



Town of Bruderheim Economic Development Strategy Report

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Executive Summary

The *Town of Bruderheim Economic Development Feasibility Study* provides a forward-looking assessment of the community's opportunities, challenges, and potential pathways for sustainable growth. As a small but strategically located municipality within Alberta's Industrial Heartland, Bruderheim has both significant competitive advantages and clear barriers to overcome.

Purpose of the Study

This study was undertaken to evaluate Bruderheim's economic position, identify gaps in services and infrastructure, and chart a roadmap for attracting investment, diversifying the economy, and strengthening community resilience. The report combines quantitative data, stakeholder engagement, and comparative benchmarking with other municipalities.

Key Findings

- **Demographics & Workforce:** Bruderheim's population of ~1,400 has grown modestly over the last five years, with a strong base of working-age residents but a relatively high unemployment rate compared to the province.
- **Industrial Advantage:** Proximity to more than \$40 billion in capital investment within Alberta's Industrial Heartland positions Bruderheim as an attractive hub for support services, logistics, and housing for industrial workers.
- **Community Strengths:** Affordable housing, a high rate of home ownership, and strong community spirit create a family-friendly environment.
- **Gaps & Challenges:** A small population base, limited amenities, dependence on the energy sector, and aging infrastructure constrain growth and increase risk exposure.
- **Commercial Leakage:** Significant retail and service spending flows to Fort Saskatchewan, Lamont, and Edmonton, underscoring the need to strengthen local offerings in groceries, dining, banking, health, and childcare.

Opportunities

- **Diversification:** Attraction of clean energy, hydrogen, logistics, and value-added manufacturing.
- **Community & Lifestyle Development:** Expanding retail, services, and amenities to reduce leakage and improve quality of life.
- **Regional Partnerships:** Leveraging membership in the Alberta Industrial Heartland Association to market investment opportunities and share infrastructure solutions.
- **Digital & Infrastructure Readiness:** Upgrading broadband and municipal servicing to support both residents and businesses.

Strategic Recommendations

The study recommends:

1. **Positioning Bruderheim as “Open for Business”** by marketing its industrial location and affordable lifestyle.
2. **Targeted Commercial Attraction** to fill service gaps, with incentives for anchor tenants in grocery, pharmacy, and family dining.
3. **Support for Local Entrepreneurs** through training, small business workshops, and “Shop Local” campaigns.
4. **Regional Collaboration** to align with neighbouring communities and capitalize on shared strengths.
5. **Phased Implementation** of priority projects, supported by clear performance metrics and periodic reviews.

Path Forward

Bruderheim’s economic future will depend on balancing its role within Alberta’s Industrial Heartland with efforts to strengthen local services, diversify beyond energy, and create a resilient, attractive community. This feasibility study provides the framework for achieving that balance and sets the stage for informed decision-making by Council, businesses, and residents alike.

Strategic Framework

The *Bruderheim Economic Development Feasibility Study* is guided by a framework that connects the town's vision, guiding principles, and strategic pillars. This framework bridges the community profile, engagement findings, and commercial analysis with clear priorities for future action.

Vision

Bruderheim will build on its strong industrial location, small-town character, and community spirit to become a resilient, diversified, and welcoming hub for residents, businesses, and industry partners within Alberta's Industrial Heartland.

Guiding Principles

1. **Community-Centered Growth** – Economic development initiatives must enhance the quality of life for residents and support a vibrant, safe, and inclusive community.
2. **Regional Collaboration** – Strengthen partnerships with Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association, neighbouring municipalities, and regional employers.
3. **Sustainability & Resilience** – Promote economic diversification, environmental stewardship, and long-term financial sustainability.
4. **Investment Readiness** – Ensure Bruderheim has the infrastructure, policies, and services in place to attract and retain investment.
5. **Entrepreneurship & Innovation** – Support local businesses, foster new ventures, and encourage innovative practices in key sectors.

Strategic Pillars

To achieve the vision, four strategic pillars have been identified:

1. Diversify and Strengthen the Economy

- Attract new industries such as clean energy, logistics, and value-added manufacturing.
- Expand the commercial base to reduce leakage and increase local amenities.

2. Enhance Quality of Life and Community Vitality

- Improve access to retail, services, and recreational amenities.
- Promote cultural and tourism opportunities tied to Bruderheim's heritage and regional attractions.

3. Build Regional Partnerships and Collaboration

- Leverage membership in Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association for marketing and joint projects.
- Develop intermunicipal partnerships for shared infrastructure and economic development initiatives.

4. Invest in Infrastructure and Readiness

- Upgrade digital connectivity and essential servicing to support future growth.
- Position available land and zoning as competitive assets for prospective investors.

Methodology Overview

The development of the *Bruderheim Economic Development Feasibility Study* followed a structured, multi-phase methodology designed to ensure a comprehensive, evidence-based, and community-driven approach. The process integrated quantitative research, stakeholder engagement, and strategic analysis to create recommendations grounded in both local realities and broader economic trends.

Phase 1: Project Initiation and Scoping

- Defined project objectives, scope, and deliverables with the Town of Bruderheim.
- Established a work plan and guiding framework to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the process.
- Identified key stakeholders, community partners, and regional comparators for inclusion in the study.

Phase 2: Current State and Community Profile

- Compiled demographic, housing, labour force, and income data from Statistics Canada, the Alberta Regional Dashboard, and Alberta HUB Investment Profiles.
- Documented Bruderheim's industrial and infrastructure assets within Alberta's Industrial Heartland.
- Benchmarked Bruderheim against similar-sized communities to assess relative strengths and gaps.

Phase 3: Stakeholder and Community Engagement

- Designed an engagement plan tailored to Bruderheim, including interviews, surveys, focus groups, and public sessions.
- Collected qualitative insights from municipal leadership, businesses, residents, educational partners, and community organizations.
- Used these inputs to inform the SWOT analysis and identify opportunities for diversification, resilience, and growth.

Phase 4: Market and Commercial Gap Analysis

- Conducted a retail and service leakage study to identify areas where resident spending flows to surrounding communities.
- Analyzed commercial land availability, infrastructure readiness, and real estate conditions.
- Evaluated market opportunities in retail, services, and amenities that could strengthen economic resiliency.

Phase 5: Strategic Analysis and Scenario Development

- Integrated findings from data analysis and engagement to define Bruderheim's economic strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.
- Identified priority sectors and diversification opportunities aligned with regional and provincial economic trends.
- Developed scenarios for investment readiness, including infrastructure, workforce, and policy considerations.

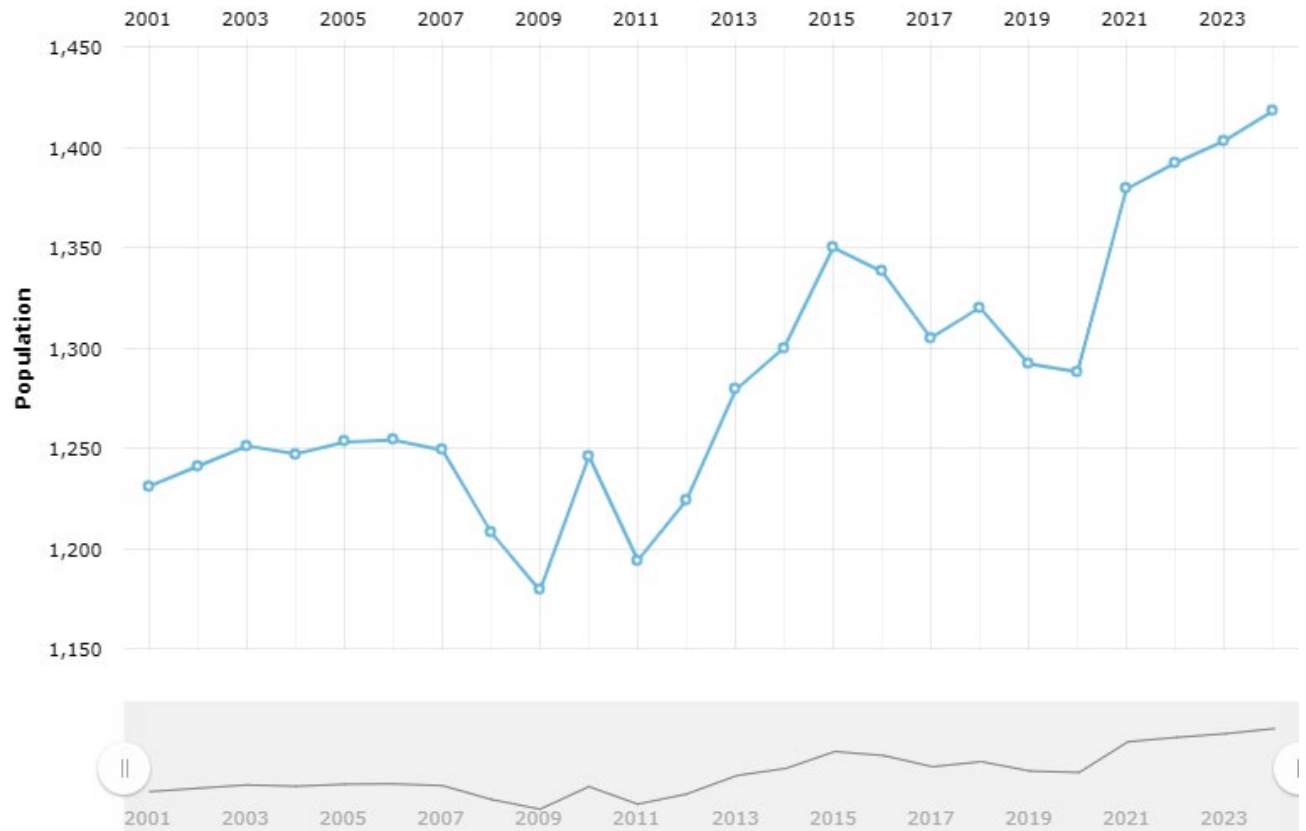
Phase 6: Recommendations and Action Framework

- Translated findings into clear strategic recommendations supported by best practices from other municipalities.
- Outlined implementation considerations, including potential partnerships, phasing, and capacity requirements.
- Proposed evaluation metrics to monitor progress and measure impact over time.

