

UNIVERSITY  
of GUELPH

School of Environmental Design  
and Rural Development



Results Summary

Observations

Reflections

# Rural Research Priorities



**Project Director:**  
Dr. Wayne Caldwell

**Research Team:**  
Dr. Jennifer Ball  
Dr. Yolande Chan  
Suzanne Ainley  
Jeff Dixon  
Harold Flaming  
Erik Lockhart

April 2010

## Executive Summary

---

Research has the potential to identify information, create knowledge and contribute to timely solutions and policy options that can fundamentally address key societal issues. Rural regions are often limited in their capacity to conduct research. This research project implemented a methodology that engaged community and organizational representatives in a systematic dialogue that identified rural research needs from a community and organization perspective. The outcome of this research provides baseline community input on critical community research issues and questions that can form the basis of much needed relevant rural research in the future. This can also help government and policy makers better understand what is happening at the local/regional level in Ontario.

This research brought together researchers from the University of Guelph with researchers from The Monieson Centre at Queen's University. Key partners also included The Ontario Rural Council (TORC) and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). The research focused on community engagement sessions in Central and South-western Ontario. It involved 12 community and organization discovery workshops. The results have been integrated with existing research results from Eastern Ontario (through prior consultations led by The Monieson Centre) and Northern Ontario (through the Northern Growth Plan consultations). The research was completed between September 2009 and April 2010.

## Beneficiaries of this Project's Results:

---

- Province of Ontario with an interest in supporting the building of strong rural communities
- OMAFRA and other rural research funding organizations
- University researchers who will be conducting relevant research on issues of concern to rural communities and stakeholders
- Rural municipalities, non-government organizations, rural businesses, provincial and federal ministries and departments with rural development mandates and rural residents wishing to live and work in rural Ontario

## Impacts and Benefits:

---

- Rural research projects will be funded that will directly benefit community, non-government organizations and the federal and provincial government involved in building strong rural communities
- Insights gained through the specific research will positively impact the quality of rural development policies and programs developed at the local, provincial or federal level
- Rural communities will, over time, begin to experience positive change at the community and business level

- Potential for increased job creation, enhanced workforce attraction and retention, and more effective programs to address social, economic, workforce and environmental issues
- Enhanced and more informed working relationships between the university research community and those directly engaged in rural development, allowing for more effective knowledge transfer when research is conducted and published

### Top Key Issues Distilled from this Research

The following list comprises the top 10 issues from the Discovery Workshops with the addition of four issues prominently profiled in the organizational workshops and in the Northern Ontario Growth Plan.

- Agriculture/Farm Revitalization
- Broadband
- Economic Diversification
- Efficient, Cooperative Government
- Employment Opportunities
- Environmental Sustainability
- Financial Sustainability (at a community level)
- Healthcare
- Infrastructure
- Regional Strategies & Collaboration
- Skills Training/Education/Literacy
- Sustainable Economic Development
- Transportation Improvement
- Youth Retention

### Top Emerging Issues

The following list of emerging issues was drawn from all of the workshops and the Northern Growth Plan. It includes issues that are new and emerging as well as issues which are known to exist but have not received significant research attention. This list is derived from the researchers' reflections on the discussions at the workshops.

- Aboriginal Issues (youth, engagement, collaboration between government and communities)
- Access to Capital for small businesses
- Adequate Services in rural areas with declining populations
- Climate Change
- Demographics (Aging population)
- Immigration - attracting new immigrants & labour migration
- Poverty

- Rising Energy Prices and impact on rural communities
- Safe Drinking Water (a specific priority in the North)
- Women’s Issues (training, employment, transportation, etc.)

## Conclusions

---

The following conclusions are intended as a summary of key findings that emanate from the research.

- The ranked issues as identified by the participants provide insight into a series of generic issues that are applicable across rural Ontario.
- While the ranking is important, it should not be construed as suggesting that one issue is necessarily more important than another issue. Many of the highly ranked issues scored only marginally higher or lower than lower ranked issues. Consider the rankings as a guide.
- The questions provide direction for research that would be of considerable assistance to researchers who are interested in tackling current and practical issues. These specific questions have a direct link to research and establish a clear connection between the community’s needs and the potential research activity.
- The Emerging Issues can contribute to an important and evolving research agenda that adds to the important issues identified throughout the research consultation. Research into these emerging issues may be critical to the future of rural Ontario even though they may not have been highly ranked through the consultation process.
- There is considerable regional variation with a number of the issues that suggests that regionally specific research would have great value. For example, the strong agricultural foundation of South-western Ontario speaks to a range of unique issues just as the distance and isolation of some communities in Northern Ontario requires a thoughtful approach to research.
- A balanced approach to research with a goal of enhancing community well-being speaks to the importance of conducting research in the economic, environmental, and social spheres of the community.
- This research has contributed to an expectation on the part of some community leaders for forthcoming research that is relevant, practical, and applicable.
- Knowledge dissemination is key to the success of rural based research.



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	i
Introduction .....	1
Background .....	2
Methodology & Limitations .....	3
Limitations.....	5
Results Summary.....	5
RRP & KIS Discovery Workshops .....	6
RRP & KIS DISCOVERY WORKSHOP RESULTS .....	7
Regional Comparison: TOP DEVELOPMENT ISSUES .....	7
Regional Comparison: RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	11
Organization Workshop Results.....	28
Key Issues.....	28
Key Research Questions .....	29
Northern Ontario Growth Plan – Summary of Issues .....	32
Northern Ontario - Key Issues .....	33
Observations .....	34
Top Key Issues Distilled from Research.....	34
Emerging Issues.....	34
Reflections .....	35
Appendix 1: Sample Community Profile .....	36
Appendix 2: Sample Discovery Workshop Agenda .....	45
Appendix 3: Summary of Ontario Provincial Planners Institute (OPPI) Workshop .....	47
Appendix 4: Summary of Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) Workshop ....	49
Appendix 5: Summary of Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Workshop .....	52
Appendix 6: Summary of Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations (OACFDC) Workshop .....	55



## Introduction

This research brings together a unique approach to gathering public input with the need to identify rural research priorities. The research builds on the opportunities for university researchers to work with communities to identify key research needs. This tradition of university researchers working on development issues with rural communities has been a strong focus at the University of Guelph beginning in the 1970's with the Rural Development



Outreach Project. Similar engagement between universities and communities has been used more recently by The Monieson Centre at Queen's University (2007-2010) and by the Community Development Institute at the University of Northern British Columbia (2008).

Research has the potential to identify information, create knowledge and contribute to timely solutions and policy options that can fundamentally address key societal issues. Rural regions are often limited in their capacity to conduct research. This project implemented a methodology that engaged community and organizational representatives in a systematic dialogue that identified rural research needs from community and organizational perspectives. The outcome of this research provides baseline community input on critical community research issues and questions that can form the basis of much needed relevant rural research in the future. This can also help government and policy makers better understand what is happening at the local/regional level in Ontario.

There were several purposes to this research. These are as follows:

- Identification of rural development issues or questions currently being dealt with by rural development practitioners, municipal decision makers and businesses at the community level.
- Implementation of evidence-based rural research that will help inform and influence rural policy, program and research development at various levels.
- The results of this research project will complement the high-level rural research priorities identified in OMAFRA's Rural Policy Research Priorities document. The results will also provide a greater level of depth.
- OMAFRA, as the research funding organization, has an enhanced level of confidence that research is being conducted that will effectively address community rural development issues.

## Background

---

The recent report released by Robert Martin and Richard Florida<sup>1</sup> and commissioned by the Ontario Government stresses that Ontario's prosperity hinges on creativity. From a certain perspective this is even more pertinent and timely for rural Ontario. The challenge for rural Ontario, however, is that in many ways it lacks the coordination, resources and information to adjust to changing economic realities. In this context, businesses, municipalities, and various regional development organizations such as Community Futures Development Corporations strive to develop and implement local and regional strategies that help rural communities adjust to this evolving milieu. The missing link in this puzzle, however, is the frequent absence of quality information and research. Identifying this need is the primary purpose of this research.

Others have also called for an enhanced university role in this field, in part due to the wide-ranging benefits of engaging communities in academic research.<sup>2</sup> Studies have shown that community-based participatory research ensures that the research focus reflects a major concern of the community, brings together partners with differing expertise to address complex problems, and enhances the quality, validity, sensitivity, and practicality of the research being conducted.<sup>3</sup>

This project, known as the Rural Research Priorities (RRP) Project, had a fundamental goal of consulting with various rural stakeholders to identify key issues and research questions. The approach to engaging the community – known as “Discovery Workshops”- that has been developed at The Monieson Centre at Queen's University as part of their Knowledge in Society (KIS) project<sup>4</sup>, has been integral to the success of this research. The approach is novel and brings together academics with community leaders who are familiar with the knowledge needs and resources of their region. The workshops serve two purposes. First they provide researchers and policy makers with a better understanding of the knowledge needs and resources of a given area and second, the workshops build strong ties between community decision makers and university researchers.

---

<sup>1</sup> Martin, Roger and Richard Florida. 2009. Ontario in the Creative Age. Martin Prosperity Institute.

<sup>2</sup> Wolfe, David. 2004. The Role of Universities in Regional Development and Cluster Formation. University of Toronto Press. Toronto.

Community Development Institute, University of Northern British. 2009. <http://www.unbc.ca/cdi/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> Sapienza, Jessica, N., Giselle Corbie-Smith, Sarah Keim, and Alan Fleischman, “Community Engagement in Epidemiological Research.” *Ambulatory Pediatrics*, 7 (2007): 247-252.

Israel, Barbara, A. “Community-Based Participatory Research: Lessons Learned from the Centers for Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research” *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 113 (2005): 1463-1471.

<sup>4</sup> Monieson Centre. 2009. <http://easternontarioknowledge.ca/index.php/knowledgeinaction.html>.

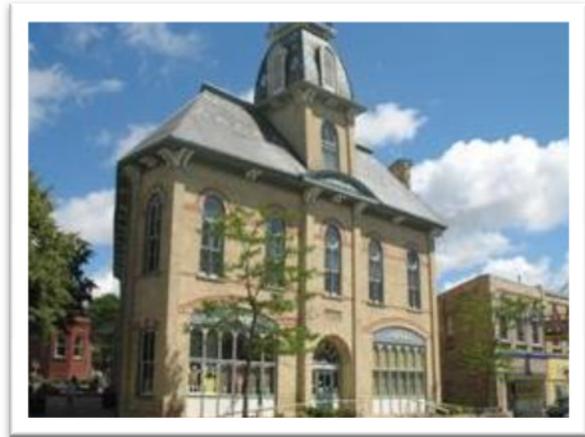
The process used to gather information from communities in the “Discovery Workshops” has also been shown to be highly effective.<sup>5</sup> The workshops use an electronic group-decision support system, a technology that allows groups to brainstorm and make important decisions together in an anonymous and democratic way. Research suggests that the use of this technology reduces evaluation apprehension and improves group effectiveness and communication. This ultimately allows participants to come up with more ideas as well as higher quality ideas and decisions.<sup>6</sup>

Across Canada, rural and small town communities face significant change.<sup>7</sup> There are many reasons for this change including economic restructuring, changing demographics, aging, youth out-migration, population decline in some communities and urbanization in others, resource industry restructuring and the on-going restructuring of services at both the public and private sector. In this context, there is a need for policy makers, planners and economic development officials to address issues and capitalize on new opportunities. To do this there is a need to develop a clearer understanding of the forces that contribute to change, the resulting opportunities and the creative response advocated by Martin and Florida.<sup>8</sup>

### Methodology & Limitations

---

This research brought together researchers from the University of Guelph with researchers from The Monieson Centre at Queen’s University. Key partners also included The Ontario Rural Council and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The research focused on community engagement sessions in Central and South-western Ontario and the results have been integrated with existing research results from Eastern Ontario (through prior consultations led by The Monieson Centre) and Northern Ontario (through Northern Growth Plan consultations).



---

<sup>5</sup> Dennis, Alan, R. and Michael Williams, “A Meta-Analysis of Group Size Effects in Electronic Brainstorming: More Heads are Better than One.” *International Journal of e-Collaboration*, 1 (2005): 24-42.

<sup>6</sup> Dennis, Alan, R., Joseph Valacich, Traci Carte, Monica Garfield, Barbara Haley, and Jay Aronson, “Research Report: The Effectiveness of Multiple Dialogues in Electronic Brainstorming.” *Information Systems Research*, 8 (1997): 203-211.

Gallupe, R. Brent, Alan Dennis, William Cooper, Joseph Valacich, Lana Bastianutti, Jay Nunamaker Jr., “Electronic Brainstorming and Group Size.” *Academy of Management Journal*, 2 (1992): 350-369.

<sup>7</sup> Caldwell, Wayne J. “Rural Canada: Designing a Desirable Future.” 2006. [A Reader in Canadian Planning: Linking Theory and Practice](#). Edited by Jill Grant. Nelson Publishers. 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Martin, Roger and Richard Florida. 2009. Ontario in the Creative Age. Martin Prosperity Institute.

