Lethbridge Regional Collaboration Workshop Report

Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities
ACSRC Report # 27 – 16 No. 3 of 9
Lethbridge Regional Collaboration
Workshop Report

Authors
Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities

Acknowledgements
These notes were created by the staff of the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities, University of Alberta – Augustana Campus.

The creation of this report would not have been possible without the many voices heard at the Lethbridge Regional Collaboration Session. No particular observation or comment should be attributed to any specific individual, unless otherwise specified. Any errors in description or interpretation are those of the author.

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2016
Executive Summary

On November 24, 2015 The Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities (ACSRC) at the University of Alberta conducted a regional collaboration workshop in Lethbridge Alberta. The event was one of seven workshops held in communities across Alberta from April 2015 and March 2016. Twenty six participants engaged in this event.

The purpose of the event was to bring representatives from a wide variety of areas including rural municipalities, regional economic development alliances, rural associations (AUMA, AAMDC), Aboriginal communities, and not-for-profit and private sector associations. The inclusion of these groups in this event was meant to create a balance of inter-sectoral representation with geographic, political and social considerations. During this event, a three-part collaboration and capacity-building exercise took place.

The three parts to this event were in the form of exercises to help enable regional collaboration within the context of rural Alberta. The exercises were as follows: (1) Establishing criteria for identifying and prioritizing high-impact action areas; (2) Establishing priority areas, themes, questions and actions for regional collaboration (based on (1)); and (3) Completing a 4-phase scenario planning process (see for example HHL based on 1 and 2 (above) in order to (1) identify core problems and frame their analyses; (2) identify assumptions and models about regional collaboration; (3) discussing and evaluating current trends; and (4) developing scenarios for the "ideal" regional future.
Introduction

Collaboration within and between regions is a priority area for rural Alberta, and improved/increased partnerships are key elements in potentially reducing costs, increasing economic benefits and focusing planning services and project development. Particularly with the gradual adoption of the Land Use Framework, there are increased pressures upon rural communities to integrate, collaborate and partner in innovative ways, as well as a need for opportunities to consider the form, function and implications of regional collaboration. This is particularly true from the perspective of the regional development alliances, rural municipalities and rural service providers, and is clearly recognized in Strategy 5.1 of the Rural Alberta Economic Development Action Plan (2014). As a result, finding mechanisms to not just foster collaboration, but engage community-based stakeholders in a broader process of determining priorities, impact areas, needs, gaps and future scenarios are important components of this process. It is these mechanisms that will drive the workshops.

This project facilitated the design, implementation and evaluation of a series of facilitated regional collaboration workshops in locations around the province. These workshops were structured around three primary goals: (1) identifying priority and high-impact areas for regional, inter-municipal, inter-organizational and REDA-oriented collaboration; (2) establishing necessary conditions for success for these areas; and (3) engaging the participants in a broader process of scenario planning to identify both those conditions, and the external/internal factors that can facilitate, and frustrate, success collaboration of this form. On the conclusion, approximately 200 stakeholders from rural community, policy and economic sectors (including governance, natural resources, infrastructure, energy, small/medium enterprise, education, social service providers and health) will have been engaged.

We believe that these workshops proved a valuable means of not only fostering the connections and relationships necessary to develop meaningful collaboration, but also as a way of determining the local, regional and provincial priority areas that can best achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the Rural Alberta Economic Development Action Plan in 2014.
Regional Collaboration

Today’s economic, social and environmental challenges demand that people, industries and institutions work together. While regional collaboration can be addressed in many ways, this event took place in a one day workshop with a goal to help support and better enable regional collaboration within Alberta. Some of the benefits of regional collaboration involve:

- Finding new resources and capacities to cope with challenges
- Fostering discourse
- Synthesize ideas and needs
- Building relationships

Methodology

Four different exercises were conducted during the workshop. The four exercises used rotating table discussion. The main topics discussed included identify potential areas for collaboration, what is the ideal future for the Grande Prairie region was seen as, where was collaboration most needed and what were the possible trends and patterns.

