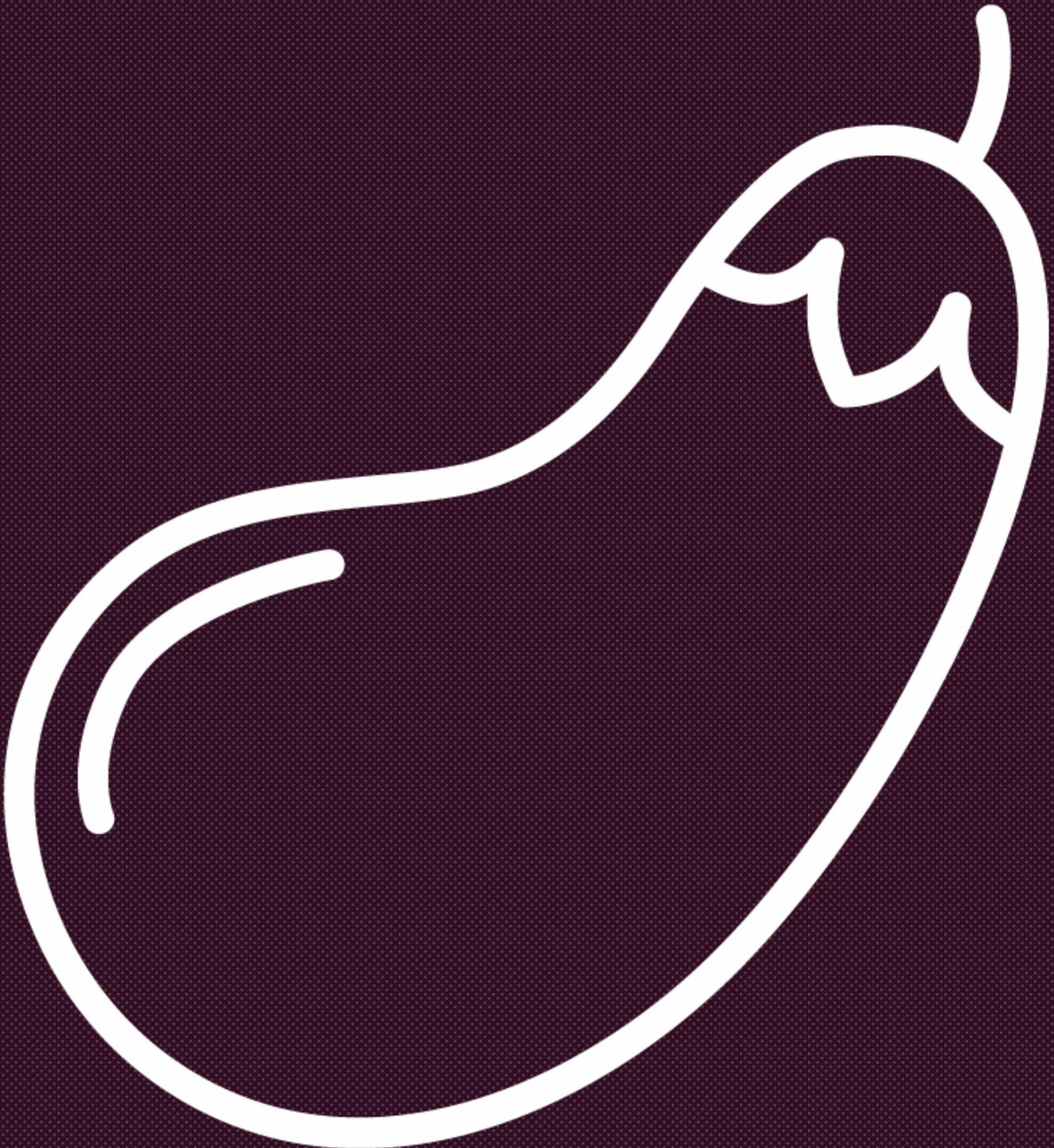


# 2.0 POPULATION



## 2.0 POPULATION

### 2.1 Findings

Population statistics allow one to examine who lives in the area we are studying, what their backgrounds are, and introduces us to how populations may be affected by the determinants of food security. This section examines data pertaining to the population of Middlesex-London and compares it, when available, to: London, Middlesex, Ontario and Canada.

Specifically, this section of the environmental scan examines demographic data to:

- Provide an overview of populations that are vulnerable to and affected by food insecurity;
- Provide an overview of the many negative population health issues linked to or resulting from the current food system; and
- Provide an overview of the economic conditions/realities within the area, which limit the access to and affordability of healthy food.

#### Demographics Related to Food Security

In 2014/2015, the population of Middlesex-London was 459,821 of which Middlesex County accounted for 76,004 residents and London 383,817 residents.<sup>24</sup> According to Statistics Canada, London Middlesex is substantially more population dense, with London denser still, as an urban region, than Ontario as a whole.

Table 4: Population Density and Distribution (Source: Statistics Canada, 2011)

Population (density and distribution)	Canada	Ontario	Middlesex-London	London
Density (people per km <sup>2</sup> )	3.7	14.1	132.4	870.6

According to Statistics Canada, Middlesex-London is in line with Canada and Ontario with approximately 15% of persons being older than 65.

In Ontario, 2.3% of the population identify as having Aboriginal identity, while in Middlesex-London 3.3% of the population do. This is a substantial increase in proportion.

In regards to the number of recent immigrants, from 2006-2011 Middlesex-London saw a total of 11,905 immigrants to the area (this represents 13.58% of the total immigrant population in Middlesex-London). Middlesex-London's population consists of 18.76% immigrants, Ontario's

<sup>24</sup> Invest in Middlesex County, "Population, Projections & Age," Manifold Data Mining Inc., "Superdemographics," 2014/2015, Web, at <http://www.county.middlesex.on.ca/data-centre/demographics-trends/population-projections-age-income>.

population consists of 28.5% immigrants, and Canada’s consists of 20.6% immigrants. Middlesex-London has approximately 10% less of the total population consisting of immigrant populations compared to Ontario, but has relatively the same percentage as Canada.<sup>25</sup>

In Middlesex-London the number of lone parent households is in line with Canada and Ontario, as is the distribution of female versus male single parent households.<sup>26</sup> In 2011, Middlesex-London had 18,605 lone parent households of which a female parent led 15,175 households and 3,430 households were led by male parents.

