

Municipal Report

NOVA SCOTIA

Town of Oxford

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Municipal Profile and
Financial Condition Indicators Results

2020-21

Municipal Profile and Financial Condition Indicators Report

2020-2021 Fiscal Period

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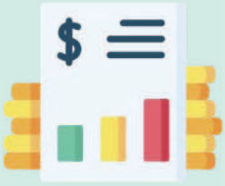
- Residential Tax Effort
- Residential and Commercial Uniform Assessment 5-Year Trend

**Uniform Assessment is taxable property assessment plus the capitalized value of payments made to municipalities in lieu of taxes.*



Chapter 3 - Financial Information

- Revenue Information - revenue by source (consolidated and operating fund), percentage of revenue reliance on government transfers, and percentage of tax revenue not collected.
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- Accumulated Surplus (Deficit) Information - accumulated surplus (deficit)by fund, annual surplus (deficit) and number of annual deficits in the last 5 years.
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Chapter 4 - Financial Condition Indicators

The Financial Condition Indicators (FCIs) condense multiple sources of information into a single visual "House Model" graph. The House Model gives a quick visual of a municipality's strengths and possible areas where a municipality may want to focus its attention. Thirteen indicators consisting of:

- 4 key performance indicators;
- 5 financial indicators that concern management and debt; and
- 3 indicators relating to internal and external factors that could impact the municipality's revenue stream.

Appendices

- List of additional municipal data located on the Nova Scotia Open Data Portal
- Municipality's website contact information



Contact Information

Introduction

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing compiles municipal indicators on behalf of the Nova Scotia Government and Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia (AMANS) that focus on three areas:

- financial matters;
- administration of the municipality; and
- characteristics of the community.

This report creates a snapshot from those financial and demographic statistics to help community members and decision makers better understand:

- the municipality in which they live;
- the municipality's key characteristics; and
- the municipality's financial risks.

For example, the snapshot makes it easy to:

- compare the Three-Year Change in Tax Base indicator to understand the municipality's revenue growth in comparison to cost of living; and
- use the change in population to indicate whether a community's population is growing or declining and its potential impact on municipal revenues and expenses.



Chapter 1 - Municipal Profile

Municipalities are diverse and operate within unique demographic and economic characteristics. These characteristics have a significant impact on municipal performance and subsequent strategies required to ensure a sustainable environment. This chapter outlines the unique demographic and economic characteristics of the Municipality, specifically its composition, population trends, demographics, median household income levels, employment rates, and educational attainment. The municipal profile trends could have impacts on the current and potential future tax base for a municipality.

Municipal Profile Highlights

About the Municipality



Figure 1- Location of Municipality

Name:	Town of Oxford
County:	Cumberland County
Approximate size:	11 km^2
Number of dwellings:	619
Government:	7 elected councillors (including the Mayor)

Population Highlights

Population 2016:	1,190
Population 5-year trend:	+3.4%
County 5-year trend:	-0.4%
Demographic trend:	Aging
Up to 19 Yrs.	21%
20 to 59 Yrs.	49%
Over 60 Yrs.	30%

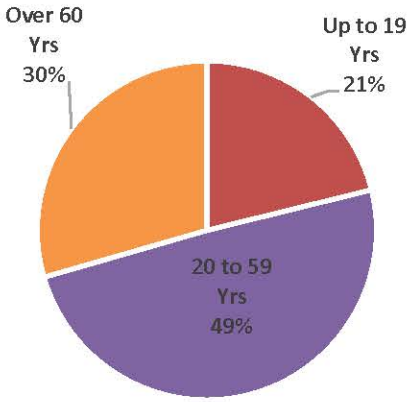


Figure 2 - Age Breakdown

Population Trends

Population:	1,190
Provincial population:	0.1%
20-year trend:	Declining [supported by Figure 3 below]
Age Trend:	Majority between 40-69 years of age [supported by Figure 4 below]

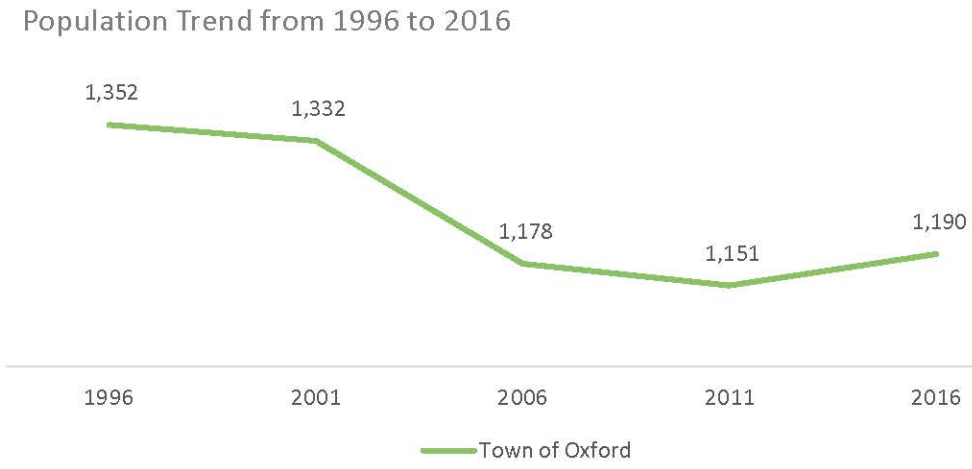
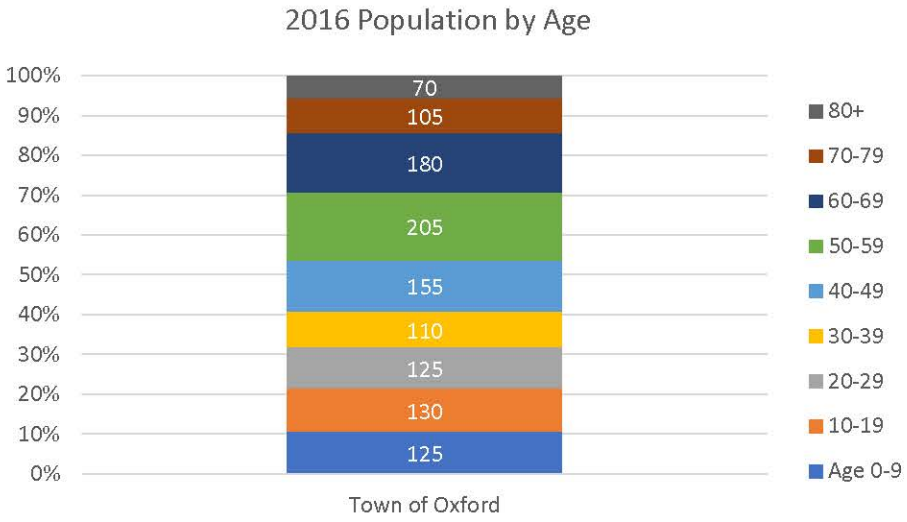


Figure 3 - Population from 1996-2016. Source: Statistics Canada

Figure 4 - Population by Age for 2016. Source: Statistics Canada



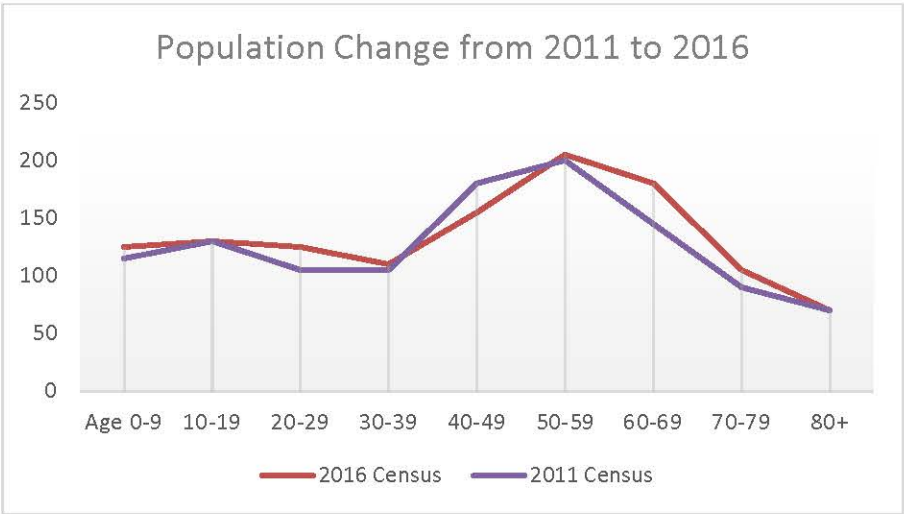


Figure 5- Population Age Change from 2011 to 2016. Source: Statistics Canada

According to the 2016 Census, similar to most towns in Nova Scotia, the majority of Oxford's citizens are between the ages of 40 and 69, but it has more youth population than most towns.

