



Centre for Innovative &
Entrepreneurial Leadership

Business Vitality Alberta (BVA) Handbook

A Project of:



Funded by:



Table of Contents

A. INTRODUCTION	1
B. ADMINISTERING THE SURVEY	2
Surveying a working group only	2
Surveying the general public.....	3
Survey Monkey or Other Commercial Online Survey Tools.....	3
C. TABULATING THE SURVEY RESULTS.....	4
Paper survey.....	4
Survey Monkey	5
D. PRESENTING THE RESULTS.....	5
Presenting in writing only	5
Working group meeting	6
E. IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP	7
F. SEVEN USEFUL INTERVENTIONS.....	7
1. Beautify your downtown.....	7
2. Buy local	8
3. Attract tourists.....	8
4. Attract new residents	8
5. Organize technology forums and other business forums.....	9
6. Enhance communication	9
7. Retain and engage youth with entrepreneurship training.....	10
G. FOUR EMERGING DEVELOPMENTS	11
1. The population is aging.....	11
2. “Local” could include your entire region.....	11
3. Online media is the new word of mouth.....	12
4. Local investing	12
APPENDIX 1: Sample BVA Report Outline.....	13
APPENDIX 2: Reality Check Form.....	18
APPENDIX 3: Online references and resources.....	19

A. INTRODUCTION

This handbook, and its accompanying video, will guide you through the process of administering Business Vitality Alberta (BVA), an easy-to-use tool and process for helping small communities measure and improve business health. It is addressed to the local coordinator of the process, who may hold any of a number of positions such as economic development officer, head of a local business association, or town council member.

Although this is a step-by-step manual, it is a guideline, not a prescription. We assume you will make local decisions about the process depending on your situation, and that you have certain skills such as facilitating a meeting, writing reports, and the basics of spreadsheets. If you don't have those skills, we expect that someone nearby can help you.¹

The BVA was initiated by a partnership between the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and the Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership (CIEL – www.theCIEL.com). Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) has funded its development.

The BVA is based on CIEL's successful Business Vitality Initiative (BVI), which has been used in dozens of communities in Canada and Australia. 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.

The BVA, like the BVI, helps communities to assess their capacity to work with and support entrepreneurs and to foster small business growth. The BVA 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 21st Century has been dubbed “The Entrepreneurial Century”. There is a powerful link between entrepreneurship & economic performance. Some studies suggest that entrepreneurs and small businesses 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.

¹ While this manual has been written so that communities can self-administer this tool and process, communities that do not have the required skills to complete one or more parts of the BVA process, can contact CIEL who may be able to assist on one or more parts of the process on a fee-for-service basis. Contact info@theCIEL.com for more info.

The BVA begins with a survey containing 30 questions that anyone can answer because they ask about perceptions. We have found that asking people about their perceptions can accurately pinpoint the main strengths and weaknesses in a community. Deciding how to use those strengths and deal with those weaknesses is the job of the second part of the BVA, in which you will tabulate the results and decide on actions.

B. ADMINSTERING THE SURVEY

Are you going to survey a small working group, or the general public? The advantages of surveying a working group are efficiency and the group's expert knowledge of the subject matter. The advantage of a public survey, even though it is a more complex project to administer, is a larger volume of responses from a broader cross-section of the community.

That decision will depend on your time, resources, and reasons for conducting the survey.

Surveying a working group only

The working group might be the staff in your office, or an existing committee that is not necessarily confined to one workplace, or any group whose work is relevant to business vitality in the community. We recommend a maximum of twelve people. The ideal composition would be several municipal council and staff, several key businesses, and other important business support organizations (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, community college, etc.) or other important community stakeholders.

When first presenting the survey, tell the group something like this:

- The purpose of the survey is to gauge their perceptions about business vitality in the community.
- The survey results will help to determine your (or the group's) priorities over the next year or more.
- It will take them a maximum of 10- 20 minutes to fill it out.
- Once you have tabulated the results you will hold a one to two hour meeting to go over the results with them and decide on actions (if applicable).

