

# ***Community Development Planning Project***

*FINAL PROJECT REPORT  
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**PREPARED FOR:**



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&



**NOVA SCOTIA**  
Economic Development

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings and recommendations from the Community Development Planning Project (CDPP). The project took place over the period of February 2005 to March 2006.

The purpose of the CDPP was to design and test a program to help community groups in Nova Scotia develop more realistic and evidence-based community development plans and funding proposals. The approach was to introduce groups to the Community Counts web-based statistical information system that came on-line in early 2005, and to facilitate participatory planning processes making use of evidence drawn from the system. The intended project outcomes were as follows:

1. Transfer of skills to Regional Development Authorities (RDAs), to related agencies and to communities for using Community Counts in their local development planning activities.
2. Design and testing of a practical planning process for communities to develop strategic, evidence-based community development plans and proposals.
3. Development of a network of trained facilitators across the province who would assist community groups in using the planning process and Community Counts to strengthen their community economic development planning activities.
4. Generation of feedback for the Community Counts program on ways to make the system more “community-user friendly”.

The principal activities of the CDPP were:

1. A review of the literature on the use of statistical resources to support community development planning processes;
2. Consultations with key stakeholders in the community development field;
3. Regional workshops to familiarize community development workers with the new Community Counts system, and to organize CDPP pilot projects;
4. Development of a four-session community development planning process making use of Community Counts, and conduct of a trial run with the program;
5. A workshop to recruit and train community workers to do pilot projects;
6. Conduct of pilot projects;
7. Evaluation of the pilot projects and of CDPP training activities; and

8. A Project Wrap-up Workshop with key stakeholder representatives and experts in statistical information systems.

Among the principal findings of the project were the following:

- Community Counts is a major new asset for community development in Nova Scotia with the potential to add significant value to the development of strategic plans and funding proposals.
- A year after coming on-line Community Counts is well known and quite widely used by community development practitioners, and there is keen interest among them in training and support to use the system more effectively in their work.
- The four-session community development planning process developed and tested by the CDPP was effective in helping participants in the pilot projects to generate more realistic, strategic and focused development plans for their communities.
- There is a need for more resources, and greater clarity in roles and mandate, for the ongoing facilitation of community use of Community Counts for strategic planning purposes.
- There are important opportunities for Community Counts to evolve as a dynamic multi-stakeholder support system for community development, regional economic development, health promotion, education and other fields of activity through active outreach, resource sharing, research partnerships and other initiatives.

The report concludes with recommendations for next steps in the areas of:

- Establishing a broad-based Advisory Committee to guide and facilitate the ongoing development of Community Counts;
- Providing Community Counts with an education and communications officer to develop and deliver training programs and to establish effective communications with stakeholders;
- Clarifying mandates and providing resources to ensure that there is effective facilitation support for local groups using Community Counts to develop their community development plans and proposals;
- Establishing guidelines and protocols for the preparation of evidence-based funding proposals by community development groups;
- Adding more tools and resources to the Community Counts website; and

- Working with the Community Accounts system in Newfoundland & Labrador and with other statistical agencies to develop more sophisticated analytical approaches and tools and to facilitate the use of standard measures and indicators across systems.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This report reviews the activities and outcomes of the Nova Scotia Community Development Planning Project (CDPP) and presents advice and recommendations regarding next steps.

The project was carried out from February 2005 to March 2006, and was jointly sponsored by the Nova Scotia Division of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA-NS) and the Nova Scotia Office of Economic Development (NS OED).

### 2.1. CDPP Goals

The project originated in the shared concerns of ACOA-NS and NS OED about the need to encourage community groups to develop more strategic and evidence-based proposals for community economic development (CED) projects. It had been observed that community groups often did not do the background work to assess the feasibility of their proposals and to provide effective rationales in terms of measurable needs, capacities, opportunities and development objectives.

In discussions prior to the initiation of the CDPP, the ACOA and NS OED stakeholders identified two recent developments with important implications for CED in the province:

1. In late 2004 NS OED introduced a new policy framework for community development. The approach focused on themes of accountability, transparency, evidence-based planning and collaboration among stakeholders in both government and the community. It also recommended a more integrated approach across the fields of health promotion, community development and local economic development.
2. In early 2005 the Nova Scotia Department of Finance brought its new Community Counts program on-line. This web-based resource provides a wide array of statistical information in user-friendly formats. Users are able to access data for a number of “geographies” including some 280 individual communities as well as counties, electoral constituencies and health districts.

In combination, these new developments provided an opportune moment to explore new approaches to assisting communities in their local development activities. The objectives of the CDPP were therefore set out as follows:

1. To promote awareness of, and abilities to use, Community Counts resources and tools among community development practitioners across Nova Scotia.
2. To transfer technical skills to community groups to use Community Counts in their local development activities.
3. To build capacities in community groups for research and planning.

It was further determined that the principal means to achieve these objectives was to involve Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) and other community-based agencies, including District Health Boards (DHBs) and the Coastal Communities Network (CCN), in facilitating the use of Community Counts by local development groups. The project would first share knowledge and skills to use Community Counts with the appropriate staff members of the RDAs and other agencies, and then facilitate outreach to communities.

The intended project outcomes were therefore as follows:

1. Transfer of skills to Regional Development Authorities (RDAs), to related agencies and to communities for using Community Counts in their local development planning activities.
2. Design and testing of a practical planning process for communities to develop strategic, evidence-based community development plans and proposals.
3. Development of a network of trained facilitators across the province who would assist community groups in using the planning process and Community Counts to strengthen their CED planning activities.
4. Generation of feedback for the Community Counts program on ways to make the system more “community-user friendly”.

The project methodology and activities were designed to achieve these outcomes.

## **2.2. Project Activities**

The work of the project involved the following specific activities:

### **2.2.1. Literature Review**

The project began with a review of the research and policy literature to identify and evaluate other web-based statistics resources and the support systems for communities using such resources. The consultants looked for community development indicators that might be built into such statistical resources and also for training tools and outreach models to support community use of such systems.



### 2.2.2. Consultations and Outreach

The consultants held three meetings with the CDPP Advisory Committee where the project approach, methodologies and findings were reviewed and approved. The Advisory Committee included representation of ACOA-NS, NS OED, the Community Counts program, the RDA Association and the Rural Communities Impacting Policy (RCIP) Project.

To inform key stakeholders about the project and to receive advice and direction on implementation, the consultants conducted the following consultations:

- In-person interviews with eight Executive Directors of RDAs and four managers of District Health Authorities (DHAs);
- A presentation to the RDA Association attended by 10 Executive Directors of RDAs; and
- A presentation at the Rural Communities Impacting Policy and Coastal Communities Network Policy Forum attended by some 30 community development practitioners and other stakeholders.

Upon completion of these consultations, and after discussions with the Project Advisory Committee, it was recognized that greater efforts were needed to encourage participation in the project by front-line RDA staff members. In the summer of 2005 the consultants together with Mr. Dennis Pilkey, Director of the Community Counts program in the NS Department of Finance, conducted four regional workshops in Truro, Port Hawkesbury, New Glasgow and Kentville. Some 25 individuals participated in these sessions representing all the RDAs and four DHAs. In addition, information about the CDPP was distributed to all the RDAs and DHAs by mail-outs and through the RDA Association web page.

### 2.2.3. Design and Testing of the Planning Process

Based on the advice and direction received from the consultations and workshops, the consultants developed a prototype community development planning process centred on the use of Community Counts as an information resource (see Appendix III). With the assistance of staff from the Colchester Regional Development Authority (CoRDA), and the participation of Mr. Dennis Pilkey, the consultants piloted the four-session planning process in Upper Stewiacke in September 2005. The sessions were held in the elementary school computer lab (one of the few locations in the community with access to high-speed Internet)

and were attended by eight community leaders from the area. These participants also took part in an evaluation session at the conclusion of the four sessions.

#### 2.2.4. Training of Community-based Facilitators

Subsequent to the testing of the four-session planning process in Upper Stewiacke, adjustments were made to the process design and a training session was held with community development field staff to promote their participation in pilot projects around the province. A one-day training session was held in late September 2005, attended by 10 staff members from RDAs, two staff members from DHAs and one representative of RCIP. Mr. Dennis Pilkey again assisted with the workshop. The agenda consisted of three elements:

- A “tutorial” on the use of Community Counts;
- Introduction to the four-session planning process methodology and approach; and
- Roundtable discussion on strategies to recruit community participants and to facilitate the pilot projects.

#### 2.2.5. Pilot Projects in Local Communities

Subsequent to the training workshop, the consultants maintained ongoing telephone and e-mail communications with the participants to support their planning and organization of pilot projects. However, for reasons that will be discussed in greater depth below, the uptake was limited and delayed. As of the time of writing the following pilots have taken place or are underway.

<b>TABLE 1: PILOT PROJECTS</b>		
<b>Location</b>	<b>RDA</b>	<b>Schedule</b>
St. Peter's, Richmond County	Strait Highlands RDA	Completed mid-December 2005
Middle Musquodoboit, HRM	Halifax RDA	Completed mid-December 2005
Economy, Colchester County	CoRDA	Completed March 30, 2006
Brookfield, Colchester County	CoRDA	To be completed mid-April 2006

#### 2.2.6. Evaluation

The evaluation component of the project was initially intended to generate feedback from the pilot projects on the effectiveness of the four-session community development planning program. However when it became apparent that not many RDAs were going to do pilots it was decided to expand the

evaluation activity to get feedback from all the RDA and DHA staff who had participated in the regional workshops. Evaluation activities included:

- A workshop and follow-up meetings with three RDA staff members who delivered pilots;
- Telephone survey interviews with all participants in regional workshops and facilitator training workshop.

### 2.2.7. Wrap-up Workshop

At the conclusion of the project a workshop was held to review the outcomes and findings of the project and to develop advice on next steps. The workshop was facilitated by the consultants and attended by representatives of the following agencies and NGOs:<sup>1</sup>

<b>TABLE 2: WRAP-UP WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS</b>
Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency – Nova Scotia
Coastal Communities Network
Colchester RDA
Halifax RDA
Newfoundland & Labrador Community Accounts
Nova Scotia Community Counts
Nova Scotia Office of Economic Development
RCIP and Nova Scotia Voluntary Planning
Rural Secretariat (Agriculture Canada) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nova Scotia Office</li> <li>▪ Atlantic Region Office (Moncton)</li> <li>▪ National Office – Community Information Database Program</li> </ul>
Statistics Canada – Agriculture Division
Upper Stewiacke Community Development Association

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I for list of names and affiliations of attendees.