This research was completed between September 2009 and April 2010. Key methods were as follows:

- 1) A Research Advisory Committee was established with representatives from OMAFRA, CFDC's, The Ontario Rural Council, and the Rural Ontario Municipal Association, and a municipality. They provided advice and commentary on the research.
- 2) Discovery Workshops were scheduled across Central and South-western Ontario. These complemented the 10 workshops already completed and 5 workshops in progress by The Monieson Centre in Eastern Ontario. In total 12 workshops were held - 8 workshops were conducted with local municipal and community leaders organized and hosted by the local CFDC (in Chatham, Mitchell, Hanover, Elora, Simcoe, Dunnville, and Orillia, and Alliston), and 4 workshops were conducted with key rural organizations (EDCO, ROMA, OPPI, OACFDC). Different formats were used for the community vs. organization workshops.
- 3) The approach to the Discovery Workshops used the model developed by The Monieson Centre and successfully applied across Eastern Ontario. The workshops are unique in that they use networked computers to facilitate anonymous brainstorming, produce instant results and detailed reports. Technological and facilitation expertise was provided by the Queen's Executive Decision Centre. Summaries of local regions were prepared in advance of each workshop (See Appendix 1 for a sample community profile and Appendix 2 for a sample workshop agenda). Key topics explored at the workshops are as follows:



**Burning issues:** What are the challenges and needs with respect to rural community and economic development and making your region a vital community (economic, social, health)?

**Research wish list:** If you had access to researchers for a year, what would you ask them to study in relation to question 1? What are the critical research questions requiring answers and insights?

**Local capacity:** What local resources (organizations, reports, past work etc.) might contribute to addressing the issues identified above? What local businesses have had success overcoming related challenges and can be consulted or studied?

**Ensuring success:** To ensure that today's workshop results in lasting community benefits, what actions can your community take to address these priorities and what assistance do you need?

- 4) Results from the workshops were summarized and posted on the TORC website and posted with additional project information on a custom section of the Monieson Centre's Knowledge Impact in Society website (<http://ruralknowledge.ca>).

- 5) The results from the Central and Southwest were combined with those from Eastern Ontario. The results from the organizational workshops, along with those from the Northern Growth Plan were also factored into the analysis of this report to present a province-wide perspective on research and community needs.
- 6) Evaluation of workshop success occurred throughout the research.

### **Limitations**

---

This research engaged participants from 23 communities across southern Ontario, as well as representatives from four provincial organizations. There were approximately 400 participants. We recognize, however, that this research had several limitations.

First, Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) played an instrumental role in organizing workshops and inviting participants. While these participants had broad community interests, it is probable that this led to a disproportionate focus on economic issues.

Second, as we reflect upon the Northern Growth Plan and the results from two or three of the workshops, it is clear that the research would have benefited from a specific focus on securing input from First Nations communities in southern and Eastern Ontario.

Third, due to limitations of time and budget, there was no direct participation of Northern communities. A Northern perspective was however evident in the provincial organizations that we consulted and was specifically drawn from our review of the Northern Growth Plan.

### **Results Summary**

---

This section includes the results from three separate processes of data collection and analysis. The first includes the detailed results from 23 workshops (15 in Eastern Ontario and 8 in South-western Ontario). The second includes the results from facilitated discussions with four organizations with province-wide membership (Ontario Provincial Planners Institute (OPPI), Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA), Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations (OACFDC), and Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO)). The third set of results are drawn from an analysis of the Northern Ontario Growth Plan.

The challenge in presenting the results from these three sources is that they are the outcomes of three different processes that led to varying levels of detail. The 23 RRP and KIS workshops were the most rigorous in both process and analysis. They had broadbased participation and each of the workshops occurred over a half day. Results were immediately compiled using computers and participants had the opportunity to provide immediate feedback. The participants also actively engaged in the ranking of both the issues and research questions that they had identified and developed.

Conversely, the 4 organizational workshops generally took place over an hour, were directly facilitated with results recorded manually, and did not provide the same opportunity for ranking. These workshops, however, had the advantage of participants who are leaders in their

field with a broad perspective on rural issues from across the province. Results were rich and have proven to be instrumental in the validation of the RRP and KIS results and in the identification of new and evolving issues.

Our analysis of the Northern Growth Plan and the related consultations was a substitute for more direct engagement. The results, as summarized, do provide a perspective that reflects the unique issues of the North and contributes to our understanding of a variety of issues with province-wide application.

### RRP & KIS Discovery Workshops

At the RRP and KIS Discovery Workshops, the participants identified a multitude of issues and questions. Participants assisted with the clustering and prioritizing of these issues. Further limited clustering was later done by the research team to reduce the overall quantity of data without losing key significant issue areas. The results of the RRP and KIS Discovery Workshops resulted in a combined total of 210 different issues. To help manage this large amount of data, each top 10 issue of each workshop was allocated a weighted score (e.g., the #1 issue received 10 points, the #2 issue received 9 points, etc.). This weighting captured the prioritizing of the issues by workshop participants. Even though the top 10 issues of each workshop were included, this resulted in a high priority list of 30 issues. A similar process was used with the top research questions, resulting in 31 high priority categories with related questions.

The challenge in presenting the results was to determine the appropriate level of detail. To help manage this detail, the workshop participants played an instrumental role in grouping and ranking data related to key issues and key research questions. Further limited clustering was completed by the researchers. Despite this, there were still approximately 30 issues and 31 sets of research questions overall. On the one hand, it was tempting to place all of the detailed results into appendices. However, given the importance of this data and the relevance for setting specific research agendas, we have incorporated it into the body of the report in its totality. Full workshop summaries are available as a separate reports at [ruralknowledge.ca](http://ruralknowledge.ca). The discussion section which follows provides additional insight and interpretation related to these findings.

## RRP &amp; KIS DISCOVERY WORKSHOP RESULTS

**Question 1: Southern Ontario Priority Development Issues**

## Regional Comparison: TOP DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Rank	Total (Weighted)	SW Ontario (Weighted)	Eastern Ontario (Weighted)
1	Youth Retention (110)	Youth Retention	Youth Retention
2	Skills Training/ Education/Literacy (95.5)	Agriculture/Farm Revitalization	Skills Training/ Education/Literacy
3	Transportation Improvement (78)	Sustainable Economic Development	Labour Migration & Attraction
4	Economic Diversification (78)	Transportation Improvement	Infrastructure
5	Infrastructure (70.5)	Economic Diversification	Regional Strategies & Collaboration
6	Employment Opportunities (70.1)	Skills Training/ Education/Literacy	Economic Diversification
7	Agriculture/Farm Revitalization (69)	Employment Opportunities	Small Business Support
8	Sustainable Economic Development (69)	Healthcare Issues	Strategic Planning & Implementation
9	Efficient, Cooperative Government (65.5)	Efficient, Cooperative Government	Transportation
10	Regional Strategies & Collaboration (61.5)	Infrastructure	Efficient, Cooperative Government
11	Labour Migration & Attraction(60.5)	Aging Workforce/ Population	Employment Opportunities
12	Small Business Support (56)	Regional Strategies & Collaboration	Sustainable Economic Development
13	Healthcare Issues (55.5)	Environmental Sustainability	Aging Workforce/ Population
14	Strategic Planning & Implementation (54.1)	Small Business Support	Healthcare Issues
15	Aging Workforce & Population (40.6)	Poverty	Tourism
16	Rural Identity (28)	Rural Identity	Rural Identity
17	Comparative Advantage (25.5)	Funding & Financing	Agriculture/Farm Revitalization
18	Tourism (24.5)	Housing	Demographics & Data
19	Demographics & Data (22)	Creative Economy	Funding & Financing

20	Funding & Financing (21.6)	Aboriginal Issues	Comparative Advantage
21	Poverty (19.5)	Comparative Advantage	Emerging/Green Industries
22	Environmental Sustainability (19.5)	Non-Profit Sector	Poverty
23	Creative Economy (15)	Demographics & Data	Creative Economy
24	Emerging/Green Industries (10.5)	Strategic Planning & Implementation	Downtown Improvement
25	Aboriginal Issues (9)	Waste Management	Environmental Sustainability
26	Housing (9)	-	Natural Resources
27	Downtown Improvement (7)	-	Aboriginal Issues
28	Natural Resources (6.5)	-	-
29	Non-profit Sector (5)	-	-
30	Waste Management (3.5)	-	-

#### REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUE PRIORITIES (WEIGHTED)

1. **Youth Retention (110)** - There is a lack of opportunities for youth which makes retaining them in the community difficult. There needs to be initiatives that encourage youth to want to stay in the community.
2. **Skills Training/Education/Literacy (95.5)** – Rural communities tend to have lower levels of literacy and little incentive to pursue further education. There needs to be better access to education and opportunities, especially in the area of skills training.
3. **Transportation Improvement (78)** – Local public transit and transportation are not adequate. Communities need better inter- and intra- community transportation.
4. **Economic Diversification (78)** – Attention needs to be given to the attraction of non-traditional industries to address the loss of traditional manufacturing jobs. This involves being ready for investors by creating industrial zones, making land available, and having adequate and affordable housing. Rural leaders also need to know how to connect to the global economy.
5. **Infrastructure (70.5)** – There is a need for improved infrastructure such as water and sewage; new roads; and broadband. Communities also need better access to funding.
6. **Employment Opportunities (70.1)** – There is a lack of full-time jobs. There is a need for initiatives which expand the opportunities for community members to gain employment.
7. **Agriculture/Farm Revitalization (69)** – Producers and farmers need more opportunities, support, and resources to grow and prosper
8. **Economic Sustainability (69)** – Economic capacity is needed for the development of sustainable industries that go beyond traditional industries and create long-term employment. Growth must balance the interests of various demographic groups. Initiatives should encourage people to buy locally.

9. **Efficient, Cooperative Government (65.5)** – There is a failure of different government agencies and levels of government to cooperate on important issues. There needs to be the right balance of centralization and decentralization of services to serve the community.
10. **Regional Strategies & Collaboration (61.5)** – Community groups lack communication and need to work together to make decisions and accomplish goals. Stakeholders must appreciate the value and benefits of community collaboration.
11. **Labour Migration & Attraction (60.5)** – It is increasingly difficult to source skilled workers. There must be a way to attract skilled workers to the region or have the current workforce upgrade their skills. Communities need to take advantage of the benefits of diversity by attracting different ethnic groups to the region.
12. **Small Business Support (56)** – Small businesses must be given business support to prosper. There is insufficient awareness of funding, training, and support available to entrepreneurs and new business owners. A medium for innovation needs to be developed to foster the growth of new business sectors. There is also a reluctance to change the status quo.
13. **Healthcare Issues (55.5)** – There is a shortage of healthcare professionals in rural areas because of the difficulties involved in attracting and retaining them. Initiatives need to be put in place to attract healthcare professionals and their families to rural areas. There is further lack of access to healthcare facilities and services.
14. **Strategic Planning /Implementation (54.1)** – There needs to be economic development planning that is clear, strategic and realistic. These plans must include ways of implementing strategic goals.
15. **Aging Workforce/Population (40.6)** – An older demographic will result in a reduced tax base. The older population will require new facilities and services.
16. **Rural Identity (28)** – There is an increasing demand for urban services in rural settings including retirement living and land development; however, size limits accessibility to education, health care, employment, social networking, public transportation, and other services. Rural proximity to a large urban community can have both positive and negative implications.
17. **Comparative Advantage (25.5)** – There is a need for community members to be proud of where they live. Rural communities need to brand their community as a tourist destination and as a place to do business.
18. **Tourism (24.5)** – Year-round tourism activities need to be created. There needs to be a mindset that supports growth in the tourism sector.
19. **Demographics & Data (22)** – Up-to-date demographic information and trends need to be taken into account to plan for the future.
20. **Funding & Financing (21.6)** – Rural communities must compete with large urban centres in Ontario for funding. There is a lack of funding which supports services to municipalities.
21. **Poverty (19.5)** – The issue of poverty in the community needs to be addressed.
22. **Environmental Sustainability (19.5)** – There needs to be planning for the ecological and economic effects of climate change. Energy and waste need to be considered in

development. There needs to be a resilient watershed in the face of multiple policy issues.

23. **Creative Economy (15)** – Communities need to understand knowledge-based development opportunities to get a competitive advantage.
24. **Emerging Green Industries (10.5)** – Jobs in the green industry need to be created. Such jobs will help rural areas develop industries that are sustainable.
25. **Aboriginal Issues (9)** – There needs to be greater Aboriginal involvement in various economic development initiatives and sectors. Native land claims are an ongoing issue with an uncertain economic impact.
26. **Housing (9)** – There needs to be a workable model for affordable housing and living.
27. **Downtown Improvement (7)** – Downtowns are struggling and they need to be revitalized. There needs to be a greater number of people using the downtown for various purposes.
28. **Natural Resources (6.5)** – Communities need to understand how they can use their natural resources for energy development projects and to create value-added products.
29. **Non-profit Sector (5)** – There are increased costs of doing business in the voluntary sector. There is a declining volunteer base and fewer partnerships between the volunteer and business community.
30. **Waste Management (3.5)** – Better strategies need to be put in place to deal with waste management issues. These include landfill and sewage problems.



