

**HUD Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant
HUD Docket No. FR-5505-N-33
Business Outreach - Executive Summary**



Background:

The Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) in partnership with the Thurston Regional Planning Council was contracted to conduct outreach to businesses located within the four primary districts identified as part of the Capitol Corridor of Thurston County and outlined by the HUD Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant. Those districts are described in the enclosed District Summary reports as the Capitol Blvd Corridor, Brewery District, Woodland District and Martin Way Districts.

Project Overview:

The project was intended to help create strong regional partnerships that establish and support the Capitol-Martin Corridor and Neighborhood District Plan as a planning priority; directly impacting economic development efforts throughout Thurston County.

The EDC's project team worked with each jurisdiction to develop an outreach strategy and set of survey questions designed to better understand the mix and characteristics of businesses located within each district. The surveys were intended to solicit input from local businesses on issues and opportunities currently impacting their business and provide feedback to the city for future improvement of the district.

Approximately 318 businesses within the targeted outreach area were identified and approached to participate in the survey process. At completion of the project, a total of 228 businesses within the corridor had completed a business survey. As each district outreach was completed, a summary of findings was provided to the respective jurisdiction. This information was used as a resource in their planning efforts, providing a more clear understanding of the characteristics, opportunities and challenges of businesses located within their district.

Summary of Findings:

The feedback received throughout the survey process, varied by district and location along the corridor. The following themes however were consistent among the districts and throughout the project:

- Types of business located along the corridor generally fell into the following industry categories: professional services, financial, transportation, utilities, healthcare, retail or hospitality.
- The overall tone of businesses that completed a survey was positive; reflected both in their willingness to take part in the survey and in the general tone of their responses.
- 92.5% - the average among all 4 districts; indicating their business was either stable or growing
- There was strong interest expressed in the future of their district and a general willingness to participate in future dialogue regarding regional planning.

Please find a more detailed summary by district in provided in the enclosed summary reports.

Executive Summary

Tumwater Brewery District – Sustainable Communities

Business Outreach

Prepared for: City of Tumwater



Introduction:

The Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) is pleased to partner with the Thurston Regional Planning Council as a recipient of the Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant. The EDC was contracted to conduct outreach to local businesses located within the Brewery District of Tumwater, Washington.

Project Overview:

The project was managed by EDC staff lead, Renée Sunde, Deputy Director. Joshua Cummings, Government and Business Development Manager and project intern, Kyle Wiese provided primary staffing throughout the project. In coordination with City of Tumwater staff, the EDC worked to develop an outreach strategy and set of survey questions designed to better understand the mix and characteristics of businesses in the district. The survey was intended to solicit input from local businesses on issues and opportunities currently impacting their business and provide feedback to the city for improvement of the district in the future.

Through access of the Co-Star Commercial Real Estate database (subscribed to by the EDC), approximately 50 businesses were identified within the targeted outreach area of the district. This area included businesses located within the parameters of the intersection at Capitol Blvd and Cleveland Avenue to the north, E Street SE, Tumwater Valley Drive to the south as well as Cleveland and N 2nd Avenues. At completion of the project, a total of 39 businesses within the district had participated in the survey process. (see enclosed copy of outreach letter, Local Business Profile/Visitation Form [survey], outreach map, and a complete report of outreach results)

Summary of Findings:

A total of 39 surveys were completed representing the following industry categories: professional services, financial, healthcare, retail and hospitality.

Market & Sales

A majority of survey respondents represent service related industries whose primary customer is either local or regional. Of the 39 businesses surveyed, 94% indicated they are stable or growing and 66% indicated that their sales are currently increasing. The survey results show that between 2010–2012, 18% of the businesses surveyed had laid-off employees however that number was offset by the 23% of businesses who had hired employees during the same time period.

Primary Market		Life Cycle		Market Share		Sales	
Local	8	Emerging	2	Increasing	24	Increasing	26
Regional	28	Growing	14	Stable	13	Stable	11
National	2	Maturing	22	Decreasing	2	Decreasing	2
International	1	Declining	1				

Fluctuation of Employees 2010-2012		Total Employees
Increased	9	2010 841
Stable	23	2011 829
Decreased	7	2012 853

Facility & Location

When asked to describe the positive attributes of their location we received similar responses across industry categories. Businesses in the brewery district like the fact that they are close to I-5 with relatively easy access. Those located directly on Capitol Blvd appreciated the visibility the traffic provides. It was also expressed, in different ways, that being near the brewery offered a sort of landmark for customers to better understand they're location.

