

## THE BUSINESS VITALITY INITIATIVE (BVI)

### Stimulating Entrepreneurship In Communities

Does your community encourage entrepreneurs? Is it strategic in spotting opportunities? Do youth have entrepreneurial role models that inspire them? What would it take to become more business friendly?

Communities that fail to ask and address these questions will have difficulty thriving in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The BVI is a unique assessment and action process designed to effectively address these issues. It measures the business friendliness of a community and then helps the community take action to build economic vitality.

### How the BVI Works

Through an engaging, quick, and cost-effective group process, the BVI analyzes the perceptions of community leaders, business people, and citizens on 100 key indicators – our unique Business Vitality “Index”<sup>1</sup> – that are known to affect business.

With the findings, presented visually in an easy-to-understand report, the community has a starting point to focus on workable change. The BVI team works with the community to set priorities and create a Community Business Action Plan to improve business friendliness and promote business growth.

## BENEFITS OF THE BVI

### Quick & cost effective

Once engaged, the community can be through the process in two three-hour sessions. The BVI report can be ready in as little as 3 weeks.

### Provides easy-to-read reports

Reports contain straightforward graphs, lists and recommendations. The community can see where it scores on each of the 100 indicators using CIEL’s unique Business Vitality “Index” in addition to how it views itself on a range of other important questions.

### Leads to action

The BVI’s unique Assess-Focus-Act process gets communities into action to improve business friendliness: 10 out of the first 11 BVI communities carried out actions within two years - a 90%+ success rate.

### Identifies significant issues

Perceptions on the key & most contentious business issues are identified in a non-confrontational, productive format.



*“The BVI gave us a great foundational document for economic development. Its greatest value, however, was the structured approach it offered the community with respect to identifying the strengths, weaknesses and priorities and then harnessing the community’s collective energy around using them.”*

**Norm Carruthers**  
CITY ADMINISTRATOR, CITY OF NELSON, BC

BVI



**Driven by the community**

The BVI does not impose the ideas of outside "experts" but holds a mirror up to the community. The community sets the priorities, based on its own perceptions and resources.

**Provides comparisons to other communities**

The BVI has a database of the results from similar communities to provide a reference for your community.

**Helps to leverage resources**

The BVI's inclusive process legitimizes community priorities, making it easier to access funding and get the whole community onside.

**WHAT COMMUNITIES HAVE DONE**

Strategies undertaken by BVI communities include:

- Developing a comprehensive economic development strategy
- Creating entrepreneurial solutions for youth
- Developing a downtown revitalization strategy
- Community re-branding
- Solving a "leakage" problem by creating a buy-local campaign
- Building community solutions to critical issues

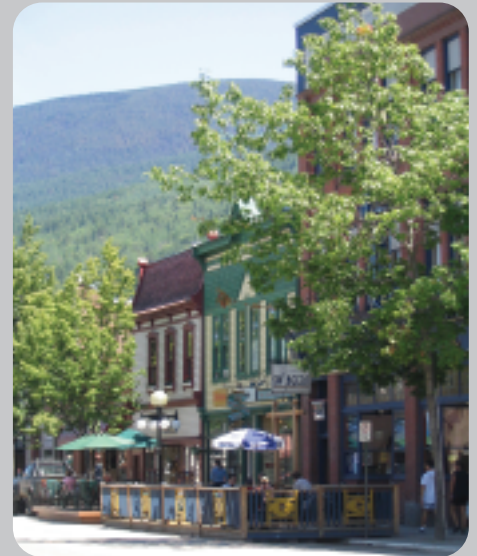
For more information or to see if your community qualifies for the BVI, please contact :

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 [within Canada between 8:30-4:30 PST]

**A Magical Ride**

Using the BVI, the community of Harrop-Procter, BC was able to strategically generate business – in this case, a huge order of witches' brooms made by local artisans from their community forest - for the launch of a Harry Potter novel. The small community was able to turn the story into a full page colour story in The Province (BC's provincial newspaper). The community also formed a business & artisans association and was able to build a strong community brand, one that incorporates their story-telling festival with their community forest, which produces eco-certified wood. Progress in building an entrepreneurial community is ongoing.

<sup>1</sup>CIEL's BVI indicators have generated interest from governments and organizations in Canada, the United States, the U.K., the Caribbean and Australia.



*"The BVI is extremely effective. I've seen the community focus and work toward achieving their action items, based on the BVI. This program is an excellent community capacity building tool."*

**Tracey Whiting**  
 COLLEGE OF THE ROCKIES, CRANBROOK BC

