

Planning for Healthy Rural and Small Town Communities

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An initial story...



Healthy Communities in an Environmental and Social Context





The Village of Blyth

Healthy Communities
in an Economic &
Social Context



CANADIAN
CENTRE FOR
RURAL CREATIVITY

CCRC

R2R2018

THANKING OUR COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS



What are Healthy Rural Communities?

- Healthy Communities initiatives are multi-sectoral collaborations that integrate social, economic and environmental goals to benefit the whole community and strengthen community capacity to promote and sustain health.

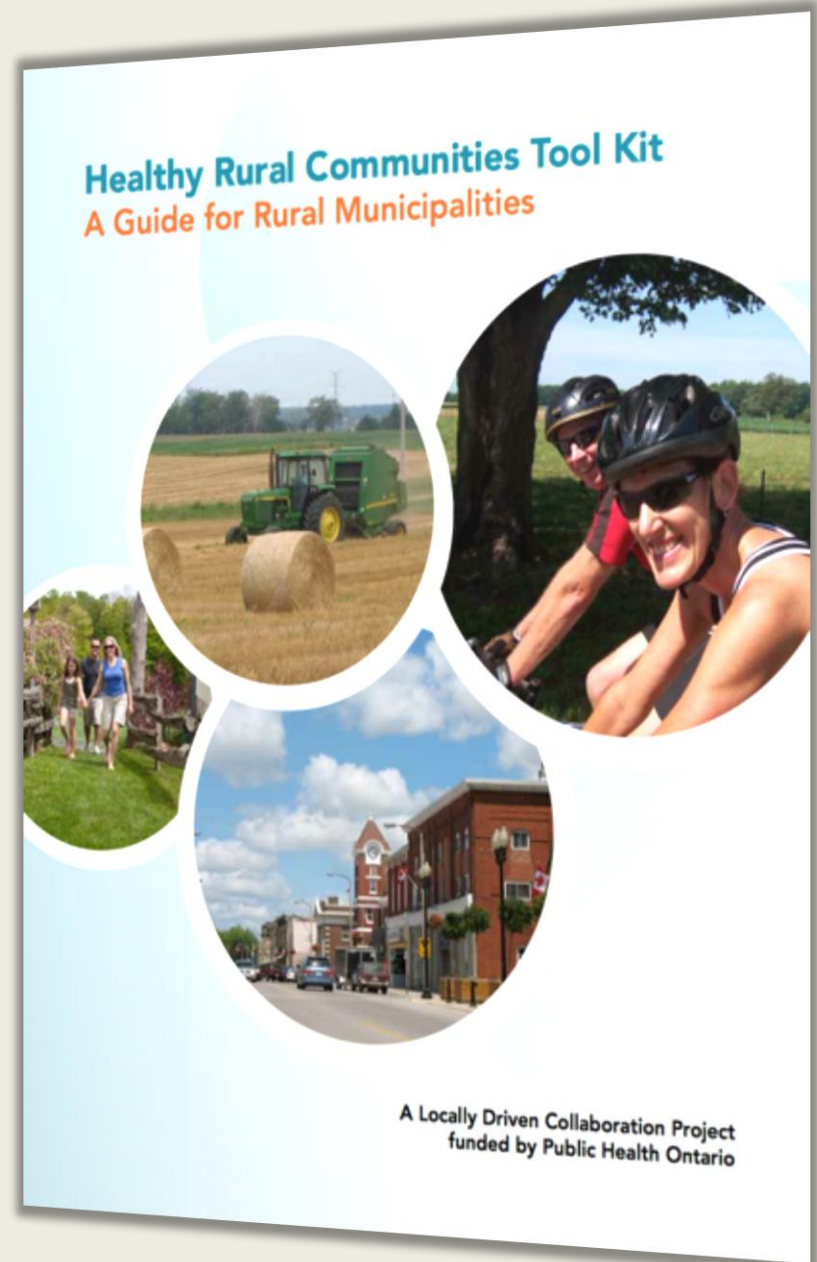
(Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition)

Agenda

- Introductory Exercise
- Overview of Healthy Rural Communities Tool Kit
- Health indicators in rural communities
- Innovative practices— Examples from participants
- Relationship to Immigration
- Conclusion

With Thanks...

- Funded by Public Health Ontario
- Funded by Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs
- Healthy Rural Communities Project Team Members (Health Units)
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute



Why Focus on Healthy Rural Communities?

What do the following photos tell us about rural and small town communities?









FARM to MARKET to TABLE





What comes to my mind is the word - *sustainability*

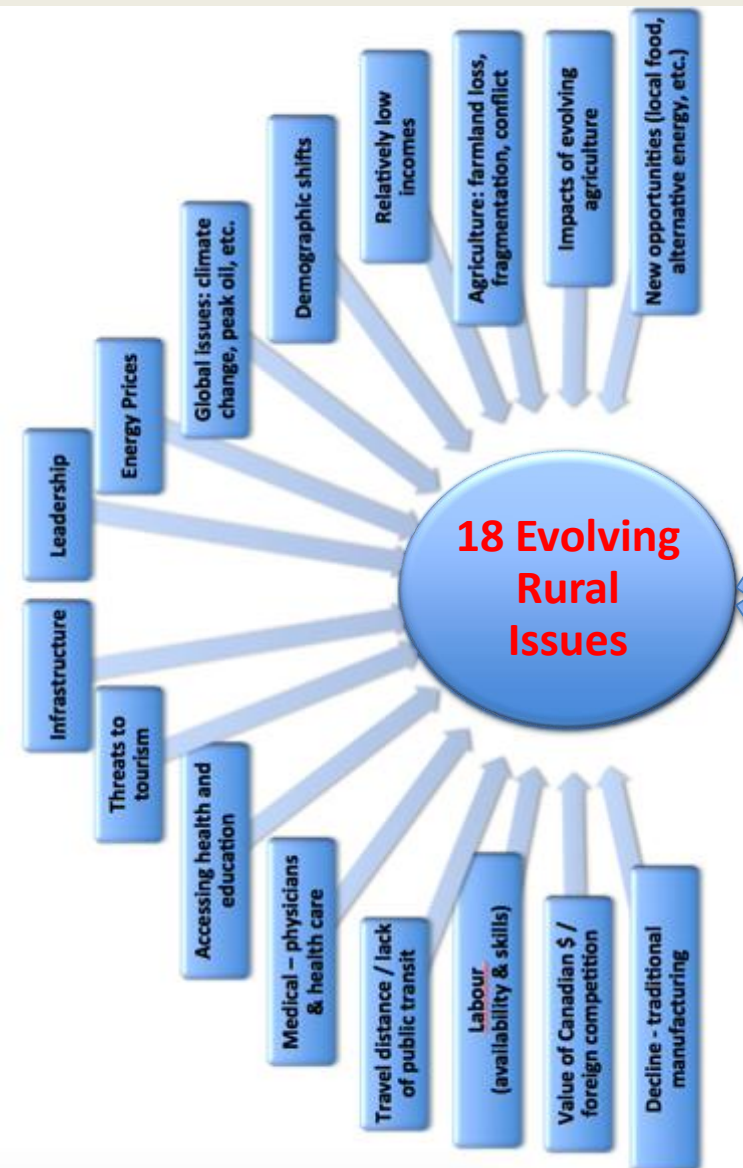
- Blending together
 - the economic,
 - the environmental and
 - the social
- And the relationship between Sustainability and Healthy Rural Communities

What is happening in your community that makes it *healthy* or *unhealthy*?





