

Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Trends at the Turn of the 21st Century

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- Cambridge Big Sisters
- Cambridge Home Support Program
- Cambridge Memorial Hospital
- Cambridge Out of the Cold
- Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank
- Cambridge Volunteer Bureau
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- Chaplin Family YMCA Settlement and Integration Services (Multicultural Centre)
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- Community Care Access Centre
- Community Justice Initiatives
- Family Services of Cambridge & North Dumfries
- Family & Children’s Services of the Waterloo Region
- Independent Living Centre of Waterloo Region
- Information Cambridge
- John Howard Society
- Langs Farm Village Association



- People Assisting in Transporting Elderly Residents (PATER)
- Preston Heights Community Group
- Project Read Literacy Network Waterloo-Wellington
- South Waterloo Housing Authority
- Southwood Community Centre
- Trinity Community Table
- Waterloo Region Community Health Department
- Waterloo Region Social Services Department
- Waterloo Region Safety and Crime Prevention Council
- Waterloo Region – Wellington – Dufferin District Health Council
- Waterloo Regional Police
- Waterloo Regional Police Neighbourhood Watch
- Women's Crisis Services

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Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 What is the Social Planning Council?
- 1.2 Background and rationale for this community trends report
- 1.3 Purpose of this community trends report
- 1.4 A Larger Context for Community Trends Analyses
- 1.5 Limitations
- 1.6 Format of this document
- 1.7 Maps

2.0 Population

- 2.1 Size & Growth of the Cambridge Population
- 2.2 Population by Cambridge Communities
- 2.3 People Who Moved
- 2.4 Source of Migration to Cambridge
- 2.5 Immigration (“External Migrants”)
- 2.6 Population by Age Groups
- 2.7 Sex
- 2.8 Age
- 2.9 Children
- 2.10 Seniors
- 2.11 Cambridge Population Report Summary (1996 Census)

3.0 Household and Family Structure

- 3.1 Size of Households
- 3.2 Lone-parent Families
- 3.3 Marital Status
- 3.4 Cambridge Household and Family Report Summary (1996 Census)

4.0 Ethnocultural Diversity

- 4.1 Language (Mother Tongue & Home Language)
- 4.2 Knowledge of Official Languages
- 4.3 Immigrants
- 4.4 Visible Minorities
- 4.5 YMCA Settlement and Integration Services
- 4.6 Cambridge Ethnocultural Diversity Report Summary (1996 Census)

5.0 Employment & Unpaid Work

- 5.1 Education
- 5.2 Literacy
- 5.3 Employment Growth in Cambridge
- 5.4 Participation Rates
- 5.5 Employment/Unemployment Rates
- 5.6 Part-time & Full-time Employment
- 5.7 Self Employment
- 5.8 Unpaid Work
- 5.9 Employment by Sector & Occupation
- 5.10 Location of Employment
- 5.11 Cambridge Employment Report Summary (1996 Census)



6.0 Income and Poverty

- 6.1 Household Income
- 6.2 Income by Gender
- 6.3 Income by Family Structure
- 6.4 Source of Income
- 6.5 Government Provided Income Supports
- 6.6 Incidence of Low Income
- 6.7 Cambridge Income & Poverty Report Summary (1996 Census)

7.0 Housing

- 7.1 Housing Growth
- 7.2 Ownership & Rental Housing
- 7.3 Availability of Housing
- 7.4 Affordability of Housing
- 7.5 Social Housing/Non-profit Housing
- 7.6 Assisted Housing
- 7.7 Homelessness & Emergency Shelters
- 7.8 Cambridge Housing Report Summary (1996 Census)

8.0 Community Safety

- 8.1 Crime Prevention
- 8.2 Reported Crime
- 8.3 Community-based Programs
- 8.4 Community Policing & Safety
- 8.5 Safety Perceptions and Concerns

9.0 Health

- 9.1 Perceived Health
- 9.2 Leisure Activity Levels
- 9.3 Primary Health Care
- 9.4 Community-Based Health Assistance

