

Be Part of What Happens in Oxford!
Report on a Community Engagement Initiative

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On behalf of the

Town of Oxford Community Economic Development Committee

November 21, 2017



This initiative was undertaken to identify opportunities for Oxford and area residents, community organizations, local businesses, and the Town of Oxford to work together to enhance our economy and provide activities and events that improve our quality of life.

From mid-September until November 20, 2017, Oxford individuals (Town of Oxford and catchment area), businesses, and organizations were encouraged to participate in a community engagement initiative.

Surveys were distributed online and in print format. The print surveys were distributed in the October 2017 water bills and through a bulk mailing to households on the Oxford rural routes. They were available for pick up at the Town Hall and Oxford's Public Library. Other aspects of the initiative were: three coffee-drop-ins, discussions at meetings of three community organizations attended by the CEDO and individual conversations with citizens. *Synopsis of Community Survey Results* reports on information gathered by these methods. *Please Note:* Business and Organizational survey responses were not included due to insufficient response.

The **Town of Oxford** also held a *Community Gathering* (November 14, 2017). *Ideas brainstormed at the Community Gathering* reports on the results of the evening's small group work when participants shared thoughts on six ideas suggested by survey respondents.

I have also added additional ideas (not recorded elsewhere in this document) that I've taken from my own research or noted from community discussions. These are referred to as *Notes/Ideas from Community Economic Development Officer*.

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Synopsis of Community Survey Results:

Be Part of What Happens in Oxford!

Survey for Individuals Living in Oxford & Surrounding Area

Number of People Engaged:

-Seventy-two individuals submitted answers to the “*Be Part of What Happens in Oxford! Survey for Individuals living in Oxford and Surround Area*”. Most (about 75%) were submitted online using Survey Monkey. The remaining surveys were hand written and returned to the Town Office.

-13 people attended coffee drop-ins

-20-25 people attended the Town of Oxford Community Gathering

-Approximately 32 people were present at three meetings of community organizations where input was received (the actual number of people providing input was not recorded).

-Approximately five-ten informal conversations with individuals provided input that related to the survey.

-Twelve individuals completed the “How Do You Find Out What’s Happening in Oxford” survey distributed at the OREC Open House and through the Town Office.

Responses:

Do you have ideas for new programs, services, activities or events you would like to see in Oxford?

A wide variety of suggestions were received and are recorded in attached appendices:

Highlights appear below.

-More Promotion of Oxford as the Blueberry Capitol of Canada: Respondents would like to see more and ongoing efforts to promote Oxford’s “claim to fame”: signage/promotion, more blueberry products on restaurant menus, and more Blueberry Harvest activities in Oxford.

-Physical activities: dance classes, chair exercise classes, more opportunities for skating, an indoor walking track, men’s walking group, a gym

-Outdoor activities: 4-wheeler rally using the Trans Canada Trail, a way to allow 4-wheelers downtown to benefit stores/restaurants, promotion and use of all trails, signage and trail maps

- **New and/or unique events:** Classic Car Shows, Horse Shows (aside from the Exhibition), Pub Nights, Poetry Festival, Music Festival, Hallowe'en Festival, Film Festival, Fishing Derby, small venue acoustic music events

- **Courses and classes:** Wide range of suggestions ranging from art nights and classes to Tantramar Seniors College courses to cooking/nutrition, food safety and more

- **Programs for Children/Youth/Families:** more opportunities in all these areas including programs specifically for boys

- **Community Awareness Initiatives:** citizens want methods to learn more about community organizations and opportunities to get involved/volunteer; events to bring community together

-**Improving Communication: Town:** improvements in the format and delivery (coverage area and timeliness) of the Town's monthly community calendar, consistency between online and paper community calendars, a Town newsletter, better promotion of Town's website. **General:** better sharing of Face book information, advance advertising of events on a well-maintained community calendar so that there are not multiple activities scheduled for the same dates.

-**Suggestions specifically for Businesses:** more open hours, more blueberry products year-round, a café and bakery downtown, need for more traffic downtown, a second-hand store, a laundromat/dry cleaning depot, pub, distribution centre.

-**Other Suggestions:** Here you will find ideas that would require extensive budgets and long-term planning with government partners (walk-in clinic, nursing home, dementia centre, etc.) to practical ideas about increasing use of the arena to improving truck access to the businesses on Upper Main Street, and thoughts on attracting tourists. School-related comments are also contained here. Some individuals also took the opportunity to comment on services provided by the Town of Oxford.

