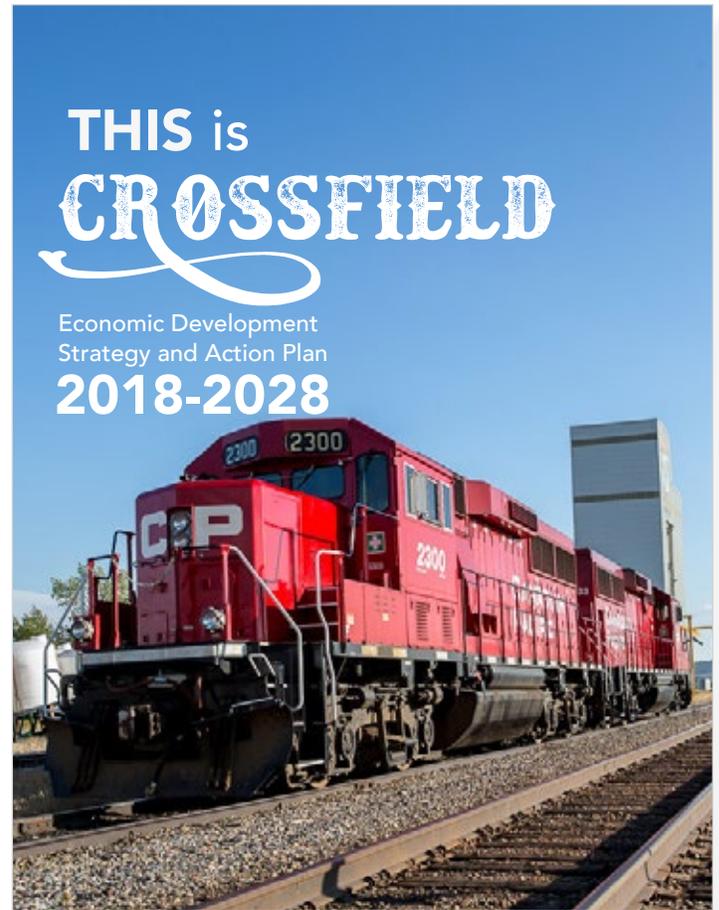
We are an attractive, unique, vibrant, welcoming, friendly, green, and diverse community that retains its small town feel in the country with people who have come to live, visit, play, and work here in Crossfield

The action plan identifies numerous short, medium, and long term initiatives that can help address quality of life in Crossfield. These initiatives include mention of affordable and seniors housing, mentorship programs between youth and seniors, an Elder Council, and a welcoming centre among many others.

3.3 Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2028

This economic development strategy was created with the support of Rocky View County and presents a pathway for commercial, industrial, and residential growth. The Strategy's Vision is,

“A full service municipality where residents can live, learn, work, shop, recreate, retire, and meet all their lifestyle needs without having to leave the community.”





CROSSFIELD



4.0 Social Trends

A scan of trends, issues, and research related to the provision of social services in Crossfield was conducted. Items of relevance to this Needs Assessment are highlighted below. It is important to note that the information presented in this section may not fully align with the circumstances in Crossfield. Rather, the information is intended to provide a broader perspective of issues related to social services that can be applied in Crossfield or can be used to understand the context in Crossfield vis-à-vis circumstances elsewhere.

This is a time of rapid change. Social, economic, and technological developments, along with the unknown long-term implications of COVID, are all having far reaching impacts on the way people live, work and play. These factors are resulting in significant changes to the way governments and organizations are conceiving, funding, and delivering community-based services. Service providers will need to be prepared for these changes in order to navigate them successfully. The following section highlights key information on emerging trends and leading practices in community social services.



4.1 Community-Based Programs and Services

The creation of unique community-based social and health programs and services has gained significant attention over the past few years. This interest has been driven by the idea that the complex social, health and economic issues people experience are connected to and influenced by their unique social environment and place. Essentially, it is the idea that people in different communities will experience social, health and economic issues differently and preventative and intervention social and health services should reflect the unique nature of that community.

A place-based approach advocates for the creation of a strategy to address issues like housing insecurity and youth anti-social behaviour by developing services and programs that are designed to meet the specific needs of a particular community, not designed at a provincial or federal level. This is especially true in rural areas, where these programs and services often become the cornerstone of communities by fostering greater social connection, providing opportunities for community-based leisure opportunities, and having spaces to celebrate a shared history and culture, all of which improved the overall well-being of residents. This is a concept and belief echoed by the Alberta Rural Mental Health Project who include ‘community-based’ as one of their key principles, noting that “...for meaningful change to exist, context matters—the community must be the owners and directors of local priorities and actions.”

Over the course of the COVID pandemic, it has become even more clear that these community services and gathering spaces play a pivotal role in the lives of rural residents who face increased social isolation; lack of opportunities to be physically active; less access to mental health resources and support; and a greater risk of being unable to meet basic needs - including access to quality food.

Although research confirms the importance of these services, rural communities continue to face some unique challenges in program and service delivery including:



Accessibility: Research has shown that individuals and families living in rural communities face additional barriers to accessing programs and services due to a lack of free time, increased cost of participation, lack of diverse programming options (including long-term programming), and challenges with transportation/distance to programs and services.



Facilities and Infrastructure: The ongoing challenge of maintaining existing community assets along with comprehensive lifecycle upgrades, expansions, or replacements of aging facilities has shown to be a huge challenge for rural communities who may lack the funding and/or community support to complete these essential updates. Furthermore, rural areas with single-purpose facilities continue to face challenges around meeting the needs of the ever evolving and increasing demands of residents and diverse groups including youth, individuals with disabilities, cultural and social organizations, and seniors.



Leadership Capacity: Many programs and services offered in rural communities are heavily dependent on volunteers and seasonal staff. Research shows that these roles, especially those in fitness, health, and active living, are temporarily filled by youth and young adults who move away from rural communities to more urban areas, significantly impacting the potential pool of available staff and volunteers.

Rural communities can work together to enhance the quality of life of residents by creating more accessible programs and services designed to meet the needs of residents by doing the following:

- Advocating for not-for-profit funding models that provide long-term allocation of resources to build community capacity.
- Reimagining existing community spaces including green spaces, natural areas, play fields, schools, and community-based businesses to offer a diverse range of accessible programs and services.
- Providing volunteer opportunities, training, and mentorship programs to older adults, newcomers, and stay-at-home parents to further develop leadership capacity and provide ongoing key programs and services to the community.



Case study:

Town of Chestermere Community Gardens

In 2011, The Town of Chestermere planted its first community garden on donated land with the support of residents, volunteers, and the Chestermere Regional Food Bank.

After the success of the rural community garden project, a second (urban) community garden was opened in 2016 with multiple partners including Parent & Caregiver Support Services (PCSS), the Chestermere Regional Food Bank, and students of Chestermere Lake Middle School. These partners provided ongoing maintenance of garden plots with a portion of harvested produce being used to fill the Regional Food Bank fridge, a program that provides food for local residents facing food insecurity.

4.2 Preventative Social Programs and Services

Regarding community and social services, prevention typically consists of methods or activities that seek to reduce or deter specific or predictable problems, protect the current state of well-being, or promote desired outcomes or behaviors.

For Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), prevention occurs by strengthening resiliency through identifying and enhancing individual, family, and community assets.

- Prevention may involve enhancing the strengths, skills, and abilities of individuals, families, and the community so they are more resilient and better able to deal with a stress or challenge that may result in future problems.
- Prevention may involve building individual or environmental safeguards that enhance the ability to deal with stressful life events, risks, or hazards and promote the ability to adapt and respond constructively.
- Prevention may involve addressing protective and risk factors.
- Protective and risk factors can exist both within individuals and across the various settings in which they live, such as the family, peer group, school, and community.

Protective and risk factors are the aspects of an individual, family, or community (or group) and environment or personal experience that make it less likely (protective factors) or more likely (risk factors) that people will achieve a desired outcome or experience a given problem.

Another term used for protective factors is “assets.” “Asset-based” approaches used by local FCSS programs put the emphasis on the positive (protective), not the negative (risk), factors that contribute to outcomes. Research suggests that the greater the number of assets, the more likely are positive outcomes. Research suggests that the greater number of risk factors, the more likely a negative outcome.

Protective and risk factors are generally grouped into two categories: those that are personal characteristics of individuals and those that occur in the environment

(both socially and physically). Personal factors are unique to everyone (or group). They include an individual’s knowledge, skills, experience, history, and genetic makeup. Environmental factors are factors that affect a specific group of people in each community; they are not specific to each person. The environment refers to the conditions in which each individual life - their household, their neighborhood or town, and the larger community. Categories of environmental factors include support and services; access, barriers, and opportunities; consequences of efforts; and policies and living conditions.

General principles are true for all the “subtypes” of factors: protective and risk, personal and environmental, social and physical. Research has consistently shown the following:

- Many protective and risk factors are related to multiple community outcomes. That is, they are important factors in many communities’ social concerns. As such, they provide a good place to start when developing lists of protective and risk factors. For example, a child having a strong relationship with a caring adult is a protective factor against substance abuse, dropping out of school, committing criminal actions, and so on. On the other hand, poverty is a risk factor for teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and inadequate access to health services.
- Not all protective and risk factors are created equal. Some protective and risk factors are much more influential than others. For example, having friends who use drugs has been shown to be a very significant risk factor for a teen to start using drugs. It is a much stronger risk factor than simply having the substances available in the community. It is important to consider the relative importance of each protective and risk factor because this will help you prioritize your actions later.
- The more protective factors or assets individuals have in their corner, the less likely they are to engage in an unhealthy behaviour. And conversely, the more risk factors a person has, the greater the likelihood they will engage in each unhealthy behavior. For example, if you smoke heavily, eat a diet high in cholesterol, do not exercise, and have high blood pressure, it is much more likely that you will have a heart attack than if your only risk factor is a poor diet.

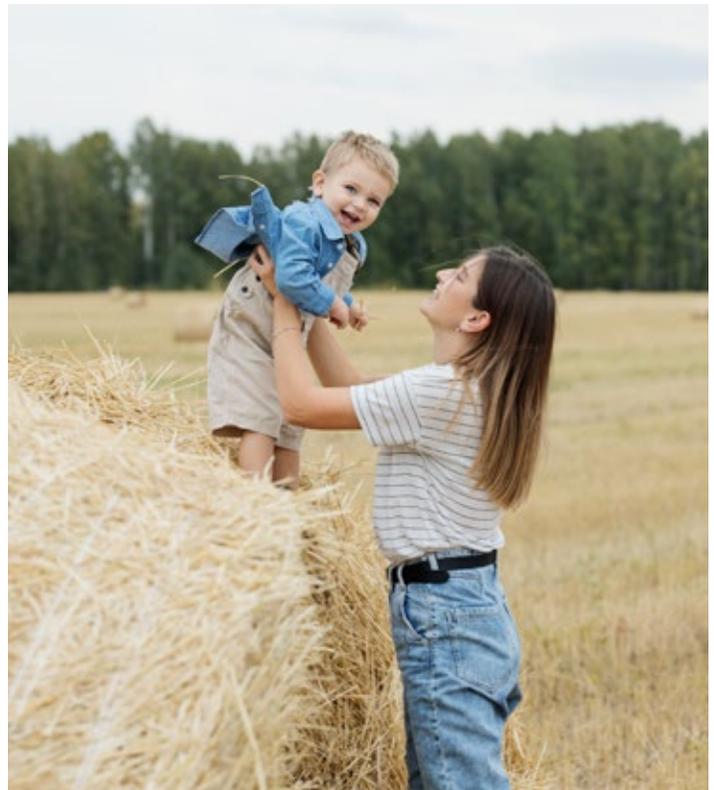
4.3 Safety in Rural Communities

Community safety in rural communities is an important public issue throughout Alberta. In 2019, Statistics Canada research found that rural communities in Alberta had a crime rate that was 36% to 42% higher than in urban areas. In addition, rural communities faced greater levels of violent crime (including firearms offenses and aggravated assault) and impaired driving causing bodily harm³ that could be directly attributed to various socio-economic challenges faced by residents living in rural areas including unsupported mental health and addictions, disengaged youth, lack of community-based programs and services, and transportation barriers⁴.

An important part of crime prevention is taking a proactive approach that reduces the opportunities for crime victimization by engaging, educating, and empowering residents to be allies in preventing rural crime and building a safer community. This can be achieved by the following actions.

Developing a greater understanding of rural safety issues and the factors that directly increase the rate of rural crime including socio-economic challenges, mental health issues and substance abuse, lack of educational and employment opportunities, and the need for early intervention programs and community-based programs and services.

- Building partnerships between community stakeholders including the government, schools and education centres, community-based organizations, and policing agencies, to develop and sustain collaborative approaches.
- Implementation of comprehensive, place-based policies that are reflective of the important priorities of rural residents and include crime prevention strategies related to developmental, community, and situational crime.
- Developing cost effective programs and services to increase the safety and well-being of rural communities including community-lead crime prevention networks, early identification and intervention programs, and ongoing community-based engagement opportunities targeting children and youth.



