

What We're Hearing Summary

HIGHWAY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



March 2023



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WHAT WE'RE HEARING SUMMARY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project

The town of Stony Plain is carrying out a significant research, analysis, and engagement project to complete a Highway Development Strategy for the Highway 16A and Highway 628 corridors that will ultimately guide a targeted investment attraction program. The Highway Development Strategy aligns with the town's progressive outlook and will contribute to a more dynamic and prosperous corridor to support Stony Plain's economy. This Strategy sits in the context of provincial initiatives on investment attraction and economic diversification. And in turn, is set against a backdrop of opportunities brought about by numerous sectors, including, but not limited to, technology, social and environmental dynamics. This project will set out how the town, in the short, medium, and long term, will leverage these opportunities and Stony Plain's attributes through targeted investment attraction and investment readiness. The town recognizes the importance of communicating to all key stakeholders prior to and throughout the project phases to understand their perspectives, garner their insight, and to create a plan informed by those who live, work, and do business in Stony Plain.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the outcomes of the Communication and Engagement Plan for the Highway Development Strategy and describe how the input received was used in the final strategy. Several stakeholder groups have been identified as having interest or influence in this project, as well as the interdisciplinary team of consultants and town administration required to see this project from a vision to implementation.

1.3 Communication and Engagement Plan

For this project, V3 and its project partners, on behalf of the town of Stony Plain, prepared and implemented a Communication and Engagement Plan (CEP) that sought the input for the Highway Development Strategy. The objectives of the CEP were to:

- ▶ Develop trust with the stakeholders by keeping them informed and responding quickly to inquiries;
- ▶ Actively inform and engage with stakeholders throughout the project;

- ▶ Actively work with businesses, property owners, and industry professionals to understand their perspectives and garner their insights to develop the Strategy; and
- ▶ Provide monitoring tools to measure the success of the CEP.

The CEP identified 11 stakeholder groups, including:

- ▶ Growth and Commerce Committee;
- ▶ Business Support Organizations;
- ▶ Land Developers and Real Estate firms with active interests in the project area;
- ▶ Local Companies with active interests in the project area;
- ▶ Town's Economic Development Department;
- ▶ Town's Planning and Infrastructure Department;
- ▶ The Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce;
- ▶ Relevant Industry Associations (UDI, CHBA, NAIOP, Edmonton Global); and
- ▶ Non-business Area Residents and Landowners.

As outlined in the CEP, each stakeholder group was assigned different methods for engagement, ranging from postcard mailouts describing the project and including an invitation to provide input via an online survey, to individual phone call interviews, and workshops.

2 SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

This section summarizes the feedback from various stakeholder groups, received up until the most recent date of this document.

2.1 Growth and Commerce Committee

The first touch-point with the Growth and Commerce Committee occurred on July 26, 2022. This involved a presentation regarding the context setting report, and themes the project team had heard and learned to-date. A second session with the Growth and Commerce Committee occurred on March 28th, 2023 to present the findings of the stakeholder engagement and provide an overview of the recommendations report.

2.2 Business Support Organizations

A number of business support organizations were identified as having potential insight into what could influence development within the study area. In collaboration with the town, the project team selected four (4) business support organizations to have one-on-one phone interview conversations with, working through a prepared survey to garner their insights. For anonymity purposes, the direct feedback from these organizations has been compiled and summarized together.

WHAT TOP THREE ISSUES HAVE YOUR CLIENTS OR SECTOR HAS ENCOUNTERED? (four key outcomes provided)

- ▶ Talent (hiring skills), Supply Chain/Logistics, and Costs (wages etc.) issues for clients of business services in the Edmonton Region are reoccurring themes as cited by other respondents. However, workforce availability is seen by one respondent as a strength;
- ▶ Real estate/land including lab space (prices and serviced land) issues in the Edmonton Region are a potential opportunity for Stony Plain, as shortages and more expensive pricing in contiguous region is cited by other respondents;
- ▶ Transportation access as an issue in the Edmonton Region is cited by other respondents as an issue in Stony Plain. However, Transportation connections are also seen as a strength in CN line connecting to Prince Rupert; and
- ▶ Taxes as an issue in the Edmonton Region are a potential opportunity (subject to validation) for Stony Plain and Incentives as an issue in the Edmonton Region validates the identification of best practice incentives.

WHAT TOP THREE SECTOR OPPORTUNITY AREAS HAVE YOUR CLIENTS ENCOUNTERED?*

- ▶ Transportation/logistics (warehousing/distribution), Manufacturing (light and medium industrial), and Food, as well as Construction material manufacturing and green construction material. Note, Edmonton Global has five transformational opportunities;
- ▶ Higher demand for Oil & Gas support services, Value-added Agriculture is seeing an uptick, but on a smaller scale than the first two opportunities; and
- ▶ Supplies and services: Distribution/Warehousing e.g., Retailers (shorten supply chain) and Pro Services e.g., lawyers, accountants, engineers.

**Note: Transportation/logistics (warehousing/distribution) is cited by multiple respondents as a potential opportunity/gap; Top strengths have been integrated into this opportunity areas section.*

TOP THREE WEAKNESSES

- ▶ Quality of municipal services/infrastructure in the Edmonton Region. However, it is seen as strength by one respondent;
- ▶ Unserved land, Land Use/Zoning (wrong zoning) for targeted businesses as a weakness in the Edmonton Region could be an opportunity for Stony Plain to capitalize; and
- ▶ Limited choices in some retail categories (e.g., men's/children's clothing and grocery stores) supports some views in the Resident's survey.

WHERE DOES THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXCEL IN PROVIDING SUPPORT?

- ▶ The town of Stony Plain should note comment from one regional organization - 'If the municipality is willing to work with client/flexibility to rezone to support and capture investment';
- ▶ Stony Plain is seen as business friendly by respondents:
 - Low development costs, taxes, great at attracting retail (although there is a need to pivot to light industrial and office, and tech which is often overlooked with rural communities); and
 - Creative in its support for businesses with different approaches, and good at collaboration with partner communities (e.g., cultural business event, downtown markets, and new library development with commercial space).

WHAT BUSINESS SECTORS HAVE THE MOST DIFFICULTY FINDING AND RETAINING EMPLOYEES?

- ▶ Primary sectors (i.e., mining, agriculture, fishing, farming, forestry);
- ▶ Secondary sectors (i.e., manufacturing); and
- ▶ Tertiary sectors (i.e., service providers).

WHAT ASPECTS OF COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CAN BE IMPROVED TO PROMOTE GROWTH?

- ▶ Utility and transportation infrastructure;
- ▶ Taxes, economic events, economic incentives, access to telecommunication, community facilities, infrastructure is priority in terms of broadband or rail (e.g., rail spurs cited by the regional investment attraction organization);
- ▶ Removing/reducing barriers created by planning documents to better support/ promote commercial/industrial development in Stony Plain, in particular the Land Use Bylaw which could be updated to better support/promote development; and
- ▶ To continue to support/promote regional collaboration even if jobs do not land in Stony Plain.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES OF BEING LOCATED IN THE EMPLOYMENT LANDS ALONG HIGHWAY 16A AND/OR HIGHWAY 628?

Each bullet below is an individual response ([verbatim](#)).

ADVANTAGES

- ▶ Availability of employee amenities and everyday needs/proximity to retail area (e.g., childcare, gym, grocery stores, coffee shops, pet daycare etc.);
- ▶ Proximity to highways, availability of bus route for employees as an advantage
 - An example of the proximity to highways: access to trade to shop to Prince Rupert or Edmonton as a benefit to being located in the employment lands along Highway 16A and/or Highway 628; and
- ▶ It is a high traffic area; strong anchor tenants (e.g., McDonalds, Safeway, Tim Hortons) and a variety of industrial/commercial development.

DISADVANTAGES

- ▶ NIMBYism, Lack of Serviced Land or specialized Infrastructure (e.g., three phase power, waste management schedule, etc.) as issues in the Edmonton Region should be noted in Stony Plain as opportunities and things to consider in enhancing the employment lands; and
- ▶ Accessibility to visible businesses on 16A - no direct in/out, commercial/industrial area is not well mapped out raises the question of infrastructure and road provision.

WHAT BARRIERS ARE THERE TO GROWTH?

- ▶ Attracting and/or retaining skilled labour with a specific lack of middle management; and
- ▶ Limited land/properties that have the appropriate infrastructure in place/are already serviced.

WHAT KEY INSTITUTIONS COULD PLAY A KEY ROLE IN SUPPORTING BUSINESS GROWTH AND EXPANSION?

- ▶ The Chamber of Commerce was cited by all respondents; and

- ▶ Invest Alberta, Libraries, Business Associations – (e.g., Acheson Business Association) and a collective voice of municipalities at the table also cited.

WHAT COULD BE DONE TO ENCOURAGE INNOVATION AND RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT (R&D) IN STONY PLAIN/TRI-MUNICIPAL REGION?

- ▶ Tax incentives/rebates, policies to encourage investment (regulatory sandbox);
- ▶ Regional approach – leverage partnership with Edmonton Global and other community partners;
- ▶ Leverage the CED (Collaborative Economic Development Grant);
- ▶ A win for one municipality is a win for the entire region – working together and collaborating demonstrates to investors that we are one team;
- ▶ Establish a business incubator;
- ▶ Encourage more activity in significant recent developments e.g., start-ups, new companies, products, technologies or initiatives;
- ▶ Awareness of diversification activities around Energy/Cleantech, Agriculture and AgriTech; and
- ▶ Another respondent had seen little activity, all of which was at the micro level. More adding complimentary services than diversification.

WHAT ARE THE TOP ADVANTAGES/CHALLENGES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SCALING UP IN THE STONY PLAIN/TRI-MUNICIPAL REGION?

ADVANTAGES

- ▶ Strong government services sector and supportive workers and elected officials mentioned by all respondents – represents a good building block for enhanced customer service, which in turn can be a competitive advantage;
- ▶ There is also improved internet connectivity and access to the Greater Edmonton Metro Region; and
- ▶ Strategic location, Low tax rates, Cost of living (Stony Plain has affordable living which is attractive to companies looking to locate or re-locate).

CHALLENGES

- ▶ Workforce/labour shortage, Middle Management talent, Small town;
- ▶ Support services: Community Futures Capital Region, Chamber of Commerce; and
- ▶ Collaboration: local firms, research institutions/centers of excellence, local industry.

2.3 Land Developers and Real Estate Firms

In collaboration with the town's project team, fourteen (14) land developers and real estate firms with interest in the town of Stony Plain were identified. All of the identified land developers and real estate firms were contacted directly by email and phone calls by the town to receive permission for the consulting project team to conduct one-on-one interviews, informing them of the project, and working through a survey to garner their insights about the project. Those who could not be reached by phone call or email were still invited to participate in the survey. For anonymity purposes, the direct feedback from participants have been compiled, summarized and analyzed together.

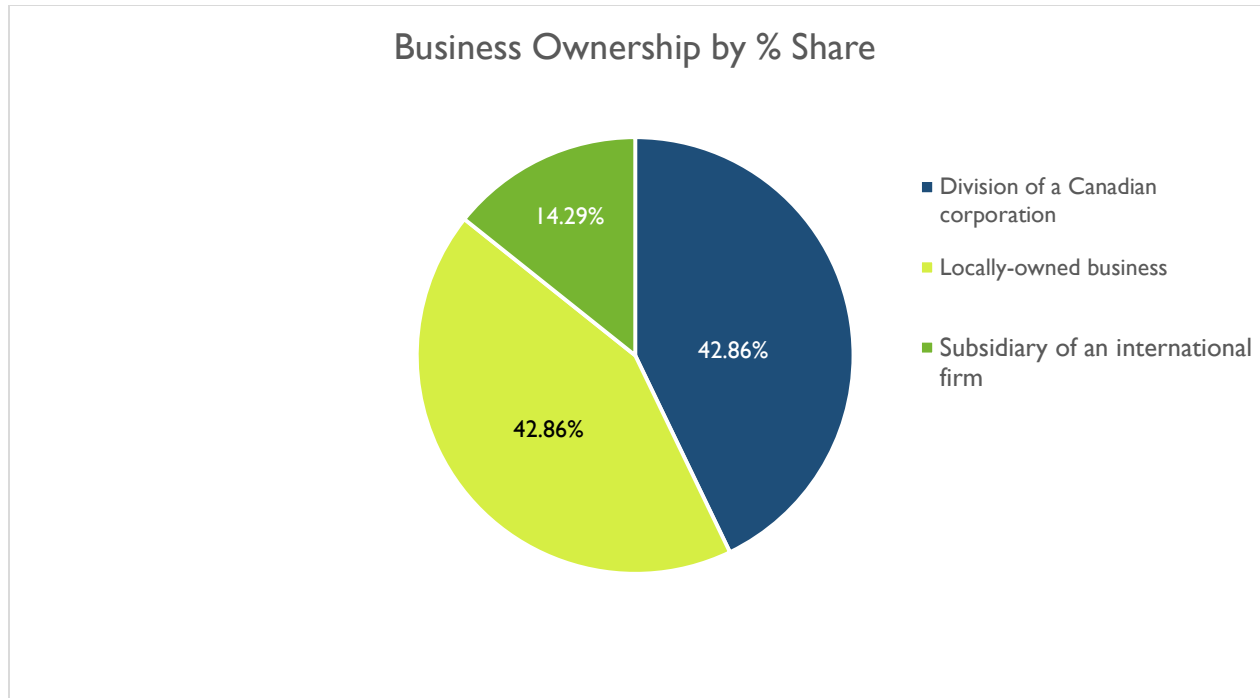
**Note: Where it indicates "n=" this indicates the number of respondents.*

ARE YOU A LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESS, A DIVISION OF A CANADIAN CORPORATION OR A SUBSIDIARY OF AN INTERNATIONAL FIRM?

