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Economic Development Practitioners Network (EDPN) Dialogue

**Business Retention & Expansion (BRE):
Learnings From the Regional Pilot Project**
October 2014

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Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute



Agenda

- **BRE Project Background**
- **Economic Development Capacity**
- **Themes Emerging from BRE Projects**
- **Action in Action: Successes & Opportunities**
- **Conditions/Considerations**



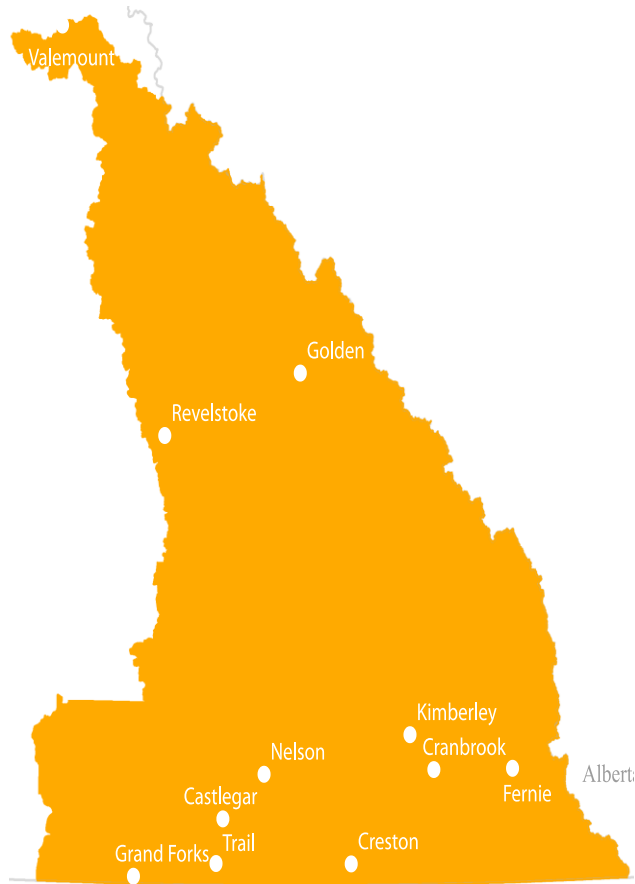
Business Retention & Expansion



- Over 600 businesses surveyed, with *interests in 42 communities
- 30+ partnerships (local government, Community Futures, Chambers of Commerce, Development Boards, provincial government, provincial economic development association, Columbia Basin Trust)
- Over 140 hours on development of implementation tools (regional partnership model, manuals, instructional videos)
- Over 700 hours of direct research support and over 150 hours of training
- 7 faculty and students involved
 - 5 faculty
 - 2 co-op students



BRE Project Background



ABOUT BRE?

- Action oriented;
- Community-based;
- Learn about:
 - **BUSINESS CLIMATE,**
 - **BUSINESS CONCERNS,**
 - **ED PRIORITIES**



Research Questions

1. What retention and expansion challenges and opportunities are the region's businesses experiencing?
2. How have economic development practitioners and business support providers responded to these needs and what challenges have they faced?
3. In what ways can locally collected data on businesses inform local and regional level planning?