Evolving Rural Issues and Issues for Planning



- Rural services
- Growth and Depopulation in different areas
- Labour shortages
- Loss of farmland to urban encroachment
- Conflict within an urbanizing province
- Political Insensitivity
- Environmental Implications
- Pressures for non-farm activities
- More diverse agricultural opportunities
- Etc.

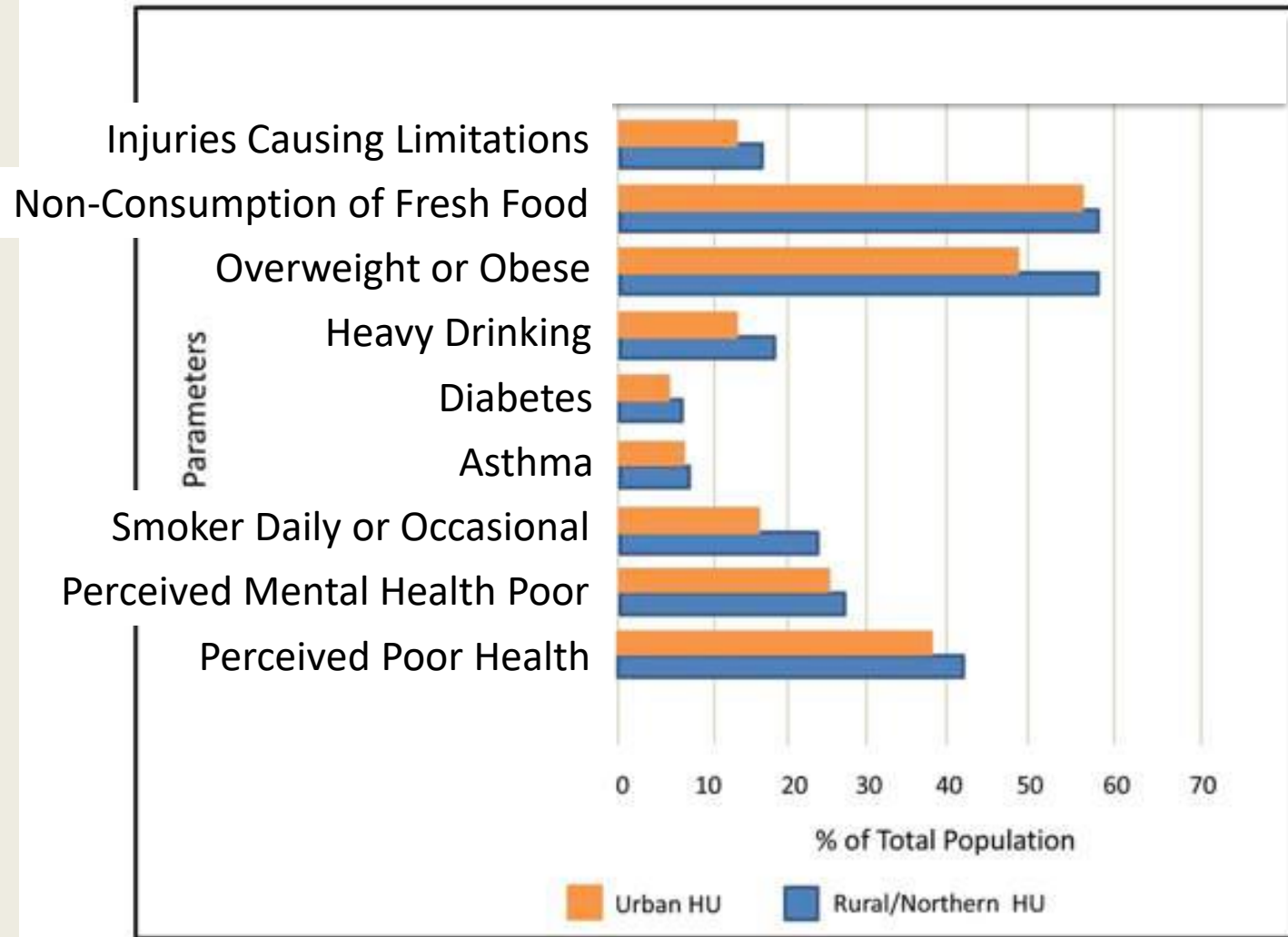
Healthy Rural Communities:

We started by looking at the relationship between the built environment and health

