

Qualicum Beach and Area Business Walks 2019

Qualicum Beach Chamber of Commerce



For more information please contact:

Anne Dodson, CEO | Qualicum Beach Chamber of Commerce | 2711 Island Highway West, Qualicum Beach, V9K 2C4 | T: 250-752-0960 | chamber@qualicum.bc.ca | www.qualicum.bc.ca

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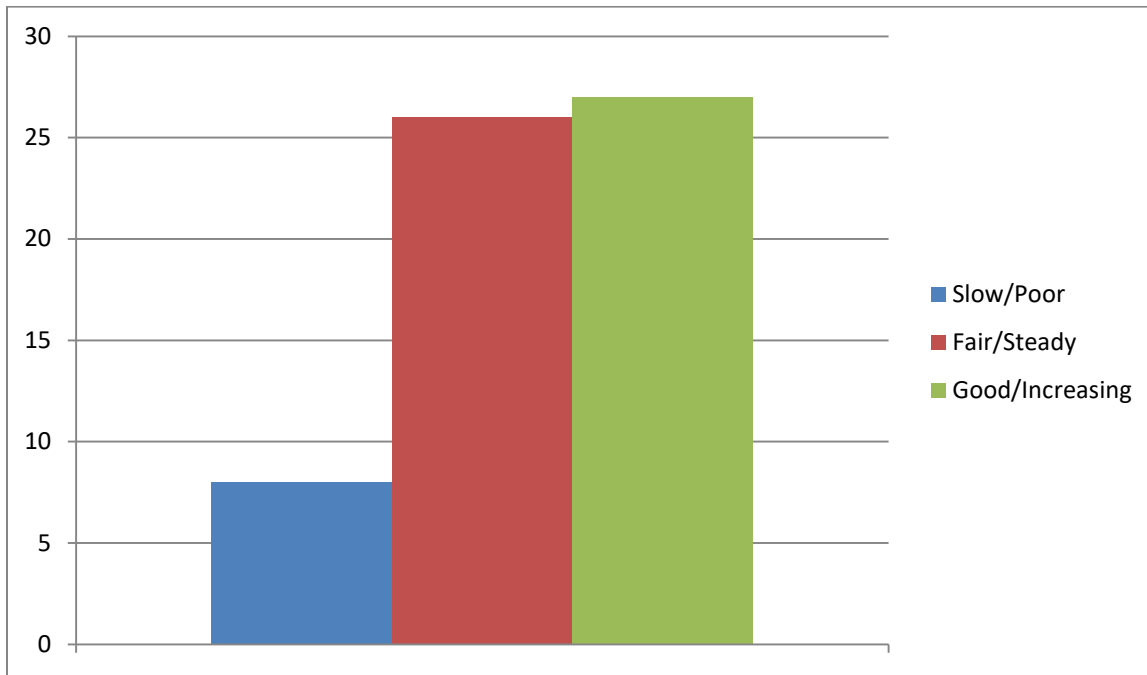
On November 14, 2019 the Qualicum Beach Chamber of Commerce hosted Business Walks in Qualicum Beach, Qualicum Bay and Bowser in partnership with the Lighthouse Country Business Association and the Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism Association. Volunteer groups consisting of Chamber directors, Lighthouse Country Business Association directors and local business people along with Chamber and Tourism Association staff went door to door surveying small businesses in the community. The survey inquired about successes and struggles, and how the Qualicum Beach Chamber along with all levels of government could better assist small business.

During a two hour time period on the afternoon of November 14 businesses were visited by small teams of two people who surveyed the business and recorded their anonymous responses to gauge the pulse of the business community in Qualicum Beach. If the appropriate person was not available or it was not a convenient time, an electronic version of the survey was later emailed to the business if requested. Furthermore, an electronic version of the survey could be requested through the Chamber for any business in the area.

In total 61 businesses were surveyed in Qualicum Beach, Qualicum Bay, and Bowser; the following are the results that came out of the business walks and the roundtable discussion hosted by the Coastal Community Credit Union.