Bruderheim Demographic Overview

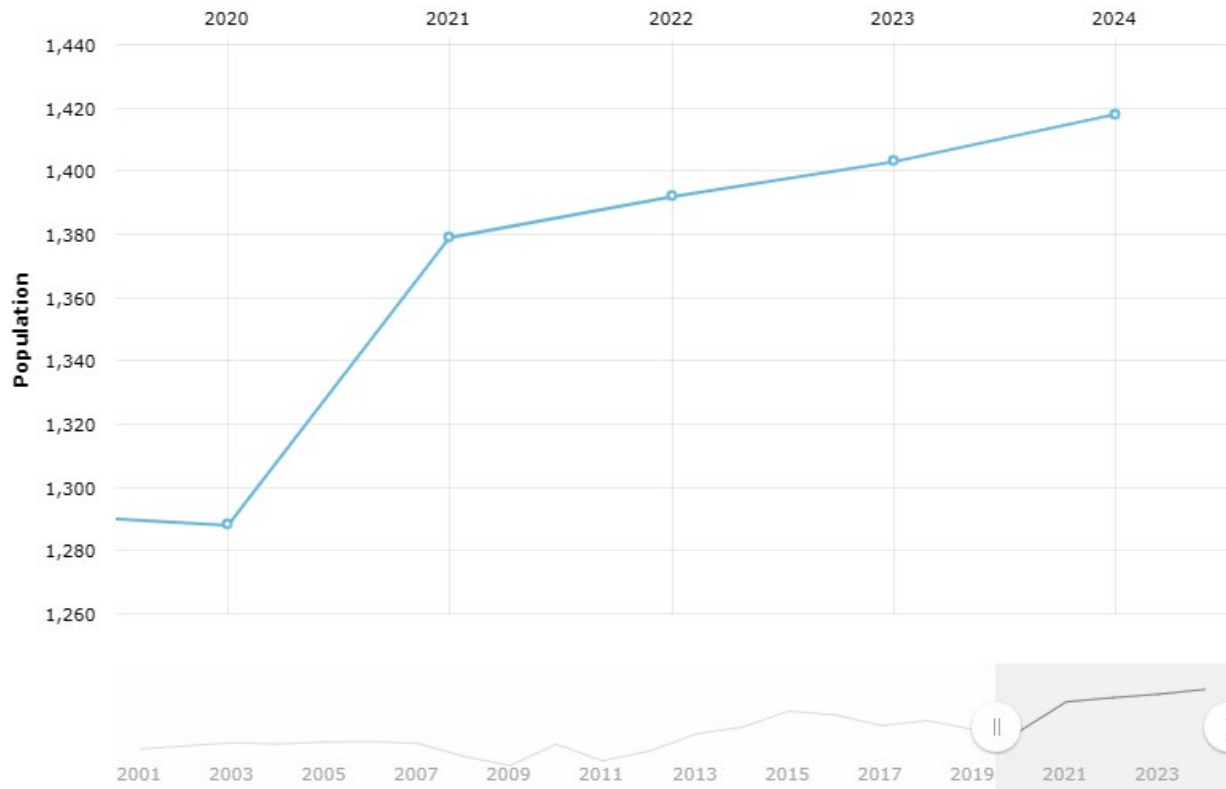
- **Population:** 1,418 (2024 estimate), reflecting a 1.07% annual growth and a 9.75% increase over five years.¹

Bruderheim Population 2001 - 2024



Source: [Government of Alberta](#)

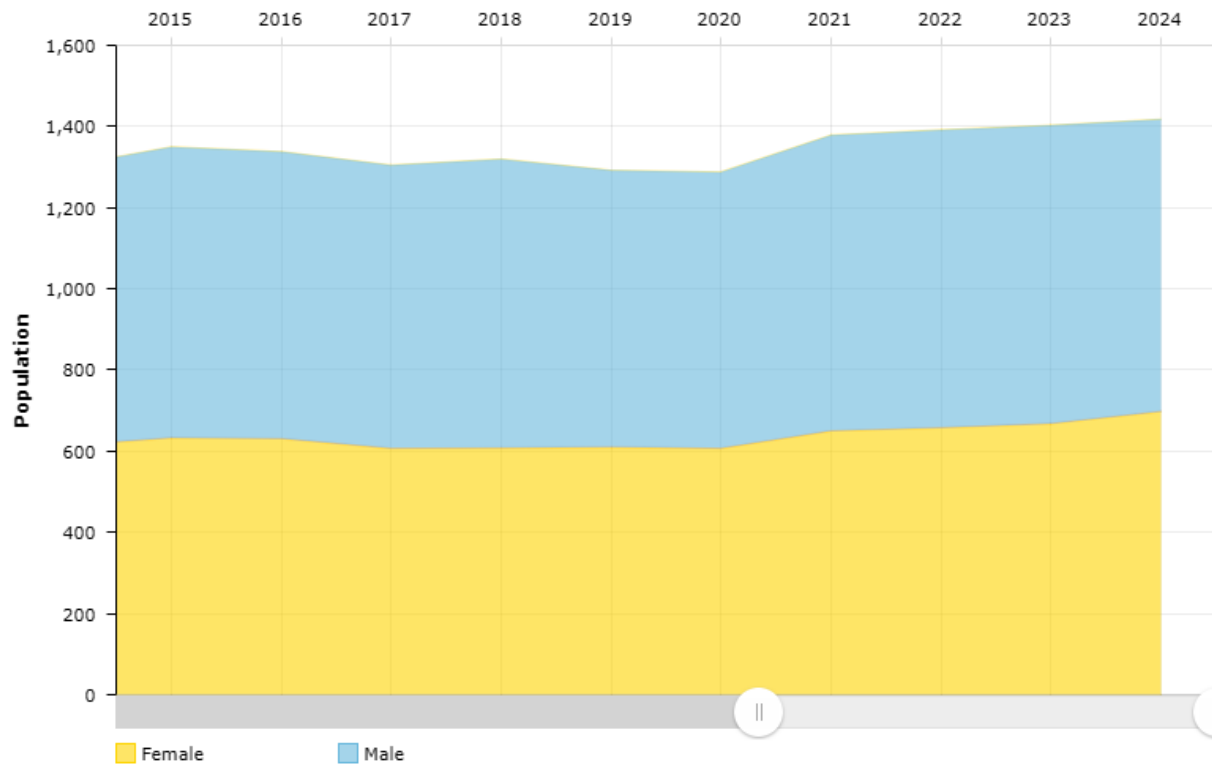
Bruderheim Population 2020 - 2024



Source: [Government of Alberta](#)

- **Median Age (2021):** 37.6 years ²
- **Gender Distribution (2024):** 50.7% male, 49.2% female ¹

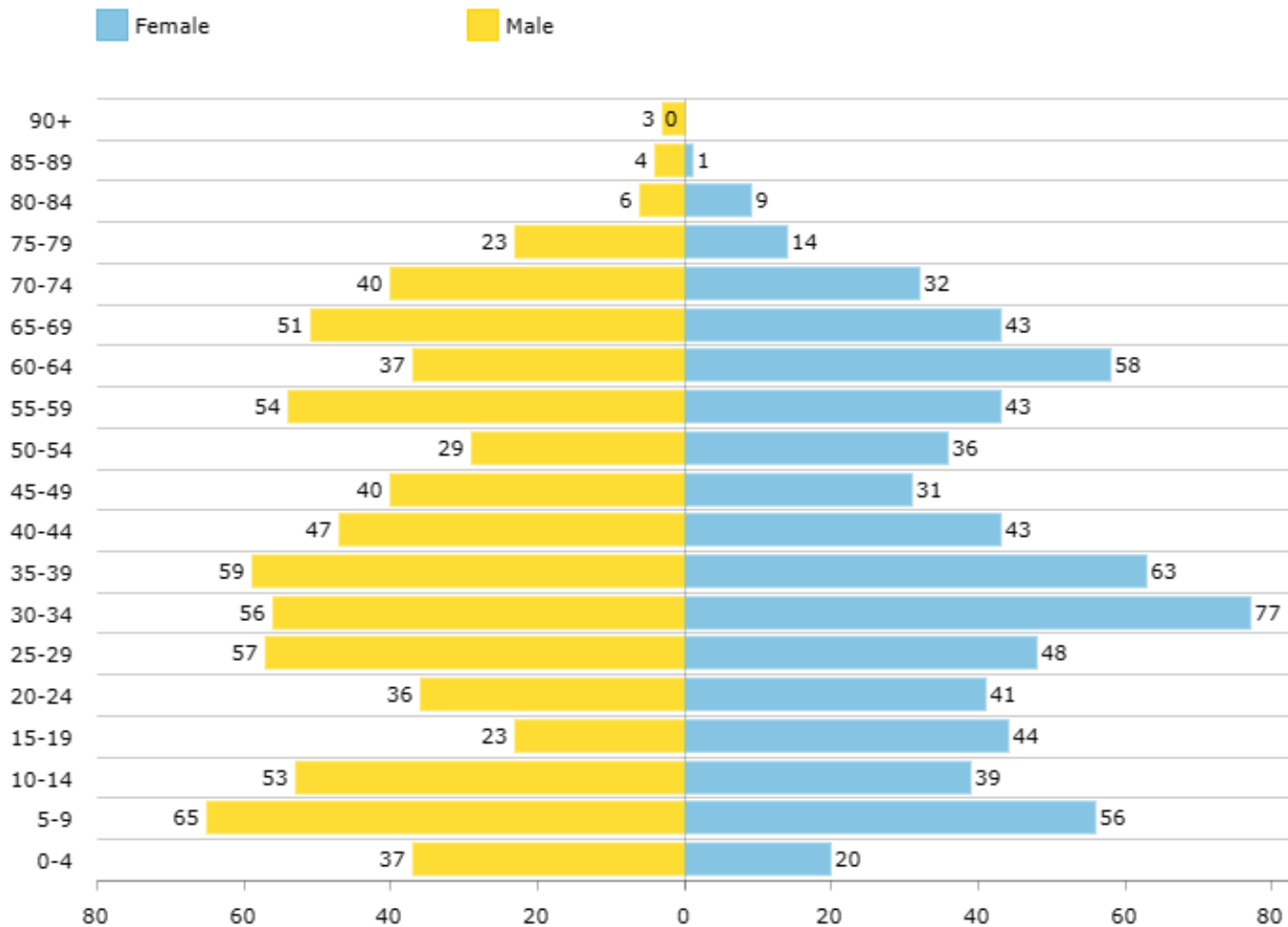
Bruderheim Population 2015 – 2024 by Sex



Source: [Government of Alberta](#)

- **Age Distribution (2024)¹:**
 - o Under 14: 19%
 - o 15–24: 10%
 - o 25–34: 16.8%
 - o 35–44: 15%
 - o 45–54: 9.6%
 - o 55–64: 13.5%
 - o 65 and over: 15.9%

Bruderheim Population Age Pyramid



Source: [Government of Alberta](#)

- **Marital Status (2021) ³:**
 - o Married: 47.8%
 - o Common-law: 14.8%
 - o Single: 25.4%
 - o Separated/Divorced/Widowed: 11.9%
- **Language:** 98.1% speak English as their primary language
- **Population Identifying as Indigenous:** 6.4%

- **Immigrant Status**
 - Immigrant Population: 1.9%

Housing & Households

- **Total Households:** 515
 - Owner-occupied: 85.4%
 - Rented: 14.6%²
- **Average Household Size (2021):** 2.6 persons³
- **Dwelling Value:** Average of \$253,000
- **Average Income:** \$55,600
- **Average Household Total Income:** \$105,200²

Economic Profile

- **Labour Force Participation:** 66.5%
- **Employment Rate:** 56.6%
- **Unemployment Rate:** 14.9%
- **Top Employment Sectors:**
 - Trades and Transport: 27.83%
 - Sales and Service: 13.68%
 - Business, Finance, and Administration: 3.77%
 - Manufacturing and Utilities: 3.77%
- **Average Household Income:** \$105,200 ²

Industrial & Infrastructure Assets

- **Strategic Location:** Situated within Alberta's Industrial Heartland, a hub with over \$40 billion in capital investment, providing access to major industries and infrastructure.
- **Transportation:**
 - Highways: Proximity to Highways 15, 16 (Yellowhead), and 29
 - Rail: Access to both CN and CP rail lines
 - Airports: Near Edmonton International Airport and Josephburg Airport ²

- **Major Projects:** In 2023, Bruderheim had \$125 million in major projects announced or under construction. ⁴

School Enrollment Data & Available Capacity

- Analyzing the enrollment data at Bruderheim Community school for grades K-6 over the last 6 years, we see several trends.
 - o First, enrollment has been steadily declining, from its peak in 2019 – 2020 of 131 students and falling to 115 in 2023 – 2024.
 - o For the past three years (2021 – 2024), enrollment has remained stable at around 114 – 119 students, suggesting that the decline has potentially levelled off.
 - o Between Grades 1 – 6, cohort size tends to be consistent as it advances, suggesting that those who begin school in Bruderheim, will finish the 6th grade there, and then continue on to another school to continue their education.
 - o Overall, enrollment is presently 10-15% lower than six years ago. ⁵

Year	ECS	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total
2023–2024	19	20	13	13	16	18	16	115
2022–2023	16	17	14	17	20	15	15	114
2021–2022	15	20	15	22	17	17	13	119
2020–2021	17	17	19	15	16	13	20	117
2019–2020	22	18	18	19	15	21	18	131
2018–2019	17	19	19	15	24	21	13	128

Community & Quality of Life

- **Community Character:** Bruderheim is known for its small-town charm, safety, and community spirit, making it an attractive place for families and individuals seeking a close-knit environment. ⁶
- **Education:** The town is served by Bruderheim Community School, providing educational opportunities for local residents.

