



# Staff Report

## Administration

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**Report To:** Economic Development Advisory Committee  
**Meeting Date:** January 11, 2021  
**Report Number:** FAF.21.013  
**Subject:** Economic Development Survey Results  
**Prepared by:** Carling Fee, Communications and Economic Development Coordinator and Tim Hendry, Manager of Communications and Economic Development

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### A. Recommendations

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THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee receive Staff Report FAF.21,013, entitled “Economic Development Survey Results”;

AND THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee acknowledges that the survey responses will be analyzed with resulting action items incorporated into the final draft of the Economic Development Strategy;

AND THAT the Economic Development Advisory Committee requests staff to provide the Economic Development Survey Results to Council for information at a future meeting.

### B. Overview

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This report provides the Economic Development Advisory Committee with the results from the Economic Development Survey and requests the same information be provided to Council.

### C. Background

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The Economic Development Survey was available between January 16, 2020 and February 19, 2020.

Two separate surveys were conducted:

- 1) Public & Resident Survey – 370 Responses
- 2) Business Community Survey – 213 Responses

The survey was promoted through the following tactics:

- Press release sent to media and community distribution lists
- E-Blast to website email subscribers
- Newsletter sent to YourView subscribers
- Social media messages posted to Town's Twitter account
- Mailed post cards (6000 mailed directly to TBM households)
- Road signs (25 signs located at key intersections)
- Radio campaign (95.1 Peak FM & CFOS 560)
- Chamber of Commerce Road Sign

## **D. Analysis**

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The survey results provide an in-depth and valuable snapshot into the Town's economic development efforts and the associated views and opinions of residents regarding Town business and operations prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Understanding that the survey was launched prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the results should be analyzed through the understanding and context of the impacts to businesses resulting from the pandemic.

To gather data and to understand the impacts, the Town supported the Grey County Economic Development Department as they conducted three COVID-19 Business Impact Surveys. The summary of the survey results is attached to this report for information.

All survey results will be analyzed in detail by Town staff and the Economic Development Sub-Committee. Associated tactics will be incorporated into the final draft of the Economic Development Strategy. The summarized results of the Economic Development Survey are attached to this report.

## **E. Strategic Priorities**

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### **1. Communications and Engagement**

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders.

## **F. Environmental Impacts**

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No environmental impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

## **G. Financial Impact**

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No financial impacts are anticipated as a result of this report.

## **H. In consultation with**

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Shawn Everitt, Chief Administrative Officer

Peter Bordignon, Chair of Economic Development Advisory Sub Committee

## **I. Public Engagement**

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The topic of this Staff Report has not been subject to a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Carling Fee, [economicdevelopment@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:economicdevelopment@thebluemountains.ca).

## **J. Attached**

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1. Summarized Survey Results – Public & Resident
2. Summarized Survey Results – Business Community
3. Grey County Business Impact Survey Summary

Respectfully Submitted,

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Carling Fee  
Communications and Economic Development Coordinator

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Tim Hendry  
Manager of Communications and Economic Development

For more information, please contact:

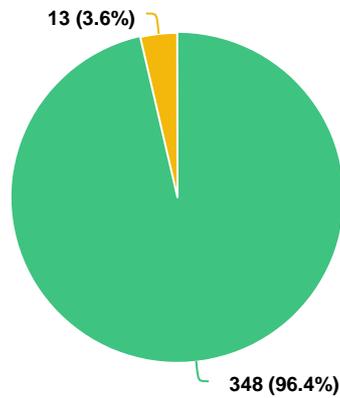
Carling Fee  
[economicdevelopment@thebluemountains.ca](mailto:economicdevelopment@thebluemountains.ca)  
519-599-3131 extension 269

**Survey Summary and Analysis**  
March, 2020  
**Economic Development  
Public & Resident Survey  
2020**

**PROJECT: Economic Development Strategy  
Your View The Blue Mountains**



**Q1** This survey is intended for the general public and residents in the Town of The Blue Mountains. Please ensure that you are completing the correct survey.

