

Community Business Readiness Assessment Land Development Focus

The Community Business Assessment Checklist tool can be used to undertake a quick assessment of the community’s capacity to be “business ready”. Business ready refers to the community’s ability to explore, attract, respond and successfully secure the business investment best suited to the location. The checklist has been organized into economic development functions that support a community to be “business ready”. This specific checklist has been modified to focus on land development readiness questions outlined in the “community business readiness assessment checklist.

As the checklist is a guide, it is important to consider the community size and staff capacity when reviewing the functions and determining areas for improvement.

Community Business Readiness Assessment Checklist Update – Contact Details and Schedule	
Name	
Title	
Date Completed	
Next Scheduled Checklist Review (recommended to review and update annually)	

A. Business-Friendly Land Use Planning

Having a business-friendly land use planning process in place provides investors with certainty and is an important element of being “business ready”. In the context of the land use planning process, the term business-friendly refers to an approval process that is clearly defined and adheres to a reasonable timeframe for processing applications. This provides investors with some degree of predictability regarding the time and costs involved in obtaining the necessary approvals.

Business-Friendly Land Use Planning	Yes	No
1. Does your community have an approved official community plan?		
2. Does your official community plan have one general designation for each of the basic land use categories such as residential, commercial, heavy and light industrial, institutional, open space, rural and environmentally sensitive?		
3. Does your community have policy intentions, regulations and permitted uses in each land use designation?		
4. Does your community (or regional economic organization) have an effective information system that can be used to provide the official community plan and zoning information to prospective investors/developers, e.g. neighbourhood maps or other street, aerial maps that are available on the community’s website?		
5. Are policies and/or designations in the official community plan general enough so that an amendment is not required to accommodate most conventional development proposals in the community?		
6. Is the zoning bylaw flexible enough to allow desired development in the community?		
7. Are a wide range of businesses permitted, as well as outdoor signage/advertising and on-site customer parking?		
8. Are the official community plan and zoning bylaws kept up-to-date, e.g. updated every five years?		
9. Are the official community plan and zoning bylaws available on your community’s website?		
10. Does your Official Community Plan support Economic Development?		
11. Does your community have a designated individual to guide proponents through the approval process?		
12. Does your community have a flow chart or itemized list outlining the steps in the land use planning and development approvals processes, as well as approximate time required to complete each step?		
13. Does your community have information on how long it takes for a typical planning application/proposal in your community to be approved?		
14. Does your community website provide a list of all the application fees and other associated charges or levies that an applicant/developer would be required to pay for the processing of a planning/development proposal?		
15. In cases where special technical studies are required (e.g. noise impacts or hydro geologic assessments), is the community able to advise prospective applicants and		

Business-Friendly Land Use Planning	Yes	No
developers about the nature, scope, timing and potential cost of such studies in advance?		
16. In cases where planning and development approvals are not handled locally, do you know which level of government has the responsibility and who your contact is?		
17. Do you know if there are land use planning or economic development consultants who are familiar with and have worked on development projects in your community?		
18. When a development application has been successfully completed, is there a review of the process with the proponent as part of the community's quality control or customer services program?		
Total Points (1 for Yes and 0 for No)		

Scores greater than or equal to 13 out of 18 in this category suggest that your community has business-friendly land use planning processes.

B. Commercial & Industrial Land Inventory

Having existing commercial and industrial lands available for potential new development is an important consideration in business attraction.

Commercial & Industrial Land Inventory	Yes	No
1. Does your community have an overall commercial/industrial land inventory?		
2. Is the inventory in digital format, e.g. electronic database or PDF file?		
3. Does the inventory include both publicly and privately owned properties?		
4. Is there an area in the community that is planned to be zoned or already zoned for the purpose of industrial development?		
5. Does the inventory include maps or pictures for added visualization?		
6. Is the inventory updated regularly?		
7. Does the inventory provide potential investors/developers with relevant development information about each property including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowable uses • Lease or purchase price • Location • Size, indicating max and min • Zoning (type and category) • Taxes • Water and sewer provider and main size • Electricity provider and capacity • Information regarding site contamination • Telecommunications provider • Access to transportation network • Owner or contact name 		
Total Points (1 for Yes and 0 for No)		

Scores greater than or equal to 5 out of 7 in this category suggest that your community is well positioned to share information about available industrial and commercial lands that are suitable for investment.