[How do you usually find out about Oxford events?](#)

Most people use either **Face book** or the **Town's Community Calendar** to find out about Oxford events. Close behind were *Word of Mouth* and *Posters*, in that order. Very few answered *Town's website, newspaper, online/Internet, radio, school*.

[Do you have ideas about how groups and organizations can better promote their activities?](#)

Not surprisingly, the two most popular ways of finding out about events (above) were often mentioned in the responses to this question. Other suggestions included: an electronic sign, community newsletter, a reminder not to assume that everyone is on Face book, advance

advertising, better promotion of what groups do and how to join, more posters, better use of Town website, advertising at community meetings, offering prizes.

Clearly, groups and organizations will need to use all means available to them to reach as many people as possible. (Also see *Improving Communication* above.)

What is the best thing about living in Oxford and area?

Responses consistently emphasised that people like living in a centrally located, small, safe, clean, affordable community with good school and businesses, beautiful scenery, relaxed lifestyle, and all the basic amenities “within arm’s reach”. “Great place to raise kids” and “Friendly people” were comments stated again and again. Also mentioned were the arena, Lions park/lake, close proximity to beaches and ski slopes, good roads, good snowplowing, a major employer, the trails, library, and promotion of local talent (art and music).

Are you interested in working with others on any of the above ideas?

41% of the 72 individuals who filled in the online and print survey answered YES and gave their name and contact information. Some specified limitations.

Ideas brainstormed at the Community Gathering

During small group work, participants were asked to share thoughts on offering the following six activities suggested by respondents of the survey. *Notes/Ideas from Community Economic Development Officer* also are attached in some of these six sections.

*** Please note that more ideas on these topics are contained in the [Detailed Report on Responses](#)

Building on our Strengths: Promoting Oxford as the Blueberry Capitol of Canada

Building on our Strengths – Trails

Building on our Strengths- Annual Community Yard Sale in May

Being Unique in our region and/or New Initiatives for Oxford –Fishing Derby/River Days

Being Unique in our region and/or New Initiatives for Oxford –Poetry Festival (April is Poetry Month)

Being Unique in our region and/or New Initiatives for Oxford – Geo-caching

Building on our Strengths: Promoting Oxford as the Blueberry Capitol of Canada

Notes from November 14, 2017 Community Gathering

- Blue grass festival
- Blues festival
- National Blueberry Day: Special 1-day event (first class events)
- Festival event ideas: BB tea, BB Stomp (crushing BBs), staining t-shirts with BB juice (activity) – could also sell the t-shirts, world's biggest BB pie, Blues Music,
- More business and community involvement in BB festival – food related
- TOP CHEFS: must come to Oxford to cook with blueberries (from NS, PEI, NB or the world(Alain Bosse)
- BB wine making
- Where's Oxley (game or scavenger around finding little Oxleys) – Oxley is the name of the giant BB at Irving. (Think: *Where's Waldo*)
- Geo-caching: Where's Oxley
- Signage in Town and on trails; electronic sign
- Map of town: trails, historical info.
- Tourist banner
- Historical walks
- Event featuring blueberry-related stories, memories

Notes/Ideas from Community Economic Development Officer

-The whole community gets involved in **Branding things “Blue” or “Blueberry Capitol” all year long.** (Ex: *Blueberry Capitol Music Jam; Blueberry Capitol Community Yardsale; Blueberry Capitol Celebrates July 1st; Blueberry Capital Joint Church Service*)

-Organizations take every opportunity to use blueberries and promote our claim to fame. Ex: Church Mouse Players plays; Lionettes Christmas in the Park– BB desserts; Hold a Frenchy’s “Blue” fashion show (clothes for the whole family);

-Promote BB Capitol on Trans Canada Trail

-Blueberry coloring book (children involved in creating the drawings – could also have safety rules, health rules (Oxley’s bullying prevention book- possible Community Health Board grant???)

-Exhibition: Serve Blueberry Buckle at dining room (fits with belt buckles worn during horse showing etc.)

-Paint night – featuring blue shades of blue

-Experience packages: Example: Jam-making, Blueberry pie making. While the pies are baking discuss benefits of blueberries, other recipes; then eat the pie!!

