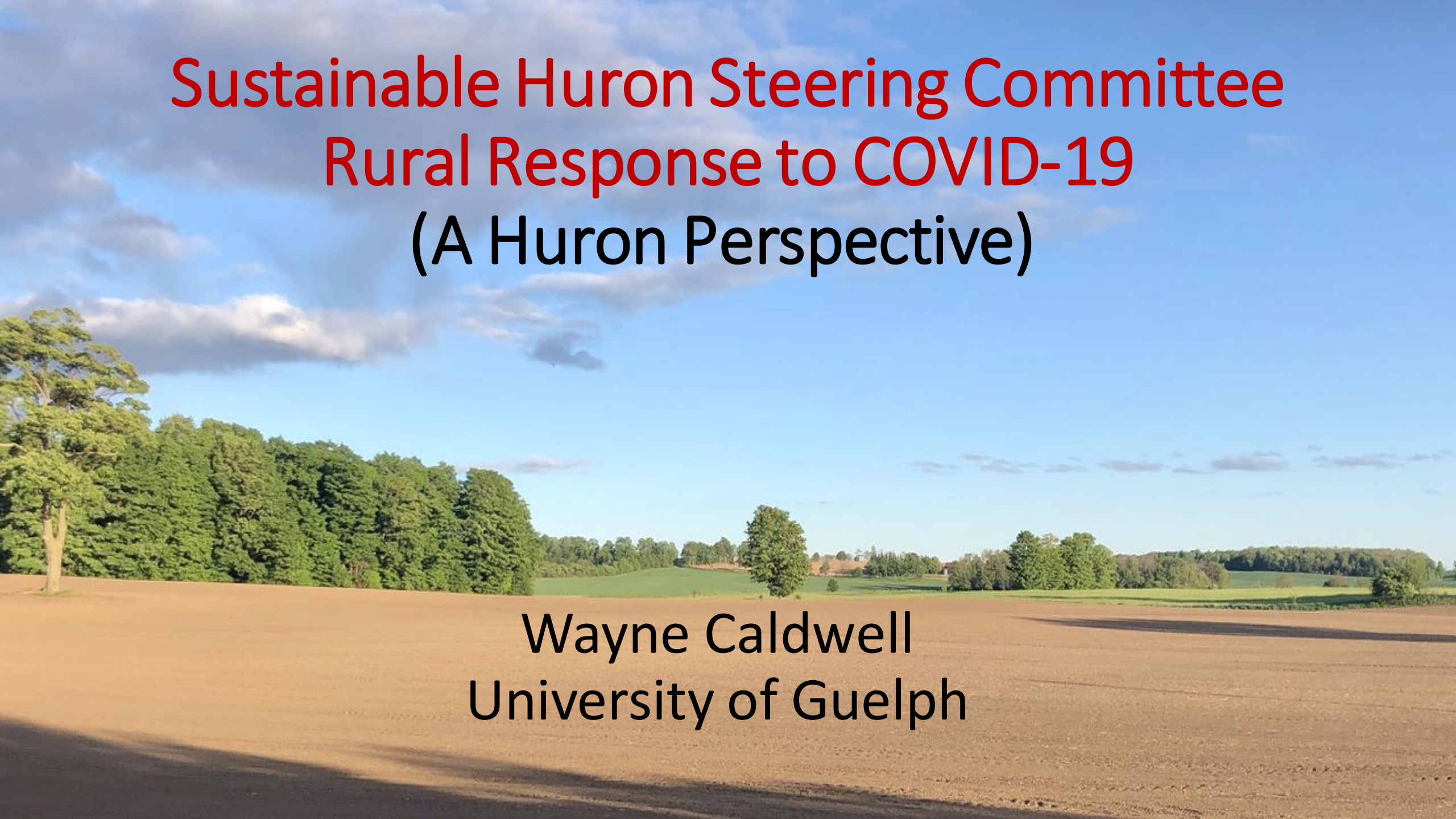


Sustainable Huron Steering Committee
Rural Response to COVID-19
(A Huron Perspective)

