



Outlook

market research
and consulting

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Strategy and Work Plan *Final Report*

For:

Town of Vegreville

December 2, 2015



Outlook

market research
and consulting

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To: Maureen Easton
From: Mark Baxter
Date: December 2, 2015
Re: FDI Strategy and Work Plan Final Report

Dear Maureen,

We are pleased to present our final report for the Vegreville FDI Strategy and Work Plan. Working in the Town of Vegreville has been rewarding and illuminating. We believe the intensive on the ground primary research that we engaged in yielded a number of important results. Foremost, it helped form a picture of the assets and challenges in Vegreville related to foreign direct investment attraction, and business retention and expansion efforts overall.

Thank you for your willingness to accept our report.

Sincerely,

Mark Baxter,
Outlook Market Research & Consulting Ltd

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Major Themes

Vegreville welcomes economic development

- The Stakeholder Engagement Process was highly successful due to the outstanding response of the businesses and administration in Vegreville, and the assistance of Vegreville Economic Development & Tourism (83 in-depth interviews were completed in three weeks). The people of Vegreville are engaged in the development process and eager to help build their community.

Value proposition

- The Town's primary advantage is locational, being on Highway 16 and near Highway 36 in the heart of a high load corridor with access to rail. Related to this advantage is access to primary agricultural inputs.

Agricultural processing

- Stakeholders repeatedly said Vegreville would be best served by the attraction of a significant, new, light to heavy manufacturer or processing facility specific to the agricultural industry.

Vegreville must be viewed as friendly to business

- There is a perception that Vegreville is not open for business. A common comment was that the permit process was cumbersome. This comment within the business community is not unique to Vegreville but supports the "not open" perception. Although there are initiatives in place such as the Non-Residential Development Incentive Program, the relatively high non-residential mill rate of 20.3032 feeds that narrative. These elements will remain an issue for promoting new business if there isn't a strategy to counteract the perception.

Focus on attracting residents, not just business

- New business does not guarantee new residents. Business retention and expansion is important, but the end goal should be resident attraction and retention. Any economic development strategy must consider how to convince new (and existing) workers to live in Vegreville.

Review the past, look to the future

- Many stakeholders believe that Vegreville must review the community's previous investment attraction efforts that either were not successful or, if initially successful, lead to businesses that did not last. This activity, amongst several others, are important steps in a new, comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

Seniors Goods and Services

- Vegreville is experiencing aging demographics at an accelerated pace due in part to the presence of a wide variety of seniors housing options. There was significant support to leverage this naturally occurring trend to stimulate the town's economy.

1.2 Recommendations

1. Short Term Business Development Opportunities/Actions for the EDO
 - Business succession support to local business
 - Business expansion support to existing business
 - M&M Meats and KFC franchises and clothing franchises
 - Commercial zoning assessment
 - Economic Development Strategy process planning (including grant acquisition)
2. Economic Development & Tourism Strategy - including:
 - In-depth analysis of 2014 Business Visitation Program data
 - Situation Analysis: Review of past economic development efforts
 - Commuter Study
 - Trade Area Analysis
 - Competitive Analysis: Industrial land availability/commercial taxation/incentive
 - Alberta Innovates Technology Futures (AITF) role in local economy diversification
3. Investment Attraction Marketing Infrastructure – options:
 - Leverage existing Vegreville marketing materials from Alberta HUB and EATC
 - Economic development branding
 - Website development
 - Marketing Collateral, e.g.:
 - Vegreville Investment Profile
 - Sector Profiles for Oil & Gas, Agriculture, Retail, etc.
 - Community Guide
 - Business Cases and Opportunity Analysis
 - Banners
 - Investment Folders
4. Auto Mall Retail Node Development
 - Market Assessment
 - Business Case
5. Seniors Service Study
 - Demographics/Income Analysis

- Housing and Services Needs Assessment
- Opportunity Analysis

6. Regional Agricultural Processing Study (Related to local Transportation Strengths)

- Opportunity Analysis
- Feasibility Study
- Business Case

2. Methodology

2.1 Literature Review Summary

As a first step, our consulting team completed a Literature Review, based mostly on the documents listed in the RFP. The team added material as needed to round out the information. This review included an in-depth analysis of the Business Visitation Project Data. Several themes that were supportive of this Foreign Direct Investment project work emerged.

Themes:

- Opportunity: Assess local manufacturing presence and capacity given proximity to transportation corridors.
- Opportunity: Investigate new or expanded businesses in the delivery of goods and services for children and for seniors.
- Opportunity: Leverage the Non-Residential Development Incentive Program. (ICSP, Strategic Plan)
- Opportunity: Leverage the need for succession planning and evaluate for investment potential
- Opportunity: Quantify hotel/motel accommodation shortages

Documents Reviewed:

- 2012 Municipal Census Report
- Town of Vegreville Strategic Plan 2014-2017
- Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) 2010
- Business Visitation Project (BVP) Survey
- Comparison of BVP Data to ICSP Data
- By-Law No. 01-05 Town of Vegreville (Non-Residential Development Incentive Program), 2005
- Traffic Counts
- Alberta Transportation Traffic Statistics. Alberta Transportation. <https://www.transportation.alberta.ca/3459.htm>
- Business Visitation Project: Survey Results. Vegreville Economic Development, 05/07/14 – 03/04/15. These dates appear to be going in reverse
- By-Law No. 01-05: Non-Residential Development Incentive Program. Town of Vegreville, April 25, 2005.
- EATC Means Business, Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor.
- Integrated Community Sustainability Plan 2010, Town of Vegreville, September 13, 2010.
- Invest in the Town of Vegreville (DRAFT), Alberta HUB, May, 2015.
- Living in the Town of Vegreville (DRAFT), Alberta HUB, May 2015.

- National Household Survey. Statscan. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/index-eng.cfm?HPA>
- Small Business, Big Impact, Government of Alberta, 2013. http://eae.alberta.ca/media/341826/sp_eh-smallbusprofile.pdf
- Statistics on Small Business in Canada, Start-up Canada.
- Strategic Plan 2014-2017, Town of Vegreville, October 27, 2014.
- Vegreville 2012 Municipal Census Report, Town of Vegreville, April, 2012.
- Vegreville Chamber of Commerce Website, <http://www.vegreville.com/living/community-services-directory/business-development/vegreville-district-chamber-of-commerce>
- Vegreville Community Investment Profile, Alberta HUB.

2.2 Stakeholder Engagement Process

The Stakeholder Engagement Process was highly successful due to the engagement of the businesses and administration in Vegreville, and the assistance of Vegreville Economic Development & Tourism. Our firm has engaged in dozens of similar projects over the past 19 years, and few have matched the speed and quality of the responses we received.

Building on the 2014 Business Visitation Survey (BVS) done by the Town of Vegreville, we developed the final primary research plan (i.e. Stakeholder Engagement Process), utilizing Survey Monkey for data collection, storage and analysis purposes. This is the typical data tool we use in stakeholder engagement projects. Working with Vegreville Economic Development, and drawing from the BVS, three new surveys were developed.

Our objectives in the Stakeholder Engagement Process are to:

1. Collect stakeholder feedback on which potential industries and business opportunities will provide the most benefit to the Town of Vegreville and be most viable in the long term.
2. Potentially provide value-added service to the Town by integrating the Stakeholder Engagement with the BVS, providing more BVS completions to your existing data set. The BVS data is also of great use to the consulting team in this FDI project.

Cathy Goulet conducted the Stakeholder Engagement Process and noted that the line of questioning particular to current and future economic growth required up to 60 minutes per interaction. The interviews flowed smoothly and produced the most creativity when business owners and managers were given space to focus on the local economy from a strategic perspective. We are of the opinion that in-person interviewing provided the best results for the Stakeholder Engagement Process.

Three Cohorts - Survey contact leads were generated three ways:

1. The list of respondents to the BVS was collected by Vegreville Economic Development between May 20, 2014 and April 3, 2015. This data set was very helpful with complete contact information including names of owners, email addresses, phone numbers and location.
2. A list was developed by the consultant based on industry sectors under-represented in the BVS. Vegreville Economic Development reviewed this additional list and provided the contact information it had available.
3. A select list of members of Town Council and senior Administration with contact information was provided by Vegreville Economic Development.

Contact Steps:

1. *Original BVP Survey List*
Each contact is initially reached by email with an explanation of the project, an attached letter of introduction from Vegreville Economic Development, and a notice to “expect a call”. Each contact is then phoned, an interview arranged and a confirmation email sent. After the interview was completed at the place of business, a “thank-you” email is sent, usually the same day. We made contact with each business up to six times to attempt to book an interview. Most interview appointments were completed after one email and one or two phone calls. In a few cases, due to changing plans and re-booking, up to ten contacts were required to complete the interview.
2. *New Business Contacts*
For the businesses from the list of new contacts, because the contact information was less robust and email addresses were not always readily available, usually a first phone call was made to establish contact and introduce the project. In some cases, an interview was immediately scheduled. In all cases, a follow-up email was sent with details of the project. And as each interview was concluded, a “thank-you” email was sent.
3. *Administration*
In the final stages of the engagement process, members of Town Council and senior administrative members were interviewed, mostly by phone. Due to the familiarity of the interviewees with the project and the subject matter, gathering meaningful data was very effective and efficient. Thank-you emails were also delivered to this group.

Summary of Survey Work Completed

The first interview in this survey process was held on July 8, 2015 and the last on October 16, 2015. In total 83 completed responses were gathered, including

- 54 from the first group surveyed for the original Business Visitation Project,
- 21 from the consultant generated list and
- 7 from Town Council and Administration.

In total 106 businesses and stakeholders were contacted with 14 being unresponsive and 9 declining to participate.

Of the 83 interviews held:

- 69 were conducted in-person at the place of business in Vegreville,
- 1 was in-person in Willingdon,
- 3 surveys were dropped off and picked up, and
- 10 interviews were conducted over the phone.

To complete these 83 interviews, 426 contacts were made by phone and email. This is an average of 5.13 “touches” per successful interview. See Figure 1.

Cathy Goulet visited Vegreville and area on 18 days over the course of project. While we did not time the interviews, our estimate is that most interviews required about 45 minutes, with the shortest being 15 minutes and the longest being 90 minutes.

| FIGURE 1: Summation – Stakeholder Engagement Process | | |
|--|----|----------------|
| Total businesses and stakeholders contacted | | 106 |
| Contacts from initial list provided by Vegreville Economic Development (adjusted for closures and duplicates) | 66 | 54 completions |
| Contacts compiled by contractor with assistance from Vegreville Economic Development to round-out sample set (due to time constraints not all on this list were contacted) | 45 | 22 completions |
| Contacts at Town of Vegreville Council and Administration | 8 | 7 completions |
| <i>Total Successful Interviews</i> | | 83 |

3. Findings

The findings section is based on the research completed in the literature review, the interviews of 83 businesses and stakeholders, and post-interview additional research. This supplementary research provided detail that takes this section of the work beyond simple summary to value-added analysis. The team has also brought in its own extensive experience and knowledge in the economic development field to augment the recommendations, which emerge in the final sections of the report.

3.1 Overview of the Findings

The in-depth information gained through the interview process provided a solid foundation for developing the strategy and work plan found later in this document. A wide diversity of opinion was sought with many sectors represented in the interview sample. Industry sectors included, among others:

- Finance and Banking
- Professional Services
- Retail
- Food Services
- Manufacturing
- Agricultural sales and services
- Transportation
- Information and Communications Technology
- Health and associated services
- Public Administration
- Construction
- Autobody and Repair
- Research and Innovation
- Oil and Gas supply and services

This wide sample set, allowed for a balanced view of the local industry development landscape. While there were varied opinions about which industries and opportunities would be most impactful and viable, themes did emerge.

3.1.1 DOMINANT INDUSTRY SECTORS GOING FORWARD

Most responses (See Figure 2) reflected a desire to see diversity in the local economy as well as development that contributes to an attractive quality of life for residents:

- *Agriculture*
Agriculture is seen as relatively stable over time and, as a renewable industry, likely to continue as such. Secondary and tertiary sectors attached to primary agriculture production, were among the top four sectors seen as being significantly important in the future economy of Vegreville. Some concern was raised about restructuring of agriculture through farm consolidation leading to fewer farmers supporting Vegreville businesses. This threat was anticipated by

all sectors of business within the town, from agricultural implement dealerships to farm supply to professional services.

- Manufacturing**
 Manufacturing was selected as important by 72% of the survey respondents. The rationale for this selection was based on existing manufacturing capacity in the community, previous experience with the sector, and its ability to generate large employment numbers. Respondents, in anecdotal responses, did not always have a specific manufacturing opportunity in mind. If it was tied to another industry, it was most likely to be seen as an add-on to the agriculture industry or the oil and gas sector.

FIGURE 2: Which industry sector(s) do you believe are likely to most significantly contribute to the future economy of Vegreville? Feel free to check more than one response.

| <i>Industry Sector</i> | <i>Percent selected</i> |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Primary Agriculture</i> | <i>85</i> |
| <i>Agricultural support services</i> | <i>80</i> |
| <i>Manufacturing</i> | <i>72</i> |
| <i>Agricultural processing</i> | <i>62</i> |
| <i>Health</i> | <i>56</i> |
| <i>Retail</i> | <i>54</i> |
| <i>Oil and Gas Support</i> | <i>53</i> |
| <i>Oil and Gas</i> | <i>49</i> |
| <i>Construction</i> | <i>47</i> |
| <i>Transportation and Logistics</i> | <i>41</i> |
| <i>Accommodation</i> | <i>33</i> |
| <i>Food</i> | <i>30</i> |
| <i>Education</i> | <i>28</i> |
| <i>Wholesale</i> | <i>21</i> |
| <i>Finance and Insurance</i> | <i>17</i> |
| <i>Professional Services</i> | <i>16</i> |
| <i>Arts, Entertainment/Recreation</i> | <i>14</i> |
| <i>81 of 83 responding</i> | |

- Health**
 Health was seen as a significant industry going forward by 56% of survey respondents. This selection was often supported by a reference to the need for good health care for a high quality of life in the community. However, the importance of this sector was more significantly tied to the high percentage of senior citizens in the community and the potential to enhance or create business that provided goods and services to this demographic. Since “senior services” was identified more as a market than an industry, the opportunity to provide value to this demographic showed up in many sectors, but certainly very strongly in “Health”.
- Oil and Gas**
 The Oil and Gas sector, both as primary production and support services, was seen as less impactful to the local economy, both historically and into the future. Most often, the cyclical nature of the business and the distance to primary production fields were seen as two limiting factors in that industry’s importance in Vegreville. In fact, this industry was seen as important by only slightly more than half of respondents.

- *Retail*
There was a divergence of opinion on retail trade. This is reflected by its selection as “significant” by 54% of responders. A robust retail presence was seen by some as a creator of jobs and wealth. Some support was given for increased presence of retail in the community as a way to build the community’s attractiveness as a place to live or to relocate to.

It was acknowledged that the population base in Vegreville might not be sufficient to make some retail businesses viable. And certainly the presence of significant retail development in Sherwood Park, Edmonton and, less often, Camrose and Vermilion, was seen as a threat to this sector’s success in Vegreville. This perception led many responders to drop retail from the list of “significant”. Either they did not see real potential to grow the sector given the competition from nearby communities or the scope of what was probable was not significant enough to make an impact on the local economy.

Accepting all of the above, there was also consensus that, while retail was not necessarily seen as a key primary driver, it was seen as important for a myriad of community building and sustainability reasons. The expansion of Vegreville’s retail sector is seen positively from several perspectives although its potential impact, and the nature of that impact, is viewed very differently within the business community of Vegreville.

- *Other Sectors*
Other sectors selected less frequently were identified in comments as supports to, or outcomes of, growth in other sectors. For example, construction was seen as important by 47% of interviewees. However, this selection was often identified as being created if the population of Vegreville was to increase because of job growth in the agricultural processing sector or in manufacturing.

3.1.2 TWO APPROACHES TO GROWTH

The interview data supports two overarching investment attraction narratives:

1. **Vegreville would be best served by an incremental approach to investment attraction, anchored in growing a community of supports for seniors.**
This narrative favours expansion of existing local business and institutions as well as the attraction of more small retail and service sector operations. Incremental growth would be generated by creatively expanding service and product offerings to senior citizens. This catalyst would create employment, attracting new people and generating a need for even more goods and services. This narrative included a desire to increase capacity in local public services and

institutions such as the hospital, and enhanced recreation facilities. This approach to growth is ambitious and yet slower and more gradual.

2. Vegreville would be best served by the attraction of a significant, new, light to heavy manufacturer or processing facility, possibly complementary to or specific to, the agricultural industry.

