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Executive Summary:

Commuters are employed people who travel outside of their municipality for work. Among all municipalities in the county, Sarnia is least likely to have residents who commute. For most of the other municipalities, residents are more likely to commute than to work within their community. Commuters are more likely to travel to a rural municipality than to Sarnia.

Highlights

- Among rural communities, about 1 of 4 employed people work within their community.
- In Sarnia Lambton, there are 16,570 residents who travel outside of their municipal community for work.
- Among the 16,570 commuters, 37% travel to Sarnia, 45% travel to a local rural community, and 18% travel outside of the county for work.
- Sarnia, Petrolia, and St. Clair are local places often travelled to by commuters.
- Commuters travel at least 50 kilometres each day to work and back home. Access to transportation is necessary for employment for many residents.
- Rural-to-rural commuting within the county suggests that municipalities are interdependent on each other for jobs for their residents.

Quick facts about Sarnia Lambton:

- Population of 126,200
- 3 of 7 residents live in rural area (outside of the City of Sarnia)
- 56,245 employed residents in 2011
- This number is up to 61,000 as of September, 2014
- has 11 municipalities and is nearby three First Nations communities
- Municipalities with the largest population size:
 - Sarnia
 - St. Clair
 - Lambton Shores
- Municipalities with the smallest population size:
 1. Oil Springs
 2. Point Edward
 3. Dawn-Euphemia
- All three First Nation communities have relatively small population sizes

Sarnia Lambton is a rural community, a fact well known by residents. The county has one city, with a population of 72,366. The population sizes of the remaining municipalities range from 704 to 14,515.

Low population sizes may lead one to suspect that most county residents work within the city. But is this really true? Are there some rural communities that provide employment for residents? Which ones? How common is it for people to commute outside of the county limits? This report addresses these questions by examining commuter information.

Municipality and First Nations Populations

The table below documents the population size and number of employed people for each municipality. The number of employed residents of Oil Springs isn't available from Statistics Canada likely because it is too small. Commuter information is also not available for Oil Springs.

According to Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, in 2011, the on-reserve populations are about 2,300 for Walpole Island and 1,300 for Kettle and Stony Point; sources say these numbers may be overestimates of the true size. Current numbers aren't available for Aamjiwnaang, but sources say the population is close to 900. According to Statistics Canada, about 170 residents of Aamjiwnaang and 275 residents of Kettle and Stony Point are employed. An employment number isn't available for Walpole Island because it opted out of participating in the National Household Survey.

In this report, Sarnia is considered the only urban area in the county. The remaining municipalities and First Nation communities are considered rural due to their small population sizes.

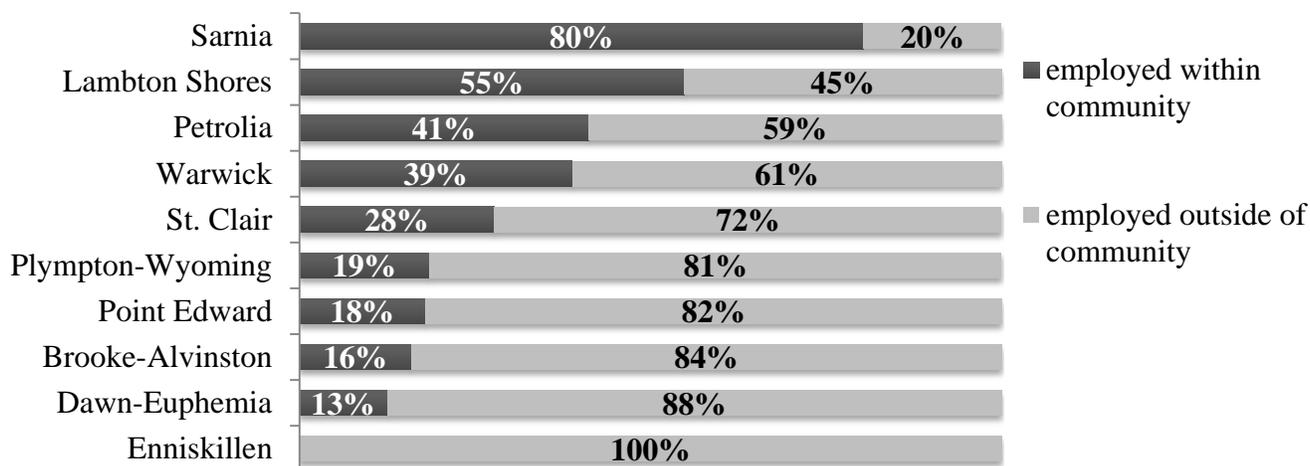
Do Residents Work Where They Live?

About 3 of 5 employed people in Sarnia Lambton work within their own community. This number is largely influenced by Sarnia. Eighty percent of employed residents of Sarnia work within the city. When Sarnia is excluded, about 1 of 4 employed people work within their community.

Municipality	Population	# of Employed
Brooke-Alvinston	2,548	1,185
Dawn-Euphemia	2,049	1,080
Enniskillen	2,930	1,450
Lambton Shores	10,656	4,750
Oil Springs	704	not available
Petrolia	5,528	2,360
Plympton-Wyoming	7,576	3,590
Point Edward	2,034	930
Sarnia	72,366	31,450
St. Clair	14,515	6,860
Warwick	3,717	1,785

Source: Statistics Canada. *Census Profile, 2011*.
Catalogue no. 98-316-XWE.