Bruderheim's combination of population growth, industrial access, transportation infrastructure, and community character makes it a well-positioned town for both economic development and residential stability.

Site Visit Findings

A physical site visit was conducted to assess Bruderheim's economic development readiness across five key categories: infrastructure, market conditions, housing, community assets, and overall investment appeal. The observations highlight both challenges and opportunities to be addressed in the Action Plan.

1. Physical Infrastructure Assessment

The town's core roadways are functional but show signs of wear, particularly along secondary streets where potholes and uneven pavement were visible. Sidewalk networks are inconsistent; while the main arteries are walkable, connections between residential areas and Queen Street are limited, reducing pedestrian access to commercial amenities.

Several **vacant and underused parcels** were observed within walking distance of Queen Street. These lots, combined with older strip-style commercial buildings and surface parking lots, represent opportunities for infill and mixed-use development.

Utility infrastructure is present, with visible access points for water, sewer, and power, though broadband coverage remains uneven. The absence of public transit infrastructure (bus stops or regional connections) highlights a gap for residents without private vehicles. Streetscaping amenities are minimal, with few benches, bike racks, or wayfinding signs, limiting the attractiveness of the pedestrian realm.

However, the town's eye-catching gazebo and well-maintained flower displays add charm and curb appeal, enhancing the visual character of the community.

Opportunity Indicators: aging infrastructure near Queen Street, empty parcels with street access and basic servicing, and parking lots that could be re-purposed into higher value uses.

2. Market Gaps and Business Mix

The commercial core has a small number of essential services (gas station, liquor stores, and convenience outlets) but is missing key anchors such as a **full grocery store, pharmacy, family dining, and childcare facilities**. Several retail units displayed *For Lease* signs, suggesting a mix of vacancy and turnover.

Local shopping behavior appears to be oriented toward nearby Fort Saskatchewan and Lamont, evidenced by limited retail options in Bruderheim and anecdotal comments from residents about traveling elsewhere for daily needs. Industrial and agricultural lands were visible but underutilized, with some older shops and storage yards appearing outdated.

Opportunity Indicators: high-visibility corners without anchor tenants, vacant storefronts on Queen Street, and a lack of clustering strategy to create a true downtown destination.

3. Housing Needs and Revitalization Potential

The housing stock is primarily single-family dwellings, with limited rental units and virtually no seniors housing. Some older homes are in need of repair, especially near the town's core. Vacant residential lots and corner parcels exist, creating infill opportunities that could strengthen walkability.

Sidewalk connectivity between residential neighborhoods and Queen Street is fragmented, limiting safe and attractive pedestrian access to commercial areas. Land adjacent to infrastructure corridors provides further opportunities for residential expansion.

Opportunity Indicators: lack of housing options for young families and seniors, infill potential on vacant lots, and strong demand signals from homes that sell quickly when listed.

4. Community Assets and Anchors

Bruderheim benefits from several well-maintained parks, a community arena, schools, and churches, which serve as key anchors. However, many of these spaces are

underutilized outside of scheduled events. Queen Street lacks strong cultural or retail anchors that could tie into these community hubs.

Historic and cultural elements, while present, are not visibly celebrated through signage, wayfinding, or supporting businesses (e.g., cafés, gift shops). Community spaces for festivals or markets are available but not fully leveraged as year-round economic drivers.

Opportunity Indicators: underused public spaces near Queen Street, cultural sites without complementary businesses, and hubs that could be linked to commercial revitalization efforts.

5. Investment Readiness & Appeal

Gateway signage exists but is dated, and branding is inconsistent across community assets. There are few visible signs of recent commercial or residential construction, suggesting limited current development momentum.

The municipal office is centrally located and accessible, but its role in visible economic promotion (signage, banners, or “open for business” messaging) is limited. Properties on Queen Street remain relatively low cost compared to regional peers, and vacant parcels provide opportunities for rezoning or subdivision.

Opportunity Indicators: affordable, serviced land near infrastructure, visible potential for Queen Street renewal, and low-barrier entry points for developers.

Summary of Site Visit Observations

Overall, Bruderheim has a solid foundation of infrastructure, community assets, and industrial adjacency. However, gaps in **commercial mix, housing diversity, and main street vibrancy** limit its ability to capture more resident spending and attract outside investment. With targeted interventions—particularly in **Queen Street redevelopment, retail attraction, and civic branding**—the town can position itself as both a livable community and an investment-ready partner in Alberta’s Industrial Heartland.

Stakeholder Engagement Context

As part of this feasibility study, a stakeholder engagement process was carried out to capture the perspectives of Bruderheim residents, business owners, community leaders, and elected officials. A total of **twelve interviews** were completed, representing a diverse cross-section of voices, including long-time residents, business operators, and civic volunteers.

It is important to note that **engagement was limited** by two factors:

1. **Community fatigue with studies** – Several residents declined to participate, citing frustration with past processes. Common reasons included: *“This has been done before”* and *“Nothing ever comes of it.”* This sentiment reflects both skepticism and disengagement, underscoring the need for the Town to demonstrate follow-through and visible results from this study.
2. **Limited council participation** – All members of council were invited to be interviewed on multiple occasions. Only **Mayor Hausch** chose to participate, providing valuable insights into municipal priorities and leadership perspectives. The absence of other council voices is itself a finding, highlighting challenges in leadership cohesion and willingness to engage with community planning initiatives.

Despite these limitations, the interviews provided **rich, consistent insights** that align with observations from previous reports and community discussions. The candid nature of the responses reflects both the depth of concern and the passion stakeholders have for Bruderheim’s future.

Overview

Interviews with residents, business owners, municipal staff, and elected officials revealed a town at a crossroads. While there is pride in Bruderheim’s small-town character, many stakeholders expressed frustration with stagnation, community division, and barriers to attracting and sustaining new businesses. Themes included concerns over council behavior, lack of amenities, youth employment, community image, and the persistence of social media hostility toward new enterprises.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan: Bruderheim Economic Development Feasibility Study

Objectives

- Identify economic opportunities and barriers from multiple community perspectives.
- Ensure representation across sectors: municipal, business, social, industrial, and resident.
- Foster buy-in and transparency for future economic development strategies.
- Gather qualitative and quantitative data to inform the feasibility study.

Stakeholder Categories and Goals

Stakeholder Group	Goals for Engagement
Municipal Leadership	Understand policy direction, infrastructure, and growth vision.
Business and Industry	Capture market insights, growth challenges, and investment needs.
Agriculture & Landowners	Understand rural economic realities and land use constraints.
Workforce & Education	Identify skill gaps, training opportunities, and youth retention issues.
Community & Nonprofits	Assess social capacity, inclusion, and quality-of-life elements.
Regional & Infrastructure Partners	Align on regional strategies and development readiness.
Residents	Ensure public voice is considered in long-term planning.

Engagement Methods

Method	Audience	Format	Purpose
Key Informant Interviews	Mayors, CAO, Industry Leaders, Educators	One-on-one (virtual or in-person)	Deep qualitative insights
Roundtable Discussions	Business owners, Farmers, Service groups	Small group facilitated sessions	Cross-sector exchange of ideas
Online Survey	General public	Digital	Broad reach, gather community sentiment
Public Open House / Town Hall	Residents	In-person	Transparency, listening, and education
Focus Groups	Youth, Seniors, Newcomers	Thematic groups	Capture niche perspectives
Workshops with Council & Staff	Town Council, Admin Team	Working sessions	Collaboratively interpret findings

Engagement Timeline

Phase	Activities	Timing
Preparation	Stakeholder list, interview guides, promotion materials	Week 1
Engagement Launch	Begin interviews, publish survey, schedule focus groups	Weeks 2–4
Community Outreach	Public open house, youth/senior focus groups	Weeks 3–5
Data Analysis	Thematic review, input synthesis	Weeks 5–6
Findings Review Workshop	Town leaders validate findings	Week 7
Final Report & Presentation	Deliver feasibility study	Week 8

Communications & Promotion

- **Channels:**
 - o Town of Bruderheim website & newsletter
 - o Facebook & social media announcements
 - o Posters at community centres and local businesses
 - o Radio/print ads in local media (if budget permits)
- **Messaging:**
 - o Emphasize "Have Your Say in Bruderheim's Future!"
 - o Communicate purpose, anonymity, and impact of participation

Data Collection & Reporting

- **Tools:**
 - o Google Forms or SurveyMonkey for public survey
 - o Audio notes/transcripts for interviews
 - o Thematic coding in spreadsheets or qualitative analysis tools
- **Reporting:**
 - o Stakeholder feedback categorized by sector
 - o Key themes, direct quotes, and representative statistics
 - o SWOT analysis informed by stakeholder input

Evaluation Metrics

Metric	Target
Number of stakeholder interviews	15–20
Survey responses	100+
Focus group participation	5–8 per group
Open house attendees	30–50
Representation	At least one participant from each priority sector

Key Themes & Insights

1. Governance & Leadership Challenges

- Several stakeholders criticized the behavior of council members, citing **personal agendas, resistance to change, and public infighting**.
- One staff member stated bluntly: *“Without growth and development, we can’t have stability. The current council is so wrapped up in personal agendas that they can’t see what’s good for the town”*.
- Interviewees noted that council behavior at public hearings and online created a **negative reputation** for Bruderheim, making it appear unwelcoming to investors.

2. Community Attitudes & Resistance to Change

- A recurring theme was **division between residents who value quiet, small-town life and those seeking growth**.
- One resident noted: *“I like the quiet. I don’t want to drive half an hour for a coffee, but I also don’t want noise or industrial disruption”*.
- Others highlighted **“NIMBY-ism”**, with some community members vocally opposing businesses they believe the town already has enough of (e.g., liquor stores, hemp plant).

3. Business Climate & Barriers

- Stakeholders described Bruderheim as a **difficult place for new businesses** due to community hostility and lack of infrastructure.
- One municipal employee recalled: *“I’m shocked some businesses even opened after being attacked on social media before they even had their doors open”*.
- A local business owner expressed fatigue: *“I’m tired of doing economic studies and giving time for interviews when nothing happens afterwards”*.

4. Lack of Amenities & Retail/Service Gaps

- Nearly all participants identified **missing amenities**: grocery stores, cafés, restaurants, medical services, and youth employment opportunities.
- A long-time resident shared: *“There’s no shopping here. You have to drive everywhere you want to go. That drives seniors away”*.
- Multiple interviewees noted that **Queen Street lacks the buildings** to support cafés, boutiques, or a vibrant main street economy.

5. Youth Employment & Retention

- Stakeholders consistently raised concern about **lack of jobs for local youth**.
- *“Kids don’t have opportunities here. They can’t work if they don’t drive, and by the time they get jobs, they’re years behind”.*
- Several suggested that **fast food or service-oriented businesses** could provide entry-level employment while boosting community vitality.

6. Community Image & Reputation

- Perceptions of Bruderheim as **unwelcoming or hostile to outsiders** came up repeatedly.
- At least one stakeholder observed potential investors walking out of a public meeting, saying: *“This is just disgusting”.*
- Concerns included **bullying on social media**, public hostility at council meetings, and divisive community behavior that damages external reputation.

Representative Quotes

- *“It’s not always easy taking the high road, but we choose to. The problem is we have way too many keyboard warriors on social media”.*
- *“We can’t do what [other Towns]do. We’re too close to Fort Saskatchewan. What works there won’t work here”.*
- *“I would move out when I retire—there’s no shopping here, and as you get older you don’t want to drive everywhere”.*
- *“Businesses were attacked before they even opened. Why would anyone want to invest here?”.*

Conclusion

The stakeholder engagement process revealed both **latent opportunities** (youth employment, main street revitalization, regional industrial partnerships) and **serious barriers** (toxic public discourse, council dysfunction, lack of amenities). The most urgent task is to rebuild trust, improve communication, and present Bruderheim as a **welcoming, investable community**. Without addressing community image and governance culture, even well-designed incentive programs may fail to attract and retain new businesses.

