



2008 Master Plan Update

Business Phone Survey Summary

Prepared by

Bellingham Planning Board

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Contents

Section 1: Introduction	2
Section 2: Executive Summary	3
Section 3: Questions #1 - 2 Analysis.....	4
Question #3 Analysis	5
Question #4 Analysis	6
Question #5 Analysis	7
Question #6 Analysis	8
Question #7 Analysis	10
Question #8 Analysis	12
Question #9 Analysis	13
Question #10 Analysis	14
Question #11 Analysis	15

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

Appendix B: Survey Results Raw Data

Introduction

As part of the 2008 Master Plan update, the Master Plan Task Force conducted a phone survey of local businesses. The intent of the phone survey was to receive input from local business owners concerning how they feel about Bellingham as a place to operate a business. A random sampling of 46 small to medium size businesses were polled on issues ranging from the quality of services to future conditions. Types of businesses range from professional offices to retail, small industrial and service. A senior aide in the Planning Board conducted the survey during normal business hours.

Executive Summary

A phone survey of Bellingham businesses was conducted during the summer of 2009 to seek input for the 2008 Master Plan update. A random sampling of small to medium sized businesses was used. Business types ranged from professional offices to small retail (including restaurants and salons), automotive and industrial. Below is a highlight of some of the data collected:

- Overall, most business owners surveyed were very positive about operating a business in Bellingham.
- Most people own rather than rent.
- 69% of business owners polled have between 0-4 full time employees.
- 20 out of 46 businesses have been operating in Bellingham for over twenty years.
- 60% of business owners polled think that the business environment in Bellingham is “Good.”
- 24 out of 45 business owners thought that snow removal and accessibility in the winter was “Excellent.”
- 73% of those polled felt that the Bellingham town government supported the business community.
- 43 business owners were satisfied with police and fire service.
- 100% of those polled felt that an attractive building and streetscape was an important component to support local businesses.
- 66% of businesses owners felt that large retail was not beneficial to their business and the town.

Questions 1 – 11 Analysis

Question #1: Do you rent or own? If rent, do you feel your rent is high, low or average?

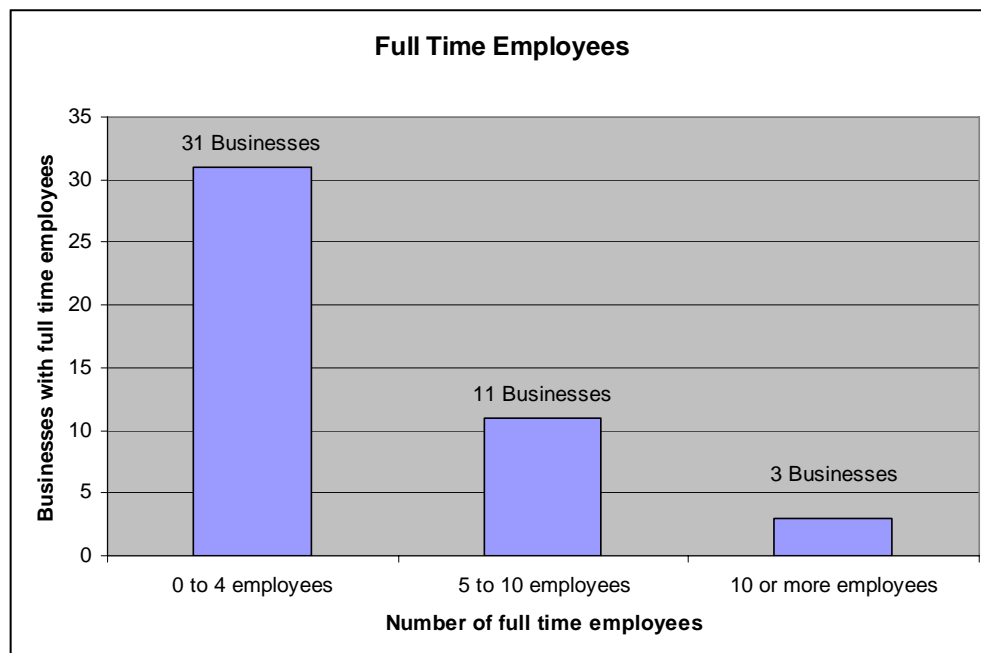
40 out of 46 respondents said they owned their business. The remaining six business owners polled stated that they rented. Of those that rented, two respondents felt their rent was high, three felt it was average and one declined to answer.

Question #2: Number of employees including yourself [person being surveyed], full-time and part-time.

45 out of 46 respondents stated that they have full-time employees. 30 out of 46 businesses have part-time employees.

Of those businesses that have full-time employees, 31 businesses have between 0-4 full-time workers. 11 businesses have between 5-10 full-time workers. Only three businesses have more than 10 full-time employees.

Of those businesses that have part-time employees, 24 businesses have between 0-4 part-time employees. Five have between 5-10 part-time employees and only one has over 10 part-time employees.



Question #3: How many years has your business been in Bellingham?

