

Quality of Life Index Project Spring 2004

Progress & Setbacks in Hastings – Prince Edward
1990 - 2003

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This report, like all CDC initiatives, is representative of true community development. The Social Planning & Research Department of the Community Development Council of Quinte worked collaboratively to undertake this initiative.

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General Observations

Quality of Life Index Project: Progress and Setbacks in Quinte

Quality of Life: the product of the interplay among social, Health, economic, and environmental conditions which affect Human and social development.¹

The Quality of Life in Hastings – Prince Edward is higher in 2003 than both the base year of 1990 and 2002.

Hastings Prince Edward enjoyed progress in each of the following areas:	Hastings & Prince Edward saw setbacks in each of the following areas:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Assistance Beneficiaries	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children Admitted To Care of CAS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Labour Force Working	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social Housing Waiting Lists
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Labour Force unemployed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bankruptcies
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Long Term Care Wait Lists	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Cancer Cases
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Low Birth Weight Babies	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tonnes Diverted to Blue Boxes	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spills Reported	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tonnes Shipped To Market	

Alerts:

Social Indicators have seen the largest decline of all the sectors, having attained an overall score of 25 during the base year but a value of just 14.6 in 2003. This dramatic decline has a negative impact on community quality of life not just in the short-term but for years to come. Children Admitted To Care of CAS, Social Housing Wait Lists, and Bankruptcies continue to affect overall community well-being.

Cancer Cases are also on the rise, the cost of which on quality of life in terms of ill-health services, social well-being, and the economics of families coping with illness also has a negative impact on community quality of life.

Quality of Life in Hastings & Prince Edward Counties

History:

The Community Development Council of Quinte conducts social planning and community development within the context of social justice so as to enhance the quality of life for individuals and families in communities. Since 1996, the Community Development Council of Quinte, in partnership with the Ontario Social Development Council and the Social Planning Network of Ontario, has attempted to monitor the quality of life in Hastings – Prince Edward. The Quality of Life Index, like all social planning activities of Council, aims to identify urgent and emerging social issues, monitor and analyze trends that affect community quality of life, and heighten awareness to the needs of its members.

By monitoring the progress and setbacks experienced by communities in the period of time spanning 1990 to 2003, the Community Development Council of Quinte, in co-operation with our partners, has witnessed the progress and setbacks of community quality of life in Hastings – Prince Edward Counties. As such, the community has gained new insight into the inter-play between each of four sectors that contribute to community quality of life. Concurrently, at the CDC we've gained much insight into the collection of information which impacts on policy development at many levels of community life.

Having twice ranked as having experienced the most improvement in local quality of life, The Community Development Council of Quinte has endured criticism pertaining to our involvement in this project. Critics of the QLI have established three primary arguments. The first originates from those that believe the Hastings – Prince Edward communities should capitalize on its successes (and its score) in order to continue to strengthen community. The second originates from those individuals that believe a community's strengths and weaknesses cannot be found in the figures, but, rather, in the contribution residents make to responding to community crisis so as to improve quality of life. The third revolves around the collection and interpretation of data. This concern includes issues of reliability, and at the same time, the lack of data. In this regard, the critics are right. None-the-less, the Index has the capacity to help all three camps accomplish their respective goals. It is a tool from which community development can occur. By identifying strengths and weaknesses of community, the Hastings – Prince Edward region can celebrate its successes, socially, economically, spiritually, and otherwise. It can also influence how the community gathers data and ensure that its collection reflects the values communities hold dear.

Defining and Measuring Quality of Life:

Throughout the 1990's and into the new millennium we have witnessed widespread changes in communities. The effects of these changes have intensified, **especially in the past five years**. We have also witnessed changes to the economic and social infrastructure. We have witnessed a marked increase in the level and

complexity of poverty among most vulnerable in our community: women, frail elderly, young families, persons with disabilities, sole support families, to name only a few.ⁱⁱ Provincial and municipal governments have become wholly responsible for responding to issues for which they have been ill prepared.

Quality of Life as defined as:

The product of the interplay among social, health, economic, and environmental conditions which affect human social development.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Index:

Following an intensive literature review by members of the Provincial Working Group, led by the Ontario Social Development Council in 1997, it was determined, that the overall level of health attained by Canadians is an important measure in the success of our society. Good health enables individuals to lead productive and fulfilling lives. For the country as a whole, a high level of health contributes to increased prosperity and overall social stability. We were careful to include both positive and negative measures in order to provide a balanced perspective on the quality of life. We learned that our overall high standard of health is not shared equally by all sectors in Canadian society.^{iv} At the same time, the Quality of Life Index (QLI) is just one of several indicator projects occurring simultaneously world-wide. The QLI was presented by Malcom Shookner, of the Ontario Social Development Council at the 2nd International Conference on The Quality of Life in cities in Singapore in February 2000. We learned that QLI was, at the time, one of a handful of projects on the international stage which attempts to objectively measure quality of life within a holistic framework. Since that time, indicator measurement has become increasingly popular. In 2001, the Community Development Council of Quinte was invited to present its indicator work to academics and social researchers at the Universite de Provence in Marseilles, France. Since that time, research has determined that indeed, indicator work is most effective at the community level where community development activities can be implemented in response to community progress and setbacks.