## 3. PROJECT FINDINGS

### 3.1. Literature Review

It was found that most of the statistics agencies of provincial governments in Canada, parallel state agencies in the USA, and the national statistics services of Canada, the USA and the European Union all maintain on-line statistical resources systems. Many of these systems provide some level of “community” profiling, although the smallest “geography” is usually a district-level data collection unit from the national census. There are variations in the way data is formatted and organized, and some systems utilize more comprehensive and innovative frameworks for socio-economic analysis (see Appendix II).<sup>2</sup>

After reviewing these different approaches the consultants concluded that the Community Accounts system in Newfoundland & Labrador and Community Counts in Nova Scotia are more developed than most of these on-line resources in terms of the user-friendliness of the interface and the clear focus on providing information to citizens to support their efforts to improve their communities. Other systems appear to be designed more for government planners and policy makers, for academic researchers and for investors making decisions about business locations.

The Nova Scotia and the Newfoundland & Labrador systems are distinctive both because of the number of levels or “geographies” for which information is provided and the use of smaller community units based on municipal boundaries and actual community identities. The integration of economic and demographic information with health statistics and departmental administrative data is not unique, but becomes more powerful when it is available for local community units, health districts, electoral districts and other such “geographies”.

The Nova Scotia and the Newfoundland & Labrador systems also support thematic analyses of social, economic, cultural and environmental topics and provide indicators for well-being and health status. Users are able to download

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix II for the literature review report drawn from the CDPP Phase I Report.

pre-defined statistical summaries and profiles for communities, health districts, etc.<sup>3</sup>

The consultants feel that with these systems the two provinces have the opportunity to do truly path-breaking work in the integration of data resource systems with training for users and active outreach and support for community-based planning.

The consultants also looked for approaches and tools that have been developed in other jurisdictions and that might have application with Community Counts. The two most interesting examples were the Neighbourhood Renewal program in the UK and the Eurostat system operated by the statistical agency of the European Union.

In the former case, the UK government has established a substantial investment fund to be used by community partners in targeted “high risk” communities. The communities have been selected on the basis of measurement criteria within the system of national statistics. Community partners in these areas have access to money, training and outreach support for community development projects. This was the only example the consultants found where government statistical systems have been integrated with training and outreach to support community development. The key contextual factor is that the UK government is taking a comprehensive and strategic approach to the rehabilitation of communities that meet clearly defined criteria for social and economic need.

The Eurostat on-line statistical information system does not provide statistical resources broken down by local communities. However the innovative aspect of the program is that national and regional data is organized according to 10 themes within a comprehensive sustainable development framework. It includes indicators for social well-being, economic development, demographic change, health, climate and environment, renewable and non-renewable resources, trade and governance. The system of indicators is more comprehensive and integrated than other systems that were examined, and provides a working conceptual model of sustainable development.

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<sup>3</sup> The Nova Scotia system is much newer than Community Accounts in Newfoundland & Labrador, and key elements are still in development at the time of writing.

## 3.2. Findings From Consultations and Regional Workshops

Interviews with managers and staff in the RDA and DHA systems and in other community development agencies, and the regional workshops with RDA and DHA staff, revealed a widespread and keen interest in Community Counts as a resource for community development work in general. Stakeholders in all these settings wanted to know more about the system and were interested in the acquisition of skills to use Community Counts in their day-to-day work processes. In particular, staff members of RDAs and DHAs wanted access to technical skills to use the system fully.

One specific concern, particularly among RDA Executive Directors, was whether the Community Counts system represented a threat to the sustainability of the Target Nova Scotia system that supports decision-making on business locations. The impression was that the Target system was widely used and valued among the RDAs.

Responses were mixed on the topic of the CDPP. There were concerns that the approach would overwhelm community volunteers who are already “burnt out” and anxious about the futures of their communities. It was felt that too much data on negative trends might further weaken community organizations, particularly if there is no empowerment through follow-up training, ongoing technical support and resources to implement action plans. Interviewees asked whether CDPP would be an ongoing program of support for communities or a once-only initiative. They asked whether there would be resources for ongoing delivery by RDAs or other community agencies. There were also concerns about possible duplication among the RDAs, the RCIP project, the Coastal Communities Network and other community development groups.

Interviewees noted that it would be useful for Community Counts to provide downloadable tools for follow-up research such as short survey instruments and focus group agendas to gather data on quality of life and satisfaction levels in communities and to seek input on development goals. There could also be data collection instruments to inventory and evaluate public services and amenities in communities.

It was the shared view of the interviewees that community development planning activities should be limited in duration and scope to accommodate the limited time volunteer participants will commit to such processes. They identified constraints around access to high-speed Internet services and lack of confidence in dealing with statistics. The general advice was to “keep it simple!”

The input and direction from the interviews and from the regional workshops was very helpful in guiding the consultants in the development of the planning process to be used with community groups. In particular the decision was made to limit the planning exercise to four two-hour sessions and to scale down expectations in terms of the level and complexity of analytical activities. It was clear that what was needed was a basic program to get groups started in using Community Counts, to build their confidence in using statistical evidence for planning purposes, and to provide them with a solid base of information to support more strategic thinking about community development priorities and approaches.

The result was the four-session Community Development Planning Program that was tested in a trial run in Upper Stewiacke (see Appendix III).

### **3.3. Findings From the Upper Stewiacke Trial**

With the assistance of CoRDA, the trial run was conducted with an active group of eight community leaders in Upper Stewiacke in September 2005. The sessions were held in the computer lab in the elementary school. The group had already led a community development planning process in the winter of 2005 with a high level of participation from community members. They had arrived at a plan with 10 priority action areas, and had set up sub-committees to work on different elements. They saw the CDPP process as an opportunity to add evidence and analytical depth to their plan before moving forward with implementation.

After the four sessions were completed, the group participated in the evaluation of the process. They reported that they had changed their development priorities after examining statistical evidence about their community from Community Counts and going through a somewhat more rigorous SWOT analysis supported by data (see Appendix IV). They said they felt empowered rather than discouraged or overwhelmed by the process, and noted that it was important to look at their community in context and to compare it with nearby communities and the wider region in terms of key social and economic indicators.

Group participants commented that they had previously felt that their community was “dying” because of the falling numbers of young people, but after the CDDP process they realized that their community was “not dying but changing” and they needed to adjust their planning to accommodate such change. All the participants agreed that they had “learned a lot about our community” and that “it’s really useful to have evidence”.

When asked about possible improvements in the process, they felt that the agenda for the four sessions was appropriate in terms of length and level of detail and complexity. However they would have liked to have had more hands-on time with Community Counts and saw the need for a downloadable “navigation guide” or “cheat sheet” for the system. They had some concerns about demographic data becoming “stale” four or more years after the Census year.

### **3.4. Findings from the Facilitator Workshop**

This workshop was held at the end of September 2005 in Truro with 10 staff members representing nine different RDAs, and three staff members from two DHAs, along with a representative from the RCIP project. As noted above, the agenda for the session included a presentation by Mr. Dennis Pilkey on the Community Counts system, a report on the Upper Stewiacke trial, a training session on the four-session process, and a roundtable discussion on how to set up pilot projects.

The participants expressed a high level of interest in Community Counts and in the hands-on demonstrations of the system. Almost all identified possible community groups to work with and made verbal commitments to follow-up with the consultants. They did express concerns about workload constraints and also noted that many of the community groups they worked with were engaged on single-issue projects and might not be interested in a more global planning approach.



### 3.5. Findings from Pilot Projects

Only two pilot projects were undertaken in 2005 despite frequent follow-up calls to the workshop participants.

One of the two pilot projects was in St. Peter's, Cape Breton, organized and facilitated by a staff member from the Strait Highlands RDA. A pre-existing Community Advisory Committee had begun meeting to review a local re-zoning plan put forward by the municipal planning office. The eight original members met at the local C@P site and after they got started they decided to recruit two young people as well.

The facilitator reported that the process was very successful in that the group carried on meeting after completing the initial four sessions, and drafted a strategic plan for the community with coverage of the following development areas:

- Business development;
- Waterfront development;
- Infrastructure;
- Residential development;
- Lifestyle/destinations; and
- Partnership building.

At the time of writing they have had eight more meetings and are preparing to consult the community on the draft plan they have put together.

When asked about criticisms and ideas for improvements, the facilitator reported that the four-session process worked well to get the group started. However it is important to have up-to-date data on population trends, school enrollments, etc. to be credible with community participants.

The second pilot project was in Middle Musquodoboit facilitated by a staff member from the Halifax RDA. Community members had held previous meetings to discuss an infrastructure development project for the community, but were not focused and realistic and were having difficulty finding consensus. Some people

wanted to expand an existing community theatre site while others were promoting new facilities at the agricultural fairgrounds.

The group held their first session in the computer lab of the local high school, and finished the process in a more comfortable setting nearby. As in St. Peter's, they have carried on working together since with a higher degree of focus and commitment, have reached consensus on a comprehensive community development strategy with several different elements, and are planning ways to inform and consult the wider community.

In evaluating the experience, the facilitator felt that the process was successful in getting the leadership group to be more realistic about the strengths and weaknesses of the community and its real development potential. The four-session process worked well to get the group started, and the information from Community Counts was instrumental in helping them to broaden their understanding of their community and to focus on their current circumstances. It was also important to be able to use Community Counts to compare different communities in their area.

### 3.6. Findings from Evaluation Activities

In the evaluation session with the three facilitators of the pilot projects (including Upper Stewiacke) certain constraints and issues were discussed. It was generally agreed that the four-session planning process template was appropriate and

*“The biggest advantage of the [four-session planning] process was that we got beyond vague ideas to use actual evidence, to combine data with community experience. The group was able to stand back and look at the whole community. It was a total change of mindset, looking at the whole community and its needs.”*

Graziella Grbac,  
Facilitator of the Middle  
Musquodoboit Pilot Project

effective, the caveat being that all groups would like to have had more hands-on time and instruction with Community Counts. Access to high-speed Internet was indeed found to be an issue in rural communities. The locations where it is available are not always readily accessible or comfortable for adults meeting in the evenings. There is uneven access at home and limited ability for group participants to do “homework”. Timing to get people together is also an issue since all three groups recruited participants who were

active in many other community settings. It was observed that the groups have to be prepared and ready to do this kind of “big picture” planning rather than pursuing specific issues.