Following is a summary of the most common responses:

- good access to and from I-5
- flow of traffic
- local accessibility and convenience
- visibility from Capitol Blvd
- pleasant area
- close to landmarks so easy to give directions
- parking

The negative attributes described by businesses in the district as expected surround the fact that the brewery buildings and property remain vacant. It is presumed by some of the business owners that this fact and the bus stop by Safeway may increase the rate of vagrancy, homelessness and vandalism in the area. In addition, the narrowness and difficulty of the traffic flow on and around the Custer & Boston Street bridges creates back-ups and delays. Parking is also an issue for some businesses.

Following is a summary of the most common responses:

- vacant brewery buildings and property
- traffic congestion on Custer St.
- parking
- difficulty getting onto I-5 south
- Cleveland & Emerson bus stop and vacant buildings attract vagrancy, homelessness, vandalism
- barrier on Capitol Blvd can create accessibility issues

When asked, "What additional businesses, commercial or other types of use they would like to see locate in the district," the responses were nearly all focused on improving the brewery property, although how varied significantly.

The most common responses indicated that local business owners would like to see more quality restaurants, small business retail and commercial offices, improving the parks and bringing back manufacturing. There were visions of redeveloping the parks and vacant properties as a destination 'river-walk' with recreation, shopping, restaurants and access to fishing all connected to the Olympia park trails. Some saw the district becoming an attraction center with an amusement park, convention center and large hotels. Still some businesses

envisioned a strong tie to the community and creating mixed use commercial and residential area with community centers for residents and growing families.

Following are the top responses:

- restaurants
- small businesses retail/services
- professional services
- park/recreation improvements
- manufacturing
- brewery
- commercial
- housing (condos)
- community/aquatic center
- mixed use
- state buildings
- “anything”

When asked if they would like to see a mix residential buildings locate within the Brewery District, the responses were weighted great approximately 79% - yes and 6% - no (some chose not to answer).

The answer to this question prompted a fairly strong, yes response. Many of the currently operating businesses in the district are related to retail or professional services and presumed an increase in residents would lead to an increase in their business. For those few that expressed a negative opinion towards housing there were shared concerns about the possibility of drawing an increasing vagrant population that may not be good for business.

Local Challenges

When asked, “What are the biggest local challenges impacting your industry today,” many of the respondents mentioned challenging economic conditions over the past several years, including lack of investment income, home values and expendable income for restaurants and extra services. Some businesses also cited concerns with government regulations and spending.

2012 and Beyond

When asked, “How do you feel about the future – 2012 and beyond,” the top responses were surprisingly positive. Words like good, hopeful, excited, cautiously optimistic, getting better, slow, but on the right track seemed to resonate across the district.

Although there were a handful of responses indicating concern for the future, for the most part businesses in the brewery district appear fairly positive about their business and economic future.

Summary:

The overall tone of businesses who participated in the Tumwater Brewery District business outreach project was quite positive. This was reflected both in their willingness to take part in the survey and in the general tone of their responses.

Of the 39 businesses surveyed, 92% of the businesses serve a local or regional market and 97.5% of those businesses indicated that they were emerging, growing or maturing. Of those, 61.5% are increasing market share and 66.5% are seeing an increase in sales. One-fourth of the businesses indicated that they had increased their number of employees between 2010-2012, while one-fifth indicated they had laid-off employees during the same time.

There was great interest expressed in the future of the brewery district and in how the City of Tumwater, EDC and the community as a whole might work together to redevelop the district. Our hope is that this initial outreach with local business and community stakeholders will help lay the groundwork for future dialogue and engagement with the local business community.

Executive Summary
Capitol Blvd Corridor – Sustainable Communities
Business Outreach
Prepared for: City of Tumwater



Introduction:

The Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) is pleased to partner with the Thurston Regional Planning Council as a recipient of the Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant. The EDC was contracted to conduct outreach to local businesses located within the Capitol Blvd Corridor of Tumwater, Washington.

Project Overview:

The project was managed by EDC staff lead, Renée Sunde, Deputy Director. Joshua Cummings, Government and Business Development Manager and project intern, Kyle Wiese provided primary staffing throughout the project. In coordination with City of Tumwater staff, the EDC worked to develop an outreach strategy and set of survey questions designed to better understand the mix and characteristics of businesses in the district. The survey was intended to solicit input from local businesses on issues and opportunities currently impacting their business and provide feedback to the city for improvement of the district in the future.

