



WORKFORCE CAPACITY & RECRUITMENT STUDY

Workforce Recruitment Strategy & Action Plans

Town of Mayerthorpe and Lac Ste Anne County

Prepared by:



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY
TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY



Town of Mayerthorpe
Box 420, 4911 Denny Hay Drive
Mayerthorpe, Alberta
T0E 1N0

Phone: (780) 786-2416
Fax: (780) 786-4590

www.mayerthorpe.ca

Lac Ste Anne County
56521 Range Road 65
Sangudo, Alberta
T0E 2A0

Phone: (780)785-3411
Fax: 780)785-2359

www.lzac.ca

PHASE 2

QUALITATIVE LABOUR MARKET DATA COLLECTION AND SURVEYS

PHASE 3

RECRUITMENT STRATEGY AND ACTION PLANS



McSweeney & Associates
121 Crystal Green Bay
Okotoks, AB T1S 2N4
Phone: 1-855-300-8548 X208
Fax: 1-866-299-4313
Email: consult@mcsweeney.ca
Website: www.mcsweeney.ca

Table of Contents

- 1 INTRODUCTION 1**
 - 1.1. Purpose of Workforce Capacity and Recruitment Study 1
- 2 PHASE 2: QUALITATIVE LABOUR MARKET SURVEYS 2**
 - 2.1. What We Did..... 2
 - 2.2. Survey Response 3
 - 2.3. Workforce Summit..... 3
 - 2.4. What Were the Big Picture Findings of Phase 2? 6
- 3 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES 8**
 - 3.1. Business Opportunities Identified by Survey Respondents 8
- 4 PHASE 3: RECRUITMENT STRATEGY & ACTION PLANS..... 12**
 - 4.1. How Do We Recruit, Attract and Retain Workers and Talent? 13
 - 4.2. How do we Retain, Attract and Develop Employers? 14
 - 4.3. How Do We Renew/Redevelop Our Communities & Improve Quality of Life?..... 17
 - 4.4. Overarching Recommendations 20
- 5 CONCLUSION 21**
- APPENDIX A - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN 22**
- APPENDIX B - WORKFORCE SUMMIT WORKSHEETS 28**



1 Introduction

1.1. Purpose of Workforce Capacity and Recruitment Study

Workforce issues are increasingly driving economic development planning. Labour force invariably is the #1 issue of any business. More and more, investment attraction work is centred on the availability of talent in the labour force - in Alberta, and across Canada.

The genesis of this project was the recognition of the need for a Workforce Study and Action Plan(s) that will support economic development efforts and address the workforce needs of both existing and potential businesses. What this Study has done is to ‘turn economic development on its head’ - meaning that while traditional economic development practice is to analyse the existing industrial base and develop strategies to attract businesses using that strength, this project has analysed the workforce of the Region to build strategies that would use the strength of their workforce to attract/retain businesses and then attract the workers that complement its industrial strengths.

In Phase 1 of this study, we developed an in-depth labour profile of the Region, based upon available data, including 2017 business and 2016 census data. Phase 2 was designed to build on the Phase 1 indicators, to validate the Phase 1 findings and add current, first-hand perspectives from a variety of sources. The opinions and observations gathered probed and built on the analysis to provide a more comprehensive view of current and future workforce-related issues. We also probed and examined a number of economic opportunities for the Region.

Finally in Phase 3, we brought together the results of Phases 1 and 2 to formulate strategies and action plans that would address the Region’s key challenges that emerged.



2 Phase 2: Qualitative Labour Market Surveys

2.1. What We Did...

We used a variety of methods to gain input from the Region. Our methods included:

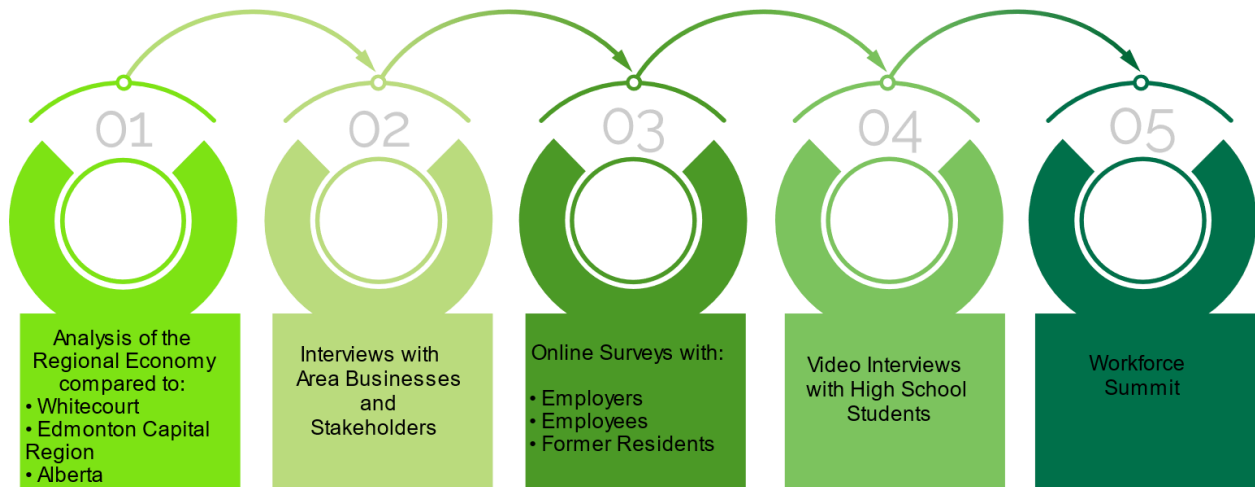
- In-person interviews with business owners and managers to determine their views on current and anticipated future workforce challenges. The number and types of businesses were determined using the situation analysis done in Phase 1 to achieve a representative sample;
- An on-line survey of the Region's residents who are employed to gain their perspectives on employment, commuting patterns, their ability to adapt to changing technology and work demands and aspects of life in the community that influence their willingness to stay in the area;
- An exercise with high school students - the Region's future entrepreneurs - to get their perspectives on future opportunities and how their community should grow and develop;
- An online survey using municipal Facebook pages to gather input from employees and residents who have moved away to gain an understanding of why it was necessary to leave and what - if anything - might lure them back to the Region;
- In-person interviews with local leaders, service providers, economic development agencies and partners, providers of advanced training and workforce development;
- In all cases, those interviewed were asked for perspectives on local and Regional economic opportunities that might create new growth or fill voids that impact quality of life and community attractiveness for employers, workers and their families;
- A Workforce Summit was held on March 1st, 2018 that was well-attended by businesses, government and agencies. This was held to get feedback on findings, input on strategies and to build implementation networks.

