



Centre for Innovative &  
Entrepreneurial Leadership

# Business Vitality Initiative (BVI)

Phase One Assessment Report

High Level, Alberta

June 2010



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## Executive Summary

### The BVI

The Business Vitality Initiative (BVI) helps communities to assess their capacity to work with and support entrepreneurs and to foster small business growth. The BVI measures the perceptions of community leaders, business people and citizens about the current business environment in their community and compares the results to an average of other communities to determine possible short and long-term actions the community can undertake to improve its business friendliness.

The High Level BVI was initiated by a partnership between the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and CIEL. The Rural Community Adaptation Program (RCAP) of Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development (ARD) funded it. The community sponsors were the Town of High Level and Community Futures Northwest Alberta, which selected the participants.

High Level is the twenty-second community in Canada that has taken part in the BVI, in addition to five communities in Australia.

This report summarizes the *Assessment Session* of the BVI in High Level, where a questionnaire and a focus group assessed the community's small business resources and potential on May 4, 2010. The phase 2 or *Focus and Action Session* will be open to the entire community with the purpose of setting priorities for improvement and jump-starting the community to action. That session will take place on Tuesday June 8<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm at Town Hall in High Level.

### Community Profile

In the *Assessment Session*, participants were asked to give three words to describe their community. The majority of responses were positive. According to many respondents, High Level is a *friendly, busy* and *vibrant* community, and there are also some concerns about the appearance and morale of the town. When participants were asked to identify key strengths not used to potential in the community, the top responses were *tourism, the people, and recreational opportunities*.

When participants were asked to name their predicted top economic drivers for the community in the next five years, the most common responses were *oil and gas, lumber/forestry, small business, and agriculture*. When asked about untapped business opportunities in the community, *value-added agriculture, tourism, and Tim Hortons* were the top three responses.

When asked for suggestions on how to improve High Level, the top four responses were *beautification of the town, fewer street people, and more retail businesses*.

## High Level Section Scores

High Level participants were asked to respond to a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions, all directly related to the concept of business vitality. The questions are divided into ten separate sections that focus on different aspects of business vitality. Section names and descriptions, as well as High Level section scores are as follows:

- A. Opportunities and Attitudes: 59 out of 100** - The ability of the community to recognize, act on, and follow through on available opportunities.
- B. Quality of Life: 48 out of 100** - The ability of the community to attract & retain businesses & residents, especially those who are young, skilled workers.
- C. Education and Training: 46 out of 100** – The ability of a community to develop entrepreneurship skills & attitudes in the non-business population, and to upgrade skills in the business community to remain competitive in larger markets.
- D. Innovation: 46 out of 100** – The ability of a community and its residents to think of and develop new ideas, adapt to changes, recognize unusual and new opportunities and technologies, and share ideas with like-minded people.
- E. Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking: 46 out of 100** - The capacity of a community to take action on an idea or opportunity as a whole group, with good leadership, effective teamwork, and clear communication.
- F. Role of Government and Organizations: 55 out of 100** – The ability of local governments and other organizations to work with business to design processes and programs that make it as easy as possible to start or expand a business.
- G. Capital and Funding: 41 out of 100** – The ability of the community to financially support entrepreneurs by ensuring access to capital and by educating businesses about financial management and supports.
- H. Infrastructure and Business Services: 53 out of 100** – The ability to provide high quality support services and infrastructure to business at reasonable costs, allowing businesses to be as competitive as possible.
- I. Communication and Connectivity: 59 out of 100** - The ability of businesses to connect with each other and with outside markets.
- J. Markets and Marketing: 41 out of 100** – The ability of business to capture and expand markets locally, regionally, and outside the region, thus keeping and building local wealth.

The average score for all sections for High Level was **50 out of 100**. The average for the 22 communities that have undertaken the BVI is 54.

## Recurring Themes

The following recurring themes were identified throughout the BVI, highlighting areas for the community to potentially focus action on. The themes can be used as a strength or solid base from which to work on the things that need improvement.

◆ Oil/ gas & lumber anticipated to remain key economic drivers
◆ Young community with many business opportunities for those willing to hustle
◆ Labour issues and availability limit growth & expansion
◆ Downtown beautification(including lower highway) needed
◆ Communication between & amongst Town, Chamber, businesses, non-government organizations could be improved
◆ Not many opportunities – beyond sports – to engage young people in the community
◆ Transient nature of community and remoteness provide extra challenges (e.g. generating community spirit/volunteers, more expensive goods due to shipping costs)

## Possible Courses of Action

The following are some possible courses of action that the community could undertake to improve its business friendliness. They are derived from the responses to the focus groups and questionnaire.

**Table 1: Recommendations – Possible Short Term Actions (0-12 Months)**

<b>Possible Short Term Actions (actions completed in less than 12 months)</b> (The possible actions are based upon participant responses to the survey and focus groups . Each action notes the corresponding BVI questions)	
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Volunteer recruitment (“Beyond the same 10 people”) (Section A, Improvements)</li> <li>▪ ‘Buy Local’ Initiative (Focus Groups, Section J)</li> <li>▪ Youth &amp; young adult opportunity identification session(s) to identify recreational, educational, and business opportunities (Section A, Themes)</li> <li>▪ Specific service skills upgrading programs to improve front line service (Focus Groups, Sections G, A)</li> <li>▪ More basic business training (Business start-up, financing, accounting, etc.) (Sections G, A)</li> </ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Downtown beautification initiative (e.g. building appearances, filling vacant buildings/lots, lower highway through town) (Section A, Improvements)</li> <li>▪ Community brand to differentiate, promote town ( tourism, physician</li> </ul>

	<p>recruitment, etc. – consider assets like First Nations, Vegas theme, Northern Lights, Gateway to NWT, etc.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Publish/promote unfilled niches (e.g. Tim Horton’s, ladies clothing, Canadian Tire, business service centre, etc.) (Opportunities)</li> <li>▪ More promotion of local businesses in local media (awards, features, profiles of start-ups, etc.) (Section A)</li> </ul>
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A signature festival or special event (Improvements)</li> <li>▪ “What’s happening?” – Communications initiative to increase communication effectiveness of business to business, Chamber, Town, NGOs, to citizens (Improvements, Sections D &amp; I)</li> </ul>
Admin., Research, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Investigate EDO or economic development function to promote, attract, etc. (Focus Groups)</li> <li>▪ Regional tourism opportunity identification to objectively examine assets (like First Nations, Vegas theme, Northern Lights, Gateway to NWT, etc.) (Improvements)</li> <li>▪ Research/assess value-added agriculture opportunities (Opportunities)</li> </ul>

**Table 2: Recommendations – Possible Long Term Actions (12+ Months)**

<b>Possible Long Term Actions (actions taking more than 12 months to complete)</b>	
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Volunteer recruitment strategy (Focus Groups)</li> <li>▪ Buy Local Program (Focus Groups)</li> <li>▪ Skills training &amp; education strategy and ongoing initiatives (e.g. more localized training for trades, etc.) (Section C)</li> </ul>
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Downtown beautification strategy (Improvements, Focus Groups, Section A)</li> <li>▪ Cultural event strategy (B3)</li> <li>▪ Physician incentives and recruitment (Section B)</li> <li>▪ Identify &amp; package winter recreation activities (Improvements)</li> </ul>
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strategy to get youth/young adults involved in building community &amp; community spirit ((Section C)</li> <li>▪ Broad community/regional leadership program beyond the elected representatives to build capacity/ links/ collaboration with Town, County, business, NGOs, First Nations (Improvements, Section E)</li> </ul>

<p>Research, Admin. and Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Performing arts/cultural centre &amp; museum feasibility study (Section B)</li> <li>▪ Research co-gen potential (Improvements)</li> <li>▪ Sidewalk/paving strategy/plan (Section I)</li> <li>▪ Research regional tourism strategy (Opportunities)</li> </ul>
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## 1.0 Introduction

The Business Vitality Initiative (BVI) helps communities to assess their capacity to work with and support entrepreneurs and to foster small business growth. The BVI measures the perceptions of community leaders, business people and citizens about the current business environment in their community and compares the results to an average of other communities to determine possible short and long-term actions the community can undertake to improve its business friendliness.

The High Level BVI was initiated by a partnership between the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and CIEL. The Rural Community Adaptation Program (RCAP) of the Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development (ARD) funded it. The community sponsors were Community Futures Northwest Alberta and the Town of High Level, whose staff coordinated the project.

On May 4, 2010, twenty people attended the Phase 1 or *Assessment Session* of the BVI in High Level. Twenty-five people filled out the BVI questionnaire.

High Level is the twenty-second community in Canada that has taken part in the BVI, in addition to five communities in Australia.

The second session of the BVI, the *Focus and Action Session*, will take place on Tuesday June 8<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm at Town Hall in High Level. Everyone in the community will be invited. At that meeting, the findings contained in this report will be presented and the participants will then set priorities for action. In the months following that process, the community sponsors will be available to assist the community in locating resources to carry out the identified actions.

### 1.1 How the Business Vitality Initiative Works

The BVI process surveys community members about a wide range of topics related to business vitality. The community sponsors, which typically include city councils and economic development offices, are encouraged to sample communities at certain ratios: 50% business people, 25% local leaders, and 25% citizens representing a wide range of interests, ages, and perspectives in the community. Upon selection, these participants are asked to attend a BVI focus

group session (the *Assessment Session*), which typically takes place over two and a half hours on a weekday evening.

A typical BVI Assessment Session begins with an introduction to the BVI process and an introduction of session participants and facilitators. In order to provide some structure for the BVI process and results, participants are then asked to discuss and define the geographical boundaries of their community. This boundary may be just a town’s boundaries or it also may encompass nearby surrounding communities that may rely on or are integrated into the central community.

The completion of the BVI questionnaire is the next step in the facilitation process. The first section collects information relating to both the participant and the community, and asks participants to provide their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the community.

The second section of the questionnaire is comprised of 60 multi-choice and short answer questions in ten separate sections (Table 3).

**Table 3: BVI Evaluation Sections**

A. Opportunities and Attitudes
B. Quality of Life
C. Education and Training
D. Innovation
E. Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking
F. Role of Government and Organizations
G. Capital and Funding
H. Infrastructure and Business Services
I. Communication and Connectivity
J. Markets and Marketing

A range of answers are available to the participant for each question (*completely agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, and completely disagree*), and each answer receives a different score. If all participants completely agreed with a question, the question would receive a score of 100. Alternately, if all participants completely disagreed with the question, the overall question score would be zero. In the case of *neither agree nor disagree*, if all participants answered a question with this option, the question score would be 50.

CIEL weights each question, subsection, and section according to its relative importance in terms of business vitality.

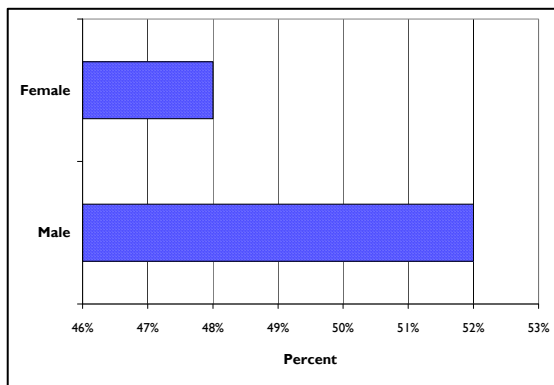
In addition to the questionnaire portion of the BVI, focus groups in High Level discussed the factors that make the community a good place to do business and improvements that could be made in order to improve business vitality.

CIEL then takes the results of the focus groups and the data provided by the BVI questionnaire to produce an analysis such as the one contained in this report.

## 2.0 Community Profile and Focus Group Results

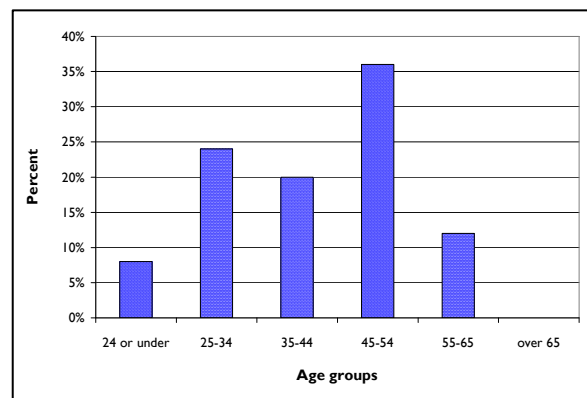
### 2.1 BVI Focus Group Respondent Profile

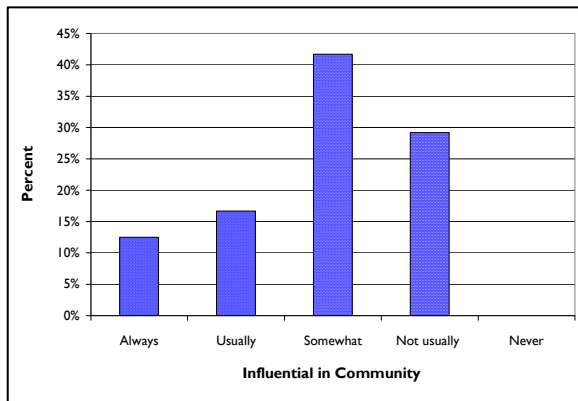
The first part of the BVI questionnaire profiles the participants. The results for the 25 High Level participants are shown follow.



- 52% of High Level BVI participants were male, and 48% were female.

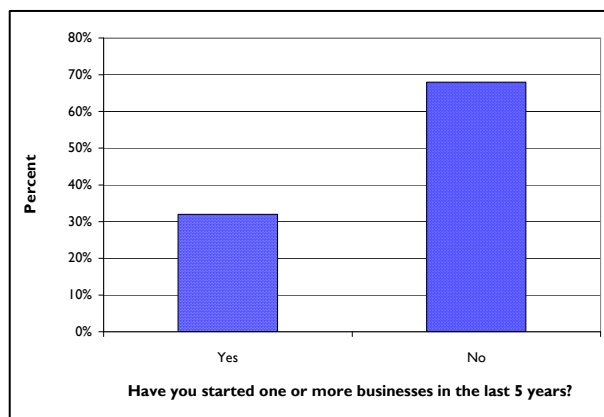
- 56% of the participants were in the 35-54 age range.





- 70% of participants said they were influential in the community. No participants said they are never influential.

- More than 90% of participants stated that they felt they are a businessperson or entrepreneur in some way.



- 32% of participants stated that they have started at least one business in the last 5 years.

## 2.2 Focus Group Results

The focus groups on April 28 in High Level were asked two questions:

1. What are the things that make this community a good place in which to do business?
2. What are the things (within the community’s control) that can be improved to help businesses in your community?

Table 4 shows the responses to Question 1. Similar answers are aggregated in the “count” column.

**Table 4: Focus Group Question 1**

▪ Isolated community with a large regional pop.
▪ Centre with regional facilities (i.e. pool, airport, arena, ball diamonds)
▪ Natural resources (oil/gas, forestry)
▪ Limited competition
▪ Geographical location of town: major hwy (N,W, E, S)
▪ Local chamber of commerce
▪ Young community
▪ Town of HL supports new business
▪ Community Futures
▪ Opportunities
▪ Friendly community
▪ Resources: natural and labour
▪ Supported by the local community as well as the transient community
▪ Friendly community
▪ Acknowledgement
▪ Small town environment
▪ Support of business community
▪ Availability of services
▪ Education: the college, opportunities
▪ Providing opportunity (stepping stone)
▪ Customer service
▪ Knowledgeable
▪ Isolation
▪ Large trading area
▪ Recreation opportunities: fishing, hunting
▪ Northern lights
▪ Local talent/art

▪ Tourism: proximity to NWT
▪ Town Infrastructure
▪ Trust
▪ Safety

Table 5 shows the responses to Question 2.

**Table 5: Focus Group Question 2**

▪ Economic Dev. Officer i.e. sales person
▪ Start-up incentives (local, provincial, federal)
▪ Lack of labour (qualified or non qualified)
▪ Quality of life: health, recreation, education, professional training, vagrancy, transportation, culture
▪ Technology: shortage eg internet speed; trade shows bus forums
▪ Arts
▪ NO signature event! To draw in people, theme or brand
▪ Upgrading infrastructure: small airport, aging facilities
▪ Continuing education
▪ Chamber of commerce: welcoming/encouraging new business; reach out to new bus.; promote existing bus
▪ Shopping local: incentives/ideas
▪ Signage: what's here/ street maps of businesses
▪ Beautification/cleanliness
▪ Communication--lack of communication of events everyone can benefit from
▪ More town advertising/endorsements for the local businesses
▪ Volunteer/recruitment incentives
▪ Knowledge of local groups: industry, agriculture, culture
▪ Safety concerns: vandalism, break-ins, theft, vagrancy
▪ More Neon Signs: "Vegas of the North"
▪ Support youth: arts, education, sports/recreation
▪ Business presentation: cleaning sidewalks, improve presentation
▪ Improving the downtown
▪ Better service: make people want to come back to the bus.
▪ Better produce in town
▪ Educate the public that the prices of products here are relatively similar to bigger towns
▪ Businesses come together to create an identity. Differentiate the town
▪ Regular updates of events eg: email sent to residents who sign-up; sign board in town

## 2.3 Community Profile Results

The BVI questionnaire includes a community profile consisting of five questions:

- Describe your community in three words
- What are the two greatest assets in your community not used to potential?
- What are the expected top two economic drivers of the economy in your community in the next 5 years?
- What is a specific untapped community, business or economic development opportunity for the area?
- What are the top things that could improve your community?

