

# Town of Hinton Economic Development Strategy

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# Economic Development Strategy

Hinton has significant competitive assets; the community, which is located on the doorstep to the Rocky Mountains, is rich in natural resources and beauty that millions of visitors and dollars worth of goods pass through every year on extensive transportation infrastructure. Economically, Hinton has major natural resource extraction and processing firms located in and around the community. These have proved to be excellent cooperative citizens beyond providing stable and well-paying employment to residents. Its economy is robust and diversified, which helped it weather the recent economic recession that gripped the province and country.

Despite these advantages, Hinton's population has stagnated for nearly two decades at under 10,000 residents and the town has not been able to leverage its considerable resources into sustained growth. Adding to these pressures, nearby growth threatens Hinton's economy as communities like Edson expand, partly due to lower cost housing and the securement of major investments, including a \$300 million healthcare centre.

Hinton also faces physical challenges, such as rocky, sloped terrain, resulting in higher costs for residential, commercial and industrial development. The increase in wildfires and altered environment caused by the western pine beetle have the potential to threaten the tourism market and the stability of forestry for years to come. These situations highlight the need to further diversify the local economy.

While there is considerable opportunity for growth and development, the Town and its partners in economic development lack a firm strategy to fully embrace the opportunities. The Town has signalled significant interest in addressing economic development strategically via its most recent Corporate Strategy, where this *Economic Development Strategy* is intended to provide with a cohesive vision for economic development and tourism success, supported by strategic objectives and actions to fully leverage the assets of this unique community.

This strategy is designed for maximum impact and actionability. Staying true to this objective, the entire strategy and implementation plan is contained in this single chapter, with the remainder of the document consisting all supporting materials from the background review and consultation process.

## Financial and Budget Implications

Municipalities are the foundation of our local, provincial, and national economies. Yet, growing responsibilities and shrinking resources are impacting communities, large and small. While Provincial investments in local communities are being made, a great deal more needs to be done if counties, towns and cities are to be liveable, sustainable, and competitive in the national and global marketplace.

While not directly addressed in the writing of the Economic Development Strategy, the Town of Hinton has and will continue to face budget limitations when it comes to resourcing economic development initiatives. With limited resources, the Town will need to consider how best to invest in economic development activities and programs – always aiming to provide the greatest return on investment while addressing such issues as economic diversification, residential, industrial and commercial land development, investment attraction, business retention and expansion support activities, and small business support services.



## Notes on Data

Data from the Statistics Canada's 2016 Municipal Census, 2011 Census and National Household Survey, and 2006 Census were consulted and analyzed. In addition, Statistics Canada's 2017 Canadian Business Counts data provided a record of business establishments by industry and size. Extensive research was conducted both qualitatively and quantitatively. Where appropriate, comparator data was collected and analyzed for the municipality, Edson, Yellowhead County, and the Province of Alberta.

## Methodology

The methodology underpinning the strategy is based on two forms of information gathering:

- Secondary data gathering and analysis comprised of background documents, base economic statistics, and studies conducted by the community including the Town's corporate strategy, economic-related documents, and planning and other strategies.
- Primary data gathering and analysis comprised of stakeholder engagement activities in the community including interviews, workshops, and surveys. The Hinton and Region Economic Development Coalition (HREDC) were involved at several steps along the way. Members provided the consulting team with the local grounding that was necessary to appreciate the context of local activities and past decisions.

### Secondary Data Analysis (See Appendix A for Results)

- **Economic Base Analysis:** This analysis is designed to examine the socio-economic characteristics of the community. A profile was developed focusing on relevant socio-economic indicators for Hinton and West Yellowhead – demographics, income, workforce, and business climate. This process identified key trends and informed the stakeholder engagement process.
- **Economic Forecast and Impact of Market Trends:** This section reviews trends in the clean technology, forestry, and tourism sectors and assesses their potential impact and opportunities they provide Hinton.
- **Commercial Gap Assessment:** A population-oriented commercial retail and service gap analysis was conducted for the town and included comparisons to Edson and Edmonton. The gap analysis juxtaposed the theoretical number of population-oriented businesses against the actual amount of businesses in the same category to determine if there are sufficient businesses relative to the size of the population.



## Primary Data Gathering: Stakeholder Engagement (See Appendix B for Results)

In order to fully contextualize the secondary data analysis, primary data gathering was conducted to develop an understanding of the attitudes and aspirations of the community.

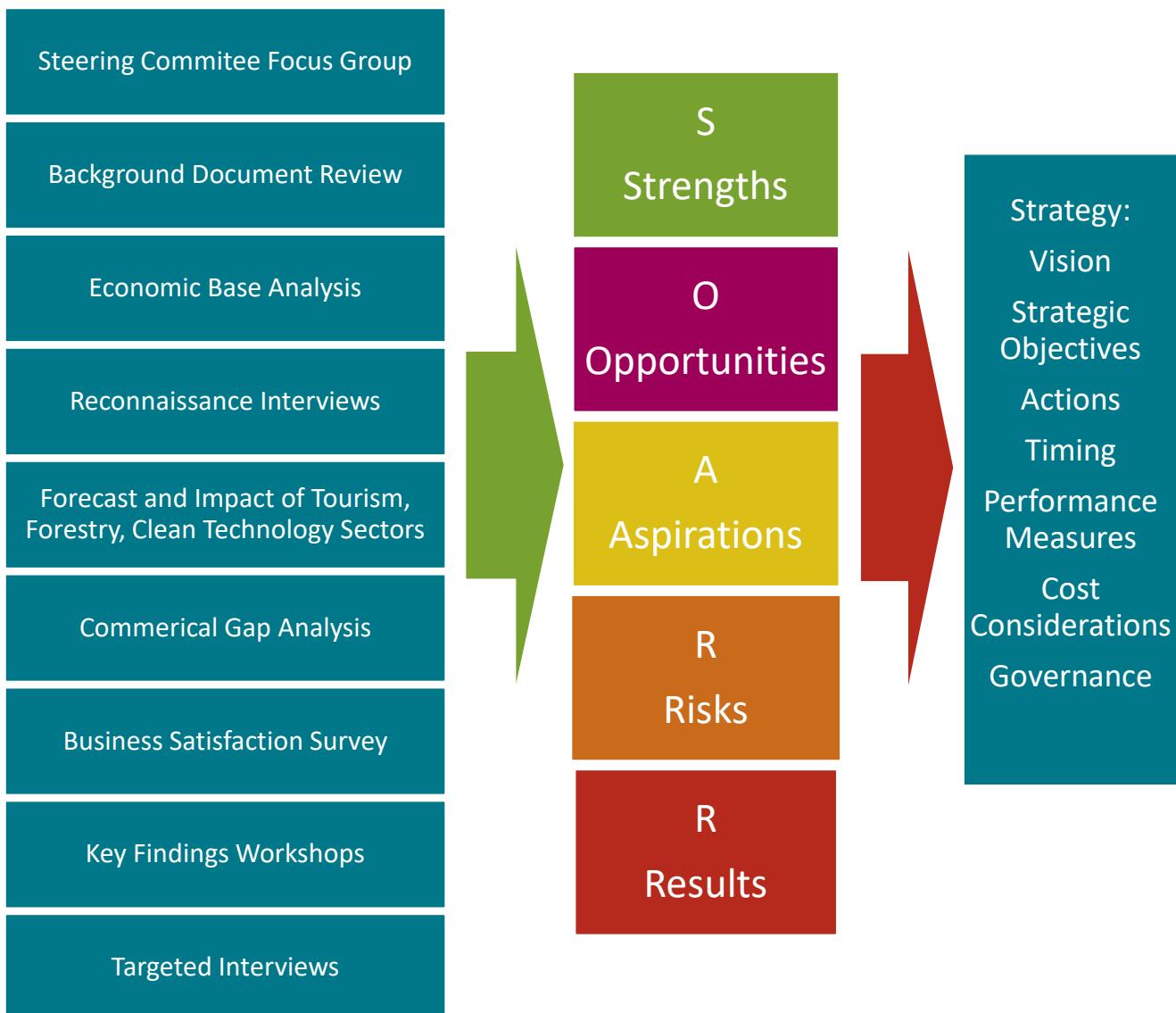
- **Steering Committee Kick-off Focus Group:** This session was held in Hinton with the Economic Development Strategy's Steering Committee (HREDC) to establish expectation, the committee's vision for economic development, and identification of some opportunities.
- **Reconnaissance Interviews:** One-on-one reconnaissance interviews were conducted with 11 community and business leaders from Hinton to gather their thoughts on various topics. The purpose was to obtain a qualitative understanding of considerations about Hinton to supplement quantitative data already collected, and to potentially point toward follow-up questions to be used in a subsequent series of workshops.
- **Business Satisfaction Survey:** A random sample telephone survey collected results from 86 local businesses about business satisfaction, key areas for improvement, and other relevant business considerations.
- **Key Findings Workshops:** Three workshops were conducted in Hinton to present key findings of Secondary Data Analysis and stakeholder engagement with the Economic Development Strategy's Steering Committee and two segments of the business community. These sessions were to provide a baseline of information and launch a discussion of opportunities to pursue in depth.
- **Targeted Interviews:** An additional seven targeted interviews were conducted following other consultation activities with industry experts, municipal employees, and external experts that could offer a better appreciation for how to capitalize on higher priority opportunities.

These efforts provided input for a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Risks, and Results (SOARR) assessment. The SOARR assessment represents a model of appreciative inquiry, which helps to go beyond where things currently stand in Hinton and make important links to where the community wants the economy to go in the future. It assists in ensuring the action plan is rooted in the desires of the community.

These different components are summarized in the graphic below.



Figure 1: Project Methodology Flow Chart





# Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Risks & Results

## SOARR Assessment

A SOARR Assessment is a model for reflecting on a base line for strategic planning by studying identified strengths, opportunities, aspirations, risks and results (SOARR). It is a forward-looking model, taking elements of what would traditionally be affiliated with a strengths weaknesses opportunities and threats analysis and using insights gained through stakeholder consultations to inform what is desired for the future and how to know when our aspirations have been met. The key concepts underpinning the SOARR model are outlined in the figure below. The SOARR Assessment is used in conjunction with the rest of the content available in the Appendices. In essence, it represents a summary of all the key learnings uncovered that will inform the Economic Development Strategy's action and implementation plan.

**Figure 2: Key Considerations for a SOARR Analysis**



Source: MDB Insight, 2018.



## Strengths

S	Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are we doing well?</li><li>• What key achievements are we most proud of?</li><li>• What positive aspects have individuals and enterprises commented on?</li></ul>
	What can we build on?	

- **High-quality Transportation and Communications Infrastructure** – The highway, rail, and fibre internet infrastructure all support business development in the community.
- **Diversified Economy** – Hinton has strong tourism and multiple expanding primary industry employers, providing a strong base for community growth.
- **Recreational Assets** – Hinton boasts a large number of natural recreational assets and facilities supporting a high quality of life.
- **Regional Healthcare Amenities** – Hinton's status as a regional healthcare provider attracts a high-quality medical services workforce. With that in mind, Edson's new hospital creates the potential that services will have to be shared by the two communities.
- **Community Involvement** – Community engagement indicated a strong willingness to share perspectives and ideas in support of stronger coordination and collaboration.
- **Lower Development Restrictions** – Neighbouring communities like Jasper have high levels of development restrictions and Hinton can capitalize on that to attract projects. This has been traditionally somewhat offset by lower costs in Edson, but that may be changing as that community faces the prospect of levies for new development.
- **Business Satisfaction is High** – A random survey of 80 businesses found that 91% of businesses are satisfied with Hinton as a place to own or operate a business. Business satisfaction levels rate were highest for infrastructures like water, health care and roads and the support from local businesses and residents, all of which had over 85% satisfaction levels.
- **Town Planning Department** – The new protocols in place have helped to improve the level of service.

## Opportunities

O	Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What changes in demand do we expect to see in the future?</li><li>• What external forces or trends may positively affect development?</li><li>• What are the key areas of untapped potential?</li><li>• What weaknesses or threats can be converted into SMART improvements?</li></ul>
	What are our best possible future opportunities?	

- **Investment Attraction/Readiness** – Ensuring investors can find information on what is available and the community can proactively attract the businesses the community wants.
- **Forestry Spin-offs** – Grow the forestry value-chain by expanding into complimentary sectors such as cleantech (biomass), scientific research and pest management, and alternative fibre and composite material development.
- **Resident Attraction** – Promote Hinton to the types of residents that are a priority to attract, such as professionals with families.



- **Home-based Business Attraction** – Lone Eagles are people that work remotely and independently for the majority of their work, relying primarily on modern technology and occasional travel.
- **Single Point of Contact/Hinton First** – There is an opportunity to ensure all marketing materials point people toward a point-person at the Town and further promote the Hinton First brand.
- **Continuing Business Retention/Expansion Efforts** – Enhance the business retention and expansion program to assist local businesses, including follow-up on businesses that indicated in the business survey that they require assistance.
- **Partnerships with Local Employers and Developers to Build Needed Housing** – Facilitate partnerships to develop the housing needed in the community.
- **Community Engagement** – Ensure the Town continues to have buy-in and support for initiatives such as business retention and expansion.

## Aspirations

A	Aspirations	What do we care deeply about achieving?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are we deeply passionate about?</li><li>• As a region, what difference do we hope to make (e.g. to residents, for institutions, to businesses)?</li><li>• What does our preferred future look like?</li></ul>
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- **Capitalize on Tourism Traffic** – Hinton is more than a gateway, but instead is an intentional destination for road-trippers and other tourists in search of diverse experiences.
- **Growing Tourism Development and Assets** – Beyond attracting tourists, the Town is active in encouraging the development of tourism-related businesses or other community assets that add to the tourism value proposition in the region.
- **Support Key Sector Development** – Continuing to support industries such as forestry and mining and encourage spin-off industry opportunities associated with these core sectors.
- **Creating a More Diversified Economy** – Hinton knows what industries are strong, but also need to ensure the economy is balanced by a healthy mix of business types.
- **Improving Business Relationships** – The Town and its partners who deliver small business supports are reliable assistants in providing business advice, coordinating development approvals, and connecting established and new start-ups with other business support resources in the region.
- **Attract Remote Enabled Entrepreneurs (Lone Eagles)** – Hinton's location is an intentional destination for home-based businesses also known as lone eagles or independent entrepreneurs that are capable of working remotely for the majority of their work and choose Hinton as they base of operations because of its assets and quality of life.



## Risks

R	<b>Risks</b>  How will we recognize and mitigate or eliminate potential risks?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What challenges do we need to be aware of?</li><li>• What policy shifts could impact our aspirations?</li><li>• What contingencies should we have in place to address threats or unexpected consequences?</li></ul>
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- **Natural Disasters** – The pine beetle has created a higher risk of fire in the region. Preparation and contingencies need to be well developed and continually enhanced.
- **Global Commodity Markets** – Market conditions for commodities that local industries are producing can shift. Diversification is a bulwark against this risk.
- **Brain Drain** – The outmigration of youth needs to be addressed so that people that leave for post-secondary and other life experiences are encouraged to eventually return and raise their own families.

## Results

R	<b>Results</b>  How will we know we are succeeding?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What are the key goals we would like to accomplish in order to achieve these results?</li><li>• What meaningful measures will indicate that we are on track toward achieving our goals?</li><li>• What resources are needed to implement our most vital projects and initiatives?</li></ul>
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- **Clear Understanding of Economic Development** – Hinton decides on what action and role to play in the types of services that will be provided in assisting developers and providing business development support.
- **Supportive and Focused Marketing Initiative** – The value proposition of Hinton being leveraged as a tool for marketing and the monitoring of impact via different tools.
- **Performance Measurement** – Key indicators have been developed around core activities administered by the Town, and results are measured and compared to expectations or goals.



## Strategic Directions

This section analyzes the various aspirations identified in the SOARR assessment to determine shared themes of overlap. These themes come together to form the Strategic Objectives that will formulate the rest of the strategy. They are reflected in the matrix below where:

- Across the top of the matrix table are a series of aspirations identified in the SOARR. Aspirations can be understood as key goals for the community.
- Along the left side of the matrix are a series of strategic objectives that make sense for Hinton.

In the matrix, places where strategic objectives intersect with aspirations have been indicated via a checkmark. The matrix therefore helps to illustrate the different ways community aspirations overlap with potential strategic objectives. The Strategic Objectives are:

### **Objective 1: Improve Investment Readiness and Proactively Attract Targeted Sectors.**

- Why? Preparing Hinton for investment and being proactive in attracting targeted sectors furthers nearly all of the community's key aspirations. By choosing to welcome new investment, Hinton can diversify and grow the local economy in complementary sectors, grow the population base and fully leverage community assets.

### **Objective 2: Implement Business Retention and Expansion Programming.**

- Why? The needs of existing businesses are the needs of the local economy, supporting them provides the highest return on investment to the community by ensuring existing businesses flourish. Enabling business success will also improve investment attraction activities and generate new opportunities in Hinton.

### **Objective 3: Increase Tourism Marketing and Asset Development.**

- Why? Millions of visitors and dollars pass through Hinton on a yearly basis. By fully capitalizing on this opportunity the community can expand its reputation as a tourist destination. The marketing collateral and development of assets will also pay dividends for residents by providing more activities and supporting a higher quality of life.

### **Objective 4: Develop Housing to Support Incoming Residents and Population Growth.**

- Why? Affordable housing in Hinton is a key enabler of economic development and supports the community in achieving its goals. Current residents (seniors) are unable to downsize and remain in the community and applicants are turning down jobs because of the cost and unavailability of appropriate housing. This objective supports business development and is contingent on having an available workforce, who need a range of living accommodations, and also would facilitate opening the community up to more residents that work remotely from home offices and spend their money locally.



**Table 1: Intersections of Aspirations and Strategic Objectives**

Strategic Objectives	Aspirations					
	Capitalize on Tourism Traffic	Create a More Diversified Economy	Support Key Sector Development	Improve Business Relationships	Grow Tourism Development and Assets	Attract Remote Enabled Entrepreneurs
<b>Objective 1:</b> Improve investment readiness and proactively attract targeted sectors.		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Objective 2:</b> Implement ongoing business retention and expansion and start-up programming.		✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Objective 3:</b> Increase tourism marketing & asset development	✓		✓	✓	✓	
<b>Objective 4:</b> Develop housing to support incoming residents and population growth.			✓			✓

## Acknowledging Shared Opportunities

Hinton is a community made up of very different groups of people; families who have lived in the area for generations, transient workers on shifts, newcomers from urban centres, returning sons and daughters, seasonal residents, local business enterprises, community groups, retirees, and young families. All of these groups have needs and priorities. Hinton serves a diversity of interests, not a single uniform body of residents and taxpayers. Sometimes those interests can appear to be at odds when it comes to economic development strategies; however, there is a strong interconnection between the needs and wants of residents, independent entrepreneurs (or solopreneur “lone eagles”), transient workers, and visitors.

It is at the points of convergence, where the fringes of multiple sectors begin to merge, that a community has unique competitive advantages if these uniform needs are met. When one examines the needs of lone eagles more closely, it becomes obvious that they are similar to those of visitors, transient workers, and existing residents.

This concept becomes a focus for the use of limited resources. By concentrating effort where all four needs overlap, Hinton will get more “bang for its buck” and positively affect the lives of multiple



stakeholders. The figure below highlights a few of the many priorities of four key populations that interact with Hinton. The common ground showcases the many areas of overlap these groups have. The most common areas these groups coalesce around are:

- Recreation
- Broadband
- Restaurants and enter
- Retail
- Natural environment
- Transportation infrastructure

The strategy below keeps these considerations in mind so that Hinton can get to work effectively without as much redundancy, while ensuring there is a maximum return on investment.

**Figure 3: Convergence of Needs for Lone Eagles, Visitors, Existing Residents and Transient Workers**





## The Critical Path to Success and Risk of Inaction

A number of items emerge from the action plan as being essential to a long-term foundation for success. The priorities in the following table are emphasized and should occur within the first year of adoption of the strategy.

