



Community Futures

Thompson Country

thriving communities

Building the
Future Now

Final Report February 2020



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number of individuals through this project:



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Summary Report

Introduction

We live in dynamic and ever-changing times and as such it is always important for communities through-out BC to prepare for and adapt to these changes. **This inspired the question: how can a community become more resilient so when change happens, they can adapt, innovate, and thrive?**

The answer is multi-faceted, and the best way to start understanding potential threats (to proactively mitigate them), and opportunities (to proactively to pursue them), is to engage with stakeholders – the community of Merritt.

WorkBC and Community Futures Nicola Valley are spearheading a Thriving Communities project to ask strategic questions of local citizens, finding out what's on the minds of local workers and business leaders. All information will be used to develop a labour market study to pinpoint potential gaps and uncover innovative opportunities just waiting to be realized.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to facilitate meaningful engagement and consultation with the community in order to conduct a review of Merritt's unique local labour market conditions. The goals of the project are as follow:

1. Develop a detailed understanding of the unique labour market characteristics of Merritt through community engagement;
2. Develop a series of recommendations which can be implemented by various organizations to address the labour market challenges and opportunities.

The Thriving Communities Presentation will share recommendations for local businesses, organizations, and educational facilities, as well as local and provincial governments, to strategically provide skills training, build partnerships, and make good investments.

Engagement Summary

The Project Team wanted to provide the community with as many options as possible to not only learn about the project, but also to provide feedback on Merritt's unique labour market. This was achieved in a number of ways which can be summarized as:

- In-person sessions such as: public presentations, participation in the employment fair, door-to-door visits with local businesses and engagement of local partners who interact with the community on a regular basis.
- Digital Information: A dedicated project website, Facebook posts, an online survey, power point presentations and email conversations.

- Print Material: Postcards, hand-outs, posters, booklets and fact sheets.

Overall Participation

570 individuals participated in the Thriving Communities survey. Using the Statistics Canada 2016 Census population size of 5,321 for the City of Merritt, this would mean that the results from this project are statistically significant and represent a confidence level of 99% and a confidence interval of 5%. In other words, there is a 99% chance that the data in the report is representative of the population as a whole, plus or minus 5%.

Key Findings:

Demographics:

Merritt will see a bigger labour market turn-over (both loss and new entrants) than the rest of BC in 10 – 15 years.

Assuming zero population migration (the movement of people in and out of the region), Merritt is going to see a bigger impact from the retiring baby boomer population (assuming this demographic retires between the ages of 65 and 70) and a bigger influx of new workers entering the labour market (assuming this demographic (ages 15 to 35) choose to participate in the labour market) than the rest of the Province.

This is because Merritt is currently over-represented in age categories which are 50 years and over as well as in age categories of 0 – 15 years of age.

Education:

When looking at the findings from the Province's 2018 Labour Market Outlook, we can see that the majority (77%) of the job openings expected in the next 10 years will require some level of post-secondary education or training.

Most of the current workers in Merritt do not hold a Bachelor's degree or higher, yet there are projected future job openings for individuals with a diploma, certificate or apprenticeship training (371,300) and those with high school or occupational training (176,300).

It is important for Merritt to continue to make post-secondary educational options available for its population, to not only close the gap with the rest of the province, but also to better position their workforce for future job opportunities as position requirements continue to increase in education demand and complexity.

Labour Market Supply

Merritt's labour mobility patterns very closely match those with the rest of the province with the exception of intraprovincial migrants meaning that **Merritt is more likely to be the destination for people moving with-in the province than the average city in BC**. This could indicate that Merritt is well situated to continue to attract people to relocate, increasing the labour supply and bolstering the economy.

Merritt has more people looking for jobs (higher unemployment) in comparison to the rest of the Province (9% vs. 7%), although it does not provide enough information to be able to tell if this unemployment is frictional, structural or seasonal.

Merritt has a lower percentage of labour market participation than the rest of BC (57% vs. 64%). This will result in an increased dependency ratio, which effectively means that there are fewer resources available in an economy to provide for the population. This results in increased pressure on city infrastructure and business owners and in and around Merritt.

Local Job Growth:

None of the business owners who participated in this project anticipate workforce shrinkage over the next two years. Instead they all indicated that they anticipated either maintaining or growing the current number of positions available. This growth varied with the highest frequency of responses indicating between 0 and 9 and the maximum being 54 new positions in the coming two years.

Out of the anticipated vacancies reported by the Business owners who participated in the Thriving Communities survey, the largest employer demand is for sales and service positions (48.72%), followed by trades, transport, equipment operators and related positions (33.33%), then business finance and administration (25.64%), then management related roles (20.51%).

Labour Market Supply Barriers:

The top reported barriers to employment for those looking for work was lack of prior work experience (54.53%), education (44.67%) as well as “upgrading skills and employment training” (43.86%) all of which are associated with current skills mismatch in the marketplace. This grouping of barriers represents just over 88% of individuals opinions of the barriers to employment*.

Affordable housing (28.57%), childcare (25.15%) and transportation (24.75%) are all barriers associated with the infrastructure in and around Merritt which supports an effective labour market. This grouping of barriers represents just over 78% of individuals opinions of the barriers to employment*.

* **Note:** totals can sum to more than 100% as each response category represents a percentage of responses from every individual

Labour Market Demand Barriers:

The number one perceived barrier to employment from labour market demand perspective was an inability to offer wages which are high enough to cover the cost of living (52.52%).

This was followed by a “lack of available jobs in the industry/sector” which represented 44.47% of the responses. This category is interesting as it can represent two very different scenarios: the first is once again a skills mismatch between the current employment opportunities and those looking for work. This can be perceived as a lack of jobs in the field of the job seeker’s preference. The second scenario is either a contraction or lack of growth in a certain industry or sector, which can result in a curtailment of job vacancies in this industry and an oversupply of available workforce.

Lastly; a lack of “soft-skills”, such as showing up on time, being respectful, dressing appropriately, etc. was identified as a barrier to employment by 25.96% of the respondents. This response is in effect once again an example of skills mismatch as the skills employers are seeking are not matching those which the job seekers possess.

Opportunities to Improve the Labour Market

All participants in the Thrive Communities survey (representing both labour supply and demand) were asked what, in their opinion, were opportunities or ways in which the labour market could be improved in Merritt and the surrounding region.

Skills Training:

Not surprisingly, based on the feedback in the previous section, “skills and employment training support” was the most frequent response at 66.13%. Access to post-secondary education was also mentioned (31.44%) along with public education at 22.31%. This grouping of “Skills Training” represents a combined total of just under 120% when each category percentage is summed*.

Affordable Housing:

The next two largest single categories represent a perceived need of more affordable house (55.98%) as well as an overall need for more housing in general (55.98%). Another category mentioned was “more available land for development” which could mean either land for housing development or land for commercial and industrial development (18.05%). This grouping of “Affordable Housing” represents a combined total of just under 130% when each category percentage is summed*.

* **Note:** totals can sum to more than 100% as each response category represents a percentage of responses from every individual

Labour Market Support Programming:

This category represents a range of responses which are associated with support programming for a variety of sub-groups in and around Merritt. Support for entrepreneurs ranked the highest at 29.01%, followed by mature worker (28.40%) and youth (25.96%) support programs. This grouping of “Labour Market Support Programming” represents a combined total of just under 83.37% when each category percentage is summed*.

Improved Transportation Options:

Transportation is seen as a barrier to employment (24.75%) and therefore also represents an opportunity if there are means to improve available options. Merritt already boasts some of the lower commute times in the Province (Figure 40: 2016 Census: Commuting Duration for the Employed Labour Force), so duration is likely not the problem. Instead improved access and options would help support the current labour market.

Access to Healthcare:

Lastly, access to healthcare was viewed as an opportunity to improve the labour market in the region. There is a chronic family doctor shortage in the Province of BC. If Merritt was able to provide better access to primary healthcare it could act as a differentiator in a competitive market to motivate both workers (labour supply) and business owners (labour demand) to relocate to Merritt.

Housing:

Business owners, employed and unemployed individuals all agree that housing affordability is a barrier to the labour market in Merritt.

Merritt boasts much more affordable dwelling options of the rest of the province with median dwelling costs in Merritt (\$250,000) being about half of the median value of a home in the rest of the province (just over \$500,000).

When looking at the average age of dwellings in and around Merritt we can see that there was a construction boom between 1961 and 1981, where construction of new dwellings in Merritt far exceeded the provincial average, but since that time Merritt has lagged the rest of the province in new dwelling construction consistently. The largest discrepancy between the Merritt and the rest of BC was between 2006 and 2010, where growth in the Province was sitting around 9%, while Merritt was at 2%.

Overall, Merritt has a higher percentage of single detached homes, semi-detached homes and movable dwellings than the rest of the province but is generally underrepresented in all of the other categories. **There is an opportunity to develop apartment buildings (of all kinds), duplexes and Row houses to provide new more affordable housing options.**

Transportation to Work:

Merritt employees are more likely to walk to work in comparison to the province averages.

Walking to work is the second most widely used mode of transportation, exceeding carpooling (traveling to work in a vehicle as a passenger).

Commuting times for Merritt are far less than most of the rest of the province, with the majority (73%) of workers having a commute time of 15 min or less. In comparison, the average commute time in BC is close to double (26 min), while the average commute times for Metro Vancouver (individuals living in Vancouver, not commuting from the lower mainland) was 67 minutes.

There is an opportunity to increase or promote carpooling as an option in and around Merritt.

This is the second most preferred method of transportation for all parties, yet data would seem to indicate that there is very little carpooling currently taking place in and around Merritt.

There is an opportunity to further expand the “walking to work” infrastructure and awareness in Merritt. Walking to work is far more popular in Merritt when compared to the rest of the province, which could indicate that Merritt is ideally setup for employees to walk to work and is the third most preferred mode of transportation by the participants in the Thriving Communities survey.

This could indicate an opportunity to further enhance walking infrastructure and promote walking to work as a means to remove transportation as a barrier to the labour market and also to attract additional people to Merritt (as both labour supply and demand) by marketing Merritt’s “walkability”.

Opportunities for Future Growth of Merritt’s Existing Industries

When comparing the current industry representation in Merritt by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to the 10 industries forecast to have the largest number of job openings in the Thompson Okanagan region we can see that **Merritt will likely see increased job openings in “other retail trade” (excluding cars and personal care), Hospitals and Nursing and residential care facilities, ambulatory health care services, food services and drinking places, elementary and secondary schools as well as accommodation services.**

Provincially the fastest growing industries from now until 2028 are anticipated to be Warehousing and Storage, Telecommunications and Nursing and Residential Care Facilities. Once again, comparing this data to the existing industry mix in Merritt, likely **there will also be growth in the existing Warehousing and Storage as well as Nursing and Residential Care Facilities.**



Opportunities for Merritt to Diversify the Economy

Historically, B.C.'s economy has been defined by resource extraction, particularly the forestry and mining industries. Those industries are still important, but sectors such as tourism and high technology are continuing to grow and as a result are becoming increasingly important to the provincial economy.

In British Columbia, five industries will account for about half of the total job openings projected over the next 10 years¹. They are:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (148,400 job openings; 16.4 percent of total job openings)
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (106,200 job openings; 11.8 percent of total job openings)
- Retail Trade (82,300 job openings; 9.1 percent of total job openings)
- Accommodation and Food Services (61,000 job openings; 6.8 percent of total job openings)
- Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (59,700 job openings; 6.6 percent of total job openings)

When we compare these projections to 2016 Census: Major Field of study - Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP), we can see that Merritt is well positioned to further grow the following industry sectors:

- **Healthcare and social assistance industry**
- **Professional, scientific and technical services**
- **Accommodation and Food services**
- **Educational Services**
- **Mechanic and repair technologies/technicians services**



¹ British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition

Opportunities for Merritt to be a Leader in Emerging Industries:

This last section of the report goes beyond labour forecasting and instead focuses on expert opinions on the next big emerging industries in Canada. These top emerging industries were then put to the Thriving Communities participants to ask, given their knowledge of Merritt, if they feel that their community would be well situated to capitalize on these opportunities.

Cannabis Production and Products

The top emerging industry that community members felt Merritt would be best situated to take advantage of was cannabis production and products (60.69%). Overall, the industry is expected to grow an annualized 137.1% to \$3.16 billion in revenue in 2020, up from the \$1.46 billion forecast for 2019².

Given the regions connectedness to the rest of the province and country through transportation networks, high sunshine hours annually, roots in agriculture along with the natural grasslands and fields surrounding Merritt, coupled with policy changes in the industry which are now allowing for outside “field” growth of cannabis, Merritt is well situated for the cannabis industry.

Merritt is already proving to be a provincial leader in the cannabis industry with projects such as Emerald Plants Heath Source 56 -acre farm and research facility (with plans to phase in 1.2 M sq. ft. over the next 5 years) as well as Sundial Cannabis’ plans for multi-acre projects. Analysts are pointing to continued opportunity and growth in this industry for years to come.

Wind Turbine manufacturing

Wind Turbine manufacturing was the second highest ranked response at 44.06%. Electricity from wind energy is one of the fastest growing methods of electrical generation in the world³. Canada finished 2019 with 13,413 MW of wind energy capacity - enough to power approximately 3.4 million homes. The year saw completion of five projects that added 597 MW of new installed capacity, representing over \$1 billion of investment. Canada is home to the world's eighth largest wind generating fleet⁴.

Reasons given for why people feel Merritt is particularly well suited to be a leader in wind turbine production include plenty of available land, well connected to the Lower mainland and Alberta, a general feeling of wanting to diversify the economy into more green energy as well as the fact that Merritt has plenty of naturally windy weather.

² Bloomberg News: *Pot sales in Canada to hit \$3.16B in 2020 despite slower growth: Canaccord*, October 31st, 2019.

³ Natural Resources Canada: *Energy Sources and Distribution: Renewable Energy: Wind Energy*

⁴ Canadian Wind Energy Association: *National Installed Capacity*

Specialized Health Related Industries

Specialized health related industries ranked third highest in this list at 43.63%. Given the data already mentioned in previous sections, which shows strong forecasted growth and Merritt's above average number of students focusing on healthcare and related studies, this sentiment should not be surprising.

Health-related occupations will grow at a faster rate than other jobs in the coming years, as BC's growing and aging population require more health services. This industry has a low unemployment rate and is generally not affected by changes in the economy⁵, which makes it a natural hedge for other more cyclical industries.

Specialized health related industries are a very broad category that encompasses a large range of businesses and professions. Most of the anticipated growth are those which focus on the aging population (as already mentioned), such as home care, senior support services, physiotherapy and personal health care providers. Many of these individuals are entrepreneurs and contractors as well as employees.

Green Building Supplies and Associated Technologies

Green building supplies and their associated technologies and services was ranked the fourth highest response at 39.52%. The Canada green building market is vigorous and growing, which has been fueled by growing consumer interest to build greener buildings⁶. In April 2017, the Province introduced the BC Energy Step Code, which provides incentives for the use of green building materials and for builders/developers to exceed the minimums of the current provincial building code.

Wood is the only renewable building material. Advances in wood science and building technology, coupled with modern building codes, allow wood to be used in an increasingly broad range of non-residential, multi-story and longer span buildings and applications⁷. Examples of new innovative products include engineered mass timber products, Glue-laminated timber (glulam) panels and beams.

⁵ The Skilled Immigrant Info Centre › Industry Profiles › Fastest Growing Industries Health Care

⁶ Canada Green Building Trends: *Benefits Driving the New and Retrofit Market*. McGraw Hill Construction in partnership with the Canada Green Building Council, 2016.

⁷ Canfor: Wood in Green Building, 2019

Technology: Software Development and Manufacturing

Technology in the form of software development and manufacturing was the fifth highest rank response at 34.56%. Canada's 2017 Budget included a comprehensive Innovation and Skills Plan Part to encourage business to invest in innovative technology industries. British Columbia is leading the country in the technology sector with \$26 billion a year. BC's tech workforce is proving the fastest growing in Canada as well, with 150,000 people employed in technology.

One key advantage to workers in the technology sector is their ability to thrive as "remote workers" which is a trend that is quickly growing around the world. Remote workers, as the name implies, work remotely from anywhere for various companies and firms around the year. The major advantage being the ability to command major epicenter wages (such as those found in Vancouver, San Francisco or Los Angeles), but live in a location with more affordable housing or lower costs of living, such as Merritt. One key limiting factor with this trend is the ability for these individuals or companies to access high speed/capacity internet connections.

Wine and Distilled Alcohol Beverage Industry:

BC already has a successful and established wine industry which continues to grow as appetite for BC wine grows internationally. **BC craft breweries have been exploding all over the province with many industry experts believing that there is still plenty of room in the marketplace for new entrants and now BC distilleries are starting to gain attention as they experience 400%+ growth year over year.** This last category is set to see changes in government regulation and policy which were created in 2013 to exempted craft distilleries from the more than 160 per cent markup the province applies to all other B.C. spirit makers — as long as they produce less than 50,000 liters of alcohol per year and ferment their own base alcohol⁸.

Industry experts point to the fact that this number is vastly lower than what is currently allowed by BC craft breweries or wineries and is very much a limiting factor for growth in this industry. If this legislation is updated, there will be a massive amount of growth in this industry in the province. Once again, Merritt's history in agriculture, abundant space for development and access to markets was cited as reasons why there is opportunity in this industry for the region.

⁸ Craft Distillers Guild of BC: *About BC Craft Distilleries*





Remediation and Environmental Clean-up:

In July of 2019 the Government of Canada announced it was renewing the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan for another 15 years (2020–2034) and investing \$1.16 billion from 2020–2024. With this new funding, it is estimated that 242 sites will be assessed, and remediation activities will be undertaken on 1,316 sites. Of these, remediation activities will be carried out on about 475 sites on First Nation reserves. This investment is expected to support 6,400 new and existing private-sector jobs in the waste management and remediation sector across Canada over 5 years⁹.

2016 Census data points to the fact that Merritt boasts nearly 300% higher representation of students with a major focus of study being classified as “natural resources and conservation”. Given this announcement and this upcoming pool of trained individuals, Merritt is well positioned to see growth in the Remediation and Environmental Clean-up industry sector.

⁹ Environment and Climate Change Canada: *Government of Canada invests \$1.16 billion to continue cleaning up contaminated sites* - Jul 24, 2019

Technical Report

Introduction

Located within the traditional territory of the Scw'exmx, Nlaka'pamux, and Syilx peoples and the heart of the Nicola Valley, Merritt is known for its history in ranching, logging and country music. With a population of approximately 5,000, Merritt is the commercial center for the area. Early settlers were attracted to Merritt for its rich grasslands which are ideally suited for livestock and still today ranching is a very important industry for the local economy. Merritt is the nearest large community to the Douglas Lake Cattle Company, Canada's largest working cattle ranch.

Besides ranching, Merritt's economy is primarily driven by farming, forestry, transportation and tourism. Country Music is a key driving force behind the tourism industry for Merritt and amenities such as the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame, Music in the Square and in the Park along with other tourism development activities have been used to solidify the city's branding as the Country Music Capital of Canada.

Project Background

With the forestry industry undergoing a significant transformation in British Columbia there was an identified need to investigate the impacts in the labour market, but also to look for opportunities for Merritt to transition its economy by exploring trends and emerging industries.

An informal working group started this discussion on the local level. The committee members include (but are not limited to) representatives from the following:

- Work BC Merritt
- Community Futures Nicola Valley
- The Merritt Chamber of Commerce
- The Economic Development Department at the City of Merritt
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT)
- The Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development

This committee directed WorkBC to secure funding for an investigation into the current labour market through the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction through the Community and Employer Partnerships fund, Labour Market Partnerships funding. This funding was then used to contract O'Leary and Associates Ltd. and Amplify Inc. to organize a series of community engagement sessions, marketing materials and an online survey to collect current labour market data and sentiment.

The Thriving Communities survey asked strategic questions of local citizens, finding out what's on the minds of local workers and business leaders. All information collected built a new and fresh labour market study which pinpoints potential gaps and uncovers innovative opportunities for the Merritt community. This information was then compiled and combined with secondary labour market data to identify key trends and emerging opportunities which was used to create a series of recommendations.

These recommendations will be developed and broadly shared so local businesses, organizations, and educational facilities can look to provide skills training, build partnerships, and make strategic investments. The goal: a thriving community to the benefit of all community members.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to facilitate meaningful engagement and consultation with the community in order to conduct a review of Merritt's unique local labour market conditions. The goals of the project are as follows:

During the period from October 11, 2019 to February 28, 2020, Community Futures Development Corporation of Thompson Country (CFDCTC), coordinated with local employers and service providers in Merritt to provide:

1. A Community Career Fair to address current labour market gaps and issues and
2. Engage the services of a consultant to undertake a community labour market review, and analyses the training gaps, opportunities and skill requirements in the Merritt area that will lead to the creation of action items to enhance labour market resiliency.
3. Produce a report that includes an easy to read executive summary as well as a more detailed technical report for those who are interested.

Project Deliverables / Expected Results / Outcomes:

As previously mentioned, this project will have provided one Community Career Fair in Merritt to address current labour market issues affecting the community and produce a public community labour market review report that includes an executive summary, an analysis of relevant existing local labour market information and literature pertaining to labour market issues, analysis of the training gaps, opportunities and skill requirements and an action plan to enhance labour market resiliency in the Merritt area.

The community will have been given networking opportunities with local employers and will have been informed of training and educational programs available to address these needs, along with resources available in the community for additional support.

The Thriving Communities Presentation will share recommendations for local businesses, organizations, and educational facilities, as well as local and provincial governments, to strategically provide skills training, build partnerships, and make good investments.

The Thriving Communities Concept

The community of Merritt recently experienced a reduction in operations at a local mill which resulted in 30 local workers losing their jobs. **This inspired the question: how can a community become more resilient so when change happens, they can adapt, innovate, and thrive?**

The answer is multi-faceted, and the best way to start understanding potential threats (to proactively mitigate them), and opportunities (to proactively to pursue them), is to engage with stakeholders – the community of Merritt.

WorkBC and Community Futures Nicola Valley are spearheading a Thriving Communities project to ask strategic questions of local citizens, finding out what's on the minds of local workers and business leaders. All information will be used to develop a labour market study to pinpoint potential gaps and uncover innovative opportunities just waiting to be realized.

Engagement Summary

The Project Team wanted to provide the community with as many options as possible to not only learn about the project, but also to provide feedback on Merritt's unique labour market. This was achieved in a number of ways which can be summarized below:

Nov 8

The online Thriving Communities survey was launched
The Thriving Communities website landing page was made public

Nov 12

Engagement with leadership of Merritt including: CAO, Mayor, Economic Development Manager, TNRD Directors (Areas M & N), NVIT and Citxw Nlaka'pamux

Nov 13

The communications strategy was launched which included:

Radio interviews: To generate awareness of the project and drive participation

Postcards to be distributed by project partners throughout the region

Poster: 11 x 17 for general community invite

Invites: digital and printed (5.5 x 8.5 SINGLE sided)

Newspaper ads: ½ page full color - 7.333" wide x 10" tall

Facebook ads: Facebook ads size and variety of creatives featuring Merritt people.

Facebook Event Cover photo: Thriving Communities look.

Event Signage: 36" x 24" full color

Reports: 17" x 11" folded in half and saddle stitched.

Nov 15 – Jan 20

Nov 15th Career Fair with Thriving Communities team onsite asking questions + gaining contacts of attendees. This included:

- 264 community members attended
- 34 exhibitors
- Colin Angus – Transition and Change Workshops – 59 attended
- Do What you Love Workshops – 16 participated
- Government Procurement Workshop – 5 attended

General Ongoing Community Engagement:

- Business Walks
- Focus Groups with key groups (Steelworkers | Chamber | First Nations)

Feb 27

Presentation to community

- Public presentation at 5:00pm to the community about the key findings from the report and an invitation to explore the Resources Showcase of strategic partners, featuring job skills and training information plus helpful resources to share with community members and business owners alike.

Methodology

PHASE 1 – PROJECT LAUNCH

Task 1.1: Project Scoping Meeting

An in-person project kick-off meeting was held with the project manager and staff to confirm the work program, project objectives, desired outcomes, and budget, schedule, and communication channels. This meeting also allowed us to identify background information and data to be collected, and to gather any additional information and/or insight with respect to the needs and desired outcomes for the Community Futures Thompson Country (CFTC)'s labour market assessment of Merritt.

Task 2.1: Labour Market Research

Based on the outcome of the project scoping meeting, secondary data required for the later analysis was identified. This data could include labour market statistics, demographic and socioeconomic data as well as macroeconomic industry trends in Canada and emerging markets. This secondary data was then used to inform the community needs assessment, survey and community engagement sessions.

PHASE 2 - PLANNING, LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Task 2.1: Communication and Engagement Content Development

To ensure maximum participation and exposure for CFTC, an active advertising campaign supporting the survey was rolled out. The advertising campaign was an excellent opportunity for CFTC to actively engage the community and organizations to provide input in the research. The marketing and communications strategy had three main goals:

- 1) Increase awareness of the need for community labour market planning
- 2) Drive the community and businesses to fill out an online survey
- 3) Drive the community and businesses to participate in the community engagement sessions

Task 2.2: Labour Market Assessment and Gap Analysis Survey

Given the overall project, overall timeline and resources the most effective method of engagement for this project was comprised of strategic community engagement sessions, all supported by an online survey. The online component of the survey allowed the project team to access the most data in the shortest period of time, so that resources can be better utilized for the Labour Market Assessment.

Task 2.3: Community Engagement Session Planning

The overall focus of these events was to increase awareness the need for community labour market planning, collect valuable data and engage the business community in a meaningful manner. In order to do so, a number of key planning steps needed to be accomplished in advance.

Task 2.4: Operational Planning

Along with the planning of agendas, exercises and presentations, logistics was required for the community engagement events.

PHASE 3 - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Task 3.1: Roll Out the Marketing Content Utilizing Various Media Channels

As outlined above, content developed to help the awareness of the project was rolled out utilizing various community partner media channels.

Task 3.2: Community Engagement

The next step in the process was to gather community input. These sessions happened between November 2019 and January 2020 including at the November 15th at City of Merritt's job fair. During the job fair, the project team set up an awareness station to engage the business community in the labour market assessment process. This included offline surveys and interviews.

PHASE 4 – DATA AND GAP ANALYSIS

Task 4.1: Compile Data from Online Survey and Community Sessions

At this stage the labour market assessment process was complete and the project team began to compile all of the primary data collected into meaningful trends and themes. All identifying information was stripped from the data and the results were aggregated to ensure anonymity. At this point the data was still fairly raw, but these trends and themes started to build the foundation of the labour market review findings.

Task 4.2: Gap Analysis

All of the information gathered to date, along with the secondary data review from Phase 1, was used to help finalize the trend analysis to determine local economic development gaps and opportunities. At this stage further research was completed to review best practices and make recommendations for City of Merritt's labour market analysis and recommendations.

PHASE 5 - VALIDATION

Task 5.1: Validation of Draft Findings

This portion of the project involved re-engaging Community Futures staff to provide input on the draft labour market conditions improvement process assessment. Broad concepts and groups of options were narrowed down into more refined products before the project team created the draft recommendations.

Task 5.2: Coordination with other stakeholders

Once the preliminary findings of the draft labour market conditions improvement plan was approved, the project team once again engaged the other key stakeholders to share the results and start final report.

PHASE 6 - CREATION OF FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND REPORT

The Project Team created a final report (this document) which is presented in two sections. Section 1 is the Executive Summary for the project and was developed with the community audience in mind. It articulates the key findings and recommendations. Section 2 is the technical report which presents the data, analysis and community consultation results as well as the final City of Merritt's labour market analysis and recommendations.

Overall Results from the Community Consultation

This following section outlines the findings from the Thriving Communities engagement and data. Through the in-person engagement sessions, marketing materials and online information individuals were asked a series of questions from a survey which was developed in advance as a part of the communications and engagement strategy.

All individual responses to the survey were kept strictly confidential and stripped of any identifying information before being compiled into this report. This way participants had the opportunity to speak freely and were encouraged to do so. Honest feedback provides the best opportunities for constructive growth and opportunity identification.

570 individuals participated in the Thriving Communities survey. Using the Statistics Canada 2016 Census population size of 5,321 for the City of Merritt, this would mean that the results from this project are statistically significant and represent a confidence level of 99% and a confidence interval of 5%. In other words, there is a 99% chance that the data in the report is representative of the population as a whole, plus or minus 5%.