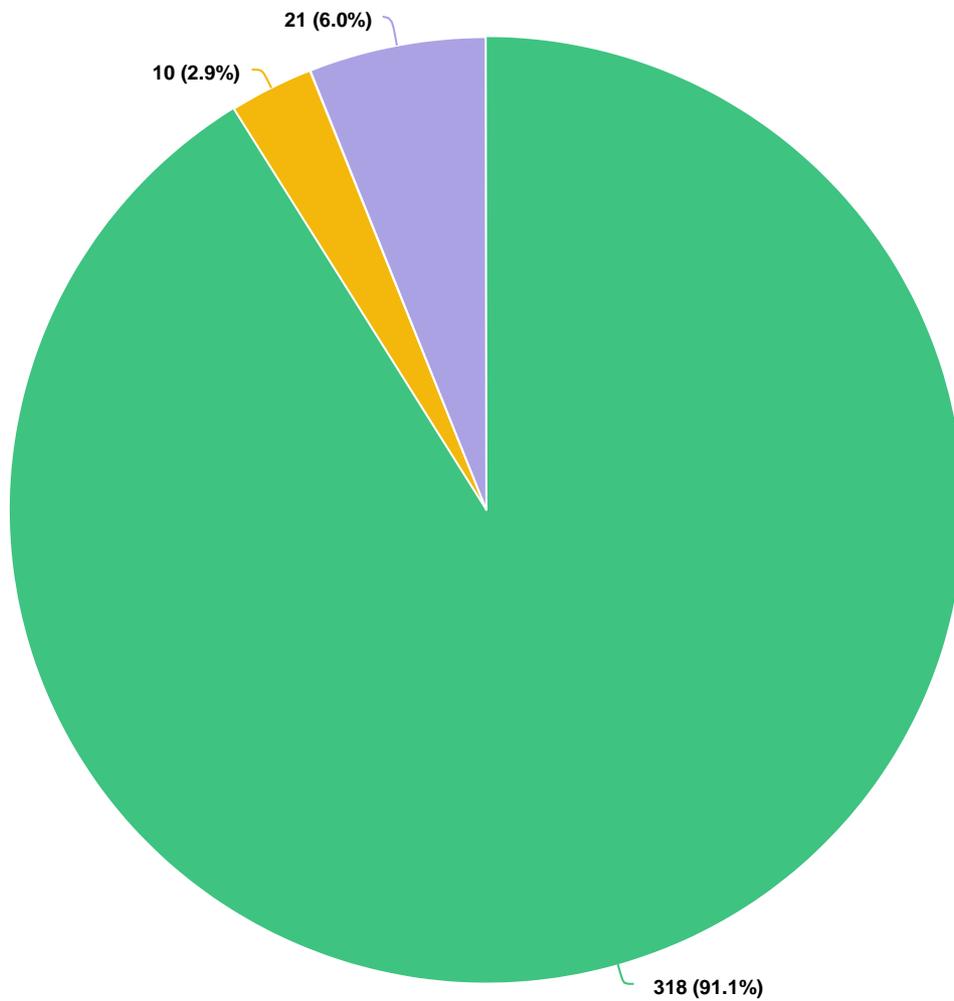


**Question options**

- Yes, I would like to proceed with the general public and resident survey.
- No, I would like to complete the business community survey.

*Optional question (361 responses, 3 skipped)*

**Q2 Please select the option that best describes yourself:**



**Question options**

- I am a resident of the Town of The Blue Mountains
- I live outside of the Town, but I am an employee of a business in the Town of The Blue Mountains
- I am both a Town resident and an employee of a business in the Town of The Blue Mountains

*Optional question (349 responses, 15 skipped)*

**Q3 | What makes the Town of The Blue Mountains a great place to live, work and/or raise a family?**

**Quality of Life:** Most respondents stated that what makes the Town of The Blue Mountains a great place to live, work and/or raise a family is the quality of life. Many respondents love that it offers an active lifestyle, laid back pace, with ample outdoor recreational activities (skiing being the primary draw with golf, biking, fishing and hiking also cited), safety, quietness, and four-season community. The small town feel, differentiation from the city, ability to live a balanced and slower pace of life as well as the variety of activities were also named as contributors that make the Town of The Blue Mountains a great place to live, work and/or raise a family.

**Natural Beauty and Environment:** Many comments from respondents stated that what makes the Town of The Blue Mountains a great place to live, work and/or raise a family is the natural beauty and environment of the Town. The geographic location of the Town, greenspace, fresh / clean air, beaches, fresh water of Georgian Bay, trails, hiking opportunities, fishing, etc. is what makes the Town of The Blue Mountains a great place to live, work and/or raise a family. Many residents love that the Town is right by Georgian Bay and have access to clean water. An abundance of natural resources was cited as benefits to living and working in the Town.

**Sense of Community:** The small-town charm was stated by many residents who have a friendly or familiar relationship with each other and a feel friendly sense of community. Respondents appreciate the bond and relationships built and stated that this was one of the reasons that also make the Town of The Blue Mountains a great place to live, work, and/or raise a family. Respondents also stated that there is a vibrant community spirit within the Town and that people are passionate and proud about where they live and work. They also stated that safety and low crime rate is a contributor to the Town being a great place to live, work and/or raise a family. Community organizations and facilities (e.g., BVO, library, etc.) were cited as great ways to connect with one another.

