



**BOLTON-OUEST**

# Consultation Report

## Family and Seniors Policy Approach

WEST BOLTON | SEPTEMBER 2021

PREPARED BY

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## Introduction

The Municipality of West Bolton is leading a process to institute its first Family and Seniors Policy.

According to the Carrefour Action Municipale et Famille (CAMF) *"A family policy aims to meet the following main objectives:*

- Develop the reflex within the culture of the municipal organization to put the family at the centre of all decisions;
- Propose thoughtful solutions to address the various municipal issues affecting family life;
- Ensure coherence and continuity in orientations and decisions likely to have an impact on the lives of families;
- Maintain and develop the spirit of consultation among stakeholders who have the family at heart;
- Disseminate and exchange information among and with the population on actions taken regarding families;
- Recognize the competence of families by supporting them and complementing their efforts, while taking into account their rights, constraints and responsibilities;
- Improve the quality of the social fabric and stimulate a sense of belonging to the municipality.

*An age-friendly municipality approach is one that aims to have a positive impact on the living environment by:*

- Increased and accessible local services;
- Strengthening intergenerational links;
- Increased sense of belonging;
- Greater participation of seniors in recreational activities, among others;
- Raising the awareness of elected municipal officials and supporting decision-making to better plan their actions and ensure the coherence and permanence of measures geared at seniors.

The CAMF is a reference resource for the steering committee and the project manager to assist them in completing the process for the municipality of West Bolton.

A family and seniors policy approach includes a needs analysis step with the community. It is as part of this stage of the process that this consultation report was produced. The analysis and recommendations are presented considering the current situation of the community, the priorities in place in West Bolton as well as the objectives outlined above.

# Methodology

The Municipal Council is the decision maker for the entire process of setting up a Family and Seniors Policy. The Municipal Council of West Bolton has designated a steering committee to carry out all the stages of the process.

This committee is composed of:

Jean-Pierre Pouliot, Municipal Councillor responsible for family and seniors affairs

Emilie Rogerson

Gail Watt

John Rhicard

Nancy Lanteigne

Rachel Massicks

Sylvie Hébert

Maike Storks, Project Manager.

The approach to the public survey will be as follows:

- The steering committee decides to carry out a needs analysis via an online survey to the population.
- Preparatory meetings for the drafting of the survey: steering committee (2), in order to determine the information to be collected based on the previously identified consultation themes.
- Mailing of the survey to all citizens and invitation to participate in the survey on the municipal website.
- Survey posted online and on the municipal website from May 21 to June 7, i.e., for almost 3 weeks.
- Additional paper versions of the survey available upon request (sent to 35 individuals).
- Analyses and choice of themes for the citizen consultation with the steering committee on June 17, and August 24, 2021.
- Organization of the citizens' consultation with the Steering Committee on September 14, 2021.
- Submission of the final consultation report to the Steering Committee on September 14, 2021.

**A citizen consultation will take place on November 20, 2021 to clarify some important needs identified via the survey.**

The objectives of this citizen consultation are:

- To share information about the current portrait of the municipality;
- To share highlights of the survey results;
- To consult the public on identified needs in order to focus the municipal action plan.

## Preliminaries

It is important to consider that...

- This is not a comprehensive planning approach for the development of the municipality and it can in no way replace it;
- The questionnaire is not a comprehensive socio-demographic study or needs analysis;
- A citizen meeting is to come to clarify priorities and nourish the action plan;
- The next three years will be used to work on the priorities and objectives identified.

# 1. Survey themes

The survey questions were developed from the themes identified in the practical guide for the production of the Age-Friendly Municipality policy, since these themes seemed to be complete enough to also explore issues relating to the living conditions of families.

These themes are:

- Habitat and living environment  
Including issues related to attraction and retention of residents.
- Transportation and mobility  
Including means of transportation and active transportation.
- Social participation and leisure  
Including activities and infrastructure services, and activities for children specifically.
- Communication and information  
Including the tools used by citizens to obtain information and access to communication technologies.
- Health and social services  
Including issues related to the loss of autonomy
- Security
- Outdoor spaces and buildings

# 2. Survey results

A total of 264 people responded to the survey out of a population of 590 people aged 20 and over, or about 44.75% of the target population. It should be noted that the municipality received 35 paper surveys. The overall response rate is therefore representative and reliable.

However, the 12-29 age group is grossly under-represented, so caution should be exercised in interpreting the results for this age group.

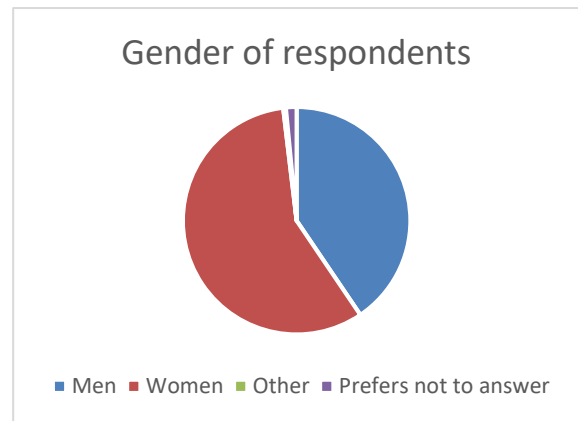
For the analysis of senior and family particularities, the answers to certain questions were analyzed based on the respondents' family situation. This avoids diluting the particularities of "family" needs.

Some survey respondents did not answer all the questions. Thus, the number of respondents who answered each question is specified.

