

Creston

Entrepreneurial Capacity Test for Communities (ECTC)

Phase I Report

Community Futures of Central Kootenay

January 2002

Prepared by Anne Stacey

Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Part I: Summary	3
Part II:	
<i>A. Background</i>	9
<i>B. Methodology</i>	10
<i>C. Participant Profile</i>	11
<i>D. Attendance</i>	12
Part III: Results	
<i>A. Respondent Profiles</i>	13
<i>B. Community Profile</i>	15
<i>C. Summary Responses by Category</i>	18
<i>D. Focus Group Response</i>	38
Appendix A: Detailed Data Methodology	40

Part I: Executive Summary

The Entrepreneurial Capacity Test for Communities (ECTC) helps communities to assess their capacity to work with and support entrepreneurs, and to foster small business growth. The test measures the perceptions of community leaders, business people and citizens about the current business environment in a community.

This report summarizes the first phase of the ECTC. Phase I included the assessment of the community's apparent small business resources and potential. This information was gathered through a survey and a focus group session.

The **Creston Area Economic Development Society (CAEDS)**, the community partner organization, was asked to select and invite the community participants. It was asked that these participants were business people, local leaders and citizens, representing a diversity of interests, ages and perspectives in the community. On November 20th, 2001 16 citizens of Creston participated in Phase I of the Entrepreneurial Capacity Test for Communities (ECTC).

Overview of Results

Overall, the community perceived itself as a **safe and beautiful place** to live, with numerous **recreational opportunities** available to both residents and visitors. **Schools are of high quality**, and residents perceive Creston to be a **desirable place to live**. Creston prides itself on a **strong sense of community** that focuses on traditional values and relationships. Business thrives on these interpersonal relationships. Most networking, leadership, and marketing is driven by **informal lines of communication**, resulting in a close-knit **business community that is supportive, knowledgeable, and committed**

However, business in the Creston Valley has many significant challenges and opportunities. There are many factors that could improve the area's business potential, including **improved availability of capital**, access to **training that addresses business needs, joint marketing initiatives, communications technology, and formal networking opportunities**. Creston is fortunate to have several well-known **organizations (CAEDS, the College, Enterprise Facilitation, CFDCCK/Alvin)** aimed at assisting business development, expansion, and startup. These organizations facilitate **training (on-line and in person) programs, creative problem-solving, examination of unique local market opportunities, and assistance in the search for funding and capital**. Business services in the area are both accessible and affordable, though some **technology upgrades** would significantly enhance the business potential. According to the results, Creston also has several significant challenges to address and overcome. There is a **need for a joint marketing strategy**, to both **develop the image or brand** of the area. A **transformation of the downtown core** into a thriving business center is pointed out as a significant need. **Local buying habits** need to be improved, and action needs to be taken to **make Creston a place that is desirable for all age groups**, whether young adults, families or retirees.

The community had the highest scores in the areas of **Opportunities, Incentives & Attitudes (38.7)**, **Quality of Life (36.1)**, **Role of Government & Organizations (26.1)**, and **Infrastructure & Business Services (23.5)**. The lowest scores were recorded in **Markets & Marketing (-3.6)**, **Research & Development (5.7)**, **Communications & Connectivity (7.8)**, and **Education & Training (9.6)**.

Major Themes and Recurring Ideas

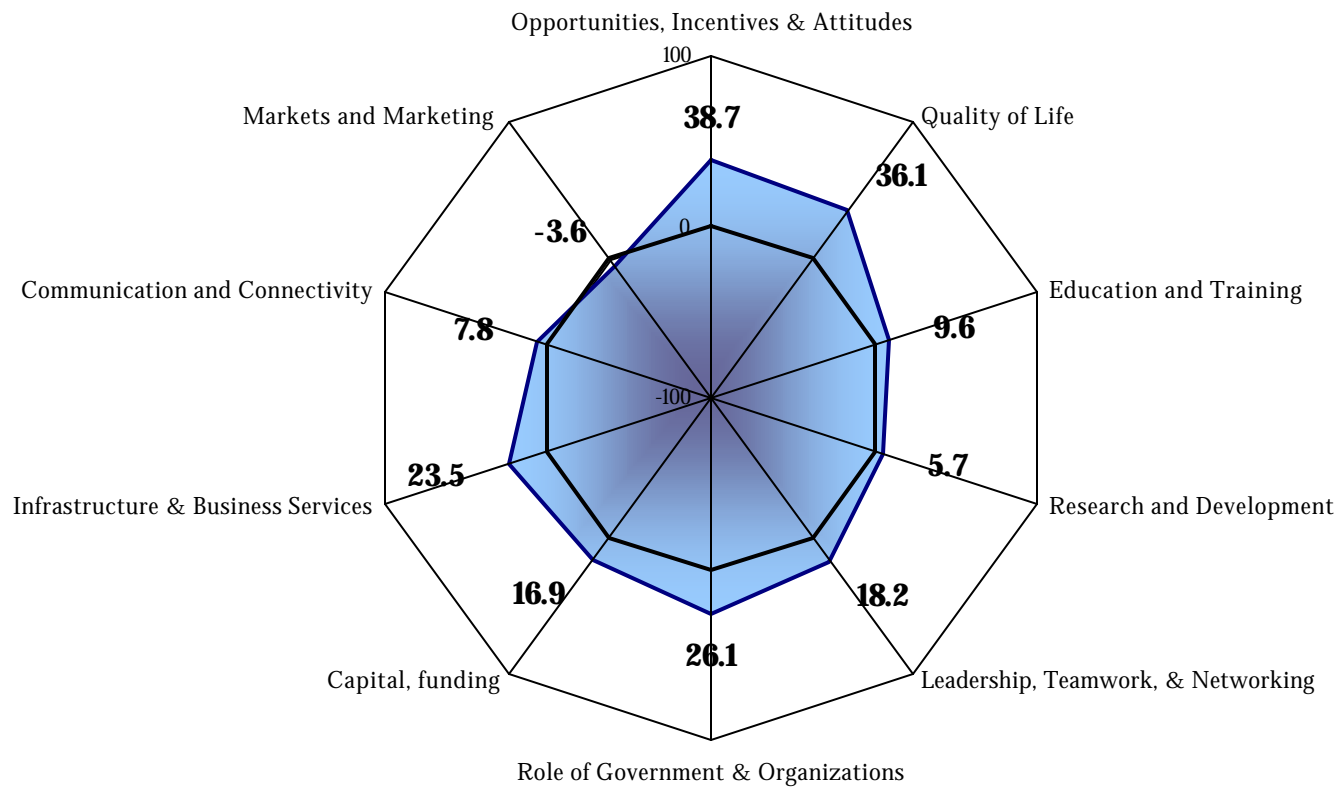
- Community services and infrastructure need to be improved (Pool, parks, library)
- More activities and education for young adults and new families are needed
- Need to develop the downtown core (downtown cleanup, revitalization, beautification, reality checks, awareness, pride, accessibility)
- Lots of good business locations and spaces are available, esp. in downtown area
- Cooperation between groups of people, leaders and citizens rather than competition
- Attract non-resource dependent employers to area (environmentally friendly)
- Existing education facilities are good, and focus on community needs, but need to further develop them
- Agricultural education is a niche/strength Creston could develop (horticultural program)
- Retirement community is a valuable community resource presenting opportunities for partnerships and mentorship
- “A lot of potential in the community, but many barriers to overcome to achieve change”
- Small town way of life is both a strength (strong sense of community, commitment to community) and a challenge (isolation)
- Isolation is both a strength (lower cost of living) and weakness (costs of transportation and shipping)
- Community caring and safety (teachers, parents, bus drivers, administration)
- “People are resourceful and pull together during a crisis”
- Need to develop community pride and optimism
- Lots of recreational opportunities in the Creston Area
- The natural physical beauty of the area, climate, and its recreation contribute to a good quality of life
- Need to develop and use community vision as a whole
- Need for regional marketing and marketing education (identification of opportunities, create strategies)
- Need for joint marketing strategies, developing a valley-wide “brand”
- Quality products come from the area, especially agriculture and brewery
- LOCATION! (Airports, USA markets, Selkirk Loop tourism)
- Different groups and organizations are able to learn, to achieve results and to facilitate activity, both individually and with other groups
- Personal relationships provide support, accessibility, and teamwork
- MANY resourceful support organizations providing assistance in business development and training, and finding funding and capital
- Need more skills in raising funds, awareness, knowledge about where to go, business plan development despite a lot of existing support
- Need to expand funding solution options to broaden opportunities (funding types, incentives, rebates, venture capital, coops)
- More communication between business and government should decrease confusion and increase efficiency and appropriateness
- Need to increase communication and cooperation (clarity of who is doing what, resolve personal conflicts, common vision and goals, networking)
- Leadership is improving; leaders are dedicated, but need to listen more and support and encourage small business
- Government and Governing bodies are knowledgeable competent and approachable
- RED TAPE! A big challenge to start up a business
- “Research and development in Creston is because of individuals. It is not a community effort”
- Need to increase local shopping
- Many services are available (professional, commercial, support, training)
- Communications are affordable, but not very good availability of advanced communications technology

- Transportation systems are good (biking, Greyhound bus) but could be improved more (air, train)
- Great potential in terms of community infrastructure and utilities (reasonably modern, availability good, location good)
- Regular shipping is good, but expensive (time and money)
- Many good potential market opportunities, both locally and outside the area
- Diversified economy

