



Growth Strategies for Rural Communities: A Preliminary Investigation

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Rural Development Institute, Brandon University

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Abstract

Rural planners and development officers are often looking for ways to sustain and grow population. What growth strategies and assets are tools for rural population growth? While there are many self-directed guides suggesting different growth strategies and a large literature on assets and capitals, there is no research comparing the growth strategies and assets used by rural municipalities with growing and declining populations. Past growth strategies used by rural specialists were identified from a number of self-directed guides and six municipalities were identified for the study: three municipalities with stable or growing populations and three municipalities with declining populations.

Interviews with key informants from each municipality were used to identify growth initiatives which were then categorized into eight growth strategies and seven capitals. The research shows that growing and declining municipalities use similar assets to implement different growth strategies.

region strategies
rural communities
population growth
growing
capitals
assets
declining



Introduction

In 2015, there is an abundance of resources, materials, and organizations available to rural planners and development officers that contribute to community development and growth. Such efforts have been bolstered over the decades with guides, tools, and advice developed by local, regional, and provincial agencies. If growth means increasing local population, the answer relies on finding ways to have more births than deaths, and more people moving to the community, be it those migrating in from another province or immigrating from outside the country (Bollman 2014). The definition of community growth has evolved. Since the Brundtland Commission report (1987), the most frequently used adjective is sustainable growth.

Population growth does not just happen on its own. A rational, planned approach with resources and a commitment to follow through are integral to a successful population growth strategy. Also important to the process is evaluation of the strategy and readjustment as needed. At the essence of many growth initiatives are efforts to lesson factors that drive people away and enhance factors that attract people. Retention and expansion efforts are a common refrain in the lexicon of planners and development officers and there continues to be efforts to retain youth and repatriate former residents, in part based on lifestyle, family, well-being, and scenic attractions.

While these are factors best addressed locally, in New Brunswick, a provincial population growth strategy has helped create positive conditions for population growth. Their first Population Growth Strategy (2007-2012) focused attracting immigrants and better integrating newcomers, retaining youth, promoting diversity, and repatriating former residents (Government of New Brunswick 2015). According to the Provincial government's report card, 34 of the 37 initiatives outlined in the strategy were completed.

New Brunswick's population decreased by 8,136 between 1996 and 2006, however, between 2006 and 2011, the province saw a significant population jump (Statistics Canada, 2012). In 2006, New Brunswick had 729,997 residents and in 2011 it had 751,171 residents, an increase of 21,174 people. The province is currently developing the 2014-2017 population growth strategy.

There are equal and opposite factors pulling local residents away for jobs, education, and services, including health specialists. When coupled with aging demographics, we see older parents dying in rural areas, and much of their wealth (and life insurance policies) are being transferred out of the local area to their children, likely in urban centres. It is of little surprise that growth efforts in the last two decades repeatedly call for two additional factors: the importance of local capacity and competencies in rural communities to implement growth strategies and the need for deliberate regional cooperation. In some ways, 'regional' is the new rural.

The rural economy across the globe and right here in Manitoba, has changed and is still changing. Partridge and Olfert explain these in their 2010 article, *The Winner's Choice*. Rural residents no longer do almost everything in one community; instead, they live, work, shop, and play in different communities in their region. They argue that using a functional economic region as the base geographic measure rather than individual communities on their own is the better way to analyze economic information and formulate policy. Rural economic changes have been enabled by a number of factors including a reduction of economic reliance on primary agriculture, an increase of labour-saving techniques that reduce the number of available jobs, better transportation networks, and retail spending happening at a regional, rather than local scale.

Community Economic Development (CED) is an approach to development where planning and actions are driven by people living in the community (Government of Manitoba 2015).

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD) has resources available online and from front-line staff to support Manitoba communities choosing to take a CED approach to influencing the local economy and improve the quality of life for its residents. The department has developed handbooks that provide elected municipal officials with a comprehensive overview of CED, as well as ones to assist with establishing a Community Development Corporation (CDC) and hiring an Economic Development Officer (EDO).

Community Futures – Manitoba also offers a number of online and front-line support for economic development in rural Manitoba. Two online tools of note are the Business Planning Workbook and the Guide to Starting a Business in a First Nation Community (Community Futures 2015).

Functional economic regions are a contained geographical area that can be the focus of planning and development activities. Functional economic regions were the geographic basis of measure in the 2013 RDI report, Identifying and Explaining Self-Contained Labour Areas in Rural Manitoba; in this report, functional economic regions are referred to as self-contained labour areas (SLAs). The economic patterns and activities of local businesses and residents was determined by tracking where people live and work using Statistics Canada data. These commuting patterns are used in the report to delineate which municipalities are located in each of the 18 SLAs in Manitoba a propose sub-SLAs for regions that have a large geographic area and/or population.

Research Design and Methods

Local stakeholders wanted an answer to their question: How do rural communities grow? This became our research question. Situating this question in Manitoba meant most of the rural communities were 1,000 people, some rural municipalities with a pattern of low density agriculture producers, and some villages and towns. They are located two to four hours from Winnipeg that had a population of 663,617 in the 2011 Census. Some municipalities had two and three decades of population decline, some with low, but stable population levels, and a few experiencing growth. Also part of this Manitoba context was a provincial amalgamation initiative in 2013-14 that resulted with 112 municipalities transforming into 47 new ones.

We developed a research response with two objectives. First, an examination of guides or tools intended to identify growth strategies as one way to answer the question with a view from the past. Twenty guides were inventoried that spanned three decades to identify and describe growth strategies. Second, case studies that inventoried growth initiatives over the past decade were prepared based on data from key informants in rural communities. To better reflect the situation faced by rural communities, three rural municipalities with a stable or growing population and three municipalities with a declining population were selected. The communities were chosen in part because their population levels meant they were not impacted by the amalgamation process. Using a simplified snowball sampling technique, we recruited and interviewed 21 key informants across the six municipalities.

The process for selecting municipalities began with Manitoba's SLAs. Due to limitations of Statistics Canada data sampling, SLAs in Northern Manitoba, as well as those made up entirely of First Nations communities were excluded from the sample. SLAs that contained Saskatchewan communities were also eliminated because the case study is focused on Manitoba. Finally, SLAs that contained the large urban centres of Winnipeg and Brandon were also eliminated because the case study focused on rural Manitoba. Once this broad elimination process was complete, there were 14 remaining SLAs that included 103 municipalities. These were further reduced to 42 by excluding: municipalities with a population significantly under 1,000 in 2011; recently amalgamated municipalities; municipalities where the boundaries had changed since 1986; and First Nations communities.

Statistics Canada population data from the 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, and 2011 censuses were analyzed to determine which municipalities showed a declining population trend between 1991 and 2006, but a growing or stable trend between 2006 and 2001. They were categorized as growing municipalities. Population data was also analyzed to determine which municipalities showed a steadily declining population between 1991 and 2011. They were categorized as declining municipalities. Three municipalities from each category were then selected for the case study, for a total of six municipalities.

Summary of Growth Strategies & Assets from Self-Directed Guides

Growth strategies were gleaned from self-directed guides. A common interest shared among the guides was assisting rural and small towns in combating decline and pursuing growth. These guides join over 150 others that were selected by growth practitioners and organized into promising practices for CED (see: Rural Development Institute ChoiceMatrix.ca).

Generally, all the guides mentioned the overarching purpose to assist communities to grow and contribute to the broader provincial (state) aspiration of prosperity. These guides commonly prescribed processes for developing strategies and all avoided providing a list of what is working. Some suggested new ways for thinking were needed, as Luther did to bring about a more realistic and relevant community growth strategy, as noted in Table 1. In addition, three guides encouraged the related community development activities to be purposely linked to broader regional development initiatives and assets. Moreover, the importance of sharing and discussing local strategies with nearby communities and provincial (state) departments was stressed. This was seen as an integral part of determining the feasibility and sustainability. These guides were often broad in scope and process oriented.