## Question 2: Southern Ontario Priority Research Questions

### Regional Comparison: RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Rank	Total (Weighted)	SW Ontario (Weighted)	Eastern Ontario (Weighted)
1	Sustainable Economic Development (122)	Sustainable Economic Development	Comparative Advantage
2	Comparative Advantage (94)	Youth Retention	Sustainable Economic Development
3	Youth Retention (87.5)	Agriculture/Farm Revitalization	Economic Diversification
4	Economic Diversification (82)	Labour Migration & Attraction	Labour Migration & Attraction
5	Labour Migration & Attraction (72)	Environment & Land Use	Regional Strategies & Collaboration
6	Agriculture & Farm Revitalization (71.5)	Skills Training/ Education/Literacy	Small Business Development
7	Regional Strategies & Collaboration (59)	Economic Diversification	Best Practices
8	Small Business Development (51.5)	Governance Models & Opportunities	Youth Retention
9	Skills Training/ Education/Literacy (50.5)	Emerging/Green Industries	Tourism
10	Best Practices (47.5)	Transportation Improvement	Demographic Info & Trends
11	Transportation Improvement (46)	Employment Opportunities	Transportation Improvement
12	Governance Models & Opportunities (45.5)	Creative/Knowledge-Based Economy	Strategic Planning/ Implementation
13	Emerging/Green Industries (42.5)	Comparative Advantage	Skills Training/ Education/Literacy
14	Environment & Land Use (41.5)	Regional Strategies & Collaboration	Funding/Financing
15	Creative/Knowledge-Based Economy (39)	Funding/Financing	Agriculture & Farm Revitalization
16	Funding/Financing (36.5)	Aboriginal Participation	Value-added Products
17	Demographic Info & Trends (34.5)	Small Business Development	Governance Models & Opportunities
18	Tourism (34)	Best Practices	Creative/Knowledge-Based Economy
19	Value-added Products (29.5)	Housing	Emerging/Green Industries

20	Employment Opportunities (28)	Waste Management	Aging Workforce/Population
21	Strategic Planning/ Implementation (27.5)	Healthcare Issues	Infrastructure
22	Aging Workforce/Population (20)	Poverty	Environment & Land Use
23	Infrastructure (18.5)	Demographic Info & Trends	Poverty
24	Poverty (16.5)	Value-added Products	Employment Opportunities
25	Healthcare Issues (16.5)	Infrastructure	Healthcare Issues
26	Downtown Improvement (11)	Aging Workforce/ Population	Downtown Improvement
27	Quality of Life (10)	Downtown Improvement	Quality of Life
28	Aboriginal Participation (9)	-	Bilingualism
29	Housing (7)	-	Aboriginal Participation
30	Waste Management (7)	-	-
31	Bilingualism (5.5)	-	-

## REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH QUESTIONS (WEIGHTED)

### 1. Sustainable Economic Development (122)

#### *Economic Sustainability*

- How do we change our mindsets to think bigger and plan for the long term?
- How can we sustain our existing tax base?
- How do we create sustainability in the midst of changing oil costs, climate change, and food issues?
- What type of rural development should be permitted in order to encourage sustainable growth?
- What is the best business mix to ensure that the county has a sustainable economy?
- How can underutilized resources create sustainable economic growth including quality employment, increased tax revenues, and improved community resources?
- Can you help us designate areas in our region which would better serve the requirements of industrial and residential development while maintaining our environmental standards?
- How do we encourage consumers to support the local economy in a society of big box stores?

#### *Economic Development Models*

- How can we build a case for community economic development?
- What are some successful economic development models that have worked in rural communities like ours?
- We should measure the impact of investment and how it has improved (or not) the viability of rural Ontario communities.

- What type of economic development models could assist multiple communities with diverse interests and needs to achieve their individual objectives?
- How can we coordinate a regional economic strategy?
- What successful businesses exist in similar communities?
- What are the barriers to growth in our community? How do we remove the barriers?
- What's missing from our communities' economic base?
- How do you show return on investment on dollars invested in economic development?
- Quelle structure (organisationnelle) serait le meilleur model pour être stratégique en région (Kedco, OCRI, Table EcDev de Renfrew County, etc.)?

#### *Local vs. Generic Solutions*

- With respect to economic development, where should there be synergy and where should there be localization? Which issues are common and which issues are unique?

#### *Community Resilience*

- What are the components of a resilient community (e.g., knowledge transfer models, attitudes and beliefs, infrastructure and supports)?

#### *Social Enterprise*

- What new economic indicators can policy makers use to identify problems with social programs and social enterprises?
- Quel est le ROI de l'État, en soutenant le DÉC et l'Entreprise sociale?

## 2. **Comparative Advantage (94)**

### *Niche*

- What is our region's niche/competitive edge and how can we capitalize on it?
- How do we turn immense diversity of base industries into a strength?
- What industries and services can operate most competitively here?
- Which regional strengths should be focused on to distinguish the area and foster the region's development?
- Identify the unique economic opportunities in our region, i.e. what makes us different and could give us a competitive advantage? It would be useful to define the five main strengths of the region which we should be promoting to attract new private capital investment.
- What industry should we be focusing on in our community?
- What are we currently doing and what could we do differently to effectively leverage our prime natural resource?
- Research how to obtain County unification, highlighting strengths of each town, village, and hamlet, and using global examples.

### *Community Branding*

- How can we effectively brand our region? How can we get the region to buy into this brand?

- What common interests and strategies exist in our region that could be developed into a local brand?
- What are best practices of municipalities working together to market and brand themselves?
- What initiatives would our community support and encourage that would improve our public image both within and outside our boundaries?
- Comment développer une image de marque touristique?

#### *Asset Inventory*

- How do we make an inventory of our region's assets? (e.g. health, recreation, tourism, business). How we can capitalize on them?

#### *Pride in Place*

- How can we develop a local sense of pride in our community?

#### *Cultural/Recreational Development*

- What are our cultural assets, what are they worth, and to whom?

### 3. Youth Retention (87.5)

- What youth retention strategies are most effective?
- What types of programs and/or activities might we develop to retain and attract youth from the Greater Toronto Area?
- How do we compare with other rural communities for youth retention?
- How can intergenerational programs help retain youth?
- What are the best practices to retain youth in rural communities?
- Why are rural youth disappearing from our communities and what is needed to keep them?
- How do rural communities create vibrant communities that attract and retain youth and knowledge-based industry?
- How do we merge local economic diversification with attracting and retaining youth?
- What is missing to attract youth, from a lifestyle perspective?
- How can we encourage youth to stay in/attract youth to our community?
- What are the greatest drivers in retaining youth?
- What are the impacts of youth retention/loss?
- How can we support and tap into our youth?
- We need ways to work with youth to help them develop their ideas about future-oriented opportunities.
- What types of employment and lifestyle are today's youth looking for?

### 4. Economic Diversification (82)

#### *Economic Diversification*

- How can we foster the growth of non-traditional industries?
- Which economic drivers have been successful when a community's core industries have collapsed?
- What factors drive the location choices of knowledge-based industries?

- How can we attract diversification for cluster developments in the knowledge-based economy and what policy will support this?
- What are the high growth sectors in the region?
- If we were to switch our emphasis from major manufacturing employers to a broader, more diversified economy, what businesses would be most likely to succeed in a small town environment?
- What retail and commercial businesses are missing in our community? How can we attract them?

#### *Business Attraction/Retention*

- What community attributes will attract business?
- What can we do to retain business in our region?
- Create a priority list of successful businesses/industries that we might be able to migrate here from the city. Identify the characteristics and attributes of potential businesses.
- How can we attract those who want to open a new medium or small business in the County?
- How can we assist the many business chambers of commerce? Are there more efficient models? Best practices?
- What does a business consider the most important factors when relocating or staying in a community?
- What can we do and what should we offer new businesses to have them develop in the area?
- What tax incentives or other "carrots" could be used by small towns to attract private sector business development?
- Qu'est la fuite ("leakage") dans les divers secteurs (santé, commercial, tourisme, agro, etc.) pour notre region?

### 5. Labour Migration & Attraction (72)

#### *In- and Out-migration*

- How can we attract in-migration and prevent out-migration?
- What rural programs are needed for immigrant workers with the skills they need to succeed?
- How can we foster entrepreneurship with immigrants?
- What are the local conditions that will attract immigrants to our area?
- What are the best ways to attract and retain foreign trained workers to smaller cities and rural communities?
- How can we mitigate the lack of cultural diversity in our region so as to attract highly qualified people not interested in our region now?
- Explore immigration/migration strategies to drive economic growth including youth exodus, i.e.: why do people move, what are they taking with them, what potential resource is our community losing in the process, etc.

- What policies will create a welcoming environment? How can we encourage inclusionary behaviour (policy) in our region to assist in immigration, retention and creating a welcoming environment?
- We need research into what we have now that is attracting and keeping families here.
- Concrètement, qu'avons-nous besoin pour ramener nos gens? Quel est le potentiel d'une stratégie d'attraction d'immigration et migration pour la région?

#### *Skilled Worker Shortage Issues*

- What can we do to attract and retain skilled workers?
- How do we inventory our workforce skills and use this information to attract and expand employment?
- What is the existing skill set of commuters and the unemployed?
- What are the potential local economic opportunities available for the unemployed, unskilled labour pool?
- How do we inventory and capitalize on traditional skills for communities in transition?
- What skills are most needed for the new economy?

## **6. Agriculture/Farm Revitalization (71.5)**

### *Agricultural Issues*

- What can we do to revitalize our farming/agricultural sector?
- What would make farming economically viable?
- How can we put more grocery dollars in the hands of the local producers?
- How do we grow, market and sustain food production within Canada to feed ourselves and decrease our reliance on imports?
- What strategies and opportunities are envisioned by farmers to keep their businesses viable?
- Why is agriculture being acquired by large corporations?
- What would a fair farm tax system look like in Ontario?
- What can we learn from other jurisdictions?
- How can we use knowledge from other communities to improve our Agricultural and Green space?
- What is the economic impact of agriculture and what are models that work in rural settings for local/sustainable food systems?
- What can be done to re-establish and support family farms and can support for agriculture be fostered locally?
- How can we address the need to make farming more economically viable?
- What alternatives are researchers looking into for farmers?
- How can we sustain our agriculture and forestry industries?
- Research how to better sustain these key industries including creative uses for their wastes.

*Agribusiness/Local Foods*

- How can we best support our local food producers and promote local food in the region?
- What local food processing needs and opportunities exist for local farmers and urban institutions?
- What potential local food distribution mechanisms could we utilize?
- What is the economic impact of food and farming locally, and how does that translate into dollars for municipalities and the province?

**7. Regional Strategies and Collaboration (59)***Regional Cooperation & Collaboration*

- How do we encourage various stakeholders and community groups in our region to cooperate and collaborate effectively?
- What economic development activities are best suited for regionalization?
- How can we remove barriers between neighbouring municipalities so they can work together for regional economic development?
- How do you have a vision process for a divergent community? Are there examples of collaboration in communities with diversity, large geographic areas, and various government structures?
- What are the benefits and costs of amalgamation?
- What collaborative models and economies of scale are available to improve service delivery in a sustainable way in the community?
- How do you bring people and organizations to work together more effectively?
- Is there some value in working more regionally towards economic development?

*Community Engagement*

- How do we engage the broader community to get involved in economic development activities?
- Research successful mechanisms by which to involve the entire community.
- How do we best get the community together, build momentum and make things happen?

**8. Small Business Development (51.5)***Small Business Support*

- How do you nurture small business creation and development? Is it a matter of providing tools, training, mentors, capital, etc.?
- How do we convince government associations and funding programs to recognize the value of investing in small businesses, not just medium-large?
- De quelle façon pouvons-nous appuyer d'avantage nos entreprises?
- Identify home-based business supports, practices, and obstacles. Find the "hidden" jobs (e.g. home-based businesses which are successful but nobody knows about). Explore mechanisms to fairly tax home-based businesses.

*Entrepreneurship*

- What can we do to foster entrepreneurship?

- What is the best way to support prospective entrepreneurs?
- Identify what programs are available for new businesses/entrepreneurs and how we can successfully get the information to them. For example, conduct a market study for knowledge of available resources and needs that should be addressed for small business start up.
- Are business incubators effective in rural communities? What models exist?

#### *Business Innovation*

- How do we use our assets and talents in our region to create innovative businesses?
- What existing talents and assets can create innovative businesses that have an agricultural and tourism focus?

### 9. Skills Training/Education/Literacy (50.5)

- How can we provide skills training in our community?
- What is the feasibility of creating a new skilled-trades training facility?
- What is the relationship between education and skilled trades?
- What are educational institutes doing to address the shortage of skilled workers?
- To what extent do Guidance Counselors direct students to take post secondary education in areas where shortages exist?
- How do we provide skills training to rural populations with limited access to broadband and extreme challenges of distance?
- What are local businesses' and professionals' needs in relation to labour?
- What can the education system do to encourage students to consider the skilled trades?
- How can we increase literacy training in our community?
- How can we overcome cultural reluctance to education and encourage employer based literacy training? What best practices exist for employer-based literacy training?
- How do changes in literacy rate impact health care, concern for the environment, employment and economic success?
- How can post-secondary institutions help examine education and skills needs in rural communities?
- With low educational attainment levels how can we mobilize the region to higher education?
- How do we develop a strategy around post-secondary education which contributes to the attraction and retention of younger entrepreneurs?
- How can we attract post-secondary institutions and knowledge-based industries to diversify the economy?
- What are best practices in rural schools, particularly with school closures and "super schools"?

## 10. Best Practices (47.5)

- What are the best practices from other rural communities re: tourism, economic development, population migration, volunteer participation, grant successes, politics, etc.?
- What ideas have other rural communities used to attract businesses to their communities?
- How do the taxes compare between the U.S.A., the European Union (EU) and rural Ontario?
- What best practices of integrated community sustainable planning (ICSP) are being used in similar sized regions with multiple communities?
- We can use a list of transportable best practices in economic development.

## 11. Transportation Improvement (46)

- What are the keys to transportation improvement?
- What are the existing best practices and case studies for rural transportation networks?
- What is the impact of public transit in rural areas?
- Is there a benefit/cost win?
- How can we further develop public transportation services?
- Are there successful examples where municipalities received funding?
- Best practices for developing long-range transportation plan.
- What are the models of affordable sustainable public transportation in rural areas?
- How do we overcome rural transportation issues and optimize the existing transportation infrastructure?
- Research how public transportation and inter-County linkages can be improved.
- What are effective methods/initiatives to encourage rural and urban communities to partner on a regional transportation system?
- How can we improve our transportation system in an affordable and effective way?
- How do we quantify the benefits of a transit system to major centres as well as a regional transit system?