Slightly over 85% of the real estate firms and land developers in Stony Plain are Canadian-owned businesses, and half of those are locally owned.

For those that are a division of a Canadian corporation or subsidiary of an international firm, they are from:

- ▶ Delta, British Columbia;
- ▶ Edmonton, Alberta; and
- ▶ Winnipeg, Manitoba.

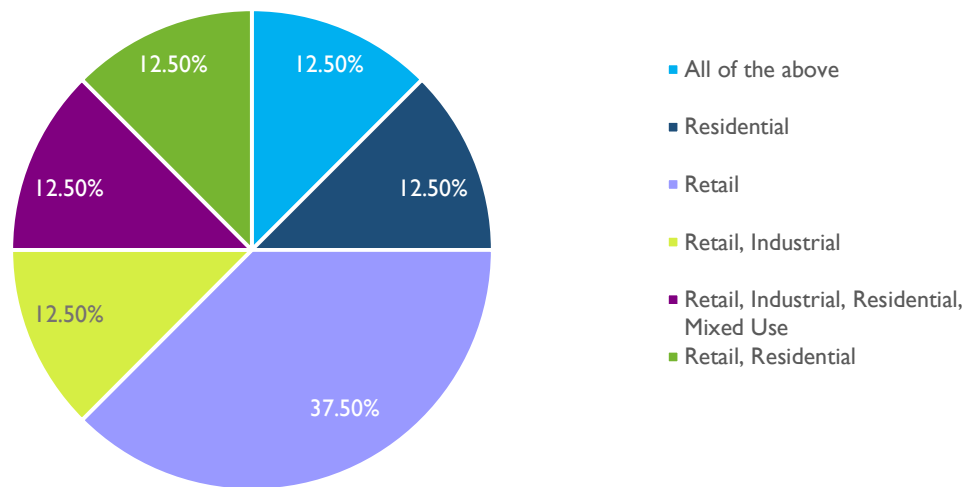


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WHAT SECTORS DO YOUR CLIENTS IN STONY PLAIN OPERATE IN?

Retail, at 37.5% of the responses, was the single most dominant sector that the clients of real estate firms and land developers worked in.

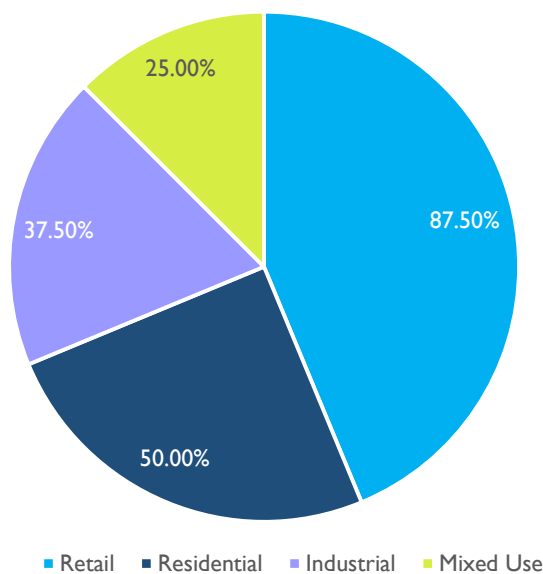
Operating Sectors (including multiple) of Clients in
Stony Plain by % Share



$n = 8$

However, if we extract all responses and isolate by sector (as opposed to multi-sector responses), the dominance of retail is even stronger, having been listed as a client sector in nearly 90% of the responses. Residential was listed as a client sector in half of all responses received.

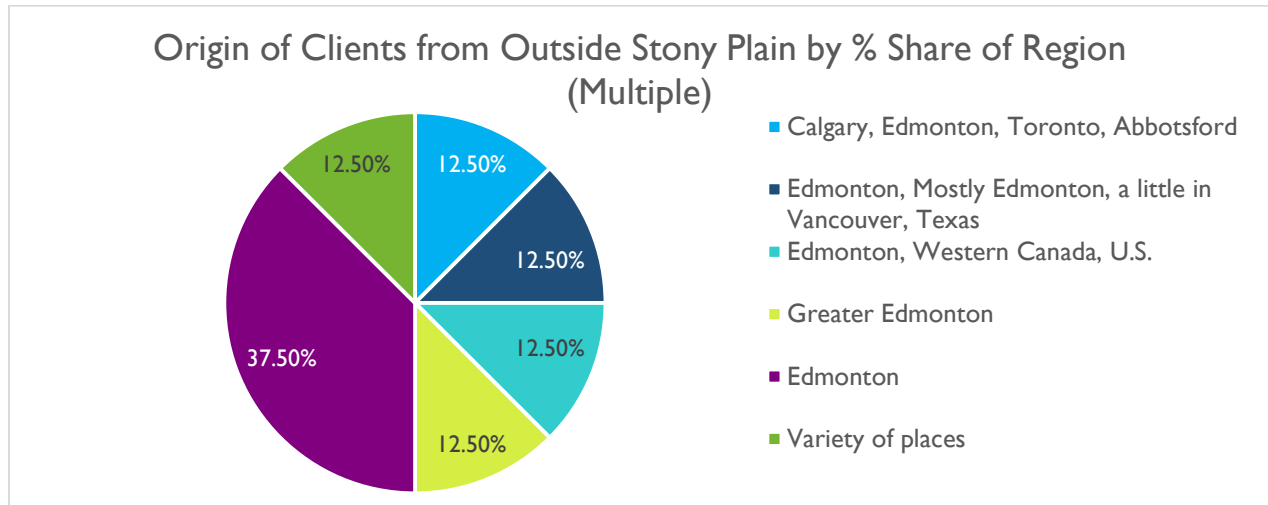
Operating Sectors of Clients in Stony Plain by % Share



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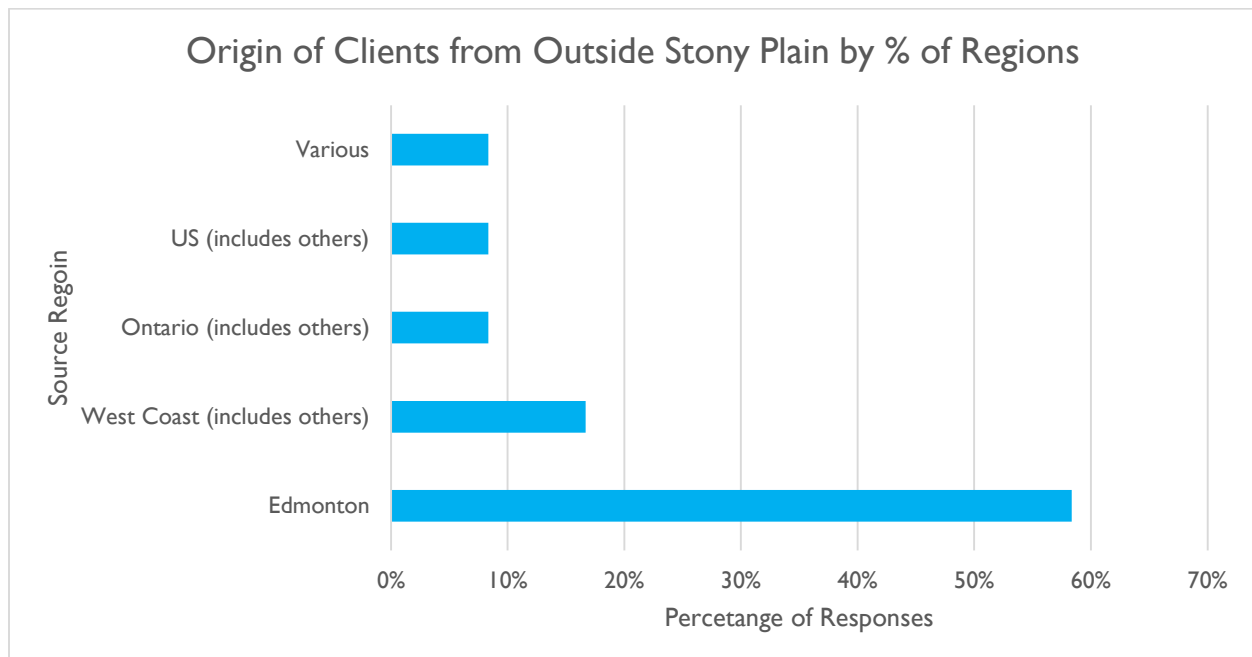
FOR CLIENTS THAT ORIGINATED FROM OUTSIDE OF STONY PLAIN, WHERE DID THEY ORIGINALLY COME FROM?

By response categories, nearly 40% of responses identified clients from outside of Stony Plain as originating from a variety of places, while other regions and combinations were equal in terms of their share of responses.



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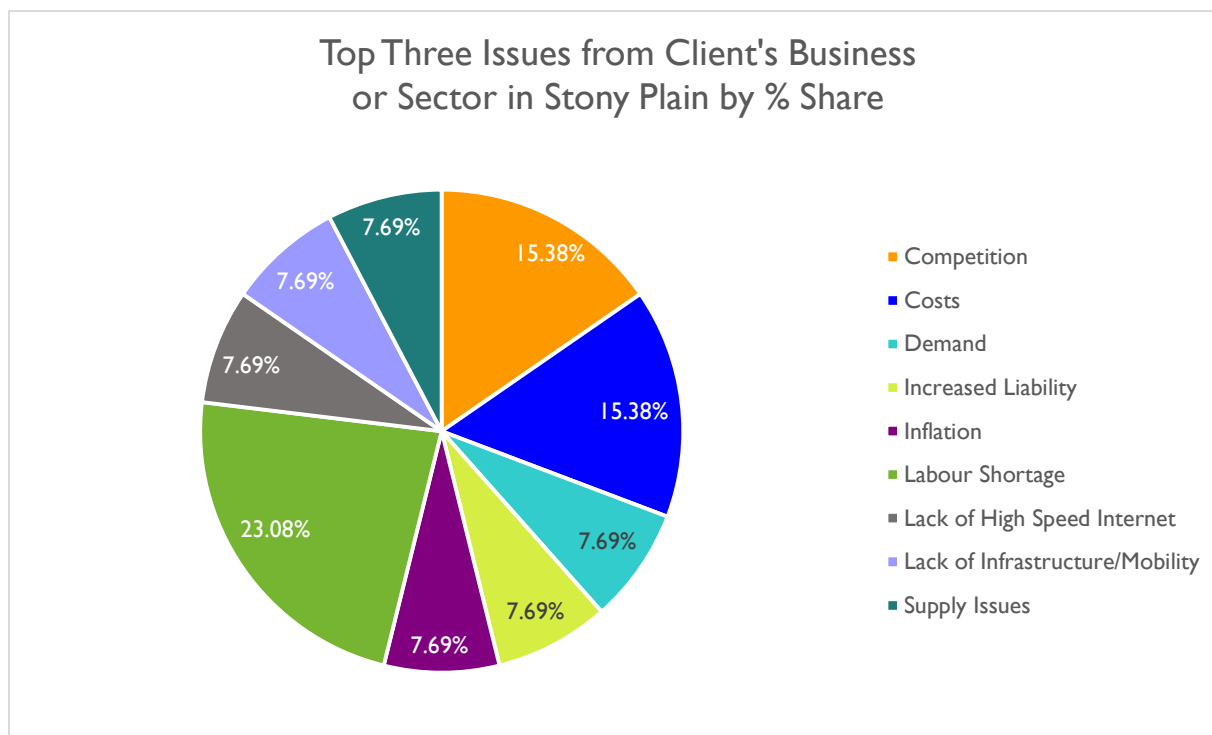
If we group the regions more specifically, another view reveals that Edmonton is the dominant source of clients from outside the region, cited in nearly 60% of all responses. While the West Coast (which includes other regions mentioned) make up nearly 20% of all responses.



