



Town of Olds
Situation Analysis

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McRobbie Optamedia

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Introduction to the Situation Analysis

The Town of Olds has undertaken an ambitious program of development in recent years. One of the first Alberta communities to undertake a self-examination and sustainability planning program, it has made significant strides to move itself forward. This drive has been spearheaded by leaders in the community, some in the elected or bureaucratic parts of the Town, and others leading the business, educational and other pieces of the town.

McRobbie Optamedia was hired to guide Olds through a process that would help explore the brands of the Community and the Town, respectively. It was our job to recommend a plan of action for developing and articulating these two brands.

In order to understand the Town and the Community, we reviewed a variety of documents, including, but certainly not limited to: Olds Institute planning documents, Town of Olds planning, communications and human resources plans and strategy documents, as well as reference materials related to other bodies in the community such as Olds College and the Olds Institute for Community and Regional Development (OICRD).

Following that initial exploration, we conducted a broad assessment of perceptions through an online survey. This surveyed a large, diverse and statistically relevant sample of people from the Community of Olds. It sought to understand fundamental elements of the brands in question, as well as identify communication and perception gaps that, although not directly related to the “brands” will be vital when it comes to identifying specific strategies for expressing or proving these brands in the following phases of this project. This data also acts as a baseline, against which changes in attitudes and perceptions can be measured in the future.

To gain a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of brands in questions, and the trends revealed in the online survey, McRobbie Optamedia held two Focus Groups in Olds with a diverse group of Town employees, Town Councillors, Olds Institute members, and members of the broader community. Our staff also had the opportunity to tour the Community, including a visit to the impressive new Community Learning Campus.

We also explored how four other organizations with similar characteristics or related brands and sub-brands chose to represent themselves. From this, we were able to identify a series of best practices and more subtle distinctions to be used in the development of visual representations of the Town of Olds and the Community of Olds.

This document summarizes the thorough research conducted and compiles and synthesizes it into simple and clear recommendations for the development of visual tools to represent both the Town and the Community of Olds, and in doing so, also considers other related brands such as the Olds Institute.

Taken collectively, the measurement and analysis contained in this document should be viewed as an articulation of the current state. Following the development and execution of a

communications plan, further research should be conducted to assess the impact on the perceptions, bias and comprehension laid out here.

Although this document informs and will inform many different communications decisions, the two key recommendations at the conclusion of this document are:

1. How to create 2 distinct and/or related identities that represent the Town and the Community.
2. The central theme or themes that need to be expressed in this or these representations.

Enjoy!

Section 1: Online Brand Perceptions Survey

Key Findings Report

Introduction

The Town of Olds Brand Perceptions Survey was designed to identify and gain an understanding around people's perceptions, interactions and experiences with the "Olds brand". The online survey was intended to reach a broad cross-section of Olds and surrounding area residents. In conjunction with facilitated sessions hosted by McRobbie Optamedia in Olds, the online survey makes up the primary research component of the Situation Analysis, January 14, 2011.

Methodology

The survey questions were administered through an online survey platform, Survey Gizmo. There were 20 survey questions presented in multiple choice, ranking and open response formats. The survey questions were categorized into three general areas:

1. Demographics
2. The Town of Olds
3. The Community of Olds

Statistical Significance

We received a strong response of 237 completed surveys. Given a population of approximately 7,500, the results are statistically significant with 95% confidence and a 6% margin of error.

Key Findings Report

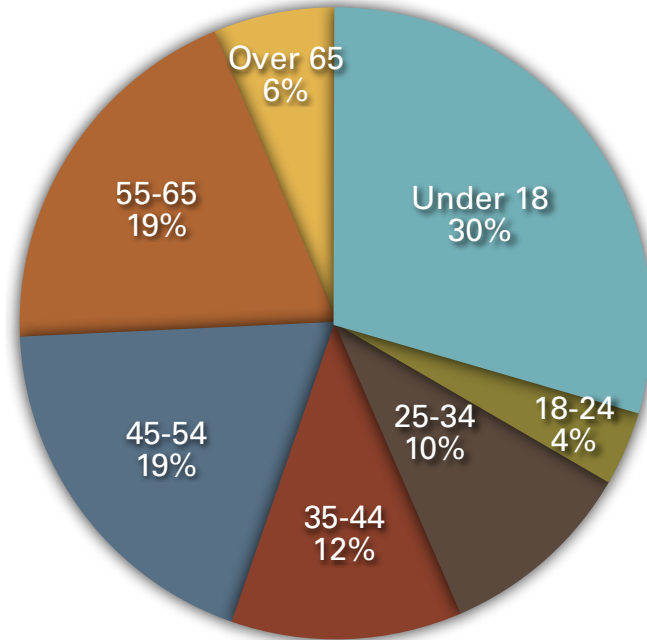
This report presents the survey results for each question, with some commentary throughout.

Based on our experience with similar online surveys, we were surprised by the large number of respondents who chose to answer the open response questions. We have found that people often skip open response questions when they are not required. In this survey it was nearly always the case that the vast majority chose to provide as with an answer. This is a positive reflection of the level of engagement people feel with the Town and Community of Olds. Given the high response rate it was not always possible to include all of the answers in this report. In those cases we have provided a representative sampling, highlighting the major trends.

Throughout the report we have included "**So What?**" sections that provide deeper analysis and speak to significance of the results. These sections are collected in the summary at the end of the report and will help inform the recommendations we will be making at the end of the Situation Analysis.

Demographics

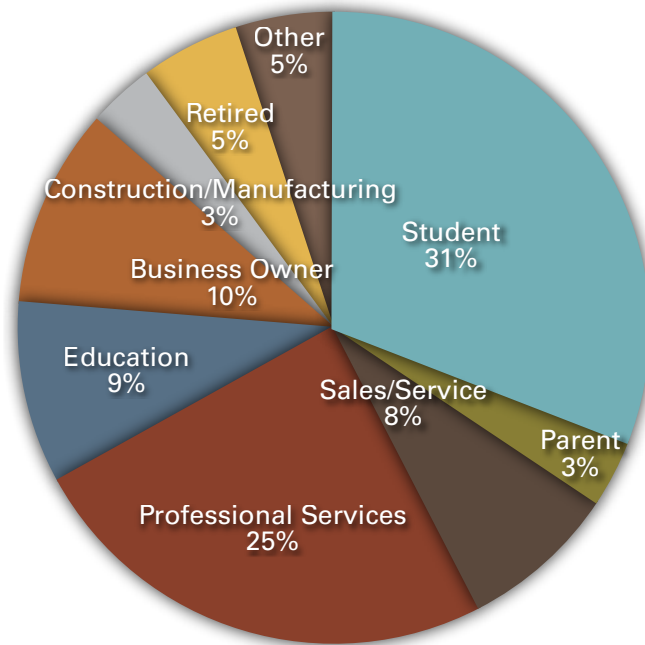
1. Which age category do you fall into?



The survey showed a healthy distribution among age groups. A disproportionate number of people under the age of 18 answered the survey due to the survey's distribution in some schools. Where appropriate, this demographic will be removed when analyzing results.

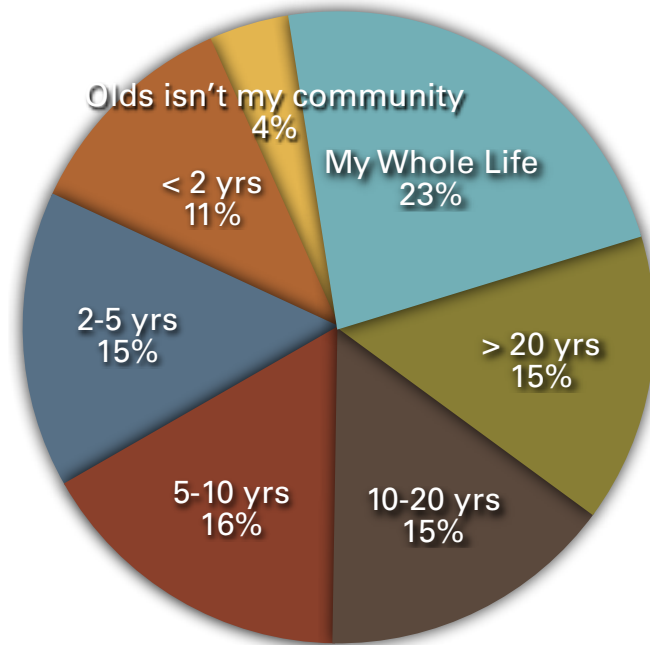
2. What do you do for a living?

- Student
- Professional Services
- Construction/Manufacturing
- Parent
- Education
- Retired
- Sales/Service
- Business Owner
- Other



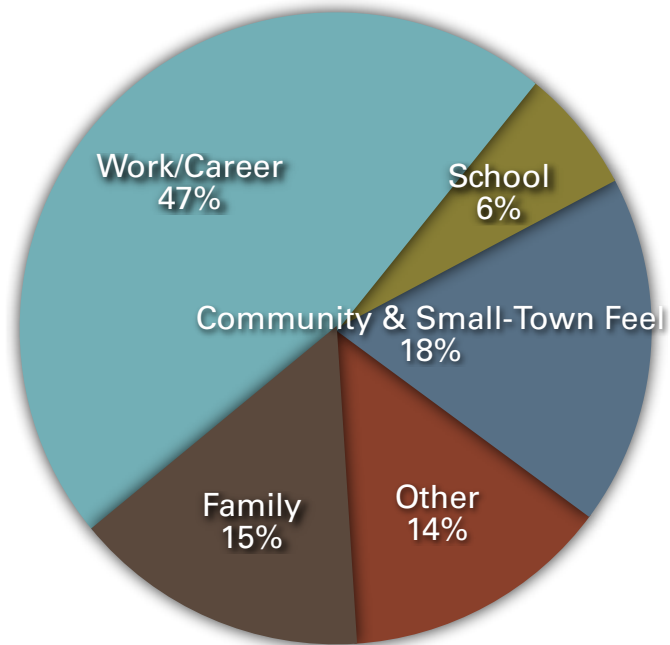
Once again, we see a large group of students (31%). Other substantial groups include: Professional Services (25%), Business Owner (10%), Education (9%) and Sales/Services (8%).

3. A) How long have you considered Olds to be your community?



The survey reached a wide variety of people who have considered Olds to be their community for differing amounts of time.

3. B) Why did you choose to make Olds your community?

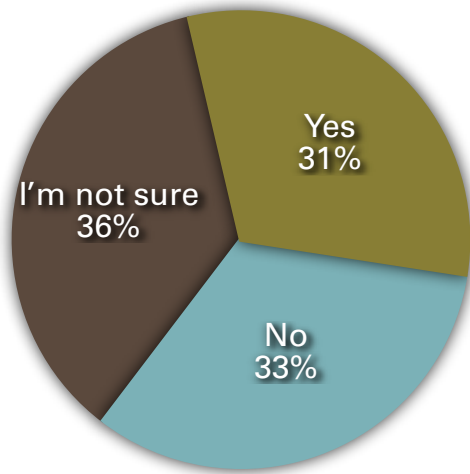


Nearly half of respondents have chosen to make Olds their community for work/career reasons. Respondents who have lived in Olds their whole life were not asked this question.

Responses in the other category were largely individual's clarifications or explanations that could have fallen under the categories provided. These are some examples:

- "for the kids' – education, health, outside interests/sports"*
- "it is a growing community"*
- "married someone from Olds"*
- "small but close to Calgary"*
- "we got an awesome house here"*

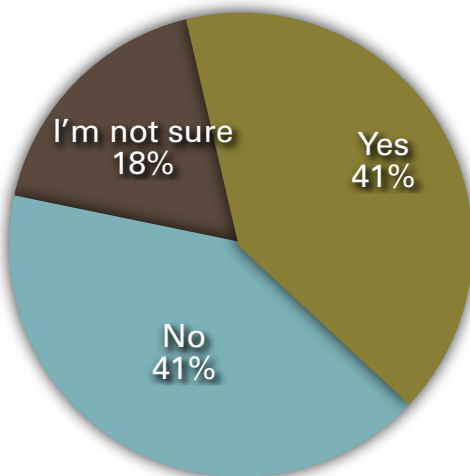
4. A) When you think of Olds, do you make a distinction in your mind between the **Town of Olds** (i.e. Town Council, infrastructure, facilities and services provided by the Town) and the **Community of Olds** (i.e. the people, places, institutions, businesses and values that make up the community)?



The majority of respondents (69%) either do not make a distinction between the Town of Olds and the Community of Olds (33%), or answered "I'm not sure, I've never thought about this before" (36%).

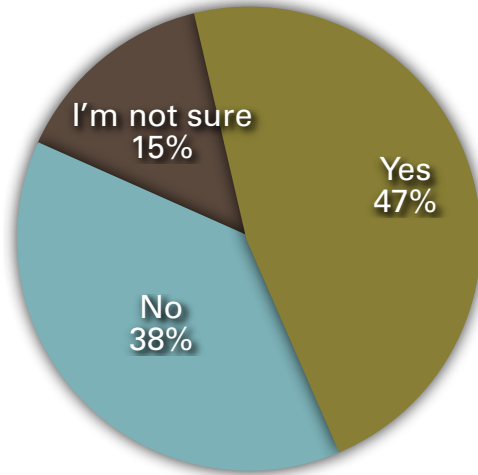
When the respondents under the age of 18 are removed from the data, the percentage of people who are unsure decreases, but the majority of respondents (59%) still do not having a clear distinction in their minds.