**Figure 4: Economic Development Priorities, Investments and Risks of Inaction**

Priority	Investment Considerations	Risks of Inaction
<b>Business retention and expansion program</b>	Long-term dedicated staff time is the most important factor in developing relationships and maintaining communications with local businesses. This person will be the key to connecting existing businesses together or existing businesses with external opportunities to form new relationships that lead to new business.	Businesses may become disengaged or there is the risk of flight from the community; businesses may remain unaware of supports that could assist them to expand.
<b>Destination Marketing Fee</b>	There is near consensus that this is an excellent idea but the barrier has always been a resource to take the lead. Of all initiatives in this plan, this has the greatest ability to be a game changer in securing not only long-term sustainability and growth of the tourism sector but other related sectors as well, such as attracting small businesses and new residents.	Not only does the community not capitalize on potential growth, but it will not effectively shield itself from challenges that are present and will remain for many years (e.g. forest fires, loss of green landscape).
<b>Housing Strategy</b>	There seems to be significant demand for new housing, but the community has not been proactive in completely understanding the challenges and implementing an appropriate plan of action. This strategy identifies a number of steps, but the single most important one is to create a long-term strategy that includes comprehensive consultation with developers, employers, and existing residents.	The status quo is likely to remain because land owners have priorities in other communities and employers may not be sufficiently telling their stories to fill the void.
<b>Proactive Communications and Marketing Plan</b>	Hinton has so many strengths to leverage and it is “market ready” in several instances (e.g. small business, value chain opportunities, lone eagles) that there is no reason for there not to be a sophisticated communications and marketing strategy that not only buoys internal spirit but tells those external target markets that Hinton is a location of choice.	Population and business stagnation are the likely risks – nothing will change, but the community has stressed that it does want to see positive change.





## Economic Development Objectives and Actions

The following section provides a series of action plans which directly support the economic development priorities described above. These actions plans should be interpreted in the following context.

Beneath each strategic objective is a preamble that establishes the core ideas that are actioned in its respective framework. In the framework are a series of goals, each supported by a series of actions that present step-by-step details about reaching the goal. The timing of the goal is established to show the level of priority for each goal. To add further clarity, each goal is supported by a rationale, linking the item back to the SOARR assessment, the role of the municipality in terms of what departments or actors should be involved, and key performance measures.

In the actions tables to follow, the level of priority for each goal has been based on several criteria including:

- The level of immediate return based on the Town of Hinton's economic development objectives
- The potential to contribute to the long-term economic vitality and sustainability of Hinton
- The resources required (i.e. the capacity to implement given the current state)
- Logical sequence of actions

The priority level assigned to each action item also corresponds to a specific timeframe. The time frame for each priority level may be operationalized as:

- Short – immediate to one year
- Medium – one to two years
- Long – three to four years
- Continuous – ongoing throughout the life span of the Strategy

Accompanying many action items are a series of footnotes. These point to best practice examples of programs or projects undertaken in other communities which Hinton and its partners can look to.



## Objective 1: Improve Investment Readiness and Proactively Attract Targeted Sectors

**Why? Preparing Hinton for investment and being proactive in attracting targeted sectors furthers nearly all of the community's key aspirations. By choosing to welcome new investment, Hinton can diversify and grow the local economy in complementary sectors, grow the population base and fully leverage community assets.**

Investment attraction is centered on increasing new business investment through developing and communicating business-friendly policies and a corporate culture that demonstrates the Town is “open for business”. This includes ensuring institutional structures are streamlined so as to make the process of land selection and acquisition easy for investors; an accurate inventory of available ‘shovel-ready’<sup>1</sup> property exists, investment properties are easy to search for, and there is adequate infrastructure and land to satisfy projected demand. Being investment ready also means having available shovel-ready land buildings for purchase or lease, an online-presence of land availability, and access to quality physical infrastructure (broadband, roads, electricity, rail, etc.).

The perception of a community as livable, diverse, and inclusive is also a vital component of its ability to attract and retain residents from a wide range of demographic groups. This discussion takes on greater relevance in the battle to attract the workforce required to drive the development of more knowledge-based sectors of an economy. Attracting creative workers, or the intellectual capital that powers the development of a knowledge-based economy, has become a priority in many areas of Alberta.

Since investment readiness is targeted at an investor who may not be familiar with Hinton, a coordinated approach to marketing investment ready commercial, office, and industrial properties is essential. Investors have little time or patience to talk with several contacts to secure the needed information. Any confusion can result in a missed opportunity.

The purpose of this objective is to focus Hinton’s activities on processes, assets and communications that make for more efficient investment attraction.

This section also points to opportunities for attracting “lone eagles”; people who can work from almost anywhere provided they have access to quality internet and reliable transportation infrastructure. These people do the majority of work from a home office or co-location space, as most of their clients tend to be in other parts of the province, country, or even the world. This demographic of business chooses a location because of the amenities, assets, and quality of place attributes that appeal to them and their families because they do not have to choose a location simply because of where their clients are located. As professionals, they are typically involved in engineering, design, computer programming, media or cultural industries, law, research and development, or consulting.

A detailed analysis into Hinton’s commercial needs was conducted, which include consideration of the tourism influx the community benefits from. Overall, the study found that for a community of its size, most categories of population-oriented commercial sectors are met by existing businesses; however, there were about 15 to 20 specific business sectors that could potentially be filled further. This is a good news story in a sense, in that the results show that the market has responded pretty accurately the size of the local and

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<sup>1</sup> Shovel-ready refers to land that is immediately available for development, including having clear title, all environmental-type approvals, and is appropriately serviced by utilities and transportation infrastructure.



visiting demographic. The most visible cluster that is lacking fits partially into the broader need for professional services. Key individual business categories that were identified as missing include the following:

- Automotive repair and maintenance
- Personal and household goods repair and maintenance
- Legal services
- Insurance carriers
- Other residential care facilities
- Funeral services
- Electronic shopping and mail-order houses
- Accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping and payroll services

One of the outcomes of this analysis is that the recommendation in the original proposal to invest in attendance at the International Shopping Centre Congress, a popular investment event where economic developers meet with franchisees, is not the best use of time or money. The recommendation to complete a pitch deck is still warranted. See the action plan for details.

**Figure 5: Framework for Strategic Objective 1: Improve Investment Readiness and Proactively Attract Targeted Sectors**

Goals	Actions	Timing
<b>Goal 1. Complete Foundations of Investment Readiness</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Maintain and promote a vacant building inventory that also includes inventory on affordable and flexible workspaces / co-working spaces. This available online property search tool will support the attraction/retention of small and large businesses. Monitor user habits to generate investment leads via diagnostic tools.</li><li>2. Initiate a series of brownfield or underdeveloped commercial and industrial site redevelopment scenarios:<sup>2</sup><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Starting from a long-list, assemble a list of five to eight prime sites that are in need of redevelopment</li><li>• With the permission of the property owner, conduct an assessment of the ideal new build, including high density and moderate density scenarios and projected return on investment for redeveloping the property (where appropriate they should advocate mixed-use housing/commercial opportunities)</li><li>• Develop a series of investment prospectuses to market to property owners, which include visuals, development costs, local advantages, projected return on investment, and other aspects to developers or inspire current land-owners to redevelop</li></ul></li><li>3. Initiate a bylaw amendment that sets a time limit or penalties on land purchases that result in prolonged periods of inactivity, either via an increased non-residential mill rate or as a claw back mechanism.<sup>3</sup></li></ol>	Short Medium-Long Medium

<sup>2</sup> As an example, consult with municipal economic development staff at Town of Greater Napanee for examples of investment prospectuses.

<sup>3</sup> Best Practice: A tax mechanism that applies to vacant non-residential land, amounting to a higher mill rate than if the land is developed. For example, the Town of Morinville charges 18.429338 for vacant non-residential, compared to 6.972441.



Goals	Actions	Timing
	4. Conduct an in-house website audit or via a professional firm to identify blind spots in content hierarchies, data availability, links and other components. Uncovering where things are not as obvious as they should be.  5. Create and publish an investment readiness scorecard that assesses the community's investment readiness grade.  6. Investigate a "One Window Access" approach for developmental services via a concierge service. A concierge service acts as a steward for developers and businesses looking to expand by guiding the business through the development process and helping to anticipate and meet the needs of specific processes. The concierge assists with: <sup>4</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Providing flow charts, user guides and best practice tips to assist developers in understanding the development process and expectations for the Town and the developer</li><li>• Coordinating pre-consultation meetings designed to allow people with business development ideas an opportunity to pitch them and get feedback from all key decision makers in the development process (e.g. planning and development, environmental health and safety, clerk's office) in advance of beginning the formal application process</li><li>• Ensuring that all forms and applications are available from a single source and that guidance and instruction can be provided about meeting any required deliverables</li><li>• Following-up with businesses after the approval process via aftercare programming designed to identify emergent challenges and ways to improve the development process for future users</li></ul> <p>Note: The one window approach needs approach and concierge service need to be immediately desirable via a separate online vehicle that allows investors to decide right away available information and resources.</p>	Short Medium Medium
	7. Maintain comprehensive and visible community and sector profiles that can be shared with regional partners and used in conjunction with regional marketing and promotion activities, and ensure data are also available online for easy access. Sectors should include: forestry and forestry products; mining and oil and gas; professional independent entrepreneurs; commercial opportunities. Programs such as LocalIntel provide simplified platforms for investment-related data, property selection, development cost factors and more. <sup>5</sup>	Medium

<sup>4</sup> A winning "one window" approach is in place in Aurora, Ontario, where a suite of process guidelines and all answers in one place to make investments and business development easy: <http://businessaurora.ca/business-concierge-service-understanding-development-processes.php>

<sup>5</sup> See LocalIntel for suite of examples: <http://www.localintel.co/>



Goals	Actions	Timing
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Investment readiness ensures the opportunity for investment attraction is maximized, that site-selection processes are optimized, and that development processes are streamlined.</p> <p><b>Municipal Role:</b> Planning and Communications Department staff time (Economic Development staff time)</p> <p><b>Key Partners:</b> None.</p>		
<p><b>Quantitative Performance Measures:</b> Land inventory tool usage; # of leads generated (by each tool); # of clients facilitated via concierge; \$ investment (each tool)</p> <p><b>Qualitative Performance Measures:</b> Land inventory compete; development scenarios complete; investment prospectuses complete; bylaw amendment complete; community profile complete; sector profiles complete</p>		
<p><b>Goal 2. Pursue investment opportunities emerging from the commercial gap analysis</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identify a commercial investment profile and pitch deck that is suited to key commercial opportunities available in Hinton, including professional services (legal, finance, accounting, etc.), specialty food stores and services, and other market gaps. Ensure that the Town's website clearly defines these opportunities and who to contact if interested.</li><li>2. Leverage the Hinton First brand within social media campaigns that draw attention to the opportunities. Include testimonials of local champions celebrating Hinton First (let businesses stand as advocates for Hinton First). Integrate Hinton First awareness building into business visitation and business walk processes.</li><li>3. Target commercial chains that already have a foothold in Edmonton but which do not have one in Edson, for promoting specific development opportunities. These connections will be much more direct and done through email, telephone, and personal visits.</li></ol>	<p>Short</p> <p>Short-Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>
<p><b>Rationale:</b> By targeting key sectors and the sites suitable for investment Hinton develops the investment attraction baseline.</p> <p><b>Municipal Role:</b> Planning and Communications Department staff time (Economic Development staff time)</p> <p><b>Key Partners:</b> The Province of Alberta, Trade Commissioner's Office</p>	<p><b>Quantitative Performance Measures:</b> Total number targeted companies attracted, job numbers, total investment; Absorption rate of employment lands and by type (industrial, commercial-retail, commercial-office); Increased score on the Investment Readiness Scorecard</p> <p><b>Qualitative Performance Measures:</b> Reputation as a good location for targeted sector investment; Feedback on the range of information products in demand by investors and business community; Level of engagement with the business community</p>	



Goals	Actions	Timing
<b>Goal 3. Establish Outreach Program to Potential Investors and “Lone Eagles”</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop a targeted social media campaign focusing on businesses in selected industries and individuals in those industries who value the recreation assets Hinton possesses (industries include information technologies, professional services, etc. Targeting should include visitors and alumni members of Hinton organizations.)</li></ol>	Medium
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Promote Hinton’s high-speed internet infrastructure as a key enabler for remote workers and key sectors.</li><li>2. Develop investor focused marketing materials and consider broadening the utilization of Hinton First to play this outward marketing role.</li></ol>	Medium-Long
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Access the Invest Canada-Community Initiatives (ICCI) program which supports Canadian communities seeking to improve their capacity to attract, retain and expand foreign direct investment in order to create jobs for Canadians, support innovation and increase exports. ICCI provides reimbursement of up to 50% of eligible expenses.</li></ol>	Medium
	<p><b>Rationale:</b> Lone Eagles are high value residents who enable economic diversity</p> <p><b>Municipal Role:</b> Communications Department time/facilitation (Economic Development staff time)</p> <p><b>Key Partners:</b> Business Community, Alumni Organizations</p> <p><b>Quantitative Performance Measures:</b> Total number of new “Lone Eagles” in Hinton; Number of companies assisted through business attraction efforts; Increased score on the Investment Readiness Scorecard</p> <p><b>Qualitative Performance Measures:</b> Reputation as a good location for “Lone Eagles”; Reputation as a welcoming community for technology-based businesses; Feedback on the range of information products in demand by investors and the business community</p>	



## Objective 2: Implement Ongoing Business Retention and Expansion and Start-up Programming

**Why? The needs of existing businesses are the needs of the local economy, supporting them provides the highest return on investment to the community by ensuring existing businesses flourish. Enabling business success will also improve investment attraction activities and generate new opportunities in Hinton.**

Business Retention and Expansion is a cornerstone of economic development, with the highest return on investment compared to supporting entrepreneurship or pursuing investment attraction. Studies have shown that over 80% of new jobs and investment in a community will come from existing businesses. Business retention and expansion is a form of economic gardening. It is called so because it needs to be long term and continually supported for maximum success. Relationships are the basis of these programs and the most successful have dedicated staff maintaining clear lines of communication and providing consistent support to businesses.

Large businesses often have extensive government relations experience and understand not only what role municipalities play in economic development and business support but how to access these supports. Even still, having dedicated resources to supporting these major corporate citizens is a fundamental role of BRE programming. Small and medium sized businesses however often do not often have the benefit of experience in accessing services and supports, typically requiring additional support.

Meanwhile, small businesses play a significant role in supporting and sustaining the diversity of the business base including providing higher value employment opportunities. Small businesses are often touted as delivery agents of some of the most positive economic impacts a community can experience. They are extremely nimble, have the ability to scale up and scale down employees and production to match the boom and bust cycles of the economy and are capable of reaching a national and international market. While broadband infrastructure was rated highly favourable, small businesses have reported that they are struggling with workforce development, business planning, marketing and promotion and financing; hence, the connection to business retention and expansion support.

It is important for the Town to maintain a supportive small business climate by looking at ways to provide information and other services important for small business success and provide programs, such as support for training, knowledge sharing, workshops, or co-working spaces. For example, the community, having already ascertained that workforce is a key barrier to growth, could facilitate training opportunities with partners like Grande Prairie Regional College.

These supports should also include information on how to access large business supply chains. In Hinton two major mining operations are active and require millions of dollars in products and services, creating opportunities for new and existing local businesses. These opportunities are not limited to procurement; the utilization and recycling of waste (materials, heat, outputs) on a co-located site can reduce costs and reduce environmental impact.

Well-resourced BRE programming also allows municipalities to monitor major government facilities such as hospitals, provincial training centres, and other government service providers. These institutions contribute greatly to the economy and their quality of life. Maintaining relationships with these operations reduces the risk of losing them and improves opportunities for expansion or added services delivery. These projects may be long-term but yield considerable benefits.



**Figure 6: Framework for Strategic Objective 3: Implement Ongoing Business Retention and Expansion and Start-up Programming**

Goals	Actions	Timing
<b>Goal 1. Support for Business Retention and Expansion Programming</b>	1. Launch retention and expansion programming with expanded business contact, provision of business support, assistance in navigating development approvals, and continue to survey the business community to gauge business satisfaction and identify newly emerged priorities. <sup>6</sup>	Short
	2. Build on the completed business satisfaction survey and prioritize addressing the factors most affecting overall satisfaction including: workforce development, business planning, marketing and promotion and financing.	Short
	3. Continue/Expand Hinton First to support business marketing and encourage residents to buy local.	Medium
	4. Work with Community Futures and the Chamber of Commerce to develop a Business Guide and ensure it outlines all the services and processes of the municipality that assist business investment opportunities. <sup>7</sup>	Medium
	5. Work with the Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, and Alberta Labour in continuing to support theme-based business workshops (succession planning, marketing, social media) and other outreach activities to assist small businesses. <sup>8</sup>	Short-Medium
	6. Establish long-term relationships with the business community and provide a single point of contact for support and information.	Continuous
	7. Initiate a concierge team within the Town and establish regular discussions with local companies to gather feedback and offer additional assistance. Prioritize high risk companies who have noted expansion, retention or closure challenges.	Short-Medium
	8. Develop a Workforce Development Strategy to better understand workforce issues and support businesses' access to the talent they need to grow. Use the Vicinity Jobs supply and demand reporting platform as a starting point for trends and forecasting.	Continuous, but strategy is Medium

<sup>6</sup> The research done for this project included the Triage BR+E business survey method and derived importance calculations offered by MDB Insight. Now that benchmarks have been established, it is logical that the process be used again.

<sup>7</sup> A popular external business guide for general start-up advice is BusinessLink. It is funded by the Government of Alberta: <https://airdrie.ecdev.org/ca-csd-airdrie>. This is great for general business planning, but does not have insight in specific local resources or assistance. For example, the City of Grande Prairie has a simple online seven step guide to starting a business with links to specific resources embedded at each stage: <http://www.cityofgp.com/index.aspx?page=2064>. A list of business financing from different levels of government is available in Appendix C of this Strategy.

<sup>8</sup> Theme-based workshops is a successful model which has already been implemented in Edson in partnership with organizations like Community Futures and Alberta Labour, and these organizations are willing share what they have worked on with Hinton.



Goals	Actions	Timing
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Business Retention and Expansion is a Cornerstone of Economic Development</p> <p><b>Municipal Role:</b> (Economic Development staff time)</p> <p><b>Key Partners:</b> Business Community, Community Futures Yellowhead West, Chamber of Commerce</p> <p><b>Quantitative Performance Measures:</b> Total number of companies expanded or retained in Hinton; Number of new jobs and total investment by supported businesses</p> <p><b>Qualitative Performance Measures:</b> Reputation as a good location for small and medium business growth; Feedback on the range of information products in demand by investors and business community; Level of engagement with the business community</p>		
<p><b>Goal 2. Support Hinton's Entrepreneurial Community</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Host/Encourage ongoing business networking events partnering with local service providers including the Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures and the Business Support Network to target the development of new businesses.</li><li>2. Identify existing lone eagles in Hinton through targeted semi-casual business mixers, networking events, and information sessions. Track and classify areas of business expertise and facilitate information sharing methods between. Work with women entrepreneurs to grow awareness.</li><li>3. Explore the necessity and partnerships that could support coworking spaces. Work with Community Futures and the Chamber of Commerce in programming the space.<sup>9</sup></li></ol>	Continuous Medium Long
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Entrepreneurs are high value residents who enable economic diversity and innovation</p> <p><b>Municipal Role:</b> (Economic Development staff time)</p> <p><b>Key Partners:</b> Business Community, Community Futures Yellowhead West, Chamber of Commerce</p> <p><b>Quantitative Performance Measures:</b> Total number of new companies in Hinton; Development and usage rates of co-working/incubator space; Number of companies assisted through support efforts, jobs created and investment in Hinton</p> <p><b>Qualitative Performance Measures:</b> Reputation as a good location for Start-ups; Reputation as an innovative community for technology-based businesses</p>		
<p><b>Goal 3. Investigate Current Major Sector Value Chain Opportunities</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Establish and build on relationships with major employers and small businesses to source opportunities in value chains that local companies or new investors can fill.</li><li>3. Run procurement workshops with major businesses and the local/provincial governments on how local firms can support their activities.</li><li>4. Investigate co-location, waste product and recycling opportunities with major employers, small businesses, and the Waste Management Authority.<sup>10</sup></li></ol>	Short Medium Short

<sup>9</sup> The City of Airdrie has two coworking spaces (Peak Place Business Centre <https://www.airdrie.ca/getLink.cfm?ID=5728> and Westside Professional Centre <http://westsidecentre.net/>)

<sup>10</sup> Community Futures Yellowhead West has already assisted in supply-chain linking via similar programs in Whitecourt and Edson.



Goals	Actions	Timing
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Support both major and small business integration within Hinton</p> <p><b>Municipal Role:</b> Communications Department time/facilitation (Economic Development staff time)</p> <p><b>Key Partners:</b> Business Community, Province of Alberta, Community Futures Yellowhead West</p> <p><b>Quantitative Performance Measures:</b> Total number of local companies supplying major businesses Hinton; Number of companies assisted through workshops; Total value of contracts and jobs created</p> <p><b>Qualitative Performance Measures:</b> Positive Relationship with the local business community; Reputation as a supportive community</p>		



## Objective 3: Increase Tourism Marketing & Asset Development

**Why? Millions of visitors and dollars pass through Hinton on a yearly basis. By fully capitalizing on this opportunity the community can expand its reputation as a tourist destination. The marketing collateral and development of assets will also pay dividends for residents by providing more activities and supporting a higher quality of life.**

The tourism traffic that flows through Hinton on a daily basis is a massive source of revenue, jobs, and opportunity for the community. Capitalizing on this traffic is a key component of this objective. The tourism and hospitality sector is a major driver of economic impact and diversity in Hinton.