**Retirement Community:** Some respondents stated that the Town of The Blue Mountains is a great place to retire due to its proximity to Toronto (90 minutes away), Georgian Bay, the mountains, safety, and recreational opportunities for retirees.

**Other:** Shops & Restaurants (specifically not big box or chains), Amenities, Education (for youth), Family Environment, Proximity to Collingwood, Blend of Visitors & Residents With Activities for Both, Vibrant arts & culture community, Little/no traffic, Low density, Accessibility to Town Hall and Council, Rentability of property.

**Some of the main phrases/words mentioned included:** Small town feel/community, lots of activities, outdoor activities, four seasons/year-round, natural environment, recreational activities, Georgian Bay, natural beauty, lucky to live here, community, and friendly.

*Optional question (340 responses, 24 skipped)*

#### Q4 What are the main challenges of living in the Town of The Blue Mountains?

**Cost of Living & Attainable Housing:** Respondents cited the high cost of living as a main challenge of living in the Town of The Blue Mountains. Residents are concerned about the potential of being forced out due to high property taxes, affordability for median-income families, affordable housing and affordable shopping. Residents also noted the difficulty in finding affordable options for groceries and shopping locally and resort to shopping in Collingwood and other communities where it's more affordable, causing leakage. Above all, housing is the primary concern for residents as it is deemed unaffordable for many median and low-income families.

**Business Offerings:** The lack of diverse and affordable business offerings was listed as a challenge for residents living in the Town of The Blue Mountains. Many respondents stated that the local shops offering high-end retail items appeals to tourists but not locals. These respondents would like to see an increase in retail offerings that cater specifically to local residents and are affordable.

**Employment:** Respondents cited employment as a main challenge for residents living in the Town of The Blue Mountains. Respondents mentioned that many businesses provide poor wages and cause economic disparity in the population. Although many part-time jobs are available, there is a lack of full-time jobs in the area that offer compensation relative to the cost of living in the Town of The Blue Mountains.

**Infrastructure (not including transportation and roads):** Respondents mentioned infrastructure as a challenge of for residents living in the Town of The Blue Mountains. Infrastructure concerns mentioned include:

- Lack of sidewalks
- Unsafe bike/cycling lanes
- Lack of Parking
- No community centre
- Lack of turning & passing lanes causes traffic
- No high school
- Hwy 26 beautification
- Signage
- Internet & Wi-Fi connectivity issues make it difficult to have a stable connection and work from home
- No street lamps in Craigleith
- Lack of public washrooms & water filling stations
- Lack of EV car charging stations.
- Extremely wheelchair inaccessible with over half of downtown businesses inaccessible and 50% of restaurants with no accessible bathroom.

Many respondents request that growth be stopped/ managed until the existing infrastructure can support it. Many Clarksburg respondents lobbied for water, septic and sewage services to their area to increase quality of life and development.

**Transportation:** A recurring residential challenge mentioned was transportation. Many find it challenging to get from one place to another and wish to have local public transit, with service to Collingwood and Meaford. Public transportation such as buses, taxis and Uber are strongly recommended throughout the survey to ensure residents without a vehicle can get to their destination safely and affordably, especially seniors and youth. Some residents wish to have transportation links from the Town of The Blue Mountains to the Greater Toronto Area. Residents are concerned about the increase in traffic, specifically on Hwy 26, noting an increase in volume and speed, making it dangerous for walking during peak hours. Residents also stated that public transportation will greatly assist with filling the employment gap, as employees without vehicles and those from neighbouring communities can work in the Town

**Medical Care:** Respondents noted medical care as a challenge for residents in the Town of The Blue Mountains, specifically for the elderly population. Respondents cited difficulties accessing health specialists, lab services, a walk-in clinic and family doctors willing to accept new patients; they would need to go out of Town to access these services.

**Development:** Some respondents in the Town of The Blue Mountains cited concerns about over-development in the community, the changing landscape and density of the area. They feel that the scale and pace of development has been too fast and the Town is losing its "small-town feel". A theme of NIMBY-ism towards development and growth was evident from a few respondents that would like to see no change at all to the community. Many respondents have concerns about development impacting the natural landscape and environment, which initially attracted them to live here.

- **Volume:** A lot of full-time resident respondents mentioned that with tourists, weekenders, and part-time residents, the area is regularly over-crowded and busy, especially on weekends which causes traffic. Full-time resident respondents hoped that the influx of tourists and weekenders coming in can respect the safety and preserve the natural beauty of the area.