For each question, a table of the answers is presented below.

### 2.3.1 Describing High Level in Three Words

There were 64 individual responses to the community profile question that asks for three words or phrases that best describe High Level. Of those, 21 were considered to be positive, 26 were neutral, and 17 were considered negative, resulting in a 1.25:1 positive to negative ratio.

**Table 6: Describing High Level in Three Words**

Positive		Neutral		Negative	
Friendly	9	Small	5	Dirty	4
Busy	2	Young	5	Transient	4
Vibrant	2	Remote	4	Cold	2
Entrepreneurial	1	Isolated	3	Depressed	1
Home	1	Blue collar	1	Dysfunctional	1
Opportunity	1	Conservative	1	No identity	1
Strong future	1	Far	1	Lazy	1
Unique	1	Old	1	Stagnant economy	1
Viable	1	Work-centred	1	Unattractive	1
Warm	1	Quiet	1	Uninspired	1
Youthful	1	Resource based	1		
		Rural	1		
		Industrial	1		

]

### 2.3.2 Strengths And Assets Not Used To Potential In High Level

Respondents were asked to give two answers to the question, “What are the two greatest assets in your community not used to potential?”

**Table 7: Top Strengths and Assets of High Level**

	Count
Tourism potential	5
The people	3
Recreational opportunities	2
Outdoors, wilderness	2
Natural resources	2
Chamber of Commerce	2
Young transient people	1
Wonderful long summer hours of daylight	1
The various cultural groups	1
Surrounding wood --aspen especially	1
Majority are age 25-34	1
Park	1
Outdoors winter or summer)	1
OSB plant	1
Oil/gas	1
Manpower (too many people but less want to work)	1
Location (transportation hub)	1
Huge resource for "co-gen" power	1
Hardworking, ambitious people	1
Forest resource	1
First nations market	1
Endless possibilities for business	1
Eco tourism	1
Bylaw officers	1
Arena	1
Affordable housing compared to the cities	1
1st nations entrepreneurial abilities	1
Scenery	1

### 2.3.3 Economic Drivers In High Level

Participants were asked to give two answers to the question, “What are the expected top two economic drivers of the economy in your community in the next 5 years?”

**Table 8: Future Economic Drivers in High Level**

	Count
Oil/gas	18
Lumber/forest industry	17
Small businesses	2
Agriculture	2
Transportation	1
Tourism	1
Biomass fuel project	1
Smart centres	1
Mascoma biorefinery	1
Industry	1
Footner re-opening	1
Extractors of natural resources	1
Expansion of commercial property on south side	1
Consumer exhibitions	1

#### 2.3.4 Untapped Opportunities In High Level

Participants were asked to give two answers to the question, “What is a specific untapped community, business or economic development opportunity for the area?”

**Table 9: Top Untapped Opportunities in High Level**

Value-added agricultural	4
Tourism	3
Tim Hortons	3
Value-added forestry	2
Small business potential	2
Manufacturing	2
Youth	1
Aboriginal Culture (4 distinct groups)	1
Shops, dining	1
Restaurant Franchise (mid level)	1
Regional tours: oil & gas; forestry; 1st Nations	1
Recreation i.e. more theatre, arcade, etc.	1
Northern lights non aboriginal cultural centre (Mennonite)	1
Push to have the OSB plant open again	1

Native crafts	1
Ladies shopping-clothes, shoes etc.	1
Family activity facility	1
Clothing store--something with higher end clothes	1
Chamber of Commerce	1
Canadian Tire	1
Business support centre: copying, comp. services, web design/service	1
Box stores	1
Bio-fuel	1
Bigger brand convenience stores	1
Additional rec. facility. for youth	1

### 2.3.5 Improvements to High Level

Participants were asked to give two answers to the question, “What are the top things that could improve your community?”

**Table 10: Improving High Level**

	Count
Downtown beautification and revitalization	9
Fewer street people, transient people	5
Festivals, active cultural scene	4
More retail	3
More businesses	3
Recreation and leisure opportunities/ facilities	2
Sporting events	1
New activities or projects done by the town	1
Networking opportunities	1
More community development, greater individual investment	1
Local gov't promoting rather than hindering business	1
Invitations sent to more well-known business (franchises)	1
Healthy relationships--town, business	1
Frequent consumer exhibitions trade shows	1
Clean-up lower highway through town	1
Buy local program to keep money in town	1
Business & local gov't & non-profit communication	1
Arts facility	1

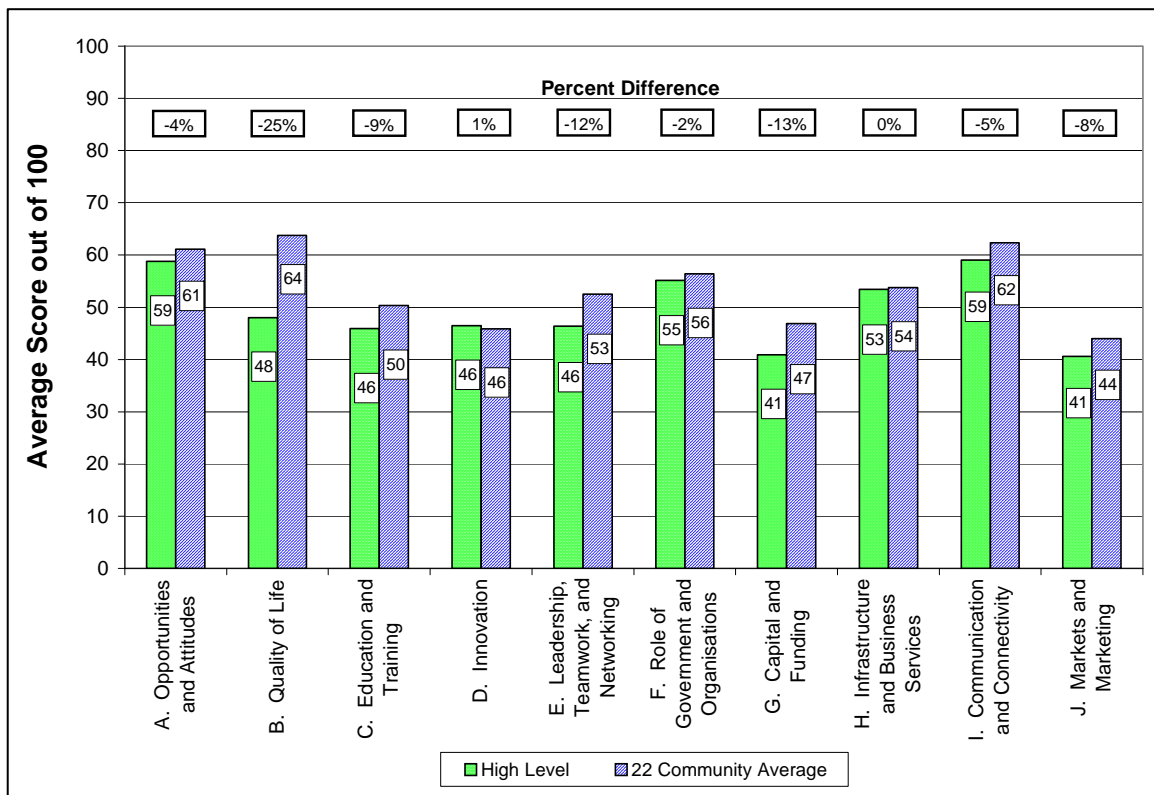
Advertising activities	1
Winter recreation	1

### 3.0 Section Scores

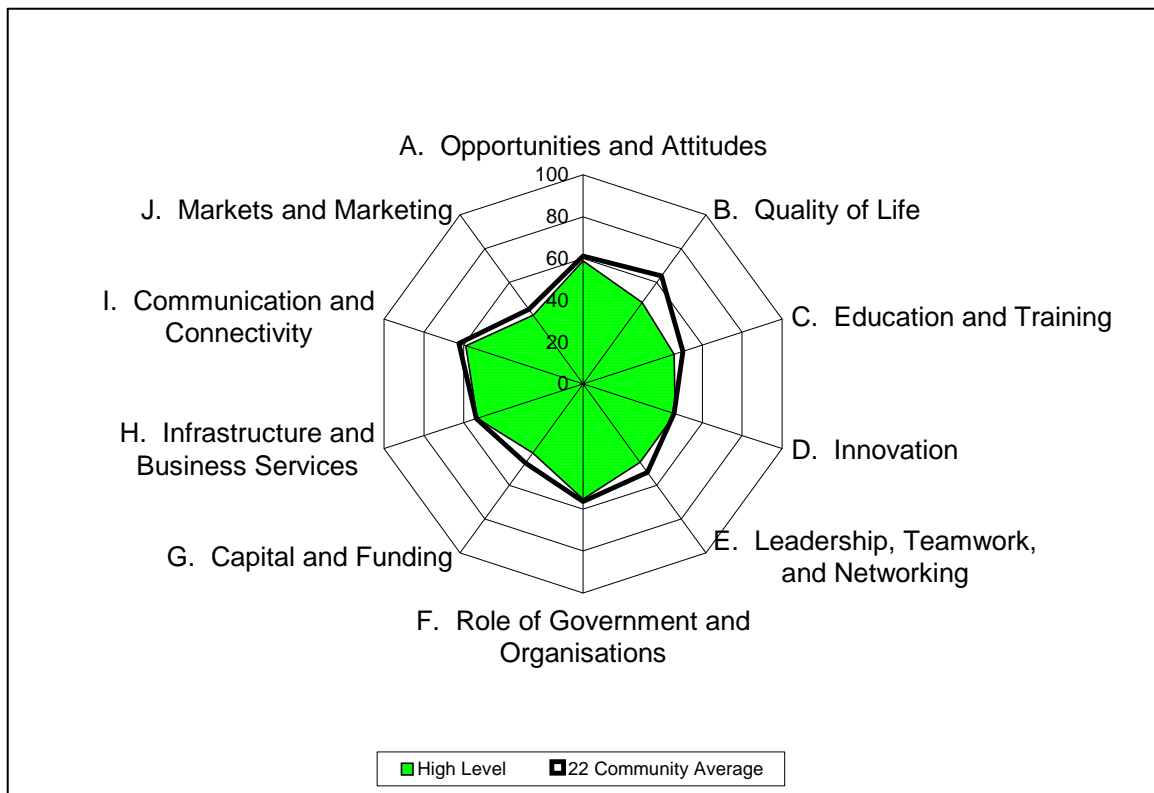
Overall, High Level had a full survey score of 50 out of 100, which is 8% below the 22-community average of 54.

The BVI section results as shown in figures 1 and 2 show that particular strengths for High Level are its two highest scores in the *Opportunities and Attitudes* and the *Communications and Connectivity* sections.

The lowest scoring sections of the survey are *Capital and Funding* and *Markets and Marketing*.



**Figure 1: High Level and 22-community Average Section Scores**



**Figure 2: High Level and 22-community Average Section Scores**

### 31. Individual Section Scores

The remainder of this report looks at each of the ten sections of the High Level BVI individually, including:

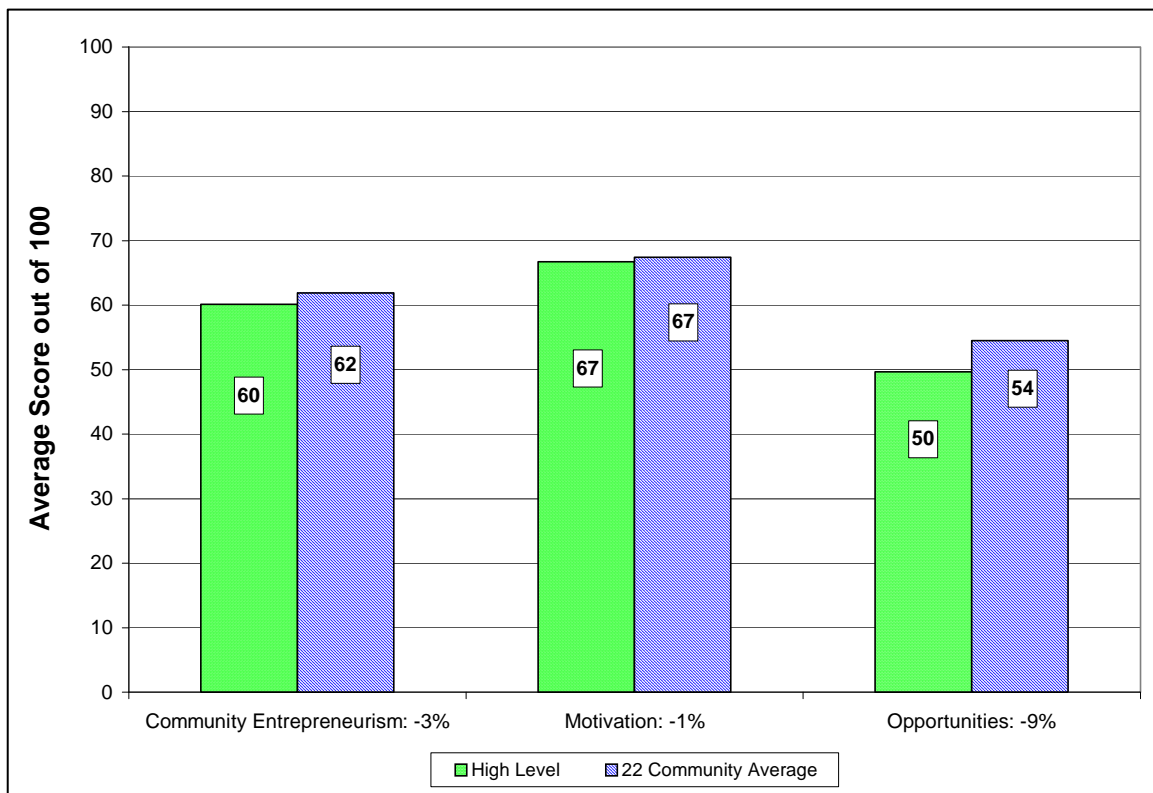
- a graph showing the subsection results for each section, and the deviation of those results from the 22-community average.
- a list of all questions in each section showing the score for High Level compared with the average score for the 22 communities. That table has the highest scoring question in relation to the 22-community average highlighted in green, and the lowest in red.
- a graph indicating the distribution of answers within each question.
- a summary of the strengths and improvements as stated by the survey participants.

### 3.2 Section A: Opportunities and Attitudes (59 out of 100)

- 
**The ability of the community to recognize, act upon, and follow through on available opportunities.**

The *Opportunities and Attitudes* section was the highest-ranking section of the BVI questionnaire in High Level. The list of ten highest-scoring questions for High level listed in Appendix A contains three questions from this section: A2 (creative thinking), A6 (area is facing a significant opportunity), and A4 (successful businesses want to remain) which was the highest scoring question of the entire survey for High Level.

Figure 3 and Table 11 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.



**Figure 3: Opportunities and Attitudes Subsection Scores**

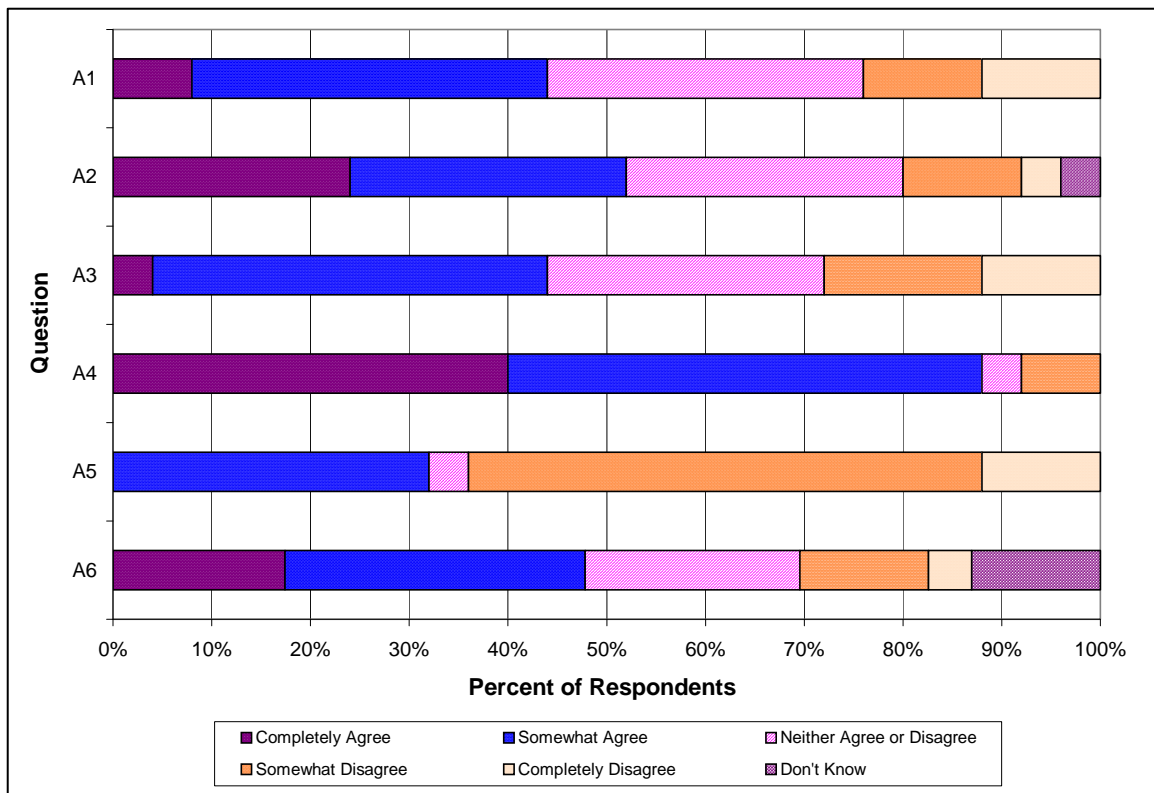
- The 'Motivation' subsection scored highest (67 out of 100).