Through access of the Co-Star Commercial Real Estate database (subscribed to by the EDC), approximately 85 businesses were identified within the targeted outreach area of the corridor. This area included businesses located directly on Capitol Blvd from Linwood Ave at the north to business at the intersection of Capitol Blvd and Tumwater Blvd at the south end. At completion of the project, a total of 55 businesses within the district had participated in the survey process. (see enclosed copy of outreach letter, Local Business Profile/Visitation Form [survey], outreach map and a complete report of outreach results)

Summary of Findings:

A total of 55 surveys were completed representing the following industry categories: professional services, financial, healthcare, retail and hospitality.

Market & Sales

A majority of survey respondents represent service related industries whose primary customer is either local or regional. Of the 55 businesses surveyed, 89% indicated they are stable or growing and 53% indicated that their sales are currently increasing. The survey results show that between 2010–2012, 9% of the businesses surveyed had laid-off employees however that number was offset by the 23.5% of businesses who had hired employees during the same time period.

Primary Market		Life Cycle		Market Share		Sales	
Local	5	Emerging	6	Increasing	28	Increasing	29
Regional	47	Growing	21	Stable	23	Stable	20
National	2	Maturing	25	Decreasing	4	Decreasing	6
International	1	Declining	3				

Fluctuation of Employees 2010-2012		Total Employees	
Increased	13	2010	315
Stable	30	2011	340
Decreased	5	2012	376
New Business	6		

Facility & Location

When asked to describe the positive attributes of their location we received similar responses across industry categories. Businesses in the Capitol Blvd Corridor like the fact that they are close to I-5 with relatively easy access and being right on Capitol Blvd appreciate the visibility the traffic provides. It was also expressed that the foot traffic from the state workers, the neighbors and the safety services (police, fire) are all positives.

Following is a summary of the most common responses:

- good access to and from I-5
- visibility from Capitol Blvd
- local accessibility
- state workers
- near schools
- good neighbors
- central location

The negative attributes described by businesses in the corridor were extremely varied, but a few main themes emerged: traffic congestion at the intersection of Trospen Rd & Capitol Blvd; lack of an evening/weekend attraction (ie movie theater, nice restaurants); and concern the city would install median barriers that would inhibit business accessibility. It was relayed that the congestion issue was caused by poor traffic flow at the Starbucks and state worker rush hour(s). In the southern Capitol Blvd area the concern was too many city granted permits for convenience stores has created unwanted competition and that Old Towne Plaza has a stigma of being unoccupied.

Following is a summary of the most common responses:

- traffic congestion at Trospen Rd and Capitol Blvd
- accessibility
- this side of I-5 getting less attention than the west side
- parking
- competition
- crime
- no negatives
- road needs repair

When asked, “What additional businesses, commercial or other types of use they would like to see locate in the district,” the responses were nearly all focused on increasing retail opportunities.

The most common responses indicated that local business owners would like to see more quality restaurants, state worker offices, small business or boutique retail and an evening and weekend attraction. There were differing visions of how to address the traffic flow issue from installing roundabouts to the city buying up homes and creating two one-way streets similar to Lacey & Pacific Blvd. Another concept was to build a bridge over I-5 between X & Z Streets connecting to King’s Wood Drive SW, reducing Trospen traffic trying to get to Littlerock, bringing potential customers to business in the middle section of Capitol Blvd and providing quick access to grocery. Some business owners suggested a movie theater and family restaurants to spread out the potential hours for retail opportunity.

Following are the top responses:

- nice restaurants
- small businesses retail/services
- state offices
- attraction/entertainment
- park/recreation improvements
- beautification
- “anything”
- Restore historic feel
- grocery
- destination chain business

When asked if they would like to see a mix of residential buildings locate within the Capitol Blvd Corridor, the responses were weighted towards Yes, with approximately 65.5% - yes and 18% - no, additionally 14.5% didn't have an opinion either way.

While the majority of businesses responded in the affirmative to condos or townhouse, it was made clear that apartments and low-income housing would not help their businesses. Additionally, those who did not wish to see any residential were generally very passionate about their perspective. Many of the currently operating businesses in the district are related to retail or professional services and presumed an increase in residents would lead to an increase in their business. For those few that expressed a negative opinion towards housing there were shared concerns about the possibility of drawing an increasing vagrant population that may not be good for business.