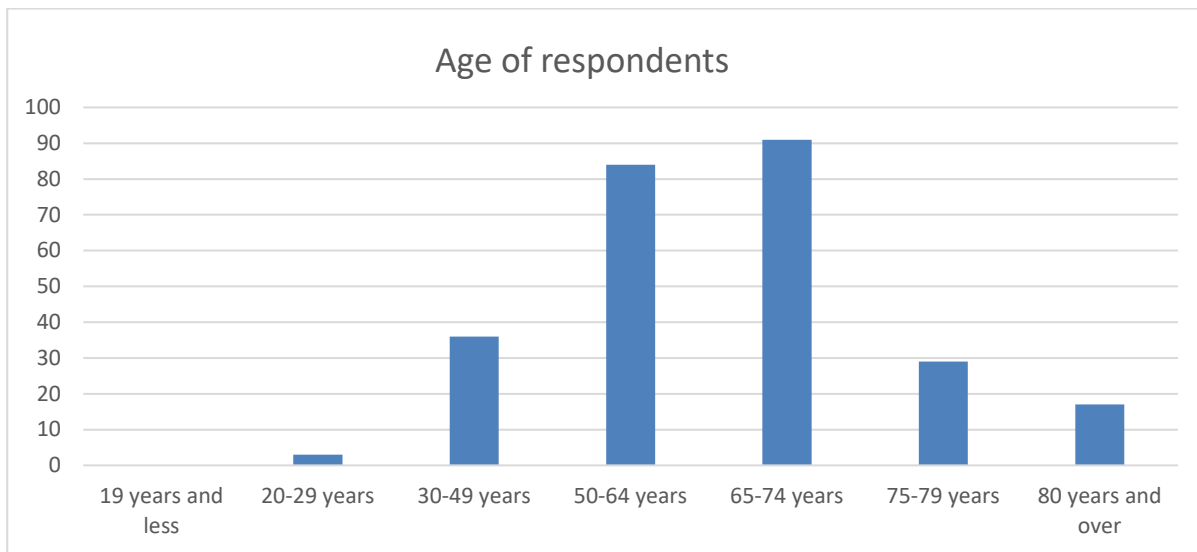
## 2.1. Respondent profile

### Gender of respondents

264 respondents	Number	Percentage
Men	107	40.53
Women	152	57.57
Other	1	0.38
Prefers not to answer	4	1.51



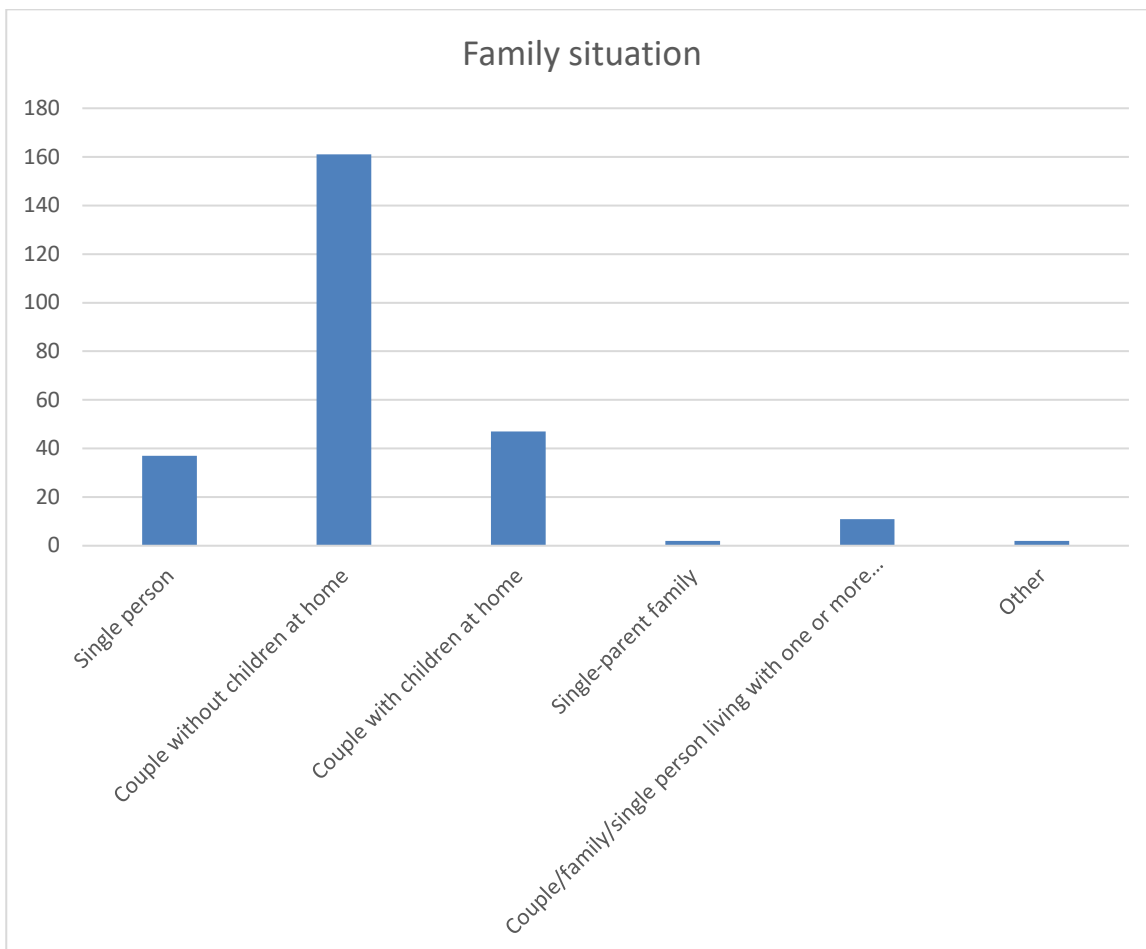
### Age of respondents



260 respondents	Number	Percentage of respondents	Representativeness of the population
0-19 years	0	0	0
20-29 years	3	1.15	6.67
30-49 years	36	13.90	37.72
50-64 years	84	32.31	45.85
65-74 years	91	35.13	67.40
75-79 years	29	11.19	72.50
80 years and over	17	6.56	48.57

According to Statistics Canada's 2017 socio-demographic data, people aged 65 and over represent 31.4% of the total population of West Bolton. We see that this segment of the population is largely overrepresented among survey respondents, representing 52.88% of respondents.

