

Building the Future: Rural Infrastructure & Regional Economic Development 2018-2021





Building the Future:

Rural Infrastructure & Regional Economic Development

SNAPSHOT

Are rural Ontario communities capable of responding to infrastructure pressures and opportunities? How does that capacity – or lack thereof – affect a community's current and future long-term economic development? This research initiative will examine these questions and develop recommendations for addressing these issues through both immediate and long-term policy alternatives.

TIMELINE: 2018-2021

FUNDING

Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance

RESEARCH TEAM

Ryan Gibson - University of Guelph (Lead Investigator)

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Scott Butler - OGRA

Karla Uliana - OMAFRA

Sean Markey - Simon Fraser University

Sheri Longboat - University of Guelph

Matthew Wilson - Minister of Infrastructure

Jillian Soule - OMAFRA

Megan Reynolds - Ministry of Infrastructure

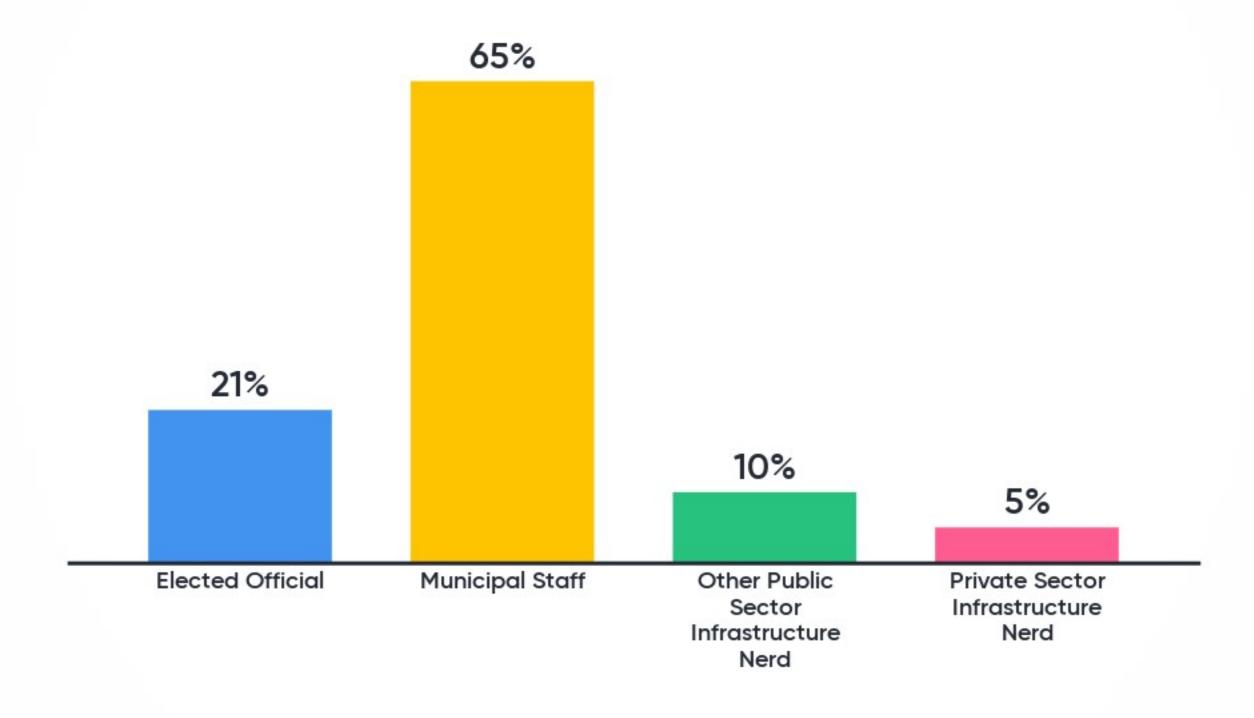
Koren Lam - University of Guelph

Jay Maloney - Simon Fraser University

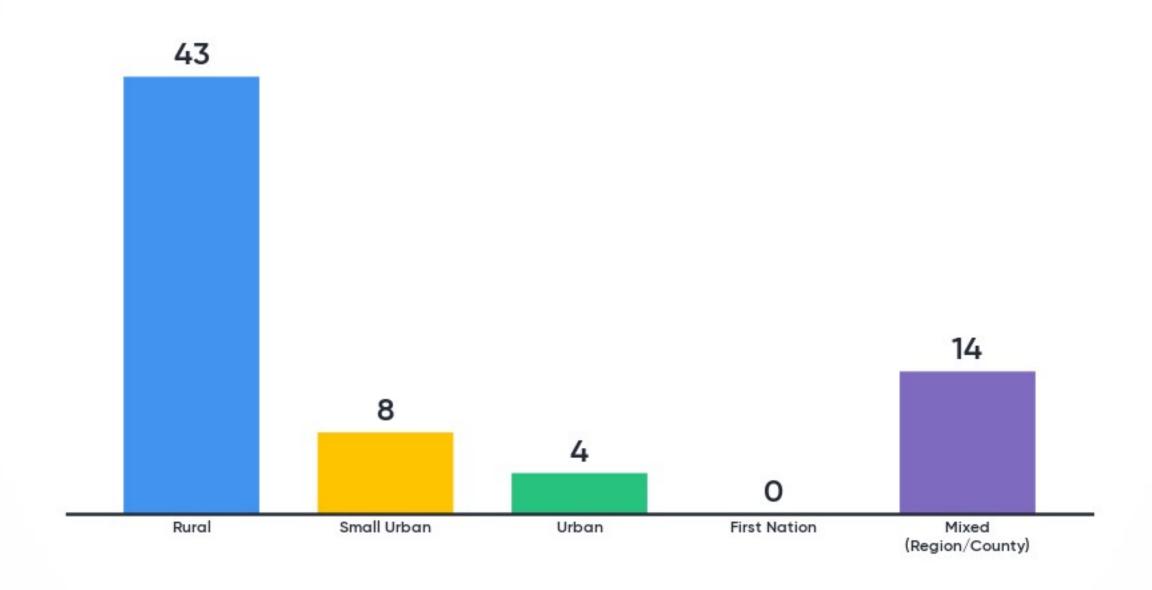
Sarah Breen - Canadian Rural Revialitzation Foundation

More information about this research initiative can be found at www.ruraldev.ca/infrastructure or by contacting Ryan Gibson at gibsonr@uoguelph.ca, or Ashleigh Weeden at weedens@uoguelph.ca

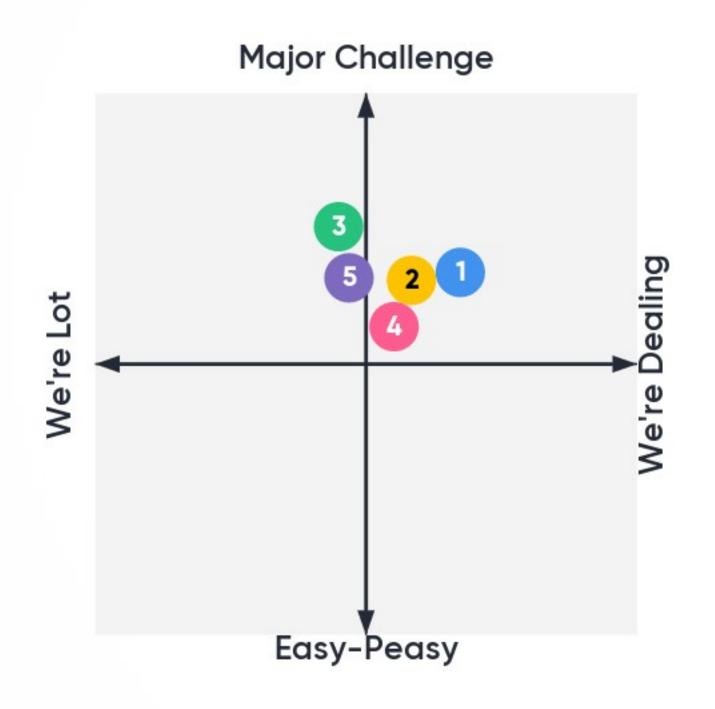
Who are you?



What type of community are you representing at OGRA2020?



What are the most pressing challenges affecting how you think about infrastructure and economic development?