Variation by community is illustrated in the graph below. In most rural municipalities, employed residents are more likely to commute than work within their community. The exception is Lambton Shores where 55% of employed residents work within Lambton Shores.



Source: Statistics Canada. *2011 National Household Survey*. Catalogue No. 99-012-X2011032.

Consider the population size of each community while examining the above graph. It appears that the smaller the population size, the higher the likelihood that employed residents commute. For example, less than 1 of 5 employed residents of Point Edward, Brooke-Alvinston, and Dawn-Euphemia work within their communities. However, there are a couple of exceptions. St.Clair and Plympton-Wyoming have relatively large populations, and yet have among the highest percentage of commuters.

Commuter patterns among nearby First Nation communities vary. Whereas 83% of employed residents of Kettle and Stony Point work within the community, 30% of employed residents of Aamjiwnaang work within the community.

- Commuter data are for employed people with a usual place of work; 4 of 5 employed residents fit this description. The other 20% of employed people are those who work from home every day or outside of the country, or don't have a fixed workplace address (i.e., transport truck drivers, home care workers, contractors).
 - About 550 residents work outside of Canada. It isn't known how many work in the United States.
- Commuters are employed people who travel outside of their community for work.
- Counts must be at least 20, otherwise are considered 0.

Where do Commuters Work?

Among commuters, 37% work within Sarnia. Each municipality has residents who commute to the city, but the percentages differ greatly. The table below shows the percentage of residents who work within their community, another local rural community, Sarnia, or outside of Sarnia Lambton.

Residents in communities that surround Sarnia are the most reliant on the urban centre for jobs. In Point Edward, St. Clair, Plympton-Wyoming, and Aamjiwnaang, at least 50% of employed residents commute to Sarnia.

Local rural communities are also destinations for employment as 45% of commuters travel to one. Employed residents of Brooke-Alvinston, Enniskillen, Dawn-Euphemia, and Warwick are more likely to work within other local rural communities than in Sarnia. Also, almost 1 in 5 employed Sarnia residents commute to a local rural community.

The remaining 18% of commuters work outside of the county. Among these 2,985, 1,010 go to London, 905 go to Chatham-Kent, and 445 go to Strathroy-Caradoc. In Lambton Shores, employed residents are more likely to commute to another county than to another community within Sarnia Lambton.

Community	Within Community	Other Local Rural Community	Sarnia	Outside of Sarnia Lambton
Brooke-Alvinston	16%	47%	9%	28%
Dawn-Euphemia	13%	36%	10%	42%
Enniskillen	0%	47%	38%	14%
Lambton Shores	55%	11%	9%	25%
Petrolia	41%	19%	38%	2%
Plympton-Wyoming	19%	26%	50%	5%
Point Edward	18%	8%	74%	0%
Sarnia	80%	17%		3%
St. Clair	28%	10%	53%	10%
Warwick	39%	24%	11%	26%
Aamjiwnaang	30%	0%	70%	0%
Kettle & Stony Point	83%	17%	0%	0%

Source: Statistics Canada. *2011 National Household Survey*. Catalogue No. 99-012-X2011032.

The table on the next page includes the average roundtrip distance covered by commuters. For most communities, commuters travel at least 50 kilometres each day to work and back home. The longest trip reported is 116 kilometres travelled daily by Lambton Shore commuters.

The table on the next page also shows the top two places of destination for work among commuters. Sarnia, Petrolia, and St. Clair are local places often travelled to by commuters.

Community	Average Distance (2-way) in km	Top 2 Destinations of Commuters (number)	
Brooke-Alvinston	85	Warwick (110)	Petrolia (80)
Dawn-Euphemia	78	Chatham-Kent (225)	Petrolia (195)
Enniskillen	56	Petrolia (355)	Sarnia (325)
Lambton Shores	116	London (400)	Sarnia (300)
Petrolia	55	Sarnia (685)	St. Clair (145)
Plympton-Wyoming	68	Sarnia (1,295)	Petrolia (285)
Point Edward	10	Sarnia (535)	St. Clair (60)
Sarnia	74	St. Clair (2,505)	Point Edward (1,385)
St. Clair	59	Sarnia (2,640)	Chatham-Kent (390)
Warwick	81	Sarnia (120)	London (115) Strathroy-Caradoc (115)
Aamjiwnaang	13	Sarnia (70)	
Kettle & Stony Point	28	Lambton Shores (25)	

Source: Statistics Canada. *2011 National Household Survey*. Catalogue No. 99-012-X2011032.

Discussion

The findings of this report challenge the presumption that commuting in Sarnia Lambton for employment involves a trip to its urban centre. It does for some, particularly in communities surrounding the city. An important finding is the commonality of rural-to-rural commuting. These findings mean that the municipalities are interdependent on each other for jobs. Accordingly, the municipalities could benefit from working together on economic development activities.

A lot of distance is travelled in order to get to one's job. For most communities, employed residents make a roundtrip of at least 50 kilometres each workday. This distance isn't reasonable walking distance. For most residents of local rural communities, transportation is necessary for employment. Public transportation for employment purposes isn't available in the rural parts of Sarnia Lambton. During consultations held by Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board, employment service providers have continually mentioned that the lack of transportation services is a barrier to gainful employment for many of their clients who are looking for work. Job seekers may not have access to a personal vehicle or cannot afford taxi services. In turn, this issue affects employers as they may not be able to fill vacant positions.



Thank you to the Live in Lambton Portal for providing the above map.