

## **Discovery Workshop Report**

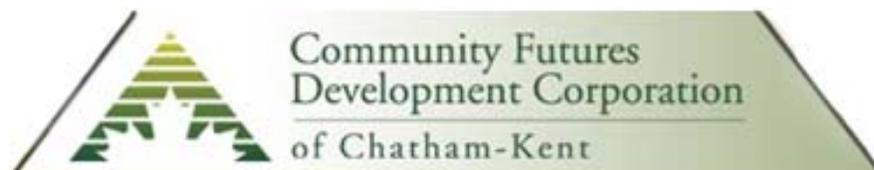
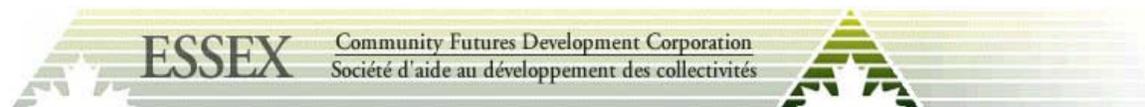
### **Essex, Sarnia-Lambton and Chatham-Kent Region**

*September 21, 2009*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This report is part of The Rural Research Priorities through Community Engagement (RRP) Project, a one-year endeavor to identify and prioritize development needs in Rural Ontario. The report is a summary of information collected at a 3-hour workshop in Chatham, ON. Five community leaders and business people from the Essex, Sarnia-Lambton and Chatham-Kent gave feedback on their community's development needs and research questions. This information, along with similar information gathered in seven other communities in Southwestern Ontario, will guide the research pursued over the course of the RRP project.

The workshop was hosted by Ms. Carol Emery, Manager, Chatham-Kent Community Futures Development Corporation. Dr. Wayne Caldwell, Professor, University of Guelph; Dr. Yolande Chan, Director, The Monieson Centre, Queen's School of Business; Mr. Harold Flaming, Executive Director, The Ontario Rural Council; and Mr. Jeff Dixon, Project Coordinator, The Monieson Centre, introduced the RRP project. Mr. George Jackson, Associate Facilitator, Queen's Executive Decision Centre, facilitated the workshop. Special thanks belong to Ms. Suzanne Ainley and Dr. Jennifer Ball for their coordination of the workshop. The RRP project is funded by the Province of Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.



## QUESTION 1

*What are the challenges and needs with respect to rural community and economic development and making the Essex, Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Elgin region a vital community (economic, social, health)?*

Top Issues:

1. **Economic Diversification.** There needs to be a greater emphasis on attraction of non-traditional industries.
2. **Education.** High levels of illiteracy and little incentive to pursue further education.
3. **Community Economic Development.** Lack of understanding about the importance of asset-based community economic development.
4. **Non-Profit Sector.** Increased costs of doing business in the voluntary sector, declining volunteer base, and fostering partnerships between the volunteer and business community.
5. **Funding.** The challenge of competing with larger centres in Ontario.
6. **Poverty.** With the economic downturn there are growing poverty and addiction issues.
7. **Strategic Planning.** Setting a clear and comprehensive vision for the community
8. **Youth.** Engaging and retaining our youth population.
9. **Health Care.** We must maintain accessible health care that accommodates the aging population.
10. **Local Pride.** We need to create a sense of pride in our region, especially given the decline of the automotive industry.
11. **Public Engagement.** People of all backgrounds need to be engaged in local decision making.
12. **Regional Cooperation and Promotion.** The region as a whole needs to be more strategic in its planning and promotion of rural assets in order to compete with larger jurisdictions (e.g. London).
13. **Tourism.** Focus on agriculture tourism.
14. **Immigration.** We need to attract, connect and retain immigrants with our community.

