



# DUCK LAKE

*New Horizons*

## Business Retention & Expansion Survey Results

August 2025



P R E P A R E D   B Y



[www.prairierising.com](http://www.prairierising.com)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Business Information:	2
Community Satisfaction:	5
Workforce:	10
Business Support	12
Future Business Plans & Needs:	16
Growth Opportunities	19
Networking & Collaboration	21
Attracting New Residents	23
Sustainability	24
Recommendations	25
Duck Lake New Horizons Committee	30
Vision Statement	35
Objectives	36
Demographics: Town of Duck Lake	37
Demographics: Beady's & Okemasis Cree Nation	38
Demographics: RM No. 463 of Duck Lake	39



# General Business Information:

**TRADES & CONSTRUCTION: 1**



**SERVICES: 5**



**ARTS & CULTURE: 2**



**RETAIL: 3**



**HOSPITALITY: 1**



**HEALTH: 2**



**AGRICULTURE: 1**



## Years in Business

**1 – 3 Years:**

**1**

**3 + Years:**

**14**

## Number of Employees

**1 – 5: 10**

**66.7%**

**6 – 20: 3**

**20%**

**21 – 50: 1**

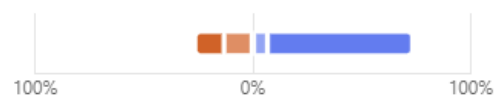
**6.7%**

**51+: 1**

**6.7%**

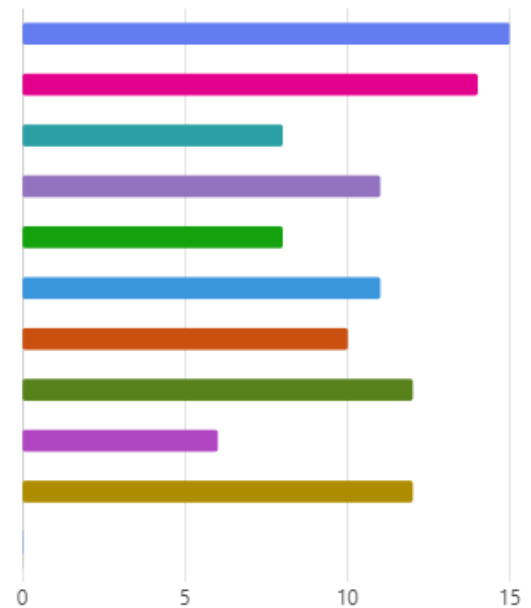
## What percentage of your employees live in the local community?

0-25% 26-50% 51-75% 76-100%



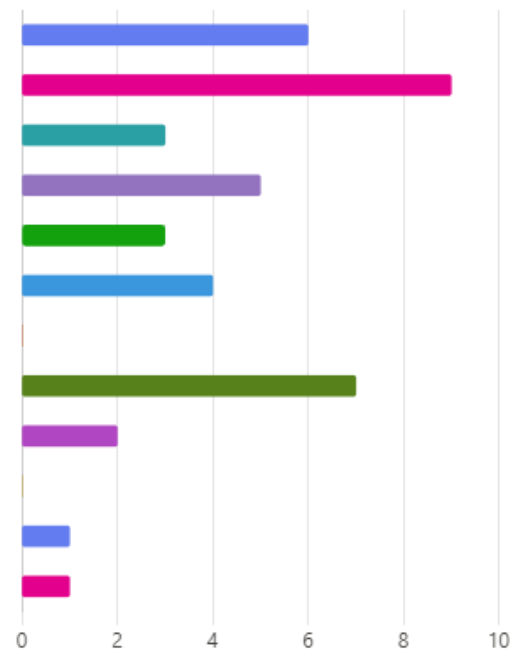
## What are your greatest Strengths?

Strong customer service	15
Quality products or services	14
Strong brand recognition	8
Skilled workforce	11
Innovation and adaptability	8
Strong community involvement	11
Financial stability	10
Efficient operations	12
Strong online presence	6
Good location/Accessibility	12
Other	0



## What are your greatest Weaknesses?

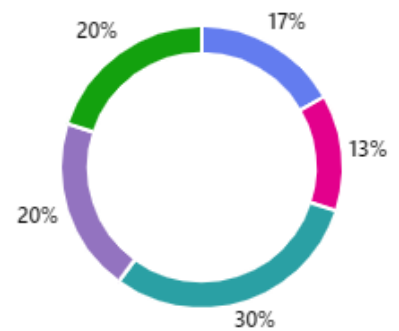
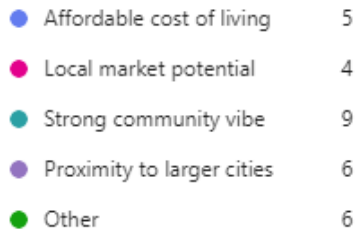
Limited access to capital or funding	6
Lack of skilled workforce	9
Limited marketing or brand awareness	3
High employee turnover	5
Insufficient technology or equipment	3
Poor location or limited visibility	4
Difficulty managing cash flow	0
Limited customer base	7
Supply chain or inventory issues	2
Ineffective management or leadership	0
Regulatory or compliance challenges	1
Other	1





