

Local Attitudes and Perceptions Regarding Development: Parry Sound, Ontario

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Regional development practice changed considerably during the 1980s in Canada and other western industrialised nations. Government directed, regional scale planning was de-emphasised and increasing emphasis was placed on bottom-up, community-directed local economic development. Local initiative within local economies is now advocated by all levels of government as one remedy to global economic restructuring and local decline (for example, Ontario 1992; Economic Council of Canada 1990; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 1985). While activity is less well established in Canada than in the United States, where it first emerged (Perry 1989; Brodhead et al. 1990), or Western Europe, a series of studies commissioned by the Economic Council of Canada during the 1980s led it to conclude that "communities can help themselves through local-development initiatives that promote entrepreneurship and help the community to respond to market opportunities" (Economic Council of Canada 1990: ix).

Of critical importance in community-based development is the community's support and participation. While development can involve providing financial, physical, or information resources, it is human development, cultural attitudes, and perceptions which are increasingly recognised as the most important components (Perry 1989; Brodhead et al. 1990). This is because community-based development is initiated as social development and proceeds through mobilising the local population to counter inappropriate market mechanisms. Constrained by goals to maximise productivity growth and profit, market-guided activities may under-use local physical and human resources, ignore social and cultural capital in the form of co-operative values, and fail to supply existing demand. Mobilisation of the population, however, is dependent upon a common perception of the origin and nature of economic strife and widespread awareness of the availability of local and external resources. Without a common perception and understanding, a community-based process, by definition, cannot emerge. Therefore, this paper examines one community's current attitudes towards and perceptions of development, after long term industrial decline and several years of experience with government programmes fostering local or community-based development. Attitudes and perceptions of the West Parry Sound Area community were surveyed, with particular attention to those regarding current social and economic conditions, the potential for community-based development in the area, and general awareness of and participation in existing community-based or locally directed development activities. A spatially

stratified random sample of residences and businesses was surveyed to determine if the social preconditions for community-based development were present.

The paper briefly traces the rise of community-based development practice and outlines the main requirements for a successful process as identified in the literature. Subsequently, it assesses how the West Parry Sound Area fits the definition of community, how its own activities compare to community-based development processes, and identifies the community's attitudes toward and perceptions of development.

The Rise of Community-Based Approaches

Canada's federally-directed regional development programmes emerged in the 1960s when awareness of regional disparities was increased through modern telecommunications (Savoie 1992a). Regional development practice was typically promoted through three processes (Coffey and Polèse 1985): 1) migration from declining to prosperous areas; 2) investment in potential growth industries and infrastructure, and 3) the application of growth pole theory, practised by designating certain communities as growth centres, investing in infrastructure and existing industries, encouraging in-migration of new industry, and promoting population in-migration from the rural periphery. ⁽¹⁾ Unfortunately, regional disparities persist or have even widened, particularly since the early 1980s recession (Economic Council of Canada 1990; Brodhead et al. 1990), and neither government spending nor later supply-side economics seem able to counter economic problems rooted in community and social structures (Pierce and Steinbach 1987). Eventually, these mainstream approaches lost the support of many original enthusiasts.

By the mid-1980s, it was clear that trying to duplicate earlier patterns of unplanned industrialisation was not sensible (Savoie 1992a). Older industrial areas were being restructured themselves. In response, Canadian regional development institutions were decentralised, and, with the growing constraints of public debt, industrial restructuring and international competition rely increasingly on co-operation between the public and private sector. Furthermore, there is growing acceptance amongst professionals that regional differences are part of regional structures, and appropriate solutions may not be found merely through seeking social and economic homogeneity (Higgins and Savoie 1988; Economic Council of Canada 1990). Also, there is a growing public perception that current state and competitive market practices may not be able to provide the employment level desired (OECD 1985).

Within an overall climate of change and questioning of top-down regional development, local people may be more open to non-traditional development methods, if only out of sheer necessity. Recognition of inherent regional differences can also justify the innovation and adoption of more locally appropriate social, financial, and institutional structures. Development structures and processes are being examined in core areas themselves for appropriateness and internal logic, in the face of changing industrial production practices. For example, rapid technological changes in the increasingly information-dependent manufacturing sector has provoked re-evaluations of the most

appropriate scale for facilities and organisational structures. Scott (1992) argues that the new social divisions of labour, the proliferation of small producers, high entrepreneurial activity, and the highly competitive atmosphere in new industrial agglomerations can inhibit the stable, co-operative environment needed for innovation, and thus lead to economic decline. He proposes that new industrial agglomerations need appropriate institutions promoting innovation, co-operation, business service, and labour training. Scott's point, in brief, is that local socially responsible institutions are part of efficient economic activity.

The Dimensions of Community-Based Economic Development

All regional development perspectives assume that an area has untapped potential; the distinguishing feature of community-based development is its emphasis on human and cultural resources (Coffey and Polèse 1984; Economic Council of Canada 1990). To Coffey and Polèse (1985) developing this resource changes traditional practices to 1) discouraging the migration of younger, more qualified people, 2) investing in human capital and infrastructure and 3), disseminating power and control to local hands in contrast to growth pole practice. Untapped human potential is perceived as the primary cause of underdevelopment, whether manifested as a lack of job skills, inappropriate social, political, and economic institutions, or poor access to financial or information resources. Untapped potential is interpreted as the gradual erosion of the institutional and resource base through what Myrdal (1957) and Hirschman (1958) described as negative cumulative causation or backwash effects. Interregional or inter-locality relationships become locked into a continual transfer of resources from one to another, rather than equalising. Bryant (1994) notes that this negative pattern was observed and described long before current heightened concerns about rapid changes in technology, markets, and institutions. The resulting condition is described by Stöhr (1981; 1983) as functional dis-integration. Excessive specialisation, demanded by market forces exploiting only narrowly defined and existing comparative advantage, causes discontinuities in local economic circuits, political interaction, idle resources, and a lack of locally responsive facilities. Large financial institutions, for example, can be unresponsive to profitable small-scale activity (Brodhead et al. 1990). Canada's community-based development roots can, in fact, be traced to the late 19th century establishment of specific institutions such as co-operatives and credit unions to counter elements of functional dis-integration (Douglas 1994). Consequently, three interrelated policy options proposed to counter local underdevelopment are: 1) community animation, or people development, 2) the provision of information, and 3) access to financing.

