

Business Vitality Initiative (BVI)

Phase One Assessment

Final Report

Olds, Alberta
May 2011



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1. Introduction—The BVI in Olds

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.

For a detailed description of how the BVI process works, see Appendix O.

The Olds 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 Olds and the Olds Institute for Community & Regional Development, which selected the participants. The local project coordinator is Gail Scott, the Community Economic Development Officer for Olds.

On April 14, 2011, 29 people attended the BVI session held at the Bell e-Learning Centre at Olds College, where they took part in focus groups and discussions and filled out the BVI questionnaire. An additional six people also filled out the questionnaire.

This report summarizes that *Assessment Session* of the BVI in Olds.

Olds is the 26th community in Canada to undertake the BVI in addition to five communities in Australia.

The Phase Two 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 be held on the evening of Wednesday, June 1st at the Bell e-Learning Centre at Olds College.

1.1 Recurring Themes in the Olds BVI

The following recurring themes were identified throughout the Olds BVI, highlighting areas for possible community action.

- People see the community in a very positive and progressive light.
- Green spaces, parks, pathways and Olds College are seen as top community strengths not used to potential.
- Oil & gas and opportunities presented through the fibre network are viewed as the top two economic drivers. Agriculture (including value-added) was third.
- A high degree of community engagement means shared vision and more cooperation.
- Brand & tourism potential need serious review.
- Uptowne beautification needed.
- Highest section scores were in *Attitudes Towards Business, Innovation, and Role of Governments and Other Business Support Organizations*.
- Housing affordability remains an impediment to development.
- Communication between businesses could be improved.
- People are excited about a future that will be a mix of old Olds, entrepreneurship, & technology/innovation. Olds College & Olds Institute have potential for a big role.

1.2 Possible Courses of Action for Olds

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, all described in detail in this report.

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

Possible Short Term Actions (actions completed in less than 12 months)	
The possible actions are based upon participant responses to the survey and focus groups. For each action, the corresponding BVI questions or sections are noted in parentheses.	
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Concerted effort to recruit 25-34-year-olds (Focus Groups) ▪ Buy local project (e.g. local coupons, identifying customer and business gaps, identifying and recruiting for specific labour needs, etc.) (Focus Groups, Section C)
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote list of business opportunities (Opportunities) ▪ A uniting cultural event(s) that builds networks and markets in community/region – e.g. farmers' markets (Focus Groups,

	<p>Section J)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uptown beautification & vibrancy project (e.g. begin with storefronts, offer incentives, streets & sidewalks, after 5 pm strategy, etc.) (Themes, Focus Groups, Section D) ▪ What's happening business communication project—explore better ways to improve business to business and community to business communication. The initiative should look at opportunities, education, F/T Chamber storefront, formal and informal means, etc. (Themes, Sections D, F) ▪ Review of branding (Focus Groups)
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business and new resident welcome program (Focus Group, Section F) ▪ Business succession strategy involving mentorship, education, etc. (Section B) ▪ Strategy and implementation around ensuring Fibre to the Premises ensures a truly connected community (Focus Group, Sections D, I)
Admin. Research, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assess tourism amenities and capacity (Improvements) ▪ Review town business processes with joint business/government team to ensure business friendly processes (Focus Groups) ▪ Pre-feasibility study of conference facilities and/or opportunities (Opportunities) ▪ Explore affordable and coop housing opportunities (Opportunities)

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

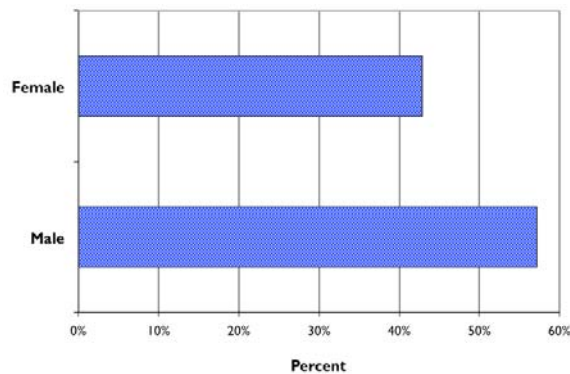
Possible Long Term Actions (actions taking more than 12 months to complete) The possible actions are based upon participant responses to the survey and focus groups. For each action, the corresponding BVI questions or sections are noted in parentheses.	
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cultural event strategy working with Didsbury, Sundre, etc. (Section B) ▪ Create and promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship possibly starting with a conference (Section D) ▪ Buy local program (Focus Groups) ▪ Research local lending/equity fund (e.g. local coop, investors club, etc.) (Opportunities)
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uptown beautification program including theme (Themes, Focus

	<p>Groups)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rebrand using strengths identified through BVI and other processes (FTTP, entrepreneurial nature of community [BVI Poster Child), etc.)
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business succession plan (Section C) ▪ Explore SME incubator in conjunction with CIRE (Section C) ▪ Business peer mentorship breakfast program (Section C)
Research, Admin. and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tourism development plan and yearly evaluation (Opportunities) ▪ Explore small bus and transportation routes and options (Focus Groups, Section I) ▪ Exploration of eco-industrial park (Sections A, D, I) ▪ Feasibility study of conference facilities and/or opportunities (Opportunities) ▪ Affordable and coop housing plan (Focus Groups)

2.0 Participant Profile, Community Profile, and Focus Group Results

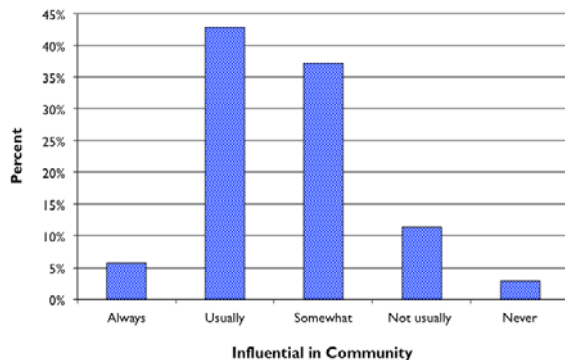
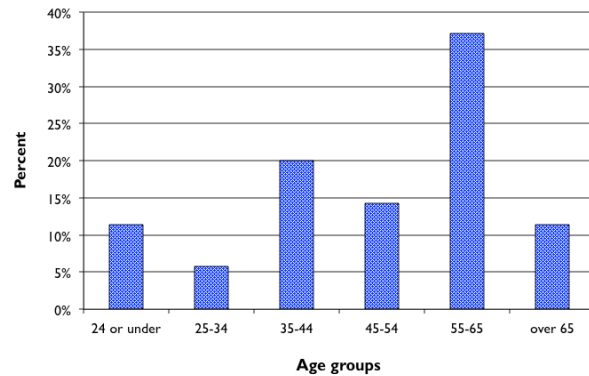
The first part of the BVI questionnaire asks the group some demographic questions (the *Participant Profile*). Here are the responses from the 35 survey participants in Olds.

2.1 Participant Profile Results



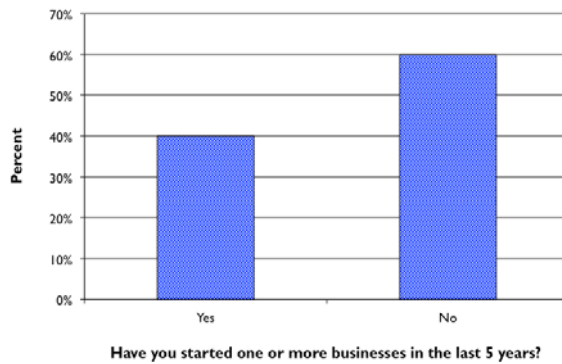
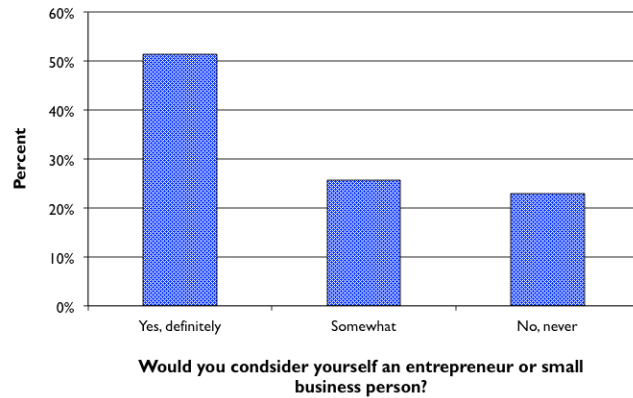
42% of the participants were female, and 58% were male.

The most prevalent age ranges were 35-45 and 55-65.



48% of participants said they were always or usually influential in the community.

51% of participants stated that they felt they are definitely a businessperson or entrepreneur.



40% of participants stated that they have started at least one business in the last 5 years.

2.2 Community Profile Results

The BVI questionnaire includes a *Community Profile* section 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 the next 5 years?
- What is an untapped business opportunity?
- What are the top things that could improve your community?

The participants' answers to those questions are listed below.

2.2.1 Describing Olds in Three Words

There were 103 individual responses to the community profile question that asks for three words or phrases that best describe Olds. Of those, 75 were considered to be positive, 25 were neutral, and 3 were considered negative, resulting in an approximately 25:1 positive to negative ratio. This is a much more favourable ratio than in any of the previous 25 communities that have undertaken the BVI.

Table 3: Describing Olds in Three Words
(103 Responses)

Positive		Neutral		Negative	
Progressive, leading, visionary, proactive, futuristic	12	Growing	8	Apathetic	1
Friendly	10	Small	6	Fragmented	1
Busy	6	Changing	2	Unbalanced	1
Active, engaged, happening, vibrant, dynamic	5	Cosmopolitan	2		
Innovative	4	Aggressive	1		
Connected	3	Aging	1		
Collaborative, partnering	3	Agriculture	1		
Home	3	Capitalist	1		
Central	2	Conservative	1		
Creative	2	Materialistic	1		
Green	2	Rural	1		
Safe	2				
Accommodating	1				
Awakening	1				
Beautiful	1				
Comfortable	1				
Complete	1				
Cozy	1				
Economic	1				
Excellent	1				
Fun	1				
Good town services	1				
Grounded	1				
Hub	1				
Interesting	1				
Liveable	1				
People	1				
Privileged	1				
Prosperous	1				

Quaint	1			
Relaxed	1			
Sustainable	1			
Viable	1			

Describing Olds in Three Words: this “word cloud” gives greater prominence to words that appeared more frequently in the participants’ responses.



2.2.2 Strengths And Assets Not Used To Potential In Olds

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

Table 4: Top Strengths and Assets of Olds Not Used to Potential
 (63 Responses)

	Count
Green spaces, parks, pathways, natural areas	9
Location	8
Olds College	6
Youth	6
Seniors	5
OICRD	3
Active and engaged residents	2
Environmental initiatives	2
Personal and corporate capital	2
Business appearances uptown	1
New businesses	1
Capacity for sustainable development	1
Clc	1
Community facilities (Cadet Hall, Library etc)	1
Desire to succeed - call to action	1
High school	1
History	1
Library	1
Light - medium industrial property	1
Local business	1
Local work	1
New active people	1
Olds Grizzlies	1
Senior housing	1
Sports complex	1
Very fit/active community	1
Existing structures (i.e. Volunteer groups, municipal structure)	1
Fibre to the Premises	1
People's desire to contribute "staff desk corner"	1

Technology	3
Small business	3
Olds Institute	2
Service sector	2
Cars	1
Central location	1
Education	1
Expansion	1
Growth-population and business	1
Hospital/health services	1
New retail centre (i.e. Wal-mart, Canadian Tire etc.)	1
Job growth - reduced unemployment	1
Manufacturing	1
Shopping hub for the area	1
Quality of life	1
Retail	1
Senior retirement/care	1
Uptowne Olds	1

2.2.4 Untapped Business Opportunities

Participants were asked to give two answers to the question, “What is a specific untapped community, business or economic development opportunity for the area? (List up to 2)”

Table 6: Untapped Opportunities for Olds
(58 Responses)

Quality internet	3
Agricultural value added	2
Central location in the province	2
Eco-Industrial park	2
Hotel and convention centre	2
Local growers/producers market	2
Japanese sushi restaurant	2
Regional tourism	2
"Theme" for uptown Olds	1
A second medical clinic that allows for alternative services yet combines many services i.e. Nurse	1

practitioners, nutritionists, athletic therapists, doulas, midwives etc.	
A separate tourist information area (open on evenings and weekends)	1
Welcome wagon operation for new residents	1
Affordable housing	1
Museum is too small	1
Beautification of uptown needs to happen soon - attract visitors, tourists...history of area	1
Business support services to larger urban areas	1
Childcare services	1
Commercialization of ideas from Olds College	1
Create niche shopping areas	1
Grow on the Ag Society model - Attract provincial and national events	1
FFTP	1
Land along the railway tracks	1
Large community hall	1
Creation of small business incubator	1
Year round indoor/outdoor public market	1
Olds College	1
Our location	1
Our people	1
Become a high tech centre for home based consultants	1
Pottery painting place	1
Renewable energy (i.e. solar)	1
Restaurants - sit down, chain is okay especially breakfasts e.g. Denny's	1
Seniors services	1
Something for kids (rec centre)	1
Something for teenagers to do	1
Sporting goods	1
Technology	1
The construction or labour community in the area	1
The holistic and artistic community	1
Unpaved running trails	1
Unpaved walking trails	1
Venture capital company or Co-op	1
Younger group 25 - 34	1

2.2.5 How to Improve Olds

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

Table 7: Ways to Improve Olds
(64 Responses)

	Count
Hospitality/ conference facilities	4
Awareness/ communication/networking among local businesses	4
Affordable housing, coop housing	4
Develop tourism	3
Recreation Centre	3
Friendlier, more supportive Chamber of Commerce	2
More non-take-out restaurants	2
More skilled job opportunities for young adults	2
More walkways, bicycle/pedestrian friendly	2
Sporting good stores	2
Local lending fund to invest in growing local jobs	2
New vision and strategic plan, acceptable and bought by the community, for the Olds Agricultural Society	1
Arena with better seating	1
Arts, cultural and theatre	1
Grocery store closer to the east side of town	1
Community appreciation	1
Continue to improve parks	1
Drive in theatre	1
Entrepreneurial incubator	1
Expansion of sewer and water lines	1
Focus on opportunities	1
FTTP eco industrial park	1
Help people to understand FTTP and EIP	1
Hwy 27 improvements	1
Increase the number of full time professional/technical jobs	1
Increase the number of young (age 20 -40) families with children	1
Increased financial options for local businesses	1
Local growers/producers market	1
Local supporting local	1
More clothing stores	1
More development	1

2.3 Focus Group Responses

Also, at the initial assessment session meeting, the 35 participants took part in focus groups. The focus groups on April 14 in Olds 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?

Question 1

What are the things that make this community a good place in which to do business?

Group 2

- Diverse population
- Small-town values
 - Accountability, recognition, connectedness, approachability
- Location – Regional hub
 - On Hwy 2 corridor, between larger centres, ability to have unique businesses
- Cultural facilities
 - Olds College
 - Olds AG Society
 - Auction Mart
 - Diverse business choices

- Affluent population
- Retirees
- High-quality schools
- Engaged youth
- Tolerant, caring community
- Pride in community
- Attractive community
 - Draws people from all over the world to jobs here
- Progressive
- Safe
- Oil & gas, agriculture
- Cost of doing business is reasonable
- Ample parking
- Business clusters

- Strong downtown business core
- Expanding commercial periphery
- Strong fitness facilities and groups
- Available labour pool
- Clean environment

Top Three

Small-town values

Accountability, recognition, connectedness, approachability

Location – Regional hub

Cultural facilities

Olds College

Olds AG Society

Auction Mart

Diverse business choices

Group 3

- Can do everything in Olds
 - Balanced
- Our regional centre
- Health service
- Great educational institutions
 - Engaged in the community
- Location – Hwy 2/airport/cities/markets
- Room to expand
- Recreational opportunities
 - Quality of life
- Community engagement, shared vision
 - Leadership of Olds Institute
 - Cooperation/collaboration
- Proximity to natural recreational opportunities
- Small town feel?
- Focus on technology
 - FTTP
 - Connected Community Network
- Affordable retail/lease space
- Cultural and heritage focus

Top Three

1. Can do everything in Olds
2. Location – Hwy 2/airport/cities/markets
 - Balanced
 - Community engagement, shared vision
 - Leadership of Olds Institute
 - Cooperation/collaboration

Focus Groups Question 2

What are the things (within the community's control) that can be improved to help businesses in your community?