This narrative favours expansion through aggressive action by the Town of Vegreville to attract medium to large employers. This approach was referred to variously as “a big player” or a “game changer”. There was a wide range of job creation numbers suggested but many hovered around the 50 employee range. There were few specific examples of potential types of manufacturing provided, although products that were tertiary to the oil and gas and agriculture industries were mentioned. Processing facilities were universally tied to the agriculture industry, either crops or livestock. The competitive features mentioned that would assist in attracting manufacturers and processors included:

- a. the availability of existing buildings,
- b. the competitive cost of land,
- c. the proximity to Highway 16,
- d. the availability of rail service,
- e. availability of water and other utilities including connectivity, and
- f. the reasonable cost of living for new hires.

The second narrative has more support among stakeholders. This tends to be the dominant position of interviewees in BR&E studies, as it is seen as a more expedient and actionable path to growth.

3.1.3 THEMES THAT COULD IMPACT GROWTH POTENTIAL

Two themes emerged during the course of the interviews that may impact the future consideration of the Town of Vegreville’s investment attraction program. These themes are tangential to this project but were consistent enough to note.

1. There is a perception among the interviewees that, in preparation for investment attraction, it would be useful to review the community’s investment readiness.
 - a. There is a perception that local business taxes are comparatively higher than other like-sized Alberta communities.
 - b. There is a perception that zoning may not be attractive to business development and that increased flexibility may be required to attract new investment.
 - c. There is a perception that there is a shortage of available, development-ready industrial land.

2. There was consistent messaging about previous investment attraction efforts that either were not successful or, if initially successful, lead to businesses that did not last. In general, while there were some opinions offered about reasons for these situations, there was also significant confusion expressed.
 - a. There were many mentions of a Home Hardware distribution centre that went to another community.
 - b. CMBS's closure is very much top-of-mind
 - c. A biodiesel project that did not come to Vegreville
 - d. An ethanol plant that did not go forward
 - e. Das Disposal relocated
 - f. A meat processing facility...what happened?
 - g. Canola crushing plant... what happened?

Our sense, based on an initial review of the data, is that the participants mostly saw Vegreville as being well positioned and potentially well-resourced for growth. Their assessment is combined with confusion and some frustration about what is seen as a lack of growth in the community.

3.2 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

A SWOT analysis is a powerful planning tool that allows a community to gain clarity around its competitive position in the marketplace. When developing a SWOT analysis for economic development it is important to stay focused on a narrow definition of “economic development”. In fact, for this exercise, there is a very narrow focus on investment attraction. Many components of economic development are not assessed in this SWOT to avoid becoming distracted from what is a fairly specific activity – investment attraction.

For clarity, the following are the definitions that will guide this SWOT analysis:

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Strength | As a location for investment, what does Vegreville do well? Strengths are about what is within the influence of the community today. |
| Weakness | As a location for investment, what does Vegreville need to do a better job of? What existing processes, or conditions, does the community need to change to improve its investment attraction success? |
| Opportunity | As a location for future investment, what change can Vegreville implement that will lead to increased success in investment attraction? |
| Threat | As a location for future investment, what factors, either immediate or anticipated, will limit Vegreville's investment attraction success? |

STRENGTHS - What does Vegreville do well?

- *Transportation Infrastructure*

The ability to move goods and people is critical to expanding and attracting investment. Vegreville is well connected by road, rail and air to points north, south, east and west.

 - Roads - Vegreville is immediately adjacent to Highway 16, the Yellowhead Highway, which is the major northern transportation route east-west across the prairie provinces through to the intermodal port of Prince Rupert opening up markets in the Asia Pacific. Vegreville is also connected to the Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor with proximity to Highway 36, a high-load corridor connecting from Fort McMurray, Alberta through to the Gulf of Mexico.
 - Rail- CN Rail operates its main line through northern Alberta following closely to the Yellowhead Highway. Vegreville has a passing track and is the site of the only siding between the Walker Yard in north Edmonton and Vermilion. This rail line is active with container, agriculture, oil and gas product traffic.
 - Air - Operated by the Town of Vegreville, the Airport's runway is 4000ft x 100ft and is capable of landing aircraft up to 20,000lbs. This would include small commuter aircraft. The airport has a public terminal and is fully operational 365 days a year, weather permitting.
- *Solid Economic Base*

The agriculture industry in the surrounding counties of Lamont, Minburn and Two Hills provide a moderating influence on the local economy.
- *Utilities Infrastructure*

To be competitive, Vegreville must be able to supply the needs for electricity, natural gas and water. Vegreville has two 144Kv lines to the existing ATCO Electric substation. Water is supplied through the Alberta Central East Water System originating with the City of Edmonton. Natural gas is provided by ATCO Gas.
- *Stable Population*

Stability of the population provides some certainty to investors about the future of the community. This is important for finding and attracting labour. Vegreville's population has been stable over time with small incremental growth in the past 10 years.
- *Regional Hub*

Vegreville is well located by highway to communities in northeastern Alberta.
- *Availability of Existing Buildings*

Vegreville has a number of commercial and industrial buildings available for sale or lease including the former CMBS facility, the Nortel building, and the Ashley Furniture building.
- *West End Retail*

Walmart and Canadian Tire anchor a retail development that creates significant traffic to the community.

- *The Alberta Innovates Technology Futures (AITF)*
Research capacity for innovative projects is locally available and a working partnership is developing between AITF and the Town of Vegreville.
- *Proximity to Major Urban Centre*
Short distances to Sherwood Park and Edmonton provide ready access to supplies and services.

WEAKNESSES – What does Vegreville need to do a better job of?

- *Property Taxes*
Paying property tax is a cost of doing business. While the market sets the property value, the municipality sets the mill rate. Of eight similarly sized municipalities in Alberta, Vegreville's non-residential mill rate was highest at 20.3032. The next highest was Edson's at 15.4408 and the lowest was Bonnyville's at 7.6265. While there are many reasons for this local decision, it should be acknowledged as a weakness.
- *Lack Of Development Ready Land*
Vegreville does not currently have fully serviced industrial land.
- *Perceptions About Development Processes*
There was strong opinion that development processes were cumbersome and time consuming.
- *Downtown Revitalization*
The downtown core of Vegreville is not seen to be investment ready. It is seen as the potential site for the small retailers who would provide the goods and services that would support growth in other sectors.

OPPORTUNITIES – What change can Vegreville implement?

- *Leverage Aging Population*
Supported by existing health care and housing infrastructure, Vegreville has a good base for providing expanded services and goods to its senior population.
- *Convert Commuters to Residents*
The Business Visitation Survey conducted by Vegreville Economic Development identified that, of its responders, 63% had employees who commuted to work. It is estimated that of the over 200 commuters, about 40 travelled from Sherwood Park and Edmonton. There were significant employers, who anecdotally have a high percentage of commuters, which did not complete the BVS. The potential market may be larger.
- *Leverage Automobile Dealers*
Vegreville has three dealerships that are in close proximity to each other. These dealers create customer traffic and, therefore, opportunity.

- *Leverage Large Employers*
Vegreville has several large employers in the private and public sector. These may be a source of new investment if relationships are cultivated.
- *Leverage Transportation Infrastructure*
Focus attention on the traffic flows through the community.

THREAT – What are the limiting factors?

- *Global Economic Trends*
Oil prices and agriculture commodity prices could, and do, impact the local economy.
- *Dependence On Large Employers*
Vegreville has a number of large employers, both public and private. A closure or downsizing could be impactful.
- *Farm Consolidation*
As farms consolidate, fewer farm families are accessing goods and services in Vegreville. Larger farming operations may change their buying habits and choose to buy goods and services in other locations.
- *Agriculture Downturns*
With the community heavily reliant on the agriculture industry that surrounds it, events such as drought can tighten the local economy.

3.3 Opportunity Analysis Framework

Respondents interviewed for the Investment Attraction Project were asked two related, but significantly different, questions:

1. What new or expanded businesses/services in Vegreville would be most beneficial to the local economy?
2. What type of new or expanded businesses/services would be most viable in Vegreville in the long term?

The first question speaks to impact. If a business was to start or expand, would it make a difference to the local economy? All businesses contribute in some way. However, some create more opportunity for spin-off and added-opportunity. For example, a business that employs many people in remote locations but has a head office of only a few staff, may not change the local economic climate. Another business that processes raw material obtained locally, like grain or agricultural biowaste may contribute more to local growth. The business could also contribute by offering a service that would noticeably increase local quality of life and encourage more relocation to the community. When considering the answers to this question in light of the second question on viability, respondents were frequently unsure. A common answer was “I

think it would be good, but I don't know enough about that business to know if it would be profitable." This was particularly true for larger developments.

The question of viability is critical. Many businesses might be beneficial but for reasons of size of market, cost of operating, or availability of labour, or any number of other factors, would simply not survive. Viable businesses create stability in the local marketplace and other businesses looking to locate or expand are attracted to that stability. Stability in the business community also increases the ability to retain and attract residents' long term. Certainty of employment is an important factor in considering a permanent residential location.

The list of answers to these two questions was quite extensive and is included in the appendices to this report. By sorting through for prevalence of beneficial and viable we were able to cross reference those opportunities that were most often named and then compare the two criteria. See Figure 3

FIGURE 3

| Beneficial | Viable |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| | A "Better" Chain Restaurant |
| | A Ukrainian Restaurant |
| | Shoe Store |
| M&M Meat Shop | M&M Meat Shop |
| Ag Food Processing - Meat | Ag Food Processing – Meat |
| Ag Food Processing – Canola | |
| Aging Population – Goods And Services | Seniors Services |
| | Medical Supplies For Seniors And Others |
| Health And Hospital Services | |
| Diagnostics | |
| Foreign Car Dealership | Automobile |
| AITF | AITF Expansion |
| | Training – Safety |
| Manufacturing | Manufacturing |
| Distribution Centre | Distribution Centre |
| Corporate/Service Hubs | Corporate Headquarters |

3.4 Key Business Sectors for Investment Attraction

When considering where to start for investment attraction and retention, existing strength in the local economy provides a solid launching point. The business sectors

highlighted below are already present in Vegreville with enough critical mass to leverage further investment either internally or from outside the community.

3.4.1 AGRICULTURE

Consistently, throughout the interview and research processes, agriculture was identified as the dominant influence on the Vegreville economy. Primary agriculture in the surrounding counties supports agri-business within the town and many other businesses rely on the sector for a significant percentage of its business. Of the 83 companies surveyed, 83% saw primary agriculture as a “most significant “contributor to Vegreville’s future economy. Although primary agriculture is not present in the community, it is seen as critical for its prosperity going forward.

Agriculture support services are well represented in Vegreville based on the primary base in the surrounding counties. Three large implement dealers are present in Vegreville representing Case IH, New Holland and John Deere, selling equipment and providing servicing and repairs. These companies also sell related minor products. Several companies provide inputs including chemicals and seeds for the farming communities, as well as professional agronomic advice.

Agricultural processing is also present in Vegreville, although the direct economic impact may be less significant. Butchering for farms and individuals is complemented by the production of meat products such as sausages, and other cured meat products. These are produced for custom, as well as, retail markets. The community also has a seed cleaning facility within its boundaries. Vegreville has recently seen the opening of an independent distillery, which produces grain alcohol from locally sourced crops.

3.4.2 RETAIL

It is important to include goods for seniors in a consideration of the retail sector. With less experience with online shopping and less mobility, ready access to products locally is important to attracting and retaining a senior population. Vegreville has both independent and multi-national retailers, with clusters around the downtown, in a strip mall and at a power centre. The downtown is populated with small, locally owned retailers. The retail operators in the downtown area indicated that there are significant challenges to operating in that area. A lack of traffic, both foot and vehicular, the proximity of larger retail markets (Sherwood Park, Edmonton, Camrose), and the cost of operating were most often cited as concerns. The opening of the power centre at the west edge of Vegreville was referred to both positively, it did boost traffic into town, and negatively, the retailers there were lower-cost sellers.

The presence of several large retail outlets at the west end power centre offers an anchor for the retail sector in the community. And there was diversity in the survey

respondents in how they viewed this relationship. This development is dominated by Walmart and by Canadian Tire with other smaller retailers and food outlets clustered around it, as well as accommodation. The presence of big-box stores generates traffic to communities and, with careful strategic attention, can become a leverage for other retail development.

It is interesting to note that Vegreville, with a population of 5,758, has three large, national chain, grocery stores. The stores interviewed identified that they had a fairly large trading area emanating north-east and north-west. One of the operators referred to the presence of Walmart and its impact on their own operations. They were careful to understand Walmart's grocery product mix and to adjust to meet gaps. With a unique product line, they are finding that they are able to draw in new customers who were not attracted in the past.

Another specific retail sector that demonstrates strength in this market is automotive sales. All three major North American automotive makes are represented and are located on the west end of Vegreville on Highway 16A, between 75th Street and 60th Street. These locations span the main thoroughfare from the Galleria Mall in the east to just past the power centre in the west. A new entrant to the automobile sector, The Garage, is a locally-owned vintage car restoration and parts outlet. It adds an interesting "twist" to an already strong automobile retail sector. Overall, the relative proximity of the dealerships presents an opportunity to create a retail node that could be strengthened and supported by unique local consumer opportunities. The dealerships have worked together on joint marketing and sales. This existing relationship provides a good foundation for exploring more extensive marketing and attraction activities.

3.4.3 MANUFACTURING

Building on its transportation infrastructure, Vegreville has had some success with manufacturing businesses. RJV, a long term manufacturer, emerged from local investors and provides gas field fabrication throughout western Canada. Buhler Industries, at its Vegreville location, manufactures agricultural equipment for markets across North America. This success has been balanced by recent challenges including the closure of the CMBS modular home manufacturer. Anecdotal responses during the surveys reflected the opinion that this facility had adequate market opportunities and its closure was credited to other factors. All three manufacturers, while connected to different industry markets, benefit from the geographic location of Vegreville and its access to highways and railways.

The successful recruitment of Emergent Waste Solutions (EWS) to Vegreville is an example of a manufacturing opportunity that builds on the community's competitive advantages of location and availability of buildings. EWS deals with organic waste by using Pyrolysis. Pyrolysis is the process whereby carbon based materials are placed in an

oxygen deprived environment and heated to a point at which the composite chemical makeup of the feedstock separates and the molecules recombine into useable products like fuel oil, syngas and a charcoal like product called bio-char. EWS's new Vegreville facility will use rubber tire waste to generate energy and could also use agricultural bio-waste.

3.4.4 GOODS AND SERVICES FOR SENIORS

An in-depth analysis of the 2011 Stats Canada Household Survey and the 2012 Vegreville Municipal Census is very revealing. The population is spread fairly evenly across all age groups. (See Figure 4). The first two loosely grouped cohorts below are divided into children, young adults, middle aged adults and seniors. The middle aged cohort has one additional 5-year age band, which artificially boosts the percent of population somewhat. The seniors cohort is particularly interesting.

The first 5-year band of 65-69 years has 280 residents. In the years between 70 and 84 age groups, the number of residents goes up and down but trends down. Then in the 85 years and older group, the number of residents returns to that of the 65-69 years group. This phenomena cannot be explained outside of immigration to the community of a relationally large number of seniors in this category. A review of seniors housing availability may provide some clues to this apparent anomaly.

| FIGURE 4: Statistics Canada 2011 Household Survey | | | |
|---|------|------|-----|
| Total population by age groups | 5720 | | |
| 0 to 4 years | 320 | | |
| 5 to 9 years | 310 | | |
| 10 to 14 years | 340 | | |
| 15 to 19 years | 345 | 1315 | 23% |
| 20 to 24 years | 310 | | |
| 25 to 29 years | 285 | | |
| 30 to 34 years | 330 | | |
| 35 to 39 years | 335 | 1260 | 22% |
| 40 to 44 years | 370 | | |
| 45 to 49 years | 430 | | |
| 50 to 54 years | 395 | | |
| 55 to 59 years | 360 | | |
| 60 to 64 years | 305 | 1860 | 33% |
| 65 to 69 years | 280 | | |
| 70 to 74 years | 245 | | |
| 75 to 79 years | 260 | | |
| 80 to 84 years | 225 | | |
| 85 years and over | 280 | 1290 | 23% |
| Median age of the population | 44 | | |

Vegreville is home to seven seniors housing facilities including lodges, manors, and long-term-care. It would be reasonable to suggest, given the current practice of providing more intensive care in regional centres, that Vegreville attracts the eldest senior citizens, and those requiring the highest levels of care.