The surveys probed geographic and sectoral differences in terms of workforce needs and challenges. The evolution of the local and Regional economies were examined with a view to better understand how these shifts in economic opportunities will drive workforce issues.



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY

TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY



2.2. Survey Response

In our experience, the survey response was exceptionally high in all categories. This reflects a high level of allegiance to the Region (even by many who have left), and a willingness to be involved in finding solutions to their concerns and capitalizing on opportunities.

- Businesses/employers: 18 in-depth interviews were completed and 18 on-line survey responses were received.
 - Key industries were identified in Phase I and were interviewed;
 - 38% of employers were from the County, 31% from the Town of Mayerthorpe and 31% from outside the Region, but having employees from the Region; and,
 - The size of businesses were Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and some on-line responses came from home-based businesses.
- Employees living in the Region: 101 completed on-line surveys were received.
- No Place Like Home: 55 completed on-line surveys were received from workers who had left the Region.
- Ten interviews were conducted with government and not-for-profit agencies that support business growth.
- Eight grade 12 students were interviewed from Mayerthorpe High School for their perspectives on their future in the Region.

2.3. Workforce Summit

The last step in our consultation process was to facilitate an input session with selected businesses, government representatives and Regional stakeholders. The Summit was held in



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY

TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

the Lac Ste. Anne Council Chambers on March 1, 2018. The turnout was exceptional and the entire group was very engaged in their tasks:

- Learning about the outcomes and challenges emerging from Phases 1 and 2.
- Developing practical and 'do-able' projects that would help address the opportunities and challenges identified.

The participants worked hard over the five-hour Summit and the results were impressive. As recorded in Appendix B and incorporated into the Implementation Plan (Appendix A), the group came up with truly actionable projects that responded to the Region's opportunities and challenges that would be low-cost, quick wins that would build the Region's economic development support system and be sustainable.

The group worked in teams of 5 or 6, who then presented their suggested projects to the room. Participants then 'put their money' on their favoured projects and those have been included in this report.

Detailed Summit Worksheets can be found in Appendix B.



Workforce Summit Stakeholders



2.4. What Were the Big Picture Findings of Phase 2?

Considering all of the input received, a number of cross-cutting findings emerged. Generally, these opinions were reflected by all groups:

- All groups interviewed or surveyed conveyed a high degree of loyalty to the Region. For instance, over 50% of former residents would return for “the right opportunity”.
- All groups were eager to talk and share their opinions. The process and study were well-received.
- There is a high degree of agreement on some issues regarding the Town of Mayerthorpe, which is considered the service and recreation centre for much of the Region:
 - The Town of Mayerthorpe has a perceived image problem - schools not up to par, drug and crime issues were cited - although not substantiated by school board and police data.
 - The core area of Mayerthorpe needs redevelopment to improve both the appearance and the range of shopping opportunities (frequently mentioned were hardware/building supplies, a good restaurant, coffee shop or pub - a gathering/meeting place, a good hotel, clothing and shoe stores).
- The Region could be more inclusive to newcomers.
- There are few opportunities for community members to meet or places to meet in, across the Region.
- There is little to do for all age groups in the evenings.
- The “Gasoline Alley North” development will be positive for the entire Region. Its failure may reinforce negative opinions of Mayerthorpe and the broader Region as a place to live or do business.
 - Lots in “Gasoline Alley North” are considered too expensive and many felt not competitive with other communities with more population and amenities.
- Tax rates in the Region are perceived as high as compared with neighbouring municipalities for both businesses and residential, and were frequently mentioned as deterrents for both business and residential attraction.
- Small & Medium Enterprises (SME’s) account for largest portion of job growth in the Region.



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY
TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

From the consultations, there emerged **3 key challenges** that the Region is facing:

1

How do we recruit, attract and retain workers and talent?

2

How do we retain, attract and develop employers?

3

How do we accomplish the community renewal and development/quality of life required to attract and retain the employees, talent, young people and employers we need for a vibrant economy?



3 Economic Opportunities

Where there is a challenge, there is almost always an opportunity. It is evident that the Region has not capitalised on its many strengths and economic assets. Diversification into sectors other than those comprising the Region's traditional economy is limited.

Several suggestions for business opportunities that could likely succeed in the Region were identified in the surveys. These could be either stand-alone businesses, or expansions and new product, service or business lines of existing businesses. What was clear was that many businesses had already responded to the downturn in Alberta's economy - diversifying by expanding their client base outside of Alberta/Canada, expanding project lines and services offered.

Opportunities identified by the survey respondents would assist in stemming the spending leakage that currently goes to Whitecourt, Stony Plain/Spruce Grove and Edmonton.

3.1. Business Opportunities Identified by Survey Respondents

Survey respondents as potential consumers and/or employees, suggested the following business opportunities.

Retail/Service

- Hardware and building supplies;
- Hotel/lodging (for both short and medium-term stays);
- Coffee shop/restaurant;
- Pub or sports bar/meeting places;
- Clothing/shoe stores;
- Computer, printer, stationery, office supplies;
- Car dealership, automotive/light truck service centre.



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY

TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

Industrial

Given the Region's location on Highway 43 that connects to the Canamex Trade Corridor as well as its access to a CNR railline and 3 natural gas pipelines, there were suggestions mainly made by existing businesses and Regional stakeholders for the following:

- Machine shop;
- Pellet Plant for alfalfa and other animal feed inputs;
- Trans-loading silica sand facility;
- Container yard/intermodal rail to truck or truck to rail;
- Grain and feed, livestock, crop products, fertilizer;
- Heavy equipment and diesel truck service centre.