Objectives

The outcomes of the event were as follows:
1. To increase rural dialogue and engagement with the concept, practices, opportunities and challenges of regional collaboration.
2. To increase inter-regional communication and knowledge sharing through the transfer of priorities, futures and success criteria.
3. To link regional economic development alliances and initiatives with both governance, economic, environmental, social and planning stakeholders at the regional level.
4. To engage Aboriginal community leadership with regional development and governance initiatives.
5. To create opportunities for regional collaborations and partnerships to build capacity, share knowledge and develop collaborative opportunities and initiatives.
6. The evaluation of prioritization and scenario planning methods through workshop and project evaluation.
7. To identify regionally-based needs, gaps, opportunities and capitals that support long-term community sustainability in rural Alberta.
Project Evaluation

This project will undertake a post-facto evaluation of regional collaboration through an online survey of workshop participants in late 2016. This evaluation is premised on an already validated theory of change that supports activities such as asset mapping, scenario planning, prioritization and horizon scanning as initiatives that can spark long-term discussion, planning and even action within rural communities. While these workshops are far from the only causal factor that will influence the nature, form and content of collaboration, we will assess the effects of these workshops as triggers or facilitators of increased and/or high-impact collaboration. These data will be cross-referenced with on-site event evaluations conducted at the conclusion of each workshop.
Summary of Findings

Session 1: World Café

SUMMARY: The first session of the workshop involved discussion around identifying potential areas for collaboration; challenges to collaboration; and clarifying the “region” in regional collaboration.

Before discussing potential areas, the participants identified existing collaborations. Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) were seen as an existing, effective collaboration.

Lethbridge airport was identified as an asset in terms of contributing to the capacity of the region to hold large events.

A recent effective collaboration was in emergency management of the floods in southern Alberta. While nobody was interested in having all collaboration being disaster driven, it was noted that disasters are very effective in cutting through social and cultural barriers that typically hinder effective collaboration. They also provide a proving ground that it is possible to collaborate in spite of those barriers.

Potential areas identified for regional collaboration during the workshop included:

- Social innovation such as food hubs. Food hubs promote food sovereignty and security, while providing a product amalgamation centre for local producers. They are also an area that draws interest from a variety of sectors. For example, Alberta Health Services sits on a local committee for food hubs.

- Access to broadband. High speed internet is a key issue being that many rural communities do not have the access that supports economic development. There was a concern that the lack of high speed internet makes communities less competitive for attracting new business and residents and may even drive existing businesses. Participants noted that there needed to be grants from the government in order for high speed internet in all rural Alberta communities to become a reality. Pincher Creek is working with Axia to explore the possibility of establishing a fibre network in town.

- Public transportation between communities. It is lacking and no action has yet been taken on the issue.

- Renewable energy. Both sun and wind are plentiful renewable natural resources in the region.
• Workforce attraction. It was acknowledged that this is an issue and can have high impact. However, there has yet to be a successful collaboration develop on the issue.

• Health services. Participants felt that the move to a provincial level board didn’t actually serve the region well. They stated a preference for more regional boards and regional oversight in collaborating for the wellbeing of citizens in the region.

• Resource management. Water management is included in this area of collaboration, given that access to water can be a particular issue given that water licences are fully allocated in the South Saskatchewan River basin. Resource management was identified as being greater than merely addressing environmental issues due to the social and economic impacts that are tied to resource management. An example given was that of the oil and gas sector where development involves broad reaching environmental costs that are born by the whole region, while the benefits of the development accrue to the oil and gas companies.

• Tourism. Destination management is being done by several groups in the region but everyone needs to come together to do it.

Identified challenges to collaboration included the fact that it is easy to make collaboration happen on new projects where everyone is excited, but they are difficult to maintain over the long term. It can also be difficult to connect resources between communities.

While participants acknowledged that there can be challenges bringing communities together to collaborate, Aboriginal communities were also seen as particularly challenging. Major challenges in collaborating with Aboriginal groups included the fact that they possessed different ideas of nationhood resulting in reserves having various departments with various leaders of these departments making communication difficult. The biggest problem acknowledged by the participants of the regional collaboration workshop was the mismatch in priorities coming from the fact that Aboriginal communities face historical and ongoing challenges.