SWOT Analysis (Stakeholder Engagement Themes)

Strengths

- **Strong Community Spirit:** Long-time residents and groups like the Ag Society show deep commitment to Bruderheim's identity and events.
- **Strategic Location:** Proximity to Alberta's Industrial Heartland remains a competitive advantage.
- **Past Incentive Programs:** Bruderheim has experience with tools like "Tax Free for Three" and \$1 lots, which successfully attracted some businesses.

Weaknesses

- **Governance & Council Dysfunction:** Public infighting, personal agendas, and lack of clear communication erode trust.
 - *"We have a couple of rogue councillors...their comments are killing our community".*
- **Unwelcoming Business Climate:** Community resistance and social media hostility deter entrepreneurs.
 - *"I'm shocked some businesses even opened after being attacked on social media before they even had their doors open".*
- **Service Gaps:** Lack of grocery, pharmacy, dining, and youth employment opportunities.
 - *"There's no shopping here...you have to drive everywhere you want to go".*
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Queen Street lacks the buildings needed to host cafés, restaurants, or boutiques.

Opportunities

- **Youth Employment & Retention:** Attracting service-oriented businesses (fast food, retail, childcare) could provide entry-level jobs and keep youth engaged .
- **Main Street Revitalization:** Infill and mixed-use development on Queen Street could anchor new amenities.
- **Regional Partnerships:** Align with Alberta Industrial Heartland Association and neighboring communities for joint investment attraction .
- **Community Engagement & Communication:** Structured forums, transparency in budgeting, and proactive communications could rebuild trust .

Threats

- **Economic Volatility:** Dependence on oil and gas exposes Bruderheim to policy shifts and global markets.
- **Population Stagnation:** Without amenities and jobs, the town risks losing families and seniors.
- **Community Resistance & Reputational Risk:** Hostility at council meetings and online damages Bruderheim's image.
 - *"Investors walked out of a meeting saying 'this is just disgusting'"*.
- **Business Fatigue:** Repeated studies without follow-through create skepticism.
 - *"I'm tired of doing economic studies...nothing happens afterwards"*.

Stakeholder Insights

As part of this study, interviews were conducted with a cross-section of Bruderheim stakeholders, including business owners, municipal staff, residents, and elected officials. These conversations provided valuable context on the lived experience of operating, investing, and residing in the community. While perspectives varied, several consistent themes emerged that help explain both Bruderheim's current challenges and its opportunities for renewal.

Governance and Leadership

Stakeholders expressed significant concern about governance and decision-making at the council level. Many described public infighting, unclear communication, and decisions shaped by personal agendas rather than long-term community interests. One resident reflected: *"We have a couple of rogue councillors...their comments are killing our community"*. This lack of cohesion, a concern echoed by several interviewed, contributes to mistrust among residents and sends negative signals to potential investors.

Community Attitudes and Division

Participants consistently described Bruderheim as a town divided between those who value its quiet, small-town character and those seeking growth. While some residents appreciate peace and proximity to larger centres, others are frustrated by the absence of local amenities. A long-time resident summarized this tension: *“I like the quiet. I don’t want to drive half an hour for a coffee, but I also don’t want noise or industrial disruption”*.

Underlying this divide is a pattern of vocal resistance to change. Stakeholders cited examples of residents opposing new businesses they deemed unnecessary, such as liquor stores, and attempts to influence which industries are considered “a fit” for the town. Another suggested that the focus shouldn’t be on chasing business at all but instead on attracting families to live in Bruderheim, stating that because small businesses currently pay the same tax rate as residences, new residential development generates equivalent municipal revenue, while also providing families to populate schools, shop locally, and use recreation facilities.

Business Climate and Investment Barriers

Bruderheim’s business climate was described as challenging, with entrepreneurs facing both practical barriers and cultural resistance. Several stakeholders noted how new businesses were publicly criticized before opening. One participant observed: *“I’m shocked some businesses even opened after being attacked on social media before they even had their doors open”*.

This hostility extends into council chambers, where public hearings have at times driven potential investors away. A municipal staff member recounted seeing representatives walk out of a meeting, remarking *“This is just disgusting”*. Such incidents reinforce an image of Bruderheim as unwelcoming to business, undermining economic development efforts.

Amenities and Service Gaps

A universal theme across interviews was the lack of basic amenities. Stakeholders identified the absence of a grocery store, pharmacy, family dining options, and childcare as particularly problematic. Seniors expressed concern about driving long distances for essentials: *“There’s no shopping here...you have to drive everywhere you want to go”*.

The physical constraints of Queen Street also limit progress. While the town has ambitions to revitalize its main street, it currently lacks the buildings required to house cafés, boutiques, or small restaurants.

Youth Employment and Retention

The absence of local employment opportunities for young people was cited repeatedly. Without entry-level service jobs or apprenticeships, youth are forced to commute or leave the community altogether. One parent noted: *“Kids don’t have opportunities here. They can’t work if they don’t drive, and by the time they get jobs, they’re years behind”*. Expanding the business mix to include service-oriented employers was seen as a key step to retaining younger residents.

Reputation and Civic Culture

The most striking theme across interviews was Bruderheim’s reputation as an unwelcoming place for business. Social media “keyboard warriors,” hostile council debates, and public opposition to new enterprises have contributed to a toxic civic culture. As one participant admitted: *“It’s not always easy taking the high road, but we have way too many keyboard warriors on social media”*.

This reputation not only discourages new investment but also deepens resident disengagement, with some stakeholders questioning the value of participating in studies and consultations: *“I’m tired of doing economic studies...nothing happens afterwards”*.

Conclusion

The interviews make clear that Bruderheim’s future is not constrained by location or capacity alone—it is equally shaped by culture, governance, and community attitudes. While challenges are evident, stakeholders also pointed to pathways forward: stronger communication, renewed council leadership, Queen Street revitalization, and the attraction of businesses that meet everyday needs. By addressing reputational risks and rebuilding trust, Bruderheim can reposition itself as a welcoming, investable community.

Key Lessons from Stakeholder Engagement

- **Consultation Fatigue:** Some residents declined to participate, citing *“this has been done before”* and *“nothing ever comes of it.”*
- **Leadership Gaps:** Despite repeated invitations, only the Mayor participated in interviews; other council voices were absent.
- **Trust Deficit:** Businesses and residents are skeptical, pointing to past studies without visible follow-through.
- **Urgent Need for Action:** The credibility of this plan will rest on **visible progress, transparent reporting, and consistent engagement.**

Community Engagement Recommendations

Rebuilding trust between Bruderheim residents, businesses, and council is essential to creating a welcoming environment for investment. The stakeholder interviews revealed that communication breakdowns, social media hostility, and public infighting have significantly damaged the town's reputation. The following recommendations aim to restore confidence, foster constructive dialogue, and build a civic culture that supports sustainable economic growth.

1. Establish Clear and Respectful Communication Channels

- **Council Engagement Standards:** Adopt formal rules of order for public hearings and council meetings to ensure respectful discourse and prevent hostile interactions.
- **Transparent Budget Communication:** Develop accessible budget summaries, infographics, and Q&A sessions so residents clearly understand municipal finances, reducing mistrust and misinformation.
- **Proactive Updates:** Use newsletters, social media, and town hall forums to regularly share progress on projects, investments, and upcoming opportunities.

2. Create a “Welcoming Bruderheim” Program

- **New Business Welcome Package:** Provide new entrepreneurs with a formal welcome from the Mayor, staff, and community ambassadors. Include information on support programs, contacts, and local partnerships.
- **Community Showcases:** Host “Business Spotlight” events or features in newsletters/social media to highlight local successes and reinforce positive narratives.
- **Civic Pride Campaign:** Launch a branding campaign celebrating Bruderheim's heritage, community strengths, and investment readiness.

3. Engage Residents in Constructive Decision-Making

- **Community Roundtables:** Establish quarterly forums where residents can engage directly with council and administration in a collaborative format, focused on solutions rather than conflict.
- **Participatory Planning:** Involve residents in shaping Queen Street revitalization, housing strategies, and community amenities through workshops and design charrettes.
- **Feedback Loops:** Create clear mechanisms for follow-up—residents should see how their input influenced decisions.

4. Address Social Media Hostility

- **Civility Guidelines:** Publish and enforce community standards for respectful online engagement on town-managed platforms.
- **Myth-Busting Communications:** Quickly address misinformation with fact-based responses, especially on high-profile issues like land use or new business licensing.
- **Community Champions:** Recruit respected residents and local organizations to amplify positive stories and counter negativity online.

5. Support Businesses and Volunteers

- **Small Grants Program:** Reinstate or expand micro-grants (e.g., \$5,000–\$10,000) for businesses making storefront improvements, modeled on other Alberta towns.
- **Volunteer Recognition:** Publicly recognize contributions of residents and organizations (e.g., Ag Society, community gardeners) to reinforce civic pride.
- **Business Forums:** Hold annual or semi-annual business forums to gather feedback, share municipal updates, and foster collaboration.

6. Build Long-Term Trust Through Consistency

- **Regular Reporting:** Issue an annual “State of Bruderheim” report card, summarizing achievements, challenges, and next steps.
- **Predictable Engagement Calendar:** Establish a clear rhythm of communication (quarterly forums, annual reports, monthly newsletters) to normalize transparency.
- **Leadership Training:** Provide training in facilitation, communications, and conflict resolution for council and senior staff.

Conclusion

For Bruderheim to achieve its economic development goals, it must first rebuild its civic culture. By embracing transparency, celebrating successes, and creating structured, respectful forums for dialogue, the town can shift from division to collaboration. A community that feels informed, valued, and involved will be far more likely to support new businesses, amenities, and investment opportunities—ensuring Bruderheim’s long-term resilience and vitality.

SWOT Analysis – Economic Development of Bruderheim

Strengths

- **Strategic Location in Alberta’s Industrial Heartland**
Bruderheim is situated within one of Canada’s largest hydrocarbon processing regions. Proximity to refineries, petrochemical plants, and industrial facilities makes it an ideal location for support services and workforce housing.
- **Transportation Infrastructure**
The town has access to major highways (15, 16, 29), and both CN and CP rail lines, enabling efficient logistics and supply chain support. It is also within reasonable distance of Edmonton International Airport and regional air services at Josephburg.
- **Available Land and Industrial Zoning**
Bruderheim has land designated for commercial and industrial development, with supportive municipal policies aimed at attracting business investment.
- **Affordable Housing and Living Costs**
With an average dwelling price of ~\$253,000 and high rates of home ownership (85.4%), the community offers a cost-effective living environment for both families and workforce commuters.
- **Community Stability and Quality of Life**
The town has a family-friendly character, community pride, and a safe environment, supporting retention and attraction of skilled workers and families.

Weaknesses

- **Small Population Base**
With just over 1,400 residents, the town faces challenges in building a large local workforce, supporting retail/service sectors, and generating internal economic momentum.
- **Limited Local Amenities and Services**
Bruderheim lacks many of the commercial and entertainment amenities found in larger centres, potentially limiting its attractiveness to new residents and businesses.

- **High Unemployment Rate**

As of the latest data, the unemployment rate stands at 14.9%, which is significantly above provincial averages and may indicate underemployment or mismatched skills.

- **Economic Dependence on Oil and Gas**

The region's economic fortunes are closely tied to the health of Alberta's energy sector. This creates vulnerability to oil price fluctuations and regulatory changes affecting carbon emissions.

- **Limited Public Transit and Connectivity**

Dependence on private vehicles for commuting can create barriers for lower-income households and limit workforce mobility from nearby communities.

