



A Natural Attraction

Impact of COVID-19 on Local Business Survey Results Summary March 27, 2020

Background:

The City of Quinte West, in collaboration with the Quinte West Chamber of Commerce and Trenton DBIA conducted a survey to identify the current and future impacts that COVID-19 is having and will have on our local business community. The survey was distributed by all organizations and the link was posted to the City's website.

Summary of Findings:

The survey went live through Survey Monkey on Thursday, March 19, 2020 and closed on Monday, March 23, 2020 with a total of 167 responses collected.

Economic Development Staff reviewed each of the 167 responses and it was evident that there were certainly many common themes within the results. Listed below is a summary of the survey responses.

The most common theme was Access to Capital and that ranged from:

Federal and Provincial Level

- Grants *and/or* interest free or low rate loans to assist in paying staff, rents, leases and mortgages
- Program similar to Employment Insurance (EI) or funding for small business owners to compensate them for their loss of revenues during closures or interruptions
- Deferrals, reductions *and/or* waiving of fees and remittances (Income tax/HST/ CPP/WSIB payments/Hydro bills)

Municipal Level

- Deferrals, reductions *and/or* waiving fees related to property taxes and water and wastewater

Many businesses commented that they are concerned with cash flow and the uncertainty of how long this pandemic will last and the effect it will have on the economy and their business in both the short and long term. Many businesses responded with concerns for their employee's health as well as their financial well-being during this pandemic.

Other interesting responses/concerns and recurring themes that some business owners shared:

- Sanitizer and supply shortages
- Urging people to self-isolate
- Preparing a marketing plan/Shop Local campaign when pandemic is over
- Seasonal businesses fearing loss of their busiest season
- Cancellation of special events and tournaments
- Clarity from all levels of government and a centralized location to access information about the available grants, loans and programs and also assistance with accessing these programs
- Staff availability due to self-isolation or illness
- Health care in general and testing for COVID-19

Other interesting responses/concerns that were minimal or stand alone:

- Receiving product deliveries on time
- Basic amenities for truck drivers (lack of washroom facilities and large trucks are unable to access drive thru's)
- Safety from looting
- Product Loss - perishable items
- A few landlords had concerns about collecting rental fees from tenants
- Not allowing cash to be used
- Less negative news
- Allow businesses to top up employees EI benefits to their existing rate if they are laid off
- Customer's ability to pay for services

Many respondents are concerned with the impact that COVID-19 will or may have on their business and employees.

City's Actions to Date:

Council for the City of Quinte West passed the following resolution regarding "Proposed Financial Relief Measures due to COVID 19" at their Special Council meeting on March 24, 2020:

That Council approves the waiving of any new interest charges on Property Taxes and Water and Wastewater Billings until July 1st 2020;

And Further that Council Approves the final installment dates for the 2020 Property Tax billings as August 27th and October 28th;

And Further that Council approves the first bag of garbage for curbside collection will be free until April 30th;

And Further that Council approves free public transit until April 30th;

And Further that Council approves the waiving of the following administrative fees until July 1st 2020:

- Taxes
 - Returned Item Fee
 - Tax Account Setup Fee
 - Statement of Account Fee
 - Tax Reminder Fee (per notice)
- Water and Wastewater
 - Returned Item Fee
 - Water Account Setup Fee
 - Statement of Account Fee
 - Water Meter Charge
 - Water Occupancy Fees
- Online Payment service charges including shipping & handling fees
- Extending the due date for Dog Tags from March 31 to July 1st

Economic Development Staff met with representatives from the Quinte West Chamber of Commerce and Trenton DBIA on March 25, 2020 to discuss the results of the survey and to inform them of City Council's decision regarding financial relief measures in relation to COVID 19 so they could inform their membership.

Economic Development Staff met with the Community Engagement Officer on March 25, 2020 to discuss developing a page within the City's website that would provide a centralized location for businesses to access information about the available grants, loans and programs being offered by all levels of government. This page is now live on the City's website at:

https://www.quintewest.ca/en/services-for-you/covid19_resources_business.asp

Economic Development Staff have and continue to be in contact with both levels of government and their agencies to keep informed of all new programming, grants and loans relating to COVID-19 that have been announced. Details about the new grants

loans and programming relating to COVID-19 are evolving and Staff will continue to monitor and communicate this information to our business community.