-Link Town Parade Themes to BB

Also Refer to the Detailed Report on Responses

Building on our Strengths – Trails

Notes from November 14, 2017 Community Gathering

- Trails are everywhere which is unique to our Town
 - Snowmobile/ATV rallies
 - Trail maps – need these available at Town Hall, on Town website, etc.; also put them on the trails
 - Strawberry Run; Blueberry run
 - Tree therapy walk (promote trails for emotional well-being)
 - Scavenger hunts (this could include hunting for certain plants and trees on the trails)
 - Signage on trails to include tree and plant identification
 - Trail Bicycling (Blue Route Association)
 - Short Line Promotion (Pictou to Oxford)- Historical Trail --Destination Trail
 - Support to Trails Association – how do they get volunteers
 - Videos of trails for promotion; marketing to other trail associations and tourists
 - Pave walking portion of trail that goes around Town
 - Promote/provide opportunities for people to stop while travelling (Great) trail
 - Maintenance of trails updates especially within town limits
- ***Note that some of these ideas would refer to the Great Trail (Trans Canada Trail) and some would include all Town trails

Building on our Strengths- Annual Community Yard Sale in May

Notes from November 14, 2017 Community Gathering

- This is good for everyone
- It would work because people shop on a budget
- Would provide businesses opportunity to sell off over stock
- An indoor yard sale would be beneficial because weather wouldn't be a factor (arena); rented tables
- Farmer's Market in arena
- Could advertise as *largest indoor yard sale; so much more than a yard sale; new items as well*
- Timing is critical (Pay days/pensions)- May? June? Is May too damp?
- Mary Jane yard sale

Things that could be held at same time...

- Trail walks
- Brunches
- Family Activities
- Car Show
- Dance
- Movie at the theatre
- ATV Show
- Antique Road Show
- Scarecrow contest (in the Fall)

Notes/Ideas from Community Economic Development Officer

- This could be combined with a Community Awareness Event- another indoor location – rent tables to businesses; provide free to community organizations; include Town display
- Advertising outside the community is crucial
- Great time for businesses to offer specials and/or promote items that people don't expect to find there. (Scott's....frozen blueberries)
- Brand "Blueberry Capitol Yardsale" and have blueberry-related products for sale
- Staff or Volunteer to have the Oxford Riverside Gallery and Tourist Bureau open
- Theatre open for tours

Being Unique in our region and/or New Initiatives for Oxford –

Fishing Derby/River Days

Notes from November 14, 2017 Community Gathering

- 3 Rivers and 1 Lake + Big Lake, Victory Lake
- Children's Fishing Derby
- Race with several themes with time being the decider
- Bathtub race;
- Ice boat race in winter (soap box with skate blades)
- Paper boat race (as in pool sticks)
- Canoe Race/Poker Run
- Canoe Rally (no race- just a fun time – bbq after at canoe dock (ballfield?); coordinate with Duck Race
- Parties on the way
- Dieter Warwick's fly fishing class – open up for all ages
- Striped bass, Atlantic salmon, small mouth bass, trout
- River Days: doesn't have to be on the water but close by; Trails
- Tubing on the river
- This would really help promote our rivers
- The Fire Dept and the Lions Club could use this as a fundraiser
- Pond Hockey with no skates; bonfire and marshmallows
- Skate-less hockey game
- Coasting party

Being Unique in our region and/or New Initiatives for Oxford –

Poetry Festival (April is Poetry Month)

Notes from November 14, 2017 Community Gathering

- Poetry and Prose
- Blueberry Music Jam and Poetry Slam
- Feature a well-known poet
- Local authors and book signings
- Poems in the Park (weather could be an issue in April)
- Pocket Poems (engaging children and youth – school event)
- Poets at the Art Gallery
- Engage with Library
- Coffee shop setting and music (Lions Centre?)
- Mary Jane coffee
- (Include) Writings of local authors who have passed
- Children involved (blueberries, strawberries, promoting Oxford) stories and poems
- “Blues”/ Jazz festival music jam
- “Blue” grass festival
- Can we dye the grass blue?
- It could put us on the map in the poetry world
- Our proximity to the TC means we have a great location
- Could start small and grow
- Unique
- Covers/includes all ages
- We have a lot of poets
- Need to have clear intent
- Contest; prizes?
- Groups that this might be a good fit for: school, seniors, businesses, gallery, library, Town of Oxford

Notes/Ideas from Community Economic Development Officer

- Not currently done in Cumb. Co.
- Amateurs, published poets
- Sidewalk chalk poems
- Poetry festivals held all over the world – some have catchy names like “Verve” – why not “BLUE”? (1st annual). Often they have various events happening at the same time: music, film, dance, etc.
- Sponsors
- Contests could be sponsored – different age groups, blueberry categories.
- There could be a different theme each year
- Lots of format possibilities: Readings at already established community groups as well as at the library, theatre, in the park, in restaurants, etc.
- Poems could be framed and posted in public places; sometimes people write poems and leave them in public places
- Blink events: 30 second poems
- Publisher tables, bookstore exhibits
- Writer’s organizations
- poetry-writing workshops
- Could research possible event funding