A key component of capitalizing on this traffic is creating targeted messages that appeal to the different market segments who are passing through. Two examples are recreators versus out-of-country visitors. Recreators are from markets that are geographically closer and hold the potential of coming back to the community multiple times per year. They are drawn to more specific amenities versus out-of-country visitors who are likely to have less frequent visits and are drawn to the entire experience of visiting a different region, which can be vast. A better understanding of these groups' motivations allows for the development of complementary assets that also support the residents of Hinton. By understanding what assets, festivals and events recreators are looking for, complementary year-round draws can be developed which, in turn, supports a higher quality of life for residents. At the same time, these kinds of considerations cannot be made without a strong understanding of all the existing assets, highlighting the need for an asset mapping project. In addition, times have changed and so has technology and its ability to facilitate in the discovery of tourism experiences and for marketing and categorizing asset types. New considerations such as Airbnb have altered the tourism landscape.

Tourism and placemaking are increasingly being recognized as important factors in the economic performance of communities. The importance of the identity of a community as livable, diverse, and inclusive is a vital component of its ability to attract visitors and retain residents. By developing key messaging and cohesion around a tourism association or destination marketing organization Hinton can leverage the assets of the industry and actively bid on major events and conferences/travel trade market targets.

A Destination Marketing Fee (DMF) has the potential to be a game changer for Hinton. The DMF can fund sustained promotion and attraction efforts. Not only would a DMF rally and support the industry, the spinoffs in investment and resident attraction would further contribute to Hinton's vitality.

The development of a tourism association/destination marketing organization complete with a DMF would also allow the industry to have a clear voice for the development of new and maintenance of existing tourism assets that support their industry.



**Figure 7: Framework for Strategic Objective 4 Increase Tourism Marketing & Asset Development**

Goals	Actions	Timing
<b>Goal 1. Develop a Local and Regional Tourism Association</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. Bring together a coalition of local hotels and commit to the implementation of visitor levy (DMF) to fund marketing initiatives, travel trade bids, and support new asset development.<sup>11</sup></li><li>3. Build on the work of Tourism Hinton and provide the organization with terms of reference, develop a formalized memorandum of understanding with any partner communities and create/build an association with the buy-in of operators and hotels to promote the region.</li><li>4. Consider a regionally-oriented organization to pool resources and reduce individual community costs, but accept that Hinton may have to start this initiative without their support.</li><li>5. Encourage regional tourism businesses to share content and promote the ecosystem, not just the individual asset. Host workshops and develop marketing platforms that are regionally based.</li></ol>	Short Medium Medium-Long Medium
	<b>Rationale:</b> Tourism is a key sector and requires dedicated and sustained support	
	<b>Municipal Role:</b> Town Communications Department time, engagement and facilitation	
	<b>Key Partners:</b> Tourism Business Community, Neighbouring Municipalities	
	<b>Quantitative Performance Measures:</b> Total number of existing and new assets, festivals, activities and attendance rates in Hinton; Development of a local/regional tourism association; Implementation of Hotel Tax and total revenue generated to support tourism, travel/trade market; Number of attracted conferences and conventions; Number of companies assisted through asset development efforts	
	<b>Qualitative Performance Measures:</b> Reputation as a good location for things to do for residents and visitors; Feedback on the range of assets developed; Level of engagement with regional tourism partners and the industry; Perception of the town centres as destinations and key asset within the community	

<sup>11</sup> The Alberta Hotel and Lodging Association has an excellent guide to preparing a Destination Marketing Fee. The organization also notes a DMF Task Force that works as an ombudsman for potential grievances relating to DMFs: <https://www.ahla.ca/resources/tourism/destination-marketing-fees/>



Goals	Actions	Timing
<b>Goal 2. Inventory and Promote Hinton's Tourism Assets in the Regional Context, Encouraging the Development of New Assets</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop/Update a complete inventory of tourism assets, identifying gaps and opportunities. Include gathering spaces and placemaking assets in the inventory including each of the downtown centres. This inventory can serve as the basis for marketing materials and the development of new assets to fill gaps.<sup>12</sup></li><li>5. Create asset maps that highlight different assets and allow for tourist and investor exploration and ensure they are available online as interactive cultural and tourism resources.</li><li>6. Work with tourism providers to survey patrons on assets they would like to see developed in the region.</li><li>7. Partner with current festival and event planning organizations to develop off season festivals and activities. Investigate opportunities associated with the completion of a Regional Festivals and Event Strategy to attract and host destination events.</li></ol>	Short Medium Long Medium

**Rationale:** Understanding the assets of the region, highlight opportunities for growth and allow for more effective promotion of the sector

**Municipal Role:** Economic Development and Communications Staff to Map assets and develop marketing materials

**Key Partners:** Tourism Businesses, Neighbouring Communities

**Quantitative Performance Measures:** Total number of existing and new assets, festivals, activities and attendance rates in Hinton; Development of a local/regional tourism association; Implementation of Hotel Tax and total revenue generated to support tourism, travel/trade market; Number of attracted conferences and conventions; Number of companies assisted through asset development efforts; campground and park occupancy rates

**Qualitative Performance Measures:** Reputation as a good location for things to do for residents and visitors; Feedback on the range of assets developed; Level of engagement with regional tourism partners and the industry; Perception of the town centres as destinations and key asset within the community

<sup>12</sup> Examples include tracking Airbnb locations, Camping Garden and RV with Me



## Objective 4: Develop Housing to Support Incoming Residents and Population Growth

**Why?** Affordable housing in Hinton is a key enabler of economic development and supports the community in achieving its goals. Current residents (seniors) are unable to downsize and remain in the community and applicants are turning down jobs because of the cost and unavailability of appropriate housing. This objective supports business development and is contingent on having an available workforce, who need a range of living accommodations, and also would facilitate opening the community up to more residents that work remotely from home offices and spend their money locally.

The need for housing in Hinton is well established but many factors have influenced this situation; the geological barriers and higher costs of building in Hinton, filled industrial and trailer parks occupying large areas of optimal land, residents wanting to capitalize on higher home values, landowners not doing anything with land or imposing stringent conditions on leasers, the large volume transient shift workers, developers building only high-end homes out of the reach of many new or potential residents, and a dearth of rental opportunities. These factors have created a tight market with limited availability of housing in the \$200-300,000 price point. The lack of diverse housing is also pushing some senior residents to leave the community as options to downsize are in short supply.

Objective 4 ties directly to both the long-term population stagnation in Hinton since 1991 (hovering between 9,000 - 10,000 residents and projected to reach only 10,422 by 2046) and the concerns of local residents about being unable to find housing options that meet their needs.

Available housing is a major factor in the overall investment readiness of a community and is a key driver in business investors' decisions strictly because of its ability to impact labour force availability. By developing programming to support housing in Hinton the community will be more attractive to new investment. This objective also looks to the future of the community with the imminent expansion of the Big Horn Mine project which is expected to bring more than 300 additional jobs to the community, creating a massive opportunity for Hinton to retain a new workforce.

The demand for housing is a major opportunity for Hinton. While many rural communities are shrinking and aging, Hinton has assets that make the town a desirable place to live. By providing a guide to housing development in the community Hinton can improve the livability of the community while building a base for long-term growth.



**Figure 8: Framework for Strategic Objective 4: Develop Housing to Support Incoming Residents and Population Growth**

Goals	Actions	Timing
<b>Goal 1. Complete a Housing Strategy and continue to improve the development process.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Complete a long-term strategy that includes comprehensive consultation with developers, employers, and existing residents and will pinpoint the most effective path to success.</li><li>2. Conduct a workshop with Edmonton-area developers to better understand the levers that lawmakers have to facilitate accommodation development; in particular mixed-use or high-density construction. Explore conditions on lots for private sales.</li><li>3. Continue to review existing development approvals process and address inefficiencies or redundancies that unnecessarily hinder application processing and approvals.</li><li>4. Develop a schematic, for use by builders, of all key steps in the development process, any legislation or regulation applicable to each phase, as well as any triggers that would require additional scrutiny, assessment, or analysis; it should also have target timelines for regular procedures (such as application processing, decision making, etc.) and any application fees or business development costs. Make the blueprint available online and in hard-copy and ensure that concierge services include sharing it when inquiries are made.<sup>13</sup> Review it annually to ensure it is current.</li><li>5. Develop an inventory of available residential lands highlighting mixed-use and infill opportunities. Ensure that the inventory includes public and private lands. Update the inventory regularly.</li></ol>	Short Short Short and Continuous Short Medium
<b>Rationale:</b> Improve the ability of developers and residents to build housing in Hinton. <b>Municipal Role:</b> Planning and Communications Department staff time (Economic Development staff time) <b>Key Partners:</b> Developers, Businesses  <b>Quantitative Performance Measures:</b> Growth in residential tax assessment; Absorption rate of development lands; Number of Developer and Rental development meetings; Value of building permits; private lot sales %  <b>Qualitative Performance Measures:</b> The reputation of being “Open for business” with developers; Reputation as a good location for new housing and rental opportunities; Level of engagement with the developer community and feedback on processes		
<b>Goal 2. Provide residents, developers, and industry with information on needs and opportunities.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Communicate with residents and the developer community on expected housing needs and better understand what shovel ready sites exist and the timeline for more housing to come to market.</li><li>2. Conduct information sessions on building/managing rental suites with residents to improve the availability and quality of rental accommodations. These sessions should include potential income opportunities.</li></ol>	Short Medium

<sup>13</sup> The City of Leduc has an excellent “What documents do I need to upload when I apply for permits?” on its website: <https://www.leduc.ca/cityview-portal-help>



Goals	Actions	Timing
<p><b>Rationale:</b> Clear messaging to the community creates a baseline for coordination and action</p> <p><b>Municipal Role:</b> Planning and Communications Department staff time (Economic Development staff time)</p> <p><b>Key Partners:</b> Developers, Community, Businesses</p> <p><b>Quantitative Performance Measures:</b> Total number of meetings with developers and information sessions; Commitment of major employers to support housing initiatives; Number of companies with employees buying/renting new housing</p> <p><b>Qualitative Performance Measures:</b> Reputation as a proactive, collaborative community; Feedback on the information meetings by developers and community; Level of engagement with the business community</p>		



## Structure Required for Action Plan Implementation

When considering what approach Hinton's economic development efforts must adopt, the strategy's implementation should be suited to reflect the optimal form – or organizational structure – that best assists in achieving the strategic objectives. Different organizational forms are able to do different things and for economic development, this translates to differences in accountability.

Economic development structures can be most easily understood as falling within four specific models:

1. **Municipal Department or Office** – The organization is housed within the formal municipality as a line department, office or single actor and accountable directly to the municipality's Council.
2. **Development Corporation** – The organization is a “joint power” institution involving varying degrees of government, business and community representation and support within an incorporated body and accountable to a board of directors.
3. **Private Development Associations** – The organization is sponsored by local/regional businesses and operates in economic development with permission or endorsement of local government (for example, through chambers of commerce or business associations), but with limited direct control from the municipality.
4. **Advisory Committee** – There is no formal organization and roles and responsibilities are determined on an ad-hoc basis via suggestions from a committee of volunteers.

While the private development association model is used by some communities, it is uncommon in Canada. Instead, most Canadian communities choose to work collaboratively through either municipal departments or arm's-length development organizations.

In some instances, there are combinations of organizations within a single community. For example, a development corporation might focus on attraction-related economic development, while an internal representative in an office handles retention-related economic development, or other local initiatives.

The development corporation model can also function at a regional level, typically focussing on specific aspects of economic development that make sense for shared costs, pooled resources, or limited internal capacity. Such regional organizations are common for investment attraction purposes as well as tourism, or to assist with some components of business retention and expansion, such as research and data collection.

The advisory committee model is what drives economic development decision making currently in Hinton, and while it can be nimble, its range of impact is typically limited as it relies on volunteers and a range of municipal staff to cover various points of economic development activities, as opposed to a dedicated person or team that is expert in economic development and spends 100% of their time on the task. Advisory committees tend to face challenges with maintaining momentum and are prone to either spreading existing staff resources too thin or having priorities moved to the back-burner.



## Considering Hinton's Service Delivery Model

While an internal economic development function could certainly be workable, there is nothing unworkable about an external model. Indeed, some of the features of the external model – such as opportunities for greater levels of community engagement, independence from short-term political cycles, and the ability to escape some of the more restrictive elements of the *Municipal Government Act* with respect to economic development practice<sup>14</sup> – are substantive arguments in favour of an arm's-length model.

Ultimately, the recommendation is to invest in an *internal* economic development function that leverages external partners to assist in the delivery of economic development programming and activities in Hinton. Put simply, there should be an economic development expert doing economic development work in Hinton, who can coordinate and work with partners while driving an agenda of specific deliverables that are measurable and for which they would be accountable. External partners would include neighbouring municipalities as well as business partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, land owners and realtors, and others as necessary.

In addition, there is a role to be played by the existing Hinton Regional Economic Development Coalition (HREDC), which has the ability to bring different actors across the community together and remove (or at least bridge) silos. This committee can serve as a forum for collective decision making and prioritization and can be the organization that ensures stakeholders stay faithful to the Economic Development Strategy. The organization also serves as a means of preventing the municipality from being too inward looking, by representing the eyes and ears of the business community. This Coalition resembles the Advisory Committee model discussed in the section above. Its strength is that it is rooted in diverse stakeholders, but its challenge is that it only has limited direct control over any future economic development staff. Efforts will need to be made to ensure HREDC remains an integral part of reviewing and evaluating progress on this strategy.

Finally, there is value to seeking a formalized regional tourism structure to better administer business development, capacity building and marketing in that sector; however, failing to initiate such an organization would further increase the burden on existing resources or a future internal economic development staff member.

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<sup>14</sup> For example, Economic Development Corporations can create partnerships with the private sector with more ease and they can own land, buildings and other development assets, but can get more creative on the deals they want to strike (e.g. selling for less than market value if the development will substantially change economic prospects).



## Strategic Communications Considerations

Having the above framework is important for implementing a strong economic development strategy, but a critical piece is conveying the appropriate messages to different audiences about the strategy. The framework below identifies several key audiences to consider when announcing and implementing the strategy. It also shows what the message or call to action needs to be for each, the appropriate media channels or means of outreach, and the specific trigger that is sought to generate buy-in or support.

**Figure 9: Strategic Communications Considerations Regarding the Economic Development Strategy**

Audience	Message/Call to Action	Means/Media	Trigger
Local residents	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Our Economic Development Strategy is ready for lift-off! It is designed to leverage our strengths and build new and exciting opportunities for smart, innovative growth.</li><li>2. Our Economic Development Strategy addresses the pressing need for additional housing for our residents and to attract enough workers for the many jobs we have and will be creating.</li><li>3. Our Economic Development Strategy revives the Hinton First initiative; you can be a part of it; help support Hinton First!</li><li>4. Our Economic Development Strategy sets a path for attracting more businesses and the retail options that you want!</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Press release; Hinton website; Facebook; Instagram; Twitter</li><li>2. Press release; Hinton website; Facebook; Instagram; Twitter</li><li>3. Facebook; Instagram; semi-annual Google campaign targeting local IP addresses; Twitter</li><li>4. Press release; Hinton website; Facebook; Instagram; Twitter</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Visit our website for more details.</li><li>2. Visit our website for more details.</li><li>3. Follow #hintonfirst on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter; show your #hintonfirst pride</li><li>4. Visit our website for more details.</li></ol>



Audience	Message/Call to Action	Means/Media	Trigger
Local small businesses and entrepreneurs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Hinton has a new Economic Development Strategy. It is configured to put our existing businesses and their needs front and centre. We will continually strive to understand and address our business community's top concerns, and will keep businesses informed about what we are doing to better meet their needs.</li><li>2. We will be proactively engaging our business community through a number of new initiatives designed to ensure their continued success and growth.</li><li>3. Help be a local champion for Hinton First to keep money in our community. What are you doing to make Hinton First?</li><li>4. Are you an entrepreneur that operates from a home business? Come meet and network with other entrepreneurs that may share similar or complimentary interests!</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Press release (same as above); direct email outreach via existing directory; partner sharing (chamber; Community Futures)</li><li>3. Press release (same as above); direct email outreach via existing directory; partner sharing (chamber; Community Futures)</li><li>4. Facebook; Instagram; Twitter</li><li>5. Targeted Google ad campaign; public bulletin boards; existing business network outreach; partner coordination (Chamber; Community Futures)</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Direct engagement; visit our website (dedicated landing page); Check out our website for more details; direct engagement</li><li>2. Direct engagement; visit our website (dedicated landing page); Contact: name, phone number, email</li><li>3. #champion; #hintonfirst; businesses supporting businesses; like and share your story; visitation schedule</li><li>4. Direct engagement; visit our website (dedicated landing page); Contact: name, phone number, email</li></ol>



Audience	Message/Call to Action	Means/Media	Trigger
Local large employers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. We want to work with you to address housing challenges for your labour force. Be part of the conversation!</li><li>2. Hinton may have local businesses that are ready to fill your supply or service needs. Talk to our economic development team so we can put you in touch with local options.</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Printed media at open-house or business visitation; email follow-up</li><li>2. Printed media at open-house or business visitation; email follow-up</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Direct engagement</li><li>2. Direct engagement</li></ol>
Investors: Industry	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Investment made easy! Our one window approach and concierge services are designed to get you set up and running quickly through our one-stop-shop</li><li>2. Explore our detailed and up-to-date site selection tools and resources including inventories, infrastructure, and our customized cost-calculator</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Targeted outreach; print materials (investment profile); trade shows</li><li>2. Targeted outreach; print materials (community profile); trade shows</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Lead generation; business referrals; visit our website (dedicated landing page)</li><li>2. Lead generation; business referrals; visit our website (dedicated landing page)</li></ol>
Investors: Commercial	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. We're getting ready to grow! Don't miss out! The Town of Hinton is pursuing an aggressive growth strategy to attract more residents and labour to fill our existing and future needs! Come take advantage of our growing and affluent population!</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Targeted outreach; print materials (investment profile); business referrals; trade shows</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Lead generation; visit our website (dedicated landing page)</li></ol>



Audience	Message/Call to Action	Means/Media	Trigger
Investors: Lone Eagles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>[External] Hinton is your home office in paradise, on the door step to the Rockies within hours of international air travel and all the local amenities and broadband to meet your personal and professional needs. Let us get you set up for success in Hinton!</li><li>[Local residents] Ready to start your new home business? Let us get you started!</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Targeted Google campaign in Edmonton Metro region</li><li>Facebook; local bulletin boards; local partners (Chamber; Community Futures); open-house or other public-facing community events</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Visit our website (dedicated landing page); Contact: name, phone number, email</li><li>Visit our website (dedicated landing page); Contact: name, phone number, email</li></ol>
Investors: Tourism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>With an average of 3,500 monthly visitors, and even more people passing through, come to Hinton on the doorstep to the Rockies and give tourists another great reason to stay! Talk to us about opportunities ripe for development in Hinton and in our own backyard!</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Targeted outreach; print materials (investment profile); business referrals; trade shows</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Lead generation; visit our website (dedicated landing page)</li></ol>





## Appendix A – Background Research

### Economic Base Analysis

The following analysis is designed to examine the socio-economic characteristics of Hinton's economy and identify areas of competitive strength and weakness.

- Statistics Canada, Canadian Census 2011 and 2016
- Statistics Canada, National Household Survey (NHS), 2011
- Statistics Canada, Canadian Business Counts, December 2017

In addition to studying Hinton, comparators used in the economic base analysis include the following:

- Town of Edson
- Yellowhead County
- Province of Alberta

### Demographic Portrait

Since 2001, Hinton's population has fluctuated, climbing from 9,401 in 2001 to 9,738 in 2006, declining to 9,640 by 2011 and growing again to 9,882 by 2016. Despite the variation, Hinton has ultimately grown by 5.1%, which is approximately half the rate of Edson and Yellowhead County and far slower than that experienced across the province.