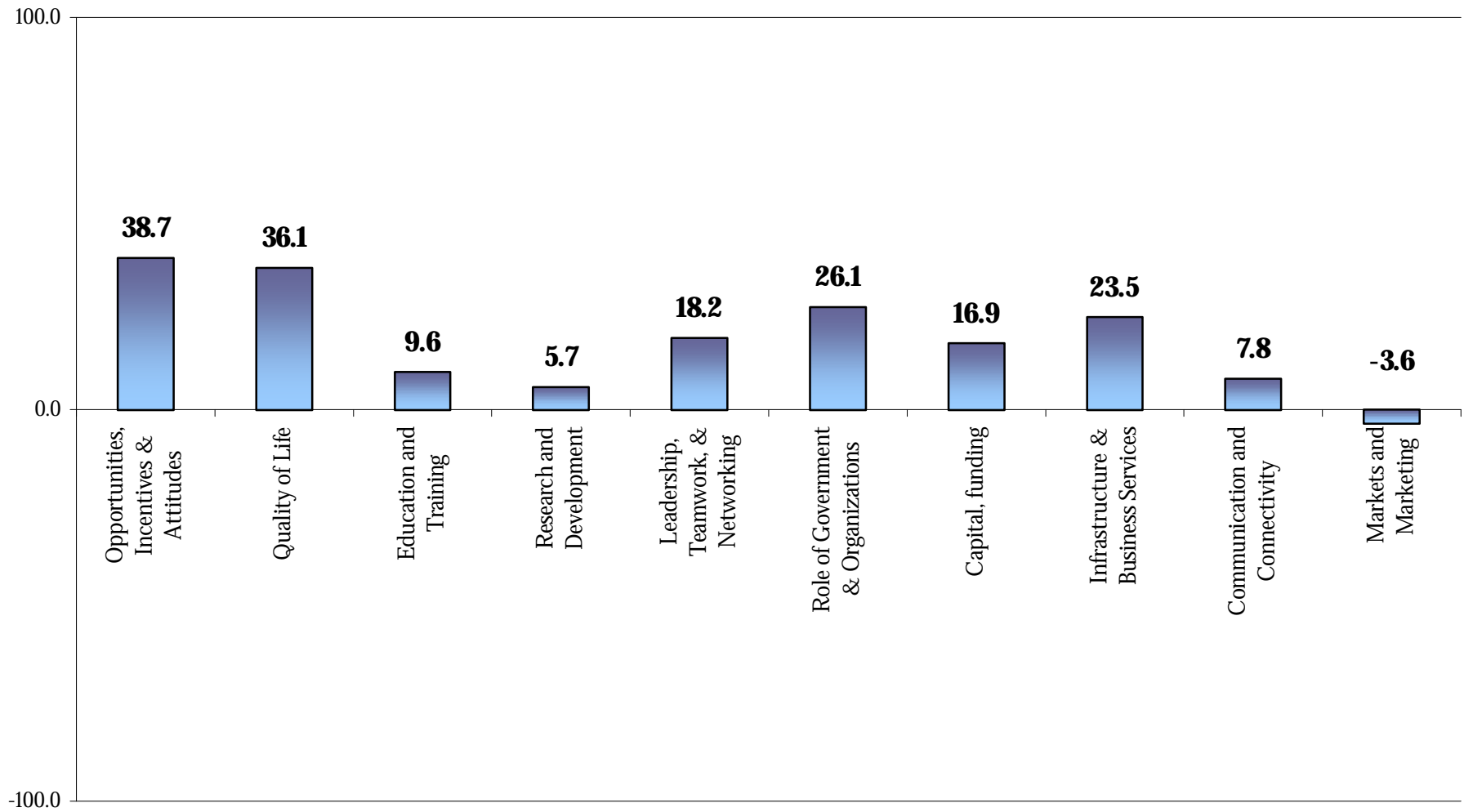
Possible Courses of Action

- Business recognition program to celebrate successes and bolster confidence and pride
- Develop organic agriculture market niche
- Develop recreational potential (facilities, bike paths)
- Make Creston "Horticultural Centre of BC"
- TAKE ACTION on community plans and feasibility studies
- Improve medical and health resources, esp. geriatric
- Clean up and develop the downtown area and community core!
- Research downtown revitalizations and cleanup initiatives from other communities (get advice!)
- Offer a variety of classes and educational opportunities (i.e. time and topics) for business development (i.e. leadership, management, fundraising, marketing, technology applications)
- Develop a way to promote local business and innovation to increase awareness of innovation and opportunities (articles, library, awareness sessions, trade fairs)
- Gather information on accessing help for research and development
- Develop research facilities and library (financially sustainable)
- Research CBT funding (in response to belief that fewer applications from Creston area)
- Research Kootenay Lake Freshwater Research Centre and look at opportunities of this initiative
- Provide conflict resolution workshops to groups within the community
- Organize all business support organizations under one roof
- Relocate government offices to Creston
- Improve signage of local public transportation (ie times and location of stops)
- Maintain local air service
- Look at ways to improve shipping options (train? cooperative transportation?) to decrease time & \$ cost
- Improve communications technology and business' understanding of the benefits of improvement
- "Buy Local" program
- Marketing Coordinator for the whole valley (to find emphasis/strengths, facilitate cooperation and networking, partner with existing business development organizations)
- Create a business association to increase pride and coordinate downtown efforts
- Enhance breakfast series
- Mentoring with businesses
- Provide opportunities for businesses to collaborate and support
- Develop alternative funding options
- Increase community resource awareness (community business newsletters? resource book?)
- Create a system and/or program to provide feedback to businesses
- Develop innovative/alternative leasing options and business incentives
- Develop capability of the community to present larger-scaled business workshops and conferences

Distribution of Scores (Total) for Creston (November, 2001)



Entrepreneurial Capacity Test for Communities (ECTC) Scores for Creston



Part II.A: Background

On November 20th, 2001, 16 Creston area citizens were engaged in Phase I of the Entrepreneurial Capacity Test for Communities (ECTC). This session included a survey and a focus group session. The ECTC helps communities assess their capacity to work with and support entrepreneurs, and to foster small business growth. The test measures the perceptions of community leaders, business people and citizens about the current business environment in a community.

Creston is one of two Central Kootenay communities that have been asked to take part in this pilot project. The second phase of the ECTC, *Analysis, Action & Implementation*, is to report back on the findings of the assessment to the community and to facilitate the community in setting priorities. CFDCCK has also offered to assist the community in locating resources (where resources exist) for some community priorities/actions identified. The aim of the ECTC is to assist communities identify ways they can make the entrepreneurial environment in their communities stronger and to assist them in taking action to achieve this.

The CAEDS, mainly through the efforts of Wendy Walter, acted as a co-sponsor of the ECTC booking the conference room, selecting a representative sample group & inviting them, coordinating the food, and establishing communication for the entire ECTC process.

Part II.B: Methodology

The Creston Area Economic Development Society (CAEDS) was asked to select participants from the community made up of business people, local leaders and citizens. CFDCCK asked that at least half the sample size be made up of the leaders and business people. The rest of the participants were to represent a diverse range of interests, ages and perspectives in the community. The group was to be representative of the community.

Following an overview of the ECTC, introduction of everyone participating, and a review of the agenda, participants were asked to individually fill out a questionnaire broken into 2 distinct parts. Part I asked the participants to record qualitative perceptions of the community – its strengths weaknesses, why people live in the community, their commitment to it – and key demographic data (without identifying their names). Part II asked the participants to record their perceptions to questions covering 10 different sections on factors that are seen to be important to gauging a community's entrepreneurial capacity (e.g. markets and marketing). Each statement was framed in a positive context – e.g. *"Marketing services in my community are affordable and accessible."*

Respondents were asked to record their perceptions for each of the 150 or so factors from strongly agreeing to strongly disagreeing. At the bottom of each section respondents were asked to record the community's strength relating to the section, areas where it could improve on, in addition to any comments.

If all respondents strongly **agreed** to a statement, the total community score would be **+100**. If the community strongly **disagreed** with the statement, the total community score would be **-100**. A neutral response (neither agree nor disagree) would be scored as 0. The percentage of people who didn't know (also scored as a 0) is also indicated on the graphs. This helps to identify gaps in knowledge in the community.

The participants were given as much time as they needed to complete the questionnaire with 2 the facilitators, Anne Stacey and Mike Stolte, being available to answer any questions. The response time ranged from 35 minutes to approximately 80 minutes with the average being 60 minutes. A short snack and networking break followed the questionnaire.

Following the break, participants were broken into 4 groups to further assess the community's entrepreneurial strengths and areas for improvement. Two groups were asked to answer the question; *"What are the things that make it easy to do business in your community?"* while the other group was asked to answer; *"What are the things that can be improved to help businesses in your community?"* In all instances businesses were defined as including existing, start up, expanding and those businesses that could be attracted to the community.

Data entry and analysis took place in the CFDC of Central Kootenay office. Detailed data methodology is outlined in Appendix A.

Part II.C: Participant Profile

The participant population can be described as below. Of the 16 participants,

- 44% had started a business within the last 5 years
- Half consider themselves business people, whereas only 12.5% do not at all
- 12.5% consider themselves to be very influential in their community. 25% are usually influential, 44% somewhat, and 18% not usually.
- 81% are committed to the community and would do much to remain there
- 87.5% have at least one community affiliation (i.e. Festival committees, CFDC, CAEDS, EF, Chamber of Commerce)
- Half (50%) were male, half female
- Most respondents were either between 35-44 (37.5%) or 45-54 (37.5%). There were 12.5% between 25-34 and 55-65 each, and none either under 25 or over 65.
- The majority of respondents (31.5%) had an annual income between \$40,000 and \$60,000
- Most respondents were either employed in Education (18.75%), Social Services (18.75%) or Other occupations (62.5%) including design, CED, alternative health, environment, author, architecture, and research
- There was a range of length of time in the community. 25% had been in the Creston area for over 20 years. 31.25% over 10 years, 12.5% over 5 years, and 25% from 2-5 years.
- All respondents had completed high school. Most respondents had at least some University or College education (37.5%) or Trade or Non-university certification (37.5%)

Part II.D: Phase I Attendance

	Name	Address	Email, Phone #
1	Wendy Walter	Box 899 Creston	caeds@kootenay.com 428-2022
2	Holly Pender-Love	516 10 th Avenue N Creston	hpenderlove@kootenay.com 428-7855
3	Susan Zimmerman	BO Site 62A RR#1 Creston	rzim@kootenay.com 428-7775
4	Alvin Dribnenki	519 10 th Ave N Creston	adribnen@kootenay.com 428-4730
5	Debby Johnson	B.1 S. 8 RR#1 Wynndel VOB 2N	cvins@kootenay.com 866-5657
6	Anne de Jage	1804 Hurl St Creston VOB 1G4	adejager@crestonwildlife.ca
7	Drik Kunze	Box 111 Wynndel BC	dkunze@uniserve.com
8	Paul Goldsmith	2125 Sunset Blvd Creston	pmgoldsmith@uniserve.com
9	Hugh Grant	Box 548 Creston	hg@kes.bc.ca
10	Annette Sawall	1635 Erickson RR#3	428-0550
11	Bart Bjorkman	RR31 735 25 th Ave S	bjorkman@uniserve.com 428-5076
12	Damien Vincent	2232 Cornel Rd	dvincent@kootenay.com 428-5414
13	Kerry Ross	S10 C4 Highway 3A Boswell BC	ckross@kootenay.com
14	Beth Sawall	115 20 th Ave S Creston	quilt@quiltview.com
15	Richard Kaperski	3955 46 th St PO Box 937 Canyon BC V0B 1C0	kasper@kootenay.com
16	Sharon Brocklesby	Box 555 Creston BC V0B 1G0	tcmdoctor@yahoo.com

Part III.A: Respondent Profiles

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Very Committed to community (“Yes”)

- Opportunities exist for those open and willing to set objectives and put plans into action.
- I have lived here for 12 years and Creston has everything I want
- The community offers an excellent lifestyle. However, the economic situation is unstable at this time
- We have chosen a rural lifestyle and feel the Creston Valley is best suited for our lifestyle
- I haven't had a lot of encouragement from a lot of people. This has been going on for a few years but I still am going forward and doing everything I can to make it help the community and my family
- I chose the community, then I had to invent a way to survive
- My partner and I believe that it is a great place to raise a family and are dedicated to encouraging that. We are intent on being here until our children are older and then after.
- My husband and I have lived and worked here for 20 years and I would like to retire here or up the lake
- Creston is a wonderful place to live. I have found that flexibility and diversity has allowed my family and I to remain in Creston, as it has been difficult for me to have just one business or source of income to survive here.
- Creston is a great place to live with lots of potential and opportunities
- Creston has lost many committed people to its unwillingness to change. Staying is conditional to economic growth and town development.
- Friendly, caring, community relocatee because of transfer, but have made Creston our home

Not committed to community (“No”)

- Retired – committed to community, not to working!
- I would NOT do anything to make a living. It wouldn't take much for me to move my business to somewhere like Calgary!