Agricultural

The Town of Mayerthorpe is somewhat of a Regional centre for agri-business, that has further value-added opportunities given its transportation links as well as proximity to the farms and feedstock in the Region.

- On-farm diversification (specialty crops or livestock, niche products or processing);
 - Greenhouses;
 - Medicinal/recreational marijuana.
- Agri-tourism;
- Farm equipment dealership - New Holland or short-line company with full range of equipment to encourage a cluster and a competitive shopping for equipment;
- Equine (could include cattle handling - penning, squeezes, etc.) - stabling, equipment, trailers, feed, tack, maybe combine horse feed & other pet food;
- Local or Regional cattle sales - breeding stock, feeder sales;
- Increase value-added local processing, including grain and meat products;
- Develop a Regional food brand.



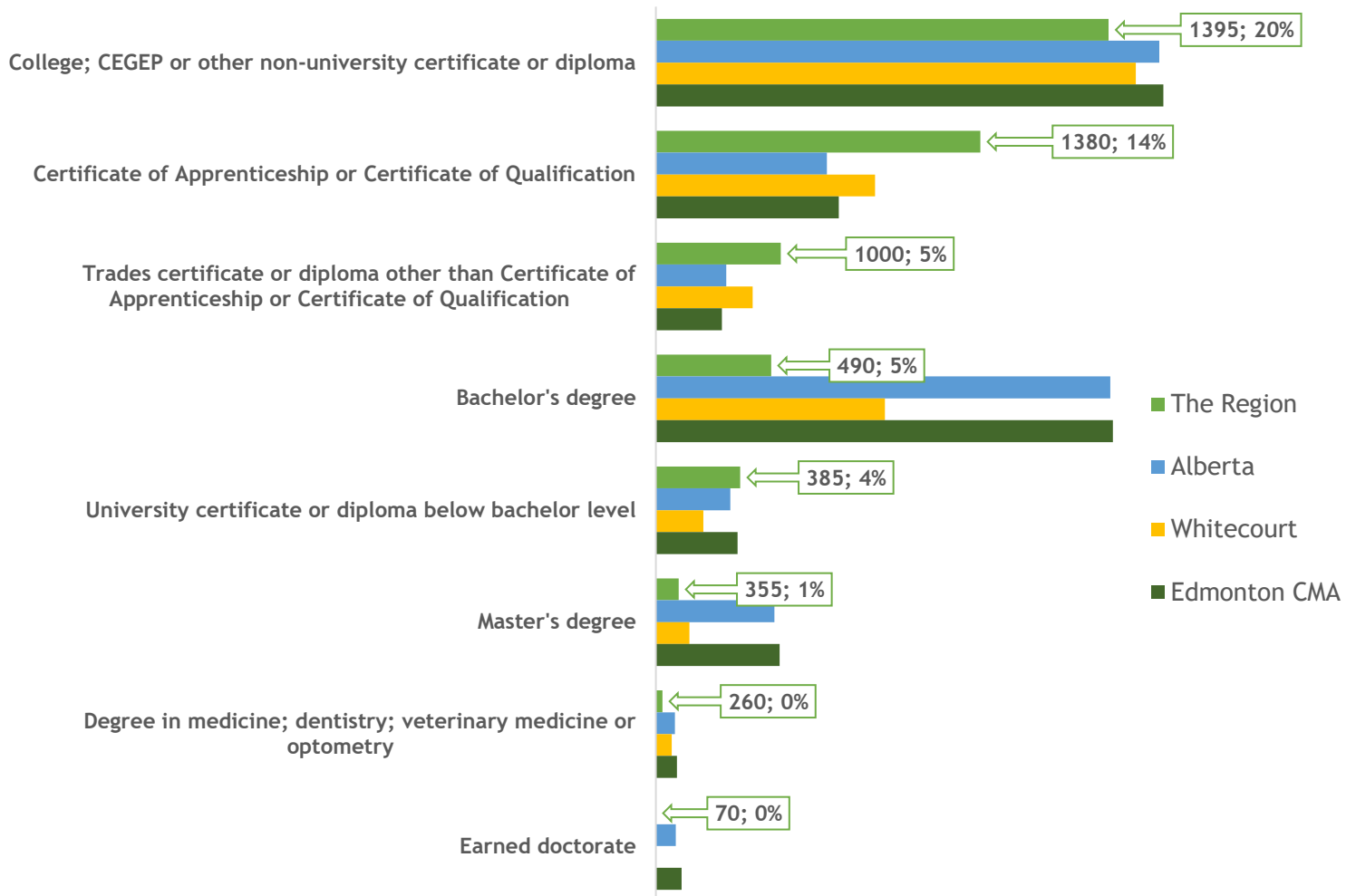
Opportunities Related to Workforce

- As indicated in Phase I of this Study, the Region has an exceptionally large labour pool of tradespeople as compared with its reference areas (Alberta, the Capital Region and Whitecourt). However, these workers are mainly commuting outside of the Region. Promoting to employers/businesses that require tradespeople the Region's talent pool could well bring in opportunities.
- With healthcare workers projected as growing and with the hospital and long-term care facilities in Mayerthorpe, the Region is well-placed to appeal to couples who often find it difficult to get employment for a spouse or a place for an aging parent.

As shown below, the Region has a large competitive advantage in its number of certified trades people and should use this to attract those industries that require those skills. However, those companies also need the accountants, engineers and marketing professionals that the Region needs to attract or nurture from within to attract and retain companies.



Double-Edged Sword: The Region's Competitive Advantage (and Disadvantage)



4 Phase 3: Recruitment Strategy & Action Plans

Through Phases 1 and 2:

- Quantitative data was used to develop economic base and workforce analyses for the Region.
- An situation analysis was completed for the overall Region and workforce profiles were created for the Town of Mayerthorpe, Lac Ste. Anne County and Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation.
- Qualitative data was gathered through in-person, telephone and on-line surveys and observations of the Region over a 4-week period.
- A Workforce Summit was held with the Region’s stakeholders and businesses.

