

# TRANS CANADA WEST PLANNING DISTRICT

## **DISTRICT PLAN RM of WALLACE & VILLAGE of ELKHORN Rural Development and “Quality of Life” Findings**

WORKSHOP # 1 – April 22, 2006

COMPILED BY: LOMBARD NORTH GROUP (1984) LTD.  
505 – 93 LOMBARD AVENUE,  
WINNIPEG, MB R3B 3B1  
PHONE: (204) 943-3896 FAX: (204) 947-5696

---

### **1.0 PURPOSE**

#### **1.1 Background**

The following report provides an overview of local planning issues identified by Workshop participants in the RM of Wallace and Village of Elkhorn concerning “Rural Development” directions and “Quality of Life” within the two municipalities.

This workshop represented the first of two workshops on Rural Development. The workshop focus included identification of those issues having implications upon the strategies to guide rural economic diversification, livestock siting and how participants view their community’s Quality of Life. There were 15 participants including District Board members at the first workshop held April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2006.

**These findings will be used as the basis for the second Workshop scheduled for June 14<sup>TH</sup> at 7 PM in McAuley. The objective of the second workshop will to identify concrete directions and actions to resolve the priority issues identified in Workshop #1 and to assess how these actions might contribute to the development of communities Wallace and Elkhorn aspire to become.**

#### **1.2 The Process**

Rural Development Workshop #1 was divided into two parts. Part One represented an overview the forces shaping Wallace and Elkhorn and the possible characteristics of the two communities if current trends continue into the future. This historical overview of socio-economic trends, rural land use and resources provided an introduction to current circumstances. Its purpose was to

help participants to reflect upon the questions **“Where are we today?”** and **“Where might we be tomorrow, if we take no steps to influence the direction of our communities?”**

Part Two of the workshop represented the opportunity for participants to get involved in defining issues and needs to be resolved. Participants were divided into two smaller discussion groups of approximately 8 people. Each discussion group was asked to consider the background information presented and based upon their personal experiences and perspectives on rural development needs, asked to consider the following statement:

**“The long term health of our rural communities will be a key to sustaining a viable agricultural/food and resource development and diversified District economy. The pace of change within Manitoba and the District’s rural economy is reflected in peoples’ discussions concerning:**

- **Managing the impacts of livestock intensification;**
- **Resource development opportunities; and**
- **Improving rural economic opportunities to retain and attract population/ jobs to the District.**

**Some of the implications of these concerns as they are expressed in rural Manitoba include:**

- 1. Increasing public expectations placed upon the agriculture sector, local councils and senior government authorities to address concerns over the social and environmental issues associated with livestock management;**
- 2. Need to understand how “best agricultural practices” will be specifically applied to local conditions in the Planning District;**
- 3. How best to facilitate resource development**
- 4. How can we, as a group of communities, use our infrastructure assets, opportunities and quality of life to attract immigration and investment?; and**
- 5. How can we create agricultural diversification opportunities to stimulate job creation and reverse present trends towards rural de-population?”**

Participants were asked to discuss within their groups those considerations they felt to be important in the creation of a rural development strategy and livestock siting guidelines for Wallace and Elkhorn.

**Each participant considered the following issues:**

- i) How can the municipalities develop opportunities to diversify their economies?

- ii) How can the municipalities best manage the location and development of livestock operations?; and
- iii) How can the municipalities improve their quality of life to retain people, attract investment and expand employment opportunities?

In response to these issues participants identified 27 current assets and opportunities they believe give the Municipalities a competitive advantage and help Wallace and Elkhorn diversify their local economies and promote the municipalities as good places to invest. Participants also identified 20 challenges they felt needed to be resolved to stimulate economic development and encourage support for the agriculture sector and entrepreneurial investment within the municipalities. In each case the participants decided to group the key issues under broader headings. Assets and Opportunities were consolidated under the headings (listed in order of priority given to each grouping) of “**Agriculture**”; “**Economy**” ,“**Regional health facilities**”, “**Infrastructure**”, “**Community resources**” and “**Affordability**”. Challenges were consolidated under the headings (again listed in order of priority given to each grouping) of “**Economy**”, “**Population**”, “**Community attitudes**” and “**Local governance**”.

Discussion Group participants were asked to assess the importance of each idea developed within its group. Importance was established by the cumulative value all participants from each Discussion Group assigned to the ideas they felt strongly about. Each participant was given a budget of \$100 to spend on promoting, for the workshop’s consideration, the ideas they believe require the greatest attention from the Planning District. Under the rules, each participant could spend no more than \$40, or no less than \$10 on any one item they decided to support. However, just as in the real world each participant found they did not have enough resources to do all things and had to make trade-offs.

