

Business Vitality Initiative (BVI)

Phase One Assessment Report

Peace River, Alberta

March 2009



Sagitawa
Friendship
Centre



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Executive Summary

The BVI

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

The Peace River BVI is sponsored by the Town of Peace River, Community Futures Peace Country, the Peace River Rotary Club, Northern Lakes College, the Sagitawa Friendship Centre, and the Peace River and District Chamber of Commerce. Norma MacQuarrie, the Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Peace River, is the primary contact person.

Peace River is one of four Alberta communities selected to participate in a pilot of the BVI funded by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD). ARD has partnered with CIEL to deliver the BVI to assist with economic development in rural Alberta.

The invited participants were to be 50% business people, 25% local leaders and 25% citizens, representing a diversity of interests, ages and perspectives in the community. On February 10, 2008, forty-two people attended the Phase 1 session of the BVI in Peace River, and thirty-eight filled out the BVI questionnaire.

This report summarizes the Phase 1 or *assessment* phase of the BVI. The phase 1 session used a survey and a focus group to assess the community's small business resources and potential. The phase 2 or *focus and action* session will be open to the entire community with the purpose of setting priorities for improvement, and jump starting the community to action. The date of that session is March 30, 2009.

Community Profile

In the Assessment Session, participants were asked to give three words to describe their community. The majority of responses were positive. According to respondents, Peace River is a *scenically beautiful, friendly, growing, and peaceful* community. When participants were asked to identify key strengths, the top response was *the beautiful river valley location* followed by *the full range of services and friendly, supportive people*. When participants were asked why they

live in Peace River the main reasons were *employment* and *business*. When participants were asked to provide directions for improvement for their community, the need for *more activities for youth* and *regional cooperation between municipalities* were mentioned most often.

Peace River Section Scores

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

- A. Opportunities and Attitudes: 59 out of 100** - The ability of the community to recognize, take action, and follow through on available opportunities.
- B. Quality of Life: 72 out of 100** - The ability of the community to attract & retain businesses & residents, especially those who are young, skilled workers.
- C. Education and Training: 50 out of 100** – The ability to develop entrepreneurship skills & attitudes in the non-business population, and to upgrade skills in the business community to remain competitive in larger markets.
- D. Innovation: 47 out of 100** – The ability of a community and its residents to innovate-- to think of and develop new ideas-- increases the ability of that community to adapt to changes, recognize unusual and new opportunities and technologies, and share their ideas with like-minded people.
- E. Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking: 61 out of 100** - The capacity of a community to take action on an idea or opportunity as a whole group, with good leadership, effective teamwork, and clear communication.
- F. Role of Government and Organizations: 53 out of 100** – The ability of local governments and other organizations to work with business to design processes and programs that make it as easy as possible to start or expand a business.
- G. Capital and Funding: 52 out of 100** – The ability of the community to financially support entrepreneurs through ensuring access to capital, and educating businesses about financial management and supports.
- H. Infrastructure and Business Services: 66 out of 100** – The ability to provide necessary and high quality support services and infrastructure to business at reasonable costs, allowing businesses to be as competitive as possible.
- I. Communication and Connectivity: 66 out of 100** - The ability of businesses to connect with each other and with outside markets.
- J. Markets and Marketing: 48 out of 100** – The ability of business to capture and expand markets, both locally, regionally, and outside the region, thus keeping and building local wealth.

The average score for all sections was **58 out of 100**.

Recurring Themes

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

Positive	Improvements Needed
Beautiful river valley	Activities, opportunities for youth
Regional service centre	Regional coordination
Natural resources	Community marketing
Optimistic, motivated, independent	Town beautification
	Community plan

Possible Courses of Action

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

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

Possible Short Term Actions (actions completed in less than 12 months) (The possible actions are based upon participant responses to the survey and focus groups – each action notes the corresponding BVI section(s) where the action was listed by participant(s) – e.g. Question F8)	
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunity identification session(s) for youth/young adults to identify untapped business, recreation and education opportunities – start with identifying affordable/accessible activities, BVI, etc. (Opportunities, Untapped opportunities) ▪ Entrepreneurial program for youth in schools and other supports for young entrepreneurs (Focus groups, Untapped opportunities) ▪ Create a community foundation that harnesses wealth for community building initiatives (Section G)
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town beautification/revitalization project(s) – begin with reviewing underutilized buildings (Focus groups, Improvements, Section H) ▪ Create a positive ‘buy local’ program (Opportunities, Section J) ▪ Create Peace River brand that resonates with young families, harnesses community amenities/advantages (e.g. “leader of the North”) (Sections A, J)
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership program with a regional flavour (e.g. participants from

	<p>Peace River and some from regional communities) that builds strength in the community and appetite for regional initiatives (Improvements, Section A)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link in-town and out-of-town investors to businesses in the community needing ‘angel’ financing (Section G) ▪ Mentoring, training [successful e-commerce, tools for productivity increases, customer service, etc.] program for businesses (Section A) ▪ More communication, collaboration, and networking between leaders, businesses and community – [e.g. possible regular roundtable, forum on infrastructure/highways/town development, innovative practices, e-commerce/e-learning/e-health, etc.] (Section E)
Admin., Research, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of post-secondary opportunities with view to offer more college and university level courses to area residents [this initiative would also look to improve communication and promotion of what already exists] (Untapped opportunities, Focus groups, Section C) ▪ Research and survey local R & D issues and opportunities, and publicize them (Section D) ▪ Research and create a place for youth to gather (e.g. youth centre) activities (Opportunities, Untapped opportunities, Section A)

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

Possible Long Term Actions (actions taking more than 12 months to complete)	
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate incentives [e.g. tax credits, etc.] and other encouragement for businesses (Focus groups, Section H) ▪ Review public transportation, especially accessibility [e.g. schedule] issues for the young and the elderly (Section I) ▪ Affordable housing review with eye to impacts on economic and community development (Improvements, Section B)
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Town beautification/revitalization strategy (Focus groups, Improvements) ▪ Market Peace River brand to target group(s) outside of community (Sections A, F, & J) ▪ Investigate appetite for joint marketing & other initiatives amongst businesses [e.g. trade show, joint promotion, trade missions, etc.] (Section J)
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business and employee awards [e.g. customer service] program (to showcase businesses and increase employee motivation) (A9, Section A) ▪ Continue to build telecommunications infrastructure to build Peace River into a ‘leading’ telecommunications community [inc. investigate cell phone ‘holes’, free wi-fi in downtown, businesses/community better using video conferencing opportunities, etc.] (Section I) ▪ Better communication between business community and training facilities so courses/training fit business needs (Section C)

Research, Admin. and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Review of sport/recreational facilities for current and future needs (Improvements, Section B)▪ Airline affordability review (Opportunities, Focus groups, Sections B & I)▪ Investigate feasibility of facility for arts and culture (Section B)
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1.0 Introduction

The assessment session of the BVI was conducted in Peace River, Alberta, on February 10, 2009. The project is sponsored by the Town of Peace River, Community Futures Peace Country, the Peace River Rotary Club, Northern Lakes College, the Sagitawa Friendship Centre, and the Peace River and District Chamber of Commerce. Norma MacQuarrie, the Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Peace River, is the primary contact person.

Peace River is the 20th community in Canada that has taken part in the BVI, in addition to five communities in Australia.

The second session of the BVI, the Phase 2 or *focus and action* session, will take place on March 30. At that meeting, the findings contained in this report will be presented to the community, which will then set priorities for action. Following that process, the community sponsors will be available to offer assistance to the community in locating resources to carry out the identified actions.

1.1 Business Vitality Initiative Methodology

The BVI process surveys a variety of community members while also maximizing the information from local business people. For this reason, community sponsors, which typically include city councils and economic development offices, are encouraged to sample communities at certain ratios: 50% business people, 25% local leaders, and 25% citizens (representing a wide range of interests, ages, and perspectives in the community). Upon selection, these participants are asked to attend a BVI focus group session, which typically takes place over two and a half hours on a weekday evening.

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

In the case of Peace River, the group on February 10 decided the boundary was the town boundary, based on the clarification that this was the basis on which the initiative was funded.

The completion of the BVI survey is the next step in the facilitation process. The first section of the BVI collects information relating to both the participant and the

community. For example, questions relating to age, income, education, and occupation are collected. Additionally, the BVI asks participants to provide information on the strengths and weaknesses of the community.

The second section of the BVI is comprised of various multi-choice and short answer questions in ten separate sections (Table 3). Each section contains a variable number of questions and subsections which total 200 questions in this section of the survey.

Table 3: BVI Evaluation Sections

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

A range of answers are available to the participant for each question (completely agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, and completely disagree), and each answer receives a different score. If all participants completely agreed with a question, the question would receive a score of 100. Alternately, if all participants completely disagreed with the question, the overall question score would be zero. In the case of neither agree or disagree, if all participants answered a question with this option, the question score would be 50.

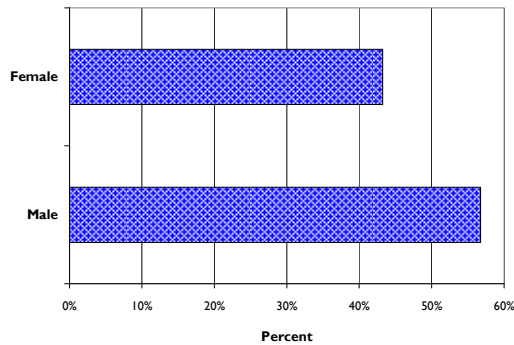
CIEL weights each question, subsection, and section according to its relative importance in terms of business vitality.

In addition to the survey portion of the BVI, focus groups in Peace River discussed the factors that make the community a good place to do business and improvements that could be made in order to improve business vitality. The results of the focus groups are then added to the data provided by the BVI survey in order to gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of a community.

2.0 Community Profile and Focus Group Results

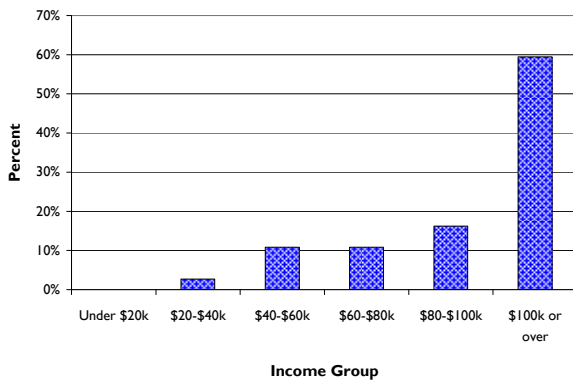
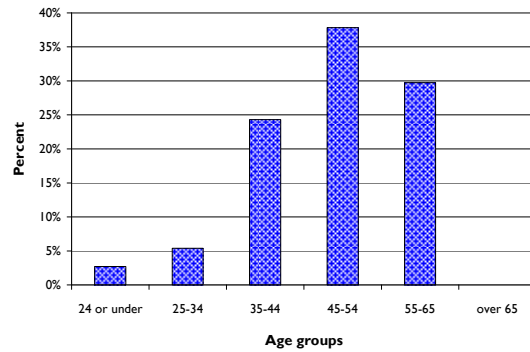
2.1 BVI Focus Group Respondent Profile

The first part of the BVI survey consists of various questions used to profile focus group participants. Thirty-eight people from the community of Peace River participated in the BVI survey and focus group sessions on February 10, 2009.



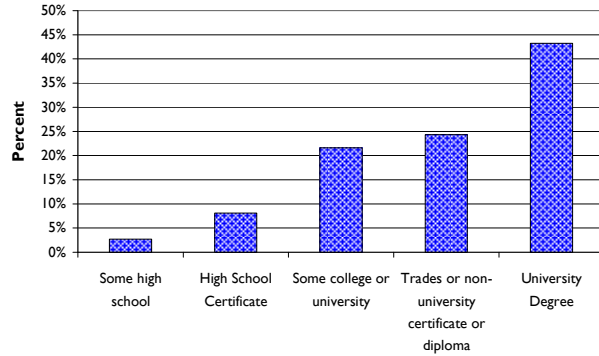
42% of Peace River BVI participants were female, and 58% were male.

- In the BVI focus group session, 66% of the participants were in the 45-65 age range.

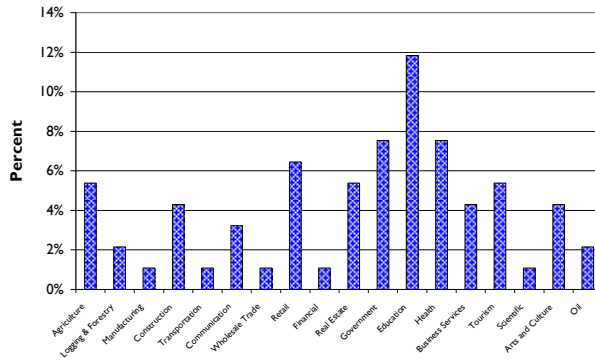


- 59% of the BVI survey group had household incomes over \$100K.
- There were no participants with an income under \$20K.

- The most common educational grouping was "University Degree" at 43% of participants.



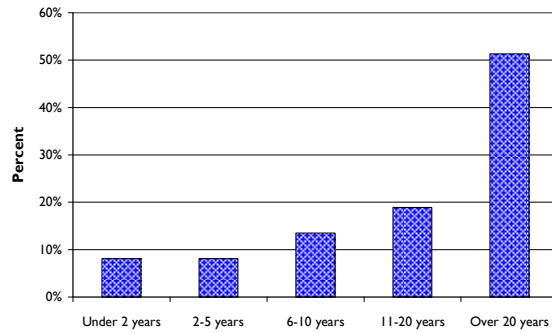
Highest level of Education



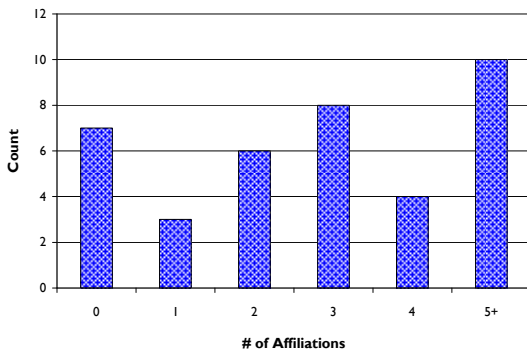
Occupation

- The most common occupation of BVI participants is "education" followed by "government" and "health."

- The majority of the participants have lived in the community more than 20 years.

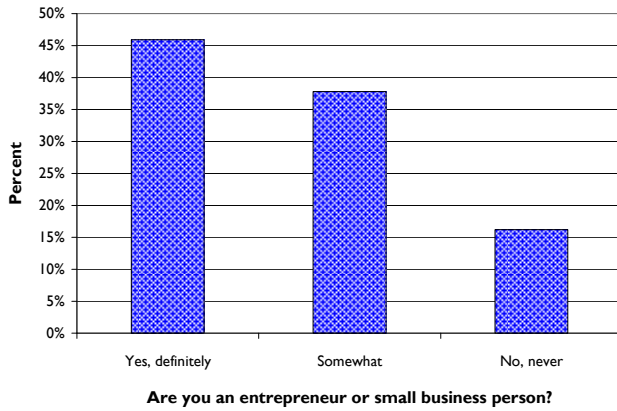
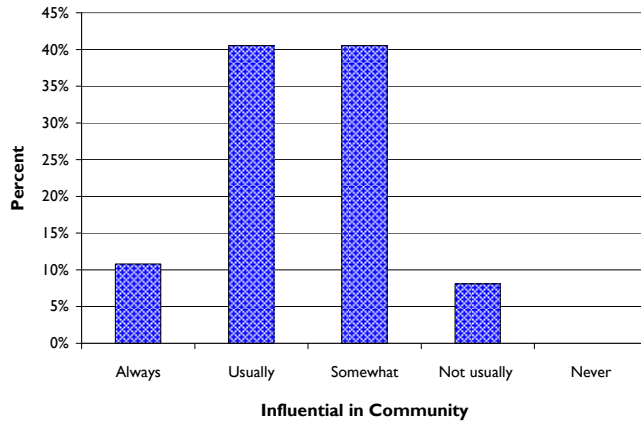


Time in Community



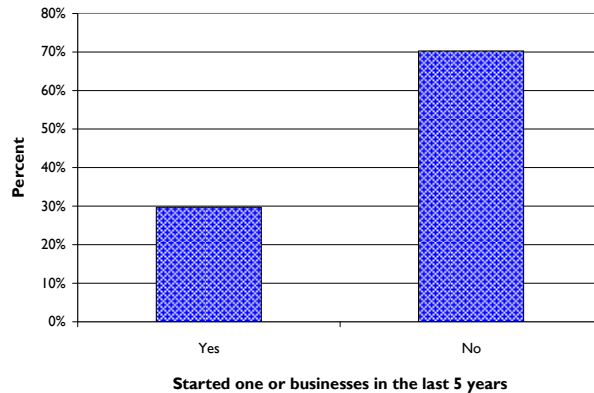
- 25% of participants had more than 5 community affiliations

- Most of the participants said they feel influential in the community in some way.
- No participants felt they were 'never' influential in the community.



- 84% of participants stated that they felt they are a business person or entrepreneur in some way.

- 30% of participants stated that they have started at least one business in the last 5 years.



2.2 Focus Group Results

The focus groups on February 10 were asked two questions.

Question 1: What are the things that make this community a good place in which to do business?

Question 2: What are the things (within the community’s control) that can be improved to help businesses in your community?

Table 4 shows a partial list of responses to Question 1. For a full listing of answers consult Appendix F.

Table 4: Focus Group Question 1

	Count
Regional service centre	4
Friendly small town atmosphere	4
Rich in natural resources	4
Regional government centre	2
Networking on individual basis (word of mouth)	2
Personal knowledge and trust of business owners and operators	2
Engaged community groups (Rotary, youth (Ground Level), Senior drop-in, Chamber, Aboriginal Interagency, pond hockey, Carnival, Peacefest)	2
Capability of providing further education and employer willingness to support education initiatives	2
See Appendix F for more	

Table 5 shows a partial list of responses to Question 2. For a full listing of answers consult Appendix F.

Table 5: Focus Group Question 2

	Count
Community business website and marketing strategies	5
Encouragement, incentives for businesses	5
Entrepreneurial training in schools	5
Affordable/accessible activities, places to go and things to go for youth	3
Mentoring program (innovation, marketing, retailing)	2
Specialty shops	2
See Appendix F for more	

2.3 Community Profile Results

The community profile is broken up into seven different questions. For each question, a table of the top answers is presented below with a count of the number of answers in brackets. For a full list of responses for each question, tables are located in Appendix G.

2.3.1 Describing Peace River in Three Words

There were 110 individual responses to the community profile question that asks for three words or phrases that best describe Peace River. Of those, 95 were considered to be positive, 5 were neutral, and 7 were considered negative, resulting in a 13:1 positive to negative ratio, indicating an overall strength for the community.

Table 7: Describing Peace River in Three Words

Positive		Negative	
Beautiful, scenic, pretty	25	Stagnant	1
Friendly	11	Disconnected	1
Growing	6	Judgmental	1
Peaceful	5	Unprepared for change	1
Vibrant	4	Not teen friendly	1
Diverse	3	Behind the times	1
Active	3	Some shortcomings exist	1
Safe	2	Neutral	
Stable	2	Isolated	3
Clean	2	Busy	1
Regional centre	2	Changing	1
See Appendix G for full list		Quiet	1
		Old age	1

2.3.2 Strengths and Assets of Peace River

In the strengths and assets section of the Peace River community profile, there were 114 individual responses, all listed in Appendix G. The top self-assessed strengths of Peace River appear in Table 8 below.

Table 8: Strengths and Assets of Peace River

	Count
Beautiful river valley location	20
Full range of services and facilities	7
Friendly, supportive people	6
People	6
Schools	4
Many volunteers for community projects	3
Diverse economy	3
Community networks	3
Recreational activities	3
See Appendix G for more	

2.3.3 Improving Peace River

There were 113 suggestions on how to improve Peace River, all listed in Appendix G.

Table 9: Top Ways to Improve Peace River

	Count
More activities for youth/ retention of youth	7
Regional cooperation between municipalities	7
Town beautification and cleanliness	6
Affordable housing	5
Additional sport/rec facilities	4
Diversified economy	3
More post secondary education	3
Improved access to medical care	3
Better use of our airport	3
Arts centre, concerts, theatre	3
More retail/ restaurants	3
See Appendix G for more	

2.3.4 Reason for living in Peace River

Table 10: Top Reasons for Living in Peace River

	Count
Employment/ business/ Income	15
Small town quality of life	10
Family	8
Close to nature	4
Friendly people	3
People	2
Location in the north	2
Friends	2
Safe	2
See Appendix G for more	

2.3.5 What makes Peace River unique

Table 11 contains a partial list. For the full list of responses consult Appendix G.

