CITY-REGION STUDIES CENTRE

Final Report
Urban-Rural Interdependencies: Flagstaff Pilot Project

October 2009

Acknowledgements

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the Urban-Rural Interdependencies project is to explore the nature of interdependencies between towns or villages and surrounding areas from the perspective of economic, social, and environmental sustainability and to determine their impact on the well-being and prosperity of the Flagstaff Community. The study addresses how towns and villages benefit rural areas and vice versa. It explores the conditions under which alliances are most beneficial, and the ways to facilitate cooperation that would lead to economic growth in the region.

Is there a tipping point when a people begin to realize important stages for mobilizing changes for the community? How can people deal with the complicated politics of identity and autonomy, while engaging in multiple partnerships? The goal of the study is first to understand how these alliances and agreements benefit or harm communities. The second goal is to see how cooperation fosters rural economic development and diversification, environmental sustainability, and social infrastructure. The study includes data collected by reviewing background documents, conducting a survey, and doing interviews.

With a few exceptions, respondents and interviewees recognize the value of forming partnerships, and are interested in doing so. They want to encourage local partnership initiatives, while maintaining a broad framework of established guidelines together with adequate resources. This need for productive partnerships becomes more urgent as young families move into the area and look for services to meet their social, educational, and professional needs.

Many interviewees are responding positively to Flagstaff County's vision statement as a "Community of communities," emphasizing the shared values and goals of most of the people who live there. While some study participants thought that the ten towns and villages are overly dependent upon the County for survival, others thought that the ten towns and villages paid a disproportionately large share of costs for recreational facilities that are also used by county residents. Those in the study from smaller communities expressed the desire to maintain their own local identities, without following the directives of those from larger communities. Other challenges relate to the policies of clear governance, in contrast with what's perceived to be bureaucratic government.

The conditions under which urban-rural alliances and agreements are most beneficial to the participating parties include: common goals; open communication; top quality administrative and political leadership; clearly defined roles and responsibilities; balanced outside expertise and local know-how; and shared knowledge, best practices, and resources.

The following challenges still impede the formation of partnerships, according to this study's participants: past failure, knowledge gaps, and pre-conceived ideas and

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prejudices against neighboring communities. Partnerships are further complicated by factors such as land use, municipal status, environmental sustainability (including water, sustainable agriculture), and social infrastructure, including seniors' housing and recreational facilities. Opportunities to form further agreements could come from existing partnerships, such as FIP (Flagstaff Intermunicipal Partnership), BRAED (Battle River Alliance for Economic Development), and BRAV-C (Battle River Agri-Ventures Co-op).

The participants in the study stated that urban-rural partnerships can be facilitated by providing guidance and structure for partnerships, while allowing communities to partner on their own. Furthermore, partnerships can be nurtured by fostering a spirit of cooperation and rewarding communities that invest in partnerships. Other conditions that influence urban-rural economic cooperation, according to the study participants, include the perception of regionalization as threatening community identity and the pressure to provide services that used to be handled by other levels of government. Fostering local innovation was felt by most (60%) survey respondents to be the best way to achieve diversification (as opposed to attracting entrepreneurs). However, at the same time many indicated the importance of creating an economic climate that would attract outside entrepreneurs. Partnerships are seen by many interviewees as potential opportunities for sharing knowledge and best practices, and may foster innovation in doing so.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

The Flagstaff Pilot Project Report presents the findings of the City-Region Studies Centre's (CRSC) project on partnerships throughout the Flagstaff Community. For the purposes of the project, the "Flagstaff Community" includes the County of Flagstaff as well as those municipalities and rural areas within its boundaries. Municipalities within the County's borders include the towns of Killam, Daysland, Hardisty, and Sedgewick; and the villages of Forestburg, Strome, Lougheed, Alliance, Heisler, and Galahad.

This study examines the partnerships that have and, in some cases, have not been formed in order to understand how these relationships are or are not working within the Flagstaff Community. The purpose of this project is to understand how community connections influence the collective well-being of the Flagstaff Community. To do so, we explore the ways in which social, economic, and environmental dynamics affect and are affected by partnerships.

More specifically, the objectives of this study include developing a deeper understanding of how partnerships benefit communities in this region, and the extent to which partnerships support regional economic development, rural economic diversification, environmental sustainability, and social infrastructure. The study also seeks a clearer understanding of the conditions that contribute to greater levels of interdependence between partners, especially in terms of leveraging economic and social development. Finally, the study addresses environmental sustainability and land use planning initiatives.

The impetus for this project comes in part from the ongoing challenges related to Alberta's reliance on one industrial sector, natural resource extraction. Over 70% of exported goods from Alberta are comprised of raw and semi-processed natural resource products (Gartner, 2007). This reliance makes the province, especially its rural areas, vulnerable to volatile markets and environmental issues. In rural areas, 20% of jobs are located in the primary sector, compared to the types of jobs available in urban areas, where only 8% are found in the primary sector (Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2006). It is now widely recognized that, if rural areas are to prosper in a sustainable way and avoid the risks associated with single-industry economies, they must become more diversified by establishing and cultivating economic activities that extend beyond harvesting resources (Johnston, 2005; OECD, 2005a; Porter, 2004).

1.2 Definitions

Urban and Rural
The Flagstaff Community is considered entirely rural under Statistics Canada guidelines, which define Rural and Small Town areas as "regions that have a population

of less than 10 000 and where less than 50% of employed individuals commute to a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) or Census Agglomeration (CA)" (Statistics Canada, 1999a, as cited in Sorensen and de Peuter Chick, 2008).

The Community's towns and villages, however, are considered urban municipalities under the Municipal Government Act (Alberta Municipal Affairs, 2009b). Regardless of the definition used for the municipalities within Flagstaff County, the Flagstaff Community has low levels of interdependence with municipalities outside of the Community but has high reliance on municipalities within it. Perhaps due to the small size of the Community's municipalities and their proximity to urban centers, partnerships are not only common, but are also essential for survival.

<u>Partnership</u>
Any agreement, alliance, arrangement, or shared service, ranging from informal (handshake) agreements to formal (legal) contracts.

<u>Social Infrastructure</u>
Organizations in which social relations are organized, such as schools, libraries, recreation facilities and leagues, social housing, volunteer networks and community-based agencies.

1.3 Programs Promoting Partnerships

Various provincial initiatives have encouraged the establishment of partnerships in the Flagstaff Community and across the province. Alberta Municipal Affairs (AMA) introduced the Regional Partnerships Initiative in 1999 "as a means of fostering regional cooperation and strengthening Alberta" by encouraging intermunicipal partnerships as a way to promote innovation, sustainability, and cost savings (Alberta Municipal Affairs, 2004, p. 1). Certain partnerships can also qualify for funding under the Municipal Sustainability Initiative developed by AMA (Alberta Municipal Affairs, 2009a).

1.4 Factors Influencing Partnerships in the Flagstaff Community

The indicators of rural-urban economic interdependence suggest that the Flagstaff Community has a more self-sufficient economy, where there is higher reliance within the municipalities of the Community than outside the Community. Several economic and social factors continue to contribute to the dynamics at work in the Flagstaff Community and play a role in partnerships in the region. For example, the County of Flagstaff enjoys the positive characteristic of high labour force participation (84.7%). However, its towns and villages are at a relative economic disadvantage, demonstrating a higher tendency to rely on government income from Unemployment Insurance and Worker's Compensation than elsewhere in the province (Sorenson and de Peuter Chick, 2008). Because of their lower LFP and higher unemployment rate, the towns and villages "rate at a slightly lower overall economic standing" (Sorensen and de Peuter Chick, 2008).

Flagstaff County's demographics also contribute to the nature and number of partnerships that are formed, as will be discussed in greater detail below and in the Flagstaff Community: Economic and Social Profile (Appendix 1). For example, compared to Alberta as a whole, Flagstaff County has the greatest population migration out of the region, including the greatest loss of youth to other areas, and the smallest racial minority populations. Although the citizens of this region have a relatively low level of educational achievement, rural communities and farms overall are financially stable and viable. This stability is due to the agricultural diversity throughout the region, including a recent growth in livestock farming. The overall tendency has been for farms to merge and consolidate with other operations as farmers retire or decide to sell off their land at optimal market value.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

The Urban-Rural Interdependencies project has three main data collection stages:
- 1.) Collection of background information
- 2.) Interviews (face-to-face and telephone)
- 3.) On-line survey

For its Urban-Rural Interdependencies Flagstaff Pilot Project, the CRSC conducted a case study of partnerships in the Flagstaff Community. The case study includes a review of the literature and a profile of the socio-economic features of the region. A case study approach provides the most reliable form of data collection and analysis here because it allows researchers to explore the contextual conditions that have some bearing on the interviewees' statements.

