



Community Talks - Hinton, Alberta

Full Report on Session Three: October 21st, 2023

Summary

In October 2023, Iron & Earth hosted the third and final Hinton session as part of the Community Talks Program. This session built upon the first and second events, which were hosted in January 2022 and November 2022. The community faced various challenges since the beginning of the session series, including extreme weather conditions, wildfires, shifts in the local economy and employment insecurity. Despite these changes, the town has shown resilience with the diversification of its economic community and significant rise in new projects. This report will focus on the themes that emerged in the final community conversation, including improving publicly accessible community infrastructure, fostering Hinton's growth and the interconnected nature of communities in the Hinton area. The themes of these conversations were prompted from the breakout questions that focused on enhancing rural accessibility, strengthening communication between Hinton residents, and promoting economic diversification in the town. These questions were developed based upon themes from the initial two dialogues, to ensure the topics were driven by the community and resonated specifically with the needs of the Hinton community. The goal of these community conversations was to better understand the unique needs of Hinton's residents towards pursuing new opportunities and a green economy.

1. Introduction

About Iron & Earth

Iron & Earth (I&E) is a non-profit organization with roots in the fossil fuel industry that is working toward a future where the workforce is dynamically engaged in a thriving green economy. We envision broad participation in a Just Transition, leading to strengthened economic and climate resilience, expanded accessibility to sustainable energy solutions and meaningful careers. This vision extends beyond workforce mobilization to foster a community-driven transformation, where people actively contribute to a sustainable and equitable future, for their communities and the planet. Its mission is to enable sustainable, community-driven climate solutions and reduce barriers for those seeking a future in the green economy with programs that support greater job security, social protection, and more training opportunities as we move toward a low-carbon economy.



Iron & Earth believes community engagement is an effective way to influence sustainable participation in a Just Transition, and that community-driven solutions have a greater chance of becoming successful and sustainable in the long-term. Iron & Earth takes the time to build relationships and adapt to individual community needs whenever possible.

Community Talks is Iron and Earth's engagement initiative designed to spark conversations about how environmental, social, and economic changes impact people across Canada. It is committed to meeting communities where they are at, by supporting self-determined, community-driven solutions, and offering non-prescriptive support with programs that are designed by the community and for the community.



Why this community was selected to have a conversation

Oil, gas, and coal have been instrumental in building prosperity for Hinton, and its people are deeply appreciative of the hard work of those who have contributed to the well-being of the community. Hinton has experienced increased uncertainty in weather patterns, extreme climate events, businesses changing hands, and new businesses opening up offering employment opportunities to residents. Just in the past couple of years the town has been experiencing:

- Unprecedented weather conditions including cold snaps, heat waves, droughts, excess rain, mild/dry winters, wildfires and ecological impacts.
- The 2023 wildfire season posed significant challenges to the Hinton Community and neighboring areas. The season started with unsettling weather conditions including unusually hot and dry conditions with high winds. A neighbouring town, Edson, was evacuated twice this summer, with residents taking shelter in Hinton, placing stressors on the town's infrastructure, water, and food supplies. The risk of fire hazards and wildfires was so prominent that many people struggled to purchase or renew home insurance due to the ongoing threat. Wildfire smoke persisted throughout late spring and summer causing individuals with underlying health conditions to stay indoors impacting their routines and mental health.
- In February 2024, Mondi, a UK packaging company, bought the Hinton Pulp mill in Alberta, Canada from West Fraser Timber for \$5 million dollars. They plan to invest €400 million in a new kraft paper machine at Hinton by late 2027, partnering with West Fraser for local fibre. The project aims to boost local employment and continue water services. The mill's continued operation will continue to secure income security for the community for years to come, being a core pillar of the community since the 1950's.
- More than 300 workers in the thermal coal industry, along with those in related industries and contractors, are facing uncertainty about their future earnings. This is due to the possible phasing out of the thermal coal industry in Canada and required permitting.
- Hinton saw the flourishing of new businesses, like a yoga studio and restaurants, but experienced a setback with the closure of key retailers such as Sport Exports and The Source, resulting in almost a 50% vacancy in the local mall.
- The town's capacity to source work and complete repairs on damaged infrastructure, whether from age or extreme weather events, has been inadequate, resulting in increased fees and longer wait times.



- A shortage of available land for new developments has caused delays and deterred the creation of new industries/businesses, as well as the retention and restoration of existing ones.

Hinton also has many strengths:

- The town initially had a diverse economic community, involving industries such as pulp, forestry, coal, oil and gas, and tourism. This suggests that a diverse economic future is possible.
- Hinton is known as the "gateway to the Rockies," which creates a strong connection, familiarity, and sense of pride within the community towards the environment as a whole.
- There has been a rise in the number of developments for new renewable projects and other non-energy-related projects in the community and its surrounding areas. This includes the geothermal, hydro-power, and tourism industries.