**Table 5: Household Total Annual Income (Source: National Household Survey, 2011)**

Household total annual income	Canada	Ontario	Middlesex-London	London
Average	\$79,102	\$85,772	\$74,765	\$73,107
Median	\$61,072	\$66,358	\$57,987	\$56,241

Middlesex-London has slightly fewer low-income families than the rest of Ontario and Canada. Middlesex-London is less than Canada and Ontario by 1% in low-income families, with 10.4% of low-income families. When the income of individuals is analyzed, 54,325 people in Middlesex-London have low incomes based on the after-tax low-income measure (49,080 between the ages of 18-64 and 5,245 65 years of age and above). This represents a total of 24.1% of the Middlesex-London population in 2010.<sup>27</sup> When London is studied separate from Middlesex County, London Census Metropolitan Area’s low-income rate is increasing more than Ontario’s and the proportion of the population living with income below the Low Income Cut Off (LICO) has been increasing since 2006 (LICO estimates the “...Income threshold at which families are expected to spend 20 percentage points more than the average family on food, shelter and clothing” leaving them in strained circumstances)<sup>28</sup>. In 2012, 14.8% of Londoners lived with an income below the after tax LICO, compared to 11.3% of people in Ontario.<sup>29</sup> Middlesex-London has a smaller average and median income compared to Canada, and a significantly reduced income compared to Ontario as a whole, as much as 14% less.<sup>30</sup>

Although officially the number of homeless people in Middlesex-London is not known, there is some data that can help us to understand the magnitude of this social problem within the local area. A study in 2003 showed that shelters in London serve approximately 4,000 persons in a year.<sup>31</sup> In 2010 this number grew to 12,000 individuals per year accessing the shelter system<sup>32</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Statistics Canada, *National Household Survey, 2011*, Data Request.

<sup>26</sup> Statistics Canada, *National Household Survey, 2011*, Data Request.

<sup>27</sup> Statistics Canada, *National Household Survey, 2011*, Data Request.

<sup>28</sup> Statistics Canada, *Low Income Lines, 2013-2014*, Catalogue no. 75F0002, 2015, Web, at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75f0002m/2015001/lico-sfr-eng.htm>

<sup>29</sup> Child & Youth Network, *Poverty Trends in London*, 2015, Web, at p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> Statistics Canada, *National Household Survey, 2011*, Data Request.

<sup>31</sup> Abe Oudshoorn, “How Many are Homeless?,” 2010, Web, at <http://abeoudshoorn.com/blog/?p=35>

(however, only a portion of those who are homeless access shelters, so the number of homeless people is much higher than what shelter visits indicate). The City of London has 600 shelter beds in total, and the London InterCommunity Health Centre’s “Health Outreach for People who are Homeless” program has well over 1,000 clients.<sup>33</sup> 2013 data shows that an additional 23,710 households are living in core housing need (i.e. housing that is not adequate in condition, not suitable in size, and/or not affordable).<sup>34</sup>

### Healthy Weight & Nutrition

This section of the environmental scan focuses on demographic data related to healthy weight and nutrition. The statistics help us to understand the current state of health issues, and the many influences from the current food system.

Middlesex-London has a similar prevalence of dietary-related disease as Ontario. Middlesex-London has slightly lower heart disease rates and slightly higher blood pressure rates compared to the province as a whole, whereas diabetes rates are on par with the province.<sup>35</sup>

**Table 6: Self-Reported Prevalence of Dietary-Related Disease (Source: Public Health Ontario Snapshot, 2012)**

Self-reported prevalence of dietary-related disease	Ontario	Middlesex-London
Diabetes	5.60%	5.50%
Heart disease	4.20%	3.70%
High blood pressure	14.70%	15.40%

Middlesex-London is also typical of Ontario with rates of mortality related to the following dietary-related diseases (according to the Public Health Ontario Snapshot, 2011):<sup>36</sup> diabetes, cardiovascular disease, ischemic heart disease, cerebrovascular disease and stroke. While Middlesex County is typical in its rates of heart disease as a leading cause of death compared to Canada, 5% less of London residents die from heart disease than in Middlesex County. The leading cause of death in Canada is cancer (30% of deaths) whereas, in Middlesex County and London it is heart disease (19.2% and 14.8% respectively). In Canada, 19.7% of deaths are attributable to heart disease.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The Homeless Hub, “Community Profiles, London, Ontario,” 2013, Web, at <http://homelesshub.ca/community-profiles/ontario/london>

<sup>33</sup> London Community Foundation, “Confronting Homelessness in London, Ontario,” 2010, Web, at <http://www.lcf.on.ca/blog/confronting-homelessness-london-ontario>

<sup>34</sup> The Homeless Hub, “Community Profiles, London, Ontario,” 2013, Web, at <http://homelesshub.ca/community-profiles/ontario/london>

<sup>35</sup> Public Health Ontario Snapshot, 2012, Web, at <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/DataAndAnalytics/Snapshots/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>36</sup> Public Health Ontario Snapshot, 2012, Web, at <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/DataAndAnalytics/Snapshots/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>37</sup> Public Health Ontario Snapshot, 2012, Web, at <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/DataAndAnalytics/Snapshots/Pages/default.aspx>

Middlesex-London is in line with Canada and Ontario with its rates of obesity according to the Canadian Community Health Survey. Generally, obesity rates are slightly higher for youth and lower for adults. Middlesex-London has a slightly higher youth obesity rate at 26.4% than Canada (3% higher than Canada), but a slightly reduced adult obesity rate at 19.1% (the Canadian adult obesity rate is 24.8%).<sup>38</sup> The prevalence of obesity in Ontario does not differ much from the national average.<sup>39</sup> Having organized physical activity and healthy food available to all residents of Middlesex-London could increase the number of residents living healthy lifestyles. Often, organized physical activity is expensive so it's important to have free or low cost options available. Community gardens achieve both of these goals, as people are required to be physically active as they tend to the garden and then also gain access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

Middlesex-London and Ontario both have a similar percentage of low birth weight (6%) according to Ontario Inpatient Discharges Data.<sup>40</sup>

**Education, Employment & Local Economy**

In order to understand those who reside in Middlesex-London, we must also examine their level of education, employment, and the local economy.