## 2.2. Family situation



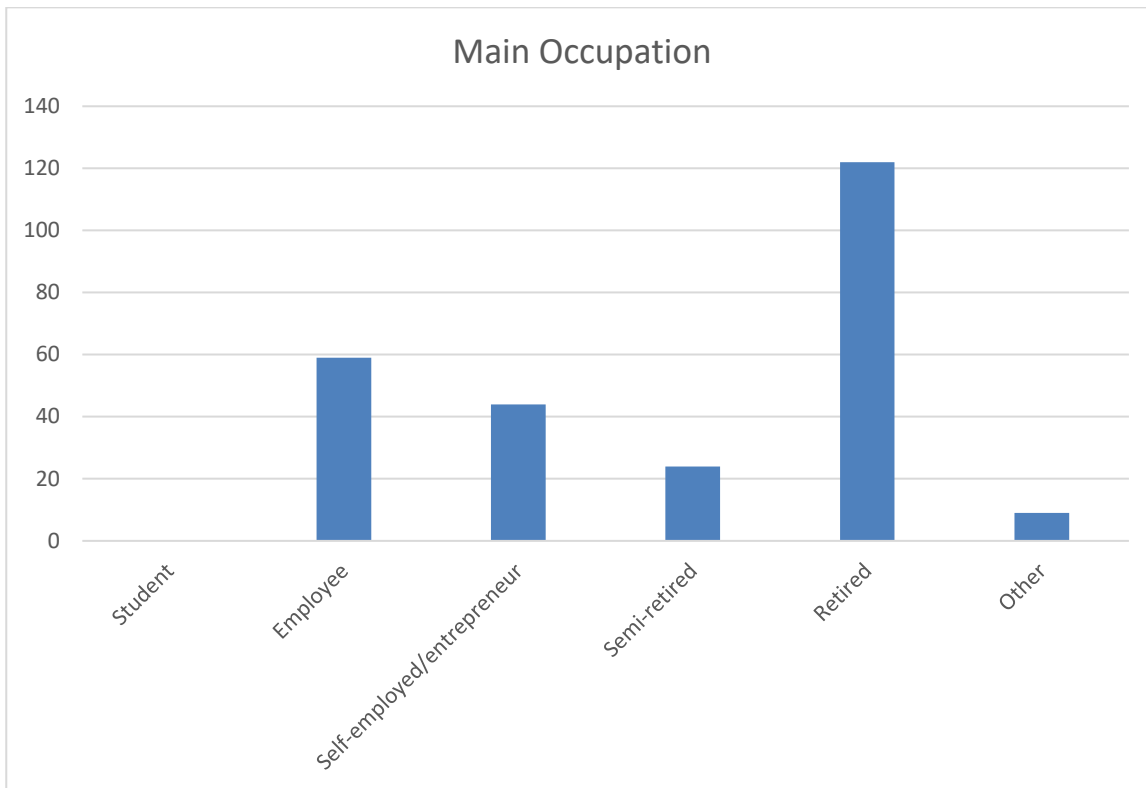


261 respondents	Number	Percentage of respondents	Percentage of the population
Single person	37	14.17	14.26
<i>of which pers. 65 years and over</i>	25	9.58	-
Couple without children at home	161	61.68	45.97
Couple with children at home	47	18.00	17.43
Single-parent family	2	0.77	3.17
Couple/family/single person living with one or more parents	11	4.21	-
Other	3	1.15	-

Single-parent families are under-represented among survey respondents, representing 3.17% of the population but only 0.77% of respondents.

Couples without children at home are rather overrepresented since they represent 45.97% of the population but 61.68% of respondents.

### 2.3. Main occupation



262 respondents	Number	Percentage of respondents
Student	0	0
Employee	59	22.52 %
Self-employed worker / entrepreneur	44	16.79 %
Semi-retired	24	9.16 %
Retired	122	46.56 %
Other occupation	6	2.29 %

Details for "other occupation":

- At home
- Unemployment
- Farmer
- Handicapped

For respondents who are couples with children or single-parent families (49 respondents in total):

- 26 respondents are employed, or 53.06%
- 12 are self-employed, or 24.49%
- 4 are semi-retired
- 3 are retired.

## 2.4. Languages

### Mother tongue

Out of 261 respondents:

- English 116 44,44% of respondents (55% of the total population)
- French 131 50.19% of respondents (44% of the total population)
- Bilingual 9
- Others 5: Polish, Romanian, German

### Second language good enough to conduct a conversation

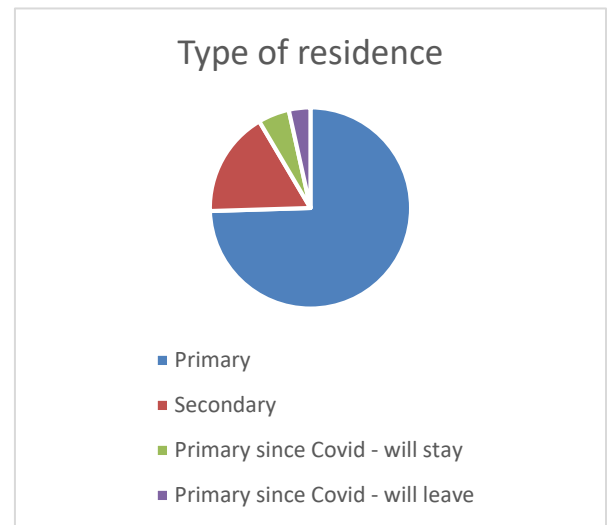
Out of 220 respondents:

- English 130 59.09% of respondents
- French 101 45.91% of respondents
- Other 18: German, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, Russian

## 2.5. Living environment and habitat

### Type of residence occupied by respondents

259 respondents	Number	Percentage of respondents
Main	193	74.51
Secondary	44	16.99
Main since COVID and I will stay there	13	5.02
Main since COVID but will become secondary again	9	3.47



### Number of days spent annually in the second home on average:

- 41 respondents, who spend between 25 and 245 days a year in their second home
- Including 18 who spend between 90 and 120 days a year
- And 14 who spend 125 and 200 days a year.