Emerging Themes

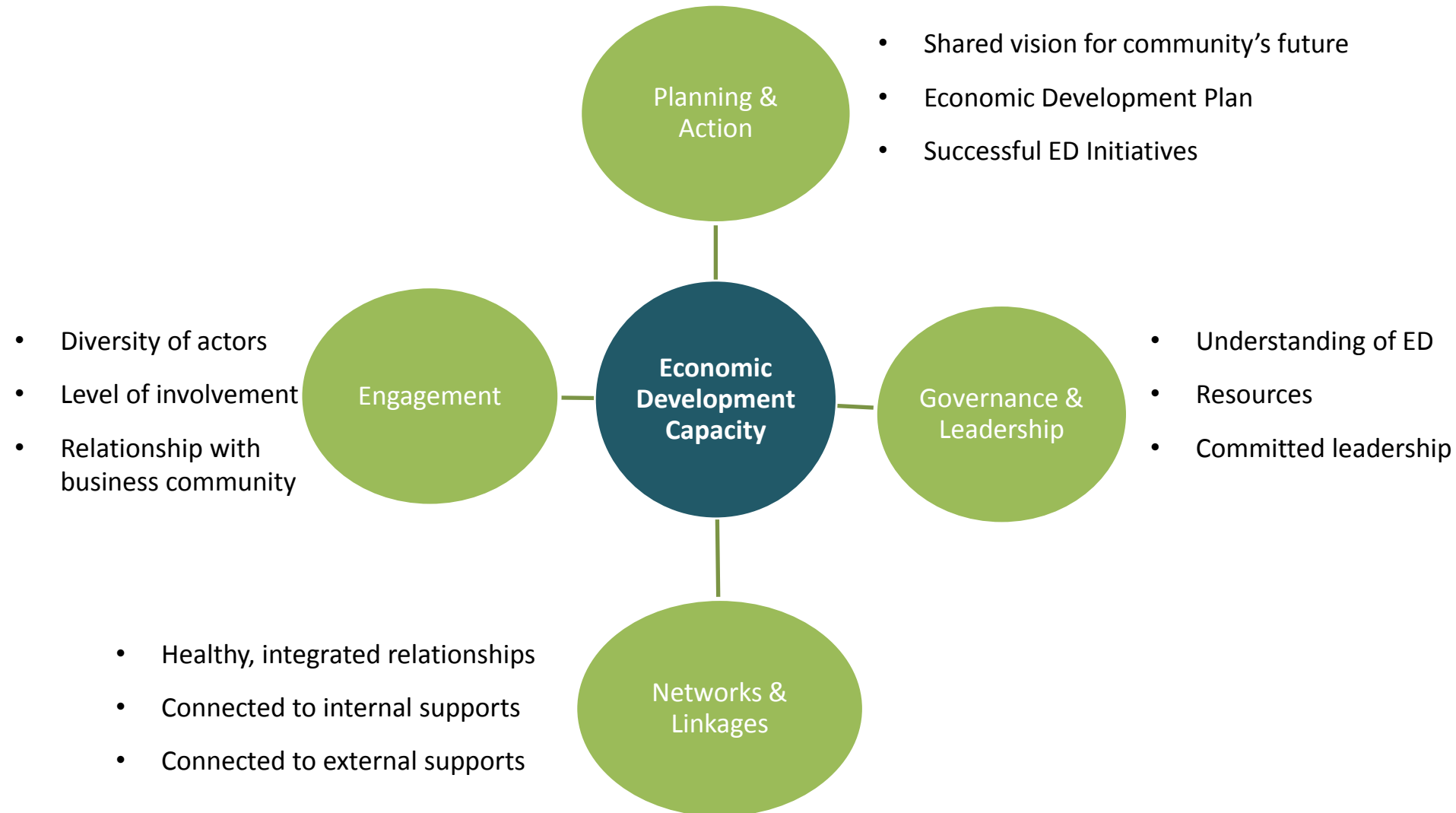
Capacity is *all important*

- Capacity to organize, plan and support ED
 - ❖ Human resources
 - ❖ Financial resources
 - ❖ Coordination
 - ❖ Motivation

“Every community should have an EDO to act as the focal point for these issues.” ~ BRE Lead



Understanding Economic Development Capacity

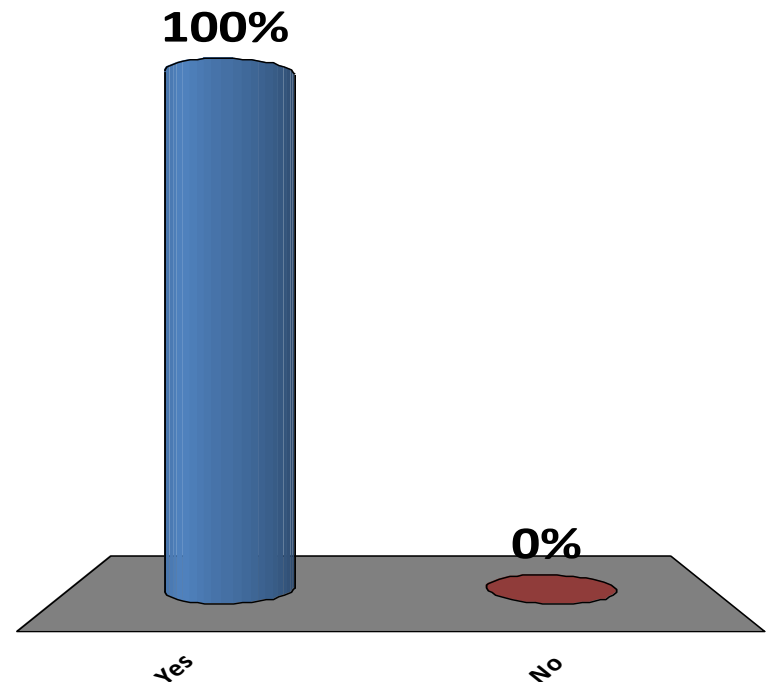




Informed Consent

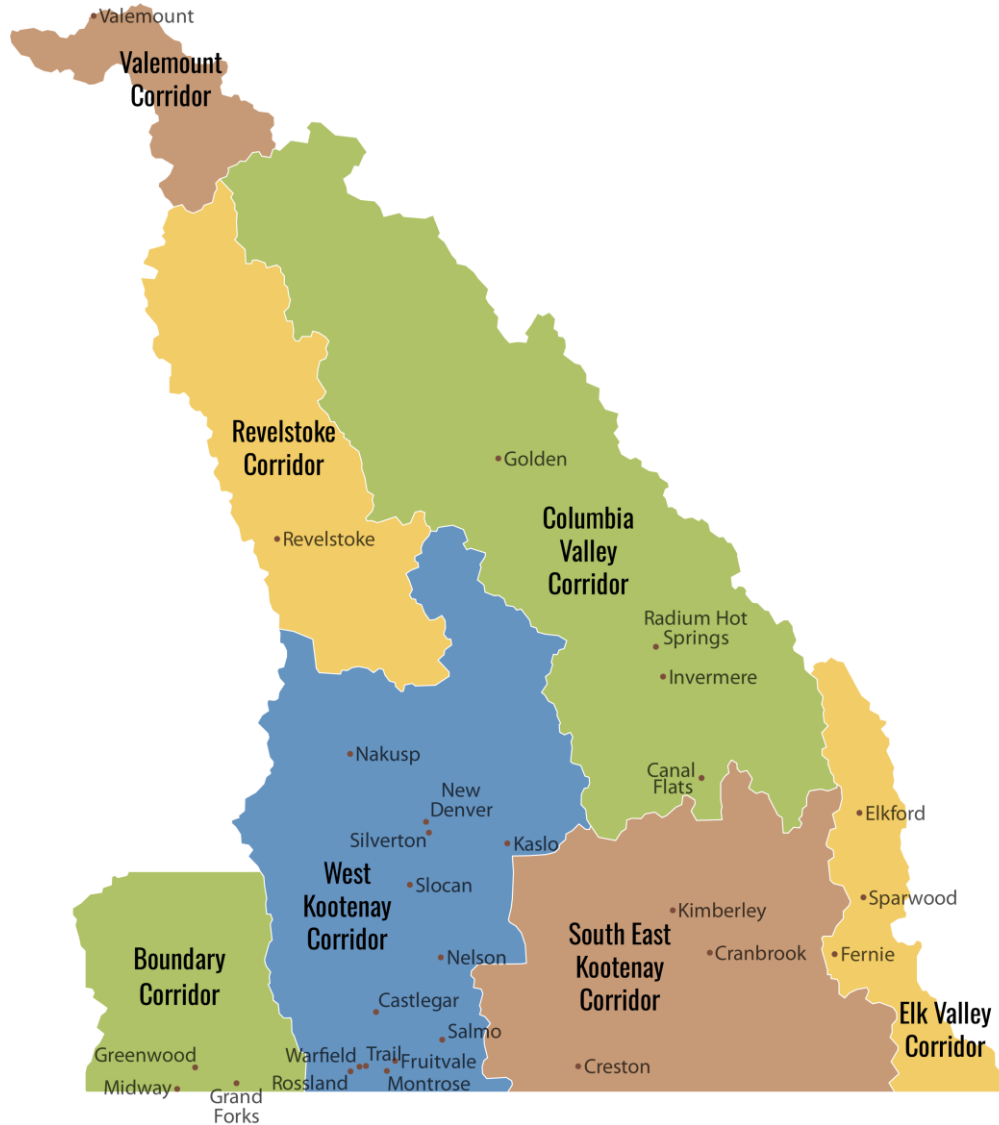
Your responses will remain anonymous. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw participation at any time. There are no risks. Do you agree?