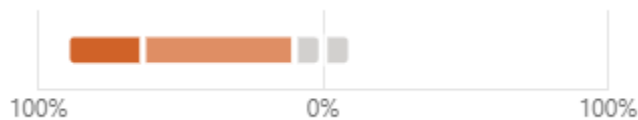
# Community Satisfaction:

## What attracted you to start or expand your business in Duck Lake?



## How satisfied are you with your current location?

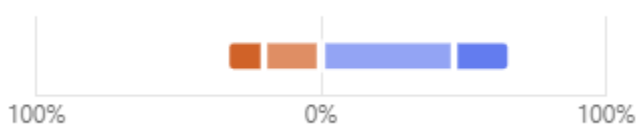
Very satisfied Satisfied Neutral Dissatisfied Very dissatisfied



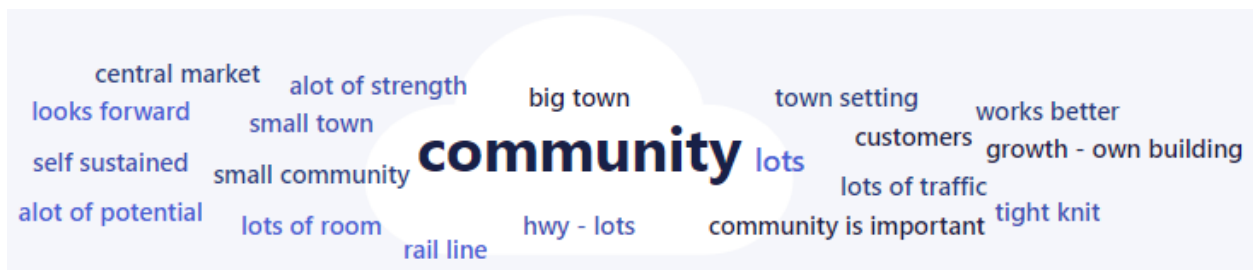
## How would you rate the overall business climate?

Excellent Good Fair Poor

13.3% 20% 46.7% 20%



## What are the key advantages of doing business here?



**"Small town setting, everyone knows everyone and are willing to help out."**

**"Strong historic heritage of this region and with the highway there's lots of traffic, the community is important."**

**"Community is self-sustained with a central market, it has everything for self-sustainment."**

**"Reserve adds a lot of strength to sales, there's a lot of potential to expand."**

**“It’s not a big town so we’re not crowded and its surrounded by lots of natural beauty.”**

**“Affordable to run a business, no parking issues, no traffic, lots of room for growth. You can own your building and lot. It’s easy to expand if you want to.”**

**“Small town, you know residents and customers.”**

**“Serve the elderly in this community and giving them an option for care in their own community.”**





## Rate these challenges on how much they relate to your business: (Higher = More Challenging)

Lack of skilled work force:



Limited Access to Resource:



Available Land to expand:



Limited Transportation or Infrastructure:



## How would you rate the following aspects of infrastructure in our community? (Higher = Better)

Roads /Transportation:



Internet access:



Commercial space Available:



Utilities/Energy reliability:



Access to shipping/logistics:



## What improvements in infrastructure would benefit your business the most?



**“The roads - to clean up and maintain access roads. on permanent boil water, no potable water for visitors - so it is an added expense.”**

**“The maintenance of important utilities and access to skilled workers - electricians, plumbers.”**

**“Having requirements for businesses to maintain the outer aesthetic of their business, more available commercial space, bylaw for length of time to hold onto space without doing anything with it - lots of sitting empty business space and no contact information.”**

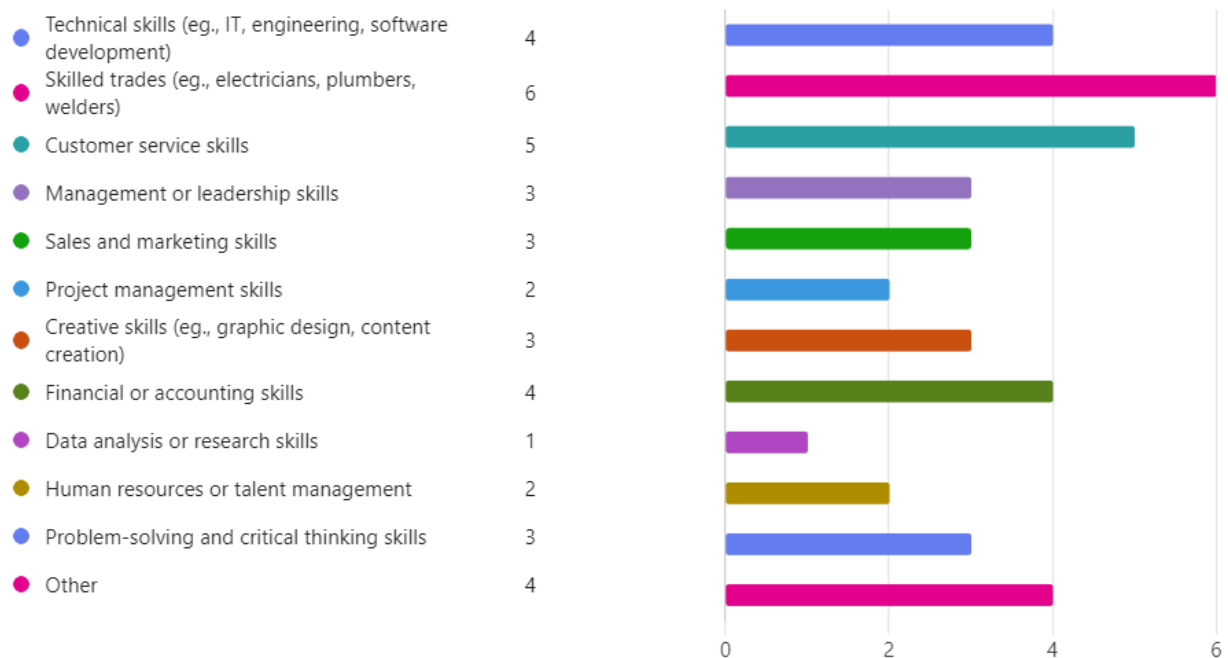
**“Stronger economic development committee”**