Group 1

- Polish Uptowne
 - Beautify store fronts
 - Incentives for refurbishing and restoration
- Upgrade town's business directory and stats
- Create asset map of what we have
 - Inventory listing
 - Awareness creation of business directory
- Identify gaps in business products and services – help fill gaps
- Create a “welcome” to new business
- Cooperative business events i.e. auto indoor sale @cow palace
- Provide more opportunities for business to business networking
- Joint advertising for cooperative events
- Start to capitalize on community events by cooperating and collaborating between businesses
- Educate businesses that competition is not a bad thing is can be very lucrative
- We need each other
- More choice can attract more people
- “buy local” programming—make people aware of our services and products
- Local business needs to implement a ‘customer service excellence’ program
- A full time store front Chamber of Commerce
- They need to be more visually involved with business
- Branding needs to be bigger and better than “Hay City”
- Should be part of Alberta Best - customer service training

Top Three

1. Need for the right branding = coop marketing
2. Beautification of Uptowne
 - Relocating transportation
 - Improved look of store fronts and street/sidewalks
3. Fibre to the Premise
 - Connected community

Group 3

- Access to venture capital
- Uptowne theme brand

- Focus town services on business friendly processes
- Long term planning
- Beautify entrance to town

Group 4

- Affordable housing to attract employees and retain
- Improve communication between businesses
- Recognize unintended boundaries
- Welcoming business package at town office
- Direct new businesses to town website for current information
- Transit
 - Small bus route – designated stop
- Informative, inexpensive workshops to educate small businesses to enable growth
- East of tracks convenience store

Top Two

1. Affordable housing to attract employees and retain
2. Improve communication between businesses

Group 5

- Fix Hwy 27
- Better organizational support for start-up businesses (help with business plan)

3.0 Section Scores

Olds 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. Section names and descriptions, as well as Olds' scores for each section, are as follows:

- A. Opportunities and Attitudes: 74 out of 100** - The ability of the community to recognize, act on, and follow through on available opportunities.
- B. Quality of Life: 68 out of 100** - The ability of the community to attract & retain businesses & residents, especially those who are young, skilled workers.
- C. Education and Training: 68 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: 69 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: 68 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: 70 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: 50 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: 64 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: 65 out of 100** - The ability of businesses to connect with each other and with outside markets.
- J. Markets and Marketing: 56 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 Olds was **66 out of 100**. The average for the 25 communities that have undertaken the BVI is 54.

The BVI section results as shown in Figures 1 and 2 show that particular strengths for Olds are its two highest scores in the *Opportunities and Attitudes* and *Role of Governments and Organizations* sections.

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

Figures 1 and 2 show Olds' scores for each of the ten sections of the BVI, compared with the average section scores for the 26 communities that have undertaken the BVI.

Olds scored higher in every section than the 26-community average.

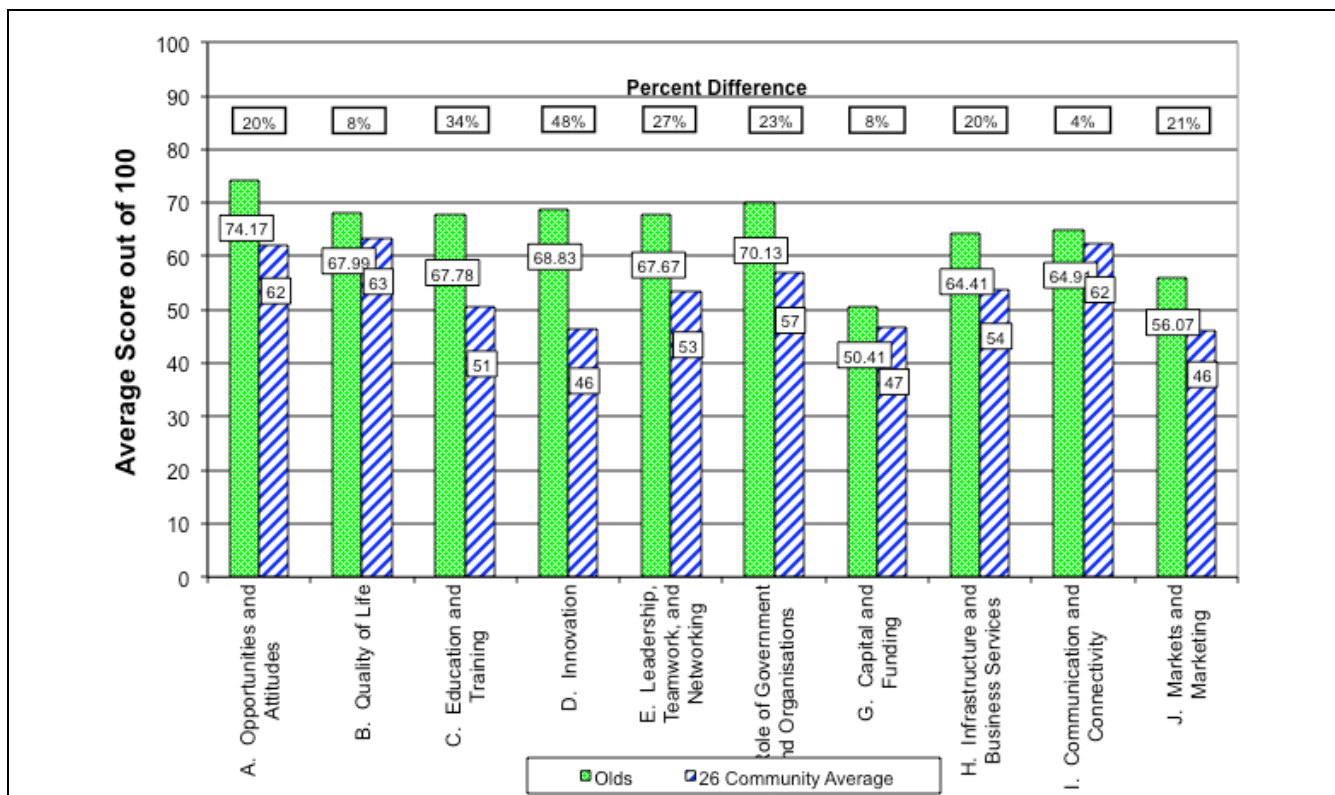


Figure 1: Olds and 26-community Average Section Scores

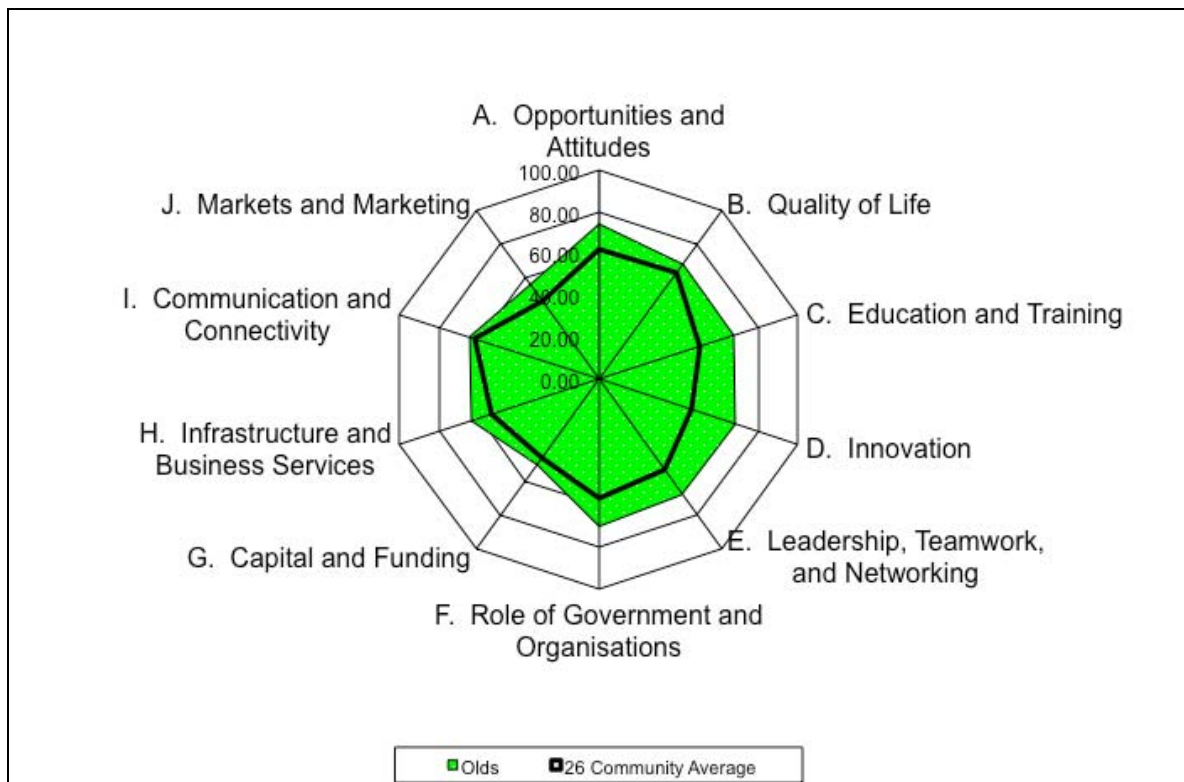


Figure 2: Olds and 26-community Average Section Scores

3.1 Individual Section Scores

The remainder of this report looks at each of the ten sections of the Olds BVI individually including:

- a graph showing the subsection results for each section, and the deviation of those results from the 26-community average.
- a list of all questions in each section showing the score for Olds compared with the average score for the 26 communities. That table has the highest scoring question in relation to the 26-community average highlighted in green, and the lowest in yellow.
- 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 (74 out of 100)


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

The *Opportunities and Attitudes* section was highest-ranking section of the BVI questionnaire in Olds, scoring 20% above the 26-community average.

In the list of ten highest-scoring questions for Olds listed in Appendix A, there are three questions from this section. In fact the second and fifth highest scoring questions in the entire survey are from this section: A4 (successful businesses want to remain, at 7% above the 26-community average) and A6 (area is facing a significant opportunity).

Question A5 (enough employees to meet business' needs) had a highly polarized response: equal amounts of agreement and disagreement.

Figure 3 and Table 8 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.

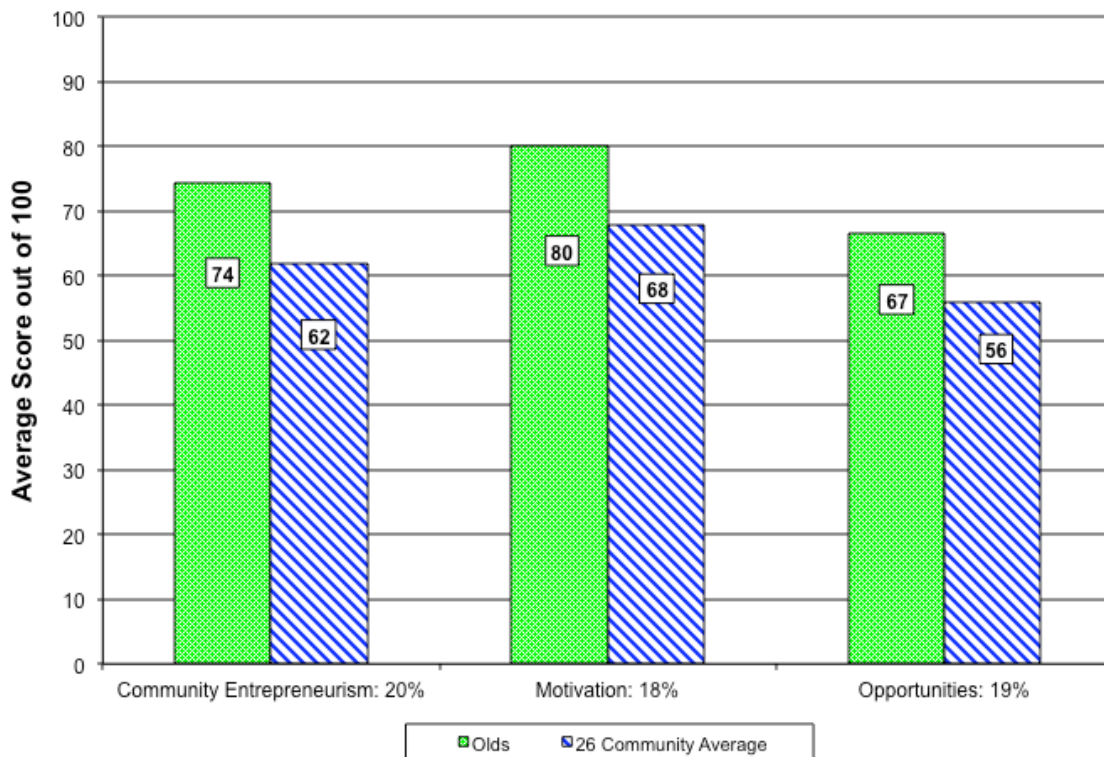


Figure 3: Opportunities and Attitudes Subsection Scores

- The 'Motivation' subsection scored highest (80 out of 100).
- With a score of 67, the 'Opportunities' subsection scored lowest in the section.

Table 8: Opportunities and Attitudes-- Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
Community Entrepreneurism	1. Entrepreneurial ventures and business creation are encouraged and supported by citizens and local governments.	74	58	28%
	2. Individuals are capable of thinking creatively and developing unconventional solutions and innovative business opportunities.	75	65	15%
Motivation	3. Citizens are motivated to learn new skills and to develop existing ones.	72	52	37%
	4. Successful businesses want to remain in the area.	88	82	7%
Opportunities	5. There are employees available to meet business needs.	54	50	8%
	6. The area is facing a significant economic opportunity.	82	63	29%
Section Score		74	62	20%

Legend	Greatest positive difference from 26-community average	Greatest negative difference from 26-community average	Red: Highest and lowest scores for Olds in this section
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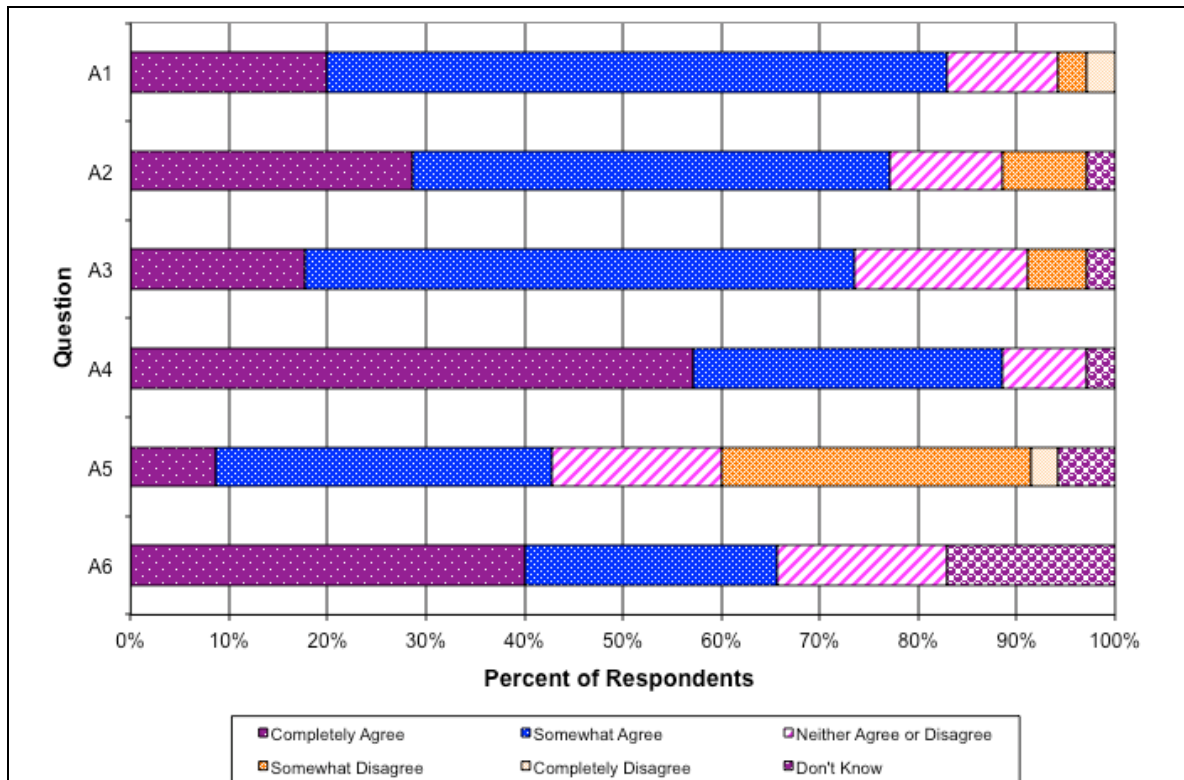


Figure 4: Opportunities and Attitudes-- Question Response Distribution

Highest level of agreement with the question:

- A4 Successful businesses want to remain in the area (89%).

Lowest level of agreement with the question:

- A5 There are employees available to meet business needs (42%).

High levels of “don’t know” responses (more than 15%):

- A6 The area is facing a significant economic opportunity (18%).

Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):

- A5 There are employees available to meet business needs.

For a list of the highest levels of “don’t know” and polarized responses across the entire survey, see Appendices F and G.

Table 9: Opportunities and Attitudes-- Improvements

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

- More direct communication and awareness creation—utilize local TV more. Access to business start-up financing/mentoring. Improve websites for town & OICRD. Expand C of C to full time, street/store front operation.
- Continue to involve community members; listen to needs/desires; build upon sustainability.
- Continue with the strategic planning.
- Easy dialogue between town officers (planning dept. etc.) and citizens.
- Ideas for businesses needed; market opportunities; connect potential investors and mentors through local development fund; promote community as entrepreneurial; Olds College development of more programs that encourage value added businesses; exploit agri-industry history in area.
- Broader support and mentoring to bring more people into the community.
- To ensure the businesses know about the opportunities, attitudes need to be open (not in the 17-19th century) to see or from a new entrepreneurial view, i.e. new businesses, young people. If attitudes are not balanced with new opportunities in the community it may decrease business or economic increase into the community.
- Age group 25 - 34 is not tapped. "Old Boys Network" still exists. Competition not encouraged. Older business people do not like giving up the reins to younger group. Business groups, volunteers, the older group dictates and thus younger business people back away. New ideas needed.
- More media coverage.
- I haven't seen a lot of time, effort or marketing towards entrepreneurial ventures. More information to help create now business.
- I found the groups that should support small business (chamber, Uptown) do little to do this. They don't seek us out and support us in this busy world. We need to seek them out. Business mentors, not competitors,

- need to be available.
- Improve quality of life; make area more desirable to live in.
 - The Olds Institute is doing a significant and varied number of initiatives. Communicating the significance of these to the community is challenging - need to find a way to make that connection.
 - Educate, evaluate, evolve.
 - Ensure Olds is a leader in technology; promote what is available for young people and families such as the Community Learning Centre and the college; ensure a business friendly town and county administration; create services and businesses that allow citizens to shop locally.
 - Work together and analyze opportunities.
 - Better opportunities for public engagement.
 - Do not allow a repeat of the demolition of the old high school. That should have been exposed to the private sector for re-development ideas.
 - Increased use of internet/social media programs. Let individuals outside the area learn about local opportunities.
 - Government support of local businesses.
 - More funding.
 - More support from local gov't and drive to attract new things to Olds.
 - The development of industrial parks. Ensure Olds College continues to grow and expand.
 - Local growers/producers market creation, local investment focus.
 - Less support for multinationals; funding into renewable resource technology (i.e. Capsolar); more community engagement in local issues.
 - Less emphasis on the Olds Institute as the driver and decision influencer on town council. The good ideas of others not connected to Olds Institute are not heard. Too much money spent on Olds Institute initiatives and town bureaucracy is growing.