Under 18 Demographic Removed



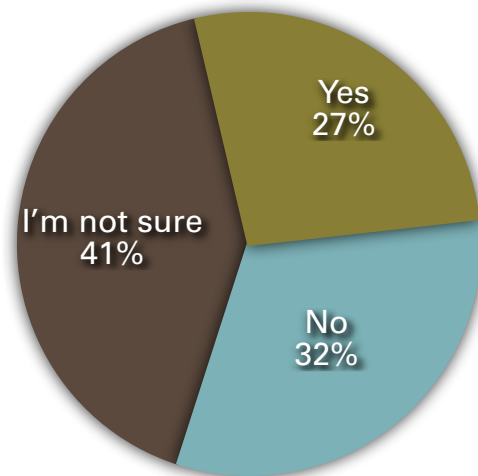
However, when we drill down further and look at those over the age of 18 who have considered Olds to be their community their whole life, or more than 20 years, we see that nearly half (47%) make a distinction in their minds between the Town and the Community.

Respondents over 18 who have lived in Olds their whole life or 20+ yrs



When we look at the responses of people who have considered Olds to be their community for less than 5 years, we see the opposite trend – they are more likely to be unsure about there being a distinction in their minds between the Town and the Community.

Respondents who have lived in Olds less than 5 yrs



So What?

From this question we see that a significant portion of respondents make a clear distinction between the Town of Olds and the Community of Olds.

On the other hand, the results also demonstrate that there is a strong association between the Town and the community in people's minds, given the large number of respondents who do not make a distinction in their minds or who aren't sure.

This speaks to the reality that, in some ways, the Town and Community are intrinsically linked while, in other ways, they are clearly distinct. When developing a visual brand identity, it will be important that both the differences and similarities between the Town and the Community are captured and expressed.

The results also suggest the longer a person is a part of the Community of Olds, the more likely they are to make a distinction in their minds between the Town and the Community. Newcomers are not as likely to see a clear distinction, implying that the Town of Olds may have an important opportunity to communicate what the Community of Olds is and stands for with new residents. It may also be the case that residents simply become more equipped to articulate the differences as they have had more specific interactions with the Town and Community.

The next question digs deeper into the perceived differences between the Town and Community.

4. B) Why do you make this distinction between the Town of Olds and the Community of Olds, or what are the differences you perceive?

Of the 74 people who answered "Yes" in the previous question, 65 took the time to explain what they perceive the distinction between the Town of Olds and the Community of Olds to be. For the purposes of this report, we will highlight the general trends exhibited in people's comments.

*A common theme in people's responses was that the **town is "government"** while the **community is the "people"**. Here are some examples of how this was expressed:*

- "Town is legislative and public services, community is organizations and events"*
- "The community is the people – not elected officials or staff at the Town"*
- "The council changes, the people do not"*
- "Government v.s. public"*

*People also expressed a **disconnect between the Town of Olds and their day-to-day lives**. Here are some examples of how this was expressed:*

- "The community of Olds is people, day-to-day living"*
- "The town office is for administration of taxes and utilities and I have never really seen the Town participate in community events"*
- "I feel that there is a difference since I am not involved in the political side. It is possible to live in Olds and not be greatly affected by the politics. Obviously there are politics that make living in Olds unique, but generally I would say the two are distinct."*
- "I have had little involvement in the "Town" other than briefly when opening our business. Other than that it just feels separate from the day to day things I do in town."*
- "Until you are actively involved with different areas of the Town of Olds I don't think of them when thinking of the actual [community] of Olds. The Town of Olds is just the place that sends me a utility bill and I pay my property taxes at. I realize they are much more than that but when thinking about Olds as a [community] I don't consider them as part of that perception."*

*Another way the distinction was described was in the sense of **business v.s. culture**. Here are some examples of how this was expressed:*

- "I see the Town of Olds as its own entity, the business side of running the Town and the Community as the people and the culture of Olds."*
- "Business vs social"*
- "Because the Town of Olds is a corporate business operation while the community is about people, place, and pride and most people don't make corporate local government a priority concern in their lives. What most often is a priority concern for them is family, friends, faith and financial stability"*
- "I perceive the town of Olds to be more infrastructure -based (e.g. town council and dept. of works), and the community of Olds consists of various organizations (e.g. Kiwanis, church groups). I find the people of Olds generally very friendly and willing to serve in the community"*

Some respondents saw the two being distinct but closely related, **directly influencing one another**. Here are some examples of how this was expressed:

- *“Although a well-formed town and community often go hand-in-hand, I view them as cause and effect as opposed to being the same thing”*
- *“I see the key difference as being one, the Town provides services and programs to support the community. The other, the community is the sum total of all the things and people that happen and live here - supported by the Town and other agencies, but in my opinion there are two concepts being addressed”*
- *“The Corporate structure has the responsibility to ensure there is the infrastructure to support its citizens. The Citizens have the responsibility to add the dimensions of quality through volunteering and offering other services”*
- *“Town of Olds is the machine that makes the rest of the town run”*

People also voiced **frustration with the Town**, contrasting their experiences with the Town v.s. Community. Here are some examples of how this was expressed:

- *“I enjoy the community of Olds but I am disappointed in the Town of Olds and it's inability to attract new businesses and industries”*
- *“I really like being a part of the Community of Olds but sometimes the Town of Olds leaves me a bit baffled”*
- *“Town of Olds is poorly managed. Staff are rigid and dogmatic. Town can do all kinds of “dumb” things but if a garbage lid is not closed you are punished! Town does not listen!”*
- *“The town does not care what the people think, they simply do it their way, the community listens and things do change”*
- *“It's the people that make community, not what the elected officials deem what's good for the town. Many times they are totally out of touch with what people want and need”*

There were also a handful of comments that highlight how people perceive the Town of Olds is influenced by **how the Town talks about itself**. Here are some examples of how this was expressed:

- *“Because, in conversations with other residents of Olds, they, like me, differentiate between “we” and “them”, the latter referring to the town office and employees.”*
- *“The identity of the Town of Olds has seems more closely aligned with the the vision, goals and purpose of the Olds Institute and has moved away from the more traditional mandate of municipal governance.”*

So What?

It is interesting to see the distinction between the Town and the Community that people see and feel. At its simplest, the Town is “government” and the Community is “people.” This was also expressed as “business” vs. “culture.” People often feel a disconnect between the Town and their daily lives while expressing a stronger sense of ownership towards the Community. They also recognize that the Town directly influences the Community.

The Town, as a service provider, corporate entity and governing body, will naturally have a very different relationship with people than the general community (a much more abstract concept). The relationship between the Town and its residents is a much more structured type of relationship where both sides have responsibilities to one another – the Town to provide services and the residents have to pay taxes, etc. These responsibilities can, at times, cause strain, but the relationship remains stable because of the inherent structure in the relationship. That is, the structure provides both stability and strain in the relationship.

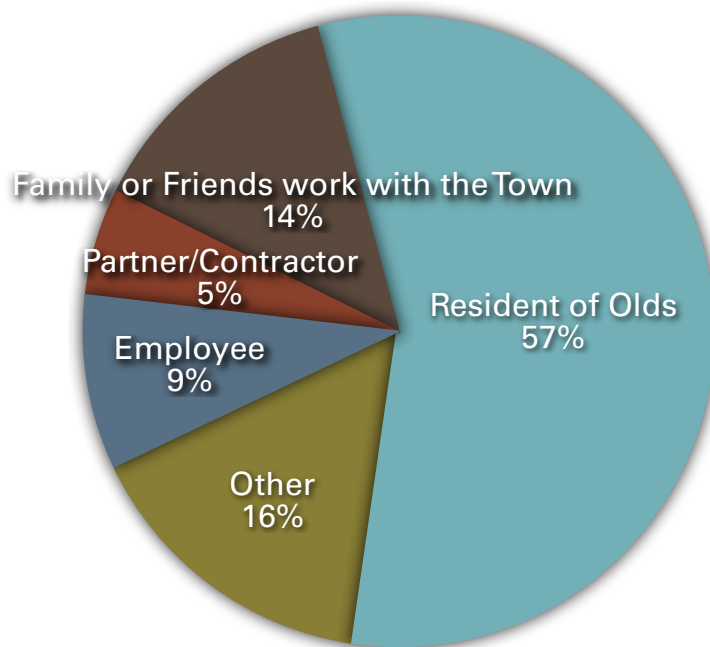
When developing the brand identity it will be important to allow for this distinction between the Town and the Community to be expressed, while at the same time acknowledging their close connection.

The brand that is developed needs to authentically represent the Community as a whole. The Town is a part of that Community, just as individuals, the Olds Institute, business, churches, clubs, schools, and many other organizations are all parts of the Community and are all involved in building the Community. The main difference between the Town and other parts of the community is that the Town has a more clearly and perhaps narrowly defined mandate to build the community by providing services and governance. The difference is primarily functional. The Town is also the only other stakeholder accountable to and in a direct relationship with all the other stakeholders who are part of the Community.

Town of Olds

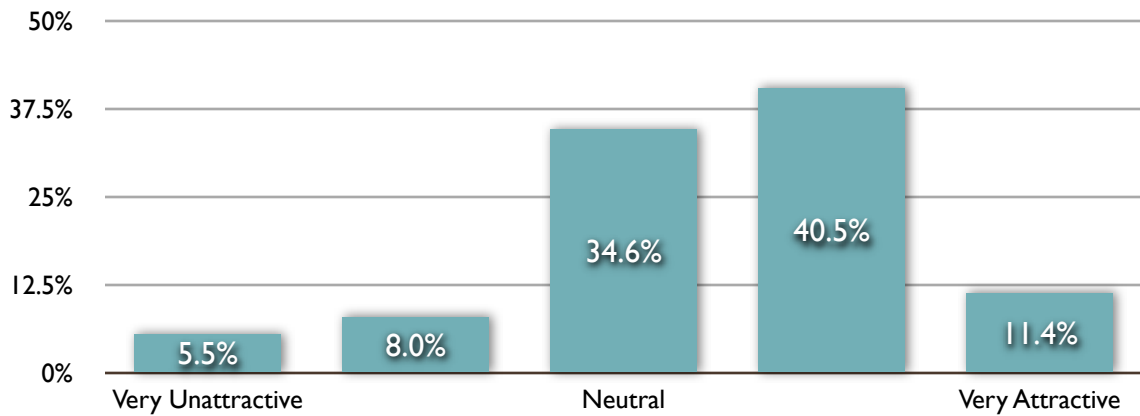
From this point forward in the survey, we will be making a distinction between the "**Town of Olds**" and the "**Community of Olds**". The following set of questions deals with the Town of Olds, meaning the services, departments and facilities operated by the Town under the direction of Town Council.

5. Which best describes your relationship with the Town of Olds?



The majority of respondents (57%) have no personal connection to the Town of Olds, but are a resident of the Town or surrounding area. This question allows us to drill down the data to look at what specific groups are thinking. Responses in the "Other" category did not provide any further insights, and could be generally added to the "Resident of Olds" category (e.g. respondents clarified by stating "I live in Olds" rather than selecting the "Resident of Olds" option).

6. As an employer, how attractive do you perceive the Town of Olds to be?



Roughly half of respondents (52%) perceive the Town of Olds to be a somewhat attractive or very attractive employer; 35% are neutral.

Employees, partners/contractors, and respondents who have friends or family in either of those roles are more likely to see the Town of Olds as a somewhat attractive or very attractive employer (64%); 24% are neutral.

So What?

People who have a better understanding of or closer connection with the Town of Olds are more likely to see it as an attractive employer. This suggests that employees and others linked to the Town are important brand ambassadors. It also suggest how important communication is when recruiting employees so that potential candidates receive a full picture of who the Town of Olds is and what it offers as an employer.

People outside of Olds are likely to be less closely connected, and as such, may be less likely to see the town in a favorable light with relation to their role as an employer. Should the Town of Olds be looking to recruit employees from outside of the community it may be advantageous to target people who already have some level of personnel connection to the community (e.g. family ties in Olds or grads of Olds College, etc.).

7. What makes the Town of Olds an attractive or unattractive employer?

190 people (80%) took the time to explain what they thought makes the Town of Olds an attractive or unattractive employer. Many respondents misunderstood the question, and answered why the community of Old provides good opportunities for employment. Those answers are not included in the analysis of this question.

For the purposes of this report we will highlight the general trends with examples. There were significantly more comments about why the Town of Olds is an attractive employer vs. an unattractive employer (which is reflective of the results of the previous question).

Responses from employees are identified with asterisk*.

What makes the Town of Olds an attractive employer?

The most common theme was **compensation, benefits and stability**. Here are some examples of how this was expressed:

- "AUPE union and pension"
- "Good wage and benefit package"
- "Excellent benefits and salaries"*
- "Good wages for the area, reliable employment"
- "Steady work, reasonable pay, good benefits, and good hours"
- "Tax payers perceive compensation packages paid by the Town to be higher than those of the private sector, making it an attractive employer."
- "Job security"
- "Municipal government employment is stable, better than average pay and benefits"

Another common answer referred to the **people and the environment**. Here are some examples of how this was expressed:

- "Good people to work with, good workplace environment"*
- "I believe they treat their employees fairly and strive to give them a good working environment"
- "Focus on people"*
- "Excellent staff"*
- "The people"
- "The connection between management & staff"*
- "The CAO is leading the entire organization toward a significantly improved culture - fair and consistent implementation of policies and procedures, promotion of a learning culture, and opportunities to try new initiatives"*
- "I like the people who work there and think it would be a stimulating environment"
- "Mostly it feels like the council and mayor and other staff really care about the people in Olds"

Many people commented on the **work itself** and the **type of organization the Town of Olds is**. Here are some examples of how this was expressed:

- *“Interesting and varied work”**
- *“The geographic area of jurisdiction; A wide variety of work assignments”**
- *“An opportunity to better understand how municipal govt. makes a difference for the community at large”*
- *“Sustainability commitment”**
- *“It seems to be a forwarding thinking organization - willing to take risks to promote Olds as a great place to live, work and play. The Council seems to function well and works well with administration - good role definition”*
- *“I visited the town office to drop off a resume and was very impressed with how professional it looks. We had also just moved here and the lady I gave my resume to was very helpful and gave us information about garbage pick up, phone books, etc. It seemed like a great environment. Also when I have seen your workers out they have always been ready with a smile!”*
- *“The Town of Olds seems to be very forward thinking and challenges the same from it's employees”**
- *“There seems to be a variety of employment opportunities that are well resourced making it an attractive employer.”*
- *“The Town of Olds is forward thinking and innovative”*

People also highlighted the **opportunities for growth** at the Town of Olds as being attractive. Here are some examples of how this was expressed:

- *“Growing town and growing opportunities for new positions”*
- *“Growing community with an interest in sustainability”*
- *“Potential of future growth and employment”*
- *“The town is expanding, creating jobs”*

What makes the Town of Olds an unattractive employer?