10.0 Disability Issues

- 10.1 Psychiatric Disabilities
- 10.2 Developmental Disabilities
- 10.3 Population with Activity Limitation
- 10.4 Physical Disabilities

11.0 Community Supports

- 11.1 Volunteerism
- 11.2 Neighbourhood Organizations
- 11.3 Supports for Children
- 11.4 Emergency Food
- 11.5 Percieved Gaps
- 11.6 Percieved Strengths of the Cambridge Community

12.0 North Dumfries

- 12.1 Population
- 12.2 Household and family structure
- 12.3 Ethnocultural diversity
- 12.4 Employment & Unpaid Work
- 12.5 Income and Poverty
- 12.6 Housing
- 12.7 Disability Issues
- 12.8 North Dumfries Report Summary (1996 Census)



13.0 Appendices

Appendix A: References

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

Appendix C: Top 10 Countries of Last Residence of External Immigrants to Cambridge,
1994-1998

Appendix D: List of Countries Comprising the Seven Major Areas for Figure 4-4



List of Figures and Tables

1.0	Introduction	1
	Figure 1-2: Cambridge and North Dumfries within the Regional Municipality of Waterloo Map	9
2.0	Population	2
	Table 2-1: Cambridge Total Population and Growth Rate, 1981-2016	2
	Figure 2-1: Population and Growth Rates for Cambridge, 1976-2016	3
	Figure 2-2: Cambridge Population by Community, 1961-1996	4
	Figure 2-3: Cambridge Population by Community Percentage, 1961-1996	4
	Figure 2-4: Cambridge Movers Over Previous Five Years, 1986-1996	5
	Figure 2-5: Source of Migration to Cambridge, 1986-1996	6
	Figure 2-6: Total Cambridge Population by Age Range Percentage, 1986-2001	7
	Figure 2-7: 1996 Cambridge Age Pyramid by Sex	8
	Figure 2-8: 1996 Actual vs. 2016 Projected Population in Cambridge	9
3.0	Household and Family Structure	2
	Figure 3-1: Family Type in Cambridge, 1996	3
	Figure 3-2: 1996 Cambridge Marital Status	4
4.0	Ethnocultural Diversity	2
	Figure 4-1: 1996 Official and Non-Official Mother Tongue Languages in Cambridge	2
	Figure 4-2: 1996 Non-Official Mother Tongues in Cambridge	3
	Figure 4-3: Total Yearly, External-Immigrant Permanent Residents Destined to Cambridge, 1994-1998	5
	Figure 4-4: Permanent Residents Destined to Cambridge by Area of Last Residence, 1994-1998	5
	Figure 4-5: 1996 Visible Minority Breakdown in Cambridge	6
	Figure 4-6: 1996 Visible Minority Breakdown in Cambridge	7
	Figure 4-7: Settlement & Integration Services, 1995-1997	8
5.0	Employment & Unpaid Work	2
	Figure 5-1: Cambridge Residents' Level of Education, 1986-1996	2
	Figure 5-2: Literacy Levels in Waterloo Region and Cambridge, 1998	4
	Figure 5-3: Cambridge Unemployment Rates, 1986-1996	6
	Figure 5-4: Percentage of the Labour Force that is Self-Employed, 1986-1996	9
	Figure 5-5: Percentage of the Labour Force that is Self-Employed, Cambridge and Waterloo Region, 1986-1996	10
	Figure 5-6: Percentage of the Labour Force that is Self-Employed, 1986-1996	11
	Figure 5-7: Employment in Various Industries in Cambridge, 1991-1996	12
6.0	Income and Poverty	2
	Figure 6-1: 1996 Cambridge Individual Income Spread by Gender	4
	Figure 6-2: 1996 Cambridge Average Family Income by Family Type	5
	Figure 6-3: Census Family Income of All Families in Cambridge 1996	5
	Figure 6-4: Household Income of All Private Households in Cambridge 1996	6
	Figure 6-5: 1996 Cambridge Composition of Income in Cambridge 1996	7