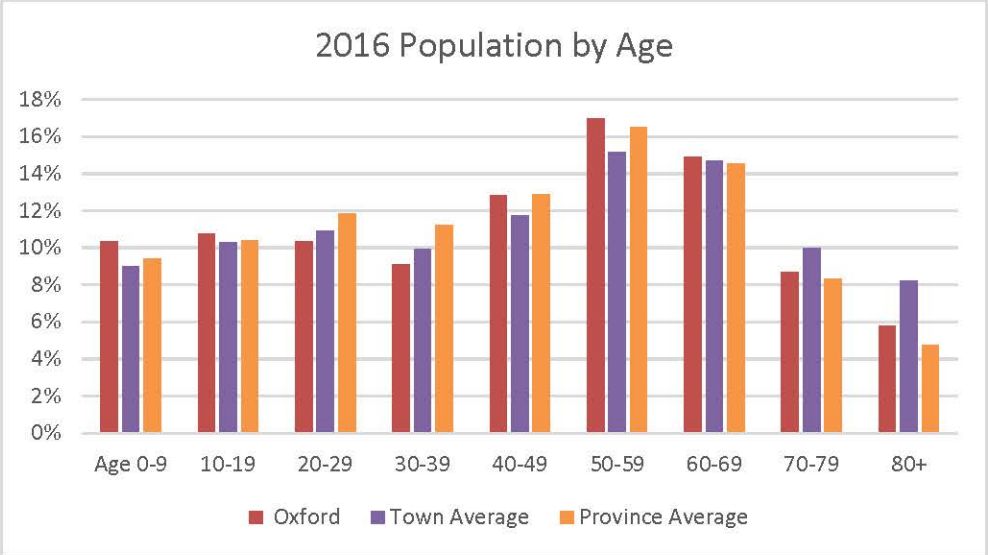


Figure 6 - Comparison of Population by Age for 2011 and 2016. Source: Statistics Canada

Economic Indicators

Along with population trends, employment rates and median household income are important economic indicators. Education levels can also play a crucial role in economic and social progress and can help improve income distribution. These factors provide an indication of the wellbeing of the economy and labour force.

	2016 Census	*2011 Census*	*+/-*	*Town Average*
Median Household Income	$46,336	$43,385	$2,951	$48,934
Employment Rate	52.1%	N/A	N/A	48.3%
Education Beyond High School	45.3%	N/A	N/A	52.0%

Source: 2011 and 2016 Statistics Canada

Median household income: Oxford's median household income is lower than the provincial town average, although it has increased since 2011.

Employment rate: The Town of Oxford's employment rate is above the provincial town average. Please note the 2011 Census data was not available for Oxford.

Education level: Oxford's education level is lower than the provincial town average. Please note the 2011 Census data was not available for Oxford.

Chapter 2 - Assessment Information



Since property taxes are a primary source of revenue for most municipalities, special emphasis has been placed on reviewing assessment trends.

Three-year change in Tax Base (Uniform Assessment)[1]:	5.1%	
	growth does not keep pace with cost of living	
Reliance on a Single Business or Institution	29.0%	dependent (high risk)
Financial Condition Indicator (FCI):		
Residential Tax Effort FCI:	3.4%	has some flexibility (low risk)

The line graphs below show the five-year trend of residential and commercial portion of the municipality's taxable assessment.

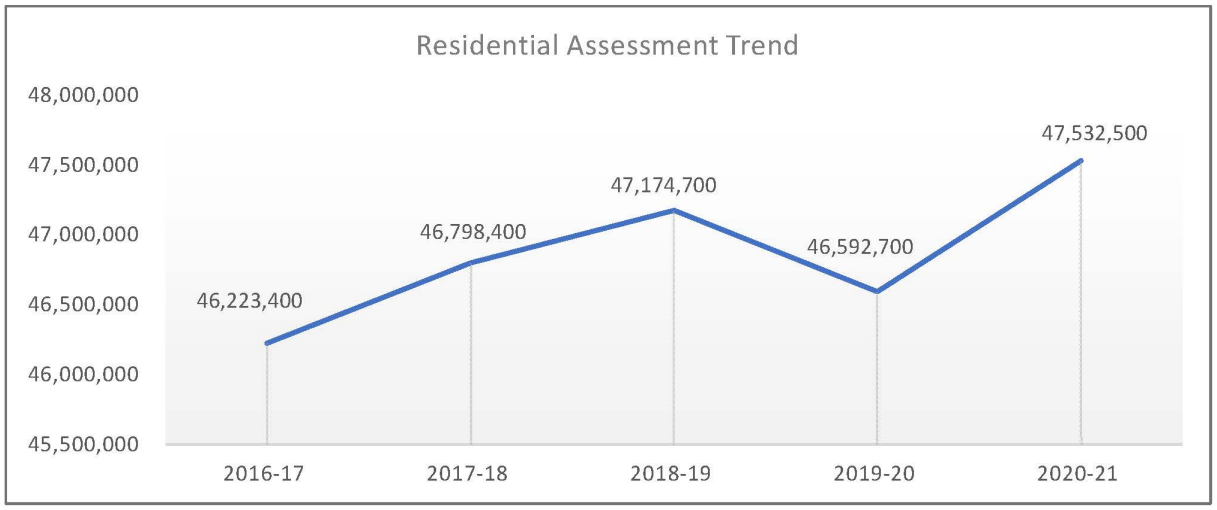


Figure 7 - Residential taxable assessment over the last five years. Source: 2016-17 to 2020-21 Statement of Estimates - Assessment

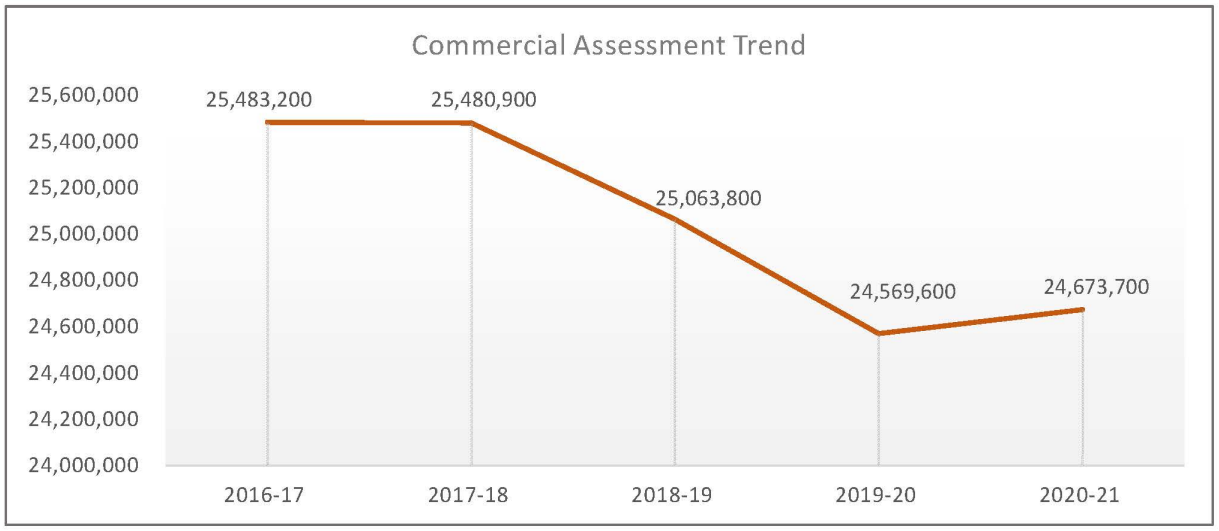


Figure 8 - Commercial taxable assessment over the last five years. Source: 2016-17 to 2020-21 Statement of Estimates - Assessment

[1] Uniform assessment is the value of a municipality's taxable property assessment plus the capitalized value of payments in lieu of taxes.