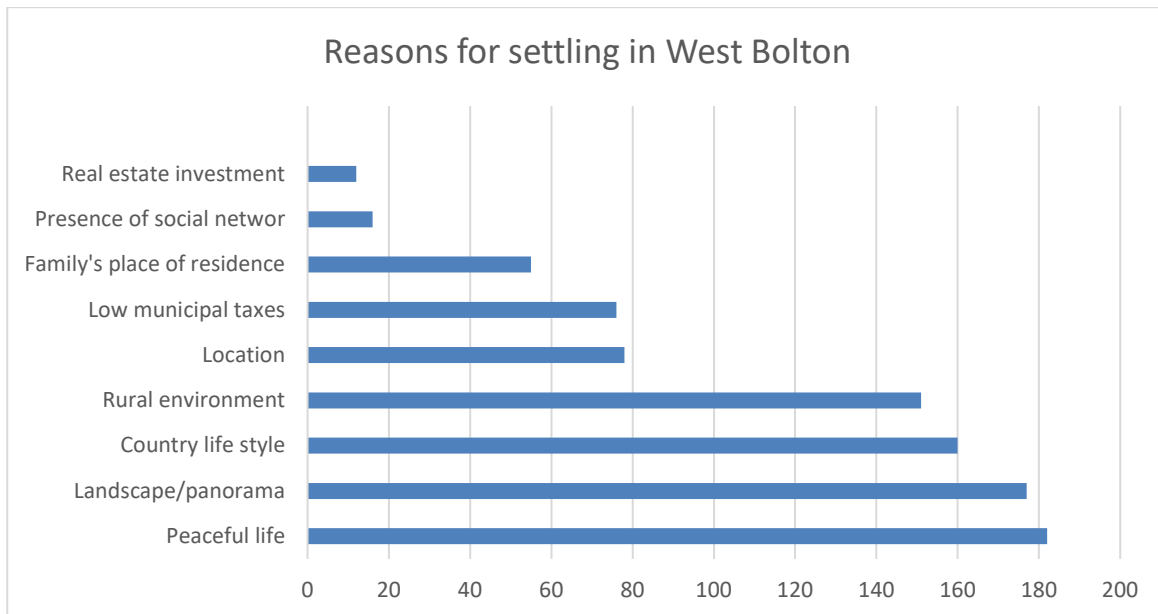
### Intention to become a permanent resident in the near future:

Out of 43 respondents:

- 22 people say no
- 11 people say yes, within 1 to 5 years
- 10 people say yes, within 6 to 10 years.

## 2.6. Top reasons for settling in West Bolton (attraction)

Out of 260 respondents



Other reasons mentioned:

- Getting closer to family, spouse's family, their network
- Living in an English-speaking environment
- Work, including starting a farm
- Access to leisure, skiing, culture...

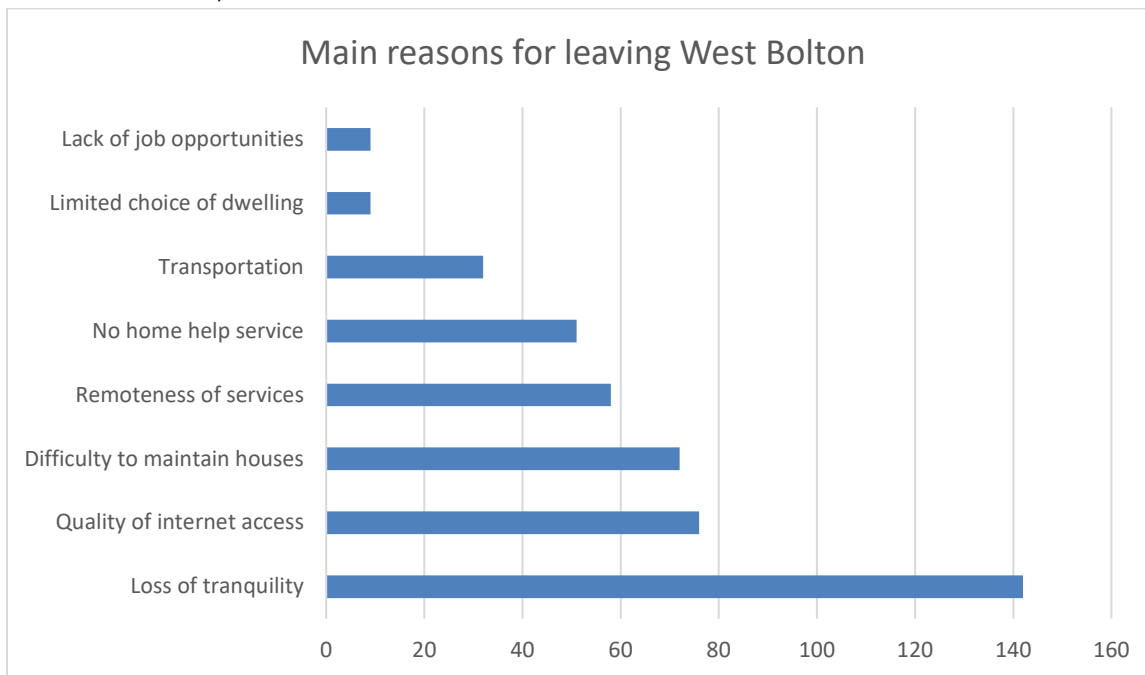
For residents who are couples with children or single-parent families (49 respondents in all), the peaceful and rural living environment is also the main reason for settling in West Bolton.

The main reasons are essentially in the same order:

- Country lifestyle (35 answers)
- Peaceful life (33 answers)
- Landscapes, vistas (32 answers)
- The rural environment (31 responses)
- Location (29 answers)
- Low municipal taxes (17 responses)
- Family's place of residence (11 responses)
- Presence of social network (3 answers)
- Real estate investment (3 answers)

## 2.7. Main reasons for leaving West Bolton

Out of 245 respondents



Other reasons mentioned:

- Several people say that nothing will make them leave West Bolton.
- Aging, disease
- Real estate overdevelopment
- Too much tourism
- The quality of roads
- A potential increase in taxes

For residents who are couples with children or single-parent families (49 respondents in all), the risk of loss of tranquility is also the main reason that would push people to leave West Bolton.

However, the main reasons do not come quite in the same order:

- Loss of tranquility (27 answers)
- Quality of internet access (20 answers)
- Remoteness of services (11 responses)
- Lack of job opportunities (5 responses)
- Transportation (3 answers)
- No home help service (2 answers)
- Limited choice of dwellings (1 answer)

If we look at the results by age group, apart from the loss of tranquility which comes in 1st place for all age groups, we notice that:

- Internet access comes in 2nd place for those aged 49 and under and 50-64-year-olds
- Distance from services comes in 3rd place for these same age groups
- Difficulty maintaining houses ranks 2nd for those aged 65 and above
- The lack of home help services ranks 3rd for those aged 65 and above.