# Workforce:

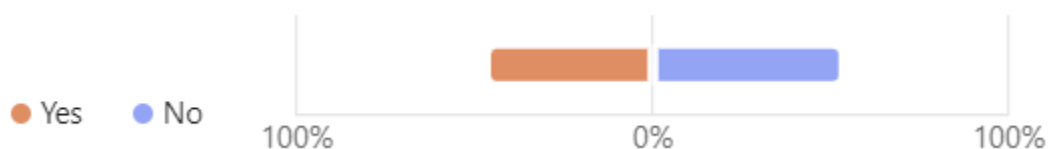
## Are you able to find skilled workers locally?



## If no, what skills are most difficult to find? (select all that apply)

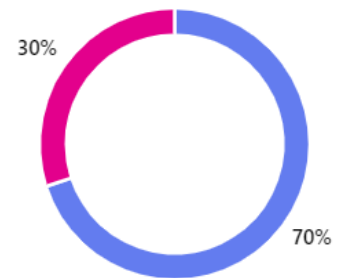


## Would you be interested in workforce training or apprenticeship programs?



## What types of training programs would benefit your business? (Select all that apply)

● Job training programs	7
● Internships or apprenticeship programs	3
● Other	0



## What kind of recruitment strategies could the town partner with businesses on?

**“Build new houses or smaller houses, low rental to attract people who could come and work for us.”**

**“Something on their billboard with job vacancies, or post locally for job availability.”**

**“They could use their technology to post job openings and opportunities, partner to do jobs trainings or a skills building.”**

**“Better communication with council and the business owners - having that bridge of communication open and working hands on with businesses. Being more proactive, instead of waiting for issues to come up.”**

# Business Support

How would you rate the level of support from the town, in the following aspects (Higher the Better)

Business regulation:

3.33

Average Rating



Permitting process:

3.38

Average Rating



Town Marketing:

2.86

Average Rating



Bylaw enforcement:

2.92

Average Rating





**How can the town enhance its services?**

**"By not charging 5% surcharge on utility bills."**

**"Coming up with a very clear and defined plan for the future."**

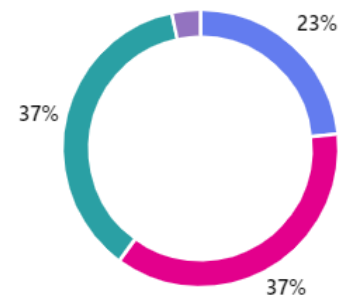
**"Road to the reserve is a bad road, in winter the road is awful and some people choose not to come here. Better roads would help to bring more people and more customers."**

**"Better communication to businesses and residents. Seem to only hear when something goes wrong. Monthly newsletter from town could be beneficial."**

**"Be more open minded."**

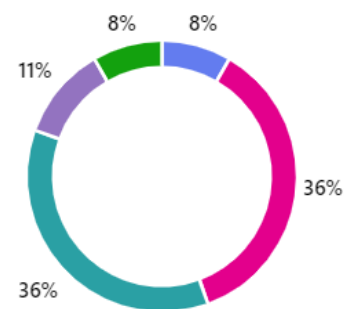
## What types of local government support would be most helpful?

● Tax incentives	7
● Grants or subsidies	11
● Workforce development assistance	11
● Other	1



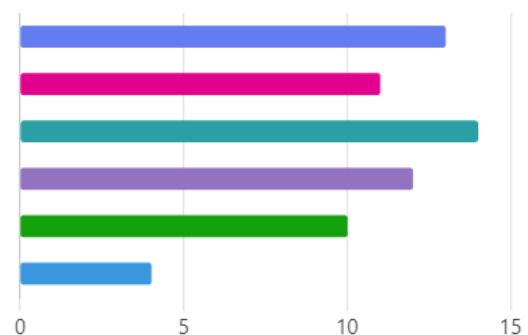
## What amenities or services would make the town more attractive for businesses and residents?