Community-based development has its roots in the rural United States, as a response to the ineffectiveness of conventional efforts (Perry 1989). From rural roots, it spread to disadvantaged urban areas in the 1960s, where it often took a more political than economic form. In the 1970s and 1980s, with increasing economic constraints on government and national economies, focus has again become more economic, but with emphasis on local relevance in economic practice (OECD 1985; Pierce and Steinbach 1987; Brodhead et al. 1990). This paper is again more concerned with a rural, small town setting, since these have significant cultural, social, political, and physical-environment

differences from larger urban areas. For community-based development, a community is defined as relatively finite, occupying a geographically contiguous area, interacting, and sharing a cultural identity, affiliation, and political identity (after Douglas 1989; Brodhead et al. 1990; Economic Council of Canada 1990). Given the above definition, development is the adjustment of all social and economic activity to increase the well-being of the community as a whole. Many disadvantages of small town and rural communities, such as smaller markets, a smaller physical and human resource base, lack of financing, lack of information, fewer social services, cost disadvantages, and often higher unemployment rates can be counter-balanced by a local culture which is socially interrelated and has traditions of co-operation and reciprocity (Stöhr 1990a). Bolton (1992) discusses these advantages as the capital asset of "sense of place". People in communities invest in this asset through behaviours such as limiting the search for markets and the use of monopoly power and committing time and personal effort. Similarly, these gain returns in the form of security and a sense of community, such as, "a combination of social interactions in a particular setting" (Bolton 1992: 194). Like a household, a community earns income within the boundaries of interpersonal relationships and reciprocal moral obligations.

On the other hand, small towns and rural communities have a tendency to hold conservative attitudes towards economic and social innovation and the importance of personal relationships. Long term economic dependence can lead to cultural dependence, where individuals and communities lose the ability to govern and direct their own affairs (Savoie 1992b). Tension thus exists between existing cultural homogeneity and stability and the animating process required to use this same attribute in co-operative efforts for change. Thus, many researchers have identified a crisis stage as part of the development process (Douglas 1989; Stöhr 1990a).

Central to community animation are community participation at the appraisal, goal setting, and implementation stages. Entrepreneurship and innovation is encouraged in all areas, not only economic. Case studies have shown that development often begins with an individual "social entrepreneur" who establishes or modifies organisations and relationships (Stöhr 1990a; Douglas 1989). Coffey and Polèse (1985) note that there is little knowledge regarding the social circumstances which lead to the emergence of entrepreneurs. However, Stöhr (1990a) notes that social entrepreneurs were often not conventional leaders, and may come from outside or be former residents returning to the community.

Once the process of change is initiated, however poorly understood, community-based development often proceeds through a local development organisation, constituting an "appropriate technology" for the community (Douglas 1989). Reorganisation through a new institution is in response to changing perceptions and awareness levels (see the model description below and Figure 1) and counters the disintegrative process described by Stöhr (1983). Douglas (1989) summarises the critical importance of community organisation, in general, as determining whether or not there will be community-wide participation, local government involvement, an appropriate variety of objectives pursued, useful connections to government programmes, accountability to the

community, legitimacy with the community, appropriate legal and financial status, and efficient use of time and human resources. In Douglas' model, organisation emerges after the crisis period, when groups and personalities, often previously less noticed, have had a chance to emerge.

The local development organisation can take several forms, such as a Community Development Corporation, Local Training Institute, or Local Employment Agency (Sharpe 1994; Douglas 1989; Brodhead et al. 1990). Its strengths have been variously identified as the shared culture of its participants (Douglas 1989; Stöhr 1990b), broad-based support, local knowledge and commitment, access to volunteer labour (Brodhead et al. 1990), its relative freedom to act more independently of major economic trends (Perry 1989) and greater flexibility in general (OECD 1985). Success is often determined by whether or not the local organisational vehicle reflects local values and culture and is accepted by the community (OECD 1985; Douglas 1989).

FIGURE 1 General Phases of the Community Economic Development Process

Douglas (1989), summarising several case studies, devised a simplified phase model for community-based development (Figure 1), which, while not intended to be rigid or definitive, provides a useful guide for evaluation. Phase one begins with a general awareness of problems, a process which may take weeks or years; phase two is a preliminary search period and chaotic phase where problems are being identified, personalities emerge, and initial actions suggested; phase three is a consolidating period, where leadership (possibly a local development organisation) is defined, and interchange and goal formulation occurs; and phase four is planning, which currently is undertaken by a minority of communities. At its most sophisticated, planning includes diagnosis, prognosis, prescriptive planning, and implementation, but Douglas identifies points of deviation and possible breakdown throughout the entire model. For example, declining single-industry towns tend to move quickly from "awareness" to prescription, since problems and causes are more easily identified. The West Parry Sound Area provides an interesting basis for evaluation with Douglas' model because it already has several locally-based and community-based organisations in place. What needs to be assessed, with respect to activity already undertaken, is whether there is agreement between existing institutions and the community itself. If the community's self-perception as a declining manufacturing town has not yet moved from uncertainty (phase one) to the search for solutions to defined problems (phase three), then those institutions, whose emergence is also associated with phase three, may be unusable by the community. The sections below briefly describe the social and political make-up of the West Parry Sound Area. Special reference is made to the definition of community, the variations between sub-areas, and the general effects of economic restructuring.

The West Parry Sound Area as a Case Study

The West Parry Sound Area comprises eight rural townships, two villages, a fairly large unincorporated area, and the town of Parry Sound, all clustered near or on the eastern shore of Georgian Bay, 200 km north of Toronto, as shown in Figure 2. It is not a unique political entity, nor a social or culturally defined community, but an administrative area, defined by the activities of the area school board, the Community Futures Committee and the Economic Development Commission (Tucci 1993). This reflects recent trends to focus development efforts on subregional, as opposed to regional or community targets (Sharpe 1994). Likewise, existing development agencies reflect a mixture of federal, provincial and local initiatives, none of which combine both the broad-based goals of community-based development and the authority to implement them, which, as noted above, a successful local development organisation needs. Thus, the tie between the population and the existing agencies is looser than idealised. Nevertheless, the West Parry Sound Area does reflect local economic development as practised in many Canadian communities. Comparing the community's aspirations and perceptions with existing development processes provides a useful measure of their potential effectiveness.

FIGURE 2 The West Parry Sound Area

FIGURE 2a Study Area (enlarged)

The town of Parry Sound was established as a fur trading area and, eventually, became a central transportation point for the lumber and mining industries near the turn of the century (Belanger 1982; Tucci 1993). The area became known for its beauty, and seasonal cottage residency was established at this time. Homestead farming was established, but poor soil prohibited extensive agriculture. Manufacturing became the predominant economic sector after the First World War and remained so until the early 1980s recession. Since then, various forms of tourism have become the most important regional industry.