Local Challenges

When asked, “What are the biggest local challenges impacting your industry today,” many of the respondents mentioned challenging economic conditions over the past several years, including lack of expendable income for restaurants and services. Some businesses also cited concerns with government regulations and spending. As previously stated, there was concern about the number of permits for convenience stores within a limited geography.

2012 and Beyond

When asked, “How do you feel about the future – 2012 and beyond,” the top responses had a tempered positivity. Words like cautiously optimistic, pretty good, slow but getting better and challenging but optimistic seemed to resonate across the district.

There were a handful of responses indicating concern for the future, for the most part businesses on the corridor appear fairly positive about their business and economic future.

It's also important to recognize the 6 new businesses that participated in the survey. As we know, the act of starting a business is a strong sign of economic optimism. It will be important to keep this new growth going.

Summary:

The overall tone of businesses who participated in the Capitol Blvd Corridor business outreach project was positive. This was reflected both in their willingness to take part in the survey and in the general tone of their responses.

Of the 55 businesses surveyed, 94.5% of the businesses serve a local or regional market and same percentage indicated that they were emerging, growing or maturing. Of those, 51% are increasing market share and 53% are seeing an increase in sales. One-fourth of the businesses indicated that they had increased their number of employees between 2010-2012, while one-tenth indicated they had laid-off employees during the same time.

There was hope expressed in the future of this part of Tumwater and in how the City of Tumwater, EDC and the community as a whole might work together to redevelop the district. Our hope is that this initial outreach with local business and community stakeholders will help lay the groundwork for future dialogue and engagement with the local business community.

Executive Summary
Woodland District – Sustainable Communities
Business Outreach
Prepared for: City of Lacey



Introduction:

The Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) is pleased to partner with the Thurston Regional Planning Council as a recipient of the Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant. The EDC was contracted to conduct outreach to local businesses located within the Woodland District of Lacey, Washington.

Project Overview:

The project was managed by EDC staff lead, Renée Sunde, Deputy Director. Joshua Cummings, Government and Business Development Manager and project intern, Kyle Wiese provided primary staffing throughout the project. In coordination with City of Lacey staff, the EDC worked to develop an outreach strategy and set of survey questions designed to better understand the mix and characteristics of businesses in the district. The survey was intended to solicit input from local businesses on issues and opportunities currently impacting their business and provide feedback to the city for improvement of the district in the future.

Through access of the Co-Star Commercial Real Estate database (subscribed to by the EDC), approximately 102 businesses were identified within the targeted outreach area of the district. This area included businesses located within the parameters of 3rd Avenue to the north, College Street, Pacific Avenue to the south and Sleater Kinney. At completion of the project, a total of 80 businesses within the district had participated in the survey process. (see enclosed -copy of outreach letter, Local Business Profile/Visitation Form (survey), outreach map, presentation PowerPoint and a complete report of outreach results)

Summary of Findings:

A total of 80 surveys were completed representing the following industry categories: professional services, financial, healthcare, retail and hospitality.

Market & Sales

A majority of survey respondents represent service related industries whose primary customer is either local or regional. Of the 80 businesses surveyed, 98% indicated they are stable or growing and 47.5% indicated that their sales are currently increasing. The survey results show that between 2010–2012, 25% of the businesses surveyed had laid off employees however that number was offset by the 33% of businesses who had hired employees during the same time period.

Primary Market		Life Cycle		Market Share		Sales	
Local	35	Emerging	8	Increasing	32	Increasing	38
Regional	41	Growing	35	Stable	42	Stable	30
National	3	Maturing	31	Decreasing	6	Decreasing	12
International	1	Declining	6				

Fluctuation of Employees 2012-2012		Total Employees
Increased	27	2010 1,042
Stable	33	2011 1,173
Decreased	20	2012 1,160

Facility & Location

When asked to describe the positive attributes of their location, we received similar responses across industry categories. Businesses in the district like the fact that they are relatively close to I-5 and that their businesses are accessible from Sleater Kinney, 6th Avenue, College Street and Pacific Avenue. They appreciate their neighboring retailers and professional service offices as a draw for potential customers and many described the district as the heart of the community.

Following is a summary of the most common responses:

- convenient with good access to I-5
- available parking
- middle of district, heart of the community
- close to JBLM, Fred Meyer, St. Martin's, senior living
- neighboring retailers and access to services
- market area seems fairly steady

The negative attributes described by businesses in the district seemed to surround the fact that although they are accessible, many of their business locations are hidden and not visible from College Street or Sleater Kinney. In addition, there were several businesses who expressed concerns that as state offices vacate, so does daytime employment and foot traffic around the district.