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WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE ISSUES YOUR CLIENT'S BUSINESS OR SECTOR HAS ENCOUNTERED IN STONY PLAIN?

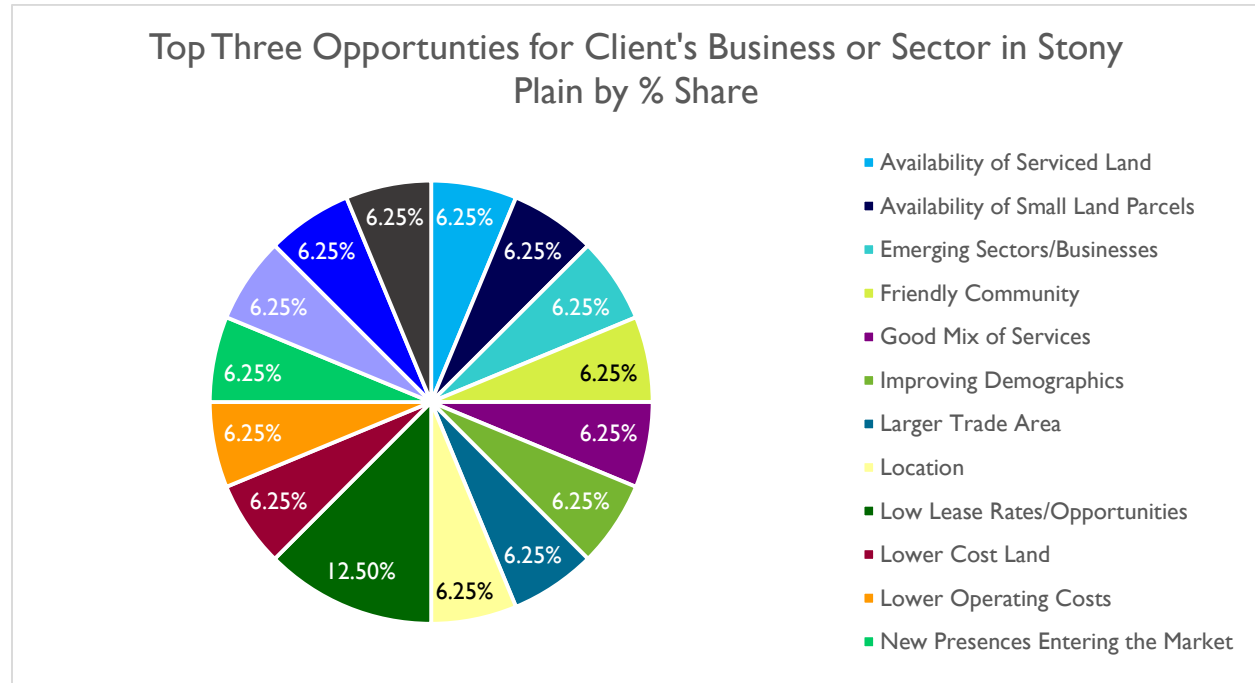
The leading issue referenced in nearly 25% of all responses was with regards to talent, specifically, Labour Shortage. The second and third leading issues were Competition, specifically from other municipalities, and Costs, at 15.38% of all responses. Of note is the Lack of High Speed Internet services, mentioned on several occasions, which is critical infrastructure in businesses attraction with a significant increase in the proportion of those working from home and businesses deploying more advanced technologies.



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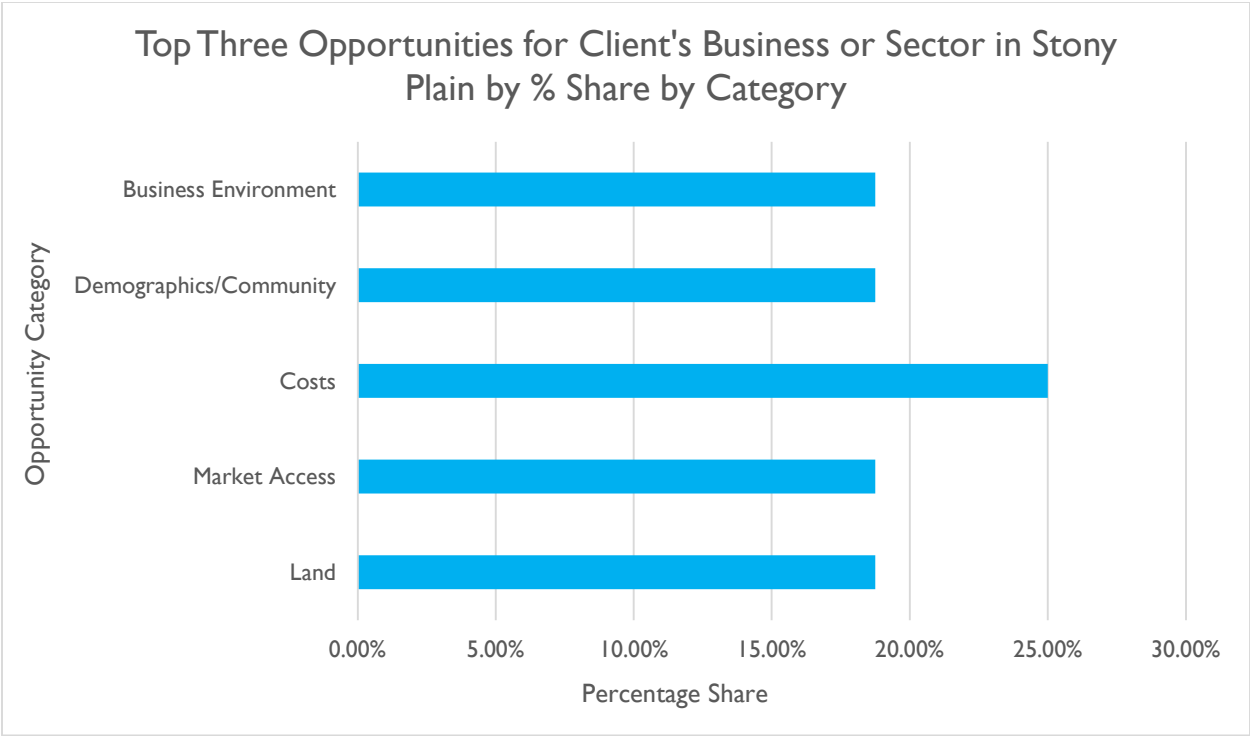
WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE OPPORTUNITIES YOUR 'CLIENT'S BUSINESS OR SECTOR HAS ENCOUNTERED IN STONY PLAIN?

The number one mentioned opportunity was with regards to Low Lease Rates, accounting for 12.5% of all responses, while the remaining responses were tied in terms of their percentage share.



$n = 7$

If we group the above-mentioned responses into broader opportunity categories, general costs become the strongest opportunity accounting for 25% of all responses received. While the remaining categories are tied, they tend to fall into four main categories: land, market access, demographics/community, and business environment.



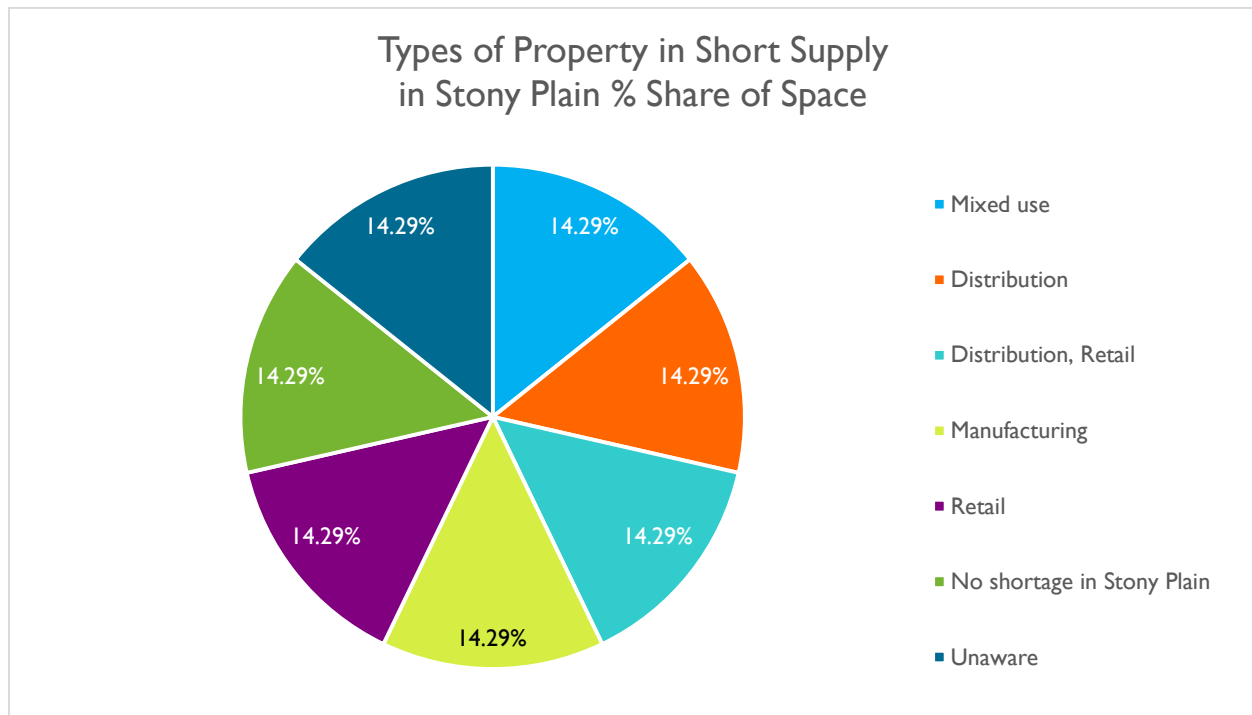
n = 7

WHAT TYPES OF COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL SPACE IS IN SHORTEST SUPPLY IN STONY PLAIN?

In terms of responses, there was an even distribution of commercial and industrial space deemed to be in shortest supply in Stony Plain.

However, Distribution, as well as Retail, were equally the most mentioned when looking at individual space types. The shortage of distribution space could be a tentatively noteworthy, as one company mentioned a lack of logistics companies offering competitive pricing.

Note: two of the responses indicated that they were either unaware or perceived that there was no shortage in supply.



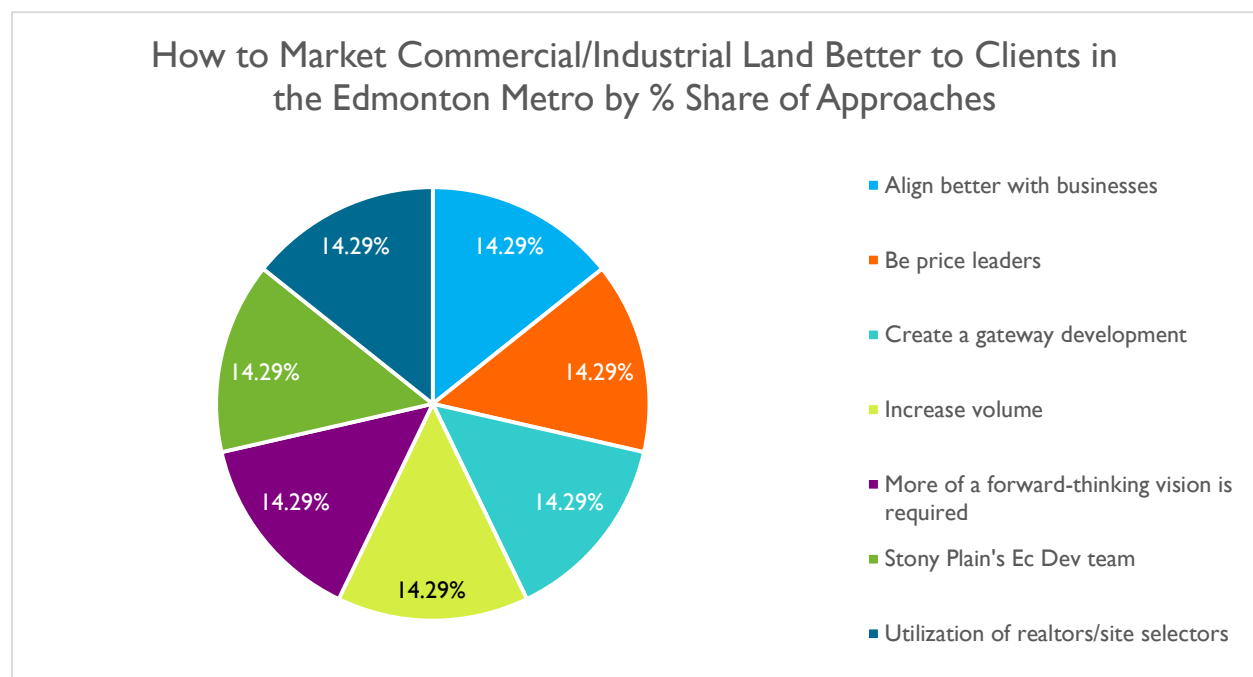
$n = 7$

HOW CAN COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL LAND IN STONY PLAIN BE MORE EFFECTIVELY MARKETING TO POTENTIAL BUYERS IN THE EDMONTON METROPOLITAN REGION?

