

Community Needs
ASSESSMENT
Summary Report

2019

**DETAILED REPORT
OF FINDINGS:**
Environment



Acknowledgements

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The following reports outlines results of the Haldimand Norfolk Health and Social Services (HNHSS) Community Needs Assessment (CNA) 2019. This section of the report includes detailed results and conclusions about the physical environment and associated health outcomes.

Community Profile

Local Geography

- Norfolk County (City) and Haldimand County (City) are census subdivisions, within the Haldimand-Norfolk Census Division, within the province of Ontario.¹
- Haldimand County covers 1252 km² along the shores of Lake Erie. The county borders Hamilton, Brant County, and Norfolk Counties, and includes a portion of the Six Nations Indigenous Reserve Lands.¹

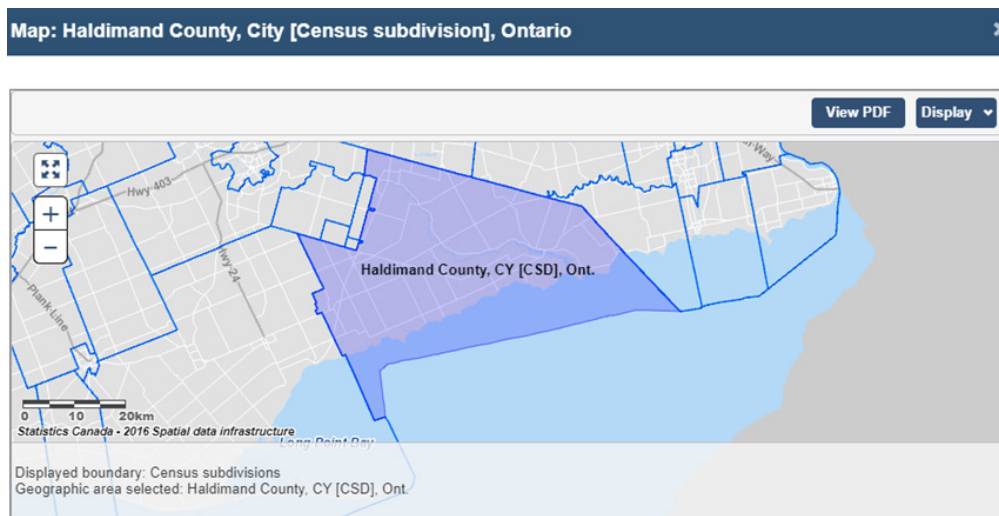


Figure 1. Map of Haldimand County (Statistics Canada).¹

- Norfolk County covers 1607 km² along the shores of Lake Erie. The county borders Haldimand County, Brant County, and Oxford County.¹