The data from the 2012 Municipal Census supports this conclusion. Several of the most intensive care units, including the Vegreville Care Centre, are located in Census Zone 10. This Zone has 57% of residents over the age of 60 years. And a full 45% of residents are over 75 years of age. Zone 10 is the area found south-east of the downtown core. Other areas of Vegreville also have higher than average senior resident density. And these areas are mostly single family dwellings, as opposed to multi-family or senior-designated facilities. See Figure 5.

| Figure 5: Seniors Population Density by Census Zone | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------|
| | 60-64 years | 65-69 yrs | 70-74 yrs | over 75 yrs | Total |
| Zone 6 | 5% | 4% | 8% | 31% | 48% |
| Zone 7 | 4% | 7% | 4% | 11% | 26% |
| Zone 8 | 5% | 7% | 5% | 14% | 31% |
| Zone 10 | 2% | 5% | 5% | 45% | 57% |
| Zone 14 | 6% | 5% | 4% | 21% | 36% |

The high number seniors in the oldest cohorts coupled with the high number of seniors in areas of the community in single family dwellings, points to some interesting opportunities for exploration of business development potential.

3.4.5 TRAINING

Post-secondary educational and training opportunities were cited as potential areas for growth. Post-secondary training often requires significant capital investment and many of the respondents suggesting this indicated that their preference would be for a satellite campus of an existing institution. There were other suggestions that privately offered training, particularly in safety, could be an expansion opportunity for existing businesses.

3.5 Supply Chain Gaps within the Target Business Sectors

Although particular business sectors in Vegreville have current and historical strength, there are many opportunities to expand within those sectors and to fill gaps in the local supply chain. For example, the presence of three automotive dealers was seen as a strength in Vegreville’s retail sector and an opportunity to diversify within that business sector. A strategy of diversifying within existing areas of local capacity has several advantages. An existing knowledge base and experience with an industry, while not a guarantee of future success, is helpful.

3.5.1 GOODS AND SERVICES FOR SENIORS

The community members surveyed frequently mentioned seniors' goods and services, often coupled with healthcare, as an opportunity for significant impact and for the creation of viable local businesses. This segment of the population will continue to grow; however, this cohort will also experience better health and longevity than previous generations. The seniors in Vegreville may be not only a source of employment and business development, they may also be more active members of the labour force.

The City of Camrose recognized the economic development potential of seniors in the late 1990's and pursued an aggressive strategy to attract retirees from the surrounding agricultural counties. By 2013, 25% of residents were over the age of 65 years, however, the rate of relocation had slowed. The influx of seniors was a jumping off point for the creation of a strong retail sector that is now a regional shopping hub. However, retail jobs are low paying and seniors' annual incomes are on average lower. The City has recently recognized the need to diversify yet again and is now successfully pursuing agricultural processing. So while building capacity to provide goods and services to seniors is a likely strategy for communities, it should not be the only strategy.

While Vegreville has a smaller population base than Camrose, there are parallels including the presence of seniors housing and having a surrounding agricultural industry. In 2012, Vegreville's senior population, over 65 years of age, had already reached 23%. A richer dataset is required to determine the true depth of the opportunity available. However, some gaps have been identified and should be investigated further. These are consistent with communities with a reasonable seniors' population base and could be added to existing businesses as diversification strategies. These include medical supplies, home maintenance, sale and installation of safety equipment, estate sales and personal organizers, financial managers and planners, non-medical in-home care, seamstress, computer consulting and shopping and home delivery service.

| For More on Seniors Services (Additional source documents): |
|---|
| <i>"Camrose looks beyond retail for new employment", www.Augustana .Ualberta.ca. January 4, 2013.</i> |
| <i>"As demand for senior services grows, caregiving workforce fills ranks with other seniors", The Associated Press, January 5, 2014.</i> |
| <i>"Aging population driving demand for affordable seniors services", The Globe and Mail, July 18, 2007.</i> |
| <i>"15 Home Based Business Ideas that Serve Senior Citizens", Home Business Magazine, January 5, 2009</i> |
| <i>"Capture the Seniors Market with These Niche Business Ideas", Business News Daily, July 2, 2014</i> |

A particularly interesting opportunity to investigate is home maintenance. As detailed above, based on an analysis of the Town of Vegreville's 2012 Municipal Census, there appear to be several pockets of single dwelling homes that correlate to high density

pockets of senior citizens. The 2012 Stats Canada Household Survey identifies 1,865 single detached homes in Vegreville. It also identifies 835 people who live alone and 545 widowed individuals. None of this data is conclusive in identifying a strong need for home maintenance services based on a large number of older residents living independently in their own homes. However, of the 1,290 residents who were in the 65 years and over category in 2012, it is reasonable to assume that a significant number are still in their own homes. At the very least, more pointed investigation would determine the size of this market and the viability of adding niche services to existing residential maintenance businesses.

Vegreville currently has nine accounting and financial service businesses in addition to five banks or credit unions. Of these businesses, nine were interviewed. In general, this sector is quite healthy in Vegreville with most respondents stating great confidence in their viability going forward. As people age, their need for financial advice, and the need for assistance with financial transactions can increase. Providing this service may be an opportunity for businesses already established in this sector in the community.

3.5.2 AGRICULTURE PROCESSING/MANUFACTURING

There was consistent input from respondents that gaps exist in the secondary agricultural sector. As much effort as was possible in the scope of this study was given to uncovering these opportunities. As per the Recommendations section later on, further investigation is required. In this study, a few of the ideas mentioned were:

- EWS – pyrolysis transferable to agricultural bio-mass
- Industrial Hemp
- Meat Processing
- Canola Crushing

- *Manufacturing*

There are significant gaps in the supply chain for manufacturing businesses in Vegreville. While successful local enterprises exist, and some precursors to manufacturing location exist, there was not a consistent type of manufacturing suggested or indicated by the respondents to the survey. The competitive advantage that exists for this businesses sector is based on location, transportation and infrastructure and the presence of several large, available, appropriately zoned buildings. It is most likely that a manufacturer will support the agriculture sector, although oil and gas is still a sector with long term upside.

- *Alberta Innovates Technology Futures (AITF)*

An opportunity identified for supporting agricultural processing in Vegreville was the facilitation of a stronger strategic alliance with the Alberta Innovates Technology Futures (AITF) offices in Vegreville. Leveraging the research and

development facilities of AITF was seen as a significant competitive advantage for the area. In particular AITF's capacity for applied research in the areas of agricultural biomass was seen as having high potential. This recognition was identified by some as a recent appreciation and there was great openness to learning more about AITF and its ability to operate as - or support - a business incubator function particular to creating an agriculture industry cluster.

3.5.3 RETAIL

- *Restaurants*

The local restaurant sector was seen as important to supporting quality of life in Vegreville. It was also recognized as important for offering added amenities and spending opportunities for people visiting either to access other buying opportunities, access medical services, on business or visiting. At the same time several gaps were identified in the local restaurant offerings. Suggestions for food service outlets revolved around increased choice in buying opportunities and experiences. While it was acknowledged that the existing food service industry met the needs for fast food and family dining, a shortage of fine dining alternatives was identified. This was variously described as “a good steak house”; “not fine-fine dining but something a bit better”; “a special occasion place”. This could present an opportunity for repositioning and rebranding for an existing establishment or investment in a new franchise or independent operation.

Vegreville has a well-established identity as a Ukrainian community with the annual Pysanka Festival, the Pysanka attraction and the availability of Ukrainian goods and foods in the community. This identity leads travelers to seek authentic food when visiting Vegreville. The Train Station Café currently offers these menu items and there may be opportunity to strengthen this existing business. A year-round Ukrainian restaurant, also referred to as a “perogy restaurant”, was suggested by numerous respondents as a good addition to the local food service business. A challenge identified with this specific restaurant-type was the potential for a weak local market. To paraphrase the common limiting statement: “Everybody's Baba makes better Ukrainian food than any restaurant. So people from Vegreville won't go to a restaurant to pay for Ukrainian food.” This reliance on travelers and tourists to sustain a Ukrainian restaurant, without strong local support, may challenge the viability of a specialized Ukrainian restaurant.

- *Food Services*

Several opportunities for niche markets in the retail food sector were identified in the interview process. The most often cited was the franchise M&M Meats. There was a perception that this store was a popular destination for out-of-town shopping. There are 54 M&M Meat stores in Alberta with major representation

in large urban markets and more concentration in southern Alberta. This may be the result of higher population density in the province south of Highway 16. There are five locations in markets of under 10,000 people. The closest two locations in proximity are Edson and Hinton at 84.8km apart. Slave Lake, with the smallest population base, is the most remote location in Alberta. This particular store is located on Highway 2 with high traffic counts through to the Peace River country. Treating Slave Lake as an outlier, the average distance between small market M&M Meat Stores in Alberta is 91.3km.

Vegreville is 87.5 km from Sherwood Park, which is the location of the closest M&M Meats Store. Vegreville is smaller in population than the smallest local market currently with this food store. It is difficult to determine if there is potential to locate a franchise for M&M Meats in Vegreville. However, it appears that, at least based on geography, there may be an argument to be presented. See Figure 6.

FIGURE 6

| M&M Meats Store | Population | Distance to next location - km |
|----------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Drayton Valley | 7,049 | 99 |
| Edson | 8,475 | 84.8 |
| Hinton | 9,640 | 84.8 |
| Whitecourt | 9,605 | 96.5 |
| Slave Lake | 6,782 | 195 |
| Average | 8,310 | 112.02 |

- *Foreign Car Dealership*

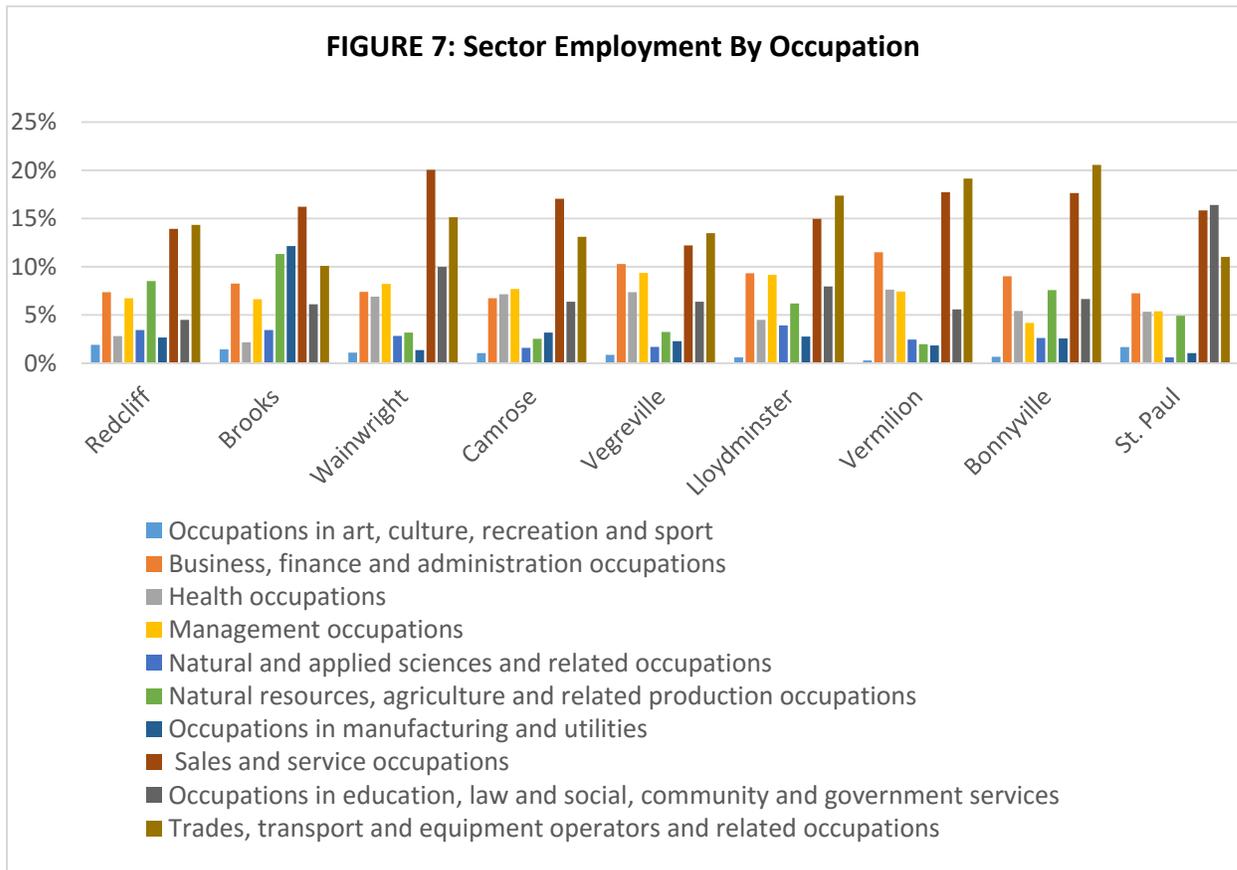
There is relative strength in the automotive dealership presence in Vegreville. As indicated, the success of the three companies present and their relative proximity organically creates an automobile cluster development or automall. A gap in the local supply chain, identified consistently, is the lack of non-North American brands in the local product mix. The introduction of a Toyota, Honda, Kia dealership were the suggested alternatives. This was universally presented as a way to strengthen the local businesses as opposed to the creation of more local competition.

Perhaps the most recognized automall in Alberta is found in Wetaskiwin, which is branded as “cars cost less in Wetaskiwin”. That very successful collaborative marketing program includes two Ford, one Chevrolet, one General Motors and one Toyota dealerships. The automobile dealerships in Vegreville have already demonstrated ability to market collaboratively and this could become the basis for a local expansion through the purchase of a foreign maker dealership by one of the existing players or the attraction of a new investor.

3.6 Vegreville’s Value Proposition

An important goal of any investment attraction effort is to identify a point of market differentiation that can form a core value proposition for a community. The consulting team, through many years of experience in Alberta and Western Canadian economic development, has had opportunities to research a potential point of market differentiation in many communities.

The reality is that most small towns in a similar geography tend to exhibit similar strengths, weaknesses, and assets. Identifying a point of market differentiation can be challenging. A review of sector strength in geographically and/or demographically similar towns shows very similar employment patterns across all communities (Figure 7):



The in-depth Literature Reviews and Stakeholder Engagement processes undertaken in this study reinforced the challenge of finding any striking points of market differentiation.

What is clear is that Vegreville lies in an area of immense agricultural production, and is on Highway 16 with close access to Highways 36, which is a high load corridor. This location, combined with its access to rail, give the Town of Vegreville a locational advantage compared to other communities. It is the largest Town in near proximity to this important intersection of highways.

It should be noted that this advantage is assumed to hold as long as the inputs or the markets for a potential business tend to run north-south along the high load corridor. If a business requires close access to Edmonton, other locales such as Lamont or Sherwood Park become more attractive. This becomes even more of a challenge when you look at the non-residential mill rates in Lamont (12.3460), compared to Vegreville (20.3032).

In summary...

The Town's primary advantage is locational, being on Highway 16 and near Highway 36 in the heart of a high load corridor with access to rail. Related to this advantage is access to primary agricultural inputs.

4. FDI Best Practices

Before considering a specific Leads Handling Protocol for Vegreville, it is important to understand what the *Investment Promotion and Attraction Process* generally looks like. This includes some generally accepted *Best Practices in Investor Inquiry Handling*.

This list of suggested processes and best practices is culled from:

- Outlook Market Research
- Investment Climate Advisory Services of the World Bank Group
- Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
- The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
- Economic Development Association of British Columbia
- The Australian Trade Commission
- Government of Alberta

4.1 The Investment Promotion and Attraction Process

The Investment Promotion and Attraction Process is an internal EDO process designed to react to the Site Selection Process used by relocating companies, while being proactive by generating and converting FDI leads.