Affiliations

- *Community Futures, CAEDS (2), Entreprise Facilitation Board Member, Chamber of Commerce (3), School groups (PA, Band, Grad), Beta Sigma Phi, Coordinator of town project, Creston Valley Business Association, Legion (husband), Rotary (3), Kootenay Lake Freshwater Resource Center, Rec Centre classes, Community Resource Centre Board (husband), Kuskanook Harbour Society, Science Fair Committee, Computer Club, Recreation Programs with my children, KES, Toastmasters, BC Teachers Federation, Fall Fair Convener, Wynndel Hall Board, Wynndel Irrigation, Duck Lake Dyking District, Community Resource Centre, Social groups – Scottish Dancing, Round Dancing, Curling, Wildlife Centre, Creston Valley Garden Festival Committee, Worked on many community committees, The Garden Festival, Attendance at business, community, and education related gatherings*

Words that describe community

- *Laid back (2), Friendly (6), Slow, Special, Wonderful, Enchanting, IN NEED OF MAJOR CHANGE, Economically disadvantaged, Of great potential, Staid, Quaint, safe (4), sleepy, Complacent, Caring, Beautiful (3), Outdoorsy, Quaint, Dying, Resistant, Comfortable, Quiet, Growth, Cozy, Old fashioned, Rural, Accepting, Helpful, Sleepy, reserved, Small-town attitude, Conservative, Charming, Nurturing, Creative, Environmentally sensitive, Inactive (due to age of population), Farming atmosphere*

Other Occupations of respondents:

- *Retired, Retail, Software, Web Designer, Computer Repair, Traveling sales, Community Economic Development, Acupuncture, Environment, Writer, Researcher, Architecture*

Education and other qualifications of respondents:

- *Cab license, Masters, Bachelors, Diploma*

Part III.B: Community Profile (from preliminary information)

STRENGTHS

People and Family

- *The people: resourceful and pull together during a crisis. Nurturing, tolerant, varied, diverse, experiences, knowledge, culture, Friendliness, Caring for its citizens, Wealth of well-educated people, Wholesome: LIFESTYLE, healthy, family is important, The education system (people), The sense of community, Slower pace of life, A lot of positive and motivated people, Attitude, Not over populated, community-minded citizens, Serious crime rate low, Dedicated community leadership*

Beauty and Recreation

- *Natural Beauty – recreation (soft adventure), Ready access to nature (Mtns, lakes, fresh water, fresh produce), Its natural beauty, Peacefulness, Location, Great climate, Great recreation all around the valley, Air quality, Climate, Scenic beauty, Beautiful surroundings, The natural surroundings, Valley – physical beauty*

Diversity and Opportunity

- *Tourism, Diverse interests, Willingness to work together over 200 volunteer groups, Location – on major southern route across BC, Agriculture – Basis, Variety of agricultural aspects, Chance to grow and mold into desirable community, Potential for tourism, Agricultural land and marketing, Entrepreneurs starting small businesses (retirement community), Being resilient, capable of bending and flowing, Well located to access markets (Hwy 21, Hwy 93/95, Rail, US Border), Retirement appeal, Diversity, Great geography – ie relationship to US markets, (Higher group of quilters!)*

IMPROVEMENTS

Image

- *Beautification, Physical Fabric of the downtown (ie downtown revitalization), Cleaning ourselves up so that it is clear to ourselves and others that we care, Beautification plan for the town, "Clean" it up – give stores a facelift*

Attitude

- *Thinking outside is better, Attitude (citizens and businesses), Pride in the community, Stop negativity, Acceptance of new ideas and lifestyles*

Activities and Leadership

- *Jobs for youth and access to schools so they don't have to leave for Vancouver, Alberta, Employment for youth, Increase town footprint to include Erickson as Creston, Support our local businesses, More for young people to do, Positive recreational outlets for all ages, particularly children and youth, More "cultural" exposure, Improved access and development to recreation, Better networking and vision for the town as a whole, More things to for the youth, Bottom up approach to development: leaders to support the community and people with initiatives, Increased population, Better use of local materials, Cooperation rather than competition*

Infrastructure and business development

- *Infrastructure development to attract new businesses and new family residents (ex: indoor pool, public library), Community Services ie indoor swimming pool, expanded library, long term care (increased capacity), Economy, More amenities – parks, covered pool, new library, Transportation, Economic Diversity, Seniors and Social Housing Developments, Geriatric Health Services, Communications, More community services such as a better library, pool, etc, Industry (\$\$), Infrastructure, More businesses that won't take away from others. Eg. Some industry that would employ a huge amount of people, Another major employer not related to forestry, but environmentally friendly*

Marketing

- *Regional Marketing (sell the area lifestyle), Customer Service, Tax Concessions, More money to help entrepreneurs and businesses move to Creston, More advertising in Alberta and the USA to attract more people to Creston and the valley, Identify opportunities as it relates to the global market, Know markets, create strategies and tactic (includes retaining residents and helping them to be proud of this valley)*

REASONS WHY RESPONDENTS LIVE IN THE COMMUNITY

Opportunities and Affordability

- *Low cost, Proximity to the US Border and Spokane Airport, Jobs for both of us Security, My job, Great potential for business opportunities, Relatively inexpensive place to live and or do business, Low traffic volumes, Affordable housing, Arts are becoming appreciated, Alternative health care is becoming acceptable*

Family and Community

- *Lifestyle and schools, Friends Family, Excellent place to raise children Job, Friends, family, Safe place to raise family, Small enough to feel I belong, In a fairly short time, I was able to become involve and contribute, It is well located in relation to my extended family, I was born here and want my 2 children to grow up here, A good place to raise a family, Friendly people, Availability of square dance and round dance clubs, Individuals, To be near my family, Small town and friendly people, It's a great place to raise a family (as long as one can stay gainfully employed), Loyal clients to business, Relationships are valued, Easy to know lots of people*

Location (nature, recreation, climate)

- *Like living by the lake – peace and quiet, Access to outdoor recreation, Kootenay Lake (ice free diving with significant wrecks), The lake is stunning!, Access to Wildlife and nature, skiing, boating, fishing, fruit orchards, We live here because it's slower than the city, a place for our children to play safely, the climate allows gardening, there is fabulous cross country skiing, biking, and hiking, I love the climate, beauty, ambiance, It is a quiet and peaceful town, a safety living in a smaller town, You can grow almost anything, Good climate, Natural beauty, Lifestyle – the proximity to things our family enjoys (outdoors), Overall appreciation for the Creston Valley and its inherent beauty, Favorable weather, Recreation is great, Beautiful valley*

Part III.C: Survey Responses by Category
Section 1: Opportunities and Incentives

Opportunities and Incentives is strongest areas for Creston. The **category score of 38.7** is the highest of all the sections (see Figure 1 and 2), and the respondents' knowledge of this area (with the exception of business incentives and community vision) is very good (see Figure 3).

The following strengths for Creston's "**Opportunities and Incentives**" were identified:

- *Facing an economic opportunity*
- *Recognized organization or individual available to help business development*
- *Desire to remain in the community*

However, the following gaps in the "**Opportunities and Incentives**" in Creston were also identified:

- *Business incentives*
- *Pool of motivated employees*

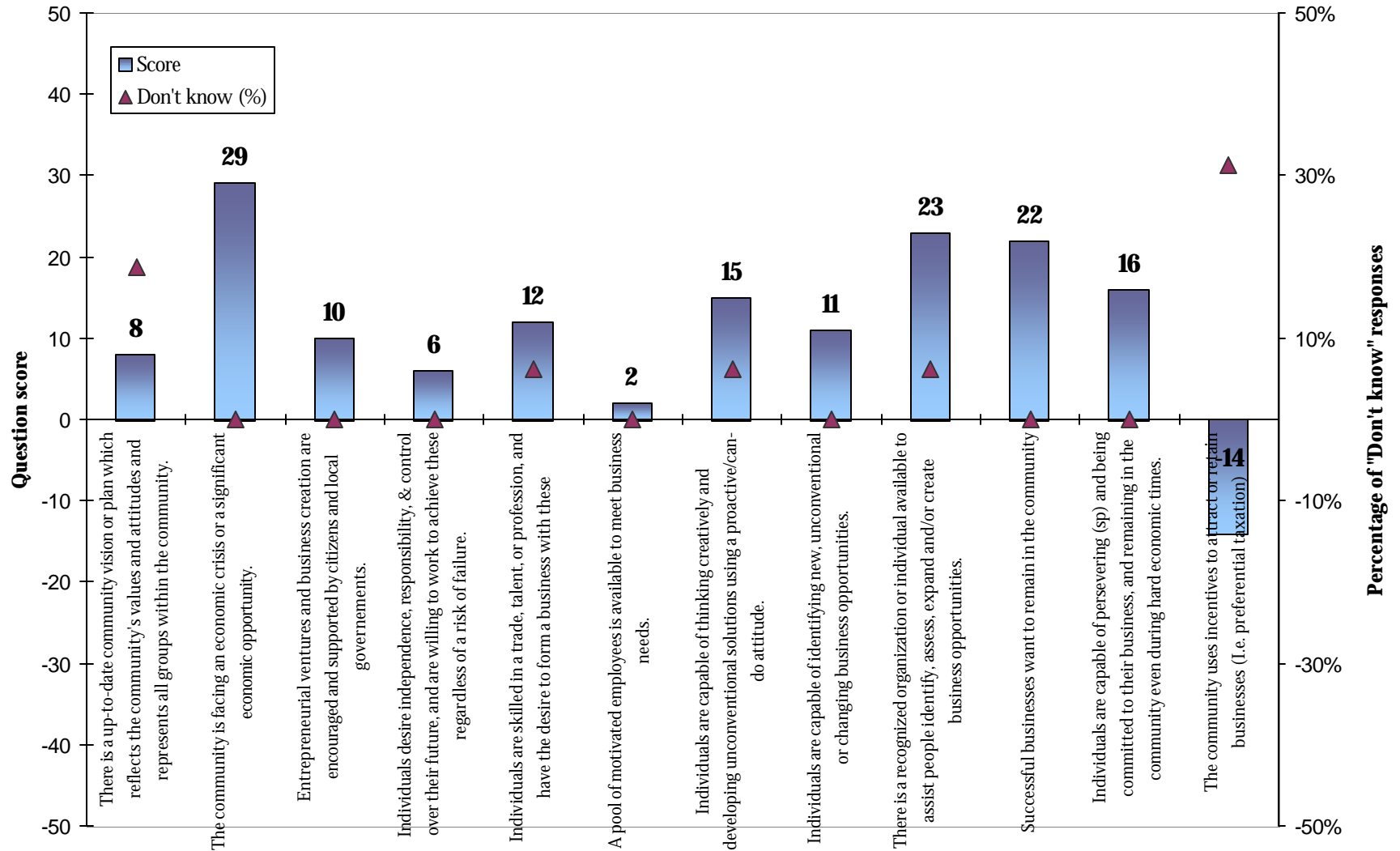
Some specific areas of **strength** as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- **Realization of community potential**
 - *Unlimited opportunities, citizens willing to do the necessary to promote change to improve and/or expand, people's realization it is either "do or die", core group of people who believe in Creston, gives hope, The changes in the global market toward quality brands, quality of life, environmentally sound practices, holistic medicine, soft adventure, recreation, arts – baby boomers, In spite of economic problems, new opportunities exist, tremendous opportunity to do a lot with tourism and related things*
- **Support and resources:**
 - *Entreprise facilitator, Alvin, Debbie Johnson, Employment – Hugh Grant, College, Once someone has begun, there is help. But the individuals must initiate, The availability of diverse raw materials and the talent to create from these*
- **Location:**
 - *Location, great natural resource, great place to live, clean water, air, etc*

Areas identified as needing **improvement**, and some specific suggestions as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- **Attitude:**
 - *Proactive attitudes towards development of community infrastructure, Convincing the senior population that increased services in the community is good for everyone, even though it may cost money, Celebrate even small successes to bolster confidence, Awareness in and of the community and what we have to offer, encouraged by change and success, People tend to have a "whats in it for me" attitude.*
- **Vision, Direction, and Leadership:**
 - *Leaders to send a clear message to individuals and groups that they will support them in their endeavors, Encourage more people to move here, a strong community vision, many feasibility studies with too little action, Improve what we already do, agri culture, forestry, tourism, More education as to what is happening elsewhere, Communication between the entrepreneurial and the established retail, need to get the current business healthy, Organic Agriculture*

Opportunities, Incentives, Attitudes



Part III.C: Survey Responses by Category
Section 2: Quality of Life

Quality of Life is one of the strongest sections for Creston. The **category score of 36.1** is the second highest score in the survey (see Figures 1 and 2), and the respondents' knowledge of this area is very high (see Figure 4).