While little of depth can be said about local cultural attributes, general social and demographic statistics reveal certain patterns as shown in Table 1. With its long history of economic decline and longer history as a favoured seasonal residency location, youth out-migration and retiree in-migration places the percentage of older people above the national average. However, there are interesting differences amongst individual municipalities with respect to growth rates, and age and family structure. Humphrey and McDougall, for example, have higher growth rates and more children under age 15 than the area's average, similarly to young suburbs. McKellar, on the other hand, has a high growth rate but less children, possibly indicating a retirement community. Other municipalities are stagnant or in decline. One community which diverges more from the social norm is Parry Sound itself, with significantly fewer family persons. Seasonal residency rates also vary and may affect the social make-up of both the permanent and temporary residents and their views on community-based development.

TABLE 1 Selected Social Characteristics of the West Parry Sound Area (WPSA): National, Provincial and District Comparisons

With respect to economic variation, incomes in the Parry Sound Census District are notably lower than the Canadian average with 66% of all tax payers earning under \$20,000 compared to 56% all of Canadians (Parry Sound Area Economic Development Commission 1992a). From 1991 to 1992, reflecting typical restructuring patterns in the older industrialised nations, full-time employment in the private sector dropped for males, while part-time employment rose for females, making 52% of the privately employed workforce female (Parry Sound Area Economic Development Commission 1992b).

Federal economic development programmes have been in place since the 1960s when the West Parry Sound Area was first identified as a slow growth area. Local programmes have changed with federal changes, and most recently, the area became eligible for assistance under FEDNOR (the federal economic development programme for northern Ontario) and the Community Futures Program. Most other local development agencies were established in the mid-1980s, including the Parry Sound Economic Development Commission, jointly funded by the Ontario Ministry of Mines and Northern Development and the municipalities.

Tucci (1993) identified 12 core agencies involved in community economic development, 32 additional regulatory, training, or single-purposes agencies, and a large number of diverse social service agencies. Of the core agencies, the three most important are: the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Commission, and the Community Futures Committee. Of these, the Economic Development Commission has the most purely economic mandate, recruiting new businesses and promoting the area. Not surprisingly, the Chamber of Commerce has a strong business focus, though its mandate also includes the provision of social services. The Community Futures Committee, which is now part of Human Resource Development Canada's Job Strategy programme, draws its membership from the broadest population base and interest group base and has the broadest mandate. Though funded federally, the Committee is autonomous, and acts as an umbrella agency to co-ordinate development efforts, analyse problems and identify potential, and advise local government on Canadian Job Strategy programmes. According to its federally defined mandate, a community futures committee is not expected to represent the community development process, but may initiate it (Employment and Immigration Canada 1987; 1989).

Research Questions and Methodology

The purpose of this study is to describe and assess the local social and cultural capacity for community-based development. In particular, the focus is on local residents' attitudes towards and perceptions of the existing process and future prospects of community-based development. Their attitudes and perceptions are contrasted with those of the business population, to assess the relative compatibility and cohesion of these two groups and the

relative representation of their views in the development process. Attitudes and perceptions of interest are:

- the kind of development which is familiar and desired, such as,
 - a) whether primarily economic or social development is desired?
 - b) what kind of economic development is seen as having potential to meet local needs? and
 - c) whether residents see development as an external or internal process.
- the level of awareness of the development process, such as,
 - a) are residents are aware of institutions and agencies?
 - b) do they think community-based development can help? and
 - c) do they see the existing process as representing fairly the whole community?

Community development research frequently uses open-ended questions and unstructured interviews to capture diverse opinions and concerns present in any community, and to better record respondents' own views (Graham and Jones 1992). Interpretation and evaluations of such interviews can be difficult, however, and time constraints are often prohibitive. Consequently, data on perceptions and attitudes were collected through a face to face, structured, questionnaire survey of local residents and business owners or employees. Five open-ended questions were also included to allow for personal responses on:

- definitions of community-based development, related organisations known, important quality of life issues, the most important objectives for a community plan, and possible ways the individual could participate in the process.

In addition, respondents gave their opinions on the inclusion of 13 themes for a community plan, and indicated their agreement or disagreement with 10 statements about current community conditions and the local development process. These are stated in more detail in Appendix Tables 3A and 4A. Interviews were conducted by 12 third year university students and two graduate students.⁽²⁾

TABLE 2 Comparative Population Statistics: Canada, Incorporated Localities in the West Parry Sound Area (WSPA), Parry Sound (town), and the Residential Sample

Time constraints also forced the sample to be heavily biased toward the town of Parry Sound itself, where collecting interviews was easier than in rural areas. Thus, 75.1% of the sample is from the town and the remainder from the various rural and village municipalities. However, the town sample proved to be quite representative when compared to the town census data as shown in Table 2. Seven teams of two interviewers surveyed 134 residential respondents and 53 business respondents over four days in early October, 1993, after most seasonal residents had departed. Residential respondents in the

town were selected through a stratified random sample. The town area was divided on a checker-board grid and alternate residences selected in alternate strata. Alternate businesses were selected from the two business districts, the downtown area, and the mall on the outskirts. Rural respondents were less randomly chosen, as people were simply harder to find. This determined the smaller sample size of forty-one rural residents and six rural business people drawn largely from the incorporated townships and villages. Again, due to time limitations, teams of four travelled into the rural areas and sought out residents and businesses along the existing routes. Rural residences outside of incorporated and informal settlements comprised the majority of rural residents, but residences were often quite isolated and their occupants difficult to find at home. Thus, it was difficult to obtain a random sample of the rural population, especially given its social diversity, and these responses must be viewed with caution. Chi-square tests did not find significant differences between overall rural and town responses, and this could reflect a rural sample skewed toward rural residents with similar habits to town residents. Still, the overall sample is a valid test of the town's perceptions. Only one seasonal resident was interviewed.

Responses for definitions of community-based development, quality of life issues, and major objectives, were fairly similar, indicating a preoccupation with economic issues. Thus, a common set of categories, as shown in Table 3, was devised for all three questions. ⁽³⁾

Analysis and Results

Differences between business and residential responses were measured to assess the divergence within the community over development goals and practices. Chi-square tests were used to compare definitions of community-based development, quality of life issues selected, important themes selected for a future plan, and community development organisations named. Results are summarised in Tables 1A to 4A of the appendix.