Wayne Caldwell
University of Guelph

Meeting Partners

Social Research & Planning Council

HURON COUNTY

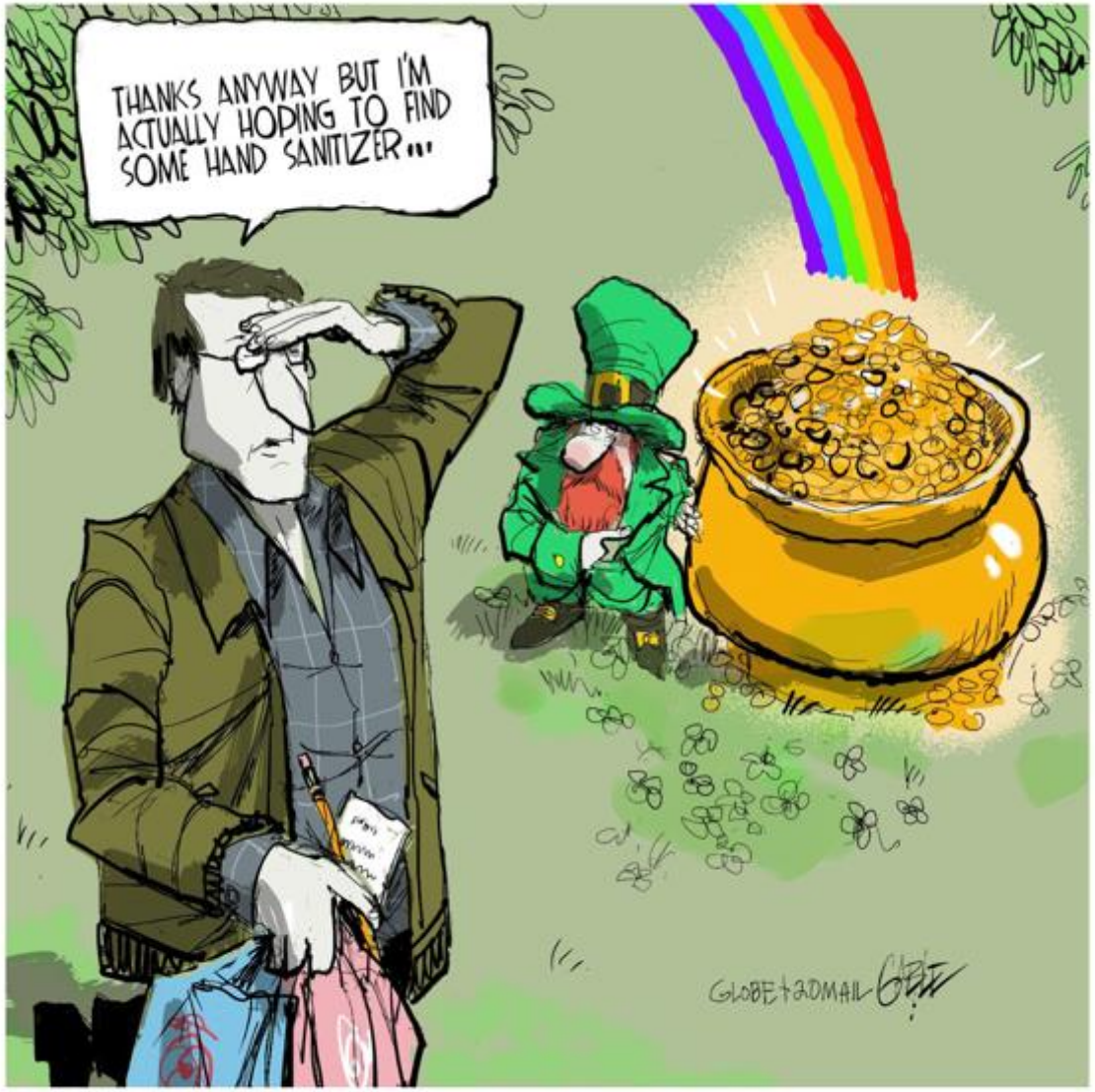
UNIVERSITY of GUELPH
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable Huron
TAKE ACTION

Thanking Our Funders: University of Guelph, Mitacs, Social Research and Planning Council, Huron County, Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health, Salvation Army