● Better internet access	3
● Healthcare services	13
● Recreational facilities	13
● Schools and education programs	4
● Other	3



## What do you think are the top factors that would attract people to move to this town?

● Affordable housing	13
● Good schools	11
● Safe environment	14
● Proximity to larger cities	12
● Strong community involvement and volunteer base	10
● Other	4



**What improvements would help the community grow and thrive?**

**“Willingness to make the town look better, a facelift of buildings, houses and roads.”**

**“Having more businesses and better services, stronger recreational facilities.”**

**“Replacement of water, sewer and roads. upgrading water system.”**

**“Structure. training for town council, for mayor, more opportunities for youth, keeping people in our communities, bringing resources and post secondary training - that would help keep people here and make them want to stay.”**

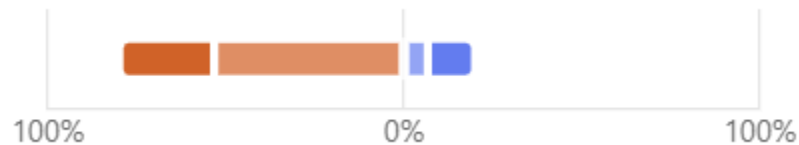
**“Some committees to help and handle - get people to talk about things, get more ideas moving and builds excitement and a strong base.”**

**“The community working together.”**

# Future Business Plans & Needs:

## What are your business plans for the next 5 years?

● Expand ● Maintain Current Size ● Relocate ● Reduce size



## If planning to expand, what support do you need?

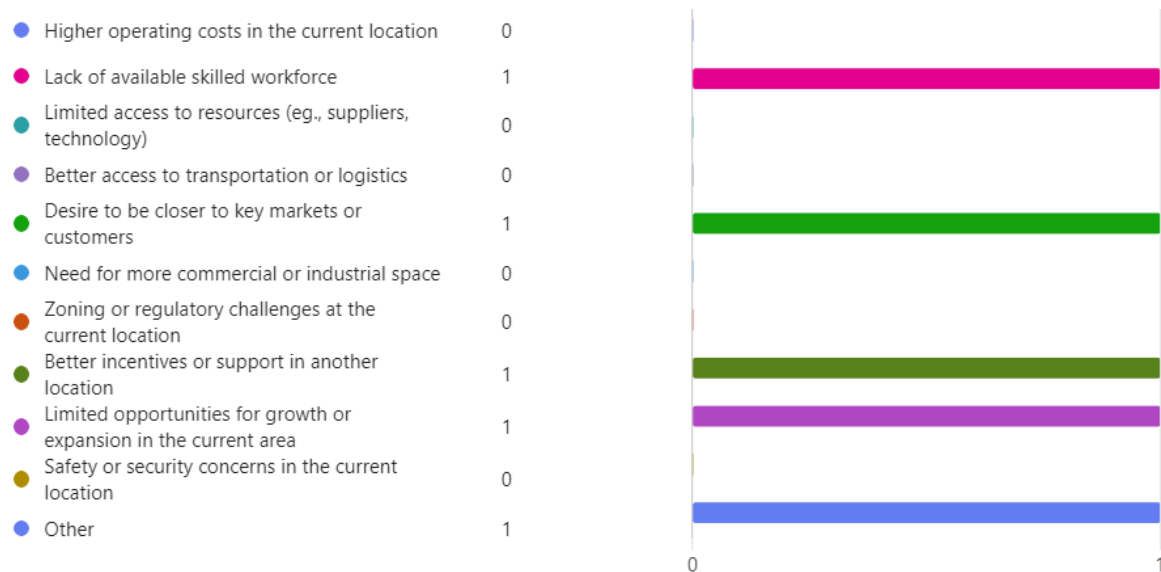


## If considering reducing size, what are the reasons?

**Decline in demand or Sales**

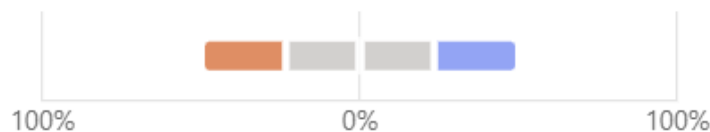
**Reduced Customer Base**

## If considering relocation, what are the reasons?



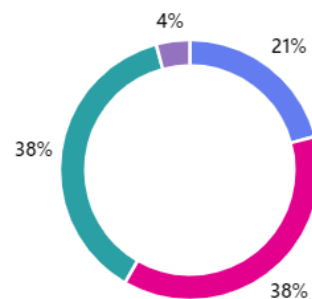
## Are you considering any building improvement projects?

**YES: 4**      **NO: 7**      **MAYBE: 4**



## What kind of incentives would encourage you to expand your business here?

Property tax breaks	5
Grants or subsidies	9
Workforce development assistance	9
Other	1





**What are your businesses greatest threats?**

**"Affordability."**

**"Lack of workforce."**

**"Losing the \$10 a day childcare if Saskatchewan doesn't sign on."**

**"Lack of visitors, and growing cost of utilities, the lack of people wanting to work."**

**"Population size."**

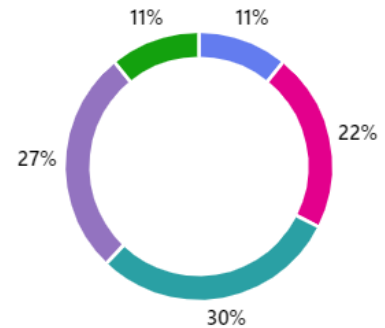
**"Lack of skilled customer service workers and lack of quality in our facility and technology maintenance."**

**"Bigger companies buying out farms."**

# Growth Opportunities

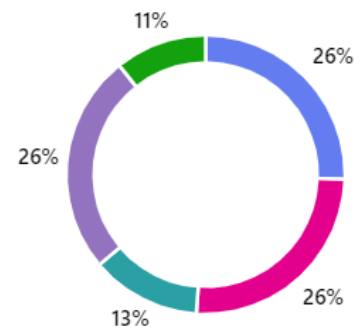
## What economic development would you benefit from?