The following strengths for Creston's "Quality of Life" were identified:

- *Safety*
- *Physical beauty*
- *Real Estate opportunities*
- *College*

However, the following gaps in the "Quality of Life" in Creston were also identified:

- *Desirable place to live for young adults*
- *Social facilities*
- *Strong community identity*

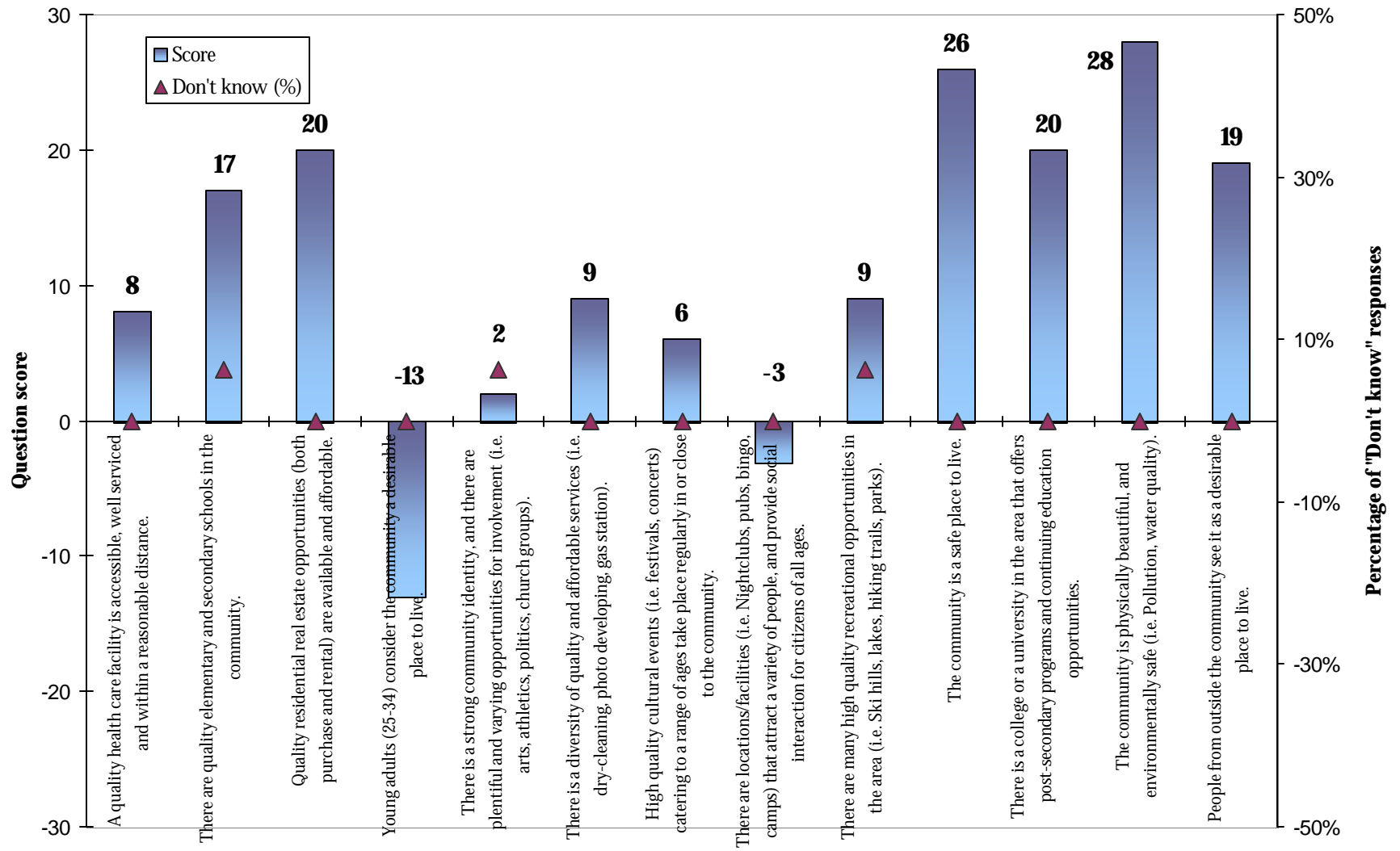
Some specific areas of **strength** as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- **Physical Environment:**
 - *Climate and physical environment, weather, quiet, fairly peaceful, beautiful, with the exception of the "burning", the environment is 100%, proximity to mountain lakes, agriculture, the natural environment around the town*
- **Safety and Community:**
 - *Offers a healthy lifestyle, lots to do and enjoy, wonderful places to hike, safe, near facilities, a lake (but need a car to drive to the lake), lots of activities for seniors, wildlife center, accessibility of most types of outdoor recreation*
- **Recreation and Lifestyle:**
 - *Friendly, laidback, safety, education, relative affordability of housing*

Areas identified as needing **improvement**, and some specific suggestions as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- **Infrastructure:**
 - *More facilities for families (pool, library), more beds as long term care facility, improve services, need to travel over summit or to Cranbrook for medical specialists, need more senior and LTC housing, infrastructure to enhance economy and provide more social benefits, community infrastructure, regional hospital for geriatrics*
- **Activities and Vision:**
 - *Protect it from those who would pollute the air, chop down the trees, or kill the animals, support RCMP, as town grows, won't be able to afford policing, stop the burning*
- **Safety and Protection:**
 - *More cultural events and venues, bicycle paths, indoor pool, university, more things for young adults to do, There needs to be more employment and opportunities for young couples and new families, Attitudes! IT is positively ok to have public buildings and spaces look good, Focus on long term impact rather than just the immediate*

Quality of Life



Part III.C: Survey Responses by Category
Section 3 Education and Training

Education and Training in Creston has a **category score of 9.6** (see Figure 1 and 2), and the respondents' knowledge of this area is generally poor (see Figure 5), especially regarding types of training programs available.

The following strengths for Creston's "Education and Training" were identified:

- *Organization through which business training can be offered*
- *Business plan development training opportunities*
- *Distance learning opportunities*

However, the following gaps in the "Education and Training" in Creston were also identified:

- *No University, university transfer programs*
- *Availability of most training programs*

Some specific areas of **strength** as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

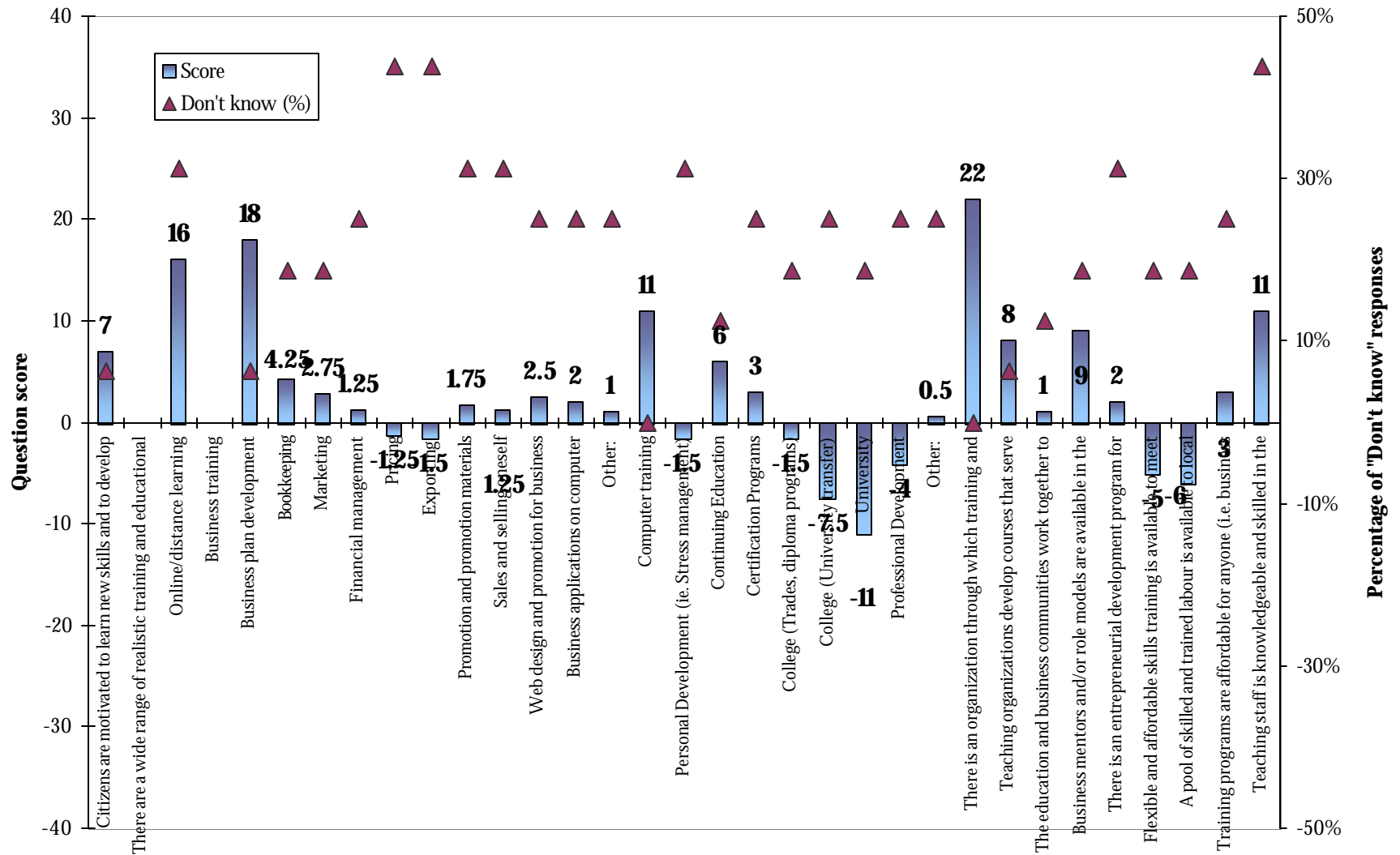
- **College:**
 - *College horticultural program, distance learning, special training, specializes in agriculture*
- **Business Education opportunities:**
 - *Facilitation and fostering of entrepreneurial business, training easily accessible, willingness for business and education resources to organize events and learning opportunities together*
- **People:**
 - *People, top teachers who care about our children, quality education*

Some areas of **improvement** and specific suggestions as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- **Building on College:**
 - *Improve range of courses and college's approach to what courses are offered, need more university classes to keep youth in community, more evening classes, selection is minimal, expand repertoire of college courses*
 - *Attract students from outside of Creston, horticultural center of BC, College needs to prepare for future needs – transferable credits, trades school addition*
- **Funding and communication:**
 - *The business and education groups to build relationships with the business community and work force. To Listen openly to their interests and concerns and identify ways to meet those needs and aspirations, Not affordable by all that need it, More \$ for wages and equipment and supplies*
- **Business and alternative training:**
 - *Professional and artisan courses should be offered, matching retired/semi retired people with skills to those in need, classes delivered in Creston and not just in Nelson Cranbrook or Kelowna, Variety of training programs for entrepreneurs, Flexibility of schedule, High school needs to become current in future needs for skilled trades people*

- *Walk into any school or the college - the buildings are clean safe and well maintained. The school buses are in excellent shape. The drivers are professional and everyone seems to have a good attitude. The educators are well educated and willing to go the extra mile. College in tune with the needs of community. The administration fro k-12 and college (and home schooling) is top.*
- *Both my kids and myself had to leave the valley to further their education because they were unable to take all the courses through open learning and there was nothing the Kootenays to provide these services. Once kids leave there is very little to attract them back.*
- *With the Creston Area being in the center of a VERY diversified farming area as well as gardening, the College could easily be established as the center of this area of education.*

Education and Training



Part III.C: Survey Responses by Category

Section 4: Research and Development

Research and Development is one of the weakest sections for Creston. The **category score of 5.7** is one of the lowest scores in the survey (see Figure 1 and 2), and the respondents' knowledge of this area is poor (see Figure 6), especially regarding research and development networking.