Table 11: Reasons Peace River is Unique

	Count
Beautiful setting in river valley	27
History	5
Location in northern rural wilderness	4
Potential, opportunity, possibility re work and business	4
Ski hill right in town	3
Close to nature ("deer in town, beavers in river")	2
Variety in types of schools, jobs, cultural/artistic, sports, activities	2
Young vibrant community	2
Good number of professionals	2
Caring people	2
Fitness opportunities	2
See Appendix G for more	

2.3.6 Untapped Opportunities

Table 12: Untapped Opportunities (partial list)

	Count
Tourism development	8
Place for youth to gather (youth centre, etc.)	6
The river - for sports, leisure, travel, photography, business, entertainment	6
Bowling alley	4
Post secondary education	2
Support the arts and local talent	2
Support youth entrepreneurs	2
See Appendix G for more	

2.3.7 What is the one thing you are most proud of?

Table 13: Sources of Pride (partial list)

	Count
Natural beauty of the river and valley	14
Ability to work together and support each other	4
Caring people	3
Hospitable and welcoming	2
The great number of community activities	2
See Appendix G for more	

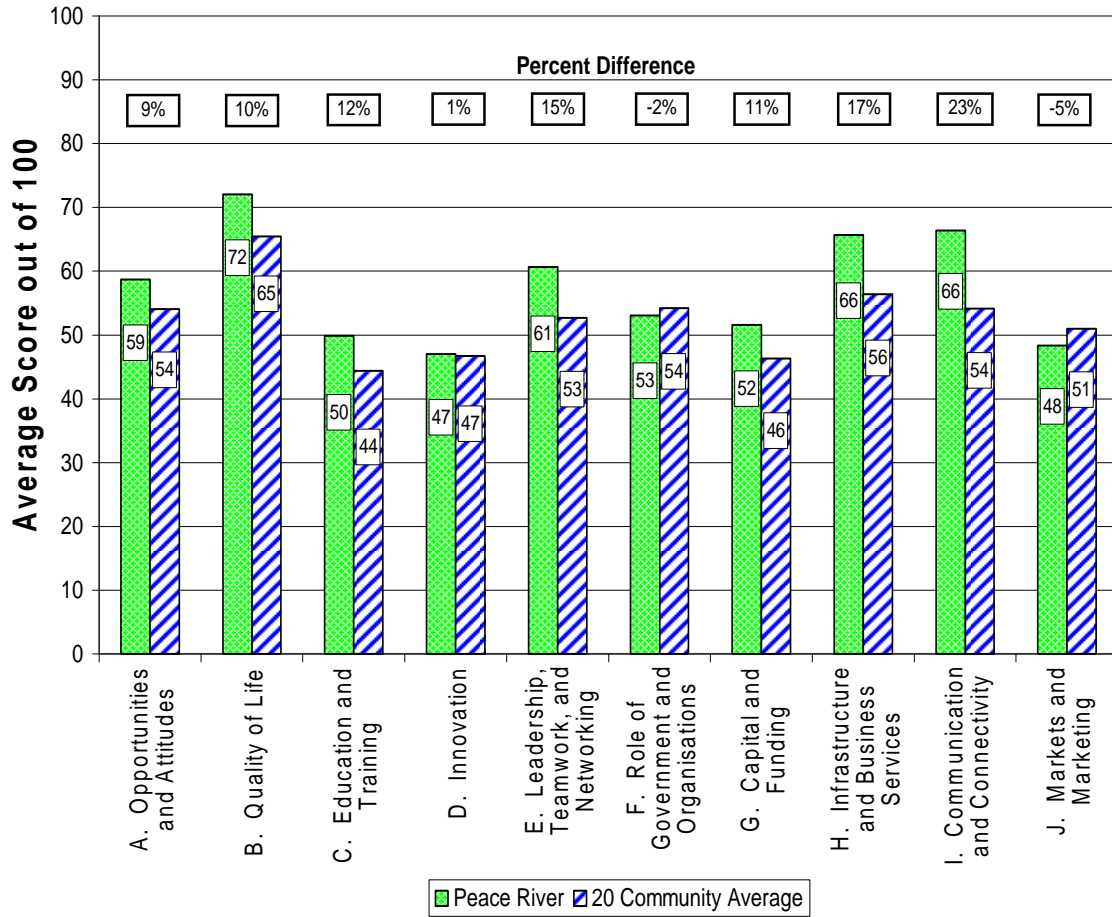
3.0 Section Scores

Overall, Peace River had a full survey score of 58 out of 100, which is 10% above the 20-community average of 52.

The BVI section results as shown in figures 1 and 2 illustrate that Peace River scored equal to or above the 20-community average in all but 2 of the 10 sections. A particular strength for Peace River are its scores for the 'Infrastructure and Business Services' and 'Communication and Connectivity' sections of 66 out of 100 (17% and 23% above the community average respectively). The highest scoring section of the survey is 'Quality of Life' with a score of 72 (10% above the community average).

The lowest scoring section of the survey was 'Innovation' which had a score of 47 (1% above the 20-community average).

Figure 1: Peace River and 20- Community Average Section Scores



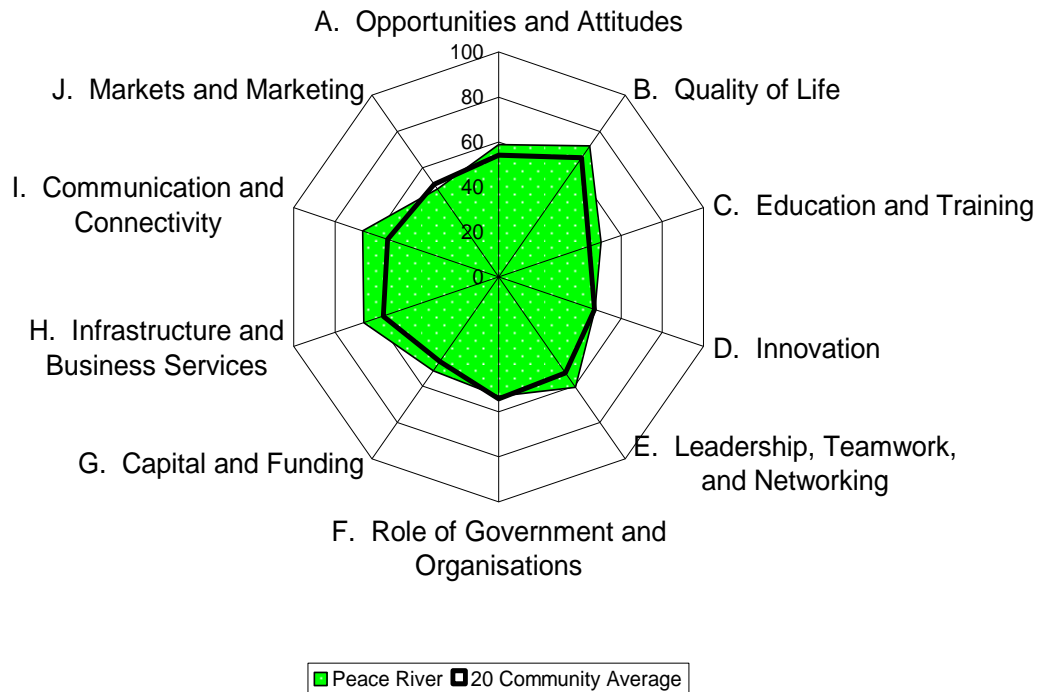


Figure 2: Peace River and 20- Community Average Section Scores

31. Individual Section Scores

The remainder of this chapter presents a look at each of the ten sections of the Peace River BVI individually, including:

- a graph showing the subsection results for each section, and the deviation of those results from the 20-community average.
- a list of all questions in each section showing the score for Peace River compared with the average score for the 20 communities. That table has the highest scoring question in relation to the 20-community average highlighted in green, and the lowest in red.
- a graph indicating the distribution of answers within each question.
- a summary of the strengths and improvements as stated by the survey participants.

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

- ◆ The ability of the community to recognize, take action on, and follow through on available opportunities.

The Opportunities and Attitudes section was the 4th highest ranking section of the BVI survey in Peace River.

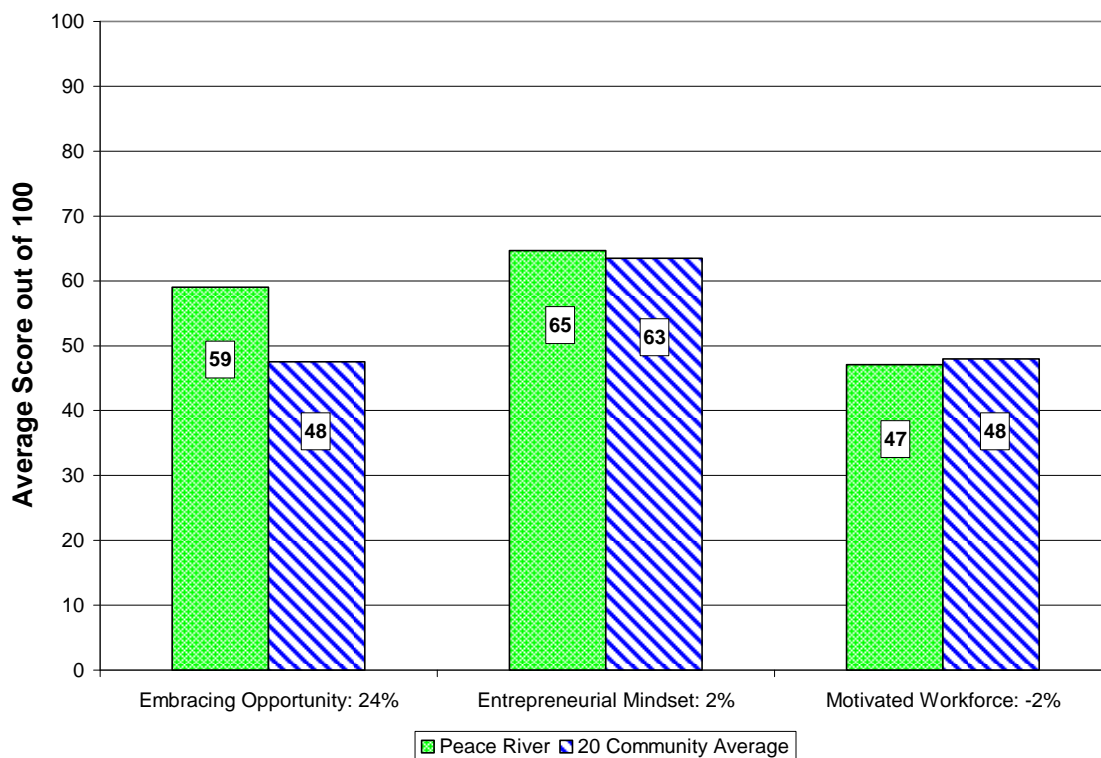


Figure 3: Opportunities and Attitudes Subsection Scores

- The ‘Entrepreneurial Mindset’ subsection scored highest (65 out of 100), 2% above the 20-community average.
- With a score of 47, the “Motivated Workforce’ subsection scored lowest in the section, 2% below the 20-community average.

Table 14: Opportunities and Attitudes Individual Question Scores

Score out of 100				
Subsection	Question	Peace River	20-Community Average	% Difference
Embracing Opportunity	A1. There is an up-to-date community vision or plan which reflects the community's values and attitudes and represents all groups within the community.	50	46	10%
	A2. The community is facing an economic crisis.	47	59	-19%
	A3. The community is facing a significant economic opportunity.	69	62	11%
	A4. Entrepreneurial ventures and business creation are encouraged and supported by citizens and local governments.	58	58	1%
Entrepreneurial Mindset	A5. Individuals desire independence, responsibility, & control over their future, and are willing to work to achieve these regardless of a risk of failure.	64	63	2%
	A6. Individuals are skilled in a trade, talent, or profession, and have the desire to form a business with these	68	65	4%
	A7. Individuals are capable of thinking creatively and developing unconventional solutions using a proactive/can-do attitude.	65	65	0%
	A8. Individuals are capable of identifying new, unconventional or changing business opportunities.	63	61	3%
Motivated workforce	A9. A pool of motivated employees is available to meet business needs.	38	46	-19%
	A10. Managers & supervisors are motivated in their work and about their staff	59	59	0%
Section Score		59	54	9%

- The highest and lowest scores in terms of the community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, above.
- The highest and lowest absolute scores are in **large bold type**.

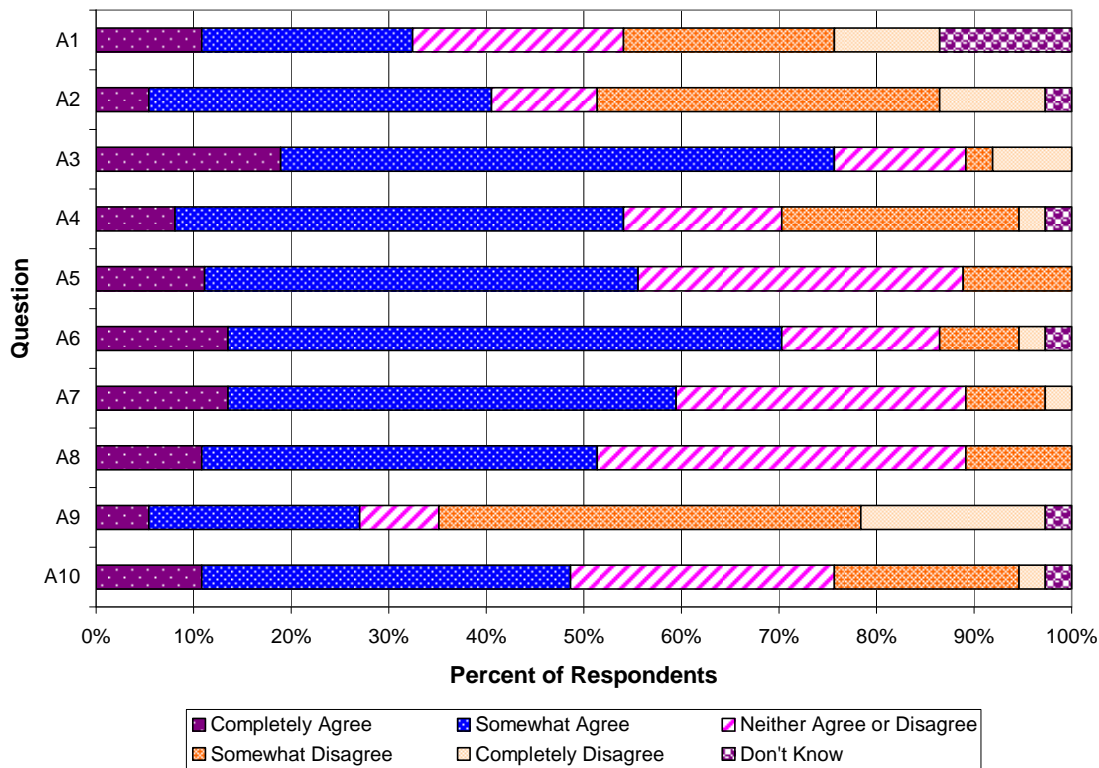


Figure 4: Opportunities and Attitudes Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** A3 (significant economic opportunity) at 75%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** A9 (pool of motivated employees available) at 27%.
- **Significant level of “Don’t know” responses:** A1 (community plan) at 13%.
- **Highly polarized responses (where there is a similar amount of agreement and disagreement):** A1 (community plan)

Table 15: Opportunities and Attitudes Strengths and Improvements

Strengths		Improvements	
Opportunities in natural resources	10	More training, mentoring and incentives for new entrepreneurs, and publicize this	5
Optimistic community spirit	6	Better regional cooperation or regional government	4
People motivated, independent, yet willing to pull together	4	Improve retail customer service	3
People	3	Downtown revitalization including under-utilized buildings	3

Geographic location as hub for northern communities	3	Market opportunities to outside areas	3
Proposed Bruce Power Nuclear plant	2	Create reasons for people to buy locally including business services	2
Alternative energy opportunities	2	Investors that will take chances	1
Strong successful open minded business community	2	Create facilities that will attract young families (recreational, clubs)	1
AFSC and AOC funding	1	A welcoming local bureaucracy	1
Agriculture - canola capital of the world	1	Attract a more diverse range of businesses to create a better sense of pride for the community	1
Annual events - Peacefest, Octoberfest, etc.	1	Attract more large industry	1
Available professional help-- accountants, lawyers, banking, government agencies, active Chamber of Commerce	1	Better support from Chamber of Commerce	1
Community is more interested in supporting the business people than assisting the common joe	1	Bringing community members together to brainstorm concerns and ideas	1
Desire by current council to do visioning, strategic planning, etc.	1	Collaborate with the people--listen before you act	1
Desire for change in terms of increased business	1	Communication and working together	1
Desire to raise children in a high quality educational environment	1	Community business foundation	1
Diverse	1	Competition for labour from high paying/sometimes short term jobs in the resource sector - esp. oil and gas	1
Endless opportunities	1	Consolidate all initiatives and accomplishments and communicate these to its citizens to make them proud	1
If a good idea is brought forward by the leadership in the community it will be supported by the community - financial supports as well	1	Continue to provide public transit system	1
If you have the money or position we will take your word seriously	1	Education	1
Large number of local inventors	1	Encourage citizen participation and involvement	1
Local government that is open to new business development	1	Ensure airport remains open	1
Lots of sports clubs in town and we are thriving in that area	1	For entrepreneurs to just go for it!	1
NAIT and Fairview College expansion/ combination.	1	Involve all youth not just the chosen few who know how to talk or are doing well enough, not to need helping agencies	1
Networking	1	More positive attitude and business minds needed	1
Opportunities in tourism	1	Open door policy	1
Our greatest strength is the strength of opposing viewpoints-- no one group will be able to push through an idea or project without significant community debate/consensus happening	1	Provide space (buildings) more people could get started and allow an opportunity to move up the community ladder	1
Our wages are good	1	Renew passions with the possibilities	1
Overall educational opportunities	1	Show Bruce Power that they are welcomed	1

		and wanted	
Small group of very good business mentors	1	The people who have valuable opinions (but who are not part of the existing vocal minority) need more venues in which to add their voice to ongoing/upcoming matters that effect the white community	1
Small population makes for great possibilities and opportunities	1	Think big city not small town	1
The beautiful location in the valley	1	University and technical college venue (keep youth here)	1
The few that want to pull the wagon	1	What incentives?	1
There is opportunity to exploit the land	1	When European settlers arrived here the land was in a pristine state, let's try and keep it that way	1
Tourism - river/scenery/wildlife.	1		
Town of Peace River held visioning sessions and are finishing the vision statement this is a good first step	1		
Very open door attitude with local government	1		
We have lots of room for more business	1		

3.3 Section B: Quality of Life (72 out of 100)

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

The Quality of Life section was the highest ranking section for Peace River. The list of the 20 highest scoring questions listed in Appendix A contains five questions from this section. The highest scoring questions in the entire survey are B2 (high elementary and secondary schools) and B6 (physical beauty and environmental safety), which got scores of 90 and 89 out of 100.

