

Valemount and Area Community Survey 1999

Prepared for:

Residents of the Valemount Area
And Council of Valemount

Prepared by:

Valemount and Area Economic Development Commission

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Summary

In the process of reviewing the Strategy Plan of 1994, some members of the Valemount and Area Economic Development Commission felt that a revised strategy plan should also include the opinion of local residents expressed by means of a survey. The 1999 survey was mailed out to all households of the Village of Valemount and to the Area of Valemount. In addition, local residents could pick up questionnaires at the Village Office, the Government Agency and at the Open House of the Village of Valemount held on December 17, 1999.

The return rate for the whole area was almost 23%, and this result is a real success when two to four percent is considered good for a mailed, volunteered survey. Over 100 questionnaires were returned at the Open House, and this may have contributed to the high return rate of the survey.

Local residents wish more and better services, but they do also realize that improved services can only be supported by a larger population base. Valemount and area residents confirm national concerns and trends: life quality issues such as water, air, health care, and education are on top of their priority list.

Among public and private projects, the *College of New Caledonia – Northern Outdoor Recreation and Ecotourism Program* tops the list with a support level of 81%. The *Canoe Hot Springs*, the *Gateway Community Pilot Project*, the *Interpretive Centre*, and the *Canoe Mountain Gondola* all receive a very strong support level over 75%.

With regard to forestry issues, the *Small Business Logging Operations* receives the highest support (71%), followed by the *Community Forest* (61%), and a *Log Sort* (53%).

Local residents strongly support the activities undertaken by Council and the Economic Development Commission with regard to growth and diversification, and they do support a vision statement that leads Valemount to a mixed economy town with a sustainable forestry, tourism, and service sector.

Households and Return Rate

The number of households for the Valemount Area can only be estimated through the Postal Office Boxes, since BC Stats and Canada Census include the Valemount Area in to the Regional District Area Subdivision B of Fraser-Fort George. The number of households, however, can be precisely determined for the Village of Valemount.

Valemount	495
Area (estimated)	269
Total Households	764

In 1994, for the first Valemount Community Survey 123 questionnaires were returned. 175 Questionnaires were returned by Jan. 1, 2000, for the second Valemount Survey.

No direct comparisons can be made between the two surveys. The first one required opinions and suggestions in almost every second question, whereas the second survey was focused on yes/no questions and evaluation questions (minimum support – maximum support).

Survey 1994	123
Survey 1999	175

The overall return rate was 22.9%. Area residents participated at the survey with an astonishing 28.6% (77 returned questionnaires out of 269 households). Valemount residents returned 98 questionnaires and achieved a return rate of 19.8%. Of the returned questionnaires Valemount residents represent 56% and the area residents 44.0%

	Returned Questionnaires	Return Rate	% answered
Valemount	98	19.8%	56.0%
Area	77	28.6%	44.0%
Total	175	22.9%	

Residence

Question 1: In what area do you reside

The majority of respondents (56%) reside within the Village boundaries and the majority of the remaining 44% are evenly composed by Hwy 5 North, Cedarside and Tete Jaune residents. No one from the Albreda area returned a complete questionnaire.

	#	% surveyed
Valemount	98	56.0%
Hwy 5 North	18	10.3%
Cedarside	18	10.3%
Tete Jaune	16	9.1%
Hwy 5 South	12	6.9%
Other	9	5.1%
Mount Robson	4	2.3%
Albreda	0	0.0%

Age and Gender

More than 11% preferred not to indicate the age and gender of the person answering the questionnaire. Females and males are equally represented.

Male	% answered	Female	% answered
84	49.7%	85	50.3%

With regard to the participation rate by generation groups, the baby-boomers generation is the largest group, and youth and seniors are almost equally represented.

Age Groups	#	% surveyed
33 - 53	73	41.7%
54 and over	42	24.0%
16 - 32	40	22.9%
No Age Response	20	11.4%

Age Groups Break-down by Gender

The returned surveys confirm the average age group of the population. Female boomers (48%) scored with a stronger participation rate than male boomers (38%). This gender predominance is reversed in the other age groups where senior males (29%) and youth males (28%) are much stronger represented than their counterparts, i.e. 18% for both senior and youth females.

Age Groups	Male	% surveyed	% answered
33 - 53	32	18.3%	38.1%
54 and over	25	14.3%	29.8%
16 - 32	24	13.7%	28.6%
No Age Response	3	1.7%	3.6%

A remarkably higher reticence to disclose age among females is also confirmed by this survey. Almost 7% of females do not answer the age question, whereas this percentage drops down to 1.7% for males.