Case Study:

Rural Crime Prevention Community Safety Training

The Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention (CMNCP) offers a 12-hour virtual training program on crime prevention and community safety planning in the rural context. The training is part of the “Building Capacity in Rural Crime Prevention” Project. The lead organizations for the project are the Alberta Community Crime Prevention Association (ACCPA), REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities, Red Deer/Lacombe Rural Crime Watch, and CMNCP.

The program provides participants with the necessary understanding, knowledge, and practice implications to prepare a rural community safety plan in collaboration with community partners that proactively addresses locally identified priority risks.

3 *Crime Rates Higher in Rural Canada*; <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/statscan-statistics-canada-rural-crime-alberta-urban-1.5125922>

4 *Building Capacity in Rural Crime Prevention Project*; <https://www.albertacrimeprevention.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Jan-Fox-and-Jean-Bota-2021-04-Rural-Crime-Prevention-Project-Overview.pdf>

4.4 Community Interventions for Mental Health

The Canadian Mental Health Association estimates that 20% of Canadians will personally experience a mental illness in their lifetime and that 8% of Canadian adults will experience major depression at some time in their lives. In 2018, 5.3 million people (18% of all Canadians) reported requiring support for their mental health, and of those who were able to receive mental health resources and/or supports, 44% felt the resources and/or support was insufficient to meet their mental health needs⁵. Since this data was collected, the COVID pandemic has created great uncertainty, disruption, and harm, especially to societies most vulnerable. Canadians are reporting their lowest levels of life satisfaction since data became available in 2003.

For people living in rural communities, especially those already facing economic stressors impacting mental health (including income inequality, lack of local employment opportunities, and increased levels of food insecurity), finding quality, accessible mental health resources and supports within their community was shown to be even more challenging. This was specifically due to a shortage of mental health professionals and services within their geographic area, lack of collaboration of existing mental health services, significant culture and language barriers, and greater stigma around mental health.

Unfortunately, these gaps in resources and supports have been magnified over the past three years as the pandemic continues to put greater strain on individuals and families, especially children and youth⁶, which is expected to have long-lasting impacts on rural communities. Social isolation due to COVID has heightened the risk of family violence and substance abuse issues. Across Canada, 54% of responding victim services reported an increase in the number of victims of domestic violence served between mid-March and early July 2020.

Case Study:

Mental Wellness Public Education & Mental Wellness Conference For Youth

The Edson Rural Mental Health Project is looking to expand public education, sharing mental health kits for the workplace based on the Mental Health Continuum model that the Project adapted. The project aims to encourage community to be able to “check-in” on their mental health, learn about what it means to be mentally well, and learn about the resources available. Another key piece of the project is a Mental Health and Wellness Conference for Youth for the Fall of 2021, which is led by and open to youth in Edson and the surrounding area.

As the community services sector plays an important role in developing and providing critical supports and services to rural communities, potential opportunities to support residents include:

- Fostering greater collaboration between intergovernmental departments and organizations, health-care providers, and existing community agencies to provide accessible resources and supports for rural residents.
- Offering travelling mental health services/mobile clinics that can provide mental health programs and services to residents at home, at work, or in school, ensuring mental health services are more accessible and closer to home.
- Further exploring the use of innovative and accessible technology to provide mental health services to rural communities that improve service availability and reduces the strain on organizational resources.

5 *Mental Health Care Needs – 2018*; <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-625-x/2019001/article/00011-eng.htm>

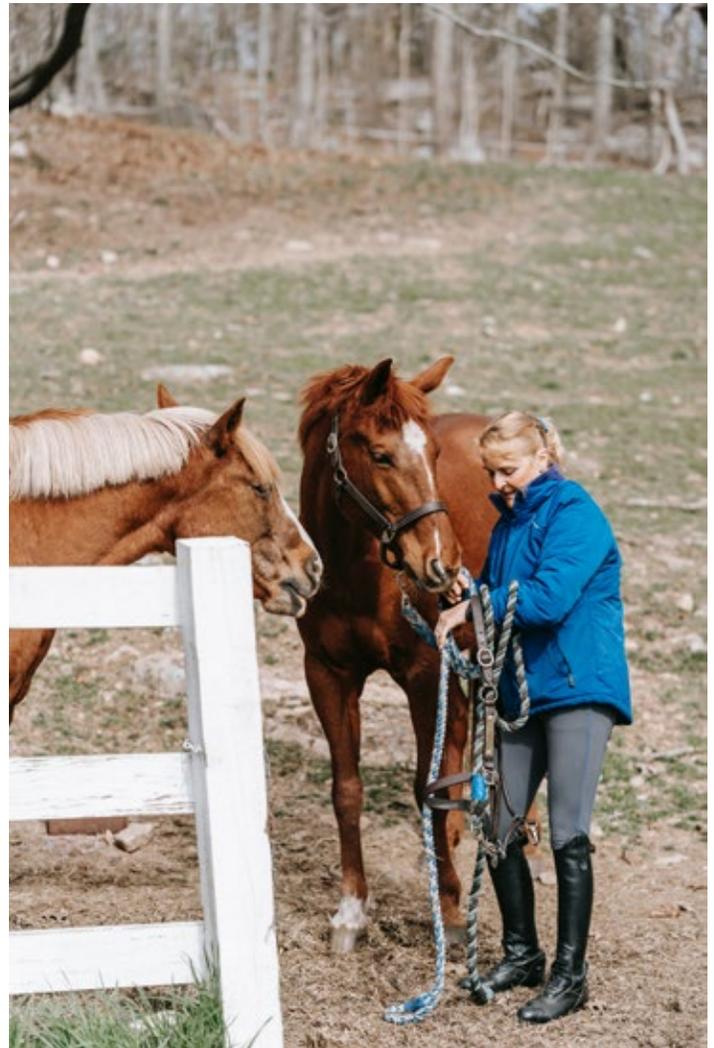
6 *Child and Youth Mental health Problems Have Doubled During COVID-19*; <https://theconversation.com/child-and-youth-mental-health-problems-have-doubled-during-covid-19-162750>

4.5 Newcomers in Rural Communities

Although vital to the Canadian economy, newcomers (including recent immigrants, refugees, undocumented workers, and international students) are often racialized, underemployed, or unemployed. Newcomers also face significant socio-economic and cultural barriers including limited access to culturally appropriate foods related to their cultural or linguistic groups. All these factors make it difficult to build strong connections within their new communities. At the end of 2021, Statistics Canada reported immigration landings returned to levels not seen since 2019 including more than double the number of newcomers to Alberta compared to the year before⁷.

To increase the capacity of rural communities, it is important to support rural stakeholders, including community-based organizations and service providers to help create welcoming communities that support the settlement and integration of newcomers. This can occur by undertaking the following actions:

- Working with residents and stakeholders to create a welcoming rural community that supports newcomers in creating a sense of identity and connection with their new community by providing opportunities for newcomers to contribute and be an integral part of community growth and development⁸.
- Conducting needs assessments with newcomers to better understand the rural settlement experience and create collaborative networks to address the unique needs of newcomers (i.e., language barriers, access to cultural and religious groups, diverse employment opportunities, affordable housing, access to transportation, etc.)
- Supporting community efforts to attract and retain newcomers by creating welcoming communities that celebrate cultural diversity, ensuring newcomers are part of key decision-making discussions, and focusing on the strengths, abilities, and contributions of newcomers to build community capacity.



Case Study:

Skilled Newcomer Career Loan Program

The Skilled Newcomer Career Loan (SNCL) is designed to help skilled newcomers living in the Nipissing District upgrade their credentials so they can get back to work in their field while living in Ontario. The SNCL offers up to \$5,000 for eligible applicants; eligibility criteria and terms of the loan will be discussed at time of intake. This loan is paid back over 3 years with interest-only payments for the first year to make the upgrading process as easy as possible.

7 2021 Population Statistics; <https://www.alberta.ca/population-statistics.aspx>

8 *The Political Economy of Culturally Appropriate Foods in Winnipeg; A Case of Refugee Path Immigrants*; <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba%20Office/2015/12/Cultural%20Foods.pdf>

5.0 Community Asset Inventory

Community assets are organizations and entities that either provide services directly to individuals or that assist Crossfield residents in accessing programs and services to help enhance their well being. The following is a list of organizations and services locally available in Crossfield.

*Note: the organizations marked with an * are ones that have received funding from Crossfield FCSS in the previous couple of years.*



Organization / Agency	Description
Crossfield FCSS	<p>Designs, delivers, and supports social programs that are preventative in nature which promote and enhance well-being among individuals, families, and communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID food security: shop for food, coordinate volunteers, build food hampers and deliver • Volunteer of the Year Award • Seniors Connection Kits • Series of community events such as Christmas and Easter Egg-stravaganza, Family Day
Helping Hands 4-H Multi Club*	<p>Builds self confidence and independence in its members such as inclusiveness, communication skills, leaderships skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer activities: Remembrance Day, Food Bank, Town Christmas Event and Easter Egg-stravaganza • Skill development • Work skills (e.g. welding)
Airdrie and District Victims Assistance Society (ADVAS)*	<p>Provides support in traumatic effects of event, violence in community, provides information about victim's rights during investigations, ensures victims are given appropriate information and guide them through any obstacles and concerns. Aims to create communities that are resilient and supportive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 24/7/365 crisis intervention and support • Provide individuals and families with tools that will aid in trauma recovery • Provide information on the rights of victims under the Victims of Crime Act • Provide appropriate referrals to other community agencies • Provide information regarding the investigative process and the criminal justice system • Provide victims with court information on cases, court preparation and accompaniment • Provide education to the community regarding community needs such as the Victims of Crime programs
Boys and Girls Club of Airdrie*	<p>Provides safe, supportive places where children and youth can experience new opportunities, overcome barriers, build positive relationships, and develop confidence and skills for life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural outreach • Programs for children and youth in grade 1 – 12 • After school club (crafts, games and friend making) • Developing leadership skills and self esteem • Kitchen safety and cooking skills
North Rocky View Community Links Society (Community Links)*	<p>Aims to improve the well-being of individuals or families and connects them with services and supports required for them to achieve positive outcomes. Provides information on enhancing life skills, health, and social environments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One on one support with drop-in counselling • Groups, workshops, presentations to increase individual and family capacity by providing education and skill-based supports • Has a volunteer registry and volunteer opportunities

Organization / Agency	Description
Crossfield Playschool Association*	<p>A non-profit association dedicated to enhancing three & four year old's ability to learn skills through creative play, sharing, stories and song to create a positive transition to Kindergarten.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> playschool activities such as children's games and activities positive child and youth development and socialization <p>Playschool Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> September – May First come first serve basis Free play, story time, crafts, songs/finger plays and theme-based lessons
Crossfield Municipal Library*	<p>Provides equal access to an efficient and effectively operating library, that meets the cultural, educational, and recreational needs of patrons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> broad array of programming for all ages from preschool through to adult and senior game time, crafts, movies, social “hang out”, art groups, speakers, tutoring, Story hour promote early literacy, connect to the online world, provide lifelong learning and stimulate the imagination
Crossfield Agricultural Society*	<p>Encourage improvement in agriculture and enhanced quality of life for persons living in the community by developing educational programs, events, services, and facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> community gardens workshops, events, group activities social media page to enhance social connections
Crossfield Madden 4H Beef Club*	<p>Aims to develop lifelong learning based on self discovery of their personal leadership skills, as well as being active and positive leaders and members of their local communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> volunteer activities such as Highway Clean Up, charity events like snow angels, community support for events such as set up and take down at Farmers Market
Town of Crossfield Emergency Food Hamper*	<p>Government of Alberta allocated \$43,000 for the town of Crossfield's Emergency Social Services Fund to supply those in and around Crossfield food in times of hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides food to families to apply for assistance The program will be available until Mar 2022 looking for ways to keep this sustainable and have a consistent food assistance program in Crossfield
WG Murdoch School*	<p>Grade 6-12 school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> youth acquire collaboration and conflict resolution skills to prepare for their independence while building self confidence and relationships with positive role models
Mothers of Preschools (MOPS)*	<p>Support group for mothers to promote social wellbeing and growth as an individual while children (0-5 years) develop social skills and positive identities</p>

Organization / Agency	Description
Crossfield Day Camp Society*	<p>Aims to create a safe and fun space for youth during summer months. Crossfield Day Camp is a non-profit organization directed by caring local parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 weeks of camps for youth aged 5 – 12 • Field trip Fridays • Crafts, games, large activities
Airdrie Food Bank	<p>Aims to help the community find solutions to hunger-related issues by collecting and distributing food to those in need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hampers • classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Fuel 4 Kids - food provided to schools so kids do not go hungry. › Breakfast program - addresses food insecurity in children and also provides emotional and social support › Community Kitchen - a place where people come to connect with others and learn cooking skills while building stronger individuals and families › Pantry Program - available without referral, food bank stocks food and encouraged to stop in when in need
Crossfield Elementary School	<p>Grade K-5 school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Development Advisor in house; also has a therapy dog available
Crossfield Clinic	<p>Crossfield clinic is a small-town medical clinic offering care for families and community members of all ages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural doctor and registered nurse • Provides same day care for kids
Crossfield Baptist Church	<p>Aims to make disciples through gospel - centred worship, teaching, community and service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children Ministry - Children aged three to Grade 6 meet in small groups to learn about religion and life. • Youth Ministry - youth nights, safe place for youth to meet and do some fun activities every week • Bible Camp - overnight weekly camps for kids aged 6 - 17. Crafts, games, learnings, worships • Seniors Ministry - meet for picnics and events throughout the year • Worship Ministry - Choir group that inspires people and encourages worship • Freedom Sessions - Through bible teaching and small group discussion and personal reflection, participants will enhance their emotional health and empower themselves. • Garden of Hope – a plot of land prepared for gardening to grow fresh food for the Airdrie Foodbank. The garden is sponsored by the Crossfield Baptist Church and is maintained by the Landscaping Committee.