## 12. Governance Models & Opportunities (45.5)

### *Efficient, Cooperative Government*

- How do we develop efficient government that builds cooperation between local, regional, provincial, and federal levels?
- How can municipal, provincial and federal policies be aligned to support rural residents to build sustainable livelihoods?
- What specific areas can/should different tiers of government better collaborate on and how can that networking be facilitated?
- How do we make local government work?

- How can we improve our current municipal government system to increase effectiveness?
- How can we improve single tier systems who serve large geographic areas?
- How can we foster partnership in policy development between the provincial government and the local municipalities?
- Is it possible for the multi-tiered government of our region to behave more like a regional one while still remaining focus on local issues? How are others doing this and what lessons have they learned?
- Research why fragmentation takes place and how to bring consensus to the development process.
- What govt. regulations hinder business growth and how can paperwork be streamlined?
- How does one improve local government and governance in a growing and changing community?
- What trends are evident in municipal government (age, gender, tenure, voting participation, representation by population) and how do the trends impact policy, cooperation, collaboration and innovation?

#### *Conflict Management*

- Are there models of community conflict resolution?
- How do we overcome resistance to change?
- When are decisions final (given that there are appeals)?

#### *Non-profit Funding*

- Why are rural non-profit cultural organizations left to “survival of the fittest” government policies?
- How can we protect the fragile network of the social services sector (given the size of the federal/provincial debt) when health and education are sacred cows?

### **13. Emerging/Green Industries (42.5)**

- What emerging/green industries can we develop and how do we tap into them?
- How do we overcome the barriers to the adoption of green energy technology?
- What opportunities and strategies exist for bio-technology and how do we evaluate the costs?
- Given global trends, what are the opportunities, occupations and skills in support of a green economy?
- What are the emerging opportunities that could be developed that capitalize on existing workforce skills, infrastructure, community & natural resources etc. in our area?
- What successful green business transformation strategies (e.g. efficiency, effective, job creation) have been implemented?
- What are the best ways to attract and promote "green" economy entrepreneurship locally?
- What are the environmentally friendly industries that would generate jobs? How can we attract such industries?

- What emerging industries in the next economy would be best for an area like this with our amenities? How do we develop them? E.g. alternate energy business development

#### 14. Environment & Land Use (41.5)

##### *Healthy Communities*

- How can we promote health and wellness?
- What infrastructure is required to create healthy communities and where will funding come from?
- What are healthy communities doing, including promotion of health and wellness?

##### *Environmental Sustainability*

- What alternatives are available to land filling and energy production that will be effective in protecting the environment and downstream communities?
- How can rural communities develop land use policies that protect agricultural lands, forests, water ways, natural habitats etc. for food production and allow for other uses (energy) while at the same time meeting the demands for growing urbanization and industrialization?
- What are the best steps to identifying the relevant issues around Places to Grow legislation and disseminating that information so as to take advantage of it?
- Do any other areas exist in the world with an imposed green belt around a large metropolitan area? What were the consequences for the surrounding communities? Did leapfrogging occur?

##### *Urban Mindset Government Policies*

- What are the impacts of urban-based government policies implemented in rural areas?
- Should we redefine or in some cases define the definition of rural? e.g. Should we use different scope for different sectors, programs?

##### *Land-Use Policies*

- What land use policies should be put in place, i.e., development agreements?

#### 15. Creative/Knowledge-Based Economy (39)

##### *Creative/Knowledge-Based Economy*

- How can our community respond to and capitalize on the emerging creative economy?
- What methods of economic development can be applied to the creative and/or knowledge economy?
- What are the limitations of these methods and how can the gaps be addressed?
- What are the gaps in our existing product mix for the further development of knowledge-based industry?
- What are the regional assets that can be translated into economic wins?
- What knowledge-based jobs can replace those jobs being sent offshore?

- What changes must be made in our education system so that our youth are prepared for these future jobs?
- How can the region encourage creativity and innovation?
- How can a community develop a plan for attracting and retaining a creative economy?
- How do we create a long-term strategic plan to attract and maximize our “creative economy” to our county?
- How do we promote creative economy to attract and retain youth and non-retirees?
- How can we create an environment that will encourage and attract small creative, knowledge-based businesses?
- How do we create research and development opportunities in technology, health care, software development, green building technologies?
- Can Smiths Falls benefit from expanding into the IT sector or the arts and culture industry?
- How do we connect researchers and academia to private business? What mechanisms have worked to place researchers with companies in rural communities?

#### *Market Proximity*

- How can regions close to large urban centres take advantage of their proximity to markets?

#### **16. Funding/Financing (36.5)**

- How can we create business financing opportunities?
- How can we access funds, grants, and other resources that can assist in employment growth?
- How can private capital be mobilized for new rural businesses?
- What financial instruments do we need to develop?
- What models successfully fund infrastructure in small communities?
- In view of the present economic situation, what is the financial risk to rural communities/areas?
- What types of government funding, grants, and initiatives have actually helped other communities in creating jobs?
- Where do we access the funding in order to develop any one of our issues, specifically the long-term vision?
- What resources are available for business development? What is available to us in terms of capital, funding, and financial resources so that we know how to find financing that fits the local businesses and economy?
- Investigate creative funding opportunities for infrastructure renewal including how to access funding outside the Municipality.
- How can small communities influence government funding policies for rural environments?

### 17. Demographic Information and Trends (34.5)

- What demographic information can guide our planning?
- How can we adapt to changing demographic trends?
- What makes one region more affluent (GDP) than another when they are similar with respect to geography and demographics (e.g., business sector profiles, econ dev policies)?
- We need a central repository of development and demographic data for regional use.
- What existing databases are currently available to businesses (i.e., Rural Secretariat database)?
- What are the impacts of present and projected demographics on employment, social services, infrastructure, etc.?
- What do we have, where are they headed?
- How do different Eastern Ontario regions fare?
- What trends (changes, needs, patterns), both nationally and internationally, can we exploit?
- Quelle sont les tendances économiques et socio-économiques pour les 3-5 prochaines années?
- What is our regional market base?

### 18. Tourism (34)

- What can we do to improve tourism in the region?
- Create a tourism development study, including an analysis of opportunities and best practices.
- Who visits here, when and why?
- Feasibility studies are needed about tourist opportunities that haven't been developed in the region.
- What is the tourist experience in the county as it relates to customer service, satisfaction, etc.?
- Identify alternate tourism products and markets outside of the immediate area which could increase business traffic and revenues.
- How do small businesses and municipalities go about attracting customers and tourists?
- What are the real economic benefits of tourism and how do we quantify them?
- What are the benefits of the recent designation of the Rideau Canal as a UNESCO World Heritage site and how do we maximize our return on the Rideau Canal?

### 19. Value-added Products (29.5)

- How can we create value-added products from our local natural resources (agriculture, forestry)?
- How can rural communities maximize positive economic spin-offs from development of its natural resources?

- What strategies exist to best access global markets for local producers of goods and services especially in value-added areas? What are best practices elsewhere?
- Outline best practices on the development of bio-based and wood-based value-added products and cleantech industries.
- Highlight emerging/different business models for forest-based businesses and connections to emerging energy technologies. How can we expand the forestry industry to include manufacturing i.e. what are uses for the type of forestry products we have here?
- What are exemplary models of businesses partnering and packaging their services?

## 20. Employment Opportunities (28)

- How can we effectively increase the number of employment opportunities?
- How do rural municipalities attract businesses that will provide skilled, technology-based and digital jobs?
- What can be done to revitalize the declining economy of our community?
- How do we attract sustainable long term employment?
- What are the future employment trends in the agricultural, tourism, and environmental sectors and how will we be able to fill these jobs? Will we be able to fill them with our youth and/or with new people moving here?
- How can we support the development of rural jobs?
- Exactly what is the impact of lost jobs to actual residents of our community?

## 21. Strategic Planning/Implementation (27.5)

- How do we make strategic economic development plans and implement these plans effectively?
- What are best practices for rural regions that have developed comprehensive integrated visions and plans for cultural planning, environment, built environment, economic development, etc.?
- How do we build a 25-year vision?
- How can a county *integrate* its industries (tourism, outdoors, business, arts, etc.) to work towards its strategic plan?
- How can we implement existing identified strategies?
- Existing identified strategies and actions (i.e. Eastern Ontario Prosperity Plan) need an implementation plan. This research should include community activation, that is, ways communities could further come together to foster economic growth utilizing non-governmental resources.
- What can we do with what we have to increase self-reliance?
- How do we evaluate the short- and long-term benefits of programs, projects, policies?

- Can you provide improved impact analyses so that we can better understand the social/economic/community impacts of various types of growth, so that we can have smart growth?
- How do we best get the community together, build momentum and make things happen?
- How efficient are municipalities at implementing initiatives and taking advantage of their resources?
- Are our communities successful in implementation? Do we evaluate our effectiveness? Are our resources being used efficiently?

## 22. Aging Workforce (20)

- What needs to be done to address the issues related to the aging workforce and population?
- How are demographics going to impact employment and wealth in our community?
- How are other counties dealing with the aging population and addressing needs such as access to health care, social services, etc.?
- What are going to be the distinct needs of the baby boomer population as they age and how can business capitalize on this shift?
- How can we use retirees (educators) to build our economic base?
- What and where is the best example of an active, engaged, (mentoring) seniors community?

## 23. Infrastructure (18.5)

### *Infrastructure*

- How do we foster infrastructure renewal in our region?
- What would the cost be to overcome the barriers to establish the infrastructure renewal to create long-term business in our region?
- How do we access public funds for infrastructure needs?

### *Airports*

- What is the value of a community airport?

### *Broadband*

- How can we improve broadband access in our region?
- What alternatives are available that will provide access to knowledge for rural areas at a cost equal to urban centres?
- What is the current broadband Internet penetration in the County and how do we compare to other Eastern Ontario communities?
- What sort of economic opportunities can be developed using high speed communications?
- How can we leverage the Internet and bring that knowledge to businesses?

## 24. Poverty (16.5)

- What is our best strategy for reducing poverty in our community?

- What does poverty look like in a rural area and how can we address it?
- What is the relationship between local poverty and local economic development?
- Is there any research to help communities deal with hidden poverty?
- Quels sont les facteurs de risque de la porécarité économique en milieu rural?

#### 25. Healthcare Issues (16.5)

- What is our best strategy for healthcare professional recruitment?
- What incentives/enticements or resources are effective in attracting healthcare professionals to rural communities? Are there successful techniques other than money to attract physicians?
- Are LHINs an effective system for providing healthcare in rural Ontario?
- How can we improve healthcare delivery in rural Ontario?
- We could use a study of best practices to attract and retain medical practitioners to rural areas. We should also research what practitioners want.
- Are there alternative healthcare delivery models (e.g., broadband-based) that we can adopt?
- What are healthcare professionals looking for when choosing a community (money? Lifestyle? Recreation?)
- How can accessibility to healthcare be improved?

#### 26. Downtown Improvement (11)

- How do we develop a vibrant downtown?
- What are the best practices in revitalization of rural downtown and mainstreet areas?
- What economic value do healthy downtowns add to a small town economy?
- How do we ensure a long-term sustainable downtown community? What services do we need to develop to support new business clusters?
- Are there clusters of businesses that we could attract that, combined, keep people shopping locally?
- How can we differentiate our downtown?

#### 27. Quality of Life (10)

- Are there quality of life indicators that we can use to evaluate our region?
- What niche markets can we build upon which would maintain our current rural life but attract and sustain viable employment for young families/people?
- What are the most effective strategies to support, grow and maintain our culture and quality of life?
- Given our attributes, what type of growth would be interested in coming to the county?
- Are there yearly Quality of Community Life Indicators that we can track and compare ourselves against?

**28. Aboriginal Participation (9)**

- How do we welcome and encourage collaboration and interaction with Aboriginal groups in regards to economic development, education and employment?
- How can we harness the potential of Aboriginal economic development and build external partnerships to support those developments? Develop a cooperation strategy to include Aboriginal Groups into broader regional economic development initiatives.
- How can Aboriginal issues be more effectively addressed? How can a community adapt to adverse issues?
- How have the land claims had an impact on communities and to what extent monetarily?

**29. Housing (7)**

- How can we ensure that there is adequate and affordable housing in our region?
- How do we build more affordable housing and ensure they are occupied?

**30. Waste Management (7)**

- How do we best deal with waste management issues?
- What waste management systems provide the safest, locally controlled, financially viable, affordable solutions to the waste management issues in Ontario?
- How can we work towards a zero waste program?

**31. Bilingualism (5.5)**

- How do we capitalize on our bilingualism and see it as an asset?
- Comment concilier les (deux) cultures et capitaliser sur le fait que nous sommes la région la plus bilingue au Canada plutôt que la région la plus divisée au Canada?

## Organization Workshop Results

Organizational workshops were held with leaders from four key provincial organizations with rural mandates. The results are summarized in the following table. Full workshops reports can be found in Appendices 3, 4, 5, and 6.