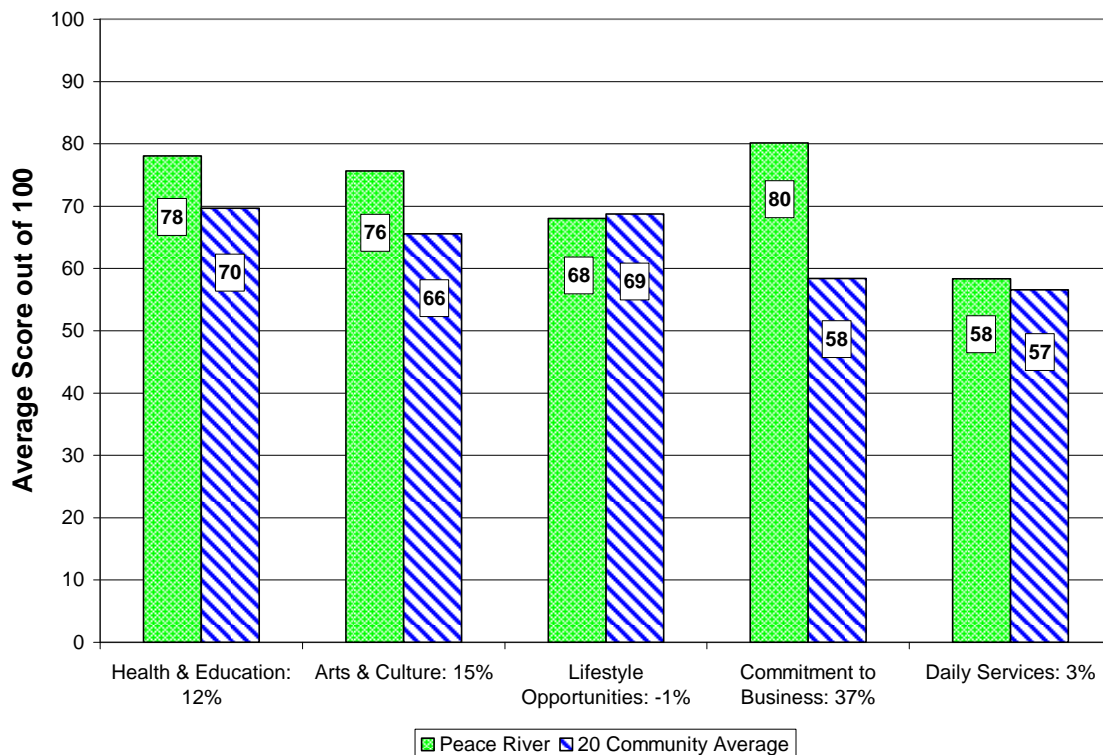


Figure 5: Quality of Life Subsection Scores

- The ‘Commitment to Business’ subsection scored highest as compared with the 20-community average and in terms of absolute score, with a score of 80 (37% above average).
- The lowest scoring subsection, ‘Daily Services’ had a score of 58 (3% above the 20-community average).

Table 16: Quality of Life Individual Question Scores

Score out of 100

Subsection	Question	Peace River	20-Community Average	% Difference
Health & Education	B1. A quality health care facility is accessible, well serviced and within a reasonable distance.	76	70	7%
	B2. There are quality elementary and secondary schools in the community.	90	81	11%
	B3. There is an educational organization in the area that offers post-secondary programs and continuing education opportunities.	67	55	22%
Arts & Culture	B4. High quality events (i.e. festivals, concerts) catering to a range of ages take place regularly in, or close to, the community.	74	61	21%
	B5. There is a strong community identity, and there are plentiful and varying opportunities for involvement (i.e. arts, athletics, politics, church groups).	78	70	11%
Lifestyle Opportunities	B6. The community is physically beautiful and environmentally safe (i.e. pollution, water quality).	89	86	3%
	B7. Young adults (25-34) consider the community to be a desirable place to live.	55	49	13%
	B8. There are locations/facilities (i.e. nightclubs, pubs, bingo, camps) that attract a variety of people, and provide social opportunities for local residents of all ages.	50	45	12%
	B9. There are many high quality recreational opportunities in the area (i.e. sports fields, golf courses, lakes, hiking trails, parks).	72	79	-9%
Commitment to Business	B10. The community is a safe place to live.	78	90	-13%
	B11. Successful businesses want to remain in the community.	84	83	1%
Daily Services	B12. Individuals are capable of persevering and being committed to their business, remaining in the community even during hard economic times.	74	70	6%
	B13. Quality residential and business real estate opportunities (both purchase and rental) are available and affordable.	46	60	-23%
	B14. There is a diversity of quality and affordable services (i.e. dry-cleaning, photo developing, gas station).	70	53	33%

Section Score **72** **65** **10%**

- The highest and lowest scoring questions in terms of the community average are shaded in green and pink, respectively, above.
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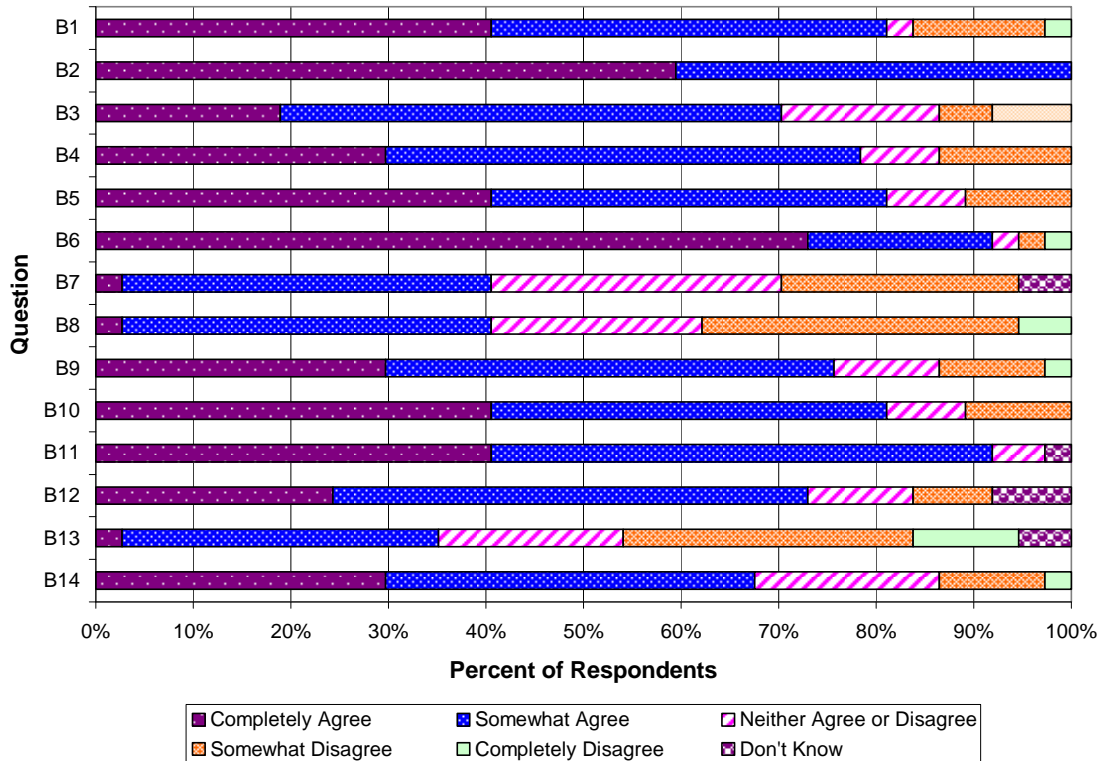


Figure 6: Quality of Life Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** B2 (quality schools) at 100%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** B13 (available and affordable real estate) at 35%.
- **Significant level of “Don’t know” responses:** none
- **Highly polarized responses (where there is a similar amount of agreement and disagreement):** B8 (local opportunities for social opportunities) and B13 (available and affordable real estate)

Table 20: Quality of Life Strengths and Improvements

Strengths		Improvements	
Natural beauty	8	Affordable housing	5
Recreational opportunities and sports facilities	7	Youth facility, affordable programs for youth	5
Good place for young family: safety, good schools, extracurricular activities for young kids	6	Higher education and training opportunities	5
Friendly people	4	Recreation centre, facilities	4
Small town lifestyle	3	Affordable accessible health care	3
Active arts community	3	Community facility for arts and culture	3
Good range of services and amenities	3	Mental health services	2
Pollution free, unspoiled	2	Low cost transit services	2
Good selection of strong businesses	2	Cheaper air fares to the city	2
Location re oil, gas, hydro electricity, solar, and nuclear power resources	2	Improve life for deprived and marginalized people	2
Location	2	Offer more for complete families to do	2
Good social support system is in place	1	Aboriginal people are a cottage industry for social programs that pay the mortgages for lawyers, doctors, judges, yet they (aboriginal people) remain marginalized	1
Community groups have demonstrated some success in working together and collaborating for the greater good	1	Activities, social areas, facilities for young adults (17-25)	1
Community is welcoming to newcomers	1	Address the issue of homelessness	1
Community size and diversity	1	Balance - provide same opportunities for all	1
Exceptional RCMP services	1	Bring more people to the river-- easier access	1
Good facilities for seniors	1	Coordination of more festivals or bringing together a couple district ones to create one large one	1
Good sports teams	1	Economic diversity	1
Good strong economic foundation	1	Fewer minimum wage jobs for disadvantaged people	1
Many churches in town are well attended	1	Find a process to increase collaboration, use of facilities, sharing ideas, sharing public money, and funding opportunities to increase quality of life.	1
Our medical facilities, although at the moment they are sadly understaffed	1	Good jobs for young families	1
Passion	1	Improve access to day-care facilities	1
Physical space to do things with your family	1	Improve development along the river	1
Secure employment	1	Improvements to infrastructure and design and central core	1

The airport plays an important role	1	Incentives to attract professionals to our town (doctors, nurses, teachers, etc).	1
We are a service centre hub for this region	1	Increase networking and communication opportunities for small business and growth	1
Wide array of professionals	1	Lack of quality entertainment, attractions, etc.for young people to keep them here	1
		More green space	1
		More services to match the quality and variety of professional services offered in the community	1
		More things for people of all ages to do	1
		Municipalities with resource wealth receive disproportionate benefit from the resources-- this is wrong, destructive, and wasteful	1
		Promote ourselves as the place to live in the north	1
		Seniors' housing	1
		Short-term economic activity in the resource sector draws people not committed to community	1
		Sustainability	1
		Terrible customer service in all our stores due to staff turn over and lack of training	1
		Training centre, conferences, professional development and mentorship networking	1

3.4 Section C: Education and Training (50 out of 100)

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

The Education and Training section scored 7th in the ten sections of the Peace River BVI, but it was still 12% above the 20-community average. Four questions from this section appear in Appendix B, the list of the lowest-scoring questions for Peace River. In fact, question C3 (entrepreneurial development programs in the schools) was the second-lowest scoring question in the entire survey, both in terms of actual score (Appendix B) and relative to other communities (Appendix D).

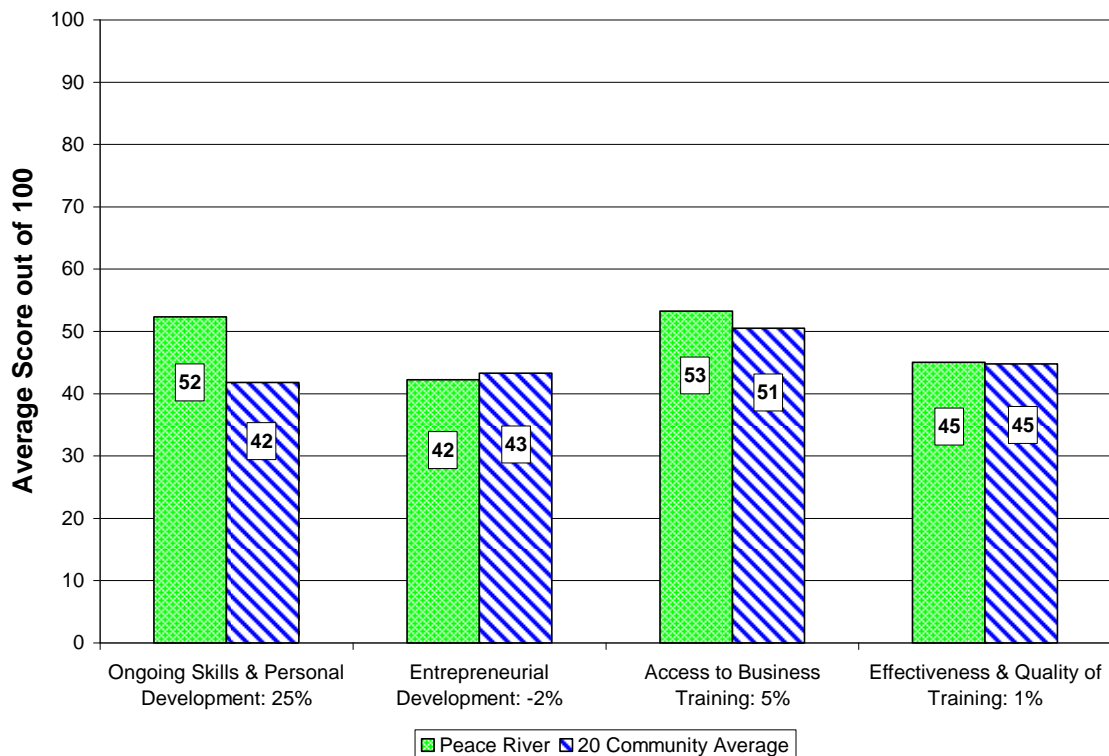


Figure 7: Education and Training Subsection Scores

- The ‘Access to Business Training’ subsection was the highest scoring subsection, 5% above the average with a score of 53.
- The ‘Entrepreneurial Development’ subsection was the lowest scoring subsection with a score of 42.

Table 20: Education and Training Individual Question Scores

Score out of 100

Subsection	Question	Peace River	20-community Average	% Diff.
Ongoing Skills & Personal Development	C1. A range of training and educational programs are utilized, including:			
	Business training			
	C1a. Business plan development	54	54	0%
	C1b. Basic business skill development (i.e. sales, pricing, display)	47	42	10%
	C1c. Advanced business skill development (i.e. financial planning, marketing, accounting, communication)	54	42	27%
	C1d. Computer training for business (i.e. excel, web design, graphics, business applications)	64	57	12%
	C1e. Personal Development (i.e. Stress management)	48	42	14%
	C1f. Online / distance education	72	65	10%
	C1g. Continuing education	60	58	5%
	C1h. TAFE/College	53	33	61%
C1i. University	23	33	-28%	
C1j. Professional Development (i.e. certification sessions)	49	37	34%	
Entrepreneurial Development	C2. Business mentors and/or role models are available in the community	59	51	15%
	C3. There is an entrepreneurial development program in primary and secondary schools.	22	34	-36%
Access to Business Training	C4. There is an organization through which training and educational programs/opportunities can be offered.	72	64	13%
	C5. Training programs are affordable for anyone (i.e. business owners, youth, professionals)	44	49	-11%
	C6. Flexible timing for skills training is available to meet local business needs.	47	43	10%
	C7. The education and business communities work together to provide convenient training	41	42	-1%
Effectiveness & Quality of Training	C8. A pool of skilled and trained labour is available to local businesses.	30	34	-13%
	C9. Teaching organizations develop courses that serve community needs (i.e. specialised training)	45	41	8%
	C10. Teaching staff are skilled in and knowledgeable about the subject(s) they teach	65	58	12%
	C11. Individuals are motivated to learn new skills and to develop existing ones.	48	50	-5%
Section Score		50	44	12%

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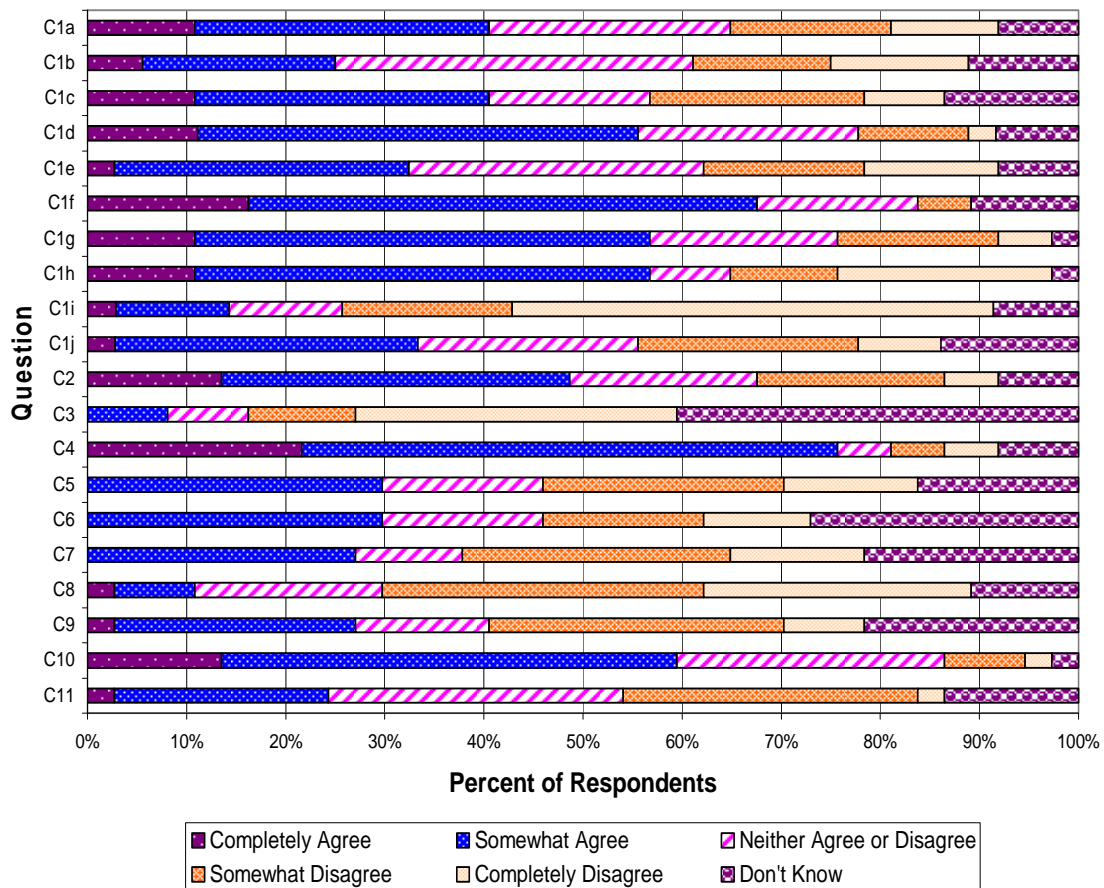


Figure 8: Education and Training Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** C4 (an organization that offers training) at 76%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** C3 (entrepreneurial development programs in schools) at 12%.
- **Significant level of “Don’t know” responses:** C3 (entrepreneurial development programs in schools) at 41%, C6 (flexible timing for skills training) at 27%, C7 (education and business work together) at 22%, C10 (educational staff are skilled) at 22%
- **Highly polarized responses (where there is a similar amount of agreement and disagreement):** C1b (business skill development training)

available), C6 ((flexible timing for skills training), C6 (flexible timing for skills training), C1j (professional development available)

Table 19: Education and Training Strengths and Improvements

Strengths		Improvements	
NAIT	18	Larger better-funded post secondary program	6
Good schools K-12	9	University level courses available locally	5
French immersion programs	5	Better promotion and awareness of local post sec opportunities	5
Northern Lakes College	5	Technical/ trade college venue	3
University level courses available through distance learning	3	Expand NAIT program	2
Catholic schools	2	Better communication between business community and training facilities so courses/training fit business needs	2
RAP program in schools	2	Keep opportunities for training here so people do not have to got to larger centres	1
CF office - business training	1	Training is not happening as much as it could be	1
DMI	1	Solid pre school system to bring children into the school system prepared	1
Facilities	1	Public transportation to the college	1
Facilities for online meetings and computer learning, etc	1	Advertise and host free courses on basic computer, how to create a resume, the basics on a job interview-- people would attend, because not everyone can afford to go to school	1
Flexibility	1	Bring workshops and facilitators in to Peace River so everyone can benefit rather than paying for only a few to leave to benefit.	1
Focus on FNMI (First Nations, Metis, and Inuit) success in elementary and secondary schools	1	Distance learning and video conferencing opportunities	1
Good long term dedicated teachers	1	Many who need upgrading (or language training) aren't comfortable with computers (at school) and don't own computers for (at home) study	1
Government departments (some) support staff who wish to pursue higher education	1	Affordable housing for students.	1

Great k-12, poor post secondary	1	Trade scholarships for our youth	1
Hub for the surrounding communities	1	Community and business leaders stressing and encouraging the importance of advanced and lifelong training	1
Individuals who go beyond the curriculum to help their students succeed	1	Short, specific, focused training	1
Our experienced teachers	1	More facilities for online meetings	1
Peace Association for Lifelong Learning	1	NAIT to offer more evening courses and more direct work with business to fill these needs	1
Radio station - training ground	1	We need smaller classrooms and more teachers	1
Schools that offer athletic advancements	1	Life skills training that will contribute to students completing programs	1
Smaller classes	1	Teach for the needs of the individual not a curriculum which 50% of students struggle with because of handicaps or other issues beyond their control	1
		High speed more available	1
		Housing and transportation - would support Peace River as a regional centre to many rural communities including aboriginal communities	1
		Bring back the community based college level upgrading and technical programs which have migrated to Grande Prairie and Edmonton	1
		A more realistic view of what types of workers, programs etc, that we need	1
		Find ways to have business sponsor training costs for their staff and a way to encourage government to find short course training	1
		Entrepreneurship training in school	1
		A larger training centre and business partnerships that use the facility more effectively like ? Shell, DMI, Bruce Power, etc	1
		Greater information about what is available to want to be entrepreneurs in the schools.	1

3.5 Section D: Innovation (47 out of 100)

- ◆ Ability of a community and its residents to innovate, that is, think of and develop new ideas, increases the ability of that community to adapt to changes, recognize unusual and new opportunities and technologies, and share their ideas with like-minded people.

