



Initiative on the New Economy

**Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Places:
A Report for Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia**

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A project of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
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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 places across Canada. Capacity is the ability of people residing in a place 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 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.

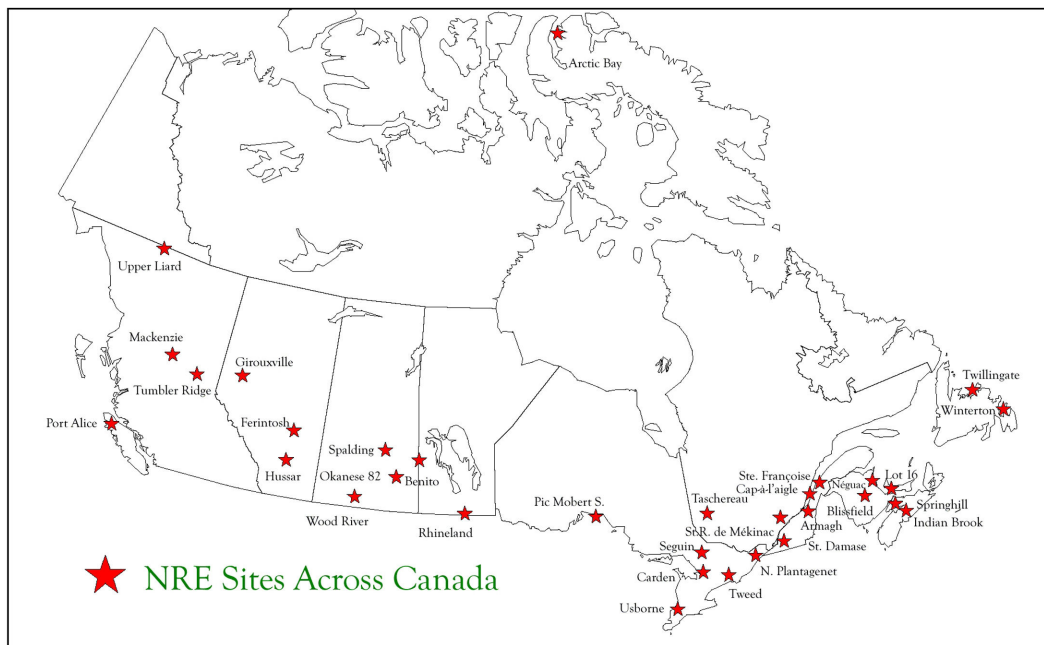
The Services Research theme conducted site profile surveys in the summer of 2005. This is the fourth survey conducted since 1998 with a goal to track services over time. Services play two key functions in building capacity. First, services help rural and small town places to cope with restructuring and transition as a result of economic downturns or plant closures. Job losses stemming from industrial restructuring or closure can place increased demands on local services for education and training, business development, 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.

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. 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, British Columbia with services available in other research sites across Canada, as well as with services available in other study sites within Western Canada. In each of the tables in this report, the availability of services in Tumbler Ridge is compared to the 24 sites surveyed across Canada and to the 9 study sites in Western Canada.

Information for this report was collected in Tumbler Ridge by: Chelan Hoffman, Shiloh Durkee, Laura Ryser, Nora King, Virginia Pow, and Greg Halseth.

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 and fishing communities, and tourism towns. Furthermore, some of these places are located adjacent to metropolitan areas, while others are more isolated.



In the summer of 2005, researchers visited 24 sites across Canada to update a service provision inventory. This included 9 sites in Western Canada, 5 sites in Ontario, 4 sites in Québec, and 6 sites in Atlantic Canada. The population of these rural and small town places varies from 150 to 5,205 people.

Distribution and size of INE participating sites

SITES	POPULATION SIZE – 2001
Western Canada	
Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia	1,851
Mackenzie, British Columbia	5,205
Port Alice, British Columbia	1,126
Hussar, Alberta	181
Ferintosh, Alberta	150
Spalding, Saskatchewan	261
Wood River, Saskatchewan	370
Benito, Manitoba	415
Rhineland, Manitoba	4,183
Ontario	
Seguin, Ontario	3,698
Tweed, Ontario	1,540
North Plantagenet, Ontario	3,848
Carden, Ontario	888
Usborne, Ontario	1,490
Québec	
Taschereau, Québec	534
Cap-à-l'aigle, Québec	720
St. Damase, Québec	1,327
St. Françoise, Québec	453
Atlantic Canada	
Blissfield, New Brunswick	674
Neguac, New Brunswick	1,697
Lot 16, Prince Edward Island	688
Springhill, Nova Scotia	4,091
Twillingate, Newfoundland and Labrador	2,615
Winterton, Newfoundland and Labrador	560

Source: CRRF NRE 2005; Statistics Canada 2001.