Chapter 3 - Financial Information

General Overview:

Audited financial statements are presented on a consolidated basis. These consolidated financial statements present all municipal entities as one single reporting entity:

- all the individual funds managed by the Municipality
- organizations or enterprises that the Municipality owns or controls, such as:
  - Water Utility
  - Cumberland Joint Services Management Authority - 2%

The Municipality's non-consolidated financial statements present only the individual funds managed by the Municipality, such as the General Operating Fund, General Capital Fund, Non-operating Reserve Fund, Operating Reserve Fund and, if applicable, Water Operating Fund, Water Capital Fund, Water Reserve Fund, Electric Operating Fund, Electric Capital Fund, and Electric Reserve Fund. Non-consolidated financial statements are reconciled but not audited[2].

Financial Reporting Compliance:

Audited Financial Statements and Financial Information Return	Yes
Submission of financial information:	After deadline[3]
Financial statements include:	
Remuneration and Expenses for Elected	Yes
Unqualified Opinion:	Yes
Quarterly Expense and Hospitality Report posted online:	Yes
Summary Expense and Hospitality Report submitted:	Yes
Statement of Estimates (SOE) -Assessment and SOE-Budget submitted:	Yes

[2] Please be advised that, although the Department reconciles, at a high level, a municipality's non-consolidated financial statements to the consolidated financial statements, the non-consolidated financial statements are usually not audited nor presented in full accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

[3] Annually, municipalities are required to submit their financial information by Sept 30th, with an exception made for the 2020-21 FIR, which was due November 24

Financial Highlights

Revenue

Total consolidated revenue:	$2.7 million
Revenue generated from own souce revenue *:	$2.4 million
Total general operating revenue:	$2.2 million
Largest general operating revenue:	80%
	Net property taxes and payments in lieu of taxes

Expenses

Total consolidated expenses:	$2.6 million
Total general operating expenses:	$2.0 million
Largest general operating expense:	41%
	Protective services

Annual Surplus

Annual consolidated surplus (deficit):	$0.2 million
Consolidated accumulated surplus (deficit):	$8.0 million
Annual general operating surplus (deficit):	$0.2 million

Debt

Total consolidated long-term debt:	$1.8 million
Total general capital fund long-term debt:	$0.8 million
General operating fund bank indebtedness:	$0.0

*excluding government transfers

Revenue:

$2.7 M

2021 Consolidated Revenue

Total consolidated revenue:	$2.7 million
Largest revenue:	$1.8 million Net property taxes and payments in lieu of taxes
Revenue generated from own source revenue:	89%

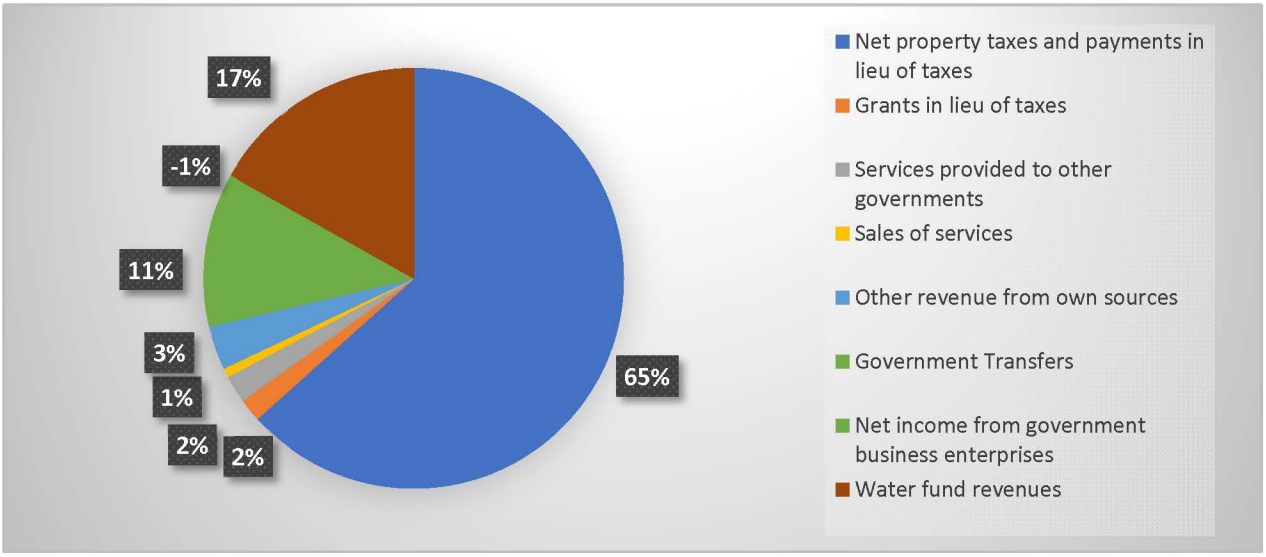


Figure 9 - Consolidated Revenue Source: 2020-21 Financial Information Return

The graph above and table below show the Municipality's consolidated revenue divided into categories.

	Consolidated Revenue
Net property taxes and payments in lieu of taxes	$1,768,702
Grants in lieu of taxes	$50,035
Services provided to other governments	$58,543
Sales of services	$20,042
Other revenue from own sources	$93,103
Government Transfers	$297,072
Net income from government business enterprises	-$34,261
Water fund revenues	$470,254
Electric fund revenues	$0
	$2,723,490

$2.2 M

2021 General Operating Revenue

Total general operating revenue:	$2.2 million
Largest general operating revenue:	80%
	Net property taxes and payments in lieu of taxes
Uncollected Taxes Financial Condition Indicator (FCI):	3.8%
Reliance on Government Transfers FCI:	9.6%

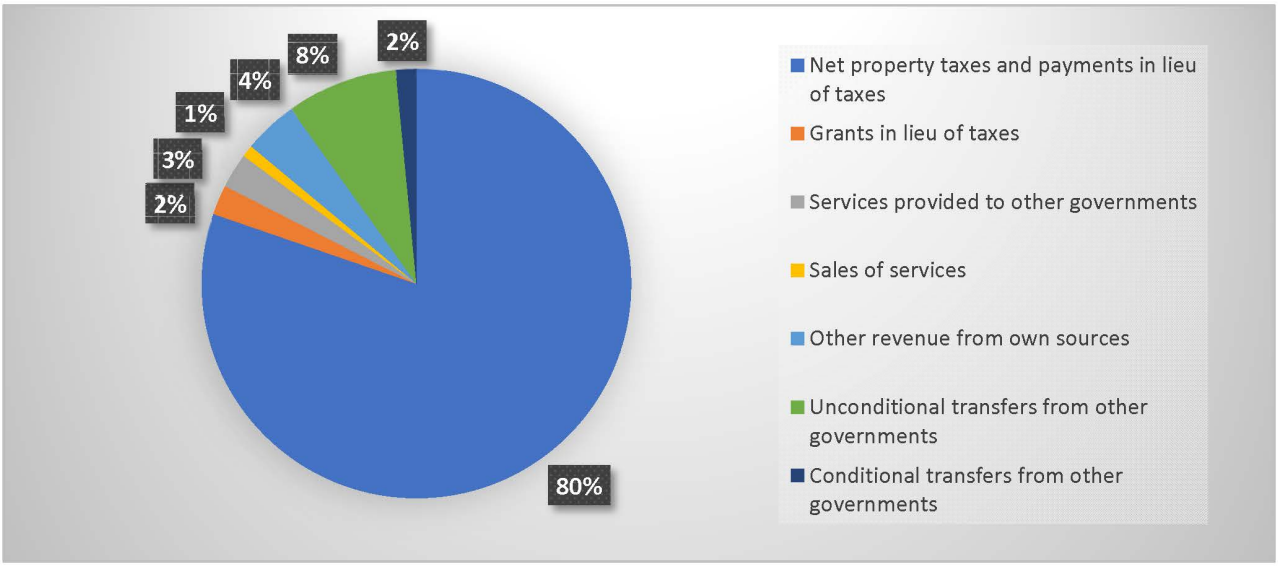


Figure 10 - General Operating Fund Revenue Source: 2020-21 Financial Information Return

