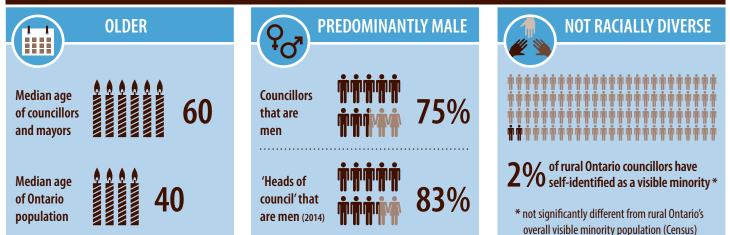
# **RURAL MUNICIPAL COUNCILLOR PROFILE**

Are we seeing participation in rural Ontario municipal politics from a diverse talent pool? Are there sufficient candidates to foster a healthy, competitive environment in local elections? Do new councillors feel prepared to carry out their roles and responsibilities?

# THE MAKEUP OF RURAL ONTARIO MUNICIPAL COUNCILLORS IS...



Data did not identify significant differences between urban and rural councillor demographics, suggesting this is a society-wide challenge.

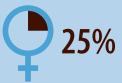
# THE CHALLENGE OF MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

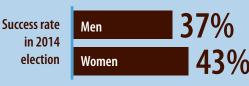
### **GENDER IMBALANCE**

Women are not running for council in the same numbers as men. Respondents cited various environmental factors that may deter women from running for election: lack of role models, conflict, stereotypes & socialization.

"As long as we think a woman is abandoning her family and a man is serving his community, we will continue to see these lower numbers for women."

Rural Ontario councillors & mayors that are women





2014 candidates that were women

23%

### AGE DISCREPANCY

The job of municipal council is not seen as a "young person's sport". Councillor duties conflict with commitments like young families, full-time jobs and new mortgages.

"... If you have a young family, the worst thing that can happen is you either rob your family to do the job, or you rob the job to do right by your family."

50-70 years old

#### 

Ontario councillors

#### Continued on opposite side

#### THE CHALLENGE OF MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION continued

#### **COUNCILLOR PREPAREDNESS AND EXPERIENCE**



#### "For the first two years you are useless. You're learning how this whole thing works."

**Councillors reported struggling to** learn their roles on council and how the municipal system works.



"The odds of me running again are not good by the way – it's extremely unpleasant in a lot of ways."

Many councillors cited a negative working environment as a reason for them leaving municipal politics and as a deterent for peers running.

# WHAT CAN BE DONE : OPPORTUNITIES FOR FUTURE ACTION



### **ENCOURAGE CANDIDACY**



**Collect and house more robust** demographic data for municipal candidates across Ontario



Identify and connect existing candidacy initiatives to build on best practices



**Actively recruit candidates** through social marketing and public education campaigns



Market and promote positive role models

# **PREPARE CANDIDATES & NEW COUNCILLORS**



**Develop mentorship and** networking among current and future municipal leaders



Improve/expand access to pre-candidacy and new councillor training



Make adaptable educational tools and resources available to clerks across Ontario



## **ENCOURAGE MUTUAL RESPECT**



Collectively as a council, review a code of conduct for council operations



**Establish common "aspirational** values" for council operations and interactions

# **MORE INFORMATION**

and the realities councillors face

Develop a public education campaign

around the value of local government

For more information, go to www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca and download the Measuring Rural Community Vitality: Municipal Councillor Profile

SOURCE: Measuring Rural Community Vitality: Municipal Councillor Profile. Rural Ontario Institute, 2016



Measuring Rural Community Vitality



**RURAL ONTARIO** INSTITUTE