



Growth Readiness Assessment

Methodology & Data Collection Guide

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1 INTRODUCTION

Housing growth does not happen through demand alone. Communities that want to grow (or that are being asked to plan for growth) need to be able to answer a foundational question: are we actually ready for it? The Growth Readiness Assessment (GRA) is a structured tool designed to help communities and their planning partners answer, at a high level, the question honestly and systematically.

The GRA evaluates a community's capacity to accommodate residential growth across eight interrelated dimensions, ranging from the availability of developable land to the strength of the local construction industry. Rather than relying on a single indicator or a broad subjective judgment, the GRA draws on a questionnaire completed by knowledgeable local stakeholders (capturing both documented facts and informed perception) to build a multidimensional picture of where a community stands.

This document serves as the primary reference guide for communities and planners undertaking a GRA. It explains why the assessment exists, how it is structured, what each dimension is intended to measure, how data are collected, and how results are used. It is intended to be read before completing the questionnaire so that respondents understand the context and purpose behind the questions being asked.

1.1 Purpose of the Growth Readiness Assessment

The GRA serves three related purposes:

- (1) It provides an honest baseline. Before a community can meaningfully plan for growth, it needs to understand its starting position: where capacity exists, where constraints are present, and where notable gaps would need to be addressed before growth could be responsibly accommodated. The GRA is designed to surface that information in a consistent and comparable way.
- (2) It supports informed decision-making. Councils, planners, and senior staff are regularly asked to make decisions about growth targets, infrastructure investment, and planning policy without a clear picture of whether underlying capacity exists. The GRA provides that picture in a high-level, structured format that can inform strategic conversations and long-range planning exercises.
- (3) It enables comparison across communities. The GRA uses a standardized framework, which means that results from one community can be compared to others, whether as part of a regional housing study or to be used by provincial staff to understand trends.

Overall, the GRA is not meant to be a process that reveals great, unknown facts about a community. Much of the information collected is broadly known. Conversely, its intent is to serve as a form of standardizing documentation of key growth-related details to support further, more detailed conversations.

1.2 What the GRA is (and is not)

The GRA is a diagnostic and planning tool. It is not a performance audit, a compliance check, or a ranking of communities against one another in a competitive sense. A community with considerable capacity constraints is not a poorly performing community. Instead, it may simply be one that faces geographic, demographic, or fiscal realities that require careful planning before growth can proceed.

The GRA is also not a housing needs assessment, though it is designed to complement one. Where a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) identifies what types and quantities of housing are needed, the GRA asks whether the conditions are in place to actually deliver that housing. The two tools are most powerful when used together.

Finally, the GRA is a perception-based tool, at least in part. Many of the questions ask respondents to characterize current conditions based on their knowledge and experience. This is intentional: local knowledge is often the most accurate and timely information available in smaller communities, and stakeholder perception of readiness is itself a meaningful input into planning decisions. Where more precise technical data exists (such as infrastructure capacity studies or financial statements), respondents are encouraged to ground their answers in that information.

2 ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The GRA is organized around eight dimensions of “growth readiness.” Each dimension captures a distinct aspect of a community’s capacity to accommodate residential development. Together, they reflect a range of conditions (physical, institutional, regulatory, financial, and social) that influence whether growth can happen in practice.

The dimensions were selected on the basis that a constraint in any one of them can materially limit a community’s ability to grow, regardless of the strength of other dimensions. A community with abundant developable land but no servicing capacity cannot grow. A community with strong planning policy but no construction industry faces the same practical barrier. The GRA treats each dimension as independently noteworthy while recognizing that they are also deeply interconnected.

Section	Dimension	Description
B	Land Capacity	The availability, accessibility, and developability of land for residential use.
C	Servicing & Infrastructure	The capacity of water, wastewater, stormwater, and road systems to support new development.
D	Supporting Services	The capacity of schools, healthcare, childcare, emergency services, and other social infrastructure to accommodate growth.

Section	Dimension	Description
E	Staffing & Institutional Capacity	The ability of municipal staff and systems to administer planning, building, and engineering functions at a pace that supports development.
F	Land Use Planning & Zoning	The presence, currency, and flexibility of land use plans, zoning regulations, and related planning policy.
G	Fiscal Capacity	The availability of financial tools and fiscal room to fund growth-related costs.
H	Community Engagement	The extent to which the community has been engaged on housing and growth, and the nature of public attitudes toward development.
I	Construction Activity	The presence and capacity of an active development and construction sector capable of delivering housing.
J	Climate Resilience	The extent to which the community has identified climate-related risks to infrastructure or housing development, and which specific hazard types are of concern.