Organization / Agency	Description
Equine Enrichment	<p>Provides services to help people move through grief, loss, trauma, and addictions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individual sessions on coaching and mindful human ship • workshops and special events • youth programs aimed to develop positive relationship building with oneself and others while discovering the importance of emotions and communication.
Alberta Health Services - Addictions and Mental Health Services	<p>Provides services to individuals in need of addictions and mental health help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addictions help line (1-866-332-2322) • self help (addiction, alcohol, anxiety, cannabis, depression, mental health, opioids, substance abuse, supporting family members)
Alberta Health Services Didsbury Public Health Nurse	<p>Provides services to individuals in need of health-related issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prenatal / postpartum services • health promotion • disease and injury prevention services • immunizations & communicable disease control
Closer to Home Community Services	<p>Facilitates growth and belonging in communities of meaningful relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating new possibilities for a brighter future • adult / parent programs • family programs • support for families experiencing homelessness • children and youth programs
Crossfield Elks	<p>Dedicated to the benefit and welfare of others wherever there is a need for charity or public service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demolition derby's, rodeos, community event sponsorships • provides scholarships and donations to local community groups for programming or projects
Golden Key Club / Over 50 Club	<p>The voice of those over 50 dedicated to make new friends and stay social.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Events for seniors • Coffee meet ups • Senior centre • Potluck dinners • Carpet bowling • A place for seniors to make new friends

Organization / Agency	Description
Rocky View Schools Adult Learning	<p>Delivers grassroots education to provide, promote and increase access to foundational learning opportunities in Rocky View County.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GED preparation, • English Language Learning, • Basic Numeracy, • Basic Digital Skills
Royal Canadian Legion	<p>The Royal Canadian Legion cares for all those who have served our nation. As members, we show our thanks by supporting and advocating for Veterans, by remembering their sacrifices, and by continuing the tradition of service in helping our communities.</p>
Rocky View Schools Stepping Stones	<p>Works to promote positive mental health in children, youth, families and support individuals in the community who interact with children and youth. The Mental Health Capacity Building MHCBI initiative is based on research and best practice literature that demonstrates that mental and emotional wellbeing can be developed, nurtured, and supported through promotion and prevention efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School presentations • Small group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Healthy relationships – (2SLGBTQIA+) › Girls group › Boys group • Parent Groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Emotional regulation and mindfulness › Self care › Strategies for success › Understanding childhood anxiety and stress › Understanding social media › Understanding teens mental health
Prospect Employment Services (Rocky View Employment Services)	<p>Provides employment and career development services. Prospect services a broad demographic of Albertans (youth, mature workers, transitioning professionals, unemployed/underemployed Albertans, new Canadians, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employment services • Internet access • resume help • workshops • photocopying • faxing • Job and career fairs at the Rocky View Education Centre

Organization / Agency	Description
Airdrie & District Hospice Society	<p>Supports those who are struggling to cope with diagnosis, death and grief. Provide compassionate care to those living with a life-limiting illness as well as grief support to anyone impacted by a diagnosis or loss.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grief support • Children and teen grief support • Compassionate care fund • Hold fundraisers
Crossfield Rocky View Lodge	<p>Provides quality residential facilities for seniors in a supportive environment through innovative and progressive program service delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent living <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Units for seniors who are fully able to cook, clean and live independently › Tenant rent (30%) of income › Self contained, living room, kitchen, bedroom, bathroom etc. › Bingo nights, potlucks and coffee hours • Supportive living <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › For seniors 65 + who are independent, with or without the help of community-based services › Provides all meals, snacks, linen changes and housekeeping › Social and leisure programs › Medication assistance, assisted bathing and minor medical services are provided
Crossfield United Church	<p>Crossfield United has a lengthy, highly regarded history of worship and service in this dynamic rural community of Crossfield and surrounding area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists with transitional moments in life • Spiritual counselling • Educational opportunities • Community events • Weddings • Funerals • Facility rentals
Rocky View Regional Handi Bus Society	<p>Provides transportation on a shared-ride basis to medical appointments, schools, work in Calgary and in the rural communities.</p> <p>Operating costs for transportation are covered by user fees, municipal grants, fee for service contracts and donations. Capital funding for new buses is raised through grant applications and donations. Each handibus is an investment of more than \$75,000.</p>





A program of engagement was implemented to gather the perspectives of the community in the Crossfield area regarding social needs. A survey was fielded with residents, agencies providing services to residents were surveyed, as were the community's youth. Finally, a series of meetings was convened with key stakeholders in Crossfield. Additional detail about each of these engagement mechanisms is provided along with the findings from each.

6.1 Resident Survey

A survey was fielded with residents of the Crossfield area regarding the social needs of the community. Residents were provided with an opportunity to complete the survey online; a link to the survey was hosted on the Town's website. Hard copies were also available at the Town Hall of Crossfield, the Crossfield Municipal Library and the Crossfield Clinic. The survey was promoted through a variety of mechanisms including through the following means:

- Town of Crossfield website;
- Poster distributed to organizations and posted around the community;
- Flyers distributed to mailboxes at Canada Post
- Town social media; and
- Word of mouth.

In total, three hundred and ninety-five (395)⁹ residents provided a response to the survey. If randomly sampled, this response rate would provide a margin of error of +5.1% 19 times out of 20. The survey was in the field from January 12, 2022 to February 16, 2022. The survey findings are presented below in the order the questions were posed in the questionnaire. The findings presented reflect the results for each question - not all respondents answered all questions. Due to rounding, the figures may not add up to 100%. Subsegment analysis was undertaken; where meaningful and pertinent, those findings are presented along with the overall findings.

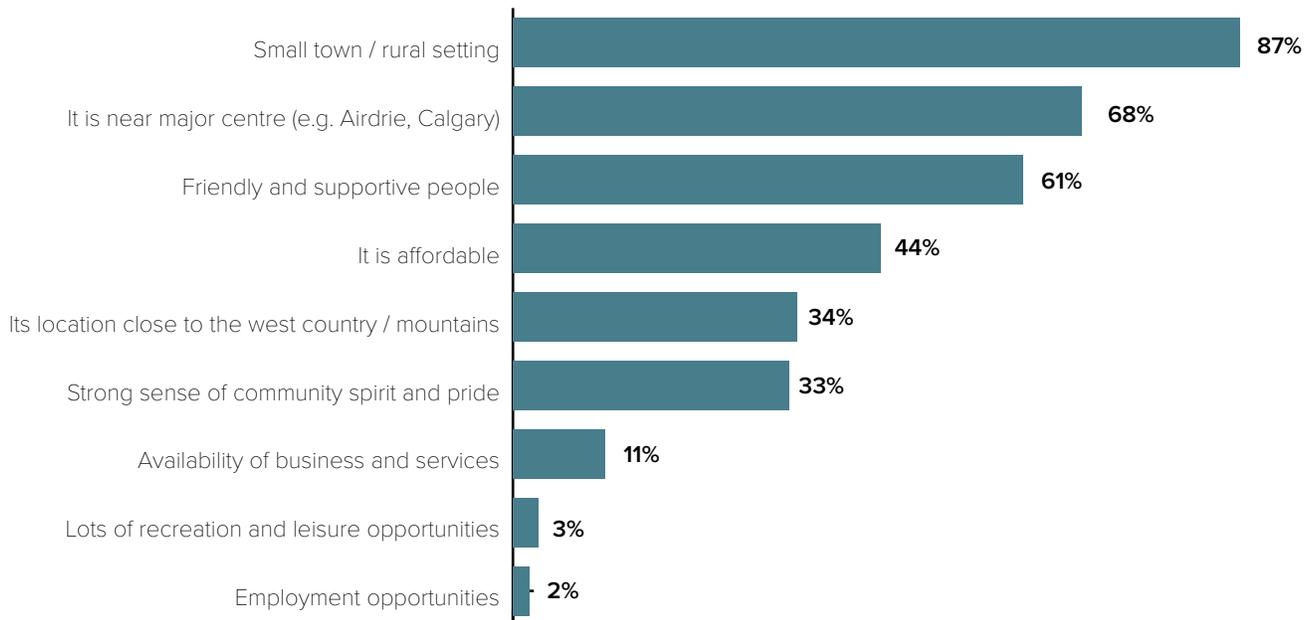


⁹ Of the 365 responses, 360 were provided online while 5 were submitted as a hard copy.

6.1.1 Living in Crossfield

To begin the survey, respondents were asked to identify the best things about living in and around Crossfield. As portrayed in the graph, almost all (87%) respondents said that the small town / rural setting was one of the best things about living in and around Crossfield. Approximately two-thirds of respondents said that its proximity to major cities such as Airdrie and Calgary (68%) and the friendly and supportive people (61%) are strengths of living in the Crossfield Area. Refer to the graph for more responses.

Best Things About Living in the Crossfield Area

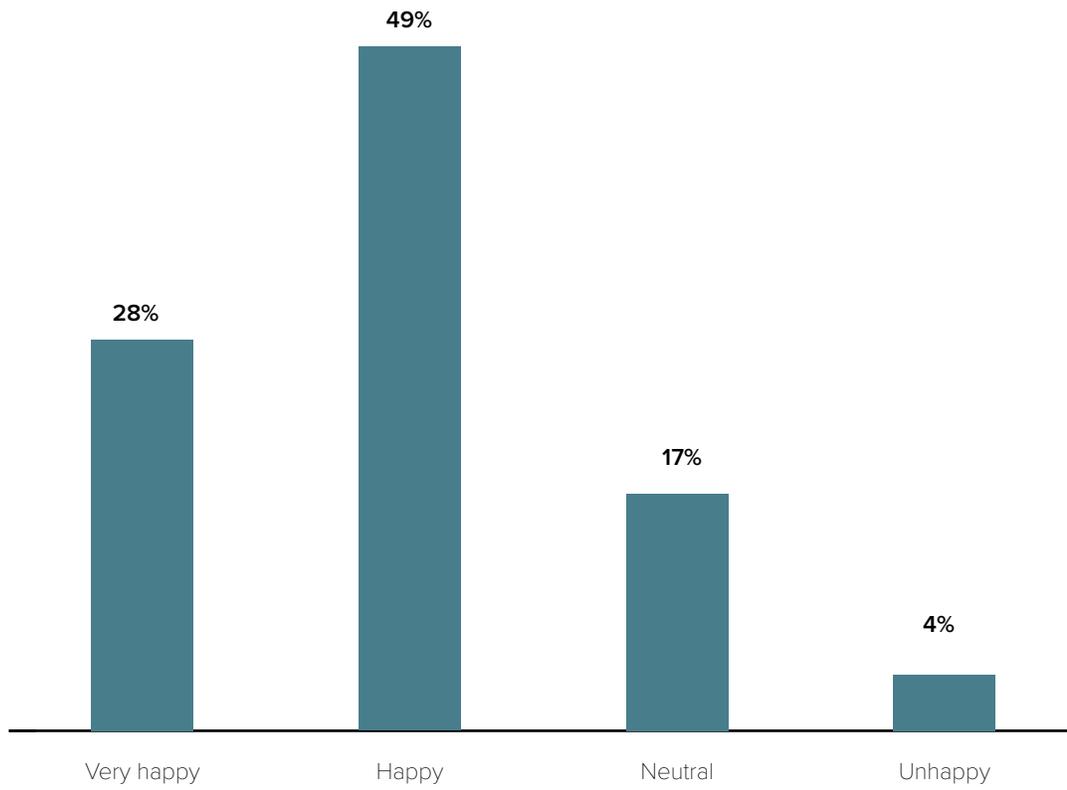


Subsegment Analysis

- Respondents who said they are happy or very happy with their quality of life in Crossfield are more likely to identify the following attributes as being the best things about living in the Crossfield area than respondents who are neutral or unhappy to some degree with their quality of life:
 - › Small town feeling: 93% versus 67% of respondents who are neutral, unhappy, or very unhappy with their quality of life.
 - › Friendly and supportive people : 71% versus 28%
 - › Strong sense of community spirit and pride: 40% versus 9%
 - › Feeling of safety: 48% versus 10%

When asked about their household's level of happiness, approximately three-quarters (77%) of respondents are very happy (28%) or happy (49%). A small minority of respondents (4%) stated they are unhappy. Refer to the graph.