## 2.8. Housing models that would motivate people to settle in West Bolton or to stay as long as possible

Out of 129 respondents

- |  |    |        |
|--|----|--------|
| • Residence for autonomous/semi-autonomous living      | 33 | 25.58% |
| • Intergenerational houses                             | 28 | 21.71% |
| • Affordable homes (home ownership for young families) | 20 | 15.50% |
| • Rental housing                                       | 5  | 3.86%  |

Other suggestions:

- Affordable houses near Bolton Pass
- Co-op housing
- Improving services

Rate and number of responses by age group:

Age groups	Residence	Intergenerational houses	Affordable homes	Rental housing
20-29 years			100% (2)	
30-49 years	17.65% (3)	29.41% (5)	41.18% (7)	11.76% (2)
50-64 years	48.00% (12)	32.00% (8)	16.00% (4)	4.00% (1)
65-74 years	52.00% (13)	40.00% (10)	4.00% (1)	4.00% (1)
75-79 years	8.33% (1)	33.33% (4)	50.00% (6)	8.33% (1)
80 years and over	100% (4)			

For residents aged 65 and above (41 respondents in all), residences for autonomous/semi-autonomous living with 18 responses, and intergenerational houses, with 14 responses, come in at 1st place.

For residents who are couples with children or single-parent families (49 respondents in all), it is affordable homes, with 7 responses, and intergenerational houses, with 5 responses, that rank first.

## 2.9. Transportation and mobility

### Respondents' usual means of transportation

Out of 254 respondents:

- 98.78% use their car
- 0.85% travel mainly on foot
- 0.37% use a person to drive them

Of the 252 respondents, 96.75% generally manage to make the trips they need or want to make.

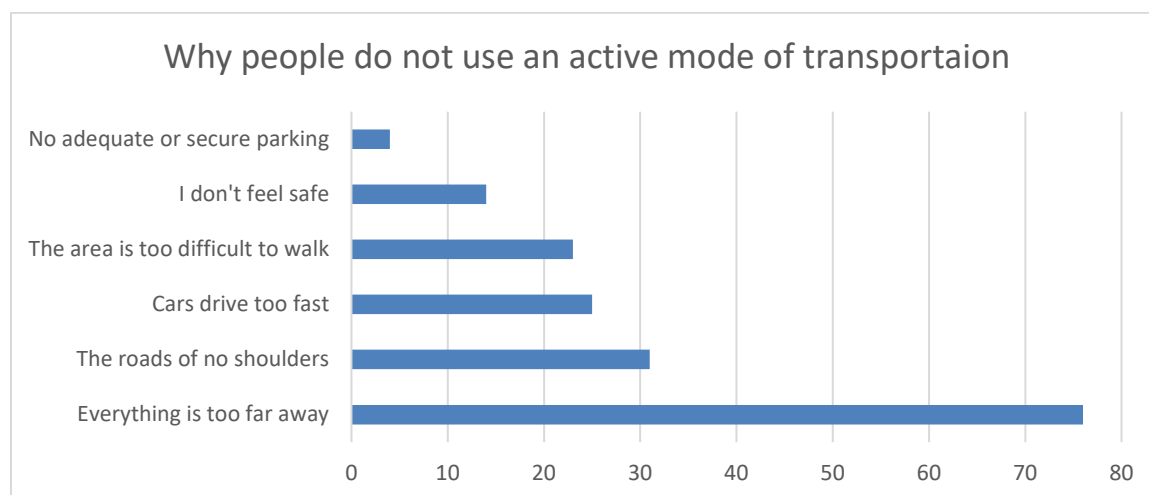
2.39% do not always succeed and 1.71% do not succeed at all.

### Active transportation

Of the 249 respondents, 43.83% make some trips on foot, by bike, by cross-country skiing or by some other form of physical activity.

Cycling and walking are the most frequent modes of transportation, and this for leisure or physical activity in most cases. However, some also use occasional modes of transport for utilitarian travel.

121 people do not use these modes of transportation for the following reasons:



Other reasons mentioned:

- Age, mobility, health
- Road conditions, bad roads
- Lack of time
- Few or no trail or bike paths

Of the 44 respondents who are couples with children or single-parent families, 61.36% make some trips on foot, by bike, by cross-country skiing or by some other form of physical activity.

### Services offered by the MRC

Of the 245 respondents, 66.12% are not aware of these services.

Note: 44.64% of Anglophones know it, but only 25% of Francophones.

## 2.10. Leisure and social participation

Services used by the public in West Bolton or surrounding municipalities, or that respondents would like to use

Out of 237 respondents

Services	I use	I would like to use	Total
Walking trails	141	38	179
Bike paths	100	44	144
Library	85	53	138
Theatre	79	38	117
Park	76	36	112
Training, workshops, courses (painting, cooking...)	16	77	93
Community centre activities	42	44	86
Ice rink	36	39	75
Tennis court	31	28	59

Other suggestions: many very varied suggestions are proposed.

The items mentioned 3 times or more are as follows:

- Access to water for swimming: Brome Lake, Douglas Beach
- Access to a municipal swimming pool.