Indicators

Twelve Quality of Life indicators are used. These include:

Social Indicators

- Social assistance beneficiaries
- Admissions to C.A.S. care
- Public housing waiting lists

Economic Indicators

- Number of people in labour force – working
- Number of people in labour force – unemployed
- Number of declared bankruptcies

Health Indicators

- Low birth weight babies
- Elderly waiting long term care facilities
- New cancer cases

Environmental Indicators

- Tonnes Shipped to Market
- Spills Reported
- Tonnes Diverted to Blue Boxes

These indicators represent a diversity of issues affecting or collective quality of life and encompasses four of the five components used in healthy community planning. The QLI tells us about the strengths and weaknesses within communities. It tells us which factors negatively impact our community and identifies those that have made a positive impact on our quality of life.

The QLI can reinforce what we already know about the relationship between how Federal, Provincial, municipal, and corporate policies and decisions affect and influence how we live our lives. It further validates assessment and planning exercises that take place at the community level and reinforces the need for programs and initiatives that address the weakness within communities.

It supports the need to continue to dedicate resources, energy, and effort to maintaining the areas that positively impact our community and has the potential to influence decisions that are made at the community, municipal, provincial and federal levels in so far as those decisions relate to:

- Identifying urgent, emerging, and priority issues within communities
- Designing and implementing changes in policy
- The allocation of financial and human resources dedicated to improving community quality of life
- The implementation of new programs and initiatives that enhance the quality of life for individuals within community.

Gathering Data:

Whenever possible, the Community Development Council of Quinte has attempted to gather statistics from local sources. Occasionally, our provincial partners were able to access data which had previously been unavailable to the Community Development Council, due in part, to the limited geographic region being studied.

Quinte vs. Hastings & Prince Edward Counties:

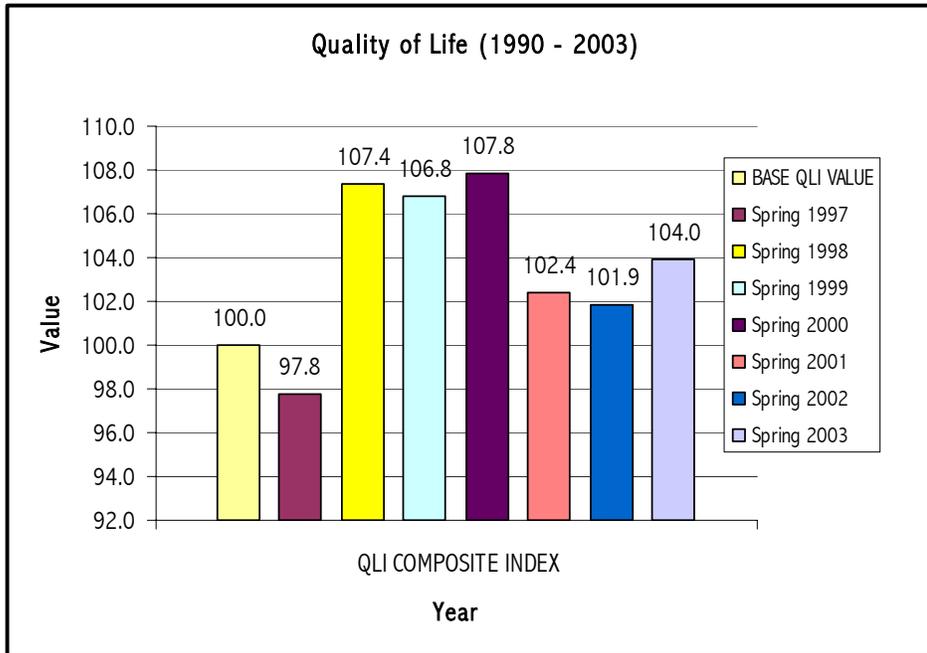
Although Quinte is usually more narrowly defined than Hastings & Prince Edward Counties, both counties have been included in this study as a result of the fact that statistics are rarely kept for each of the separate municipalities that comprise the Quinte region.

