

DISCERNING GROWTH STRATEGIES: WINKLER AND AREA REPORT

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The Honourable Christine Melnick, M.L.A. Minister of Multiculturalism and Immigration 317 Legislative Building, 450 Broadway Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

The Honourable Ron Kostyshyn Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives 317 Legislative Building, 450 Broadway Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8





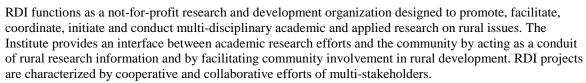
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Brandon University established the Rural Development Institute in 1989 as an academic research centre and a leading source of information on issues affecting rural communities in Western Canada and elsewhere.



The Institute has diverse research affiliations, and multiple community and government linkages related to its rural development mandate. RDI disseminates information to a variety of constituents and stakeholders and makes research information and results widely available to the public either in printed form or by means of public lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences.

For more information, please visit www.brandonu.ca/rdi.



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Letter of Transmittal

January 2013

The Honourable Christine Melnick, M.L.A. Minister of Multiculturalism and Immigration 317 Legislative Building 450 Broadway Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8 The Honourable Ron Kostyshyn Minister of Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives 317 Legislative Building 450 Broadway Winnipeg, MB R3C 0V8

We are pleased to provide our research report: *Immigration and Rural Communities: People, Plans and Actions.* It was supported by your Ministry and MAFRI.

The starting point of this research was to better understand how rural areas are accommodating the influx of immigrants - a testimony to the success of the Government's economic growth strategy. The resulting rural settlement pattern in Manitoba suggests that upwards of 80% of immigrant are concentrated in certain areas. Two such areas are around Winkler and Neepawa. In this action-research project we interviewed and identified with local stakeholder a dozen challenges, then consulted with Manitoba government ministries to better understand what was needed to achieve growth strategies.

This report is about the Winkler area (including Morden, Altona and the RM of Stanley), chosen due to its sustained high immigration growth for more than 10 years. From our statistical profile, this area has sustained growth with Winkler growing by 34% from 2001 to 2011 while Morden, Altona and the RM of Stanley each grew by 27%, 19% and 63% respectively. Immigration is the main driver of this population growth and has played a central role in the development of the region over the last 10 years.

After completing 10 interviews with service provides government and businesses we facilitated a local workshop with 9 stakeholders to validate findings and prioritize recommendations. As a result, 8 recommendations were formulated which were discussed with 11 officials from six Ministries.

The 8 recommendations have a sense of urgency since local resources and capacities appear to be stretched. The recommendation topics call for increased collaboration, and continued integration through to housing and transportation. The very nature of these topics, which address pressing challenges to accommodate the pace of growth, speaks to the need of coordination. Included in the recommendations from Winkler is the need for a pilot project that establishes an interdepartmental committee for 24 months to better coordinate existing provincial resources to assist and enable implementation of actions to address challenges. We strongly support this action and recommend that it encompass Neepawa and area as well as other rapid growth regions in the province.

I would look forward to responding to questions and to assisting with these recommendations.

Yours sincerely,

J.m.

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Table 1: Recommendations for Winkler and Region

	COMMUNITY GROWTH RECOMMENDATIONS
Collaboration-based	
Hire a Liaison	Set up a 24 month pilot project to organize community efforts between different provincial departments and organizations; this coordinator will help avoid duplication of efforts between departments, facilitate communication of issues from the region and enable coordination of solutions between province and rapid growth region
	(Interdepartmental participants identified that the planning act requires a comprehensive and approach to community growth and Provincial Municipal support services could be accessed. Additionally the participants identified specialists in community development, agriculture and land use that could provide support)
Become a rural voice	Increase regional participation in key government committees to represent the area and keep MLA informed of development projects and outcomes; increasing understanding and awareness of regional issues will increase ability to coordinate solutions between region and province
	(Interdepartmental participants suggested that Winkler and area present their story at the AMM)
Work as a unit	Lobby for new projects as a region, to present a more cohesive and coordinated case. Collaboration as a regional will prevent competition and will increase effectiveness; i.e. improving highway 32
	(Interdepartmental participants Cooperative Development Support as a resource and Manitoba Housing indicated that they are looking to foster liaisons with community leaders)
Health	
Hire new midwives	Make use of new midwifery programs within the province as a labour recruitment pool to fill staffing shortages; Central RHA has significant demand for midwifery services - currently 2.25 positions are filled in the region but need requires closer to 10 positions
	(Interdepartmental participants identified Betsi Dolin at Manitoba Health as an expert resource. Participants also indicated that there is federal funding for Manitoba midwifery education gap training)
Integration	
Diversity training	Continue providing training and increase participation across the region in both the public and private sectors. This will help in community engagement and reduce tension between cultural groups
	(Interdepartmental participants indicated that there is a pool of diversity trainers available through the Diversity and Intercultural Training of Manitoba Start)
Host family or mentorship program	Pair new immigrants with locals willing to help them with basic settlement and integration needs; mentors become the face of community support for new immigrants and creates connections to the community that facilitate settlement and improves retention
	(Interdepartmental participants identified that there is interpreter training available)