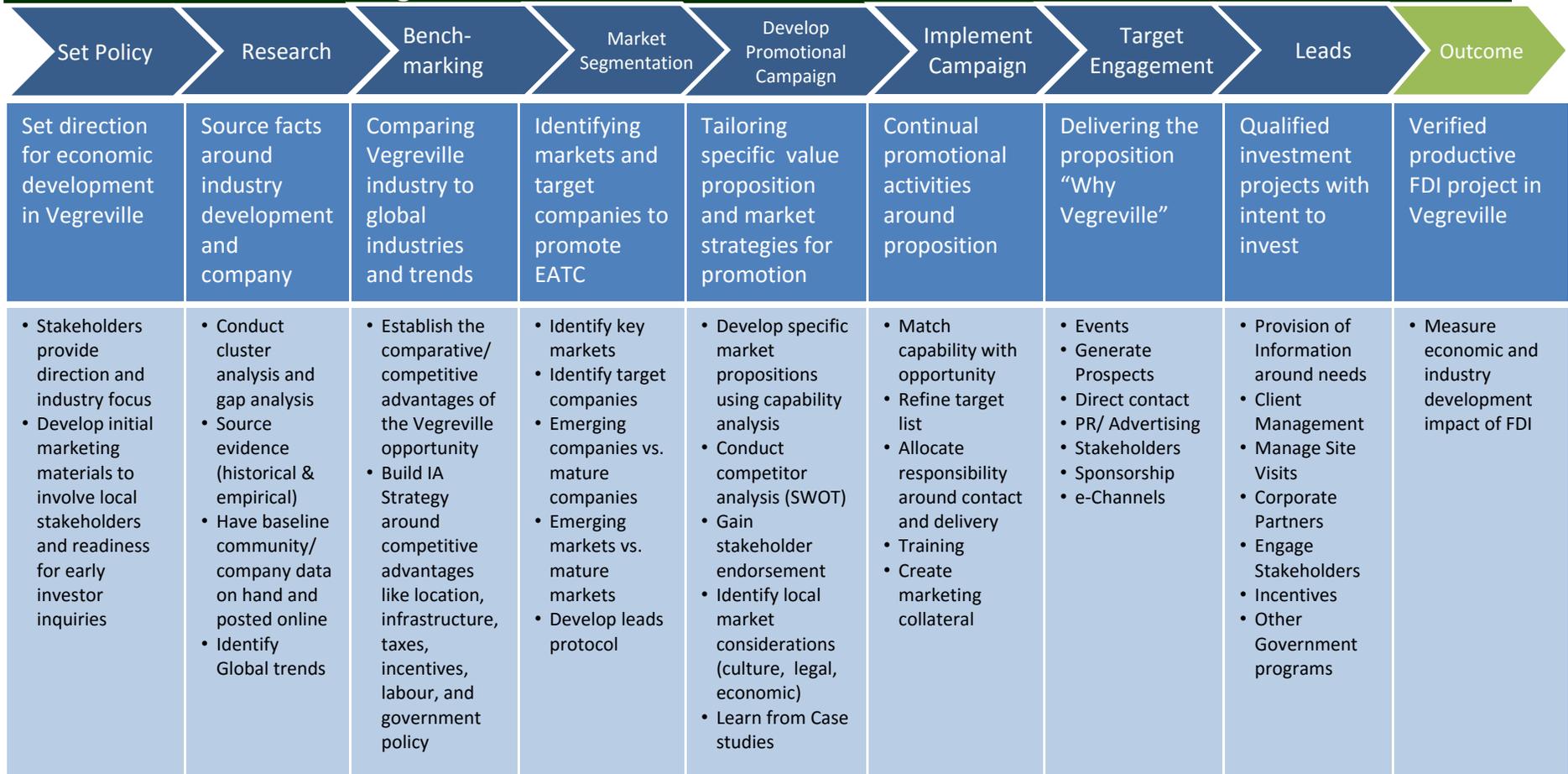
At the beginning, the Site Selection Process depends on the type of FDI desired and requires understanding of the region's level of economic development and its national economic policies. For example, is the FDI seeking resource-based locations, strategic market locations or product efficiency locations? The site selection process becomes increasingly detailed as decision makers narrow the list of possible locations.

Key factors during the site selection process generally fall into the following categories:

- Market characteristics (local and regional)
- Costs (labour, transportation and other)
- Natural resources (availability and quality)
- Infrastructure
- Policy structure
- Business support and promotion

Figure 1 outlines a general Investment Promotion and Attraction Process that allows EDOs to proactively seek FDI and also be ready to respond to ad hoc Site Selector inquiries:

Figure 8: The Investment Promotion and Attraction Process



Feedback loop between policy, strategy and implementation

Chart culled from the Australian Trade Commission.

4.2 Best Practices in Investor Inquiry Handling

Best-practice EDOs address the four key dimensions of inquiry-handling—availability and contactability, responsiveness and handling, response quality, and ongoing customer care—in an integrated system that is continuously monitored for improvement.

The following **basic steps** will improve Economic Development Officer's (EDO) interaction with foreign companies:

1. **Expedite Investor Communications:** Ensure correct and complete contact information on the EDO web site. Ensure that an investor can contact an appropriate project manager as the key liaison throughout a project. Having a single point of contact makes communications easier for the investor.
2. **Target Data:** Ensure that data and overall response to an inquiry is highly targeted. Understand what is important for the investor: have a clear understanding of their target markets and their competitive positioning in those markets. Then gather the information and relevant promotional facts that will impress the investor.
3. **Be Professional:** Use business practices that demonstrate the EDO's professionalism. Train staff to direct enquiries to the EDO promptly. Encourage them to announce the EDO's name and their own. Include electronic signatures on all e-mails.
4. **Brand Your EDO Economic Development Office:** The professionalism of the Economic Development Office is often evaluated (especially at first) by design of branded, well-written, professional-looking materials. The finished materials should be distinctive and as impressive as resources allow.
5. **Target Your Website:** The EDO's economic development department's Investment Attraction website and marketing materials should be reasonably focused on key target markets.
6. **Promote Your Advantages:** Have materials available on key features and advantages about the location, such as labour costs of key positions, employment regulations or costs for key sectors and subsectors, and names of existing investors, for quick response to investors.
7. **Customize Response Information:** Customize information for the particular inquiry. The customized information should answer all questions asked in the inquiry and take into account feedback received during the discussion and clarification stage. The best customized information goes beyond merely

dealing with the original inquiry and demonstrates the EDO's knowledge of the sector in question and experience in handling corporate location projects.

8. **Meet or Beat Deadlines:** Investment inquiries are often highly time sensitive. Meet deadlines—or respond even sooner. If research for an investor takes longer than expected, inform the investor and propose another date. Whether inquiries are received by e-mail or telephone, a rapid reaction to the initial contact is necessary.
9. **Organize Your Response:** Respond to investor inquiries efficiently and informatively, and promote the location:
 - Organize responses according to the company's specific questions. Provide responses in a single report or presentation with a table of contents.
 - Make sure to discuss and clarify. After receiving the inquiry and assigning an advisor, the EDO should contact the investor in order to discuss the project and clarify the information required. Preferably this should be carried out by telephone.
 - Include germane, accurate, and comparative data, visuals, case studies about current investment in the location, and testimonials from well-known companies doing business there, to demonstrate the viability of the location.
 - Anticipate and answer questions that the company has not yet asked. This demonstrates the EDO's expertise and understanding of the company's needs.
10. **Develop a Response Template:** Develop a template for responses so that documents look professional, are branded, and follow a standard format including a table of contents, executive summary, and business case.
 - Include a summary, at the beginning or the end of the document, that specifies why the EDO's location is the best one for investment. Investors often use this summary in their own reports. By providing this summary, the EDO saves the investor time and ensures that the right arguments about the location are made.
 - E-mail or call the investor to confirm receipt of the sent information.
 - Follow up in 1-2 weeks to determine what more the EDO can do to support the project and offer to meet or arrange a site visit for the investor (budget permitting). This can be carried out by e-mail or telephone depending on circumstances.
11. **Cooperation Standards:** If you are going to work with another EDO, ensure there are common standards of professional service, so that the foreign investor can be satisfied at every step of the investment process.

12. **Train Your Staff to Respond Effectively:** Train project managers to discuss a project and anticipate issues that may arise. Staff should know enough about the location to be able to suggest where projects could go, and what infrastructure, universities, and so forth will be available to the investor. Staff also need customer relationship management skills so they can effectively build “trusted advisor” relationships with investors.
13. **Work with Government:** Work in close coordination with high levels of government to assess their country’s business climate and economy, and identify the sectors in which the EDO can realistically compete for investment. This assessment of their sector comparative attractiveness should be the foundation for the EDO’s investment strategy, and thus for all research and promotion activities, including facilitation.
14. **Follow Up:** A follow-up call to check on the investor’s analysis of the response and to offer further assistance is an essential step in the process. Timing of the call is dependent on the location selection timetable. This follow up should be made by telephone in order to extract the maximum feedback on the response from the investor. Even if the investor has chosen another location, finding out why your region did not succeed is vital to your EDO’ future efforts.

5. LEADS HANDLING PROTOCOL

There are many examples of leads handling protocols. The following is an amalgamation of multiple methodologies from various sources ranging from the World Bank to British Columbia to Wales to Australia. It has been customized by the consulting team to fit Vegreville's situation.

5.1 Definitions

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), defines "Target", "Lead", and "Prospect" as:

- "Target" means a foreign company identified as having the potential for investing abroad.
- "Lead" means a foreign company has the desire and capability to expand through investment abroad.
- "Prospect" means a foreign company has expressed an interest in investing and has specified Canada or places Canada on the destination shortlist.

5.1.1 WHAT IS A LEAD?

In short, a Lead is a company or investor that has demonstrated a desire and capability to expand a business or start a business in Eastern Alberta, and potentially Vegreville in particular. This might occur in one of several ways:

- A Target has been contacted and shows interest in an opportunity
- An inquiry generated from the Vegreville website
- An inquiry generated from the Alberta HUB or EATC websites
- An inquiry from marketing and promotion of Vegreville or Eastern Alberta
- An inquiry routed from another region, the Province, or federal government

5.1.2 WHAT IS A PROSPECT?

It is often difficult to define a point where an EDO can know that a Lead has become a Prospect. The DFAIT definition above states that a Prospect "expresses an interest in investing". But defining an expression of interest may lie in the eye of the beholder. For our purposes, some indications that a Lead has become a Prospect are:

- A Lead signs a memorandum of understanding or some other declaratory document with Vegreville
- The Lead conducts an in-person visit to Vegreville
- A Lead requests a second round of information after a formal Vegreville response to a first inquiry (see Section 5.3)

5.2 Recommended Vegreville Lead Generation

Investment inquiries arise from a number of sources; often they come in via Federal or Provincial investment attraction specialists or directly to a community via website or phone. With the recent re-establishment of a department dedicated to economic development in the Government of Alberta, it will be important to quickly understand where this expertise is now available. But active lead generation should still be a part of an EDO's investment attraction strategy.

In a general sense, the region or community must first be investment ready. Some steps that are necessary in this readiness include:

1. Having an inventory of local and regional assets, opportunities, value propositions, and contacts
2. Displaying this inventory online and in other professional marketing materials, and ensuring it is up to date
3. Identifying major regional projects that may have an impact on FDI
4. Identifying local companies interested in FDI
5. Raise awareness of regional assets, activities, and the intent to attract FDI among all regional provincial and federal partners
6. Setting a critical information path (or leads response) to field investment inquiries

When a community is investment ready and knows the type of FDI it is seeking, investment generation and ways to target the specific investment opportunities become the next steps. Many of these next steps will be addressed in section 6. Action Plan, that speaks to a Phase 2 of the FDI project.

What the economic development professional does to promote its community for investment is very similar to what a business does to generate revenue – Marketing, Sales and Customer Service. The community first needs to be marketed and then sold as the location for investment. Once the investment is placed in the community, it will need to be serviced.

Here are some lead generation practices that Vegreville should engage in:

5.2.1 LEADS DATABASE

The first step in effectively marketing your community to your targeted investment audience is to develop a database (or Relationship Management System) of potential investors. This database will be the source of information that enables you to build and maintain a relationship with multiple foreign investors (clients).

There are many database programs available but keep in mind names and addresses are only the starting point of what it should track. Ideally, the database should be able to track the following information:

- Investor (client) name;
- Date the information was entered, revised and by whom;
- Investment status;
- Contacts and positions in company – CEO, Senior VPs – try to get as much information on as many key contacts as possible including assistants as they are often the first point of contact in the communication process;
- Primary contact – ensure any mailings are addressed with names and not ‘Sir’ or ‘Madam’;
- Address – mailing and street address if different;
- Phone numbers, fax number, E-mail;
- Industry targeting – is this an industry sector, sub-sector or specialty for your investment target?
- NAICS code
- Volume of Sales – useful for targeting firms by size of their operation;
- Number of Employees – provides another useful comparison;
- Name of parent company;
- Internal assessment of lead – develop a system specific to your investment target priorities;
- Size of potential investment – in dollars or jobs or both;
- Follow up – set to an automatic follow up reminder.

The development of a database is not a single event. It is important to maintain and update the database or it will rapidly become out of date and, therefore, of little use.

There are various software programs available that can be modified to a community’s specific needs; as well, customized database software can be designed to better meet a community’s requirements. Examples are:

- Act! by Sage (www.act.com) – is a contact and customer manager that helps to organize contact information, manage daily responsibilities and communicate more effectively. Starting at \$25/month

- Maximizer (www.maximizer.com) – is contact management software that provides multiple editions to meet your needs. The website provides a demo and free trial offer. Starting at \$55/month
- Portfol (www.portfol.com) – is a database designed specifically for economic development. It tracks activities from the initial call and deal structuring through to the lending approval process (if applicable). Also provides built in features including job tracking and reporting, accounting for different funding sources and responding for information from public officials or funders. Cost: \$3,500

Free demos are available for all of these programs; this is the best way to determine which database solution will work best.

Portfol is customized to economic developers, but it is quite expensive and limited in its solutions. Also, its economic development applications are focused on tracking lending. Maximizer is less expensive, has a wider customer base, longer track record, and a wide variety of solutions and applications for cloud based solutions and Blackberry.

5.2.2 LISTS

For organizations that do not have a list of contacts or prefer to have the list already started, there are companies that will sell a customized list that can be used as a foundation for your database. The purpose of such list is to help develop Targets. Examples are:

- Hoover's (www.hoovers.com) – Hoover's online offers company information with detailed business reports and industry profiles. It provides up-to-date information for sales, marketing, business development and other professionals who need intelligence of global companies and industries.
- Dun and Bradstreet (www.dnb.com) - Dun and Bradstreet provides information on businesses and corporations for use in credit decisions, B2B marketing and supply chain management. The company maintains information about more than 150 million companies worldwide
- Kompass (www.kompass.com) – Kompass provides business to business intelligence. They have a directory that enables information gathering on over 2.3 million companies in 70 countries referenced by 57,000 products and service keywords, 860,000 trade names and 4.6 million executive names.
- Info Canada (www.infocanada.ca) – They focus on Canadian business and consumer directories. Their business databases are built from over 4,000 phone directories and over 350 new business sources, including new business filings, daily utility connections, county courthouses, and public record notices.

5.2.3 OUTBOUND VISITS

For all the types of lead generation, it can be argued that nothing beats old fashioned in-person sales. Even in this age of technology, it is important and impressive for a client to meet the EDO and community officials face to face. One way to efficiently make contact with potential investors is a targeted approach to tradeshow participation.

Tradeshows

Vegreville features multiple industry sectors including Energy, Agriculture, Tourism, Transportation, Manufacturing, etc. Listing every trade show or outbound event for each sector is impractical at this stage. The EDO must assess short and long term Vegreville objectives to make a determination on which sectors/opportunities are focused on at what time. But as an example, the EDO could compile a list of events for the Oil and Gas sector and evaluate the cost-benefit of attending these events for the purpose of attracting FDI. An *abbreviated example* of such a list might look like this:

- Oil Sands Trade Show (<http://oilsandstradeshow.com/>)
- 2016 CAEDO Scotiabank Investment Symposium (<http://caEDO.ca/about-us/events/2016-caEDO-scotiabank-investment-symposium>)
- Permian Basin International Oil Show (www.pbioilshow.org)
- Global Petroleum Show (<http://globalpetroleumshow.com>)
- Etc.

5.2.4 NEWS SOURCES

Keeping up with information sources that may present opportunities to target investors is important. Just keeping up with sector trends is valuable. There are endless trade websites and newsletters that can be accessed for every Vegreville sector. But as an example, the EDO could comprise a list of websites and newsletters for the Oil and Gas sector and evaluate the cost-benefit of actively monitoring these sources for the purpose of attracting FDI. An *abbreviated example* of such a list might look like this:

- Rocky Mountain Oil Journal (www.rmoj.com)
- Oil and Gas Journal (www.ogj.com)
- Pennwell (www.pennwell.com)
- Oil and Gas International (www.oilandgasinternational.com)
- Oil & Gas Network (<http://oilgas.net>)
- Oil & Gas Industry Today (<http://oilandgas.einnews.com>)

5.3 Recommended Leads Response Framework

The following is a 10 point framework for responding to FDI leads from potential clients:

1. **Central Inquiry System:** All client inquiries are logged into a central system and ensure that the EDO monitors the progress of inquiries and completed forms that are received via the website or phone (see 5.1.1 Lead database). Acknowledge receipt of all e-mails with investor inquiries and let investors know when the EDO will respond in full. If the inquiry is made during a tradeshow or other outbound activity, provide the client with a reasonable time frame for response based on the duration of the trip and on the steps below.
2. **Suggested - Client Information Sheet:** Once initial contact is made, the EDO can use a Client Information Sheet (Appendix 1) to garner information regarding the site requirements. This step is optional if the EDO and/or the client deems it unnecessary or too time consuming.
3. **Optional - Lead Registration and Confidentiality Statement:** The EDO can present a Lead Registration and Confidentiality Statement for the investor's review and signature. The purpose of the statement is to explain the roles of the Vegreville EDO and provide written assurance of confidentiality to the client. This step is optional if the EDO and/or the client deems it unnecessary or too time consuming.
4. **Rate Community/Inquiry Fit:** The EDO must decide which part of the community of Vegreville best fits the inquiry request. To a degree the community fit will be a qualitative judgment based on the experience of the EDO, but several factors must be considered:
 - a. Required land/buildings
 - b. Transportation needs
 - c. Preferred industrial clusters
 - d. Labour needs
 - e. Etc.
5. **Member-Client Interaction:** Members might want to deal with the client directly, but that is at the discretion of the client (especially if a Confidentiality Statement has been signed). It is imperative that the client is comfortable with the process, and is not overwhelmed with communications from multiple sources. Members should only be permitted direct access to the client after permission from the client; and in such a case the EDO should request to be kept in the communications loop as the process moves forward.
6. **Disseminate the Inquiry:** The EDO will disseminate the inquiry (and Client Information Sheet if available) to the Town and appropriate companies or partners

(REDA manager or the EDOs/CAOs of other communities), and request any needed information to respond to the inquiry.