A small number of respondents wrote why they perceive the Town of Olds to be an **unattractive employer**. Here are some examples of how this was expressed:

- *“Challenges of working for and with the public - unattractive”*
- *“High turn over rate and would someone please smile”*
- *“Seems to be an “Old boys school” type of employer, you really have to know someone to be hired.”*
- *“Staff are not treated equally”**
- *“The employees do only what they are told to do, they do not think for themselves”*
- *“The less attractive aspect is that we remain in the 60th percentile for wages which is really very low compared to other communities within a one hour drive of Olds. we may lose good employees who choose to commute and earn a better living.”*

So What?

When asked to look at the Town of Olds from a different perspective (as an employer vs. a service provider) people were more likely to say positive things about the Town compared to other questions where more people expressed frustration or negative feelings toward the Town. It appears that even those who have had what might be expressed as frustrating experiences with the town still see it as an attractive employer.

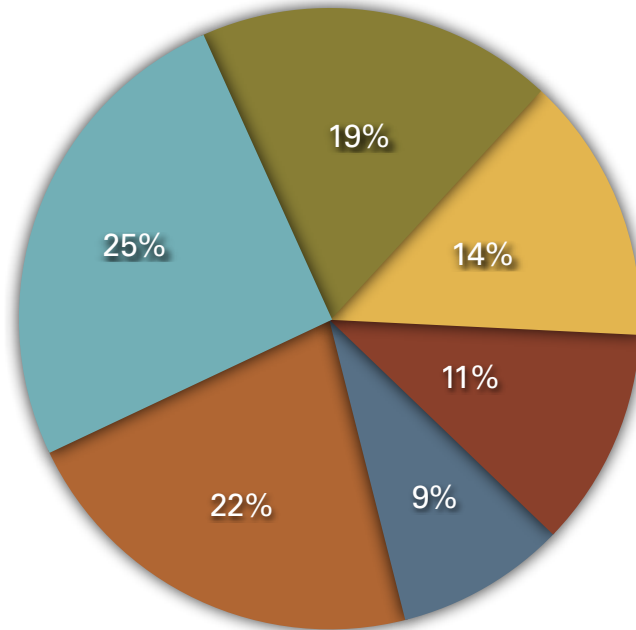
We recognize that, while employees can be great recruiters and advocates, it is important to be able to distinguish between the perceptions of employees and the perception of people who do not currently work for the town. There may be some conflict of interest or bias on the part of Town staff, making them feel responsible to speak highly of the organization that they are part of. For this reason, we have identified employee responses with an asterisk.

15 employees (out of 21 who participated in the survey) chose to answer this question. Comments from employees were nearly all positive and focused mainly on people, the organization and the work itself, though a few responses did mention wages and benefits.

The results suggest that non-employees may be more likely to see compensation, benefits, stability and opportunities for growth as attractive while current employees are more likely to mention the people, environment and work itself. However, due to the large number of respondents who misunderstood the question (referring to employment opportunities in the Community rather than the Town as an employer) and the small number of employees who participated, the results cannot speak conclusively to this observation.

8. As a service provider, do you see the Town as a:

- Supportive older brother (25%)
- Younger sibling who hates helping with the dishes (19%)
- Team Captain (14%)
- Reliable butler (11%)
- Janitor (9%)
- Other (22%)



A quarter of respondents (25%) see the Town as a **supportive older brother**. The supportive brother could be interpreted as someone who is there when you need him, fulfilling his role, but not overly involved in your life. An older brother might also be associated with authority.

19% of respondents see the Town as a **younger sibling who hates helping with the dishes**. The younger sibling could be interpreted as someone you are related to, but who is slacking off or not fulfilling his/her expected role.

14% of respondents see the Town as a **team captain**. The team captain could be interpreted as a person who provides leadership and direction, and who is in a position of authority and responsibility. Leaders drive innovation and support the team, making this assessment a very flattering one.

11% of respondents see the Town as a **reliable butler**. The reliable butler could be interpreted as someone who is serving you, anticipating your needs and providing timely support and assistance. This choice suggests more of a personal relationship based on trust and friendship.

9% of respondents see the Town as a **janitor**. The janitor probably has less positive associations, and could be interpreted as a person who simply cleans up after others, largely behind the

scenes and unnoticed. This is a less innovative or proactive assessment, but does seem to recognize that services are provided, often out of sight of the public.

In the "Other" category people volunteered their own interpretations of how they saw the Town. These are very interesting descriptions, offering additional insights into how people view their relationship with the Town. Responses included:

- "A leader"
- "As a friend who sometimes gets taken advantage of"
- "Parent, we have some bumps but with each child we learn"
- "A crotchety neighbour who is sometimes nice"
- "A friend to turn to if you need help/advice"
- "A supportive cousin"
- "A twin, sometimes one way and sometimes another"
- "The child who takes his bat and ball and goes home when he doesn't get his own way"
- "The hand that rocks the cradle"
- "A mother. Someone who is there for you and supports you in your endeavors but sometimes has to let you do things on your own"
- "A caretaker, handyman - ready and willing and able to monitor, fix, squeeze every nickel, and advise for future needs"
- "I did see it as a reliable butler but because of my association with the OAGSL network, I am beginning to see it as a team captain"

Employees, partners/contractors and respondents who have friends or family in either of those roles are more likely to see the Town of Olds as a **team captain** (21%). This is a positive indication suggesting that people with a better understanding of the Town see it taking more of a leadership role.

Respondents over 18 who have considered Olds to be their community for their whole life or 20+ years are less likely to see the Town as a **younger sibling** (15%) and more likely to see the Town as a **team captain** (15%) compared to respondents who have considered Olds to be their community for less than five years: 25% of these see the Town as a younger sibling and 6% as a team captain.

So What?

Respondents more closely related to the Town were more likely to see the Town in a leadership role (i.e. as a team captain). This trend has been seen elsewhere in the survey. This implies the Town is doing something correctly if people who know more about the Town and its operations are more likely to see it in a flattering light. It also highlights the opportunity the Town has to better communicate the leadership it is providing to its citizens.

People also seem to respond well to, and remember innovation and leadership when they see it in action, as demonstrated by this response:

- *“I did see it as a reliable butler but because of my association with the OAGSL network, I am beginning to see it as a team captain”*

It may be worthwhile, using innovative tools, to help people better understand the innovative role that the town is playing in community development.

9. What are the first three services provided by the Town of Olds that come to mind?

For the purposes of this report we will identify the top three responses and provide examples of other responses.

1. The **first** thought to come to most people’s minds were services related to **utilities and waste removal**: water, sewer, garbage collection/disposal, recycling, composting.
2. The **second** most cited service was related to **parks & recreation**, including recreation facilities: parks, recreation, swimming pool/aquatic center, playgrounds, green spaces, flowers, arena.
3. The **third** most popular response was services related to **roads and public works**: roads, infrastructure, road maintenance & repair, street cleaning, snow removal, sidewalk cleaning.

There was a wide variety of other responses. Here is a representative sampling:

- Taxes
- Emergency services – police, fire
- Business services – permits, licenses
- Community support services
- Governance - bylaw enforcement
- Library
- Public events - Old Fashion Christmas, Festival of Trees
- Town Council
- Walmart and other business (shows a possible misunderstanding of the question)
- Hospital/health care (shows a possible misunderstanding of the question)
- Schools & Education (shows a possible misunderstanding of the question)

So What?

Respondents are able to list a variety of services provided by the Town, suggesting general awareness around the services provided by the Town.

Respondents readily cited services related to parks & recreation which are closely related to what people also associate with the community, such as green spaces and recreation facilities. This demonstrates another way in which the Town and Community are closely connected.

It is also interesting that some respondents identified events such as Olds Fashioned Christmas as a service provided by the Town when in an earlier question a different respondent noted "I have never really seen the Town participate in community events."

This is representative of a wider perception gap that may exist. On one hand people feel that the Town is not a part of their day-to-day lives, while on the other hand, the Town is providing services people use on a daily basis. This is a communication challenge that could be addressed in Phase 2 of the Promoting Olds project.

10. What do you perceive the top priorities of the Town of Olds to be? Please rank in order of importance.

Ranking	Reason	Total Score*
1	Sustainable Community	851
2	Health, Social & Safety	740
3	Learning & Education	732
4	Technology & Innovation	605
5	Arts, Heritage & Culture	513

**Score is a weighted calculation. Items ranked first are valued higher than the following ranks, the score is the sum of all weighted rank counts.*

So What?

It appears the Town has been successful in communicating “sustainability” as a top priority. It is interesting that people perceive things like health and education to be priorities of the Town, although both are mainly delivered by provincially run institutions such as schools and hospitals.

Some of the items above do not necessarily define whether the town is innovative or progressive – things like health and safety are basic needs. Depending on whether you are trying to prove that you are doing what you are responsible to do, or whether you’re trying to show innovation, the messaging will change. Innovation and progressive thought can apply in all of these areas – more the “how” than the “what” – all those things are important, but equally important is how you practically approach and implement those areas.

11. If you had to choose one word to describe the Town of Olds, what would it be?

For the purposes of this report, we will present a representative sample of the responses given, highlighting observable trends.

Three words were mentioned by more than 10 respondents:

- “growing” (17)
- “progressive” (13)
- “friendly” (12)

A large number of respondents saw the Town in a positive light, choosing words such as (in no particular order):

- “progressive”
- “leader”
- “pro-active”
- “community” (“community spirit”, “community minded”)
- “friendly”
- “respected”
- “approachable”
- “dependable”
- “innovative”
- “welcoming”
- “stable”

On the other hand, roughly an equal number of respondents were more critical, choosing words such as (in no particular order):

- “old fashioned”
- “stagnant”
- “traditional”
- “unsupportive”
- “confused”
- “difficult”
- “disjointed”
- “distant”
- “lagging”

A number of people chose words around the idea of growth, including (in no particular order):

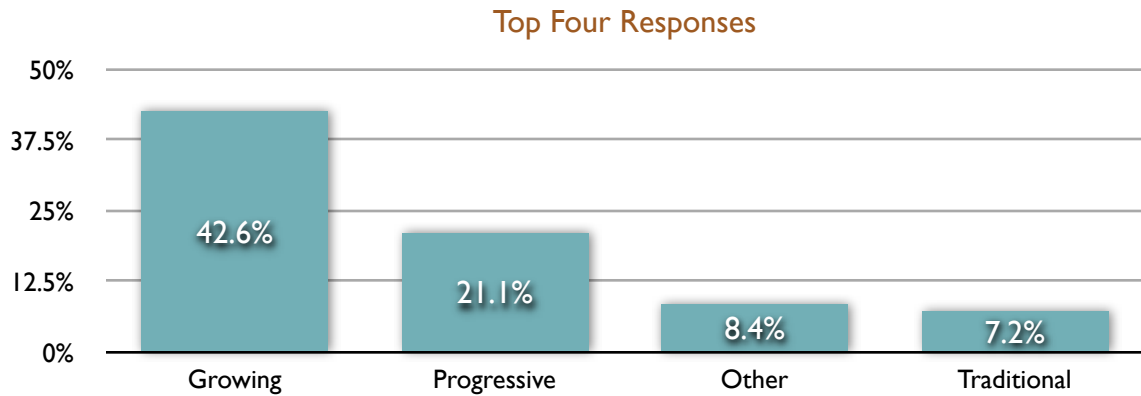
- “growing pains”
- “growing”
- “expanding”
- “upcoming”

So What?

“Growing” and “progressive” were two words that really stood out in terms of the number of mentions. This is especially interesting because the same words are the top two in the next question, suggesting they are accurate descriptors that generally resonate with respondents.

“Progressive” was also a term that came up repeatedly in the focus groups facilitated by McRobbie Optamedia.

12. How do you think other people in the community or surrounding areas view the Town of Olds?



Response	Count	%
Growing	101	42.6%
Progressive	50	21.1%
Other	20	8.4%
Traditional	17	7.2%
Learning	13	5.5%
Working Towards Sustainability	12	5.1%
Innovative	12	5.1%
Responsible	9	3.8%
Declining	3	1.3%

29% of those over the age of 18 who have lived in Olds their whole life or more than 20 years think other people view the Town of Olds as progressive (compared to 13% of those below the age of 18).

26% of employees, partners/contractors, and respondents who are their friends or family think other people view the Town of Olds as progressive.

So What?

This question functions as a confirmation of the previous question. People often externalize when asked to guess at what others think. Since they cannot know what someone else is thinking, they often project their own beliefs or understanding onto others, revealing some of their true opinions in the process.

“Growing” and “progressive” are the top two ways respondents believe outsiders view Olds. Both words were the most frequently cited in the previous question, suggesting their accuracy and resonance.