Figure 6-6: Government Transfer Payments, Percentage of Total Income for Cambridge, 1986-1996	7
Figure 6-7: Social Assistance Beneficiaries in Waterloo Region, 1994-1998	8
Table 6-1: Adequacy of Benefits in Ontario, 1998.....	9
Figure 6-8: Incidence of Low Income in Cambridge, 1986-1996.....	10
Figure 6-9: Incidence of Low Income in All Private Households, 1986-1996	10
Table 6-2: 1995 Low Income Cut-Off (100,000-499,999 population area), 1992 base.....	11

7.0 Housing 2

Figure 7-1: Residential Building Permits Issued in Cambridge by Community, 1990-1999.2	
Figure 7-2: Percentage of Occupied Private Dwellings that are Owned and Rented in Cambridge, 1986-1996	3
Figure 7-3: Cambridge Vacancy Rates for Apartments, 1989-1998	4
Figure 7-4: Cambridge Homeowners Paying More Than 30% of Household Income on Housing, 1986-1996.....	5
Figure 7-5: Cambridge Tenants Paying More Than 30% of Household Income on Housing, 1986-1996.....	6
Figure 7-6: South Waterloo Housing Authority Waiting List, 1991-1999	7
Figure 7-7: South Waterloo Housing Authority Waiting List and Number Housed, 1991-1999	8
Figure 7-8: Coordinated Access (Waterloo Region South) Income Category of Waiting List Applicants, August 1999	9
Figure 7-9: Number of Individuals on CCAC Long-term Care Waiting List at Year-end, 1993-1999	10
Table 7-1: CCAC Long Term Care Waiting List, 1993-1999	10
Figure 7-10: Number of Annual Bed Nights at Argus Women’s Residence , 1994-1998... 12	
Figure 7-11: Cambridge Women’s Crisis Shelter Average Clients, 1994-1998	13

8.0 Community Safety 2

Figure 8-1: Cambridge Per Capita Reported Criminal Offences Per Thousand Residents, 1993-1998	3
Figure 8-2: 1998 Per Capita Reported Criminal Offences Per Thousand Residents, Waterloo Region & Cambridge	4
Figure 8-3: John Howard Society All Community-based Alternative Options, 1993-1998 fiscal years	5
Figure 8-4: Cambridge and North Dumfries Neighbourhood Watch Members, 1993-1998.6	
Figure 8-5: Block Parents in Waterloo Region and Cambridge, 1994-1999	6

9.0 Health 2

Table 9-1: Waterloo Region Residents Perceived Health by Income Quintile, 1996/97	2
Figure 9-1: Waterloo Region Population With Excellent or Very Good Health, 1996/97	3
Figure 9-2: Leisure Time Activity Level in Waterloo Region, 1996/97.....	4
Figure 9-3: Activity Level by Age for Waterloo Region, 1996/97	5
Figure 9-4: Cambridge Memorial Hospital Emergency Visits, 1995-1998	6
Figure 9-5: Cambridge Memorial Hospital Inpatient Admittances & Same Day Surgeries, 1995-1998	6
Table 9-2: Private Family Physician Shortfall, 1999.....	7
Figure 9-6: PATER Number of Out-of-Town Rides, 1994-1998.....	8
Figure 9-7: PATER Rides Provided, 1994-1998.....	9
Figure 9-8: Cambridge Home Support Individuals Served in All Programs, 1994-1999 Partial Year	9
Figure 9-9: Meals on Wheels Average Number of Meals Per Customer, 1994-1998	10
Figure 9-10: Red Cross Home Healthcare Equipment Services, 1993-1998.....	11