- A. Yes
- B. No





Geographic Corridors: Where are you?

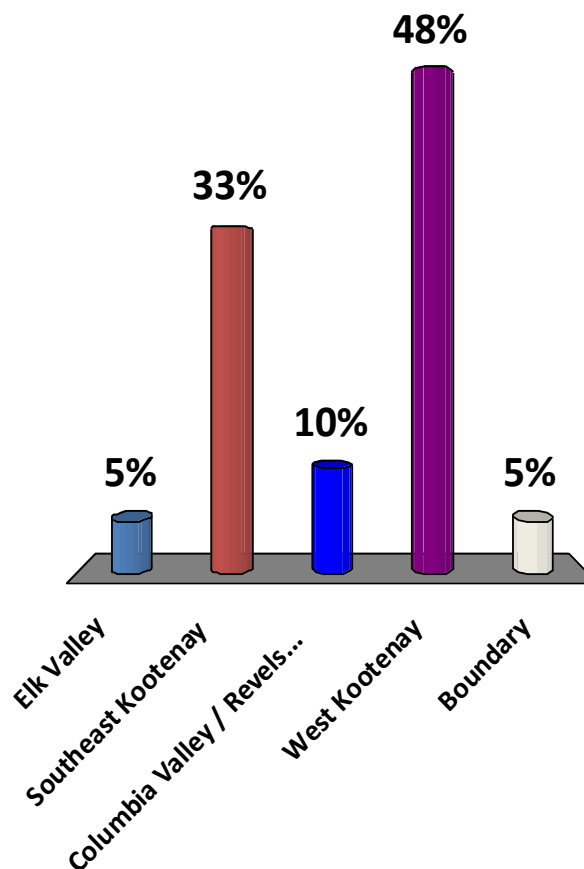




Capacity Diagnostic

Which corridor is home?

- A. Elk Valley
- B. Southeast Kootenay
- C. Columbia Valley /
Revelstoke /
Valemount
- D. West Kootenay
- E. Boundary

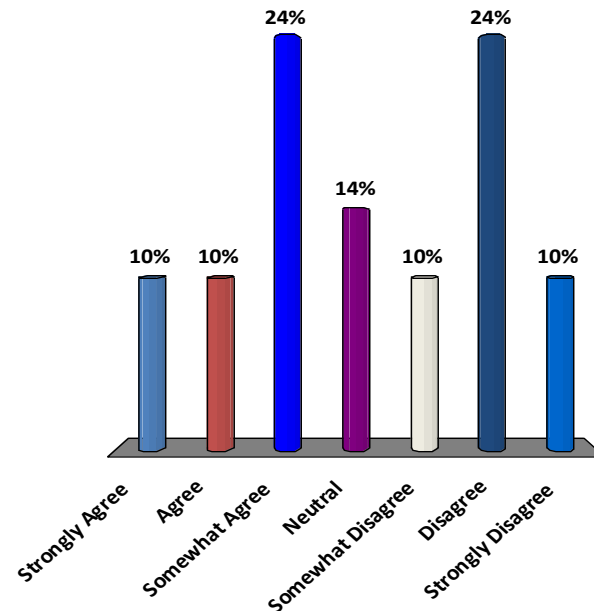




Capacity Diagnostic: Planning & Action

Our community has a shared vision for our long-term future?

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

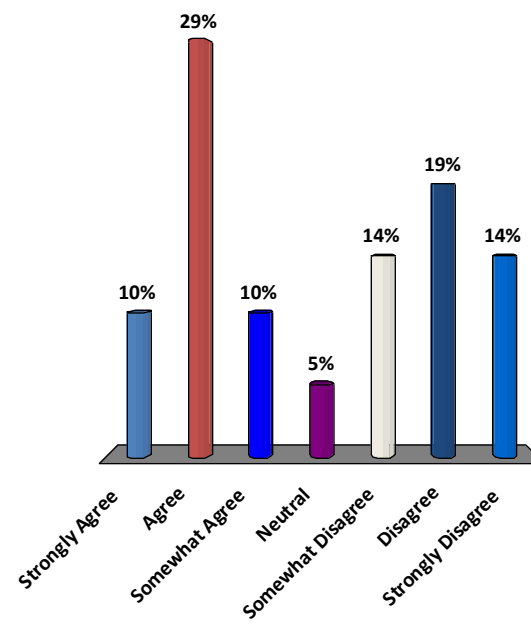




Capacity Diagnostic: Planning & Action

Our community has a current economic development plan and it is connected to broader planning and related action?