Being Unique in our region and/or
New Initiatives for Oxford – Geo-caching

Notes from November 14, 2017 Community Gathering

- Would bring people to the community; downtown
- Would familiarize people with the community
- We are close to the Trans Canada
- Lots of unique locations (rivers, trails, lakes)
- We have food and accommodations
- (Make it) Blueberry focused
- (Celebrate) Geo-caching Days
- Use Oxley figurines to promote the Town through geo-caching
- Groups: Youth Groups, school, orienteering groups
- Family activity

Notes/Ideas from Community Economic Development Officer

- Family oriented
- Health benefits of exercise and being outside
- Advertise through Tourism, on FB, website, geo caching sites if available
- Could work with Trail promotion

DETAILED REPORT

Be Part of What Happens in Oxford!

Survey of Individuals living in Oxford & Surrounding Area

Detailed Report on Responses from the online and print surveys, coffee drop-ins, discussions at three meetings of community organization and individual conversations with citizens.

November 21, 2017

Notes in Red are the comments of the Community Economic Development Officer

1. Do you live in Oxford or Surrounding area?

Of the 72 individuals who completed the online and print surveys, 100 % of respondents answered this question. 27 said Oxford; 20 said Surrounding Area; 25 said Yes

2. Do you have ideas for new programs, services, activities or events you would like to see in Oxford?

Note: Although the responses below are provided under specific headings, many suggestions fall into more than one category and the reader is encouraged to review all sections. 72% of online and print survey respondents answered this question.

Events/Activities/Local Group Involvement

- year-long/long term dance classes like one put on by Y
- more recreation programs, especially for seniors,
- evening skating for Seniors very much enjoyed in the past. People are travelling outside of Oxford to enjoy this activity now.
- parent/tot skating and evening adult skating
- skating for adults only,
- skating for adults; bars to keep adults up – scared of falling- skating aids
- chair yoga
- more activities for kids 12 years,

- more for teenage kids to keep them from getting into trouble
- like to see shuffleboard promoted and supported – great game for teens through the elderly
- annual 4-wheeler rally (Trans Canada Trail)
- celebration of poetry, get together where people can meet each other, an indoor walking track, movies at the theatre,
- pub with events, dances, demolition derby with annual fair, other tourist events with more current appeal;
- musical get together for acoustic instruments – informal
- book club
- art nights or short painting classes (4-6 sessions)
- cooking for one or 2 with recipes and nutrition information,
- educational opportunities such as learning to play bridge, garden, cook, photography,
- things for families with small children, daycare, teen centre, monthly programs for kids,
- YMCA and some dances,
- bring back Canoe Race
- Blueberry Run
- card Parties
- put on program to teach lonely men and women not to fall for scams
- let's get more of the community involved in more activities such as the walking clubs, using our amazing trails, and using our arena more
- would love to hear Christmas music played from Dec. – New Years. Orland Thompson used to play it and it was wonderful.
- junior book club
- Oxford Film Festival
- beer gardens, pub nights
- Hallowe'en Festival (parade, Scary Walk, dance, dinners, etc.)
- Meals on Wheels
- bring in a dietitian

- Oxford Baking Show: ask Power Co. or another to donate something for a winner – Give tickets out at door.
- classic car show, blueberry and music festivals,
- more multicultural, exercise and healthy eating programs or services, cooking/craft/diy classes,
- need a walking track (inside); Men’s Walking Group
- indoor walking track for winter months – advertise this so public is aware
- suggested areas for indoor winter walking: school, exhibition buildings, curling rink, churches, Legion, Lions Club
- more activities for men; boys
- need to bring 4-wheelers down town
- more signage for trails
- trails map – featuring all Oxford trails
- Eleanor Crowley has a group who will help decorate parade floats
- plan seasonal “hook in” – four a year!
- Community Groups: suggestion to do more partnering on fundraisers etc. to reduce cost and make more impact
- better promotion of Swimming Lessons
- maybe the same set up for the Strawberry fest to be set up around exhibition week,
- there are several opportunities for “girls only” programming (i.e. careers, sexual health). What about boys?
- Town needs to fund some events and partner to avoid turning events into a flea market. Blueberry fest kids zone with a dance and BBQs could be built on with other fun activities. What does the main street sale add to the blueberry fest? (Note: this may be referring to the Strawberry Fest as we don’t have a Main St. sale during BB festival. No name given so I couldn’t confirm.)
- Strawberry Festival: Add new activities, can’t have the same thing every year- ideas: strawberry scavenger hunt, strawberry road race, strawberry breakfast, strawberry flea market
- plan activities and events ahead and advertise well in advance (2 months if possible); more advertising; keep price low