Quality of Life in Crossfield



Respondents were provided with several statements about Crossfield and asked the extent to which they agree with each. As illustrated in the accompanying graph, over three-quarters (83%) of respondents agree that Crossfield is a community where people care about their neighbours.

Approximately three-quarters agree that Crossfield is a welcoming community (72%) and that it is a place where people work together to improve their community (72%).

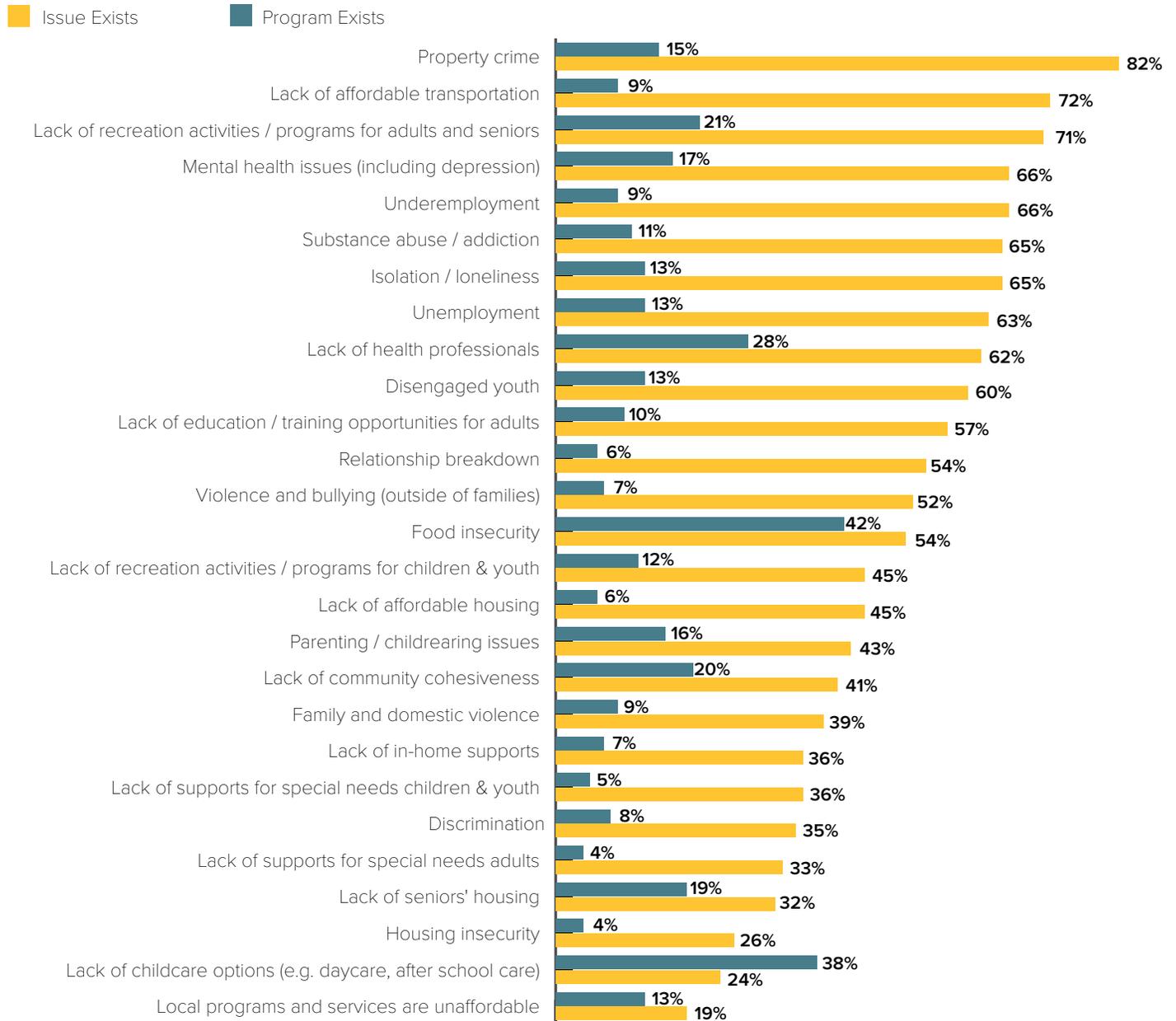
What Kind of Community is Crossfield?



6.1.2 Social Issues in the Crossfield Area

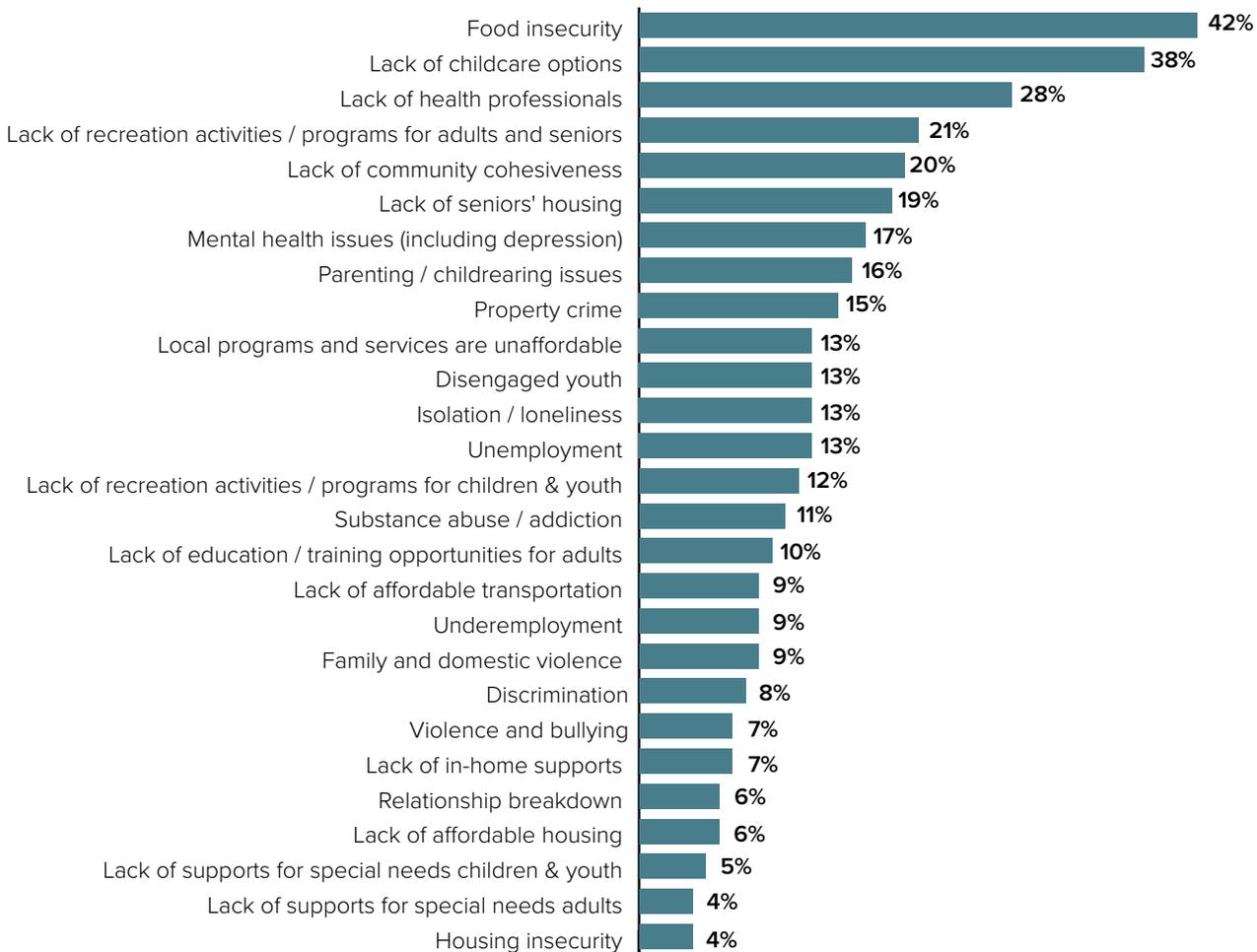
Respondents were provided a list of social issues and asked if these issues exist in Crossfield. As illustrated in the graph, over three-quarters of respondents (82%) said property crime is an issue in Crossfield. Approximately three-quarters said there is a lack of affordable transportation (72%) and a lack of recreation activities/programs for adults and seniors (71%). Approximately one-fifth (19%) identified programs and services being unaffordable as an issue. Refer to the graph for additional findings.

Social Issues and Existing Programs



Respondents were also asked whether they are aware of programs and services that are available to residents that address each of the potential issues. As illustrated in the graph, for almost all issues, a minority of respondents say that there are programs available to deal with the issue. Just under half (42%) said that there are programs to address food insecurity while over one-third (38%) said there are childcare programs.

Awareness of Programs



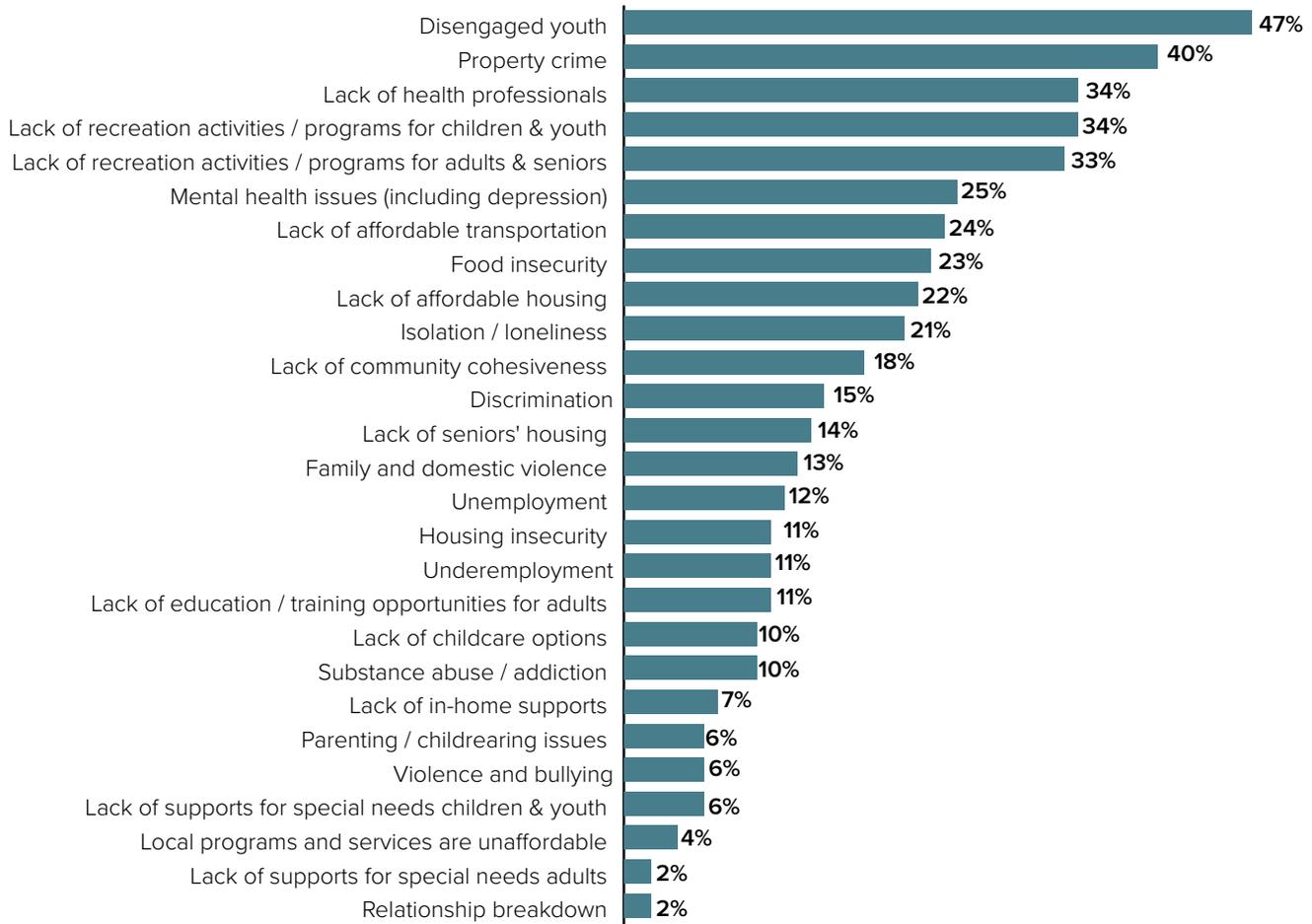
Generally, respondents said they are unaware of available programs. There were some instances in which the proportion of respondents who said there are not programs available was similar to those who are unsure:

- Lack of affordable transportation: 44% said there are not programs / services available while 47% are unaware.
- Lack of health professionals: 33% said services not available compared to 39% who are unsure.
- Property crime: 47% said services are not available compared to 39% who are unsure.