The Innovation section was the lowest scoring for Peace River, with a score of 47 out of 100 (1% above the community average). The list of the lowest scoring questions in Appendix B contains three questions from this section. This section also had a high level of “don’t know” responses (Figure 10).

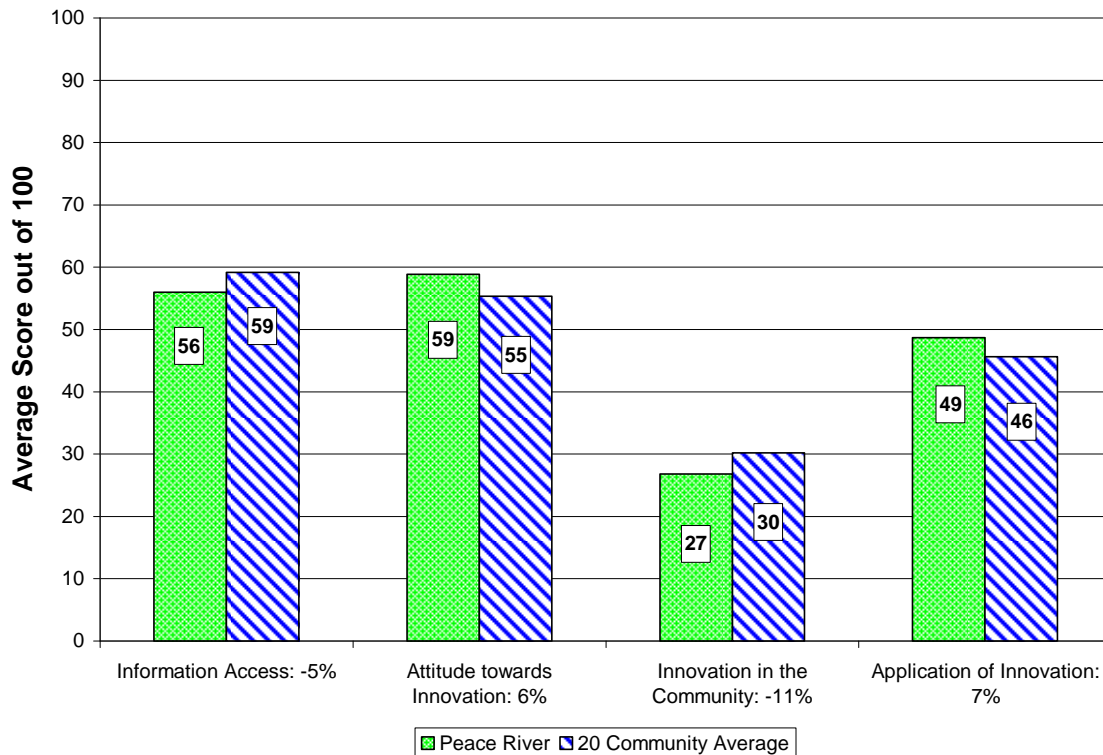


Figure 9: Innovation Subsection Scores

- ‘Attitudes toward Innovation’ is the highest scoring subsection, with a score of 59 (6% above average).
- The lowest scoring subsection ‘Innovation in the Community’ still scored 25% higher than the average.

Table 20: Innovation Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Peace River	20 Community Average	% Difference
Information Access	D1. Individuals have access to research (local, regional, national, international) relating to new technologies, business development and/or expansion.	58	58	-1%
	D2. There are library or resource facilities that carry information on business development, market trends, new technologies, policies, and networks.	55	60	-9%
Attitude towards Innovation	D3. Business people & entrepreneurs are aware and knowledgeable about new and innovative technologies, & are eager to further their knowledge.	62	55	12%
	D4. Innovation is valued and recognized by business people.	67	61	10%
	D5. Support and assistance for innovative business research and development is available.	44	48	-8%
Innovation in the Community	D6. Businesses that do research, or research facilities are geographically concentrated (clustered) and interact with each other.	28	33	-16%
	D7. Skilled and knowledgeable scientists and researchers do academic and/or practical work in my community or region (not necessarily about the region).	22	29	-23%
	D8. There are formal and informal forums (conferences, workshops, association lunch meetings) on technology and technology applications.	29	29	0%
Application of Innovation	D9. Businesses use innovative technology, practices and research.	52	46	12%
	D10. Research that is being done in the community or region is relevant to the business community's needs and interests.	46	45	2%
Section Score		47	47	1%

- The highest and lowest scoring questions in terms of the community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, above.
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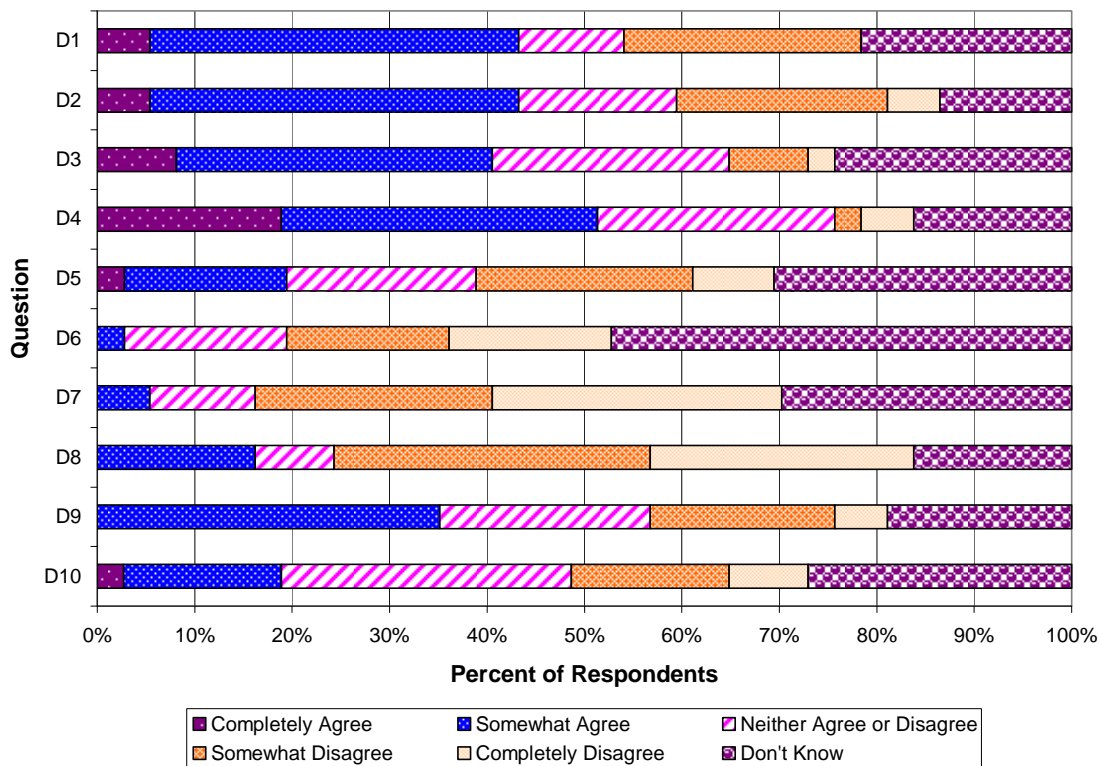


Figure 10: Innovation Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** D4 (innovation is valued by business people) at 52%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** D6 (businesses that do research at 3%.
- **Significant level of “Don’t know” responses:** D6 (businesses that do research interact at 47%., D7 (businesses do research) at 30%, D5 (support and assistance for research is available) at 30%, D10 (research is relevant) at 27%, D3 (businesses are knowledgeable about technology) at 24%
- **Highly polarized responses (where there is a similar amount of agreement and disagreement):** D9 (businesses use innovative technology)

Table 21: Innovation Strengths and Improvements

Strengths		Improvements	
Oil and gas industry	2	Research and survey local R&D issues and opportunities, and publicize them	9
I don't think there is a strength	1	Raise awareness of presence of science/technology & individuals facilities in the community	2
Shell	1	Funding by government and a mandate by an educational institution	2
Nuclear power innovation	1	Celebrate local success and promote our successful people/businesses	2
Telecommunications	1	A economic development officer with full staff	2
Distance education and rural development	1	Stronger and proactive Chamber of Commerce	1
We seem to depend on other parts of the province (south) other parts of Canada (Ontario) or the states for R&D	1	Spend more on encouraging R&D to attract a highly educated and highly skilled workforce	1
Other than community futures and the Peace Region Economic Development Association, I am not sure	1	Need funding for R&D	1
Forest industry - leaders in research for forest management (Emend Project)	1	Lifestyle incentives to researchers	1
I truly have no idea-- not sure if that means there is none or that I am oblivious	1	Innovation is difficult in an older traditional community	1
Hopefully the Chamber of Commerce and town I do not know of the major R&D groups in town	1	Increased funding to post secondary institutions	1
The resources are available - need more support and use of these resources	1	I don't think our community does enough research	1
Outside of research done within my own industry, I'm unaware of other research in the Peace River area	1	Honesty at government levels	1
Concern about the environment and willingness to develop green technologies	1	Help people write business plans and do research necessary to start R&D venture	1
Divided in regards to healthy land and environment/ getting rich at any cost with disregard to the next generation	1	Have forestry, oil sands, tourism, research available	1
Willingness to partake	1	Encouraging energy savings technologies-- very little being done to date	1
Not sure what is being done	1	Encourage R&D forums-- develop/implement a series of workshops that are dedicated to R&D initiatives	1
SARDA for agriculture-- not aware anything else	1	Diversify and expand R&D	1
Not involved in any R&D	1	Communicators and networking opportunities do not exist in the local climate	1

The opportunity/potential to do more research and development exists because of the unique geographic conditions and resources	1	Bring in innovators, researchers, and connect with residents - better use of videoconferencing	1
Our geographic location	1		
Connection to centre for research and innovation at Grande Prairie college	1		
The only research and development that I am aware of is the Boreal Forest Research Centre	1		
West Hill new development by bigger corporation	1		
The independent attitude that allows individuals to succeed with the resource and ingenuity they already possess	1		

3.6 Section E: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking (61 out of 100)

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

This was the third highest scoring section for Peace River, with a score of 61 (15% above the community average).

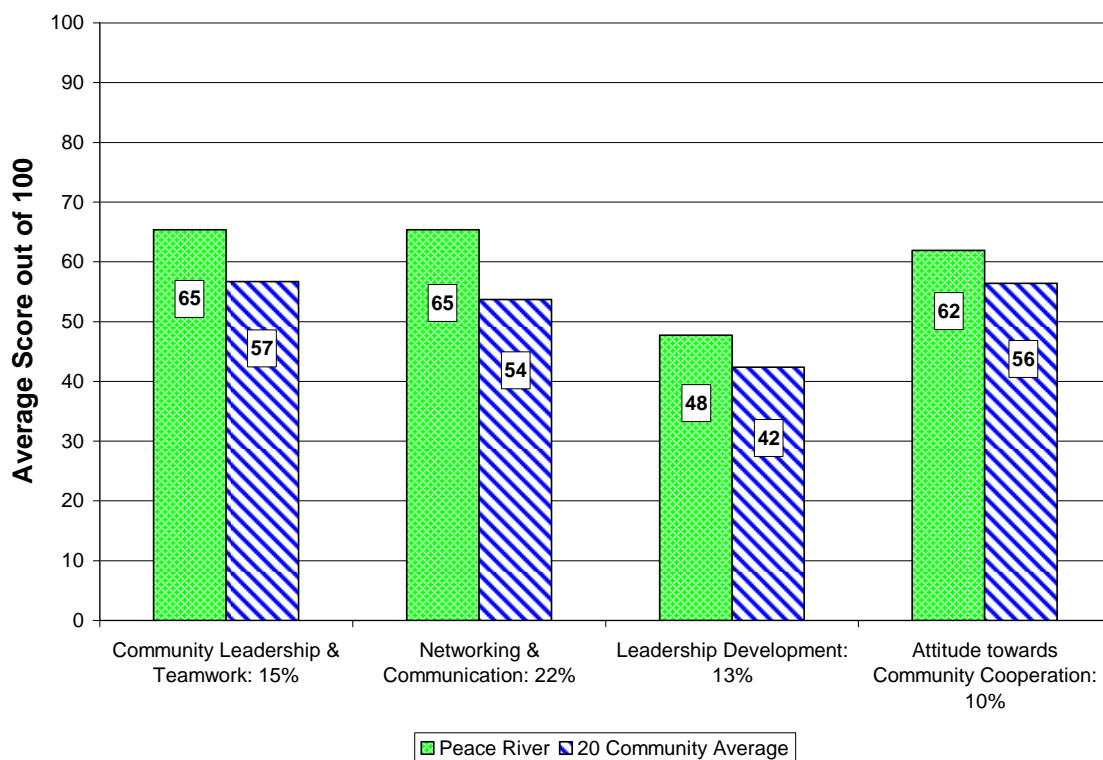


Figure 11: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking Subsection Scores

- ‘Community Leadership and Teamwork’ and Networking and Communication’ are the highest scoring subsections with a score of 65 (15% and 22% above average respectively).
- The lowest scoring subsection, ‘Leadership Development’ has a score of 48 (13% above average).

Table 22: Leadership, Teamwork, and Network Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Peace River	20-Community Average	% Diff.
Community Leadership & Teamwork	E1. Members representing interests of the public, private, and government sectors jointly participate in community decision-making and implementation.	60	58	3%
	E2. There is a pool of talented leaders with diverse skills, cultural experiences and backgrounds who are available for leading community initiatives.	77	68	14%
	E3. Qualified supervisors and managers (and management services) are available to small business.	58	44	31%
Networking & Communication	E4. There are adequate opportunities (informal and formal) where business people and entrepreneurs can network with each other.	69	56	24%
	E5. Business people are able to give and receive support from other experienced business people (i.e. business associations, mentoring).	61	51	19%
Leadership Development Opportunities	E6. There are opportunities for leadership training and development for individuals of all ages and interests (i.e. professionals, youth).	42	42	1%
	E7. There are opportunities for small business to learn and develop management and leadership skills.	53	43	24%
Attitudes towards Community Cooperation	E8. Groups with similar interests can form alliances and cooperate to achieve goals.	61	61	1%
	E9. Cooperatives and joint community initiatives are encouraged and respected.	63	58	8%
Section Score		61	53	15%

- The highest and lowest scores in terms of the community average are shaded in green and pink, respectively, above.
- The highest and lowest absolute scores are in large **bold type**.

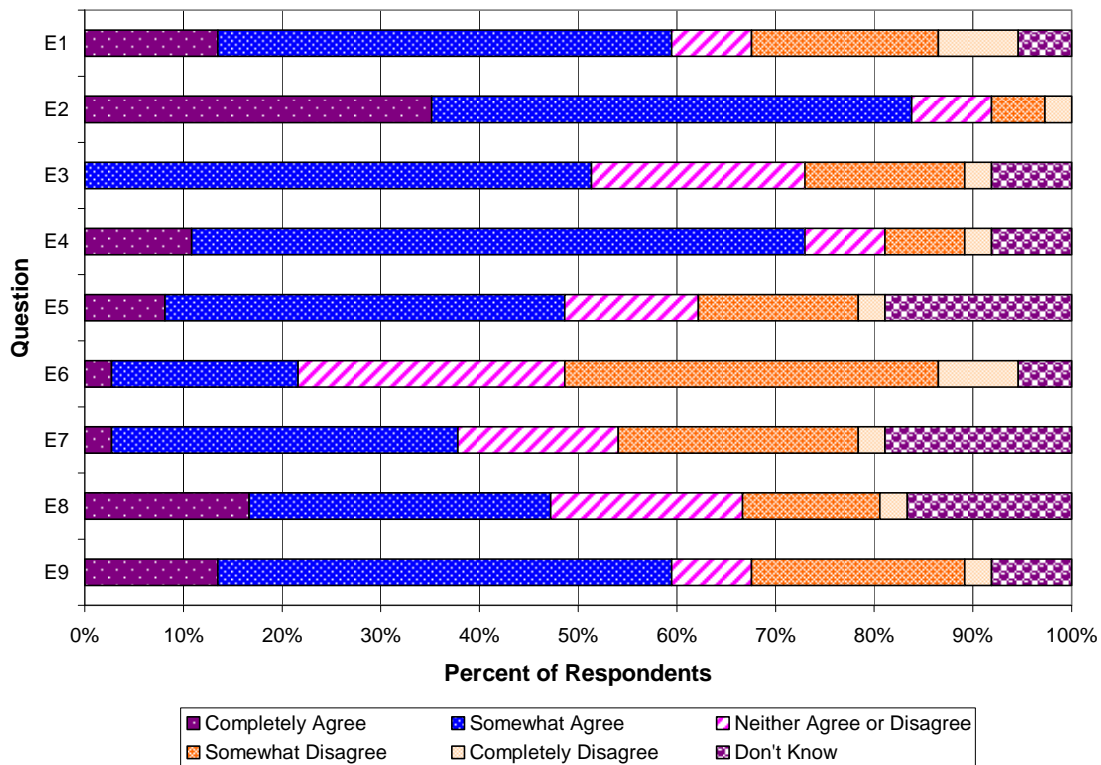


Figure 12: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** E2 (pool of talented leaders) at 83%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** E6 (opportunities for leadership training) at 22%.
- **Significant level of “Don’t know” responses:** None
- **Highly polarized responses (where there is a similar amount of agreement and disagreement):** E7 (opportunities to learn and develop business plans)

Table 23: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths		Improvements	
Diverse and talented leaders	11	More communication, collaboration, and networking between leaders and community	10
Chamber of Commerce	7	More public involvement	2
Rotary	5	More regional cooperation	2
Willingness to pull together across sectors	4	Welcome and tap into the strengths of newcomers	1
Mayor and council	2	Public forums before decisions are made-- represent the people not just industry	1
Desire to bring about positive change, forward thinking	2	Some young ideas into some older thinking minds	1
Caring volunteers	2	More workshops with these individuals	1
Many Town of Peace River employees who are taking a leadership role	1		
Community is in the midst of creating/defining its identity	1	The program might help	1
Lots of expertise	1	Economic development officer to facilitate new business development	1
People are proud of their community	2	Help from the town to host more events like the oil show	1
It works for the stats or benefits of individuals	1	Business seminars	1
Size (small) makes for frequent informal networking and feedback	1	Reward collaborative initiatives or successes	1
Small community	1	Providing a framework for this to happen-- town council or Chamber of Commerce could provide support	1
Kinsmen	1	I have been extremely well served by our community in their willingness to partner and find ways to get things done	1
Community events (peacefest)	1	Focus attention on the group working towards R&D of entrepreneurial activities in Peace River	1
We know each other	1	Less politics	1
Peace River construction association	1	Professional organizations	1
Community networks are in place where ideas are pooled and strategies are developed	1	Strengthen business and social development relationships (schools and business)	1
		Community meetings with an even playing field	1
		Define why we should be proud of ourselves, what makes us unique	1
		Train new age leaders, build trust between organizations and don't make them compete for same money	1
		We can't get information or answers due to bylaw after bylaw restrains - we just don't bother	1

	Find more ways to build the capacity and enhance opportunities to share information and work together	1
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3.7 Section F: Role of Government and Organizations (53 out of 100)

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

This was the fifth-highest scoring section for Peace River with a score of 53 (2% below the community average). There was a high level of “don’t know” responses (Figure 14).