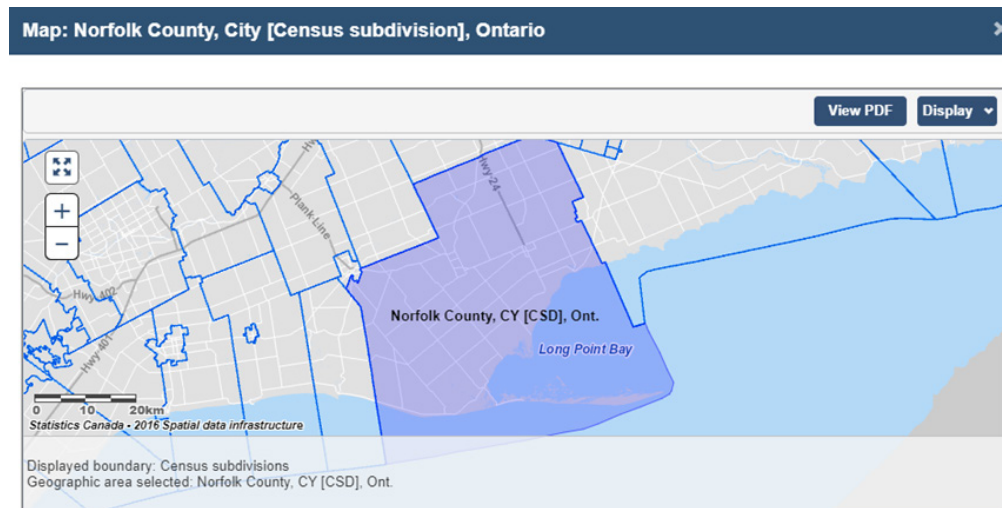


Figure 2. Map of Norfolk County (Statistics Canada).¹

- Population density in Haldimand County is 35.97 people/km², and in Norfolk County was 39.25 people/km².¹
- Haldimand and Norfolk counties combined cover 2,859km².¹
- In Haldimand and Norfolk, approximately 1.9% (approximately 54km²) of land is deemed park lands.¹
- In Haldimand and Norfolk, approximately 68.3% (approximately 1952 km²) of land is deemed agricultural land.¹
- Haldimand and Norfolk County roadways include the provincial highways of Highway 3, Highway 6, Highway 24, Highway 54, and Highway 59 which connect in several places to the 400-series highways.¹

Climate

- In 2019 (to date: Dec 5, 2019), there were 58 adverse water quality events. That is higher than in 2018 (n=57), but lower than in 2017 (n=74) or 2016 (n=72).²

- The 2018 average temperatures and precipitations in the region are reported below.

MONTH	AVERAGE DAILY TEMPERATURE (°C)	AVERAGE DAILY MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE (°C)	AVERAGE DAILY MINIMUM TEMPERATURE (°C)	AVERAGE DAILY PRECIPITATION (mm)
January	-6.2	-2.4	-10.2	63.2
February	-5.6	-1.5	-9.8	58.3
March	-0.2	4.0	-4.5	82.1
April	6.5	11.9	1.1	83.4
May	12.6	18.5	6.7	73.8
June	17.8	23.7	11.9	81.6
July	20.4	26.3	14.5	76.7
August	19.5	25.2	13.8	80.1
September	15.5	21.0	10.0	88.8
October	9.6	14.5	4.6	73.2
November	3.8	7.6	0.0	95.0
December	-2.8	0.9	-6.6	92.2

Table 1. Average monthly temperature and precipitation for Norfolk, 2018.²

MONTH	AVERAGE DAILY TEMPERATURE (°C)	AVERAGE DAILY MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE (°C)	AVERAGE DAILY MINIMUM TEMPERATURE (°C)	AVERAGE DAILY PRECIPITATION (mm)
January	-4.7	-0.9	-8.5	56.8
February	-3.9	-0.1	-7.9	57.2
March	0.5	4.8	-3.5	63.7
April	7.1	11.7	2.4	73.3
May	13.3	18.6	7.9	85.5
June	18.9	24.3	13.4	72.7
July	22	27.3	16.7	82.7
August	20.9	25.9	15.8	90.9
September	16.3	21.1	11.4	78.4
October	10.0	14.6	5.4	71.6
November	4.1	7.7	0.4	91.3
December	-1.4	2.0	-4.7	71.9

Table 1. Average monthly temperature and precipitation for Norfolk, 2018.²

Community Survey Results

Environment and Climate Change

- 72% (n=213) of survey respondents felt that climate change was already impacting the local environment.
- 79% (n=177) of survey respondents expressed an interest to know more about the impacts of climate change on Haldimand and Norfolk counties.
- 47% (n=139) of survey respondents reported they did not feel prepared for a climate emergency in their area.
- 55% (n=164) of survey respondents felt that climate change was impacting their family's health.

Environment and Community Health

- 53% (n=165) of survey respondents ranked more recreational opportunities as one of the top three services they needed to help them improve their own social health.
- 37% (n=116) of survey respondents ranked more safe places to walk and/or play as one of the top three services needed to help them improve their own health.
- 71% (n=211) of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Haldimand and Norfolk counties need more access to active transportation opportunities, such as bike lanes or sidewalks.
- 60% (n=179) of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Haldimand and Norfolk counties needs stricter legislation about smoking in outdoor areas.

