



Centre for Innovative &
Entrepreneurial Leadership

Business Vitality Initiative (BVI)

Phase One Assessment Report

Acme, Alberta

June 2010



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Executive Summary

The BVI

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

The Acme BVI was initiated by a partnership between the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and CIEL. The Rural Community Adaptation Program (RCAP) of Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development (ARD) funded it. The community sponsor was a working group organized through the Village of Acme, which selected the participants.

Acme is the twentieth community in Canada that has undertaken the BVI, in addition to five communities in Australia.

This report summarizes the *Assessment Session* of the BVI in Acme, where a questionnaire and a focus group assessed the community's small business resources and potential on April 28, 2010. The phase 2 or *Focus and Action Session* will be open to the entire community with the purpose of setting priorities for improvement and jump starting the community to action. That session will be held on Thursday June 10th.

Community Profile

In the *Assessment Session*, participants were asked to give three words to describe their community. The majority of responses were positive. According to many respondents, Acme is a *friendly, relaxed, and close-knit* community. When participants were asked to identify key strengths not used to potential in the community, the top responses were *the new community hall, youth, and the Seniors Centre*.

When participants were asked to name their predicted top economic drivers for the community in the next five years, the most common responses were *agriculture, oil and gas, and trucking*. When asked about untapped business opportunities in the community, *a motel, a bottle depot, and a better grocery store* were the top responses.

When asked for suggestions on how to improve Acme, the top four responses were *more businesses and incentives for business, beautification of the town, and street improvements*.

Acme Section Scores

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

- A. Opportunities and Attitudes: 59 out of 100** - The ability of the community to recognize, take action, and follow through on available opportunities.
- B. Quality of Life: 52 out of 100** - The ability of the community to attract & retain businesses & residents, especially those who are young, skilled workers.
- C. Education and Training: 46 out of 100** – The ability of a community to develop entrepreneurship skills & attitudes in the non-business population, and to upgrade skills in the business community to remain competitive in larger markets.
- D. Innovation: 38 out of 100** – The ability of a community and its residents to think of and develop new ideas, adapt to changes, recognize unusual and new opportunities and technologies, and share ideas with like-minded people.
- E. Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking: 50 out of 100** - The capacity of a community to take action on an idea or opportunity as a whole group, with good leadership, effective teamwork, and clear communication.
- F. Role of Government and Organizations: 47 out of 100** – The ability of local governments and other organizations to work with business to design processes and programs that make it as easy as possible to start or expand a business.
- G. Capital and Funding: 40 out of 100** – The ability of the community to financially support entrepreneurs through ensuring access to capital and through educating businesses about financial management and supports.
- H. Infrastructure and Business Services: 36 out of 100** – The ability to provide high quality support services and infrastructure to business at reasonable costs, allowing businesses to be as competitive as possible.
- I. Communication and Connectivity: 57 out of 100** - The ability of businesses to connect with each other and with outside markets.
- J. Markets and Marketing: 43 out of 100** – The ability of business to capture and expand markets locally, regionally, and outside the region, thus keeping and building local wealth.

The average score for all sections for Acme was **47 out of 100**. The average for the 20 communities that have undertaken the BVI is 55.

Recurring Themes

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

◆ Many underutilized resources including new community hall, youth, Seniors Centre
◆ Friendly, laid-back, close knit community
◆ Entrance/downtown in need of beautification
◆ Need to get next generation involved in terms of community and interest in business
◆ Office & other space for business needed
◆ More forums for communication needed, especially on issues like business/village relations, taxes, etc.
◆ School is key to community vitality

Possible Courses of Action

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

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

Possible Short Term Actions (actions completed in less than 12 months) (The possible actions are based upon participant responses to the survey and focus groups . Each action notes the corresponding BVI questions	
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'Buy Local' program (first identify what is most often bought elsewhere for residents and businesses) (Improve, Section F) ▪ Work with Community Futures to explain their services including grants, funding opportunities, courses (business start-up, marketing, youth business options, etc.) (Focus Groups, Section A, F3) ▪ Opportunity identification session for youth to identify recreational, educational, and business needs & opportunities (Themes, Section A, A1)
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look to improve town web-site (start by incorporating BVI positives, business opportunities, council minutes, etc.) (Focus Groups) ▪ Recognize local businesses (newspaper profiles, awards, etc.) (Section I) ▪ Entrance or downtown beautification project (Improvements, Themes, H11) ▪ An Acme event (could be festival, Farmers Market, etc.) (Improvements, Section B)

Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More Village public open meetings, forums (among issues to be considered would be taxes, business development (use BVI results as starting place)) (Themes, Focus Groups, etc) Business mentorship &/or Chamber breakfast meetings to strengthen ties and build local knowledge/skills (Section E)
Admin., Research, Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory office space availability (supply/demand) with aim of finding provider(s) (Focus Groups) Publish and strategize top business opportunities from BVI (e.g. motel, bottle depot, grocery store, etc.) (Opportunities, Improvements) Research trades/skills training options (e.g. partnering with Olds College) (Section C)

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

Possible Long Term Actions (actions taking more than 12 months to complete)	
Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land review and strategy to address shortage concerns (A1, Section A) A community learning strategy that involves taking advantage of school, community hall (e.g. night courses), local amenities (e.g. trucking, oil & gas, agriculture), local skilled educators (e.g. Community Futures, youth teaching internet, Facebook skills), video conference facilities (Section A, Section F, Themes)
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Acme brand + strategy around the brand (Focus Groups, Section J) Long-term strategy to beautify downtown and entrance ways to town (Section H, Themes, Improvements)
Networking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Street Parties (Focus Groups) Volunteer recruitment (“no one to take over from 70 to 80-year-olds”) (Section B) <p>Look at public transportation links to other communities (including costs, access, etc.) (Section I)</p>
Research, Admin. and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research trades/skills training options (e.g. partnering with Olds College) (Section C) Investigate industrial sub Street paving/ improvement review and strategy (Improvements, Focus Groups) Examine tax rate difference & possibly incentives to encourage new businesses (Focus Groups, Section A, Improvements)

1.0 Introduction

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

The Acme BVI was initiated by a partnership between the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) and CIEL. The Rural Community Adaptation Program (RCAP) of the Alberta Agriculture & Rural Development (ARD) funded it. The community sponsor was a working group organized through the Village of Acme, which selected the participants.

On April 28, 2010, forty-two people attended the Phase 1 or *Assessment Session* of the BVI in Acme. Twenty-two people filled out the BVI questionnaire.

Acme is the twentieth community in Canada that has taken part in the BVI, in addition to five communities in Australia.

The second session of the BVI, the *Focus and Action Session*, will be held on Thursday June 10th. Everyone in the community will be invited. At that meeting, the findings contained in this report will be presented and the participants will then set priorities for action. In the months following that process, the community sponsors will be available to assist the community in locating resources to carry out the identified actions.

1.1 How the Business Vitality Initiative Works

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

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

surrounding communities that may rely on or are integrated into the central community.

The completion of the BVI questionnaire is the next step in the facilitation process. The first section collects information relating to both the participant and the community, and asks participants to provide their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the community.

The second section of the questionnaire is comprised of 60 multi-choice and short answer questions in ten separate sections (Table 3).

Table 3: BVI Evaluation Sections

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

A range of answers are available to the participant for each question (*completely agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, and completely disagree*), and each answer receives a different score. If all participants completely agreed with a question, the question would receive a score of 100. Alternately, if all participants completely disagreed with the question, the overall question score would be zero. In the case of *neither agree nor disagree*, if all participants answered a question with this option, the question score would be 50.

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

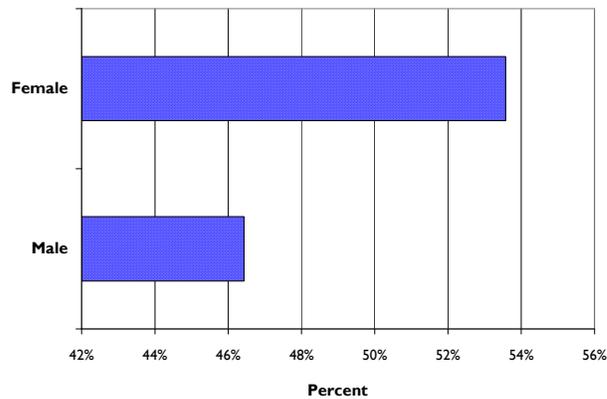
In addition to the questionnaire portion of the BVI, focus groups in Acme discussed the factors that make the community a good place to do business and improvements that could be made in order to improve business vitality.

CIEL then takes the results of the focus groups and the data provided by the BVI questionnaire to produce an analysis such as the one contained in this report.

2.0 Community Profile and Focus Group Results

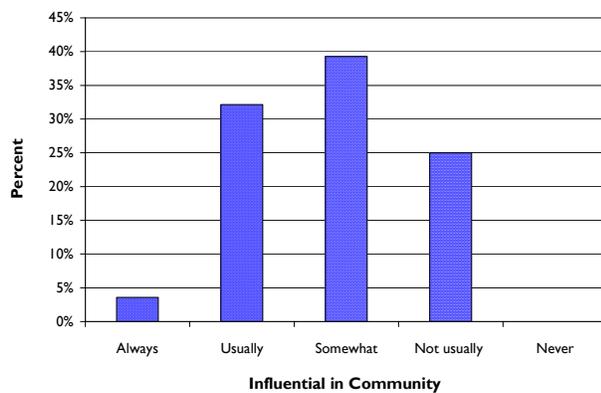
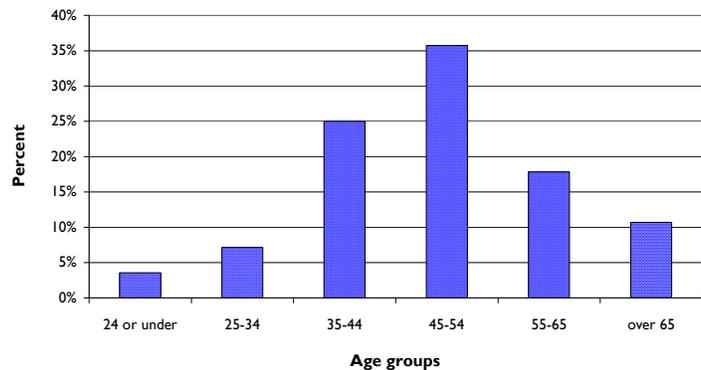
2.1 BVI Focus Group Respondent Profile

The first part of the BVI questionnaire profiles the participants. The results for the 22 Acme participants are shown follow.



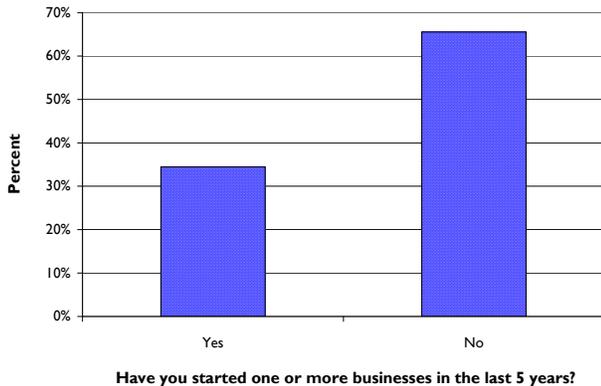
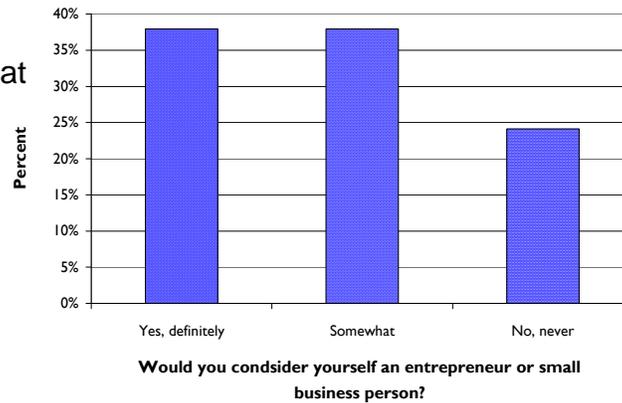
- 53% of Acme BVI participants were female, and 47% were male. This deviates from most other BVIs in which men have outnumbered women.

- 57% of the participants were in the 35-54 age range.



- 75% of participants said they were influential in the community. No participants said they are never influential.

- 74% of participants stated that they felt they are a business person or entrepreneur in some way.



- 32% of participants stated that they have started at least one business in the last 5 years.

2.2 Focus Group Results

The focus groups on April 28 in Acme were asked two questions:

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

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

Table 4 shows the responses to Question 1. Similar answers are aggregated in the “count” column.

Table 4: Focus Group Question 1

	Count
Affordable real estate	3
Easy to get permits for business	2
Proximity to Calgary	2
Friendly People	2
Employment opportunities in oil and gas	1
Customer base is here or close	1
Do have basic needs, businesses (gas station, bank, food store)	1
Regular hours of business	1
Quality products	1
Quality services (trades)	1
Environment	1
Stable Economy	1
Less overhead costs	1
Quiet	1
Labour is fairly readily available	1
Close to main artery roads (#1,2,9)	1
Good source of quality water (though high price)	1
High speed internet	1
Daily freight courier services	1
Recreation for workers	1
Recycling of cardboard is nearly ready to go.	1
Businesses who supply businesses already in place	1
Computer support 10 minutes away	1
Comfortable downtown	1
Ample free parking	1
Snow clearing in place	1
Good school for children of workers	1
Day-care services	1
We now know Mike!!	1
Residents are knowledgeable of local businesses	1
We are not a big city (Calgary)	1
Safer	1
Location good for agricultural business	1

Table 5 shows the responses to Question 2.

Table 5: Focus Group Question 2

	Count
Availability of office space	3
Reduce taxes	2
More advertising/ promotion	2
Better town website	2
Buy local whenever possible	2
Industrial subdivision	1
Utilize the Acme name	1
Business taxes (tax incentives?)	1
Cost of running a business (utilities, water)	1
Hours of operation	1
Incentives for business improvement	1
Development of commercial and residential properties	1
Work experience in schools.	1
Funding grants for existing and new business	1
Advertising for existing grants (Community Futures)	1
Postal service effective	1
Government assistance	1
Education programs	1
Adult learning courses	1
Community Futures funding	1
Policing	1
Fire Department	1
More access to regional markets	1
Communications	1
Perception of Downtown	1
Best before dates (food)	1
Health services	1
Develop more business lots	1
Reduce service costs	1
Encourage kids to pursue blue collar jobs and stick around	1

2.3 Community Profile Results

The BVI questionnaire includes a community profile consisting of five questions:

- Describe your community in three words

- What are the two greatest assets in your community not used to potential?
- What are the expected top two economic drivers of the economy in your community in the next 5 years?
- What is a specific untapped community, business or economic development opportunity for the area?
- What are the top things that could improve your community?

For each question, a table of the answers is presented below.