**Figure 10: Population Change, 2001-2016**

Characteristics	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County	Alberta
Population 2001	9,401	7,585	9,881	2,974,807
Population 2006	9,738	8,098	10,045	3,290,350
Population 2011	9,640	8,475	10,469	3,645,257
Population 2016	9,882	8,414	10,995	4,067,175
Growth Rate	5.1%	10.9%	11.3%	36.7%

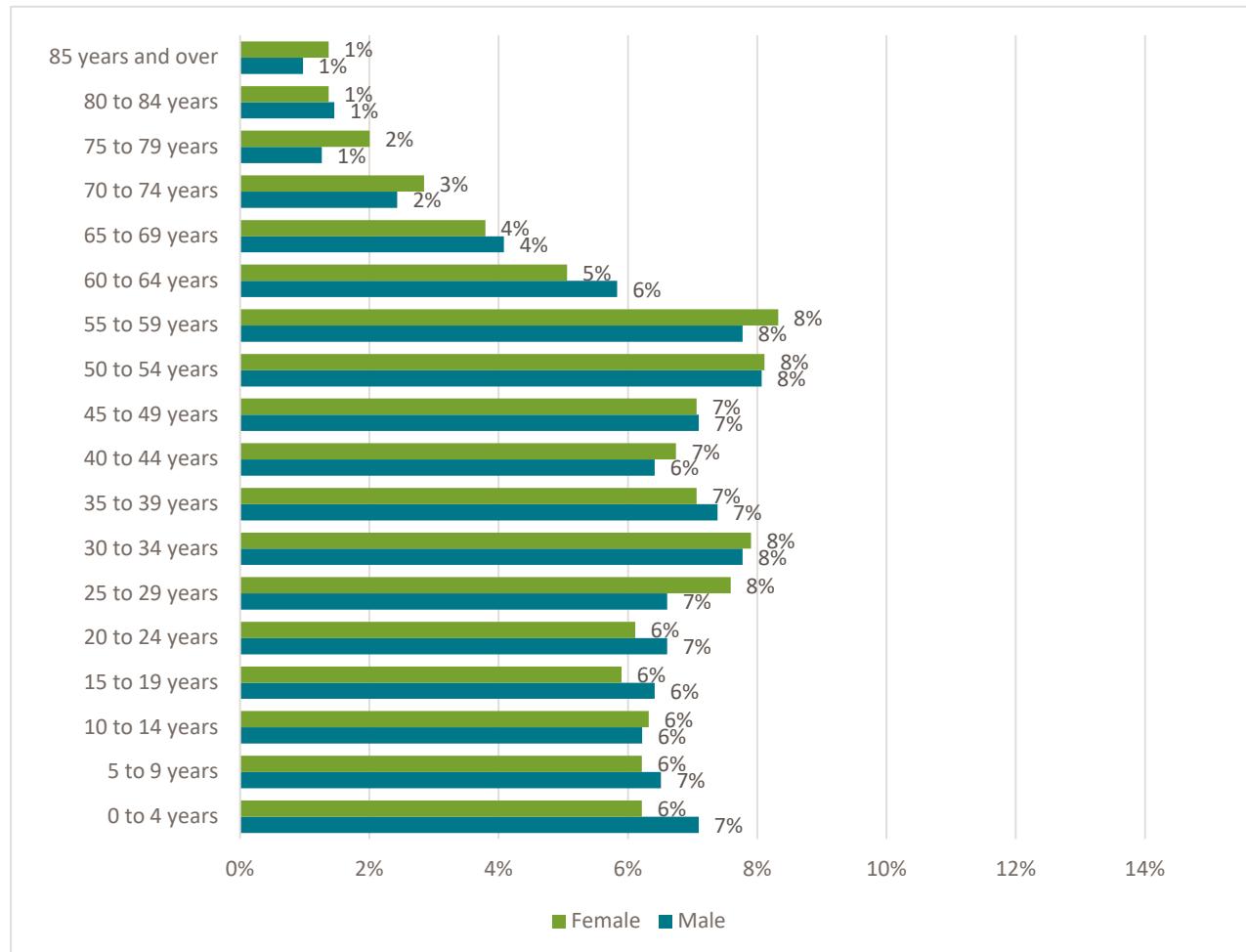
Source: Statistics Canada; 2006 Census Profile, 2011 Census Profile, 2016 Census Profile.



Figure 10 shows the distribution of age-groups. With 5,145 males and 4,745 females, there are about 400 more males than females in Hinton. Despite the asymmetry, age distributions, as shown in the figure below, suggest there is not much variation in any one age group, with fewer than 2% difference between male or female for any one age bracket.

Meanwhile, Figure 11 shows that Hinton's median age is slightly older than the provincial median at 37.2 compared to 36.7. More proximately, Hinton's median age is lower older than Edson's, but is notably lower than Yellowhead County's median.

**Figure 11: Age Characteristics, Percentage of Overall Population – Detailed Categories**



Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile.

**Figure 12: Median Age of Population**

Year	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County	Alberta
2011	36.4	35.1	43.5	36.5
2016	37.2	35.9	43.0	36.7

Source: Statistics Canada; 2011 National Household Survey Profile, 2016 Census Profile.



## Dwelling Characteristics

The vast majority of housing in Hinton are single detached (66%) followed by row houses (11%) and semi-detached (7%). Certainly, there is a greater variety of housing options in Hinton than Edson or Yellowhead County, but is similar in some respects to the Alberta distribution.

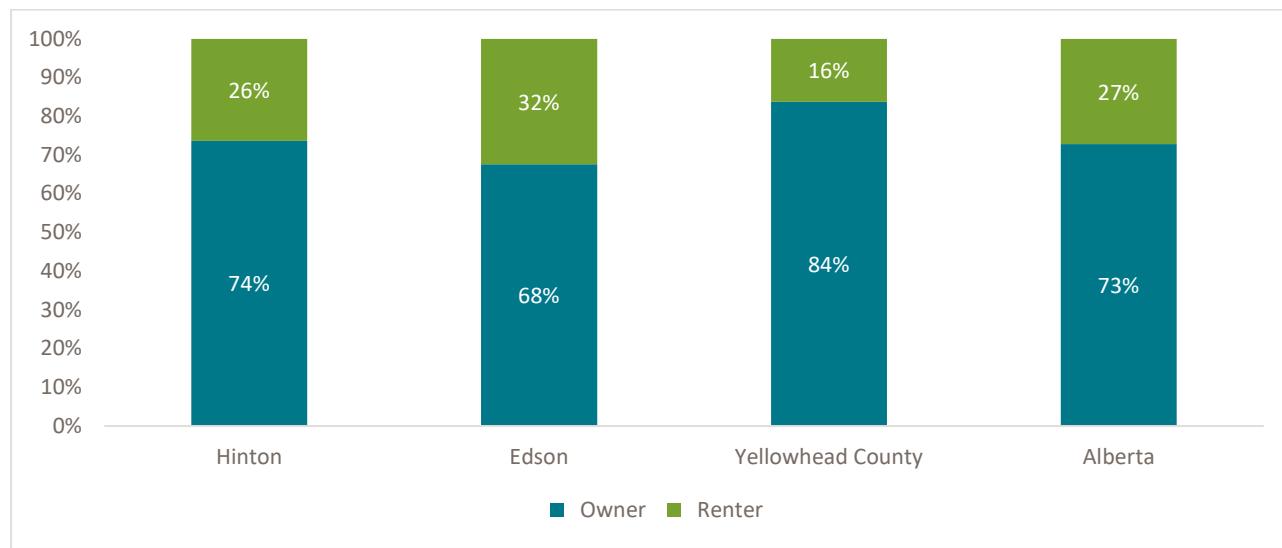
**Figure 13: Occupied Dwellings by Type, Percentage of Overall Population**

	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County	Alberta
Single-detached house	66%	69%	96%	64%
Apartment in a building that has five or more storeys	0%	0%	0%	4%
Semi-detached house	7%	3%	0%	6%
Row house	11%	6%	0%	8%
Apartment or flat in a duplex	1%	2%	0%	3%
Apartment in a building that has fewer than five storeys	15%	20%	3%	15%
Other single-attached house	0%	1%	1%	0%

Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile.

In Hinton, 26% of dwellings are occupied by renters compared to 32% in Edson. Edson's larger rental population is made evident when reflecting on the fact that 20% of its dwellings are apartments in buildings that have fewer than five storeys, compared to 15% in Hinton.

**Figure 14: Dwelling Owners Compared to Renters, 2016.**



Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile.



The median value of dwellings in Hinton has grown by about 10% between 2011 and 2016, compared to 7% for Edson. Housing values were nearly identical in 2011, but Edson's did not grow as much as Hinton's. Meanwhile, median monthly shelter costs have remained similar in Hinton and Edson. Interestingly, compared to Yellowhead County, average dwelling values in the county are higher than Hinton or Edson, while rent costs have remained lower than the two towns. Generally, cost competitiveness is expected to remain similar for Hinton and Edson into the foreseeable future.

**Figure 15: Average Dwelling and Shelter Costs for Rented Dwellings**

Variable	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County	Alberta
Median value of dwellings 2011	\$299,842	\$299,027	\$300,792	\$349,684
Median value of dwellings 2016	\$330,063	\$318,759	\$349,834	\$400,104
Median monthly shelter costs for rented dwellings 2011	\$950	\$920	\$751	\$1,017
Median monthly shelter costs for rented dwellings 2016	\$1,078	\$1,054	\$953	\$1,243

Source: Statistics Canada; 2011 National Household Survey Profile, 2016 Census Profile.

## Income

Looking at income, median individual income has grown by about 17% in Hinton since 2011, with Edson growing at a quicker pace to nearly the exact level as Edson, but consisting of a larger growth rate at 23%. In both cases, individual income levels are higher than the county and provincial averages.

**Figure 16: Median Total Individual Income**

Individual Income	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County	Alberta
Median total income in 2011 among recipients	\$38,111	\$36,117	\$33,284	\$36,306
Median total income in 2015 among recipients	\$44,490	\$44,249	\$39,984	\$42,717

Source: Statistics Canada; 2011 National Household Survey Profile, 2016 Census Profile.

Shifting to the subject of median household income, Hinton has had higher median household incomes than all comparators; however, Edson's household income has grown by 31% compared to Hinton's growth rate of 10%.

**Figure 17: Median Household Income**

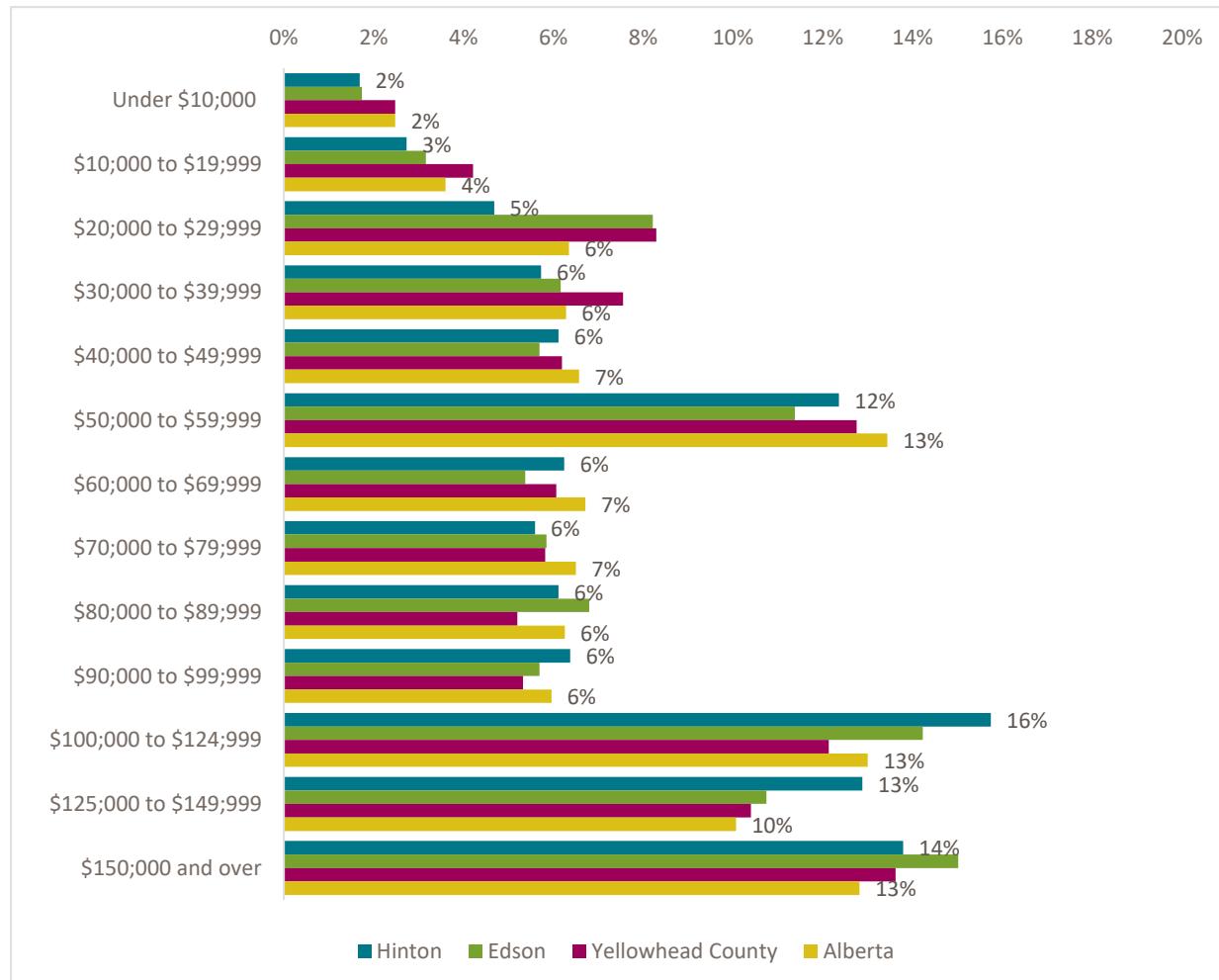
Household Income	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County	Alberta
Median total income of households in 2010	\$90,668	\$74,404	\$81,261	\$78,632
Median total income of households in 2015	\$100,096	\$97,664	\$92,544	\$93,835

Source: Statistics Canada; 2011 National Household Survey Profile, 2016 Census Profile.



In terms of distribution, Figure 17 shows that there are notable clusters of households in the \$50,000 to \$59,999 income range, followed by notable dips until the \$100,000 and above ranges. In most cases Hinton's income bands are within 1% of comparators. For the first four income bands, i.e. below \$50,000, Hinton is lower than its regional comparators, indicating a slightly lower proportion of lower income families.

**Figure 18: Household Income Distribution, Percentage of Overall Population**



Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile.



## Education

Education attainment can be looked at as an important descriptor of labour force capacity. The figure below summarizes skilled labour proportions for comparator areas, which is composed of those people that have completed an apprenticeship, college or university degree, diploma or certificate. Broadly, skilled labour has been on the rise across the province, and the trend is reflected regionally as well. Hinton and Edson had similar levels in 2011 at 30% and 29% respectively, but by 2016 Hinton's skilled labour force was more significant at 46%, compared to Edson's 42%, with Yellowhead growing from a level of 24% to 41% by 2016. The whole region lags behind the provincial average, which is most likely due to large urban centres such as Greater Edmonton and Greater Calgary which tend to have higher proportions of skilled labour.

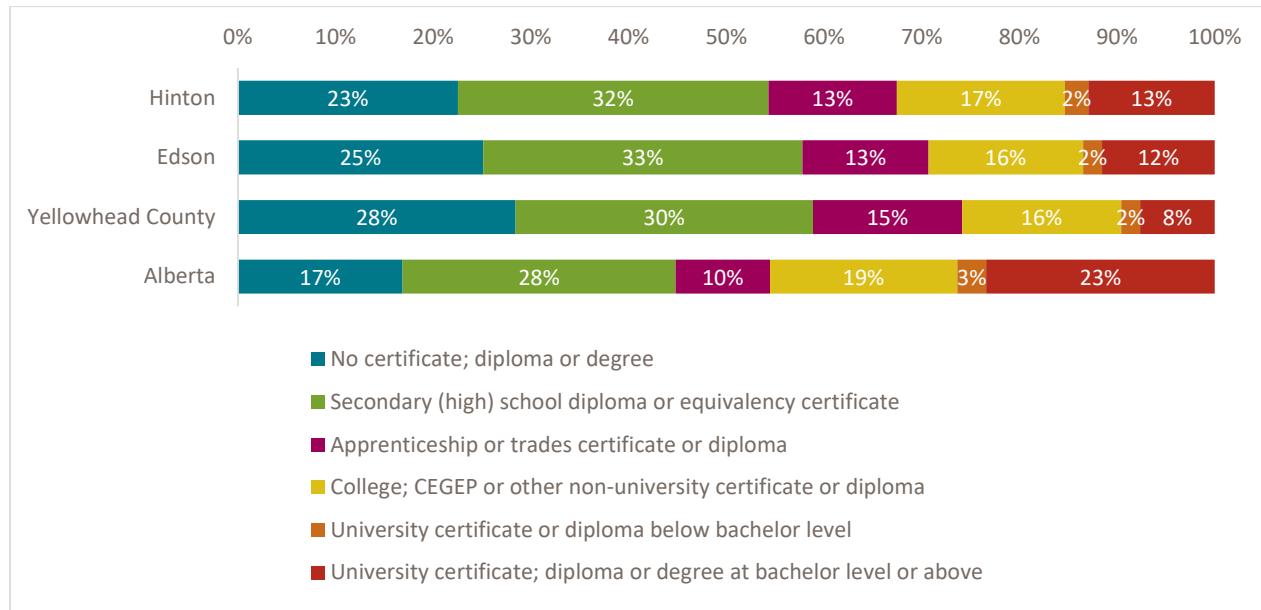
**Figure 19: Proportion of Population (Ages 15 and Over) with Post-Secondary or Apprenticeship Education**

Year	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County	Alberta
Skilled Labour 2011	30%	29%	24%	43%
Skilled Labour 2016	46%	42%	41%	55%

Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile.

As shown in Figure 20, Hinton's level of apprenticeship and trades people is similar to the rest of the region, but it is also slightly higher than the province. There are also lower proportions of people in the region that have a university certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor level or higher, with Hinton's position being slightly stronger than the others, but still lagging the province by about 10%. There is a possibility that the region is suffering some degree of brain-drain from people that leave for post-secondary educations and do not return to the area after their studies have been completed.

**Figure 20: Highest Level of Education Attainment (Ages 15 and Over), % of the Population – Detailed Categories**





People's major fields of study in Hinton are in architecture, engineering, and related technologies, which is notably higher than the province, but mid-range among local comparators. Other strong fields of education are business, management, and public administration; and health and related fields. Something noteworthy is the difference in business, management, and public administration levels between Hinton (15%) and Edson (20%). As will be seen later, Hinton has fairly strong retail and personal services sector, but Edson seems to have more professional services, which may be explained by this difference in concentration levels in education backgrounds related to business, management and public administration.

**Figure 21: Major Field of Study (Ages 25 to 64), Percentage of the Population**

Major Field of Study	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County	Alberta
Education	7%	7%	7%	6%
Visual and performing arts, and communications technologies	2%	1%	1%	3%
Humanities	2%	4%	1%	4%
Social and behavioural sciences and law	6%	5%	5%	9%
Business, management, and public administration	15%	20%	14%	21%
Physical and life sciences and technologies	3%	3%	2%	4%
Mathematics, computer, and information sciences	2%	2%	2%	4%
Architecture, engineering, and related technologies	33%	30%	40%	26%
Agriculture, natural resources, and conservation	5%	6%	4%	2%
Health and related fields	14%	14%	12%	15%
Personal, protective, and transportation services	9%	8%	10%	5%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile



## Mobility

The movement of people within a community or to the community from somewhere else constitutes mobility. Statistics Canada tracks this in two ways, by asking if a household has moved within the past year and asking if a household has moved within the past five years. As of 2016, the majority of people in Hinton, Edson, and Yellowhead County had either stayed where they were five years earlier, or moved somewhere in the same community. For Hinton, this group constitutes a combined 64%, which is similar to Edson's 60%, but notably lower than Yellowhead County's 73% (which is not surprising, given the largely agricultural character of the rural county). Across all comparators, 7% External Migrants (i.e. new people from outside Canada) approximates the same level as the province's 6%.

**Figure 22: Mobility Characteristics 5 years ago, 2016**



Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile



## Labour Force

According to the standard definition employed by Statistics Canada, the employed are persons having a job or business, whereas the unemployed are without work, are available for work, and are actively seeking work. Together the unemployed and the employed constitute the labour force<sup>15</sup>.

Between 2011 and 2016 Hinton's labour force declined by 55 people, from 5,825 to 5,770, which translates to about 1%. Similar declines were noted for Edson and Yellowhead County, largely influenced by the effects of an economic recession and sharp decline and subsequent plateau in oil and gas values between 2014 and 2016 most notably.