From this work, **3 challenges** emerged that face the Region in terms of attracting and retaining both employees and employers. These were:

1	2	3
How do we recruit, attract and retain workers and talent?	How do we retain, attract and develop employers?	How do we accomplish the community renewal and development/quality of life required to attract and retain the employees, talent, young people and employers we need for a vibrant economy?

The Recruitment Strategies and Action Plans will be based upon meeting these three challenges. Following are the strategies and their implementation plans may be found in Appendix A.



4.1. How Do We Recruit, Attract and Retain Workers and Talent?

Objective

That the Region attract and retain people (of all income and skill levels) to live, work and shop in the Region and have jobs for spouses/partners.

Why this is important

Leakage of talent has been occurring as workers attempt to improve their situation and subsequently find better paying jobs in other parts of Alberta. The survey of those who left indicated that more than half would return for a good job opportunity. Return of workers may be conditional on other improvements or evidence of progress in the area reflected by better shopping, more housing options and some renewal of the community core or downtown areas.

Feedback was also given that while primary bread-winners may be able to find work in the Region, spouses/partners found it difficult in the Region. Additionally, employers cited difficulties in filling professionally qualified positions such as accountants, marketing professionals, project managers and engineers.

Strategies:

- 1) Retention and improvement of the existing workforce will cause the least disruption as employers diversify their business or implement new technologies. The survey of employees indicated that 80% felt they were capable of doing more, taking on more responsibility and learning new skills. There was also feedback that managerial/supervisor skills were sub-standard in many workplaces. Offering courses and having a business support network that responds to employee needs will assist in developing the Region's existing talent pool.
- 2) With families wanting to stay together and aging parents needing assistance, work with the long-term facilities to market the Region as a '4 Generation Caring Community'. This will not only appeal to families that are struggling to find a place to accommodate their parents' needs, but will also provide jobs for spouses in healthcare and related fields. Development of child daycare facilities may be needed to round out the offer.



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY

TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

- 3) An increased number of youth can be retained or attracted back after education. An approach proposed at the Summit is to implement two programs for high school students. The first would be aimed at grades 9 and 10 to introduce career ideas through job fairs and a school expo. The second is targeted to later grades and recent graduates to have career days that would create seasonal or internship positions with employers. Programs of this type have shown a high success rate in placing youth with future employers. These relationships frequently continue after graduation as both the student and employer become familiar and comfortable with the working relationship. The employer can train and build students' work skills to meet their specific needs.
- 4) A Homecoming or a major social event can play a role in attracting workers with roots in the Region, and is increasingly becoming an economic development tool for rural communities.

The surveys indicated that about half of existing employers grew up in the Region and they view it as "Home". Of those residents who have moved away, about 70% indicated some level of interest in returning for a homecoming because of attachments to friends and family. A Homecoming would be an opportunity to promote jobs available in the Region and provide resource material (as suggested at the Summit) to show the advantages of living and working in the area.

4.2. How do we Retain, Attract and Develop Employers?

Objective

To develop an employment base that makes optimal use of both the local workforce skills and economic assets.

Why this is important

The Region may not be able to compete with urban areas for many businesses. However, it can compete very well with other agricultural areas given its proximity to Edmonton while still providing small town, rural values and sense of home that came out in the surveys as being a major strength of the Region.

The Region should ensure a sufficient supply of serviced employment lands, including asphalt roads, natural gas, and high speed broadband to these lands, as well as to all existing businesses.



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY

TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

Most importantly, the Region needs to function as a Region, be inclusive and collective in its planning and development. This is not only to meet statutory requirements, but for functionality purposes such as economic development, planning and promotion. Our recommendation is to include the County, the Towns of Mayerthorpe and Onoway, and wherever possible the Alexis Nakota Sioux First Nation in this planning.

The challenge lies in converting what came through the Study as strong local support into real investment by both local businesses and outside investors by creating a very cost-competitive, business-friendly environment for business.

Strategies:

- 1) Market the Region's largest advantages - its high proportion of trades people, agricultural and healthcare workers, as compared to the Provincial average, proximity to Edmonton and its routes to market with Highway 43 that connects with the Canamex Trade Corridor and its CN railline. This should be marketed to the industries that use these skills for a targeted approach to industries that require the Region's talent pool, such as equipment manufacturers and fabricators. Once industries are identified, targeted marketing sheets for those industries, developing industry knowledge, attending targeted trade shows and establishing industry relationships would be core activities for the Region's economic development staff and supporters.

Another tactic could include an examination of the Region's value chains (input:output relationships) with existing businesses. The objective would be to fill the gaps and strengthen existing sectors and businesses within those sectors.

- 2) That the Town of Mayerthorpe proactively work in partnership with the developer of 'Gasoline Alley North' to encourage investment and uptake. Undertakings that should be considered include:
 - Facilitating any required planning review to ensure the properties are as ready as possible. The development approvals process should consider the appearance and attractiveness of buildings that face Highways 43 and 22, ensuring inviting, front-facing buildings.
 - Include the area in an Area Redevelopment Plan connecting Highway 22 and downtown, encouraging complementary uses of both commercial areas.
 - Engage and work with the development's real estate agent to put signs up with renderings of the developed property - to draw attention and signal that something is happening.
 - Commissioning of an appraisal by an independent appraiser, including a comparative analysis against other like properties on main Provincial highways - Highways 43, 16, 14, 2. In choosing



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY

TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

comparable locations, like-sized communities/local catchment and traffic counts should be factored in.¹