The following strengths for Creston's "Research and Development" were identified:

- *Support and assistance for innovative business*
- *Resource facilities with business, research and development information*

However, the following gaps in the "Research and Development" in Creston were also identified:

- *No clustering of R&D facilities,*
- *No forums for exchange of ideas and technologies*
- *Lack of skilled scientists and a R&D Centre*

The main area of **strength** as identified in the qualitative answers is that R&D resources exist in Creston:

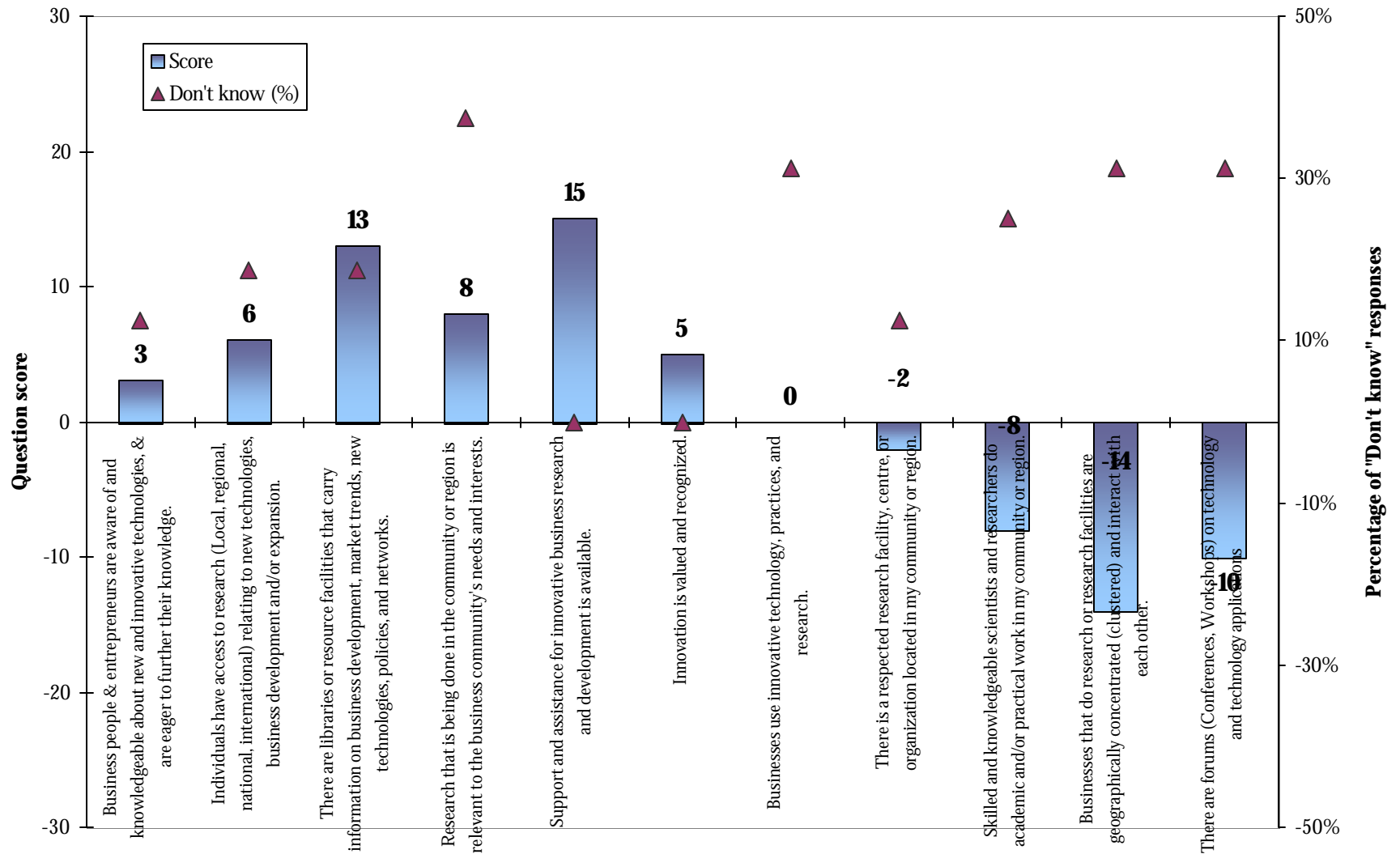
- *Business and education groups network for contacts and information, a few innovative individuals, recognition of need, great minds*
- *Lots of conferences and workshops, farm community creating markets for products, CVWMA, make it a research place for scientists more than it already is, library, good resources available and helpful and informative*

Some areas of **improvement** and specific suggestions as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- Networking and linking with respect to R&D:
 - *Method of linking or networking these people, communications, R&D in Creston is because of individuals, not a community effort, EDS and Chamber of commerce could maybe advertise and promote local businesses*
- Awareness and education:
 - *Community awareness of existing development, international awareness of opportunities, Make people aware of R&D Programs, loans, etc, give researchers a reason to come here, more information on accessing help for R&D, an "incubator", funded research facility, newer library, tech awareness open sessions, provide consultations to these exploring opportunities and communicate the support that is available, articles in paper discussing new R&D in different areas in our community, Brewery will have article about innovations in their field*
- Sustainability of R&D (Facilities and Funding):
 - *Infrastructure, Financial support of library, funding could be made available from some level of government*

- *Most businesses in the area are small and need assistance in "startup" both financially, site and training.*
- *CBT did not receive many applications from Creston. Maybe they did not know \$ was available?*
- *The Kootenay Lake Fresh Water Research Center is trying to establish a facility on Kootenay Lake for international researchers and educators to do fresh water research in the Kootenays*

Research and Development



Part III.C: Survey Responses by Category
Section 5: Leadership, Teamwork and Networking

Leadership, Teamwork and Networking in Creston has a **category score of 18.2** (see Figure 1 and 2). The respondents' knowledge of this is moderate, but is especially poor regarding the availability of qualified supervisors and managers (see Figure 7).

There was only one clear strength, "*a pool of dedicated leaders*"; identified for Creston's "**Leadership, Teamwork and Networking**". However, other suggested strengths were also identified:

- *Recognized process to representative community decision making*
- *Networking opportunities*
- *Business support networks*

However, the following gaps in the "**Leadership, Teamwork and Networking**" in Creston were also identified:

- *Opportunities for leadership training and development*
- *Availability of qualified supervisors and managers*

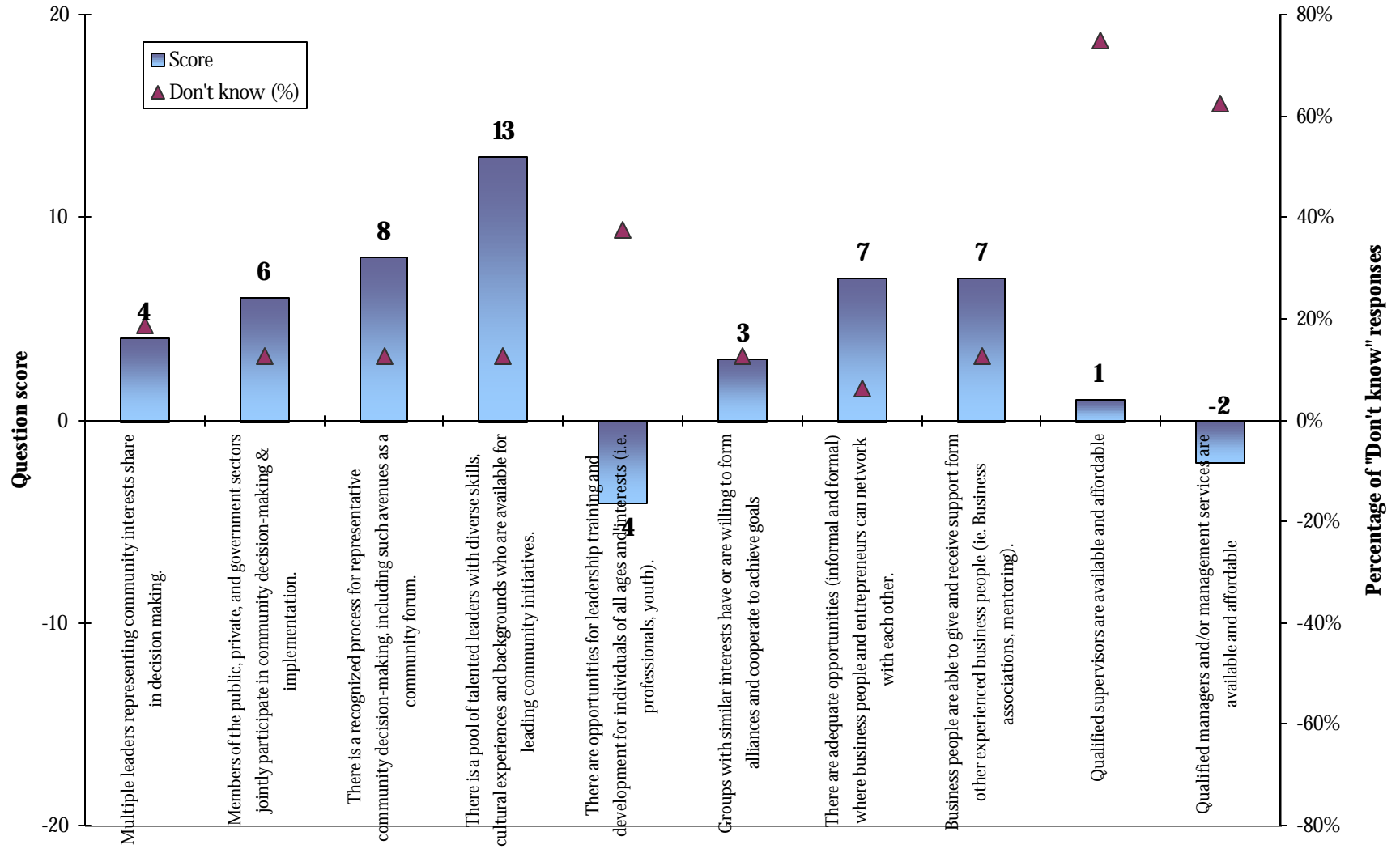
Some specific areas of **strength** as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- Organizations' ability to facilitate activity:
 - *Organizations such as Rotary, Programs exist to assist people to network and funding is available, great network of people such as Enterprise Facilitation, Economic Development Chamber of Commerce*
- Teamwork among diverse groups:
 - *Most levels of business and local government are approachable, all know one another, people are accessible and approachable, great network of people, groups and association work well together share ideas and resources, community partners on numerous projects, community teams, some leadership training has been initiated, partnerships of several key organizations accomplish projects (is community visioning, Garden Festival), desire to create opportunities for area, individuals willing to move forward in spite of the perceived barriers*

The main area of **improvement** as identified in the qualitative answers is the ability to **communicate and cooperate**. Specific areas identified as needing improvement are as follows:

- Clarity about who is doing what:
 - *Get the word out there, people can really help your business, seems to be several levels of government offering assistance but confusion as to who does what, improve communication, make newcomers and new businesses aware of what is available, stop duplicating effect, a marketing person*
- Overcoming personality conflict:
 - *Use of interpersonal relationships, being more open and not relying on the personal relationships, more participation from the community, many personality conflicts and groups could benefit from conflict resolution (eg DBA vs. Chamber, Packers/Orchards vs. Packing Plant)*
- Common vision and action:
 - *Long term follow through, small businesses have great ideas but often don't have the funding to allow time to establish their markets, single general vision for the valley, don't just talk about something – do it!, Leaders need to understand their role to serve and listen and support their people. They need to see their intelligence, skills, and desire within the community to make CV a better place to live. They need their leaders to support and encourage instead of looking outside the area*
- Networking:
 - *Business owners sticking and working together, more involvement between a diverse range of business managers, all industry banding together, need more opportunities to network, more cooperation between associations, increased use of community leadership talents, increased leadership training opportunities, involve skilled retirees*

Leadership Teamwork and Networking



Part III.C: Survey Responses by Category
Section 6: Governments and Governing Bodies

Governments and Governing Bodies in Creston has a **category score of 26.1** (see Figure 1 and 2). The respondents' knowledge of this category is moderate, primarily lacking in terms of program duplication, development, and delivery.