The graph above and table below show the Municipality's general operating fund revenue divided into categories.

	General Operating Revenue
Net property taxes and payments in lieu of taxes	$1,787,700
Grants in lieu of taxes	$50,035
Services provided to other governments	$58,543
Sales of services	$20,041
Other revenue from own sources	$90,683
Unconditional transfers from other governments	$186,306
Conditional transfers from other governments	$34,127
	$2,227,435

Expenses:

$2.6 M

2021 Consolidated Expenses

Total consolidated expenses:	$2.6 million
Largest expense:	28%
	Protective services

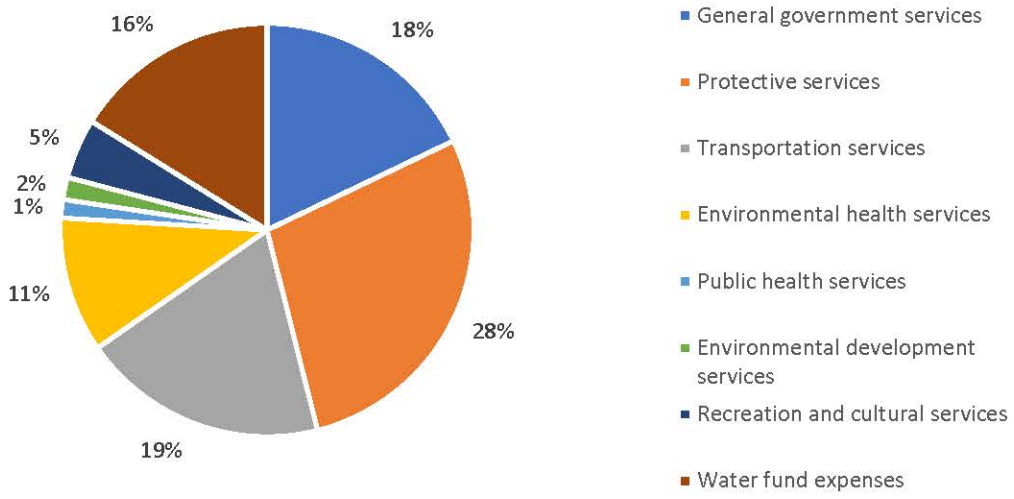


Figure 11 - Consolidated Expenses Source: 2020-21 Financial Information Return

The graph above and table below show the Municipality's consolidated expenses divided into categories.

	Consolidated Expenses
General government services	$457,553
Protective services	$721,131
Transportation services	$492,438
Environmental health services	$271,120
Public health services	$36,973
Environmental development services	$44,648
Recreation and cultural services	$120,648
Extraordinary or special items	$0
Water fund expenses	$413,391
Electric fund expenses	$0
	$2,557,902

$2.0 M

2021 General Operating Expenses

Total general operating expenses:	$2.0 million
Largest general operating expense:	41% Protective services
General operating reserves as a percentage of total general operating expenses:	3.2%

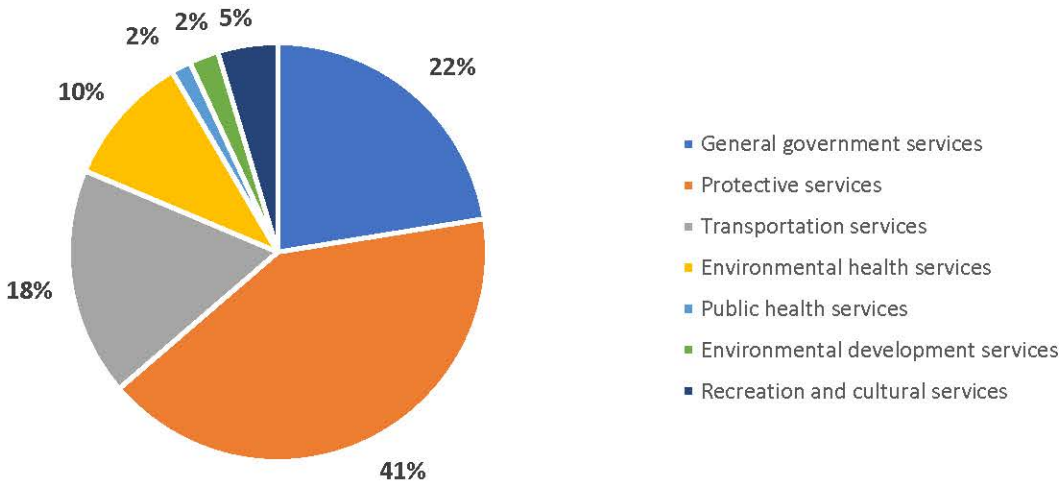


Figure 12 - General Operating Fund Expenses Source: 2020-21 Financial Information Return

The graph above and table below show the Municipality's general operating fund expenses divided into categories.

	General Operating Expenses
General government services	$439,897
Protective services	$808,159
Transportation services	$346,267
Environmental health services	$199,809
Public health services	$30,095
Environmental development services	$44,638
Recreation and cultural services	$90,964
Extraordinary or special items	$0
	$1,959,829

The graph below shows the expense by function for the municipal operations or General Operating Fund expenses compared to the provincial town average.