Following the second session in November 2022, we organized this third and final session to conclude this part of the conversation and summarize the findings. These conversations explored diverse perspectives and sought to identify innovative solutions for Hinton's unique needs. These sessions followed a three-conversation model, beginning with broad topics and gradually aligning with the communities specific interests and challenges. This approach aids in understanding the community's needs and experiences. In our first conversation, we gathered broad information about the concerns and desires of Hinton residents. Participants expressed deep concern about extreme weather events and income security, and an interest in strengthening the community through diversification. They expressed a desire for a proactive approach to supporting workers in transitioning economies and emphasized that the community should be leading policy conversations. For the second conversation, we zeroed in on these themes by asking participants more about how extreme weather conditions have affected them, what diversification meant to them, and what changes they would like to see in the community. They spoke at length about rural accessibility issues, challenges with distributing information in the community, and a desire to have the community self-define and lead the local energy transition.

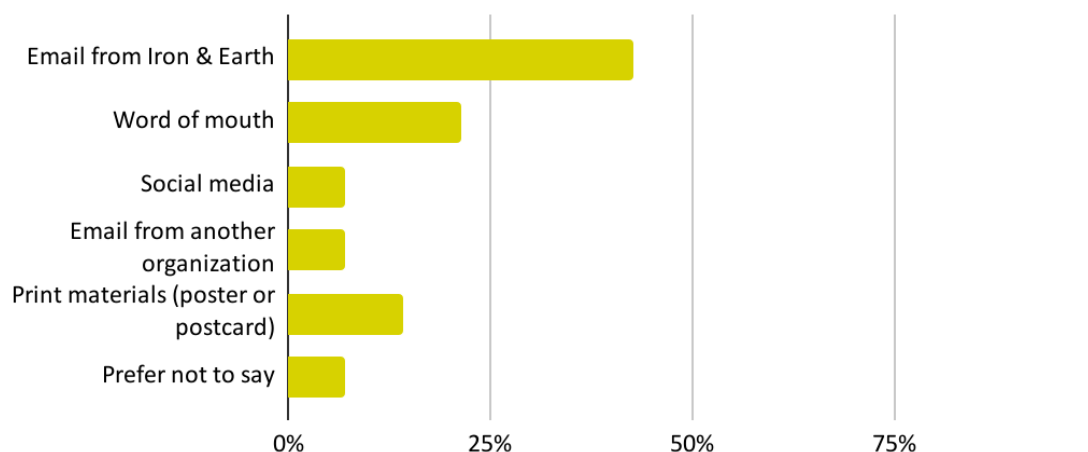


About the conversation participants

Our objective was to bring together people with diverse experiences, including members of various local organizations, industries, and government representatives of different ages, races, and educational backgrounds. To achieve this, we used multiple methods to reach out to potential participants, such as social media posts, physical advertisements, email outreach, and in-person engagement at a local event led by our team. As a result, 28 individuals registered for the session and 14 individuals were in attendance. The figures below are based on the answers of the 14 attendees.

For successful outreach methods, as illustrated in Figure 1.1 - Outreach Results below, attendees indicated that most individuals learned about the session through e-mail from I&E, followed by word of mouth, print materials (including materials distributed at community events), and lastly social media, and email from another organization. Of the 14 participants, 8 had attended a Community Pathways event hosted by I&E prior to this session.

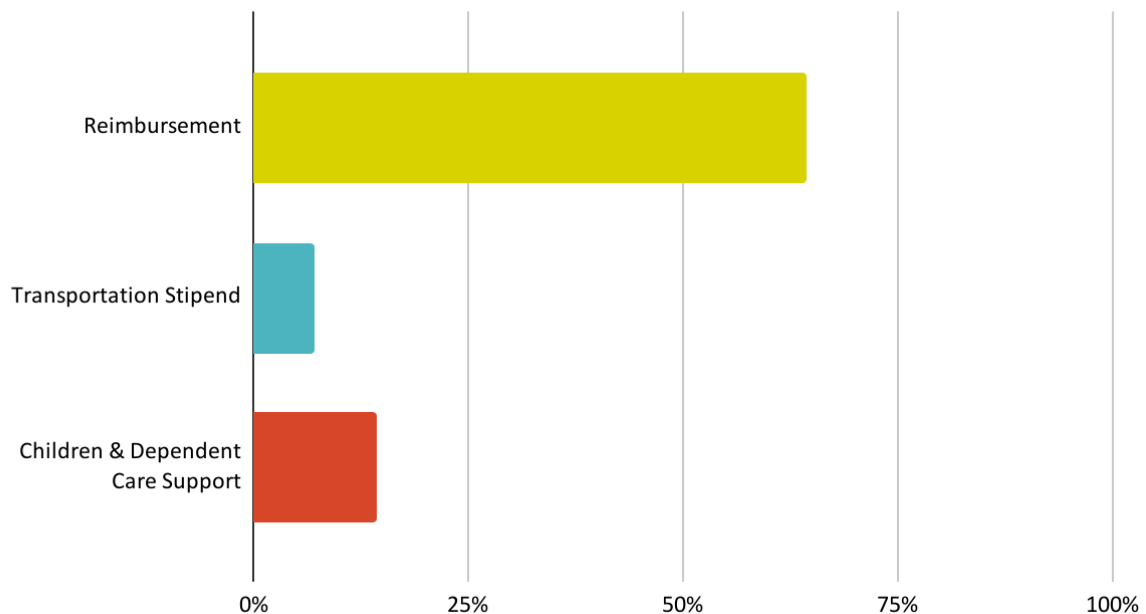
Figure 1.1 - Outreach Results



To reduce potential attendance barriers, the sign-up form included questions on accessibility information. The major accessibility supports identified during the planning phase were: competitive reimbursement, child or dependent care assistance, and transportation stipends. Participants also had the option to answer an open-ended accessibility request question, to list additional requests outside of the mentioned categories. The registration information shows that most participants received one or more kinds of accommodation offered by I&E. As outlined in Figure 1.2 - All Accommodations, 64% of participants received compensation for their participation, while 7% requested transportation reimbursement, and 14% received care support for children or dependents.