Survey Design

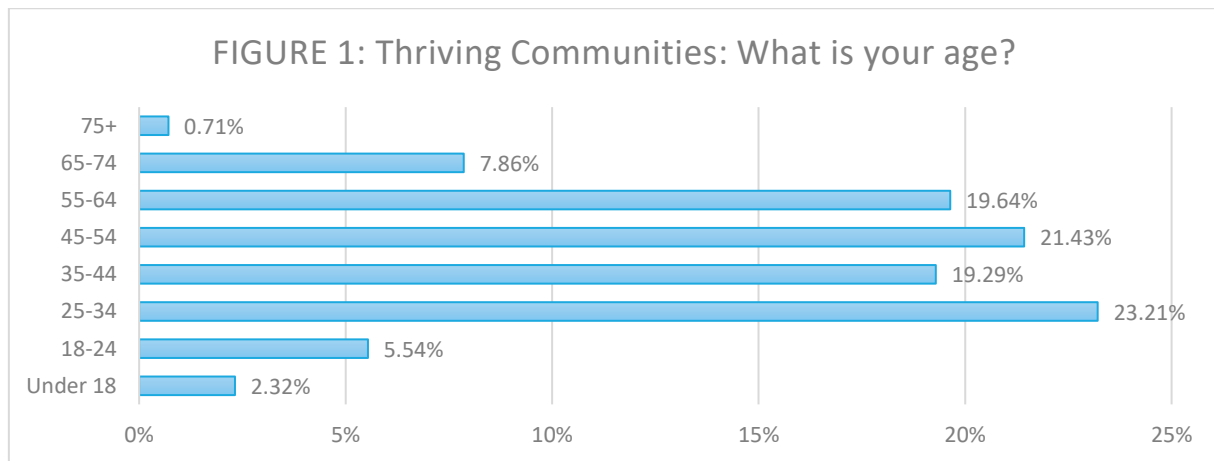
The Thriving Communities Survey was designed to be adaptive and change the questions asked depending on the participant completing the survey. The end result is that some questions were asked to all stakeholders, but there was also specific responses and data collected depending on whether the participant is employed, unemployed or a business owner. The following sections will outline these various findings

Overall Population Characteristics

Age Profile:

The following graph (Figure 1) shows the age profile for the various participants which completed the Thriving Communities Survey. Over 80% of the people who completed the survey fall between the ages of 25 and 64, which is the bulk of the “working” age profile in the Province, meaning that these survey responses are over representational for the working population, when compared to the 2016 Census overall population profile (Figure 2: 2016 Census: Age Profile of Merritt vs. B.C.).

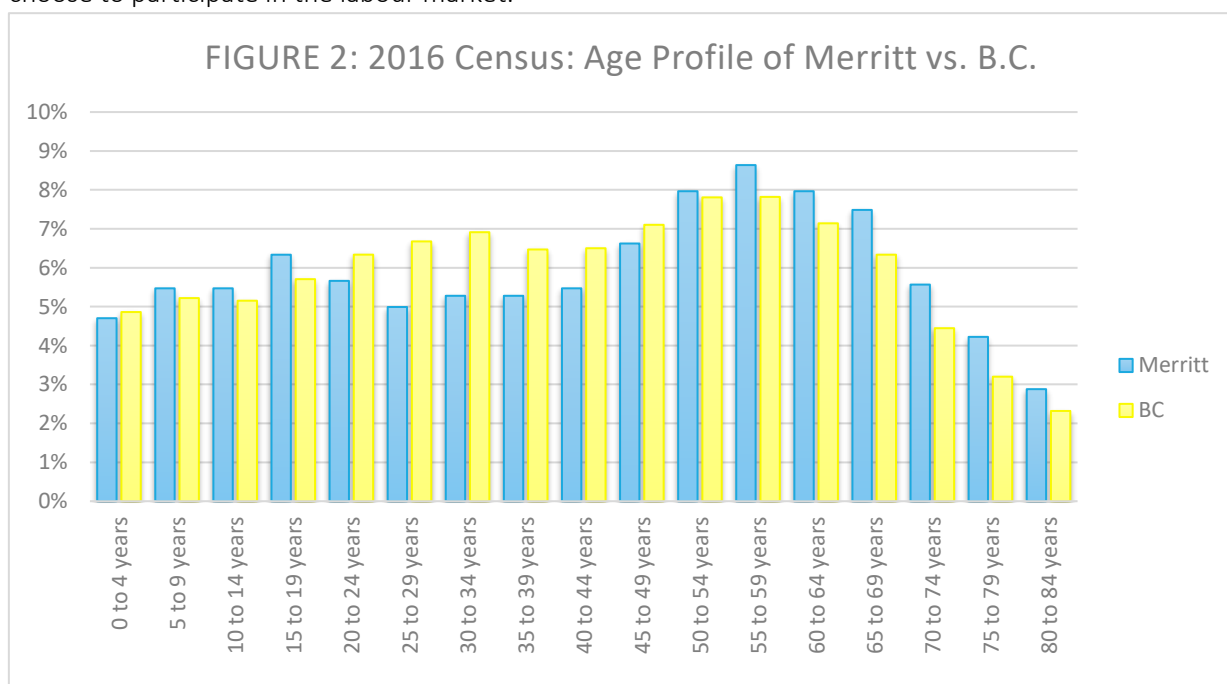
This means that the data captured in this report is more reflective of the labour pool population than the data captured in 2016 Census. Whenever possible the 2016 Census data was also included as a baseline to compare the results of the survey data.



Overall when looking at the 2016 Census Age Profile for the city of Merritt vs. the Province as a whole, we can see that Merritt is under-represented in the bulk of the active labour market age categories: ages 20 through to 50. In the same token, Merritt is overrepresented in the age categories which represent “near retirement” and “retirement” (ages 50 to 84) as well as those either just entering the labour market or not yet in the labour market (ages 5 to 19).

Assuming zero population migration (the movement of people in and out of the region), this data would indicate that Merritt is going to see a bigger impact of future increased labour market demand (job openings) from the retiring baby boomer population than the rest of the Province in the next 10-15 years, assuming this demographic retires between the ages of 65 and 70.

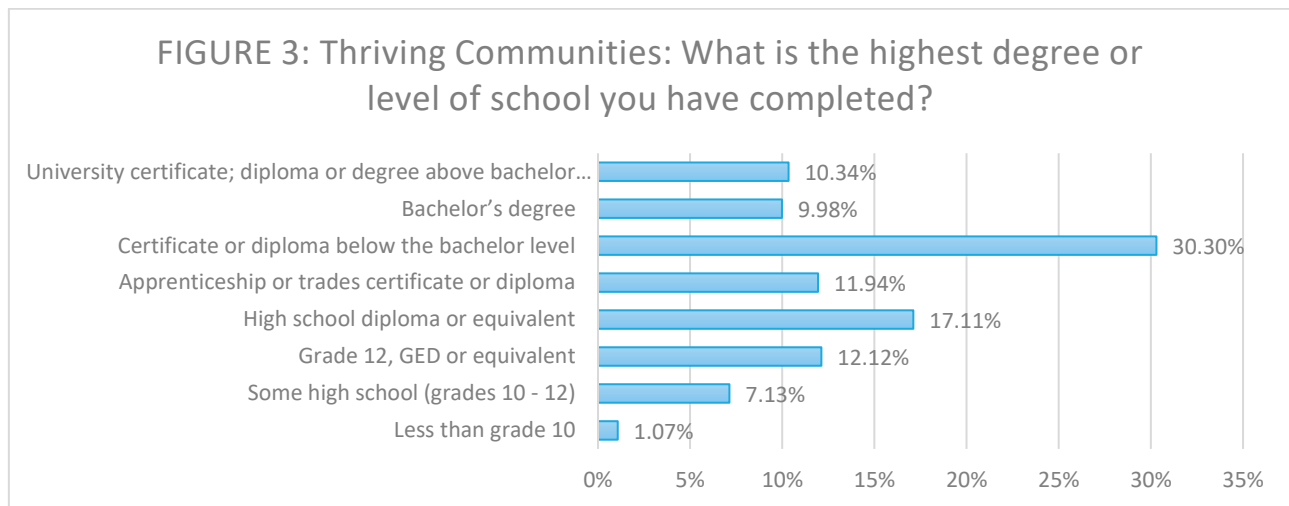
Likewise, in the next 10-15 years Merritt will have a larger representation of new workers entering the labour market (labour supply) than the rest of the Province, assuming this demographic (ages 15 to 35) choose to participate in the labour market.



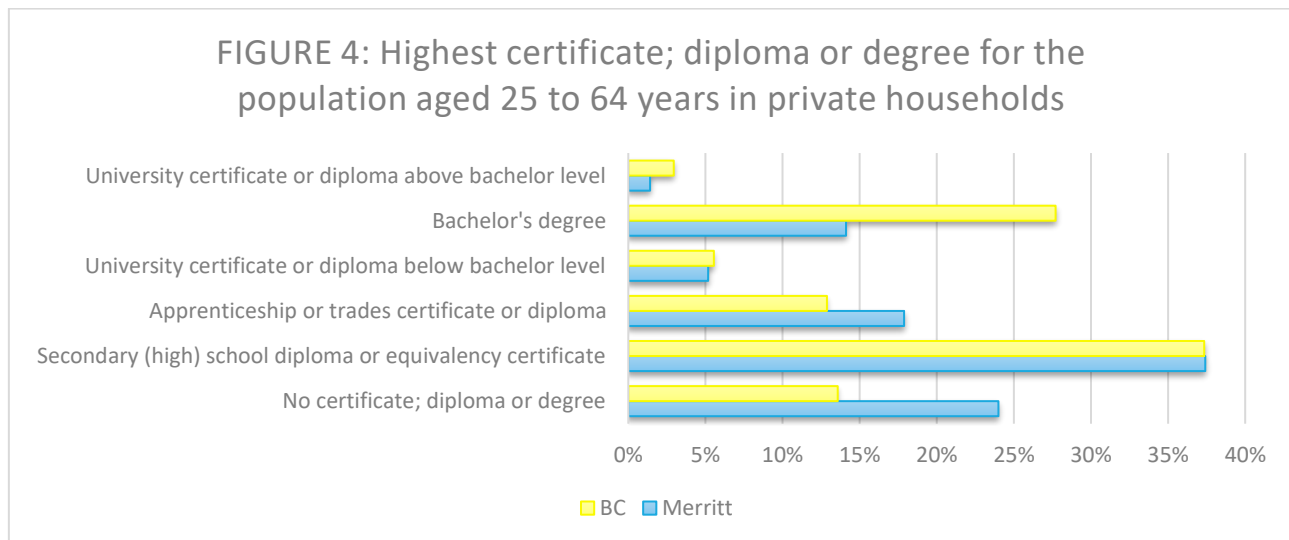
Education:

This following section summarizes the education levels of the Thriving Communities Survey participants, the 2016 Census data for Merritt and the Province as well as the projected job openings by education requirements in the Province between 2018 and 2028 from the Provinces 2018 Labour Market Outlook.

Figure 3 outlines the highest degree or level of schooling completed by all of the Thriving Communities survey participants (employed, unemployed and business owners). Just under 80% of the participants in the Thriving Communities survey held education credentials below a bachelor's degree. The majority of these individuals held certifications or diplomas, such as Trades certificates.

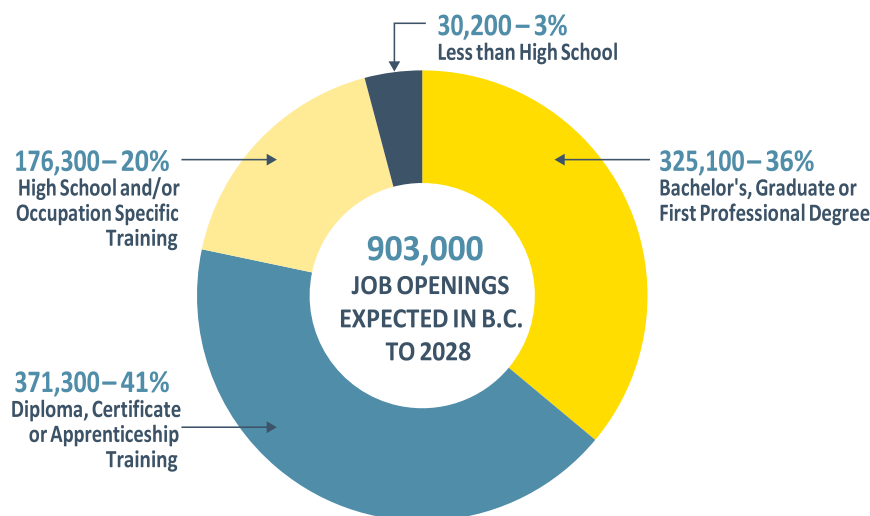


When comparing Merritt to the rest of the Province using the 2016 Census data, we can see that Merritt is under-represented when it comes to bachelor's degrees or higher education. Merritt is over-represented when it comes to Trades certificates or diplomas, as well as "no certificate, diploma or degree". This data would seem to match the responses from the Thriving Communities survey.



When looking at the findings from the Province’s 2018 Labour Market Outlook, we can see that the majority (77%) of the job openings expected in the next 10 years will require some level of post-secondary education or training. Forty-one percent will be in occupations requiring a diploma, certificate or apprenticeship training and 36 percent will be in positions requiring a bachelor’s, graduate or first professional degree. In contrast, only three percent will be available for those with less than a high school education¹⁰ (Figure 5: Job Openings by Education Requirements, B.C., 2018-2028)

FIGURE 5: Job Openings by Education Requirements, B.C., 2018-2028



This would imply that although most of the labour market in Merritt do not hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, there will still be future projected job openings for these individuals at least until 2028 (61% or 547,600 job opening in the Province).

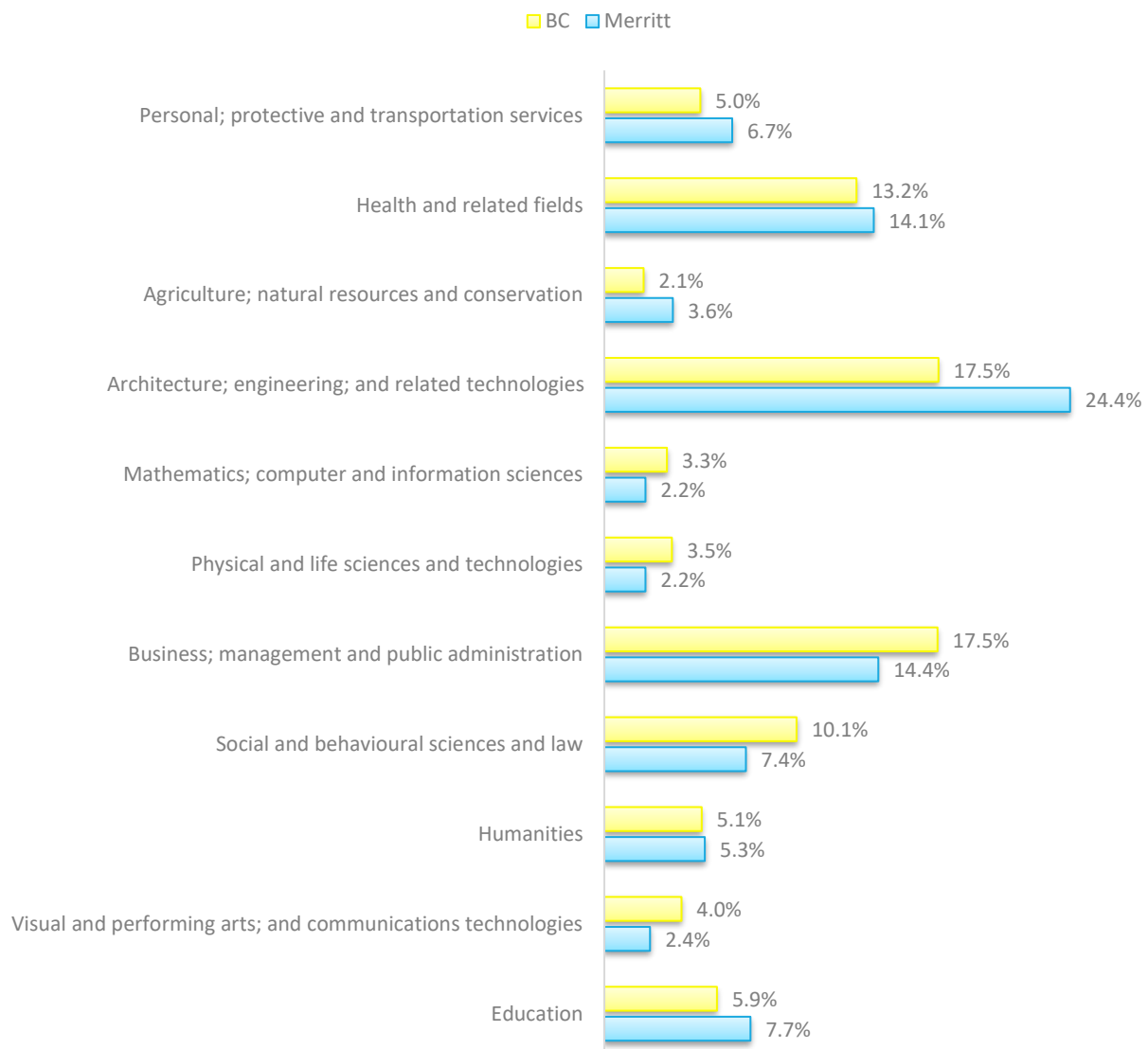
This data would also suggest that it is important for Merritt to continue to make educational options available for its population, to not only close the gap with the rest of the province for Bachelor’s degree or higher education, but also to better position the people of Merritt for future job opportunities as job requirements continue to increase in education demand and complexity.

When looking specifically at the major field of study for individuals in Merritt vs. the Province (Figure 6), we can see that Merritt very closely follows the same study patterns as the Province as a whole, with a few noted exceptions:

- Merritt is overrepresented in the architecture, engineering and related technologies fields (+6.9%)
- Merritt is underrepresented in the Business; management and public administration fields (-3.1%)
- Merritt is underrepresented in the Social, behavioral sciences and law fields (-2.7%)

¹⁰ British Columbia Labour Market Outlook 2018 Edition

FIGURE 6: 2016 Census: Major field of study - Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP)

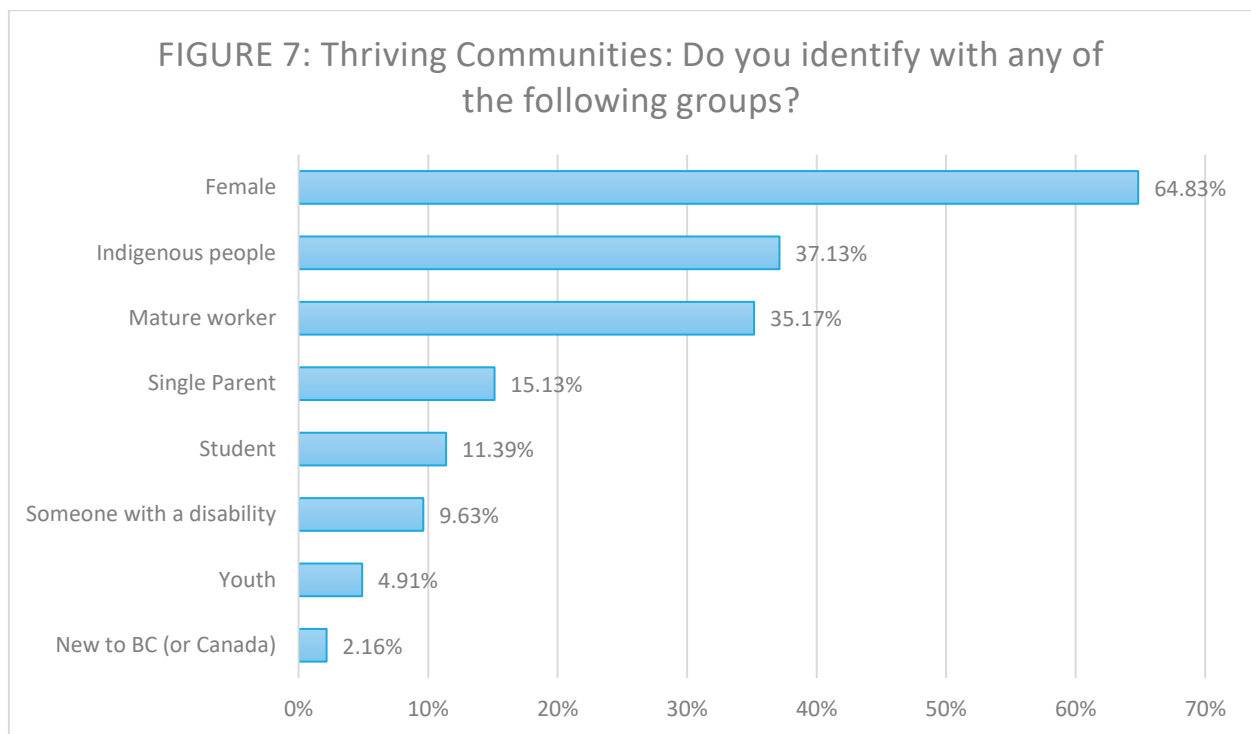


Specialized Population Groups:

Thriving Communities Survey participants were asked if they identify with a number of specialized population groups. These groups were specifically targeted as there are unique programs and support available to these individuals through a variety of organizations in and around Merritt.

The Thriving Communities Survey participants represent a very high level of diversity, with a proportionally high representation of Females and Indigenous Peoples when compared to the overall population in Merritt (Figure 7).

Appendix 4 outlines some of the support programming available through Work BC for these individuals.

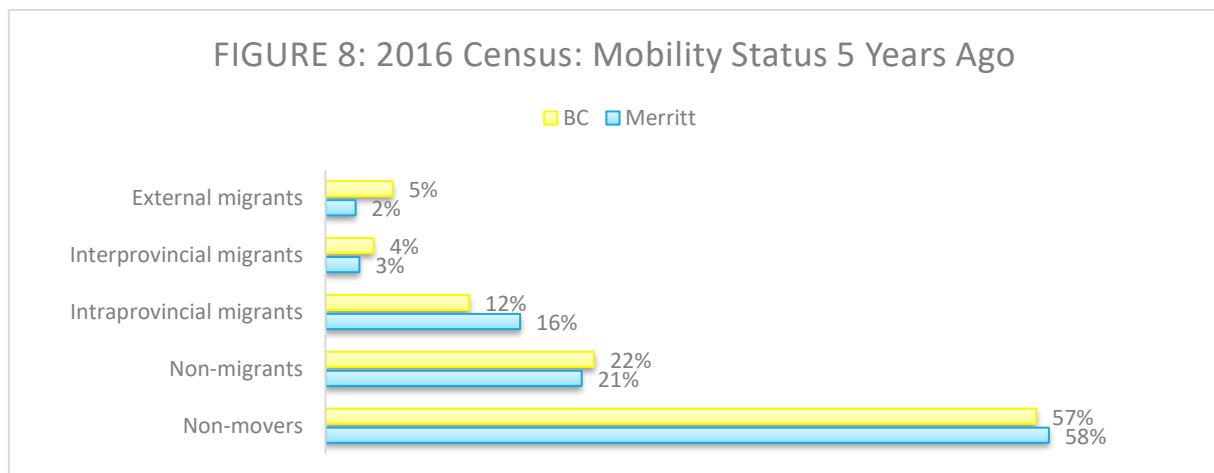


Labour Market Supply Data:

This following section summarizes the Labour Market Supply data for Merritt, through both the Thriving Communities Survey, as well as secondary research sources of labour force data.

Labour Mobility:

Figure 8 summarizes the 2016 mobility status for individuals in Merritt in comparison to the rest of the Province. This graph shows any individuals movement over the last 5 years. Merritt's labour mobility patterns very closely match those with the rest of the province with the exception of "intraprovincial migrants". This data would indicate that Merritt is more likely to be the destination for people moving within the province than the average city in BC. This could indicate that Merritt is well situated to continue to attract people to relocate, increasing the labour supply and bolstering the economy.



Labour Market Participation:

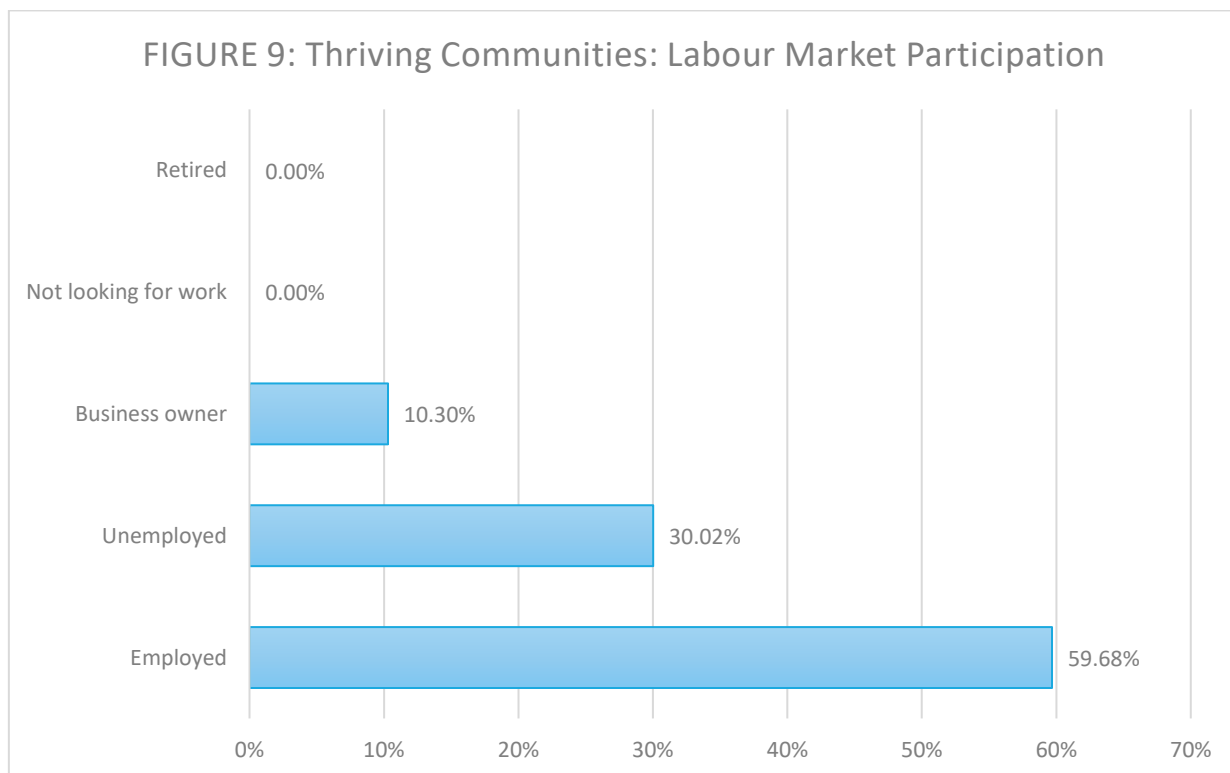
When comparing Merritt to the rest of the Province using the 2016 Census data (Figure 10), we can see that Merritt has a slightly higher unemployment rate. The unemployment rate is defined as the percentage of unemployed workers in the total labor force. Workers are considered unemployed if they currently do not work, despite the fact that they are able and willing to do so. The total labor force consists of all employed and unemployed people within an economy.

The unemployment rate is a tool used by economists to measure the efficiency of an economy and is an indicator for whether an economy is growing or shrinking. For example, unemployment usually decreases when an economy is growing as companies hire more workers to meet growing demand or increases as economic activity slows and workers are laid off. One key thing to keep in mind is that unemployment tends to be cyclical and can be impacted by things which are not an overall indicator of an economy growing or shrinking (as seasonal employment).

There are a number of different categories of unemployment:

- Frictional unemployment refers to temporary unemployment during the period when people are searching for a job.
- Structural unemployment is a mismatch between workers' skills or locations and job requirements.
- Seasonal unemployment is caused by seasonal patterns in economic activity, such as harvesting or tourism.

The 2016 Census data would seem to indicate that Merritt has more people looking for jobs (labour supply) in comparison to the rest of the Province, although it does not provide enough information to be able to tell if this unemployment is frictional, structural or seasonal.

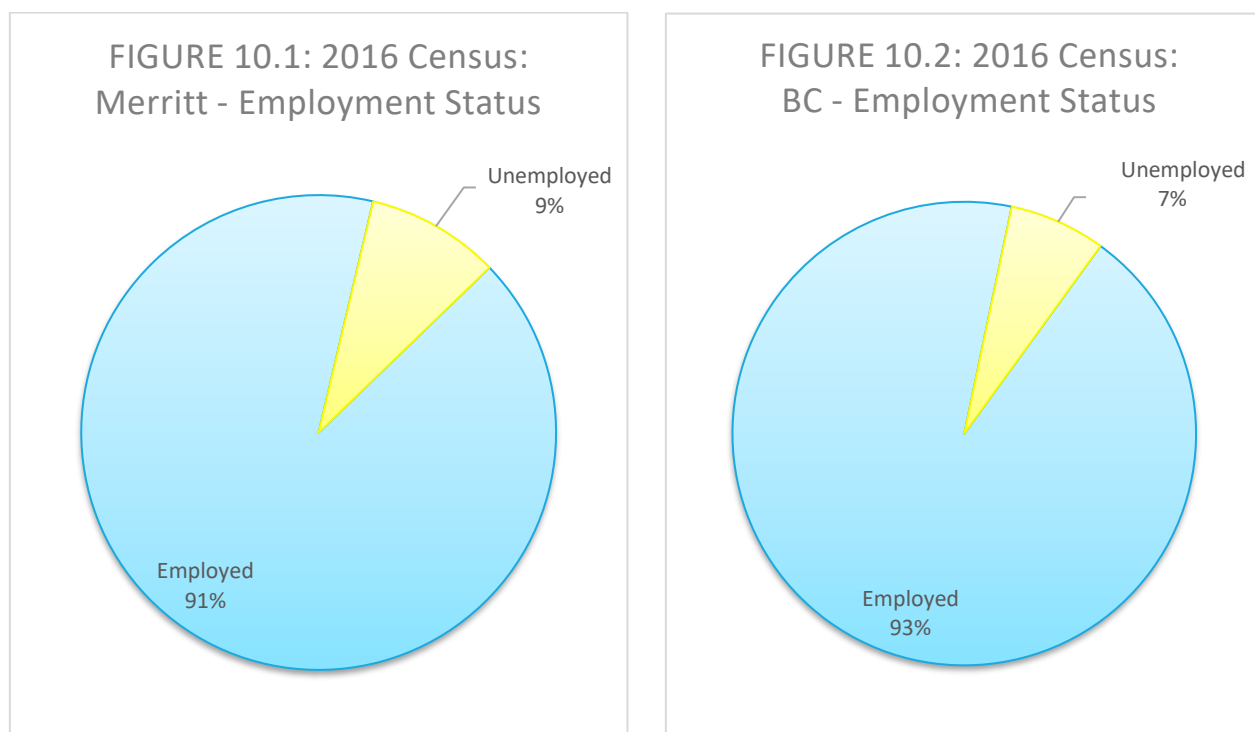


The Thriving Communities survey participants represent a disproportionately higher number of unemployed individuals (Figure 10.1 and Figure 10.2). This is likely due to the fact that some of the data collection happened at the Merritt Community-Based Career Fair which was hosted by Work BC on November 15th, 2019.

