



VitalSigns[®]

FORT MCMURRAY WOOD BUFFALO

2022

working together
for a **VIBRANT, HEALTHY,**
and **JUST COMMUNITY.**



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS
OF CANADA

VitalSigns.



WOOD BUFFALO
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we live, learn, work, and play on Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional meeting grounds and gathering places of Cree, Dene and Métis people. We are all Treaty people and may we work together to be good stewards of this land.

ABOUT US



Gaylene Weidlich, Executive Director
Wood Buffalo Community Foundation

OUR VISION

Healthy and vibrant communities, enabled by longterm social investment.

OUR MISSION

To enhance the quality of life in our region through grants and partnerships that improve the capacity and sustainability of our community.

WOOD BUFFALO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Wood Buffalo Community Foundation stewards over \$5 million in endowed and non-endowed funds and manages operational funds for other charities, ensuring a reliable stream of grant funding flows into the community forever. The Foundation is trusted to represent a growing number of fundholders. Every year, it supports a wide range of community projects and initiatives on behalf of donors who have created unrestricted funds. The Foundation also provides strategic grant-making services, philanthropic advisory services and community leadership. Beyond charitable sector knowledge, the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation team has a heart for community supporting reconciliation, inclusion and quality of life in Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo.

WELCOME TO VITAL SIGNS REPORT 2022!

2022 represents the first year that the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation carried out the Vital Signs® initiative. This initiative focuses on Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo's emergence from COVID-19 to work together for a vibrant, healthy and just community.

This Vital Signs report presents a snapshot of data points that are directly relevant to Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo. The report assists the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation in its mission to understand our community and to steward the gifts donors from all walks of life have entrusted to us. Vital Signs offers us a path for addressing community needs. It is a springboard to community conversations which will deepen understanding of our rapidly evolving community. Over time, the data in this report and the conversations we convene to connect sectors will empower all of us to catalyze change toward a vibrant community where everyone belongs.

INSIDE VITAL SIGNS...

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ABOUT VITAL SIGNS AND THE DATA

Vital Signs presents a snapshot of data in a glance about Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo.

An initiative of Community Foundations of Canada, Vital Signs is an internationally respected tool for measuring and reporting on the vitality of communities. Wood Buffalo Community Foundation is part of this movement to create more inclusive and sustainable communities. Vital Signs 2022 also refers to the 2016 United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are internationally accepted categories for collecting and reporting data.

Although not all the SDGs are addressed in this report, they will form a basis on which future reports will be built. By presenting this report, Wood Buffalo Community Foundation hopes to inform and engage all citizens in making positive contributions to a vibrant community where everyone belongs.

The 2021 Federal Census provides the backbone to the data included in this report. In addition, WBCF surveyed the community in the summer of 2022 to gain additional insights into the 2021 Federal Census data. The survey was voluntary and focused on eight priority areas: Living Standards, Community Connections, Wellness, Environment, Arts & Culture, Recreation, Values and Quality of Life. Insights from this survey are woven into this report.

UNDERSTANDING VITAL SIGNS 2022

In the next several pages, you will learn about the shared values that frame the information within this report, helping to tell the story of Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo in 2022. Wood Buffalo Community Foundation is committed to these values. They are the lens through which we not only view community but envision making it more vibrant and equitable for all. Because of this vision for the future, the values we describe in this report will be carried forward through future reports to evaluate and measure progress.

This report will showcase the “story” of Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo told through data.

Each value in the report has a section, which we connect to related SDGs and to many types of data. At the end of the report, you will find a section that offers suggestions for how you can respond to the report. We look forward to connecting with you in the future, continuing a conversation about community that began over five years ago with the launch of Wood Buffalo Community Foundation and will continue as we build the future of Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo.

USING A VALUES-BASED FRAMEWORK FOR THE DATA

GUIDED BY VALUES

Vital Signs 2022 presents a snapshot of community vitality through data. We adopted a values-based framework to interpret data of many types from many sources. The framework helped us to weave a broader narrative from the data than the original sources would have intended. The chosen values reflect the community, guiding Wood Buffalo Community Foundation in terms of the meaning and purpose of the report, the data we included, how we portrayed it and why it was relevant.