## Activities or infrastructure desired as a priority in West Bolton

Out of 228 respondents



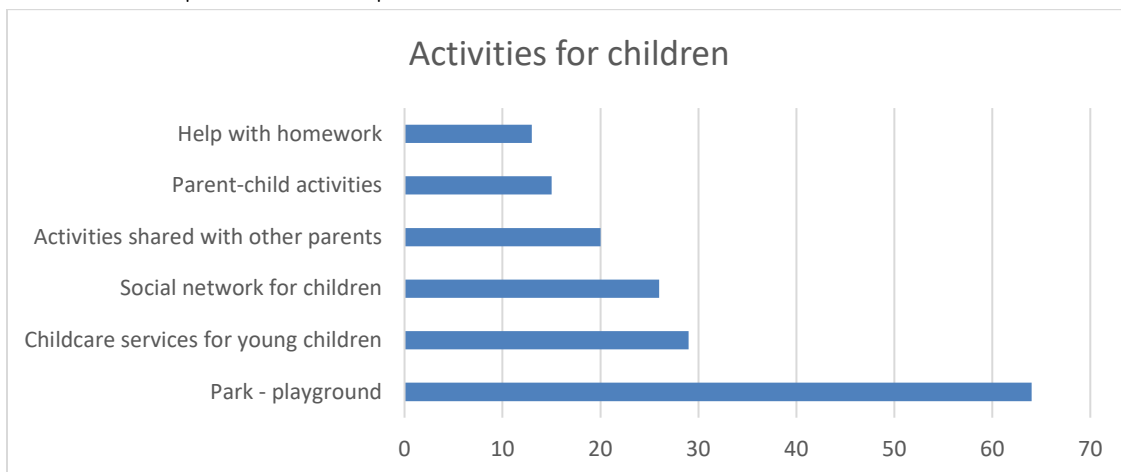
28.5% of respondents aged 20-49 place the playground as a priority.

Among the 43 couples with children or single-parent families who answered this question, the priorities were as follows:

- Farmer's market: 48.24%
- Hiking trails: 41.86%
- Better access to services from other municipalities: 25.58%
- Cultural activities: 23.35%
- Sports activities: 18.18%
- Playground: 16.28%
- Place for meeting and services: 4.65%

## Services/activities for children

Out of 116 respondents, the preferred activities are:



Other proposals:

A few respondents suggested that an agreement should be sought with Knowlton for the various activities, or with other surrounding municipalities.

Some people think it's not up to the municipality to do that.

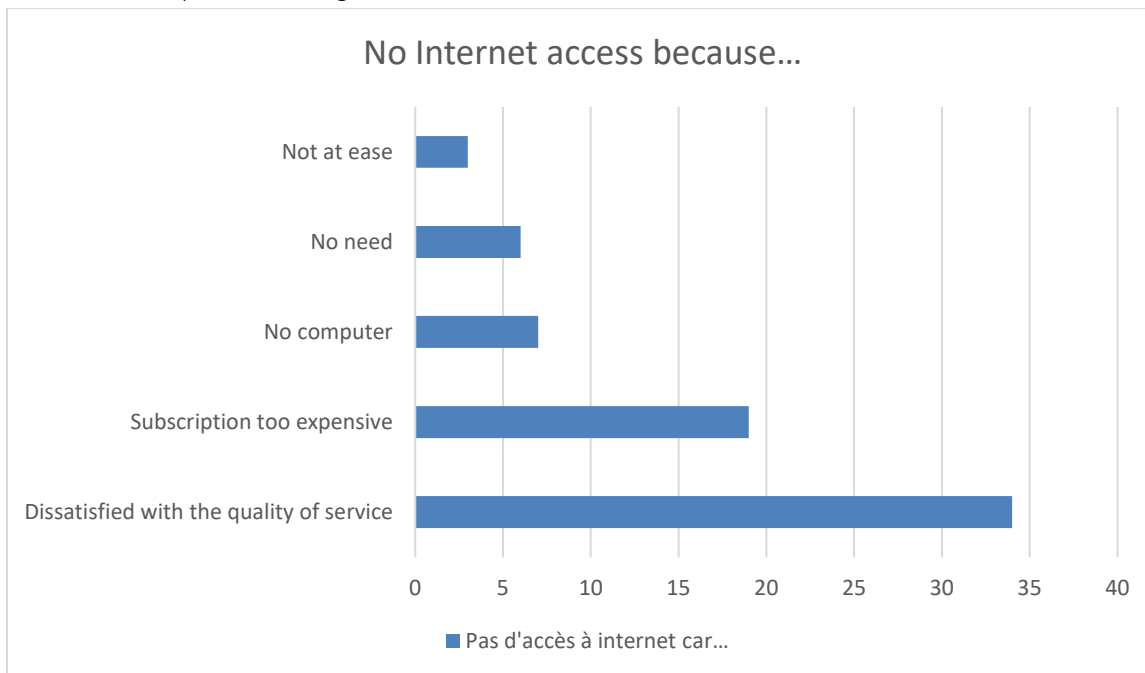
Suggestion to vary the offer at Saint-Édouard School.

It was also suggested that a group should be created for teenagers.

## 2.11. Communication

### Reasons why people don't have access to the Internet

Out of 65 respondents aged between 30 and 79:

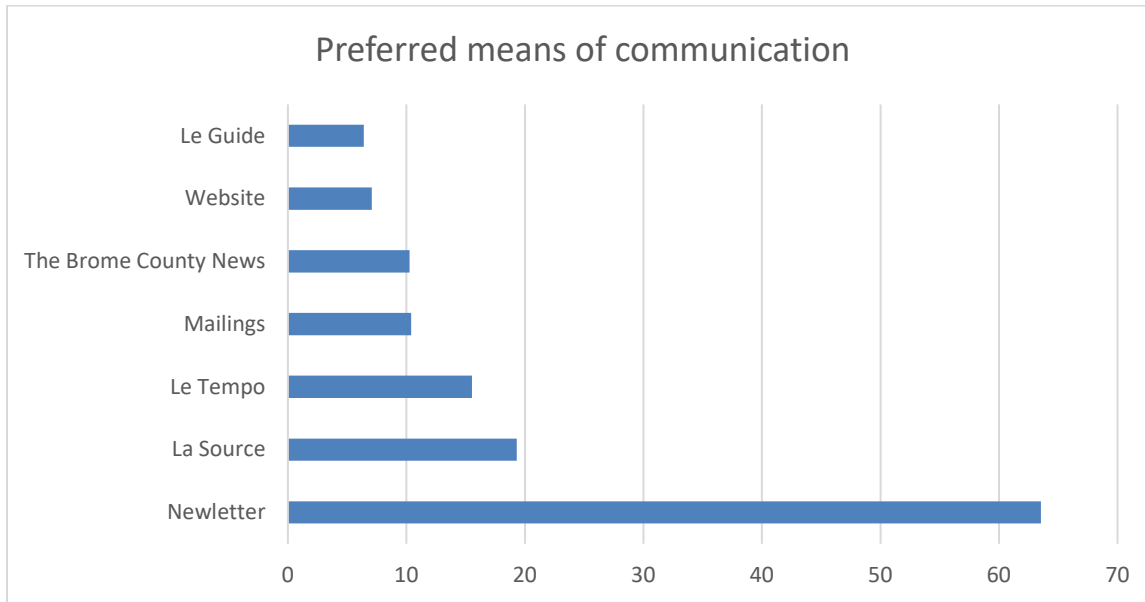


For 5 people, the service is simply not available.