Map of Flagstaff County

Copyright 2006 Geography Division
Statistics Canada
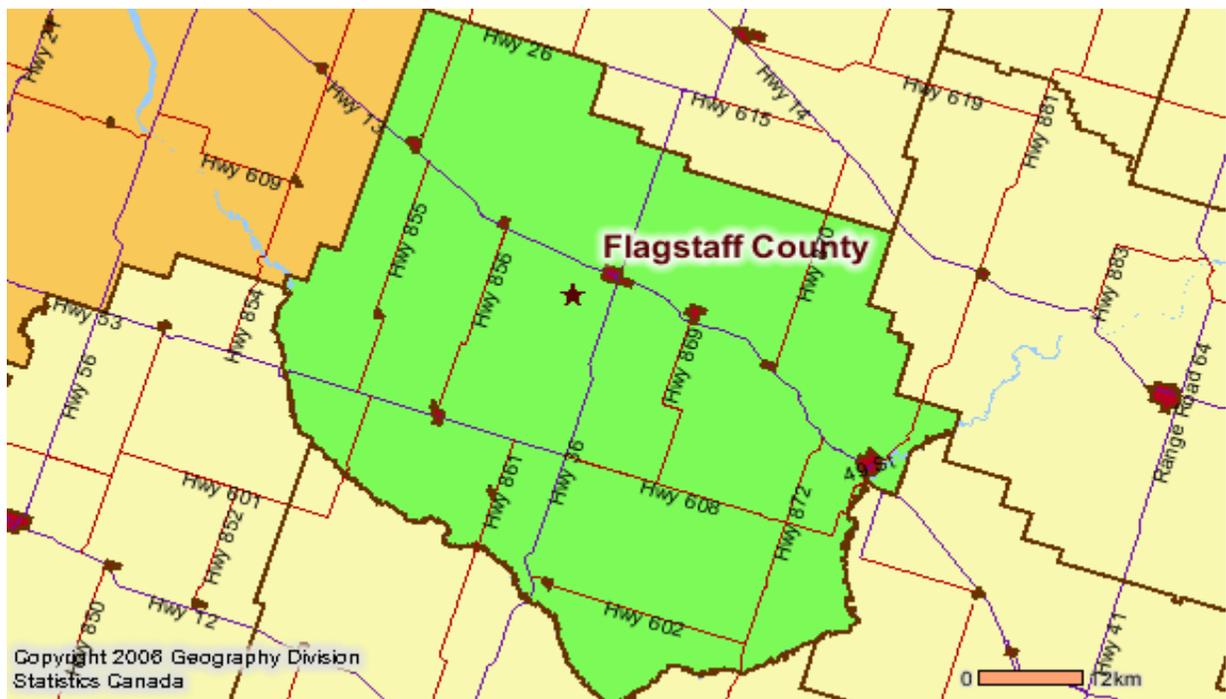
Map of the 10 Towns and Villages in the Flagstaff Community
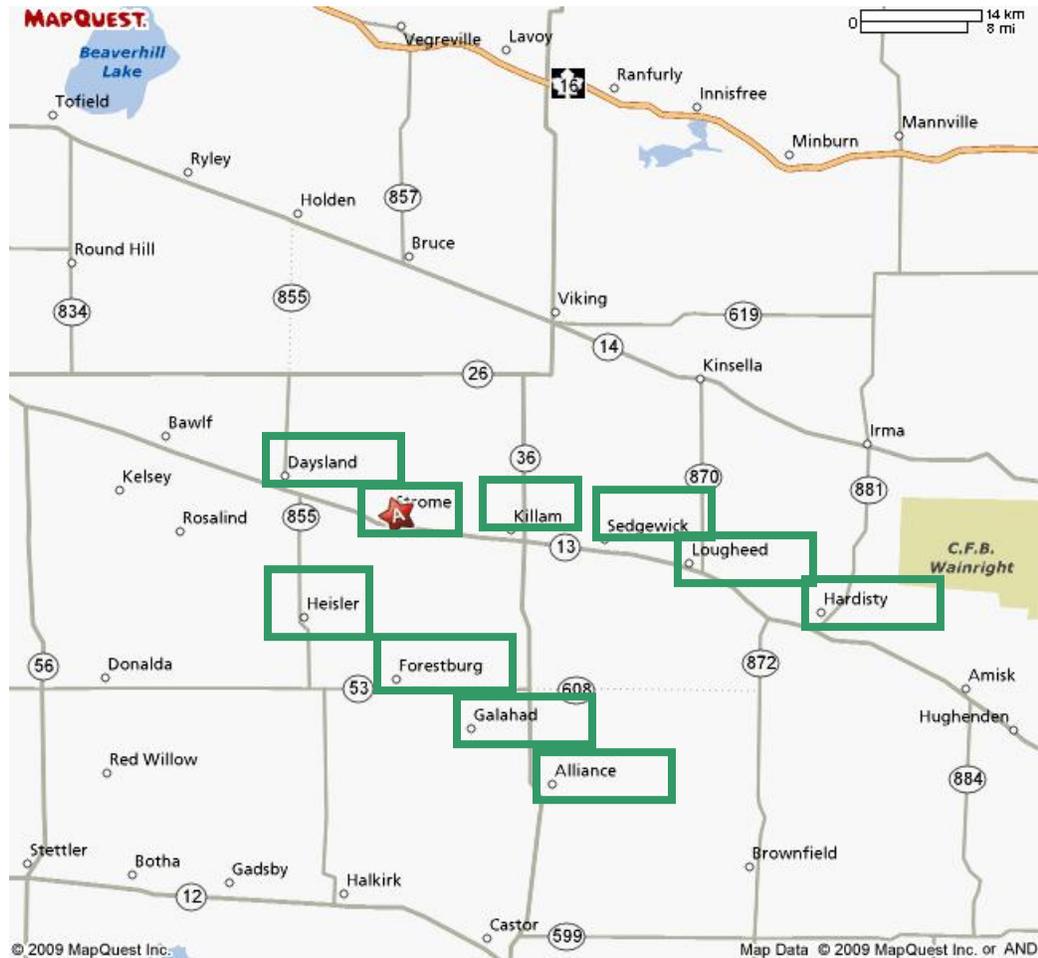
This case study uses qualitative (interviews and parts of the survey) and quantitative (parts of the survey) methods to achieve the advantages of each and mitigate their weaknesses. These are applied at different stages of the research and then brought together (Trochim, 2001).

The study seeks to explore contextual conditions that affect partnerships. Stage one, Collection of Background Information, shaped the Interview Guide (Appendix 2a). The next two stages of Interviews and On-line Survey (Appendix 3b) helped reveal issues involving partnerships in the region, including how perceptions of partnerships affect decisions about whether or not to embark on them and the conditions that influence these decisions. The information drawn from the interviews was integral to shaping the on-line survey instrument (Appendix 3a), which was then used to explore how people across the Flagstaff Community understand and experience partnerships.

This project follows the University of Alberta and Tri-Council ethical guidelines that protect the privacy and integrity of participants, who included representatives from municipal, community, and business sectors from the Flagstaff Community.

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Participants were provided with background information on the project (see Appendix 2b). Informed consent (Appendix 2c) was obtained from the respondents, anonymity was assured, and references to identifiable information were removed. Participants will have on-line access to the final report at www.crsc.ualberta.ca.

The ratio of respondents sought was 1:1:1:1 between municipal elected officials, municipal employees, community organization representatives, and business representatives. Municipal elected officials are mayors, deputy mayors, councillors, and reeves. Municipal employees are Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs), administrators, planners, fire chiefs, general managers, and town managers. More municipal representatives were sought because of the focus on interdependencies at the municipal level. Community organizations include educational organizations such as school and training facilities, libraries, museums, recreation facilities, social housing, senior housing, volunteer networks, social services, agricultural societies, and other community-based agencies. Businesses include business owners and/or managers, as well as Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Agencies members. There were 23 interviewees and 28 survey respondents. Face to face interviews were conducted for three days in December and telephone interviews were conducted in January. Although the number of survey respondents is too low to make statistical generalizations, the response rate was 27%, which is considered a successful response rate for a survey (see Appendix 3b).

A document scan of existing public to public and public to private alliance agreements was initiated. The number of existing agreements made it unfeasible to complete an in-depth summary of all the agreements. As well, the focus of the case study is to understand why partnerships are created and how they are functioning, rather than to have an inventory of individual partnerships. In general, the partnerships tended to fall into the 14 categories listed below.

Partnership Categories:
- Cultural (art gallery, museum, historical buildings)
- Economic Development (includes business)
- Education (includes K-12 and post-secondary, as well as training facilities)
- Emergency services (includes ambulance, fire, policing/bylaw)
- Environmental (includes natural resources, land use)
- Health (includes hospitals, health clinics, mental health)
- Housing (includes low-income, senior)
- Human resources (includes administrators, volunteers)
- Infrastructure (includes road maintenance, gravel, snow removal)
- Recreation (includes recreation facilities, parks, cemeteries)
- Social (includes social services, library, community foundations)
- Transportation (includes public transportation, airport)
- Utilities (includes water, electricity, natural gas)
- Waste (includes solid waste, recycle, waste water)

The limitations of this case study include the size of the sample as well as a lack of comparative reports. However, this report does intend to make intelligible a very complex system of partnerships and the factors facilitating and constraining these partnerships in a local region.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

The complex relationships within regions continues to attract the attention of policy-makers and political theorists (Partridge et al., 2005; Tacoli, 1998), yet the ways in which those relationships function needs to be addressed on both a more detailed and a more sophisticated level. For example, Snoxell (2005, quoted by Dabson, 2007) reviewed the literature on urban-rural relationships and found that few writers tackled the topic of how communities are linked with each other. Similarly, Caffyn and Dahlstrom (2005) reviewed government papers that had been written on the subject of community relationships and came to the same conclusion: there is agreement on the importance of understanding partnerships, but little discussion on the ways in which these partnerships work.

No single authoritative book on partnerships appears to be in publication, and no consensus on how to define or describe them is in print. Thus this summary draws on publications from a variety of fields, including rural economy, rural development theory, community economic development, regional science, and regional economic development. Since much of the limited writing on the subject comes from the field of rural economy, many publications contain insights on conditions that contribute to partnerships between regions within a rural context.

Infrastructure Canada (2005), for example, reviewed the literature on partnerships, based on social, economic, environmental, cultural, and geographic factors. This review did not find any sources that had come to a comprehensive understanding of fundamental principles of intermunicipal relationships, and certainly none that focused exclusively on the partnering issue. However, publications were identified that assess the costs and benefits of partnerships across a variety of regions, including those between rural parties and urban ones.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) three pillars—innovation, human capital, and cluster development (OECD, 2005a)—usefully describe the key components that contribute to economic diversification. Each of these components is significant on its own, but their strength comes from their intricate relation with each other, providing the vital dynamics that are required to support economic diversification. For example, opening a rural community college could not only develop human capital through skills training and education of the rural workforce, but also could result in increased innovation (Rosenfeld, 2000, cited in Porter, 2004, p. 40). Innovation, involving technological products or processes that provide new or improved characteristics in a business context (OECD, 2005b), interacts with human capital and business clusters, to produce the conditions that are fundamental to diversified economies and long term economic success.

It is important to take into account recent shifts in the economy, especially the ways in which these shifts affect partnerships between businesses and community groups in both rural and urban settings. First, what are identified as "labour-shedding"

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technologies in agriculture and natural resource extraction have reduced the number of jobs that are available in these areas. As well, transportation and shipping businesses are always looking for ways to become more efficient and to cut costs, and therefore continue to move goods, capital, and labour through larger regional centers. These activities can negatively affect small towns and villages (Bollman, 2007; Moseley, 2002; Reimer, 2005; Reimer, 2004; Webb, 1999). At the same time as these job opportunities are shrinking, trade liberalization on a global scale and improvements to technology, communications, and transportation have resulted in the expansion of economic opportunities through more diverse possibilities for work in rural communities (Lowe and Ward, 2007; Moseley, 2002; Webb, 1999). These developments could mean that fewer rural residents need to move away to find employment.