In regards to education level, London is generally typical of Canada and Ontario in its level of education, while Middlesex tends to have a lower population of those with a university education or higher. Middlesex has a higher proportion of people in apprenticeships and receiving a college education, as well as, higher proportions of those with no certificate or diploma and high school education.<sup>41</sup> The table below shows the education levels of those in Middlesex, London, Ontario, and Canada.

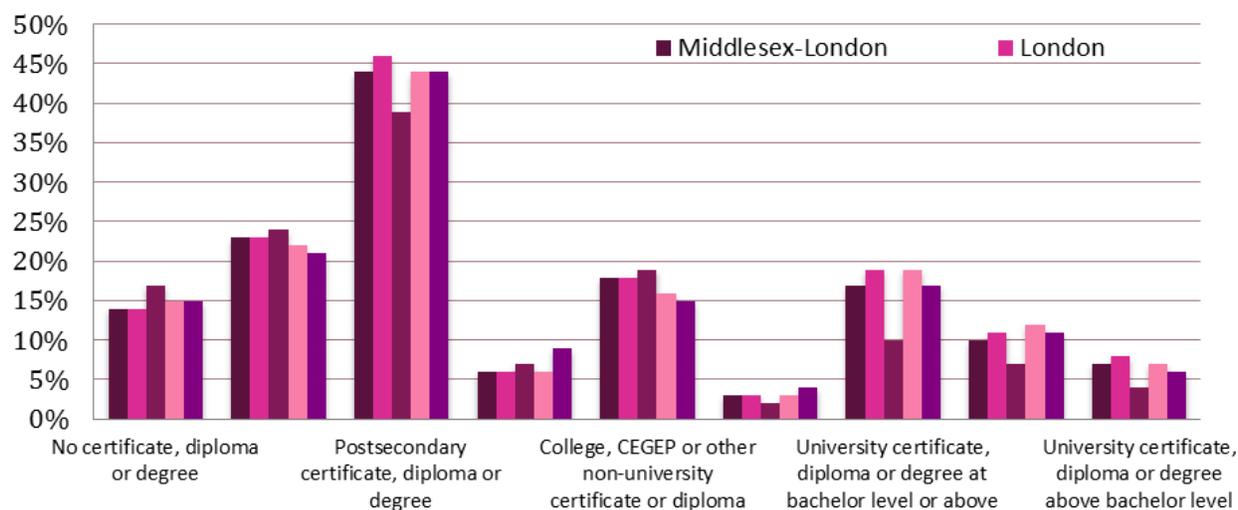
**Table 7: Percentage of Population by Education Level (Source: National Household Survey, 2011)**

Percentage of population aged 15 years and over by highest certificate, diploma or degree	Canada	Ontario	Middlesex -London	London	Middlesex
Total population aged 15 years and over	81%	81%	82%	82%	80%
No certificate, diploma or degree	16%	15%	14%	14%	17%
High school diploma or equivalent	21%	22%	23%	23%	24%
Postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	44%	44%	44%	46%	39%

<sup>38</sup> Public Health Ontario Snapshot, 2012, Web, at <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/DataAndAnalytics/Snapshots/Pages/default.aspx>; Statistics Canada, "Health at a Glance: Adjusting the Scales: Obesity in the Canadian Population After Correcting for Respondent Bias," 2012, Web, at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-624-x/2014001/article/11922-eng.htm>.  
<sup>39</sup> Statistics Canada, "Health at a Glance: Adjusting the Scales: Obesity in the Canadian Population After Correcting for Respondent Bias," 2012, Web, at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-624-x/2014001/article/11922-eng.htm>.  
<sup>40</sup> Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. "Ontario Inpatient Discharges Data," No Date, Data Request.  
<sup>41</sup> Statistics Canada, *National Household Survey*, 2011, Data Request.

Percentage of population aged 15 years and over by highest certificate, diploma or degree	Canada	Ontario	Middlesex-London	London	Middlesex
Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma	9%	6%	6%	6%	7%
College, CEGEP or other non-university certificate or diploma	15%	16%	18%	18%	19%
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%
University certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor level or above	17%	19%	17%	19%	10%
Bachelor's degree	11%	12%	10%	11%	7%
University certificate, diploma or degree above bachelor level	6%	7%	7%	8%	4%

**Figure 7: Population Aged 15 Years and Over by Highest Certificate, Diploma or Degree (Source: National Household Survey, 2011)**

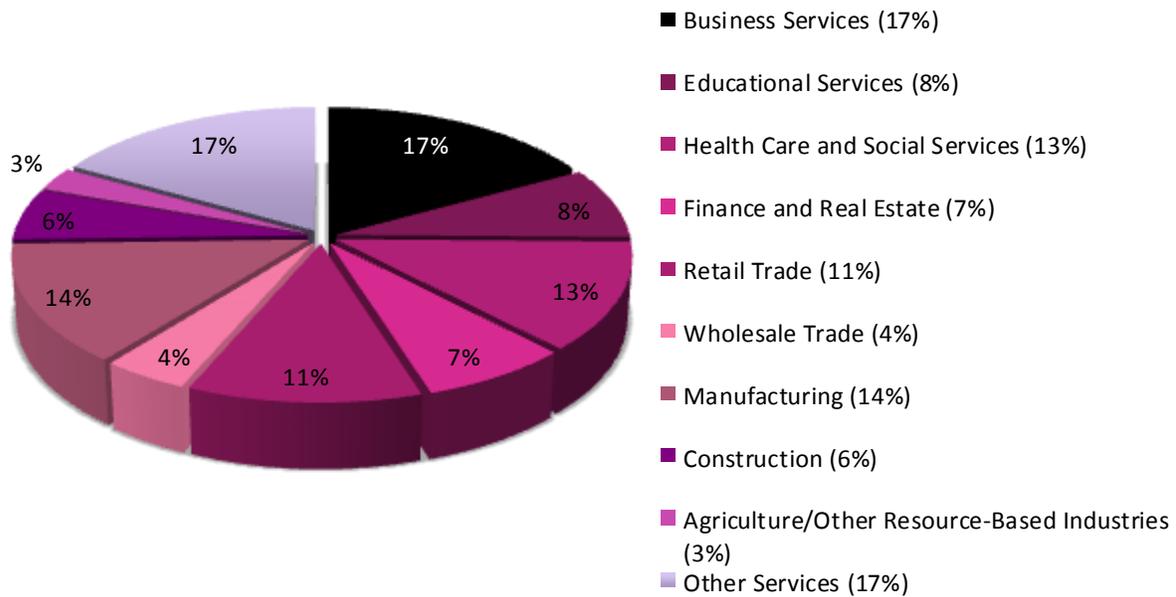


**\*Note:** The percentage of the population ages 15 and above years of age in Middlesex-London is consistent with the national and provincial average with only a 1-2% variance

The top five industries in Middlesex-London in 2006 were, from the highest number of occupations to the lowest, business services (17%), other services (16.8%), health care and social services (12.5%), manufacturing (13.8%), and retail trade (11.4%).<sup>42</sup> The top three industries are generally shared by Canada, Ontario, London and Middlesex in roughly the same proportions (retail trade, health care and social assistance, and manufacturing) (see Figure 9). Interestingly, agriculture is one of the top five occupations in Middlesex, but is not in London, Ontario or Canada.