Decide at this point whether your working group is going to be involved in coming up with solutions and actions later on (see Section D: *Presenting the Results*, below). If they are not going to be involved, be sure you don't give them the impression that

they will be. If they will be involved, tell them now. In other words, their role in this process should be stated clearly up front.

To survey the working group you could simply give them each a paper copy, and use their written responses to tabulate the results (see *Tabulating the Survey Results*, below.) Or you could use Survey Monkey (see below) or another online commercial survey service.

Surveying the general public

If you decide to survey the general public, it is important to get a good volume of responses. This will depend a lot on how well you publicize the survey and how you describe it. You can use Survey Monkey for a public survey (see next section).

Tell the public something like this:

- You want to know what they think about the economic future of the community.
- You want them to fill out a survey that will take them 10- 20 minutes.
- The survey is anonymous.
- The results will help you, or your organization, set direction for the coming year or more.

In publicizing the survey we recommend that you do not restrict yourself to traditional media. Engage people on social media as well, since this will amount to free advertising and, most importantly, it will bring in the under-40 crowd. Try to get a radio interview about it. Ask community organizations to get the word out to their members. Go to their meetings and tell them about it. Don't just rely on a press release and a newspaper ad. Be sure the web address of the survey and the deadline are clear to everyone.

You could offer a prize draw for people who fill out the survey. To do that you will have to ask them to volunteer their name on the online survey.

Survey Monkey or Other Commercial Online Survey Tools

For a public survey, you can consider Survey Monkey or other commercial online survey services. For using Survey Monkey, go to www.surveymonkey.com and sign up for the SELECT plan, which costs \$228 for a year. Survey Monkey also has a free introductory plan, but it has a limit of ten questions per survey, too small for this project.

If you are not familiar with Survey Monkey, there is probably someone in your working group who is. In any event, spend some time studying the site and

becoming familiar with its content and structure. The site explains itself quite well with built-in tutorials.

You can copy and paste BVA questions directly from your Word version into Survey Monkey's question builder. See the FAQ section on the Survey Monkey site.

C. TABULATING THE SURVEY RESULTS

Paper survey

If you have used a paper survey, type the results of the first three questions (three words, greatest strengths, and improvement needed) into a table or list for inclusion in your report later.

For the main section of the survey with the multiple choice questions, enter the results into a spreadsheet. CIEL has prepared a spreadsheet template for this purpose. You can find it at:

[http://www.auma.ca/live/AUMA/Toolkits+%26+Initiatives/Business Vitality Initiative Tools](http://www.auma.ca/live/AUMA/Toolkits+%26+Initiatives/Business_Vitality_Initiative_Tools) .

The video accompanying this manual gives you instructions on how to use it.

For each person who filled out the survey, and for each of the 30 multiple choice questions, fill in the cells in the spreadsheet template according to these values:

Completely agree = 4
Somewhat agree = 3
Neither agree nor disagree = 2
Somewhat disagree = 1
Completely disagree = 0
Don't know = DK

Once data from the 30 multiple choice questions has been entered in the prepared spreadsheet for each user, the spreadsheet automatically tabulates scores out of 100.² Ensure that if you have only seven users, you put data into the first seven user columns and delete the five columns (representing users 8-12) not in use. The spreadsheet automatically recalculates scores based on the number of users.

² If you wish to tabulate results manually follow these instructions: For each question, add the scores, then divide by the number of responses (not including "don't know") to create an average score. Then multiply that average by 25. That will give you a score out of 100 for each question in the survey.

If all respondents completely agreed to a positively worded statement, the question score would be 100. If all respondents completely disagreed with the statement, the question score would be 0. A neutral response (neither agree nor disagree) would be scored as 50. A score over 50 would indicate that there is a perceived good capacity, while a score less than 50 would indicate a perceived lower capacity.