While deregulation and improvements in transportation and communications have reduced the roles that towns and villages play in the global economy, those developments have also opened new trade opportunities that were not as accessible before (Lowe and Ward, 2007; Webb, 1999). Together with access to markets on a global scale, new technology has contributed to innovative production techniques and more readily available distribution networks. These developments also improve the diversity of the rural economy, and in so doing contribute to the economy's resilience (Webb, 1999). A third feature of the rural economy's diversification is the trend of people leaving the fast-paced lifestyles of the city and joining the more relaxed living of the countryside, with the assumption that there will be greater opportunity for closer-knit social networks and communities in rural areas. Many firms have re-located outside of the city to take advantage of not only the lower land and labour costs, but also this slower, more "human-paced," way of life (Bollman, 2007; Lowe and Ward, 2007). Youthful retirees are an important population segment moving to rural areas and fueling opportunities for service sector businesses (Canada West Foundation, 2009).

To further their research on regional partnerships, scholars have sometimes found it useful to study documents on the global south. Traditional "growth pole" models of economic development, which describe "trickle down" effects from urban to rural areas, have not represented the economic phenomena that actually take place. For this reason, several authors emphasize the need to understand all regions as interdependent and to develop economic theories and development policies that take a more regional approach to reducing rural poverty (Douglass, 1998). Tacoli (1998), for example, represents regional partnerships with a four-fold typology: rural and urban areas depend on each other for flows of people, goods, wastes, and commerce. These flows are signaled by commuting, leisure, and immigration patterns; market interactions; and the phenomena of urban farming and rural manufacturing.

Most authors agree that good leaders help make regional collaboration effective, but assert that finding and training quality leaders presents challenges. That collaborations tend to transcend party politics shows the spirit of good-will in these partnerships. However, this practice also creates problems because no local legislator can claim a credible base from which to champion strategic regional partnerships (Libby and Nalukenge, 2001). Likewise, government employees who are supposed to assist

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with these arrangements may be uncooperative, uninterested, or overwhelmed (McKinney et al., 2002). Decision-making structures may be overly fragmented (Parkinson, 2004), and may be characterized by ineffective information flows (Moseley, 2002). A further complication for leaders comes from governance methods that may not transfer from the urban sphere, where they are often developed, to rural contexts where they are put into practice (Caffyn and Dahlstrom, 2005).

One challenge that arises regarding effective leadership relates to who should be responsible for training these new leaders. The problem stems in part from complexities involved in clarifying a role for the public sector in collaborative partnerships. For example, public institutions and public policy could foster urban-rural partnerships, but few guidelines are in place to spell out how this would take place (Moseley, 2002). Together with the Province's Regional Partnership Initiative Guidelines (2004) document, government leadership could help municipal partners cultivate effective relationships with various government bodies (McKinney and Essington, 2006).

"Comprehensive Community Initiatives" (CCIs) is one innovative approach, which provides an organizational structure for community-driven, collaborative processes used to address community issues. The role of government in the effective management of CCIs is examined in some detail by Torjman (2004). His case study shows that governments tend to restrict their involvement in CCIs to the role of funder; however, the research reveals that CCIs would benefit from greater government involvement as a leader, investor, and enabler. For example, government partners could: fund local meetings that facilitate partnership building through roundtables and steering committees; become champions of the issue that is at stake; provide technical assistance or coaching to help the community tackle complex issues; provide information on similar initiatives and on exemplary collaborative practices; and lastly involve key stakeholders in discussions of possible policy approaches and solutions.

Several studies have concluded that rural, and urban, partnerships would benefit from government involvement through a collaborative relationship, instead of prescriptively as "rural" or "urban" entities. Government might strengthen rural areas with negotiating authority and commit to long-term development strategies that build on urban-rural alliances (Azmier and Lozanski, 2004; Core Cities, 2003; Olfert and Partridge, 2005; Partridge et al., 2005).

A number of key themes emerged from this review of the literature on municipal partnerships in rural areas, as well as in urban regions. First, the most recent rural development policies approach socio-economic development from a regional perspective, emphasizing the interrelatedness of communities and the influence of globalizing trends. Technological innovation and an investment in the "knowledge economy" are vital for rural economic revitalization.

A review of the literature makes it clear that the results of regional relationships have yet to be fully described in detail and that little empirical research has examined the changing qualities of urban-rural relations and interdependencies. Despite this

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limitation, the literature, particularly in the fields of economics and geography, has identified some of the specific advantages and disadvantages of increased interdependence. Many authors acknowledge the importance of cultivating regional alliances in order to maximize the benefits of interdependencies, especially in areas with fewer resources. The publications that discuss regionalism and, to some extent, community economic development, focus on identifying the conditions necessary for the cultivation of meaningful and financially beneficial relationships with municipal partners.

Findings from the present review of the literature indicate that our understanding of urban-rural partnerships would benefit from research that explores the nature of specific partnerships between stakeholders in rural and urban communities. What are the challenges and successes? What are the implications of rural and urban partnerships for economic prosperity? We summarize the highlights of this literature together with findings from the study below.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

These findings are drawn from the literature review, interviews, and survey conducted as part of the study.

4.1 Lessons in the Literature

- No consensus or dominant approach is apparent in the literature, and general research on partnerships is lacking.
- Globalization and technological change constrain some aspects of the traditional rural economy while at the same time opening new opportunities to gain a livelihood in more diverse services and sectors.
- Leadership that capitalizes on shared benefits is necessary.
- Fragmentation, lack of training and personnel, lack of government support, and lack of city-based development models pose challenges.
- A focus on inter-relationships and regional alliances helps in the formation of partnerships, as does a commitment to goals over the long term.
- Investment in the "knowledge economy" is essential.

4.2 Key Overall Themes

- On the whole, respondents and interviewees support the idea of partnerships and are eager to partner.
- Participants agree on the importance of allowing communities to implement local expertise and voluntary partnerships over which they have control. They also value the guidance of organizational structures, plus adequate resources, in implementing formal partnerships.

4.2.1 To what extent do rural regions benefit from urban areas and urban from rural?

- Many local residents view Flagstaff as a "Community of communities."
- Some participants think that the towns and villages depend upon the County for continued viability.
- In contrast, other participants see towns and villages as paying a disproportionately large share of costs for recreational facilities, which are then used by county residents.
- However, most survey respondents disagreed with the statement "Larger communities often carry the cost of services for smaller communities."
- Most survey respondents also disagreed with the statement "Smaller communities do not gain as much from partnerships as larger communities."
- Participants from smaller communities expressed a concern to retain freedom to maintain their own local identities despite the potential aspirations of neighboring communities.

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4.2.3 Conditions under which urban-rural alliances and agreements are most beneficial to the participating parties

- Synergy — a confluence of objectives, resources, timelines.
- Common goals.
- Transparency and open communication.
- Both administrative and political leadership valued and encouraged.
- Clearly delineated roles and responsibilities.
- Inclusion of outside expertise and local expertise.
- Sharing of knowledge, best practices, and resources.
- Development of trusting social relationships between partners.

4.2.4 Impediments to urban-rural cooperation

- Past failure — parties are reluctant to try again if they felt they lost out on the first partnering agreement.
- Lack of local knowledge, guidance, and structure about how to partner.
- Lack of resources to bring to the table.
- Protectionism — perception of an "old mentality" not as open to partnerships (this mindset, however, may be subsiding).
- Inadequate dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Unresolved interpersonal conflict.
- Lack of administrative and financial resources to handle grant applications, document tracing, etc., especially in small municipalities.
- Inequalities in power and population base leading to complications in cost sharing and funding.

4.2.5 Opportunities for future cooperation

- Cooperation in land-use planning to reduce development conflict and promote environmental sustainability.
- Environmental sustainability, including water conservation, sustainable agriculture, and waste management.
- More social infrastructure, including seniors' housing, and recreational facilities.
- Opportunities from existing partnerships, such as FIP, BRAED, and BRAV-C.

4.2.6 How can urban-rural cooperative alliances and agreements be facilitated?

- Provide guidance and structure for partnerships, while allowing communities to choose what to partner over and with whom to partner—voluntary partnerships are preferred.
- Foster a spirit of cooperation and community.
- Reward communities that invest in partnership (deemed by survey respondents

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as more important than covering the cost of developing partnerships).

4.2.7 Other influences on the benefits of urban-rural economic cooperation

- Regionalization and regional governance are perceived by some as threatening individual community identity.
- Municipalities feel pressed to provide services that used to be the responsibility of higher levels of government.
- Aging infrastructure, such as recreation facilities, is seen by some to require a solution arising from regional collaboration.

4.2.8 The relationship between level of economic diversification and urban-rural interaction

- Fostering local innovation was felt by most survey respondents to be a better way to achieve diversification than attracting outside entrepreneurs.
- Partnerships are seen by many interviewees as potential ways to share knowledge and best practices, and may foster innovation in doing so.
- Working together to attract investors to the region based on regional assets may be beneficial, and such methods were ranked highly by survey respondents as the most effective ways to foster economic development.

4.2.9 The implications of this assessment for alliances that would lead to economic growth and stability in the region

- Partnerships are key to maintaining services; services are essential in maintaining populations and thus in keeping communities viable.
- Although the majority of alliances in the Flagstaff Community are successful, finding ways to overcome the challenges would ensure further success.

CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS FOR PARTNERSHIPS

5.1 Willingness to Partner to Achieve Community Well-being

The forms of partnership agreements in the Flagstaff Community range from informal handshake agreements with a shared understanding between partners about the general intent and basic methods for the arrangement to formal agreements with full documentation that attempts to spell out the protocols for how the partnership will function.

"And we want to go this way, and we want to become innovative, progressive, and aim for economic prosperity and environmental stewardship. We want to deliver a responsible level of service. And a responsible level of service is as cheap as possible and uses the best use of our resources that we have. And partnerships are the best use of our resources."

Many respondents to this study see an increased level of partnerships across business, municipal, and community lines. Further, most of these respondents consider partnerships to offer better possibilities for the well-being of their communities. This increase in partnerships and agreements is part of an ongoing process, where leaders recognize that forming teams and joining together with like-minded individuals increases the chances of success for projects of many kinds. Interviewees feel that as partnerships continue to create successful results throughout the Community, more will continue to be formed, leading to an exponential growth in "additional partnerships and willingness to partner," in the words of one interviewee.