Other Issues:

- Housing
- Culture
- Social Enterprise
- Transportation
- Population
- Seniors
- Infrastructure
- Quality of Life

## QUESTION 2

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

1. **Economic Diversification.** Which economic drivers have been successful when a community's core industries have collapsed? What factors drive the location choices of knowledge-based industries?
2. **Youth Retention and Attraction.** What types of programs and/or activities might we develop to retain and attract youth from the Greater Toronto Area? How do we compare with other rural communities for youth retention? How can intergenerational programs help retain youth?
3. **Regionalization.** What economic development activities are best suited for regionalization?
4. **Business Innovation.** What existing talents and assets currently exist in Chatham-Kent to create innovative businesses that have an agricultural and tourism focus?
5. **Capital.** How can private capital be mobilized for new rural businesses? What financial instruments do we need to develop?
6. **Social Enterprise.** What new economic indicators can we give policy makers to identify local problems with social programs and social enterprises?
7. **Education.** How can we overcome cultural reluctance to education and encourage employer based literacy training? What best practices exist for employer-based literacy training? How can post-secondary institutions help examine education and skills needs in rural communities?
8. **Immigration.** What rural programs are needed for immigrant workers with the skills they need to succeed? How can we foster entrepreneurship with immigrants.
9. **Community Economic Development.** How can we build a case for Community Economic Development?
10. **Pride in Place.** How can different levels of Government aid with the stimulation of pride in place? How have other communities built local pride?

Other Questions:

- Seniors – How can we use retirees (educators) to build our economic base?
- Poverty – How can the faith-based community assist in an economic downturn?
- Skills – How can we identify gaps in the workforce?
- Agricultural Diversity – What are the best practices related to encouraging agri-diversity?
- Public Engagement – How can we effectively engage the public to get involved in their community?

### QUESTION 3

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

1. **Economic Diversification.** In a community that has been devastated by the collapse of one or two (automotive and agriculture) of its traditional industries, what sorts of new economic drivers have been successful in other communities which have faced a similar collapse. What is the local niche and how do we develop it?
  - The University of Michigan
  - The Ontario Global Traders Awards, RBC Women Entrepreneur Awards, Profit 100 etc.
  - Consideration of community competitive advantage for the creative economies sector: Richard Florida, the Prosperity Institute and Mike Floria, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
  - Bio economy considerations
  
2. **Youth Retention and Attraction.** What factors influence the choice of destination for new graduates, and how can we combat the risk of Greater Toronto Area (GTA) “overheating” demographically, economically and socially?
  - Deb Matthews MPP – Completed PhD thesis on demographic challenges facing Canada and could discuss existing Ontario policy directions
  - Monieson Centre study with Kingston Economic Development Corporation and Queen’s Student Affairs on local retention of graduates

What types of intergenerational programs and/or activities might we develop with retirees to mentor and retain local youth?

  - Look for existing mentoring programs – newcomer agencies or the Ontario Chambers of Commerce may have leads
  
3. **Regionalization.** What economic development activities are best suited for regionalization?
  - Ensuring that strategic plan corresponds with the needs and direction of the Region
  - The David Douglas/Don Reid research at the University of Guelph
  - The book “Small Towns, Big Ideas”
  
4. **Business Innovation.** What existing talents and assets currently exist in Chatham-Kent to create innovative business that have an agricultural and tourism focus?
  - Tourism Development Officer, Municipality of Chatham-Kent: Jan Marquez
  - Essex Community Futures Development Corporation, Shores of Erie Resource Enterprise
  - Agriculture sector Committee: Windsor-Essex Development Corporation
  - Leamington Area Drip Irrigation Initiative: Wayne Palichuk
  - Leamington Economic Development Officer: Anne Miskovsky
  - Ontario Greenhouse Vegetable Growers
  - Essex County Federation of Agriculture
  - Essex County Associated Growers
  - Small Business Enterprise Centre – Kingsville
  - Small Business Centre – Leamington
  - South Western Ontario Vinters Assocaiton

