



Strathcona County

Business Survey Results 2021





Background

- Strathcona County Economic Development & Tourism Department completed a business satisfaction survey to understand how to best support local businesses. Business retention and expansion (BR+E) activities can be employed to ensure business needs are monitored and addressed; however, engagement can be time consuming and complex.
- A Triage BR+E Survey was commissioned to engage the broader business community, while also allowing for the identification of potential expansion or retention opportunities for follow-up on a business-by-business basis.



Methodology

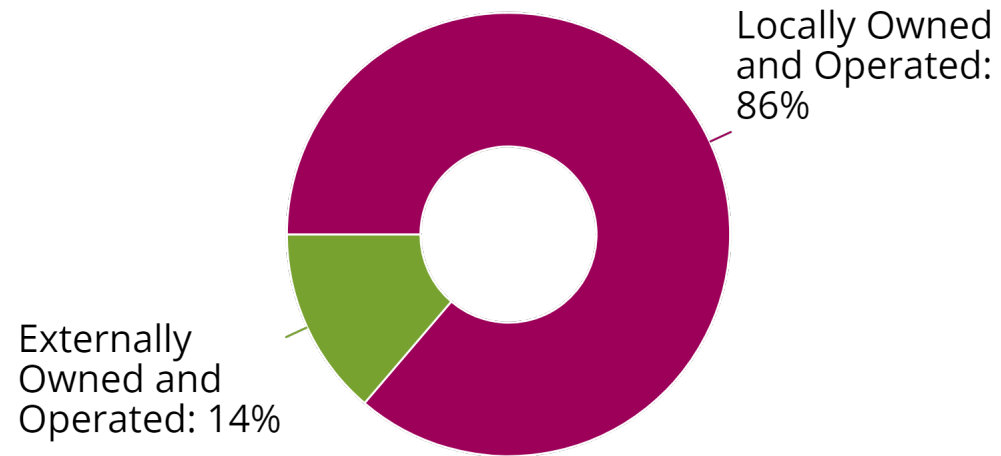
- A random sample telephone survey was conducted with 400 businesses out of an initial sample of 3867. The survey achieved a response rate of 16.8% which is extremely high in the market research industry where response rates average in the 1%-2% range.
- This scientific approach ensures that the results have a high level of accuracy (with a 4.9% margin of error at a 95% confidence level) and statistically represents the business community in the region.