Table 1. Shifting language and practices to building on assets instead of deficits

Old Terminology	New Terminology
Community Development	Community Building
Clients	Citizens
Needs Assessment	Asset Mapping
Individual Leadership	Community Capacity
Strategic Planning	Strategic Visioning
Deficiencies	Capacities
Dependency	Interdependency
Industrial Recruitment (external)	Building from Within
Outside Evaluation	Internal Monitoring

Source: Luther, V., & Wall, M. (1998)

The guides lend themselves to approaching growth using asset based development where the focus is on building upon the existing strengths of a municipality or region. An asset based development approach begins with identifying assets and making them the foundation for planned initiatives, rather than starting with a foundation based on problems and perceived or real deficiencies (Kretzmann & McKnight 1996). This more positive approach to development increases the self-worth, confidence, and home of community residents, which is especially important in municipalities or regions struggling with social and economic challenges, including population decline (O'Leary, Braithwaite, & Burkett 2001). In order to help with the process of identifying assets, seven commonly used categories that are called capitals have been developed, namely financial capital,

built capital, social capital, human capital, natural capital, cultural capital, and political capital (Flora et al. 2005). There is a significant body of literature discussing how to define and measure the seven capitals. Rural Wealth Creation (Pender et al. 2014) provides a comprehensive overview and discussion on how to better define and measure wealth in rural communities. For the purposes of this research, the definition of seven capitals found in Flora et al. (2005) will be used. Each capital and its definition are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. Community Capitals and Definitions

Capital	Definition
Financial	Funding and other financial resources to help improve community.
Built	Fixed and built infrastructure that improves the community. Roads, telecommunications, housing, and recreation infrastructure are examples.
Social	Networks, trust, and cooperation amongst individuals and organizations in the community.
Human	Health, knowledge, skills, and motivation, as well as the presence of leadership and related expertise in the people that live in the community.
Cultural	How the residents of the municipality view the world, as well as what heritages and perspectives are valued. Also how creativity, innovation, and collaboration are nurtured.
Political	The ability of a municipality to influence rules, regulations, and allocation of resources. Reflects access to power and power brokers locally, regionally, provincially, and nationally.

More specifically, the content of the guides were very similar with the emphasis on process, a sequence of activities. In many cases the process was complex with many steps. Typically, this involved: a committee; approval of a mandate; collection of data used for SWOT analysis; environmental scan; profiles; and lists of assets. Examples of lists of assets were: effective engagement of stakeholders and citizens in issues and actions, then seeking feedback; communicating results including a plan of action; and ways of monitoring and sustaining success and progress. Overall, guides were most effective in offering promising processes to develop, implement, and monitor growth strategies and few included specific suggestions. Unfortunately, evaluation of initiatives undertaken was not raised in the self-directed guides. This is an important part of any plan to ensure it is accomplishing its goals and is readjusted as needed.

Of the guides that included growth strategies, eight distinct growth strategy categories can be identified. They are listed and defined in Table 3 with further details of the guides themselves in Appendix A. These eight growth strategies are considered a preliminary list that will be used to help detect and organize what is suggested by key informants in the six case studies. In addition, these growth strategies are not considered mutually exclusive nor are they assumed to be the proverbial ‘silver bullet’ where one growth strategy makes each and every community grow. Many growth initiatives employ multiple growth strategies.

Table 3. Growth Strategies and Definitions

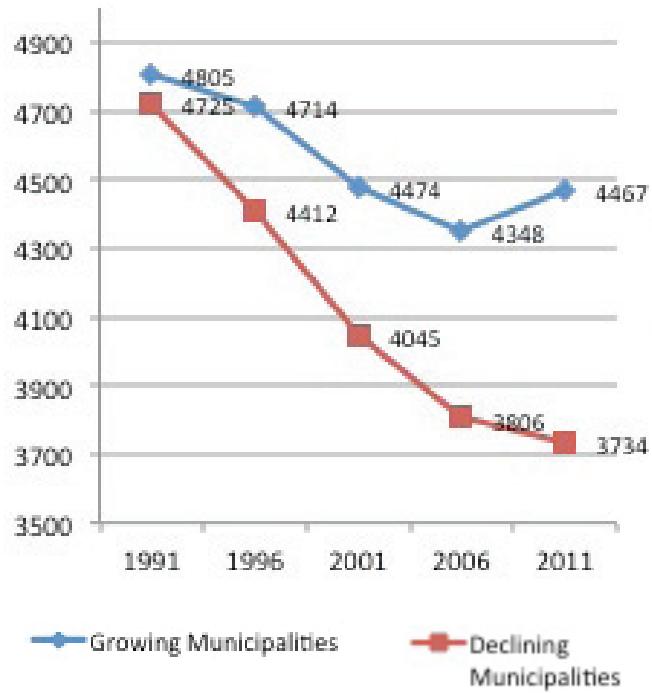
Growth Strategy	Definition
Retaining and Attracting People	<p>Focuses on the reasons why people would want to move to a community. Initiatives focus on retaining current residents, as well as attracting returning residents, migrants, and/or immigrants.</p> <p>Examples: self-identifying as a welcoming community, creating welcome wagons, supporting age friendly projects and policies, building housing and housing incentives, specialized settlement services for immigrants, and distributing marketing materials promoting the advantages of the community.</p>
Retaining and Expanding Local Business	<p>Focuses on keeping current businesses in the community and encouraging them to create new jobs and increase productivity.</p> <p>Examples: tools, resources, and tactics for business succession planning, organizing local food systems, finding new uses for waste, workforce training programs, financial incentives, and promoting local business.</p>
Attracting New Business	<p>Looks at bringing in or developing a new business or industry in the community.</p> <p>Examples: local investment pools; cooperatives; encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship, distributing marketing materials promoting the advantages of the community, alternative ownership models such as social enterprises, and financial incentives.</p>
Tourism	<p>Focuses on bringing visitors to the community to showcase the community itself, as well as bring in outside revenue for local government, businesses, and organizations.</p> <p>Examples: campgrounds, community events, groomed trails through natural landscape, outdoor recreation activities, ecotourism, and agritourism.</p>
Community Capacity	<p>The ability of stakeholders and leaders to find, assess, select, implement, and evaluate initiatives.</p> <p>Examples: developing leadership capacity, community assessments, asset mapping, maintaining and building local infrastructure, zoning and community planning, hiring and training employees, and supporting age friendly projects and policies.</p>
Regional Cooperation	<p>Cooperating with surrounding regions, other communities or organizations to strengthen the capacity and capital of all regional participants.</p> <p>Examples: establishing a regional economic development corporation; establishing joint committees to collaborate on solutions to common problems, sharing employees, and facilitating communication between residents and regional leaders.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	<p>Focuses on residents' basic needs of shelter, food, health care, and education.</p> <p>Examples: building housing and housing incentives, influencing senior government delivery of facilities, programs, and grants to the community, disaster resilience planning, partnerships between local government and volunteer organizations, supporting age friendly projects and policies, afterschool programs.</p>
Recreation and Culture	<p>Focuses on strengthening a community's recreation programs and facilities, as well as developing cultural and historical assets.</p> <p>Examples: maintaining, expanding, and building indoor and/or outdoor recreation facilities; hiring staff to develop and implement programming; events based on community culture and/or history, preserving historic sites; museums; promoting inclusivity; and concerts, recitals, and other arts programming.</p>

Case Study Overview

For analysis purposes, the six municipalities selected for case studies are separated into two groups. The first group, growing municipalities, represents municipalities that experienced a decline in population between 1991 and 2006, but their population levels increased or stabilized between 2006 and 2011. The three municipalities in this group are: Town of Russell, Rural Municipality (RM) of Pipestone, and of Coldwell. The second group, declining municipalities, represents municipalities that experienced a consistent decline in population between 1991 and 2011. The three municipalities in this group are: RM of Argyle, RM of Montcalm, and RM of Grahamdale.

The population comparison between growing municipalities and declining municipalities is shown in Figure 1. The total population in the growing municipalities according to the 1991 census was 4,805 people. The population declined steadily between 1991 and 2006, to a low of 4,348 people in 2006, a decline of 9.5%. However, this trend changed after the 2006 census and the total population had grown to 4,467 people in 2011, an increase of 2.7%. In contrast, the total population in the declining municipalities decreased from 4,725 people in 1991 to 3,734 people in 2011, a decline of 21%.

Figure 1. Total population for selected growing and declining municipalities in Manitoba



Growth initiatives for each case study were itemized from the interview data, the applicable growth strategy and capital were identified, and placed in chronological order, when dates were mentioned or available (Appendix B). There were two initiatives identified by participants that were considered, but not pursued. These initiatives were eliminated from the analysis. In total, participants identified 55 growth initiatives that were implemented, with similar numbers in growing and declining municipalities: 30 were in growing and 25 were in declining.