Economic Development Staff have had direct communications with a number of individual businesses to discuss concerns and answer questions about accessing the available programs. Staff will continue to have these conversations with our businesses and provide as much assistance as possible.

Federal and Provincial Government's Actions to Date:

“The Government of Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, will provide up to \$27 billion in direct support to Canadian workers and businesses, plus \$55 billion to meet liquidity needs of Canadian businesses and households through tax deferrals to help stabilize the economy. Combined, this \$82 billion in support represents more than 3 per cent of Canada’s GDP. This wide-ranging support will help ensure Canadians can pay for rent and groceries, and help businesses continue to pay their employees and their bills during this time of uncertainty.”

The Provincial Government’s “action plan is a first step in its response to COVID-19 and includes \$7 billion in additional resources for the health care system and direct support for people and jobs. It also will make available \$10 billion in support for people and businesses through tax and other deferrals to improve their cash flow, protecting jobs and household budgets.”

A full listing of the available grants, loans and programs being offered by both levels of government can be accessed on the City’s website by visiting:

https://www.quintewest.ca/en/services-for-you/covid19_resources_business.asp

Public Input: Business Survey

Internal/External Consultation:

- Brian Jardine, Director, Planning & Development Services
- Linda Lisle, Manager, Economic Development & Tourism Services
- Hannah Brown, Community Engagement Officer
- Brian Grattan, Economic Development Coordinator
- Quinte West Chamber of Commerce
- Trenton DBIA

Next Steps:

The survey results are a snapshot in time and there have been many changes since the survey closed and with the Province’s recent closure of all non-essential businesses, some of these results could be very different. Staff will continue to keep our COVID-19 resource page updated in order to assist our local businesses during this difficult time. The business resource page can be accessed on the City website at:

https://www.quintewest.ca/en/services-for-you/covid19_resources_business.asp

Economic Development Staff will continue to meet with our partnering agencies to discuss strategies and possible programming that could address the concerns, comments and suggestions that were received from the respondents that participated in the business survey. Staff will also continue to monitor all programs that relate to COVID-19 and work with our local businesses and stakeholders to assist them in the process of accessing these different programs.

Attachment – COVID-19 Business Survey Results – Power Point

During this time our staff is available to answer questions and provide assistance as required. Please don't hesitate to contact us.

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Impact of COVID-19 on Local Business