All three community trials had positive outcomes in terms of the groups carrying on their work after completing the four-session program, and developing comprehensive community development plans. The facilitators all reported that their groups changed their goals and approaches during the process and became more focused and realistic. The four-session template appears to work well when the facilitators adapted it to their circumstances, and all three found that it made a real difference to work with evidence from Community Counts. The participants were seen to learn new perspectives on their communities and to change their attitudes and priorities. The three groups were seen to be “empowered” rather than discouraged or overwhelmed by the amount of information or the negative trends. All of the community groups expressed a willingness to do community plans to support their future funding proposals.

Evaluation findings were also drawn from a telephone survey of 12 RDA and DHA staff members who attended the facilitator workshop but did not conduct pilots. They were asked for feedback on the regional introductory workshops, on the facilitator workshop and on their use of Community Counts in their jobs.

The major positive factor the interviewees identified was learning about Community Counts, although a number wanted to have more training on using the system. Almost all the respondents have used it more than once in their regular work activities and see it as a valuable resource. Some said they have used it in community meetings. There was also a mention that “Community Counts is more a resource for RDA staff than for community members”, and that “it’s our job to get the data and give it to community groups when they need it”.

Of the nine respondents who attended the Truro workshop but did not subsequently complete pilots, six said it was “somewhat likely” and three said it was “highly likely” that they would use the four-session planning program in future. When asked why it had been difficult to do the sessions up to that point in time, they identified issues such as lack of staff resources, time constraints, the lack of space required to hold sessions, access to the Internet and problems finding a group that is interested in community development and committed and able to use computers.

Of those respondents who had used Community Counts in their work to date, several had made the most use of its charts, data on demographics and education levels, and profiles of communities. A few respondents mentioned they are

looking forward to being able to access the “to be developed” sections of Community Counts.

In terms of changes or improvements in Community Counts they made the following suggestions:

- A regular bulletin about changes to the program and ideas for its use, made available by compact disc or e-mail;
- Downloadable easy-step tools to use the web resource;
- A downloadable orientation guide for new staff members;
- An outline of the most common features and uses;
- A guidebook on tips to analyze and understand statistical data; and
- Workshops around the province on use of data and analytical skills.

In general, these evaluation findings suggest a variety of ways to make Community Counts a more active outreach service rather than a “passive” web-based statistical resource. For example, interviewees raised the idea of building and servicing a network of users among community development practitioners around the province.

### **3.7. Conclusions Drawn from the Evaluation Components**

The following general conclusions are drawn from the findings from CDPD evaluation activities:

1. Community Counts is a major new asset for community development practitioners in Nova Scotia.
  - ✧ They are using it, like it and want more access to it.
  - ✧ Many are eager to develop skills to use it more effectively.
2. Community Counts is an effective educational and planning tool for community groups.
  - ✧ Concerns about “disempowerment” may have been misplaced. It is evident that in fact the opposite has occurred in the pilot projects.
  - ✧ Working with Community Counts helps groups to arrive at more realistic plans and proposals.

3. The four-session planning template is an effective starting point and works as a planning process.
  - ✧ Facilitators adapt it to situations and particular groups.
  - ✧ Having four two-hour sessions seems to be manageable and effective.
  - ✧ The output of the four sessions seems sufficient as a jump-off point for more ambitious planning activities.
4. There is a keen interest among community development practitioners and community users in more data resources, and more up-to-date data, in Community Counts.
  - ✧ Users look forward to having more information on health, economic activities, resources, environment, etc.
  - ✧ There are concerns about the data becoming more “stale” as it may take up to two years to get the 2006 Census data into the system.
5. There are practical constraints on the use of Community Counts by community groups.
  - ✧ In many rural communities there are few locations where high-speed Internet is available, and where a workshop process with computers is feasible.
  - ✧ Community groups encompass a broad spectrum of skills and resources, from advanced computer skills to marginal literacy.
  - ✧ There is limited capacity for “homework” in terms of skills and access to high-speed Internet at home or in the community.
6. It is not clear that building more sophisticated indicators into Community Counts will be useful.
  - ✧ Limited knowledge and skill to use statistics, even among community development practitioners.
  - ✧ Groups are productive working with just basic statistics.
7. Community groups need guidance and facilitation in shifting from single issues to more strategic approaches.
  - ✧ Locally based community development practitioners play a key role in persuading groups to try something new and to take a broader approach.
  - ✧ Community Counts serves as an effective motivator to try a broader approach.

8. There will be an ongoing need for technical support, advice and communications for practitioners and community groups using Community Counts.
  - ❖ Hardware and high-speed access are a continuing issue.
  - ❖ There is turnover in RDA staff.
  - ❖ Frequent developments in Community Counts suggest the need for some form of user's newsletter and/or electronic forum.
  - ❖ A feedback loop will also be useful to Community Counts staff to help them identify bugs in the data and the software.
  
9. The RDAs have limited capacities to deliver the four-session CDPD program at this stage.
  - ❖ Field staff have full workloads.
  - ❖ There is not a clear organizational commitment to the CDPD process.
  - ❖ There are concerns within RDAs about resources and program continuity.
  - ❖ Ongoing training and technical support will be required.

## 4. CDPP WRAP-UP WORKSHOP

The Wrap-up Workshop held on March 20, 2006 brought together representatives of ACOA-NS, NS OED, Nova Scotia Community Counts, Newfoundland & Labrador Community Accounts, Statistics Canada, the Rural Secretariat, Nova Scotia Voluntary Planning, the Coastal Communities Network, two RDAs and a community group that had participated in the pilot projects. The agenda for the workshop included a review of the activities and findings of the project to date, an exploration of options for building more sophisticated analytical tools into Community Counts, and a roundtable discussion of advice and recommendations for next steps.

With regard to the development of more sophisticated socio-economic indicators, Ray Bollman of Statistics Canada (who participated by way of speaker phone) made the following remarks:

- The purpose of statistical data is to help make better decisions. The focus should be on the key areas of decision-making.
- For rural communities, the most important place to start is with demographic trends.
- To know communities it helps to study the regional context around them. [Community Counts] could have buttons to generate comparative information on the community within its region.
- In terms of diagnostics, a key step is to compare changes in age cohorts in the makeup of the community, and also to look at changes in where people work relative to where they live.
- A key factor in local economic development is the ratio of exports to imports [i.e., the more of the former, the better]. You could use various data resources to calculate the size of, and changes in, the export sector of the local economy, and changes in employment in the sector.
- In general you need to track key change areas in communities and develop more products in Community Counts that deliver the results of these analyses.
- One idea might be to sponsor competitions for high school students to develop community profiles.

- In the UK the Office of National Statistics (ONS) did a study that found that local councils make decisions affecting £3 billion a year in spending. The ONS is developing information resources to target particular issues and to support more effective decision-making at the local level.
- In terms of having more up-to-date information, Statistics Canada publishes monthly EI data by Census division and county, and the Labour Force survey data could also be covered in Community Counts.

Dennis Pilkey from Community Counts reported on the following developments:

- ACOA and NS OED recently provided resources to purchase tax filer data at the community level. This will provide information on amounts and sources of income and related issues.
- They will also be doing projections of demographic trends and working with more government departments to access administrative data. For example they will have information on hospital separations and cancer statistics, but at the county level only.
- There are researchers working with them on health and epidemiological data, on indicators of social deprivation and of social cohesiveness and resilience in rural communities.
- Community Counts is working with the Coastal Communities Network to put together a course on community asset mapping.
- Improvements are being made in mapping capabilities and in community profiles with words and pictures for each of more than 450 geographies.
- The priority for the next year is to access more administrative data and to work with researchers to develop analytical resources. For example, the Population Health Research Unit at Dalhousie has major data resources that can be incorporated.

Doug May from Community Accounts described the ongoing work on their system:

- They are working on a framework for looking at community economic development, quality of life and social well-being to apply for all of Atlantic Canada. The challenge is how to bring in the richness of neighbourhoods and local communities.
- They have added a new account to Community Accounts to address issues of community safety and crime prevention.



- They are also bringing in tax filer data and using it for demographic and employment projections.
- They are looking at modeling data for smaller communities to provide measures of sustainability, and are developing tools to analyze labour force characteristics and demand/supply trends by communities.
- On the income side, they are developing measures of poverty at the community level, taking account of cost of living factors and tracking changes in income inequalities.
- The “Production Account” on Community Accounts provides data on productivity and competitiveness by industry at the province level. They will soon be getting this data out sub-regionally.

Kate Humpage from the Rural Secretariat presented an update on the development of their Community Information Database system. The system will provide social and economic information on rural communities across Canada, and will come on-line in the fall of 2006. The smallest “geography” in the system will be the Census Sub-division. It will have powerful graphics capabilities and be very user-friendly for educators, researchers and community planners.

Following these discussions there were round-table commentaries on follow-up to the CDPP project. The following points were raised:

- There is a need for more “story lines” and analytical approaches to be built into Community Counts. Data only becomes knowledge when people in the community use it to pursue their own goals.
- There is a need to develop analytical frameworks within Community Counts on themes like sustainable community development, social well-being and social determinants of health.
- Community Counts could have downloadable analytical reports on particular issues at the provincial level (such as changes in age groups, income levels by gender, links between education levels and incomes and employment, etc.) with step-by-step instructions for users to develop parallel analyses for their communities.
- There is a need for an ongoing working group to bring together key people from Community Counts, Community Accounts, the Rural Secretariat, Statistics Canada and other researchers to develop standard indicators for composite variables such as poverty, health, quality of life, etc.