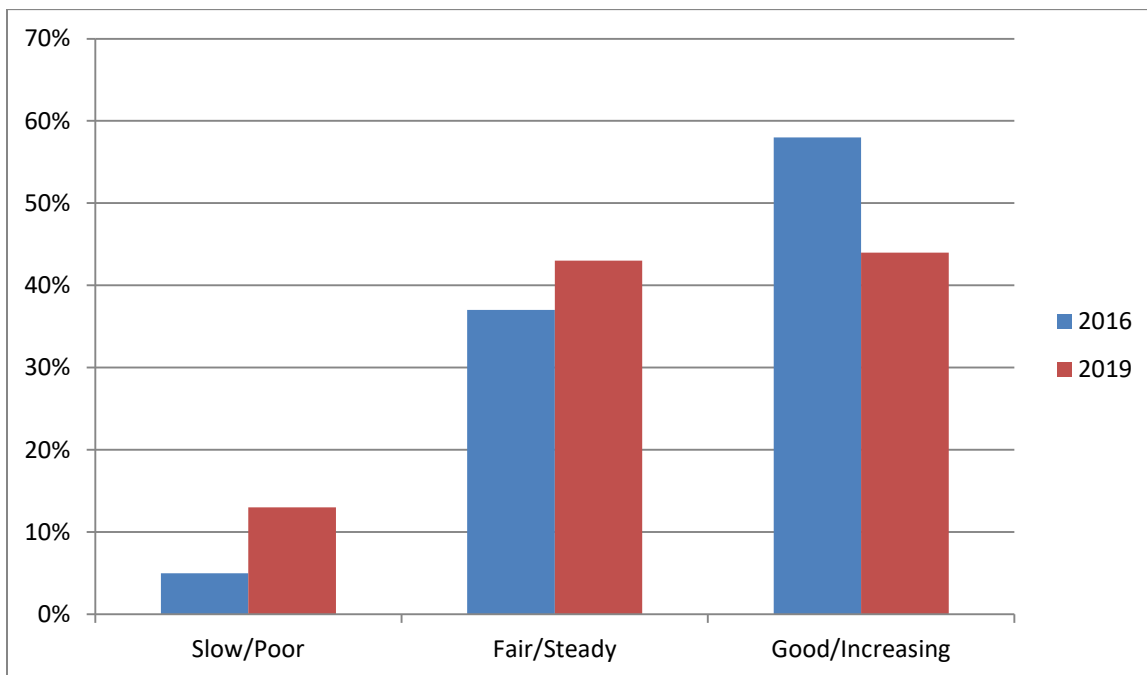


Question 1: Please rate the current state of your business

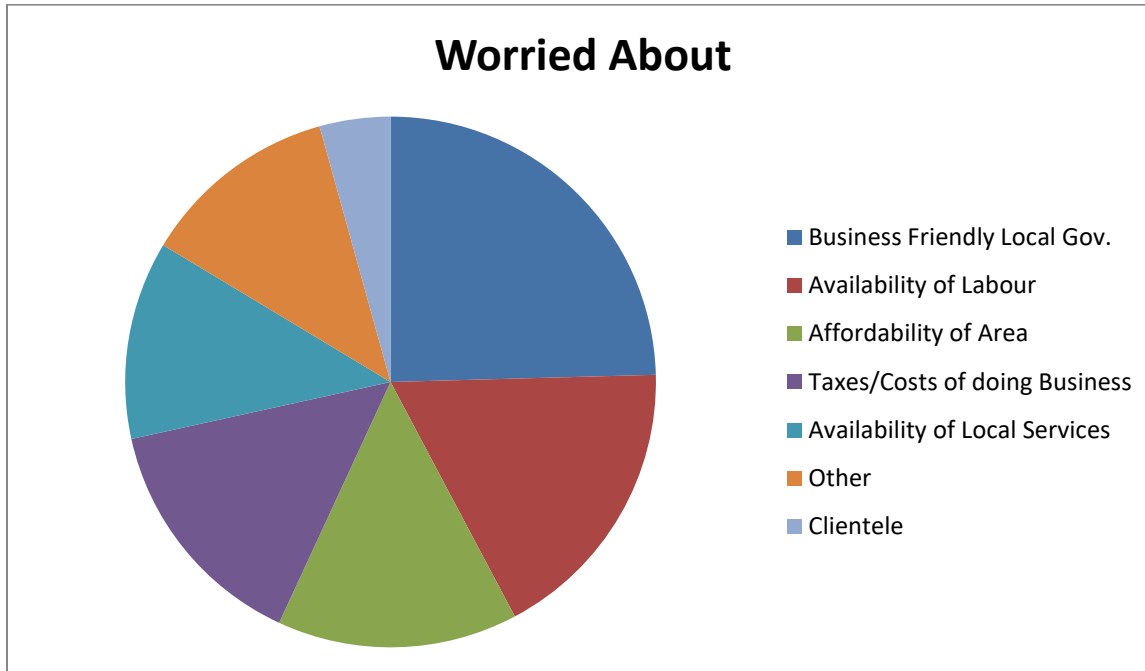


When asked to rate the current state of their business the majority of businesses chose Good/Increasing (44%) or Fair/Steady (43%), while 13% responded Slow/Poor.

Comparing these results to the data collected in 2016 shows that although less optimistic, businesses are still positive:



Question 2: What is keeping you up at night?