Monday, March 23, 2020

167

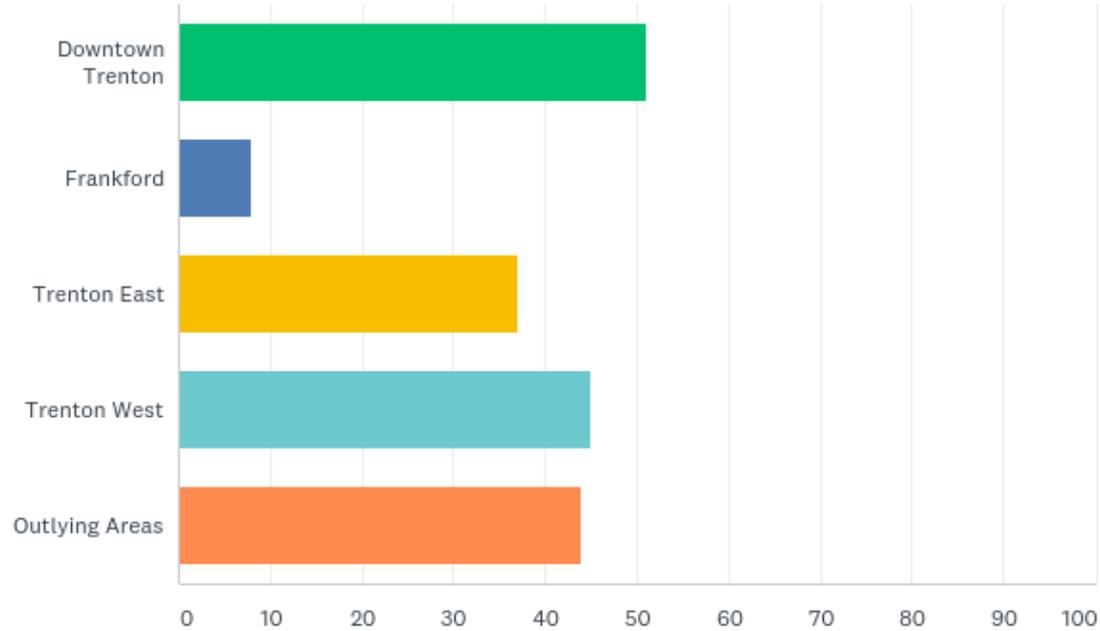
Total Responses

Date Created: Wednesday, March 18, 2020

Complete Responses: 167

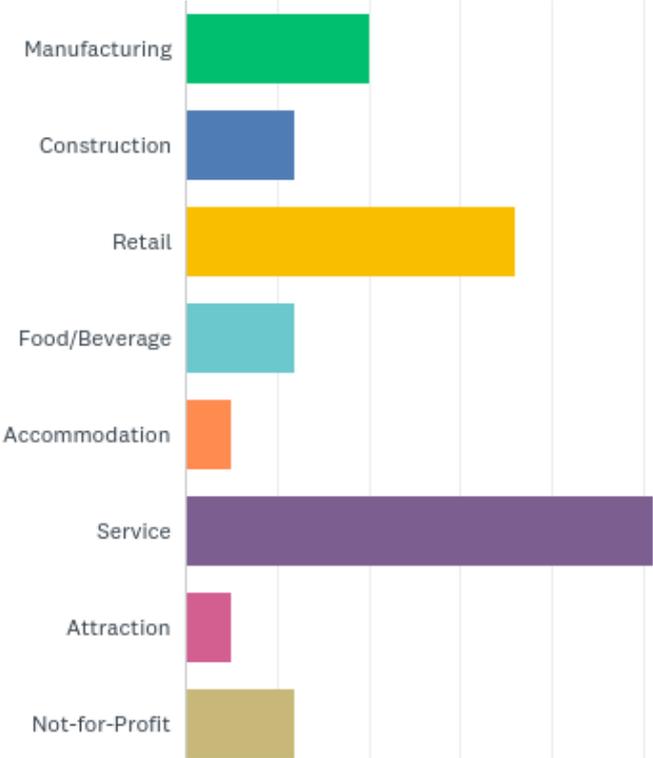
Q1: Where is your business located?

Answered: 167 Skipped: 0



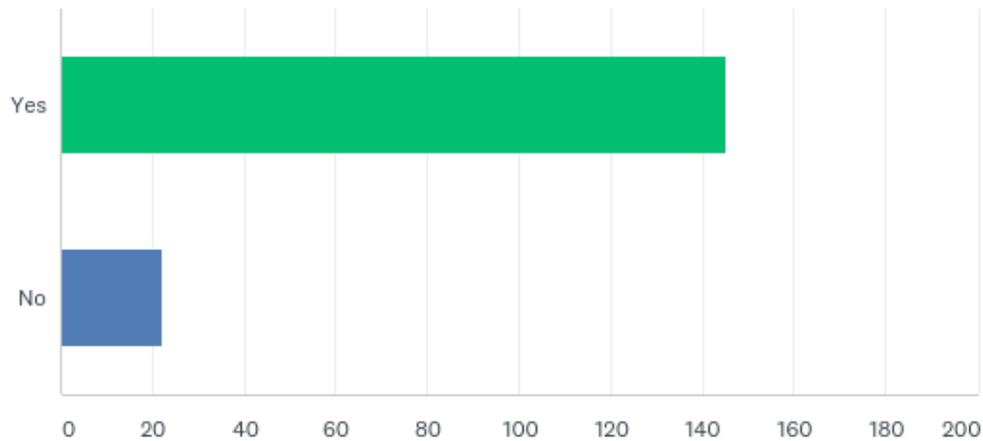
Q2: What sector is your business primarily operating in?