For the purpose of this project, this overrepresentation is ideal as the data provided in the results will be much more accurate when it comes to the thoughts and opinions of individuals currently unemployed but looking for work. This will also bring this group of respondents much closer in numbers to those individuals who are currently employed (30% unemployed vs. 60% employed).

With 10% of the respondents identifying as “business owners” this data represents not only labour supply, but also labour demand data.

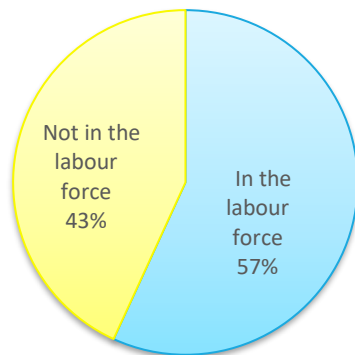
None of the respondents fell into the category of “retired” or “not looking for work” which means that 100% of the responses captured represent either labour supply or demand.



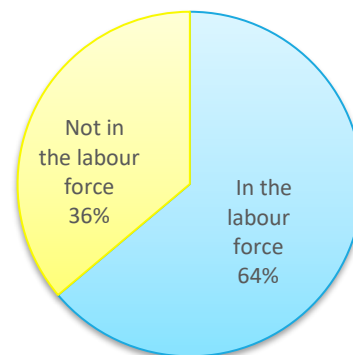
Merritt has a higher percentage of individuals not participating in the labour market when compared to the rest of the province (Figure 11). Looking at the age profile for the community, these are individuals who are likely either too young to be working (15 years old or younger), have chosen not to participate in the labour market for various reasons (such as staying home as a caregiver) or have retired.

This lower percentage of labour market participation will result in increased labour market demand as the labour market supply will be diminished, yet the demands for goods and services are proportionally higher than average in the Province. This will result in increased pressure for business owners in and around Merritt.

**FIGURE 11.1: 2016 Census:
Merritt - Labour Force Status**



**FIGURE 11.2: 2016 Census: BC
- Labour Force Status**



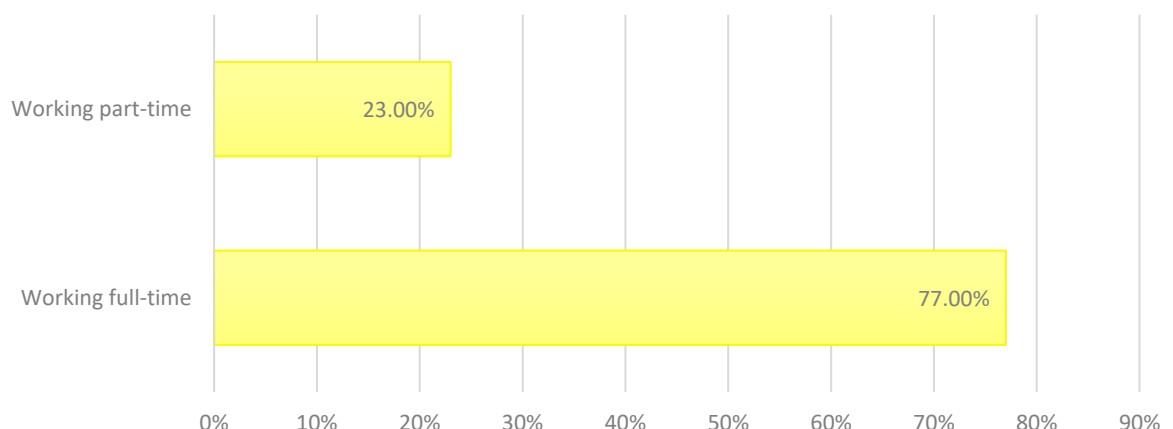
Profile of Employed Participants:

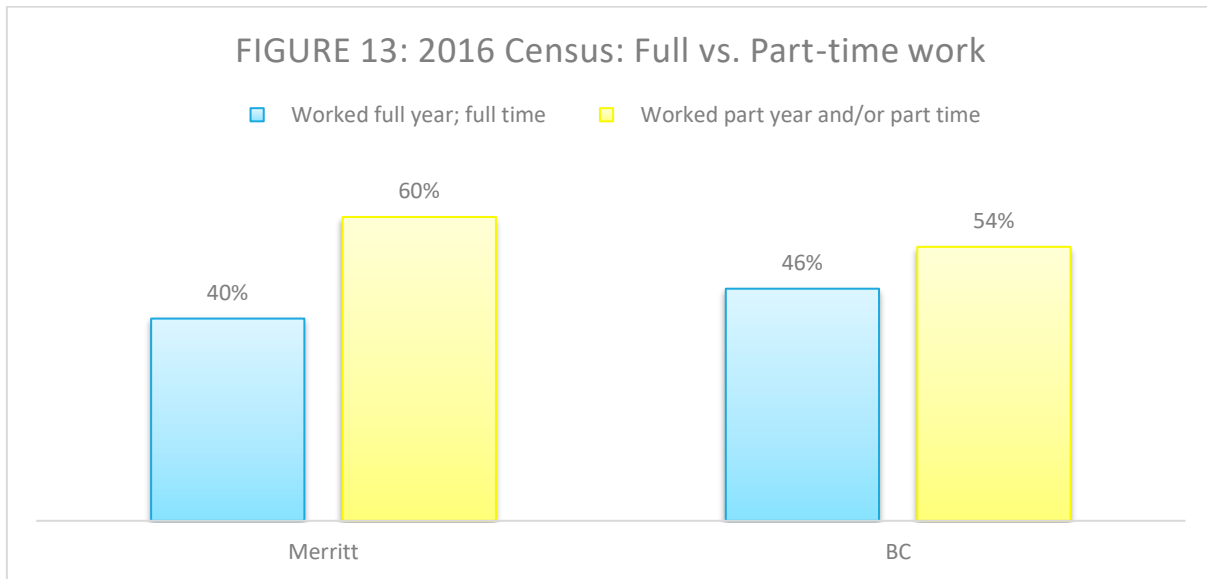
This following section outlines the details of the individuals who identified as being employed for the Thriving Communities survey. These individuals were asked a series of questions which were unique to their employment circumstances as the survey was adaptive and changed the questions it was presenting to participants depending on their Responses.

Full-time vs. Part-time Employment:

The Thriving Communities survey participants were over representative of the number of full-time workers in Merritt (Figure 12). When looking at Figure 15: Industry Profile: Employed Survey Participant vs. 2016 Census for BC, we can see that these participants were over representational of retail trade (7.37%), other services (9.29%), healthcare and social assistance (16.35%), education (16.67%) and agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (6.09%), which could explain this over-representation.

**FIGURE 12: Thriving Communities: Full-Time vs. Part-Time
Employment**





When looking at the 2016 Census data (Figure 13) we can see that Merritt has a higher representation of part-time or part-year employment when compared to the rest of the province. This is likely due to Merritt's history and strong representation in Tourism, Agriculture and Forestry industries which tend to be seasonal in nature.

The participants who were identified as "employed" in the Thriving Communities survey were mostly working year-round (86.58%) with only about 7% working seasonally full-time and a little over 6% working a temporary full-time contract position. This data would indicate that these employed individuals represent mostly stable long-term employment and are not in jeopardy of needing to find new employment in the near future.

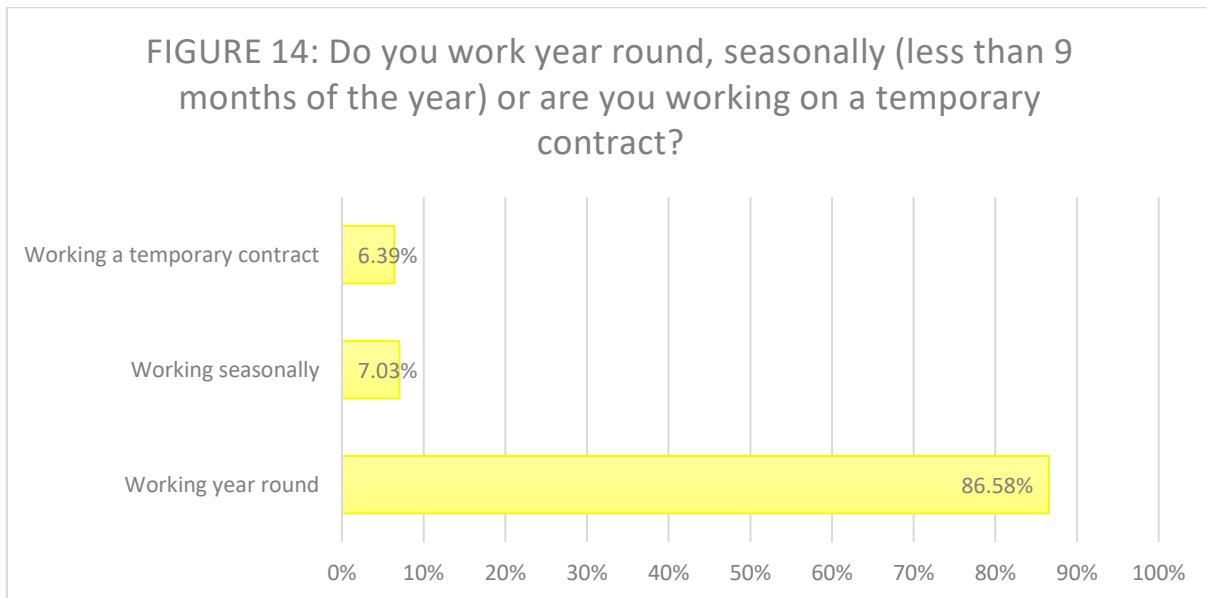
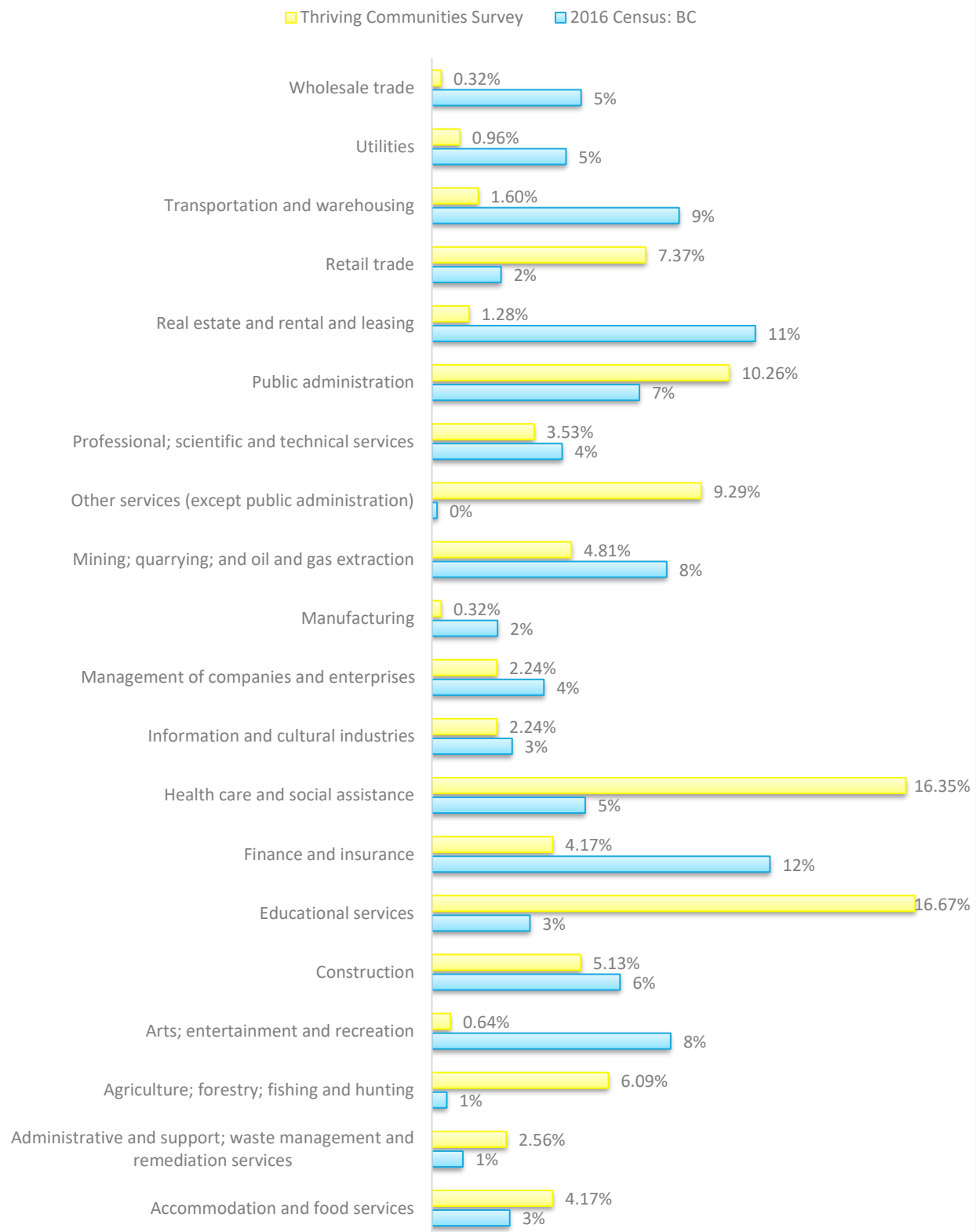
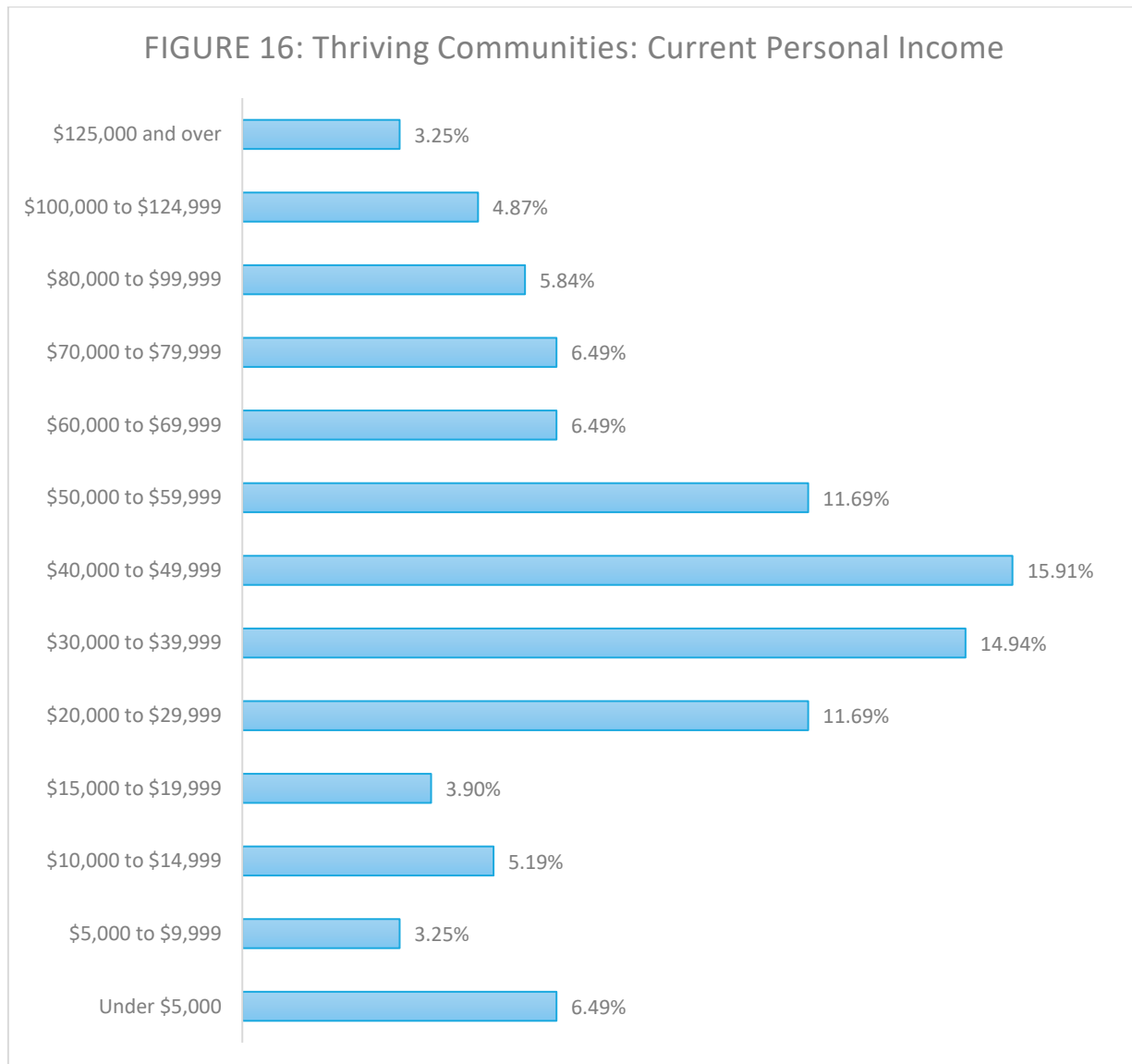


FIGURE 15: Industry Profile: Employed Survey Participant vs. 2016 Census for BC



Employment Income:

The Thriving Communities employed participants represented a diverse range of personal income levels, with the bulk of the representation comprising of individuals who earn between \$20,000 to \$60,000 (54%).

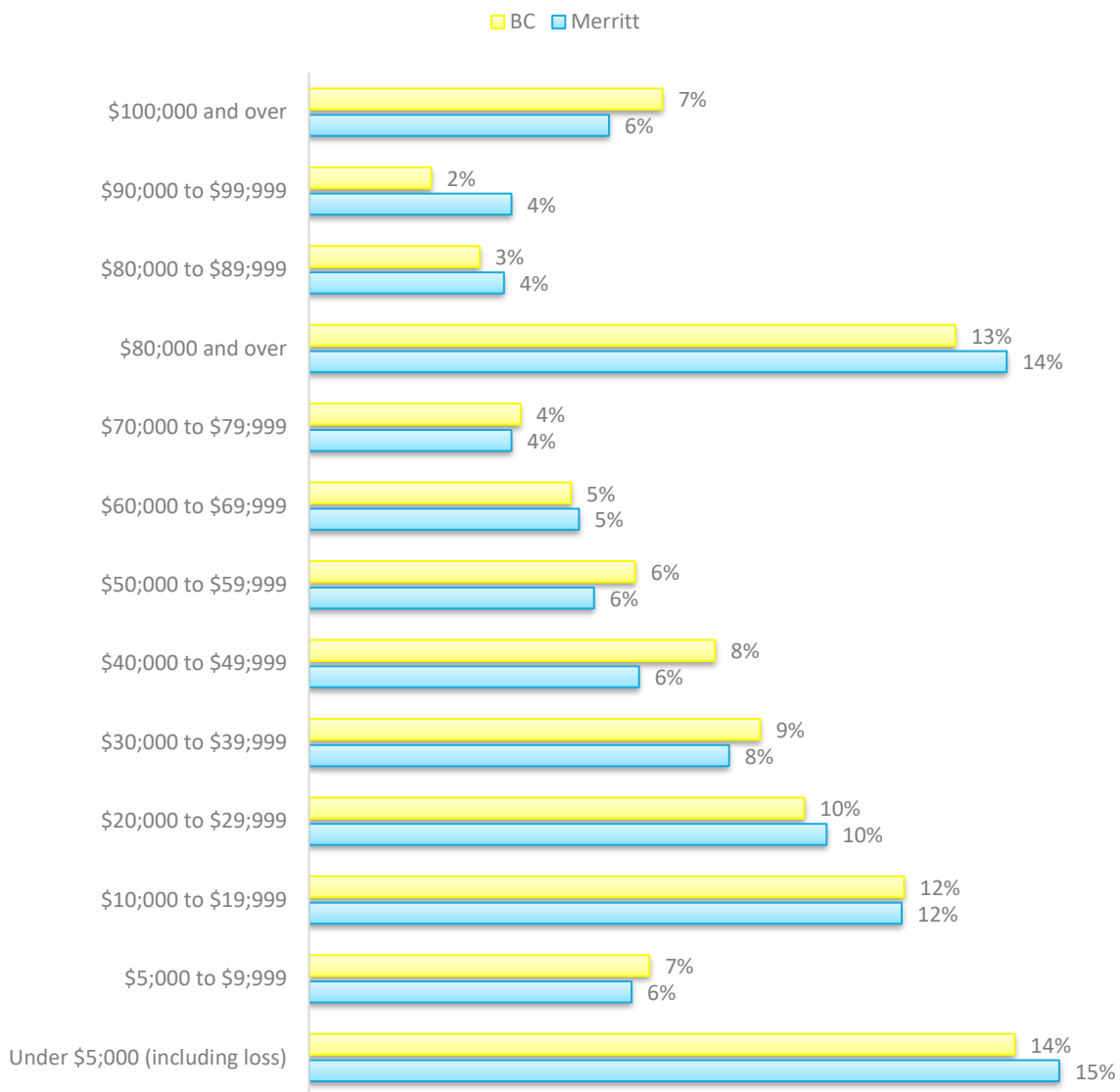


These middle-income earners are slightly overrepresented as the 2016 Census data shows that Merritt very closely follows the same distribution of personal incomes found across the province. British Columbians median total income of one-person households is \$35,701 compared to the national median income of \$35,174, the median after tax income of one-person households in British Columbia is \$31,899 compared to the national median after tax income of \$31,446.¹¹

Generally earnings are slightly less for Merritt compared to the averages in BC, below the \$80,000 mark, but Merritt also has a slightly higher representation of personal incomes between \$80,000 and \$100,000, which could be linked to the higher density of Forestry, Mining and oil and gas sectors (which tend to offer higher wages than other industries).

¹¹ Census Profile, [2016 Census, Statistics Canada](#)

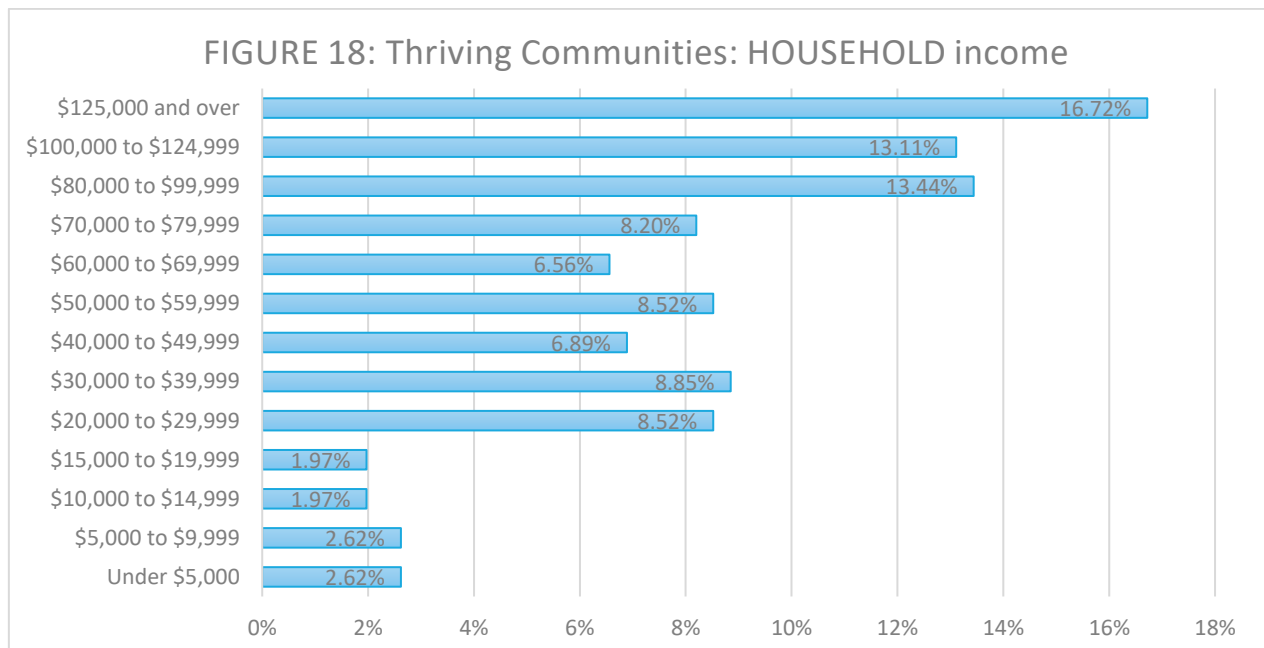
FIGURE 17: 2016 Census: Total Income 2015 In Private Households



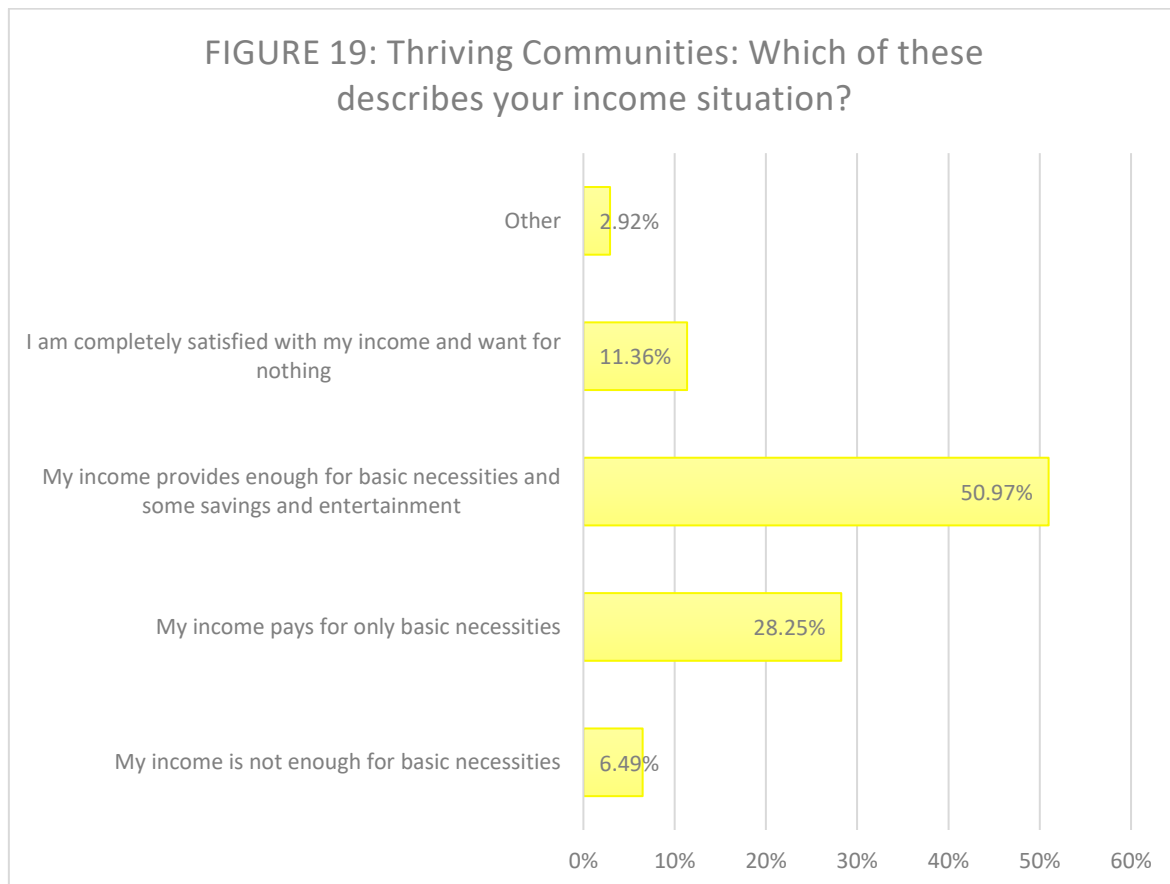
Household Income:

Household income is a measure of the combined earnings of a household, which includes all family members contributing to household expenses. In 2017, the median after-tax income for all types of households (including both economic families of two or more persons and unattached individuals) in British Columbia was \$52,120.¹² When looking at the Thriving Communities employed individuals responses (Figure 18), we can clearly see that most of these households represent more than one income earner as over 51% of the responses represent \$70,000 or greater household earnings, yet only 20% of the responses to personal income exceeded this level.