Group differences on specifically named planning themes favoured and perceptions of specifically identified processes and problems were measured on a three point scale from negative (value=1), neutral (value=2), to affirmative (value=3), with a separate category for "don't know" (value=missing). All four categories are compared for both groups using the Chi-square test. Residential sample results were used to estimate expected business values, since the residential sample is the approximation, admittedly flawed, for the total population. Thus deviations for the business sub-group are measured against this estimate of the norm. T-tests were also performed on the three ordinal responses (that is to say, missing values were excluded) to show comparative variances and the general direction of polarisation around the "neutral" category. All comparisons are summarised in Tables 3A and 4A of the appendix.

TABLE 3 Categories Used for Responses to the Three Open-ended Questions

What kind of development is familiar and desired?

From our survey, it is clear that there is still a high level of ignorance regarding community-based development. Almost 20% of residential respondents could give no definition at all, and over 30% could not name a local organisation (Table 1A). Even amongst business respondents, 13.1% could give no definition at all, accurate or otherwise, for community-based development, and 15.1% knew no related organisations. Both business and residential respondents expressed greater concerns for economic as opposed to social development, and showed a tendency to think of economic development as an exogenous, as opposed to an endogenous, process. Business respondents, although less concerned with social development, were more aware of endogenous development practices and principles than residents.

Either increased employment, industrial activity, or general "economic development" were the most common definitions of community-based development, while increased employment was both the most commonly named quality of life issue and objective for a future plan. Economic development was seen by both business and residential respondents as the most important issue facing the area (Table 4A). Economically oriented development themes, such as tourism, industry, and enterprise development were more universally favoured than more social themes, such as social and family services, cultural amenities, and health and medical facilities (Table 3A).

Overall, residential respondents stress social development more than business respondents. Although 35.1% of residential respondents and 39.6% of business respondents named one of "more employment", "more industry", or "economic development" in defining community-based development, the single most commonly named category was "participation". ⁽⁴⁾ 2 Business respondents, name "endogenous development" as often as "participation". Both categories reflect the bottom-up definition of community-based development, but business respondents also name the more economic component, endogenous development. Similarly, residential respondents also mention social development, education, and increased employment as important quality of life issues, whereas business respondents dramatically shift their economic focus to employment, the most social of the traditional economic categories. At their highest, endogenous development concepts are spontaneously mentioned by only 7.5% of residential respondents when defining development, compared to 22.6% of business respondents. By contrast, education, part of the more social dimension of community-based development, is mentioned consistently more often by residential respondents.

While most residential and business respondents favoured including all the suggested themes in future plans, some interesting polarisation was seen on social and economic issues, both within and between groups (Table 3A). The most statistically significant between-groups polarisation is over including social and family services, with 24.6% of business respondents against, compared to 8.2% of residential respondents. Similarly, 15.1% of business respondents were against emphasising health and medical facilities, compared to 5.0% of residents. Both groups showed more ambiguity towards

emphasising cultural amenities, such as theatres, libraries and museums, and retirement facilities. Attitudes regarding these three categories are of particular interest, because they serve retirees, who are increasingly seen as a potential source of income and a market for tourism and other service industries.⁽⁵⁾ Clearly, there are mixed feelings regarding this potential.

Related to the ambiguity about cultural amenities and retirement facilities, is some polarisation amongst residential respondents on tourism-related themes; it is significantly different from the strong business support. Tourism's local importance is widely acknowledged; only 11.9% of residential respondents completely opposed its emphasis and several mentioned it spontaneously in defining community-based development, or identifying important quality of life issues and future objectives. The relative polarisation compared to business respondents is notable, however, especially with regard to seasonal residences.

Mixed feelings about tourism can be well documented. Lovel and Feuerstein (1992) summarised general concerns in the newly booming industry in less developed countries, several of which can be applied to the West Parry Sound Area. Tourism can inhibit industrial development, since it is seen as detracting from the image of pristine nature, provides lower paying jobs and only seasonal employment, but raises local land, housing and commodity prices. Economic gains from tourism may not be evenly spread locally and the tourist-resident relationship can be either reciprocal or exploitative. In the latter instance, everything is seen as available for the tourist, rather than belonging to the residents (Selwyn 1992). All this can contribute to ambiguous feelings towards the tourist industry, particularly as an engine of economic growth.

The only other notable polarisations on development themes were for land use planning and entrepreneurship. Here, the determining factor may have been difficulty in interpretation, since both had high numbers of "don't know" responses. Local entrepreneurship may have been seen as threatening the environment, while land use planning may have been seen as either inhibiting or encouraging economic development, depending on the respondent's interpretation. Business respondents emphasize local entrepreneurship as a theme, reflecting their greater emphasis on endogenous economic development noted above.

How Aware are People of the Local Development Process?

Differences between business and residential respondents in perceptions and awareness of activities and institutions are greater than for definitions of development. As mentioned earlier, many residential respondents could name no development organisations (Table 1A) and differences in business and residential priorities emerge clearly. For residential respondents, the most frequently named agencies were service clubs (29.1%) while business respondents more frequently named the Economic Development Commission (47.2%). However, the Economic Development Commission and Chamber of Commerce were the second and third most commonly mentioned organisations by residential respondents, still reflecting a high emphasis on purely

economic development. Business respondents essentially reversed the top three categories. Awareness of the Community Futures Committee as a major agency was quite low.

Perceptions of the local community, its prospects, and the community-based development process are summarised in Table 4A, and provide the most interesting results. More divergence was seen between and within populations. Both groups agreed that economic development was the most urgent issue, and neither group agreed that economic prospects were more favourable in Parry Sound than other areas, although business respondents were more positive. In general, residential respondents saw themselves as less able to influence the system and saw the system as less fair, while business respondents were more positive about the system and less positive about the community. Of greatest relevance to the community development process, however, is that 59.7% of residential and 69.9% of business respondents agreed that problems were solvable through a community-based development approach.

Business and residential respondents' opinions were reversed over whether local people were positive about development, and whether the community could influence business. While not an overwhelming majority, 50.0% of residential respondents, compared to 28.3% of business respondents saw the local population as positive about community-based development prospects. By contrast, more residential respondents, 43.3%, agreed that the community could not influence business, compared to 26.4% of business respondents. A clear majority of business respondents, 64.1%, thought the community could influence business. Both groups seem to believe in the potential of community-based development, but each seems to see the other as less supportive.

