

THE STATE OF OUR COMMUNITIES



Johnsonville 2020

Evolving and adapting are two characteristics that can explain the state of Johnsonville. In review of the community and key informants' insights into their community, there are some major themes that are consistent throughout the survey: the Johnsonville Shopping Centre (mall), infrastructure, housing, poverty and young people. The Johnsonville population is forecasted to grow over the next 20 years and the impact this will have on housing infrastructure and services is uncertain. Whilst Johnsonville is a predominantly middle-class community, there are pockets of poverty in the community. The impacts of Covid-19 on employment, income and mental health have amplified the issues for whānau, who are predominantly minorities or refugees. Recovery for Johnsonville must take into consideration the trajected growth rate whilst not neglecting the vulnerable people in the community.

What do you like about your community?

The key assets for the Johnsonville community was the friendly nature and diversity within their community. Some of the key attributes stated were: good people, diversity, close-knit, being family-like with a strong sense of community. **Location** and **accessibility** were also key assets for locals, with over 38 percent talking about the ease of travel from Johnsonville to the Wellington CBD. More than a third of the locals talked about the **amenities**, **activities** and **accessibility**, particularly participants with children. Almost 20 percent of the locals talked about Johnsonville as an ideal place to raise **families** because of the schools and facilities that are available in the area.

What are some of your concerns or fears about your community?

The primary concern among Johnsonville locals was the mall; an upgraded **Johnsonville Shopping Centre** is viewed as a beacon of hope for creating employment, business opportunities and stimulating the local economy and as a safe space for the community, particularly young people. Locals seemed frustrated with the lack of improvements to the mall, particularly how slow developments are in relation to a rapidly growing community. There were a variety of housing concerns, with the most common including **housing** affordability, housing shortages and overcrowding. The high housing density in the area was noted as a concern in the Johnsonville community. Locals talked about the lack of planning for the development of housing in the area, and how the surrounding **infrastructure** does not accommodate for these developments.

How were you impacted by Covid-19?

Employment and Income were the greatest impacts for locals, with 29 percent of them or their partners losing their jobs or had lost a significant portion of their income. The flow on effect to **financial hardship** resulted in difficulties of having to adjust their lives and look for work. One local talked about feeling like a failure because they were unable to meet basic living costs such as food for their **children**. Locals talked about the many stresses that come with losing employment and income, the isolation from family and support networks during lockdown and the toll that it is taking on their **mental wellbeing**. Locals who had positive experiences with lockdown enjoyed the extra time that they were able to stay **home** and spend with their **family** members.



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What are Johnsonville's key social issues for Election 2020?

The key social issue for Johnsonville locals is **housing**; locals want more quality and affordable housing, with an infrastructure to match. Equality and the role it plays in driving **poverty**, particularly child poverty, was another key issue for Johnsonville locals. Other issues include employment, with particular emphasis on **employment** opportunities for those impacted by Covid-19, improvements to the welfare system, **Covid-19 recovery** and increasing **healthcare services**.

What changes would you like to see in Johnsonville in 5 years' time?

The six key aspirations for the Johnsonville in 2025 are:

- 1 the availability of quality and affordable housing
- 2 more employment opportunities for New Zealanders
- 3 Johnsonville infrastructure that supports the community growth
- 4 upgraded Johnsonville mall that provides employment and stimulates the local economy
- 5 stronger, connected, stable and confident community
- 6 more support for vulnerable whānau to decrease poverty levels.

Moving Forward

Johnsonville is a diverse and vibrant community, but key questions emerged as a result of our research.

What are the new issues that were created by Covid-19?

Existing housing challenges in Johnsonville, which were highlighted with Covid-19, have shed more light on the pockets of poverty in the community. Locals acknowledged that residents from a refugee or migrant background faced a variety of challenges before Covid-19. Children under the age of 15 years represent over 20 percent of the Johnsonville population, warranting a need to address youth issues. Covid-19 pointed exposed the gaps in mental health services for families and young people in the area—the demand for these services will continue to increase as Johnsonville recovers from the pandemic. The development of the mall will play a significant role in the recovery of Johnsonville from Covid-19, through employment and local economic stimulation.

The Johnsonville population continues to grow and is forecasted to carry that trajectory for the next 20 years, however, one of the key assets for Johnsonville is their close-knit community, attributed to their size.

What does it look like for a small community like Johnsonville to continually adapt and adjust to growth and how does Johnsonville maintain that sense of community with a growing population? Does growth result in sacrificing the community spirit? What implications will growth have on the stress on infrastructure and social services create? The significant diversity in this small community can be a strength, particularly if there is more collaboration and connection between the different residents. If this happens, addressing both the big changes coming to the community, and the social issues they face, becomes more possible.



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