



Initiative on the New Economy

**Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Places:
A Report for Tumbler Ridge, B.C.**

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INITIATIVE ON THE NEW ECONOMY - ABOUT THE PROJECT

The *Initiative on the New Economy* project of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation works closely with residents, service providers, voluntary organizations, business members, and decision makers to identify factors that contribute to building capacity in rural and small town Canada. Capacity is the ability of people to mobilize their assets and resources to cope with stress and transition, or to capitalize on opportunities. Such capacity is built from trust and relationships grounded in institutions, organizations, businesses, and services alike. The Initiative on the New Economy project is built on four key themes to explore capacity including *local governance, communications, services, and the environment*. This report explores the relationship between services and capacity.

The Services Research Centre conducted site profile surveys in the summer of 2003. This is the third survey conducted since 1998 with a goal to track services over time. Services play two key functions in building capacity. First, services help rural and small town places to cope with restructuring and transition as a result of economic downturns or closures. Job losses stemming from industrial restructuring can place increased demands on local services for education and training, counselling, health care, and other support services. Without such services, residents would have to cope with the additional burden of having to leave their town to access assistance. Job and service losses present a significant challenge to rural and small town places working on revitalization.

Second, services provide opportunities for building relationships, partnerships, and trust. Together, these can lead to new partnerships and innovative ways for delivering services where they might otherwise not exist. For example, schools or seniors' centres can act as multi-functional facilities for the community where local volunteer groups, sporting clubs, local theatre, and others can do their work in the absence of other facilities. Another example might be the way that post offices can act as a one-stop shop for a range of government services. This report focuses on the current service provision levels in rural and small town Canada. In particular, this report will compare the availability of services in Tumbler Ridge, B.C. with services available in other research sites across Canada, as well as with services available in other study sites within Western Canada. In each table in this report, the availability of services in Tumbler Ridge is compared to the 22 sites surveyed across Canada and to the 8 study sites in Western Canada.