2.3.1 Describing Acme in Three Words

There were 66 individual responses to the community profile question that asks for three words or phrases that best describe Acme. Of those, 34 were considered to be positive, 20 were neutral, and 12 were considered negative, resulting in a 3:1 positive to negative ratio.

Table 6: Describing Acme in Three Words

Positive		Neutral		Negative	
Friendly	9	Small	7	Cliquey	3
Laid back/relaxing	3	Quiet	3	Junky	3
Close knit	2	Agricultural	2	Falling apart	1
Volunteer	2	Commuters	2	Divided generationally	1
Neighbourly	1	Conservative	1	Boring	1
Home	1	Urban	1	Welfare	1
Fun	1	Slow	1	Stagnant economically	1
Active	1	Country	1	Lacking decent business	1
Togetherness	1	Retired people	1		
Forward thinking	1	Aging	1		
Comfortable	1				
Spiritual	1				
Family roots	1				
Pleasant	1				
Pretty	1				
Community Spirit	1				
Recreation	1				
Strong	1				
Great Teamwork	1				
Affordable Housing	1				
Green	1				

Safe	1				
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2.3.2 Strengths And Assets Not Used To Potential In Acme

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

Table 7: Top Strengths and Assets of Acme

	Count
New Community Hall	4
Youth	3
Seniors Centre	3
Close to Calgary	2
Main Street business	2
Golf Course	2
School	2
Grocery Store	2
Curling Rink	1
Cartoon character feature not embellished enough	1
People	1
Location	1
Walking pathways	1
Recreation	1
The name "Acme"	1
Highly educated people	1
Restaurant	1
Low cost of housing	1
Meat market	1
Country Living	1
Lots of open spaces for building for business	1
Farmer's market (in curling rink)	1
Land not developed for commercial, industrial	1
Not enough people using the sports facilities	1
Advertising its resources	1
Highway retail frontage	1
Campground (amenities, full service)	1
Talented people	1

2.3.3 Economic Drivers In Acme

Participants were asked to give two answers to the question, “What are the expected top two economic drivers of the economy in your community in the next 5 years?”

Table 8: Future Economic Drivers in Acme

	Count
Agriculture	12
Oil and gas	6
Trucking and servicing trucking industry	6
Close to Calgary	2
Service	1
Affordability	1
Business - new	1
Santerra	1

2.3.4 Untapped Opportunities In Acme

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

Table 9: Top Untapped Opportunities in Acme

Motel	6
Bottle Depot	3
Grocery store	3
Office Space	3
Affordable properties (commercial and residential)	2
Farmers Market	2
Energy services sector	1
More buildings for businesses	1
Oil and gas servicing	1
Tradespeople	1
Proximity to Calgary	1
Old folks home/housing	1
Unused land by the RR track	1
Small town feel, neighbours are friends	1
Meat market	1

Truck stop	1
Large scale construction	1
Sports arena	1
Food Services	1
Meal in a box type business for commuters	1

2.3.5 Improvements to Acme

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

Table 10: Improving Acme

	Count
More businesses/ incentives	10
Beautify, clean up, remove eyesores	5
Improve/pave streets	4
Lower taxes	4
Better/bigger grocery store	3
Advertise the community	2
Buy locally	2
A place for preteens to hang out and not get in trouble	1
More employment	1
Street parties	1
More accommodations	1
Farmer's market	1
Youth attractions (groups)	1
Less apathy	1
Less welfare	1
Upkeep on ball diamonds, pool, skating rink.	1
Hobby Shop	1
More community events	1
Home beautification	1
Meat Market	1
Make our Sports Day more of an attraction	1
Good truck stop	1
More exposure for the tradespeople that work in Acme	1
Gas and oil to remain viable	1
Tourism	1

Bigger pool	1
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3.0 Section Scores

Overall, Acme had a full survey score of 47 out of 100, which is 14% below the 20-community average of 55.

The BVI section results as shown in figures 1 and 2 show that particular strengths for Acme are its two highest scores in the *Opportunities and Attitudes* and the *Communications and Connectivity* sections.

The lowest scoring sections of the survey are *Innovation* and *Infrastructure and Business Services*.

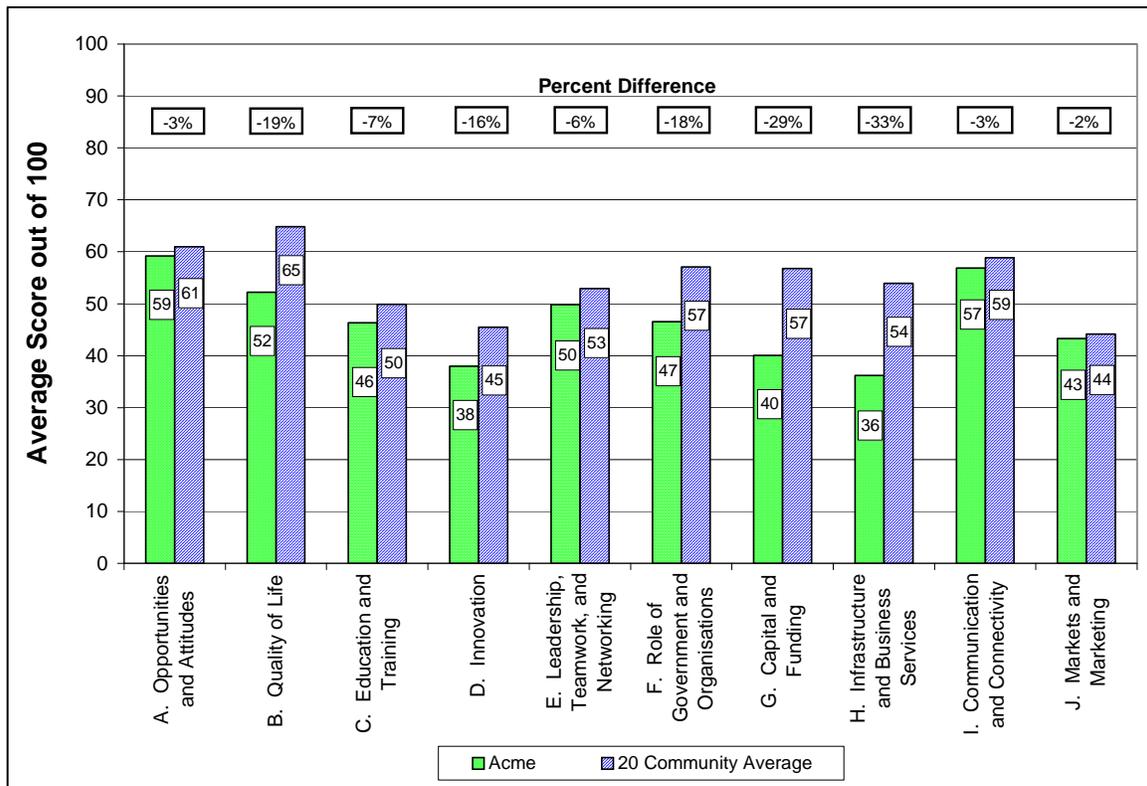


Figure 1: Acme and 20-Community Average Section Scores

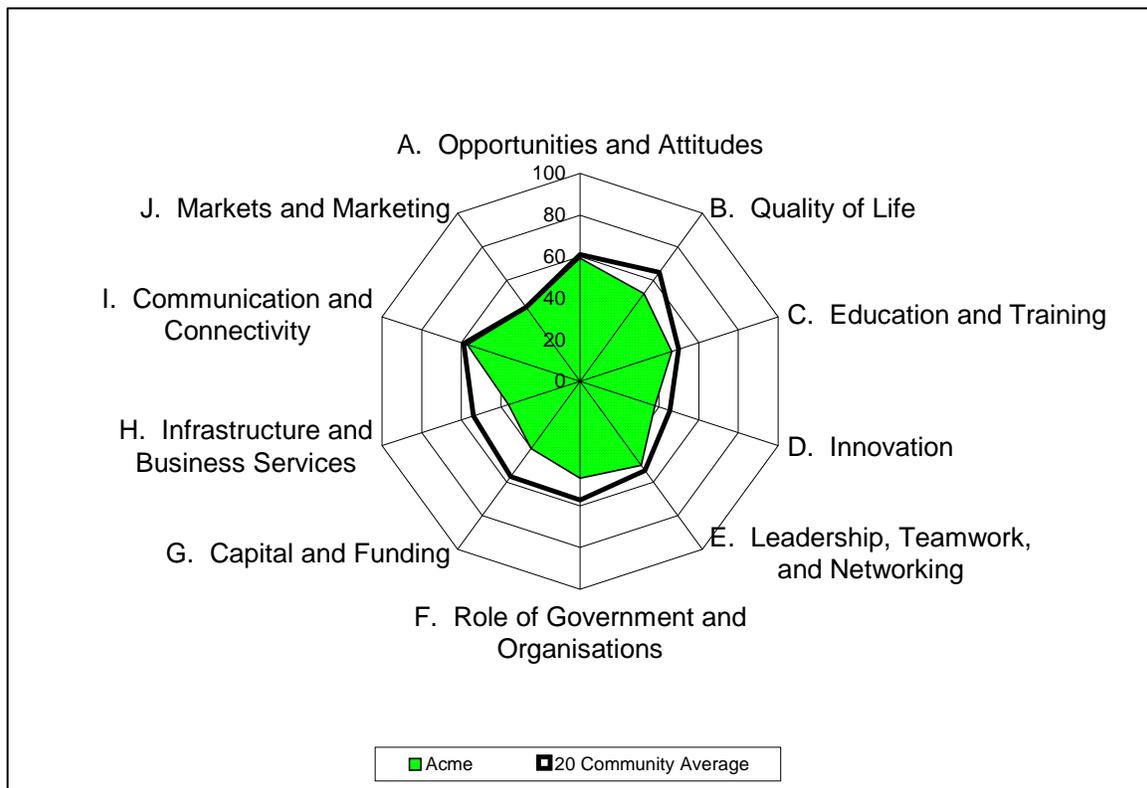


Figure 2: Acme and 20-Community Average Section Scores

31. Individual Section Scores

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

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

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

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

The *Opportunities and Attitudes* section was the highest-ranking section of the BVI questionnaire in Acme. The list of ten highest scoring questions for Acme listed in Appendix A contains two questions from this section: A4 (successful businesses want to remain), and A5 (availability of employees) which had a score 38% above the average.

Figure 3 and Table 11 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.

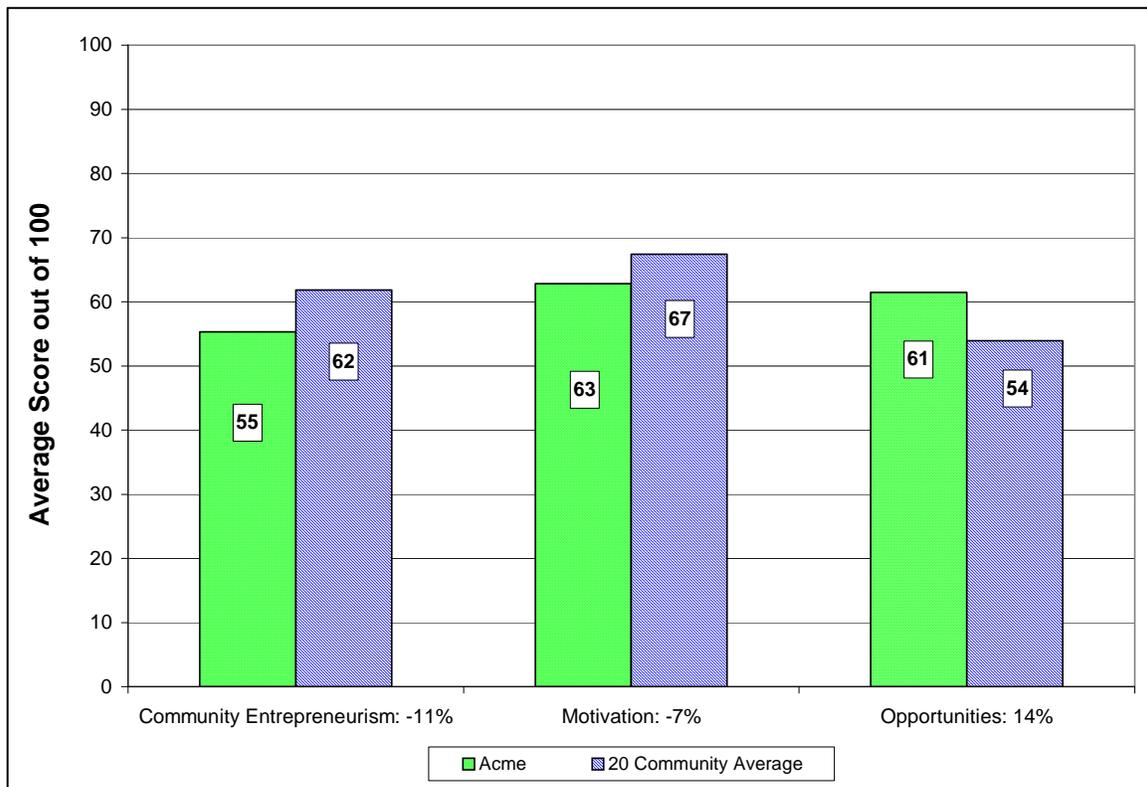


Figure 3: Opportunities and Attitudes Subsection Scores

- The 'Motivation' subsection scored highest (63 out of 100), 7% below the 20-community average.

- With a score of 55, the “Opportunities’ subsection scored lowest in the section, 11% below the 20-community average.

