

## INTRODUCTION

The provincial government recently passed legislation requiring municipalities to collaborate with one another in matters related to land use and service provision such as transportation, water and wastewater, solid waste, emergency services and recreation.

In response to the new requirements, the County of Vermilion River and the Villages of Kitscoty, Marwayne, Dewberry and Paradise Valley hosted two open houses in January 2019, one in Marwayne and one in Kitscoty. The open houses provided an opportunity for interested residents and stakeholders to learn more about the provincial collaboration requirements, the work that the municipalities are undertaking to meet those requirements, and to express any questions, concerns or considerations about the requirements and the work being done.

Information about the sessions was sent to residents and stakeholders of the five municipalities via direct mail, and advertisements were placed in the Lloydminster Source, the Vermilion Standard and the Vermilion Voice throughout the month leading up to the sessions. In addition to the in-person sessions, an online survey/feedback form was created and circulated via social media.

The feedback received has been aggregated, summarized and presented in this report, and will be used to inform intermunicipal collaboration matters between the municipalities.

## WHAT WE HEARD

A total of 40 individuals attended the open houses: 14 people in Marwayne and 26 people in Kitscoty, and a total of 16 people completed the feedback form. Feedback forms were completed at the open house, online, or sent in the mail.

The feedback form consisted of a combination of multiple choice and written response questions (appendix 1). The answers to the multiple choice questions are shown in pie charts, and written summaries were created for the written response questions.

## Short Answers

### 1. How might intermunicipal planning support your community?

The key themes that emerged in the responses to this question were resource efficiency and cost sharing—being able to provide a higher level and breadth of service and support to a larger community of people, through the sharing of resources.

Approximately half of the respondents made some reference to the idea of intermunicipal cost sharing for services, allowing individual municipalities to have access to services they could otherwise not afford to provide on their own, or to reduce financial redundancies between municipalities.

Several respondents touched on the advantages of collaborative efforts in promoting growth, investment, and development. A resident of Dewberry provided a specific example of a challenge the Village is facing:

*“Our community has next to no room left for either residential or commercial expansion. There is no money left in any budget that I have been made aware of that would allow our community to expand. Our community has become stagnant, in my opinion, as the taxes are a huge deterrent to the purchase of any property within the boundaries of the Village. The residential component to County properties in the surrounding area seems to be growing at a relatively rapid pace while the Village itself is seeing VERY limited growth.”*

One respondent identified that intermunicipal planning may boost the sustainability of a single community. Another reflected that intermunicipal planning helps provide a stronger indication of what the future holds for these communities.

Five respondents did not provide any answer to this question.

### 2. What are key service areas our communities should consider collaborating on? In what ways could we work together in future?

A diversity of comments were received in response to this question.

The most common idea was to collaborate on emergency services: nine of the sixteen respondents made reference to emergency services in some capacity. There were five explicit references to fire related services, three comments about ambulance or emergency medical services, and four references to policing, crime prevention, or protective services. Relatedly, bylaw enforcement was also mentioned twice.

Utilities and infrastructure was another common theme mentioned by seven individuals, with no particular utility favoured over any other. Power, lighting, signage, natural gas, and roads were each mentioned once, water and sewer were each mentioned twice.

Another one of the top themes—surfacing in roughly one third of the responses—related to recreational facilities and services. The feedback did not go into further detail about the nature of the recreational facilities or services desired.

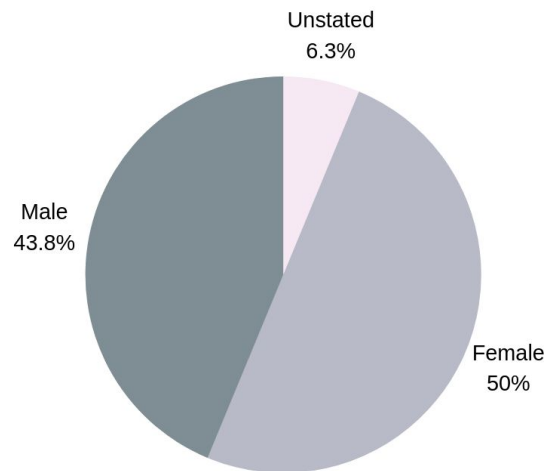
A couple of respondents suggested sharing services and/or revenue. Another suggested better collaboration—working together as a region instead of as individual municipalities. Development, schools/schooling, and caring for the land (and not over-developing it), came up twice in the responses.