<sup>42</sup> Middlesex-London Health Unit, "Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London: Community Picture," 2011, Print, at p.25.

**Figure 8: Top Five Industries (Source: National Household Survey, 2011)**



The number of people and households receiving social assistance in Middlesex-London has been increasing over the years. In 2006, 6.5% of the population, and 9.6% of households received Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Ontario Works (OW). In June of 2014, these numbers rose to 8.2% of the Middlesex-London population (36,931 people), and 12.7% of households (23,733 households). Within this period of time, London’s social assistance caseloads have increased faster than its population; the Middlesex-London population increased by 7% and the ODSP and OW caseload increased by 35%. Since 2011, the ODSP caseload has been growing faster than the OW caseload.<sup>43</sup> As of 2014, the OW caseload is primarily represented by people over the age of 18 (75% of caseload), single individuals (64.3% of caseload), and households of families with children under the age of seven (over one-third of households).<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Child & Youth Network, *Poverty Trends in London*, 2011, Print, at p.11.

<sup>44</sup> City of London, “Ontario Works Participant Profile,” 2011, Print, p.1.

Figure 9: Occupations by Industry in Middlesex-London (Statistics Canada, 2006)

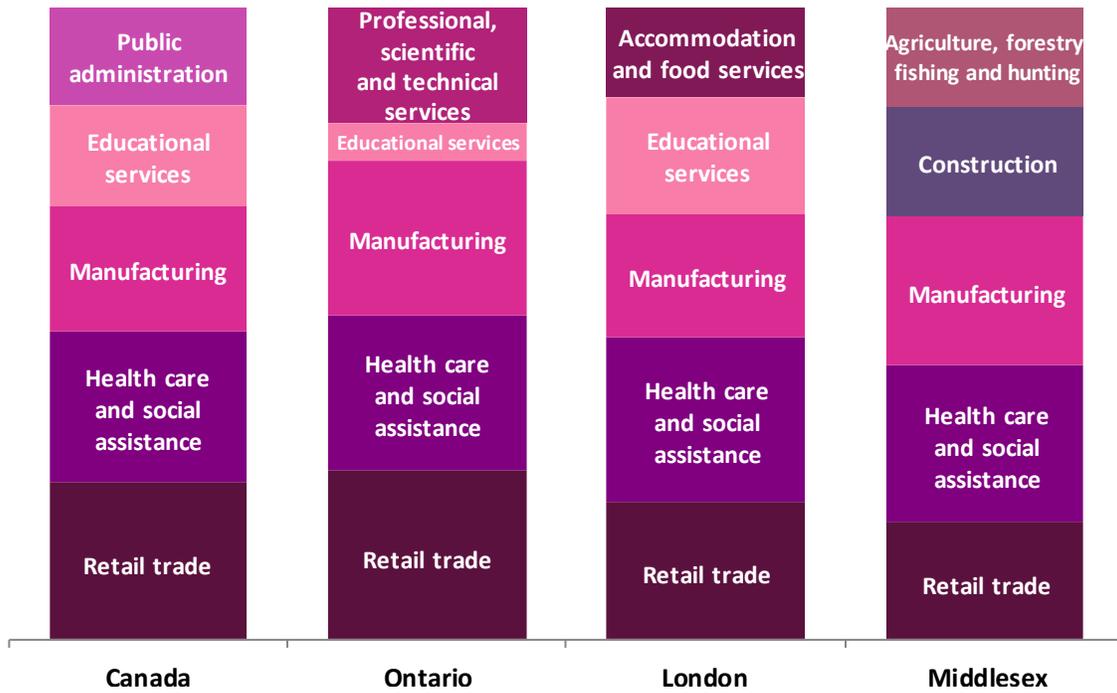
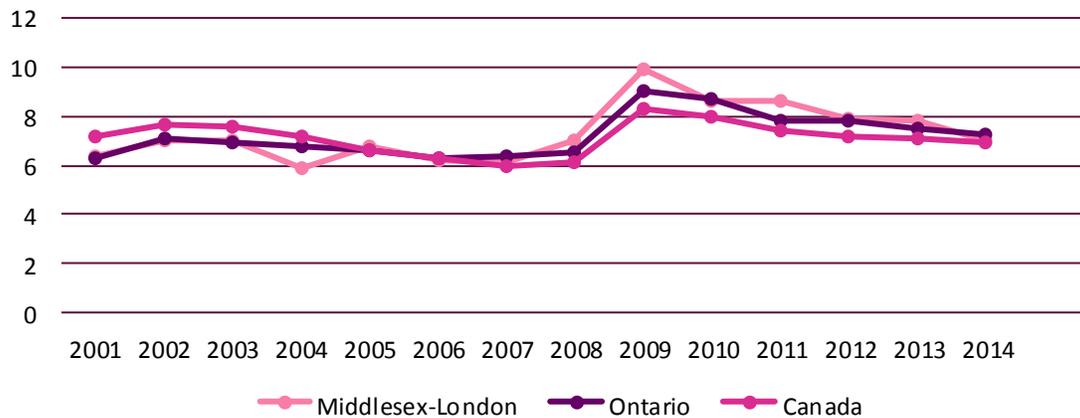