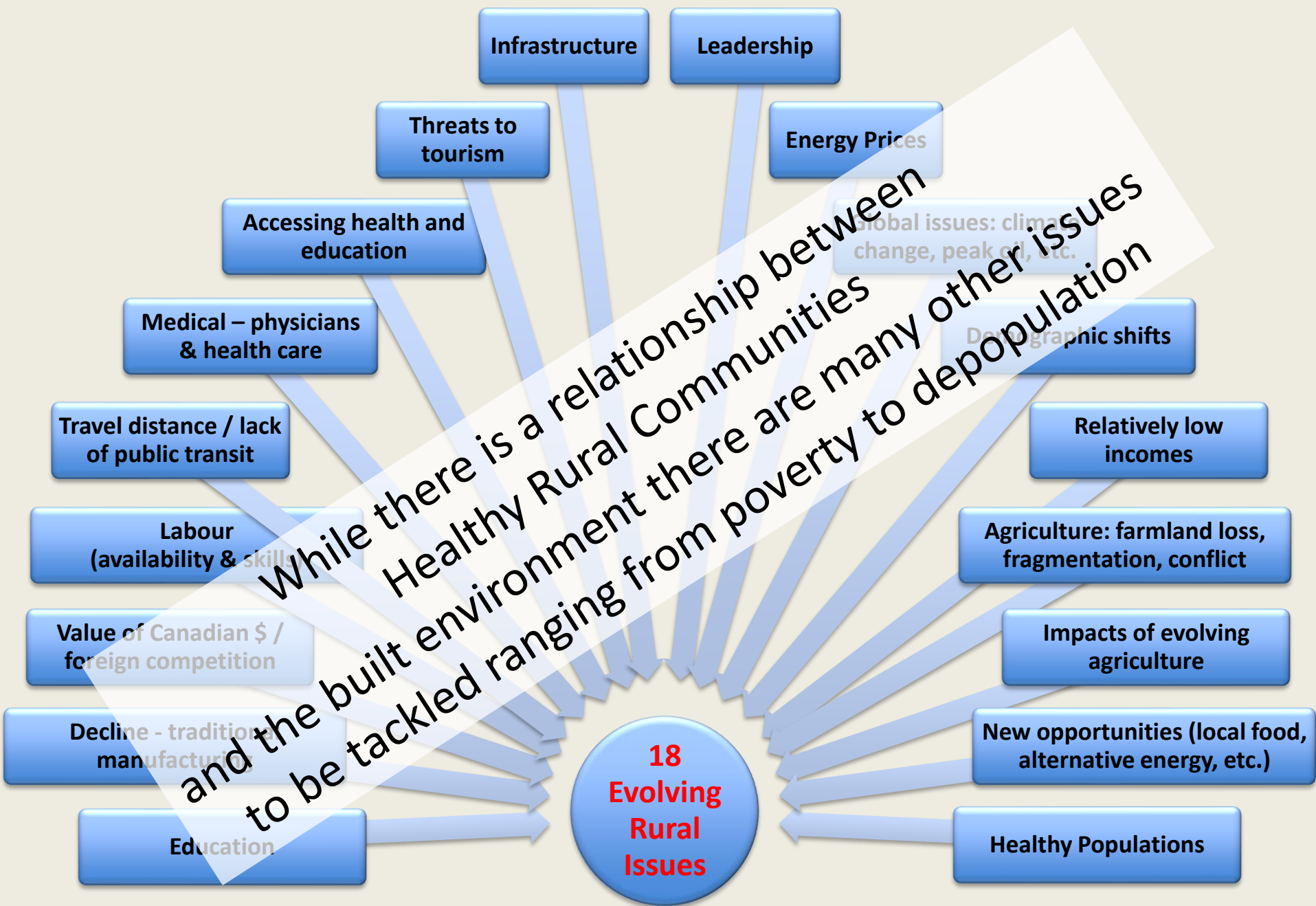


- Obesity + Physical Inactivity
- Chronic Diseases
- Climate Change
- Air Pollution
- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Other Impacts

Key Health Indicators: Rural vs. Urban



Source: Statistics Canada 'Canadian Health Profile' (2013)





Our challenge: How do we respond to these issues?

**The starting point is a sound understanding
of our communities...**

Five questions to get us thinking about what is happening in our Communities.



Question 1:

The Edmonton-Calgary corridor covers 6% of the Province's total land area and is home to ____ of Alberta's population



- The corridor is the most urbanized area of the province
 - Projected growth of this area is expected to be more rapid than the rest of the province
 - By 2046, four out of five Albertans are expected to live within this area
- a) 25%
b) 47%
c) 76%
d) 52%

Question 2:

Alberta is projected to reach a population of 6.4 million by 2046. What percentage of this growth is anticipated to be a result of immigration?



a) 25%

b) 48%

c) 15%

d) 67%

• An additional 18% is expected to be a result of interprovincial migration

• Natural increase is a diminishing source of growth

(Government of Alberta, 2018)

Question 3:

Nationally, only 1 in 4 rural youth who leave their communities will return to the same community within 10 years.

True or False?



Question 4:

Edmonton and Calgary are the destination of 75% of the provinces immigrants

True or False?

Question 5:

By 2046, 1 in 5 Albertans are expected to be aged 65+

True or False?

How did you score?



The Future:

Our challenge is to understand the trends and new trends that will impact us at a

- *community,*
- *provincial and*
- *national level.*

Healthy Rural and Small Town Communities:

- The importance of a Community Based Response and
- The importance of a broad definition of Rural Planning



A Broad Definition of Rural Planning

Rural Planning Strategies to Enhance Health Outcomes



Recent Headlines

“Red Deer County Agricultural Services looking for Public Ag Literacy Advisory Committee members”

" Developer's attempt to do a land swap for Oliver Park parcel fails”

" Residential street sweeping starts tomorrow”

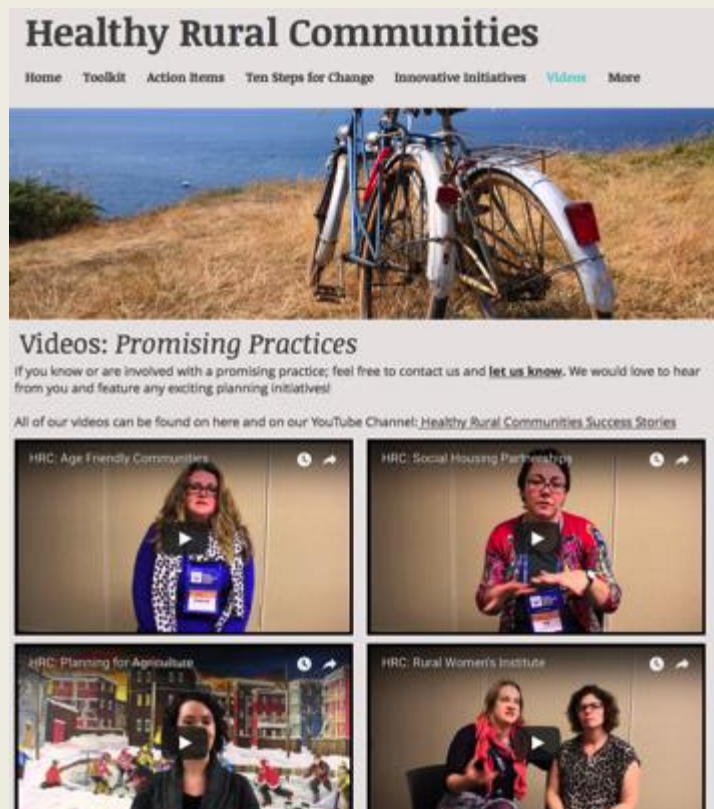
" 2019 Rural Beautification Tour.”