The main strength for Creston's "**Governments and Governing Bodies**" was identified as "*staff members delivering programs are knowledgeable, competent, and approachable*" (Figure 8). Other strengths that were identified were as follows:

- *Business programs are located in a well known location*
- *Business programs are effectively and efficiently delivered*

However, the following gaps in the "**Governments and Governing Bodies**" in Creston were also identified:

- *Regulations and red tape are easy to understand*
- *Officials make it easy for businesses to start or expand*

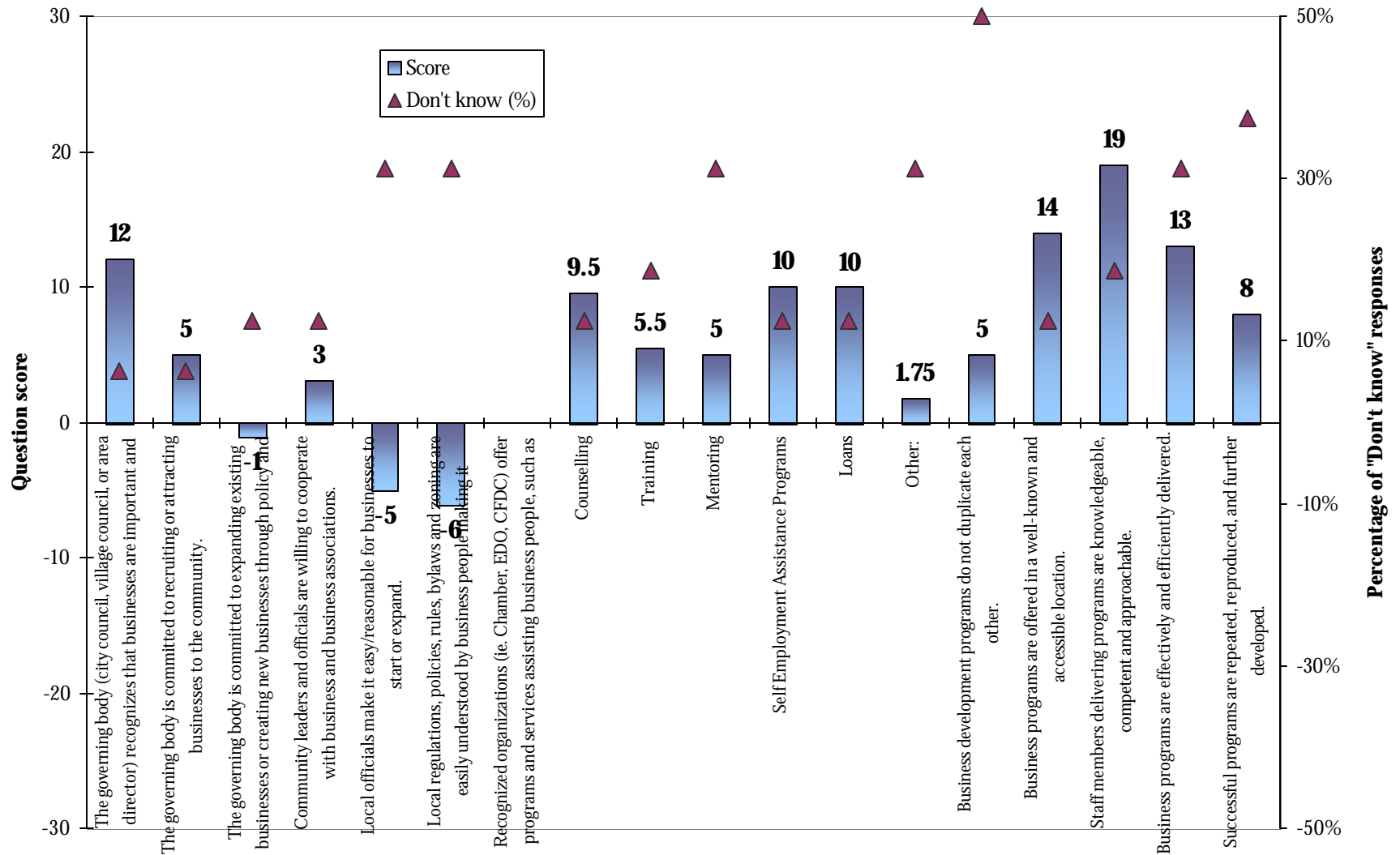
Some specific areas of **strength** as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- **Resources and Facilities:**
 - *Local government and organizations are supportive, has a broad spectrum in ages (young and elderly people) involved, all know each other, people are accessible, organizations work together to provide the best service to our clients, willingness to work together, willing attitude to identify the strengths of each program and enhance the entire business community to support by working as a team to provide services.*
- **Support:**
 - *There are at least 4 organizations assisting small business (CFDC, KES, CAEDS, Enterprise Facilitation, Chamber of Commerce), availability of CFDC and HRDC training and facilitation programs*

Some areas of **improvement** and specific suggestions as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- **Cooperation**
 - *Communication, create joint programs that reflect the community desires and needs, more support and interaction of government and business, unification of effort to achieve results, work together; confusion as to who does what, all the business assistance organizing under one roof for easy and efficient access, reach out to the businesses and let us know you are there!*
- **Flexible support**
 - *More support (money and resources) for programs with a proven track record, more flexible with "red tape" and issues such as the Agricultural Land Reserve Issues, fund the business entrepreneurs – it's working well, but the BC government and CBT is cutting funding, limited financial support to deliver services and information, give "new" businesses chance! Help encourage and be reliable when asked for advice or help*
- **Vision:**
 - *Preparation for the long haul, develop a vision and promote and foster business that fits with its vision, Relocate government offices to Creston, local government has severe lack of vision, cohesive plan*

Governments and Governing Bodies



Part III.C: Survey Responses by Category
Section 7: Capital and Funding

Capital and Funding in Creston has a **category score of 16.9** (see Figure 1 and 2). The respondents' knowledge of this category is very poor. This may indicate that respondents did not have enough knowledge to accurately score this category rather than a lack of services and opportunities.

Only one real strength for Creston's "Capital and Funding" was identified (see Figure 9):

- *Businesses look for sources of funding and capital*

Minor strengths include:

- *Presence of development organizations for funding, availability for loans, informal ways of raising capital*

However, the following gaps in the "Capital and Funding" in Creston were also identified:

- *Skills in fundraising*
- *Availability of capital*
- *Lenders are willing to take risks*
- *Businesses understand financial management*

Some specific areas of **strength** as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

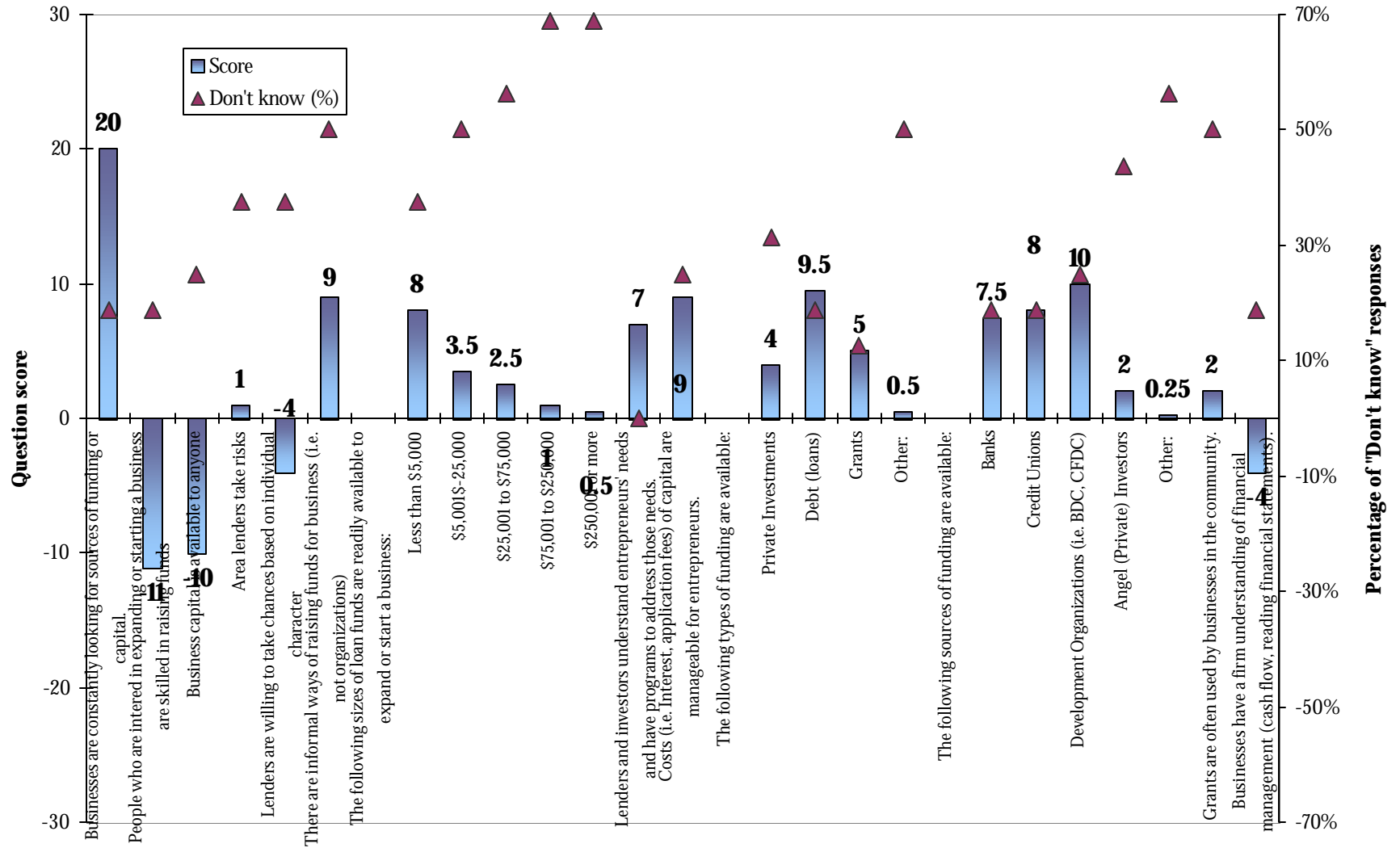
- Availability of funding and support sources:
 - *KES to help business startups and business plan preparation, CAEDS helps organize and locate funds, CFDC has training and support for startup, good cross section of financial institutions in the valley, CFDC office in Town and EF, availability of banks credit unions, and CFDC programs*
- Resourcefulness in finding funds:
 - *Resourcefulness, organizations helping people find funding solutions, people are known and money can be lent on strength of a relationship (don't know if it happens), people who are dedicated to researching grants and loans for people, people dedicated to delivery of programs, training to show business where to look for funding*

Some areas of **improvement** and specific suggestions as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- Education and training awareness:
 - *Lenders to be educated on changes and demands in this economy and to communicate their needs to manage risks, continue to offer training in how to start and how to run a business, community awareness by funding agencies, need venture capital, more training in financial management, more awareness of programs and of needs, more CFDC visibility*
- Alternative sources of funding:
 - *Program to catch those who fall through the cracks, other avenues for funding (venture capital, Coops), more funding for re-education and entrepreneurship (gvt job cuts), wealthy residents, financial incentives for business start-up (partially forgivable loans, interest rebates)*

Creston is in the process of establishing a trust into which money can be donated or bequeathed, etc for future town enhancement

Capital and Funding



Part III.C: Survey Responses by Category
Section 8: Infrastructure and Business Services

Creston's **Infrastructure and Business Services** category has a **category score of 23.5** (see Figures 1 and 2). The respondents' knowledge of this area is good.