"Everybody's got their strengths and if you put them all together you can accomplish quite a bit."

One of the ways in which intermunicipal cooperation is encouraged is through provincial government grants that are released only for proposals involving two or more partners on a project (Regional Partnership Initiative Guidelines, 2004). Participants repeatedly emphasized that they need increased intermunicipal cooperation, a view that the provincial government also expresses. This increased focus on partnerships comes from a realization that some forms of competitiveness may be unproductive at the local level, and that promoting independence, instead of interdependence, will make the region less economically prosperous. "It's not town against town," as one interviewee stated, but rather "We're competing with other regions!" Together with traditional allegiances to the town, team, or local area, thinking on a regional level involves including allegiances to the broader, regional level.

"I think that traditionally there's been a spirit of competition between communities and I don't think that can happen anymore . . . I think to get the outsider to look to this area, it makes sense to have a focused approach as a group."

A further challenge to accomplishing partnerships throughout the Flagstaff Community involves changing the scope of planning for economic and resource benefits from the short term to the long. This fundamental shift in attitudes and perspectives involves not only supporting partnering initiatives that will be located in a given community's "back yard," in the words of one interviewee, but also understanding that "partnerships are the best use of our resources ... in order to become innovative, progressive, and aim for economic prosperity and environmental stewardship." The Flagstaff Community is beginning to be viewed more as a "Community of communities"— a phrase in the Flagstaff County's vision statement that was repeatedly used by the interviewees—which will have long term benefits for businesses, municipalities, and community groups.

"And so, what you've got in the room is a bunch of people that have . . . divergent personalities and different ways of approaching a problem so that you have a lot better chance of may solving that problem in the best way possible by having a group of people in the room."

The vast majority of those we interviewed and surveyed agree that joining together with others is an excellent way to improve the well-being of their municipality, community, or business. Respondents see value in partnering on the local level to achieve long-term goals that would benefit them both locally and regionally. Partnering with other groups, for example, can eliminate overlapping projects and initiatives, and thus cut costs by sharing the financial burden with others who are offering the same level of service to their communities. However, identifying with the region instead of solely with the local community means adding to traditional allegiances which have taken shape over generations among people who worked together on farms and in businesses, socialized at dances and over coffee, and rooted for teams in hockey arenas and on baseball diamonds. But while modifying this culture of local loyalties to include regional ones can be challenging and time-consuming, this is generally seen by respondents as the way to go in order to improve the prosperity and stability of the Flagstaff Community.

"If we didn't have those grants, they wouldn't happen . . . the Province giving financial consideration to look at that and to encourage it definitely has pushed al of what I've seen forward. A lot of your municipal sustainability grants are based on intermunicipal cooperation."

This prompts the question: if so many in the Flagstaff Community favour partnerships, why are more not being formed?

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5.2 Barriers to Partnerships

5.2.1 Prior to the Partnership

5.2.1.1 Guidelines

Many respondents cited fears about the partnering process as causing them to hesitate before joining with a business, municipal, or community group, despite having identified a need that could be met by doing so. Respondents identified a lack of knowledge and guidance regarding best practices for initiating and sustaining partnerships. Potential partners may especially prefer having guidelines in place if negative experiences soured a partnership in the past, or if they are uncertain about how benefits would be shared between partners. Several respondents indicated that the long-term implications and complications of a partnership could actually prove to be more detrimental to the well-being of the community. Reasons cited for this view included the financial risk that they might be exposed to through the partnership and the potentially harmful atmosphere that could cloud other ways in which they interact with each other for years to come, should conflict arise within the partnership.

"When the partners trust each other, and I think one of the factors is if we see each other working towards a common goal, we're not in the partnership for individual objectives, we're in it for a common objective."

5.2.1.2 Forming Relationships

Together with professionalizing potential partnerships with a guidelines document, personalizing partnerships by offering opportunities to get to know leaders across the Flagstaff Community could also facilitate partnering. Respondents identified a potential benefit from more opportunities to get to know others on a personal and trusting level. Individuals fear being taken advantage of by others and their hidden agendas if they form an alliance with someone that they do not know, not only professionally, but personally as well.

"I think the interconnectedness of the small towns could become better and therefore the services we provide and use for each other could become better."

Another potential deterrent identified in the study is the possibility of one partner having to "carry" the other by supplying more than their fair share of finances, resources, and services. The lack of a trusting relationship also creates fear that strings will be attached to partnering agreements, threatening autonomy and identity. Furthermore, getting to know

potential partners personally would clarify whether they can in fact supply the expertise that is needed to provide a service, operate equipment, or run a program that a given group has identified as a gap in what it can provide on its own.

5.2.1.3 Leadership

Along with the need for guidelines and social opportunities, leadership was identified by respondents as a requirement in partnerships. A well-connected person can coordinate partnerships and agreements, acting as a kind of broker, linking compatible partners with each other. To this end, some participants suggested a countywide online site to facilitate the exchange of resources, services, and equipment. Having one or two individuals to coordinate these efforts would help streamline the process, especially since many do not know what types of partnerships and agreements are available to help meet gaps in services in their own regions. Lacking a local leader to coordinate partnership agreements is currently seen by some participants as a barrier to effective practices. In addition, numerous respondents emphasized that both administrative and political leadership should be valued and encouraged.

5.2.1.4 Risk-Benefit Ratio

Each of these barriers to forming agreements requires considering the risk/benefit ratio. Although partners may stand to improve the overall well-being of their region in the long run, they do not know whether this positive outcome will occur. This uncertainty was commonly cited by respondents as a deterrent to partnering. Given such uncertainty about the future, leaders may think it more prudent to continue with the status quo, rather than risk losing what exists. If one community were to lose its arena, for example, in favour of the skating rink at a more centralized recreation centre, that community reasonably fears losing a major draw for young people. Although the new recreation centre may be only ten minutes down the road, its location in another community could be seen as dulling the competitive edge of the surrounding communities. However, taking a regional approach may

"What else [makes the partnership] successful? I like to believe what makes our partnership successful is we have some strong leadership. And I'm finding more so now it's administrative leadership as much as the political leadership. I can see where both are necessary."

"A growing body of research increasingly recognizes that leadership is most effective when shared amongst many . . . …When collaboration works, people feel better about community life. Decisions made through a collaborative process are more solid and lasting. People feel like they are contributing to community life and are more empowered." (Stolte, CIEL).

"There's no agreement, and there's nobody at the top to coordinate [the location of recreational facilities]."

"Protectionism [is a challenge to overcome]. Cause everybody says, 'Well, we don't want to lose anything'. I mean, if [Municipality X] was to lose the arena, that would be a devastating blow for the community. It'd be difficult to attract young families to our community. Other communities have seen the same thing."

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have important advantages. Constructing facilities that serve the region, instead of only the local community, can contribute to the ongoing viability of the region since the costs associated with maintaining the facility and developing programming would be shared. Promoting the facilities that are down the road requires integrating local allegiances together with regional ones.

5.2.2 During the Partnership

5.2.2.1 Structural Considerations

<u>Way of Thinking</u>

The fears that cause some business, municipal, and community representatives to shrink from forming partnerships often do become realized in the structural problems that prevent the partnership from working smoothly. Some respondents pointed to generational attitudes which they perceived were still entrenched in narrow-minded local political loyalties from still earlier generations. The difficulty of changing a competitive mindset to a collaborative one emphasizes the magnitude of the shift that is required to create a harmonious system of interdependent groups working for the greater good of the region. One person called this shift in thinking long term "visioning." Another expressed optimism in the democratic process to replace those who were not on board with regional collaboration, indicating that those officials who were reluctant to make a partnership agreement work optimally would not last long in office.

<u>Dispute Resolution</u>

Some participants expressed frustration with an antiquated dispute resolution structure for conflicts that were arising with parties along the way. In fact one individual stated that most would avoid the intermunicipal arbitration system (which is perceived as producing a win-lose situation among the disputing parties), since healthy compromises were not available through this route. Disputes amongst partners in a specific agreement can arise when the strongest voice at the table coerces the

"Right now I had to go out and sell lots to get these people to even agree to come to the meeting, because economic development hasn't gone their way in the past. I think that would be a huge measure of success, for all the towns and villages to even come on board."

"Politicians, for example, if they don't exhibit the traits of wanting to work together, I don't think they last long as an elected official."

others into complying, preventing alternate views from being aired. Participants expressed the need to ensure fair and cooperative dispute resolution strategies.

Regarding conflicts between municipalities on issues related to annexation, amalgamation or land use, there is a process laid out in provincial legislation, which has been found to be time-consuming. The Alberta Government created the 'Lets Resolve', which encourages municipalities to try mediation before making an appeal to the Municipal Government Board. To encourage using this alternate process, the provincial government helps municipalities to prepare for mediation, facilitates mediation processes and provides grants to help cover the costs of the mediation process.

5.2.2.2 Administrative Considerations

Part of the difficulty of resolving disputes stems from inadequate administration. Several respondents told us that smaller communities, especially, lack the human and financial resources to conduct their affairs in a professional manner. Problems with efficient administration include lack of guidance provided to councils; for example, councils rely on administrative staff to "bring forward all of the information," as one interviewee stated, needed to make informed decisions. Within the larger centres, according to respondents, expertise from smaller communities often goes unrecognized, and those who are experts on a subject are often not involved in the decision-making process. For example, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of a town may have greater knowledge and sensitivity about the nuances of an issue from having worked in that position for many years; by contrast, the mayor may not have a comprehensive knowledge about that issue because of his or her recent election or short term in office. Nevertheless, the mayor may decide who should be involved in the decision-making process for political reasons, rather than knowledge and experience. Ignoring the expertise of administrative staff may not only frustrate long-term employees, but also require the employment of costly consultants, who are seen by several respondents as providing "band-aid" solutions to problems due to their lack of familiarity with the complexity of the local climate.

" . . . we feel that's what really drags our villages down, is they don't have good administration to guide council. And then they get bad decisions because they don't have the administration to get the background information to make a good quality decision."

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There is at least one successful partnership in place that attempts to resolve such administrative issues. The Flagstaff Community Resource Officer initiative was awarded an Honourable Mention in the Partnership category at the Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence in 2008 (East Central Alberta Child and Family Services Authority, 2008). Under this program, the region's Family and Community Services office, which itself involves partnering between the County and the ten municipalities within its borders, further partnered with 17 agencies and private industry to enable the hiring of a Community Resource Officer (Armstrong, 2008).