- **Community Perceptions & NIMBY-ism**

At times, Bruderheim can be perceived as unwelcoming to certain types of businesses, particularly when residents feel the community already has “enough” of them (e.g., liquor stores). Resistance to change or new development proposals — commonly referred to as *NIMBY-ism* — may deter outside investors or slow diversification efforts.

- **Main Street Redevelopment Constraints**

While the Town has expressed a desire to revitalize Queen Street as its central commercial corridor, it currently lacks suitable building stock to house cafes, small restaurants, boutiques, or specialty shops. This gap in physical infrastructure makes it difficult to achieve the desired main street vibrancy without significant new construction or redevelopment efforts.

Opportunities

- **Industry Diversification**

Bruderheim can leverage its industrial location to attract clean energy companies, hydrogen development, logistics firms, and value-added manufacturing operations.

- **Regional Collaboration and Investment**

As part of Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association (AIHA), Bruderheim can benefit from joint investment attraction efforts, marketing, and large-scale infrastructure projects.

- **Tourism and Cultural Development**
The town has opportunities to develop small-scale tourism linked to heritage (Ukrainian settlement history), events, and nearby recreational trails or agri-tourism.
- **Digital Infrastructure Improvements**
Investment in broadband and smart technologies could support the attraction of remote workers, digital entrepreneurs, and online service businesses.
- **Workforce Development Partnerships**
Collaborating with regional institutions (e.g., NAIT, Lakeland College) could support skill development tailored to the needs of nearby industries.
- **Main Street Revitalization (Queen Street)**
Although current building stock is limited, Queen Street offers a focal point for future revitalization efforts. Incentives for infill development, mixed-use construction, and building retrofits could enable the creation of cafés, restaurants, boutiques, and service-oriented businesses that enhance community vibrancy.
- **Proactive Community Engagement**
While resistance to certain businesses exists, there is an opportunity to educate and engage residents about the benefits of a diverse commercial base. Structured consultation, pilot projects, and showcasing success stories from similar towns can help reduce NIMBY-ism and make Bruderheim more welcoming to investment.

Threats

- **Economic Volatility in the Energy Sector**
Prolonged downturns in the oil and gas industry or rapid policy shifts toward net-zero targets could reduce investment and employment in the region.
- **Population Stagnation or Decline**
If Bruderheim cannot retain young families or attract new residents, long-term sustainability of schools, healthcare services, and retail businesses may be at risk.
- **Competition from Nearby Communities**
Larger neighbours like Fort Saskatchewan and Lamont may outcompete Bruderheim for commercial developments, new residents, and provincial funding.

- **Aging Infrastructure and Limited Municipal Capacity**
Smaller municipalities often face challenges maintaining and upgrading essential infrastructure (water, roads, utilities), particularly with a modest tax base.
- **Climate Change and Environmental Regulations**
Future industrial activity could be constrained by stricter environmental standards, flood risks, or extreme weather events affecting rural communities.
- **Community Resistance and Reputational Risk**
Tensions sometimes arise when new businesses or industries are proposed in Bruderheim. At public council meetings and on social media, strong opposition has been directed at certain sectors (such as liquor stores), creating a perception that the community is unwelcoming to investment. In some cases, individual residents' vocal opposition and online "bullying" of entrepreneurs has discouraged new businesses from locating in town. While not reflective of the entire community, these actions contribute to a negative reputation and may deter prospective investors, limiting diversification and growth.

Mitigation Strategies for Community Resistance & Reputational Risk

1. Structured Engagement & Education

- Host "**Business Information Nights**" before new industries or services are approved, so residents can hear directly from prospective investors and ask questions in a moderated, respectful forum.
- Provide **fact sheets** about economic benefits (jobs, tax base, community amenities) to counter misinformation or speculation.

2. Council & Staff Facilitation Practices

- Train council and administration staff in **facilitation and conflict resolution** to manage heated public meetings constructively.
- Introduce **clear rules of engagement** for public hearings and town halls to ensure respectful dialogue.

3. Proactive Communications Strategy

- Develop a **“Welcoming Bruderheim” campaign** that highlights success stories of new businesses that have been embraced by the community.
- Use local media, newsletters, and social channels to emphasize how economic growth benefits everyone.

4. Support Systems for New Businesses

- Establish a **Business Welcome Program** (mentorship, ribbon cuttings, community spotlight) to signal municipal support and counterbalance negativity.
- Provide **ongoing check-ins** between administration and new entrepreneurs to address early concerns before they escalate.

5. Community Champions & Ambassadors

- Identify and empower **local champions** (respected residents, business owners, service clubs) to speak publicly in favor of new investments.
- Create a **Business Ambassador Group** that pairs new businesses with supportive community members to help them integrate.

6. Digital Civility & Reputation Management

- Monitor town-managed social media channels for civility, and enforce **community standards** against bullying or harassment.
- Provide guidelines for respectful online engagement, making it clear that hostile behavior harms Bruderheim’s reputation and investment potential.

Conclusion

Bruderheim's strategic industrial location and affordable lifestyle make it a promising hub for specialized industry support and family settlement. However, a small population, dependence on oil and gas, and lack of local services present challenges. A targeted economic development strategy focused on diversification, regional cooperation, and infrastructure investment would best position the town for long-term resilience.

Commercial Gap Analysis

Overview of Community Profile

- **Population:** ~1,418 (2024 est.)
- **Median Age:** 37.6 years
- **Household Income:** Median \$98,000, Average \$105,200
- **Household Size:** 2.6 persons
- **Home Ownership:** 85.4%
- **Labour Force Participation:** 66.5%
- **Unemployment Rate:** 14.9%³

Bruderheim is a small but growing town located in Alberta's Industrial Heartland, making it a residential and workforce hub for industrial operations in the region. The local economy is influenced by the energy sector and nearby large employment centres like Fort Saskatchewan and Edmonton.

Existing Commercial Environment

While Bruderheim offers some basic services and retail amenities, much of the resident and visitor spending "leaks" to surrounding communities due to limited commercial variety. Current offerings include:

- While Bruderheim offers some basic services and retail amenities, much of the resident and visitor spending "leaks" to surrounding communities due to limited commercial variety. Current offerings include:
- **Grocery/Convenience:** A small grocery/convenience store, limited selection.
- **Fuel Stations:** Two operating gas stations.
- **Restaurants:** Two small eateries, largely casual or takeout style. One bar.
- **Personal Services:** Basic services such as a hair salon/barber, a pharmacy.
- **Banking:** No banking institutions.
- **Recreational Facilities:** Town-run facilities, community centre, arena.
- **Retail:** Virtually no clothing, electronics, hardware, or specialty retail.

Benchmarking Bruderheim

To identify the missing or underdeveloped business sectors and services in Bruderheim, the town was compared to the similarly sized communities of Lamont, Mundare, and Gibbons to highlight high-potential business categories.

	Bruderheim	Mundare	Lamont	Gibbons
Population	1,418 (2024)	871 (2024)	1,804 (2024)	3,290 (2024)
Grocery Stores	1 Mid sized independent grocery store	1 Grocery store 1 Convenience Store	2	3
Childcare Centres	1 Active Dayhome 1 Daycare	1 Daycare	1 Community Playschool 1 After-School Care 1 Daycare	4
Schools	1	1	2 (elementary & high school)	
Restaurants (Quick Service & Sit Down)	2 Restaurants 1 Home Baker	1 Cafe 4 Restaurant 2 Bakery 3 at home bakeries	4 Restaurants 1 Drive In	4 Quick Service 6 Restaurant
Retail	1 Ice Cream Truck 1 Greenhouse 2 Gas Stations 3 Liquor Stores 1 Thrift Store	1 Clothing 1 Garden Centre 2 Liquor Store 1 Gas Station 1 Quilt & Gift Shop 1 Craft Store	1 Vintage Store 1 Thrift Store 1 Candy Store 1 Gas Station 1 Home Hardware 3 Liquor Store 1 Florist	2 Pet Store 3 Convenience 1 Game Store 1 Vape Store 2 Cannabis 3 Gas Station 2 Liquor
Veterinary Services/Pet Services	1 Pet Grooming	1 Pet Grooming	1 Boarding Kennel 1 Pet Groomer	1 vet 1 Groomer
Pharmacies/Health Centres	1 Pharmacy 2 Massage 1 Foot Care Nurse	1 Hospital 1 Pharmacy 1 Medical Clinic	1 Medical Centre 1 Medical Clinic 1 Pharmacy	2 Medical Centre 2 Pharmacy

ALCHEMY

COMMUNICATIONS INC.

	Bruderheim	Mundare	Lamont	Gibbons
Banking		2	2	2
Wellness & Health	1 Hair Salon	2 Hair Salon 1 at home salon 2 Massage Therapist 1 Seniors Centre	1 Senior Centre 2 Dental Clinic 1 Denture Clinic 1 Hair Salon 1 Optometrist 3 Senior Homes 1 Museum	6 Salon 2 Massage 2 Dental 1 Optometrist
Sports & Entertainment	1 Dance Studio 1 Arena (no minor hockey)	1 Curling Club 1 Arena 2 Ball Diamonds 1 Golf Club 1 Museum 1 Bowling Alley 1 Rec Centre 1 Splash Park 1 Skateboard Park	1 Dance Studio 1 Arena (with minor hockey) 3 Ball Diamonds 1 Curling rink 1 Library	1 Dance Studio Hockey Team 1 Karate
Auto	2 (one for classic cars only)	3	2	6
Real Estate		2	2	1
Misc	1 Music Instruction 1 Sewing Service 1 Caterer 1 Post Office 1 Bottle Depot 1 Butcher	2 Registry/Insurance 1 Law firm 1 Air Cadets 1 Bottle Depot 1 Post Office 1 Library 1 Meat Processing plant 1 Canine Breeding Supplies Shipping Centre	1 Auto Yard 1 Registry 1 insurance 1 Photography Studio 1 Canada Post 1 Food Bank 1 Child & Youth Ranch 1 Sewing Centre 1 Bottle Depot 1 Caterer Lions Club 1 Travel Agency 1 Funeral Home	3 Lawyer 2 Tax Service 1 Insurance 1 Investment 1 Bottle Depot 1 Registry 1 Legion 1 Caterer

Commercial Leakage (Spending Outflow)

Primary Leakage Areas:

Category	Leakage Destination	Reason for Leakage
Full-Service Grocery	Fort Saskatchewan	Greater selection, fresh goods, brand-name chains
Dining (Family & Upscale)	Lamont, Fort Sask.	Limited variety in Bruderheim
Health & Wellness	Fort Sask./Edmonton	Lack of clinics, physio, optometry, dental variety
Apparel & Footwear	Edmonton, Fort Sask.	No local clothing or shoe stores
Banking & Financial	Fort Sask.	No full branches, limited ATM access
Household Goods & Furniture	Edmonton	No local options for home improvement, furniture
Childcare & Sports	Lamont, Fort Sask.	Limited childcare options, lack of sports opportunities
Entertainment	Edmonton, Fort Sask.	No movie theatres, arcades, or cultural venues

Market Gaps & Commercial Opportunities

Based on population characteristics, disposable income, community needs, and leakage patterns, the following **gaps** represent **high-potential commercial development opportunities**:

Retail & Service Gaps

Category	Opportunity Summary
Mid-size Grocery Store	Strong demand for a full-service grocer (e.g., Co-op, Save-On-Foods) with fresh produce, deli, bakery
Quick-Service Restaurants	Franchises like Tim Hortons, McDonalds, Subway, or A&W could thrive due to commuter and worker traffic
Family Restaurant	Sit-down casual dining (e.g., Boston Pizza, local diner with extended hours)
Pharmacy with Health Hub	Add walk-in clinic, lab services, basic diagnostics
Banking Services	ATB, Credit Union branch or satellite office
Childcare Centre	With 21.4% of population under age 14, daycare and after-school care are lacking. Introducing a licensed daycare centre or after-school program could support young families.
Health & Wellness Clinics	Space exists for dental, optometry, or chiropractic services, as well as wellness practitioners.