Converting Data to Quality of Life Scores

Step One:	The base composite index score is pegged at 100 for 1990.
Step Two:	Each indicator in the base year is affixed a value of 8.3 and is considered of equal value. No single indicator is weighted or deemed of more importance to the quality of life than another.
Step Three:	Statistics were gathered relating to each of the above indicators for each year included in the study. Wherever possible, local data sources were used. This information was applied to the Index using the formulas that have been established by the Provincial Working Group.
Step Four:	Local statistics were converted to a base rate per 10,000 people. This is to account for growth in population. The population rate was determined by dividing the population into the statistic for each of the years studied. The base year per 10,000 was subtracted from the current year per 10,000 and divided by the base year figure. This, when multiplied by 100 determined the percentage change between the base year and the current year. To determine QLI change, 8.3 was multiplied by the percentage change. This figure was added or subtracted to 8.3. The impact on communities was then determined. If the current QLI was greater than the 8.3 assigned base year, it was deemed to have impacted our quality of life in a positive manner. If however, the current QLI was less than 8.3, the indicator was deemed to have had a negative impact on the quality of life.

Some discussion has occurred with regard to updating the base year from 1990 to an alternate base year. The argument in favour of changing the base year is an acknowledgement of the diverse economic, political, and environmental conditions that have impacted quality of life over the past decade. Indeed that is precisely why the Community Development Council of Quinte has elected to sustain the base year as 1990. Ontario, and more directly, Hastings & Prince Edward Counties has seen political shifts which have included Provincial governments led by three different political parties. Municipalities have undergone dramatic changes as a result of amalgamation and the downloading of government programs and initiatives. Trends are impacted by these and other influences.

Generally speaking, quality of life in the region has continued to exceed quality of life from 1990. The region has seen peaks and valleys in its overall score having experienced a low of 97.8 in 1997 and a high of 107.8 during the spring of 2000. Despite a marginal dip in quality of life in 2001 and 2002, 2003 scores are again on the rise.



Most startling however is not the overall scores related to community quality of life or the trend lines that accompany the score, but, rather, analysis of the sectoral ratings.

Social Indicators have seen the largest decline of all the sectors, having attained an overall score of 25 during the

base year but a value of just 14.6 in 2003. This dramatic decline has a negative impact on community quality of life not just in the short-term but for years to come.

On the other hand, Health Indicators have seen the greatest incline, from a score of 25 in 1990 to 31.9 in 2003. Of the health indicators, the score for low birth weight babies, (weighing less than 5.5lbs.) has nearly doubled from a rate of 8.3 in 1990 to 16.5 in 2003, indicating a dramatic decline in the number of low birth weight babies from 1990 to present.

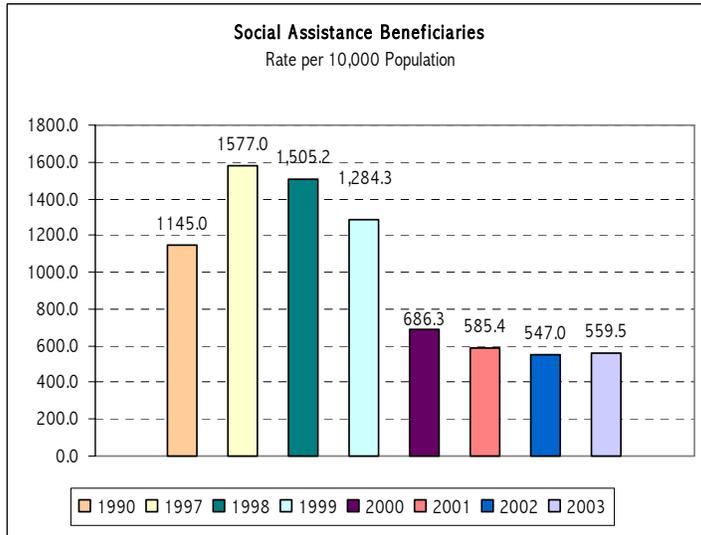
Health indicators are closely followed by Environmental indicators. The region's success can be largely attributed to the effectiveness of its recycling initiatives, where the percentage of tonnes (of recycling materials) shipped to market range from 94% collected to 97%.