Note: Video and Discussion with Ray Bollman

Additional Materials at: https://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/knowledge-centre/focus-on-rural-ontario



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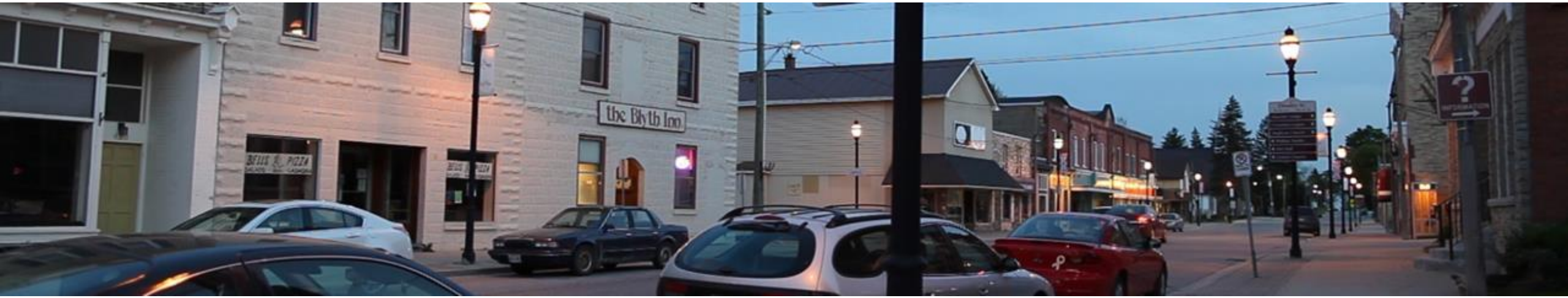
Source: Globe and Mail

