



## **Media Release – For Immediate Release Wednesday, August 12, 2020**

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### **County of Grande Prairie Gains Key Insights into Local Business Priorities**

The County of Grande Prairie will meet with local businesses later this month to dive deeper into understanding business struggles in the region as well as opportunities for improvement. The interviews are a continuation of a comprehensive Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) study, conducted by the County's Economic Development office, that commenced at the end of the 2019.

The study aims to learn more about local businesses concerns, and to set priorities to address those needs. It also allows for the identification of individual potential expansion or retention opportunities, which staff is following up on business-by-business.

Last November and December, the County conducted a Business Retention & Expansion Survey (BR+E) survey with businesses to understand future plans, needs and level of satisfaction with doing business in the County. The random telephone survey was completed by 115 business owners and managers and included questions about levels of satisfaction with 16 different business factors.

The Triage BR+E methodology conducted by MDB Insight, the consultant working with the County to conduct the study, then identified businesses for in-person follow up interviews. These businesses include those with plans to expand, downsize, close, sell or relocate. The ongoing individual interviews allow economic development staff to assist with any expansion plans and identify strategies or actions to mitigate a business decision to potentially close or downsize whenever possible.

Findings from the interviews will be published later this year.

For detailed results of the County of Grande Prairie business study to date, visit [www.countygp.ab.ca/BusinessSurvey](http://www.countygp.ab.ca/BusinessSurvey).

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## Backgrounder

### **Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) Results from November and December 2019 survey:**

- The statistically significant survey demonstrated that overall, 98.3% of businesses were satisfied with the County as a place to do business with 45.2% very satisfied.
- The factors with the highest level of satisfaction were identified as the availability of appropriate work-related training, zoning, availability of property for purchase or lease, availability of adequate housing and development/building permit process.
- Skilled labour and issues related to internet and cellular phone reception were among the least satisfied factors of doing business in the County.
- Looking at the factors most likely to lead to an increase in overall business satisfaction, municipal property taxes, development/building permit process and zoning were identified.

The ongoing follow up with individual owners and managers will further help to identify how these priorities translate at the individual business level. An added feature of the project was the complete update and verification of the County's business directory to ensure that staff have the tools available to deliver communications to businesses effectively.

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