Section A of the questionnaire collects background information about the respondent, including their stakeholder group and length of involvement with the community. This information is used to contextualize responses and, where multiple stakeholders complete the questionnaire, to compare perspectives across groups.

Section K captures an overall assessment of growth readiness and invites respondents to identify the community's top strengths and the factors most in need of attention. It is completed after all other sections and serves as a synthesis of the respondent's overall impression.

3 DIMENSIONS OF GROWTH READINESS

The following subsections describe each dimension in detail: what it covers, why it matters to growth readiness, and what the questions in that section of the questionnaire are designed to reveal. Respondents are encouraged to read these descriptions before completing the corresponding section.

B: Land Capacity

What This Dimension Covers

Land capacity addresses the most fundamental prerequisite for residential growth: the physical availability of land that can be developed into housing. This includes greenfield land at the edge of the built-up area, underutilized land within existing neighbourhoods (infill), and land that may be available but subject to significant development constraints.

Why It Matters

Even where demand for housing is strong and all other conditions are favourable, growth cannot occur without land. In many smaller Canadian communities, the question is not simply whether land exists, but whether available land is practically developable. That is, whether it can be serviced, is free from prohibitive natural hazards, has sufficient market depth to attract investment, and is not blocked by regulatory or ownership barriers.

Infill development (i.e., building on vacant or underutilized lots within the existing settlement area) is increasingly recognized as a cost-effective and sustainable complement to greenfield expansion. The GRA assesses both the supply and the perceived accessibility of infill opportunities.

What the Questions Are Designed to Reveal

Section B asks whether there is sufficient land for growth over the next ten years, how difficult that land would be to develop, and whether meaningful infill opportunities exist. Together, these questions are intended to distinguish between communities where land supply is a genuine constraint and those where land is available but may require investment or policy attention before it can be brought into productive use.

C: Servicing & Infrastructure Capacity

What This Dimension Covers

This dimension addresses the capacity of physical infrastructure systems (e.g., water supply, wastewater treatment, stormwater management, and roads) to support residential growth. It is assessed separately for communities with municipal systems and for those where development depends on private wells and septic systems.

Why It Matters

Infrastructure capacity is often the binding constraint on residential growth in Canadian communities; particularly, smaller areas that have not recently invested in system upgrades. A community may have abundant land, willing developers, and supportive policy, but if the wastewater treatment plant is at capacity or the water distribution system cannot meet peak demand with additional connections, growth is effectively blocked until that constraint is resolved.

Infrastructure constraints are also among the most capital-intensive to address. Unlike planning policy, which can be updated in months, a new water treatment facility or a sewer trunk main expansion may take years to plan, permit, and build (and may require debt financing that is itself subject to provincial limits). Understanding the state of infrastructure capacity early in a planning process is therefore critical.

The GRA also asks about existing infrastructure conditions and whether upgrades needed to maintain current service levels (independent of growth) are already planned and funded. This distinction is important: a community whose infrastructure is aging and requires substantial reinvestment simply to maintain service faces compounding fiscal and planning challenges that growth pressure would only intensify.

What the Questions Are Designed to Reveal

Section C asks respondents to assess the capacity of each major infrastructure system, the overall condition of core infrastructure, whether planned upgrades are funded, and whether upgrades will be needed to maintain current service levels over the next decade. For communities on private systems, it asks about groundwater capacity and any observed changes in supply. Together, these questions identify whether infrastructure is a near-term barrier to growth or a longer-term risk to monitor.

D: Supporting Infrastructure & Services

What This Dimension Covers

This dimension addresses the capacity of social and community infrastructure (e.g., schools, healthcare facilities, childcare, recreation, libraries, transit, active transportation networks, and emergency services) to support an increasing population. Unlike hard infrastructure, these services are often delivered by agencies beyond the direct control of the municipality, making them both important to assess and more difficult to act upon unilaterally.