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

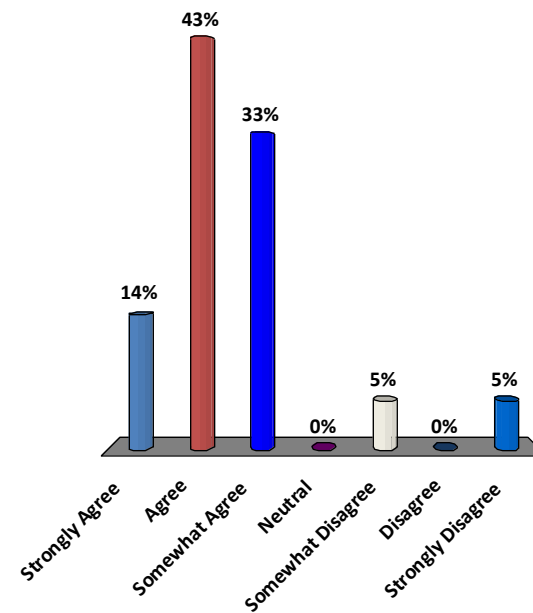




Capacity Diagnostic: Planning & Action

Economic development initiatives have been successful?

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

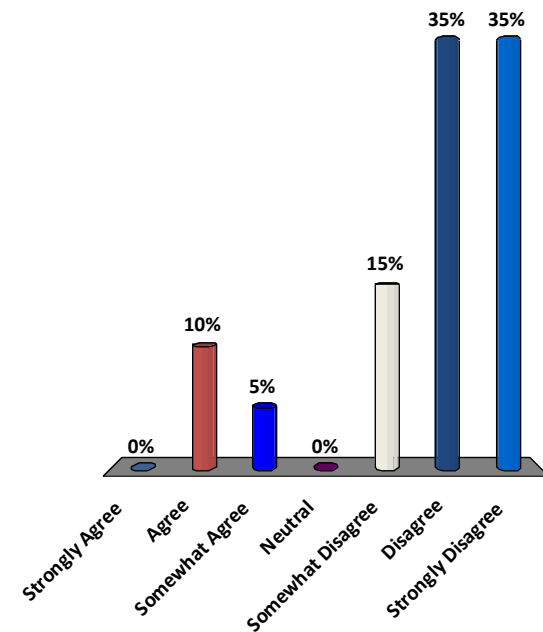




Capacity Diagnostic: Governance & Leadership

Elected officials understand how to participate and strategically lead efforts aimed at local and regional economic development.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

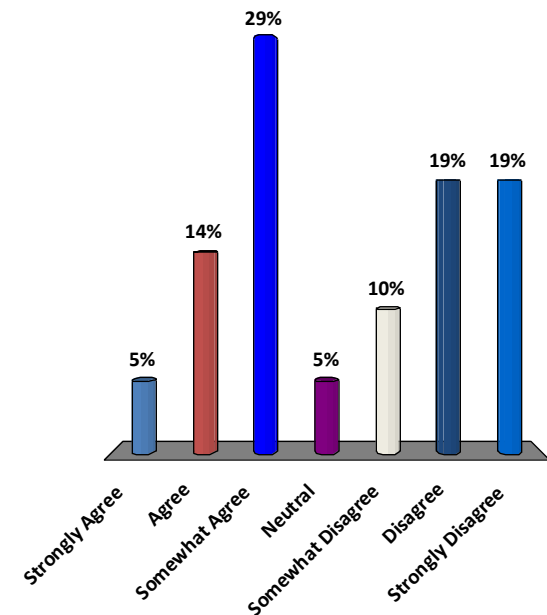




Capacity Diagnostic: Governance & Leadership

Local government staff understands how to participate and strategically lead efforts aimed at local and regional economic development.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

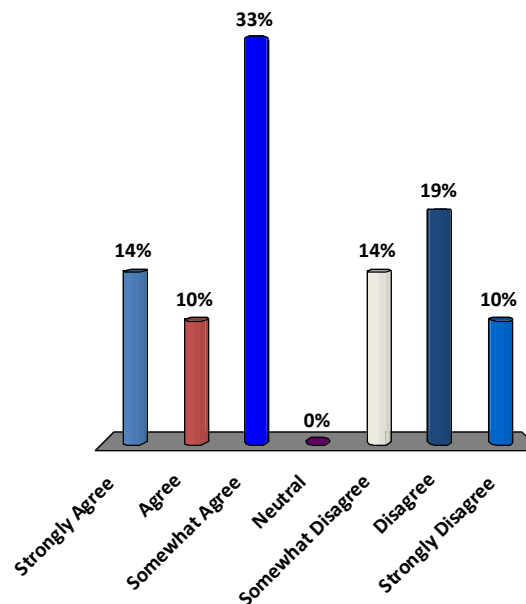




Capacity Diagnostic: Governance & Leadership

Human and financial resources are in place to advance economic development priorities.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