On other issues, the general trend in opinion is the same between groups, but there is variation in the level of agreement. Fewer residential respondents believe there have been adequate opportunities for training and involvement, and significantly fewer see local economic prospects as more favourable. A minority of residential respondents compared to a majority of business respondents believe there have been adequate training opportunities for the development process itself, and a similar pattern emerges regarding the equal representation of social and economic groups, and municipalities. Also of interest, is the relatively high number in both groups responding "I don't know", particularly to statements about opportunities for involvement and training, and the representation of various groups. This confirms the earlier observation of low awareness and participation levels.

Business respondents are much more involved in the development process; almost 50% had participated in the development organisations they named, including 28.3% as board members; comparable participation rates for residential respondents were 35.8% and 9.7% respectively. This alone, goes a long way to explaining variation in awareness levels and perceptions. Tucci (1993) noted that local development agencies do not represent seniors and low income groups well. It is not reasonable to expect all community members to participate with the same frequency or at the same levels as special interest groups, including the business sector; however, it is interesting to note

that general volunteer levels and meeting attendance levels are low for both groups, reflecting a polarisation between socially and politically active community members and passive observers. Although not untypical of North American communities, the community-development process is dependent upon changing this pattern.

Conclusions

Despite ongoing development activity in the West Parry Sound Area, both the business and general population show a high level of ignorance about the general concept and the local practice of community-based development. However, concern for development, social and especially economic, is very high. Average citizens are notably more concerned with, and accepting of, social goals, more apt to name service clubs than economic organisations as development agencies, more interested in training, education, and opportunities to participate, more ambivalent about tourist related activities, and more inclined to identify externally directed economic development as a solution. While social and economic development are seen as inseparable complementary factors of the community-based development process, in Parry Sound, the tendency is for business and the population to see them as exclusive. Further data analysis is needed to separate the proportion of each group which sees these two factors as conflicting from those who see them as complementary.

Despite some polarisation of approaches, a majority of both business and residential respondents believe that problems are solvable through a community-based approach. In addition, 77.6% of residential respondents and 88.7% of business respondents were able to suggest ways they could participate. While not all volunteer offers made in a face to face interview will necessarily materialise, the highly positive response rate indicates general willingness to participate and learn. There seems to be potential for community-based development, but considerable ignorance of the existing agencies and process.

With reference to Douglas' (1989) phase model in Figure 1, the West Parry Sound Area residents would seem to be in the chaotic first phase of search where problems have been identified, but causes and solutions have not. By contrast, government programmes, and traditional business patterns of association, for example, in Chambers of Commerce, have already established the sort of umbrella agencies and upper-level financial and human resource training pools that an integrated and united community can exploit. Existing agencies are perhaps better set up to serve a community already in the third phase of development, where leadership has emerged or is emerging, and there is greater interchange of ideas and information, particularly in ways which extend to the broader population. Many are agencies designed to turn an economy around, rather than turn a culture around. The most community-oriented agency, the Community Futures Committee, and its financial arm, the Business Development Centre, have fairly low profiles.

One of the key obstacles to the community-based development process in West Parry Sound Area is the degree to which the area fits the definition of community given earlier. Much of its population is scattered, its rural population is quite diverse and, most

importantly, it lacks a unified political structure and cultural authority that can guide complex social change. Unfortunately, time constraints prevented the gathering of more detailed data on internal variations. No major differences could be seen from a general comparison of "urban" versus "rural" responses. As noted above, and shown in Table 1, there is considerable variation in the social profiles of the rural municipalities, which comprise the majority of the population, and their concerns and influence may be highly variable. As one resident noted, a new youth facility, built by a service club, was placed too far out of the town to be reached without a car.

It may be that the social entrepreneurship required to use existing resources effectively and creatively cannot emerge or have an impact at the planning level currently administered. Alternatively, an examination of intraregional dependency patterns might be of value, especially if a significant proportion of the area's higher income and more educated population tends to live away from the major settlement and the location of most economic and social exchange.

Appendix

[TABLE 1A Response to Open-Ended Questions](#)

[TABLE 2A Development Organisations Named](#)

[TABLE 3A Ranked Responses for Themes Suggested for a Future Plan](#)

[TABLE 4A Ranked Responses for Statement about Existing Conditions and Ongoing Community-Based Development Processes and Practices.](#)

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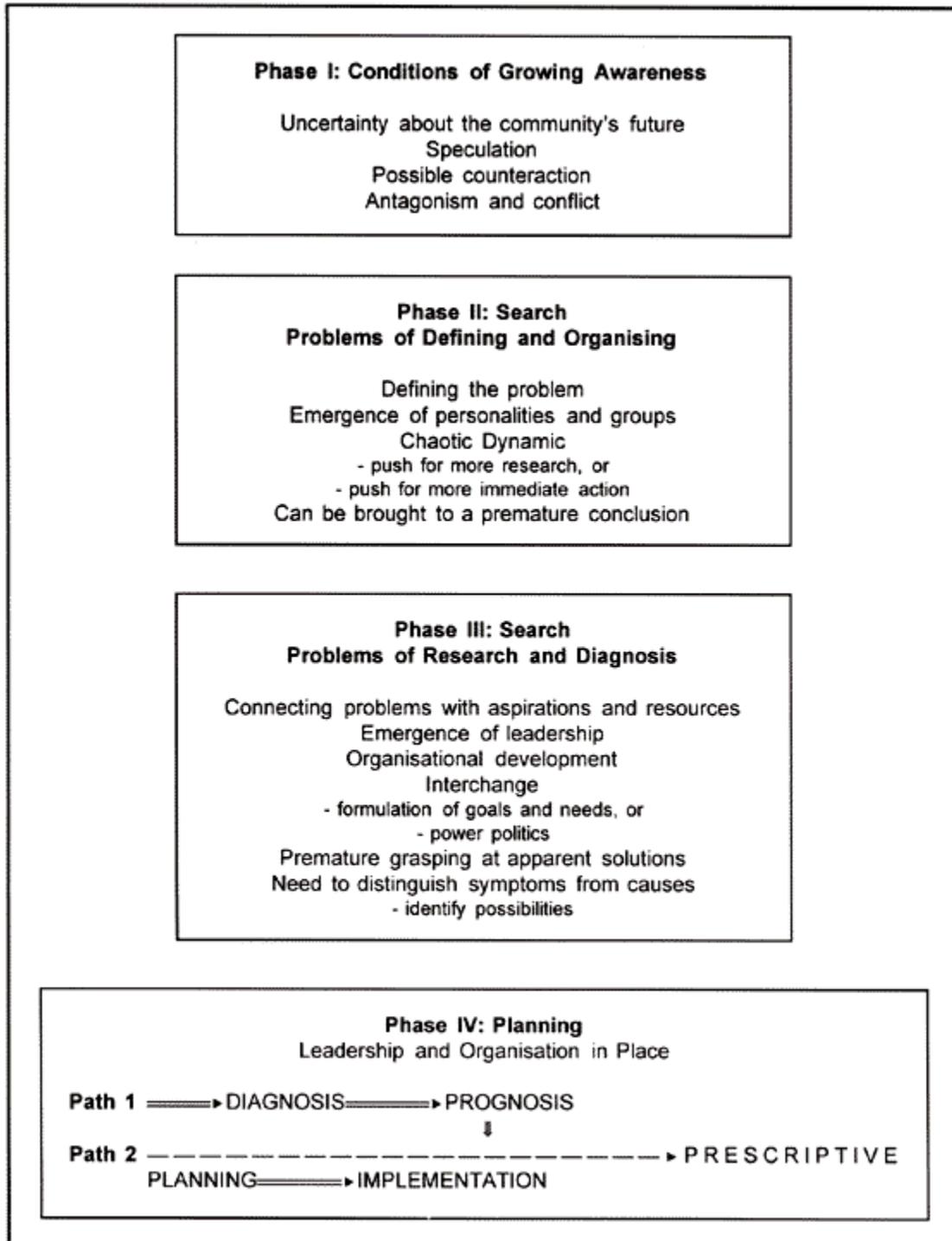
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Endnotes

