

Master Report

SouthGrow
Community
Business Retention,
Expansion and
Marketing Plans

Prepared for:

Peter Lovering,

SouthGrow Regional Initiative

January 23, 2018

Prepared by:

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To: Peter Lovering
From: Mark Baxter, Cathy Goulet
Date: January 23, 2018
Re: Community Business Retention, Expansion and Marketing Plans *Master Report*

Dear Pete,

We are pleased to present our report for the SouthGrow Regional Initiative Community Business Retention, Expansion and Marketing Plans Project.

Thank you for your willingness to accept our Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Mark Baxter".

Mark Baxter,
Outlook Market Research & Consulting Ltd

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that appears to read "Cathy Goulet".

Cathy Goulet
Killick Leadership Group Ltd.



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2. Executive Summary

2.1. PURPOSE

In recent years, SouthGrow engaged in projects on investment attraction plan and leads, community profile development, and the investment readiness of the region. This Community Business Retention, Expansion and Marketing Plans Master Report synthesizes the information from these last three projects with new community interviews, analysis, providing marketing recommendations to specific communities and to the overall regional alliance.

Each of the 24 SouthGrow member communities was provided with a document called Interview Take-Aways that summarized the outcomes of the interviews, and provide some insight from the lead interviewer Cathy Goulet, an experienced economic development practitioner. Much of that content, along with previous studies conducted by SouthGrow, and marketing analysis, forms the basis of Findings in this Master Report.

2.2 FINDINGS

The 24 reports synthesize the research and findings from each phase of work to form a picture of the communities BRE situation. Each report is separated into the following sections:

- A. Community Overview
- B. Community Assets
- C. Opportunity Analysis
- D. Marketing Go-Forwards

The Marketing Go-Forwards sections are limited to more community-specific recommendations. But many marketing actions are applicable across multiple SouthGrow communities due to geographic proximity, and similarities in demographics, assets, opportunities, and value propositions. Therefore, some actions are included in Section 5. Regional Marketing Recommendations. These recommendations will be cross-community, and sometimes regional in nature.

There were a wide variety of observations about BRE strategy and marketing recommendations across the 24 communities, but here are some common themes that emerged:

COMMUNITY WEBSITES LACK SUFFICIENT BRE INFORMATION

This was a common theme noted in the 2016 Rainmaker Global Business Development report on the Investment Readiness of the region. Our team reviewed all community websites and reaffirm this finding. However, we do not believe this is necessarily an indictment on the communities, rather each community has to look at its own economic development goals to decide what level of resources should/can be applied to BRE.

Some considerations:

- At least two communities have very strong BRE content on their websites, but these are also larger communities with dedicated EDOs. Small communities cannot afford this type of staffing – and it is the staffing that is the key requirement for good BRE content being developed and maintained on a website.
- If investment attraction is a priority of these smaller communities, working with an organization like SouthGrow is imperative to have the BRE content supplied to their websites. Whether it be through simple links, downloads, and/or special initiatives. Examples of special initiatives are support of SouthGrow in development of Community Profiles, or this BRE study – projects that used the REDA's economy of scale to develop content that is specific to each community, and often applicable across many member communities.
- Often the architecture and design of a community website is meant to deliver municipal information, not for investment attraction. That is okay. But it is advisable that at least some community profile information and BRE related information be included on the website. Many of those ideas are listed in this report, and the Investment Readiness report. Most websites have a Business section. Leveraging content from SouthGrow and Alberta Municipal Affairs (e.g. Regional Dashboard) is simple and provides at least a baseline of BRE content. Intense investment attraction may not be a high priority in every community, but BRE should be.
- There is little excuse for an unattractive website these days. Incredibly cheap templates are available that are graphically sophisticated and can effectively host municipal content. A website is the information gateway to the world about a community – especially more remote communities. Councils and CAO's should support moderate funding for website design upgrades. SouthGrow should be a supporting organization to help steer member communities to the right information and resources to undertake these upgrades. A website design upgrade training course(s) organized by SouthGrow for its members would be useful and effective in helping communities, especially smaller ones, upgrade their web presence.

BEDROOM COMMUNITIES - BRANDING

A number of communities are very open about their desire to be bedroom communities – in other words, resident attraction is their main priority. BRE is still important, but it alters the nature of investment attraction activities. Priorities become attracting new service-based businesses like restaurants and retail, maintaining or expanding existing service-based businesses, and having a strong recreation sector.

The field of economic development is often tilted towards industrial investment attraction. Resident attraction is a slightly different pursuit, where community branding is as important as in-depth sector analysis, opportunity analyses, and businesses cases for new investment. New residents need to be courted with good information about services and quality of life, but that information needs to be properly packaged and delivered.

These communities should place extra emphasis on branding, website design, marketing material design, road signage, and targeted marketing campaigns. New residents want services first and foremost, but they are also persuaded by how belonging to a community makes them feel. While they may not outwardly admit this, many potential residents ask themselves, “What does belonging to this community say about me?”. Much like what driving a particular car or wearing particular clothes says about them.

When engaging in BRE activities, bedroom community policy makers and economic developers must pay attention to marketing an image, as well as services.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR TRADE AREA

In BRE, the ability to provide prospective industry and business with a legitimate and credible trading area calculation is more than an important data point. Realistically understanding what businesses and services can/should be supported in your community versus in surrounding communities should be the foundation of a BRE Strategy. The baseline information required to make such an assessment starts with a Trade Area Analysis.

The use of trading area as a selling feature has a long history in economic development. Over fifty years ago, in 1966, William Applebaum defined a primary trade area as encompassing a geographic region accounting for between 75 and 80 percent of relevant consumers. Others have added additional definitions based on drive time:

1. Primary trade area: 50-80% within 10 minutes of drive time
2. Secondary trade area: 15-25% of customers less than 20 minutes' drive time
3. Fringe or tertiary trade area: the remainder of customers who must travel 15 – 50 minutes to reach the shopping destination

No matter how closely the area is defined, the basic definition has not changed and, in fact, most of the methods for calculating trade area have also not changed over the years. What has changed is the ease of gathering data with the advent of GIS and data, which marries distance to income levels.

The Regional Marketing Recommendations section provides an overview of various Trade Area Analysis methodologies. These can be carried out by local EDOs or consultants. Once this type of analysis is done it forms the backbone of the value proposition to attract new services and businesses. A Traffic Pattern Analysis is also a useful investment attraction tool. Approaching chain restaurants, hotels or other service businesses without more than just anecdotal trade area information makes the investment attraction process very challenging.

CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT – BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Another common theme noted in the 2016 Rainmaker Global Business Development report on the Investment Readiness of the region was capitalizing on exiting economic development successes.

Actively seeking complimentary companies to invest in a community is one of the strongest methods of investment attraction. The Investment Promotion and Attraction Process is an internal EDO process designed to react to the Site Selection Process used by relocating companies, but also be proactive by generating and converting investment leads.

At the beginning, the Site Selection Process is aimed at gaining an understanding of the region's level of economic development and its national economic policies, and depends upon the type of investment. For example, is the investor seeking resource-based locations, strategic market locations or product efficiency locations? The site selection process continues to become increasingly detailed as decision makers narrow the list of possible locations. Key factors during the site selection process generally fall into the following categories:

- Complimentary businesses or clusters
- Market characteristics (local and regional)
- Costs (labour, transportation and other)
- Natural resources (availability and quality)
- Infrastructure
- Policy structure
- Business support and promotion

Good investor information, a solid marketing (web) presence, and a leads handling protocol are all important. Section 5, Regional Marketing Recommendation touches more on leads handling protocol and investment attraction best practices.



But the key point for local policy makers and EDO's is to build on your successes. It is often very difficult for rural communities to attract significant business investment. When that happens, build on it within that cluster – diversification is great, but diversification is much easier for larger communities with more infrastructure, labour base, and market.

OTHER THEMES

Many findings, observations and recommendations arose out of the research and analysis in this study. Some other BRE themes of note:

Maximize Membership in SouthGrow Regional Economic Development Alliance

- Communities should leverage their SouthGrow members as much as possible. Regional projects can have local impacts.

Investment Attraction Strategy

- If investment attraction is a significant part of a community's BRE Strategy, forming a customized local Investment Attraction Strategy is advisable.

Investment Attraction Tools

- BRE-focused websites and marketing collateral can benefit greatly from the development of tools such as: Site Selector Profile, Community Brand, Communications Plan, Sector Profiles, Business Cases.

Chain Hotel Attraction

- Several communities mentioned lack of accommodations as an issue. Some communities had excellent sports facilities or other tourism assets top draw visitors, but no hotel or not enough hotel space. Understanding hotel franchisee requirements and site selection criteria is important.

Land Needs Assessment – Area Develop Plan

- When undergoing site selection research, investors typically look at land availability, taxation/incentives, labour pool, existing business clusters, and infrastructure. Without available land, none of the other factors matter. Land Needs Assessments and Area Develop Plans are common baseline tools to address this issue. However, the assessment is not as important as the will of political and business stakeholders to find compromises and solutions to make land available for servicing and investment.



3.Methodology

3.1. BACKGROUND

More than three years ago, SouthGrow commissioned a study by MNP called Targeted Investment Attraction Plan and Leads. When that study was completed, it became obvious that, in order to embark on this plan, SouthGrow members each required an updated profile to properly describe their communities.

In 2015, Schollie and Associates prepared profiles for the members at that time, which are currently in the process of being updated with new census and tax information.

In early 2016, Rainmaker Global Business Development finalized group training and a report on the Investment Readiness of the region.

This Community Business Retention, Expansion and Marketing Plans Master Report synthesizes the information from these last three projects with new community interviews, analysis, and marketing recommendations.

3.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The first step in the Work Plan is to collect and review all relative secondary data. This begins with a request to the client to provide data pertinent to the project, and to review data sources on websites or elsewhere as deemed necessary.

In the initial stages of this project, the literature review focused on individual community information that has been gathered about investment opportunities, local assets, and development planning.

We closely reviewed:

- Targeted Investment Attraction Plan and Leads Study
- 2015 Community Profiles
- 2016 Group Training and a Report on Regional Investment Readiness



We wanted to ensure that the SouthGrow Regional Initiative Community Business Retention, Expansion and Marketing Plans Project is informed by these previous projects so there is continuity between all the phases of this economic development initiative. And so that previous research investments are fully leveraged.

3.3 PRIMARY RESEARCH

Primary research (i.e. working with communities to gather and vet data) is a core specialty of Outlook Market Research and Killick Leadership Group. Primary research is performed in a BRE project to:

- Fill data gaps from the secondary research process.
- Inject a more precise, rich information package into the project; this can only result from local knowledge.
- Help determine the value proposition for each community based on investment opportunities and local assets.
- Demonstrate the commitment of the REDA to its member communities.

We met with each member community and, using the above-mentioned studies, work with each to determine a Business Retention and Expansion strategy. The primary research component started soon after the secondary research was completed for the first few communities. The secondary and primary research efforts can also run concurrently.

Every effort was made to communicate efficiently with community contacts to respect their valuable time, and to ensure the information collected is accurate and representative of the community. Most primary research was done in person, although the communities had the option to be interviewed via phone or skype.

The following BRE/Marketing Reports are based on three phases of work by SouthGrow:

1. 2015: Schollie and Associates prepared Economic Development Community Profiles for SouthGrow members.
2. 2016: Rainmaker Global Business Development finalized group training and a report on the Investment Readiness of the region. This included a series of community interviews.
3. 2017: Outlook Market Research and Killick Leadership Group conducted BRE interviews and background research as part of the Community Business Retention, Expansion and Marketing Plans project.

The Reports synthesize the research and findings from each phase of work to form a picture of the communities BRE situation. Interview comments from Rainmaker Global Business Development's December 18th, 2015 report entitled "SouthGrow Investment Readiness And Attraction Review" is used in conjunction with Outlook Market Research's 2017 interviews to produce the 24 reports.

Each report will be separated into the following sections:

- A. Community Overview
- B. Community Assets
- C. Opportunity Analysis
- D. Marketing Go-Forwards

NOTE: The Marketing Go-Forwards sections are limited to more community-specific recommendations. But many marketing actions are applicable across multiple SouthGrow communities due to geographic proximity, and similarities in demographics, assets, opportunities, and value propositions. Therefore, some actions will be included in Section 5. Regional Marketing Recommendations. These recommendations will be cross-community, and sometimes regional in nature.



4. Community Findings

VILLAGE OF ARROWWOOD

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The Village of Arrowwood, surrounded by choice farmland, lies between the east and west Arrowwood Creeks with the Bow River 5 km to the north and the Buffalo Hills to the south. This area, with an abundance of good water and many thousands of acres of good grass, was utilized by many of the early ranchers. Arrowwood is the northernmost village in Vulcan County. The town site was a part of the Siksika Reserve until it was sold at the Blackfoot Indian Reserve Sale in 1911. A. M. Grace bought the E½ 32-20-23 and later sold it to the Canadian Pacific Railway. Part of this became the Village of Arrowwood. Arrowwood was incorporated into a village in 1926. The June 2011 population of the village is 188 persons. Local history states that the name, Arrowwood, was taken from the Blackfoot Indian words "Mista Katpiskoo", which means Wood Village.

- *Village of Arrowwood Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Charming village, proximity to Gleichen First Nation is a competitive advantage.
- Community has history of driving growth through creativity.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Anchors for drawing people into the community:
 - Arrowwood School – people come to Arrowwood to drop kids off and that creates track in the community.
 - Co-op, a new hardware store, draws people into the community.
- Siksika Nation residents shop in Arrowwood. Their population supports the community and Siksika has a large population. Present services to rural and First Nation community include:
 - ATB
 - Centrest eatery
 - Co-op
- Arrowwood is like a little movie set. It has a western feel and a great rodeo.
- No commercial tax rate – flat rate of 11.6m.



- Transportation
 - P & H Truck Depot
 - Train track to Arrowwood wants to extend
 - Welding shop and car wash
- Spa
- Aspen Crossing – tree farm, fully serviced campground, railway centre, restaurant in old rail car, mystery room. Aspencrossing.com
- There is growth potential in home based businesses.
- 12 Residential lots - village owned. Partially serviced (7 could be done).
- Tourism proximity is an asset:
 - Aspen Crossing – tree farm, fully serviced campground, railway centre, restaurant in old rail car, mystery room. Aspencrossing.com
 - 40 minutes to Okotoks
 - 60 minutes to Calgary
 - 30 minutes to MacGregor Lake

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Arrowwood is a picturesque community close to the Siksika Nation with an on-reserve population of 3,589. Arrowwood's hardware store and car wash are opportunities to expand on the current trading pattern between the two communities. These also represent potential to increase tourist service traffic with flow-through nearby lakes.

Arrowwood has been proactive in leveraging its "western style" strip mall including its business centre. One potential to be explored is a small grocery store. The local population may not provide the critical mass needed, however, the nearby population at Siksika may be supportive. This consumer offering could leverage the daily traffic to the community created by the local school and a preliminary viability scan would be helpful.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Co-op Hardware store was the result of community action.
- ATB Financial is an asset. Temporary business centre, gave ATB a temporary place to start. The Business Centre was a village initiative. Business centre needs fibre access. Meeting space, document centre, working space.
- Although people are very mobile, people still want to buy local. Time is important. You don't want to drive forever for services.
- Relationships are what have brought business to Arrowwood.
- Agriculture based community. Cattle and crops. Irrigation district supports crop production.



D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- The Arrowwood website needs updating. The site design and architecture is good. Much of that work that needs to be done is internal content management focused on BRE.
- Arrowwood's website does not sufficiently market the business community. If an investor was to look at this website for useful information, there is not enough information to make an initial impression on the pros and cons of setting up a business. Consider developing an "investor" area for the website where potential investors can locate key information. This area could be a subheading on the economic development page. Include important documents such as Area Structure Plans, Land Use Maps, Municipal Development Plans, etc. Within this area, also consider using language that promotes an "open for business" attitude.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*

Highway Signage

- One of the interviewees said "How do we market the place?", and that they could use help with advisory services.
- Highway signage is a very good marketing tool. It needs to be visually appealing, but also succinct in promoting specific community assets, events, and locations. The key is to think like a visitor when designing signage.
- A good source of information on this topic was done by the Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP) out of BC. Here is their report: http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/Community_signage_new.pdf

Opportunity Assessment

- Asking, as one of the interviewees did, "what would make a business locate here?" is important. But even more important is asking what business is 1. Needed, and 2. Viable.
- This type of Opportunity Analysis is most often done by external Economic Development Consultants. It is part of the investment attraction research process. The typical steps are:
 1. Situation Analysis: As seen in this report.
 2. Opportunity Analysis: High level research and analysis on specific businesses that are needed in the community and make sense based on the situation.
 3. Feasibility Study: Investigates the marketing, operational and financial viability.
 4. Business Plan: Builds on the Feasibility Study with full pro forma financials. This document is used as a blueprint to operate the business, and secure financing.



VILLAGE OF BARNWELL

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Barnwell is a village with a population nearing 1,000. It is located eight (8) km west of Taber, Alberta, and 43 km east of the city of Lethbridge. The community is located in the Municipal District of Taber, a diversified and prosperous agricultural area that includes vegetable and sugar beet agri-business along with the traditional agricultural production of grain, oilseeds, legumes, and livestock.

- *Barnwell Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Community has a tremendous volunteer base and capacity to set and achieve community based goals. See school development.
- Barnwell is a small town that is welcoming.
- Community School opened in 2017. Grades K-9. Draws students from surrounding area. Has a double-sized gymnasium. Public library is onsite and a fitness centre open to the public. The Village contributed to the school to get a recreation centre. Playground at the school includes an outdoor fitness facility and basketball court.
- A community strength is the ability to work together. This has meant they have completed ambitious projects. All the playgrounds were purchased and assembled by the community.
- There are three parks in the Village and one is available to the public for rent.
- A hurdle to development has been a lack of industrial and commercial land. Local land is privately owned so that limits the ability to attract new business.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Highway access – Highway 3 and 3A are assets.
- Rail line is adjacent to community with spur line.
- Business climate is good because taxes are reasonable and businesses like the community.
- Home based businesses are growing – trades, online sales.
- Water capacity – new water treatment plant in 2016 and sewer system is in place but need additional lines for expansion.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Located on Highway 3 between Taber, Coaldale and Lethbridge, Barnwell has exceptional transportation access including a rail spur as well as access to a parcel of land suitable for industrial development. This set of assets is potentially marketable in the value-added agriculture sector, but the regional market is very competitive. Barnwell's challenge is how to attract attention of a developer in this environment. Being active in regional economic development agencies will be an important part of Barnwell's strategy. The community may also consider having a preliminary engineering study completed on the parcel of land to determine its potential.

As with a number of other communities near-in to Lethbridge, Barnwell has potential to attract investment in residential development as a cost-effective and easily commutable location. Barnwell's competitive strength in this market is its new K-9 community school. The story of how the school was supported by Barnwell's residents is very engaging and can be used in marketing the community to potential residents who have school aged children. An effective marketing narrative could be built around commitment to children and creating safe learning and play opportunities.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Potential to develop industrial land east side of Barnwell, between Highways 3 and 3A. Truck traffic would not have to go through residential area of Barnwell to access those industrial lots.
- A low tax base with ready access to transportation assets makes for a good business environment.
- Industrial development is of more interest to the community than commercial development because of it job creation potential.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- The website is well organized and easily navigable.
- There is little in terms of economic development or investment attraction information on the website. At minimum there should be reference to SouthGrow where there is capacity to gather and disseminate economic development information. This would be leveraging Barnwell's membership in SouthGrow.
- In addition, the website could feature information that would be appealing to investors because there is currently almost no information for investors or companies looking to locate in the Village. Where investors will be looking for economic and community information, use language that promotes an "open for business" attitude. Consider developing an "investor" area for the website where potential investors can locate key information.

Marketing Education

- The new K-9 school is what could be the core of Barnwell's marketing effort – its core value proposition. It appears that resident attraction is a better economic development path than facing heavy competition for industrial attraction.



BLOOD TRIBE

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The Blood Tribe (Kainai) is the largest First Nation Reserve in Canada, with an area covering 356,755 acres of prime agricultural land. The Bloods are signatories to Treaty 7 (1877) and part of the Blackfoot Confederacy that spans most of southern Alberta and northern Montana and includes the Siksika, the Piikani and the Blackfeet (US). The Blood Reserve consists of three main community areas: Standoff, Lavern, and Moses Lake. The Blood Tribe's major economic base has traditionally been the agricultural sector. Farming (both irrigated and non-irrigated), and oil and gas exploration also provide employment for Tribal members.

- *Blood Tribe Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Lack of housing on reserve. Many would prefer to live on reserve. CMHC allocates only so many housing starts a year, and they are behind in the number of houses needed and those being built.
- Note: Understanding land designation process is the key to understanding their ability to attract investment.
- Can't rent on reserve to non-tribe members.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Entirely self-supporting as a community. Blood Tribe has their own fire service, schools, healthcare, bank, recreation facilities.
- 80,000 sq ft manufacturing facility.
- 30 new business starts annually – 20 business grants and 10 elder grants. Business starts can be off-reserve. Open to non-resident members. Not based on residency on-reserve. Designated land required in order to secure for bank loans.
- But once a corporation is registered, it becomes non-Indian and, therefore, presents problems for expanding business base.
- Service industry – garage, car wash, beauty salons, retailers. Few store fronts. Many gas stations.
- Well developed, good water, infrastructure.
- Community has many cottage industries such as beauty salons in homes.