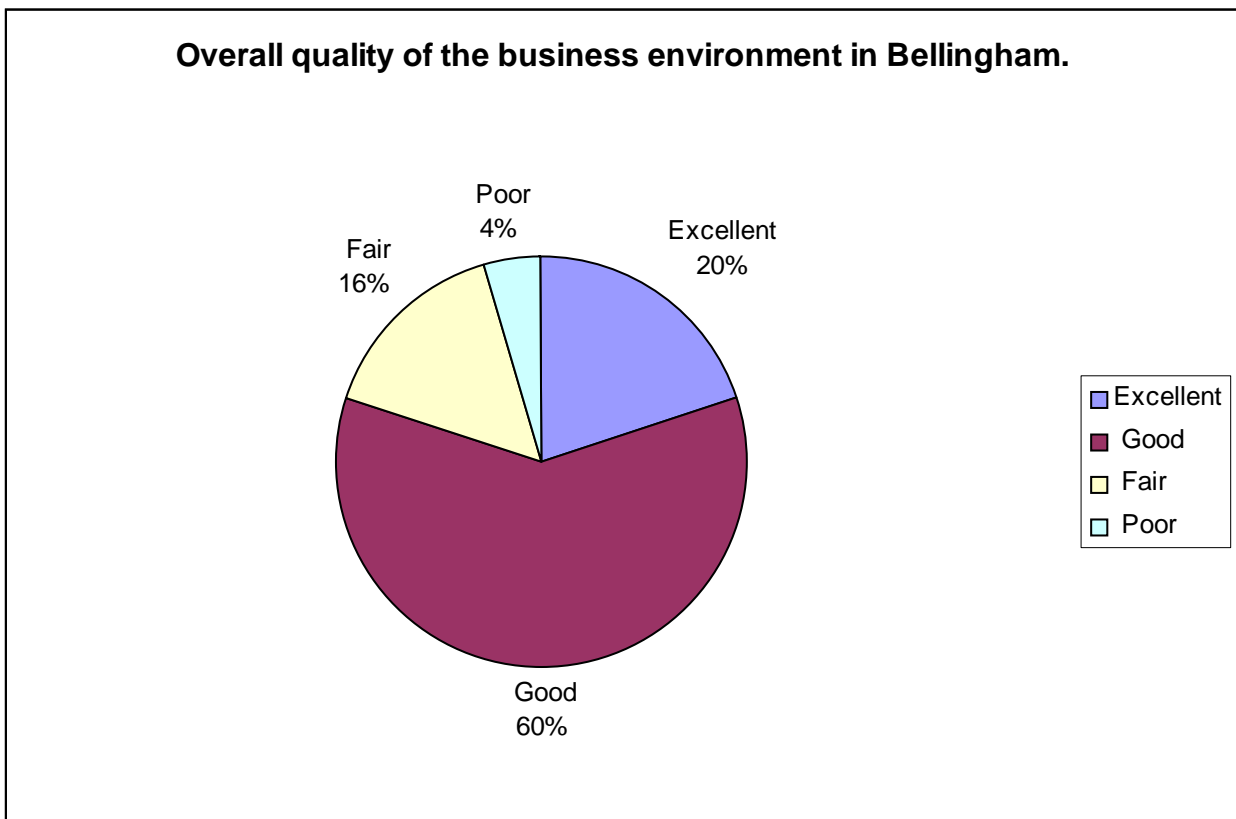
Out of 46 respondents, 20 businesses have been operating in Bellingham for more than twenty years. Four have been operating in Bellingham for less than a year. Eight businesses have been in Bellingham between 1-5 years, six have been in Bellingham for 5-10 years and eight have been operating in Bellingham between 10-20 years.



Question #4: Please rate the overall quality of the business environment in Bellingham as Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor.

One respondent skipped this question. Out of 45 respondents, 27 rated the business environment as “good.” Nine respondents rated the business environment as “excellent”, seven respondents rated the business environment as “fair” and two respondents rated the business environment as “poor.”

One respondent added that it is “always a privilege to have a business here.”



Question #5: Please rate the following municipal services as Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor:

Municipal / directional signs: Out of 46 business owners polled, 33 felt signage in town was good. Eight felt that the signage was excellent and five felt that signage was fair. No one polled felt that the signage was poor.

Street lighting: Out of 46 business owners surveyed, 27 felt there was good street lighting in the town. Seven felt that the street lighting was excellent and ten stated that the street lighting was fair. Two people surveyed stated that they felt the street lighting was poor.