THESE VALUES ARE:

- UNDERSTANDING
- CONNECTION
- WELLNESS
- EQUITY
- SUSTAINABILITY
- RECOVERY



WHY GROUP DATA USING VALUES?

The values give us a systematic way to gather, interpret and sort data from many sources. Each value illuminates an aspect of Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo's story. Each aspect of the story complements and overlaps, creating an accessible yet comprehensive picture of the community. This values-based framework will be continued in future reports, so readers can meaningfully observe changes over time. The framework also accommodates many areas of current research and community work.

HOW DO THE VALUES WORK TOGETHER?

The diagram on the next page shows how the values interact together as a system.

WELLNESS, at the centre of the diagram, is the core value in this report and for Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo. All the other values contribute to wellness. Wellness encompasses all aspects of quality of life – physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual – our relationships to one another and the land and the systems that affect our lives. Contributing to **Wellness** are **Understanding**, **Connection**, **Equity** and **Recovery**.

Notice that the arrows showing this contribution are either dotted (**Connection**, **Understanding**, **Recovery**) or solid (**Equity**).

The solid line from **EQUITY** emphasizes its importance in supporting **Wellness**, and the need to challenge and disrupt systems that persistently privilege some people over others. To create Equity, we must address the ongoing effects of colonialism, racism, power and privilege at all levels of society.

CONNECTION is about the relationships we create and maintain with one another (including the land we live on). If these relationships foster equity, safety, comfort and belonging, they contribute to **Wellness**.

UNDERSTANDING is a vital contributor to **Wellness**. To be well, we must approach the issues we face with knowledge and awareness of multiple worldviews, our colonial history and our own privilege. If we were able to better understand the world around us from multiple perspectives, we could again contribute to the wellness of our community.

RECOVERY represents the revitalization of our interpersonal, organizational and systemic capacity. Recovery can be economic, but also social and personal as each of us addresses our colonial past and current challenges, including rebuilding from the COVID-19 pandemic.

SUSTAINABILITY is represented in the green box that flows through **Equity**, **Recovery**, **Understanding**, and **Connection**, and is also connected to **Wellness**. For the community to be truly well, we must preserve and live in harmony with the lands and peoples of Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo (including responsible environmental protection and economic growth). Our progress toward these values must also be sustainable so that future generations can thrive and the current generation can be proud of the legacy it leaves behind.

For more information on understanding this values-based framework or to obtain additional details on how it was created, contact the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation at office@wbcfoundation.ca

VALUES-BASED FRAMEWORK



WELLNESS encompasses the many elements that contribute to quality of life, including the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. It certainly includes physical health, but also our relationships to others, ourselves and the land. Wellness is influenced by many factors, including income, housing, food security and programs supporting physical and mental health.

EQUITY Society and its systems (legal, governmental, social services, etc.) are inherently biased against some groups. Though superficially society may claim to treat all people equally, in practice, some groups consistently face racism, bigotry and exclusion. To create equity, we must ensure that anti-racism, anti-oppression and culturally-inclusive frameworks and practices inform all we do as a community.

CONNECTION The relationships we have with one another, including individual and group relationships with the land and systems in the community, partnerships and the degree of equity, inclusivity, safety, comfort and belonging shared among us.

UNDERSTANDING Knowledge and awareness, from many perspectives, of issues facing us in the past, present and future, including the positions we occupy in society and how well our systems serve us and others in the community.

RECOVERY Building community through strengthening and revitalizing interpersonal, organizational and systemic capacity, valuing and reinvigorating Indigenous knowledge, ensuring access to a living wage and rebuilding from the COVID-19 pandemic.

SUSTAINABILITY Ensuring we value, preserve and live in harmony with the lands and peoples of Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo, especially in terms of responsible environmental protection and economic growth, so that future generations can thrive physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.



THE VALUES AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In Vital Signs 2022, we are connecting local data to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs are the international standard for measuring the sustainability and vitality of communities. The way we connected each SDG to the Vital Signs Values are presented (right), but the reader should note that a given SDG can fit with multiple values. While the SDGs are assumed to be part of each value in this report, these connections will be made more explicit in future versions of the report.