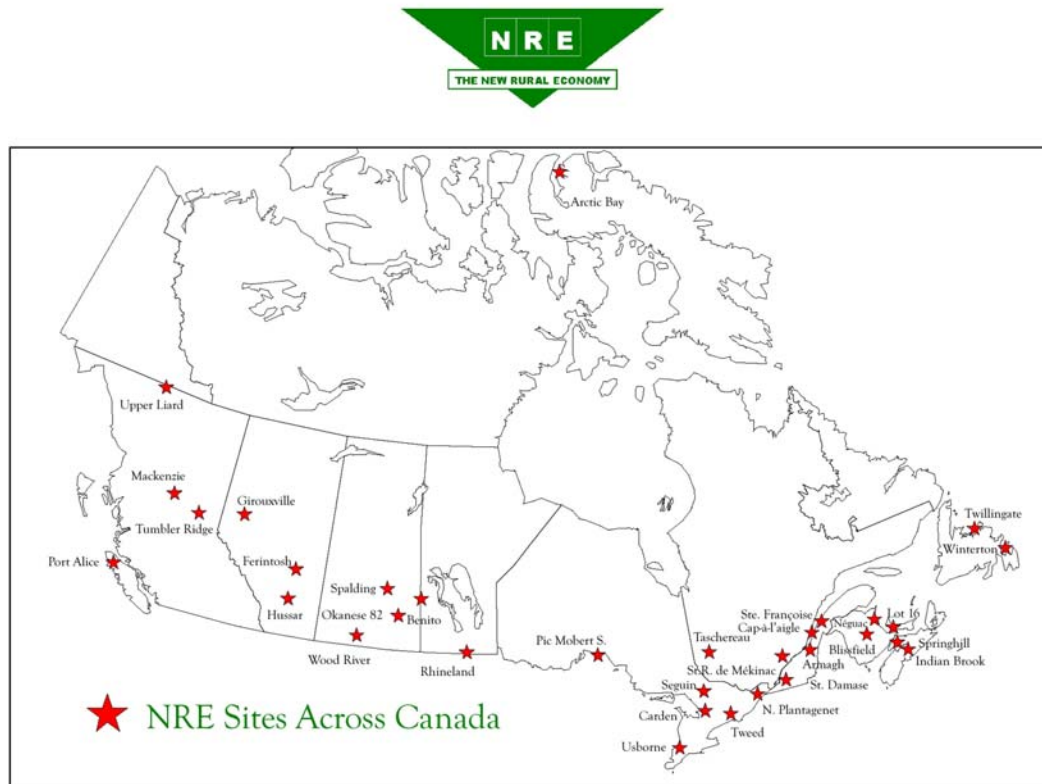
ABOUT THE SERVICE INVENTORY

The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation has been conducting research in 32 rural and small town sites from across Canada. These sites form a type of “rural observatory” in which aspects of the *Initiative on the New Economy* project may be examined. The sites participating in this project reflect the diversity of the Canadian landscape, and include forestry and mining towns, farming communities, and tourism towns. Furthermore, some of these places are located adjacent to metropolitan areas, while others are more isolated.

In the summer of 2003, researchers visited 22 sites across Canada to update a service provision inventory. Data were collected to examine the availability of a range of services including:

education
health
protection services
legal
business services
communication
elderly and childcare
government

community
transportation
recreational
basic shopping
commercial shopping
economic development organizations
housing



AVAILABILITY

Copies of all site reports on services were distributed within participating sites. Additionally, copies have been posted on the INE website (nre.concordia.ca) and on Greg Halseth's website (<http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg>).

Copies of the larger *Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Canada* report are available in a number of locations. At the University of Northern British Columbia, copies have been deposited at the Weller Library or can be accessed on Greg Halseth's website: <http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg>. Copies are also available on the website of the Initiative of the New Economy at: nre.concordia.ca.

For further information about this report or other available reports on services, please contact Greg Halseth at:

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INITIATIVE ON THE NEW ECONOMY - SERVICE PROVISION IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWN PLACES: A REPORT FOR TUMBLER RIDGE, B.C.

Site Description - Tumbler Ridge, B.C.

Tumbler Ridge is British Columbia's newest town, founded in association with the province's last resource development 'mega project'. Located on the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Northeastern B.C., planning for Tumbler Ridge and the area's coal mine developments began in 1975. The local economy was originally developed around two open pit coal mines, Quintette and Bullmoose, whose markets were Japanese steel mills.

The Provincial Government, through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, managed the design and development of the community. Extensive efforts were put into the design, layout, and servicing of the town site. The community opened in 1986.

Although diversification of the local economy was part of the concept plans for the community, Tumbler Ridge faces some challenges. For example, it is not on a 'thru' highway, as road access comes via separate roads from either Dawson Creek or Chetwynd. Recently established provincial parks and protected areas, together with extensive snowmobile, cross country skiing, and hiking trails, offer possibilities for tourism development. A local firm was recently granted a short term timber license to develop a value added wood products mill. In 1999, the Quintette coal mine closed. In 2003, the Bullmoose mine closed. As a result, the town has undertaken a wide range of diversification activities which have included eliminating the town's debt, securing services funding from the Provincial Government, re-selling most of the houses owned by the coal mines, and supporting new economic ventures. Among these exciting new ventures is a museum society working to develop Tumbler Ridge's rich dinosaur finds as part of a tourism strategy.



POPULATION PROFILE - TUMBLER RIDGE, B.C.

The population of Tumbler Ridge, B.C. has declined from 3,775 residents in 1996 to 1,851 residents in 2001 (Statistics Canada 2001). During the 2001 Canada Census, however, former residents and newcomers were in the process of moving both within and out of the community as a part of the successful housing sales. Consequently, the composition of the Tumbler Ridge population has changed. Today, it has a family oriented population that includes a growing population of seniors. This has important implications when planning the delivery of a range of services, such as recreational, educational, health, and senior services. The estimated population in 2003 is 3,200 people.

Population	Site: Tumbler Ridge		
	Total	Male	Female
Population in 2001	1,851	960	890
Population in 1996	3,775	2,045	1,725
1996 to 2001 population change (%)	-51.0%	-53.1%	-48.4%
Total - All persons	1,855	960	890
Age 0-4	80	40	40
Age 5-14	310	150	155
Age 15-19	185	110	75
Age 20-24	55	25	30
Age 25-44	550	260	285
Age 45-54	330	185	150
Age 55-64	250	140	110
Age 65-74	70	40	30
Age 75-84	15	10	10
Age 85 and over	5	0	0
Median age of the population	38.8	40.1	37.9

Source: Statistics Canada 2001.

