COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
AGENDA
CITY OF MERRITT

Tuesday, August 20, 2019

6:00 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

2185 Voght Street

Merritt, B.C

Mission Statement: *The City of Merritt is a progressive, attractive, economically viable City that is socially responsible and environmentally sustainable.*

Pages

1. CALL TO ORDER

   1.1   Call to Order

2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

   2.1   Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - May 21st, 2019   2

   Recommendation:
   THAT the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held on May 21st, 2019 be adopted.

   2.2   Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - July 9th, 2019   6

   Recommendation:
   THAT the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held on July 9th, 2019 be adopted.

3. GENERAL MATTERS - Delegations and Recognitions

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5. NEW BUSINESS

   5.1   Economic Development Plan   9

6. TERMINATION OF MEETING

CITY OF MERRITT

MINUTES

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

CITY HALL
2185 Voght Street
Merritt, B.C.

Tuesday, May 21, 2019
At 6:00 pm

Mission Statement: *The City of Merritt is a progressive, attractive, economically viable City that is socially responsible and environmentally sustainable.*

Council
Mayor Linda A. Brown
Councillor Mike Bhangu   Councillor Kurt Christopherson
Councillor Adam Etchart   Councillor Travis Fehr
Councillor Tony Luck   Councillor Melvina White

Country Music Capital of Canada

For Enquiries
Telephone - (250) 378-4224
www.merritt.ca

CITY OF MERRITT

MINUTES

SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, CITY HALL
TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2019
AT 6:00 PM

1.	**PRESENT**

Mayor L. Brown
Councillor M. Bhangu
Councillor K. Christopherson
Councillor A. Etchart
Councillor T. Fehr
Councillor T. Luck
Councillor M. White

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. S. Hildebrand, Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. W. Anderson, Financial Services Manager
Mr. G. Lowis, UVic Law Coop Student
Ms. S. Thiessen, Director of Finance & IT

2.	**CALL TO ORDER**

2.1 Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

3.	**PUBLIC INPUT**

Nil

	4.	ADOPTION OF MINUTES

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

4.1 Moved, Seconded and **CARRIED**
> **THAT the Minutes of the Special Committee of the Whole Meeting held on Monday, April 15, 2019 be adopted**

4.2 Moved, Seconded and **CARRIED**
> **THAT the Minutes of the Special Committee of the Whole Meeting held on Tuesday, April 16, 2019 be adopted**

	5.	GENERAL MATTERS – Delegations and Recognitions

INTERIOR HEALTH

5.1 Healthy Communities Initiative Presentation; Claire Audet and Jeff Conners, Interior Health
File: 0500

Ms. C. Audet and Mr. J. Conners representing Interior Health Authority presented to Council on healthy communities for Interior Health.

BUSINESS LICENSING REVIEW

5.2 Business Licensing Review Presentation; Sean Smith and Greg Lowis, City of Merritt
File: 4320.2

Mr. S. Smith and Mr. G. Lowis presented the business licencing review performed by O'Leary Associates in December, 2018, and explained that staff would be bringing forward proposals to modify the City of Merritt Business Licence Bylaw, and to implement Inter Community Business Licencing.

	6.	UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Nil

	7.	NEW BUSINESS

Nil

8.   INFORMATION ITEMS

                        Nil

9.   TERMINATION OF MEETING

The Mayor declared the meeting ended at 7:30 p.m.

Certified correct in accordance with Section 124(2) (c) of the Community Charter.

_____
Corporate Officer

Confirmed on the   Day of   , 2019

_____
Mayor

MINUTES

CITY OF MERRITT

Tuesday, July 9, 2019
5:30 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL
2185 Voght Street
Merritt, B.C

PRESENT:	**Mayor L. Brown**
	Councillor M. Bhangu
	Councillor K. Christopherson
	Councillor A. Etchart
	Councillor T. Fehr
	Councillor T. Luck
	Councillor M. White
IN ATTENDANCE:	**Mr. S. Hildebrand, Chief Administrative Officer**
	Mr. J. Dinwoodie, Director of Engineering & Development
	Mr. S. Smith, Director of Corporate Services
	Mr. W. George, Tourism & Economic Development Manager
MEDIA & PUBLIC:	**About ten members of the public**

1.   CALL TO ORDER

1.1   Call to Order

Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 5:36pm

2.   ADOPTION OF MINUTES

2.1   Special Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes - May 27, 2019

THAT the Minutes of the Special Committee of the Whole Meeting held on May 27, 2019 be adopted.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

3.   GENERAL MATTERS - Delegations and Recognitions

3.1   Airport Presentation - George Miller

File: 8410

Mr Miller thanked Council for inviting him back, and presented his views about the future of Merritt Airport. He talked about his experiences with Langley Regional Airport, and made suggestions about best practices for Airport committees. He made a series of recommendations for safety and operational improvements.

Committee request Council to direct Staff to bring forward options amending the Official Community Plan and to consider the adequacy of the 2003 airport plan, in the light of public concerns.

Moved, Seconded, CARRIED

4.   UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5.   NEW BUSINESS

5.1   UBCM Minister Meeting Discussion (time permitting)

File: 0270

Members discussed the various Ministers they could meet, and noted they would only split up if they were double-booked.

6.   TERMINATION OF MEETING

The Mayor declared the meeting ended at 6.45pm

_____

Corporate Officer

Sean Smith

Certified correct in accordance with Section 124(2) (c) of the Community Charter

Confirmed on the ____ day of _____, 20____

_____

Mayor

2

3

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN – 2014/2015

City of Merritt

Introduction

The City of Merritt has taken an important step towards moving their community forward and working to identify and achieve their economic development goals with the creation of this Economic Development Action Plan. It will be the City's role to encourage and develop policies to support existing business and to expand investment and attraction efforts.

A community's economic development strategy or plan should work to bring together community stakeholders and provide the roadmap for a common vision or goal. This Economic Development Action Plan is intended to assist with that. It is intended to help guide how economic development can work in the City of Merritt to enhance, support and encourage local economic progress.

Nobody knows the capacities and needs of a community better than its own residents and stakeholders. The development of this plan brought together individuals and businesses to ensure the plan reflected the needs and desires from the local community. Their input provided a key source from which to draw conclusions and recommendations for the Economic Development Action Plan.

What This Plan Will Do

The Economic Development Action Plan lays out the groundwork required for the City of Merritt to work towards a more enhanced economy. The Plan will:

- Provide an analysis of the community consultation process
- Identify strengths and other qualities of the community
- Identify priorities and targets for economic development
- Provide recommendations for moving forward as a community
- Deliver a detailed implementation plan

It is important to note that this plan, like any other, is only as good as the implementation. That is why the plan includes a detailed implementation plan that provides the steps necessary to begin to implement the recommendations. There is no guessing as to what to do – the implementation plan provides the answers. That being said the plan should be considered to be fluid and flexible. It will be important for the City of Merritt to ensure that it reacts to changes in the economy and the local business environment to ensure its economic development success.

Approach and Methodology

The approach to achieving maximum results and benefits is a simple approach driven by stakeholder engagement, collaborative working and a commitment to building a collective framework for shared success.

In preparing this plan, a practical course of action is to build upon the assets of the community to ensure a future that is bright – one filled with economic opportunities for the community's current and future residents to enjoy as a place with the right lifestyle and for target audiences to perceive the community as a place to invest in business.

It is important that the plan also works within the framework of existing documents and existing and proposed land use and economic development planning efforts. The review of past studies and reports, combined with stakeholder input, informed the development of this Economic Development Action Plan for the City of Merritt.

Plan Summary

The City of Merritt re-established their economic development department in July 2013. After some initial months of restarting the function, it was determined that a strategy was required to move the community forward in its economic development efforts. In early 2014 a decision was made to have an Economic Development Action Plan completed.

The Economic Development Action Plan has been completed following an open and inclusive public input process, review of existing documents and literature, primary and secondary research along with specific economic development knowledge and expertise. In general, it is recognized that this plan will help to increase the competitiveness of Merritt while at the same time focus on key initiatives and plans to ensure a sustainable future for the City.

During the planning process it became clear that residents are optimistic about the future and they want to be a part of it. Certainly there were issues raised that will need to be addressed, however, the overall general feeling was one of optimism and a "let's get on with it" approach. The feeling expressed was if things aren't changed and soon then Merritt will likely never change and the future will be very dim. There is also a challenge with the perception that Merritt is not a vibrant community – that it lacks the characteristics necessary to retain and attract residents, businesses and investment. The strategic planning process undertaken to develop this Action Plan has been a key first step for Merritt to change this perception both internally and externally.

The Merritt Economic Development Action Plan is a strategic plan for the future of Merritt's economic development. The plan should be viewed in the following ways:

1. As direction for making immediate and longer-term planning decisions

The plan can be used as a guide for directing short-term and longer term economic development initiatives, planning and development initiatives and strategic investments into specific projects and developments. The intent of the plan is that future City, organizations, private, institutional and non-profit investments work towards achievement of common goals as laid out in this plan.

2. As direction into the creation and development of future economic development work plans and budgets

This plan will require flexibility of existing programs and creation of new programs in the future. The plan should be thought of as a dynamic document – one that should be updated and adjusted as circumstances change.

3. As the source of ideas and inspiration for community action and collaboration

Achieving the objectives of this plan will require the involvement and participation of many businesses, organizations, associations, levels of government and stakeholders. This plan should serve as a source of ideas and inspiration for actions aligned with mutually supportive goals and objectives.

In the case of Merritt, this plan is a start point – not an end point. The list of actions is a starting point based on community input and research at a point in time. Essential for effective implementation will be ongoing review of the plan implementation. New realities, new ideas and opportunities will emerge that could not possibility be envisioned during the creation of this plan. Therefore, the strategy as mentioned must not remain static but needs to be fluid and ever-changing in response to what is happening around us.

The plan focuses on five key outcome areas aimed at growing, diversifying and sustaining Merritt's overall economy. More specifically, the goals outlined include:

- **Economic Development Capacity**
- **A Collaborative Approach for Real Outcomes**
- **Keeping Merritt as a Vibrant and Competitive Community**
- **Increase Awareness**
- **Tourism**

Within the five areas 27 strategies have been identified. Some of these strategies will need to be implemented immediately while others are longer term. The Implementation Plan provided as part of the Action Plan outlines the timelines, responsibilities, partners and budgets for each of the strategies. The strategies take into account the resources available for economic development – both human and financial. Therefore, the strategies are ones that will make an impact on economic development versus

EXISTING DOCUMENTS

An Economic Development Plan must be in alignment with existing City of Merritt's policies and documents. This section provides a review of a number of documents and provides the relationship between those documents and this Action Plan.

Official Community Plan

Economic development is central to the City of Merritt being able to thrive and grow into a self-sustaining community that retains the assets they have, attract new assets and develop a livable community. Economic development policies are integrated throughout the OCP and is specified in more detail in section 4.1.3.

The City's Official Community Plan (OCP) outlines policies that support the Regional Growth Strategy to broaden the economic base through diversification and expansion. The plan supports existing industries and new economic development and promotes new economic development opportunities. The plan commits to supporting economic development commitments made in the OCP which states that the City will focus on investment friendly climate, tourism development, partnerships and establishing a committee to facilitate timely and consistent processes.

Integration of Economic Development Priorities in an Official Community Plan is an important step in supporting the growth of a community. The economic development priorities identified in this Action Plan support the principles of the OCP and will help to ensure that the OCP is seen as a living document that the Council and the City is trying to achieve.

Revitalization Tax Exemption Program

Merritt has identified the desire to encourage new construction, increase employees, and the beatification of the community commercial corridors by introducing a Revitalization Tax Exemption Program.   This program provides tax exemptions for development or redevelopment of business, industry and residential developments.

This program is designed to provide the City of Merritt a competitive advantage in attracting development that will ensure growth that is balanced and progressive. This program could be marketed more to increase the use of the exemption and the redevelopment of the main entry corridors and the downtown core.

Initiatives have been identified in this strategy to encourage the use of this program. The City is encouraged to continue the program with an increased emphasis on redeveloping the main cores of the community.

Draft Economic Development Strategy (January 9, 2013)

The draft Economic Development Strategy was released on January 9, 2013 to provide a map for the community to proceed with development that is focused on the local economy, the strengths of existing industry and the wealth of labour expertise. Some of the key goals in development of the draft strategy included the following: Municipal Competitiveness; Economic Diversification; Community Sustainability; Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development; Retail and Commercial Centre; Downtown Revitalization; Marketing and Promotion.

The Strategy was not finalized nor adopted by council. The initiatives outlined in the document have not be implemented as the economic development function lapsed shortly after the draft plan was completed. In addition the plan did not include sufficient public consultation, lacked an implementation plan, budget, timelines and resources.

In developing this Economic Development Action Plan, a review of the draft strategy was completed in order to determine what programs were identified that could be included or expanded on. This plan includes initiatives that crossover to the suggested programs in the 2013 plan including improving the local business investment climate, encouraging local business growth, encouraging new enterprise, and promoting inward investment,
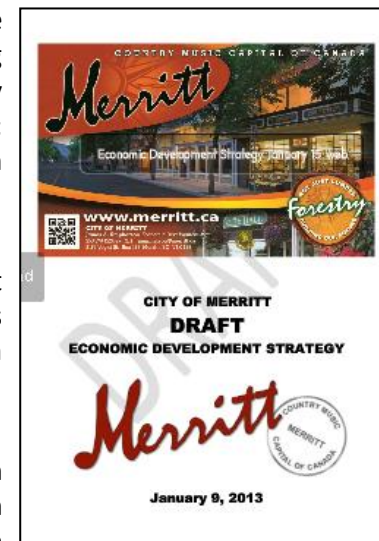
Draft Tourism Plan Merritt/Nicola Valley – 2013/14

The Tourism Plan was prepared for Merritt and the Nicola Valley through the Community Tourism Foundations program (CTF) of Destination BC. The plan uses the Thompson-Okanagan Tourism regional strategy process completed in 2011 as its framework for communities and stakeholders to integrate with the national and provincial tourism strategies while integrating what is unique and distinctive to the region.

Key objectives of the plan include increased visitation, more high-yield products and experiences, greater awareness for the Nicola Valley as a destination and a marketing program based on clear target markets. At the time of writing this Economic Development Action Plan the Tourism Plan was in draft form and not yet adopted by council.   The draft Tourism Plan was reviewed in order to determine what recommendations were identified that could be included or expanded on in this plan. Initiatives that crossover to the recommendations from the draft Tourism Plan include tourism management, asset inventory, First Nation partnerships, and signage

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A key element of the economic development planning process was stakeholder and community engagement. Several methods were used to engage and solicit input and feedback from the business community and residents. The following pages provide a brief overview of the responses received from the 171 residents and 28 businesses who completed the online surveys. It should be noted that there was excellent exposure for community engagement opportunities. Through various media, including Facebook where approximately 980 individuals would have seen the survey promotion, through to more traditional media. Detailed responses to both the resident and business surveys are provided as Appendix A.

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What ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT **mean to does you?**

54% new **COMPANIES** opening in the region
47% more **JOBS**
32% better **LIFESTYLE** amenities

perception

50% perceive Merritt's image as negative
60% think non-residents perceive Merritt's image as negative

What type of business would you like to see attracted?

48% HEALTHCARE
46% MANUFACTURING
45% RETAIL

Strength

76% transportation access
58% climate and coastal location
53% proximity to major centres

Challenges

66% availability of jobs
42% high costs (business and living)
41% availability of retail/restaurants/ entertainment options

Top three economic development goals?

42% EXISTING COMPANIES STAY AND EXPAND
36% REVITALIZATION OF OLD COMMERCIAL AREAS
35% BETTER LIFESTYLE AMENITIES

What ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT mean to does you?

63% EXISTING COMPANIES stable and expanding in the region

42% NEW COMPANIES

32% IMPROVED AWARENESS (reputation) of the area

32% more **JOBS**

In two years existing business plan to….

48% MAINTAIN employment levels
44% INCREASE employment levels

Our businesses

Biggest barrier to business growth?

50% resistance to change

68% have less than 5 employees
21% have 6-10 employees
11% have 25-49 employees

43% in business 0-5 years
29% in business 6-15 years
29% in business 15 plus years

Top three economic development goals?

64% EXISTING COMPANIES STAY AND EXPAND
41% ATTRACTION OF NON-RETAIL
36% RETAIN YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

SWOT – COMMUNITY STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

A SWOT analysis provides an inventory of a community's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) and assesses the degree to which each economic factor supports future growth. The overall goal of this section is to have a clear understanding of Merritt's strengths and areas of potential that can be built upon and better marketed. The findings of this analysis, combined with other research are used to assist in developing recommendations for inclusion in the overall strategic economic development plan.

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Key SWOT Findings

This section highlights the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the City of Merritt, as collected through stakeholder discussions, survey information and qualitative databases. We do not intend for this analysis of issues to be all-inclusive. Rather, we focus on those areas that will have the most direct impact on specific components of future economic development efforts in Merritt. We define the four aspects of "SWOT" in terms of:

- **Strengths:** Issues or characteristics that can be built upon to advance current and future economic growth opportunities in Merritt.
- **Weaknesses:** Issues or characteristics that, if not addressed effectively, could limit current or future growth opportunities.
- **Opportunities:** Assets, events, or trends that offer Merritt the potential for economic growth and attraction of new industry.
- **Threats:** Obstacles, events or trends that, if not addressed effectively, could threaten the City's economic potential and its ability to attract, expand and start up new employers.

Observations in this report are based on information collected from local citizens, businesses and staff through focus groups, interviews and on line survey methods. Analyzing the perception that residents and businesses in Merritt have, is an important step as it directly relates to how well the community conveys it strengths, or tells it economic development story. The City of Merritt can examine their strengths and challenges within two key factors which are important economic development topics:

- Community and surrounding area
- Business and economic development climate

Companies, site selectors and residents looking to expand or relocate to a community will analyze these factors to determine how well a community ranks compared to other communities. It is important for Merritt to be aware of its strengths and opportunities to be able to expand upon them. At the same time Merritt needs to be aware of its threats and weaknesses. It is only through understanding the SWOT of a community or region that programs can be developed to adjust and proactively work towards a resolution that will increase opportunities.

Overall it has been determined that Merritt has some important strengths – its strategic location and transportation network can be a significant competitive advantage. However, it is important to recognize there are also weaknesses that will need to be overcome in order to capitalize on the identified strengths. A key weakness for Merritt is the lack of communication and cohesiveness within the community. Failure to recognize and work towards improvement can result in not achieving the community's goals towards a sustainable and prosperous economy. Merritt will need to communicate its strengths to ensure that the perception of the community is improved.

Strengths

Issues or characteristics that can be built upon to advance current and future economic growth opportunities in Merritt.

Location

Merritt can be accessed from the north and south on Hwy 5 and Hwy 5A, from the northeast on Hwy 97C and from the northwest via Hwy 8. The City is located within 2 hours of five international airports and 85% of BC's population lives within 2 hours of Merritt. There is a strong strategic locational link with the Lower Mainland, Thompson Okanagan and Southern Interior.

People

The people are loyal and determined. There is a strong volunteer base within Merritt that over the years have made things happen. There is a strong spirit of giving and of looking after each other

Climate

Merritt experiences mild winters with little snowfall and warm, dry, sunny summers. Merritt is a natural location year round for outdoor adventure with more than 2,050 hours of annual sunshine.

Quality of Life

Merritt offers a small town atmosphere with affordable housing and quiet country living. It does provide some amenities and services but expanded services must be obtained outside the community.

Recreation & Events

Merritt has an abundance of recreational and outdoor activities. The City has a curling rink, arena, swimming pool and a well utilized civic centre. There are many events held throughout the year that residents enjoy attending including the annual Christmas parade, rodeo, farmers market and various music events.

NVIT

Merritt is home to the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology , BC's Aboriginal public post-secondary institute. This is an important asset within a community the size of Merritt. It provides the opportunity for students to earn credits towards a university degree and provides the opportunity for a number of potential partnerships.

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Weaknesses

Issues or characteristics that, if not addressed effectively, could limit current or future growth opportunities.

First Impression

Merritt does not currently provide a positive first impression for visitors or investment. The entrance signage is dated, faded and does not provide any sense of a community brand. Once inside the community signage or wayfinding is lacking.

Communication

There is lack of communication and cohesiveness within the community. Stakeholders are not collaborating or sharing information with each other. There is little communication between stakeholders, groups and local council.

Poor Local Perception

Respondents to the online survey felt that both in the community and out that Merritt does not possess a positive image – the entrances into the community are unattractive, Merritt is not open for business and there is a perceived notion that goods and services are more expensive or not available.

Land Availability

There is a lack of available industrial land for development within the community. Much of the land is within the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) or is First Nation lands.

Location

A strength can also be a weakness and in the case of Merritt this is true for its location. The highways make it easy to by-pass Merritt and there is a large percentage of "drive by" traffic. In addition, because of its close proximity to other communities many residents leave Merritt to shop, eat or stay.