Data were collected to examine the availability of a range of services including:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| education | community |
| health | transportation |
| protection services | recreational |
| legal | basic Shopping |
| business services | commercial shopping |
| communication | economic development organizations |
| elderly and childcare | housing |
| government | |

AVAILABILITY

Copies of all service availability reports were distributed within the 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 Initiative of the New Economy website 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,
BRITISH COLUMBIA**

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 planning 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 began as a single industry town and faced some challenges in moving to a diversified economy. 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. Local work in forestry and oil and gas, as well as summer and winter tourism, also highlight a broader local economic base. In 2004, with improved coal prices, new mine developments emerged including new resource development at Western Canadian Coal's Dillon Mine.



POPULATION PROFILE - TUMBLER RIDGE, B.C.

The population of Tumbler Ridge, B.C. 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 into 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 2005 was 3,500 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. However, rural and small town places across Canada are experiencing tremendous change stemming from economic and social restructuring in an increasingly 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.

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 - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge:	
	Canada		West		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Pre-school/kindergarten	50.0	62.5	62.5	66.7	✓	
Elementary school	63.6	66.7	62.5	66.7	✓	
High school	27.3	37.5	37.5	44.4	✓	
CEGEP/college	18.2	16.7	25.0	22.2	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

With the exception of community colleges, educational services are available in more sites across Canada in 2005 compared to two years ago. A greater proportion of sites in Western Canada offer a range of educational services when compared to the sites across Canada (Table 1). With the exception of community colleges, the Western Canada region has experienced a growth in the availability of educational services since 2003.

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, in 2004, Northern Lights College offered an oil and gas field operator program. It also continues to offer dinosaur camps in partnership with the Tumbler Ridge Museum Foundation and Northern Lights College.

Health Services

Health services play an important role in attracting new labour and retaining residents. 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 or 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 2: Availability of Health Infrastructure - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge:	
	Canada		West		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Hospital	18.2	12.5	25.0	22.2	X	X
Health centre/CLSC	27.3	37.5	25.0	44.4	✓	
Medical clinic	40.9	37.5	50.0	55.6	✓	
Blood/urine testing	36.4	41.7	37.5	44.4	✓	
X-ray facility	22.7	20.8	37.5	33.3	✓	
Baby delivery facility	4.5	4.2	12.5	11.1	X	X
CT scan facility	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Nursing home	13.6	16.7	12.5	11.1	X	X
Pharmacy	40.9	37.5	37.5	33.3	✓	
Ambulance	36.4	41.7	37.5	44.4	✓	
Emergency services	18.2	16.7	25.0	22.2	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Health facilities are limited in most of the rural and small town places examined (Table 2). This has changed very little over the last two years. Of particular interest is that fewer than 40% of sites across Canada in 2005 have a health centre, hospital, or pharmacy. This carries important implications for residents commuting for medical emergencies or health care reasons. Sites in Western Canada are better equipped with health care facilities when compared with the national sample. At least half of the sites in Western Canada have a medical clinic. There have been few changes to other health care facilities across Western Canada over the last two years. Most of the listed medical facilities are available in Tumbler Ridge, including a health centre, pharmacy, blood testing, x-ray, and ambulance facilities. These services provide an important foundation for retaining residents in an aging population. Residents may access hospital services, such as baby delivery and CT scan facilities, an hour away in Dawson Creek.

Table 3: Availability of Health Professionals - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge: 2005	
	Canada % Yes		West % Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Doctors	36.4	41.7	50.0	44.4	✓	
Nurses	36.4	41.7	37.5	55.6	✓	
Dentists	27.3	25.0	12.5	11.1	X	X
Dental Surgeons	9.1	8.3	0.0	0.0	X	X
Optometrists	18.2	16.7	25.0	22.2	✓	
Home care visits	54.5	70.8	75.0	88.9	✓	
VON	13.6	20.8	0.0	0.0	X	X
Social workers	22.7	29.2	12.5	11.1	X	X
Public health nurse	31.8	37.5	50.0	66.7	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

The availability of health care professionals is also limited in small places. In fact, only home care visits are available in more than half of the sites across Canada in 2005 (Table 3). Even those services considered as essential, such as doctors, are only available in just over 41% of the sites across Canada. While health care professionals are generally more available in a higher proportion of Western Canada sites, dentists, dental surgeons, VONs, and social workers are more limited. Tumbler Ridge offers doctors, nurses, and home care. Residents also have access to a visiting optometrist twice a week from Dawson Creek. Services that are unavailable in Tumbler Ridge are also uncommon in other rural and small town places in Western Canada. Access to other health care professionals is available beyond 30 minutes in either Chetwynd or Dawson Creek.