3.3 Section B: Quality of Life (68 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 fourth highest ranking section for Olds (tied with *Education and Training* and *Leadership and Teamwork*). The list of the highest scoring questions in Appendix A contains two questions from this section: B1 (quality health care—the third highest score in the entire questionnaire and 22% above average) and B4 (plentiful opportunities for community involvement).

Question B6 (available and affordable residential accommodation) is in the list of the ten lowest scoring questions at 22% below average.

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

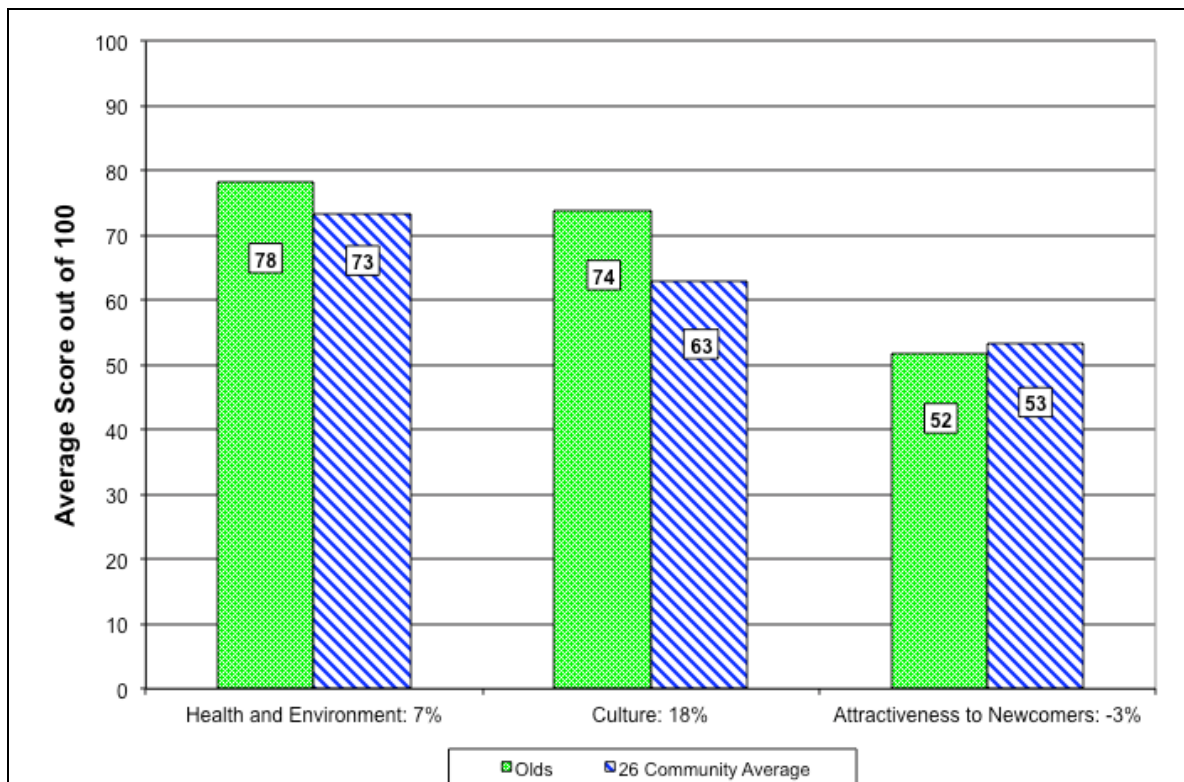


Figure 5: Quality of Life Subsection Scores

- The 'Health and Environment' subsection scored highest.
- 'Attractiveness to Newcomers' scored lowest at 53 out of 100, 3% below the 26-community average.

Table 10: Quality of Life-- Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
Health and Environment	1. A quality health care facility is accessible, well serviced and within a reasonable distance.	86	71	22%
	2. There are no significant environmental pollution issues here.	66	78	-15%
Culture	3. There are frequent high quality cultural events (e.g. festivals, concerts) catering to a range of ages.	71	57	24%
	4. There are plentiful and varying opportunities for involvement (e.g. arts, athletics, politics, church groups).	77	69	12%
Attractiveness to Newcomers	5. Young adults (25-34) consider the area to be a desirable place to live.	57	49	16%
	6. Quality residential accommodation is available and affordable.	46	58	-22%
Section Score		68	63	8%

Legend	Greatest positive difference from 26-community average	Greatest negative difference from 26-community average	Red: Highest and lowest scores for Olds in this section
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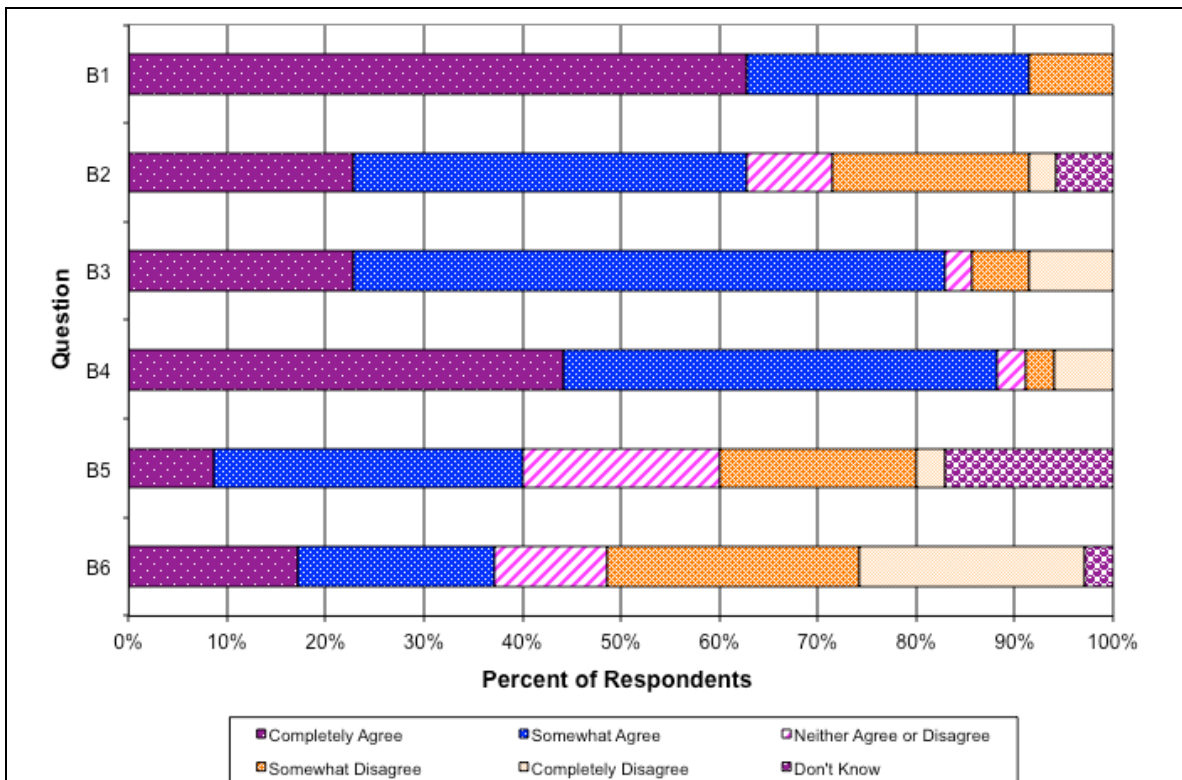


Figure 6: Quality of Life-- Question Response Distribution

Highest level of agreement with the question:

- B1 A quality health care facility is accessible, well serviced and within a reasonable distance (91%)

Lowest level of agreement with the question:

- B6 Quality residential accommodation is available and affordable (38%)

High levels of “don’t know” responses (more than 15%):

- B5 Young adults (25-34) consider the area to be a desirable place to live (18%).

Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):

- None

For a list of the highest levels of “don’t know” and polarized responses across the entire survey, see Appendices F and G.

Table 11: Quality of Life— Improvements

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

- More connection of trails for cross-country biking and skiing; local transportation system; broader choice of restaurants, movie shows; more walkable town - sidewalks etc. along highway 27.
- Encourage walkable community; preserve wetlands; tree reserve.
- Housing - starter homes are needed (price).
- Health care: We need another clinic, but with different leadership. People in the community need to be given back their ability to choose. That was taken away from them with little or no consultation.
- Local transit, even bicycle renting. Fully rented or leased business premises (fewer empty spots), outdoors café spaces.
- Expansion of senior care to allow seniors to remain close to family for

duration; promote wider variety of low cost housing for vulnerable populations.

- More advertising on where new people could get help with setting up residence.
- Affordable housing for individual seeking employment i.e. seasonal, permanent etc. Festivals for the community to take part in. More activities for families need to be created other than bowling, swim or hockey. Ensuring all business areas are considered part of the community not East & West or North & South areas i.e. separate identities or not worth individuals.
- Cultural events are few. Olds has few affordable housing options. Houses and lots are very expensive compared to other towns, more parks and playgrounds. Investing in urban forestry and child-friendly concerts and more community festivals.
- More affordable accommodations for low income or single parent families.
- Of my 4 children, none of them chose to stay in town. They enjoyed growing up here, but did not have the desire to stay.
- It is extremely hard for a young adult to start on their own with no affordable housing. Very important area.
- Wow! So much. Olds is a well-situated town, nice location. But, aside from the Light Up event and Canada Day, there are no town wide events (oh, except the Show & Shine). Young people can't wait to leave this town and jobs are scarce. Affordable housing to encourage youth. People to stay. Attractive jobs or encouragement to start own business.
- Park improvements, walkways, incorporating college with full-spectrum town outdoor recreational opportunities.
- Public transportation. Cooperation and consolidation of social service agencies.
- Get local people to know what's in the community and get them involved.
- Add park space and walking/biking trails; create a pedestrian friendly downtown that remains active and vital after 5 pm; add character to downtown in order to attract visitors.
- It's generally thought that the area has a high quality of life. However working together to improve on what we have.

- Continued focus on culture.
- Olds is quite a fit town. There are pockets of fitness groups - cycling, running, boxing, Tai Chi - this is important to promote and, if promoted, would make Olds an attractive destination or place to call home.
- Very hard to find a family doctor. Proximity to Red Deer and Calgary is an asset.
- Affordable housing and commercial property.
- More rental housing units.
- Cheaper housing way too much to buy or rent.
- Housing prices need to be checked and rent too. More cultural events, health events.
- Trails (connecting). Wing nights locally! Improved movie theatre.
- Ensure streets pavement is kept up, encourage the Ag Society and the Market to move to a more appropriate location (near Hwy#2), spruce up "Uptowne Olds" – mandatory.
- Have lowest property taxes (grow tax revenue by growing the tax base).
- Sustainable environmental regulation on housing and retail development and use of chemicals on residential properties; affordable housing; more cultural and other community engagement events.
- Less materialistic focus; more engaging cultural events.
- Increase access to lower cost housing options; increase childcare options for young families; increase entertainment/recreation options for young people.
- Affordability is key to access for most people. This includes basics such as housing, food, utilities, as well as sports, library, museum, concerts, etc. Utility cost, especially water is a barrier.

3.4 Section C: Education and Training (68 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 achieved the fourth highest score in the Olds questionnaire (tied with *Quality of Life* and *Leadership and Teamwork*). It contains the community's highest scoring question—C6 (quality of schools).

Appendix C, the list of the ten questions that scored highest for Olds when compared with the 26-community average, contains two questions from this section: C2 (availability of other business education at 69% above the average) and C4 (education and business communities work together at 60 % above average).

Figure 7 and Table 12 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.

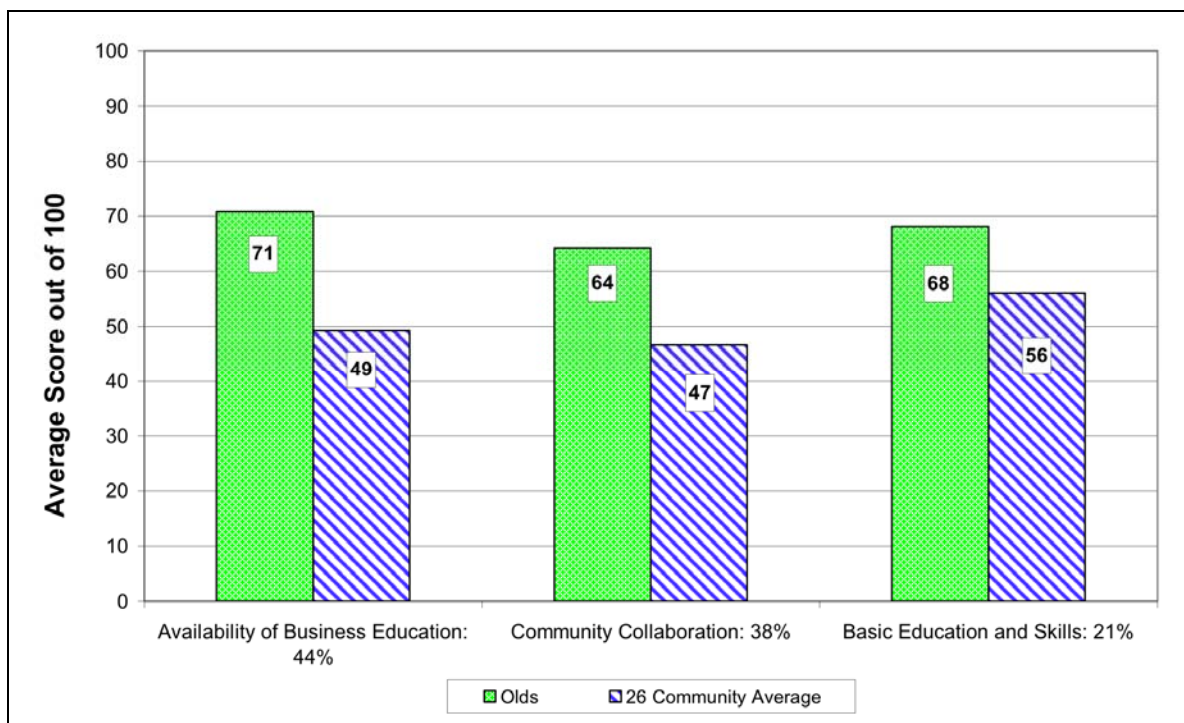


Figure 7: Education and Training Subsection Scores

- The 'Basic Education and Skills' and 'Availability of Business Education' subsections scored well above the 26-community average.
- 'Community Collaboration' scored lower but still above average.

Table 12: Education and Training-- Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
Availability of Business Education	1. Business skills training is available (e.g. business plan development, marketing, accounting, etc.).	68	54	27%
	2. Other business education is available in the area (e.g. personal development, professional forums, etc.).	74	44	69%
Community Collaboration	3. Business mentors and/or role models are available in the area.	62	50	25%
	4. The education and business communities work together to provide convenient training for businesses.	68	42	60%
Basic Education and Skills	5. A pool of skilled labour is available to local businesses in the area.	48	38	27%
	6. There are quality elementary and secondary schools in the area.	93	79	18%
Section Score		68	51	34%

Legend	Greatest positive difference from 26-community average	Greatest negative difference from 26-community average	Red: Highest and lowest scores for Olds in this section
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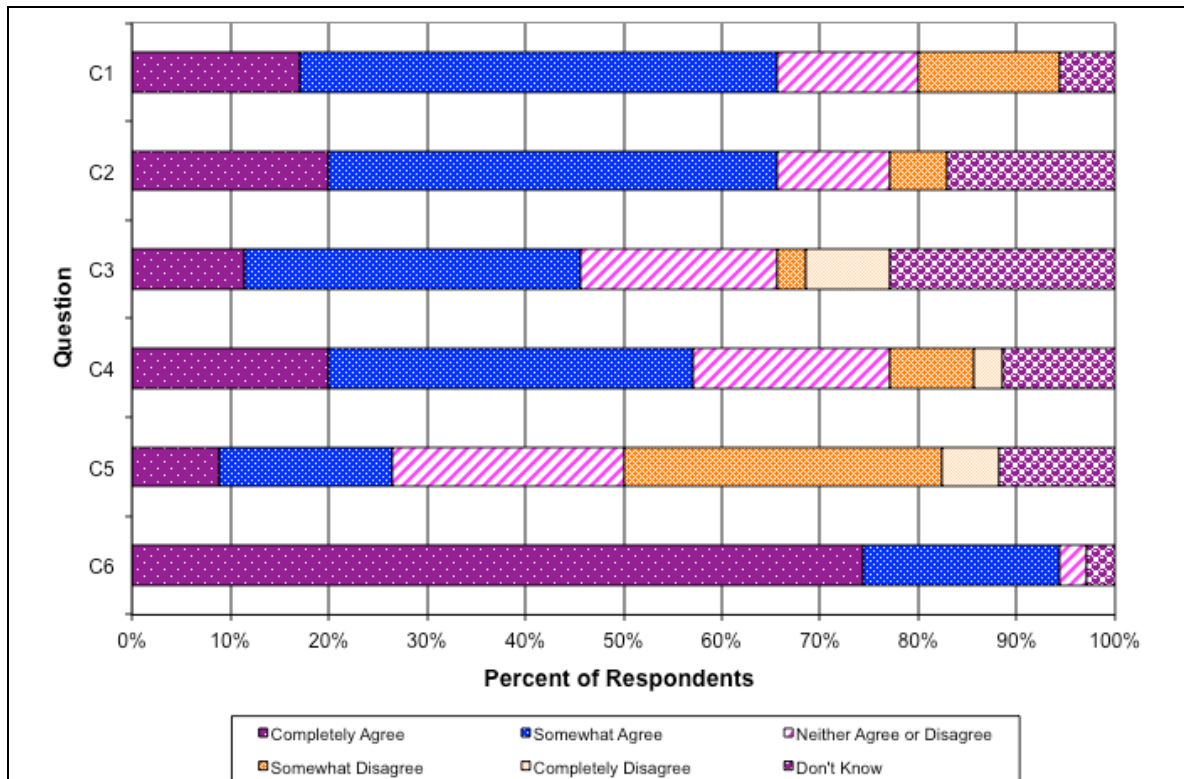


Figure 8: Education and Training Question Response Distribution

Highest level of agreement with the question:

- C6 There are quality elementary and secondary schools in the area (95%)

Lowest level of agreement with the question:

- C5 A pool of skilled labour is available to local businesses in the area (26%)

Highest level of “don’t know” responses (more than 15%):

- C2 Other business education is available in the area (e.g. personal development, professional forums, etc.) (18%)
- C3 Business mentors and/or role models are available in the area (22%)

Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):

- None

For a list of the highest levels of “don’t know” and polarized responses across the entire survey, see Appendices F and G.