2022 does not focus on all 17 SDGs. Instead, it highlights the SDGs most relevant to our emphasis on wellness, equity and recovery as we emerge from the pandemic. The SDGs were aligned with both the context of the core value and the story the local data is telling about the value. Throughout the report, we focus on these fundamental connections between wellness, equity, recovery and SDGs.

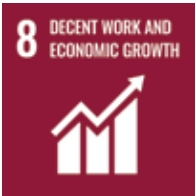
If your organization is tracking data relating to the Sustainable Development Goals, please let us know, as it could be included in future reports.



UNDERSTANDING



CONNECTION



EQUITY



SUSTAINABILITY



RECOVERY





UNDERSTANDING

Knowledge and awareness, from many perspectives, of issues facing us in the past, present, and future, including the positions we occupy in society and how well our systems serve us and others in the community.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY UNDERSTANDING?

What we understand is the basis for how we see and explain our world, interpret data, give context to facts, know ourselves and empathize with others. Understanding can be the basis for purposeful actions, and lacking understanding can lead to harmful actions. Building our understanding of community on factual data gives us a good place to start toward building the community we want to see.



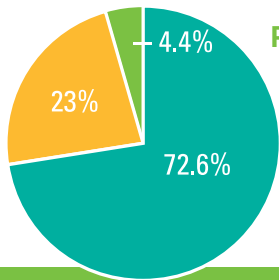
POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS



73,837 General population

9,590 Indigenous population
13% of overall population

35.1 Median age compared to
37.9 Alberta
41.1 Canada



Population Breakdown by Age

- Over 65
- Under 15
- 16 - 64

Population Growth from 2016 to 2021



3,087 People enrolled in post-secondary education

34,170 People hold a post-secondary qualification (e.g. university degree, apprenticeship, diploma, certificate, etc.)



FAMILY & RESIDENCE

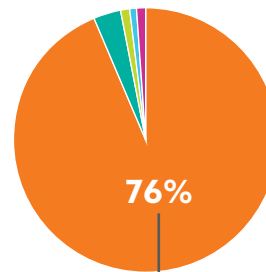
3.1 Average family size

1.8 Average number of children per family

62.5% Of population married or living common law

\$143,000 Median household income after tax

Language & Most Common Mother Tongue



- Urdu (510)
- French (590)
- Gujarati (725)
- Tagalog (1,895)
- English (56,310)

English as a first language represents 76% of the population



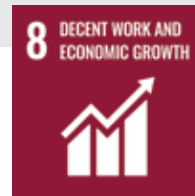


CONNECTION

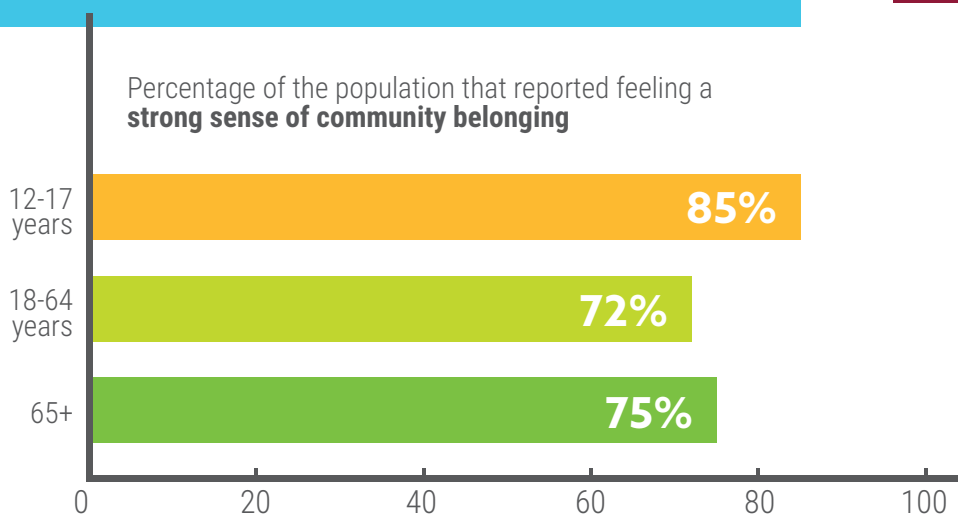
The relationships we have with one another, including individual and group relationships with the land and systems in the community, partnerships and the degree of equity, inclusivity, safety, comfort and belonging shared among us.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CONNECTION?