Following is a summary of the most common responses:

- tucked away, not on main street
- location in relation to I-5 and lack of visibility
- signage limitations
- getting back on College St.
- State offices moving out and empty buildings
- apartments attract vagrant population

When asked, "What additional businesses, commercial or other types of use they would like to see locate in the district," the responses varied significantly across all industry categories.

This was an interesting question, in that it sparked a wide range of responses. The most common responses indicated that local business owners would like to see more retail, and commercial office tenants. There were visions of redeveloping the old state buildings as a high-tech medical complex or to attract light manufacturing. Some saw the district becoming more of a family oriented place that might also draw multi-family housing. Still some businesses envisioned a strong tie to St Martin's or the creation of a possible education center with additional retail to serve a growing student population.

Following are the top responses:

- retail
- medical campus
- tech services
- professional services
- better mix of public & private
- housing and high density residential
- education center
- restaurants
- light manufacturing
- daycare
- state offices
- recreation, family friendly
- low income housing

When asked if they would like to see high density residential buildings locate within the Woodland District, the responses were split with approximately 56% - yes and 44% - no.

The answer to this question prompted a fairly strong yes or no response. Some businesses felt that housing could provide more foot traffic and a day into night population that would benefit the district, while others shared strong concerns about the possibility of housing (especially low-income housing) drawing an increasing vagrant population that may not be good for business.

Local Challenges

When asked, “What are the biggest local challenges impacting your industry today,” many of the respondents mentioned challenging economic conditions over the past several years and locally the loss of state workers. Consumer confidence and getting customers in the door also seemed to be a common theme. Several businesses also cited concerns with growing health care costs and government regulations.

2012 and Beyond

When asked, “How do you feel about the future – 2012 and beyond,” the top responses were surprisingly positive. Words like good, hopeful, cautiously optimistic, getting better, unsure and slow but steady seemed to resonate across the district.

Although there were a handful of responses indicating concern for the future, for the most part businesses in the Woodland district appear fairly positive about their business and economic future.

Summary:

The overall tone of businesses who participated in the Woodland District business outreach project was quite positive. This was reflected both in their willingness to take part in the survey and in the general tone of their responses.

Of the 80 businesses surveyed, 95% of the businesses serve a local or regional market and 92.5% of those businesses indicated that they were emerging, growing or maturing. Of those, 40% are increasing market share and 47.5% are seeing an increase in sales. One third of the businesses indicated that they had increased their number of employees between 2010-2012, while one fourth indicated they had laid off employees during the same time.

There was great interest expressed in the future of the Woodland District and in how the City of Lacey, EDC and the community as a whole might work together to redevelop the district. Our hope is that this initial outreach with local business and community stakeholders will help lay the groundwork for future dialogue and engagement with the local business community.

Executive Summary
Martin Way District – Sustainable Communities
Business Outreach
Prepared for: City of Olympia



Introduction:

The Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) is pleased to partner with the Thurston Regional Planning Council as a recipient of the Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant. The EDC was contracted to conduct outreach to local businesses located within the Martin Way District of Olympia, Washington.

Project Overview:

The project was managed by EDC staff lead, Renée Sunde, Deputy Director. Joshua Cummings, Business Development Manager and Kyle Wiese, Research & Project Coordinator, provided primary staffing throughout the project. In coordination with City of Olympia staff, the EDC worked to develop an outreach strategy and set of survey questions designed to better understand the mix and characteristics of businesses in the district. The survey was intended to solicit input from local businesses on issues and opportunities currently impacting their business and provide feedback to the city for future improvement of the district.

Through outreach to the Martin Way District, approximately one out of three businesses contacted, participated in the survey. The targeted area of outreach which was rectangular in shape included the corridor of Martin Way from Lilly Road to Wilson Street and the corridor of Pacific Avenue from I-5 to the intersection of Martin Way and Pacific Avenue. (See enclosed copy of the outreach letter, Local Business Profile/Visitation Form [survey], outreach map, and a complete report of outreach results)

Summary of Findings:

A total of 54 surveys were completed, representing the following industry categories: professional services, financial, transportation, utilities, healthcare, retail, restaurant and hospitality.

Market & Sales

A majority of survey respondents represent service related industries whose primary customer base is regional. Of the 54 businesses surveyed, 89% indicated they are stable or growing and 47% indicated their sales are increasing. The survey results show that between 2011-2013, 24% of the businesses surveyed had laid-off employees while 18% of businesses had hired employees.