Age Groups	Female	% surveyed	% answered
33 - 53	41	23.4%	48.2%
16 - 32	16	9.1%	18.8%
54 and over	16	9.1%	18.8%
No Age Response	12	6.9%	14.1%

Permanency

Question 3: How long have you lived in Valemount?

All respondent answered question 3. The strongest group is represented by “old-timers”, i.e. people who have been in the area more than 10 years or were born here.

	# of responses	% surveyed
c) over 10 years	94	53.7%
b) 5 - 10 years	42	24.0%
a) 0 - 4 years	21	12.0%
d) born here	18	10.3%
No Response	0	

Population Growth

Question 4: What would you like the Valemount area population to be in 10 years. (presently just under 2,000)

Over 90% of the respondents support some kind of population growth. The vast majority (44.3%) supports a population growth up to 4,000, and if one combines answers c) and d), 47% support a population growth up to 5,000.

	# of responses	% surveyed	% answered
b) 3,000 to 4,000	77	44.0%	44.3%
c) 4,000 to 5,000	52	29.7%	29.9%
d) 5,000 to 6,000	31	17.7%	17.8%
a) 2,000	14	8.0%	8.0%
No Response	1	0.6%	

A more detailed analysis shows that Valemount residents are more progressive with regard to population growth. 94.8% of Valemount respondents support some kind of growth, while population growth is supported by a strong 88.3% of the Area residents.

	Valemount	% answered
b) 3,000 to 4,000	49	50.5%
c) 4,000 to 5,000	26	26.8%
d) 5,000 to 6,000	17	17.5%
a) 2,000	5	5.2%

	Area	% answered
b) 3,000 to 4,000	28	36.4%
c) 4,000 to 5,000	26	33.8%
d) 5,000 to 6,000	14	18.2%
a) 2,000	9	11.7%

Given that almost 93% of males and 92% of females support some kind of growth, there is no significant gender related difference with regard to population growth.

	Male	% answered	Female	% answered
a) 2,000	6	7.1%	7	8.3%
b) 3,000 to 4,000	40	47.6%	33	39.3%
c) 4,000 to 5,000	22	26.2%	30	35.7%
d) 5,000 to 6,000	16	19.0%	14	16.7%

Interestingly, young (97.5%) and senior residents (92.7%) support a greater population growth than the boomers (91.8%).

	Youth	% answered	Boomers	% answered	Seniors	% answered
b) 3,000 to 4,000	17	42.5%	32	43.8%	19	46.3%
c) 4,000 to 5,000	11	27.5%	26	35.6%	12	29.3%
d) 5,000 to 6,000	11	27.5%	9	12.3%	7	17.1%
a) 2,000	1	2.5%	6	8.2%	3	7.3%

The propensity for supporting some kind of population growth tends to decrease with long time residents. 100% of new residents support some kind of growth, while 88.2% of “old timers” support some kind of population growth.

Time of Residency	Population Growth Support
0-4 years	100.0%
5-10years	97.6%
over 10	88.2%
Born here	88.9%

	0-4 years % answered	5-10 years % answered	over 10 % answered	born here % answered
a) 2,000	0.0%	2.4%	11.8%	11.1%
b) 3,000 to 4,000	33.3%	33.3%	49.5%	55.6%
c) 4,000 to 5,000	38.1%	42.9%	24.7%	16.7%
d) 5,000 to 6,000	28.6%	21.4%	14.0%	16.7%

Strategies to Attract People and Businesses

Question 5: Do you think that the Village of Valemount, the Chamber, and the Economic Development Commission should develop specific strategies to attract more people and businesses?

The support for specific strategies confirms the trend expressed with regard to population growth. There is a clear desire to support growth with an adequate strategy.

	# of responses	% surveyed	% answered
Yes	152	86.9%	93.3%
No	11	6.3%	6.7%
No Response	12	6.9%	

In this question, there is a 100% gender concordance.

	Male	% answered	Female	% answered
Yes	74	93.7%	74	93.7%
No	5	6.3%	5	6.3%

Valemount residents express a higher need for a strategy than Area residents.

	Valemount	% answered	Area	% answered
Yes	90	94.7%	62	91.2%
No	5	5.3%	6	8.8%

Youth and Boomers indicate a higher need for a strategy than Seniors.