Table 11: Opportunities and Attitudes-- Individual Question Scores

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 20-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for Acme are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
Community Entrepreneurism	1. Entrepreneurial ventures and business creation are encouraged and supported by citizens and local governments.	48	57	-16%
	2. Individuals are capable of thinking creatively and developing unconventional solutions and innovative business opportunities.	61	65	-7%
Motivation	3. Citizens are motivated to learn new skills and to develop existing ones.	46	51	-10%
	4. Successful businesses want to remain in the area.	78	82	-5%
Opportunities	5. There are employees available to meet business needs.	67	49	38%
	6. The area is facing a significant economic opportunity.	54	60	-9%
Section Score		59	61	-3%

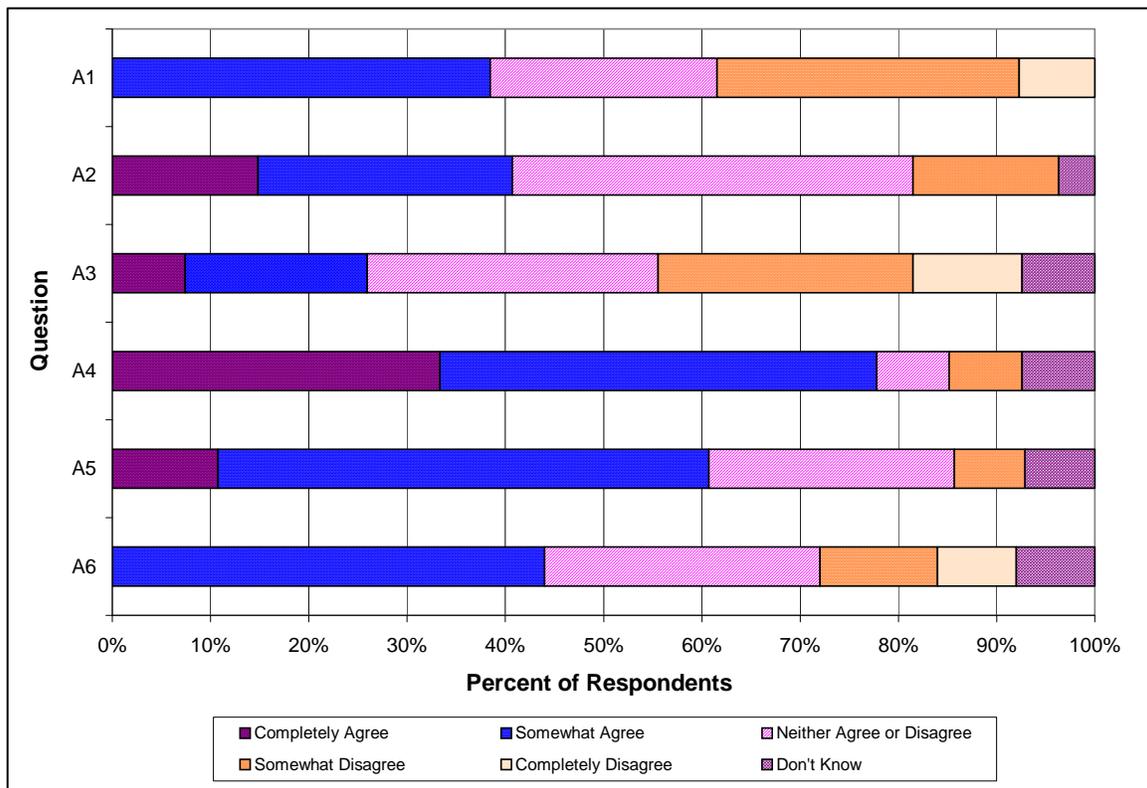


Figure 4: Opportunities and Attitudes-- Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** A4 (successful businesses want to remain) at 78%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** A3 (citizens motivated to learn new skills) at 26%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** A6 (significant opportunity) at 8%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** A1 (entrepreneurism is encouraged).

Table 12: Opportunities and Attitudes-- Improvements

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advertise Acme in Calgary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buy locally.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have to get next generation involved. More business needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Help people realize the importance of getting involved and caring about what's happening in Acme. Show people there are funding opportunities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep school open. Encourage young families to move in and make them aware of what we have in the way of service clubs and recreational facilities for the size of town, as well as the quality and history of the school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower taxes. Incentives. Grants. Understand needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More activities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More businesses needed for younger generations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More office space needs to be built and made available. There is no existing space for those looking. Land is also limited.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More things for the younger people and get more business.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need to have a facility/building to offer small business office space/location.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Residents and community working together.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tax incentives for business. Why is everything out of Three Hills now? We use to have self improvement courses and strong creative courses right in our community. I feel that what operates as BALS is positive but serves the northern corridor not the south. We should align with Beiseker, Irricana and south - that's where our partners lie. We must break with tradition of going N - it just isn't working even on a most basic level - the government serves T.H and Trochu not Linden and Acme.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The village needs to make an effort to attract new business and support existing business.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We need to have a brainstorming meeting to discover what people are thinking in this community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We would have more businesses if we built more office space and that which we do have are in desperate need of a facelift.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work closer together as businesses.

3.3 Section B: Quality of Life (52 out of 100)

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

Quality of Life was the third-highest ranking section for Acme. Questions B2 (no significant environmental problems) and B4 (opportunities for involvement) both appear in the list of the top ten highest scoring questions in Appendix A.

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

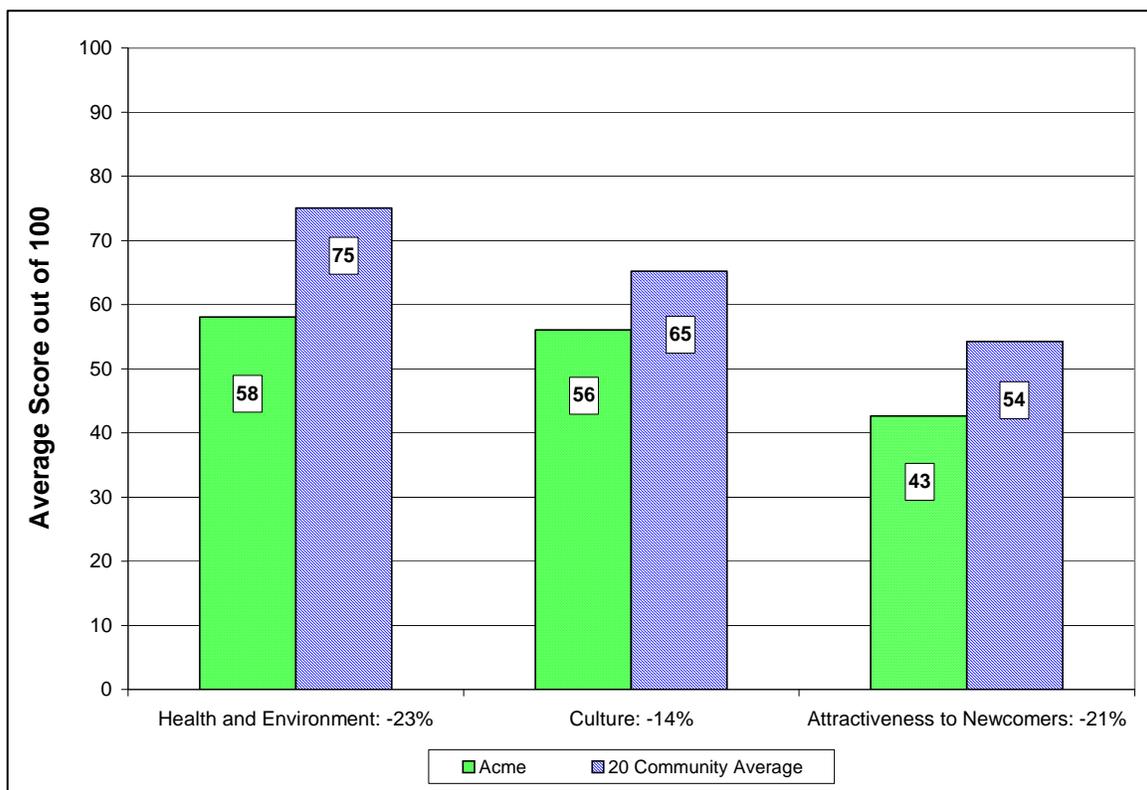


Figure 5: Quality of Life Subsection Scores

- The 'Health and Environment' subsection scored highest with a score of 58 (23% below average).
- The lowest scoring subsection, 'Attractiveness to Newcomers,' had a score of 43 (21% below the 20-community average).

Table 13: Quality of Life-- Individual Question Scores

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 20-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for Acme are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
Health and Environment	1. A quality health care facility is accessible, well serviced and within a reasonable distance.	53	69	-23%
	2. There are no significant environmental pollution issues here.	66	85	-22%
Culture	3. There are frequent high quality cultural events (e.g. festivals, concerts) catering to a range of ages.	48	60	-20%
	4. There are plentiful and varying opportunities for involvement (e.g. arts, athletics, politics, church groups).	64	70	-9%
Attractiveness to Newcomers	5. Young adults (25-34) consider the area to be a desirable place to live.	41	50	-18%
	6. Quality residential accommodation is available and affordable.	45	60	-25%
Section Score		52	65	-19%

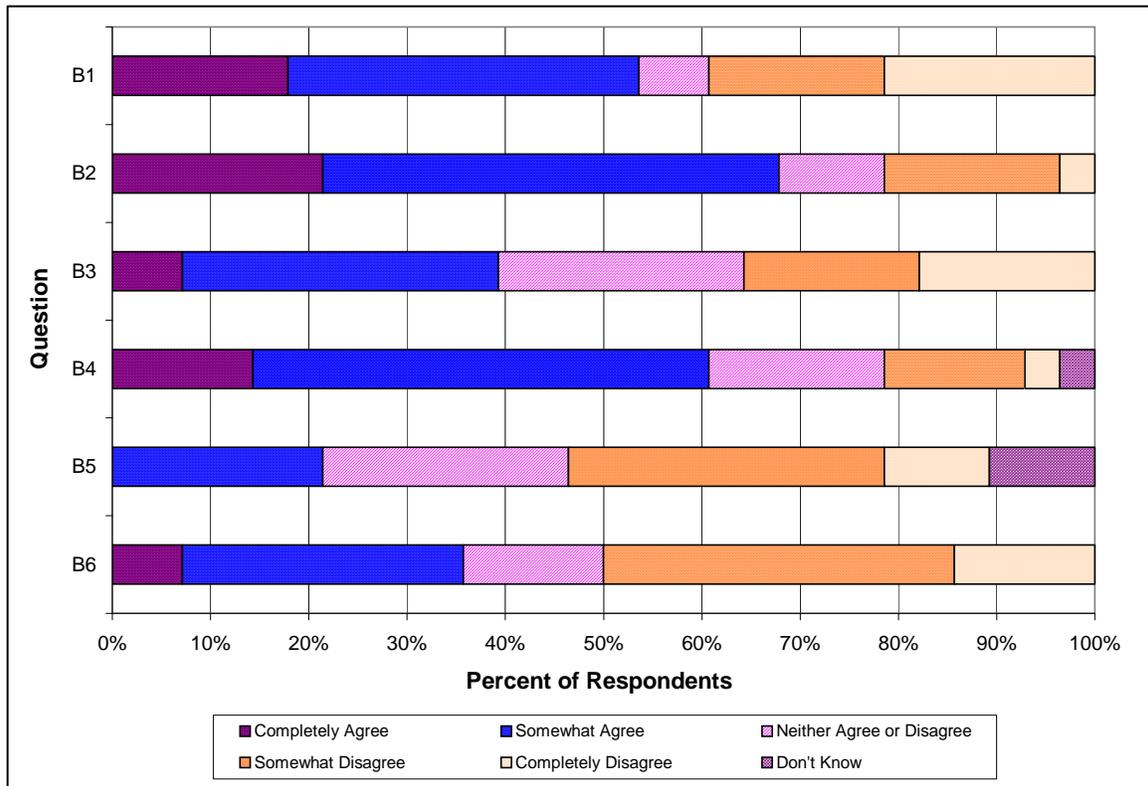


Figure 6: Quality of Life-- Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** B2 (no environmental pollution) at 68%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** B5 (attractive to young adults) at 22%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** B5 (attractive to young adults) 11%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** B3 (cultural events).

Table 14: Quality of Life— Improvements

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active recruitment for a doctor to set up practice in Acme. More needs to be done to keep kids busy and interested in the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affordable, decent housing is needed. Property taxes need to be lowered to keep young families in the area. Existing businesses need to be encouraged to stay and in some cases improve their goods and services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community recreational facility to attract families to the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Employment opportunities. Social clubs for kids. Cultural events to bring. Whole community together.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First you start with jobs. The rest "quality of life" follows. Right now the quality of life enjoyed in Acme can be traced to the efforts of devoted people who are now in their late 70s and 80s. No-one to take over.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lots more events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lower taxes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More active policing (RCMP)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More locally produced organic food.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recreation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce taxes to new business that need to build more pathways. No truck route through village on Nolan St.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce taxes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We don't have enough events taking place for people to get together and enjoy. However they are starting such as "Bringing the music home", Variety night and high school dinner theatre. We need help to make our Sports Day better we need volunteers for that day.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We need a decent grocery store. A drugstore. Drop in centre for the kids.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We need more development; there isn't any more places to build houses or industrial buildings.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We should have doctors in the area. Rental accommodations.

3.4 Section C: Education and Training (46 out of 100)

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

The *Education and Training* section scored sixth out of the ten sections of the survey. Question C6 (quality schools) was the highest-scoring question of the survey for Acme (see Appendix A). Question C5 (availability of skilled labour) scored 50% above the 20-community average (see Appendix C).

Figure 7 and Table 15 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.

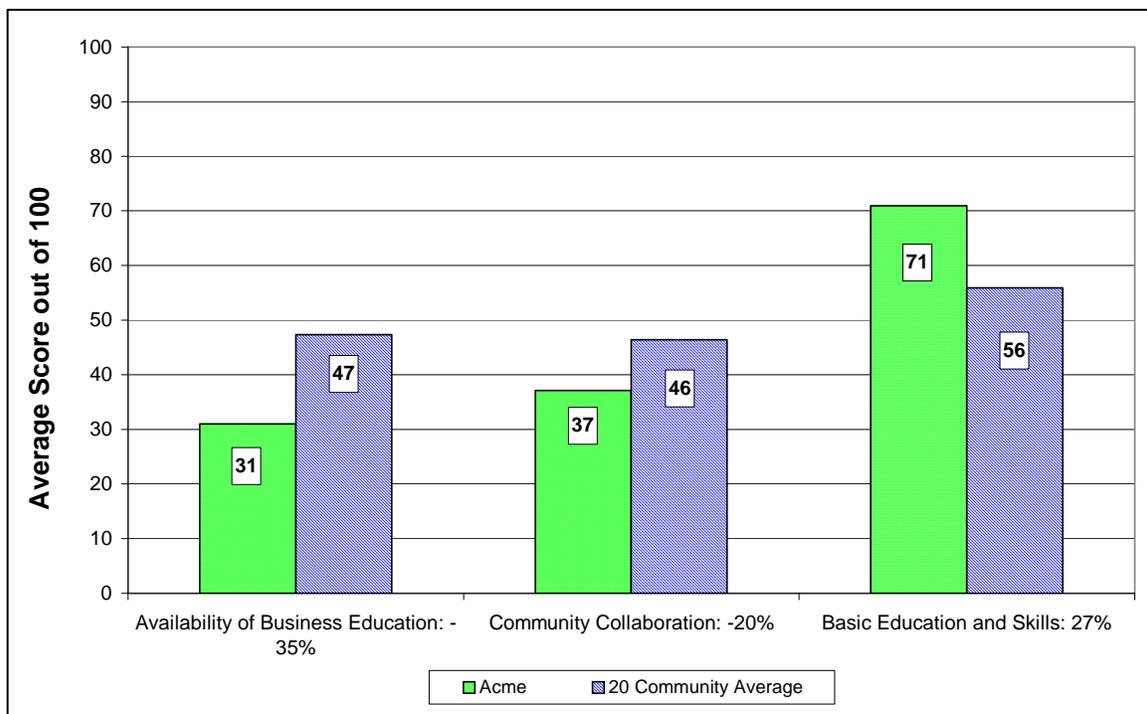


Figure 7: Education and Training Subsection Scores

- The 'Basic Education and Skills' subsection was the highest scoring subsection, 27% above the 20-community average.
- The 'Availability of Business Education' subsection was the lowest scoring subsection with a score of 31 (35% below average).