**Figure 23: Labour Force Size**

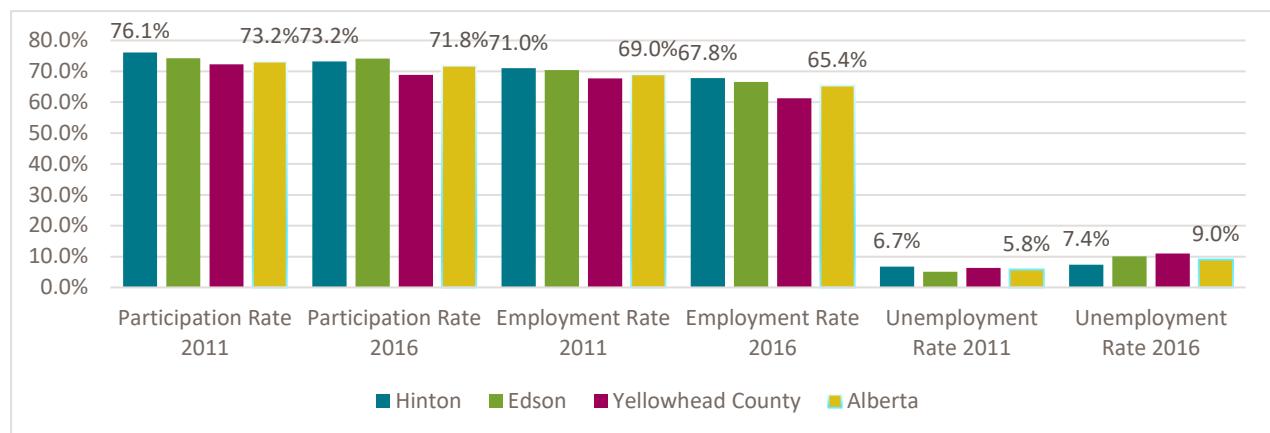
	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County
2011	5,825	4,960	6,095
2016	5,770	4,945	6,035
Net (+/-)	-55	-15	-60

Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile.

Unemployment rates grew by just under 1% between 2011 and 2016, again reflecting the impact of the recession. Notably, Hinton weathered the period more successfully than Edson or Yellowhead County, presumably because of a slightly more diversified economy that was less directly affected by oil and gas sector changes.

Also notable is that the participation rate declined slightly in Hinton, while it grew in Edson during the period. The participation rate is key because out of the theoretical total of people that should be capable of working (aged 15 and over) it says what proportion is actually either employed or actively looking for employment. Therefore, the results suggest that in Hinton there was a smaller proportion of people that were either working or looking for work (keep in mind that people looking for work can include those receiving employment insurance). For Edson, participation rates increased. For Yellowhead County, they declined, from 72.3% to 68.8%.

**Figure 24: Labour Force Status, Percentage of Population**



Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile.

<sup>15</sup> Statistics Canada, date modified 2008-12-01: [www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-004-x/def/4153361-eng.htm](http://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-004-x/def/4153361-eng.htm)



Turning to the class of worker, 91% of the labour force in Hinton are employees, whereas 9% are self-employed. The proportions are similar for Edson, but notably different in Yellowhead County, where agriculture tends to be associated with large numbers of self-employed individuals.

**Figure 25: Class of Worker Ratio**

	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County	Alberta
Employee	91%	90%	74%	88%
Self-employed	9%	10%	26%	12%

Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile.

## Employment by Industry

Most notably in the figure below, declines in employment are evident in mining, quarrying, and oil and gas (-220 people), followed by transportation and warehousing (-85), education services (-40), and health and social services (-40). Notable is the impact that declines in oil and gas likely had on its supply chains, such as transportation and warehousing. Sectors that saw notable growth over this period include administrative and support and waste management (+90), manufacturing (+85), public administration (+55), and construction and accommodation and food services (+45).

**Figure 26: Employed Labour Force by Industry (Number of People)**

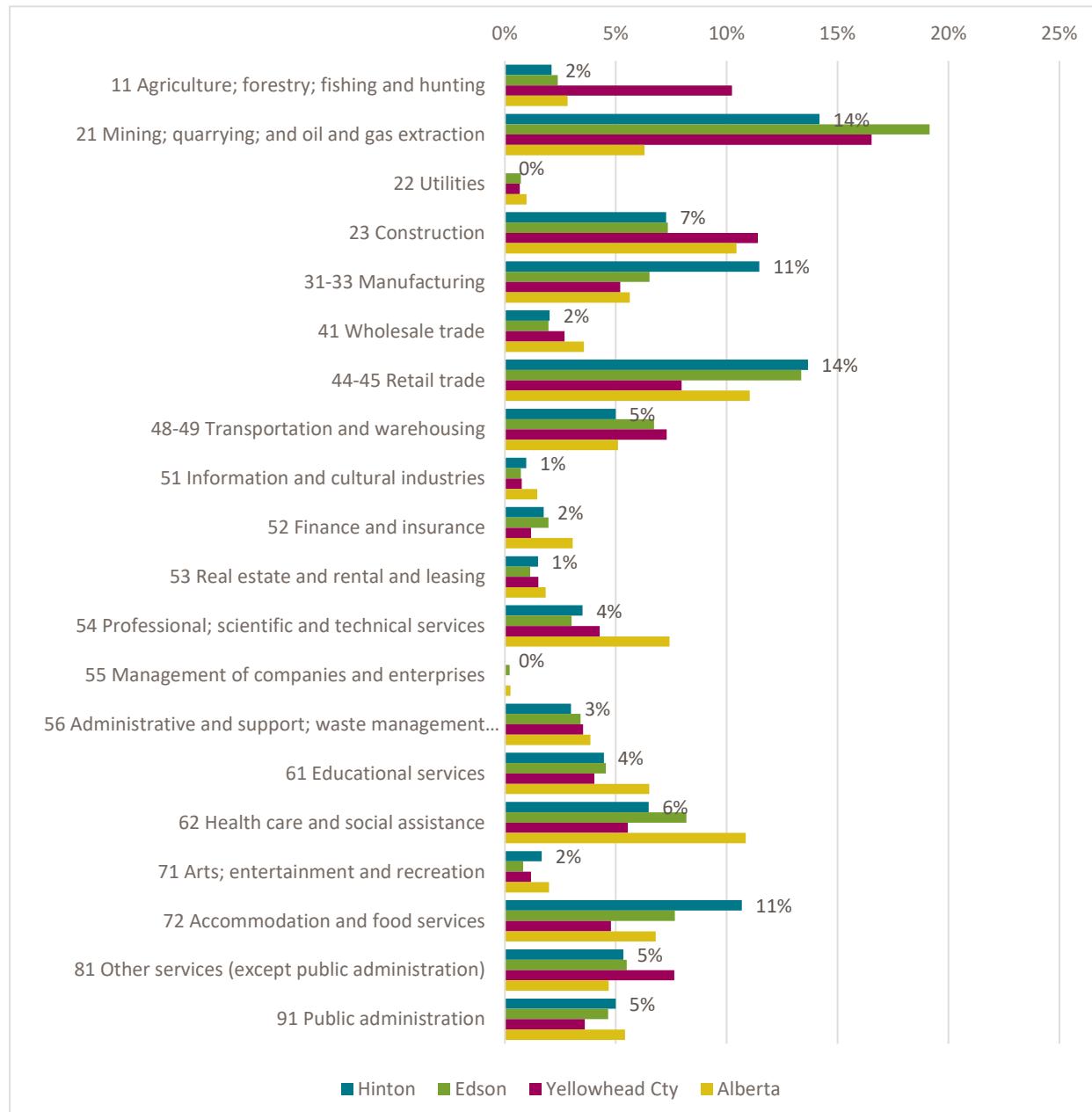
North American Industry Classification System (2012)	2011	2016	Dif. (+/-)
11 Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	110	120	10
21 Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	1,030	810	-220
22 Utilities	0	0	0
23 Construction	370	415	45
31-33 Manufacturing	570	655	85
41 Wholesale trade	110	115	5
44-45 Retail trade	770	780	10
48-49 Transportation and warehousing	370	285	-85
51 Information and cultural industries	20	55	35
52 Finance and insurance	90	100	10
53 Real estate and rental and leasing	140	85	-55
54 Professional, scientific, and technical services	200	200	0
55 Management of companies and enterprises	0	0	0
56 Admin./support, waste mgmt., and remediation services	80	170	90
61 Educational services	295	255	-40
62 Health care and social assistance	410	370	-40
71 Arts, entertainment, and recreation	85	95	10
72 Accommodation and food services	565	610	45
81 Other services (except public administration)	270	305	35
91 Public administration	230	285	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,715</b>	<b>5,710</b>	<b>-5</b>

Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile.



Looking comparatively to Edson and Yellowhead County, Hinton has higher concentrations of employment in manufacturing, retail, accommodation and food services, indicating it is a bit of a commercial hub. Meanwhile, it lags behind comparators in mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction, transportation and warehousing, other services (except public administration).

**Figure 27: Employed Labour Force by Industry, Percentage of Labour Force**



Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile.



Despite the insight gleaned from the above, further analytical tools allow for an assessment of industry competitiveness relative to the province, and these can prove insightful for understanding what industries make sense to promote for further growth or monitor for potential declines.

A location quotient (LQ) analysis explains which industries employ a competitively higher proportion of people than the province. A score of 1.25 or greater represents a sector of relative strength, a score between 0.75 and 1.25 represents a sector that is on par with the province (1.0 represents perfect parity), and a score below 0.75 represents a sector of comparative weakness. Also pertinent are the trends over time and their direction, which indicate that potential opportunities or threats need to be addressed:

- Growing – Continue to build on the momentum and consider supply-chain gaps to grow related sectors
- Stable – Continue to monitor, encourage investment attraction and business retention and expansion
- Declining – Focus on business retention for existing businesses and monitor broader market trends and potential threats to local businesses. Intervention is necessary.

Based on the above considerations, the following observations emerge from the data in the figure below:

- Manufacturing is experiencing growth in competitiveness from LQ 1.69 to 2.04. Moreover, manufacturing is a sector that tends to have high multiplier effects, which means that growth in that sector likely also leads to grow in some other sectors that support it directly or indirectly. For example, moderate gains in transportation, construction, and retail may be a result of increased local spending power thanks to growth in manufacturing.
- Another area of existing competitive strength includes mining and oil and gas extraction (LQ 2.25), which also tends to have high multiplier effects in other sectors, has seen declines in relative competitiveness. Vista's new mine near Hinton will help but safeguards may be required to prevent further slippage in the sector and to regain competitiveness.
- Strength in accommodation and food services is indicative of the impact of tourism commerce on the community, but some other areas of tourism are less competitive than would traditionally be expected, such as retail (which is almost in a position of strength at 1.24) and arts, entertainment, and recreation (which is moderate at 0.84, though growing). Encouraging growth in these two sectors in areas that grow the tourism value proposition may help to compliment strengths in accommodation and food services.
- Areas of concern include transportation and warehousing (a decline from 1.29 to 0.98) and real estate and rental and leasing (a decline from 1.28 to 0.81). Also, pertinent to many sub-sectors affiliated with the knowledge economy, the professional, scientific, and technical services remain consistently low (0.45 to 0.47), but may represent a latent opportunity yet to be capitalized upon.
- The fact that sectors such as other services, professional, scientific, or technical services, or health care and social services are generally on par or below par with the province indicates that the area may be a slight hub for retail-related commerce but not for personal or professional services, which are likely being accommodated by a neighbouring community, such as Edson, if not others in the Greater Edmonton Area.



Figure 28: Employment Location Quotients – Concentration of Employed Labour Force by Industry

Industry - North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) 2012	LQ 2011	Strength	LQ 2016	Strength	Change	Trend
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	0.66	Low	0.74	Low	0.09	Growing
Mining and oil and gas extraction	2.76	High	2.25	High	-0.50	Declining
Utilities	0.00	None	0.00	None	0.00	None
Construction	0.69	Low	0.70	Low	0.01	Stable
Manufacturing	1.69	High	2.04	High	0.35	Growing
Wholesale trade	0.45	Low	0.57	Low	0.11	Growing
Retail trade	1.23	Moderate	1.24	Moderate	0.01	Stable
Transportation and warehousing	1.29	High	0.98	Moderate	-0.31	Declining
Information and cultural industries	0.21	Low	0.66	Low	0.45	Growing
Finance and insurance	0.48	Low	0.57	Low	0.09	Growing
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.28	High	0.81	Moderate	-0.46	Declining
Professional, scientific, and technical services	0.45	Low	0.47	Low	0.02	Stable
Management of companies and enterprises	0.00	None	0.00	None	0.00	Stable
Administrative and support, waste management, and remediation services	0.40	Low	0.77	Moderate	0.37	Growing
Educational services	0.76	Moderate	0.69	Low	-0.08	Declining
Health care and social assistance	0.72	Low	0.60	Low	-0.13	Declining
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	0.78	Moderate	0.84	Moderate	0.06	Growing
Accommodation and food services	1.64	High	1.57	High	-0.07	Declining
Other services (except public administration)	0.97	Moderate	1.14	Moderate	0.17	Growing
Public administration	0.65	Low	0.92	Moderate	0.27	Growing

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, 2011; Census Profile, 2016. Adapted by MDB Insight.

Figure 29 presents the results of another analytical tool called a **shift-share analysis**. The shift-share articulates the factors which drive changes in employment through three primary considerations:

- **Reference Area Growth Effect:** The impact that changes in the overall broader economy at the provincial level have had on local employment in a given sector, leading to an increase or decrease in local employment.
- **Industrial Mix Effect:** The impact that changes among different industries of the economy have had on local employment in a given sector, leading to an increase or decrease in local employment).
- **Differential Shift:** The impact that local factors have had on increases or decreases in local employment (i.e. changes that cannot be explained by those in the reference area growth effect or industrial mix effect).



The data below indicates the following:

- Overall, local drivers have been the largest change to employment in Hinton, with a decline of 483 jobs between 2011 and 2016. Overall declines have been tempered by increases in local employment influenced by changes in the broader provincial economy, with an increase in 478 jobs over the same period. The industrial mix effect had a net neutral impact on local employment, with some industries declining in employment (such as mining and oil and gas, manufacturing, and wholesale trade) and others increasing (such as health care and social services and accommodation and food services). Overall, taking together the reference area growth effect, industrial mix effect and differential shift, there has been a net decrease in jobs of 5 people. Most striking from the results is that despite the economic recession which hit Canada most profoundly beginning around 2014, the broader economic impacts were not as directly related to local decreases in employment; a testament to Hinton's diversified economy. The most negative change was instead influenced by local factors, such as the decisions of business owners, head quarters, or other factors, which may be more easily mitigated in the future through increased business retention and expansion programming.
- Mining and oil and gas extraction increases were due largely to differential shift impacts (i.e. local drivers) (-265), followed partially by declines due to changes within the industry (-41), but some losses were mitigated by increases in employment due to changes in the broader economy (+86). Declines in transportation (-85) were entirely due to local drivers (-122), which were offset by modest growth due to area growth effect (+31) and industrial mix effect (+6). Declines of equal values in health care and social services (-40) and educational services (-40) were influenced by slightly different combinations of factors, with health and social services being influenced negatively only due to local factors (-118) and increased by 43, due to industrial mix effect, and by 34, due to reference area growth effect.
- Increases in manufacturing were due to a mix of local (+66) and provincial reference area growth effect (+48), which were collectively reduced slightly due to declines of 29 jobs due to industrial mix effect. Overall, the sector grew by jobs. Also driving strong job growth were increases in all three categories (reference area, industrial mix, differential shift) of administrative and support, waste management and remediation services (+90). Other strong sectors were public administration (+55), mainly due to differential shift and area growth effect gains (+19 and +66, respectively), and accommodation and food services, similarly due to growth in (+23 and +23, respectively). Modest declines in industrial mix effect impacted both sectors, but not significantly enough to lead to a net decline.



Figure 29: Hinton Alberta Shift Share Analysis

North American Industry Classification System (2012)	Area Growth Effect	Industrial Mix Effect	Differential Shift	Total
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	9	-4	5	10
Mining and oil and gas extraction	86	-41	-265	-220
Utilities	0	0	0	0
Construction	31	45	-31	45
Manufacturing	48	-29	66	85
Wholesale trade	9	-20	15	5
Retail trade	64	5	-59	10
Transportation and warehousing	31	6	-122	-85
Information and cultural industries	2	-3	36	35
Finance and insurance	8	-7	9	10
Real estate and rental and leasing	12	-7	-60	-55
Professional, scientific and technical services	17	-10	-7	0
Management of companies and enterprises	0	0	0	0
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	7	9	74	90
Educational services	25	-13	-52	-40
Health care and social assistance	34	43	-118	-40
Arts, entertainment and recreation	7	4	-1	10
Accommodation and food services	47	78	-81	45
Other services (except public administration)	23	-10	23	35
Public administration	19	-30	66	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-483</b>	<b>-5</b>

Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile. Adapted by MDB Insight.



## Commuting Patterns

Commuting patterns identify the shifts in the labour force as people travel from a place of residence to a place of work. The next three figures contribute to an understanding of the commuting patterns of the region. These measurements are applicable only to people that commute to a usual place of work, whether it be a factory, school, store, or other brick and mortar location, including a home office. It does not apply to commuters that do not have a usual fixed address, such as seasonal labour associated with certain sectors (e.g. agriculture), or construction (where the site changes for each new construct).

Hinton and Edson have similar proportions of people that both live and work in the same community (i.e. “commute within census sub-division of residence”), at 89% and 88%, respectively. The remainder commute within the same census division (which in this region is Division 14).

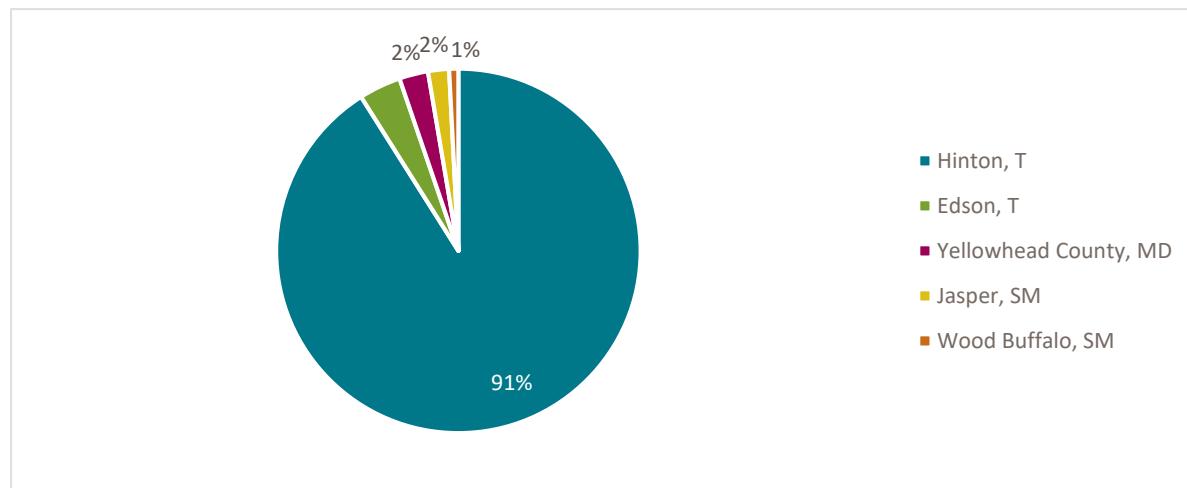
**Figure 30: Commuting Destination for Employed Labour Force**

Commute Category	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County
Commute within census subdivision (CSD) of residence	89%	88%	26%
Commute to a different census subdivision (CSD) within census division (CD) of residence	6%	8%	56%
Commute to a different census subdivision (CSD) and census division (CD) within province or territory of residence	5%	3%	18%
Commute to a different province or territory	0%	0%	0%

Source: Statistics Canada; 2016 Census Profile.

The next two figures indicate the workforce imported to and exported from Hinton. Regarding imported workforce, 91% of the people that commute to Hinton for work already live there, while an additional 4% come from Edson, 3% from Yellowhead County, and 2% from Jasper.