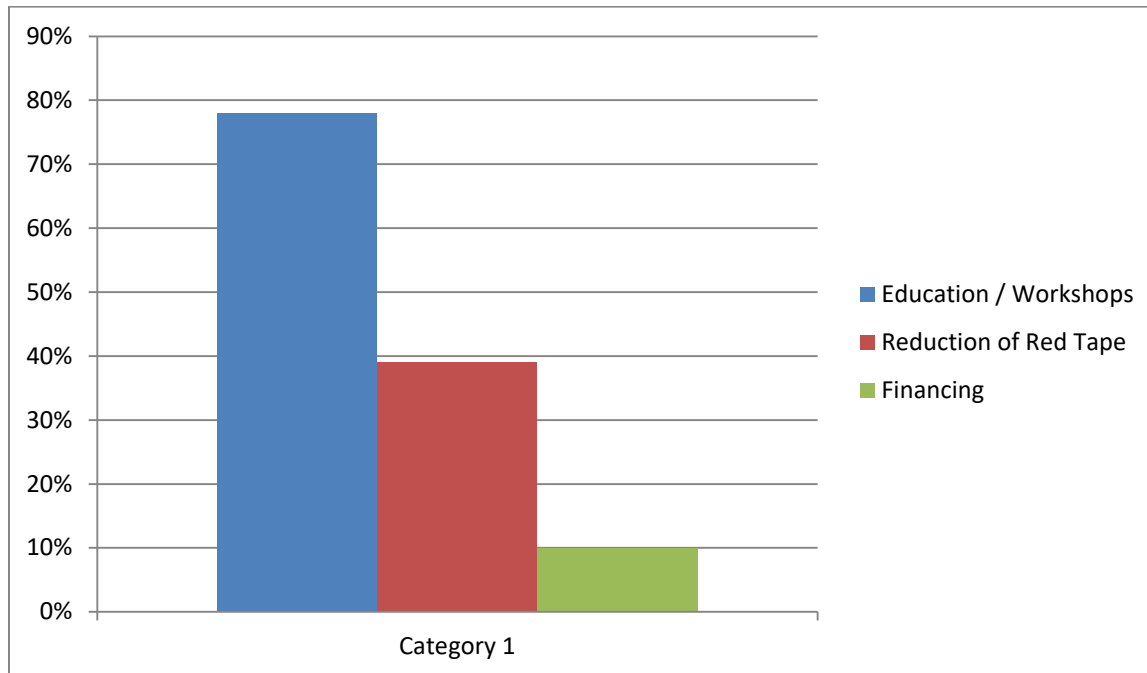
The number one concern of business owners in downtown Qualicum Beach is a lack of street parking available in Town, parking enforcement and the concern that there is no plan in place to address current and future parking issues. Downtown businesses would like to parking time regulations enforced, with the possibility of a designated longer parking area for patrons of services that take longer than two hours.

Elimination of some of the existing signage regulations, enforcement of smoking bylaws, increased flexibility around zoning and more frequent communication from Town Hall were noted as areas of opportunity for the Town to help small business. In Qualicum Bay and Bowser limited development opportunities, land issues and local infrastructure projects were frequently mentioned as areas of frustration for businesses.

The availability of labour and lack of affordable housing for workers continues to hinder businesses ability to staff appropriately and is a concern across the geographic areas and differing types of business that were surveyed. Shortage of local health care was the predominant local service that continues to concern business; an evenly weighted worry is the increasing costs of doing business.

Finally, other concerns included the seasonality of the area; increasing crime rate; the number of closed businesses in Town; and summer construction and road closures this year which affected some businesses.

Question 3: What can be done to help your business thrive?



Almost every business we spoke with identified training opportunities would help their business thrive. Most of the needs were for training in sales skills, advertising and marketing, and social media. Legal issues, succession planning and help with finances were also identified.

Almost 40% of businesses indicated that a reduction in red tape would help their business succeed – predominantly in terms of municipal regulations such as signage, zoning and parking. ICBC regulations, policies around merchant fees, and a lack of cooperation between different regional governments are also a source of frustration for local businesses. Only 10% of those surveyed indicated that financing and access to capital are a concern.

By taking the current pulse of the business community and identifying common themes for action, our business community will become better equipped to support and stimulate economic activity in our area. We thank the participants in this survey and the volunteers that made it possible. For more information, please contact:

Qualicum Beach Chamber of Commerce, chamber@qualicum.bc.ca , 250-752-0960

Town of Qualicum Beach, qbtown@qualicumbeach.com , 250-752-6921

Parksville Qualicum Beach Tourism Association, blain@parksvillequalicumbeach.com ,
250-248-6300

Lighthouse Country Business Association, lcba@shaw.ca