Priority Social Issues

Respondents were then asked to identify the top five (5) issues that should be a priority for Crossfield, over the next five (5) years. As illustrated in the graph, almost half (47%) see disengaged youth is a priority, followed by property crime (40%), lack of recreation and programs for children and youth (34%), lack of health care professionals, and lack of recreation and programs for adults and seniors (33%). Refer to the graph to see how other issues rated.

Priority Social Issues



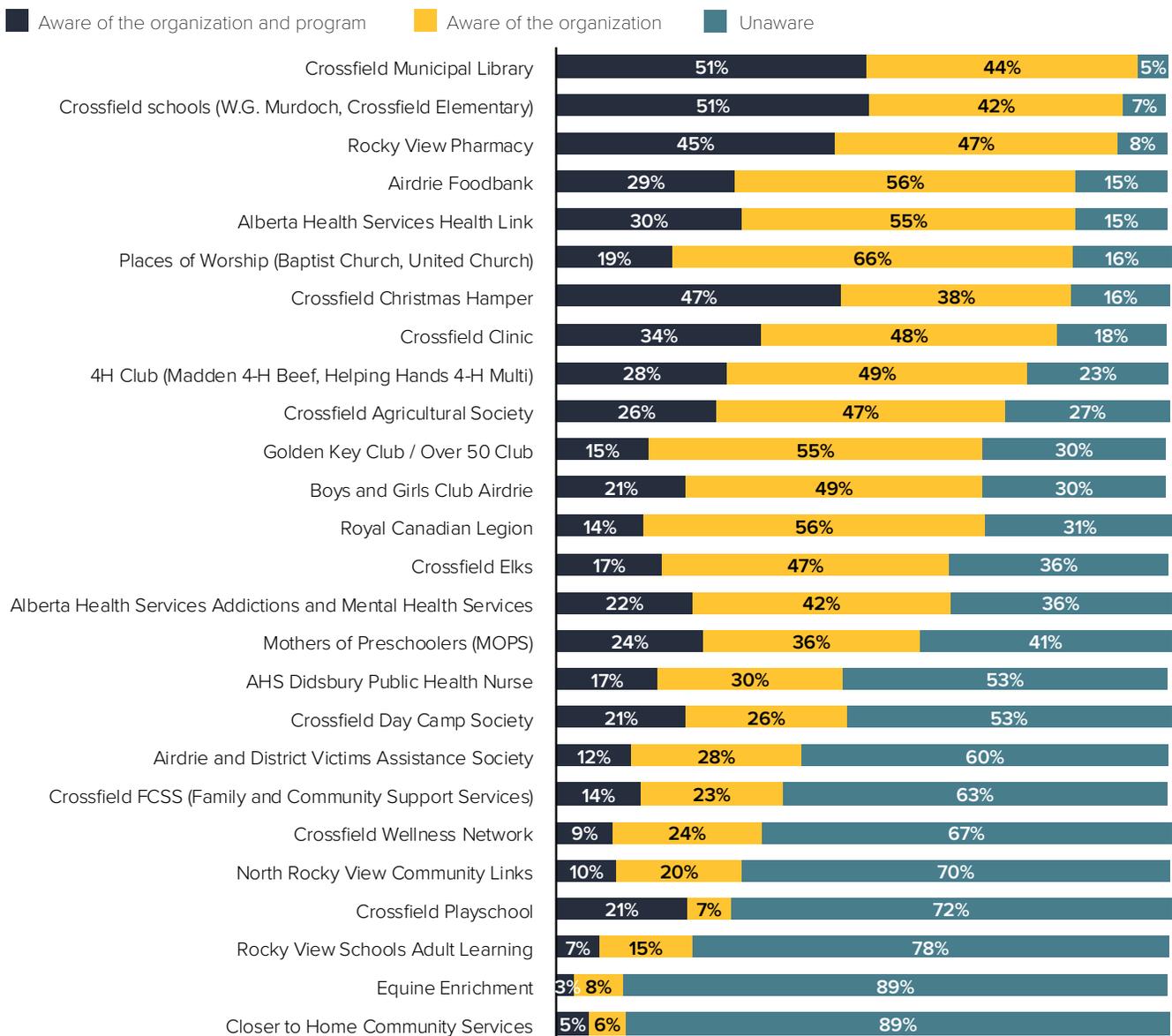
Subsegment Analysis

- Residents that have lived in Crossfield for more than 10 years are more likely to say that disengaged youth is a major social issue (68%) compared to those who have only lived in Crossfield for less than two years (37%).
- Some differences exist regarding the priority social issues when examined by age of respondents.
 - › Respondents 29 years and younger included mental health issues in their top 5 but not lack of health professionals
 - › Respondents aged 40-49 years included mental health issues in their top 5 with lack of recreation activities as sixth.
 - › Respondents 60 years and older included lack of seniors' housing and lack of affordable housing in their top five but not lack of recreation activities / programs for children & youth. Lack of health professionals was sixth.

6.1.3 Social Programs and Services in Crossfield

Respondents were provided with a list of organizations that provide programs and services to Crossfield residents. They were then asked to indicate if they are aware of the organizations and its programs or if they are simply aware of the organization (but not its programs). The greatest level of awareness is for the Crossfield Municipal Library; almost all respondents (95%) are aware of it with approximately half (51%) saying they are aware of its programs as well. Respondents are also very aware of the schools in the community (93% aware). While there is good awareness of many organizations in Crossfield, the level of awareness of programs being offered by the organizations is generally lower. For example, while a large majority (84%) are aware of the churches in Crossfield, less than one quarter of respondents (19%) are aware of their programs and services. Conversely, over half of those aware of the schools and playschool in Crossfield are aware of their programs. Approximately one-third (37%) of respondents are aware of Crossfield FCSS. See the graph for additional information.

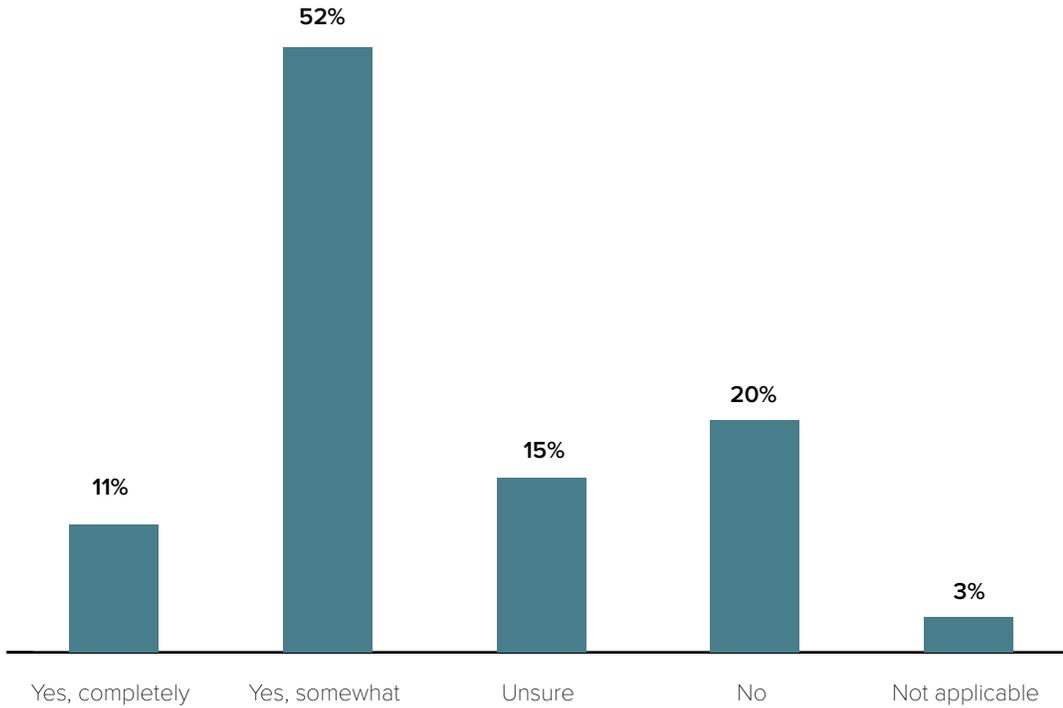
Awareness of Programs and Services in Crossfield



Ability to Access Programs

While approximately half (52%) are able to somewhat access the programs and services they require in Crossfield, only a small minority (11%) are able to completely access their needed programs and services. Twenty percent (20%) said they are unable to access needed programs and services in Crossfield. Refer to the graph.

Access to Programs and Services

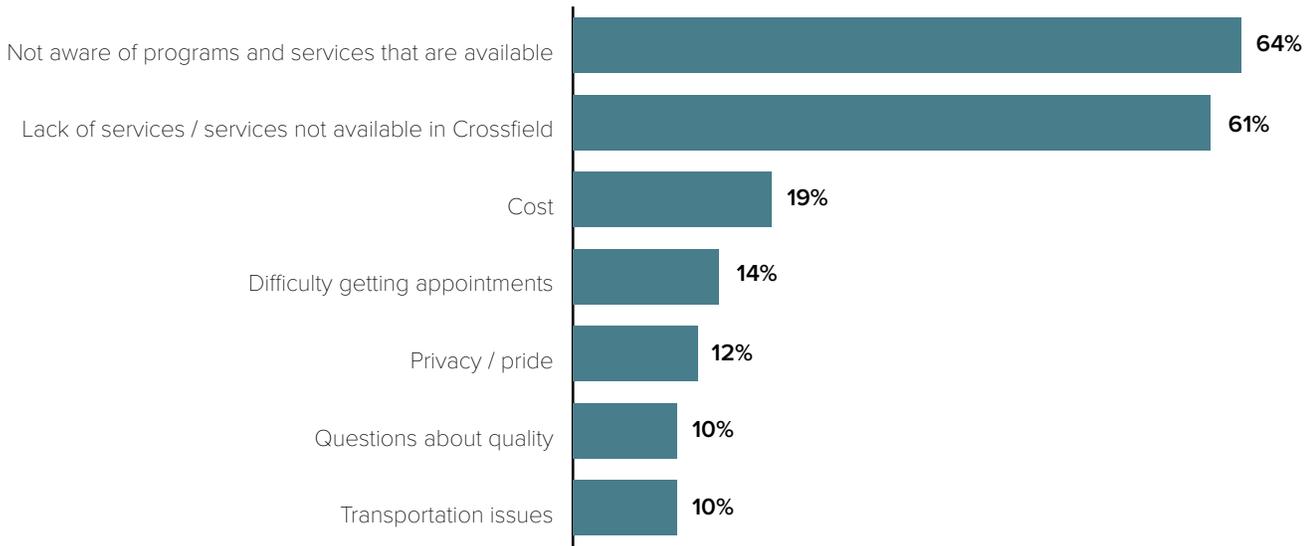


Subsegment Analysis

- Respondents who said they are happy or very happy with their quality of life in the Crossfield area are more likely to say they are able to access the programs and services in Crossfield (completely or somewhat) than respondents who are neutral, unhappy, or very unhappy (69% vs. 44%)

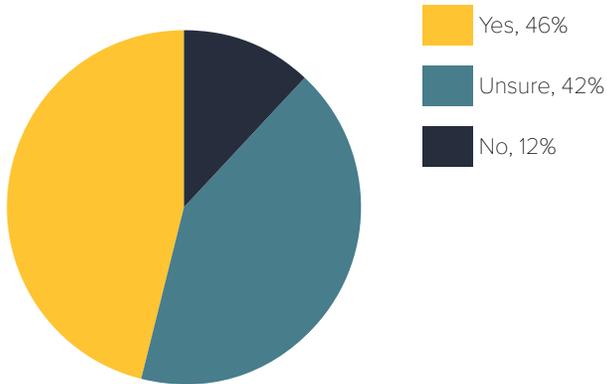
Excluding those who are able to completely access needed services in Crossfield, respondents were then asked what prevents them from accessing the needed programs and services in Crossfield. Approximately two-thirds (64%) of respondents said lack of awareness of programs and services is their primary barrier. A similar proportion (61%) said the lack of services in Crossfield is a primary barrier.