Community is all about connections. Community means a group of people unified by what they have in common. In most cases, when we refer to “the community,” we mean people living together in a specific area, though of course, within a geographic community, there are many different types of connections. We are connected as families and friends, through business and social activities, by our shared values, goals and interests. The vitality of a community is reflected by the strength of the many threads that connect us.



COMMUNITY BELONGING



COMMUNITY COMFORT

How residents of Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo reported they...

69%

Feel **comfortable and at ease** in their community

66%

Would **recommend Wood Buffalo** to others as a place to live

60%

Know their neighbours well enough to ask for help or offer assistance

90%

Feel **youth have opportunities** to be involved in their communities





WELLNESS

Wellness encompasses the many elements that contribute to quality of life, including the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. It certainly includes physical health, but also our relationships to others, ourselves, and the land. Wellness is influenced by many factors, including income, housing, food security, and programs supporting physical and mental health.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY WELLNESS?

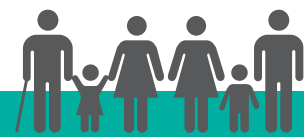
Whether we call it “wellness,” “vitality” or “quality of life,” we all have perceptions of how we are doing in relation to our goals, standards, expectations and concerns. We all want to be well and to do well, physically, emotionally, spiritually, economically and in terms of our relationships with others and the world we share. Wellness is the core of Vital Signs, and each person puts their own emphasis on the many elements that contribute to a good life – the life we wish to live.



STANDARD OF LIVING vs QUALITY OF LIFE



64% Of people rate the **cost of living** in Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo as higher than desired



LIVING HERE

Percentage of people that feel...

73%

Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo is a great place to **raise children**

39%

Seniors generally have a high standard of living

23%

Our region is a great place for **seniors** to live

POVERTY CONCERNS

Percentage of people that...

78%

Are concerned about the **level of poverty**

91%

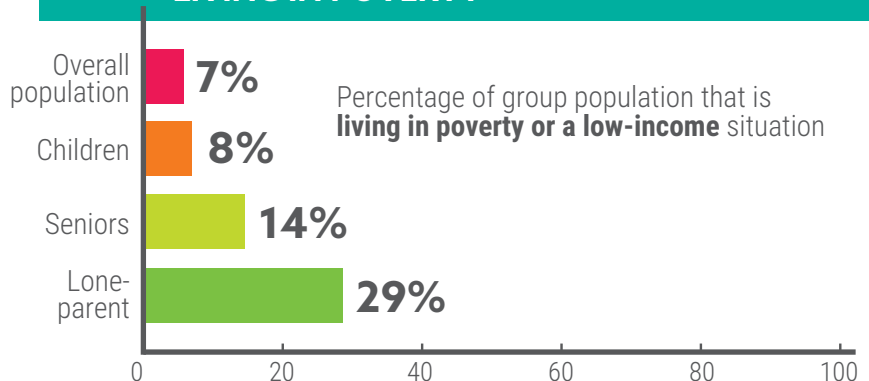
Feel **reducing poverty** is important to Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo's well-being