Responses to this question were evenly divided in terms of percentage share of responses, highlighting various ways that Stony Plain could approach improving marketing to the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.

The gateway development refers to creating a “gateway development to Stony Plain, such as Remax, which is working on a Power Centre around 28th. street, north of 16A. Building interior roads on the development is critical in attracting an anchor tenant, such as Costco”.

Another respondent suggested that “a more forward-thinking vision is required, which has resulted in missed opportunities. The town needs to understand what infrastructure is required to be investment ready. e.g., a new 28th Street, but The town did not invest in 4-way traffic lights.”

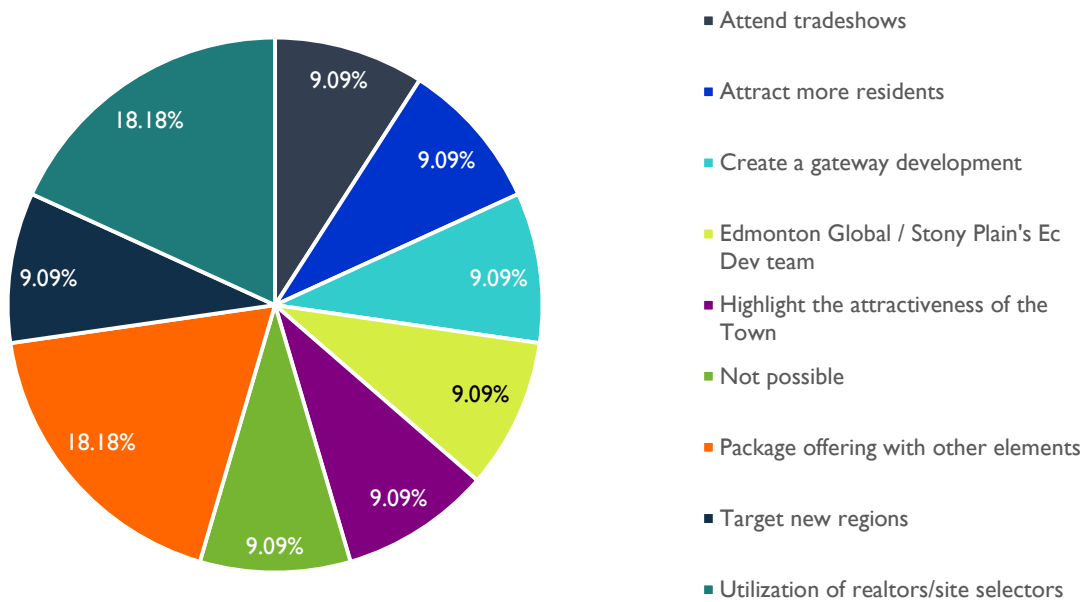


$n = 7$

HOW CAN COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL LAND IN STONY PLAIN BE MORE EFFECTIVELY MARKETING TO POTENTIAL BUYERS ACROSS CANADA?

At 18.8%, the top suggestion was a Package offering including other elements and the Utilization of realtors and/or site selectors. In regards to this suggestion, the respondent mentioned "Package offering with elements such as affordable housing, favourable tax regime etc.". Additionally, the respondent cited the "Acheson Industrial Area in Parkland County, which has been very successful in luring business out of Edmonton."

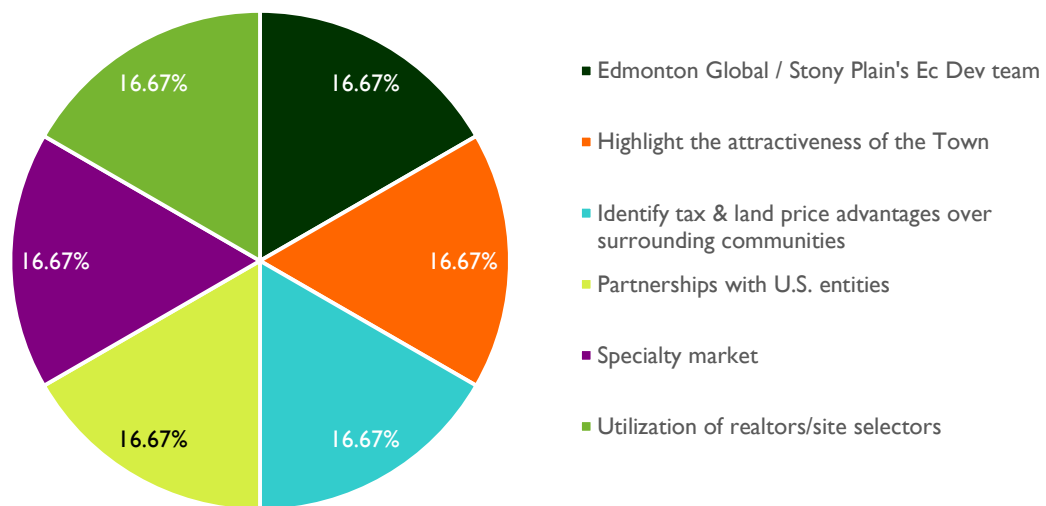
**How to Market Commercial/Industrial Land Better to Clients
across Canada by % Share of Approaches**



n = 8

HOW CAN COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL LAND IN STONY PLAIN BE MORE EFFECTIVELY MARKETING TO POTENTIAL BUYERS IN THE US?

There was an even distribution of suggestions/responses, with some of the notable ones around being a Specialty market and forming Partnerships with U.S. entities. One respondent recommended that Stony Plain compile comparison data on taxes and land prices to identify competitive advantages over surrounding communities such as Spruce Grove, Acheson, Edmonton and other regions like Vancouver. The respondent also cited high taxes in Edmonton and land prices at \$400K/acre in Stony Plain, \$700K/acre in Edmonton, and \$3.5M/acre in Vancouver.

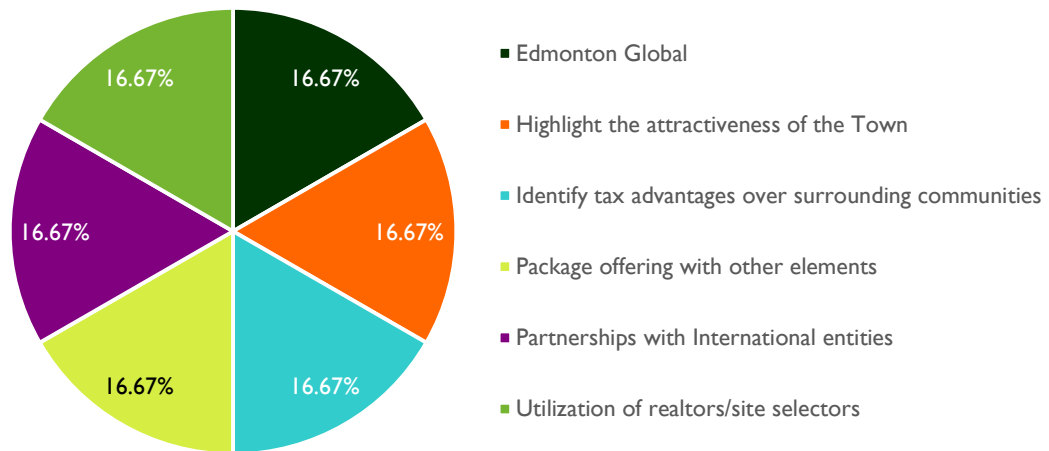
How to Market Commercial/Industrial Land Better to the U.S. Clients by % Share of Approaches

$n = 6$

HOW CAN COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL LAND IN STONY PLAIN BE MORE EFFECTIVELY MARKETING TO POTENTIAL BUYERS INTERNATIONALLY?

There was an even distribution of suggestions/responses, with some common themes reoccurring with responses being nearly identical to those of the responses for the U.S. buyers.

How to Market Commercial/Industrial Land Better to International Clients by % Share of Approaches



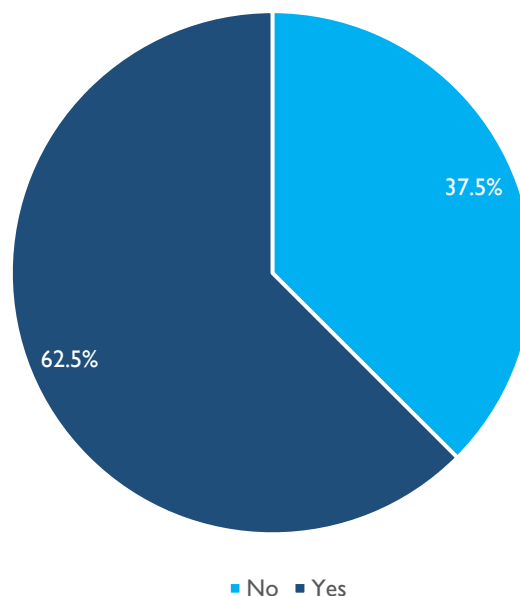
$n = 6$

DO YOU SEE BARRIERS TO HOW THE FOLLOWING PLANNING DOCUMENTS [STONY PLAIN'S LAND USE BYLAW AND MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, THE EDMONTON METROPOLITAN REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN, AND THE TRIMUNICIPAL REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN] FUNCTION REGARDING COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT IN STONY PLAIN?

For respondents that said yes, their reasoning, when provided, is as follows ([verbatim](#)):

- ▶ Too much bureaucracy. Developers need assurance on what can be built, as the speed of the approval process is critical. There is not enough deletion of outdated land use policies so the requirements keep growing;
- ▶ Every year the process becomes more and more difficult. More people are involved. Paperwork is intensive. Increased supply chain is involved, i.e number of professionals e.g. lawyers, engineers, surveyors etc. Costs are now at the point where the developer profit split is 30-70 percent as opposed to 70-30 percent in the 1970/80s;
- ▶ The planning framework has a negative impact on road infrastructure. In particular, there is a need to make improvements to 79th Avenue, which would make Stony Plain the only community with 4 major access routes to Edmonton and drive growth in the north corridor. One respondent described the growth potential as 'exploding';
- ▶ There are some challenges with engineering / servicing standards and the town should be open to innovative servicing solutions for challenging sites; and
- ▶ EMRGP hinders smaller municipalities.

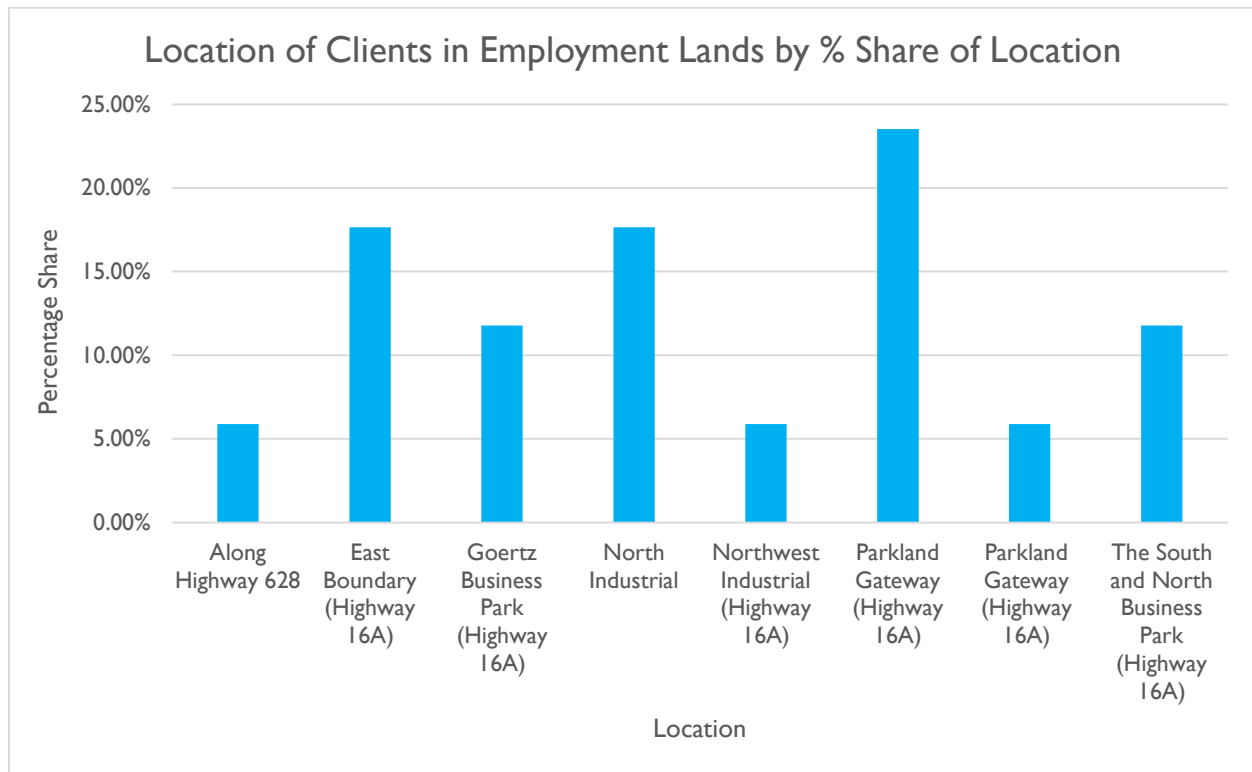
**Barriers to How Planning Documents Function
by % Share of Responses**



n = 6

ARE YOUR CLIENTS LOCATED IN THE EMPLOYMENT LANDS ALONG HIGHWAY 16A OR HIGHWAY 628? IF SO, WHERE:

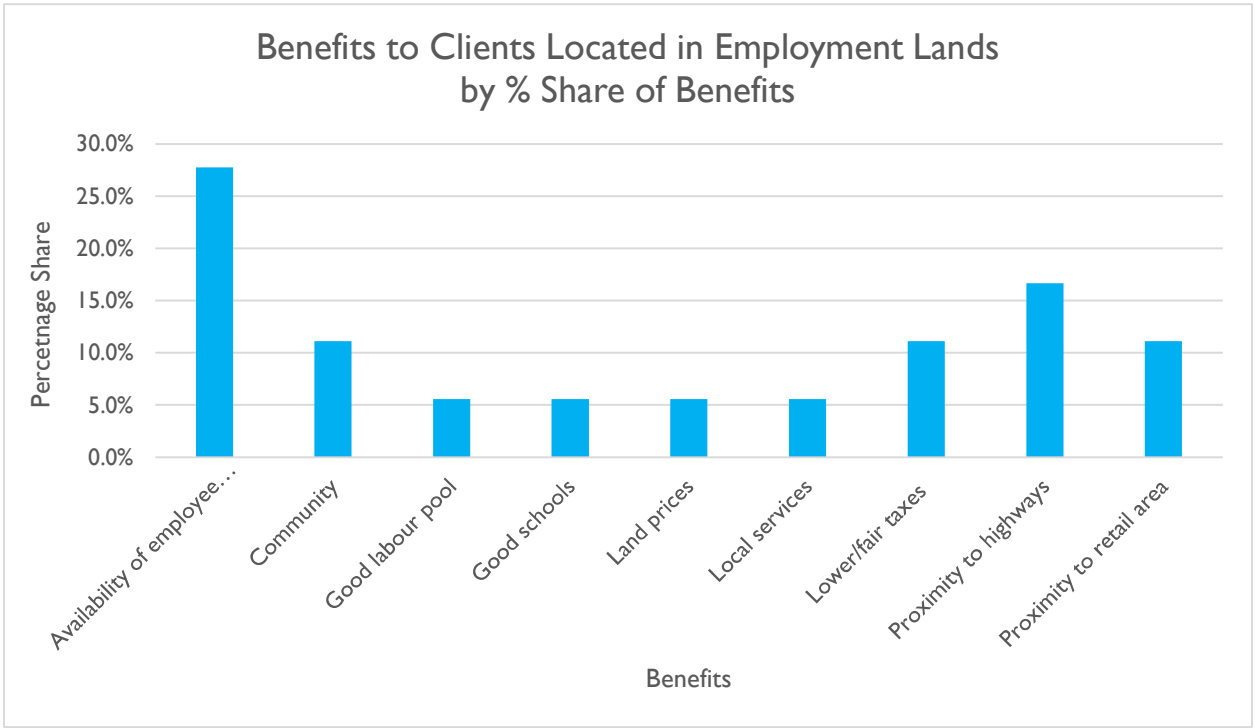
Parkland Gateway (Highway 16A) had nearly 25% of all responses with regard to where clients were located in the study area. The North Industrial and East Boundary (Highway 16A) were tied for second place at 17.65% each, and in third place was Goertz Business Park (Highway 16A) and the South and North Business Park (Highway 16A) at 11.76% of responses, respectively.



$n = 6$

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS TO YOUR CLIENTS OF BEING LOCATED IN THE EMPLOYMENT LANDS ALONG HIGHWAY 16A AND/OR HIGHWAY 628?

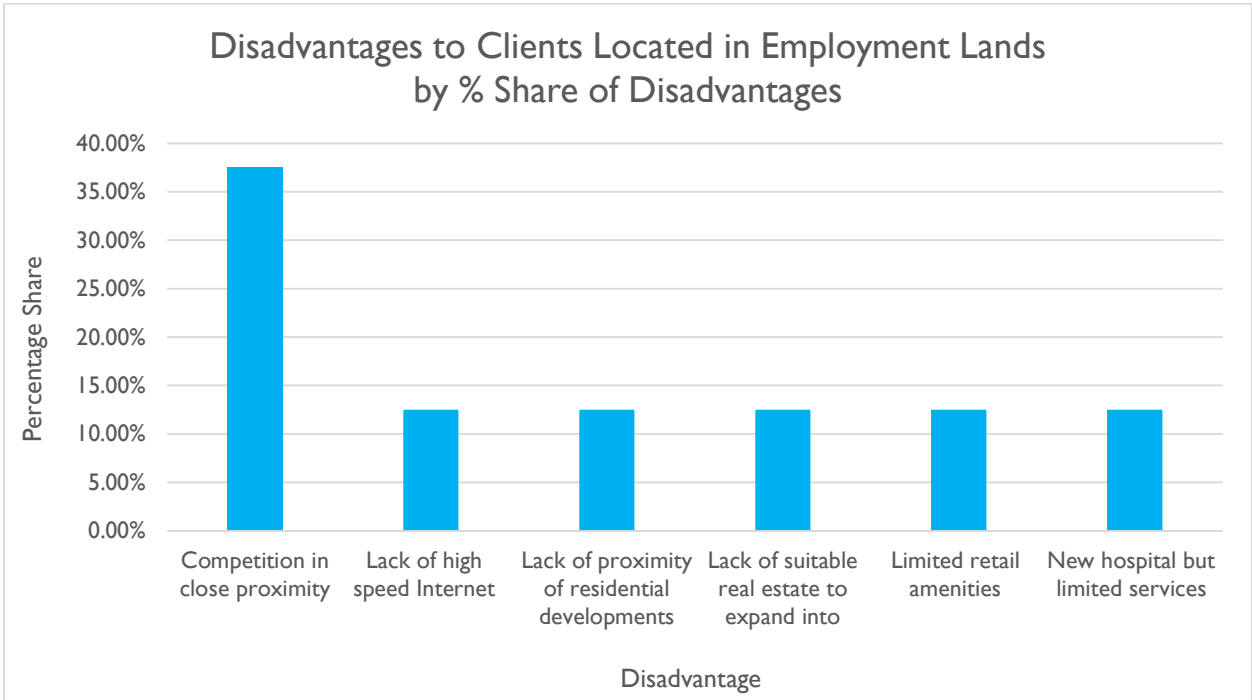
Availability of employee amenities and every day needs in a retail area was the leading benefit, at 27.8% of all responses. Proximity to highways was the second leading benefit, at 16.7% of responses, followed by a tie for third position between Community, Lower/fair taxes and Proximity to retail area, at 11.1% each respectively.



n = 5

WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES FOR YOUR CLIENTS OF BEING LOCATED IN THE EMPLOYMENT LANDS ALONG HIGHWAY 16A AND/OR HIGHWAY 628?

The leading disadvantage, accounting for nearly 40% of responses, was Competition in close proximity.



n = 5

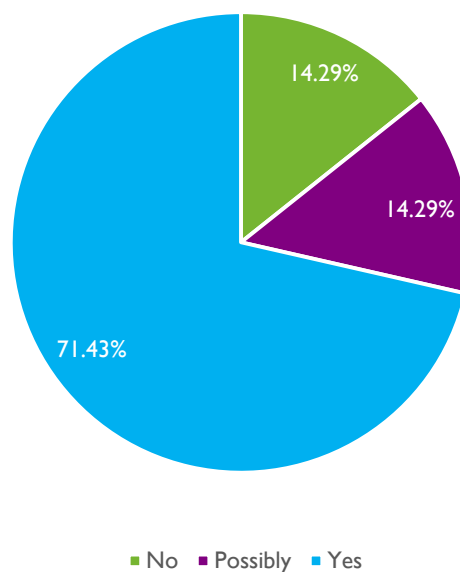
ARE YOUR CLIENTS PLANNING TO GROW/EXPAND IN THE REGION (I.E., TRI-MUNICIPAL REGION), ELSEWHERE IN CANADA OR INTERNATIONALLY?

Over 85% of respondents indicated that their clients are intending to and/or could possibly grow/expand in the region, with 71.43% confirming that their clients are intending to expand.

When asked to provide details (e.g., type of facility, timeline, number of jobs, potential locations considered etc.), the following responses were received:

- ▶ A developer client indicated expansion in industrial/retail development;
- ▶ One did not give specifics but said the majority of clients had expanded their existing facility;
- ▶ Another respondent cited a "Timber frame company that had invested in facilities in Montana, Idaho, Company involved in industrial electric turbines expanded to British Columbia"; and
- ▶ That multiple retailers are expanding in Northern Alberta.

Clients with Expansion Plans by % Share

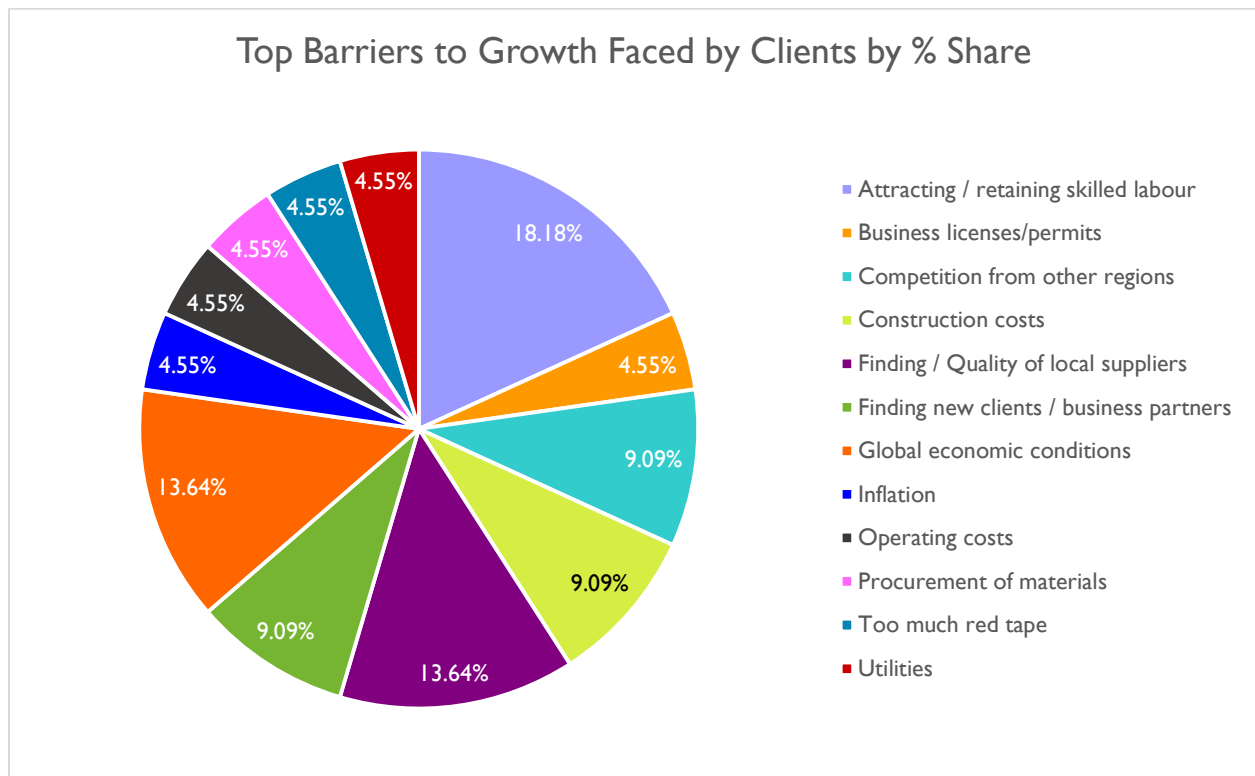


$n = 5$

WHAT ARE THE TOP THREE BARRIERS TO GROWTH YOUR CLIENTS FACE FOR FURTHER EXPANSION?