1. Several authors (for example, Brookfield 1975; Higgins 1988), including Perroux (1988) himself, have been at pains to point out that Perroux's original growth pole theory was considerably more complex than the version finally implemented.
2. We would like to thank the following students for helping conduct the survey in October, 1993: L. McCormick, K. Chapman, C. LaViolette, A. O'Connor, J. Shaw, R. Antezko, J. Morrow, E. Hurlburt, M. Volk, J. Knox, T. van Vliet, K. Wirschke, M. Kleinnecht.
3. Often, a single response fell into more than one category, or was mentioned more than once. In these cases, care was taken to ensure each category mentioned was recorded only once.
4. This percentage is not the sum of these categories as indicated in Table 1A, since individuals may have named more than one category. The combined percentage for all those naming at least one traditional category is calculated directly from the database.
5. This potential was mentioned in a general address by the Community Futures Committee director to the interviewers and authors before the survey was conducted.

FIGURE 1 General Phases of the Community Economic Development Process



Source: after Douglas (1989)

FIGURE 2 The West Parry Sound Area

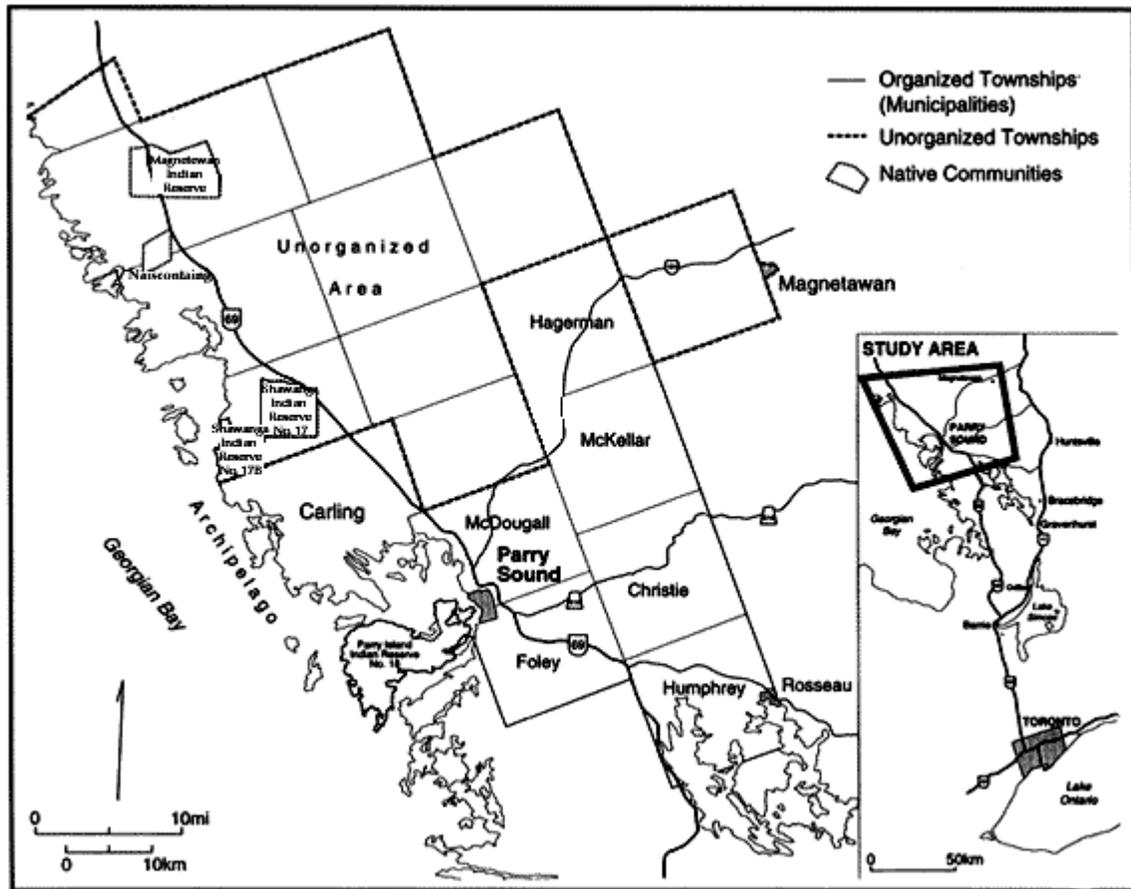
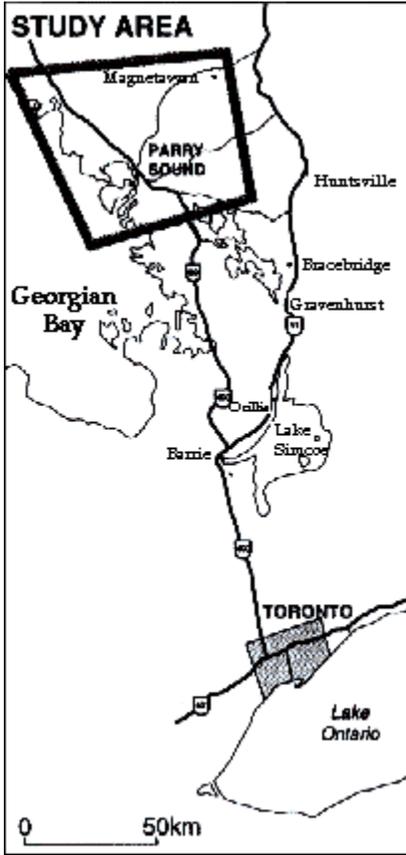