Table 13: Education and Training—Improvements

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

- The college is starting to implement a business/education entrepreneurial program to address some of these issues (CIRE). Businesses need to actively support CIRE; we need a SME incubator in Olds with trained staff/mentors to assist with business planning and start-up. Need for a "Business Succession" program in which bank, businesses and education work together.
- Utilize college, CLC, Bell E-Learning, library.
- High school CLC collaborates with college - this is awesome!
- Better student funding
- Skilled labour depends upon the type of business looking for workers. College need to be approached to put on training courses if needed—the willingness is there.

- Mentoring programs for youth; programs for apprenticeship.
- Create awareness of training and upskilling programs for mature workers, workers requiring transitions to new work because of physical limitations, youth.
- I think the local college has recently started a business course, which is an improvement already.
- Ensure education is available in areas of new businesses i.e. holistic, self-care, construction etc., more visible mentors need to be identified and utilized with the youth in the community, more work with businesses and local educational providers in the area.
- Focus on skills required for current businesses and partnering to bring new businesses to town and have required training in place.
- To me, there are many groups providing training opportunities but they appear to be "silos" rather than co-operative or networking or collaborative organizations.
- More opportunities for people to get the training required. To have the ability specific training as it relates to business.
- As a small business owner, I felt I am alone, even though I am a Chamber and Uptowne member. I didn't have a business background and it has been difficult trying to get info from other businesses about day-to-day operating questions. Businesses need to start really talking to one another for support. It's great to plan events, but what about the "meat and potatoes" of running a business?
- Better co-operation between industry and college; targeting highest priority, practical needs for gov't support.
- Evaluate what is needed and get people involved.
- Utilize the CLC & Olds College for more business/entrepreneurial training; town could promote and host evening sessions for start-up businesses.
- We are fortunate in having a college and an aggressive chamber who provide education and training need to continue to use new tech and systems.
- Continue to emphasize broad range of options, not just traditional bricks and mortar. Web- based, just in time, etc.

- Again capitalization on the FTTP project.
- Lunchtime afternoon business workshops.
- More funding from employers, more choices to choose from in town of Olds
- More funding for education and more promotion of what is available.
- Have a pamphlet made with all of the courses/training opportunities.
- Olds is blessed with outstanding schools and Olds College. Keep doing what they do best.
- Provide community events on entrepreneurship and business development, integrate business education into secondary schooling, provide generic business programs at Olds College.
- Education and training is more than acceptable for the area.
- Increase business training available in evenings; increase technical training @ high school level.
- Olds College is wonderful institution but is missing the opportunity to provide education and training for the many "human services" that are in the community. This includes services for seniors, children and adults with disabilities etc.

3.5 Section D: Innovation (69 out of 100)

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

This was Olds' third-highest scoring section. Appendix C, the list of the highest scoring questions relative to the 26-community average, is topped by question D1 (forums on technology), which came in at 146% above average.

The list of questions with high levels of "don't know" responses contains two questions from this section: D4 (research done in the area is relevant to local needs) at 28% of respondents, and D2 (support for innovative business research and development) at 26 %.

Figure 9 and Table 14 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.

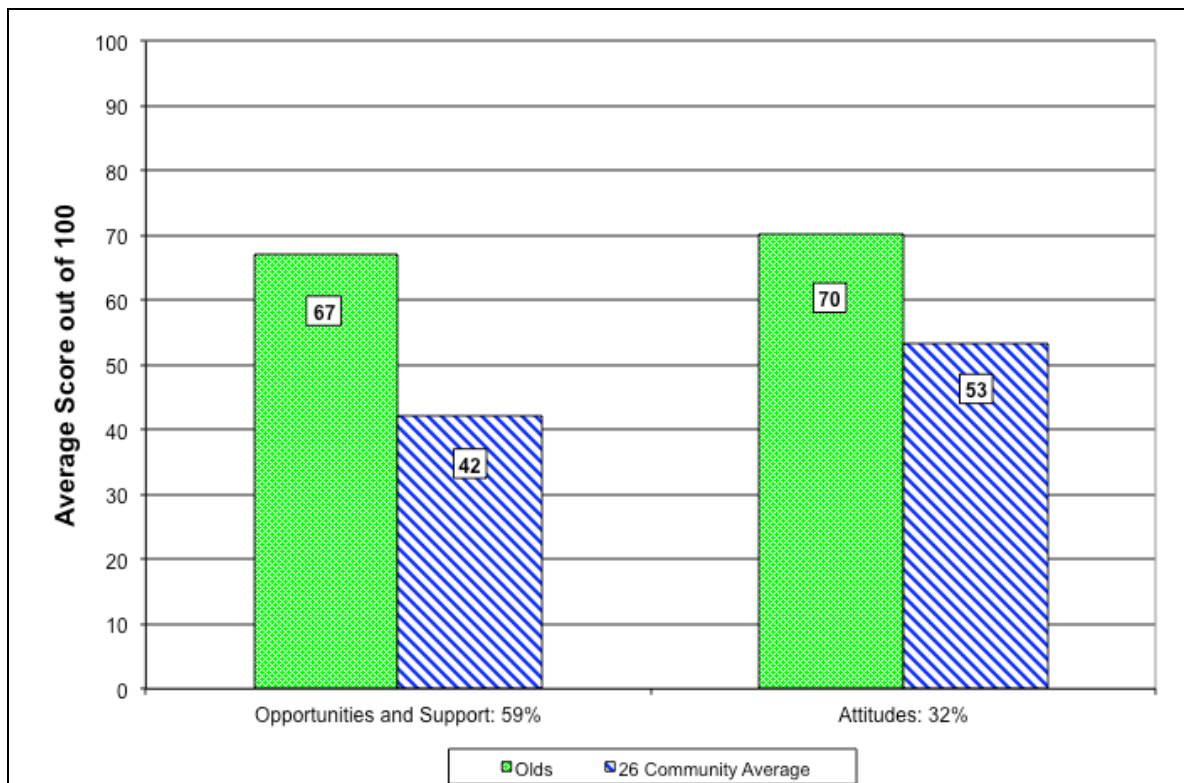


Figure 9: Innovation Subsection Scores

- Both subsections scored very high, at 67 and 70.

Table 14: Innovation-- Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
Opportunities and Support	1. There are formal and informal forums (conferences, workshops, association breakfast meetings) on technology and technology applications.	77	31	146%
	2. Support and assistance for innovative business research and development is available.	62	45	35%
	3. Local businesses demonstrate creativity and innovation in seeking new customers.	60	52	17%
Attitudes	4. Research done in the area or region is relevant to the area's business needs and interests.	68	46	46%
	5. Innovation is valued and recognized by business people.	72	59	22%
Section Score		69	46	48%

Legend	Greatest positive difference from 26-community average	Greatest negative difference from 26-community average	Red: Highest and lowest scores for Olds in this section
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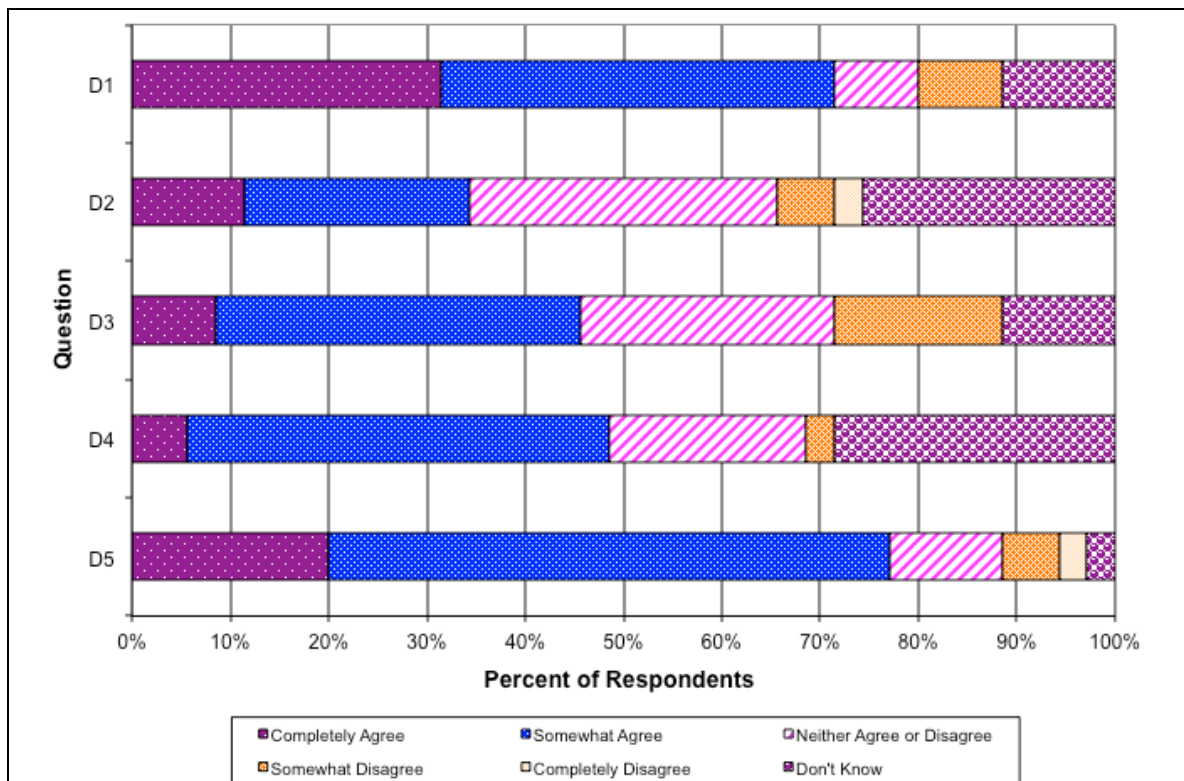


Figure 10: Innovation-- Question Response Distribution

Highest level of agreement with the question:

- D1 There are formal and informal forums (conferences, workshops, association breakfast meetings) on technology and technology applications (71%).

Lowest level of agreement with the question:

- D2 Support and assistance for innovative business research and development is available (33%)

High levels of “don’t know” responses (more than 15%):

- D2 Support and assistance for innovative business research and development is available (26%).
- D4 Research done in the area or region is relevant to the area's business needs and interests (28%).

Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):

- None

For a list of the highest levels of “don’t know” and polarized responses across the entire survey, see Appendices F and G.

Table 15: Innovation—Improvements

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

- We have active Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions clubs that interact, network not necessarily on technology; Olds Institute is big push for technology improvements; Olds College/CLC utilize technology.
- This town has more happening in all areas we need a day to have 36 hours to accommodate.
- Keep educating the community as to what is available to them. The college has the Bell e-Learning for example and many citizens still do not realize that they can and should access it.
- Communication between like businesses (clustering) or like-minded people for information gathering.

- Improve visibility of community economic development office; improve website integrating business opportunities, business directory, gaps identification mechanism--ask the public what they would like to see; encourage youth/20-30/31-40 more in planning and visioning networking conferences in the local business community.
- Communication i.e. a community service and business guide delivered each year so all can be in it. More networkers with all groups in the community.
- There is a segment of society who want nothing to do with innovation. There is a small segment pushing for innovation. Money stands in the way of some. Those that can pursue innovative solutions should be encouraged, or if nothing changes - nothing changes.
- More communication from town council, Chamber of Commerce to the community.
- More communication about new projects.
- This could be an area that is happening more today than I am aware of. If it is and I am unaware, possibly more resources need to be put here.
- Recognize it and fund its practical applications.
- A lot will depend on a "Culture of Use" being adopted when the Olds Connected Community is lit up.
- Embrace it and encourage it.
- Ensure that technology is available to the local population that is equal to or better than what can be offered in a large city.
- Locate support for innovation business and look for opportunities.
- As FTTP is built, education of tech innovation needs to follow.
- Local capital formation and availability along with mentorship.
- Promote more.
- More promotion of what's available.
- Ensure BVI is fully utilized. Attract businesses that use high tech communications to service their customers.
- Provide workshops and develop new advertisement methods or utilize

technology (i.e. Facebook and Twitter).

- Less of a conservative approach to business; more research into community effects of business.
- Information/conference on "frugal" innovation; encouragement of "innovation culture."
- The Chamber has provided some excellent courses to improve employer/employee skills this past year through funding from AEI. This employer/employee skill development is also provided through the Centre for Employment (accredited supports). This is helping to create a skilled and creative workforce in Olds and area. The availability of video conferencing etc. is an asset.

3.6 Section E: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking (68 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 section was the fourth highest scoring section of the survey for Olds, tied with *Quality of Life* and *Education and Training*.

Question E4 (collaboration with neighbouring communities) ranked fourth in Appendix C, the list of questions with the highest score relative to other communities, at 58% above average.

Figure 11 and Table 16 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.

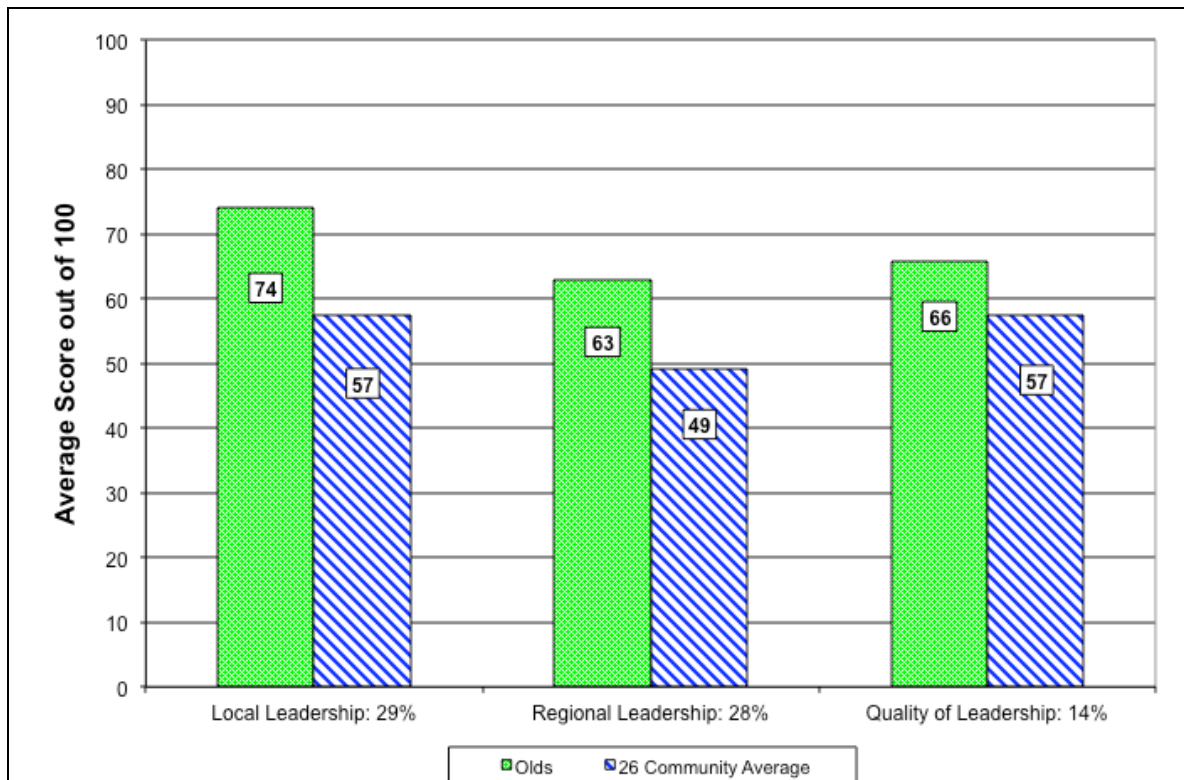


Figure 11: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking Subsection Scores

- 'Local Leadership' is the highest scoring subsection with a score of 74 (29% above average).
- The lowest scoring subsection, 'Regional Leadership' has a score of 63 (28% above average).