Consumer Leakage

Merritt has limited amenities within the community itself. Many products or services must be obtained from outside the community (i.e. Kamloops). This results in significant consumer leakage.

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Threats

Obstacles, events or trends that, if not addressed effectively, could threaten the City's economic potential and its ability to attract, expand and start up new employers.

Population

Population growth has a substantial impact on economic development. Merritt has had stagnant growth over the past ten years. Population growth is significantly less than regional or provincial averages.

Dissatisfaction

Residents are dissatisfied with some of the current conditions within Merritt - lack of direction, level of communication, Council's lack of involvement at the local level and community branding. These issues threaten to separate and divide the community.

Competition

The growth within the Thompson Okanagan – Kamloops, Kelowna – could impact Merritt's ability to attract new businesses and even to retain existing business. Respondents showed a strong dissatisfaction within the community - over 50 percent of respondents perceive Merritt's image as negative and over 60 percent think non-residents perceive Merritt's image as negative.

Economic Uncertainty

Merritt's growth and prosperity are directly related to the growth and prosperity across the region and province. Many are uncertain that Merritt will benefit from any potential provincial projects while others see growth will continue to happen within the region (Kamloops) but not within Merritt.

Lack of Awareness

Respondents felt there was a lack of awareness of Merritt as a place to do business or to visit. There needs to be an improved effort towards marketing the community in order to attract new residents and investment.

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Opportunities

Assets, events, or trends that offer Merritt the potential for economic growth and attraction of new industry..

Tourism

Building on Merritt's natural assets, the potential for tourism development could capitalize on a number of strengths in the community. The strategic location within the province and the small town atmosphere contribute to attracting tourists if the product is developed. Merritt will need to implement initiatives identified from the recently completed Tourism Strategy .

Commercial/Retail Development

Merritt has an underserviced commercial market with numerous development opportunities to satisfy the needs of local residents. As a community close to a larger centre Merritt should strategically position itself to support local based retail operations. .

Communications/ Partnerships

Merritt has a unique working relationship with the Chamber of Commerce and Community Futures with these organizations located within City Hall. This offers the opportunities for expanded partnerships and marketing a "one stop shop".

Identify Sector Targets

Respondents pointed to a number of areas where they felt Merritt had a potential in the attraction of entrepreneurs seeking to offer work/life balance benefits to their employees who do not need to be in major centres. Professionals, and products or services answering current gaps are examples.

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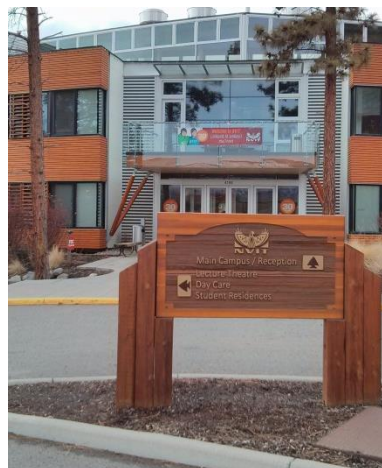
Competitive Advantages for Attracting Investment

Merritt will need to begin to make a concerted effort towards marketing the strengths of the community and to addressing its weaknesses as presented in the SWOT in order to retain and attract investment. In addition to the community's own strengths there is benefit in understanding and marketing any regional or provincial strengths that exist. Investors or site selectors who have placed investment in the province tell a compelling story for doing business here:

- Canada has lower corporate taxes for business
- Canada's social programs, including Medical Benefits, are substantially cheaper than the plans that employers must pay for in the US.
- Labour laws have been changed over the past ten years making it harder for unionization.
- Utility costs are more competitive than other jurisdictions (pre BC Hydro rate increases).
- BC Municipalities do not charge Inventory Tax which is common in many US states (including Washington). In many cases the invoice for Inventory Tax can be higher than Property Taxes negating the advantage of waived property taxes as an incentive.

Merritt can use these advantages to help strengthen its own competitive advantage story or unique selling point.

City of Merritt's Unique Selling Point

In addition to the above mentioned competitive advantages for BC communities, the City of Merritt offers a unique blend of attributes which make it a City with potential and opportunity. There is a sense in the community that Merritt can emerge to be a location of choice in which to work, live and invest as defined by:

- A conveniently located transportation hub
- Future development opportunities – downtown
- Semi-arid climate for year round activities
- An identifiable "country" lifestyle
- Year round recreational opportunities
- Proximity to large population base

RECOMMENDATIONS

Five outcome areas form the basis of the City of Merritt's Economic Development Action Plan:

1. Economic Development – Expanding and Enhancing Capacity
2. Communication – A Collaborative Approach for Real Outcomes
3. Marketing – Keeping Merritt as a Vibrant and Competitive Community
4. Increase awareness
5. Tourism

Priority Areas

In order for Merritt to prosper now and in the future it must become a preferred location in which to work, live and invest. The strengths of the City must be capitalized on and will require a collaborative and coordinated effort from the City's government, non-government and industry leaders to pro-actively support and encourage Merritt's economic prosperity. With this in mind, three priority areas are presented in this Action Plan:

- **Economic Development Capacity**
- **A Collaborative Approach for Real Outcomes**
- **Keeping Merritt as a Vibrant and Competitive Community**
- **Increase Awareness**
- **Tourism**

These three themes provide the framework for the City's economic development activities. They articulate the core areas of focus for the City's economic development function in its role as a promoter and facilitator of economic development, providing clear direction by identifying the priority areas for action to promote investment and employment growth, while ensuring the City of Merritt's opportunity as an appealing place in which to work, live and invest is protected, nurtured, promoted and capitalized upon for all segments of the Merritt community, now and in the future.

The action plan contains initiatives that are designed to stimulate, attract and maintain business activity, investment and employment growth in Merritt, while remaining sensitive to the desire to sustain a City recognized for its community spirit and need to move forward towards a more prosperous future. The actions are framed to provide directions for the implementation of projects which will meet key objectives and which will have an economic impact. Simplified, the actions can be separated into activities which are:

i.   City-led – the things the City and its economic development department can and will do within its resources
ii.   Partnership – activities that require partnerships with community, regional or provincial agencies or groups

Strategies

The five outcome areas contain 30 strategies, summarized as follows:

1. **Economic Development Capacity**
    1.1 Economic Development Committee
    1.2 Economic Development and Small Business Accord
    1.3 Facilitate Economic Development Training for Local Leaders

2. A Collaborative Approach for Real Outcomes

2.1 Community Accord

2.2 Resident Survey

2.3 Communications Plan

2.4 Economic Development Roundtable

2.5 Support NVIT

2.6 Pursue expansion and retention of Merritt-based Forestry operations

2.7 Gateway 286

2.8 Merritt Youth Leap

3. Keeping Merritt as a Vibrant and Competitive Community

3.1 Investment Readiness – Self-assessment

3.2 Making it Easier to do Business

3.3 Marketing the Tax Exemption

3.4 Business Retention and Expansion

3.5 Support Home Based Business

3.6 Land and Building Inventory

3.7 First Impressions Program

3.8 Consumer Leakage Study

3.9 Small Town Love

3.10 Art in Vacant Storefronts

4. Increase Awareness

4.1 Community Profile

4.2 Website

4.3 External Awareness

4.4 Attraction of Immigrate Investors

4.5 Familiarization Tours

5. Tourism

5.1 Coordinator Tourism Board

5.2 Asset Inventory

5.3 Signage

5.4 Adoption and Implementation of the Draft Tourism Plan

1. Economic Development Capacity

1.1. Economic Development Committee

It is encouraging to see the City of Merritt's commitment to economic development. During the consultation process there was wide-spread support for economic development. Though support was expressed it was also noted that some residents and businesses were unclear on what economic development does and unsure what past economic development progress had been made. There was also frustration expressed with the lack of community involvement. For successful economic development to happen within a community residents, businesses and stakeholders must be included in the process. It is recommended that an economic development advisory committee be created consisting of stakeholders within the community including key sector or businesses. The committee will be instrumental in helping to raise awareness of economic development within Merritt and to build support. The committee would be an advisory committee accountable to the City of Merritt and would act as a conduit of community and business information. Information received by the committee members provides staff the ability to identify approaches, activities and partnerships in order to facilitate a healthy, sustainable local economy. The committee may establish subcommittees to work on various projects and may include other members of the public. As an advisory committee the member's role would include:

- Providing relevant industry information
- Providing local knowledge, direction and expertise during the planning and implementation of Merritt's economic development programs
- Participation and contribution to the economic development strategic vision
- Provide active involvement, attendance at meetings and representation in the community
- Advisory board member only (not operational board) and is not legally responsible for decisions or action of Merritt's economic development department
- No participation in hiring and firing of staff
- Do not set the budget and not responsible for budgetary decisions
- Not a lobbyist organization and provides no political endorsement

The committee should meet on a quarterly basis. It may be deemed necessary that meetings become more frequent but that is to be determined at a later date. Usually, an economic development committee is comprised of key individuals who represent:

- Major employers and businesses (i.e. Tolko)
- School districts and post-secondary institutions (i.e. NVIT)
- Banks and other lending institutions
- Real Estate

A draft Terms of Reference for a select committee for the Economic Development Advisory Committee, as allowed under the Municipal Community Charter, Section 1.42, is provided as Appendix B

- Key industry sectors (i.e. tourism)
- Economic development stakeholders (i.e. Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, WorkBC, First Nations)
- Downtown businesses or organizations
- Local government and First Nations

There are a number of individuals within Merritt who could provide the leadership skills and enthusiastic desire to help the community in its economic development efforts. Once the economic development advisory committee has been established it is important to ensure they understand their roles and responsibilities. The committee must be clear on its role, expectations and responsibilities to the economic development office and what the goals and objectives are. It is recommended that a committee manual be completed to provide guidance for new and future committee members. It is also recommended that a quarterly activity report be created and submitted to all committee members providing updates on activities within the economic development department. The report will need to take into account and respect the confidentiality of clients.

Create an Economic Development Advisory Committee

Action Steps
- Develop and adopt Terms of Reference
- Establish an economic development advisory committee
- Create committee manual
- Monthly activity reports
- Annual review of advisory committee to ensure effective composition, rotation of members and meeting schedule

1.2 Economic Development and Small Business Accord

The City of Merritt has committed to building a strong economic development function to help improve the community's economic future. This means it has an important part to play in assisting local businesses (and residents) to adjust to economic challenges and to identify and capitalize on opportunities for economic development as they arise. The City of Merritt is a key player in its local economy in a number of ways in that:

- It spends money on development infrastructure that facilitates business and community activity and sustains environmental quality (i.e. roads, drains, parks, trails and gardens).
- It provides important community services that support economic development activity and promote the health and well-being of the local population. These services assist in social cohesion and the development of local identity (i.e. child care, recreation services, aged care, etc.).
- It is an effective partner in the early stages of project development through its role in development approvals (i.e. planning and building).

- It is often the first point of contact for local businesses and the community in relation to day-to-day concerns that affect the immediate environment for business production and quality of life (i.e. local land use conflicts and their resolutions, lobbying other levels of government for attention to problems outside the Council's responsibility, providing information on changes to regulations, housing and so on).

In undertaking these activities, the City of Merritt directly influences the way in which the local economy develops. Consequently, when it comes to economic development, Council recognizes that it must play a leadership role and nothing less than best practice in each of its areas of responsibility should be pursued.

In the fall of 2012, the BC government announced it would create the BC Small Business Accord to establish a list of priorities to make BC the most business-friendly jurisdiction in Canada. In February 2013, six principals were adopted to help the small business community move forward.

1. Consider the needs and impacts of small businesses in policy and program decisions to enhance business certainty, access to qualified labor, access to capital and technology adoption.
2. Foster a regulatory environment that small business can access, navigate and influence effectively and efficiently.
3. Design government programs and resources affecting small business so that they are well developed, accessible, properly funded and effectively communicated.
4. Foster thoughtful collaboration among all levels of government, including First Nations.
5. Deploy educational and training programs that are future-focused and aligned to meet the changing needs of small business and the labour talent it develops.
6. Create long-term growth opportunities for small business through government procurement.

To date only one community in the province has adopted the Small Business Accord. Merritt can show leadership by adopting the plan and ensuring the local community is aware of the commitment the City is making to economic development and small business.

Adopt Small Business Accord

Action Steps

- Contact Ministry of Jobs, Tourism & Innovation to investigate how Merritt can adopt the BC Small Business Accord

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1.3 Facilitate Economic Development Training for Local Leaders

A lack of understanding what economic development can achieve and how fast is sometimes one of the biggest challenges facing those involved in economic development. The British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) offers a one day training session for local leaders on the topic of economic development. The session covers what economic development is, the role of the EDO, business retention and attraction, workforce development, tourism and more. It is recommended that Merritt hosts a Local Leaders session in the community. As this is an election year it is recommended that the session be held as a Year 2 activity.

Economic Development Training for Local Leaders

Action Steps

- Approach BCEDA to determine potential dates
- Host workshop in Merritt

2. A Collaborative Approach for Real Outcomes

2.1 Community Accord

Today many First Nations and neighbouring local and regional governments recognize the need to develop better relationships and work together more closely on community and land use planning issues of mutual interest. There is more interest in improved intergovernmental relations and joint planning. One community leading the way is Powell River and the Sliammon First Nation (Tla'amin). Through a community accord and a protocol agreement on culture, heritage and economic development they are a best practice in sustaining an intergovernmental relationship.

The City of Merritt is surrounded by five First Nations and there would be benefit to meeting to discuss the potential of creating a community accord and protocol agreement similar to Powell River. The process will not be a quick but will require time, effort, patience and a sincere willingness to work together. Meetings between the City and First Nations representatives should determine the best approach to this effort. It may be decided that one joint accord would be the preferred option or it may be individual accords with each First Nations community.

The District of Powell River is open to discussing how the process worked for them and to providing the necessary steps, cautions and lessons learned. For Merritt to be successful an important step will be to take information from Powell River and determine how best to adopt those practices.

Community Accord

Action Steps

- Contact Powell River for process
- Meet with First Nations representatives to introduce concept
- Host District of Powell River and Sliammon First Nation
- Develop and sign community accord

2.2 Resident Survey

Communities conduct citizen surveys to gauge public satisfaction with municipal programs and services and to gain an insight into citizen's rankings of service priorities. During the public consultation appreciation was expressed by residents and businesses that they were being part of the process and felt included and listened to. It was also expressed that this was not generally the case in Merritt.

By identifying what matters most to residents, a community is able to focus their attention on the areas that will have the greatest impact on the resident experience. It enables a community to increase resident retention and referrals. For the City of Merritt, a citizen survey

would help the community to measure and improve its own performance, as well as identifying and addressing residents' needs. The City may be fearful that a resident survey will only be a vehicle for complaints, but a good survey can highlight successes. Survey results can also prove invaluable to a community's planning process or to improving both its management and customer service approach. To be successful the City must be prepared to act on the results. A survey may uncover problems that were not readily apparent or may show that there are initiatives doing well. Whether the survey indicates problems or successes – or likely a mix of both – the City should carefully review results, share them with City leaders and residents as appropriate, and if necessary, take action to address any potentially serious issues. Residents will continue to feel frustrated if nothing seems to change as a result of the survey; even relatively modest improvements may make them feel that their concerns were heard.

Resident Survey

Action Steps

- Research other communities
- Choose an appropriate survey method and develop
- Administer the survey
- Analyze and present the results

2.3 Communications Plan

Communication is an opportunity for Merritt to increase their exposure – both internally and externally. Communication is also key to successful economic development in any community. The economic development department in Merritt has recently been restarted and it is important to build the foundational communication pieces now. Communications for economic development does not have to be complicated or time consuming. It can be the implementation of a few actions – regular activity reporting to Council, monthly article in a local paper, developing an electronic newsletter, celebrating success stores through BRE. These are all small steps to begin to develop an economic development communications plan build around a series of clear messages about Merritt as a place to grow and invest.

During the consultation process, there was support for economic development but there was also a lack of understanding of what it is. It is important to communicate out what economic development is doing otherwise a community can risk the perception that the department is not doing anything or worse is hiding what it is doing.

Communications Plan

Action Steps

- Initiate monthly activity reports to Council

- Develop a quarterly electronic newsletter
- Gather success stories through BRE

2.4 Economic Development Roundtable

Merritt is in a unique position with the offices of the Chamber of Commerce and Community Futures all situated within City Hall. This provides the opportunity to present Merritt as a one-stop shop to residents, entrepreneurs and businesses. A key piece of communication is the communication between peers. Currently, though the offices are strategically located together, there is no formalized meeting between the organizations. There is benefit to be had for the City to initiate quarterly meetings with the Chamber of Commerce and Community Futures. The meetings will help to build and strengthen the partnership, can identify collaborative and mutually beneficial initiatives, provide a formalized method of sharing information, and will illustrate to the business community a relationship between the organizations working together to help sustain and grow local business.

Economic Development Roundtable

Action Steps

- Meet with representatives from other local key agencies on a quarterly basis

2.5 Support NVIT

The role of higher education as a major driver of economic development is well established and this role will increase as further changes to the global, national, provincial and regional economies impact local communities. Having institutions offering higher education in a community can provide a significant competitive advantage in retaining and attracting business. The City of Merritt is fortunate to be the home of the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT). NVIT is unique compared to other post-secondary institutes in BC with a vision of being the home for Aboriginal Public Post-Secondary Education.

Being a community based institution, the City of Merritt has an opportunity to strengthen and expand the partnership with NVIT and turn it into a competitive advantage and a partner in attracting and retaining business. The City should work with NVIT to promote and expand their programs. In particular there is an opportunity with the Aboriginal Community Economic Development Program. This is a unique program and fulfills the requirements of the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers' (CANDO) status. The community can play a role of providing mentorship and cooperative support for participants in the program and making the community known as the Centre of Excellence for Aboriginal Economic Development.   Partnerships could be developed between NVIT, BCEDA, and others to provide unique training opportunities, expanding on the courses already provided by NVIT and CANDO.

Support NVIT

Action Steps

- Engage NVIT in the BRE Program to determine programs that would be of value to fill the labour needs of local companies.
- Work with the President of NVIT in identifying ways for the community to be involved in the Community Economic Development Program
- Work with NVIT to develop a relationship and partnership with BCEDA and others in expanding the courses and learning for aboriginal economic development officers.

2.6 Pursue expansion and retention of Merritt-based Forestry operations

Forestry remains a strong sector, providing significant employment in Merritt, however as experienced in many rural communities, it is also the one that is the most volatile.   There are several smaller firms doing contract logging and other forestry services, and the regional forest office is located within the community. Tolko and Aspen Planers hold the tenure for the majority of the surrounding timber and ultimately determine the level of activity in the region, in response to global market trends that no one controls. Those global trends are currently moving in a positive direction with BC successfully accessing new and growing markets in Asia (notably China) as well as Japan, South Korea and even India. The US housing market is slowly recovering from its post-2008 crash as well and it is anticipated that this will reach full recovery by 2016.

While an increase in employment at either facility may not be a reality, the community must maintain good communications and relationships to ensure that limited outsourcing occurs and that any opportunity for expansion is seriously considered to occur in Merritt. Incorporating Tolko and Aspen executives into long term planning and visioning for Merritt will be critical. Companies that are connected to the community in which they invest can provide other economic benefits now and into the future.

For an issue with such potential importance to the local economy, the City has limited control. Its role is to engage with these companies to work through any issues or challenges they may be having regarding the expansion or retention of operations in Merritt. These may include challenges relating to fibre, tax rates, employees, disposal of excess materials and other company specific issues.   It should also be recognized that the forestry operations are visible entities located at the entrance seen by visitors. In some cases this can be a positive showing a vibrant community with strong employment opportunities and in other cases it can be a detriment if the visibility is not positive.

Both communities also face challenges in finding skilled employees. Many communities work with major employers to develop relocation guides for potential employees and also work with them to post job opportunities on provincial sites and by participating in regional and provincial job fairs.

Forestry Operations

Action Steps

- Engage with Tolko and Aspen on a regular basis to stay abreast of changing plans with regards to Merritt operations and to identify issues and challenges.
- Working with Tolko and Aspen, develop programs to attract and retain employees

2.7 Sector Gateway 286

During the public consultation process, reference was made to Gateway 286. This is the parcel of land where the provincial tourist information centre is located. Other than the centre the land is undeveloped. Merritt's OCP has identified the opportunity that Gateway 286 presents (3.1.3 Creation Initiative 2 – Sector Gateway 286). There was definitely support for a partnership between the City, First Nations and other private landholders held at the public focus groups.