C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Local businesses that employ community members and support community needs are the priority for economic development. There is potential to support small “cottage” industries through small business training and Tribe administered loans. An Economic Impact Study was previously completed, and this work could be revisited. There is also potential to build and strengthen the existing network of truckers on reserve. These could be pulled together to respond to external opportunities. This could be a way to move into a larger market and gain knowledge on business practices.

The Blood Tribe also has a tremendous asset in the BTH Building. The near success with Morgan USA and its housing unit construction for the energy sector was a good experience. With a turn in the US economy, it could be good timing to revisit some of those contacts.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Morgan USA, based in Texas, was interested in building housing units for CNRL. Building units were to be built at the manufacturing facility, Kainai Industries. Blood Tribe had agreement to construct the modular units. It took one year to negotiate with INAC for the commercial lease for a land designation. Found Morgan USA through SouthGrow site selection process. Deal fell through because of US economy and energy sector.
- Blood Tribe Agricultural project (tribally owned corporation) – irrigation project. Head lease – for agricultural purposes. Has potential for expansion.
- AIIC (Alberta Indian Investment Corporation) – can work with a BCR (Band Council Resolution) guarantee to allow business to operate if it defaults.
- Economic impact Study suggested clothing because of lack of transportation for people into urban centres.
- Can pull from surrounding areas (Hutterite communities) but Reserve is primary market. Looking to reduce leakage. Their aim is to build their own economy.
- Business park plan awaiting land designation. INAC only funds infrastructure on designated lands.
- Economic Development supports businesses with training. Blood Tribe Employment and Skills training. Safety training, large scale training for example Heavy Duty Equipment Operators. ASETS provides funds to Economic Development to deliver training on how to start a business.
- CF Treaty Seven – offers training programs. They also partner with Lethbridge Economic Development on targeted programming as well as Business Link through the Aboriginal Business Development Services program.
- Lots of external people coming in to the reserve to work. Professionals – teachers, pharmacists, doctors, lawyers.
- Schools – K-6, middle school and high school. Red Crow College campus. Operates on reserve and also a Lethbridge campus.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Small Business Training

- It is understandable that Blood Tribe is more focused on getting businesses started, than on attraction. Investment attraction on a First Nation can be tricky due to the Land Designation Process, taxation and incorporation issues, housing, etc.
- Outlook Market Research has worked extensively with Western Canadian First Nations on building economic development capacity, which almost always focuses on new business development or business expansion on-reserve. The cornerstone for success in this field is training and education. Particularly management and financial training.
- Blood Tribe Economic Development already supports businesses with training and is linked into ASETS funding. Another avenue they can consider is bringing in specialized business trainers in five functional areas of small business development: Management, Marketing, Finance, Operations, and Human Resources.
- Hiring trainers with real world experience in these areas is vital. Provincial and Federal agencies are good partners for funding and secondary information. But private sector trainers with actual small business experience can be an invaluable resource to new small business owners.
- If these trainers have small business experience on First nations, even better.

Website

- The economic development website, <http://btecdev.org>, is offline.
- Even if investment attraction is not a major priority, the communications assets of the Economic Development Department can be important resources for community members looking to open businesses.
- Small business training materials could be hosted on the website. We would encourage a 'link-light' strategy. When viewers look for information on a website and moved off in a series of links to other sites they lose attention, can get confused, or frustrated. Building a website with the necessary training materials on site is more appealing to the viewer, although slightly more work.



TOWN OF CARDSTON

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

On May 1, 1887, wagons belonging to Latter Day Saint immigrants from Utah, led by Charles O. Card, arrived in the Cardston area and set up camp along the Lee Creek, starting the settlement that was named Cardston after the man who led the immigrants. While still crowded in their first mud-chinked log houses and barely able to eke out an existence, the settlers were making plans to build a great temple. And build it they did; first building a large church followed by a great brick tabernacle, and finally in 1913 started construction on the magnificent granite temple around which the town nestles today.

It was the first Latter Day Saint temple built outside of the United States and above and beyond its architectural beauty and uniqueness, it has enormous religious significance for Latter Day Saint church members. Cardston and area provide a great place to live, work and raise a family. This is a family centered, safe community that provides a great quality of life for those who reside here.

- *Town of Cardston Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Mormon community, which constrains some types of business attraction activities. Community is 70% Mormon.
- Mormon population also makes it unique.
- High level (skill level) of secondary school sports.
- The entire County (Cardston County) is dry (alcohol-free).
- Can't use recreational facilities except the golf course on Sundays.
- People move to Cardston for a conservative community atmosphere.
- People retire in Cardston.
- Average age is close to provincial average (42.1 years)

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- The Town is a hub for surrounding communities with 10,000 in regional trading area.
- Proximity to Blood Reserve. Estimated \$20m leakage to Cardston.
- Six Hutterite colonies close by contributing to local economy.
- Route 2, 20 minutes south to the Piegan/Carway border crossing.

- Intersection of HWY 5 and HWY 2 is an asset.
- Town has 60 acres of land being considered for development. A four-phase approach to development including incremental servicing.
- Population is stable, creates predictability.
- MASH sector. School division #1, hospital, Town office, County office, with large number of employees adds to stability.
- Businesses are planning expansion.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Cardston is dominated visually and culturally by the Church of Latter Day Saints. The culture is key to attracting people who are looking for the conservative environment, whether they are followers or not. Unlike many of the other communities in SouthGrow, Cardston is distant enough from Lethbridge to have a fairly robust small business community. In fact, the main street area appears quite active although many of the buildings are in need of upgrading. For most small purchases, consumers are unwilling to drive the 55 minutes. Between the Town's population, the County's and the population on the neighbouring Blood Reserve, Cardston's businesses benefit from a reasonably large trading area.

One contributor to retail leakage is travel for medical and professional services. Cardston currently has a full complement of these offerings and should work aggressively to maintain and grow this sector. This will retain local consumers and also attract from the surrounding trading area. It would be useful to determine service levels on the Blood Reserve and if there is a gap that can be addressed through partnership arrangements with Cardston practitioners.

Residents are very interested in increased restaurants, however, without the ability to sell alcohol, with those high margins compensating for low margins per plate, attracting a new sit-down restaurant will be challenging. Particularly with the sales volume likely for a midrange establishment. A potential solution may be a local operator who is supportive of the community's values who, with coaching and support, might take on the challenge.

With a strong MASH sector, Cardston can offer institutions that are attracted to stable, conservative locations. In the past, several efforts have been made in this regard. These should continue in a very targeted, strategic manner.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Remington Museum – Tourism potential.
- Campaign for restaurants. Looking for sit down restaurants. Alcohol prohibition is an issue. Have reached out to chains where alcohol is not part of the business model. "flagged" restaurant??

- Industrial sector – See BVS. There was a skew for oil and gas based on high levels of exploration. There are predictions of resurgence in the area.
- Service sectors.
- Senior focused services.
- Services to existing ag industry.
- 10 acre and hobby farms (light agriculture and retail agricultural).
- RV sales and service.
- Truckstop.
- Latter Day Saints College. Southern Virginia University was considering expansion. Spent three years pursuing – from 2014-2016. There was also potential for partnership with Harvard. There is no current activity on the file presently. “On the backburner”.
- Electrical distribution system is owned by the Town (Medicine Hat has an exemption). Businesses were working with regulator to get discretion in distribution also looking at creating electrical generation potential. The community could reduce fixed cost charges for local users. Provincial regulation does not allow local distribution network at this time.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- The website has a clean, graphically sophisticated look.
- Its Local Attractions section is superb. This is highly conducive to visitors and tourists.
- The site is light on economic development and investment attraction information. The links to economic development partners is good, but the site should contain some value proposition and economic asset information.
- Consider consolidating all the important investor and economic development information in the Economic Development section of the website. Include important documents such as Area Structure Plans, Land Use Maps, Municipal Development Plans, etc.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*

Restaurant Business Case

- Restaurants, particularly branded chains, are excellent attractors of tourists, workers, and help greatly in attracting new investment. Site selectors look at quality of life and economic cluster as important determinants of investment. In addition, more restaurants are of course always welcomed by existing residents. So wanting new restaurants is understandable, but not having liquor revenues is a serious challenge.



- Approaching potential investors willing to consider a midrange restaurant that does not serve alcohol is a good idea. But the Town should be armed with as much information as possible. A business case showing successful alcohol-free restaurants would be a powerful marketing tool. There are hundreds of alcohol-free communities across North America, and attracting restaurants is a challenge (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_dry_communities_by_U.S._state). Southern New Jersey has dozens of such communities that reference the same situation. A consultant or local economic developer could research and reach out to these communities to help form the business case.
- The case should also be delivered in a graphically sophisticated manner. The case should not just provide information, but create some excitement about the possibilities.



CARDSTON COUNTY

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Cardston County is tucked away in the Southwest corner of the province and embodies the western life style with its open ranges, wandering cattle, farm land with swaying wheat fields, and its rugged timberland on the edge of the Rocky Mountains. Cardston County is in an ideal location for trade with three border crossings to Montana, and a major North-South Highway (Hwy #2) running through, and an East-West trade route only a few miles away. Cardston County is the “Heart of the Southwest”. From outdoor adventure to live theatre, trail rides to country dances, there is so much to do and discover.

- *Cardston County Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- The County is in the early process of economic development; we have mostly partnered with Towns.
- Colony – Hutterites do metal work, produce pancake mix and build pallets. There are 14 Hutterite colonies in the County.
- The communities in Southwest Alberta, which are heavily influenced by LDS Church (Mormon Trail – Cardston, Magrath, Stirling and Raymond), could be a source of advice on economic development.
- Workforce is limited but hardworking. Goal is to bring people to be part of local culture.
- County is aligned to US interests and values based on its history. Cardston County was settled by groups sent by the Church of Latter Day Saints to create communities in Canada.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- There is a strong agricultural base - feed lots, one seed plant.
- Land viable for commercial development.
- Major corridor with Highways 2 and 5, connecting to 3. Two main border crossings.
- Several welding and mechanical shops.
- Tourism – Bed and breakfasts, trail rides, cowboy experiences, mountain view, gas stations and barn store.
- Agricultural economic development is a strong possibility.
- Water rights bought – 144-acre ft. with Magrath; 110 acre ft with Cardston. Available for residential, commercial or industrial development.



- Good relationships for potential intermunicipal partnerships around development.
- Land mass and irrigation available and abundant.
- There is a huge opportunity for wind farm development, as several studies have concluded that Cardston County shows great wind potential.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

The County is a mix of unique demographic influences: the 1,420 sq. km. Kainai Blackfoot Reserve is home to 10,000 people; a socially and economically influential Mormon community has its origin in settlement in the late 1800's; and there are several Hutterite colonies that trace directly to the 16th-century Reformation. This mix of markets is a local strength.

In interviews, Cardston County acknowledged its several challenges to industrial and commercial growth. These include the lack of a major border crossing, lack of rail access and lack of qualified labour. These conditions do create a difficult environment for creating economic growth. Cardston County has, however, been identified as a potential site for wind energy facilities. This industry is not reliant on transportation and a large labour force, once installations are complete. As a potential augmentation to the municipal tax base, this may be a good place to start in the County's economic development efforts.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Hemp mill
- Straw processing
- Donkey breeding
- Pallet construction
- Enhancements to agriculture but not new implement dealers
- Tractor shops are not viable due to low volume of sales
- Smaller ag supply shops that address more immediate needs

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Community Profile

- It was noted in interviews that the SouthGrow community profile needs updating and the County does not have expertise to do data collection. This updating is underway by SouthGrow.

Local BRE Survey

- It was noted in the interviews that some business survey work that could be enhanced for BRE purposes would be useful. BRE work can be done successfully by local employees, but it is advisable that the survey instrument and survey plan be designed professionally by an economic development consultant, or perhaps in partnership with organizations that the County is a member of such as SouthGrow or Alberta SouthWest. Some tips:
 - In small communities, the sample size should approach the population's size. So, you will want to survey as many businesses as realistically possible.
 - The survey must be relatively short to respect the interviewees' time and get better response rates. An electronic or paper survey should be a page long, or just a few minutes. An in-person interview should be kept under 15-20 minutes unless the interviewee wants to talk longer. On that note...
 - Make sure there are a few 'key' questions included. Find out what you really want to know, don't waste time.
 - If it is an electronic or paper questionnaire, try and make most questions close-ended (or quantitative) in nature. E.g. Yes/No; Scale of 1-5; etc. Open ended questions make the survey longer, and make it harder to analyze the data.
- BRE data is an excellent cornerstone to building a full economic development strategy/plan that is grounded in the realities of what businesses need to succeed.

Website

- The website needs a section dedicated to attracting investors, or at least answering basic investor inquiries.
 - It is not easily navigable. It needs a single navigation architecture, not sets of rollovers and links that reside at the top, left side, and in the body.
 - The main page is much too long in content; use bounce-downs. And the logo does not appear on the home page upper left corner.
 - Cardston County website only gives contact information for Government employees, which could be difficult for investors who need to contact someone for business purposes. The information regarding marketing and messaging needs to be improved, including the aesthetics. Under the "About Cardston County", there are three additional links that, when you click, are empty. This website needs more information and wording that would be appealing to investors because there is currently almost no information for investors or companies looking to set up in Cardston County. Where investors will be looking for economic and community information, use language that promotes an "open for business" attitude. Consider developing an "investor" area for the website where potential investors can locate key information. This area could be a subheading on the economic development page. Include important documents such as Area Structure Plans, Land Use Maps, Municipal Development Plans, etc.
- *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*



Wind Development

- Cardston County should be identifying which part of its 350,000 hectares is the most suitable place for wind farm development, and engage with landowners to create a strategy for how to handle wind farm developers. The County should begin identifying and targeting wind farm companies with informational materials about the benefits of setting up in Cardston County.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*



VILLAGE OF CARMANGAY

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

With a beautiful blend of prairie, river valley, and mountains, the Village of Carmangay is the perfect place for any couple to raise a family. Carmangay offers unlimited opportunities for business, industrial or residential projects. Affordable, fully serviced lots, low taxes and a unique geographical location provide opportunities galore for you and your family.

Carmangay is the oldest municipality in Vulcan County. C.W. Carman and his wife (nee Gay), settled in 1907. The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) branch line made Carmangay a “boom town” in its’ early years. During this time, the rail line extended only as far as Carmangay. The prosperity ended in 1911 when the bridge over the Little Bow River was completed, and the rail line then extended north. Nevertheless, Carmangay continues to progress. Carmangay is the “Home of Southern Hospitality” and offers an excellent quality of life with family and country-style living, fresh air, blue skies and a progressive community spirit.

- *Village of Carmangay Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Carmangay has a quieter lifestyle that people enjoy. Some are retired from the City but later they have to move back to a larger centre to access medical services. The past 6 – 12 months have seen several younger families move to Carmangay. Housing prices are low. Modular homes must be under 10 years old. Building lots are inexpensive - \$14,000 for 11' x 115-120' deep lot.
- Diverse, good cross-section of people – semi-retired and young people in the workforce. Adults 18-65 yrs – 130 residents; 65+ yrs - 82 residents.
- Community is very accepting of people from other cultures.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Reasonably priced land. Some serviced or serviceable – commercial and industrial. \$140 sq ft frontage.
- Fibre Optic lines are installed throughout the community, which should help attract IT and home based businesses. No business taxes.
- Highway and rail access. CP spur line.
- Close to cities – 45 min to Lethbridge, 25 minutes to Claresholm, 15-20 minutes to Vulcan.
- Seed cleaning plant.
- Garage, Restaurant, Bar and Hotel.



- Seniors group – organize outings to attractions and events; different activities that appeal to semi-retired.
- Mennonite community has brought lots of children to the area. 65 children in grades 7-12 in Carmangay. School pulls from area 45 minutes away and into Picture Butte and Barons for Mennonite children.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

At under 30 minutes from the towns of Vulcan and Claresholm, Carmangay has good opportunity to provide well priced housing to workers from both communities. The Village is focused on older adults with activities for that demographic. Marketing that interest and its competitive housing and land costs in the immediate region may be a good first step in growing the community.

The proximity to the two towns is an impediment to growing a local retail or service sector. There is local interest in re-creating a local general store with lunch counter café partially based on flow through traffic to the seed cleaning plant. The Village could ask Community Futures or the Vulcan Business Development Society to do a pre-feasibility study to test this business idea.

Carmangay has good transportation assets with highway exposure and a CP spur line. It would be helpful to work closely with Vulcan County in the pursuit of alternative energy and value-added agriculture projects.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Starfield Centre – geothermal greenhouse with 15-year expansion plan.
- Big issue is cost of infrastructure and its age. Best case would be to attract a developer.
- A general store with a lunch counter. People have wanted a general store for a long time. Need to sell household, grocery, lottery, liquor, and have a lunch counter. Needs to be diverse but only minor grocery. In the past a general store with a lunch counter did well (10 -15 years ago).
- Gas card lock.
- Truck traffic goes through Village to seed cleaning plant.
- Large animal veterinary serving agriculture industry, farming community.
- Includes crops, cattle producer, 16 Hutterite colonies and pet owners.
- Don't have vacant buildings so company needs to have financing to build from the ground up.



D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- There is little in terms of economic development or investment attraction information on the website. At a minimum, there should be reference to SouthGrow where there is capacity to gather and disseminate economic development information. This would be leveraging Carmangay's membership in SouthGrow.
- In addition, the website could feature information that would be appealing to investors because there is currently almost no information for investors or companies looking to locate in the Village. Where investors will be looking for economic and community information, use language that promotes an "open for business" attitude. Consider developing an "investor" area for the website where potential investors can locate key information.

Logo

- The Village has a very strong, well-designed logo. It is unique, which is always a good asset for a small community, as rural villages often struggle to differentiate themselves. The design of the website doesn't match the quality of the logo. If a re-design is done at some point, a style sheet or template that matched the feel of the logo is recommended.



TOWN OF COALDALE

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The Town of Coaldale is an emerging community located in the heart of southern Alberta. With state-of-the-art recreational facilities, and a diversity of amenities and tourist attractions, our municipality combines the benefits of small town living with the service provision of larger urban centres. Council's mission is to ensure that Coaldale continues to be a preferred place to live, work and play. Whether you're a developer or business owner seeking the "Coaldale Advantage," a prospective homebuyer looking for a friendly neighbourhood or a couple looking to retire, our community has something for everyone. If you're new to Town, or simply visiting for the weekend, we encourage you to stay a little longer. What attracts many people to the Town is the friendliness and security that comes with small-community living. This is rarely found these days and something Coaldale residents are truly proud of. That makes Coaldale especially welcoming. – *Town of Coaldale Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- People like the large neighbourhood feel, the stores, recreation facilities per capita is high, good walkability, local identity. Local government is close to the people. 505 of Coaldale residents work in Lethbridge or surrounding area. Real estate is good value. Average 60 new homes per year.
- Development and growth has been consistent.
- Younger community (average age 36 yrs) and this is growing.
 - 10 minutes from Lethbridge which helps with access to goods and services for business.
 - Getting lots of transplants (new residents) and need to educate on the offerings of Coaldale. For example "Taste of Coaldale" featuring local culinary artists.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Non-residential millrate is 13.6/ Lethbridge is 18.8.
- No Machinery and Equipment tax, a policy decision.
- Real estate – industrial park is significantly less cost. Town is the developer. Goal is to cover costs of development. Payoff is tax revenue.
- Safety and security: 25,000 sq ft RCMP regional depot including specialty units which will be working from that facility. It will be the RCMP "beehive" starting in 2018.
- Emergency response is very strong. Faster response time than the city.



- Strong support at municipal level for economic development. They facilitate well, are nimble, relationship-based, and keep track of companies looking for land.
- Road access highways 3 and 845.
- High visibility and traffic.
- Commercial development – high volume of traffic on HWY 3 (30K vehicles daily) .
- Shop local marketing program.
- Spur line potential.
- CP main line.
- Gem of the West Museum.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

While its proximity to Lethbridge and lower cost of living makes it a likely location for city-based workers, Coaldale, at 8,215 residents is now becoming large enough to sustain its own business community. This business community is more likely to be locally owned with fewer national chains. This creates an opportunity for Coaldale to develop a boutique or specialty market. Careful consideration should be given to commuters who drive to the city for work all week, who may welcome the opportunity to stay home on the weekend.

It is often repeated that “the highway runs both ways”. While this is true, large population centres tend to create their own “pull” and city dwellers are less likely to travel to smaller centres. There are examples that run counter to this pattern, however, usually centered around an accessible and unique experience. Coaldale might review its attractions including the Birds of Prey Centre and the Gem of the West Museum and determine if they are close enough to the dominate shopping and hospitality nodes in the community to create supportive traffic to those businesses. The Town is already working on campaigns to build awareness among residents about local retail and entertainment options. These efforts have potential to support a vibrant town core but requires partnerships with the business community and persistence.