Key Issues	OPPI	EDCO	ROMA	OACFDC
• Transportation - linking small communities with a good transportation system	*	*	*	*
• High-speed broadband – access and linkages		*	*	*
• Employment				*
• Access to capital for small businesses		*		*
• Centralized decision-making – not working in favour of rural communities				*
• Future of CFDCs				*
- Declining rural population (including north) (out migration)	*	*	*	
- Rural health care	*		*	
- What does rural sustainability mean?	*			
- Rural areas and urban settlements	*			
- Adequate services in rural areas is a significant issue (including education)	*	*	*	
- Need for regional governance approach	*			
- Rising energy prices and impact on rural communities and rural way of life	*			
- Renewable energy – issues and opportunities for rural communities	*	*		
- Disproportionate use of social services in rural communities	*			
- Diversification of rural economy and the provision of rural based jobs, home-based business development (decline of sectors)	*	*		
- Northern Ontario itself is not a homogeneous region			*	
- Financial implications on rural municipalities (farm tax and downloading)		*		
- Women's issues generally and specifically lack of quality employment opportunities			*	
- Inadequate capacity to deal with the significant growth in some rural municipalities			*	
- Provincial Policy Statement and related land use policies			*	
- Communication		*		
- Support for small business		*		
- Agriculture		*		
- Attracting new immigrants		*		

- Labour		*		
----------	--	---	--	--

<u>Key Research Questions</u>	OPPI	EDCO	ROMA	OACFDC
• How do you design a model that will allow for the redistribution of capital among CFDCs?				*
• How do you stratify/determine an adequate level of operating resources for a CFDC?				*
• What are the benefits of having a good transportation system				*
• Self-governance is a northern Ontario research issue.				*
- What are the main factors that affect rural decline?	*			
- How do we define rural decline and rural growth?	*			
- What are the main factors in achieving rural community sustainability?	*			
- What are the key issues / challenges to rural residents accessing social and health services	*			
- Are the LHINs effectively addressing the health needs of rural residents?	*			
- What steps do rural communities need to take to create and manage community sustainability?	*			
- What is the impact of the Green Energy Act on rural Ontario?	*			
- How can rural communities benefit from the opportunities afforded by green economy, creative economy, home based business? What steps need to be facilitated to take advantage of these opportunities?	*			
- Review of provincial policies and programs dealing with education, health care and social services. Are these policies and programs effectively supporting the needs of rural residents?	*			
- What are the ingredients / conditions for a liveable sustainable rural community?	*			
- What is needed to more adequately take advantage of technology in the provision of education and health care in rural Ontario? Lessons to be learned from northern Ontario	*			
- Review of PPS and other planning policies to ensure support for a strong rural economy as well as land protection	*			
- Research related to addressing community objection to certain forms of renewable energy? Addressing truth and myths re: impact of renewable energy in Ontario	*			

- Pros and cons of different renewable energy ownership models	*			
- balance between policies that protect agricultural land and still allow for rural economic development			*	
- What is an appropriate long-term fiscal capacity that would allow rural / northern municipalities to provide adequate services for their populations?			*	
- What are effective, innovative and appropriate delivery mechanisms and structures to provide for the delivery of services within vast geographic areas i.e. northern Ontario?			*	
- How are municipalities able to survive if they are not allowed to grow?			*	
- What is the appropriate and acceptable balance between fiscal, environmental and economic sustainability?			*	
- Is the current LHIN structure adequately addressing rural and northern health issues?			*	
- What are some innovative and best practices to appropriately address the transportation crisis in rural and northern communities?			*	
- Assessment of the current post secondary school system to adequately prepare youth and women in rural communities for the work force.			*	
- What are the effective and innovative approaches to the provision of health care services in rural and northern communities?			*	
- Effective governance of rural areas within large urban centres i.e. Ottawa, Hamilton, etc.			*	
- How to meet the ever increasing demand for rural services with the ever decreasing financial support from the province?			*	
- Cost of doing business		*		
- What is the role of local government?		*		
- Incubators – what are the opportunities?		*		
- What are the best options for 21 <sup>st</sup> century jobs/industries in rural communities?		*		
- How do/should rural municipalities measure their own success?		*		
- Where are occupations growing?		*		
- Where is rural Ontario competitive?		*		
- What are the blockages to change?		*		
- How do you manage community dynamics as urban retirees relocate to rural communities?		*		

- How do we demonstrate the application of these tools to rural communities?		*		
- How do you turn external pressures into a real opportunity?		*		

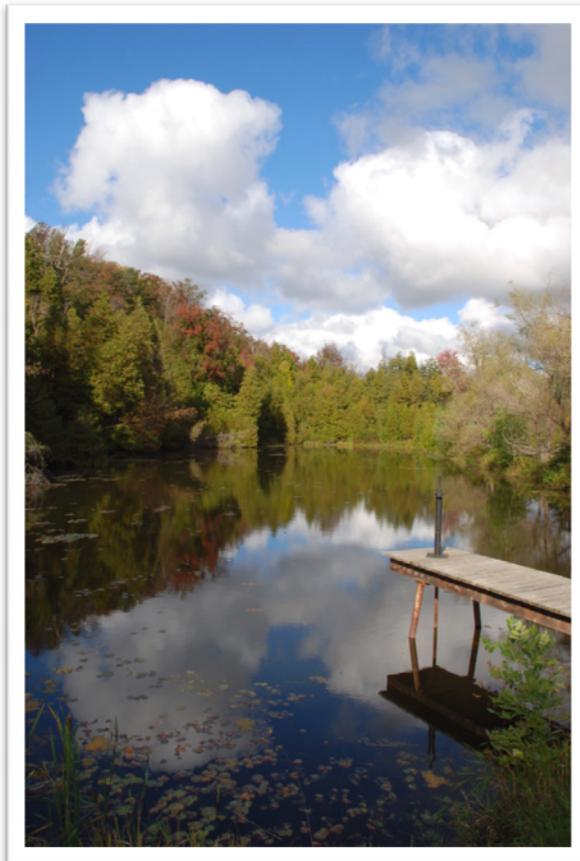
## Northern Ontario Growth Plan – Summary of Issues

---

Northern Ontario, with its vast area, remote communities and immense natural resources, faces a different set of community challenges than Southern Ontario. Recognizing the need for a strategy that addresses Northern Ontario's long term priorities, the province has developed a Growth Plan which establishes a long term vision to guide government, industry, communities and Aboriginal communities over the next 30 years.

In developing the Growth Plan, the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure and Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry undertook an in-depth analysis of the North and engaged in extensive public consultation to understand the core issues and challenges. The proposed Northern Ontario Growth Plan can be accessed at [https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=53](https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=53).

Drawing from the Growth Plan, the table below provides a high-level summary of 10 significant issues affecting community development in Northern Ontario.



Northern Ontario - Key Issues	Description
Health Care	Improving access and quality of health care services to northern Communities is crucial to build capacity for an adaptive and knowledge-based economy.
First Nations Engagement	Government, at the Federal, Provincial and Municipal level, needs to engage and collaborate with First Nation communities in Community Economic Development.
Strengthen Connections	Northern Ontario must connect with one another and the global economy through improved transportation, broadband and energy infrastructure.
Fiscal Sustainability	With ongoing uncertainty and restructuring of economic sectors, long range planning in Northern Ontario must incorporate innovative partnerships and maximization of resources in order to be fiscally sustainable.
Environmental Sustainability	Large scale logging and mining operations must use new, innovative practices that reduce its foot print on the natural environment that allows for reuse.
Youth	Ensuring that there are employment and post-secondary education opportunities for youth.
Aboriginal Youth	In Northern Ontario, 34% of the aboriginal population is under 15 years of age. There needs to be expanded educational opportunities for aboriginal youth to ensure that they are able to participate and lead in an innovative economy.
Climate Change	Climate Change is an immensely important issue for Northern Ontario on two fronts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ontario's North, with vast forests and wetlands, is a significant carbon sink that stores more than 97 billion tonnes of carbon and absorbs 12.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year.</li> <li>b. Northern communities and their ecosystems are more vulnerable to climate change than southern Ontario and its effects could result in new pest infestations, threats to the region's biodiversity, greater incidence of forest fires and storms. A rise in temperatures will also reduce the winter icepack and reduce the ability to use temporary ice roads to import fuel, building supplies and other large goods to remote aboriginal communities.</li> </ul>
Economic Diversification	Northern Ontario has reliance on prevalent resources that has lead to drastic population increases and decreases over past decades. To better ensure steady population growth and new economic opportunities, the region must diversify its outputs through fostering entrepreneurship and pursuing innovative value-added business opportunities.
Collaboration	In order to move forward, there must be strong collaboration and cooperation between all levels of government and Aboriginal Communities.
Safe Drinking Water	Northern communities are struggling to maintain the infrastructure and meet the monitoring requirements necessary to provide safe drinking water.

## Observations

---

This research presents a wealth of data. There is a challenge however both in terms of managing this data and also in making sure that we do not lose sight of the many issues that may not have been rated highly but are equally important to long term community well-being. To address this potential weakness, we have created two separate lists of key issues. The importance of these two lists is that they provide two perspectives on what are the most important issues for the future of rural Ontario. It is important to have a sound grasp of what the community thinks are key priorities, and it is also important to flag certain issues that received less attention but which also warrant further research.

## Top Key Issues Distilled from Research

---

The following list of top key issues reflects the top 10 issues from the RRP-KIS workshops with the addition of four issues prominently profiled in the organizational workshops and in the Northern Ontario Growth Plan.

- Agriculture/Farm Revitalization
- Broadband
- Economic Diversification
- Efficient, Cooperative Government
- Employment Opportunities
- Environmental Sustainability
- Financial Sustainability (at a community level)
- Healthcare
- Infrastructure
- Regional Strategies & Collaboration
- Skills Training/Education/Literacy
- Sustainable Economic Development
- Transportation Improvement
- Youth Retention

## Emerging Issues

---

The following list of emerging issues was drawn from all of the workshops and the Northern Growth Plan. It includes issues that are new and emerging as well as issues which are known to exist but have not received appropriate research attention. This list is derived from the researchers' reflections on the discussions at the workshops.

- Aboriginal Issues (Youth, Engagement, Collaboration between Government and Communities)
- Access to Capital for Small Businesses
- Adequate Services in Rural Areas with Declining Populations
- Climate Change

- Demographics (Aging Population)
- Immigration (Attracting New Immigrants & Labour Migration)
- Poverty
- Rising Energy Prices and Impact on Rural Communities
- Safe Drinking Water (a Specific Priority in the North)
- Women's Issues (Training, Employment, Transportation, etc.)

## Reflections

Rural Ontario is in a state of flux. The process of gathering various perspectives on the key issues and research questions provides much insight into the felt needs and aspirations of people in rural Ontario. It also provides strong evidence of the potential linkages between evidence-based research, rural communities, and the university community. OMAFRA can also benefit from this research because it provides a current and comprehensive overview with broad stakeholder participation. This can help in setting relevant research priorities and contribute to the development of effective policy.

The following conclusions are intended as a summary of key findings that emanate from the research.

- The ranked issues as identified by the participants provide insight into a series of generic issues that are applicable across rural Ontario.
- While the ranking is important, it should not be construed as suggesting that one issue is necessarily more important than another issue. Many of the highly ranked issues scored only marginally higher or lower than lower ranked issues. Consider the rankings as a guide.
- The questions provide direction for research that would be of considerable assistance to researchers who are interested in tackling current and practical issues. These specific questions have a direct link to research and establish a clear connection between the community's needs and the potential research activity.
- The Emerging Issues can contribute to an important and evolving research agenda that adds to the important issues identified throughout the research consultation. Research into these emerging issues may be critical to the future of rural Ontario even though they may not have been highly ranked through the consultation process.
- There is considerable regional variation with a number of the issues that suggests that regionally specific research would have great value. For example, the strong agricultural foundation of South-western Ontario speaks to a range of unique issues just as the distance and isolation of some communities in Northern Ontario requires a thoughtful approach to research.
- A balanced approach to research with a goal of enhancing community well-being speaks to the importance of conducting research in the economic, environmental, and social spheres of the community.
- This research has contributed to an expectation on the part of some community leaders for forthcoming research that is relevant, practical, and applicable.
- Knowledge dissemination is key to the success of rural based research.