- Tourism Windsor-Essex: Sandra Bradt
  - Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association, conducted a study of best practices to encourage agri-tourism and on-farm diversification
  - University of Guelph (Ridgetown Campus)
  - The Monieson Centre's Knowledge Impact in Society (KIS) Project
  - Australia: Peter Kenyon
5. **Securing Capital.** Poor access to capital is limiting both economic diversification and social enterprise, even though there is a lot of "old wealth" in small towns and rural areas. What financial instruments can be created to mobilize the available private capital?
- The Ontario Securities Commission has to be engaged in this research or it will not be successful
  - Scott Gray from Wallaceburg has cross border experience with the National Angel Organization and understands the challenges
  - Community credit unions and small town business bankers to see what they are already doing, or would like to do in an "ideal world" scenario
  - The Canadian Community Economic Development Network: Paul Chamberlain
  - The Rural Economic Development (RED) Program: Ethel Cote
  - Ontario Cooperative Association: Jen Heneberry
  - The Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario
6. **Social Enterprise.** What new economic indicators can we give policy makers that will highlight local problems, regional trade balances, and the Rate of Interest (ROI) for social programs and social enterprises?
- Develop a new comparator specific to communities in rural Ontario only
  - See what economic indicators can be imported from the field of "Development Economics" – the challenges facing rural communities in Canada have developing world parallels.
- How can we get politicians focused on the importance of investment in social infrastructure?
- Futures game recently hosted by Ontario Rural Council an excellent vehicle to encourage long-term thinking
  - Need to do research on the economic impact of social infrastructure – possibly the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCDNET)
  - Talk to political party riding association policy chairs
7. **Education.** What are the best practices for encouraging employer-based literacy training?
- There needs to be incentive to employers to hire those with literacy issues.
  - Ontario Works
8. **Immigration.** Are there entrepreneurial programs for immigrants? Can immigrants who are not classified as "Entrepreneur Class" by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) access the tools that allow them to create jobs?
- Rural business incubator concept and how to build such successful incubator facilities
  - Centre for Rural Entrepreneurship, Rural Policy Research Institute
  - Ontario Farmland Trust has looked at opportunities for the production of crops destined for the new immigrant population
  - Cultural Coalition of Chatham-Kent

- Ontario Association of Agencies Serving Immigrants
- Terence Johnson (Scribendi Inc.) is a 'family class' immigrant who dove straight into entrepreneurship

What rural programs are needed for immigrant workers to provide them with the skills they need to succeed?

- Harold Bauder, formally from the University of Guelph and now from Toronto has researched the role of immigrants in rural communities
- John Smithers, University of Guelph has looked at opportunities for immigrant farmer in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)

9. **Community Economic Development.** How do we build a case for community economic development? How can we educate policy makers on the values of community based economic development? What models currently exist that provide evidence of the value of community based economic development? How does community economic development contribute to community sustainability?

- Conduct economic impact study on Community Economic Development (CED): David Douglas
- Economic Development Council of Ontario (EDCO) training programs
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs – “Readiness for Economic Development”
- Work with the United Way
- Windsor-Essex Development Commission
- Leading by example through successful community transformations
- Organization for Economic, Co-operation and Development (OECD) studies
- KIS project Knowledge Synthesis (Monieson Centre)

10. **Pride in Place.** How can the different levels of government aid with the stimulation of pride in place? How have other communities globally been able to reclaim this sense of pride in place?

- University of Waterloo Municipal Cultural Planning Partnership: Emily Robson
- Bank of I.D.E.A.S., Perth, Australia: Peter Kenyon
- AuthentiCity Consulting: Greg Baeker
- Parks Canada Study from around 2005 on 'Sense of Place' in National Parks