## **2.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Following, we present the workshop findings as defined by the total value assigned by participants from each Discussion Group. Responses are presented in descending order of the importance for each of the questions, as defined by the values assigned by participants, to their discussion group’s listing of ideas.

### **2.1 Community Opportunity and Constraints**

**Part A) Assets and/or opportunities** that may represent advantages for your community to diversify its economy or provides Wallace or Elkhorn with a possible competitive advantage we may be

able to use to promote our communities as good places to invest and to attract economic development.

Following we present the Workshop findings in order of priority assigned by all participants based upon the allocation values to determine the relative importance among the grouping of issues. The values assigned by the workshop to the asset groupings are shown in parenthesis.

**Priority #1 Asset - Agriculture (430)**

1. Strong cattle/hog production area (18% of province's production)
2. Investment in grain terminals/feed mills
3. Access to regional cattle/hog sales/processing
4. Access to local/vet services
5. Feed mill located at Kola to serve expansion of livestock and recent establishment of Erco plant which processes locally found "sodium" product (a transitional product between potash and salt) for export. Presently no local businesses use the Erco product this represents an opportunity to attract industries to the area who may have a use for the product in their processing.

**Priority #2 Assets - Economy (300)**

1. Diversified local economy
  - Agriculture production
  - Oil production
  - Aggregate production
2. Diversified retail
  - Commercial sector serving local and regional needs
3. Local industrial/commercial building capacity in Kola with the capability of assist business physical plant construction expansion in District with local skilled labour, equipment and materials available

**Priority #3 Asset - Regional health facilities (270)**

1. Virden hospital/Moosomin health care facilities readily accessible
2. Personal care homes (Elkhorn, Virden)

3. Elkhorn's senior housing with clinic (1/2 day/week) (24 single units) (important to maintain for future of community)
4. Health services. Emergency ambulance service is available now. Important to maintain the service as a local priority the alternate impacts upon local community growth prospects would be very negative if we loss it.

#### **Priority #4 Assets - Infrastructure (250)**

1. Rural water distribution system
2. Access to transport links (Provincial Highway system/ Rail services/ Virden Airport)
3. Access to (3) phase electric power
4. Communications (high speed internet)
5. Hazco regional waste facility
6. Wallace's rural water system and Virden's water system offers two alternate sources of water and jointly represent opportunities to promote the District as a good place for business investment and development (Virden provides untreated water to Erco in Wallace to be used in its industrial processes)
7. Proximity to major transportation routes PTH No.1/CPR/local (CP maintenance) PR 256, PTH83 south provides opportunities to attract business investment to Elkhorn and Wallace
8. Elkhorn and Wallace have good water quality and quantity

#### **Priority #5 Asset - Community resources (170)**

1. Recreation resources
  - Elkhorn rink
  - Curling / skating
  - Sports fields
  - Emergency services (fire etc.)
  - Asessippi ski resort
2. Volunteerism
3. access to more than one urban service centre in the district (Elkhorn, McCauley, Virden, Kola)

4. Elkhorn has a school K to grade 12 (although there is a current concerned about long term outlook for sustaining all grades at school)

#### **Priority #6 Assets - Affordability (50)**

1. Low taxes
2. Affordable housing
3. Reasonable priced land (urban/rural)

**Part B) Local challenges** that need to be addressed to improve economic and quality of life prospects within Wallace and Elkhorn in order to stimulate economic development and support the agriculture sector are:

#### **Priority # 1 Challenges - Economy (440)**

1. Lack of “value added” processing
2. Local investment capital (lacking)
3. Uncertain farm stabilization support from province/federal government e.g. “CAIS”
4. Elkhorn. Is it possible to expand current job opportunities associated with local businesses (i.e. rail/car repair)
5. We need to be open to new ideas and investigate new opportunities and be pro-active in economic developments “promoting co-operative approaches”
6. Does ILO development offer opportunity to use by-products as the basis of new businesses? i.e. manure as the basis for production of other production, i.e. mushrooms
7. We have a shortage of skilled labor (oil industry is taking a lot of available labor) – how do we attract labor to area for non-oil industry jobs

#### **Priority # 2 Challenges - Population (410)**

1. Retention (Growth/stabilization)
2. Small/shrinking skilled labour force
3. Need to support cycle of rural family life where children grow to replace parents and sustain rural economy

4. Challenge is to make the “rural life style” attractive and competitive to the “urban life style” to increase population
5. Attracting in-migration requires co-ordination hands on assistance to help make the re-settlement process successful.