FIGURE 2a The West Parry Sound Area



**TABLE 1 Selected Social Characteristics of the West Parry Sound Area (WPSA):
National, Provincial and District Comparisons**

AREA	Total Pop.	% Growth 1986-1991	% WPSA	% married	% husband & wife family	% family persons	% over 64	% under 15 (total pop.)	% under 15 (ex. seniors)	Seasonal Residents
Canada	27,297	7.9	--	42.8	77.2	82.6	10.6	20.9	23.3	--
Ontario	10,849	10.8	--	44.9	80.7	83.2	10.8	20.4	22.9	--
Parry Sound District	38,423	13.6	--	49.5	82.4	84.4	15.8	19.3	22.9	--
WPS Inc. Areas	14,489	12.1	100.0	50.4	83.0	83.2	17.0	18.3	22.1	--
Carling	951	10.7	6.4	59.4	85.9	89.9	18.4	16.3	20.0	1,035
Christie	537	12.3	3.6	53.1	90.3	85.7	22.3	19.6	25.2	598
Foley	1,467	8.7	9.8	53.9	86.5	86.9	14.0	18.1	21.0	1,637
Hagerman	513	24.2	3.4	56.5	87.5	85.8	19.5	16.6	20.6	564
Humphrey	1,111	45.6	7.5	55.4	88.4	88.2	18.0	19.8	24.1	1,144
Magnetewan	267	5.1	1.8	50.6	86.7	78.7	26.2	16.9	22.8	360
McDougall	2,061	19.2	13.8	53.9	87.9	91.7	12.6	23.5	26.9	2,213
McKellar	879	36.5	5.9	58.0	86.2	87.6	20.5	12.5	15.7	911
Parry Sound	6,125	2.5	41.1	43.7	77.1	76.2	16.9	18.0	21.6	78
Rosseau	263	13.4	1.8	49.4	81.3	85.6	15.2	17.1	20.2	307
Archipelago	720	23.5	4.8	56.3	80.9	84.7	20.1	16.0	20.0	787
Unorganised Area	3,394	8.7	--	54.2	86.0	83.2	20.5	15.2	19.1	--
(Entire District)										

Note: The Parry Sound Area Economic Development Commission (1992a) estimates unincorporated area population at 1,269, but excludes native communities. This table uses the census subdivision for unorganised areas.

Source: Statistics Canada 1992 and Parry Sound Area Economic Development Commission. 1992a.

TABLE 2 Comparative Population Statistics: Canada, Incorporated Localities in the West Parry Sound Area (WSPA), Parry Sound (town), and the Residential Sample

	Canada	Municipal Areas in WSPA	Town of Parry Sound	Sample (total)	Sample (town)
Total population	27,296,000	14,894	6,125	134.0	93.0
Population age 19 and under ^a	27.7	24.4	23.6	1.5	1.0
Population age 20-24	61.7	58.8	59.5	67.2	67.4
Population over age 64	10.6	16.4	16.9	31.3	31.6
Adults over age of 19	19,736,000	11,284	4,680	132.0	93.0
Percentage over the age of 64	14.7	22.4	22.1	31.3	31.6
Labour Force Participation	--	57.2 ^b	58.2 ^d	53.0	56.1
Unemployment Rate	--	10.7 ^c	10.0	10.0	10.2

Note:

a. Age categories for the sample were from 18 to 64; age was estimated, except for retirees, who were assumed to be above age 64.

b. This figure includes the unincorporated area.

c. This figure includes Carling, Foley, and McDougall Townships.

d. The local Canada Employment Office uses the provincial average for an estimate. This figure is for September, 1993.

Source: Statistics Canada (1992) and Parry Sound Economic Development Commission (1992a).

TABLE 3 Categories Used for Responses to the Three Open-ended Questions

General Group	Response Category
Primarily Economic	<p>More employment</p> <p>More industry</p> <p>More commercial, business or just "economic development"</p> <p>Tourism</p> <p>Exogenous, for example, attract industry or money</p>
Community-based Development	<p>Endogenous development, for example, development and use local human and physical resources</p> <p>Community action or participation</p>
Social Variables	<p>Youth: Various needs and concerns</p> <p>Elderly: Various needs and concerns</p> <p>Local recreation</p> <p>Education or Training</p> <p>General social development or social services</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Safety, crime, and police concerns</p> <p>Small Town Atmosphere</p>
Physical Conditions or Amenities	<p>Infrastructure or Transportation</p> <p>Natural environment and/or its conservation</p>
Other	Other or unidentifiable

Questions:

- 1) What does community-based development mean to you?
- 2) What, in your opinion, are the three most important issues regarding the quality of life in the Parry Sound Area?
- 3) What do you think should be the three main objectives of the community development plan for the Parry Sound area?

TABLE 1A Response to Open-Ended Questions

	Definitions		Quality of Life		Objectives	
	Res.	Bus.	Res.	Bus.	Res.	Bus.
More Employment ^a	22.4	17.0	30.6	50.9 ^a	38.1	43.4
More Industry	11.2	9.4	14.9	20.8	23.9	28.3
"Economic" Development	8.2	17.0	0.0	0.0	13.4	18.9
Tourism ^a	7.5	9.4	10.4	15.1	9.7	24.5 ^a
Exogenous Development ^a	3.0	13.2 ^a	6.7	7.5	6.0	15.1 ^a
Endogenous Development ^a	7.5	22.6 ^a	1.5	5.7	5.2	9.4
Participation	24.6	22.6	1.5	1.9	14.2	13.2
Youth Issues	9.0	3.8	17.9	13.2	12.7	18.9
Elderly Issues ^a	2.2	0.0	0.7	0.0	11.2	1.9 ^a
Recreation	2.2	1.9	11.2	13.2	8.2	7.5
Education	2.2	0.0	11.9	7.5	15.7	9.4
Social Services ^a	11.9	9.4	15.7	1.9 ^a	14.9	5.7
Housing	3.7	1.9	0.0	0.0	5.2	3.8
Safety	0.0	0.0	4.5	11.3	1.5	13.8
Small Town Atmosphere	0.0	0.0	11.2	11.3	4.5	1.9
Infrastructure	1.5	3.8	0.0	0.0	11.2	17.0
Environment	0.0	0.0	19.4	26.4	9.7	3.8
Other	15.7	17.0	36.6	35.8	10.4	17.0
No Response	18.7	13.2	6.0	3.8	10.4	3.8

Note:

1. a indicates significance at the 0.05 level for the open-ended question indicated.
2. Res. and Bus. are Residential respondent and Business Respondent respectively.

