

KEY FINDINGS – Reynolds Economic Development Public & Business Input Surveys

Prepared by Community Futures Winnipeg River, July 2024

The RM of Reynolds conducted a **Public Survey and a Business Survey** to identify needs and opportunities for economic development in the local area. 46 respondents completed the public survey and 7 respondents completed the business survey to help identify where business development and attraction efforts should be made and how to strengthen the local economy. The online survey was administered by Community Futures Winnipeg River and was available on Survey Monkey from April 1 to June 10, 2024.

The results and ideas gathered from the survey are presented throughout the Summary Survey Reports prepared for each survey. This document is a list of key findings, or takeaways, from the survey input received. The key findings will be discussed and utilized in the development of the **RM of Reynolds Economic Development Strategy**.

Note: With low participation, we can not assume that the survey findings accurately reflect the thoughts and feelings of RM residents and businesses. The survey results still reflect good insight and ideas that should be considered.

Key Findings of Public Survey

- ❖ The top weaknesses of the local business/shopping community as a whole are listed below. Consider how to address the weaknesses.
 1. Variety of businesses
 2. Product selection
 3. Public awareness of existing businesses
 4. Public safety support (lighting, police presence, etc).

- ❖ 87% of respondents identified that they only purchase 1-25% of their products, supplies and services within the RM of Reynolds. Top 3 reasons for this are:
 1. Products/services are not available here – 80%
 2. Better selection elsewhere – 48%
 3. Higher local costs – 30%

- ❖ If available, people would purchase/support the following:
 1. Groceries/Food (answers included bakery, produce, dairy, specialty foods) – 21 responses
 2. Gas/Fuel – 12 responses
 3. Restaurants – 7 responses
 4. Clothing/Fabric – 5 responses
 5. Hardware Store/Lumber/Building Supplies – 5 responses

6. Houseware/Furniture/Cleaning Supplies – 5 responses
7. Liquor/Wine/Beer – 4 responses
8. Car Wash – 4 responses

❖ Infrastructure needs that support economic development were pretty evenly ranked, but are listed in order of responses received from most to least.

1. Sewer
2. Water & Commercial Land (tied)
3. Housing
4. Internet
5. Cell Service
6. Roads

❖ New infrastructure and assets desired are ranked as follows:

1. Roads/bridge improvements
2. Cell service
3. Grocery stores
4. Gas stations & fiber internet (tied)
5. Pineland Nursery development/greenhouses & medical/health services (tied)

❖ Top business sectors the public thought to explore for development opportunities are:

1. Accommodation and food services
2. Health care and social assistance
3. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
4. Retail trade
5. Automotive repairs or service

❖ Business types to target attraction efforts are:

1. Community services
2. Tourism/ecotourism
3. Grocery/food services & restaurants & small/local/home-based businesses (tied)
4. Gas/fuel & greenhouses (tied)
5. Hotel and farmers markets (tied)

❖ 52% of respondents support development, 22% are neutral, and 26% have fears or are against it. Development fears that were expressed and should be considered are:

- Fear of environmental impacts
- Minimal disturbance to nature
- Garbage dumping/littering increases
- Tax increases

❖ 73% of respondents would recommend that people move to the RM of Reynolds. Top area strengths identified can be used in attraction efforts and are:

1. Nature/Forest/Close to Wild Life/Wet Lands/Parkland Setting – 17 responses

2. Peaceful/Quiet/Tranquil/Serene Rural Area – 15 responses
3. Outdoor Recreation/Lake Life/Rivers/Trails/4 Seasons of Recreation (snowmobiling, fishing, ATV) – 13 responses
4. Small-Town Rural Community/Neighbourly/Friendly People/Good place to raise family/Not Overpopulated – 13 responses
5. Beauty of the Area/Natural Beauty – 11 responses
6. Affordable/Low Taxes and Housing – 10 responses
7. Remoteness/Privacy/Open Space – 7 responses

❖ When marketing for tourism, the types of people to target are:

- Nature lovers/environmentalists/those interested in wildlife, birds, native plants
- Outdoor recreation enthusiasts (i.e. ATV, dirt bike, snowmobile, campers, beach goers)
- Families with young children/youth
- History buffs
- More affluent persons

Things to Market/Promote:

- Outdoor activities such as geocaching, dog sledding, fishing, skating, quadding, snowmobiling, bird watching in the wetlands, etc.
- Walking, biking and cross-country ski trails
- Campgrounds and cabin sites
- Businesses and services in our town
- Reynolds ponds and Lafarge pits are a huge attraction
- Marketing the areas offerings/attractions
- Wildlife and nature walks
- Events
- Clubs

Key Findings of Business Survey

❖ The top weaknesses of the area in terms of conducting and attracting local businesses are listed below. Consider how to address the weaknesses.

1. Proximity/access to required supplies & courier/delivery services (tied at 83%)
2. Cost of construction, support from municipality for new/existing businesses & local leadership and collaboration for economic developmet (tied at 71%)

❖ All 7 respondents identified that the products and services they need are not available in the municipality. If available, businesses would purchase/support the following:

1. Groceries/Food 4 responses
2. Better courier/delivery services – 2 responses

- ❖ Most business comes from outside the RM, yet 4 of 7 businesses responded that they have no online sales. This is an opportunity to explore. It also shows that businesses are capturing the visitor market.

- ❖ Things identified that would help run, expand or make businesses more viable were:
 - Promotion, referrals from local RM
 - Promotion in local tourism guides, newspapers and on RM website (website is not current)
 - Labour skills
 - Better tech skills training
 - Public areas like trails or parks
 - Security/law enforcement
 - Better/more consistent power supply
 - Cell service
 - Internet service
 - Not implementing any further tax costs to businesses as we already pay higher taxes, and also pay for our own garbage and septic removal.

- ❖ Top business sectors that businesses thought to explore for development opportunities are:
 1. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
 2. Accommodation and food services
 3. Construction
 4. Retail trade
 5. Utilities

- ❖ Business respondents noted no fears or lack of support for future business development.

- ❖ Ideas for local efforts to increase spending in the area included:
 - Promote Reynolds Canada wide as a great place to live and play.
 - Keep local business
 - Community activities
 - Local markets and events to promote the area
 - Funds to market local events
 - Clean up fire sites (McMunn, Rennie)
 - Forcing yard clean up
 - Promotion by Chamber of Commerce for all businesses
 - RM help with applications for signage permits on highway
 - Access to affordable highway signage
 - Local repair business that stocks farm parts
 - Sell off government land along the TransCanada highway, Dawson Road and 308 as affordable land, perhaps to new immigrants.