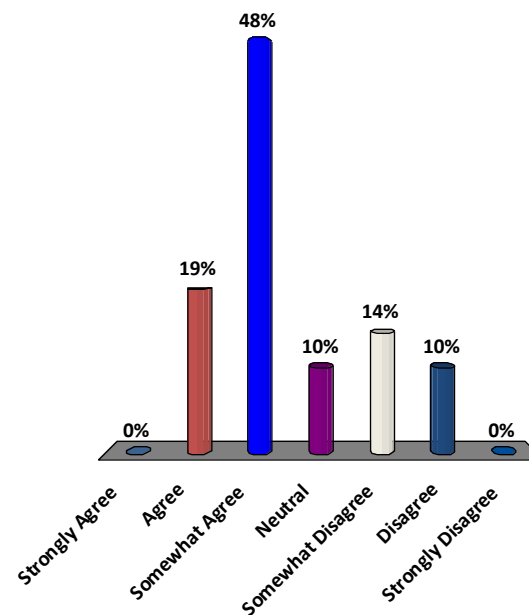




Capacity Diagnostic: Governance & Leadership

Our community leaders are committed to actively advancing economic development opportunities.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

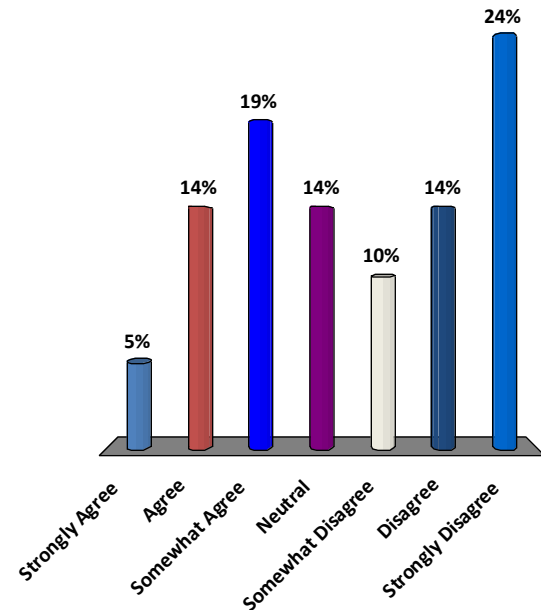




Capacity Diagnostic: Networks & Linkages

Economic, social, cultural and environmental groups work together on successful community projects.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

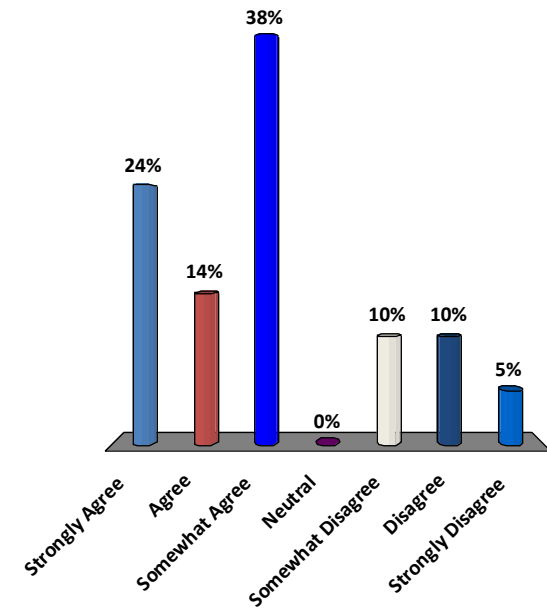




Capacity Diagnostic: Networks & Linkages

Our community is connected to the networks and supports available within our region.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

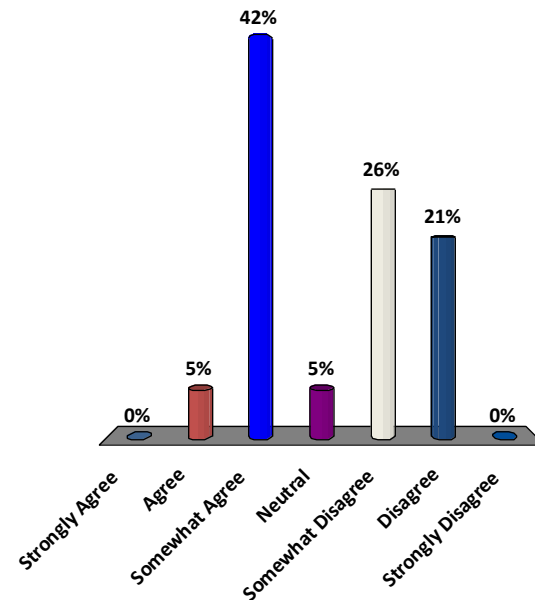




Capacity Diagnostic: Networks & Linkages

Our community is connected to the networks and supports external to our region

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

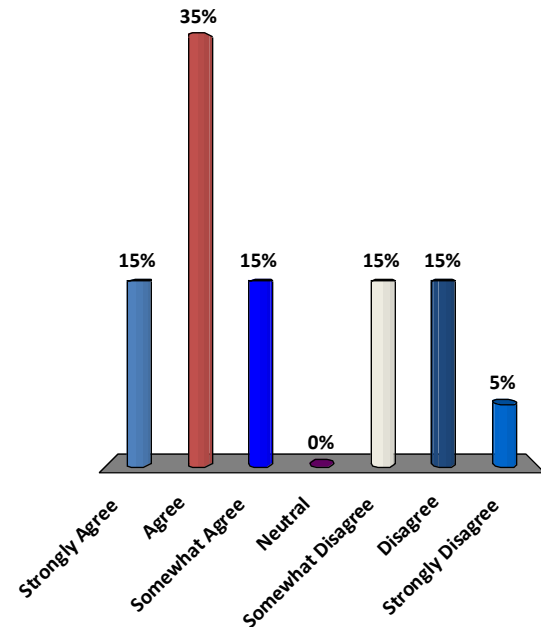




Capacity Diagnostic: Engagement

A diverse group of stakeholders are involved in economic development planning and action