7. **Info Return:** The Town, company or partner organization will have three days to return requested information to the EDO.
8. **Response Development:** Once all forms are completed and information has been returned, a full response to the inquiry will be compiled to be forwarded to the client. Information should include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Community Profile (Marketing Package)
 - i. Basic demographic information on entire region
 - ii. Basic demographic information on specific community/city
 - iii. Map of region the community/city is in
 - iv. Listing of relevant business clusters
 - v. Listing of labour, utility, educational, governmental, infrastructure, incentive resources
 - b. Available land and building information
9. **Response Time:** If the response is being made to the client at their place of business, the response will be delivered in email with a read receipt, or via fax or mail if the client requests within five business days (at most) depending on the type of information required.
10. **Response to Client Visits:** If the client is visiting Vegreville to receive the proposal package and tour/discuss the business opportunities, staff should make the following preparations:
 - a. Confirm date and time of arrival
 - b. Determine amount of time available for their visit/tour
 - c. Schedule site visits with appropriate real estate professionals (for qualified sites included in proposal)
 - d. Invite municipal representatives to meet client during their visit preferably at the potential location site(s)
 - e. Determine other major items of interest that must be accommodated (examples include topics specific to utilities, specialized permitting, financing, labour). During entire visit, staff shall document additional items requested.
 - f. As time allows, schedule short meet-and-greet meetings between the client and professional service providers
 - g. Allow for time at end of visit for general reactions and questions that may need follow-upThe EDO should follow-up the site visit with:
 - h. The names and contact information of the client to each of the individuals that met the client during their visit
 - i. A detailed list of items that require follow-up and make contact with appropriate community representative(s) if required

j. Send a thank-you letter to the client within 24 hours of their visit.

11. On-Going Follow Up:

- a. Thank you letter (24 hours)
- b. Ensure that all questions that have been posed by the client are responded to (1 week)
- c. Follow-up call (1 week)
- d. Follow-up call (30 days)
- e. Follow-up call (60 days)
- f. Letter follow-up (90 days)
- g. If the FDI attraction effort is unsuccessful, attempt to learn what the deciding factors were for the client going elsewhere, and what could be done to improve Vegreville's assets or presentation.

6. Action Plan

6.1 Strategic Partnership Identification in FDI

Some of the suggested strategic partners listed below are well known to Vegreville, as the Town is a member of the organizations. But it is still important to outline how Vegreville can best leverage these organizations to help attract investment to the Town.

Supporting regional economic development is one of the best ways to bolster local economic development. Smaller rural communities often do not have the business clusters, labour, and infrastructure to compete with larger urban centres. Partnering with other communities in your region allows a smaller town to market a larger set of assets, and potentially open the doors to new opportunities that would have otherwise gone unrealized.

6.1.1 NORTHEAST ALBERTA INFORMATION HUB

The Northeast Alberta Information HUB, also known as “Alberta HUB”, is the Regional Economic Development Alliance (REDA) of Northeast Alberta. Vegreville is a long-time, important member of the organization.

- **Regional Investment Attraction Efforts:**
Alberta HUB has dedicated significant resources to investment attraction efforts over the past several years. It engaged in a four phase effort to ready the organization for inbound and outbound investment. Much of this work has focused on building a website and marketing presence that will help its members attract new investment, and allow Alberta HUB to direct investor inquiries to appropriate member communities. A significant section of the Alberta HUB website is devoted to investment:
<http://www.albertahub.com/investing-here/>
- **Investor Resources**
In addition, a number of investment resources have been developed throughout the years, including regional profiles in English, French, German, Russian, Hindi, Spanish and Chinese:
<http://www.albertahub.com/about-us/media-centre/downloads-and-publications/resources-for-residents-business-and-industry/>
Vegreville can leverage its membership in Alberta HUB by accessing this material, saving budget for other investment work.

- **Leads Handling Protocols**

It is the mandate of Alberta HUB to assist its member communities with investment activities. The organization actively attempts to match any investor inquiries with the communities that possess the assets sought. By actively sharing leads with Alberta HUB, the EDO in Vegreville will increase access to Alberta HUB's connections to GOA resources to assist local inquiries. In short, Alberta HUB's mission is to assist its members with economic development, so Vegreville should tap this resources whenever appropriate.

6.1.2 EASTERN ALBERTA TRADE CORRIDOR

The Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor (EATC) is a joint initiative of three Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs) in Eastern Alberta, and works in association with the North American Ports-to-Plains Corridor linking the United States, Canada and Mexico. By virtue of its membership with Alberta HUB, Vegreville is a part of the EATC.

- **Community Marketing Tools**

The EATC's mission is "To provide Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor municipalities and businesses with effective and coordinated marketing and investment attraction support." As such a number of marketing tools have been developed for member communities such as Vegreville, and are viewable/downloadable through the Alberta HUB and soon the EATC websites:

1. *Vegreville Online Community Profile*: This tool is designed to be highly editable and flexible, containing as much or as little profile information as the Town wants to display: <http://www.albertahub.com/profiles/?site=18>
2. *Vegreville Investment Fact Sheet*: This tool is meant as a brief marketing piece that can be linked to online, or instantly print in high resolution. It is perfect as a downloadable pdf link for the Town, Chamber or local businesses; or to print and take to tradeshow or other investment attraction related events: Vegreville Investment Fact Sheet: http://www.easternalbertainfo.com/profiles/VegrevilleProfile_5_5_15v151657.pdf
3. *Vegreville Lifestyle Fact Sheet*: This is another tool meant as a marketing piece that can be linked to online, or instantly print in high resolution. It is perfect as a downloadable pdf link for the Town, Chamber or local businesses; or to print and take to tradeshow or other labour attraction related events: http://www.easternalbertainfo.com/profiles/VegrevilleLifestyle_16_9_15v164856.pdf

All of these resources will be editable online by Alberta HUB or the Town itself. A Training manual is under development by the EATC that will be made available to all member communities.

- **Ports-to-Plains Alliance**

The EATC is a paying member of Ports-to-Plains Alliance (P2P), which is an excellent networking organization with reach all the way down to Mexico. P2P, based in Lubbock, Texas, is a non-profit, non-partisan, community-driven advocacy group led by mayors, councilpersons, economic development officials, business and other opinion leaders from 10 U.S. states served by a nine-state, 2,300-plus mile economic development corridor between Mexico and Canada. As a member of EATC, Vegreville can leverage its P2P connection to make investment contacts in the US or Mexico, attend various conferences and workshops, and any of the other services the organization provides.

6.1.3 CANADIAN TRADE COMMISSIONER SERVICE

The [Canadian Trade Commissioner Service](#) has over 150 offices around the world. While much of their time is used assisting Canadian companies with export advice, they are willing and able to help Canadian communities identify potential foreign investors for targeted opportunities.

Consulting team discussions with Trade Commissioners in Denver, Minneapolis, and Detroit all yielded enthusiasm to help Canadian communities identify potential foreign investors for a *specific* opportunity(s). Trade Commissioners have easy access to numerous companies that can be potential targets for FDI, but they need to present specific opportunities to target their efforts. This is where the development of business cases or opportunity analyses comes in handy for an EDO.

The following are links to Trade Commissioners in U.S. cities along the Ports-to-Plains Corridor (of which Vegreville is associated through EATC):

- [The Consulate General of Canada, Denver](#)
- [The Consulate General of Canada, Houston](#)
- [The Consulate General of Canada, Dallas](#)

6.1.4 ALBERTA AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY - INVESTMENT ATTRACTION BRANCH

One of the most important industry sectors in Vegreville is Agriculture. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry - Investment Attraction Branch has excellent staff with many years of practical evaluation of investment opportunities. They can be reached at:

- [Norm Janssen](#) Investment Attraction Manager (North) 780 422-5577

6.1.5 ALBERTA INNOVATES TECHNOLOGY FUTURES (AITF)

Alberta Innovates - Technology Futures (AITF) is a provincial corporation that provides innovation, research and commercialization services delivering economic and social benefits to Alberta. It collaborates with industry, government, academic and other science and technology organizations to address the grand challenges and priorities of the province's agriculture, energy, environment, forestry and health sectors. AITF helps with research, new product development, and commercialization. It works collaboratively, with a wide range of partners, to create the strong science, technology and entrepreneurial culture Alberta needs to grow new and existing businesses and industries. The corporation provides services and programs to:

- Attract and develop world-class research teams in Alberta
- Help start-up companies establish and grow
- Provide quality management and ISO consulting services across Canada
- Solve basic and applied research problems moving technologies from ideation to commercialization.

The Vegreville location of AITF is responsible for a number of research and development initiatives, many of which are highly complementary to the agriculture industry. Included are:

- Analysis and Testing Services
 - Provides comprehensive environmental monitoring and contaminant monitoring services, specializing in the analysis of organic and inorganic compounds in water, wastewater, air, soil, sludge, solids, waste oil, solvents, sediment and biological tissues; develops novel methods for testing and commercialization.
- Ecosystems and Plant Sciences
 - Supports sustainable resource management through applied research, development and deployment of technologies for land and water management and the development of innovative tools for integrated decision making. On the Plant Sciences side, AITF takes a “from seed to final product” approach. The corporation works with industry, academia and government to improve agricultural crops and develop novel varieties that are well-suited to Alberta’s challenging climate, highly resistant to various plant diseases and can tolerate cold temperatures, short growing seasons and water scarcity. AITF also works closely with seed companies and pesticide/herbicide manufacturers to develop and test new products.
- Processing Technologies
 - Provides specialized facilities and expertise in biotechnology, biomass feedstock development, bio-processing, bioconversion and biomaterials engineering to

help industry design, develop, demonstrate and commercialize new bio-refining processes and value-added products. Key initiatives include the Alberta Biochar Initiative, Engineered Wood Products Services and a new Nano Crystalline Cellulose Pilot Plant.

AITF is very active in the community of Vegreville and was named in the Intermunicipal Development Plan between the Town of Vegreville and Minburn County as a key partner in economic development in the region. Most recently, AITF has worked with Emergent Waste Services on the opening of its pyrolysis facility in Vegreville. As an internationally recognized centre for biosource technology research and development, AITF is a natural and important resource to the economic future of the Vegreville area.

6.2 Potential Sources of Funding

6.2.1 INVEST CANADA - COMMUNITY INITIATIVES (ICCI)

Vegreville is very aware of this program, as it is was accessed to fund this project. The goal of ICCI is to increase Canadian employment by supporting Canadian communities' collaborative efforts to attract, retain and expand foreign direct investment (FDI).

ICCI is currently not accepting applications, but should be again before the end of 2015.

Once the program has been successfully accessed, follow up applications are usually received well. It is generally easier to apply for projects under \$100,000 (ICCI pays up to 50% of this) in rural communities, and major urban centres across Canada tend to receive the larger grant totals.

It is highly advised that Vegreville apply for a Phase 2 of this FDI Project. The Phase 2 Work Plan recommended in section 6.3 below will conform to the ICCI Guidelines, ensuring that Vegreville's application is fully eligible for funding:

<http://www.tradecommissioner.gc.ca/eng/funding/icci/document.jsp?did=156221>

6.2.2 ALBERTA COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (ACP)

In Budget 2014, the Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) replaced the Regional Collaboration Program (RCP). The objective of the ACP program is to improve the viability and long-term sustainability of municipalities by providing support for regional collaboration and capacity building activities. The ACP program is designed to support municipalities in attaining the following key program outcomes:

- Significant regional approaches to exploration and/or implementation of new or enhanced municipal services;

- Improved overall municipal capacity to respond to municipal and regional priorities and to build and maintain effective intermunicipal relations through joint and collaborative activities; and
- Strong intermunicipal relations that result in strengthened community identities and improved quality of life.
- http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/municipalgrants-description?program_id=41

Alberta HUB and the EATC have accessed the ACP program. The cap was \$350,000, and Economic Development was included as enhanced municipal services. The program is currently under review, but if Vegreville was able to access it, the Town would have to find at least one other municipality to partner with.

6.2.3 ALBERTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

In October 2015, the Government of Alberta accounted a new ministry: The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade provides leadership on the government's economic development efforts, and single-door access to information and support for businesses and investors. It is expected that new grant funding will be available through the Ministry to assist municipalities and economic development offices with various projects. Vegreville Economic Development should keep apprised of new programs.

6.3 Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION #1:

Short Term Business Development Opportunities/Actions for the Economic Development Officer

Rationale

The results of the Business Visitation Survey (BVS), conducted by Vegreville Economic Development, were reviewed and analyzed with an investment attraction lens. This initial research work provided valuable insight into the makeup of the business community of Vegreville. It was an excellent inventory of the businesses that responded and gave a sense of the scope of the Town's business activity. The Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Survey, conducted by Outlook Market Research, was designed specifically to gather knowledge and background to look into the growth potential future of the community.

When we combine the two research pieces, and apply our own municipal and regional economic development and business development backgrounds, several opportunities for immediate action emerge. These activities will build on the work already completed by Vegreville Economic Development and set the stage for strategies and tactics that will take longer to develop and implement.

It is important at this point in time to move to action. The BVS was begun in May 2014 and completed in April 2015 and the FDI interviews were completed over the summer and early fall of 2015. In all, 16 months have elapsed since this work was begun and it will be important to be seen as actively and intentionally following up on the results of the investment of time by the business community. While it is important to establish and maintain momentum, there are many opportunities emerging that will take longer to fully investigate, plan and implement. To not pay appropriate attention to the investigation and planning stages may lead to ultimate disappointment as opportunities to grow Vegreville are not fully successful. In short, as several businesses relayed during the FDI interviews, there is an expectation that someone will do something. And a quick demonstration of that intent to follow through will be well received by the business community.

Outputs

Some "quick wins" for Vegreville Economic Development include:

- *Business succession support to local business*
- *Business expansion support to existing business*
- *M&M Meats Franchise investigation*
- *Commercial zoning assessment*
- *Economic Development Strategy Process Planning*

To demonstrate its continued commitment to the success of the business community, and the economic prosperity of Vegreville, the following are suggested as immediate actions: Business

succession follow-up and support, support for local expanding businesses, M&M Meats follow-up and commercial zoning assessment.

Business Succession

Meet with all six of the businesses who indicated in the original BVS that they would be closing or scaling down their businesses in the next five years. All six of these businesses indicated that the reason for closure was retirement. This may be an indicator of a need to consider a strategy for dealing with business succession in the community. There has been significant work done in other rural communities to address this issue, both from a farm family perspective and from community economic development planning. Resources for this work include:

- Alberta Business Family Institute
- Farm Management Canada
- Rural Alberta Business Centres
- Alberta Community and Co-op Association
- Palliser Economic Partnership “Business Succession Planning Model”
- Alberta Treasury Branch

Our work in several rural communities suggests that small businesses close not for lack of market share or viability but because there was no buyer for the business. With six businesses considering closure due to retirement, it would be useful to meet with each one to determine how a succession plan could help. And what support the Economic Development office could provide.

Support Expansion of Existing Businesses

In the combined BVS and FDI surveys, 26 businesses indicated that they had expansion plans in the next five years, with the majority of those indicating that would occur in the next three years. Changes in the economy since the completion of the BVS may have had an impact on those plans. However, it is certainly worth visiting with these companies to update the information and look for opportunities to be of assistance. In interviews, several businesses provided details of their specific plans. However, due to the small sample size of interviews and the need for confidentiality for the respondents, these details are not included in this report. However, all of this information is accessible to the Economic Development Officer.