The spreadsheet also automatically provides graphs for each of three sections, each containing 10 questions, and another graph for all sections cumulatively. The graphs provide a useful comparison of your scores to an average of 30 other small communities in Canada that have participated in CIEL's other business vitality processes. Those scores are entered for you on CIEL's prepared spreadsheet.

We also recommend sorting the results on the spreadsheet in order of highest scoring and lowest scoring questions. Create a graph or table to show those, so you can get a graphic look at areas where you are doing well and those that need improvement. See Appendix 1: *Sample BVA Report Outline*.

Survey Monkey

If you use Survey Monkey, the site will graph the results for you. It also allows you to export results in a variety of formats so you can use them in a report. For the questions that ask for written answers, Survey Monkey will present those for you as well, which you can transcribe into your own table, chart, or report.

D. PRESENTING THE RESULTS

Are you going to present the results to a meeting of your working group, or just send them a report with your decisions about what actions will be taken? If there will be a meeting, are you going to allow those present at the meeting to have a hand in determining what actions should flow from the survey results? Those are the first questions you will need to answer.

The main advantage of not involving the working group is efficiency. The advantage of involving them is buy-in. Your choice here will depend on your circumstances.

Of course you always have the option of making the report available to the public and perhaps inviting public comment.

Presenting in writing only

If you decide not to have a meeting, write a report that contains the following:

- A summary of the results including strengths and weaknesses, with graphs or tables to illustrate
- Your analysis of what needs to be done to build on strengths and deal with problem areas
- List potential actions and realistic recommended actions, considering all success factors including such things as funding, time, and staffing
- Choose only a few actions that are do-able, realistic, and specific
- For each action, determine who will manage or lead it including a timeline and some benchmarks
- For each action, list some indicators of success. How will you know this action has been successful? How will you measure success? See Also Appendix 2 - *Reality Check*

Use Appendix 1: *Sample BVA Report Outline* as a guide.

Distribute your report to your working group and to anyone else you think should see it, perhaps including the public.

Working group meeting

If you decide to have your working group help you make decisions about what actions to take, your initial report might have recommendations but will not yet contain decisions about what actions should be taken. Give the report to your working group in advance of the meeting, perhaps with some questions or issues you would like them to think about.

At the meeting:

- Present the results, without yet discussing solutions.
- Present your recommendations.
- Perhaps ask for further recommendations from the working group.
- Develop a final list of recommendations that can be realistically turned into actions in fewer than six months. We recommend that you create no more than three actions. If there are lots of recommendations, narrow it down by getting your group to vote on their favourites, or, depending on the issues and size of the group, use a technique (researchable on the internet) called *dotmocracy*.
- When you have the recommendations narrowed down to a few potential actions, use the Reality Check form, included here as Appendix 2, to determine the feasibility of each action and to come up with measures and guidelines.
- If, in order to implement each action, you need to get required approvals, obtain funding, or build partnerships with other agencies, these should be explicitly stated.

- Assign an action manager to each action—this could be you or another member of the group. It should be clear that each action manager is accountable to the group for the success of the action.

Everyone should leave the meeting with a clear picture of the way forward: what will be done, by whom, by when, and by what criteria.

E. IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW-UP

We all know the fate suffered by so many organizational plans and strategies— a long and lonely life on the shelf while everyday life takes over.

That's why the decided-on actions must be realistic and why they need to be persistently kept on the front burner. Find a process to keep them there, such as reporting progress at each group meeting or on a quarterly timeline. The coordinator should help the action managers stay accountable, and vice-versa.

F. SEVEN USEFUL INTERVENTIONS

CIEL has guided dozens of communities through the Business Vitality Initiative (BVI), a tool similar to the BVA. In our experience, there are a handful of actions that come up over and over—either we recommend them to communities after looking at their survey results, or they decide on these of their own accord. Here are the top seven.