Table 16: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking-- Individual Question Scores

		Score out of 100		
Subsection	Question	Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
Local Leadership	1. Business and area groups/sectors have a voice in key local government decisions (e.g. infrastructure improvements, transportation).	75	57	32%
	2. There are adequate opportunities (informal and formal) where business people and entrepreneurs can network with each other.	73	55	34%
	3. Groups with similar interests can form alliances/networks and cooperate to achieve goals.	74	61	21%
Regional Leadership	4. We collaborate and cooperate with neighbouring communities.	63	40	58%
	5. Cooperatives and joint community initiatives are encouraged and respected.	63	57	11%
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.	73	66	11%
	7. Qualified supervisors and managers (and management services) are available to small business	54	44	21%
Section Score		68	53	27%

Legend	Greatest positive difference from 26-community average	Greatest negative difference from 26-community average	Red: Highest and lowest scores for Olds in this section
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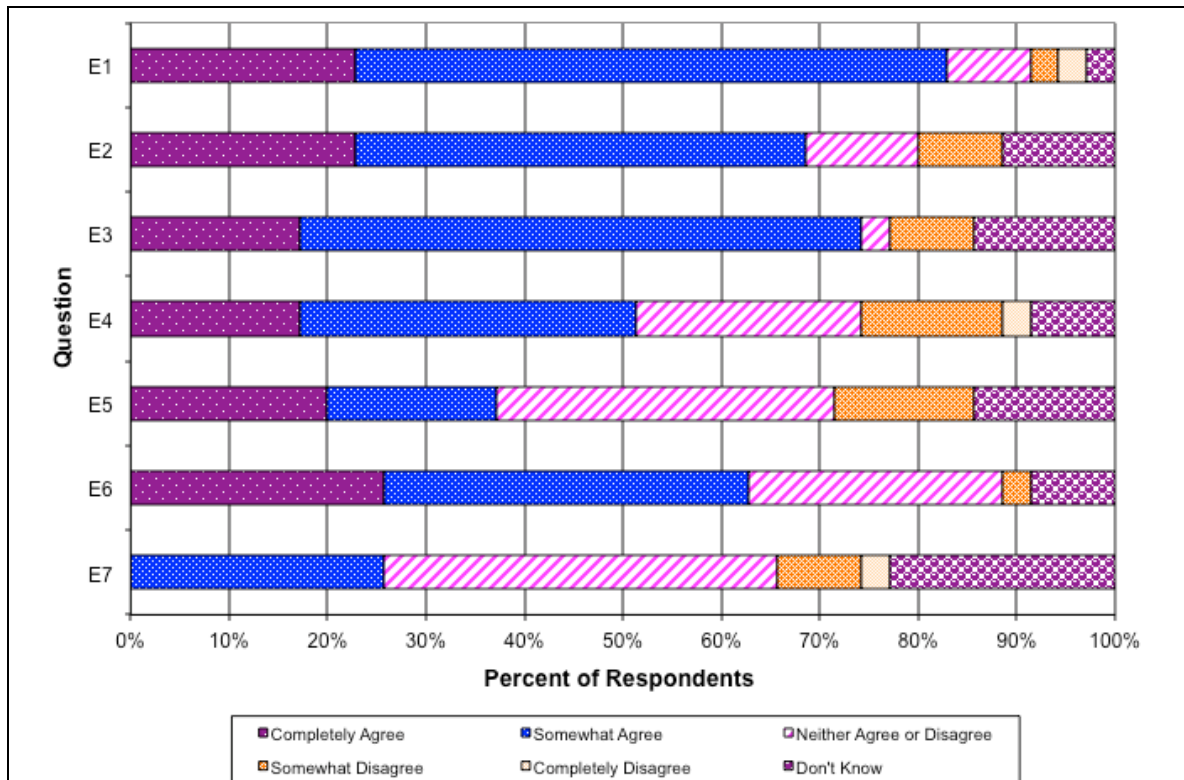


Figure 12: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking Question Response Distribution

Highest level of agreement with the question:

- E1 Business and area groups/sectors have a voice in key local government decisions (e.g. infrastructure improvements, transportation) (82%).

Lowest level of agreement with the question:

- E7 Qualified supervisors and managers (and management services) are available to small business (26%)

Highest level of “don’t know” responses (more than 15%):

- E7 Qualified supervisors and managers (and management services) are available to small business (23%)

Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):

- None

For a list of the highest levels of “don’t know” and polarized responses across the entire survey, see Appendices F and G.

Table 17: 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.

- Chamber needs to become a full time storefront operation. We could use a business incubator/CFDC. College could provide more one on one adult business programs.
- Mentor younger members for succession planning in the future. Sometimes difficult to balance with time.
- This town has more networking than any place I know of.
- Increase in opportunities for informal networking. Collaboration between competing businesses.
- Continue collaboration with Olds Institute essential members and associate members; improve the quality of engagement at OI/representation; improve communication and marketing (reporting to community) of active partnering/collaborative projects; invite private businesses and individuals to get involved in projects that fit with their operations/services.
- Any of the above with all groups in the community would be good.
- Time to let younger business people take up the cause.
- There appears to be too much competition between towns and the county, and not enough collaborative communication.
- Continue to create networking opportunities. Continue to ask the community for their input.
- All of the above should be addressed and initiated.
- Targeting real, achievable projects and not wasting time, energy on navel gazing, conceptualizing.
- Educate.
- Ensure the community can offer all services that are demanded/expected by top level/educated individual leaders.
- Improve communications to engage more people.

- Needs to be better coordination of opportunities. Too many things competing for consideration.
- Work with Olds College schools of local entrepreneurship and innovation.
- Very good foundation of networks already exists, need to try and attract more people aged 25 - 40.
- More training.
- Promotion.
- Focused leadership seminars for business, especially at the Middle School and High School/college levels. This is where it starts - locally, nationally and internationally.
- More networking with other municipalities (Didsbury, Sundre, Mountain View County).
- More inter-community activities and events; community support for leaders.
- The courses via AEI, Chamber and Centre for Employment are helpful and could be expanded.

3.7 Section F: Role of Government and Organizations (70 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 second highest for Olds. Appendix A, the list of the highest scoring questions, contains two questions from this section: F1 (government recognizes the value of business), which was the fourth-highest scoring question in the survey, and F3 (a recognized organization to help businesses) which scored 47% above the 26-community average.

Figure 13 and Table 18 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.

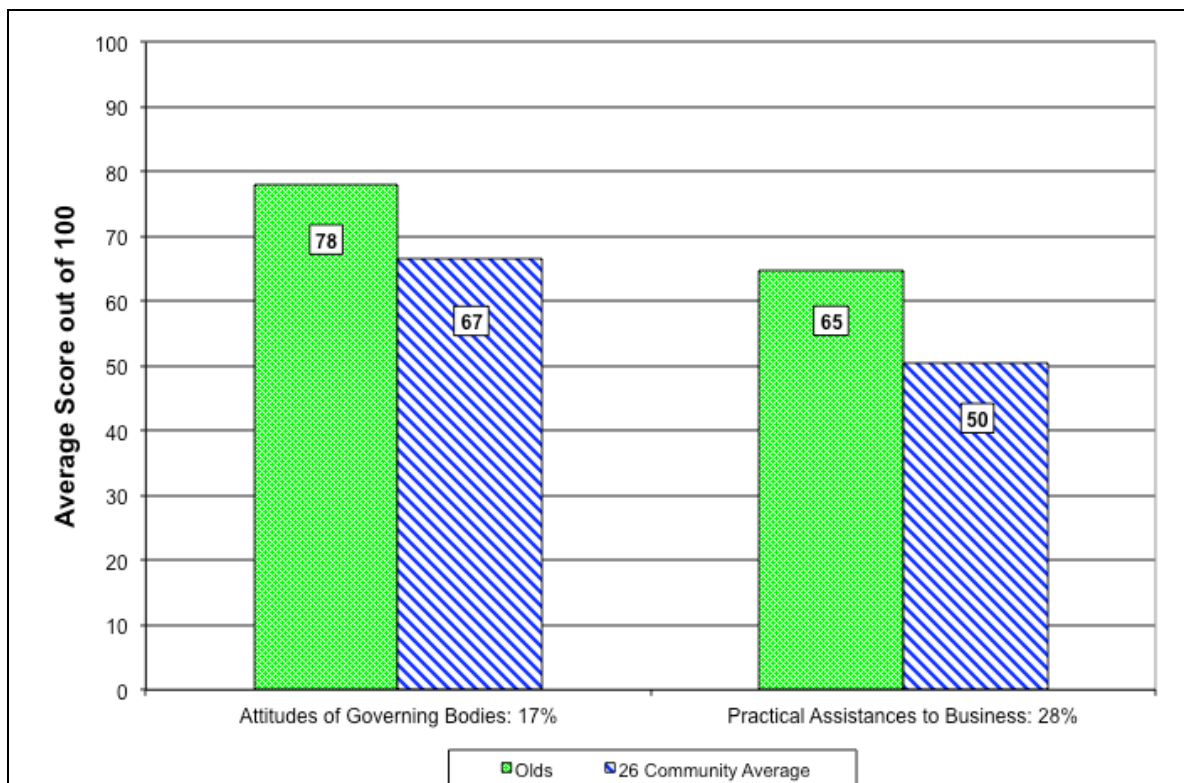


Figure 13: Role of Government and Organizations Subsection Scores

- The ‘Attitudes of Governing Bodies’ subsection is the highest scoring subsection with a score of 78.
- The ‘Practical Assistance to Business’ subsection scored lower with a score of 65.

Table 18: Role of Government and Organizations-- Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Olds	26 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.	84	74	13%
	2. The governing body is committed to recruiting or attracting businesses to the area, and uses strategies or incentives to do so.	70	56	25%
Practical Assistance to Business	3. There is a recognized organization or individual available to assist people identify, assess, expand and/or create business opportunities.	78	53	47%
	4. Officials make it easy/reasonable for businesses to start or expand.	61	50	23%
	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.	54	48	13%
Section Score		70	57	23%

Legend	Greatest positive difference from 26-community average	Greatest negative difference from 26-community average	Red: Highest and lowest scores for Olds in this section
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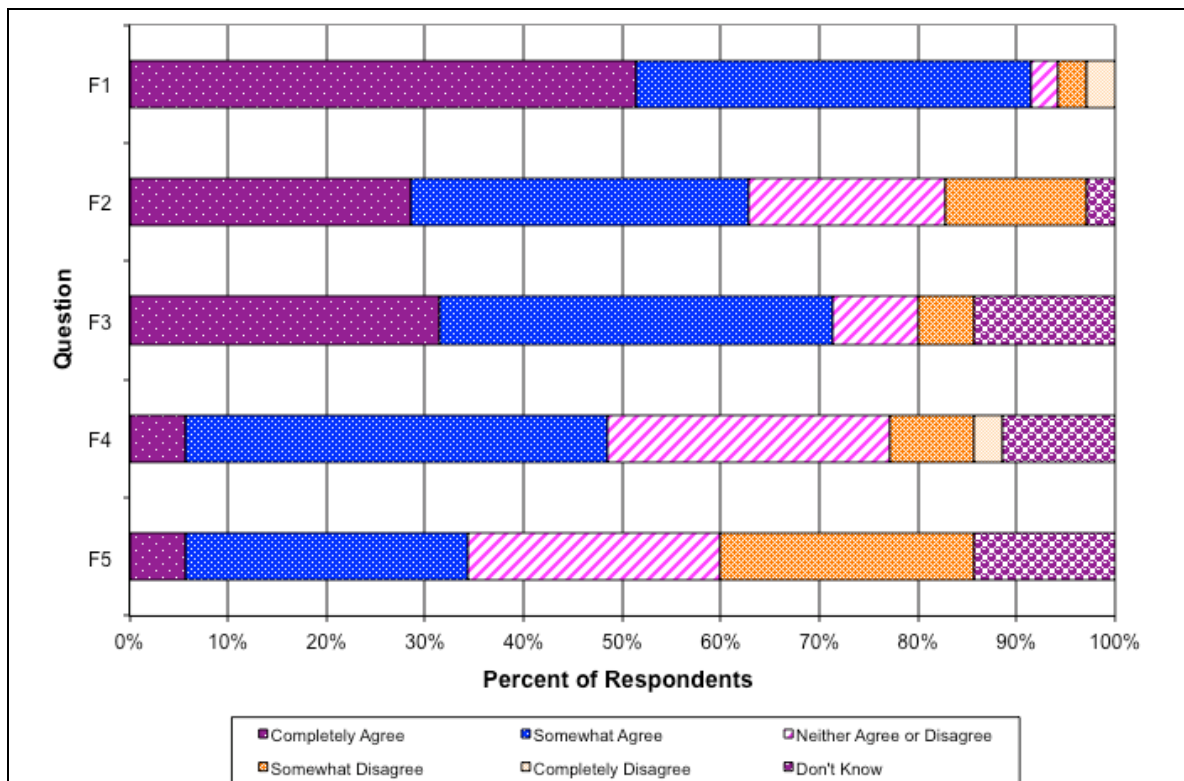


Figure 14: Role of Government and Organizations-- Question Response Distribution

Highest level of agreement with the question:

- F1 The governing bodies (town councils, regional district) recognize that businesses are important and valuable for the development of the area (91%)

Lowest level of agreement with the question:

- F5 Local regulations, policies, rules, bylaws and zoning are easily understood by business people, making it easy/reasonable for businesses to expand or start up (33%).

Highest level of “don’t know” responses (more than 15%):

- None

Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):

- None

For a list of the highest levels of “don’t know” and polarized responses across the entire survey, see Appendices F and G.

Table 19: 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.

- Town planning and operations and the economic development office lack capacity and dedicated resources (capital/human) to do the job that is needed for the rate of growth in the area.
- Gov’t could have small business funding programs.
- Refine the process— sometimes it is just too wordy and overwhelming for the applicant.
- Expansion of “bizpal” awareness, more communication via media to inform citizens of processes.
- Clarify and simplify and facilitate ease through systems for approvals;

improve transparency of process and access to information.

- Ensure info is out to help businesses do the above; ensure incentive are there for businesses to remain in the community.
- Improvements to obtaining all necessary documents, by-laws etc. Mentoring.
- A more user-friendly town of Olds website.
- To make sure the processes to start or expand a business is easily done.
- Keep taxes low while strategically improving infrastructure and quality of life. Do not use tax dollars to attract businesses that will compete with the existing businesses that generate the tax dollars.
- Get involved and get others involved with your government.
- Government make the first contact more valuable, more informative for those that are looking to locate with area. Renew regs, policies, by-laws etc. to be more friendly to those wanting to expand or start-up.
- Establish a mechanism where business and political leaders can discuss municipal policy impacts on business.
- Promote more.
- Less top-heaviness. Bureaucrats are overwhelming.
- Greater awareness of funding opportunities. Local, provincial, federal and international foundations.
- Encourage a long-range development plan.
- More involvement/assistance by the OI to help new business.
- Government is only helpful for big companies like Wal-Mart, which destroys smaller companies.
- The town council of Olds defers (seems to) leadership and governance responsibilities to the Olds Institute. They are not easily accessible, through media or in person. Information about decisions is not readily available (many in- camera sessions noted in council minutes).

3.8 Section G: Capital and Funding (50 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 scored lowest for Olds (although it should be noted that its score is still 8% above average).

Questions G4 (access to informal local investors) and G2 (access to formal investors) scored third and fourth lowest across the entire survey (see Appendix B). Question G2 also scored 14% below the community average (see Appendix D).

Every question in this section showed a very high number of “don’t know” responses (see Appendix F).

Question G1 (lenders will take chances) had a very polarized response (see Appendix G).

Figure 15 and Table 20 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.

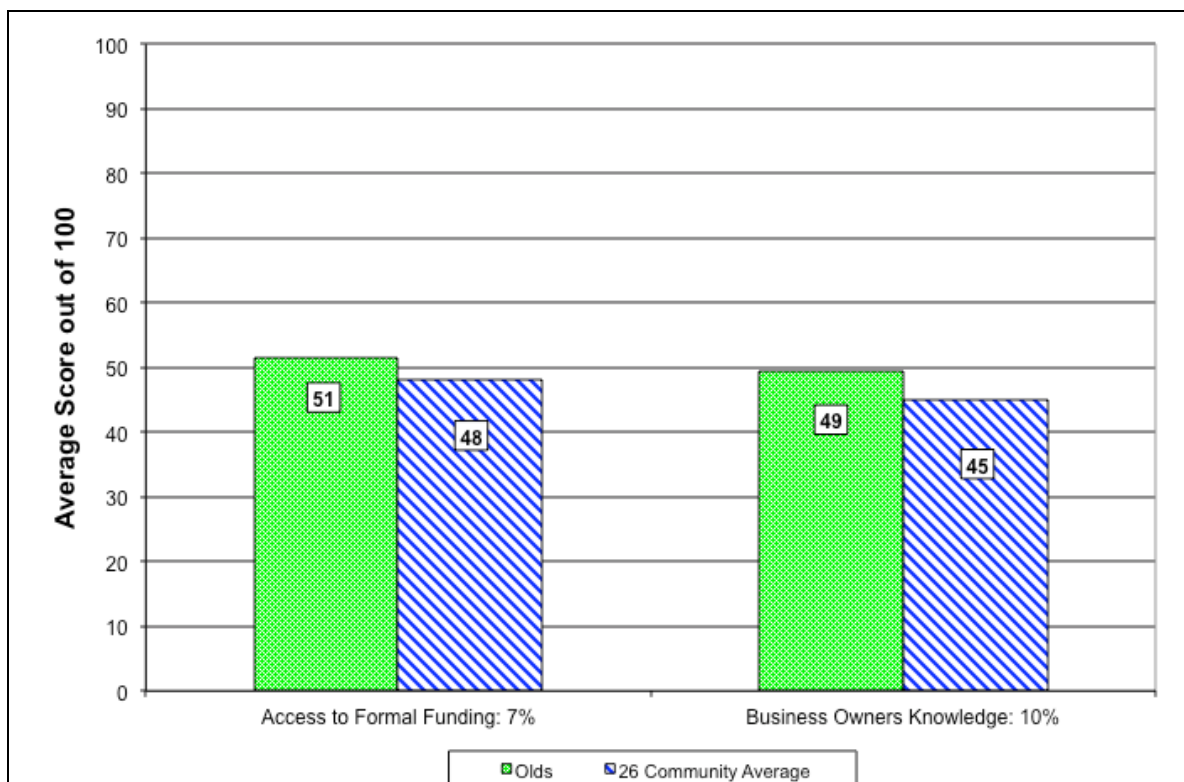


Figure 15: Capital and Funding Subsection Scores

- Both subsections scored almost the same as each other and the 26-community average.