About 50% of those businesses indicating that they are considering expansion also indicated that they anticipated the permitting process to be a barrier to their plans. This perception could be a result of lack of familiarity with the process or there may be a gap in expectations of cycle time between business and Town administration. The Economic Development Officer can play a valuable role in supporting businesses through the permitting process to manage expectations or help businesses properly prepare applications. Planning and development professionals with the Town of Vegreville could assist business expansions by ensuring that expectations are clearly articulated and applied. Another role for planning and development could be continued diligence in meeting cycle time commitments and ensuring permits are issued in a timely manner, while still meeting the high due diligence standards of the municipality.

Investigate Franchises

The EDO should look at the viability of M&M Meat Shops, KFC franchises and clothing franchises. M&M Meat Shops is a franchised operation that requires a total investment of approximately \$400,000 - \$450,000 for a standard-size new store. Given the number of times that this outlet was name-mentioned in the surveys, it would be useful to contact their corporate office. The purpose of meeting would be to understand the requirements of the franchise in selecting a community as a location, and see if they would consider Vegreville. At present, M&M is seeking more franchisees in:

- Brooks
- Calgary - Deer Valley
- Camrose
- Edmonton - Namao Centre
- Edson
- Fort Saskatchewan
- Lethbridge - Fairmont
- St. Albert
- Whitecourt

A supporting activity would be to contact the municipal official responsible for economic development in each of the small market communities (Edson, Slave Lake, Hinton, Drayton Valley, and Whitecourt) which currently have an outlet. These professionals will be able to provide good background information. If this conversation does start to look promising, the survey forms will allow the EDO to match the comments on this opportunity to the business owners. There is then potential to match local businesses to the emerging opportunity.

Assess Commercial Zoning

Once there is clarity on which businesses, of the original 26, are moving forward with expansion plans, it will be useful to match those plans with potential sites and any zoning challenges that may be presenting. A discussion with the Town's planning professionals would be helpful to identify any potential pinch points in advance of applications for permits. This advance thinking and planning has potential to reduce cycle time and frustration in the business's expansion plans and implementation. The Area Structure Plans that are underway obviously fit into this effort.

Begin Economic Development Strategy Planning

Prior to beginning an economic development strategy, several steps need to be taken. Researching available grants and developing an RFP should be high on the priority list.

Outcomes

The five outputs described under EDO activities will support the outcomes of:

- maximized potential of investment from existing business
- increased investment to the community with new products and services
- a land use planning framework that supports business development while being a community planning best practice
- a clear and supported vision for Vegreville's economic future and prosperity

Estimated Cost

- These are internal functions of Vegreville Economic Development and Tourism, and as such all cost should be factored into the department's operating budget.

RECOMMENDATION #2: Economic and Tourism Development Strategy

Rationale

With many competing and attractive opportunities for investment expansion and attraction, communities find it useful to be strategic in their approach to economic growth. A focused and strategic approach supports the effective and efficient allocation of budget and time. By determining Vegreville's desired future and most likely ways to get there, Council and administration can support business owners who are the main players in economic growth.

Municipal governments have a role in creating a business friendly culture and ensuring that needed infrastructure is in place. There are times when a neutral voice and a confidential source of information are very useful to entrepreneurs considering a new venture or an expansion. By clearly understanding and respecting the importance of all players in economic development, communities move together toward prosperity.

The Town of Vegreville has recognized the value of economic development strategic planning and committed to moving this in its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. Under the goal, *Promote Economic Prosperity*, a key activity identified for 2014/15 was preparing an Economic and Tourism Development Strategic Plan. From the Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) between the Town of Vegreville and Minburn County, there is a clear interest to act with intention to grow Vegreville and the surrounding community. In particular, the Town and County will "collaborate with the Vegreville Chamber of Commerce, the Vegreville Economic Development Board and the Alberta Innovates Technology Futures (AITF) on economic development in the area." And, "The focus of collaboration will be on supporting expansion of existing development, and attracting new growth and development to support future job growth and diversification of employment opportunities in the area." The IDP also indicates that the parties see Alberta Innovates Technology Futures as an important partner in value-added manufacturing and product development.

With this understanding, and with Minburn County's current membership on the Economic Development Advisory Board, it may be useful to engage the County in the process of developing this new strategic document. The scope and nature of that engagement is a point to consider going forward.

Outputs

An Economic and Tourism Strategy that provides a solid roadmap will be widely supported in the community. Based on the work completed in this investment attraction project, it is recommended that the Town of Vegreville Economic and Tourism Development Strategy include the following components:

- *Situational analysis*
 - A review of the current economic development situation that is realistic and current. Included, but limited to, could be:

- an in-depth analysis of the current business environment. The Business Visitation Survey information will be current if the strategy is completed in the near-term.
- an in-depth analysis of the population, work force and growth patterns
- review of community amenities for attracting and retaining labour force. This includes a housing study.
- Analysis of trading area based on most current data and best practices.
- An analysis of commercial and industrial asset base (available and vacant land and buildings).
- A complete review of infrastructure (electricity, water, natural gas, communications, roadways, rail, highways, and water and sewer).
- Review of past economic development efforts to suggest adjustments in future work.
 - Home Hardware distribution centre recruitment (was there a competitive advantage that could have brought them to Vegreville?)
 - CMBS (Could the community have influenced viability?)
 - Canola crushing plant (was there an competitive advantage that could have brought them to Vegreville?)
 - Case Processing Centre (Anecdotally, it appears that this facility has increased local jobs but not grown local wealth through municipal taxes or increased business. This could be examined more closely and validated.)
- A review of current bylaw and taxation policy.
 - Opportunity and problem identification sometimes framed as a SWOT analysis
- *Vision, Values and Goals*
 - Determine Vegreville's preferred future and develop a values matrix to evaluate potential growth opportunities
- *Strategic Objectives*
 - A high level list of actions to be completed with timelines
 - Assessment of budget and human resources required
- *Roles and Responsibilities*
 - Determine who is responsible for which objectives and the accountability structures
- *Performance measures*
 - How will the community recognize success when it happens? This is unique to each community and reflects the vision and values and objectives developed as the foundation for the *Economic and Tourism Development Strategy*.
- *Commitment to success*
 - Plan for engagement through communication and celebration

Outcome

- Increased economic viability through job opportunities and population growth
- A vibrant, growing Vegreville that reflects the community's values

Estimated Cost

- \$50,000. This estimate takes into account a number of extra deliverables such as reviews of the trade area, infrastructure, and past economic development efforts. The process to create an Economic and Tourism Development Strategy in many ways will serve as a 'catch-all' for economic research activities identified as necessary in this Vegreville FDI Strategy and Work Plan.

RECOMMENDATION #3: Investment Attraction Marketing Infrastructure

Vegreville Economic Development is in need of an 'Investment Attraction Marketing Infrastructure'. Investment attraction, and indeed, much of economic development as a whole is based in the promotion of the community or region. Below are some activities that the Town should consider. They are broken into four sections:

1. Leverage Existing Vegreville Marketing Materials From Alberta HUB And EATC
2. Economic Development Branding
3. Marketing Collateral
4. Website Development

1. Leverage Existing Vegreville Marketing Materials from Alberta HUB and EATC

Rationale:

Alberta HUB, along with its Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor partners, have developed graphically sophisticated and informational in-depth marketing materials to promote Vegreville as one of its valued community members.

Outputs:

The link/downloads below should be embedded in the Vegreville Economic Development website at: <http://www.vegreville.com/municipal/community-services/economic-development-and-tourism> :

- Vegreville Online Community Profile:
<http://www.albertahub.com/profiles/?site=18>
- Vegreville Investment Fact Sheet:
http://www.easternalbertainfo.com/profiles/VegrevilleProfile_5_5_15v151657.pdf
- Vegreville Lifestyle Fact Sheet:
http://www.easternalbertainfo.com/profiles/VegrevilleLifestyle_16_9_15v164856.pdf

Alberta HUB will be rolling out a Community Training Manual so communities can edit parts of these marketing tools themselves, and then upload them back to the Alberta HUB, EATC and Vegreville websites.

Outcome:

- Immediate access to Vegreville-specific, sophisticated marketing materials that will support investment attraction and economic development efforts

Estimated Cost:

- \$0.00. The tools have all been developed as part of Vegreville's membership in Alberta HUB

2. Economic Development Branding

Rationale:

A serious investment attraction marketing effort starts with development of a brand that will effectively communicate the Town's value proposition to investors. Based on the in-depth research in this report, and the previous Business Visitation Project, the Town has a wealth of information of which to build a 'standalone brand', or a 'sub-brand' for the purposes of investment attraction or economic development:

- A 'standalone brand' would be used in conjunction with an investment attraction effort that is positioned as somewhat separate from the Town of Vegreville. This would mean the information and marketing effort designed to attract investment would be featured on a website that is fully independent from the Town of Vegreville website. Much like a Chamber of Commerce works with the Town, but is a separate entity. This methodology would mean that Vegreville Economic Development would "appear" as a standalone entity with a unique brand and message specifically targeted at inventors.
- A 'sub-brand' would be built into the existing Town of Vegreville website in an enhanced Economic Development section. It might be closer linked to the graphical 'feel' of the Town of Vegreville brand.

Note: these options do not require any administrative or structural change to Vegreville Economic Development. This can be purely a market positioning exercise.

Outputs:

The branding effort would be split into four steps:

1. Pre-Brand
 - Stakeholder workshops will take place in Vegreville at times and location(s) determined by the client. These will be 1.5 to 2 hour sessions that review the information gathered in this project and the BRE project, and seek new input to identify the unique characteristics of Vegreville, and gather ideas on how these characteristics might best be translated into a visual representation (i.e. logo and tagline). NOTE: This is usually the most costly portion of a branding process; but we would leverage the extensive research already collected by Vegreville Economic Development in this project and the BRE project.
2. Design
 - Based on the Logistics, Literature Review, Pre-Brand Engagement, the graphics team will design several brand options (logo with a tagline).
 - The consulting team will develop a series of sample taglines. The tagline is important, as it succinctly states the value proposition for people and companies to move to or remain in Vegreville. A tagline will be reviewed by the client, and once a tagline has been chosen, the graphics team will build brand image options.
 - The design process may heavily consider the look, feel and usage of the existing Vegreville brand, so that the regional brand (do you mean eco dev/investment brand?) we develop can be used in concert with the Town brand.

3. Client Review

- The client (Project Manager, Council, and Committee) will refine the brand options with the consulting team, eventually choosing a narrow set of images/taglines. These options will be presented to the stakeholders in a Post Brand meeting for review and further refinement.

4. Deliverable

- *Brand Files*

A complete set of electronic graphics files will be created and delivered to the client. This will include dozens of options suitable for laser printing, full press printing, website development, and any other design application. Files will include: CMYK, grayscale, solid, reverse, PDF, ESP, JPG, TIFF, etc. In short we will provide every file option Vegreville may need, and if in the future, further unforeseen options are required – we will provide those free of charge as well. Our team will always be available to support the Town of Vegreville.

- *Graphic Standards Manual (Brand Graphics Kit)*

This Manual will provide how the Vegreville logo can be displayed on all marketing materials and any other use, including the type of font, color and size to ensure a consistent look. Any re-production or use of the Vegreville logo has to be with permission of the Town. The client will be provided with the “designed material in formats” that can be easily duplicated.

Outcome:

- A graphical basis on which to build all future investment attraction and economic development efforts and marketing materials
- A tangible descriptor of how the Town of Vegreville wants to position itself and promote its strengths and assets.

Estimated Cost:

- \$12,000. This is a drastically reduced cost compared to open market rates. These types of branding efforts usually cost between \$30k and \$100k if done by a mid to high priced marketing firm. Vegreville has the significant benefit of voluminous stakeholder research collected by Vegreville Economic Development in this project and the BRE project; and if conducted by Outlook Market Research, we take into consideration the Town’s membership in Alberta HUB, which our firm has worked with for many years on a variety of marketing projects involving Vegreville.

3. Marketing Collateral

Rationale:

Part of the investment attraction effort should be the development of marketing collateral to support the efforts of Vegreville Economic Development. In order to attract investment, a graphically and technically sophisticated marketing presence is very helpful. The Economic

Development staff and Town representatives need to be able to decimate information about local assets and opportunities to investors in electronic and print format. These materials can be leveraged on the website, in social media, at tradeshow, or investor visits. What materials are developed is a determination that must be made by Vegreville Economic Development. Here are a few suggestions:

Outputs:

- *Vegreville Investment Profile*
Based on the desired investment focus of the Town, an investment profile could be developed that highlights local assets and opportunities. The profile would usually be four to eight pages in length, and come in a high resolution format for professional printing, as well as a low res file for easily downloadable web applications. This piece would leverage the new economic development brand.
- *Sector Profiles for Oil & Gas, Agriculture, Retail, Etc.*
Again leveraging the new brand, designing graphically sophisticated sector profiles for Oil & Gas, Agriculture, Retail, and any other sector desired by the Town. These would most likely be two page fact sheets, printable in a double sided format, and bled to the edges for full high res professional printing. We would also provide low res files for easily downloadable web applications.
- *Community Guide*
This would be a “lifestyle piece’ used by the Town and employers to attract new workers to reside in Vegreville. We would see this as another opportunity to leverage economies of scale in the production of the Investment Profile and Sector Profiles. If the Town provides the content, our graphics team can design the Community Guide in an electronic version for the web, and a high res version for printing. This could be a two to 12 page document depending on the wishes of the Town.
- *Business Cases and Opportunity Analysis*
Other Recommendations in this report include investigating the development of an Auto Park, looking at Seniors Housing potential, and investigating agricultural process opportunities that rely on Vegreville’s locational advantages. These will tend to be longer, in-depth reports, but if the results are positive, they could be developed into shorter, graphically sophisticated marketing pieces. They are usually four pages in length and come in a high resolution format for professional printing, as well as a low res file for easily downloadable web applications.
- *Banners*
An impactful promotional piece for conferences, trade show, and meetings are six foot high roll away banners. These banners can highlight the Town in general, sectors, quality of life, investment potential, etc.

- *Investment Folders*
A handy tool for conferences, trade show, and meetings heavy stock promotional folders that can carry 8.5X11 marketing pieces as well as business cards

Outcome:

- Support of the Economic Development Department in promoting the Town and its efforts to attract investment

Estimated Cost:

- Profiles, Cases, Etc.: \$6,000 to \$18,000 per unit. It is very difficult to solidify a cost without specifically scoping the depth of each piece. They range from two to 12 pages, and require varying degrees of content development. But due to economies of scale, the more pieces that are ordered, the cost per unit comes down significantly.
- Banners: \$3,500 per unit including printing and stand
- Folders: \$2,000 for design – printing extra.

4. Website Development

Rationale:

It is difficult to underestimate the importance of a well-designed economic development website. Quite simply, it is the informational and marketing portal for all your organization’s investment attraction efforts. The best investment attraction efforts involve comprehensive, integrated brand/website/database/marketing material development.

Outputs:

The methodology and deliverables in a website development project obviously vary widely based on the needs and budget of the client. Here is an overview of our “typical” methodology:

1. *Architecture Design (Full Content Review, Rewrite, And Reorg)*
 - A content gathering and review should be exhaustive and thorough. In consultations with the client, the developer must present a proposed website architecture that will maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the website, all while promoting the new brand. The developer must have extensive knowledge regarding how to develop, design and feature economic development content in a web platform.
2. *Technical Scoping*
 - A very significant part of the design process must be the scoping of technical considerations. The consulting team should produce a recommended methodology for the re-development of the website. Major considerations include: security, hosting, ease of use, maintenance methods and cost, integration of marketing materials, integration of data, integration of member community websites, community access protocols, editing environment, etc.

- Note: The consulting team should review synergies with the website and database technologies developed for Alberta HUB and EATC. Strong consideration will be given in regards to integrating the marketing materials into the back end of the website in order for easy, multi user editing and maintenance – much like the editable Fact Sheet environment that is featured on the HUB/EATC websites.

3. *Front Page Design*

- Using the research/deliverables from the branding process, marketing material development (regional profile, etc.), technical scoping, and architecture redesign, we will develop a front page for a new Vegreville Economic Development website.

4. *Back Page Design*

- A template for the second and third levels of the website will also be designed. This process must be heavily informed by the Architecture Design, as the content will govern the navigability of the site.