The OCP outlines a number of development options for Gateway 286. It is recommended that the City follow the policies outlined in the OCP being:

- Facilitate the development of Sector Gateway 286 with public and private landholders and the First Nations
- Develop a partnership with First Nations for the purpose of developing Gateway 286 either as joint landholders or otherwise
- Consult with the Crown to facilitate the transfer of certain lands within Sector Gateway 286 to the First Nations for development within the boundaries of the City of Merritt

Sector Gateway 286

Action Steps

- Support and encourage the City to follow the policies within Section 3.1.3 of the OCP
- Continue to develop and strength relationships with First Nations

2.8 Merritt Youth Leap

Ensuring that youth have the right training tools available to enter and succeed in business is important and can help to retain and attract youth and young families to the community. The Merritt Youth Leap program would be a focused business development program for young entrepreneurs

This project helps address youth unemployment in the region, providing youth ages 18-39 who are unemployed or underemployed with more entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities. Enhance youth empowerment and capacity, and generating space for youth to contribute and participate in a community economic development initiative. Youth would embark on a process of designing and launching their own small businesses. At the end of the program participants will have completed a business plan and budget and be given the opportunity to apply for a start-up loan in order to finance the launch of their businesses. Potential partners for the program include:

- Chamber of Commerce
- Community Futures
- Credit Union (Vancity, Interior Savings Credit Union)
- Private sector: Telus, Tolko, Aspen and others
- Canadian Youth Business Foundation
- Western Economic Development Diversification

There is a particular opportunity to partner with the Canadian Youth Business Foundation who can provide financing opportunities for youth looking to start a business, in addition CYBF may provide referral fees to help support community involvement in the program.

Merritt Youth Leap

Action Steps

- Develop partnership with identified agencies
- Develop operations and marketing plan

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3. Keeping Merritt as a Vibrant and Competitive Community

3.1 Investment Readiness – Self-assessment

Communities need to be ready for investment when the opportunity arises and investment readiness means ensuring your community is as ready as possible to attract and retain business investment. It means having all the pieces in place to be in the right place at the right time.

Investors want to talk to communities who are knowledgeable, accessible and who have current information available at their fingertips. Investment readiness means making the most of a community's resources – its land, people, unique characteristics and planning system. It also means being able to communicate your strengths effectively.

An investment readiness assessment evaluates a community's current status by reviewing:

- Economic development capacity
- Investment marketing
- Development approvals process
- Property inventory
- Electronic readiness

As an initial start, it is recommended Merritt undertake an investment readiness self-assessment test (provided as Appendix C). The self-assessment will uncover areas where Merritt may need improvement in order to become an investment ready community. As part of this Action Plan there are specific strategies included that will move Merritt towards investment readiness, i.e. Community Profile, and the completion of the self-assessment may determine addition initiatives for Merritt. As a Year 2 activity it is recommended Merritt retake the self-assessment to see what progress has been made towards investment readiness.

Investment Readiness – Self assessment

Action Steps

- Complete investment readiness self-assessment

3.2 Making it Easier To Do Business

Input received from the public consultation indicates a more efficient development approval process would create encouragement for local business to expand. Furthermore, a streamlined understanding of the various approval processes involved within the City may encourage new business and investment to locate in Merritt, providing additional employment opportunities for current and future residents. It is recommended Merritt undertake a review of internal processes and costs (planning and building approvals) to determine where the City

stands in comparison to competing communities. The review should include comparisons to competing communities along with other communities of similar size.

Making it easier to do business

Action Steps

• Internal review of processes

3.3 Marketing the Tax Exemption

The City of Merritt Official Community Plan outlines Council's affirmation to remove impediments to private sector investment and an overall improvement to the competitiveness in attracting growth and encouraging development in the community.   In January of 2012, in order to encourage development, the City of Merritt adopted bylaw 2126, 2011 to provide a revitalization tax program for business, industry, utilities and high density residential development and redevelopment.

These programs are a great tool for communities to use to encourage economic activity. While some businesses have taken advantage of the program, it is believed that more can be done to use this program to the community's advantage. In discussions with local businesses through individual drop ins and during focus groups, it was discovered that some businesses were not even aware that the program existed. Several communities have introduced these programs, but have not included this incentive in marketing efforts both internally (local businesses) and externally (attraction efforts). Through programs like Business Retention initiatives, the community can circulate information to businesses rather then assuming businesses read about the program in the paper or through other marketing efforts.

Marketing the Tax Exemption

Action Steps

• Develop marketing materials demonstrating examples of what businesses can do to qualify
• Incorporate information on program into Community Profile and other tools used to market community for investment

3.4 Business Retention and Expansion Program

The ability of a community to keep their existing businesses often is easier than attracting new businesses. It is recommended Merritt focus the majority of its time on activities related to existing businesses compared to attracting new business. In September 2013, Merritt took the proactive step of acquiring a licence to the provincial program, BC BusinessCounts, but has not yet activated the program. Through BC BusinessCounts, Merritt has access to one of the leading Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) programs available in North America.

A BRE program seeks to identify and understand the issues and obstacles faced by a variety of local businesses in the City through a series of detailed surveys and interviews. The program will assist in understanding the immediate concerns among local businesses, seeking to improve the City's efforts in retaining and encouraging growth. Once the core issues and obstacles begin to be addressed within the City the business climate will start to improve. Upon witnessing a successful business climate, a BRE program can assist in marketing and attracting new business and investment into Merritt. This will allow for increased provision of stable and sustainable employment opportunities for current and future residents.

Due to resources it is recommended that Merritt uses a third party BRE specialist to kick off the program. This will allow for a specific number of businesses to be surveyed and interviewed in a short amount of time. For example, 100 businesses could be targeted over a three month period. The information collected from these businesses will provide Merritt with a benchmark of information concerning the local business environment including labour needs, expansion plans and community satisfaction. The information can also be used for the economic development department to develop specific programs or initiatives to address any issues or challenges identified. It will be important for the information to be disseminated throughout the community once the initial 100 businesses are interviewed. We suggest holding a luncheon or session inviting the business community and other stakeholders to hear the results of the BRE program. This session could be held in partnership with either the Chamber of Commerce or Community Futures . After the collection of information from the 100 businesses the City's economic development department can then take over the program and establish a business visitation schedule, i.e. 3-5 businesses per month.

A growing BRE tend is incorporating a "Business Walk" into the program. A business walk allows for a more informal approach to BRE while increasing the flexibility of participation from local leaders. The business walk is designed to pinpoint successes and struggles in a community which then allows business and civic leaders to use that information to help create a more affluent business climate. We recommend Merritt implement a Business Walks component into their BRE program in the second year.

Business Retention and Expansion Program
Action Steps
- Establish BRE program
- Contact 3rd party specialist
- Initiate BRE with set number of businesses (i.e. 100)
- Report information out to community
- Incorporate Business Walks into BRE

3.5 Support Home Based Business

With a strong number of home-based businesses in the community it is clear there is demonstrated support for this type of business. This is reinforced in section 5.3.4 in the Official Community Plan and for good reason – working at home has a range of environmental and social benefits, including supporting the attraction of lifestyle entrepreneurs. Expanding the number of home-based businesses will also help to improve the attraction of labour to the community by allowing one wage earner to work from home. The City should therefore continue to support home-based businesses in order to ensure ongoing growth in this important area.

Support Home Based Business

Action Steps

- Continue to ensure that regulations (e.g. business licenses, zoning, signage) are supportive of home-based businesses
- Make available clear information on how to establish a home-based business in Merritt
- Proceed with establishment of the Home Based Business Task Force
- Promote the City's support for home-based businesses in partnership with other organizations that support entrepreneurs (Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures, etc.)

3.6 Land and Building Inventory

One of the most critical pieces of information that is required in responding to enquiries (both internal and external) is the inventory of available land and buildings. While a community may meet the criteria in terms of labour and other key decision-making issues it is essential for the required land to be available in order to attract new investment or satisfy local expansion needs. The development of a land inventory can benefit the City in a number of ways. It demonstrates the ability of the City to accommodate a company's needs. The information can be used to provide local government with rationale for new zoning or OCP changes. The information can also be used when approaching the Agricultural Land Commission for removal of land from the ALR. Some communities find the creation of a land and building inventory is better prepared by an outside third party. This may be an option Merritt may chose to take as there could be funding available through the Invest Canada-Community Initiatives program

Land and Building Inventory

Action Steps

- Working with local and external real estate representatives to develop a comprehensive land and facilities inventory
- Publish an updateable detailed land and facility inventory to distribute to potential clients
- Create an online inventory of available lands and facilities, searchable by size and permitted uses
- Maintain and update inventory

3.7 First Impressions Program

First Impressions Community Exchange is a structured process that reveals the first impression a community conveys to outsiders, including tourists, potential investors and residents. It offers a fresh perspective on the community's appearance, services and infrastructure and helps communities learn about their strengths and shortcomings.

Volunteer "visiting teams" from two exchange communities do unannounced visits, record their observations and give constructive feedback to their exchange community. The knowledge gained through a First Impressions Community Exchange can be the basis for positive community action, focused on downtown revitalization, tourism development, investment attraction, quality service improvement or broader community strategic planning efforts.

There are a number of states and provinces (Alberta and Ontario) that have undertaken community exchanges and there is a wealth of information available to walk a community through the process. Merritt is a prime candidate for a First Impressions Community Exchange due to its size and limited resources. The initiative would also be a great kick-off to the development of a revitalization project.

First Impressions Program

Action Steps

- Identify "exchange" community and form volunteer group
- Implement First Impressions Community Exchange
- Review report and develop next steps

3.8 Consumer Leakage Study

Perhaps the most powerful impact of spending, or not spending locally, is on local jobs. Focus groups and the survey identified that significant spending is being done outside of the community. The loss of this spending, or consumer leakage results in the potential loss of local retailers. Typically, for each dollar earned, that dollar gets passed on 7 times. When that dollar is spent locally it can provide sustainability for local businesses and the possibility of attracting new complimentary retailers and services.

The "Buy Local" mindset is something that applies not just to families and individuals, but to local companies, organizations and governments. Some of the biggest employers in any community are school districts, local and regional governments, and other government agencies. The loss of this spending locally when it is outsourced outside of the community can also negatively impact the loss of retailers, and other service providers.

It is recommended that Merritt conduct a Consumer Leakage study on the spending that is done outside of the community. Development and distribution of promotional material for the survey should be timed to coincide with mailing of annual tax bills. The work done through a business retention program will identify business spending done outside of the community. A sample survey for a consumer leakage study can be found in Appendix D.

The study should focus on the following:

- Overview of the retail economy in Merritt, including retail that draws shoppers into the community as well as retail leakage to other communities (Kamloops, Kelowna, Lower Mainland, etc.)
- Consumer profiles of Merritt residents
- Identify tactics that existing retail stores could employ to capture leaked sales
- Identify marketing programs to attract new retailers to fill gaps

Consumer Leakage Study

Action Steps

- Contract 3rd party specialist
- Initiate study
- Evaluate results and report out to community

3.9 Small Town Love

For every $100 that is spent locally in a community up to $75 stays in the community. This compares to just $13 when that same $100 is spent at a big box or chain store. The importance of a shop local program is an important aspect of a healthy local economy. Merritt has developed shop local programs in the past to varying success. A unique program originating out of Quesnel, BC , and now being expanding to six other northern communities is "Small Town Love". This shop local program focuses on the stories behind local business owners and is a movement connecting people with independent shops and services that are the heart and soul of a community. The program develops guidebooks, creates online communities, and hosts community shopping events, workshops and mixers for entrepreneurs.   It is recommended that Merritt investigate the program in more detail to determine if this is a shop local program that fits for the community.

Small Town Love

Action Steps

- Contact Small Town Love (smalltownlove.com) and Northern Development Trust

3.10 Art in Vacant Storefronts

Nothing portrays decline and defeat like a block full of empty storefronts. With a rise in interest in "local" – local food, authentic experiences, a slower pace of life and a longing for something more simple and real, small towns should be bustling with visitors, but they're not. This is the situation in Merritt. And much of it has to do perception. If a small town looks empty, and feels in decline, what entrepreneur is going to be able to visualize themselves creating a successful business there? What visitor is going to stop long enough for even a bite to eat or an overnight in a charming local mom & pop motel?   Changing perception is the first step in turning around a small town. Taking an idea from larger communities, small town are beginning to turn to their arts community for help. In Dunsmuir, California, a town of less than 2,000, local building owners and regional artists are working together to revitalize a charming but empty downtown by filling the windows with art. The program is based on an economic revitalization project for the San Francisco Arts Commission and a program implemented in Eugene, Oregon. It is recommended Merritt investigate the details of the program(s) in the various communities to see how it can be adopted.

Art in Vacant Storefronts

Action Steps

- Contact Dunsmuir Chamber of Commerce

4. Increase Awareness

4.1 Community Profile

A community profile is usually the first piece of information that a prospective investor, business or resident will look for regarding a community's potential suitability. The City of Merritt does not have a comprehensive community profile that provides current, reliable information. A profile, at minimum, needs to have the following information:

- Community overview – including map
- Demographics
- Labour
- Major employers
- Cost of doing business – taxation, utilities, etc.
- Transportation

It is recommended Merritt develop a Community Profile that provides comprehensive, detailed and up to date information. The profile should be developed in a user friendly format and allow for future updates. The profile should be made available through the City's website.

Community Profile

Action Steps
- Create community profile for Merritt
- Maintain and update community profile information

4.2 Website

In today's changing economic development marketing world, a community's number one marketing tool is their website. When site selectors, investors, potential businesses and residents are seeking information the first place they look is the internet. According to a recent study, site selectors go to community websites and are looking for real-time data, statistics that accentuate strengths and challenges, property searches, GIS analysis and social media. The internet and technology play a significant role now for economic development. It is important for a community's website to have the information people and businesses are looking for. The information needs to be available, current and accurate because most times a community will not even know it is being looked at. The primary information on an economic development website often comes from a community profile – one of the key pieces of information for economic development. Completion of a comprehensive community profile has been recommended and it is important the profile is available through the website.

Currently economic development has a few pages off the existing City's website. Once the profile is complete it will need to be available through the City's website. A review of the current economic development website pages show a lack of demographic information and target industry specific information. The information currently available is out of date or not relevant. A thorough review of the existing pages needs to be completed. At this time, utilizing the existing City website for economic development is sufficient but it is recommended that discussions take place in year two of the plan to investigate the option of establishing a standalone, dedicated economic development website.

Website

Action Steps

- Review existing website content
- Add community profile when complete
- Investigate option of standalone, dedicated economic development website

4.3 External Awareness

Many of the recommendations in this Action Plan centre on retaining and expanding local business. Although this is viewed as a priority for Merritt, there is also a need for the City to market itself to attract new companies and investment. Respondents felt that Merritt has a negative image both internally and externally. They also expressed the desire for Merritt to market themselves as a viable place to do business.

The attraction of new investment can provide a significant boost to the local economy and help to supplement the growth generated by existing companies. The ability though, to attract new investment and jobs from elsewhere depends on how the market views the community as a location to do business. Much of this can be influenced by local government policies and initiatives. The key is to identify the true competitive advantages that your community has over other areas and then market these to your targets.

Marketing or promotion of a community cannot be done by sitting in the office or through advertising efforts alone. Promotion and building awareness must be in combination with external strategies – in other words: get out of the office and create new relationships and partnerships with individuals, organizations and various levels of government that can assist. The City should be encouraged to participate in sessions hosted by external agencies, for example the provincial association, and to events such as their annual Ministry Dinner. Participation at this event allows for discussions with key staff from ministry departments, and networking receptions with the BC Trade and Investment Representatives, and more. Merritt was in attendance at this year's event and it is recommended this become an annual participation for the City. Attendance at various trade shows including BC Real Estate show, ICSC (Whistler), and others should also be considered in order to increase the awareness of Merritt as a place to live, work and invest. Merritt should also review whether there is a benefit to attending other organization's conferences to help increase awareness of the community. This could include Gold Country, CCCTA, VCM, TOTA, EDAC, EDA, EDABC and IEDC.

There is also benefit to reviewing current memberships to ensure they are benefiting the economic development department and City. There may be opportunities for memberships that are not currently held (i.e. LinxBC). Memberships in economic development organizations provide needed networking and partnerships that cannot be found elsewhere.

External Awareness

Action Steps

- Develop list and budget of events
- Review existing and potential memberships
- Create schedule of events attendance and appropriate budget

4.4 Attraction of Immigrant Investors

In addition to the actions identified to expand external awareness the City should attend BC Immigration sessions hosted by the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) where the community can promote opportunities directly to immigrants and immigration consultants. It is recommended the City get on the list to present opportunities to those immigrants that attend the session. Upwards of 70 participants attend each session.

Attraction of Immigrant Investors

Action Steps

- Contact PNP to schedule presentation
- Development and delivery of PNP presentation

4.5 Familiarization Tours

The purpose of a familiarization tours is to introduce the community and to make a case for investment. Familiarization tours are effective in showcasing location and resources but are an invaluable opportunity to establish personal relationships with potential clients. Properly designed these tours are a uniquely effective form of marketing to raise a community's profile. The potential for positive economic impact is an effective selling point to familiarization tour sponsors, investors and local officials. One method for tours is with existing developers, real estate agencies and others that can play a crucial role in marketing the community for future projects. Merritt can invite local, regional and even Metro Vancouver commercial real estate contacts and developers to tour the community to see what's happening, what the opportunities are and to show that Merritt is the place to establish new investments. This recommendation is for Year 2 as Merritt will need to work towards improving its investment readiness status first.

Familiarization Tours

Action Steps

- Organize an annual tour for real estate agencies (local, regional and Metro Vancouver) to promote opportunities

5. Tourism

5.1 Coordinated Tourism Board

Tourism in the City of Merritt is not operated in a coordinated manner – there are currently a number of organizations all delivering various aspects of tourism. The City of Merritt has a service agreement with Baillie House, there is the Provincial Visitor Centre and a newly created non-profit society that collects and manages a fund for a select group of six accommodation providers. This society does not include any official representation from local government or other community organizations.

The draft Tourism Plan addresses this lack of a coordinated tourism effort as a strategic priority (6.1 Building Capacity: Tourism Management for the City of Merritt and the Nicola Valley). Tourism and economic development are linked by the various ways in which tourism can contribute to the economic development of a tourist destination. One of the benefits or links between tourism and economic development is the fact that a vibrant tourism sector provides employment for the citizens of the community. Another way in which tourism and economic development are linked is through the provision of small or micro enterprises for certain citizens. For example, the artisan store located in downtown Merritt collaborates with local artisans and craftsmen to supply them with handcrafted items which they sell to tourists. Infrastructure to support the tourism market includes factors like good airports, security, hotels and roads. Such factors help facilitate economic development and might not be as developed if not for their importance to the economy.

Merritt would definitely benefit with an improved coordinated tourism function. It is recommended that the City review the current status of tourism and implement the specific strategies outlined in the draft Tourism Plan.

Coordinated Tourism Board

Action Steps

- Review specific strategies in the draft Tourism Plan (6.1 Building Capacity)
- Adopt and implement strategies

5.2 Asset Inventory

Tourism opportunities within Merritt are not being fully realized. There are a number of tourism attractions, operators and services but there is no coordinated inventory of the actual products available. A community inventory lists categories of tourism products as well as community infrastructure that support tourism. An inventory of these assets will enable a community to review the number, range and quality and also identify any gaps that need to be addressed. The inventory should not just include accommodations and restaurants but be more focused on those activities that will keep tourists in the community for a longer period of time. TOTA is currently piloting an online database project that creates a destination features inventory that can be viewed and shared with community tourism representatives. The draft Tourism Plan addresses asset inventory as a strategic priority (7.1.1 Inventory of Destination, Products, Events and Stakeholders). It is recommended Merritt implement the specific strategies for complete an inventory as outlined in the draft Tourism Plan.

Asset Inventory

Action Steps

- Review specific strategies in the draft Tourism Plan (7.1.1 Inventory of Destination, Products, Events and Stakeholders)
- Adopt and implement strategies

5.3 Signage

During the public consultation process, the quality of signage into the City was severely criticized and did not provide a positive impression of the community. It was also noted the signage within the community to inform visitors was extremely poor and lacking. An effective signage program not only attracts visitors and provides direction and information, but it also plays a critical role in linking visitors to "product" or experiences. It is the final and likely most critical piece of the marketing process and is an essential part of the product development process. To benefit the most from the efforts made to attract tourists and to make sure the entire community benefits it is important to provide travellers visiting Merritt with appropriate directions to easily locate attractions and merchants. Not every visitor will stop at the VIC and those that don't are left wondering what the community has to offer. The draft Tourism Plan addresses signage as a strategic priority (7.6.1. Signage). It is recommended Merritt implement the specific strategies to create a consistent and uniformly applied signage policy.

Signage

Action Steps

- Review specific strategies in the draft Tourism Plan (7.6.1 Signage)
- Adopt and implement strategies

5.4 Adoption and Implementation of the Draft Tourism Plan

A draft Tourism Plan for Merritt/Nicola Valley has been prepared and provided to the City. The plan outlines three strategic priorities – Building Capacity – Position & Marketing – Destination Experiences. Within the three priorities are seven objectives. The Economic Development Action Plan has included three key initiatives that will work towards enhancing economic development for the City. However, there is benefit to implementing all the strategies within the draft Tourism Plan and it is therefore recommended Merritt adopt and implement the draft Tourism Plan.