Table 4: Availability of Health Programs / Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge: 2005	
	Canada % Yes		West % Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Physiotherapy	22.7	25.0	25.0	11.1	✓	
Speech therapy	31.8	25.0	50.0	33.3	✓	
Occupational therapy	13.6	17.4	12.5	0.0	X	X
Respite care	22.7	21.7	50.0	25.0	X	X
Prenatal care programs	*	39.1	*	33.3	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

The availability of health care programs and services is also low in the sites examined across Canada. However, new services being tracked in 2005, including prenatal care programs, are more widely available (Table 4). Health care services and programs are less widely available in sites across Western Canada compared to the national sample. In particular, while half of the sites in Western Canada had respite care in 2003, just 25% of these sites are still able to offer this

service in 2005. Residents in Tumbler Ridge have access to some specialized health care services, such as physiotherapy and speech therapy. Again, the presence of health care professionals and services will play an important role in retaining residents within the community who may otherwise be concerned about commuting longer distances to access these services.

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 5: Availability of Protection Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge: 2005	
	Canada % Yes		West % Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Police (local/RCMP)	22.7	33.3	25.0	33.3	✓	
Fire department	68.2	79.2	87.5	100.0	✓	
911 emergency line	86.4	83.3	100.0	100.0	✓	
Security services	4.5	12.5	0.0	22.2	✓	
Alarm services	22.7	37.5	37.5	44.4	✓	
Neighbourhood watch	31.8	29.2	37.5	33.3	✓	
Rural crime watch	13.6	16.7	25.0	33.3	X	X
Victim's services – police based	*	16.7	*	33.3	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

Protection services are more available than most other services (Table 5). Most notably, fire departments and the 911 telephone number are available in more than half the sites across Canada. Since 2003, some sites across Canada appear to have recovered policing and fire department services. Most protection services are more available in Western Canada sites compared to the national sample. With the exception of a rural crime watch, all of these protection services are 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 such as preparation of wills or for purchasing real estate, or to have passports or affidavits signed.

Table 6: Availability of Legal Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge:	
	Canada		West		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Lawyer	18.2	16.7	12.5	11.1	X	X
Notary	40.9	45.8	50.0	55.6	✓	
Court	18.2	12.5	25.0	22.2	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Overall, legal services are very limited in the study sites across Canada (Table 6). The availability of legal services in Western Canada sites is above the national sample. However, while more sites in Western Canada have a notary public, fewer of these sites have a lawyer or a court when compared to 2003 results. Tumbler Ridge residents and business members have access to a notary public and a part-time court system. The closest lawyer is located in Chetwynd.

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 viability and stability of the local economy. Business members also play an important role in community development as they can provide leadership in, and support for, local volunteer groups. Small local businesses are also an important source for fundraising and sponsorship of specific local organizations or events.

Table 7: Availability of Financial / Business Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge:	
	Canada		West		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Banks	36.4	33.3	37.5	33.3	X	X
Credit union/caisse populaire	50.0	50.0	62.5	55.6	✓	
ATM	50.0	54.2	62.5	66.7	✓	
Micro-financing	9.1	16.7	25.0	44.4	X	X
Insurance office	50.0	50.0	62.5	55.6	✓	
Industrial park	22.7	20.8	37.5	33.3	✓	
Real estate office	18.2	20.8	12.5	22.2	✓	
Accounting	50.0	50.0	50.0	44.4	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

In general, credit unions, ATMs, insurance offices, and accounting services are found in half the rural and small town sites across Canada (Table 7). The availability of these services has remained fairly stable over the last two years. In 2005, more Western Canada sites have ATMs,

micro-financing, and industrial parks compared to the national sample. Fewer sites in Western Canada have an accounting office.

There is a range of financial services in Tumbler Ridge, including a credit union, an ATM, and an industrial park, as well as insurance, real estate, and accounting services. In fact, two new realty offices, including TR Realty Ltd. and Cascade Realty Ltd., opened in 2005. Micro-financing and real estate offices can also be accessed an hour away in Dawson Creek.

