#1. Sustaining Rural Communities
(22% of Conversations)

Specific challenges:

- Aging infrastructure, saving old buildings in small towns
- Young people leave small towns, lack of age diversity
- Loneliness within small communities for all age groups

Resources and supports needed to make a change:

More funding is the primary request from communities.

- Diversification of funding - relying on fundraising has become a challenge
- Establishment of food banks in smaller communities
- Small business development and community beautification

Read Stories

#3. Safety In Communities
(20% of conversations)

Specific challenges:

- Rising number of gangs in schools and community
- Vehicle break and enters, vandalism, lack of safety for cyclists and pedestrians
- Worker's safety, specifically in relation to vulnerable trades

Resources and supports needed to make a change:

- Funding and donations, identifying funding sources to meet specific needs
- Support for a neighborhood watch
- Speed bumps in school zones
- Late closing centres, past 10 p.m.

Read Stories

Saskatchewan 4-H Council:

"One of 4-H Saskatchewan's concerns is around people moving out of rural communities. Small schools in these communities are being closed, forcing families to move to urban centres. Since there is the isolation from urban centres, kids are no longer involved in 4-H and clubs are folding due to low enrollment, leaving an older population behind."

Learn More

Town of Assiniboia:

"[...] Online shopping and traveling to the cities have a negative effect on Assiniboia's economy. [Need] [j]obs to keep youth living here."

Learn More

Civic Museum of Regina:

"Many people stated they do not feel safe in the evening and there is a need for additional night watch patrols and programs like *White Pony Lodge*."

Learn More

Southeast Advocates for Employment Inc. Weyburn:

"We need a united, safe, and peaceful community."

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Maple Creek	Hunger
Moose Jaw	Poverty
Regina	Homeless
Swift Current	Improper Sanitization
Yorkton	Rural Communities
Weyburn	Gender Inequality

South Saskatchewan Community Foundation

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Vital Community Conversations

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Title of Topic
(X% of Conversations)

Specific challenges:

- List
- of
- Some
- Points

Resources and supports needed to make a change:

- Some
- more
- points

Read Stories

Somebody said:

"Your quote here."

Learn More

SEARCH?

Goals/ Executive Statement

About The Report

Five Emerging Issues:

#1. Sustaining Rural Communities
(22% of Conversations)

Specific challenges:

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Key Indicators of Community Health (Q2)

When thinking of the health of their communities, each community reported three of their top indicators, which were organized into six categories:

1. Belonging
2. Wellbeing and mental health
3. Income, economy, and poverty
4. Family violence and safety
5. Homelessness and housing
6. Reconciliation and Indigenous issues

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Emerging Issue #1:
Sustaining Rural Communities

Saskatchewan 4-H Council:

"One of 4-H Saskatchewan's concerns is around people moving out of rural communities. Small schools in these communities are being closed, forcing families to move to urban centres. Since there is the isolation from urban centres, kids are no longer involved in 4-H and clubs are folding due to low enrollment, leaving an older population behind."

Specific challenges reported by communities (Q5):

- Aging infrastructure, saving old buildings in small towns
- Programs are closing down in small towns
- Development of arts community in small towns
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Rural Canada contributes about 30% of the country's gross domestic product.

COMMUNITY FOCUS

Partnership is key for conserving our environment

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is our country's largest land conservation organization. Established in Ontario in 1962, NCC's first conservation project in Saskatchewan was a quarter section of native grassland in the QuiAppelle Coulee in 1982. Today, NCC conserves over 150,000 acres in our province. There is an urgency to this work as it is estimated that only about 20% of Saskatchewan's native prairie remains intact.

Jennifer McKillop, Regional Vice-President of NCC says, "[The grasslands that we see in southern Saskatchewan], are the most endangered ecosystem on the planet, more than the rain forest and more than coral reefs, and what we have left is valuable for a lot of reasons and its valuable to all of us."

"Indigenous people have been a part of that landscape for thousands of years and I think that the conservation of those lands has to include Indigenous people."

NCC is partnering with First Nations on environmental conservation programs.

"Learning the Land is a partnership which NCC Saskatchewan has with Treaty 4 Education Alliance which now represents seven schools in the Treaty 4 area. It was initiated as a pilot project almost five years ago when I met with Chief Cyril Bear and discussed our concerns around native prairie conservation, from both a conservation science point of view, and from an Indigenous traditional knowledge point of view," adds McKillop.

The program is focused on grade seven science curriculum with both classroom work and field trips to NCC property and land important to First Nations. Staff teach skills like using GPS and inventorying plants. In addition, the children study species of risk such as the plains pocket gopher, northern leopard frog, and the Ord's kangaroo rat. The students get to explore further in a variety of ways including internet research and asking grandparents what the animal's name is in their native language.

"The conservation community has its own history with Indigenous people and it's not always a happy one. We have seen in the past where areas set aside for protection have actually displaced Indigenous people. Programs like this one are opportunities to build bridges and work together."

Adding an art component to Learning the Land is one of those bridges. Michael Lonechild, a Cree artist from White Bear, leads Treaty 4 students in painting murals of endangered animals. Copies of these colourful murals are proudly displayed in the NCC's Regina offices. Learning the Land continues to increase the range of activities and grades included. McKillop is particularly enthusiastic about introducing Indigenous children to careers in environmental science and stewardship.