86%

Feel all residents should be **entitled to a living wage**



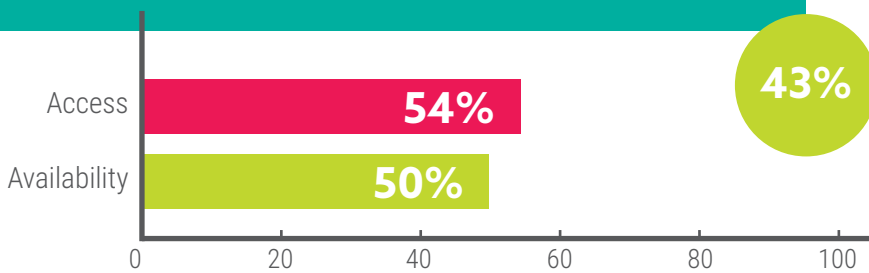
LIVING IN POVERTY





FOOD SECURITY

Rated by people as good or excellent in relation to **nutritious food**



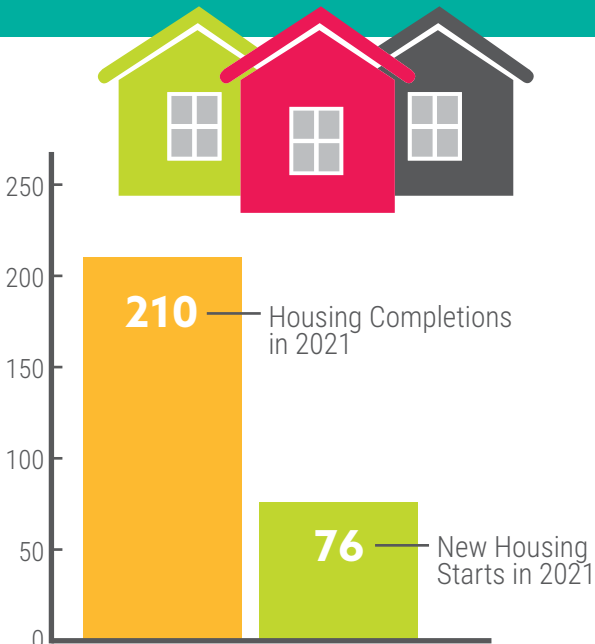
43%

Of people feel that **opportunities to grow their own food** (e.g. backyard gardens, community gardens) are good or excellent

HOUSING

HOUSING CONCERNS FOR AVERAGE PERSON

Percentage of people that feel...



39%

Home ownership options to meet their needs are below average or poor

32%

Rental accommodations to meet their needs are below average or poor

\$921 Average monthly rental cost

HOUSING CONCERNS FOR SENIORS

Percentage of people that feel...

87%

Seniors do not have adequate access to **affordable housing**

34%

Seniors **care homes are an option** they would consider for themselves or their family members

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

23%

Of the population (12 yrs or older) **smoke tobacco** ↓ down **3.4%** since 2016

23%

Are considered **heavy drinkers**

41%

Of the population (18 yrs+) are considered to be **obese** ↑ up **3.9%** since 2016

HEALTHCARE ACCESS

Percentage of the population that...

78%

Has access to a **regular family physician** ↑ up **3.4%** since 2016

95%

Is within **3 km** (driving distance) to a **health care facility**

56%

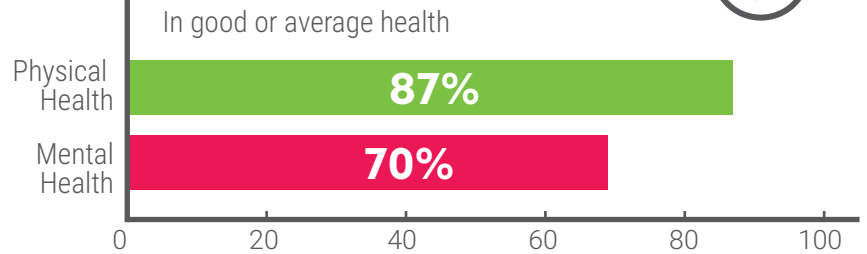
Believe their access to **timely physical health care** is average or good

65%

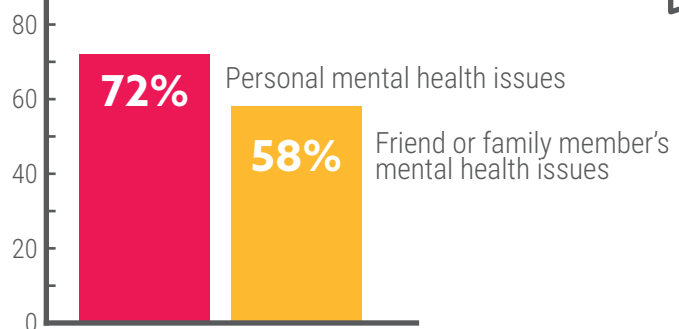
Believe their access to **timely mental health care** is below average or poor