Table 20: Capital and Funding-- Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
Access to formal funding	1. Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas.	50	46	8%
	2. Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding).	43	51	-14%
	3. Costs of capital (e.g. Interest, application fees) are manageable for entrepreneurs.	60	48	27%
Business Owners' Knowledge	4. Local business can access informal local investors.	43	42	1%
	5. Businesses have a firm understanding of financial management (e.g. cash flow, reading financial statements).	56	47	18%
Section Score		50	47	8%

Legend	Greatest positive difference from 26-community average	Greatest negative difference from 26-community average	Red: Highest and lowest scores for Olds in this section
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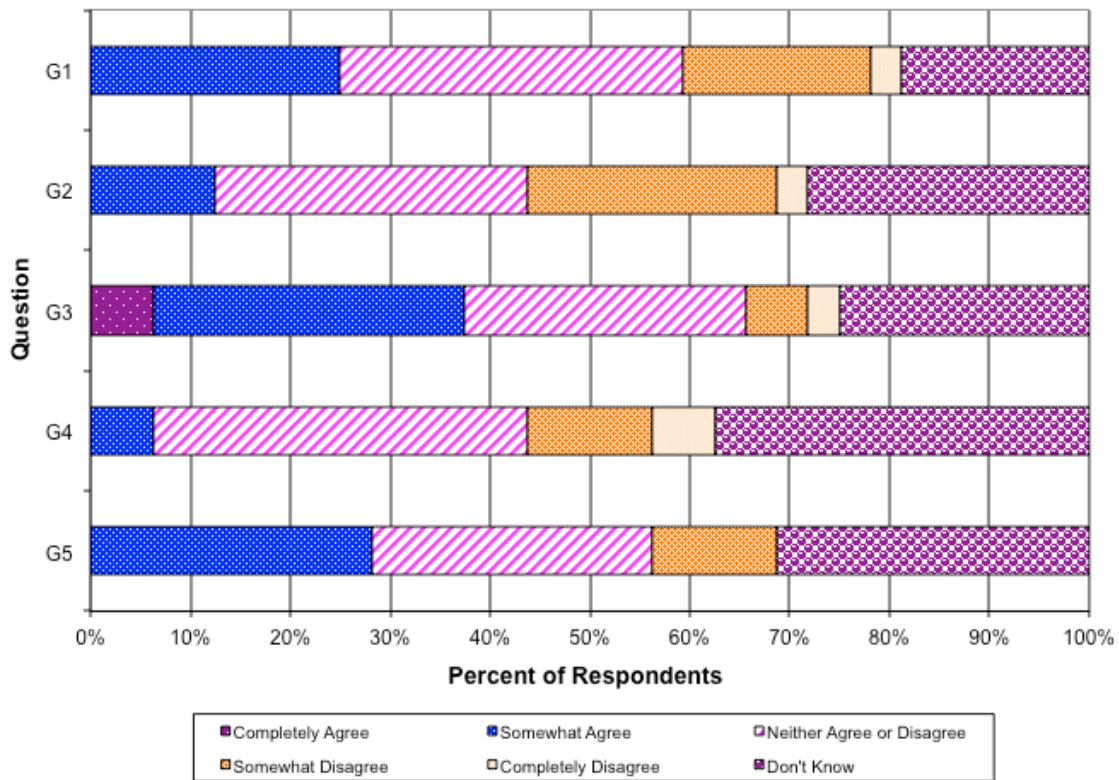


Figure 16: Capital and Funding Question Response Distribution

Highest level of agreement with the question:

- G3 Costs of capital (e.g. Interest, application fees) are manageable for entrepreneurs) (38%)

Lowest level of agreement with the question:

- G4 Local business can access informal local investors (6%)

High levels of “don’t know” responses (more than 15%):

- G1 Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas (19%)
- G2 Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding) (28%)
- G3 Costs of capital (e.g. Interest, application fees) are manageable for entrepreneurs) (26%)
- G4 Local business can access informal local investors (37%)
- G5 Businesses have a firm understanding of financial management (e.g. cash flow, reading financial statements) (31%)

Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):

- G1 Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas

For a list of the highest levels of “don’t know” and polarized responses across the entire survey, see Appendices F and G.

Table 21: Capital and Funding—Improvements

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

- I would like to see a collaborative business succession program put in place where bankers, exiting business owners and education and business support services come together to make it easier for new start-ups and business takeovers - bankers need to start being more flexible and supportive.
- Capital funding is out there.
- Share information about availability of funding and grants.
- Improve knowledge of programs and access to services of community futures business link, entrepreneurial training, business networking and mentorship opportunities.
- Unsure. Not enough info found to base a decision in the community; If economy is causing local services to increase pricing there is no local economic aid to ensure business still flourish in low times of development to ensure businesses stay.
- Better communication avenues.
- I think the ability to access funding has got tougher due to the economy. I'm not sure about the ability to source informal investors. This could be an area to promote.
- As stated previously, it has difficult to assess how we are doing as a business. Simple, valuable, accessible and reasonable knowledge opportunities need to be available to us (small business). We need some confidence.
- Sustained growth will create a secure climate for investment.

- Economic development Co-op or Corp. Local opportunity bonds.
- College could offer short term/evening courses on financial literacy, etc.
- Develop sources of funding and courses to help business prepare info for lenders.
- Local opportunity bonds?
- Explore local equity capital formation alternatives and notion of micro-credit.
- Bring in/invite alternative lenders from Red Deer and Calgary, Community Futures, Business Development Bank of Canada, Alberta Women Entrepreneurs, CDN Youth Business Foundation.
- More public transportation and advertising.
- Need public transportation, as there is none.
- Seminars on business management for all levels, particularly new small businesses; increase awareness of broader funding opportunities.
- OI investment; Town of Olds Investment; formation of local investors group.
- The relationship between banks, businesses, and not for profits is vital for entrepreneurship. Local banks are active in Chamber etc. This needs to keep happening.

3.9 Section H: Infrastructure and Business Services (64 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 was the sixth highest scoring section.

Appendix F, the list of questions with high levels of “don’t know” responses, contains two questions from this section: H7 (quality rental space available for business) and H6 (affordable rental space). Question H6 also appears in Appendix G, the list of questions with highly polarized responses (equal amounts of agreement and disagreement).

Figure 17 and Table 22 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.

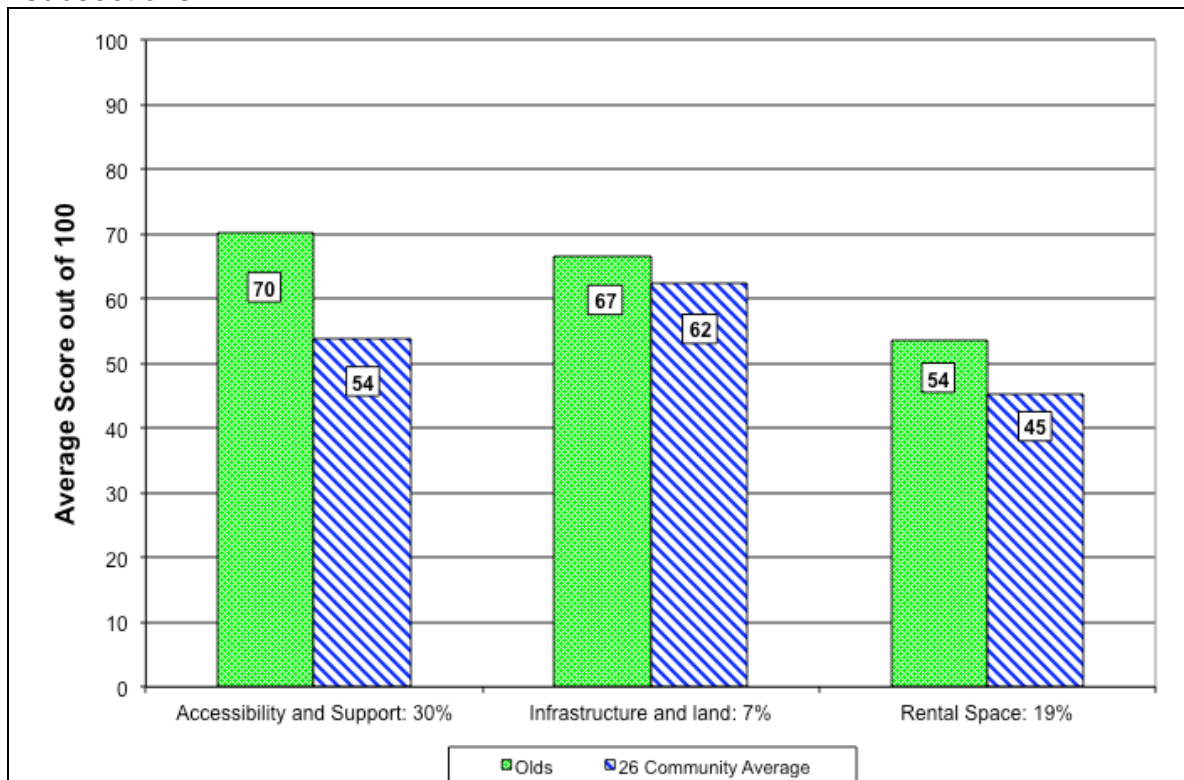


Figure 17: Infrastructure and Business Services Subsection Scores

- The ‘Accessibility and Support’ subsection was the highest scoring subsection of the section with a score of 70.
- The lowest was ‘Rental Space’ with a score of 45.

Table 22: Infrastructure and Business Services-- Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
Accessibility and Support	1. There are vibrant, active downtown areas or community cores.	66	47	39%
	2. Core business areas are easily accessible by all users (e.g. parking, sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.).	66	61	8%
	3. Adequate business services (e.g. printing services, computer help, graphic design, etc.) are available.	79	58	37%
Infrastructure and Land	4. Existing infrastructure (e.g. local roads, water, power) is of good quality, well maintained, serviced, and modern.	67	68	-1%
	5. A variety of buildings and commercial land is available to accommodate business expansion, attraction, or creation.	66	56	19%
Rental space	6. Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	52	45	16%
	7. Quality rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	55	46	21%
Section Score		64	54	20%

Legend	Greatest positive difference from 26-community average	Greatest negative difference from 26-community average	Red: Highest and lowest scores for Olds in this section
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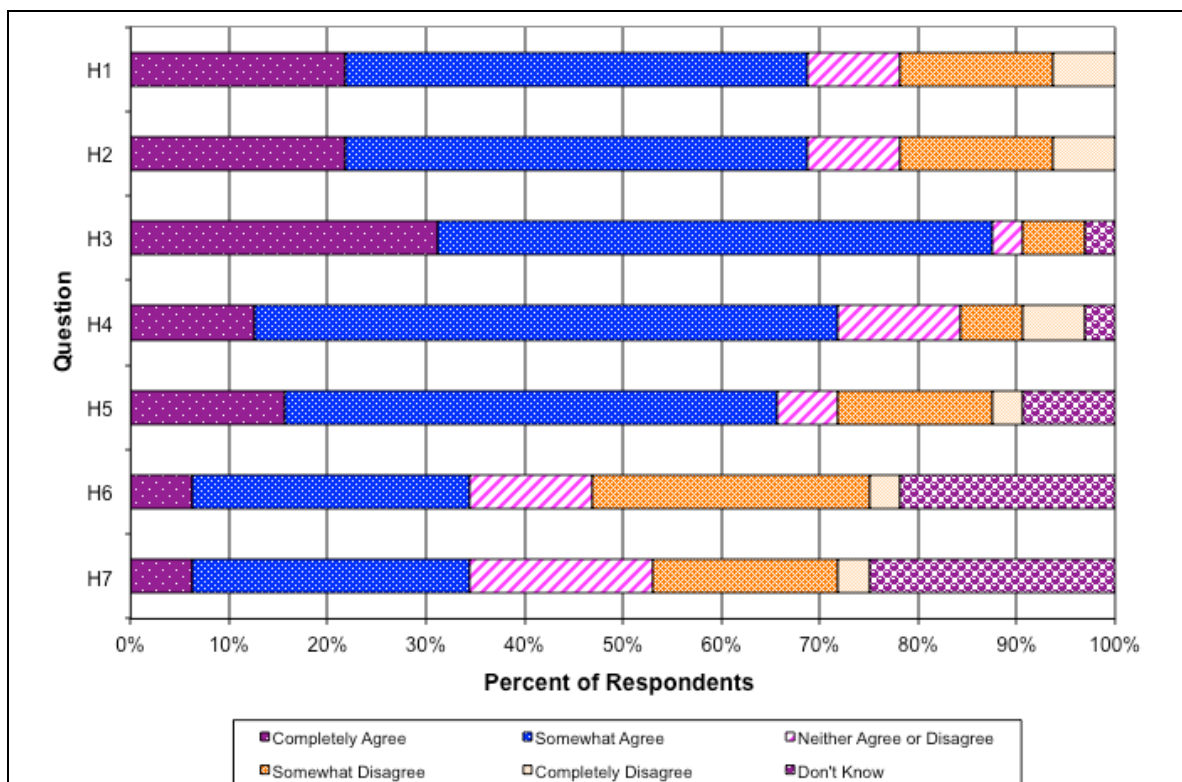


Figure 18: Infrastructure and Business Services Question Response Distribution

Highest level of agreement with the question:

- H3 Adequate business services (e.g. printing services, computer help, graphic design, etc.) are available (87%).

Lowest level of agreement with the question

- H6 Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs (34%)
- H7 Quality rental space is available to accommodate business needs (34%).

High levels of “don’t know” responses (more than 15%):

- H6 Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs (22%)
- H7 Quality rental space is available to accommodate business needs (26%).

Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement:

- H6 Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs.

For a list of the highest levels of “don’t know” and polarized responses across the entire survey, see Appendices F and G.

Table 23: 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.

- We have aged infrastructure and much work and \$ is needed to bring it up to the level needed for our growth pattern. More money is need in the budget for this. An uptown 'public market' would help to create more activity - expand business zone etc.
- Infrastructure: lifecycle plan for time/cost effective improvements; local promotion.
- The partnership of uptown/museum/town heritage is working on Main Street and heritage buildings.
- The town core is struggling to remain vibrant. It is not because of lack of

trying - there has been a shift in the community with development on west side. The difficulty is finding business that will bring shoppers downtown.

- More attractive rental or leasing agreements (affordable).
- Rehabilitation of sub par business properties incentives to improve; strong capital improvement commitment that is communicated to the community relating to w/s/sidewalks/pavement/lighting.
- Talk to business owners and find out what is needed.
- Use builders and make affordable for business to be part of the community; not all areas are visibility beautified to bring people to the businesses.
- Welcome package for all new businesses.
- Especially at this time of the year, potholes make it almost impossible to enter/exit some businesses.
- There is a huge parking issue in the downtown. Not enough stalls. More computer or graphic design businesses would improve the waiting times.
- Fix Hwy 27! Put in sidewalks. Connect it to downtown.
- Develop additional area for light industrial use. Look at land use by-laws ensure the all meeting the need of business.
- Ensure development pays for new development and have taxes focused on infrastructure renewal.
- We need affordable serviced industrial land to attract and encourage employment generation like an EIP.
- Good foundation already in place.
- Some sort of public transportation.
- Promote it more.
- More selection of business, more variety of stores.
- Clean-up all store fronts on Uptowne Olds.
- Have a clear development plan for the area; keep property taxes low.
- Support vibrant community core (i.e. publicize, events, etc) (downtown).

- Downtown areas are not easily accessed by pedestrians; infrastructure is poor and focus is on building new stuff instead of repairing old.
- Uptown area is experiencing significant change in the nature of businesses located there. Appears vulnerable at this time.
- Utility costs especially water are very high. This is a deterrence to business/services needing to use water in operations. Facility costs have need very high and often inline with Calgary. This is a deterrent for business etc. I'm not sure how this is solved. The town council could look more closely at not housing water as revenue!

3.10 Section I: Communication and Connectivity (65 out of 100)

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

The *Communication and Connectivity* section is the fifth highest scoring section of the survey for Olds. It contains the lowest-scoring question in the survey: I4 (public transportation), which scored 30% below average (see Appendices B and D).

Figure 19 and Table 24 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.