10.0 Disability Issues **2**

Figure 10-1: Population with Activity Limitation by Sex, 1996..... 4

11.0 Community Supports **2**

Figure 11-1: Volunteer Bureau Referrals, 1989-1999 3
Figure 11-2: Volunteer Bureau Referrals Age Breakdown, 1994-1999..... 4
Figure 11-3: John Howard Society Active Volunteers, 1993-1999..... 5
Figure 11-4: Cambridge Red Cross Volunteer Resources, 1993-1998 5
Figure 11-5: Cambridge Big Sisters Waiting Lists & Matches, 1994-1998..... 6
Figure 11-6: PATER Drives, 1994-1998 7
Figure 11-7: PATER Drives Per Driver, 1994-1998..... 7
Figure 11-8: Cambridge Neighbourhood Association Development, 1996-1999..... 9
Figure 11-9: Neighbourhood Organization Number of Volunteers, 1993-1998..... 10
Figure 11-10: Neighbourhood Organization Number of Volunteer Hours, 1993-1998..... 11
Figure 11-11: Family and Children’s Services of Waterloo Region, Cambridge Referrals,
1994-1998 12
Figure 11-12: Family and Children’s Services of Waterloo Region, Cambridge Children in
Care, 1994-1998 12
Figure 11-13: Number of Cambridge Families Accessing Subsidized Childcare, 1994-1999
..... 14
Figure 11-14: Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank Total Hampers, 1995-1999 15
Figure 11-15: Trinity Community Table Annual Meals Served, 1995-1998 16

12.0 North Dumfries **2**

13.0 Appendices **1**

Table 13-1: Top 10 Countries of Last Residence of External Immigrants to Cambridge,
1994-1998. 13



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 What is the Social Planning Council?

“As a voluntary independent voice, the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries will actively participate in building and strengthening our community through research, analysis, facilitation and education.” This is the mission of the Social Planning Council. Our organizational values include:

- equitable access to resources;
- meaningful input into the definition and resolution of community issues through community participation.
- act as independent facilitators within the community viewing issues from multiple perspectives.
- by drawing from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives we strive for awareness and sensitivity to the diversity in our community (“strength in diversity”).

The Council also has a number of organizational goals. We strive:

- a) To predict, identify and address gaps in community services.
- b) To have equitable and accessible opportunities for all residents to impact on decision-making processes.
- c) To facilitate and support positive social change through partnerships with other organizations.
- d) To facilitate the empowerment and capacity building processes within our community.
- e) To conduct public policy analysis in order to educate and encourage action as appropriate.

It is with these values and goals in mind that we set out to find, assemble, analyse and interpret data on local community trends.

1.2 Background and rationale for this community trends report

The Social Planning Council has a rich legacy of providing data and information to human services organizations, governments, and funders. During the past 10 years the Council has released a variety of reports to the community for use in human service planning efforts. Most notable of these was the report titled, *Community Trends: City of Cambridge and Township of North Dumfries* that was released in July 1994. On a daily basis, the Council also responds to requests for data received by telephone, fax and e-mail.



One of the major sources of data for the Social Planning Council is Statistics Canada. Statistics Canada gathers census data from the population every five years. The last census was taken in 1996. The next census will be completed in 2001.

It usually takes Statistics Canada approximately two years to analyse and package data they collect from the census. The Social Planning Council was able to purchase the census data for Cambridge and North Dumfries in late 1998. Then we began to plan the creation of this community trends report in early 1999.

This community trends report became part of a larger process in early 1999, in which Cambridge City Council indicated an interest in measuring its progress on the objectives listed in *Our Common Future*.¹

It was agreed that explanations about progress on certain objectives² of *Our Common Future* would be most easily completed through City staff and already-established Advisory Committees to Council. However, two objectives fit nicely with current work of the Social Planning Council of Cambridge and North Dumfries (e.g., update on community trends, Capacity Net, and Waterloo Region Quality of Life Index project).

So, by April 1999, *Our Common Future, Our Progress* became an initiative funded by the City of Cambridge and the United Way of Cambridge and North Dumfries. The main question to be answered was, “Is Cambridge making progress toward becoming a healthier, safer and more sustainable community?”

The Social Planning Council formed an advisory committee in April 1999 comprising a broad cross section of human service organizations in Cambridge. The committee met at least monthly to offer advice on the methodology and the analyses for *Our Common Future, Our Progress*.