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

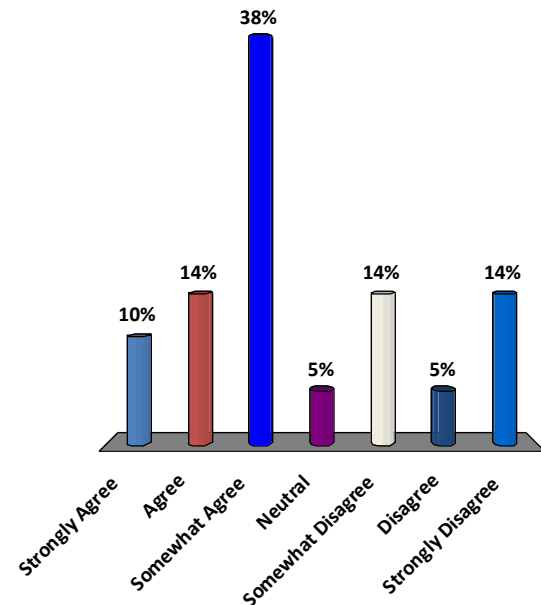




Capacity Diagnostic: Engagement

There is a high level of involvement by stakeholders in economic development.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree

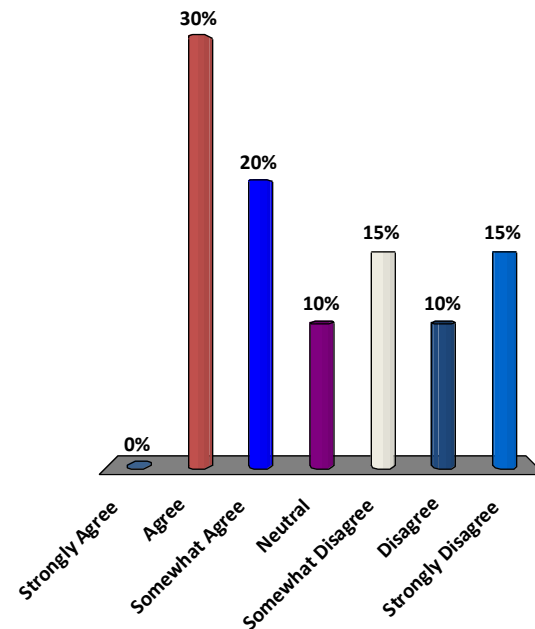




Capacity Diagnostic: Engagement

The business community is actively involved in informing economic development.

- A. Strongly Agree
- B. Agree
- C. Somewhat Agree
- D. Neutral
- E. Somewhat Disagree
- F. Disagree
- G. Strongly Disagree





Emerging Themes

Data *can* drive policy

- Communities ***are*** using BRE data to organize plans
- Communities ***are*** using data to prioritize
- Opportunity for elected officials to ask questions about their business community



Emerging Themes

Commitment by ALL is King

- Elected Officials => priorities
- Municipal staff => action
- Business => active participation



Emerging Themes

Leverage is possible **Collaboration!**

- Small communities
- Small budgets
- Small teams...

- But, together...