- There is also a need for active partnerships between Community Counts and key partners in community development including the Community College, the Coastal Communities Network, the RDAs and Health Boards, etc.
- High school students could write up community stories and have them downloadable from Community Counts.
- As more data becomes available on Community Counts it will be important to incorporate the environmental dimension and to link to the Sustainable Communities Initiative, the Ecology Action Centre and other key stakeholders.
- Another possible analytical focus will be tracking climate change.
- In developing links with other institutional and community partners, it may be useful to think of Community Counts as the “transmission line” by means of which other groups can develop information resources and analytical tools and make them available to the wider community.
- More work needs to be done to get the RDAs to make an active commitment to working with Community Counts as a tool for community development.
- There needs to be a training program to give public servants, educators and community development practitioners the skills to use Community Counts effectively. The content of the training needs to be spelled out.
- There is a need to continue to build Community Counts from the “grass roots” by involving community groups and responding to their needs and ideas, and by doing outreach, training and facilitation.
- More work needs to be done to inform communities about Community Counts and to build capacity to use it for community development. Not all communities have RDAs in their areas. Local libraries could be key centres for accessing Community Counts and supporting its use for local projects.
- We have to give communities the tools to do evidence-based planning before we can require this for funding proposals to government.

## **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations to ACOA-NS and NS OED were reviewed at the Wrap-up Workshop and subsequently revised and further elaborated.

### **5.1. Building a Wider Partnership**

Community Counts came on-line in early 2005. Since that point many stakeholders in government and the community have become aware of, and begun to use, the system. Over that period the web resource has gone through important changes and many more resources have been added.

The ongoing development of Community Counts will involve communication, cooperation and active partnerships with sister agencies, government departments and user groups. The following diagram describes the wider network of stakeholders and their potential linkages to the system as it evolves.



Community Counts is rapidly evolving as much more than a passive database or statistical service: it is already, or soon will be, an integral component of social, economic and health planning in the province. It is increasingly used in the community development and regional economic development fields and it is valued as a resource by educators and researchers in many different settings. The program is also responding to feedback from users and reaching out to partner agencies to plan and implement collaborative initiatives. As the system expands, and as demand for services grows and diversifies, there will need to be greater capacity to manage these relationships.

It is the observation of the consultants that the managers of Community Counts have done an excellent job of building links with partners and user groups, and with reaching out to the wider community of stakeholders. It is also our observation that the CDPP Advisory Committee has been a useful forum for providing feedback to the program managers and for communicating with a wider network of potential users.

At present the Community Counts program has an internal advisory committee and a steering committee to oversee the administration, resourcing and management of the program within the provincial government. The recommendation here is that wider forums of stakeholders be created to generate advice and feedback and to facilitate collaboration, knowledge exchange, knowledge development and identification of opportunities, all on a continuing basis.

It is proposed that these objectives could be achieved by implementing one or both of the following options:

1. The establishment of a Community Counts Advisory Council that would meet at least twice a year and would be comprised of appropriate representatives of:<sup>4</sup>
  - ✧ NS OED;
  - ✧ ACOA;
  - ✧ NS Association of Regional Development Authorities;
  - ✧ The Rural Secretariat;
  - ✧ NS Department of Health;
  - ✧ NS Voluntary Planning;
  - ✧ Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations;
  - ✧ Human Resources & Skills Development Canada; and
  - ✧ Coastal Communities Network.

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<sup>4</sup> The first four agencies on the list were active on the Advisory Committee for the CDPP. The five additional agencies are suggested because they have significant roles in community development and are likely to make frequent use of Community Counts.

The Advisory Council would review feedback from system users, identify/evaluate potential development opportunities, facilitate linkages with other initiatives in government and the community, and offer strategic advice on the ongoing development of Community Counts.

2. The organization of an annual conference open to Community Counts users and collaborators and providing opportunities for:
  - ✧ Updates on the Community Counts system and resources;
  - ✧ Training sessions and workshops for different categories of users;
  - ✧ “Show and tell” presentations on research projects, planning processes, educational programs and other activities making use of Community Counts;
  - ✧ Feedback sessions; and
  - ✧ Panels and forums on public policy issues relevant to Community Counts.

Planning, organization and facilitation of the conference itself could involve partnerships with stakeholder groups such as universities and the Community College, the RDAs, the Coastal Communities Network, etc.

## 5.2. Communications and Training

There is substantial feedback from community development practitioners that Community Counts is seen as an important new resource for their work and that it can add significant value to local development plans and project proposals.

However, the practitioners and other stakeholders recognize that the effective use of Community Counts requires specific knowledge and skills in areas such as:

- Navigating the website and make full use of its resources and tools;
- Understanding and using basic statistical concepts and measures;
- The development of more complex analyses making use of statistical resources;
- Familiarity with, and skills to access, additional sources of statistical data and other information to supplement Community Counts (e.g., Statistics Canada, Target Nova Scotia, the Rural Secretariat’s new information database, etc.);

- Skills in using surveys and qualitative research tools to supplement information from Community Counts; and
- Facilitation skills to organize and lead community-based development planning processes making use of Community Counts and the four-session planning process.

In addition, it is clear that conditions affecting the use of Community Counts in community development processes are not static. On the one hand, there are more resources being added to the database all the time – new data sets, tools to use the data, graphic capabilities and downloadable reports – that may often require information updates and, in some cases, upgrading of user skills. On the other hand, there is frequent turnover among field staff in community development agencies, and the agencies continue to evolve in their structure and operations, and so new staff will need orientation and training over time.

Given these factors the consultants recommend that steps be taken to provide the Community Counts program with an appropriately qualified staff member (1 FTE) to serve as a training and communications officer on a full-time basis. Roles and responsibilities would include:

- Development and maintenance of an active network of system users (i.e., community development practitioners, educators, library staff, researchers, etc.);
- Production and distribution of a newsletter and operation of an electronic bulletin board, etc.; and
- Development of a program of training and certification for Community Counts users and community development facilitators to be delivered through collaboration with appropriate training agencies (e.g., Nova Scotia Community College, universities, local adult education programs, etc.);
  - ◇ The program should target appropriate personnel in government departments and agencies as well as managers and field staff in RDAs and DHAs, planning and economic development staff in municipal agencies, community college and public school teachers, library staff and community development workers in NGOs.

- ❖ It will likely require at minimum a two-day course to provide in-depth training in the Community Counts system itself, in supplementary research and analytical skills and resources, and in skills in facilitating community use.
- ❖ To encourage consistency of training content and methods there should be a certificate offered by the Community Counts program to individuals who complete the training.
- ❖ The training approach could evolve over time to accommodate different categories of system users – community development practitioners, health planners, business development officers, municipal planners, etc.

The training and communications officer would carry substantial leadership and development responsibilities to support the evolution of Community Counts as an active, multi-stakeholder partnership. Such a position would require a person with Master's level qualifications and substantial experience in adult education and/or community development as well as advanced competencies in communications and a working knowledge of statistical analysis processes and tools. The position would also require a budget for travel and for conduct of workshops and some training activities.

It is suggested that the CDPP partnership group work together to develop a plan to create and support the training officer position. Given limitations on departmental FTEs and other administrative or budgetary issues, it may prove advantageous to locate the training officer in a different department, to fund the position from different budgets, or perhaps to outsource to a community development agency or practitioner group.

### **5.3. Support for Community Development Planning**

The CDPP has generated convincing evidence that the use of statistical information from Community Counts can help community groups to develop more realistic and focused plans and proposals for local development projects. However it is clear that such groups need effective facilitation support and practical assistance in overcoming obstacles such as access to high-speed Internet and making the transition from single-issue mobilization to more strategic approaches.



The CDPP has tested a four-session community development planning process that has helped to get groups started on strategic analysis and on the development of evidence-based community development plans. The evaluation of the pilot projects indicates that the process works well but that it is “facilitator intensive”, i.e., success depends on a certain level of expertise in using Community Counts and in facilitating group processes (such as the SWOT analysis), and on the facilitator knowing the community well and being able to persuade community leaders to try a different approach.

To ensure that facilitation services are available to community groups willing to use Community Counts to generate evidence-based plans and proposals, it is recommended that NS OED and ACOA-NS develop ways and means to negotiate formal agreements or memoranda of understanding with RDAs, DHAs and other community development agencies such that these agencies would have the resources, the mandate and the trained personnel to deliver such services.

If resources are made available to community development agencies to provide such facilitation services, there should be requirements for participation in training, networking and evaluation activities on an ongoing basis.

## 5.4. Protocols for Proposal Submissions

The findings of the CDPP suggest that community groups that go through the four-session planning process making use of Community Counts do go on to develop evidence-based community development strategies. Further, the groups express a willingness to undertake such planning as prerequisites to the submission of development proposals to funding agencies.

The consultants therefore recommend that ACOA-NS and NS OED move forward with the elaboration of protocols and guidelines for community groups to provide evidence and strategic rationales for their development proposals. Although there are wide variations in the types of initiatives communities undertake, certain common themes might be addressed in many such proposals. The following is a suggested framework of such themes:

1. Community Vision and Objectives
  - ✧ What are the specific objectives and desired outcomes of the proposed project?

- ◇ What evidence is there that these objectives are in harmony with a vision for the future of the community that is broadly shared in the community?

## 2. SWOT

- ◇ What are the principal strengths of the community internally that will contribute to the success of the proposed project?
- ◇ What obstacles or constraints will the community need to overcome to be successful?
- ◇ What are the principal external opportunities and supports that will contribute to the success of the proposed project?
- ◇ What external barriers or threats will the community need to overcome to be successful in the project?

## 3. Needs Assessment

- ◇ What specific community needs will the proposed project address?
- ◇ What evidence is there of the nature and extent of these needs?

## 4. Assets

- ◇ What are the key physical assets, attributes and resources readily available to the community for the purposes of this project?
- ◇ What physical assets, attributes and resources (not including financial resources) will the community need to acquire to implement the project successfully?

## 5. Infrastructure & Services

- ◇ What physical infrastructure and services are needed to implement the project successfully? Are they available at manageable cost levels?
  - Water and sewage;
  - Electricity;
  - Communications;
  - Transportation;
  - Fire and police protection;
  - Education and training;

- Health care;
- Accommodation and food services;
- Legal and financial services;
- Repair and maintenance; and
- Other.