GROWING MUNICIPALITIES

The Town of Russell, the RM of Pipestone, and the RM of Coldwell were the three growing municipalities. The oil industry plays a significant role in the economies of the Russell and Pipestone, while the agriculture industry plays a role in the economies of all three. All of the growing municipalities experienced population decline between 1991 and 2006. However, Russell and Pipestone experienced population growth between 2006 and 2011, while Coldwell experienced a stable population during that time period. In total, ten key informants from growing municipalities participated in interviews.

Town of Russell

The Town of Russell is located in the north-west part of Southern Manitoba near the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border. According to the 2011 Census, the Town's population is 1 669 people. Russell is located in the Self Contained Labour Area (SLA) of Russell along with the RMs of Russell, Shellmouth-Boulton, Silver Creek, and Binscarth.

Russell is located at the intersection of three major highways, Highway 16 (the Yellowhead Route), 45, and 83, connecting the community in all four directions. According to the local website, the Town is a regional centre that serves over 13 000 people. The website highlights the local retail and industrial sectors, as well as public services, specifically health care and education. The area is also a resource-intensive area for oil.

The Town of Russell was selected for the case study because its population declined between 1991 and 2006, but there was an increase between 2006 and 2011 that resulted in a higher population than in 1991 prior to the decline. Three people from the Town participated in interviews for the case study.

Participants discussed fifteen growth initiatives that, taken together, focused on all eight types of growth strategy: attraction of migrants/immigrants, health and wellbeing, community

capacity, recreation and culture, tourism, attraction of new business/industry, expansion of existing business/industry, and regional cooperation. Participants identified assets that can be categorized as all seven capitals: financial, human, social, built, natural, cultural, and political.

Three growth initiatives discussed by participants have been in place for over a decade. The oldest initiative is the Welcome to Russell dinner that has taken place annually since the 1970s. The Beef and Barley Festival has also been an event in the community for well over a decade and the Assessippi Parkland Economic Development Corporation (APED) began in 1996. The bursary program was put in place in 2003. The regional strategic planning initiative and work on tourism took place about a decade ago. The main street revitalization plan began eight years ago and missions to attract new immigrants took place seven years ago. A lot of activity has occurred in the past three years. The provision of settlement services, Regional Economic Assessment Process (REAP), the rebranding initiative, consideration of an event coordinator, and building the sun room at the palliative care facility all took place in the last 2-3 years. The most recent initiatives, promotion at northern tradeshows and the business retention and expansion survey took place over the last year.

Rural Municipality of Pipestone

The Rural Municipality (RM) of Pipestone is located in Southwestern Manitoba. According to the 2011 Census, the RM's population is 1447 people. The RM is located in the Self Contained Labour Area (SLA) of Virden along with the municipalities of Virden, Wallace, Woodworth, Sifton, Elkhorn, Oak Lake, Albert, and Sioux Valley Dakota Nation.

The RM includes the communities of Reston, Pipestone, Cromer, and Sinclair and is situated entirely in a resource-intensive area for oil. The local website describes it as a picturesque region that is easily accessible from highways 2 and 83.

The RM of Pipestone was selected for the case study because its population was on the decline between 1991 and 2006, but increased slightly between 2006 and 2011. Four people from the RM participated in interviews for the case study.

Participants discussed eleven growth initiatives that can be categorized as growth strategies focused on: attraction of migrants/immigrants, health and wellbeing, community capacity, recreation and culture, attraction of new business/industry, expansion of existing business/industry, and regional cooperation. There were no growth initiatives that used the growth strategy of tourism. Participants identified assets that can be categorized as financial, human, built, social, natural, and political capitals. They did not identify any assets that could be categorized as cultural.

All of the growth initiatives described by participants have taken place in the last six years. A majority of them began 4-6 years ago, they are: the \$10 lot program, the business incentive program, the homeowner/renter grant, incentives to buy an existing residence or build a new one, regional cooperation, and the community grant program. The old school was purchased in the last two years, as was rebranding community marketing materials. Tours to tradeshows to promote the community and construction of the dike took place over the last year.

Rural Municipality of Coldwell

The Rural Municipality (RM) of Coldwell is located in the central part of Southern Manitoba. According to the 2011 Census, the RM's population is 1351 people. Coldwell is located in the Self Contained Labour Area (SLA) of Sigrunes-St. Laurent along with the RMs of Eriksdale, Fairfod, St. Laurent, Sigrunes, and Grahamdale.

According to the local website, Lundar is the regional service centre and the main industries in the area are agriculture, fishing, recreation, and tourism. The website highlights hunting, fishing, and wildlife management areas,

particularly for bird watchers as attractions for tourists. Lundar is promoted as an all season community with organizations, facilities and activities for residents and tourists of all ages.

The RM of Coldwell was selected for the case study because its population increased slightly between 1991 and 2011, while the population in the other RMs in the SLA of Sigrunes-St. Laurent declined. Three people from the RM participated in interviews for this case study.

Participants discussed five growth initiatives that can be categorized as growth strategies focused on attraction of migrants/immigrants, health and well being, recreation and culture, tourism, attraction of new business, industry, or expansion of existing business/industry. Neither community capacity nor regional cooperation were identified as growth initiatives. Participants identified assets that can be categorized as financial, human, social, built, natural, and cultural capitals. They did not identify any assets that could be categorized as political.

The growth initiatives described by participants occurred over the past 20 years. The oldest initiative is the development of Lundar Beach/Sugar Point Lots, which began about 20 years ago. Lunacy Nights was the next initiative described and it started about a decade ago. More recent growth initiatives are the attraction of the Lundar Falcons Junior B hockey team five years ago and the beginning of the lot incentive program about four years ago.

DECLINING MUNICIPALITIES

The RM of Argyle, RM of Montcalm, and RM of Grahamdale were the three declining municipalities. The agriculture industry is a significant of the economy of all three municipalities. All three municipalities experienced population decline between 1991 and 2011. However, Argyle and Montcalm experienced a much smaller decline in population between 2006 and 2011 than Grahamdale. In total, eleven key informants from declining municipalities participated in interviews.

Rural Municipality of Argyle

The Rural Municipality (RM) of Argyle is located in Southwestern Manitoba. According to the 2011 Census, the RM's population is 1071 people. Argyle is located in the Self-Contained Labour Area (SLA) of Killarney-Boissevain along with the following municipalities: Killarney, Boissevain, Turtle Mountain, Roblin, Louise, Riverside, Strathcona, Morton, Whitewater, Glenboro, Pilot Mount, Wawanesa, Cristal City and Cartwright.

The Town of Baldur is the main community in the RM of Argyle. According to the local website, the area is known for its scenic prairie landscape with lakes and hills. Baldur was founded in the late 1800s as the railroad was built across Canada.

The RM of Argyle was selected for the case study because its population declined steadily between 1991 and 2011. Four people participated in interviews for the case study.

Participants discussed fifteen growth initiatives that used all eight growth strategies: attraction of migrants/immigrants, health and wellbeing, community capacity, recreation and culture, tourism, expansion of existing business/industry, attraction of new business/industry, and regional cooperation. Participants identified assets that can be categorized as all seven capitals: financial, human, social, built, natural, cultural, and political.

Upgrading the community hall and making a plan to build and maintain infrastructure are the two growth initiatives that have been around the longest and began about a decade ago. Three initiatives began about seven years ago. They were the seniors' manor expansion, the establishment of the museum/gym, and the attempt at a regional immigration strategy. Most of the initiatives raised by participants took place in the past 4-5 years, including: the public washroom at the part, upgrades to the recreation centre, attracting a new credit union, hiring a building inspector, establishing a health living committee, and doing heritage research. Two initiatives, the hiring of the MDO and "Baldur Bucks" began two years ago.

Rural Municipality of Montcalm

The Rural Municipality (RM) of Montcalm is located in Southeastern Manitoba. According to the 2011 Census, the RM's population is 1309 people. Montcalm is located in the Self Contained Labour Area (SLA) of Winkler-Morden-Altona along with the municipalities of Winkler, Morden, Stanley, Rhineland, Altona, Carman, Morris, Dufferin, Grey, Franklin, Pembina, Morris, Thompson, Roland, Plum Coulee, Manitou, Emerson, St. Claude, and Gretna.