The leading barrier cited was Attracting/retaining skilled labour at 18.18% of all responses. The second and third leading responses were Finding/quality of local suppliers and Global economic conditions at 13.64% respectively.

However, if we combine Business licenses/permits and too much red tape collectively as the business environment, then it would account for 9.09% of responses. If we group Construction costs and Operating costs as general costs, it would account for 13.64% of responses. Finally, if we incorporate Inflation into Global economic conditions, then Global economic conditions would account for 18.18% of responses and would be tied with Attracting/retaining skilled labour as the leading barrier clients face for further expansion.



$n = 6$

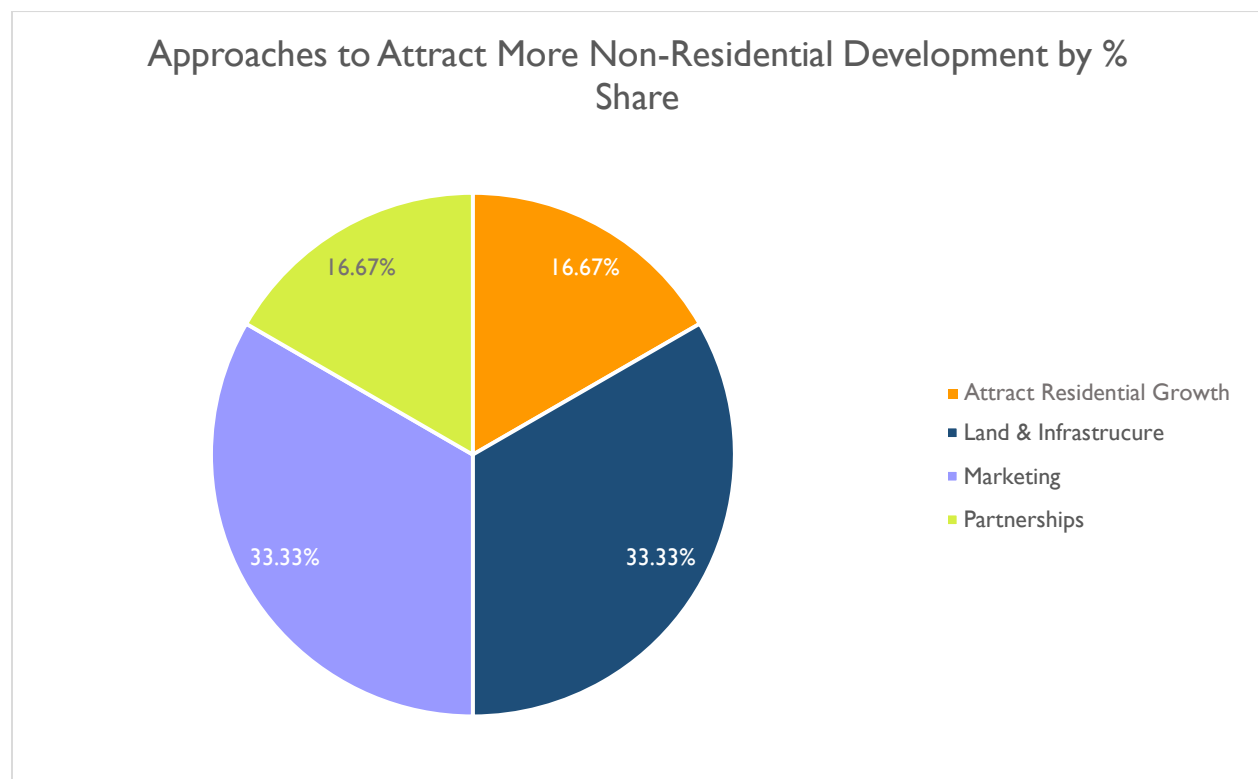
WHAT COULD THE TOWN OF STONY PLAIN DO TO ATTRACT MORE NON-RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT?

Land and Infrastructure and Marketing related responses were tied as the leading approach, combining for 2/3 or 66.6% of all responses*.

For responses received that identified an approach, those responses are as follows ([verbatim](#)):

- ▶ Marketing, marketing, marketing;
- ▶ Get all parties (including clients) around the table to ensure they are all on the same page;
- ▶ Address development land infrastructure requirements for future demand. A firm worked with a church that chose Stony Plain because roads were ready, services in, and traffic impact study had been completed;
- ▶ Upgrade marketing. Having a web page is not enough. Deploy TV, radio ads. Push the region more. 'Sleepy village' mentality. The town should capitalize on Spruce Grove running out of land;
- ▶ "Partnerships with telcos e.g. Telus, Shaw";
- ▶ A respondent cited New York State's great success in attracting investment with favourable tax incentives; Stony Plain lost the RCMP office due to Spruce Grove's willingness to forgive \$50,000 in development costs. The town needs to look at the bigger picture";
- ▶ Provide and facilitate infrastructure; and
- ▶ Attract more residential growth to support the non-residential development.

*Note: two responses not included in the analysis below stated "we are not affected by a problem here" and "It's market driven - out of Stony Plain's hands".



$n = 6$

In addition to the survey, one land developer and real estate agent within the study area provided these additional comments beyond the one-on-one interview conducted ([verbatim](#)):

- ▶ Respondent represents landowners along Highway 16A and my clients will be very excited about the project. Noted that there was land for sale in places and the town has been revitalized in the downtown core. An industrial study was also just completed;
- ▶ The town needs to work with Alberta Transportation to get the speed limit reduced along Highway 16A consistent with Spruce Grove. Views significant opportunity with traffic coming from the west and highlighted the need for more signage along the highway to inform people about the services and the redeveloped downtown. Respondent used to own Camp'N Class RV Park runs an RV park in the town and learnt a lot from the patrons who advised the need for more information about town services and opportunities and how little information there was about the town. Views an opportunity capitalize on tourism;
- ▶ The town needs to create a more customer service experience in the regulatory process of helping vs directing and making the process more engaging;
- ▶ Work with what you have – such as utilizing the downtown by having some tenant/business hosted evening and weekend events (eg. several restaurants staying open later, this would increase customer count to the downtown core) more through closing it down and having events/promoting the town – the key however is to engage tenants on what to do and not be driven by the town – let them program events etc with help from the town;
- ▶ The town could help stimulate development through approaches such as the highway speed and management of the corridor. Opportunity to create an entertainment corridor and continuing the retail from Spruce Grove west as land is running out along this corridor. Be good to get a big box store located within the town along the Highway 16A corridor this would help with job market. There are a number of short-term actions the town could take to get things started;
- ▶ Culture is everything – Stony Plain has a great sense of community culture and needs to be promoted more Stony Plain has way more culture than Spruce Grove. The town has a hospital that is an asset for the surrounding area. compared to Spruce Grove. The town should be creating a gathering venue to link to the rich culture of the town. People want the little shop feel and consider this a marketing position for the town; and
- ▶ Highway 628 – view as having the opportunity to create a small hub of restaurants and Commercial Retail Units (CRU). this corridor could be complimented with more CRU, multifamily development and high end residential lots, given the high traffic volumes along this corridor to surrounding cities/towns and rural properties. The area near Memorial Composite High School is a great asset to the town and development of these lands would be beneficial to grow the town.

2.4 Local Companies

A total of 264 businesses were identified as being located within the study area. All businesses were mailed a postcard inviting them to partake in a survey and to learn more about the project. Further to this, and in collaboration with the town's project team and the consulting project team, twenty (20) businesses were selected for one-on-one interviews and were contacted with direct emails and phone calls. Unfortunately, there was a low response rate, and there were only two (2) respondents. As a result, only general observations have been summarized.

- ▶ COVID related opportunities are around better business processes with improved communication and decision making;
- ▶ Quality of City governance and the quality of Municipal services/infrastructure was also mentioned in business services interview, however there is a divided opinion with the other company citing as a weakness;
- ▶ Development costs were seen as a strength, as this feeds into the lower costs advantage mentioned by the realtors and developers interviewed;
- ▶ Workforce availability was mentioned by interviewees which was supplemented by the challenge that attracting and retaining skilled labour is to growth;
- ▶ Proximity to other businesses brought a divided opinion as to whether it was a strength or weakness;
- ▶ Restrictive transportation signage, more could be done for infrastructure in the North business park (access, etc.), Edmonton Metropolitan Region, the logistics/quality/transportation access marked as 'average' supports comments by realtors and some developers interviewed;
- ▶ Lack of competitive logistics pricing as compared to contiguous regions and supply chain gap in logistics should be investigated as higher costs could negate cost competitiveness in other areas;
- ▶ Advantages of being located in employment lands: availability of employee amenities and every day needs in retail area (e.g., childcare, gym, grocery stores, coffee shops, pet daycare etc.), proximity to highways mentioned by realtors, developers interviewed. This is in contrast to the 'Lack of business amenities' cited;
- ▶ Materials (e.g., VFD's, equipment enclosures, and motors, flooring) sourced from Canada in the case of both companies;
- ▶ Purchase of business services all in Stony Plain by one company supports realtors, developers, business support but other (larger) company goes elsewhere;
- ▶ Ontario featured in purchase of goods/services in Canada but supply chains appear to be established;
- ▶ Both companies potentially have expansion on the agenda; and
- ▶ Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) mentioned by both companies as growth drivers (but no partnerships) as a key asset for Stony Plain.

2.5 The Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce

On August 2nd, 2022, the project team and the Greater Parkland Regional Chamber of Commerce met virtually to discuss the project, including the preliminary findings of the context setting report, and general trends and opportunities identified to date. The sentiment from the participants was that they were happy the town was taking proactive steps by undertaking this study, and that they were willing to support when/as needed to help support economic activity within the town.

2.6 Relevant Industry Associations (UDI, CHBA, NAIOP)

Three (3) relevant industry associations were identified within the project area – UDI, CHBA, and NAIOP. These associations were contacted for a one-on-one conversation to garner their insights about development within the project area. The key points stemming from these conversations are identified below:

URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (UDI)

- ▶ Highway 16A along Spruce Grove is picking up most of the commercial traffic and when it is built up the town of Stony Plain may see some demand for development extending along Highway 16A;
- ▶ On the Industrial side – Acheson is picking up the bulk and to attract industrial to the town is viewed as being challenging given their competitive advantage, however, if land costs and taxes are less it could attract more lay down yards;
- ▶ Adjacent to Highway 628 is residential and planned in the future for residential so the only opportunity would be to capture neighbourhood commercial that services the local community or be part of a mixed-use development. Highway 628 does not capture a lot of traffic compared to Highway 16A;
- ▶ It was noted that getting things through administration was hap-hazard and lacking in customer service. Being business friendly is a competitive advantage. Council also needs to have greater trust in their administration vs creating systems where items have to keep coming back to Council – recent example is the overlay for zero lot lines where every application has to go before Council;
- ▶ An advantage of the town was untapped potential and the need to carry out a market demand study;
- ▶ It was raised as to whether the town was open to flexibility on different servicing approaches where significant costs exist that could prevent projects moving forward. Currently the standards are set in black and white with no flexibility for innovation in design options or approaches that become out of date. Being more open to alternative innovative solutions could be an advantage;
- ▶ It was acknowledged that the town of Stony Plain has additional geotechnical challenges related to peat and water which can result in projects not proceeding or clients avoiding purchasing land in the area; and
- ▶ UDI can support the town through tapping into the knowledge and skill set of the people within the organization, sharing ideas and communication. They can assist within putting the economic development person in touch with developers and providing improved information about what is available and ready to go – keeping on top of this information is important.

CANADIAN HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION (CHBA)

- ▶ You indicated that while overall houses may be viewed as cheaper in Stony Plain a new home is not cheaper as a result of the land sale price on greenfield lands. On the Real Estate side, the prices may be more competitive as it is hard to entice people to the community;
- ▶ Stony Plain is a small community and an increase in industrial (light and medium) will lead to a benefit in an increase in residential housing because people who work at the facilities will typically want to live near their place of employment;

- ▶ In relation to challenges – viewed as no more challenging than other municipalities, however, the processes may be easier than the other areas in Edmonton Region; and
- ▶ A key to enabling industrial growth will be good access off of Highway 16A, the railway line would create more barriers if it needed to be crossed.