**Some unrelated ...
but Actual Newspaper Headlines**

- **Enraged Cow Injures Farmer With Ax**
- **Plane Too Close to Ground, Crash Probe Told**
- **Deer Kill 17,000**
- **Astronaut Takes Blame for Gas in Spacecraft**
- **Kids Make Nutritious Snacks**

Healthy Rural Communities

www.ruralhealthycommunities.ca



Healthy Rural Communities Tool Kit A Guide for Rural Municipalities



A Locally Driven Collaborative Project
funded by Public Health Ontario

Tool Kit – '10 Key Things to Do'

- 1. Planning Policy for individual towns and hamlets.*
- 2. Create understanding of relationship between planning and health.*
- 3. Measure impact and change of a planning initiative or practice on a community.*
- 4. Encourage partnerships between municipalities and community groups.*
- 5. Encourage collaboration between the municipality and health unit.*



Tool Kit – '10 Key Things' (con't)

6. *Develop safe spaces for dialogue and opportunities for community members to contribute.*



7. *Have council and senior staff buy-in.*

8. *Have champions for projects.*

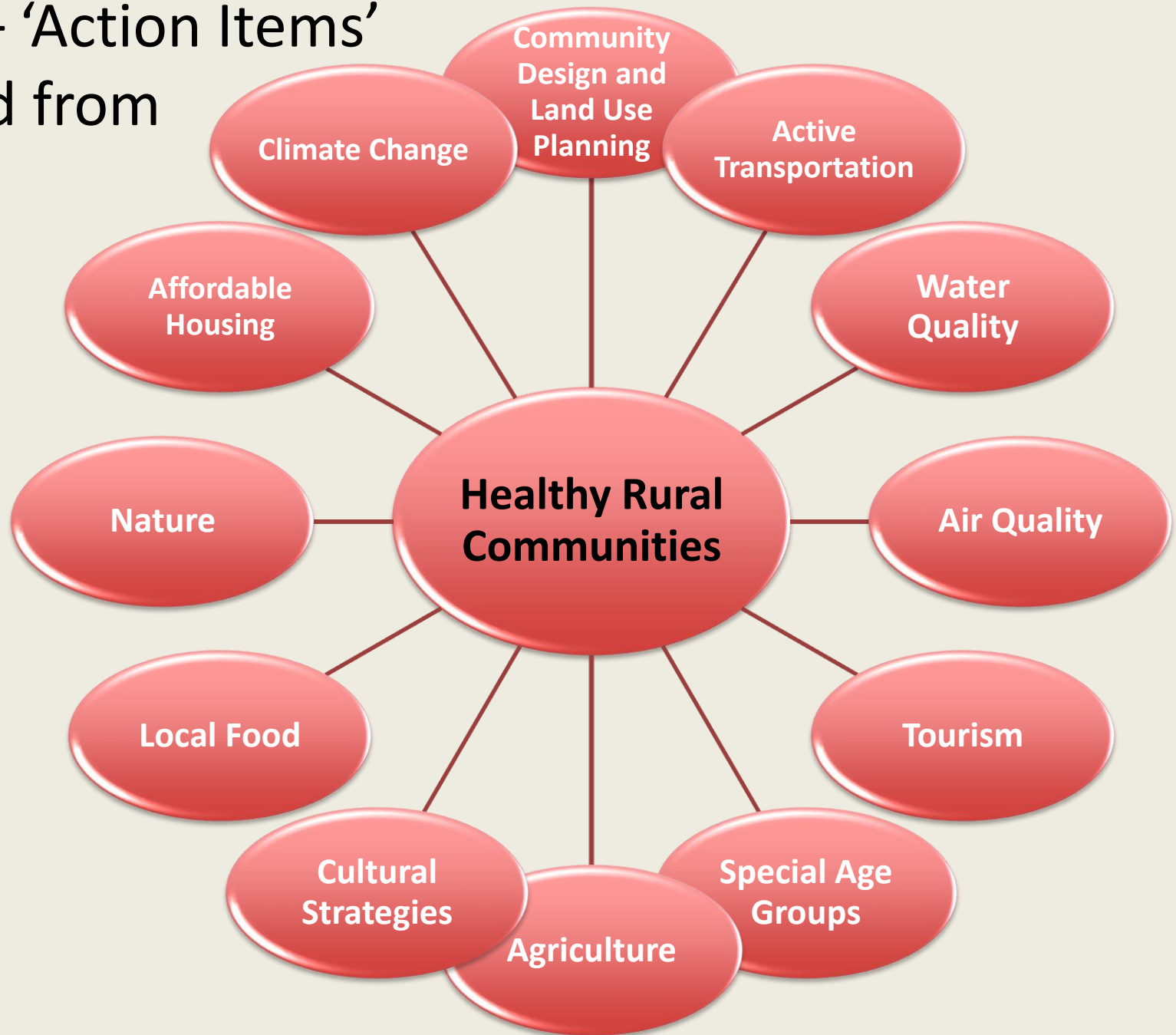
9. *Have a committee or community-based group to whom the initiative is important.*



10. *Focus on something manageable.*



Tool Kit – ‘Action Items’ Identified from Research



Identifying Innovative Examples

Reflecting upon these 13 themes:

- At your table (or with 2 or 3 people beside you) *please identify 1 or 2 innovative examples/successes from your own communities.*



Community Design / Land Use Planning

or

Active Transportation:

Do you have any
innovative examples
or successes to
share?

Action One - Community Design and Land Use Planning

Why are community design / land use planning important?

- They help to build robust communities by managing and directing land use to achieve healthy, liveable and safe communities.
- They help to create communities as good places to live, work, learn and play in close proximity to one another.
- They promote complete and compact settlements. This is applicable in rural areas where the revitalization of existing towns, villages and hamlets is encouraged. Some communities must deal with populations that are even more widely dispersed. These include places where large-scale agriculture, natural regeneration of poorer agricultural land and recreational properties compose substantial amounts of land. Complete and connected communities located in these areas need other creative responses - for example, high speed internet connectivity and the provision of secondary road or waterway networks (MMAH, 2014).
- The creation of community design guidelines clarify the meaning of general official plan policies and put these policies into practice for new development in a community.

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- Activity destinations and facilities, whether they be a naturalized trail system, dedicated bike paths or lanes, children's park or a formal recreational facility (such as soccer fields, swimming pools etc.) should be adequately distributed throughout a community, making access to such facilities as equitable as possible.
- New streets should have good connectivity with the existing street pattern. In addition, sidewalks should have clear connections to trail systems within a community.

City of Kawartha Lakes case study

- The City of Kawartha Lakes has recently developed a variety of land-use planning documents that focus on creating active and healthy rural communities.
- Activating Kawartha Lakes was an on the ground initiative where the community was invited to take part in walking audits with a walkability consultant to build on the policy work completed to date. These walks and the resulting photo visions of specific sites proved to be successful and provided inspiration for the implementation of more walkable and active design elements in the community. To view photo visions, please see: [City of Kawartha Lakes Photo Visions](#).



Water or Air Quality:

Do you have any
innovative examples
or successes to
share?

Action Four - Water Quality

Why is water quality important?