Real Estate	A physical or home-based real estate presence could support community growth and residential/commercial development
Veterinary Services	No local vet presence despite growing pet ownership
Category	Opportunity Summary
Hardware & Home Supply	A small-format hardware store (e.g., Home Hardware or Peavey Mart)
Personal Fitness Studio	Yoga/Pilates, 24-hour fitness, or bootcamp-style services
Local Artisan or Farmers Market	Regular or seasonal market could attract regional attention

Real Estate & Commercial Land Considerations

- **Zoned Commercial Parcels Available:** Bruderheim has available land for commercial and light industrial use. Pricing and servicing incentives can attract tenants.
- **Highway Visibility:** Sites along Highway 45 and key local routes offer visibility for drive-by traffic.
- **Proximity to Industrial Heartland:** Support services for energy-sector contractors (e.g., equipment rental, safety supply, uniform services) are feasible.

Challenges to Address

Issue	Implication
Small Population Base	Limits initial foot traffic; may require regional draw or phased investment
Limited Workforce Onsite	Most workers commute out or into Bruderheim, not all stay during evenings
Internet & Infrastructure	Broadband capacity and municipal servicing may need upgrades
Risk Aversion in Lending	Smaller towns often struggle to attract financing for commercial ventures

Strategic Recommendations

- **Position Bruderheim** as open for business investment in identified sectors.
- **Encourage Mixed-Use Development:** Blend residential growth with small commercial nodes to increase walkability and daily foot traffic.
- **Incentivize Anchor Tenants:** Provide tax incentives or leaseback models for essential services like groceries or pharmacy.
- **Support Local Entrepreneurs:** Host small business workshops and provide start-up assistance programs.
- **Create a “Shop Local” Campaign:** Collaborate with local businesses and regional tourism to boost local spending.
- **Promote partnerships** with service providers in Lamont County or nearby cities to pilot services.
- **Partner with Industrial Employers:** Survey regional workers to determine high-demand services and target them locally.

Financial Modeling & Cost Estimates

1. Queen Street Infill and Revitalization

- **Building Renovations / Façade Program:** \$5,000–\$15,000 per storefront (town-supported grants, similar to Alberta “Main Street” programs).
- **New Mixed-Use Construction:** \$250–\$350 per square foot for small-scale commercial/residential infill.
 - Example: A 5,000 sq. ft. mixed-use building = \$1.25M–\$1.75M.
- **Streetscaping (benches, signage, lighting, landscaping):** \$150,000–\$300,000 for the Queen Street corridor.

Comparable Example: Town of Mundare’s façade improvement program cost ~\$100,000 in matching grants for 10 businesses.

2. Broadband & Digital Infrastructure

- **Fibre Expansion / Last-Mile Servicing:** \$1,000–\$2,500 per household connection.
- **Community-Wide Broadband Upgrade:** \$500,000–\$1.5M depending on partnership with ISPs and federal/provincial funding.
- **Smart Infrastructure (public Wi-Fi zones, digital signage):** \$50,000–\$100,000 for initial installation.

Comparable Example: Smoky Lake County budgeted ~\$750,000 for rural broadband expansion through a federal connectivity grant.

3. Anchor Tenant Incentives (Retail / Service Gaps)

- **Tax Abatement (“Tax Free for Three” style):** \$20,000–\$50,000 in forgone municipal revenue per anchor tenant.
- **Lease Subsidies or Fit-Out Grants:** \$25,000–\$75,000 per business (for grocery, pharmacy, or restaurant start-ups).
- **Marketing & Attraction Campaign:** \$30,000–\$60,000 for branding, prospectus development, and targeted outreach.

Comparable Example: Vegreville offered \$40,000 in incentives to secure a national-chain pharmacy tenant in its downtown.

4. Housing & Infill Development

- **Residential Infill Servicing Costs:** \$15,000–\$25,000 per lot (water, sewer, roads).
- **Affordable or Seniors' Housing (small 10-unit build):** \$1.5M–\$3.0M depending on build type (modular vs. stick-built).
- **Housing Incentives (lot discounts, rebates):** \$10,000–\$20,000 per unit in municipal contribution.

Comparable Example: Lamont County supported seniors' housing redevelopment with ~\$2M in combined municipal and provincial funding.

5. Civic Culture & Community Engagement Programs

- **“Welcoming Bruderheim” Campaign:** \$25,000–\$40,000 annually for branding, communications, and events.
- **Business Ambassador Program:** \$10,000–\$20,000 per year (training, recognition, networking).
- **Community Forums & Roundtables:** \$5,000–\$10,000 annually (venue, facilitation, communications).

Comparable Example: Edson budgeted ~\$30,000 annually for its “Open for Business” communications campaign.

Summary of Investment Needs (Order-of-Magnitude Ranges)

- **Queen Street Renewal:** \$1.5M–\$2.0M (initial phase).
- **Broadband & Digital Infrastructure:** \$500,000–\$1.5M.
- **Anchor Tenant Incentives:** \$50,000–\$125,000 per targeted business.
- **Housing & Infill Support:** \$1.5M–\$3.0M (seniors' housing pilot).
- **Civic Culture & Engagement Programs:** \$40,000–\$70,000 annually.

Funding Alignment Table

Priority Project	Estimated Cost (Range)	Potential Funding Programs	Local Share Needed
Queen Street Infill & Revitalization (streetscape, mixed-use development, façade grants)	\$1.5M – \$2.0M	Alberta Community Partnership (ACP); Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC) – energy-efficient retrofits; Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) <i>Green Municipal Fund</i>	10–25% (in-kind land, grants, tax incentives)
Broadband & Digital Infrastructure (fibre, last-mile service, public Wi-Fi)	\$500K – \$1.5M	Universal Broadband Fund (Innovation, Science & Economic Development Canada); CRTC Broadband Fund; Alberta Broadband Strategy	10–20% (cost-sharing with ISP)
Anchor Tenant Incentives (grocery, pharmacy, dining)	\$50K – \$125K per tenant	Alberta Jobs, Economy & Trade – Regional Economic Development grants; local tax abatement	100% local (foregone revenue, direct incentive)
Housing & Infill Development (seniors housing, affordable infill lots)	\$1.5M – \$3.0M	Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC) <i>National Housing Co-Investment Fund</i> ; Alberta Seniors Housing Grants; FCM Sustainable Affordable Housing	10–20% (land contribution, planning support)

Civic Culture & Engagement Programs (“Welcoming Bruderheim,” ambassador program, branding)	\$40K – \$70K annually	Alberta Community Initiatives Program (CIP); Rural Development Network micro-grants; FCM Municipal Asset Management Program (communications components)	25–50% (in-kind staff time, local budget)
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Key Notes

- **Cost Ranges** are based on comparable Alberta small-town projects and order-of-magnitude estimates.
- **Local Share** often includes in-kind contributions (land, staff, tax abatement) rather than purely cash.
- **Stacking Funding:** Several of these grants can be combined (e.g., FCM + provincial ACP).

Implementation Capacity

Successful implementation of the Action Plan will require not only clear priorities but also sufficient staff, leadership, and organizational capacity to deliver results. Bruderheim, like many small municipalities, faces constraints in terms of administration size, council bandwidth, and financial resources. These limitations must be explicitly acknowledged and addressed to ensure that the plan is actionable rather than aspirational.

Current Capacity Constraints

- **Small Administrative Team:** The Town operates with a lean staff structure, limiting its ability to pursue multiple large-scale initiatives simultaneously.
- **Council Cohesion:** Stakeholder engagement highlighted gaps in council participation and leadership alignment, which may impede consistent decision-making.

- **Financial & Human Resources:** Limited tax base and modest revenues constrain the ability to hire additional staff or dedicate internal resources exclusively to economic development.

Strategies to Strengthen Implementation

1. Regional Partnerships

- **Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association (AIHA):** Leverage regional marketing and investment attraction capacity rather than building a stand-alone program.
- **Neighboring Municipalities (Lamont County, Fort Saskatchewan):** Explore joint grant applications and shared service delivery, particularly in broadband, tourism, and housing initiatives.
- **Post-Secondary Institutions (NAIT, NorQuest, Lakeland College):** Partner for workforce training and applied research tied to industrial and service sector growth.

2. External Expertise

- **Consultants and Technical Specialists:** Contract targeted expertise (e.g., urban design for Queen Street, broadband engineers, economic development strategists) for defined phases of the Action Plan.
- **Shared Services Model:** Partner with other municipalities to share the cost of specialized roles, such as a regional grant writer or investment attraction officer.

3. Volunteer and Community Ambassadors

- Establish a “Welcoming Bruderheim” business ambassador group made up of local business owners, service clubs, and volunteers. This expands engagement capacity without heavy staff requirements.

4. Funding and Resource Alignment

- Prioritize applications to programs that include **administrative support components** (e.g., Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Alberta Community Partnership), ensuring staff capacity is built into the funding model.
- Consider modest allocations (e.g., \$10,000–\$20,000 annually) to contract grant-writing and communications support, which has proven high return-on-investment in comparable municipalities.

Conclusion

Bruderheim cannot achieve the goals of this study by relying on its internal capacity alone. A realistic approach to implementation requires:

1. Leveraging regional partnerships to avoid duplication.
2. Engaging external consultants for specialized projects.
3. Building shared service arrangements for ongoing functions.
4. Mobilizing local ambassadors to extend community engagement.

Risk-Mitigation Framework

Risk Area	Description of Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation Strategies
Reputational Risk & Community Resistance	Hostility toward new businesses (e.g., liquor store backlash), public council conflicts, and social media bullying create a perception of Bruderheim as unwelcoming.	Loss of potential investors; community division; slowed revitalization of Queen Street.	• Launch “Welcoming Bruderheim” program. • Adopt civility and conduct guidelines for council/public meetings. • Establish clear social media communication standards.
Council Cohesion & Governance Gaps	Limited participation by council in planning, visible infighting, and inconsistent decision-making reduce trust and investor confidence.	Weak leadership credibility; difficulty securing funding; stalled projects.	• Leadership and governance training. • Structured council–administration workshops. • Regular progress reporting (annual “State of Bruderheim”).
Economic Volatility in Energy Sector	Alberta’s Industrial Heartland ties Bruderheim’s fortunes to oil and gas cycles and global energy transitions.	Revenue instability; risk of stranded assets; job losses.	• Diversify into value-added industries (logistics, renewables, services). • Partner with AIHA to attract complementary industries. • Pursue grants for diversification.
Infrastructure Deficits	Aging roads, limited broadband, lack of Queen Street building stock for desired retail and services.	Reduced competitiveness; investment leakage to Fort Saskatchewan/Lamont; constrained downtown revitalization.	• Phase-in upgrades with external funding (ACP, MCCAC, FCM). • Prioritize broadband expansion through ISP partnerships. • Incentivize infill and mixed-use development.

Risk Area	Description of Risk	Potential Impact	Mitigation Strategies
Population Stagnation & Youth Outmigration	Limited jobs and services force young people and families to relocate.	Shrinking tax base; loss of labour force; declining school enrolment.	• Create youth employment partnerships (NAIT, NorQuest, local businesses). • Incentivize family-oriented services (childcare, recreation). • Promote housing infill and seniors housing options.
Funding & Implementation Capacity	Small municipal staff and budget cannot manage all Action Plan elements simultaneously.	Delayed or incomplete implementation; loss of credibility with funders.	• Use shared services/regional partnerships. • Contract consultants for technical projects. • Build grant-writing support into all funding requests.

Investment Readiness

Bruderheim's ability to attract and retain investment depends not only on its location within Alberta's Industrial Heartland, but also on how it presents itself to businesses, residents, and potential partners. The site visit, interviews, and comparative analysis reveal that Bruderheim is at a **transitional stage**: it has affordable land, regional advantages, and community pride, but faces challenges related to infrastructure, reputation, and governance.

