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Regional Workforce Development Research: Attraction and Retention 2022-2023

CITY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE | COUNTY OF GRANDE PRAIRIE | MUNICIPAL DISTRICT OF GREENVIEW | AREA COMMUNITIES
October 2023

Today's agenda

1. **Objectives of the research**

2. **What did the data and consultation tell us?**

3. **SOARR analysis**

4. **What can be done?**

Objectives of the research

Objectives of the research

This research seeks to provide insights for enhancing workforce attraction and retention strategies.

For employers

- Understand employers' experiences and perceptions in attracting and retaining talent
- Identify initiatives, programs, challenges, and gaps to inform strategies that enhance talent programs and support workforce development efforts
- Inform and strengthen the talent ecosystem
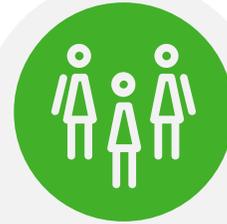
For employees

- Identify key community assets that attract workers
- Assess employee satisfaction with recruitment and onboarding, and understand reasons for leaving the region
- Provide insights for enhancing workforce attraction and retention strategies

Developing the research

Project Initiation and Management

(November – December 2022)

Situational Analysis and Stakeholder Engagement

(December 2022 – May 2023)

Baseline Data Collection

(June 2023)

Reporting

(July – Sept 2023)
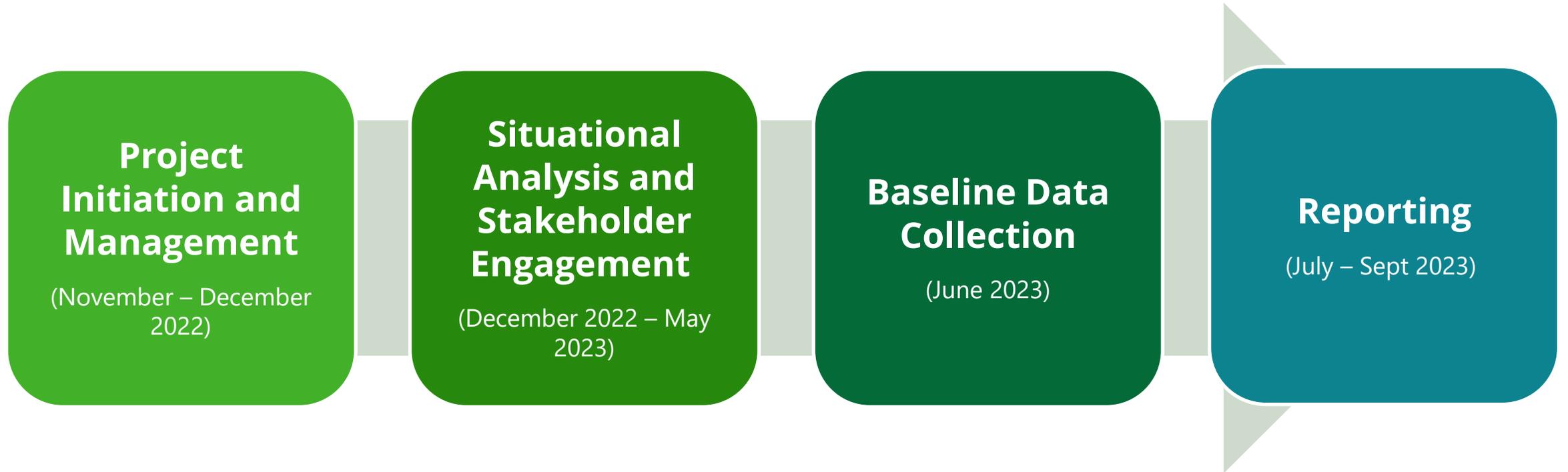
Engagement activities summary

660 stakeholders provided insights and feedback

195
Regional Employers

Deloitte conducted a survey of employers from February 3 to March 2, 2023.

465
Employees and Job Seekers

Deloitte conducted a survey of employee and job seekers from April 18 to May 17, 2023.