5.2.2.3 Consultants

Respondents held somewhat contradictory views on consultants; our interviews found that consultants can both assist and impede effective partnerships. Consultants can be very valuable and provide needed expertise; turning to outside help does not always pose difficulties for the participants in this study, who recognize that citing an authority on a subject in a meeting can cut through much uncertainty and disagreement. However, many people we talked to argued that sometimes consultants are an unnecessary expense, are time-consuming, and do not necessarily table recommendations that have practical value for the individual players who hired them. Consultants may also speak directly to the elected officials and exclude municipal employees from the decision-making process. Despite these drawbacks, in many cases municipalities do not have access to provincial funds because the monies are tied to consultants' assessments and recommendations.

At the heart of this issue seems to be trust-related problems. Sometimes consultants are not trusted and there is an unwillingness to accept a consultant's advice if it suggests a different direction in decisions should be taken. Lack of trust also exists between different levels of government: some municipal leaders feel that the provincial government does not give enough control to them to come up with home-grown, place-based and context-relevant solutions. Interviews conveyed the

"When I have to phone up [a consultant] for a legal opinion . . . I know it's going to cost a hundred bucks an hour to do that, but it's well worth the money spent because I'm giving good advice to my council and then they can make an informed decision."

" . . . let us do the research, let us do the report on it without hiring a consultant. Guess what? It builds a stronger region, because now everybody is working on projects that are important to the region and gives us an opportunity to shine a little bit and provide some expertise back into it."

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sense that the provincial government's hiring of outside "experts" sometimes stirs up resentment on the local level. The practice may be a less appropriate solution than giving smaller municipalities the administrative and human resources to create and implement locally-focused solutions, thereby employing local expertise.

Overcoming this barrier to successful partnerships would involve local people developing a local solution to get "buy-in from the region," as one interviewee put it. The grassroots proposal would still go through the vetting process, but would provide an opportunity for officials at the local level to apply their expertise, saving the time and expense that might be spent on an outside consultant. A stronger region would result, and local leaders would continue to be active in educating themselves about the ins and outs of issues that are most relevant to the well-being of their constituents.

5.2.2.4 Government Stipulations

This issue of provincial stipulations for grant money gets at the broader issue of accessing those funds in the first place. Many respondents assert that the provincial government needs to give freedom of choice to potential partners without requiring municipalities to partner in certain ways over particular projects. Instead, provincial policy needs to foster a spirit of cooperation and community building, providing a variety of models and guidelines to facilitate the various stages of partnerships. Business, municipal, and community respondents overwhelmingly agree that they do not want "strings attached" to provincial funds. Most believe that local people know best how the money should be spent. Having money earmarked by government sometimes means that communities are prevented from pursuing projects that are believed would contribute to the well-being of the local town or region.

"There's one area that every municipal government is always concerned with and that involves grants that come to communities from both the federal and provincial government with strings attached. We don't need those strings. We don't need somebody in a government office telling us where that money should be spent. So, we really like funds coming our way where we make the decision."

Interviewees generally agreed that some level of reporting must still be required to explain how the funds should be spent. Report writing may be necessary, but many interviewees are of the opinion that it needs to be simplified, or communities must be given easier access

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to administrative and human resources, since many do not have the staff to create elaborate reports.

5.2.2.5 Issues with Inequality

One of the biggest issues complicating partnership agreements, amongst the study participants, is inequality regarding income, cost sharing and power.

The County collects taxes from industry, which is a considerably more significant sum than the residential taxes towns and villages collect. Some participants perceived that this tax base obliges the County to contribute more money for services than the other municipalities. For this reason, some interviewees feel that the County is "carrying" smaller municipalities that lack the financial resources to remain solvent, keeping them on "life support" to prevent them from dying out.

However, not all interviewees agreed that the County is providing "life support" services. Some indicated, instead, that the ten towns and villages are providing services for the County, and that the County does not contribute an "equal" share to the operation and costs of various facilities and services. A controversial issue between the communities and the County, which arose in our interviews, is whether the County pays for operating *and* capital expenses and if the payments are adequate. The interview results indicate that there is a lack of understanding of how responsibilities are divided. Another challenge was if each of the ten towns and villages wanted to build or maintain their recreation facilities and expected the County also to contribute, it would not be financially feasible for the County to provide support to everyone. One recommendation that arose in interviews was for larger, centrally-located recreational facilities, for which all residents of the towns, villages and County could pay a tax.

"And I think we have some communities in our own Flagstaff region that are on life-support. And I think Flagstaff County has, basically, propped them up, but they have no idea what sustainability means . . . and if it wasn't for Flagstaff County propping them up, they would have been a tumbleweed long ago."

"The County blesses us with their money. Although it's a mere fraction of what it should be, we spend almost twice as much per capita for recreational culture than what the county does on operating. Yeah, we pay all the capital. This is a bone of contention between us and the County."

" . . . the bigger towns obviously get more money than the smaller towns, which is kind of, it doesn't seem fair, but they go by per capita. So, that's kind of a drawback that we all need money to run and small towns are still getting the short end of the stick kind of thing, just because they don't have the population."

All towns and villages need money to provide essential services to residents. However, the perception among certain interviewees is that smaller areas can not provide the services they require, because they do not have the population to qualify for finances to provide costly, but necessary, services. Some respondents felt that tying provincial grants to population favours the larger centres over the smaller ones. Towns like Killam, Hardisty, and Daysland, for example, consistently qualify for the most financial support.

"But we just basically are just trying to work together better because I know there are a lot of municipalities that are kind of getting folded and not being able to work together and so they are then getting taken over the by counties, and we don't want that. We want to work together and try to make each municipality work in this region."

One interviewee suggested that the governance model of regionalization[1] may solve these problems. According to this view, regionalization would give smaller communities equal access to the financial resources they require in order to provide the community services, social support, and business environment that can sustain a vital, if small, population. Others were opposed to a regional model if it became too large and would not be able to meet the individual needs of communities.

"When I first started I was using 'regionalization' but as soon as you say 'regionalization' everyone gets upset. Now I'm calling it 'collaboration to provide services to your people' . . . We're collaborating to get this stuff done. Not regionalizing – we're collaborating. It gives it a whole different context"

There are also issues around power. The population of a municipality or community determines the amount of power it has. In our interviews, concerns arose that the County only receives one vote even though it has the largest population.

5.2.2.6 Uncertainties about the Future

A final barrier to successful partnerships in the Flagstaff region relates to the relative newness of forming regional partnerships and agreements. Overall, participants expressed eagerness to partner, but because of their uncertainties about structure, process, and resources required, hesitations to join partnerships arose.

"...Protectionism...fear of the unknown...lack of knowledge in how to make it work..."

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1 Regarding regional partnerships, one interviewee noted that the term "regionalization" causes some people to feel uncomfortable. This person proposed replacing "regionalization" with "collaboration" to underscore the importance of achieving a balance between the informal, friendly agreements that might begin in a coffee shop, and the formal, professional ones into which they might evolve, in order to access government funding, and get projects completed.

As discussed in the Flagstaff Community: Economic and Social Profile (Sorenson and de Peuter Chick, 2008), agriculture is the largest industry in the region. However, the number of farm operators and farms is decreasing. Farming families and their communities face uncertain futures because of economic and social pressures brought on by the closing of grain elevators, the halting of rail services, and the offloading of health and social services on municipalities that do not have the tax base to support them. Youth migrate away from rural areas in part because of the daunting financial challenges associated with operating a successful farming venture. All of these changes contribute to the flux of lifestyles throughout the Flagstaff Community.

Participants suggested that partnerships could provide some long term stability in the region, but many indicate that it is difficult to determine exactly how to go about developing the partnerships that will effectively address the most pressing economic and social issues. Clearly, uncertain economic fluctuations, changes in communications and transportation technology, and shifts in labour opportunities make for a climate already filled with risk. For some of the study participants, uncertainty about the new approach of partnering appears to add yet more risks.

Some interviewees were of the opinion that sometimes it does make sense for a community to be dissolved and become absorbed by a larger municipality, despite the risk of losing local identity and autonomy. The responses on dissolution and amalgamation were very mixed on whether it would enhance community well being or not. Interviewees' suggestions included more education on dissolution, amalgamation and other alternatives.

"So the fear of getting involved in that negotiation and setting that up and coming away with less or an unfair portion as a new member, you know, that's a fear, or a potential fear."

" . . . amalgamation is a bad idea, in that it's actually better to support regional partnerships on providing services, because then you lose your community identity if you get swallowed by a larger municipality. But if it makes sense to be dissolved and become a hamlet within larger one . . . then, people should do that, because it actually lowers your tax dollars and gets you more services in return, right?"

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5.3 Existing Partnerships

5.3.1 Detailed Description of Salient Partnerships

5.3.1.1 Flagstaff Intermunicipal Partnership (FIP) Committee

Several organizations are operating in the Flagstaff Community with the explicit purpose of supporting partnership agreements amongst a variety of parties. For example, the Flagstaff Intermunicipal Partnership committee (FIP), which was formed to "coordinate regional activities within the region and to explore opportunities for the sharing of services" (Peach, 2006, on *Municipal Excellence Network* website). FIP's collaborative philosophy is recognized by many interviewees as having contributed positive value to the region and they continue to support FIP, arguing that overall it should be "trusted" to undertake projects that they believe promote the well-being of the region.

However, many also spoke of challenges they faced when attempting to accomplish goals while working within FIP. For example, each elected official has one vote. However, CAOs do not have a vote and if the communication between elected officials and CAOs is lacking, then valuable input from CAOs is lost. Another interviewee perceives FIP to be lacking leadership to see projects through from start to finish. When grant money arrives for a municipality's project, that grant is handed over to FIP to administer. FIP's vision of itself as an organization that initiates large projects, rather than managing them to the end, may be a source of difficulty for members who expect FIP's involvement throughout the project's evolution.

A further challenge involves FIP's cooperative mandate. Although one member noted that overall FIP has been successful at getting members to cooperate to achieve economic goals in the Flagstaff Community, according to some interviewees this cooperative mandate is not always viewed in a positive light. Decisions on the committee are made with a majority vote; if consensus is not reached, the committee has a hard time moving forward.