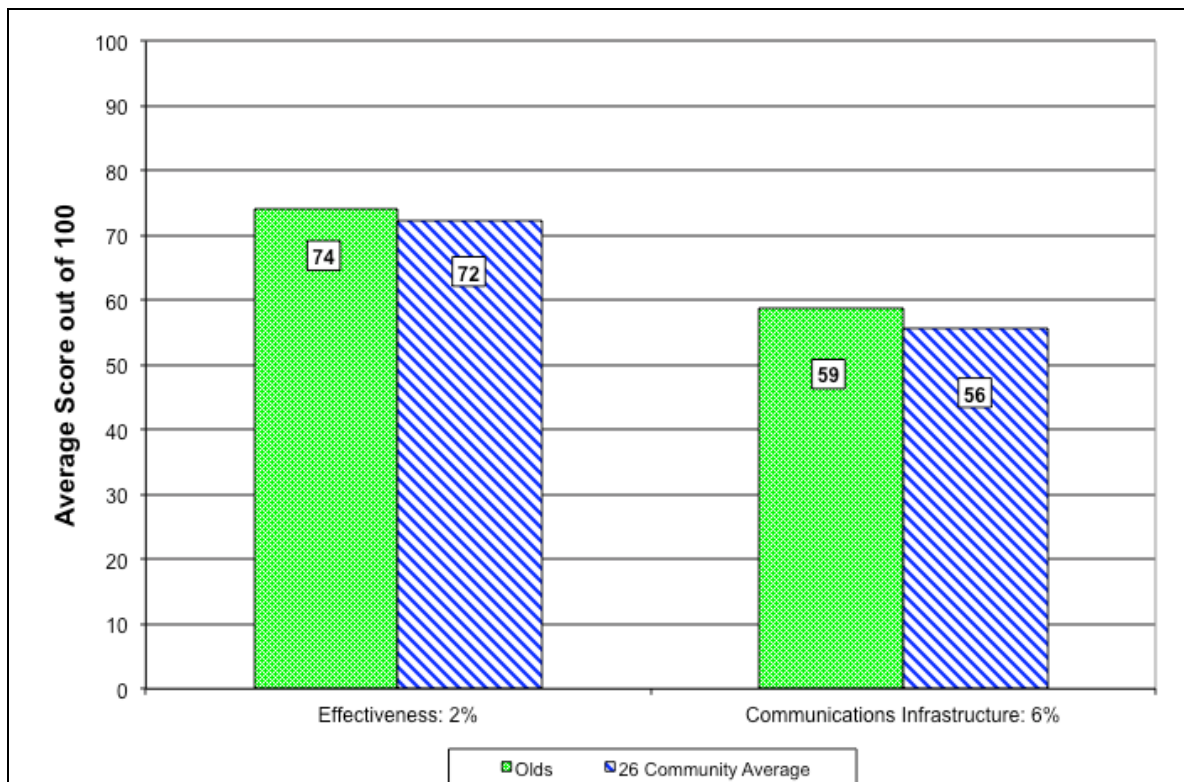


Figure 19: Communication and Connectivity Subsection Scores

- The 'Effectiveness' subsection is the highest scoring of the section with a score of 74. Both subsections were more or less equal to the community average.

Table 24: Communication and Connectivity-- Individual Question Scores

		Score out of 100		
Subsection	Question	Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
Effectiveness	1. Informal business communication (word of mouth) is highly effective.	75	85	-12%
	2. Formal business communication (e.g. newspaper, radio, etc.) is highly effective.	73	57	27%
Communications Infrastructure	3. Quality communication services (phone, cell phone, high speed internet, etc.) are adequate for business.	72	63	15%
	4. Public transportation within the area is adequate.	21	30	-30%
	5. Shipping and freight services into and out of the area are affordable to businesses.	64	61	4%
Section Score		65	62	4%

Legend	Greatest positive difference from 26-community average	Greatest negative difference from 26-community average	Red: Highest and lowest scores for Olds in this section
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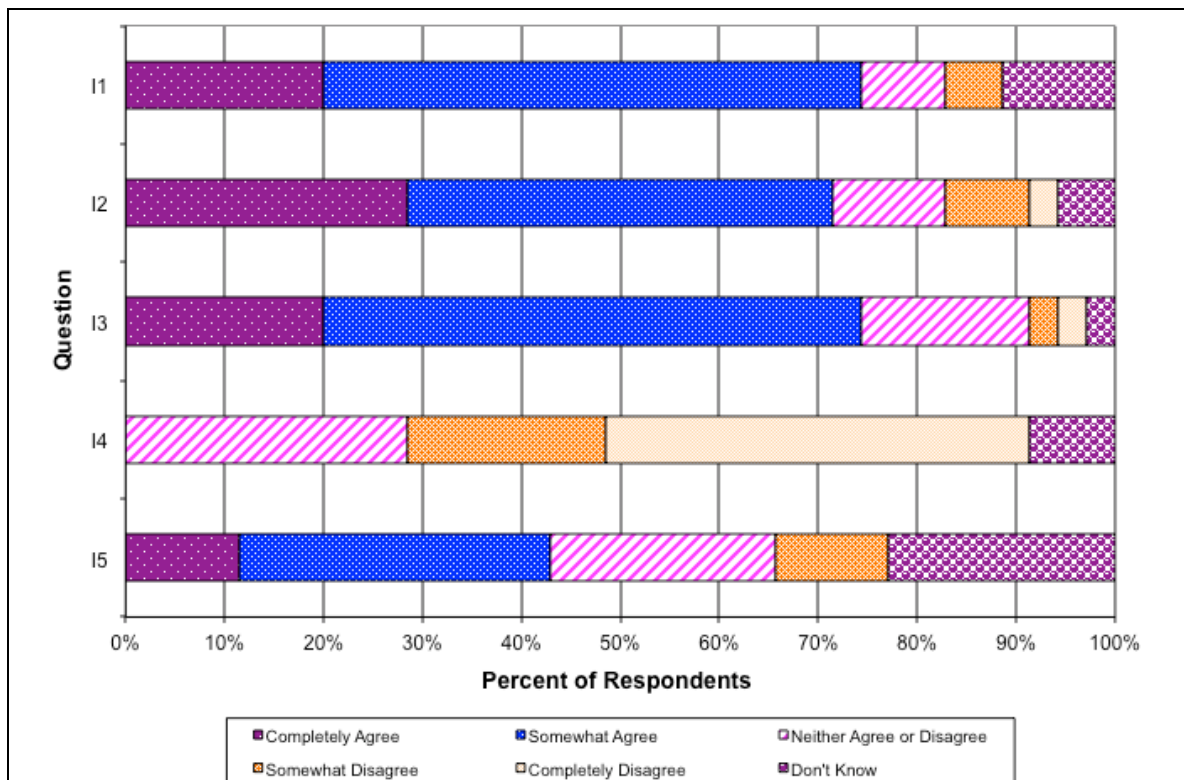


Figure 20: Communication and Connectivity Question Response Distribution

Highest level of agreement with the question:

- I2 Formal business communication (e.g. newspaper, radio, etc.) is highly effective. (74%)

Lowest level of agreement with the question:

- I4 Public transportation within the area is adequate (0%)

High levels of “don’t know” responses (more than 15%):

- I5 Shipping and freight services into and out of the area are affordable to businesses (22%).

Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):

- None

For a list of the highest levels of “don’t know” and polarized responses across the entire survey, see Appendices F and G.

Table 25: Communication and Connectivity-- Improvements

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

- When our Fibre to the Premises comes into place we will be ahead of the game.
- Implement use of community info boards; social media/interaction in real time with customer/business; network.
- We are too small (at this moment) to have public transportation but it is being discussed for the future. We do have handy bus.
- Public transportation is a real issue for some people. There is a group currently working on Fibre to the Premises - and have explained to the community what their plan entails yet many still do not understand.
- Encourage participation in Fibre to the Premise
- Skill Bank for the extraordinary hidden skills in our labour; great potential/underutilized; Live Dream Grow: the Dream in Olds; Connect the

entrepreneurial spirit though recognition celebration mentorship program
volunteer skill bank.

- There is no public transport to busy area in town for families to use; outside of the newspaper and word of mouth it's hard as a small business to know what's happening that effects businesses general.
- The seniors' Handi-Bus is too busy so seniors are not phoning to book it.
- A better high speed internet service to outlying areas would be beneficial. Not a lot of public transportation options.
- Olds FTTP Community Network.
- Find ways to communicate with the masses.
- Look at newer social media to contact more business.
- Build fibre network.
- We need, or soon will need, a bus/transportation service. Seniors, students struggle somewhat.
- FTTP is a must.
- Web 2.0 is here, can't go back. Websites (updated beyond 2003); Facebook; Twitter; Foursquare; iPhone Apps; Blackberry apps; these are all what our volunteers and leaders of tomorrow are using today.
- Public transportation - bus service.
- Ensure the Super Net is a success.
- Continue Fibre to the Premise project; expand services to network business park.
- Inquiry into new/more forms of public transportation.
- Public transportation is non-existent.
- Communication hampered by available news media except radio which has been very effective. The local newspaper could have more coverage although cost is likely a factor. Public transportation is poor and I'm not aware of any long range planning. This affects seniors, persons with disabilities, lower income, new comers, and ultimately employment.

3.11 Section J: Markets and Marketing (56 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 was the second-lowest scoring section for Olds. Appendix B, the list of the ten lowest scoring questions, contains three questions from this section: J3 (distinctive brand) which is the second lowest score across the entire survey, J4 (joint marketing, which at the same time was 54% above average), and J5 (local purchasing).

Question J4 also appears in the list of questions with a high rate of “don’t know” responses in Appendix F.

Figure 21 and Table 26 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.

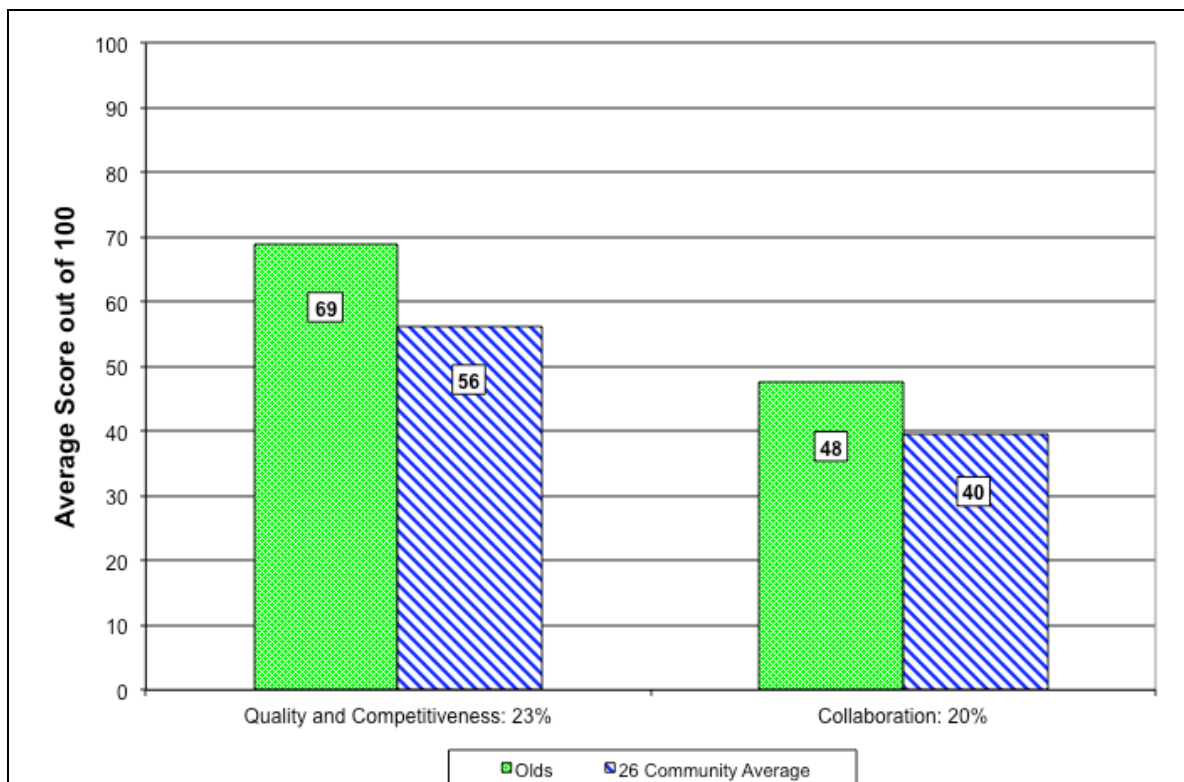


Figure 21: Markets and Marketing Subsection Scores

- The ‘Quality and Competitiveness’ subsection scored highest with a score of 69.

Table 26: Markets and Marketing-- Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
Quality and Competitive-ness	1. The area has a reputation for high quality products and/or services.	71	55	28%
	2. Products and services are reasonably priced in comparison to regional and big city competitors.	67	57	19%
Collaboration	3. The area has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image.	40	41	-1%
	4. Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions.	49	32	53%
	5. People prefer to purchase local products and services.	52	42	24%
Section Score		56	46	21%

Legend	Greatest positive difference from 26-community average	Greatest negative difference from 26-community average	Red: Highest and lowest scores for Olds in this section
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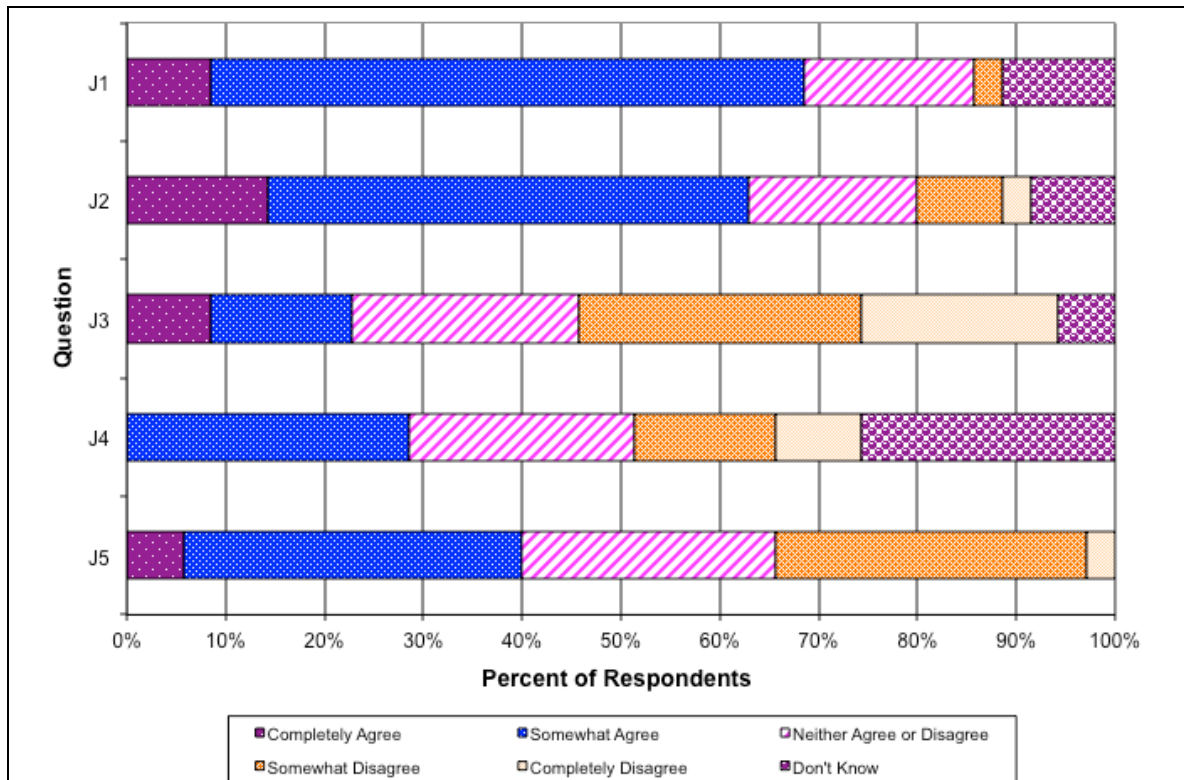


Figure 22: Markets and Marketing Question Response Distribution

Highest level of agreement with the question:

- J2 Products and services are reasonably priced in comparison to regional and big city competitors (65%)

Lowest level of agreement with the question:

- J3 The area has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image. (22%)

Highest level of “don’t know” responses (more than 15%):

- J4 Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions (26%)

Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement:

- J5 People prefer to purchase local products and services.
- J4 Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions.

For a list of the highest levels of “don’t know” and polarized responses across the entire survey, see Appendices F and G.

Table 27: Markets and Marketing-- Improvements

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

- Marketing coops; we are rebranding right now which should help.
- Communicate/interact utilizing social media?
- We are working on partnershiping and marketing in lots of areas.
- People will go where products are cheapest. For years they were told they owed it to the businesses to shop in town. We live between two large centres and a mega mall. Businesses need to make sure the consumer knows they can be and are willing be competitive.
- Branding of the town. Encourage people to shop locally by coupons or incentives or great services.
- Promote "Build our Community— Buy Locally"; brand roll out; get college on board with branding on collaborative basis. Walk the talk.
- Maybe a unique marketing angle.
- More group marketing instead of individual marketing.
- Perhaps have an individual nominated on a monthly basis who demonstrates high quality leadership or volunteerism - "A community super star."
- Generate excitement about our town. P.S. I may have been able to fill this out better if it was done after the chatting time!
- More focus towards marketing of the businesses. Olds has many small communities within close proximity.
- Somehow, consumers need to realize that buying out of town is costly to them and the town. But still, there are gaps in service/good - even I have to go to the city from time to time.
- Discourage big boxism.
- Community branding. Olds community network.
- Identify the markets and connect people!
- Be more cooperation in developing business.