Table 15: Education and Training-- Individual Question Scores

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 20-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for Acme are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
Availability of Business Education	1. Business skills training is available (e.g. business plan development, marketing, accounting, etc.).	31	53	-40%
	2. Other business education is available in the area (e.g. personal development, professional forums, etc.).	30	41	-26%
Community Collaboration	3. Business mentors and/or role models are available in the area.	42	50	-16%
	4. The education and business communities work together to provide convenient training for businesses.	30	41	-27%
Basic Education and Skills	5. A pool of skilled labour is available to local businesses in the area.	55	36	50%
	6. There are quality elementary and secondary schools in the area.	91	80	14%
Section Score		46	50	-7%

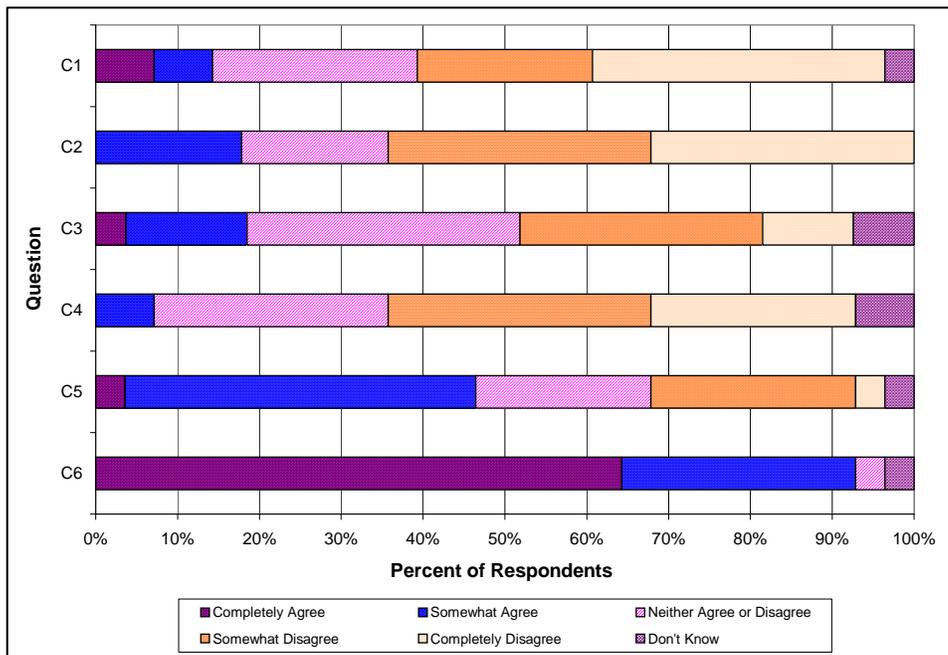


Figure 8: Education and Training Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** C6 (quality of schools) at 93%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** C4 (education and business work together) at 6%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** C3 (mentorship) and C4 (education and business work together) at 7%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** none

Table 16: Education and Training-- Strengths and Improvements

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A professional office should be available in the community with local trades and other professions from businesses helping to train young and old alike.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adult learning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bring RAPP program into school. Provide some evening classes (of interest to the general public) in the school.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business opportunity - Marketing and accounting to teach people in the area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interface with Olds College. Video conferencing courses are widely available - machine in public library bookings are free. Support the school - it is under siege - GHSD is on record for saying rural schools like ours are a drain on the urban. A new school needs to be built to consolidate H.S. students of Linden, Acme, Carbon, and lets think outside the box - why not Beiseker - why not here? Have the plan - present it, sell it, people will move here for that reason alone. Great school, academic success- good sports program - make sure teacher must live in County or villages-- when they buy in for their own kids everyone wins.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Keep our schools open.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make sure the school stays open. Encourage the day care to expand. This is a blue collar town. We could use some more arts and culture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More educational opportunities - post secondary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More information about E learning provided.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More programs offered for work experience for students. STEP programs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide more adult learning.

3.5 Section D: Innovation (38 out of 100)

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

This section had the second-lowest score of the survey. Questions D1 (formal and informal forums), and D2 (support for innovative businesses) at 50% below average. Both appear in the list of lowest-scoring questions in Appendix B.

Figure 9 and Table 17 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.

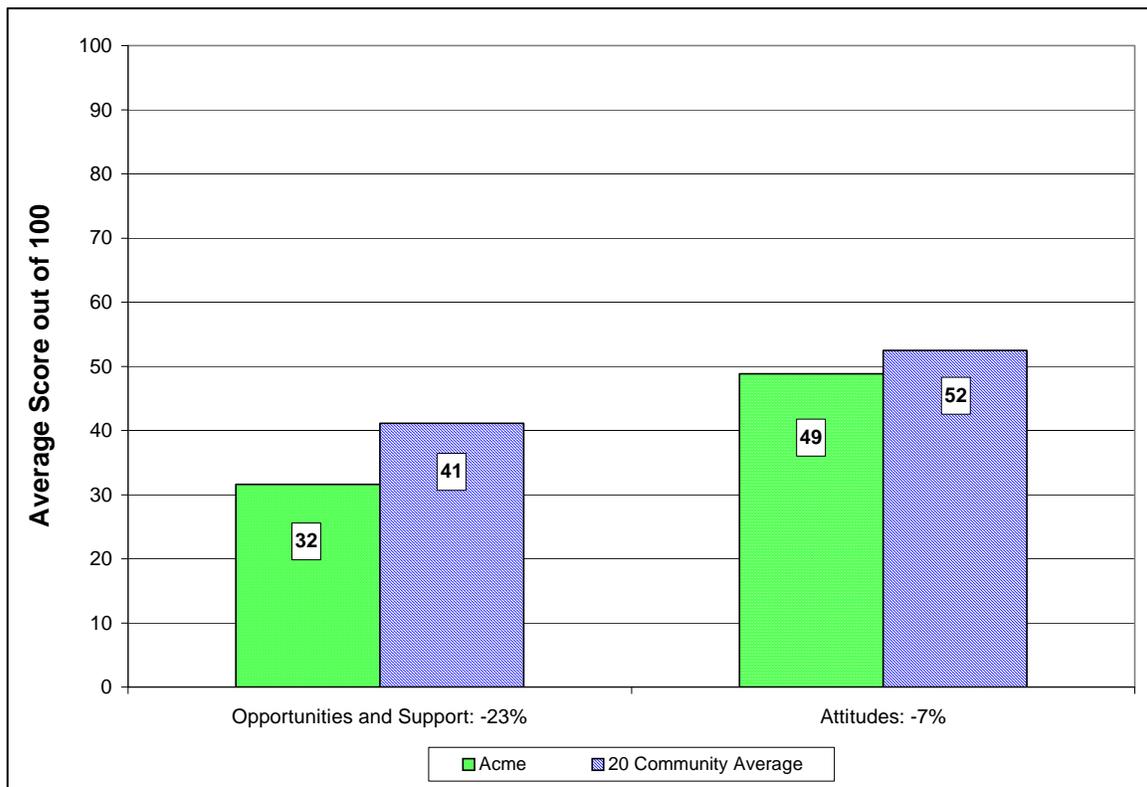


Figure 9: Innovation Subsection Scores

- The 'Attitudes' subsection is the highest scoring subsection, with a score of 49, just under the community average.

Table 17: Innovation-- Individual Question Scores

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 20-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for Acme are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
Opportunities and Support	1. There are formal and informal forums (conferences, workshops, association breakfast meetings) on technology and technology applications.	23	28	-19%
	2. Support and assistance for innovative business research and development is available.	23	46	-50%
	3. Local businesses demonstrate creativity and innovation in seeking new customers.	47	52	-10%
Attitudes	4. Research done in the area or region is relevant to the area's business needs and interests.	42	44	-6%
	5. Innovation is valued and recognized by business people.	55	60	-8%
Section Score		38	45	-16%

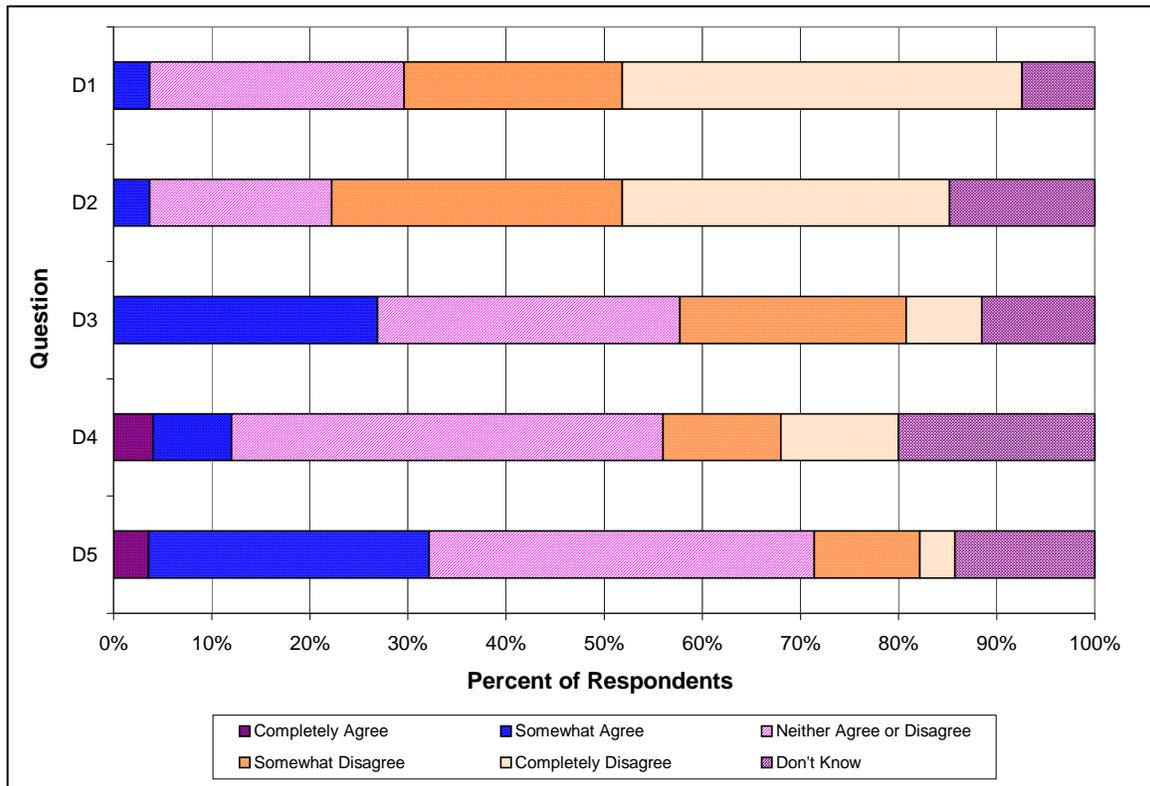


Figure 10: Innovation-- Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** D5 (innovation is valued and recognized) and at 32%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** D1 (forums) and D2 (support for innovative businesses each at 4%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** D4 (relevance of research) at 20%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** D3 (creativity of businesses).

Table 18: Innovation-- Improvements

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better understanding of areas business needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business development ideas. Improve local businesses. Encourage new businesses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Businesses struggle here. We are close to Calgary/Airdrie. Plus our main street is not appealing nor does it have room for more.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education is key.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Night classes at the hall for different computer apps and other hobby crafts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not Sure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Technology workshops held periodically.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There has to be more communication between groups, associations, and people.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Village needs to support new ideas. Encourage youth.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We are a conservative town and that mindset has hindered decisions in the past.

3.6 Section E: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking (50 out of 100)

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

The Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking section ranked fourth for Acme with a score of 50. This section contains the question with the highest positive deviation from the 20-community average: E4 (collaboration with neighbouring communities) at 71% (see Appendix C).

Figure 11 and Table 19 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.

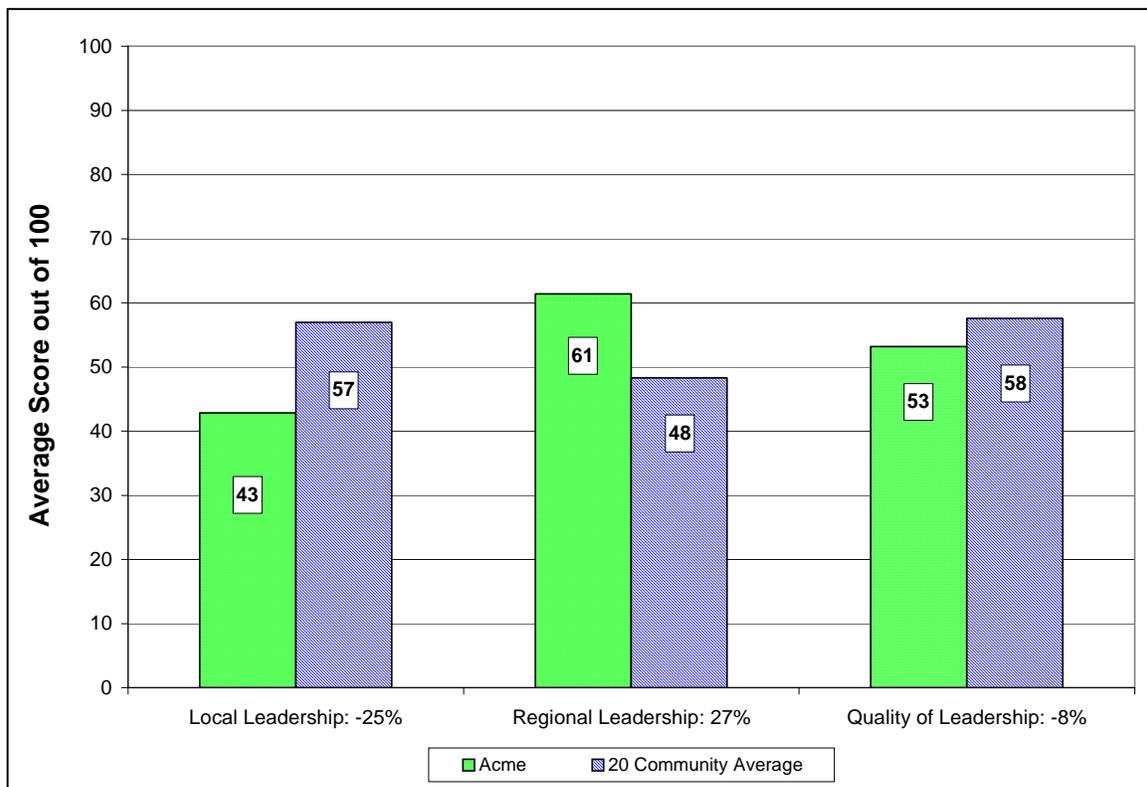


Figure 11: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking Subsection Scores

- 'Regional Leadership' is the highest scoring subsection with a score of 61 (27% above average).