Better broadband internet	4
Tax incentives	8
Infrastructure improvements	11
Workforce development programs	10
Other	4



## What types of industries do you think would thrive here?

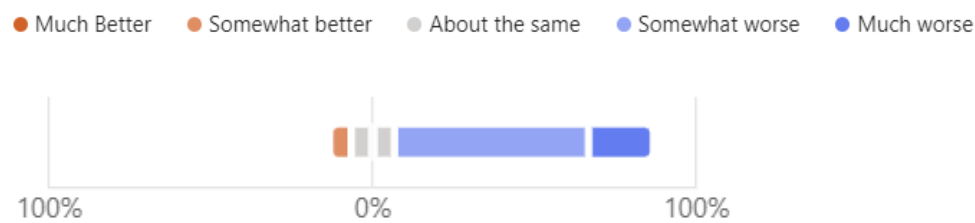
Retail	12
Manufacturing	12
Technology	6
Agriculture/ food processing	12
Other	5



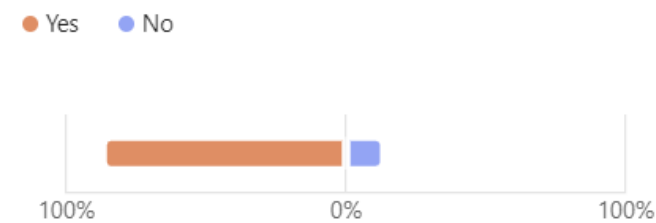
## What specific businesses do you think would thrive here?



# How do you feel this town compares to other nearby towns or cities in terms of business opportunities?



# Do you want to see more regional cooperation for businesses?

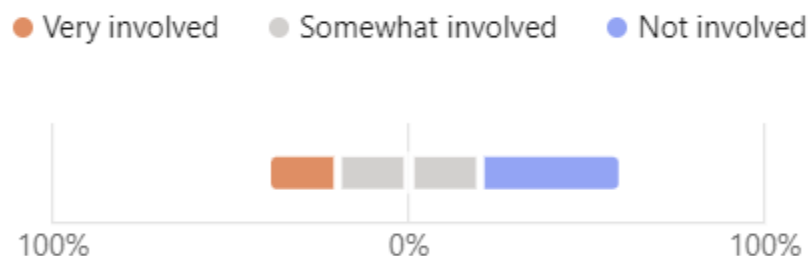


# What type of financial support would help your business grow?



# Networking & Collaboration

**How involved are you in community activities or local governance?**



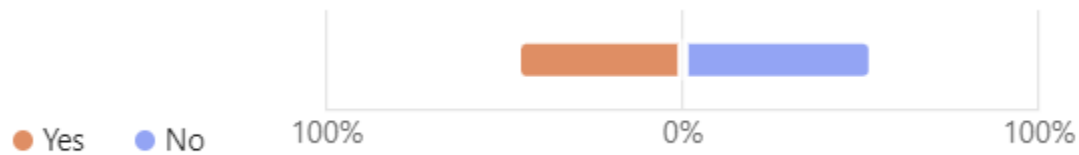
**What can the town do to encourage more community involvement and create a stronger local identity?**

**“Look into creating more events and looking for community input.”**

**“Having better training for town council and effectively communicate to business owners what is available and what is possible. Someone to oversee governance of committee as a whole.”**

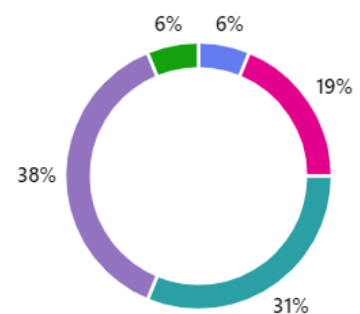
**“Economic development and different committees. Have new comers - not the same people.”**

## Do you currently collaborate with other businesses or community organizations?



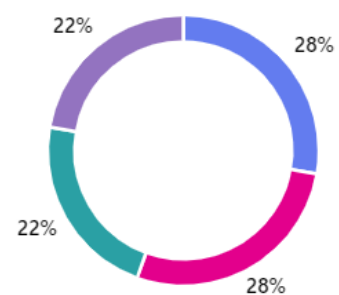
## If yes, in what areas do you collaborate?

Marketing	1
Product or service development	3
Shared resources (e.g., space, employees)	5
Community events	6
Other	1



## What would you prefer within the business community?

Chamber of commerce	5
Business networking group	5
Council advisory board	4
No interest	4

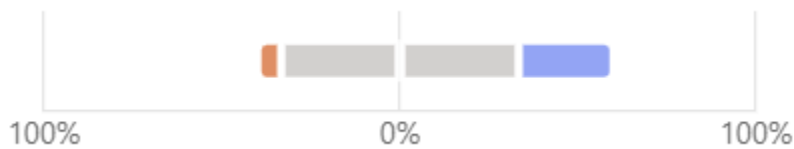




# Attracting New Residents

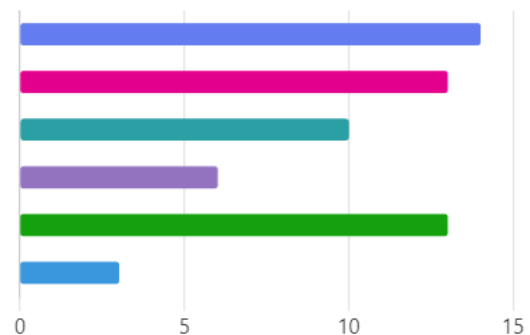
How would you describe the overall image of this town to someone who may be considering moving here?