Why It Matters

Residential growth does not only create demand for housing; it creates demand for the full range of services that residents need to live, work, and raise families. A community that can accommodate additional housing units but cannot enrol children in local schools, access primary healthcare, or provide safe transportation options will not retain new residents over the long term. Social infrastructure capacity is therefore a genuine constraint on sustainable growth, even where it is less visible than the limits of a water treatment plant.

Respondents are often better positioned than any technical document to identify which services are already stretched and which have meaningful room to grow. The GRA captures this local knowledge through a series of questions that ask respondents to identify, from a standardized list of service categories, which are currently available, which would cope adequately with growth, which would become a concern under growth pressure, and which are already a concern.

What the Questions Are Designed to Reveal

Section D identifies the services present in the community, distinguishes between those that have capacity to absorb growth and those that do not, and surfaces any services that are already under strain regardless of future growth. The final question asks for an overall assessment of concern about the state of social infrastructure, providing a summary signal that can be compared across communities and stakeholder groups.

E: Staffing & Institutional Capacity

What This Dimension Covers

This dimension assesses the capacity of the local government to administer the planning, building approval, and engineering functions that residential development requires. It covers both the adequacy of current staffing levels and the ability to fill positions when vacancies arise.

Why It Matters

Even a community with ideal land, infrastructure, and planning policy cannot accommodate growth efficiently if it lacks the staff to process development applications, conduct building inspections, manage engineering approvals, and administer the regulatory framework that

governs development. Institutional capacity is a frequently underestimated barrier to growth; particularly, in smaller municipalities where planning and building functions may be combined into one or two roles, or delivered through shared services or consulting arrangements that have limited surge capacity.

Processing timelines matter both to developers making investment decisions and to residents waiting for housing supply to respond to demand. Where application backlogs are chronic, the practical cost of regulatory delay is borne by the entire housing system. The GRA asks specifically about typical processing times and whether applications have been withdrawn due to process-related issues, a signal of capacity constraint that is often undercounted in official data.

What the Questions Are Designed to Reveal

Section E asks respondents to characterize current planning and engineering capacity, identify whether recruitment challenges exist in relevant roles, estimate typical application processing times, and indicate whether development applications have been abandoned due to process issues in the past year. Together, these questions identify whether institutional capacity is currently functioning adequately or is itself a constraint on the pace of housing delivery.

F: Land Use Planning & Zoning

What This Dimension Covers

This dimension examines whether the community has a functioning land use planning and regulatory framework in place, and whether that framework is sufficiently current and flexible to guide and enable residential growth. It covers official plans, zoning by-laws, housing strategies, and related policy documents.

Why It Matters

Land use planning is the primary regulatory tool through which communities shape where and how growth occurs. A community without comprehensive planning, or with plans that are considerably out of date, is effectively planning reactively (meaning, they are responding to applications as they arrive rather than proactively directing growth toward appropriate locations and in appropriate forms). This reactive posture increases processing time, creates uncertainty for developers, and makes it harder to ensure that growth contributes to broader community objectives.

Equally important is whether the planning and zoning framework is flexible enough to accommodate a range of housing types. The GRA asks specifically about which housing forms are permitted as-of-right (that is, without requiring a discretionary approval process) because as-of-right permissions are one of the most direct levers available to municipalities to accelerate housing delivery.

What the Questions Are Designed to Reveal

Section F asks whether comprehensive planning documents exist, how current they are, whether updates are planned, whether supporting strategies are in place, whether Council has adopted growth targets, whether zoning is flexible enough for diverse housing forms, and which housing types are currently permitted as-of-right. Together, these questions identify whether the planning framework is a ready enabler of growth or a barrier that would need to be modernized before meaningful housing delivery could occur.

G: Fiscal Capacity

What This Dimension Covers

This dimension examines whether the community has the fiscal tools and financial room to fund the costs associated with growth; both the infrastructure needed to service new development and the capacity to service debt or access grant funding when needed.

Why It Matters

Growth has costs. New development requires roads, pipes, pads, parks, and connections, and someone has to pay for them. In Canada, these costs are typically shared between development charges or similar levies on new construction, provincial and federal grants, municipal debt, and, ultimately, the tax base. A community that lacks the fiscal tools to recover growth-related costs from development (or that has limited capacity to take on debt or access grant funding) may be unable to unlock infrastructure constraints, or find that growth creates as many fiscal problems as it solves.