Northwest Region Communities

What did the data and consultation tell us?

Regional employer survey

Deloitte conducted a survey of employers from February 3 to March 2, 2023.

Availability of required labour

55% of employers are satisfied with the availability of labour to support business growth and success.

This suggests that 45% of respondents have had some difficulties finding required labour in the region.

Employee retention

50% of employers are satisfied or very satisfied with the region as a place to attract workers.

This suggests that 50% of employers feel more is needed on the attraction front.

Employers are most satisfied with the ability to offer competitive wages (74%) and access to information about what is available in the region and communities (73%).

Future hiring

38% of employers report that their total number of employees has increased over the past 12 months, and 55% expect their number of employees to increase over the next 12 months.

38%   55%

Past 12 Months   Next 12 Months
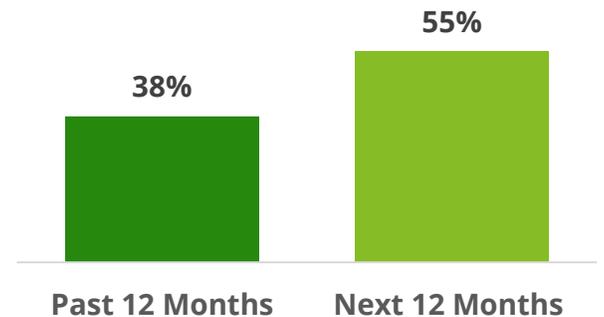
Regional employers survey

Deloitte conducted a survey of employers from February 3 to March 2, 2023.

Retention priorities

The top three priority factors related to employee retention are **the overall cost of living** (excluding housing), **availability of child care**, and **availability of transportation** options.

Recruitment outside of the region

39% of respondents indicate that they have directed recruitment efforts outside of the region, noting nationwide (30%), Alberta-wide (25%), and Edmonton (22%) as target regions or areas.

52% of respondents who have directed recruitment efforts outside of the region agreed that they were successful in hiring individuals outside of the region.

Employee Retention

Employers are more satisfied with the region as a place to retain workers (69%) than the region as a place to attract workers (50%).

Employees and job seekers survey

Deloitte conducted a survey of employee and job seekers from April 18 to May 17, 2023.

Satisfaction with the region

The overwhelming majority of respondents (92%) were satisfied with the region as a place to work.

Labour force participants were most satisfied with suitable job opportunities (89%), commute times (88%), job security (88%), and access to health benefits/sick pay (81%).

	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Total
Suitable job opportunities	50%	39%	89%
Commute times	34%	54%	88%
Job security	37%	50%	88%
Access to health benefits/sick pay	35%	46%	81%

■ Somewhat Satisfied ■ Very Satisfied
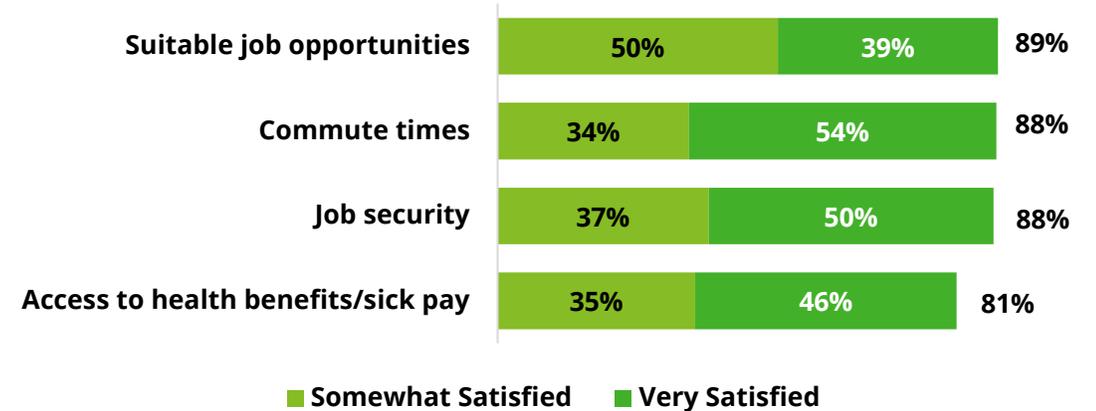
Top priorities for working in the region

The top priorities related to working in the region were:

1. Accessibility of appropriate work-related training
2. Adequate pay/compensation
3. Availability of professional development opportunities through local education/training providers.