**Figure 31: Work Force Imported to Hinton**

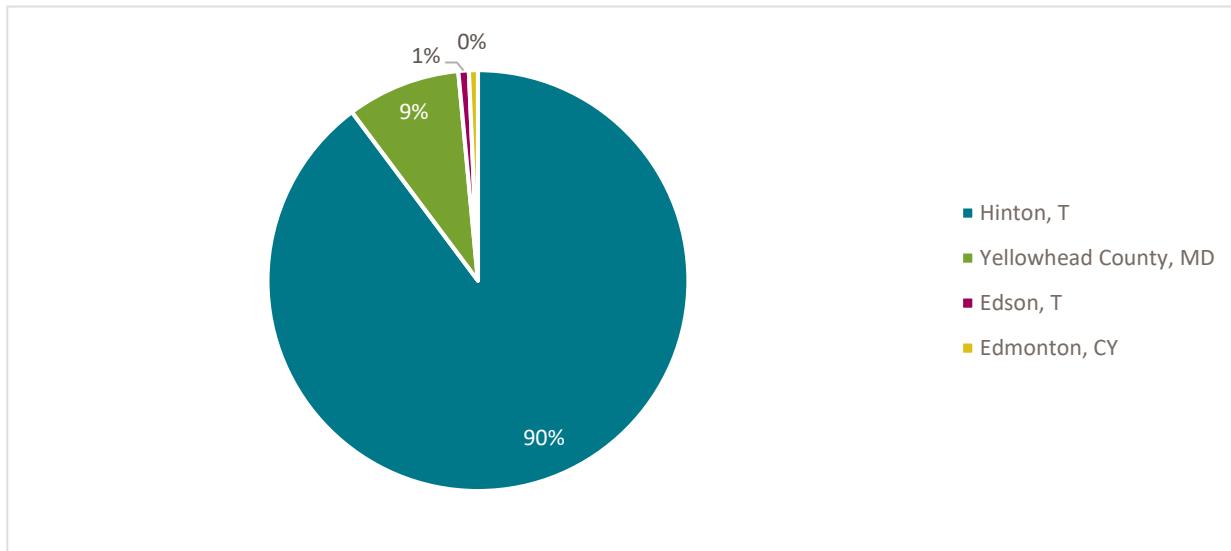


Source: Statistics Canada; Commuting Flows 2016, Table No. 98-400-X2016325.



Turning to those that live in Hinton, 90% of those that live in Hinton also work in Hinton, with the remainder travelling to Yellowhead County (9%) and Edson (1%). Fewer than 1% work in Edmonton (0.4%).

**Figure 32: Work Force Exported from Hinton**



Source: Statistics Canada; Commuting Flows 2016, Table No. 98-400-X2016325.

## Business Counts

Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts provides a record of business establishments by industry sector and size. This data is collected from the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA).

The Canadian Business Counts data records business counts as either "Without Employees" or "With Employees." The establishments in the "Without Employees" category include the self-employed (i.e. those who do not maintain an employee payroll, but may have a workforce consisting of contracted workers, family members or business owners). It should be noted that the Canadian Business Counts data use the Canada Revenue Agency as a primary resource in establishment counts; therefore, businesses without a business number or indicating annual sales less than \$30,000 are not included.

Those businesses with employees are further divided into group sizes. The largest group is 200 employees or more. Typically, Canadian Business Counts have a 200 to 499 group and 500 employees or more group, but these have been combined into 200+ to save on space and because there were only 4 businesses in that group; all of which came from the 200 to 499 group. Results are presented in the figure below.



Figure 33: Business Counts in Hinton by Industry and Number of Employees

North American Industry Classification System (2012)	Total	Without Employees	With Employees	1-4	5-9	10-19	20-49	50-99	100-199	200+
		Employees	Employees	Employees	Employees	Employees	Employees	Employees	Employees	Employees
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,318</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>
Unclassified	127	95	32	28	1	2	1	0	0	0
<b>Sub-total, classified</b>	<b>1,191</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>562</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	67	36	31	23	4	2	2	0	0	0
Mining and oil and gas extraction	63	35	28	17	1	4	4	0	1	1
Utilities	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	166	81	85	59	18	2	3	2	0	1
Manufacturing	23	10	13	8	1	1	1	0	0	2
Wholesale trade	22	5	17	10	3	0	3	1	0	0
Retail trade	117	30	87	26	38	13	6	4	0	0
Transportation and warehousing	100	49	51	34	9	3	5	0	0	0
Information and cultural industries	6	0	6	1	2	3	0	0	0	0
Finance and insurance	43	34	9	3	3	3	0	0	0	0
Real estate and rental and leasing	174	147	27	23	2	1T	1	0	0	0
Professional, scientific, and technical services	96	55	41	25	12	1	3	0	0	0
Management of companies and enterprises	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Administrative and support, waste management, and remediation services	41	21	20	15	5	0	0	0	0	0
Educational services	6	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Health care and social assistance	53	19	34	18	6	4	3	0	3	0
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	16	12	4	1	2	0	1	0	0	0
Accommodation and food services	61	18	43	6	9	10	12	4	2	0
Other services (except public administration)	130	69	61	42	9	7	2	1	0	0
Public administration	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
	<b>1,190</b>	<b>629</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>

Source: Statistics Canada; Canadian Business Counts December 2017. Adapted by MDB Insight.



Focussing primarily at the “Sub-Total, classified” numbers and industry breakdowns, the analysis has found that:

- Just over half of all businesses have no employees (52%), with four businesses that have employees employing more than 200 people. Two that employ more than 200 people are in manufacturing, another is in mining and oil and gas, and the other is in construction.
- Other sectors with large businesses include accommodations (18 firms employing more than 20 people), retail (10 employing more than 20), and construction (6 employing more than 20)
- The largest sectors without employees are real estate and rental and leasing (147 businesses), construction (81), and professional, scientific and technical services (55)

The figure below a takes the distribution of businesses with employees and compares them to Edson, Yellowhead County and Alberta.

- Hinton has higher proportions of businesses in comparison to Edson and Yellowhead County in retail trade, health care and social services, and accommodation and food services. In other sectors, Hinton is either on par with its neighbours or lagging at least one.

**Figure 34: Businesses by Industry, Percentage of Total Businesses with Employees**

North American Industry Classification System (2012)	Hinton	Edson	Yellowhead County	Alberta
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	6%	3%	13%	4%
Mining and oil and gas extraction	5%	13%	13%	3%
Utilities	0%	0%	0%	0%
Construction	15%	14%	17%	14%
Manufacturing	2%	2%	2%	3%
Wholesale trade	3%	3%	1%	4%
Retail trade	15%	10%	7%	10%
Transportation and warehousing	9%	12%	12%	6%
Information and cultural industries	1%	1%	1%	1%
Finance and insurance	2%	2%	1%	3%
Real estate and rental and leasing	5%	4%	4%	4%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	7%	8%	9%	15%
Management of companies and enterprises	0%	0%	0%	1%
Administrative and support, waste management, and remediation services	4%	5%	5%	5%
Educational services	0%	1%	0%	1%
Health care and social assistance	6%	3%	2%	8%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	1%	1%	0%	1%
Accommodation and food services	8%	6%	2%	6%
Other services (except public administration)	11%	11%	11%	9%
Public administration	0%	0%	0%	0%

Source: Statistics Canada; Canadian Business Counts December 2017.



As was the case with jobs in an earlier section above, the data on the number of enterprises allows for location quotient analysis to determine what sectors Hinton is competitive in based on centration of businesses. The same principles of scoring apply, with 1.25 or greater indicating strength, 0.75 to 1.25 indicating parity with the province, and below 0.75 indicating weakness. Because Statistics Canada advises against comparing Canadian Business Counts over time, there is no comparison between different yearly outputs. As such, the results represent a snapshot in time for the competitiveness of different sectors compared to the overall province. Finally, the results focus on enterprises with employees. The following observations emerge from the data:

- Key leading sectors include transportation and warehousing (LQ 1.58), mining and oil and gas (1.55), agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (1.5), and accommodation and food services (1.27).
- Key areas of moderate strength include other services (except public administration) (1.16) information and cultural industries (1.11), and construction (1.08).
- Key areas to consider for growth include professional scientific and technical services (0.49) and arts, culture and entertainment (0.63).

**Figure 35: Business Counts Location Quotients –Concentration of Businesses with Employees by Industry Hinton/Alberta**

North American Industry Classification System (2012)	LQ	Competitiveness
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	1.50	High
Mining and oil and gas extraction	1.55	High
Utilities	0.89	Moderate
Construction	1.08	Moderate
Manufacturing	0.76	Moderate
Wholesale trade	0.68	Low
Retail trade	1.48	High
Transportation and warehousing	1.58	High
Information and cultural industries	1.11	Moderate
Finance and insurance	0.48	Low
Real estate and rental and leasing	1.09	Moderate
Professional, scientific, and technical services	0.49	Low
Management of companies and enterprises	0.00	Low
Administrative and support, waste management, and remediation services	0.76	Moderate
Educational services	0.33	Low
Health care and social assistance	0.73	Low
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	0.63	Low
Accommodation and food services	1.27	High
Other services (except public administration)	1.16	Moderate
Public administration	0.41	Low

Source: Statistics Canada; Canadian Business Counts December 2017. Adapted by MDB Insight.



## Economic Forecast and Local Impacts of Market Trends

This section will review trends in the clean technology, forestry, and tourism sectors and will assess their potential impact and opportunities they provide Hinton.

### Forestry

The forestry sector in Canada has historically been, and continues to be, a leader in innovation and adaptability. Shifts in global demand for traditional forest products, and growing demand for non-traditional forest products have changed the forest industry. While the demand for paper products continues to shrink, demand for alternative wood products is growing.

A good example is the development of Cross Laminated Timber (CLT), a multi-layered wood panel that is created out of layers of timber stacked together in a perpendicular fashion, which builders find less costly to use, and is stronger than traditional timber. Wood products like CLT are increasing the demand for Canadian wood products in infrastructure projects, and Canadian building codes are resulting in taller structures made of wood.<sup>16<sup>17</sup></sup>

The forestry sector has also readily embraced cleantech trends. Canada's forest sector pledged to the annual removal of 30 megatons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year by 2030, surpassing the Canadian Government's emissions target by 13%.<sup>18</sup> To do this, the sector has aggressively implemented energy efficiency measures at mill sites, improved forest management activities and increased the use of innovative forest products and clean tech to displace materials made from fossil fuels. Biomass – organic matter used as fuel – presents a value-added opportunity for the forestry sector. Many mill sites have transitioned to on-site biomass power sources, which have cut costs and decreased CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

In Hinton, the forestry sector is a valuable and persistent section of the local economy. It lends itself well to opportunities in value-added wood products and biomass energy generation.

In Prince George, BC, Canfor Corporation invested \$58 million to increase its facility's power generation and energy efficiency. That investment led to a partnership with Licella Fibre Fuels to integrate a Catalytic Hydrothermal Reactor (Cat-HTR) upgrading platform into Canfor's kraft and mechanical pulp mills. Through the conversion of biomass, the Cat-HTR could reportedly take 20-30 minutes to produce a renewable biocrude oil that would lead to the production of next-generation biofuels and biochemicals.<sup>19</sup>

As another example, in Atikokan, Ontario, one previous coal fired electricity generating station was converted to a biomass power plant in 2014. The plant burns wood pellets, is connected to the provincial power grid and supplies enough energy to supply approximately 70,000 households for one year.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Natural Resources Canada. "How is the forest industry changing?" September 26, 2018. <<https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/forests/report/industry-change/16524>>

<sup>17</sup> Canadian Council of Forest Ministers Innovation Committee. "A Forest Bioeconomy Framework for Canada." 2017. <<http://cfs.nrcan.gc.ca/pubwarehouse/pdfs/39162.pdf>>

<sup>18</sup> Nighbor, Derek. "Forestry: A Success Story in Clean Tech" *Canadianmanufacturing.com*. September 10, 2018. <<https://www.canadianmanufacturing.com/manufacturing/forestry-a-success-story-in-clean-tech-219067/>>

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Ontario Power Generation. "Atikokan Biomass Conversion." Accessed October 5, 2018. <<https://www.opg.com/generating-power/thermal/stations/atikokan-station/Pages/atikokan-station-biomass-conversion-project.aspx>>



## Clean Technology

Some solutions presented above relate to broader clean tech activities. Clean tech is a term that includes everything from fuel efficient transportation solutions to green energy infrastructure. As a whole, Alberta's cleantech sector reports generating over \$307 million in revenues in 2015. Two-thirds of reported revenues in cleantech come from exports to the U.S. market.<sup>21</sup>

Globally, the clean tech industry has experienced progressive growth since the early 2000s. Estimates are that the global market is worth over US\$ 1 trillion.<sup>22</sup> Canada has partaken in this global marketplace, though its international ranking in cleantech merchandise exports fell from 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> place from 2005 to 2014 – which is attributed to rise in international competitors and decline in government support during that period.<sup>23</sup>

The Canadian Government has prioritized \$7.4 billion in spending to advance clean tech initiatives—including assisting Canadian clean tech firms with scaling up to compete in the global clean tech marketplace.<sup>24</sup>

The Alberta Government's carbon taxing initiatives may have caused some increased cost of doing business for some Alberta entrepreneurs, though it also signals an opportunity for investment into clean tech industries, particularly in the green energy sector. In 2018 the Alberta government pledged to invest \$5.3 billion to support a “diversified, lower carbon economy over the next three years”. Roughly three-quarters of Alberta's ventures sell their products and services to oil, gas, and mining sectors.

Hinton has access to green energy opportunities in geothermal energy and has already pursued partnerships with the University of Alberta, on repurposing Hinton's oil wells for geothermal energy generation. The oil and gas sector presents numerous synergies with the green energy sector, including: technical and non-technical skills present in the area, sub-surface data available from the oil and gas sector can be used to indicate locations of promising geothermal resources, existing oil and gas wells may be utilized to produce geothermal energy, or explore for promising sources, among others.<sup>25</sup> Hinton is in a position to continue to explore opportunities in geothermal energy, potentially branding itself as a living laboratory for geothermal infrastructure of different sizes and levels of complexity.

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<sup>21</sup> “Alberta Clean Tech Survey Results” (2016). <<https://eralberta.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Alberta-2016-Cleantech-Survey-Results.pdf>>

<sup>22</sup> Cote, Lynn. “How can Cleantech Canada compete for global market share?” October 17, 2017. Blog post. <<https://www.edc.ca/en/blog/cleantech-canada-growing-global-markets.html>>

<sup>23</sup> The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service. “Canada unveils clean-technology strategy.” March 22, 2018. <<http://tradecommissioner.gc.ca/canadexport/0002802.aspx?lang=eng>>

<sup>24</sup> Invest Alberta. “Industry profile: Cleantech” Accessed October 2, 2018. <<https://investalberta.ca/industry-profiles/cleantech/>>

<sup>25</sup> Leitch, Aletta. “The missing pieces in Alberta's geothermal puzzle.” December 18, 2017. <<http://www.pembina.org/blog/missing-pieces-albertas-geothermal-puzzle>>



## Tourism

The Canadian tourism market is heating up, with international tourists seeking out outdoor and rustic experiences in Canada.<sup>26</sup> Hinton has maintained a competitive advantage in this sector of the market with its adjacency to Jasper National Park, and other outdoor recreation opportunities.

A near-term challenge for Hinton's tourism market is the prevalence of the pine beetle and the subsequent damage to the pine forests in Jasper National Park. As massive sections of pine forest die from the infestation, there is an increased threat of forest fires in the area.<sup>27</sup> Activity on the tourism website, Tripadvisor.com, suggests that tourists intending to visit the Canadian Rockies are concerned about smoke inhalation from recent forest fires.<sup>28</sup> While there is optimism that the forests will regenerate over time, in the short-term, forest fire threats may have an impact on Hinton's tourism economy.

An opportunity area for Hinton's tourism economy lies in developing arts, entertainment, and recreation experiences in town. Hinton's offerings in accommodation and food services suggest that its tourism market is healthy. Hosting festivals and events are a proven method through which municipalities can generate economic activity in other provinces.<sup>29</sup> Festivals and events tend to attract regional tourists, and Hinton has an opportunity to attract people from the urban centres of Edmonton and Calgary seeking arts and culture experiences. Hinton could focus its tourism strategy on developing summer festivals and events to capture more tourism value. The Wild Mountain Music Festival is already a successful annual event in Hinton. The Squamish Valley Music Festival, in Squamish BC, attracted 120,000 festival attendees in 2015 and was a key contributor to Squamish's economy during its six-year run. The Wild Mountain Music Festival could be scaled up to attract larger audiences of urban-rural tourists.

Another example is using an existing local asset such as the PATH (Performing Arts Theatre Hinton) to host specific theatre events that are marketed at urban residents in the Greater Edmonton Area. For example, the Globus Theatre in Bobcaygeon, Ontario, takes advantage of its proximity to cottage country and rural setting to attract Toronto residents to its facility during the summer months.<sup>30</sup> It presents a rotation of different shows, from theatre to stand up comedy and musical journeys (such as the British Invasion, celebrating over 50 years of British pop and rock). The combination of arts and culture with scenic and laidback rural pace of life has resulted in a growing annual buzz around this local fixture, which is just over two hours from Toronto. There are likely opportunities to start small and look to grow visitors over a sustained period of time (meaning years, not months). The Globus Theatre highlights a key corporate sponsor for each show, demonstrating how the theatre both acknowledges and promotes other local businesses. People that come to Hinton for arts and culture, be it a festival or a summer theatre program, can also appreciate the other tourism-related amenities.

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<sup>26</sup> Roberto, Rocha. "Why Canada's tourism industry is finally heating up again." June 18, 2018. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/travel-canada-numbers-1.4682484>

<sup>27</sup> French, Janet. "Mountain pine beetle takes over Jasper National Park forests." July 17, 2018. <<https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/mountain-pine-beetle-takes-over-jasper-national-park-forests>>

<sup>28</sup> TripAdvisor. Topic: Canadian Rockies Alberta Travel Forum. <[https://www.tripadvisor.ca/ShowTopic-g659487-i11598-k11834440-Fires-Canadian\\_Rockies\\_Alberta.html](https://www.tripadvisor.ca/ShowTopic-g659487-i11598-k11834440-Fires-Canadian_Rockies_Alberta.html)>

<sup>29</sup> Ontario Major Festivals and Events Attraction Research Study – Final Report. Ministry of Tourism. February, 2009. <[http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/publications/Ontario\\_Major\\_Festivals\\_and\\_Events\\_Attraction.pdf](http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/publications/Ontario_Major_Festivals_and_Events_Attraction.pdf)>

<sup>30</sup> Globus Theatre, "Summer Season 2018." Accessed October 5, 2018: <http://lakeviewartsbarn.com/globus-current-season>



## Commercial Gap Assessment

A population-oriented commercial retail and service gap analysis (gap analysis) was conducted for the Town of Hinton and included comparisons to Edson and Edmonton. The gap analysis juxtaposes the theoretical number of population-oriented businesses against the actual amount of businesses in the same category to determine if there are sufficient businesses relative to the size of the population.

Using a population base from the 2016 Census, the annual growth rate from the 2011 to 2016 census period was used to calculate the estimated 2017 populations for Town of Hinton, Town of Edson and City of Edmonton. The 2017 population is used to obtain a per-capita estimate of how many businesses in a given four-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) subsector can be supported by the local population. The per-capita estimate of businesses for each community is referred to as the theoretical capacity. By comparing the actual amount of businesses in each NAICS category to the theoretical capacity the gap is identified. Gaps are labeled as Capacity (+/-), where negative values represent an under-representation of businesses in the sector, relative to what the population can theoretically support. A positive value means that the sector has an over-representation. The analysis has focussed exclusively on businesses that have one or more employees and therefore excludes sole-proprietorships.

Gaps are tracked on a one-to-one basis, meaning that a category with a score of +/- 1 represents a gap or surplus of one business for the sector. Meanwhile, a score of +/-3 represents a gap or surplus of three businesses, and so forth. A score of zero (0) means the ideal number of businesses relative to the category size already exists for the community. Gaps are presented in numbers rounded to one decimal place. As an example, the *Sporting goods, hobby, and musical instrument stores* sector has a theoretical capacity of 3.3 retailers in that category, but only has 1 such retailer, which means Hinton is under-capacity by -2.3 businesses, or approximately 2 businesses.

Comparisons were made to Edson and Edmonton because these communities represent the most likely sources of economic leakage due to people purchasing goods or services outside of the community.

### Type of Audience

Different kinds of population-oriented businesses have different kinds of audiences. These are typically classified as destination-oriented, comparison-oriented, or convenience oriented. Destination-oriented businesses rely on patrons from broader geography, often beyond the actual community. They are often sought specifically for the good or service they offer, which is typically a higher-order good or service (i.e., something people are willing to spend larger amounts of money on). Examples of destination-oriented businesses are automotive dealers, gambling industries, and traveler accommodations.

Comparison-oriented businesses have clients that are interested in comparing similar products or brands. A cluster of comparison businesses could produce a destination as well, but the main audience is normally local, with some exceptions for specific niches within clothing and accessory retail, specialty goods, and upscale restaurants. Examples of comparison businesses are electronics and appliance stores, clothing and other accessory stores, legal and accounting services, and dentist.

Finally, convenience-oriented businesses rely on people that are in the area or passing by as their key audience. Examples are health and personal care stores (i.e., pharmacies), grocery stores, corner-stores or gas stations, and personal and household goods repair and maintenance.