Development charges or their equivalents are the most direct mechanism for ensuring that the costs of growth are borne by growth rather than by the existing tax base. Where these tools exist and are set at levels sufficient to recover actual costs, the fiscal risk of growth is reduced. Where they are absent or set too low, communities may find themselves subsidizing new development through the existing assessment base.

What the Questions Are Designed to Reveal

Section G asks which infrastructure funding mechanisms are in place, whether development charges are sufficient to cover growth-related costs, whether the community has successfully accessed grants or alternative funding in recent years, and what the community's current debt level is relative to provincial limits. Together, these questions indicate whether the community has the financial architecture to fund growth responsibly or whether fiscal constraints are likely to limit what can be delivered.

H: Community Engagement

What This Dimension Covers

This dimension examines the extent to which the community has engaged its residents and stakeholders on housing and growth-related topics, the nature of that engagement, and the issues that most frequently arise when development applications come before the public.

Why It Matters

Public attitudes toward growth and development are a practical constraint on housing delivery. Communities where growth is politically contentious, where development applications routinely attract organized opposition, or where Council is reluctant to approve projects that will face public pushback, may find that all the physical and regulatory conditions for growth are in place and yet housing does not get built.

At the same time, understanding what the community is genuinely concerned about (whether that is traffic, school capacity, neighbourhood character, or housing affordability) is useful information for planners and councils seeking to design growth strategies that can address the public's priorities. Engagement that surfaces those concerns early in the planning process is more productive than engagement that arrives after decisions have effectively been made.

What the Questions Are Designed to Reveal

Section H asks whether the community has conducted formal public engagement on housing topics in recent years, what housing-related directions are embedded in strategic plans, how many development applications received formal public input in the past year, and which topics most frequently arise in public discussions about development. Together, these questions indicate how active and informed the community dialogue around growth currently is, and where public concern is most concentrated.

I: Construction Activity

What This Dimension Covers

This dimension examines the presence, activity level, and capacity of the local and regional development and construction industry. These are the private sector actors who, in most communities, are ultimately responsible for building housing.

Why It Matters

Housing does not build itself. In the vast majority of Canadian communities, the private sector (e.g., developers, builders, and tradespeople) is responsible for translating land, servicing, and planning permissions into actual housing units. A community that lacks an active and interested development industry faces a constraint that policy alone cannot easily address. Even if all regulatory and infrastructure barriers are removed, housing may not materialize if there are no builders present or willing to operate in the local market.

This is a particular challenge in smaller, rural, and remote communities, where development margins are thin, construction costs are high relative to achievable rents or sale prices, and the local trades workforce may be limited. Understanding whether the development industry is present, interested, and capable of scaling production is therefore an important part of assessing genuine growth readiness.

The GRA also asks about the tools and supports that the community has made available to facilitate housing construction. This serves both as an inventory of existing efforts and as a signal of the degree to which the local government sees housing delivery as a shared responsibility that benefits from active facilitation.

What the Questions Are Designed to Reveal

Section I asks whether active developers and builders are interested in the community, what factors most influence development feasibility locally, whether a sufficient construction workforce is available, and what supports the community has put in place to facilitate housing construction. Together, these questions identify whether the private sector conditions for housing delivery exist or whether the community would need to take a more active facilitative role to see housing built.

J: Climate Resilience

What This Dimension Covers

This dimension examines the extent to which a community is aware of the climate-related hazards that may affect its infrastructure or housing development prospects, and the degree to which that awareness has been formalized through studies, plans, or documented assessments. It covers a range of hazards relevant to Canadian communities, including riverine and coastal flooding, coastal erosion, wildfire, extreme heat, and drought.

Why It Matters

Climate change is increasingly shaping the physical conditions under which housing development occurs and infrastructure is operated. Communities that have not identified their climate-related risks are less positioned to plan for growth in a way that is durable over time. A new subdivision developed in a flood-prone area, or infrastructure built without account for increased precipitation intensity, creates long-term liability for both residents and the community at large. Conversely, communities that have formally assessed their risks and begun integrating climate considerations into their planning are better placed to make growth decisions as conditions evolve.

This dimension is also directly relevant to federal funding programs such as the Canada Housing Infrastructure Fund (CHIF), which requires applicants to identify climate hazards affecting funded infrastructure and commit to implementing appropriate treatment measures. Communities that have not yet undertaken any climate risk identification may face additional requirements before becoming eligible for such programs.