## QUESTION 4

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

### **Suggested Next Steps (in no particular order)**

- Grass roots consultation from voices we don't often hear from
- Using Survey Monkey to get broader input on these same questions
- Identify others who should be consulted
- Broaden the focus to health and education
- Report to Municipal Councils
- Contact Professional Associations of Chatham-Kent (Young Professionals – Jana Green at the Enterprise Centre)
- Reach out to Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and Chambers of Commerce
- Canadian Federation of Independent Business
- Take the report back to each community to share, add and clarify the findings
- Create on-line space/forum for collecting research questions, use info-mail sites
- Joint project with US/Canadian Universities to study further – Border trade and tourism
- Media release the results of the sessions

## Appendix A – Rough Ideas for Question 1

*What are the challenges and needs with respect to rural community and economic development and making the Essex, Sarnia-Lambton, Chatham-Kent and Elgin region a vital community (economic, social, health)?*

### Voting Results

Multiple Selection (maximum choices = 5)

Number of ballot items: 63

Total number of voters (N): 5

Rank	Issue	Comments	Comment Votes	Total Votes
1	Economic Diversification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic diversification</li> <li>Greater awareness of the value of non-traditional industries in the area</li> <li>Students unaware of opportunities other than traditional employment</li> </ul>	2 2 0	4
1	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literacy is still a major issue</li> <li>Providing greater incentive for higher education in an area with one of the lowest levels of education in Ontario</li> <li>Educational attainment and cultural diversity</li> <li>Reskilling existing workers</li> <li>Education not a priority (cultural perspective)</li> <li>Education programs matching needs of local students - college not consulting with local schools, employer input</li> </ul>	1 1  1 1 0 0	4
3	Community Economic Development (CED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of understanding about the importance of asset based community development; "community" economic development and the importance of social capital</li> <li>Cohesive voice for economic development locally, regionally and beyond - lack of attention to rural economies, ec dev groups not aware of rural opportunities</li> <li>Education about "community" economic development</li> </ul>	2  1  0	3
4	Non-Profit Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased costs of doing business in the voluntary sector; declining volunteer base; issues related to liability insurance</li> <li>Getting folks from all three sectors speaking the same language; voluntary sector needs to be able to speak the language of the business sector in order to be understand; making the point that investments in social infrastructure DO make an impact on the bottom line</li> <li>Voluntary burnout</li> </ul>	1  1	2

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selling the notion of multi-use facilities and community centres where a host of not-for-profits can benefit from co-habitation - shared reception, bulk purchasing and meeting space</li> <li>Economic downturn affecting charitable fund-raising efforts</li> </ul>	0 0 0	
4	Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The challenge of competing with the largest centres in Ontario for funding</li> <li>Money stops at London</li> <li>Competition for fund-raising</li> <li>No time to write funding applications and/or do independent research</li> </ul>	1 1 0 0	2
4	Poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing poverty and growing addictions (drugs, alcohol, eating disorders) - we need to focus more on prevention - investing today for major returns in years to come; focus on individual needs</li> <li>Poverty reduction</li> </ul>	1 1	2
7	Strategic Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic planning at a grass roots level</li> <li>Setting a clear and comprehensive vision for the community</li> <li>Deciding if growth is a desirable and/or necessary goal</li> <li>Setting priorities on a fact based set of issues</li> <li>Getting business, government and voluntary sector partners at ALL planning tables</li> <li>Overcoming the status quo mentality</li> </ul>	1 0 0 0 0 0	1
7	Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth engagement and retention</li> </ul>	1	1
7	Health Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health care access and retention – LIHN and policy not focused on local needs</li> <li>Health care - limited focus on prevention as population ages and priorities are to treat the seriously ill</li> <li>Reducing and preventing lifestyle related illness</li> <li>Burgeoning cost of health care as the Baby boomers age and eventually require greater medical assistance</li> <li>Physician wait times for everyone, more critical for seniors and seriously ill - prolonging seeking access to health care, community getting more ill</li> <li>Aging population and health of seniors</li> </ul>	1 0 0 0 0 0	1
7	Local Pride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating a sense of pride in place with the near destruction of the automotive industry</li> <li>Need to create a sense of purpose of space</li> </ul>	1 0	1
7	Public Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creating opportunities for members of the general public to become engaged; listening is critical ... and then acting on what we've heard so folks know that</li> </ul>	1	1