The RM includes three communities: Saint-Joseph, Letellier, and Saint Jean Baptiste. According to the local website, agriculture is the main industry driving the region, however, strong partnerships and diversification make the RM attractive to entrepreneurs.

The RM of Montcalm was selected for the case study because its population steadily declined between 1991 and 2011, which is different than the population increase seen in other local RMs such as Dufferin and Roland. Three people participated in interviews for this case study.

Participants discussed four growth initiatives that can be categorized as growth strategies focused on: attraction of migrants/immigrants, health and wellbeing, recreation and culture, and tourism. Growth strategies not identified

were: community capacity, attraction of new business/industry, expansion of existing business/industry, and regional cooperation. Participants identified assets that can be categorized as financial, human, built, natural, or social capital. They did not identify any assets that could be categorized as cultural or political capital.

Three of the four growth initiatives discussed began at least a decade ago and only one has been undertaken in recent years. The Quad Derby has been an event for 14 years while the addition to the senior's manor happened a decade ago and upgrades to the recreation facility occurred in the last ten years. The most recent initiative discussed was the establishment of a new housing subdivision over the past three years.

Rural Municipality of Grahamdale

The Rural Municipality (RM) of Grahamdale is located in the Interlake region of Manitoba. According to the 2011 Census, the RM's population is 1354 people. Grahamdale is located in the Self Contained Labour Area (SLA) of Siglunes-St. Laurent along with the municipalities of Siglunes, St. Laurent, Coldwell, Eriksdale, and Fairford.

The RM of Grahamdale was selected for the case study because its population declined steadily between 1991 and 2011. Four people participated in interviews for the case study.

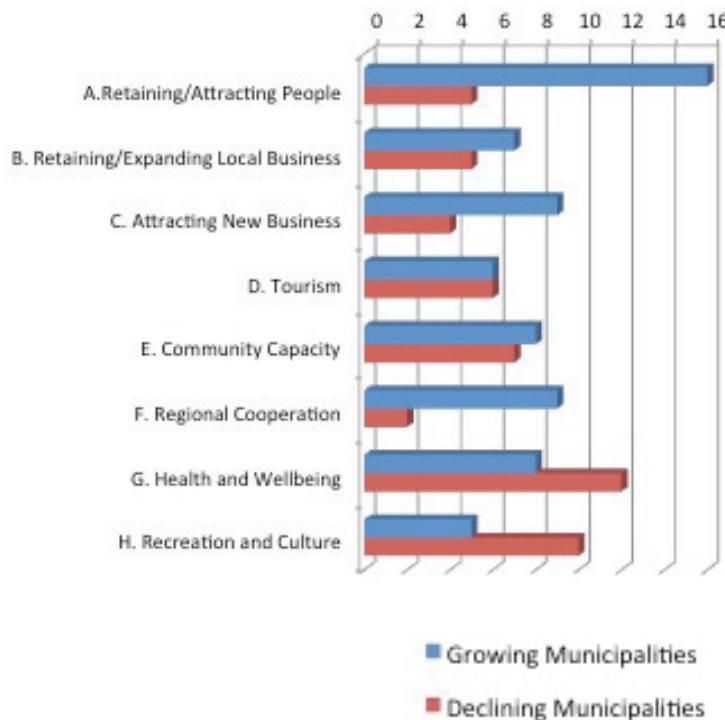
Participants identified seven growth initiatives that can be categorized as growth strategies focused on: attraction of migrants/immigrants, health and wellbeing, community capacity, recreation and culture, tourism, attraction of new business/industry, and expansion of existing business/industry. Regional cooperation was not identified as a growth strategy. Participants identified assets that can be categorized as all seven capitals: financial, human, social, built, natural, cultural, and political.

Only two initiatives discussed had timelines described along with them. The Steeprock Cottage Lot Development began about five years ago while the development of the CDC occurred two years ago.

Growth Strategy Analysis

All eight growth strategies were used in some way by both growing and declining municipalities; however, there are distinct differences between how often certain strategies are used by each group. Retaining and attracting people, attracting new business, and regional cooperation were the growth strategies most often used by growing municipalities. Health and wellbeing and recreation and culture were the growth strategies most often used by declining municipalities. Retaining and expanding local business, tourism, and community capacity were used about the same amount of times by growing and declining municipalities. Figure 2 shows the use of growth strategies by the selected growing and declining municipalities in Manitoba.

Figure 2. Growth Strategies used by selected growing and declining rural Manitoba municipalities



FINDINGS

A. Retaining and Attracting People

Growing municipalities undertook growth initiatives using the growth strategy of retaining and attracting people sixteen times, which is significantly more than declining municipalities that used the strategy only five times. The growth initiatives implemented by growing communities that used this strategy were varied, they included: a decades old annual dinner to introduce and welcome new residents; international recruitment of immigrants and provision of settlement services; development of lots for housing and housing incentives; and rebranding marketing materials and marketing the community at local, regional, provincial, and national tradeshows. The growth initiatives implemented by declining communities that used this initiative were limited. They only included maintaining local infrastructure and housing, specifically development of lots for seniors' housing.

B. Retaining and Expanding Local Business

The growth strategy of retaining and expanding local business was used a similar number of times by both growing and declining municipalities in growth initiatives identified by participants. Growing municipalities used the strategy seven times while declining municipalities used the strategy five times. Examples of initiatives implemented by growing municipalities included: main street revitalization; bursaries for students to learn skills and return home; incentive programs to attract customers or support existing local businesses; and low taxes. Examples of initiatives implemented by declining municipalities included: investing in local infrastructure in general, as well as specific projects such as a public washroom and campground; and incentive programs to attract customers or support existing local businesses.

C. Attracting New Business

Growing municipalities undertook growth initiatives using the growth strategy of attracting new businesses nine times, which is just over twice as often than declining municipalities that used the strategy in only four initiatives. The growth initiatives implemented by growing municipalities using this strategy were varied, including: main street revitalization; rebranding marketing materials and marketing the community at local, regional, provincial, and national tradeshows; REAP; tourism development; low taxes; and incentive programs for new businesses. Declining municipalities also undertook varied initiatives using this strategy, including: maintaining local infrastructure in general, as well as campground infrastructure; focused efforts to successfully attract a Credit Union; and an incentive program for new businesses.

D. Tourism

Tourism as a growth strategy was used in six initiatives by both growing and declining municipalities. Similar growth initiatives undertaken by both groups using this strategy included: community events, such as festivals, dinners, and an annual derby; and developing activities using the natural landscape, such as cottage lots, campgrounds, and ski/snowmobile trails.

E. Community Capacity

The growth strategy of building community capacity was used a similar number of times by both growing and declining municipalities in growth initiatives. Growing municipalities used the strategy nine times while declining municipalities used the strategy seven times. Many of the growth initiatives implemented by growing municipalities were undertaken by a formalized regional economic development corporation, including: establishing the corporation itself; regional strategic planning; REAP; and a business retention and expansion strategy. Other growth initiatives undertaken

by growing municipalities using this strategy included: rebranding marketing materials and marketing the community at local, regional, provincial, and national tradeshows; community project grants; and building a dike to prevent flooding. The growth initiatives implemented by declining municipalities were varied, they included: maintaining local infrastructure; hiring new employees that would focus on building inspection and municipal development; using technology infrastructure at the school for educating local youth; developing cottage lots; forming a Community Development Corporation (CDC); and attracting a credit union.

F. Regional Cooperation

Growing municipalities undertook growth initiatives using the growth strategy of regional cooperation eight times, which is significantly more than declining municipalities that used the strategy only twice. Many of the growth initiatives implemented by growing municipalities were undertaken by a formalized regional economic development corporation, including: establishing the corporation itself; regional strategic planning; REAP; business retention and expansion strategy; and overseas immigration recruitment. One participant from a growing municipality identified cooperating with neighbouring municipalities as a growth initiative; however, this relationship was not formalized. Two initiatives each identified by one participant from a declining municipality using this strategy were related to hiring new employees that would focus on building inspection and municipal development. Regional cooperation was present when a municipal development employee was first hired, but it most recently was an initiative solely of the municipality.