What the Questions Are Designed to Reveal

Section J asks whether the community is aware of climate-related risks to its infrastructure or housing development (and whether that awareness is formally documented or only informally held), and which specific hazard types are of concern. Together, these questions distinguish between communities where climate risk is actively understood and integrated into planning, those where risks are known but not yet formally addressed, and those where climate considerations have not yet entered the local planning conversation. This distinction is relevant both to the long-term sustainability of growth decisions and to the community's readiness to access climate-linked infrastructure funding.

4 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

4.1 The Questionnaire

The primary data collection instrument for the GRA is a structured questionnaire covering Sections A through J. The questionnaire is provided as fillable Excel workbook, which guides respondents through each section in sequence and automatically compiles answers into a standardized summary format. A PDF version of the questionnaire is also available for reference.

The questionnaire combines three types of questions. Most questions are single-choice, asking respondents to select the one response that best characterizes current conditions. Multi-select questions are used where more than one option may apply simultaneously (e.g., when identifying which services are available in the community or which factors influence development feasibility). A small number of free-text questions invite respondents to provide brief written responses, particularly where a list of options would not capture the full picture.

The questionnaire is designed to take between 10 and 15 minutes per respondent. Respondents are not expected to consult detailed technical documents to answer most questions. **Answers are based on their knowledge of and experience with the community.** Where more precise technical information is easily available and relevant, respondents are encouraged to use it.

4.2 Who Should Complete the Questionnaire

The GRA questionnaire is designed to be completed by individuals with substantive knowledge of the community's planning, servicing, and development context. The following stakeholder groups are identified in the questionnaire:

- Municipal staff
- Elected officials
- Developers and business community representatives
- Community organizations and residents
- Infrastructure providers (school boards, health authorities, utilities, and similar)

If the GRA is being used by a specific community (instead of a regional or provincial body), the GRA is most informative when it is completed by multiple respondents across different stakeholder groups, rather than by a single individual. Differences in perception between, for example, municipal staff and local developers, or between elected officials and community organizations, are themselves meaningful data. They indicate where there may be gaps in shared understanding of the community's readiness to grow, and where stakeholder alignment may be needed before a growth strategy can be effectively implemented.

If the GRA is being used by higher-tiered jurisdictions, said jurisdictions should require similar persons in each community to respond, to further standardize answers. For instance, the questionnaire may be best completed by a senior municipal staff member with a comprehensive understanding of local planning, infrastructure, and financial conditions. I

4.3 Completing the Fillable Workbook

The fillable Excel workbook is organized into tabs corresponding to each section of the questionnaire (Sections A through J), a cover sheet, and a summary sheet. Respondents navigate between section tabs to complete their answers. Each section opens with a brief description of the question type and how to record a response.

For single-choice questions, respondents select their answer from a dropdown menu in the answer column. The selected answer is the one that best characterizes current conditions from the respondent's perspective. For multi-select questions, respondents mark "Yes" beside each option that applies (from a drop down menu); unmarked options are treated as not applicable. Text-entry questions accept typed responses directly in the designated cell.

The Summary tab compiles all responses automatically through cell references linked to each answer cell in the section tabs. This tab is formatted for export and is the basis for combining responses across multiple communities or multiple respondents within a community.

4.4 Combining Responses Across Respondents or Communities

Where multiple respondents complete the questionnaire for the same community, each respondent's Summary tab can be exported and the responses combined for analysis. Where the GRA is being conducted across multiple communities (e.g., as part of a provincial study), each community's summary is similarly compiled into a standardized multi-community dataset.

The Summary tab is structured to facilitate this combination: each row corresponds to a single question-and-option record, with consistent column names (question ID, section, question type, short label, option, and answer) that allow records to be stacked across respondents and communities using standard data handling tools. The community name is recorded on the cover sheet of each workbook and should be transferred to the summary export before combination.

The structure of the combined dataset is consistent with the output of automated processing scripts, allowing results from large numbers of communities to be combined, analyzed, and visualized efficiently.

5 SCORING METHODOLOGY (EXAMPLE)

The GRA includes an optional scoring layer that converts questionnaire responses into section-level categorical ratings. These ratings are calculated automatically in the Scoring worksheet of the fillable workbook and are intended to provide a structured, at-a-glance characterization of readiness across each dimension. The scoring methodology is described below so that users understand how ratings are derived and how to interpret them.