- Supply the real estate agent with data for their sales sheets that will be of interest: Comparative data from above appraisal, population, average income, Regional exporting figures, perhaps some of the quantitative data from this Study. Add note on sales sheets how the Town is 'Open for Business' and will work with all investors to achieve the best mutual outcome.
 - Post the sales sheets on the Council websites and Townfolio pages (and update the Townfolio pages).
 - Consider doing a trade area gap analysis to provide the data required to draw the attention of retail/commercial investors.
 - Consider the creation of an overall visitor signage program along Highways 43 and 22, as well as in the Town.
- 3) Interactions between businesses and the community can be improved with simplification and streamlining of processes as described at the Summit. Permitting and approval processes are being reviewed and it is timely to pursue improvements and test them soon - possibly with consultation facilitated through the Chambers of Commerce. As suggested at the Summit, a cross-Region Chamber of Commerce that could deliver some of the business support or tourism services for the municipalities, including the development of a Junior Chamber of Commerce would give additional resources to deliver economic development in the Region.
- 4) Develop a Regional Business Support Network along with existing organizations in Whitecourt and adjacent counties, accessing the Labour Market funding through the Ministry of Labour.
- 5) Currently, there is little capacity within the Region to implement needed economic development programs and integrated planning. We recommend the increasing of the capacity of the Region to provide support through both:
- Hiring a shared, experienced and qualified Economic Development Officer (preferably with an Ec.D);
 - The administrative merging of the small Chambers of Commerce in the Region. The merged Chambers could collectively afford a staff person who can respond to some issues that would supplement the work of the joint municipally-supported Economic Development Officer.

¹ Both national chain and local investors will typically consider the local market as their anchor/base income and passing trade as prospective/seasonal.



- 6) The Region needs to “grab and steer” the communications that have allowed negative perceptions to grow, resulting in a negative impact on community pride and confidence. The change needed requires a stream of more positive communications about the Region that might do at least two things:
- Feature success stories of new and growing businesses, student accomplishments in the Region and other celebrations that are source of pride;
 - Change the first impressions created by web searches that still bring up the ‘Mayerthorpe Tragedy’ as the first item listed by Google in a search on “Mayerthorpe”, by having a professional Search Engine Optimization Program put in place. The Fallen Four should be remembered and honoured, but should not be among the first impressions of Mayerthorpe and area when potential investors search online.
- 7) Address the needs expressed by employers for better temporary housing for contractors, as well as quality hotel, restaurant and coffee shops in the area that provide more enjoyable short stays and comfortable places for both business meetings and relaxation - serving both employers and employees.

4.3. How Do We Renew/Redevelop Our Communities & Improve Quality of Life?

Objective

Refresh and renew the appearance of the community core areas and downtowns to attract and retain the employers, workers and young people needed for a vibrant economy. Create a quality of life that competes favorably with similar agriculture-based Regions for investment, residents/workers and those who have left.

Why this is important

Quality of life and place is now one of the main determining factors in attracting and retaining employees, (important to all employers). The Region enjoys a very loyal population that values the rural way of life and the friendliness that is experienced in smaller communities. Employers, employees, students and former residents surveyed all mentioned the need to retain the character of the Region but improve the appearance - streetscapes, store fronts and community entrances. Similarly, there was a strong desire expressed for more shopping options, activities and attractions in their communities. If these desires are not addressed, then there is risk of further loss of people and businesses to communities that satisfy these expressed needs. Importantly, we witnessed a lack of opportunities to build the social network essential for healthy community growth and sustainability.



The following strategies will assist in working towards a quality of life and community pride that inspires economic growth, youth retention thereby maximizing the Region's potential to retain and attract workforce and talent that businesses require.

Strategies:

- 1) Take advantage of foreseen events such as the new traffic lights planned at the intersection of Highway 22 and Highway 43 at Mayerthorpe. Speed limits will be reduced in all directions and there is an opportunity to attract vehicles from the Highways into the Town. Signage, attractive restaurants, coffee shops and restrooms may attract a percentage of travelers to take a break. Once stopped, some travelers may be lured into the core area for grocery shopping or other needs with appropriate signage and streetscape. The attractive features need to be addressed as soon as possible with other planned improvements to follow as soon as feasible. Visitor and business promotion signage on Highway 43 should be pursued and there are precedents for such signage on provincial highways across the Province.

Consider creating an Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) for the Highway 43 and 22 intersection area, including Gasoline Alley, a Town entrance feature, and the roadway leading into downtown Mayerthorpe, using these principles:

- That the entrance to the Town be inviting and attractive.
 - That a strong and consistent visual image be created using signage and streetscaping, supported by private sector developments.
 - That uses and look and feel be complementary between the two commercial areas.
 - That the sites adjacent to Highway 43 be developed to present an attractive face to motorists, and that visitors into the Town travel on paved roadways.
 - That the downtown has consistent design, signage, and compliance standards.
- 2) Build on ideas from the Summit such as a local co-op nursery school and/or daycare center. The concept discussed included apartments above street level or associated retail - depending upon the suitability of the building. This type of development addresses multiple opportunities; the need for more and better affordable housing, the need for more daycare space and the possibility of more people living in the core area (adding 'built-in' shoppers as well as 'feet on-the-street' that can reduce vandalism in the core area). The co-op model might be applied to other commercial ventures and investor interest will increase if the first couple investments perform as planned.
 - 3) Add a gym or fitness centre. This could be municipal or privately-owned to address needs as well as the possibility of a new locally-owned business. There is potentially space for the gym upstairs in the Arena that could be run by a contractor, and would be a



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY

TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

welcome amenity that would offer an evening activity and source of social networking for all ages.