In addition, some desire for additional commercial uses was expressed, with respondents mentioning a car wash, bigger food store, hardware store, medical facilities, and seniors housing one time each.

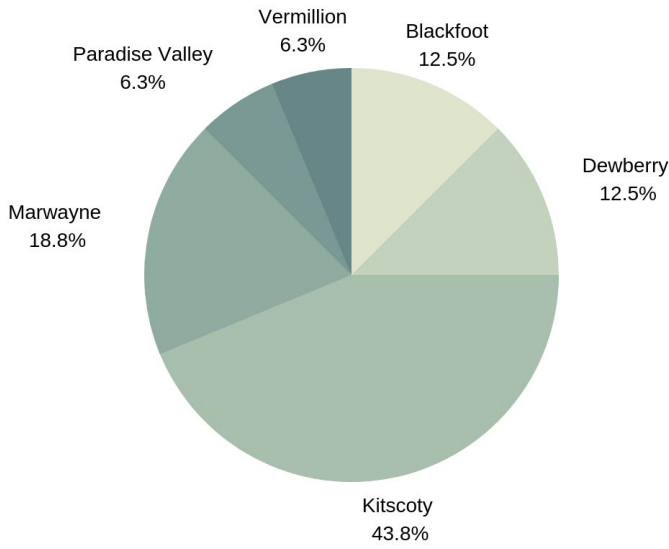
One respondent did not provide any answer to this question.

### *Demographics*

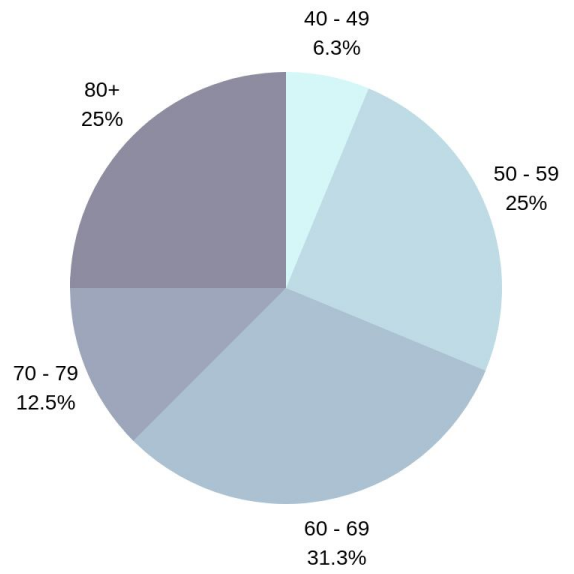
Gender:



Community Representation:

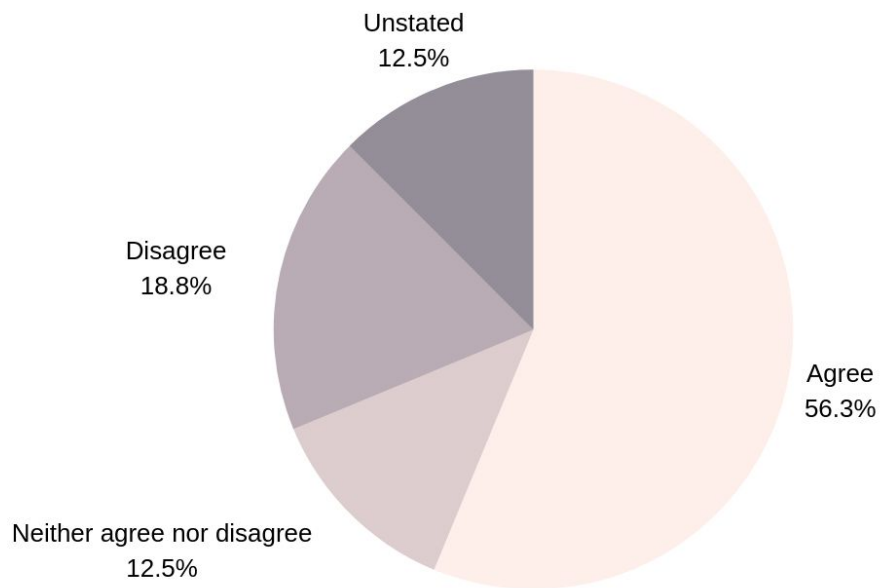


Age:

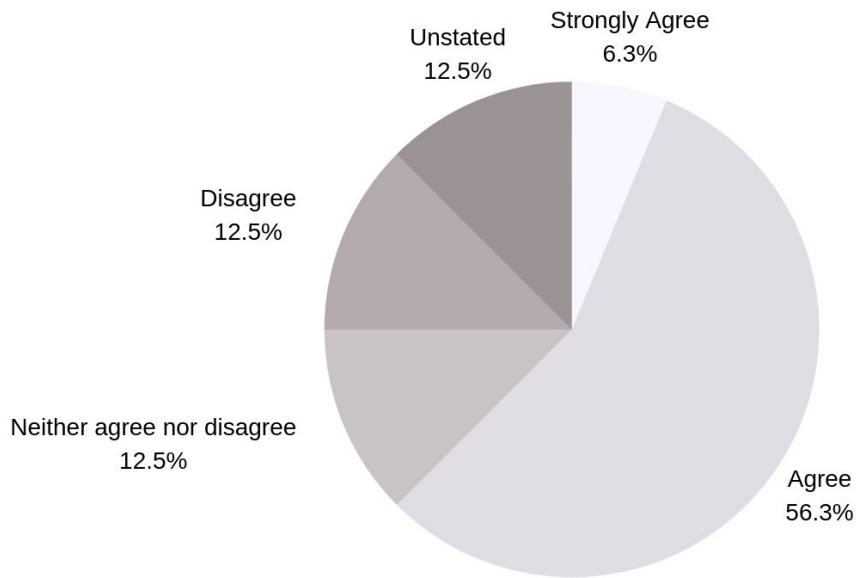


*Workshop Logistics*

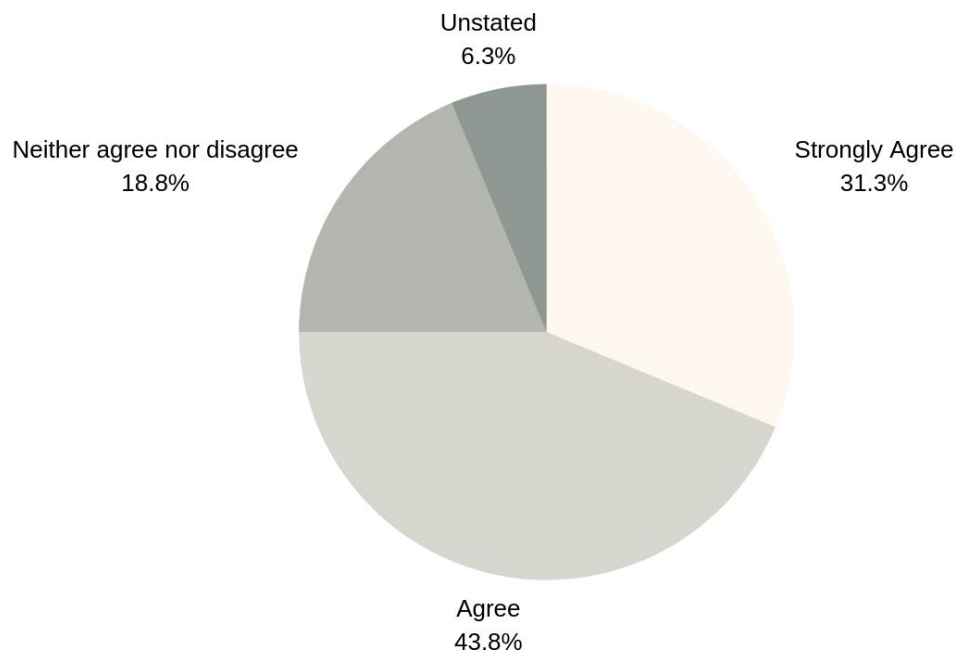
Open house was well organized and informative:



Information was clear and relevant:



Opportunities to comment and ask questions were provided:



## OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Although the sample size was too small to notice any significant trends in the data, some interesting observations emerge nonetheless.

The vast majority of survey respondents own property in the urban municipalities, which could demonstrate a greater interest on the part of village residents in the implications of increased intermunicipal collaboration. All of the respondents were over the age of 40, and nearly 70% of respondents were over the age of 60.

Interestingly, the comments about collaborating on schools/education were both made by women. The comments about protecting the land, and not over-developing it, both came from residents of Blackfoot.

In terms of more general themes, the feedback demonstrates that there is support for intermunicipal collaboration within and among the County and the Villages. There are also numerous ideas about what that collaboration could look like, and general interest in learning more about how collaborative efforts will unfold.