TABLE 2A Development Organisations Named

Organisation	Residents	Business
Economic Development Commission ^a	23.9	47.2
Chamber of Commerce ^a	13.4	28.3
Business Improvement Association	3.0	3.8
Community Futures Committee ^a	3.7	13.2
Business Development Centre	2.2	11.3
Waterfront Commission ^a	3.0	5.7
Federal or Provincial Government or their Agencies	5.2	11.3
Municipal Government or their Agency	5.2	7.5
Health and Services	4.5	3.8
Churches	5.2	0.0
Service Clubs	29.1	20.8
Other	15.7	20.8
No Answer ^a	32.8	15.1

Note:

a. Difference significant at the 0.05 level.

TABLE 3A Ranked Responses for Themes Suggested for a Future Plan

Suggested Themes	chi ^2	Sig.		% of Responses				t-test meansd	Prob.
				1	2	3	0		
Tourism and Hospitality	8.98	<.05	Residents	11.9	4.5	82.9	0.7	2.710.67	.005
			Business	0.0	1.9	98.1	0.0	2.980.14	
Envir. Resources and Controls	1.30		Residents	5.2	7.5	82.8	4.5	2.810.51	.857
			Business	3.8	9.4	85.1	1.9	2.820.47	
Social and Family Services	20.01	<.001	Residents	8.2	17.9	70.1	3.7	2.640.64	.032
			Business	24.6	15.1	60.4	0.0	2.350.86	
Industrial and Business Development	1.87		Residents	9.0	6.0	82.1	3.0	2.750.61	.684
			Business	7.5	5.7	86.8	0.0	2.790.57	
Land Use Planning	4.64		Residents	13.4	12.7	64.2	9.7	2.560.74	.445
			Business	11.3	11.3	75.5	1.9	2.650.68	
Recreational and Leisure Services	4.04		Residents	11.1	11.9	75.4	1.5	2.650.68	.152
			Business	7.5	5.7	86.8	0.0	2.790.57	
Seasonal Residences	13.81	<.01	Residents	20.1	14.2	59.7	6.0	2.420.82	.001
			Business	5.7	11.3	83.0	0.0	2.770.54	
Labour Force Training	6.39		Residents	6.7	9.7	76.9	6.7	2.750.57	.105
			Business	11.3	5.7	83.0	0.0	2.710.66	
Municipal Infrastructure	2.29		Residents	8.2	7.5	80.6	3.7	2.750.60	.096
			Business	7.5	9.4	83.0	0.0	2.750.59	
Cultural Amenities	3.03		Residents	16.4	20.1	62.7	0.7	2.460.76	.737
			Business	18.9	11.3	69.8	0.0	2.500.80	
Health and Medical Facilities	8.92	<.05	Residents	6.0	14.2	77.6	2.2	2.730.57	.108
			Business	15.1	15.1	69.8	0.0	2.540.75	
Local Entrepreneurship	10.74	<.05	Residents	10.4	8.2	72.4	9.0	2.680.67	.008
			Business	3.8	1.9	92.4	1.9	2.900.41	
Retirement Facilities	6.24		Residents	13.4	12.7	73.2	0.7	2.600.71	.311
			Business	13.2	1.9	84.9	0.0	2.710.69	

Note: 1 = Disagree; 2 = Neutral; 3 = Agree; 0 = Don't Know

Responses of "don't know" were excluded from the estimates of the means.

TABLE 4A Ranked Responses for Statement about Existing Conditions and Ongoing Community-Based Development Processes and Practices.

Suggested Themes	chi ²	Sig.		% of Responses				t-test	Prob.
				1	2	3	0		
Local residents are positive about prospects.	12.98	<.01	Residents	31.4	10.4	50.0	8.2	2.200.92	.004
			Business	50.9	15.1	28.3	5.7	1.760.89	
Problems are solvable through a community-based approach	10.62	<.05	Residents	21.7	9.0	59.7	9.7	2.420.85	.160
			Business	11.3	17.0	69.9	1.9	2.600.69	
There have been sufficient opportunities fro public involvement.	2.56		Residents	28.4	8.2	48.5	14.9	2.240.93	.248
			Business	19.9	9.4	52.8	18.9	2.420.85	
Economic Development is the most urgent issue.	1.55		Residents	9.7	6.0	82.0	2.2	2.740.63	.363
			Business	5.7	5.7	84.9	3.8	2.820.52	
Overall, economic prospects are more favourable for this area.	7.92	<.05	Residents	59.7	6.0	22.3	11.9	1.580.87	.155
			Business	49.1	13.2	30.2	7.5	1.790.91	
There is little community organisation can do to influence business.	18.26	<.01	Residents	37.3	9.0	43.3	10.4	2.070.95	.002
			Business	64.1	9.4	26.4	0.0	1.600.87	
There are not enough development training opportunities for residents.	7.15		Residents	23.8	6.7	54.4	14.9	2.360.89	.042
			Business	37.7	9.4	39.6	13.2	2.020.95	
Different social and economic interests are fairly represented.	8.08	<.05	Residents	23.8	9.0	43.3	23.9	2.250.91	.056
			Business	13.2	13.2	58.5	15.1	2.530.76	
Residents are supportive of local initiatives.	8.87	<.05	Residents	20.9	14.2	59.0	6.0	2.400.83	.064
			Business	23.3	20.8	39.6	11.3	2.130.88	
Individual municipal concerns are equitably represented.	6.67		Residents	28.3	6.7	44.0	20.9	2.200.94	.391
			Business	24.5	11.3	54.7	9.4	2.330.88	

Note: 1 = Disagree; 2 = Neutral; 3 = Agree; 0 = Don't Know

Responses of "don't know" were excluded from the estimates of the means.