● Very positive ● Positive ● Neutral ● Negative ● Very negative



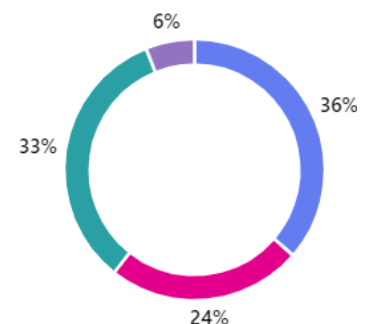
What would make this town more attractive for new residents?

Better job opportunities	14
Improved housing options	13
Social and cultural events	10
Access to quality education	6
Healthcare and senior services	13
Other	3

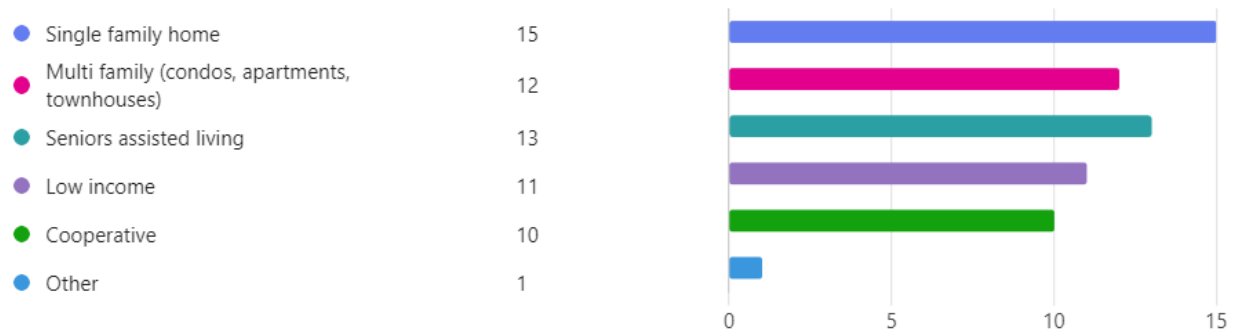


Are there any programs or policies that would encourage people to move here?

Relocation incentives (e.g., moving grants, homebuyer assistance)	12
Networking events for new residents	8
Community mentorship or welcome programs	11
Other	2



## What type of housing would you like to see developed in the town?



## Sustainability

### Are sustainability and environmental practices important to your business?



### What kind of support or resources would you need to implement more sustainable practices in your business?



# Recommendations

## Community Satisfaction:

30% of Respondents said there is a Strong Community Vibe, while “Small town setting where everyone knows each other” was a commonly expressed advantage of operating a business in Duck Lake. Let’s build off of and leverage this. Future planning sessions will include strategic planning specific to this.

Road and infrastructure improvement was a common theme. Staff & Consultants can continue to seek out additional sources of funding to help make these improvements a reality while informing the public of progress.

Improving the aesthetic of homes and businesses was listed as a top priority. Consultants to research and prepare tailored strategy to incentivize home and business owners.

## Workforce

66.7% of respondents rated the overall business climate as Fair to Poor, with Lack of Skilled Workforce ranking the most important challenge businesses are facing. This is a common challenge the majority of communities and industries face.

70% of respondents said they would be interested in Job Training Programs. Consultants to investigate skills and workforce training programs that could be brought to the community.

Research viability of utilizing billboard to advertise job vacancies

## Business Support

Town Marketing & Bylaw Enforcement all ranked below 3 for level of support from the Town. Bylaw Enforcement should be improving in the coming weeks as contracted Community Safety Officer begins working in Town. Communication to community and business owners should be a priority. Research will be conducted into a tailored strategy for Town Staff.

One respondent mentioned removing the 5% surcharge on utility bills. We will look into the viability of lowering this.

One respondent mentioned the road to the Reserve with its hundreds of residents is very poor, especially in Winter. The town should lobby the provincial and/or federal governments to fund improvements. This is also an opportunity to build relationships.

All municipal operations pertaining to business development should be reviewed for improvements with the goal of creating a long term and tailored strategy with specific processes that can easily be adopted by staff.

Research the viability of Grants, Subsidies and Tax incentives to support local businesses.

Attract more healthcare services.

Create new recreational opportunities and strategies to market existing ones.

## Business Needs

One business indicated plans to relocate and 2 businesses indicated plans to reduce size. Consultants will set up meeting with each business to discuss their challenges in more detail and report back to committee.

Four businesses indicated plans for building improvement projects, while 4 indicated that might consider these plans. Consultants will schedule follow up meetings to discuss these plans in more detail and report back to committee.

## Growth Opportunities

Post-secondary training specifically in the Agricultural and Hospitality Sectors is an opportunity that will be explored to help retain and attract youth to the community while also building local workforce.