The following strengths for Creston's "**Infrastructure and Business Services**" were identified (Figure 10):

- *Availability and affordability of professional services*
- *Availability and affordability of commercial services*

However, the following gaps in the "**Infrastructure and Business Services**" in Creston were also identified:

- *Vibrant community core*
- *Infrastructure meets business needs*

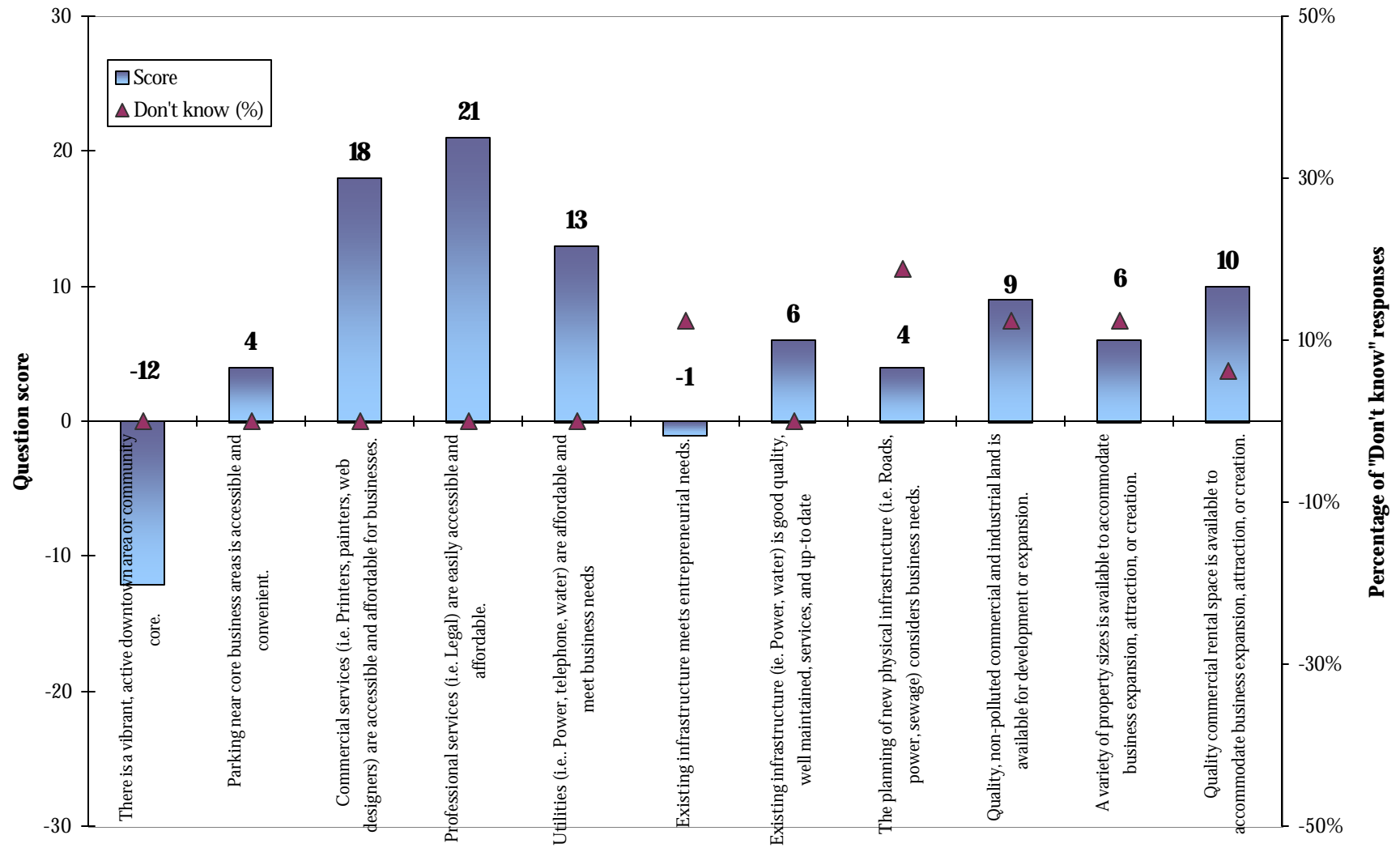
Some specific areas of **strength** as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- Availability of land and locations:
 - *Retail space, commercial space, good locations, good quality services, downtown locations, lots of vacancy, inexpensive land, vacant store fronts*
- Cooperation:
 - *Community Centre, Community Plan, new plan by town and RDCK, endless possibilities, Creston Valley Business Association, involvement and investment by provincial agencies and national utilities in the past helped to upgrade infrastructure*

Some areas of **improvement** and specific suggestions as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- Downtown core:
 - *Improve commercial properties, rent to reflect economic realities not wishful thinking, land and building owners need to understand what attracts and retains tenants and purchasers, affordable newspaper ads, more affordable rentals and utilities*
 - *Downtown revitalization to which every shopkeeper is committed, highway 3 through town has too many trucks (need alternative route), beautify downtown, increase motorhome parking and camping, make downtown attractive to business, people who live here and people who visit.*
- Infrastructure:
 - *Facilities to make Creston a destination for young adults, new infrastructure (pool, library, hospital), high tech cable hook up*
- Vision:
 - *Vision around the downtown core promoting a vibrant and pleasant shopping experience, adoption of a town plan to which everyone is committed, re-examination of land in the ALR*

Infrastructure and Business Services



Part III.C: Survey Responses by Category
Section 9: Communications and Connectivity

Communications and Connectivity in Creston has a **category score of 7.8**, one of the lower scores in the survey (see Figures 1 and 2). Knowledge of this category is good, but is not as complete in terms of Internet and transportation services.

The following strengths for Creston's "Communications and Connectivity" were identified (Figure 11):

- *Affordability of existing communication services*
- *Business shipping – regular, frequent, routes are well maintained*

However, the following gaps in the "Communications and Connectivity" in Creston were also identified:

- *Communication service availability (High speed internet, Cable, satellite)*
- *Human Transportation (passenger train, air service)*

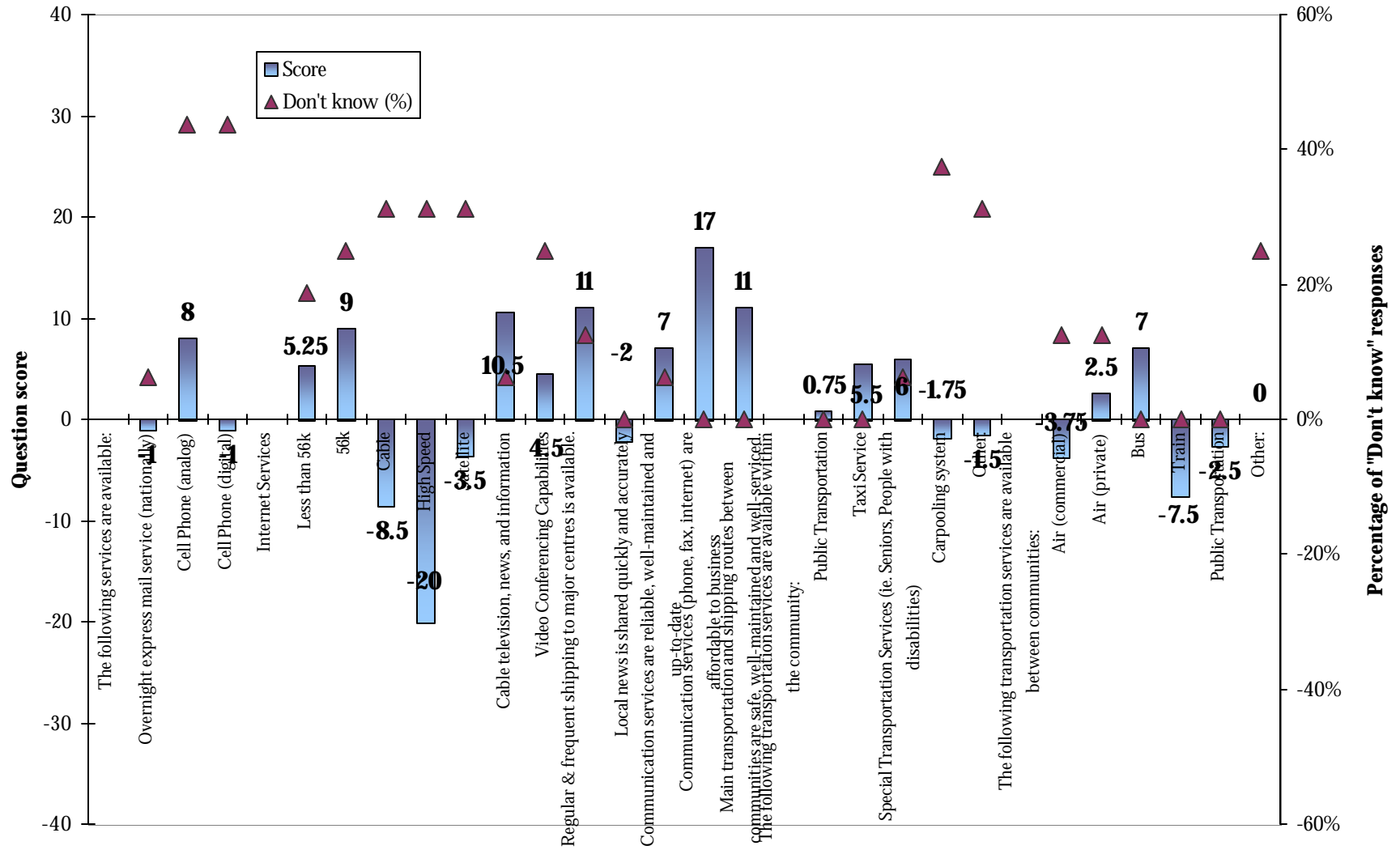
The main area of **strength** for Creston, as identified in the qualitative answers, is the *Availability and accessibility of communication and connectivity services* outlined as follows:

- **Transportation:**
 - *Can ride a bike almost anywhere most of year, Greyhound bus is reliable, highways keeps road and pass clear and open in winter, pretty good for seniors*
- **Utilities and Services:**
 - *Most means of communications are available, water, sewers, power, acceptance of community isolation (so shop at home), all infrastructure reasonably modern, basic services available, concentrated downtown core, courier services*

Some areas of **improvement** and specific suggestions as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- **Transportation:**
 - *In area: seniors can't afford taxis, public transportation needs to be more effectively communicated with visible signs posting pick up times and locations*
 - *Out of area: summit is often closed, better and less expensive shipping to and from Creston, keep airline company here, local air service, distance from large markets (perhaps train can be used to more effect?), living in semi-isolated community the biggest factor of doing business is cost of transporting people and goods (time and money costs)*
- **Communications:**
 - *Improved internet services, update communications, high speed internet, cable hookup, better communication and availability, lack of understanding of communications jargon, doubts whether locals would be willing to pay price of high speed internet (though would attract high tech business to area)*
 - *Mail service is declining*

Communication and Connectivity



Part III.C: Survey Responses by Category
Section 10: Markets and Marketing

Creston's **Markets and Marketing** category has a **category score of -3.6** the lowest score in the survey (see Figures 1 and 2). With the exception of marketing services, the respondents' knowledge of this area is excellent.