Employees and job seekers survey

Deloitte conducted a survey of employee and job seekers from April 18 to May 17, 023.

Quality of life

86% of labour force participants were satisfied with the quality of life in the region.

Respondents were most satisfied with the region's:

- Family-friendliness (81%)
- K-12 education (77%)
- Recreational activities (76%)

Top priorities for quality of life

The top priorities for labour force participants related to quality of life, in order of importance, were:

1. Availability of health and medical services
2. Public transportation
3. Overall cost of living (aside from housing)
4. Availability of child care

Career progression

26% of respondents strongly agreed that the region provided opportunity for career progression in their field, while 49% somewhat agreed, indicating an overall positive response with some room for improvement.

The region in numbers – demographic profile

Figure represent the aggregate of Census Divisions No. 18 and No. 19 | Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

Population 2021	**Mobility**	**Working Age**	**Retirement Age**	**Immigration & Diversity**
134,393 people	**25%**	**30%**	**12%**	**10%** immigrants
Change from 2016 ↓ 0.4% growth	percentage of population who lived elsewhere five years ago	population 25-44 years old	population 65+ years old	**13%** Indigenous
				10% visible minorities
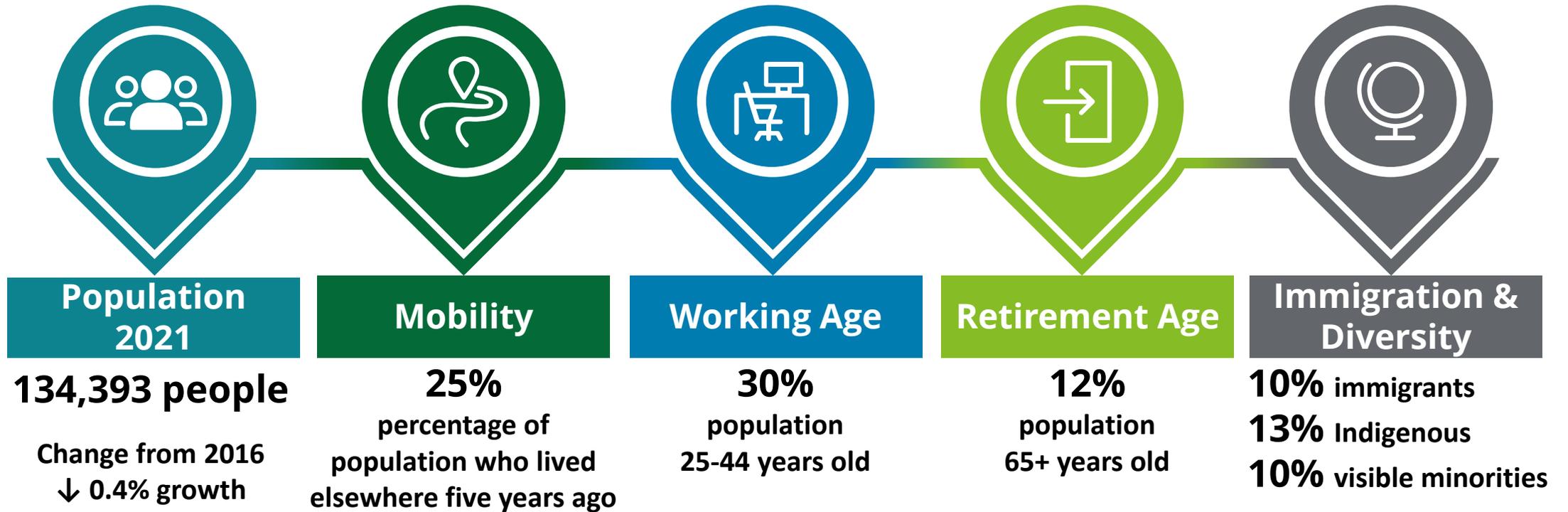
The County of Grande Prairie's population grew at a faster rate (5.6%) than the rest of Alberta (4.8%) from 2016 to 2021, but overall population growth in the wider region was slower (0.7%) than the rest of the province. Slow growth has been driven by population declines in rural areas in Greenview, Fox Creek, Beaverlodge, and Sexsmith.