G. Health and Wellbeing

Declining municipalities undertook growth initiatives using the growth strategy of health and wellbeing twelve times, which is more

than growing municipalities that used the strategy eight times. Declining municipalities used this strategy in initiatives that focused primarily on building or improving recreation facilities and community spaces, as well as housing, specifically development of lots for housing and seniors' housing. Initiatives identified by participants in declining municipalities also included hiring new employee to do building inspection and using technology infrastructure at the school for educating local youth. Growing communities using this strategy implemented initiatives that were primarily focused on development of lots for housing and housing incentives. Initiatives also included making enhancements to existing public infrastructure by building a sun room for the hospital's palliative care unit; repurposing public infrastructure that is no longer in use by purchasing an old school that now houses a daycare, nursery school, local dance club, and recreation services; and building a dike to prevent flooding.

H. Recreation and Culture

Declining municipalities undertook a growth initiative using the growth strategy of recreation and culture ten times, which is twice as often than declining municipalities that used the strategy in only five initiatives. Growth initiatives implemented by declining municipalities had one of three focuses: building or improving recreation facilities and community spaces; community events, such as festivals, dinners, and an annual derby; developing activities using the natural landscape, such as ski and snowmobile trails. Growth initiatives identified by growing municipalities that used this strategy included: a decades old annual dinner to introduce and welcome new residents; main street revitalization; community events; attracting a hockey team; and repurposing public infrastructure that is no longer in use by purchasing an old school that now houses a nursery and recreation services.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of the information gathered during interviews shows that growth strategies differed by growing and declining municipalities. When compared, growing and declining municipalities had a similar number of strategies (30 vs. 25), however, they had different population trends between 2006 and 2011. This difference is explained by which growth strategies were used by the different groups. Growing municipalities had more initiatives for retaining and attracting people (16 vs. 5), attracting new businesses (9 vs. 4), and regional cooperation (8 vs. 2). Declining municipalities had more initiatives using health and wellbeing (12 vs. 8) and recreation and culture (10 vs. 5) as growth strategies.

Growth initiatives focused on housing were identified by participants in both growing and declining municipalities and, based on the current system, housing uses the growth strategies of retaining and attracting people and health and wellbeing. Given that having a place to live is integral to population retention and growth, future research should identify housing as a growth strategy in and of itself.

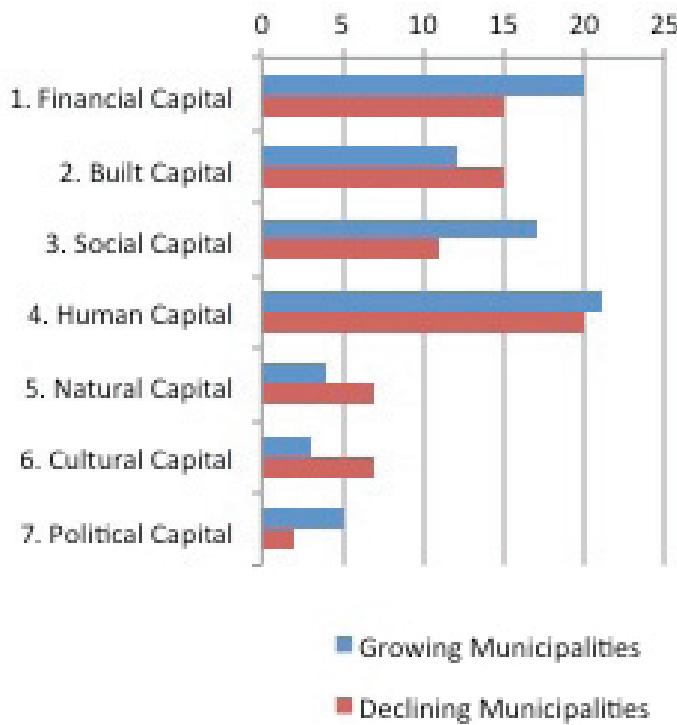
In addition, a number of growth initiatives identified by participants focused on retaining, expanding and attracting business. Future research using categories of growth strategies should group retaining and expanding local business and attracting new business as one strategy, namely retaining, expanding, and attracting business.

As was found in the analysis of the self-directed guides, there was no evidence of municipalities formally evaluating their growth initiatives. Information gathered in interviews indicates that success is not determined by a systematic review of the initiative and there is little indication of readjustment of actions based on this review. However, the town of Russell did use information from the REAP to validate their planning and actions to date.

Capitals Analysis

All seven capitals were used in growing and declining municipalities; however, financial and human capitals were used very often by both growing and declining municipalities. There were some differences between how often each capital was used by each group. Declining municipalities used built, natural, and cultural capitals slightly more often in growth initiatives than growing municipalities. Growing municipalities used social and political capital slightly more often in growth initiatives than declining municipalities. Financial and human capitals were used in a similar number of growth initiatives by growing and declining municipalities. This supports a big picture notion that initiatives have to be supported and have money behind them in order for them to be implemented. Figure 3 lists capitals used most often to implement growth initiatives identified by participants in growing and declining municipalities.

Figure 3. Capitals used in growth strategies by selected growing and declining rural Manitoba municipalities



FINDINGS

1. Financial Capital

Financial capital was used in a number of growth strategies identified by participants. Growing municipalities used financial capital twenty times while declining municipalities used it fifteen times. Growing municipalities used financial capital in their growth initiatives in the following ways: funding a formalized regional economic development corporation; putting on community events; international recruitment of immigrants and provision of settlement services; paying for bursaries; development of lots for housing and housing incentives; and rebranding marketing materials and marketing the community at local, regional, provincial, and national tradeshows; funding business retention, expansion or attraction incentives; maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure; repurposing old public infrastructure; and building new infrastructure. Declining municipalities used financial capital in their growth initiatives in the following ways: housing, specifically development of lots for housing and seniors' housing; funding a CDC; maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure; repurposing old public infrastructure; building new infrastructure; hiring new employees for building inspection and municipal development; and business loans.

2. Built Capital

Declining municipalities used built capital in fifteen growth initiatives which, proportionally, is slightly more than growth municipalities that used the capital in twelve growth initiatives. Declining municipalities used built capital in their growth initiatives in the following ways: building or improving recreation facilities and community spaces; developing activities using the natural

landscape, such as ski and snowmobile trails; and housing, specifically development of lots for housing and seniors' housing. Growing municipalities used built capital in their growth initiatives in the following ways: maintaining and enhancing existing infrastructure; repurposing old public infrastructure; building new infrastructure; tourism development; and main street revitalization.

3. Social Capital

There was difference in the number of times each group of municipalities used social capital in their growth initiatives. Growing municipalities used social capital more often, seventeen times, than declining municipalities that used it eleven times. Social capital in a number of growth initiatives implemented by growing municipalities took the form of regional partnerships, including: regional strategic planning; retail market analysis; business retention and expansion strategy; and overseas immigration recruitment. Other forms of social capital used by growing municipalities in growth initiatives included partnerships with community organizations to put on community events and invest in public infrastructure. Social capital in growth initiatives implemented by declining municipalities took the following forms: partnerships with community organizations to put on community events and invest in public infrastructure; a regional partnership to hire a shared building inspector; and forming a CDC.

4. Human Capital

Human capital was used in most of the growth initiatives identified by participants. Growing and declining municipalities used this capital a similar number of times; twenty one and twenty times, respectively. In both groups, human capital was the elected officials, paid employees and/or volunteers that made the decision to implement initiatives and the support to carry them through. Arguably, human capital is necessary for every growth initiative to occur.

5. Natural Capital

Declining municipalities implemented six growth initiatives drawing on natural capital, which is more often than the four initiatives implemented by growing municipalities. Declining municipalities used natural capital in growth initiatives that developed activities using the natural landscape, such as cottage lots, campgrounds, and ski/snowmobile trails and developing lots for housing. Growing municipalities used natural capital in developing cottage lots and lots for housing, as well as tourism initiatives.

6. Cultural Capital

Declining municipalities implemented seven growth initiatives using cultural capital, which is more often than the three initiatives implemented by growing municipalities. Cultural capital was used by declining municipalities in growth initiatives such as maintaining recreation and cultural spaces; putting on community events; and gathering historical information about the community. Growing municipalities drew on cultural capital for putting on community events and attracting a hockey team.

7. Political Capital

Growing municipalities used political capital more often than declining municipalities, five and two times, respectively. Political capital in growth initiatives undertaken by growing municipalities came in the form of the local government making decisions to: be part of a regional economic development corporation and undertake regional strategic planning; put guidelines and standards in place to support main street revitalization; build a dike to protect the community from flooding; and keep taxes low. Growth initiatives in declining municipalities that used political capital were the decision to maintain local infrastructure and the decision to form a CDC.