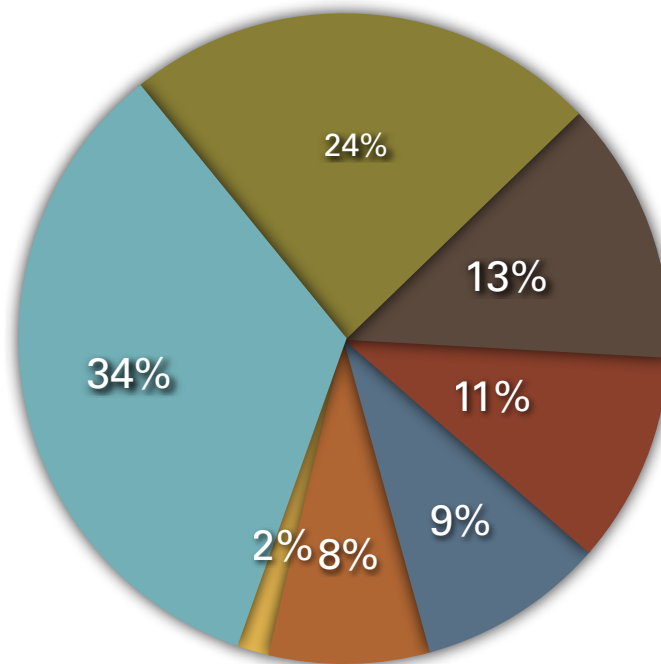
Those with more experience or a personnel connection with the Town of Olds are somewhat more likely to see it as progressive, a further confirmation.

Community of Olds

This final set of questions deals with the **Community of Olds**, meaning the people, landmarks, institutions, businesses and values that make up the broader community.

13. How would you describe the Community of Olds?

- Friends you don't see that often, but who you can count on in a pinch (34%)
- Loose, extended family - gets together for Christmas (24%)
- Acquaintances, but nothing more (13%)
- Close, nuclear family - gets together for dinner every night (11%)
- Stray dogs, fighting over leftovers (9%)
- Other (8%)
- Grandparents who are still fighting to stay internet free (2%)



The majority of respondents (58%) would describe the Community of Olds as either friends they can count on (34%) or extended family (24%). Both speak to a close-knit community typical of small towns.

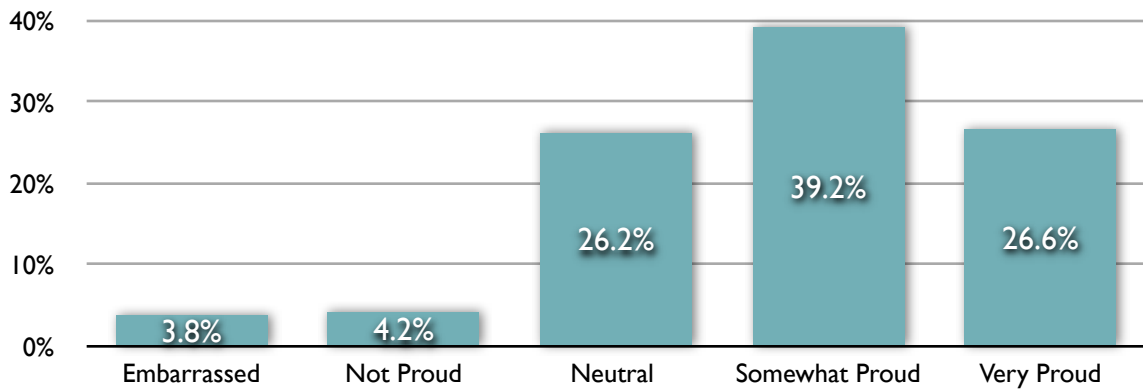
47% of those over the age of 18 who have lived in Olds their whole life, or more than 20 years see the Community of Olds as friends you might not see that often, but who you can count on in a pinch.

14. What do you love about Olds? Choose from the following options and rank in order of importance to you.

Ranking	Reason	Total Score*
1	Safe and friendly neighborhoods	1623
2	School and educational opportunities	1424
3	An ideal place to raise a family	1399
4	Beautiful parks and recreation facilities	1291
5	Professional or career opportunities	1063
6	Our history and heritage	985
7	Close-knit community	976
8	Arts and culture	898

Respondents appear to value the security and opportunity Olds provides them with. Security in the sense of safe and friendly neighborhoods, and opportunity in the sense of education, careers and being well set-up to raise a family.

15. How proud are you to be a part of the larger Community of Olds?



The majority of respondents (66%) are somewhat proud or very proud to be a part of the larger Community of Olds, suggesting a strong sense of ownership in the community.

77% of those over the age of 18 who have lived in Olds their whole life or more than 20 years are somewhat proud (42%) or very proud (35%) to be a part of the larger community of Olds. The same is true for respondents who are employees, partners/contractors, and respondents who are their friends or family.

So What?

The last three questions (13-15) confirm a strong sense of community in Olds where people can count on their neighbors, pursue educational and career opportunities, and raise a family in a close-knit environment. People are proud to be a part of the community of Olds, and that sense of ownership should be captured in the brand. People should be able to feel ownership in the brand in the same way they feel ownership in the Community.

16. If you had to choose one word to describe the broader Community of Olds, what would it be?

For the purposes of this report, we will present a representative sample of the responses given.

A majority of respondents described the Community in a positive light, choosing words such as:

- *“friendly”*
- *“progressive”*
- *“innovative”*
- *“safe”*
- *“co-operative”*
- *“supportive”*
- *“welcoming”*
- *“accepting”*
- *“clean”*
- *“close-knit”*
- *“diverse”*
- *“open”*
- *“opportunities”*
- *“great”/“good”/“nice”/“amazing” and other positive descriptors*

A smaller percentage of respondents had less positive things to say:

- *“traditional”*
- *“unnoticed”*
- *“conflicted”/“confused”*
- *“becoming unfamiliar”*
- *“boring”*
- *“close-minded”*
- *“cliquey”*

Other terms were used to describe the Community that are less easy to identify as either positive or negative:

- *“aging”*
- *“agriculture”/“farming”*
- *“Bible-based community”*
- *“historic”*
- *“changing”*
- *“conservative”*
- *“redneck”*
- *“expanding”/“growing”*
- *“home”*

- *“regional centre”*
- *“location”*
- *“lifestyle”*

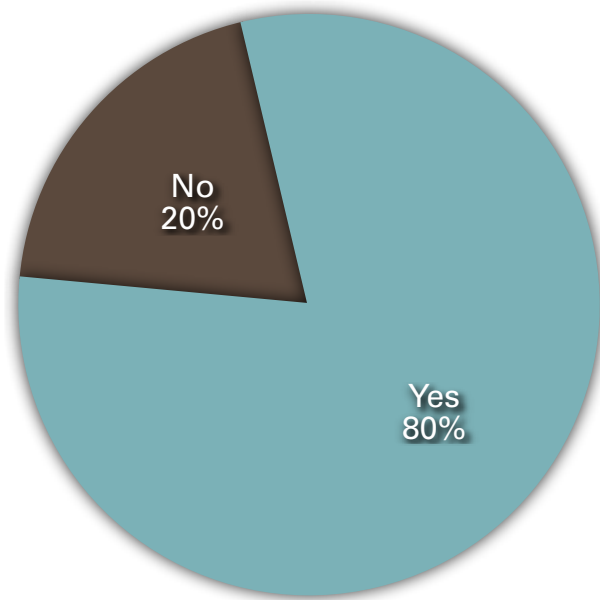
So What?

It is interesting to note that many of the same words used to describe the Town of Olds were also used to describe the Community of Olds, suggesting that people see the Town and Community in a similar light. The main difference, however, was that the relative percentage of positive words used to describe the Community was higher than the Town. This makes sense given the stronger sense of ownership people feel with the Community and also the more structured relationship people have with the Town.

It was noted in the focus groups facilitated by McRobbie Optamedia that it is sometimes difficult for newcomers to be integrated into the community – to feel accepted and engaged. The survey appears to reflect this as well, with examples of respondents describing the community as “cliquey”. However, these respondents are a minority and perhaps a reality of any close-knit group.

“Friendly”, mentioned 17 times, was the only word identified by more than 10 respondents. Along with words such as “supportive”, “generous” and “welcoming” we get a picture of a warm and caring community, something that was confirmed in the focus groups.

17. Would you recommend that people you know join the Community of Olds?



The majority of respondents (80%) would recommend the Community of Olds to others, once again highlighting the pride and sense of ownership people have in the Community of Olds.

91% of those over the age of 18 who have lived in Olds their whole life or more than 20 years would recommend people join the Community of Olds.

18. Why wouldn't you recommend people join the community of Olds?

A Sample of the Responses

Because Olds is just the same as another town.

No career opportunities.

Why? Better opportunity in larger areas.

The town is leaderless and made up of numerous committees that each go their own way.

It's hard to "get in" both in business and community – there are two classes of people, those who are "in" and those who are "foreigners"... and if you in the later group, you don't have much of a chance of changing your station in the community.

The 'leadership' of this community is a joke. There is no vision for the community. It's every man/woman for him/herself. There's a "me too" mentality when it comes to growth, wanting to be a Red Deer or Calgary. If you like big city crime that goes with that, like drug trafficking and now even murder, it's great. Yes, there's good schools, hospitals, programs for kids, just be wary where you buy/build your home or the Town will drop an apartment complex in your back yard and demand you to love it. Taxes are too high and we get little for it, except more spending. (Really, who approves applying for multi-million dollar loans for a project that has no business plan written?) The blind leading the blind. Growth for growth's sake. Putting priorities in the wrong places. Nope... I'd look at Didsbury or Sundre if I was looking now...

I feel there are limited career opportunities and real estate is unjustifiably high to warrant living in the community and commuting to larger centers for work. I own a duplex and still feel I can get much better value for the dollars if I moved to Airdrie or Red Deer and there are many more opportunities for myself and spouse (he is in construction) in those areas.

I feel that there are more experiences and opportunities for people who are my age elsewhere. Olds is a place to settle down and raise a family, not a place to establish yourself in the world and become something. It might have been a place to become something years ago, but with the current economic climate, cities are better for getting jobs and providing opportunities to seek jobs.

28 of the 30 respondents who answered "no" to the previous question explained why they would not recommend people join the community of Olds. As is the case with any survey or opportunity for feedback, a small number of people took the opportunity to vent their personal frustrations in a decidedly negative manner.

Common reasons not to recommend Olds included a lack of opportunity, the difficulty of becoming an accepted member of the Community and criticism of Town leadership.

19. Why would you recommend people join the community of Olds? How would you sell them on it?

A Sample of the Responses

Big business. Technology advancements (Fibre). Small town community, feel and safety.

Centrally located, progressive community committed to sustainability.

Country living with the amenities of city living.

Education and employment. Schools and the number of employment opportunities.

Forward thinking innovative community with a vibrant cultural scene and pride in its heritage.

Friendly people, opportunities to work, great schools, recreation facilities shopping.

Good place to raise a family as a whole from small to elderly.

Great community lots of co-operation.

Growing community with friendly people. Small town life with access to Red Deer and Calgary.

It's a nice town. Lots of amenities. Safe. Recreation facilities. Parks.

Safe, friendly, all the amenities, easy access to businesses, no traffic problems.

Location, Facilities, College, New High School

Show them the progressive nature of their arts and the warmth of the community as a whole.

Strategically located along QEII with access to larger centers yet still a quiet safe place.

The community has a broad base of volunteers that work together to add vitality to our community.

Friendly community but modern and up to current times.

Excellent location with all the amenities a family would want. State of the art educational facilities from pre-school through college. Innovative technologically. Safe, friendly community. Decent cost of living.

Best of both worlds. Small town values, yet has all the amenities. Growing commercial and residential areas. Variety of educational options. Central location in Alberta.

Sustainable community, strong local economy, caring, friendly, not too big, sports facilities, Christian churches

A Sample of the Responses

A place of opportunity that is creating the type of environment people and families want to live in. Excellent school systems; excellent entrepreneurial business start up opportunities; close to major centers and airports; access to incredible outdoor recreation; safe and no traffic grid locks.

147 respondents took the time to explain why they would recommend people join the community of Olds. While the responses were diverse, we were able to identify some clear trends:

- *The small town spirit (e.g. community, safety, no traffic issues, volunteers)*
- *Big city opportunity (e.g. amenities, facilities, education, businesses)*
- *Optimal location (e.g. proximity to larger centers, QEII, Rocky Mountains)*
- *Progressive community committed to sustainability*

So What?

The first three points – small town, opportunity and location – can be classified as assets of the Community. The lack of traffic issues, first-class facilities and a prime location are tangible/physical assets that provide direct benefits to people in the community.

The last point – a progressive community committed to sustainability – speaks to values held in the Community.

Other questions in the survey, such as asking people to choose descriptors or rank priorities, have sought to gain insight into the values and personality of Olds.

Together with the insights gained from the focus groups, we can craft the brand essence, which is made up of the brand personality, values, assets and benefits.

Throughout this process we have not been looking for divergence, but rather hoped to find convergence and consistency. If we find convergence, we find the common threads in the community, making us more confident in our recommendations for how to represent that community in the brand. Where there is significant divergence (and little commonality), it is virtually impossible to identify a solution that truly represents the broader community. Fortunately with Olds, we have seen clear convergence and consistency in the trends expressed.

20. Is there anything else you want to tell us?

The last question gave respondents an opportunity to voice any thoughts or opinions that they were eager to share with the Town but had not been given the opportunity to elsewhere in the survey. This helps respondents make their voice heard in a less-structured format. 90 people (38%) took the time to write something.

Most of these responses have no direct bearing on our analysis as they often refer to operational aspects of the Town. However, they do provide further insight into people's experiences with the Town and community. We believe the comments also have value for the Town of Olds as an opportunity to hear directly from their constituents.

We have sorted comments into two categories – comments relating to the Community of Olds and comments relating to the Town of Olds. In some cases there may be overlap.

We have taken the liberty of removing responses that we deemed inappropriate or irrelevant.