Environment and Personal Health

- 14% (n=43) of survey respondents reported wanting more education or information about vector-borne diseases, such as Lyme Disease and West Nile Virus.
- 8% (n=26) of survey respondents reported wanting more education or information about sun safety or ultraviolet radiation exposure.
- 98% (n=287) of survey respondents considered a safe environment important for their health.
- 86% (n=255) of survey respondents reported access to air conditioning in their home.
- 75% (n=224) of survey respondents reported that they check their bodies for ticks after outdoor activities.
- 66% (n=200) of survey respondents reported carrying a refillable water bottle with them.
- 53% (n=53%) of survey respondents reported they take extra precautions when a heat advisory is issued.
- 43% (n=129) of survey respondents reported they used always used sunscreen or protective clothing for planned time in the sun.
- 66% (n=200) of survey respondents reported carrying a refillable water bottle with them.
- In the past 12 months, 11% (n=32) of survey respondents brought in a water sample for testing.
- In the past 12 months, 1% of survey respondents reported an animal bite or strange animal behaviour, and 1 survey respondent reported a dead animal for post-mortem testing to the health unit.

Focus Groups and Interviews

Seven major themes emerged from the qualitative data collected via focus group discussions and interviews: (i) Mental Health and Addictions; (ii) Physical Health; (iii) Poverty; (iv) Housing; (v) Rurality; (vi) Availability of Products and Services; and (vii) Organizational Structures.

This chapter on the Environment and Environmental Health discusses the key themes associated with this topic.

Rurality and Available Products and Services

With regards to the environment, rurality was commonly discussed in context of available products and services. Rurality was described as a common rationale for lack of available products and services that community members desired, both in the quantitative and qualitative data. One participant (KI22) said, “When you live in a rural area, some kids may only have school and home. And that home could be a terrible environment for them so it’s hard. I think we are missing some of those vulnerable kids. . .”

Participants in the focus group discussions and interviews frequently discussed a lack of available recreation opportunities and safe places to walk or play. Another participant (KI46) said, “We need to really focus on wellness for youth and strategies for good health and being connected with their community.” Several participants described connections between the lack of youth-focused activities and recreation and a lack of physical health or wellbeing. When discussing their interactions with local youth, a participant (KI29) said, “I hear of complaints about nothing being here.” Further, several participants described the inaccessibility of available recreation opportunities, such as hockey, linked to low-incomes and poverty. One participant (KI63) outlined the issue well by stating,

“I’m always concerned with regard to kids playing hockey in our community. I think it’s very costly and they’re pretty straight out of it. You talk about, I know some major hockey team, youngster hockey team. You could spend \$5000 a year. And can you imagine a woman with a youth able to play hockey and a good player in a local community, five or six hundred dollars to sign up. You just can’t afford it. So there you go. I think it’s not fair.”

Further, some felt it was the responsibility of public health to intervene and support the youth who were otherwise unable to participate in recreation. One participant (KI5) noted that, “There isn’t a lot that public health does as far as finding activities in the community for the students. . .”

The lack of infrastructure was often linked to large geographical spaces in the counties and a relatively low population size. Participants often described how recreational facilities, sidewalks, and bike lanes would improve their environments and make them healthier physically.



Conclusions

In conclusion, Haldimand and Norfolk counties are demonstrating evidence of climate change (i.e. heat, flooding, and wind events) and many residents believe this is negatively impacting their health. However, when not directly asked about their physical environment or climate, local residents rarely mentioned their environment as a priority or a concern for their health. Addressing environmental health issues in this region requires the initiation of campaigns that focus on information for the public about the links between environment and health.

References

1. Statistics Canada. Census Profile, 2016, Haldimand-Norfolk, Census division, Ontario. Available from: <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CD&Code1=3528&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&SearchText=haldimand%20norfolk&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=1&type=0>
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