SERVICE PROVISION IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWN PLACES

Services play an important role in retaining and attracting residents and businesses as they enhance local quality of life. However, rural and small town places across Canada are experiencing tremendous change stemming from economic and social restructuring in an increasing global economy. As a result, some small towns have been experiencing population declines. At the same time, federal and provincial government policies have been withdrawing some of the service infrastructure that can provide a foundation for revitalizing rural and small town places and assist residents to cope with stress. Some rural and small town places adjusted to transition through establishing innovative services or diversifying their local economies. These types of innovation suggest one way by which services help to build capacity within a place.

Services also help to build capacity by providing opportunities for building relationships, partnerships, and trust, which subsequently can lead to new partnerships and innovative ways for delivering services where they might otherwise not exist. Together, services can help to enhance local quality of life and mitigate out-migration from rural and small town places.

Educational Services

Educational institutions are playing a changing role in maintaining quality of life in rural and small town places. Schools have provided other amenities through their libraries, theatres, and art galleries in places that would otherwise not have access to such services. They have also played a larger economic development role. Community colleges can provide skilled and professional workers, act as a broker of services, and act as a repository of information. They can also design programs and services that are relevant and respond to the changing labour market conditions of small places.

Table 1: Availability of Education Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Pre-school/kindergarten	50.0%	62.5%	✓
Elementary school	63.6%	62.5%	✓
High school	27.3%	37.5%	✓
CEGEP / College	18.2%	25.0%	✓
Continuing Education	27.3%	37.5%	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Results indicate that educational services are available in a greater proportion of sites in Western Canada when compared to the total sites across Canada (Table 1). Furthermore, more than half the sites in Western Canada provide early childhood educational services, including pre-school

and elementary school services. Tumbler Ridge provides a wide range of educational services to its residents. As such, it is well equipped to cope with the needs of its young population, as well as any demands for retraining that may be required as a result of economic changes. For example, the Northern Lights College Campus in Tumbler Ridge offers applied business technology, university transfer courses, first aid, and continuing education, it has also offered 'dino camps' in partnership with the Tumbler Ridge Museum and Dinosaur Centre for youth in the community to educate them about recent dinosaur findings in the local area.

Health Services

Health services play an important role in attracting new labour and retaining residents. However, during times of economic and social restructuring, closures in hospitals and the centralization of physical and mental health services can be difficult on the elderly and the poor who do not have access to a vehicle and who live in a place with limited transportation services. However, it is not just the utility of health services that is of concern, but also the potential loss of health care jobs that can lead to a further decline in the local economy and population.

Table 2a: Availability of Health Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Hospital	18.2%	25.0%	
Health centre / CLSC	27.3%	25.0%	✓
Medical clinic	40.9%	50.0%	✓
Blood / urine testing facility	36.4%	37.5%	✓
X-ray facility	22.7%	37.5%	✓
Baby delivery facility	4.5%	12.5%	
CT scan facility	0.0%	0.0%	
Pharmacy	40.9%	37.5%	✓
Ambulance	36.4%	37.5%	✓
Emergency services	18.2%	25.0%	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Health care facilities are limited in most of the rural and small town places examined (Table 2a). Of particular interest is that fewer than 40% of sites have a health centre, hospital, or pharmacy, and just over one-third of the sites have ambulance services. This carries important implications for residents commuting for medical emergencies or health care reasons. However, medical facilities are generally more available in Western Canadian sites when compared to the national sample. Most of the medical facilities were available in Tumbler Ridge, such as a health centre, pharmacy, blood testing, x-ray, and ambulance facilities. Residents may access hospital services, including baby delivery and CT scan facilities, an hour away in Dawson Creek.

The availability of health care professionals is also limited in small places (Table 2b). In fact, only home care visits are available in more than half of the sites. Even those services deemed as

essential, such as doctors, are only located in just over 35% of the sites across Canada. Sites in Western Canada are slightly better equipped with health care professionals when compared to the national sample. The majority of sites in Western Canada have doctors, home care visits, a public health nurse, and even speech therapy. Health care services were also more limited in Tumbler Ridge. However, the community offers two doctors, nurses, and home care. Visiting specialists also serve Tumbler Ridge on a part-time basis including an optometrist, a physiotherapist, and a speech therapist. Access to other health care professionals is available just over 90 kilometres away in Chetwynd or Dawson Creek.