¹² Income of families and individuals: Sub-provincial data from the T1 Family File, 2017, [Statistics Canada](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/92-621-x/2018001/article/00001-eng.htm)

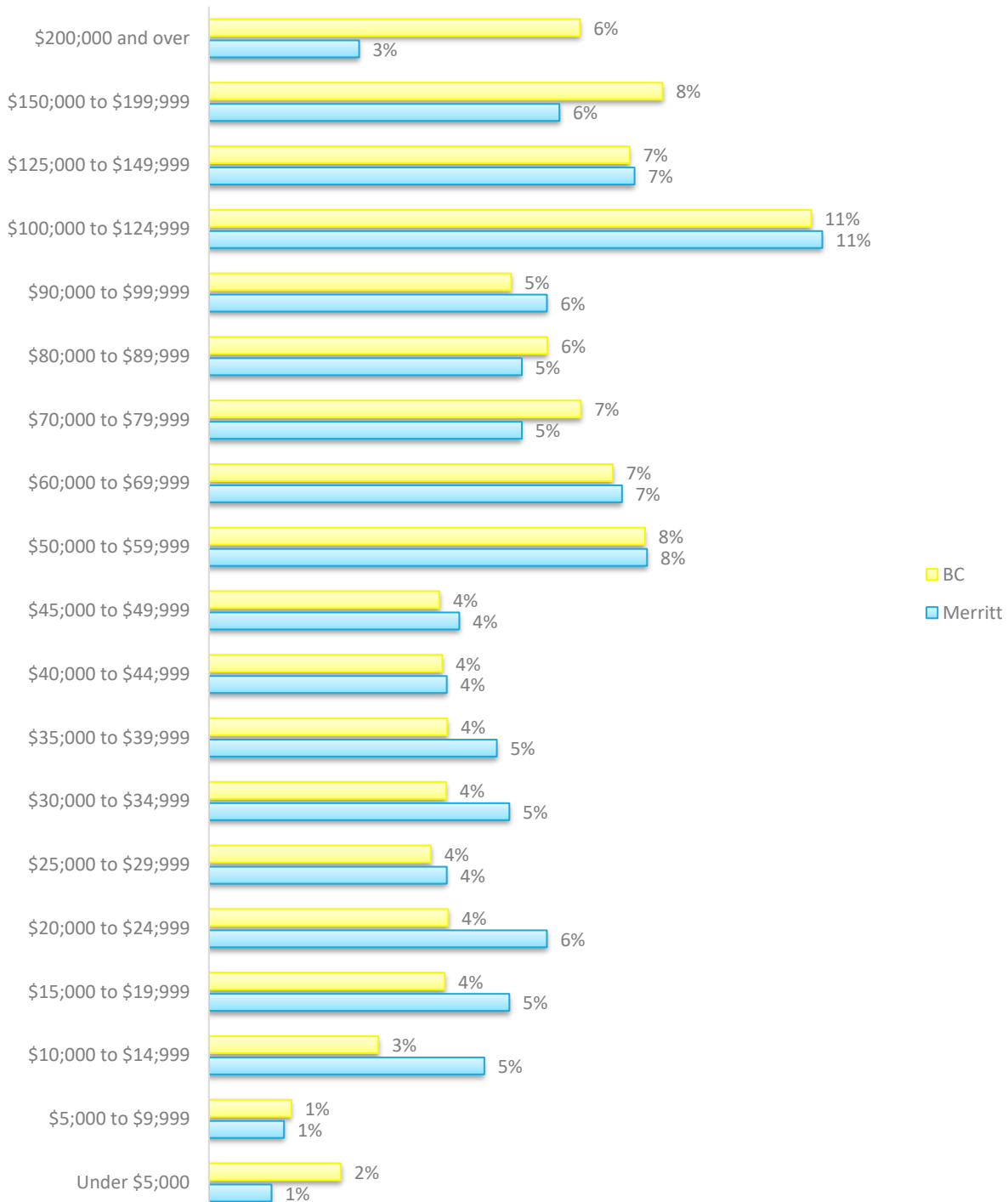


Survey participants were asked if they were satisfied with their current income situation (Figure 19) and most employed individuals (92.5%) indicated that their current income allowed them to cover all basic necessities. Over half (50.97%) of the employed individuals surveyed indicated that they had enough income to satisfy their basic needs and still have some left over for savings and entertainment.



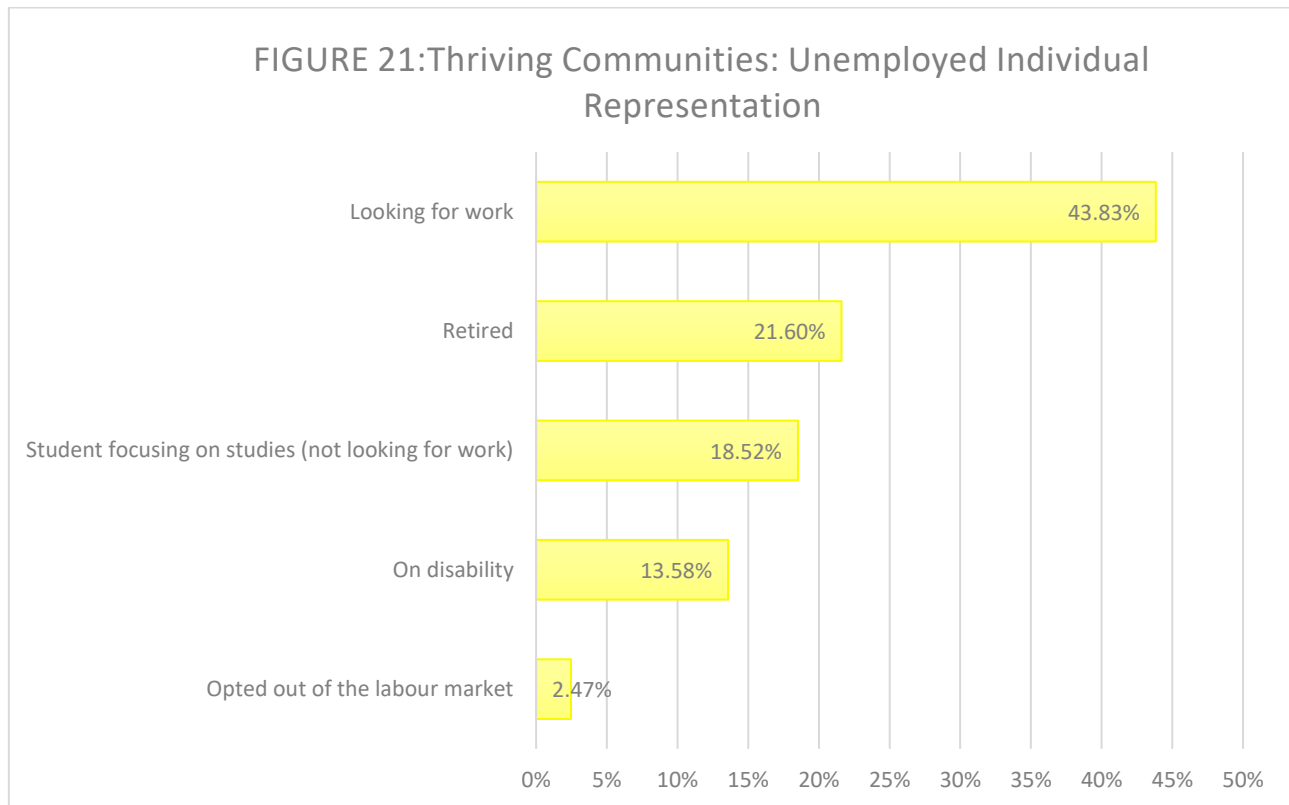
When comparing Merritt to the provincial averages, we can see that Merritt households are underrepresented in the higher household income brackets and overrepresented in the lower household income brackets.

FIGURE 20: 2016 Census: Household Total Income in 2015



Profile of Unemployed Participants:

In contrast to the previous section, the following graphs and figures represent the responses of unemployed individuals who completed the Thriving Communities survey. As with the last set of data, these individuals were asked a series of questions which were unique to their employment circumstances as the survey was adaptive and changed the questions it was presenting to participants depending on their responses.



Out of the total unemployed participants in the Thriving Communities survey, under half were currently looking for work (43.83%). Just under 22% of the respondents indicated that they were retired and are no longer participating in the labour market. The next largest representation were students who were currently focusing on their studies and not looking for work (18.52%), followed by peoples with disabilities (13.58%) or who had opted out of the labour market all together (2.47%).

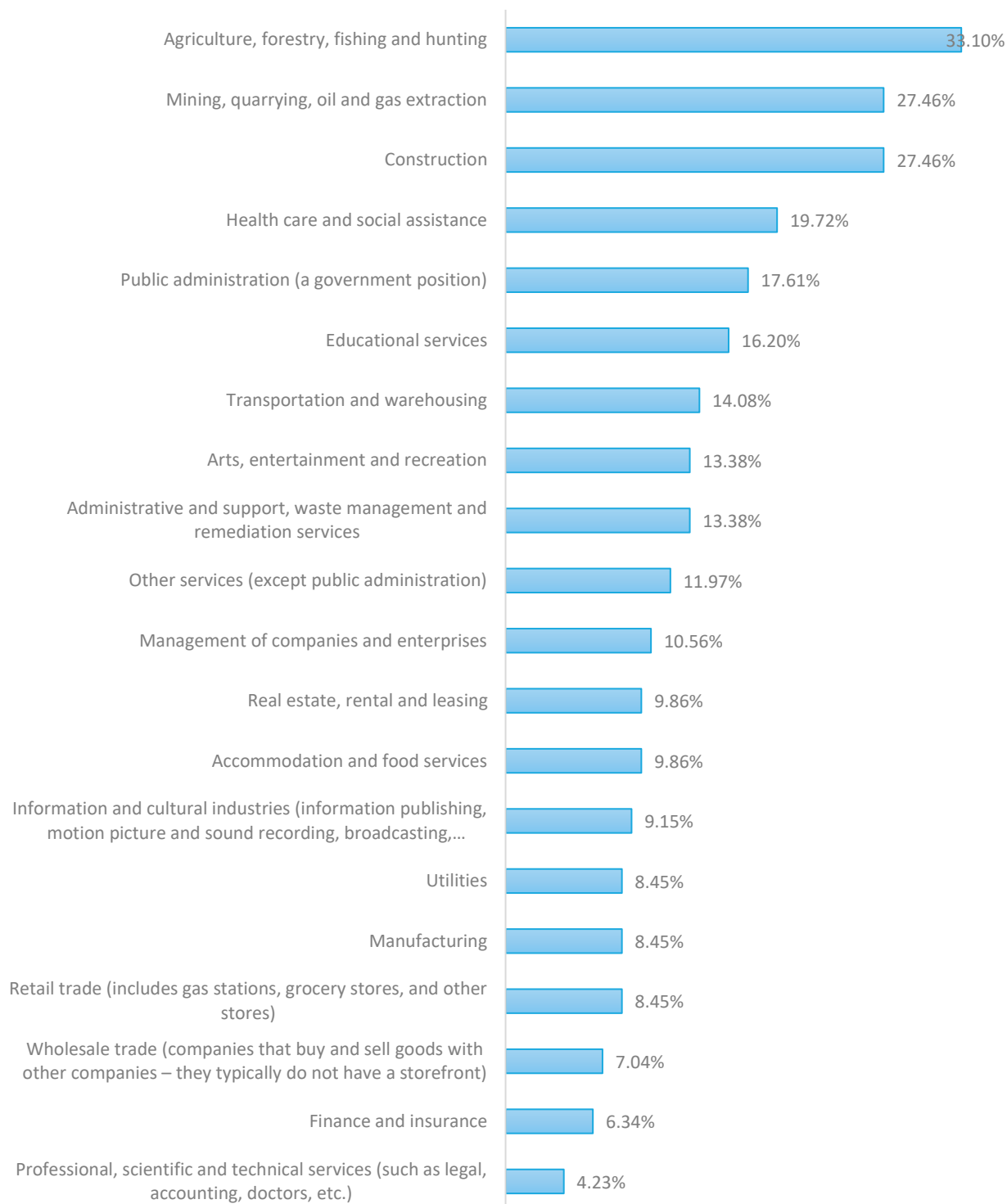
Industries of Interest for the Currently Unemployed:

The graph on the following page (Figure 22) summarizes the industry interest responses from unemployed individuals who completed the Thriving Communities survey. Participants were encouraged to indicate any and all industries which interest them while they are looking for employment.

The top two most frequently indicated industries were agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting (33.10%) followed by mining quarrying, oil and gas extraction (27.46%). These responses would seem to match the historically strong industries for Merritt and the surrounding region, which is probably a reflection of individuals who have existing work experience in these fields.

There was strong interest in a diverse mix of different industries overall, with the next strongest representation in construction (27.46%) and healthcare and social assistance (19.72%). A more detailed breakdown can be seen in Figure 22.

FIGURE 22: Thriving Communities: In which industry would you be interested in looking for a future job (check all that apply)?

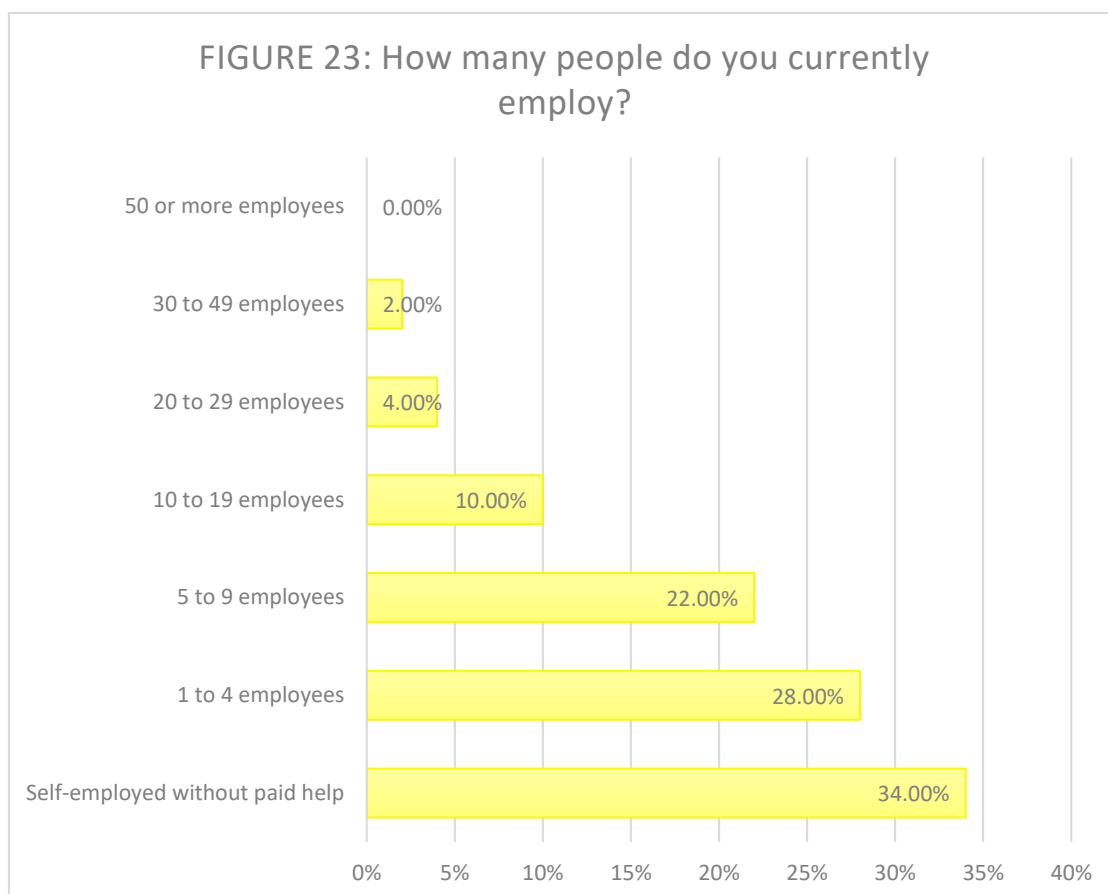


Profile of Business Owners

The previous two sections detailed the current labour market supply, both available (unemployed individuals) as well as current capacity (employed individuals). This next section outlines responses from Business owners, which represents labour market demand. The following figures and tables summarize the feedback from these individuals.

Current Workforce Numbers:

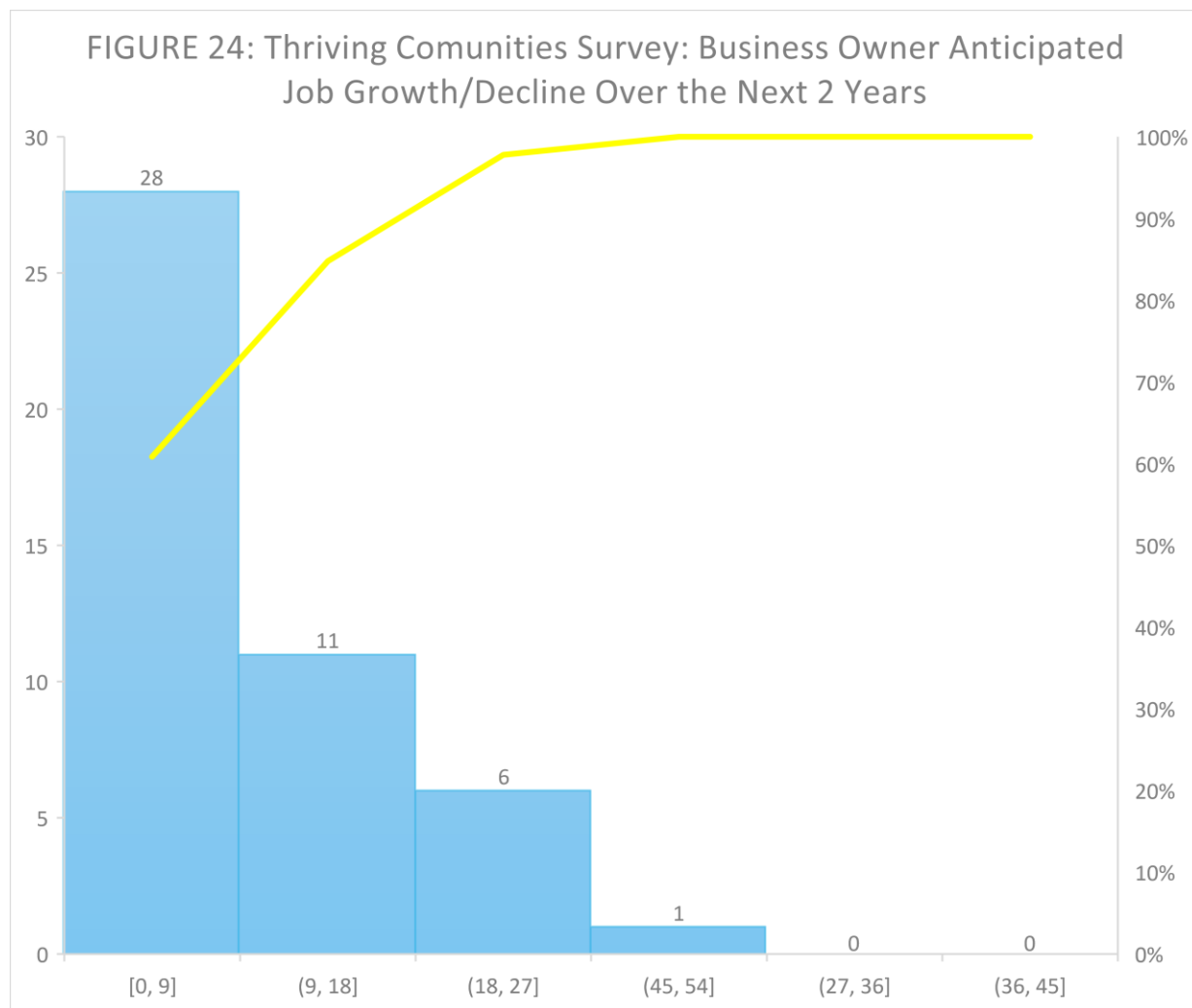
Business owners were asked to indicate their current workforce numbers, which is summarized in Figure 23. Not surprising, the largest representation was self-employed individuals without paid help (34%). In British Columbia, 98% of the businesses are “small businesses” which is defined as 50 employees or less. B.C. has the highest concentration of small business payrolls in the country. In 2018, small businesses accounted for nearly one third (32 per cent) of wages paid to workers, well above the national average (26 per cent).



The small business sector is a key instrument of job creation and economic growth, representing 53 per cent of private sector employment and almost one third of the provincial payroll. Most international exporters in B.C. are also small businesses and are responsible for 32 per cent of total provincial goods exports.¹³

The numbers captured in Figure 24, from the Thriving Communities survey are fairly indicative of the provincial numbers, with larger organizations being less prevalent.

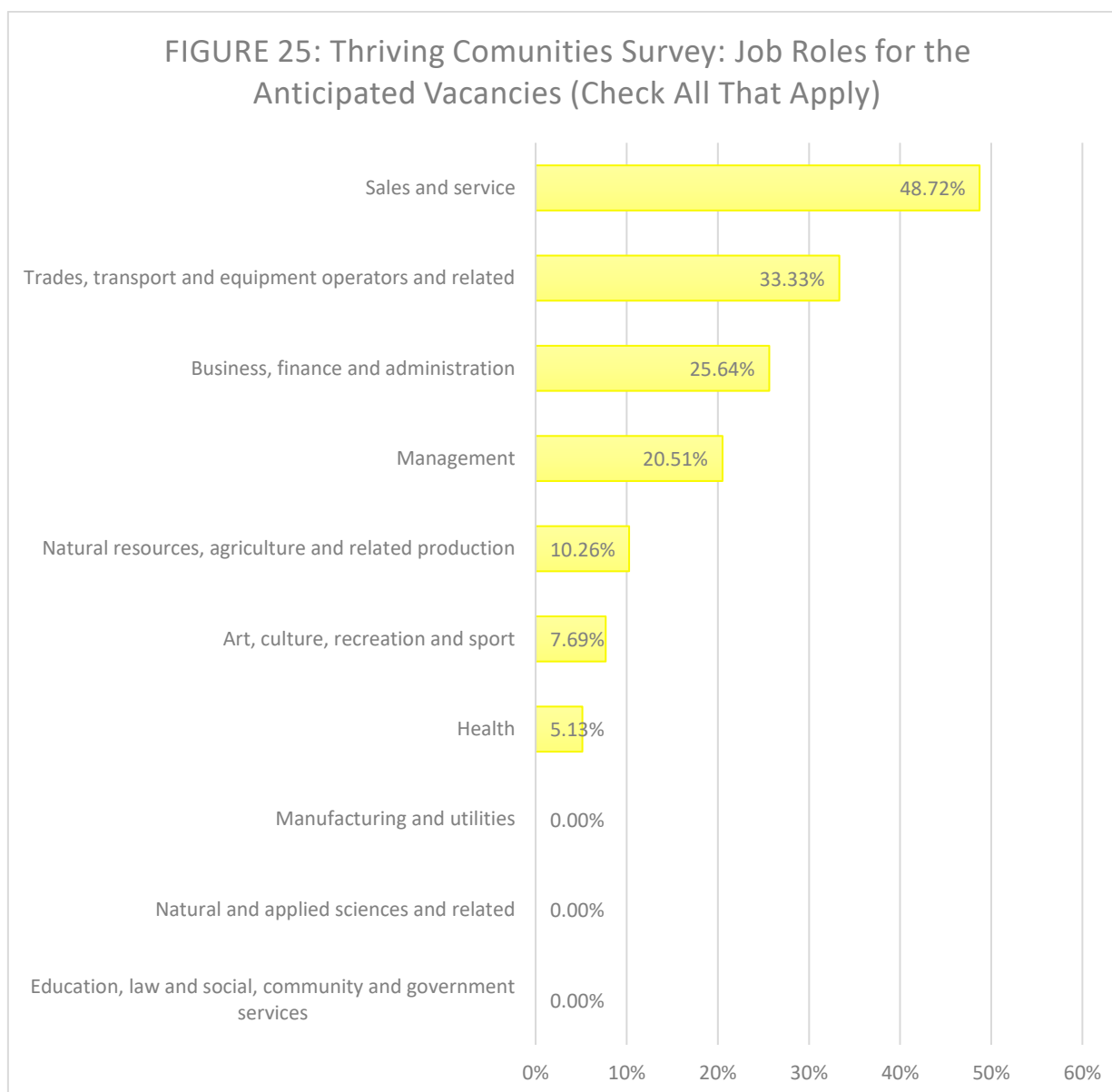
¹³ Small Business Profile | 2019



This data is summarized in Figure 24, which is a histogram. A histogram is useful to show frequency distributions. It looks very much like a bar chart, but the various bars represent “bucket” of responses – for example in this histogram the first “bucket” represents the frequency of responses which indicated 0-9 additional positions. The yellow line which overlaps the bar chart shows the percentage of cumulative responses. In other words, the increasing number of “buckets” represents more and more of the total data as the reader progresses through the chart from left to right.

Histograms are a useful tool to be able to quickly summarize responses in numerical order so that the viewer can get a better idea of the distribution and representation of the data.

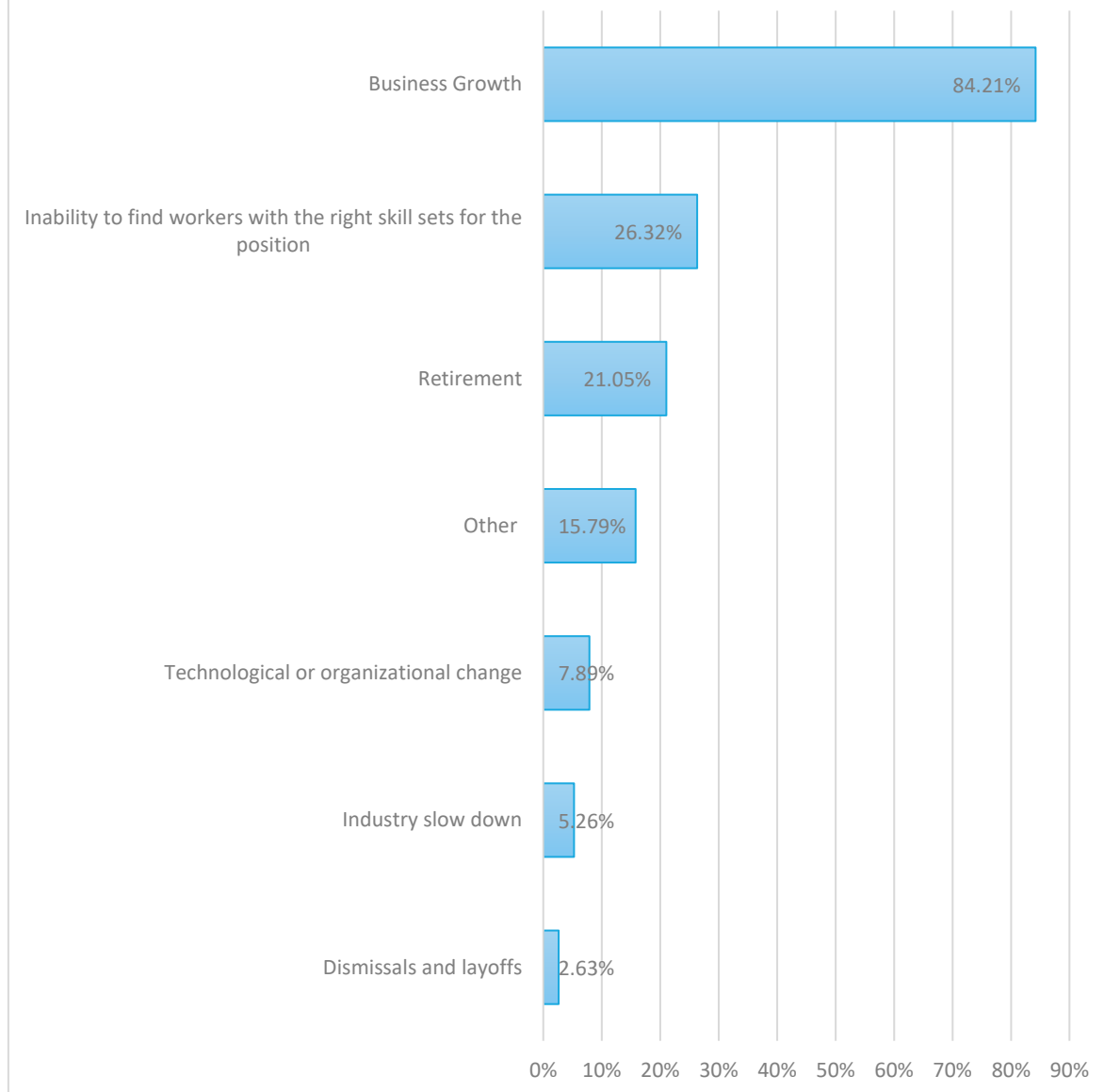
It is interesting to note that none of the business owners surveyed anticipated workforce shrinkage over the next two years. Instead they all indicated that they anticipated either maintaining the current number of positions available or some degree of growth. This growth varied with the highest frequency of responses indicating between 0 and 9 positions in the coming two years. These anticipated growth numbers slowly trailed off, with one employer indicating an expected addition of 54 new positions in the coming two years.



Out of the anticipated vacancies reported by the Business owners who participated in the Thriving Communities survey, the following roles were identified (Figure 25). The largest employer demand is for sales and service positions (48.72%), followed by trades, transport, equipment operators and related positions (33.33%), then business finance and administration (25.64%), then management related roles (20.51%) and so on.