	Youth	% answered	Boomers	% answered	Seniors	% answered
Yes	38	95.0%	65	94.2%	34	91.9%
No	2	5.0%	4	5.8%	3	8.1%

Age Group	Support level of Strategy
Youth	95.0%
Boomers	94.2%
Seniors	91.9%

100 % of new residents feel that a strategy is extremely important in order to attract people and new businesses, whereas this importance decreases with old-timers and people who were borne here (83.3%).

	0-4 years % answered	5-10 years % answered	over 10 % answered	born here % answered
Yes	100.0%	94.9%	93.0%	83.3%
No		5.1%	7.0%	16.7%

General Issues

**Question 6: How important are the following sectors/issues to you?
(1= not important, 5= very important)**

This question was aimed at measuring the degree of importance given by each respondent to relevant issues of the local community life. The following table reproduces the answers with numerical values. Each number indicates the total responses for each sector and evaluation value.

Sector / Issue	1	2	3	4	5
	Not important	Low	Medium	High	Very Important
Natural Resource Extraction (forestry, mining)	11	27	48	32	53
Water & Air Quality	0	1	8	30	134
Visual Quality	1	3	13	44	108
Land Use Issues (Agricultural Land Reserve)	10	20	55	45	41
Outdoor Recreation	3	5	21	46	97
Tourism	5	9	17	53	90
Small Business	3	4	19	54	93
Government services	5	9	44	58	57
Health Care	0	1	16	28	130
Education (School System)	2	3	12	34	123
Training and Learning (V L Centre)	4	6	36	51	76
Communications (Telephone, Internet)	5	4	30	50	84
Improvement of Valemount Airport	17	20	47	44	46
Valemount Community Television	47	32	52	22	21
Attraction of Retirees	13	21	54	39	43
Arts & Culture	12	14	59	44	45

The support level for each sector/issue can be measured in percentage. 0% of support was assigned to the negative answer “not important” and 100% of support to the positive answer “very important”.

Numeric Expression	1	2	3	4	5
Linguistic Expression	Not Important	Low	Medium	High	Very Important
Support Level in %	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%

The following table shows the support level for each issue as a total percentage number. The sectors are sorted by importance.

Sector / Issue	Support Level in % of surveyed
Water & Air Quality	91.9%
Health Care	91.0%
Education (School System)	88.7%
Visual Quality	84.7%
Small Business	82.3%
Outdoor Recreation	81.9%
Tourism	80.3%
Communications (Telephone, Internet Access)	78.6%
Training and Learning (Valemount Learning Centre)	76.4%
Government services	71.3%
Arts & Culture	63.4%
Natural Resource Extraction (forestry, mining)	61.6%
Improvement of Valemount Airport	61.4%
Land Use Issues (Agricultural Land Reserve)	61.3%
Attraction of Retirees	59.7%
Valemount Community Television	40.9%

Growth Strategy and Services

Question 7: Do you favour a growth strategy (for example, attraction of more people and businesses), if that means more services in health care, education, and government services?

This question reaffirms the need and support for a growth strategy if that results in benefits such as improved services.

		% surveyed	% answered
Yes	158	90.3%	93.5%
No	11	6.3%	6.5%
No Response	6	3.4%	

In this question there is no absolute gender parity as in question 5.

	Male	% answered	Female	% answered
Yes	77	95.1%	77	92.8%
No	4	4.9%	6	7.2%

Valemount residents are far more supportive of growth strategies than Area residents.

	Valemount	% answered	Area	% answered
Yes	90	95.7%	68	90.7%
No	4	4.3%	7	9.3%

100% of young residents support a growth strategy, and almost 93% of boomers and seniors do also support a growth strategy if growth is associated with improved services.

	Youth	% answered	Boomers	% answered	Seniors	% answered
Yes	39	100.0%	65	92.9%	38	92.7%
No	0	0.0%	5	7.1%	3	7.3%

New residents (100%) are more receptive to a growth strategy than “old timers” (91.1%), and people who were born here (88.2%).

	0-4 years % answered	5-10years % answered	over 10 % answered	born here % answered
Yes	100.0%	97.6%	91.1%	88.2%
No		2.4%	8.9%	11.8%

Village Expansion

Question 8: Do you favour the expansion of the Village borders?

Numerous respondents indicated that this question needed additional information in order to express a clear opinion.

	# responses	% surveyed	% answered
Yes	115	65.7%	68.9%
No	52	29.7%	31.1%
No Response	8	4.6%	

Females are more inclined to support an expansion of the Village.