Table 2b: Availability of Health Professionals - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Doctors	36.4%	50.0%	✓
Nurses	36.4%	37.5%	✓
Dentists	27.3%	12.5%	
Dental surgeons	9.1%	0.0%	
Optometrists	18.2%	25.0%	✓
Home care visits	54.5%	75.0%	✓
VON	13.6%	0.0%	
Social workers	22.7%	12.5%	
Public health nurse	31.8%	50.0%	
Physiotherapy	22.7%	25.0%	✓
Speech therapy	31.8%	50.0%	✓
Occupational therapy	13.6%	12.5%	
Respite care	22.7%	12.5%	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Protection Services

Protection services contribute to community capacity in a number of ways. For example, volunteer fire departments and various ‘crime watch’ programs provide opportunities for community involvement and interaction, both of which can build trust and leadership.

Table 3: Availability of Protection Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Police (Local / RCMP)	22.7%	25.0%	✓
Fire department	68.2%	87.5%	✓
911 emergency line	86.4%	100.0%	✓
Neighbourhood Watch	31.8%	37.5%	
Rural Crime Watch	13.6%	25.0%	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Protection services are more available than most other service categories (Table 3). Most notably, fire departments and 911 are in more than half the sites across Canada. Local police or RCMP services are limited in sites across Canada overall, including sites in Western Canada. Policing services, a fire department, and 911 service are all available in Tumbler Ridge.

Legal Services

Legal services are another example of specialized services that are often not found in rural areas. The absence of legal services has important implications as residents must commute to go to court, to access legal services to prepare wills or purchase real estate, or have important documents or affidavits signed.

Overall, legal services are very limited in the NRE sites across Canada (Table 4). In this case, half of the sites in Western Canada have a notary public. In Tumbler Ridge, court is held at the Community Centre three times a year. Residents may access a lawyer or notary public in Chetwynd or Dawson Creek.

Table 4: Availability of Legal Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Lawyer	18.2%	12.5%	
Notary	40.9%	50.0%	
Court	18.2%	25.0%	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Financial Services

Businesses also play a role in providing a range of activities that enhance the quality of life of a place, as well as the economic viability and stability of the place. Business members also play an important role in community development as they can provide leadership in volunteer groups. Small local businesses are also an important source for fundraisers and many sponsor specific local organizations or events.

Overall, credit unions, ATMs, and insurance offices are found in half the sites across Canada (Table 5). More than half the Western Canada sites also have a credit union, ATMs, and insurance offices. This has important implications for not just retaining residents, but also for retaining and attracting businesses as well. There is a range of financial services in Tumbler Ridge, including a credit union, an ATM, insurance, and accounting services. Micro-financing and real estate offices can be accessed an hour away in Dawson Creek.

Table 5: Availability of Business Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Banks	36.4%	37.5%	
Credit Union / Caisse Populaire	50.0%	62.5%	✓
ATM	50.0%	62.5%	✓
Micro-financing	9.1%	25.0%	
Insurance office	50.0%	62.5%	✓
Industrial park	22.7%	37.5%	✓
Real estate	18.2%	12.5%	
Accounting	45.5%	42.9%	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Communications

Connectivity is crucial in the new economy. Communication services also allow residents to maintain contact with family and friends. With improved communication infrastructure, such as telephone services, Internet, and cell phone service, rural and small town places can attract businesses that no longer have to be located in cities, and they can improve local employment opportunities. They can also use communications services to support business networks.

Table 6: Availability of Communication Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Cell phone – analog	86.4%	87.5%	
Cell phone – digital	40.9%	25.0%	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Overall, analog cell phone service is widely available across the NRE sites in Canada (Table 6). Almost 41% of the sites also enjoy digital cell phone service. Fewer sites in Western Canada have digital cell phone service when compared to all the sites across Canada. Unfortunately, given the mountainous terrain surrounding Tumbler Ridge, there is no cell phone service.

Elderly and Childcare Services

Childcare services provide an important part of the educational and care services in rural and small town places. Childcare also provides men and women with children an opportunity to participate in the labour force. Other services of importance are seniors' services including nursing homes and retirement homes. These services are particularly important given the aging of the Canadian population and that many rural and small town places are not yet well equipped to deal with seniors' needs.