- The lowest scoring subsection, 'Local Leadership' has a score of 43 (25% below average).

Table 19: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking-- Individual Question Scores

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 20-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for Acme are in large bold type.

Sub-section	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
Local Leadership	1. Business and area groups/sectors have a voice in key local government decisions (e.g. infrastructure improvements, transportation).	34	57	-39%
	2. There are adequate opportunities (informal and formal) where business people and entrepreneurs can network with each other.	43	54	-20%
	3. Groups with similar interests can form alliances/networks and cooperate to achieve goals.	54	61	-12%
Regional Leadership	4. We collaborate and cooperate with neighbouring communities.	64	38	71%
	5. Cooperatives and joint community initiatives are encouraged and respected.	59	57	4%
Quality of Leadership	6. There is a pool of talented leaders with diverse skills, cultural experiences and backgrounds who are available for leading area initiatives.	63	66	-6%
	7. Qualified supervisors and managers (and management services) are available to small business	39	44	-12%
Section Score		50	53	-6%

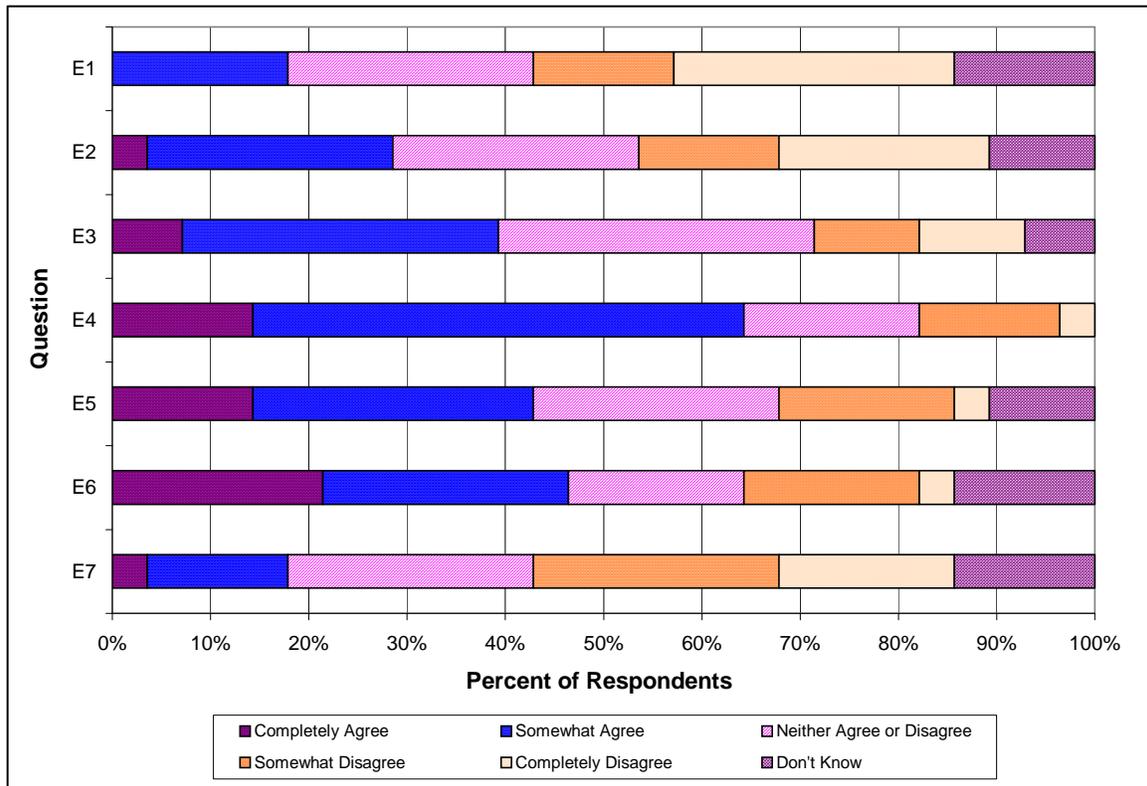


Figure 12: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** E4 (collaboration with neighbouring communities), at 65%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** E1 (business has a voice in government) and E7 (quality supervisors and managers) at 18%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** E1 (business has a voice in government) and E7 (quality supervisors and managers) at 14%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** E2 (networking opportunities).

Table 20: Leadership, Teamwork, and Networking-- Improvements

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of leadership, teamwork, and networking.

▪ Advertise.
▪ Better communication between town officials and community.
▪ Make sure those who work in the area have incentive to live in the area.
▪ More effort to attract supervisors and managers to the area.
▪ More skilled lenders with education and business sense.
▪ More things like Chamber of Commerce, breakfast meetings for businessmen, etc.
▪ Opportunity to get together (brain storming).
▪ Our community has service groups and organizations that do work together. But some of the members of these groups are getting older and so some might not be there in years to come.
▪ Village taking the lead in the community and having more open village meetings.

3.7 Section F: Role of Government and Organizations (47 out of 100)

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

This section ranked fifth for Acme, 15% below the 20-community average.

Figure 13 and Table 21 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.

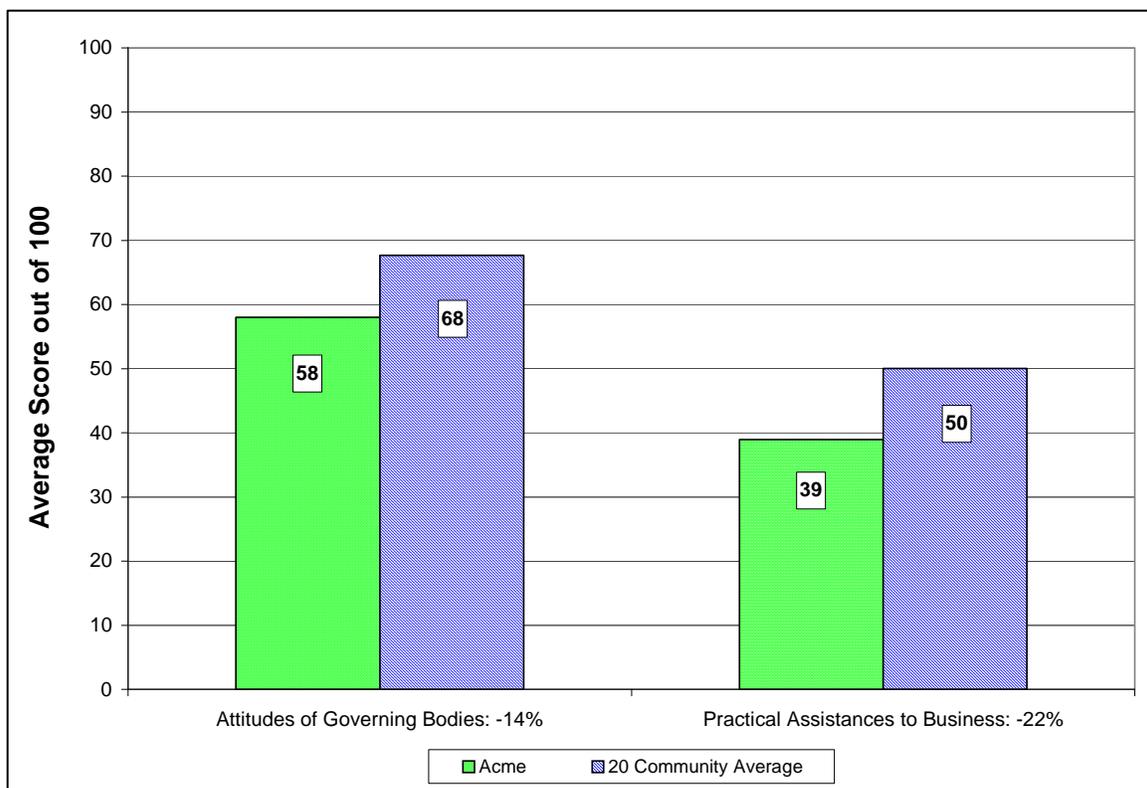


Figure 13: Role of Government and Organizations Subsection Scores

- The 'Attitudes of Governing Bodies' subsection is the highest scoring subsection with a score of 58.
- The 'Practical Assistance to Business' subsection scored lowest with a score of 39.

Table 21: Role of Government and Organizations-- Individual Question Scores

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 20-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for Acme are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
Attitudes of Governing Bodies	1. The governing bodies (town councils, regional district) recognize that businesses are important and valuable for the development of the area.	70	75	-6%
	2. The governing body is committed to recruiting or attracting businesses to the area, and uses strategies or incentives to do so.	39	57	-30%
Practical Assistances to Business	3. There is a recognized organization or individual available to assist people identify, assess, expand and/or create business opportunities.	27	51	-47%
	4. Officials make it easy/reasonable for businesses to start or expand.	41	51	-20%
	5. Local regulations, policies, rules, bylaws and zoning are easily understood by business people, making it easy/reasonable for businesses to expand or start up.	50	48	5%
Section Score		47	57	-18%

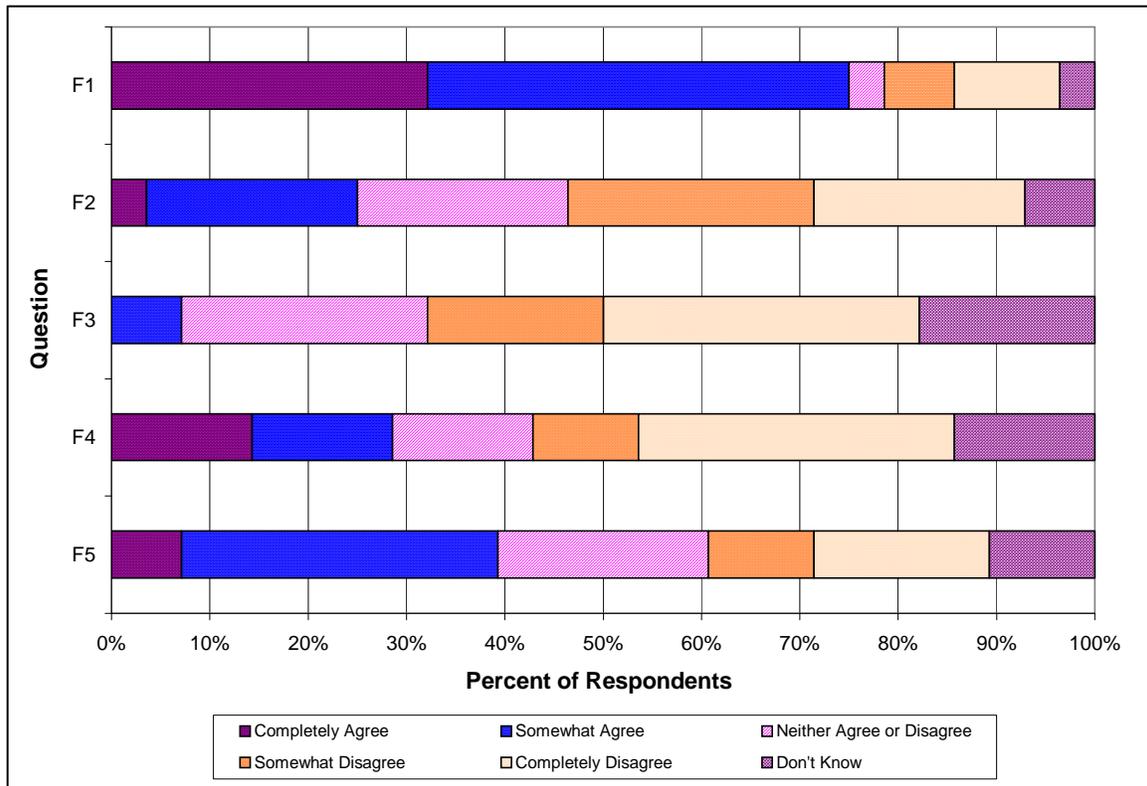


Figure 14: Role of Government and Organizations-- Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** F1 (municipal government recognition) at 75%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** F3 (organization to assist businesses) at 7%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** F3 (organization to assist businesses) at 18%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** F5 (local regulations make it easy for business).

Table 22: Role of Government and Organizations-- Improvements

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of the role of governments and organizations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council lowering the price of land in order for other business to come into our village.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governments kill businesses, reduce government, lower taxes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many evening courses.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More involvement of people to create business opportunities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More public meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish town minutes in paper. Better communication on town activities/council's approvals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taxes are too high - not inviting for new businesses just starting out. Lack of available office space and buildings. Lack of land to build on.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try to reduce taxation. Acme is the highest taxed village in southern Alberta.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use questionnaires.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Village council need to do more to attract business and after they need to follow up and make sure the business gets started up and not buy lots and let them sit vacant for years.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We have a new council and CAO and I think they are making progress for the village in general.

3.8 Section G: Capital and Funding (40 out of 100)

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

The Capital and Funding section scored eighth for Acme out of 10 sections, 29% below the 20-community average. This section is distinguished by an extremely high incidence of “don’t know” responses (see Figure 16, below).

Figure 15 and Table 23 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.

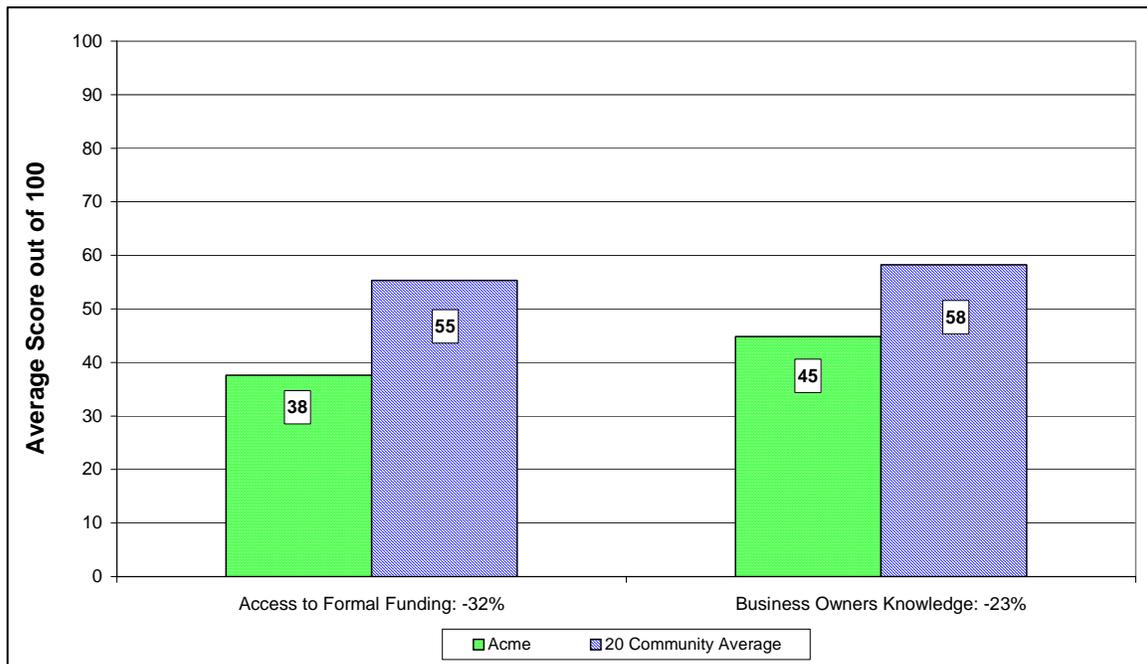


Figure 15: Capital and Funding Subsection Scores

- The ‘Business Owners’ Knowledge’ subsection scored highest with a score of 45 (23% below the 20-community average).
- The ‘Access to Formal Funding’ subsection scored lower with a score of 38, (32% below average).