Current Readiness Strengths

- **Strategic Location:** Proximity to major industrial players in Alberta's Industrial Heartland makes Bruderheim well-positioned for value-added industry, logistics, and supply chain opportunities.
- **Available Land:** Vacant and underused parcels with street access and servicing exist within walking distance of Queen Street and along main arteries. These represent affordable entry points for developers.
- **Community Assets:** Parks, schools, and the arena provide foundational amenities that can anchor further commercial and residential investment.
- **Low Entry Costs:** Compared to neighboring municipalities, Bruderheim offers **lower property and leasing costs**, making it attractive to entrepreneurs seeking affordable space.

Gaps and Barriers

- **Physical Infrastructure:** Aging roads, inconsistent sidewalks, and limited broadband coverage hinder competitiveness. The absence of public transit limits workforce mobility.
- **Queen Street Constraints:** While envisioned as a revitalized main street, Queen Street currently lacks the building stock to house cafés, restaurants, or boutiques, requiring infill and redevelopment.
- **Reputation and Civic Culture:** Stakeholder interviews highlighted that social media hostility, council infighting, and community resistance create an **unwelcoming climate** for businesses. Several investors have already walked away after negative public meetings.
- **Service and Retail Gaps:** The absence of a grocery store, pharmacy, family dining, and childcare services forces residents to shop elsewhere, creating commercial leakage and limiting local quality of life.
- **Youth Employment:** Lack of entry-level service jobs discourages young people from staying in the community, further weakening the labour base.

Indicators of Opportunity

Despite these barriers, Bruderheim displays multiple signals of investment potential:

- **Vacant Parcels and Infill Lots:** Sites near the school, arena, and post office could be positioned for mixed-use or service-oriented development.
- **Affordable Market Positioning:** Bruderheim can brand itself as a **low-barrier alternative** to higher-cost communities nearby.
- **Regional Partnerships:** The town can leverage Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association, as well as partnerships with Fort Saskatchewan and Lamont, to market itself collectively and share infrastructure.
- **Community Appetite for Amenities:** While resistance exists, there is also clear demand for cafés, restaurants, and youth-oriented services, which would meet both lifestyle and economic needs.

Readiness Assessment

On balance, Bruderheim is **partially investment-ready**. It has the land, location, and affordability that investors seek, but must address infrastructure gaps, service deficiencies, and civic culture to fully realize its potential. The immediate priority is **creating an environment where businesses feel welcome and supported**, paired with visible progress on Queen Street renewal and essential service attraction. With these steps, Bruderheim can shift from being seen as a “risk” to a **viable, investable community**.

Key Findings

The Bruderheim Economic Development Feasibility Study highlights both the town's significant opportunities and the critical challenges it must overcome to attract and retain investment. While Bruderheim's location within Alberta's Industrial Heartland provides a clear strategic advantage, the community's current infrastructure, governance, and reputation require focused attention.

1. Strategic Location and Affordability

Bruderheim benefits from its proximity to Alberta's Industrial Heartland and available, affordable land. These assets position the town as a potential hub for value-added manufacturing, logistics, and energy-related industries. Compared to nearby municipalities, Bruderheim offers **lower entry costs for development**, making it attractive to entrepreneurs and small businesses seeking affordable space.

2. Infrastructure and Main Street Limitations

The site visit revealed aging infrastructure, inconsistent sidewalks, and limited broadband connectivity. Most importantly, **Queen Street—the town's main street—lacks the building stock to support cafés, restaurants, and boutique shops**, which constrains Bruderheim's ability to create a vibrant commercial core. Without targeted investment in infill and redevelopment, revitalization will remain aspirational.

3. Gaps in Retail and Services

Stakeholders consistently identified a lack of **basic amenities**: no grocery store, pharmacy, family dining, childcare, or youth employment opportunities. This absence forces residents to travel to Fort Saskatchewan and Lamont for everyday needs, creating significant commercial leakage. Expanding the retail and service mix is critical to improving quality of life and retaining both seniors and young families.

4. Community Division and Reputational Risk

Interviews revealed deep divisions within the community between residents who value small-town quiet and those who want growth. **Resistance to certain businesses (e.g., liquor stores) and hostile behavior at council meetings or on social media** create a

perception of Bruderheim as unwelcoming to investment. This reputational risk is one of the most significant barriers to economic development, with several potential investors already discouraged.

5. Governance and Leadership Gaps

Stakeholder feedback highlighted frustration with council dysfunction and public infighting. Despite repeated invitations, only the Mayor participated in interviews, raising concerns about leadership accountability. A recurring message from stakeholders was that “**studies are done, but nothing ever comes of it.**” This consultation fatigue reflects a trust deficit that Bruderheim must actively repair.

6. Youth Retention and Workforce Needs

The lack of local entry-level employment opportunities leaves young people at a disadvantage. Without accessible service jobs or apprenticeships, youth are forced to leave Bruderheim or commute, weakening the local labour base. Expanding job opportunities is essential for long-term demographic stability.

7. Partial Investment Readiness

Bruderheim is **partially investment-ready**: it has location advantages, affordable land, and strong community assets, but weaknesses in infrastructure, governance, and civic culture constrain progress. To improve readiness, Bruderheim must:

- Address retail/service gaps.
- Invest in Queen Street renewal and infill development.
- Build a welcoming civic culture through transparency, communication, and structured engagement.
- Strengthen partnerships with regional institutions and Alberta’s Industrial Heartland Association.

Conclusion

Bruderheim has the ingredients to position itself as a **resilient, investment-ready community**, but its future depends on taking deliberate steps to rebuild trust, upgrade infrastructure, and diversify its business base. The next stage requires not only a clear Action Plan but also visible follow-through and consistent communication to overcome skepticism and demonstrate momentum.

Funding Implementation

Funding Sources Mapping Matrix

Priority Project	Estimated Cost (Range)	Potential Funding Sources	Eligibility / Focus	Local Contribution
Queen Street Infill & Revitalization (streetscaping, mixed-use, façade grants)	\$1.5M – \$2.0M	• Alberta Community Partnership (ACP) • Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) – <i>Green Municipal Fund</i> • MCCAC (Municipal Climate Change Action Centre) – energy retrofits	Downtown renewal, climate-smart design, municipal collaboration	10–25% (in-kind land, staff, tax incentives)
Broadband & Digital Infrastructure	\$500K – \$1.5M	• Universal Broadband Fund (ISED Canada) • CRTC Broadband Fund • Alberta Broadband Strategy	Last-mile and rural broadband expansion	10–20% (cost-share with ISP)
Anchor Tenant Incentives (grocery, pharmacy, dining)	\$50K – \$125K per tenant	• Alberta Jobs, Economy & Trade (RED grants) • Municipal tax abatements (local)	Business attraction, retail expansion	100% local (forgone revenue, direct incentive)
Housing & Infill Development (seniors housing, affordable infill)	\$1.5M – \$3.0M	• CMHC – <i>National Housing Co-Investment Fund</i> • Alberta Seniors Housing Grants • FCM – <i>Sustainable Affordable Housing</i>	Affordable/seniors housing, sustainable builds	10–20% (land, planning support)
Civic Culture & Engagement Programs ("Welcoming Bruderheim," branding, roundtables)	\$40K – \$70K annually	• Alberta Community Initiatives Program (CIP) • Rural Development Network (micro-grants) • FCM Municipal Asset Management (communications & engagement)	Community engagement, volunteerism, capacity-building	25–50% (in-kind staff time, local budget)

Key Takeaways

- **Stacking is possible:** ACP, FCM, and MCCAC grants often allow co-funding, which can multiply local dollars.
- **Anchor tenant incentives** are typically **100% locally borne** — but positioning them as part of a broader *Main Street Renewal* grant can help offset costs.
- **Broadband** is best approached via **ISP partnerships**, with federal/provincial grants covering most costs.
- **Housing** has the most external funding opportunities (CMHC + provincial seniors programs).

Youth & Workforce Strategy

Bruderheim's long-term vitality depends on retaining youth and ensuring that local businesses and industries have access to a skilled, reliable workforce. Stakeholder interviews consistently highlighted the lack of entry-level jobs, limited service-sector employment, and few opportunities for young people to work, train, or build careers locally. Without targeted strategies, Bruderheim risks continued youth outmigration, weakening both its labour base and its community fabric.

Current Gaps

- **Limited Entry-Level Employment:** Few service businesses (e.g., cafés, restaurants, childcare centres) means fewer part-time jobs for high school and post-secondary students.
- **Skills Mismatch:** Alberta's Industrial Heartland requires specialized skills, but Bruderheim has no direct training linkages with post-secondary institutions.
- **Outmigration Risk:** Young people often leave Bruderheim for jobs, training, and recreation in Fort Saskatchewan, Lamont, or Edmonton.

Strategic Priorities

1. Create Local Youth Employment Pathways

- **Service-Sector Expansion:** Attract anchor tenants (grocery, dining, pharmacy) to create entry-level jobs.
- **Youth Hiring Incentives:** Offer small municipal subsidies to employers who hire and train local youth.
- **Summer Student Programs:** Partner with the Government of Alberta's STEP (Summer Temporary Employment Program) to subsidize seasonal municipal and community roles.

2. Build Workforce Development Partnerships

- **NAIT / NorQuest College / Lakeland College:** Establish satellite training partnerships or short-course programs in trades, health care, and logistics relevant to Bruderheim's industrial region.
- **Alberta Industrial Heartland Association:** Work with regional employers to create apprenticeship pipelines and co-op opportunities for Bruderheim students.
- **School-to-Work Connections:** Collaborate with local schools to integrate career exposure programs, site tours, and mentorships with local businesses.

3. Support Long-Term Labour Force Development

- **Seniors' Care & Housing:** As Bruderheim develops seniors' housing, link projects to health-care training institutions to attract and retain care workers.
- **Entrepreneurship Supports:** Provide micro-grants and training for youth interested in starting businesses (e.g., digital services, trades, or retail pop-ups on Queen Street).
- **Regional Workforce Forums:** Host annual workforce roundtables with employers, schools, and post-secondary institutions to align local needs with training pipelines.

Implementation Tools

- **Grants:** Explore Government of Alberta and federal youth employment programs (e.g., Canada Summer Jobs, Youth Employment and Skills Strategy).
- **Shared Services:** Pool resources with Lamont County and Fort Saskatchewan to fund a regional youth/workforce coordinator.
- **KPIs:** Track number of youth hired locally, apprenticeship placements, and service jobs created as key indicators of workforce progress.

Conclusion

By expanding local employment options, building direct partnerships with post-secondary institutions, and fostering entrepreneurship, Bruderheim can create a **youth and workforce strategy that retains families, supplies industry, and builds resilience**. A strong local labour pipeline not only benefits young residents but also makes the community more attractive to businesses seeking stability and growth.

Youth Workforce Roadmap

Timeframe	Priority Actions	Key Partners	Expected Outcomes
Short-Term (0–2 years)	• Attract service-sector anchors (grocery, café, childcare) to create entry-level jobs. • Launch municipal youth hiring incentives (\$500–\$1,000 per hire). • Use Government of Alberta STEP program for summer student roles in Town and community organizations.	Local businesses, Alberta STEP program, Bruderheim School	• 10–20 new youth jobs created annually. • More visible youth participation in local economy.
Medium-Term (2–5 years)	• Establish training partnerships with NAIT, NorQuest, and Lakeland College for trades and service courses. • Create apprenticeship pipelines with Alberta Industrial Heartland employers. • Host annual Workforce Roundtable with employers, schools, and post-secondary institutions.	AIHA, NAIT, NorQuest, Lakeland College, local employers	• First cohort of local apprenticeships placed. • Local students access post-secondary training without leaving the region.
Long-Term (5+ years)	• Develop seniors’ housing and care facilities tied to healthcare training partnerships. • Expand entrepreneurship supports (youth micro-grants, business incubator spaces on Queen Street). • Create regional youth coordinator role (shared with Lamont County, Fort Saskatchewan).	CMHC, Alberta Seniors Housing, Rural Development Network, Lamont County	• New industries and services employ local youth. • Sustainable local labour pipeline across service, trades, and care sectors.