Figure 1.2 - Accommodation Summary

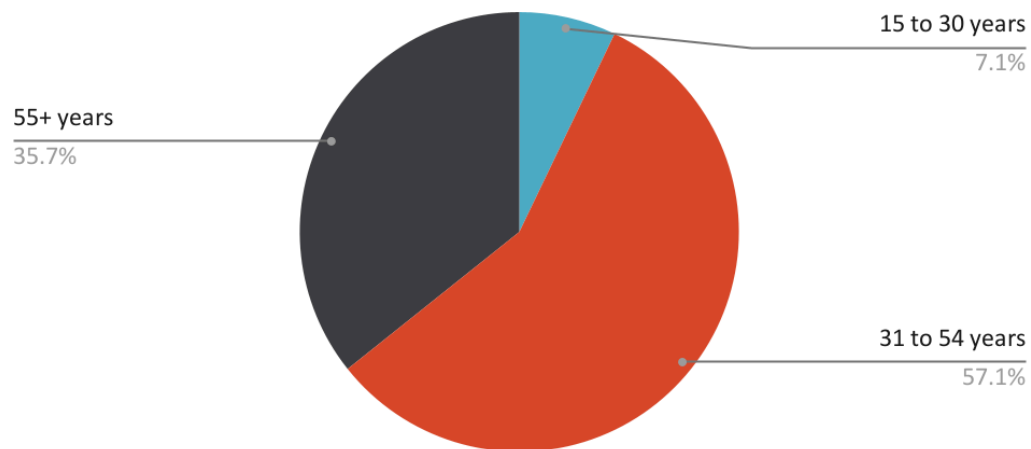


A survey of the demographic characteristics of participants showed that 93% of participants were residents of the town of Hinton and were not new immigrants. For first languages, 86% of participants speak English at home, while 7% speak English and French, and 7% of participants speak English and Anishinaabe. Finally, most participants (64%) identified as women, while 36% identified as men.

The social demographics questions revealed that while 21% of participants identified as Indigenous, none of the participants lived in Indigenous reserves. In addition, 7% identified as 2SLGBTQ+, 7% identified as people of colour, and 14% identified as persons with disabilities. Figure 1.3 - Age Groups show that most of the participants belonged in the 31 to 54 age group (57%), followed by 55 years and over (36%), and 15 to 30 (7%).

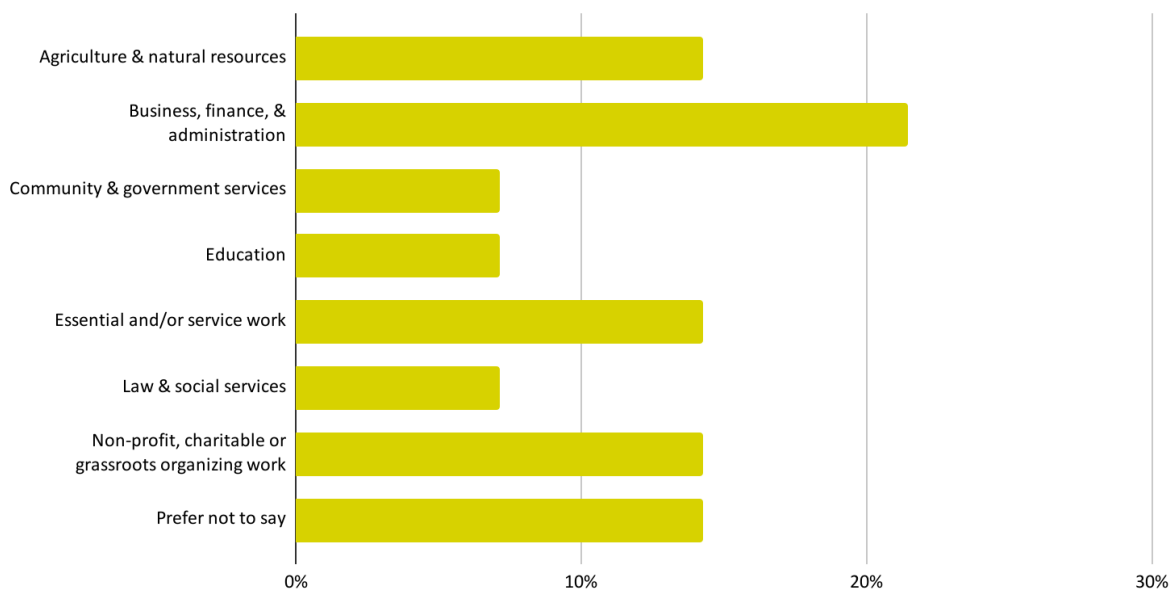


Figure 1.3 - Age Groups



On the socioeconomic status question, 14% of participants were of low income status (below \$53,413 per year), 43% of middle income status (\$53,413 - \$106,827), and 36% preferred not to say. Figure 1.4 - Job Sector outlines the participants' job sectors distribution.