Ways to improve opportunities for collaboration with Aboriginal groups included acknowledging that non-Aboriginal communities needed to share knowledge with Aboriginal communities as opposed to transmit information. Participants also cited a need to come to Aboriginal communities instead of asking them to come to them and making an effort to be more open. Resources were also key factors in collaboration as Aboriginal communities were not equal in terms of the resources they possessed. The most important way to improve collaboration with Aboriginal
communities was recognizing that relationships need to be developed and maintained beyond the context of a collaboration: it isn’t just about coming together when a community needs someone or something. Thus, there is a need to establish ties and develop an ongoing relationship with the community as well as individuals within it.

Ultimately, it was acknowledged that history has had impacts and needs repair but there is also a need to keep inviting these groups to events and to never let the absence of these groups deter other groups from trying to invite them to events.

Of the collaborations discussed, areas identified with the highest potential for collaboration included:

- Health services
- Access to broadband
- FCSS. Even though the FCSS is already working effectively in collaborations, its continued efforts were identified as having high impact on the region’s citizens.

The question of what was considered a region was posed to the participants. Responses were as follows:

- Calgary/southern Alberta region
- Depends on the project/issue
- Formal regions defined by the government or organization in question
- Some regions overlap
- Depends on your audience, it could be Canada, Western Canada, Southern Alberta
- May be restricting to formalize it
- Involves administrative AND ecological boundaries
Session 2: Scenario Planning
This section involved a three part scenario planning exercise. First, a discussion of a potential future collaboration which involves identifying what values, principles, actions and structures were ideal for regional collaboration as well as what regional collaboration looks like and why it matters. Second, a look at proximal and distal causes - those things that will have immediate and arm’s length impact on the collaboration. The third step goes further out again, looking at trends and patterns that could affect the collaboration.

SUMMARY: Potential future collaboration
Values and principles identified as important to regional collaboration included:

- Evaluation. If the collaboration was effective, ensure it is documented as a template for similar future collaborations.
- Need initiators/leaders to get the ball rolling. By showing that you can and are doing something, others will get on board.
- Communication. Having a common language and terms of reference with clear shared objectives. Also ensuring stakeholders are aware of what the collaboration is doing.
- Being flexible and entrepreneurial.
- Shared vision. All members of a collaboration start from a common understanding. Any who join later must share that vision. There must also be the freedom to leave the collaboration if it no longer serves the member or the member can no longer serve the collaboration.
- Trust
- Focusing on the collaboration and not the individual organizational member, but still balancing the needs of the members with the needs of the region.
- Shared way of managing conflicts.
- Shared distribution of work. Everyone who is part of the collaboration contributes, not just we all support the idea but only a few actually work on it.
● Making sure the community and voice of the community are supported and celebrated.

● Diversity of experience and thoughts; welcoming alternative perspectives.

● Data driven. There needs to be reliable information to support your project.

● Sharing of resources, including data/information.

The twinning of Highway 3 was given as an example to illustrate the importance of these values and principles. The communities along Highway 3 worked together to improve transportation safety by twinning the highway. Participants cited that identifying similar needs and a vision with which all communities along highway 3 could identify was key to the success of this initiative.

Structures and actions for a successful collaboration included:

● Communication structure. In particular, one-to-one communication was especially important in rural areas. Individuals noted that the local library had previously taken on an initiate to provide video conferencing services but it was found to be less effective than face-to-face contact. However, due to the location of rural communities, in person interaction is often impractical as small town administrations and social organizations cannot afford these travel expenses.

● Shared administration.

● Iterative planning process. Always coming back to the plan and revamping it as the situation demands.

● Deliberative development of the committee. The people who have the time to work on a project aren’t always the ones you want or need. Have a clear idea of the skillset you need, and find the people who can fill it.

● Circle trips. Engaging members of a collaboration by visiting member municipalities to see where they share issues on which they could collaborate or, in an active collaboration, to see how the collaboration is working for each of them.

● Infrastructure. Physical structures identified as important to collaboration included the library, the airport and Highway 3.
The primary reason collaboration matters, is that by coming together as a group, the region’s issues are given legitimacy.