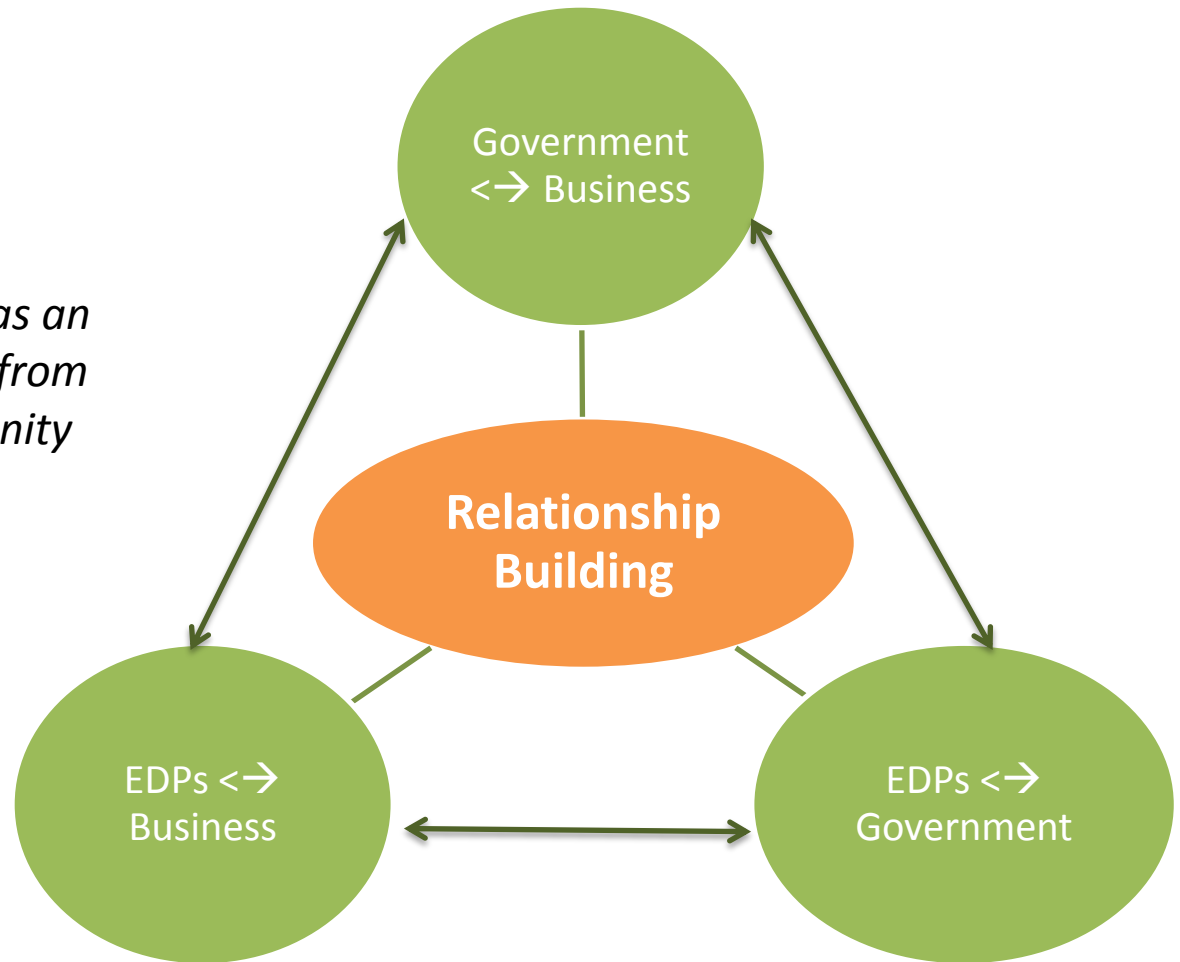


BRE in Action: Successes & Opportunities

BRE as a mechanism to increase communications across key ED stakeholders

Local government has an opportunity to hear from the business community

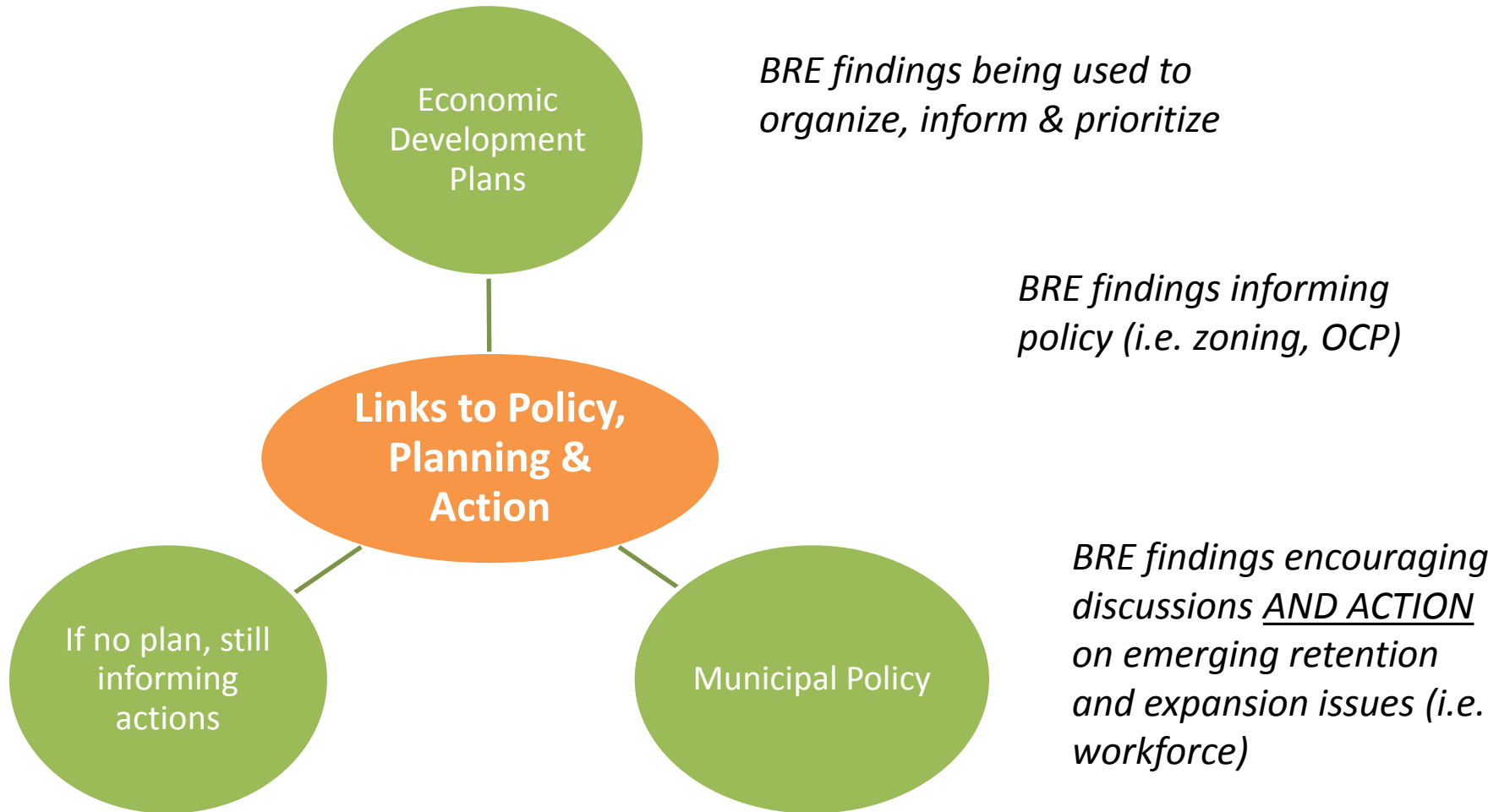
*Discussions between stakeholders expedite future actions
...this is the foundation*