" . . . the founding principle of the FIP group was that each member was requested to view things from a regional standpoint . . . and, so, you know, you may not get a win today on a particular project, but overall, everybody wins."

"[FIP has been] very strongly moving in a cooperative way, has been quite successful in a couple of areas, and has been recognized as fulfilling a cooperative mandate successfully."

". . . we should make a recommendation to FIP, who then goes back to their respective councils and makes their recommendation. Right now, that's not happening. It's going from the consultant, over the CAO group, directly to our elected officials. We can have our piece at this FIP –but ultimately, we have no voting powers at this FIP. So, they can make decisions without us even, basically, debating the merits of any proposal put forth by the consultant."

"So, these things haven't happened yet, they've just, they're just starting, they're for '09: Best research practices, address the regionalized emergency services system, continue with the Flagstaff Intermunicipal Partnership and build on it, and develop a charter that will guide us to focus in FIP's operation, guiding principles, objectives to be achieved, how it will operate."

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Although several participants suggested improvements to FIP's decision-making structure, they also expressed optimism about FIP's future plans and potential. Suggestions were also made that FIP could look at projects other than those tied to provincial funding.

5.3.1.2 BRAED

The majority of the municipalities from the Flagstaff Community are also members of the Battle River Alliance for Economic Development (BRAED), which has enjoyed some measure of success in improving the economic standard of the Flagstaff Community . Respondents agree that the goal of branding the region, much like the branding of the Okanagan Valley in BC, is a laudable one.

Despite its cumbersome size, BRAED, like FIP, has enjoyed some success, including the organization of a partnership between farmers and CN Rail. BRAED supports organizations and businesses, especially when they are first starting out. The alliance also supports people leading local initiatives with organizational support and name recognition, including connections to organizations such as Alberta Employment and Immigration. BRAED works with Trail of the Buffalo, which is a regional tourism initiative. Further, BRAED leverages support for educational programs in the region, such as the Flagstaff Training Foundation. BRAED helps also with job creation initiatives in order to stem the tide of young people leaving the area because they cannot find a livelihood there. Other positive aspects of BRAED that respondents describe include its ability to draw people together, not only to socialize, but also to share best practices, discover what other municipalities are doing, and generate solutions that they may not have come up on their own. People in new roles also benefit from mentorship at BRAED meetings.

Regardless of the many positive aspects of BRAED, some respondents did criticize its unwieldy size and the travel distance required to attend meetings. Furthermore, attending BRAED events and maintaining one's membership in BRAED and other organizations can be expensive. The added expense for sometimes

"BRAED is a very large organization and people can lose interest. When it becomes too complex or too large to feel like they belong – it's impersonal and then it loses its ability to create effective social networks. If most of the members are from large communities, small communities can feel like this organization is not suited for their needs."

"BRAED has multigenerational impact. For example, if a parent is involved in such an organization, it's an opportunity to encourage their children to be part of the organization as well, and can thus double the network of connections across the region."

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doubtful returns is a deterrent for some to continue their active participation in this organization.

5.3.1.3 FREDI

The Flagstaff Regional Economic Development Initiative (FREDI), formerly Killam Regional Economic Development Initiative (KREDI), was formed in 1980 and has been responsible for the formation of many partnerships. Its achievements are due to a group of dedicated volunteers who apply for provincial funding. FREDI came about as a result of a grant from the Rural Alberta Development Fund for the purpose of collating all of the economic and business-related information that had been circulating in different locations. It was hoped that centralizing this information would make it much easier to inform potential businesses and industries of the economic factors defining the region. This expedience provides further evidence of the attractiveness of the area for companies. FREDI has links to all of the towns and villages within Flagstaff County, as well as to the County itself.

"And the purpose of the grant was to pull all of our information together that we had been using basically on the shotgun approach over the years and to put it all under one cover so to speak, so it's much easier to access and pass on to potential clients and businesses and industries that might want to locate in the County of Flagstaff."

Interviewees stated that FREDI has contributed to the economic well-being of the County and the ten towns and villages by publicizing business opportunities in the region. The organization had some success publicizing its profile through the Flagstaff Regional Economic Development Initiative Interactive CD and Media Kit (Changewave Canada, 2008). The package emphasizes the importance of systematic planning and collective cooperation to attract and support businesses that might consider locating in the region. The recently completed video is responsible for at least three or four serious inquiries from businesses who are thinking of locating within Flagstaff's borders, including NovaGreen and BRAV-C (see Section 6.3).

"…make the local people more aware of what is here and keep them shopping locally."

According to a couple of respondents, one of the challenges that FREDI faces derives from the confidentiality agreements towns and villages sign as a condition of conducting business. While it is understandable that companies and industries desire some confidentiality agreement as a way to strengthen the business environment, participants felt these agreements placed a strain on organizations like

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FREDI, which are prevented from accessing and assessing the terms and conditions of the businesses contract with the local government. Another weakness attributed to FREDI by certain respondents is a perceived lack of expertise in administering or organizing projects.

"they built the service road and they're trying to build a business area, and so that might attract some more businesses, especially with what's going on out here. So if that happens, maybe some other businesses might spin off from there."

5.3.2 Other Salient Partnerships

See Appendix 4 for other salient partnerships in Flagstaff County.

CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

The concept of sustainable development is often used to mean "balance" or "viability". However, its best known definition comes from the 1972 Brundtland Report defining sustainable development as "a development that *meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs"*. Today, various definitions acknowledge the interconnectedness of the resources, such as social, economic, cultural, and environmental. Sustainability calls for a need to put in place mechanisms that will allow for equitable access and does not necessarily presume growth.

6.1 Economic Sustainability

As discussed in the Flagstaff Community: Economic and Social Profile (Sorensen and de Peuter Chick, 2008), there is a high degree of economic interdependence between most municipalities in the Flagstaff region. The economic indicators for Flagstaff are mixed when comparing towns and villages to the County. This high level of interdependence corresponds with the survey response that working together at special events (92.3%) and utilizing local knowledge and skills (88.55%) were rated as the most effective method for fostering economic development.

"we struggle with economic development as… a group… …because… regionalization, economic development is great, as a long as it's being developed in our community."

There are typically four waves of rural diversification in OECD countries (Community Futures Alberta, 2008):

A. Primary Activities

The primary activities in the region are farming and oil and gas extraction, which occur in the County, giving the County greater economic strength than the towns and villages. Crop production (58.5%) and beef ranching (28.2%) make up the majority of the farming industry. Noteworthy is the finding that Flagstaff County experienced a large shift away from the agriculture and resource extraction sector (Sorensen and de Peuter Chick, 2008). Promoting primary industries was rated highly by survey respondents for achieving rural economic development.

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B. Income Diversification and Value-adding from Primary Activities

Encouraging value added industries was ranked highest in the survey for achieving rural economic development. Numerous factors have influenced agricultural production in the BRAED region, such as unfavourable climatic conditions, BSE, pork industry collapse, Agricultural Policy Frameworks, rising input costs, and increase in the Canadian Dollar (BRAED Agriculture Report, as cited in Sorenson and de Peuter Chick, 2008). Since the 2003 BSE announcement, the beef industry has been struggling. Perhaps as a response, livestock farming has diversified. Currently there is not much value-adding from primary activities in the region, thus there is potential to engage in secondary processing (Sorenson and de Peuter Chick, 2008).

The value-adding that builds on the primary activities of a region depends on the railway for accessing markets and larger distribution centres with relatively inexpensive transportation. However, participants communicated that several communities are in danger of losing railway access. Preliminary research findings indicate that access to railway transportation is a key factor in community survival (O'Connor, 2009). FIP lobbies government and corporations to keep railway lines operating.

C. The Growth of Non-farm Industries and Services (such as tourism or manufacturing)

Health care, social services, and business services employ a significant portion of the Flagstaff Community labour force (11.2% and 9.6%, respectively). The County lost jobs in agriculture and resource-based industries, but gained them in health and education. The towns and villages experienced the greatest proportion of employment decrease in the services sector. There was growth, however, in other areas such as tourism and manufacturing industries.

Although tourism was ranked fifth as a method for achieving rural economic development, it is

"We coordinate… the producer car – you heard about that? The producer cars are the farmers'… the railway, the CN brings the trains, the cars down, and the farmers load them… It costs them less than in taking it to an elevator. And it's coordinated here, out of our… fund. They… do the coordination work and it involves all the communities along this line…"

"most of our towns and villages are members of Trail of The Buffalo…[they] are seeing that we are out there trying just as hard as they are trying to sell the area to other people. They appreciate that…And that makes my job more easy when I have to call them and say, this and this might be coming, what do you think about this? Because we already have that the mindset that we are working towards the same set of goals".

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currently expanding with the Alberta Trail of the Buffalo Project in East Central Alberta. This project could provide a successful model for other tourism-related initiatives in the area.

NovaGreen and BRAV-C manufacturing industries have recently invested in the Flagstaff region (see Environmental Sustainability below for more detail). Keeping taxes at a minimum was mentioned by numerous respondents as important factors for continuing to attract manufacturing industries and other businesses.

D. The Growth of Services and the Residential Economy

In general, services are decreasing in these rural communities, although residents are fighting to keep them. People will not remain in an area with inadequate services, thereby reducing the labour pool for local businesses. Individual businesses benefit from services that improve quality of life, and many municipalities in the region struggle to maintain the population density that justifies the provision of these services. As a response to the labour shortages, the Flagstaff Training Foundation was created in 2006 to project manage the facilitation of skills and trades training.

6.2 Social Sustainability

6.2.1 Community Well-being

6.2.1.1 Basic Criteria

Over three-quarters of survey respondents (77.8%) felt that fostering community well-being was an important factor in partnering with others. Interviewees not only expressed the importance of community well-being, but defined it in various ways. Some stated that community well-being involved healthy communities and a safe place to raise their families. Along with the basic criteria, also mentioned was the importance of providing future generations

"Our vision is actually that we are a safe and caring and vibrant rural Community of communities committed to working with our neighbours to ensure a quality of life for all citizens. As an innovative and progressive community that balances economic prosperity and environmental stewardship, we deliver a responsible level of service that is both efficient and effective."

with the following factors to enrich their lives: educational opportunities; housing; jobs; social programs; social networking and volunteerism; and emergency services.