Communications

Connectivity is crucial in the new economy. Communication services also allow residents to maintain contact with family and friends. With improved communication infrastructure, rural and small town places can improve local employment opportunities, and support business networks.

Table 8: Availability of Communication Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge:	
	Canada		West		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Cell phone – analog	86.4	91.7	87.5	77.8	X	X
Cell phone – digital	40.9	83.3	25.0	77.8	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Overall, analog cell phone service is widely available across the study sites in Canada (Table 8). Approximately 83% of the sites in the national sample also enjoy digital cell phone service. While fewer sites in Western Canada offer cell phone services compared to the national sample, there has been a substantial increase in the proportion of Western Canada sites that offer digital cell phone service compared to two years ago. Tumbler Ridge residents and businesses benefit from the availability of digital 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.

An inventory of 24 sites across Canada indicates that while many are equipped to meet the needs of young families, others are not yet well equipped with seniors' care facilities (Table 9). In contrast to the national sample, sites in Western Canada are less equipped to offer daycare and elderly services. Until the closure of the Bullmoose and Quintette mines, Tumbler Ridge was a young community with very few seniors. Thus, there was limited demand for senior care

facilities. Today, the town has young families, as well as retirees. For Tumbler Ridge, the closest daycare and elderly facilities are located in Chetwynd.

Table 9: Availability of Elderly and Daycare Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge:	
	Canada		West		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Daycare	45.5	54.2	37.5	44.4	X	X
Senior citizen's nursing home	18.2	20.8	12.5	11.1	X	X
Senior citizen's retirement home	33.3	37.5	25.0	33.3	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

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.

The rural and small town sites examined across Canada do not have access to many government services (Table 10). Of particular concern to sites experiencing social and economic restructuring is that few of the sites have Employment Insurance or social assistance offices. Consequently, during restructuring or plant closures, households experiencing stress will have to go outside the site for information and assistance.

Table 10: Availability of Government Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge:	
	Canada		West		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Employment Insurance	4.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	X	X
Provincial auto license office	18.2	16.7	50.0	44.4	✓	
Social assistance office	22.7	16.7	37.5	22.2	✓	
Town hall	68.2	70.8	87.5	88.9	✓	
Post office	81.8	83.3	100.0	100.0	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

With the exception of Employment Insurance, more sites in Western Canada offer a range of government services to households experiencing economic and social restructuring compared to the national sample. However, fewer sites in Western Canada have a social assistance office compared to two years ago. Tumbler Ridge offers a greater range of government services compared to other sites across Canada. While Tumbler Ridge did not have social assistance

services available within the community two years ago, a financial aid worker now visits once a month from Dawson Creek. Other government services available in Tumbler Ridge include a provincial auto license office, a town hall, and a post office. Residents in Tumbler Ridge must travel to Dawson Creek to access Employment Insurance services.

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 varies considerably (Table 11). While fewer sites across Canada have a second hand stores compared to two years ago, more sites in the national sample offer clothing depots and senior drop-in centres.

Table 11: Availability of Community Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge:	
	Canada		West		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Food bank	31.8	25.0	25.0	33.3	✓	
Clothing exchange/depot	18.2	29.2	0.0	33.3	✓	
Second hand stores	40.9	29.2	37.5	33.3	✓	
Youth drop-in centre	22.7	25.0	50.0	44.4	✓	
Women's drop-in centre	22.7	16.7	50.0	44.4	✓	
Senior's drop-in centre	31.8	41.7	75.0	55.6	X	X
Half-way house	4.5	4.2	12.5	0.0	X	X
Women's resource centre	9.1	8.3	0.0	11.1	X	X
Women's safe house	*	8.3	*	22.2	✓	
Personal aid services	31.8	37.5	37.5	33.3	✓	
Victim's services						
– comm. based	*	25.0	*	44.4	✓	
Churches	*	95.8	*	100.0	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

Overall, sites in Western Canada are able to offer more community services when compared to all the sites across Canada. In fact, the availability of clothing depots has increased in the Western Canada sites since 2003. At least half of these sites continue to have a senior's drop-in centre or a church. A concern may stem from the decline in Western Canada sites of drop-in centres for seniors since 2003. These centres provide opportunities for interaction and help to foster a sense of community. Tumbler Ridge offers a wider range of community services compared to other sites across Canada. While the Family Support office closed in January 2003, there are a range of other personal aid services, including grief counselling, mental health services, and a children's centre society. The Tumbler Ridge Teen Centre re-opened in September 2003. Furthermore, while Tumbler Ridge does not yet have a senior's drop-in centre, there is an active senior's organization called the 49 Forever Club.