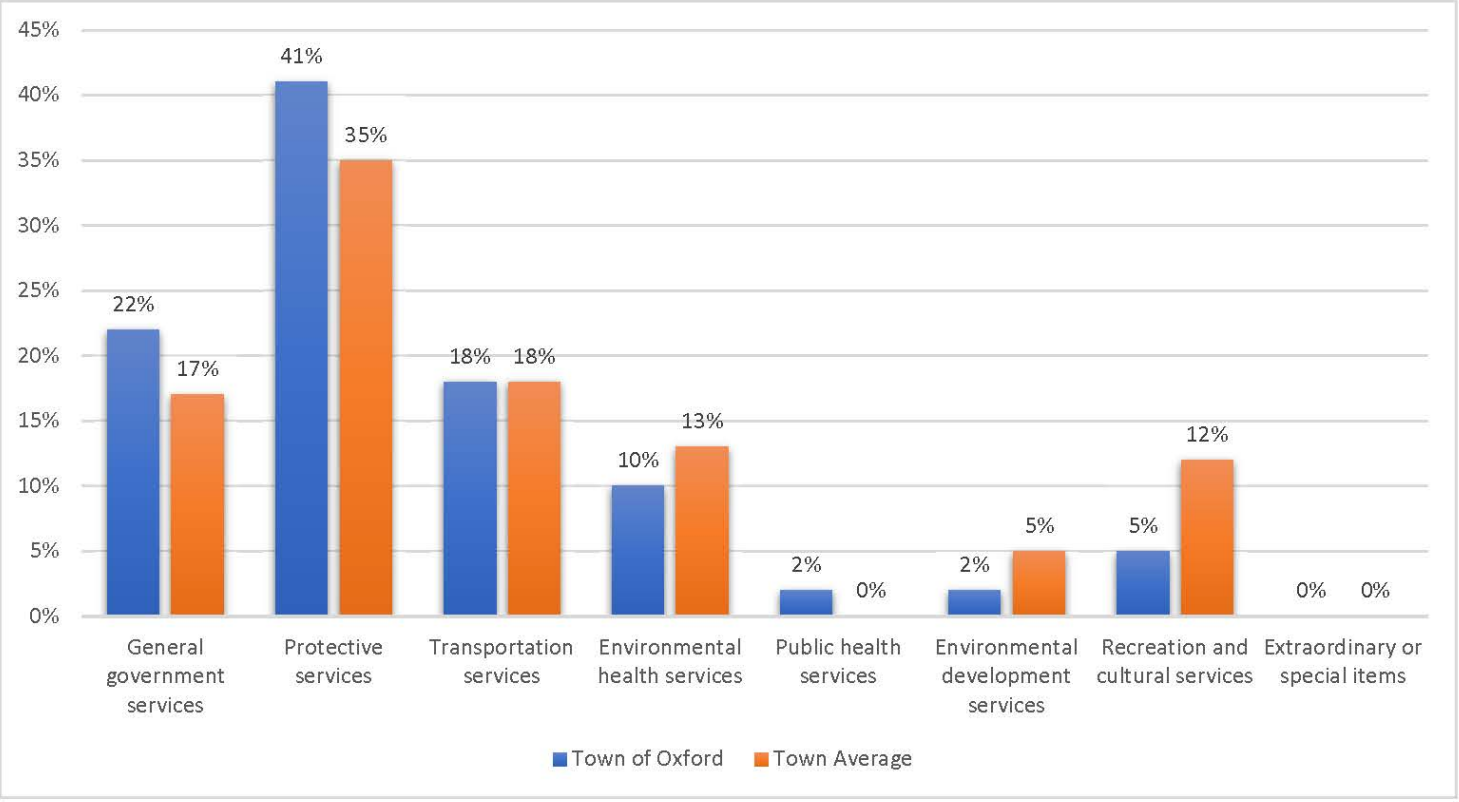


Figure 13 - Comparison of General Operating Fund Expenses to Provincial Town Average. Source: 2020-21 Financial Information Return

Accumulated Surplus (Deficit)

Annual Surplus: Revenue - Expenses

Note: Annual surplus is added to the accumulated surplus (deficit)

Annual consolidated surplus (deficit):	$0.2 million
Consolidated accumulated surplus (deficit):	$8.0 million
Annual general operating surplus (deficit):	$0.2 million
Number of Deficits in the Last 5 Years Financial Condition Indicator (FCI) :	Two

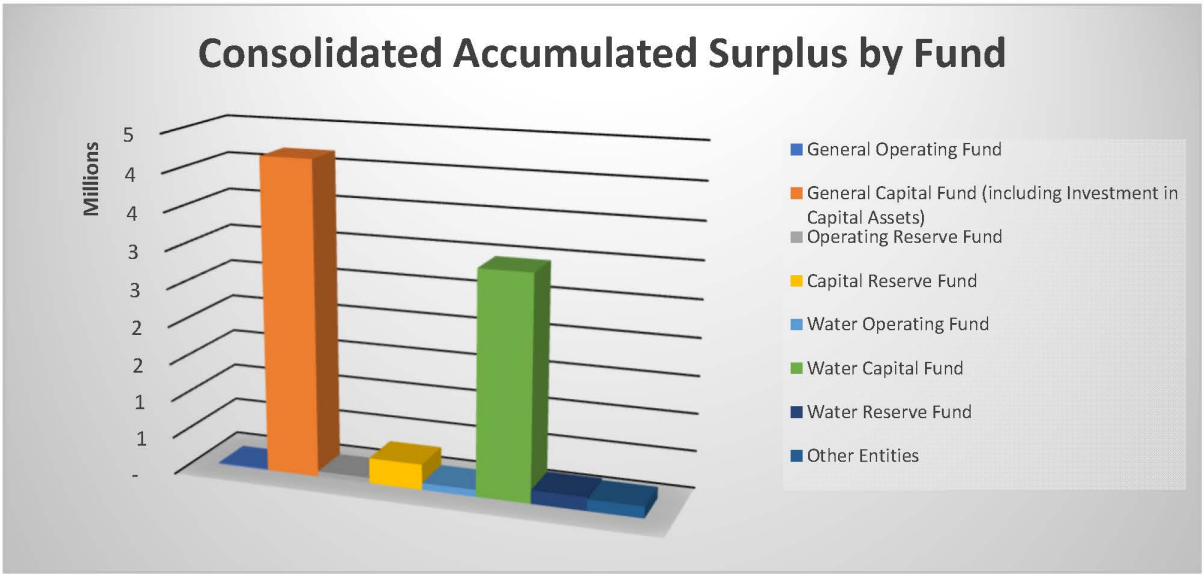
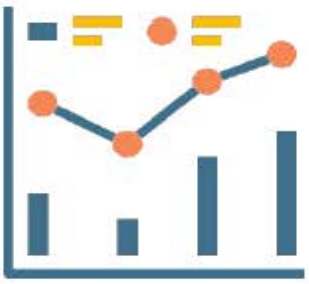


Figure 14 - Consolidated Accumulated Surplus by Fund. Source: 2020-21 Financial Information Return

Debt

Total consolidated long-term debt:	$1.8 million
Total general capital fund long-term debt:	$0.8 million
Debt Service Financial Condition Indicator (FCI):	12.2%
Operating fund bank indebtedness:	$0.0
Outstanding Operating Debt FCI (as a percentage of Net Property Taxes/Payment in Lieu of Taxes, Grants in Lieu of Taxes and Government Transfers):	2.5%

Chapter 4 - Financial Condition Indicators: House Model



The Financial Condition Indicators (FCIs) condense multiple sources of information into a single visual "House Model" graph. The House Model gives a quick visual of a municipality's strengths and possible areas where a municipality may want to focus its attention.

The Model:

The Model consists of 12 indicators organized into base, structure and roof, focusing on:

- roof: 4 key performance indicators;
- structure: 5 financial indicators that concern management and debt; and
- base: 3 indicators relating to internal and external factors that could impact the municipality's revenue stream.

Risk thresholds:

Each indicator is assessed against a risk threshold:

- low risk (**green**);
- moderate risk (yellow) ; and
- high risk (**red**).

Overall assessment:

The Department calculates an overall assessment for fiscal instability:

- low risk (**green**): 9-12 FCIs meet low risk threshold;
- moderate risk (yellow) : 7-8 FCIs meet low risk threshold; and
- high risk (**red**): 6 or less FCIs meet low risk threshold.

For Comparison:

Prior years included the 5-Year Budget Accuracy as a financial condition indicator. Due to the impact of COVID-19, use of the 5-Year Budget Accuracy indicator has been suspended for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022. Its future inclusion or possible replacement will be re-evaluated for the 2022-2023 municipal reports.

Overall Assessment

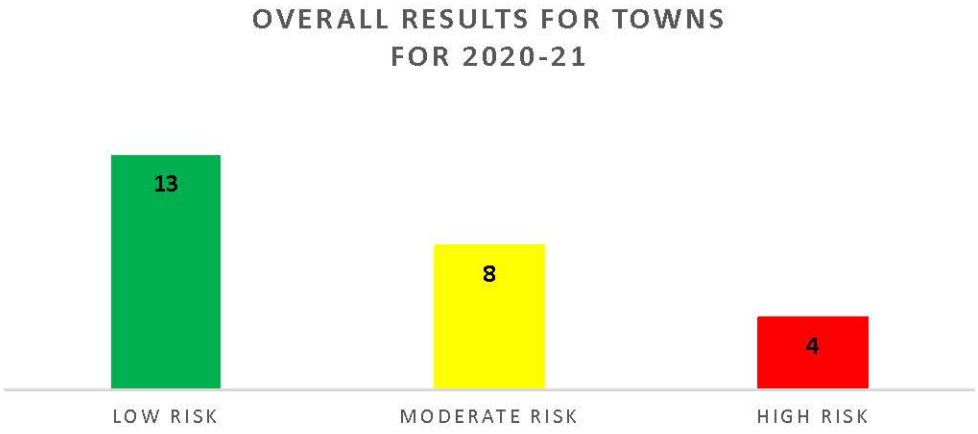
Overall Assessment for: Town of Oxford

Financial Condition: **High Risk**

The overall Financial Condition Index assessment for the Town of Oxford is High Risk.