The following strengths for Creston's "**Markets and Marketing**" were identified (Figure 12):

- *Local businesses cater to both local and outside markets*
- *There are market niches and opportunities*
- *There are no dominant businesses preventing other businesses from growing*

However, the following gaps in the "**Markets and Marketing**" in Creston were also identified:

- *People prefer to purchase local products and services*
- *Joint marketing strategies*
- *Marketing image or brand*

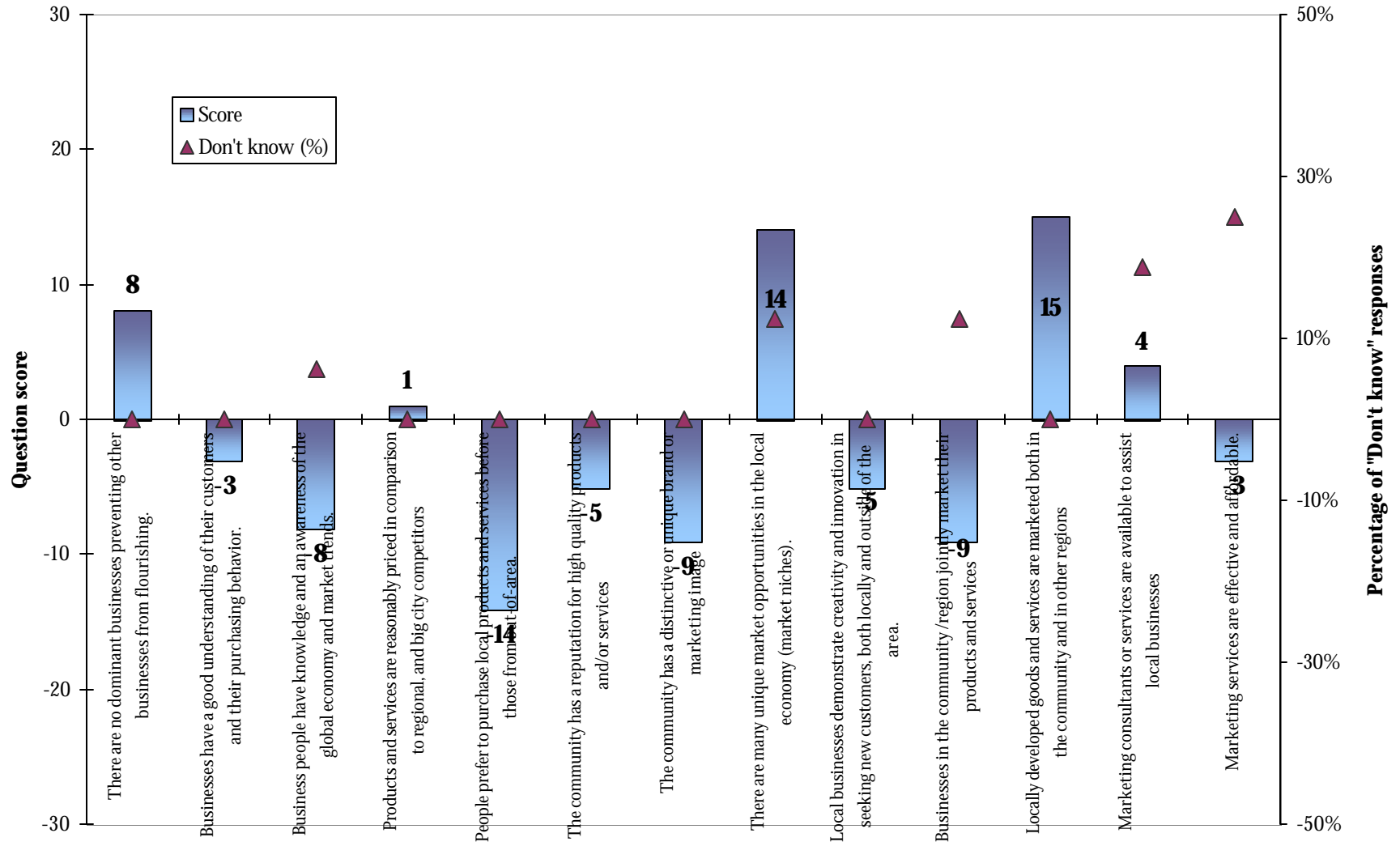
Some specific areas of **strength** as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- **Unique market niches available:**
 - *Good and unique products, quality of many products has created own market, pockets of successful marketing, crop of cherries when no one else in the world has them, Columbia Brewery (Kokanee beer well known), community represents wholesome natural personalized individual custom skilled people*
- **Location and communication:**
 - *Good and attractive area, close to regional markets, CV business association, proximity to US markets*

Some areas of **improvement** and specific suggestions as identified in the qualitative answers are as follows:

- **Marketing image/brand for whole community :**
 - *Needs a collective brand or image, needs to emphasize something (organic products, farming, friendly to environment, etc), find our strength, recognition of unique market strengths, cooperation and networking to attract markets that want and appreciate these types of products and services*
- **Marketing support and networks:**
 - *Appoint marketer (2 days-Creston, 1 day new businesses), need help in accessing and marketing to international markets for value added products, working together as a community, take advantage of local support systems (i.e. EF) to help with networking and direction, marketing block, global marketing (don't depend on local markets), support (i.e. education and financial) to small and medium business, downtown core where all strive to maintain or improve local shopping*
- **Education and awareness:**
 - *Many are old fashioned and don't know what their demographics are, motivate local businesses to improve sales and service, college course or mentoring program about marketing, better awareness of local customers and trends, apply what Kokanee has done (leads to more awareness of community)*

Markets and Marketing



Part III.D: Focus Group Responses

Question #1: What are the things that make it easy to do business in your community?

Location relevant to markets

- *Central location – airport (pros and cons)*
- *Close to USA (Spokane airport)*
- *Isolation can be looked at as an opportunity (lower costs of living)*
- *Proximity to US markets and large US population just south of border*
- *Highway 3 – southern Trans-provincial highway*
- *Selkirk Loop*

Education and Training Programs

- *College – big on community needs*
- *Supportive business programs (ie Debbie Johnson, CAE, KES, CFDC) for existing and new businesses*
- *Good educational opportunities*

Community

- **Business**
 - *Current real estate market (buyers market)*
 - *Concentrated and centralized downtown core*
 - *Low level of local competition – not many duplicate businesses*
 - *Lots of potential for growth*
 - *Diversified economy*
 - *More progressive leadership (business, council, etc) – leadership is changing for the better*
- **People**
 - *Client Pool*
 - *Retirement community is a good market for many businesses*
 - *Safe – good place to raise kids*
 - *Old fashioned values – values, close knit community*
 - *Quality of life is a focus here*

Geography

- *Natural resources draw customers*
- *Potential for tourism*
- *Milderclimate and beautiful geographically*
- *Railroad access*
- *Proximity to lake*
- *Amenities and recreation potential*
- *Attractive place for staff to live*

Question #2: What are the things that can be improved to help businesses in your community?

Networking

- *More networking opportunities, better networking for big events, breakfast series (we do anyways), more talking and sharing between new business with existing businesses (Mentoring)*

Attitudes

- *Business collaboration (i.e. marketing skills and coops), ongoing support system for business, more group and community marketing (“Brand recognition”)*
- *Local air service and transportation, cooperative transportation (of products out of area)*
- *Revitalization of community – incentives to beautify community, and advice about how to go about it, increase community involvement*

Cooperation

- *Venture Capital – creative and alternative options, financing*
- *More workshops for existing businesses (web, employee standards, financial, HRES), access to training (time and location), better training opportunities for business, more variety and availability of programs, customer service*
- *Keep up to date on changes in retail markets globally – more learning opportunities, create an effective local government, community self awareness – (i.e. “where to go to get...?”)*
- *More higher-level work for youths (i.e. adults take jobs traditionally for youth)*

Education, Awareness and Support

- *Recognition Program to encourage high standards – staffing pricing hospitality (positive feedback to businesses), reduce out of town shopping, change attitude towards how town looks (lack of care vs. care), achieve full potential*
- *Show financial benefits of being occupied for long term to building owners*
- *Improve conflict resolutions among community, environmental, public relations issues (PR – how to get loyalty), consider the demographic imbalance (many seniors, few youth)*

Infrastructure

- *Decrease Vacancies by offering innovative leasing and municipal incentives (lower taxes) – also alternative leasing*
- *Structues for organizing and coordinating for larger tourism business workshops and conferences*
- *Extended health services – because of retirees*

Appendix A: Detailed Data Methodology

1. Quantitative data from the questionnaire was entered manually into a customized Excel spreadsheet using the designations as below.

- *Strongly Agree* entered as A valued at 2
- *Agree* entered as B valued at 1
- *Neither agree nor Disagree* entered as C valued at 0
- *Disagree* entered as D valued at -1
- *Strongly Disagree* entered as E valued at -2
- *Don't know* entered as F valued at 0
- *Not applicable* entered as G valued at 0
- *No answer* entered as H valued at 0

The pre-written spreadsheet automatically calculated scores, percentages, and generated graphs.

2. The questions were weighted. Most were weighted with a factor of 1.0. However, some "sub-questions" were weighted partially (i.e. 0.5 or 0.25).
3. The number of non-scoring responses (F, G, H) were automatically totaled using the equation below.

$$(\# F-H) = (\#ofF + \#ofG + \#ofH)$$

4. Each question scored was automatically totaled using the equation below.

$$\text{QUESTION SCORE} = [(\#ofA \times 2) + (\#ofB \times 1) + (\#ofC \times 0) + (\#ofD \times -1) + (\#ofE \times -2) + (\#ofF \times 0) + (\#ofG \times 0) + (\#ofH \times 0)] \times \text{WEIGHTING}$$

5. Scores of each section were automatically totaled using the equation below.

$$\text{SECTION SCORE} = \text{sumof (Question \#1 score ... to Question \#X score)}$$

6. Total possible scores were automatically calculated for each section using the equation below.

$$\text{TOTAL POSSIBLE} = (\#Q \text{ per section}) \times (\text{Total possible score per question (i.e. A=2)}) \times (\# \text{ of respondents})$$

7. Adjusted Total Possible scores were automatically calculated for each section using the equation below.

$$\text{ADJUSTED TOTAL POSSIBLE} = (\text{Total Possible}) - [(\text{sum of all (F-H) in each section}) \times (\# \text{ of respondents})]$$

8. Total Scores for each section were automatically calculated for each section using the equation below.

$$\text{SECTION SCORE} = [(\text{Section Score}) / (\text{Adjusted Total Possible})] \times 100\%$$

9. Total Graphs (radial and bar) were automatically generated. The radial graph indicates the fullness (or lack of) of the capacity of the community to support business startup and expansion. The bar graph indicates the relative strength and weakness of each section.

10. Section bar graphs were automatically generated. There are two y-axes included on the graph, the question *Score* and the *% of Don't Know* (% of F-H for each question). The *% of Don't Know* may be attributed to one of three hypotheses.
 - H1 = Question is not valid
 - H2 = Question is not understood/not clearly written
 - H3 = Lack of knowledge on part of respondent
11. Profile of Respondents was summarized automatically. The number of respondents in each category was totaled, and then converted into a percentage
12. Qualitative data (Preliminary information, Section comments and responses, and Focus Group notes) was entered manually into a customized MSWord Document.
13. Using the graphs for each section, the greatest strengths and weaknesses were highlighted and listed for each section.
14. Using the graphically-derived information and the qualitative information for each section, the strengths and weaknesses for each section were grouped into themes (1-5). Theme types were dependent on the community's response and perceptions. This was repeated for the weaknesses
15. The Preliminary Information and the Focus Group data were grouped into themes wherever possible.
16. *Major Themes and Recurring Ideas* were derived from qualitative and quantitative information, highlighting points and comments indicated in more than one data set (Questionnaire quantitative data, Questionnaire qualitative data, Preliminary information, Focus Group notes)
17. *Possible Courses of Action* were derived from the specific comments in the qualitative information, and possible "next steps" following the major themes.