1. Beautify your downtown

A rural downtown should be a friendly public space, with a variety of shops and services, and where people want to be because it is attractive, welcoming, and relaxed. It should be geared as much to pedestrians as to the automobile. Downtown revitalization can be an effective economic development strategy. It can facilitate the growth of existing small businesses, create conditions for new businesses, attract shoppers and tourists, and increase the attractiveness of the town to potential new residents.

Sometimes, if yours is a town that needs to attract people in from the highway, this strategy could include beautifying your entrance including its signage.

Your strategies and funding sources will vary depending on your situation, but see Appendix 3 for some ideas and resources.

2. Buy local

Buy local programs involve promoting local products using ads, maps, buy local guides, and community awareness campaigns. Such programs can reduce leakage in the community (money flowing out of community through consumer, business and government purchases), build community pride, create connections, increase economic strength of community, and reduce community's carbon footprint by reducing food transport.

Buy local food programs are popular, but the idea may also apply to manufactured or other goods. There is room for innovation in non-food local buying programs, because of the strength of consumers' temptation to buy cheaper products online or in a nearby city.

See Appendix 3 for buy local resources and examples.

3. Attract tourists

It has taken a while for some communities get over the perception that embracing tourism means resorting to work that is low-paying, seasonal, and part-time. They are realizing that tourism employs not only service personnel but a range of occupations such as pilots, website developers, managers, accountants, tour operators, fishing guides, designers, and resort operators, in a range of sectors including transportation, accommodation, food and beverage, recreation and entertainment, and travel services.

For greater success, tourism operators need to make sure they are good at internet marketing, branding, and creating unique *experiences* rather than simply offering sightseeing. Municipal and regional tourism agencies need to make sure they are thinking and operating regionally.

We recommend the creation of a regional tourism strategy, starting with branding. For resources see Appendix 3.

4. Attract new residents

If people think your town is a nice place to visit, they will probably think it's a nice place to live. That idea links your attempts to attract both tourists and residents.

The term *liveability* has become current and popular because of world city liveability indices.

“Livability means being able to take your kids to school, go to work, see a doctor, drop by the grocery or post office, go out to dinner and a movie, and play with your kids at the park, all without having to get into your car. Livability means building the communities that help (people) live the lives they want to live—whether those communities are urban centers, small towns, or rural areas.”—Secretary Ray LaHood, U.S. Department of Transportation

Take a look at your community’s score for the BVA question B9 - *Young adults (25-34) consider the area to be a desirable place to live*. This is a key question because people in that age range are often the ones starting families and businesses. Because of the internet, an increasing number jobs can be done from anywhere, so young people are likely to move to a town they want to live in, rather than to one where there is a job waiting for them.

5. Organize technology forums and other business forums

The old way is for small town businesses to be protective and secretive, and stick with the tried and true. The new way is to share experience, expertise, and insights, and to embrace life-long learning. The old way is to rely on the telephone, newspaper ads, and word of mouth. The new way is to be handy on the internet and good at social media networking (the new word of mouth), as well as to stay right up to date on the digital technology relevant to your particular business. Successful rural business communities are not old boys clubs any more.

We have found that business people are eager to talk to each other about business, but they are not sure how, and they often can’t find the time. Regular technology forums can help, either to feature guest speakers or just to exchange ideas among each other. Sometimes business mentoring initiatives (formal or informal) can grow out of this kind of exchange.

Forums in other areas of business are very helpful as well. Examples include finances, advertising, dealing with suppliers, human resources, taxation, and branding.

A variation on this theme is the development of more formal business training or mentoring.

6. Enhance communication

The issue of communication often comes up in business vitality discussions, sometimes in the form of regrets about a lack of connection between businesses,

and sometimes as the need for better communication between businesses and local government.

Communication can be a tricky subject because most of us are not as good at it as we think we are. We all have a tendency to think it is the other person who is not communicating well.

A communication skills workshop is not the answer. Instead, set up situations where people are invited to talk and feel comfortable doing so. Communication between businesses can be improved through forums as described above. Or perhaps they need a more regular get-together, a chance to talk and exchange ideas. How this looks will depend on your needs and circumstances.

