Canadian Regional Development: Reflections & Updates from the Kootenay Region

Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference

Fall 2016

Dr. Terri MacDonald
BC Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development
Agenda

The Kootenay Region

Central Themes:
- Integrated Development
- Place-Based Development
- Multi-Level Governance
- Innovation & Learning

Arenas:
- Recreation
- Economic Development
Research Area

Columbia Basin-Boundary Region

- Comprises a majority of Canadian Columbia River Watershed.
- Land area 83,000 Sq. Km. (size of Austria)
- 28 Communities, largest 20,000
- Population: 161,000 (similar to Sudbury’s total pop.)
- Accounts for 3.7% of population of BC
- 9% of area of BC
- Key economic drivers: Natural Resources and Tourism
Theme: Integrated Development

THEN:

- Managerial elements of policy and planning came out strongly
- Comprehensive planning approach to development was reflected in less than 2/3 of respondents
- 2/3 cited incidence of multidisciplinary approaches
- A modest amount of interaction between the 3 regional districts
- Little evidence of holistic planning
- Low incidences of policy and development planning [+ shifts here]
- Alternative economic perspective was universal across the Kootenayas
- Environmental ethics strong across the region
- Quality of life explicitly mentioned by many
- Demographic challenges
- Questions around level of public participation
## Theme: Integrated Development

### Integrated Community Sustainability Plans in the Basin-Boundary Region

**Analysis of Process, Plans and Indicators**

### NOW:

#### Cranbrook
- **Community Approaches:** Community Defined & Lead, Consultant Supported
- **Definitions:** Self Defined: "A Sustainable Cranbrook is adaptable to change with social well-being and quality of life supported by a diverse and stable economy, maintained by a healthy environment, balanced to the needs and opportunities of present and future."
- **Focus Areas:** "8 Big Ideas":
  - Water Forever
  - Hometown Opportunity
  - Working Together
  - Moving Connections
  - Taking the Lead
  - Living Smart
  - Restore the Core
  - Past to Future

#### Fernie
- **Approaches:** "Quick Start"; The Natural Step
- **Definitions:** Brundtland and "Sustainability Vision": "Fernie is an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable community where everyone has the opportunity to pursue an excellent quality of life."
- **Focus Areas:** Buildings & Sites
  - Community & Individual Health
  - Housing
  - Economy & Work
  - Education & Learning
  - Arts, Culture & Heritage
  - Recreation & Leisure
  - Land Use & Natural Areas
  - Transportation & Accessibility
  - Energy, Resources & Waste

#### Grand Forks
- **Approaches:** Smart Growth
- **Definitions:** Self Defined: "Sustainability Stool"
- **Focus Areas:** "8 Goals":
  - Strengthen arts & culture
  - Fortify sustainable economic development
  - Ensure a healthy natural environment
  - Promote constructive government-community relations
  - Advance the community’s capacity for self-sufficiency
  - Develop a sustainable land use plan
  - Improve the social fabric of the community
  - Integrate health principles into all decisions
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<tr>
<td>Kimberley</td>
<td>&quot;Quick Start&quot;; The Natural Step</td>
<td>Brundtland and their own, more &quot;precise&quot; definition: &quot;...a sustainable community is one with a robust resilient economy within and serving a strong, equitable society, within a highly functioning natural environment.&quot;</td>
<td>-Arts, Culture &amp; Heritage, Buildings &amp; Sites, Community &amp; Individual Health, Economy &amp; Work, Education, Energy, Waste &amp; Water, Food, Land Use &amp; Natural Areas, Recreation &amp; Leisure, Transportation &amp; Mobility</td>
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<td>Rossland</td>
<td>Community Defined &amp; Lead, Consultant Supported</td>
<td>Self Defined (almost identical to the Brundtland definition): &quot;Meeting our needs today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and to enjoy a similar quality of life to what we enjoy today.&quot;</td>
<td>-Land Management, Natural Environment &amp; Resource Lands, Community Economic Development, Recreation &amp; Leisure, Housing &amp; Affordability, Transportation, Intergenerational Care &amp; Learning, Sense of Community, Energy &amp; Air Quality, Water &amp; Solid Waste Management, Governance</td>
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THEN:

• Weak regional identity (with exceptions for fighting something that is coming from the outside or responding to disasters)

• Stronger attachment to community identity over region

• Presence of informal, organic, bottom-up forms of regional collaboration – but that lacked capacity and depend on key individuals/external forces

• Recognition of importance of place, but barriers to place based development

NOW:
Theme: Multi-Level Governance

FOSTERING A JUST & VIBRANT FOOD SYSTEM IN CENTRAL KOOTENAY
Theme: Learning & Innovation

THEN:

• Innovative policy and support institutions include: innovation councils, the CBT, CFDCs, BC Applied Research and Innovation Network, National Research Council, other provincial support

• Programs: invest kootenay, 350 buy local program

• Examples of openness to creativity, risk, and change discussed by the vast majority

• Learning resources discussed by half, including Selkirk, COTR, but also lack of university in region (similar for knowledge infrastructure)

• Majority discussed knowledge partners, including the tri-cities, cross-sector partnerships, CBT

• Majority discussed reflection, seeking, sharing knowledge – 2/3 actively shared ideas, experience, lessons learned with other people or orgs

• Challenges to innovation include access to capital, lack of trust between organizations and municipalities, demographics, human resource issues, conflicting policies
Theme: Learning & Innovation

NOW:

- Applied Research & Innovation Centre
- Strategic Doing
- Columbia Basin RDI
- Kootenay Workforce Development
- Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy
- MIDAS
Theme: Learning & Innovation

NOW:

Learning by Doing

Student learning is the glue that binds!

Use a collaborative learning approach

Policies, procedures and integration of administrative functions provides a critical backbone

Manage expectations, engage in clear communications, state intentions up front

“DEVELOPING AND NURTURING PARTNERSHIPS WITH SMES TAKES TIME.”
Ian Parfitt, co-ordinator of the Selkirk Geospatial Research Centre (SGRC)

“WITH THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND RESOURCES, COLLEGES LIKE SELKIRK SHOULD BECOME CENTREPIECES IN THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL TOWNS ALL ACROSS CANADA.”
Colin Carew, owner and director, Valhalla Technologies

“COLLEGES ARE IN A GOOD POSITION TO SHOW LEADERSHIP IN BrINGING TOGETHER SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR THE BENEFIT OF BUSINESSES AND THE CANADIAN ECONOMY.”
Terri MacDonald, Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development, Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute
Arena: Recreation

THEN:

NOW:
Arena: Economic Development

Understanding Economic Development Capacity

- Businesses Actively Informing ED
- High Level of Involvement in ED
- Involvement of Diverse Groups
- Connected to External Networks
- Connected to Within Region Networks
- Successful, Integrated Projects
- Committed Leadership
- Advance ED Opportunities
- Elected Officials - Strategically Lead
- LG Staff - Strategically Lead
- Track Record of ED Success
- Human & Financial Resources

Columbia Basin/Boundary Economic Development Practitioners Network

Social Network Analysis...
coming soon
Over 1000 businesses interviewed by community partners for Business Retention and Expansion

30+ partnerships (local government, Community Futures, Chambers of Commerce, Development Boards, provincial government, provincial economic development association, Columbia Basin Trust)

Primary sectors include retail trade, professional services, manufacturing, and accommodation & food services

Over 140 hour on implementation tools, 700 hours of direct research support and over 150 hours of training

7 faculty and students involved
- 5 faculty
- 2 co-op students
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