Table 23: Capital and Funding-- Individual Question Scores

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 20-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for Acme are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
Access to formal funding	1. Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas	42	47	-11%
	2. Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding).	35	74	-53%
	3. Costs of capital (e.g. Interest, application fees) are manageable for entrepreneurs.	36	47	-25%
Business Owners' Knowledge	4. Local business can access informal local investors.	35	72	-52%
	5. Businesses have a firm understanding of financial management (e.g. cash flow, reading financial statements).	54	46	17%
Section Score		40	57	-29%

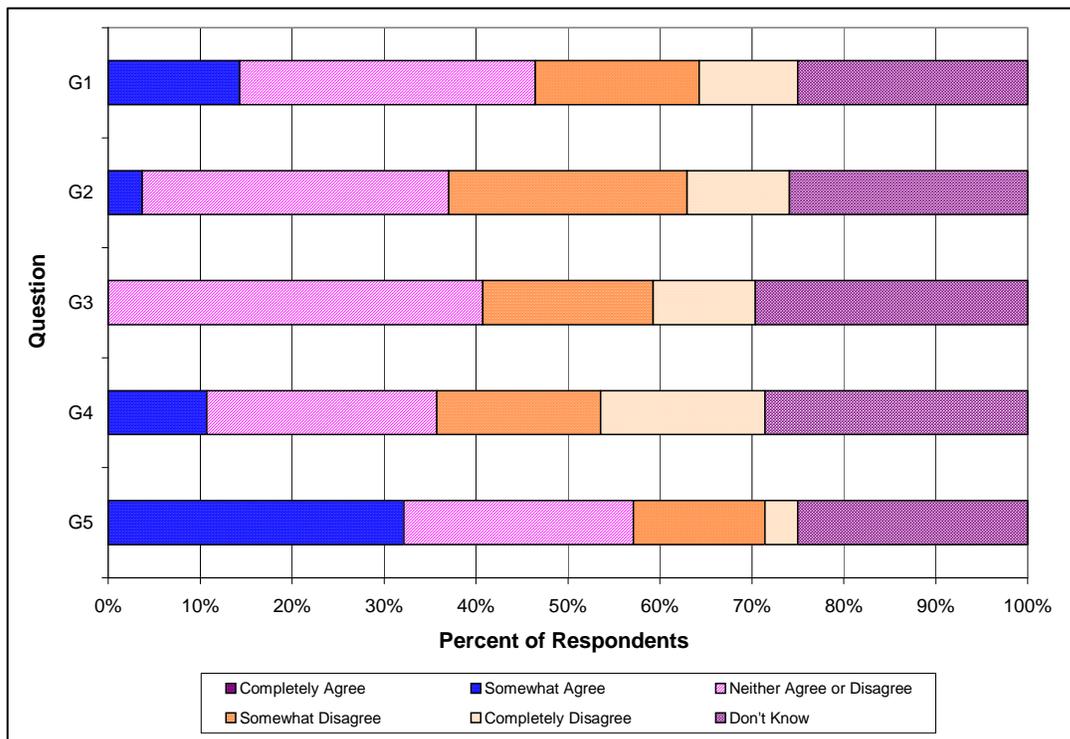


Figure 16: Capital and Funding Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** G5 (businesses understand financial management) at 32%
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** G3 (costs of capital) at 0%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** G3 (costs of capital) at 30%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** none

Table 24: Capital and Funding-- Improvements

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

▪ Business development corporation is in high demand.
▪ Financial institutions could "advertise" their policies. Local investors need to be identified.
▪ Import replacement - what does our community need that we go elsewhere for and could possibly provide ourselves.
▪ Make investors and entrepreneurs opportunities to meet each other. Advertising, newsletter, etc.
▪ Most people don't know all of the resources available to them

3.9 Section H: Infrastructure and Business Services (36 out of 100)


The ability to provide high quality support services and infrastructure to business at reasonable costs, allowing businesses to be as competitive as possible.

This section was the lowest scoring section of the survey for Acme with a score of 36 (33% below average).

However, Question H2 (core business areas are easily accessible) is the second highest scoring question of the entire survey for Acme—see Appendix A).

Appendix B, the list of the ten lowest scoring questions contains four questions from this section including the second lowest-scoring question in the survey (quality rental space available).

Questions H3 (adequate business services) and H7 (quality rental space for business) topped the list of questions with the greatest negative deviation from the 20-community average at -63% and -60% (see Appendix D).

Figure 17 and Table 25 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.

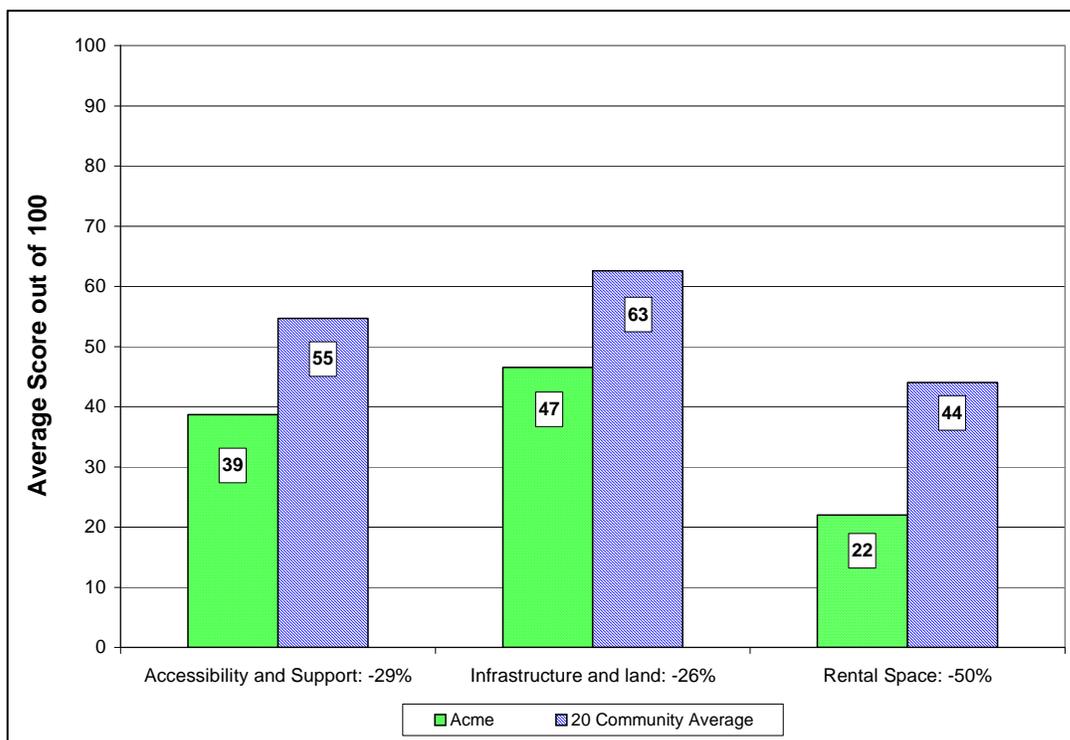


Figure 17: Infrastructure and Business Services Subsection Scores

- The 'Infrastructure and Land' subsection was the highest scoring subsection of the section with a score of 47 (26% below average).
- The 'Rental Spaces' subsection was the lowest scoring subsection with a score of 22 (50% below average).

Table 25: Infrastructure and Business Services-- Individual Question Scores

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 20-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for Acme are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
Accessibility and Support	1. There are vibrant, active downtown areas or community cores.	30	49	-40%
	2. Core business areas are easily accessible by all users (e.g. parking, sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.).	80	61	32%
	3. Adequate business services (e.g. printing services, somputer help, graphic design, etc.) are available.	21	57	-63%
Infrastructure and Land	4. Existing infrastructure (e.g. local roads, water, power) is of good quality, well maintained, serviced, and modern.	50	69	-27%
	5. A variety of buildings and commercial land is available to accommodate business expansion, attraction, or creation.	42	55	-23%
Rental space	6. Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	26	43	-40%
	7. Quality rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	18	45	-60%
Section Score		36	54	-33%

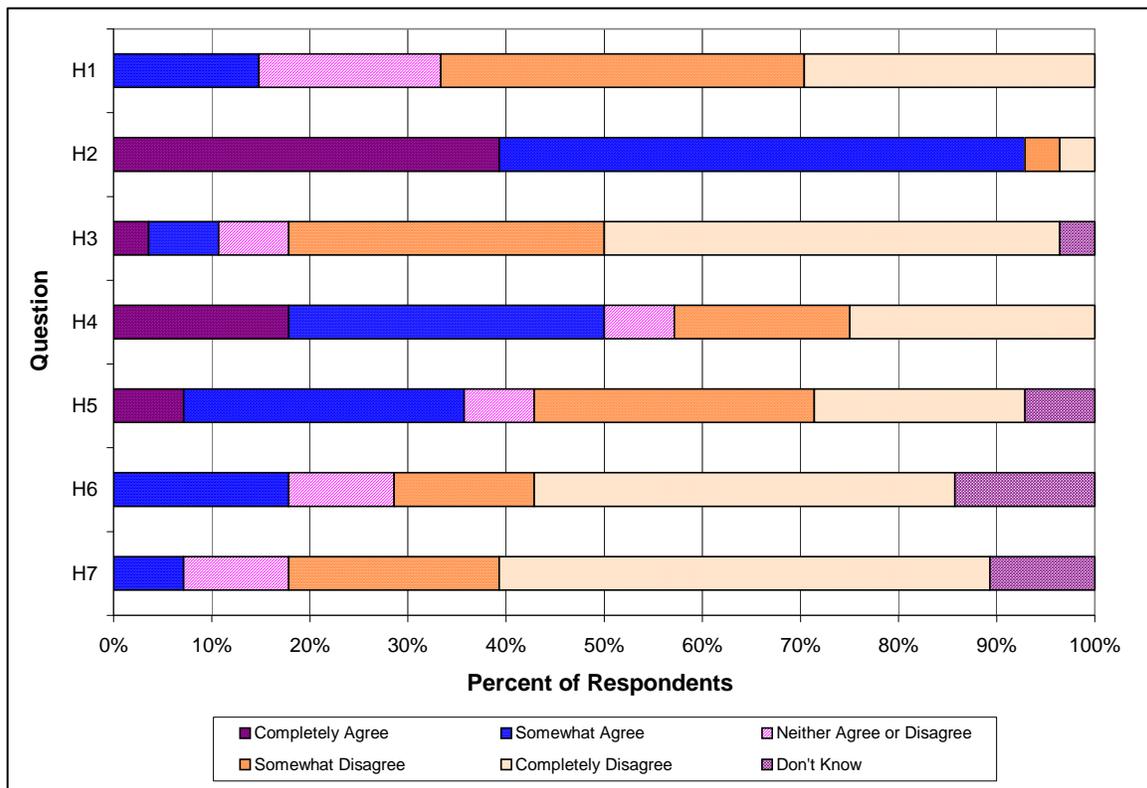


Figure 18: Infrastructure and Business Services Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** H2 (core business is accessible) at 93%
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** H7 (quality rental accommodation for businesses) at 7%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** H6 (affordable rental space) at 18%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** H4 (quality infrastructure).

Table 26: Infrastructure and Business Services-- Improvements

Participants were asked to state in writing how the community could be improved in the area of infrastructure and business services.

▪ Advertising. Invite investors.
▪ Again it goes back to new council and CAO helping set us back on track.
▪ Buildings need to be available for businesses.
▪ Downtown needs a face-lift. Our boulevard is tired. The trees are dead and a mess. If main street looks a mess, then who will move here or start a business?
▪ Downtown really needs to be beautified. Beautiful benches and flowers and businesses would be way more inviting.
▪ Government assistance.
▪ Look into more grants for infrastructure improvements and beautification. Improve the look of Main street. It should be a focal point in town.
▪ Lower taxation for Village of Acme.
▪ Possibly have a building with offices/rooms for small business to use. Beautiful downtown/the whole town, ball diamonds.
▪ Sidewalks and paved streets.

3.10 Section I: Communication and Connectivity (57 out of 100)


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

The Communication and Connectivity section is the second highest scoring section of the survey).

This section contains the lowest-scoring question of the entire questionnaire: I4 (public transportation), which scored 59% below the 20-community average.

Figure 19 and Table 27 show the questions in this section divided into three subsections.

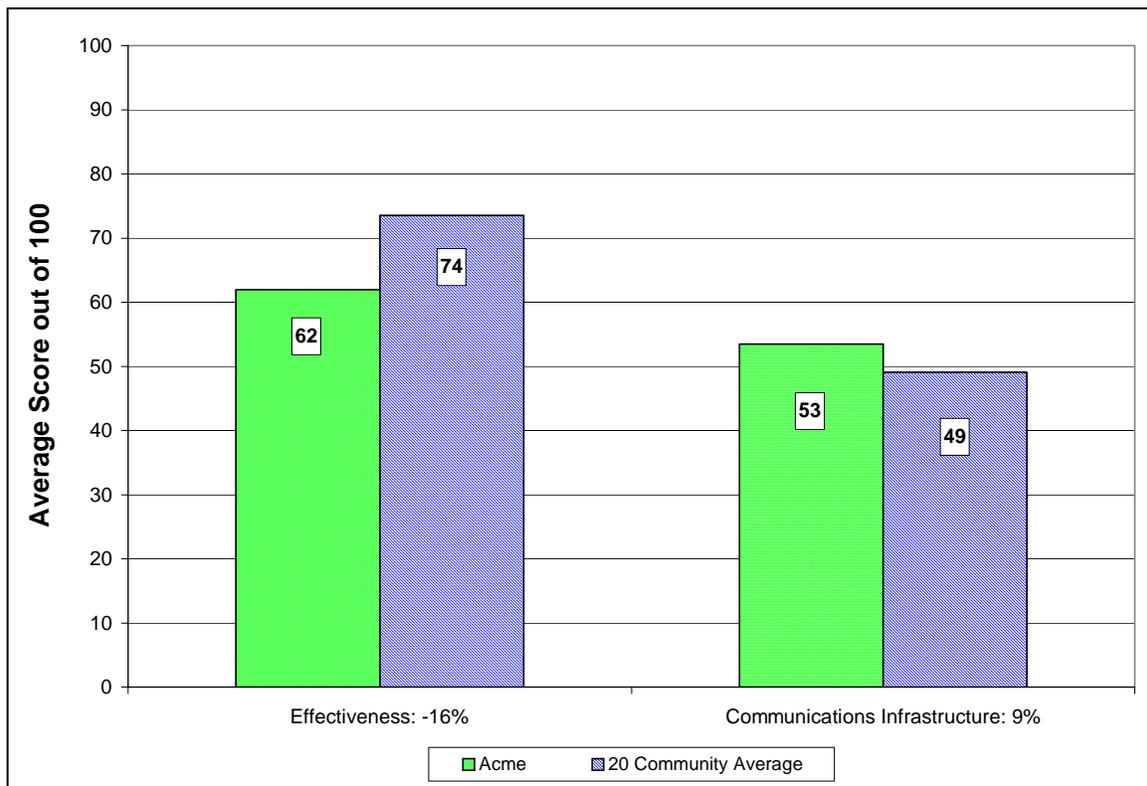


Figure 19: Communication and Connectivity Subsection Scores

- The 'Effectiveness' subsection is the highest scoring section with a 2score of 62 (16% below average).