Responses relating to the Community of Olds

I am proud to be an ambassador for Olds and am passionate about our community.

I love this town

Olds is a great place to live!

Olds is a nice town. Tries hard to be bigger than it needs to be, but that's okay too.

Olds is to be commended for its partnerships and the creation of the Olds Institute

Its not the perfect town but it sure tries to be and that means its growing and moving forward as best it can.

I find a dividing line between traditionalist Olds residents who pride themselves on knowing everybody's business, and newcomers who are here for progressive, technological and/or educational opportunities, but I am new and have not explored all the possibilities for developing friendships yet.

Lived here since 1987. Happy to see more cultural facilities and would like to see more TREES and park spaces. Pleased with Town Council.

More efforts must be done to integrate the various components of Olds into one community. College, churches, patch workers, agriculture, commuters, seniors, services, etc.

Due to (necessary) progression of the town it is losing it's 'small town feel' and 'appeal' - sometimes it feels like a 5 year old playing dress-up - wishing they were 25... growing pains...

As far as employment opportunities, we still have a ways to go. I work in Calgary and I know a number of others that do as well. My profession is in Information Technology.

Responses relating to the Community of Olds

I really like the fact that Olds has been progressive when it comes to investing in programs such as composting, the fibre optic link, and the power program. Very dynamic in the look towards the future.

Every organization in Olds, for the most part, is open and willing to have newcomers. There are, however, still cliques. This is standard in any community. What sets Olds apart is that there are intelligent leaders, leaders who know who to talk to in order to get what they want.

Am currently planning a return to Olds after a short absence of living elsewhere and am very excited to return due to the progressive attitude compared to where I currently live.

Olds has been a great place for myself and my husband ,we have fit in well to the community,everything we need is right in the town and we love how it continues to grow.
GREAT JOB !!!

I hope you're having an excellent day. I did notice there was no mention of anything to do with Churches or the Godly side of Olds. That is a significant factor in our desire to live in Olds; it's mostly Christian.

Really proud of our record of inspiring change within the community through strong leadership and accessing guidance

Olds is a very warm, engaging and exhibits a Can Do philosophy. Olds is vibrant and engaging. A truly happening place:)

olds has pretty flowers :)

olds is a good safe place

Comments relating to the Town of Olds (Operations, Council, Infrastructure, etc)

Please take care of the road situation.

Need Tourist Info Centre

The only problem with Olds is that some seniors are in danger of being taxed out of their homes

We need a industrial park so that business and industry can locate to drive our economy

better snow removal and raise the man hole covers

roads by the golf course need fixed. snow removal need improved

yes..please get more police to patrol for vandalism, stealing, speeding

Hwy 27 and the closures of several intersections has made the remaining 2-3 a huge mess each morning and coming home from work. It's lucky to get 3 cars through at Ted's corner. Check it out at 8-9am and 3:30 - 5pm. I'm losing any fondness I had for Olds. It's gotten too big too fast. I'm barely keeping a roof over my head and have even resorted to borders. Frugal life and Olds are no longer a good match.

PLEASE cut way back on the street cleaning! It's far more than necessary. And please make a "suggestion box" where we can tell you our beefs and bouquets. And when you ask a question, include "not sure" along with yes and no answers.

there should be more history involved with the town like another museum. the olds high school part of the ralph klein building should be closed off to random people walking the halls that probably don't even live in olds, its almost scary, because people will just stand there and stare at the students. better security around parks because people speed around there a lot.

The walking paths that are in this town are a joke. The one on the North side of the town isn't even looked after. is this because that corridor has been put to the DOGS?

Relaxation of planning rules should have a better method to inform neighbors before the relaxation is okayed

Town is losing out on outdoor recreation ideas such as trout ponds, actual nature trails/x-country ski trails and dog parks which adults could enjoy not just people with children.

When council says they will do something for the community they should do it not just say they will.

Olds has a significant traffic problem; planning developments - layouts-pathways-sidewalks-traffic flows is so very poorly thought out.

Comments relating to the Town of Olds (Operations, Council, Infrastructure, etc)

I feel frustrated that there seems to be so much duplication of service...eg, the Olds Institute and Town council. If the people on the Institute want to make a difference and change Olds, they should run for council and do so through that route. I have the same view of adding a new Catholic school in Olds. We had a decrease in enrollment in Chinooks Edge, but we are building a separate school to further reduce the number going to the new high school and to the elementary. No common sense any more, just tax the people for all these wants which are not needs

I am very disappointed with the LACK of a trail system in Olds! It is impossible to get out of my subdivision safely on foot or on a bicycle because there is no sidewalk or pathway (or street lights) along 57 Ave. I have lived here over 5 yrs and when I do walk or bike, I am challenged with vehicular traffic along 57 Ave until I reach the sidewalk near 58 St. I am told that nothing will be done until the area east of 57 Ave is developed. This is ludicrous when there are several hundred families living west of 57 Ave now - is the town not concerned about their safety? I have visited a lot of towns smaller than Olds, and have seen many paths throughout their subdivisions and parks. Olds does not have a continuous pathway system that measures up. This is very disheartening!

Some facets of the Town operation are not as efficient as they could be, wasting tax-payer dollars unnecessarily. For example, the street cleaner cleaning clean streets...twice in as many hours! Or, spraying salt/sand on top of snow rather than cleaning the snow off before application where it would do more good.

Left turning arrows required at intersection of Highway 27 and 57th Avenue. Noise bylaw required, e.g noisy motorcycles are very annoying!

Hwy 27 through Olds looks POOR. Not a good first glance for passerbys and people considering a new spot. Particularly between the tracks and Mountainview Plaza - both North and South sides.

We need a more coordinated recreation department. We have great facilities, but not enough coordination, therefore they are not being used as well as they could be.

Constant pressure to accept low bids results in delivery acceptance of sub-standard work on all public works contracts. There is nothing worse than paying too little; too cheap will always cost more in the long run.

In recognizing contributions to the community in the area of sports especially, please recognize those who participate in or volunteer with Special Olympics. Don't shuffle them to the back burner.

The young red-headed woman at the reception desk at the Town of Olds office is wonderful. She makes a great first impression for the town and is also so kind and helpful. Feel free to let her know I think she is a terrific community representative.

The roads in and around Olds should be cared for more often and the sulfur plant should not make the town smell like crap so often.

Comments relating to the Town of Olds (Operations, Council, Infrastructure, etc)

Yes, We do not need that many by-laws. Especially when you just need to install a sign in front of your brand new business. As soon as you pay for you business license you should be able to put up a sign which the town could approve first, but it should not take 6 weeks.

Yes. The only big gripe I have about Olds is the snow removal policy - streets are not plowed until hard pack in the middle reaches 4" - at which time there is two feet at the curbs. If the walks are shoveled, the spring melt water floods the sidewalks making them far more treacherous than an unshoveled walk. However, when my 80 year old neighbor ended up in the hospital for a week and was unable to clean her walk, there was no hesitation in issuing her a ticket.

LISTEN TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S WISHES FOR THIS TOWN.

keep up the good work ...keep communicating

I would like to see more transparency regarding Town of Olds decision making, make up of committees, structure of departments etc. The Town newsletter is great but coverage of the above is lacking in the media and the Town website is not accessible to all.

the mayor of the town should have more communication sample at least once a month something what she has been doing to improve the town

Lessons for the Brand

The survey provided insights that can potentially have many different applications. While we believe there is relevant information here for future phases of the Promoting Olds project, our take-aways are currently focused on helping us determine the Olds “brand essence”:

To do this we will focus on three key areas that help make up the brand essence:

1. Brand personality
2. Brand values
3. Brand assets/benefits

We will preface that with a discussion around the structure of the brand, given the unique challenge of representing both the Town and the Community.

We made the observation previously that the structured relationship between the Town and its constituents provides both stability and strain in the relationship. Perception gaps (e.g. my taxes are not providing me with enough value) or service gaps (e.g. the snow is not being cleared from the roads) influence people’s opinions about the Town. A brand seeks to communicate authentically, and while there will always be critics, the expression of a brand must focus on positive or aspirational aspects of that brand. Communication may suggest to people that the Town is doing its job well, but ultimately the actions of the Town will determine whether this is true. That is, the brand will be positive, but it will be the actions (or inaction) of the Town that determine whether people “believe” the brand, as expressed.

Structure of the Brand

A significant portion of respondents, especially among those who have been a part of the Olds community for the majority of their lives, make a clear distinction between the Town of Olds and the Community of Olds. However, the survey also demonstrated that there is a strong association between the Town and the Community in people’s minds. This speaks to the reality that, in some ways, the Town and Community are intrinsically linked, while in other ways, they are clearly distinct.

At its simplest, the Town is “government” and the Community is “people”. People often feel a disconnect between the Town and their daily lives while expressing a stronger connection with the Community. The Town, as a service provider, corporate entity and governing body has a structured relationship with its constituents – very different from the diversity of relationships people have with the Community.

When developing the brand identity it will be important to allow for this distinction between the Town and the Community to be expressed, while at the same time acknowledging their close and necessary interrelatedness.

It is also important to recognize that the Town has the unique responsibility to present and promote the Community of Olds to the world. For visitors and newcomers, the first impression

they will get of the Community will be either directly or indirectly through communications or experiences shaped by the Town, such as the website, signage, infrastructure, facilities, promotional materials, etc.

In Olds, the Olds Institute plays a unique and central role in facilitating community and economic development through the incorporation of the five dimensions of a sustainable community. The brand that is developed will also have to be owned by the Olds Institute given their close relationship with the Town and Community, and their role in this branding process. Because of their close association with the Community and the Town, the Olds Institute will be working with the new brand on a frequent basis.

When looking at the next points, we will differentiate between the Town and community where applicable.

Personality

Town of Olds

In an online survey, questions of personality can be expressed a number of ways. In this case, we allowed people to assign a persona to the Town, and to supplement that, we reviewed their other opinions about the Town to craft a concise image of how the people of Olds see the Town.

When asked to describe the Town as a person (based on options provided), the top three responses were “supportive older brother,” “younger sibling who hates helping with the dishes,” and “team captain.”

The “supportive older brother and “team captain” communicate the idea of someone who is in a position of authority, fulfilling his/her responsibility, providing support and taking leadership.

Some people do not see the town as fulfilling its expected role in the community, suggested by their description of the Town as a “younger sibling who hates helping with the dishes.”

Also, in our analysis of brand personality, we are concerned with **how** the Town is going about doing its job.

When asked to choose a word to describe the Town, words that were put forward by respondents that are applicable to personality included:

- “progressive”
- “leader”
- “pro-active”
- “friendly”
- “respected”
- “approachable”
- “dependable”
- “innovative”
- “stable”

Of these, “progressive” and “friendly” were the most often mentioned words. A word like “stable” is interesting, because it speaks to the structured type of relationship the Town has with residents.

Taken together, the Town could be described as a **progressive leader**. “Leader” speaks to the role the Town plays in the Community as well as to personality traits such as being dependable, respected and stable. “Progressive” speaks to how the Town leads, in a way that is innovative, approachable and friendly.

The survey results suggested that those who are more closely connected with the Town (e.g. employees or those who have lived in Olds longer) were more likely to see the Town in a positive or leading role. The fact that those who know more about the town, or who have more experience with the Town have positive perceptions about the personality of the Town suggests that ongoing communication at a greater frequency may start to shift perceptions. If the Town is able to communicate more regularly and effectively with residents, overall opinions of this component of the brand may become more positive.

Community of Olds

The survey results suggested that respondents see Olds as a close-knit community that they are proud to be a part of.

When asked to choose a word to describe the Community of Olds people chose words including:

- “friendly”
- “progressive”
- “innovative”
- “safe”
- “co-operative”
- “supportive”
- “welcoming”
- “accepting”
- “clean”
- “close-knit”
- “diverse”

Words like friendly and progressive are very similar to those words used to describe the Town, however, the idea of authority or leadership is gone.

If the Community were a person, it would be a friendly, caring person, open to other people and ideas with a sense of healthy pride – the type of pride that causes a person to spend a little extra time to make sure they are well-presented in the morning.

It’s worth noting that, when viewed together, the perceptions of the Town and of the Community align well with what one might expect of those two different entities; you expect your

government to lead, and you expect a community to be welcoming. Therefore the general distinctions are appropriate, and reasonable. When it comes to these roles, it is great to see that the members of the Community do see these entities fulfilling their roles as they are expected to.

Values

Town of Olds

A key focus at the Town of Olds has been the idea of sustainability, as is featured in its current tagline, “Your partner in sustainable opportunities,” as well as its mission and vision. Using the survey, we wanted to test whether respondents were able to recognize sustainability as a top priority of the Town. Question 10 in the survey confirmed that respondents do indeed see sustainable community as a top priority, or value, of the Town.

Sustainability, defined by the Town as relating to the five dimensions of environment, economy, community, culture and governance, is in itself very progressive. This supports the Town’s personality – a progressive person should value sustainability.

In the *2008 - 2010 Town of Olds Strategic Plan* the Town identifies four key values:

- integrity
- collaboration
- innovation
- accountability

Collaboration and innovation both came up as words which respondents used to describe the Town of Olds in the survey, providing confirmation that they recognize these values within the Town. However, since values need to come from within the organization and not from outside, we did not directly ask respondents to identify what they saw as values of the Town. The Town has already done this.

Community of Olds

Respondents appear to value the security and opportunity Olds provides them with. Security in the sense of safe and friendly neighborhoods, and opportunity in the sense of education, careers and being well set-up to raise a family.

Values are a complex and qualitative area. As such we felt it was more effectively addressed through discussion in the focus groups. A more extensive analysis of the values of the Community of Olds can be found there.

Assets/Benefits

Physical assets are generally seen to be shared by both the Town and the Community – they apply equally to either.