-Community Awareness Event -so people could find out what organizations do and possibly get involved. (Note: I heard again and again that unless they were involved, many people didn't know about all the opportunities there were in Oxford (Shuffleboard, how to join groups, that groups were looking for new members, what Seniors group does, etc.)

-interest in a Food Safety Course

-antique car show – would have to be planned a year in advance; could have a dance same night; blueberry pancake brunch, etc.

-bring in a bigger variety in music

-community dinners or events to bring people together

-events to make newcomers welcome; encouraging them to stay in our community

-poetry festival, author readings,

-do unique things to attract people in the surrounding area

-maybe more for seniors

-groups are mainly for school students, would like to see more events for older people

-bingo at a hall at night

-Art Gallery: would like to see weekend or night hours for working people. Opportunity for a volunteer from school or community

-Art Gallery: Good venue for small music event, perhaps with wine and cheese; could be combined with poetry reading

-Tantramar Seniors' College Programs

-Fishing Derby

-Geo-caching

-“How about a once a month activity where different groups are brought in so people can try a different activity with no commitment or cost. Maybe ax throwing (for all ages), quilting for all ages, target practice with paint ball guns, rock climbing – if there is such a thing as a mobile rock wall. Have a skateboard competition. Have an ATV or bicycle agility course at the rink. Have a obstacle course, mud/summer, ice/winter. Horseback riding lessons. To make sure if it works invite groups and people to make up teams if it is appropriate. Activities that give some people experiences that they may have wanted to try. I'm getting excited!”

-an attendee at the Coffee Drop-in expressed an interest in starting an acoustic instrument jam session for individuals' personal enjoyment – perhaps using a small venue like the Lions Centre where the public could drop in and watch if they wanted and the Lions could sell refreshments, etc. (separate from the Theatre's Music Jam)

Blueberry Capitol of Canada/Blueberry Harvest Festival:

Town doesn't promote that we're the Blueberry Capitol of Canada enough- better signage, more Blueberry Harvest Festival events here in Oxford; organizations and businesses need to get more involved in promoting both.

Celebrate "Blueberry Capitol of Canada" (our claim to fame) more. Don't try to spread ourselves thin by celebrating too many other seasons or themes.

Organizations have blueberry breakfast/suppers/other events; Blueberry Festival Paint Night with BB dessert.

Theatre: have more events during BBH Festival, Quilt Show;

Related **Historical Society** event,

"Blue" art show at **Gallery**, etc.

The children's activities at the Lake don't seem to be well attended. Try something new.

Get advertising in the glossy Festival flyer.

Businesses: try to have some type of blueberry or blueberry-related product for sale during the Festival

Communication

-small paper to go around letting everyone know about yard sales etc.; some sort of weekly news items; 2 sheets instead of one for the monthly calendar

-the area needs a weekly spreadsheet put out (2 pages printed both sides, or 4 if needed), to inform people of upcoming events, etc. Subscriptions at a reasonable price.

-a newsletter, in addition to the monthly calendar: distribute and post a link on the website – perhaps there's a volunteer who would work on it.

-a weekly list of activities going on and a designated location for pick-up in Oxford (for people who don't have a computer and don't get email)

-an electronic sign board to let citizens know about happenings,

-signage: need digital sign or at very least one like Lions have; sandwich board at Town Hall.

-a community board or sign on Main St. posting upcoming community events – updated weekly or bi-weekly.

-the Town of Oxford monthly calendar is fantastic- only get it in my area when children started school (River Philip)

-could we have the community calendar in the Collingwood area? 6 or more people made this comment

-improvements to the Town website; make better use of it and Face book (fb); put links to real estate sites on Town website; use Calendar to tell residents how to find the fb site.

-improve the (paper) "Town of Oxford Community Calendar". Ex: Use newsletter format and arrange in columns such as a newspaper.

-Town calendar needs to be received by the end of the month – it's often late. The layout of the calendar needs improvement so more can be included. A Town newsletter might be helpful. (Note: I heard again and again that people want to get the Calendar earlier.)

-the (paper) community calendar is different than the Calendar of Events on the Town website.