Table 7: Availability of Child and Elderly Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Daycare	45.5%	37.5%	✓
Senior citizen's nursing home	18.2%	12.5%	
Senior citizen's retirement home	31.8%	25.0%	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

An inventory of 22 sites across Canada indicates that many are not equipped to meet the needs of young families or seniors (Table 7). While some services are provided by formal groups recorded in site profiles, there is considerable informal care offered by family and friends. In particular, sites in Western Canada are less equipped with these formal services. A part-time daycare operates in Tumbler Ridge. Until the closure of the Bullmoose and Quintette mines, Tumbler Ridge was a young community with very few seniors. Until recently, there was no imminent demand for senior care facilities.

Government Services

Town halls and post offices are the most frequently available government services in rural and small town places. Post offices not only provide a service and identity, but also opportunities for routine social interaction to build relationships. Other government services play an important role in community capacity by providing a local source of expertise and knowledge upon which the community can draw.

Table 8: Availability of Government Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Human Resources Dev. Canada	0.0%	0.0%	
Employment Insurance	4.5%	0.0%	
Provincial Auto License Office	18.2%	50.0%	✓
Social Assistance Office	22.7%	37.5%	
Town hall	68.2%	87.5%	✓
Post office	81.8%	100.0%	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

The rural and small town sites examined do not have access to many government services overall, although the listed government services are offered by a greater proportion of sites in Western Canada (Table 8). Of particular concern to sites experiencing social and economic restructuring is that none of the sites have HRDC or Employment Insurance offices. Furthermore, few sites have social assistance offices. Consequently, during economic change, households experiencing stress will have to go outside the site for services to help them cope.

Residents in Tumbler Ridge must travel to Dawson Creek to access these services. However, other government services are available locally including a provincial auto license office, a town hall, and a post office.

Community Services

Community services can provide an important foundation from which to build relationships, and can be important sources to draw upon during times of economic and social stress. The availability of community services in rural and small town places varied considerably (Table 9).

Overall, sites in Western Canada have more community services with the exception of food banks, clothing exchanges, and second hand stores. Regardless, youth drop-in centres, women's drop-in centres, and senior's drop-in centres are available in more than half of the sites in Western Canada. In Tumbler Ridge, the Family Support office closed in January 2003. However, there are a range of other personal aid services, including grief counselling, mental health services, victim services, and a children's centre society. Furthermore, while the Salvation Army closed in 2000, church and community groups pulled together to take over the operations of the second hand store.

Table 9: Availability of Community Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Food bank	31.8%	25.0%	
Clothing exchange / depot	18.2%	0.0%	
Second hand stores	40.9%	37.5%	✓
Youth drop-in centre	22.7%	50.0%	✓
Women's drop-in centre	22.7%	50.0%	
Senior's drop-in centre	31.8%	75.0%	
Half-way house	4.5%	12.5%	✓
Women's resource centre	9.1%	0.0%	
Personal aid services	31.8%	37.5%	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Transportation

Transportation infrastructure can have important implications not only for attracting economic activity to a place, but also for enhancing the quality of life of vulnerable groups in rural and small town places. Transportation services, especially freight services, can play an important role in attracting industry by providing additional options to export products. However, without adequate and affordable transportation options, mobility can be difficult for women, seniors, or those with disabilities to move within the community and to access services in adjacent centres. Being mobile enables citizens to have access to services, to be involved in the community, and to develop local friendships and support networks.

The higher availability of gas stations and automobile repair services in these places reflects Canada's general reliance on the automobile (Table 10). Other transportation services are less frequently available, most notably local transit service, passenger rail service, boat / ferry services, and airport service. However, sites in Western Canada offer a greater variety of transportation services. In fact, while the majority of sites in other regions did not have inter-community bus service or train freight services, most sites in Western Canada have these services. Transportation services have become important not just in attracting economic activity to Tumbler Ridge, but also for enabling residents to commute to nearby regional centres to access other services. Freight train infrastructure, through B.C. Rail, is in place to transport resources out of the region. Furthermore, while there is no inter-community bus service between Tumbler Ridge and nearby centres, a taxi service has developed to transport individuals both within town and to Dawson Creek.