This means that the Municipality has some challenges, and it is considered high risk for fiscal instability.

Comparison: The majority of towns are at low risk (see chart below).



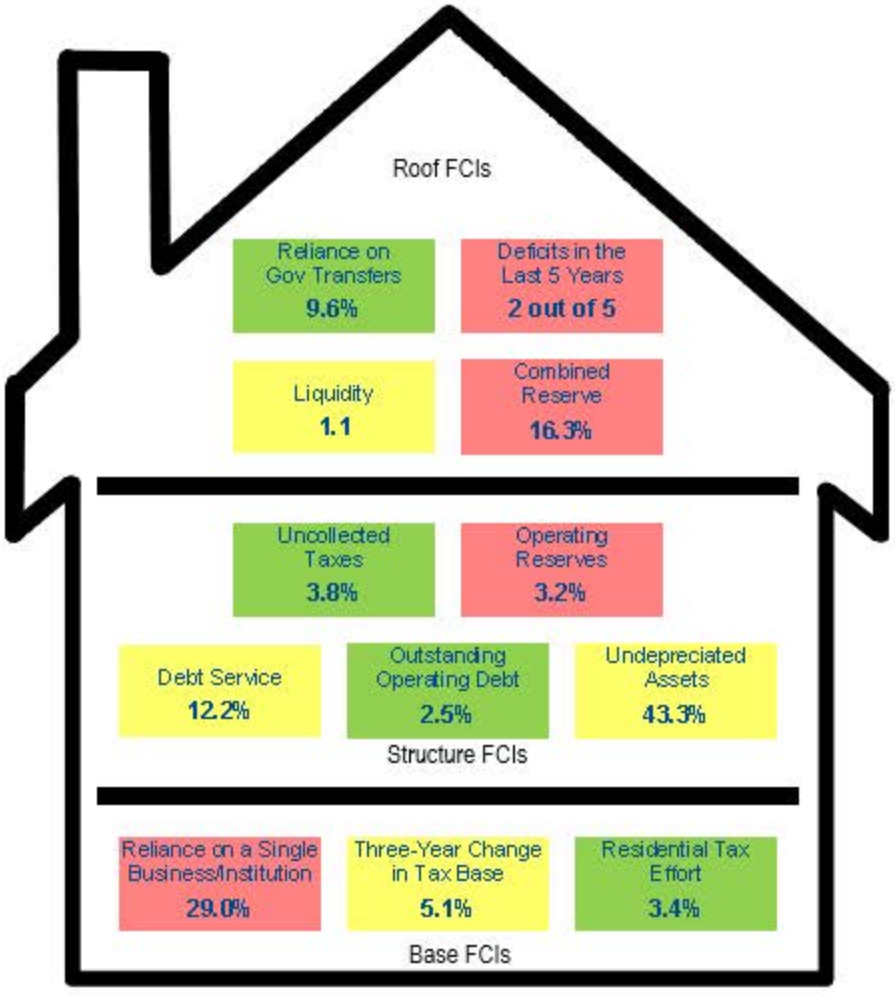
Financial Condition Indicators Highlights for 2020-21

Overall Assessment	Red (high risk) The overall Financial Conditions Index assessment for the Town of Oxford is red (high risk). This means that while the Municipality might face some challenges, it is considered high risk for fiscal instability.

As shown in the House model below, Oxford's FCIs are comprised of:

Low Risk (green):	4 Indicators
Moderate Risk (yellow):	4 Indicators
High Risk (red):	4 Indicators

Details on the individual FCI assessments are provided below.



Two-Year Comparison of Financial Condition Indicators

BASE	2020-21	2019-20	+/-
3-year Change in Tax Base	5.1%	7.3%	-2.2%
Reliance on a Single Business or Institution	29.0%	28.8%	0.2%
Residential Tax Effort	3.4%	3.3%	0.1%
STRUCTURE			
Uncollected Taxes	3.8%	4.7%	-0.9%
Operating Reserves	3.2%	9.3%	-6.1%
Debt Service	12.2%	15.3%	-3.1%
Outstanding Operating Debt	2.5%	2.1%	0.4%
Undepreciated Assets	43.3%	45.6%	-2.3%
ROOF			
Deficits in the Last 5 Years	2/5	2/5	0
Liquidity	1.1	1.0	0.1
Reliance on Government Transfers	9.6%	13.2%	-3.6%
Combined Reserve	16.3%	17.5%	-1.2%

* For 3-year Change in Tax Base, CPI % change for 2020-21 is 6.7% and for 2019-20 is 3.2%

The Base FCI Indicators

Reliance on a Single Business or Institution

2020-21 Results: **High risk** **29.0%**

The largest single commercial or institutional account is 29.% of the Municipality's total Uniform Assessment.

What does it mean?

The Municipality is showing vulnerability in this area.

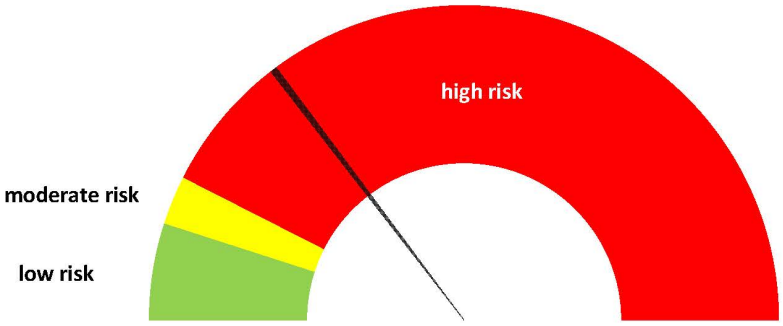
The Municipality's tax base is highly dependent on one single business or institution.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Taxable assessment value of the largest business or institution}}{\text{Uniform Assessment}} = 29.0\%$$

Risk Thresholds:

- Low: Less than 10%
- Moderate: 10% to 15%
- High: Greater than 15%



Residential Tax Effort

2020-21 Results:

Low risk 3.4%

3.4% of median household income is required to pay the average tax bill.

What does it mean?

The Municipality has some flexibility to increase the taxes, if required.

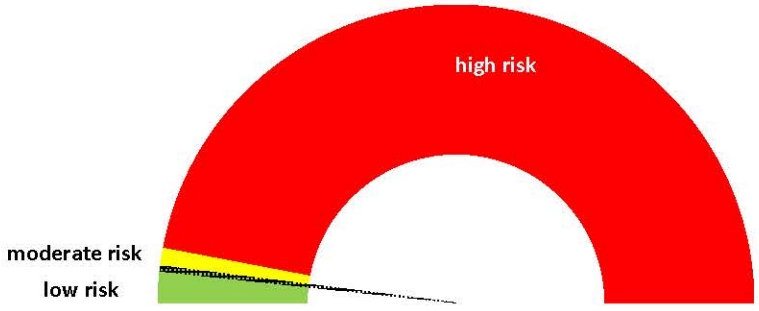
This indicator helps council assess the affordability of municipal taxes in relation to the current service levels.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Total residential tax revenue per dwelling unit}}{\text{Median Household Income}} = 3.4\%$$

Risk Thresholds:

- Low: Less than 4%
- Moderate: 4% to 6%
- High: Greater than 6%



Three-Year Change in Tax Base

2020-21 Results: **Moderate risk 5.1%**

What does it mean? Growth is below the CPI % change of 6.7% but above 0%.