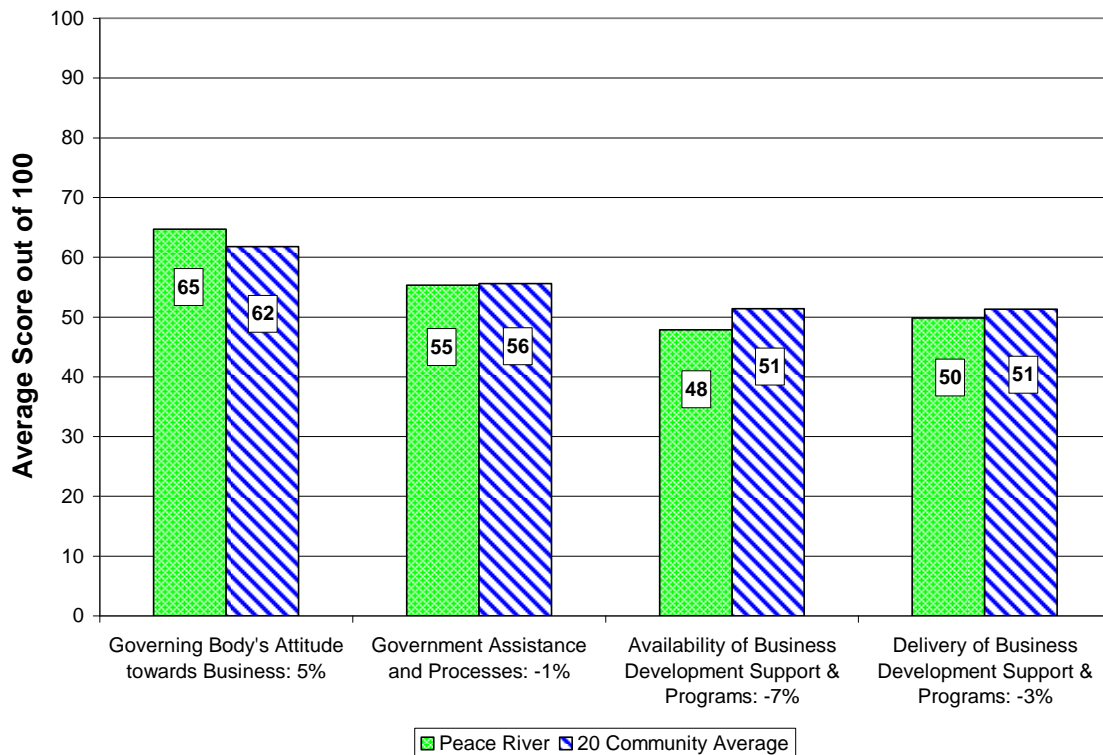


Figure 13: Role of Government and Organizations Subsection Scores

- The ‘Governing Body’s Attitude’ subsection is the highest scoring subsection with a score of 65 (5% above average).
- ‘Availability of Business Development’ scored lowest with a score of 48 (7% below average).

Table 24: Role of Government and Organizations Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Peace River	20 Community Average	% Difference
Governing Body's Attitude towards Business	F1. The municipal government recognizes that businesses are important and valuable for the development of the community.	79	76	5%
	F2. The governing body is committed to recruiting or attracting businesses to the community, and may use strategies or incentives to do so.	61	58	4%
	F3. The governing body is committed to assisting existing or startup business opportunities through policy and action.	52	50	5%
Government Assistance and Processes	F4. Community leaders and officials are willing to cooperate with business and business associations.	71	67	6%
	F5. Local officials make it easy/reasonable for businesses to start or expand.	53	52	2%
	F6. Local regulations, policies, rules, bylaws, zoning are easily understood by business people, making it easy/reasonable for businesses to expand or start up.	43	48	-12%
Availability of Business Development Support & Programs	F7. There is a recognized organization or individual available to assist people identify, assess, expand and/or create business opportunities.	47	53	-11%
	F8a. Counselling	47	48	-2%
	F8b. Training	50	49	1%
	F8c. Mentoring	34	42	-18%
	F8d. Assistance for those seeking self-employment	50	54	-8%
Delivery of Business Development Support & Programs	F8e. Loans	55	60	-8%
	F9. Business development initiatives are effective and efficient, and do not duplicate each other.	36	42	-15%
	F10. Business programs are offered in a well-known and accessible location.	49	49	1%
	F11. Staff members delivering programs are knowledgeable, competent and approachable.	60	60	1%
	F12. Successful programs are repeated, reproduced, and further developed.	48	49	-4%
Section Score		53	54	-2%

- The highest and lowest scores in terms of the community average are shaded in green and pink, respectively, above.
- The highest and lowest absolute scores are in **large bold type**.

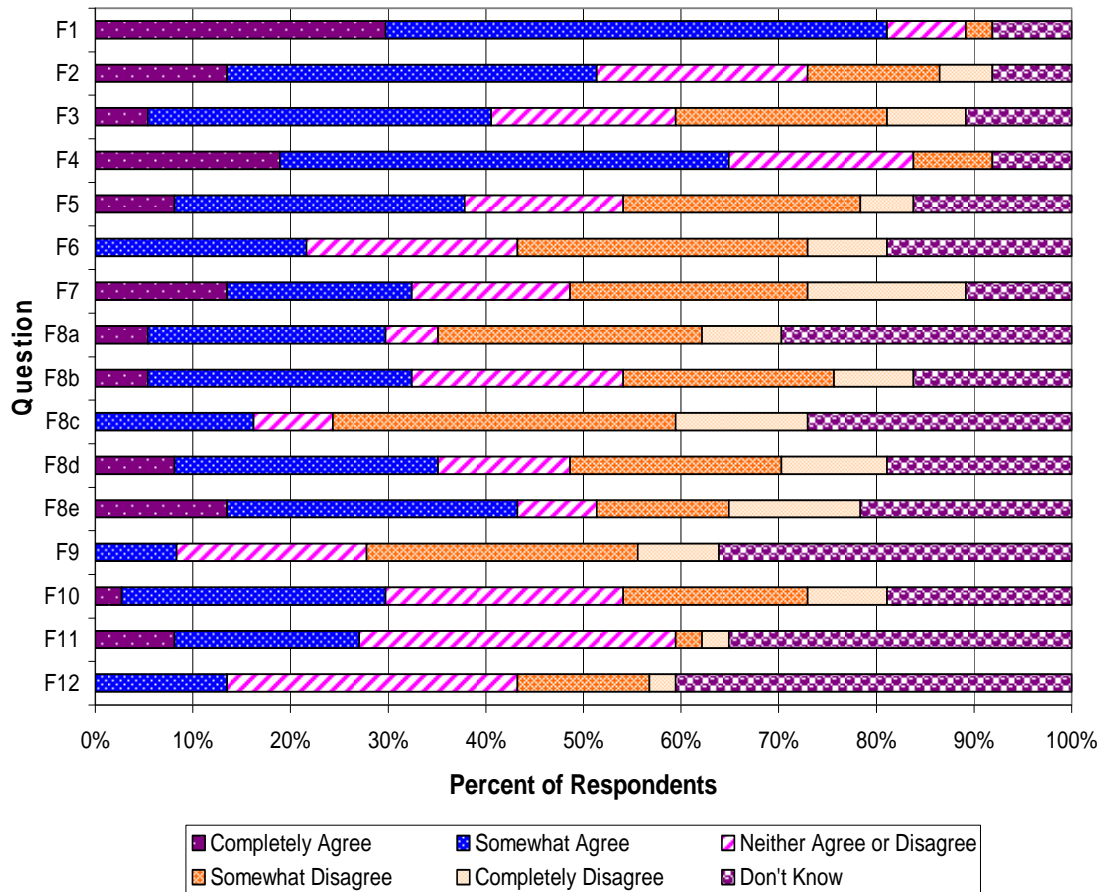


Figure 14: Role of Government and Organizations Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** F1 (municipal government recognition) at 81%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** F9 (business development initiatives are efficient) at 9%.
- **Significant level of “Don’t know” responses:** F12 (successful programs are repeated) at 41%, F9 (business development initiatives are efficient) at 36%, F11 (staff members delivering programs are knowledgeable and

competent) at 35%, F8a (business counselling available) at 30%, F8c (business mentoring available) at 28%.

- **Highly polarized responses (where there is a similar amount of agreement and disagreement):**F5 (local officials make it easy to expand), F8b (training is available), F8d (assistance for those seeking self-employment), F10 (programs are offered in an accessible location, F12 (successful programs are repeated).

Table 25: Role of Government and Organizations Strengths and Improvements

Strengths		Improvements	
Good new council	8	Market the community as the leaders of the north	4
Variety of organizations serve community well	3	Regional government or more regional cooperation	4
Leaders are approachable and helpful	2	Increase business training/ mentoring/ assistance, more visible formalized process	3
Access to MLA	1	A community plan	2
Strong desire to see the community grow and expand	1	They speak for the people sometimes without the peoples voice even being heard	1
People are its greatest asset	1	Getting the other people in government chain to cooperate down in chain	1
There is a wonderful counselling program in our community	1	Training of town staff for a positive, friendly, helpful attitude	1
Local government is drawing upon strength of its people in determining the future direction/identity of the community	1	Offer more to the community-- how are we to grow if we can't get the nutrients?	1
Teamwork/open door policy	1	Infrastructure to take care of the sick and elderly	1
Provincial government office - regional centre	1	Support and trust by businesses	1
My perception (and likely many others) see them as pro-business	1	More people take the responsibility to be informed about and vote on important issues	1
Advocacy for better health care	1	Advocacy for dynamic growth in employment to diversify the economy	1
There are a fair amount of social programs available in this community	1	Too much red tape and politics involved in this community, too many putting their own agenda before the town's agenda	1
Sports teams are strongest in town, but other organization struggle	1	Stronger leadership	1
New town manager and opportunity for regional partnership	1	Work together	1
Progressive--passion for growth	1	Continue recruitment and retention initiatives	1
They understand the benefits of regional government	1	Walk and talk to the grass roots youth	1

The willingness to take a holistic approach rather than a single mindedness	1	Increased diversity - age, ethnicity, etc	1
Small size and willingness to help	1	More involvement needed with the business community	1
Increased interest in community engagement and collaboration	1	More support from the province for the forestry sector	1
Strong provincial government representation and facility plus a strong regional municipal presence	1	Same people in our governing chairs for years-- attract younger or different people	1
Local government is very knowledgeable about how municipal taxation works and the weaknesses of the current process	1	Continue to engage key community members as well as all community people	1
We have all levels of government represented here	1	Make investment possible and streamline procedures	1
Provincial government is supportive of the oil patch	1		
The government and organizations are accessible	1		
The presence of agencies, such as NAIT, community futures, NADC	1		
They understand the benefits of regional government	1		
The willingness to take a holistic approach rather than a single mindedness	1		
Small size and willingness to help	1		
Increased interest in community engagement and collaboration	1		
Strong provincial government representation and facility plus a strong regional municipal presence	1		

3.8 Section G: Capital and Funding (52 out of 100)

- ◆ Ability of the community to financially support entrepreneurs through ensuring access to capital, and educating businesses about financial management and supports.

The Capital and Funding section scored 6th for Peace River out of 10 sections, and is distinguished by an extremely high incidence of “don’t know” responses (see Figure 16, below).

Peace River’s score of 52 is 11% higher than the 20-community average.

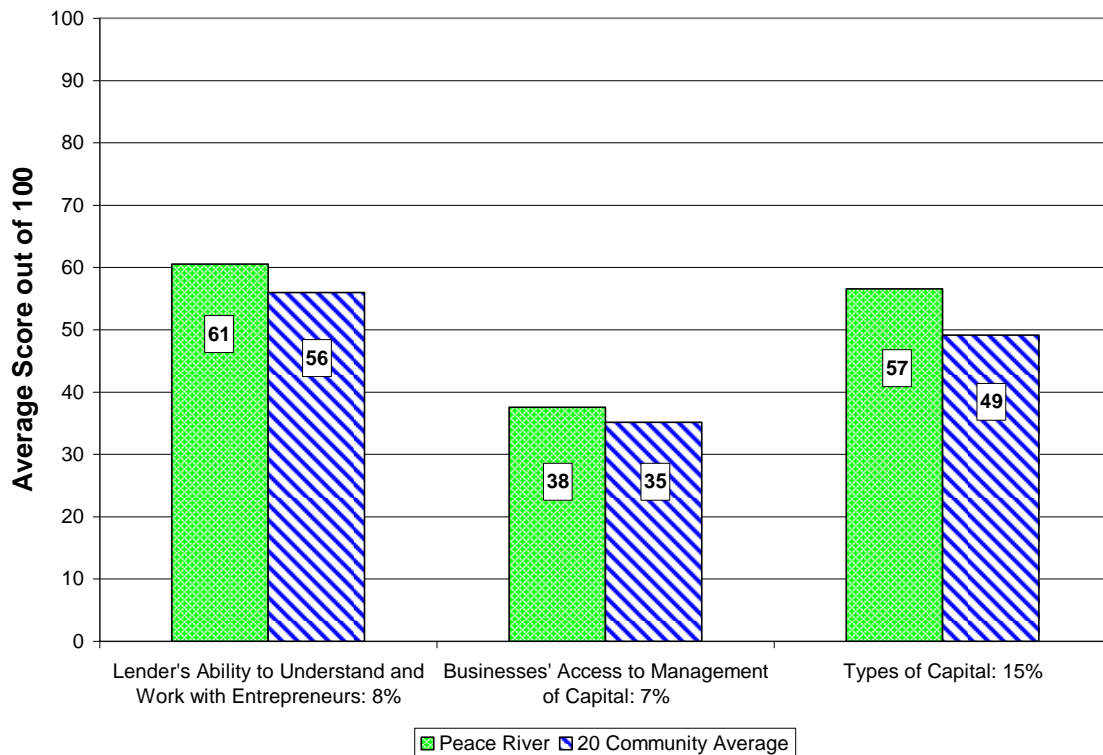


Figure 15: Capital and Funding Subsection Scores

- The ‘Lenders’ Ability to Work with Entrepreneurs’ subsection scored highest in the section with a score of 61 (8% above the average).
- The ‘Businesses’ Access to Management of Capital’ subsection is the lowest scoring subsection of the section with a score of 38 (7% above average).

Table 26: Capital and Funding Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Peace River	20 Community Average	% Difference
Lenders' Ability to Understand and Work with Entrepreneurs	G1. Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas.	58	48	20%
	G2. Lenders and investors understand entrepreneurs' needs and have programs to address those needs.	47	48	-2%
	G3. The following types of lending organizations are utilised for business needs.			
	G3a. Banks	81	79	3%
	G3b. Credit Unions	81	77	5%
	G3c. Business Development Organizations	73	73	1%
Businesses' Access to & Management of Capital	G4. Business capital is available to anyone committed to a venture, regardless of credit history or any other factors.	28	22	26%
	G5. People who are interested in expanding or starting a business are skilled in raising funds.	33	29	11%
	G6. Businesses have a firm understanding of financial management (cash flow, reading financial statements).	44	45	-3%
	G7. Costs of Capital (i.e. interest, application fees) of accessing capital are manageable for entrepreneurs.	49	48	3%
Types of Capital	G8a. Equity (formal investors)	50	56	-10%
	G8b. Angel (informal local investors)	37	44	-16%
	G8c. Grants	55	54	2%
	G8d. Revolving Loan Funds (i.e. lines of credit)	66	67	-1%
	G8e. Micro Loans (up to \$5,000)	65	73	-11%
	G8f. Loans \$5,000 to \$200,000	68	69	-2%
	G8g. Loans \$200,000 and above	56	54	3%
Section Score		52	46	11%

- The highest and lowest scoring questions in terms of the community average are shaded in green and pink, respectively, above
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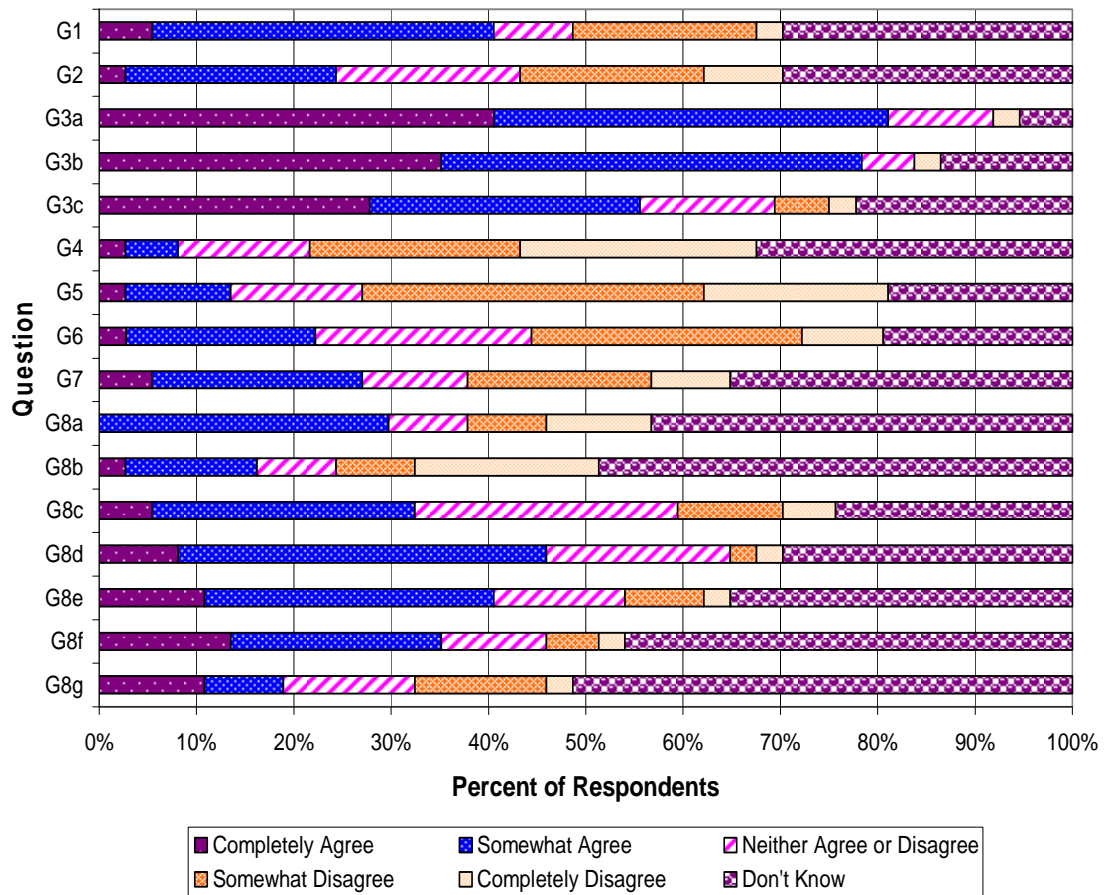


Figure 16: Capital and Funding Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** G3A (banks) at 81%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** G4 (business capital available) at 8%.
- **Significant level of “Don’t know” responses:** All except G3a (banks) and G3b (credit Unions).
- **Highly polarized responses (where there is a similar amount of agreement and disagreement):** G2 (Lenders understand entrepreneurs’ needs), G7 (costs of capital are manageable), G8g (loans \$200,000 and above).

Table 27: Capital and Funding Strengths and Improvements

Strengths		Improvements	
Variety of lending agencies	15	Community foundation or local investment fund	4
Strong provincial/ local natural resources economy	4	Getting outside investors to invest in businesses in the community	2
Community futures	2	Form a regional government	2
Community groups can access a variety of government administered funds and loans	1	Promote the tools and opportunities available to potential investors	2
NADC	1	Communicate the advantages of establishing a business in the area	1
There is a sharing of information with grant opportunities-- people will email you if they think it will fit in with your mandate	1	Formal institutions follow the oil field economics	1
Limited financial support from federal government	1	BDB available in Peace River	1
Generosity of donors for good causes	1	Not sure- I like bartering but no one has any extra time	1
Good financial history	1	Take a long term planning approach	1
Strong MLA	1	More research into the actual needs	1
Some wealthy people live here but they retire elsewhere	1	Lower application fees	1
Strong network of angel investors	1	Opportunity	1
Close knit community creates a friendlier and positive loan process	1	Easy understandable, clear guidelines	1
None - had to go to Ontario for funding-- only local support of a few local service companies	1	More loan funds for local CF	1
		Creation of a formal network to link entrepreneurs and investors	1
		Local banks or programs for revitalization and new business innovation	1
		Community members that have the financial means to invest should be encouraged to do so	1
		Oversee work done & follow-up to check quality of work as time passes	1

3.9 Section H: Infrastructure and Business Services (66 out of 100)

- ◆ Ability to provide necessary and high quality support services and infrastructure to business at reasonable costs, allowing businesses to be as competitive as possible.

This section and Section I (Communications and Connectivity) were the second highest scoring sections of the survey for Peace River, each with a score of 66 (17% and 23% above average, respectively). Appendix A, the list of Peace River’s 20 highest scoring questions, contains 4 questions from this section.