### **Priority # 3 Challenges - Community attitudes (370)**

1. Volunteer burn out
2. Lacking “can do” attitude by business sector
3. “Perimeteritess” (urban /rural split)
4. Poor outlook for agriculture sector given rising costs of inputs are exceeding the economic values of agricultural products

### **Priority # 4 Challenges - Local governance (280)**

1. Retention of local decision – making authority
2. Concern rural areas may be annexed by urban centers or smaller urban centers may not be viable as separate government units without amalgamation with larger rural municipalities
3. Duplication of services provided by local government and attendant inefficiencies
4. Development Plan needs to empower district and municipalities to make decisions that meet local needs and priorities and helps the provincial government understand our needs and how their programs can be applied within our District to support and complement local initiatives.

## **2.2 Livestock Development and Site Selection**

From the livestock operators’ perspective, there were 17 concerns identified grouped into five priority areas as follows in descending order of importance:

- Economic Viability
- Regulatory Compliance
- Location Suitability
- Community Concerns
- Options for Production

From the non-livestock community perspective, 17 concerns were identified and grouped into three priority areas as follows in descending order of importance:

- Environmental quality
- Quality of Life
- Regulations

**Part A) “Livestock Operator” Site Selection concerns:**

**Issues expected to be most important to the consideration of locations for livestock siting in the Wallace /Elkhorn area are:**

**Part A) “Livestock Operator” Siting Concerns:**

**Priority #1 Livestock Siting Operator Concerns - Economic Viability (420)**

1. Access to infrastructure (roads, power, and potable water)
2. Proximity to market and processing
3. Availability of skilled labour
4. Livestock producers would be concerned about lack of qualified labour in District – producer needs to attract labour by creating a quality work and living environment within the District.
5. Livestock producer would be concerned about the cost of dead stock disposal, no disposed location available yet within the District.
6. Livestock operator would need local support i.e.
  - clear location policy with community and municipal government support
  - good markets (local and regional) for products
  - access to local processing facility
  - access to incineration/disposal facility
  - availability of feed

**Priority #2 Livestock Siting Operator Concerns - Regulatory Compliance (330)**

1. Fair/equitable siting regulations
2. Manure management guidelines
3. Dead stock disposal
4. ILO’s should not be regulations should be designed to address siting needs of all species and should not preclude hog production facilities

5. livestock producer would be concerned about meeting manure management regulations.

### **Priority #3 Livestock Siting Operator Concerns - Location Suitability (230)**

1. Would prefer location on more productive soil class “3” or better “best for managing nutrients and protecting environment”
2. Livestock producer needs locations with access to good quality water and adequate water supply.
3. Livestock producer would be interested in locating in close proximity to major truck transportation routes.

### **Priority #4 Livestock Siting Operator Concerns - Community Acceptance (330)**

1. Livestock producer would be concerned about community acceptance and the attendant risks community attitudes may have on livestock business investment.

### **Priority #5 Livestock Siting Operator Concerns - Options for Production (70)**

1. Finding organic/niche production opportunities and markets that could add value to locally produced products
2. Provision of opportunities for full range, family farm to corporate livestock operations

## **Part B) “Community” Livestock Siting Concerns:**

### **Priority #1 Livestock Siting Community Concerns - Environment (540)**

1. Community is concerned about protecting surface and groundwater and sees livestock operations as increasing environmental risks.
2. Environmental security (water, soil protection)
3. Odour
4. Quality of life impacts of livestock operations when sited in proximity to residences
5. Application of clear and equitable livestock siting regulations

6. Livestock operators commitment to high quality farm management practices and commitment to operate in compliance with applicable regulations
7. Dead stock disposal

#### **Priority #2 Livestock Siting Community Concerns - Quality of life (460)**

1. Odour
2. Community and agriculture need to find a win-win solution in the diversification of the agriculture economy by providing siting opportunities for livestock and criteria to minimize odour.
3. Community is concerned ILO livestock operations will negatively impact land and dwelling values.
4. Community is concerned about smell and would want a separation distance that would reduce the nuisance factor associated with odours generated by operations.