Key Success Indicators

- Increase in youth employment within Bruderheim (baseline to be established in 2025).
- Number of apprenticeship or co-op placements per year.
- Growth in local service jobs tied to Queen Street revitalization.
- Retention of families and young workers in Bruderheim over the next decade.

Action Plan

While Bruderheim's opportunities are clear, its ability to act is constrained by the **limited staff and council capacity** typical of small municipalities. This means the town cannot shoulder every responsibility internally. However, these limitations are not insurmountable. By leveraging **regional partnerships** (e.g., Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association, neighboring municipalities, and post-secondary institutions), engaging **external consultants** for technical projects, and adopting **shared services models** (such as regional grant-writing or investment attraction), Bruderheim can extend its reach well beyond its administrative size. In this way, implementation challenges are not barriers, but catalysts for collaboration and innovation.

The *Bruderheim Economic Development Feasibility Study* highlights both the opportunities and challenges facing the community as it seeks to strengthen its role within Alberta's Industrial Heartland. To translate these findings into practical steps, this Action Plan provides a structured roadmap for implementation. It is designed to be phased, measurable, and adaptable as conditions evolve.

Purpose of the Action Plan

The Action Plan moves Bruderheim from **analysis to implementation**. While the SWOT, commercial gap analysis, and stakeholder engagement process identify the town's current state and opportunities, this section outlines **how to act on those findings** in a deliberate and achievable way.

Specifically, the Action Plan aims to:

- Provide a **phased timeline** (short-, medium-, and long-term) for economic development initiatives.
- Identify **responsible parties and partners** needed for success.
- Establish **clear performance indicators (KPIs)** that allow progress to be measured and reported back to Council and the community.
- Balance **economic development goals** with the **social dynamics** of the community, ensuring that growth supports quality of life and civic cohesion.

Guiding Considerations

The Action Plan is grounded in several key considerations that emerged during this study:

1. **Leverage Industrial Proximity** – Bruderheim’s location within Alberta’s Industrial Heartland remains its most significant competitive advantage. The plan emphasizes aligning local development with industrial growth, while diversifying into new sectors.
2. **Strengthen Local Services** – Commercial leakage is significant. Addressing gaps in grocery, healthcare, dining, childcare, and financial services will reduce outflow, improve quality of life, and retain spending in the community.
3. **Revitalize Queen Street** – The town’s main street is a focal point for identity and vitality. Redevelopment and infill are essential to create the building stock needed for cafes, restaurants, and boutiques.
4. **Enhance Civic Culture** – Concerns about NIMBY-ism, reputational risk, and negative social media dynamics must be addressed proactively. The plan includes strategies to foster a more welcoming and business-friendly environment.
5. **Regional Collaboration** – Bruderheim cannot act in isolation. Partnerships with Alberta’s Industrial Heartland Association, neighbouring municipalities, and post-secondary institutions are critical to attract investment and build workforce capacity.
6. **Investment Readiness** – Infrastructure, digital connectivity, and supportive policies must keep pace with growth to position Bruderheim as truly open for business.

Structure of the Action Plan

The Action Plan is organized into three phases:

- **Short-Term (0–2 years):** Foundational actions focused on setting the tone, improving perceptions, and filling immediate service gaps.
- **Medium-Term (3–5 years):** Strategic initiatives that strengthen Queen Street, incentivize anchor tenants, and improve digital infrastructure.
- **Long-Term (5+ years):** Transformational projects, including mixed-use redevelopment, sector diversification, and deepened regional collaboration.

Each phase includes specific actions, identified leads, and measurable KPIs. The plan is **iterative**, meaning progress should be evaluated annually, with adjustments made based on new conditions or opportunities.

Expected Outcomes

By implementing this Action Plan, Bruderheim will:

- Improve its reputation as a **welcoming community for businesses and investors**.
- Reduce commercial leakage and **retain more resident spending locally**.
- Attract new industries and **diversify beyond oil and gas dependency**.
- Revitalize Queen Street as a **vibrant main street destination**.
- Strengthen civic culture and foster a **collaborative, forward-looking community identity**.
- Position itself as a **resilient, investment-ready municipality** with strong regional partnerships.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Successful implementation of the *Bruderheim Economic Development Feasibility Study* requires more than action—it requires consistent monitoring, reporting, and adjustment. This Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) framework ensures that progress is tracked, outcomes are transparent, and the plan remains responsive to changing conditions.

Purpose of Monitoring & Evaluation

- Provide **accountability** to Council, residents, and businesses.
- Measure whether initiatives are achieving intended outcomes.
- Identify barriers early and adjust strategies before resources are misallocated.
- Demonstrate value to potential partners and funders.

Reporting Structure

- **Quarterly Updates:** Administration provides Council with progress updates on short-term action items, noting achievements, delays, or adjustments required.
- **Annual Report:** An annual Economic Development Progress Report is presented to Council and shared with the public. It summarizes KPIs, key initiatives, success stories, and next steps.
- **Mid-Plan Review (Year 3):** At the halfway point of implementation, a formal review will assess overall progress, update KPIs if necessary, and recalibrate timelines.

- **End-of-Plan Evaluation (Year 5):** A comprehensive review evaluates outcomes against objectives, informing the next strategy cycle.

Roles & Responsibilities

- **Town Administration:** Tracks progress on each initiative, gathers KPI data, and prepares reports.
- **Council:** Provides oversight, approves adjustments, and communicates progress to the public.
- **Partners:** Alberta Industrial Heartland Association, regional municipalities, and post-secondary institutions contribute data and support for relevant initiatives.
- **Business Community:** Provides feedback through surveys and ambassador groups to gauge sentiment and impact.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

KPIs are aligned with the Action Plan phases and include both **quantitative** and **qualitative** measures:

- Number of new businesses attracted and retained.
- Percentage reduction in retail/service leakage.
- Occupancy rate on Queen Street.
- Broadband coverage and adoption rates.
- Resident sentiment (survey results on “welcoming to business” culture).
- Number of regional partnership agreements signed.
- Year-over-year employment rate improvements.

Communication & Transparency

- **Public-Facing Dashboard:** A simple, visually accessible dashboard (online or in annual reports) allows residents to see progress at a glance.
- **Community Check-Ins:** Regular forums or town halls ensure residents remain informed and engaged.

Conclusion

The Bruderheim Economic Development Feasibility Study confirms that the town stands at a pivotal juncture. On one hand, its strategic location within Alberta’s Industrial Heartland, affordable housing, available land, and strong community spirit provide a compelling foundation for growth. On the other, governance challenges, a limited retail and service mix, and reputational risks tied to community division constrain its ability to fully capitalize on these advantages .

A Town with Competitive Strengths

Bruderheim benefits from its adjacency to more than \$40 billion in regional industrial investment, extensive highway and rail access, and affordable residential and commercial land. These assets provide a natural advantage for industrial support services, logistics, and value-added manufacturing. The community also boasts high levels of homeownership, strong volunteerism, and a family-friendly environment—all of which support retention of a stable resident base .

Persistent Gaps and Barriers

Despite these strengths, Bruderheim faces significant weaknesses that limit economic momentum. Its small population base constrains the market for local services. Queen Street, the community’s main street, lacks the building stock required to house cafés, restaurants, or boutiques, hindering revitalization goals. The town is missing essential amenities such as a full-service grocery store, pharmacy, family dining options, and childcare facilities, resulting in substantial commercial leakage to surrounding communities .

Stakeholder engagement further revealed concerns about governance, transparency, and civic culture. Public infighting, social media hostility, and opposition to certain businesses have fostered a perception of Bruderheim as unwelcoming to investment. This reputational challenge emerged as one of the most pressing threats, with stakeholders warning that potential investors have already been discouraged by divisive behavior .

Opportunities for Renewal

The path forward lies in targeted interventions that address both infrastructure gaps and community culture. Revitalizing Queen Street through infill and mixed-use development, expanding retail and service offerings, and improving digital connectivity will directly strengthen investment readiness. Equally important is rebuilding trust and confidence within the community through transparent communication, structured engagement, and a proactive “Welcoming Bruderheim” initiative.

Regional collaboration will be central to Bruderheim’s success. Leveraging partnerships with the Alberta Industrial Heartland Association, neighbouring municipalities, and post-secondary institutions will allow the town to share infrastructure solutions, market investment opportunities, and develop workforce capacity.

Toward an Investment-Ready Future

Bruderheim is partially investment-ready: it offers affordable land and location advantages but must address governance challenges, commercial gaps, and main street revitalization before it can fully capture its potential. The Action Plan outlined in this study provides a phased, measurable framework to improve readiness and resilience.

Ultimately, Bruderheim’s future will be determined not by its location alone but by its ability to create a welcoming, collaborative, and forward-looking civic culture. With deliberate action, transparent leadership, and community buy-in, Bruderheim can reposition itself as a resilient, diversified, and investment-ready hub in Alberta’s Industrial Heartland.

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Insights from 13 Ways to Kill Your Community

One interview respondent recommended we read *13 Ways to Kill Your Community* as a part of this research. This is what we found.

Doug Griffiths' book *13 Ways to Kill Your Community* has become a touchstone for rural and small-town leaders across Canada. It identifies common pitfalls that undermine community vitality and economic resilience. Several of these “ways” directly reflect the challenges Bruderheim faces today, as identified through this study. By explicitly linking local findings to this broader framework, the town can better understand where it is vulnerable—and how to act differently.

Key Parallels

1. Don't Attract Business

Griffiths warns that communities fail when they make it difficult for new enterprises to enter. In Bruderheim, stakeholder interviews revealed a culture of resistance and even hostility to certain businesses, such as liquor stores. Negative social media campaigns and tense public hearings reinforce the perception of Bruderheim as unwelcoming, directly aligning with this pitfall.

2. Don't Engage Youth

A lack of entry-level service jobs, apprenticeships, or youth-oriented spaces forces young people to leave town or commute. This was one of the most consistent concerns raised by stakeholders. Without pathways for youth to contribute and earn locally, the town risks long-term demographic decline—exactly the trap Griffiths identifies.

3. Shop Elsewhere

Griffiths cautions that when residents take their spending outside town, local economies wither. Bruderheim's commercial leakage to Fort Saskatchewan and Lamont is significant,

driven by the absence of a grocery store, pharmacy, dining, and childcare. This pattern weakens local businesses and discourages new investment.

4. Live in the Past

Communities that cling to what “used to be” often struggle to adapt. In Bruderheim, the divide between those seeking small-town quiet and those seeking growth reflects this dynamic. While preserving character is important, an overreliance on nostalgia can stall progress.

5. Don’t Take Responsibility

Griffiths stresses that communities fail when they wait for others—governments, industry, outsiders—to solve their problems. Bruderheim’s repeated reliance on studies without follow-through has created skepticism. Several residents declined to participate in interviews, citing: *“This has been done before. Nothing ever comes of it.”* This echoes Griffiths’ warning about responsibility and accountability.

Implications for Bruderheim

The parallels between Griffiths’ lessons and Bruderheim’s realities are striking. They highlight that Bruderheim’s challenges are not unique, but they are serious. The good news is that communities that deliberately **reverse these behaviors** often see rapid change.

- Attracting and supporting new businesses through incentives and a welcoming culture will counter reputational risks.
- Creating youth opportunities will secure the next generation of residents.
- Expanding retail and services will reduce leakage and strengthen the local economy.
- Revitalizing Queen Street will create visible progress that builds pride and confidence.
- Transparent leadership and consistent follow-through will restore community trust.

By recognizing how Bruderheim’s struggles mirror the cautionary lessons of *13 Ways to Kill Your Community*, leaders and residents can make intentional choices to move in the

opposite direction. Rather than resisting change, Bruderheim has the opportunity to embrace renewal, cooperation, and responsibility—laying the groundwork for a resilient and investable future.