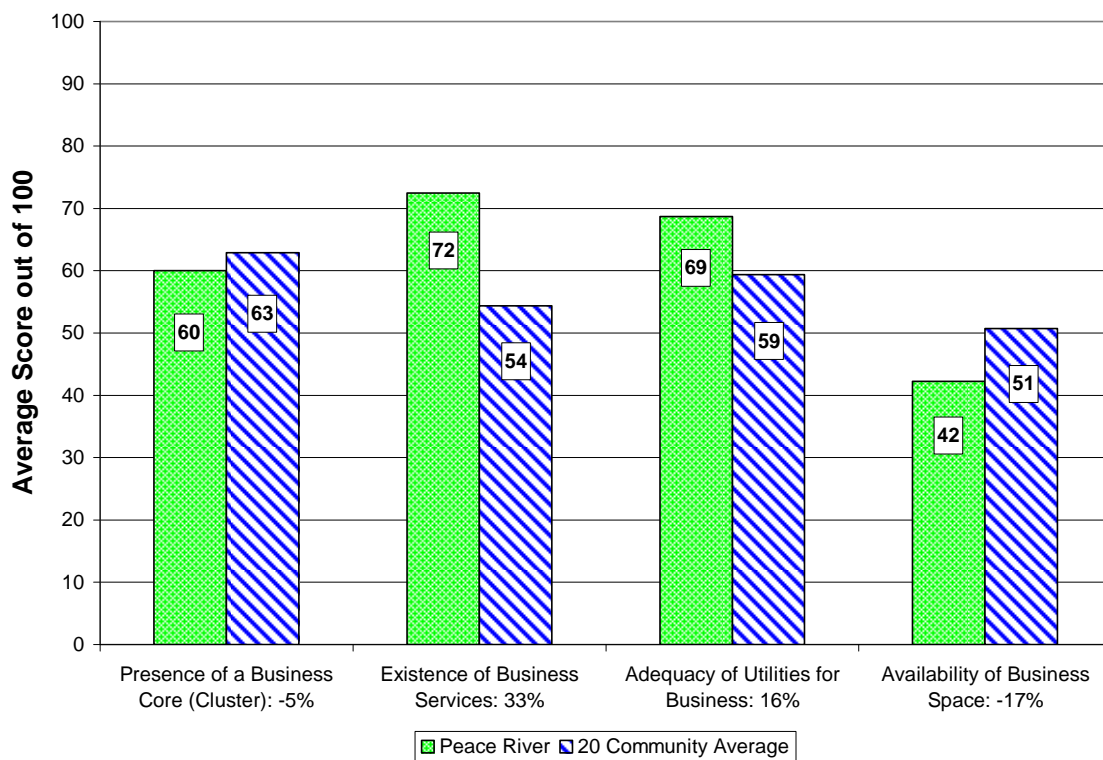


Figure 20: Infrastructure and Business Services Subsection Scores

- The ‘Existence of Business Services’ subsection was the highest scoring subsection of the section with a score of 72 (33% above average).
- The ‘Availability of Business Space’ subsection was the lowest scoring subsection with a score of 42 (17% below average).

Table 28: Infrastructure and Business Services Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Peace River	20 Community Average	% Difference
Presence of a Business Core (Cluster)	H1. There is a vibrant, active town centre or community core.	49	51	-4%
	H2. Parking near core business areas is accessible and adequate.	77	81	-5%
Existence of Business Services	H3. Business services (i.e. printers, web designers) are affordable and modern.	57	59	-3%
	H4. Professional services (i.e. legal, accounting) are easily accessible and affordable.			
	H4a. Banking	84	84	0%
	H4b. Insurance	82	83	-2%
	H4c. Freightling	71	68	5%
	H4d. Legal	78	66	18%
	H4e. Marketing	60	43	41%
Adequacy of Utilities for Business	H4f. Accounting	84	74	13%
	H4g. Graphic Design	55	51	8%
	H5. Existing infrastructure (i.e. power, water) is of good quality, well maintained, serviced, and modern.	77	72	7%
	H6. The planning of new physical infrastructure (i.e. roads, power, sewage) considers business needs.	62	60	3%
Availability of Business Space	H7. Telecommunication infrastructure is reliable, well maintained and modern.	66	61	7%
	H8. A variety of real estate is available to accommodate business expansion, attraction, or creation (i.e. home-based, town centre, industrial park).	44	55	-21%
	H9. Quality rental space is available to accommodate business expansion, attraction, or creation.	41	46	-11%
Section Score		66	56	17%

- The highest and lowest scores in terms of the community average are shaded in green and pink, respectively, above.
- The highest and lowest absolute scores are in **bold type**.

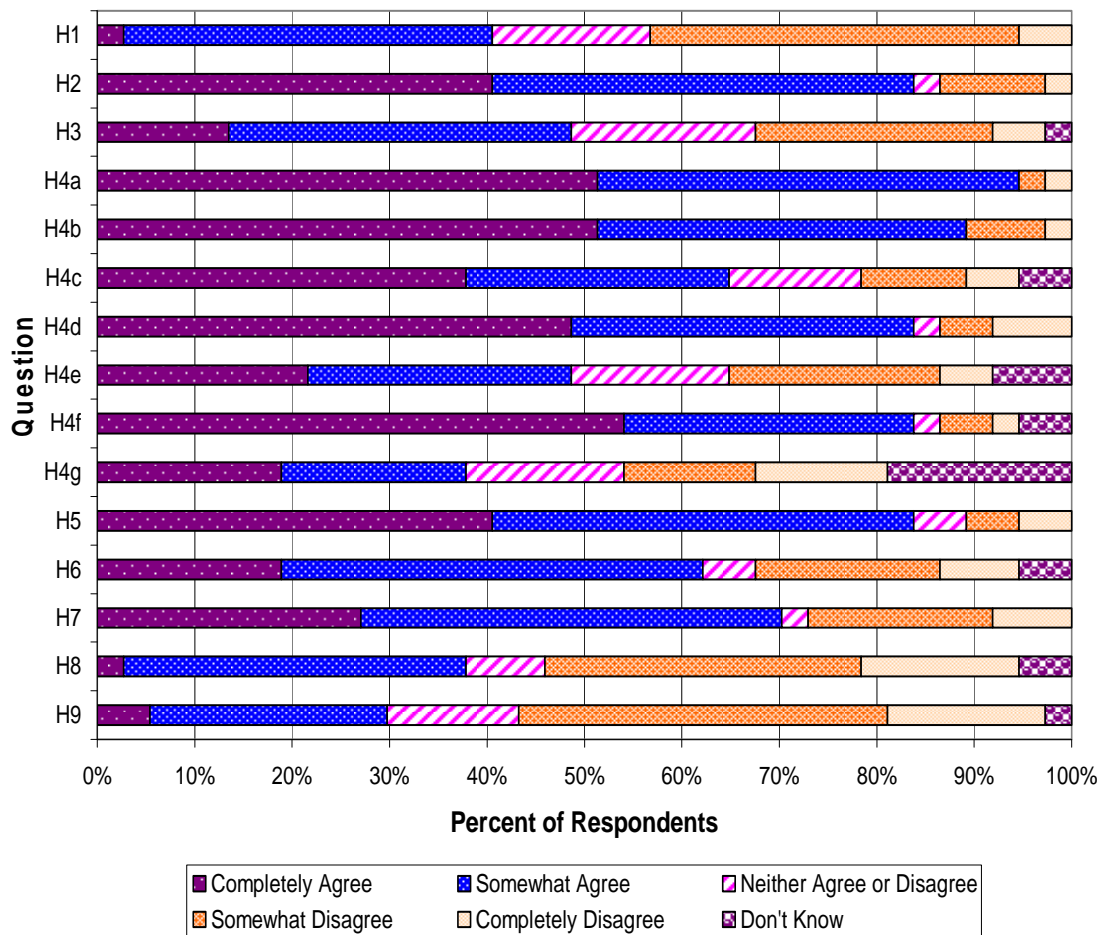


Figure 20: Infrastructure and Business Services Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** H4a (banking) at 95%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** H9 (rental space available) at 30%.
- **Significant level of “Don’t know” responses:** None
- **Highly polarized responses (where there is a similar amount of agreement and disagreement):** H1 (vibrant community core), H4g (graphic design services).

Table 29: Infrastructure and Business Services Strengths and Improvements

Strengths		Improvements	
Wide variety of services and retail	7	Continue to re-design/ revitalize downtown	6
Development on the west hill	3	Develop over-all plan for town development and highways with lots of public input	6
Number and size of the professional services in the community	2	Greater affordability for business growth	3
Working on town beautification	2	Expand outwards-- we are running out of room	2
Central in North Peace	1	Infrastructure (water/sewer) needs to be improved upon	2
Adequate	1	A safer bridge	1
Provincial government service centre	1	Improvement of regional hiking, sledding, trails	1
Free parking - excellent idea	1	Another skating rink	1
Trying to catch up with roads and bridges	1	Seniors housing both supported and independent	1
Major highway access	1	Improved access and services to property adjoining highway needs improvements	1
Very attractive main street	1	Transport to larger centres	1
Good roads	1	Support economic development with less red tape	1
Variety of land/expansion areas and councils willingness to look at zoning changes	1	More direction and development assistance	1
Variety	1	Use tax credits to revitalize downtown	1
Mega opportunity	1	Qualified and committed human resources	1
We still know each others names and faces	1	Easier access in terms of transportation for fixed income	1
The town gathers giving the green light to projects	1	Formal affordable flight services airport/airline	1
Community infrastructure is maintained favourably	1	More modern affordable services	1
Good surrounding	1	Cooperation with surrounding municipalities in cost sharing initiatives	1
Land and unutilized space for expansion	1	Open up some buildings for alternative uses (library, arts society, sports club centre)	1
Community Futures office	1	Fort McMurray access	1
Many local entrepreneurs committed to community	1	Could use more box stores	1
Single crossing over the Peace River for 200km each way	1	Better library	1
Infrastructure is fine and has been upgraded	1		

3.10 Section I: Communication and Connectivity (66 out of 100)

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

This section and Section H (Infrastructure and Business Services) were the second highest scoring sections of the survey for Peace River, each with a score of 66 (23% and 17% above average, respectively). Appendix A, the list of Peace River's 20 highest scoring questions, and Appendix C, the list of highest scoring questions relative to the community average, each contain 7 questions from this section.

Question I3a (public transportation) is the survey's highest score relative to the community average at 95% higher (Appendix C). Question I4d (train service) is the survey's lowest score relative to the community average at 72% lower (Appendix D).

This section contains the third, fourth and fifth highest scoring questions in the entire Peace River Survey (word of mouth, cell phone services, and basic internet services).

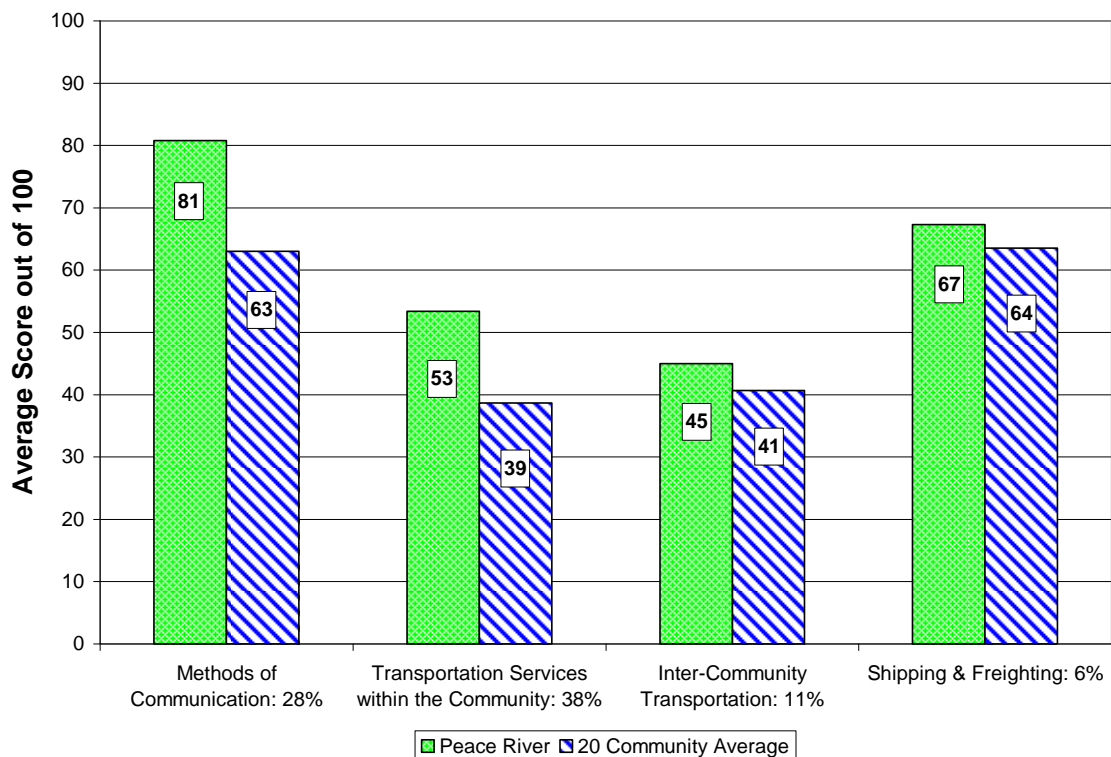


Figure 19: Communication and Connectivity Subsection Scores

- The 'Methods of Communication' subsection was the highest scoring of with a score of 81 (28% above average).
- 'Inter-Community Transportation' was the lowest scoring subsection, 11% above average with a score of 45.

Table 30: Communication and Connectivity Individual Question Scores

Score out of 100

Subsection	Question	Peace River	20-Community Average	% Diff.
Methods of Communication	I1. The following communications services are accessible and utilized.			
	I1a. Word of Mouth	88	90	-2%
	I1b. Local Newspaper	80	74	7%
	I1c. Local Radio	84	56	51%
	I1d. Overnight express mail service (nationally)	68	57	20%
	I1e. Mobile phone	87	68	28%
	I1f. Basic Internet Services	85	84	1%
	I1g. Fast or High-Speed Internet services	82	61	35%
	I1h. Video Conferencing Capabilities	72	48	50%
	I2. Quality communication services (phone, fax, high speed internet) are affordable to business.	78	73	7%
Transportation Services within the Community	I3. The following transportation services are accessible and utilised within the community.			
	I3a. Public Transportation	67	34	95%
	I3b. Taxi Service	63	41	54%
	I3c. Special transportation services (i.e. Seniors, people with disabilities)	55	55	1%
Inter-Community Transportation	I4. The following transportation services are available between communities.			
	I4a. Air (commercial)	38	26	43%
	I4b. Air (private)	53	47	14%
	I4c. Bus	83	69	20%
Freighting	I4d. Train	6	20	-72%
	I5. Main transportation and freight routes between communities are safe, well maintained and well serviced.	66	69	-4%
	I6. Regular and frequent freight to major centres is accessible and utilised.	72	71	1%

17. Freight services into and out of the community are affordable to businesses.	63	47	34%
Section Score	66	54	23%

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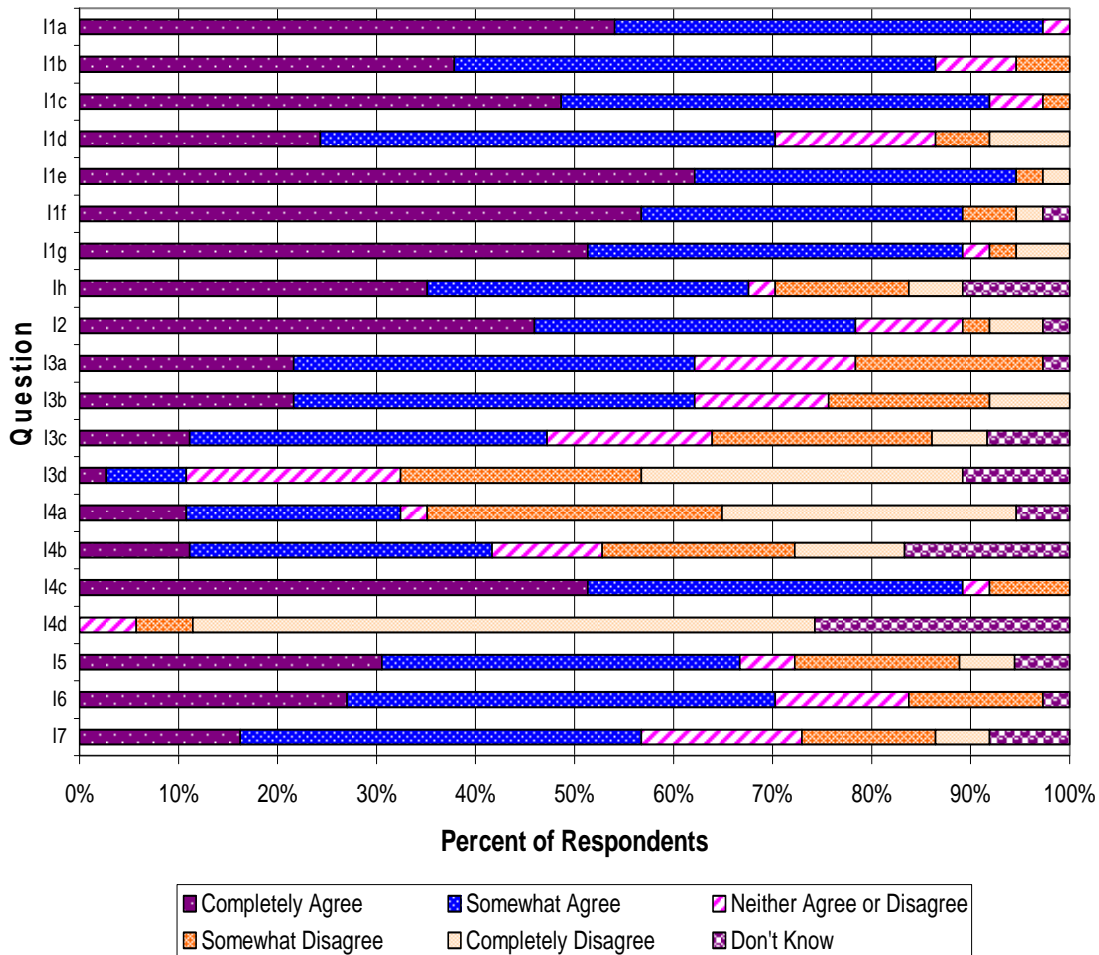


Figure 20: Communication and Connectivity Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** 11a (communication by word of mouth) at 97%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** 14d (train between communities) at 0%.

- **Significant level of “Don’t know” responses:** I4d (train between communities) at 26%
- **Highly polarized responses (where there is a similar amount of agreement and disagreement):** I4b (private air services)

Table 31: Communication and Connectivity Strengths and Improvements

Strengths		Improvements	
Good telecommunications access -- high speed, cell phone	15	Affordable airline providers and service	14
Word of mouth	4	Increased high speed internet and investment in telecommunications	5
All roads to major centres well maintained	3	Reliable public transport and better schedules	3
Radio station	2	Better taxi systems, clean taxis	2
Good local/about town ways of staying in touch	1	Cell service just outside the town 10-50 k is very patchy)	1
Located on a major highway to Yellowknife	1	Small town so relies on ownership of personal vehicles	1
We can really get the word out about almost any topic, new business, etc	1	More transportation and accessibility for the young and the elderly	1
Interagency meetings	1	Peace River should be a wifi town that is free/accessible to all	1
Business men's meeting	1	Video conferencing	1
Great newspaper and radio station	1	Competition for TELUS	1
People willing to share	1	An email fan out list that serves groups of mutual interest	1
Small size ensures no barriers to face to face	1	Twin the highway bridge to improve traffic	1
Peace River is the hub of the region and points north	1	Solve the two town syndrome (downtown, West Hill)	1
Our openness and willingness to share our resources	1	Human and financial resources to maintain existing services	1
Great local news coverage and promotion	1	More meetings like this (time, who has time)	1
		Improved access to and use of potential for videoconferencing, web marketing, etc.	1
		Peace River needs to advertise its assets south	1
		More informal opportunities to share information and participate in decisions that will affect the community	1
		More modern, affordable services which will connect us to other communities	1

3.11 Section J: Markets and Marketing (46 out of 100)

- ◆ Ability of business to capture and expand markets, both locally, regionally, and outside the region, thus keeping and building local wealth.

The Markets and Marketing section ranked second to last in Peace River’s scores, with a score of 48 (5% below the community average). Appendix B (lowest scoring questions) and Appendix D (greatest negative deviation from the community average) both contain three questions from this section.