Figure 1.4 - Job Sectors



In comparison to the 2021 Census of Population of Hinton from Statistics Canada¹, the participants' demographics are more representative of the general population in some

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<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?LANG=E&GENDERlist=1,2,3&STATISTIClist=1,4&DGUIDlist=2021A00054814019&HEADERlist=2,30,22,23,10,9,7,,21,19,,42,44,40,43,41,15,13&SearchText=Hinton>



demographic areas. The census data shows that Hinton's population is made up of 52% men and 48% women, showing that the gender distribution of the attendees were overly representative of women. Additionally, the census data shows that for the population of 15 years and above, 15-29 years old are 23%, 30-54 are 43%, and 55 and above are 34%. In comparison, the age groups of the attendees are lacking the representation of the 15-30 age group, and overly representative of the 31-54 age group. It is important to note that the age group division is slightly different in our demographics question and census population.

The census data also shows 14% Indigenous population (including 0-14 years old residents), a smaller figure compared to our attendees' 21% Indigenous demographics. while the immigrant population that makes up 7% of the town of Hinton's population (including 0-14 years old residents) is equal to the immigration percentage in our attendees' group.

For job sectors data, the attendees' population lack the high representation of the top 2 highest job populations in Hinton (using National Occupational Classification): sales and service occupations, and trades, transport and equipment operators and related occupations.



The Community Conversation

During our planning process, we carefully considered the language we would use in our conversation and created a detailed script (see Appendix A). These sessions address the unique needs of Hinton, as they face different challenges and have distinct economic and social situations. The objective is to invite a wide range of community members, including those with differing views on the energy transition and environmental narratives. We wanted to make sure that the language was not confrontational or polarizing; therefore, we avoided terms such as “climate change” and “net-zero emissions” including the avoidance of political statements or conversations. Additionally, our focus was on the Town of Hinton and its residents, leaving out provincial, federal or global affiliations. This ensured that participants felt comfortable voicing their opinions without imposed narratives or scrutiny.

The event took place at the Dr. Duncan Murray Recreation Centre located in Hinton, Alberta on October 21, 2023. The venue was specifically chosen for its large space to allow for distancing of the discussion tables to limit interference in the recordings. The room was organized with 3 discussion tables with a capacity for 10 participants each. To aid in the discussion, 3 trained facilitators were present to lead the discussions. One of the facilitators was also a Community Engagement Officer, representing Iron & Earth at a local level. Overall, participants provided feedback that the event was well organized and promoted thoughtful discussion and active participation from all participants.

In order to respect each individual's comfort level and consent, we recorded the discussions at each table to aid in identifying individual speaker's input when transcribing the data. We separated the tables to reduce the likelihood for overlapping noises between groups and introduced ourselves in a round table to help identify who is speaking. In-person sessions encourage a natural flow of conversation and allows for participants to freely voice their thoughts. Past virtual sessions have demonstrated that participants may feel uncomfortable to speak up and feel that the conversation does not flow as easily. For future in-person sessions we will continue implementing the steps above to ensure effective delivery of discussions and transcription processes.



2. What We Heard

For our final event we proposed three questions based upon themes developed over the course of our first two Hinton Community Conversations:

- *How would you like to see communication strengthened within the Hinton community?*
- *How can accessibility be enhanced in rural communities?*
- *What kind of support does your community need to promote diversification that benefits your community?*

Participants strongly verified our findings from the second session regarding the challenges of communication in Hinton. They confirmed that there is a strong desire to improve the exchange of information throughout the community:

"I just don't find that as a community we're sharing a lot of information."

"Even being a resident of Hinton almost 40 years, I still don't know a lot about what is going on in the community."

"There's no singular source that we know we can go to. And the town of Hinton had a communications officer and then they got moved. And then someone else took the position and they got moved. And now there's someone else and they're trying to figure it out. And - it just keeps changing who we contact...So nobody knows where to go to look for any of this."

"There's a lot that goes on in the town of Hinton that the Hinton residents...we just don't know, until, like I said, until sometimes it's too late. "

"I did social media for [an event]. And I worked my butt off promoting [it]. And yet I had plenty of people go, "Oh my god, I didn't hear anything?" And I'm like, "I can't staple the poster to your head." I don't know. But there's no single place to send it so that we can get the information out."

Participants expressed that social media is the primary vehicle through which information spreads in the town. The community relies on individuals running Hinton-specific Facebook pages to fill an information gap in the face of declining production of the local newspaper, closures of community poster boards during the COVID-19 pandemic, inconsistent communications from the government on local events, and a general shift towards digital media. For many Hintonites, the need for better communication is rooted



in a desire to get more involved in the community, as articulated by one individual: “We need to find out what's really happening...Because so many people probably would like to be involved, but they just don't know how to.”