The research for *Our Common Future, Our Progress* involved the following tasks:

- gathering and analysing census data from the 1986, 1991 and 1996 census years for the City of Cambridge as well as analysing data from other major surveys (e.g., National Population Health Survey, a survey of youth perception of safety and crime in Waterloo Region, etc.);
- gathering and analysing program data (e.g., client utilization data) from a variety of human service organizations in Cambridge in order to better understand trends;
- completing a survey of human service providers (N=38) in Cambridge; and
- organizing a series of focus groups and public meetings with community residents (N=147) to gather qualitative data that help explain community trends and other issues raised in *Our Common Future*.

¹ The City’s strategic plan, ***Our Common Future***, was the result of an intensive community process which came to an end in October 1994. It resulted in a document titled, ***Our Common Future: A Strategy to Guide Cambridge into the 21st Century***. That process saw approximately 600 people participate in shaping a vision and objectives for Cambridge. This plan has been used by many organizations and funders – including United Way – as a tool for informing program planning processes and for making funding allocations.

² Objectives b), c), d), and e) of *Our Common Future* were completed by City staff and already-established Advisory Committees to City Council. These objectives focused on: A Place Where People Want to Live and Visit, A Vibrant & Diverse Economy, Necessary Infrastructure, and Strong Cores With a Single Civic Centre. Objectives a) and f) were completed by the Social Planning Council and focused on: Strong Community Leadership, and A Safe & Caring Community.



This document contains both quantitative and qualitative data on community trends in the Cambridge area. It contains information from all of the sources just listed. If one is interested in more details about any of the work completed for *Our Common Future, Our Progress*, readers are encouraged to consult one or more of the following reports that have already been produced:

- *Our Common Future, Our Progress Report to Cambridge City Council (January 2000)*;
- *Our Common Future, Our Progress: Recommendations to Cambridge City Council from Our Common Future Advisory Committee (January 2000)*;
- *Our Common Future: Content Analysis of Focus Groups and Public Meetings (December 1999)*; and
- *Our Common Future: Human Service Provider Survey Results (December 1999)*.

A major initiative of the Social Planning Council for the past few years has been to conceptualize how it can make more readily available, data like that which is contained in this trends document. Part of the Social Planning Council's strategic plan includes the creation of an electronic database that would contain most of the data collected from local human service organizations for this report. Putting this database on-line would make it readily available to the community as needed and more easily updated on an annual basis. The Social Planning Council will be pursuing this over the course of the next year.

1.3 Purpose of this community trends report

The Social Planning Council believes that research on the health and well-being of communities, with an emphasis on measuring what progress is being made and where more work is needed, is critical for long term community sustainability. The results of this research on community trends can serve many purposes including:

- This report is intended to be a starting point for anyone interested in a wide range of community issues. The trends reported here offer only a surface view of what is going on in our community. Local human service providers and people who use human services can offer much more detailed insight and analyses of these trends than what we have offered here.
- Shared understanding about what is happening within the community can lead to more inclusive decision-making about moving toward a healthier, safer and more sustainable community. With this information, we can now be more proactive about the desired direction of our community.
- Elected officials should know and understand the broad range of issues – social, environmental, and economic – that exist within the community in which they were elected to serve.
- The collected data can assist the City in its budgeting process. In other words, answers to the question “Where should/could the City be spending its money?” can be more rooted in the community.
- We can encourage greater public awareness of critical social issues in our community.



- Now that we see trends in a variety of community issues, our community (i.e. elected officials, City staff, non-profit organizations, community volunteers) can rally together to encourage healthy public policies in other levels of government with local information on community well-being. Cambridge City Council too, can advocate on behalf of its community residents.
- Finally, these results should act as a catalyst for dialogue in the government restructuring process, which is before us now. Thus they would assist in identifying what we do not want to lose in the current government restructuring exercise.

1.4 A Larger Context for Community Trends Analyses

Research on indicators related to community well-being has been ongoing around the world for many years now. Here we will highlight some examples of work that is being done on questions of community well-being, quality of life and healthy communities – all labels which refer to the same concept with slightly different emphases. All of these require trend data/indicators. They can all have major impacts on the design and implementation of healthy public policies too.