The location of Polymax into Coaldale, is a potential leverage point for increased investment in Coaldale. The Town should maintain ongoing relationships with Polymax and initiate discussions about the potential to attract complementary or similar businesses. A very clear understanding of Polymax’s decision making process in selecting Coaldale will be critical to moving forward with a strategy to increase participation in this sector. Transportation infrastructure, attractive land costs, proximity to urban services and an available labour pool appear to be reasonable starting points for discussion.



2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Health services and optometrist.
- Larger retailers are wanted – but the population base must support it.
- Need a trade area analysis done.
- Industrial growth – we are not recruiting to a particular sector. Our main criteria is job creation and tax base contribution.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Capitalizing on Success – Cluster Building

- The establishment of Polymax in Coaldale is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the Town's ability to build successful subsidiaries. Polymax undoubtedly has relationships with complementary businesses at the headquarters in Quebec as well as other locations around Canada. These businesses could be enticed to locate subsidiaries in Coaldale if Polymax is deemed a success. - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- Actively seeking complimentary companies to invest in Coaldale is one of the strongest methods of investment attraction. The Investment Promotion and Attraction Process is an internal EDO process designed to react to the Site Selection Process used by relocating companies, but also be proactive by generating and converting FDI leads.
- At the beginning, the Site Selection Process is aimed at gaining an understanding of the region's level of economic development and its national economic policies, and depends upon the type of investment. For example, is the investor seeking resource-based locations, strategic market locations or product efficiency locations? The site selection process continues to become increasingly detailed as decision makers narrow the list of possible locations.
- Key factors during the site selection process generally fall into the following categories:
 - Complimentary businesses or clusters
 - Market characteristics (local and regional)
 - Costs (labour, transportation and other)
 - Natural resources (availability and quality)
 - Infrastructure
 - Policy structure
 - Business support and promotion
- Good investor information, a solid marketing (web) presence, and a leads handling protocol are all important. As stated in the interviews, "It would be good to have a base of good market information. We need the base data. Good looking templates, better online presence leading to more hits and more calls."
- Section 5, Regional Marketing Recommendation will touch more on leads handling protocol and investment attraction best practices.



Website

- There is plenty of useful information throughout Coaldale's website regarding community facilities and services, business development and general information about the Town. However, it needs to be cleaned up and reorganized to make it easy for investors to navigate. Having Twitter and Facebook showcases a proactive strategy and is an effective tool. Also, the statistics found under the economic development page are very useful for potential investors. The business directory is currently under construction and needs to be completed. Consider providing testimonials from business leaders to highlight the Town.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- The website is clean and easily navigable. And it is good that it has an Economic Development section. But it needs updated information and significantly more data for site selectors.
- Linking into the SouthGrow Town of Coaldale Economic Development Community Profile is advisable.
- Working with Polymax to understand their internal site selection process is a great opportunity to build up the investment attraction website content and messaging.

Highway Signage

- Too many people travel through Coaldale daily on the highway with the vast majority of them not stopping on their way through. More businesses are needed, but also some clear signage, so these 30,000+ commuters become potential customers.
- Highway signage is a very good marketing tool. It needs to be visually appealing, but also succinct in promoting specific community assets, events, and locations. The key is to think like a visitor when designing signage.
- A good source of information on this topic was done by the Tourism Research Innovation Project (TRIP) out of BC. Here is their report: http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/Community_signage_new.pdf.



TOWN OF COALHURST

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

If you are looking for a residential town with quiet streets, good schools, caring people and lots of potential - this is the place for you. Our proximity to the City of Lethbridge and access to their shopping, post-secondary, medical, seniors and recreational facilities gives us the best of two worlds - city amenities and small town living. We have residential developments offering a choice of building lots. Owning a home in Coalhurst is a reality. Our growth is steady and without many of the problems being experienced by communities who are outgrowing their infrastructure. Combined property tax and utility rates are one of the lowest in Alberta. The servicing of our long term debt takes only 7.8% of our total operating budget. Entrepreneurs are always happy to hear we have no business tax. Coalhurst is physically located within the boundary of Lethbridge County. It is situated only 8 kilometres from the City of Lethbridge (with more than 85,000 consumers) and 200 kilometres from the City of Calgary (with more than one million consumers). Additionally, it is conveniently located along Highway 3 — the principal highway through southern British Columbia and Alberta, and part of the CANAMEX Corridor linking Canada to Mexico through the United States.

– *Town of Coalhurst Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- It is a bedroom community; we aim to be the “best bedroom community in the area”.
- Development is currently 95% residential.
- Commercial development will evolve as population grows.
- Enquiries are generally coming for smaller scale businesses - Very family oriented.
- Young population with a low crime rate.
- Small town atmosphere; kids can ride bikes in town safely.
- Water capacity is licensed. Regionally that is an issue. Having a growing population and increased manufacturing and a lot of dry land farming puts pressure on water capacity. This is an issue that will need to be addressed going forward.
- Usually businesses approach the Town. The Town doesn’t actively pursue business.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Our main marketing concept is “the best bedroom community in Alberta”.
- Mayor comments – don’t necessarily want to see major industrial/commercial growth. More focused on good utopia community for families.

- We are really growing without trying – fastest growing community in Alberta and been in top 10 for past 10 years.
- Southern Alberta climate, family connections, proximity to Lethbridge.
- Most sunshine hours, helps with morale.
- We have space – Industrial park – negotiating shared industrial park with the County. Hope is for slightly lower land costs. Town has water and sewer capacity.
- Current businesses - Prairie Cedar – very specialized product.
- Provide for more immediate resident needs: Two liquor stores, two convenience stores, a pub. A dollar store that struggles.
- City of Lethbridge is expanding towards Coalhurst.
- Recreational facilities are in the City and close by.
- We have access to medical services, financial institutions, dental services.
- Town has annexed a $\frac{1}{4}$ section for commercial development. And constructed alternate access to Town to service. Looking at County collaboration.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

It's leadership and administration has identified that focusing on enhancing Coalhurst liveability is key to its continued growth and success. It's very close proximity to the City of Lethbridge is a significant constraint on retail and services development, but also presents opportunity. Coalhurst has embraced its role as a bedroom community and maintains good productive relationships with its neighbours.

Understanding Coalhurst's demographics will help the Town determine which medical and health services might be most useful to its residents. Best opportunities exist in goods and services which are relatively immediate, not warranting a highway trip, albeit a short one. These tend toward lower margin items that require high volumes for business profitability. However, local residents are also likely to pay a reasonable premium for convenience. With lower development costs, this community could be well positioned for attracting younger residents looking for the opportunity to access the housing market. As young families are established and grow, Coalhurst's safety and educational opportunities will become increasingly valuable in attracting investment. The Town is aware of issues with access off and onto Highway 3 and is addressing those concerns.

A challenge for Coalhurst, if it continues to emphasize residential development, with minimal commercial or industrial growth, may be managing affordability of property tax. Partnerships with Lethbridge County involving fringe area land may assist with this going forward.



Maintaining close working relationships with the County's economic development office will be beneficial.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Medical services, pharmacy, doctors, dentists.
- Eating establishments.
- Another service station on annexed land.
- Very little opportunity for value-added agricultural processing. Have feedlots in the area but very little potatoes or sugar beets.
- Potential for large scale greenhouses given land availability and climate.
- Large industrial development based on space, potential land development, transportation infrastructure.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Embracing Your Brand

- It is refreshing to hear a community embracing the concept of being a bedroom community. This is a solid value proposition, and juxtaposes many communities who are focused strictly on industrial development.
- But from a marketing perspective, this economic development concept is more consumer-focused than business-focused. It relies on attracting businesses through the attraction of residents. It is basically a Pull Through Marketing Strategy.
- Being focused on the consumer requires a higher level of attention to Community Branding. Businesses are often more focused on economic data, while potential residents can be influenced by the 'feeling' they get from being part of a certain community.
- The focus on attracting residents means that the Coalhurst brand needs better development. This will mainly be realized on the website, but also in other marketing materials.

Website

- Coalhurst's website has plenty of useful business and community information. However, aesthetically, the website needs to be updated and the marketing and messaging needs to be improved to better market the town. The front page of this website is too cluttered. Consider consolidating all the important investor and economic development information in the Business section of the website. Include important documents such as Area Structure Plans, Land Use Maps, Municipal Development Plans, etc.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- Ensuring that its resident's information and attraction information, both in print and online will be helpful. Adding a "Move to Coalhurst" tab on the town website with a one-page summary of the town's amenities may be helpful.



- As mentioned above, new brand development focused on being the “the best bedroom community in Alberta” is advised. And then a refresh of the website based on this new brand. The ‘Live Work Play’ construct is often used by small communities in brand and website development. Strongly embracing “the best bedroom community in Alberta” right on the Home Page would make a clear, effective message for viewers and businesses.



VILLAGE OF COUTTS

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Coutts is a warm and friendly place to live and provides a safe environment in which to work, raise a family and retire. The quality of life is enhanced by the recreational facilities, affordable housing, low taxes, and an excellent volunteer fire and ambulance service. The Village of Coutts is located on the Alberta/Montana border, 1 hour south of Lethbridge. Coutts has the only 24-hour port of entry in Alberta, with over 750,000 travelers passing through every year.

– *Village of Coutts Economic Development Community Profile*

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- The border crossing the primary local asset.
- Border location is #1, and so the Transportation and Logistics sector is most important to the Village.
- Gas station/convenience store/restaurant right on the highway.
- Brokers (7) here because of border crossing. We must work to retain that business.
- The community also has a very low crime rate.
- Low property tax.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

The closure of a number of brokerages in the Village has had a negative effect on the community. Further challenges include the absence of high quality broadband service and restricted access to water. Past efforts to attract Tim Horton's were unsuccessful and this was attributed to the lack of understanding by developers of the nature of the traffic flow into the United States. Intuitively a Tim's at the border seems to make sense. It would be useful to look at other busy border crossings to see what services are offered on the Canadian side. If those have been successful in attracting coffee shops, and particularly Tim Horton's, a comparative of traffic patterns and the nature of the vehicles and drivers would be useful.



The Village has noted that there may be an opportunity for locating summer homes for snowbirds in the community based on the cost of land and housing and a very low crime rate. A traffic count of recreational vehicles travelling into the US might indicate an opportunity for RV storage at the border. This would be the first step to develop a business case. Secure RV storage has a lower capital investment and low maintenance costs. It may represent a business opportunity for a local entrepreneur.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Server farm would be a good idea.
- IT – Milk River Cable and ShockWave but poor service. Trying to get Axia in town to provide broadband.
- Snowbirds are locating in Coutts for cheap property and a Canadian address with ease of access to the US.
- Businesses don't understand traffic flow through Coutts and make decisions based on the Village's population base.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- The Village of Coutt's website is out-dated. There is no information that is applicable for investors or other businesses looking for guidance in setting up in the Village. In addition, there is not enough information for anyone looking to find general data about Coutts. Consider developing an "Investor" area with key information all in one place. Provide important statistics, charts, land use maps, and tables within the "Investor" or Economic Development section of the website. Lastly, consider including statistics that may be appealing to the US demographic because of the proximity to the US border crossing.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- The website has an awkward architecture. The navigation system is not very intuitive.
- More information about the community's primary value position – the border crossing – needs to be on the home page.



LETHBRIDGE COUNTY

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Lethbridge County is located in south central Alberta neighbouring five other rural municipalities. Running east through the centre of the municipalities is the Oldman River that eventually joins with the Bow River to form the South Saskatchewan River. There are several reservoirs in the County presenting ample water-based tourism activities. The Crowsnest Highway (#3) is a divided highway that bisects the County from east to west and connects the BC border to eastern Alberta at Medicine Hat. It then connects to the TransCanada Highway system. It also intersects with Highway 2 near Fort Macleod, which is the major north/south route to Northern Alberta and the United States. Highway 4 (also divided) connects with Highway 3 at Lethbridge and continues down to the United States where it connects with Interstate 15. Highway 5 goes straight south through Cardston and provides easy access to many recreation activities. Other major roads include Highways 25, 512, 519, 520, 521, 843 and 845. The south line of the CP Railroad connects to both the west coast of Canada and the St Lawrence Seaway. It also provides easy access to the US system of railroads going through the northern states. There is an ample supply of land along both rail and highway corridors for commercial development as well as space at the Lethbridge Airport. The Lethbridge Airport is jointly operated by both the City and the County and offers passenger operations, flight schooling, hangers, aerial spraying, etc. There is also exciting potential for air freight and additional consumer services.

– *Lethbridge County Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Lethbridge is home. But can be challenging to find entry level jobs with a defined career path in Lethbridge and there are relatively few companies with well-developed career paths.
- County population stable – 10,000. Not a lot of movement. Rural, heavily agricultural. For people who enjoy that lifestyle but with the advantage of proximity to city. Don't have manufacturing or large employers.
- Many people who work in the county live in the City of Lethbridge or other municipalities.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Excellent transportation infrastructure. Road, rail, air. HWY 3, 4 and 5 and secondary's.
- Proactive about keeping road network well maintained to keep good transportation infrastructure.
- Coutts border, four highways from County to border. Special rail section for bulk shipping—CP turns over to Burlington Northern Santa Fe.

- Private rail facility – Transmark – Highway 14, 15 minutes south by Viterra, unloading site. Railcar storage, could have potential for growth. County has good working relationship with Transmark.
- 150 acres at site that could be easily served by rail. Needs water and waste water service.
- Intermunicipal development plan – the City of Lethbridge and County recognize that agri-food should be in the County.
- Pro-business attitude – willing to propose innovative solutions to development challenges.
- Council understands, recognizes and supports business. Sees business as “undergirds” of county. Within MGA and land use bylaws are positive towards business.
- Easy access and relationship with research institutes.
- University of Lethbridge, College, Federal government agricultural research station, animal communicable disease research station, Dupont Pioneer Corn Research.
- Developing a “super-cluster” proposal to federal government around agricultural research expertise. Expect to submit by early 2018.
- Agropure Cheese Factory – 80 employees near Diamond City (hamlet) – this may not be unique.
- Lots of land. Good soil. Irrigation, fertile land and market access. Long, sunny, warm days in the summer months. Good research/R&D support through the university, college and ag research station.
- Proximity to Lethbridge. Residents are source of labour for County businesses.
- Stability in leadership and administration and approach to business gives predictability.
- Competitive millrate.
- Positive – Council and administration have written economic development into 2017 strategic plan. Citizens can see that as part of County’s vision.
- County has competitive advantages in grain, canola, barley – bulk shipping – unit train and elevator capacity.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Lethbridge County has a well-developed economic development strategy that centres on the agricultural food industry, alternative energy and transportation. Transportation industry diversification efforts may be constrained by the location of the regional inter-modal site to Calgary. Analysis of those impacts on both the transportation industry and movement of agricultural products would be helpful.



The County’s ability to develop an agri-food and alternative energy sector is well supported by existing primary production and excellent transportation networks. A stable political and administrative environment is helpful in sustaining the relationships needed to attract meaningful investment.

Continued work with learning and research institutions could lead to new opportunities in agricultural processing, packaging and technology supported innovation in the sector. The County has identified that its current strength is in the primary agriculture production industry. Assertive investment attraction efforts to attract packaging and other processing opportunities are suggested. These efforts are well supported by superior growing conditions and a well-developed supply-chain network.

A key decision point for site selectors is the availability of local labour and supporting housing and services infrastructures. Lethbridge County may wish to approach specific opportunity attraction efforts collaboratively with neighbouring urban municipalities in order to offer a complete package.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Number one priority is Agri-food development. Value-added agriculture. Great at primary production. There is already some value-added ag here, but need to do more.
- Bio-industrial, example hemp fibre, and could be more coming.
- Alternative energy – would like to see development of viable wind and solar projects, so far lots of inquiries and tire kicking, but no one has “pulled the trigger” on a project (yet).
- Bio-digester – Lethbridge Bio-Gas.
- Don’t have shovel ready land lots. County does not have land, so almost all private land.
- Taking more passive approach. Responsive not aggressive due to lack of land under County Control.
- We stay out of the land deals. Do some pre-work suggesting potential sites, and then working with the landowner/realtor/company if the process moves forward.
- Need a head start, timing is important.
- Both non-traditional crops/foods and traditional food, bio-industrial products.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website, Data, and Marketing Materials

- The website is visually appealing and relatively easy to navigate.
- The Economic Development section of the website is very strong.
- The County Business Investment Profile is a well-designed, informative document.
- The Canada Census Population Data needs updating.
- In short, without extensive in-depth analysis it would be difficult to provide investment attraction advice to a well evolved economic development program in the County of Lethbridge. However, some of the recommendations in section 5. Regional Marketing Recommendations may be applicable to the County.



VILLAGE OF LAMOND

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Lamond has excellent recreational facilities, clean parks, well equipped playgrounds, and all the amenities and recreational opportunities. Community clubs and committees are very active, energetic and family oriented. Agriculture and the Oil and Gas Industry are the largest employers. Traditional values, determination and an eye to the future keep the Village prospering. Lamond is the easternmost village in Vulcan County, 49 km directly east of Vulcan on Highway 534 and 45 minutes west of Brooks. It is a short drive from Lake MacGregor, Badger Lake, Travers Reservoir and Little Bow Reservoir, so Lamond is a fisherman's paradise.

– *Lamond Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- We are small town people with farm roots.
- The Agriculture and the Oil and Gas industries are the largest employers.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Good highway access. Heavy equipment moves through Lamond . HWY 845 N/S and HWY 531. Heavy loads – energy, houses, semi's, etc.
- Commercial lots – some are serviced, some not. Estimate 10 acres unserviced, 2 acres easily serviced, 150' hwy frontage lots fully serviced. And all easily accessible from the highway.
- All businesses have highway access: serving population in County Division 7, about 400 people.
- Credit Union.
- Fertilizer plant – started 38 years ago, grew it over the years.
- Surrounded by lakes. West – Lake MacGregor, Traverse Dam, Little Bow Reservoir, Badger Lake. People camp and recreation. Lots of fishermen, water-skiing, water sports. Tourism development.
- Little Bow – Provincial Park, Little Bow resort development, Lake MacGregor Estates (3).
- Travers Dam – 2 provincial parks – Village sees some spinoff from tourism.
- Lamond has a very stable business community. Grocery and hardware changed hands but within the community.



- Except for fertilizer facility, other businesses change hands within the community. Strong community spirit to support local businesses.
- Population is changing because family farms are consolidating.
- Farms hire German Mennonite workers who use some of the services in Lamond.
- Manufacturing, welding shop, which would use highway transportation infrastructure and access.
- No rail, lost three grain elevators and rail line about 10-15 years ago. Big loss in tax revenue but not in population.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Geographically removed, relatively speaking, from other SouthGrow communities, Lamond is surrounded by lakes in an active tourism node. Lamond's geo-position off major thoroughfares translates into lower levels of flow-through or commuter traffic but also is a favoured route for larger loads. With available highway frontage there is opportunity to offer some services to this industrial truck traffic.

Lamond currently sees "some" spinoff from recreational users of the lakes and reservoirs in the area. There may be opportunities to leverage this traffic with promotion into those parks and recreational areas. It appears that water skiing and boating are attractions in this area. An area to explore may be recreational vehicle storage and boat servicing and repair. Information needed includes number of users, estimates of annual expenditures on servicing and storage costs in major centres such as Lethbridge, Calgary, Brooks and other sources of users.

Lamond should stay apprised of development opportunities within Vulcan County in order to leverage secondary business opportunities as well as residential relocations.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Fertilizer facility was bought by outside community. There was a ready market for the business. It was a unique business, based on the personal relationships of the owner with his clients.
- ATB sub-branch of Vulcan, largest fertilizer facility in the area (resale and delivery, mostly inputs), automotive garage, Lamond carwash, South Country Co-op, Harvest Moon and T and T is owned by community co-op partnership.
- Proximity to Vulcan (30 minutes away), Brooks (45 minutes away) Lethbridge (60 minutes away) means people can get goods and services elsewhere.



D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- The Village of Lamond has a visually appealing and distinct logo that works well on the home page of the website.
- There is a link to the SouthGrow Village of Lamond Economic Development Community Profile which is good, as there is little other economic development information on the website. Making the profile link more prominent would be a good idea.
- It would be helpful for BR&E efforts if the website could feature information that would be appealing to investors because there is currently almost no information for investors or companies looking to locate in the Village. Where investors will be looking for economic and community information, use language that promotes an “open for business” attitude. Consider developing an “investor” area for the website where potential investors can locate key information.

Traffic Pattern Analysis

- As stated above, with available highway frontage, there is opportunity to offer some services to this industrial truck traffic. Greater understanding is required about this traffic. What is the distance to the next viable truckstop? How does this route and potential stops relate to regulations about driver hours? Answers to these questions and others related to the trucking industry will determine the viability of highway commercial development related to that industry.
- The types of analyses can be done with a mix of secondary data (<https://www.transportation.alberta.ca/3459.htm>) and primary data. Another valuable source of information can be Alberta Motor Transport Association. The primary data may require physical traffic counts and an analysis of what types of vehicles/loads are running through the region. Conducting interviews with the trucking companies working in the region is the best source of load data. But this can be time consuming work, and some companies are very restrictive about what data they share. However, if successfully complete, a Traffic Pattern Analysis or Transportation Study can become a powerful tool to develop Opportunity Analyses and make a case to site selectors about investment.
- It is recommended that such a study be done on a regional level, with an organization such as SouthGrow. Such studies are costly, and are regional in nature as they look at traffic moving in and around local communities.