Sometimes business people see local government simply as an obstacle—a source of bureaucracy and red tape. This may be true, but sometimes this perception is based on just one frustrating incident. Find ways for business people and local elected and non-elected officials to get together and learn about each other's reality and perspectives.

Because communication is such a nebulous and multi-faceted subject, our suggestions here are quite unspecific. That's not because it isn't important. But you have to find your own way through it, and the first step is making it a priority.

7. Retain and engage youth with entrepreneurship training

Many small communities are worried about their ability to retain and engage their youth, but are often at a loss to know what to do about it. One option is a youth entrepreneurship training program, a venture best done in collaboration with a school or community college.

By entrepreneurship education we do not mean business management training, which often misses three essential components of entrepreneurship, namely opportunity recognition, the marshalling of resources in the face of risk, and the creation of an actual business.

Youth entrepreneurship programs can:

- provide new ideas and fresh thinking for both local and global economies
- tackle youth unemployment
- give young people skills for the “real world”
- help to fill the gap when large numbers of small business people retire in the near future
- motivate some students who are “marginal” in school
- give youth a sense of connection with adults in the community
- foster independence
- give young people a reason to stay in the community

G. FOUR EMERGING DEVELOPMENTS

Whatever you decide to do, keep the following four things in mind. More information about them can be found in Appendix 3.

1. The population is aging

By 2021 the population of seniors in Alberta will have increased by almost half—from 11% in 2011 to 16% in 2021. This will vary between communities, but it has implications for business and for community infrastructure.

Outdoor spaces and buildings can create problems for seniors, especially in winter, if sidewalks and curbs are not walkable, if buildings are not accessible, and if washrooms are not plentiful and accessible.

Many rural communities have limited or no public transportation. Most seniors will eventually lose their drivers licences. Sometimes seniors drive when they should not, and this is sometimes because of a lack of public transportation. Having no drivers licence and no public transportation can lead to isolation, the last thing seniors need.

Housing is another issue. An aging population is going to need affordable housing and the support services needed to allow seniors to remain as long as feasible in their own homes.

The accessibility of health care becomes a bigger issue with an aging population.

Communities also need to think about issue of social inclusion and civic participation for older people. One indication of a vibrant community is that it is liveable and inspiring for seniors, offering them a variety of ways of participating in community life beyond sitting at home alone watching TV or silently playing cards in the seniors centre.

2. “Local” could include your entire region

Most community business strategies, especially marketing and tourism, will benefit from a regional approach. It’s time to work with our neighbours.

Tourism operators should consider collaborating with other tourism businesses in the region and creating regional tours or itineraries, and jointly market those to tourists.

Buy local could be extended to *buy regional*. Why should your town compete with another small community a half hour down the road, if you can find ways to collaborate and mutually benefit? Perhaps a group of towns in your region can offer a menu of interesting buy local options, and collaborate in marketing them.

3. Online media is the new word of mouth

New digital ways of selling, buying, marketing, and communicating are emerging almost daily, and much of it involves some form of social media. It's not a passing fad. It's a new way of communicating.

Whether or not you like Facebook, your customers do. Your business' Facebook page should function like a news agency for your business. It should invite people's opinions, and respond to them. It's not advertising; it's interaction.

More and more people make their shopping decisions on the fly, aided by social media, often on their hand-held devices. This is particularly true of travel. Tourism businesses such as hotels, resorts, and restaurants would do well to know what their customers are saying about them on Tripadvisor and other social media sites.

4. Local investing

Some communities are extending "buy local" to the concept of local investing. Do you have a credit union, a community foundation, or some other way of encouraging people to invest in the local community?

Some new businesses are considering cooperatives as a model for maximizing local investment and involvement. There is talk of regional stock exchanges and local currencies. It is hard to say whether these are viable, but since the financial meltdown in the U.S., such ideas are being taken more seriously.

Some communities believe that revitalization involves taking more control of their financial destinies.