We have compiled a list of assets and corresponding benefits from the survey and have presented them in the table below. This is not an exhaustive list but highlights general trends.

Shared Assets/Benefits

Asset	Benefits
Small Town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close-knit community • More relaxed lifestyle
Safe and friendly neighborhoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ideal place to raise a family • Peace of mind
Comprehensive education system (Primary, secondary and post-secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ideal place to raise a family • Opportunities for personal development • Better career opportunities
First-class recreation & cultural facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle and recreation opportunities • A more cohesive community (More places to see and meet neighbors)
Location (proximity to larger centers, QEII HWY, Rocky Mountains)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional & career opportunities • Lifestyle and recreation opportunities
Active business community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business and employment opportunities • Many products/services available locally
Olds College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational Opportunities • Employment opportunities • Brings in consumers • Puts Olds on the map
Olds is a growing community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for business growth and development, which can lead to more career opportunities, better services, etc.

The Town, as a service provider, does however “own” some of the assets and provide specific benefit to members of the community. Question 9 in the survey asked residents to identify services provided by the town. Respondents readily recognized the Town’s services in areas such as utilities and waste removal, parks & recreation, roads and public works. When looking narrowly at the Town, without considering the broader community, a slightly different table of assets/benefit could be compiled.

Town of Olds

Asset	Benefits
Infrastructure of the Town (public works, roads, utilities, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the basic infrastructure required for the community to exist
Parks, recreation & cultural facilities (e.g. aquatic center, library, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle and recreation opportunities • A more cohesive community (More places to see and meet neighbors)
Equipment and personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the Town to provide services such as waste removal, Town planning, or emergency services

These assets and benefits however are not unique to Olds. They are characteristic of any community. People expect these services to be provided and, as the online survey demonstrated in regard to snow removal, complain loudly when their expectations are not met.

Our discussion of assets/benefits as it relates to the brand will focus on shared assets/benefits.

Next Steps

As already referred to, McRobbie Optamedia hosted two Focus Groups after the Online Survey had been closed. The Focus Groups sought primarily to identify what the brand is, whereas the online survey also sought to identify where the gaps are (i.e. what elements of the brand are understood and appreciated by the community more broadly).

The results from the Focus Groups provide the next step in determining the Olds "brand essence". The results from both the Online Survey and the Focus Groups are then synthesized in the Situation Analysis, presenting the final brand essence. Secondary research as to how other municipalities and similar organizations is added to the Online Survey and Focus Group findings to help inform the final recommendations on how the brand is to be structured, so that it authentically and effectively represents both the Town and the community.

The information contained in this report has relevance beyond Phase I (Branding) of the Promoting Olds project. When developing a communications or marketing plan, it will be valuable to refer to the insights garnered through this research piece.

It is interesting to observe in the survey how one respondent will talk about the wonderful opportunities the community of Olds provides while another complains about the lack of opportunities. We saw this trend throughout the survey where respondents would have completely opposite views. This highlights the subjective nature of personnel experiences and speaks to a distinction between perception gaps and service gaps.

Where there are perception gaps, messages and communications can provide value in filling those gaps. Where there are service gaps, those cannot be addressed through communication. When moving into the Phase II of the Promoting Olds project, this will be an important consideration.

Section 2: Focus Groups

Key Findings Report

Introduction

McRobbie Optamedia facilitated two Focus Group sessions at the Olds Municipal Library on December 16, 2010.

The first session was held in the morning, from 10 am - 12 pm with six individuals. The individuals included three Town employees, a Town Councillor, a member of the Olds Institute and a community member.

The second session was held in the afternoon, from 1 - 3 pm with seven individuals. The individuals included two business owners, a retired teacher, a golf professional, a nurse, a high school student, and an active volunteer in the community.

Both sessions had a healthy distribution of male and female participants, and participants who have spent varying amounts of time as a part of the community of Olds. Participants came from a variety of careers, and were very diverse in age, anywhere from a high school student to a retiree.

To start each session we asked each individual to share their "Olds story" – how they came to be a part of the Community of Olds and some general information about themselves. This provided an opportunity for us to get to know the participants as well as for them to get to know each other.

The Focus Groups were designed to help define the Olds Brand Essence. The facilitators from McRobbie Optamedia led participants through four exercises that explored different components of a brand essence from the perspective of the broader Community of Olds (vs. the Town):

1. Assets/Benefits
2. Values
3. Personality
4. Differentiators

Traditionally, explorations of "brand" tend to examine each of these aspects separately and distinctly. Our process demands participants to discuss many of these things in the context of each other. That is, our discussion of values included an exploration of the terms people most closely associate with their community, but in doing so, we encouraged participants to discuss other elements, such as more concrete "assets" or the more abstract "personality". It then falls to us to assess the discussion as a whole, extrapolating and synthesizing the information to see whether the core elements of a section like "personality" are consistent from one discussion to the next, or whether there is some discrepancy that needs to be further explored.

This process provides a more integrated approach, useful because each of these four key elements of a brand is intimately related to the others. Discussed independently, we may lose insights as to the relative importance of each, or the subtle relationships that define the brand.

Because the online survey showed both the interconnectedness and distinction between the Town and the Community, we allowed these sessions to explore the Community as their central focus. At times, discussion of brand elements specific to the Town came up, and were noted.

This report describes each of the exercises and their outcomes. These results, together with the findings from the Online Survey, will be used to define the Brand Essence in the Situation Analysis.

Assets/Benefits

The Process

The first exercise we did with participants was to ask each participant to identify two “assets” of the Community of Olds – two things Olds has that provide benefit to the community. Their input was collected and posted on a board at the front of the room. Participants then had the opportunity to explain their answers to the group.

The Outcomes

The table below summarizes participants’ responses and the discussion that followed regarding the assets and the benefit they provide. There was some discussion of the benefits of each of these assets at this point in the process. In addition, we have expanded the “benefits” below through other research and the inclusion of some feedback from the online survey.

Asset	Benefits
Location (proximity to larger centers, QEII HWY, Rocky Mountains)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to big-city amenities • Employment opportunities (e.g. people can live in Olds, work in Red Deer) • Recreation opportunities (Rockies) • Attracts businesses & consumers • Promotes growth
Olds College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational opportunities • Employment opportunities • Draws people to Olds • Puts Olds on the map • Partnerships with the High School • Helped to define Olds as an Agricultural Hub (with Olds Ag Society)
Comprehensive education system (Primary, secondary and post-secondary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ideal place to raise a family • Opportunities for personal development • Better career opportunities
Regional business & service center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic driver in the region • Business and employment opportunities • Many products/services available locally • Attracts consumers from out-of-town • Promotes growth
Diversity of people & business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for business growth and development, which can lead to more career opportunities, better services, etc. • Promotes growth (economic diversity sheltered Olds in the economic downturn) • Diversity promotes innovation & progress
Engaged Citizens & Active Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens community spirit • Fosters progress and community development

Asset	Benefits
Strong community organizations (e.g. Olds Grizzly Hockey Club, Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, Churches, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens community spirit • Fosters progress and community development
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People & history of the town foster a “can do” attitude
Cutting-edge infrastructure (Investments in new technologies, e.g. Fiber to the Premises, CLC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes business & community development • Provides career & education opportunities • Demonstrates commitment to sustainability
First-class recreation facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation opportunities • Promotes healthy lifestyles • Strengthens community spirit
Small Town (“Smallness”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close-knit community • More relaxed lifestyle • Lack of big-city problems (traffic, crime)
Hospital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peace of mind • Attracts seniors • Supports development

While the table above provides greater detail concerning the community of Olds, the assets seems to fall into a couple of key categories:

1. **Location**
2. **Educational institutions**
 - Olds College
 - Full-range of educational opportunities (pre-school to post-secondary)
3. **Business & service offerings**
 - Diverse range of business & services
 - Hospital
4. **Sense of community**
 - Small town
 - Engaged citizens & active volunteers
 - Strong community organizations
 - Heritage
5. **Infrastructure & facilities**
 - Technology (e.g. FFTP, CLC)
 - Recreation facilities

Values

The Process

The second exercise explored the values of the Community of Olds. Before the session we gathered key words (value-descriptors) from the documents we received relating to the Town, Olds Institute, and broader community. For example we used the four values identified by the Town and the Olds Institute and took words such as “progressive” and “sustainable” from the Town’s vision statement. Some of these terms came directly from things like vision statements, and others were selected for less direct reasons; some were simply words that we felt might be used to describe the Town or the community.

The Town and the Olds Institute have clearly identified values. We wanted to test whether the participants, representative of the overall community, would independently identify the same values as being descriptive of the community.

We wrote down the roughly 30 value-descriptors we had collected onto cue-cards which we spread out in the middle of the boardroom table where the participants were seated. We asked the participants to walk around the table and choose two cards that they felt best described the Community. Each participant was then given the opportunity to explain why they had chosen their respective cards with the group.

Not all of the words we selected related only to “values”. There was also overlap with “Assets/ Benefits” and “Personality”. Overlap between the exercises is a positive sign, as it means we are identifying common trends.

The Outcomes

Between the two sessions, 19 value-descriptors were chosen:

Value-descriptors chosen in the:

AM & PM Sessions	AM Session Only	PM Session Only
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development• Innovation• Progressive• Sustainable• Visionary• Welcoming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flourishing• Opportunities• Collaboration• Diverse• Leading• Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic• Heritage• Technology• Lifestyle• Healthy• Location• Strong

Not all of the words are specific to the values of the Community of Olds, relating instead to the assets/benefits Olds has or to its personality. The table on the next page seeks to categorize the

descriptors chosen by participants as either values, assets/benefits, or personality descriptors. Words that may apply to more than one category are identified by this colour.

Value-descriptors categorized into:

Values (Olds values...)	Assets/Benefits (Olds has...)	Personality (Olds is...)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability • Innovation • Integrity • Collaboration • Leading • Diversity • Development • Progress • A flourishing community • A healthy community • A welcoming community • Its heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Rockies • Opportunities • Technology • A rich heritage • Diversity • Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Visionary • Leading • Progressive • Flourishing • Healthy • Welcoming

Both the Town of Olds and the Olds Institute have identified four common organizational values (albeit expressed slightly differently for each organization). They are:

- *Integrity*
- *Collaboration*
- *Innovation*
- *Accountability*

Of these four, three were chosen by participants as describing the Community. “Accountability” was left out, which makes sense given the “Community” is not accountable to anyone in the same way that the Town or Olds Institute are accountable to various groups (e.g. voters or a board or directors). “Innovation” was mentioned in both the AM and PM sessions, confirming its resonance with participants.

Many of the words could also refer to assets/benefits or the personality of Olds. If we ignore those words, we are left with four values to describe the Community. These four values are identical to the values identified by the Town, except that “sustainability” replaces “accountability”. Sustainability was also a key value identified in the online survey.

Given their alignment with the expressed values of the Town and Olds Institute, as well as their resonance with participants, we believe these four values are reflective of the Community of Olds:

- *Integrity*
- *Collaboration*
- *Innovation*
- *Sustainability*

While these values are central to the expression of the brand, the many other descriptors that people selected through this process help us better understand the way that members of the Community view Olds. This is vital, as it can help to uncover their aspirations (a “leading” community) or some of the softer expressions of the brand, such as the “welcoming” nature of Olds that some perceived.

When developing the visual representation for the brand or brands, it will be important to recognize the shared values, while accurately representing the subtle distinction between the Town’s identified Values:

- *Integrity*
- *Collaboration*
- *Innovation*
- *Accountability*

And the values identified as representing the Community:

- *Integrity*
- *Collaboration*
- *Innovation*
- *Sustainability*

The main difference here is that accountability does not apply to the Community in the same way it does to the Town.

There is a great deal of overlap in how people perceive the two, which affirms the strong and important symbiotic relationship between the two. A great divergence in these two value sets would have indicated a disconnect between the way the Community wants to move forward and the way that the Town wants to move forward. This could have been very problematic.

Also, while sustainability is not a specific value identified by the town, it is central to their long-term planning and business plan. It appears as a central theme in the Town’s mission, vision and current tagline.

Personality

The Process

The third exercise explored the personality of Olds. Participants were asked to describe the Community of Olds in the same way they would describe a person. Again, participants were given two sticky-notes to write down two words.

The Outcomes

Between the two sessions, 27 personality-descriptors were put forward (some participants shared more than two words and some words were added in the discussion as people shared their responses):

Personality-descriptors chosen in the:

AM & PM Sessions	AM Session Only	PM Session Only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong • Engaged (2x) • Ambitious • Optimistic • Innovative • Kind • Intelligent • Independent • Hard working • Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic • Inclusive • Caring • Committed • Competitive • Conservative • Supportive • Grateful • Understanding • Progressive • Close-knit • Dynamic • Laid back • Helpful • Easy going • Clean

There was less overlap between the AM and PM sessions compared with the value-descriptors exercise – only one personality trait, “caring/kind & friendly;” was brought up in both sessions. It is interesting to note that “friendly” was the most often used by respondents in the online survey to describe the Community of Olds.

“Strong;” “leading” and “progressive” were mentioned in the previous exercise. “Progressive” was the most often mentioned word in the online survey to describe the Town.

When we look at words chosen by respondents of the online survey to describe the Town or Community we see a significant amount of overlap between those and the terms selected in the focus groups. This demonstrates the resonance of these words.

Personality descriptors also chosen in the **online survey to describe the:**

Town & Community	Town Only	Community Only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly • Progressive • Innovative • Clean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent • Leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring • Close-knit • Conservative • Dynamic • Engaged • Helpful • Inclusive • Progressive • Relaxed (Laid back/Easy going) • Strong • Supportive

“Friendly”, “Progressive” and “Innovative” are words that have consistently appeared throughout both the online survey and focus groups. They are words people seem to clearly associate with both the Town and the Community of Olds. “Leader” or “Leading” is a common characteristic prescribed to the Town vs. the Community. Respondents in both the online survey and focus groups expressed how they expect the Town to be providing leadership for the Community.