Answered: 167 Skipped: 0



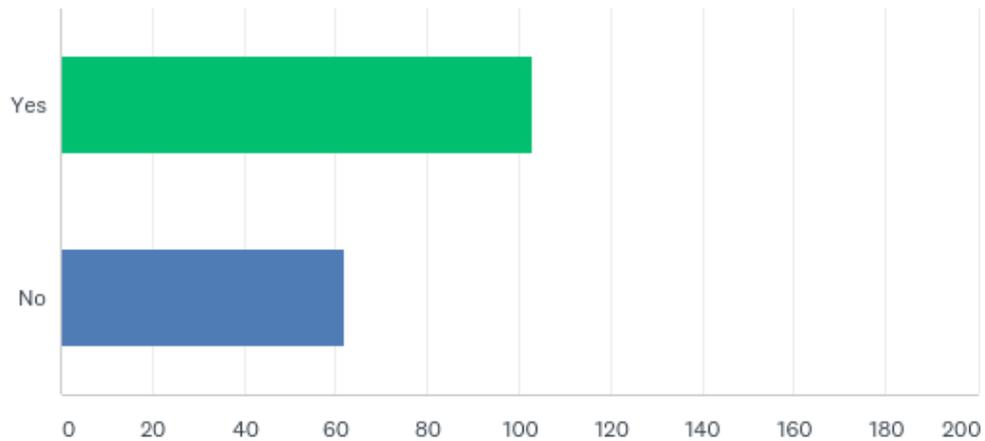
Q3: Have you currently made any changes to your business as a result of COVID-19?

Answered: 167 Skipped: 0



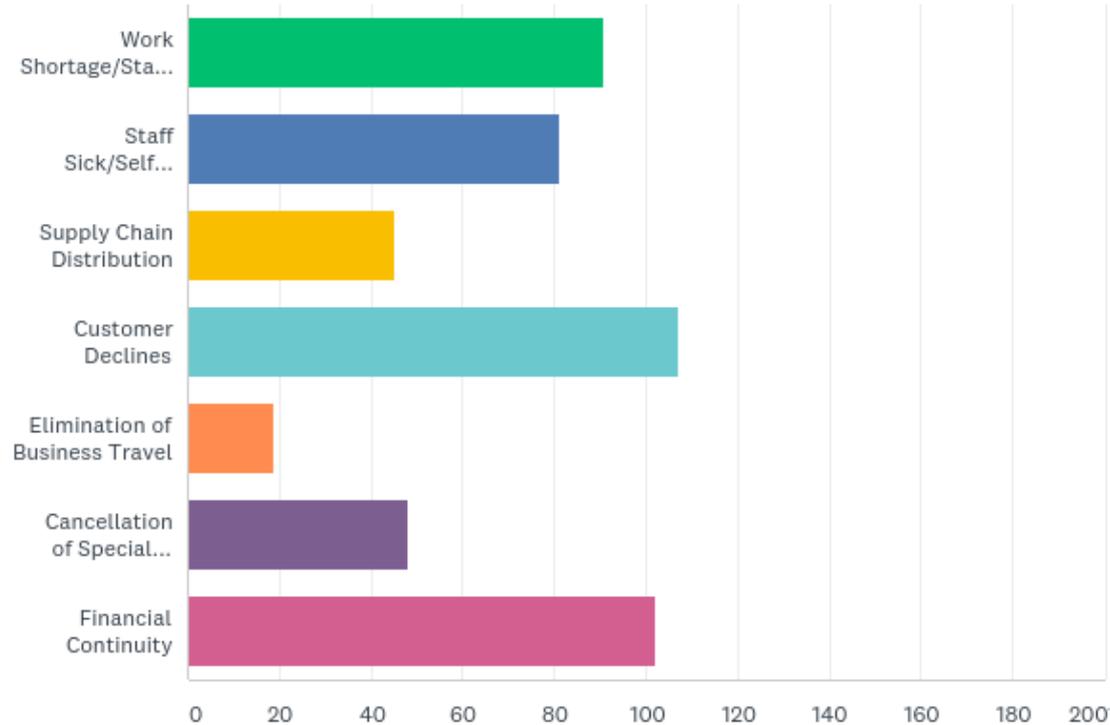
Q5: Do you anticipate making any or additional changes to your business as a result of COVID-19?