DISCUSSION

The research shows that all municipalities, growing or declining, are investing financial (20 vs. 15) and human (21 vs. 20) capital in trying to grow and improve their communities. Where the municipalities choose to invest their human and financial capital is what makes the difference.

Growing municipalities tend to invest in initiatives to attract and retain people, attract new business, and regional cooperation, while declining municipalities tend to invest in initiatives focused on improving health and wellbeing or recreation and culture.

There were differences in the other capitals used by growing and declining municipalities. Growing municipalities used social (17 vs. 11) and political (5 vs. 2) capital more often in growth initiatives than declining municipalities. Declining municipalities used built (15 vs. 12), natural (6 vs. 4), and cultural (7 vs. 3) capitals more often in growth initiatives than growing municipalities.

Summary

The findings of this research can be used planners and development officers working with communities to sustain and increase local population. Based on the analysis of growth initiatives in growing and declining municipalities, five key findings are evident.

1. Revise the categories of growth strategies. Given the local growth initiatives, two changes are needed in the growth strategy categories to better reflect local activities. Housing for residents is integral to retaining and growing population and, therefore, housing should be a stand-alone growth strategy. In addition, retaining and expanding local business and attracting new business should become one strategy, namely, retaining, expanding, and attracting business. The new list of growth strategies proposed is:
 - a. Retaining and Attracting People
 - b. Housing
 - c. Retaining/Expanding/Attracting Business
 - d. Tourism
 - e. Community Capacity
 - f. Regional Cooperation
 - g. Health and Wellbeing
 - h. Recreation and Culture
2. Growing and declining municipalities had a similar number of growth initiatives. One might assume that there would be a large difference in the number of initiatives and the more initiatives, the more growth. This was not the case because growing and declining municipalities had a similar number of initiatives.
3. Growing and declining municipalities used different growth strategies. Growing municipalities had more initiatives for retaining and attracting people, attracting new businesses, and regional cooperation. Declining municipalities had more initiatives using health and wellbeing and recreation and culture.
4. Growing and declining municipalities had similarities and differences in the capitals used to implement growth initiatives. Financial and human capitals were used in initiatives by both growing and declining municipalities. However, growing municipalities used social and political capital more often while declining municipalities used built, natural, and cultural capitals more often.
5. Neither growing nor declining municipalities formally evaluated growth initiatives.

Conclusion

The question asked at the outset of this research project was, "What strategies and assets contribute to growth or decline in rural communities?" The research findings show that it is not the amount of initiatives undertaken, but which growth strategies those initiatives employ that impacts population growth or decline. While financial and human capitals were used often by growing and declining municipalities, it is on what growth strategies these assets are focused that impacts the population trend. Growing municipalities undertook more initiatives that focused community capitals on growth strategies aimed at retaining and attracting people, attracting new business, and regional cooperation. On the other hand, declining municipalities focused their efforts and assets on initiatives using health and wellbeing and recreation and culture. Growing municipalities used social and political capitals more often, while declining municipalities relied on built, natural, and cultural capitals in their initiatives. Neither growing nor declining municipalities formally evaluated their growth initiatives. Finally, the research findings indicate that changes are needed to the growth strategy categories to better reflect local activities; the new categories are: retaining and attracting people, housing, retaining/expanding/attracting business, tourism, community capacity, regional cooperation, health and wellbeing, and recreation and culture.

Potential Future Research

The Town of Russell is the most successful municipality studied with respect to population growth in this research project. It was also the only growing municipality to use all growth strategies and capitals. An in-depth case study on the Town of Russell would lead to a better understanding of the strategies and assets used in growth initiatives. Additional case studies using the new growth strategy categories with municipalities in Manitoba and other provinces can help determine these new growth strategy categories apply to other municipalities and in other provincial contexts.

Research focused on the growth strategy of retaining and attracting people will lead to a better understanding of what tactics communities use to keep current residents, attract people from other parts of the province or country, and recruit and retain immigrants. Finally, further research on groups of municipalities that participate in a formalized regional economic development corporation will lead to more knowledge about the possible impact these organizations have on population growth.

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Appendix A: Growth Strategies from Self-directed Guides

A variety growth initiatives were identified to better understand the dimensions of different growth strategies and identify examples to help define each strategy. The table below provides more detailed examples.

A. ATTRACTING AND RETAINING PEOPLE

Welcoming Community for Newcomers

Creating social links between newcomers and the community and allowing learning about each other.

Example: In Cap-Saint-Ignace, QUE, the community has “godparents” who meet with newcomers and invite them to a community dinner. This establishes a basis of support for the newcomers and helps the community learn about the newcomers.

Reference: Dr. Bill Reimer, 7 Strategies for Sustainable Communities , RDI, 2013 *Seven-Strategies-for-Sustainable-Community-Futures_.pdf*

Integrating Seasonal Residents

Helping seasonal residents integrate as part of the community for mutual benefit.

Example: In Seguin, ON, they integrated seasonal residents into local decision-making. This allowed the seasonal residents to understand their community and it gave the community access to the seasonal residents and their networks of resources.

Reference: Dr. Bill Reimer, 7 Strategies for Sustainable Communities , RDI, 2013 *Seven-Strategies-for-Sustainable-Community-Futures_.pdf*

“Age Friendly” Communities

Communities that specifically pride themselves and focus on making their communities appeal to senior citizens or retirees.

Examples: Gladstone, Manitoba, has revitalized itself as an “Age-friendly” community, utilizing a planning process that included public consultations and a strong vision. A few years after adopting their plan, Gladstone’s property values have increased and younger people have also moved to the community. Other communities identified by Melissa Leong in the “Small towns can offer big savings for retirees” at the financialpost.com are Fredericton, N.B., Comox Valley, B.C., Stratford, Ont. And Halifax, N.S.

References:

- http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/lindsay-jolivet/age-friendly-communities_b_2039761.html
- <http://www.manitobacooperator.ca/2010/07/22/new-housing-construction-spurs-growth-in-gladstone/>
- <http://business.financialpost.com/2013/02/02/small-towns-can-offer-big-savings-for-retirees/>
- http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publications/afrrc_en.pdf (Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide)

Locally Financed Housing

Working with local residents and business owners to finance new or improvements to community housing.

Example: Business people in Gladstone Manitoba financed some housing and a Elkhorn, Manitoba’s local development corporation drew together a local group of investors to build six new homes.

Reference: <http://www.manitobacooperator.ca/2010/07/22/new-housing-construction-spurs-growth-in-gladstone/>

Incentives Programs

This strategy involves offering lots of land, usually with available water and sewer hook-ups to new residents for either free or a very low cost (ex. \$1). It may also include other incentives (credits etc.) to new residents who purchase a house. These programs used to entice newcomers to build a home and become a resident.

Example: In 2003, the Town of Rossburn (Manitoba) and the Rossburn Chamber of Commerce developed a series of incentives for residential and commercial properties. This included lots for \$1, utilities credits, tax credits, fee waivers and passes to community recreation activities. At the conclusion, 20 new residents/families took advantage of the incentives and both the council and chamber agreed the program was worthwhile.

References:

http://www.edacenter.org/downloads/Ben_Winchester_Report_2.pdf

http://www.amm.mb.ca/download/tools_for_change/AMM-Tools-Rossburn.pdf

B. RETAINING AND EXPANDING LOCAL BUSINESS

Business Succession Planning

Making business owners aware of the importance of business succession planning, which is having a plan in place when they are ready to sell their business. Having a business succession plan helps to keep the business in the community. It also gives newcomers an opportunity to buy the business and create employment for themselves.

References:

http://www.edacenter.org/downloads/Ben_Winchester_Report_2.pdf

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/21-006-x/21-006-x2012001-eng.pdf>

Organizing Local Food Systems

Local food systems include farmer's markets, community supported agriculture, local food in grocery stores and restaurants initiatives, and public "buy local campaigns" which encourage the purchase of local agricultural products by local people.

Example: In the report "Local Food – A rural Opportunity", Humaira Irshad suggests that Local Food Systems have environmental, economic and social benefits. Harvest Moon Society in Manitoba has created a website portal to connect local producers with local consumers.