## Appendix 1: Sample Community Profile

### Essex, Chatham-Kent, and Sarnia-Lambton – Fact Sheet September 2009

#### Community Overview

##### **Essex**

- The County of Essex is comprised of:<sup>9</sup>
  - Six towns:
    - Amherstburg (Population 21,748)
    - Essex (Population 20,032)
    - Kingsville (Population 20,908)
    - Lakeshore (Population 33,245)
    - LaSalle (Population 25,285)
    - Tecumseh (Population 24,223)
  - The Municipality of Leamington (Population 31,113)
  - The Township of Pelee (Population 256)
- Population 166,000<sup>10</sup>
- It is projected that Essex County will attain a population of 196,305 by the year 2016<sup>11</sup>
- Canada's southernmost county spanning 1720 square kilometers<sup>12</sup>

##### **Chatham-Kent**

- The Municipality of Chatham-Kent is a city-status single-tier municipal government
- Population 108,177 – Approximately 59,000 live in the former City of Chatham<sup>13</sup>
- Other population centres in the municipality include:<sup>14</sup>
  - Wallaceburg (11,114)
  - Bothwell (1,002)
  - Blenheim (4780)
  - Tilbury (4,599)
  - Ridgetown (3,358)
  - Dresden (2,572)
  - Thamesville (928)
- Over 55% of Chatham-Kent's population has some post-secondary education which exceeds the provincial average<sup>15</sup>
- Approximately 92% of the residents' first language is English<sup>16</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Ontario Municipal Home Pages," Association of Municipalities of Ontario <http://www.amo.on.ca/YLG/yjg/ontario.html#REGIONS> (Accessed Sept. 12, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> "County of Essex." County of Essex <http://www.countyofessex.on.ca/general/home.asp> (Accessed Sept. 12, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> *City of Windsor/County of Essex: Regional Economic Development Strategy* (Windsor: City of Windsor, 2004). <http://weblink.countyofessex.on.ca/weblink7/ElectronicFile.aspx?docid=45842>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> "Welcome to the Community of Chatham-Kent Portal," Community of Chatham-Kent, <http://www.chatham-kent.ca/default.htm> (Accessed Sept. 12, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> *Chatham-Kent Community Profile* (Chatham: Municipality of Chatham-Kent, 2007). [http://www.chatham-kent.ca/cityBundle\\_services/downloadsService/downloadfiles/bffe499e-962a-4fe1-91a9-699fa4f30976\\_ck%20community%20profile%2008%20CS3-HYPERLINKS.pdf](http://www.chatham-kent.ca/cityBundle_services/downloadsService/downloadfiles/bffe499e-962a-4fe1-91a9-699fa4f30976_ck%20community%20profile%2008%20CS3-HYPERLINKS.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

- Is 2,494 square kilometers and 950,000 Canadians live within a 1 hour drive of the municipality<sup>17</sup>
- Chatham is home to the Thames Campus of St. Clair College of Applied Arts and Technology<sup>18</sup>

### **Sarnia-Lambton**

- Population approximately 130,000<sup>19</sup>
- Comprised of 11 municipalities:<sup>20</sup>
  - Brooke-Alvinston (2,661)
  - Dawn-Euphemia (2,190)
  - Enniskillen (3,122)
  - Lambton Shores (12,170)
  - Oil Springs (717)
  - Petrolia (5,222)
  - Plympton-Wyoming (7,506)
  - Point-Edward (2,019)
  - Sarnia (72,125)
  - St. Clair (16,527)
  - Warwick (3,945)
- Land area 3,000 square kilometers<sup>21</sup>
- The percentage of the population in Lambton County that is of retirement age (65+) is now 16.9%, (up from 16% in 2001) - this figure compares to a provincial average of 13.6%<sup>22</sup>
- The population includes 14,700 immigrants, who combine to make up 11.7% of the total population (Ontario's population includes an immigrant population of 28.3%)<sup>23</sup>
- Sarnia's employment rate, while continuing to climb, was nevertheless below the 2006 national average of 62.4<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Community of Chatham-Kent Portal, <http://www.chatham-kent.ca/default.htm> (Accessed Sept. 12, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> "Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership," Sarnia Lambton Economic Partnership, <http://www.sarnialambton.on.ca> (Accessed Sept. 12, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> *Sarnia-Lambton Demographic Overview* (Sarnia: Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, 2006). [http://www.sarnialambton.on.ca/documents/LAMBTON2006censusJUN1608\[1\].pdf](http://www.sarnialambton.on.ca/documents/LAMBTON2006censusJUN1608[1].pdf).

<sup>22</sup> *Life in Sarnia-Lambton*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Sarnia: Sarnia-Lambton Workforce Training Board, 2008). [http://www.sltb.org/documents/profile\\_SLife\\_2008.pdf](http://www.sltb.org/documents/profile_SLife_2008.pdf).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

## Economic Development and Industries

### Essex

- Its main industries (Advanced Manufacturing, Agriculture, Tourism) are under economic strain and are being adversely impacted by:
  - Difficult border crossing, rising energy and commodity costs, increasing global competition, the shift in market focus and the development of a global supply chain<sup>25</sup>
- In 2009, a controversial 30 Million dollar wind turbine development project was approved in the county<sup>26</sup>
- Strategic objectives of the county include:<sup>27</sup>
  - Targeting high-value, high-margin manufacturing growth sector
  - Targeting agri-business opportunities and research
  - Expanding investor outreach (Europe and Asia)

### Advanced Manufacturing

- Companies in this industry operate in the automotive, aerospace, machine, tool, die & mold (MTDM), and plastics industries<sup>28</sup>
- Employs over 28% of the population in the County<sup>29</sup>
- There is a threat to the MTDM industries due to aggressive off-shoring by the automotive original equipment manufacturers and global competition from lower-cost economies<sup>30</sup>
- Further contraction of the industry is predicted in the coming 3 to 5 years<sup>31</sup>

### Agriculture

- Focused on vegetable fruit crops and greenhouse vegetable production and grape/wine production<sup>32</sup>
- Over 1,100 acres of greenhouse vegetable production represents over 83% of the provincial total<sup>33</sup>
- Leamington has the highest concentration of greenhouse vegetable growers in North America, maintaining over 900 acres of greenhouses valued at about \$180 million<sup>34</sup>
- Wine production in Essex County is a \$25 million business, employing over 300 people.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *City of Windsor/County of Essex: Regional Economic Development Strategy.*

<sup>26</sup> Gary Rennie, "Essex Approves Wind Turbine Development," *The Windsor Star*, June 16, 2009.

<http://www.windsorstar.com/business/fp/Essex+approves+wind+turbine+development/1699219/story.html>.

<sup>27</sup> *Strategic Plan Presentation: September 2008* (Windsor: Windsor-Essex Development Commission, 2008).

[http://www.choosewindsor.essex.com/downloads/WEDC\\_StrategyPlan.pps](http://www.choosewindsor.essex.com/downloads/WEDC_StrategyPlan.pps).

<sup>28</sup> "Advanced Manufacturing," Windsor Essex Development Commission,

<http://www.choosewindsor.essex.com/industries/manufacturing.cfm> (Accessed Sept. 12, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> "County of Essex."

<sup>30</sup> Sandy Munro, *Changing the Paradigm for the Machine, Tool, Die and Mould Industry in Windsor Essex* (Windsor: Windsor Essex Development Commission, 2008), [http://www.choosewindsor.essex.com/downloads/MTDM\\_Diversification\\_Study.pdf](http://www.choosewindsor.essex.com/downloads/MTDM_Diversification_Study.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> "County of Essex."

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *City of Windsor/County of Essex: Regional Economic Development Strategy.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

- Future opportunities to expand the local wine industry through the Ontario Wine Strategy (October 2001), which is a 20-year plan aimed at enhancing the competitiveness of Ontario wines and increasing their share of sales in the Ontario and various export markets<sup>36</sup>

### **Tourism**

- 402 kilometers of shoreline, much of it sandy beaches<sup>37</sup>
- Convention business makes a significant economic contribution to the region<sup>38</sup>
- Local foods are promoted - Essex CFDC helped organize “A Recipe for Success” tourism event to promote local foods<sup>39</sup>

### **Chatham-Kent**

- Based on economic research and community consultation input, the following industry sectors will be pursued: Diversified High Value Agriculture, Advanced Automotive Parts Manufacturing, Business Process Outsourcing, Next-Generation Energy, Retail/Commercial, and Tourism<sup>40</sup>
- Received funding for the development of additional wind farms (to a total of 229 turbines) and a solar project<sup>41</sup>

### **Automotive Parts**

- Companies operating in Chatham include:<sup>42</sup>
  - International Truck & Engine Corporation (770 employees)
  - Meritor Suspension Systems (270 employees)

### **Agri-business**<sup>43</sup>

- Agri-business is strong in the region and is home to the following companies:
  - Pioneer Hi-Bred (Dupont Agriculture and Nutrition) (200 employees) providers of agricultural seeds (corn, soybeans, canola, alfalfa, wheat, sunflowers, sorghum), silage inoculates and information services.
  - Greenfield Ethanol (73 employees), providers of fuel, ethanol, industrial alcohol, distillers of grains, animal feed, and carbon dioxide.
- Local foods are promoted: the CFDC offers a Microfinance Program to 10 aspiring entrepreneurs wanting to sell prepared foods or produce at the Chatham-Kent’s Farmers’ Market.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> “County of Essex.”

<sup>38</sup> *City of Windsor/County of Essex: Regional Economic Development Strategy.*

<sup>39</sup> Essex CFDC Annual Report: 2007-2008 (Essex: Essex CFDC, 2008), <http://www.essexcfdc.on.ca/en/documents/AnnualReport2007-2008.pdf>.

<sup>40</sup> *Chatham-Kent 2007 Review* (Chatham: Municipality of Chatham-Kent Economic Development Services, 2008), [http://www.chatham-kent.ca/cityBundle\\_services/downloadsService/downloadfiles/1ba089aa-539b-41a6-80fe-957b5215ff13\\_CK%20YEAR%20IN%20REVIEW%202007.pdf](http://www.chatham-kent.ca/cityBundle_services/downloadsService/downloadfiles/1ba089aa-539b-41a6-80fe-957b5215ff13_CK%20YEAR%20IN%20REVIEW%202007.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> *Chatham-Kent 4 Business Newsletter*, Spring 2009 (Chatham: Municipality of Chatham-Kent Economic Development Services, 2009), [http://www.chatham-kent.ca/cityBundle\\_services/downloadsService/downloadfiles/7fde7bdc-b09f-4e8d-9ec2-1ef846deffcb\\_CK%20for%20Biz%20SPRING%202009%20pg-FINAL.pdf](http://www.chatham-kent.ca/cityBundle_services/downloadsService/downloadfiles/7fde7bdc-b09f-4e8d-9ec2-1ef846deffcb_CK%20for%20Biz%20SPRING%202009%20pg-FINAL.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> Welcome to the Community of Chatham-Kent Portal.”

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

- In October 2009, the Centre for Agricultural Renewable Energy and Sustainability (CARES) was established at the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus
  - The centre focuses on on-farm renewable energy technologies.

#### **Other companies in the region<sup>44</sup>**

- These include:
  - Union Gas Limited (A Spectra Energy Company) and Pioneer Hi-Bred Limited (A DuPont Company) have their Canadian head offices in Chatham.
  - Has a contact centre industry including YA Canada, and TransCom International.

#### **Sarnia-Lambton**

- Seeds of the economy were sewn 150 years ago, when the discovery of crude oil in Lambton County triggered an oil rush<sup>45</sup>
- Diverse economy provides Sarnia-Lambton with a stable employment base
- Industrial Sectors include: Agriculture, Cleantech, Automotive Parts, Business Process Outsourcing, Engineering, Construction & Metal Fabrication, Industrial BioProducts, Petrochemical and Refined Petroleum, and Tourism<sup>46</sup>
- Strategic goals of Sarnia-Lambton include becoming:<sup>47</sup>
  - A leading agricultural centre with a key role in the bioeconomy
  - A major commercialization and manufacturing centre and feedstock provider for the biopetro economy
  - An end-to-end supporter of the energy sector
  - A recognized Canadian centre for clean technology

#### **Alternative Energy**

- OptiSolar Farms is located in Sarnia is one of North America's largest solar power generation facilities<sup>48</sup>
- Wind Power is generating electricity at Sky Generation Inc.'s new facility at Ravenswood<sup>49</sup>
- The Research Park (operated by the University of Western Ontario) Sarnia-Lambton Campus, established in 2004, focuses on alternative energies, advanced materials and environmental, process and biotechnologies<sup>50</sup>
- Lambton College is located in Sarnia and offers an Alternative Energy Engineering Technology program, providing theory and application skills in current and emerging energy technologies<sup>51</sup>
- Examples of local organizations embracing green technologies:<sup>52</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Welcome to the Community of Chatham-Kent Portal."

<sup>45</sup> "Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership."

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> *Powering a Sustainable World: Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership Strategic Plan Summary* (Sarnia: Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, 2009), <http://www.sarnialambton.on.ca/downloader.php?fid=73&type=File1>

<sup>48</sup> "Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership."

<sup>49</sup> *Solar Solutions* (Sarnia: Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership, 2009), <http://www.sarnialambton.on.ca/downloader.php?fid=52&type=File1>.

<sup>50</sup> *Solar Solutions*.

<sup>51</sup> "Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership."

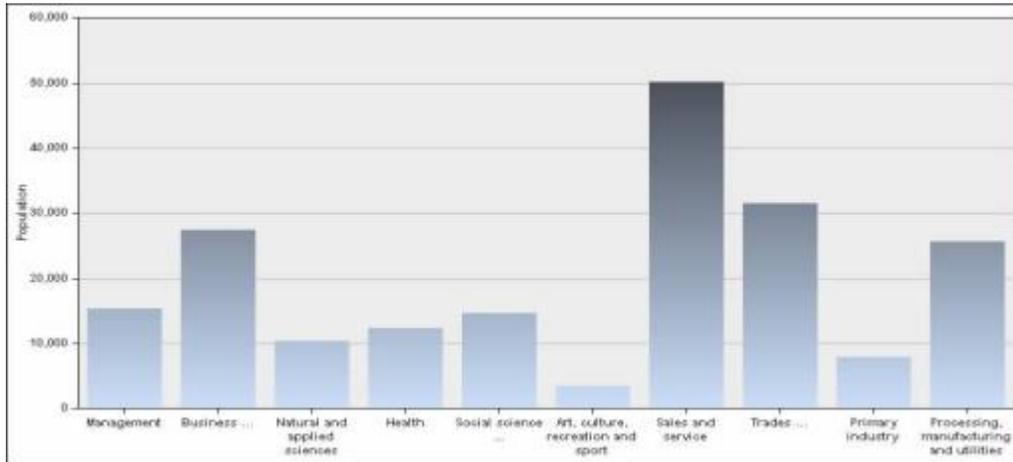
- Suncor Energy – built the largest ethanol facility in Canada
- Northern Ethanol is in the initial stages of building a \$210 million dollar ethanol plant in the City of Sarnia
- Bluewater Power, the largest electric utility in Sarnia-Lambton, is generating electricity from landfill gases

---

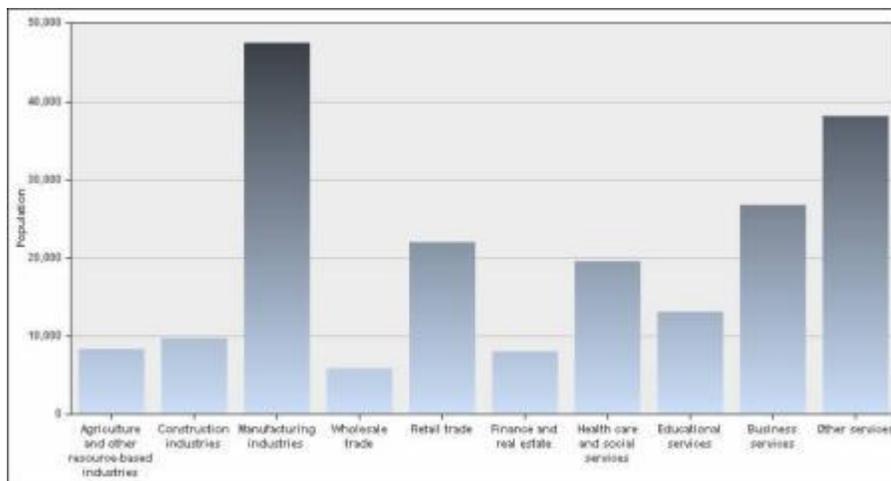
<sup>52</sup> *Sarnia-Lambton Ontario: Canada's Bioindustrial Centre* (Sarnia: Sarnia-Lambton Economic Development Partnership, 2008), <http://www.sarnialambton.on.ca/downloader.php?fid=55&type=File1>.