"This is the coolest job on earth. Our staff get to spend time in nature whether they are a biologist, ecologist, or a range manager – sparking one kid's interest in postsecondary education – that's pretty exciting... In Saskatchewan we have the opportunity to be cutting edge and to do some really exciting work... We are a leader and we have a huge opportunity for the students," McKillop says.

Students, teachers and everyone else can learn more at Learningtheland.ca. by Donna Boyce

Existing evidence for sustaining rural communities:
Sustainability of rural communities is essential to Canada's economic growth. Rural Canada contributes about 30% of country's gross domestic product and approximately 23% of Canadians work in rural communities.3 The province of Saskatchewan is known for its large rural population, which comprised 34% of Saskatchewan's total population in 2016 and contributes to its rural economy and culture. Approximately 14% of its total population. Figure 3 illustrates that Saskatchewan's rural population as a share of total population in the province has been steadily declining since 1901. Closure of the farms (due to the incorporation of smaller farms into larger units and a substitution of capital for labor) has contributed to the decline in rural population. It is projected that this trend will continue unless all levels of government step up to create positive change. In addition to the declining trend in rural population, Saskatchewan's rural communities are faced with the demographic composition, where younger population leaves for larger cities with aging population remaining. Such a demographic shift poses a challenge to economic wellbeing of the communities and calls for creative action. Government of Canada, with partners from various provinces, has embarked on a three-year Pan-Canadian initiative to strengthen Rural Canada. For Saskatchewan, this means that the Government of Canada will work with its partner Saskatchewan Literacy Network and rural communities to find potential solutions to

existing challenges. Based on three criteria – population size, degree of rurality and diversity, this Pan-Canadian study chose Saskatchewan's rural communities of Gravelbourg, Hudson Bay, Humboldt, Kipling, Rosetown and St. Louis. Strengthening Rural Canada will work with these individual communities to develop community plans where opportunities will be identified and strategies will be developed on how to build each community's human and social capital. In its 2019 Budget, the federal government also committed up to $6 billion in investments in rural broadband internet over the next 10 years, which will help build "fully connected Canada."5 In terms of local support for rural Saskatchewan, the provincial government is allocating $71 million in funding to rural municipalities in 2019-20 through the Municipal Revenue Sharing for resort villages through its Municipal Revenue Sharing for 2019-20 fiscal year.6 Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities uses these funds to ensure rural infrastructure and roads are properly maintained. Preserving rural Saskatchewan is critical to having a vibrant and growing province. Initiatives such as Strengthening Rural Canada can help small communities overcome challenges such as declining populations and skill shortages.

Resources and supports needed to make a change as reported by communities (Q3 and Q6):

- **More funding is the primary request from communities. The stability of funding has been noted as an important factor. Lack of funding has been a threat to meeting the needs of small town communities, for example, maintaining facilities as well as in developing and supplying various programs.**
- **Diversification of funding – relying on fundraising has become a challenge**
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- **Community calendar listing all events for people who do not use the internet**

Emerging Issue #1:
Sustaining Rural Communities

Town of Assiniboia:

"[...] Online shopping and traveling to the cities have a negative effect on Assiniboia's economy. [Need] [j]obs to keep youth living here."

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Emerging Issue #3:
Safety in Communities

Civic Museum of Regina:

"Many people stated they do not feel safe in the evening and there is a need for additional night watch patrols and programs like *White Pony Lodge*."

Southeast Advocates for Employment Inc. Weyburn:

"We need a united, safe, and peaceful community."

Specific challenges reported by communities (Q5):

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Regina's Crime Severity Index is 70% higher than in the rest of Canada.

Go to Rural Long-Form as example for the remainder of this page:

Rural Long-Form

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Emerging Issue #5:
Homelessness

Example Homeless Advocates:

"a quote somebody or a group said about homelessness"

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Everyone is Home: A 5-year plan to end Chronic and Episodic Homelessness in Regina

Go to Rural Long-Form as example for the remainder of this page:

Rural Long-Form

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The SSCF talks with communities all across the south side of the Province

Learn more about the regions and key topics we've discovered in our research:

Focus Area: Focus Area — Region: Regina

Regina's Crime Severity Index is 70% higher than in the rest of Canada.

"Many people stated they do not feel safe in the evening and there is a need for additional night watch patrols and programs like *White Pony Lodge*." - From the East Quadrant of Regina conversation

"We need a united, safe and peaceful community." - From the Southeast Advocates for Employment Inc. Weyburn conversation

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Example Regina Crime Watch:

"a quote somebody or a group said about crime in Regina"

Learn More

Everyone is Home: A 5-year plan to end Chronic and Episodic Homelessness in Regina

Existing evidence for homelessness and affordable housing:

On June 16, 2019 a partnership between the City of Regina and the Government of Saskatchewan released a 5-year plan to end Chronic and Episodic Homelessness in Regina. The 5-year plan was a response to the 2018 Point in Time Count, which found that 1,110 people were homeless in Regina. The 2018 Point in Time Count also