80% of respondents said Retail, Manufacturing and Agriculture/Food Processing industries would thrive here. Work will begin to identify how to help existing businesses in these industries expand and attract new businesses.

Work will begin to attract new investment in the following specific businesses:

- Restaurants
- Liquor Store
- Coffee Shop
- RTM Builder
- Handyman/Trades
- Hardware/Lumber
- Laundry



Belle Pulses is the largest private employer in town and the largest processor of plant-based ingredients in Canada. There is a huge opportunity to focus efforts on helping this company expand its operations as the world demand continues to grow for these products. Workforce challenges could be mitigated through partnering with Sask Polytechnic or the University of Saskatchewan to invest in a remote campus specifically for Agricultural Food Processing. This would simultaneously attract and retain young people and families while creating even more jobs with opportunities to expand post-secondary education programs. A follow up meeting with Belle Pulses will be held to discuss these opportunities.

## **Networking & Collaboration**

87% of businesses want to see more regional cooperation. Begin researching regional cooperation initiatives designed to help local businesses and reach out to regional communities. This could include a regional Chamber of Commerce or Business Group.

Only 50% of respondents indicated they currently collaborate with other businesses and community organizations. Research initiatives and events to help improve collaboration and attract new businesses/community members.

Businesses specifically mentioned Community Events and Shared Resources (space, employees) as areas they currently collaborate but Marketing was only mentioned by one respondent. Design ways to build off of events and shared resources while expanding shared Marketing.

The Business community was divided as to what they would prefer (eg Chamber of Commerce, Business Networking Group, Council Advisory Board and no interest). Progress of this committee should be communicated on a regular basis.

## Attracting New Residents

Affordable Housing, Safe Environment and Proximity to Larger Cities are the top 3 factors that could attract people to move to Duck Lake. Marketing strategies will emphasize these in promotions.

Begin or continue work in attracting the following:

- Assisted Seniors Living Development
- Smaller, affordable housing
- Social and Cultural Events
- Cooperative Living
- Multi-Family Homes
- Traditional Single Family Homes

Review viability of Relocation Incentives.

Create networking events for new residents that combine mentorship and welcome programs.

## Sustainability

100% of respondents said sustainability and environmental practices important to their business. Indeed this is increasingly an opportunity to businesses to reduce costs in the long term while attracting skilled talent. This is also a way communities can differentiate themselves with prospective residents by implementing community wide sustainability initiatives. Research into the viability of attracting large scale sustainability development projects to Duck Lake will be conducted as well.

Research will be done regarding solar energy rebate and equipment retrofit programs for businesses with results communicated to them.

# Duck Lake New Horizons Committee

## Introduction

On May 26, members of the new Duck Lake New Horizons Economic Development Committee and consultants from Prairie Rising Consulting met to discuss the following:

- Results of the Business Retention & Expansion Survey & Recommendations
- Identify Strengths & Challenges for Duck Lake
- Identify a Long Term Vision
- Identify Potential Projects
- Set Objectives for the Committee and Consultants

These recommendations and objectives will be implemented to achieve immediate growth for the Town of Duck Lake and will have a spin off effect for the RM of Duck Lake and Beardsley's & Okemasis Cree Nation. Over the coming months, a long term plan will take shape that ensures any improvements and growth is maintained well into the future, ensuring prosperity and thriving community for generations to come.

The Town of Duck Lake's strategic vision is an ambitious and achievable plan that blends its historic identity with forward-looking innovation. Through meaningful partnerships, inclusive growth, and a strong sense of place, Duck Lake is not only preserving its legacy—it is actively shaping a bold, shared future for all.



## Strengths

- Know everyone
- unique history
- affordability
- large lots
- Metis & Indigenous relationships
- excellent school (sports & science)
- in-fill lots available
- habitat for humanity
- safe for kids
- potential & opportunities
- crime rate down
- housing prices
- business opportunities
- people want to stay in the community
- expansion North along the Highway
- Highway commercial/ industrial
- Beardys Cree Nation -partnership
- Main street has room - ”
- Beardy Cree Nation members want to come home
- Ownership by Band Members wanted
- Commuting distance to P.A./ Warman, Saskatoon/Martensville
- Indigenous based grants opportunities
- Outdoor – fishing, hunting, sledding, tourism
- people in the community with vision
- small town living
- school on reserve
- healing lodge
- PA water coop
- High paying jobs
- facilities – arena/ hall
- sewer – capacity to 1,200

## Challenges

- Attracting Young People
- transition housing
- lack of businesses
- refurbish main street
- Water!
- Lack of groceries/ prices
- infrastructure maintenance
- partner with healing lodge
- training opportunities
- Capacity of Water Treatment Plant with proper maintenance
- Servicing new areas
- Engineering studies needed
- Community Based Organizations and volunteers
- Funds
- Relationship between Beardys and Town could be better
- More Community Cohesion required
- No recreation Board
- Continuety and Community Buy-in
- Communications
- No welcome Wagon
- Beardys has a director of partnership program for both communities