The Municipality's tax base is not keeping up with the cost of municipal services and programs.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Current Uniform Assessment - Uniform Assessment 3 Years Prior}}{\text{Uniform Assessment 3 Years Prior}} = 5.1\%$$

Risk Thresholds:

- Low: Equal or above CPI% Change
- Moderate: Below CPI % Change, but not negative growth
- High: Negative growth

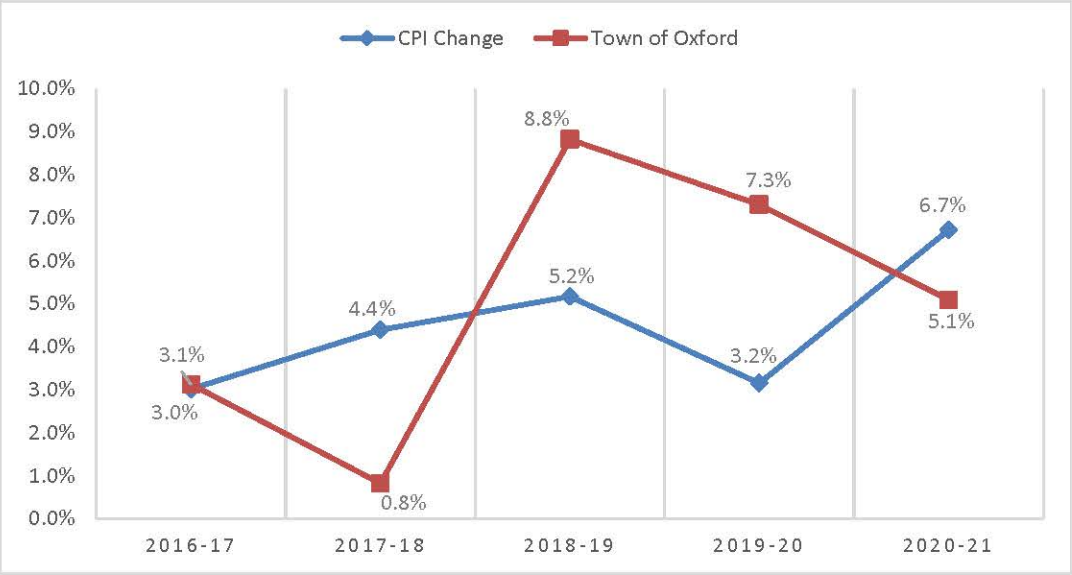


Figure 15- Three-year change in Uniform Assessment in comparison to three-year change in CPI for the last 5 years. Source: Statement of Estimates-Assessment and Statistics Canada

FCI Indicators - Structure (Management) Indicators

Debt Service

2020-21 Results:

Moderate risk 12.2%

12.2% of own source revenue is spent on principal and interest payments.

What does it mean?

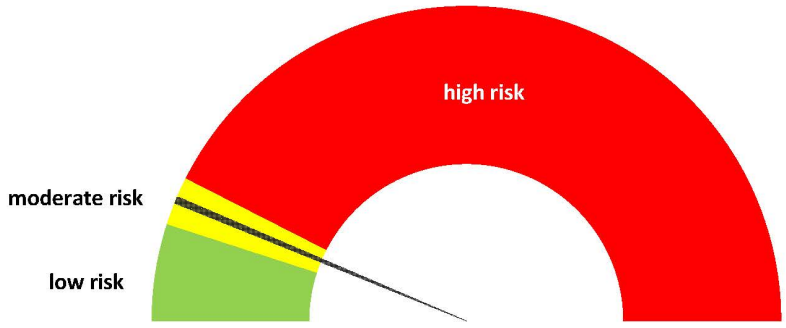
With adequate cash flow, the Municipality may have limited flexibility to increase borrowing levels to help finance future capital expenditures.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Principal and Interest Paid on Long-term Debt}}{\text{Total Own Source Operating Revenue}} = 12.2\%$$

Risk Thresholds:

Low: Less than 10%
Moderate: 10% to 15%
High: Greater than 15%



Outstanding Operating Debt

2020-21 Results: **Low risk** **2.5%**

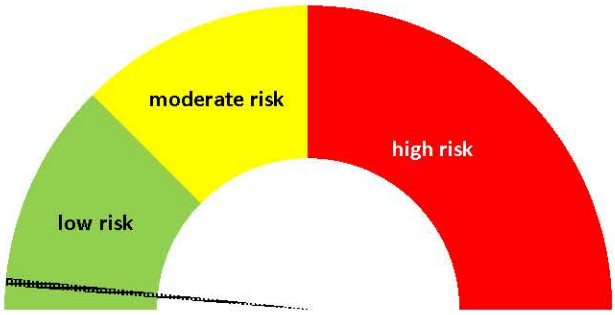
What does it mean? The Municipality is carrying operating debt.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Total Outstanding Operating Debt}}{\text{Total Own Source Operating Revenue}} = 2.5\%$$

Risk Thresholds:

- Low: Less than 25%
- Moderate: 25% to 50%
- High: Greater than 50%



Operating Reserve

2020-21 Results: **High risk** **3.2%**

What does it mean? The Municipality has not set aside sufficient funds to help mitigate any unforeseen risks or future needs.

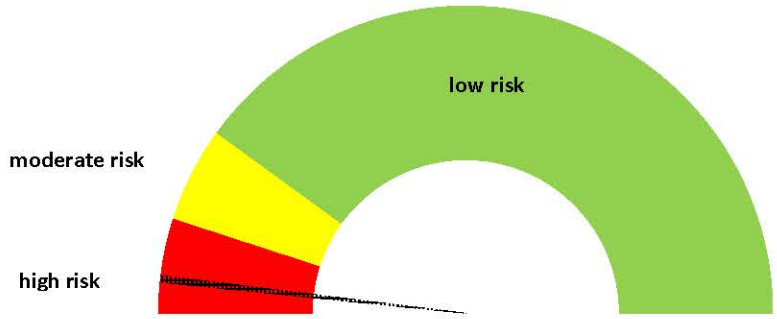
This indicator provides the value of funds set aside for planned future needs, to smooth expenses or for unexpected expenses.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Total Operating Reserve Fund Balance}}{\text{Total Operating Expenditures}} = 3.2\%$$

Risk Thresholds:

- Low: Greater than 20%
- Moderate: 10% to 20%
- High: Less than 10%



Uncollected Taxes

2020-21 Results: **Low risk** **3.8%**

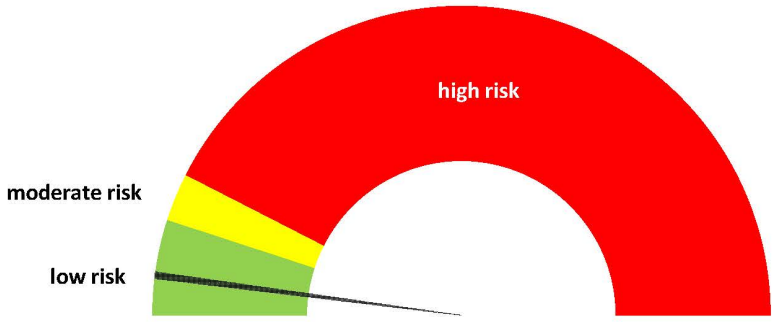
What does it mean? The Municipality is managing tax revenue collection.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Total Cumulative Uncollected Taxes}}{\text{Total Taxes Billed in Current Fiscal Year}} = 3.8\%$$

Risk Thresholds:

- Low: Less than 10%
- Moderate: 10% to 15%
- High: Greater than 15%



Undepreciated Assets

2020-21 Results: **Moderate risk 43.3%**

What does it mean?