Barriers to Accessing Programs and Services



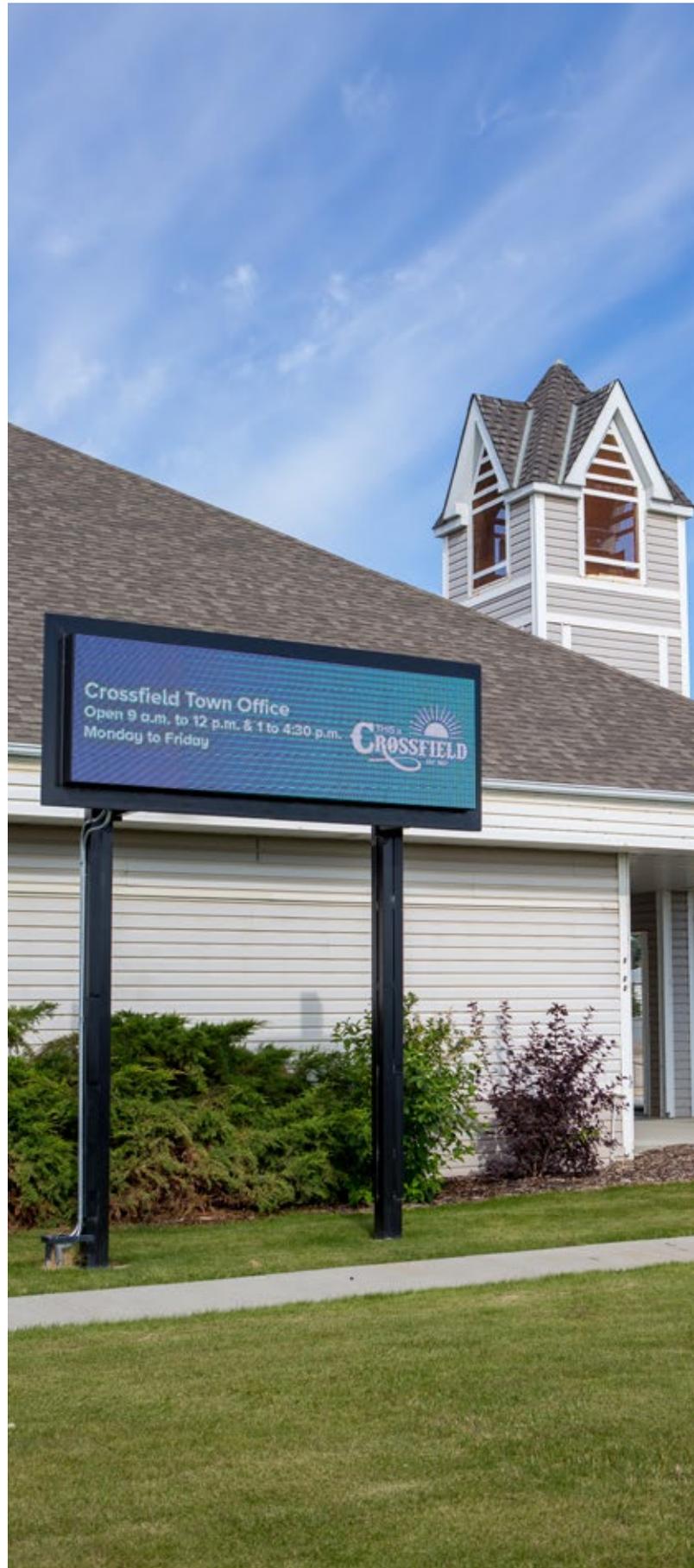
Respondents were then asked if there are programs and services that are unavailable in Crossfield that they would like to access locally. Almost half of respondents (46%) said that there are programs and services unavailable that they would like to access in Crossfield. A similar proportion (42%) are unsure.

Are Programs/Services Unavailable That You Would Like to Access Locally?



Those respondents who said they would like to access some programs and services locally that are currently unavailable were then asked to identify the programs and services that they would like to access in Crossfield. A variety of comments were offered, the most frequently mentioned include the following.

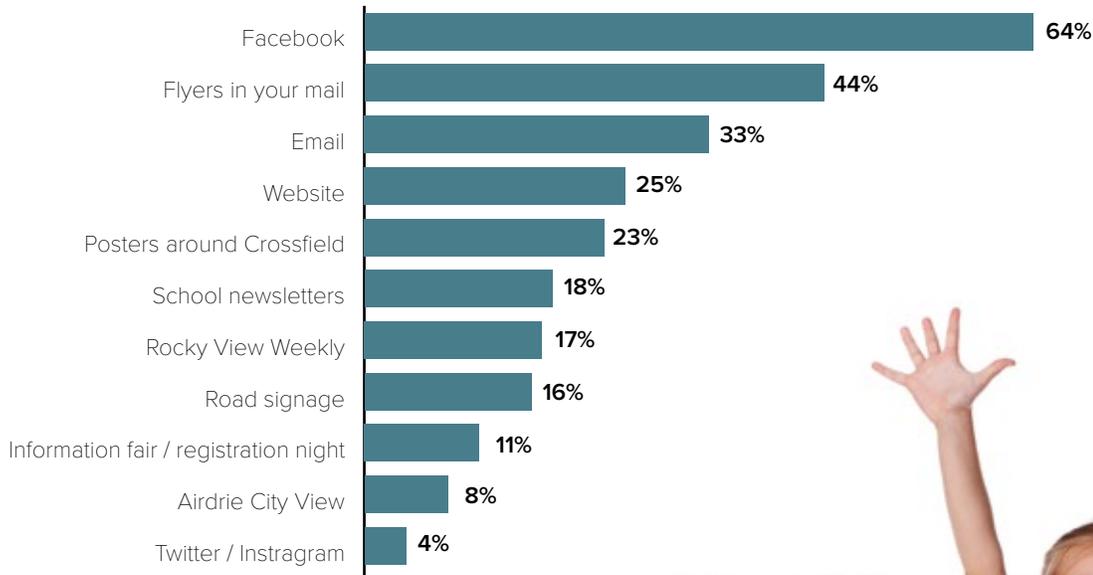
- Infant, youth and children’s programs (37 mentions)
- Mental health supports (20)
- Gym/Fitness Centre (13)
- Adult recreation programs (11)
- Senior’s programs (10)
- Pool (10)



6.1.4 Communications

In today's world there are many methods of providing information to residents. Respondents were asked to identify the three best methods to inform them about programs and services. Approximately two-thirds (64%) stated that Facebook is one of the best methods. Less than half (44%) said flyers in the mail is one of the top communications methods, while one-third (33%) identified email as a top means to inform them about social programs and services. See other responses in the graph.

Best Methods to Communicate about Programs / Services



6.1.5 General Comments

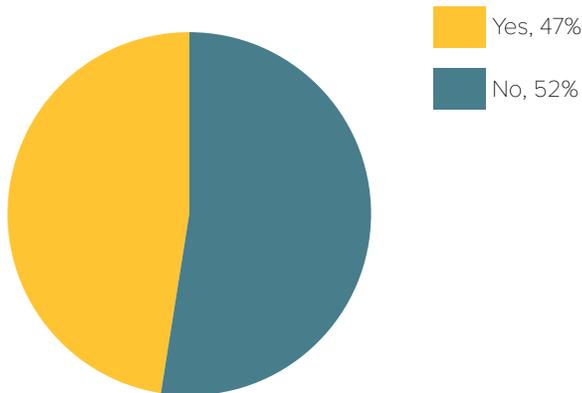
Finally, respondents shared many interesting ideas for social changes they would like to see in Crossfield. The most common responses are noted below.

1. Better marketing avenues (30 comments). This includes ideas such as more social media usage, e-newsletters and more accessible information on the Town of Crossfield's website. It was also noted that platforms such as mailed newsletters better accommodate for seniors.
2. Programs for all ages (13) such as toddler programs, family programs, adult education programs, seniors' programs.
3. Youth amenities (11) such as a larger skate park, youth in action groups, bowling alley, larger splash pad and local programs.
4. Reliable transportation (9) to surrounding communities.
5. Local Programs (7). Respondents shared that many programs and services are only available in surrounding communities.

6.1.6 Volunteerism

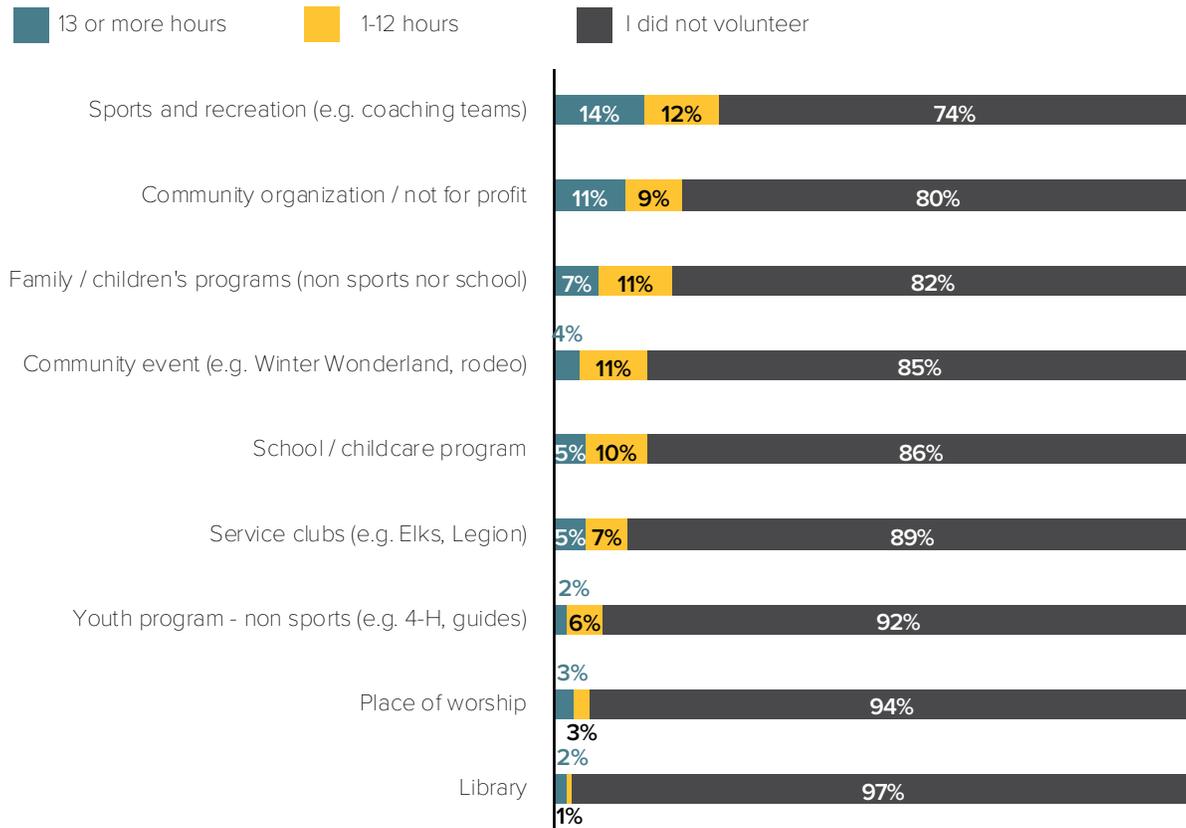
Respondents were asked if they have volunteered locally in the last two to three years. Less than half of respondents (47%) said that they have volunteered in the previous few years.

Volunteered Locally



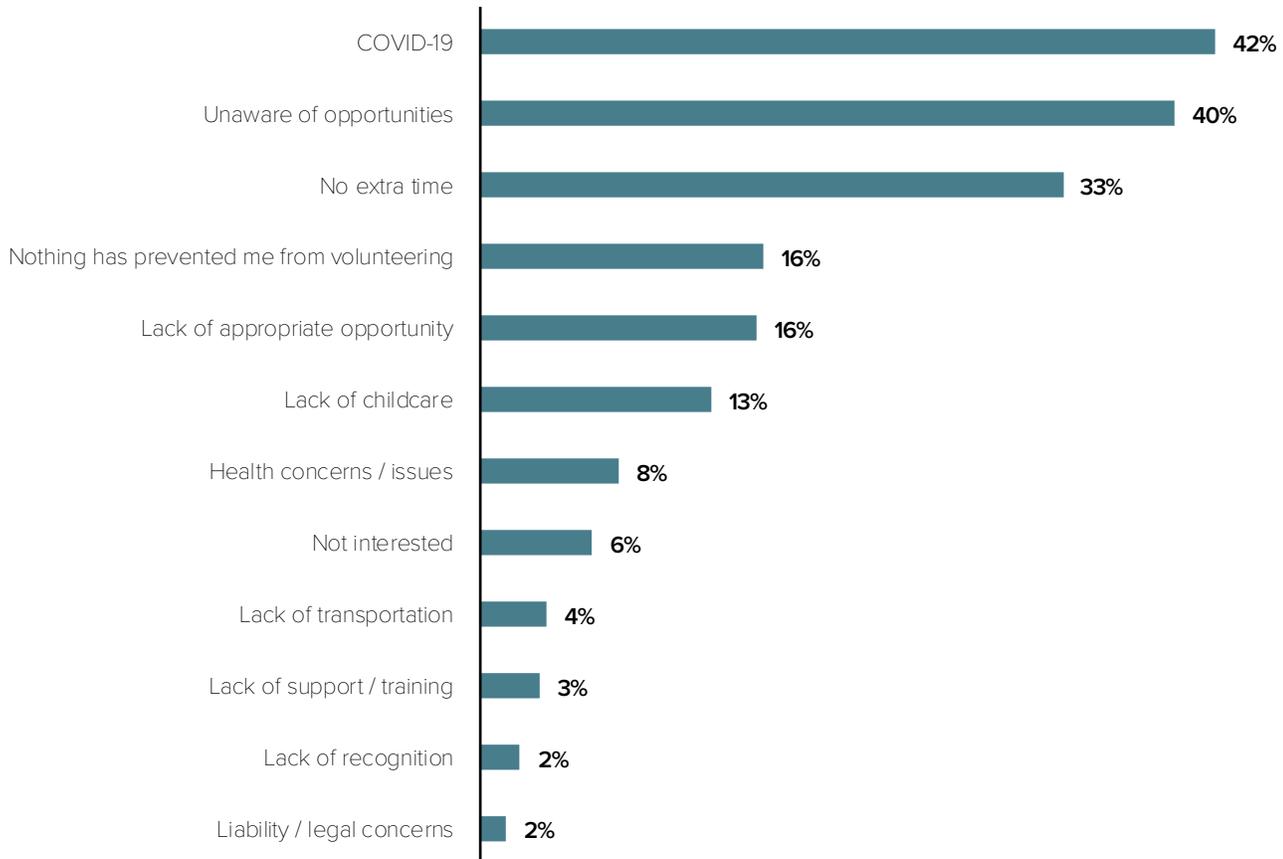
Respondents who did volunteer (and those unsure) were then asked to identify the amount of volunteer hours they provided at different services of the last two to three years. While the majority of respondents did not volunteer at any of the services listed, sports and recreation received the greatest levels of volunteerism. Approximately one-quarter (26%) volunteered in these opportunities. Of those who did volunteer in sports and recreation, over half (14% of the 26%) volunteered 13 or more hours.