GENERAL PERCEIVED STATE OF HEALTH



NEGATIVE LIFE IMPACTS DUE TO MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES



38%

Of people feel a sense of **social isolation**

63%

Of people sometimes feel a sense of **loneliness**

19%

Of people (12 yrs+) feel **extremely high levels of life stress** most days

92%

Of people feel that **relationships with family, partners, and friends are important**

1 out of every **10,000** people has been hospitalized due to significant opioid poisoning



EQUITY

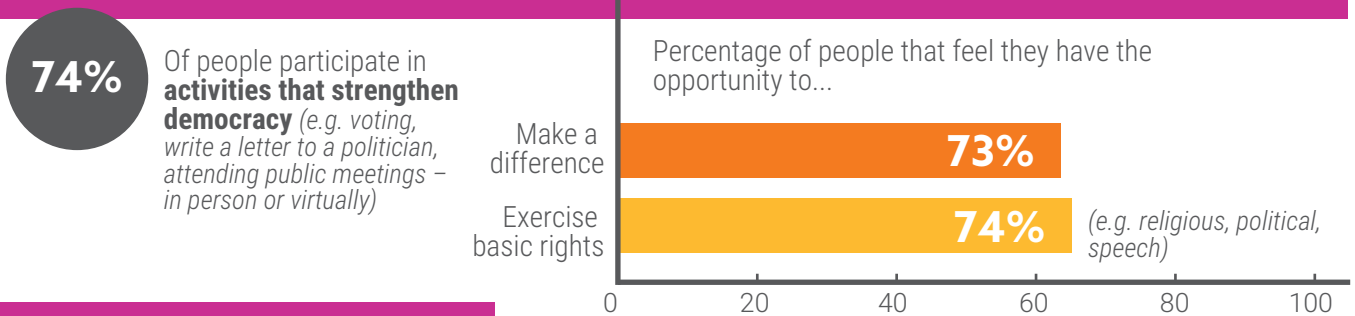
Society and its systems (legal, governmental, social services, etc.) are inherently biased against some groups. Though superficially society may claim to treat all people equally; in practice, some groups consistently face racism, bigotry and exclusion. To create equity, we must ensure that anti-racism, anti-oppression and culturally inclusive frameworks and practices inform all we do as a community.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EQUITY?

At its heart, equity is about sharing fairly in the opportunity to have a good life in the community and supporting those who face challenges and disadvantages. Valuing diversity and inclusion does not truly change systems in society. When systems cause inequity, we need to work together to disrupt and challenge them. To achieve equity, we must actively address the ongoing effects of colonialism, racism, power and privilege in society. We need to be accountable for the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual safety of all those who live in Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo.



PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC ACTIVITY



SAFETY



16% Of people **feel uncomfortable or out of place** because of their religion, ethnicity, skin colour, culture, language, accent, gender, or sexual orientation

9% Of people **feel threatened or unsafe** because of their religion, ethnicity, skin colour, culture, language, accent, gender or sexual orientation

EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

Percentage of people that feel...

33% Of children have **vulnerabilities in areas of early development**

65%

There is an inadequate supply of child care services

65%

Ability to access quality education is average or good

52%

Ability to afford post-secondary education is average or good

56%

Ability to access adult education programs is average or good



SUSTAINABILITY

Ensuring we value, preserve and live in harmony with the lands and peoples of Wood Buffalo, especially in terms of responsible environmental protection and economic growth, so that future generations can thrive physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