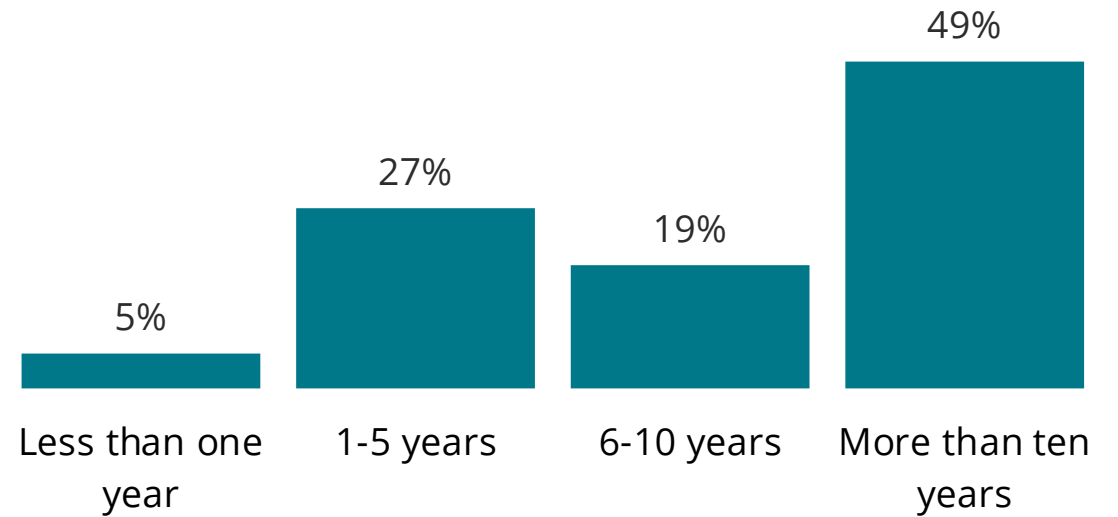
Business Community Firmographics



Business Ownership

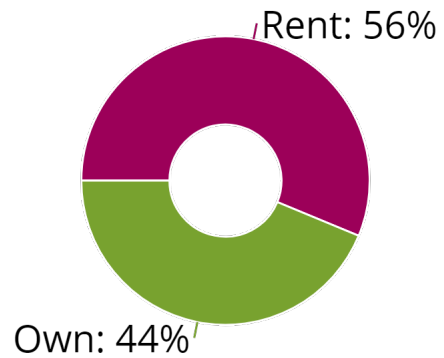


Years Operating in the Region

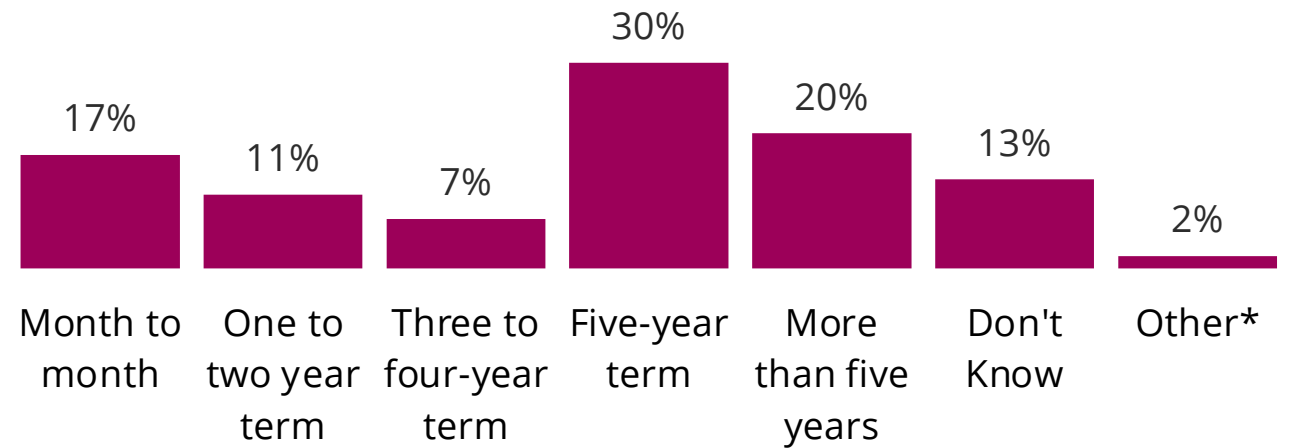




Property Ownership

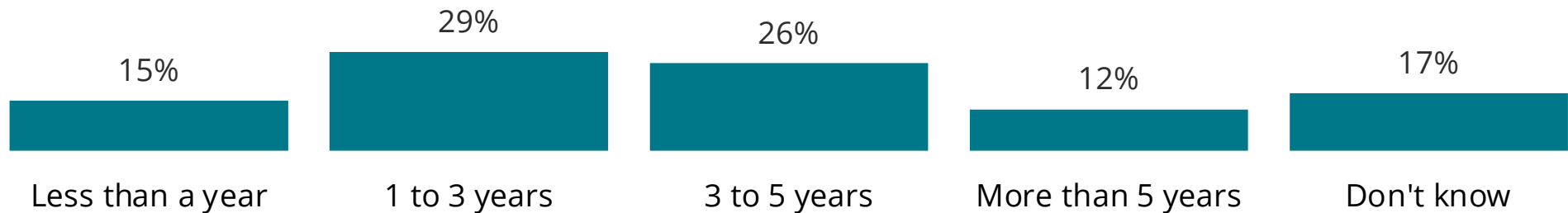


Term of Lease



*Other includes: half year, multiple leases.