APPENDIX 1: Sample BVA Report Outline

1. Title Page

The title page should include:

- *Your letterhead and/or logo*
- *The title Business Vitality Alberta*
- *The name of your community*
- *The date*
- *The names and/or logos of any partnering organizations*

2. Introduction and/or Executive Summary

3. Describing the Community in Three Words

(Group words with similar meaning together eg. beautiful, pretty, scenic.)

Positive		Negative	
Word(s)	Count	Word(s)	Count
Total count		Total count	
Ratio, positive to negative:			

4. Strengths and Assets of the Community

(Consider listing only those with more than one mention. Group similar strengths together, e.g. wilderness, outdoors, outdoor recreation)

	Count

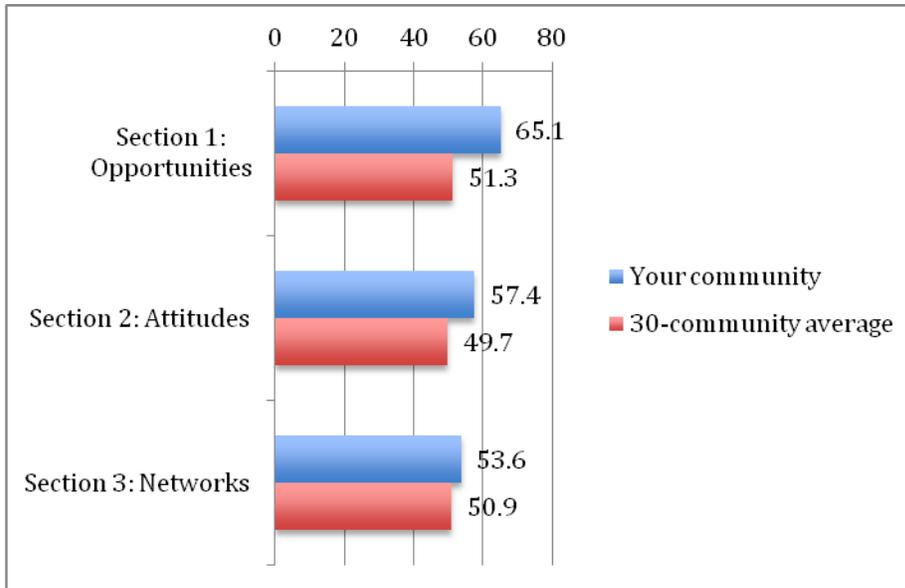
5. Underdeveloped Economic Opportunities

(Consider listing only those with more than one mention. Group similar things together)