	Male	% answered	Female	% answered
Yes	53	64.6%	60	75.9%
No	29	35.4%	19	24.1%

Almost 80% of Village residents favour an expansion of the village, whereas the support of Area residents decreases to 56.6%.

	Valemount	% answered	Area	% answered
Yes	72	79.1%	43	56.6%
No	19	20.9%	33	43.4%

Young residents are more progressive than boomers and seniors with regard to village expansion.

	Youth	% answered	Boomers	% answered	Seniors	% answered
Yes	29	76.3%	49	71.0%	29	72.5%
No	9	23.7%	20	29.0%	11	27.5%

New residents and settled residents (5-10 years) strongly support the idea of expanding the village boundaries. This support decreases with “old-timers” and people who were born here.

	0-4 years % answered	5-10 years % answered	over 10 % answered	born here % answered
Yes	73.7%	81.0%	64.0%	58.8%
No	26.3%	19.0%	36.0%	41.2%

Forestry Issues

Question 9: With regard to Forestry, how important are the following issues to you? (1= not important, 5= very important)

This question was aimed at measuring the degree of importance given by each respondent to relevant issues concerning forestry. The following table reproduces the answers expressed by numerical values.

Forestry Issues	1 Not important	2 Low	3 Medium	4 High	5 Very Important
Increase Annual Allowable Cut	41	27	44	27	29
Forests be Available to Small Logging Operations	6	10	42	55	54
Increase Protected Areas (Parks, Reserves, etc.)	35	30	40	19	42
Decrease Protected Areas (Parks, Reserves, etc.)	60	22	37	21	24
Planning a Community Forest	13	22	45	47	39
Planning a Log Sort	22	27	50	34	29

The following table shows the support level for each issue as a total percentage number. The issues are sorted by importance.

Forestry Issues	Support Level in % of surveyed	Support Level in % of answered
Forests be Available to Small Logging Operations	67.9%	71.1%
Planning a Community Forest	58.4%	61.6%
Planning a Log Sort	49.3%	53.2%
Increase Protected Areas (Parks, Reserves, etc.)	47.9%	50.5%
Increase Annual Allowable Cut	44.6%	46.4%
Decrease Protected Areas (Parks, Reserves, etc.)	36.4%	38.9%

Projects

Question 10: Please indicate your level of support for the following proposed projects. (1= no support, 5= maximum support)

This question was aimed at measuring the degree of support given by each respondent to proposed projects. The following table reproduces the answers expressed by numerical values.

	1	2	3	4	5
Projects	No Support	Low	Medium	High	Maximum Support
Downtown Beautification	9	14	29	38	81
Interpretive Centre on HWY 5 and Pine Road	8	14	26	43	79
Canoe Mountain Gondola	15	7	27	34	87
Canoe Hot Springs	13	6	18	36	97
Gateway Community Pilot Project	13	2	25	45	78
College of New Caledonia – Northern Outdoor Recreation and Ecotourism Program	7	6	19	42	94

The following table shows the support level for each project as a total percentage number. The projects are sorted by importance.

Projects	Support Level in % of surveyed	Support Level in % of answered
College of New Caledonia – Northern Outdoor Recreation and Ecotourism Program	78.0%	81.3%
Canoe Hot Springs	76.9%	79.1%
Gateway Community Pilot Project	71.3%	76.5%
Interpretive Centre on HWY 5 and Pine Road	73.0%	75.1%
Canoe Mountain Gondola	73.0%	75.1%
Downtown Beautification	72.9%	74.6%

Vision Statement

Question 11: Please indicate your level of support for the following vision statements. (1= no support, 5= maximum support)

This question was aimed at measuring the degree of support given by each respondent to proposed vision statements for the revised Economic Development Strategy. The following table reproduces the answers expressed by numerical values.

	1	2	3	4	5
Vision Statements	No Support	Low	Medium	High	Maximum Support
Valemount a service centre for the Robson Valley, Mount Robson and Jasper	9	11	24	40	79
Valemount an exclusive forestry town	98	33	22	6	4
Valemount a mixed economy town (forestry, tourism, services)	1	5	19	28	114

The following table shows the support level for each vision statement as a total percentage number.

Vision Statements	Support Level in % of surveyed	Support Level in % of answered
Valemount a mixed economy town (forestry, tourism, services)	83.3%	87.3%
Valemount a service centre for the Robson Valley, Mount Robson and Jasper	70.7%	75.9%
Valemount an exclusive forestry town	15.9%	17.0%