- The Social Planning Network of Ontario developed a framework, the Quality of Life Index, that can be used by people with few research skills in communities to gage positive and negative changes in four main areas: social issues, health issues, economic issues and environmental issues.
- The Federation of Canadian Municipalities released a report in May 1999 titled, *The FCM Quality of Life Reporting System: Quality of Life in Canadian Communities*. It offers a framework to monitor quality of life in Canadian cities. It includes population, affordability issues, quality of employment, quality of housing, community stress, community health, safety, and community participation.
- The Region of Waterloo is currently developing a framework and process for a region-wide quality of life master plan.
- Proceedings from a symposium on social indicators for measuring well-being offer one an opportunity to begin to understand the challenges that exist around objective and subjective indicators (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1996). Researchers from Canada, the United States and Europe met to discuss the use of social indicators in the measurement of well-being.
- Population health and sustainable development are two conceptual approaches that have many differences and many similarities.³ Population health tends to be driven by health departments and medical science, while sustainable development tends to be driven by the planning departments and environmental sciences/preservation. They are similar though in that they both focus on the community as a whole and a systems perspective.⁴
- Health promotion is another body of literature that relies heavily on indicators collected over time. Raphael et al. (1999) describe a community quality of life project that is actually a health promotion approach to understanding communities.

³ In her book, *No Place Like Home* (1992), Marcia Nozick explains the “essential characteristics of sustainable local economic development and why it works” (p. ix). She also advocates for “small is beautiful”.

⁴ For an interesting description of population health and sustainable development as concepts and how they are similar, refer to Hayes & Glouberman (1999), *Population Health, Sustainable Development and Policy Future*.



- The Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition has been actively promoting resident participation in building healthier neighbourhoods and advocating for healthier public policy for at least 10 years in Canada.
- The Canadian Council on Social Development has collected and analysed poverty data from the 1996 census. A number of regional municipalities across Canada now have urban poverty data for a variety of population groups (e.g., seniors, single parent families, etc.), which comprise these communities. This is called the *Urban Poverty Project*.
- As we move farther away from the Canada Assistance Plan of pre-1994 and watch how the Canada Health and Social Transfer (post-1994) is being implemented across the country, a variety of indicators can show us what potential impacts this federal policy shift is having locally.
- A variety of public policy issues are constantly being explored at the national level which require indicator data. The National Forum on Family Security is but one example. Their research includes data on the new economy, globalization, integration of schools and work, declining fertility rates in Canada, human development, changing structure of families, women's work, and real family incomes since the 1970s – to name but a few.⁵
- There are innumerable studies on the well-being of children across Canada. Campaign 2000, the national children's report card, and *The Progress of Canada's Children into the Millennium* (Canadian Council on Social Development, 1999) rely heavily on historical trend data to argue for more effective policies and programs for children. Using a number of indicators, this progress report offers a description of some of the barriers that stand in the way of optimal child well-being as well as some suggested directions to remove those barriers.
- Research as complex and as national in scope as that completed by the Canadian Policy Research Networks Inc. offers some explanations about measuring change within a Canadian social union model which inherently includes indicators of well-being.⁶
- The concept of social cohesion and attempts to map it is another body of literature that requires consideration of a variety of community indicators and their connection with other concepts such as social capital, civil society, pluralist society, state institutions, public participation, and social justice.⁷
- The United Nations relies on community trend data to detect positive and negative changes in countries around the world. Poverty and social development are but two areas in which the United Nations requires data.

There are also many resources and how-to manuals available for community residents who want to actively participate in measuring and changing conditions in their communities. The following are just a few of these resources:

- *Signs of Progress, Signs of Caution* (Hellman, 1996) is a manual on how to prepare a healthy, sustainable community progress report card in 12 steps.

⁵ The National Forum on Family Security is a three-volume set that offers readers the opportunity to explore some major shifts occurring around us. This work is preoccupied with the well-being of families as the basic unit in a civil society. (They use an inclusive definition of family.)

⁶ For more details, please refer to O'Hara and Cox (1998), *Securing the Social Union*.