- With a score of 50, the “Opportunities’ subsection scored lowest in the section, 9% below the 22-community average.

**Table 11: Opportunities and Attitudes-- Individual Question Scores**

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 22-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for High Level are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
<b>Community Entrepreneurism</b>	1. Entrepreneurial ventures and business creation are encouraged and supported by citizens and local governments.	54	57	-5%
	2. Individuals are capable of thinking creatively and developing unconventional solutions and innovative business opportunities.	65	65	-1%
<b>Motivation</b>	3. Citizens are motivated to learn new skills and to develop existing ones.	52	51	2%
	4. Successful businesses want to remain in the area.	<b>80</b>	82	-3%
<b>Opportunities</b>	5. There are employees available to meet business needs.	<b>39</b>	49	-21%
	6. The area is facing a significant economic opportunity.	63	61	3%
<b>Section Score</b>		<b>59</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>-4%</b>



**Figure 4: Opportunities and Attitudes-- Question Response Distribution**

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** A4 (successful businesses want to remain) at 88%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** A5 (employees available) at 32%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** A6 (significant opportunity) at 14%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** none

**Table 12: Opportunities and Attitudes-- Improvements**

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of opportunities and attitudes.

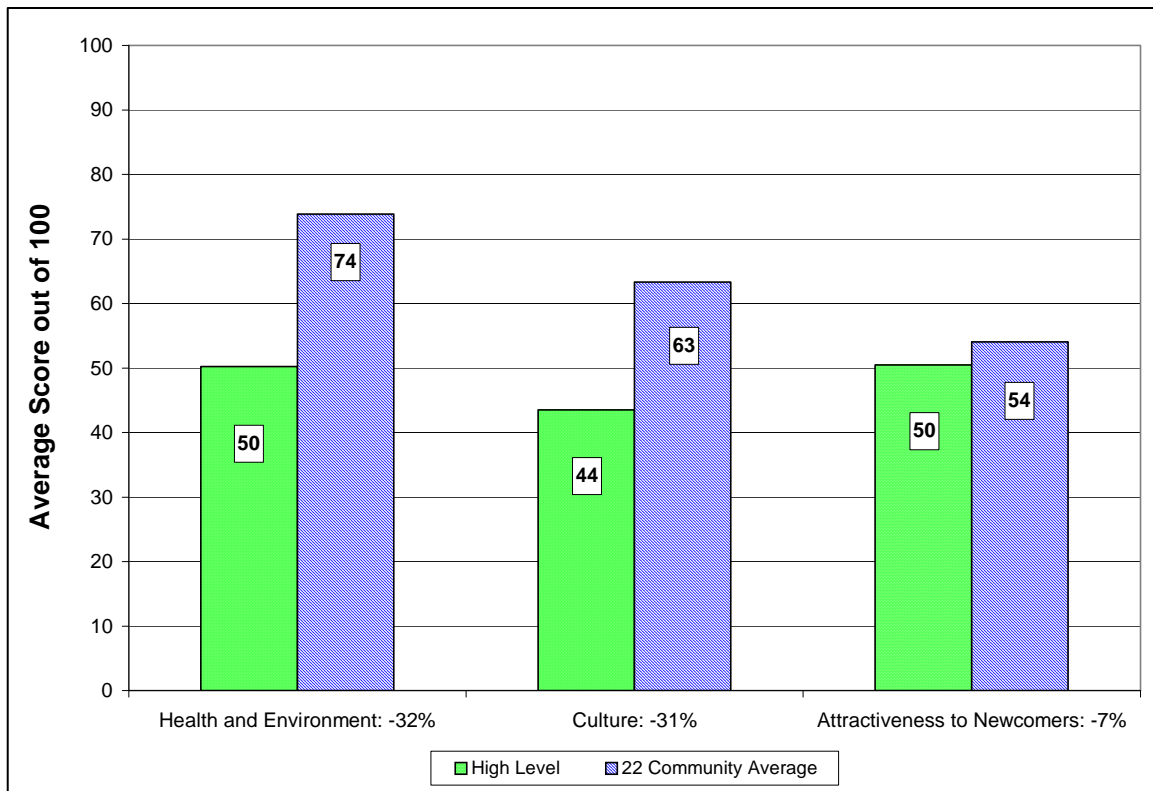
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clean-up downtown, buildings appearance &amp; more parking.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attract more small business which would bring more people to town &amp; more money to be spent in the community. Locals would spend more here rather than going out.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More promo of small business start-ups.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not sure--qualified tradespeople are in shortage. We have to train our own, but this is not new! We've been involved with RAPP &amp; apprenticeship training for many years.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Financial &amp; development support.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Opportunities that are available need to be known better by the community. I don't think businesses know of all the opportunities. So they can't take advantage of them. Attitudes can be improved by letting members of the community know what is happening.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage younger people (25- 34) to invest through community support.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More (free) advertising for businesses should be done by town so the businesses earn more and so pay more to employees. (They will get more permanent employees that way.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Availability of employees is a big issue; small businesses could grow but no one want to expand due to labour issues</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engage the community; find creative ways to get people involved; support our youth/provide healthy opportunities promote sports education &amp; arts; promote the natural environment; northern lights, x-country skiing, snowmobiling etc</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More things for youth. Cleaner looking town.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Town has to be more open to all business. Not against them; downtown core needs to be cleaned up</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Advertise more, promote how wonderful HL is, and allow people to try new ventures without having to jump through lots of hoops.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a perceived divide between longer term residents and newer community members. This has lessened in the past 2 - 3 yrs. With the slowing economy which has slowed transience but when the region rebounds the comm. should continue to work together and not divide.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stronger business presence on town council and more cooperative attitudes with town admin.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The community needs to support the businesses in the community. They are the one's that can make the community grow. Create jobs for youth; teach them how to work in retail.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More communication</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clean-up downtown, buildings appearance &amp; more parking</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attract more small business which would bring more people to town &amp; more money to be spent in the comm. Locals would spend more here rather than going out.</li> </ul>

### 3.3 Section B: Quality of Life (48 out of 100)

- 
**The ability of the community to attract & retain businesses & residents, especially those who are young, skilled workers.**

*Quality of Life* was the fifth-highest ranking section for High Level. Question B3 (high quality cultural events) topped the list of questions with the largest negative difference from the community average, at minus 57% (see Appendix D). This question was the third-lowest scoring question for High Level (see Appendix B).

Figure 5 and Table 13 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.



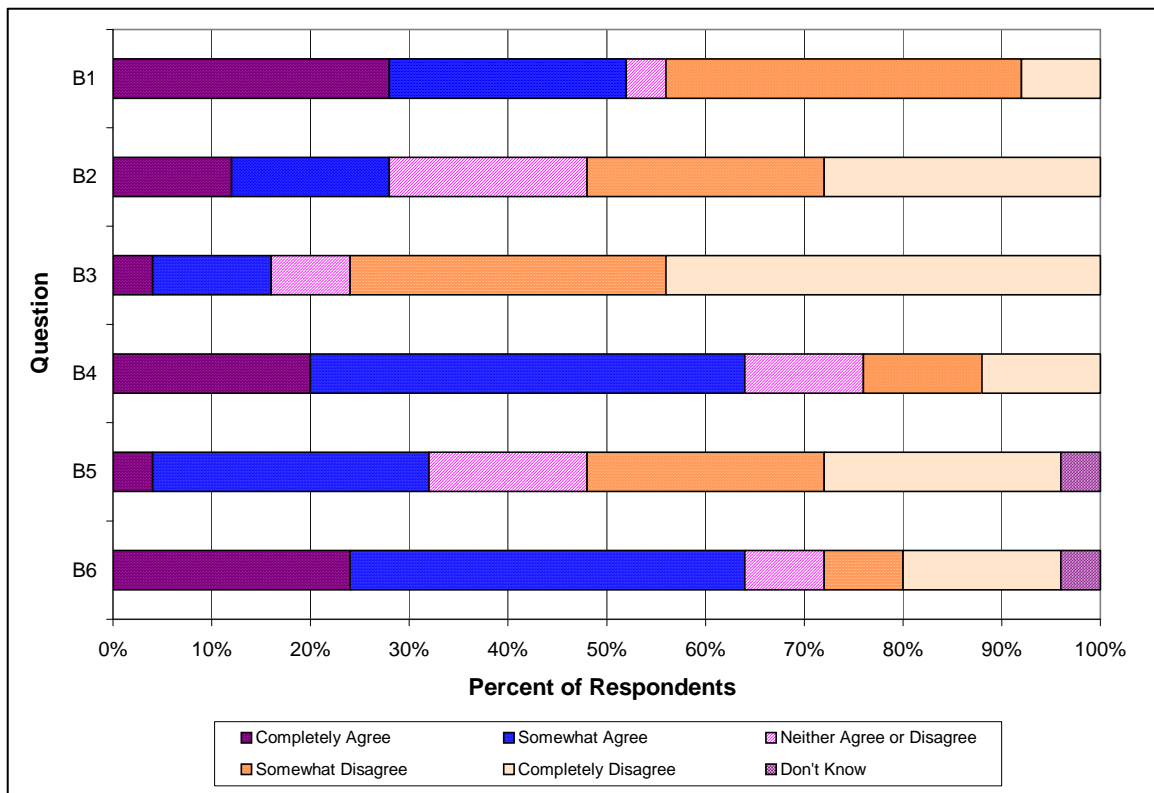
**Figure 5: Quality of Life Subsection Scores**

- The 'Health and Environment' and 'Attractiveness to Newcomers' subsection scored highest.
- The lowest scoring subsection, 'Culture,' had a score of 44 (31% below the 22-community average).

**Table 13: Quality of Life-- Individual Question Scores**

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 22-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for High Level are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
<b>Health and Environment</b>	1. A quality health care facility is accessible, well serviced and within a reasonable distance.	57	69	-17%
	2. There are no significant environmental pollution issues here.	40	81	-51%
<b>Culture</b>	3. There are frequent high quality cultural events (e.g. festivals, concerts) catering to a range of ages.	<b>25</b>	58	-57%
	4. There are plentiful and varying opportunities for involvement (e.g. arts, athletics, politics, church groups).	62	69	-10%
<b>Attractiveness to Newcomers</b>	5. Young adults (25-34) consider the area to be a desirable place to live.	41	50	-18%
	6. Quality residential accommodation is available and affordable.	<b>63</b>	60	5%
<b>Section Score</b>		<b>48</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>-25%</b>



**Figure 6: Quality of Life-- Question Response Distribution**

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** B4 (opportunities for involvement) at 64%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** B3 (cultural events). at 16%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** none significant
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** B1 (quality health care facility)

**Table 14: Quality of Life— Improvements**

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of quality of life.

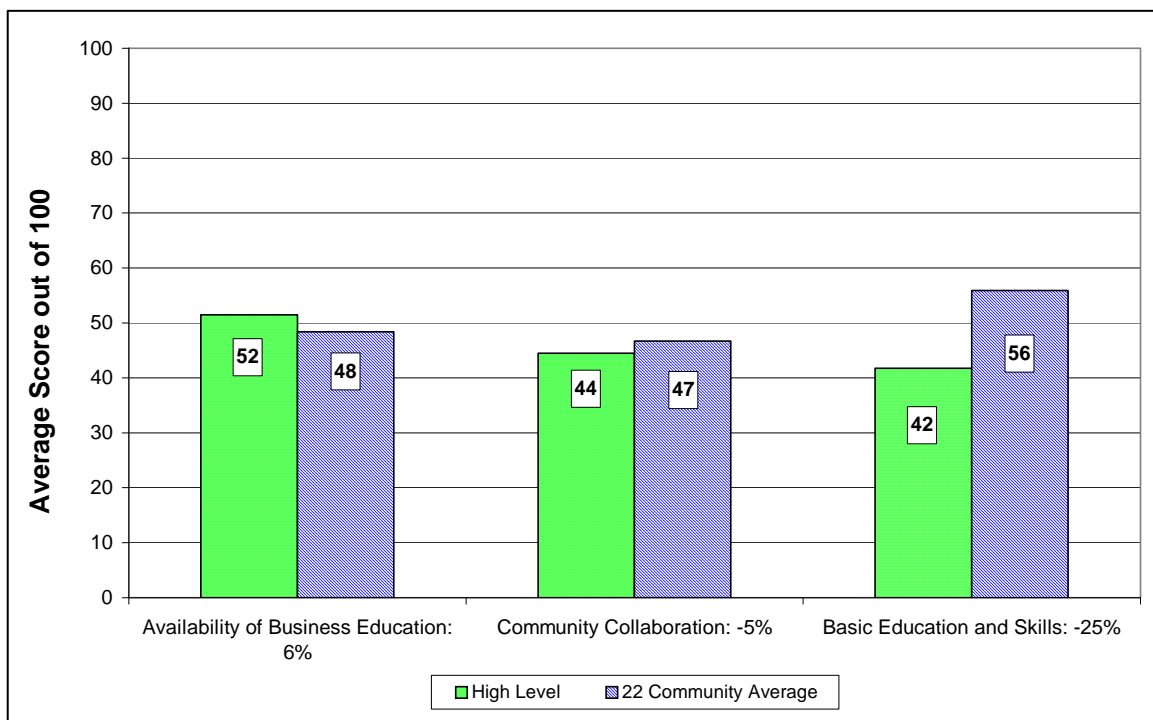
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is no facility available for performing arts. This town desperately needs a community centre.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attract more small business &amp; a couple of large plants. Improve rec. Facility. Theatre for movies and performing arts.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Although we have a wonderful facility, staffing of doctors is a constant challenge. The problem is in retraining the younger (18-24) persons.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve health care service. Great facility. Poorly staffed (numbers of employees not quality)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are quite a few activities for young adults but mostly sports activities. There is opportunity to expand.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More rec. Opportunities. More community building --a park was built last year and a record number of volunteers showed up--projects such as that improve sense of community.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The town needs to get active and encourage volunteers.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better air quality</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We need town council has to provide incentives for doctors to come; more cultural events need to take place; we need a movie theatre; need more activities that do not involve alcohol; the teepee burner needs to be shut down</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Way more cultural events are needed: speakers, festivals. Our emphasis almost entirely on sports.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have more things for the "average" person to do rather than just drinking establishments. Sports is strong but what if you're not a sports person</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance/arena; no arts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Health care is a major concern especially to young couples starting a family. @ adults may be willing to do without access to health care professionals) but are less willing to make their children do without.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Remove TOLKO burner; Stronger efforts to keep town clean; better access to health care.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The youth always complain that there is nothing to do in this town. We have lots to do but the youth are different now a days. Stay inside on comps., don't get involved in outside sports, volunteering etc</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The town's population has a majority unde the age of 30. There is a lack of diverse sports or recreational groups for these people. Especially without children.</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Section C: Education and Training (46 out of 100)

- ◆ **The ability to develop entrepreneurship skills & attitudes in non-business population, and to upgrade skills in the business community in order to remain competitive in larger markets.**

The *Education and Training* section scored sixth out of the ten sections of the survey. Question C5 (availability of skilled labour) scored 37% below the community average and was the lowest-scoring question overall for High Level (see Appendix B).

Figure 7 and Table 15 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.