References: Irshad, H. "Local Food – A rural Opportunity" Government of Alberta, Rural Development Division, July, 2010

[http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/\\$Department/deptdocs.nsf/ba3468a2a8681f69872569d60073fde1/593337cbd907813a8725782c0058ae97/\\$FILE/Local-Food-A-Rural-Opp.pdf](http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$Department/deptdocs.nsf/ba3468a2a8681f69872569d60073fde1/593337cbd907813a8725782c0058ae97/$FILE/Local-Food-A-Rural-Opp.pdf)

Harvest Moon Society website:
<http://www.harvestmoonsociety.org>

Find New Uses for Local Waste Materials

Example: In Mattawa, Ontario, a local businessman noticed how many cores were being thrown out by the local plywood company, were waste, so he used them to manufacture bowling pins which are sold throughout the world.

References: Dr. Bill Reimer, 7 Strategies for Sustainable Communities , RDI, 2013 [Seven-Strategies-for-Sustainable-Community-Futures_.pdf](http://www.ruraldevelopment.ca/7strategiesforcommunityfutures.pdf)

Identify Niche Markets

Sharing resources to find niche market opportunities to promote new products or old products in a new way

Example: MAFRD in the provincial government released an article describing how herbs have the potential to be an “economically important” alternate crop in Manitoba. A man from a hamlet in Ontario created an international vehicle auction business.

References:

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/globe-drive/reviews/classics/uneducated-small-town-ontario-boy-now-runs-a-global-empire/article19213759/>

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/production/native-plants-as-potential-crops-for-mb.html>

Creating a Workforce Training Programs

Creating programs by working with local educational institutions and chamber of commerce to create training programs tailored to local demand.

Example: Ponca City in Oklahoma, U.S.A., with a population of 24,000 in 2009 lost over six thousand jobs when the town’s only major employer left. The community’s leaders, working with the chamber of commerce and a small online adult college, focused on helping local businesses grow. This initiative included identifying the local skills needed and developing workforce training programs. The city was able to help create almost 3,000 jobs.

References:

<http://ysnews.com/news/2014/05/small-towns-use-creativity-to-grow>

C. ATTRACTING NEW BUSINESS

Creating Entrepreneurs – Starting Business incubator and business accelerator programs

Providing space, communication network and resource sharing opportunity for new entrepreneurs and emerging businesses. This may also include competitions, prizes or challenge type initiatives.

Reference: <http://www.canadabusiness.ca/eng/page/2740/sgc-46/#sgcselect> (Canada Business Network Manitoba Grants, contribution and financial assistance)

Creating Entrepreneurs – Identify and build upon auxiliary skills of newcomers

Contacting and working with newcomers to develop a list of their skills. Skills that may not be currently used in the community but that could lead to new business or industry

References: http://www.edacenter.org/downloads/Ben_Winchester_Report_2.pdf

Social Enterprises

Businesses that create products or services for people, community or the environment as opposed to financial profit for stakeholders

Example: In Bosissevain, Manitoba, the Rural Roots Food Cooperative was created which sells local products from the community as well as products created in their own kitchen. With community vision and a grassroots beginning, the not-for-profit community service organization opened a small store.

References: <https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/files/2014/03/Rural-Roots-Powerpoint-April-2014.pdf>

D. TOURISM

Mural Based Tourism

Hiring artists to create large scale murals on buildings, these may have the theme of historical significance to the community. These murals are designed to attract tourism and improve the community.

Examples: Saskatchewan communities that self-identified as using a mural tourism strategy, were assessed in “Indicators of Community Economic Development Through Mural-Based Tourism”. Two of the communities, Wadena and Churchbridge saw their project as successful using an intangibility and community beautification framework. Moose Jaw saw the project as successful in a tangible sense with increased visitors and attracting new businesses. The Mayor of Duck Lake said that beautification occurred but that the initiative had “failed in achieving an long-term economic development”.

References: Koster, R and J.E. Randall “Indicators of Community Economic Development through mural-based tourism”, Canadian Geographer, Spring 2005, Vol. 49, Issue 1, p42-60

Trails

Groom and promote recreational trails for various outdoor recreation activities. Trails can be used for horseback riding, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, etc.

Example: The Stanley Trail is described by the RM of Stanley as offering “unlimited opportunities for nature lovers, artists, historians, photographers, cyclists and explorers” on their website.

References: http://www.rmofstanley.ca/main.asp?fxoid=FXMenu,5&cat_ID=20&sub_ID=156

Promote Historical Site, Houses and Museums

Unique and interesting locations of historical value can be of interest to tourists.

Example: The Manitoba Agricultural Museum near Austin, Manitoba, was started in the 1950's by volunteers who wanted to collect and preserve agricultural implements. The first Threshermen's Reunion, which showcased pioneer equipment in operation, in 1952. The expected attendance at the 2014 Threshermen's Reunion was 11,000. Manitoba Heritage Success Stories by Reid Dickie highlights Manitoba heritage success stories from museums to preserving heritage.

References:

- <http://ag-museum.mb.ca/>
- <http://www.marketwired.com/press-release/celebrating-the-past-at-manitobas-threshermens-reunion-and-stampede-1932611.htm>
- http://heritagemanitoba.ca/images/pdfs/featuredProjects/Success_Stories_Heritage_MB.pdf

Festivals

Events that attract people to the community with a theme. They may be one day events or last for several days. Common themes are arts and music.

Examples: In 1990, Dauphin, Manitoba created “Countryfest” as a way to sustain their Ukrainian Folk Arts Centre and Museum. In the first two years, the festival had financial losses in the 10's of thousands of dollars. However, with community support, the festival continued and in the third year it made a profit. Since that time, the festival has provided a financial impact of \$10 million dollars to the region. It is a non-for-profit organization that is run with the help of 2000 volunteers under a volunteer board of directors. Community groups and service organizations that help volunteer earn over \$150,000 annually and Countryfest has provided grants over \$1 million dollars to community projects.

References: <http://countryfest.ca/>

E. COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Recruit New Leaders

If there is a shortage of leadership, people to get involved with community projects, strategies, planning etc. , some ideas to recruit new leaders include assessing what groups or individuals from the community could contribute but are not currently involved, looking for skills not names, creating involvement opportunities that allow people to get involved in degrees and using current leaders to help recruit new leaders.

Reference: Helping Small Towns Survive, A Training Program for Community Developers by the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, 1994 (binder located at RDI)

Leadership Workshops

Hosting events to develop the community capacity for leadership by inviting new leaders and existing leaders and those with interest in a leadership role in all organizations and committees in the community to develop leadership skills, communication skills and project management skills, stress and time management skills, conflict resolution skills.

References: Helping Small Towns Survive, A Training Program for Community Developers by the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, 1994 (binder located at RDI)

Exploring Nearby Urban Demand

Pay attention to needs of nearby urban communities, looking for opportunities to use existing community infrastructure.

Examples: Faced with rising arena costs, Warner, Alberta started a girl's hockey school and marketed it to families all over North America. It was so successful that they have expanded it to a residential school that runs year round. A community in St. Paul in the Gas Bay region of Quebec, a community what was in danger of losing their school due to low enrollment, attracted students from nearby urban regions.

Reference: Dr. Bill Reimer, 7 Strategies for Sustainable Communities , RDI, 2013 *Seven-Strategies-for-Sustainable-Community-Futures_.pdf*

Creating a Community Foundation

Creating a Community Foundation as a registered Canadian Charity to accept donations and give grants to the benefit of the community. Grants may be used for creating Youth in Philanthropy initiatives, supporting local students, local daycares and schools, recreational programs and facilities, medical and senior's community programs, "green" environmental programs and helping special needs families in the community. The foundation may be funded by donations and fundraising activities.

Example: Manitoba's Community Foundations lists information about Community foundations as well as examples of how Manitoba foundations have helped their communities http://www.wpgfdn.org/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/Publications/comm_roots_12.pdf

References:

<http://communityfoundations.ca/>
<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/?item=13900>

F. REGIONAL COOPERATION

Create Regional Initiatives

Finding a common need or opportunity shared between two groups, and creating a method, such as a committee, to work together so that both parties can benefit from the results

Examples: In 2006 the City of Dauphin and the RM of Dauphin worked together with public involvement to open a new recreation arena with many environmentally friendly features. The committee tasked with adding the arena comprised of representatives from the business community, facility user groups, the joint recreation commission and representatives from the two councils. The involvement and support of the local people from the beginning made the project successful.