⁷ More details can be found in Jenson (1998), *Mapping Social Cohesion: The State of Canadian Research*.



- *Communities and Local Government Working Together* (Walker, 1996) is a resource manual of strategies.
- *Pathways to a Healthy Community* (Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition, 1999) is a tool kit that focuses on indicators and evaluation.
- *Evaluation of Implementation Mechanisms for Vision 2020* (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, 1999) is an explanation of the various collaborative relationships that can enhance the chances of full implementation of strategic directions defined by communities with municipal government support.

Locally, the Social Planning Council has been involved in measuring community well-being for many years now. With some of the major changes in public policies in the 1990s, the Council has conducted research into the impacts of these changes on local human service organizations. It was argued that these findings would help to pinpoint some areas of major concern for some of the most vulnerable people living in our community. The report, *1997 Cambridge and North Dumfries Social Services: Inventory, Impacts of Cuts and Implications* (DeSantis, 1998) showed some areas of concern that have a direct link to community well-being and included: a shift toward more crisis related work with less emphasis on preventative work; increase in demand for many human services; changing expectations of volunteers in the delivery of services; persistent poverty; and questions about apparent pressure toward centralization of human service delivery.

Other local work on community well-being included the *Quality of Life Index* (Brunswick, et al., 1998) project in which we worked collaboratively with the Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo. This research showed some areas of concern including an increase between 1990 and 1997 in the demand for long term care, to name but one.

1.5 Limitations

The focus of this report is on Cambridge and North Dumfries. We have included some details about Waterloo Region and Ontario where they seemed to be most appropriate. We have not included data dealing specifically with neighbourhoods, yet these data are available through our office or the local planning department.

Readers should be careful about drawing conclusions when comparing data from different sources and different time periods. For example, despite the fact that Statistics Canada provides data on unemployment, these data should not be directly compared with unemployment data from the local employment office because these data are collected at different times and based on different methods of data collection.



We recognize that this document is not an exhaustive account of community trends. This document does not contain data on all available childcare, access to human services for gays and lesbians, community mental health services, parent-child drop-in programs, a variety of counseling programs, rehabilitation programs, adult education programs, public library usage, public transit ridership data, and the growing gap between the rich and the poor, to name but a few.

1.6 Format of this document

There are 11 main sections of this report.

Section 2.0 focuses on general population information including age, sex, source of population growth, age, sex, and migration.

Section 3.0 examines household and family data such as the size of households, lone-parent families, and marital status.

Section 4.0 provides an overview of the diverse makeup of the population of Cambridge, including mother tongue, home language, place of birth, and information on visible minorities.

Section 5.0 focuses on working in Cambridge, including education and literacy, participation rates, part-time and full-time employment, self-employment, unpaid work, industry sectors, and commuting.

Section 6.0 examines income issues in Cambridge. It includes information on, household, family, and individual income, source of income, and low income.

Section 7.0 provides a brief overview of housing in Cambridge, including housing growth, renting versus owning, availability, affordability, and homelessness.

Section 8.0 examines just a few indicators of community safety and accessibility in Cambridge, including reported crime rates, community policing, and perceptions of safety.

Section 9.0 focuses on basic health data on the population of Cambridge, including general health assessment, activity level, primary care, and community-based healthcare.

Section 10.0 is a brief overview of psychiatric, developmental, and physical disabilities in Cambridge.

Section 11.0 provides a few indicators of Cambridge community support, including volunteerism, neighbourhood associations, supports for children, and emergency food programs.

Section 12.0 focuses on North Dumfries. This report provides basic demographic data, including population growth, age, sex, migration, education, households, families, ethnocultural diversity, employment, income, and housing.



Unless otherwise noted, data are from the 1986, 1991, and 1996 Statistics Canada census. Local agency statistics were obtained directly from individual organizations.

Most of the data from organizations begins with 1994 because this was the base year for Our Common Future. Otherwise, data from the census was extracted for 1986, 1991, and 1996.