What we know and what we don’t know

The obvious and the not-so obvious

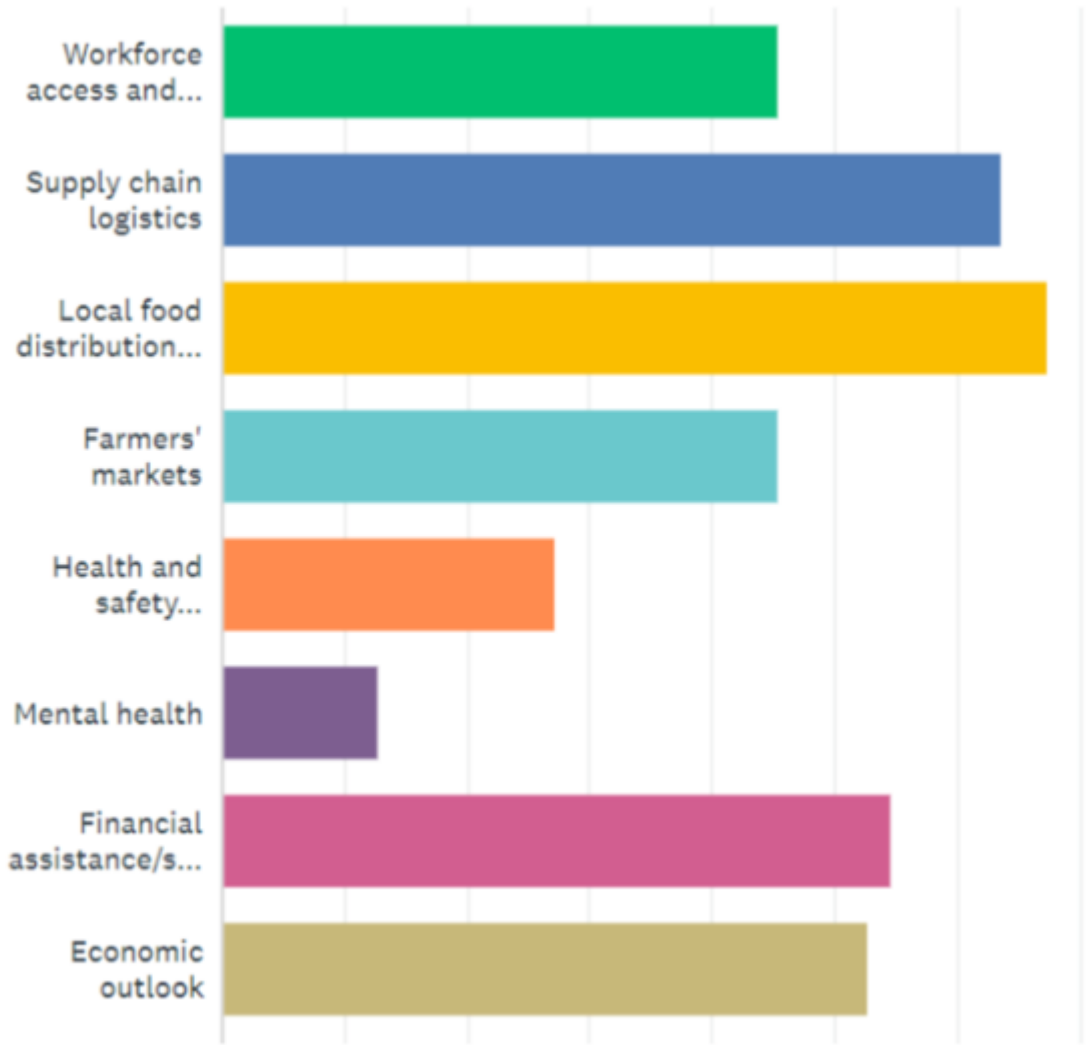


Top Rural Concerns

(From Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation - 128 respondents)

- Access to Healthcare services + Critic Capacity
- Bridging the Digital Divide + Acc rmation
- Relief for Small + Local Bus + Employers
- Support for Non-Prof ocial Service Sector
- Market Access f ulture, Fisheries and Natural Resources
- Local Cap ding + Long Term Stratgies for Rural resilience

Making Sure Rural is Heard



What issues and potential solutions would you like to discuss?

From Agriculture, Economic Development and Community of Practice
Agriculture & COVID-19: How Can We Help?, April 15 Webinar

What are we missing from
the preceding 2 slides?

Perspectives from the Warden

- Ginn on the workforce: “Some common themes are still problems for some of our businesses, like workforce shortage. As much as the numbers look like there’s a lot of unemployed, I think a lot of those people are temporarily unemployed or are waiting for their jobs to come back.”
- On housing: Ginn said it’s difficult to attract people to the area if there’s no place for them to live.
- On child care: “We talked a lot about child care being a problem as well. With kids being out of school, young families, they just don’t have people to look after their kids. Internet connectivity, obviously, is a big one as people try to work from home and kids try to learn from home.”

(Blackburn News- June 9)

Vulnerability and What it Means

Individuals

Not for Profits

Employment

Groups

Businesses

Etc.

Some of our challenges and opportunities moving forward (*Is there some good news in the midst of all of this?*):

- Agriculture
- Tourism
- Our space
- Our not-for-profits
- Our relatively good fortune to this point in time
- Other…

Some things to Remember

- If you've visited one rural community, you've visited one rural community. They will all experience COVID19 differently
- The importance of building upon local resources, integrating local knowledge and using locally relevant information
- The importance of broadband – it is a connected world
- Strategies for Rural Recovery
- On-going Social Distancing
- Potential (likelihood) of continued disruptions
- Huron's Rural Lens

What do we want in Huron County?*

1. The **economy** will continue to provide economic security and opportunity for its residents.
2. Huron County will have a **transportation** network providing multi-modal options.
3. Develop a strong and diversified **agricultural industry**.
4. Encourage local renewable **energy sources** and maximize energy conservation.
5. Retain **rural character** through planned growth of our settlement areas.
6. A healthy, resilient **ecosystem** with connected natural areas, clean water and diverse flora and fauna.
7. Sustain a moderate **population** growth with increased ethnic diversity.
8. **Downtowns** in Huron County will be active and healthy centres of commerce, government and culture.
9. Support **community organizations and services**.
10. Help residents live active, **healthy lifestyles**.

*from the Take Action For Sustainable Huron plan http://www.huroncounty.ca/sustainablehuron/

What are some of the strengths and challenges of rural Huron?