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, 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, to develop local friendship ties and support networks, and to experience social activities.

The higher availability of gas stations and automobile repair services in these places reflects Canada's general reliance on the automobile (Table 12). Other transportation services are less frequently available, most notably local transit service, passenger rail service, and airport service.

Table 12: Availability of Transport Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge:	
	Canada		West		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Local bus transit	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Inter-community bus station	31.8	29.2	62.5	55.6	X	X
Train – passenger	4.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	X	X
Train – freight	36.4	29.2	87.5	55.6	X	X
Airport	18.2	16.7	37.5	33.3	✓	
Helicopter port	22.7	25.0	37.5	33.3	✓	
Boat/ferry terminal	18.2	25.0	12.5	11.1	X	X
Taxi	27.3	25.0	25.0	33.3	✓	
Gas station	86.4	87.5	87.5	88.9	✓	
Automobile repair	63.6	70.8	87.5	88.9	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

When compared to sites across Canada, more Western Canada sites have an inter-community bus station, freight train service, an airport, helicopter port, taxi, and automobile repair shops. However, fewer Western sites have a boat or ferry terminal. While local automobile services remain stable in these communities, fewer sites in Western Canada offer freight train services compared to the 2003 results. 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. The resumption of coal mining will again make use of the freight train infrastructure 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.

Recreation Services

When examining all of the sites, recreational services show the greatest range of availability compared to any other service category (Table 13). 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 community playing fields, community centres, libraries, municipal parks, hiking trails, and campgrounds. Many of these services can be important places where events can foster a sense of community. Across Canada, most sites are also able to offer either an indoor skating rink or a community gym. Recreational services less frequently available across Canada include fitness facilities, such as athletic clubs and swimming pools, as well as entertainment features such as cinemas. Since 2003, live theatre and tennis courts are found in more sites in the national sample. Declines in recreational services between 2003 and 2005 in the national sample include outdoor municipal swimming pools and skiing trails.

In 2005, a greater proportion of sites in Western Canada offer recreational amenities such as curling rinks, indoor municipal skating rinks, community gym, municipal athletic club, live theatre, municipal parks, golf courses, and campgrounds. However, the availability of other amenities, such as public libraries, outdoor municipal skating rinks, and provincial parks are more limited compared to the national sample.

Table 13: Availability of Recreation Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge: 2005	
	Canada % Yes		West % Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Curling rink	31.8	37.5	75.0	77.8	✓	
Bowling lanes	22.7	20.8	25.0	22.2	X	X
Indoor municipal swimming pool	13.6	12.5	25.0	22.2	✓	
Outdoor municipal swimming pool	18.2	8.3	25.0	11.1	X	X
Indoor municipal skating rink	50.0	54.2	75.0	77.8	✓	
Outdoor municipal skating rink	31.8	33.3	25.0	22.2	X	X
Community playing field	81.8	79.2	87.5	88.9	✓	
Community gym	50.0	50.0	62.5	77.8	✓	
Community centre	81.8	75.0	87.5	77.8	✓	
Private athletic club	13.6	15.0	12.5	11.1	X	X
Municipal athletic club	18.2	16.7	37.5	33.3	✓	
Theatre (performance)	13.6	33.3	12.5	55.6	✓	
Cinema (movie theatre)	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Museum	36.4	41.7	37.5	44.4	✓	
Library	77.3	79.2	62.5	66.7	✓	
Municipal parks	77.3	79.2	100.0	100.0	✓	
Provincial parks	22.7	16.7	25.0	0.0	X	✓
Tennis courts	31.8	45.8	37.5	44.4	✓	
Skiing trails	50.0	37.5	62.5	33.3	✓	
Hiking trails	63.6	62.5	62.5	55.6	✓	
Golf courses	36.4	37.5	50.0	55.6	✓	
Campgrounds	68.2	66.7	100.0	100.0	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Tumbler Ridge offers a wide range of recreational amenities for citizens and visitors of various ages and fitness levels. 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. The discovery of dinosaur footprints in the area has led to further tourism ventures. Furthermore, the Grizzly Valley Players is a new theatre group for adults. Other recreational services that are not available locally are found beyond an hour's drive from Tumbler Ridge in Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, or Fort St. John.

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.