Housing	
	Increase the availability of low cost housing to improve retention of new immigrants; rising housing prices and lack of low cost housing availability create challenges for new immigrants to remain in the region. Increasing low cost housing stock is essential to provide appropriate housing for new and future immigrants
Increase housing stock	(Interdepartmental participants identified that MAFRI has created a guide to developing housing and that there is a portable housing benefit for individuals with mental health issues on EIA. Participants also indicated that Manitoba Housing is looking to foster liaisons with community leaders regarding housing studies and discussions. Another issue raised was the lack of clear policies related to residential development in municipal/planning district development plans while population growth is exceeding the capability of the communities to increase housing stock)
Transportation	
Develop transportation	Develop a bus system to increase the mobility of the population within and between communities in the region; establishing public transportation within the region would enable greater access to jobs, services and housing for current residents and new immigrants
	(Interdepartmental participants identified that there are inter-region transportation plans that can be developed through Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation)

DEPARTMENT	REPRESENTATIVE
Manitoba Agriculture Food and Rural Initiatives	Mona Cornock
Immigration and Multiculturalism	Margot Morrish
	Liz Robison
	Sarah Lynn-Graham
Housing and Community Development	Terry Kozak
	Shannon Watson
	Carly Duboff
Local Government	Chris Leach
	Nadalene Khan-Cooper
Manitoba Early Learning and Child Care	Pauletta Monita
Manitoba Council on Post Secondary Education	Melissa Weavers

Table 1: Interdepartmental Review Participant List

Executive Summary of Winkler and Area

The Rural Development Institute with support from Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism along with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives conducted research into growth strategies in rural centers. Winkler and area was selected to discern growth strategies, which will be compared to another region, namely Neepawa. Population growth was a predominant factor examined in both regions, but not the only one. The research team utilized secondary research, ten key-informant interviews, and a one day workshop attended by 9 regional stakeholders to identify issues that were of import to the community. Local stakeholders and leaders from the chamber of commerce, the health care system, education, and immigration services attended the workshop.

Winkler and the surrounding area has been the site of tremendous growth since shortly after the launch of the Provincial Nominee Program in 1998. This population growth has created challenges for the communities in the area. These problems include staffing for health care institutions, cultural conflicts, a shortage of appropriate housing and issues with transportation of citizens. Winkler, Morden, Altona and the RM of Stanley, need to be aware of how the growing population will affect them as a group over the next ten years to better facilitate planning processes of a rapidly growing population. What follows is a list of recommendations derived from the research process that are intended to form the basis of possible actions.

Smart Growth Strategy

- Hire a Liaison: set up a 24 month pilot project to organize community efforts between different
 provincial departments and organizations; this coordinator will help avoid duplication of efforts
 between departments, facilitate communication of issues from the region and enable coordination
 of solutions between province and rapid growth region
- Become a rural voice: Increase regional participation in key government committees to represent
 the area and keep MLA informed of development projects and outcomes; increasing understanding
 and awareness of regional issues will increase ability to coordinate solutions between region and
 province
- Work as a unit: Lobby for new projects as a region, to present a more cohesive and coordinated case. Collaboration as a regional will prevent competition and will increase effectiveness; i.e. improving highway 32

Health

 Hire New Midwives: Make use of new midwifery programs within the province as a labour recruitment pool to fill staffing shortages; Central RHA has significant demand for midwifery services - currently 2.25 positions are filled in the region but need requires closer to 10 positions

Integration

- **Diversity training:** Continue providing training and increase participation across the region in both the public and private sectors. This will help in community engagement and reduce tension between cultural groups
- Host family or mentorship program: Pair new immigrants with locals willing to help them with basic settlement and integration needs; mentors become the face of community support for new immigrants and creates connections to the community that facilitate settlement and improves retention