## 6. Demographic Status

- ◇ Is the community stable, growing or in decline in terms of population levels?
- ◇ How is the profile of the community changing in terms of key age groups relative to the goals and activities of the proposed project?
- ◇ Now, and in the foreseeable future, will the community have sufficient numbers of workers or volunteers to implement the proposed project successfully?
- ◇ Now, and in the foreseeable future, will the community have sufficient numbers of “consumers” or beneficiaries to justify the implementation of the proposed project?
- ◇ If a goal of the project is to attract and/or retain population, who are the target groups or categories of people and how will the project address their needs?

## 7. Labour Force

- ◇ What numbers and categories of skilled workers and/or volunteers are needed to implement the project?
- ◇ Are there people living in or near the community now who are available and have the specific skills to do the work of the project?
- ◇ If not, what is the strategy for attracting those skilled people?
- ◇ Are there people who lack the required skills who could be trained to meet the labour force requirements of the project? If so, what types and levels of training might be needed?

## 8. Organizational Capacity

- ◇ What are the most influential community organizations in the community?

- ❖ What are the levels of involvement in and support for the proposed project among those organizations?
- ❖ Which specific organizations are involved in implementing this project, and what are their roles and responsibilities?
- ❖ What kinds of capacity building might help these organizations to be better able to fulfill their roles and responsibilities?
- ❖ In what ways will the implementing organizations be accountable to the community for their activities?

It is recommended that ACOA-NS and NS OED undertake joint efforts to develop a prototype framework for such proposal requirements based on the above suggestions, and do pilot testing with community groups to ensure that they are realistic and manageable.

## 5.5. Downloadable Tools and Resources

The Community Counts program already includes an impressive array of statistical reports, community profiles, graphic materials and background information that can be downloaded by users. Based on the outcomes and findings of the CDPD project, it is recommended that the following resources be developed and added to the system:

1. The four-session planning program and an accompanying facilitator's guide.
2. Guidelines and suggestions for supplementary research activities for community groups doing the four-session planning program:
  - ❖ Guidelines on how to do asset mapping;
  - ❖ Questionnaires and focus group agendas to address quality of life, social well-being and community health issues; and
  - ❖ Guidelines for how to access other sources of statistical data from Statistics Canada, the Rural Secretariat, Target Nova Scotia, etc.
3. A user's handbook and update guide.
4. Links to other statistical information websites.
5. A membership option where qualified users of Community Counts could sign in and receive "insider" news, updates, tips, contacts with other users, etc.

## 5.6. Development of More Complex Indicators and Analytical Tools

The CDPP literature review identified examples of analytical frameworks, tools and indicators that have been developed within statistical information systems. These include elements such as:

- Multi-variable analytical frameworks for sustainable development, for determinants of population health and for measures of social well-being or quality of life;
- Community profile reports; and
- The application of statistical criteria to identify or target communities for specific socio-economic interventions.

The CDPP Wrap-up Workshop discussed these approaches and generated advice on how these more sophisticated analytical resources might be developed within Community Counts. A few ideas that came out were:

- “Buttons” that Community Counts users might manipulate to compare their community with others, and to their region, in terms of key health, social and economic change variables.
- Similar tools that would generate diagnostic information on factors such as age profiles, migration patterns, income trends, labour force characteristics, education levels or health risks for communities.

The experience with the CDPP pilot projects suggests that such tools might not be initially useful for community groups just beginning to develop strategic community development plans and evidence-based proposals. They would be perhaps of more immediate value to researchers, educators and government decision-makers.

It is recommended that the Community Counts program establish an active partnership with Community Accounts in Newfoundland & Labrador, and with experts doing parallel work in Statistics Canada, the Rural Secretariat, the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre and in other academic and research settings, to share their resources and experience in this important area of development and to promote the use of standard measures, frameworks and indicators wherever possible.

## APPENDIX I: PARTICIPANTS IN PROJECT WRAP-UP WORKSHOP

PROJECT WRAP-UP WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS	
Affiliation	Attendees
ACOA	Lynn Adams
Coastal Communities Network	Ishbel Munro
Colchester Regional Development Authority	Anna Parks
Halifax Regional Development Agency	Graziella Grbac
Newfoundland & Labrador Community Accounts	Doug May
Nova Scotia Community Counts	Dennis Pilkey
Nova Scotia Office of Economic Development	Laurie Alexander
PRAXIS Research	Rick Williams Iona Worden
RCIP and NS Voluntary Planning	Malcolm Schookner
Rural Secretariat	Keith Cossey Jean Lambert Kate Humpage
Statistics Canada	Ray Bollman
Upper Stewiacke Community Development Association	Sandra Jackson Todd Stoddart

## APPENDIX II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The consultants conducted a review of readily available literature on four topics:

1. Identification of web-based resources for community planning;
2. Systems of social, economic and other indicators for analysis of community conditions and development challenges;
3. Identification of tools and resources to assist communities in using statistical resources for community planning; and
4. Models and best practices for community-based development planning processes.

First of all it must be said that, without conducting an exhaustive search, it is readily apparent that many jurisdictions in Canada, the US and Europe have made their national, provincial or state statistical resources available on the World Wide Web, and in most cases the systems provide community breakdowns. CDPD stakeholders are already familiar with the Community Accounts system in Newfoundland & Labrador. Some other examples to consider include the following:

### *Canadian Examples*

Statistics Canada provides statistical data on discrete communities at its Community Profiles website.<sup>5</sup> The data is presented in five broad categories:

- Population;
- Education;
- Incomes and Work;
- Families and Dwellings; and
- Births and Deaths.

The range of data available for each topic is quite limited. The following, for example, is the data provided under the category “Incomes and Work”. The data

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<sup>5</sup> [www12.statcan.ca/english/Profil/PlaceSearchForm1.cfm](http://www12.statcan.ca/english/Profil/PlaceSearchForm1.cfm)

for each community is presented by gender and compared with the provincial level:

- Labour force characteristics of the population age 15 years and over;
- Average total income of persons reporting income (\$);
- Persons in the employed labour force;
- Persons reporting unpaid work;
- Persons reporting any hours of unpaid housework;
- Persons reporting any hours of unpaid child care;
- Persons reporting any hours of unpaid care to seniors;
- 1996 unemployment rate (%);
- 1996 participation rate (%);
- Industry characteristics of the population age 15 years and over who have worked since January 1, 1995; and
- Total - All industries
  - ◇ Persons in agriculture and other resource-based industries (primary)
  - ◇ Persons in manufacturing and construction industries (secondary)
  - ◇ Persons in service industries (tertiary)

The major drawbacks of the Statistics Canada Community Profile system is that to date it is only available for 1996, and in most cases it is not possible to consider comparisons with earlier Census years to see the trends over time.

The Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics provides a Community Profiles system that allows users to select either the Territory as a whole, a region, or one of 32 communities, and to view a selection of statistical categories.<sup>6</sup> The data is generally up-to-date and provides historical comparisons, but information is incomplete for some of the smaller communities.

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<sup>6</sup> [www.stats.gov.nt.ca/CPWeb/NNWThome.html](http://www.stats.gov.nt.ca/CPWeb/NNWThome.html)



Ontario provides quite comprehensive community profiles on its statistics web page.<sup>7</sup> The system is up-to-date and provides some historical comparisons. It appears to be primarily oriented to location decision-making by businesses similar to Target Nova Scotia. The major categories of data are:

- Population by age, family income and education;
- Labour force by industry, wage rates and major employers;
- Real estate (e.g., property prices) and finance;
- Utilities;
- Transportation facilities;
- Research and development;
- Community services;
- Investment opportunities;
- Schools;
- Media and communications;
- Culture and health; and
- Recreation.

There is a great deal of information in the Ontario community profiles about businesses, services and amenities in each community, but not a lot of social and economic data beyond the basic Census population and labour force descriptive material.

The Alberta First system of community profiles is very similar with its emphasis on support for decision-making on business location.<sup>8</sup> Over 450 individual community profiles are on the database, and many appear to be designed and written by the communities themselves.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.2ontario.com/communities/home.asp](http://www.2ontario.com/communities/home.asp)

<sup>8</sup> [www.albertafirst.com/profiles/community/](http://www.albertafirst.com/profiles/community/)

Québec has a large and comprehensive system of regional profiles on its statistical database.<sup>9</sup> It is perhaps worth examining this system in some greater detail because it shows the full extent of the social and economic data that can be provided at the level of small regions. Most of the statistics tables are provided with five-year trends. The following tables are available for each region and represent a substantial framework for analysis of the development strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges communities face.

### **The Economy and Finance**

#### ○ Foreign Trade

- ✧ Exporting establishments of merchandises and export value
- ✧ Value and share of exported merchandises by destination

#### ○ Economic Situation

- ✧ Economic accounts
- ✧ Gross domestic product (GDP) at basic prices
- ✧ Investment unrevised data for all of Québec
- ✧ Capital expenditures by NAICS sector and sub-sector
- ✧ Capital and repair expenditures in the private and public sectors
- ✧ Capital and repair expenditures in the private sector
- ✧ Capital and repair expenditures in the public sector
- ✧ Capital and repair expenditures in the primary sector
- ✧ Capital and repair expenditures in the secondary sector
- ✧ Capital and repair expenditures in the tertiary sector
- ✧ Capital and repair expenditures in the housing sector
- ✧ Value of building permits by type of construction

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<sup>9</sup> [www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/regions/profils/region\\_00/region\\_00\\_an.htm](http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/regions/profils/region_00/region_00_an.htm)

- Labour Market Indicators
  - ◇ Labour market characteristics, seasonally adjusted monthly data
  - ◇ Labour market characteristics by gender, population aged 15 and over
  - ◇ Labour market characteristics by age group, population aged 15 and over
  - ◇ Labour market characteristics by age group, men aged 15 and over
  - ◇ Labour market characteristics by age group, women aged 15 and over
  - ◇ Labour market characteristics, population aged 15 and over
  - ◇ Labour market characteristics by major activity sector
  - ◇ Employment by industry, NAICS sub-sector
- Knowledge-based Economy
  - ◇ Scientific publications by discipline and type of collaboration
  - ◇ Industrial research and development
  - ◇ Utility patents held in Québec and inventions patented
  - ◇ Population of human resources in science and technology working in a science and technology occupation, by industry