The region in numbers – population share by age group

Figure represents the aggregate of Census Divisions No. 18 and No. 19 | Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

	Children (0-14)	Youth and Young Adults (15-24)	Young Working Prime (25-34)	Mid Working Prime (35-44)	Late Working Prime (45-54)	Late Career and Early Retirement (55-64)	Young Seniors (65-74)	Elderly (75+)
Region	21%	12%	15%	15%	12%	12%	8%	5%
Alberta	19%	12%	14%	15%	13%	13%	9%	6%

- ■ Children (0-14)
- ■ Youth and Young Adults (15-24)
- ■ Young Working Prime (25-34)
- ■ Mid Working Prime (35-44)
- ■ Late Working Prime (45-54)
- ■ Late Career and Early Retirement (55-64)
- ■ Young Seniors (65-74)
- ■ Elderly (75+)
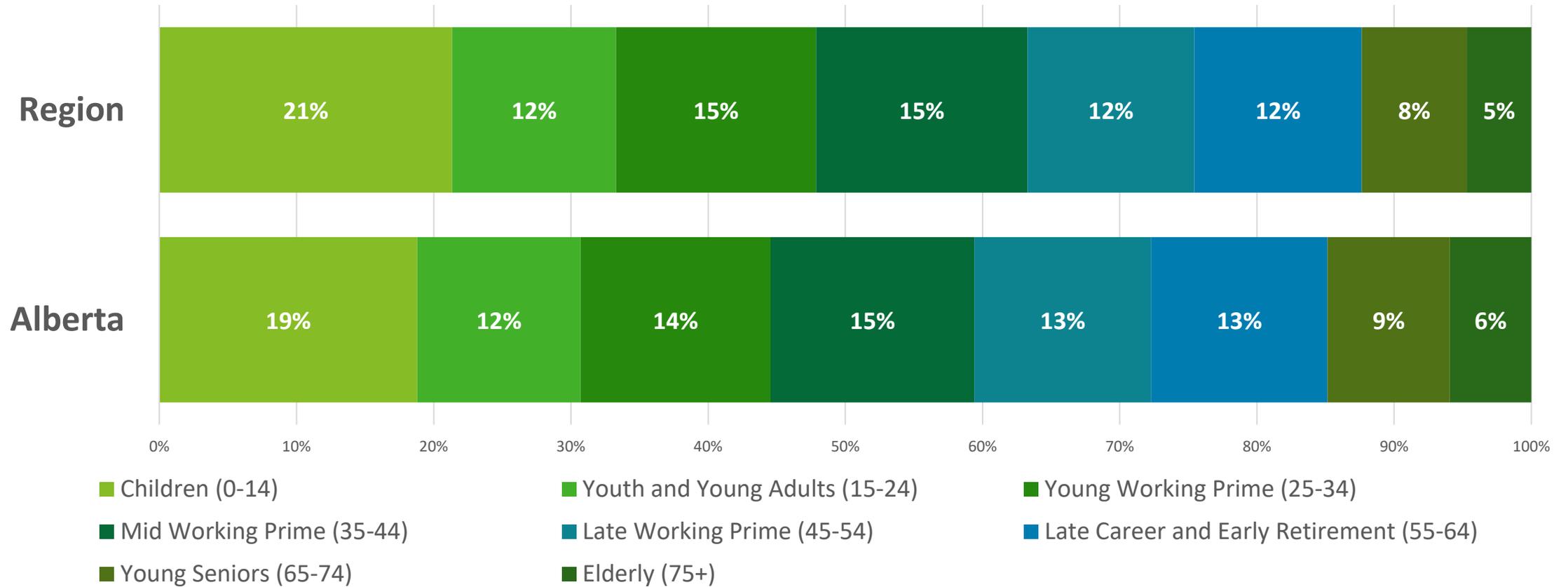
(Numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding)