Draft Tourism Plan

Action Steps

- Adoption of draft Tourism Plan
- Review, prioritize and implement strategies

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Implementation Plan is based around the five outcome areas all aimed at cultivating sustained economic prosperity for the City of Merritt. This Implementation Plan is structured in the following way. Each action step is further broken down into doable actions and are provided with timelines, responsibilities, potential partners and resources required.

1. Economic Development Capacity				
Action	**Timeline**	**Role of City**	**Potential Partners**	**Resources Required**
Economic Development Committee				
Develop and adopt Terms of Reference: • Develop Terms of Reference • Present to Council for adoption	 April April	EDO – Lead Council - Support		Staff Time No budget implications
Establish an economic development advisory committee: • Identify or advertise for potential committee members • Approach or interview individuals for commitment • Finalize new committee	 April May June	EDO – Lead Council - Support		Staff Time No budget implications
Create Committee Manual: • Establish committee roles • Establish committee responsibilities • Establish 2014/2015 meeting schedule • Establish Code of Ethics • List of committee members	 May May May May May	EDO - Lead		Staff Time No budget implication
Annual Review of Advisory Committee: • Review existing make-up of committee to ensure right mix, rotating members and meeting schedule	Annual/Ongoing	EDO - Lead		Staff Time No budget implications
Economic Development and Small Business Accord				
Contact MJTST to investigate how Merritt can adopt the BC Small Business Accord: • Visit website to obtain information on BC Small Business Accord - http://www.jtst.gov.bc.ca/sbaccord/ • Begin discussions with Ministry staff to determine steps to adopt the accord for Merritt • Approach Council with research completed to determine interest	 June July August	EDO – Lead Council - Support		Staff Time No budget implications

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1. Economic Development Capacity				
Action	**Timeline**	**Role of City**	**Potential Partners**	**Resources Required**
• Depending on Council response draft up Small Business Accord for Merritt to present to Council • Once approved communicate Accord to business community – time with Small Business Week	September October			
Facilitate Economic Development Training for Local Leaders				
Approach BCEDA to determine potential dates: • Determine best dates for Merritt • Contact BCEDA to arrange workshop	November December			
Host workshop in Merritt: • Confirm workshop parameters (when, where) • Correspond with local leaders to invite • Host workshop	January 2015 February 2015 March 2015	EDO - Lead		Staff Time $5,000
Suggested Performance Metrics				
• Increased community involvement in economic development • Number of businesses • Number of partnership opportunities • Community knowledge of economic development				

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2. A Collaborative Approach for Real Outcomes

Action	Timeline	Role of City	Potential Partners	Resources Required
Community Accord				
Contact Powell River for process: • Contact Powell River EDO for information on their accord • Review information to determine how the accord might be structured for Merritt	September November	EDO – Lead	First Nations	Staff Time No budget implications
Meet with First Nations representatives to introduce concept: • Contact FN representatives to initiate concept • Determine who should be involved in the meetings • Hold meeting(s)	2015	EDO - Lead	First Nations	Staff Time No budget implication
Host District of Powell River and Sliammon First Nation • Dependent on FN interest coordinate a visit with Powell River and Sliammon First Nation • Host meeting	2015	EDO - Lead	First Nations	Staff Time $2,000
Develop and sign community accord	TBD			
Resident Survey				
Research other communities: • Research how other communities implement their resident surveys • Present information to Council	2015 2015	EDO - Lead		Staff Time No budget implication
Choose an appropriate survey method and develop: • Based on Council feedback and decision work with City staff to develop survey that incorporates economic development	2015	City – Lead EDO - Support		Staff Time No budget implication
Administer survey: • Communicate with City staff to stay abreast of the survey administration	2015/annual	City - Lead EDO - Support		Staff Time No budget implication
Analyze and present results:	2015/annual	EDO - Lead		Staff Time

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2. A Collaborative Approach for Real Outcomes

Action	Timeline	Role of City	Potential Partners	Resources Required
• Use results as required to communication out for economic development purposes				No budget implication
Communications Plan				
Initiate monthly activity reports to Council: • Use the same template (or adapt) as reports to economic development advisory committee to distribute report to Council	June Quarterly/Ongoing	EDO - Lead		Staff Time No budget implication
Develop a quarterly electronic newsletter	2015	EDO - Lead		Staff Time
Gather success stories through BRE	Ongoing	EDO - Lead		Staff Time
Economic Development Roundtable				
Meet with representatives from other local key agencies on a quarterly basis: • Identify agencies to involve in roundtable • Contact each agency to determine interest and schedule of dates • Hold meetings	 April April May/Quarterly	EDO - Lead	Chamber of Commerce Community Futures Ministry of Forest, Land & Natural Resources	Staff Time No budget implication
Support NVIT				
Engagement NVIT in the BRE program: • Approach NVIT to determine interest in their involvement with BRE • Schedule appropriate BRE meetings with NVIT representative(s)	 September Ongoing	EDO - Lead	NVIT	Staff Time No budget implication
Work with President NVIT for involvement in Community Economic Development Program: • Approach NVIT to determine interest • Ongoing meetings and discussions to determine ways for the City to be involved	 September Ongoing	EDO - Lead	NVIT	Staff Time No budget implication
Work with NVIT and BCEDA to expand opportunities:		EDO - Lead	NVIT	Staff Time

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2. A Collaborative Approach for Real Outcomes

Action	Timeline	Role of City	Potential Partners	Resources Required
• Approach NVIT to determine interest • Ongoing meetings and discussions to determine ways for the City to be involved	September Ongoing		BCEDA	No budget implication
Pursue Expansion and Retention of Merritt-based Forestry Operations				
Engage with forestry companies to identify issues and challenges: • Arrange quarterly meetings with forestry companies and their representatives • Collaborate with forestry companies and value-added companies in developing solutions that are effective and cost-efficient with the ultimate goal of expanding local forestry operations	Quarterly/ Ongoing	EDO – Lead	Ministry of Forest, Land and Natural Resources	Staff Time No budget implications
Develop programs to attract and retain employees: • Approach NVIT to develop training programs • Develop a forestry-specific relocation package	May September	EDO – Lead	NVIT Ministry of Forest, Land and Natural Resources	Staff Time $2,000
Sector Gateway 286				
Support and encourage the City to follow the policies within OCP: • Work with City staff and Council to implement the policies outlined in the OCP	Ongoing	City – Lead EDO – Support		Staff Time No budget implication
Continue to develop and strengthen relationships with First Nations: • Identify, expand and strengthen relationships • Determine interest of establishing regular meetings with First Nations	Ongoing June	EDO – Lead	First Nation	Staff Time No budget implication
Merritt Youth Leap				
Develop partnership with Community Futures and others	2015			
Develop operations and marketing plan	2015			
Suggested Performance Metrics				

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2. A Collaborative Approach for Real Outcomes				
Action	**Timeline**	**Role of City**	**Potential Partners**	**Resources Required**
• Improved rating from resident survey • Number of partnership opportunities identified between City and First Nations • Awareness of economic development programs and initiatives • Number of partnership opportunities identified with economic development stakeholder groups • Number of partnership opportunities identified with NVIT • Economic impact of forestry sector • Number of partnerships opportunities identified between the County's forestry sector and NVIT • Total number of business networking events				

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3. Keeping Merritt Competitive				
Action	**Timeline**	**Role of City**	**Potential Partners**	**Resources Required**
Investment Readiness – Self-assessment				
Complete investment readiness self-assessment: • Complete the self-assessment (Appendix XXX) • Review results and determine where improvements can be made • Retake the self-assessment	May May Annual	EDO - Lead		Staff Time No budget implications
Making it Easier to do Business:				
Internal review of process: • Complete a review of internal processes and costs • Complete comparisons to communities of similar sizes • Define how information will be disseminated • Communicate information to community (use regular article in Merritt Herald, BRE and other methods) • Conduct review on an annual basis	May May September September Annual	EDO – Lead City – Support		Staff Time
Marketing the Tax Exemption				
Develop and circulate marketing materials: • Develop a one page fact sheet on how to access the program • Circulate information through Business Walks and other Business Retention initiatives, and other agencies	May May	EDO – Lead City – Support	Chamber of Commerce Community Futures	Staff Time No budget implications
Incorporate information into other materials: • Incorporate information on program into Community Profile and other tools used to market community for investment	Ongoing	EDO - Lead		Staff Time No budget implications
Business Retention and Expansion Program				
Establish BRE program: • Activate BC BusinessCounts license	April	EDO – Lead	Chamber of Commerce	Staff Time

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3. Keeping Merritt Competitive				
Action	**Timeline**	**Role of City**	**Potential Partners**	**Resources Required**
• Populate database • Determine number of businesses to visit	May June		Community Futures	$500 annual licence renewal fee
Contact 3rd party specialist: • Release RFP to contract 3rd party specialist • Contract with 3rd party specialist	 July August	EDO- Lead		Staff Time $30,000
Initiate BRE: • Customize survey questions • Begin BRE visitation process with 3rd party specialist targeting set number of businesses (i.e. 100)	 September September/ October	EDO - Support	Chamber of Commerce Community Futures	Staff Time
Report information out to community: • Receive report from 3rd party specialist • Disseminate information out to community (Chamber of Commerce luncheon, regular article in Merritt Herald)	November	EDO - Support	Chamber of Commerce	
Incorporate Business Walks into BRE	2015	EDO – Lead City - Support	Chamber of Commerce Community Futures NVIT First Nations	Staff Time
Support Home Based Business				
HBB regulations are supportive: • Continue to ensure that regulations (e.g. business licenses, zoning, signage) are supportive of home-based businesses	Ongoing	EDO – Lead City - Support	Home based businesses Community Futures	Staff Time No budget implications
HBB information: • Make available clear information on how to establish a home-based business in Merritt	Ongoing	EDO – Lead City - Support		Staff Time No budget implication

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3. Keeping Merritt Competitive				
Action	**Timeline**	**Role of City**	**Potential Partners**	**Resources Required**
HBB task force: • Proceed with establishment of the Home Based Business Task Force	April	EDO – Support		Staff Time No budget implications
Promote HBB with other agencies: • Promote the City's support for home-based businesses in partnership with other organizations that support entrepreneurs	Ongoing	EDO - Lead	Chamber of Commerces Community Futures	Staff Time No budget implications
Land and Building Inventory				

Develop land and facilities inventory:
• Work with local and external real estate representatives to develop a comprehensive land and facility inventory, broken out with information on the following characteristics:
   o Availability of municipal water
   o Availability of municipal sanitary sewer system
   o Electrical supply
   o Natural gas
   o Services with high speed telecommunications
   o No man-made environmental issues, such as chemical contaminations
   o Size of land and/or facilities
   o Designated in the municipality's OCP and zoning bylaws as industrial, commercial or other designations allowing industrial uses such as manufacturing, assembly and warehousing
	December	EDO – Lead City Support	Real Estate Developers First Nations	Staff Time

Publish and distribute:	2015			
Create an online inventory:	2015			
Maintain and update inventory:	Ongoing			
First Impressions Program				
Identify "exchange" community and form volunteer group: • Download the manual from the Center for		EDO – Lead		Staff Time

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3. Keeping Merritt Competitive				
Action	**Timeline**	**Role of City**	**Potential Partners**	**Resources Required**
Community and Economic Development – http://cced.ces.uwex.edu/2012/08/04/first-impressions-program-2/ • Follow the first steps outlined in the manual including forming a volunteer group and identifying an exchange community	December			$2500 budget for 2015
Implement First Impressions Community Exchange	2015	EDO – Lead		
Review reports and develop next steps:	2015	EDO – Lead		
Consumer Leakage Study				
Contract 3rd party specialist: • Release RFP to contract 3rd party specialist • Contract with 3rd party specialist	September/ October	EDO – Lead	Chamber of Commerce Community Futures	Staff Time $10,000
Initiate Study: • Work with contractor to customize survey • Initiate study	October/ November	EDO - Lead	Chamber of Commerce Community Futures	Staff Time No budget implication
Evaluate results and report out to community: • Receive report from 3rd party specialist • Disseminate information out to community (Chamber of Commerce luncheon, regular article in Merritt Herald) • Use information to develop programs and identify targets for 2015	November/ December	EDO - Lead	Chamber of Commerce Community Futures	Staff Time 2015 – TBD
Small Town Love				
Contact Small Town Love (smalltownlove.com) and Northern Development Trust	2015		Chamber of Commerce of Commerce	

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3. Keeping Merritt Competitive				
Action	**Timeline**	**Role of City**	**Potential Partners**	**Resources Required**
			Art Council	
Art in Vacant Storefronts				
Contact Dunsmuir Chamber of Commerce	2015			
Suggested Performance Metrics				

- Number of business survey (BR+E) projects
- Number of businesses surveyed, numbers in target sectors
- Number of business issues addressed
- Total number of programs accessed by local businesses
- Jobs created (fulltime, part-time, contract, seasonal)
- Changes in average wages or salaries
- Amount of investment in the community
- Improved in Investment Readiness ranking
- Number of businesses utilizing tax exemption
- Number of home based businesses
- Amount of dollars spent in community
- Vacancy rates for industrial and commercial employment lands
- Existing and available industrial space
- Existing and available retail/commercial space
- Changes in the vacancy rates for leased space

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4. Increase Awareness				
Action	**Timeline**	**Role of City**	**Potential Partners**	**Resources Required**
Community Profile				
Create community profile for Merritt • Determine if profile is to be done in-house or contracted out • Start data collection process • Design community profile (incorporate new brand design) • Completion of draft profile • Distribute draft to agencies, Council for input • Completion of final profile • Add to website • Communicate new profile to media and community (regular article in Merritt Herald and other methods)	April May June June June September September September	EDO - Lead	Chamber of Commerce Community Futures TNRD	Staff Time $20,000 if profiles are contracted out
Maintain and update community profile information	Quarterly/Ongoing	EDO – Lead		Staff Time
Website				
Review existing website for content: • Review current content and identify gaps • Determine how new webpages will be designed and added • Include budget for 2015 for new, separate website	June June November	EDO – Lead	DFAIT	Staff Time $15,000 budget for 2015
Add community profile when complete: • Include profile to website as a download	September	EDO - Lead		Staff Time
Investigate option of standalone, dedicated economic development website:	2015			
External Awareness				
Develop list and budget of events: • Contact BCEDA for suggested events • Develop list of potential events • Develop budget for participation	April	EDO - Lead	BCEDA	Staff Time $15,000 Budget for 2014

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4. Increase Awareness				
Action	**Timeline**	**Role of City**	**Potential Partners**	**Resources Required**
Review existing and potential memberships: • Review memberships and benefits • Revise memberships as required and budget for 2015	April	EDO - Lead		Staff Time $5,000 Budget for 2015
Create schedule of events attendance and appropriate budget	April			Staff Time $5,000
Attraction of Immigrate Investors				
Contact PNP to schedule presentation • Contact Ministry to receive scheduled dates • Schedule presentation(s)	May September	EDO – Lead		Staff Time
Development and delivery of PNP presentation: • Develop and design PNP presentation (incorporate new brand design) • Deliver PNP presentation	July/August Fall	EDO - Lead		Staff Time $3,000
Familiarization Tours				
Organize an annual tour for real estate to promote opportunities	2015			
Suggested Performance Metrics				

Suggested Performance Metrics
- New business investment attracted – number of businesses, number of jobs, sector
- Number of business inquiries by sector and type of investment
- Vacancy rates for industrial and commercial employment land
- Existing and available industrial space
- Existing and available retail/commercial space
- Changes in the vacancy rates for leased space
- Traffic to City related websites
- Building permit activity – commercial/residential/institutional/industrial
- Population and employment – changes in numbers, changes per age categories, change by sector
- Increased business engagement – number of businesses
- Number of referrals and RFI requests, number of proposals delivered

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4. Increase Awareness				
Action	Timeline	Role of City	Potential Partners	Resources Required
• Total number of new businesses in key sectors • Personal contacts with influencers • New business investment attracted – dollars and number of businesses				

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5. Tourism			Potential Partners	Resources Required
Action	**Timeline**	**Role of City**	**Potential Partners**	**Resources Required**
Coordinated Tourism Board				
Review specific strategies in the draft Tourism Plan (6.1 Building Capacity): • Review the strategies under Section 6.1 to form a coordinated tourism board	Spring	EDO – Lead City - Support	TOTA Community Futures Tourism Nicola Valley VCM CCCTA Gold Country	Staff Time
Adopt and implement strategies	Spring	EDO - Lead		Staff Time
Asset Inventory				
Review specific strategies in the draft Tourism Plan (7.1.1 Inventory of Destination, Products, Events and Stakeholders) • Review the strategies under Section 7.1.1 to complete a tourism asset inventory	Spring	EDO - Lead	TOTA Community Futures Tourism Nicola Valley VCM CCCTA Gold Country	Staff Time Budget TBD
Adopt and implement strategies	Spring	EDO – Lead		Staff Time
Signage				
Review specific strategies in the draft Tourism Plan (7.6.1 Signage): • Review the strategies under Section 7.6.1 to improve signage	Spring	EDO – Lead City – Support	TOTA Community Futures Tourism Nicola Valley VCM CCCTA Gold Country	Staff Time Budget TBD
Adopt and implement strategies	Spring	EDO - Lead		Staff time

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5. Tourism			Potential Partners	Resources Required
Action	Timeline	Role of City	Potential Partners	Resources Required
Adoption and Implementation of the Draft Tourism Plan				
Adoption of draft Tourism Plan	Spring	City – Lead EDO - Support		Staff Time
Review, prioritize and implement strategies	Spring	EDO – Support		Staff Time
Suggested Performance Metrics				
• Programs implements directly related to tourism • Number of tourists/visitors • Tourists/visitor total and average spending tourist/visitor length of stay • Number of businesses in the tourism sector				

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APPENDIX A – SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

Prepared by:
EDCD CONSULTING

Community Survey Results

Community Survey - Question 1:

How long have you lived in Merritt?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
0 - 3 years	13.1%	22
4 - 6 years	14.9%	25
7 - 15 years	24.4%	41
15 years or longer	47.6%	80
	answered question	**168**
	skipped question	**1**

■ 0 - 3 years

■ 4 - 6 years

A1
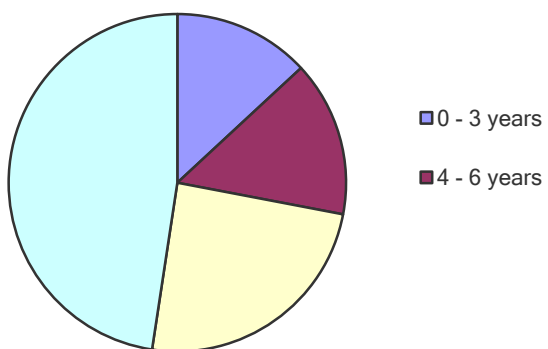
Community Survey - Question 2:

Prior to Merritt, where did you live?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Have always lived in Merritt	13.4%	22
Other parts of the Thompson Okanagan Region	15.9%	26
In British Columbia, but not in the Thompson Okanagan Region	57.9%	95
Outside of British Columbia, but in Canada	10.4%	17
Outside of Canada	2.4%	4
If outside of Merritt, please specify:		94
	answered question	164
	skipped question	5
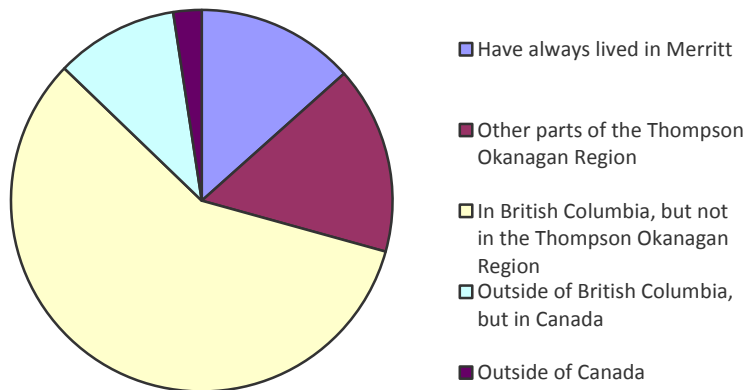
If outside of Merritt, please specify:

- Prince George
- Vancouver
- Surrey
- Chetwynd
- Coquitlam
- Abbotsford
- Vernon
- Terrace
- Ontario
- Alberta
- Delta
- Sparwood
- Smithers
- Manitoba
- Princeton
- Mackenzie
- Burns Lake
- Kamloops
- Vancouver Island
- Kelowna
- Valemount
- Clinton
- Ft. St. John
- Langley

- Have always lived in Merritt
- Other parts of the Thompson Okanagan Region
- In British Columbia, but not in the Thompson Okanagan Region
- Outside of British Columbia, but in Canada
- Outside of Canada

Community Survey - Question 3:

What is the primary reason you have chosen to live in Merritt?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Grew up in region	13.7%	23
Close to work	10.7%	18
Close to family	18.5%	31
Caring for another person(s)	1.2%	2
Transferred by employer	8.3%	14
Education	0.6%	1
Career opportunities	9.5%	16
Quality of life	10.7%	18
Affordable cost of living	6.5%	11
Other (please specify)	20.2%	34
answered question		168
skipped question		1

Other, please specify:

- Retirement
- Employment
- Location
- Affordable housing
- Climate

- Grew up in region
- Close to work
- Close to family
- Caring for another person(s)
- Transferred by employer
- Education
- Career opportunities
- Quality of life
- Affordable cost of living
- Other (please specify)

A3
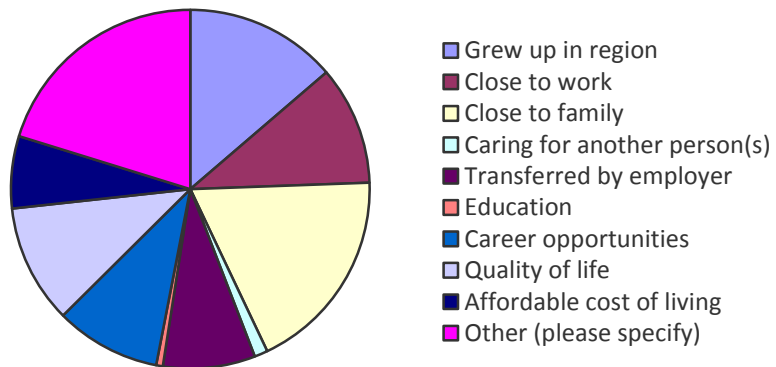
Community Survey - Question 4:

Do you live in Merritt but work elsewhere most of the time?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	11.0%	18
No	89.0%	146
If yes, please specify in which communities you work.		17
answered question		164
skipped question		5

If yes, please specify in which communities you work:

- Logan Lake
- Kamloops
- Alberta

- Yes
- No

A4
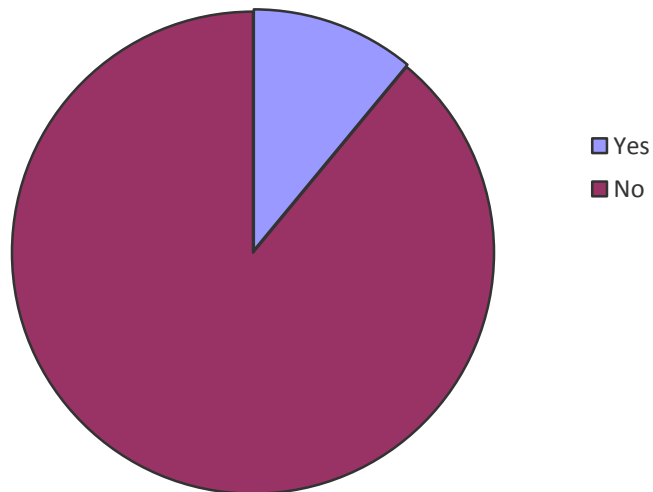
Community Survey - Question 5:

How do you perceive Merritt's image as a community?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive	30.3%	50
Negative	50.3%	83
No Perception	19.4%	32
If positive or negative, why did you indicate your particular response?		111
answered question		165
skipped question		4
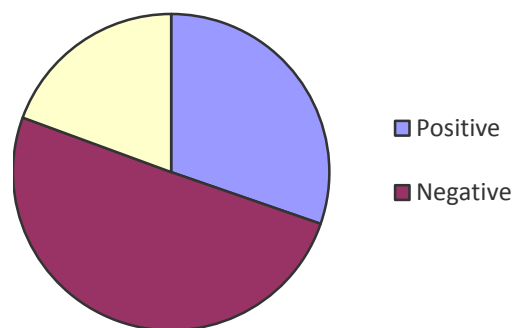
If positive or negative, why did you indicate your particular response:

Positive:
- Community Support – Always willing to help a neighbour
- Outdoor recreation
- Good weather
- Central location
- Cost of living
- Good place to raise children

Negative:
- "Dirty" - many empty storefronts, Downtown buildings in need of a facelift
- High taxes
- Bad reputation - "party town" "gas stop"
- Frustrating civic politics
- Needs more community events; Youth activities
- Derelict highway signage
- We are "closed" for business; Stagnant
- Social issues - Alcohol abuse downtown; poverty
- No hospital

□ Positive
■ Negative

A5

Community Survey - Question 6:

How do you think non-residents of Merritt perceive its image as a community?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Positive	13.6%	22
Negative	60.5%	98
No Perception	26.5%	43
If positive or negative, why did you indicate your particular response?		108
answered question		162
skipped question		7
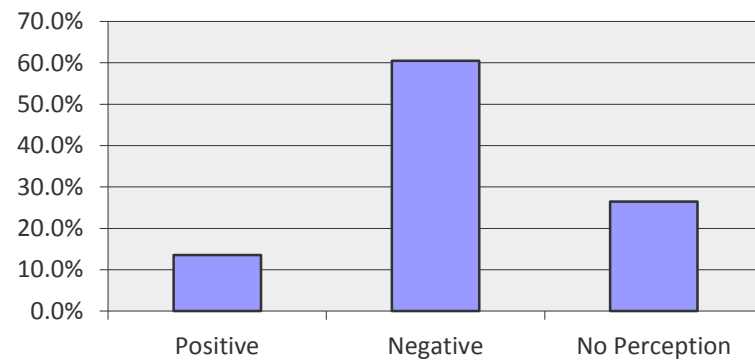
If positive or negative, why did you indicate your particular response?

Positive:
- Beautiful location
- Nice climate
- Community spirit

Negative:
- Somewhere to stop, not to stay
- Party town reputation
- High gas prices
- Dirty, dusty
- Alcohol abuse downtown
- High crime

Community Survey - Question 7:

What does effective economic development mean to you? (Check two best choices). The Economic Development Department is a municipal function.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More jobs in the region	47.0%	77
Existing companies stable and expanding in the region	23.8%	39
New companies opening in the region	53.7%	88
Improved awareness (reputation) of the region	23.8%	39
More tourists visiting the region	20.7%	34
Better lifestyle amenities	31.7%	52
Better educational opportunities	6.1%	10
Higher standard of living for citizens	15.9%	26
Other (please specify)	9.1%	15
	answered question	**164**
	skipped question	**5**

Other, please specify:

- More emphasis on arts and culture
- Better socio-economic standings
- Business attraction

A7
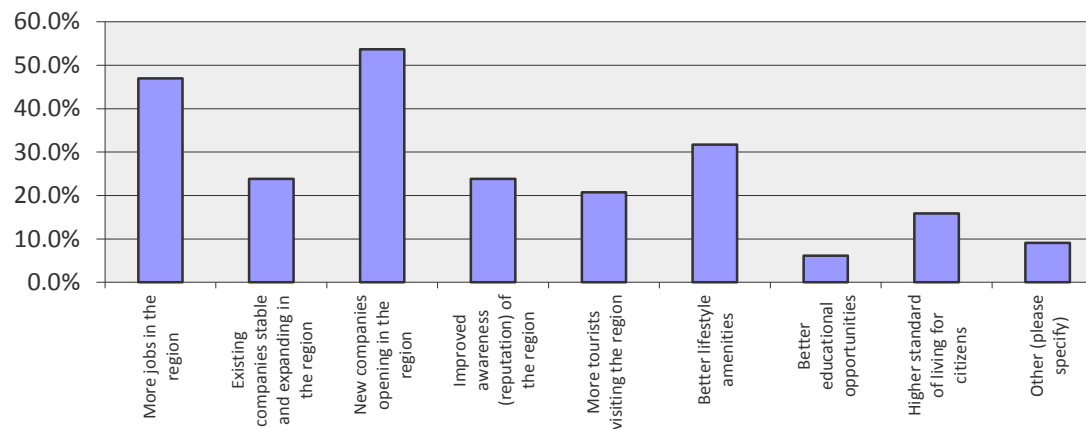
Community Survey - Question 8:

What word or phrase would you use to describe Merritt?

- A Lake A Day As Long As you Stay
- Boring
- The Hub
- Stagnant
- Lacking
- Dirty
- Country
- Relaxed
- Windy
- Friendly
- Great outdoors
- Potential
- Small town
- Recreational
- Retirement

Community Survey - Question 9:

How well does Merritt satisfy your needs in the following areas?

Answer Options	Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Dissatisfied nor Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Response Count
Education systems (K-12)	5	19	54	71	12	161
Post Secondary	3	37	66	45	8	159
Availability of a wide range of jobs	36	70	32	23	1	162
Jobs that lead to career growth	35	68	39	19	1	162
Cost of living (ie: housing, transportation, food)	36	56	27	39	3	161
Entertainment/recreation & arts/culture	37	54	29	40	3	163
Crime rate	43	61	36	19	4	163
Health care	46	49	29	34	4	162
Climate	2	5	14	81	59	161
City's ability to manage growth	50	50	37	21	2	160
Highway access/Driving time to work	2	5	37	70	47	161
High speed internet connectivity	12	20	30	87	13	162
Public transportation	8	12	73	56	10	159
Image of city as place for business	40	67	37	11	3	158
Image of city as place to live	32	60	34	30	5	161
Multi-level care facilities	27	35	64	35	1	162
					answered question	164
					skipped question	5

A9
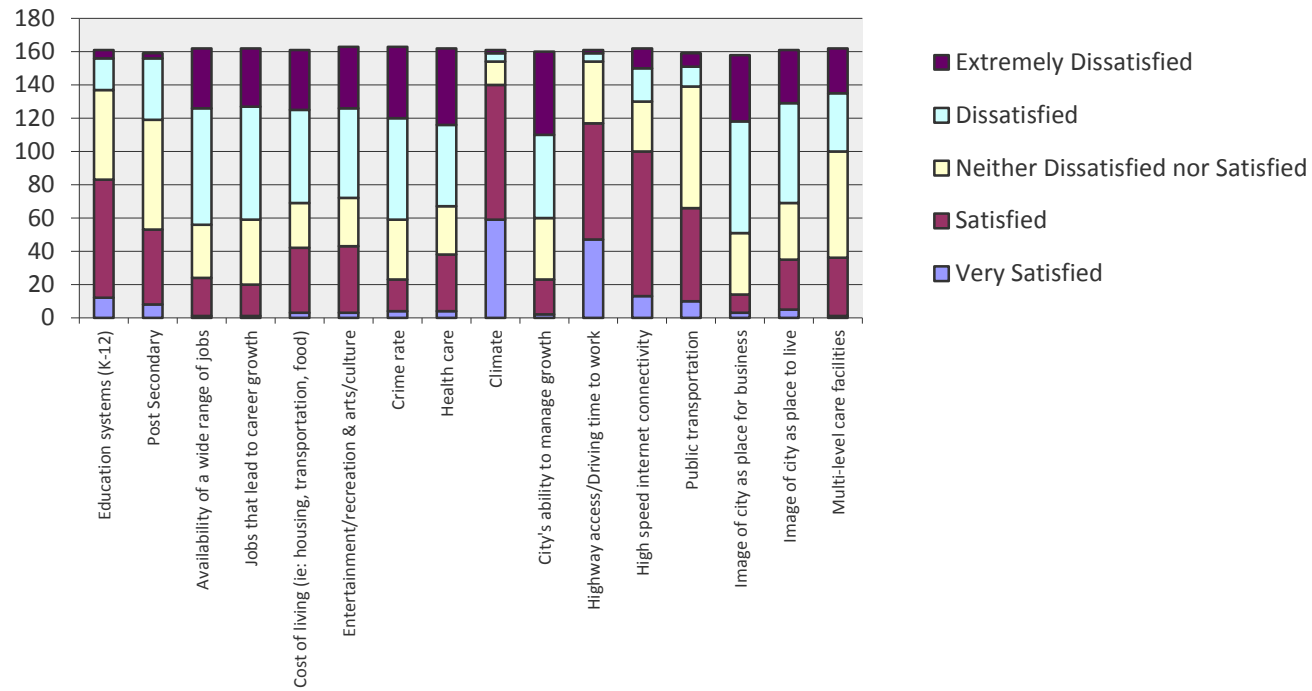
Community Survey - Question 10:

What type of business would you like to see expand or locate in Merritt? (Choose up to three)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Construction	18.4%	30
Retail	44.8%	73
Professional, scientific & technical	26.4%	43
Finance and insurance services	4.3%	7
Healthcare	47.9%	78
Tourism & hospitality	40.5%	66
Software development	7.4%	12
Telecommunications	14.1%	23
Green industry	29.4%	48
Distribution and warehousing	37.4%	61
Manufacturing	46.0%	75
Government offices	12.3%	20
Other (please specify)	14.1%	23
answered question		**163**
skipped question		**6**

Other, please specify:

- Restaurants
- Manufacturing
- Entertainment – Movie theater, adventure tourism
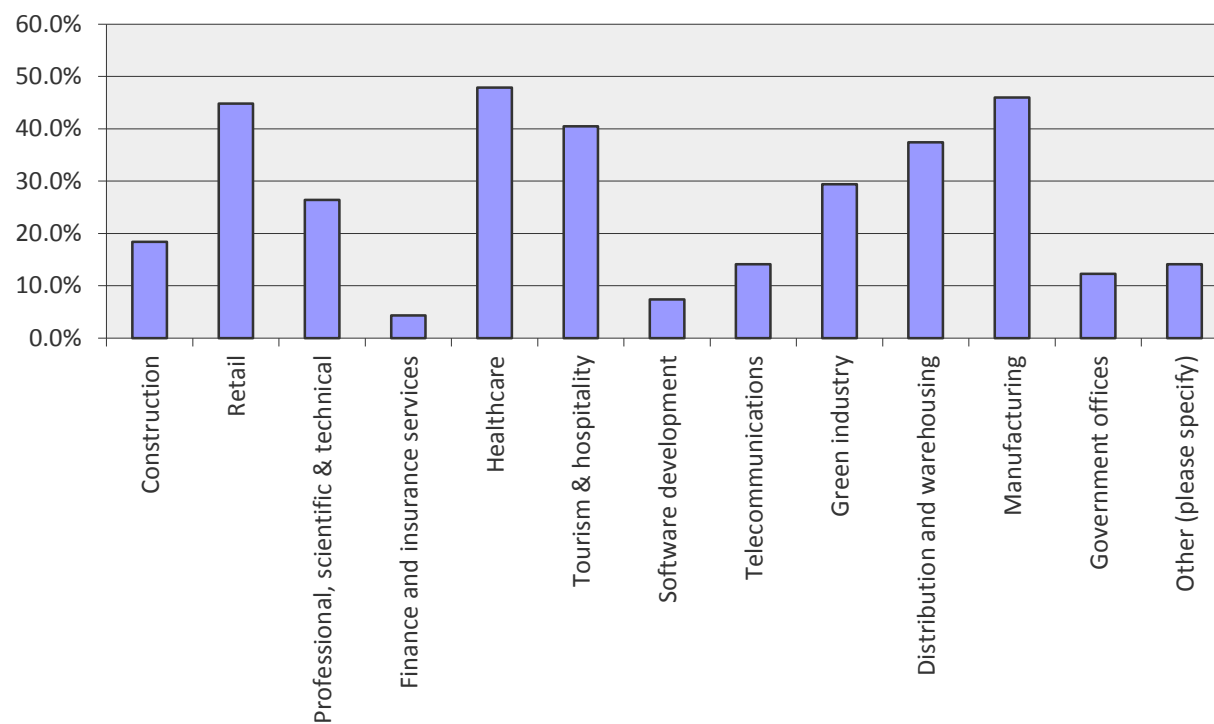
Community Survey - Question 11:

If tourism, what type? (ie: accommodations, events, etc.)

- Outdoor activities: Camping, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, quading, dirtbiking, geocache
- Accommodations
- Restaurants
- Street malls
- Hosting events – sporting, art, music
- Theme park
- Casino

Community Survey - Question 12:

If retail, what product or service should be expanded or attracted?

- Clothing
- Sporting goods
- Shoes
- Restaurants (not fast food)
- Building supply
- Grocery

Community Survey - Question 13:

What are three of our greatest strengths that CURRENTLY make Merritt a viable place for economic growth? (Check top three)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Skilled workforce	3.8%	6
Transportation access (close to highways, ease of getting from place to place)	75.5%	120
Close proximity to recreational opportunities	39.0%	62
K-12 schools	8.8%	14
Local government leadership	0.6%	1
Strong employer base	3.1%	5
Entrepreneurial talent	3.1%	5
Affordability of housing	26.4%	42
Strong community pride	12.6%	20
Climate and coastal location	57.9%	92
Multi-cultural presence in the community	8.8%	14
Proximity to Major Centres	52.8%	84
Other (please specify)	3.1%	5
answered question		159
skipped question		10
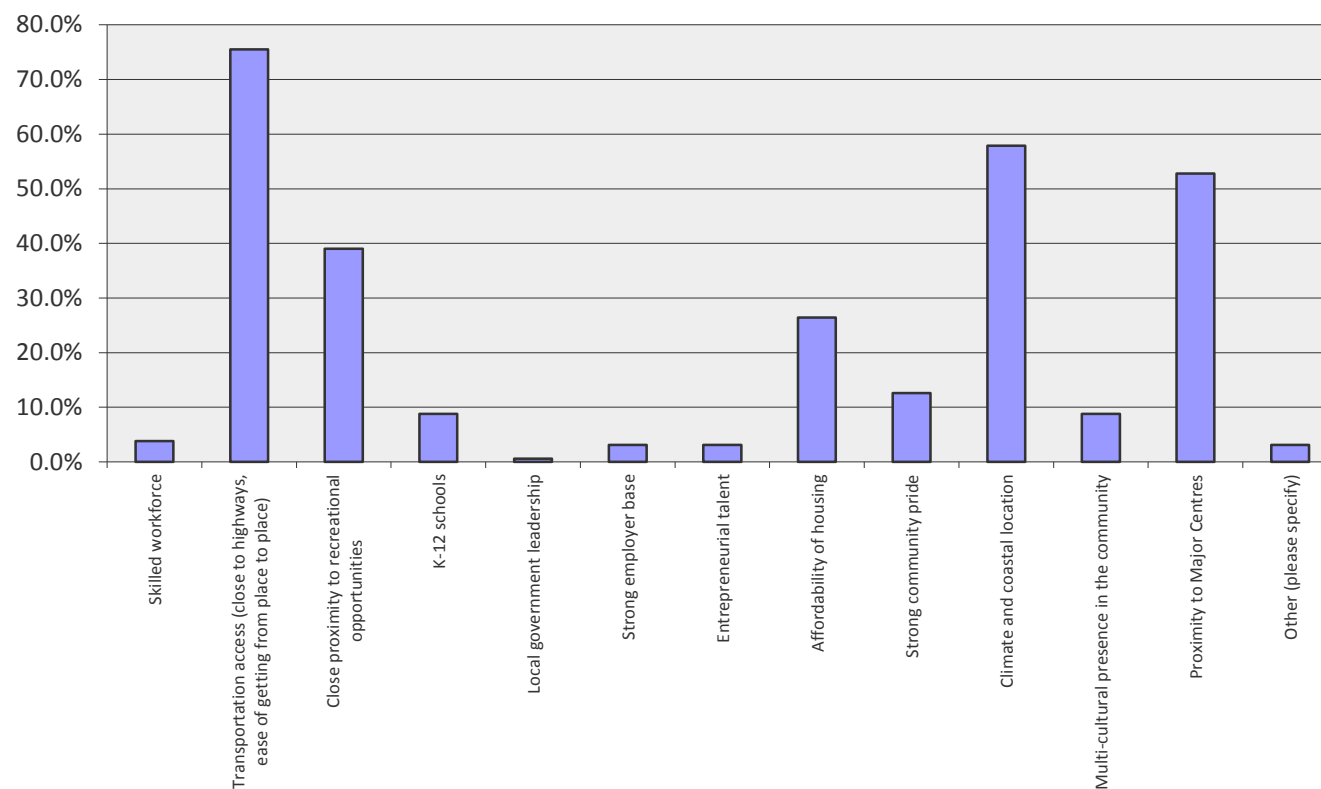
Other, please specify:
- Outdoor activities
- Not overcrowded

A16

Community Survey - Question 14:

What are the three biggest challenges CURRENTLY facing Merritt as it works to improve jobs and economic growth? (Check top three)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Availability of jobs	65.6%	105
Availability of diverse housing options	17.5%	28
Keeping young skilled workers	40.0%	64
Inadequate transportation infrastructure	5.0%	8
Local government leadership	50.0%	80
Level of community pride	18.8%	30
School systems	5.6%	9
High costs (business and living)	41.9%	67
Availability of retail/restaurant/entertainment options	41.3%	66
Other (please specify)	13.8%	22
answered question		**160**
skipped question		**9**