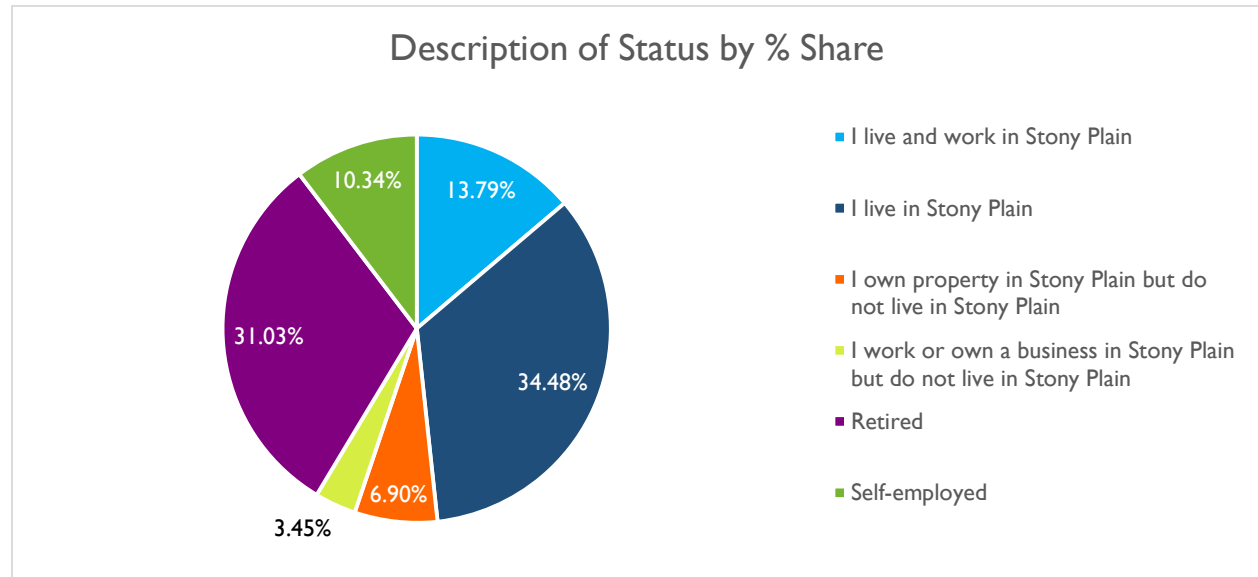
COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (NAIOP)

- ▶ From a NAIOP perspective they are not familiar with many developers in the town and have not seen new development occur and get the impression that it's all for sale. It would be good to bring the land owners and developers of the areas together to identify future development opportunities. Recognize the challenge of sophisticated developers vs unsophisticated developers and the challenges this can present with trying to implement and develop a plan;
- ▶ Industrial development seen as too far out to put distribution centre and today there really is no heavy industry which leaves light industrial uses. However, Acheson has this fairly well wrapped up. May want to focus on existing or nearby industries that are unique to the area and try and co-locate businesses in a cluster;
- ▶ Need to have better information on the town to attract passing traffic moving to the east. Need more information about what is interesting about the town and what it has to offer. Capitalizing on the Rotary Park – ways to attract people; and
- ▶ Consolidating the land parcels and getting the right developers involved.

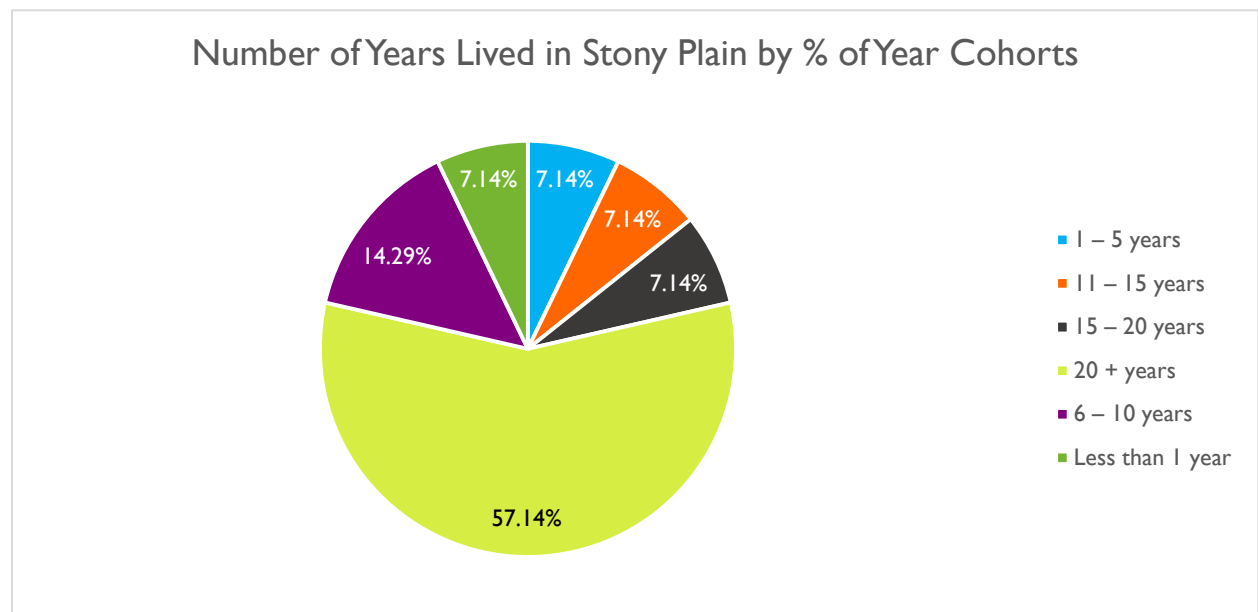
2.7 Non-business Area Residents and Landowners

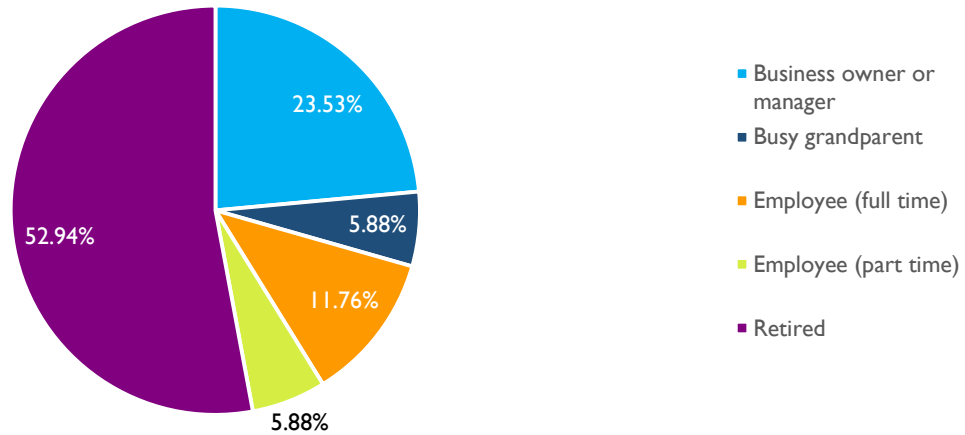
A total of 949 residents and/or property owners were identified as being located within the study area. All residents/property owners were mailed a postcard inviting them to partake in a survey to help inform the highway development strategy and to learn more about the project. Further to this, the town's project team received two phone calls from residents wanting to learn more about the project. For anonymity purposes, the direct feedback from participants have been compiled, summarized and analyzed together:

WHAT ANSWER BEST DESCRIBES YOU?



IF YOU ARE A RESIDENT OF STONY PLAIN, HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED HERE?



WHAT ANSWER BEST DESCRIBES YOU?**Employment Status by % Description Share**

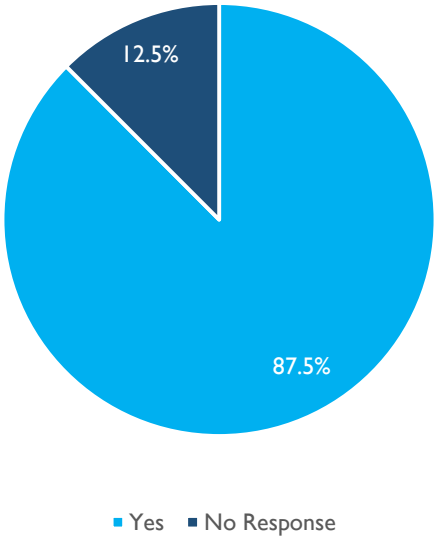
n = 14

SHOULD STONY PLAIN BE SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH ALONG HIGHWAY 16A/HIGHWAY 628 IN REGARDS TO COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT?

When asked, please tell us why you selected Yes or No, the following responses were provided ([verbatim](#)):

- ▶ Keep our economy growing!
- ▶ Increase The town's tax base and increase employment;
- ▶ These corridors are prime retail areas that need to be developed properly. Industrial should be developed in the North Business Park;
- ▶ Commercial—yes. Industrial —no. We could use a larger-type department store and another nice restaurant on the South East side of town;
- ▶ In order to encourage local businesses, increase traffic through The town and awareness of economic options;
- ▶ Need to have more industrial and commercial property development;
- ▶ 'It's long overdue! Other communities in the region have passed Stony Plain with their development leaving the town in the dust to clean up scraps!!
- ▶ Yes, because it helps the local economy and grows the community;
- ▶ Natural growth supported by the high volume of traffic;
- ▶ Hwy 628 should be paved all the way into the city and should be wide enough to handle large volume of traffic and large vehicles. By providing another entry point to the city it creates a better access to the south side of the city for commuters and business for residents & potential future residents of Stony Plain & area businesses;
- ▶ We need every advantage to grow. Will help with the tax base;
- ▶ Hwy 628 does not need business between Golf Course Road and Veterans Way. In addition, the 80 km speed should immediately reduced to 60 km at least 800 meters east of Golf Course Road - this section of road is a speedway; and
- ▶ Support only along Highway 16A as this is already a industrial/commercial area.

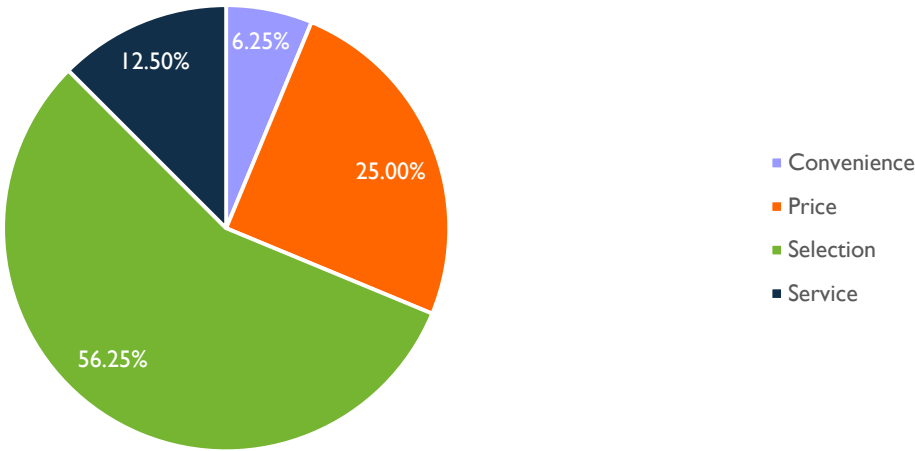
Votes for Stony Plain to Support Economic Growth along
Highways 16A & 628



n = 14

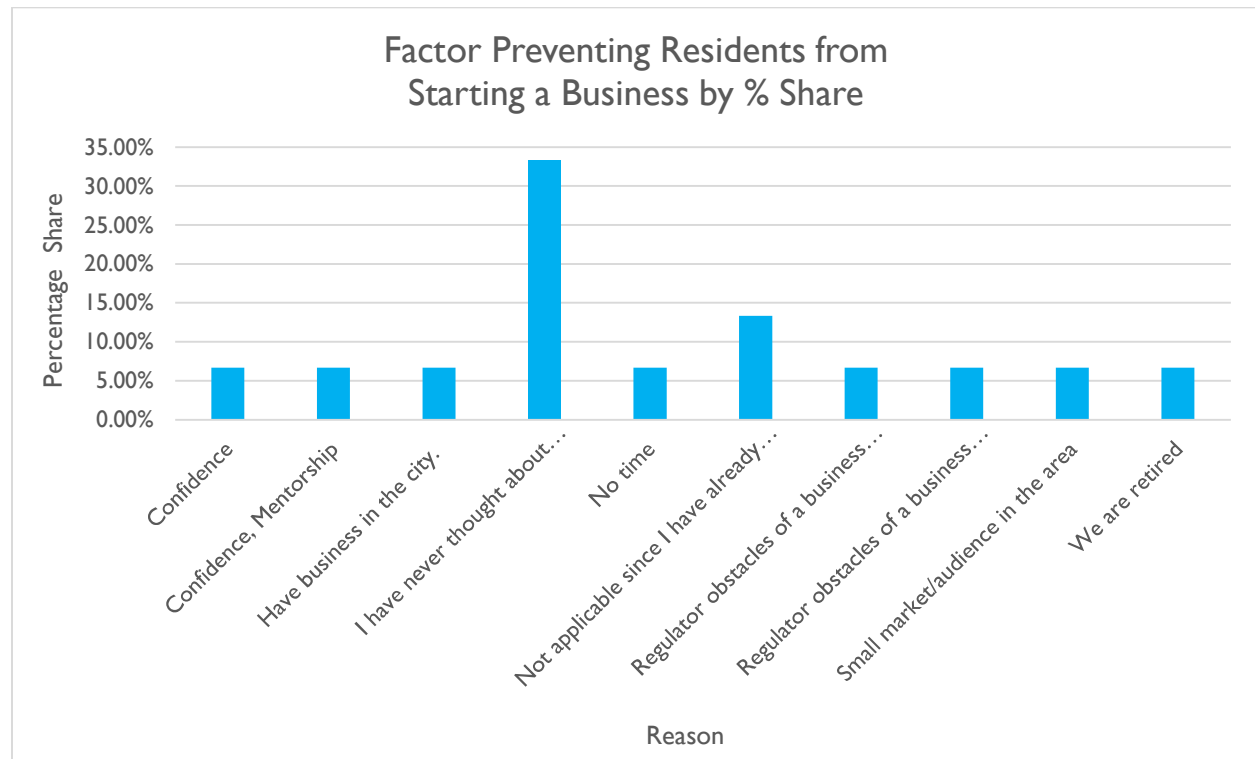
WHAT DRIVES YOU TO MAKE PURCHASES FROM SOURCES OTHER THAN LOCAL BUSINESSES (INCLUDING ONLINE)?