## Vision for the Future

- Paved roads, attractive community
- Entrepreneurial spirit – supported by town (partnership)
- re developed main street
- recreation amenities
- industrial/highway commercial corridor
- Community spirit & volunteerism
- a part of building the Prairies Then/Now
- A highly skilled workforce
- Thriving Culture & tourism partner with Pemiska Tourism
- Strong Unique community offerings that attract people
- Maintain small town peace
- Innovative
- communication hub
- start up community
- Creative housing continuum with emphasis on seniors
- Partnership with Beady's. Vibrant & reciprocal
- Image of safe & welcoming
- Town of murals (again)

## Potential Projects:

- Industrial Corridor
- Bedroom community
- Community Centre
- Assisted living
- Affordable housing (wartime, tiny houses)
- Transition housing (condos, apartments, etc)
- Spray Park/ BMX Park
- Historical Tourism
- Arena expansion/ artificial ice
- joint applications between Beardys & Duck Lake for projects
- Beardys Rink
- Engage Young Families
- Youth spaces
- Mural program
- Community events
- Newsletter



# Vision Statement

From the Heart of Canada’s Old Northwest, Duck Lake is a dynamic prairie community, rooted in a rich past and guided by our legacy of “History in Harmony.” With a community eager to grow, we are shaping a future built on prosperity, pride, and possibility—driven by a bold vision and supported by a forward-thinking Council and a culture that values innovation, collaboration, and opportunity.

We proudly partner with Beardsley’s & Okemasis Cree Nation, the RM of Duck Lake, and all individuals and organizations dedicated to our shared success. Together, we embrace the potential to build a welcoming and inclusive community—one where you can start a business, grow a career, and raise a family where the Boreal Forest and Parkland meet under living skies.

# Objectives

## 1. Economic Development & Innovation/ Marketing

- Support local businesses through partnerships, grants, and marketing programs.
- Encourage entrepreneurship and foster a start-up-friendly environment.
- Inventory and promote available commercial properties.
- Develop list of required business and start to recruit.
- Create concept plans & attract investment for a new highway commercial corridor.
- Provide workforce training supports and joint marketing opportunities for businesses.
- Create Duck Lake Business Association.
- Explore Belle Pulses leadership in plant-based proteins, look to assist in expansion or creation of an industry cluster.

## 2. Market Duck Lake as a bedroom community

- Primary market includes Saskatoon, Martensville, Warman and Prince Albert
- Develop inventory of lots
- Create daily and weekly content
- Develop community celebrations and events

## 3. Community Partnerships

- Deepen collaboration with Beardy's & Okemasis' Cree Nation through joint initiatives, shared infrastructure, and cultural events.
- Deepen collaboration with Pemiska, Duck Lake Regional Interpretive Centre and regional tourism operators
- Promote inclusive and reciprocal relationships that reflect our shared history.
- Promote Duck Lake as a tourism destination with a focus on heritage & art.
- Celebrate Duck Lake's role in the development of the Prairies—then and now.

## 4. Infrastructure & Development

- Maintain and expand paved roads and walkable pathways.
- Upgrade the murals.
- Continue revitalization of downtown, ensuring it remains attractive and vibrant.
- Plan and implement a creative housing continuum, with a focus on seniors and affordability.

# Demographics: Town of Duck Lake

## Population:

2021 – 579

2016 – 569

## Private Dwellings:

232

## Household Composition:

68% Owned

32% Rented

## Average Household Size:

2.7

## Gender Split:

53% Female

47% Male

## Marital Trend:

50% Married Couples

## Age Profile:

0-14: 140

15-19: 40

20-64: 280

65+: 115

Median Age: 36 (Saskatchewan: 37)

## Post Secondary Education:

55.8%

## Employment Participation:

60.7%

## Core Sectors:

33% Education, Law, Community & Government services

30% Sales & Service

14% Business, Finance & Administration

8% Trades & Transport

8% Natural Resources & Agriculture

## Median Household Income:

\$65,500

## Median Personal Income:

\$32,800

# Demographics: Beardy's & Okemasis

## Population:

2021 – 1249      2016 – 1323

## Dwellings On Nation:

315

## Household Composition:

## Average Household Size:

4

## Gender Split:

48% Female      52% Male

## Marital Trend:

37% Married Couples

## Age Profile:

0-14:              430

15-19:            110

20-64:            605

65+:               105

Median Age:      25      (Saskatchewan: 37)

## Post Secondary Education:

27.8%

## Employment Participation:

34.2%

## Core Sectors:

24%   Public Administration

17%   Educational Services

8%   Construction

6%   Retail Trade

4%   Each: Mining, Oil & Gas Extraction; Manufacturing; Administrative  
Support; Accommodation and Food Service

## Median Household Income:

\$63,200

## Median Personal Income:

\$25,400

# Demographics: RM No. 463 of Duck Lake

## Population:

2021 – 1010      2016 – 955

## Private Dwellings:

450

## Household Composition:

96% Owned      4% Rented

## Average Household Size:

2.6

## Gender Split:

50% Female      50% Male

## Marital Trend:

70% Married Couples

## Age Profile:

0-14:      220

15-19:      60

20-64:      545

65+:      185

Median Age:      42      (Saskatchewan: 37)

## Post Secondary Education:

56.3%

## Employment Participation:

67.1%

## Core Sectors:

14% Agriculture

12% Educational Services

12% Health Care & Social Services

11% Public Administration

11% Construction

## Median Household Income:

\$87,000

## Median Personal Income:

\$42,500