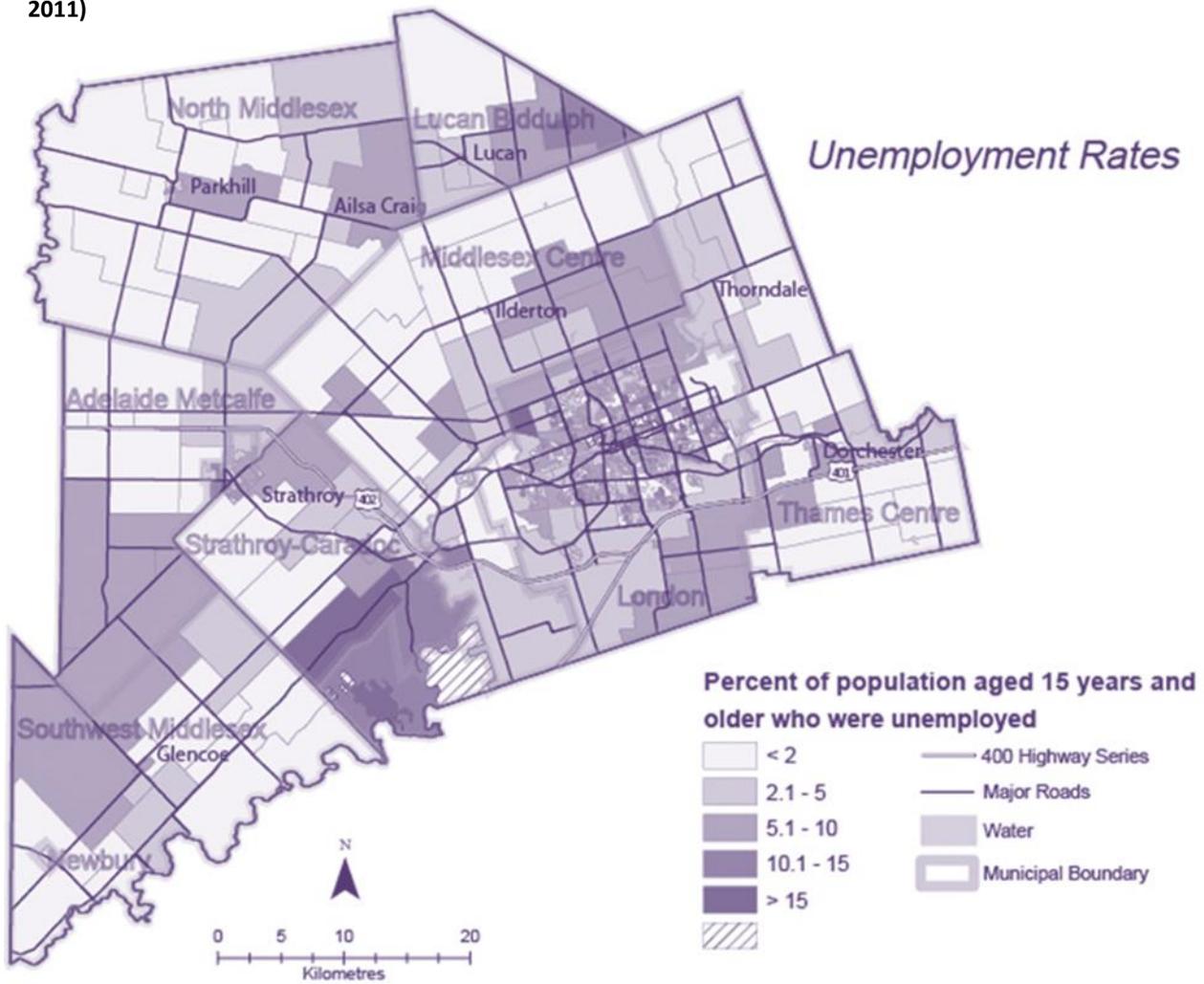
Figure 10: Unemployment Rates (Source: National Household Survey)



Middlesex-London’s 2014 unemployment rate (7.0% unemployment rate) is relatively in line with Ontario (7.3% unemployment rate) and Canada (6.9% unemployment rate). In April 2015, Middlesex-London’s unemployment rate was recorded as 6.3%, 0.7% lower than Ontario’s unemployment rate of 7.0%.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Statistics Canada, at <https://www.investinmiddlesex.ca/data-centre/workforce-profile/unemployment-rate-trend>

Figure 11: Unemployment Rates in Middlesex County, 2006 (Source: Human Environmental Analysis Laboratory, 2011)



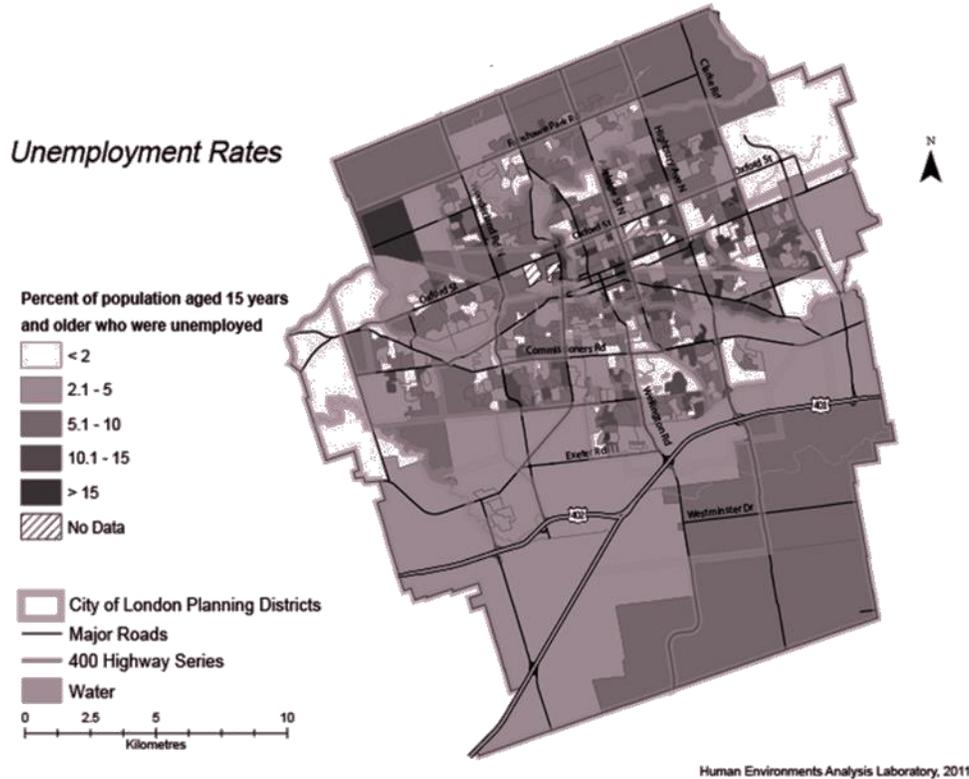
Maps provided by the Middlesex-London Health Unit show the percent of the population ages 15+ in 2006 who were unemployed by where they live in the region.<sup>46</sup>