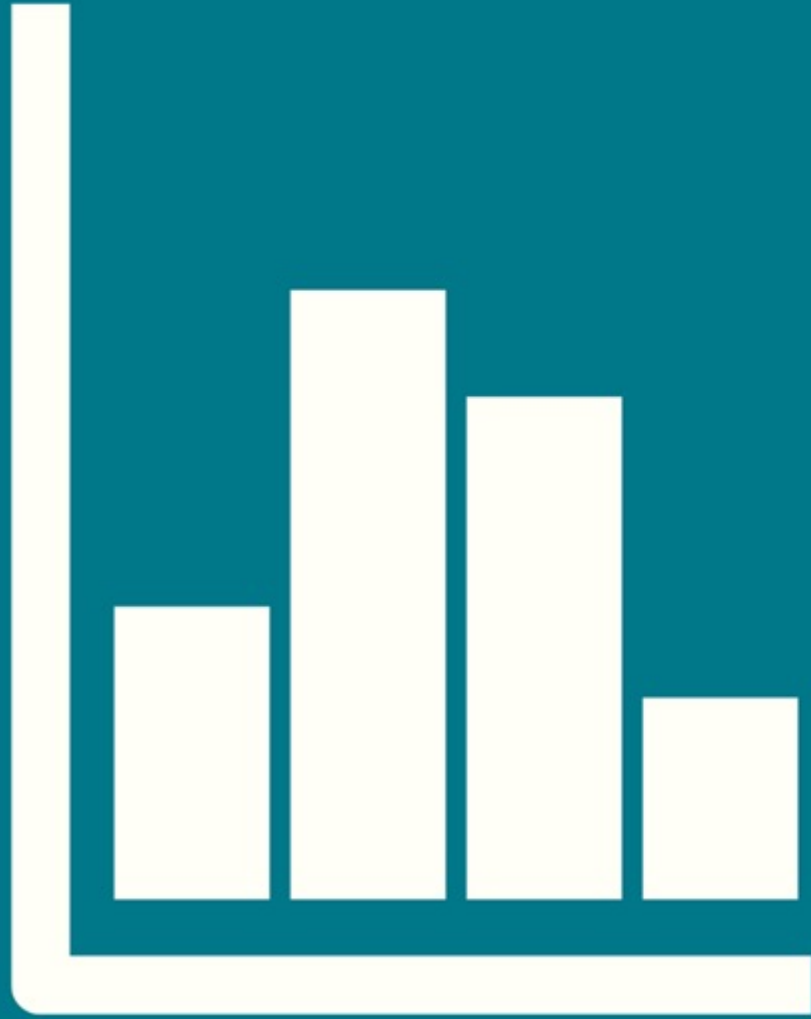
Lease Expiry





Firmographics

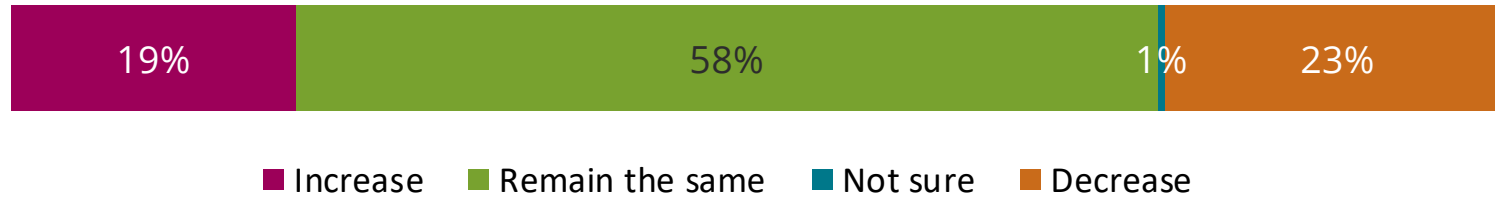
Industries Surveyed	Percent	Count
Retail Trade	17%	70
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	15%	60
Accommodation and Food Services	11%	44
Construction and Trades	10%	41
Health Care and Social Assistance	10%	40
Manufacturing	7%	27
Transportation and Warehousing	7%	27
Agriculture and Animal Services	6%	23
Finance and Insurance	3%	14
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3%	14
Oil and Gas Service	3%	13
Educational Services	2%	9
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	2%	8
Wholesale Trade	1%	4
Administrative and Business Support	1%	2
Waste Management and Remediation Services	0%	2
Other	0%	2
Forestry-related	0%	1



Business Performance



Business Performance



Over the past 12 months
did the total number of
employees in your company



Thinking about the next 12
months, do you expect the
total number of employees
in your company to:



Business Performance



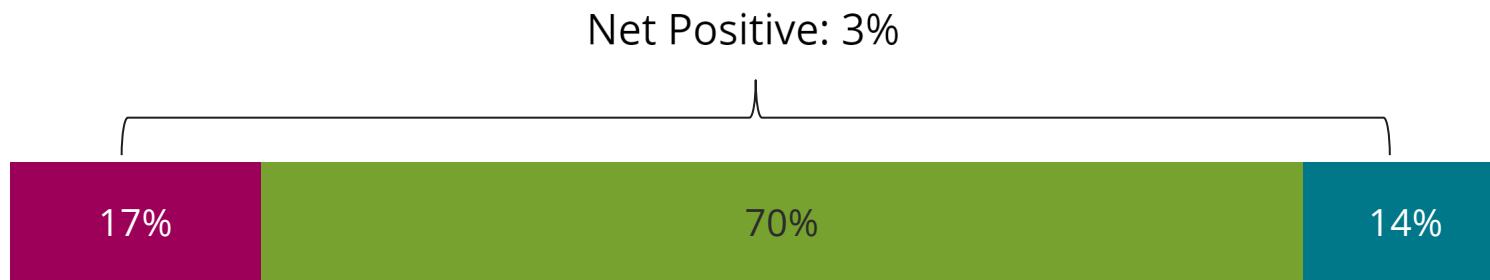
■ Increased ■ Remained the same ■ Not sure ■ Decreased

Over the past 12 months have your revenues at your business...



■ Higher ■ The same ■ Not sure ■ Lower

And what are your expectations for the next 12 months in total revenues compared to last 12 months?