5. *The Build*

a) Review of Technical Requirements

- Review of Hosting Requirements: The proposed host would need to offer support for: PHP, My SQL and Database. The proposed website would be “Dynamic” and would use Design Templates and Style Sheets to generate webpages from Database content.
- DNS Procurement
- Identify Website Host and Create Account with Host
- Review of Email Services and Potential Migration of Email Accounts to new Host (if required / requested)
- Review of Web 2.0 Requirements / Standards (Include links to Social Media i.e. Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, RSS Feeds, etc.)- these features are only useful if there are active Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts for users to connect to.
- Review of Search Engine Optimization strategies

b) Review of overall Website Content and Information Architecture (Based on all content provided by client)

- During this phase, the proposed content of the website is identified, approved, organized and prepared for insertion into the website.

c) Design / Layout of Website Interface and Navigational System based on Information Architecture Review

- The purpose of this phase is to create an overall design for the website including the Navigational System and to organize all content into appropriately named sections and subsections so as to present information to users in the most intuitive manner possible.

d) Construction of Website

- Includes: Design of Database structure (based on Information Architecture), construction of overall Design Templates, formatting of content (Style Sheets), insertion of content, testing, etc.
- e) Development of RTE Content Management System (CMS) allowing client to globally edit website content. Includes:
- Administration Panel (used to assign password protected administrative editing privileges to designated staff members.)
This panel allows for the creation of:
 - one or more Super Administrators (top level control of administrative privileges and editing access to all pages contained in the site)
 - lower level Content Administration privileges (allowing designated individuals access to the editing environment (either discreet content pages or site wide content))
 - RTE Editing: Content Management System (CMS)
NOTES: The CMS functions by allowing authorized users to access / edit existing database content on the server via their web browsers. Certain browsers are preferable to others (to be determined - TBD).
 - The CMS will allow designated content managers to add / remove / edit content (graphics, photos, documents, text and hyperlinks) in all existing website pages
 - in some cases, the CMS could allow for the creation of new pages (subsections) within existing sections (TBD)
- f) Upload, testing and CMS training
- Once the website construction phase is complete and the site fully tested, the site would be made “live” on the server. Configuration of the CMS administrative panel and training for content managers in the use of the CMS would also be required

Outcome:

- This information and marketing tool is the cornerstone in all inbound and outbound promotional efforts to attract investment. It will aid in the attraction and retention of business in the short, medium and long term.

Estimated Cost:

- \$40,000 to \$60,000, depending on the depth of the content, and sophistication of the technical and graphical environment.

RECOMMENDATION #4: Auto Mall Retail Node

Rationale

This retail node would be built on the three established and already successful automotive dealers in Vegreville. These are Vegreville Ford, Grant Miller Motors Ltd. and Maddigan Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram. Examples of automobile developments, notably in Wetaskiwin, have proven to be excellent additions to local economic development diversification strategies. This business case would have some unique features with existing dealerships agreeing that their own business proposition would be strengthened by bringing a competitor to their local market. One consideration in this specialized market, automobiles, is brand loyalty.

Preliminary discussions with the three businesses already operating in this location and sector consider three related questions:

- Is there viability for an automall in Vegreville?
- How would the introduction of another, differentiated, foreign automobile dealer enhance the automall value proposition?
- What is the business case for a foreign dealership in Vegreville?

While this action concentrates on the retail sector at the west end of Vegreville, there could be additional expansion to include complementary and supporting business throughout Vegreville. The Garage introduces an opportunity to expand the branding to include automotive themed attractions and create a tourism node that builds off the auto mall concept. These automotive aficionados could generate increased business for food services and accommodation. Other businesses in Vegreville will also benefit from increased traffic generated by the auto mall. This could include the registries companies, insurance companies, tire shops and others.

Outputs

In the exploration of the potential for an expanded auto retail sector in Vegreville, two outputs will be created:

- A business case for an Auto Mall marketing consortia
- A business case for a fourth auto dealer specifically offering a foreign brand

Automall Business Case – Marketing Consortia

The Business Case for an automall marketing consortia could be independent but linked to the new dealership. This plan is quickly actionable and could be undertaken in parallel to the attraction of an additional dealership. The ability to leverage this node to its maximum benefit would be reliant on a collaborative approach with the businesses already present. The Automall Consortia Business Case should include:

- Market/Needs Assessment
- Analysis of Competing/Complementary business-industry
- Financial Plan –Operations
- Operational – how would the marketing consortia be run?

- Marketing Plan

| | |
|---|---|
| Review Background Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional BRE research and planning • Case study compilation and analysis • Potential secondary partners engagement |
| Business Philosophy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values and aims • Desired outcomes • Policy and strategy |
| Market Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-demographic data • Competition analysis • Supporting documentation • Needs Assessment • Would a fourth differentiated dealership support the consortia model? |
| Justification of the Proposed Consortia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review need identification process/needs assessment |
| Draft Consortia Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management structure • Products and services • Staffing • Marketing strategy • Finance and admin |
| Marketing Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding • Activity plan • Performance measurement and tracking • Budget and sources |
| Recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option selection • Recommendations |

Automall with New Automotive Dealership

The table below outlines sections that should be considered in a Business Case *Layout*. This Automall Business Case would include a foreign automobile dealership located in close proximity to the existing dealerships. The availability of land for a fourth dealership is a critical consideration. Hence the extra focus on the land and the facility.

The Business Case for a new automotive dealership should include:

- Market/Needs Assessment for the business
- Analysis of Competing/Complementary business-industry
- Financial Plan – Capital and Operations
- Operational
- Human Resources Plan
- Marketing Plan

| | |
|--|--|
| Review Background Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional BRE research and planning • Corporate policies and plans • Zoning and taxation analysis |
| Business Philosophy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values and aims • Desired outcomes • Policy and strategy |
| Market Analysis | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-demographic data • Competition analysis • Supporting documentation • Needs Assessment |
| Justification of the Proposed Business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review need identification process/needs assessment |
| Draft Management Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management structure • Products and services • Staffing • Marketing strategy • Finance and admin |
| Concept Design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Elements • Management needs • Functional requirements • Plan and layout • Finishes • Sustainable elements |
| Location Rationale | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental • Statutory planning and regulations • Demographic • Transport and Logistics |
| Design/Technical Practicability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building and technical systems • Evaluation of technical design options |
| Capital Costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital cost estimates • Sources of capital funds • Capital cash flow • Life-cycle analysis |
| Capital Operating Income and Expenditure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial forecasts - 20 years • Cash flow analysis • Profit and loss • Breakeven analysis • Sensitivity analysis • Life-cycle analysis |
| Recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option selection • Recommendations |

Outcomes

Completion of business cases focused on the automotive retail sector could lead to:

- Strengthened retail sector
- Increased traffic with potential to build supply chain, tourism and other businesses

Estimated Cost:

- A business case for an Auto Mall marketing consortia: \$20,000-\$30,000
- A business case for a fourth auto dealer: \$20,000-\$30,000

RECOMMENDATION #5: Seniors Services Study

Rationale

Housing is a built asset that supports tax base and creates wealth generation. The Municipal Census completed in 2012 provides a rich source of demographic data. The fact that Vegreville has a high percentage of seniors in all age cohorts past 65 years is a good indicator of the need to understand their goods and services needs.

A critical decision in retaining and attracting seniors is the availability of appropriate housing. The age and condition of the housing inventory in Vegreville needs to be understood to determine the likely demand for more age-specific housing.

Anecdotally, we know that as people age they want to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. The step to move into a manor or even a seniors' apartment or condo development is often traumatic and seen as a loss of independence. The analysis of the density of seniors by census zone opens the possibility that a large number of seniors are currently living in single dwelling homes and will need to transition into other accommodations in the not-too-distant future. Understanding the magnitude of this situation creates the opportunity to assess a number of business opportunities associated with independent living.

Possible lines of questioning in the Study are:

- Age of residents
- Number of residents per household
- Age of house and square footage
- Annual maintenance costs
- Current unaddressed maintenance issues
- Services that help extend the residency in their own home
- What options would be attractive for the next housing option
- What time frame would they anticipate moving to another housing option

The study would also help predict the number and age of houses likely to come into the real estate market and when that might happen. Depending on the results, opportunities for infill housing or starter homes may emerge. Housing stock can be an asset in any community's investment attraction strategy. New employees need new homes, which are appropriately priced and in attractive neighbourhoods. An opening up of that stock through attrition might be an opportunity to be creative in attracting and retaining labour and supporting investment.

Outputs

- A demographic analysis and housing inventory that will predict opportunities for retaining younger seniors, identify transition strategies within Vegreville for aging residents, and identify opportunities to capitalize on vacated homes.
- A needs assessment for seniors support services/businesses.

- An opportunity analysis that suggests the most beneficial and viable opportunities to support seniors and grow the Vegreville economy.

Outcomes

A clear understanding of the housing stock in Vegreville, particularly tied to seniors, could lead to:

- Expansion of businesses offering services that support seniors to stay in their own homes
- Attraction of purpose built housing for seniors who are transitioning out of private dwellings
- A strategic approach to repurposing and leveraging the vacated housing stock

Estimated Cost:

- \$50,000-\$60,000

RECOMMENDATION #6: **Regional Agricultural Processing Opportunity Analysis**

Rationale

Development of the agricultural processing/manufacturing industry in Vegreville was listed repeatedly by stakeholders as a means to attract new investment to the Town. It is a sensible recommendation for numerous reasons. These are some areas that warrant more specific research:

- *Canola*

With a long agricultural history, the rural areas surrounding Vegreville support 1,911 farms in the Counties of Lamont, Minburn and Two Hills (2011 Agricultural Census). The area shows particular strength in growing canola having 7% of that crop's acres under cultivation in Alberta in 2011. Based on the 878 farms active in producing canola, these farms are just under the average acres under cultivation in the province at 478.93/farm compared to 510.7/farm. It would appear there is opportunity for further assessment of the region's ability to support further canola processing.

Canola crushing facilities currently exist in Lloydminster (ADM) and in Camrose (Cargill). Cargill (Camrose) opened in July 2015 and this opening was referenced in interviews conducted over the summer. Richardson and Viterra are also active in canola processing and do not have presence in north eastern Alberta at this time. There is an opportunity to gain clarity about Vegreville's competitive advantages in this market and to build a value proposition for locating a canola crushing plant close by. This opportunity analysis should include an assessment of the opportunity to encourage employees to locate in Town, maximizing the economic impact to the municipality and the community.

- *Hemp*

An emerging opportunity is in industrial hemp with the AITF in Vegreville conducting research and growing test plots. This work is supporting the development of strains that grow successfully in northern Alberta climates. From a producer perspective, hemp sells for .80/lb in comparison to canola at .18/lb (2014). An acre of hemp yields about \$700, 1.5 times the value of canola and 3-4 times the value of coarse grains. While there is increasing interest on the grower side, there is a shortage of processing capacity for seeds and fibre in Alberta.

AITF has a small processing facility in Vegreville and is gaining an international reputation as a knowledge centre on industrial hemp. While the \$30m cost of a full scale facility is a barrier, there is some optimism surrounding industrial hemp and Vegreville is well placed to compete for this opportunity. Its competitive advantages might include: solid agricultural base, rail and highway transportation infrastructure, the presence of AITF. AITF, Minburn County and the Province of Alberta may be likely partners in this opportunity analysis. Supporting the strength of interest in industrial hemp, a number of

regional economic development organizations are partnering to present hemp growing workshops throughout northeastern Alberta in November and December 2015.

- *Viterra Elevator*
Interviewees mentioned the potential opening of a Viterra elevator about 2 miles outside of Vegreville in 2017. The presence of this facility will further strengthen Vegreville's presence as an agriculture centre. As this development moves closer, the opportunity for Vegreville will be in working with the proponent to assist in locating some of the projected 40-50 employees into Town.
- *Meat Processing*
Successful local operators are present in Vegreville and there was support for increasing this sector in the area. There are current businesses that process meat for retail markets and also do custom slaughtering. With these operations already in place, supportive economic development activity may yield further local industry diversity and strength.
- *Biomass*
Vegreville has recently attracted Emergent Waste Solutions, a Canadian company that turns waste into fuel. The new processing facility in Vegreville is focussed on used tires as a feedstock for generating fuel through the pyrolysis process. Conversation with the CEO of EWS confirms that agricultural waste, biomass, could also be used as feedstock in pyrolysis. This use of a local product may provide another stream of business for EWS and should be taken up.

Note: In the early to mid-2000's, biofuel was discussed as an emerging opportunity for farmers in Alberta and this was certainly the case in Vegreville. This processing opportunity was mentioned in interviews in the community with questions about why an anticipated biofuel plant did not open in Vegreville. Preliminary research reveals that the lack of public funding after the economic crisis of 2008 and the lack of government grant programs going forward has caused this opportunity to dry up.

Outputs

Given the diversity of the agricultural industry in the Vegreville area, it is not surprising that there are several promising actions for follow-up.

- Canola Crushing Opportunity Assessment
- Hemp Processing Opportunity Assessment
 - Developed working relationship with AITF on local industry development
- Liaison with Viterra to support staff locations from elevator opening
- Agricultural Biomass Opportunity Assessment
 - Working with Emergent Waste Solutions

Outcomes

- Diversification within a strong and well –supported industry
- Increased Vegreville population

Estimated Cost:

- \$40,000-\$70,000 depending on the number of opportunities investigated.

6.4 Summary of Key Recommendations

| FIGURE 9: Vegreville Town Administration and Economic Development Activities Timing | | |
|---|--|---|
| Short Term | Medium Term | Long Term |
| <p>Immediate EDO Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Succession Support • Business Expansion Support • M&M Meats follow-up • Commercial zoning assessment • Analysis of BVP results • Planning for Tourism and Economic Development Planning Process <p>Completion of Tourism and Economic Development Strategy</p> | <p>Tourism and Economic Development Strategy implementation</p> <p>Business case for Auto Mall Consortia and implementation</p> <p>Business case for fourth automobile dealership</p> <p>Senior housing study</p> <p>Opportunity assessment for food processing facility</p> <p>Opportunity assessment for distribution centre</p> | <p>Expansion of auto mall concept to develop supply chain</p> <p>Feasibility study for food processing facility</p> <p>Feasibility study for distribution centre</p> <p>Expansion of housing and goods and services for seniors</p> |

Appendix 1: Client Information Sheet Sample

INVESTOR/COMPANY INFORMATION

Date _____
Completed by: _____
Source of Referral: _____

PROSPECT COMPANY

Company Name: _____
Contact : _____
Title: _____
Address: _____

Province /State : _____ Postal /Zip Code: _____
-Country : _____
Email: _____
Website: _____

COMPANY PROFILE

Type of Business: _____
HQ Location: _____
Years in Business _____ No. Current Employees _____
No. New Employees at Site _____
CHECK ONE: Relocation Expansion Start -Up
Market Destinations? _____
Origin of goods/raw materials? _____

SEARCH INFORMATION

Site Preference: (check one) Building Land
 Building w/Land for Expansion
Desired Occupancy Date: _____
Transaction Type: (check one) Lease Buy Lease or Buy
Proposed Uses: Warehouse Distribution
(check all that apply) Tourism Recreation Manufacturing
 Assembly R&D

[] Accommodation [] Office
 [] Other: _____
 Transportation: On Port (Y/N) _____ On Rail (Y/N) _____
 On Public Transportation (Y/N) _____

PROPERTY SPECIFICATIONS

| If Building: | Minimum | Maximum |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|
| Total SF | _____ | _____ |
| SF Manufacturing | _____ | _____ |
| SF Warehouse | _____ | _____ |
| SF Office | _____ | _____ |
| Lot Size (SF) | _____ | _____ |
| Required Ceiling Height | _____ | _____ |
| # of Parking Spaces | _____ | _____ |
| # of Loading Docks | _____ | _____ |
| Free Standing ? (Yes/No) | _____ | |
| # of Floors | _____ | _____ |
| Expansion Sq. Ft. | _____ | _____ |

| If Land: | Minimum | Maximum |
|---------------------|---------|---------|
| Total Acreage | _____ | _____ |
| Build-out (Sq. Ft.) | _____ | _____ |

Utility Needs
 Electrical Service _____ (Amps) _____ (Volts) _____ (Phase)
 Gas _____
 Water _____ (GPD)
 Sewer _____ (Discharge) On-site septic ok? _____
 Communications Service _____

LABOUR

Staff Numbers Needed _____ Management Numbers Needed _____
 Staff Skills Needed _____
 Management Skills Needed _____
 Educational facilities Needed _____

NEEDS RANKING

| Need | Description | Rank |
|------|-------------|-------|
| Land | _____ | _____ |

| | | |
|------------------------|-------|-------|
| Building | _____ | _____ |
| Transportation | _____ | _____ |
| Infrastructure | _____ | _____ |
| Utilities | _____ | _____ |
| Labour | _____ | _____ |
| Educational Facilities | _____ | _____ |
| Other | _____ | _____ |
| Other | _____ | _____ |
| Other | _____ | _____ |

PROPOSED PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

Comments:

Sites Needed by

Appendix 2: Sample Interview Responses

Below is sample of **verbatim** responses to two questions from group 2. “FDI questions only (for previous BVS respondents)”. This was the largest cohort in the sample. No sorting or analysis provided.