A17
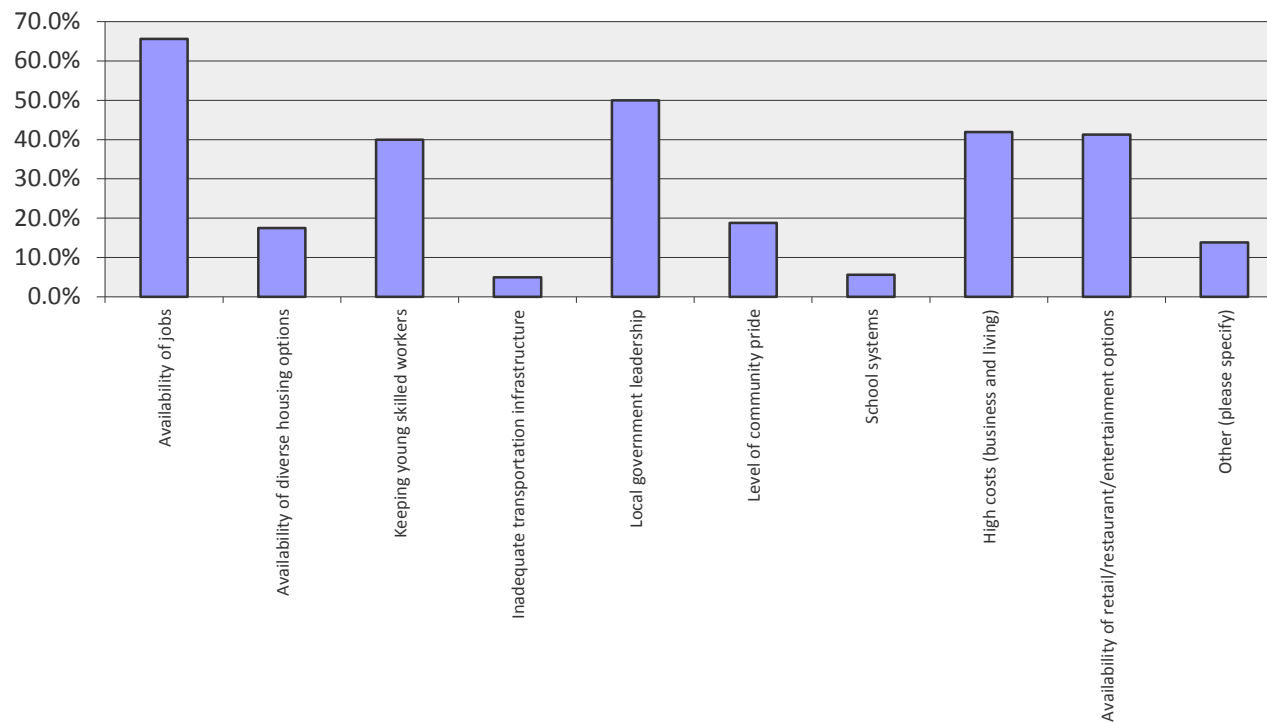
Other, please specify:
- High taxes
- Socio-economic problems
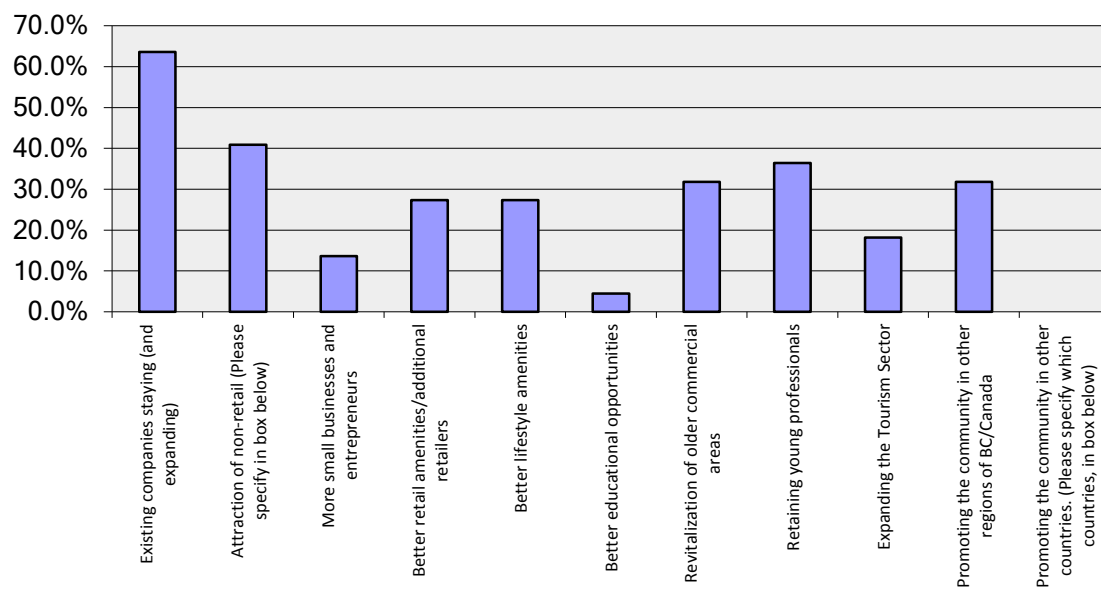- Lack of medical services
- Availability of skilled workforce

Community Survey - Question 15:

What should be the top three economic development goals for the FUTURE of Merritt? (Check top three)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Existing companies staying (and expanding)	42.1%	67
Attraction of non-retail (Please specify in box below)	26.4%	42
More small businesses and entrepreneurs	25.8%	41
Better retail amenities/additional retailers	33.3%	53
Better lifestyle amenities	35.2%	56
Better educational opportunities	10.7%	17
Better tourism amenities	23.9%	38
Revitalization of older commercial areas	36.5%	58
Retaining young professionals	20.8%	33
Promoting Merritt in other regions of BC/Canada	30.2%	48
Promoting Merritt in other countries. (Please specify which countries, in box below)	4.4%	7
Other (please specify)	31.4%	50
answered question		**159**
skipped question		**10**
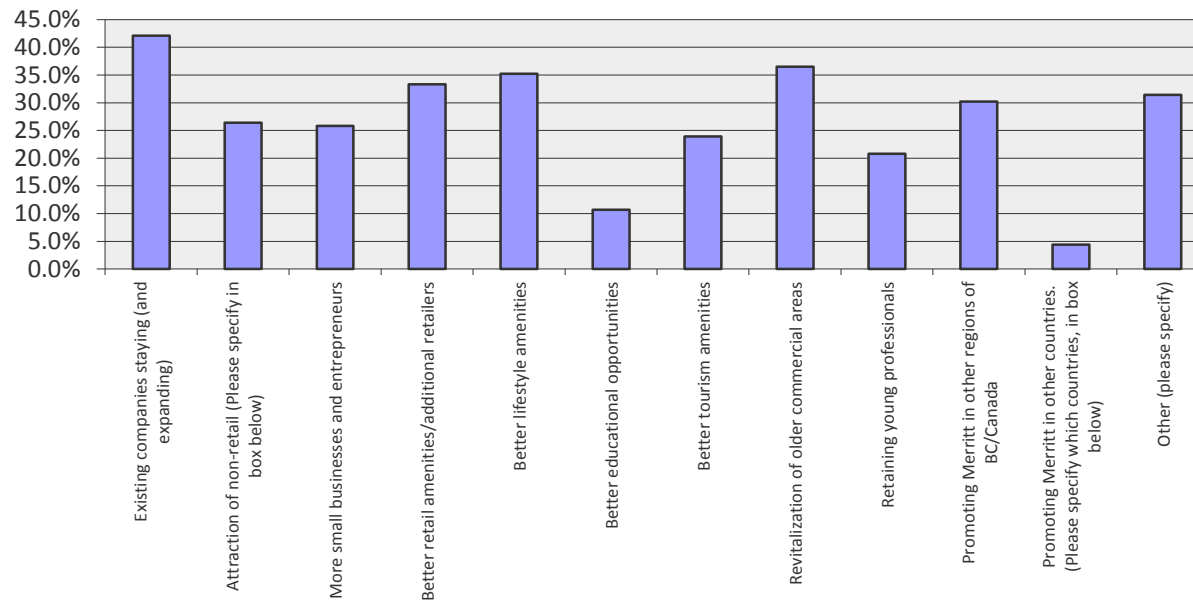
Other, please specify:
- Attract visitors - Adventure tourism
- Attract business – Manufacturing, industry, green initiatives, technology, warehousing, transportation
- Downtown revitalization
- Strong leadership

Community Survey - Question 16:

Do you consider Tourism to be a key economic driver for the community?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	63.7%	100
No	36.3%	57
answered question		157
skipped question		12

- Yes
- No

A21
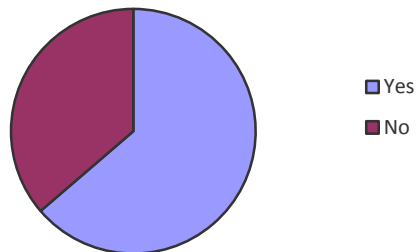
Community Survey - Question 17:

How can tourism be expanded (ie: new hotels, new or expanded festivals and events)

- Promotion of outdoor recreational activities
- Sit down restaurants
- More enticing downtown
- Host sporting events – Fishing, rally races, moto cross, geocache
- Higher quality accommodations
- Movie theater
- Festivals and events – Family friendly; better advertising
- Street malls

A22

Community Survey - Question 18:

What is your age?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
< 18	0.0%	0
18-24	3.1%	5
25-34	15.6%	25
35-44	23.1%	37
45-54	28.1%	45
55-64	22.5%	36
65+	7.5%	12
answered question		160
skipped question		9

Legend:
- < 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

A23
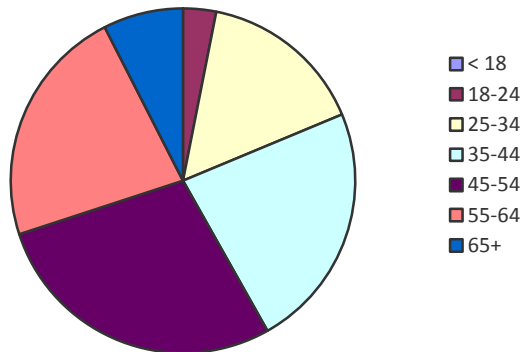
Community Survey - Question 19:

What is your annual household income?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
< $25K	11.2%	17
$25K - 50K	25.7%	39
$51K - 75K	18.4%	28
$76K - 100K	19.7%	30
$101K - 125K	12.5%	19
>$125K	12.5%	19
	answered question	**152**
	skipped question	**17**

- < $25K
- $25K - 50K
- $51K - 75K
- $76K - 100K
- $101K - 125K
- >$125K
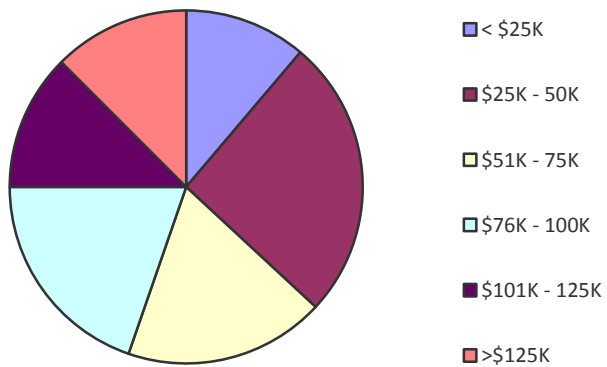
Community Survey - Question 20:

What is your highest level of education?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Attended high school without graduating	6.4%	10
High school Graduate	19.2%	30
College or other non-university certificate	33.3%	52
Apprenticeship or Trades certificate	8.3%	13
University below Bachelor level	5.1%	8
University certificate, diploma or degree	17.3%	27
Graduate degree	7.7%	12
Post-graduate degree	2.6%	4
answered question		**156**
skipped question		**13**
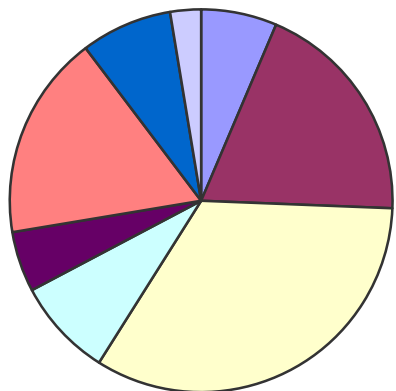
- Attended high school without graduating
- High school Graduate
- College or other non-university certificate
- Apprenticeship or Trades certificate
- University below Bachelor level
- University certificate, diploma or degree
- Graduate degree
- Post-graduate degree

A25

Community Survey - Question 21:

Please include any comments that you think would be helpful to this process:

- Downtown core needs a facelift
- Taxes are too high
- Address social issues
- Listen to public input
- Medical services are lacking
- Promote Merritt as a great place to raise a family
- Focus on eco-tourism
- Forget party theme
- Need more employment opportunities
- Attract industry
- Update highway signs

A26

Business Survey Results

Business Survey - Question 1:

Which best describes the primary industry focus of your company?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Retail trade	25.0%	7
Finance and insurance	3.6%	1
Information technology (software, data processing, computer systems design)	0.0%	0
Media, publishing, telecommunications	0.0%	0
Professional, scientific and technical services	3.6%	1
Real estate	0.0%	0
Construction	10.7%	3
Legal, accounting, engineering services	3.6%	1
Arts, Culture & Heritage	0.0%	0
Entertainment	0.0%	0
Recreation	3.6%	1
Wholesale/transportation and/or warehousing	7.1%	2
Education and health services	0.0%	0
Auto or equipment repair	10.7%	3
Government	0.0%	0
Manufacturing	0.0%	0
Renewable energy	0.0%	0
Utilities	0.0%	0
Accommodation	0.0%	0
Food Services	14.3%	4
Tourism Attraction	0.0%	0
Winery	0.0%	0
Agriculture	3.6%	1
Forestry	3.6%	1

A27

Fishing	0.0%	0
Mining	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	10.7%	3
answered question		**28**
skipped question		**0**

If other, please specify
- Community development
- Marketing
- Cleaning services

- ■ Retail trade
- ■ Finance and insurance
- ☐ Information technology (software, data processing, computer systems design)
- ☐ Media, publishing, telecommunications
- ■ Professional, scientific and technical services
- ■ Real estate
- ■ Construction
- ☐ Legal, accounting, engineering services
- ■ Arts, Culture & Heritage
- ■ Entertainment
- ■ Recreation
- ☐ Wholesale/transportation and/or warehousing
- ■ Education and health services
- ■ Auto or equipment repair
- ■ Government
- ■ Manufacturing

Business Survey - Question 2:

How many people are employed by your business (including contract employees)?

How many people are employed by your business (including contract employees)?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
<5	67.9%	19
6-10	21.4%	6
11-24	0.0%	0
25-49	10.7%	3
50-99	0.0%	0
100-499	0.0%	0
500-999	0.0%	0
	answered question	**28**
	skipped question	**0**

■ <5
■ 6-10
□ 11-24
□ 25-49
■ 50-99
■ 100-499
■ 500-999
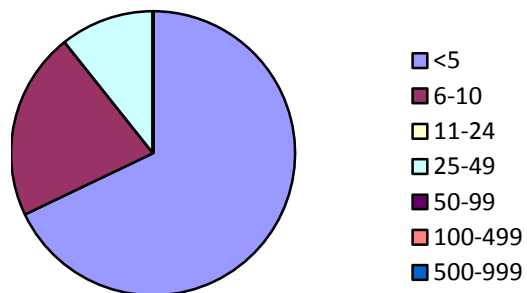
Business Survey - Question 3:

How long has your business operated in the City of Merritt?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
0-5 years	42.9%	12
6-15 years	28.6%	8
15+ years	28.6%	8
answered question		28
skipped question		0

- 0-5 years
- 6-15 years
- 15+ years
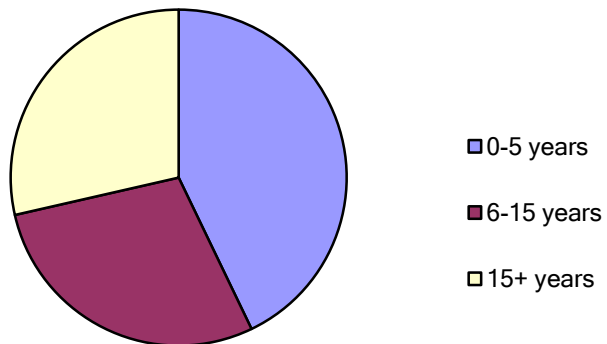
Business Survey - Question 4:

Did you relocate your business to Merritt from somewhere else?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	14.3%	4
No	85.7%	24
answered question		28
skipped question		0
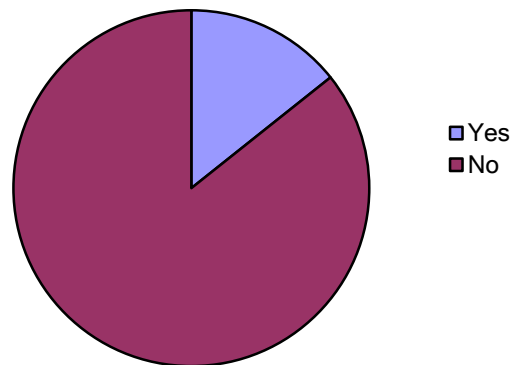
Business Survey - Question 5:

If so, from where?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Kamloops	25.0%	1
Elsewhere in the region	25.0%	1
Elsewhere in the Province (please specify in other below)	25.0%	1
Elsewhere in Canada (please specify in other below)	25.0%	1
Other	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		2
answered question		4
skipped question		24

If other, please specify
- 2nd location
- Edmonton

- Kamloops
- Elsewhere in the region
- Elsewhere in the Province (please specify in other below)
- Elsewhere in Canada (please specify in other below)
- Other
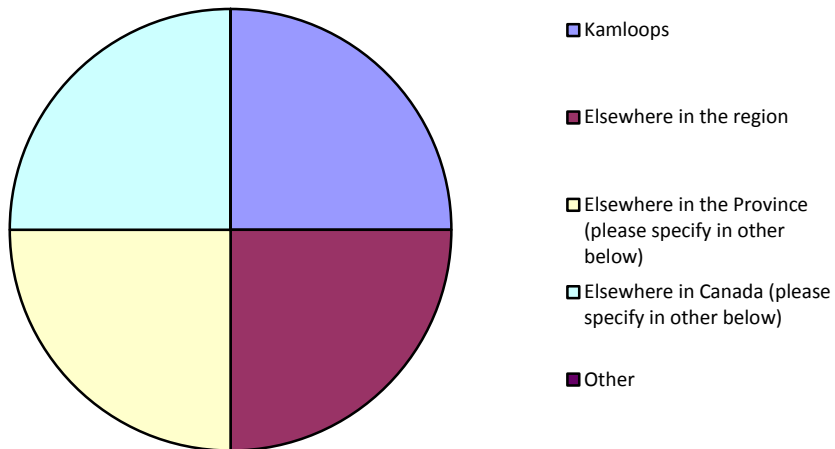
Business Survey - Question 6:

Over the next 2 years, do you expect the number of employees to:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Decrease	7.4%	2
Stay the same	48.1%	13
Increase	44.4%	12
answered question		**27**
skipped question		**1**

- Decrease
- Stay the same
- Increase

A33
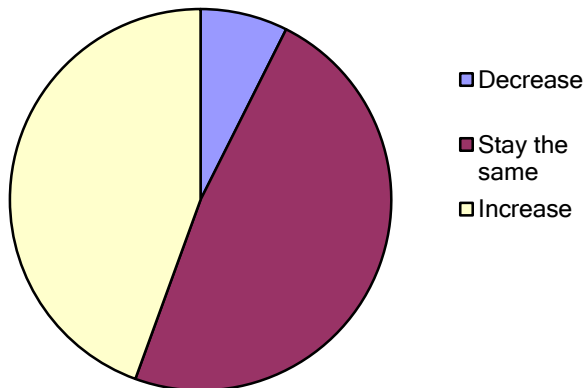
Business Survey - Question 7:

Over the next 3-5 years, do you expect the number of employees to:

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Decrease	3.6%	1
Stay the same	50.0%	14
Increase	46.4%	13
answered question		28
skipped question		0

□ Decrease
■ Stay the same
□ Increase

A34
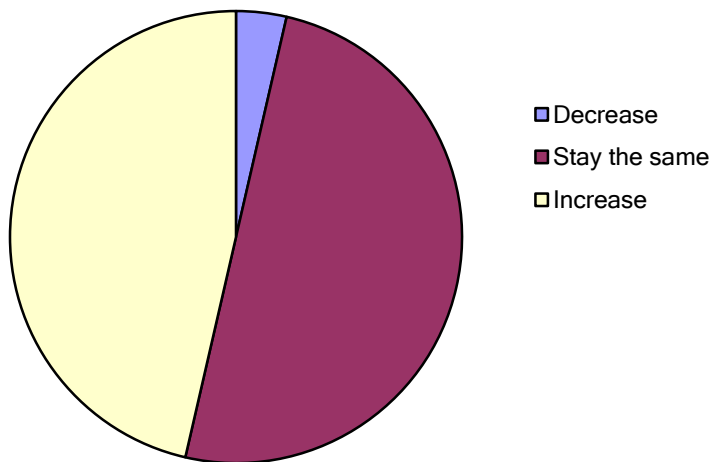
Business Survey - Question 8:

What was the primary reason for locating your business in the City of Merritt?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Current resident and decided to start a business	50.0%	14
Availability of a wide range of workers	0.0%	0
Educated and technically-skilled workforce	0.0%	0
Low business costs	0.0%	0
Strong infrastructure (broadband network, utilities support)	0.0%	0
Transportation access and mobility (parking ease, close to highways, unclogged roads)	7.1%	2
Close proximity to customer base	3.6%	1
Close proximity to resources/suppliers	0.0%	0
Strong quality of life	3.6%	1
Came out of retirement to start-up or return to business	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	35.7%	10
answered question		**28**
skipped question		**0**

A35

- **Other, please specify**
- Need for our type of service
- Good central location
- Affordable real estate

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY   CITY OF MERRITT

□ Current resident and decided to start a business

■ Availability of a wide range of workers

□ Educated and technically-skilled workforce

□ Low business costs

■ Strong infrastructure (broadband network, utilities support)

□ Transportation access and mobility (parking ease, close to highways, unclogged roads)

■ Close proximity to customer base

□ Close proximity to resources/suppliers

■ Strong quality of life

■ Came out of retirement to start-up or return to business

□ Other (please specify)

Business Survey - Question 9:

Does your company have another location outside of the community?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	39.3%	11
No	60.7%	17
	answered question	28
	skipped question	0

■ Yes
■ No

A37
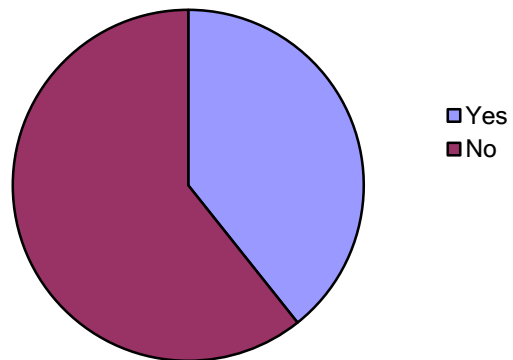
Business Survey - Question 10:

Is your business an exporter of product outside of the community?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	32.1%	9
No	67.9%	19
answered question		28
skipped question		0

■Yes
■No

A38
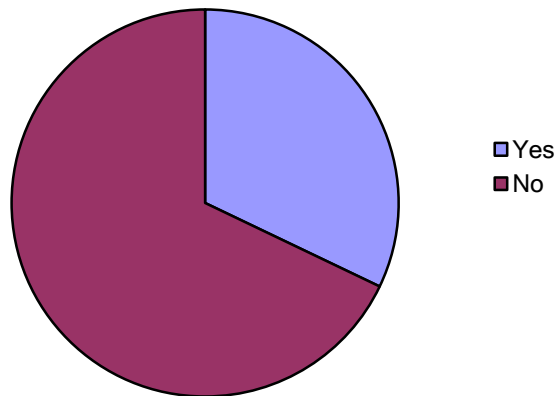
Business Survey - Question 11:

Where do you export to?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Other parts of BC	100.0%	9
Other parts of Canada	44.4%	4
USA	22.2%	2
China	11.1%	1
Japan	0.0%	0
Korea	0.0%	0
Europe	0.0%	0
Other	0.0%	0
	answered question	**9**
	skipped question	**19**

Where do you export to?
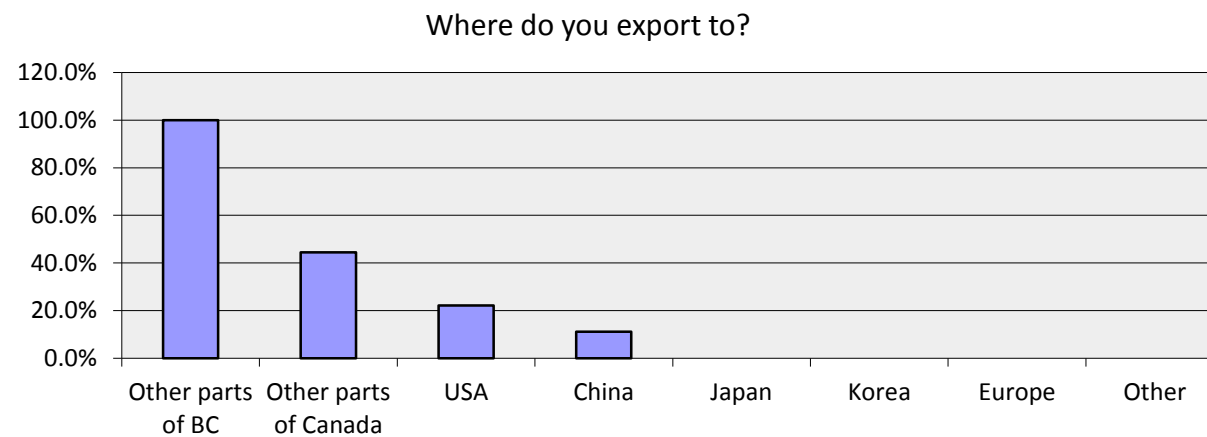
Business Survey - Question 12:

Please rate your satisfaction level of each factor

Answer Options	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A	Response Count
Availability of commercial buildings and land (e.g. office, retail, industrial)	1	6	8	2	4	1	22
Promotion/Marketing of the area to new companies/investors	0	4	5	8	5	0	22
Overall quality of region's transportation network	4	7	3	5	2	1	22
Proximity and ease of access to key markets	3	13	4	2	0	0	22
Quality of the communications infrastructure (e.g. wireless and high-speed internet)	1	10	2	5	4	0	22
Cost of doing business	0	10	2	6	4	0	22
Low-cost of facilities in which to launch new businesses	0	1	7	6	6	1	21
Efficient development environment for permits, approvals, etc.	0	5	6	4	5	1	21
Local government tax rates	1	2	2	8	9	0	22
Access to business services (e.g. lawyers, accountants)	0	5	6	8	2	1	22
Access to business financing	1	4	3	5	5	4	22
Access to economic development services	0	2	7	6	4	3	22
Access to business training/support/workforce development	1	3	8	5	3	2	22
					answered question		**22**
					skipped question		**6**
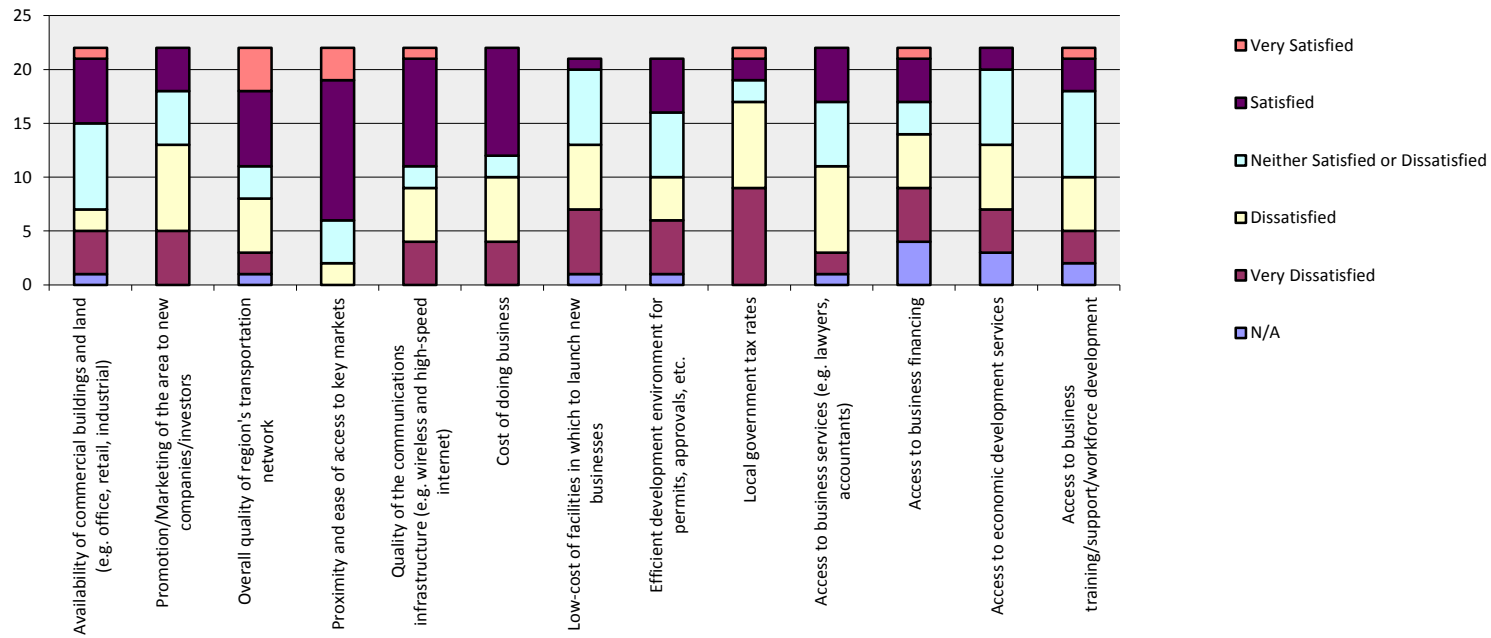
Business Survey - Question 13:

Please rate your satisfaction level of each factor

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
More jobs in the region	31.8%	7
Existing companies stable and expanding in the region	63.6%	14
New companies opening in the region	40.9%	9
Improved awareness (reputation) of the region	31.8%	7
More tourists visiting the region	18.2%	4
Better lifestyle amenities	4.5%	1
Better educational opportunities	0.0%	0
Higher standard of living for citizens	18.2%	4
Create a Shop Local Culture	22.7%	5
Other (please specify)	9.1%	2
answered question		22
skipped question		6

Other, please specify:
- Municipal / Commercial Taxation
- Growth for this city in an industry sector
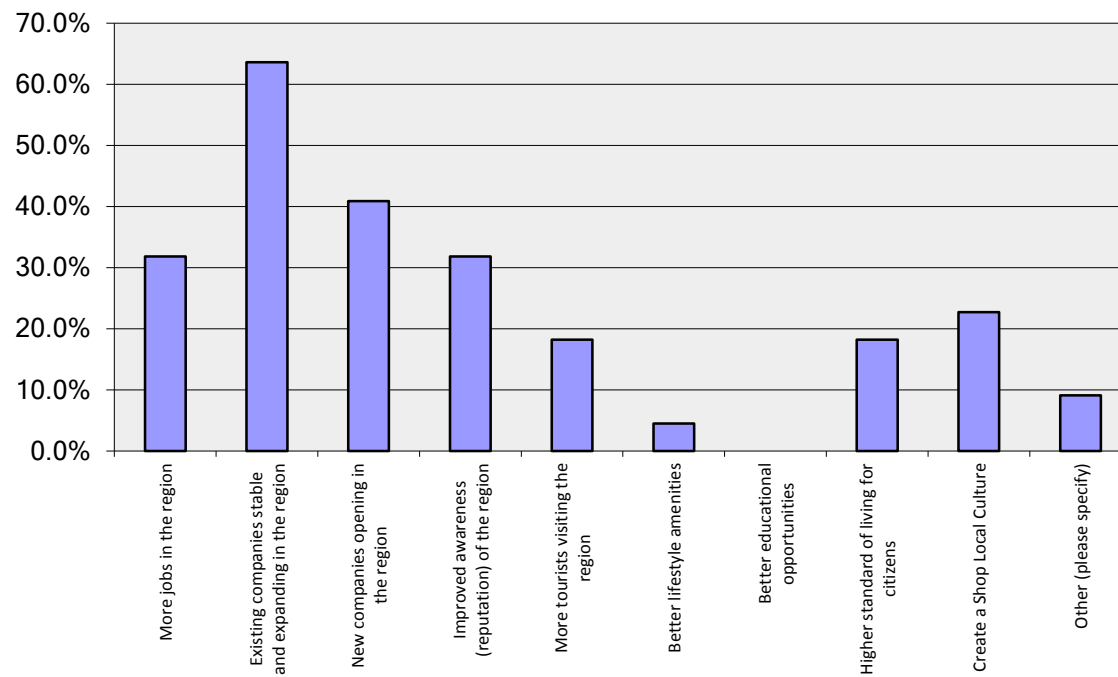
Business Survey - Question 14:

What should be the top three economic development goals for the FUTURE of the community? (Check top three)

Other, please specify:
- More diversification in the Downtown Core
- Attract more industry/jobs

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Existing companies staying (and expanding)	63.6%	14
Attraction of non-retail (Please specify in box below)	40.9%	9
More small businesses and entrepreneurs	13.6%	3
Better retail amenities/additional retailers	27.3%	6
Better lifestyle amenities	27.3%	6
Better educational opportunities	4.5%	1
Revitalization of older commercial areas	31.8%	7
Retaining young professionals	36.4%	8
Expanding the Tourism Sector	18.2%	4
Promoting the community in other regions of BC/Canada	31.8%	7
Promoting the community in other countries. (Please specify which countries, in box below)	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		3
answered question		**22**
skipped question		**6**

Business Survey - Question 15:

If you selected the Tourism Sector, please state what type of tourism expansion (ie: Accommodations, special events, etc)

- Events

Business Survey - Question 16:

If retail, what product or service should be expanded or attracted?

- Locally owned businesses
- Clothing
- Footwear
- Movie theater
- Restaurants

Business Survey - Question 17:

What do you think is the most critical regional/local challenge facing your business today?

- Can't put signage on highway
- Visitors don't stop, just drive through
- Downtown needs a facelift
- "gateway property" city restrictions and dealing with Provincial Ministry of Highways for access
- Lack of construction projects
- No population growth
- Lack of municipal support for economic development
- High taxes and a community with a low disposable income
- Narrow minded local leadership
- Residents leaving town to shop

A47

Business Survey - Question 18:

How would you evaluate the quality factors of the overall workforce?

Answer Options	1. Very satisfied	2. Satisfied	3. Dissatisfied	4. Very dissatisfied	Response Count
Education	0	9	9	3	20
Experience	0	10	10	0	20
Work Ethic	0	6	12	3	20
Skills related to the job	0	9	11	0	20
				answered question	**20**
				skipped question	**8**

A48
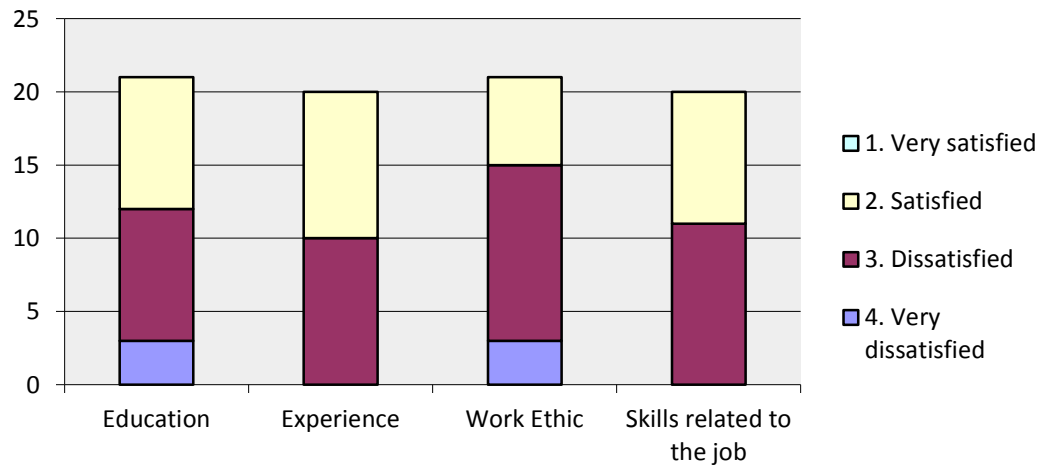
Business Survey - Question 19:

What are the top three hardest-to-fill jobs in your business?

- Cooks
- Heating and cooling repair people
- Data input
- Trades
- Boarders
- Front end; sales; social networking
- Graphic Designers; Sales Managers; Website Developers
- Experienced management
- Skilled technicians and service writers.
- Skilled class 1 drivers

Business Survey - Question 20:

What percentage of your workforce, including sub-contractors are hired within the Community?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
100%	60.0%	12
75-99%	15.0%	3
50-74%	10.0%	2
25-49%	0.0%	0
1-24%	5.0%	1
0%	10.0%	2
answered question		20
skipped question		8

■ 100%   ■ 75-99%

□ 50-74%   □ 25-49%

■ 1-24%   ■ 0%
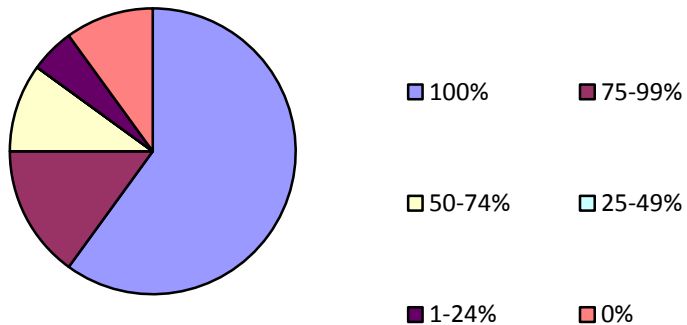
Business Survey - Question 21:

What do you see as the biggest barrier to business growth in the Community?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of Serviced Land	5.0%	1
Declining Population	10.0%	2
Municipal Infrastructure Gaps	10.0%	2
Resistance to change	50.0%	10
Access to Markets/Transportation	0.0%	0
Ability to Hire/train skilled workforce	5.0%	1
Communications Infrastructure	0.0%	0
Access to financing	0.0%	0
Regulations/zoning	15.0%	3
Other (please specify)	5.0%	1
answered question		**20**
skipped question		**8**

Other, please specify

- Lack of higher paying jobs

- Lack of Serviced Land
- Declining Population
- Municipal Infrastructure Gaps
- Resistance to change
- Access to Markets/Transportation
- Ability to Hire/train skilled workforce
- Communications Infrastructure
- Access to financing
- Regulations/zoning
- Other (please specify)
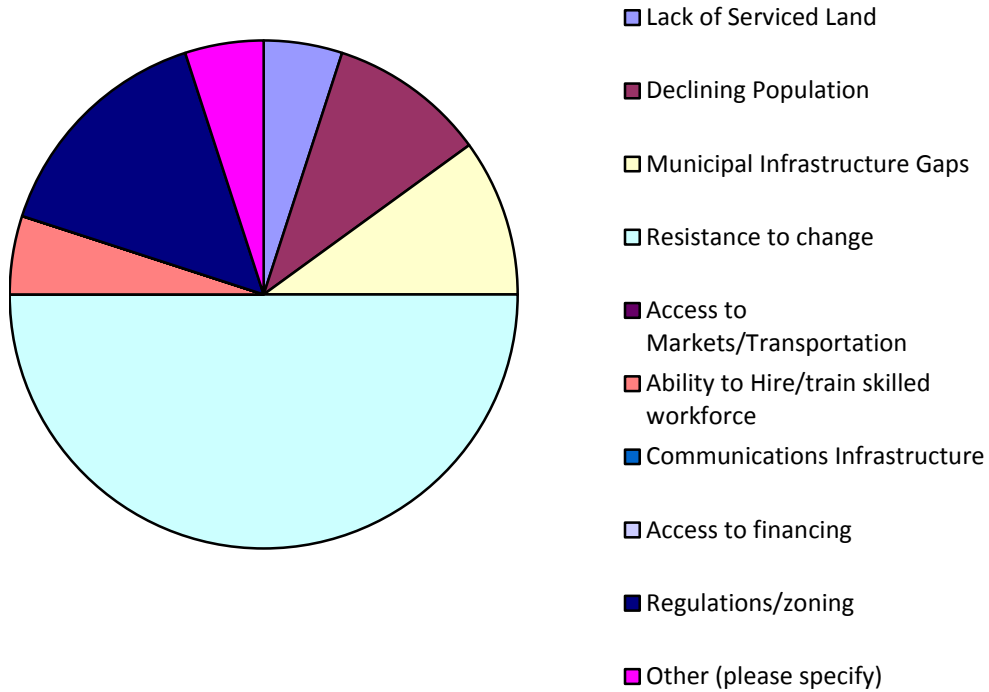
Business Survey - Question 22:

What are the top three advantages of doing business in the area?