- Water provides economic and social benefits and is the basis for healthy and diverse ecosystems and communities. Water is used by humans for consumption and by industry to support our economy. It also supports ecological processes including aquatic life and aquatic ecosystems (MMAH, 2014).
- In rural areas, sources of drinking water can come from surface water features or groundwater aquifers, and these sources are vulnerable to contamination or depletion. Drinking-water wells and intakes serve individual homes, clusters of homes and rural settlement areas.
- Healthy shorelines provide a range of social, economic and environmental benefits. They help to control surface run-off and erosion and filter associated nutrients and harmful pollutants, therefore protecting water quality. Healthy shorelines also help regulate temperature and microclimate, screen noise and wind, preserve the aesthetic appeal of the landscape and provide many other cultural, social and economic benefits through recreation and tourism (MMAH, 2014).

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- There are many threats to drinking water quality, including both point sources and non-point sources contaminants. Effective stormwater management, including techniques such as installation of pervious surface treatments, can reduce the potential for contamination from surface run-off during storm events.
- For existing private well and septic system owners, the promotion of well stewardship and the need for support of stewardship programs is apparent.

Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls case study

- The community of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls is a small northern community that began implementing new zoning by-laws, never used before in their municipality, in order to maintain and improve water quality.
- Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls added policies to their official plan relating to shoreline protection. A new implementing zoning by-law has established a minimum setback from shorelines for new development.

Recommendations for rural municipalities

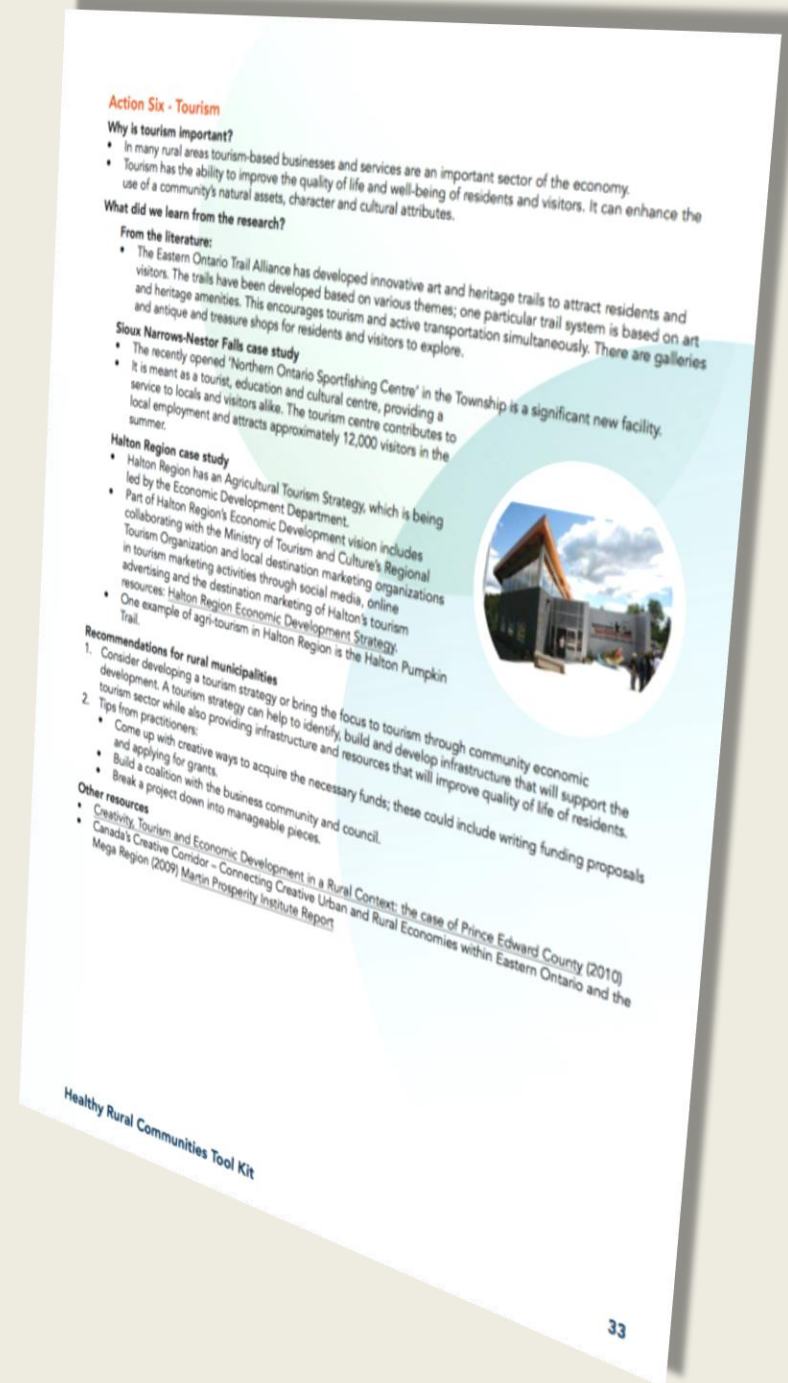
1. Work with the conservation authority if it exists for your region to ensure that your source water protection plan is being properly incorporated. Efforts to support clean drinking water supplies through source water protection planning and other mechanisms (e.g. mandatory septic system re-inspection by-laws) are important. Please see [Drinking Water Source Protection](#).
2. Work with the conservation authority to ensure that planning efforts can incorporate a focus on watersheds/sub-watersheds. This can contribute to an ecologically-focused approach to protecting water resources and other natural features.
3. For existing brownfields (such as abandoned heavy industrial sites), ensure that your community has considered various mechanisms to have these sites cleaned up. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has a large number of resources to aid with this. See for example [Brownfields Resources](#).
4. Work with your health unit and building permit staff to ensure that you are following best practices related to public and private sewage treatment. As an example, Huron County has started a septic system maintenance program. Please see: [Healthy Lake Huron](#).
5. A number of municipalities have developed lake plans. These are created to protect the water quality of lakes and assess lake impacts and carrying capacity. See for example: <http://www.lakeplan.com/>

Other resources

- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing - MMAH (2014) An Introduction to the Provincial Policy Statement, 2014: Rural Ontario.



Tourism or Nature or Climate Change: Do you have any innovative examples or successes to share?



Action Seven - Planning for Special Age Groups

Why is planning for special age groups important?

- Rural communities have larger proportions of aging populations when compared to larger urban centres.
- Transportation access is consistently identified as a major barrier in studies on the impacts of an aging demographic (OPPI, 2009).
- Two of the issues which currently face many rural communities are out-migration of youth and aging population.

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- The issue of aging population is a major social planning topic and the planning for the challenges of an aging population is garnering greater attention recently. Rural communities faced with aging populations will need to examine mechanisms to increase transportation options, and geriatric support services (Social Planning Network of Ontario, 2010).
- Innovative ideas for transporting youth to recreational amenities in rural municipalities include late night school buses or shuttles and organized car pools.