5.1 Rating Categories

Each section is assigned one of three categorical ratings based on its total score: **Ready**, **Moderate Concern**, or **High Concern**. A Ready rating indicates that no substantial constraint is evident in that dimension. A Moderate Concern rating indicates that some constraint exists and warrants monitoring or attention. A High Concern rating indicates a considerable barrier to growth that would likely need to be addressed before the community could accommodate residential development responsibly in that dimension.

No overall composite rating is produced across sections. Growth readiness is multidimensional, and collapsing nine section ratings into a single number would obscure the specific barriers that planning and investment decisions need to address. Users are encouraged to engage with section-level results directly and focus attention on the dimensions where concern is highest.

5.2 Question Selection and Weighting

Not all questions in each section contribute to the score. Questions are selected for scoring where they most directly signal the presence or absence of a growth constraint. Descriptive questions that establish context (such as identifying which services exist in the community) are excluded; scoring focuses on questions that reveal constraint severity or capacity adequacy.

Each scored question is assigned a point value for each possible response. More concerning responses receive higher point values; more positive responses receive lower values, typically zero. A “Don’t Know” response is treated as a mild concern throughout: it is scored above a clearly positive response but below an explicitly negative one, reflecting the principle that uncertainty about a key growth condition is itself a signal worth capturing.

For multi-select questions (such as those asking which services are of concern), the score reflects the count of concerning responses rather than scoring each option individually. Counts are

grouped into bands (e.g., zero items, one to two items, three to four items, five or more) and assigned increasing point values accordingly.

5.3 Section Scores and Rating Bands

Point values for each scored question are summed to produce a section total. That total is then compared against two thresholds to assign the section rating: scores at or below the Ready threshold are rated Ready; scores above the Ready threshold but at or below the Moderate threshold are rated Moderate Concern; scores above the Moderate threshold are rated High Concern. The table below summarizes the scoring parameters for each section.

Sections B, C, and F are treated as high priority dimensions. Their scoring uses more questions and steeper point penalties for negative responses, reflecting the principle that land capacity, infrastructure capacity, and planning policy are the most fundamental needs for residential growth.

Section B – Land Capacity

Three questions scored: sufficient land for growth (B1), development difficulty (B2), and infill opportunities (B3). Maximum score: 8. Ready: 0–2. Moderate Concern: 3–5. High Concern: 6–8.

Section C – Servicing & Infrastructure Capacity

Six questions scored: water capacity (C1), wastewater capacity (C2), stormwater capacity (C3), overall infrastructure condition (C4), upgrades planned and funded (C5), and infrastructure as a housing barrier (C7). Maximum score: 14. Ready: 0–3. Moderate Concern: 4–8. High Concern: 9–14.

Section D – Supporting Infrastructure & Services

Three signals scored: count of services currently of concern (D4), count of services that would become a concern under growth (D3), and overall social infrastructure concern level (D5). Maximum score: 8. Ready: 0–2. Moderate Concern: 3–5. High Concern: 6–8.

Section E – Staffing & Institutional Capacity

Four questions scored: planning and building review capacity (E1), engineering and public works capacity (E3), typical application processing time (E5), and applications withdrawn due to process issues (E6). Maximum score: 10. Ready: 0–2. Moderate Concern: 3–6. High Concern: 7–10.

Section F – Land Use Planning & Zoning

Five questions scored: existence of comprehensive planning documents (F1), currency of those documents (F2), adequacy of supporting plans and strategies (F4), formal adoption of growth targets (F5), and zoning flexibility for diverse housing types (F6). Maximum score: 12. Ready: 0–3. Moderate Concern: 4–7. High Concern: 8–12.

Section G – Fiscal Capacity

Three questions scored: sufficiency of development charges (G2), access to grants or alternative funding (G3), and current debt level relative to provincial limits (G4). Maximum score: 6. Ready: 0–1. Moderate Concern: 2–4. High Concern: 5–6.

Section H – Community Engagement

Two signals scored: recent public engagement on housing or growth topics (H1), and whether substantive housing directions (such as population targets, affordability policies, or intensification

objectives) are embedded in strategic plans (H2). Maximum score: 5. Ready: 0–1. Moderate Concern: 2–3. High Concern: 4–5.