Economic indicators, on the other hand have remained relatively unchanged

Composite Scores 1990 - 2003

Quality of Life Index 1990 – 2003									
INDICATORS	BASE YEAR	BASE QLI VALUE	SPRING 2003 QLI	SPRING 2002 QLI	SPRING 2001 QLI	SPRING 2000 QLI	SPRING 1999 QLI	SPRING 1998 QLI	SPRING 1997 QLI
SOCIAL INDICATORS									
1: Social Assistance Beneficiaries	1990	8.3	12.5	12.6	12.4	11.6	7.3	5.7	5.2
2: Admissions to CAS Care	1990	8.3	0.0	1.0	4.1	5.2	5.0	6.9	9.6
3: Ontario Housing W. Lists	1991	8.3	2.1	5.1	4.4	3.6	9.9	12.6	12.0
SOCIAL COMPOSITE		25	14.6	18.7	20.9	20.4	22.2	25.2	26.8
ECONOMIC INDICATORS									
4: Labour Force Working	1990	8.3	8.9	8.9	8.7	8.4	8.7	8.0	9.1
5: Labour Force Unemployed	1990	8.3	9.9	8.5	9.4	10.6	8.7	7.7	5.9
6: # of Bankruptcies	1990	8.3	7.0	8.2	7.4	8.3	7.9	8.1	7.9
ECONOMIC COMPOSITE		25.0	25.8	25.7	25.5	27.3	25.2	23.8	22.9
HEALTH INDICATORS									
7: # New Cancer Cases	1990	8.3	6.6	6.6	7.1	7.5	8.1	7.6	8.2
8: Long Term Care W. Lists	1995	8.3	8.8	10.2	7.8	10.8	10.9	11.8	12.7
9: Low Birth Weight Babies	1990	8.3	16.5	9.1	9.5	8.4	6.8	6.4	5.5
HEALTH COMPOSITE		25.0	31.9	25.8	24.4	26.6	25.8	25.8	26.4
ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS									
10: Tonnes Shipped To Market	1995	8.3	8.2	8.7	8.4	7.9	7.8	7.4	7.4
11: Spills Reported	1990	8.3	10.1	10.5	10.7	11.7	12.5	11.5	11.2
12: Tonnes Diverted to Blue Boxes	1991	8.3	13.3	12.4	12.6	14.0	13.2	13.7	3.1
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPOSITE		25.0	31.6	31.6	31.6	33.5	33.5	32.6	21.7
QLI COMPOSITE INDEX		100.0	104.0	101.9	102.4	107.8	106.8	107.4	97.8

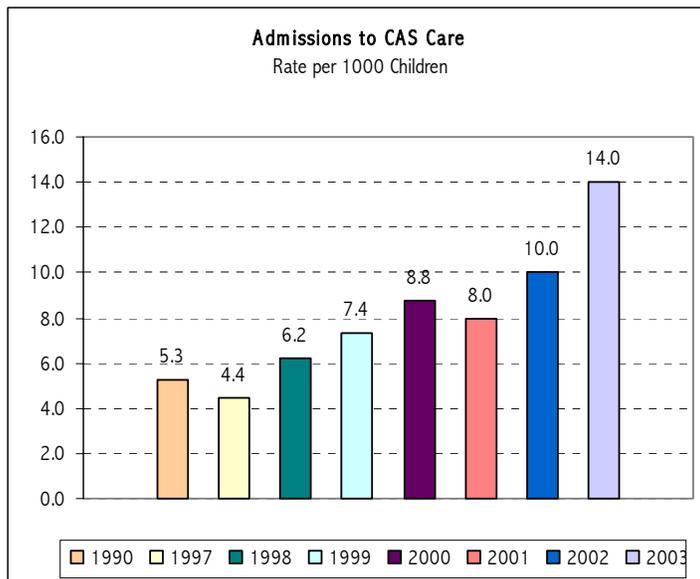
Social Indicators:



there has been an incline in the number of people who are now working, significant discrepancies continue to exist. This leads to two pertinent questions: has quality of life improved for former social assistance recipients and how do we track those improvements? From an indicator perspective, 2003 scores outperform that of 1990.

Social Assistance Beneficiaries:

Changes to the Social Assistance Act have dramatically influenced how social services/income support programs are delivered in Ontario and to whom. While the number of social assistance beneficiaries has continued to decline since 1998, this does not necessarily mean that individuals are better off as a result. In the best case scenario, the decline in the number of social assistance beneficiaries would be matched by an incline of the number of people who are active in the labour force. While indeed



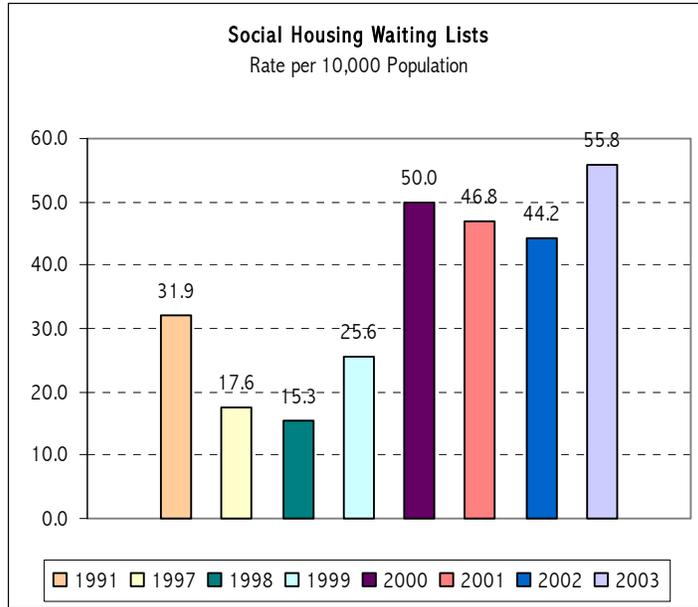
Admissions to C.A.S. Care:

The chart at left clearly shows that the number of children admitted to C.A.S. care in 2003 is drastically higher than the base year. In fact, as the chart shows, children admitted to care have increased every year since 1990. This trend has, and will continue to have a significant impact on Hastings and Prince Edward for years. In 2003, the Community Development Council of Quinte, in partnership with the Hastings Children's Aid Society undertook an extensive demographic review in response to this alarming trend. That report can be

accessed on line by visiting www.lks.net/~cdc or directly through the Hastings Children's Aid Society. That

report very clearly demonstrated the relationship between the region's economic conditions and lack of social supports for families in crisis.

Social Housing Waiting Lists:



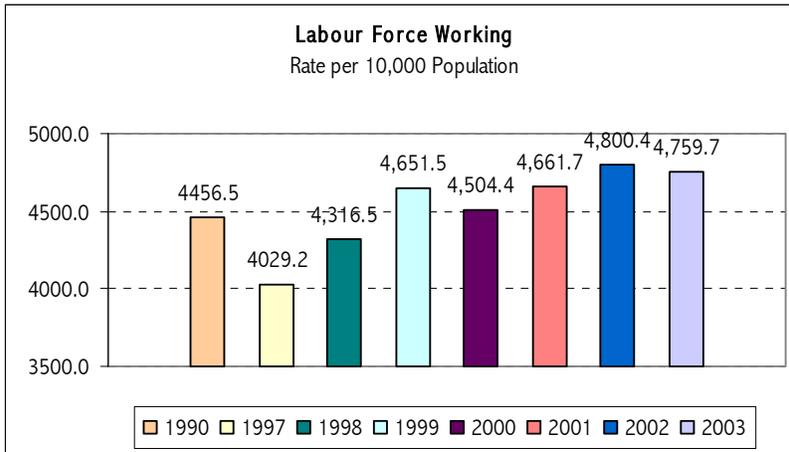
The number of individuals and families awaiting support through social housing continues to climb. This has a negative impact on community quality of life. Scott Robertson of The Hastings & Prince Edward Housing Programs Branch reports that “the most affected segment of society is still the single, low income individual who receives minimum shelter allowances with which to secure housing”. “Seniors who can climb stairs,” continues Robertson, “could attain rentals within months, but a single, low income person’s wait time is currently four years.” This trend is echoed by the Quinte Landlord Association (Belleville Intelligencer, April 26th, 2004). The high cost of utilities,

coupled with a high incidence of low and moderate incomes in the region have exacerbated the increase in the number of people on social housing wait lists.

Economic Indicators:

Labour Force Working:

Despite on-going concerns relating to the way in which government determines labour force participation

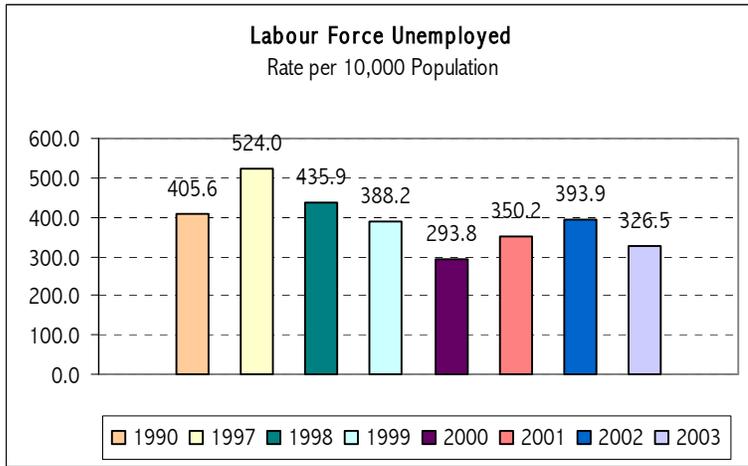


rates, i.e., sample surveying in economic region 515, manipulation of the data reveals that greater numbers of people in the region are now working and/or actively involved in the Labour Force. What we are not able to determine through this means, however is the quality of employment that exists. Specifically, quality of employment includes full-time work, access to benefits and supports, etc. The East Central Ontario Training Board is the local (and provincial)

leader in forecasting employment trends in the region. Through their work, and the analysis of local tax-filer data, issues relating to quality of employment have been brought to the forefront time and again. Most recently, the East Central Ontario Training Board determined that: in the year 2000, the last year for which tax filer data is available, local jurisdictions trailed the province (\$35,277) in terms of average annual employment income. At the high end, Belleville (\$28,009) was at 79.4% of the province, while Prince Edward County (\$24,421), at 69.2% of Ontario, posted the lowest average employment income. ^v

On the other hand, East Central Ontario Training Board also reports: 2000 average annual self-employment incomes in the local area, except for Belleville, remain far below the provincial average of \$17,567. Quinte West is at 69.6% (\$12,233) of Ontario; Prince Edward is at only 56.3% (\$9,892), while Hastings posted a dismal 45.2% (\$7,943).