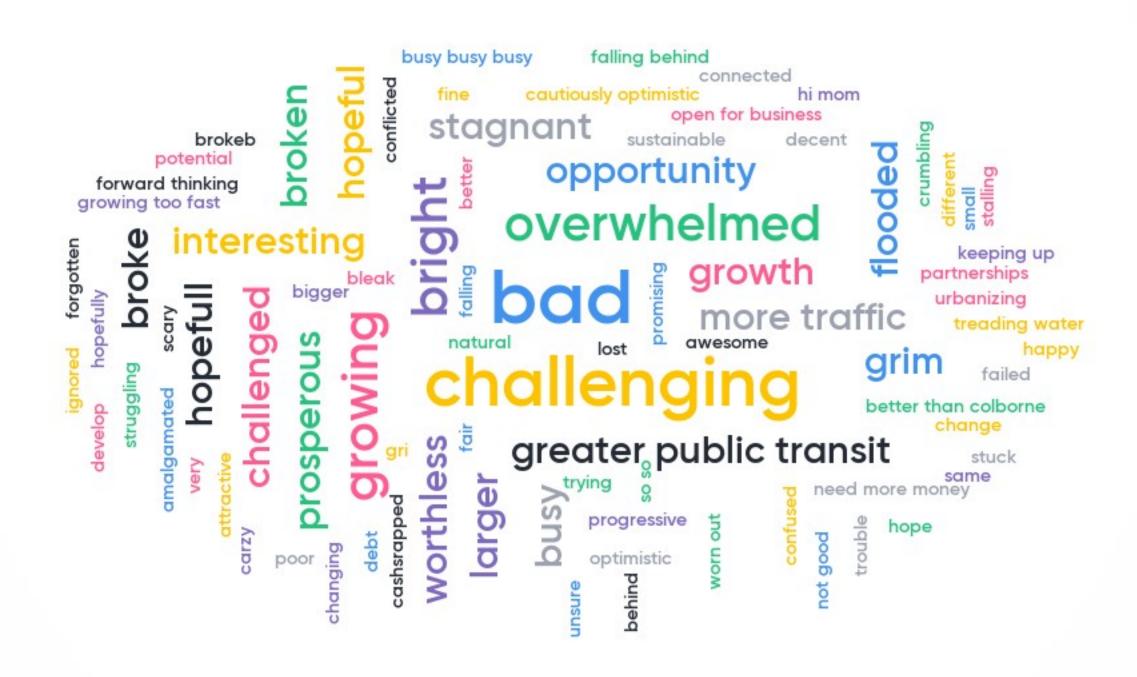


- 1 Knowing What You Need to Do
- 2 Pace of Change
- Funding Availability
- Regional Collaboration
- Competing Priorities

Do your infrastructure investments reflect your guiding plans?



If you could describe what the future of your municipality looks like in one word, what would it be?



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Why study rural infrastructure?

Informing evidence-based policy to support adaptive & effective infrastructure investments



The opportunity to invest in infrastructure

has never been greater.

 Unleashing Productivity Through Infrastructure, Government of Canada Advisory Council on Growth, 2016



Research Questions:

Are rural Ontario communities capable of responding to infrastructure pressures and opportunities?

How does that capacity – or lack thereof – affect a community's current and future long-term economic development?



Rationale for this research:

- Communities of all sizes must balance fiscal realities, changing economies, aging infrastructure, changing demographics, and a challenging climate
- Rural communities differ from urban communities and each other
- Investment in productivity-enhancing infrastructure is perhaps the most powerful & critical mechanism for supporting immediate & long-term economic development, innovation, & community resilience
- Adaptive, responsive & evidence based rural infrastructure policy & investment frameworks are critical for addressing realities of rural development across all jurisdictions



Objectives for this research:

- Examine how rural Ontario communities vary in their capacity to respond to infrastructure pressures
- Investigate how those varying capacities affect short- & long-term economic development
- Provide OMAFRA recommendations on how to develop rural infrastructure policy, programming & investments that will build rural community capacity & support economic development & growth



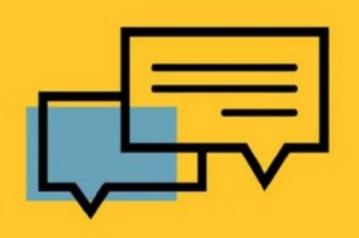
What we heard at OGRA2019

- Rural communities believe they offer more opportunities for expansion, affordability, and quality of life - attractive qualities for investment
- The lack of broadband infrastructure and natural gas are major impediments to rural economic development
- It remains challenging to operationalize the connection between infrastructure planning and economic development strategies in concrete ways
- Working collaboratively with regional partners is both a major challenge and major opportunity that rural communities would like to explore in more creative ways and with more support

So what's next?

We need your help.

In partnership with the OGRA, we're launching the exciting next phase of this research initiative and we need you to help make it work...











BUILDING THE FUTURE: SURVEY ABOUT RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE

& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



<u>LAUNCHING NOW!</u> AVAILABLE UNTIL APRIL 10, 2020



ACCESS THE SURVEY AT HTTP://BIT.LY/BTFSURVEY2020



Learn more:

Visit www.ruraldev.ca/infrastructure

Or contact us at:

- Ryan Gibson: gibsonr@uoguelph.ca
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