SUMMARY: Proximal and Distal Variables that Affect Collaboration

Proximal variables can be seen as “what affects me immediately/over what have I got immediate control.” The following are proximal variables identified by participants:

- Being able to identify issues at a regional, rather than organizational or single community, level

- Self-interest/personal agendas or organizational mandates. Not being upfront about challenges or issues that your organization may have with the project or limitations you have in contributing to the collaboration.

- Reframing the issue at hand. For example, there is often hand-wringing over retaining youth, but it is natural for youth to leave and explore the wider world. The issue needs to be reframed as “how do we attract young families” rather than “how do we retain youth.”

- Location. It makes sense to collaborate with those in your immediate proximity.

- Bringing the right people into the collaboration.

- Allocating resources. Ensure that the budget includes an allocation of staff time/money to the collaboration.

- Playing to different strengths.

- Know your environment. Knowledge of the social, geographic and political environments is important as participants suggested that collaboration tends to be initiated by resources on the table.

- Investing the time to find out what is/has already happened on this issue; and whether there is interest regionally to address it.

- Having a leader or champion for the collaboration.
Distal variables can be seen as “arm’s length variables.” Some examples of distal variables cited during the workshop include:

- History of antagonism between communities or organizations.
- Political cycle. Priorities change with each election and that leads to inefficiencies and uncertainty in funding.
- Turnover in personnel.
- Changes in funding allocations.
- Natural disasters. You have no control over them but they define the problem for you.
- Lacking knowledge/capacity to effectively engage Aboriginal communities.
- Personality conflicts.
- Provincial policy and regulation can either encourage or hamper collaboration.
- Access to leadership training. Rural communities rely highly on groups of skilled volunteers to implement programing and collaborations. As many leadership training opportunities are in large urban centers, many rural communities simply do not have access to these opportunities due to the expenses involved with going to these centers.

**SUMMARY: Trends and Patterns**

This section involved identifying the trends and patterns that could impact regional collaboration.

Trends and patterns that were discussed during this workshop included:

- The increase in the number of refugees and immigrants in the area which brings new issues and opportunities for collaboration.
- Demographic shifts. An aging population and diminishing workforce. In farming, older people are retiring and younger people don’t have the hands on experience. There is a need to address that knowledge gap.
- Youth are increasingly interested in having their voices heard.
• An over-emphasis on collaboration. It isn’t an appropriate model for everything.

• Concerns as a result of how regions have been consolidated in other areas of the country that have created problems such as emergency response. The resultant gaps from reorganizations have left some areas without adequate emergency coverage. As the trend seems to be toward municipal amalgamation, it is important to do it in such a way that services continue, uninterrupted, for all residents.

• The importance of the Municipal Government Act – which impacts ability for small communities to merge and make collaborations.

• Climate Change Act. Conventional energy is likely to cost more; is this an opportunity for a renewable energy collaboration in the region?

• Increasing interest in local food and food security.

• Increasingly things are being done online from government services, to banking to education. This is a problem for communities that don’t have access to broadband.

• The global economy. Things happening across the world can impact our economic situation here.

• Question of what will happen if we do not collaborate

When asked if regional collaboration was necessary, the participants overwhelmingly agreed. It was identified that many rural municipalities face the similar situation of orbiting an urban centre, which can draw people and resources away from the municipality. But the urban centre could also be a source of population for people who would like to live a more rural lifestyle. Participants noted that the region does have a reputation for being good collaborators. Some the greater benefits of collaboration mentioned during the workshop included its cost effectiveness. There can be a duplication of resources and effort where collaboration is not undertaken. It is also powerful when done well and the issues of the region becomes noticed on a wider scale, including by higher levels of government. Despite the fact that it is a lot more work to collaborate than to do something by oneself, the end result is more effective.

The workshop ended with a discussion surrounding the best way to collaborate regionally. Participants cited that the best way to collaborate regionally was to adapt
to a knowledge-based economy. They noted that a small proportion of Alberta’s population complete post-secondary education. This makes the workforce less resilient to economic downturns. It is also important to highlight that the definition of blue collar is not what it used to be: technology has influenced the blurring between white and blue collar jobs. Participants then noted that people will have two to three careers in their lifetime. Because of this constant reinvention, younger people are more comfortable with constant change as opposed to previous generations. Additionally, information sharing was seen as important. This is due to the fact that most organizations do not have the capacity to examine implications of policy and tend to rely on academics for this purpose.
Responses – From Participant Comments on Evaluations

Following the event, evaluations were e-mailed to the participants. 10 evaluation forms were returned.