C. Designated Community Contact(s) for Prospective Investors & Site Selection Consultants

Having designated points of contact for prospective investors and site selection consultants is essential to successfully attract and secure business investment.

Designated Community Contact(s) for Prospective Investors & Site Selection Consultants	Yes	No
1. Does the community have a person designated as the main contact on economic development-related matters for outside enquiries?		
2. Is the main community economic development contact person knowledgeable about the official community plan and how these policies and land use designations may affect proposed development in your community?		
3. Is the main community economic development contact person knowledgeable about neighbouring communities' official community plans and how these policies and land use designations may affect proposed developments in your community?		
4. Is it easy for an outsider to reach the main economic development contact?		
5. Does the main contact person have an "elevator speech" ready, which highlights the community and describes why a business should locate there?		
6. Does the contact have quick and easy access to technical information (either on the website or an electronic file) related to available industrial/commercial sites in the community?		
7. Is the contact familiar with the land use planning, development approvals, and building permit processes in your community?		
8. Does the contact person have an up-to-date copy of the local official community plan and zoning bylaw and know Council's policies on new development proposals?		
9. Does the contact person have a process for tracking and understanding the reasons why prospective businesses located elsewhere?		
10. Does the community have a person designated as the key contact on land use planning and development matters?		
11. If the contact is a planning professional, is he/she able to respond to economic development and business enquiries, for example industrial site availability and workforce data, from a potential investor?		
Total Points (1 for Yes and 0 for No)		

Scores greater than or equal to 8 out of 11 in this category suggest that your community contact is to respond to investor inquiries.

D. Investment Marketing

Having a sound marketing approach is critical to connecting and attracting desired investment.

Investment Marketing	Yes	No
1. Does your community have an investment marketing team?		
2. Has your community prepared an investment marketing plan that identifies goals and target markets/industries?		
3. Has the inventory of commercial/industrial land been compiled into a marketing package/profile?		
4. Do community representatives participate in trade shows/missions?		
5. Does your community advertise local economic development opportunities in domestic/international trade magazines and journals?		
6. Does your community maintain stakeholder communication channels, e.g. business newsletter, LinkedIn account?		
7. Have you contacted a real estate/industrial commercial investment (ICI) broker to discuss potential marketing techniques?		
8. Is information aimed at site selection consultants posted on your website, e.g. community profile, site selector profile, land inventory?		
9. Is your site selector profile accurate, up-to-date and formatted according to the data standards set by the International Economic Development Council?		
10. Is your community profile downloadable from your website in a single package?		
11. Is your community profile on BritishColumbia.ca accurate and up-to-date?		
12. Does your community maintain a website with links to other related sites, e.g. BritishColumbia.ca, the B.C. Economic Atlas, commercial realtors?		
13. Does your community use SpaceList.ca to market available industrial and commercial properties on BritishColumbia.ca?		
14. Does the community work co-operatively with neighbouring communities to pool resources and information and to jointly market industrial sites for the region?		
Total Points (1 for Yes and 0 for No)		

Scores greater than or equal to 10 out of 14 in this category suggest that your community is ready to effectively promote and market land development opportunities to the business community.

Assessment Scorecard		
Economic Development Functions	Community Score	Target Score to be Business Ready
	Total Score	
A. Business-Friendly Land Use Planning		13
	18	
B. Industrial & Commercial Inventory		5
	7	
C. Designated Community Contact Person(s) for Prospective Investors & Site Selection Consultants		8
	11	
D. Investment Marketing		10
	14	
	Totals	36
	50	

If your total overall is 37 or higher, your community is business ready with respect to land development opportunities. Otherwise, you have now identified areas for improvement to further support your community economic development efforts in land development and marketing.