■ Better ■ The same and has not changed ■ Worse

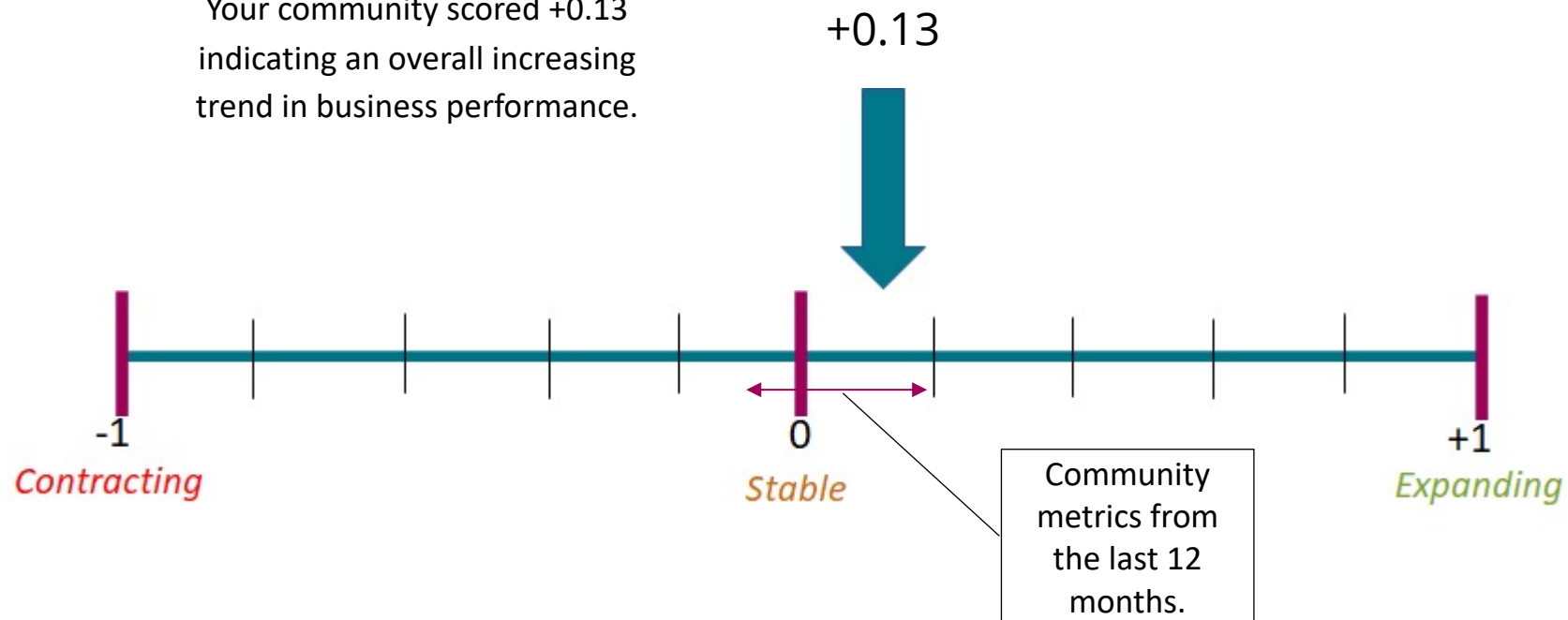
Over the course of the past 12 months would you say your attitude about doing business in Strathcona County has become...



Business Performance

The Business Performance Forecast is a metric created by combining the five business performance questions. It considers the changes in staff, revenue and attitudes among businesses in the region for an overall directional picture of the business climate in the area.

Your community scored +0.13
indicating an overall increasing
trend in business performance.





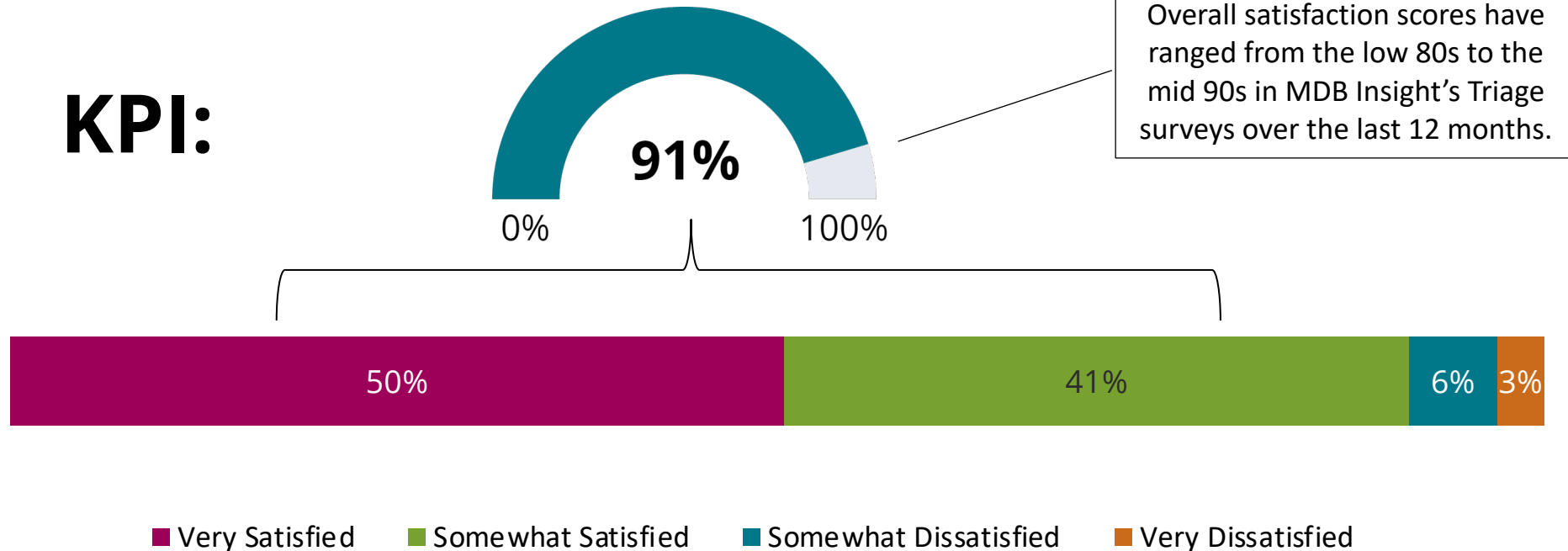
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)



Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

Overall, how satisfied are you with Strathcona County as a place to own and operate a business?

KPI:

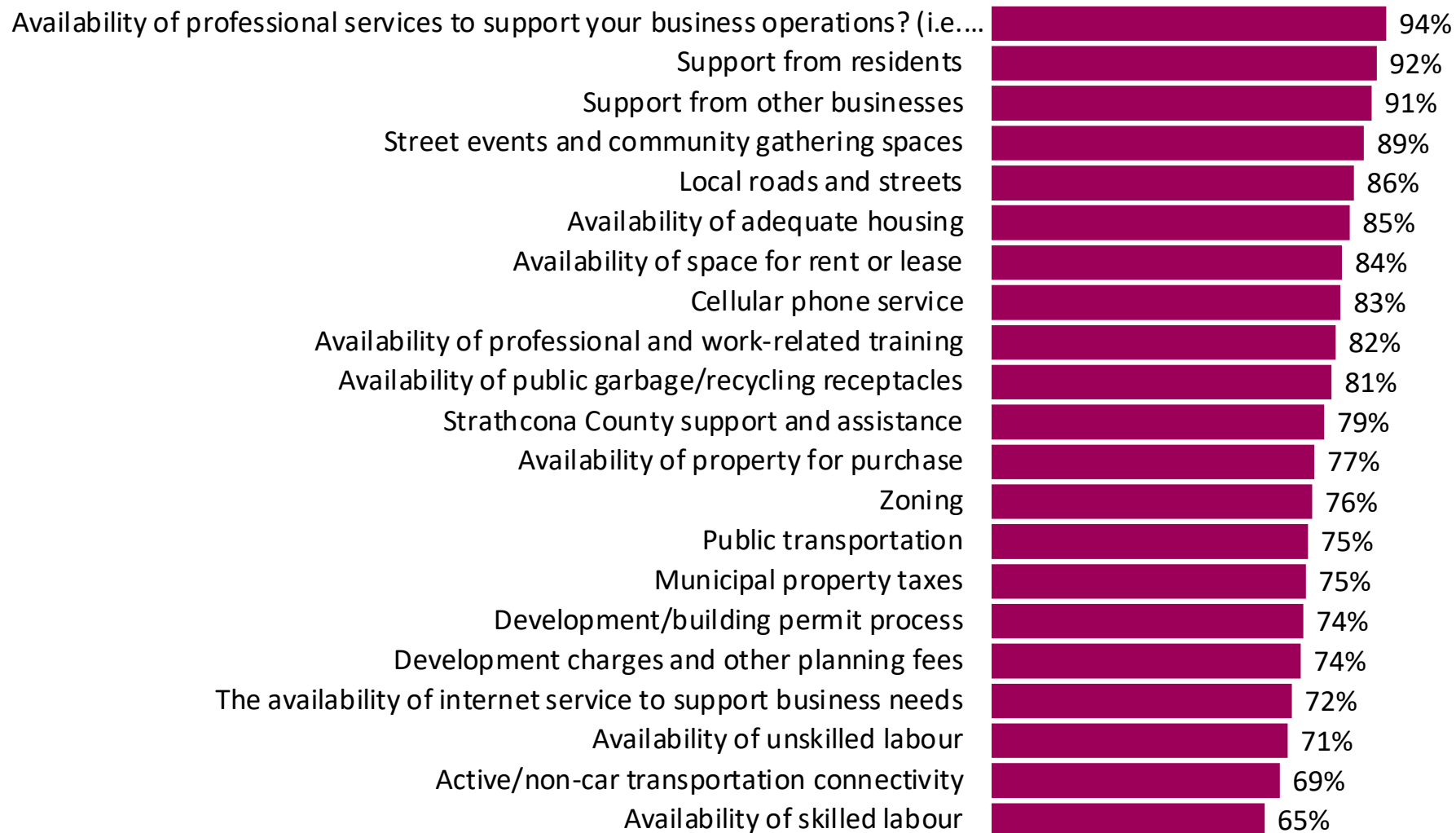




Satisfaction Levels

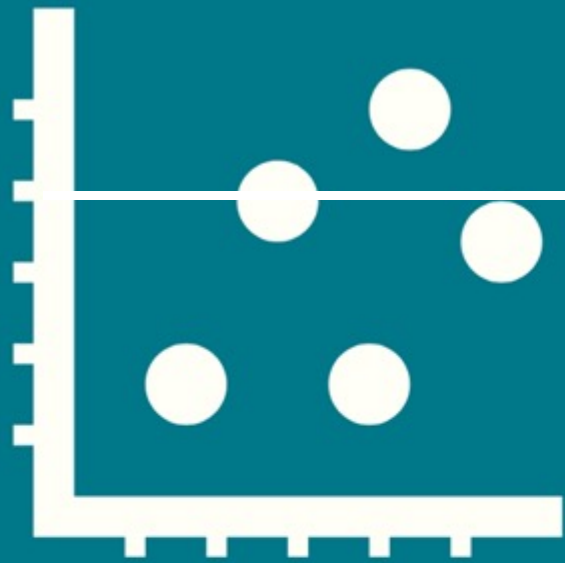


Satisfaction Levels



Top two box:
Very Satisfied &
Somewhat Satisfied
combined.





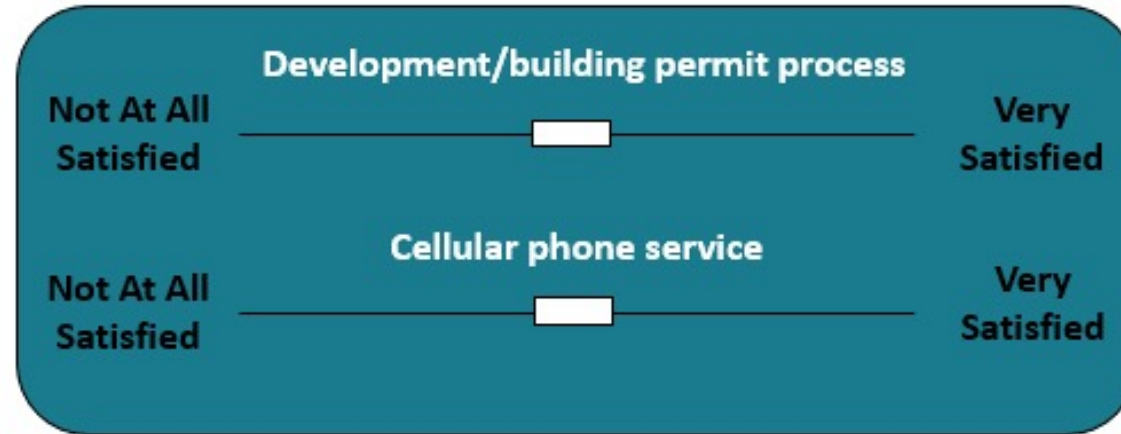
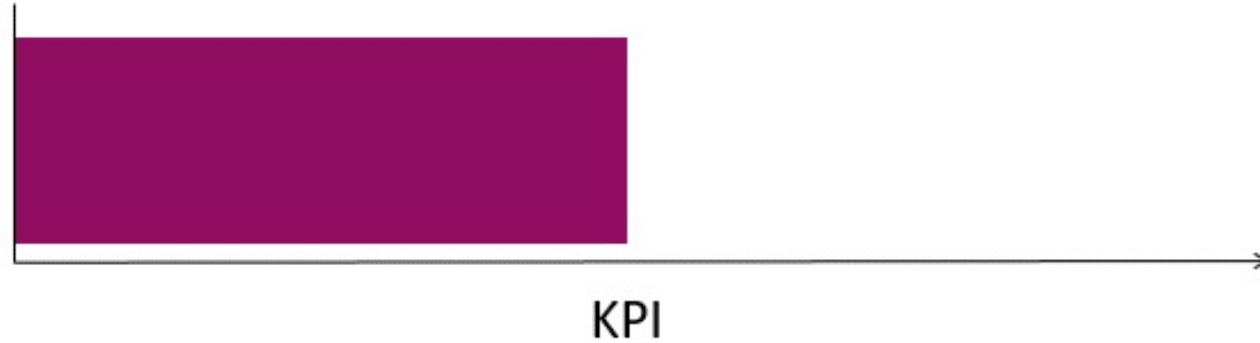
Derived Importance & Priority Matrix



Derived Importance & Priority Matrix

Example:

Region as a Place to do Business





Priority Matrix

Factor	Importance	Influence	Performance	Priority Rank
Availability of skilled labour	7.3	5	65%	1
The availability of internet service to support business needs	7.7	6	72%	2
Development/building permit process	6.1	8	74%	3
Strathcona County support and assistance	8.7	9	79%	4
Development charges and other planning fees	5.8	7	74%	5
Municipal property taxes	6.3	7	75%	6
Active/non-car transportation connectivity	6.5	4	69%	7
Availability of unskilled labour	6.1	5	71%	8
Public transportation	7.2	6	76%	9
Zoning	5.6	8	76%	10
Availability of public garbage/recycling receptacles	8.4	7	81%	11
Availability of space for rent or lease	7.2	7	84%	12
Cellular phone service	7.3	6	83%	13
Availability of professional and work-related training	6.6	5	82%	14
Availability of property for purchase	5.9	3	77%	15
Local roads and streets	8.0	6	86%	16
Availability of adequate housing	7.3	4	85%	17
Street events and community gathering spaces	7.3	7	89%	18
Support from other businesses	8.6	8	91%	19
Support from residents	7.9	8	92%	20
Availability of professional services to support your business operations?	7.7	7	94%	21