Table 10: Availability of Transport Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Local bus transit	0.0%	0.0%	
Inter-community bus station	31.8%	62.5%	
Train – passenger	4.5%	0.0%	
Train – freight	36.4%	87.5%	✓
Airport	18.2%	37.5%	✓
Helicopter port	22.7%	37.5%	✓
Boat / ferry terminal	13.6%	12.5%	
Taxi	27.3%	25.0%	✓
Gas station	86.4%	87.5%	✓
Automobile repair	63.6%	87.5%	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Recreation Services

When examining all of the sites, recreational services showed the greatest availability compared to any other service category (Table 11). This bodes well for the retention and attraction of residents, as well as the overall quality of life of these places. More notable recreational services available include indoor skating rinks, community playing fields, community centres, libraries, municipal parks, skiing and hiking trails, and campgrounds. Many of these services are important places where events can be held to foster a sense of community.

Across Canada, most sites offer either an indoor skating rink or an outdoor skating rink. Recreational services less frequently available across Canada include fitness facilities, such as athletic clubs, as well as entertainment features such as live theatre or cinemas. A greater range of recreational services are available in a majority of sites in Western Canada. In fact, all of the sites in Western Canada offer municipal parks and campgrounds. Tumbler Ridge offers a wide range of recreational amenities for its citizens and visitors. The Tumbler Ridge Community Centre includes a curling rink, an ice arena, an indoor swimming pool, a public library, a

municipal athletic club, a restaurant, several meeting rooms, and more. Tumbler Ridge has also been able to promote itself as a tourism destination for snowmobiling, hiking, camping, and cross-country skiing. More recently, the discovery of dinosaur footprints in the area has led to further tourism ventures.

Table 11: Availability of Recreation Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Curling rink	31.8%	75.0%	✓
Bowling lanes	22.7%	25.0%	
Indoor municipal swimming pool	13.6%	25.0%	✓
Outdoor municipal swimming pool	18.2%	25.0%	
Indoor municipal skating rink	50.0%	75.0%	✓
Outdoor municipal skating rink	31.8%	25.0%	
Community playing field	81.8%	87.5%	✓
Community gym	50.0%	62.5%	✓
Community centre	81.8%	87.5%	✓
Private athletic club	13.6%	12.5%	
Municipal athletic club	18.2%	37.5%	✓
Theatre (live performance)		13.6%	12.5%
Cinema (movie theatre)	4.5%	0.0%	
Museum	36.4%	37.5%	
Library	77.3%	62.5%	✓
Municipal parks	77.3%	100.0%	✓
Provincial parks	22.7%	25.0%	✓
Tennis courts	31.8%	37.5%	✓
Skiing trails	50.0%	62.5%	✓
Hiking trails	63.6%	62.5%	✓
Golf courses	36.4%	50.0%	✓
Campgrounds	68.2%	100.0%	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Shopping

Shopping services contribute to the success of the local economy and are considered to be an important gauge of economic health of rural and small town places. Shopping is also an important recreational activity and provides opportunities for social interaction. Low levels of shopping services can lead to out-of-town shopping and perhaps even out-migration.

The service inventory indicates that most sites across Canada are able to offer shopping services that residents would need to access on a more frequent basis, notably grocery stores (Table 12). A greater proportion of sites in Western Canada have a grocery store and a liquor store. With the exception of a farmer's market, Tumbler Ridge offers all of the listed basic shopping services.

Table 12: Availability of Basic Shopping Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Grocery store	68.2%	87.5%	✓
Farmer's market	13.6%	12.5%	
Liquor store	54.5%	75.0%	✓
Bakery	27.3%	25.0%	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Most of the sites across Canada are minimum convenience service centres (Table 13). These places generally offer a hardware store, a drug store, a bank, and two other convenience functions such as a variety store. About one-third of the sites function as a full convenience centre. These places offer all the services of a minimum convenience centre, plus a laundry or dry cleaning store, jewelry, appliances, or furniture, clothing, lumber, building materials, shoes, garden supplies, and a motel or hotel. Finally, just under 20% of the sites fulfill the role of a partial shopping centre. These towns carry all the services of a full convenience centre plus some specialty services such as a camera shop, a floral store, radio or television store, or women's accessories. Full convenience centres and partial shopping centres were more likely to be located in sites that were not adjacent to metropolitan areas. The availability of commercial shopping services in Western Canada are very similar to the national average. Tumbler Ridge functions as a partial shopping centre. The closest 'complete shopping centre' and 'secondary wholesale retail centre' is Dawson Creek. The closest 'primary wholesale retail centre' to Tumbler Ridge is Prince George, which is located almost 400 kilometres away.