This indicator estimates that the Town's capital assets have 43.3% of their useful life remaining.

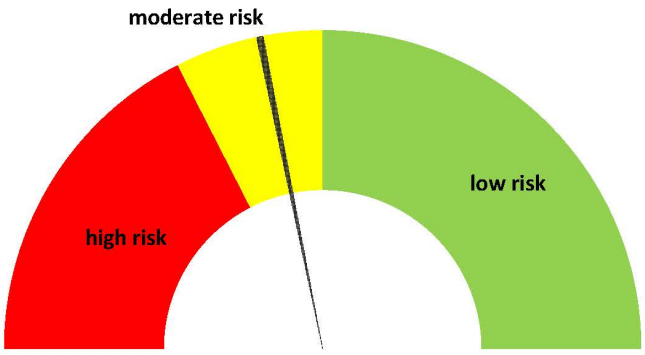
Municipalities across Canada are facing sufficient infrastructure challenges. This indicates that the Municipality is experiencing an infrastructure challenge similar to other municipalities.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Total Net Book Value of Capital Assets}}{\text{Gross Costs of Capital Assets}} = 43.3\%$$

Risk Thresholds:

- Low: Greater than 50%
- Moderate: 35% to 50%
- High: Less than 35%



FCI - Roof (Key Performance) Indicators - the ability to meet current and future needs in a balanced and independent manner

Reliance on Government Transfers

2020-21 Results: **Low risk** **9.6%**

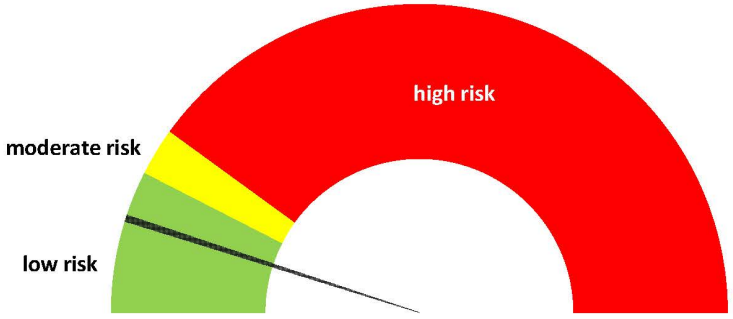
What does it mean? The Municipality is not dependent on another level of government to meet its service obligations.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Total Government Transfers}}{\text{Total Revenue}} = 9.6\%$$

Risk Thresholds:

- Low: Less than 15%
- Moderate: 15% to 20%
- High: Greater than 20%



Number of Deficits in the Last 5 Years

2020-21 Results:	**High risk**	2 Operating deficits in the last five years
What does it mean?	Deficits are important indications of financial health. The result indicates that the Municipality has, at times, not been able to meet its needs in a balanced manner and maintain a balanced budget.	
Calculation:	The number of non-consolidated operating deficits in the last five years	= 2

Risk Thresholds:

- Low: 0 in the last 5 years
- Moderate: 1 or more in the last 5 years
- High: 1 or more in the last 2 years with one material deficit (0.5% of operating expenses)

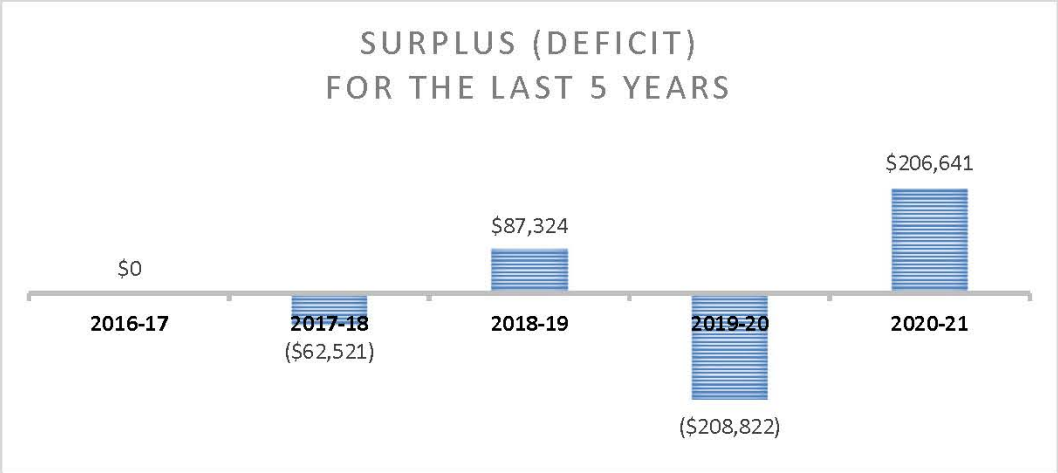


Figure 17- Annual operating fund surplus (deficit) for the last 5 years. Source: Financial Information Return

Liquidity

2020-21 Results: **Moderate risk 1.1**

What does it mean? Liquidity is key to financial performance.

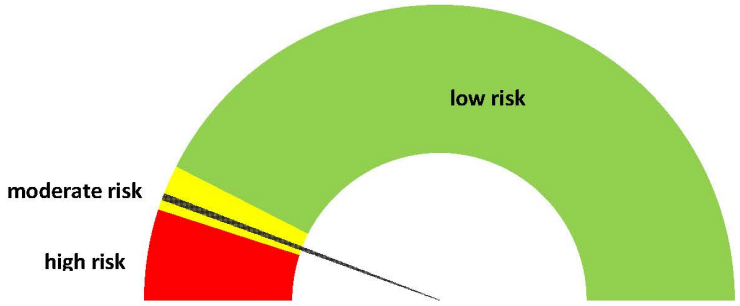
The result indicates that the Municipality is somewhat able to meet its needs in a balanced manner and maintain a balanced budget.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Total Current Financial Assets}}{\text{Total Current Liabilities}} = 1.1$$

Risk Thresholds:

- Low: Greater than 1.5
- Moderate: 1 to 1.5
- High: Less than 1



Combined Reserves

2020-21 Results: **High risk** **16.3%**

What does it mean?

This result indicates that the Municipality does not appear to have sufficient reserves needed to address unexpected events or provide flexibility to address future projects.

Reserves are critical components of a municipality's long-term sustainability. This indicator shows the value of the funds held in the reserves compared to a single year's operation, including amortization expenses.

Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Total Operating and Capital Reserves}}{\text{Total Operating Expenses plus Amortization Expense}} = 16.3\%$$

Risk Thresholds:

- Low: Greater than 40%
- Moderate: 30% to 40%
- High: Less than 30%



Appendix I - Additional Resources

Nova Scotia Government's Open Data Portal (data.novascotia.ca)
This portal provides access to various government data in a free, accessible, machine-readable format. Financial datasets currently published through the Nova Scotia Government's Open Data Portal:

- 911 Municipal Grants
- Consolidated Revenues and Expenses by Municipality
- Municipal Affairs Funding Programs
- Emergency Services Provider Fund
- Farm Land Grant
- Financial Condition Indicators by Municipality
- Municipal Contributions to Roads
- Municipal Financial Capacity Grant (formally equalization program)
- Municipal Operating Fund- Summary of Revenue and Expenses by Municipality
- Municipal Operating Expenses by Function -10 Year Summary
- Municipal Operating Revenue by Source -10 Year Summary
- Municipal Property Tax Rates
- Nova Scotia Power Grant-in-Lieu
- Uniform Assessment

Appendix II - Municipal Website

Municipal website is **town.oxford.ns.ca**

A municipality's website can be a helpful resource to access various financial information. Currently, most municipal websites provide:

- Audited Financial Statements
- Approved Operating Budget
- Quarterly Municipal Councilor and CAO Expense Report
- Quarterly Municipal Hospitality Expense Report

Contact Municipal Affairs and Housing

For more information, for support in action plan development, or to obtain a guide on action plan development: **municipalfinance@novascotia.ca**