#### **Priority #3 Livestock Siting Community Concerns – Regulations (380)**

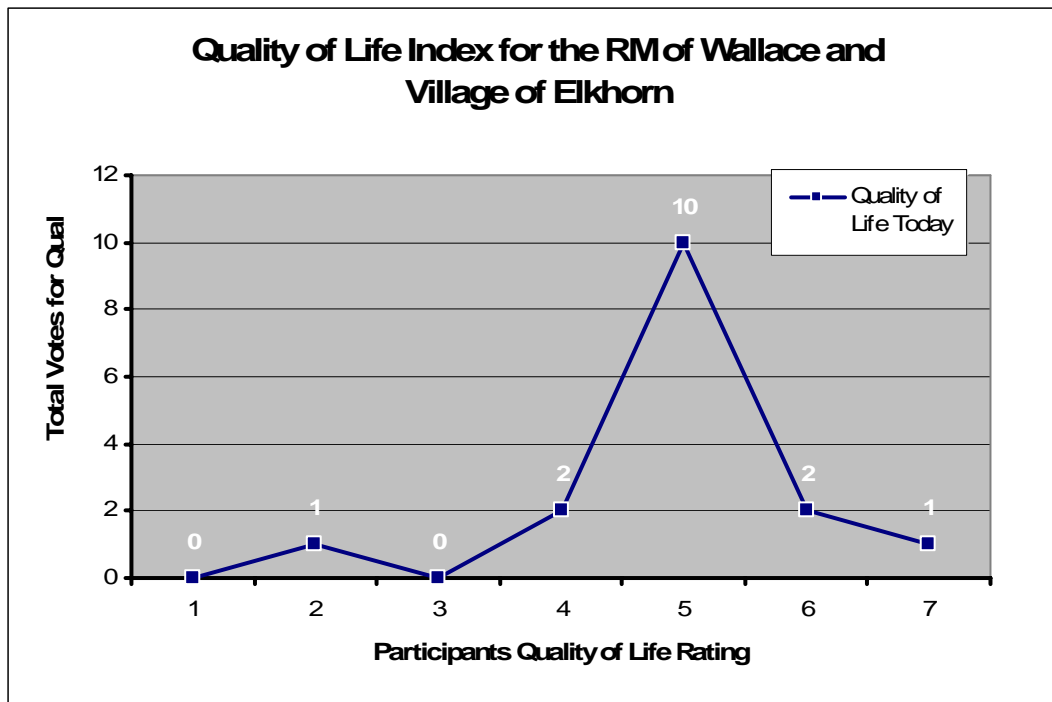
1. Environmental security (water, soil protection)
2. Compliance with applicable regulations
3. Dead stock disposal
4. Fair/equitable siting regulations
5. Community not convinced province does an adequate job of monitoring manure application or assessing impacts upon soil and environment
6. Community is uncertain livestock regulations and standards are followed, enforced or monitored by provincial authorities

### **2.3 Quality of Life Index: RM of Wallace and Village of Elkhorn**

At the conclusion of the First Workshop on Rural Development and Quality of Life all participants were asked to assess the RM of Wallace's and Village of Elkhorn's current state "quality of life". The ranking generated was combined for both communities and as a consequence we can not interpret how the communities individually would have fared.

Quality of life is oft described by the health of a community. Improving the quality of life within our communities requires that we integrate physical development with environmental, economic and social perspectives on the needs of the community. Sustainable development, a related concept, means we endeavour to meet the needs of today without compromising the ability of future residents or generations from meeting their needs. The first step in creating a Vision for the RM of Wallace and Village of Elkhorn within the Planning District is to discuss where we might now sit on the “Quality of Life Index”. As no such index really exists the workshop created its own in the following exercise.

Participants were asked to consider the opportunities and challenges which presently define the quality of life in the community. In the absence of any formal index we create a seven step scale to understand how the workshop might rate the quality of life in the communities of Wallace and Elkhorn today. Each participant after considering opportunities and challenges discussed at the workshop individually ranked together Wallace and Elkhorn on the quality of life index. Where a rating of 1 was assumed to be the worst place ever and a rating of 7 was considered the best place ever.



**Sixteen participants rated** the present quality of life and their rankings created the above graph for the RM of Wallace and Elkhorn’s quality of live index. The index may be interpreted as follows:

**Quality of Life Index Ratings:**

- Rating of 2 or less is very negative;

- Rating of 3 is tends toward negative;
- Rating of 4 is neutral, person is non-committal to a negative or positive rating;
- Rating of 5 tends toward positive;
- Rating of 6 or higher is very positive.

Given the current mix of opportunities and challenges in Wallace and Elkhorn 19 % or 3 of the 16 workshop participants' ranked the current quality of life rating as either neutral or toward the negative while 81% or 13 of the 16 participants rated quality of life in Wallace and Elkhorn from positive to very positive.

**Compiled by David Palubeski, MCIP**

Planning Advisor Trans Canada West Planning District

Lombard North Group  
505-93 Lombard Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R3B3B1  
Phone 204-943-3896  
Fax 204-947-5696  
e-mail [dave@lombardnorth.com](mailto:dave@lombardnorth.com)