Capacity Requirement: Low



BRE in Action: Successes & Opportunities



Capacity Requirement: Medium



BRE in Action: Successes & Opportunities

Helping to link what employers are needing with what is being provided

Businesses need stay engaged by accessing available skills training

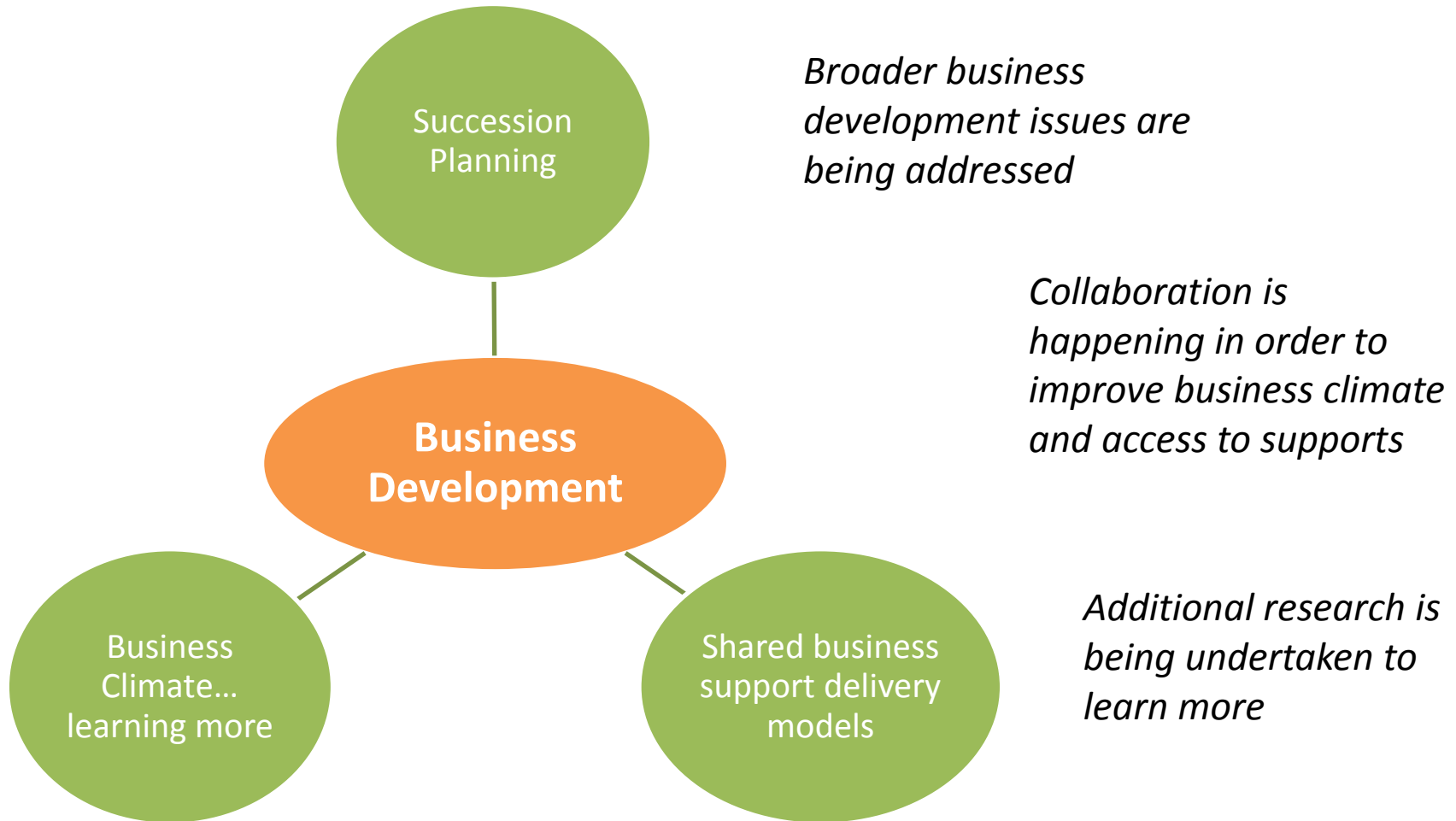
For those not taking advantage of training ... why aren't they?



Capacity Requirement: High



BRE in Action: Successes & Opportunities



Capacity Requirement: High



BRE in Action: Successes & Opportunities

Overall businesses are reporting positive climate and projections

Online communications are being used regularly to keep communities informed

Cultural and recreational amenities are important to existing and future businesses



Capacity Requirement: Low/Medium



Conditions / Considerations

- A dedicated EDP is an ingredient in ED capacity (elevates from low to medium/high), otherwise manage expectations on what is possible = opportunity for EDNP to support lower capacity communities?
- Not all actions require high capacity – building trust and opening up conversations have huge value
- Need for local government training identified, not all are convinced they have a role in economic development
- Limited follow-up with businesses = emerging opportunity for the EDNP?



RDI and BRE

- Continue with related applied research and support to BRE implementation, analysis and reporting efforts
- Release BRE data and BRE Briefs highlighting key regional / corridor findings
- What happens to BRE at the end of the pilot in March 2015?



The POWER of the BRE Database

Community / Corridor	Total Respondents	Plans to Expand (3yrs)	Land Constraints	%	Primary Sectors Constrained
Elk Valley	49	25	13	52%	manufacturing (3), construction (2), Other services (2)
Creston/ Cranbrook/Kimberley	101	60	14	23%	professional services (6), retail trade (3)
Columbia Valley					
Golden	108	54	16	30%	accommodation & food services (3), retail trade (3), transportation & warehousing (2), construction (2)
Revelstoke					
Nakusp	46	17	12	71%	retail trade (3), agriculture (3)
Slocan Valley	80	35	8	23%	retail trade (4)
Nelson	30	9	2	22%	professional services (1), manufacturing (1)
Castlegar					
Lower Columbia	150	52	8	15%	retail trade (3)
Boundary	59	26	4	15%	Other services (i.e. repair, maintenance)

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