TOWN OF MAGRATH

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Magrath was founded in 1898 and has been known since its founding as "The Garden City." The Community is also known for its excellent schools, its natural beauty and its outstanding quality of life. Historically Magrath is unique in the sense that it is based on the two model community traditions: the "plat of Zion" and the British "Garden City" tradition. Magrath is an outlier in many ways and is continuing to reinforce and learn from these two utopian approaches to community building. It continues to focus on its Vision Statement. The Town of Magrath is an inclusive Oasis-like community at the edge of the Canadian Prairie. It also serves as a gateway along the Alberta Highway 5 to one of the worlds most pristine and visually stunning natural areas called "The Crown of the Continent Ecosystem," which includes both Waterton Lakes National Park in Canada and the contiguous Glacier National Park in the United States.

Magrath is one of the fastest growing communities in Southern Alberta and its environmental quality and sustainability in economic, social, and other terms is outstanding. The National Film Board of Canada is currently completing a short documentary on the unique quality and history of our community, which will be screened to local residents and made available in 2016. Magrath is an entrepreneur and learning-centered community as well, and the \$20,000,000 Modernization of Magrath Schools that is currently underway is catalyzing a number of new corporate ventures in the community and the establishment of The Sustainable Agriculture Education Partnership in conjunction with the University Of Lethbridge and major corporate and other partners.

– *Magrath Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- See "Plat of Zion", which is a key to understanding community capacity for growth based on land use.
- Community is embracing the model concept (British Garden City concept). Council is resourcing Canada 150 to restore historic sites.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- History is economic engine. Innovation and leadership in agriculture in particular.
- Magrath is a "model community" see Plat of Zion and we are working with that model.
- Beauty of natural setting. It is the Gateway to the Crown of the Continent.
- "Garden City" theme – oasis type community, intimacy with the environment.

- Axia fibre optic an asset.
- Aesthetics of the community, Sense of place. People want to be part of that. “It just feels right” is embedded in planning.
- Proximity to Lethbridge is a strength.
- Incubator being put together.
- Encouraging local entrepreneurs for services.
- Trying to zone and develop smaller lots for younger residents (see Plat of Zion concept for limitations large lot sizes place on current development).
- Stirling, Raymond and Magrath and Cardston have a common Mormon history that has shaped their municipal land use and development. These four have a natural boundary and are in the same school division. They have formed a sub-regional alliance called The Mormon Trail (<http://www.themormontrail.ca>), which needs stronger economic development resources. Needs a more sophisticated approach, more horsepower, a coordinator with passion and experience.
- The Sustainable Agriculture Education Partnership (SAEP) was incorporated by the Town of Magrath in January 2016. This partnership was initiated by the Town of Magrath and Westwind School Division in collaboration with representatives from leading agriculture corporations, the University of Lethbridge and Lethbridge College. The capital portion of this project is also being supported by Cardston County.
- The standalone Career and Technology Studies facility that is currently under construction near the high school will be housing the partnership both during and after completion of our schools’ modernization. The main goals of the SAEP are to develop curricula and programs that will enable young people to catch a higher vision of the future of global agriculture and that will encourage them to take up careers in the increasingly international and technology-dense agriculture sector. Its wider goal is to encourage the increasing diversification of our local and regional agricultural economy in collaboration with other regional private and public-sector business and education partners. Adult education and specialized training are other areas of focus.
- It is expected that this Magrath-based pilot project will eventually serve as a prototype for other similar initiatives throughout Western Canada and beyond. If you have questions about any aspect of this project, please don’t hesitate to contact a member of Council or call the Town office.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

The community of Magrath has very deliberately and intentionally pursued the garden city development model. This model appeals to a very specific type of investor and resident. The local economic development program is driven by cultural resource models. This approach is incremental, and not surprisingly fits well with Magrath’s vision. This approach is transformational and will require sustained leadership politically and administratively.

There have been successes in attracting knowledge based investment, much based on the personal network and connections of the community leaders. It will be important to carefully cultivate support with residents. This will include educational efforts on the role of history and place in economic development.

The attraction of research facilities and incubation resources requires focused and sustained attention to building collaborative relationships. This cannot be project driven and/or short term. As part of Magrath's economic development strategy, a relationship map of the network is needed to create the envisioned garden city supported by research and knowledge based "clean" industry is critical.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Starfield Centre – greenhouses. 50 acres under development. In Magrath anticipate 5 -10 people in management. Currently working on proof of concept.
- Surex – direct sales online of insurance. Is world leader in the field. 80 employees in Magrath and taking up commercial space.
- Agricultural diversification is important.
- Education – the Sustainable Agriculture Education Partnership –Partners include Agrium, Perish and Heinbecker and Prairie.
- Housing development is a priority as well.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- Overall, Magrath has one of the better websites of the SouthGrow member communities. It is aesthetically appealing and the information is very well organized. Under the "Business Development" tab, there is enough information for investors regarding directory, plans, land use bylaw, application forms and development. Consider providing testimonials from business leaders and families to highlight the Town. If possible, find a testimonial that ties together local business and a high quality of life for a family. Highlight the quality of life in the area. Consider developing a Community Profile. Add more information under "About Magrath" to promote the benefits of both working and living in the community.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- The website has good architecture and is easy to navigate.
- The Statistics section need to be expanded.



Agriculture Sector

- Partnerships between agriculture facilities, corporations, and the Town of Magrath are helping to position Magrath as an incubation centre for innovation in agriculture. This is one of the most tangible near-term and future opportunities in SouthGrow that could attract the eyes and ears of the entire global agricultural community. Research and development in agriculture is a multi-billion dollar industry globally. Create a promotional package that highlights the various R&D and agricultural projects in the Town inviting other agricultural businesses and investors to come experience what the Town has to offer.

- *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*

The Mormon Trail

- The Mormon Trail website is visually appealing with strong brand imagery.
- And while the concept is strong, it is unclear how the four communities might further monetize tourism opportunities.
- Data on events and Trail traffic is a key starting point. There are many questions: It is a self-guided trail so how many people do it? Data on the Chattaqua event. Who came? Local people or tourists? How many? Is there enough accommodation and services in the four communities?
- This type of benchmarking data can be the foundation of a Marketing Plan.



MD OF TABER

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

We have access to primary highways 3, 36 and 25, as well as a number of secondary highways that provide key transportation corridors within the M.D. of Taber. These highways provide great access and routing to all major centres. Within the M.D. of Taber are five hamlets:

- Grassy Lake, on Highway 3, 2.5 miles from the east boundary
- Hays, at the intersection of Highway 875 and 524
- Enchant, along Highway 526 in the northwest corner of the M.D.
- Johnsons Addition, adjacent to the west side of the Town of Taber
- Purple Springs, on Highway 3, approximately 10 miles east of Taber

The Towns of Taber and Vauxhall, plus the Village of Barnwell are also located within the M.D. of Taber's boundaries. The brown soils in the M.D. vary from clay to sandy loams of a medium texture, which combine with a relatively level topography to make the area ideally suited to irrigation farming. The foundation for the present and future prosperity of the M.D. was laid in 1920 when the introduction of irrigation water changed area farming from a gamble to a reliable industry as rainfall was the principal limiting factor in crop production.

The continual improvement and expansion of water supplies via the Taber, Bow River and St. Mary Irrigation District systems has paved the way to more intensive crop production techniques. The result has been the development of sugar beet and vegetable processing industries, plus livestock confinement operations, which need an abundance of hay, pasture and crop by-products for feed.

– *MD of Taber Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- We do whatever it takes to get developers here and to keep them here.
- Open to anybody. Help them find funding and opening those doors.
- We pride ourselves in being able to fit round pegs in square holes. We seek to clearly understand the needs of those who express an interest in developing here and then work to find the right property for them. Once a property is identified our municipality has a good relationship with our citizens and we can put landowners in the room with developers and allow them to make the deals.
- Have attracted diverse industry base in agricultural processing.
- We are fair and honest; always give correct information to developers. Transparent processes are communicated up front. Development hearings are open and honest with developers being informed in advance of potential questions to be asked.



B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Irrigation and climate.
- Very progressive people. Farmers willing to grow new crops.
- Eight Hutterite colonies.
- Well established farming community, some consolidation has taken place.
- Industrial millrate is competitive.
- MD is very receptive to development and has developed a reputation with developers for fairness and consistency.
 - Diversification – strong Ag and Oil and Gas industries. Oil and Gas has been slow in past two years with some smaller service companies closing or being bought out. Drilling has been slow.
 - Water – three irrigation systems - and combined with high hours of sunshine makes for good growing climate.
- The Municipal District of Taber is home to one-third of the irrigated acreage in the Province of Alberta. With near 400,000 acres of irrigation, the combination of plentiful irrigation water, fertile land and innovative agricultural producers make this the epicenter for the future development of primary and value added agricultural production and processing.
- Transportation network
 - Proximity of inputs to production.
 - Availability of markets.
 - Transportation and intersection of HWY 3 and 36.
 - Rail lines and two spurs for railcar movement. Other spurs present but privately owned.
- Relationships built between companies operating in the MD. They go the extra mile.
 - An example of this is Lamb Weston / Conagra – in 1999 the MD of Taber, Conagra and the province through Alberta Agriculture developed a tri-partite partnership for the development of water and waste water facilities for the potato processor. The \$25 million-dollar project was cost shared 3 ways. This major processor has transformed our region. From 7,000 acres to 45,000 acres of potatoes in Alberta (35,000 in the MD of Taber alone) this industry has been the largest single driver and precursor for much development in the past 17 years. Our relationship with Conagra / Lamb Weston continues to this day with frequent discussions on a variety of subjects all meant to better our community.
- Hamlets have industrial lots.



C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

In ways like the Town of Taber, the MD of Taber is fortunate in its natural assets, location and transportation infrastructure. With an abundance of water, sunshine and arable land, its competitive advantage is apparent. Married to a progressive and development friendly attitude, the MD has done a very effective job of working with developers as those have emerged. At this point, there is a long list of potential opportunities open to the region in the primary production and value-added agriculture industries. Hemp processing, bio-fibre from various sources and protein from crops are all potential opportunities to support diversification as the traditional crops, particularly potatoes, reach their peak.

The MD's central challenge is to determine its role in the future development of its industry. With a wide range of potentials, it would be useful to develop a strategy to maximize the economic benefit yield of available acres and assets. At the same time, the MD can position itself as a national, and maybe international, value-added agriculture hub.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Solar opportunities.
- Wind - Based on knowledge of local wind patterns, two wind farms have located here and one more is being considered.
- Agriculture
 - Lots of hemp in the MD and processing under discussion. Long growing season and high number of heat units. Ag industry is diverse in specialty crops. Several large processors and export of processed products to international markets. Hemp processing, have one of the largest growers in Canada. It's the fibre processing that is emerging as an opportunity. Hemp seed has a market but the industry is still maturing in its marketing of the by product. Hemp is a growing industry. Right now hemp seed is the primary commodity, however hemp fibre is largely untouched. Approximately 40 – 60,000 tonnes of hemp fibre produced annually is not utilized for any processing purpose. This is due to many reasons. One of the issues we found was transportation costs – the cost to transport a relatively inexpensive item great distances to market where they are transformed into a manufactured item makes our area uncompetitive as compared to petroleum based substitutes. A great future ahead for hemp and over time the industry will mature to the point where biofibres will become more accepted or demanded by the consumer.
 - Nutraceuticals – production of food that provides extra health benefits in addition to the basic nutritional value of the food.
 - Protein derived from crops will be a huge issue soon. New varieties and processes will advance the development of protein content in crops which will encourage the development of processing industries in this region.



- o Opiates. Production of opium poppies for pain medication is possible. Benefit is it's a great cash crop and reduces our dependence on central Asia, which uses the proceeds of the production of this crop to fund terror.
- o Bio fibre – hemp, cereals, corn, etc., lots of possibilities for the right business model.
- o Technology that supports agriculture – precision agriculture / data based agriculture etc.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- The overall look and feel of the site, its brand, is very good. It is a solid municipal website, but does lack many elements necessary for investment attraction viewers.
- The Municipal District of Taber's website is very scattered in terms of where information is placed. There is not a clear business directory, essential services are not listed, and the marketing and messaging is poor. Information on the website needs to be reorganized and easier to navigate. There is a substantial amount of good information but it should be made easier for an investor or business to navigate Under the "Business" Tab, consider using more key statistics, graphs and charts to market the business found in the MD of Taber.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*

Marketing Materials

- It was noted in the interviews that the MD is "Actively seeking out opportunities – we need development of economic development materials and to enhance our online presence for the region."
- Development of Business Cases, Company Profiles, Opportunity Fact Sheets, or Sector Profiles are very useful tools for Economic Developers and the Site Selectors they want to work with. You typically need at least a graphic artist to develop the Materials, and either an economic development consultant or the local Economic Development Officer to create the content.
- The Materials can be used to augment your website, at tradeshows, to answer site selector inquiries, or to promote local business partners.
- Here are just a few examples of investment attraction marketing materials that have been developed by Outlook Market Research:
 - o <http://www.albertatradecorridor.com/resources-2/>
 - o <http://www.albertahub.com/investing-here/why-invest-in-alberta-hub/transportation/>
 - o <http://www.vegreville.com/business/investment-profile>



TOWN OF MILK RIVER

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Milk River is a full-service municipality with amenities you would usually find in much larger centres. Nestled in beautiful southern Alberta, we have many outdoor recreational opportunities and excellent schools. We have a local airport, golf course, curling rink, hospital, library, outdoor swimming pool, financial and professional institutions, and a number of churches, restaurants, retail stores, parks, campgrounds and more! We offer our citizens and tourist friends tremendous options. Also, situated less than 10 minutes from the United States border, and embedded on a major provincial transportation route close to the City of Lethbridge, Milk River is primed for success. Couple that with affordable housing, one of the lowest cost of living indexes in the province, and a strong economy, we are excited about what the future holds.

– *Milk River Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- People are looking for good jobs for our kids to come back to.
- People are willing to help. Very Community oriented.
- It is an affordable place to live.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

Despite a population of just under 1,000, Milk River has been relatively successful at attracting businesses and services to set up shop. Everything from a bank, to a hardware store, and a large trucking company has set up in the Town. The Town's nearby tourist attraction, "Writing On Stone" attracts over 25,000 people annually to visit its beautiful and historic prairie landscape, and observe ancient First Nations rock carvings and pictographs. - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Writing on Stone Provincial Park.
- "Under the 8 Flags" historic positioning (Community has operated under 8 different countries).
- Proximity to US border (Coutts crossing).
- Canamex Highway.
- Housing under \$150,000.
- Stable population.
- Wealthy Ag families.
- Idle land which is ideal for solar development but not good for other development.

- Town is open to change.
- Cost of operating a business is low.
- Longstanding businesses are predominate.
- Commercial lots – 23.668 millrate x low cost of property makes development reasonable.
- Good motel operations.
- Strong business community – two implement dealers, hospital, two schools.
- Distance to Lethbridge is longer so Milk River does have a commercial sector.
- Milk River is the “south of Stirling” hub.
- Hughson Trucking has 40 employees.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

The economy of Milk River is supported by traffic on Highway 4, which terminates at the US border crossing at Coutts. There is potential to expand services to truckers, however, this is heavily influenced by hours-of-service regulations, which will determine where trucks must stop. Milk River could consult with the Alberta Motor Transport Association to quickly determine the feasibility of further trucking developments including a truck stop.

While its highway location is important, it would be useful to understand the driving behaviours of private operators as well as professionals. With the border crossing close-by, is Milk River's highway position a help or a hindrance in inviting more highway commercial investment? And if there are barriers, how could those be addressed?

Given that Milk River is situated right along a major trucking highway, and already has a trucking company in town, there could be potential for complementary businesses to set up. There already is a truck/RV wash in town, but given how much truck and RV traffic travel through the town already, there could be room for another one. Other types of trucking services such as blanket wrapping for freight, or truckload shipping businesses could be viable foreign targets to attract.

With a population of around 1,000 residents, Milk River is the service and shopping node for the communities in the south-east of the region. The local population is older and business owners tend to be well established. This may lead to opportunity to attract new investment as retirements and resulting business sales happen. With competitive property costs, and close access to the United States, Milk River can present a good business case for investment in well established businesses.



Finally, Milk River is only 42km from the Writing on Stone Provincial Park and its 25,000 annual visitors. By marketing local business to these visitors, ease of access and “quick stop” advantages should be considered. It is unlikely that weekend visitors would back track to Milk River for shopping, however, exposure to what is available will maximize the small opportunity. More likely is the success of “what did you forget?” campaign for those headed into the park.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Natural resources.
 - Sunlight – leaders in # of days of sunlight annually – solar energy potential.
 - Some wind energy potential.
- Medical marijuana.
- Highway commercial.
 - Flying “J” truckstop was being considered by private operator.
 - Tim Horton’s being pursued privately.
 - Tim Horton’s and Flying J – not enough traffic on the highway to support. Business case was not there (3.5 years ago). Note – Flying J is impacted by allowable driver hours for truckers. Fitness centre.
- Another gas station – extended hours.
- No branded food outlets in town – could be a market for that.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- Milk River’s note from the Mayor on the front page of the website promotes an active, engaged community. However, this website needs to be upgraded, aesthetically. In terms of content, this website is probably one of the better ones for providing a substantial amount of information, making it appealing for investors and businesses. Consider making the Community Booklet easier to find and access. Under the “Doing Business” section, items need to be organized more simply for an investor to read and understand.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- The Town should be given credit for having an Economic Development section on the website, and including the Community Profile link. The Community Booklet should be in this section, and some of the high-level content should sit on the Economic Development section, or in sub-links.



Traffic Pattern Analysis

- With an active trucking sector in the area there is opportunity to offer some services to this industrial truck traffic. Greater understanding is required about this traffic. What is the distance to the next viable truckstop? How does this route and potential stops relate to regulations about driver hours? Answers to these questions and others related to the trucking industry will determine the viability of highway commercial development related to that industry.
- The types of analyses can be done with a mix of secondary data (<https://www.transportation.alberta.ca/3459.htm>), and primary data. Another valuable source of information can be Alberta Motor Transport Association. The primary data may require physical traffic counts and an analysis of what types of vehicles/loads are running through the region. Conducting interviews with the trucking companies working in the region is the best source of load data. But this can be time consuming work, and some companies are very restrictive about what data they share. However, if successfully completed, a Traffic Pattern Analysis or Transportation Study can become a powerful tool to develop Opportunity Analyses and make a case to site selectors about investment.
- It is recommended that such a study be done on a regional level, with an organization such as SouthGrow. Such studies are costly, and are regional in nature as they look at traffic moving in and around local communities.



VILLAGE OF MILO

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

In 1907, Ontario-born Milo Munroe homesteaded north of Vulcan and opened a post office in his farmhouse the following year. Despite his brief tenure as postmaster, this railway village retains Munroe's first name. Milo is a clean, close-knit thriving community that has grown and prospered over the years. A beautiful new Community Hall was opened in 1985 and in 1998 a new kitchen, lobby and bar were added to the Curling Rink. The local Lions Club operates and maintains a grassed and well-treed playground for the children, which with its automatic sprinklers, is a busy spot for picnickers as well. There are several businesses serving the community. The Village of Milo is just off the shore of the northernmost tip of Lake McGregor, which is about a 5-minute drive away and can also be reached by walking path. Milo offers all the advantages of small-town living with many amenities and many more just a short distance away.

– *Village of Milo Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Message – you can get the good services, a good lifestyle and make a living in Milo.
- UofMilo.com is an asset.
- Active community – curling club very active. “Meat Spiel”.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- McGregor Lake – recreation area. 35km long, generates traffic in Milo.
- Less than one hour to Calgary.
- Local school generates traffic.
- Unique history – “Majorville Medicine Wheel” Canada’s Stonehenge. Could do bus tours, is somewhat remote and hard to find. We might do an observatory at the old school house.
- Grocery store.
- Milo Hotel – 5 rooms Milohotel.com. Billiards table belonged to William Van Horne.
- Sustainability Community.
- Village has residential lots next to the lake. 20 are serviced and five more to be serviced.
- Strong Lions Club (also Arrowwood) and Ag societies, which generate funds for community initiatives.
- Library has video-conference capacity.