- ‘Communications Infrastructure’ subsection was the lowest scoring subsection, 9% above average with a score of 53.

Table 27: Communication and Connectivity-- Individual Question Scores

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 20-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for Acme are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
Effectiveness	1. Informal business communication (word of mouth) is highly effective).	67	88	-24%
	2. Formal business communication (e.g. newspaper, radio, etc.) is highly effective.	56	56	0%
Communications Infrastructure	3. Quality communication services (phone, cell phone, high speed internet, etc.) are adequate for business.	67	60	11%
	4. Public transportation within the area is adequate.	13	32	-59%
	5. Shipping and freight services into and out of the area are affordable to businesses.	60	46	30%
Section Score		57	59	-3%

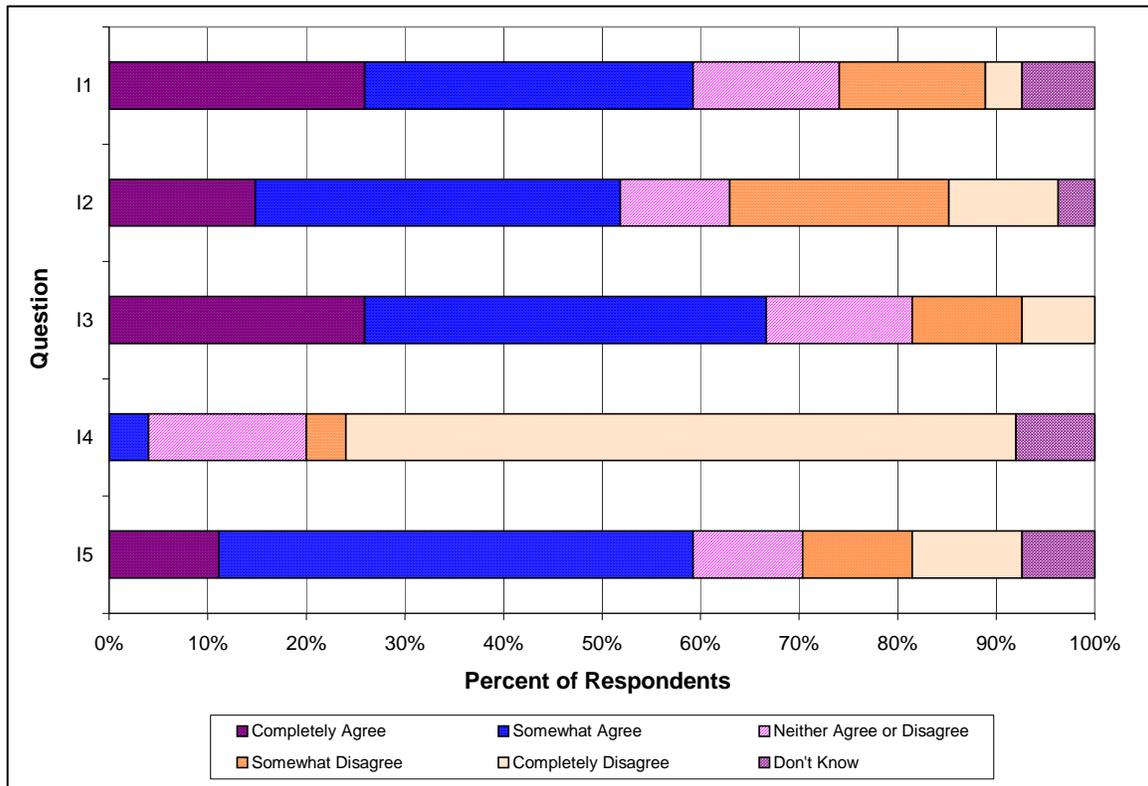


Figure 20: Communication and Connectivity Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** I3 (communication infrastructure) at 66%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** I4 (public transportation) at 3%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** I1 (informal business communication) at 7%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** none.

Table 28: Communication and Connectivity-- Improvements

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

▪ Advertising, public forum.
▪ Cell phone service is a little iffy, even with Telus. High speed internet is available.
▪ High speed internet from Telus.
▪ Reasonable ?
▪ Scheduled meetings among business owners. Websites ?!
▪ Supernet brought to the school of Acme should be available to all in the village. Not just the school (fibre optic).
▪ Wireless.

3.11 Section J: Markets and Marketing (43 out of 100)

- 
The ability of businesses to capture and expand markets locally, regionally, and outside the region, thus keeping and building local wealth.

This section ranks seventh of the ten sections for Acme.

Figure 21 and Table 29 show the questions in this section divided into two subsections.

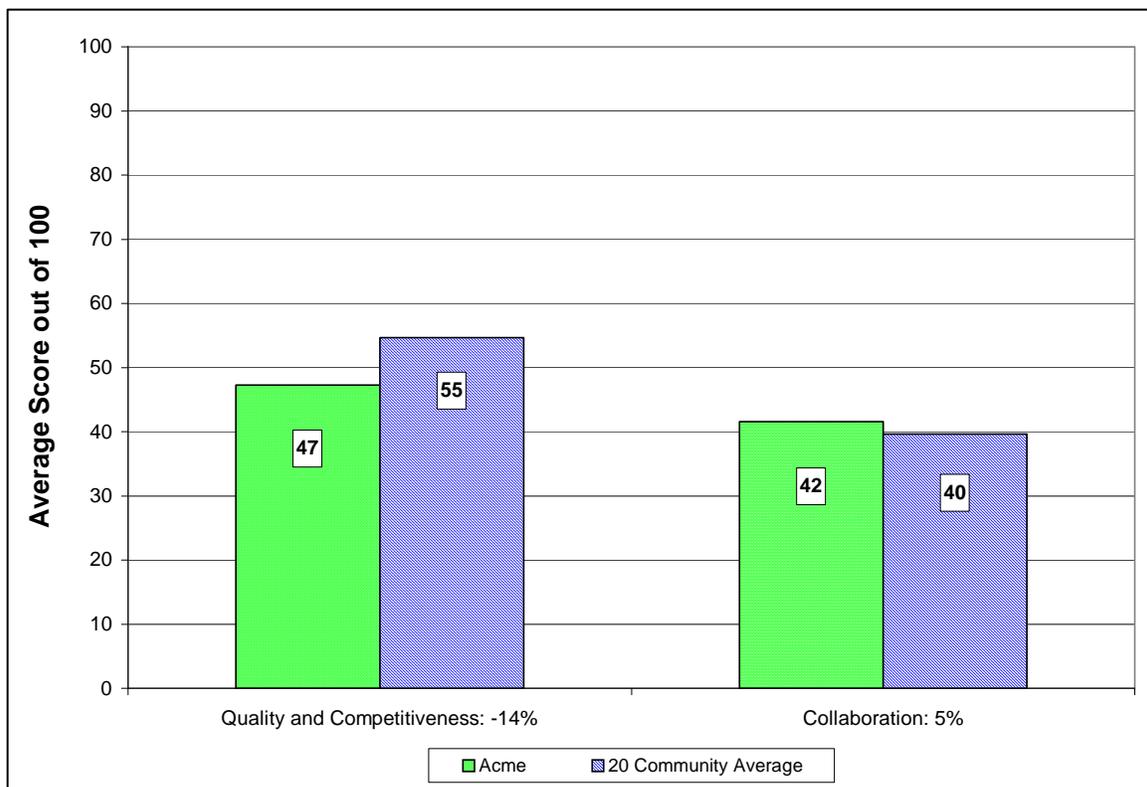


Figure 21: Markets and Marketing Subsection Scores

- The 'Quality and Competitiveness' subsection scored highest with a score of 47 (14% below average) while the 'Collaboration' subsections scored lower at 42.

Table 29: Markets and Marketing-- Individual Question Scores

The highest and lowest scores in terms of the 20-community average are shaded in green and red, respectively, below. The highest and lowest scores for Acme are in large bold type.

Subsection	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
Quality and Competitiveness	1. The area has a reputation for high quality products and/or services.	55	54	1%
	2. Products and services are reasonably priced in comparison to regional and big city competitors	35	55	-36%
Collaboration	3. The area has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image	49	44	12%
	4. Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions.	37	31	18%
	5. People prefer to purchase local products and services.	39	42	-8%
Section Score		43	44	-2%

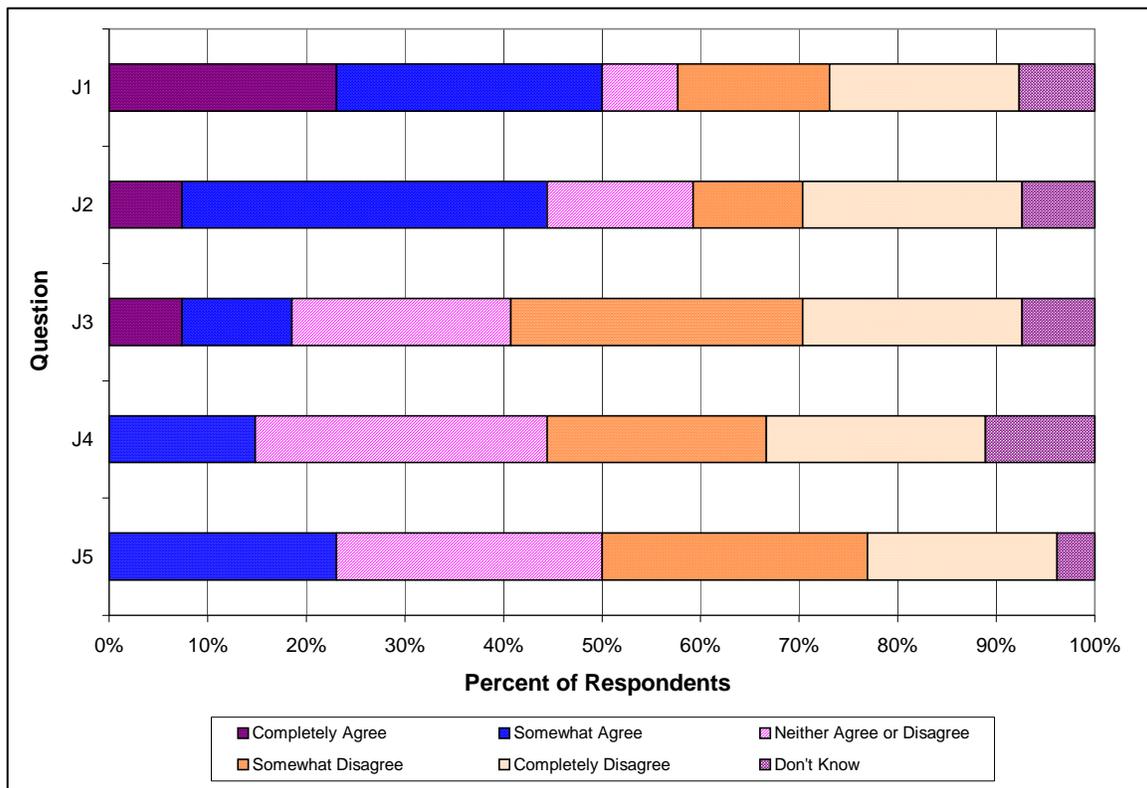


Figure 22: Markets and Marketing Question Response Distribution

- **Highest level of agreement with the question:** J1 (reputation for high quality) at 50%.
- **Lowest level of agreement with the question:** J4 (marketing as a group) at 15%.
- **Highest level of “Don’t know” responses:** J4 (marketing as a group) at 11%.
- **Questions with significant polarization (approximately equal amounts of disagreement and agreement):** J1 (reputation for high quality) and J2 (products reasonably priced).

Table 30: Markets and Marketing-- Improvements

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

▪ Find new meat cutter for empty meat market.
▪ It's hard to buy local when the quality is so below par on some things. It's nice to stay local when you are able, but we are lacking on so many levels.
▪ Less expensive transportation. More access able to regional markets
▪ Most of the products our family uses excepting the hardware and car dealership are unavailable here.
▪ We could be marketing our town name better-- only a few businesses do.
▪ We have some excellent local businesses and we need to promote them.