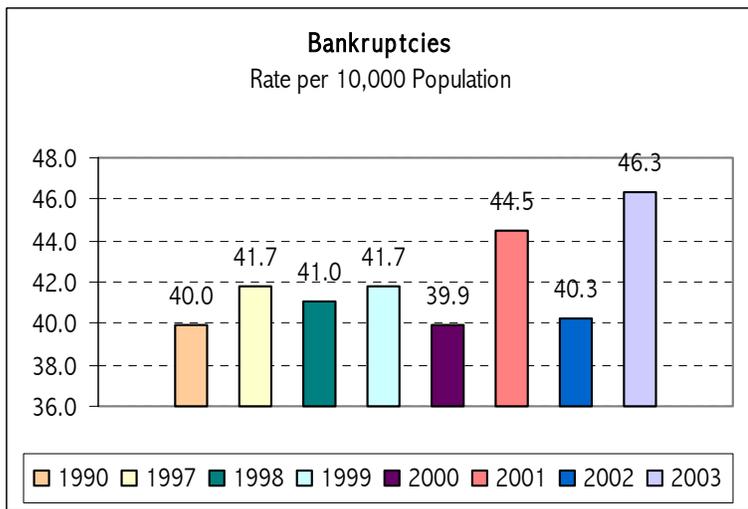
Labour Force Unemployed:



Similar to the number of people employed, the number of people in the labour force unemployed is lower as a rate per 10,000 in the year 2003 than in the base year. This has a positive impact on community quality of life.

Bankruptcies:

The number of individual and corporate bankruptcies in 2003 exceeds that of 1990, however, what is especially intriguing is the rise and fall that occurs between even and odd numbered years. None-the-less,

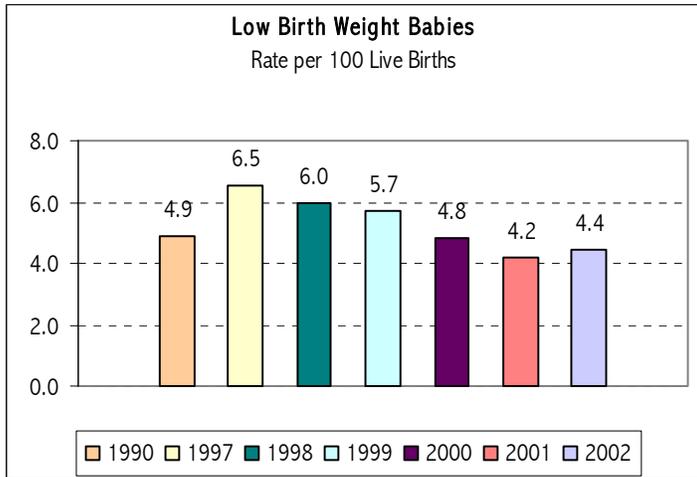


increased numbers of bankruptcies has a negative impact on community quality of life.

Health Indicators:

Low Birth Weight Babies:

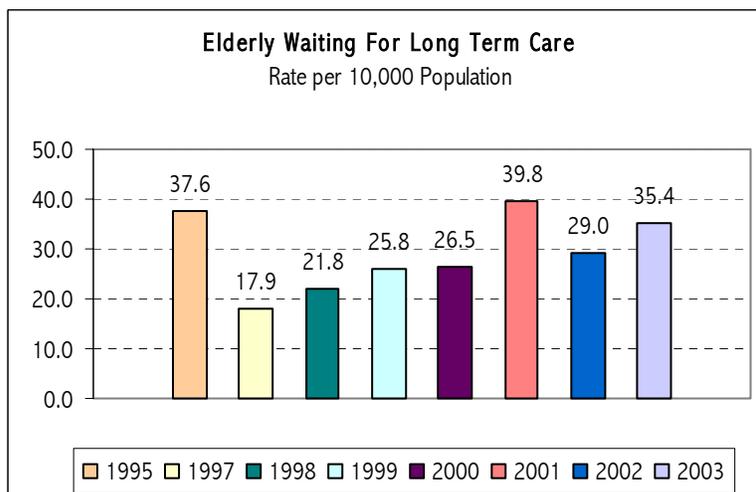
The number of low birth weight babies born in 2002 (the last year for which data was available) has declined from the number of low birth weight babies born in the base year. While 1997 saw a peak of 6.5 low weight births the declining trend has continued throughout the late nineties and into the new millennium. This has a positive impact on community quality of life as low birth weight babies very often require increased ill health services and are often at risk of learning and developmental delays, the impact of which can last a lifetime.