Quantitative Responses

Tables 1-3 account for the means of each of the quantitative questions given. Participants were given each of the following questions and asked to rate their satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being not at all and 5 being very much so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: Meeting of Goals</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did the workshop define and explain the scenario planning process and purpose</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent did the workshop discuss the ideal future for regional collaboration and what factors may positively or negatively affect collaboration</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2: Agreement with the following statements</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I had sufficient opportunity to participate in discussions.</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt I could make a contribution to the issues being discussed.</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My work was valued during the workshop.</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The presentations were appropriate and relevant to the event.</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 3: Overall satisfaction with the event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, how satisfied were you with this event?</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative Responses

When asked what the participants liked the most about the workshop, four participants cited the information and ideas that were collected, three stated the opportunities with other agencies, two said the conversations and another two highlighted the insights and discussions from others around the table. Table 4 accounts for all responses to this question. Overall, participants were pleased with the types of groups present at this event.
83% of respondents believed that there were just enough people at this event, 17% did not think that there were too few people at the event. When asked what groups and organization should have been present, participants suggested a greater representation of Aboriginal groups and First Nations communities. Other groups mentioned included disability services, the county of Cardston and school divisions. Table 5 accounts for all responses to this question.

When asked how the event can be improved, participants cited an overall need for more direction and facilitation during the event. For all responses, see Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4: All Responses to the question what did you like best about the workshop?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information and ideas that were gathered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reporting from the tables - the sharing of what others were doing or hoped to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking with other agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insights and discussion from others around the table - found a potential opportunity for collaboration!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing Opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding a different point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with new people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking with various minds/organization/partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with groups that may not come into contact otherwise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussing success stories and ways to achieve success</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5: All Responses to the question are there other groups/organizations/practitioners you feel should have been represented, or included in the future?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tech innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First nations communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller towns and villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defiantly larger cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta Southwest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal communities/organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School divisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More disability services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boards- cooperate and educational -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber of Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Lethbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not for profits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Cardston</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE 6**: All Responses to the question *what are your suggestions for improving the event?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The purpose of the workshop wasn't entirely clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would have been more helpful to have more context about collaboration in the region that would allow the conversation to &quot;dig deeper&quot; and actually discuss solutions and initiates more effectively. It would also be good connect with other experts on collaboration e.g. collective impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions are very open ended and words. Sometimes confusing. Could be used to spur further more specific conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More facilitator direction, examples</td>
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<tr>
<td>More discussion and direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great work. I would have liked the date and info sooner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit more guidance? Case studies/ examples from other region, jurisdictions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### List of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberta Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Cardston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Galt Museum and Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRC RCMP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lethbridge Sport Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lethbridge Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friesen Farms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cows and Fish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lethbridge College, Regional</td>
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<td>Lethbridge College, Regional</td>
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<td>Lethbridge College, Regional</td>
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<tr>
<td>SouthGrow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pincher Creek</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exhibition Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environment Lethbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardston and District Community Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County of Cardston</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spinal Cord Injury AB</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW Regional Collaborative Service Delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>JSTL GOA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Village of Glenwood</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer Lethbridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lethbridge County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Lethbridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Pincher Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barons-Eureka-Warner FCSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Lethbridge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A. Project Backgrounder

Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities Regional Collaboration Workshops Backgrounder:

The Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities (ACSRC) at the University of Alberta is conducting a series of regional collaboration workshops in 7 different communities dispersed across Alberta between April 2015 and March 2016. These workshops will bring together representatives from rural municipalities, regional economic development alliances, rural associations (AUMA, AAMDC), Aboriginal communities, and not-for-profit and private sector associations to engage in a 3-part collaboration and capacity-building exercise. The participants in these workshops ideally create a balance of inter-sectoral representation with geographic, political and social considerations.