	Count

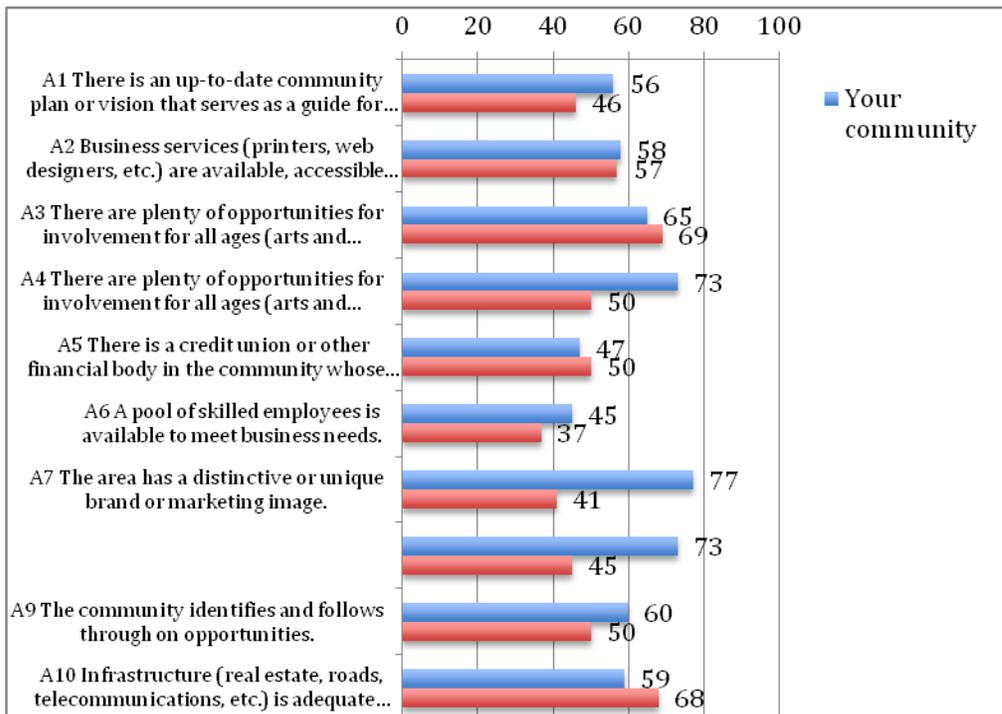
6. Section Scores

(Sample graph. See the spreadsheet template referenced above)



7. Section A: Opportunities—Individual Question Scores

(Sample graph—replace this with your graph from Tab A in the spreadsheet template)



Transcribe the open-ended question about strengths and improvements into a table:

Strengths	Needs Improvement

8. Section B: Attitudes—Individual Question Scores

(Graph and strength/improvements table, as above, using tab B in the spreadsheet template)

9. Section C: Networks—Individual Question Scores

(Graph and strength/improvements table, as above, using tab C in the spreadsheet template)

10. The Five Highest Scoring questions

(Sort the scores to determine this, and create a graph or a table like this sample)

Question	Your community	30-community average	Percent difference
A4 Quality of life in the community is high (e.g. good schools, hospital, many amenities, high quality cultural events, etc.)	72	69	4%
C2 There is a vibrant community core where people can interact.	70	47	32%
B7 Successful businesses want to remain in the area.	68	72	-6%
A7 The area has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image.	66	41	37%
C3 There is a pool of talented leaders with skills available for connecting and leading community projects.	60	66	-1%

11. The Five Lowest Scoring Questions

(Sort the scores to determine this, and create a table similar to the one above.)

12. Conclusions

13. Recommended Actions

(Maximum 2-3 actions, building on strengths or addressing weaknesses)

APPENDIX 2: Reality Check Form

Reality Check 1. (Name of Action)	
Action Group Members:	
Question	Answer
Success —Describe what the successful action might look like.	
Purpose – What is the main goal of this action?	
Commitment – Can we get commitment and energy from the town and community to undertake this? If not, what do we have to do?	
Leadership – Who has the skills to lead (organizations, individuals)? Who else do we need to involve to ensure success who isn't in the room right now?	
Time Frame – How long will it take to accomplish? Are there any political, economic or funding factors which might hurt/help the timing?	
Finances/ Resources – What, if any, financial resources do we need to tap into? Are there any organizations that can assist this action? Any other resources?	
Your recommendation	
Next Steps	

APPENDIX 3: Online references and resources

Current as of November 2012

Buy Local

Institute for Local Self-Reliance

Top Ten Reasons to Support Locally Owned Businesses

<http://www.ilsr.org/why-support-locally-owned-businesses/>

Institute for Local Self-Reliance

Study Finds Buy Local Message Benefitting Independent Business

<http://www.ilsr.org/retail/news/survey-finds-buy-local-message-benefitting-independent-businesses/>

Small Business Trends

2011 Trends Driving Rural Small Business

<http://smallbiztrends.com/2011/01/2011-trends-driving-rural-small-business.html>

Small Biz Survival

Shop Local Campaigns for Small Towns ebook

<http://www.smallbizsurvival.com/2009/05/shop-local-campaigns-for-small-towns.html>

The Rurban Fringe

Do 'Buy Local' Campaigns Work?

<http://www.therurbanfringe.com/do-buy-local-campaigns-work/>

Macleans

Is Local Food Bad For The Economy?