It is interesting to note that, not surprisingly, the in-demand position roles are almost the exact opposite of the locally represented education fields of study. This would indicate that an issue for both labour supply and demand in Merritt is related to a situation of skills mismatch. In other words, there are workers looking for work and employers looking to hire, but the available skillsets and the required skillsets for the position are not aligning, resulting in workers looking for work and positions going unfilled. Skills retraining in the above role categories could help some local workers (labour supply) and businesses (labour demand).

FIGURE 26: What is the reason for the anticipated vacancies?

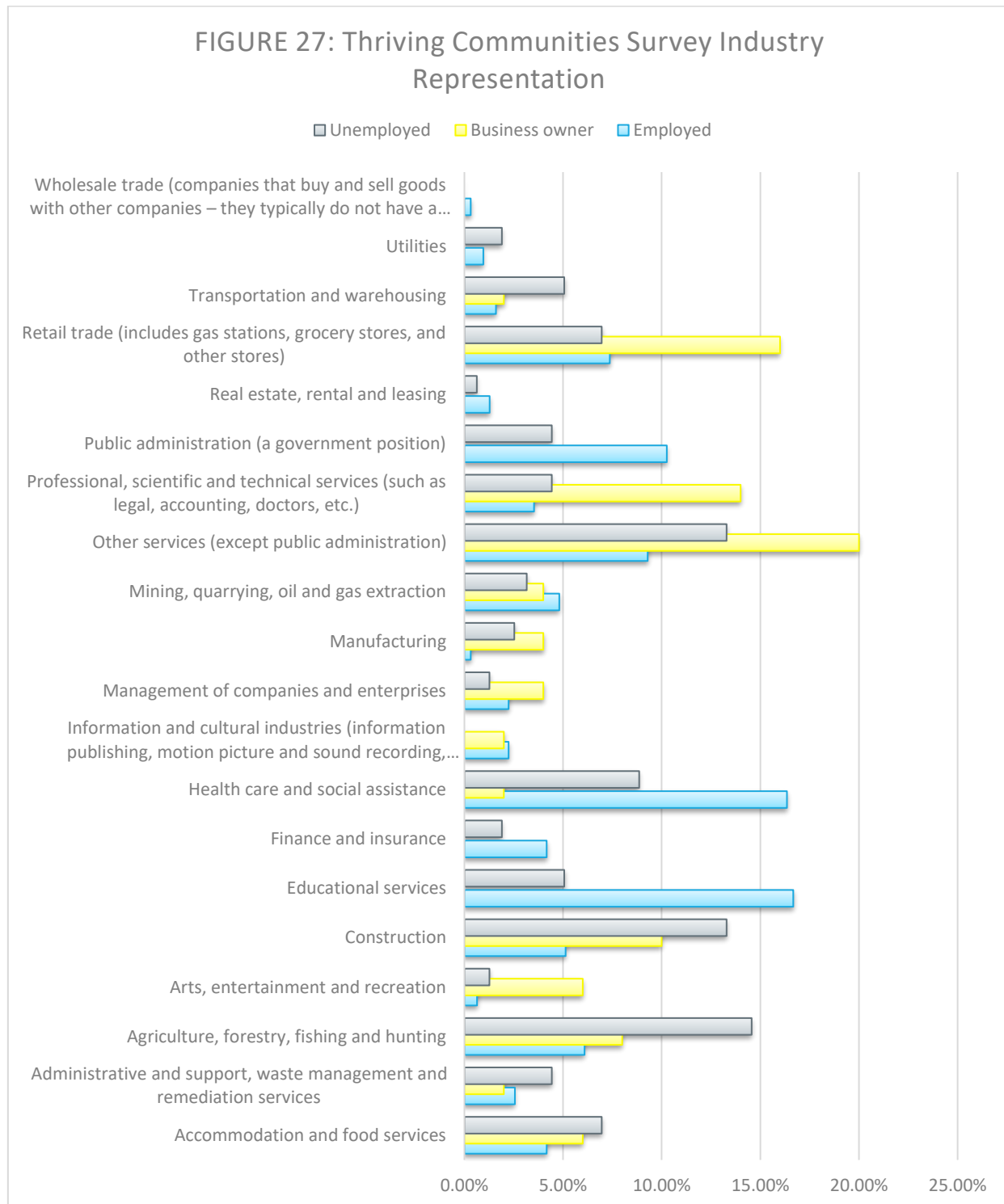


Business owners were asked for the reasons behind these anticipated vacancies and the results are summarized in Figure 26. As already indicated in previous data, businesses in and around Merritt are very much anticipating business growth in the near future (84.21%).

Some of these anticipated vacancies are a result of a skills mismatch as previous data would also seem to indicate (26.32%). There is a large component of anticipated retirement, which is also supported by the population age demographics (21.05%). The remaining anticipated vacancies are related to organizational changes (7.89%), industry slow-downs (5.26%) or dismissals and layoffs (2.63%).

Overall Labour Market Opportunities

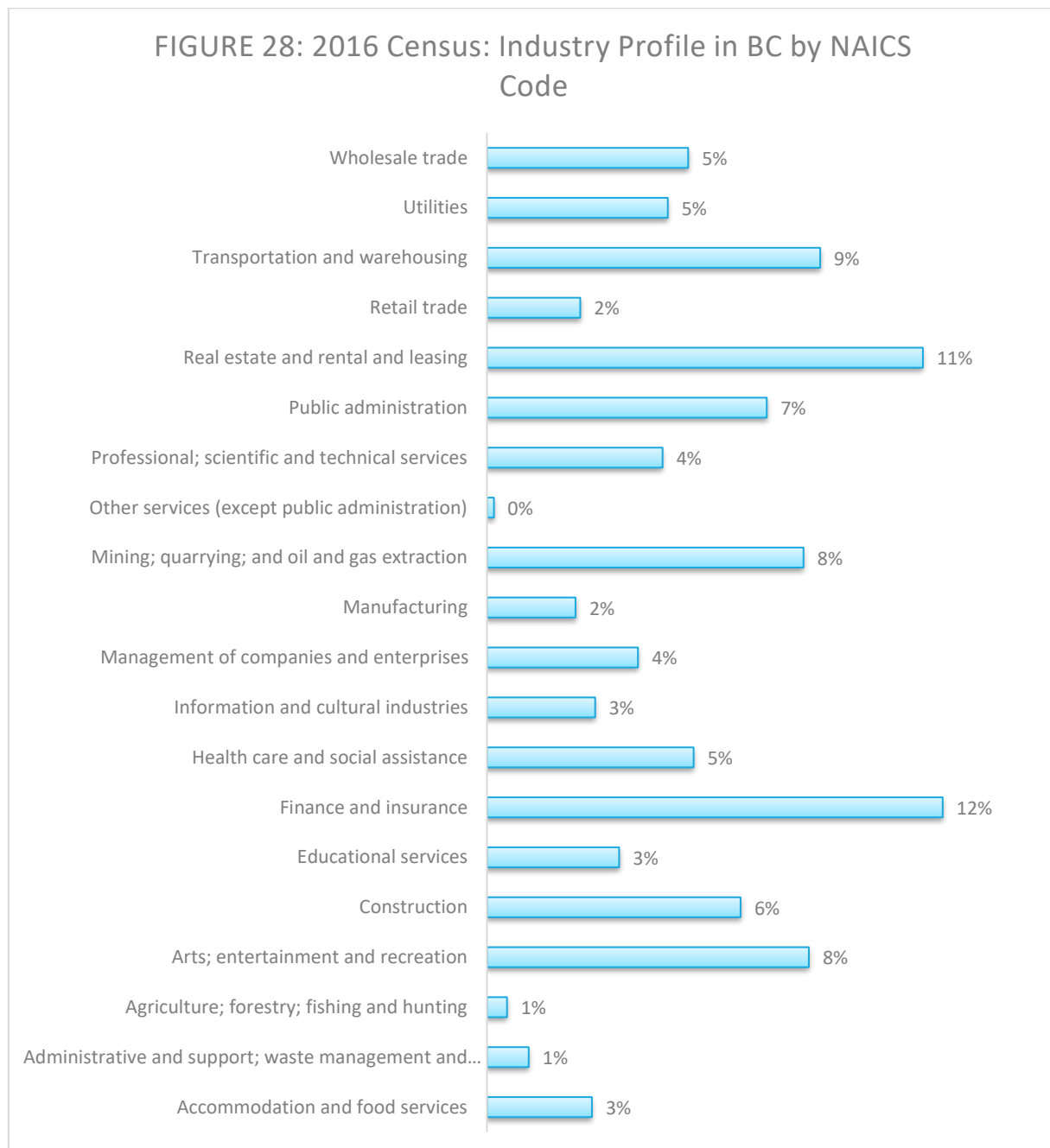
This following section summarizes the combined feedback from all three survey sub-groups: Employed, Unemployed and Business Owners. All three groups were asked questions about the current obstacles and their perceived opportunities for Merritt and the surrounding region when it comes to the labour market and ensuring that Merritt will continue to thrive into the future.



There are two things to note with the industry representation for the Thriving Communities survey participation:

The first is that there is some form of representation for all 20 North American Industry Code classification categories – in other words, every industry group in Canada has some representation in the survey.

Secondly, when the industry mix for the participants (Figure 27) is compared with the provincial distribution of industry representation (Figure 28), we can see that they very closely follow the same pattern. This means that the results captured in this survey are, from an industry (NAICS Code) perspective very representational of British Columbia. In other words; these results represent all industry perspectives and are not dominated by one strong industry voice.

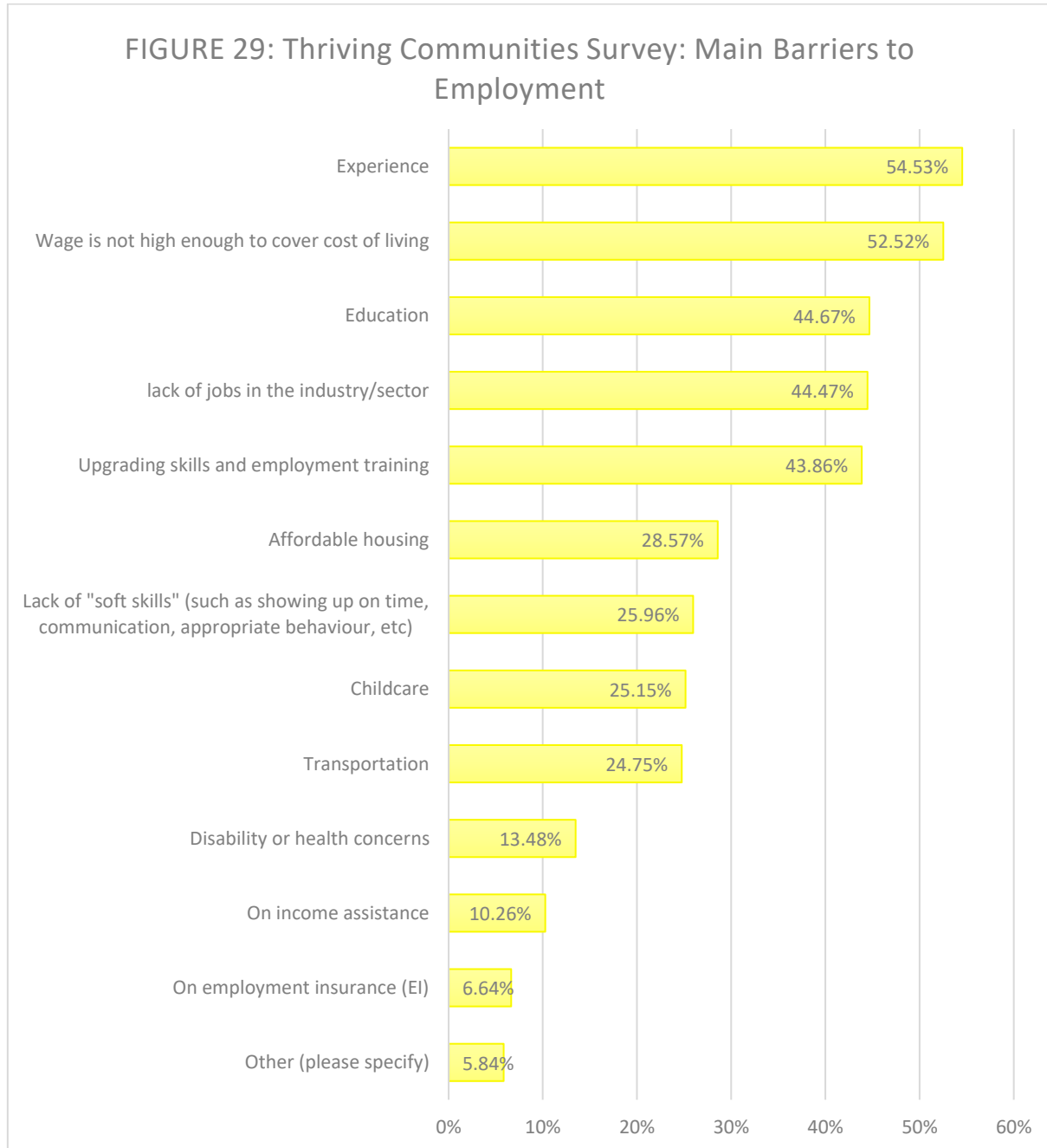


Labour Market Opportunities and Barriers

Barriers to Employment

All participants in the Thrive Communities survey (representing both labour supply and demand) were asked what, in their opinion, were the main barriers to finding employment in Merritt and the surrounding region. Figure 29 summarizes the results from the community.

This following section is going to break these barriers to employment into two separate categories and then comment on each one. The first is labour market supply barriers (which are associated with those looking for work) and the second is labour market demand barriers (which are associated with those looking to hire).



Labour Market Supply Barriers:

- The number one perceived barrier to employment for those looking for work was lack of prior work experience (54.53%).
- This was closely followed by a lack of required education (44.67%) as well as “upgrading skills and employment training” (43.86%) both of which are associated with current skills mismatch in the marketplace. This grouping of barriers represents just over 88% of individuals opinions of the barriers to employment*.
- Affordable housing (28.57%), childcare (25.15%) and transportation (24.75%) are all barriers associated with the infrastructure in and around Merritt which supports and effective labour market. This grouping of barriers represents just over 78% of individuals opinions of the barriers to employment*.
- Disability or health concerns (13.48%), current collection of Income Assistance (10.26%) or Employment Insurance (6.64%) as well as the category of “other” (5.84%) all represent unique barriers to employment which come with their own challenges and support. This grouping of barriers represents just over 36% of individuals opinions of the barriers to employment*.

Labour Market Demand Barriers:

- The number one perceived barrier to employment from labour market demand perspective was an inability to offer wages which are high enough to cover the cost of living (52.52%).
- This was followed by a “lack of jobs in the industry/sector” which represented 44.47% of the responses. This category is interesting as it can represent two very different scenarios: the first is once again a skills mismatch between the current employment opportunities and those looking for work. This can be perceived as a lack of jobs in the field of the job seeker’s preference. The second scenario is either a contraction or lack of growth in a certain industry or sector, which can result in a curtailment of job vacancies in this industry and an oversupply of available workforce.
- Lastly; a lack of “soft-skills”, such as showing up on time, being respectful, dressing appropriately, etc. was identified as a barrier to employment by 25.96% of the respondents. This response is in effect once again an example of skills mismatch as the skills employers are seeking are not matching those which the job seekers possess.

* **Note:** totals can sum to more than 100% as each response category represents a percentage of responses from every individual

Opportunities to Improve the Labour Market

Once again, all participants in the Thrive Communities survey (representing both labour supply and demand) were asked what, in their opinion, were opportunities or ways in which the labour market could be improved in Merritt and the surrounding region. Figure 30 summarizes these results.

Skills Training:

Not surprisingly, based on the feedback in the previous section, “skills and employment training support” was the most frequent response at 66.13%. Access to post-secondary education was also mentioned (31.44%) along with public education at 22.31%. This grouping of “Skills Training” represents a combined total of just under 120% when each category percentage is summed*.

Affordable Housing:

The next two largest single categories represent a perceived need of more affordable house (55.98%) as well as an overall need for more housing in general (55.98%). Another category mentioned was “more available land for development” which could mean either land for housing development or land for commercial and industrial development (18.05%). This grouping of “Affordable Housing” represents a combined total of just under 130% when each category percentage is summed*.

Labour Market Support Programming:

This category represents a range of responses which are associated with support programming for a variety of sub-groups in and around Merritt. Support for entrepreneurs ranked the highest at 29.01%, followed by mature worker (28.40%) and youth (25.96%) support programs. This grouping of “Labour Market Support Programming” represents a combined total of just under 83.37% when each category percentage is summed*.

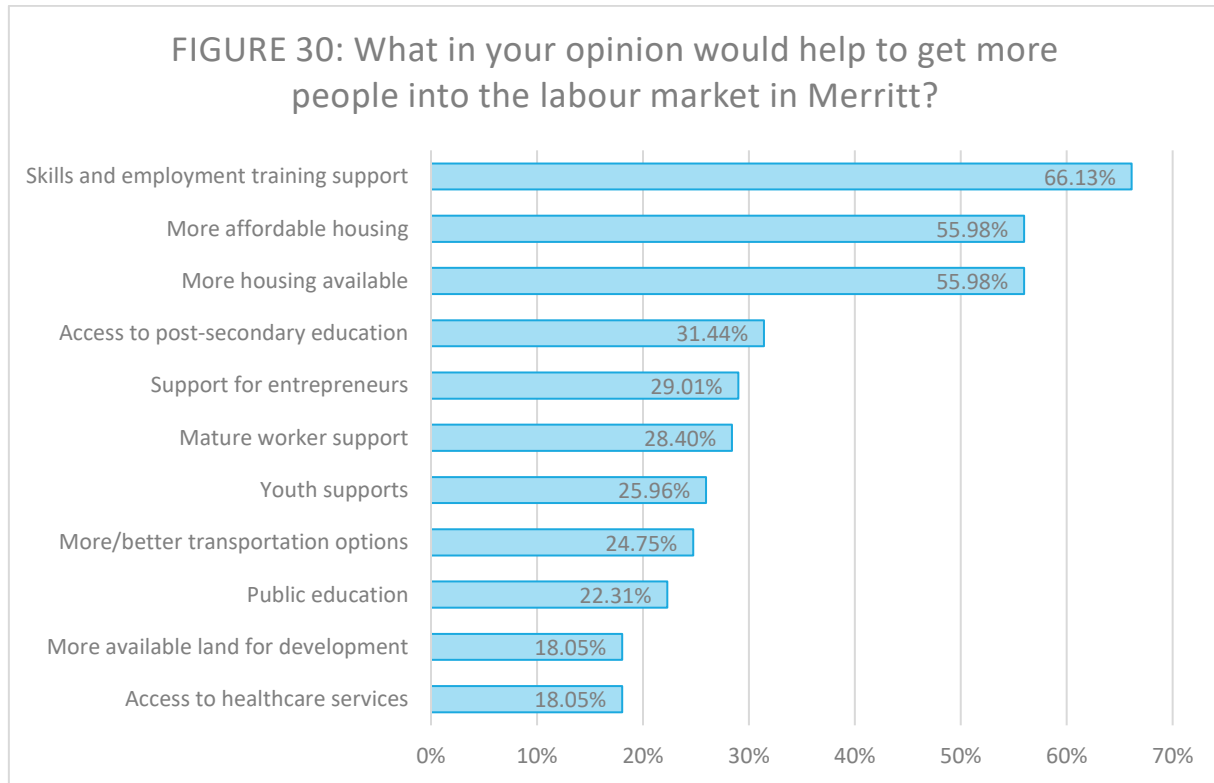
Improved Transportation Options:

Transportation is seen as a barrier to employment (24.75%) and therefore also represents an opportunity if there are means to improve available options. Merritt already boasts some of the lower commute times in the Province (Figure 40: 2016 Census: Commuting Duration for the Employed Labour Force), so duration is likely not the problem. Instead improved access and options would help support the current labour market.

Access to Healthcare:

Lastly, access to healthcare was viewed as an opportunity to improve the labour market in the region. There is a chronic family doctor shortage in the Province of BC. If Merritt was able to provide better access to primary healthcare it could act as a differentiator in a competitive market to motivate both workers (labour supply) and business owners (labour demand) to relocate to Merritt.

* **Note:** totals can sum to more than 100% as each response category represents a percentage of responses from every individual



Housing – a More In-depth Look:

[Housing Affordability Snapshot:](#)

Housing was identified as both a barrier and opportunity when it comes to the labour market in an around Merritt. This next section takes a more in-depth look at the current housing data in this region in comparison to the rest of the Province.

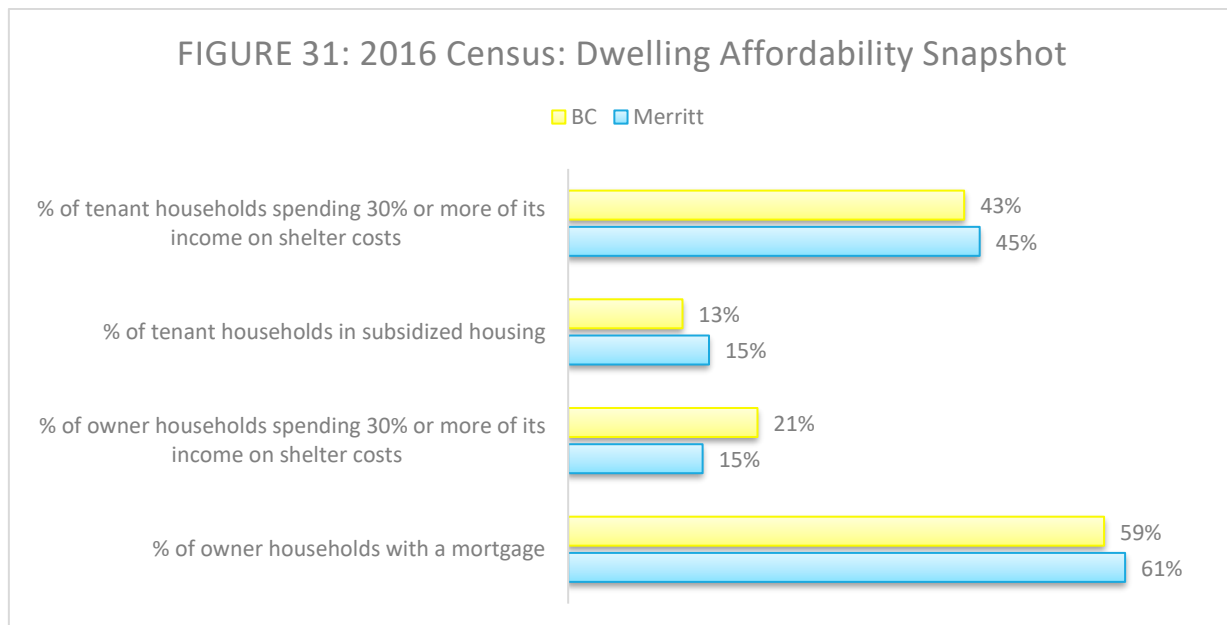
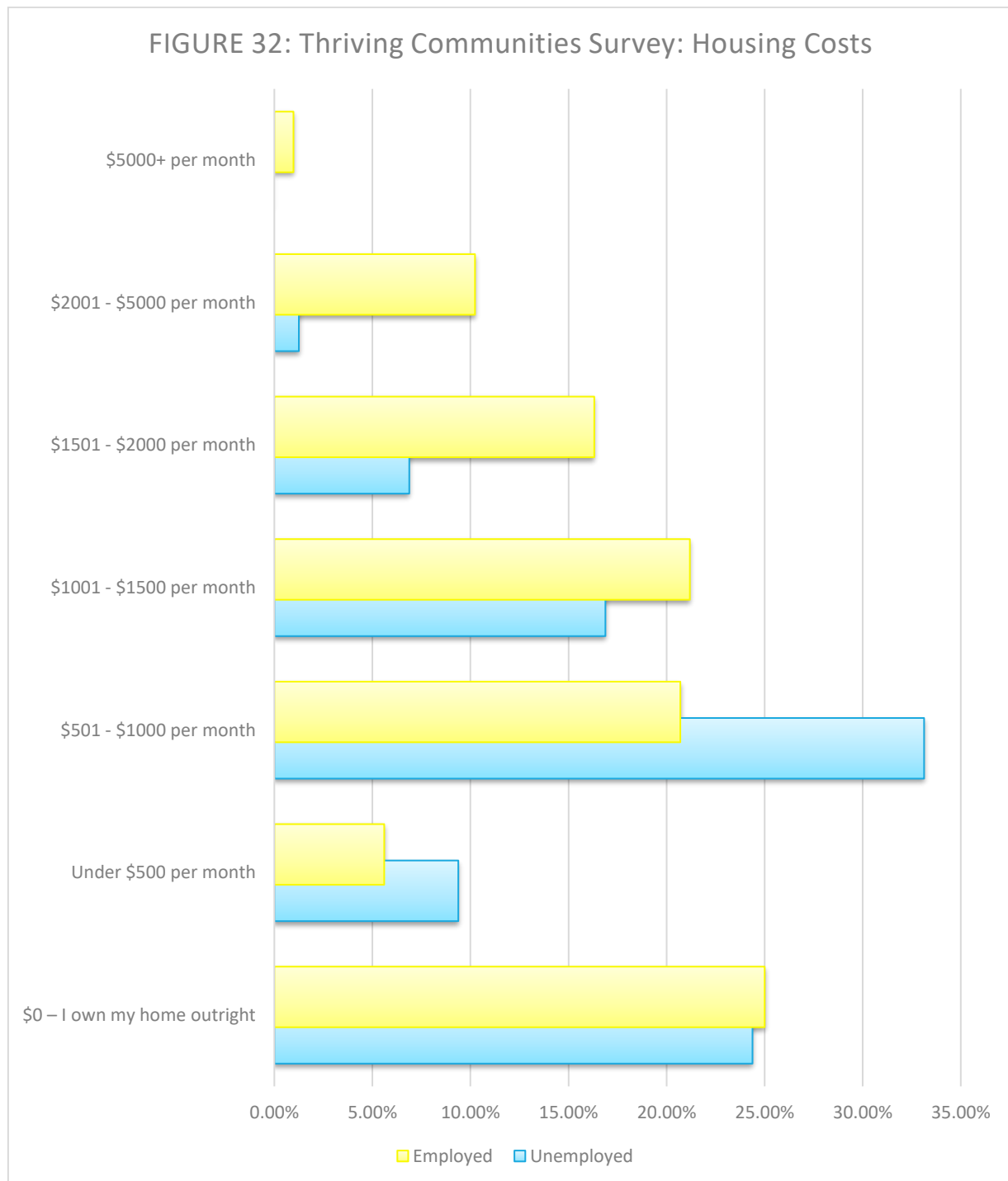


Figure 31: 2016 Census: Dwelling Affordability Snapshot, shows that Merritt is slightly better, but very similar to the situation found through-out the province, where 28% of the population are spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs.

The 30% of income standard is the threshold defined by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to measure housing affordability¹⁴.

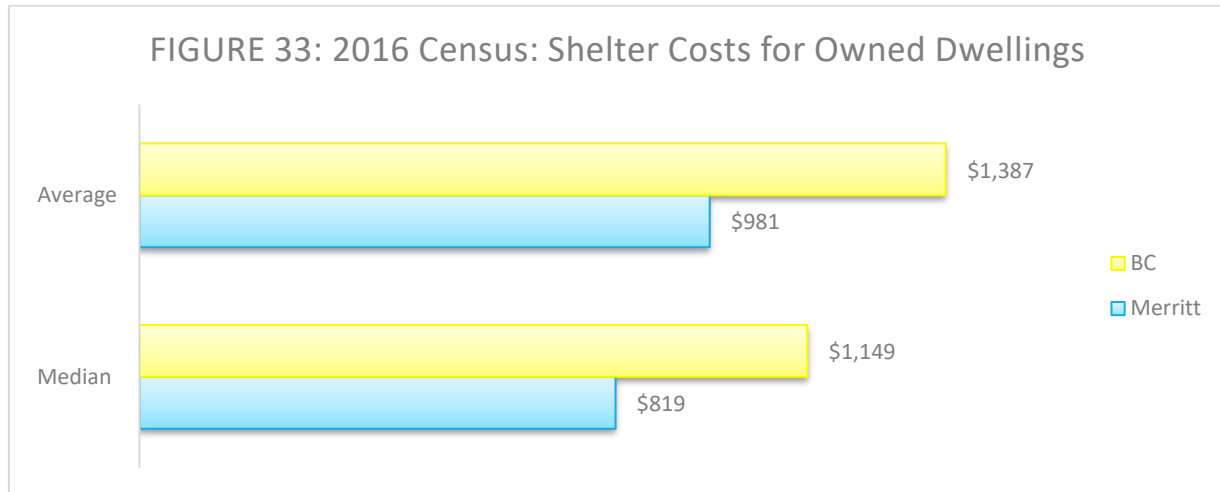


¹⁴ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 1991, 'Core Housing Need in Canada.'