Levels of Volunteerism



Respondents were then asked what prevents them from volunteering more than they have. Over one-third of respondents (42%) said that COVID-19 is a barrier to volunteering, while a similar proportion said a lack of awareness impacted their levels of volunteerism. One third (33%) of respondents said they do not have the time to volunteer more. Refer to the graph for other responses.

Barriers to Volunteering in Crossfield



6.1.7 About You

Please refer to the table for a description of the survey respondents.

Respondents Living in Crossfield	
Yes	95%
No	5%

Tenure in Crossfield	
Less than 2 years	19%
2 to 5 years	25%
6 to 10 years	17%
More than 10 years	39%

Respondents' Age	
19 years and younger	1%
20-29 years	8%
30-39 years	28%
40-49 years	23%
50-59 years	19%
60-69 years	13%
70-79 years	6%
80 years and older	3%

6.2 Agency Survey

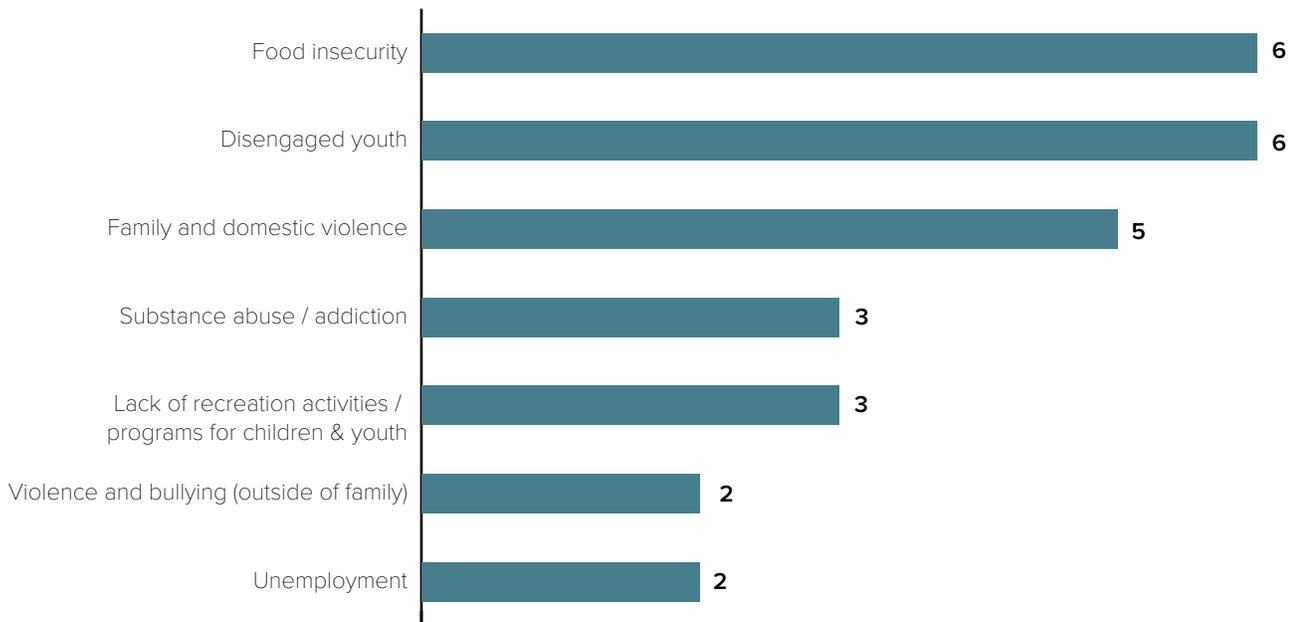
A survey was fielded to groups and agencies that address social needs in the Crossfield area. Groups were invited to participate in the survey which was promoted through the Town of Crossfield's website and could be completed online or by hard copy. In total ten (10) organizations provided a response. Please refer to the Appendix for the list of participating organizations.

The survey respondents were asked several questions including identifying programs and services, challenges, and issues in Crossfield. A synopsis of the findings follows:

- Respondents (7) said that Crossfield is a community where people are welcoming to newcomers and include people from a variety of backgrounds, that Crossfield is a place where people work together to help make the community better and that Crossfield is a community where people care about the welfare of others.
- Respondents (9) said that transportation is the biggest social issue in Crossfield, followed by (8) substance abuse, mental health issues and disengaged youth.

As illustrated in the graph below, almost two-thirds (6 of 10) of respondents said food insecurity and disengaged youth should be social priorities for Crossfield over the next few years.

Priority Issues



6.3 Youth Survey

A survey was fielded with youth in Crossfield. The intent was to gain insight into the quality of life for youth in the community. The Town of Crossfield FCSS promoted the survey to schools, connected with youth groups and engaged in hands on work with patrons in the community. Eight (8) youth participated in the survey. Two important findings gathered through the survey are noted below.

- A space for youth to congregate outside of school was identified as a need, as well as more recreation opportunities and social programs to meet friends.
- Increased promotion of current programs and services can help identify needs outlined by youth.



6.4 Stakeholder Meetings

A series of meetings was convened with stakeholders during the week of March 14, 2022. From March 14 through to March 17, nine interviews were held with ten individuals. Everyone has a unique perspective on Crossfield and, through the discussions, shared their thoughts on life in Crossfield. The positive aspects contributing to people's quality of life were identified; as well meeting participants offered their thoughts on some challenges facing some people in Crossfield. The meetings provided the consultants with opportunities to understand life more fully in Crossfield; as well the meetings provided the occasion to gather reaction to some findings from other research methods. Stakeholders represented long time and more recent residents. As well, community volunteers were represented in the meetings as were people working in the community. Refer to the appendix for the list of perspectives included.

A synopsis of the findings is presented below. Comments are not attributed to any individual. It should not be assumed that all findings presented represent consensus from the meeting participants. The information presented reflects the conversations that took place.

6.4.1 Findings

The comments provided below reflect the conversations convened during the nine meetings that included the ten individuals.

- **Crossfield is generally considered a good community in which to live.** The positive attributes one associates with small town living were mentioned during the meetings. There is a variety of events and activities that people can attend and participate in. People are concerned about their neighbours and are willing to help each other out. The Town has been investing in community beautification and Crossfield has been experiencing population growth. The quality of the schools was also cited.
- **It is important to ensure that all residents, and particularly those new to Crossfield, feel an attachment to the town.** People who have a feeling of attachment to the town are more likely to contribute to efforts to make it a better place. People who are attached are more likely to be proud of their community, volunteer more, and generally participate more in community life. Attachment to the town can be fostered through community events certainly but also by getting to know other community members through other means. Town beautification can foster place making which, in turn, can engender pride then attachment.
- **Community building is not solely the purview of the Town but is a role for all individuals and organizations.** Individuals can enhance the community by working with and supporting fellow residents. Organizations help build the community through the delivery of programs. A focus on positive outcomes, and taking small steps to achieving them, can benefit individuals and the broader community. Messaging related to mental health and its importance is helpful. Enhancing the awareness of organizations and entities in Crossfield is also helpful.
- **People have a different perspective of volunteerism in Crossfield.** Some of those interviewed indicated that there is a broad array of volunteer opportunities and that there are few challenges in anyone identifying these opportunities and grabbing them. Others were not as sure of the number of opportunities but were more certain about the challenges of someone being able to identify what is available. The ability of volunteer opportunities to enrich the community and the volunteers themselves was agreed upon.

- **While work and attention is still needed, the stability within the (Town at the Council and administration levels) is contributing to improvements in Crossfield.** While organizations have their own mandates, the direction they take is a reflection of the personnel at the helm and within them. Stability within organizations can be helpful to provide a continuation of purpose. Additionally, personal relationships still matter and continuity in positions can further enhance achievements and progress towards outcomes.
- **Economic development within Crossfield has an impact on job creation.** An improved economy can be reflected in more jobs available in Crossfield for residents. People have a desire to see more local business and more choice in local businesses. This can help keep people in Crossfield and can help support growth in the town as well. More businesses can often result in more employment opportunities for youth. Combined, this also helps keep people attached to Crossfield, and helps the economic circumstances of some residents.
- **Some of the growth experienced in Crossfield is the result of the growth of the larger, nearby centres.** There is some expected growth as some people leave the larger centres. Airdrie experienced growth as some people left Calgary. That dynamic is being experienced in Crossfield as people leave Calgary and some leave Airdrie as it grows. Crossfield offers a quieter small town atmosphere; it also provides a level of affordability that some cannot find in the larger centres. Some newcomers, however, have expectations and need to recognize that a town does not have the same services as a city. Understanding the reality of living in Crossfield is important to happiness whether these realities are benefits or trade-offs.
- **The COVID-19 pandemic has had a real and negative impact on Crossfield residents.** The economic impacts have been seen in loss of employment and the struggles that brings. There appears to be increased need for services like the food bank. People's mental health has declined as well due to isolation and stress.
- **FCSS should be promoted in the community.** FCSS is a service provided publicly through the Town that is working to enhance the lives of people in Crossfield. People should be aware that the Town provides this type of service. As well greater awareness of FCSS would mean a greater awareness of the services it provides, including offering grant funding to community organizations.
- **A series of issues that need attention were noted.**
 - › Healthy eating and food security.
 - › Awareness of existing services and how to access them.
 - › Mental health challenges for children, youth, adults, and seniors needs addressing. These challenges can be manifested in multiple ways.
 - › Local provision of services would be beneficial.
 - › Transportation within Crossfield would help enable people to access local services. Some people, as well, have challenges accessing services that are offered in other centres.
 - › Programs for teens and youth are needed. This is particularly true for those not interested in sports.
 - › There needs to be a shared vision for Crossfield amongst the entities and organizations in the community.
 - › Some coaching and service provision would benefit some of the volunteer organizations operating in Crossfield or those looking to start.
 - › A structured volunteer management approach would benefit organizations and individuals.

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7.0

Conclusions and

Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

Conclusions have been drawn from the research presented in previous sections of this report. These conclusions should be considered as key takeaways; they are presented according to the different sections of the report. The conclusions should not be construed as the only important elements of the earlier sections of the report. A fulsome review of all the information presented herein is recommended.

7.1.1 About Crossfield

- Crossfield is a service centre for the area, yet it is very close to Airdrie and close to Calgary.
- Crossfield is a rapidly growing town. From 2016 to 2021 the town averaged 4.1% growth annually.
- A higher proportion of the adult population in Crossfield is in the trades compared to the provincial average. The proportion of adults who have university education is lower than the provincial average.

7.1.2 Plan Review

- Key Town documents identify a desire for residents to have their needs for services met locally, including access to high quality social services.
- Some specific issues identified in the Sustainability Plan are: affordable housing, seniors housing, an Elder Council, and welcoming centre.

7.1.3 Social Trends

- Community based programs and services are designed to meet the unique circumstances of the community. They are not programs designed elsewhere and assumed to align with local need.
- Rural communities have their own challenges including:
 - › Accessibility to accessing programs and services.
 - › Challenges maintaining community facilities and addressing community needs in single purpose facilities.
 - › Leadership capacity often depends upon volunteers.
- Preventative social programs and services. Many protective and risk factors are related to multiple community outcomes. As such taking preventative measures can have positive impacts on several undesirable outcomes.
- Safety in rural communities. Generally, there are higher crime rates in rural communities in Alberta than in urban areas. Building partnerships between community stakeholders can help enhance community safety.
- Community interventions for mental health. There is a shortage of mental health professionals and services in rural communities. Travelling services and mobile clinics and the leveraging of technology can help mitigate this issue.
- Newcomers in rural areas. It is important to create welcoming communities to integrate newcomers.