- Calgary and District Target Shooters Association have shooting range near Milo on $\frac{1}{4}$ section of land. Currently operational.
- Zoned industrial and commercial land – could be easily serviced (see attachments).
- Village owns 4 acres and also some privately owned Industrial land. Vacant commercial space and open lots.
- Business centre:
 - ATB was looking for opportunities coming in behind Scotiabank, which was closing small market branches. Business centre made it possible for ATB to get started prior to official opening.
 - Graphic designer and photographer relocated from Toronto. Was originally from Lethbridge. They needed high speed internet.
 - Technical writer uses the business centre.
 - Crop Production staff also use the business centre.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Milo has unique and historic features that could appeal to businesses and entrepreneurs attracted to a rural lifestyle with a cultural edge. The community should consider leveraging the U0fMilo.com website to establish a brand with creatives. The community has had small successes in attracting entrepreneurs who require good quality broadband and reasonable access to urban centres. While this is in early stages, a value proposition for knowledge economy workers could be developed. Cost of living and access to airports and urban services should be part of the analysis. The availability of commercial and industrial and the potential for increased residential lots supports the potential for a small node of knowledge-based industry.

Unique features could contribute to tourist attractions that leverage Milo's proximity to McGregor Lake. With the major metropolitan area of Calgary 135 km to the northeast, and the city of Lethbridge 140 km to the south, Milo is well positioned for weekend getaway and cottage development. The Majorville Medicine Wheel, which has been described as "Canada Stonehenge", could create an educational and tourism destination. School tours could build awareness that may, if thoughtfully promoted, transition into interest in the Milo area.

Because this artifact is difficult to access, the opportunity for staging areas at a historic school house and interpretive tours may exist. When combined with "add-on" attractions, such as the William Van Horne billiard table (billiards tournaments?), at the local hotel, tourism and summer cottages seem worthy of further investigation. Our analysis does not provide adequate information to determine if the Majorville Medicine Wheel has potential to create a tourism destination opportunity. There does appear to be potential to leverage existing tourism traffic to create a secondary industry, which would supplement the dominant agriculture industry in the surrounding area.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Recreational businesses that support lake development.
- Golf course.
- Boat and RV storage, serviced campgrounds.
- Village could take on contract from AB parks to operate.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- The Village of Milo has a basic website that could use some design upgrades. The basic architecture is okay as a municipal government website, but it is not visually appealing. The logo needs better integration with the home page.
- There is a link to the SouthGrow Village of Milo Economic Development Community Profile which is good, as there is little other economic development information on the website. Making the profile link more prominent would be a good idea.
- It would be helpful for BR&E efforts if the website could feature information that would be appealing to investors because there is currently almost no information for investors or companies looking to locate in the Village. Where investors will be looking for economic and community information, use language that promotes an “open for business” attitude. Consider developing an “investor” area for the website where potential investors can locate key information.



VILLAGE OF NOBLEFORD

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Nobleford is a modern vibrant growing community near the Canadian Rockies. Nobleford maintains quality city-like infrastructure such as paved streets and concrete sidewalks complimented by a 2 km long paved walking path that wanders through its parks, recreation facilities, natural environments and numerous interpretive sites. In 2003, The Village of Nobleford was recognized as a pleasant, comfortable Village to live in but was facing sustainability issues. Property taxes were on the rise and there was a stagnant population of 615, and generally negative growth issues. The Village, economy and business growth, along with jobs in Nobleford were on the decline. Since 2003, Nobleford has doubled its population, geographic size, and has successfully self-developed and sold over 200 new residential properties. With two manufacturers, one of which has expanded for the oil industry - building large tanks, and many other businesses locating in Nobleford, the employed workforce is 300. Nobleford owns and operates a high quality water treatment facility and also provides water to regional pipelines. Nobleford property taxes have been consistently reduced annually to nearly half of 2005 levels, while maintaining healthy financial reserves, infrastructure and service. In a 2014 municipal spending report, the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses rated Nobleford as the second most sustainable municipality in Alberta.

– *Nobleford Economic Development Community Profile*

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

The Village of Nobleford's CAO, Kirk Hoffman, has investment attraction as a high priority:

Mr. Hoffman has the proper tools and packages readily available for any investor interested in the Nobleford area. Not only is Mr. Hoffman prepared with a sound business case for setting up in Nobleford, but also he shows legitimate pride and enthusiasm in the town that makes him an excellent ambassador for the village, and great first point of contact for prospective businesses. Nobleford's economic development team also has an excellent ability to leverage grants at every level of government, and raise private funds in the community for infrastructure projects and other desired amenities. - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Lifestyle, safe according to the RCMP, modern and high-quality services according to province, low taxation according to province. Sustainable modern strong infrastructure.
- Low taxation and fees.
- Minimal bureaucracy.
- High assets value with low debt and low taxes and good modern everything.

- No hidden taxes.
- Fibre optic (500mbs) to everyone. As of November 2017, up to 1 gbps for \$99 pm.
- Minimal bureaucracy and red tape “we get most of our business growth from frustrated business people dealing with other municipalities”. Nobleford is easy to work with and quick.
- 20 – 30 new or expanded businesses since 2005. In 2000 there were 30 jobs in Nobleford, in 2017 there are 300.
- We must be organized, ready, CAO needs to be able to make quick decisions, make it look easy, wasting time is what everyone wants to avoid. Know what you are dealing with and learn, learn, learn. Red tape and delay kills.
- From a municipal perspective, Nobleford governance/admin/operation model is effective.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Nobleford has adopted a very progressive and long-range economic development program. The community has effectively identified its strengths and addressed weaknesses. A steadily increasing population base is addressing earlier concerns about labour availability. And Nobleford’s proximity to other municipalities augments the available labour pool.

As the community continues to grow, there may be increased demand for services locally offered. It will be beneficial to maintain close contact with residents to understand what services they currently travel for and what might be offered in Nobleford. While local entrepreneurs may identify those organically, sometimes trends are not apparent to individuals who may emerge to someone with a community-wide perspective.

With a current population of 1,278, and close proximity to several towns, as well as the city of Lethbridge, Nobleford has limited opportunity to grow a robust retail sector and is well advised to continue to focus development work on light industry, particularly in the agricultural sector. However, the presence of high quality fibre optics opens an opportunity to attract knowledge workers based on low property taxes and reasonable housing costs and proximity to a major urban centre. These new businesses will diversify the local economy although light industrial development will likely continue to dominate.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Commercial and retail needed.
- Agriculture related. Viability is something determined by those investing and operating the business. A municipality should not tell a businessman a business is viable. Good, ambitious businessmen can make a business work that someone else would fail at.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- Nobleford's website has good information specific to economic development. It is also inviting to see how easy it would be for an investor to set up a business in the community. Nobleford's Business Directory is also resourceful to an investor, in that it specifies address, contact person, phone number, and description. However, too much information can sometimes hinder investors if there is an overwhelming amount of information. Consider combining certain parts. For example, under the section "Maps" is found under both the About section and Land and Economic Development section.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- The information on the website is very good, and the architecture lends itself to adequate navigability. It is well organized. These are the most important strengths on a municipal website that features economic development information. But the design could be more visually appealing. Development of a new style sheet or template is rather inexpensive, seeing as all the content is in place. The website has so much to offer, it would be a shame that a viewer might have a negative first impression before looking at the content.

Agricultural Sector Profile

- Nobleford should target more agriculture-based companies that could service multiple sub-sectors within the agriculture industry. Businesses that compliment the AG Growth supply chain in Nobleford could be excellent targets. One way to begin this process would be to look at other locations where AG Growth has established business and do some research on what other complimentary businesses have also set up there.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- The point made in the interviews about telling a businessman what venture will work in a community is well taken. But providing an analysis of the existing cluster might help that businessman with background information or context rationalizing a new agri-business in the community.
- Development of Business Cases, Company Profiles, Opportunity Fact Sheets, or Sector Profiles are very useful tools for Economic Developers and the Site Selectors they want to work with. You typically need at least a graphic artist to develop the Materials, and either an economic development consultant or the local Economic Development Officer to create the content.
- The Materials can be used to augment your website, at tradeshows, to answer site selector inquiries, or to promote local business partners.
- Here are just a few examples of investment attraction marketing materials focused on the agriculture sector that have been developed by Outlook Market Research:
 - o Hemp Profile: http://www.albertahub.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/AB_HUB_Ag_Hemp_Case_web.pdf
 - o Company Profile: http://www.albertatradecorridor.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/EATC_Profile_Himark.pdf.zip



TOWN OF PICTURE BUTTE

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Two historic events were largely responsible for the founding and development of Picture Butte - the building of the Lethbridge Northern Irrigation System in 1923 and the building of a railroad in 1925, which would provide access to markets. These two events precipitated an influx of settlers from the dryland areas of Southern Alberta. A post office was opened in 1926 and the hamlet sprang to life. Another milestone was marked with the turning of sod for a sugar factory in 1935. The hamlet attained village status in 1943 and was incorporated as a town in 1960. Today Picture Butte is a safe, clean community which offers exceptional recreational facilities and services. We offer the complete package. Several restaurants, a wonderful bakery, hardware store, three tremendous schools, a grocery store, automotive service shops, financial institutions and an urgent health care facility will ensure that people who choose to call Picture Butte home have access to all they need. Our arena, swimming pool, Lions Park, state of the art archery range, regional camp ground, Walk on the Wild Side nature trail, and top tier golf course provide recreational opportunities for folks of all ages and interests.

– Picture Butte Economic Development Community Profile

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Businesses have found Picture Butte. Individuals from within the community have attracted businesses.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- People could bypass Picture Butte in favour of Lethbridge, but Picture Butte has a historic connection to agriculture industry. That is growing and supports other local business growth.
- We are close to and surrounded by land that is favourable to the growing industry of feedlots as well as fertile soil with irrigation.
- Small town, familiarity, trust relationships, long standing inter-relationships.
- Picture Butte is a full-service community which is a distinguishing feature. Fuller suite of municipal services. Has full suite of life services including medical and pharmacy.
- Strong growing community with a number of successful businesses.
- Trading area – The Old Man River and north.
- Businesses that support Ag feed lots.
 - Long standing business - Rocky Mountain Equipment – Agricultural implements.
 - Masterfeeds Fertilizer.



- Cattle hauling.
 - Double V Trucking.
- Grocery Store, Home Hardware, 6 -7 restaurants, Long standing tire shop.
- Greenhouses 2km outside of town.
- Trading area – Old Man River and north.
- Competitive taxation.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

With a strong existing business community, and an active agricultural sector, Picture Butte is focused on providing good, competitive municipal services. As a growing community, its ability to provide a high quality of life for its residents has translated into good social and health services. With a lack of available land for development, and a young population, Picture Butte could concentrate on providing a supportive environment for local entrepreneurs, either those currently in business or those interested in investing in the community. This would include a continued close working relationship with Community Futures. As well, a review of current bylaws and zoning could support business development if any barriers to business development are identified.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Need the land. Current demands for land have exhausted supply.
- Commercial, industrial. Have some vacant highway commercial.
- Agricultural service businesses.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- Picture Butte's website requires some attention regarding the aesthetics and information if they are seeking to attract investment. Currently, there is very limited information regarding the community itself (about, history, events, services, etc.), therefore, the website does not promote the community strengths as well as it could. For a foreign investor, this website does in fact provide a lot of useful business information; however, this component of the website is very text heavy. It is important to remember that some investors are not going to spend longer than they feel necessary to locate important information about their potential investment. Adding in charts or graphs could be easier for an investor to read along with some strategic info graphics.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*



- The website is functional with good municipal information, but little in the way of information for site selectors or investors.
- As noted in the Investment Readiness and Attraction Review, the website needs to have effective marketing materials for investors that may be looking at Picture Butte for a place to set up business.
- Development of Business Cases, Company Profiles, Opportunity Fact Sheets, or Sector Profiles are very useful tools for Economic Developers and the Site Selectors they want to work with. You typically need at least a graphic artist to develop the Materials, and either an economic development consultant or the local Economic Development Officer to create the content.
- The Materials can be used to augment your website, at tradeshows, to answer site selector inquiries, or to promote local business partners.
- Here are just a few examples of investment attraction marketing materials that have been developed by Outlook Market Research:
 - <http://www.albertatradecorridor.com/resources-2/>
 - <http://www.albertahub.com/investing-here/why-invest-in-alberta-hub/transportation/>
 - <http://www.vegreville.com/business/investment-profile>

Land

- There could be opportunities to bring value added agricultural businesses to the region (ie: meat packing plant) if Picture Butte can work with the County to annex surrounding land.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- Lack of commercial and industrial land was noted over several studies, including this one. There is little that can be suggested from a marketing standpoint, as this is an issue for policy makers and land owners. But it is worth noting that this is a common problem, faced by many communities beyond Picture Butte. Without developable land, most new investment is not possible.
- When undergoing site selection research, investors typically look at land availability, taxation/incentives, labour pool, existing business clusters, and infrastructure. Without available land, none of the other factors matter.
- There are many examples of Land Needs Assessments:
 - <https://www.orangeville.ca/get-file/3723>
 - http://www.northcowichan.ca/files/%7B66BB9452-39A6-4158-8328-F5AE9F9BBB2F%7DCommercial%20Industrial%20Land%20Needs%20Analysis_Landworks_Final.pdf
- However, the assessment is not as important as the will of political and business stakeholders to find compromises and solutions to make land available for servicing and investment.



TOWN OF RAYMOND

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The Town of Raymond is a small community situated on the vast expansive prairie in southern Alberta. Founded by a prominent member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Jesse Knight in 1901, Raymond has a rich and complex history deeply rooted with the Church. The Church of Jesus Christ significantly influenced the planning and development of the Town, which mirrored other Mormon communities in southern Alberta. The area's history spans thousands of years encompassing First Nations groups in the region, and later, early settlers, who harnessed the agricultural potential of the open rugged prairie through the development of large-scale irrigation projects.

The community's positioning along the railway, roughly halfway between Magrath and Stirling, the Church of Jesus Christ's presence, available arable land, extensive irrigation systems, and the establishment of the Knight Sugar Factory in 1903, made Raymond highly attractive to immigrants from the United States, Europe and neighbouring provinces.

Today the Town is a growing urban centre with state of the art recreation facilities, a competitive tax rate and a strong sense of community. Our schools are the largest in the school division, new houses are growing and many new professional services are locating within our community.

The hard work and determination of our pioneer settlers have established an expectation of excellence and respect for our heritage and these values will see us through as we see what's in store for Raymond over the next hundred years.

– *Raymond Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Raymond engages in a two-phase economic development approach – let SouthGrow and Community Futures do the big projects (major projects); Local Economic Development Committee focuses on local business development.
- It is accepted that Raymond is a bedroom community.
- We contract out municipal services to other communities. Example: Chief Financial Officer also acts for 11 other communities. This model allows Raymond to keep their tax rates low.
- Residential growth was slow until it got to a point where private investment could be profitable. It has rippled out to realtors and to schools.



B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Existing business reinvest in new opportunities.
- Self-generated businesses are what we focus on, we don't chase smoke stacks.
- Fibre connectivity added to good group of incumbent internet service providers. TEDC has excellent proposals on lowering non-res tax rates, strong medical professional services accepting new patients. Gigabytes available.
- High quality of life, excellent amenities. TEDC has excellent proposals on lowering non-res tax rates. Strong medical professional services accepting new patients.
- Historically Raymond was settled by entrepreneurs.
- Current economic development strategy is focused on residential development.
- Fibre, aquatic centre, VSP, strong medical professional services accepting new patients.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Raymond is a striking community, with a sense of calm and safety. At the same time, the town has embraced technology with Wifi hotspots. Experiencing rapid residential growth, there are many opportunities for business growth. With reasonable projections for a population of over 5,000 in another 10 years.

While a demographic review is beyond the scope of this project, scrolling through the census report raises many questions.

- What is the average age of residents? Is that trending up or down over time?
- The population of Warner County is trending down. Is that a source of Raymond's growth and if so to what extent?
- How extensive is the attrition of high school graduates and is there a "rebound" effect in late twenties?
- Of the people locating to Raymond, how many have family ties in the area? How many could or are likely to move aging parents into Raymond for proximity? Anecdotally was suggested this is the case. For those who were not drawn by friends and family, what brought them to Raymond?

There is a wealth of information in the census data that will inform economic development activity. If not already completed, a deep dive into the municipal census married to the 2016 Stats Canada Census and Household data for the 2011-2016 period will be very useful. This is a period of rapid growth for the community. In order to support this pattern, it will be really helpful to understand the past five years.



Raymond faces the same challenges as other small urbans in the SouthGrow region – Lethbridge is a tremendous economic driver, which also pulls business activity towards it. Raymond is, however, approaching a critical mass that will support more retail and hospitality services than appear to be currently available. It may be that the Town has expanded more quickly than the ability of the local business community to respond. It would be helpful to examine other communities of a similar size and proximity to a larger urban centre. Communities like Lacombe and Vermilion come to mind as having a similar “feel” with about a 30-minute drive to a major urban centre. These communities are located on more significant transportation routes than Raymond but there may be similarities. Both are anchored by a predominance of locally owned retailers, drug stores and restaurants.

In addition to the opportunities that will emerge from an increased population base, Raymond is well suited to increasing its health care offerings. The Town should work actively with Alberta Health Services to establish a local centre of excellence. A number of smaller urban centres have had tremendous success with this model. In particular, Westlock (Population 5101, 91 km to Edmonton) established an orthopaedic surgery centre in 2004. It would be interesting to find out what the pinch points were in Lethbridge’s healthcare system and see how Raymond might be part of that solution.

The community is exploring the concept of a “campus of care” for dementia patients. This is a fascinating idea, and Raymond does seem to have some assets that suit it to this type of development. This is a long term venture, and will take many years to fully research and develop out. In the meantime, there may be an opportunity to develop out the existing hospital’s offerings and to leverage the lodge being developed.

Tourism development, whether building off the Mormon Trail initiative or creating more sporting events, will have more impact on the community when there are more opportunities to buy and shop in Raymond. It is, therefore, critical to work with local businesses who have a demonstrated desire to be part of the community’s success, to identify immediate opportunities.

Raymond administration reports that the community is entrepreneurial in nature, and this seems supported by our research. The number of sporting events, attendees, their pace of origin, and buying habits in the community needs close observation and data collection. Without a local hotel, impact is limited, however, visitors still need to eat and still have down time during the events. How is this leveraged and how does it benefit local businesses?

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Very strong sports minded community. Working on economic development sports strategy. No hotel, so need to partner with Lethbridge on events. Looking for a hotel and wondering “what is the business case”.
- New lodge being constructed. Swapped land for old lodge with provincial approval. Looking at re-purposing the old lodge to accommodation. 32 beds.

- Fibre Telecom provider, Health Services Cluster.
- Council lead initiative, ad hoc committee formation, met with different telecoms, commissioned feasibility studies, actively campaigned for investment selection.
- Fibre telecom initiative was successful. Health services cluster is work in progress.
- Restaurant, additional bank.
- Residential services business, tech start-ups, health services support industries.
- 15-year program to increase number of residential lots. Town developed developments which attracted more developers. Growth has been 30% in last 5 years.
- Snowbird attraction – bring your trailer unit to a 70-lot park, stay in Raymond over the summer and then migrate south for the winter. Raymond has land and preliminary plans, next to a golf course.
- Dementia care model – a community based model from the Netherlands. Also looking at research. Model includes partner housing close to dementia housing.
- Healthcare system – have a hospital. Working towards a campus of care to retain seniors.
- Tech start-up HUB - Bringing in ISPs. Telus, Shaw, Bell, Axia. Have setup wifi hotspots in town facilities and hoping to expand to other areas.
- Residential support businesses (business that support residential development).
- Professional services such as accounting.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- Having recently updated the website, Raymond's website looks modern and attractive making it appealing for investors who may be looking to do business in the community. The information provided is easily accessible and sectioned into different areas appropriately. Adding a portion on the fibre network is a good idea and markets the community well above others that do not mention the fibre network. Consider adding a tab under the "Business" section around who to contact for certain business inquiries.
- *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- The site is easy to navigate and visually appealing.
- The "Why Invest in Raymond?" is a bit buried in the website. Such a document/content could be more front and centre, although it is apparent that resident attraction is a focus for the community – and this information is well positioned on the website.

Business Cases for Sports and Accommodations

- Raymond has excellent sports facilities. Such facilities, particularly rink and ball diamond, can be excellent draws for tournaments and other events – which are excellent revenue generators, and raise the profile of the community.

- The key to success in sports marketing is services – namely accommodations and restaurants. Branded hotels and restaurants are particularly good attractors.
- Each hotel chain has an extensive set of site selection protocols, as finding suitable location is the very nature of their business.
- Often besides location, one of the key success indicators in attracting a chain hotel is the availability and willingness of a franchisee.
- Outlook Market Research has conducted numerous sports facility feasibility studies, and undergone hotel franchise attraction research. Recently we looked the Wyndham franchise hotels that provides property management services around the world. They are the world's largest lodging franchisor, as measured by the number of franchised hotels and the franchisor of 10 lodging brands that include the upscale through to economy accommodations. Their brands include more than 8,000 franchised hotels and more than 600,000 rooms on six continents, which constitute more than 10% of all U.S. hotel-room inventory.
- One of their brands is Ramada Worldwide. In section 5. Regional Marketing Recommendations, we will provide an overview of the franchisee requirements for franchisees looking to open a Ramada hotel.