Answered: 165 Skipped: 2



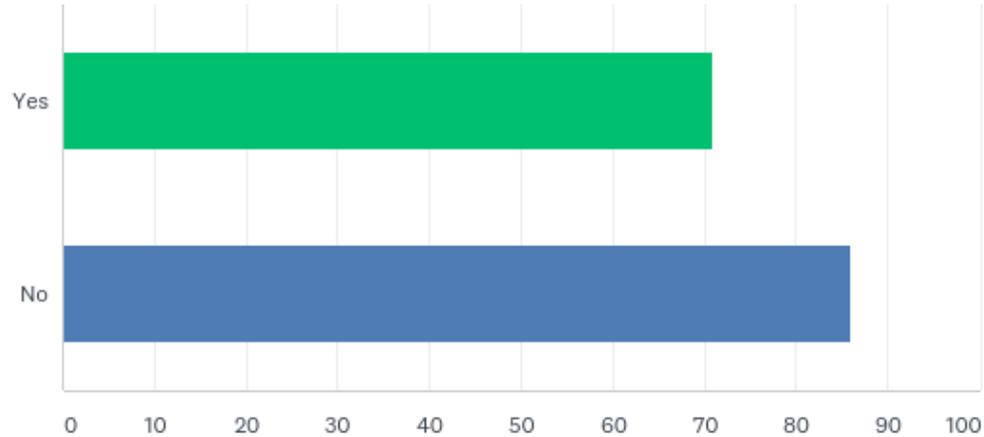
Q7: What are your major concerns as a result of COVID-19?

Answered: 165 Skipped: 2



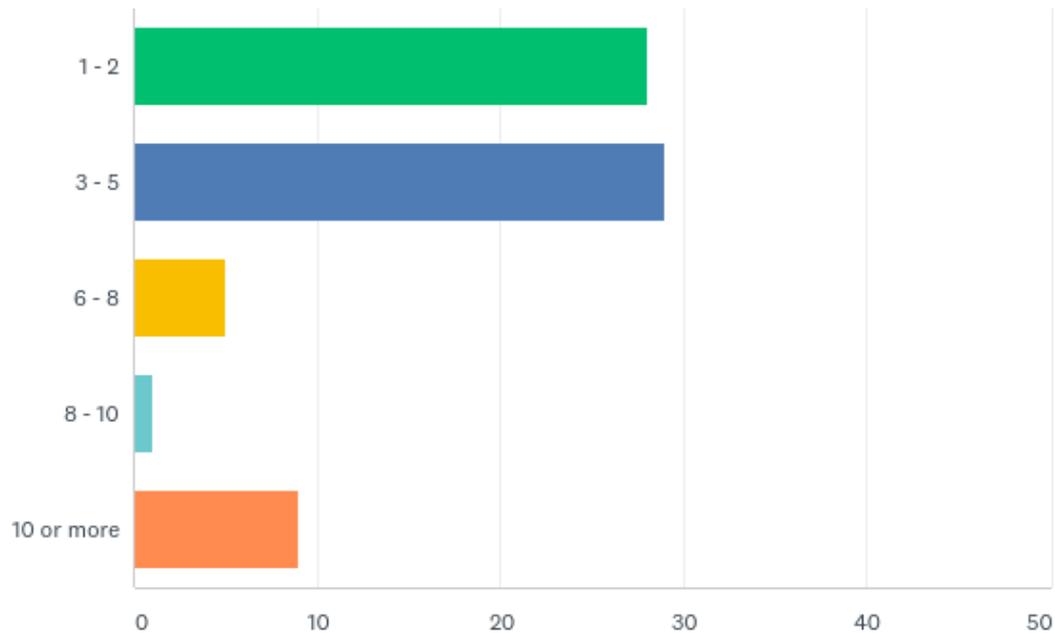
Q9: Will you be laying off employees in response to COVID-19?

Answered: 157 Skipped: 10



Q10: If you answered "Yes" to the question above, please specify how many?

Answered: 72 Skipped: 95



Q13: How are you currently receiving up to date information on COVID-19?

Answered: 167 Skipped: 0