Strengths

- High quality of life
- Strong agricultural economy
- Highly entrepreneurial workforce
- Seasonal population
- Natural environment with high quality beaches and trails
- High volunteerism
- Lower cost of living

Challenges

- Seasonal economy
- Older population
- Youth outmigration
- Lower education and income levels than provincial average.
- Mental health and physical health decreases as income decreases
- Low population density
- Lack of public transportation

How can I use the **Healthy Rural Lens** tool?

This is a tool to help you make good decisions about programs and policies in Huron County that will impact our people, economy and environment. The Healthy Rural Lens Worksheet is comprised of three parts (see reverse). On the left side is a list of indicators for success (taken

program or policy would ha
impact. The resulting picture
will impact our county.

It needs to make sense for o

Have questions or
Healthy Rural Lens

HURON COUNTY

Ontario

The **Healthy Rural Lens** for Huron County

When it comes to programs and policies that affect our daily lives in rural Ontario, **one size does NOT fit all!**

The **Healthy Rural Lens** Worksheet

POLICY OR PROGRAM

Indicators of Success

Does the action...

POPULATIONS
- Support moderate and sustainable population growth
- Promote Huron as a great place to live, work and play
- Ensure Huron is a welcoming community for new residents
- Enhance opportunities for youth, families, seniors

COMMUNITY NEEDS
- Support and build arts, culture, and heritage
- Ensure Huron is affordable and accessible to all
- Encourage local training and learning opportunities
- Foster pride and sense of community

HEALTHY ACTIVE COMMUNITIES
- Promote active and healthy lifestyles
- Support active transportation
- Ensure accessibility to excellent healthcare and wellness services

TRANSPORTATION
- Develop an accessible, efficient and integrated transportation network
- Ensure municipal transportation system is environmentally and economically feasible

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES
- Preserve Huron's history and rural character
- Foster compact communities that address local needs
- Create long-term infrastructure plans
- Help mitigate the impacts of big box development

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT
- Protect natural heritage systems and support biodiversity
- Reduce toxins, waste and greenhouse gases
- Consider water quality and quantity

ENERGY CONSERVATION
- Foster an energy conscious culture
- Exhibit municipal leadership in energy awareness
- Maximize energy conservation

ECONOMY
- Ensure a diversity of economic opportunities
- Create an economy that supports the triple bottom line
- Assist with the retention and expansion of local businesses

AGRICULTURE
- Strengthen the agriculture industry through diversification
- Build support for local food
- Promote environmental best practices

DOWNTOWNS
- Create accessible, aesthetically pleasing, people friendly spaces within downtowns
- Promote downtowns as the economic, social and cultural centres of the community

Name of policy/program you are considering:

_____

_____

How to complete the worksheet

1. Title the worksheet with the program or policy that you are considering.
2. On the left side are the Indicators of Success for each of the Sustainable Huron Themes. Think about the impacts of your program or policy for each theme. Does it have a positive, neutral or negative impact on each theme?
3. Place a dot on the theme line in the negative, neutral or positive area. Join the dots on each theme line and the resulting shape should help you see an overall perspective of how the program or policy will impact our county.
4. Below are several Key Considerations. Consider your program or policy in light of these factors and identify components that require additional research or community engagement or collaboration.

Key Considerations

- How will this program or policy impact the community 10, 20 or even 40 years from now?
- Are there possible unintended consequences?
- Does it enhance service delivery?
- Do we have adequate human and financial resources to do this?
- Is it sustainable?
- Have we adequately engaged the community?
- Does this improve accessibility?
- Does this enhance and fit with our unique Huron character?
- Who does this impact? Are we being inclusive?
- Are there partners we haven't considered?
- Are there previous experiences with this?

Example of a completed worksheet:

University of Guelph - Research and Action: The Research Team and Research Objectives During and Post COVID19

1) Identify vulnerable populations in Huron / Perth;

2) Determine priority programs to support vulnerable populations (e.g. mental health, income and food security, education);

3) Explore opportunities for the non-profit/charitable sector;

4) Identify emergent mental health and economic concerns; and,

5) Utilize findings to recommend policy and governance changes to increase resilience.

Conclusion

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