These personality descriptors from the focus groups were not identified by respondents to the online survey when describing either the Town or Community:

- *Ambitious*
- *Committed*
- *Competitive*
- *Grateful*
- *Hard Working*
- *Kind*
- *Strategic*
- *Understanding*

This does not mean these words are not as relevant. Many of these words speak to similar personality traits that could be grouped into common themes.

Action and Ownership

Committed (motivated to gets things done), engaged, ambitious, hard working, strong (strength in one another - collaboration) – these words speak to a strong sense of ownership in the community; a sense of ownership that results in a person taking action, being involved, and recognizing the strength in collaborating with others in the community. People work together to

build their community. A clean town is an example of how this sense of ownership is practically expressed.

Leadership and Innovation

Optimistic, progressive, innovative, independent, competitive, dynamic – these words describe the “can do” attitude the personality of Olds exudes. Olds expects to be more and do better. It is not afraid to step up and lead. Moving into the development and execution of a communications plan, it will be important to expand this understanding to include the idea of generative/participative governance.

[Note that “leadership” is more closely associated with the Town than the Community. This does not mean the people do not see leadership coming from other areas of the community, rather they used the word “leader” more often to describe the Town and use other language to describe leadership qualities in the Community.]

Community

Inclusive, friendly, supportive, helpful, caring, close-knit – these words describe an individual who is aware and engaged in the lives of the people around him/her.

Differentiators

The Process

The final exercise took a moment to pause and look back at the assets/benefits, value-descriptors and personality-descriptors and asked participants to identify which were truly unique to Olds, i.e. could not be claimed by any other community.

The Outcomes

What follows is a brief discussion around the key differentiators that were identified by participants.

1. Collaboration
 - The level of collaboration among the various organizations, groups and people within Olds is seen as unique. Proof points might include:
 - The existence of the Olds Institute – an organization designed to provide direction for the community based on community consultation and collaboration
 - The new Community Learning Center (CLC) – bringing together high school, post-secondary, and community education by sharing resources and working jointly with a variety of community groups and agencies
2. Economic Diversity
 - Compared to similar-sized rural communities, there is a perception that Olds boasts a diverse economic base. Proof points could include:
 - A strong service sector, academic sector, agricultural sector, human services sector have helped foster steady growth, even in a recession (3% growth during this time)
 - The community has made investments in technology to continue to promote a diverse economy, such as the Fibre to the Premises project
3. Olds College
 - Olds College is almost universally seen as unique to Olds and is recognized as having helped put Olds on the map. It generates awareness, draws people, technology, and expertise into the community and helps drive the economy (there is a perception that Olds has become an agricultural hub because of the College).
4. Location
 - Olds' geographic location is unique to Olds and is commonly perceived to give the community a clear competitive advantage over other similar-sized rural communities.

5. Progressive

- While this was often a point of pride for participants, it is more difficult to justify, because a different community could also claim to be progressive; “progressive” is a very subjective term. The difference, though, is the demonstrable actions taken by the Town and community (recognizing that the Olds Institute is key part of that community) that support its claim to being progressive. Proof points include:
 - Olds is a Fair Trade Town (through TransFair Canada)
 - Olds will be the first rural-community in Canada to have a 100% fibre-optic based communications network for residential and business customers (Fibre-to-the-Premises Project)
 - The Town of Olds has adopted a comprehensive Strategic Sustainability Plan, making sustainability across the five areas of environment, economy, community, culture and governance a top priority.
 - The collaboration evident in the community speaks to its progressive nature.
- Being progressive is can be closely linked to other descriptors often selected by participants, including innovative, visionary, and leading. It also speaks to the “can do” attitude evident in the community.

6. Heritage

- Every community has a heritage that is unique. Olds is proud of its heritage and believes it is a strength that sets it apart from other communities. While every community can claim some sort of heritage, Olds can distinguish itself in this area by highlighting tangible programs such as membership in the Alberta Main Street program and Uptowne Olds that showcase real action on this front.

7. Technology

- With the Fibre-to-the-Premises (FFTP) project and the Community Learning Center, Olds has technology available and easily accessible to its residents in a manner that other similar-sized communities do not. The FFTP project shows the intent and willingness to invest significant time and resources into a project that is intended to support the long-term viability of the community, and provides the community with a truly unique point of differentiation.

Differentiators highlight those things that must be included in a brand. The collaborative and progressive nature of the community needs to be communicated in the brand that is created. Physical characteristics such as location, technology, and Olds College being located in Olds help to inform the expression of the brand. A community’s heritage finds expression in the brand personality and values.

In future phases of the Promoting Olds project, differentiators are also important to consider when developing messaging and communications, because they are strengths of a community that are provable and unique, and therefore authentic and convincing.

Town of Olds

While we focused these sessions on the community as a whole, some discussion of the distinctions between the Town and the Community came up and are captured and summarized here.

The Outcomes

The discussion relating to the distinctions between the Town and the Community paralleled much of the background information provided to McRobbie Optamedia at the outset of this project, as well as the online survey findings.

Below are some highlights from the information shared by the participants:

- The Town is collaborative - committed to partnerships and relationships, willing to listen
- The Town is working hard to position themselves as an “employer of choice”
- The Town should be a reflection of the community
- The Town is committed to serving the people of Olds and committed to the people who work for Olds
- The Town is responsive to the needs of the community and respectful of residents
- The Town wants to build a culture of innovation
 - e.g. Olds was the first community in Canada to adopt a new leak detection system that while expensive up-front will provide significant savings in the future. It also demonstrates Olds’ commitment to sustainability as this technology is allowing the town to better protect water as a resource.
- Community members expect the Town to provide leadership and be accountable
- The Town tries to lead by example
- The Town must be open to change
- The Town continues to be progressive and promote sustainability
 - e.g. Olds has an outstanding composting system

Section 3: Brand Examples

Exploration of Brand Structure

Introduction

Olds is building a brand that authentically represents itself. The brand needs to be true to who the Community and Town of Olds is. Our research using the Online Survey and Focus Groups explored this question of who Olds is.

While the branding process is mainly an inward-focused exercise, it is also helpful to consider how communities around Olds and other relevant organizations have approached their own brands. Our primary interest here is to see how communities and organizations have approached the question of how to structure a brand or brands where they must represent more than one key area or idea. In the case of Olds, the two distinct concepts are the Town and the Community of Olds. Research uncovered strong relationships, and some distinct differences. This “different, but the same” relationship is conveyed by other organizations in different ways, and this exploration is intended to inform the collective visual representation (or representations) of the Town and the Community of Olds.

In this section we briefly explore four examples (good and bad) of brands that provide insight into this area.

Brand Example: Government of Alberta

Relevance

The Government of Alberta recently completely re-branded themselves, much in the same way the Town of Olds is doing now.

Similar to “Olds,” “Alberta” represents both the formal government institution of Alberta, as well as the broader province of Alberta.

Branding Approach

They chose to allow that distinction to be expressed in their visual identity.



The first logo (or signature) pictured above is intended to represent the province of Alberta as a whole. Associated with this logo are the:

- Brand Attributes
 - “Open,” “aspirational,” “strong,” “dynamic,” “genuine”
- Brand Promise
 - “Freedom to Create. Spirit to Achieve”
- Brand Essence
 - “People Realizing Possibilities”

All of these speak to the province as a whole, and not to the Government of Alberta. The creative execution of the provincial signature reflects the brand attributes, promise and essence – the typography and colour palette communicate openness, freedom, possibility etc.

Government of Alberta ■

The second component of the logo is the Government of Alberta’s signature. There is a strong visual connection between the two different signatures, most noticeably the blue square (colour can vary). In contrast with the provincial signature, the Government’s signature is much more formal, subdued, structured and serious, communicating the weightiness and professionalism of the government institution.



It is important to note that the two different visual expressions are part of the same “Alberta brand”. They are not to separate brands. They do however allow for the expression of two different components of the brand. They can be used separately or together, side-by-side. Generally speaking, materials representing or promoting the province as a whole feature the Alberta signature, while communications and signage specific to Government departments feature the Government signature. We noticed an example of this right in Olds while touring the CLC, where the Government departments with offices in the CLC featured the Government’s signature.

More information about the Alberta brand can be found at: www.albertabrand.com

Evaluation

We feel the Alberta brand example is the most comparable to what we are recommending for the Town of Olds. This model of having separate, but clearly related signatures for the Town and community would allow Olds to develop a brand that effectively represents both.

Brand Example: City of Airdrie

Relevance

The City of Airdrie is in close proximity to the Town of Olds. Airdrie Economic Development recently launched a separate brand to promote the City and provide information for local business development.

This example is relevant because it looks at how a municipality close to Olds chose to work with two distinct brands to represent and promote the community.

Branding Approach

The City of Airdrie kept its original logo while creating a separate visual identity for its economic development department. Visually there is little discernible connection between the two identities, apart from colour blue, and a circular shape.



Evaluation

The two brands were created for separate purposes – one represents the city and community while the other was specifically designed to promote economic development in Airdrie.

AirdrieNOW has received critical accolades for its innovative and effective approach to business development. Our concern is that the two visual identities are too distinct. It is possible that with time the new AirdrieNOW brand may overshadow the City of Airdrie brand. Without a clear visual connection between the two brands, audiences may be confused as to the relationship the two brands have with each other.

Our research indicated the circle in the AirdrieNOW logo is designed to represent the idea of the business community being linked to the overall community, giving back to the community as well as being supported by it. This idea is effectively presented. It would be nice if this connection could also be communicated in the visual relationship between the City and AirdrieNOW logos.

In Olds we have noticed that economic development is strongly linked to the Town and the Community, with the Olds Institute and other community groups playing an integral role in the economic development of the community. A brand developed for Olds needs to express the level of collaboration that is evident between the Town and the Community.

The take-away for Olds in this case is that the brand(s) developed needs to respect the relationship between the Town and the Community in a manner that conveys the authentic nature of the relationship: that the town, the Olds Institute, the business community and any other organization is part of this larger community.

Brand Example: Business for the Arts/ArtsScene

Relevance

Business for the Arts (Bfta) is an organization that connects the business community and the arts community, helping to channel funds and resources to help promote the arts in Canada.

ArtsScene is an initiative of Bfta connecting young professionals to their local artistic community with the aim that these young professionals will be empowered as future corporate leaders in supporting the arts. ArtsScene could almost be described as a “child” or “younger” version of Bfta.

We felt this was a relevant example because the visual expressions of the two groups clearly demonstrate the relationship between the two groups.

Branding Approach



The two logos for the respective groups are clearly related. They share the same colours, typography, and the swirl. The logos can be used separately or as a single identity. When used together, artScene is positioned below Bfta, under the “a” with the swirl, communicating the “parent-child” relationship of Bfta and artsScene respectively.



Evaluation

We feel this example does a good job of demonstrating how a visual identity can effectively communicate the relationship between two distinct groups that fall under the same overall brand. The creative execution of the visual identity provides flexibility, allowing each logo to be used separately, but also unity when you put them together.

Brand Example: Town of Didsbury

Relevance

Didsbury is a smaller town directly neighboring Olds that recently updated their visual identity. We feel this example is relevant because it is typical of how many communities approach their branding.

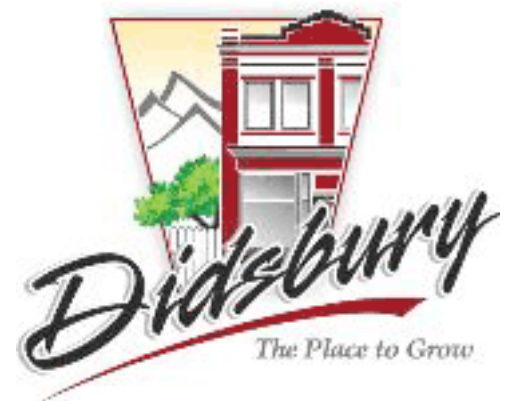
Branding Approach

Similar to most municipalities, Didsbury uses a single logo to represent the Town and the Community. Its logo is very literal, featuring physical attributes of the community.

Its visual identity features a colour palette of mainly red and yellow. In its application (on the website for example) the red is used to refer to the Community and the yellow is used to refer to the Town.

Evaluation

The challenge with attempting to make a single visual expression of the brand represent both the Town and the Community is the danger that it might not represent either one very well, or it might represent one and not the other. Many communities currently use this approach, but we feel Olds can once again prove its leadership by using a more innovative and effective visual style in its branding, choosing instead to create two visual expressions of one brand that communicate the distinctions and connections between the Town and the Community.



A logo should be simple enough that it works well across a variety of mediums and also “timeless” in the sense that its stylistic treatment does not date very quickly. This becomes a very common challenge where a visual identity takes a very “literal” approach (using detailed pictures or images).

Section 4: Summary

Situation Analysis Conclusions

What We Have Learned So Far

The Online Survey, Focus Groups, and Brand Examples have led us through a process that sought to identify who the Town and Community of Olds is, and what the core elements of a brand representing the Town and Community of Olds would include.

We were not looking for divergence, rather, we hoped to find convergence in the process of developing a brand - if we find consistent themes, we find the common threads in the community, making us more confident in our recommendations for how to represent that community.

This section seeks to synthesize what we have learned into a summary, presenting the Olds Brand Essence at the end with a visual tool we refer to as a Brand Pyramid, to help communicate our key findings.

All this information will be used by our creative team at McRobbie Optamedia to develop a brand platform, including logos, colour palette, tagline, etc. This information will also continue to be relevant as we move into later phases of the Promoting Olds project, forming the foundation upon which communication plans, messages and other collateral is developed.