The amount of income spent on shelter in Middlesex-London is a costly necessity. In 2010, 26.4% of households in Middlesex-London spent more than 30% of their total income on shelter costs (including rent and mortgage payments). While in Ontario as a whole, 42.3% of the population spent more than 30% of their income on shelter that they rent, in Middlesex-London this affects 44.7% of the population. For those in Ontario who own the place they use for shelter, 20.9% of the population spend more than 30% of their income on this cost, while in Middlesex-London 17.2% of residents spend more than 30% of their income on owned

<sup>46</sup> Human Environments Analysis Laboratory, "Employment," No Date, Web, at <http://communityhealthstats.healthunit.com/indicator/social-determinants-health/employment>

shelter.<sup>47</sup> In 2006, numbers were much higher with 25.8% of households (168,480 households) spending 30% or more of their income on housing. This compares to the provincial rate of 27.7%. The municipalities in Middlesex-London with the largest percentage of the population spending 30% or more of their income on housing are London (27.2%) and Newbury (34.3%).<sup>48</sup> The Social Research and Planning Unit states that in London, one in seven households are unable to afford shelter that meets adequacy, suitability and affordability norms.<sup>49</sup>

**Figure 12: Unemployment Rates in the City of London, 2006 (Source: Human Environmental Analysis Laboratory, 2011)**



### Cost of a Nutritious Food Basket

The cost of a Nutritious Food Basket helps us to understand how much people are required to pay for nutritious food based on the area in which they live in Ontario. According to the Nutritious Food Basket Report (2015) the weekly cost of the Nutritious Food Basket for a family of four in Middlesex-London is \$215.17 (\$860.67 monthly);<sup>50</sup> in Ontario the average is \$201.85 a

<sup>47</sup> Statistics Canada, *Focus on Geography Series, 2011 Census*, 2011, Web, at <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Pages/FOG.cfm?lang=E&level=3&GeoCode=555>.

<sup>48</sup> Middlesex-London Health Unit, *Healthy Communities Partnership Middlesex-London: Community Picture*, 2011, Print, at p.20.

<sup>49</sup> Social Research and Planning Unit, Community Services Department, *Fact Sheet: Low Income in London*, 2011, Print, p.1.

<sup>50</sup> Middlesex-London Health Unit, *Report No. 50-15 2015 Nutritious Food Basket Survey Results and Implications for Government Public Policy*, 2015, Print, at p.2.

week.<sup>51</sup> With an average income of 14% lower than the province, but food costs remaining relatively the same, it can be difficult for some residents to budget for food.

Since 2014, the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket has increased in Middlesex-London to an additional \$56.03 per week (increase of 7%) for a family of four, showing that the cost of healthy food is becoming more expensive.<sup>52</sup> (Note: a family of four includes a man and a woman each ages 31-50 years; a boy aged 14-18 years; and a girl aged 4-8 years). The cost of a Nutritious Food Basket for a single adult male has also increased since last year; in 2015, the cost of a Nutritious Food Basket in Middlesex-London was \$290 per month, compared to \$225.51 in 2014 (an increase of \$64.49 a month).<sup>53</sup>

### Cost of Healthy Eating

The Cost of Healthy Eating<sup>54</sup> shows that based on 2015 data, a single individual (male) who receives Ontario Works and all benefits and credits, receives \$740 a month. The \$740 a month does not provide adequate funds to cover the basic needs of housing and food (\$616 is needed for rent and \$290 is needed for food, based on the Nutritious Food Basket Survey, which leaves a deficit of \$166 a month. In addition to these costs, single individuals receiving Ontario Works still need to pay for heat and hydro, transportation, childcare, phone/internet, clothing, medical costs, personal care items, etc. Therefore, they must have cuts and sacrifices to survive (such as poor quality food) as they don't even have enough money to pay for rent and food alone. The situation is slightly better for a family of four (two adults, two children), but is still inadequate. A family of four who receives Ontario Works and all benefits and credits, receives \$2196 a month. Of this \$2196, \$1175 is spent on rent, and \$860 is spent on food. This leaves a remaining \$160 dollars to spend on other relevant costs identified above. See Table 8 for a breakdown of these costs. From this data, we can see that the most vulnerable residents, both individuals and families, in Middlesex-London do not have enough money to meet their basic needs. In 2014, this meant that approximately 36,931 residents of Middlesex-London did not have adequate funds to meet their basic needs (this number reflects the social assistance caseload in 2014 and does not include the dependents of each of these recipients who would also be impacted). For individuals who are struggling to afford healthy food, opportunities where people cook together as a group can help to make food more affordable as food costs are the highest when cooking for a single individual.

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<sup>51</sup> Nutritious Food Basket Report, Weekly Cost of a Nutritious Food Basket, 2013, Reference Family of Four Sorted Alphabetically, 2013, Print, at p.1.

<sup>52</sup> Middlesex-London Health Unit, Report No. 50-15 2015 Nutritious Food Basket Survey Results and Implications for Government Public Policy, 2015, Print, at p.2.

<sup>53</sup> Middlesex-London Health Unit, Report No. 50-15 2015 Nutritious Food Basket Survey Results and Implications for Government Public Policy, 2015, Print, at p.2.

<sup>54</sup> Middlesex-London Health Unit, Report No. 50-15 2015 Nutritious Food Basket Survey Results and Implications for Government Public Policy, 2015, Print, at p.2.