VILLAGE OF STIRLING

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The Village of Stirling is nestled between Lethbridge and Waterton in the heart of southern Alberta. While it is a village of just over 1,000 people, its small population lends itself to a friendly, welcoming attitude expressed by everyone. Tourists are always welcome, and there is not a shortage of things to do in Stirling. Being thirty minutes away from Lethbridge, Stirling offers easy accessibility to all major amenities and even more fantastic Alberta tourism destinations. Stirling is located in Warner County and is relatively close to the communities of Raymond, Magrath, and Warner. The Village of Stirling, a National Historic Site by Parks Canada, is one of the last surviving and best preserved Canadian examples of early 20th-century Mormon settlement patterns. Also known as a Mormon Agricultural Village or the Plat of Zion, the streets are wide and there are large farmstead lots with barns.

– *Stirling Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- 2007 – 900 population; 2016 - 1,300 population. Majority of people are from elsewhere. This is a bedroom community to Lethbridge. Plat of Zion community that influences land use for commercial development and availability of commercial lots. Small amount of commercial zoning and little room for growth. No industrial land base. As Stirling expands, looking for opportunity to add commercial and industrial land base.
- Convenience store, gas station, gift shop, daycare and fitness centre, storage facility.
- Home based business – hair salon, chiropractor, mobile dental hygiene, accounting.
- Home based business is a priority and they issue permits.
- People chose to live here. Village opened ATB agency, opening a business service centre with meeting space and training space.
- Focus for now is on sustaining and supporting existing businesses.
- \$14m school modernization of K-12 school is underway.
- There are 3-4 new single-family dwellings built every year.
- Average 20 building permits annually.
- Attracting people for lifestyle who will operate businesses from home and who will also leverage internet service.



B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Off HWY 4 which is twinned. Cannamex connector to I15 to California and Mexico.
- Close to US border. Proximity and connectivity to the U.S.
- Rail line is adjacent to the community.
- Axia fibre. Gigabyte service to every home. Affordable.
- Water – Raymond and Stirling partnered on water commission for \$14m system, which is gravity flow system.
- National Historic Village. The original layout is based on the Plat of Zion model. Stirling is the best retained site of this type of settlement. Village owns provincial site that shows how community was setup so that each lot was big enough that the landowner could be self-sufficient.
- Strong inter-community partnerships.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

As with the other communities constructed with a Plat of Zion footprint, Stirling has limitations to its ability to develop commercial and industrial lands. Its focus is on home based business and particularly those which rely on broadband. In a competitive market of communities that circle Lethbridge and attract commuters with lower cost housing and land, Stirling has several competitive advantages. The Stirling School is in the process of being modernized and provides education from K – 12. This provides an attractive option for families, particularly those who prefer a quieter, small town environment. Secondly, the large lots in Stirling are well priced, so that residents can be in a town environment with still increased privacy. The community has worked with Axia to deliver gigabyte service to every home for a very reasonable price.

Stirling has a unique character as a historic community. This combination of historic significance, revitalized education facilities and excellent broadband access is a way to differentiate the community in a competitive market. The focus on business development, further strengthens the messaging that Stirling is very serious about attracting knowledge workers.

As an economic diversification strategy, Stirling should maximize its tourism traffic and potential by maintaining its partnership with McGrath, Raymond and Cardston in the Mormon Trail. Without available commercial lots, the economic impact of this program will be constrained in the short term. However, the tourism promotion has potential to help retain the existing businesses as well as support the community's unique character of a historic community attracting knowledge economy workers. Stirling has done effective work to date with its promotion and in particular with a very effective website.



2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Development is constrained by lack of available commercial and industrial land. See Plat of Zion and village map.
- Stirling has an active recreation committee – three festivals and Chattaqua event.
- Stirling, Raymond, Cardston and Magrath partner on the Canadian Mormon Trail.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- Stirling's website is one that should be benchmarked by other communities in the area. It provides suitable information, is organized and is aesthetically done very well. The one suggestion for the site would be to add more content on the business aspect of the community. References to support companies in the community would be good additions to the site. This would make it more appealing for investors and start up, home based businesses.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- The website is easy to navigate and integrates its logo well.

The Mormon Trail

- The Mormon Trail website is visually appealing with strong brand imagery.
- And while the concept is strong, it is unclear how the four communities might further monetize tourism opportunities.
- Data on events and Trail traffic is a key starting point. There are many questions: It is a self-guided trail so how many people do it? Data on the Chattaqua event. Who came? Local people or tourists? How many? Is there enough accommodation and services in the four communities?
- This type of benchmarking data can be the foundation of a Marketing Plan.



TOWN OF TABER

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Taber is a growing community centrally located in southern Alberta's agricultural heartland. The community is a regional service centre noted for its full range of recreation facilities, shopping, and events such as Cornfest and rodeos. Taber is a centre for both food processing and the oil-field servicing industries. Basking in the sunshine of Alberta's sunbelt, Taber is located next to the beautiful Oldman River and a short drive from Waterton National Park and the US border. The Town of Taber is centrally located in an agricultural belt, which also has extensive oil and gas activity.

Taber has great transportation links including Highways 3 and 36, and the main CP rail line. Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, and the US border are within easy driving distance.

– *Taber Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Family oriented. Good schools and recreation facilities.
- Existing strong agricultural industry.
- Lifestyle, community is very safe, low crime rate. Taber has its own police force.
- Proportion of industrial development 50/50 split with residential development.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Economic development and planning in one department allows Town to tighten up on timelines. CAO instills “find a way to get it done” and Council has been very supportive.
- Competitive commercial millrate.
- Access to water – Taber Irrigation District.
- Highway 3 and 36 intersection.
- Large agricultural and oil and gas sectors. Lots of oil in the MB (Bakkan field) so very diverse economy.
- Ag processing hub.
 - Rogers Sugar employs 100-150 people in low season and 300-350 people from October to February.
 - Potato chip factory
 - Gouw Quality Onions



- Roland Seeds (hemp)
- In the region- Lamb and Weston, McCains
- Sunrise Poultry Producers
- Don't have a rail spur but addressing that.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

With a population of 8,428 citizens, Taber has the critical mass required to sustain a reasonable offering of goods and services. Its position on Highway 3, east of Lethbridge by 54 km, however, creates significant headwinds for local retailers. The lack of significant population base to the north and east of Taber on major transportation routes provides limited regional opportunity for growth in this sector. The predominance of locally owned stores and shops is reflective of this challenge as major chains focus their efforts in the larger urban municipality of Lethbridge.

Local retailers will continue to thrive by offering competitive pricing and by nurturing highly personal relationships and customized offerings. The presence of Walmart may support other shopping as customers are kept local, however, this trading pattern requires examination.

Taber and the surrounding Municipal District have both expressed relative ease in attracting investment, particularly in the agri-food industry. This relative ease may have contributed to lack of strategic clarity in economic growth and diversification. An option for Taber going forward may be to leverage its competitive position in the industry to foster partnerships between industry and research and learning institutions to widen the industry in the community. That is, to leverage processing and production presence into more research and development opportunities and growth. As a diversification strategy, Taber should also consider the role of hemp production and processing in future development. With a strong sector, Taber is well placed as a value-added agriculture hub and should assertively brand its community as such.

With an active oil and gas sector, Taber's economy is diversified, however, the stability of the agri-food sector smooths the boom and bust cycles that energy towns are known for.

With a median age of 35.2 years, Taber is a very young community and will need to assess its ability to provide good employment opportunities for those graduating into the workforce. This very young population will also require affordable housing solutions, which may be a growth opportunity for the community. It may also be useful to review the commuter patterns exiting and entering Taber to examine traffic volumes and characteristics. This close-on review will provide further information to support a strategic approach to economic development. Commuters to Lethbridge may, for example, welcome the availability of local entertainment and dining opportunities on weekends.



Overall, Taber has been able to successfully leverage the opportunities that have flowed to it based on natural assets, location and transportation infrastructure. Harnessing those assets, identifying a strategic focus and creating a focused business attraction strategy will maximize the benefits to the community.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Highway 3 corridor is heavily used for agriculture sector production.
- Trucking and transport – locational advantage and potential for inter-modal.
- Retail, outside of Walmart (have a Walmart). Currently have mostly mom and pop stores. People go to Lethbridge.
- Entertainment options to attract people.
- Tech or innovation. Have invested in fibre. Telus invested \$9m to connect Town to network.
- Need an anchor in the oil and gas sector. Businesses tend to be smaller and in the oil service sector.
- 2016 – Co-op built large truck stop.
- Ag businesses supporting primary production in the MD of Taber. In the #1 custom growing region, and need to do more processing.
- Trades for residential markets and buildings.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- Taber Economic Development Website - Overall, this website is done well. Consider adding Baker Hughes and Husky Energy under the featured oil and gas companies - these are better known companies. The “Tools” portion of this website is very useful for any investor who needs information on setting up a business in Taber. Consider making this tab more prominent on the main page for investors who may need information on how to set up a business in Taber.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- Taber is one of the few communities in the region that have a dedicated economic development website. Its Site Selector information is strong, particularly its easy access to a variety of maps.
- The website is well designed, easily navigable and visually appealing. Having a dedicated, well informed economic development staff is evident from the information and organization of the website.
- In short, without extensive in-depth analysis it would be difficult to provide investment attraction advice to a well evolved economic development program in the Town of Taber. However, some of the recommendations in section 5. Regional Marketing Recommendations may be applicable to the Town.

TOWN OF VAUXHALL

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

The Town of Vauxhall is a place for everyone. It is well situated between the Bow River and Oldman River along Highway #36 in southern Alberta. The Town is in a thriving agricultural area, with abundant water for irrigation and progressive, innovative farming operations. Oil resources are abundant with the resulting economic benefits to the area including entrepreneurial opportunities and stable jobs. The best kept secret about Vauxhall is the Vauxhall Academy of Baseball operated in partnership with the Vauxhall High School. The accomplishments of this partnership include successfully graduating 97 academy athletes over the past 8 years of which 15 have been Major League Baseball (MLB) draft picks and 33 Canadian Junior National Team Invitees.

– *Vauxhall Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- People accept you here and it is safe. Vauxhall is an extremely caring community with a friendly and supportive atmosphere.
- The Town of Vauxhall has approximately 1,200 residents and services a market area of roughly 8,500 people. Our local economy is diversified with a variety of services and retail businesses, and the oil and agricultural industries.
- We are in the process of making new residential lots to attract new business we hope.
- Vauxhall Academy of Baseball as well as being a small community, we have amazing recreation facilities. There is a very good working relationship with the MD of Taber.
- More likely to attract families than businesses. A safe place to have a family.
- Seniors have moved here based on cost of housing.
- There is a sense in some people that they want to stay at the slow pace.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Cost of housing is lower.
- Taxes may be lower.
- Not a lot of industrial buildings and industrial lots are not serviced.
- Visitor information centre.
- Prairie Gold Produces fresh packed potatoes and dried potato granules for export markets.
- Columbia Seeds – dried peas.
- Farming community supports local professional businesses and other businesses.



- Residential lots are developed by the Town (19).
- Vauxhall Academy of Baseball. Baseball academy – has not had an impact on the local economy. Tuition is high.
- Brand new pool.
- Have been focused on upgrading public facilities.
- The beautification project has been done and that changed people's perspective. Now need to move on to a new goal. Maybe Business retention and expansion.
- Recent business openings:
 - Tire shop on the highway
 - RV Repair
 - Nails, Spa
 - Welding shop re-opened
 - M and K Store
 - Bakery re-opened as diner

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

With just over 1,200 residents, Vauxhall is challenged to support a retail sector, but has nonetheless several local businesses that contribute to a feeling of potential in the community. The Town has focused recently on opening residential lots and creating an attractive community for residents and visitors. With its closeness to the Town of Taber, this is a very viable growth strategy for the community. Particularly given its low-cost housing and land and easy access to an employment and service centre.

Ongoing collaborative work through the Joint Economic Development Committee and discussions with the MD of Taber are encouraged. These conversations will build understanding of new opportunities in the value-added industry, and potential positive impacts to Vauxhall. These benefits could include increased tax base through increased residential development and continued support for town businesses from the surrounding agricultural community.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Small engine repairs.
- Medical and dental services.
- Fibre optics not in Vauxhall. Internet service is from satellite.
- Solar development.
- Did a strategic plan. People wanted franchises, gaming, movie theatre (15 responses).
- Hotel for sports travel and weddings.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- Vauxhall's website does not promote a strong business community. Currently there is no information that is available for a business or outside investor that may need help understanding the community's business environment. Instead of having a separate website for the business directory, it should be listed on the main website for people to see.
- *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- It is a nice clean municipal website, but has little to offer to site selectors or investors. If BRE is the next priority for the community, as mentioned in the interviews, it is imperative to add more business and investment information on the website.
- The easy access to Vauxhall Economic Development Community Profile by SouthGrow is a good start. Although the link appears to run to a paper copy that was scanned and uploaded as a PDF. Simply download from: http://SouthGrow.com/sites/SouthGrow.com/files/VauxhallProfileFinal_1.pdf and then upload to the Vauxhall website.

Business Cases for Sports and Accommodations

- Vauxhall's baseball facilities are a unique asset. Such facilities, particularly rink and ball diamond can be excellent draws for tournaments and other events – which are excellent revenue generators, and raise the profile of the community.
- The key to success in sports marketing is services – namely accommodations and restaurants. Branded hotels and restaurants are particularly good attractors. This was mentioned in the interviews.
- Each hotel chain has an extensive set of site selection protocols, as finding a suitable location is the very nature of their business.
- Often besides location, one of the key success indicators in attracting a chain hotel is the availability and willingness of a franchisee.
- Outlook Market Research has conducted numerous sports facility feasibility studies, and undergone hotel franchise attraction research. Recently we looked at the Wyndham franchise hotels that provide property management services around the world. They are the world's largest lodging franchisor, as measured by the number of franchised hotels and the franchisor of ten lodging brands that include the upscale through to economy accommodations. Their brands include more than 8,000 franchised hotels and more than 600,000 rooms on six continents, which constitute more than 10% of all U.S. hotel-room inventory.
- One of their brands is Ramada Worldwide. In section 5. Regional Marketing Recommendations, we will provide an overview of the franchisee requirements for franchisees looking to open a Ramada hotel.



TOWN OF VULCAN

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Originally named after the Roman God of fire by a CPR surveyor in 1910, the Town of Vulcan is a progressive and thriving community that serves as the economic hub and trading centre for Vulcan County. The Town is located midway between Calgary and Lethbridge on Highway 23. Vulcan's economic stability is enhanced by its proximity to high yielding agricultural land, and major natural gas and oil deposits. The Town of Vulcan offers all the amenities of a large city while maintaining a warm rural atmosphere. Quality of life, culture, recreation, education, medical and protective services are of the highest standard. Golfing, camping, fishing and a view of the Rocky Mountain Foothills are just a few of the many year-round recreational activities. Vulcan has affordable, serviced residential and commercial lots available, as well as a developed industrial park to accommodate new industry. Promoting the science fiction application of its name, the Town of Vulcan holds many events that attract international visitors as well as visitors from other galaxies! Be sure to stop by the Tourism and Trek Station, where we have information on all of our county communities. The Town of Vulcan offers its residents a balanced quality lifestyle making this community a great place to call "home".

– *Vulcan Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Everything we need is here. The majority of housing turnover here is seniors and young families. Local daycare numbers are increasing; there may be a lag in families starting. 2016 population has increased by 4% to 1,917.
- Business incentive policy.
- Work closely with the County.
- Community has success in attracting business when it works together to identify a need and bring it in.
- To succeed as “new to Vulcan owners” a new business needs to be very present in the community.
- Pet supply store opened 2 years ago is doing well.
- Jewelry store on main street has been very successful. They do great customer service and by invitation sales events.
- More and more 30-year olds are staying in town.
- As towns grow larger, they want to gain back the “small town feel”. Vulcan still has that. “We are fortunate to have that”.
- Hospital employs 130 people.
- County and town partnered to fund \$2.4m towards hospital expansion. Clinic and wellness centre. Hospital will be viable for 25 years.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Affordable property.
- Vulcan Business Development Society has \$80k in support. Invested in Vulcan Business Development Society – town, villages and the County.
- 3rd generation of local people now taking on businesses.
- Developing an industrial land use strategy with Vulcan County.
- 30 acres for industrial needs, need to invest \$1.1m to free up 8 industrial lots.
- 60 acres slated for long term residential development.
- Fibre optic in town – Axia. Wifibre is the ISP.
- Direct access to the customer, local expertise in agriculture industry is highly valued and utilized.
- Local retail gets good support from local people and surrounding area.
- Solar park (demonstration park next to tourism centre) promotes industry in area.
- Star Trek Tourism.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

With a population of 1,913, and with the Town of Strathmore under an hour away and Calgary 128 km's away, Vulcan has struggled to maintain a retail sector. With increased mobility and access to online shopping, this circumstance is not unlike many smaller urban centres in Alberta and beyond. The local business community's competitive advantage is its personal connection with clients and customers. Targeted local and regional retail campaigns should emphasize "where everybody know your name" themed promotions.

Vulcan's older demographic may be more supportive of local and more personalized services and goods. It would be useful to do a retail and service leakage study to determine if there are missed opportunities tied to this market. Consideration could be given to aging in place facilities. If this were pursued, the Town should consider proactive strategies to attract relocation of workers for these facilities. Competitive cost of living may be a factor for new professionals, beginning careers and family life.

The recent expansion of the hospital may represent an opportunity to attract more residents to permanent and well-paying positions. It would be helpful to understand how many employees commute, where from and what might incentivize more relocation for new and existing hires.



There is significant traffic on Highway 23, however, as is often the case, drawing this destination-oriented consumer off the major thoroughfare, in the absence of a national or internationally branded stop, is tremendously challenging. Vulcan has several truck/gas stops on the highway, which does slow down some traffic. Other establishments are clearly visible from the highway and accessible via a service road. It would be useful to review highway signage on Highway 23, north and south of Vulcan for an opportunity to increase “turn out” traffic.

The Town currently works with Vulcan County and the Vulcan Business Development Society on industrial development. An anticipated land use study will be very helpful. The Town should work closely with the County to identify opportunities for secondary goods and services opportunities arising from any close-in industrial development. As well, a close working relationship will lead to opportunities to pursue increased residential development within Town limits.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- All kinds, agriculture, commercial.
- Factories – agriculture.
- District heating study.
- Meat packing plant.
- Flax plant.
- Oil pressing.
- Diverse community-based mom and pop shops.
- Commercial – most needed here is mom and pop stores. People here like to ask questions and get answers based on trust relationships.
- Shoe store, but might not be viable.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- The Town website is well designed, and easily navigable with a good architecture. It doesn't have a lot of site selector information, but that is a task that resides with the Vulcan Business Development Society, which does have prominent placement of the town website.
- Vulcan Business Development- The Vulcan Business Development Society has plenty of useful information for both businesses looking to set up in the area, as well as people looking to live/move to the area. The information is organized appropriately.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*



- The Vulcan Business Development Society is a good example of a well-organized regional economic development website. It promotes its member communities well, and links in with information assets of the larger regional partner of SouthGrow.
- The “messaging” popup is a unique feature.
- There is a good Projects section, but it would be useful to see more information about viable business opportunities specific to the Vulcan County region.

Opportunity Assessment

- Asking “what would make a business locate here?” is important. But even more important is asking what business is 1. Needed, and 2. Viable.
- The “Industrial Land Strategy” underway can be an important stepping stone to further business development. And understanding land availability and usage is the cornerstone to identifying new opportunities for investment.
- When undergoing site selection research, investors typically look at land availability, taxation/incentives, labour pool, existing business clusters, and infrastructure. Without available land, none of the other factors matter.
- This type of Opportunity Analysis is most often done by external Economic Development Consultants. It is part of the investment attraction research process. The typical steps are:
 1. Situation Analysis: As seen in this report.
 2. Opportunity Analysis: High level research and analysis on specific businesses that are needed in the community and make sense based on the situation.
 3. Feasibility Study: Investigates the marketing, operational and financial viability.
 4. Business Plan: Builds on the Feasibility Study with full pro forma financials. This document is used as a blueprint to operate the business, and secure financing.
- The types of Opportunity Analysis documents listed on <http://www.vulcanbusiness.ca/about/regional-information/> are the right idea. But some that are specifically Vulcan-focused and placed prominently on the website are recommended.

Star Trek

- Vulcan has established a Star Trek brand and annually hosts Vul-Can which attracts several thousand visitors to a two-day event. This annual infusion of cash could be maximized with more hospitality businesses. However, a two-day event does not provide the sustained revenue required to support a full service offering year-round. To increase the impact of the Vulcan brand, the community should consider opportunities to increase its branded goods and experiences year-round. Nonetheless, the existing branding, with a potential refresh does create a uniqueness that assists in attracting attention to the community. This name recognition can be exploited in marketing the community for relocation supporting other economic attraction efforts.



VULCAN COUNTY

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Vulcan County is conveniently located one hour from Calgary and Lethbridge in Alberta's southwest. Vulcan County covers an approximate area of 545,000 hectares and encompasses the Town of Vulcan, the Villages of Carmangay, Champion, Lamond, Milo and Arrowwood, and the Hamlets of Brant, Ensign, Kirkcaldy, Shouldice, Queenstown, Mossleigh Herronton, and Travers.