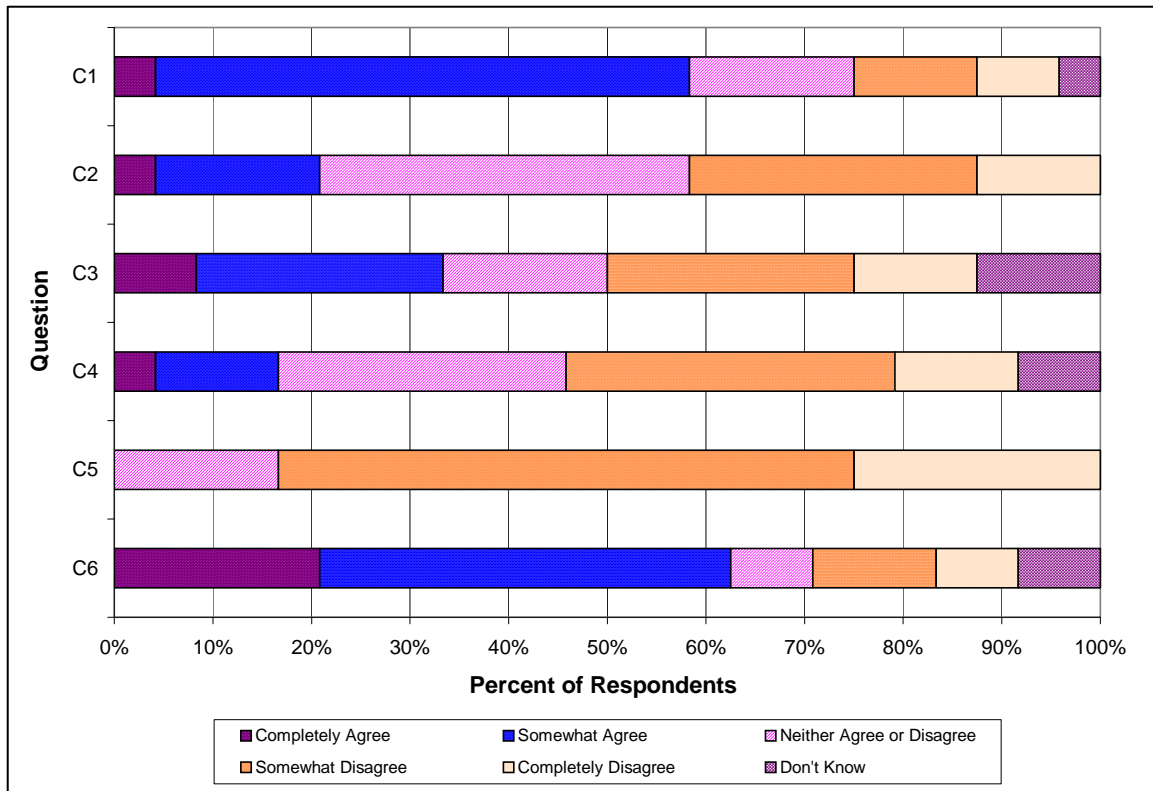
**Figure 7: Education and Training Subsection Scores**

- The 'Availability of Business Education' subsection was the highest scoring subsection, 6% above the 22-community average.
- The 'Basic Education and Skills' subsection was the lowest scoring subsection with a score of 42 (25% below average).

**Table 15: Education and Training-- Individual Question Scores**

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 22-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for High Level are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
Availability of Business Education	1. Business skills training is available (e.g. business plan development, marketing, accounting, etc.).	59	54	10%
	2. Other business education is available in the area (e.g. personal development, professional forums, etc.).	43	42	2%
Community Collaboration	3. Business mentors and/or role models are available in the area.	48	50	-5%
	4. The education and business communities work together to provide convenient training for businesses.	40	41	-4%
Basic Education and Skills	5. A pool of skilled labour is available to local businesses in the area.	<b>23</b>	37	-37%
	6. There are quality elementary and secondary schools in the area.	<b>65</b>	79	-18%
<b>Section Score</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>-9%</b>



**Figure 8: Education and Training Question Response Distribution**


- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** C6 (quality of schools) at 62%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** C5 (pool of skilled labour) at 0%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** C3 (mentorship) at 12%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** C3 (mentorship).

**Table 16: Education and Training-- Strengths and Improvements**

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of education and training.

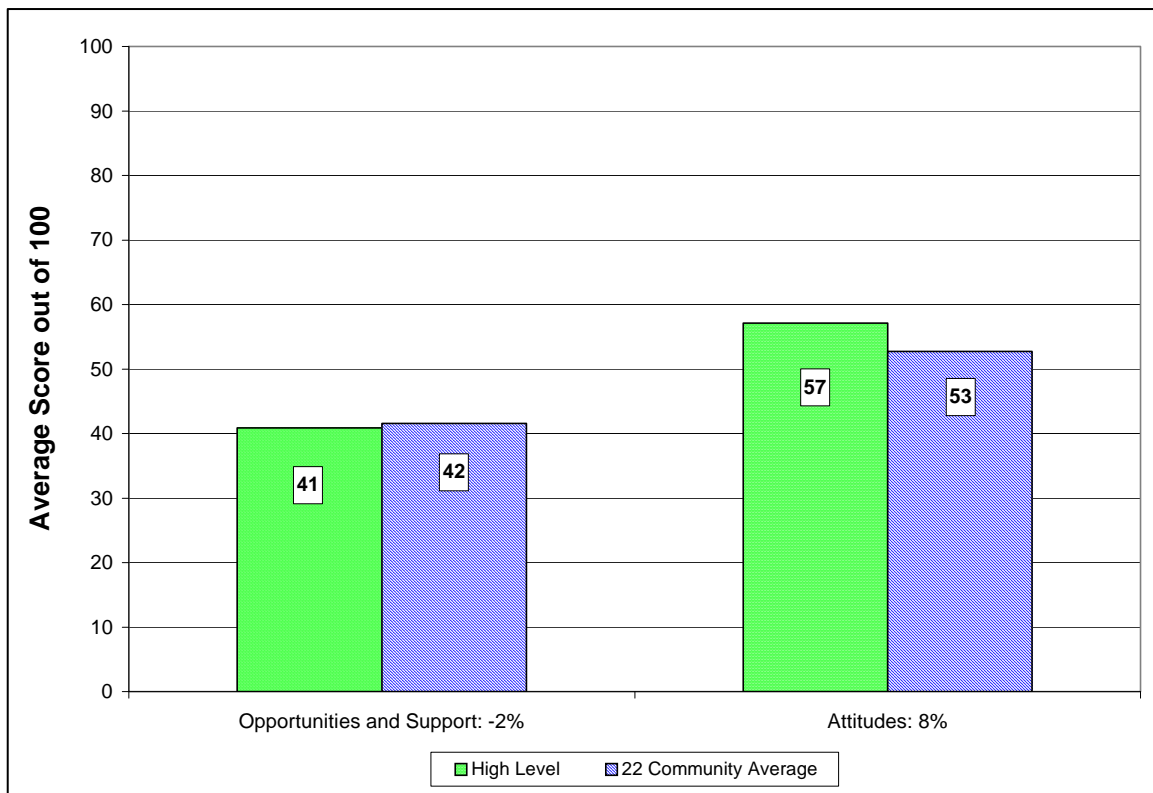
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Our Chamber of Commerce needs to step up</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students must achieve their grades or stay back. Do not pass students who have not earned.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The local community college is very receptive to offering courses requested. We would like to see the provincial apprenticeship board more receptive to "in-community" training.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attitudes of the people to receive and develop from training initiatives, i.e. Students, need to have desire to work.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improving sense of comm.--more after school/work opportunities for people in the comm.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Businesses in town should get together and start a training program (or something similar)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organizations are required to train people, motivate them, local business people for all the above issues in questions 1 - 6</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide more local opportunities. For training</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to focus on your 10 - 12 students and bring in course that will help keep the youth here.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Our school division lacks good teachers! Good administrative staff; there needs to be more trades training in the area; large workforce avail. But not skilled</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to emphasize the importance of education in the 1st Nations pop.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide more hands on (work exp.) Opportunities. Teach people the basics-- Reading, "Riting" &amp; "Rithmetic"</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Northern Lakes College has been doing a great job since they took over from NAIT; more public education on these services; Elementary schools are great; high school needs attention</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Skilled labour is recruited into town, unskilled labour is avail. With some ability to train. Timing seems to be a major issue in town for commitment to bringing in training (1) too busy in the winter, (2) no one is around in the summer.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Students get too many days off from school. We need stricter guidelines and stronger work ethics instilled by the teaching program. More localized training for trades (not only Edmonton, Calgary, or GP)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The training may be available but sometimes it enables people to be qualified elsewhere (i.e. they move)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Basic trades &amp; certifications are available past High School. But any university education is in Edmonton, thus limiting educational fields.</li> </ul>

### 3.5 Section D: Innovation (46 out of 100)

- 
**The ability of a community to think of and develop new ideas, adapt to changes, recognize unusual and new opportunities and technologies, and share ideas with like-minded people.**

This section had the sixth-lowest score of the survey. Question D1 (formal and informal forums) was the second-lowest scoring question of the survey for High Level (see Appendix B).

Figure 9 and Table 17 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.



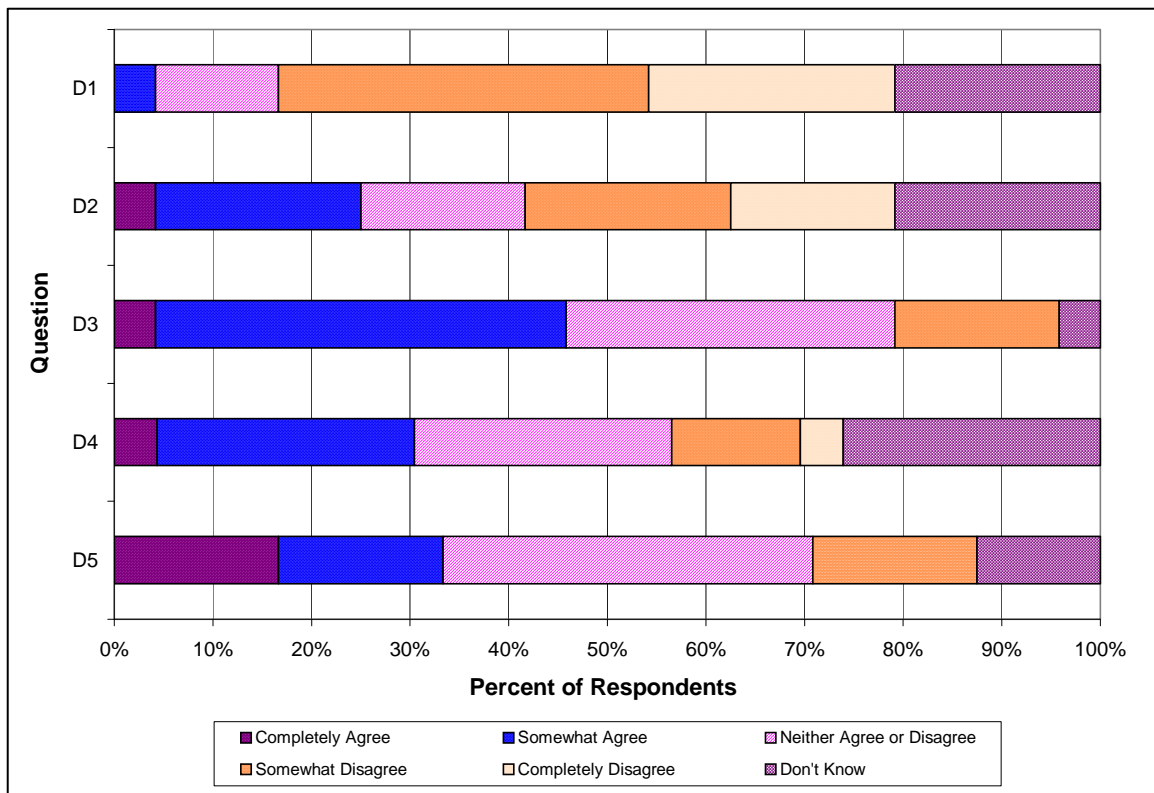
**Figure 9: Innovation Subsection Scores**

- The 'Attitudes' subsection is the highest scoring subsection, with a score of 57 (8% above the community average).

**Table 17: Innovation-- Individual Question Scores**

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 22-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for High Level are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
Opportunities and Support	1. There are formal and informal forums (conferences, workshops, association breakfast meetings) on technology and technology applications.	<b>24</b>	29	-19%
	2. Support and assistance for innovative business research and development is available.	42	46	-8%
	3. Local businesses demonstrate creativity and innovation in seeking new customers.	59	52	13%
Attitudes	4. Research done in the area or region is relevant to the area's business needs and interests.	54	45	21%
	5. Innovation is valued and recognized by business people.	<b>60</b>	60	0%
<b>Section Score</b>		<b>46</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1%</b>



**Figure 10: Innovation-- Question Response Distribution**

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** D3 (creativity of businesses) at 45%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** D1 (forums) at 3%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** D4 (relevance of research) at 26%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** none.

**Table 18: Innovation-- Improvements**

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of innovation.

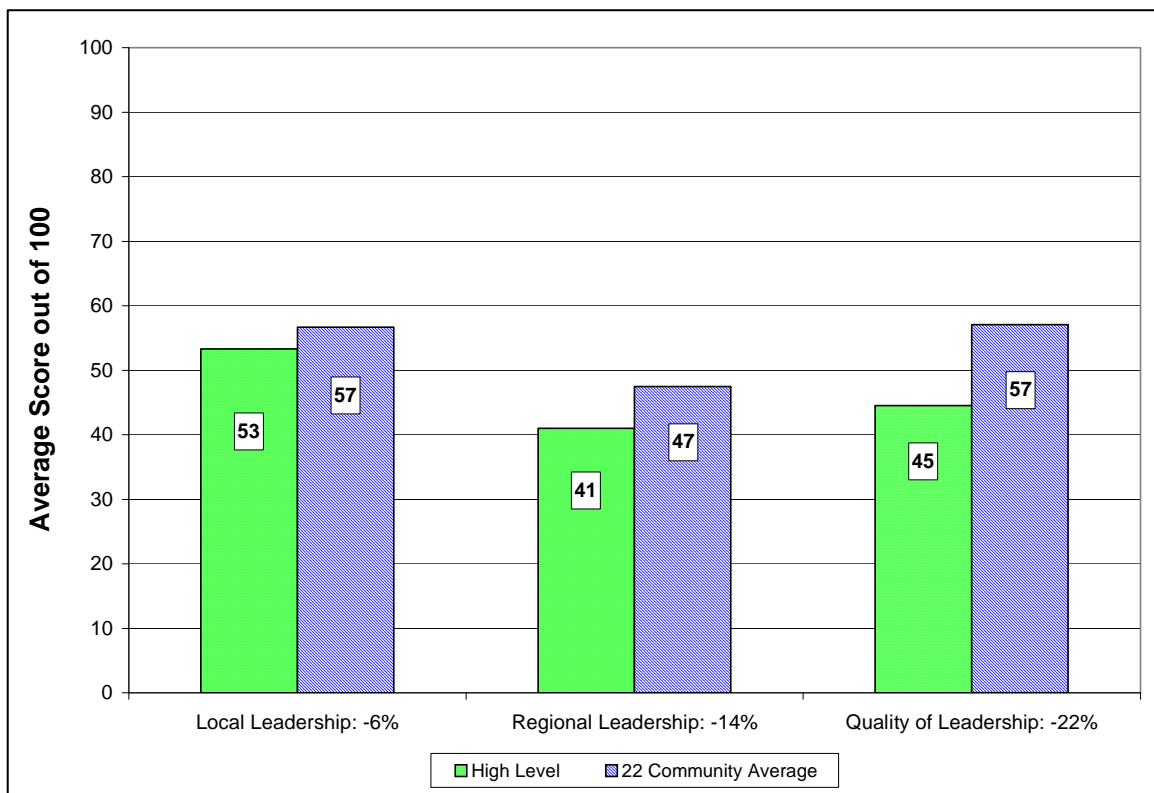
▪ Brain storming sessions quarterly
▪ Annual newsletter could be provided re: above topics to public
▪ More opp. For involvement, better communication to make citizens aware of opportunities, listen to new ideas as a positive to embrace change, cross-jurisdictional boundaries.
▪ Businesses should use tech. To their advantage; social marketing thru Facebook, websites etc would allow people to share info more readily as communication is an issue.
▪ Again, all groups need to be engaged or recruited
▪ We need more workshops, conferences, etc on tech. Etc. And they need to be open to everyone can more well advertised!!
▪ There are lots of new ideas, but the ideas/opportunities hit lots of road blocks to get going.
▪ More incentives (municipal?)
▪ There is opposition to new people with new ideas. I think change will only be possible with visible success of someone's hard work and new ideas. Only then will the comm. Actually believe that change can be popular and positive.
▪ Lack of info. from town administration on what bus. Are looking at setting up in HL (too much secrecy)
▪ Public forums--get people involved.
▪ Communication and to be open minded to change.

### 3.6 Section E: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking (46 out of 100)

- 
**The capacity of a town to take action on an idea or opportunity as a whole group, with good leadership, effective teamwork, and clear communication.**

The Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking section ranked sixth for High Level with a score of 46.

Figure 11 and Table 19 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.