- 4) Take steps to incorporate or link the Fallen Four Memorial, park and building as well as the community center into the downtown and commercial area. These assets are quite attractive but are not readily associated with the rest of Mayerthorpe and are not used optimally. If they were more evident and used, they could compliment the core area and derive greater value from events held in these locations.
- 5) Facilitate community-building. This could look like:
 - Make better use of the Legion in Mayerthorpe by engaging a programmer to organize regular dance nights, bingos that assist local charities or projects, junior achievement meetings, Weight Watchers and other meetings that bring people together for positive reasons. While some of these activities are available in the East of the County, there are opportunities in the West.
 - Councillors and staff could publicize and attend cross-Region events to reduce community silos and promote a Regional approach. Events could be community dinners in Cherhill, the Connections Coffee House music evenings in Sangudo, business openings across the Region, Chamber meetings, Polynesian Days, Sno-Mo Days at Alberta Beach or the Lac Ste. Anne Pilgrimage. It should be noted that when “Mayerthorpe events” are searched in Google, all events listed were outside the Town or County, with the closest being in Whitecourt. Local events should be included in the recommended Search Engine Optimization Program. Even the events listed on Council websites were mainly outside of the Region.
 - Sporting event trips - cost-recovery bus trips into Edmonton to attend a sporting event for local residents, starting and ending at a local bar/restaurant so they get some trade.
- 6) Explore the feasibility of attracting more retailers to the downtown area. Shoe stores, clothing, sporting goods and computer service/office supplies were frequently mentioned as lacking in the area. A trade area gap analysis could again produce the data needed to ascertain the feasibility of certain categories and assist in recruitment.



4.4. Overarching Recommendations

While these are not directly linked to workforce development or opportunities, these will be important in terms of supporting and implementing the findings of this Study.

- Proactive planning and cooperation on the Region’s Intermunicipal Development Plan and Intermunicipal Collaborative Framework that will be mandatory as of April 1st, 2018 and will be in place by 2020. This represents an opportunity for municipalities to put aside silos and put the future of the Region foremost.
- Provide economic development services for both municipalities through a shared staff person or other regional initiative. Neighbouring/competing municipalities have far greater economic development capacity in terms of budget and personnel.
- Promotion of the Region’s available workforce to potential employers and investors and building upon the strong availability of trades persons and employment lands in the Region.
- Ensure and promote the availability of quality business development and support services.
- Ensure the availability of reliable infrastructure that meets business needs, including reliable roads, broadband and utility services.



5 Conclusion

Through this Study, we have found the Region (including the Town of Mayerthorpe, Lac Ste. Anne County and the Town of Onoway) has many economic development assets and opportunities, including its workforce, location and access to market. Its main challenge in terms of economic development is to put in place a coordinated approach that will make it competitive with neighbouring/competing municipalities.

Implementing the outcomes of this Study do not necessarily require large budgets, but do require a concerted effort to put the success of the Region and the well-being of its employers and employees first. It also requires people to implement. As a result of this Study and the Workforce Summit, there is an educated, ready and willing pool of people who need to be put to work as soon as possible - to both engage and demonstrate action. Should the Region's municipalities proceed with combining its economic development function, that will be a big step in being competitive with its neighbours.

As was outlined in this report, there are three key challenges facing the Region in terms of ensuring a sustainable economy and they are inter-dependent. Attracting and retaining employers and employees depends largely upon having a competitive quality of place. Many of those surveyed love the rural and supportive environment of the Region, but desire the commercial and recreational amenities that the Region's neighbours offer.

To create the most impact, we recommend:

- 1) Further explore and engage the industries that utilize the occupations strongest in the Region - Agricultural managers, trades and health care workers
- 2) 'Grab and Steer' opportunities such as Gasoline Alley North, CN Railline and opportunities associated with the gas pipelines running through the Region.
- 3) Build a Region-wide economic development infrastructure, including municipal, provincial and agency staff, businesses and a strong Chamber of Commerce that will complement/support municipal planning.



Appendix A - Implementation Plan

Following is the Implementation Plan that has emerged from the Study, considering the data that was gathered from all sources. Strategic Action Plans for each theme that indicates who or what organization could be responsible for leading implementation, what organizations should support implementation, and how success would be measured. Also included is possible timing for that action, as follows:

Short: within 2-8 months | Medium: within 24 months | Long: from 2-8 years.

Challenge: Attract/Retain Workers & Talent				
Action Item	Champions/ Responsible for Outcome	Resources Required	Timing	How Will We Know We're Successful?
Improve the skill sets of the existing workforce by providing foundational skill development	Economic Development Chamber Industry Associations Businesses Ministry of Labour	Develop an employee focused group similar to the Business Support Network to coordinate training initiatives; Project management, leadership skills, generic training in first aid, health & safety.	Short-Medium	Formation of a training coordination group Number of courses offered Course evaluations
Retain and attract more local youth	Schools / school boards Business Support Network -	Job / career fairs; Internships and seasonal placements with local employers.	Medium	Number of career / job fair events Attendance Student placements



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY
TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

Challenge: Attract/Retain Workers & Talent

Action Item	Champions/ Responsible for Outcome	Resources Required	Timing	How Will We Know We're Successful?
Homecoming/Social event to re-attract former residents	Municipal CAOs Economic Development Staff	Support of Chambers of Commerce; Realtors and Employers to have promotional material addressing quality of life, housing options, employment opportunities.	Medium	Number of events Sponsors supporting events Attendance Number of placements and / or returnees.
Municipalities hire a full time, qualified Economic Development Officer On a parallel track Chambers merge administratively to afford a full-time Executive Director	Municipalities Chambers of Commerce	Budget and coordination of elected officials to support the initiative; Division of responsibilities - Economic Development Officer focused on Municipal functions; Chamber person focused on Chamber events and Advocacy for business; Some coordination of the two staff and roles to respond to business needs.	Short-Medium	Staff in place Work plans in place # of events # coordinated events
Improved “Business Friendliness” of Municipalities: starting with streamlining and simplification of permitting and approvals processes	Municipal CAO's and respective Department Heads	Budget and possible coordinator / facilitator to select processes, map process steps and reach agreement on simplification / streamlining and possible automation opportunities; Requires Business input and identification of priority processes.	Short-Medium	Councils agree on initiative Coordinator hired/ contracted/ appointed Business community participation Evaluation of time and steps saved



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY
TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