## Limitations of the Analysis

The commercial gap analysis represents a theoretical model based on mathematics and does not account for the possibility of anomalies or a definite conclusion relative to investment opportunities. Instead, it must be treated as one of several tools used to help understand where growth potential possibly exists in Hinton.

Because the model uses Statistics Canada's Canadian Business Counts, it is being based on businesses that have indicated they are in a particular industry through declarations made to the Canada Revenue Agency. There is a possibility that the actual number of businesses is not exactly the same in Canadian Business Counts as in other business directories, primarily because:

- Some businesses in Canadian Business Counts are unclassified
- Only businesses that generate more than \$30,000 per year are compelled to make declarations to the Canada Revenue Agency
- Many home-based businesses may not, for various reasons, be incorporated

Therefore, the results of the analysis are a starting point for deeper opportunity investigation rather than conclusive evidence of specific opportunities.

## Gap Analysis Results

The results of the gap analysis are summarized in Figure 28, according to businesses categories that registered a gap of -0.8 or greater. This is because -0.8 approximates -1 sufficiently to indicate the possibility the need for a particular business type.

### General Retail

Electronics and appliance stores are underrepresented in Hinton (-0.9) meaning that the population size can make use of an additional pertinent business unit. However, it is also noted that Edson is oversupplied in this section by an additional 1 unit which may allude to leakage effects. It is recommended to evaluate the capacity of the current electronic retailer(s) in the community to determine if they are sufficient enough (by product quantity and variety) to further refute or reinforce the need of an electronics store in the community.

Hinton has a strong presence of automobile retail sector with all three major categories meeting or exceeding the ideal per capita count, automobile dealers (0), other motor vehicle dealers (0.2), and automotive parts, accessories and tire stores (4.7). Compared to Edson and Edmonton, Edson also serves as an attractive market in an automotive retail domain with an over-supply of 2 and 3 enterprises of automotive dealers and other automotive dealers, respectively. Leakage effects may be impacting the automotive dealership section, as Hinton is essentially at par, while Edson is oversupplied as aforementioned. However, it is noted that automotive repair maintenance services are underrepresented by at least 5 units. Although it is possible that the currently registered auto-maintenance facilities (10) might have an extensive service capability in addition with automotive dealers who may have their own service units.

Comparison of retail such as lawn and garden equipment, shoes, jewelry, luggage, and leather goods and accessories are under-supplied. There may be room to build more clusters in the sector, but caution is needed as the threat from online retail continues to rise. Niche retailers that work together as a cluster



have a stronger opportunity in this space, and can also potentially benefit from both local and online retail.

Sporting goods, hobby, and musical instrument dealers are over-represented by 2.3 business units; again, caution should be exercised in further growing the space as online retail may affect the business performance. A possible solution is to combine some elements of convenience associated with these different retail options with other strong retail or people-oriented services, such as a café that sells some music accessories, or a vintage thrift store that also sells select hobby items. In other words, expanding the value proposition of some other form of retail or service to include aspects of these may fill local demands, while placing a less direct strain on a specific kind of retail. Combining these kinds of retail with food service is also a growing trend, which may also promote Hinton as a destination.

Lastly, thrift stores (categorized as used merchandise stores) are under-represented in both Hinton (-0.8) and Edson (-0.6). This may represent an opportunity to further explore the need of such service(s) in the wider community in conjunction with the hybrid model, as described in the previous paragraph.

### Professional Services for Residents

Regarding financial and insurance considerations, Hinton is under-represented in insurance carriers (-2.7); however, online services in this sphere may be an area of concern. Also, Edmonton is likely to represent a financial and insurance hub for the broader region. Hinton is over-supplied in real estate agents and brokerage (2.9) while Edson is at par with population need (0.4). The higher number of such services in Hinton may be serving as an additional option for residents of Edson.

Legal services are underrepresented in both Hinton and Edson with gaps of -4.0 and -4.7 respectively. Consequently, people in need for legal assistance are likely either struggling or possibly turning to other communities to seek help. On the other hand, this may be a conducive environment for qualified professionals seeking to establish a business in legal services domain.

Furthermore, health-care related services as a cluster include various specific sectors, some of which are more sales oriented while others are more service oriented. Health and personal care stores (i.e., pharmacies) are identified as slightly over-supplied (0.9). Meanwhile, the large amount of families and working aged people mean that other forms of health care services are likely to be in greater demand. Both Hinton and Edson are found to be self-sufficient in the cluster of health services mainly office of physicians, dentist and other health practitioners (e.g. chiropractors, physio/occupational/speech therapists, etc.).

### Arts & Entertainment, Accommodation & Food

Several business types in this section are limited by population count of Hinton. However, it is noted that Hinton is over-supplied in the areas of traveller accommodation and full-service restaurants by 14 and 15 additional businesses. The same trend is followed by Edson which has an over-supply of 8 and 17 traveller accommodations and restaurants respectively. The over-supply of these destination-oriented businesses in both communities suggests a strong interest of external population in the region.

A slight gap in special food services (-1.1) is noted for Hinton (mobile food services, caterers, etc.) This subsection comprises of establishments primarily engaged in providing food services at the customer's location, at a location designated by the customer, or from a motorized vehicle or non-motorized cart.

Finally, personal care services such as hair, beauty, esthetics, pet care (except veterinary), and such, are at par with the population for both Hinton (0.8) and Edson (-0.4).



Figure 36: Population-Based Commercial Gap Analysis for Hinton & Comparators, 2018.

Region	2011 Population	2016 Population	5-year Growth/Decline	Annual Growth/Decline	Estimated 2017 Population
Alberta	3,645,257	4,067,175	11.57%	2.31%	4,161,326
Edmonton	812,201	932,546	14.82%	2.96%	960,181
Edson	8,475	8,414	-0.72%	-0.14%	8,402
Hinton	9,640	9,882	2.51%	0.50%	9,932

Figure 37: Commercial Gap Analysis Tabular View

4-Digit NAICS	Industry Groups	# of Businesses in Alberta	# of People Per Business in Alberta	Theoretical Capacity: Hinton	Actual Number in Hinton	Capacity (+/-): Hinton	Theoretical Capacity: Edson	Actual Number in Edson	Capacity (+/-): Edson	Audience Type
4411	Automobile dealers	850	0.0002	2.0	2	0.0	1.7	4	2.3	Destination
4412	Other motor vehicle dealers	322	0.0001	0.8	1	0.2	0.7	4	3.3	Destination
4413	Automotive parts, accessories and tire stores	556	0.0001	1.3	6	4.7	1.1	6	4.9	Comparison
4421	Furniture stores	324	0.0001	0.8	11	10.2	0.7	2	1.3	Comparison
4422	Home furnishings stores	615	0.0001	1.5	4	2.5	1.2	2	0.8	Comparison
4431	Electronics and appliance stores	796	0.0002	1.9	1	-0.9	1.6	3	1.4	Comparison
4441	Building material and supplies dealers	498	0.0001	1.2	6	4.8	1.0	5	4.0	Comparison
4442	Lawn and garden equipment and supplies stores	357	0.0001	0.9	0	-0.9	0.7	1	0.3	Comparison
4451	Grocery stores	975	0.0002	2.3	4	1.7	2.0	2	0.0	Convenience
4452	Specialty food stores	1,018	0.0002	2.4	2	-0.4	2.1	0	-2.1	Destination / Comparison
4453	Beer, wine and liquor stores	268	0.0001	0.6	6	5.4	0.5	6	5.5	Convenience
4461	Health and personal care stores	2,976	0.0007	7.1	8	0.9	6.0	7	1.0	Convenience
4471	Gasoline stations	1,189	0.0003	2.8	9	6.2	2.4	6	3.6	Convenience
4481	Clothing stores	1,840	0.0004	4.4	7	2.6	3.7	8	4.3	Comparison



4-Digit NAICS	Industry Groups	# of Businesses in Alberta	# of People Per Business in Alberta	Theoretical Capacity: Hinton	Actual Number in Hinton	Capacity (+/-): Hinton	Theoretical Capacity: Edson	Actual Number in Edson	Capacity (+/-): Edson	Audience Type
4482	Shoe stores	341	0.0001	0.8	0	-0.8	0.7	0	-0.7	Comparison
4483	Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	714	0.0002	1.7	1	-0.7	1.4	1	-0.4	Comparison
4511	Sporting goods, hobby and musical instrument stores	713	0.0002	1.7	4	2.3	1.4	4	2.6	Destination / Comparison
4513	Book stores and news dealers	57	0.0000	0.1	0	-0.1	0.1	0	-0.1	Comparison
4521	Department stores	95	0.0000	0.2	1	0.8	0.2	1	0.8	Comparison
4529	Other general merchandise stores	156	0.0000	0.4	2	1.6	0.3	2	1.7	Variable
4531	Florists	621	0.0001	1.5	1	-0.5	1.3	1	-0.3	Convenience
4532	Office supplies, stationery and gift stores	310	0.0001	0.7	2	1.3	0.6	2	1.4	Comparison
4533	Used merchandise stores	326	0.0001	0.8	0	-0.8	0.7	0	-0.7	Comparison
4539	Other miscellaneous store retailers	461	0.0001	1.1	2	0.9	0.9	4	3.1	Variable
4541	Electronic shopping and mail-order houses	540	0.0001	1.3	0	-1.3	1.1	0	-1.1	Comparison
5121	Motion picture and video industries	196	0.0000	0.5	0	-0.5	0.4	1	0.6	Convenience
5221	Depository credit intermediation	314	0.0001	0.7	3	2.3	0.6	4	3.4	Convenience
5241	Insurance carriers	1,147	0.0003	2.7	0	-2.7	2.3	0	-2.3	Comparison
5242	Agencies, brokerages and other insurance related activities	229	0.0001	0.5	2	1.5	0.5	5	4.5	Comparison
5312	Offices of real estate agents and brokers	1,302	0.0003	3.1	6	2.9	2.6	3	0.4	Comparison
5411	Legal services	3,356	0.0008	8.0	4	-4.0	6.8	2	-4.8	Comparison
5412	Accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping and payroll services	3,706	0.0009	8.8	9	0.2	7.5	15	7.5	Comparison
6211	Offices of physicians	383	0.0001	0.9	10	9.1	0.8	6	5.2	Convenience
6212	Offices of dentists	250	0.0001	0.6	5	4.4	0.5	2	1.5	Convenience
6213	Offices of other health practitioners	1,411	0.0003	3.4	6	2.6	2.8	5	2.2	Convenience



4-Digit NAICS	Industry Groups	# of Businesses in Alberta	# of People Per Business in Alberta	Theoretical Capacity: Hinton	Actual Number in Hinton	Capacity (+/-): Hinton	Theoretical Capacity: Edson	Actual Number in Edson	Capacity (+/-): Edson	Audience Type
6221	General medical and surgical hospitals	219	0.00005	0.52	1.00	0.5	0.44	1.0	0.55	NA
6231	Nursing care facilities	87	0.0000	0.2	0	-0.2	0.2	0	-0.2	N/A
6232	Residential developmental handicap, mental health and substance abuse facilities	319	0.0001	0.8	0	-0.8	0.6	2	1.4	Destination
6233	Community care facilities for the elderly	38	0.0000	0.1	1	0.9	0.1	1	0.9	N/A
6239	Other residential care facilities	797	0.0002	1.9	0	-1.9	1.6	0	-1.6	Destination
7111	Performing arts companies	71	0.0000	0.2	0	-0.2	0.1	0	-0.1	Destination
7112	Spectator sports	49	0.0000	0.1	0	-0.1	0.1	0	-0.1	Destination
7113	Promoters (presenters) of performing arts, sports and similar events	91	0.0000	0.2	0	-0.2	0.2	0	-0.2	Destination
7114	Agents and managers for artists, athletes, entertainers and other public figures	31	0.0000	0.1	0	-0.1	0.1	1	0.9	Destination
7115	Independent artists, writers and performers	122	0.0000	0.3	0	-0.3	0.2	0	-0.2	Destination
7121	Heritage institutions	157	0.0000	0.4	0	-0.4	0.3	2	1.7	Destination
7131	Amusement parks and arcades	43	0.0000	0.1	0	-0.1	0.1	0	-0.1	Destination
7132	Gambling industries	312	0.0001	0.7	0	-0.7	0.6	0	-0.6	Destination
7139	Other amusement and recreation industries	602	0.0001	1.4	4	2.6	1.2	3	1.8	Destination
7211	Traveller accommodation	1,285	0.0003	3.1	17	13.9	2.6	11	8.4	Destination
7212	Recreational vehicle (RV) parks and recreational camps	210	0.0001	0.5	1	0.5	0.4	1	0.6	Destination
7213	Rooming and boarding houses	48	0.0000	0.1	0	-0.1	0.1	2	1.9	Destination
7223	Special food services	463	0.0001	1.1	0	-1.1	0.9	1	0.1	Comparison
7224	Drinking places (alcoholic beverages)	58	0.0000	0.1	0	-0.1	0.1	3	2.9	Comparison
7225	Full-service restaurants and limited-service eating places	4,260	0.0010	10.2	25	14.8	8.6	25	16.4	Destination / Comparison
8111	Automotive repair and maintenance	6,665	0.0016	15.9	10	-5.9	13.5	12	-1.5	Comparison



4-Digit NAICS	Industry Groups	# of Businesses in Alberta	# of People Per Business in Alberta	Theoretical Capacity: Hinton	Actual Number in Hinton	Capacity (+/-): Hinton	Theoretical Capacity: Edson	Actual Number in Edson	Capacity (+/-): Edson	Audience Type
8112	Electronic and precision equipment repair and maintenance	202	0.0000	0.5	4	3.5	0.4	4	3.6	Convenience
8114	Personal and household goods repair and maintenance	3,172	0.0008	7.6	1	-6.6	6.4	2	-4.4	Convenience
8121	Personal care services	2,187	0.0005	5.2	6	0.8	4.4	4	-0.4	Comparison
8122	Funeral services	706	0.0002	1.7	0	-1.7	1.4	1	-0.4	Destination
8123	Dry cleaning and laundry services	333	0.0001	0.8	0	-0.8	0.7	1	0.3	Convenience
8129	Other personal services	325	0.0001	0.8	1	0.2	0.7	1	0.3	N/A

Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profiles, 2016; Canadian Business Counts, 2017; Modified by MDB Insight, 2018. Values highlighted in green represent a gap in the capacity of more than -0.8.



## The Effect of Tourism on Commercial Gap Analysis

The sections above used local population as reference for performing per capita business count analysis. But, being a popular tourist destination, Hinton is visited by a substantial number of visitors each year. This section estimates the impact of population influx on Hinton's commercial gap analysis for select business types.

The number of tourists increases the headcount at any given time in the community which provides opportunities for accelerated business activities. However, since the arrival of new visitors in Hinton varies by season, an estimate of the average yearly contribution of the visitors to the overall population is calculated first.

The following table shows door count from the Visitor Information Center report for Hinton 2015 to 2018.

**Figure 38: Tourism Visitor Rates, 2015-2018**

Month	2015	2016	2017	2018	Average
May	628	1,043	1,061	642	
June	2,442	3,506	3,843	3,249	
July	6,119	6,390	7,120	5,954	
August	4,926	6,078	5,131	4,739	
September	2,736	3,095	3,065	2,114	
October	730	653	1,043	Not Available	
Average Monthly Visitors (based on six months tourist visitor numbers)	<b>2,930</b>	<b>3,461</b>	<b>3,544</b>	<b>3,340</b>	<b>3,319</b>

Source: Hinton Visitor Information Centre monthly comparable door count report (2017/2018)

The last column in the table calculates the average of monthly visitors for past four (4) years in Hinton. This provided the basis for including an additional 3,319 people in the population estimations for at least six months. However, for the purpose of analysis this number is taken only half to balance the presence of tourist for a full year instead of only six months). Hence, an average annual population rise of 1,660 (3,320/2) as "Tourism Factor" is added for redoing a brief commercial analysis. The analysis narrows down to only select business types which are more prone to outside influx (destination and convenience types- please see heading 'Type of Audience' for explanation)

### Assumptions:

Typical stay of tourists is usually around a month or less. i.e. (number of tourists are not carried over to the next month)

Major flow of tourism takes place during the month of May to October in Hinton.

### Findings

The addition of calculated 1660 people (visitors) in the local population did not skew the commercial gap analysis to a huge extent. However, the increased population count magnified the need for business facilities already highlighted in previous explanations (electronic stores, legal services, etc.). In addition,



the new areas which slipped to under-representation threshold (-0.8 or more) are Speciality food services (-0.8) and gambling industry (-0.9) which can both theoretically adjust one business unit.

**Figure 39: Sectors Affected by Tourism Influx**

4-Digit NAICS	Industry Groups	# of Businesses in Alberta	# of People Per Business in Alberta	Theoretical Capacity: Hinton	Actual Number in Hinton	Capacity (+/-): Hinton	Audience Type
4431	Electronics and appliance stores	796	0.0002	2.22	1	-1.2	Comparison
4442	Lawn and garden equipment and supplies stores	357	0.0001	0.99	0	-1.0	Comparison
4452	Specialty food stores	1018	0.0002	2.84	2	-0.8	Destination / comparison
4482	Shoe stores	341	0.0001	0.95	0	-0.9	Comparison
4483	Jewellery, luggage and leather goods stores	714	0.0002	1.99	1	-1.0	Comparison
4533	Used merchandise stores	326	0.0001	0.91	0	-0.9	Comparison
4541	Electronic shopping and mail-order houses	540	0.0001	1.50	0	-1.5	Comparison
5241	Insurance carriers	1147	0.0003	3.19	0	-3.2	Comparison
5411	Legal services	3356	0.0008	9.35	4	-5.3	Comparison
5412	Accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping and payroll services	3706	0.0009	10.32	9	-1.3	Comparison
6232	Residential developmental handicap, mental health and substance abuse facilities	319	0.0001	0.89	0	-0.9	Destination
6239	Other residential care facilities	797	0.0002	2.22	0	-2.2	Destination
7132	Gambling industries	312	0.0001	0.87	0	-0.9	Destination
7223	Special food services	463	0.0001	1.29	0	-1.3	Comparison
8111	Automotive repair and maintenance	6665	0.0016	18.57	10	-8.6	Comparison
8114	Personal and household goods repair and maintenance	3172	0.0008	8.84	1	-7.8	Convenience
8122	Funeral services	706	0.0002	1.97	0	-2.0	Destination
8123	Dry cleaning and laundry services	333	0.0001	0.93	0	-0.9	Convenience



## Appendix B – Stakeholder Engagement

### Reconnaissance Interviews

One-on-one reconnaissance interviews were conducted with 11 community and business leaders from Hinton to gather their thoughts on various topics. The purpose was to obtain a qualitative understanding of considerations about Hinton to supplement quantitative data already collected, and to potentially point toward follow-up questions to be used in a subsequent series of workshops. The interviews occurred during the month of September, 2018. Results are presented in an aggregated format according to the theme to protect the anonymity of participants.

#### How would you describe the business climate in Hinton?

The general consensus is that the climate is Improving due a more business friendly staff at the town, increased industrial activity related to the new mine, rebounding oil and gas and solid tourism gains.

On the negative side the community is viewed as expensive, that there is a lack of coordinated marketing and one respondent felt the climate was stagnant.

#### Do you think the business climate supports the attraction of new investment to the community?

Mostly yes, but there are practical barriers to investment, lack of commercial and industrial land and a focus on primary industries were noted. Some felt that the existing businesses in the community are blocking new investment. The new geothermal project mentioned many times as a positive driver for new investment.

“Pretty good with the new council and administration, they are welcoming new businesses and investment”

#### From an economic/business perspective, what do you think are Hinton’s most important assets?

Respondents all mentioned large primary industries including forestry, mines, oil and gas, and tourism. They also mentioned the location next to Jasper National Park and a variety of lifestyle and tourism assets.

Less mentioned were the community’s health care facilities, the Foothills Research Institute and the Wildfire Management Branch Hinton Training Centre.

#### What is your vision for the economy of Hinton over the next 10 years?

The vast majority of respondents mentioned sustainable development, the attraction of new diverse businesses and residents, buy local initiatives and increasing the number of health, senior, education and tourism assets. A few respondents included increasing available housing and a renewed emphasis on renewable energy initiatives.



### What do you want Hinton to be known for?

Many respondents agreed that the community should be known for its beauty, outdoor recreation, quality of life, and a good place for kids. Some respondents focused on economic diversity including opportunities and support for multiple levels of income.

### What do you see as the most relevant challenges or barriers to economic growth in Hinton?

- The community is not shopping locally.
- Local bylaws and lack of available land.
- Lack of health care amenities and places for seniors to move/downsize to.
- High cost of living a lack of affordable housing and rentals.
- Lack of economic development and marketing coordination with neighbouring communities.