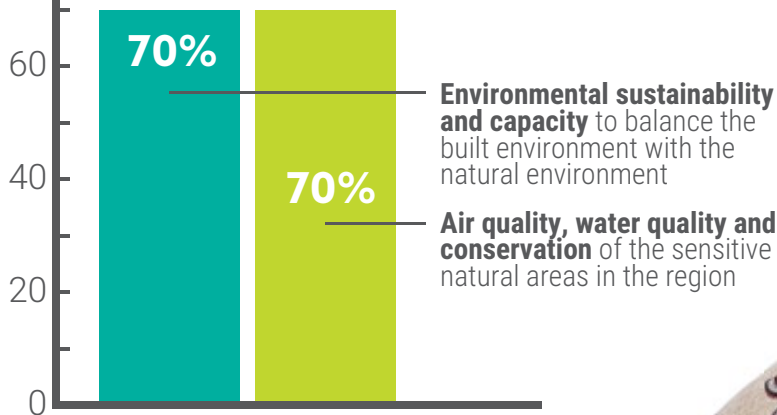
WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SUSTAINABILITY?

A sustainable community uses its resources to meet current needs while ensuring that adequate resources are available for future generations. It seeks a better quality of life for all its residents while maintaining nature's ability to function over time by minimizing waste, preventing pollution, promoting efficiency and developing local resources to revitalize the local economy. In a sustainable community, decision-making stems from a rich civic life and shared information among community members.



ENVIRONMENT

Percentage of people that rate Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo positively when it comes to



86% 
Of people live within a **1 km** walk to a neighborhood park

RECYCLING

Percentage of people that are...



50%

Concerned that there is a lack of **opportunities for recycling** and waste reduction

90%

Committed to recycling, proper waste disposal and **environmental sustainability**



EMPLOYMENT AND FINANCES

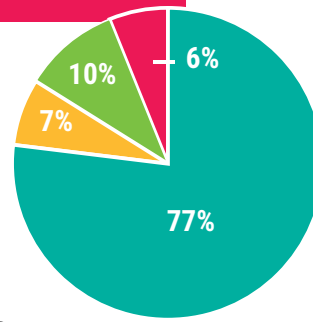
16%

Of people's **employment status** changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e. temporary or permanent job loss, or reduced hours)



54% Of people are **working remotely**

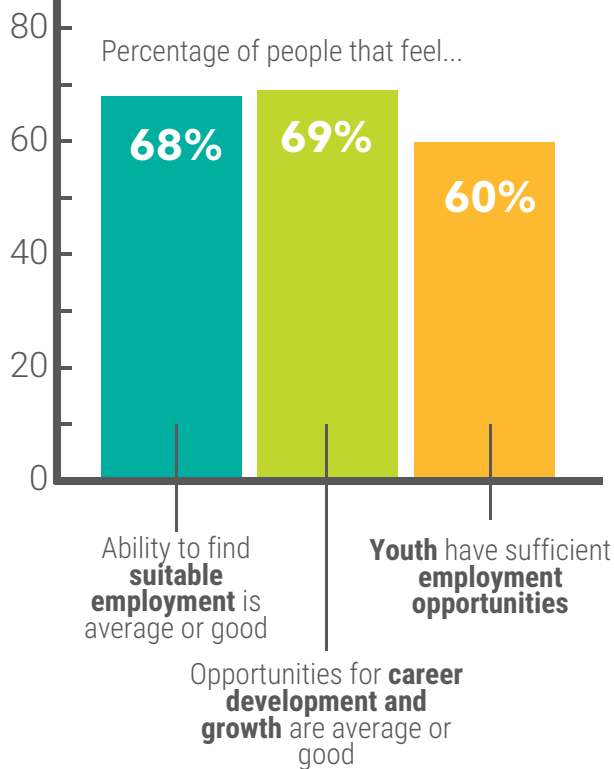
56% Of people are dissatisfied with their **work life balance**



EMPLOYMENT STATUS

- Unemployed
- Contractors/Consultants (including self-employed)
- Part-time
- Full-time

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



62%

Of people are pessimistic about the region's **economic outlook** for 2022 and beyond



FINANCES



Percentage of people that feel positively about their ability to...

71%

Meet financial obligations or essential needs (e.g., rent or mortgage payments, utilities and groceries)

65%

Afford more than just the **basic necessities**

Percentage of people that...