7.1.4 Community Asset Inventory

- The inventory shows a variety of resources are available. While there is a variety based in Crossfield, some are delivered locally by Airdrie based organizations while others are provincial services.
- Many of the locally based organizations have a focus on children and youth; there are several organizations that are more concerned with adults and seniors.

7.1.5 Engagement

- Resident survey:
 - › The small town and rural setting is identified as one of the best things about life in Crossfield.
 - › Respondents are generally happy living in Crossfield and say that people care about their neighbours.
 - › The most identified priority social issues identified by respondents include: disengaged youth, property crime, lack of recreation activities / programs for children & youth, lack of health professionals, and lack of recreation activities / programs for adults and seniors.
 - Agencies in Crossfield identified food insecurity, disengaged youth, and family and domestic violence as the priority social issues in Crossfield.
 - › The vast majority of respondents are aware of the Crossfield Municipal Library, the schools in Crossfield, and the Rocky View Pharmacy. About half are aware of the programs offered by each. As well about half of those surveyed are aware of what the Crossfield Christmas Hamper does.
 - › Eleven percent (11%) of respondents are able to completely access their needed programs and services in Crossfield while 20% are unable to access needed services in town.
 - › Facebook is identified as the best communication channel by approximately two-thirds of respondents. Flyers in the mail and email rounded out the best methods.
 - › A little less than half of respondents volunteered locally in the last 2-3 years. The main beneficiaries of their volunteer efforts are sports and recreation, community organizations, and non sports or school family / children's programs.
 - › Aside from COVID-19, the most prevalent barrier to volunteering is a lack of awareness of volunteer opportunities.
- Stakeholder discussions:
 - › It is important for residents to feel attached to the town.
 - › All parties have a role to play in building the community.
 - › FCSS should be promoted in the community.
 - › Issues in need of addressing include: food security, awareness of available services, mental health of residents of all ages, local provision of services, programs for teens.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the research conducted, with a focus on addressing the social needs in the community, and a concern with improving the quality of life of residents the following recommendations are presented. For each recommendation there is some description or explanation; there is also some considerations for moving the recommendation to implementation.

It is important to note that there is a great degree of interrelatedness to quality of life issues. In other words, efforts to address one issue can have an impact on another. Specific actions can have impacts on many aspects of quality of life. As such the descriptions accompanying each recommendation may not fully encompass all issues addressed by it. As well, it is not assumed that FCSS will be solely responsible for the implementation of these recommendations. In fact, inherent in this bouquet of recommendations is the involvement and collaboration of the community itself. FCSS can, however, help guide the direction and efforts of these recommendations.



7.2.1 Community Congress

There are innumerable organizations in Crossfield working to improve the quality of life for residents. Each of these organizations is operating somewhat differently but they are expending efforts to address their own outcomes. The Town itself is interested in creating a cohesive community, the schools are concerned about student achievement and wellbeing, the Wellness Network is focussed on physical and mental health along with connection and resilience, and the list goes on. Crossfield FCSS is hosting interagency meetings during which agencies in the community come together to share and learn from each other. While these organizations are, to some extent, working in collaboration with others, there is an opportunity to bring a broader approach to consider the community as a whole.

This is not to suggest that the aforementioned organizations are ineffective; rather it is simply to posit that all these organizations should look for ways to leverage their own resources to maximize their programs and services to achieve their own outcomes while addressing broad community issues more fulsomely. The Town should convene a Community Congress to discuss the social needs in the community and develop a shared vision for Crossfield. A shared understanding of the available programs as well as shared approaches to social issues can be discussed. This type of event should be a regular occurrence and hosted annually. All sectors (and organizations within the sectors) have an interest and stake in the wellbeing of Crossfield and its residents. Aside from the known social, health, and educational entities in the community, representatives from enforcement, justice, emergency services, recreation, culture, the business community, and other significant community organizations and representatives should be involved. Some of the subsequent recommendations may, in fact, be outcomes from the Community Congress. Other topics to discuss include:

- Local provision of professional health services (e.g. visiting professionals)
- Transportation provision – within Crossfield and outside of Crossfield
- Neighbourhood watch

Implementation Considerations

These considerations are intended to provide some steps to implementing the recommendation. To fully do so will require a detailed workplan but the steps noted below will help get “the wheels rolling”.

1. Identify representatives from several key organizations in Crossfield. Contact them and bring them together to discuss the concept of a Community Congress. This group could be considered an executive organizing committee.
2. Develop an Agenda for the inaugural Congress.
3. Plan the Congress including extending invitations, publicly launching it, then host. Consideration may be given to hiring a facilitator.

7.2.2 Food Security

Food security is an issue affecting some of the people and families living in Crossfield. This has to do with the ability to access food and the affordability of food as well. The Town does organize a local food drive at Christmas time and the Airdrie Food Bank is available for those in need, however one must visit Airdrie. A broader approach can help address this issue. While it may not completely solve the problem, it can help in the following ways:

- Provide fresh foods to those who need it.
- Educate people about healthy eating and affordable eating. Educating people about proper nutrition can benefit all in the community and demonstrating how to purchase the most nutritional foods in the most cost effective and less wasteful manner is important to know.
- Educate the community about the issue in Crossfield. By working through this initiative, all residents have the opportunity to improve their own knowledge to their own benefits. Additionally, this initiative will prove beneficial in educating the entire community about the struggles that some of their neighbours are having securing food. This awareness may prove beneficial during times when food is collected for hampers. Ultimately it may even lead to more regular local food drives.

The program involves several planks:

- › Community gardens. The Crossfield Agricultural Society does provide community gardens already in Crossfield and the Town is a supporter of this. Consideration should be given to expanding this program and more broadly supporting it. If necessary, an expansion of the plots could be considered.
- › Town gardens. Use Town beds to grow food rather than ornamental plants. This would provide fresh food throughout the town intended for people to harvest.
- › Nutrition and cooking classes. Offer classes and training in healthy eating, in particular including food grown in Crossfield. Part of these classes could include tips for shopping to maximize nutrition and minimize costs.
- › Farmers market. Work with the farmers market to curate fresh foods along with recipes to go with the produce. Residents will increase food education and awareness of local vendors.
- › Promotion and education. Each element needs to be considered part of a larger program and it needs to be promoted as such. Residents need to see that this is part of a larger issue that is being approached from a variety of ways.

The individual elements are important in a community but the collection of the elements into a program is its real strength. A program with some similarities has been operating in England ([Incredible Edible Todmorden | Home \(incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk\)](http://Incredible Edible Todmorden | Home (incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk)))

Implementation Considerations

These considerations are intended to provide some steps to implementing the recommendation. To fully do so will require a detailed workplan but the steps noted below will help get “the wheels rolling”.

1. Convene a Program Committee. Ensure to include representatives from an array of organizations including the Town, the Crossfield Agricultural Society, the grocery retailer, and others.
2. Develop a Program Plan. The plan will include the specific elements of the program, what is needed for each element, timing, and also a budget. Also make sure to identify a program name.

7.2.3 Crossfield Community Event

There is a lack of awareness of the services, programs, and organizations available in Crossfield by residents. While communication efforts are being expended by the organizations and programs, the success is variable. Awareness of volunteer opportunities is in a similar position. Organizations are having differing levels of securing volunteers while residents often are unsure of the opportunities available.

This large community-wide event would look similar to a typical “spring trade show” often seen in communities across Alberta. This event would differ in that it would include agencies and organizations that provide quality of life services such as physical, mental, and social health programs and services. Government, not-for-profit, and voluntary organizations would attend and explain their services, how to access their services, and even volunteer opportunities. A component of this, as well, could promote the recreation and culture offerings in Crossfield.

The Town has a successful track record of hosting events. Community events are also important to create community cohesion and a sense of belonging; they also provide opportunities for residents to see and meet each other. An annual event like this would serve as a welcome to the community type of initiative.

Outside of the event, an ongoing source needs to exist as a central referral place for information for the community. This is a significant undertaking, yet there is a need for a single source where people can visit and find out about the programs and services available as well as contact information.

Implementation Considerations

These considerations are intended to provide some steps to implementing the recommendation. To fully do so will require a detailed workplan but the steps noted below will help get “the wheels rolling”.

1. Define the parameters around the Community Event. This would help identify the types of organizations to include and those who are not intended to be part of the event. Additionally, it would describe how the event would work and elements to include (there may be some social gathering / fun elements).
2. Generate a list of organizations. Reach out to organizations and agencies and explain the Event and ask them to identify others to include.
3. Select a date and venue
4. Recruit agencies and organizations
5. Promote to the community.

7.2.4 Mental Health Conference

People of all ages are experiencing mental health issues. Whether youth, adults, or seniors, the challenges people are facing from mental health issues is more prevalent; it is certainly more talked about. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly contributed to this through the isolating, the social distancing, and even the divisiveness within the society. Certainly, the economic impacts associated with the pandemic have had an impact as people's employment has been impacted.

Mental health issues experienced by individuals can lend themselves to other issues as well. Someone experiencing mental health issues may experience negative impacts with relationships or may further isolate themselves. Achievement in school or on the job may be impacted.

A mental health conference should be hosted in Crossfield. The conference could educate and recognize the causes of mental health amongst people in the community and destigmatize the issue. As well means to mitigate and treat this health issue can be addressed. The conference would include a series of speakers, educators, and practitioners. Ultimately the intent of the conference is to bring the issue completely out into the open, further destigmatize it, learn how to identify it, and learn how to deal with it. The conference could take a number of forms; the key element is to coalesce the information and presentations around a single event. This may be an outcome from the Community Congress.

Implementation Considerations

These considerations are intended to provide some steps to implementing the recommendation. To fully do so will require a detailed workplan but the steps noted below will help get "the wheels rolling".

1. Recruit and form a conference committee. Include representatives from the schools, Alberta Health, and the Town. Consider others to include.
2. Plan the conference.



7.2.5 Youth Council

Disengaged youth was identified as a priority issue in Crossfield. While there are some organized activities (including sports) for youth, a gap does exist to entice and engage the community's youth. Challenges with youth finding employment in Crossfield does have some impact on this issue as well but a need exists to address this challenging issue. One important step to doing so is the formation of a Youth Council. It can be difficult for adults to determine how to address issues of malaise affecting the youth of a community. It is better to have the youth themselves develop some solutions. While often the youth who will be interested to serve on this type of organization are not the ones who are particularly "disengaged" they may be. If nothing else having youth trying to address issues impacting other youth is an important step.

The striking of a Youth Council also sends a message to the entire community that Crossfield is a town in which its leaders believe the youth can contribute to the building and betterment of the Town. It should not be surmised that Crossfield's leaders do not hold that belief now but with the launch of a Youth Council there is a visible institutional proof of this belief. Consideration will need to be given to whom the Council provides advice, or who has granted it its authority. A Council with no connection to decision makers is not worthwhile. Consideration should be given to setting up this Council as an advisory committee of the Town.

Implementation Considerations

These considerations are intended to provide some steps to implementing the recommendation. To fully do so will require a detailed workplan but the steps noted below will help get "the wheels rolling".

1. Develop Terms of Reference for the Youth Council.
2. Initiate recruitment process to fill Council vacancies.



7.2.6 FCSS Promotion

FCSS is an important service provided by the Town of Crossfield. It delivers programs and events that help build the community and offers supports to other organizations as they deliver services important to residents and families. Approximately two-thirds of residents said they are not aware of Crossfield FCSS. Yet, through their taxes all residents pay for FCSS. It is important that residents understand the key services that FCSS is delivering because of their tax support. It is warranted then that more efforts are expended to illustrate the involvement of Crossfield FCSS in the community.

While it happens through other Town programs and services, FCSS is a direct line that shows the Town is concerned about the wellness of its residents and families. This is an important message for people to understand. Further, a greater awareness of FCSS will result in a greater understanding of the supports that FCSS offers to community organizations. This, in turn, may see a greater array of organizations seeking those supports. Making people aware of FCSS is important as further means of demonstrating the good work of the Town government. Residents should be aware of the resources and efforts expended to enhance wellness in Crossfield.

Implementation Considerations

These considerations are intended to provide some steps to implementing the recommendation. To fully do so will require a detailed workplan but the steps noted below will help get “the wheels rolling”.

1. FCSS should ensure that its name and brand is on all materials that it produces.
2. FCSS should ask each agency that receives FCSS support mention FCSS on its communications and on its website as a supporter.



Appendices

Stakeholder Interview Organizational Participants

- Crossfield Town Council – 3 sessions with 4 Council members
- Crossfield Wellness Network
- Crossfield Municipal Library Board
- R.C.M.P. – Community Liaison Officer
- Rocky View School Division Board of Trustees
- Town of Crossfield Peace Officer
- Rocky View Lodge



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