## Essex County Demographics<sup>53</sup>

### Essex Occupations – Experienced Labour Force 15 Years & Over

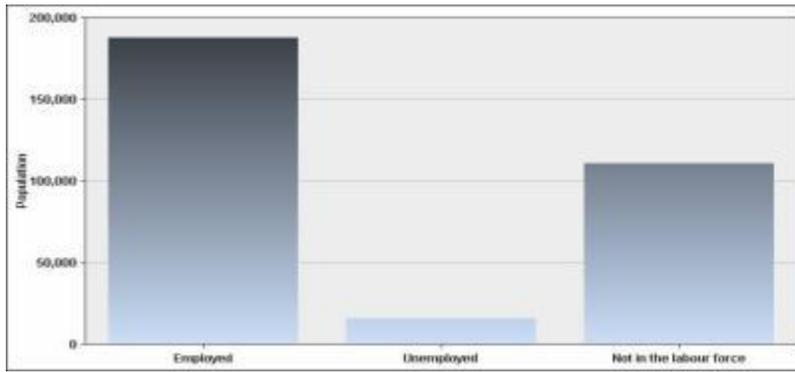


### Essex Employment by Industry – Experience Labour Force 15 Years & Over



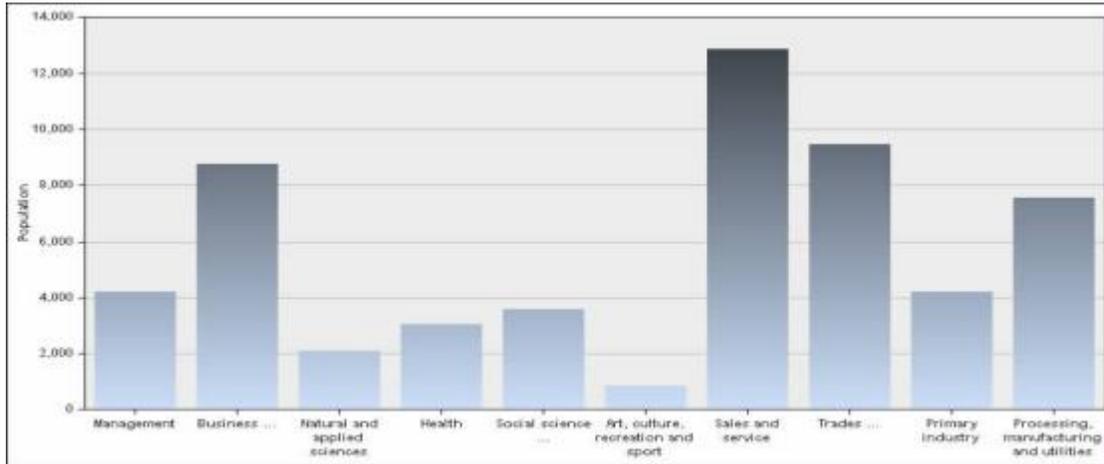
<sup>53</sup> Statistics Canada. 2007. *Essex County, Ontario* (table). *2006 Community Profiles*. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-001. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007. Statistics Canada. 2007

### Essex Labour Force Activity – Population 15 Years & Over

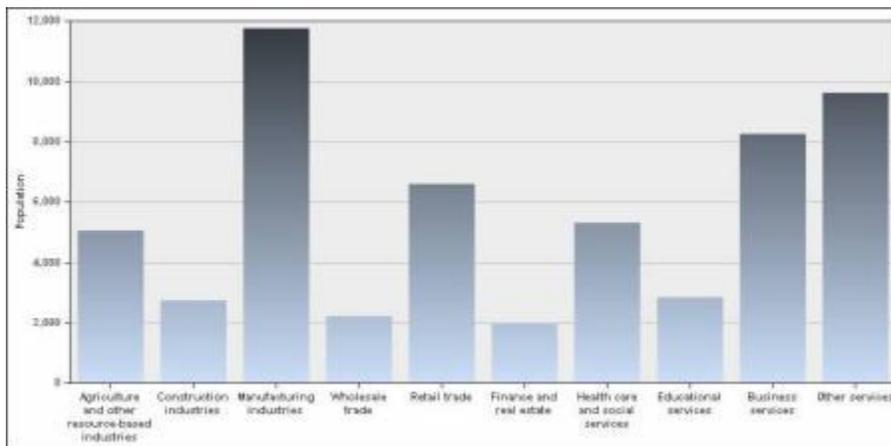


Chatham-Kent Demographics<sup>54</sup>

### Chatham-Kent Occupations – Experienced Labour Force 15 Years & Over

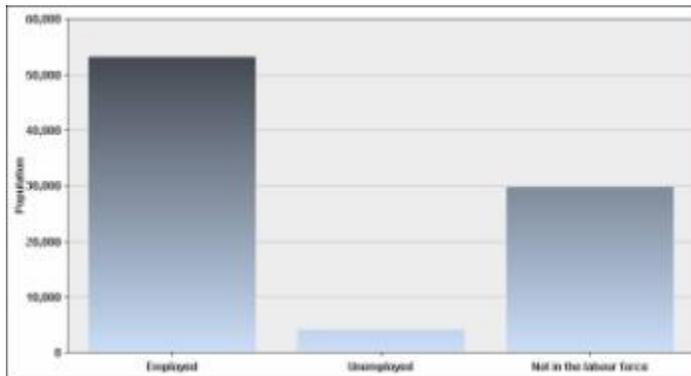


### Chatham-Kent Employment by Industry – Experience Labour Force 15 Years & Over



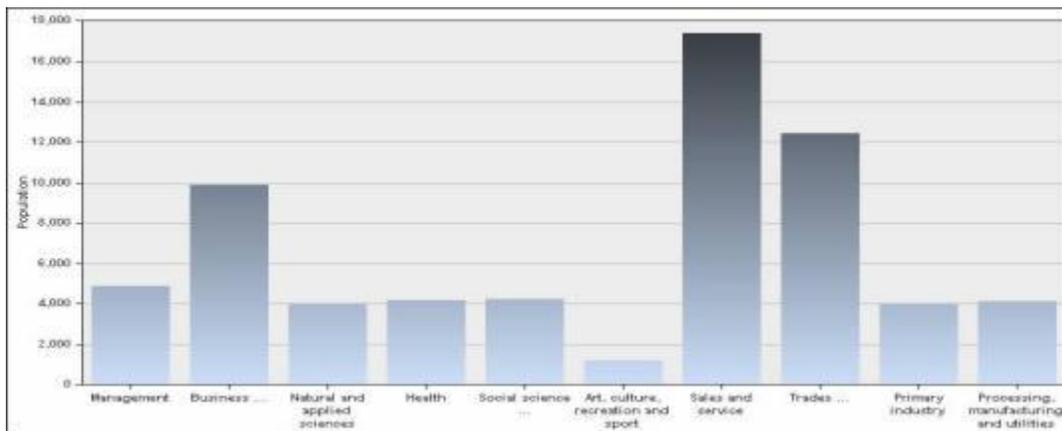
<sup>54</sup> Statistics Canada. 2007. *Chatham-Kent, Ontario (table). 2006 Community Profiles*. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007. Statistics Canada. 2007

## Chatham-Kent Labour Force Activity – Population 15 Years & Over

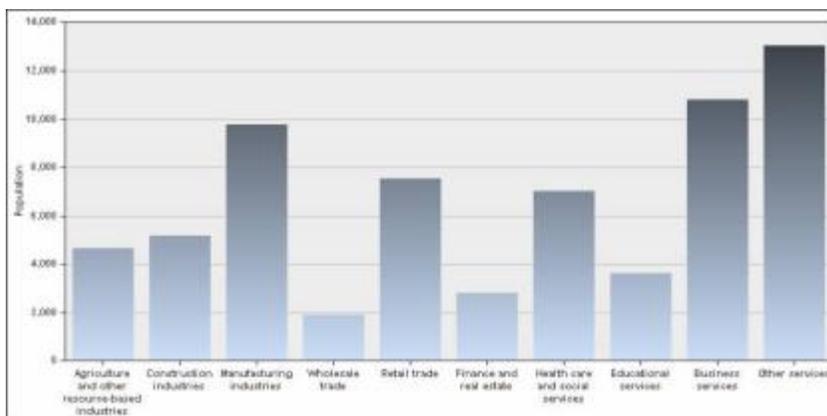


Sarnia-Lambton Demographics<sup>55</sup>

## Sarnia-Lambton Occupations – Experienced Labour Force 15 Years & Over

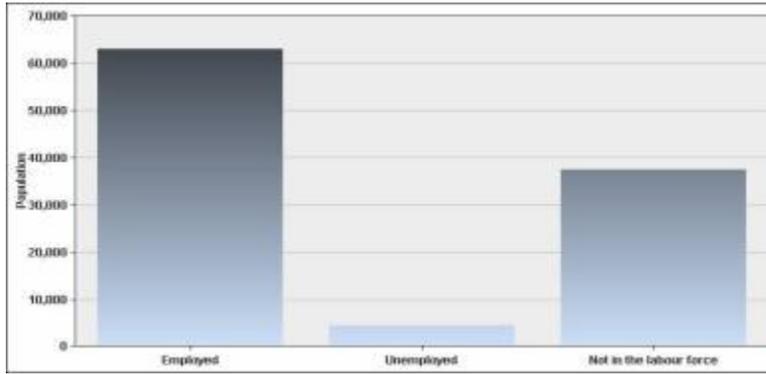


## Sarnia-Lambton Employment by Industry – Experience Labour Force 15 Years & Over



<sup>55</sup> Statistics Canada. 2007. *Sarnia-Lambton, Ontario* (table). *2006 Community Profiles*. 2006 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 92-591-XWE. Ottawa. Released March 13, 2007. Statistics Canada. 2007

## Sarnia-Lambton Labour Force Activity – Population 15 Years & Over



Reflections

## Appendix 2: Sample Discovery Workshop Agenda

---

### Chatham Discovery Workshop Agenda

September 21, 2009

9:00 – 12:00 Noon

**9:00 – 9:15 Registration & Refreshments**

**9:15 – 9:25 Welcome**

Carol Emery, *Manager, Community Futures Development Corporation of Chatham/Kent*; Harold Flaming, *Executive Director, The Ontario Rural Council*

**9:25 – 9:45 “Identifying Rural Research Priorities through Community Engagement” Project Overview**

Dr. Wayne Caldwell, *School of Environmental Design and Rural Planning, University of Guelph*; Dr. Yolande Chan, *Director, Monieson Centre, Queen’s School of Business*; Jeff Dixon, *Project Coordinator, Monieson Centre, Queen’s School of Business*

**9:45 – 11:50 Facilitated Brainstorming and Discussion**

George Jackson, *Associate Facilitator, Queen’s Executive Decision Centre*

- 1. Burning issues:** What are the challenges and needs with respect to rural community and economic development and making the Essex, Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Elgin region a vital community (economic, social, health)?
- 2. Research wish list:** If you had access to researchers for a year, what would you ask them to study in relation to question 1? What are the critical research questions requiring answers and insights?
- 3. Local capacity:** What local resources (organizations, reports, past work etc.) might contribute to addressing the issues identified above? What local businesses have had success overcoming related challenges and can be consulted or studied?
- 4. Ensuring success:** To ensure that today’s workshop results in lasting community benefits, what actions can your community take to address these priorities and what assistance do you need?