Brand Structure

One of the objectives of this project, already identified in the initial RFP by the Town of Olds, was to create a brand that would represent both the Town of Olds and the Community of Olds. Our research in the Online Survey and Focus Groups explored what people perceive the similarities and differences between the Town and the Community to be.

To recap, here is a brief overview of what we have learned:

- Many members of the broader Community of Olds make a clear distinction in their minds between the Town of Olds and the Community of Olds. This distinction, at its simplest, suggests that the Town is “government” and the community is “people”
- At the same time, many people struggle to separate the Town from the Community because, while distinct, the Town and Community are also intrinsically linked to one another. The Town has a mandate to build and serve the Community, and is at the same time also a reflection of the community.
- We discussed how the Town, as a service provider, corporate entity and governing body has a structured relationship with its constituents – very different from the diversity of relationships people have with the Community.
- We also noted the Town has the unique responsibility to present and promote the Community of Olds to the world.

Recommendation

We believe it is important that the distinct but related faces of the Town and the Community are expressed in the visual identity. The Government of Alberta and Business for the Arts/artsScene provide two good examples of how a brand can have two distinct but related visual expressions. The next phase of this project (creative execution) will explore exactly what form this will take for Olds.

We recommend the development of a visual identity and platform for the Community, where the Community is the “parent” identity – much like Bfta and artsScene. The Community is made up of the Town, the Olds Institute and other church, school, community and business development groups.

The development of the identity of the Town should follow the visual style of the Community’s identity. In the development of the Town’s identity, the distinctions should be clearly visible; we should be able to identify the characteristics that distinguish the Town from the Community. This will, in part, be reminiscent of the relationship between the Alberta visual identities. Where the Community will require a somewhat more “human” visual identity, the Town needs to convey more structure in order to accurately and authentically reflect the relationship that it has with its stakeholders.

This format will also provide a structure that, moving forward, can be applied to important community groups such as the Olds Institute. The community is the sum of all the parts, and while they are all closely linked, relevant and important differentiation can be conveyed through visual treatments.

Brand Personality

The Town and Community differ functionally, so it is no surprise then that our research also indicated they differ in personality. Personality is important here, because like other components of the brand, it directly affects the how a brand is expressed.

The Town of Olds

The Town, given its structured relationship with residents and its defined role in the Community has what one might describe as, for lack of a better term, a more traditionally masculine personality. (This is a term used here only in its traditional, stereotypical manner — not any judgement on our part as to the distinctions between men and women.)

- People see the Town in a position of authority, providing leadership **for** the community.
 - This was expressed in the Online Survey by words such as “leader”, “pro-active” and “respected”. Respondents also described the Town as a “supportive older brother” or “team captain”.
 - Participants in the Focus Groups also mentioned their expectation that the Town be a leader.
- Words like “dependable” and “stable” speak to the expectation that the Town is consistent in how it delivers its services and interacts with members of the Community.
- The Town is accountable to the community. This means the Town has a responsibility to its constituents, suggesting the Town’s personality needs to be professional, reflecting the structured and formal relationship between the Town and community.
- The Town’s personality is not completely serious though. Respondents also saw the Town as “friendly” and “approachable.”

The Community of Olds

The Community has what we shall describe as, for lack of a better term, a more feminine personality. By this we mean a warmer, informal, more “human” feel.

- A sense of “community” is central to the Community of Olds
 - Words that describe this include “caring”, “supportive”, “helpful”, “welcoming”, “friendly”, “inclusive”, “laid back”, and “close-knit”
- While at times the community was described as “safe” or “conservative”, it seemed to be overshadowed by a significant component of the community that is “innovative”, “progressive”, “independent”, “dynamic”, and “optimistic.”
- The Community is also seen as action-oriented, driven by a strong sense of pride and ownership in the Community.
 - Words that describe this include “ambitious”, “strong”, “hard-working”, and “engaged”.

Overlap

There were also consistent areas of overlap between the Town and the Community. This makes sense given the close connection between the two, and how the Town is also a reflection of the community.

- *“Friendly,” “Progressive” and “Innovative” are words that people used consistently in association with both the Town and the community of Olds.*
- *“Sustainability” was also identified as a top priority of the Town as well as a key value of the community. However sustainability is more of a value vs. a personality trait. One would be unlikely to describe a person as sustainable.*

Personality Profiles

We have synthesized our findings into the following personality profiles:

Brand Personality: Town of Olds

Progressive	Leader
Friendly Approachable Innovative	Pro-active Respected Dependable Accountable

Brand Personality: Community of Olds

Welcoming	Forward-Looking	Engaged
Friendly Caring Supportive Inclusive Easy-going	Progressive Innovative Independent Dynamic Optimistic	Ambitious Hard-working Collaborative Strong

Brand Values

Our findings from the Focus Groups and Online Survey indicated significant convergence between the values identified by the Town of Olds and Olds Institute and the values expressed by respondents and participants describe the Community of Olds.

The only major point of difference we discovered is that accountability is an essential value of the Town, but not of the Community.

Sustainability was identified as a value of the Community in our research. While sustainability is not a specific value identified by the town (in its list four values), it is central to their operations, long-term planning and current communications, appearing as a central theme in the Town's mission, vision and current tagline. Because of this, we have included sustainability as a value of both the Town and the Community.

Brand Values:

Town of Olds	Community of Olds
Integrity Collaboration Innovation Sustainability Accountability	Integrity Collaboration Innovation Sustainability

Brand Assets/Benefits

The Online Survey and Focus Groups provided us with a comprehensive list of physical assets and their corresponding benefits belonging to the Community of Olds. The Town also owns physical assets that allow it to fulfill its role in the community.

Brand Assets/Benefits: Community of Olds

Asset	Benefits
Location <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • proximity to larger centers, QEII HWY, Rocky Mountains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity to big-city amenities • Employment opportunities • Recreation opportunities • Attracts businesses & consumers • Connectedness to the world • Promotes growth
Educational Institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Olds College • Pre-school to post-secondary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational opportunities • Career opportunities • Draws people to Olds • Puts Olds on the map • An ideal place to raise a family
Business & service offerings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic diversity • Hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic driver in the region • Business and employment opportunities • Many products/services available locally • Attracts consumers and residents • Promotes growth
Sense of Community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged citizens & volunteers • Strong community organizations • Heritage • Small town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthens community spirit • Fosters progress and community development • Close-knit community • More relaxed lifestyle • Lack of big-city problems (traffic, crime)
Infrastructure & Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology • Parks & Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes business & community development • Demonstrates commitment to sustainability • Recreation opportunities • Promotes healthy lifestyles • Strengthens community spirit

Brand Assets/Benefits: Town of Olds

Asset	Benefits
Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public works, roads, utilities, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the basic infrastructure required for the community to exist
Parks, recreation & cultural facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle and recreation opportunities • A more cohesive community
Equipment and personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow the Town to provide services such as waste removal, Town planning, or emergency services

Brand Essence

Leading by example.

Olds is unique – a town confident in its direction and clear in its intent. It is taking real action to move itself forward as a community. The leadership in this community is shared – the Town and the Community collaborate in a culture of "doers".

In any workplace, the best person to work with is the person who does not wait for someone else's approval - you want to work with with people who are unafraid – confident in their convictions, strong, capable and willing to work. These people take the path less traveled and are the people who everyone else learns from, whether they are learning from their successes or failures. They are approachable and collaborative, but stick strongly to their values and take the initiative to see their goals realized. These people lead by example. **Olds is leading by example.**

We believe the statement "**leading by example**" captures the essence of Olds. It reflects what we have discovered about the Town and the Community in our research. To be clear: the Brand Essence is not a tagline or something designed to be used in external communications. A brand essence is intended as an internal rallying point, describing the central idea that a brand embodies. It is supported by the brand values, personality, assets and benefits.

In this case, this concept is shared between the two sub-brands. Each "lives" this brand in a different way, and will be expressed using subtle visual differentiation, but this is a shared essence.

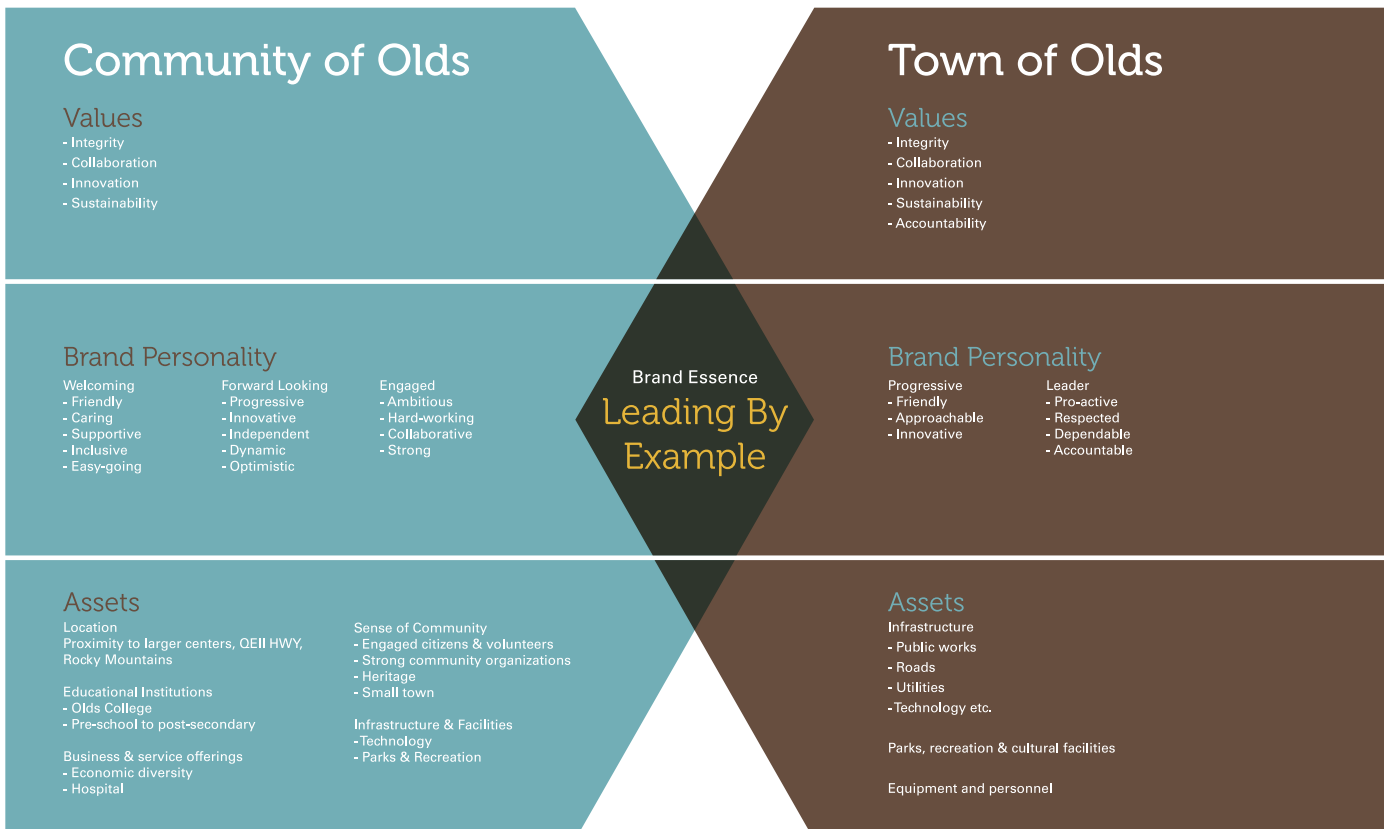
We are excited to present this concept, and confident in its relevance and effectiveness in articulating the core essence of "Olds". Creative execution and communication and messaging strategies in the following phases of this process will be well informed by this essence, and by the other assessment performed in this exercise. This will operate as a strong foundation to confidently build a practical implementation plan for sharing this brand with Olds, and with the rest of the world.

This will be easily extended to additional related brands. That is, we are very cognizant of the diversity of organizations that are integral to this "leading by example", particularly the Olds Institute (OI). Moving forward, we would strongly recommend revising the Olds Institute's visual identity to better reflect the strong relationship between the Institute and the community (and the Town). In terms of a visual expression, the OI is a vital part of the community, and that relationship should be more easily recognizable.

Brand Pyramid

The Brand Pyramid is a visual tool used to present an overview of the brand. In the middle is the Brand Essence, supported by the Brand Values, Brand Personality and Brand Assets.

In the case of Olds, where there need to be two expressions of the brand, we have adjusted the traditional pyramid design to allow for the Town and the Community to be distinct, but connected to the same central brand.



Community of Olds

Values

- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Sustainability

Brand Personality

- Welcoming
 - Friendly
 - Caring
 - Supportive
 - Inclusive
 - Easy-going
- Forward Looking
 - Progressive
 - Innovative
 - Independent
 - Dynamic
 - Optimistic
- Engaged
 - Ambitious
 - Hard-working
 - Collaborative
 - Strong

Assets

- Location
 - Proximity to larger centers, QEII HWY, Rocky Mountains
- Educational Institutions
 - Olds College
 - Pre-school to post-secondary
- Business & service offerings
 - Economic diversity
 - Hospital
- Sense of Community
 - Engaged citizens & volunteers
 - Strong community organizations
 - Heritage
 - Small town
- Infrastructure & Facilities
 - Technology
 - Parks & Recreation

Town of Olds

Values

- Integrity
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Sustainability
- Accountability

Brand Personality

- Progressive
 - Friendly
 - Approachable
 - Innovative
- Leader
 - Pro-active
 - Respected
 - Dependable
 - Accountable

Assets

- Infrastructure
 - Public works
 - Roads
 - Utilities
 - Technology etc.
- Parks, recreation & cultural facilities
- Equipment and personnel

Brand Essence

Leading By Example