Several participants offered solutions to this challenge in communications, including bringing back bulletin boards in community hubs, offering more frequent open houses for locals to learn about organizations and events in the community, and diversifying outreach methods to ensure that individuals who aren't on social media find out about local events. Another person stated that there should be a Hinton event calendar run by a third-party nonprofit organization, rather than the municipality of Hinton, to ensure more rapid circulation of events in the community. In response to the other two questions, three interconnected themes dominated the conversations: a focus on tackling accessibility issues by **improving community infrastructure**, an interest in **fostering Hinton's growth**, and the **interconnectedness between neighbouring communities** in the Hinton area.

Improving Accessibility Through Infrastructure

Participants verified that they experience significant rural accessibility issues. As in previous conversations, healthcare was the most significant area that Hinton residents are concerned about. Many participants described lacking a family doctor and travelling long distances to access critical healthcare services. Participants acknowledged that accessing healthcare is a nation-wide issue. However, they expressed that these challenges are magnified in a rural community like Hinton: “The problems we have here aren't any different. But when we hear about - okay, people in Edmonton can't get a doctor. People in Calgary can't get a doctor. People in Toronto now can't get a doctor. Like, what about us?”

Other significant areas of concern echoed from previous conversations were housing and education access, and to a lesser extent accessing retail services, securing local contractors, and lack of public transportation options. In terms of specific suggestions for improvements, participants had several specific suggestions for public infrastructure that needs improvement:

- Renovating and upgrading the hospital
- Improving the recreation centre to include a family changing room in the bathrooms and providing new showerheads and swimsuit spinners
- Creating new housing developments, including community housing and co-ops
- Building an indoor track, particularly for seniors and families to enjoy in the winter
- Improving sidewalk access



Participants expressed a desire for a more participatory process for community infrastructure project planning. *"A lot of people don't know [where] their tax dollars have been gifted to," said one person.* Another affirmed this sentiment, saying *"I'd love to get that information out and not in a negative way. Just know that community input, you know what I mean?"* One person argued that a very small percentage of the population is involved in decision-making and volunteering in the community, and that this creates a risk for burn-out: *"It's the same ten people all the time. People are burning out, things are disappearing because there's no, there's no succession planning."*

Some individuals discussed feeling conflicted about the stagnation in the development of new infrastructure in Hinton, while also not wanting to bear the financial cost of funding these projects:

"I don't know. I feel like we've been having the same conversations for years. And not much has changed. You know, it's the same. The same things, the same conversations. And where things stand with moving forward, we're still having the same conversations years later...As a community, are we willing to pay for it? To increase what we can offer as a community and then maybe bring more people in, which then makes that community grow and continue to prosper. But nobody ever - who wants to pay more money? Like I'll be the first to say I really don't want to pay more money."

However, another person reiterated that Hinton is ultimately at a crossroads in the need to develop new infrastructure: *"You gotta supply things for people to come here. And a nice life is not going to be supplied, again, by a government. Somebody's got to decide that it's worth their while to do that. There needs to be enough people here to have that make sense financially... I think the crossover, the crux that we're at right now."*



Community Growth

Throughout all three events, participants have made clear that Hinton is growing and changing through an influx of in-migration to the community. The Hinton residents we spoke to frequently discussed tourism as a growing industry attracting people to the community, and the experiences of newcomers in the community. A few attendees shared their own personal experiences as newcomers, struggling to find housing or figure out employment:

"I've had my best friend's mom move to Hinton and she's on lower income support. She's been here for three weeks now And she still has no – like, she's couchsurfing. We called every single listing in the [Hinton community] directory, and there's like, zero vacancy here."

"I really love it here. I don't want to move now... but moving here was like, "What am I gonna do for work?"

Along with this influx of people, Hinton still experiences waves of out-migration. The departure of youth from the community was a top concern of many attendees, as young people often leave Hinton seeking higher education due to lack of educational opportunities within the town. After finishing school, some young people may want to return, but feel forced to settle in other places due to lack of opportunities outside of resource-based work:

"The [youth] that do come back that I know of are usually people that stay in industry, like resource jobs, like, 'Oh I'm gonna work in my Dad's, in oil and gas,' or whatever. Cause there's a lot of those jobs out here. Hopefully, in the future, if let's say our school, or children go to school, and they do something like having a professional field, like a dentist or whatever, that [when] they come back there's services that they can fill those roles here that's not just like a specific industry related. Because maybe if our children want other things, they have to go to Edmonton or Calgary for those types of roles. So hopefully, by then, there'll be more diversification that those job positions are available here."

In addition to youth, participants observed that seniors are sometimes forced to leave the community as they find themselves requiring higher levels of care. As previously discussed, accessing healthcare is an area of concern for many Hinton residents who must travel great lengths to secure appointments beyond the capacity of a walk-in clinic: *"Hinton is – we're aging, you know. And a lot of us have to move our families outside of Hinton, who have resided here, because they've come to the time that they need care."*



Overall, participants expressed a feeling of excitement at the potential for Hinton to grow and thrive through industry diversification — whether it be tourism, new educational institutions, the development of new resource sectors like geothermal energy, or the expansion of the pulp mill under new management. They pointed to this growth as an opportunity for the town to improve community infrastructure, expand retail options, and retain more young people and specialized workers in the community:

"We're gonna have what, 800 people come in to build Mondi's plant over there. That's an opportunity to do some of those things and there's gonna be – I mean, I'm in retail and it's, that's going to be a boom. I was talking to my massage therapist on Wednesday, that's going to be a real opportunity for them. And I mean, people come out here and spend eight months, and they go, "Hey, this is a pretty nice place. And it's got the services I need," and maybe we maybe we get some people to maintain, to come here."