Appendix A: Top 10 Highest Scoring Questions

	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
C6	There are quality elementary and secondary schools in the area.	91	80	14%
H2	Core business areas are easily accessible by all users (e.g. parking, sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.).	80	61	32%
A4	Successful businesses want to remain in the area.	78	82	-5%
F1	The governing bodies (town councils, regional district) recognize that businesses are important and valuable for the development of the area.	70	75	-6%
A5	There are employees available to meet business needs.	67	49	38%
I1	Informal business communication (word of mouth) is highly effective).	67	88	-24%
I3	Quality communication services (phone, cell phone, high speed internet, etc.) are adequate for business.	67	60	11%
B2	There are no significant environmental pollution issues here.	66	85	-22%
E4	We collaborate and cooperate with neighbouring communities.	64	38	71%
B4	There are plentiful and varying opportunities for involvement (e.g. arts, athletics, politics, church groups).	64	70	-9%

Appendix B: Bottom 10 Lowest Scoring Questions

	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
I4	Public transportation within the area is adequate.	13	32	-59%
H7	Quality rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	18	45	-60%
H3	Adequate business services (e.g. printing services, computer help, graphic design, etc.) are available.	21	57	-63%
D2	Support and assistance for innovative business research and development is available.	23	46	-50%
D1	There are formal and informal forums (conferences, workshops, association breakfast meetings) on technology and technology applications.	23	28	-19%
H6	Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	26	43	-40%
F3	There is a recognized organization or individual	27	51	-47%

	available to assist people identify, assess, expand and/or create business opportunities.			
H1	There are vibrant, active downtown areas or community cores.	30	49	-40%
C4	The education and business communities work together to provide convenient training for businesses.	30	41	-27%
C2	Other business education is available in the area (e.g. personal development, professional forums, etc.).	30	41	-26%

Appendix C: Top 10 Highest Positive Deviation from the 20-community Average

	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
E4	We collaborate and cooperate with neighbouring communities.	64	38	71%
C5	A pool of skilled labour is available to local businesses in the area.	55	36	50%
A5	There are employees available to meet business needs.	67	49	38%
H2	Core business areas are easily accessible by all users (e.g. parking, sidewalks, crosswalks, etc.).	80	61	32%
I5	Shipping and freight services into and out of the area are affordable to businesses.	60	46	30%
J3	Businesses in the area /region jointly market their products and services as a group, locally and in other regions.	37	31	18%
G5	Businesses have a firm understanding of financial management (e.g. cash flow, reading financial statements).	54	46	17%
C6	There are quality elementary and secondary schools in the area.	91	80	14%
J2	The area has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image	49	44	12%
I3	Quality communication services (phone, cell phone, high speed internet, etc.) are adequate for business.	67	60	11%

Appendix D: Bottom 10 Largest Negative Deviation from the 20-community Average

	Question	Score out of 100		
		Acme	20 Community Average	% Difference
H3	Adequate business services (e.g. printing services, computer help, graphic design, etc.) are available.	21	57	-63%
H7	Quality rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	18	45	-60%
I4	Public transportation within the area is adequate.	13	32	-59%
G2	Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding).	35	74	-53%
G4	Local business can access informal local investors.	35	72	-52%
D2	Support and assistance for innovative business research and development is available.	23	46	-50%
F3	There is a recognized organization or individual available to assist people identify, assess, expand and/or create business opportunities.	27	51	-47%
C1	Business skills training is available (e.g. business plan development, marketing, accounting, etc.).	31	53	-40%
H1	There are vibrant, active downtown areas or community cores.	30	49	-40%
H6	Affordable rental space is available to accommodate business needs.	26	43	-40%

Appendix E: The “Gut Check 12”

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

Question	Score out of 100		
	Acme	25 Community Average	% Difference
A5. The area is facing a significant economic opportunity.	67	49	38%
B5. Young adults (25-34) consider the area to be a desirable place to live.	41	50	-18%
A4. Successful businesses want to remain in the area.	78	82	-5%
C4. The education and business communities work together to provide convenient training for businesses.	30	41	-27%
A3. Citizens are motivated to learn new skills and to develop existing ones.	46	51	-10%

F2. The governing body is committed to recruiting or attracting businesses to the area, and uses strategies or incentives to do so.	39	57	-30%
H1. There are vibrant, active downtown areas or community cores.	30	49	-40%
J2. The area has a distinctive or unique brand or marketing image	49	44	12%
J5. People prefer to purchase local products and services.	39	42	-8%
D3. Local businesses demonstrate creativity and innovation in seeking new customers	47	52	-10%
E6. There is a pool of talented leaders with diverse skills, cultural experiences and backgrounds who are available for leading community initiatives.	63	66	-6%
G1. Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas.	42	47	-11%

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

Question	Percent
G3. Costs of capital (e.g. Interest, application fees) are manageable for entrepreneurs.	30%
G4. Local business can access informal investors.	29%
G2. Local businesses can easily access formal investors (venture capital or equity funding).	26%
G5. Businesses have a firm understanding of financial management (e.g. cash flow, reading financial statements).	26%
G1. Lenders are willing to take chances based on individual character and good business ideas	25%
D4. Research done in the area or region is relevant to the area's business needs and interests.	20%
F3. There is a recognized organization or individual available to assist people identify, assess, expand and/or create business opportunities.	18%

Appendix G: Assessment Session Attendance

- | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Darren Steinhubl | ▪ Trish Mandel | ▪ David Alderdice |
| ▪ Charlene Steinhubl | ▪ Phyllis Deines | ▪ Sue Welke |
| ▪ Carlos Klassen | ▪ Marjorie Olafson | ▪ Zohreh Saher |
| ▪ Charlene Viste | ▪ Pat Van Der Mark | ▪ Ron Marcotte |
| ▪ Bev Hoffman | ▪ Tara Sawyer | ▪ John Tersteeg |
| ▪ Donna Bates | ▪ Rhoda Hannah | ▪ Lois Snyder |
| ▪ Terri Reimer | ▪ Glen Hannah | ▪ Rose Bent |
| ▪ Melanie Malaka | ▪ Sandi Fowler | ▪ Peter Snyder |
| ▪ Colleen Herrera | ▪ Donna Carlson | ▪ Lowell Bent |
| ▪ Lucy Ann Daubert | ▪ Dennis Kuiken | ▪ Ed Heck |

- Ken Dekoter
- Serena Nicholas
- Bryce Dekoter
- Anastatia Dekoter
- Melissa Dekoter

- Tanya Nicholas
- Ryan C. Johns
- Darrell Morris
- Ryan Degenstein
- Randy Hempel

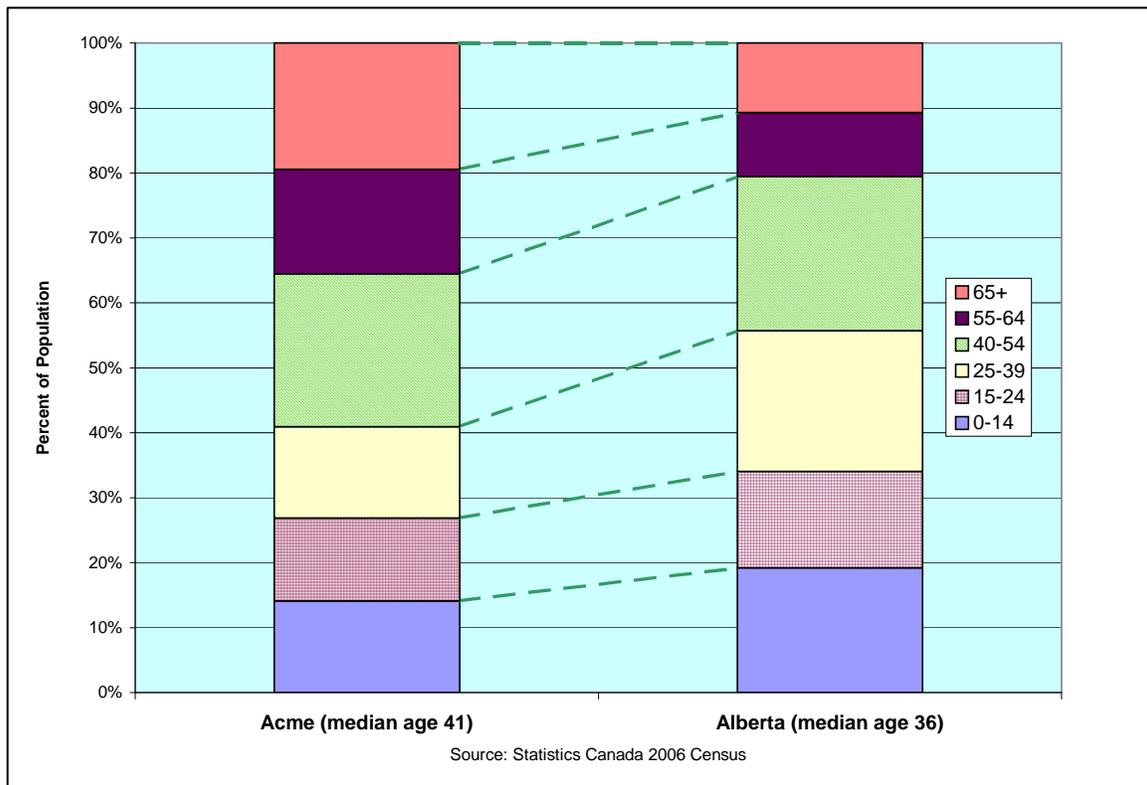
- Elaine Sadler
- Bill Sadler
- Doug Miller
- Jim Northcott
- Robert Dueck

Appendix H: Top 5 Industries of Employment by Participation (2006)

Acme		Alberta	
Business Services	20%	Business services	18%
Retail	13%	Agriculture and other resource-based	12%
Educational services	11%	Retail	11%
Manufacturing	10%	Health, social services	9%
Agriculture and other resource-based	9%	Construction	9%

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

Appendix I: Acme Community Profile-- Age Distribution (2006)

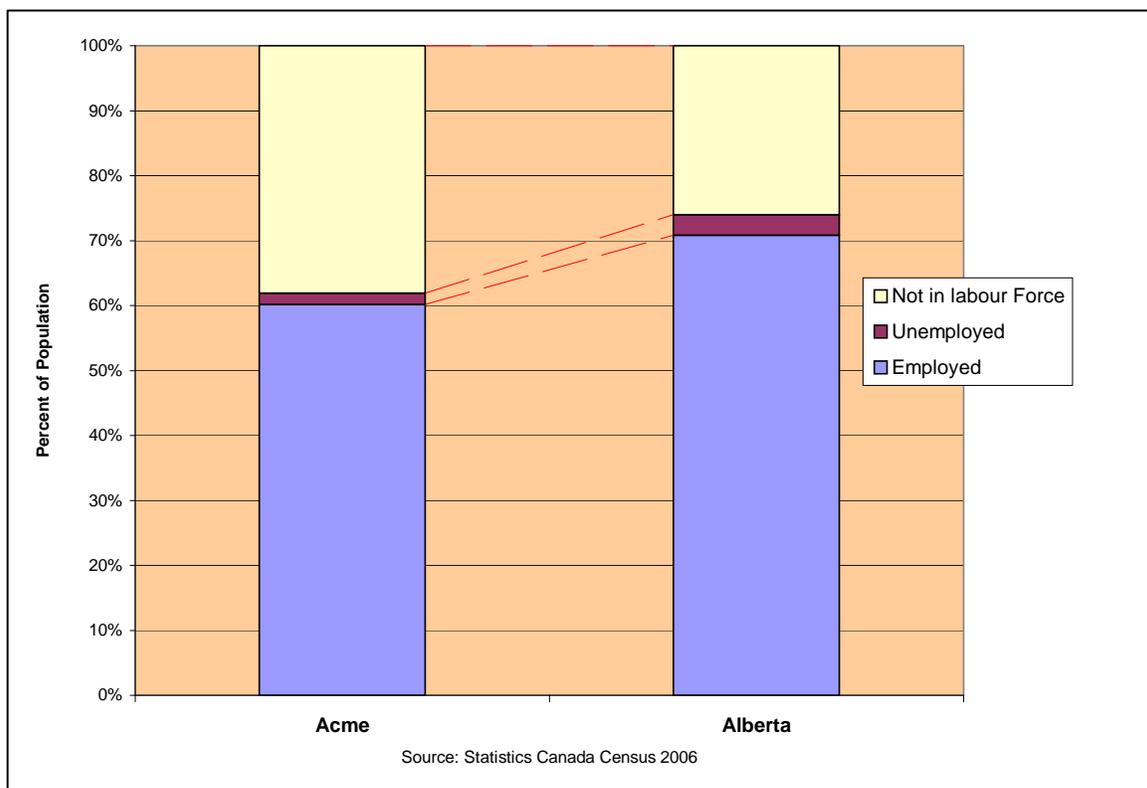


Appendix J: Acme Community Profile—Earnings and Income (2005)

	Acme	Alberta
Median Earnings (people over 15)	\$24,365	\$29,738
Percent of population in low income category	6.2	9.1
Government transfers as % of all income	14.2	7.2

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

Appendix K: Acme Community Profile— Labour Force Distribution (2006)

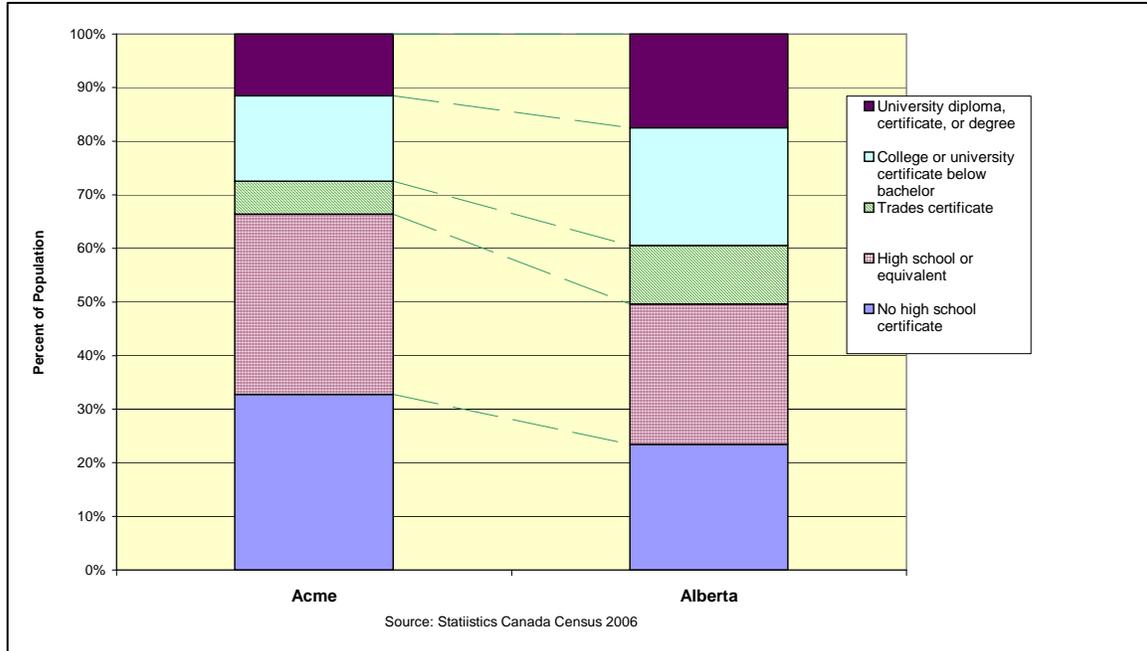


Appendix L: Acme Community Profile-- Population Growth (2006)

	Acme	Alberta
Population in 2006	656	3,290,350
Population in 2001	648	2,974,807
Percent Increase	1.2	10.6

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census

Appendix M: Acme Community Profile— Educational Attainment (Population over 15)



Appendix N: The Business Vitality Initiative

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

BVI Principles

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

Why is entrepreneurship important?

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

Summary of the BVI Process

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

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

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

Appendix O: About CIEL

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

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

Our early work assisted small communities in the neighbouring mountain valleys. We developed innovative assessments coupled with strategic processes that helped communities focus, leverage assets and energy and, most importantly, jumpstart action. Then our ideas attracted the attention of communities farther afield, and we began working with communities across the rest of B.C. More recently we have been invited into communities across Canada, the U.S, New Zealand and Australia.

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

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

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