## **Social Data**

- Population by age group and gender
- Mean age, median age, and modal age of population, by gender
- Marital status, marriage and divorce
- Marriages and nuptiality rate
- Migration and immigrant population
- Annual interregional migration
- Annual interregional migration by age group
- Five-year interregional migration by age group

- Number of in-migrants and out-migrants by the three main regions of origin and destination
- International, inter-provincial and intra-provincial migration
- Births and Deaths
  - ◇ Births, deaths and natural increase
  - ◇ Birth, death and natural increase rates
  - ◇ Fertility rate by age group and overall indexes
  - ◇ Life expectancy at birth by gender
  - ◇ Pre-natal mortality, neonatal and infant mortality rate

### **Population Projections**

- Population and projected five-year demographic components
- Population projections: number of households and average number of persons per household
- Population, by age group and gender
- Population projections: mean age, median age, and modal age, by gender

### **Education**

- Distribution of new college enrollments, by region of origin and enrollment, and by gender
- Number of college graduates by type of education and by gender
- Number of college graduates by program family

### **Families, Households and Living Conditions**

- Social Programs
  - ◇ Adult recipients of employment-assistance, by level of schooling and gender
  - ◇ Trends in recipients of employment-assistance by capacity for employment and gender

- ◇ Adult recipients of employment-assistance, by age group and gender
  - ◇ Adult recipients of employment-assistance, by family situation and gender
  - ◇ Characteristics of household recipients of employment-assistance
  - ◇ Trends in employment-assistance rate and duration of benefits under Employment-Assistance Program
- Income and Expenses
- ◇ Personal income per capita, and by gender
  - ◇ Economic dependency ratio and economic dependency index, by gender
  - ◇ Number and proportion of low income families, by type of family
  - ◇ Number of persons in low income families, by type of family
  - ◇ Median income of all families and low income families, by family type

### **Labour Force and Remuneration**

- Labour market characteristics, seasonally adjusted monthly data
- Labour market characteristics by gender, population aged 15 and over
- Labour market characteristics by age group, population aged 15 and over
- Labour market characteristics by age group, men aged 15 and over
- Labour market characteristics by age group, women aged 15 and over
- Labour market characteristics, population aged 15 and over
- Labour market characteristics by major activity sector
- Employment by industry, NAICS sub-sector

The Québec system represents one of the more comprehensive approaches to integration of social and economic indicators of development. It does not however provide data at the level of smaller communities, and it does not include cross-sectional indicators of such factors as “social well-being” or “sustainable

development”. It also does not link to substantial data resources on population health status.

## ***The United States***

The US Census Bureau provides a service called “American FactFinder” that is well set up with mapping capabilities and data on smaller communities.<sup>10</sup> For a selected community it is possible to generate census data on the following topics:

- Population;
- Aging;
- Disability;
- Education;
- Gender;
- Income and employment;
- Origins and language;
- Poverty;
- Race and ethnicity;
- Relationships; and
- Transportation.

There is interesting detail in some of these categories. For example, for the category of “aging” the following information is available:

- Age Groups – Children and Elderly
- Marital Status, Unmarried-Partner Households and Grandparents as Caregivers
- Percent of Persons 65 Years and Over, map state by county subdivision

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<sup>10</sup> <http://factfinder.census.gov>

For “Disability”:

- Disability Status by Gender
- Gender by Age by Type of Disability
- Percent of Persons 5 to 20 Years With a Disability, map state by county subdivision
- Percent of Persons 21 to 64 Years With a Disability, map state by county subdivision
- Percent of Persons 65 Years and Over With a Disability, map state by county subdivision

Under the category of “Income and Employment” the following data is provided:

- Employment:
  - ◇ Class of Worker and Veteran Status
  - ◇ Employment Status by Gender
  - ◇ Occupation by Gender
  - ◇ Gender by Age, Disability Status, and Employment
  - ◇ Gender by Age by Employment Status
- Income:
  - ◇ Income Distribution of Households and Families
  - ◇ Median Family Income in 1999, map state by county subdivision
  - ◇ Median Household Income in 1999, map state by county subdivision
  - ◇ Per Capita Income in 1999, map state by county subdivision
  - ◇ Income and Poverty:
- Occupation, industry and class of worker

American FactFinder is perhaps weaker than other systems in terms of historical comparisons and inclusion of health status data. It also does not encompass aggregate measures of social well-being.

## The United Kingdom

Some innovative approaches were found in Europe. For both the UK and the European Union there seems to be some developing interest in linkages between information systems and larger policy commitments to community development or neighbourhood renewal processes.

In the UK there are specific indications of a concerted approach to integrate three levels of activity in community development:

1. Wider policy commitments.
2. Data resources.
3. Training systems.

The web page for the National Statistics Bureau of the UK provides a special program field called “Neighbourhood Statistics” that provides information at the local community level for the following six categories (each of which has numerous sub-categories):

1. People and society
2. Health and care
3. Deprivation
4. Economic activity
5. Students, education, skills and training
6. Housing and households

Unlike almost all the other data systems we have examined, this system is less oriented to providing the data itself and more focused on analysis and conclusions from the data. For example, a search for “people and society” for the city of Nottingham produces a page with the following information:

*According to the mid-2003 population estimates there were 273,900 people residing in Nottingham, of whom 50.2 per cent were male and 49.8 per cent were female. Children under five accounted for approximately 6 per cent of the resident population of Nottingham. This compares with almost 6 per cent for England and Wales overall.*

*In mid-2003, 15.6 per cent of the resident population in Nottingham were of retirement age (65 and over for males or 60 and over for females) compared with 18.5 per cent in England and Wales.*



For the Health and Care category the following text and table is provided:

*The 2001 Census asked people to describe their health, over the preceding 12 months as 'good', 'fairly good' or 'not good'. People were also asked if they had any limiting long-term illness, health problem or disability that restricted their daily activities or the work they could do.*

	Nottingham	East Midlands	England and Wales
General health: Good	64.97	67.58	68.55
General health: Fairly good	24.01	23.27	22.23
General health: Not good	11.01	9.14	9.22
People with a limiting long-term illness	20.11	18.41	18.23
People of working age with a limiting long-term illness	15.97	13.71	13.56
Households with one or more person with a limiting long-term illness	36.28	34.25	34.05

The web page for Neighbourhood Statistics describes a number of improvements recently made to the program. These include:

- Community profiles address a wider range of subjects, covering people and society, health, housing and education. They also include the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 rankings.
- Users can build their own areas, such as neighbourhoods, from a best fit of Output Areas and then save these online, to re-use and share with other users.
- Users can chart time-series data (where available) for the first time and thematically map all datasets and analyze data using new mapping tools.
- Information is available on a range of new geographies such as wards, health areas and parliamentary constituencies and parishes making small-area comparisons easy.

Users of the system can register to make their subsequent visits to the site easier. Registered users can save selected areas for future reference, be kept informed about new data releases and significant changes to the site, and receive a Neighbourhood Statistics newsletter.

The “Neighbourhood Statistics” web resource is linked directly to the UK government’s large-scale policy commitment to community-based social and economic development entitled “The New Deal for Communities”.<sup>11</sup>

*New Deal for Communities (NDC) is a key programme in the Government's strategy to tackle multiple deprivation in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, giving some of our poorest communities the resources to tackle their problems in an intensive and co-ordinated way. The aim is to bridge the gap between these neighbourhoods and the rest of England.*

*The problems of each NDC neighbourhood are unique, but all the NDC partnerships are tackling five key themes of: poor job prospects; high levels of crime; educational under-achievement; poor health; and problems with housing and the physical environment. ....Approximately £2bn has been committed to the 39 [community] partnerships.*

The main action priorities established by the program to date are:

- Improving local services;
- Increasing community capacity (i.e., enabling people to do more for themselves); and,
- Adopting an evidence-based approach to delivering change (i.e., getting proof of what works in practice).

The National Federation of Community Organizations is a non-governmental organization that is funded by the UK government to do training and capacity building for community development. It has developed the “Community Matters” training courses specifically for multipurpose community organizations.<sup>12</sup> The list of training courses provided by the Federation includes the following:

- Sustaining your Community Building (3-day course)
- Strategic Planning & Implementing a Development Plan
- Project Planning and Management
- Profiling your Community

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<sup>11</sup> [www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=617](http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/page.asp?id=617)

<sup>12</sup> <http://communitymatters.org.uk/>

○ Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

The “Profiling your Community” course includes skills and strategies for using Neighbourhood Statistics and other research resources.

## ***The European Union***

At the wider policy level, the European Union appears to be discovering community development as a planning and regional development tool. This relatively late interest perhaps reflects the rather top-down nature of the EU itself and certain traditional bureaucratic approaches to social and economic development.

The statistical resources provided by the EU statistical agency, Eurostat, are, to say the least, complex.<sup>13</sup> They cover both member countries and the full range of potential member states, and they provide data in several languages at the national and sub-regional level.<sup>14</sup> To assist in organizing all this information, Eurostat has adopted a sustainable development framework based on the following 10 “themes”, each with “sub-themes”.

1. Economic development
  - a. Investment
  - b. Competitiveness
  - c. Employment
2. Poverty and social exclusion
  - a. Monetary poverty
  - b. Access to labour market
  - c. Other aspects of social exclusion

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<sup>13</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?\\_pageid=1090,30070682,1090\\_33076576&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=1090,30070682,1090_33076576&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

<sup>14</sup> The EU has a system for designating regions within countries in terms of their socio-economic development levels. This system provides a policy and regulatory framework for investments in regional development programs and industrial subsidies, among other things.