Table 13: Availability of Commercial Shopping Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Minimum Convenience Centre	86.4%	87.5%	✓
Full Convenience Centre	36.4%	37.5%	✓
Partial Shopping Centre	18.2%	25.0%	✓
Complete Shopping Centre	0.0%	0.0%	
Secondary Wholesale Retail Ctr	0.0%	0.0%	
Primary Wholesale Retail Ctr	0.0%	0.0%	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Economic Development Organizations

Economic development organizations can play an important role in promoting the community to attract not only additional businesses, but also to attract a wider population base. While there is not a wide range of economic development organizations in these sites, it is particularly critical to note that only approximately 20% of sites across Canada have local business development corporations or rotary clubs (Table 14). As these organizations are comprised of local business individuals, they are important sources to draw upon during economic and social restructuring.

Table 14: Availability of Economic / Development Organizations - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Community Business Dev. Ctrs	0.0%	0.0%	
Fed / Prov Econ. Dev. Agencies	0.0%	0.0%	
Chamber of Commerce	18.2%	25.0%	
Local Business Dev. Corporation	18.2%	37.5%	✓
Economic / Community Trust	4.5%	12.5%	
Career Training / Placement	13.6%	25.0%	✓
Financial / Business Consulting	27.3%	37.5%	
Real Estate Boards	0.0%	0.0%	
Tourism Associations	27.3%	25.0%	✓
Rotary clubs	18.2%	12.5%	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Economic development organizations appear to have a stronger presence in sites in Western Canada than the national sample. The Tumbler Ridge Employment Needs Development Society (TRENDS) functions as a local business development corporation. TRENDS, along with the Northern Lights College, provides career training and placement programs. The Mistahaya Wayatinaw (Grizzly Valley) Tourism Co-operative is a local tourist association for the area. Other economic development organizations are accessible in Dawson Creek and Prince George.

Housing

A new category added to the service inventory in 2003 was housing. Housing has been used as an incentive to attract residents to rural and small town places. However, lack of housing options is a problem in rural and small town places that can lead to out-migration. Housing options can improve the quality of life of residents, especially the more vulnerable citizens, including senior citizens or those with disabilities.

Although social housing does not appear to be widely available in sites across Canada, there are strong regional differences (Table 15). A greater proportion of sites in Western Canada offer a range of social housing options. In fact, half of the sites in Western Canada have assisted or subsidized housing for seniors. Social housing options in Tumbler Ridge include co-op housing and rent supplement units.

Table 15: Availability of Social Housing Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Within Tumbler Ridge
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	
Co-op Housing	13.6%	25.0%	✓
Rent Supplement Units	22.7%	37.5%	✓
Subsidized Housing - Seniors	31.8%	50.0%	
Subsidized Housing - Families	31.8%	37.5%	
Subsidized Housing - Single People		9.1%	25.0%
Subsidized Housing - Special Needs	13.6%	25.0%	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Challenges and Opportunities for Tumbler Ridge, B.C.

Although Tumbler Ridge faces challenges with on-going restructuring of the local economy, it has a foundation of services that contribute to its capacity to cope with change. To cope with cyclical changes to the economy, Tumbler Ridge residents face challenges in accessing government services, such as HRDC programs or employment insurance. Fortunately, the town has a range of educational services through the Northern Lights College and TRENDS to provide new training and educational opportunities. Tumbler Ridge can also capitalize on its rail infrastructure to attract new economic activity that would use freight services to transport their products. A second challenge for Tumbler Ridge is limited shopping and health care services that result in commuting and economic leakage. Furthermore, new amenities for an emerging senior population need to be developed, including a drop-in centre, senior care facilities, and social housing for seniors.

Fortunately, Tumbler Ridge has been able to capitalize on its assets during the transition period. The Tumbler Ridge Transition Study conducted by UNBC found that many new residents moved to the community as a result of inexpensive housing and a well designed town. Furthermore, despite being located an hour off the main highway, Tumbler Ridge is continuing to promote its recreational assets. In particular, it has been promoting winter tourism through snowmobiling. It is also capitalizing on new tourism opportunities after the discovery of dinosaur footprints in the Tumbler Ridge area. These assets will go a long way, not just in attracting tourists and economic activity, but also for retaining residents.

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