Sometimes the speed is too slow.

## The best way to communicate with West Bolton residents

Out of 249 respondents



## 2.12. Health and social services

### Autonomy

Out of 249 respondents, 92.88% qualify as autonomous.

17 people say they need help occasionally, from the age of 65

1 person needs a caregiver.

### Tasks for which people need help

Out of 83 respondents:

- Minor tasks / maintenance of the house (snow removal, lawn, paint, etc.) 71.53%
- Major tasks 38.48%
- Transport, accompaniment (shopping, medical appointments, etc.) 12.07%
- Daily tasks 3.86%
- Other: Dressing

### Services possibly used if they were available?

Out of 93 respondents:

- Directory of resources for seniors 87.42%
- Hot meal delivery service 20.53%
- Daily call service for seniors 12.80%
- Respite service 18.75%

# 2.13. Security

## Feeling safe in Bolton-West

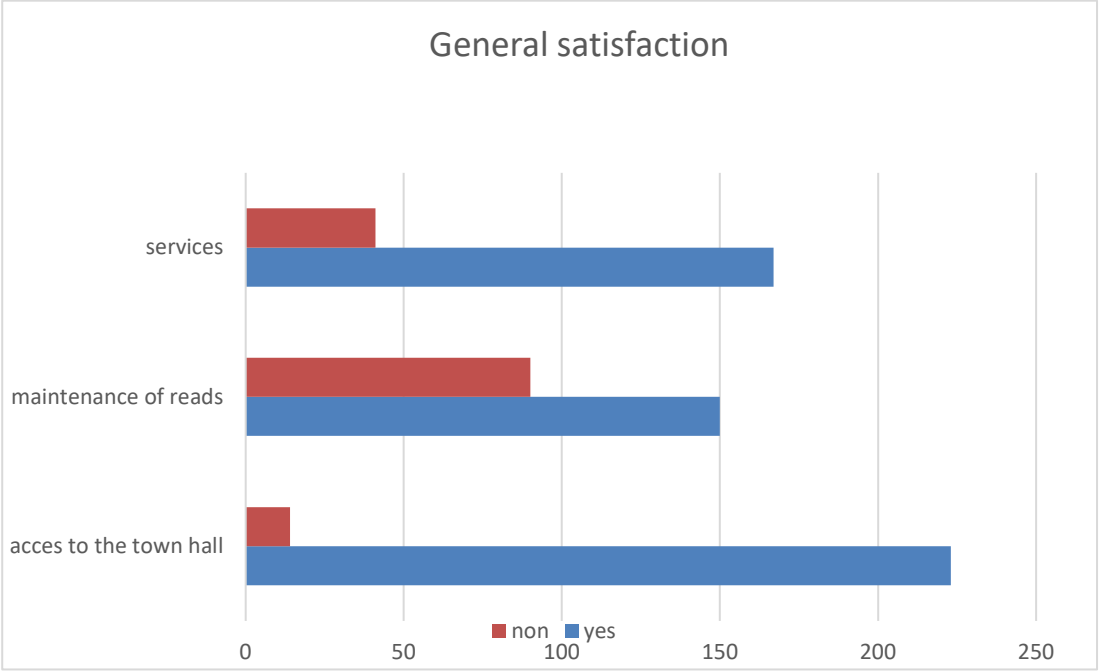
Out of 253 respondents:

Yes	80.03%
Not always	17.79%
No	2.34%

If not, why:

- Road conditions
- Dangerous speed and traffic on roads
- Cohabitation: cars – cyclists – pedestrians (from all perspectives)
- Lack of police surveillance
- Distance of 1st respondents
- Visits by nonresidents, intrusion on private land...

# 2.14. Outdoor spaces and buildings



Comments mentioned 2 times or more:

Dissatisfactions:

- Garbage management, rudimentary collection, too low frequency
- Dusty roads, road conditions in the summer, calcium too late

- High-speed Internet access
- Hazardous roads

**Satisfaction:**

- Many improvements in municipal management
- Roads are improving
- Winter maintenance is good
- COVID support.

### 3. Findings, analyses, and issues

The analysis of the results of the consultation through a survey helped to identify the following:

- The most pressing issues for families and seniors in West Bolton;
- The needs and issues that require clarification via citizen consultation.

#### Built environment

**Outdoor spaces and infrastructure**

Findings:

- Residents have access to nature, regardless of where they live;
- Roads, streets and sometimes private land are widely used for walks. In the agricultural sector, the roads are all cyclable;
- The municipality has neither parks with play areas, nor playgrounds;
- Neighbouring municipalities allow access to parks near several sectors;
- The Cowansville Aquatic Centre is also accessible to residents of West Bolton;
- There is currently no marked walking trail;
- Access to the Douglass Beach in Knowlton is chargeable since 2021 for residents of West Bolton

Analysis and issues:

Respondents' responses touch on 3 types of needs:

- ⇒ Access to marked public walking trails as well as safe bike paths and a children's playground
- ⇒ Access to bathing points: on the one hand, respondents seem to have little knowledge of available bathing points; on the other hand, access to Douglass Beach is difficult, both in terms of cost and limited parking
- ⇒ Access to a community building or gathering place for social activities in the village.

## **Transportation and mobility**

### Findings:

- Residents are able to make their trips in almost all cases;
- The RCM and the Wellness service offer public transit services;
- The RCM offers paratransit services;
- Transportation services are poorly known;
- Road conditions and safety are sometimes an issue;
- Active transportation is used by almost half of respondents.