The region in numbers – job counts

86,562
2019 jobs

Growth led by
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (+1,495 jobs, 21% growth)

Pandemic impact (2019-2021)
10% decline

Recovery period (2021-2022)
5% growth

81,819
2022 jobs

Job demand
33% Health care and social assistance
13% Retail trade

85,167
2028 jobs
(forecast)

The region has made progress in recovering some of the jobs lost during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that job declines will reverse between 2022 and 2028, resulting in a **projected growth of approximately 4% in overall jobs**.

Top sectors
Retail trade (12%)
Construction (10%)
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction (10%)

This data is for the region, which includes the Census Divisions No. 18 and No. 19; Lightcast Economic Modeling, 2023.3.

The region in numbers – share of labour force in key sectors

Retail trade 12%

Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction 10%

Educational Services 6%

Health care and social assistance 11%

Forestry and agriculture 4%

Construction 10%

Accommodations and food services 6%

Future sector growth and decline

NUMBER OF JOBS EXPECTED TO BE GAINED OR LOST (2023 – 2028)
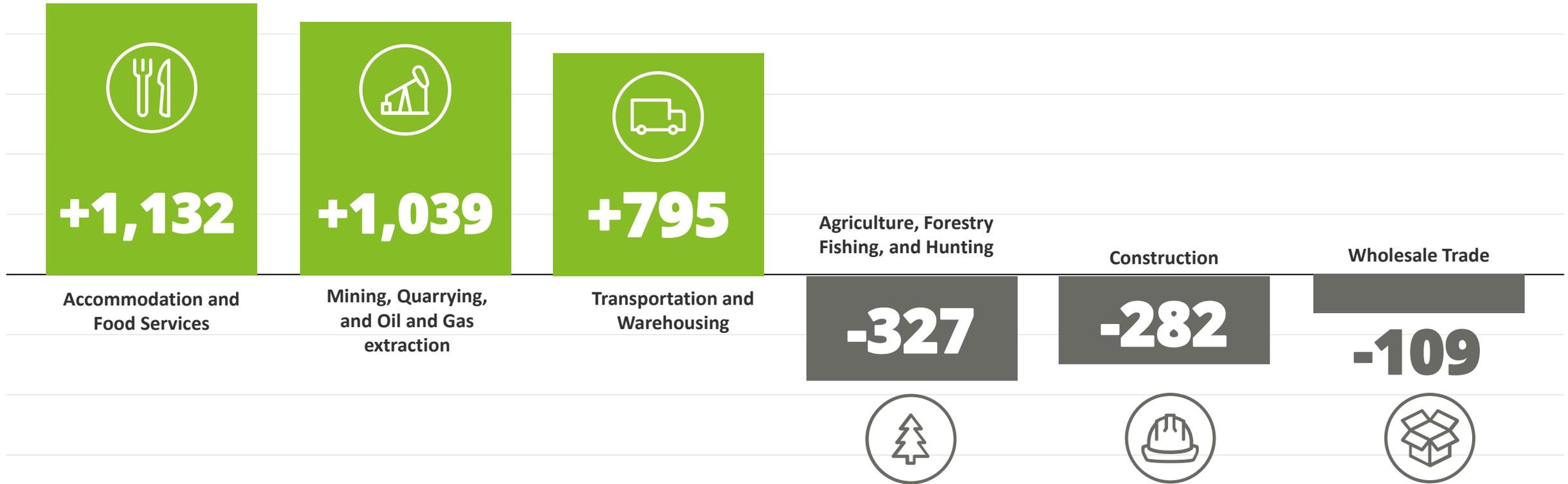
+1,132
Accommodation and Food Services

+1,039
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas extraction

+795
Transportation and Warehousing

Agriculture, Forestry Fishing, and Hunting
-327

Construction
-282

Wholesale Trade
-109

Figure represents the aggregate of Census Divisions No. 18 and No. 19 | Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census
Source: Lightcast Economic Modeling, 2023.3.