3. Ageing society
  - a. Pension adequacy
  - b. Demographic changes
  - c. Public finance sustainability
4. Public health
  - a. Human health protection and lifestyles
  - b. Food safety and quality
  - c. Chemical management
  - d. Health risks due to environmental conditions
5. Climate change and energy
  - a. Climate change – total greenhouse gas emissions
  - b. Energy – gross energy consumption by fuel
6. Production and consumption patterns
  - a. Eco-efficiency
  - b. Consumption patterns
  - c. Agriculture
  - d. Corporate responsibility
7. Management of natural resources
  - a. Biodiversity
  - b. Marine ecosystems
  - c. Freshwater resources
  - d. Land use
8. Transport
  - a. Transport growth
  - b. Transport prices
  - c. Social and environmental impacts of transport

9. Good governance
  - a. Policy coherence
  - b. Public participation
10. Global partnership
  - a. Globalization of trade
  - b. Financing for sustainable development
  - c. Resource management

The Eurostat web page on sustainable development<sup>15</sup> explains the use of the themes as follows:

*The themes are further divided into sub-themes and 'areas to be addressed'. The sub-themes usually monitor the progress towards the [development policy] objectives while the 'areas to be addressed' facilitate a more detailed and diversified analysis of background factors in each theme. In some cases the sub-themes also address so-called 'slow burning' concerns that may need a very long time to reverse.*

*The framework is determined by policy themes that unavoidably partially overlap. Some driving forces, such as energy, affect developments in several themes, but cannot be presented several times in the indicator set. Furthermore, the scope of themes differs considerably as some themes address a very specific domain (e.g. climate change and energy) and some (e.g. production and consumption patterns) encompass a wide variety of general socio-economic and environmental issues. Accordingly, the framework is based on a strict prioritization of indicators inside each theme, but it ensures, with the help of standardized concepts, definitions and classifications, structuring of information in a manner that facilitates the use of indicators in the monitoring of progress in other themes too.*

The indicators and targets for each sub-theme are set out in the web resource.

The links to community based planning and development are currently being explored in various EU policy processes. A lead agency in this field is the Combined European Bureau for Social Development (CEBSD).<sup>16</sup> It describes the

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<sup>15</sup> [http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?\\_pageid=1998,39223398,1998\\_39994175&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=1998,39223398,1998_39994175&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.cebsd.org/index.htm>

relatively recent interest in community development as a reaction against the tradition of central planning in urban areas:

*Community development challenged top-down principles and practices of governmental decision-making in which key stages of urban planning were formulated and executed without consultation with those most affected. Large-scale programmes without respect for human scale were carried out leading to large urban estates of brutal architecture with poor quality of life, alienated and dis-empowered citizens and social exclusion. In more extreme cases, the consequences of this misgovernance took the form of ghettoisation, anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder. Community development offered an opportunity to confront some of these problems and undo their worst effects.*

CEBSD is now promoting community development as:

*.... a true expression of the European principle of subsidiarity, ensuring that decisions, problems and issues are addressed at the lowest possible level.*

They also see it as:

*.... a cross-cutting principle which affects a wide range of policies - not just urban and rural government but planning, the physical environment, employment, spatial segregation, sustainable development, environmental protection, transport and social inclusion.*

*Community development approaches have much to offer in the development of [the EU's] Local Agenda 21, the promotion of local employment, the social economy and in the enhancement of the role of non-governmental organizations, association and foundations. Community development has a special focus on disadvantage and exclusion, because that is a specific process which can be the first and most crucial step in overcoming disadvantage - but general principles of participation should apply to all communities and levels of government.*

The CEBSD is currently promoting the adoption of six principles to provide a “community development lens” for EU social and regional development policies and programs:

1. *Individual and collective*: community development is concerned with change and development of both individuals and groups, through their involvement in community activities.

2. *Processes and outcomes*: commitment with educational processes of both individuals and groups alongside the achievement of concrete outcomes (a new community center, a local employment project...).
3. *Focus on disadvantage*: commitment to working with and on behalf of disadvantaged people, also seeking political coalitions addressing structural causes of poverty.
4. *Participation*: in open and accessible groups, informal networks. Interest in whatever has to be said by all members of a community, specially poor and oppressed people with less opportunities and confidence in their own skills and values.
5. *Prevention*: promoting activities born from the common desire to improve situations in the community.
6. *Change and influence*: achievement of objectives agreed by all those involved in a community project, accompanying the changing process and establishing communication channels to influence policy decision making.<sup>17</sup>

The EU has a well-established system for classifying regions in terms of social and economic development status, and has its framework of indicators and targets for sustainable development. It will be very useful to follow the development of community development policies and programs as they are harmonized in typical EU fashion with the sustainable development framework.

## ***Tools for Analysis and Planning***

In this section we briefly examine some literature resources on models and tools for community based development planning.<sup>18</sup>

### **Statistics Canada – Mapping the Socio-Economic Diversity of Rural Canada**

The Rural and Small Town Canada division of Statistics Canada has focused considerable attention on indicators of social and economic development in rural areas. This particular project looks at trends for smaller localities across the country with regard to the downloading of responsibilities to municipal and

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<sup>17</sup> Source of principles: "Social inclusion and citizenship in Europe: The contribution of community development", Paul Henderson, CEBSD publication 1997.

<sup>18</sup> The PRAXIS team is grateful for the substantial assistance received from the staff of Rural Communities Impacting Policy (RCIP) in pulling this information together.

county administrations and the management and design of local development policies.

*Mapping the Socio-Economic Diversity of Rural Canada*<sup>19</sup> describes the use of a multivariate statistical method to identify the key determinants of socio-economic development across the 288 Census Divisions of Canada. The analysis made use of 27 key variables for social and economic development:

- 5 Demographic Indicators
  - ◇ Includes population change, age characteristics and fertility rate.
- 4 Social Indicators
  - ◇ Includes years of schooling, number of low income families, dependency ratios and unemployment rates.
- 3 Housing Characteristics
  - ◇ Includes housing costs as a percent of family income and home ownership patterns.
- 15 Economic and Labour Market Indicators
  - ◇ Includes employment by industry type, labour force participation rates, average incomes and income growth.

The study used factor analysis to consider how these many variables interact in different socio-economic and geographical settings.

*This approach is beneficial when it produces a simplified but meaningful picture of a complex reality. By analyzing the nature and spatial distributions of the factor score, each dimension can reveal a pattern of associations among socio-economic indicators. These dimensions provide a perspective on the relative position of the Census Division with respect to the dimensions identified.*<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Statistics Canada, *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (March 2004).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 3.



The factor analysis generated six distinct patterns or “dimensions” in terms of statistically significant relationships among the variables.

1. Labour force and economic attributes;
2. Remote and agro-rural attributes;
3. Demographic and labour force attributes (regarding age characteristics);
4. Employment attributes – complex manufacturing versus non-agricultural primary production;
5. Employment attributes – traditional manufacturing versus government employment attributes; and
6. Demographic dynamics attributes.

These dimensions appear to explain differences among geographical units. The most powerful dimension, labour force and economic attributes, generates evidence of a “major divide between a lower economic performance in the north and east of Canada and a higher economic performance in the south and west of Canada”.<sup>21</sup>

This approach leads to a classification of Census Divisions across the country within five categories:

- 25 Urban regions;
- 37 Intermediate regions;
- 86 Rural metro-adjacent regions;
- 117 Rural non-metro-adjacent regions; and
- 23 Rural northern regions.

The factor analysis generates meaningful comparisons between each of these regional types in different parts of the country, and suggests reasons why a particular type of region is more or less economically advanced in one part of the country compared to another. It also provides explanations for critical variations between different types of regions in the same province in terms of social indicators and economic performance.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 1.

This approach to mapping social and economic development issues in rural areas goes beyond the provision of information. The additional statistical operations generate insights into causal relationships that otherwise remain hidden in the data, e.g., how housing or health issues may influence labour market performance and vice versa.

Such an approach is necessarily theoretical in nature, but it may be a very useful tool for strategic planning and problem solving at the community level. It makes use of readily available data resources but requires advanced skills in statistical analysis. The approach may therefore need to be implemented at a central agency level rather than through community-based applications, although the resulting analyses can be easily shared with local planning groups.

### **Assessing Self-Help Community Development Planning Tools**

This report was written in 2001 by Sue Calhoun, David Bruce and Gwen Lister for the Rural and Small Town Programme, Mount Allison University.<sup>22</sup>

The objective of the study was to evaluate some of the better-known community planning resources available in Atlantic Canada, how they are being used, and whether they are meeting the planning needs of communities. The principal findings were that:

1. There is a significant need for “better promotion of existing tools, so that groups are aware of what is available”. Some useful resources are underutilized because community groups are not aware of them.
2. The following resources would be useful for groups doing community planning:
  - ✧ Examples of good quality community plans;
  - ✧ A template for developing a strategic community plan, showing what kind of information should be included, similar to ACOA’s brochures on how to do a business plan, and with discrete components such as worksheets that groups can pull out and use;

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<sup>22</sup> Available online: <http://www.mta.ca/rstp/shtool-e.pdf>

- ❖ An appropriate balance between enough “how to” detail and a manageable document that won’t overwhelm the users; and
- ❖ A plain language and user-friendly format is essential.

### **Rural Community Health and Well-Being: A Guide to Action**

This report was produced by the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University in Manitoba in 2004.<sup>23</sup>

The objective of this document is to provide key tools for community groups “to identify the nature of the issues they face, gather appropriate information, transform it into knowledge, and mobilize themselves and others”.

The report provides a comprehensive guide to community analysis and planning. It has guidelines for goals and objectives, a partner identification chart, a community climate chart; worksheets on various indicators (population, education, housing, transportation, etc.), a solutions matrix and an action plan template.

### **First Nations Community Planning Model (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) and Workbook (1<sup>st</sup> Edition)**

These documents are available from the Cities and Environment Unit of the Faculty of Architecture and Planning at Dalhousie University.

The objective is to assist First Nations with community planning so that they can become “active participants in shaping their own destiny”. Although produced primarily for use by Native communities, the resource is appropriate for non-Native communities as well.

The model outlines a seven-step process:

1. Gathering background information (including creating a community profile);
2. Identifying strengths and weaknesses;

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<sup>23</sup> Available online at: [www.brandonu.ca/rdi](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi)

3. Researching root causes;
4. Establishing a vision;
5. Building a framework;
6. Developing an implementation strategy; and
7. Monitoring the plan and projects.

Each stage has a distinct product output contributing to the elaboration of the community-based plan.

In addition to these three reports, there are additional resources on the RCIP website under “Strategic Planning” in the Tacklebox Section.<sup>24</sup> These include:

- A manual on strategic planning with planning templates and worksheets, produced by the Center for Public Skills Training in Milwaukee; and
- *Moving from Vision to Action*, a seven-step planning process developed by the Appalachian Regional Commission Online Resource Center.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.ruralnovascotia.ca/tacklebox/default.asp?mnu=3&mnu2=3>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.arc.gov/index.do?nodeId=967>

## APPENDIX III – COMMUNITY COUNTS PLANNING PROGRAM

### Introduction

This document sets out draft agendas for four sessions with community leaders participating in the pilot projects for the Community Development Planning Project.