Section I – Construction Activity

Three signals scored: active developer and builder interest (I1), adequacy of the local or regional construction workforce (I3), and the count of development feasibility barriers identified (I2). Maximum score: 7. Ready: 0–2. Moderate Concern: 3–5. High Concern: 6–7.

Section J – Climate Resilience

One question scored: climate risk awareness (J1), distinguishing between formally identified risks, informally known risks, risks not yet considered, and unknown status. Maximum score: 2. Ready: 0. Moderate Concern: 1–2. High Concern: 3 or above (applicable if additional questions are added in future versions).

5.4 Adjusting the Rating Bands

The rating band thresholds are not fixed. Users who wish to apply stricter or more lenient standards for a particular context can modify the Ready and Moderate Concern thresholds directly in the Scoring worksheet of the fillable workbook. The threshold cells are clearly marked and all rating calculations update automatically when thresholds are changed. No other cells need to be edited. The maximum possible score for each section is fixed by the scoring logic and cannot be changed without modifying the underlying formulas.

6 HOW RESULTS ARE USED

6.1 Within a Single Community

At the community level, GRA results are used to characterize where a community sits across each of the eight dimensions, identifying areas of strength, areas of constraint, and areas where further investigation or investment is warranted. Where multiple stakeholders have completed the questionnaire, their responses are reviewed in aggregate to identify where perceptions align and where they diverge.

The overall assessment completed in Section K (which asks respondents to identify the community's top strengths and the factors most in need of attention) serves as a synthesis of the respondent's integrated judgment about the community's growth readiness. These open-ended responses are particularly valuable for identifying priorities that may not be captured fully by the structured questions in earlier sections.

GRA results can be presented as part of a broader housing needs assessment, a housing strategy, or a growth management study. They are not a standalone verdict on a community's capacity to grow, but rather a structured input into a planning process that will draw on additional technical information, community engagement, and professional judgment.

6.2 Across Multiple Communities

Where the GRA is conducted across multiple communities, the standardized framework allows for systematic comparison. Patterns across communities can reveal which dimensions of growth readiness are most commonly constrained across a region or jurisdiction, which types of communities face the most compound barriers, and where targeted investment or policy support from senior governments may have the greatest impact (subject to further review).

The combined dataset produced by the GRA is structured to support this type of analysis. Because each record is tagged with the community name, section, question, and response option, the data can be queried, filtered, and visualized at any level of aggregation, from individual questions to full dimension profiles to cross-community comparisons.

7 LIMITATIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

Perception-Based Responses

Many GRA questions ask respondents to characterize conditions based on their knowledge and experience rather than documented technical data. This is intentional. Local knowledge is often the most current and contextually informed information available, but it means that responses reflect perception as much as verified fact. Where respondents have different levels of knowledge, access to information, or professional backgrounds, their answers to the same question may differ. These differences are informative in themselves, but they mean that GRA results should be interpreted alongside, not in place of, available technical documentation.

Respondent Selection

The quality and representativeness of GRA results depend on who completes the questionnaire. A single respondent cannot fully represent the range of perspectives that exist in most communities. Where possible, circulation to multiple stakeholder groups is strongly recommended (especially, when doing a local study). Where a single respondent is the only option, the results should be interpreted with that limitation in mind.

Point-in-Time Assessment

The GRA captures conditions as they exist at the time of completion. Community conditions (e.g., infrastructure capacity, staff levels, planning policy, development interest) can change over time; particularly, in communities experiencing rapid growth or significant fiscal stress. GRA results should be treated as a point-in-time assessment and revisited periodically, or when material changes in community conditions occur.

Section-Level Ratings Do Not Replace Dimensional Analysis

The GRA produces section-level categorical ratings (Ready, Moderate Concern, High Concern) but does not aggregate these into a single composite score or overall readiness index. This is a deliberate design choice. Growth readiness is multidimensional, and a single summary number would obscure the specific barriers that planning and investment decisions need to address. A community rated Ready on land capacity and High Concern on institutional capacity faces a fundamentally different set of priorities than a community with the reverse profile. Users are encouraged to engage with the section-level results directly, identify the two or three dimensions of greatest concern, and focus planning attention there.

Planners and communities who wish to use the GRA are encouraged to engage with the dimension-level results, identify the two or three areas of greatest constraint, and focus planning and investment attention there rather than seeking an overall rating.