-Suggestion: mention the Town's website in the Calendar to help drive people to the website for information and to raise awareness it exists.

-promote the "Town of Oxford" website as a source for information. I noticed the Upcoming Events Calendar at the Town of Oxford (web)site is not the same as the Oxford Community Calendar website. (Note: the latter is a site done by a private citizen.)

-Better sharing of face book page info. and info. on what should be posted where

-Better communication from the town through Face book, Twitter or Email

Businesses

-second-hand children's clothing store (clothes, toys, books, etc.)- or a large sale of such items where sellers rent tables and a portion of \$ go to a charity,

-a thrift shop

-affordable second-hand clothing shop;

-laundromat/drycleaners,

-I am looking to start my own business with a portable rock wall and some industrial bounce equipment like a house and slide to start with. Great equipment to promote active living and a great addition to any event you may have.

-local inclusive farmers market

-a tour bus that would come in and visit the churches-we have beautiful stain windows at the United and the churches have great histories,

- small fabric and essentials to do with sewing store
- a gym/fitness centre
- longer hours at the drug store,
- Businesses – do better advertising of unique products
- stay open until 5 on Saturdays
- more evening hours
- Parkview: stay open later Friday/Saturday evenings
- some would like to see a Pub in Town (it was suggested that Organizations may want to try the occasional Pub night.
- some would like to see an up-scale restaurant for evening dining
- café and bakery downtown needed
- good location for a distribution company as Oxford is central

Un-categorized Suggestions

- A dog park,
- Splash park
- Walk in health clinic,
- Campground and day picnic area for tourist events,
- More services in town: enlarged library services (see Pugwash's).

If we hope to attract more people to move to our community, we need to provide/encourage more new business and be active in this endeavor which in turn creates more tax base. We have a nice base of small businesses, but certainly the town has so much potential. We have a beautiful river going through our Town which could be more utilized with extended walking trails. Much praise for the new trails that already have been established. Great work here. This we need more of!!! People like recreation/activities when they move to a Town.

- Offer the arena for more activities in the off-season such as horse shows, vendor displays, or indoor farmers markets or yard sales
- Promote and use rink more (give incentives and make schedules for hockey, skating and senior skating more accessible and advertised so people know times.)

- Oxford is the Blueberry Capital of Canada – bring back Blueberry Interpretive Center – tourists come to town expecting to see and learn.
- Would like to see much-needed nursing home in Oxford, to keep our seniors home and close to family;
- Nursing home facility
- Services: Better lighting on Pugwash Rd and snow plowing beyond the Thompson corner. If homes beyond that turn are considered town they should have similar services or be part of the county. Over the past several years, I have waited for the road to be plowed and followed one trail through by the county plow, only to get up to that turn and find both sides of the road plowed, salted and cleared.
- More bicycle friendly with bicycle lanes
- Free Wi Fi downtown
- Free use outdoor exercise equipment (like the Rotary Park in Amherst)
- Promote the Oxford Riverside Gallery
- Help support Oxford Exhibition
- Generally, do more to bring people to town and to the *downtown*
- Encourage people to move to Oxford: promote the school, energetic & cheerful people, provide more housing for low-income folks
- A review of whether Oxford should be a part of the county when it's in a good financial position (is there more benefits?) – weighing the pros and cons
- Wish we had more (businesses)
- (recognize) Oxford's Worst Driver
- Need a Community Centre; Health Centre; Dementia Centre; Indoor Pool/Rec Centre
- Need utility building at the ballpark for electricity
- Need an in-town public transit system – that works like the train does in Tatamagouche –for seniors, tourists, etc. -to facilitate ease of movement
- Need a Dementia Complex
- Horse shows at the arena: American Quarter Horse Association may be interested if invited-book now for next year - \$1000s in spin off.
- Other concerns about accessing arena rentals through Exhibition

-Christmas Parade: Citizen would like to see more prize (ribbon) categories (ex: Walking floats, horses, other animals). Important to recognize participation. Would like to see community organizations promote themselves by participating in the parades – missed opportunity if they don't.

-More activities down town

-The roads in and out of Oxford are excellent for bicycles. There is less vehicle traffic than other areas of NS. I think it would be a great destination for cyclists

-I like the town. I think it is well managed. I just don't think the town spends any tax dollars on building traditions and events. Sometimes you have to believe enough in an idea to fund it until it is self sustaining. The Exhibition and arena are excellent examples of many years of neglect/lack of new ideas and now having a difficult time making them relevant.

-Council, I feel is doing a good job with the options available to them.