**Table 8: Monthly Income and Cost of Living Scenarios in Middlesex-London (Source: Middlesex-London Health Unit, 2015)**

	Single Man on Ontario Works	Single Man on ODSP	Single Woman Over 70 (Old Age Security/ Guaranteed Income Security)	Family of 4 Ontario Works	Family of 4 Minimum Wage Earner	Family of 4 Median Income (after tax)
<b>Income (Including Benefits &amp; Credits)</b>	\$740	\$1193	\$1544	\$2196	\$2882	\$6952
<b>Estimated Rent*</b>	\$616	\$788	\$788	\$1175	\$1175	\$1175
<b>Food (Nutritious Food Basket)</b>	\$290.09	\$290.09	\$210.02	\$860.67	\$860.67	\$860.67
<b>What is Left**</b>	-\$166.09	114.91	\$545.98	\$160.33	\$846.33	\$4916.33

\* Rental estimates are from *Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation Rental Market Statistics, Spring 2015*. Utility costs may or may not be included in the rental estimates.  
 \*\* People still need funds for utilities, phone, transportation, cleaning supplies, personal care items, clothing, gifts, entertainment, internet, school supplies, medical and dental costs and other costs.

The Middlesex-London population differs from Canada and Ontario in a number of ways:

- Population density (Middlesex-London is much denser)
- Education (Middlesex County has less people with higher education)
- Immigrant population (Middlesex-London has fewer immigrants) than Ontario
- Household income (Middlesex-London has a smaller average and median annual household income of 14% lower than Ontario)
- Leading cause of death (leading cause of death in Middlesex-London is heart disease, whereas in Canada it is cancer).

Areas of specific significance as they relate to indicators or determinants of food insecurity include:

- Education: Middlesex has lower rates of those with higher education and higher rates of less education.
- Household income: Middlesex-London has significantly reduced income compared to Ontario as a whole, as much as 14% less.
- Leading cause of death: While Middlesex is typical in its rates of heart disease as a leading cause of death compared to Canada, compared to London it has a 5% greater risk of death associated with heart disease.

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“As a low income resident I can say that most vegetables are really expensive. As much as we want to eat more vegetables, ...our budget can’t afford it.”

– *Survey Respondent*

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## **2.2 Gaps in Knowledge**

There are a few pieces of information regarding the population that were not available for the Middlesex-London region. The amount of people experiencing homelessness in Middlesex-London is not known, although the number has been estimated. Data on the number of people receiving ODSP was also not readily available, nor is the number of beneficiaries (i.e. dependents) of social assistance within Middlesex-London as the City of London was on strike at time of writing.

## **2.3 Strengths and Assets**

Middlesex-London has several strengths within the characteristics of its population. Education is one of the strengths of the residents; in London, there are many university graduates, and in Middlesex County there are a large number of college graduates and those trained in the trades (the number of university and college graduates and trades is higher than the provincial average); these assets are categorized as intellectual assets. Having a well-educated population creates many opportunities for residents as they have gained more skills and knowledge through their studies and are therefore; better equipped to earn a well-paying job.

In regards to communities, there is the cultural and spiritual asset of a large established community of indigenous peoples (identified by key informants). In addition, Middlesex-London residents identified an active and connected community around food system issues as one of their strengths. United communities can help fuel change in the food system, and other areas, as they are able to mobilize more people on the issues and spread awareness about issues and opportunities.

Population density is also an asset of Middlesex County as lower density allows for food production on a larger scale to take place (a material asset). Of the assets within Population, over half are cultural and spiritual assets. Table 9 lists all of the strengths and assets identified through the community food assessment process that pertain to this section of the report (please see 1.2 for Asset Legend).

**Table 9: Strengths and Assets within Population**

POPULATION						
						
1. Middlesex County has a low population density, allowing food production on a larger scale to take place						
						
2. Established community of Indigenous peoples, reserves, Indian Friendship Centres						
3. Active and connected community (community groups)						
4. Lower rate of obese adults than Ontario (higher number of healthy weight adults)						
						
5. University and college graduates						

## 2.4 Areas to Cultivate

Within Population there were two main areas in need of cultivation, the prevalence of food-related health issues and the prevalence of food insecurity (which can contribute to food-related health issues). In regards to food-related health issues, Middlesex-London residents have a concerning amount. The youth obesity rate is higher than the Canadian average. Many residents also suffer from heart disease and diabetes. These statistics are especially concerning as people can greatly lower their chance of having these health issues by living a healthy lifestyle (e.g. healthy food, exercise, not smoking); however, evidence shows many residents are not practicing a healthy lifestyle. 2011 data shows that 89% of Middlesex-London residents (12 years and older) do not eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables each day. Some residents struggle to meet these diet requirements due to the lack of affordable nutritious food. With the average income 14% lower than the province, some residents have inadequate incomes to afford healthy diets and often purchase nutrient deficient food, as it is often cheaper than nutrient rich food. The cost of a Nutritious Food Basket is relatively the same as the provincial average; however, lower average incomes make nutritious food difficult to afford. These same issues, among others, lead to food insecure populations.

In Middlesex-London 8% of households were considered moderately or severely food insecure in 2011. It is not only those residents who do not work (on social assistance) that cannot afford a proper diet, as 9.3% of people who access food banks are part of the working poor.<sup>55</sup> It is likely that more people who are part of the working class require food from the food bank as

<sup>55</sup> Ontario Association of Food Banks, *Hunger Report*, 2014, Print, at p.19.

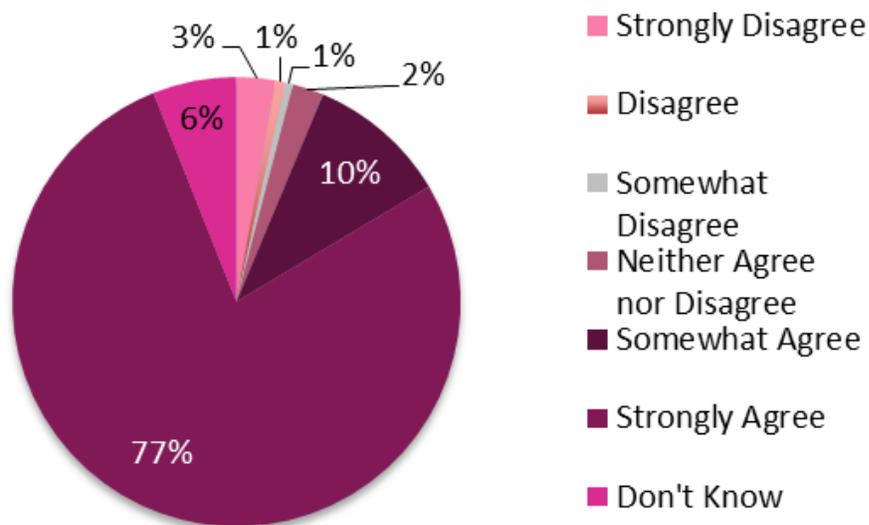
only about 25% of food insecure people access food banks.<sup>56</sup> To further support this claim, 57.5% of Ontario families who were food insecure in 2013 were part of the labour force.<sup>57</sup>

Inadequate incomes and/or unaffordable housing can force residents into a situation where they prioritize paying for shelter and utilities, over a nutritious diet. In 2012, 11% of the total population in Middlesex-London (approx. 48,307 in 2011) spent more than 30% of their income on rent or mortgage payments, leaving an insufficient amount of money for food. Additionally, 8.5% Middlesex-London residents were unemployed in 2011, making it difficult for them to consume a nutritious diet.