		<p>their voices have been heard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community engagement-getting fringe groups and those not normally involved in community to come forward and voice their needs</li> </ul>	0	
7	Regional Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional cooperation and partnerships</li> <li>Overcoming the "silo" mentality in south-western Ontario which would allow all of south-western Ontario to work together as one</li> </ul>	1 0	1
7	Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agricultural tourism - don't discount the contributions that can be made when assets of all three sectors are brought together</li> <li>Wine region growing tremendously but tourism infrastructure not developing</li> <li>Greater local appreciation of the tourism assets that currently exist within the community</li> </ul>	1 0 0	1
7	Immigration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connecting immigrants with community</li> <li>Professional credentials for newcomers - making it easier for folks to get to work</li> <li>Attraction and retention of immigrants</li> </ul>	1 0 0	1
15	Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social housing for increasing groups of people lacking access to affordable housing</li> </ul>	0 0	0
15	Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of buy in for community based programs by councils - lip service to culture, arts, uptown redevelopment</li> <li>Viewing community through a cultural lens - difficult to justify cultural programs/projects when there is no money for basic infrastructure</li> <li>Access to cultural amenities</li> </ul>	0 0 0	0
15	Social Enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More investment on the part of local government on social infrastructure - there is a ROI!</li> <li>More funding for social enterprise, individual development accounts, micro-lending and micro-granting activities</li> <li>Access to social services</li> </ul>	0 0 0	0
15	Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transportation issues in the rural sector</li> </ul>	0	0
15	Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Declining population</li> </ul>	0	0
15	Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aging population</li> <li>Need for transitional housing for seniors - retirement and assisted care</li> </ul>	0 0	0
15	Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Connectivity-broadband and infrastructure i.e. regional transportation, rail, 400 series</li> </ul>	0	0
15	Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>too much work and too little time</li> <li>Maintaining and improving quality of life</li> <li>Work-life balance</li> </ul>	0 0 0	0

## Appendix B – Rough Ideas for Question 2

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

**Note: prior to voting, the group brainstormed questions. Below is the result of selecting top questions**

### Voting Results

Multiple Selection (maximum choices = 5)

Number of ballot items: 28

Total number of voters (N): 5

Rank	Issue	Questions	Votes	Total Votes
1	<b>Economic Diversification</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In a community that has been devastated by the collapse of one of its two (automotive and agriculture) traditional industries, what sorts of new economic drivers have been successful in other communities which have faced a similar collapse?</li> <li>What factors drive the location decision in knowledge based industries (and in a portfolio of non-traditional industries)?</li> </ul>	2 1	3
1	<b>Youth Retention and Attraction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What factors influence the choice of destination for new graduates, and how can we combat the risk of GTA "overheating" demographically, economically and socially?</li> <li>How critical is youth retention and educational attainment for this area in relation to other rural communities (net out communities with universities)?</li> <li>What types of intergenerational programs and/or activities might we develop with retirees and former business owners to keep our youth people here?</li> </ul>	1 1 1	3
3	<b>Regionalization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What economic development activities are best suited to regionalization?</li> </ul>	2	2
3	<b>Business Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What existing talents and assets currently exist in Chatham-Kent to create innovative businesses that have an agricultural and tourism focus?</li> </ul>	2	2
3	<b>Capital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor access to capital is limiting both economic diversification and social enterprise, even though there is a lot of "old wealth" in small towns and rural areas. What financial instruments can be created to mobilize the available private capital?</li> </ul>	2	2
3	<b>Social Enterprise</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What new economic indicators can we give policy makers that will highlight local problems, regional trade balances, and the ROI for social programs and social enterprises?</li> </ul>	1	2