What have we learned from employers and employees?

Employers need talent attraction support.

Availability of training is affecting talent retention.

The region is attractive to talent. Employees report that the region is a great place to live and work.

Regional cost of living (outside of housing), access to child care, and access to transportation affect employee retention and satisfaction.

SOARR analysis

Strengths – What is the region doing well?

Local employees were **highly satisfied** with the region's job opportunities, commute times, job security, and health benefits/sick pay.

These benefits can be used as marketing opportunities to attract new employees and increase the retention of current ones.

Most employers were satisfied with the **productivity** of the labour force and with their ability to offer competitive wages.

Relatively high wages within the region could be a major selling point to both prospective and current residents.

Both employees and employers expressed high satisfaction with K-12 education and the **family-friendly** nature of the region.

Marketing the region as an excellent place to raise children could help retain current employees, attract candidates, expand the future workforce, and contribute to the region's overall success.

The majority of employees were satisfied with the overall **quality of life** in the region.

This could be another good selling point to prospective employees, as well as to employees' families and remote workers.

Opportunities – What are the region's best opportunities?

The population in the region has a **younger median age** than the rest of Alberta, which means there will not be significant retirements in the near future if talent is retained. A younger community can improve innovation, adaptability, diversity, inclusion, and long-term growth.

Hiring through **immigration** is a viable strategy to fill labour market gaps in the region. Businesses and employees suggest that a welcoming and inclusive community, local cultural communities, and programs for new residents of Canada could support immigrant attraction and retention.

With a demand for workers in the region, **coordinated attraction efforts** can support the large number of employers who are having difficulty finding required workforce in the region.

Employers have expressed a need for local and regional **marketing initiatives** aimed at improving the image of the region among external audiences. Some of the selling points identified in the "strengths" section of this analysis could be leveraged in marketing materials.

Leveraging **personal networks** such as family and friends can support the widespread promotion of available job openings and the attraction of new residents.

Aspirations – What do regional stakeholders want to achieve?

Employers consider **improvements** to the overall cost of living (excluding housing), availability of child care, and availability of transportation options as top priorities to support workforce development.

Employers are seeking talent who will choose the region and **stay in the region**, while employees are looking for professional opportunities as well as a good place to live.

Employees would like to improve the accessibility of appropriate **work-related training**, adequate pay/compensation, and availability of professional development opportunities through local education/training providers.

Risks – What challenges do the region need to be aware of?

Population in the overall region is growing at a slower rate than the province, which may limit the available workforce development.

A low retention rate could result in **high turnover** and recruitment costs for employers.

The region's **labour force** is following provincial trends and experiencing small declines, which may affect employers' ability to find the required labour in recruitment zones.

Most employers expect their number of employees to increase over the next 12 months, which may create **competition for talent.**

A lower share of **immigrants and visible minorities** in the region may deter minorities from relocating to some of the communities in the region.

Career progression opportunities are perceived as limited by employees, which may lead to outward mobility of experienced employees.

Results – What are the goals the region would like to achieve?

Attraction Draw a diverse workforce from provincial, interprovincial, and international sources.

Retention Foster a vibrant local community to retain top talent through targeted marketing of the region's key strengths

Diversity Build diverse and inclusive workplace cultures that attract and retain top talent

Professional development Empower employees with access to high-quality education and learning opportunities

Experiential learning Foster a culture of employer participation in work-integrated learning programs

Acknowledgements

This regional workforce development attraction and retention research project is a collaborative project of the City of Grande Prairie, County of Grande Prairie, Municipal District of Greenview, Grande Prairie & District Chamber of Commerce, and Alberta Jobs, Economy and Trade.

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Thank you!

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