### What significant opportunities for economic development or business growth do you see for Hinton?

- Development for seniors, both housing and health care amenities to retain them in the community.
- Access to affordable land and business fronts.
- Improve tourism opportunities and amenities, while promoting and enforcing tourism standards to make the community more attractive from the road.
- Geothermal opportunities with a focus on renewables.
- Expansion of education opportunities with ties to research and development.
- Shop local.

### If you were writing this Strategy, what one or two key priorities would you include to position the economy of Hinton for success into the future?

- Hinton has a reputation of being difficult to work with; continue to accommodate businesses and attract investment.
- Diversifying the economy with renewables; specifically, the geothermal project.
- Seniors Amenities focused on retention.
- Improving the availability of housing and industrial land.
- Improving the attractiveness of the community from the highway
- Being a community that can execute on opportunities. Identify opportunities and act.
- Collaboration with the smaller communities in the area, the other communities of yellowhead county.
- Try to get locals to shop locally.



## Business Satisfaction Survey

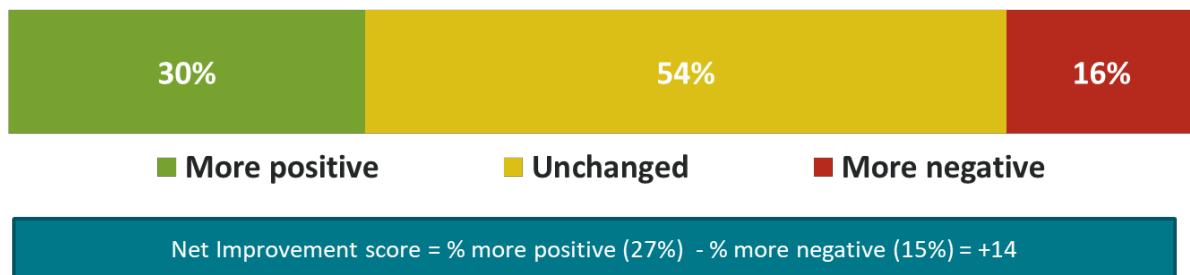
A random survey was conducted of 80 businesses out of an initial list of 542 enterprises in Hinton. The resulting margin of error is +/-10%, 19 out of 20 times. The survey was administered from September 12<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

The combined overall satisfaction is very high at 91% . The net impact of changes over the past year is +14.

### Overall Business Satisfaction



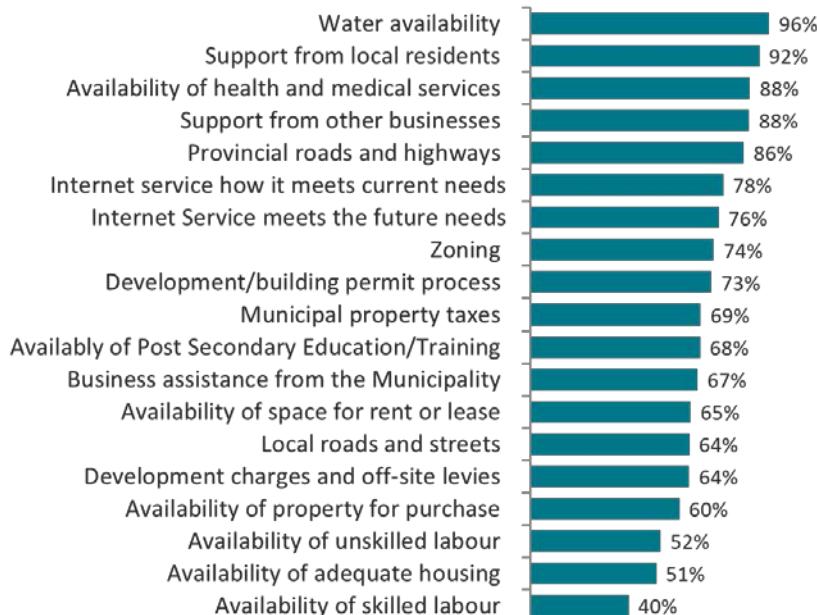
### Business Satisfaction Past 12 Months



Respondents n=80



## Performance of Business factors



The Ranking is a combination of Very Satisfied and Satisfied



Respondents n=80 (note base sizes vary and excludes don't know)

## Priority Table

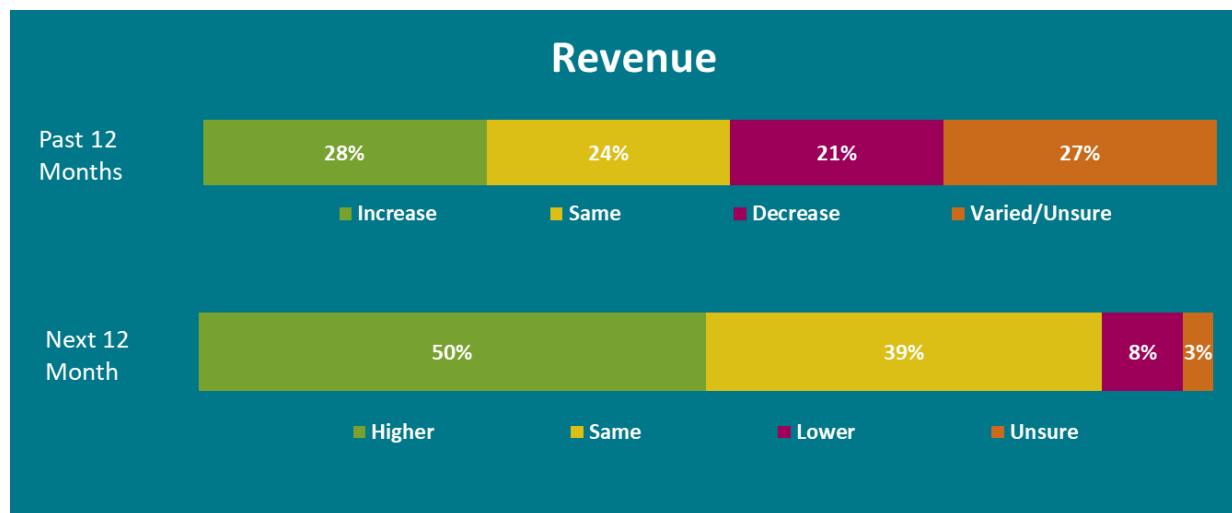
Community Factors	Performance	Importance	Priority
Availability of skilled labour	40%	6.1	1
Availability of adequate housing	51%	6.9	2
Availability of unskilled labour	52%	6.7	3
Development charges and off-site levies	64%	8.1	4
Business assistance from the Municipality	67%	9.0	5
Availability of space for rent or lease	65%	7.5	6
Local roads and streets	64%	6.3	7
Available of Post Secondary Education/Training	68%	7.1	8
Municipal property taxes	69%	7.1	9
Zoning	74%	8.3	10
Availability of property for purchase	60%	5.4	11
Development/building permit process	73%	7.5	12
Internet service and how it meets the current needs of your business	78%	5.9	13
Internet Service and how it meets the future needs and/or growth of your business	76%	5.2	14
Support from other businesses	88%	7.3	15
Provincial roads and highways	86%	5.2	16
Availability of health and medical services	88%	6.3	17
Support from local residents	92%	7.5	18
Water availability	96%	6.7	19



## Most important elements of a successful economy



## Sales and Business Outlook





## Future Plans

Plans to...	% Yes	Follow up Questions (note small base sizes)
Expand within next 2 years	41%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12 are experiencing difficulties</li><li>• 4 have reasons why Hinton will not be considered</li></ul>
Relocate outside Hinton	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 say they will relocate within the next 6 months</li><li>• 2 say relocation will occur more than 6 months from now</li></ul>
Downsize	8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All 6 say downsizing will occur more than 6 months from now</li></ul>
Close	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 say the business will close within the next 6 months</li><li>• 3 say the business will close more than 6 months from now</li></ul>
Sell	5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 say they will sell within the next 6 months</li><li>• 3 say they will sell more than 6 months from now</li></ul>



## Steering Committee Kick-off Focus Group

Steering Committee Kick-off Focus Group: This session was held in Hinton with the Economic Development Strategy's Steering Committee, as a kick off meeting to establish expectation, the committee's vision for economic development and key opportunities. The results below represent an overview of the key findings.

**What are your key expectations of this Strategy? What needs to be captured? Who needs to be convinced?**

- What specifically do we want to attract and retain?
- Plan and budget need to both be supported moving forward. False Starts in the past ... Misconception that town has "abandoned" ec dev
- Previously there were siloed efforts that did not bring the stakeholders around a common vision, the previous 40-year vision was too high level and didn't address what happens next year.
- The committee wants a cohesive vision for the community with mechanisms to support and strategize potential opportunities and coordinate investment with accountability
- The key messaging and confidence are needed enable all the stakeholders to have a shared vision with community buy in ... Create viable partnerships, not plans
- The community needs to be more welcoming and attractive to visitors
- Identify priorities of the business community and business appetite for change

**What is your long-term vision for what this Strategy will accomplish? What results do we need to see? What is different in 7 years?**

- The community needs to better understand what economic development is and progress needs to be communicated to earn/maintain trust
- Improve the lack of ownership for land (low inventory surrounded by crown land)
- Reduce the high cost of living for visitors and residents
- Utilize #HintonFirst an alternative to shopping locally
- New business package
- More opportunities for citizens
- Change the perception of "There's nothing to do here"
- Not just about work, amenities, quality of life
- Speak more about what we do have (celebrate success and assets: Beaver Boardwalk, HMBA, Nordic Centre, ASH, Art Club, Rec Centre)
- Is the youth wants fully understood? Have better student/youth engagement, possibly access to post secondary in the community



What immediate concerns or opportunities do you consider worth probing with other stakeholders?

- Grande Prairie Regional College (GPRC) courses in being held in Hinton
- Tourism Group and Marketing opportunities: “Recreators come back multiple times per year” vs. “Out of country visitors likely to have less frequent visits”
- Housing Development: More affordable options, more 55+ ... Seniors seeking transitional housing can't find a way out, young families can't find a way in
- Some offices report that once they share the cost of living and cost of housing prospective individuals have decided against taking jobs in Hinton
- Growing diverse demographics, attract new Canadians, new business/opportunities
- Bighorn: Bringing in 325 employees, around 200 post construction
- West Fraser: Do they want to be a P2 developer?
- Making permanent residents of those who currently only work here.

## Key Findings and Feedback Workshop Sessions

Three workshops were hosted in Hinton. One session was with the Economic Development Strategy's Steering Committee. The other two workshops were with segments of the business community. The other two workshops were with segments of the business community. The results below represent an overview of key findings.

### Background Research Questions

Based on what we've seen so far, is there anything that has surprised you? Anything confirm what you may have already thought?

- Participants indicated the town is trending towards a more transient business and labour mix largely due to the 4-on 4-off schedule of many workers in community and the tourism sector. This has led to many hotels and liquor stores with the sense of community changing and reducing Hinton's status as a shopping centre in the region.
- Participants agreed they were familiar with the demographic shifts the data was showing, including the loss of seniors and fairly stagnant population growth relative to neighbouring communities and the province. A key driver was said to be the need for skilled and unskilled labour but lack of affordable accommodations for the labour force.

What are some of Hinton's competitive advantages that don't show in these figures or numbers?

- Location near Jasper and large numbers of tourists passing through
- Large numbers of non-residents (workers at mines and large employers) living in the community



- A large number of recreational amenities
- Lower restrictions compared to Jasper for businesses and developers
- Regional health care amenities
- Stable, more diversified industry mix and local companies and key supporters of community projects
- Smallest community in Alberta to get fibre internet
- Multi modal transportation amenities rail, road, and river
- LNG corridor proximity

## Key Factors from Business Survey

### Availability of skilled labour

- Participants all agreed that access to skilled labour is an issue in Hinton, forcing businesses to pay high wages, offer perks and training with many being lured away to other industries.
- Lack of post-secondary options and the high cost of living are key factors
- With a strong local economy and limited labour pool many businesses bring in short-term workers
- Spouses of skilled labourers are unable to find jobs
- Younger workers have a differed approach to free time
- Recruiting new Canadians and attracting them is difficult

### Availability of unskilled labour

- Participants agreed the lack of unskilled labour is adversely affecting customer service
- Labour is being lured by higher wages into other industries
- Cost of living in Hinton makes a \$15/hour job impossible
- “Entitlement” perception of the jobs available
- Cyclical hiring

### Availability of adequate housing

- Participants agree this issue is tied to labour as workers can't find affordable places to live
- Cost of developing apartment buildings is difficult and the capital costs are high
- There are many vacant vacation homes in the community
- Many rental units in the community are of poor quality
- High earners still have difficulty buying homes.



- Furnished rentals cost up to \$2,500/month
- Some residents have stayed in hotels 100+ days in Hinton

### Development charges and off-site levies

- Limited feedback on this point, with a few developers suggesting there may be opportunities for deferral or incentives from the Town to develop what they want
- It was mentioned that bylaw changes have been made and perhaps need to be promoted as something that has been addressed

### Business assistance from the municipality

- Some participants indicated this might be a procurement perception from businesses with unsuccessful bids
- The business licence process was described as difficult and that clarity from Town Hall is needed
- Participants identified the town business directory as being out of date and containing errors
- There is a perception that public works and other departments are not communicating causing business frustration

## Key Factors from Stakeholder Interviews

### Not enough industrial land

- Participants indicated there is land available but barriers to development exist due to caveats, old uses, development fees, owners unwilling to sell or develop, and improvement costs being high
- Rental cost was considered high

### Existing businesses block new investment

- Participants indicated some owners are holding land to block possible competitors

### People are not shopping locally

- Participants were divided on this issue as many felt residents are shopping locally despite competition from neighbouring communities.
- Many participants indicated the 4-days-on 4-days-off employees in the town typically leave on off days and do not shop locally
- Other participants indicated Amazon and other online retailers are taking a bite out of local retail
- Hinton First program was good and they would like to see more, getting messaging out there



### Not enough housing options or other senior amenities

- Most participants felt this issue was covered in the earlier conversation

### There is a “brain drain” in Hinton

- Participants all agreed this is an issue affecting rural Alberta
- Some participants indicated that families are returning to Hinton having completed their education

### It can be a challenge working with the Town (costs, service, assistance, etc.)

- Participants indicated they felt the town has been making improvements and positive momentum has been created while others mentioned issues around Town flexibility

### What is your vision for the economy of Hinton over the next 10 years?

- Promotion and expansion of the local hospital
- Promotion and development of local lifestyle assets attracting new residents
- The development of a more competitive market for land, attracting more developers, an up-to-date land inventory and promotion of development opportunities
- Community building vs. the current transient culture trend, including more community events
- The growth of more walkable areas, shops open later than 6 p.m.
- A tourism strategy and hotel tax
- Business Walks combined with a retention and expansion strategy
- Celebrate and promote local mountain culture
- Overarching strategies to bring people to town and keep them in town
- Another major topic of discussion was the threat of big wildfire in the area with dead trees due to pine beetle causing enhanced risk. The development of an emergency plan and a rebuild strategy were indicated as necessary

## Targeted Interviews

An additional seven targeted interviews were conducted following other consultation activities with industry experts, municipal employees, external experts that could offer a better appreciation for some opportunities identified in the SOARR Assessment. Interviews were customized according to the specific information or clarity that was being sought and, consequently, there is no way to aggregate the data. For the protection and anonymity of participants, these interview notes have been suppressed.



## Appendix C – Grants and Financing (Alberta/Canada)

The following is a list of potential business grants that may be applicable to some businesses in Hinton, depending on various factors. The list is not exhaustive. It is followed by a list of grants available to Alberta municipalities.

**Figure 40: Business Grants and Financing from Government of Alberta and Government of Canada**

Program Name	Level of Government / Organization	Link
Futurepreneur Canada Start-up Program	Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1037">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1037</a>
BDC Xpansion Loan	Business Development Bank of Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1055">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1055</a>
Small Business Financing Program	Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1035">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1035</a>
Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program	Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1246">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1246</a>
BDC Women in Technology Fund	Business Development Bank of Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-2249">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-2249</a>
ATB Financial (business borrowing in Alberta)	Alberta	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1710">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1710</a>
Agriculture Financial Services Corporation Lending	Alberta	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1334">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1334</a>
BDC Buying a Business Custom Financing	Alberta	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1118">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1118</a>
BDC Small Business Loan	Business Development Bank of Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1100">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPIT_AL_INVESTMENT-drop-1100</a>



Program Name	Level of Government / Organization	Link
BDC Start-up Financing	Business Development Bank of Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1115">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1115</a>
BDC New Canadian Entrepreneur	Business Development Bank of Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-2467">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-2467</a>
FinDev Canada Financing and Investment	Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-2437">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-2437</a>
Community Futures Alberta NewBiz	Community Futures Alberta	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1157">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1157</a>
Community Futures Alberta Opportunity	Community Futures Alberta	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1918">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1918</a>
Agribusiness and Agrifood Young Entrepreneurs	Farm Credit Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1937">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1937</a>
BDC Working Capital Term Loan	Business Development Bank of Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1119">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1119</a>
Export Development Canada Buyer Financing	Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1228">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1228</a>
Community Futures Global Reach	Community Futures Alberta	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1916">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/45d38a4a4cd545d1#LOANS_AND_CAPITAL_INVESTMENT-drop-1916</a>
Going Global Innovation	Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1017">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1017</a>
Industrial Research Assistance Program-Financial Assistance	Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1007">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1007</a>
Experience Awards (Engineering)	Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1044">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1044</a>
Alberta Small Brewers Development Program	Alberta	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-2345">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-2345</a>



Program Name	Level of Government / Organization	Link
Industrial Research Assistance Program-Youth Employment Program	Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1010">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1010</a>
Alberta Innovates – Energy and Environment Solutions	Alberta	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1292">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1292</a>
Collaborative Research and Development Grants – Industrial Partner	Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1043">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-1043</a>
Innovation Canada – money to identify, separate and sort recycled plastics	Canada	<a href="https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-2479">https://www.ic.gc.ca/app/scr/innovation/group-groupe/381994230dd64b05#FUNDING-drop-2479</a>

**Figure 41: Grants Available to Municipalities**

Program Name	Department / Organization	Link
Alberta Community Partnership	Municipal Affairs	<a href="http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/alberta-community-partnership">http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/alberta-community-partnership</a>
Alberta Community Transit Fund	Transportation	<a href="http://www.alberta.ca/community-transit-fund.aspx">http://www.alberta.ca/community-transit-fund.aspx</a>
Alberta Municipal Solar Program	Municipal Climate Change Action Centre	<a href="http://www.mccac.ca/programs/AMSP">http://www.mccac.ca/programs/AMSP</a>
Coal Community Transition Fund	Economic Development and Trade	<a href="http://www.alberta.ca/coal-community-transition-fund.aspx#toc-4">http://www.alberta.ca/coal-community-transition-fund.aspx#toc-4</a>
Community and Regional Economic Support (CARES)	Economic Development and Trade	<a href="http://www.alberta.ca/community-regional-economic-support-program.aspx">http://www.alberta.ca/community-regional-economic-support-program.aspx</a>
Emergency Management Preparedness Program	Municipal Affairs	<a href="http://www.aema.alberta.ca/grants">http://www.aema.alberta.ca/grants</a>
Federal Gas Tax Fund	Municipal Affairs	<a href="http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/federal-gas-tax-fund">http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/federal-gas-tax-fund</a>
Federal Small Communities Fund	Municipal Affairs	<a href="http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/smallcommunitiesfund">http://municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/smallcommunitiesfund</a>
Municipal Sustainability Initiative	Municipal Affairs	<a href="http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/msi">http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/msi</a>



Program Name	Department / Organization	Link
Municipal Wildfire Assistance Program	Municipal Affairs	<a href="http://www.aema.alberta.ca/municipal-wildfire-assistance-programs">http://www.aema.alberta.ca/municipal-wildfire-assistance-programs</a>
Invest Canada-Community Initiatives	Government of Canada	<a href="http://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/funding-financement/icci-icic/about-icci-propos-icic.aspx?lang=eng">http://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/funding-financement/icci-icic/about-icci-propos-icic.aspx?lang=eng</a>
FCM Asset Management Program	Federation of Canadian Municipalities	<a href="https://fcm.ca/home/programs/municipal-asset-management-program/municipal-asset-management-program.htm">https://fcm.ca/home/programs/municipal-asset-management-program/municipal-asset-management-program.htm</a>
FCM Municipalities for Climate Innovation Program	Federation of Canadian Municipalities	<a href="https://fcm.ca/home/programs/municipal-asset-management-program/municipal-asset-management-program.htm">https://fcm.ca/home/programs/municipal-asset-management-program/municipal-asset-management-program.htm</a>