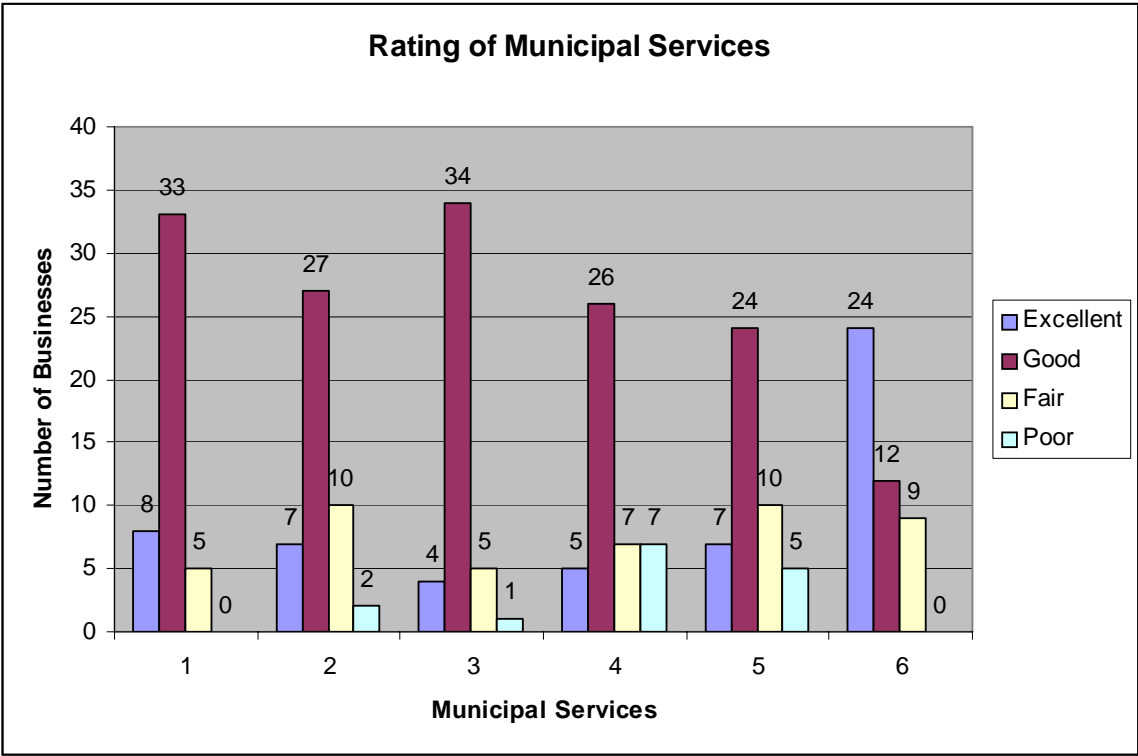
Adequacy of parking: Out of 44 respondents, 34 people felt that they had adequate parking. Five felt that their parking was fair and four felt that it was excellent. One person felt that the adequacy of their parking was poor.

Sidewalks and crosswalks: 45 out of 46 people responded to this question. 26 people polled felt that sidewalks and crosswalks in the town were good. Seven people felt that the sidewalks and crosswalks were fair and five people thought that they were good. Seven people felt that the sidewalks and crosswalks in the town were poor.

General cleanliness & maintenance of roads: Out of all 46 respondents, 24 stated that the general cleanliness and maintenance of the roads in Bellingham were good. 10 felt that they were fair. Seven thought that the road cleanliness and maintenance were excellent and five thought it was poor.

Snow removal and accessibility in winter: 45 out of 46 people responded to this question. 24 people thought snow removal and accessibility in the winter was excellent. 12 people thought it was good and 9 people thought it was fair. Nobody felt that snow removal and accessibility in winter were poor.

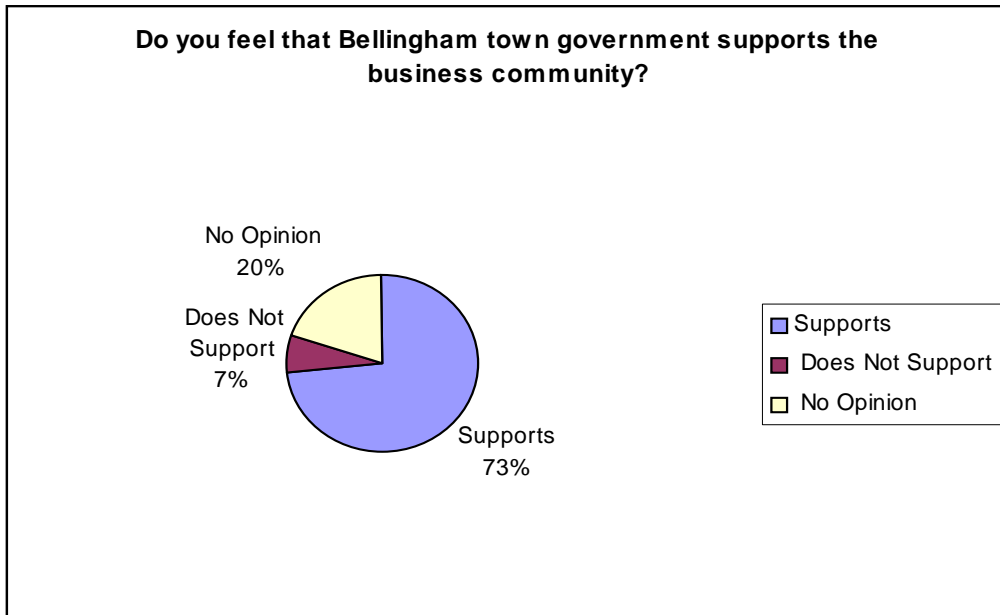
Nine people provided additional comments to this grouping of questions. There were seven comments about snow removal in the town and all of them were positive ("Snow removal best around" and "Excellent service for snow removal"). One person stated that their road was "terrible."



1. Municipal / directional signs
2. Street lighting
3. Adequacy of parking
4. Sidewalks and crosswalks
5. General cleanliness and maintenance of roads
6. Snow removal / accessibility in winter

Question #6: Do you feel that the Bellingham town government supports the business community, either Yes, No or No Opinion.