"Instead of clinging to, you know, what Hinton looked like 50 years ago. It's like, oh no, let's change that. And let the city prosper with this new technology... It's gorgeous here. I love it here...People want to live here. It's just there's no work. But if Hinton manages to kind of retool and diversify, you know, I think it could be a big new change."

The participants illustrated that Hinton's identity is in a moment of flux and change. They reiterated that the core of the town's identity remains tied to resource production. For example, one person described the mill and the mine as "our core places." This long-standing connection to local industry has fostered an expectation of a certain quality of life: "It's [an] ease of life when you [are] in the rural community of where we are. Where industry and industry wages are so high that you kind of get used to that."

However, with the community growing and changing, they also articulated a desire for Hinton to assert itself with a stronger community identity: "when I first moved here, it was always known as the gateway to the Rockies. And I always thought, why is the town of Hinton encouraging people to go to the Rockies...You know, when there's so much here that we can do and advocate for the town of Hinton and the businesses."



Interconnected Communities

Throughout all three sessions, the Hintonites we spoke to talked frequently about neighbouring communities surrounding Hinton, such as Jasper, Edson, Brule, Edmonton, and others. They described a network of communities with highly interconnected economies, as people travel frequently to other towns and cities to access services that are not available in Hinton and vice-versa. As the cost of living is rising, participants described a flow of people between communities seeking the most affordable goods: *“If you look at who’s shopping where, you know, you have people from Valemount, Grand Cache, Edson, all coming into Hinton to do their shopping. Hinton’s going into Edson. Edson’s going to Edmonton... It’s a flow.”*

In this context, Hinton is in competition with other neighbouring communities when it comes to attracting newcomers and tourists. Participants pointed to the beauty of the community as a significant strength: *“We have a competitive advantage. I mean, we get to live on the edge of the Rocky Mountains. I mean, as far as a small town goes, I think we just got to play on that more.”* However, they also argued that Hinton needs to further develop its communal recreational infrastructure if it hopes to attract coveted workers, such as healthcare professionals:

“For doctors, you can’t get them here if you don’t have things. You don’t have the golf course, the recs. We don’t have a theatre. That’s a serious disadvantage to the community. And you may not think so. But you know what, if somebody’s relocating, and they’re bringing in their family, it’s a consideration. And if they’re a golfer, there’s no golf course, that’s a consideration. And you know, if the place here doesn’t meet standard, that’s consideration, and it’s all that stuff, I think that we got to do a better job of sort of meet some of those needs, I guess.”

“The kind of base level of services need to be here. You know, like if people can’t find a doctor in Hinton, people aren’t gonna move their family here. You know? If the education system isn’t good enough, people aren’t gonna move their family. So yeah, there’s that base level of public service that has to be here in order to attract those [people].”



The Hintonites we spoke to referenced aspects of neighbouring towns as examples of inspiration for new infrastructure they desire, serving as models of what ‘could be’ in their town. Some examples include:

- Family change rooms at pools in Jasper, Edson, and Grande Cache
- Indoor tracks in Grande Cache and Cold Lake
- Housing co-ops in Jasper

Understanding the economically intertwined nature of the Yellowhead County area is crucial context necessary to grasp the ripple effects that industry changes such as mine closures or the expansion of the pulp mill can have. The prosperity of Hinton is deeply connected with the local communities surrounding it, from Jasper, to Cadomin, to Edson. Among these towns, participants pointed to Hinton’s trajectory towards a more diversified economy as a point of comfort for the community:

“For its size, the town of Hinton is pretty diversified, really. Like, we have tourism, we have the mine, we have the mill, we have another mine that's tapping in from Grande Cache. There's a lot here....You know, like, if it all goes down, that sucks. It's a lot of people. But Hinton's not gone...There's too much here. It's one of the reasons why I'm willing to stay. Because I know, it's not going.”