Primary Market		Life Cycle		Market Share		Sales	
Local	5	Emerging	1	Increasing	23	Increasing	25
Regional	46	Growing	24	Stable	24	Stable	22
National	2	Maturing	24	Decreasing	6	Decreasing	6
International	1	Declining	5				

Fluctuation of Employees By Business 2011-2013		Total Employees 2011-2013	
Increase	7	2011	921
Stable	34	2012	945.5
Decreased	13	2013	948.5

Facility & Location

When asked to describe the positive attributes of their location we received similar responses across industry categories. Businesses located in the Martin Way District like the high volume of traffic on Martin Way and Pacific Avenue ; especially businesses that are located closer to Wilson Street, where Pacific Avenue and Martin Way meet.

Following is a summary of the most common responses:

- Well established business location
- Good visibility
- Inexpensive rent
- High volume traffic
- Central location in Thurston County and surrounding cities (Lacey, Tumwater)
- Close to home

Negative attributes described by business owners in this district focused on problems with vagrancy such as: panhandling, graffiti and homelessness. In addition, several businesses indicated the need for road, sidewalk and intersection improvements. Signage restrictions and various building regulations were depicted as having a negative impact on many businesses, within the district. Suggestions that signage reform coupled with a more predictable permit process would help create a more business friendly perception throughout the district.

Following is a summary of the most common responses:

- Vagrancy issues
- Frontage/Signage limitations
- Rundown buildings
- Parking limitations
- Building permitting
- Poor road conditions

Improvements

When asked, “What are the three most important improvements you would like to see in the Martin Way District,” a majority of the answers were directed toward infrastructure improvements such as pedestrian crosswalks, street lights and road repairs. Cleaning up the district and creating a more business friendly environment seemed to resonate across the district.

Following is a summary of the most common responses:

- Clean it up
- Road repairs
- More crosswalks
- More street lights
- Revise signage regulations
- Make area more pedestrian friendly
- Help with homelessness
- Help decrease panhandlers
- More commercial development
- Nothing

Attraction

When asked, “What additional businesses, commercial or other types of uses would you like to see locate in the district,” the responses were fairly consistent. The most common responses were; quality restaurants and professional service providers to fill office vacancies. Many businesses felt that “any sort” of attraction would be good. Businesses would like to see the Martin Way district act as more of a destination rather than a corridor.

Following are the top responses:

- Quality and higher-end restaurants
- Professional service providers
- A mix of small businesses
- Content with everything that is here

When asked, “Would you like to see housing along Martin Way or the side streets? If so, what type (apartments, townhouses, single family)? If not, why?” **Forty one percent said yes**, with the majority of the responses indicating they would like to see condos and/or apartments built on side streets within the district. Some respondents added the notion that bringing in housing would help, bring in business.

Conversely, **37% answered no**, with the majority of the responses indicating that the Martin Way district should be kept commercial and that more housing will only increase congestion. They also expressed concerns that theft and the potential for the area to get “run down”. **Twenty two percent** had no comment or didn’t care either way.

Local Challenges

When asked, “What are the biggest local challenges impacting your industry today,” a majority of the respondents indicated, the current state of the economy. A few others mentioned challenges related to competition (big box stores, saturation of market, internet sales), government regulations, connection to customers while a handful of respondents indicated there were currently no local challenges concerning them.

2013 and Beyond

When asked, “How do you feel about the future – 2013 and beyond,” a very large majority of the responses were positive. Words like pretty good, awesome, optimistic, getting better and hopeful seemed to resonate across the district.

Although there were a slight handful of responses indicating concern for the future, for the most part businesses in the Martin Way District appear fairly positive about their business and economic future.

Summary:

Although just 1/3 of the businesses contacted were willing to participate in the outreach survey; the businesses that did participate were generally positive and pleased to provide feedback.

Of the 54 businesses surveyed, 95% of the businesses serve a local or regional market. Approximately 87% of businesses surveyed indicated their business was emerging, growing or maturing with 13% indicating a decline in overall business.

In terms of both market share and overall sales, 89% of the businesses were either increasing or staying stable whereas 11% indicated a decline? Although there were some fluctuations in employment levels throughout the district, a majority of those surveyed have maintained stable employment numbers between 2011-2013.

There was a great interest expressed in the future of the Martin Way District, our hope is that this initial outreach with business and community stakeholders will help lay the groundwork for future dialogue and engagement with the local business community.