6.2.1.2 Education

As discussed in the Flagstaff Community: Economic and Social Profile (Sorenson and de Peuter Chick, 2008), the population of the Flagstaff Community is characterized by low levels of educational attainment when compared with BRAED and especially when contrasted with the province. Interviewees identified the need for various levels of adult education from basic upgrading to higher level opportunities, as well as distance education, including video conferencing and weekend symposiums. In addition, certain regulations were found to be problematic for offering affordable adult learning. Developing more educational opportunities and training was ranked as the 4th most important method for achieving rural economic development. As mentioned in Section D above, the Flagstaff Training Foundation is providing some training. Potential may exist for more programs.

"We keep coming up against provincial regulations, saying, no you can't; adult learning can't give credential courses and public schools can't; well, they can I guess, technically they can but they have to charge huge bucks for people."

6.2.1.3 Housing

A larger proportion of homes in the Flagstaff Community are owned; however, they are lower in value, older, and more likely to require major repair (Sorenson and de Peuter Chick, 2008). Although a number of partnerships exist for seniors' housing between municipalities, respondents express the need for more seniors' housing. These statements in favour of seniors' housing is supported by the findings that the towns and villages of Flagstaff have nearly double the proportion of seniors than the County and the province (Sorenson and de Peuter Chick, 2008).

"…what is needed in this town is to a) make it thrive and b) make…all our citizens happy, because if we don't make them happy, it's not too far to move to Camrose or to Edmonton".

6.2.1.4 Local Jobs and Businesses

Creating and maintaining an optimal situation for businesses of many kinds would encourage families to remain in their local communities instead of moving to larger centres. Keeping a population base intact in an area is perceived as critical to community well-being,

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since this population supplies the labour pool for businesses, which in turn service that same population. Low taxation rates along with a satisfactory level of service are significant factors in maintaining citizens' sense of happiness. One advantage that rural communities may have over larger centres is that the level of taxation is much lower in the rural areas.

6.2.1.5 Social Programs

Flagstaff Community shows the greatest loss in youth population (Sorenson and de Peuter Chick, 2008). Participants suggested that the youth would benefit from more programs. Youth need to be engaged in opportunities such as recreation, volunteerism, and social groups to create the social bonds which may motivate them to remain in or return to the smaller towns later on in their adult lives. Suggestions were made to promote citizen engagement at various levels from community organizations to governance-level, since many youth are not aware of all the opportunities available to them through education and apprenticeship programs.

Many members of Flagstaff share the long-term goal of sustainability of the region. One interviewee noted the importance of having a "continuing place for [their] children and grandchildren to live and work in rural Alberta." Many interviewees were willing to support municipal and community-based programs, especially those that contribute to the long-term economic viability of the area. Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) was identified by participants as being a success story of good leadership, goals, and cooperation with other community organizations to deliver effective services.

6.2.1.6 Social Networking and Volunteerism

Developing and maintaining social relationships was considered the fourth most important factor (out of twelve) for partnering with others in the survey. Over half (57.1%) of survey

"In my mind, [a healthy community] probably strengthens the social abilities of the people, because there is more to do, more ways to get out and interact. I think the more we do that . . . the stronger our children are going to be, going forward, because they aren't at home sitting in front of the TV or playing games. They're out interacting more because they're seeing their parents do it, and face it, we're role models . . ."

"There's the Ag Society and Recreation Society, the Food Bank, and there's the churches and there's the Lion's Club, and they all run on the backs of volunteers. Certainly we've lost some volunteers, but our local legion is doing a pretty good job of getting the young people involved."

"...there are real, devoted people who do the best job that they can possibly do for their communities . . . these small communities do amazing jobs to keep themselves going."

"...what forms a community when you're working together to provide services to your citizens …. There's that feeling of community, of being a community."

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respondents indicated they volunteered in their communities. It is then not surprising that interviewees emphasized the importance of social opportunities, networks, and volunteerism.

Many respondents defined well-being in reference to the social aspects of the community, where people are generally friendly with each other. This supportive atmosphere is created not only by the personalities of certain key figures in the community, but also through a variety of opportunities for people to get involved with fund-raisers, educational opportunities, church events, craft projects and sales, sports teams, hobby groups, clubs, fairs and festivals, arts organizations, and the Agricultural Society. Having this level of local activity requires a large active pool of volunteers and community leaders. This works best if a variety of people take the initiative to do the organizing, instead of only a few who risk burn-out and fatigue. As one respondent said, "having the volunteerism to assist in running those facilities all lends to a healthy community." This person's choice of the word "volunteerism," instead of "volunteers," is important in that it implies that a certain helping attitude on a broader scale exists and/or could be nurtured among community members.

Bigger communities would seem to have an advantage over the smaller ones in this regard, having a larger population from which to draw volunteers. Our interviews suggest that rural residents share the common goal of wanting their community to continue to evolve; they focus on the strengths of their community without necessarily trying to enlarge their populations.

6.2.1.7 Emergency Services

<u>Ambulance</u>
The previous ambulance system was viewed by participants as functioning well. Recently, the province centralized it. Respondents were ambivalent on whether the province's recent centralization of the ambulance system made it function more effectively. Their main criticism of the centralization was that the communities were not consulted.

"The volunteers from our communities are there to do the best job that they can possibly do for their community. And, in most cases, they allow their community to include a wider scope than just their own town or village."

<u>Fire</u>
The majority of participants felt that there needs to be a better way of distributing operational and capital costs for fire-fighting between the towns, villages, and the County. Many of the towns and villages are paying toward fire trucks and their maintenance, yet 80% of fires occur in rural areas. The hiring of a Fire Chief to coordinate service and improve fire-fighting training for volunteers was generally seen as positive. There is still some concern that many volunteer fire fighters do not have proper equipment or training, because they cannot afford it.

<u>Law Enforcement/Policing</u>
Sharing a bylaw officer has been successful so far between several communities. Some interviewees observed that even just having a presence of some sort of bylaw enforcement is viewed as increasing the safety of communities.

6.2.2 Recreation

Survey respondents indicated that service and recreational clubs are important partnerships activities that address social infrastructure issues. Many interviewees also stated that the social aspects of forming fruitful partnerships were tied to recreational activities, but that the facilities where these activities take place are generally in need of repair. Facilities are in various degrees of disrepair, but insufficient funding raises questions about the future of the programs they contain. Recreational facilities create a sense of pride in the host community, since they have in the past been built by prominent members from the area. To offset the operation and maintenance costs of these facilities, one participant suggested that individual communities across the county "specialize" in one type of facility, such as a swimming pool, hockey arena, curling rink, or golf course. In contrast, another suggested locating all of the recreation facilities centrally, though the distance of even a few miles might deter some from utilizing them. Another person suggested that county members who are currently not taxed for recreation services should pay higher user fees each time they access a town's or village's facilities, so that members of the

"Each community must specialize in one facet of recreation, and that's where I see it. Let's get it down there and every community can specialize in one facet and get everybody going and using the facilities in the region, but that's a tough sell."

towns and villages are not paying the full costs for an expensive building that others can use for free.

Funding for these facilities remains an ongoing challenge, since municipal governments struggle for funds and other resources. An upside to this funding issue, as one participant noted, is that each municipality has greater autonomy to decide how they will spend money ear-marked for social infrastructure, since now they can "really tailor programs to their needs," as one interviewee stated.

6.3 Environmental Sustainability

The Land-Use Framework (Government of Alberta, 2008) recently released outlines for regional land use plans, which were welcomed by respondents and were seen as a tool for more effective planning of residential, industrial, and business districts. However, the majority of respondents were unsure about how to apply this in their respective municipalities and the region. Many interviewees indicated that the approach to land use planning involving the long-term goal of sustainability is relatively new. Also, participants perceive environmental sustainability as requiring proactive (incentives) rather than retroactive (punitive) measures. As a result, although willing, not many were familiar with how to proceed in a way that is environmentally friendly and economically viable at the same time.

More often, interviewees discussed environmental sustainability in relation to agricultural practices, where more sustainable policies such as limiting intensive livestock operations, planting trees (windrows), and conserving water are commonly implemented. Survey respondents also rated agriculture highly as one of the partnership areas addressing environmental sustainability. Over time these practices have become more commonplace. As well, one of FREDI's successes has included enticing two agricultural companies, NovaGreen and BRAV-C to invest in the region.

Other environmentally friendly projects include the Public Works department's use of more

"Alberta company NovaGreen Inc. has planned to build an integrated bioagricultural park in Killam, Alberta, with a straw-based ethanol plant at its core. The company, which delivers environmentally friendly products from renewable and sustainable resources, will use straw from a variety of [sources] to produce … value-added products... The facility will be the first of its kind in Alberta and the first bioenergy project for NovaGreen."
http://biofuelsmagazine.ca/article.jsp?article_id=217

Battle River Agri-Ventures Co-operative (BRAV-C) is a co-investor and key supporter of the NovaGreen project. BRAV-C plans to build a steam-heated greenhouse using recycled carbon dioxide. BRAV-C is a New Generation Co-op (based in the Flagstaff County Region) that is a "progressive, innovative co-op organization focused on building value added opportunities for regional farmers and investors."
http://www.brav-c.com/index.html

"…it's been there quite a few years and the landfill is filling up. And, so… closure is something that's hanging over their heads…and how to deal with it and how to pay for it."

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environmentally-friendly oils on the gravel roads to reduce dust and less caustic varieties of salt. Local oil-refining companies are working on improving air quality in the region.

Survey respondents indicated that waste management and recycling are the top two activities for addressing environmental sustainability. Our interviews revealed that waste treatment remains a complicated issue in the context of environmental sustainability because landfills are expensive to open and close. Recycling programs are encouraged in order to prolong the life of the dump site. At least one oil company in the Flagstaff Community is partnering with municipalities and with the County to provide recycling bins.

A further challenge that has been raised in the past relates to water conservation, where the public was made aware of the importance of practical tips, such as fixing leaking faucets. This was an example of best practice that was introduced at a conference. A number of municipalities currently partner to provide meters in homes to determine the amount of water being consumed and to protect and better manage this resource on a person-by-person basis. Water was also considered by survey respondents as an important area for partnerships to address.

In general, the availability of natural resources plays a major role in improving the quality of an area through secondary influences where, for example, more jobs lead to greater demand for housing, and consequently for utilities. Several interviewees indicated a desire to access a summary of the natural resources available in the area based on scientific data in order to attract businesses and investors.