Challenge: Attract/Retain Workers & Talent				
Action Item	Champions/ Responsible for Outcome	Resources Required	Timing	How Will We Know We're Successful?
Create a Business Support Network - modeled after others in adjacent Counties	Economic Development CAOs of municipalities Chambers of Commerce Ministry of Labour	Dedicated time and effort to create and implement the Network.	Short-Medium	Network formed Agenda / issues identified Events held to address shared issues
New Communication Strategy to emphasize positive messages, points of community pride, resident / student accomplishments. Address search engine tags to deliver more positive first impressions from Internet searches.	Economic Development With support of Communications staff	Time and budget for possible rebranding of newsletters and communication products; Business, community and school contributors for newsletter / communication product;. Expertise to update search engine tags.	Short-Medium	Re-defined Communication Strategy and objectives. New communication products Feedback and evaluation on communication products. Metrics / evaluation of Internet searches.
Improved housing options for contractors and transitional / temporary	Municipal CAOs	Support from planners and developers; Initiatives identified at retreat such as new spaces developed above street-level	Short-Medium	Initiatives started / completed Spaces created



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY
TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

Challenge: Attract/Retain Workers & Talent

Action Item	Champions/ Responsible for Outcome	Resources Required	Timing	How Will We Know We're Successful?
housing for newly recruited staff		and above coop owned / operated daycare facilities.		Evaluation by employers and contractors or temporarily housed staff



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY
TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

Challenge: Community Renewal & Increasing Quality of Place/Life				
Action Item	Champion/ Responsible for Outcome	Resources Required	Timing	How Will We Know We're Successful?
<p>Increase low income housing to increase population and availability of labour</p> <p>Policies/incentives for landlords/developers to have more affordable housing and commercial space</p>	Municipal CAOs	<p>Funding;</p> <p>Partnership with Developer - possibly Co-op or Habitat for Humanity & labour service providers;</p> <p>Possible projects lead by Sangudo Opportunities Coop;</p> <p>Review of commercial rental rates to comparables.</p>	Medium-Long	<p>Existing housing is identified and repurposed</p> <p>Increased housing spaces and population of lower skilled workers</p> <p>New retail businesses motivated by incentives / rental rates</p>
<p>Urban redesign Initiative - building upon foreseen changes such as traffic lights / lower speed limits at highway 22 - Highway 43 interchange</p> <p>Commissioning of Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP)</p>	<p>Municipal CAOs and Economic Development</p> <p>Ministry of Transportation</p>	<p>Investment in signage and landscaping at Town Entrances;</p> <p>Volunteer groups to assist in landscaping & beautification;</p> <p>Potential Community Improvement programs to address streetscapes and facades in core areas;</p> <p>Funding for Area Redevelopment Plan.</p>	Short term and ongoing	<p>New signage created</p> <p># New or renewed attractive businesses near town entrance</p> <p>Uptake of existing businesses on Town improvement program</p> <p>Business/traffic counts in core areas</p>



WORKFORCE CAPACITY AND RECRUITMENT STUDY
TOWN OF MAYERTHORPE AND LAC STE ANNE COUNTY

Challenge: Community Renewal & Increasing Quality of Place/Life				
Action Item	Champion/ Responsible for Outcome	Resources Required	Timing	How Will We Know We're Successful?
Business Recruitment targeting retail and service businesses in core areas	Economic Development Chambers of Commerce	Dedicated time and effort for Economic Development; Possible trade area analysis; Target businesses identified in surveys and retail gap analysis; Detailed market area statistics/ estimates of potential demand.	Short-Medium	# New businesses established Feedback from shoppers Feedback from businesses (able to source more consumable items locally)
Region-wide Community Building Initiative	Municipal CAOs Chambers of Commerce Councils	Partnerships with existing groups; Shared community events, Chamber meetings, linkages with Legions and Community assets such as Fallen Four Memorial to integrate with core area, fair grounds and community Centre in Mayerthorpe, for example.	Short-Medium and ongoing	Number of Region-wide events Number of projects involving more than 1 community Utilization of community assets such as community centres



Appendix B - Workforce Summit Worksheets

Below are the transcribed Worksheets that were completed by the stakeholders attending March 1st Workforce Summit.

Action Planning Worksheet Challenge 1: Workers Retention, Recruitment & Attraction

Action (What we're going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Develop Child Care Facility		Grants Finance a building purchase Trained Daycare staff	Begin planning in Spring of 2018 - target fall & Winter development / construction to be open in 2019
Building with daycare downstairs - housing in upper levels - lease-to-own opportunity	Community Co-op (Dan - Sangudo Opportunities Coop) Municipality	Team for project Local investors for the project	
Dual credit program for school in Daycare Management and Operation - work experience program	Community stakeholders 2 coops - 1 owns & manages the property - the other runs the business - cost recovery on daycare + revenue from housing	Building - right type & location Low income housing grants - daycare grants - possible sponsorships	Coordinated with project development - annual reviews once started

Evaluation Methods: Decision on go / no go; uptake on daycare; revenue targets; grant success



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge 2: Worker Retention & Attraction

Action (What we're going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Engage in or hold Job Fair	Municipality Employers Chambers of Commerce	Project Team - modeled after regional job fairs	Begin planning in Spring 2018 - hold 1 st Job Fair in Fall 2018 Evaluate - if successful make it ongoing with evaluation after each event
Leadership, Management, Project Management Skills training for career advancement	Could be a co-op venture - learn coop management / best practices	Funding - Business Support Network model	Planning in Spring - Summer of 2018 to start in Fall / Winter of 2018

Evaluation Methods: How will we know we're successful? And when? Desired Results/Actual Results



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge 3: Recruiting / Attracting and Retaining Workers

Action (What we're going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Improve social aspects of the communities. Meeting places / coffee shop / pub (may need some feasibility study). Needs a relaxed and comfortable setting for restaurant / pub / sports bar for local residents and long-term contractors to meet, relax, be entertained and interact	Municipality / maybe Sangudo Opportunities Coop	Capital - suitable downtown / mid-town location Motivated investors and owner / operator	Study through Spring 2018 with possible construction to follow - opening in early `2019
Establish regional group to offer generic training and certification / re-certification (health & safety, First Aid, forklift certification, etc.) Could be for-profit or revenue generator for Chamber-lead initiative	Municipal coordination, Chambers, company reps. Municipal groups that require some types of certification	Partnership opportunity - facility and trainers - could use municipal offices	Investigate and plan in Spring / Summer of 2018 to begin implementation in Fall of 2018