80%

Reported their **personal finances** are a **stressor**

50%

Spend **30-50%** of their **monthly income on housing** (mortgage or rent)

TRANSPORTATION & GETTING AROUND

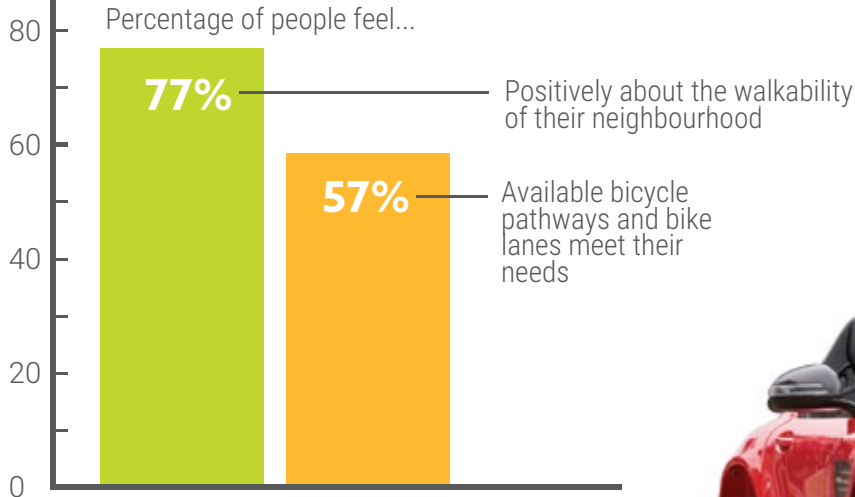
83%

Of people use a **private vehicle** to get around Wood Buffalo



45% Of people do not believe **public transportation options** meet their needs

85% Of people reported that they **never use transit** to get to and from work or school





RECOVERY

Building community through strengthening and revitalizing interpersonal, organizational and systemic capacity; valuing and reinvigorating Indigenous knowledge, ensuring access to a living wage and rebuilding from the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY RECOVERY?

The work of building community is never complete. Whatever we build can fall into disrepair, and connections that once were strong may need to be revitalized through our actions. Recovery can work on many levels: personal or collective, economic or environmental, psychological or medical. We can work to recover from our troubled history, from a recession or from a pandemic. In a sense, recovery can be seen as our response to the challenges we face as a community, so recovery plays an important role in wellness.



Data from COVID-19 and regional recovery will be available on the data hub and will be included in future Vital Signs Conversations and reports.
vitalsignsfmwb.com



REFLECTING ON VITAL SIGNS

In reading Vital Signs 2022, we hope you see a portrait of the Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo we all share. Through the lens of the six core values of **Understanding**, **Connection**, **Wellness**, **Equity**, **Sustainability** and **Recovery**, we can see so much complexity in how we interact as a community and how systems structurally affect quality of life in ways we do not even realize.

How you can be involved:

- Request a Vital Signs presentation for your organization/business
- Pledge to answer your own call to action for Truth and Reconciliation
- Reach out to equity-seeking groups and organizations
- Engage with community organizations to address issues that matter to you (directly or through Wood Buffalo Community Foundation)
- Donate to the Wood Buffalo Community Foundation's [community-based granting programs](#)
- Volunteer with local organizations working for change

Thank you for reading this report. In presenting Vital Signs, Wood Buffalo Community Foundation joins a network of 136 Canadian community foundations, along with hundreds more organizations throughout the world.

For a conversation on how you can contribute to a vibrant community where everyone belongs, contact Wood Buffalo Community Foundation at office@wbcfoundation.ca



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Wood Buffalo Community Foundation is grateful for the support from Community Foundations of Canada, Edmonton Community Foundation, and Suncor Energy Foundation; FuseSocial and United Way FMWB for their collaborative partnership; and Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and Pathways Alliance (formerly OSCA) for providing input along the way. This report and data hub would also not be complete without the hard work completed by Objective Research & Evaluation. Thank you.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

We would like to credit Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Economic Development & Tourism for use of their Place Brand Image Library throughout this report and acknowledge the incredibly talented local photographers whose work is showcased within.



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COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

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