While 1997 saw a peak of 6.5 low weight births the declining trend has continued throughout the late nineties and into the new millennium. This has a positive impact on community quality of life as low birth weight babies very often require increased ill health services and are often at risk of learning and developmental delays, the impact of which can last a lifetime.

Long-Term Care Wait Lists:

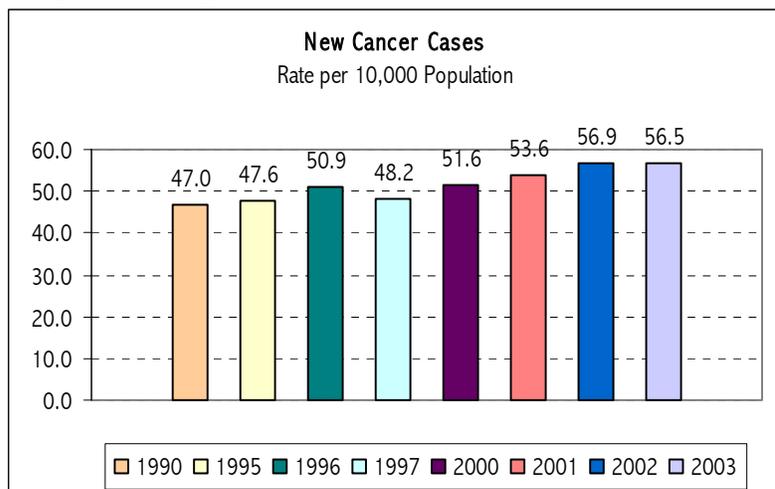
Trend lines reveal that the number of people on waiting lists for long-term care has seen some real fluctuations over the years. Despite fewer people on long-term care wait lists in 2003 over the base year,



wait lists have seen a low of 17.9 people at a rate per 10,000 in 1997, they've have also seen a high of 39.8 people per 10,000 in 2001. Long-term care will continue to be one of the many issues facing our communities in the years to come as a result of our aging society.

New Cancer Cases:

The number of new cancer cases in Hastings & Prince Edward Counties has increased from 51.0 persons per ten thousand to 56.5 persons per ten thousand since 1996. While there are still no sources to access data locally surrounding the collection of new cancer cases, the Community Development Council of Quinte has

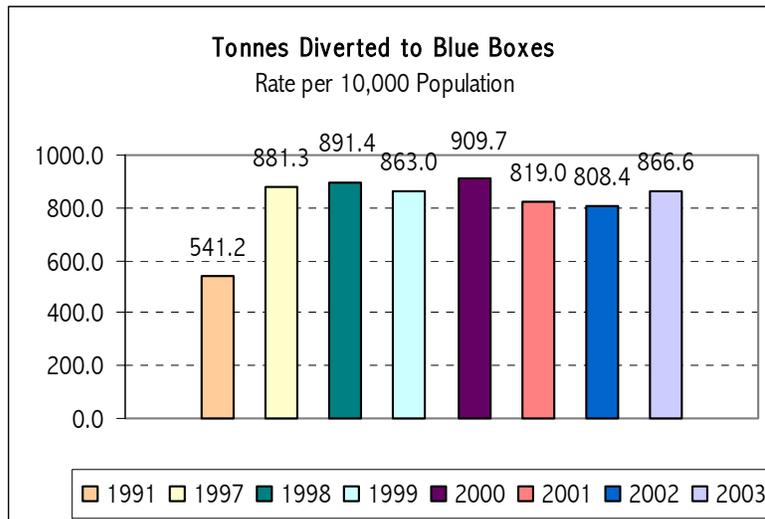


been presented with information from the Ontario Cancer registry. The Registry provides information to the Ontario Ministry of Health, Public Health Branch. The Ontario Cancer Registry is deemed to have an accuracy rate by residency of 98% at the county level.