Out of the 45 people that answered this question, 33 or 73% answered “Yes” that the Bellingham town government supports the business community. Only three responded with a “No” and nine did not have an opinion as to this question.



Question #7: Are you satisfied with the following, either Yes, No or No Opinion.

Sign Permits: Out of 44 business owners polled, 18 had no opinion. 17 people state they were satisfied with the sign permit process and 9 stated that they were not satisfied with the sign permit process.

Police / Fire: Out of 45 people, 43 stated that they were satisfied with the police and fire. Two people stated that they were not satisfied with police and fire.

Traffic control: Out of 43 people surveyed, 36 were satisfied with traffic control. Three people were not satisfied with traffic control and four people had no opinion.

Current parking and access: Out of 44 people surveyed, 28 stated that they were satisfied with their current parking and access. Six people stated that they were not satisfied with their current parking and access and 10 people had no opinion.

Current location: Out of 45 people, 40 stated that they were satisfied with their current location. Three people were not satisfied with their current location and two people had no opinion about their current location.

That you are able to find the types of employees you need: Out of 45 people, 31 were satisfied that they were able to find the types of employees that they need. Four were not satisfied that they were able to find the types of employees that they need and ten had no opinion.

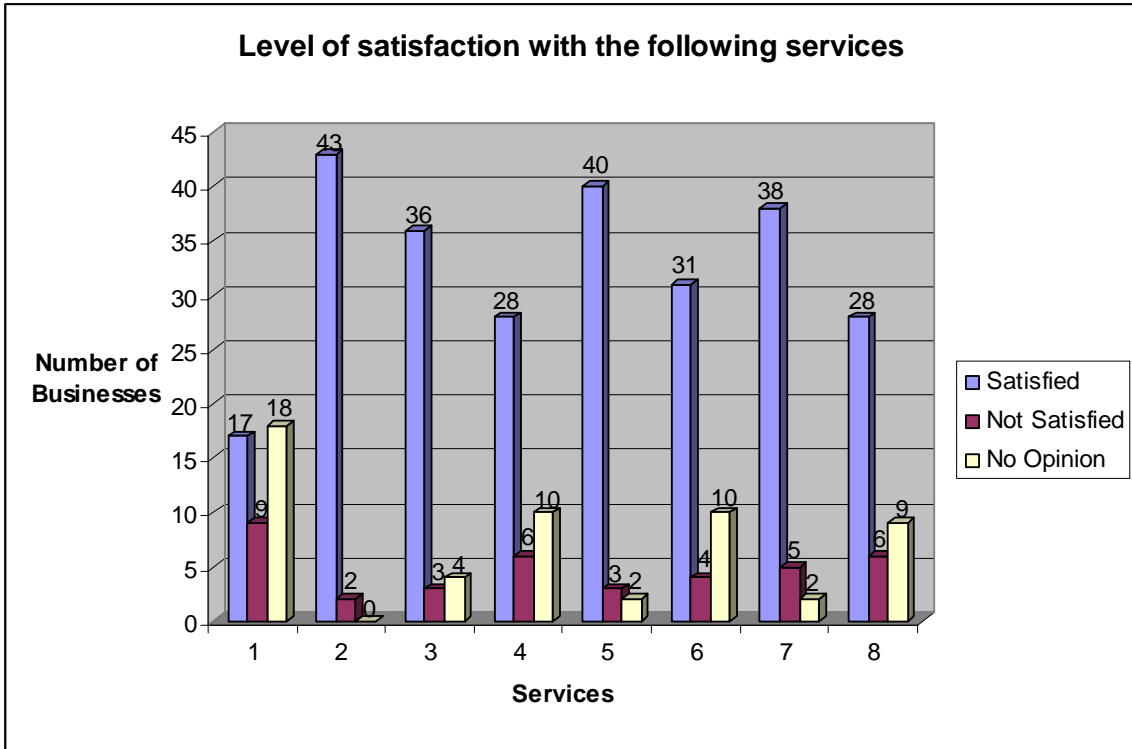
With the current business mix in Bellingham: Out of 45 respondents, 38 were satisfied with the current business mix in Bellingham. Five were not satisfied with the current business and two had no opinion.

With the value received for tax dollars: Out of 43 respondents, 28 were satisfied with the value they received for their tax dollars. Six people were not satisfied with the value they received for their tax dollars and nine people had no opinion.

Five people responded with additional comments to this section of questions. The comments were as follows:

- “Reassessment of taxes.”
- “Two many gas stations.”
- “Strict regulations should be put on home made street signs to not allow them.”