Township of Prince case study - aging communities

- The Township of Prince has created a 2013-2018 Accessibility Plan. The plan includes extending bus services from Sault St. Marie into the township, and Prince Township has an arrangement with the city for a bus to come to the corner of two highways. Please see the [2013-2018 Accessibility Plan](#).
- A co-op program funded by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Association is a key item that has provided the municipality with funding for their Strategic Plan and Accessibility Plan.

Town of Hanover case study - youth planning

- The Town of Hanover is in the process of developing a Fusion Youth Activity and Technology Centre, a precedent taken from the community of Ingersoll. Please see: [Fusion Youth Centre website](#).
- This type of facility would provide services such as education, recreation, social services and exposure to technology.
- This type of youth facility would be geared to young people who are not planning on pursuing post-secondary education. The centre would aid these youth in finding alternative employment options that would allow them to remain and reside in Hanover.

Recommendations for rural municipalities

1. Ensure that your planning initiatives bring a focus to the needs of an aging population. The requirements and needs in aging populations will be unique in terms of accessibility, services and transportation issues. The County of Brant & City of Brantford have developed a Master Aging Plan for the comprehensive needs of an aging community. Please see: [County of Brant & City of Brantford Master Aging Plan](#).
2. Ensure that your planning documents have consideration for youth, such as the inclusion of skateboard parks, arenas and sports fields, among other activities.
3. Develop a youth retention strategy. Provide opportunities for education and employment. Take a community economic development approach and seek out opportunities that could exist for youth in your community.
4. Tips from practitioners:
 - Use other communities as inspiration; the Town of Hanover is taking on a youth initiative based on the existing one in Ingersoll.
 - For communities in northern Ontario, try connecting with the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Association.
 - Share ideas and resources with neighbouring communities.
 - Keep an eye out for grants that would allow the possibility of co-op employment.
 - Engage your senior population as volunteers and in leadership positions. This will benefit the community and provide opportunities for individuals.



Healthy Rural Communities Tool Kit

Planning for Special Age Groups or Safe and Affordable Housing:

Do you have any
innovative examples
or successes to
share?

Agriculture
or
Access to Local
Food:

Do you have any
innovative examples
or successes to
share?



Action Three - Community Engagement and Capacity Building...

Why are community engagement and capacity building important?

- The community is an important resource to help achieve mutual goals, and community engagement increases municipal capacity. Municipalities can leverage the expertise and knowledge of community members on a volunteer basis.
- Community engagement provides the perspectives of citizens, both as individuals and collectively.
- Engagement and participation are vital in creating effective policy and programs for community health that are inclusive and holistic.

What did we learn from the research?

From the literature:

- Engagement activities provide a forum for citizens and other stakeholders to voice their opinions and ideas, share local knowledge, learn from others and obtain important information. This allows the opportunity to involve people in the processes and decisions that affect their lives. Empowered people and communities can be more resilient in the face of adversity (CIP, 2012).
- In Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands, workshops are organized for farmers in order to learn about economic strategies, specifically related to agriculture.
- Some rural communities are using social media to engage and connect with residents. As an example, Elgin County has created a Facebook page and Twitter account for their Community Improvement Plan. As well, the Village of Brussels in Huron County has a Facebook page to update residents on events and initiatives occurring in the community. Please see: [Elgin County Community Improvement Plan](#) and [Brussels Downtown Revitalization Group](#)

Huron County case study - Jane's Walk

- Jane's Walk was a community-organized event where residents walked around downtown Goderich and discussed design elements that could improve the community.
- Jane's Walk was innovative for a rural community because it originated as an urban idea and was implemented in a rural downtown area.
- Jane Jacobs, an urbanist who helped to protect neighbourhoods in Toronto and New York, provided inspiration for the walks, which are held around the world. Jane was an activist for people places and wrote about how cities can function as spaces for people.

Recommendations for rural municipalities

1. Use creative ways to engage the public in the planning process in addition to the Planning Act requirements. As an example, Haldimand County hired a skateboard professional to give credibility and information on public spaces for youth.
2. Leverage non-traditional organizations as partners involved with public health, recreation, engineering, business and youth.
3. Seek additional funding and foster public and private partnerships.
4. Tips from practitioners:
 - Develop safe spaces where people can engage with each other.
 - Build council support through education and awareness. This helps new projects acquire public funding and encourages fundraising and private donations.
 - Engage champions for projects - a dedicated individual who is willing to see a project through contributes significantly to a positive outcome.
 - Employ creative approaches to encourage citizen engagement which could include informal public gathering mechanisms, such as coffee shop settings and design charrettes.
 - Use social media to connect with a wide range of citizens. Social media tools can include: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Other resources

- Ball, J., Caldwell, W., & Pranis, K. (2010). Doing Democracy with Circles: Engaging Communities in Public Planning
- Canadian Institute of Planners - CIP (2012) [Healthy Communities Practice Guide](#).



Healthy Rural Communities Tool Kit

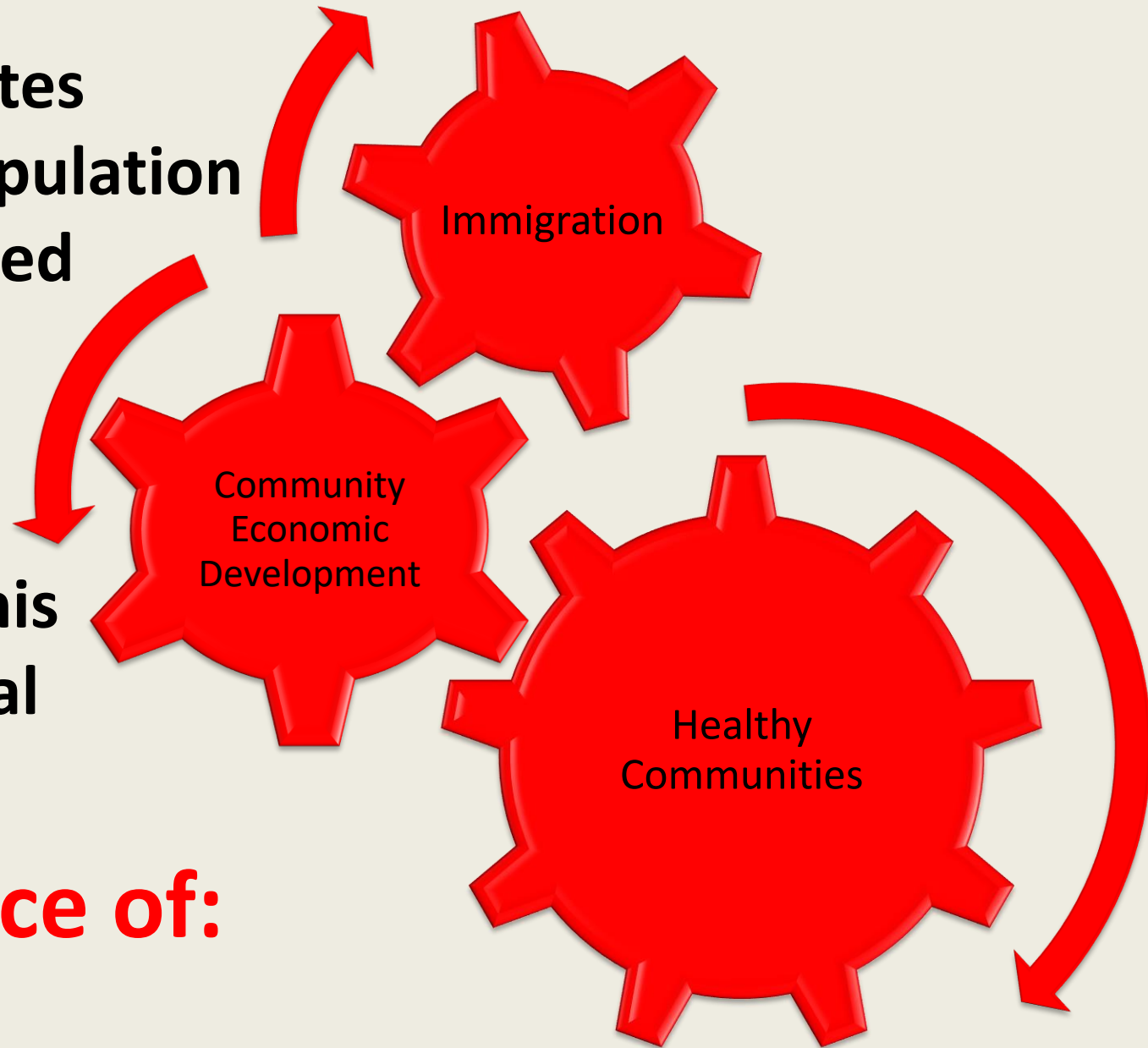
Community Engagement and Capacity Building: or Cultural Strategies and Revitalization:

Do you have any innovative examples or successes to share?

- low birth rates
- an aging population
- urban focused immigration

**What does this
mean for rural
Alberta?**

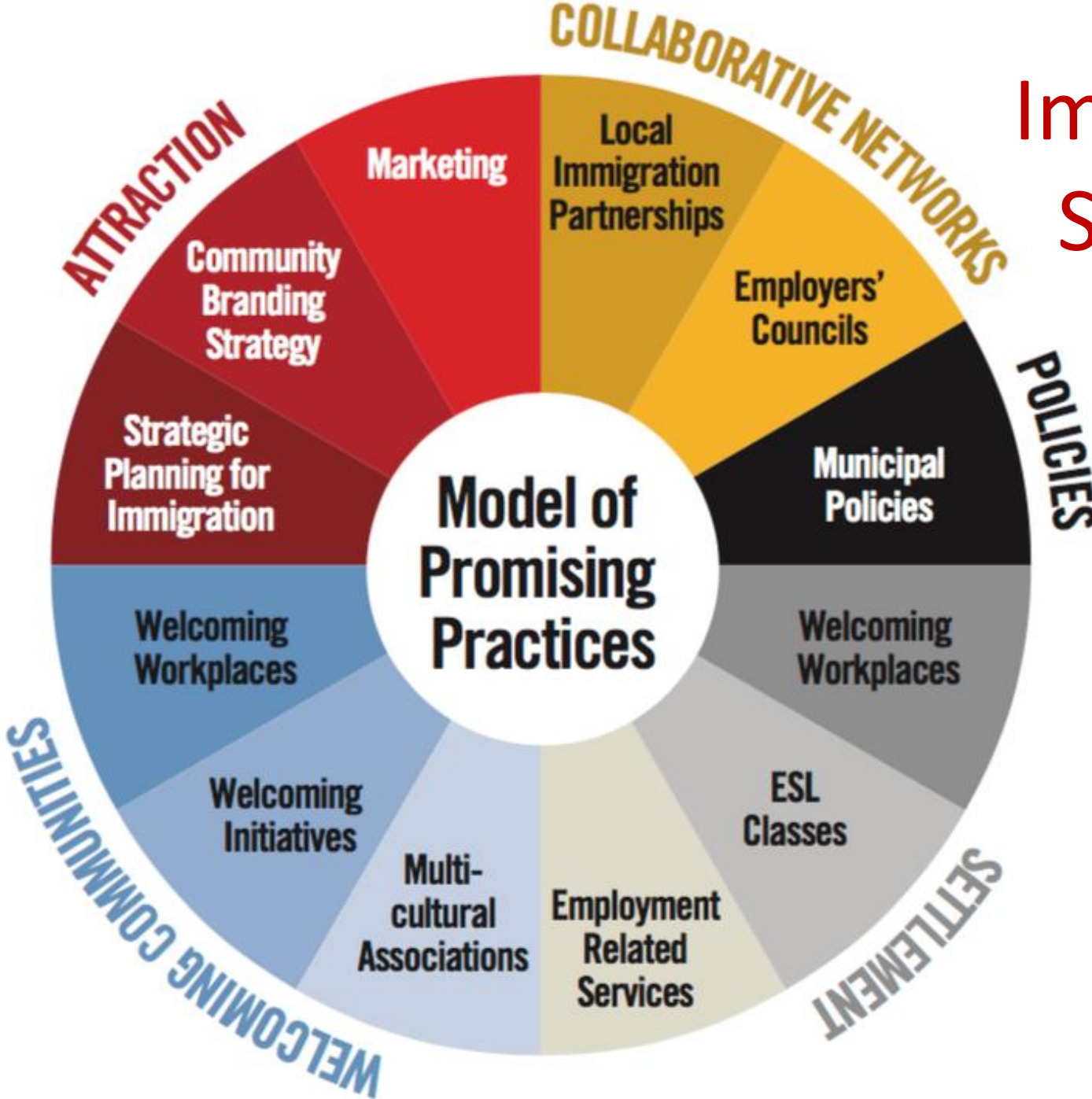
Importance of:



Immigration Strategies

Tip: Book

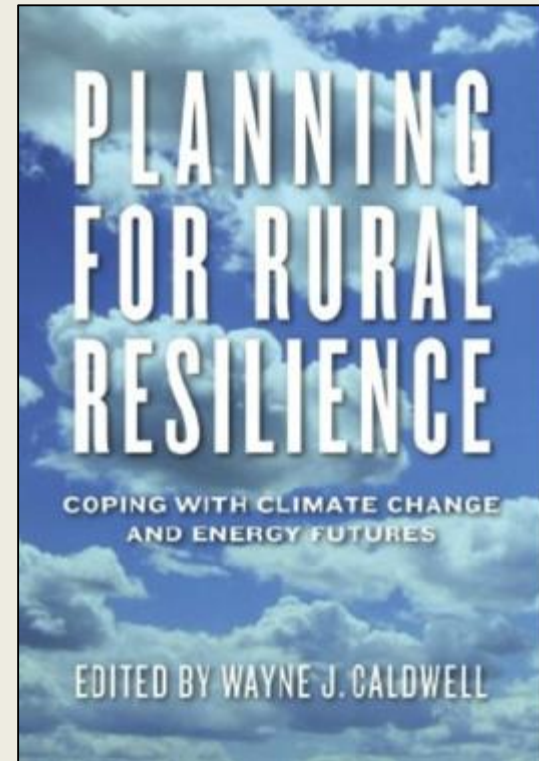
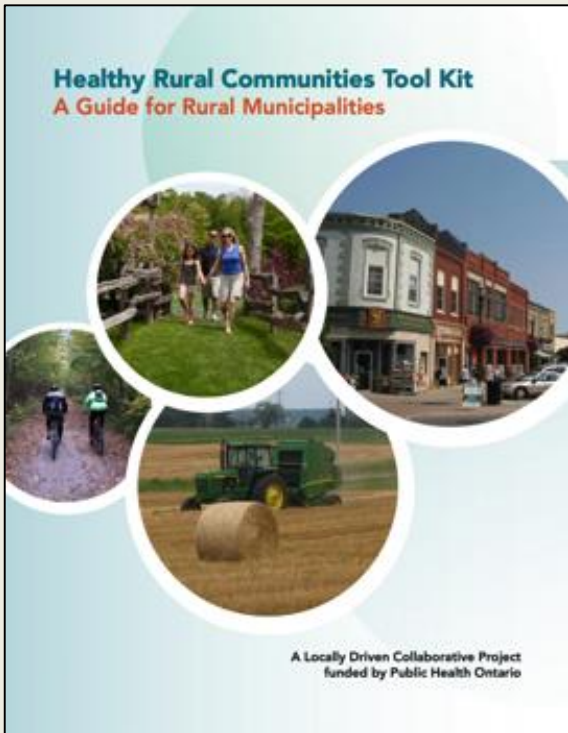
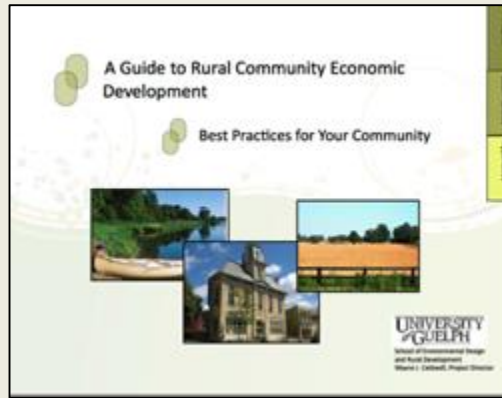
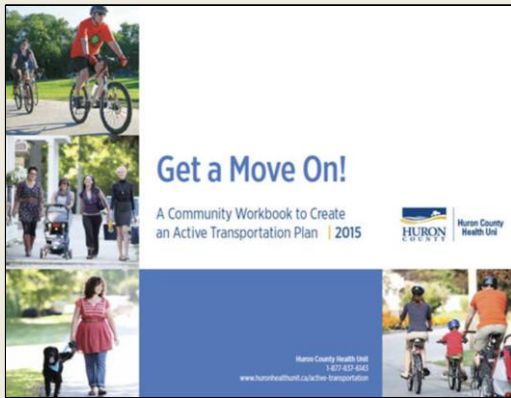
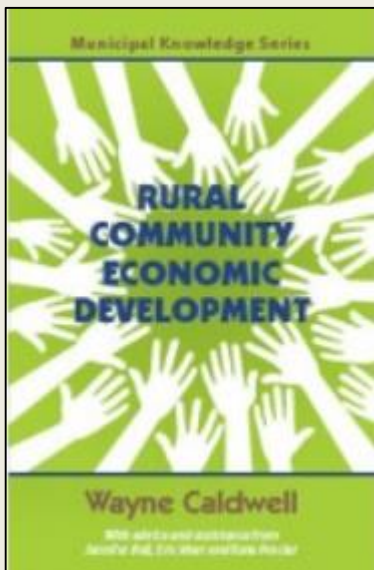
(www.waynecaldwell.ca)



A Final Reflection

The Village of Blyth





Some resources:
www.waynecaldwell.ca

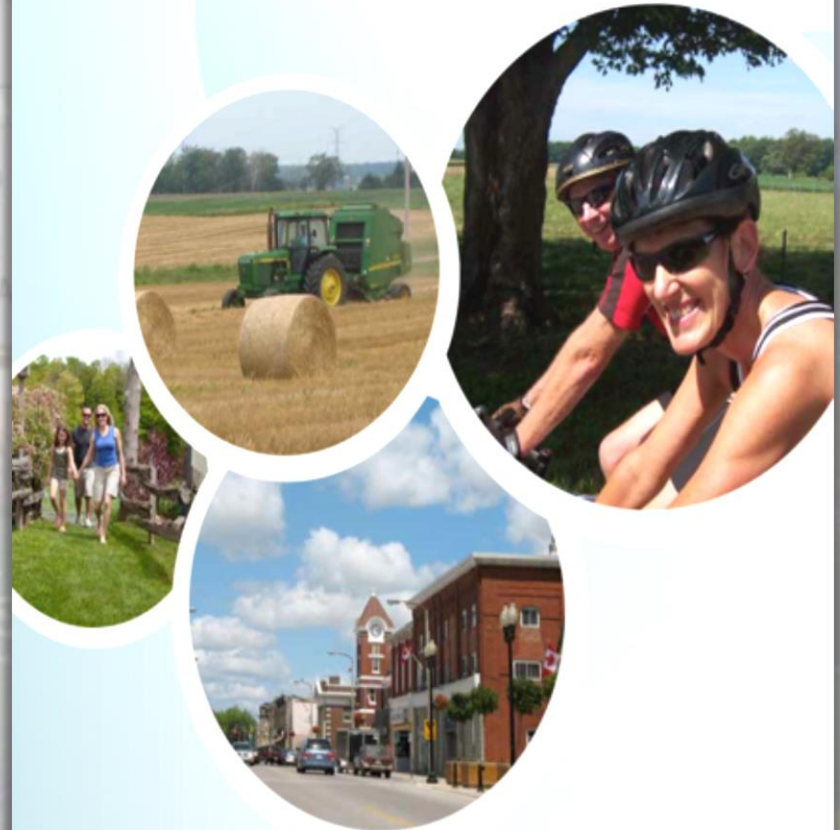
Thanks!

Questions?

**Further
Information:**

www.ruralhealthycommunities.ca

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A Guide for Rural Municipalities



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