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can we get politicians focused on the importance of investment in social infrastructure?</li> <li>Using existing resources, what types of social enterprises might be suitable for Chatham-Kent?</li> </ul>	1 0	
3	<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the best practices for encouraging employer based literacy training?</li> <li>How can we get the college and university to examine educational and skills needs in a rural setting?</li> <li>How can we overcome cultural reluctance to education?</li> </ul>	1 1 0	2
3	<b>Immigration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are their entrepreneurial programs for immigrants? Can immigrants who are not classified as "Entrepreneur Class" by CIC access the tools that allow them to create jobs?</li> <li>What rural programs are needed for immigrant workers to provide them with the skills they need to succeed?</li> </ul>	1 1	2
9	<b>Community Economic Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can we build a case for community economic development?</li> <li>What programs currently exist within the colleges and universities in Ontario to assist in community economic development?</li> <li>How can we bring folks together to educate them about the importance of asset based community development and social capital?</li> </ul>	1 0 0	1
9	<b>Pride in Place</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can the different levels of government aid with the stimulation of pride in place? How have other communities globally been able to reclaim this sense of pride?</li> <li>How do we engage youth in shaping their vision of "community"?</li> <li>What are the unique attributes of living in rural Ontario ... what do we include in our "Brag Book" when encouraging folks to come here?</li> <li>What role can our partners in the labour movement play in helping to build community?</li> </ul>	1 0 0 0	1
11	<b>Seniors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can we use retirees (educators) to build our economic base?</li> </ul>	0	0
11	<b>Poverty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What role can the faith community play in helping to address the needs of those who are affected by the economic downturn?</li> </ul>	0	0
11	<b>Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What processes can we use to creatively identify the skills gaps in today's workforce?</li> </ul>	0	0
11	<b>Agricultural Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the best practices related to encouraging agricultural diversity?</li> </ul>	0	0
11	<b>Public Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What new name can we give "strategic planning" ... so folks will want to get involved? (An opportunity for a</li> </ul>	0	0

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		new game?)		
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## Appendix C – Session Overview

The **purpose** of the workshop was to engage community leaders and academics to collaborate in order to:

- Identify Southwestern Ontario knowledge needs and resources
- Prioritize research needs and opportunities
- Share experience and knowledge
- Build lasting relationships and communication channels
- Serve Southwestern Ontario

Discovery workshop groups **explore four topics**:

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

## Appendix D – Methodology

### Information Gathering and Community Consultation process

The community consultation process included an information gathering component composed of a series of interactive workshops using facilitators from the Queen’s Executive Decision Centre. The purpose of this component was to get input from a broad cross section of community stakeholders.

The consultation was conducted using a group decision support system also known as an electronic meeting system (EMS), an innovative facilitation process developed from research at the Queen’s School of Business. The Queen’s EMS, called “the Decision Centre”, combines expert facilitation with a state of the art group decision support system to enable groups to rapidly accelerate idea generation and consensus building. This facility consists of a network of laptops accessing software designed to support idea generation, idea consolidation, idea evaluation and planning. The tool supports, but does not replace, verbal interaction; typically 25% of interaction takes place on the computers. Feedback from groups who have used the Executive Decision Centre process includes: meeting times can be cut in half; participation goes way up; better idea generation and alternative evaluation; a more structured process; and automatic documentation of deliberations.

Over 500 organizations around North America use the Centre for meetings such as: strategic planning, visioning, annual planning, focus groups, team building, budgeting, program review, project planning, risk assessment, job profiling, 360 degree feedback, alternative evaluation, new product development and a variety of other meeting types.

In the consultations, participants were asked, for example, “*What are the challenges and needs with respect to rural community and economic development and making your region a vital community (economic, social, health)?*” Participants typed in ideas on the laptops all of which appeared on a public screen at the front of the room. These ideas were then discussed and categorized into common themes. The group was then asked “if we could only address five of these in the next year, which ones are most critical?” Individuals selected his/her top 5 and the overall results were then displayed to the group and further discussed.