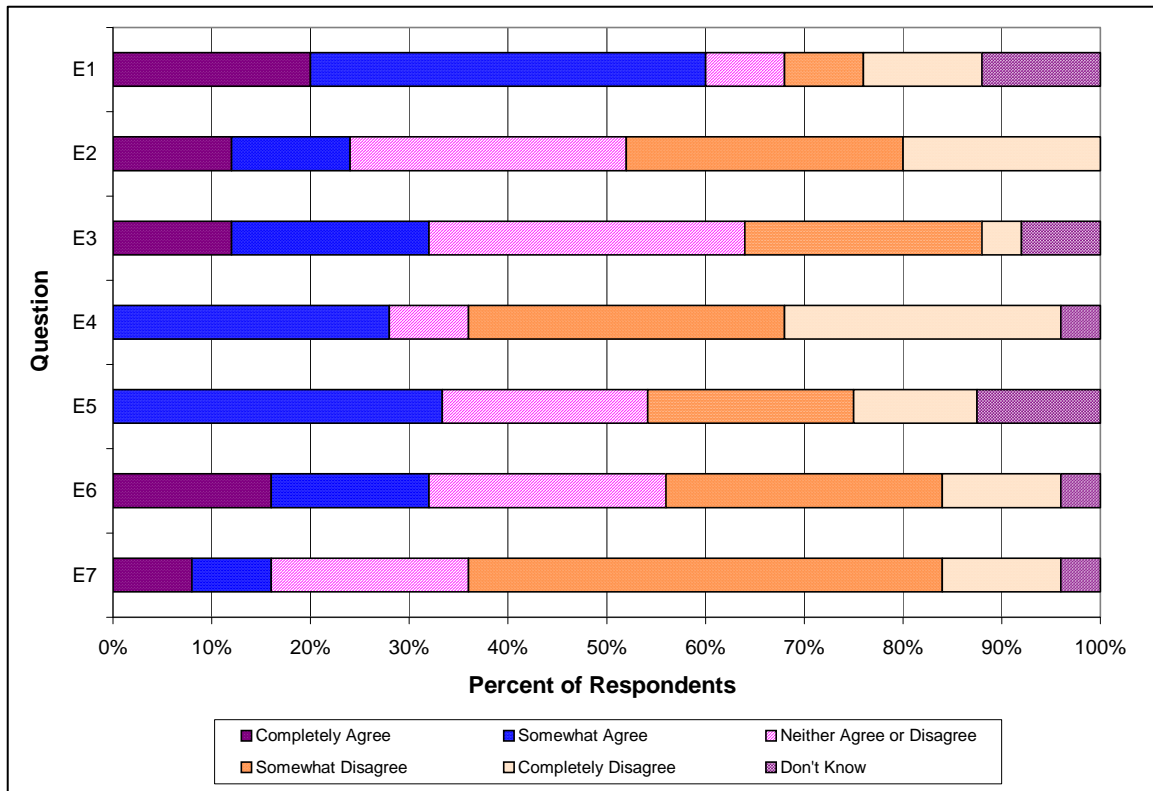
**Figure 11: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking Subsection Scores**

- 'Local Leadership' is the highest scoring subsection with a score of 53.
- The lowest scoring subsection, 'Regional Leadership' has a score of 41 (14% below average).

**Table 19: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking-- Individual Question Scores**

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 22-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for High Level are in large bold type.

Sub-section	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
Local Leadership	1. Business and area groups/sectors have a voice in key local government decisions (e.g. infrastructure improvements, transportation).	<b>64</b>	57	12%
	2. There are adequate opportunities (informal and formal) where business people and entrepreneurs can network with each other.	42	54	-22%
	3. Groups with similar interests can form alliances/networks and cooperate to achieve goals.	53	60	-12%
Regional Leadership	4. We collaborate and cooperate with neighbouring communities.	<b>34</b>	37	-8%
	5. Cooperatives and joint community initiatives are encouraged and respected.	46	56	-17%
Quality of Leadership	6. There is a pool of talented leaders with diverse skills, cultural experiences and backgrounds who are available for leading area initiatives.	49	66	-25%
	7. Qualified supervisors and managers (and management services) are available to small business	38	44	-14%
<b>Section Score</b>		<b>50</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>-6%</b>



**Figure 12: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking Question Response Distribution**

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** E1 (business has a voice in government) at 60%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** and E7 (quality supervisors and managers) at 16%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** E1 (business has a voice in government) and E5 (cooperatives and community initiatives) at 13%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** E3 (similar groups form alliances) and E5 (cooperatives and community initiatives)

**Table 20: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking-- Improvements**

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of leadership, teamwork, and networking.

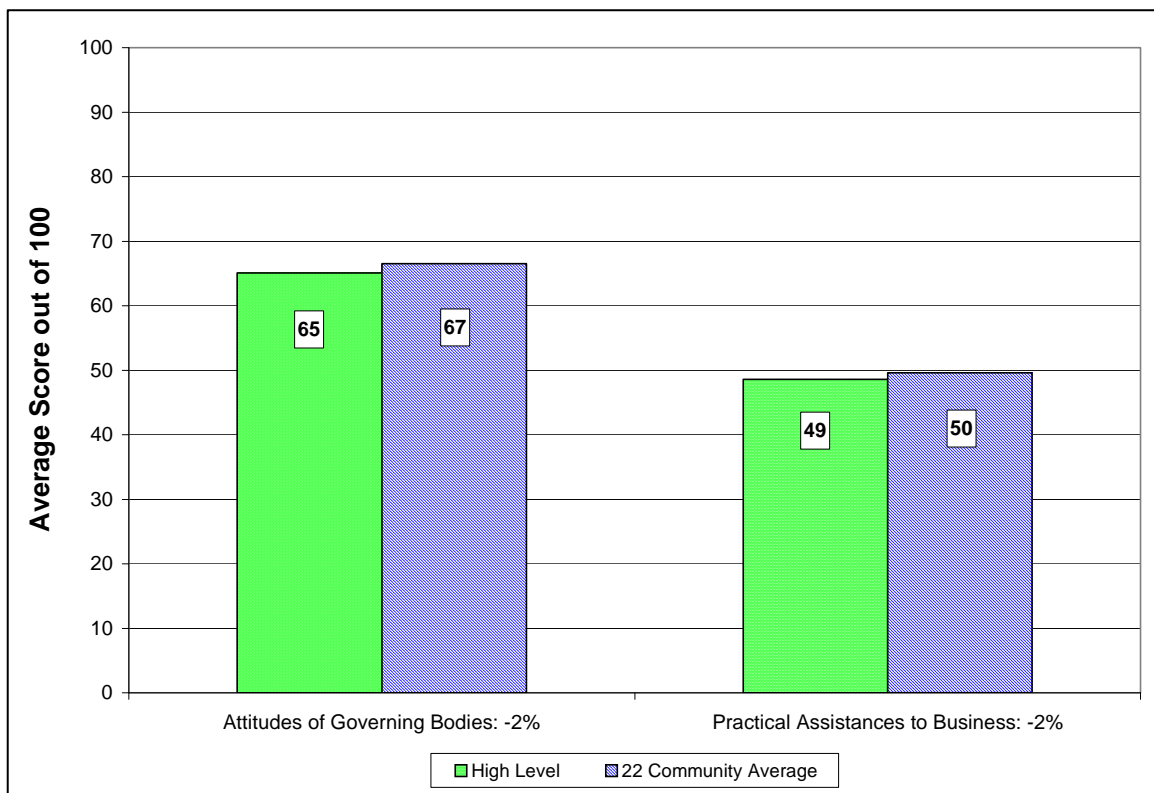
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cultural differences &amp; protectionist mentality holds the region back</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We need better cooperation with municipal government ie . Country/town cooperation. This has improved recently but needs to continue to improve.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1.) Sometimes they do not exercise their voice even though the opp. Is there! 4.0 Too often, petty issues between communities means opportunities lost.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase opportunities. For people to share ideas bring regional collaboration to a new level of cooperation. Regional based opportunities. Could benefit entrepreneurship.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There is a lot of networking available in the community, maybe a bigger variety of leaders would help bring new people/business in.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More educational opportunities; more use of aboriginal individuals/skills etc. In decision making</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More support should be provided to non-profit orgs.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Town council needs to listen to what local business has to say &amp; then act on what they want to see happen; more opportunities for networking need to take place (ie chamber needs to be more effective!); We have to learn to work better with others</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Specific projects are often undertaken by diverse groups but there isn't an ongoing forum where business people meet new people from outside their "circle"</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We need to get people involved. It is always the same people on committees. Something fun, exciting to be proud of.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How do you recruit qualified people to come live here; how do you develop employee's with little or no education? Or formal training in remote area?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The leadership here thru the migration of ambitious/skilled people to HL. HL chamber needs to be more vocal over what they do in order to get people to want to be involved. Chamber needs to shed perception of exclusiveness/old boys (girls) group.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eliminate the current atmosphere within the town admin. Of us against them (business) mentality.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community. Working together instead of trying to cut each other's throats. Work together to build pride of community.</li> </ul>

### 3.7 Section F: Role of Government and Organizations (55 out of 100)

- ◆ **The ability of local governments and other organizations to work with business to design processes and programs that make it as easy as possible to start or expand a business.**

This section ranked third for High Level. Question F1 (governing bodies recognize important of business) was the third-highest scoring question of the survey (see Appendix A).

Figure 13 and Table 21 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.



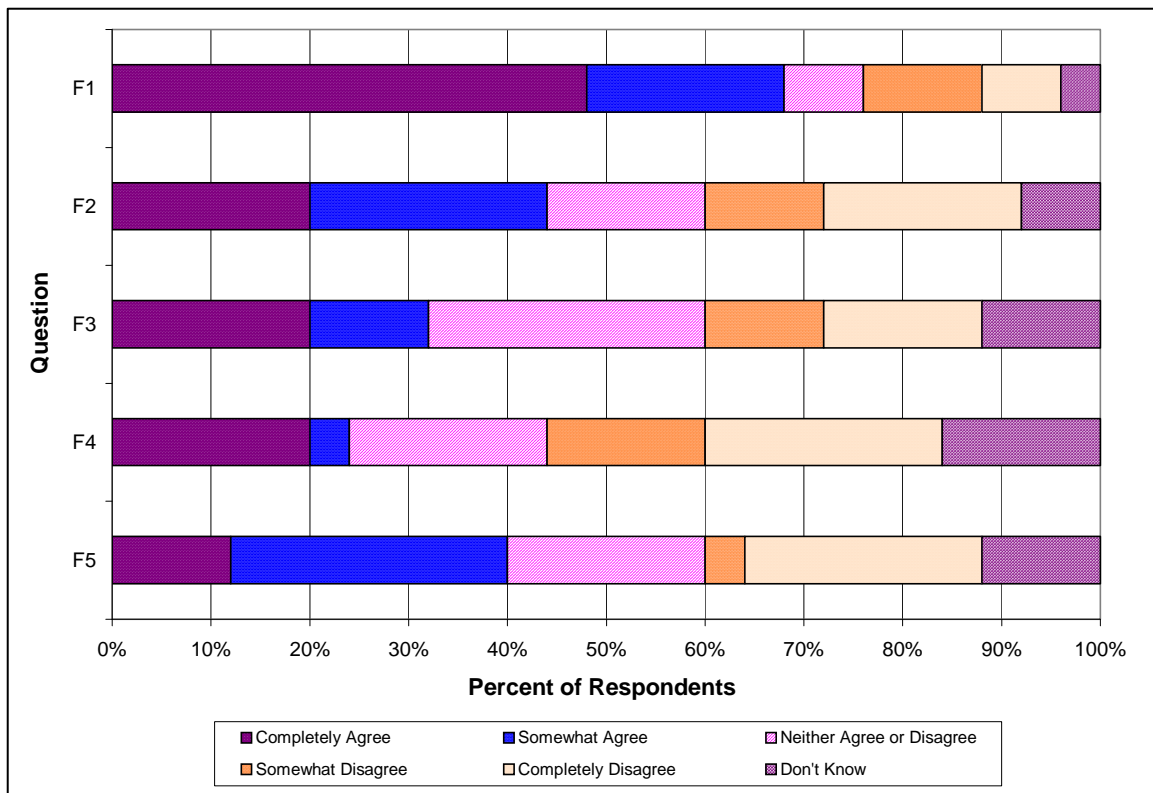
**Figure 13: Role of Government and Organizations Subsection Scores**

- The 'Attitudes of Governing Bodies' subsection is the highest scoring subsection with a score of 65.
- The 'Practical Assistance to Business' subsection scored lowest with a score of 49.

**Table 21: Role of Government and Organizations-- Individual Question Scores**

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 22-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for High Level are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
Attitudes of Governing Bodies	1. The governing bodies (town councils, regional district) recognize that businesses are important and valuable for the development of the area.	<b>73</b>	74	-1%
	2. The governing body is committed to recruiting or attracting businesses to the area, and uses strategies or incentives to do so.	53	56	-5%
Practical Assistances to Business	3. There is a recognized organization or individual available to assist people identify, assess, expand and/or create business opportunities.	52	51	3%
	4. Officials make it easy/reasonable for businesses to start or expand.	<b>44</b>	50	-12%
	5. Local regulations, policies, rules, bylaws and zoning are easily understood by business people, making it easy/reasonable for businesses to expand or start up.	50	47	5%
<b>Section Score</b>		<b>55</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>-2%</b>



**Figure 14: Role of Government and Organizations-- Question Response Distribution**

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** F1 (municipal government recognition) at 68%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** F4 (officials make it easy to start or expand) at 12%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** F4 (officials make it easy to start or expand) at 26%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** F3 (a recognized organization) and F5 (local regulations make it easy for business).

**Table 22: Role of Government and Organizations-- Improvements**

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of the role of governments and organizations.

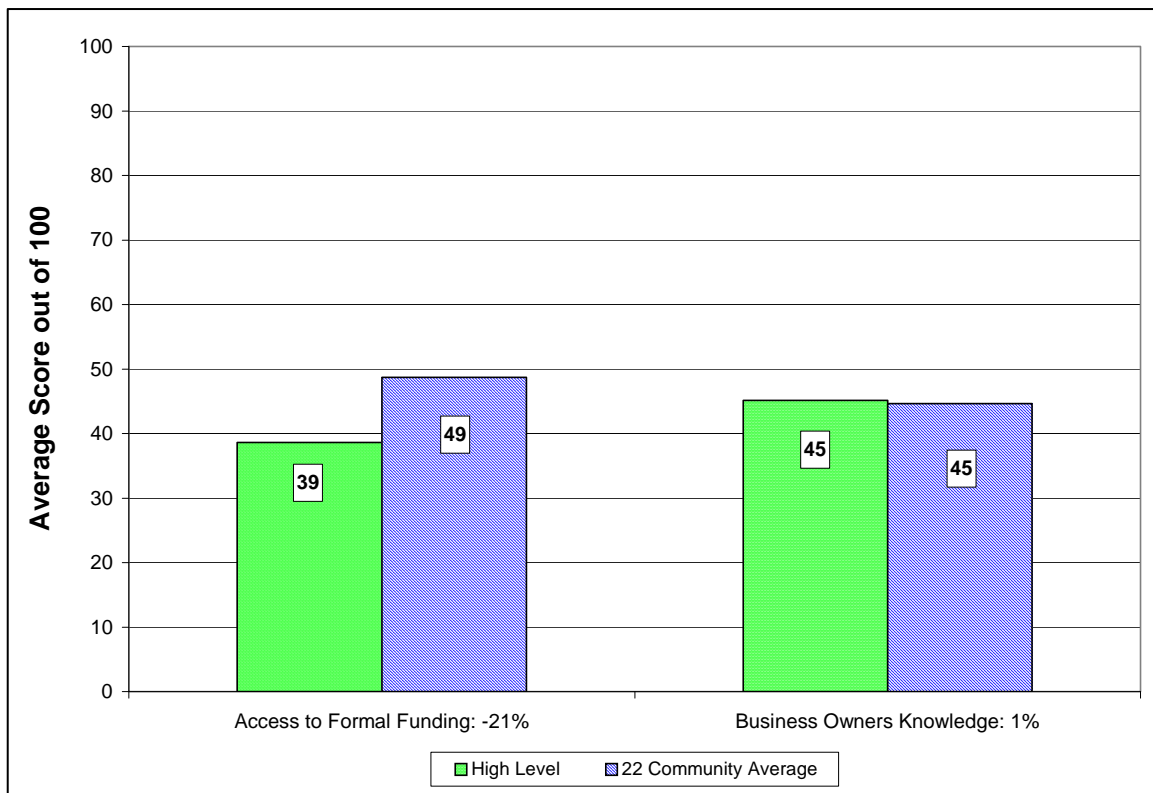
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organizations need to work together &amp; share information for the betterment of the region</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We need more businesses to HL</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maybe use more media announcements</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I would have liked to see Chamber representation here!!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are a lot of services provided through orgs but I don't think they are very well known to businesses.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better, more structured Chamber of Commerce; rec. Events that allow people to informally interact with local gov't officials</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gov't of town should promote and help business to start up.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Town office should have a special cell business people. Council/town leaders should make a plan to attract new businesses to the town &amp; make a cell to achieve that target.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Everyone needs to be on the same page, meaning gov't, business &amp; community.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ By-laws etc need to be clearer and/or explained to people starting new businesses. --the town leaves it up to the individual to sink or swim!; There needs to be a more defined reason why some businesses are approved while others are denied (we have more than 1/2 doz. liquor stores and a problem with public drunkenness--but an application to open a youth entertainment centre was denied); we need a Chamber that supports local business; many by-laws make no sense and/or discourage the opening of new businesses.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be more flexible for new businesses wanting to come to town.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaboration!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More comm. Consultation (town hall mtgs.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be more proactive than reactive.</li> </ul>

### 3.8 Section G: Capital and Funding (41 out of 100)

- 
**The ability of the community to financially support entrepreneurs by ensuring access to capital and by educating businesses about financial management and supports.**

The *Capital and Funding* section tied with *Markets and Marketing* for the lowest scoring sections for High Level, 13% and 8% below the 22-community average respectively. This section is distinguished by an extremely high incidence of “don’t know” responses (see Figure 16, below).