-Oxford is doing a great job.

-So nice to have been asked to participate in this survey even though we are not Oxford residents.

-I would just like to add that when sitting in the park and enjoying a cup of coffee, it doesn't take long to see the amount of traffic that travels through Town. How nice it would be to take advantage of this traffic and get people to stop and shop, take time to see how great our community is. Somehow....filling in the space between the current RCMP building and the Parkview as a "space" for a new business. I realize this would entail some work, perhaps even some environment inquiries, but if it were already filled in, perhaps it would encourage larger, business to invest here. In other words, make it easier! Lots of tractor trailers coming into Town....they have no where to park to get a coffee. Have seen them give up and move on....as well as in the summer months, travel trailers with no space to even get fuel as they have no place to turn any big rigs around. Maybe the Town would consider placing a traffic counter so that you could get a sense of the amount of traffic coming and going.... We have so much to be thankful for in our Town and lots of expertise to tap into. So many things that could be done and of course money is at the core of all projects to promote. Keep up the good work replacing sidewalks and making them safer (help avoid getting sued!!) Pick great projects to enhance the Town. I'm sure this survey will help bring some great ideas to fruition!

-Let's get more of the community involved in more activities such as the walking clubs, using our amazing trails, and using our arena more

-Looking forward to information collection on groups in town

-Looking forward to getting to know and work with my new community. Thank you for the online survey

-Work with and improve available resources already in place.

The Town Staff, as a whole, is doing a wonderful job with the running of the Town. Keep up the excellent work everyone.

- I have noticed an increase in different programs being offered. The use of the arena with skates, hockey, the hunting and fishing expo. Keep up the good work!
- Would like to see something of a newspaper out in the country, so we would know what is going on. (Leicester resident)
- Cut the # of councillors and save some money
- I wish I had grown up in Oxford. It must be wonderful to feel you belong here.
- Would like to see the student scores in the schools improved,
- After-school tutorials
- Volunteerism: encourage youth to volunteer by working with Guidance Dept.
- We get no information on what is going on at the school
- No reading water meters, all residents be billed equally. This would lower town costs and allow more man hours for other activities.
- Reminder on water bills regarding water conservation and its importance
- Curb side garbage
- Nursing Home, Veterinary surgeon, a Therapist
- List of names with telephone #'s and qualifications of people you can call to have odd jobs done or help of any kind around the home and property.
- Need more signs and awareness of Tourist Bureau in Town Hall
- Need a way for people who are new to the community to find out what's going on, ways to get involved, how to get services, etc. Need Welcome Wagon.
- Would the new gym offer special rates for Seniors?

3. How do you usually find out about Oxford events?

100 % of online and print survey respondents answered this question and 12 people responded to a separate survey called "How do you find out what's happening in Oxford?" for a total of 84 respondents. Some offered more than one answer.

43 said Face book but most didn't specify which site

42 said Town's Monthly Calendar (people refer to this in various ways- newsletter, flyer in the mail, etc. - but I concluded they meant this)

23 said Word of Mouth (some added "after the fact")

18 said Posters or Signs (one specifically mentioned the Lions Park sign; 6 mentioned the Canada Post bulletin board)

5 said Town's website

3 said "online" or "internet"

4 said Newspaper

3 said Radio

1 said school

4. *Do you have ideas about how groups and organizations can better promote their activities? If YES, please list below.*

Approximately 70% of respondents answered this question.

- More posters at local stores (3), ads around town
- Facebook, fb, fb, fb
- Email weekly listing of activities, publish a newsletter with calendar
- Public community board
- Social media and prizes, s media
- Use Community events page on fb.
- Calendar online similar to Springhill rec. dept.
- Online calendar, which needs to be kept current and active.
- Town newsletter and website
- Relationships are very important (to marketing)
- Weekly newsletter; weekly flyer (the monthly flyer is too congested)
- Posting on poles
- Lions TV Bingo (2)
- Community newsletter/newspaper (2)