**11:50 – 12:00 Closing Remarks**

Carol Emery, Harold Flaming, Dr. Wayne Caldwell, Dr. Yolande Chan, Jeff Dixon

**12:00 Adjournment**

## Appendix 3: Summary of Ontario Provincial Planners Institute (OPPI) Workshop

### ***Ontario Professional Planners Institute – Rural and Agriculture Working Group Tuesday, December 8, 2009***

Scott Tousaw, Huron County

Gary Cousins, Wellington County

Allen Rothwell, Perth County

Terry McCarty, City of Ottawa

Barry Uitvlugt, County of Lambton

Wayne Caldwell, School of Environmental Design and Rural Planning

University of Guelph

Yolande Chan, Monieson Centre, Queen's University

Harold Flaming, The Ontario Rural Council

#### **Question 1-What are the key issues and challenges facing rural Ontario**

- Declining rural population
  - i. No urban settlement component in many rural municipalities
  - ii. Demographic shifts within the rural the rural population and the resultant impacts
    - 1. increased demand for health care services and seniors needs
    - 2. school closures, post office closures, reduced social services
  - iii. Rural Ontario is not homogenous
    - 1. some rural areas are growing in population and thereby creating unique challenges for rural municipality community
- Rural health care
  - i. LHINs not understanding nor being response to health care needs of rural residents
  - ii. Hospital and emergency room closures
- Rural transportation
  - i. Traffic congestion and service demands of urbanites living in rural
- What does rural sustainability mean?
  - i. How to help communities adapt to change
  - ii. Issue of community resilience
- Rural areas connected to urban settlements are generally doing better
  - i. How to support and foster this connection?
- Adequate services in rural areas is a significant issue
- Need for regional governance approach
  - i. Creativity in providing services between urban / rural

- Rising energy prices and impact on rural communities and rural way of life
- Renewable energy – issues and opportunities for rural communities
- Disproportionate use social services in rural communities
- Diversification of rural economy and the provision of rural based jobs, home-based business development

**Question 2-Rural research questions that need to be addressed in order to aid in the development of a stronger rural Ontario**

- What are the main factors that affect rural decline?
- How do we define rural decline and rural growth?
- What are the main factors in achieving rural community sustainability?
- What are the key issues / challenges to rural residents accessing social and health services
- Are the LHINs effectively addressing the health needs of rural residents?
- What steps do rural communities need to take to create and manage community sustainability?
- What is the impact of the Green Energy Act on rural Ontario?
- How can rural communities benefit from the opportunities afforded by green economy, creative economy, home based business? What steps need to be facilitated to take advantage of these opportunities?
- Review of provincial policies and programs dealing with education, health care and social services. Are these policies and programs effectively supporting the needs of rural residents? What changes need to be put in place?
  - Ministry of Education
  - Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
  - Ministry of Community and Social Services
- What are the ingredients / conditions for a liveable sustainable rural community?
- What is needed to more adequately take advantage of technology in the provision of education and health care in rural Ontario? Lessons to be learned from northern Ontario
- Review of PPS and other planning policies to ensure support for a strong rural economy as well as land protection
- Research related to addressing community objection to certain forms of renewable energy? Addressing truth and myths re: impact of renewable energy in Ontario
- Pros and cons of different renewable energy ownership models

## Appendix 4: Summary of Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) Workshop

### **EDCO Consultation – EDCO Board of Directors**

Feb. 2, 2010

Dr. Wayne Caldwell, School of Environmental Design and Rural Planning

University of Guelph

Dr. Yolande Chan, Monieson Centre, Queen's University

Harold Flaming, The Ontario Rural Council

Jeff Dixon, Monieson Centre, Queen's University

Dr. Jennifer Ball, University of Guelph

### **Question 1 – Burning Issues**

- Communication
  - Not broadband (although that's an issue, too), but communication between people
  - Changing social structure (no local church link)
  - Changing media links (not everyone reads local newspapers; decline in local TV)
  - These all affect opportunities for community mobilization
- Municipal finances
  - Growing indebtedness
  - Any changes to funding will have severe effects – issues of future viability of rural municipalities
- Education
  - Need local education to re-tool for new economy
- Out-migration
  - Especially in Northern communities with one-industry towns
  - Not just youth out-migration, it's core workers leaving for S. Ontario or oil sands
  - Effect of demise of whole communities (more so in the N than in S)
- Change/depletion in traditional economic structure
  - Forestry, farming, even mining due to foreign ownership (e.g. Sudbury)
  - Manufacturing decline
  - Aging population
  - Emergence of service economy = lower-paying jobs
    - Affects tax base
- Growth of small business and entrepreneurs
  - Lack of adequate understanding of how to support these people
  - We don't retain businesses after they start
  - Need support for soft infrastructure
  - Developing business intelligence to take businesses to the "second level"
  - There is a gap between business investment and business development
  - Need to invest in the right businesses – not "garage start-ups" but businesses with a long-term business case

- Technology
  - There are Haves & Have-Nots
    - Need to make decisions about relocation, catching up with broadband access & use
  - Awareness of potential for broadband
  - Effects on small businesses of lack of broadband access
- Lack of access to second-stage funding
  - Have access to venture and angel funding, but need expansion funding
- Small businesses need expertise, but not at full-time staff level
  - Need mentoring – perhaps through a skilled group who help 1-2 days/week
  - A formal program could be developed here to help with business skill development
- Access to capital
  - Hardest for small start-ups
  - Emerging thinking is developing along the lines of co-ops: provide services *and* financing
- Micro-level:
  - Connecting resources to support businesses, particularly intellectual & cultural assets
  - E.g.: Kingston roundtable
- We don't have a culture which encourages failure in business: one-strike you're out approach to financing, rather than treating failure as lessons learned
- Agriculture
  - Climate change
  - Opportunities with new crops, need support with analyzing what to grow
  - New technologies: combines working with GPS; automated fertilizer mixing; etc.: all requires broadband
  - Urban-rural fringe creates challenges for some agricultural communities
  - Access to local food
- Alternative energy
  - Huge educational curve which agriculture sector is expected to make: involves chemistry, physics, etc.; great technological know-how required
- Attracting new immigrants
  - In tourism, new Canadians won't venture out of cities because they don't feel welcome
  - People go first as tourists, then follow as investors
  - How can we encourage them to settle in rural communities?
  - New immigrants need a support network
- Use of labour pool
  - In current economy, there is access to talent at a lower price
  - Can we use retired people relocating from the city on a part-time basis?
  - There is a quality of life advantage, e.g., less commuting
- Transportation

- Issues with getting out of major cities

## Question 2 – Research Questions

- Has anyone ever calculated the cost of doing business based on the way our transportation system is organized (rail, roads, etc.)?
- What is the role of local government? I.e., these are non-sophisticated government systems which have been thrown into economic development on top of roads, schools, hospitals, partnerships, yet lack resources and finances.
  - Companies can't afford a full-time expert, likewise with municipalities.
  - What is the driving need or "win" for local government to be engaged in economic development?
- Incubators (e.g., East Germany post-communism: brought in businesses from W Germany and elsewhere, partnered community with business to develop jobs). How can we link government economic developers, educational institutions, and businesses to get research into hands of business people and out to global markets?
- What are the best options for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs/industries in rural communities? What businesses can be attracted or created to generate employment opportunities (e.g., green industries)?
- How do/should rural municipalities measure their own success? What are a reasonable set of benchmarks/performance indicators, especially beyond tax assessment base or jobs?
- Where are occupations growing, where do skill levels reside, and where are there gaps? Skilled workforce tends to be aging, so how can we at least maintain economic prosperity? How are we addressing skills gap?
- Where is rural Ontario competitive? Where are there opportunities for businesses to attain a higher degree of profitability? Businesses are in business to make money.
- What are the present frameworks of psychology/sociology that are the guideposts and/or blockages to change? E.g., are you welcoming to newcomers (not just foreigners), how do you treat new opportunities such as wind farms? What are motivators to accept and embrace change? What is the impact of being a small community on these attitudes?
- How do you manage community dynamics as urban retirees relocate to rural communities (e.g., rising rent rates)?
- There is a Canadian tendency to jettison good technology, e.g., Avro Arrow, Nortel, potentially ACL. What policy and programs will provide active encourage, support and engagement of technological development and business?
- There are good tools coming from many ministries. How do we demonstrate the application of these tools to rural communities? Uptake is low because there is a mobilization gap.
  - Rural U.S. has some best practices to learn from. E.g., Nebraska.
  - How can resources like Mainstreet and First Impressions be further developed for areas like the Creative Economy? What new resources do we need to prepare

- us for 10 years down the road, i.e., what's the next generation of resources (e.g., social media tools)?
- How do you turn external pressures into a real opportunity, e.g., global warming leading to new agricultural and energy developments?

## Appendix 5: Summary of Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) Workshop

### ***Rural Ontario Municipal Association Board of Directors - January 14, 2010***

Dr. Wayne Caldwell, School of Environmental Design and Rural Planning  
University of Guelph  
Dr. Jennifer Ball, University of Guelph  
Harold Flaming, The Ontario Rural Council

#### **Question 1: What are the key issues and challenges facing rural Ontario**

- Significant population decline in many northern communities
- Northern Ontario itself is not a homogeneous region i.e. between northeast and northwest
  - i. Need to understand and address these differences
- Financial implications on rural municipalities re:
  - i. farm tax reduction program
  - ii. downloading of provincial highways to municipalities
- Affordable broadband accessibility in all rural communities
- Provision of adequate and quality health care services
  - i. Hospital and emergency room closures
  - ii. Health care professionals to adequately serve rural residents
- Provision of quality education for students in rural communities
  - i. School closures
  - ii. Transportation of students
- Women's issues generally and specifically lack of quality employment opportunities
- Inadequate capacity to deal with the significant growth in some rural municipalities
  - i. Human resource capacity (staff #s and skills) to deal with planning for growth
  - ii. Financial resources to take care of growth in many small rural municipalities (residential property taxes are inadequate)
- Railway closes and impact on rural municipalities
- Provincial Policy Statement and related land use policies are too restrictive to support the development of sustainable rural communities
- Poor rural transportation services and infrastructure

- i. Effective transportation connections and linkages to effectively support the movement of rural / northern residents
- Single tier municipalities are disadvantaged re: the securing of provincial grants when compared to 2 tier county structure
- Fiscal capacity of rural municipalities to survive the future
  - i. Need to provide increased services at an ever increasing cost

**Question 2: Rural research questions that need to be addressed in order to aid in the development of a stronger rural Ontario**

- What is the appropriate balance between policies that protect agricultural land and still allow for rural economic development and economic diversification in rural communities?
- What is an appropriate long-term fiscal capacity that would allow rural / northern municipalities to provide adequate services for their populations?
- What are effective, innovative and appropriate delivery mechanisms and structures to provide for the delivery of services within vast geographic areas i.e. northern Ontario?
- How are municipalities able to survive if they are not allowed to grow?
- What is the appropriate and acceptable balance between fiscal, environmental and economic sustainability?
- Is the current LHIN structure adequately addressing rural and northern health issues?
- What are some innovative and best practices to appropriately address the transportation crisis in rural and northern communities?
- Assessment of the current post secondary school system to adequately prepare youth and women in rural communities for the work force.
- What are the effective and innovative approaches to the provision of health care services in rural and northern communities?
- Effective governance of rural areas within large urban centres i.e. Ottawa, Hamilton etc.
- How to meet the ever increasing demand for rural services with the ever decreasing financial support from the province?

## Appendix 6: Summary of Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations (OACFDC) Workshop

---

### Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations (OACFDC) February 23, 2010

Diana Jedig, Executive Director, OACFDC, Board

Bill Spinney, President, OACFDC Board

Vic Howarth, Board Member

Wayne Caldwell, School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph

Jennifer Ball, University of Guelph

Yolande Chan, Monieson Centre, Queen's University

Jeff Dixon, Monieson Centre, Queen's University

#### 1. What are the key issues and challenges facing rural Ontario?

- Transportation - so many small communities – there is a need to link them with a good transportation system
- High-speed Broadband
  - Needed to link communities together
  - Need for equal access to telecommunications systems
  - students are challenged to do homework assignments etc. Equal access needed
  - has health and safety implications – snowmobile accident with no cell service; as more urbanites come to rural areas, their expectations for more services are raised but cannot be met
- Jobs
- Access to capital for small businesses
  - banks too centralized and risk averse – but banks are not losing money in rural Ontario
- Centralized Decision-making – not working in favour of rural communities
  - FedDev Ontario – rural is getting lost within the monolithic new agency; may not be funded properly – centralized decision-making may not be appropriate
  - Need community-based decision making
  - No CFDC voice at Treasury Board or Cabinet
- Future of CFDCs
  - 2003-8 Conference Board of Canada study shows loan impact of CFDCs
  - CED is not a measurable item. Loan impact is measurable. (Anticipate that the CF program will be renewed in March)

- Program review done in ON - 3 people from CFDCs and the rest from bureaucrats and consultants; this in itself says something important

**2. What are 3 - 5 rural research questions that need to be pursued in order to aid in the development of stronger rural communities.**

- How to generate input and control locally/from the grassroots? How to retain the autonomy within the local community to make decisions for itself? (Autonomy is the basis for the CFDC model.) How to retain the autonomous decision-making authority? Northern Ontario, as a resource based economy, has lived and died at the whim of Queen's Park. How can we be masters of our own home? (governance issue) Benefits have been transferred to others in the past. Now resources are being depleted, so what future?
- How do you design a model that will allow for the redistribution of capital among CFDCs? Some CFDCs have run out of their capital. Others have lots in the "bank". Some are more risk averse than others. Capital needs may not be linked directly to market size. Should OACFDC influence behavior to promote "risk friendly" decisions? Should more money be distributed to "risk tolerant" CFDCs? How can OACFDC facilitate the redistribution of this money without local CFDCs losing control over this money?
- How do you stratify/determine an adequate level of operating resources for a CFDC? Performance-based measures? Now each Ontario CFDC gets \$300K regardless of size/market. In other parts of the country, there's an eligibility for this amount but some CFDCs get less and others more, depending on the case they make.
- What are the benefits of having a good transportation system? How do we link smaller communities? Community structures should be investigated. If you're going to have rural communities, you need to be able to link them, other than with the automobile. (Cannot only rely on roads/transportation to link rural areas.)

Self-governance is a northern Ontario research issue