Environmental Indicators:

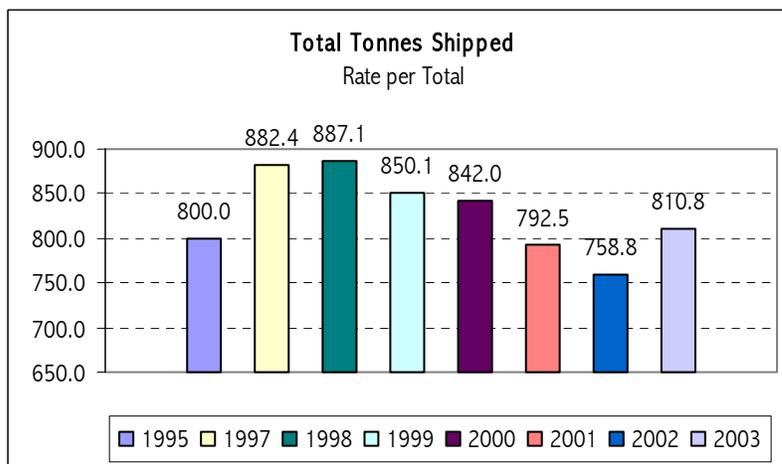
Tonnes Diverted To Blue Boxes:

Hastings & Prince Edward Counties continue to lead the Province in its recycling activities and has been



touted as a leader amongst its peers. That said, Hastings & Prince Edward continue to exceed the base rate in recycling or diversion from landfill to blue box initiatives. The trend line, however, reveals a decline in the total weight diverted from landfill to recycling initiatives, in large part, as a result of changes within packaging industries. Specifically, greater numbers of manufacturers now use plastics in their packaging. Plastics are lighter in weight resulting in reduced weights overall being diverted to blue box. This has a positive effect

on community quality of life as plastics have a greater re-market value than other forms of packaging.



Tonnes Shipped to Market:

Similar to Tonnes Diverted to Blue Box, Hastings & Prince Edward Counties have attained considerable success as it relates to the re-use of product derived of Blue Box/Recycling initiatives. In the year 2003, for example, a full 94% of all goods collected were shipped to market. Despite a peak of 97% in the year 2000, Sandra Law of Quinte

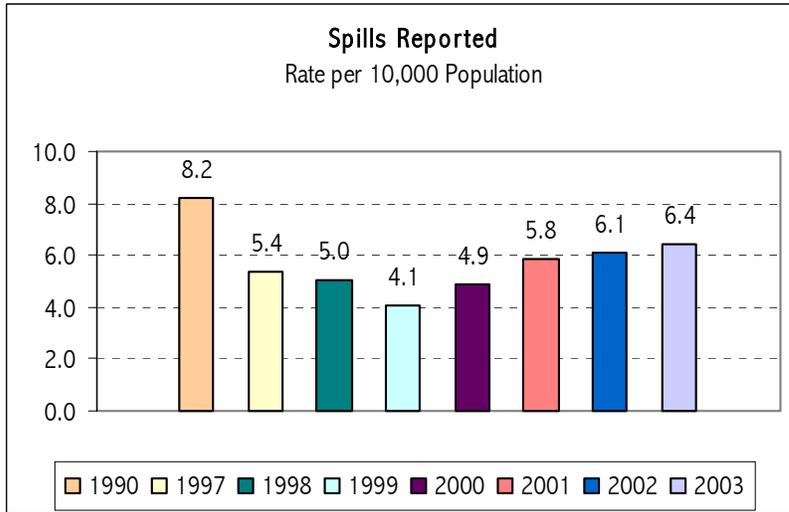
Waste Solutions, attributes the differences between “materials collected” and “shipped” to non-recyclable waste collected through the Blue Box program. Continued and sustained education, coupled with innovative and expanding recycling initiatives, is one of the ways in which participants can reduce the collection of non-

recyclable waste. Shifts within the packaging industry can shoulder some of the decline in indicator value in 2003 over 1990.

Spills Reported:

The chart at below indicates that the number of spills reported in 2003 has declined since the base year of 1990, yet has been on the increase since 1999. This may be directly associated with the new guidelines for reporting spills from the municipal to

the Provincial level. Given the less restrictive guidelines for reporting, it is highly likely the spills that are reported are of a more serious nature than those reported earlier in the decade under more strident government regulations. The impact of effluent discharge has continued to affect Hastings & Prince Edward Counties as communities continue their struggle to respond to environmental degradation as a result of poor environmental practices of the past.



Acknowledgement:

The Community Development Council of Quinte extends its sincerest thanks and appreciation to the following individuals and organizations for their assistance and contribution to the measurement of Quality of Life in Quinte.

Local Data Partners

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Siroos Hozhabri
Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Health Unit

Lisa Tweedy
Community Care Access Centre

Hanna Hrabar
Cancer Care Ontario

Monique Leclair
Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy

Additional Data Sources:

Ontario Ministry of Finance
Social Planning Network of Ontario
Spills Action Centre
Demographic Review of Hastings County
Provincial Quality of Life Studies

Government of Ontario
Health Canada
Belleville Intelligencer
Statistics Canada, Small Tax Division
Social Planning Network of Ontario partners

i Social Planning Network of Ontario, Fall 1997.

ii The Quality of Life in Brant County, June 1998

iii Ontario Social Development Council, project working group, Fall 1997

iv Ontario Social Development Council, 1997

v Community Development Council of Quint, Demographic Review of Hastings County, 2003.