- Town just completed branding exercise - phase two of this initiative is a communications strategy. Strategy needs to be broad based and community focused.
- Olds needs an event or perhaps a landmark or symbol that is distinct and would draw visitors. It does have many events that attract, but perhaps something specific.
- FTTP, social networking.
- Assist local business with internet and social media marketing programs. As my students tell me, "Why would I use the phone book when I can use my phone".
- Greater joint marketing of "Olds"! Brand Olds as something more than "Hay City"
- Local market, local business (non-transnational) directory, farmers market as a possible starting point.
- Generating interest in local business, discouraging transnational business that take away from the area.
- The local coop seems to offer local produce. If stores etc. marketed this concept, people would be attracted to supporting local producers. Also there needs to be more attention to the purchasers of goods. Customer needs vary. For example, older single people can not buy small quantities of meat in some stores.

Appendix A: Top 10 Highest Scoring Questions

		Score out of 100		
Question		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
C6	There are quality elementary and secondary schools in the area.	93	79	18%
A4	Successful businesses want to remain in the area.	88	82	7%
B1	A quality health care facility is accessible, well serviced and within a reasonable distance.	86	71	22%
F1	The governing bodies (town councils, regional district) recognize that businesses are important and valuable for the development of the area.	84	74	13%
A6	The area is facing a significant economic opportunity.	82	63	29%
H3	Adequate business services (e.g. printing services, computer help, graphic design, etc.) are available.	79	58	37%
F3	There is a recognized organization or individual available to assist people identify, assess, expand and/or create business opportunities.	78	53	47%
B4	There are plentiful and varying opportunities for involvement (e.g. arts, athletics, politics, church groups).	77	69	12%
D1	There are formal and informal forums (conferences, workshops, association breakfast meetings) on technology and technology applications.	77	31	146%
A2	Individuals are capable of thinking creatively and developing unconventional solutions and innovative business opportunities.	75	65	15%

Appendix B: Bottom 10 Lowest Scoring Questions

		Score out of 100		
Question		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
I4	Public transportation within the area is adequate.	21	30	-30%
J3	The area has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image.	40	41	-1%
G4	Local business can access informal local investors.	43	42	1%
G2	Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding).	43	51	-14%
B6	Quality residential accommodation is available and affordable.	46	58	-22%
C5	A pool of skilled labour is available to local businesses in the area.	48	38	27%
J4	Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions.	49	32	53%
G1	Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual	50	46	8%

	character and good business ideas			
H6	Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	52	45	16%
J5	People prefer to purchase local products and services.	52	42	24%

Appendix C: Top 10 Highest Positive Deviation from the 26-community Average

#	Question	Score out of 100		
		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
D1	There are formal and informal forums (conferences, workshops, association breakfast meetings) on technology and technology applications.	77	31	146%
C2	Other business education is available in the area (e.g. personal development, professional forums, etc.).	74	44	69%
C4	The education and business communities work together to provide convenient training for businesses.	68	42	60%
E4	We collaborate and cooperate with neighbouring communities.	63	40	58%
J4	Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions.	49	32	53%
F3	There is a recognized organization or individual available to assist people identify, assess, expand and/or create business opportunities.	78	53	47%
D4	Research done in the area or region is relevant to the area's business needs and interests.	68	46	46%
H1	There are vibrant, active downtown areas or community cores.	66	47	39%
A3	Citizens are motivated to learn new skills and to develop existing ones.	72	52	37%
H3	Adequate business services (e.g. printing services, computer help, graphic design, etc.) are available.	79	58	37%

Appendix D: Bottom 10 Largest Negative Deviation from the 26-community Average

#	Question	Score out of 100		
		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
I4	Public transportation within the area is adequate.	21	30	-30%
B6	Quality residential accommodation is available and affordable.	46	58	-22%
B2	There are no significant environmental pollution issues here.	66	78	-15%
G2	Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding).	43	51	-14%
I1	Informal business communication (word of mouth) is	75	85	-12%

	highly effective.			
H4	Existing infrastructure (e.g. local roads, water, power) is of good quality, well maintained, serviced, and modern.	67	68	-1%
J3	The area has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image.	40	41	-1%
G4	Local business can access informal local investors.	43	42	1%
I5	Shipping and freight services into and out of the area are affordable to businesses.	64	61	4%
A4	Successful businesses want to remain in the area.	88	82	7%

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		
		Olds	26 Community Average	% Difference
A6	The area is facing a significant economic opportunity.	82	63	29%
B5	Young adults (25-34) consider the area to be a desirable place to live.	57	49	16%
A4	Successful businesses want to remain in the area.	88	82	7%
C4	The education and business communities work together to provide convenient training for businesses.	68	42	60%
A3	Citizens are motivated to learn new skills and to develop existing ones.	72	52	37%
F1	The governing bodies (town councils, regional district) recognize that businesses are important and valuable for the development of the area.	84	74	13%
H1	There are vibrant, active downtown areas or community cores.	66	47	39%
J2	Products and services are reasonably priced in comparison to regional and big city competitors	67	57	19%
J5	People prefer to purchase local products and services.	52	42	24%
D3	Local businesses demonstrate creativity and innovation in seeking new customers.	60	52	17%
E6	There is a pool of talented leaders with diverse skills, cultural experiences and backgrounds who are available for leading area initiatives.	73	66	11%
G1	Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas	50	46	8%

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

Question	Percent of respondents
G4. Local business can access informal local investors.	37%
G5. Businesses have a firm understanding of financial management (e.g. cash flow, reading financial statements).	31%
G2. Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding).	28%
D4. Research done in the area or region is relevant to the area's business needs and interests.	28%
G3. Costs of capital (e.g. interest, application fees) are manageable for entrepreneurs.	26%
H7. Quality rental space is available to accommodate business needs	26%
J4. Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions.	26%
D2. Support and assistance for innovative business research and development is available.	26%
E7. Qualified supervisors and managers (and management services) are available to small business.	23%
C3. Business mentors and/or role models are available in the area.	22%
I5. Shipping and freight services into and out of the area are affordable to businesses.	22%
H6. Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	22%
G1. Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas.	19%
A6. The area is facing a significant economic opportunity.	18%
B5. Young adults (25-34) consider the area to be a desirable place to live (18%).	18%
C2. Other business education is available in the area (e.g. personal development, professional forums, etc.)	18%

Appendix G: Questions with a High Degree of Polarization

These questions had approximately equal amounts of agreement and disagreement.

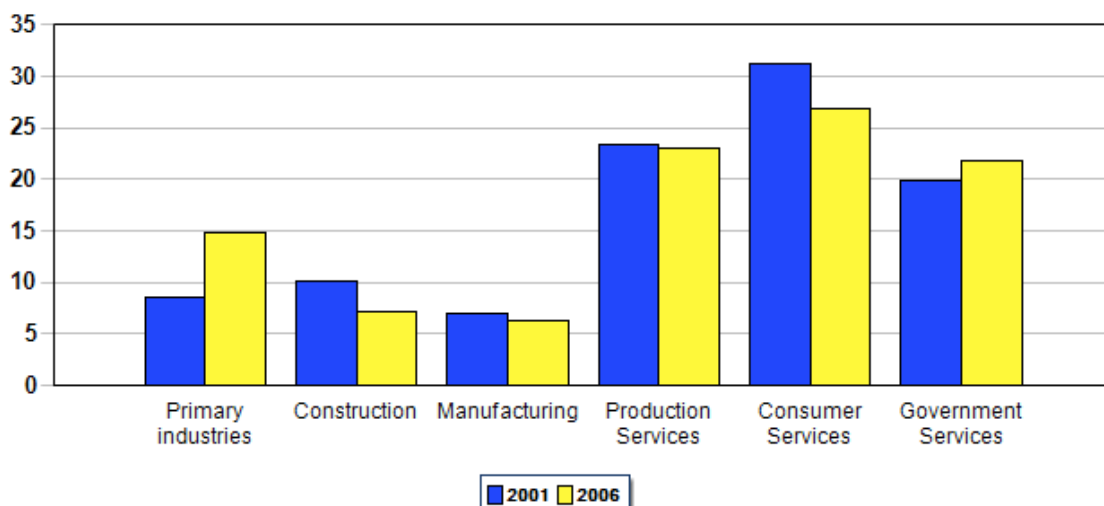
A5. There are employees available to meet business needs.
G1. Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas
H6. Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs.
J5. People prefer to purchase local products and services.
J4. Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions.

Appendix H: Assessment Session Attendance

Robin Knudsen
 Erica Sweetman
 John Gleeson
 Joe Gustafson
 Kirk Courtoreille
 Kurtis Layden
 Dan Wiebe
 Joyce Courtoreille
 Phil Stevens
 Judy Schlichenmayer
 Bibianne Munksgaard
 Carsten Mildenstein
 Doug Madill
 Rodney Perigny
 Karen Strocher

Mary Jane Harper
 Arvin Bull
 Mark Fournier
 Barb Hill
 Debbie Bennett
 Murray Elliott
 Brian Thompson
 Marnie Ragan
 Caroline Bodmer
 Hugh Bodmer
 Kathy Doyle
 Stirling McLeod
 Gail McDonald
 Norm McInnis

Appendix I: Olds Community Profile: Labour Force by Industry (2001 and 2006)



Source: Community Information Database (Community Profiles) <http://www.cid-bdc.ca>

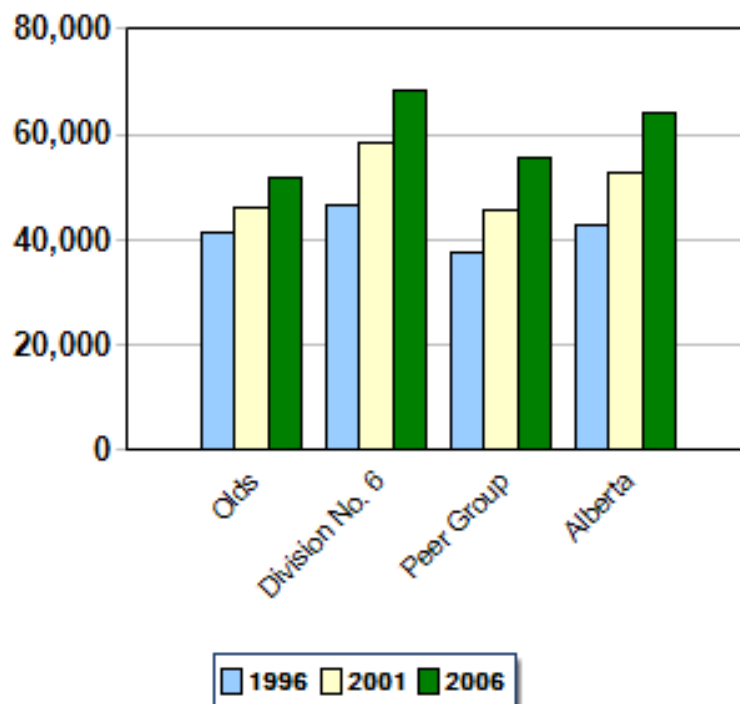
Primary industries include agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; and mining and oil and gas extraction.

Production services include utilities; wholesale trade; transportation and warehousing; information and cultural industries; finance and insurance; real estate and rental and leasing; professional,

scientific and technical services; management of companies and enterprises; and administrative and support, waste management and remediation services.
 Consumer services include retail trade; arts, entertainment and recreation; accommodation and food services; and other services.

Appendix J: Olds Community Profile—Median Household Income

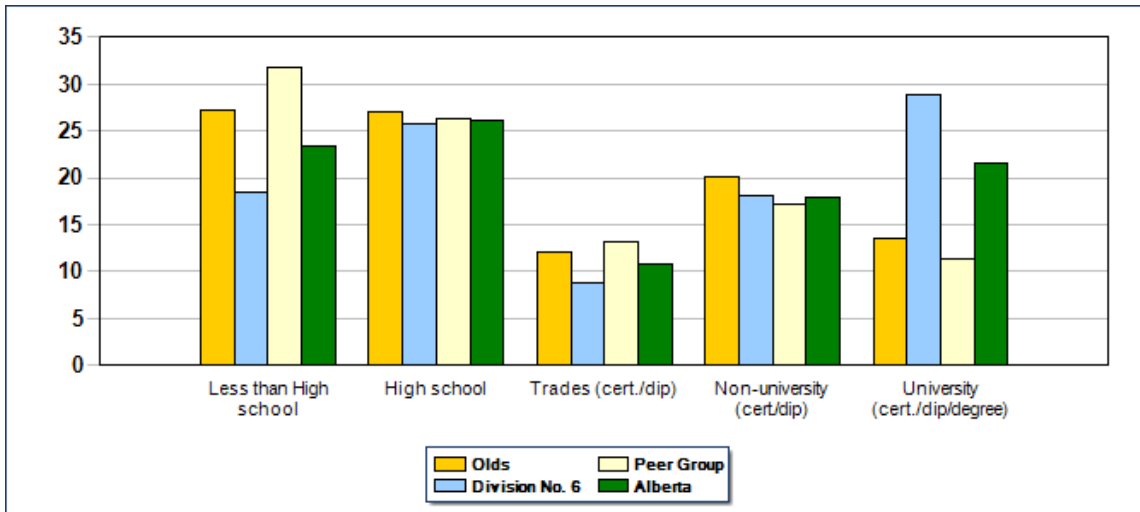
Source: Community Information Database (Community Profiles) <http://www.cid-bdc.ca>



Note: A peer group is made up of communities with similar social and economic characteristics. Peer group data are presented in order to facilitate the comparison of a selected rural or urban community to a group of similar rural or urban communities.

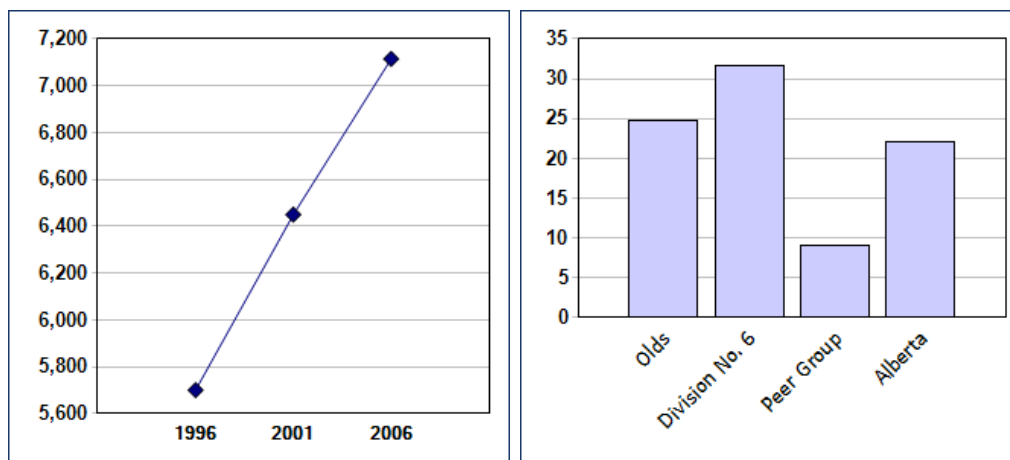
Appendix K: Olds Community Profile— Educational Attainment (Population over 15, 2006)

Source: Community Information Database (Community Profiles) <http://www.cid-bdc.ca>



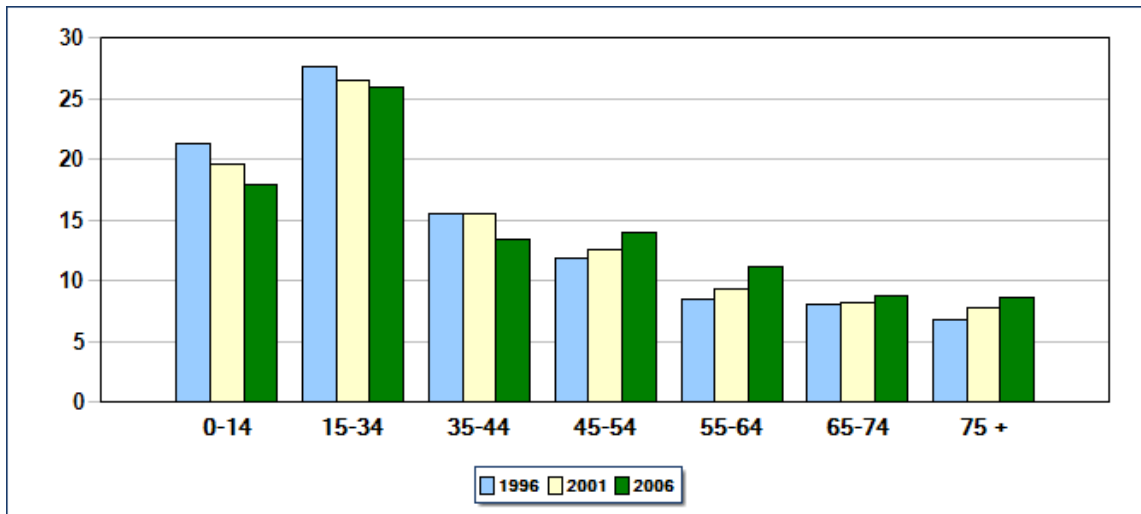
Appendix L: Olds Community Profile— Population Growth (left) and Percent Change (right) (2006)

Source: Community Information Database (Community Profiles) <http://www.cid-bdc.ca>



Appendix M: Olds Community Profile-- Age Distribution (Percent of Total Population, 2006)

Source: Community Information Database (Community Profiles) <http://www.cid-bdc.ca>



Appendix N: How the BVI 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.

- 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.

In its calculation of final scores, 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 discuss 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.

Appendix O: The Origins of 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.

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.