Housing Costs Snapshot:

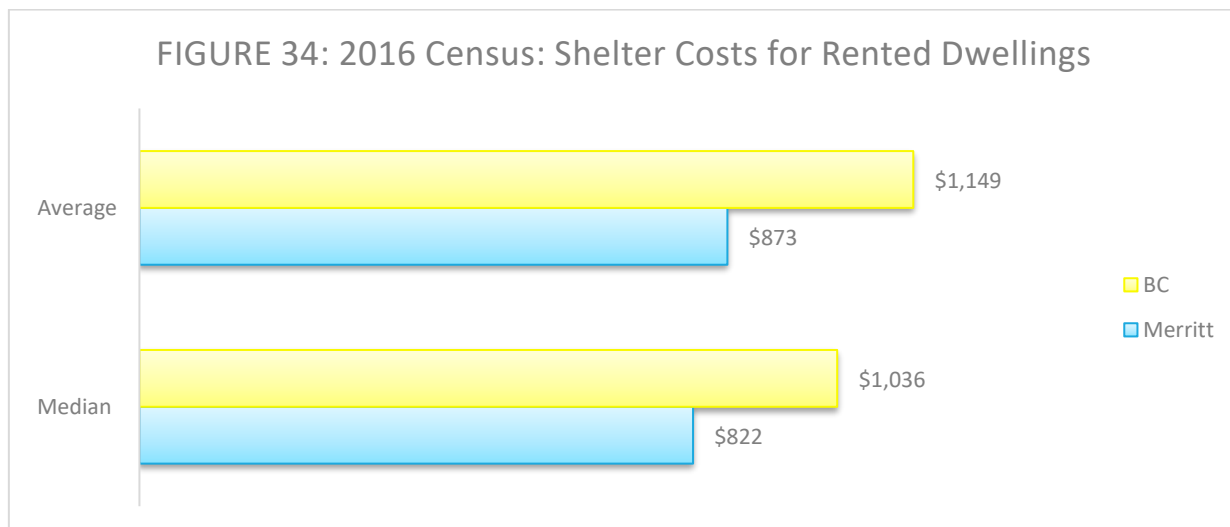
Figure 32: Thriving Communities Survey: Housing Costs, shows that there is representation across the spectrum when it comes to housing costs in Merritt. Employed individuals show a “normal” distribution between \$500 per month to \$5,000 per month. Unemployed individuals in comparison are skewed towards the lower end of the spectrum, with the bulk of the representation in the \$501 to \$1,000 range.

Surprisingly, there is almost equal representation of individuals both employed and unemployed who own their homes outright (no mortgage costs).

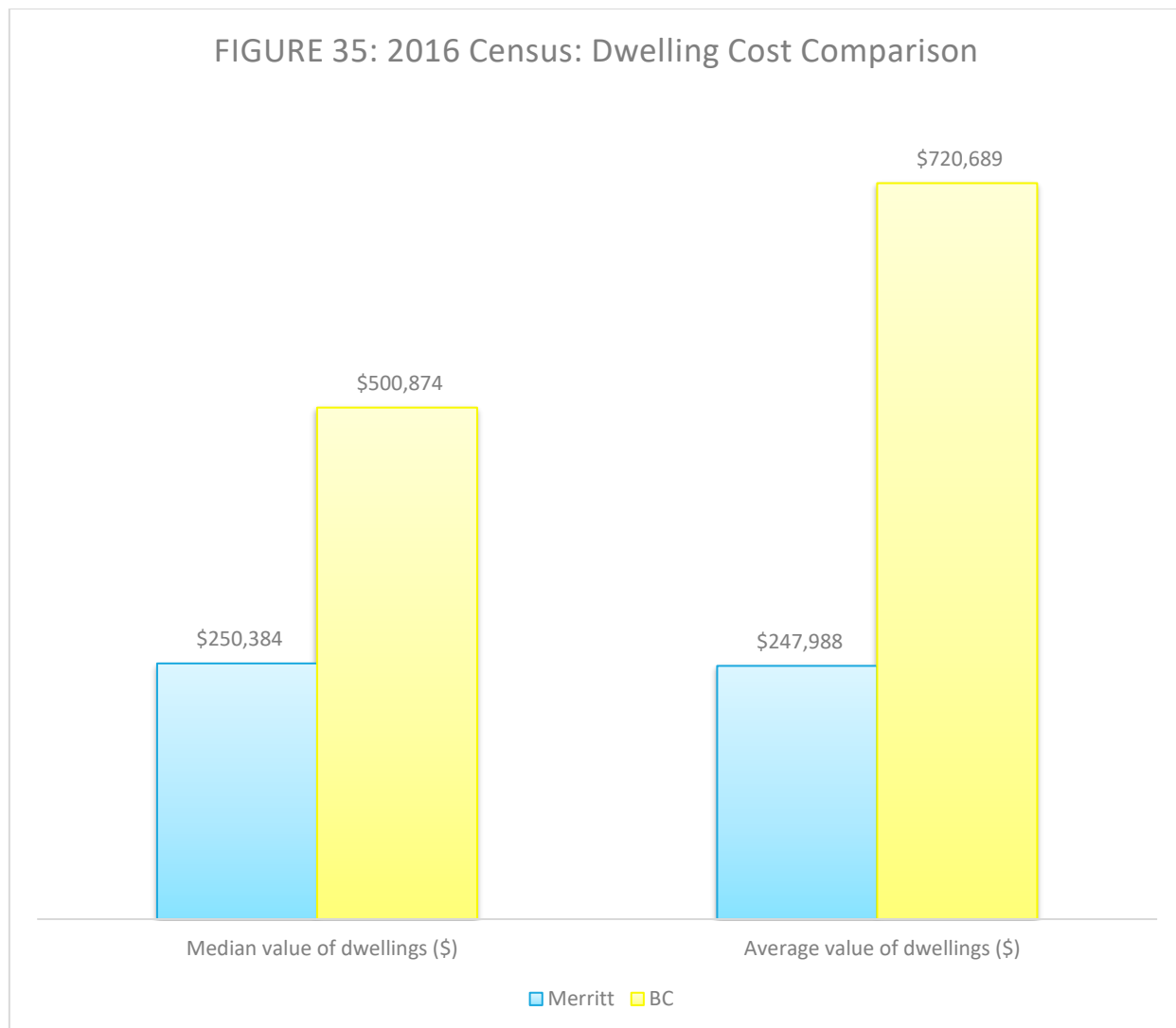


When looking at the 2016 Census data for Merritt and BC, we can see that the median and average shelter costs for both owned dwellings as well as rented dwellings was consistently lower than the province.

Overall, owning and renting housing costs are very comparable, with the median values being almost identical and the average cost of ownership being only lightly higher than the average renting housing costs.



When comparing the average and median cost of a home in Merritt vs. the Province, not surprisingly Merritt hosts much more affordable housing options. Both the median and average prices were very similar, hovering around \$250,000.



In comparison, the average value of a dwelling in BC is just over \$720,000, while the median value is just over \$500,000. When the average and the median vary dramatically from one another, this is an indication of some extreme outliers in the data. In other words: there is likely a bigger spread in housing costs in the rest of the province vs. Merritt, with some homes being much higher cost than the bulk of the figures. This is most likely the cost of Vancouver real estate bringing the average up in the province. The median value of \$500,000 is likely more representational of the dwelling costs through-out the rest of the Province.

This would mean that the median dwelling costs in Merritt are half of the median value of a home in the rest of the province. In other words – in relation to the rest of the province Merritt boasts much more affordable dwelling options (half of the cost).

Housing Inventory:

All participants in the Thriving Communities survey (Business owners, employed individuals and unemployed individuals) were asked to comment on the current dwelling options in and around Merritt. Figure 36: Thriving Communities Survey: Housing Inventory Perspective, shows their various responses in comparison to one another.

There are some interesting things to note with these results: The first most striking conclusion is that business owners are far more convinced than employed and unemployed people that a lack of housing availability is a barrier to finding workers.

Secondly, as seen in the bottom cluster of bars in the graph below, very few individuals in any group felt that the current housing options are excellent and a strength for Merritt.

Not surprisingly, housing is most likely not an issue for employed individuals, but there is representation in all three groups of respondents, which indicates that a portion of the population (between 35% and 60%) have likely secured adequate housing for themselves and therefore do not feel that it is an issue (barrier to finding workers).

All three groups show some opinion that housing affordability is a barrier to the labour market. Once again business owners show the highest representation, followed closely by unemployed, then employed individuals.

There is also some sentiment, that housing availability is not in itself the only issue, but instead finding available housing which fits the needs of the household is an issue. In other words, there could be available housing options in and around Merritt, but it is not suitable for those looking for housing.

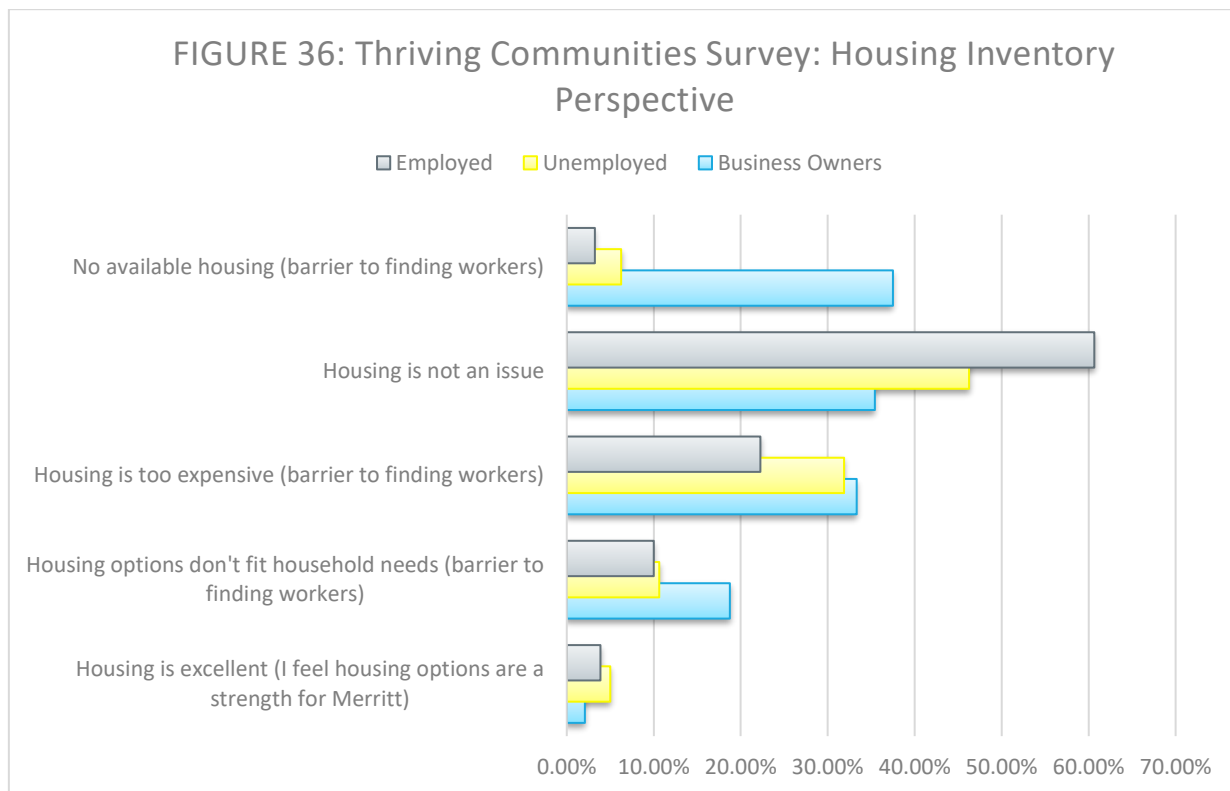
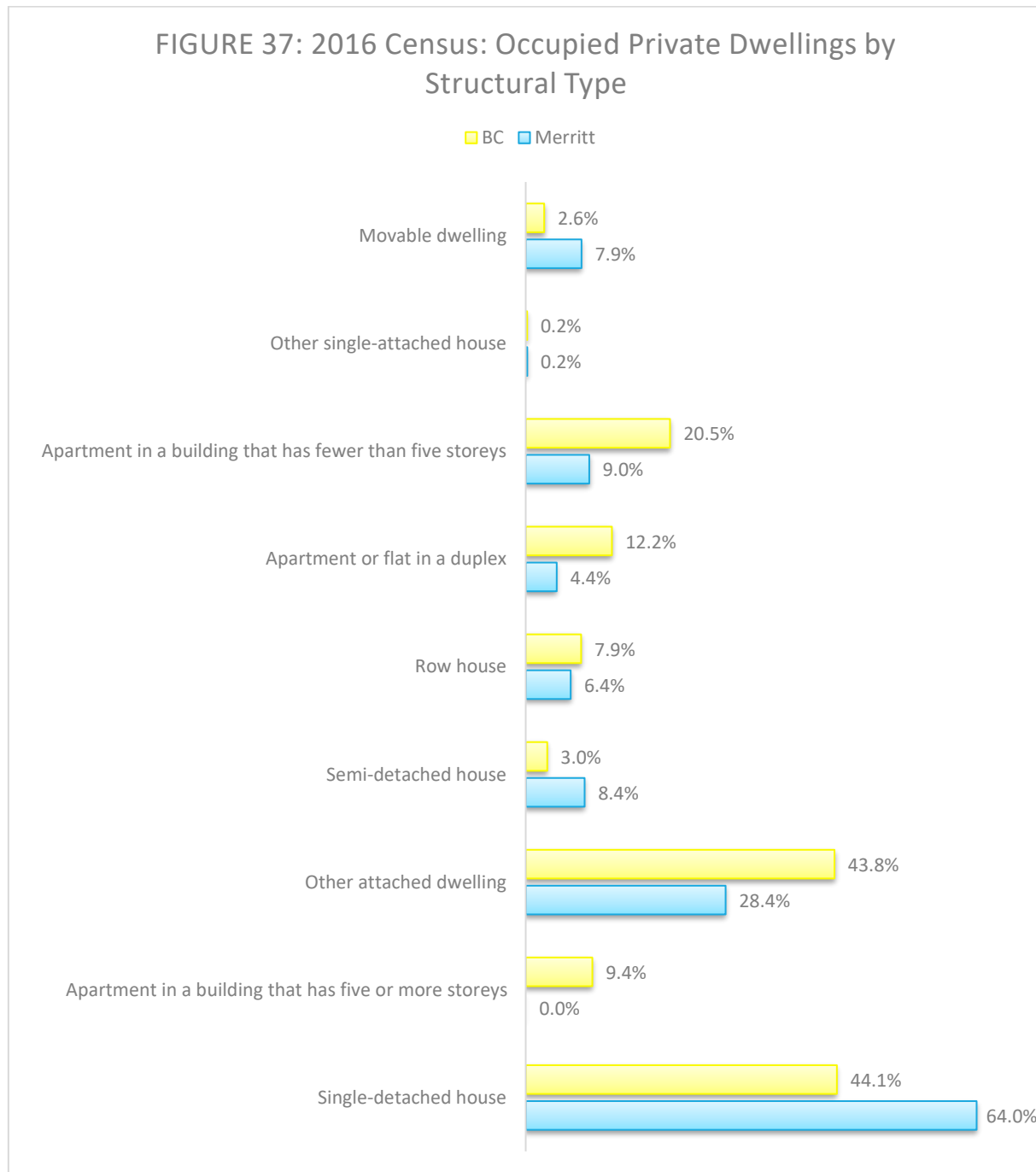


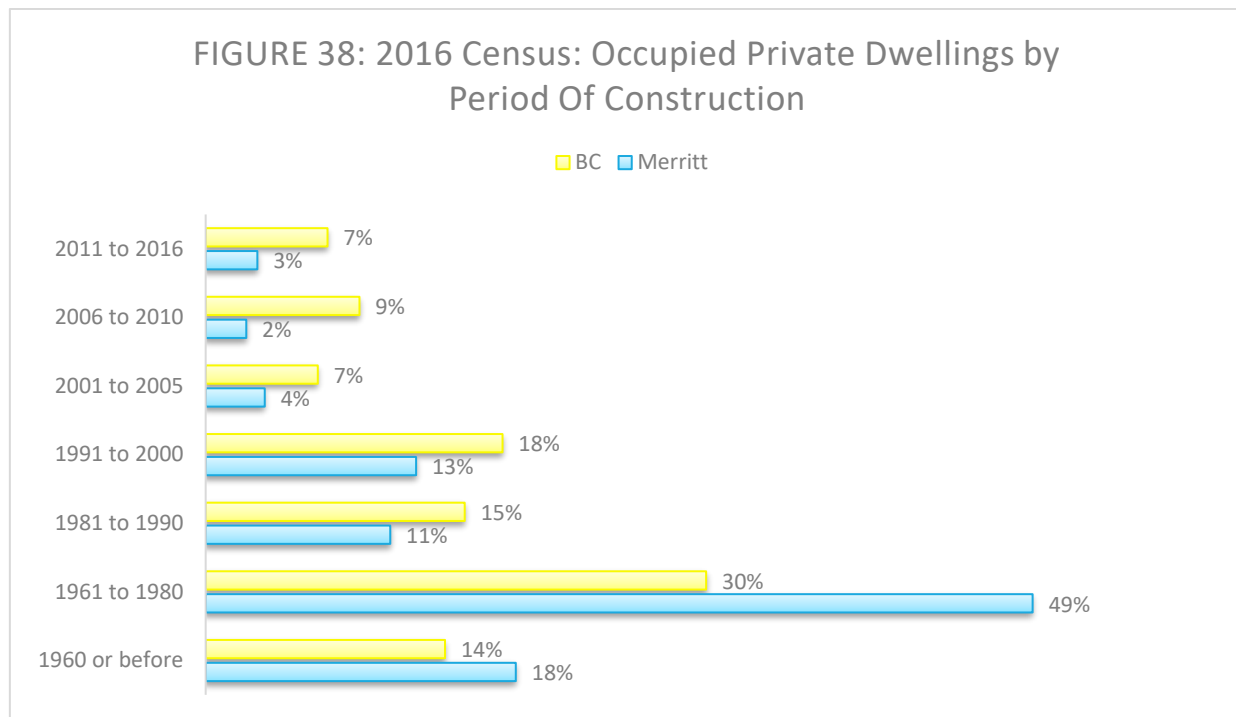
Figure 37 shows data from the 2016 Census which outlines the types of dwelling structures in the housing inventory around Merritt. From this data we can see that Merritt offers a diverse range of housing options, except for apartment buildings which are 5 stories or larger.

Overall, Merritt has a higher percentage of single detached homes, semi-detached homes and movable dwellings than the rest of the province but is generally underrepresented in all of the other categories. This data could indicate that there might be an opportunity to develop apartment buildings (of all kinds), duplexes and Row houses.



When looking at the average age of dwellings in and around Merritt (Figure 38: 2016 Census: Occupied Private Dwellings by Period of Construction) we can see that there was a boom in construction in Merritt between 1961 and 1981, where construction of new dwellings in Merritt far exceeded the rest of the Province.

After this construction boom Merritt has lagged the rest of the province in new dwelling construction fairly consistently in every age category period by about 4%. The largest discrepancy between the Merritt and the rest of BC was between 2006 and 2010, where growth in the Province was sitting around 9%, while Merritt was at 2%.



Transportation Snapshot:

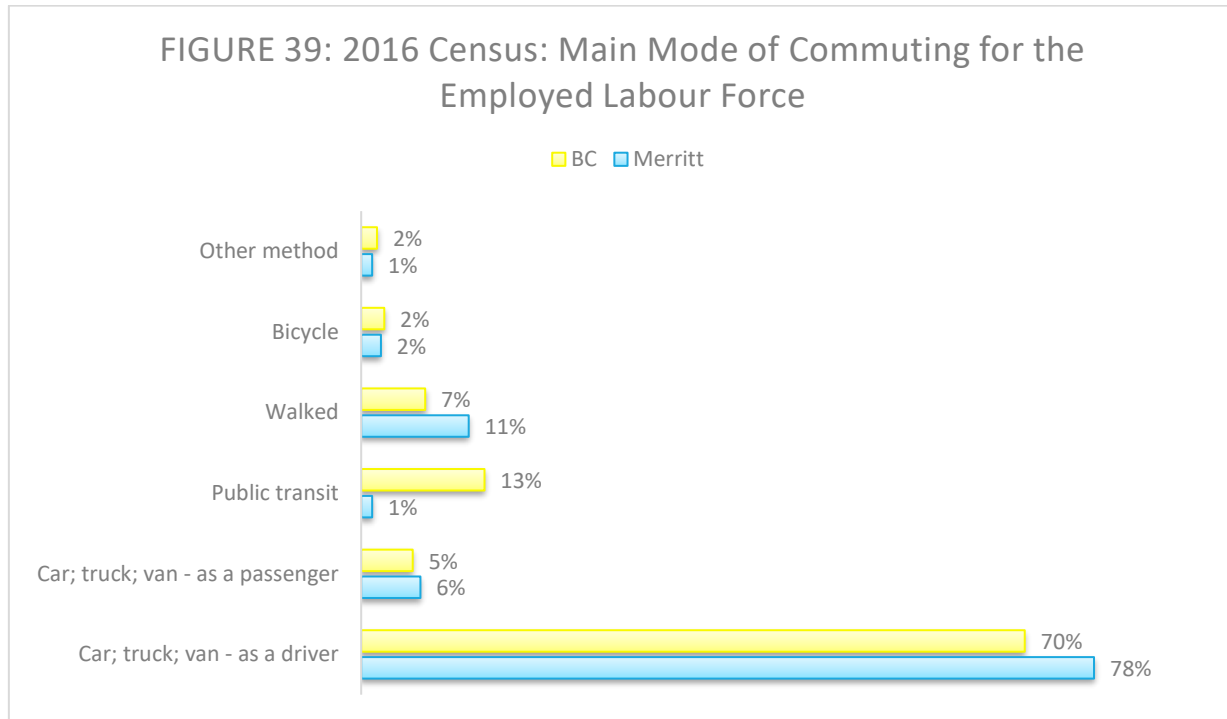
As identified earlier, transportation was identified as both a barrier and an opportunity when it comes to improve labour access in and around Merritt. This section of the report looks at the current transportation options, modes and preferences available in the region.

Not surprisingly, the main mode of transportation used by the people of Merritt and the rest of the province is passenger vehicles as the driver (Figure 39: 2016 Census: Main Mode of Commuting for the Employed Labour Force).

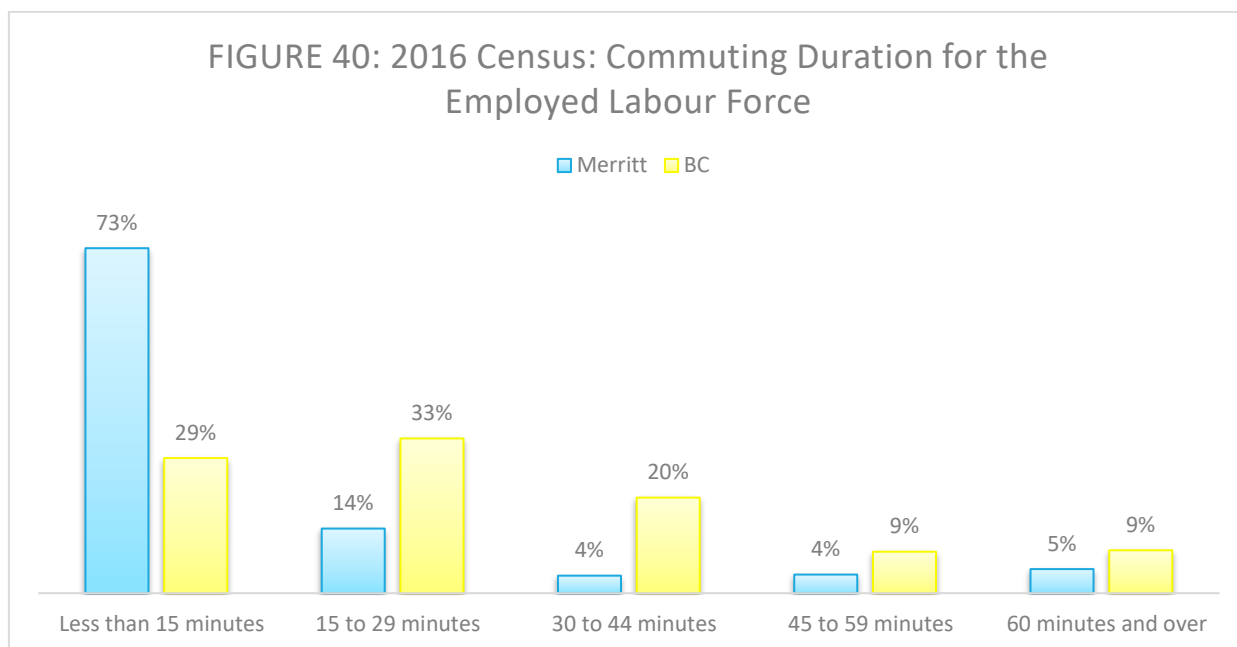
Public transit has a much higher representation in the rest of the province and is the second most widely used mode of transportation for getting to work (13%). In comparison, only 1% of the employed labour force in Merritt use public transportation to get to work.

On the flip side; Merritt employees are more likely to walk to work in comparison to the province averages. Walking to work is the second most widely used mode of transportation, exceeding carpooling (traveling to work in a vehicle as a passenger).

Besides these key differences, the rest of the representation for modes of transportation to work are fairly consistent to the rest of the province, with a small representation of carpooling, bicycling or other methods.



Commuting times for Merritt are far less than most of the rest of the province, with the majority (73%) of workers having a commute time of 15 min or less. In comparison, the average commute time in BC is close to double (26 min), while the average commute times for Metro Vancouver (individuals living in Vancouver, not commuting from the lower mainland) was 67 minutes.

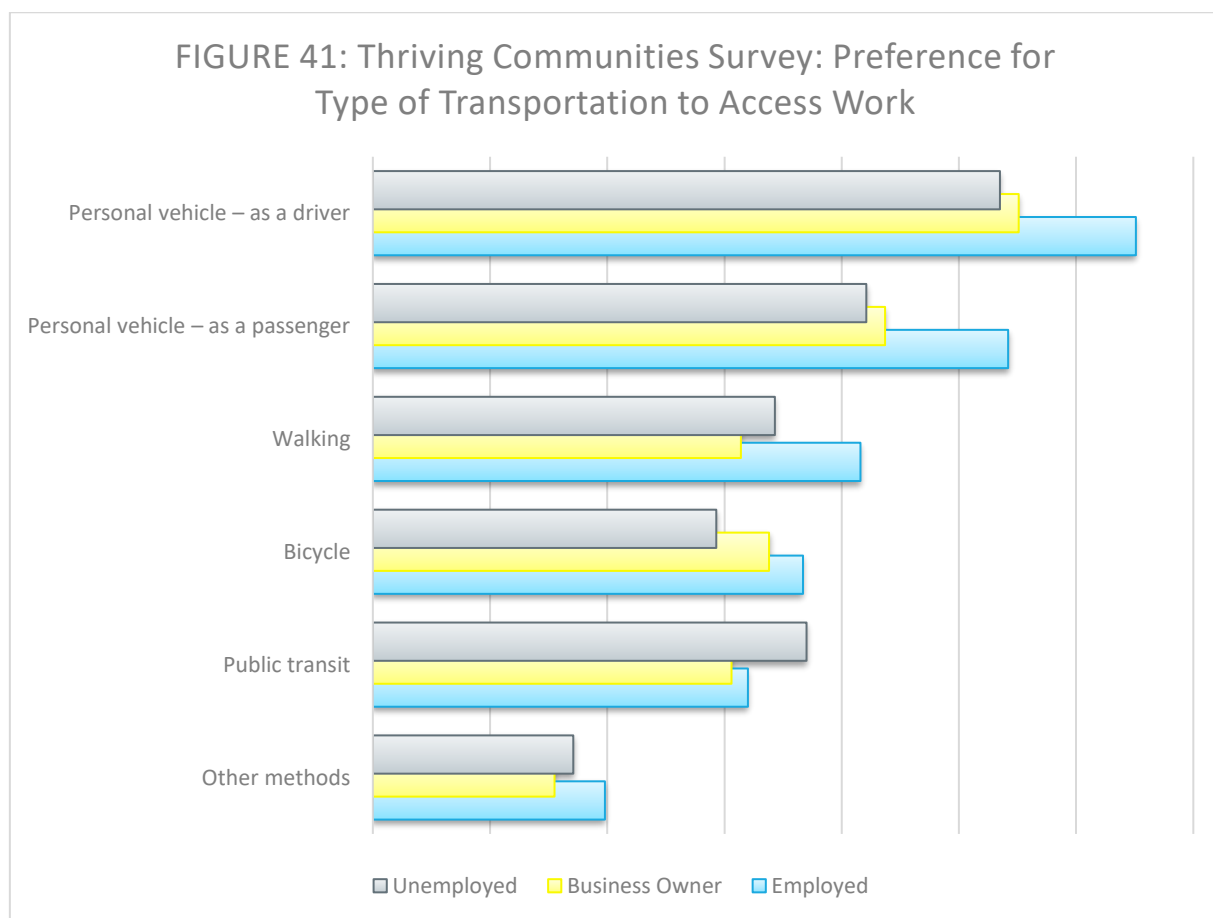


All three participant groups in the Thriving Communities survey were asked to rank their preference for mode of transportation to and from work, which is summarized in Figure 41.

Overall, all three groups ranked the following modes of transportation to and from work in approximately the same order of preference, which the top choice being a vehicle as a driver, followed by carpooling, then walking, bicycling, public transportation and then other methods.

This data, when compared to the previous data would suggest that there could be an opportunity to increase or promote carpooling as an option in and around Merritt. This is the second most preferred method of transportation for all parties, yet the 2016 census data (Figure 39) would seem to indicate that there is very little carpooling currently taking place in and around Merritt.