Several issues were not addressed in the SMART action planning activity due to time restraints but were identified as key issues that need to be addressed in the region. Participants identified the following next steps:

Housing

• Increase housing stock: Increase the availability of low cost housing to improve retention of new immigrants; rising housing prices and lack of low cost housing availability create challenges for new immigrants to remain in the region. Increasing low cost housing stock is essential to provide appropriate housing for new and future immigrants

Transportation

• **Develop transportation:** Develop a bus system to increase the mobility of the population within and between communities in the region; establishing public transportation within the region would enable greater access to jobs, services and housing for current residents and new immigrants

Introduction

Immigration has become one of the major policy responses for population and labour force growth in Manitoba. In particular, rural centres face significant challenges in responding to economic and

demographic pressures. While some communities have experienced a sudden increase in the number of newcomers arriving, placing stress on existing resources such as housing, school, and health facilities, other communities are experiencing a declining and aging population that are struggling to retain their youth. Irrespective of the pressures, rural communities are struggling to identify their priorities and plans during a time of fiscal restraint and increasing demands for services.



The goal of the *Immigration and Rural Communities: People, Plans, and Actions* project was to understand community approaches to managing growth and documenting the challenges, opportunities, and concerns community's experience, along with growth strategies. Through secondary data analysis and key informant interviews, the research engaged local stakeholders as well as government representatives from three regional clusters of rural communities experiencing distinctive kinds of growth due to immigration within the past ten years, centres representing rapid growth (Winkler and area), variable growth (Neepawa and area), and slow to declining growth (Swan River and area) (See Figure 1).

The Winkler and area communities are, located in the South Central region consisting of the centres of Winkler, Altona, Morden, and the RM of Stanley. These four towns/rural municipalities have been identified as a rapid growth



region, due to the fact that this region has seen dramatic growth over the last ten years in all of the centres. Just over 7,500 newcomers have arrived in the area since 1998. Population in the tree centres and the RM has increased by approximately 8, 300 over the 2001 to 2011 period. With the rapid growth in both the rural and smaller urban centres will be significant. There have been pressures on housing, education, health care, land supply, infrastructure capacity (sewer, water, roads), recreation, policing, and other service sectors.

There is a considerable history of immigration in this area, particularly since the introduction of the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). Since 2001, the population of the area has grown by 63% in the RM of Stanley, and by 27% and 34% in Morden and Winkler respectively. This rapid growth region has brought with it pressure on a range of services in the area such as, health care, education, recreation, policing, and others



With Dr. Tom Carter's community profiles, using Statistics Canada data (from 2001-2006, some recent numbers from 2011) and Manitoba Health Covered Population Report (2006-2010), as well as ten key informant interviews were conducted with service providers, government, and the businesses within the communities of Winkler, Morden, Altona, and the RM of Stanley. The aims of the interviews were to learn more about challenges and opportunities communities are facing, due to population growth. Four main questions were asked during the interview that shaped the results of our findings:

- 1. What are the opportunities your community has experienced over the last ten years, what are some of the causes?
- 2. What are the challenges your community has experienced over the last ten years, what are some of the causes?

- 3. What concerns might affect your community in the future?
- 4. How would you describe the 'health and well-being' of your community in the last ten years? Following the interviews a detailed analysis of the results was conducted to understand the myriad of complex issues, challenges, and needs that was identified during the interviews. The findings were shared with some of the interview participants and additional key informants at a community workshop.

The interview findings were displayed on two posters. The Population Growth poster provided information about:

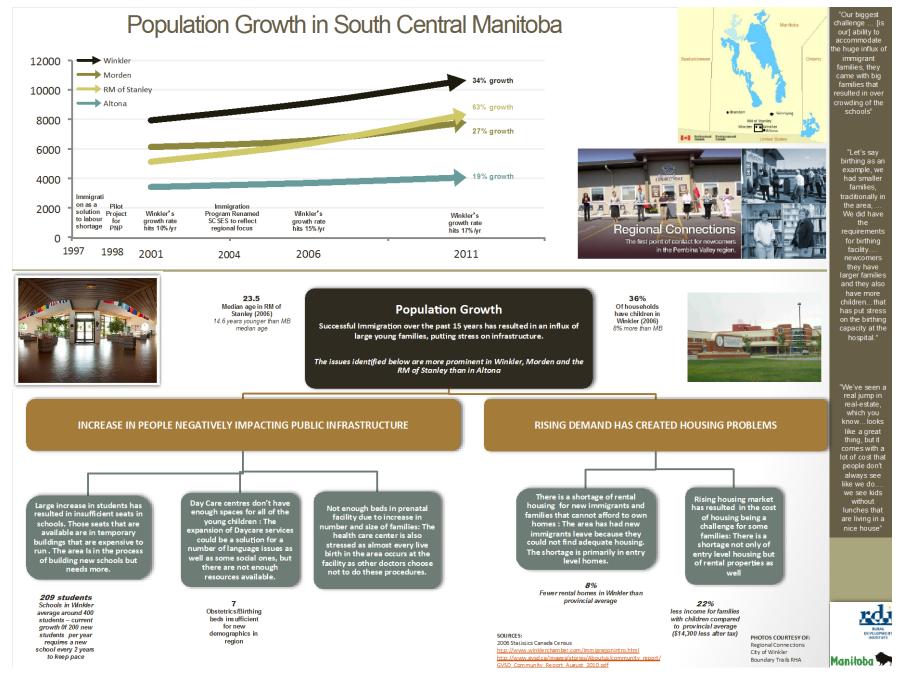
- 1. Changes in population, all three communities (Winkler, Morden, and Altona) increased in population growth from 2001 to 2011. The growth ranged from 19% in Altona to 63% in the RM of Stanley.
- 2. Chronology of change, highlighted that in 1998 the PNP pilot project began, by 2004 the immigration program was renamed SCSES to reflect a regional focus.
- 3. Direct impacts of the population change indicated that successful immigration over the past fifteen years has resulted in an influx of larger younger families, which resulted in impacting the public infrastructure, and the rising demand on housing. There are 8% fewer rental homes in Winkler than the provincial average.

The second poster is focused on policy questions related to the population growth. Three main questions and answers came up from the results of the interviews.

- 1. How can government policy programs and staff improve services to better serve the population?
 - a. New policies, support and programs are required to meet the needs of a changing population, driven by larger and younger families
 - b. Existing policies did not change to accommodate the increased growth in population
- 2. Do local leaders need to work together for this area to be successful?
 - a. Work with provincial department decision makers to better service the growth related needs of this area
 - b. Data collection will occur due to a project called "Vital Signs". It will help monitor the area and aid in local decision making
 - c. Coordinate actions in response to the demand for new regional services
 - d. Strategic decisions needed to clarify roles each community will play in the region
- 3. How do communities improve the inclusion of new immigrants?
 - a. Local events to celebrate different cultural groups
 - b. Continue to attract English speaking workers
 - c. Encourage immigrants to become more proficient in English

The purpose of the workshops was to identifying any gaps or key issues that were not identified during the interviews, as well as identify action plan development within the region. The workshop activities included: rapid visioning process, prioritizing, and SMART action planning. The results from these activities can be found in the body of this report.

Findings



Policy Questions Related to Population Growth in South Central Manitoba

"the province is doing a phenomenal job of recruiting and promoting province. People interested in immigrating to Manitoba, but they come to our area - now we have stress on infrastructure -and no assistance to help alleviate that stress. Those people that the province is attracting are now getting caught in the middle."



Local events to elebrate different

Continue to attract English speaking workers : There has been a shift to

SOURCES:

Existing policies did not change to accommodate the increased growth in population: 1/3 of the students are EAL. This is a challenge that was not accommodated for prior to the immigration initiative

"When I look at this whole program, the Province of Manitoba is very eager and it encourages immigration ... interesting part is that it never comes with the money to back up what the program is. If you have a program initiative it is the communities that carry the brunt of that burden."

How do

communities

improve the

inclusion of new

immigrants?

7%

of RM Stanley

residents do not

speak an official

language (2006)

New policies, support and programs are required to meet the needs of a changing population, driven by larger and younger families: The area feels that the money has not followed the immigration and the area is left "holding the bag"

Students in school designed for 700, community has to address gap

> "there are huts all over the place."

policy programs and staff e nable improved services to better serve the population?

How can government

"If one [community] has [something] the other [community] seems to think they need it."



CONTEXT

SOUTH CENTRAL MANITOBA IS **EXPERIENCING A MAJOR SHIFT IN** POPULATION WITH THE **INFLUX OF IMMIGRANTS CONSISTING OF** YOUNGER AND LARGER **FAMILIES**

The area does not seem to put a lot of emphasis on integration. While it would be nice it is viewed as a long term issue. A number of participants said to just "give me the children and these problems will not exist in the future"

become more ficient in Englis

Work with provincial department decision makers to better service the growth related needs of this area: Preplanning should be happening rather than post crises management

"Very nice regional hospital with many services."