Specifically, each workshop will engage these participants in three different exercises to help support and better enable regional collaboration in Alberta: (1) Establishing criteria for identifying and prioritizing high-impact action areas; (2) Establishing priority areas, themes, questions and actions for regional collaboration (based on (1)): and (3) Completing a 4-phase scenario planning process (see for example HHL (www.scenarioplanning.eu)) based on 1 and 2 (above) in order to (1) identify core problems and frame their analyses; (2) identify assumptions and models about regional collaboration; (3) discussing and evaluating current trends; and (4) developing scenarios for the "ideal" regional future. (Note: This approach was recently used by the ACSRC as part of a Land Use Planning and Municipal Governance project, and was extremely well-received by the 65+ municipal participants). Through the implementation of these 7 workshops, this project will support meeting the following objectives:

1. Increase rural dialogue and engagement with the concept, practices, opportunities and challenges of regional collaboration;
2. Increase inter-regional communication and knowledge sharing through the transfer of priorities, futures and success criteria;
3. Link regional economic development alliances and initiatives with both governance, economic, environmental, social and planning stakeholders at the regional level;
4. Engage Aboriginal community leadership with regional development and governance initiatives;
5. Create opportunities for regional collaborations and partnerships to build capacity, share knowledge and develop collaborative opportunities and initiatives;
6. Evaluation of prioritization and scenario planning methods through workshop and project evaluation;
7. Identify regionally-based needs, gaps, opportunities and capitals that support long-term community sustainability in rural Alberta.
Appendix B: Project Information and Consent to Participate Form

Rural Alberta Regional Collaboration Workshops
Given your experience and role as a community and/or government representative, you are being asked to participate in a workshop as part of a research study to further develop the collaborative capacity and regional cooperation in rural Alberta.

Objectives:
The objectives of this project are to: (1) increase rural dialogue and engagement with the concept, practices, opportunities and challenges or regional collaboration; (2) increase inter-regional communication and knowledge sharing through the transfer of priorities, futures and success criteria; (3) link regional economic development alliances and initiatives with both governance, economic, environmental, social and planning stakeholders at the regional level; (4) engage aboriginal community leadership with regional development and governance initiatives; (5) create opportunities for regional collaborations and partnerships to build capacity, share knowledge and develop collaborative opportunities and initiatives; (6) evaluation of prioritization and scenario planning methods through workshop and project evaluation; (7) identity regionally-based needs, gaps, opportunities and capitals that support long-term community sustainability in rural Alberta.

Background:
The data from these workshops will be one component of data collection. Your participation is totally voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time.

This one day workshop will give participants the opportunity to engage in three different exercises to help support and better enable regional collaboration in Alberta: (1) establishing criteria for identifying and prioritizing high-impact action areas; (2) establishing priority areas, themes, questions and actions for regional collaboration; and (3) completing a 4-phase scenario planning process based on 1 and 2.

Confidentiality and Data storage:
The data and results of this project are confidential. In no way will you be personally identified in any of the data collected, or in the results (reports, articles, papers, etc.). After the workshop is completed, confidential data (notes, etc.) will be stored (both hard and soft copies) in a locked cabinet in a locked storage room accessible only to departmental administrative staff. Electronic data are encrypted as per University of Alberta policy, and data will be destroyed after 5 years. Only trained ACSRC staff and the project team will have access to the data.

Benefits:
This project may not have any direct benefits for you. It is possible that you will become aware of new resources or capacity that are applicable to you, or your organization, to cope with challenges, areas of concern or areas where your
organization excels.

**Risks:**
Participating in this workshop may present some minor risks to you: It is possible that the questions and discussion in this workshop may trigger unpleasant memories or experiences. If this is the case, you may withdraw at any time you choose (even if only for a few minutes) and we will remove your input (See below).

**Freedom to withdraw from the workshop:**
Even after you have agreed to participate, you can decide to withdraw or not complete the process. This can be done at any time, and we will remove your contribution from the data collected.

**Use of your Information:**
This project is being undertaken by the University of Alberta, with additional support being provided by part-time staff at the University of Alberta. This project is being funded by the Government of Alberta, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. The responses will be compiled and presented in a report, as well as in supporting documents required by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. None of the reports will have your name or identifying information in them. Organizations will not be identified by name without prior written consent of appropriate personnel at that organization.