Figure 15 and Table 23 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.



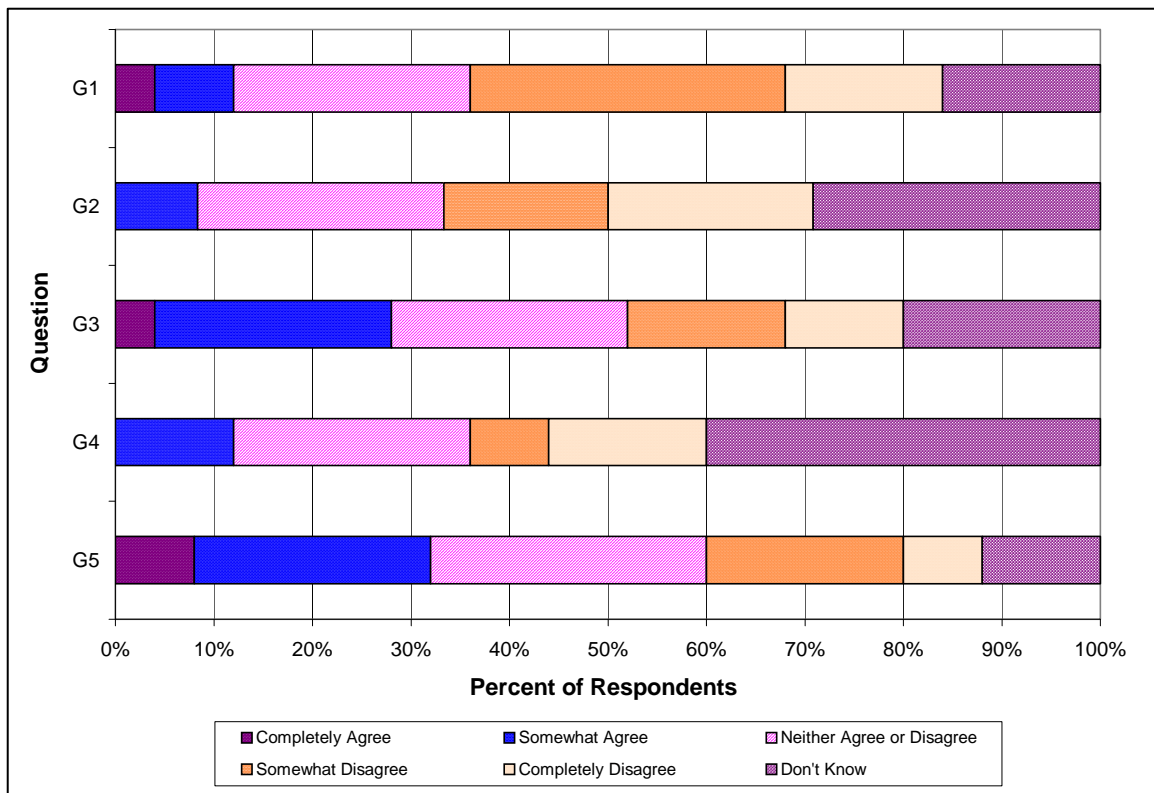
**Figure 15: Capital and Funding Subsection Scores**

- The ‘Business Owners’ Knowledge’ subsection scored highest with a score of 45, equal to the community average.
- The ‘Access to Formal Funding’ subsection scored lower with a score of 39, (21% below average).

**Table 23: Capital and Funding-- Individual Question Scores**

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 22-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for High Level are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
Access to formal funding	1. Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas	36	46	-23%
	2. Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding).	<b>32</b>	53	-39%
	3. Costs of capital (e.g. Interest, application fees) are manageable for entrepreneurs.	48	48	0%
Business Owners' Knowledge	4. Local business can access informal local investors.	38	43	-11%
	5. Businesses have a firm understanding of financial management (e.g. cash flow, reading financial statements).	<b>51</b>	46	11%
<b>Section Score</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>-13%</b>



**Figure 16: Capital and Funding Question Response Distribution**

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** G5 (businesses understand financial management) at 32%
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** G2 (access to formal investors) at 8%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** G4 (informal local investors) at 40%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** G3 (costs of capital) and G5 (businesses understand financial management).

**Table 24: Capital and Funding-- Improvements**

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of capital and funding.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Possibly a credit union??</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More small business seminars, courses mad avail. Bookkeeping course, mgt. Course etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 1.) Too often we are measured by "head offices" by the same qualifiers as communities in southern &amp; central AB while our needs are not always similar</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There isn't a lot if any, info available for business owners on formal or informal investors. Making info available and finding a means of communication.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Many businesses are started because the owner can do the job but doesn't necessarily have the business skills which hurts the business. They need to learn those basic skills to grow the bus.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Knowledge about accounting and financial management should be made available to everyone.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No resources are available. These should be a dedicated cell to business communication in the town.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More funding opportunities need to be made available</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We need to get people outside of HL to understand that we are not living in igloos and that we have knowledge, skills and desire</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More local decisions making at existing financial institutions (everything has to go to head office in Edmonton, Calgary, etc.)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Our gov't doesn't believe in small business. They like to Big Box stores &amp; give them all the benefits, leaving the small guy to struggle. Why should anyone want to start a business if our gov't will not support them?</li> </ul>

### 3.9 Section H: Infrastructure and Business Services (53 out of 100)

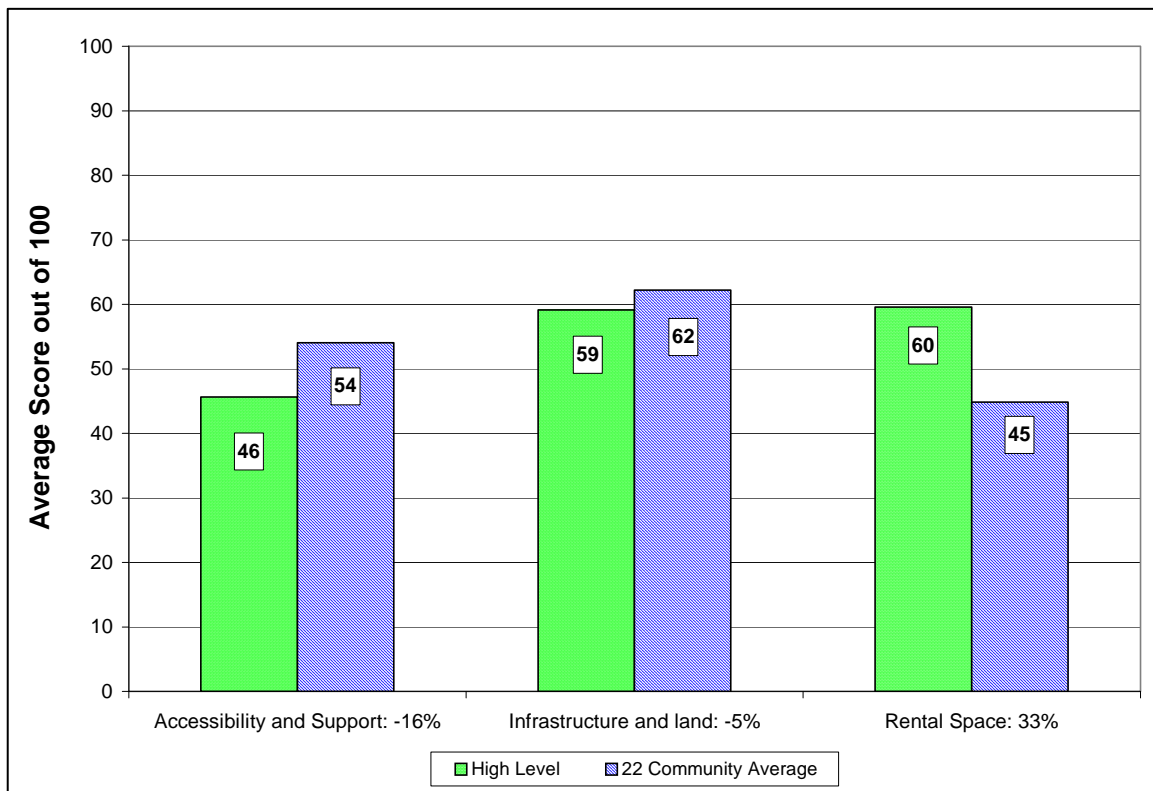

**The ability to provide high quality support services and infrastructure to business at reasonable costs, allowing businesses to be as competitive as possible.**

This section was the fourth-highest scoring section of the survey for High Level with a score of 53, equal to the community average.

Questions H6 (affordable rental space), H7 (quality rental space), and H5 (buildings and land available) were the first, second, and fourth highest scoring questions in Appendix C, the list of questions with the highest positive deviation from the 22-community average, at 35%, 31%, and 24% respectively.

Question H1 (vibrant downtown core) ranked fourth in Appendix D, the list of questions scoring low in comparison to the community average, at -43%.

Figure 17 and Table 25 show the questions in this section divided into three



subsections.

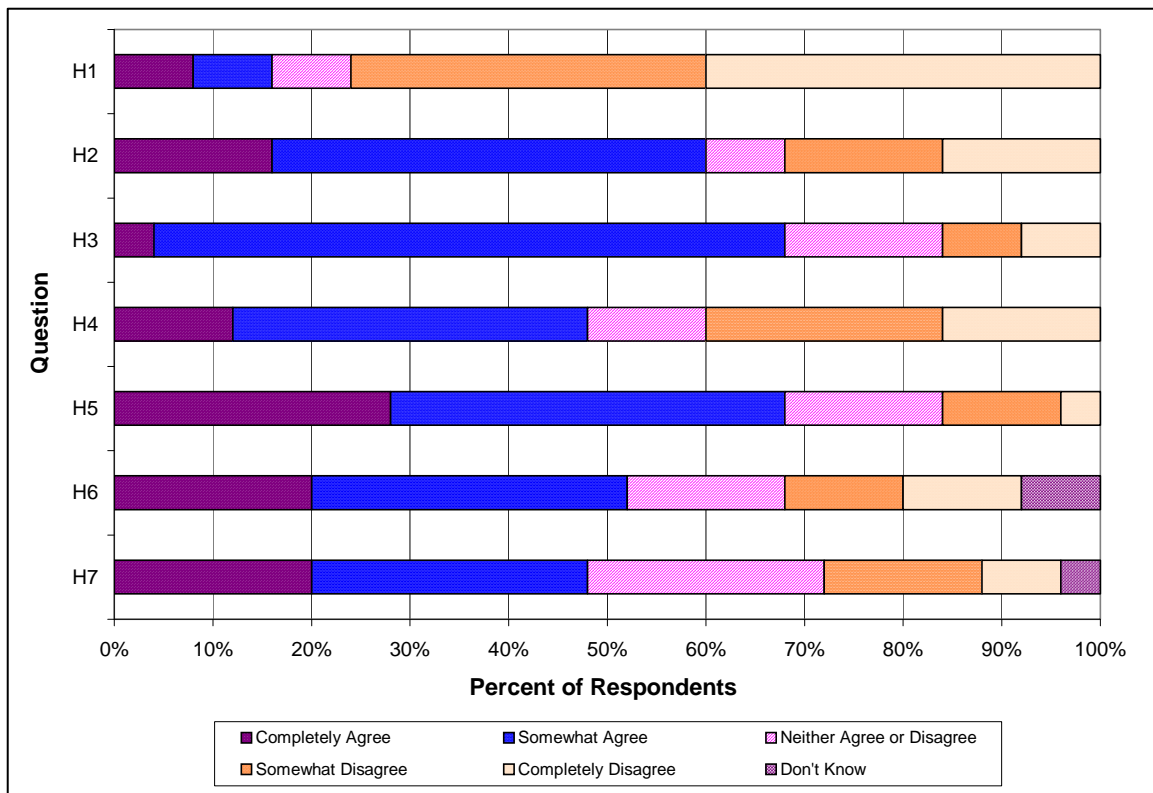
### Figure 17: Infrastructure and Business Services Subsection Scores

- The 'Rental Spaces' subsection was the highest scoring subsection of the section with a score of 60 (33% above average).
- The 'Accessibility and Support' subsection was the lowest scoring subsection with a score of 46 (16% below average).

**Table 25: Infrastructure and Business Services-- Individual Question Scores**

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 22-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for High Level are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
Accessibility and Support	1. There are vibrant, active downtown areas or community cores.	<b>27</b>	47	-43%
	2. Core business areas are easily accessible by all users (e.g. parking, sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.).	57	60	-6%
	3. Adequate business services (e.g. printing services, computer help, graphic design, etc.) are available.	62	58	6%
Infrastructure and Land	4. Existing infrastructure (e.g. local roads, water, power) is of good quality, well maintained, serviced, and modern.	51	68	-25%
	5. A variety of buildings and commercial land is available to accommodate business expansion, attraction, or creation.	<b>69</b>	56	24%
Rental space	6. Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	60	44	35%
	7. Quality rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	59	45	31%
<b>Section Score</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>0%</b>



**Figure 18: Infrastructure and Business Services Question Response Distribution**

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** H3 (adequate business services) at 68%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question** H1 (vibrant downtown core) at 16%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** H6 (affordable rental space) at 8%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** H4 (quality infrastructure).

**Table 26: Infrastructure and Business Services-- Improvements**

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of infrastructure and business services.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need newer buildings for tenants. Need tenants for existing buildings</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Possible opportunity for investment: demolish some old downtown buildings &amp; build new with rental space</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More road repairs--Potholes!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ I feel that our town administration is doing a good job at keeping our infrastructure current within our economic resources.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accessibility has come up in the community recently. The majority of businesses are not fully accessible to mobility challenged people. Making sure businesses are acc. To all would improve services.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More public input into areas that need improvement. A larger percentage of the population needs to voice needs for the community.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It seems like there is quite a bit of empty retail space downtown, a group could work on making it a more desirable place to go.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revitalize downtown--improvements to sidewalks; solutions for street people who make the downtown undesirable for families etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Nothing high tech in the town. No plaza; small town with old infrastructure</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better roads, not so many potholes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Downtown core is a mess!! There are buildings that should be condemned, sidewalks are horrible, &amp; most of the buildings are old &amp;/or ugly!; We have such a problem with public drunkenness downtown that people don't want to open businesses there; rent is expensive &amp; there are not a lot of available spaces.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Downtown area has many older buildings that should be upgraded in both structure &amp; appearance; empty lots should be developed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote HL</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Downtown needs some attention</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide better road/street maintenance yr round in a more efficient manner (ie more contract services--less town union employees)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Repair streets, unpacked dips in roads/streets when contractors do a poor job, bring them back to repair streets. Finance those businesses that want to make their store look better. Tax deduction for nice properties.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We have to start with the simple things like sweeping/shovelling sidewalks; keep things clean</li> </ul>

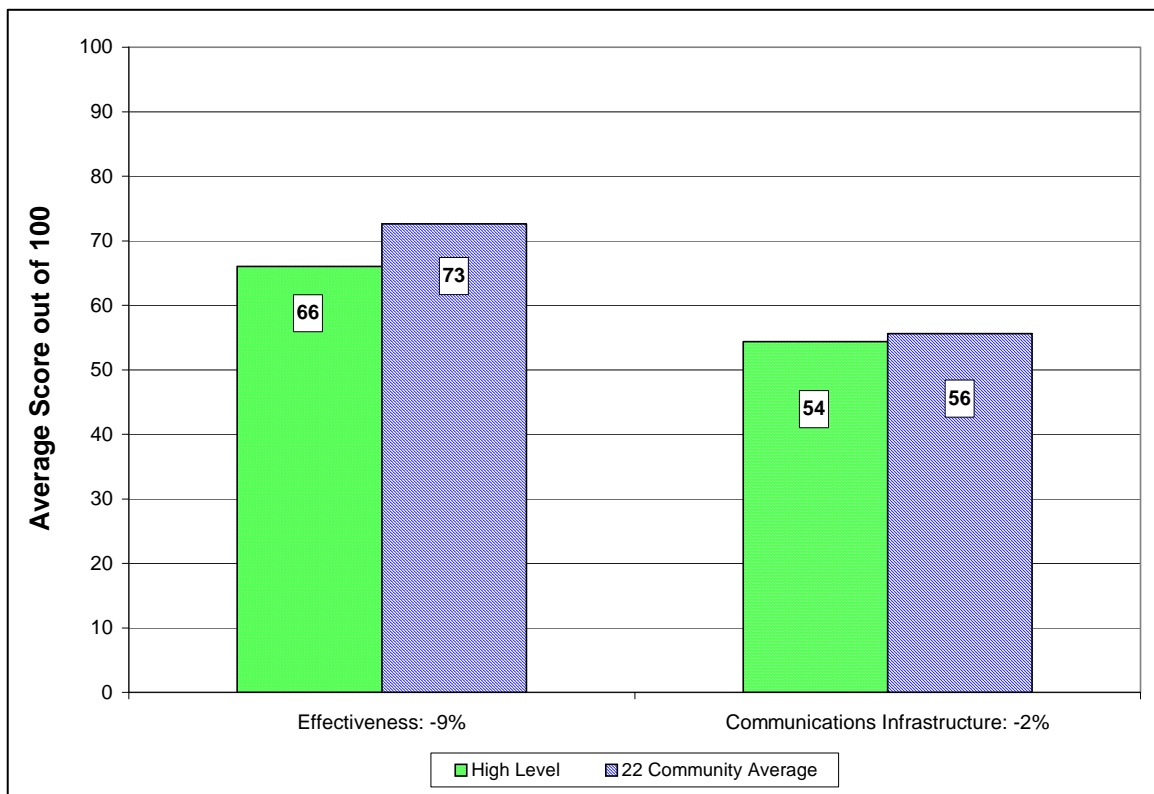
### 3.10 Section I: Communication and Connectivity (59 out of 100)

**◆ The ability of businesses to connect with each other and with outside markets.**

The *Communication and Connectivity* section is the highest scoring section of the survey, tied with *Opportunities and Attitudes* with a score of 59.