Do local leaders need to work together for this area to be successful?



Coordinate actions Strategic decisions needed to clarify in response to the demand for new roles each regional services: community will play in the region: The The discussion area is well positioned to take service between the communities was a action on some issues, "let's be prominent facet of proactive, we have the workshop the data. Why aren't we using it?"

project called "Vital

Data collection will

occur due to a

Signs". It will help

monitor the area

and with local

decision making

PHOTOS COURTESY OF: Regional Connections Campscout.com Town of Altona RM of Stnaley



43.7%

Of survey respondents in a 2011 Morden

community survey

(n=245) indicated they

would use inter

community

transportation services

regularly

Action Plan

Participants worked through three separate activities to strategize on specific, measurable, and realistic action plans with estimated cost and time frame for their region. Rapid visioning, issue prioritizing and action planning were used to help identify a vision and specific actions for the region.

Rapid Visioning

Participants were asked to identify which characteristics were important for their region. This activity was used to help establish a quick vision of where participants wanted their region to be in 5 years and to help identify common areas of interest and focus. Winkler and area identified the following qualities as their most important vision for their region (See Figure 1):

- An active and empowered area
- A welcoming area
- A caring, economically strong, and learning area

A good and well functioning community A learning community An active and empowered community An influential community An ecromically strang community A green community A safe community A velcoming community A velcoming community A lasting community

Figure 1 Rapid Visioning

Prioritizing

The workshop participants in the Winkler and area engaged in discussion and dialogue on the issues and challenges their communities have experienced in response to the population growth in the region, identifying six dominant issues:

- Education
- Smart Growth Strategy
- Integration
- Housing
- Health
- Immigration Process
- Transportation

After the issues were discussed and confirmed, participants were then asked to prioritize their issues based on importance to the region and their ability to influence those issues using sticky notes with name of the shallonges and issues (See Figure 2). As a result of this action



Figure 2: Prioritizing Issues

challenges and issues (See Figure 2). As a result of this activity, the issues were ranked as follows:

- 1. Smart Growth Strategy
- 2. Health
- 3. Integration

SMART Action Plan

Once participants had identified their priority issues, they were tasked with creating specific action items for each issue. SMART Action planning was incorporated as participants were asked to identify actions that were Specific, Measurable, Accountable, Reliable and Timely. The table below outlines those action items and groups them by issue along with timeframe based on immediate and long term actions.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS (1 year or less)	WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED COST?	WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME?
SMART GROWTH STRATEGY		
Share information throughout the region (Pembina Valley) with regular meetings and conversations with the following groups City Council Service Providers Businesses	Minimal cash cost	 On going communication Long range planning shared between the sectors City Council and school have 5 year plans
 Planning infrastructure needs ahead of time, instead of reacting to need Need for provincial support and approval Coordinator operating under the Minister's Direction Keep the MLA informed on the project(s) and communication so they can support the project goals and focus 	Possible funding with Manitoba Opportunities Fund which is managed by Immigration and Multiculturalism or Manitoba Labour	24 month pilot project E.g. Immigration and related short-term and long-term strategies, infrastructure, and related areas
Coordination between provincial departments" • Need conversation/communication between provincial department, rather than community going to multiple departments and providing information to departments about other departments	 Cost to coordinate is minimal Time for coordination may require 'costs' 	Ongoing efforts to be made
Become a rural voice on key government committees such as economic development to the cabinet To be represented and present whenever you can to the government	Cost not determined	Timeframe not determined
 Lobbying regionally for specific needs in the area High growth region requires provincial support E.g. PVDC support need for highway 32 upgrade 	Coordination from provincial departments	Timeframe not determined

HEALTH		
Hire more midwives	Funding is already available for a few positions	Summer 2014 will be the first graduating class of UCN Midwifery program
Hire professional interpreters (specifically for German and Russian speaking)	 Cost and need not agreed upon by participants 	As soon as possible
Lobbying for an assisted living center	Government funding needed	As soon as possible
INTEGRATION		
Host family or mentor	No cost	Upon newcomers arrival
Diversity training	 Community – no cost Work/Business - \$10,000 	Ongoing
LONG TERM ACTIONS (1+ years)	WHAT IS THE ESTIMATED COST?	WHAT IS THE TIME FRAME?
HEALTH		
Sponsor health professionals while they work towards their certification	 Cost and need not agreed upon by participants 	Ongoing efforts being made