The objectives of the sessions are:

1. To familiarize the participants with the Community Counts web resource and to provide them with the skills to use Community Counts for their own planning purposes; and
2. To test out a planning process whereby leadership groups can work with Community Counts to develop goals, strategic priorities and practical directions for community development projects in their home areas.

The workshop explores the participants' understandings of their community and uses the Nova Scotia Community Counts system to expand that understanding. Statistics, examples and exercises are used to introduce them to the Community Counts system and provide training in the navigation and use of the system.

Nova Scotia Community Counts is a statistical infrastructure that provides government, business, community decision-makers and citizens with easy and timely access to quality, comprehensive statistics presented in an intuitive and informative manner. It provides information to develop an understanding of and make assessments and comparisons about the health, safety and security, and quality of life in Nova Scotia communities and regions. Find it at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/communitycounts/>

The following are proposed agendas for the four sessions. These should be modified and adjusted in consultation with the participants during each session. The overall goal is to provide a learning and planning experience that is useful to the group in their efforts to address important community development issues and challenges in their local areas.

### **Session 1: Orientation to Community Counts**

- 10 minutes    Opening and introduction of participants
- 10 minutes    Review of objectives of the four planning sessions (PowerPoint)
- 20 minutes    Roundtable discussions: What do participants see as the most important development needs or issues in their community?
- 70 minutes    Introduction to Community Counts by the facilitator
1. Instructions on accessing or navigating the web page
  2. Orientation: what different kinds of information are in Community Counts, and how to find it.
  3. Exercise: Use Community Counts to identify the following information about your community:
    - ✧ How many people? What is the trend?
    - ✧ What age distribution? What is the trend?
    - ✧ What family composition? Is the composition changing?
    - ✧ What education levels? What is the trend?
    - ✧ What income levels? What is the trend?
    - ✧ How many employed and at what? Is this pattern changing?
    - ✧ How healthy is your community? What are the key health issues?
- 10 minutes    Homework Assignment for Session 2
- Read over the print-out statistical summary for the community

## Session 2: Profiling the Community

- 15 minutes    Opening and review of Session 1 outcomes
- Any questions, comments or suggestions arising from Session 1
- 15 minutes    Reflections on Session 1
- Think about the information you accessed in the opening exercise. How well do you know your community? Any surprises?
  - What did you learn from the information that could be used in program planning?
- 70 minutes    SWOT Analysis
1. What evidence can you generate from Community Counts to identify the key *strengths* of your community?
  2. What evidence can you generate from Community Counts to identify the key *weaknesses* of your community?
  3. What evidence can you generate from Community Counts to identify the key *opportunities* arising from developments in surrounding communities, the region and the province?
  4. What evidence can you generate from Community Counts to identify the key *threats* arising from trends in surrounding communities, the region and the province?
- 15 minutes    Reports to Plenary and discussion
- 5 minutes    Closing and Homework Assignment
- Participants may have identified gaps in the information available to complete their SWOT analysis. Are there ways to fill these gaps by collecting information from other sources?
  - Participants should take some time by themselves to think about the major development challenges for their community, and make a short list of points to discuss at the next session.

### Session 3: Setting Priorities

- 10 minutes    Opening and review of Session 2 outcomes
- Any questions, comments or suggestions arising from Session 2
- 20 minutes    Reflections on Session 2
- Review the list of most important development needs or issues in the community that participants identified in Session 1. Have their views changed? What would they add or subtract?
  - Review the outcomes of the SWOT analysis from Session 2.
    - ◇ Do participants have new evidence to bring to bear?
    - ◇ Any reflections to share with the group?
    - ◇ Any changes you might like to make to the analysis?
- 60 minutes    Brainstorming on action priorities
- Working in singles or pairs, and bearing in mind the identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, develop lists of action priorities for community development in the following areas:
    - ◇ Employment/job creation
    - ◇ Education and training
    - ◇ Housing and community infrastructure
    - ◇ Health
    - ◇ Social programs
    - ◇ Environment
- 20 minutes    Plenary discussion
- Review and discuss the lists from brainstorming, asking the following questions:
    - ◇ How important is it in terms of community needs?
    - ◇ How do we rate our own capacity to do it?
    - ◇ How much will community support it?
    - ◇ How easy will it be to get support from outside agencies?
- 10 minutes    Homework Assignment:
- Go back to Community Counts and look for evidence to support particular action priorities.
  - Talk to friends, family and community members to get their views about the priorities.



## Session 4: Action Planning

- 10 minutes    Opening and review of Session 3 outcomes
- Any questions, comments or suggestions arising from Session 3
- 15 minutes    Reflections on Session 3
- Review the list of community development action priorities. Have your views changed?
  - What new evidence did you find to back them up, or to justify changes of approach?
- 60 minutes    Consensus building on an action plan for community development
- For each project for which the group assigns a high priority, brainstorm about:
    - ◇ Practical goals
    - ◇ Who will initiate and lead?
    - ◇ What money and other resources are needed?
    - ◇ Possible sources of resources and support?
    - ◇ Timeframe?
    - ◇ Next steps?
- 15 minutes    Decision-making
- Review and make “green light” or “red light” decisions on possible action projects
    - ◇ Who leads?
    - ◇ Who follows?
    - ◇ Sources of outside support and funding
- 15 minutes    Evaluation of the Process
- Fill out evaluation forms
  - Plenary discussion
    - ◇ Strengths and benefits of the process
    - ◇ Weaknesses of the process
    - ◇ Ways to improve presentations, agenda, materials, etc.
- 5 minutes    Wrap-up

## APPENDIX IV – UPPER STEWIACKE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

### Upper Stewiacke Development Strategy

In the winter and spring of 2005, the Upper Stewiacke Community Development Association (USCDA) went through an extensive consultation and planning project to come up with development priorities for their community. They used a kind of voting process with a large number of community members to come up with the following list of development priorities in order of importance:

1. Maintain and expand the local business base
2. Address seniors' issues (health care services, housing, recreation, social isolation, etc.)
3. Recreational facilities, particularly for youth and elderly
4. Retain the elementary school
5. Better access to health services
6. Improve inter-group communications
7. Promote/develop community traditions, arts, crafts, culture
8. Keep churches strong
9. Long-term planning
10. Create jobs

This list was brought to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the CDPP workshop in Upper Stewiacke. The participants, most of them members and leaders of the USCDA, were able to reflect on these priorities in light of the work done, including the SWOT analysis, with the help of Community Counts.

They reached consensus on the following view of their community situation:

### Current Situation

- Upper Stewiacke is primarily a “bedroom community”. It is strategically located for people who work in Halifax or the airport, Truro (e.g., the expanding Power Centre), Musquodoboit Valley (e.g., the MacTara lumber operation) and New Glasgow area. It is estimated (although we did not have hard data) that 80% of the workforce in the community works away from the community.

- It is a stable community. It is not in crisis. Young people do leave, and there is a critical shortage of young families, but “middle aged” people are moving in to replace them, bringing knowledge and skills, a love of the local environment and a willingness to work to maintain the community as a great place to live. Some start local businesses or work out of their homes. Some are retired but still very active.
- Upper Stewiacke is a strong community in terms of volunteerism, community spirit, a sense of identity (not known outside the area) and a wide range of local services supported by the community (e.g., a co-op store and liquor store, a credit union, church, C@P site, etc.)
- As much as anything is predictable, Upper Stewiacke has a secure future. The surrounding urban areas are stable or growing, and we can predict that there will be more people wanting to live in a beautiful place like Upper Stewiacke. One key issue, however, is the sustainability of the largest industry in the area – the lumber industry. However, that is beyond the control of the community.

## Issues

- The environment is the strongest asset the community, particularly the river. There is a need to build community consensus around protecting and restoring the river and other aspects of the Valley environment.
  - ◇ There may be groups in the community who resist this approach, particularly in the sawmill and agriculture sector.
  - ◇ There is a need to link with groups outside the community who are working to rehabilitate the river.
- There is a lack of housing for young families, and a critical need for housing for seniors so they do not have to leave the community. There is a need for a recreation centre for youth and seniors, a gathering place and focus of community activities.
- There is a critical need to bring health care services to the community.
- A current worry, and potential crisis in future, is rising oil prices and their impact on transportation and home heating costs.
- The critical issue around jobs is that so many people are caught in low wage service jobs. They are vulnerable to rising gas prices, lack of daycare, etc.
- The lack of high-speed Internet access is a constraint for local businesses and for communications in general.

## **Growth Potential**

- Participants saw that their community has major assets to build on, mainly centred on it being a great place to live and the beautiful natural environment.
- The first step is to develop a “brand identity” for the community as a place to live, and perhaps to locate a small business, and market it strategically. The brand would focus on the environment, lifestyle and the strength of the community.
- A second priority is housing and controlled development so that it does not spread along the road and contribute to the breakdown of community and more expensive services. The goal is to build the village itself by providing affordable housing and making serviced lots available for a spectrum of new residents – young families, middle aged retirees and seniors.
- There is also a need for new destinations for travel-through visitors. One option is to link with the Musquodoboit Valley in terms of a “trail” with a variety of destinations along the route. The destinations should target niche markets (e.g., bike tours, trail bikes, snowmobiles, wildlife observation, canoeing and kayaking on the river, etc.).
- The general notion is that the community is already strong and stable. Having a limited number of new residents in attractive, village-connected housing, and having more pass-through visitors, will strengthen and consolidate what is already there.

## **Specific Projects**

- Higher gas prices, low wages and no daycare all hurt women in the community. There may be a need to look at a community-based adult education program to help women improve their employment skills and increase their incomes. The first step might be a needs assessment.
- A clear priority is a planned housing development through working with the province to access land and with local developers to build appropriate housing.
- There is a need for a recreation centre for youth and seniors. A starting point is simply a drop-in centre to overcome isolation.
- The big environmental issue is the river: Upper Stewiacke needs to get involved, join with other groups already working to rehabilitate the river, and build awareness and consensus in the community.