### Analysis and issues:

Three (3) types of issues have been identified from respondents' answers:

- ⇒ The feeling of safety on roads and streets, due to speed, road conditions and cohabitation of different users. These issues appear to have an impact on residents' lifestyles in terms of physical activity;
- ⇒ Lack of knowledge about and/or difficulty in accessing certain services;
- ⇒ The long distances to travel to the different parts of the municipality, which lead to difficulties in service delivery.

## **Housing and living environment**

### Findings:

- The municipality offers a very limited choice of housing, both in terms of the type of house and their price;
- There is no housing option specifically adapted to people with loss of autonomy or aging.
- Boltonians enjoy a peaceful and tranquil way of life in a rural setting. This is the 1st reason to live in West Bolton for all respondents, regardless of their situation;
- The village has no centre. The municipality is organized into 3 distinct geographical areas: Bolton-Pass, Glen and the agricultural area;
- Internet access is a problem. However, it is being resolved and access is expected to be functional for all residences by January 2022.

### Analysis and issues:

Respondents' responses focus on the Issue of the type of housing available:

- ⇒ On the one hand, older people feel that one of the reasons that would make them leave West Bolton is difficulty maintaining their home and grounds;
- ⇒ On the other hand, several respondents say they are interested in intergenerational and affordable home options.

## Social environments

**General findings** (from the portrait of West Bolton's services and resources):

- Very few resources and services are available on the territory of the municipality itself.
- For those services available in the territory of the municipality, they are offered by the municipality as such (mainly in terms of communication and community services).
- The Municipality of West Bolton has entered into inter-municipal agreements with the towns of Brome Lake and Cowansville to meet the recreational needs of residents.
- Other services are available via the Brome-Missisquoi RCM, especially health and social services and transportation.
- Residents of West Bolton have access to a good number of services at the Town of Brome Lake, a town bordering West Bolton, and to an almost complete range of services in the town of Cowansville, the head office of the Brome-Missisquoi RCM.

### **Social participation, respect and inclusion**

Findings:

- The population is stable, people stay long in West Bolton
- There is a wide variety of residents, from different cultural, socio-economic, language, and professional backgrounds...
- The population is warm and welcoming
- Citizens are generally mobilized and participate in various social activities, events, consultations...
- People help each other easily.

Analysis and issues:

Respondents' responses touch on 2 types of issues:

- ⇒ Everything concerning networking and socialization: the absence of a location that brings people together does not help to promote meetings and exchanges, especially for the elderly;
- ⇒ Everything related to cohabitation and respect for one another: there are notable issues of cohabitation on roads and streets, but also some concerns about the different visions of long-term residents versus newcomers from large cities. Mention is also made regarding the non-respect of private land.

Note that nearly half the respondents state that the activity that should be set up as a priority is a farmer's market, a market for artisans, etc. This is the activity that comes 1st in the survey results.

### **Leisure and culture, structured or individual**

Findings:

- Structured recreation is offered only by the surrounding municipalities. West Bolton has entered into agreements with them for this purpose;

- Citizens can use the Brome Lake Library;
- The Cowansville aquatic centre also offers a variety of activities;
- A Facebook page has recently been set up to promote the exchange of services, the creation of links, networking (to be developed).

Analysis and issues:

Respondents' responses essentially express the lack of outreach activities (which are nevertheless available in surrounding municipalities):

- ⇒ Lack of activities for children, adolescents and young people;
- ⇒ Lack of leisure activities for all ages: cultural, artistic, sports, social...;
- ⇒ Lack of opportunities, activities that promote a physically active lifestyle.

However, there still seems to be some lack of awareness of the services offered here.

The issue of what is actually available or not, consistent with the interests of families and seniors in West Bolton, also needs to be addressed.

It should also be noted that nearly one third of respondents mention the provision of better access to the activities of surrounding municipalities as a priority.

Finally, there is some interest in individual or unstructured activities such as walking, cycling, sports on playgrounds... :

- ⇒ Walking trails are named as the 2nd priority by more than a third of respondents;
- ⇒ Regarding the issue of specific activities for children, it is finally parks/playgrounds that comes in 1st place of priorities for the two thirds of respondents to this question.

## **Communication and information**

Findings:

- The municipality uses different means of communication to inform the population: a newsletter, a municipal bulletin: La Source, postal mailings and its website;
- The newsletter is undoubtedly the best way to reach citizens;
- Respondents acknowledge the transparency of the Municipal Council.

Analysis and issues:

There is a perceived lack of knowledge of services and what is happening in the municipality for many respondents.

## **Health and social services**

Findings:

- The vast majority of respondents identify as being autonomous;
- Only a few people mentioned that they need help occasionally;



- Difficulty maintaining one's home and grounds is, however, a potential reason to leave West Bolton for 53.27% of respondents aged 65 and above, and the lack of home services is for 31.77%;
- 33.33% of all respondents said they need help with certain tasks (minor work and maintenance of the house, major cleaning);
- The steering committee worked on a portrait of the services and resources available to Boltonians which could be a tool to be disseminated.

#### Analysis and issues:

- ⇒ Several services are available to West Bolton residents, but they seem to be poorly known;
- ⇒ Members of the committee wondered about the isolation of certain more vulnerable people;
- ⇒ The size of the territory and the distance between the different sectors make it difficult to set up home services.

### Safety

#### Findings:

- The vast majority of respondents feel safe in West Bolton;
- Speed problems on some roads are regularly reported to the Municipal Council;
- The annual activity report of the Brome-Missisquoi RCM safety committee mentions a very low number of offences equivalent to other municipalities of the same size;
- Some respondents are concerned about the distance of 1st respondents.

#### Analysis and issues:

- ⇒ Respondents' responses focus on the issue of safety on roads and streets, in relation to the speed of some motorists and the cohabitation of different road users.
- ⇒ The few residents concerned about the remoteness of 1st respondents deserve to be reassured about the effectiveness of the service provided to the population of West Bolton.

## 4. Towards the citizen workshop to co-construct the policy and the action plan

With the analysis of all the data, the steering committee carried out a social diagnosis of the municipality. This exercise identified major themes for consultation.

Thus, on November 20, the public will be invited to participate in a co-construction event to inform the steering committee on various themes that are emerging as important for the well-being of seniors and families in West Bolton.