## 2.5 Opportunities for Change

In an effort to determine Middlesex-London residents interest in addressing the areas of food insecurity and diet-related health issues in the region, residents were asked to rate how important they felt these issues were. When asked how important residents thought it was that healthy food is affordable for everyone in Middlesex-London, 85% of residents “strongly agreed” that this was important to them. A strong level of support was also seen when asked whether residents thought it was important that food-related health problems are prevented in Middlesex-London. For this question, 77% “strongly agreed” that this was important, and an additional 10% felt this was “somewhat important”. The figures below show a breakdown of responses for the two questions.

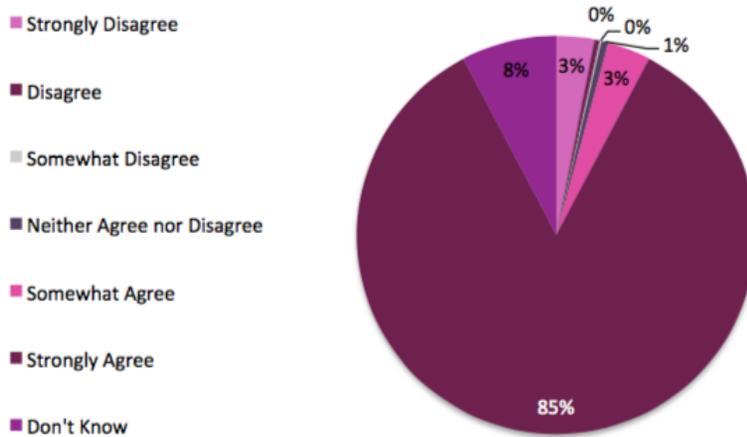
**Figure 13: It is Important that Healthy Food is Affordable for Everyone in Middlesex-London**



<sup>56</sup> Tarasuk, V. (no date). *Household Food Insecurity in Canada: Measurement, Monitoring and Research Results*. Web, at [http://www.dignityforall.ca/sites/default/files/docs/Tarasuk\\_DfA\\_Policy\\_Summit\\_Dec\\_2012.pdf](http://www.dignityforall.ca/sites/default/files/docs/Tarasuk_DfA_Policy_Summit_Dec_2012.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Tarasuk, V., Mitchell, A., & Dachner, N. (2013). *Household Food Insecurity in Canada*.

**Figure 14: It is Important to Prevent Food-related Health Problems in Middlesex-London**



As part of the Community Food Assessment, key informants and community members were asked to identify initiatives that could address the prevalence of food-related health issues and food insecurity within Middlesex-London.

To help decrease the amount of diet-related disease in Middlesex-London several initiatives were presented. Community members suggested that in order to reduce the prevalence of diet-related disease, healthy eating initiatives also need to be coupled with programming that increases the amount of physical activity that people participate in. It was noted that focusing on one aspect, and not both, does not help to instil healthy lifestyles in people.

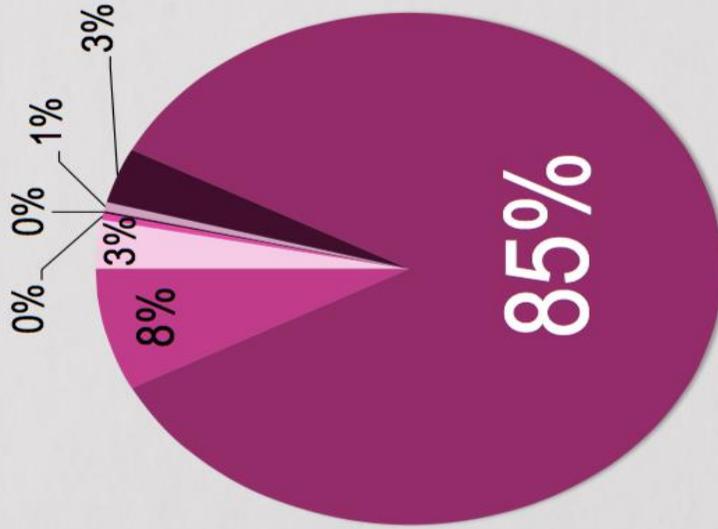
The practice of urban agriculture was also widely noted as an opportunity to encourage people to eat more nutritious food. Building more community gardens and school gardens are two ways to promote urban agriculture, as is providing workshops where people learn to garden so that they may do so on their own property. Through gardening, people are provided access to nutritious food, keep physically active and also increase their knowledge about the food system. The practice of urban agriculture can also help to reduce the prevalence of food insecurity.

To assist in decreasing the amount of food insecurity in Middlesex-London, several initiatives were noted throughout the Community Food Assessment process. Many people felt that part of the reason people are food insecure in their communities is because they have limited access to nutritious food. As a result, teaching people how to buy healthy food while on a budget was proposed. A regional plan to increase the amount of healthy food available at food service locations was also suggested as was planting fruit and nut bearing trees.

In regards to emergency food locations, food insecurity rates could decrease by providing infrastructure to food bank locations (such as cold storage units) so that they can store perishable items. These units could be stocked through providing subsidies to small-scale farmers as an incentive to donate goods to emergency food locations.

# 2.0 POPULATION

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT HEALTHY FOOD IS AFFORDABLE FOR EVERYONE



- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Don't Know



**459,821** PEOPLE IN MIDDLESEX-LONDON



**383,817** PEOPLE IN LONDON



**76,004** PEOPLE IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY



## FOOD INSECURITY

Low Income Residents

54,325

Residents on Social Assistance

36,931

Residents Spending < 30% of Income on Housing

48,307

Total

Annual Household Income

↑

Income

ONTARIO

\$85,772

MIDDLESEX-LONDON

\$74,765