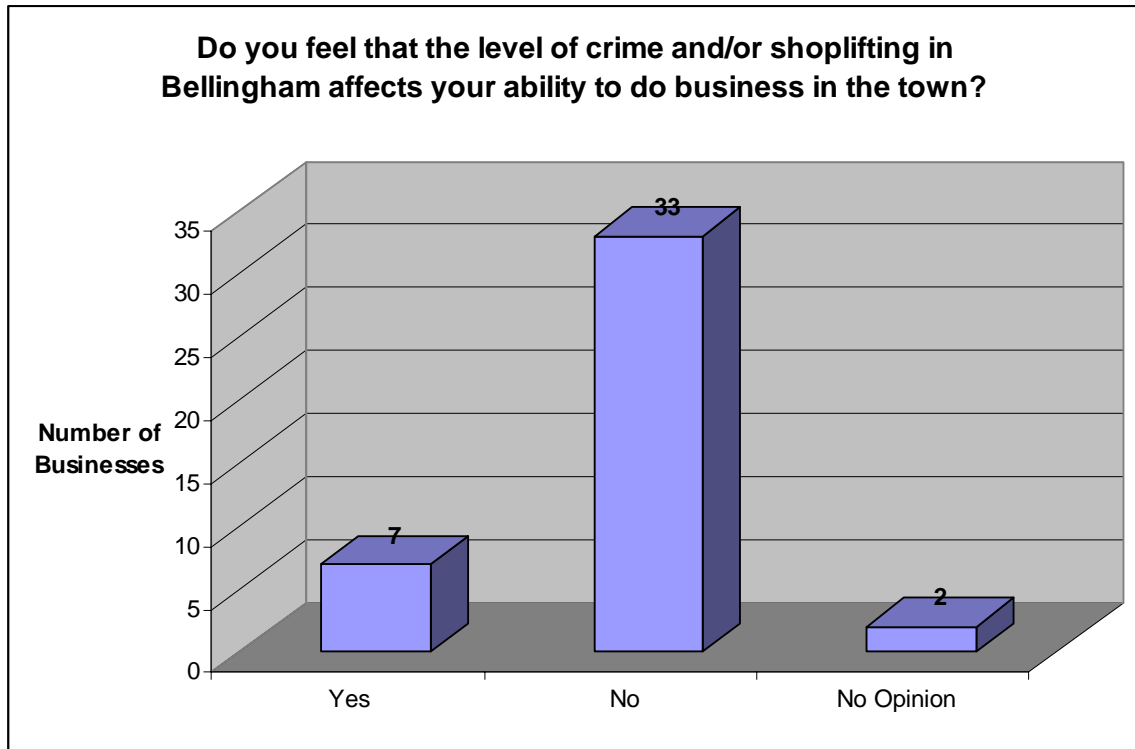
- “Issues with the Fire Dept.”
- “Taxes too high.”



1. Sign permits
2. Police / fire
3. Traffic control
4. Current parking and access
5. Current location
6. Able to find the types of employees you need
7. Current business mix in Bellingham
8. Value received for tax dollar

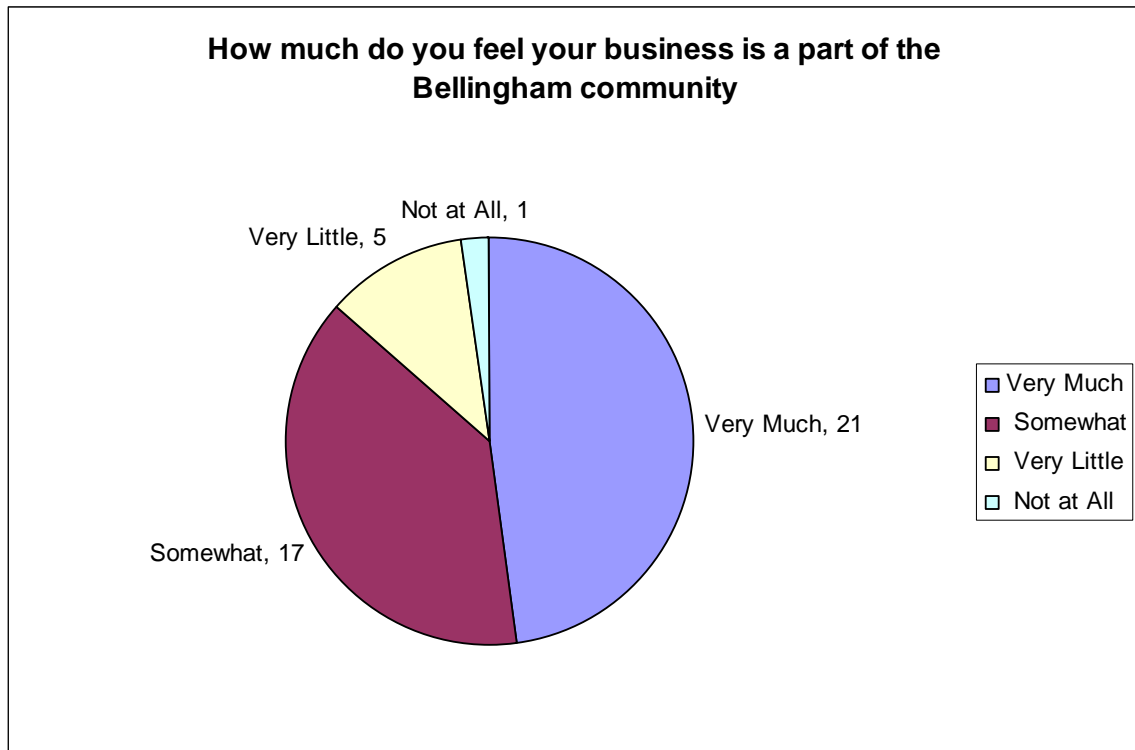
Question #8: Do you feel that the level of crime and / or shoplifting in Bellingham affects your ability to do business in the town, either Yes, No or No Opinion.