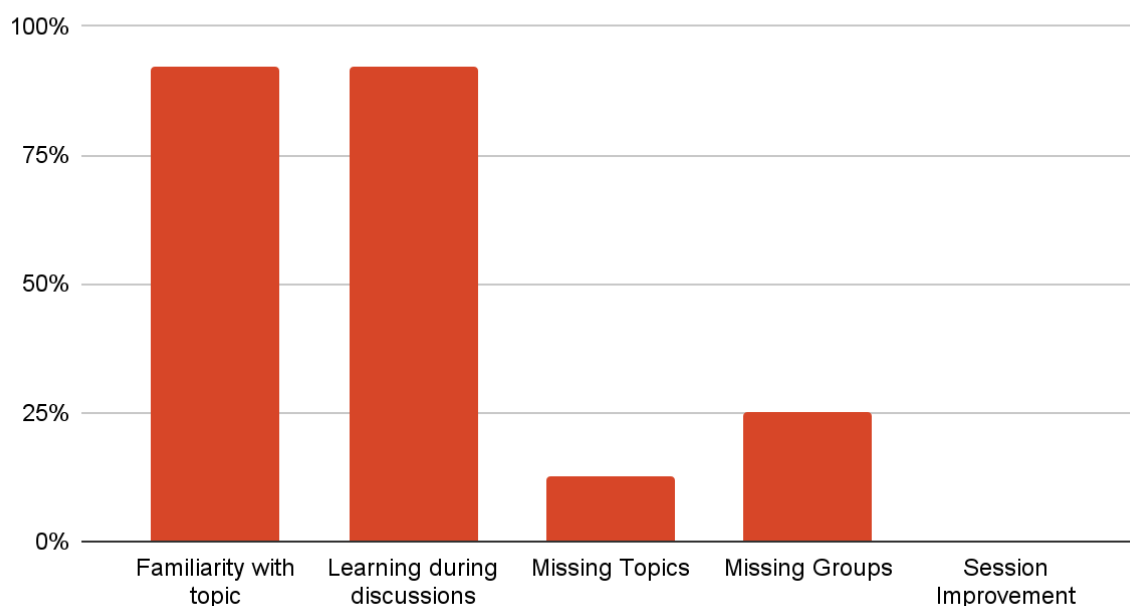
3. What We Learned

Feedback

At the end of the session we shared feedback forms for participants to fill out, to assess their experience. The feedback form was revised from previous sessions' forms to avoid mistakes in choosing the answers. All 14 participants filled out the feedback form, with 54% participants rating their satisfaction level as "very satisfied", 23% as "satisfied", and 8% as "neutral" and "very unsatisfied". 8% did not fill out the satisfaction rating.

Figure 3.1 - Feedback Form Results summarized participants' feedback on the session. 92% indicated that they were familiar with the topics prior to the discussion, and another 92% indicated that they learned something new during the discussions. 13% of participants wrote "green energy" as topics that were not talked about, or not discussed in-depth. 25% of participants pointed out groups that they thought were not represented in the discussion, such as younger people, service providers such as food bank staff, and mine workers. Lastly, none of the participants suggested improvements for the session.

Figure 3.1 - Feedback Form Results



Overall, participants provided positive feedback such as facilitators' performances and the inclusion of diverse communities in the discussion. For future contacts, 85% of participants would be interested in continuing the conversation at a later date, and to be contacted by I&E for future projects and activities.



Conclusions

In conclusion, the third community session highlighted the need for improving community infrastructure, fostering Hinton's growth and the interconnectedness between neighbouring communities. This session reinforced the second session's findings about the community's communication challenges and their keen interest in addressing this issue, driven by the desire for greater involvement in the community.

Several examples of enhancing accessibility through infrastructure improvements were mentioned, such as upgrading the hospital, improving the rec center, introducing new housing, and enhancing sidewalk access. Community growth remains a significant concern, particularly around issues of vacant, accessible, and affordable housing. The community also grapples with the departure of young people due to limited educational opportunities in Hinton. It was noted that seniors might also need to relocate in search of higher levels of care.

Despite these challenges, participants expressed enthusiasm for the community's potential growth and diversification, with less reliance on a single industry and more opportunities across various sectors. Finally, participants discussed the interconnectedness of various neighboring communities, emphasizing the frequent interaction between these areas for affordable goods, industry competition (like tourism), communal recreational infrastructure development, and healthcare services.

A significant 92% of participants already had familiarity with the discussed topics, although 13% pointed out the absence of green energy from the conversation. The feedback was generally positive, with a strong 85% of participants expressing interest in engaging in future dialogues.



4. Next Steps

Iron and Earth plans to share the knowledge gained from this community event with the community of Hinton and other communities across Canada. The discussions inspired by these sessions can potentially inspire future conversations, drive community based solutions, community advocacy points and inform the development of Iron and Earth programs tailored specifically to the needs and interests of the community. This being our third session in Hinton, we will wrap up this part of the communities program.

We will compile all final reports that summarize the needs and desires of Hinton residents and surrounding areas. These reports will be shared with our outreach network, key stakeholders, decision-makers, and published on our website for the benefit of all. Additionally, the communities team and other I&E programs will explore post-session opportunities resulting from these sessions. If you would like to learn more about the program's progress and the work that takes place after the sessions, please contact us at communities@ironandearth.org.



Appendix A

The following appendix contains the script that was used as a general guide by the facilitators for the Community Conversation conducted by Iron & Earth.

Script for Facilitating a Iron and Earth Session - Third Hinton Session

CONVERSATION TIME BREAKDOWN:

Session Introduction: 20 minutes

Breakout Group Setup: 5 minutes

Breakout Conversations: 60 minutes

Break: 10 minutes

Reporting Back: 5 minutes

Session Conclusion: 20 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 120 minutes

DOORS CLOSE TIME: 1:10pm

START TIME: 1:00 pm

END TIME: 3:00 pm

SETUP PERSON:

Set up presentation slides/theater screen

Setup microphone(s) and lighting

Have a facilitator in front doing headcount checking registered names and hand out registration forms if they haven't filled them, for those unregistered, provide registration form and letter of consent. Once we cap our numbers lead folks to fill up our sign up sheet

SESSION INTRODUCTION: 20 Minutes

Session Overview Introduction:

Welcome to the third Hinton Community Conversation. Today's conversation is being led by Iron & Earth.