<http://www2.macleans.ca/2012/07/09/is-local-food-bad-for-the-economy/>

Local Investing

Yahoo Finance

More Canadians making the switch from big banks to credit unions?

<http://ca.finance.yahoo.com/blogs/insight/more-canadians-making-switch-big-banks-credit-unions-165715983.html>

Canada Newswire

Canadian Credit Unions Continuing Solid Growth

<http://www.newswire.ca/en/story/987345/canadian-credit-unions-continuing-solid-growth>

Amy Corese

Locavesting

http://locavesting.com/Locavesting_homepage.html

Small Business Trends

Top 9 Small Business Trends for 2012

<http://smallbiztrends.com/2011/12/9-rural-small-business-trends-2012.html>

Small Biz Survival

Local investing will change the face of small towns

<http://www.smallbizsurvival.com/2012/03/local-investing-will-change-face-of.html>

Small Biz Survival

Local investing could solve several rural business problems

<http://www.smallbizsurvival.com/2011/10/local-investing-could-solve-several.html>

Yellow Wood Associates

Wealth Creation in Rural Communities: A New Approach

<http://www.yellowwood.org/WCRC%20Short%20Description.pdf>

Attracting newcomers and tourists

Rural Tourism Marketing

Are Rural Tourism and the Internet Small Towns' Last Best Hope?

<http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/2011/10/are-rural-tourism-and-the-internet-small-towns%E2%80%99-last-best-hope/>

Small Biz Survival

Tourism and economic development are linked

<http://www.smallbizsurvival.com/2012/02/tourism-and-economic-development-are.html>

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association

Welcoming communities toolkit

http://www.auma.ca/live/digitalAssets/25/25953_WICT_booklet_10232008.pdf

Re-Imagine Rural

Ten Reasons "Third Places" Matter to Rural Communities

<http://reimaginerural.com/10-reasons-third-places-matter-to-rural-communities/>

Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership

Tourism 360

<http://www.theciel.com/publications/tourism360guidecielv1.0oct2011.pdf>

U.S. Department of Transportation

The Role of Transit in Rural Liveability

http://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/TransPlanning/TAT_III_ch4.pdf

U.S. Departments of Transportation and Agriculture

Supporting Sustainable Rural Communities

http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/pdf/Supporting_Sustainable_Rural_Communities_FINAL.PDF

Social media

Rural Tourism Marketing

Are Rural Tourism and the Internet Small Towns' Last Best Hope?

<http://ruraltourismmarketing.com/2011/10/are-rural-tourism-and-the-internet-small-towns%E2%80%99-last-best-hope/>

Digital Journal

Small Business Keeps Screwing Up Social Media

<http://digitaljournal.com/pr/794277>

Mashable

5 Ways Small Businesses Get Social Media Wrong

<http://mashable.com/2012/06/25/small-businesses-social-media-tips/>

Small Biz Survival

Talk Less About You, More about Them

<http://www.smallbizsurvival.com/2011/12/talk-less-about-you-more-about-them.html>

Regional thinking

Smart Growth B.C.

Regional Economies

<http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/AboutUs/Issues/EconomicDevelopment/RegionalEconomies/tabid/100/Default.aspx>

Youth

Centre for Innovative and Entrepreneurial Leadership

From 'Take a Job' to 'Make a Job'

<http://www.theciel.com/publications/cbtyouthentrepreneurshipreportcielfebruary2010.pdf>

This publication contains references to many other sources on this subject.

World Economic Forum

Educating the Next Wave of Entrepreneurs

https://members.weforum.org/pdf/GEI/2009/EE_ExecutiveSummary.pdf

Age-friendly communities

Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors

Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities-- A Guide

http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/publications/afrc_en.pdf

Osprey Community Foundation

Creating an Age-Friendly Community

<http://ospreycommunityfoundation.ca/docs/CaringForSeniorsReport2011Final.pdf>