#1 Advantage:

- Location
- Low cost
- Good relations with supplier
- Stable natural resource businesses
- Highway system
- Exploitable Work Force (subsidies and conditions)
- Community support
- Well Known due to community size

#2 Advantage:

- Climate
- Loyal customers
- Not much competition
- Tourism possibilities
- Open space
- Quick and easy transportation

#3 Advantage

- Broad client base here
- Strong First Nation's base
- Ability to work from home
- Potential for growth

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Business Survey - Question 23:

What are the top three disadvantages of doing business in the area?

Disadvantage #1:

- Lack of off-site advertising allowed
- High taxes
- Crime
- Dealing with the city on development issues
- Shortage of work
- Lack of Vision; Lack of Leadership
- High costs from vending fees to fuel to food (Most purchasing done in other communitites)
- Declining Population

Disadvantage #2

- City discourages so many events
- Disparity between cost of municipal services and the service itself
- Dealing with the Ministry of Highways for access
- Lower contract prices
- Youth leaving Merritt
- Resistance to change
- Lack of city development
- Attendance at local events is low
- Public loyalty
- Lack of sublet vendors

Disadvantage #3

- Negative reputation of city
- Education level of applicants
- Not enough variety of businesses

Business Survey - Question 24:

Please add any thoughts on how the City could help support a strong, sustainable and vibrant economy for the future:

- Encourage business retention - Engage with the business community
- Clean up Downtown
- Allow more advertising
- Update highway signage
- Facilitate easy process for new businesses
- Keep youth in town
- Attract young families
- Host family friendly events
- Attract industry & tourism
- Leadership should work as a team

A55

APPENDIX B – Merritt Economic Development Advisory Committee (MMEDAC)
TERMS OF REFERENCE
City of Merritt

PROPOSED – SAMPLE

1.0   Committee Mandate

The mandate of the Merritt Economic Development Advisory Committee (MMEDAC) is to provide recommendations to Council on policies and strategic initiatives that will further enhance Merritt as an ideal business and investment location.

2.0   Purpose

2.1   Advise the Council on strategic initiatives and opportunities related to the economic vitality of the city.

2.2   Provide pertinent industry and sector information to Council.

2.3   Provide recommendations on specific economic development initiatives and projects.

2.4   Provide input into the annual economic development work plan.

2.5   Advise the Council on policies and bylaws related to doing business within the municipality.

3.0   Membership

3.1   MMEDAC is comprised of a maximum of nine (9) voting sector representatives and four (4) voting organization representatives. (13 voting members)

3.2   The MMEDAC membership will be appointed by Council.

3.3   The position of MMEDAC committee members will be comprised of the following sectors:

- Agriculture/Ranching
- Forestry & Logging
- Community at Large
- Health Services
- Construction

- Manufacturing & Production
- Education
- Retail
- Finance and Business Services

3.4   In addition to the nine (9) members appointed from the above categories, the MMEDAC membership will include representation from the following organizations:

- one appointee from the Merritt and District Chamber of Commerce;
- one appointee from the Community Futures Development Corporation of the Nicola Valley
- one appointee from Tourism Nicola Valley.
- One voting representative of Council

3.5   Non-voting members that may attend the MMEDAC meetings, to provide advice, information or other services, include the:

a)   Mayor;
b)   Chief Administrative Officer or his/her designate;
c)   Economic Development Officer; and
d)   Additional staff as required.

3.6   Eligible members are people who reside or work in Merritt, with an interest in the various business, education and industrial sectors within.

3.7   All Members shall have terms of appointment of two years, with an opportunity for term renewal as directed by Council. Appointees shall be staggered in order to allow for continuity. 50% of first year's appointees will be up for reappointment at the end of the first year with that decision made during appointments.

4.0   Chair and alternate Chair

4.1   The MEDAC will annually elect a chair and alternate chair from amongst themselves at the January meeting. The vice will act in the capacity of the chair at any meeting where the chair is absent.

4.2   In the absence of the chair and alternate chair, the MEDAC shall appoint a chair from those members present.

5.0   Quorum and Voting

B2

5.1   Quorum is fifty percent plus one of active membership.

5.2   All eligible MEDAC Committee members may vote on issues and resolutions, and any committee member not voting, but present, is deemed to have voted in the affirmative.

6.0   Meetings

6.1   The MEDAC will meet every three months, though special meetings over and above the meetings may be called by the chair.

6.2   MEDAC meetings will be open to the public excluding In-Camera meetings which may be closed in accordance with Section 90 of the Community Charter.

7.0   Reporting

7.1   The MEDAC shall provide minutes of meetings to Council for information purposes.

7.2   The MEDAC shall meet annually with Council to provide a summary of past accomplishments and an overview of future strategic initiatives and projects.

APPENDIX C – COMMUNITY SELF-TEST

A Self-Assessment Tool to Measure Community Preparedness

This self-assessment is based on the investor's requirements and expectations. It is an assessment of the experience the investor would have in a community. The completion of the assessment will give your community a better understanding of its investment readiness level for inward investment including planning and implementing familiarization tours. The tool will assist communities to identify investment readiness gaps and determine the effectiveness of existing planning and economic development processes.

Part I: Knowledge and Expertise

CONTACTS	YES	NO
1. Does your community have a person designated as the key or main contact on economic development?		
2. If the contact person is an economic development professional, is that person familiar with the land use planning, development approvals, and building permit process in your community?		
3. Does he/she have an up-to-date copy of the local official plan and zoning by-law and know council's policies on new development proposals?		
4. Does this person have an understanding of the site selection response (i.e. responding to inquiries, data collection, site visit, etc)?		
5. Does your municipality have a person designated as the key contact on land use planning and development matters in your community?		
TOTAL FOR MUNICIPAL CONTACTS Out of 5		

LAND USE PLANNING	YES	NO
6. Does the local official plan have one general designation for each of the basic land use categories such as residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, open space, rural and environmentally sensitive?		
7. Does your municipality list the policy intention, regulations and permitted uses in each land use designation?		
8. Does your municipality have an effective information system that you use to provide official plan and zoning information to prospective investors/developers (e.g. air		

A Self-Assessment Tool to Measure Community Preparedness

LAND USE PLANNING	YES	NO
photos, series of neighbourhood charts, or wall maps)?		
9. In your experience, are the policies and/or designations in the local official plan general enough so an official plan amendment is not required to accommodate most development proposals in your community?		
10. Is your zoning by-law flexible enough to allow desired development in your community?		
11. Is the establishment of new "home occupations" allowed in most areas of the community, without the need for an official plan amendment and/or zoning by-law change?		
12. Where they are allowed, are a wide range of businesses permitted, as well as outdoor signage/advertising and on-site customer parking?		
13. Is your key municipal contact person knowledgeable about the upper-tier official plan as well as neighbouring municipalities' plans, and how these policies and land use designations may affect proposed development in your community?		
14. Are your community's official plan and zoning bylaws kept up to date (e.g. updated every five years)?		
15. Is economic development addressed in the official plan's policies?		
16. Does your municipality have a flow chart outlining the steps in the land use planning and development approvals process in your community?		
17. In cases where planning and development approvals are not handled locally, do you know which level of government has the responsibility (e.g. upper-tier, province) and who your contact is?		
18. Does your municipality have information on how long it takes for a typical planning application/proposal in your community to be approved?		
19. Do you have a list of all the application fees and other associated charges and imposts or levies that an applicant/developer would be required to pay in connection with processing a planning/development proposal in your community?		
20. Do your municipal planning staff discussion/coordinate their work with economic development staff?		
21. Does your municipality have any materials for internal or external use that quickly and easily illustrate in layperson's language how development approvals and land use planning work, as well as time guidelines and costs in your municipality (e.g. flow charts)?		

APPENDIX C – COMMUNITY SELF-TEST

A Self-Assessment Tool to Measure Community Preparedness

LAND USE PLANNING	YES	NO
22. Does your municipality have a designated individual to guide the proponent through the approvals process?		
23. When a development application has been successfully completed, is there a review of the process with the proponent as part of your customer services program?		
TOTAL FOR LAND USE PLANNING Out of 18		

LIAISING WITH EXISTING BUSINESSES IN YOUR COMMUNITY	YES	NO
24. Does any senior member of your organization monitor/evaluate your community's track record on liaising with existing investors?		
25. Do your Mayor, CAO, Economic Development Officer or planning staff meet with local business people, including the chamber of commerce on a regular basis to talk about their business needs and future plans (e.g. once every six months for a breakfast meeting)?		
26. Does your municipality liaise with the local chamber of commerce about economic development issues?		
27. Does your community have an active Business Retention and Expansion Program?		
TOTAL FOR LIASING WITH EXISTING BUSINESSES IN YOUR COMMUNITY Out of 4		

INFORMATION SOURCES	YES	NO
28. Can you reach utilities' representatives in your area with a single phone call to answer technical or pricing questions?		
29. Do you communicate with provincial/federal agencies to learn about new policies, programs, information or issues/trends?		
TOTAL FOR INFORMATION SOURCES Out of 2		

A Self-Assessment Tool to Measure Community Preparedness

Part II: Resources

INDUSTRIAL LAND INVENTORY	YES	NO
30. Does your municipality have an industrial land inventory?		
31. Is the information up-dated regularly (quarterly)?		
32. Does the inventory provide potential investors/developers with relevant economic development information such as availability and cost of industrial properties, site servicing, transportation access, ownership, location, size, etc?		
33. Does the inventory include both publicly and privately owned land?		
34. If you have a website, is the inventory posted?		
35. Is your land inventory connected to your community GIS System?		
36. Does your community work closely with Commercial Real Estate Agencies in your area to make sure that you are aware of what is available?		
TOTAL FOR INDUSTRIAL LAND INVENTORY Out of 7		

JOINT VENTURES	YES	NO
37. Do you partner with independent business groups, the local chamber of commerce or tourism board to jointly market your community as a business location or tourist destination?		
38. Is your municipality pooling resources with neighbouring communities to jointly fund a competitiveness study or economic development strategy? The pay off can be surprisingly extensive. In addition to the facts and figures generated by the study, this sends a positive message to the business community contacted as part of the study that your municipality is proactive.		
TOTAL FOR JOINT VENTURES Out of 2		

APPENDIX C – COMMUNITY SELF-TEST

A Self-Assessment Tool to Measure Community Preparedness

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY	YES	NO
39. Has your community established an economic development committee?		
40. Does your municipality employ full or part-time professional planners and/or economic development staff to deal specifically with economic development and land use planning matters?		
41. Is there a budget for economic development activity in your municipality?		
42. Does your municipality use private sector economic development or land use planning consultants?		
TOTAL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUES Out of 4		

Part III: Communications

COMMUNITY AND SITE SELECTION PROFILE	YES	NO
43. Does your municipality have a community profile?		
44. Is it up-dated on a regular basis (e.g. every six months)?		
45. Does it include your community's vision statement?		
46. Does the community profile including the following elements (**point for each**): a. news of recent business expansions and new business locating? b. local municipal and volunteer services and business partnerships? c. references to local business groups? d. list of local services? e. list of facilities? f. list of attractions? g. vii. list of photos or other graphics to support written information?		
47. Does your community maintain a profile using the North American Site Selection Standards Template?		
TOTAL FOR COMMUNITY PROFILE Out of 11		

APPENDIX C – COMMUNITY SELF-TEST

A Self-Assessment Tool to Measure Community Preparedness

WEBSITE	YES	NO
48. Does your community have a standalone website (not connected to the main community website)?		
49. Does your website contain an easily downloadable copy of your community profile?		
50. Does your website contain information done to the North American Site Selection Standards?		
51. Does your website list key contacts?		
52. Does your website include a list of available real estate?		
TOTAL FOR OTHER COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS Out of 5		

OTHER COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS	YES	NO
53. Has your municipality reviewed and improved the mapping used to illustrate your regulatory and promotional documents?		
54. Do you maintain regular contact with media representatives?		
TOTAL FOR OTHER COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS Out of 2		

APPENDIX C – COMMUNITY SELF-TEST

A Self-Assessment Tool to Measure Community Preparedness

Municipal Economic Readiness Component	Yes Total	No Total
PART I: EXPERTISE:		
Contacts		
Land Use Planning		
Liaising with Existing Business in your Community		
Information Sources		
Sub-Total		
PART II: RESOURCES		
Industrial Land Inventory		
Joint Ventures		
Economic Development Issues		
Sub-Total		
PART III: COMMUNICATIONS		
Community and Site Selection Profile		
Website		
Other Communication Considerations		
Sub-Total		
YOUR MUNICIPALITY'S TOTAL		

A Self-Assessment Tool to Measure Community Preparedness

How you scored:

There are 60 questions. For each "yes" answer, score 1 point.

At the end of the test, total your number of "yes" answers.

- A score greater than 50: Congratulations – Your municipality is VERY READY!

- A score of 31 to 50: You're READY and can still improve.

- A score of 21 to 30: You're close to being READY but have some work to do and changes to make.

- A score of less than 20: There are lots of opportunities for your municipality to ensure its readiness.

This self-assessment is a starting point of moving your community towards investment readiness. EDCD Consulting can complete an independent investment readiness assessment on your community. Our assessment includes three phases:

- Investment Readiness Assessment – 250 data points are analyzed and a detailed report is compiled with scoring matrix and recommendations.

- Investment Request – This tests your community on your ability to respond to an investor's request for information. A mock request for proposal is prepared for completion and is then analyzed based on investor requirements and needs.

-

APPENDIX C – COMMUNITY SELF-TEST

A Self-Assessment Tool to Measure Community Preparedness

- Community Site Visit – Do you know how your community would perform during a familiarization tour or site visit? This tests your community based on real investor and site selector analytics.

Choose one or all three depending on your community's need. The assessments are performed from a site selector or investment perceptive. We also offer a separate website assessment.

APPENDIX D – CONSUMER SURVEY

CITY OF MERRITT RETAIL STUDY 2014

1. Are you eighteen years of age or older?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

2. Are you a resident of Merritt?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

3. Do you ever shop outside of Merritt?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

4. Can you give us some of the reasons why you never purchase goods outside of Merritt?

Distance	☐
Cost to Travel	☐
Shop at charity used good stores	☐
No Car	☐
Disabled	☐
Everything needed is in Merritt	☐
Don't drive much	☐
Don't know	☐

5. Over the past year, how many trips have you made outside of Merritt that included some shopping?

One to three	☐
Four to six	☐
Seven to nine	☐
Ten to twelve	☐
Disabled	☐
More than twelve	☐
Don't know	☐

6. And were these trips primarily for shopping or were there other reasons?

Shopping	☐
Other reasons	☐
Some for shopping, some for other reasons	☐
Don't know	☐

7. What were some of those reasons?

Visit family & friends	☐
Shop – ie: Christmas, back to school	☐
Sports tournaments	☐
Casino	☐
Wedding	☐
Medical/Health	☐
Products not available in Merritt/Better	☐

prices

Change of scenery ☐

Educational ☐

Visiting vet ☐

Travel/Vacation ☐

Hiking Trip ☐

Arrivals & Departures at airport ☐

Vehicle maintenance ☐

Business travel ☐

Bus charter ☐

8. In which of the following cities do you go shopping, and do you shop there often or sometimes?

	Most often	Often	Sometimes	Never	Don't Know
Hope	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Princeton	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kamloops	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Logan Lake	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other: _____	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. And why do you shop in this city most often?

Already in city (for other reasons) ☐

Selection/Variety ☐

Quality ☐

Staff more knowledgeable	☐
Price	☐
Friendlier staff	☐
Restaurants	☐
Big box stores	☐
Items not available in Merritt	☐
Closest major centre	☐
Shopping mall	☐
Walmart	☐
Home Depot	☐
Department stores	☐

10. Is there any particular time of the year when you go shopping outside of Merritt?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

11. And what time of year would that be?

Summer	☐
Fall	☐
Winter	☐
Spring	☐
Christmas	☐
Back to school	☐
Don't know	☐

12. What method of transportation do you use most often when leaving Merritt to go shopping?

Personal vehicle ☐
Go with friends ☐
Bus ☐
Taxi ☐

13. Do you ever do on-line shopping to purchase goods or services?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

14. How much of your annual shopping is done on-line?

Less than 10% ☐
10% to 25% ☐
More than 25% ☐
Don't know ☐

15. What were some of the reasons for shopping on-line?

Better prices ☐
More selection ☐
More convenient ☐
Not available ☐
Don't know ☐

EDCD Consulting | Groceries: D5

16. Please tell me if you ever purchase the following goods, where you purchase them, and how much you spend.

Groceries:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐
$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Liquor, Beer & Wine:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐
$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐

| | | Both inside and | |
| In Merritt | Outside of Merritt | outside of Merritt | On-line |

$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Shoes:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐
$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Men's Clothing:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐
$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐

$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Women's Clothing:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐
$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Children's Clothing:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐
$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐

	In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
$3000-$3999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$4000-$4999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$5000-$5999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$6000-$6999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$7000-$7999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$8000 or more	☐	☐	☐	☐

Fabric & Yarn:

	In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000	☐	☐	☐	☐
$1000-$1999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$2000-$2999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$3000-$3999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$4000-$4999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$5000-$5999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$6000-$6999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$7000-$7999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$8000 or more	☐	☐	☐	☐

Household Furniture:

	In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000	☐	☐	☐	☐
$1000-$1999	☐	☐	☐	☐
$2000-$2999	☐	☐	☐	☐

$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Household appliances:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐
$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Flooring & Draperies:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐

$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Automobiles:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐
$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Recreational Vehicles:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐

$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Vehicle Repairs & Parts:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐
$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Books, Stationary & Office Supplies:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐

$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Computers:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐
$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Hardware & Building Supply:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐

$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Sporting Goods:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐
$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

Toys, Hobbies, Novelties & Souvenirs:

In Merritt	Outside of Merritt	Both inside and outside of Merritt	On-line
Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐	Less than $1000 ☐
$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐	$1000-$1999 ☐

$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐	$2000-$2999 ☐
$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐	$3000-$3999 ☐
$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐	$4000-$4999 ☐
$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐	$5000-$5999 ☐
$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐	$6000-$6999 ☐
$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐	$7000-$7999 ☐
$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐	$8000 or more ☐

17. Overall, how satisfied are you with the shopping opportunities that exist in Merritt?

Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

18. How would you compare the shopping in Merritt to the other cities in which you shop in the following areas:

	Merritt is better	About the same	Out of town better	Don't Know
Price	☐	☐	☐	☐
Selection of merchandise	☐	☐	☐	☐
Quality of merchandise	☐	☐	☐	☐
Interior store appearance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Exterior store appearance	☐	☐	☐	☐
Hours open	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff friendliness	☐	☐	☐	☐
Staff knowledge	☐	☐	☐	☐
Parking	☐	☐	☐	☐

19. Thinking of the list you just went through, what is the one area where shopping in Merritt rates the highest?

Price	☐
Selection of merchandise	☐
Quality of merchandise	☐
Interior store appearance	☐
Exterior store appearance	☐
Hours open	☐
Staff friendliness	☐
Staff knowledge	☐
Parking	☐

20. And what is the one area where shopping in Merritt rates the lowest?

Price	☐
Selection of merchandise	☐
Quality of merchandise	☐
Interior store appearance	☐
Exterior store appearance	☐
Hours open	☐
Staff friendliness	☐
Staff knowledge	☐
Parking	☐

21. Are there any kinds of shopping services that you would like to see offered in Merritt that don't currently exist?

Shoe store	☐
Women's clothing	☐
Men's clothing	☐
Children's clothing	☐
Book store	☐
Costco	☐
Walmart	☐
Canadian Tire	☐
Home Depot	☐

22. What do you think could be done by Merritt merchants to attract more of your business?

Better selection	☐
Better quality	☐
Better customer service	☐
Better sales	☐
Hours of operation	☐
Façade improvements	☐
Lower prices	☐
Better parking	☐
Exterior store appearance	☐
Improved signage	☐
More advertising	☐

23. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about shopping in Merritt?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

DEMOGRAPHICINFORMATION

24. What is your marital status?

Single	☐
Married	☐
Living common-law	☐
Separated	☐
Divorced	☐
Widowed	☐

25. How many people live in your household? (TOTAL)

One ☐
Two ☐
Three ☐
Four ☐
Five ☐
More than five ☐

26. Are you now retired or are you still in the active workforce or actively seeking employment?

Retired ☐
Working ☐
Seeking employment ☐
Student ☐
Disability ☐
Homemaker ☐
Other ☐

27. How long have you personally lived in Merritt?

Less than 5 years ☐
5-9 years ☐
10-14 years ☐
15-19 years ☐
20-24 years ☐
25-29 years ☐
30-34 years ☐

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35-39 years   ☐
40-45 years   ☐
45 years or more   ☐

28. Is your total household income before taxes or deductions above or below $45,000?

Below $45,000   ☐
Above $45,000   ☐
Don't know   ☐

29. In what year were you born?

1910-1920   ☐
1921-1930   ☐
1931-1940   ☐
1941-1950   ☐
1951-1960   ☐
1961-1970   ☐
1971-1980   ☐
1981-1990   ☐
1991-2000   ☐

30. Gender

Male   ☐
Female   ☐