[primary facilitator introduce themselves]

We want to acknowledge the Indigenous Peoples from this area, their traditions, cultures and ways of life.



For the rest of this introductory session, we'll talk a bit about Hinton and the issues it's facing, what we found in our first session and review some key ideas.

Then we'll be sorting you into breakout groups to talk through some questions related to environmental events we've been experiencing, diversification, and what we want to see in the community going forward. There is also pen and paper if you prefer to share your ideas in a written form.

Each group will have a facilitator. You'll be in those breakout groups for about 60 minutes.

Finally, we'll come back together for a quick wrap-up and aim to be done by 3pm.

If you haven't filled out our registration or consent forms please fill it and give it to one of our facilitators.

IMPORTANT: This is a space that welcomes diversity of opinions, we ask that these conversations are approached with mutual respect and care.

Privacy Policy:

We shared a letter of consent for you to sign. In it we explained the participation, reimbursement and confidentiality processes. From it:

We would like to highlight that we will be recording today's conversation, but the transcripts and documents collected will only be shared between Iron & Earth staff. After this process ends, the notes will stay with Iron & Earth. These notes will be used to produce our reports. However, your participation will remain anonymous.

IMPORTANT: We do want to include some quotes in the community and final reports, but they will have no name attached to them.

We also want to make sure that you know that you are free to leave at any point during this session. We truly appreciate your time and respect your privacy.

IMPORTANT: Lastly, we ask that you please do not record, or photograph the conversation.



Facilitator Introductions:

We have 2 other local facilitators with us today.
[Secondary facilitators please introduce yourselves]

Conversation Introduction:

Our community is experiencing:

Weather Events: extreme cold snaps, extreme heat waves, drought or extreme excess rain, mild/dry winters, pests (mountain pine beetle)

Since our session: extreme storm damage and Jasper wildfire (2022) and an intense wildfire season (2023), prolonged summer/hot fall

Industry fluctuations and changes

Our community also has strengths:

Hinton is a diverse economic community (Pulp/forestry/thermal coal/metallurgical coal/oil and gas/tourism), so a diverse economic market is not unfamiliar to this community,

Relevant Projects: LED street lights, TC Hydro power station, West Fraser's Lignin Plant, more EVs for sale, Par999's The Bliss of Hinton (Educational Hotel/Luxury Resort), Novus Earth's Latitude 53 Project

What residents are saying from our last session:

First session

They are thinking about extreme weather events, income security and community

Affordability

Need to be proactive

Diversification of industries is valuable in Hinton's future

Support needed for workers in transition of economies

Community should be included in the policy conversations

Second session

Rural Accessibility: access to essential services & affordability, particularly around housing costs and cost of living, were a big priority.

Communication: a lack of visibility about core services, where to get the resources people need, and a connection to local programs is lacking. Clearer dissemination and promotion of local offerings would benefit everyone.



Defining the Transition: residents felt that a transitioning economy was already under way and that understanding and prioritizing a new economic backbone for the town would help sustain the quality and way of life that they want from their town.

BREAKOUT CONVERSATIONS: 60 Minutes

Setting-up Breakout Groups: 5 minutes

[Participants should say their first names when they speak, so that they can be recorded. This is only for reference purposes, the name will not show in any of our results]

[Facilitators please remember to turn on recording once you're in the breakout group]

Question 1 20 Minutes

Rural Accessibility: Previously, participants discussed how living in a rural community has shaped their experiences accessing things like healthcare, education, housing and sustainability initiatives, such as building retrofits.

How can accessibility be enhanced in rural communities?

Question 2 20 Minutes

Communication: In our last session, participants expressed a sense that people can be isolated from each other in Hinton; they discussed a need for better communication about existing programs and support systems within the community.

How would you like to see community communication strengthened within the Hinton community?

Question 3 20 Minutes

Defining the Transition: In previous sessions, people we spoke to expressed that a diversifying economy was already under way within Hinton.

What kind of support does your community need to promote diversification that benefits your community?



BREAK: 10 MINUTES

Reporting back to the room: 5 minutes

CONCLUSION: 20 MINUTES

Desired outcomes and impacts of this project

We conduct three sessions within each community, this being the third for Hinton, we will be wrapping up this part of the program, completing the final reports and needs assessments. These reports will summarize the needs and desires of Hinton residents and will be shared with our outreach network, key stakeholders and decision-makers, and published on our website for everyone's benefit.

If you're interested in learning more about the program's progress and post-session work, please reach out to communities@ironandearth.org and one of our team members will be happy to provide an update. We are continuing our work in the community in the coming months, so stay tuned!

Please share your feedback on this conversation. Let us know if there's anything important we missed, anything you learned, or anything else you want to tell us!

[Share feedback forms and give time to fill them out]

Finally, we would like to remind everyone that all reimbursements are subject to a processing time of 10 business days.

On behalf of Iron & Earth, I'd like to thank you again for joining us. Have a wonderful rest of your day!

[SESSION END]

[Collect remaining registration and consent forms and Audio Recording Devices]