Drivers to Purchase from Non-Local Businesses by % Share



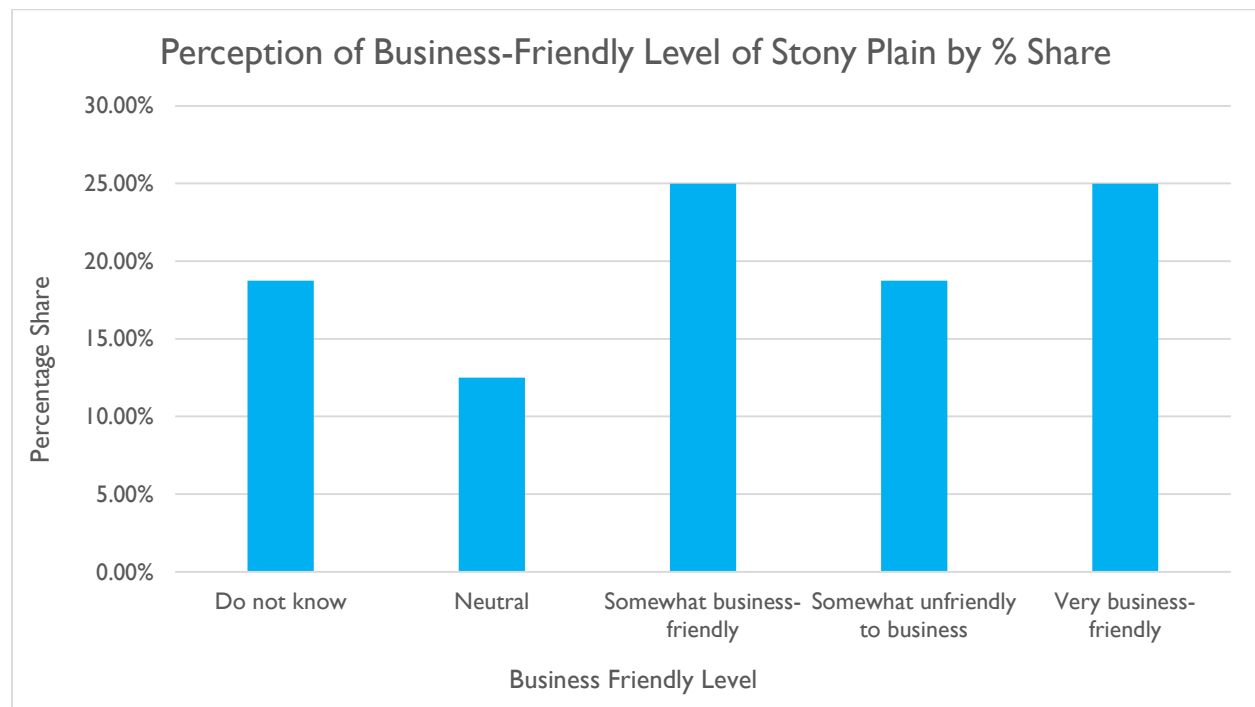
n = 14

IF YOU HAVE EVER THOUGHT ABOUT STARTING A BUSINESS IN STONY PLAIN BUT HAVEN'T DONE IT, WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE THING HOLDING YOU BACK?



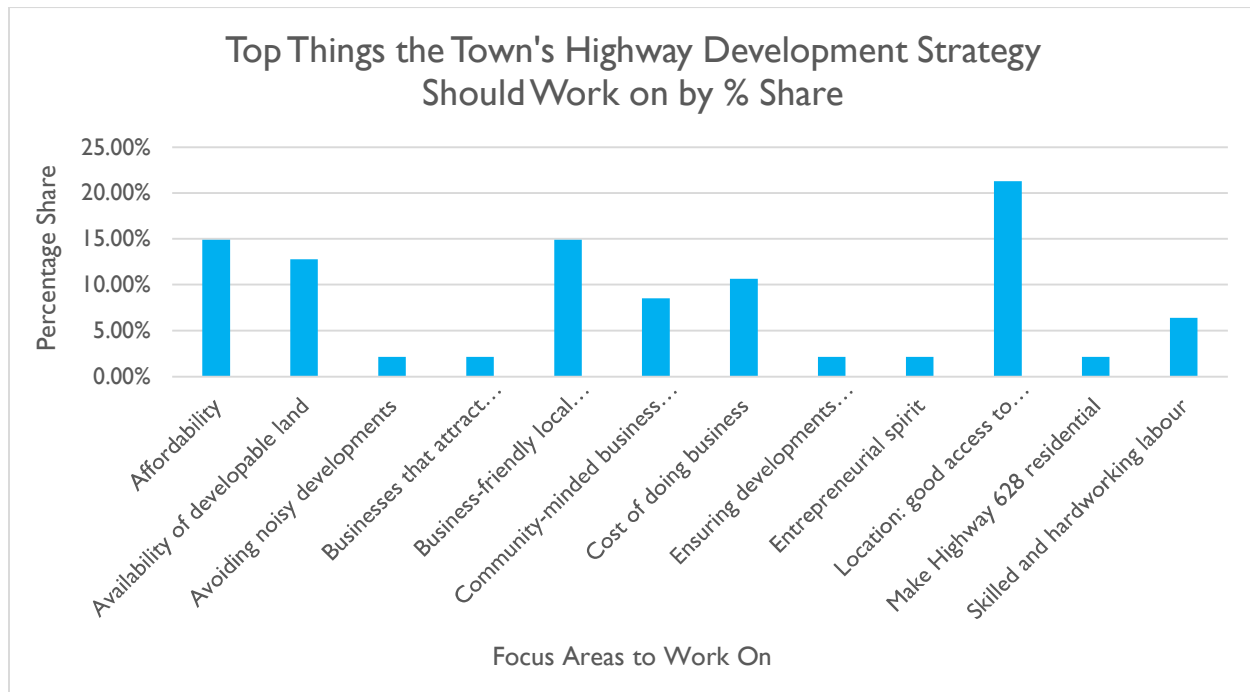
n = 15

HOW BUSINESS-FRIENDLY IS THE TOWN OF STONY PLAIN?



$n = 16$

STONY PLAIN HAS A LOT OF THINGS THAT MAKE IT GREAT FOR DOING BUSINESS. SOME OF THESE THINGS ARE ALREADY STRONG AND WE CAN BUILD ON THEM FURTHER FOR THE HIGHWAY 16A/HIGHWAY 628 CORRIDORS. WHAT ARE SOME OPPORTUNITIES THAT NEED MORE ATTENTION?



$n = 16$

WHAT ACTIONS SHOULD WE WORK ON TOGETHER TO MAKE HIGHWAY 16A/HIGHWAY 628 A BETTER PLACE TO VISIT AND/OR DO BUSINESS?

This question received suggestions that were combined into 14 themes. "Business environment/friendly" refers to responses that mentioned "Reduce red tape & development fees" and "Streamlining of processes" (permitting, subdivision, zoning, etc). "Improve road infrastructure" refers to responses that mentioned paving and improving Highway 628 between Stony Plain and Highway 60 for better and more access to town and advocating for the paving of Highway 628 all the way to the city.

"Attract large box retailers" refers to responses that mentioned wording like "Get a large box store in north area (like a Costco)" and "Pursue big box stores for development along 16A such as Costco, Bestbuy, more revenue can be generated to the town through this type of commercial development and not through residential development".

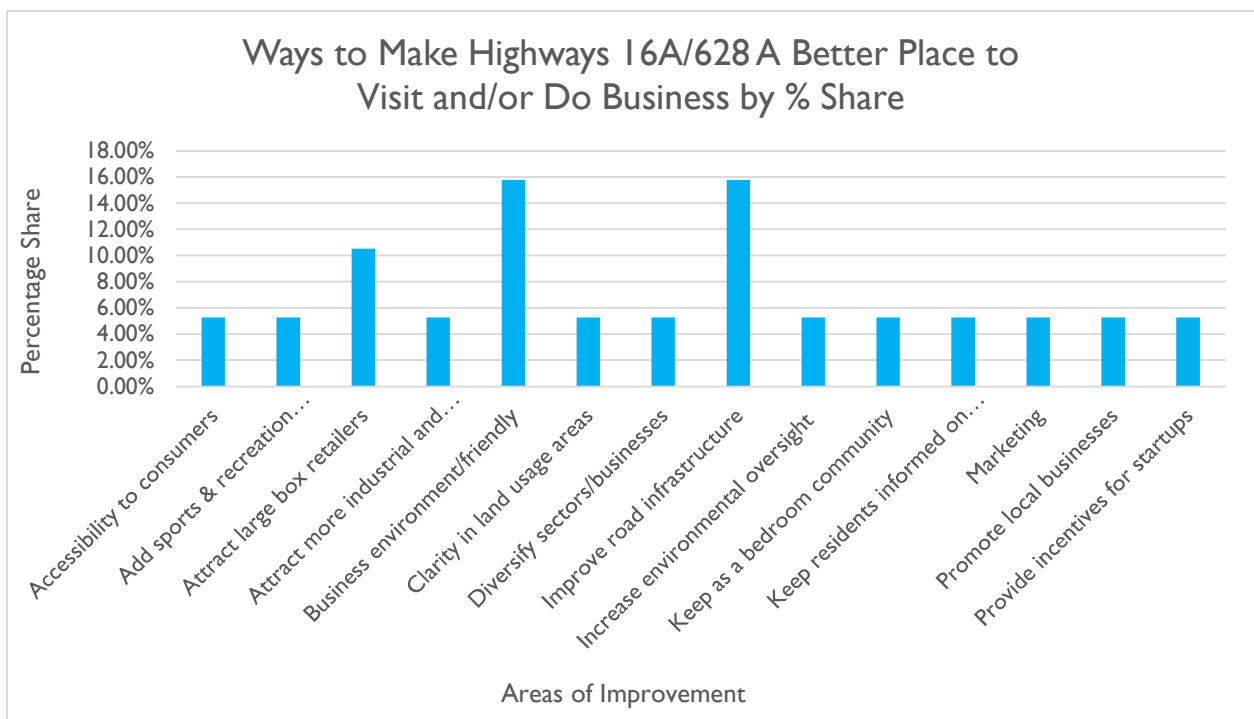
As noted previously, the town did receive two phone calls with feedback regarding the development along the highway corridors. There comments are summarized as follows:

- Landowner along Highway 628
 - It is about time the town is proactive about development on the south corridor.
 - Need commercial and retail?
 - Is there opportunity for light industrial?

- How will our plans align with what Spruce Grove is planning for neighboring land?
- Happy to see the town undertaking this project.
- Looking forward to seeing the plans to help property owners decide what to do with their land.

► Resident along Highway 628

- Would like to see the 60 km speed limit extended further east from 779. There is no need for it to be 80km. People speed down this road and they have seen multiple vehicles in the ditches, especially in the winter months. Maybe the town should put radar out there, that would slow people down.
- If land will be developed into commercial, then they will have to slow traffic down.
- Railroad Crossings are all in bad shape. Hard on vehicles. The railroad company should be out there fixing the crossings before winter and before a vehicle is damaged.



n = 13