This section contains the second-highest and fourth-scoring questions of the entire survey for High Level: I3 (quality communication services) and I1 (informal business communication).

Figure 19 and Table 27 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.



**Figure 19: Communication and Connectivity Subsection Scores**

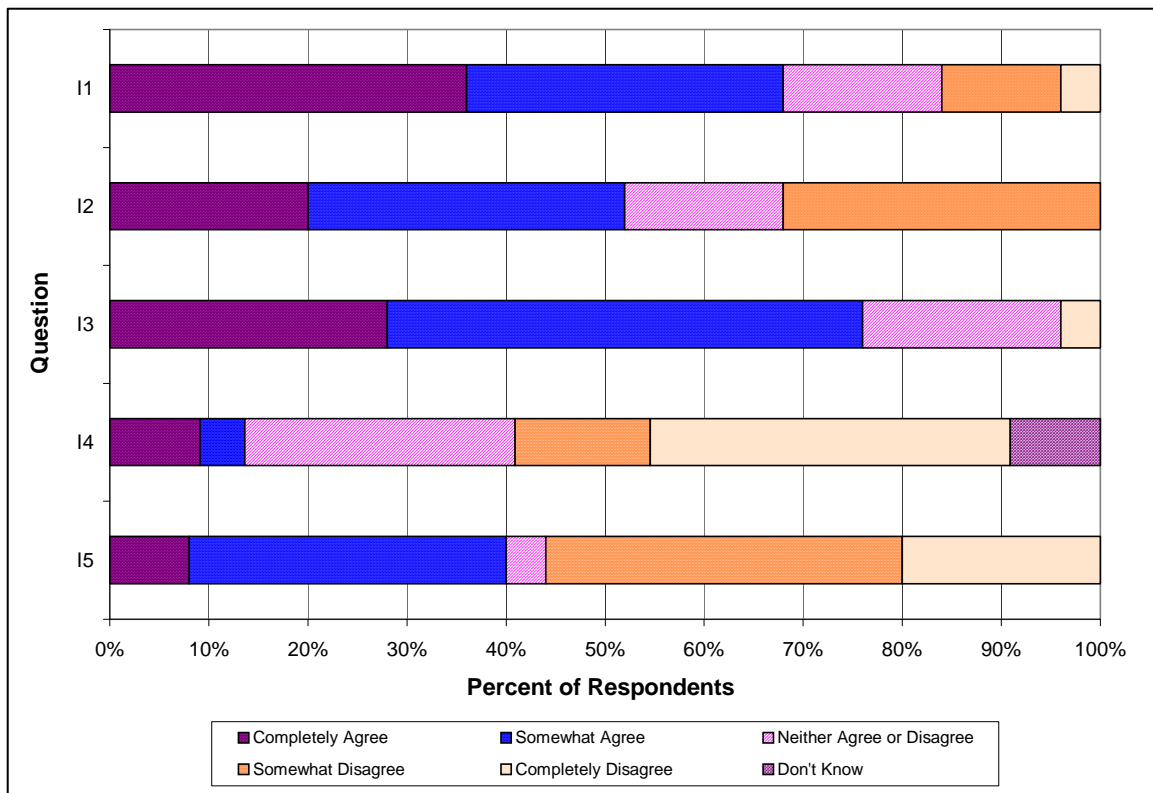
- The 'Effectiveness' subsection is the highest scoring of the section with a score of 66 (9% below average).

- ‘Communications Infrastructure’ subsection was the lowest scoring subsection, equal to the community average with a score of 54.

**Table 27: Communication and Connectivity-- Individual Question Scores**

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 22-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for High Level are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
Effectiveness	1. Informal business communication (word of mouth) is highly effective).	<b>71</b>	86	-18%
	2. Formal business communication (e.g. newspaper, radio, etc.) is highly effective.	60	56	8%
Communications Infrastructure	3. Quality communication services (phone, cell phone, high speed internet, etc.) are adequate for business.	74	61	21%
	4. Public transportation within the area is adequate.	<b>33</b>	31	3%
	5. Shipping and freight services into and out of the area are affordable to businesses.	43	62	-31%
<b>Section Score</b>		<b>59</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>-5%</b>



**Figure 20: Communication and Connectivity Question Response Distribution**

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** I3 (communication infrastructure) at 76%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** I4 (public transportation) at 13%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** I4 (public transportation) at 9%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** none.

**Table 28: Communication and Connectivity-- Improvements**

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of communication and connectivity.

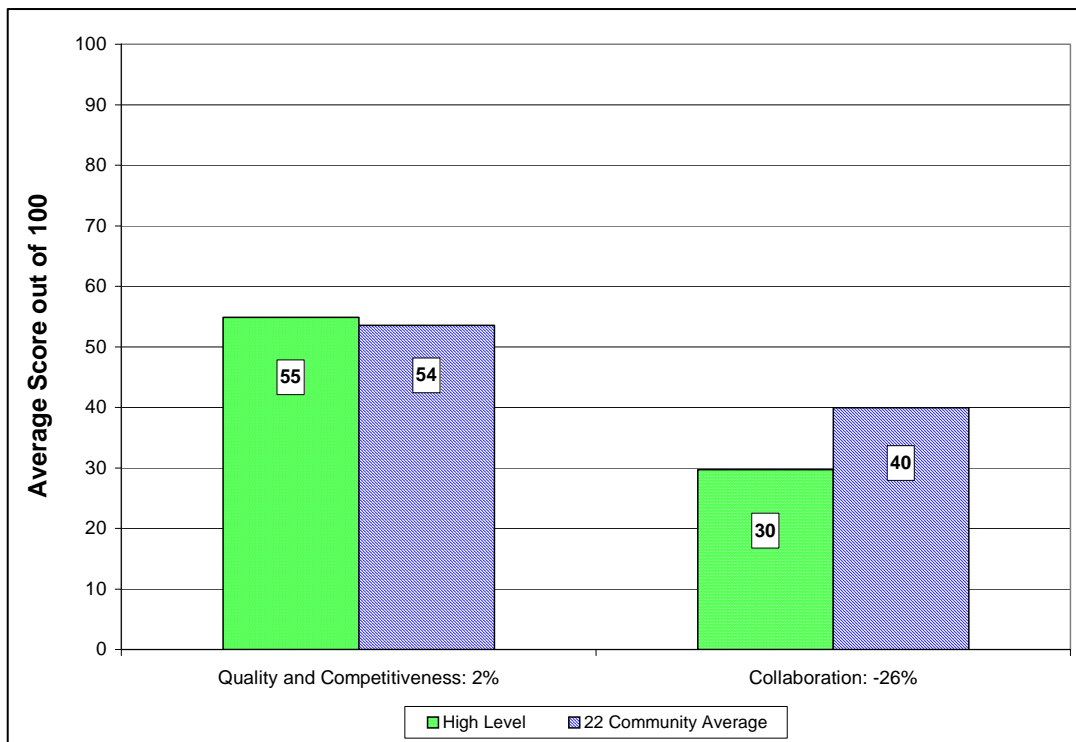
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need affordable flights in/out of HL. If they brought price down more people would fly.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Air from Edmonton and Calgary is more than to go from coast -coast!!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Most things are advertised thru the newspaper so if you don't always read it you will miss out. Businesses could make better use of adverts on the radio or signs around town.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve use of tech. (Facebook, websites); better available signage for community events</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More opportunities for business to connect need to be created</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Again promote HL outside of our region and prov.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sidewalks on more streets</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chamber should conduct their meeting in the evenings</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Freight costs are killing small business. Transient companies are gouging those that bring-in freight.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shipping &amp; freight costs are extremely expensive which cause store mark-ups to increase &amp; businesses make less profit/income</li> </ul>

### 3.11 Section J: Markets and Marketing (41 out of 100)

- 
**The ability of businesses to capture and expand markets locally, regionally, and outside the region, thus keeping and building local wealth.**

This section (tied with *Capital and Funding*) was the lowest-scoring section for High Level, with a score 8% below the 22-community average. It contains the third-lowest scoring question in the survey: J4 (products and services reasonably priced) at 52% below average. See Appendix B.

Figure 21 and Table 29 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.



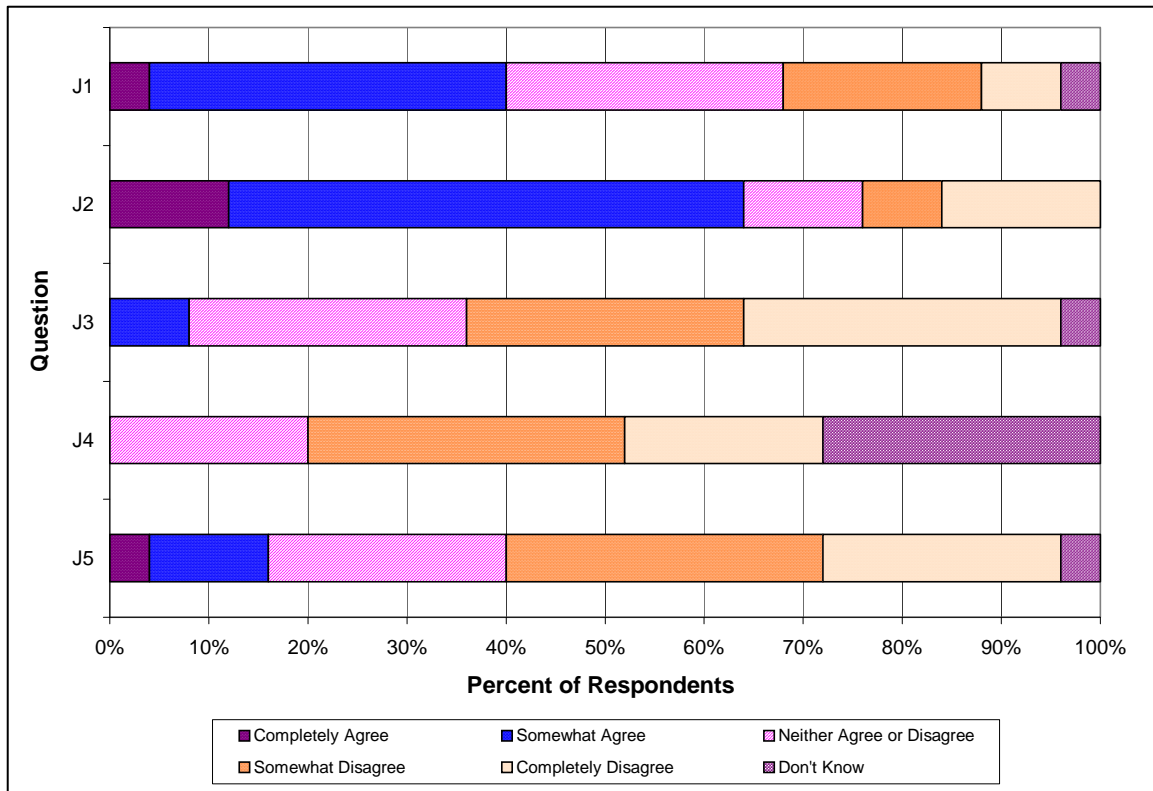
**Figure 21: Markets and Marketing Subsection Scores**

- The 'Quality and Competitiveness' subsection scored highest with a score of 55 (2% above average) while the 'Collaboration' subsections scored lower at 30 (25% below average).

**Table 29: Markets and Marketing-- Individual Question Scores**

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 22-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for High Level are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		% Difference
		High Level	22 Community Average	
Quality and Competitiveness	1. The area has a reputation for high quality products and/or services.	52	54	-4%
	2. Products and services are reasonably priced in comparison to regional and big city competitors	<b>59</b>	52	13%
Collaboration	3. The area has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image	28	46	-38%
	4. Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions.	<b>25</b>	31	-18%
	5. People prefer to purchase local products and services.	34	42	-18%
<b>Section Score</b>		<b>41</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>-8%</b>



**Figure 22: Markets and Marketing Question Response Distribution**

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** J2 (reasonably priced products) at 62%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** J4 (marketing as a group) at 0%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** J4 (marketing as a group) at 28%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** none.

**Table 30: Markets and Marketing-- Improvements**

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of markets and marketing.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gov't workers (teachers, nurses, office workers etc) need to learn that it is important to support local business.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need more competition to show that the local businesses are competitive</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ HL is transient; people tend to buy big purchases like vehicles in their hometown.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote "shop local" year round thru local media venues.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase competition in town to improve that products are of an equal cost, quality, available as in other areas.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Marketing needs to be done to keep people from going to Peace River or Grande Prairie to do all their shopping. Maybe a better selection of products may help.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Marketing "buy local"; focusing on younger adults (20 -30) who have funds to buy in town but will go outside if they feel their needs are not being met.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Necessary and usually brought products should be available more cheaply.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shopping local needs to be encouraged!!!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Show locals our many talents and promote them or tell everyone how we are promoting some of our assets.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ If you take into account travel to a big city purchase big ticket items, then prices here are reasonable</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Buy local program: Lots of money leaves for Grand Prairie &amp; Edmonton. Service at stores the worst of all places I have lived so it does not inspire any loyalty to local businesses.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Businesses need to carry the items that they have advertised - i.e. the grocery stores are empty of a lot of their advertised sale items on a weekly basis.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Shop local. Big box stores are coming closer and people will travel and spend big money to get to a big box store ie Wal-Mart. Towns promote these big box stores, lower their taxes, make deals etc to get them into town. They kill the small businesses that donates to community lives here and volunteers in the community. These local governments have it backwards. Promote small businesses-- they live here in the community!</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We don't have a choice but to purchase locally, unless you can afford additional shipping costs. Our prices would not be competitive because of the inflated costs.</li> </ul>

## Appendix A: Top 10 Highest Scoring Questions

#	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
A4	Successful businesses want to remain in the area.	80	82	-3%
I3	Quality communication services (phone, cell phone, high speed internet, etc.) are adequate for business.	74	61	21%
F1	The governing bodies (town councils, regional district) recognize that businesses are important and valuable for the development of the area.	73	74	-1%
I1	Informal business communication (word of mouth) is highly effective.	71	86	-18%
H5	A variety of buildings and commercial land is available to accommodate business expansion, attraction, or creation.	69	56	24%
C6	There are quality elementary and secondary schools in the area.	65	79	-18%
A2	Individuals are capable of thinking creatively and developing unconventional solutions and innovative business opportunities.	65	65	-1%
E1	Business and area groups/sectors have a voice in key local government decisions (e.g. infrastructure improvements, transportation).	64	57	12%
A6	The area is facing a significant economic opportunity.	63	61	3%
B6	Quality residential accommodation is available and affordable.	63	60	5%

## Appendix B: Bottom 10 Lowest Scoring Questions

#	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
C5	A pool of skilled labour is available to local businesses in the area.	23	37	-37%
D1	There are formal and informal forums (conferences, workshops, association breakfast meetings) on technology and technology applications.	24	29	-19%
J4	Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions.	25	31	-19%
B3	There are frequent high quality cultural events (e.g. festivals, concerts) catering to a range of	25	58	-57%

	ages.			
H1	There are vibrant, active downtown areas or community cores.	27	47	-43%
J3	The area has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image.	28	41	-31%
G2	Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding).	32	53	-39%
I4	Public transportation within the area is adequate.	33	31	3%
J5	People prefer to purchase local products and services.	34	42	-18%
E4	We collaborate and cooperate with neighbouring communities.	34	37	-8%

### Appendix C: Top 10 Highest Positive Deviation from the 22-community Average

#	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
H6	Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	60	44	35%
H7	Quality rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	59	45	31%
H5	A variety of buildings and commercial land is available to accommodate business expansion, attraction, or creation.	69	56	24%
D4	Research done in the area or region is relevant to the area's business needs and interests.	54	45	21%
I3	Quality communication services (phone, cell phone, high speed internet, etc.) are adequate for business.	74	61	21%
D3	Local businesses demonstrate creativity and innovation in seeking new customers.	59	52	13%
E1	Business and area groups/sectors have a voice in key local government decisions (e.g. infrastructure improvements, transportation).	64	57	12%
G5	Businesses have a firm understanding of financial management (e.g. cash flow, reading financial statements).	51	46	11%
C1	Business skills training is available (e.g. business plan development, marketing, accounting, etc.).	59	54	10%
I2	Formal business communication (e.g. newspaper, radio, etc.) is highly effective.	60	56	8%

## Appendix D: Bottom 10 Largest Negative Deviation from the 22-community Average

#	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
B3	There are frequent high quality cultural events (e.g. festivals, concerts) catering to a range of ages.	25	58	-57%
B2	There are no significant environmental pollution issues here.	40	81	-51%
H1	There are vibrant, active downtown areas or community cores.	27	47	-43%
G2	Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding).	32	53	-39%
C5	A pool of skilled labour is available to local businesses in the area.	23	37	-37%
J3	The area has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image.	28	41	-31%
I5	Shipping and freight services into and out of the area are affordable to businesses.	43	62	-31%
E6	There is a pool of talented leaders with diverse skills, cultural experiences and backgrounds who are available for leading area initiatives.	49	66	-25%
H4	Existing infrastructure (e.g. local roads, water, power) is of good quality, well maintained, serviced, and modern.	51	68	-25%
G1	Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas	36	46	-23%

## Appendix E: The “Gut Check 12”

The following questions provide a snapshot of a community’s business vitality. These key questions can be used to inform future efforts aimed at improving business friendliness.