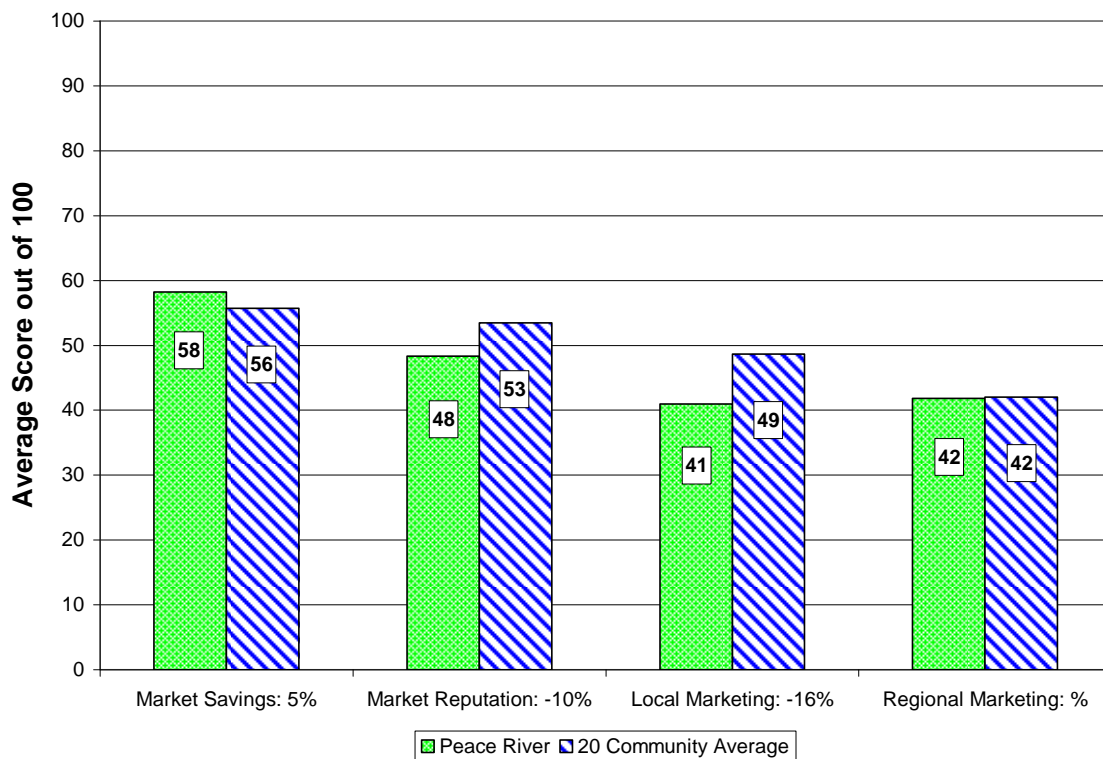


Figure 21: Markets and Marketing Subsection Scores

- The ‘Market Savings’ subsection was the highest scoring subsection with a score of 58 (5% above average).
- The ‘Local Marketing’ subsection was the lowest scoring subsection with a score of 41 (16% below average).

Table 32: Markets and Marketing Individual Question Scores

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Peace River	20 Community Average	% Difference
Market Saviness	J1. Businesses have a good understanding of their customers and their purchasing behaviour.	70	62	13%
	J2. Business people have knowledge and an awareness of the global economy and market trends, and its relevance to local markets.	61	54	14%
	J3. Local businesses demonstrate creativity and innovation in seeking new customers, both locally and outside of the area.	46	52	-13%
Market Reputation	J4. The community has a reputation for high quality products and/or services	53	55	-4%
	J5. The community has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image.	34	44	-22%
	J6. People from outside the community see it as a desirable place to live.	63	66	-4%
Local Marketing	J7. Products and services are reasonably priced in comparison to regional and city competitors	44	56	-22%
	J8. People prefer to purchase local products and services before those from out-of-area.	39	42	-9%
Regional Marketing	J9. Businesses in the community / region market their products and services as a group.	34	31	9%
	J10. Locally developed goods and services are marketed both in the community and in other regions.	52	56	-7%
Section Score		48	51	-5%

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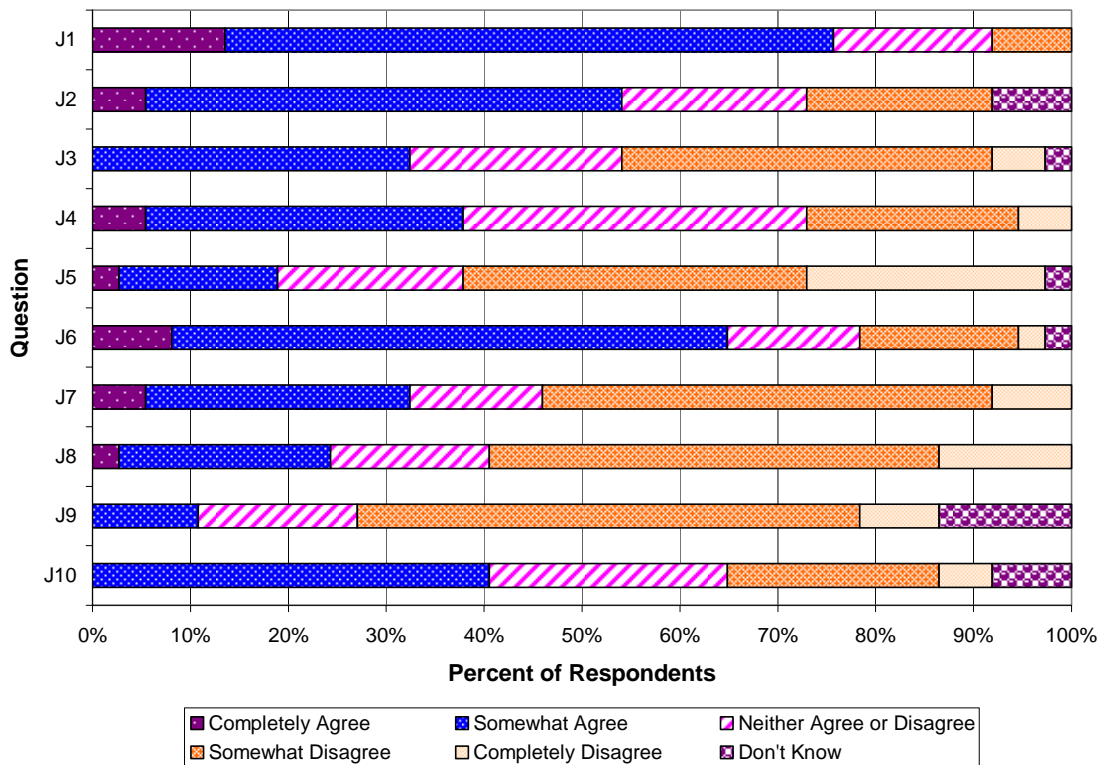


Figure 22: Markets and Marketing Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** J1 (businesses understand their customers) at 67%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** J9 (group marketing) at 11%.
- **Significant level of “Don’t know” responses:** None
- **Highly polarized responses (where there is a similar amount of agreement and disagreement):** None

Table 33: Markets and Marketing Strengths and Improvements

Strengths		Improvements	
Central location-- hub of the north	7	Develop a marketing body to market products and services outside the area	10
Very good variety of products	4	Create a Peace River brand or image	8
Community does a good job of marketing the quality of life and beauty	2	Joint marketing	4
Radio station	2	Buy local program for products and services	3
Great people with really good ideas and products	2	Develop tourism potential	1
Good local examples/mentors to emulate	2	Bring more businesses, make it easier to support local	1
Local marketing agency and printing company	2	Better awareness by community members of local products and or services	1
Local willingness to buy local	2	Business to business connection meetings	1
Relative isolation great opportunity to brand	2	Opportunities for others to learn from these people	1
Bell marketing	1	When the big guys start coming into town you have to worry about our little guys	1
Wide variety of services are offered	1	Increased focus on local markets	1
New businesses are very welcomed by the community	1	More competitive pricing in basic necessities	1
We have marvellous agriculture products - milk, honey, grains, market garden produce	1	Need more customer value added products manufactured here-- diversify away from commodities	1
Mostly commodity driven	1	More accurate reporting of news in the local paper - poor at present	1
Internet and local newspaper.	1	Customer service and quality of service need to be improved	1
We have a little of everything--they just need to work together	1	Continued competition	1
Competition results in innovative marketing	1	Honesty	1
Follow up service, pick and choose spin the wheel of fortune and hope for the best	1	Close containers depot	1
Farming, land and resources undeveloped	1	Successful businessmen could share their knowledge with new entrepreneurs	1
Businesses ability to adapt and change	1		
Good distribution	1		

Appendix A: Top 20 Highest Scoring Questions

Question	Score out of 100		
	Peace River	20-Community Average	% Difference
B2. There are quality elementary and secondary schools in the community.	90	81	11%
B6. The community is physically beautiful, and environmentally safe (i.e. pollution, water quality).	89	86	3%
I1a. Word of Mouth is utilized.	88	90	-2%
I1e. Mobile phone services are accessible and utilized.	87	68	28%
I1f. Basic Internet Services are accessible and utilized.	85	84	1%
H4a. Banking services are easily accessible and affordable.	84	84	0%
I1c. Local Radio is accessible and utilized.	84	56	51%
B11. Successful businesses want to remain in the community.	84	83	1%
H4f. Accounting services are easily accessible and affordable.	84	74	13%
I4c. Bus services are available between communities.	83	69	20%
H4b. Insurance services are easily accessible and affordable.	82	83	-2%
I1g. High speed Internet services are accessible and utilized.	82	61	35%
G3b. Credit Unions are utilized for business needs.	81	77	5%
G3a. Banks are utilized for business needs.	81	79	3%
I1b. Local Newspapers are accessible and utilized.	80	74	7%
F1. The governing body (city council, village council, or area director) recognizes that businesses are important and valuable for the development of the community	79	76	5%
I2. Quality communication services (phone, fax, high speed internet) are affordable to business.	78	73	7%
B5. There is a strong community identity, and there are plentiful and varying opportunities for involvement (i.e. arts, athletics, politics, church groups).	78	70	11%
B10. The community is a safe place to live.	78	90	-13%
H4d. Legal services are easily accessible and affordable.	78	66	18%

Appendix B: Bottom 20 Lowest Scoring Questions

Question	Score out of 100		
	Peace River	20-Community Average	% Diff.
I4d. Train services are available between communities.	6	20	-72%
C3. There is an entrepreneurial development program in elementary and secondary schools (K-12).	22	34	-36%
D7. Skilled and knowledgeable scientists and researchers do academic and/or practical work in my community or region (Not necessarily about the region).	22	29	-23%
C1i. University programs are utilized.	23	33	-28%
D6. Businesses that do research or research facilities are geographically concentrated (clustered) and interact with each other.	28	33	-16%
G4. Business capital is available to anyone committed to a venture, regardless of credit history or any other factors	28	22	26%
I3d. Carpooling system is accessible and utilized within the community.	29	25	16%
D8. There are formal and informal forums (Conferences, Workshops) on technology and technology applications	29	29	0%
C8. A pool of skilled and trained labour is available to local businesses.	30	34	-13%
G5. People who are interested in expanding or starting a business are skilled in raising funds	33	29	11%
J9. Businesses in the community /region jointly market their products and services	34	31	9%
J5. The community has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image	34	44	-22%
F8c. Mentoring programs and services assisting business people are utilized.	34	42	-18%
F9. Business development programs are effective and efficient, and do not duplicate each other.	36	42	-15%
G8b. Angel funds (informal local investors) are accessible to expand or start a business.	37	44	-16%
A9. A pool of motivated employees is available to meet business needs.	38	46	-19%
I4a. Air (commercial) services are available between communities.	38	26	43%
J8. People prefer to purchase local products and services before those from out-of-area.	39	42	-9%
H9. Quality commercial rental space is available to accommodate business expansion, attraction, or creation.	41	46	-11%
C7. The education and business communities work together to provide convenient training	41	42	-1%

Appendix C: Top 20 Highest Positive Deviation from the 20-community Average

Question	Score out of 100		% Diff.
	Peace River	20 Community Average	
I3a. Public Transportation services are accessible and utilized within the community.	67	34	95%
C1h. College programs are utilized.	53	33	61%
I3b. Taxi Services are accessible and utilized within the community.	63	41	54%
I1c. Local Radio is accessible and utilized.	84	56	51%
I1h. Video Conferencing Capabilities are accessible and utilized.	72	48	50%
I4a. Air (commercial) services are available between communities.	38	26	43%
H4e. Marketing services are easily accessible and affordable.	60	43	41%
I1g. High speed Internet services are accessible and utilized.	82	61	35%
C1j. Professional Development programs (i.e. certification sessions) are utilized.	49	37	34%
I7. Shipping and freight services into and out of the community are affordable to business.	63	47	34%
B14. There is a diversity of quality and affordable services (i.e. dry-cleaning, photo developing, gas station).	70	53	33%
E3. Qualified and affordable supervisors and managers (and management services) are available to small business	58	44	31%
I1e. Mobile phone services are accessible and utilized.	87	68	28%
C1c. Advanced business skill development programs (i.e. financial planning, marketing, accounting, communication) are utilized.	54	42	27%
G4. Business capital is available to anyone committed to a venture, regardless of credit history or any other factors	28	22	26%
E4. There are adequate opportunities (informal and formal) where business people and entrepreneurs can network with each other.	69	56	24%
E7. There are opportunities for small business to learn and develop management and leadership skills	53	43	24%
B3. There is an educational organization in the area that offers post-secondary programs and continuing education opportunities.	67	55	22%
B4. High quality events (i.e. festivals, concerts, movies) catering to a range of ages take place regularly in or close to the community.	74	61	21%
G1. Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas	58	48	20%

Appendix D: Bottom 20 Largest Negative Deviation from the 20-community Average

Question	Score out of 100		
	Peace River	20 Community Average	% Difference
I4d. Train services are available between communities.	6	20	-72%
C3. There is an entrepreneurial development program in elementary and secondary schools (K-12).	22	34	-36%
C1i. University programs are utilized.	23	33	-28%
B13. Quality residential real estate opportunities (both purchase and rental) are available and affordable.	46	60	-23%
D7. Skilled and knowledgeable scientists and researchers do academic and/or practical work in my community or region (Not necessarily about the region).	22	29	-23%
J5. The community has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image	34	44	-22%
J7. Products and services are reasonably priced in comparison to regional, and big city competitors	44	56	-22%
H8. A variety of real estate is available to accommodate business expansion, attraction, or creation.	44	55	-21%
A2. The community is facing an economic crisis.	47	59	-19%
A9. A pool of motivated employees is available to meet business needs.	38	46	-19%
F8c. Mentoring programs and services assisting business people are utilized.	34	42	-18%
D6. Businesses that do research or research facilities are geographically concentrated (clustered) and interact with each other.	28	33	-16%
G8b. Angel funds (informal local investors) are accessible to expand or start a business.	37	44	-16%
F9. Business development programs are effective and efficient, and do not duplicate each other.	36	42	-15%
B10. The community is a safe place to live.	78	90	-13%
C8. A pool of skilled and trained labour is available to local businesses.	30	34	-13%
J3. Local businesses demonstrate creativity and innovation in seeking new customers, both locally and outside of the area.	46	52	-13%
F6. Local regulations, policies, rules, bylaws and zoning are easily understood by business people making it easy/reasonable for businesses to expand or start up.	43	48	-12%
H9. Quality commercial rental space is available to accommodate business expansion, attraction, or creation.	41	46	-11%

G8e. Micro Loans (up to \$5,000) are accessible to expand or start a business.	65	73	-11%
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Appendix E: The “Gut Check 12”

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

Question	Score out of 100		
	Peace River	20 Community Average	% Diff.
A2. The community is facing an economic crisis.	47	59	-19%
B7. Young adults (25-34) consider the community a desirable place to live.	55	49	13%
B11. Successful businesses want to remain in the community.	84	83	1%
C7. The education and business communities work together to provide convenient training	41	42	-1%
C11. Citizens are motivated to learn new skills and to develop existing ones.	48	50	-5%
F2. The governing body is committed to recruiting or attracting businesses to the community, and may use strategies or incentives to do so.	61	58	4%
F3. The governing body is committed to help existing businesses or creating new businesses through policy and action.	52	50	5%
G5. People who are interested in expanding or starting a business are skilled in raising funds	33	29	11%
H1. There is a vibrant, active downtown area or community core.	49	51	-4%
J5. The community has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image	34	44	-22%
J6. People from outside the community see it as a desirable place to live.	63	66	-4%
J8. People prefer to purchase local products and services before those from out-of-area.	39	42	-9%

Appendix F: Focus Group Results

Question One: What makes this community a great place to do business in?

	Count
Regional service centre	4
Friendly small town atmosphere	4
Rich in natural resources	4
Regional government centre	2
Networking on individual basis (word of mouth)	2
Personal knowledge and trust of business owners and operators	2
Engaged community groups (Rotary, youth (Ground Level), Senior's drop-in, Chamber, Aboriginal Interagency, pond hockey, Carnival, Peacefest)	2
Capability of providing further education and employer willingness to support education initiatives	2
Economic diversity	1
Unique agricultural opportunity - longer days, high quality soils	1
Safe community	1
Major corridor to the north	1
Chamber of commerce tradeshow	1
Local aboriginal presence as a stimulus to the economy of town	1
Improved social development sphere for aboriginal population	1
Protective action taken to maintain our natural resources	1
Pay more attention to business and related positions	1
Help each other out	1
Labour pool is improving - availability of trained employees	1
Downturn has provided opportunities for further education	1
Massive potential development	1
Supportive local government (open to business, doing active planning and visioning)	1
Good place to raise a family (school, churches, recreational opportunities river, ski hill, walking trail)	1
Under utilized opportunity	1
Entrée into global economy	1
No business tax (municipal)	1
Business support network - community futures, business link, AFSC, commercial banks	1
Commercial space available	1

Provincial government support in the community	1
Financially stable	1
Access to wilderness, hunt, skidoo	1
Geography	1
Scenery	1

Question Two: What changes can be made to help business in your community?