In the 1990's, the RM of Louise, the Town of Pilot Mound and the Village of Crystal City created a Waste Management Committee with the goal of building a joint waste disposal facility that was environmentally-friendly and could provide better services for all three communities, then any of the communities could manage on their own at a lower overall cost. In 2006, the new facility was opened. The councils and citizens of the three communities agree that the project was a success.

References:

http://www.amm.mb.ca/download/tools_for_change/AMM-Tools-Dauphin.pdf

http://www.amm.mb.ca/download/tools_for_change/AMM-Tools-LouisePilotMoundCrystal_City.pdf

Connect to Other Countries

This type of cooperation involves looking beyond communities that are geographically close, but looking at a global village approach and working with communities around the world.

Example: Minnedosa, Manitoba, has a sister city of Ishii, Japan. This connection was initiated to promote friendship and facilitate understanding

of cultures. Delegations have gone back and forth between the communities. A Japanese garden was developed behind the Minnedosa library.

Reference: <http://www.minnedosa.com/index.php?pageid=126&categoryid=99>

G. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Completing Disaster Resilience Planning

The Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC) has created a guide, tools and resources for building a disaster resiliency plan for a community. This involves community assessment, planning and implementation.

Reference:

http://wp-rdrp-dev.jibc.ca/files/2013/06/Info_Guide_MB.pdf

<http://wp-rdrp-dev.jibc.ca/>

Work with health care providers and educators to provide Nutritional/physical/mental/health programs for all ages-

This strategy involves working with local health care providers and educators to introduce and promote wellness programs the benefit of the community. Some examples of wellness communities including programs to prevent and address obesity, chronic disease management, children's health, smoking cessation, senior's health

Reference: http://www.srpc.ca/PDF/rural_hands.pdf

Investigation of the Programs and Supports in Healthy Child Manitoba

This initiative by the Manitoba government provide programs and supports for children, teens and families in urban and rural communities. These programs and supports include a pilot of the Communities That Care (CTC program), and the community based Parent-Child Coalition initiative. CTC is described on their website as "CTC is a tested, effective community-wide initiative to promote positive,

healthy development of children and youth. One of the main goals of CTC is to develop healthy behaviours for all children and youth by providing opportunities, skills, and recognition; in families, schools, communities and peer-groups." Parent-Child Coalition is described as "Parent Child Coalitions bring together parents, early childhood educators, educators, health care professionals and other community organizations to plan and work collaboratively to support the healthy development of children aged 0-6 years."

Example/Evaluation: As part of the Healthy Child Manitoba Act, is to provide a report at least every 5 years on the wellbeing of Manitoba's children with respect to the Healthy Child Manitoba Strategy as a whole, not the above mentioned programs specifically, the first report was released in 2012 at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/2012report.html>.

Reference:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/index.html>
<http://www.mbpARENTchild.com/>
<http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/ctc/index.html>

Transitional Housing

Creating temporary housing that newcomers can rent when they first arrive in the community.

Example: Temporary housing was created in Altona, Manitoba, using office space. There are two units that are big enough to hold families. The renovations cost about \$5000 and rent is determined by family size and ability to pay. No government funding was provided. The units are fully furnished and have a kitchen and bathroom. Occupancy is normally restricted to 3 months. The units have telephones but these have been the source of minor problems due to long distance charges.

References: Carter, T. "Housing Strategies for Immigrants in Rural Southern Manitoba", University of Winnipeg, prepared for Rural Development Institute at Brandon University, 2010

Converted Use Housing

Creating rental properties in buildings which originally had another purpose.

Example: Due to a shortage of rental housing, Minnedosa and area created housing from vacant office space in the old Town Office. The Town of Minnedosa and the Municipalities of Minto and Odanah funded the renovations, which were less than \$5000. There was no government support. The rental unit had been rented to immigrants and temporary foreign workers as well as tourists and visitors to the area.

Reference: Carter, T. "Housing Strategies for Immigrants in Rural Southern Manitoba", University of Winnipeg, prepared for Rural Development Institute at Brandon University, 2010

Affordable Home Ownership

Creating lower cost, energy-efficient, space-saving housing on smaller lots.

Example: Steinbach, Manitoba, has used subdivision and design approach for housing. Some of the new housing developments were created with smaller lots, with driveways but no garages and reduced side yards and set backs. These units range in size from 878 to 1566 sq ft. and range from 2-4 bedrooms. The price at the time of development was just under \$200,000. The units were selling well and there were plans to proceed with developing more units on the subdivision.

Reference: Carter, T. "Housing Strategies for Immigrants in Rural Southern Manitoba", University of Winnipeg, prepared for Rural Development Institute at Brandon University, 2010

H. RECREATION AND CULTURE

Community Celebrations

Celebrations help to bring a community together. These celebrations could be fall suppers, fairs, centennial celebrations, reunions, or holiday celebrations

Example: On July 18, 2014, Boissevain, Manitoba celebrated the birthday of their fiberglass mascot Tommy Turtle. The celebration included a sponsored lunch, youth job squad carnival, children's entertainment and a golf tournament

Reference: <http://www.boissevain.ca/visitors/turtlestatue.htm>

Local Learning

Creating opportunities for the community to come together, participate in projects and learn new skills and create community culture

Example: In Clearwater, Manitoba, The Harvest Moon music festival each year. In its 12th year, they organizers had to cap the number of tickets sold. They had over 600 tents. The festival involves music and workshops on topics from growing food to aboriginal culture. The festival generates money from outside the community; however, it has also added a spark to the community by getting residents involved.

Reference: <https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/files/2014/03/Harvest-Moon-Presentation-Robert-Guilford.pdf>

Appendix B: List of Growth Initiatives by Municipality

1. Town of Russell

- 1.1. Welcome to Russell Dinner
- 1.2. Regional Economic Development Corporation
- 1.3. Local Events and Festivals
- 1.4. Bursaries for Graduating Students
- 1.5. Regional Strategic Planning
- 1.6. Tourism Development
- 1.7. Main Street Revitalization
- 1.8. Overseas Immigration Recruitment Missions
- 1.9. Supportive Settlement Services
- 1.10. Regional Economic Assessment Process
- 1.11. Rebrand Marketing
- 1.12. Palliative Care Sun Room
- 1.13. Business Retention and Expansion Strategy
- 1.14. Marketing Retirement Opportunities at Northern Trade Shows

2. Rural Municipality of Pipestone

- 2.1. \$10 Lots
- 2.2. Cooperating with Neighbouring Municipalities
- 2.3. Community Project Grant
- 2.4. Business Incentive Grants
- 2.5. Homeowner/Renter Grant
- 2.6. Incentives on Buying/Building Home
- 2.7. Rebranding of Marketing Materials
- 2.8. Purchase of Old School
- 2.9. Building a Dike
- 2.10. Marketing Community at Tradeshows
- 2.11. Low Taxes

3. Rural Municipality of Coldwell

- 3.1. Lundar Beach/Sugar Point Lots
- 3.2. Lunacy Nights
- 3.3. Lundar Falcons
- 3.4. Lot Incentive Program
- 3.5. Business Incentive Program

4. Rural Municipality of Argyle

- 4.1. Memorial Hall Upgrades
- 4.2. Maintaining Local Infrastructure
- 4.3. Seniors' Housing
- 4.4. Museum/Gym Development
- 4.5. Healthy Living Committee
- 4.6. Public Washroom
- 4.7. Recreation Centre Improvements
- 4.8. Heritage Documentation
- 4.9. Attracting Credit Union
- 4.10. Building Inspector
- 4.11. Municipal Development Staff
- 4.12. Baldur Bucks
- 4.13. IITV Lab At School
- 4.14. Home Routes Classical

5. Rural Municipality of Montcalm

- 5.1. Quad Derby
- 5.2. Recreation Upgrades
- 5.3. Seniors' Housing
- 5.4. Housing Subdivision Lots

6. Rural Municipality of Grahamdale

- 6.1. Steeprock Cottage Lot Development
- 6.2. Formation of CDC
- 6.3. Community Events
- 6.4. Business Loans
- 6.5. Steeprock Lake Campground
- 6.6. Snowmobile Trails
- 6.7. Recreation Activities



Lower Concourse, McMaster Hall Complex
270-18th Street, Brandon, MB R7A 6A9

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