Out of 42 respondents, 33 people felt that the level of crime in the town did not affect their ability to business. Seven people felt that it did affect their ability to do business in Bellingham. Two people had no opinion.



Question #9: How much do you feel that your business is a part of the Bellingham community, either Very Much, Somewhat, Very Little or Not at All.

Out of 44 people, 21 felt that their business was very much a part of Bellingham. 17 people felt that their business was somewhat a part of Bellingham. Five felt that their business was a part of Bellingham only a very little and one respondent felt that their business was not at all a part of the Bellingham community.



Question #10: How important are the following components needed to support local businesses? Please answer with Important or Not Important.

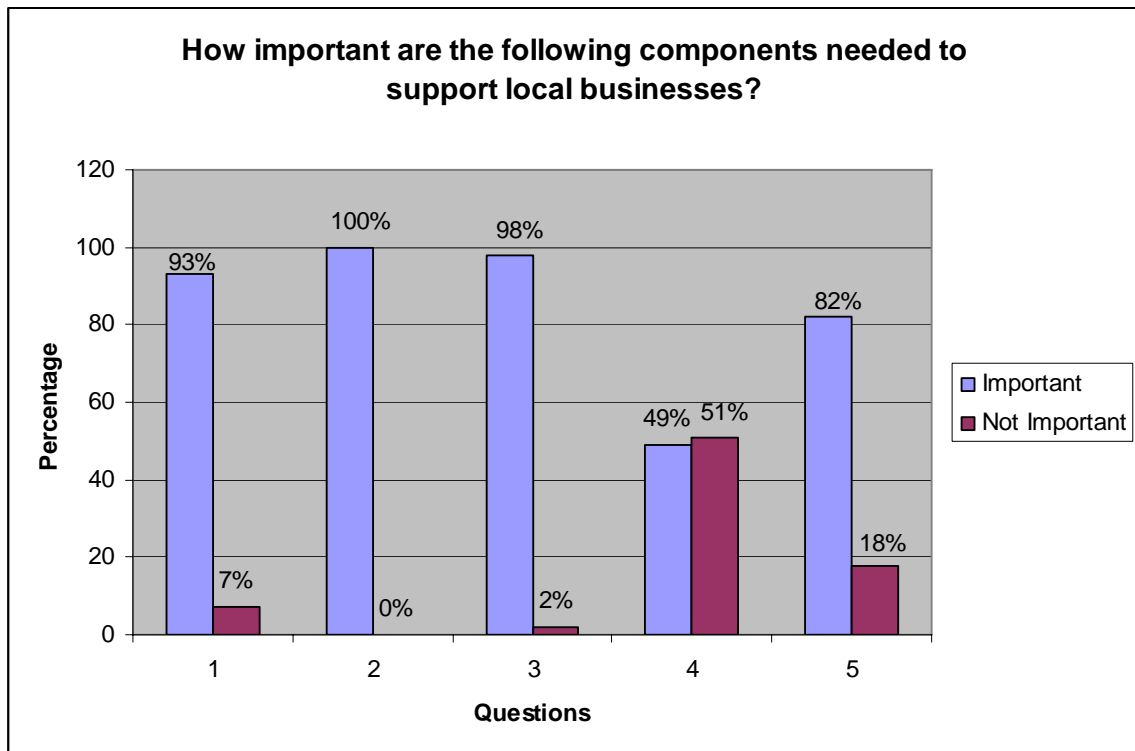
A growing population: Out of 45 people, 42 people or 93% felt that a growing population was important to support local businesses. Only three people (7%) felt that it was not necessary to support local businesses.

An attractive building and streetscape: All 44 (100%) respondents felt that an attractive building and streetscape was important to support their business.

Neighborhood perception: 44 out of 45 people or 98% felt that neighborhood perception was important to support local businesses. Only one person (2%) felt that it was not important.

Access to employees: Out of 41 respondents, 20 people (49%) felt that having access to employees to be very important to support local businesses, while 21 people (51%) felt it was not important.

Infrastructure improvements: Out of 44 people, 36 people (82%) felt that infrastructure improvements were important to support local businesses, while 8 people (18%) felt it was not important.



1. A growing population
2. An attractive building and streetscape
3. Neighborhood perception
4. Access to employees
5. Infrastructure improvements

Question #11: How beneficial would the following types of industry be to your business and to the Town of Bellingham. Please answer with Beneficial or Not Beneficial.

Light industrial, manufacturing or warehousing: Out of 45 people, 29 people (64%) felt that light industrial, manufacturing or warehousing would be beneficial to their business and the town. 16 people (36%) felt it would not be beneficial.

Environmentally friendly businesses or practices: Out of 45 respondents, 40 (89%) felt that environmentally friendly businesses or practices would be beneficial to their business and the town. Five people (11%) responded that it would not be beneficial.

Farmer's market and agriculture: Out of 45 respondents, 36 (80%) felt that a farmer's market or agriculture would be beneficial to their business or the town. Nine people (20%) felt that it would not be beneficial.