– *Vulcan County Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Rural lifestyle; Everything is essentially agriculturally based.
- Spent time on land use bylaw to sure it is “development friendly”.
- Labour base – County has population of 3,900.
- A lot to manage for road impacts with industrial developments. County and contractors needed to build good personal relationships in order to work through some of the problems.
- Best to have one development officer who sees project through from beginning to end.
- Proactive on land use. Trying to promote. One successful project which is leading to others. Enbridge/EDF (Blackspring) has a great community granting program.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- On CP mail line – North/South trunkline.
- Tax base is agriculture and agriculturally based development.
- Engaged council.
- Reviewing land use plan to ensure it is business friendly.
- Southern Alberta Energy from Waste. Central incinerator, currently completing site assessment.
- Regional water line (Twin Valley Regional Water Commission), Vulcan to Carmangay. County has substantial potable water allocation.
- Centrally located between Calgary and Lethbridge.
- Business is expanding. Farming business is changing. Some of the younger generation are coming back to the farm and modernizing farming practices with updated technology.
- Alternative energy is important. Blackspring Ridge did a good communications consultation.
- 690 acres is going to solar energy farm.



- Wind farm is also under consideration.
- Reservoirs with residential development around them.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Vulcan County is exploiting its available land in efforts to attract alternative energy industry. This seems a reasonable and likely road to economic diversification. Past successes in working with industrial developers should be used to promote and attract new opportunities. Ease of development is an important element of site selection decisions. During construction phases and, to a lesser degree, in to operations, good road access is a competitive advantage for Vulcan County.

The access to affordable potable water in good quantities is also a competitive advantage to be leveraged. The County should look at an agricultural diversification study, particularly in processing. With good rail access and servicing, the County is well positioned to consider agricultural diversification.

While working on industrial and processing opportunities, the County should continue to work effectively with the Town of Vulcan, as well as the villages within County boundaries, to develop good housing opportunities that would encourage a sustainable local labour pool.

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Alternative energy is a diversification strategy.
- Pursuing alternative energy. Blackspring approved and then will move on solar component.
- Have an application before Alberta Energy Regulator for InterEnergy for a solar array.
- Agriculture based seem viable – fertilizer plants. Seed cleaning, oils, fuel, parts and supplies.
- Tourism “Aspen Crossing” started as a campground. Owner bought a train, uses an abandoned spur line (12 miles). Does Polar Express, Ales and Rails. Year-round attraction. Winter light displays. Dining Car restaurant.
- Researching number of serviced lots for industrial land. Study ready for January 2018.

D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- The County website is easily navigable with a good architecture – it mirrors the structure of the Town of Vulcan website. It doesn’t have a lot of site selector information, but that is a task that resides with the Vulcan Business Development Society, which does have prominent placement of the town website.

- Vulcan Business Development - The Vulcan Business Development Society has plenty of useful information for both businesses looking to set up in the area, as well as people looking to live/move to the area. The information is organized appropriately.
 - *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- The Vulcan Business Development Society is a good example of a well-organized regional economic development website. It promotes its member communities well, and links in with information assets of the larger regional partner of SouthGrow.
- The “messaging” popup is a unique feature.
- There is a good Projects section, but it would be useful to see more information about viable business opportunities specific to the Vulcan County region.

Agriculture Opportunity Assessments/Marketing Materials

- Asking “what would make a business locate here?” is important. But even more important is asking what business is 1. Needed, and 2. Viable.
- Looking at Agricultural Process Opportunity Assessments and Marketing Materials would be recommended for Vulcan County. The County’s agricultural base, water supply, energy, rail, etc makes Agricultural Processing the cluster to focus on.
- Here are just a few examples of investment attraction research/marketing materials focused on the agriculture sector that have been developed by Outlook Market Research:
 - o Hemp Profile: http://www.albertahub.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/AB_HUB_Ag_Hemp_Case_web.pdf
 - o Company Profile: http://www.albertatradecorridor.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/EATC_Profile_Himark.pdf.zip
- This type of Opportunity Analysis is most often done by external Economic Development Consultants. It is part of the investment attraction research process. The typical steps are:
 1. Situation Analysis: As seen in this report.
 2. Opportunity Analysis: High level research and analysis on specific businesses that are needed in the community and make sense based on the situation.
 3. Feasibility Study: Investigates the marketing, operational and financial viability.
 4. Business Plan: Builds on the Feasibility Study with full pro forma financials. This document is used as a blueprint to operate the business, and secure financing.
- The types of Opportunity Analysis documents listed on <http://www.vulcanbusiness.ca/about/regional-information/> are the right idea. But some that are specifically Vulcan County - focused and placed prominently on the website are recommended.



VILLAGE OF WARNER

A) COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

If you are simply passing through our little Village, there are many things in the area that may peak your interest. We have a wonderful museum that showcases a Dinosaur Egg finding by a local lady. The Warner Hockey School boasts some of the best female hockey players in the Country. Our arena has many options for families to come and enjoy some ice time or during “dry floor” season for special events (i.e. home/garden shows, flea markets, farmers markets, etc.) or our bowling alley (featuring glow in the dark lanes) is available to knock down some pins. We have a curling rink in town, two restaurants, a hotel, a RV Park, a library and a state of the art athlete centre that can be used 24/7, 365 days a year. We have a lot to offer local residents – young and “seasoned” alike!! We have an active Seniors population that meet at the Seniors’ Centre throughout the week for a variety of things like cards, woodworking, bingo, scrapbooking, exercise, weight maintenance and much more. There are two playgrounds in Warner that children can enjoy.

– *Warner Economic Development Community Profile*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Lots of small home businesses.
- People who locate businesses to Warner seem to figure out solutions for business location problems i.e. need for high speed internet access.
- Ability to have land and space. People move here for housing/school/safety/proximity.
- K-12 has 120 students.

B) COMMUNITY ASSETS

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Access to rail.
- Village owned lot close to rail – could be sold.
- Good supply of water.
- 110' by 120' lots which are well priced.
- Residential sales \$1,000 per lot (have 7 which are 100' x' 120') serviced. Must build on the lot within one year.
- Competitive utilities.
- 15 millrate.
- Local road improvements.
- Utilities rate is low.

- Provide good standard of living for business employees.
- Have room for industrial expansion with servicing adjacent.
- At the intersections of highways 4 and 36.
- Land availability and lot size; and very affordable living costs.
- Agriculture based workforce. Young, adaptive, entrepreneurial, mechanically inclined.
- Community is self-sustaining.

C) OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Warner's competitive advantage is in its transportation infrastructure and availability of serviced industrial, commercial and industrial land. A good water supply also means that industry which has need for that resource will find Warner attractive. A small population may create some concern in attracting new investment, however, with a very mobile labour force, businesses in the SouthGrow region tend to pull from a wide area. It is not likely, however, that Warner would attract a major employer.

A good starting point would be to determine why the two larger employers, Viterra and Volker Stevin, have remained in Warner. Given that Volker Stevin's business is road construction and maintenance, its location may be a simple function of distances between other centres. With Viterra, its location is likely tied to the proximity to mustard crop production. An analysis of the competitive advantage of this region's mustard crop production is a good starting point. Additionally, an understanding of any tertiary processing opportunities should be sought.

Considering the Viterra mustard seed plant and the abundance of mustard crops in the region, Warner could identify and target mustard-related, value-added businesses such as French's or other mustard processing and packaging firms.

- *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*

2017 Community BRE Interviews:

- Need high speed internet.
- Need more retail.
- Oil and gas service companies – advantage in location because next location for this type of business is Taber.
- Water haulers.
- Part-time medical and pharmacy services (1-2 days a week).



D) MARKETING GO-FORWARDS

Website

- On Warner's website, the top banners are very effective. However, the business directory is not complete, and more information is needed throughout the website, specific to providing information on economic development and business. Although very simple, it is aesthetically pleasing and easy to navigate. It needs to provide more information for investors who could potentially be interested in Warner. Currently there is no information or help available. Consider promoting the Women's Hockey Club as a world-class facility.
- *Investment Readiness and Attraction Review*
- There is no link to the SouthGrow Village of Warner Economic Development Community Profile. As there is little other economic development information on the website, making the profile link a prominent feature in the Business Section would be a good starting point for providing baseline investor information.
- It would be helpful for BR&E efforts if the website could feature information that would be appealing to investors because there is currently almost no information for investors or companies looking to locate in the Village. Where investors will be looking for economic and community information, use language that promotes an "open for business" attitude. Consider developing an "investor" area for the website where potential investors can locate key information.



5. Regional Marketing Recommendations

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Many of the communities in the SouthGrow region are close in geography, and feature strong similarities in demographics, assets, opportunities, and challenges. Therefore, many of the BRE marketing go-forwards, or recommendations, are equally applicable to multiple communities. Therefore, the purpose of this Regional Marketing Recommendations section is to:

1. Suggest BRE marketing activities that may be undertaken by any number of SouthGrow communities on their own, or,
2. Suggest BRE marketing activities that may be undertaken by SouthGrow on a regional basis on behalf of member communities.



5.2 MAXIMIZE MEMBERSHIP IN SOUTHGROW REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE (REDA)

Leverage regional data and information gathered and promoted by SouthGrow REDA via their website and other mediums. Create cross-references within your own local marketing platforms to provide investors with access to relevant and current data on the region.

Showcase your community and target investors jointly with SouthGrow REDA at investor conferences and trade shows. Promoting your working relationship with SouthGrow, demonstrates to investors that you have regional backing in areas that may be deemed important to investors, such as economic development expertise, regional data, and ability to speak holistically to the success of the region, as well as reaffirm your community's investment readiness.

Create additional connectivity points via SouthGrow's media channels for investors to connect with your local economic development lead, to identify potential investment opportunities in your community.

Training: Community Website Improvement Project

When analyzing the 24 community websites, a common challenge was basic graphic design and navigability. This was also a common theme in the 2016 Rainmaker Global Business Development report on the Investment Readiness of the region.

A website is the information gateway to the world about a community – especially more remote communities. Councils and CAO's should support moderate funding for website design upgrades.

Incredibly cheap templates are available that are graphically sophisticated and can effectively host municipal content. There are thousands of WordPress templates that are for sale, and some are free. Information can be found at <https://en-ca.wordpress.org>.

SouthGrow should be a supporting organization to help steer member communities to the right information and resources to undertake these upgrades. Hiring a website development consultant to hold training session(s) for communities on website upgrades would be a highly beneficial service to community members. Ensure that the consultant is empowering the community to develop well designed websites with minimal resources – not a consultant that is trying to sell his/her own website development services.



5.3 INVESTMENT ATTRACTION STRATEGY

Investment Attraction (IA) Strategy Overview

It is advisable to build on active strategy development (in progress) or develop an individual, comprehensive, and fully executable Investment Attraction Strategy that is based on the community's level of investment readiness (Proactive, Opportunistic, Reactive). Revisit the analysis and recommendations for your respective community that are outlined in the Investment Readiness and Attraction Review (Rainmaker Global Business Development).

An IA Strategy can include many elements, and much of its content will be guided by whether the Strategy is regional or local in nature. Possible inclusions may be:

- A review of Basic Investor Attraction Practices that can guide the development of the Strategy and help inform local EDO's or community members on widely accepted best practices in the field.
- Advice on the most effective ways for the community to be promoted at such events as conferences, trade shows, and other opportunities aimed at generating investment leads.
- Advice on how best to take advantage of the Government of Alberta's investment attraction assets, staff, and information as it relates to local opportunities.
- Recommendations on the investment value proposition that will inform the design of collateral materials including marketing messages, graphics and images (not logos) that can be produced in print and electronically for incorporation into web sites.
- Implementation plan for the IA Strategy including timeline, outline of required resources, roles that individual municipalities might play, potential sources of funds/revenues to execute the IA strategy, and established performance measures to indicate what success will look like.
- Recommendations for complementary next steps related to IA activities that could be undertaken by a community, or REDA and their member communities.
- Establish practical leads handling protocol suitable for use by the community including but not limited to lead generation, lead response, lead incubation and lead conversion. This process must be detailed in a written document. This should be informed by a discussion of Best Practices in Investor Inquiry Handling.

As a preview of what a full Investment Attraction Strategy might contain, here are two sections that would be recommended for inclusion: Overview of Basic Investor Attraction Practices, and Best Practices in Investor Inquiry Handling.



Overview of Basic Investor Attraction Practices

This list of suggested processes and best practices is culled from:

- Outlook Market Research
- Investment Climate Advisory Services of the World Bank Group
- Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
- The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
- Economic Development Association of British Columbia
- The Australian Trade Commission
- Government of Alberta

The Investment Promotion and Attraction Process is an internal EDO process designed to react to the Site Selection Process used by relocating companies, but also be proactive by generating and converting FDI leads.

At the beginning, the Site Selection Process is aimed at gaining an understanding of the region's level of economic development and its national economic policies, and depends upon the type of investment. For example, is the investment seeking resource-based locations, strategic market locations or product efficiency locations? The site selection process continues to become increasingly detailed as decision makers narrow the list of possible locations.

Key factors during the site selection process generally fall into the following categories:

- Market characteristics (local and regional)
- Costs (labour, transportation and other)
- Natural resources (availability and quality)
- Infrastructure
- Policy structure
- Business support and promotion

Figure 1 outlines a general Investment Promotion and Attraction Process that allows EDOs to proactively seek investment and also be ready to respond to ad hoc Site Selector inquiries:



Figure 1: The Investment Promotion and Attraction Process

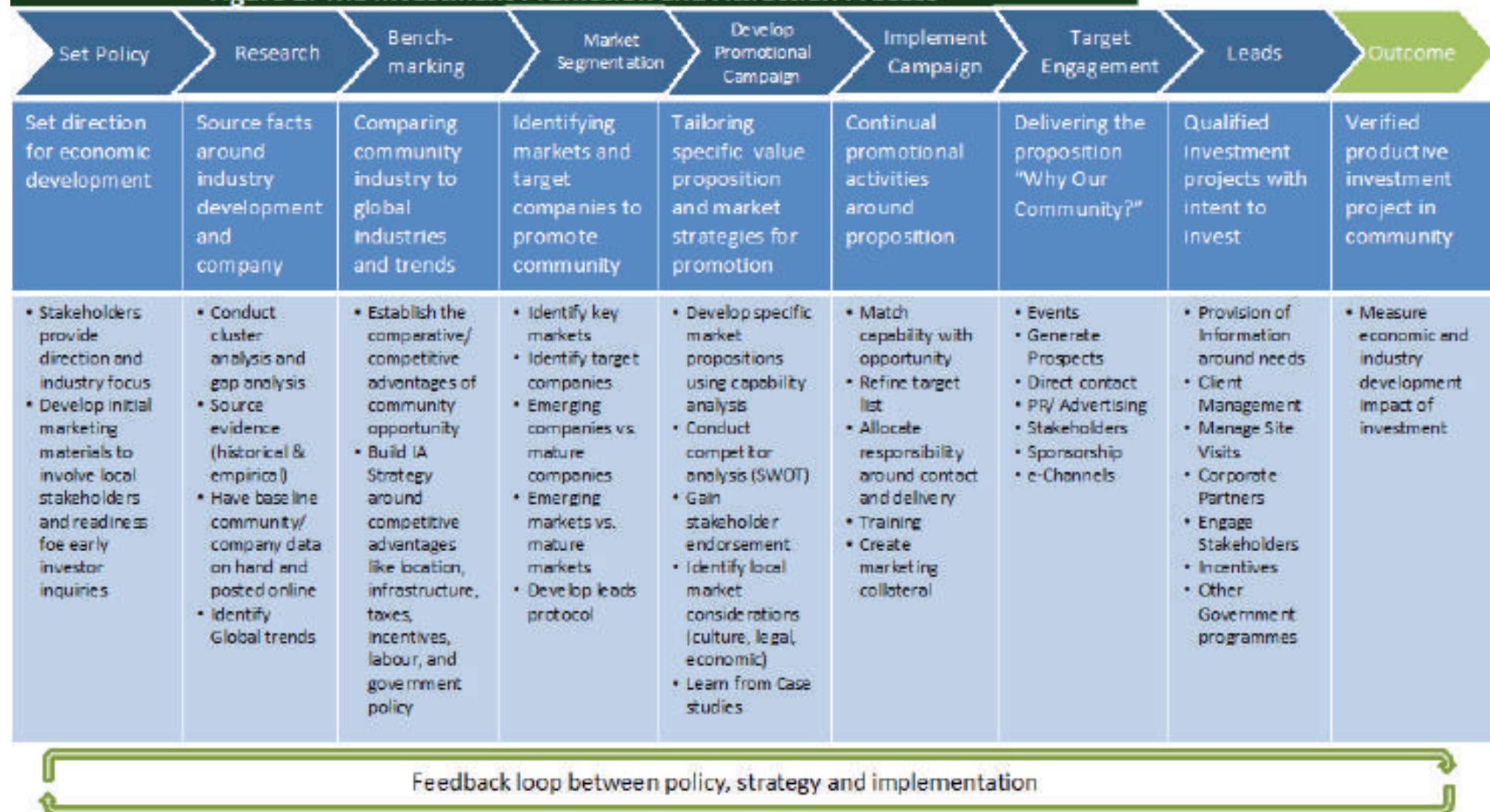


Chart culled from the Australian Trade Commission



Best Practices in Investor Inquiry Handling

Best-practice Economic Development Officers (EDOs) address the four key dimensions of inquiry-handling—availability and contactability, responsiveness and handling, response quality, and ongoing customer care—in an integrated system that is continuously monitored for improvement.

The following basic tips will improve EDO interaction with companies:

1. **Expedite Investor Communications:** Expedite the investor's communication with the EDO. Ensure correct and complete contact information on the EDO web site. Ensure that an investor can contact an appropriate project manager as the key liaison throughout a project. Having a single point of contact makes communications easier for the investor.
2. **Target Your Data:** Ensure that your data and overall response to an inquiry is highly targeted. Understand what is important for the investor: have a clear understanding of their target markets and their competitive positioning in those markets. Then gather the information and relevant promotional facts that will impress the investor.
3. **Be Professional:** Use business practices that demonstrate the EDO's professionalism. Train staff to respond to inquiries in proper ways to answer and direct telephone calls. Encourage them to announce the EDO's name and their own. Include electronic signatures on all emails.
4. **Brand Your EDO:** The professionalism of the EDO is often evaluated (especially at first) by developing branded, well-written, professional-looking materials. The finished materials should be distinctive and as impressive as resources allow.
5. **Target Your Website:** The EDO's Investment Attraction website and marketing materials should be reasonably focused on key target markets.
6. **Promote Your Advantages:** Have materials available on key features and advantages about the location, such as labor costs of key positions, employment regulations or costs for key sectors and subsectors, and names of existing investors, for quick response to investors.
7. **Customize Response Information:** Customize information for the particular inquiry. The customized information should answer all questions asked in the inquiry and take into account feedback received during the discussion and clarification stage. The best customized information goes beyond merely dealing with the original inquiry questions and demonstrates the EDO's knowledge of the sector in question and experience in handling corporate location projects.

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8. Meet or Beat Deadlines: Investment inquiries are often highly time sensitive. Meet deadlines—or respond even sooner. If research for an investor takes longer than expected, inform the investor and propose another date. Whether inquiries are received by email or telephone, a rapid reaction to the initial contact is necessary.
 9. Organize Your Response: Respond to investor inquiries in a way that is efficient, informative and promotes the location:
 - Organize responses according to the company's specific questions. Provide responses in a single report or presentation with a table of contents.
 - Make sure to discuss and clarify. After receiving the inquiry and assigning an advisor, the EDO should contact the investor in order to discuss the project and clarify the information required. Preferably this should be carried out by telephone.
 - Include germane, accurate, and comparative data, visuals, case studies about current investment in the location, and testimonials from well-known companies doing business there, to demonstrate the viability of the location.
 - Anticipate and answer questions that the company has not yet asked. This demonstrates the EDO's expertise and understanding of the company's needs.
 10. Develop a Response Template: Develop a template for responses so that documents look professional, are branded, and follow a standard format including a table of contents, executive summary, and business case:
 - a. Include a summary, at the beginning or the end of the document that specifies why the EDO's location is the best one for investment. Investors often use this summary in their own reports – so by providing it, the EDO saves the investor time and ensures that the right arguments about the location are made.
 - b. Email or call the investor to confirm receipt of the sent information.
 - c. Follow up in 1-2 weeks to ascertain what more the EDO can do to support the project and offer to meet or arrange a site visit for the investor (budget permitting). This can be carried out by email or telephone depending on circumstances.
 11. Cooperation Standards: If you are going to work with another EDO, ensure there are common standards of professional service, so that the foreign investor can be satisfied at every step of the investment process.
 12. Train Your Staff to Respond Effectively: Train project managers to discuss a project and anticipate issues that may arise. Staff should know enough about the location to be able to suggest where projects could go, and what infrastructure, universities, and so forth will be available to the investor. Staff also need customer relationship management skills so they can effectively build “trusted advisor” relationships with investors.