**Investigators:**
If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate contacting the persons listed below.

| Lars Hallstrom, PhD  
| Associate Professor & Director, ACSRC  
| Departments of Political Studies/Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology  
| University of Alberta  
| Phone: (780) 679-1661  
| Email: lars.hallstrom@ualberta.ca |

**Additional Contacts:**
If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a participant, or how this study is being conducted, you may contact the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615. This office has no affiliation with the study investigators.

Thank you for your contribution to this research project!
CONSENT FORM

Do you understand that you have been asked to participate in a workshop as part of a research study to further develop the collaborative capacity and regional cooperation in rural Alberta?

YES  NO

Do you understand that the information collected in this workshop is part of a project led by University of Alberta personnel funded by the Government of Alberta, Department of Agriculture and Rural Development?

YES  NO

Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this workshop?

YES  NO

Do you understand that you can choose to not participate, or you can choose to withdraw at any point during your participation in the process?

YES  NO

Do you understand that the information that you provide will be kept in strict confidence and that any link between your responses and your name/organization name will be destroyed?

YES  NO

Do you know that you can contact the researchers below if you have any questions about the research or the interview?

YES  NO

Do you give us (the researchers) permission to use the data and the information that you provided for the purposes specified?

YES  NO

Do you give us permission to use the data and the information that you provided in this workshop for future research and analysis?

YES  NO
I agree to take part in this workshop.

YES  NO

Name (please print):                     Date:

Signature:

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate contacting the persons listed below.

| Lars Hallstrom, PhD            |
| Associate Professor & Director, ACSRC |
| Departments of Political Studies/Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology |
| University of Alberta          |
| Phone: (780) 679-1661          |
| Email: lars.hallstrom@ualberta.ca |

Please Note:
The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at 780-492-2615
Appendix C: Agenda

**Rural Alberta Regional Collaboration Workshops**
**Funded by the Government of Alberta**
**Lethbridge, AB**
**November 24, 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:10</td>
<td>Welcome and Introduction</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 10:10 – 11:00 | World Café  
Identify potential areas for collaboration  
High impact |
| 11:00 – 11:15 | Break                                                                   |
| 11:00 – 12:00 | Plenary Session  
Top potential areas for regionalized collaboration |
| 12:00 – 13:00 | **Lunch**                                                               |
| 13:00 – 13:40 | Regional Collaboration – what is the ideal future for this region?     |
| 13:40 – 14:20 | 1) Proximal and Distal Causes  
2) What are we missing?                                                   |
| 14:20 – 14:30 | **Break**                                                               |
| 14:30 – 15:10 | Trends and Patterns                                                     |
| 15:10 – 16:00 | Plenary Discussions                                                      |
Appendix D: Workshop PowerPoint

Rural Alberta Regional Collaboration Workshop: Lethbridge
Lars K. Hellstrom, Irish MacKinnon, and Wilissa Reich
Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities
University of Alberta
Funding provided by Government of Alberta

Welcome and Introduction

World Café
- Identify potential areas for collaboration
- Which of these areas has the highest impact

Plenary Session
- Which of these potential areas of collaboration are the most critical, viable, or would have the greatest impact for the region

What Scenario Planning is and isn’t
- Scenario planning is a tool
- Scenario planning is about exploring the future
- Scenario planning Does Not predict the future
- Scenario planning provides ‘clues’ for what could be key drivers of change
Regional Collaboration—What is the ideal future for this region?

- What values, principals, actions and structures are ideal for regional collaboration?
- What does it look like and why does it matter?

What Affects Collaboration: proximal/distal causes and what are we missing

- Identify things that have immediate or arm length effects on regional collaboration and regionalization.
- Distinguish between things that they have influence over and things that happen to them.
- What are the key elements along the way that we need to recognize that we often don't recognize?
- What do we know, know we don't know, and what are we missing?
- What are the things people aren't thinking of in terms of regional and interregional relationships?
- What are the implications of this knowledge?

Trends and Patterns

- What are the trends?
- What is likely in terms of this region and collaboration?
- What are the trends in arm length variables identified in previous session?

Plenary Session

- What is the best way to collaborate regionally?
- What are your table's top 2 ways to do that?

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