Evaluation Methods: How will we know we're successful? And when? Desired Results/Actual Results



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge 4: Worker retention, Recruitment and Attraction

Action (What we're going to do?):

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
School Expo - Career Fair / work experience targeting grades 9 & 10	Schools, CFYE - Town and country student body	Location - sponsoring groups such as service clubs large employers - grants - Chambers - local business groups	Planning through Summer of 2018 for implementation through Winter - Spring of 2019 for 2019 placements
Similar to above but attracting later grades / university & college students - intern or career focus to establish relationship with potential employers (place to return to work after education completed) - could include a bursary component	EDO - municipal involvement as one of potential employers - education & business working relationship to better prepare graduates wanting a career	Grants - some municipal support in form of funding and person to help coordinate - potential linkages to other initiatives	Planning to start Summer of 2018 - similar implementation schedule to School Expo as complimentary initiatives with different age groups and outcomes

Evaluation Methods: How will we know we're successful? And when? Desired Results/Actual Results



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge: Retaining, Developing & Attracting Employers

Action (What we're going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Things to change or new alliances to form: Business Support Network Project	Economic Development Officer in Cooperation with Chambers of Commerce	Funding, Facilitator, Expertise; meeting place; coordinator; mentors	12 Months
Enable subdivisions around urban centres	Municipalities	Legislative Changes	12 Months

Evaluation Methods: Did it happen? Impact of changes - # of homes, businesses built. Feedback from Realtors & developers



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge: Retaining, Developing & Attracting Employers

Action (What we’re going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who’s Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Things to change or new alliances to form:	A.H.S & Province Municipalities	Stats Canada data Community Housing Transitional Housing	Evaluate annually but with 5 year commitment to start
Businesses to support social - economic issues: - Seniors - Homelessness - Transitional Housing		Start Pilot Program using 3P approach	
Regional Business Directory Platform	Regional Chamber of Commerce to enable staffing and support	Funding and cooperation from Municipalities	12 Months

Evaluation Methods: How will we know we’re successful? And when? Desired Results/Actual Results - 1) increase in housing units; feedback from employers 2) platform for a number of purposes - communications, emergency management, business continuity, etc.



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge: Retaining, Developing & Attracting Employers

Action (What we're going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Things to change or new alliances to form:	Economic Development	Realtors / developers to distribute packages; also through municipalities, Chambers, etc. Communication & Design	Start when Ec. D. person in place - evaluate in 1 year
Community Information / Attraction Packages (Residents and Non-Residents)			
Management Training Programs / project management	Economic Development / Chambers of Commerce	U of A; NAIT / other?	Feedback from employers & employees

Evaluation Methods:- numbers participating; evaluation surveys / feedback



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge: Developing, Retaining & Attracting Employers

Action (What we're going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Things to change or new alliances to form: Business start-up / meeting space for home based businesses; shared back-office support, phone, Internet, Reception, business meeting space, shared cost	Municipality - could be 3 rd party business / cost recovery	Space Corporate sponsors Service Clubs?	Within coming year
Streamline / Simplify permitting Process	Municipality	Council support Input from Chamber of Commerce or Ec. Dev. Committee	Within 1 year

Evaluation Methods: Uptake numbers, Interested sponsors, Feedback on processes, metrics on steps and time required



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge: Employer Retention & Attraction

Action (What we're going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Things to change or new alliances to form: Employee Attraction Information for Employers- Similar to Community Information Packages but could be customized for hard to attract occupations	Economic Development	Similar to Community packages but requires Employer input; Could be templated information that Employer can customize or add their specific information	Similar to Community packages

Evaluation Methods: How will we know we're successful? And when? Desired Results/Actual Results



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge: Retaining, Developing & Attracting Employers

Action (What we're going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Things to change or new alliances to form: Business Support Network Project	Economic Development Officer in Cooperation with Chambers of Commerce	Funding, Facilitator, Expertise; meeting place; coordinator; mentors	12 Months
Enable subdivisions around urban centres	Municipalities	Legislative Changes	12 Months

Evaluation Methods: Did it happen? Impact of changes - # of homes, businesses built. Feedback from Realtors & developers



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge: Developing, Retaining & Attracting Employers

Action (What we're going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Things to change or new alliances to form: Business Needs Assessment - could include service evaluation / satisfaction / positive suggestions for improvement	Municipalities - Businesses - perhaps through Chambers of Commerce	Funding: staff or consultant	1 year

Evaluation Methods: practical feedback; # changes or improvements happening or planned



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge: Community Development & Renewal

Action (What we're going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Chambers of Commerce working together on a regional basis	Existing Chambers & Councils + summer villages+ Alexis if they are interested+ large businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteers - Leadership of Chambers & Councils - Identity for expanded initiative - support of members - National / Provincial Chambers 	Start now - continuous operation once started
Youth Chamber of Commerce	Representatives from the areas - travelling town hall	Staff Funding Attainable goals established	Start within 1 year - continuous operation evaluated and improved annually

Evaluation Methods: How will we know we're successful? And when? Desired Results/Actual Results



Action Planning Worksheet Challenge: Community Development & Renewal

Action (What we're going to do)

Action/Steps	Champion Who's Responsible?	Resources Required	Time: Start By & Target End Date
Activity program for Youth - map out - year-round offerings - sports could include social events to include youth	Youth leaders - Volunteer opportunity for youth to count towards academic credits	Identified volunteers & leaders Start up and then ongoing funding	Within 1 year with subsequent annual reviews
Organization succession planning - involving youth - developing future leaders	Municipalities - cooperating with schools - maybe 4-H or Junior Chamber	Volunteers Council support Service clubs projects?	Pilot project within coming year

Evaluation Methods: Uptake #'s; interest could be tested at schools or with organizations 4-H / Chambers / Junior Chambers