There could also be an opportunity to further expand the walking to work infrastructure and awareness in Merritt. Walking to work is already more popular in Merritt when compared to the rest of the province and average commute times are much shorter in Merritt, which could indicate that Merritt is ideally setup for employees to walk to work. Looking at the data in Figure 41, we can see that walking to work is the third most preferred mode of transportation by the participants in the Thriving Communities survey. This could indicate an opportunity to further enhance walking infrastructure and promote walking to work as a means to remove transportation as a barrier to the labour market and also to attract additional people to Merritt (as both labour supply and demand) by marketing Merritt's "walkability".



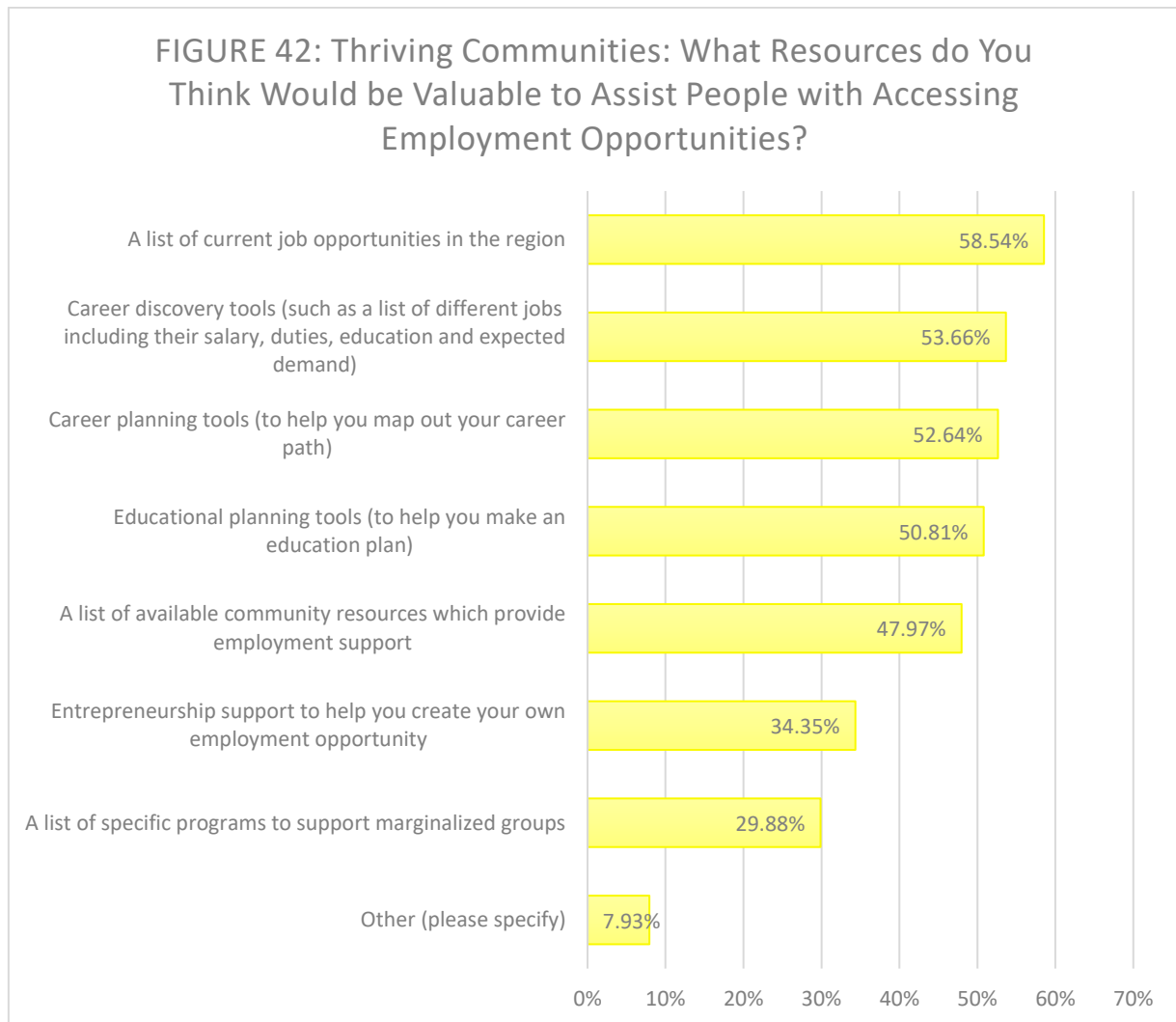
Opportunities for Support Resources:

Thriving Communities survey participants were asked which resources, if any, they think would be valuable when it comes to improving access to employment opportunities in and around Merritt, the results of which is summarized in Figure 42.

The largest number of responses related to a single database for a list of all of the current job opportunities in the region (58.54%). Resources such as this are already widely available (such as Indeed.ca and Wowjobs.ca), but there could be an opportunity to increase awareness of these resources.

This next group of responses are all related to career planning tools, which included Career discovery tools – 53.66% (such as a list of different jobs including their salary, duties, education and expectations), Career planning tools – 52.64% (to help individuals map out a career path) as well as educational planning tools – 50.81% (to help individuals make an education plan to achieve their career goals).

This was followed by creation of new support programs as well as awareness around existing support programs available for those looking for employment (47.97%), entrepreneurship support programming to help people to create their own employment (34.35%) and a list of specific programs to support marginalized groups (29.88%).



British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition

These next sections of the report focus on labour market forecasts and rely heavily on the British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition which was recently released. This document summarizes the 10-year forecast of the expected flow of supply and demand for labour in the province. It does so by using data from sources including BC Stats, B.C. Ministry of Finance, Statistics Canada and other federal departments, which is then fed into a sophisticated economic modelling system to generate these forecasted numbers.

This is a fantastic document which was created to help British Columbians better understand the labour market, plan their careers or to shift jobs or change careers. Employers and investors use the information for long-term planning and industry leaders apply it when identifying skill needs. Employment projections can help to inform a wide variety of government decisions and policies to build the best B.C.

The province makes the raw data from this report available through the B.C. Data Catalogue for analysis and planning purposes – such as this report.

The British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition is free and available online for anyone interested in learning more about the findings and projected future trends in BC.

Opportunities for Future Growth of Merritt's Existing Industries

Looking at the projections from the Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition, we can see that there is a large number of projected job openings from not only the growth in B.C.'s economy, but also from the requirement to replace retiring workers that will create more than half of the job openings for almost every major B.C. industry over the next 10 years.

The data from these projections is available down to a development region level, which for Merritt is the Thompson-Okanagan. Obviously, this is a large area which also includes Kamloops and Kelowna, amongst other cities, so some of the data is not entirely representational of Merritt. This being said, by using the industry profile of Merritt and comparing it to the findings from the labour market projections from the 2018 labour market outlook, opportunities from industry expansion can be extrapolated.

Over the 10-year forecast period, employment demand is anticipated to increase by 0.7 percent on average each year the Thompson-Okanagan. Over the next 10 years, 91,190 job openings are expected, of which 79 percent are needed to replace retirees and 21 percent are due to economic growth.

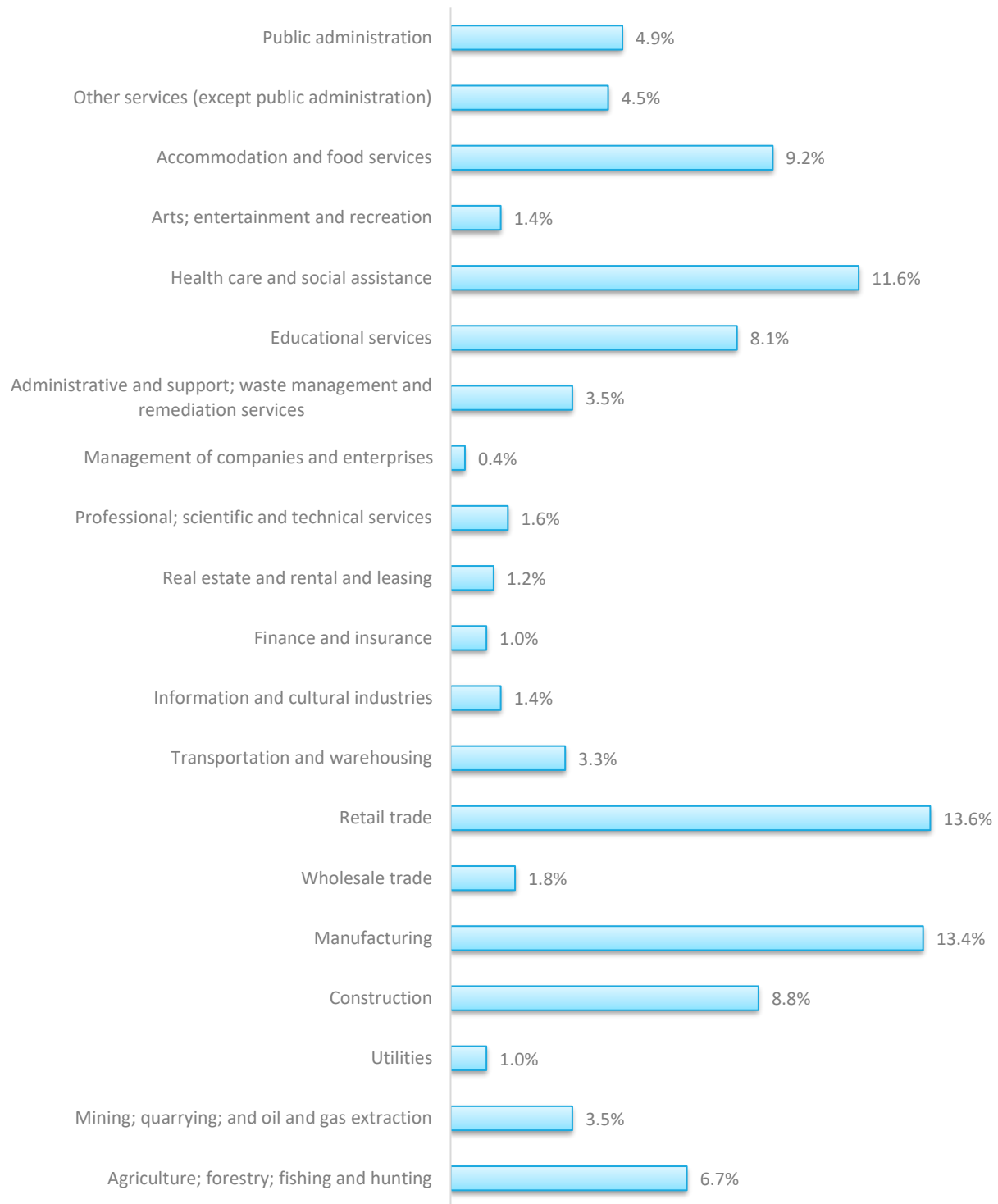
Table 1: The 10 Industries Forecast to Have the Largest Number of Job Openings in the Region:

Industry	Employment 2018	Employment Growth (average annual %)			Job Openings 2018-2028		Total
		2018- 2023	2023- 2028	2018- 2028	Expansion	Replacement	
Other retail trade (excluding cars and personal care)	25,310	0.40%	0.40%	0.40%	940	5,850	6,790
Hospitals	<u>13,000</u>	<u>1.20%</u>	<u>1.60%</u>	<u>1.40%</u>	<u>1,990</u>	<u>3,650</u>	<u>5,640</u>
Nursing and residential care facilities	<u>9,220</u>	<u>2.50%</u>	<u>2.90%</u>	<u>2.70%</u>	<u>2,880</u>	<u>2,580</u>	<u>5,460</u>
Food services and drinking places	<u>18,960</u>	<u>1.40%</u>	<u>1.20%</u>	<u>1.30%</u>	<u>2,600</u>	<u>2,780</u>	<u>5,370</u>
Ambulatory health care services	<u>8,730</u>	<u>2.10%</u>	<u>2.70%</u>	<u>2.40%</u>	<u>2,370</u>	<u>2,620</u>	<u>5,000</u>
Repair, personal and non-profit services	<u>11,810</u>	<u>1.60%</u>	<u>1.20%</u>	<u>1.40%</u>	<u>1,750</u>	<u>3,110</u>	<u>4,860</u>
Management of companies and enterprises & administrative and support	10,330	1.10%	1.30%	1.20%	1,290	3,040	4,330
Elementary and secondary schools	<u>10,960</u>	<u>0.80%</u>	<u>1.00%</u>	<u>0.90%</u>	<u>980</u>	<u>3,140</u>	<u>4,130</u>
Legal, accounting, design, research, and advertising services	8,330	1.40%	1.10%	1.20%	1,090	2,480	3,570
Accommodation services	<u>6,450</u>	<u>1.90%</u>	<u>1.20%</u>	<u>1.50%</u>	<u>1,070</u>	<u>1,730</u>	<u>2,800</u>

Figure 43 summarizes the most recent data available for the current industry representation in Merritt by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). When comparing this data to the 10 industries forecast to have the largest number of job openings in the region we can see that Merritt will likely see increased job openings in “other retail trade” (excluding cars and personal care), Hospitals and Nursing and residential care facilities, ambulatory health care services, food services and drinking places, elementary and secondary schools as well as accommodation services.

Provincially the fastest growing industries from now until 2028 are anticipated to be Warehousing and Storage, Telecommunications and Nursing and Residential Care Facilities. Once again, comparing this data to the existing industry mix in Merritt, likely there will be growth in the existing Warehousing and Storage as well as Nursing and Residential Care Facilities.

FIGURE 43: 2016 Census: Industry Representation in Merritt by NAICS Code



The fastest growing industries from now until 2028 are anticipated to be Warehousing and Storage, Telecommunications and Nursing and Residential Care Facilities.

Opportunities for Merritt to Diversify the Economy

Historically, B.C.'s economy has been defined by resource extraction, particularly the forestry and mining industries. Those industries are still important, but sectors such as tourism and high technology are continuing to grow and as a result are becoming increasingly important to the provincial economy.

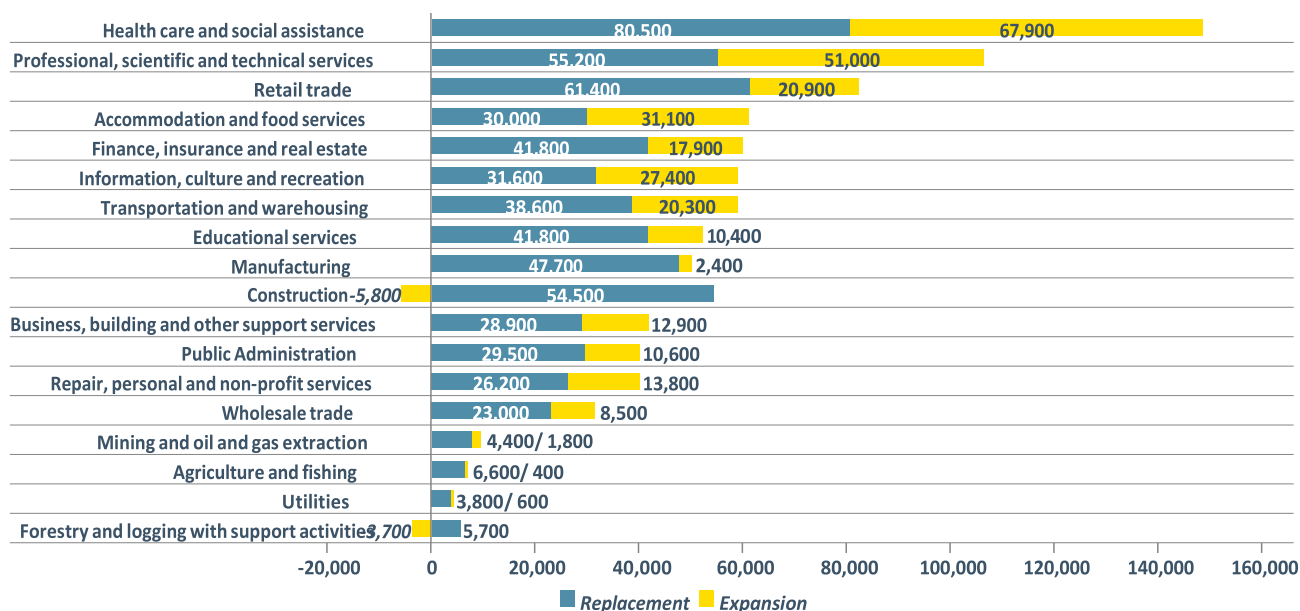
In British Columbia, five industries will account for about half of the total job openings projected over the next 10 years¹⁵. They are:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (148,400 job openings; 16.4 percent of total job openings)
- Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (106,200 job openings; 11.8 percent of total job openings)
- Retail Trade (82,300 job openings; 9.1 percent of total job openings)
- Accommodation and Food Services (61,000 job openings; 6.8 percent of total job openings)
- Finance, Insurance and Real Estate (59,700 job openings; 6.6 percent of total job openings)

As B.C.'s population continues to age, health care and social assistance will see the largest increase in job openings in the next 10 years. Fifty-four percent of these will come from the need to replace retiring workers, while an additional 46 percent will be as a result of expansion of the health system in response to the growing medical needs of an aging population.

Professional, Scientific and Technical Services has been a fast-growing industry and this trend will continue into the next decade. It is expected that economic growth will generate 48 percent of the job openings in this industry, compared to 32 percent of openings for all industries.

Figure 44 Job Openings by Major Industry Group, B.C., 2018-2028



Source: British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition

¹⁵ British Columbia Labour Market Outlook: 2018 Edition

When we compare these projections to Figure 45: 2016 Census: Major Field of study - Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP), we can see that Merritt is well positioned to further grow the following industry sectors:

- Healthcare and social assistance industry with an above average number of students studying the health professions and related programs.
- Professional, scientific and technical services industry with an above average number of students studying, Family and consumer sciences/human sciences and Natural resources and conservation fields.
- Accommodation and Food services Industry with an above average number of students studying the Accommodation and Personal and culinary services fields.
- Educational Services Industry with an above average number of students studying Education
- Repair, personal and non-profit services with an above average number of students studying Mechanic and repair technologies/technicians
-

FIGURE 45 2016 Census: Major field of study - Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) 2016

	Merritt	BC
Education	7.70%	5.90%
13. Education	7.70%	5.90%
Visual and performing arts; and communications technologies	2.40%	4.00%
10. Communications technologies/technicians and support services	0.50%	0.70%
50. Visual and performing arts	2.20%	3.30%
Humanities	5.30%	5.10%
16. Aboriginal and foreign languages; literatures and linguistics	0.00%	0.60%
23. English language and literature/letters	0.00%	1.40%
24. Liberal arts and sciences; general studies and humanities	1.90%	1.50%
30A Interdisciplinary humanities	0.00%	0.00%
38. Philosophy and religious studies	0.50%	0.30%
39. Theology and religious vocations	1.90%	0.50%
54. History	0.50%	0.60%
55. French language and literature/letters	0.00%	0.10%
Social and behavioural sciences and law	7.40%	10.10%
05. Area; ethnic; cultural; gender; and group studies	0.50%	0.20%
09. Communication; journalism and related programs	0.50%	0.90%
19. Family and consumer sciences/human sciences	2.90%	1.60%
22. Legal professions and studies	1.00%	1.60%
30B Interdisciplinary social and behavioural sciences	0.00%	0.20%
42. Psychology	1.00%	1.80%
45. Social sciences	1.70%	3.90%

FIGURE 45 2016 Census: Major field of study - Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) 2016

	Merritt	BC
Business; management and public administration	14.40%	17.50%
30.16 Accounting and computer science	0.00%	0.00%
44. Public administration and social service professions	2.20%	1.10%
52. Business; management; marketing and related support services	12.00%	16.30%
Physical and life sciences and technologies	2.20%	3.50%
26. Biological and biomedical sciences	0.50%	1.50%
30.01 Biological and physical sciences	0.70%	0.80%
30C Other interdisciplinary physical and life sciences	0.00%	0.00%
40. Physical sciences	1.00%	1.10%
41. Science technologies/technicians	0.00%	0.10%
Mathematics; computer and information sciences	2.20%	3.30%
11. Computer and information sciences and support services	1.90%	2.60%
25. Library science	0.00%	0.20%
27. Mathematics and statistics	0.50%	0.40%
30D Interdisciplinary mathematics; computer and information sciences	0.00%	0.00%
Architecture; engineering; and related technologies	24.40%	17.50%
04. Architecture and related services	0.00%	0.60%
14. Engineering	2.40%	4.00%
15. Engineering technologies and engineering-related fields	2.20%	2.80%
30.12 Historic preservation and conservation	0.00%	0.00%
46. Construction trades	7.40%	4.10%
47. Mechanic and repair technologies/technicians	9.30%	4.00%
48. Precision production	2.90%	1.90%
Agriculture; natural resources and conservation	3.60%	2.10%
01. Agriculture; agriculture operations and related sciences	0.70%	1.00%
03. Natural resources and conservation	3.10%	1.00%
Health and related fields	14.10%	13.20%
31. Parks; recreation; leisure and fitness studies	1.40%	1.00%
51. Health professions and related programs	12.70%	11.90%
60. Dental; medical and veterinary residency programs	0.00%	0.30%
Personal; protective and transportation services	6.70%	5.00%
12. Personal and culinary services	4.50%	3.30%
28. Military science; leadership and operational art	0.00%	0.00%
29. Military technologies and applied sciences	0.00%	0.10%
43. Security and protective services	1.00%	0.60%
49. Transportation and materials moving	1.40%	1.10%
Other	0.00%	0.00%

Table 2: The Occupations with the Largest Number of Job Openings in the Thompson Okanagan

Occupation Title	Employment 2018	Expansion 2018-2028	Replacement 2018-2028	Total Job Openings 2018-2028
Retail and wholesale trade managers	6,400	350	1,930	2,280
Restaurant and food service managers	2,340	310	610	930
Managers in agriculture	2,870	110	760	860
Accommodation service managers	<u>1,180</u>	<u>190</u>	<u>450</u>	<u>640</u>
Facility operation and maintenance managers	1,080	90	470	560
Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses	5,280	920	1,400	2,320
Elementary school and kindergarten teachers	3,920	350	970	1,320
Financial auditors and accountants	2,230	230	620	860
Secondary school teachers	2,330	210	640	850
Other financial officers	1,610	210	430	630
Administrative officers	3,860	310	1,690	2,000
Accounting technicians and bookkeepers	3,350	250	1,270	1,520
<u>Cooks</u>	<u>4,330</u>	<u>630</u>	<u>690</u>	<u>1,320</u>
Social and community service workers	2,620	410	820	1,230
Administrative assistants	2,710	150	890	1,040
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	5,560	1,340	1,480	2,820
Retail salespersons	10,860	550	2,250	2,800
Transport truck drivers	4,410	260	1,570	1,830
General office support workers	3,480	320	1,030	1,350
Receptionists	2,610	460	710	1,170
Light duty cleaners	4,430	630	1,120	1,750
Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support occupations	6,700	990	720	1,710
Janitors, caretakers and building superintendents	3,630	380	1,280	1,660
<u>Cashiers</u>	<u>5,070</u>	<u>310</u>	<u>850</u>	<u>1,160</u>
Landscaping and grounds maintenance labourers	2,890	260	530	780

Opportunities for Merritt to be a Leader in Emerging Industries:

This last section of the report goes beyond labour forecasting and instead focuses on expert opinions on the next big emerging industries in Canada. These top emerging industries were then put to the Thriving Communities participants to ask, given their knowledge of Merritt, if they feel that their community would be well situated to capitalize on these opportunities. These results are summarized in Figure 46.

Cannabis Production and Products

The top emerging industry that community members felt Merritt would be best situated to take advantage of was cannabis production and products (60.69%). Overall, the industry is expected to grow an annualized 137.1% to \$3.16 billion in revenue in 2020, up from the \$1.46 billion forecast for 2019¹⁶.

Given the regions connectedness to the rest of the province and country through transportation networks, high sunshine hours annually, roots in agriculture along with the natural grasslands and fields surrounding Merritt, coupled with policy changes in the industry which are now allowing for outside “field” growth of cannabis, Merritt is well situated for the cannabis industry.

Merritt is already proving to be a provincial leader in the cannabis industry with projects such as Emerald Plants Heath Source 56 -acre farm and research facility (with plans to phase in 1.2 M sq. ft. over the next 5 years) as well as Sundial Cannabis’ plans for multi-acre projects. Analysts are pointing to continued opportunity and growth in this industry for years to come.

Wind Turbine manufacturing

Wind Turbine manufacturing was the second highest ranked response at 44.06%. Electricity from wind energy is one of the fastest growing methods of electrical generation in the world¹⁷. Canada finished 2019 with 13,413 MW of wind energy capacity - enough to power approximately 3.4 million homes. The year saw completion of five projects that added 597 MW of new installed capacity, representing over \$1 billion of investment. Canada is home to the world's eighth largest wind generating fleet¹⁸.

Reasons given for why people feel Merritt is particularly well suited to be a leader in wind turbine production include plenty of available land, well connected to the Lower mainland and Alberta, a general feeling of wanting to diversify the economy into more green energy as well as the fact that Merritt has plenty of naturally windy weather.

Specialized Health Related Industries

Specialized health related industries ranked third highest in this list at 43.63%. Given the data already mentioned in previous sections, which shows strong forecasted growth and Merritt’s above average number of students focusing on healthcare and related studies, this sentiment should not be surprising.

Health-related occupations will grow at a faster rate than other jobs in the coming years, as BC’s growing and aging population require more health services. This industry has a low unemployment rate and is

¹⁶ Bloomberg News: *Pot sales in Canada to hit \$3.16B in 2020 despite slower growth: Canaccord*, October 31st, 2019.

¹⁷ Natural Resources Canada: *Energy Sources and Distribution: Renewable Energy: Wind Energy*

¹⁸ Canadian Wind Energy Association: *National Installed Capacity*

generally not affected by changes in the economy¹⁹, which makes it a natural hedge for other more cyclical industries.

Specialized health related industries are a very broad category that encompasses a large range of businesses and professions. Most of the anticipated growth are those which focus on the aging population (as already mentioned), such as home care, senior support services, physiotherapy and personal health care providers. Many of these individuals are entrepreneurs and contractors as well as employees.

Green Building Supplies and Associated Technologies

Green building supplies and their associated technologies and services was ranked the fourth highest response at 39.52%. The Canada green building market is vigorous and growing, which has been fueled by growing consumer interest to build greener buildings²⁰. In April 2017, the Province introduced the BC Energy Step Code, which provides incentives for the use of green building materials and for builders/developers to exceed the minimums of the current provincial building code.

Wood is the only renewable building material. Advances in wood science and building technology, coupled with modern building codes, allow wood to be used in an increasingly broad range of non-residential, multi-story and longer span buildings and applications²¹. Examples of new innovative products include engineered mass timber products, Glue-laminated timber (glulam) panels and beams.

Reasoning behind the feeling that Merritt could be a leader in the green building supply industry revolve around the existing established forestry sector and pivoting this infrastructure and knowledge into new green building products. This coupled with Merritt's idea location on the transportation network in the province make this development of this industry very feasible.

Technology: Software Development and Manufacturing

Technology in the form of software development and manufacturing was the fifth highest rank response at 34.56%. Canada's 2017 Budget included a comprehensive Innovation and Skills Plan Part to encourage business to invest in innovative technology industries. British Columbia is leading the country in the technology sector with \$26 billion a year. BC's tech workforce is proving the fastest growing in Canada as well, with 150,000 people employed in technology.

One key advantage to workers in the technology sector is their ability to thrive as "remote workers" which is a trend that is quickly growing around the world. Remote workers, as the name implies, work remotely from anywhere for various companies and firms around the year. The major advantage being the ability to command major epicenter wages (such as those found in Vancouver, San Francisco or Los Angeles), but live in a location with more affordable housing or lower costs of living, such as Merritt. One key limiting factor with this trend is the ability for these individuals or companies to access high speed/capacity internet connections.

¹⁹ The Skilled Immigrant Info Centre › Industry Profiles › Fastest Growing Industries Health Care

²⁰ Canada Green Building Trends: *Benefits Driving the New and Retrofit Market*. McGraw Hill Construction in partnership with the Canada Green Building Council, 2016.