	Count
Community business website and marketing strategies	5
Encouragement, incentives for businesses	5
Entrepreneurial training in schools	5
Affordable/accessible activities, places to go and things to go for youth	3
Mentoring program (innovation, marketing, retailing)	2
Speciality shops	2
New multipurpose recreational auditorium with acoustics	1
Improve tourism - maximize on our geography	1
Local commercial financing	1
Child care facilities	1
Incubator for small business	1
One stop Ed stop	1
Sustainability planning	1
Economic development officer	1
Job fairs/career fairs	1
Bowling alley	1
Encouraging youth to be engaged in planning for community development	1
Big events (peace fest, pow wow)	1
Involve artists/artisans, expand	1
Staffing - training issues with regard to employees	1
Training programs – life-skills	1
Foreign workers program	1
Networking opportunities	1
Access to capital	1
More businesses	1
Continue momentum of revitalization	1
Gap analysis - downtown	1
Attract more citizens	1
Attract more visitors	1
Buy local - service advantages, promote advantages, local support	1

More post secondary education	1
Professional continuity in Chamber office - training availability, program	1
Business - mini course/workshop to help use products	1
Cross generation communication opportunities	1
2nd bridge	1
Joint advertising to region	1
Regional rec facilities (hiking, skiing)	1
Community futures - more advertising - how do people find them	1
Welcome packages	1
Business event coordinator (with the town)	1
Business need to come together and approach new projects as a joint community	1
Community support - split the chamber fee for your 1st year (50% maybe)	1
Trade fairs, business fairs	1
Job corner (employment office, temp agency)	1

Appendix G: Community Profile Results

Name 3 words, phrases or adjectives that best describe your community

Positive

	Count
Beautiful, scenic, pretty	25
Friendly	11
Growing	6
Peaceful	5
Vibrant	4
Diverse	3
Active	3
Safe	2
Stable	2
Clean	2
Regional centre	2
Passionate	1
Resilient	1
Evolving	1
Enthusiastic	1
Picturesque	1
If you have money, you are welcome	1
Small (in a good way)	1
Social	1
Good small town feel	1
Creative	1

Tourism	1
Energetic	1
Pristine	1
Quiet and close knit	1
Historical	1
On the cusp of major economic growth	1
Panoramic	1
Some solid attributes	1
Prosperous	1
Innovative	1
Close	1
Unique	1
Quiet not dynamic progress	1
Community spirit	1
Physically active	1
Lots of opportunities	1
Uncrowded	1
Connected	1
Good people	1
Great opportunity for employment	1

Neutral

	Count
Isolated	3
Busy	1
Changing	1
Quiet	1
Old age	1

Negative

	Count
Stagnant	1
Disconnected	1
Judgmental	1
Unprepared for change	1
Not teen friendly	1
Behind the times	1
Some shortcomings exist	1

1. What are the 3 greatest strengths / assets of your community?

	Count
Beautiful river valley location	20
Full range of services and facilities	7
Friendly, supportive people	6
People	6
Schools	4
Many volunteers for community projects	3
Diverse economy	3
Community networks	3
Recreational activities	3
Strong local government	2
Location	2
Hard working people	2
Active, involved energetic people	2
Hub for the North Peace area	2
Sense of community	2
Young business community, active arts and recreation communities	1
Women's shelter	1
Welcoming	1
Water	1
Very vibrant with town festivals	1
Very sport driven for youth	1
Tourism - land mass	1
The variety of cultural backgrounds to draw upon for traditions and knowledge	1
The history	1
Support of community futures funds	1
Successful business people generous to a variety of areas	1
Businessmen groups	1
Strong willed business community	1
Starting to have more community activities to participate in	1
Remote enough to be unique, but not out of touch	1
Reasonable level of education / training within the population	1
Reasonable cost of living	1
Rapid growth	1
Proximity to nature	1
Pleasant place to live	1
Opportunity for new business	1
On a major artery - highway and water source	1
Oil business	1
Mix of population - young and old, new and long term	1
Low unemployment	1

Highway through community	1
Good place to raise a family good schools, recreation opportunities	1
Good newspaper and radio station	1
Good Chamber of commerce	1
Forward thinking	1
Excellent service from local businesses	1
Easy access by road or plane	1
Distance from large centre (creates a different community feel/can-do)	1
Creativity/imagination	1
Community leadership (elected and volunteer)	1
Community building	1
Community	1
Commitment (focus)	1
Charitable	1
Arts (Drama)	1
Access to natural resources and opportunities for tourism	1
Aboriginal talent	1
A variety of interests/organizations to draw employers/employees with young families	1
School partnerships	1
Our youth, if we can keep them here	1
Long-term steady growth	1
Increased amount of retail services	1

2. What are 3 things that could improve your community?

	Count
More activities for youth/ retention of youth	7
Regional cooperation between municipalities	7
Town beautification and cleanliness	6
Affordable housing	5
Additional sport/rec facilities	4
Diversified economy	3
More post secondary education	3
Improved access to medical care	3
Better use of our airport	3
Arts centre, concerts, theatre	3
More retail/ restaurants	3
Communication between council and citizens	2
More industry	2
Welcoming attitude	2
A bowling alley	2
Attract more good employees	2

Infrastructure	1
Better connections between youth (13-18yr olds) and the business community	1
Social programs	1
Child care for younger families working	1
Dynamic influx of employers	1
Provide amenities for new businesses more quickly	1
Communication from town office to businesses	1
More community activities (dances?)	1
Recognition of the existence of aboriginal members of the community	1
Youth friendly training and acceptance	1
A summer folk festival	1
More tourism based on the river	1
Leadership /cooperation amongst the businesses	1
A larger variety of businesses that promote the arts	1
Tax concession for revitalization of business or community facilities	1
The theatre (movie)	1
Investment	1
Regionalization of all surrounding municipalities	1
Tourism venues promoted	1
More population	1
Help ordinary people rather than industry	1
Increased opportunities for aboriginal people	1
Retain or attract more young people (and retired people)	1
Economic development officer to attract business and expansion	1
Entrepreneurial mentoring/support for youth	1
No more them and us attitudes	1
A second driving bridge across the river	1
Senior housing - assisted living	1
Partnership marketing of small business (not just hospitality and tourism)	1
Warmer weather	1
Community foundation to support	1
Green energy strategy (no nuclear)	1
Promote the area	1
Support for others	1
Family driven activities	1
More transitional housing for active seniors to keep them here	1
User friendly access to the river for recreation	1
Stores to be more competitive with Grande Prairie	1
More box stores	1
Community theme	1
Attention given to the environment	1
Worry less about making money	1
Social development that will benefit aboriginal people	1
Male shelter as hostel	1
Be more welcoming and inclusive, particularly for aboriginal people	1
Improved architecture	1
Town square/gathering centre to host events	1

Highway twinned from Valleyview to Peace River	1
Positive attitude	1
Repatriation of commercial retail space to local ownership	1
A better system of advertising community events	1
Increased business investment	1
Social opportunities	1
Local shopping programs	1
Money for improvements	1
Spotlight on artisans	1

3. What is the most important reason why you live in Peace River?

	Count
Employment/ Business/ Income	15
Small town quality of life	10
Family	8
Close to nature	4
Friendly people	3
People	2
Location in the north	2
Friends	2
Safe	2
Children do well here	1
I have a role in many organizations, making it a great place to live	1
Opportunities for work in educational/music field	1
Great tourist potential	1
Possibilities	1
Recreation potential	1
Raised my children here, work here, and a leader in my community	1
It is my home, where I belong	1
Love the land and farming	1
Relative isolation yet relatively close to amenities	1

4. What makes your community unique in contrast to other communities? (list up to 3)

	Count
Beautiful setting in river valley	27
History	5
Location in northern rural wilderness	4

Potential, opportunity, possibility re work and business	4
Ski hill right in town	3
Close to nature ("deer in town, beavers in river")	2
Variety in types of schools, jobs, cultural/artistic, sports, activities	2
Young vibrant community	2
Good number of professionals	2
Caring people	2
Fitness opportunities	2
Passionate	1
Diversity of residents	1
Support for entrepreneurial investment (but you must know someone who knows someone)	1
Opportunity for growth (land mass)	1
Good schools	1
Leadership	1
River frontage	1
Progressive	1
Recreational facilities - pond hockey	1
The river allows for specific activities	1
Culture	1
A subsidized transit system	1
Employment based on experience and not always education	1
Foot paths, pool	1
The family attitude of our people	1
Post secondary institution	1
History of aboriginal and non aboriginal stories	1
Friends	1
Northern mentality (pioneer spirit, rugged, independent)	1
The access to the Peace River	1
Strong retail sector	1
We are far from major centre	1
Airport	1
Mixed economic base, agriculture, oil/gas, forestry	1
So many smaller communities around Peace River with distinct languages and cultures	1
Peacefest	1
Solid foundation of doctors in the community	1
The motivation for change	1
Primary service centre between Grande Prairie/Edmonton and Yellowknife	1
Sports teams oriented	1
Large rural tracks of land	1
Aboriginal Interagency	1
Size	1
Lots of people who came for 2 years and stay for up to 30	1
Good people	1
The camaraderie of the members of the community, young and old	1

5. What are the untapped opportunities in your community? (List up to 3)

	Count
Tourism development	8
Place for youth to gather (youth centre, etc.)	6
The river - for sports, leisure, travel, photography, business, entertainment	6
Bowling alley	4
Post secondary education	2
Support the arts and local talent	2
Support youth entrepreneurs	2
Additional rec facilities	1
Places for young adults to gather	1
Elders hostel	1
The national heritage status of the Peace River museum (houses the Sir Alexander Mackenzie collection)	1
Senior living accommodation - transition house from adult subdivision to long term care	1
Not much to do besides bar type events	1
Community/business opportunity: rooming house for young and older, single people	1
Mountain bike/hiking paths in hills	1
Continual music and other night events	1
Designated quad/snowmobiling trails	1
Dance arbour for aboriginal events to showcase aboriginal culture to the broader community	1
Ski hill	1
A summer festival	1
Host major events	1
Theatre festival	1
Regular place for local artists to display and sell their work	1
Community centre (arts, libraries, etc) - more opportunities under one roof	1
Require large scale auditorium and gymnasium for indoor large scale activities	1
Manufacturing instead of mainly extractive industry	1
Low cost housing to support the retail sector work force requirements	1
Need things for young parents (18-30)	1
Additional shopping	1
Homeless shelter	1
Music centre	1
Needs variety in restaurants and shopping	1
Aboriginal history	1
Youth can't claim anything as their own	1
Downtown - unique	1
Ski hill could host sports events	1

An addiction centre that serves the north and works with families as a whole	
Agricultural tourism	
Create an identity in Alberta	
Investment opportunities	

6. What is the one thing you most proud of in your community?

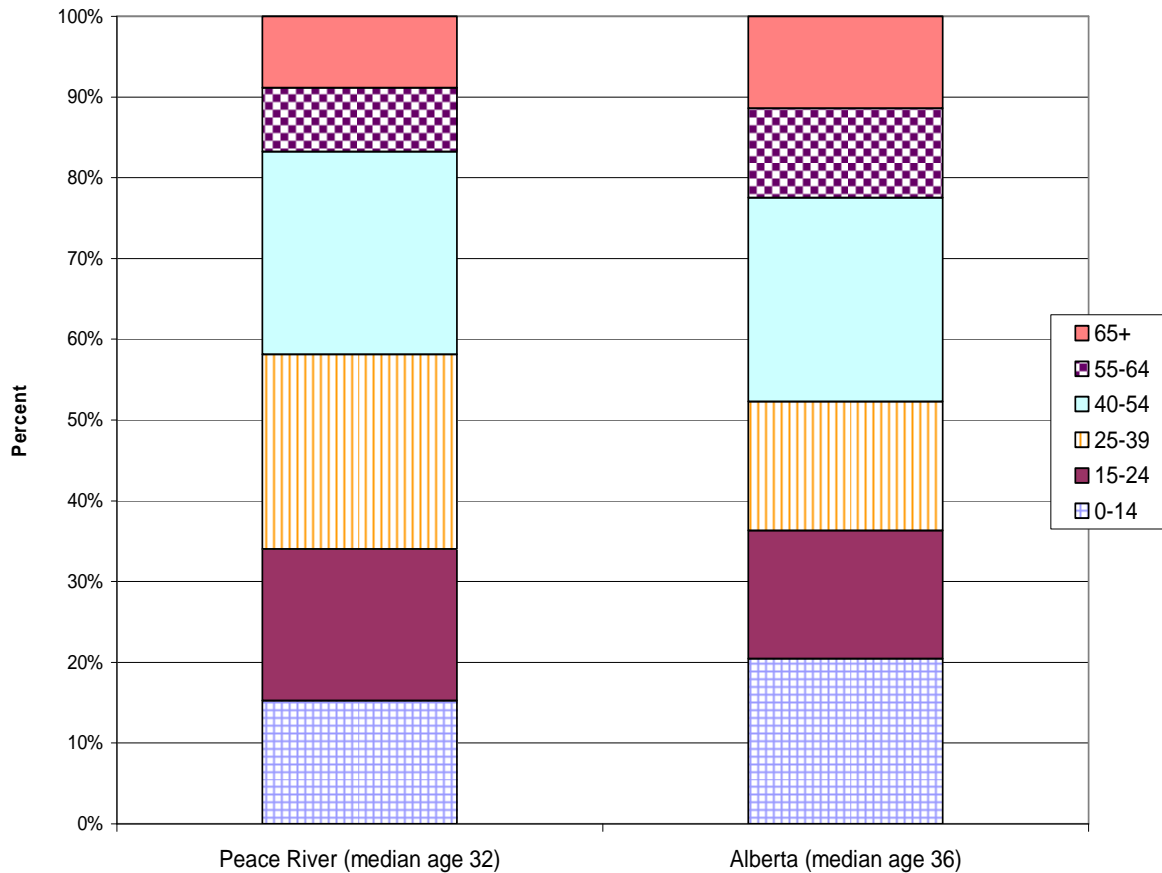
	Count
Natural beauty of the river and valley	14
Ability to work together and support each other	4
Caring people	3
Hospitable and welcoming	2
The great number of community activities	2
Peace Fest	
Neighbour closeness	
Local radio station	
The youth	
Its my home and it always feels welcoming	
Ability to survive and not give up	
My work in the aboriginal sector	
Aboriginal awareness in the schools and some agency support	
Health care	
Many individuals have taken their ideas and built them up to something strong, be it sports, business, culture, education, etc.	
Good education opportunities	
The people	
Home to active arts and recreational groups which add value to life	
The recent moves by the town council to bring the region together	
Being a part of a strong network	

Appendix H: Phase 1 Session Attendance

Marty O'Byrne
Frank Light
Dave Matilpi
Dave Desjardins
David Martin
Gayle Walton
Dennis Whitford
Richard Walisser
Kevin Delorie
Randy Hodgkinson
Kiley Corrigan
Petrina Dubo
Tracey Zweifel
Stefan Felsing
Brent Lavergne
Rachel Mackenzie
Dianne Lavoie
Carol Edwards
Skyla Mody
Geoff Milligan
Layne Gardner
Albert Cooper
Berry Heinen
Tricia Frank
Lori Connellan
Maxine Fournier
Stephen Woodburn

Zoe Nath
Cole George
Wanda Laurin
Gayle Jensen
Robert Plowman
Natalie Wild
Megan Cairns
Neil Vermeulen
Joan Goldhawk
Romeo Lavoie
Ken Zaitsoff
Carol Van Slyke
John Haney
Koos Bos
Dave Willox
Norma MacQuarrie
Leslie Ayre-Jaschke
Joanne Lavoie
Toni Antonietti
Joan Pullen
Brenda Brochu
Brent Taylor

Appendix I: Peace River Community Profile -- Age Distribution



Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

Appendix J: Peace River Community Profile—Labour Force Distribution

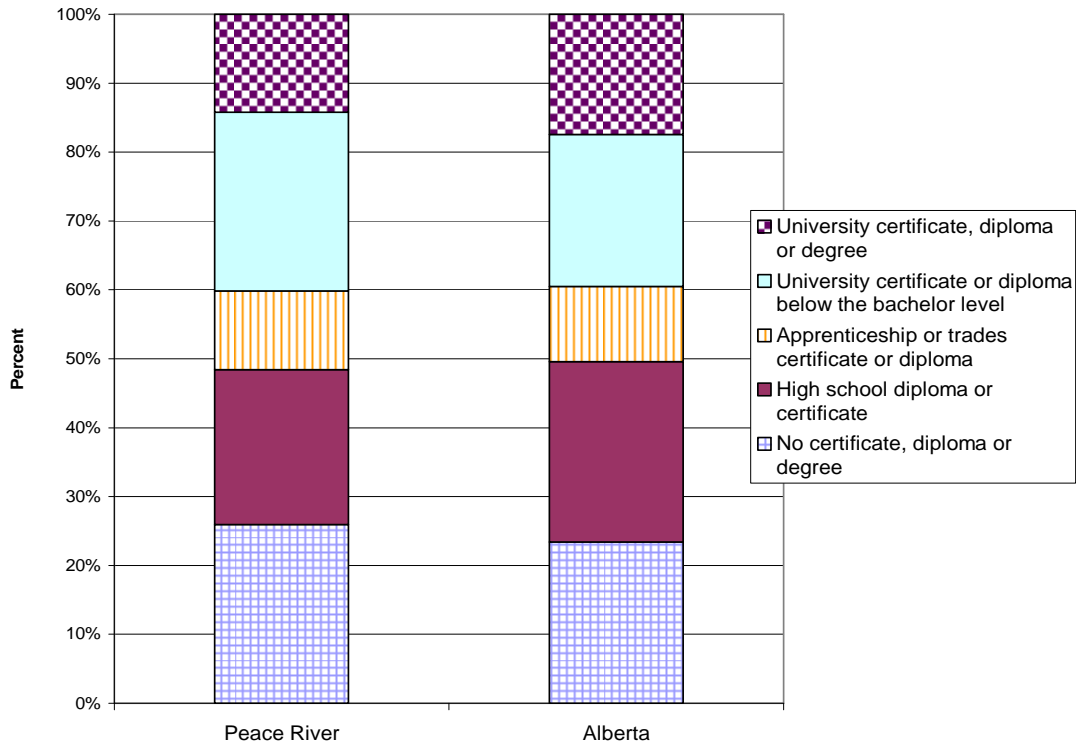
Top 5 Industries of Employment by Participation

Peace River		Alberta	
Business services	16%	Business Services	18%
Retail	15%	Agriculture and resources	12%
Agriculture and resources	11%	Retail	11%
Health and social services	10%	Health and social services	9%

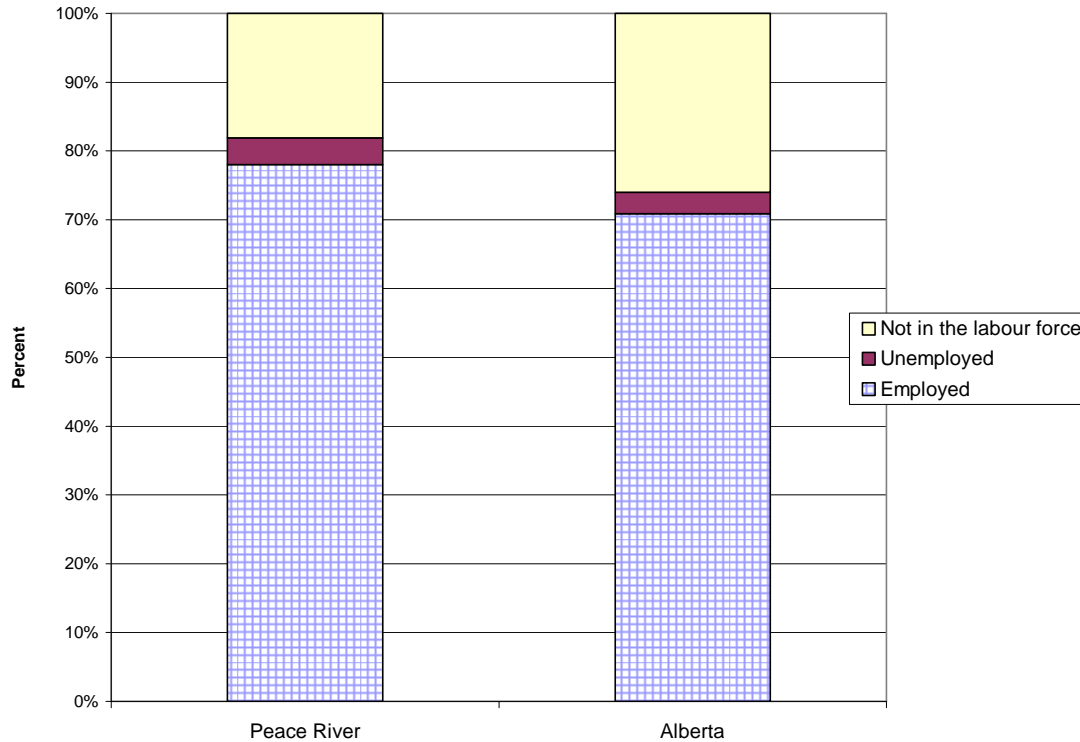
Education	8%	Construction	9%
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Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

Appendix K: Peace River Community Profile—Educational attainment, population over 15



Appendix L: Peace River Community Profile—Labour Force Distribution



Appendix M: Peace River Community Profile—Earnings and Income in 2005

	Peace River	Alberta
Median Earnings (people over 15)	\$33,744	\$29,738
Percent of population in low income category after tax	5.4	9.1
Government transfers as % of all income	5.6	7.2

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

Appendix N: Population Growth

	Peace River	Alberta
Population in 2006	6,315	3,290,350
Population in 2001	6,240	2,974,807
Percent Increase	1.2	10.6

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

Appendix O: The Business Vitality Initiative

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

BVI Principles

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

Why is entrepreneurship important?

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

Summary of the BVI Process

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

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

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

Appendix P: List of BVI Communities to Date

Canada

- Creston, BC, Canada
- Harrop Proctor, BC
- Pemberton, BC
- Nakusp, BC
- New Denver/Silverton, BC
- Grand Forks, BC
- Castlegar, BC
- McBride, BC
- Cache Creek, BC
- Nelson, BC
- Elkford, BC
- East Shore Region, BC
- Port Hardy, BC
- Kimberley, BC
- Gladstone, MB
- Dauphin, MB
- Castor, AB
- Hinton, AB
- Coronation, AB
- Vulcan, AB
- Peace River AB

Australia

- Yarram, VIC
- Dimboola, VIC
- Myrtleford, VIC
- Robinvale, VIC
- Macarthur, VIC

Appendix Q: About CIEL

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

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

Our early work assisted small communities in the neighbouring mountain valleys. We developed innovative assessments coupled with strategic processes that helped communities focus, leverage assets and energy and, most importantly, jumpstart action. Then our ideas attracted the attention of communities farther

afield, and we began working with communities across the rest of B.C. More recently we have been invited into communities across Canada, the U.S, New Zealand and Australia.

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

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

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