Higher Priority



Lower Priority



Business Community Health



Community Business Health Index

Using the results of this business survey, MDB Insight combines the questions into a proprietary Community Business Health Index which is the combination of the following eight sub-scores:

Overall Satisfaction

Workforce Attraction and Retention

Change in Attitudes

Future Plans

Business Policies, Supports and Incentives

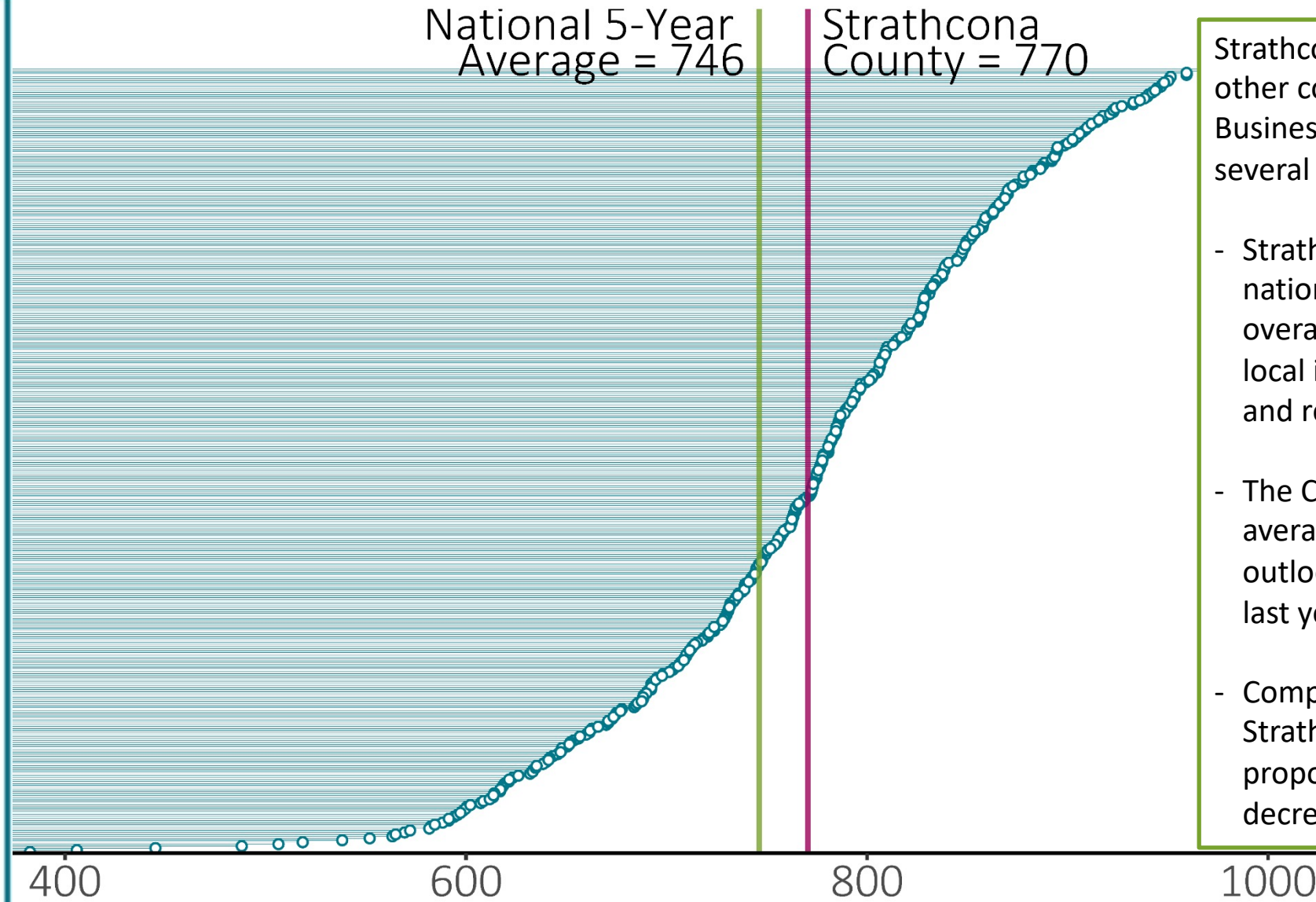
Change in Revenue

Infrastructure and Amenities

Revenue Outlook



Community Business Health Index



Strathcona County scored well compared to other communities on the Community Business Health Index. This index is based on several factors:

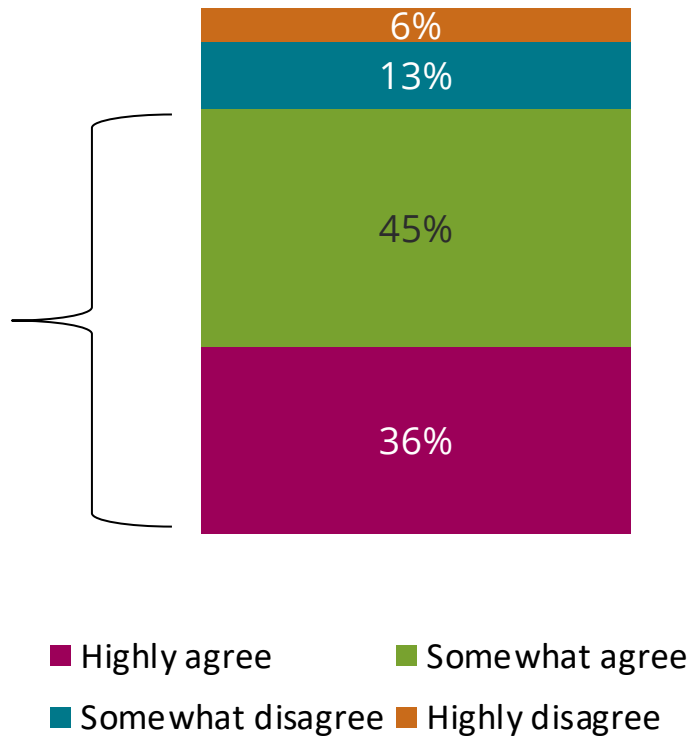
- Strathcona County outperformed the national average on businesses' ratings of overall satisfaction, workforce development, local infrastructure, local business supports, and revenue expectations.
- The County scored close to the national average on the scores related to business outlooks and changing attitudes over the last year.
- Compared to the national average, Strathcona County had a particularly high proportion of businesses that reported decreasing revenues over the last year.



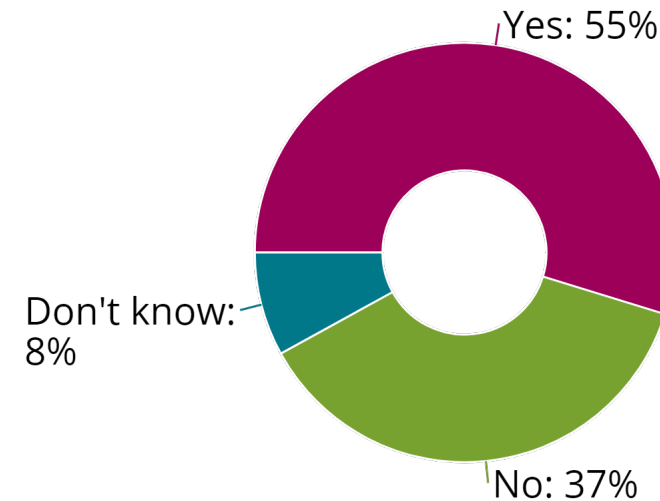
COVID Supports

Overall, I feel confident in my business' level of resiliency to operate and survive through any short-term crises or economic downturns that may arise over the next 2-5 years.

Top 2 Box
81%



Do you feel you have enough local government support for your business during the COVID pandemic?





Future Plans

Count	Total – Within the next two years	Within the next six months	More than six months from now
Expanding	83	28	55
Downsizing	14	4	10
Relocating	16	2	14
Selling	10	5	5
Closing	9	0	9



Triage Results

Throughout the survey process Triage cases that represented green or red flags were tracked. Out of the 400 businesses surveyed, 176 businesses presented an opportunity for intervention.



Green Flags

= Businesses considering expanding. = 83 businesses



Red Flags

= Businesses considering relocating, downsizing, selling, or closing. Also businesses with a month-to-month lease or those that expire in the next year.

= 93 businesses





Interview Update



Follow-Up Interviews

- Strathcona County Staff, with support from MDB Insight, have completed 14 follow-up interviews with the survey participants as of January 20, 2022.
- Most interviewees are considering an expansion in Strathcona County and recommend the community to other businesses. For the most part, the challenges they face align with those identified in the survey, including; availability of skilled labour, internet service, and the development/building permit process.
- Several businesses have identified difficulties in finding spaces to rent or lease that support their expansion plans in the county.
- Through the BRE program, the County has been developing a comprehensive database of the local business community, the challenges they face and connecting businesses to the programming and services that can provide additional support beyond County services.



Next Steps and Actions...



Chris Bandak
Executive Vice-President
cbandak@mdbinsight.com
(855) 367-3535 x224

Jordan Tidey
Senior Consultant
jtidey@mdbinsight.com
(855) 367-3535 x244

Simon Webb
Consultant
swebb@mdbinsight.com
(855) 367-3535 x247