²¹ Canfor: Wood in Green Building, 2019

Wine and Distilled Alcohol Beverage Industry:

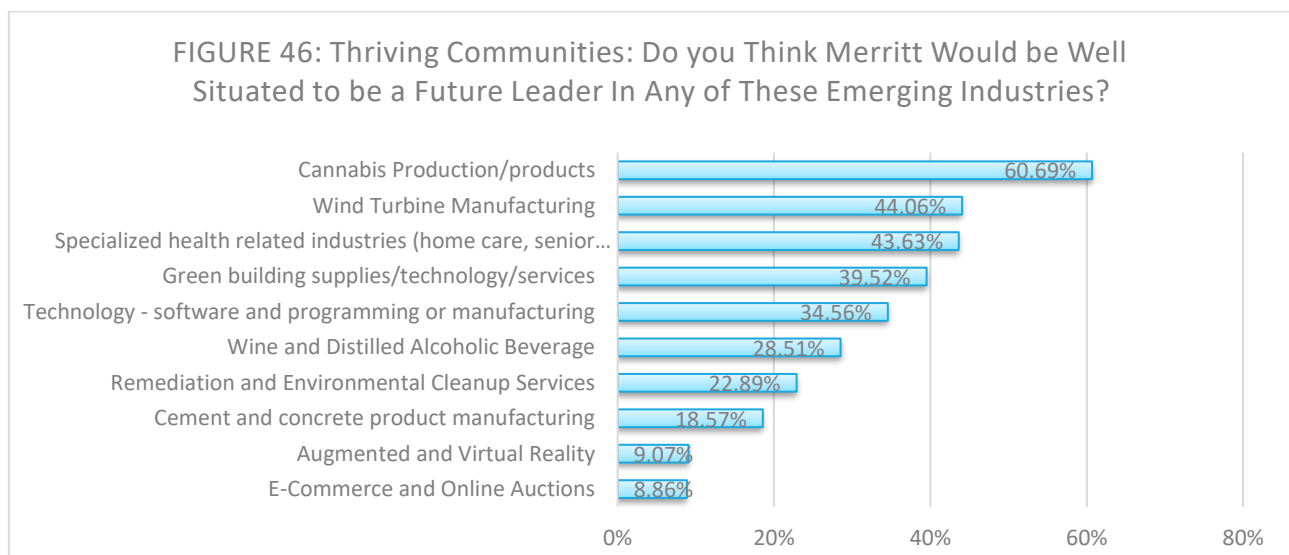
BC already has a successful and established wine industry which continues to grow as appetite for BC wine grows internationally. BC craft breweries have been exploding all over the province with many industry experts believing that there is still plenty of room in the marketplace for new entrants and now BC distilleries are starting to gain attention as they experience 400%+ growth year over year. This last category is set to see changes in government regulation and policy which were created in 2013 to exempted craft distilleries from the more than 160 per cent markup the province applies to all other B.C. spirit makers — as long as they produce less than 50,000 liters of alcohol per year and ferment their own base alcohol²².

Industry experts point to the fact that this number is vastly lower than what is currently allowed by BC craft breweries or wineries and is very much a limiting factor for growth in this industry. If this legislation is updated, there will be a massive amount of growth in this industry in the province. Once again, Merritt's history in agriculture, abundant space for development and access to markets was cited as reasons why there is opportunity in this industry for the region.

Remediation and Environmental Clean-up:

In July of 2019 the Government of Canada announced it was renewing the Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan for another 15 years (2020–2034) and investing \$1.16 billion from 2020–2024. With this new funding, it is estimated that 242 sites will be assessed, and remediation activities will be undertaken on 1,316 sites. Of these, remediation activities will be carried out on about 475 sites on First Nation reserves. This investment is expected to support 6,400 new and existing private-sector jobs in the waste management and remediation sector across Canada over 5 years²³.

2016 Census data points to the fact that Merritt boasts nearly 300% higher representation of students with a major focus of study being classified as “natural resources and conservation”. Given this announcement and this upcoming pool of trained individuals, Merritt is well positioned to see growth in the Remediation and Environmental Clean-up industry sector.



²² Craft Distillers Guild of BC: *About BC Craft Distilleries*

²³ Environment and Climate Change Canada: *Government of Canada invests \$1.16 billion to continue cleaning up contaminated sites* - Jul 24, 2019

Appendix 1: Postcards (Marketing Material)



Appendix 2: List of High Demand Occupations, B.C., 2018-2028

Occupation	Job Openings 2018-2028	Wage Rate Low 2017	Wage Rate Median 2017	Wage Rate High 2017	NOC Code
High Demand Occupations in Management Usually Requiring a Combination of Education and Work Experience (33 Occupations)					
Retail and wholesale trade managers	20,600	\$14.42	\$28.00	\$52.88	0621
Restaurant and food service managers	7,800	\$12.67	\$18.75	\$38.46	0631
Senior managers - financial, communications and other business services	5,100	N/A	N/A	N/A	0013
Facility operation and maintenance managers	4,800	\$19.85	\$35.10	\$57.00	0714
Computer and information systems managers	4,800	\$26.44	\$43.27	\$69.40	0213
Financial managers	4,700	\$21.03	\$40.86	\$67.31	0111
Corporate sales managers	4,700	\$17.79	\$36.35	\$49.04	0601
Banking, credit and other investment managers	4,100	\$24.04	\$41.03	\$60.10	0122
Senior managers - construction, transportation, production and utilities	3,900	\$21.50	\$47.65	\$90.77	0016
Advertising, marketing and public relations managers	3,500	\$19.64	\$38.00	\$75.00	0124
Senior managers - trade, broadcasting and other services	3,500	\$20.00	\$36.91	\$76.91	0015
Insurance, real estate and financial brokerage managers	3,300	\$21.00	\$42.56	\$75.90	0121
Managers in agriculture	3,200	N/A	N/A	N/A	0821
Managers in transportation	3,000	\$19.75	\$35.00	\$64.90	0731
Home building and renovation managers	2,900	\$14.00	\$20.00	\$32.61	0712
Accommodation service managers	2,900	\$15.00	\$24.00	\$36.06	0632
Other administrative services managers	2,700	N/A	N/A	N/A	0114
Managers in social, community and correctional services	2,500	\$23.47	\$38.46	\$62.50	0423
Human resources managers	2,300	\$22.85	\$34.19	\$57.69	0112
Senior managers - health, education, social and community services and membership organizations	2,100	\$16.31	\$37.29	\$75.50	0014
Other business services managers	2,100	\$20.00	\$32.31	\$51.28	0125
Managers in customer and personal services	2,000	\$15.00	\$21.63	\$35.00	0651
School principals and administrators of elementary and secondary education	1,700	\$24.00	\$41.96	\$52.88	0422
Purchasing managers	1,600	\$20.10	\$37.56	\$65.22	0113
Administrators - post-secondary education and vocational training	1,300	\$17.86	\$36.89	\$61.10	0421
Engineering managers	1,200	\$33.00	\$50.75	\$72.31	0211
Senior government managers and officials	1,200	\$24.66	\$48.52	\$79.51	0012
Recreation, sports and fitness program and service directors	1,000	\$11.35	\$26.03	\$47.07	0513
Managers - publishing, motion pictures, broadcasting and performing arts	800	\$18.33	\$29.42	\$49.04	0512
Utilities managers	800	\$15.13	\$45.05	\$85.39	0912
Architecture and science managers	600	\$16.31	\$39.44	\$75.39	0212
Government managers - economic analysis, policy development and program administration	500	\$25.98	\$41.66	\$62.39	0412
Other managers in public administration	500	\$30.77	\$47.80	\$62.50	0414
High Demand Occupations Usually Requiring Bachelor's, Graduate or First Professional Degree (26 Occupations)					
Financial auditors and accountants	10,800	\$17.00	\$27.88	\$47.00	1111
Elementary school and kindergarten teachers	10,100	\$20.51	\$32.05	\$46.63	4032
Information systems analysts and consultants	8,700	\$23.08	\$38.46	\$52.88	2171
Computer programmers and interactive media developers	8,000	\$22.00	\$38.46	\$55.77	2174
Other financial officers	6,600	\$20.19	\$32.31	\$57.69	1114
Lawyers*	5,400	\$39,811*	\$106,361*	\$269,702*	4112
Professional occupations in business management consulting	4,800	\$20.00	\$36.00	\$51.43	1122

Occupation	Job Openings 2018-2028	Wage Rate Low 2017	Wage Rate Median 2017	Wage Rate High 2017	NOC Code
Software engineers and designers	4,800	\$24.04	\$38.46	\$52.88	2173
Professional occupations in advertising, marketing and public relations	4,300	\$16.00	\$27.00	\$48.08	1123
College and other vocational instructors	4,000	\$17.00	\$33.65	\$50.48	4021
Civil engineers	3,900	\$20.19	\$35.00	\$67.00	2131
University professors and lecturers	3,800	\$17.31	\$38.46	\$69.23	4011
Business development officers and marketing researchers and consultants	3,300	\$16.00	\$31.25	\$43.59	4163
Human resources professionals	3,100	\$17.58	\$32.05	\$54.87	1121
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations	3,000	\$15.81	\$26.44	\$60.00	5131
Social workers	2,800	\$19.00	\$30.00	\$42.00	4152
Family, marriage and other related counsellors	2,600	\$18.00	\$26.74	\$37.45	4153
Web designers and developers	2,300	\$16.00	\$25.00	\$50.00	2175
Authors and writers	2,100	\$11.35	\$25.48	\$37.50	5121
Health policy researchers, consultants and program officers	1,800	\$19.00	\$30.42	\$49.45	4165
Architects	1,700	\$22.66	\$30.77	\$40.00	2151
Financial and investment analysts	1,600	\$18.46	\$33.52	\$50.00	1112
Natural and applied science policy researchers, consultants and program officers	1,300	\$24.62	\$35.00	\$53.37	4161
Securities agents, investment dealers and brokers	1,300	N/A	N/A	N/A	1113
Computer engineers (except software engineers and designers)	1,100	\$25.48	\$40.50	\$50.61	2147
Psychologists	1,000	\$16.00	35.35	\$51.00	4151
High Demand Occupations Usually Requiring Diploma, Certificate or Apprenticeship Training (33 Occupations)					
Administrative officers	17,100	\$15.00	\$23.38	\$33.00	1221
Social and community service workers	11,800	\$15.00	\$19.50	\$28.85	4212
Accounting technicians and bookkeepers	10,600	\$13.13	\$20.83	\$32.05	1311
Administrative assistants	9,700	\$14.42	\$22.00	\$30.00	1241
Early childhood educators and assistants	8,900	\$13.00	\$16.95	\$24.04	4214
Real estate agents and salespersons*	7,100	\$23,016*	\$44,753*	\$103,667*	6232
Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers	6,400	\$14.00	\$28.00	\$38.46	7321
Graphic designers and illustrators	5,000	\$15.38	\$25.50	\$37.00	5241
Hairstylists and barbers	5,000	\$11.35	\$14.00	\$22.50	6341
Program leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness	4,900	\$12.00	\$20.00	\$27.92	5254
Technical sales specialists - wholesale trade	4,600	\$14.00	\$25.38	\$46.63	6221
Property administrators	4,000	\$11.54	\$20.00	\$33.76	1224
Police officers (except commissioned)	3,800	\$25.50	\$40.00	\$50.71	4311
Insurance agents and brokers	3,500	\$14.00	\$22.00	\$35.90	6231
Financial sales representatives	3,300	\$13.75	\$23.08	\$33.65	6235
Computer network technicians	3,300	\$21.60	\$33.65	\$57.69	2281
Electronic service technicians (household and business equipment)	3,000	\$15.70	\$23.00	\$38.31	2242
Retail sales supervisors	2,800	\$11.51	\$18.27	\$33.65	6211
Supervisors, supply chain, tracking and scheduling co-ordination occupations	2,700	\$15.00	\$22.00	\$40.06	1215
Legal administrative assistants	2,700	\$15.00	\$24.00	\$32.00	1242
Executive assistants	2,200	\$17.50	\$25.50	\$31.28	1222
User support technicians	2,200	\$18.00	\$28.97	\$48.08	2282
Medical administrative assistants	2,000	\$15.00	\$22.00	\$31.25	1243
Airline pilots, flight engineers and flying instructors	1,600	N/A	N/A	N/A	2271
Paralegal and related occupations	1,500	\$13.85	\$27.00	\$45.67	4211
Insurance adjusters and claims examiners	1,500	\$14.00	\$31.00	\$48.00	1312

Occupation	Job Openings 2018-2028	Wage Rate Low 2017	Wage Rate Median 2017	Wage Rate High 2017	NOC Code
Firefighters	1,400	\$27.00	\$40.00	\$52.00	4312
Aircraft mechanics and aircraft inspectors	1,400	\$20.90	\$34.00	\$45.19	7315
Human resources and recruitment officers	1,400	\$17.79	\$27.00	\$38.46	1223
Supervisors, finance and insurance office workers	1,300	\$17.87	\$28.72	\$46.15	1212
Photographers	1200	N/A	N/A	N/A	5221
<u>Non-commissioned ranks of the Canadian Armed Forces</u>	<u>1200</u>	<u>\$16.21</u>	\$28.21	\$37.38	4313
Customs, ship and other brokers	300	\$11.35	\$21.85	\$39.50	1315
High Demand Occupations Usually Requiring High School and/or Occupation Specific Training (8 Occupations)					
Receptionists	9,600	\$11.35	\$17.58	\$25.00	1414
Food and beverage servers	8,200	\$11.35	\$11.35	\$15.69	6513
<u>Home support workers, housekeepers and related occupations</u>	<u>7,100</u>	\$11.35	\$16.75	\$23.00	4412
Home childcare providers	4,700	\$11.35	\$12.00	\$21.60	4411
<u>Taxi and limousine drivers and chauffeurs</u>	<u>2,900</u>	\$11.35	\$15.38	\$30.00	7513
Couriers, messengers and door-to-door distributors	1,800	\$11.35	\$12.50	\$25.00	1513
<u>Letter carriers</u>	<u>1,600</u>	\$18.00	\$25.00	\$28.00	1512
Mail, postal and related workers	1,300	\$11.35	\$18.00	\$26.00	1511
High Demand Health Occupations (Priority Health Occupations identified by the B.C. Ministry of Health) (13 Occupations)					

Occupation	Job Openings 2018-2028	Wage Rate Low 2017	Wage Rate Median 2017	Wage Rate High 2017	NOC Code
Family physicians*	6,218**	\$41,800*	\$209,000*	\$405,800*	3112
Nurse Practitioners	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-
Health care assistants	34,717	\$16.00	\$21.00	\$27.00	3413
Physiotherapists	3,758	\$20.00	\$37.00	\$44.76	3142
Occupational therapists	2,200	\$31.00	\$38.42	\$42.00	3143
Geriatricians*	49**	\$107,300*	\$282,900*	\$434,200*	-
Licensed practical nurses	9,612	\$22.60	\$27.00	\$29.50	3233
Perfusionists	59**	\$48.60	\$50.37	\$52.43	-
Specialty registered nurses	47,396	\$23.00	\$37.00	\$43.00	3012
Psychiatrists*	838**	\$70,900*	\$239,700*	\$480,200*	-
Sonographers	743	\$20.21	\$37.11	\$48.56	3216
Paramedics	3,182	\$17.00	\$26.78	\$39.66	3234
Dermatologists*	66**	\$76,800*	\$320,600*	\$643,900*	-

Notes:

- Occupations **highlighted** refer to moving to balance occupations. These are occupations that have fallen in the ranking relative to other occupations and will be monitored for possible elimination from the list in the next edition if current conditions continue.
- The wage rate refers to the Job Bank hourly wage rate (from Employment and Social Development Canada) which was updated in 2017, unless otherwise noted. For occupations with a “*”, the annual wage rate is provided as the hourly wage rate is not available. In some cases, no wage data is available and this is indicated with “N/A”.
- Employment figures marked with a “**” refer to 2017 employment estimates from the B.C. Ministry of Health. Employment data for other health occupations refer to 2018 employment estimates from the Labour Market Outlook.
- Wage data for Perfusionists, Family physicians, Geriatricians, Psychiatrists, and Dermatologists is from the B.C. Ministry of Health, representing gross earnings before the payment of office and other overhead expenses.

Appendix 3: Thriving Communities Survey

Labour Market Survey

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Labour Market Survey

Page 1

General questions

1. Would you be interested in learning about the outcomes of this study or more about employment support and information?

BONUS: If you provide your email address, you will be entered to win an Adventure Prize Basket valued at \$650 which includes white water rafting, stand up paddling, and ziplining passes, plus additional adventure-style goodies!

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ What is your email address?

2. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 18
- ☐ 18-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65-74
- ☐ 75+

3. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

- ☐ Less than grade 10
- ☐ Some high school (grades 10 - 12)
- ☐ Grade 12, GED or equivalent
- ☐ High school diploma or equivalent
- ☐ Apprenticeship or trades certificate or diploma



- ☐ Certificate or diploma below the bachelor level
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ University certificate; diploma or degree above bachelor level

4. Do you identify with any of the following groups (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Indigenous people
- ☐ Single Parent
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Mature worker
- ☐ New to BC (or Canada)
- ☐ Someone with a disability
- ☐ Youth
- ☐ Student



5. Are you currently...?

- ☐ Employed
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Business owner



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Labour Market Survey - If employed

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Labour Market Survey

If employed

6. Do you work full-time or part-time?

- ☐ Working full-time
- ☐ Working part-time

7. Do you work year round, seasonally (less than 9 months of the year) or are you working on a temporary contract?

- ☐ Working year round
- ☐ Working seasonally
- ☐ Working a temporary contract



8. In which industry do you work?

- ☐ Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
- ☐ Accommodation and food services
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Public administration (a government position)
- ☐ Educational services
- ☐ Retail trade (includes gas stations, grocery stores, and other stores)
- ☐ Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services
- ☐ Information and cultural industries (information publishing, motion picture and sound recording, broadcasting, telecommunications, and data companies)
- ☐ Health care and social assistance
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Transportation and warehousing
- ☐ Real estate, rental and leasing
- ☐ Arts, entertainment and recreation



- ☐ Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction
- ☐ Wholesale trade (companies that buy and sell goods with other companies – they typically do not have a storefront)
- ☐ Other services (except public administration)
- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Professional, scientific and technical services (such as legal, accounting, doctors, etc.)
- ☐ Finance and insurance
- ☐ Management of companies and enterprises

9. What is your current personal income from your job?

- ☐ Under \$5,000
- ☐ \$5,000 to \$9,999
- ☐ \$10,000 to \$14,999
- ☐ \$15,000 to \$19,999
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 to \$39,999



- ☐ \$50,000 to \$59,999
- ☐ \$60,000 to \$69,999
- ☐ \$70,000 to \$79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 to \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 to \$124,999
- ☐ \$125,000 and over

10. What is your HOUSEHOLD level of income (this includes all family members contributing to living expenses)?

- ☐ Under \$5,000
- ☐ \$5,000 to \$9,999
- ☐ \$10,000 to \$14,999
- ☐ \$15,000 to \$19,999
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 to \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 to \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$59,999



- ☐ \$60,000 to \$69,999
- ☐ \$70,000 to \$79,999
- ☐ \$80,000 to \$99,999
- ☐ \$100,000 to \$124,999
- ☐ \$125,000 and over

11. Which of these describes your income situation?

- ☐ My income is not enough for basic necessities
- ☐ My income pays for only basic necessities
- ☐ My income provides enough for basic necessities and some savings and entertainment
- ☐ I am completely satisfied with my income and want for nothing
- ☐ Other

12. How much do you spend on housing (this includes all rent or mortgage payments and utilities)?

- ☐ Under \$500 per month

- ☐ \$501 - \$1000 per month
- ☐ \$1001 - \$1500 per month
- ☐ \$1501 - \$2000 per month
- ☐ \$2001 - \$5000 per month
- ☐ \$5000+ per month

13. Which of these describes your housing situation?

- ☐ No available housing
- ☐ Housing is too expensive
- ☐ Housing options don't fit household needs
- ☐ Housing is not an issue for me
- ☐ Housing is excellent (I feel housing options are a strength for Merritt)

14. What type of transportation do you use most often to get to work?

- ☐ Personal vehicle – as a driver



- ☐ Personal vehicle – as a passenger
- ☐ Public transit
- ☐ Bicycle
- ☐ Walking
- ☐ Other methods

15. List your order of preference for type of transportation to access work:

☰	Personal vehicle – as a driver
☰	Personal vehicle – as a passenger
☰	Public transit
☰	Bicycle
☰	Walking
☰	Car pooling
☰	Other methods

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Labour Market Survey – General Questions

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Labour Market Survey

16. What, in your opinion, are the main barriers to employment (click all that apply)

- ☐ Experience
- ☐ Upgrading skills and employment training
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Education
- ☐ lack of jobs in the industry/sector
- ☐ Childcare
- ☐ Affordable housing
- ☐ Disability or health concerns

- ☐ Wage is not high enough to cover cost of living
- ☐ On employment insurance (EI)
- ☐ On income assistance
- ☐ Lack of "soft skills" (such as showing up on time, communication, appropriate behaviour, etc)
- ☐ Other (please specify)

17. What in your opinion would help to get more people into the labour market in Merritt? (check all that apply)

- ☐ More housing available
- ☐ More/better transportation options
- ☐ Youth supports
- ☐ Access to healthcare services
- ☐ More available land for development
- ☐ Public education
- ☐ Access to post-secondary education
- ☐ Skills and employment training support



- ☐ Support for entrepreneurs
- ☐ Mature worker support
- ☐ More affordable housing

18. What resources do you think would be valuable to assist people with accessing employment opportunities?

- ☐ Career planning tools (to help you map out your career path)
- ☐ Career discovery tools (such as a list of different jobs including their salary, duties, education and expected demand)
- ☐ Educational planning tools (to help you make an education plan)
- ☐ A list of available community resources which provide employment support
- ☐ A list of current job opportunities in the region
- ☐ A list of specific programs to support marginalized groups
- ☐ Entrepreneurship support to help you create your own employment opportunity
- ☐ Other (please specify)



19. Do you think Merritt would be well situated to be a future leader in any of the following emerging industries? If so, why?

- ☐ Technology - software and programming or manufacturing
- ☐ Cannabis Production/products
- ☐ Green building supplies/technology/services
- ☐ Specialized health related industries (home care, senior care, etc.)
- ☐ Augmented and Virtual Reality
- ☐ Remediation and Environmental Cleanup Services
- ☐ E-Commerce and Online Auctions
- ☐ Wind Turbine Manufacturing
- ☐ Cement and concrete product manufacturing
- ☐ Wine and Distilled Alcoholic Beverage
- ☐ Please specify why you think Merritt would be the ideal place for the growth/development of these industries (what are Merritt's specific strengths)?



Labour Market Survey – If unemployed

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If unemployed

6. Are you currently...?

- ☐ Looking for work
- ☐ Opted out of the labour market
- ☐ On disability
- ☐ Student focusing on studies (not looking for work)
- ☐ Retired

7. In which industry did you work (most recently)?

- ☐ Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
- ☐ Accommodation and food services
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Public administration (a government position)
- ☐ Educational services
- ☐ Retail trade (includes gas stations, grocery stores, and other stores)
- ☐ Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services
- ☐ Information and cultural industries (information publishing, motion picture and sound recording, broadcasting, telecommunications, and data companies)
- ☐ Health care and social assistance
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Transportation and warehousing
- ☐ Real estate, rental and leasing
- ☐ Arts, entertainment and recreation
- ☐ Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction
- ☐ Wholesale trade (companies that buy and sell goods with other companies – they typically do not have a storefront)
- ☐ Other services (except public administration)



- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Professional, scientific and technical services (such as legal, accounting, doctors, etc.)
- ☐ Finance and insurance
- ☐ Management of companies and enterprises

8. In which industry would you be interested in looking for a future job (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
- ☐ Accommodation and food services
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Public administration (a government position)
- ☐ Educational services
- ☐ Retail trade (includes gas stations, grocery stores, and other stores)
- ☐ Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services
- ☐ Information and cultural industries (information publishing, motion picture and sound recording, broadcasting, telecommunications, and data companies)



- ☐ Health care and social assistance
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Transportation and warehousing
- ☐ Real estate, rental and leasing
- ☐ Arts, entertainment and recreation
- ☐ Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction
- ☐ Wholesale trade (companies that buy and sell goods with other companies – they typically do not have a storefront)
- ☐ Other services (except public administration)
- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Professional, scientific and technical services (such as legal, accounting, doctors, etc.)
- ☐ Finance and insurance
- ☐ Management of companies and enterprises

9. How much do you spend on housing?

- ☐ \$0 – I own my home outright



- ☐ Under \$500 per month
- ☐ \$501 - \$1000 per month
- ☐ \$1001 - \$1500 per month
- ☐ \$1501 - \$2000 per month
- ☐ \$2001 - \$5000 per month
- ☐ Other

10. Which of these describes your housing situation?

- ☐ No available housing
- ☐ Housing is too expensive
- ☐ Housing options don't fit household needs
- ☐ Housing is not an issue for me
- ☐ Housing is excellent (I feel housing options are a strength for Merritt)



11. List your order of preference for type of transportation to access work:

☰	☒	Personal vehicle – as a driver
☰	☒	Personal vehicle – as a passenger
☰	☒	Public transit
☰	☒	Bicycle
☰	☒	Walking
☰	☒	Other methods

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Labour Market Survey – For Business Owners

Labour Market Survey

For business owners

6. In which industry does your business fall into?

- ☐ Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting
- ☐ Accommodation and food services
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Public administration (a government position)
- ☐ Educational services
- ☐ Retail trade (includes gas stations, grocery stores, and other stores)
- ☐ Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services
- ☐ Information and cultural industries (information publishing, motion picture and sound recording, broadcasting, telecommunications, and data companies)
- ☐ Health care and social assistance
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Transportation and warehousing

- ☐ Real estate, rental and leasing
- ☐ Arts, entertainment and recreation
- ☐ Mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction
- ☐ Wholesale trade (companies that buy and sell goods with other companies – they typically do not have a storefront)
- ☐ Other services (except public administration)
- ☐ Utilities
- ☐ Professional, scientific and technical services (such as legal, accounting, doctors, etc.)
- ☐ Finance and insurance
- ☐ Management of companies and enterprises

7. How many people do you currently employ?

- ☐ Self-employed without paid help
- ☐ 1 to 4 employees
- ☐ 5 to 9 employees
- ☐ 10 to 19 employees



- ☐ 20 to 29 employees
- ☐ 30 to 49 employees
- ☐ 50 or more employees

8. What job growth/decline do you anticipate in your business in the next two years?

9. What are the job roles for the anticipated vacancies (check all that apply)

- ☐ Sales and service
- ☐ Business, finance and administration
- ☐ Management
- ☐ Trades, transport and equipment operators and related
- ☐ Education, law and social, community and government services
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Natural and applied sciences and related

- ☐ Art, culture, recreation and sport
- ☐ Manufacturing and utilities
- ☐ Natural resources, agriculture and related production

10. What is the reason for the anticipated vacancies (check all that apply)?

- ☐ Business Growth
- ☐ Industry slow down
- ☐ Dismissals and layoffs
- ☐ Retirement
- ☐ Technological or organizational change
- ☐ Inability to find workers with the right skill sets for the position
- ☐ Other (please specify)



11. List your order of preference for type of transportation to access work:

☰	☒	Personal vehicle – as a driver
☰	☒	Personal vehicle – as a passenger
☰	☒	Public transit
☰	☒	Bicycle
☰	☒	Walking
☰	☒	Other methods

12. Which of these describes your opinion of the housing situation in Merritt?

- ☐ No available housing (barrier to finding workers)
- ☐ Housing is too expensive (barrier to finding workers)
- ☐ Housing options don't fit household needs (barrier to finding workers)
- ☐ Housing is not an issue
- ☐ Housing is excellent (I feel housing options are a strength for Merritt)



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Labour Market Survey

Thank you for taking the time to help Merritt continue to thrive!



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EXIT



Appendix 4: WorkBC Support Programming²⁴

Women

[Women in Trades](#) – Get support from the Industry Training Authority training initiative, which helps women get training; find funding and paid apprenticeship opportunities; and match their interests with B.C.'s labour market.

[Women in Science and Technology](#) - Technology drives some of the most dynamic sectors of British Columbia's economy, creating new employment and career options for women. See how these organizations can support your career in science or technology.

[Women in Business](#) - Many women find employment and a career by creating a business of their own. By establishing a business, you can create employment that you control while building long-term employment opportunities in your own community.

[Women's Enterprise Centre](#) – Discover essential business services for women starting, purchasing or growing a small business. The Women's Enterprise Centre offers guidance, skills development, networking and referrals to mentors and other resources and business services in B.C.

Indigenous People

[Indigenous Youth Internship Program](#) – Build your professional and leadership skills while you experience a career in government.

[Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program \(ISET\)](#) – Learn about work experience, skills training and access to high-demand jobs. Find a service provider in B.C.

[British Columbia's Indigenous Small Business Resource Guide](#) - Are you interested in starting or running a business? Grow your business skills with the programs and services featured in this guide.

Mature Workers

[Older Workers 55+](#) - This program provides the skills training and employment supports needed for people who are 55 years of age or older to overcome barriers and achieve sustainable employment.

Impacted Workers

[DeNovo](#) - The DeNovo program offers computer skills and short-term occupational certificate training, hands-on training, a job club and work experience. Wage subsidies, mentorships, direct matching to employers and Indigenous cultural components are available if needed.

²⁴ WorkBC, Province of British Columbia: workbc.ca

Workers with Disabilities

[Indigenous Business and Entrepreneurship and Skills Training Program \(BEST\)](#) - Entrepreneurial skills training for eligible Indigenous persons, with a focus on youth and persons with disabilities.

Youth

[Skills Training for Employment – Young Adults General](#) – Check out a program that offers skills training and employment support. Overcome barriers to employment through, for example, counselling, mentoring, childcare, transportation, disability supports, work experience, wage subsidies and equipment.

[Skills Training for Employment – Young Adults at Risk](#) – Are you a current or former youth in care or someone with a barrier to employment—unstable housing, incomplete high school, recovering from addiction, mental health challenges or prior criminal justice involvement? Find out if this program can help you become employment ready through skills training and support.

[BladeRunners Program](#) – Discover this program that helps unemployed, at-risk youth prepare for and find employment.

New to BC (or Canada)

[Career Paths for Skilled Immigrants Program](#) - Provides services to help immigrants find skilled employment in B.C. that uses the education and experience they bring to Canada. Customized to participant needs, including support specific to in-demand occupations.

[WelcomeBC](#) - helps newcomers adapt to work and life in British Columbia.

[B.C. Provincial Nominee Program](#) – Speed up your application for permanent resident status if you are a qualified trained professional or skilled worker sponsored by a B.C. employer.

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