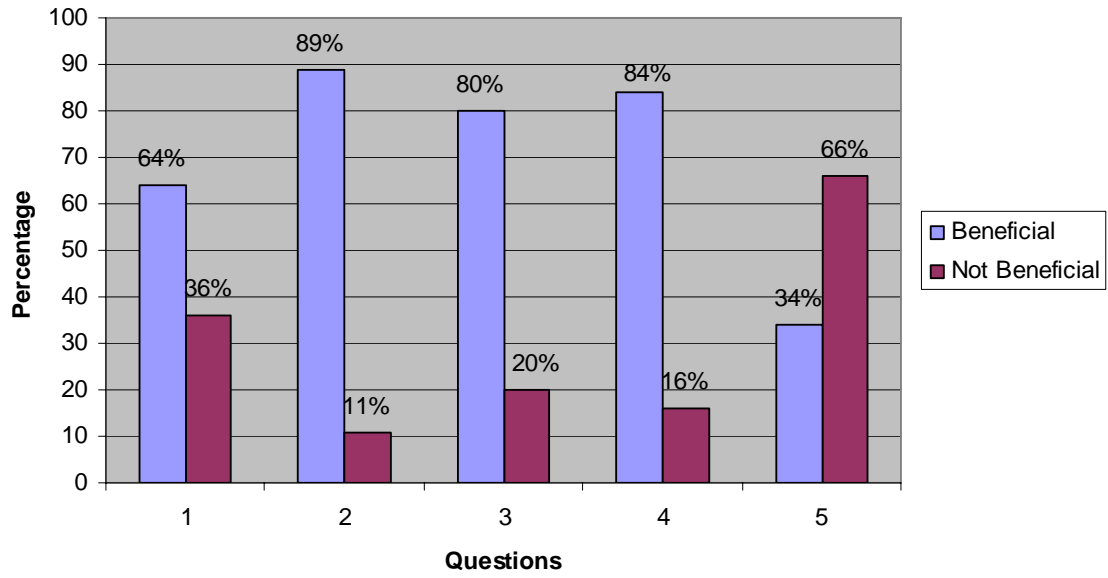
Locally owned commercial (shops, restaurants, etc): Out of 45 respondents, 38 (84%) felt that locally owned commercial would be beneficial for their business or the town. Seven people (16%) felt that it would not be beneficial.

Large retail: Out of 44 respondents, 29 (66%) felt that it would not be beneficial to their business or the town to have large retail. 15 people (34%) felt that having large retail would be beneficial to their business or the town.

There were 19 people that had additional comments relative to this section. Seven of the business owners polled stated that they did not want any more big business in the town. Five people stated that they love Bellingham and it is a nice town. Other comments included the following:

- "Traffic at Market Basket and Walmart horrendous."
- "Very satisfied with the town of Bellingham."
- "Want to see more Mom and Pop stores. Keep Bellingham a rural district."
- "Need to improve the appearance of the small businesses."
- "Need to have more upscale restaurants in Bellingham."
- "Road improvements, especially on Mill Street."
- "Nice if town would support local businesses. Town should use local services rather than outside services."

How beneficial would the following types of industry be to your business?



1. Light industrial, manufacturing or warehousing
2. Environmentally friendly businesses or practices
3. Farmer's market and agriculture
4. Locally owned commercial shops
5. Large retail

Do you

- Rent
 - If rent, do you feel your rent is high, low or average?

- own

Number of employees (including yourself)? Full time _____

Part time _____

How many years has your business been in Bellingham?

- Less than 1
- 1 to 5
- 5 to 10
- 10 to 20
- More than 20

Please rate the overall quality of the business environment in Bellingham as Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor.

Please rate the following municipal services as Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Municipal /directional signs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Street lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequacy of parking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sidewalks and crosswalks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General cleanliness & maintenance of roads	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Snow removal and accessibility in winter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you feel that the Bellingham town government supports the business community, either Yes, No or No Opinion.

Are you satisfied with the following, either Yes, No or No Opinion?

	Yes	No	No Opinion
Sign permits	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police and Fire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traffic control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current access?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current location?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
That you can find the types of employees you need?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
With the current business mix in Bellingham?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
With the value received for tax dollars	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you feel that the level of crime and/or shoplifting in Bellingham affects your ability to do business in the town, either Yes, No, or No Opinion.

How much do you feel your business is a part of the Bellingham community, either Very Much, Somewhat, Very Little, Not at All.

How important are the following components needed to support local businesses? Please answer with Important or Not Important

	Important	Not Important
A growing population	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
An attractive building and streetscape	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighborhood perception	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Infrastructure improvements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How beneficial would the following types of industry be to your business and to the Town of Bellingham? Please answer with Beneficial or Not Beneficial.

	Beneficial	Not Beneficial
Light industrial, manufacturing, or warehousing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmentally friendly businesses or practices	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Farmer's market and agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Locally owned commercial (shops, restaurants etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Large retail	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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1. Do you..

Answered: 46 Skipped: 0



2. If rent do you feel your rent is:

Answered: 5 Skipped: 41



3. Comments about rent:

Answered: 1 Skipped: 45

- Owns business, rents building

4. Number of Employees (including yourself)?

Answered: 45 Skipped: 1



5. Number of Employees (including yourself)?

Answered: 30 Skipped: 16

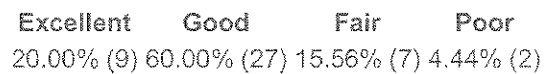


6. How many years has your business been in Bellingham?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 0



7. Please rate the overall quality of the business environment in Bellingham as Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor?



