

Retail and Commercial, and Community Service Opportunities in Tumbler Ridge, BC

Commercial Investment Analysis

In April of 2008, the District of Tumbler Ridge completed a Commercial Investment Strategy that, in part, set out to analyze the community's business environment and identify general categories of local investment opportunity. This involved the examination of factors that typically influence commercial viabilities at a local level, such as:

- Unique local market and trade area characteristics;
- Changes in population size and composition;
- Past, current, and projected sources and amounts of basic income.

Research information sources included federal and provincial census data for Tumbler Ridge and the province of British Columbia, as a whole. A local survey was also carried out, which interviewed a range of local businesses entities. This survey revealed supply/purchase practices and issues, overall business experience, and opinions.

The final result was the identification of the following opportunities for retail/commercial service expansion:

- Building construction and maintenance trade work that tends to be used on an ongoing basis after initial construction, for example in the following areas;
 - Renovations and redecoration
 - Regular maintenance and small repairs and replacements, e.g., annual commercial furnace inspections and property upkeep
- Professional or semi-professional services, such as;
 - Specialized financial services
 - General management consulting
 - Writing
 - Computer servicing and system installation and repair

Other categories of opportunity for completely new enterprises are likely to arise as the population increases over time. Meanwhile, the types of goods and services they would involve may be in enough current demand to enable existing local businesses to successfully expand their range and volume of delivered products or services. Or, if they haven't been picked up by existing businesses, then they are fair game for newcomers.

These categories include:

- Building trade work that tends to be used at initial construction and occasionally thereafter, when normal wear and tear call for replacement after periods of several to many years;
- Family and women's clothing;

- Direct sales distributorships (usually home-based);
- Specialized legal, technical, and management services, e.g., law, notary, accounting, engineering, medicine, dentistry, veterinary, tutoring;
- Personal services, e.g., interior design, landscaping, photography, amusement, auto and residential upkeep, and;
- Restaurants offering a product and experience that differ from what already exists.

From the Horse's Mouth

Being in a small town, it doesn't take long to run into someone who will freely share what they would like to see made available locally. It usually follows the statement, "I'm tired of going out of town for..."

From what we've gathered anecdotally, here are some of the more popular requests from the general public:

- Auto repair
- Bakery
- Butcher
- Chartered bank
- Chiropractor
- Clothing (men's, women's and children's)
- Deli
- Dental services
- Indoor Entertainment (I.e. bowling, billiards)

Note:

Prospective investors are strongly advised to determine for themselves whether local market demand and available supplies of wholesale goods, labour, and commercial operating space are adequate to support the particular retail enterprises they are contemplating. This summary of opportunities cannot replace investors' diligence in confirming in detail whether and when a real opportunity exists for a specific enterprise. It can only indicate general business categories where viability is likely – whether immediately or in the reasonably predictable future.