1.7 Maps

Figure 1-1: City of Cambridge & Township of North Dumfries Map,

Figure 1-2: Cambridge and North Dumfries within the Regional Municipality of Waterloo Map

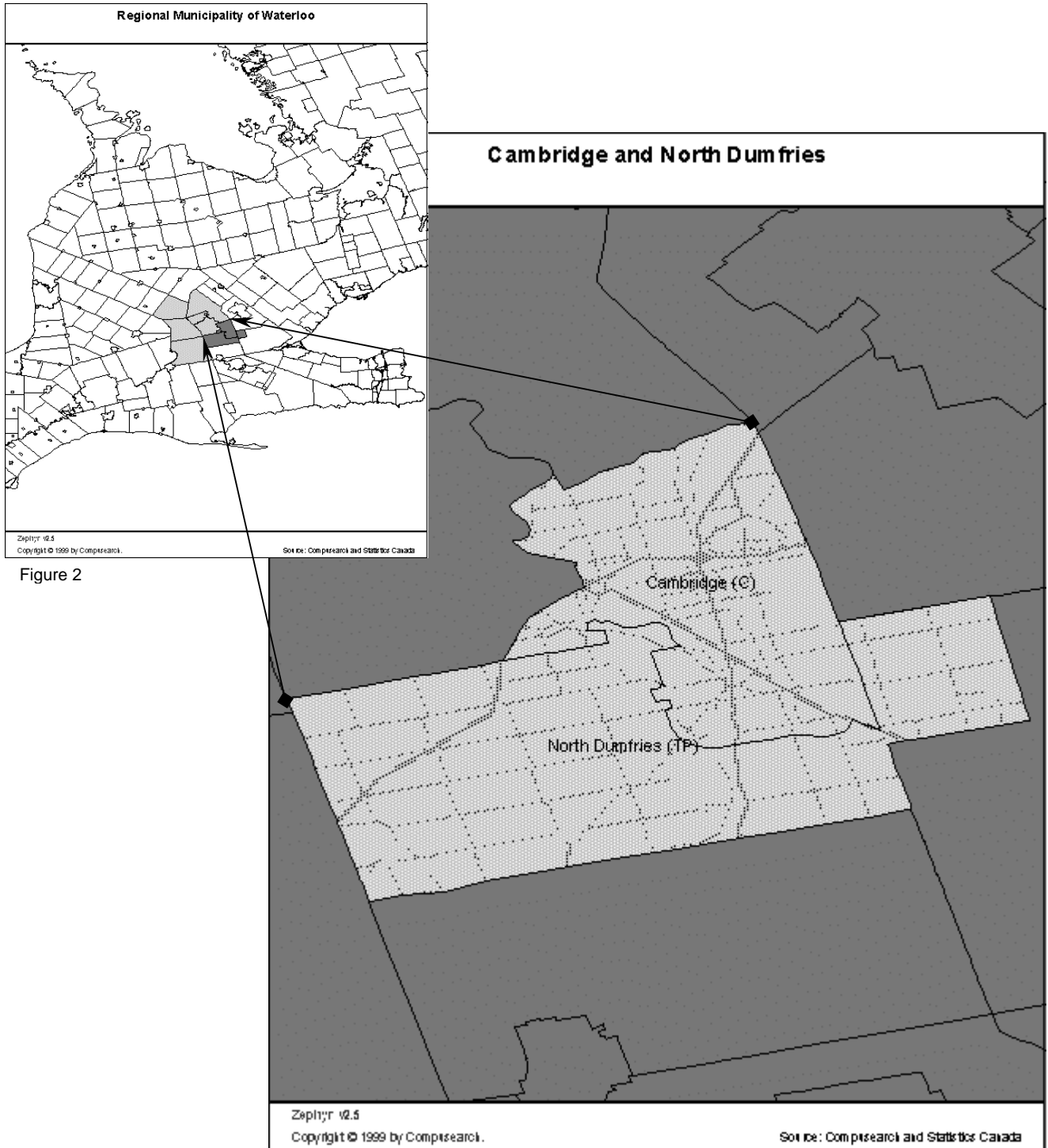


Figure 2

Figure 1