Question Number	Question	Score out of 100		
		High Level	22 Community Average	% Difference
A6	The area is facing a significant economic opportunity.	63	61	3%

B5	Young adults (25-34) consider the area to be a desirable place to live.	41	50	-18%
A4	Successful businesses want to remain in the area.	80	82	-3%
C4	The education and business communities work together to provide convenient training for businesses.	40	41	-4%
A3	Citizens are motivated to learn new skills and to develop existing ones.	52	51	2%
F1	The governing bodies (town councils, regional district) recognize that businesses are important and valuable for the development of the area.	73	74	-1%
H1	There are vibrant, active downtown areas or community cores.	27	47	-43%
J2	Products and services are reasonably priced in comparison to regional and big city competitors	59	57	3%
J5	People prefer to purchase local products and services.	34	42	-18%
D3	Local businesses demonstrate creativity and innovation in seeking new customers.	59	52	13%
E6	There is a pool of talented leaders with diverse skills, cultural experiences and backgrounds who are available for leading area initiatives.	49	66	-25%
G1	Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas	36	46	-23%

## Appendix F: Questions with High ‘Don’t Know’ Responses

Question	Percent
<b>G4.</b> Local business can access informal local investors.	40%
<b>G2.</b> Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding).	29%
<b>J4.</b> Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions.	28%
<b>F4.</b> Officials make it easy/reasonable for businesses to start or expand.	26%
<b>D4.</b> Research done in the area or region is relevant to the area's business needs and interests.	26%
<b>D1.</b> There are formal and informal forums (conferences, workshops, association breakfast meetings) on technology and technology applications.	21%
<b>D2.</b> Support and assistance for innovative business research and development is available.	21%
<b>G3.</b> Costs of capital (e.g. Interest, application fees) are manageable for entrepreneurs.	20%

## Appendix G: Questions with a High Degree of Polarization

These questions had approximately equal amounts of agreement and disagreement.

<b>B1</b> A quality health care facility is accessible, well serviced and within a reasonable distance.
<b>C3.</b> Business mentors and/or role models are available in the area.
<b>E3.</b> Groups with similar interests can form alliances/networks and cooperate to achieve goals.
<b>E5.</b> Cooperatives and joint community initiatives are encouraged and respected.
<b>F3.</b> There is a recognized organization or individual available to assist people identify, assess, expand and/or create business opportunities.
<b>F5.</b> Local regulations, policies, rules, bylaws and zoning are easily understood by business people, making it easy/reasonable for businesses to expand or start up.
<b>G3.</b> Costs of capital (e.g. Interest, application fees) are manageable for entrepreneurs.
<b>G5</b> Businesses have a firm understanding of financial management (e.g. cash flow, reading financial statements).
<b>H4.</b> Existing infrastructure (e.g. local roads, water, power) is of good quality, well maintained, serviced, and modern.

## Appendix H: Assessment Session Attendance

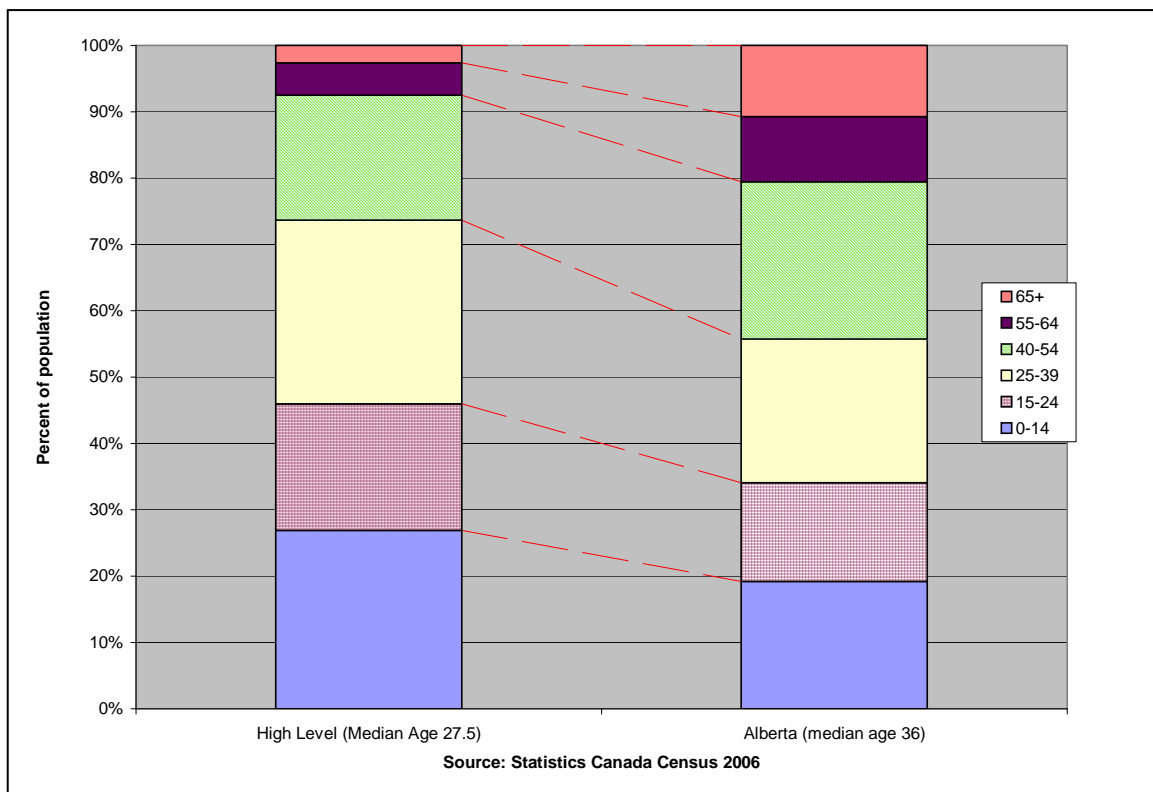
- Cameron Demkiw
- Margaret Carroll
- Monica Longard
- Cheryl Ernst
- Debbie Warman
- Mary Gramson
- Abe Wolfe
- Katie Dutove
- Richard Harder
- Dave Thiele
- Lindsay Thompson
- Sat Mehta
- Namit Mehta
- Adam Clarkson
- Barry Gladders
- Simone Wiley
- Cheryl Welke
- Jan Welke
- Shane Lloyd
- Steve MacIntyre

## Appendix I: Top 5 Industries of Employment by Participation (2006)

High Level		Alberta	
Misc. services	23%	Business services	18%
Manufacturing	13%	Agriculture and other resource-based	12%
Agriculture and other resource-based	12%	Retail	11%
Retail	10%	Health, social services	9%
Health, social services	9%	Construction	9%

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

## Appendix J: High Level Community Profile-- Age Distribution (2006)

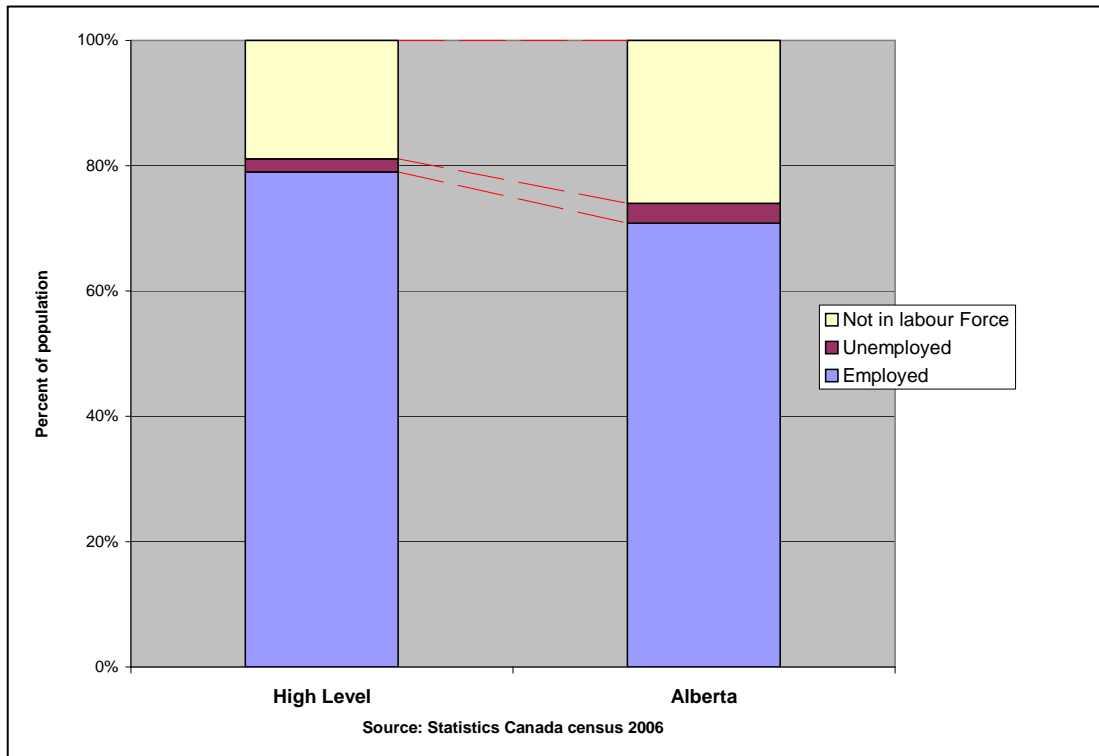


## Appendix K: High Level Community Profile—Earnings and Income (2005)

	High Level	Alberta
Median Earnings (people over 15)	\$33,885	\$29,738
Percent of population in low income category	6.2	9.1
Government transfers as % of all income	4.7	7.2

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

## Appendix L: High Level Community Profile— Labour Force Distribution (2006)

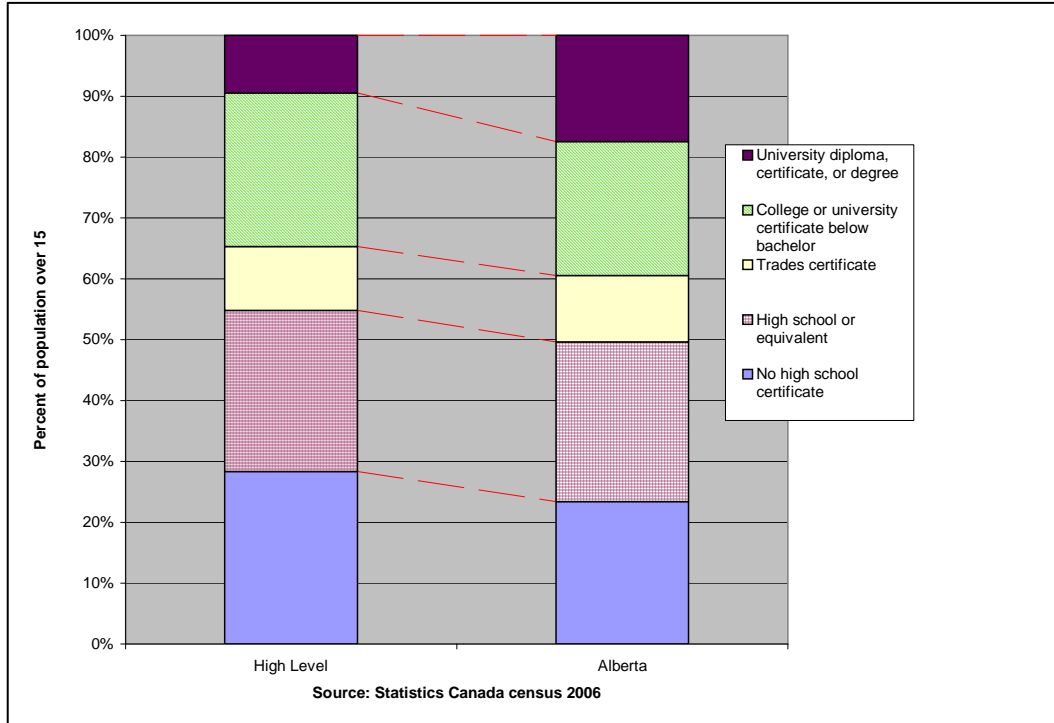


## Appendix M: High Level Community Profile-- Population Growth (2006)

	High Level	Alberta
Population in 2006	3887	3,290,350
Population in 2001	3444	2,974,807
Percent Increase	12.9	10.6

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

## Appendix N: High Level Community Profile— Educational Attainment (Population over 15)



## Appendix O: The Business Vitality Initiative

Mike Stolte, an economist and economic development manager in Nelson, B.C, developed the BVI. He knew that people have an innate need to see where they stand relative to others before taking action, and that communities have this same desire. In trying to build a tool based on available statistics to compare communities, Mike was disappointed with what was available, especially in rural areas. Mike and colleague Anne Stacey researched the keys to entrepreneurial success from academic research and CED practice from all over the world and combined it with their own experiences in the rural context to build a tool made up of 100 perceptual indicators, qualitative questions and focus groups.

### BVI Principles

- Communities know best
- Communities must harness their untapped human resources & energy
- Communities must become more self-reliant
- Small steps/actions to build capacity are recommended
- Process is better when it's inclusive
- BVI is not a substitute for community planning

### Why is entrepreneurship important?

The 21st Century has been dubbed “The Entrepreneurial Century”. There is a powerful link between entrepreneurship & economic performance. Some studies suggest that entrepreneurs and small business are creating 90-95% of new jobs. Studies also show that 80-90% of jobs are generated from retaining and expanding business within a community. Increasingly, research shows entrepreneurs fare better in supportive communities with dynamic business support organizations.

## Summary of the BVI Process

Using a combination of community meetings, focus groups, questionnaires, statistics, and written reports, the BVI guides the community through three stages:

1. Assessment --a 3 hour community meeting featuring a 95-question survey and focus groups will be accompanied by an on-line survey for those who wish to participate but cannot make the meeting.
2. Focus-- a 3 hour community meeting where survey results are reviewed, analysis is provided, possible community actions are considered, actions are selected by the community, and a reality check is performed.
3. Action-- the action stage features the community working on 3-4 top priorities or actions selected in the focus stage.

The BVI will allow communities to benchmark themselves and compare themselves to other communities using CIEL's unique graphs and scoring.

## Appendix P: About CIEL

The Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership (CIEL) strengthens communities by helping them become more business-friendly, more culturally vibrant, and more sustainable. We also assist them in improving leadership and enhancing community involvement.

CIEL is an organization located in Nelson, British Columbia, in a region featuring many communities that are quickly having to make transitions to survive in a fast-changing global economy.

Our early work assisted small communities in the neighbouring mountain valleys. We developed innovative assessments coupled with strategic processes that helped communities focus, leverage assets and energy and, most importantly, jumpstart action. Then our ideas attracted the attention of communities farther afield, and we began working with communities across the rest of B.C. More recently we have been invited into communities across Canada, the U.S, New Zealand and Australia.

Our Communities Matrix – a one page tool for assessing stages of community readiness – has now been used in many countries across the globe. The Government of Canada contracted CIEL to research, develop and build a collaborative leadership program as an effective means of building capacity for rural communities in Canada.

CIEL continues to develop practical, engaging and innovative tools and processes that strengthen communities. In 2008, CIEL won the award for the region's most innovative organization from the Kootenay Association for Science & Technology.

Our network of facilitators and trainers allows us to be responsive to the needs of communities across the world. CIEL's conference presentations have inspired at the local, regional, state/province and international level. Our work has been featured on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canadian Living Magazine and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.