- “Do not assume that everyone is on face book”
- Don't rely on fb – some people don't use it.
- Electronic sign in front of the Lions hall or high school
- Community Board or sign and better structure to face book page
- Community sign, an upgrade of the one at the Lion's Park
- Secure community Notice Board located in the gazebo
- Better use of town website and a central information board somewhere on main st.
- Put them on the website; more use of websites
- Consolidated town website
- Mail out flyers as a lot of elderly residents do not have access to the internet
- Community calendar – keep it up!
- The Community flyer
- Flyers
- Paper calendar
- Advertise that new members are welcome and how to join.
- Use the town calendar to promote and promote well in advance.
- Try to communicate their dates and activities well in advance so they won't all be on the same date.
- We need an electronic sign;
- An electronic bulletin bd. in central place on Main St. to advertise upcoming events.
- More advertising – not everyone has access to social media – posters, signs in main places, more signage
- A fb page they could use
- “Everything is done already to promote each activity
- Banners like the one outside Sackville, signs on the side of road like you see at Lions centre
- Radio, advertise more, put in monthly mailout
- Advertise at community meetings and events (Church meetings, TOPS, Card parties)

-Have one main list with Oxford and Surrounding areas. A monthly calendar posted to Facebook so people know what is happening and when.

-Use the community newsletter, radio and newspaper or have it posted at the town hall so if people want to know what is available and a contact they have a “one source” place

Note: Also see related comments in # 2

5. What is the best thing about living in Oxford and area?

91% of respondents answered this question.

-side walks to walk on and the Lions Park

-it's an awesome community and simply beautiful as you drive through. The trees are starting to drape over the roads before Dutch hit them. It's almost like a canopy.

-the convenience store and gas station opened 24 hours, The Irving gas station

-unique shopping experiences

-the Nazarene church along with the many activities they plan for our youth. I am proud to call Oxford home because of the friendly people who, in my experience, are very welcoming!

-small friendly community

-the community

-the people, same, same

-low taxes, safe community

-safe place to live, friendly people and good school

-Oxford has everything I want without having to look further (x 2)

-everything you need is within arm's length

-beautiful, peaceful, great place to raise a family, safe, affordable, friendly

-friendly people, always willing to give a helping hand, Quiet, Knowing your neighbor

-it's a small town and everyone knows everyone and are very friendly

-small quiet community

-small community

-the small town feel. I enjoy living in the country but there is still a sense of community with Oxford residents

-Oxford is a nice clean place to live. The people are friendly

Everyone knows and looks out for each other

- access to the highway. The rink for skating/hockey/recreation. The rink is a big draw when people are deciding whether to live in Oxford or another community. The new school is also a tremendous asset to attract young and growing families. The fact that we have a major employer is also paramount in attracting working aged people

-low cost of living, town is quiet, and the air is clean

-as a long-time resident, I found it a safe place to raise my children and loved the convenience of being close to everything

-quiet, friendly, trails, lake, safe

-the proximity to beaches, highway, and benefits of good roads, schools, and businesses

- access to three provinces and three major cities within less than 2 hours. Close proximity to the ocean and ski slopes, friendly and safe community, and talented, hard working folks!!
- nice quiet, honest, hard working people who care about the Town and its future
- there is a fair amount to do in town; everyone knows everyone; it's a great place for families with children
- basic needs (bank, store, gas) easily accessible.
- flat for walking; walking trails
- the new walking trail (Trans Canada Trail) South Oxford
- central – easy to get to Trans Canada highway.
- not too far to Halifax or Moncton and stops in between
- we are back home, friendly and lots of family around
- good snowplowing
- its' people
- small intimate community
- small town closeness, quiet, great school
- beautiful small town
- I love living in a rural community. I have 2 small children and having events in Oxford is a great way to get the kids involved.
- price of real estate, availability of basic needs incl. doctor, dentist..., new council making a difference, Trail
- it's a beautiful, friendly and quiet Town
- quiet and friendly
- small town, relaxed atmosphere, lots of energy and things to do, open-mindedness, welcoming reception to newcomers (CFAs)
- friendliness of residents
- good neighbors, nice and quiet, appreciate senior programs
- close to drugstore and my doctor
- the scenery
- small size, can walk anywhere
- the people and all the basic stores. How many pizzas can a town eat? Post office, bank, Tim's, small grocery, hardware, library, gas station, and other services for car trouble
- small town; small enough; people are friendly and helpful
- supportive community
- quiet town and surrounding community. Oxford is a small town but is well kept and always looking to promote local talent to showcase art, music and activities for young and seniors.
- family & friends, beautiful county
- never sitting in traffic, cost of housing, relaxed lifestyle
- great Christmas Parade
- seems to always be something going on: Jams, plays, the chance to give your opinion
- best of rural living with services (water/sewer)
- compliments to Ruth Collins for her plays. Awesome

6. Are you interested in working with others on any of the above ideas?

41% said YES, some with limitations. The Town will use this list to help develop a Volunteer Database.

7. We welcome additional comments:

Additional comments were included in the appropriate sections above.