Table 14: Availability of Basic Shopping Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge: 2005	
	Canada % Yes		West % Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Grocery store	68.2	70.8	87.5	88.9	✓	
Farmer's market	13.6	25.0	12.5	11.1	X	X
Liquor store	54.5	62.5	75.0	88.9	✓	
Bakery	27.3	37.5	25.0	44.4	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

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, such as grocery stores (Table 14). In fact, basic shopping services have been increasing in the 24 sites examined in the national inventory. While a lower proportion of sites in Western Canada have a farmer's market, a greater proportion of these sites have a grocery store and a liquor store. Tumbler Ridge residents can access most basic shopping services within their community. The closest farmer's market is approximately 97 kilometres away in Chetwynd. Tumbler Ridge residents may also access other basic shopping services locally, such as a furniture store, hair salons, computer outlet, convenience stores, outdoor adventure shop, and video stores. For more specialized shopping services, residents must travel beyond 30 minutes to Chetwynd, Dawson Creek, or Prince George.

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 the sites across Canada have a Chamber of Commerce (Table 15). As these organizations are comprised of local business individuals, they are important sources to draw upon during economic and social change. On the other hand, more sites in the national sample offer financial and business consulting services compared to two years ago.

Table 15: Availability of Economic / Development Organizations - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge: 2005	
	Canada % Yes		West % Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Business Dev. Bank of Canada	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Community Futures Dev. Corp.	0.0	8.3	0.0	22.2	✓	
Chamber of Commerce	18.2	20.8	25.0	33.3	✓	
Local bus. dev. corp.	18.2	8.3	37.5	22.2	X	X
Economic/community trust	4.5	4.2	12.5	11.1	X	X
Career training/placmt. program	13.6	12.5	25.0	22.2	✓	
Financial/business consulting	27.3	37.5	37.5	55.6	✓	
Real estate boards	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Tourism associations	27.3	12.5	25.0	0.0	X	X
Rotary clubs	18.2	12.5	12.5	11.1	X	X
Retraining programs – general	*	8.3	*	0.0	X	X
Retraining programs – women	*	0.0	*	0.0	X	X
Women’s leadership groups	*	41.7	*	44.4	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

Economic development organizations are more widely available in the Western Canada sites compared to the national sample. In fact, there has been an increase in the proportion of Western Canada sites that have a Community Futures or a financial or business consulting group since 2003. More notable declines occurred, though, with the availability of local business development corporations and tourism associations in these sites.

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. While Community Futures is based in Dawson Creek, a representative serves Tumbler Ridge on a demand basis. Since 2003, other economic development organizations and programs have emerged including a Chamber of Commerce and financial and business consulting services. Tumbler Ridge also has a girl’s leadership group operated through Tumbler Ridge Counselling. Other economic development organizations are accessible in Dawson Creek and Prince George.

Housing

Housing has been used as an incentive to attract residents to rural and small town places. However, lack of housing options as a population changes, or ages, can be a problem and 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 have been some important changes (Table 16). Most notably, there has been an increase in the availability of assisted or subsidized housing for seniors from approximately 32% of the sites across Canada in 2003 to 50% in 2005. In Western Canada, more sites have all types of social housing compared to the national sample. In this context, while there has been a decline in Western Canada sites that have co-op housing, a greater proportion of these sites have assisted or subsidized housing for seniors compared to two years ago. Tumbler Ridge continues to offer a range of social housing options for its citizens. The closest place with assisted or subsidized housing for singles is located in Prince George, while individuals with disabilities or special needs can go to Chetwynd or Prince George to access this form of social housing.

Table 16: Availability of Social Housing Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Tumbler Ridge:	
	Canada		West		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Co-op housing	13.6	8.3	25.0	11.1	✓	
Rent supplement units	22.7	20.8	37.5	33.3	✓	
Asstd./sub. housing – seniors	31.8	50.0	50.0	66.7	✓	
Asstd./sub. housing – families	31.8	29.2	37.5	44.4	✓	
Asstd./sub. housing – singles	9.1	12.5	25.0	22.2	X	X
Asstd./sub. housing - Disabled/special needs	13.6	12.5	25.0	22.2	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Challenges and Opportunities for Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia

Although Tumbler Ridge faces challenges with on-going restructuring of the local economy, it has a foundation of services that contributes to its capacity to cope with change. 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 challenge for Tumbler Ridge is limited shopping and health care services that can result in commuting and economic leakage. Furthermore, new amenities for an emerging seniors population need to be developed, including a drop-in centre, seniors' 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 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 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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