8. Comments:

Answered: 1 Skipped: 45

- always a priveledge to have a business here

9. Please rate the following municipal services as Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Municipal / directional signs	17.39% (8)	71.74% (33)	10.87% (5)	0.00% (0)
Street lighting	15.22% (7)	58.70% (27)	21.74% (10)	4.35% (2)
Adequacy of parking	9.09% (4)	77.27% (34)	11.36% (5)	2.27% (1)
Sidewalks and crosswalks	11.11% (5)	57.78% (26)	15.56% (7)	15.56% (7)
General cleanliness & maintenance of roads	15.22% (7)	52.17% (24)	21.74% (10)	10.87% (5)
Snow removal / accessibility in winter	53.33% (24)	26.67% (12)	20.00% (9)	0.00% (0)

10. Comments:

- ☑ Answered: 9 Skipped: 37
- highway dept does a great job
 - Snow removal best around.
 - Excellant snow removal. Very satisfied.
 - My road is terrible.
 - Best snow removal around.
 - Bellingham is know for its excellent snow removal.
 - Excellant service for snow removal.
 - Snow removal - excellent!!!
 - Travel from Medway

11. Do you feel that the Bellingham town government supports the business community either Yes, No, or No opinion?

Yes	No	No opinion
73.33% (33)	6.67% (3)	20.00% (9)

12. Comments:

☑ Answered: 0 Skipped: 46

13. Are you satisfied with the following, either Yes, No or No opinion?

	Yes	No	No opinion
Sign Permits	38.64% (17)	20.45% (9)	40.91% (18)
Police / Fire	95.56% (43)	4.44% (2)	0.00% (0)
Traffic control	83.72% (36)	6.98% (3)	9.30% (4)
Current parking and access?	63.64% (28)	13.64% (6)	22.73% (10)
Current location?	88.89% (40)	6.67% (3)	4.44% (2)
That you are able to find the types of employees you need?	68.89% (31)	8.89% (4)	22.22% (10)
With the current business mix in Bellingham?	84.44% (38)	11.11% (5)	4.44% (2)
With the value received for tax dollars	65.12% (28)	13.95% (6)	20.93% (9)

14. Comments:

- ☑ Answered: 5 Skipped: 41
- reassessment of taxes
 - Two many gas stations
 - Strict regulations should be put on home made street signs to not allow them.
 - Issues with the Fire Dept.
 - Taxes to high

15. Do you feel that the level of crime and/or shoplifting in Bellingham affect your ability to do business in the Town? either Yes, No or No opinion

Yes	No	No opinion
16.67% (7)	78.57% (33)	4.76% (2)

16. Comments:

☑ Answered: 0 Skipped: 46

17. How much do you feel your business is a part of the Bellingham community, either Very Much, Somewhat, Very Little or Not at all

Very Much	Somewhat	Very Little	Not At All
47.73% (21)	38.64% (17)	11.36% (5)	2.27% (1)

18. Comments:

☑ Answered: 1 Skipped: 45
 • small clientel

19. How important are the following components needed to support local businesses? Please answer with Important or Not important:

	Important	Not Important
A growing population	93.33% (42)	6.67% (3)
An attractive building and streetscape	100.00% (44)	0.00% (0)
Neighborhood perception	97.78% (44)	2.22% (1)
Access to employees	48.78% (20)	51.22% (21)
Infrastructure improvements	81.82% (36)	18.18% (8)

20. Comments:

☑ Answered: 0 Skipped: 46

21. How beneficial would the following types of industry be to you business and to the town of Bellingham: Please answer with Beneficial or Not Beneficial.

	Beneficial	Not Beneficial
Light industrial, manufacturing or warehousing	64.44% (29)	35.56% (16)
Environmentally friendly business practices	88.89% (40)	11.11% (5)
Farmer's market and agriculture	80.00% (36)	20.00% (9)
Locally owned commercial (shops, restaurants, etc)	84.44% (38)	15.56% (7)
Large retail	34.09% (15)	65.91% (29)

22. Comments:

☑ Answered: 19 Skipped: 27

- No more big business.
- No more big business.
- Traffic at Market Basket and Walmart horrendous.
- No more large retail.
- I love Bellinagham, I've been here all my life.
- Love Bellingham, wish I could live here.
- Large business is putting the little guy out of business. No more big business.
- Bellingham has enough big business. Let's keep Bellingham a small rualal town.
- Very satisfied witht the town of Bellingham.
- Want to see more Mom and Pop stores. Keep Bellingham a rural district.
- Don't need more big business in Bellingham.
- Need to improve the appearances of the small businesses
- Need to have more upscale restaurants in Bellingham
- No more big business.
- Road improvements especially on Mill St.
- Nice if town would support local business. Town to use local services rather than outside services.
- Excellent town to do business in.
- Nice town.
- Nice town, from Hopedale, Hopedale should be ashamed.

23. Comments:

Answered: 0 Skipped: 46

24. Additional comments:

Answered: 0 Skipped: 46

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Home Page