"Right now, we're looking at getting water meters, the Alberta government is also, rightfully, suggesting that we have water meters and there is proof that it's the correct thing to do. When water meters go in, people fix their toilets and their dripping taps, and they don' t tend to water their lawns when the majority of water's running down the streets, you know, that sort of thing, so it does encourage conservation."

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CHAPTER 7: NEXT STEPS

7.1 Introduction

This report provides a lens for people to look at their communities from a new perspective so that solutions to current partnership challenges can be discovered. This report does not review all the partnerships exist in the Flagstaff Community; instead, the report identifies common threads regarding what motivates people to partner. These threads include the benefits and costs of partnerships, and the conditions that facilitate or impede partnerships.

As the report reveals, Flagstaff Community members are asking partnership-related questions with a broad scope, spanning the nation and even the globe:

- How to improve on communication and turn conflicts and crises into constructive learning conversations and opportunities?
- How to decrease apathy among citizens and get them involved in their communities and in municipal governance?
- How to increase effective leadership?
- How to retain youth in rural areas?

Participants in this study repeatedly expressed the need for more cooperation amongst members throughout the region, formally and informally, in order to improve Flagstaff Community's economic, environmental, and social viability. What steps will achieve this viability? First, participants emphasized that local solutions are required. Best practices in one community are not always best practices in another. Ultimately, solutions will be discovered when communities work together with local leaders and other communities on the challenges they face. The participants' views are supported by other published studies on community collaboration. According to Morse (2004), communities need a vision and collective action in order to operate effectively. Once this direction is set, seven key points can contribute to the ongoing vitality of collaborative communities:

1.) Investing right the first time (early and for the long-term)
2.) Working together (include diverse perspectives and multiple stakeholders)
3.) Building on community strengths
4.) Practising democracy
5.) Preserving the past
6.) Growing Leaders
7.) Inventing a brighter future

Numerous resources are available for communities wanting to create and facilitate change (see section 7.6 below). These resources include reports and documents as well as interactive and facilitative services in community development and leadership.

7.2 Community Identity and Development

According to Alberta Community Development, the foundations for strong community capacity include collaborating to develop and maintain relationships; collectively identifying and solving problems to achieve goals; and making decisions collectively. Healthy communities access local resources, communicate well, agree on a common vision and take concerted steps to achieve that vision (Alberta Community Development website). One of those steps could include regional branding of the Flagstaff region, much like the Okanagan does in BC to attract tourism and industry (from the Thompson/Okanagan website: "Where in the world could you ski, play a round of golf, horseback ride, tour a historic site and visit a winery all in one day? Where else but the fabulous Thompson Okanagan in British Columbia's interior." http://www.totabc.com/).

Community development cannot be left to chance or government handouts; instead, communities generating their own best possible solutions have the best chance at success (Morse, 2004). It is also important that the government undergos a process of "institutional adjustment" (Atkinson, 1990) in order to put organizational and communication structures in place that enable collaborations to evolve as easily as possible. By creating the conditions where collaborations can occur, interdependence would be fostered, generating both challenge and opportunity, which in turn would strengthen the well-being of the Flagstaff Community over the long term.

For many of the study's participants that well-being comes, to a large extent, from a strong sense of community identity. Establishing a community identity is closely connected to community members' identifications both with the local community and the broader region, often simultaneously. This identification requires abandoning competitive feelings toward neighboring communities, and instead identifying the strengths of those other communities and building on those connections to create a larger, regional identity that competes with bigger entities like Camrose, for example, or regions outside of Alberta and around the world.

One way for local and regional identifications to be achieved, according to study participants, is by holding events that require volunteers from across the region. Getting to know individuals from nearby towns contributes to the sense of identification with the challenges and goals that individuals from those communities are also facing. Volunteering for events across the region also broadens citizens' perspectives so they can see how regional successes translate to improved lives at the local community level. Thus, collaborating with people who are some distance away geographically helps create a sense of proximity through connections formed on the basis of a shared vision for the prosperity of the Flagstaff Community.

The further benefit that volunteerism contributes to community identity, as expressed by participants in this study, is social sustainability. Making the practice of volunteering for events at local and regional levels widespread and commonplace prevents the burn out that can occur when only a few members do most of the work. Young people, according to several participants, also feel more eager to become

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involved when many are also doing it, and the benefits and enjoyment are commonplace in the town. Long-term viability of the community is supported in this way, therefore, by getting the young people to invest their time and energy into community events. They also begin to identify not only with the local community, but with communities in the region through their social activities with young people throughout the area. These friendships can also contribute to greater loyalty on the regional level, and potentially slow the tendency of many youth to move to the next largest city for their educations and careers.

"And I also see the...if you want to call it the social benefit of working together in communities. It gives you part of what forms a community when you're working together to provide services to your citizens, right? There's that feeling of community, of being a community."

Facilitation, consultation, and skill development are available to address community issues and achieve specific goals through strategic planning and community collaboration (see section 7.6). Organizational board development, public participation evaluation, and facilitator training programs also support and build community capacity, and enhance the business environment.

7.3 Leadership

Many participants underscored the importance of strong leaders in guiding Flagstaff Community to a stronger economic, social, and environmental position. At the same time, many emphasized that having only a few people do most of the community work was causing burn out and was undermining the possibility of long-term success. These study results support published findings about the type of leadership that will be most effective. According to Morse (2004), effective leadership does not consist of one or two effective "leaders" but of collaborations formed by many people with a shared vision working together to accomplish the same goal.

The type of leadership currently needed comes from directions determined by the collaboration of many people, instead of one or two people who point the way (Morse, 2004). The community of Flagstaff can further support the collaborative process by focusing on skill and resource development to facilitate change. Change can be fostered by nurturing citizen involvement, and particularly that of

the young people, through a variety of leadership styles. Approaches to leadership include personal, transformational, collaborative, and community-based approaches and styles, depending on the community's needs. These approaches also focus on creating a shared vision among members of the Flagstaff community, leading to a strategy for conflict management and to the preparation of future leaders in this position. Understanding the key components of community development, including what constitutes the well-being and quality of life of its citizens, would be furthered by establishing some form of community identity to which most of the citizens subscribe. Innovative thinking of this kind encourages local communities to provide solutions for challenges that are developed locally and at the grass roots level.

"As an innovative and progressive community that balances economic prosperity and environmental stewardship…"

7.4 Environmental Sustainability

Participants acknowledged the novelty of putting formal plans in place to ensure environmental sustainability. And because this kind of planning has not often been done before, leaders from Flagstaff Community talked about the challenges associated with having few precedents to use in their own planning, few examples to follow and little warning of situations to avoid. At the same time, they stress the importance of formalizing partnerships to support environmental sustainability through principles and practices.

Despite the challenges to developing adequate environmental policy, many want to focus on decreasing the reliance on oil throughout the region. Waste management is also being examined on a regional scale. Waste management presents an important and complex issue because of the expense and effort required to open and close landfills as the need arises. Wasted water was also identified as a solvable problem, addressed by installing meters at houses and fixing leaks throughout the service network. At the same time, recycling companies like NovaGreen, drawn to the region by the FREDI partnership, demonstrate that commercial success is possible on projects involving the recycling of a common local product such as straw.

7.5 Coming Together, Moving Forward: E-A-S-Y

The following suggestions are discussion points on the next steps for the Flagstaff Community to address identity and regional branding, collaboration, and youth. For convenience,

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we summarized these under the acronym "EASY": events, authenticity, service, youth.

- Develop county **events** such as fairs, celebrate rural ingenuity and self-reliance
  - o Develop a community event to present the results of the youth photo contest
  - o Hold discussions on the photo contest, capture discussions on the photo contest and identity, capture reactions on pieces of paper on wall or paper tablecloth.

- Capture **authenticity**, character, truth, and the dry humour of the prairies.
  - o Create capacity for Flagstaff Community to make decisions as a group.
  - o Capture collaboration with photos. For example, as the food bank is temporarily relocated to the grater shed, take photographs of members of the community helping out and locate it on a mutually accessible website for community members to be proud of. Also, to post the successful projects, such as renovating a house for physician for physician recruitment. See the example of Viking at www.ualberta.ca/SIGNATURE/smallTown.html.
  - o Create a process for involvement in projects that provides opportunity for involvement from the beginning of a project.
  - o Create a visioning exercise with all the members of the Flagstaff Community of the future they envision in 10, 20, 50 and 100 years. "What do you want to see in 50 years?"
  - o Offer a community potluck meal.

- Develop **services** in areas which benefit from being planned regionally, such as water, waste management, seniors services, foodbank.
  - o Create on-going opportunities for creating and capturing inventive ideas and solutions to problems. For example, have a suggestion board on an easily accessible website.
  - o The design of the focus groups - minimal facilitation and power point with specific topics for discussion - for feedback on the Flagstaff Draft Report were well received, suggestions are to hold more discussions with that design.

- Engage **youth** in community-building activities and in projects such as a youth centre or several linked centres.
  - o Create a contest to put Flagstaff on the map, suggestion is for a youth photo contest about community identity - what their town, village, the County means to them, pictures that create the identity of the Flagstaff Community.

7.6 List of resources

This list represents some of the programs and resources available on community development and leadership:

Alberta Community Development
http://www.albertaheritage.net/directory/acd_cultural.html

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)
http://www.auma.ca/live/AUMA/Toolkits+%26+Initiatives/Citizen_Engagement_Toolkit

Canadian CED Network
http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/?q=en/home

Community Development
http://www.culture.alberta.ca/communitydevelopment/default.aspx

Centre for Innovative Entrepreneurial Leadership (CIEL)
http://www.theciel.com/what_we_do.php

Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF)
http://www.crrf.ca/

Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta
http://www.extension.ualberta.ca/govstudies/prog-lgcp.aspx

LeadershipPlenty® Program by Pew Partnership for Civic Change
http://www.cpe.vt.edu/lpinstitute/

Municipal Excellence Network
http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/mc_municipal_excellence.cfm

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CHAPTER 8: REFERENCES

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CHAPTER 9: APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:   Flagstaff Community: Economic and Social Profile

APPENDIX 2a: Interview Instruments

APPENDIX 2b: Information Sheet

APPENDIX 2c: Consent Form

APPENDIX 3a: On-line Survey Instrument

APPENDIX 3b: On-line Survey Results

APPENDIX 4:   Table of Partnerships in Flagstaff Community