The full raw data set will be provided, in confidence to Maureen Easton and Laurie Evans.

| Q2. Which industry sector(s) do you believe are likely to most significantly contribute to the future economy of Vegreville? Feel free to check more than one response. | | |
|--|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Accommodations | 29.6% | 16 |
| Primary Agriculture | 90.7% | 49 |
| Agricultural support services | 77.8% | 42 |
| Agricultural Processing | 64.8% | 35 |
| Arts, Entertainment/Recreation | 13.0% | 7 |
| Construction | 51.9% | 28 |
| Education | 27.8% | 15 |
| Finance & Insurance | 13.0% | 7 |
| Food Services | 31.5% | 17 |
| Healthcare | 55.6% | 30 |
| Oil/Gas | 51.9% | 28 |
| Oil/Gas support services | 57.4% | 31 |
| Retail Trade | 59.3% | 32 |
| Professional Services | 20.4% | 11 |
| Manufacturing | 74.1% | 40 |
| Transportation and Logistics | 42.6% | 23 |
| Wholesale Trade | 25.9% | 14 |
| NAICS Code or other category | | 8 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 54 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 0 |

| Q3. What new or expanded businesses/services in Vegreville would be most beneficial to the local economy? | |
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| Answer Options | Response Count |
| | 54 |
| answered question | 54 |
| skipped question | 0 |
| Number | Response Text |
| 1 | College or university satellite. Light or medium industry - processing or manufacturing. Research and development - AITF for the agricultural industry. Auto dealership (Japanese) to create an auto-mile. Recreational theme park. Miniature railway; something to build around the Pysanka theme. Biodiesel. |
| 2 | Add to Immigration Centre. Lilydale. Slaughterhouse. Oil and Gas - maybe a refinery. Healthcare - something to draw people into our healthcare system. Two Hills has rehab centre. Mundare is a stroke centre. Vermilion does colonoscopies. Need to focus on developing the health centre in Vegreville. Hospital is a big place to start. No baby doctor in town. No reason for that. Lots of long term care. The hospital is empty. Aging population and no diagnostic facilities. Need more specialized education and services. |
| 3 | Not aware of businesses in Vegreville. No opinion |
| 4 | Manufacturing - empty buildings are available. Food service company - producing food products (Bab Jenny's) example) Head or corporate offices from government or major utilities. Jobs are well paying. Need to increase population so that other service industries benefit. Oil and gas, jobs, relocation of people here. Lay's potato chips - rail and highway accessibility. Industry that supports foreign workers are good and they are hard working. Want to buy houses. |
| 5 | Something like Millennium Place but smaller scale. Could include a movie or performance theatre, some kind of perogy restaurant. Two/twin arenas. College - AG and trades, welding. Similar to Olds (something smaller) Private school focused on smaller class sizes. Another utility like ATCO Electric. Employs many people. Long term employees who stay in the community. College could also offer training for utilities. Wholesale trade might work but depends on type of wholesaler and pre-existing business. Furniture maybe. |
| 6 | Biofuel - why didn't it go? Meat processing (was it Gainers) should work well with spin off. Transportation - because of geography could be better utilized. |
| 7 | Treat Vegreville like a major pit stop between Edmonton and Lloydminster. Food service, gasoline alley. Continue to support farming. Without farming Vegreville would die. |
| 8 | Anything for families to do together. Playhouses, party venues. People go to the city for that and want to spend money on it. Food and drink industry. More options. Family oriented entertainment. Health food and alternative health is lacking in the area. More retail shopping, consumer goods and services. Retailers and franchises for clothing. Shop and spend and have a good time. |
| 9 | Healthcare is very important. Hospital is underused. No babies delivered in Vegreville. Assisted living and other facilities for seniors. Some type of manufacturing where there were a number of employees. Could lead to attracting young families. Could be food processing or some type of factory. When AGT was there, the community was very vibrant. That closure was a blow to the community. Something like that to attract young families would have a ripple effect. Looking for a global player. |
| 10 | Healthcare related. Aging population. Farmers retiring and could be into Vegreville. Sporting complex - would spin-off other opportunities and needed to attract people. |

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| 11 | Manufacturing best bet. Brings people in to work. Hospital is key. Should have a birthing room. There are no retailers in clothing, ladies wear and men's wear, no shoe store, jewelry, gun shop. Too close to Edmonton for retail to develop here. Is that proximity an asset to work with? |
| 12 | Agricultural processor - less cyclical. Employs people. Growing plants using LED-controlling the environment. Hotels still operating at capacity in current economy. Something physical that needs a location. Manufacturing would have to be the right fit. Aging population - long-term care support services. Maybe a tax processing centre. Fab shops - lots of people work "out" in oil and gas. Maybe a tax processing centre?? |
| 13 | Food, hospitality good for bringing people to town, ATCO has big storage facility. County focused on agriculture and processing |
| 14 | Need a new significant industry and then market the town. Manufacturing focused on agriculture industry. Training specific to agriculture industry. Transportation and logistics is critical. Get truck stop, truck repairs, transport truck servicing. Healthcare, particularly for seniors. Better hospital. Small business will not make enough of a difference. Need available land. |
| 15 | Manufacturing - whatever works in Leduc/Nisku would work in Vegreville. Distribution centres. oil and gas sector that needs land, manufacturing with 100-200 jobs, Employees spend money. |
| 16 | Childcare - makes labour force more accessible. Mental health therapist. Agriculture is a draw and strength to the local economy. More retail would keep more dollars in town. Shoe stores. Keep local dollars circulating. |
| 17 | Manufacturing - competitive advantage is lower land and development costs, good transportation, and employee wages tend to be lower. Plan for making strawboard - what happened to that? (Commodity prices). Would up their prices of bales. Business that would take what is already produced agriculturally, already growing. |
| 18 | Primary agriculture could provide opportunity for distribution centres. Finance - ATB could make Vegreville their centre. Vegreville is a bit of a banking centre. Biodiesel. There could be an amalgamation of ag support. Could be a good distribution centre. Take advantage of the highway. Easy access for truckers. CMBS - was a good example. Distribution centre. Can't see manufacturing coming to Vegreville - is too small. |
| 19 | Accommodation is a support to events, temporary housing for industry (ATCO transmission line was an experience to reference). Mennonite community shops in Vegreville. Ezee-On/Buhler and ag dealers build community. Need something big enough to draw families - a hub industry. Do we utilize the farming community enough? Primary agriculture is the main strength and Vegreville is a hub for agriculture support services. Agricultural processing would be significant is something big enough was attracted. Food services don't hurt but not a economic driver. Everything closes down at 9pm. Lots of opportunity in health care. Vegreville is on the edge of primary oil and gas. Highway is an asset as are cheaper taxes and land for oil and gas attraction. Retail trade attraction should be for core businesses and small retailers. Find the right mix of manufacturers and draw in people with professions and skills. Specialized training facility. Distribution centre. Industry. Larger retail or manufacturing. Head quarters fro a corporation. Need to draw new families. |
| 20 | Active hospital that does surgery, there are other services to get attached to that. Brand name stores draw people to town. People then go to other places. More variety to keep people in Vegreville. Are Love's and Kotelko's a contributor? |
| 21 | Trucking companies. Oil and Ga - similar to RJV. Agricultural goods/services create spin-off. Manufacturing - CMBS - good spin-off to local companies. Need to understand CMBS failure. |

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| 22 | <p>New hospital could drive the economy - more skilled jobs. RJV is significant. Arts/entertainment/recreation secondary - helps town by bringing people. Look for potential to land big fish. Accommodation needs are filled. Pomeroy supports local events.</p> <p>Favour expansion of existing - you know it is proven. Small incremental increases will be great. Need lawyers - more capacity.</p> <p>A grain terminal, people wouldn't have to haul so far, provide seed and chemicals. Bring jobs and construction phase employment.</p> |
| 23 | <p>Biggest business in town is government. Retail trade brings people to town. Manufacturing generates a ton of jobs. Recreation in particular is important. The immigration centre generates employment and spinoff.</p> <p>Manufacturing - more employees create more local business. Arts/Recreation - Recreation/sports events build the local economy.</p> |
| 24 | <p>Construction would spin-off of other developments. Retail trade will be conditional on other growth. Might need lawyers. Would like to see a manufacturer move into CMBS Building. Manufacturing or building. CMBS was a good business for Vegreville but not viable so something steady is needed.</p> |
| 25 | <p>Problem is the lack of available services and development ready land. Oil and gas is not geographically close but still important and significant. Look at Bio-Energy in County of Two Hills.</p> <p>Construction opportunity is in commercial and light industrial</p> <p>Vantage spins benefits to local businesses. Oil operation - TransAlta, Like ATCO - a corporate location.</p> |
| 26 | Jobs, housing , repair services, parts, industrial supply |
| 27 | <p>Potential for call centres. Wholesale trade could work based on land prices and location and access to major markets. Would like to see another dentist, another accounting firm. Need to promote local legal and accounting services. Rural Alberta Centres of Excellence - were suggested. Medical services are in short supply. Internet/connectivity - tie it to the needs of the existing businesses. Could link to local opportunities. RJV - has technology potential. The big pharmacies - Walmart and No-Frills- are killing the smaller ones. In Vegreville things are done on the cheap.</p> |
| 28 | <p>New recreation facility - indoor : As a traffic creator. Bring people to town. Current facilities are dated. Needs to be planned long term 20-25 years.</p> <p>Home builder. Need all the sub-trades. Exclusively residential. Focus of existing builders is on commercial and industrial.</p> <p>Biodiesel - and manufacturing - would create more opportunity for local sub-trades.</p> |
| 29 | <p>Bring new people, sustain existing business and promote new business growth.</p> <p>Manufacturing - RJV as example - Oilfield support. Just to impact population and growth.</p> <p>Auto dealer - foreign. More restaurants would be good but not sure it would benefit the economy. Another industry created - increased demand for housing. Construction, small business.</p> |
| 30 | <p>Need a balanced diversified economy. Don't sell ourselves well (the advantages of living in Vegreville). Need to be aggressive about bringing people to town. We need to increase the number of people in town, more families. Aim for high income employees. ATCO as an example that brings people.</p> <p>New job creation. Have a really good mix already. Need consistent growth to support new business. Start with building population. Once the population hits the right numbers, the chains can come. Retail would come then.</p> |
| 31 | <p>Agriculture is the primary sector, oil and gas is not as significant. Logistics/Warehousing - spin off from Highway 16. Highway 16 and railway are important assets. Something in the ag processing sector. Good linkage to exist in industry.</p> |

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| 32 | Believe Ag is 50% and everything else is 50%. With oil and gas, when the money is there, disposal income is high. Finance and insurance are supporters of the community but doesn't bring in people. Definitely need more retail. Hotels generate spinoff - people use local services and buy vehicles. |
| 33 | Vegreville is mostly about Agriculture. Tried to get an Ethanol plant out of town. Aging population. RJV is a big client. Good portion of economic generation is retail. For manufacturing - RJV and Buhler. Food services - build it and they will come - attracts people. Food services - build it and they will come. Attracts people. Manufacturing. Government offices - brings employment, people, supports the mix) Foreign automotive dealership - bring more people into town and create tax base. |
| 34 | Food services - not sure how meaningful or impactful but would add. Healthcare is a big factor and in Vegreville cannot deliver babies because no staff. Retail trade is a tough go because a small town doesn't support it. Vegreville needs lawyers. Cost of manufacturing is high in Canada but light manufacturing is good as an opportunity. Challenge is making the community attractive. More doctors would impact the local economy. Medical - MRI, Diagnostics. The small local market is limiter. Availability of good clean real estate that is affordable. |
| 35 | Costco - big box, Cross Iron Mills. Something to bring people to town, name draw. Shopping opportunities. Tourism is not an opportunity because not a destination. Heavy industry - like ATCO to expand. |
| 36 | Seniors are important but looking for a mixture in the population. Creates balance in development. Entertainment/pleasure activities, sports activities. Conventions and conferences. - getting better facilities for sport and recreation/ arts and culture. |
| 37 | The potential for Professional services depends on the diversity of the local economy. Food services - always a good drawing card. Need to understand saturation point. Stationery supplies, furniture outlet - Leon's etc. One-stop shop - like Home Depot. Larger box stores. Location is important. Need to consider drawing traffic into the heart of the community. |
| 38 | Agricultural processing - product locally grown, would send out a finished or semi-finished product. More jobs, more spin-off. Oil and gas industry supports - still important to NE Alberta. Demand still there for final product. Major agricultural centre - farmers come to Vegreville for service centres, implement dealers, there is spin off there. |
| 39 | There are a lot of family businesses in Vegreville. Commercial taxes - are high. Vegreville is 20% higher than Vermilion and St. Paul. Need to create a more attractive tax base. Small business - employing 6 - 10 people. Focus on attracting small businesses. |
| 40 | CMBS - facility might work for a trucking facility. Restaurants - Tim's draws people in off the highway. Good for stopping in. Hotels. About creating traffic off the highway. Retail - need another home centre. Not alot of oil and gas in this area. Not a lot of opportunity for that. Ag sector provides more longevity. Oil and Gas is more cyclical. |
| 41 | Arts and entertainment are important as quality of life attraction for people. Food services are not a significant contributor but would be helpful. Want to make sure that the Ag sector is served. Agriculture is consistent and not impacted much by oil. Manufacturer - creates jobs, attracts new people, spin off jobs. Consider tax concessions to attract new business. Comfortable with that within reason. Agricultural processing - good for existing industry, creates jobs and spinoff. Consider tax relief on land for development. Crushing plant to create ethanol was proposed, what happened with that? ATCO is a big presence and increasing. Bringing in quality jobs. |

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| 42 | <p>Diversification - Need something to expand the local customer base. Manufacturing creates a customer base. Buhler ex - spin-off to supplies worldwide. Need something bigger to create employment and spinoff' Logistics - have the highway. Ex - Home Hardware distribution centre in Wetaskiwin. Builds tax base in buildings, must have infrastructure to support.</p> <p>Vegreville needs and industrial area - NE area now. There is a shortage of develop-able land and needs to be serviced. County has same problem east of County shop is just an open field. Perception is reality - so if they see nothing there, they can't see the opportunity. Before we go forward attraction activity need to have land. This is the most important thing " You can't market something you don't have." "If I'm and industrial guy, where am I going to build?" Needs roads and services. County and Town need to be ready for the developer. Vermilion has an industrial area.</p> |
| 43 | <p>Older people - more ageing in place that is affordable. Could lead to more housing opening. Gives young people a better reason to stay and to come back. Better/proper planning. More decisions based on what is good for the town. Develop a vision, determine what is best and stick to it.</p> <p>Parkland County - Acheson - only putting value-added industry into the park.</p> |
| 44 | <p>Two areas - agriculture and retirement. They support other businesses. Lots of retirement homes. Need attractions to appeal to those. More unique shops- families of retired people come here, so need to offer them something to do, something to spend money on. Very few stores open downtown on Saturday.</p> |
| 45 | <p>There is a lack of trained drivers - would buy more trucks if more drivers available. Manufacturers will keep people here. Education will keep people here. Agricultural processing of some kind.</p> |
| 46 | <p>Seniors care - potential but jobs not particularly well paid. Need full bus service. Needed for business product delivery. Sears outlet. Value-added agricultural processing. Bio-diesel operation using lower quality canola. Job creation is most critical. Need to increase # of families - they spend more money.</p> |
| 47 | <p>Some form of ag processing. Alfalfa pellet plant. Because Ag is the back bone. Support to other things going on here already. Feel strongly about the good primary agriculture base and the potential for processing.</p> |
| 48 | <p>Focus on long term sustainable job development. Trade oriented - Fab shops that employ trades people that will generate better paying jobs resulting in more local spin-off. Retail - more mid-range chains and franchises. Professional services - to get more downtown.</p> |
| 49 | <p>Retail - UFA; lumber, hardware. More advertising opportunities and more cost-effective advertising is needed.</p> |
| 50 | <p>2nd construction company - builders, commercial and residential. Difficult to get quotes in Vegreville. Local business is not fast to respond and not focused on timelines.</p> |
| 51 | <p>Oil and gas are secondary to agriculture. ATV - 2nd dealer but not sure viable. Local people don't support local business.</p> |
| 52 | <p>Creating sustainable employment is most important. Oil and gas - could link to Fort McMurray as a bedroom community. A recreation facility was proposed (2005??) but didn't proceed.</p> |
| 53 | <p>Job creation is the priority and should be multi-industry, complementary and diversified. Town should restore heritage in the down town and build on the pysanka festival. Promote more. Capitalize on more. Recently seeing fewer inter-provincial and international visitors.</p> <p>Manufacturing - sitting on transportation corridor, highway and rail. Logistics. Need to bring more families to increase tax base. Need to find out why CMBS failed.</p> |

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| 54 | Employer of more staff. Agricultural - if farmers doing well, the town does. Agricultural support is most beneficial. New housing builds this business. Distribution centre. Growth is most beneficial. Service area is one hour radius. |
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