13. Work with Government: Work in close coordination with high levels of government to assess their country's business climate and economy, and identify the sectors in which the EDO can realistically compete for investment. This assessment of their sector comparative attractiveness should be the foundation for the EDO's investment strategy, and thus for all research and promotion activities, including facilitation.
14. Follow Up: Follow up on selection process. A follow-up call to check on the investor's analysis of the response and to offer further assistance is an essential step in the process. Timing of the call is dependent on the location selection timetable. This follow up should be made by telephone in order to extract the maximum feedback on the response from the investor. Even if the investor has chosen another location, finding out why your region did not succeed is vital to your EDO' future efforts.



5.4 INVESTMENT ATTRACTION TOOLS

Site Selector Profile

Enhance community's investment readiness to inform - and field inquiries from – potential investors through the development of local community site selector attraction information:

- Market characteristics (local and regional)
- Costs (labour, taxes, transportation, other)
- Taxes (corporate taxes, sales taxes, property taxes, mill rates, etc.)
- Labour (availability, skilled and unskilled)
- Natural Resources (availability and quality of raw materials)
- Land availability (cost, size, site readiness, etc.)
- Infrastructure (electric rates, telecommunications)
- Policy structure
- Quality of life
- Business support and promotion

Collaborate with other SouthGrow region communities and the SouthGrow REDA on the development of a Regional Site Selector Profile and updated Industry Quick Fact Sheets that leads to more in depth information (eg. industry profiles - <http://SouthGrow.com/investing/key-industries>).

Create a dedicated Economic Development/Investment online experience for potential investors alongside, or within, your current community website. See Communications Strategy and Tools section below.

Community Brand

Advocate with your sister communities within the SouthGrow region to put forward a collaborative effort to creative impactful local community brands (managed locally) within an umbrella regional brand, managed by SouthGrow REDA. The value of having cohesive brand connections with SouthGrow REDA is that your community brand will resonate faster with potential investors, businesses and residents, as there is increased frequency of which the brand will be seen locally, regionally and globally. This approach still allows your community brand to remain unique in terms of what makes you appealing, while benefiting from the strength of being part of a larger entity that portrays to the investor marketplace that you are committed to community growth and sustainability.



Even without a link to a regional brand, at a minimum, strengthen your own local community brand to clearly define its community value proposition and how it benefits residents, businesses and investors. By doing so, site selectors and investors will more immediately grasp how your community views itself and its vision for growth. This is further supported by consistently branded marketing and communications tools.

Brand development can include:

- Community Brand Review (current state analysis and establish brand vision and goals).
- Develop Community Value Proposition and Key Messages to Investors (demonstrating evidence or lure to invest).
- Brand Visual Elements (logo, tagline, colour scheme, visual imagery) that best communicates your Value Proposition.
- Brand Implementation Across Platforms (web, print, communications).
- Brand Visual Identity Guide to manage brand within and outside the community.

Communications Strategy and Tools

Build a focused Communications Strategy and Implementation Plan (the “Plan”) to communicate with, and attract, new investors into your community.

An ongoing engagement process between community government leaders, local business, and industry associations and partners will be paramount in ensuring the Plan is supported. This process will also encourage all stakeholders to take ownership of their role in Plan implementation.

Major components of the Plan will include:

- Target Audience and Markets - Identify clear target sectors, markets and investors to enable focussed messaging and communications tactics to get desired results.
- Communication Messages (What will we say?), Methods (How will we deliver the message?), Channels (Where will the messages get delivered? Across what platforms?), and Timing (When and how frequent?).
- Explore ways to encourage engagement in the communications plan at a community level through incentives and showing community pride; Leverage other businesses to act as brand champion, “spread the word” and promote the brand.
- Roles and Responsibilities for specific communications activities to maximize ownership and meet deliverables.



Minimum recommended Strategic Initiatives within a Communications Plan are:

Outreach Communications	
1. Proactively engage with target investors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend or host Economic Development and Investor events and/or tradeshows.• Join Economic Development/Investor Associations for networking opportunities.• Stay connected with Investment Community by joining relevant social media discussion groups (eg. Possible LinkedIn groups “Global Investment Network”, “Alberta Angel investor network group”, “Canada Business and Professional Network”).• Create your own Social Media Investor discussion group (eg. Cardston County Investor Forum) or partner with other SouthGrow communities (eg. Alberta SouthGrow Investor Network) to identify and engage with investment community on ongoing changes and opportunities within your community.
Communication Tools	
1. Develop high value, tangible communication tools for the investor community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Site Selector Profile.• Extend your reach by collaborating with all SouthGrow communities to produce – in partnership with SouthGrow REDA – a Regional Site Selector Profile.• Investment Promotional Package to present to visiting investors or at investor events including information on land for sale, local businesses, and relevant community statistics and various community features that could be incentives for the potential investor.• Continue to review and update existing Community Profiles that emphasize the community’s attractive local assets, quality of life, and the strengths of its business community and support infrastructure.• Land Use Maps



2. Build a “work-ready” labour force and profitable business community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect employers and residents in smaller communities to educational centres such as Training Inc. Vocational School with locations in Lethbridge, Cardston and Pincher Creek and Lethbridge College, to strengthen the labour market skill set and align them to high demand industries and occupations that would also appeal to SouthGrow investors. For example, Renewable Energies, Agriculture, Technology, Professional Services. • Maximize success of your business community by providing access to standardized resources and corporate training for business managers and entrepreneurs on all areas of the business life cycle*. Investors invest in successful, growing communities. <p>* Incorporation, start-up, marketing, financing, human resources, e-business, exporting, importing, government programs, and more.</p>
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Website Presence

1. Community Website Review and Enhancement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisiting local community website design, structure and content to be more “on-brand” and “on-trend” to appeal to future residents, visitors and investors. • Collaborate with all SouthGrow communities to create some layout and navigation continuity across sites to create a positive investor user experience, for those who are looking at multiple locations across SouthGrow. This will enable them to find information faster on your site when they are accustomed to a consistent navigation structure. • Add or enhance economic development section with information deemed most important to investors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recent projects and investments - Current businesses by sector - Major businesses along major routes or corridors - Site Selector data - Investor Incentives - Major Industries - Investment Opportunities • Extend your reach by collaborating with all SouthGrow communities to produce – in partnership with SouthGrow REDA – a dedicated regional Economic Development/Investment website that serves all communities, and cross-promotes your local community’s economic development webpage/site.
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5.5 CHAIN HOTEL ATTRACTION

Several communities mentioned lack of accommodations as an issue. Some communities had excellent sports facilities or other tourism assets top draw visitors, but no hotel or not enough hotel space. The key to success in sports marketing is services – namely accommodations and restaurants. Branded hotels and restaurants are particularly good attractors.

Each hotel chain has an extensive set of site selection protocols, as finding a suitable location is the very nature of their business. Often besides location, one of the key success indicators in attracting a chain hotel is the availability and willingness of a franchisee.

Outlook Market Research has conducted numerous sports facility feasibility studies, and undergone hotel franchise attraction research. Recently, while working for a rural community, we looked at Wyndham franchise hotels that provide property management services around the world. They are the world's largest lodging franchisor, as measured by the number of franchised hotels and the franchisor of 10 lodging brands that include upscale through to economy accommodations. Their brands include more than 8,000 franchised hotels and more than 600,000 rooms on six continents, which constitute more than 10% of all U.S. hotel-room inventory.

One of their brands is Ramada Worldwide. With nearly 875 hotels in more than 35 countries, Ramada Worldwide is global. It began in 1954, when a group of investors opened a Ramada Inn in Flagstaff, Arizona. Positioned to appeal to mid-market leisure and business travelers, Ramada Hotels aims to offer a blend of comfort and affordability to its customers. Ramada also has a strong presence in many rural Western Canadian communities.

The following is an overview of how a major hotel chain assesses the viability of a location and franchisee, and what the major costs for a franchisee are:

Ramada Franchisee Application Guidelines:

Marketing

Target Markets

Most Ramada hotels tend to be mid-range facilities much like a family oriented Holiday Inn, however, they do have some more upscale brands. They have developed four tiers of hotels in the chain:

- Ramada Limited:

Ramada Limited hotels offer high-quality accommodations at value prices. Guests will enjoy free continental breakfast, newly enhanced with more variety and swimming pools at most locations.

- Ramada Inn:

Ramada properties are high-quality hotels that feature attractive accommodations for the mid-market traveler. Amenities include swimming pools (at most locations), on-site restaurants or a-la-carte food service and enhanced continental breakfast.

- Ramada Plaza:

Ramada Plaza takes the Ramada experience one step further in terms of service and style. Designed for today's most discerning travelers, these premier properties have a unique flair and feature a contemporary décor that is both attractive and comfortable.

Ramada Hotel - Canada only:

Ramada Hotels are mid-priced full-service properties, conveniently located near either city centers or airports (Canada Only). Ramada Hotels have on-site restaurants and lounges, enhanced continental breakfast, and swimming pools (at most locations). For business travelers, meeting rooms and boardrooms are also available.

Advertising

Wyndham will handle the advertising, but the franchisee may conduct their own local marketing program provided that all materials meet with corporate system standards. Franchisees must also participate in certain mandatory marketing programs and may be required to purchase specified promotional materials.

Finance

Initial Franchise Fee

- Must pay \$1,000 "application Fee" when submitting "Franchise Application"
- Must pay initial fee equal to the greater of \$35,000 or \$350 for each guest room

Property Management System

Must purchase computer hardware and software to communicate with Central Reservation System Cost ranging from \$30,000 - \$100,000 depending on:

- # of guest rooms
- Food and beverage or catering services
- Amount of group and convention business anticipated



Operations

Purchasing from Approved Suppliers

To assure consistency among Chain Facilities, each facility must purchase equipment from Wyndham's list of approved suppliers that meet Wyndham's standards for:

• Construction	• Furnishings
• Equipment	• Draperies
• Decor	• Bedspreads
• Amenities	• Carpet
• Guest Room Size	• Wall Coverings
• Signage	• Lighting
• Bath & Bed Linens	• Ice Machines
• Fixtures	• Telephone Systems

Other important factors and equipment that must be either purchased directly from Wyndham or their approved suppliers include:

- Insurance from approved supplier.
- Must purchase certain training and marketing material from Wyndham.
- Must purchase a computer system to function as the facility's PMS (Property Management System) from Wyndham or designated supplier.
- Facility must be equipped with a telecommunications system approved by Wyndham.
- Facility must be equipped with fully integrated electronic locking system including electronic card keys providing a room entry audit trail.
- Facility must be equipped with both wired and wireless high speed Internet access in all guest rooms and meeting rooms from LodgeNet Entertainment Corporation (LEC).



Other Fees:

Name of Fee	Amount
Royalty	4% of Gross Room Revenues
Services Assessment Fee	4.5% of Gross Room Revenues
Loyalty Program Charge	Up to 5% of Gross Room Revenues
Taxes	Amount assessed by federal, provincial and local tax authorities on Royalties and Services Assessment Fees
Interest	18% per annum
Extension fee	\$2.00 per room per month
Training Fees and Expenses	General Manager = \$1,250 and Owner = \$825
Public Offering Fee	\$15,000
GDS and Internet Booking Fees	\$5.35 per reservation booked through global distribution systems
Chain Conference Fee	\$995 and additional charge for each attendee
Rooms Addition Fee	\$350 for each guest room added to facility
Audit Fee	\$1000 subject to increase
Dispute Resolution Costs	Costs, expenses, reasonable attorney's fees
Re-inspection Fee and Costs	\$1000 for the first re-inspection
PMS Maintenance Fees	\$39.90 - \$52.50 per room per year plus \$1,100 per year for credit card interface
Fee for Broadband Internet Access Service	\$150-\$160 per month for 36 month term
Guaranteed Best Available Rate Processing Fee	\$60 plus you must match the lower Internet rate less 10%
RMA Fees	Currently \$24 per guest per room per year
ResCentral Call Handling Fee	\$1.65 per transferred call with \$50 min per month



Estimated Expenditures for a 150 Room Ramada Plaza Construction:

Item	Amount
Application Fee	\$53,500
Market Study	\$5,000 - \$12,000
Phase 1 Environmental Survey	\$2,500 - \$5,000
Design & Testing Fees	\$25,000 - \$75,000
Facility Construction	\$7,735,301 - \$8,925,346
Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment	\$1,452,639 - \$1,676,121
Signage	\$20,150 - \$43,000
Opening Inventory & Supplies	\$30,000 - \$45,000
Utility Deposits	\$5,000 - \$10,000
Grand Opening & Advertising	\$20,000 - \$31,600
Insurance	\$13,521 - \$17,277
Training Expenses	\$2,700 - \$4,900
Technical Systems	\$120,500 - \$196,000
Miscellaneous, Non-Tangible Asset Costs	\$55,000 - \$100,000
Construction Contingency	\$386,765 - \$446,267
Additional Funds for 3 Month Initial Period	\$60,000 - \$80,000
Land Acquisition	Varied - need approximately 3.5 acres for building and parking
Total Estimated Initial Investment	\$9,987,576 - \$11,719,012
Total Cost Per Room	\$66,584 - \$78,127

Human Resources

Training Fee

- All general managers must attend orientation program called Strategic Training and Exceptional Performance (S.T.E.P.) – cost \$1,250
- Owners orientation program – cost \$825



Business Administration

Permits and Licenses

All franchisees are subject to the laws of general application in respect of the operation of a business in Alberta including such factors as:

- Register the name of the facility in accordance with The Business Name Act.
- Sign up as a GST registrant under the Excise Tax Act (Canada).
- Make necessary remittances to federal government on behalf of employees in respect to Unemployment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan.
- Make necessary remittances to provincial government on behalf of employees in respect to Workers' Compensation.

In accordance with local municipality requirements, the franchisee must obtain the following necessary permits:

- Building and Development Permits
- Fire Safety Permit
- Plumbing and Electrical Authorizations
- Elevator Permit
- Road or Highway Access Agreement
- Operating and Maintenance Permit for Swimming Pool and Waterslide
- Local Health Authority Authorization
- Local Business License

Obligation to Participate in the Operation of the Business

Although the franchisee is not required to take an active role in the operation of the facility, a management company or individual manager with significant training and experience must manage the facility. The manager must complete the training program offered by Wyndham and must remain available for supplemental or remedial training as needed.

Territorial Rights

The franchisee will be assigned a "Protected Territory" in which neither Wyndham nor its affiliates will own, operate or manage another Chain Facility without the franchisee's consent. Wyndham will negotiate the territory with the franchisee, which will take into account one or more of the following:

- The nature of the market the facility will serve (urban/suburban/rural)
- Population Density
- Demographics

- Natural Travel Boundaries (i.e. Rivers or impassable lands)
- The 'seasonal' versus year-round nature of the anticipated occupancy of the facility
- The weekend versus weekday anticipated occupancy of the facility
- What public and private facilities will generate lodging demand including:
 - Airports
 - Highways
 - Sports facilities
 - Recreation venues
 - Entertainment venues
 - Colleges
 - Military bases
 - Tourist attractions
 - Hospital
 - Shopping malls
 - Commercial activities
 - Industrial activities



5.6 TRADE AREA ANALYSIS

Introduction

In investment attraction, the ability to provide prospective industry and business with a legitimate and credible trading area calculation is an important data point. The use of trading area as a selling feature has a long history in economic development. Over fifty years ago, in 1966, William Applebaum defined a primary trade area as encompassing a geographic region accounting for between 75 and 80 percent of relevant consumers. Others have added additional definitions based on drive time:

1. Primary trade area: 50-80% within 10 minutes of drive time
2. Secondary trade area: 15-25% of customers less than 20 minutes' drive time
3. Fringe or tertiary trade area: the remainder of customers who must travel 15 – 50 minutes to reach the shopping destination

No matter how closely the area is defined, the basic definition has not changed and, in fact, most of the methods for calculating trade area have also not changed over the years. What has changed is the ease of gathering data with the advent of GIS and data, which marries distance to income levels.

It is important to know that the customer density population dataset will vary by industry, subsector and even by individual business. A trading area analysis is at best a general indicator, which should be carefully reviewed before use in a business location decision. When making a location decision, retailers will want to know specifics about the composition of that trade area in terms of demographics, income levels and other factors that will provide a more reliable basis for decision making than a gross number of potential customers.

Trading area analysis is rooted in an assumption that the business to be attracted is rooted geo-spatially. That is, that physical location is important. In fact, as transportation networks improve both for travelers and for shippers, business is becoming less and less rooted in location.

Trading Area Calculation

As a first line in attracting investment, a well-developed trading area calculation is important and, therefore, is fundamental to any community's economic development tool kit. In general, there are several factors which affect trade area calculation:

- Size and retail mix of the town.
- Size and retail mix of competing locations.
- Transport network around the host town, particularly as it relates to roads in rural areas.



- Physical barriers such as: rivers, oceans, lakes, railway tracks, motorways or national parks and forests.
- Social and political barriers such as traditional or historic trading patterns.
- Strength of product differentiation.

And further, a general rule for calculating trade areas is that the smaller the town, the more compact its trading area and its drawing power. Therefore, all calculations should be reflective of the characteristics of the host community and, when possible, the actual industry and/or product being assessed.

There are three recognized methods of estimating trading area representing a wide range of complexity and, therefore, wide range of cost to produce. Those are:

- Radial or ring studies
- Gravity Models
- Drive time analysis

1. Radial or Ring Studies

This is the most simplistic and easiest-to-complete trade area estimation. It generally involves deciding how wide an area is and if it's reasonable for a customer to travel to a destination, drawing a corresponding circle on a map and pulling statistical data to arrive at a number of potential clientele. This model is, however, flawed because it makes some base assumptions that are easily disputed.

As an example, an investor might, drawing from the 2016 Census, use a base number of 50,000 population within 100km of a community as a definition of the regional trading area. If that investor was considering opening a liquor store in a market with many other similar outlets, it may not be reasonable to assume that everyone within 100km of the community is a likely customer. However, if a large outlet such as a national chain was considering the trade area, within 100km may be reasonable. Potentially a car dealership or an implement dealership, both businesses where purchases are large and/or specialized, may have clientele who would travel up to 100km. As a first level of investment attraction, this data serves a purpose, however, sophisticated investors will drill down past this rough estimate.

You can apply two different approaches to estimating a trading area estimate based on a radial model. The first uses GIS data and is drawn from the Government of Alberta's Regional Dashboard. The second is based on population centres.



2. Gravity Model

This is probably the most complicated and the most precise method of calculating trading area. It integrates population and income data with competitiveness of the proposed location. It is used by retailers to determine how attractive one site is over another based on:

- The presence and relative strength of competitors
- Competitor point of sale data

One weakness of this method is that it doesn't account for logistic barriers and consumer response to those.

This model accounts for the "gravitational pull" created by other businesses or other trading centres. As mentioned previously, the smaller a centre, most often, the lower its ability to pull clientele. To conduct a gravity model for a smaller population centre is unlikely to yield a substantive or satisfying result. Creating a gravity model for a single business would have to be justified by a large potential return on investment.

3. Drive-Time Analysis

This is a reasonably straight forward analysis that estimates how long people are likely to drive for a commodity and looks for population centres within that drive time. It is widely used for "convenience store" types of analysis, meaning purchases when people would spend less than ten minutes' drive time to reach. This analysis is very applicable to urban centres, including small towns, and less useful for rural populations where drive times to most conveniences are more than 10 minutes. However, this model could be used if a potential investor has access to point of sale data from other locations, which would suggest how long people are willing to drive for a more costly or specialized purchase.

If we use travel distance as a proxy for travel time, given the unpredictability of road conditions and driver behaviour, we can arrive at two different trade area estimations. Our assumption is that it takes approximately 30 minutes to travel 50km and 60 minutes to travel 100km. This may not be a perfect proxy but does assume travelling at posted speed limits.

4. Drive-Time Analysis with Limited Gravity Modeling

Finally, you can do an analysis of the trading area, which merges driving time with one aspect related to the gravity model. The gravity model assumes that a larger centre will pull greater distances than a smaller urban centre. Intuitively we know this to be true. Consumers will drive further to access the larger buying opportunities of Calgary than to a community that is quite a bit smaller.

This data compares travel distances to a community to the next shopping destination, which may have more gravitational pull based on a larger base population and a broader shopping experience potential. If we pull out all those communities that are closer to a larger shopping community than it is to the town in question, we arrive at a trading area of potential consumers.

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCRIPT



Business Retention and Expansion Strategy Member Interviews

Thank-you for agreeing to be interviewed for this project. To help you prepare for our conversation, here are the questions I'll be going through with you. I look forward to meeting with you soon. If you have any questions in the meantime, you can reach me at 780-618-4967.



Cheers,
Cathy

Value Proposition

- What do you feel is the greatest asset(s) in the community to attract new businesses?
- What do you feel is the greatest asset(s) in the community to retain existing businesses?
- What community assets(s) do you feel make your community unique?

Business Retention and Expansion

- What specific businesses have you sought to attract in the past?
- How did you go about trying to attract these businesses?
- What were the results of your efforts, and what lessons did you learn from the experience?
- What businesses or industries are most needed in your community?
- What businesses or industries do you feel are most viable in your community?

SouthGrow

- How can a regional organization like SouthGrow best assist in your community's BRE efforts?
- Are there any specific marketing or data tools that you feel would assist in your community's BRE efforts?



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