**Recreational Opportunities:** A less prominent concern but mentioned by some respondents is a lack of affordable recreational opportunities within the Town. Respondents are concerned that with fewer recreational opportunities, come fewer healthy activities for youth. Recommendations were made to develop a community swimming pool, indoor multipurpose facility, fitness centre and affordable/discounted recreation activities.

## **Q5 In your opinion, what types of businesses would thrive in this community?**

Respondents mentioned a variety of businesses that they think would thrive in this community. Businesses/industries included:

- Eco-friendly businesses
- Light Industrial
- Technological / IT / Software
- Agricultural (emphasis on organic and local)
- Experiential (e.g., bowling, roller skating, pottery-making, etc.)
- Retail
- Food & Beverage (e.g., food trucks, ethnic food options, vegan)

Responses were mixed with regards to the desire for box stores in the Town. For example, Costco was suggested as a business that would thrive and succeed in the Town. Conversely, many respondents stated they would not want a Costco in the area and would rather travel out of town for big box shopping. They also opposed discount franchise stores such as Dollarama or Dollar Tree opening in the community. Regardless, the consensus from residents was the need for affordable retail and businesses in the Town.

Residents in the Town of The Blue Mountains felt that recreational businesses would thrive in this community. Upgrading the Community Centre to include: a multipurpose space, swimming pool, basketball court, gym, fitness centre and curling rink were suggested. There was a mix of responses regarding the proposed Wakeboard Park, with strong opinions for and against.

An affordable grocer is something residents believe would thrive in the Town as there is currently only one grocery store in the Town of The Blue Mountains (Foodland). Introducing another grocery retailer will provide residents with more options and would reduce the amount of travel out of Town where more affordable grocery options exist. Specialty food stores such as a bakery and butchery were suggested as well.

Multiple respondents indicated that the Town does not need any more gas stations, pizza joints or coffee shops.

Other businesses that respondents thought could thrive in this community include:

- Childcare
- Trades
- Innovation hub / Entrepreneurship centre
- Services for seniors (i.e., personal support, delivery services for food, pharma, healthcare, etc.)
- Cannabis growers / retailers
- Health care services
- Theatre / Gallery / Performing Arts / Music Hall
- Fitness
- Tech start-ups
- Garden centre/nursery
- Hotels
- Affordable Department stores (e.g., Giant Tiger)
- Car dealerships
- Casinos
- Office supply stores
- Sporting goods stores
- Telecommuting businesses
- Eco-tourism

Overall, the main concern regarding businesses was affordability for residents.

*Optional question (307 responses, 57 skipped)*

**Q6 What is your vision for the Town of The Blue Mountains economy over the next 5 years?**

**Affordable Living:** Respondents hoped that the Town of The Blue Mountains will be a place that is affordable over the next 5 years. Affordable housing, affordable retail options, affordable food and hospitality are all mentioned as desires. Some respondents expressed concern that they won't be able to afford to continue living in the Town in 5 years as property taxes continue to increase. There is also concern that median-income and young-families will not be able to afford living here.

**Community Engagement & Initiatives:** Over the next 5 years, respondents envisioned the Town of The Blue Mountains to be a community that is transparent with communication and provides a variety of engagement opportunities such as events and festivals (e.g., enhancing the Farmers Market experience). Some respondents hoped for an increase in activities and facilities for kids (e.g., basketball courts, swimming programs, volleyball, etc.).

**Community & Economic Development:** Some respondents mentioned that they expect growth in the Town's economy over the next five years and that there should be economic diversification, well-paying jobs, and no shoulder seasons. A strong middle-class economy with a focus on tourism and family is among the recommendations. Tourism, agriculture, small businesses, and entrepreneurial support is encouraged while further diversifying our economy. A few residents also hoped to see more diversity in the Town of The Blue Mountains with respect to age, race, ethnicity, young and mature families, mixture of income classes, cultural activities, etc.

**Sustainable Development & Growth:** Although some respondents hoped to see an abundance of growth in the Town of The Blue Mountains over the next five years, the majority of responses indicated that growth needs to be managed/slowed as the current housing market and infrastructure cannot support increased and fast-paced growth. Many responses felt that growth should be organic and that the environment and preservation of natural areas (farmlands included) within the Town should be considered first and foremost. Some would like to see the Town become an environmental leader and would like to see local businesses lead the way in helping transition the economy from linear to circular (away from single-use plastics), from fossil fuels to renewables, and lower GHG emissions. Overall, respondents hoped that with growth, a strong emphasis and attention to the natural environment will be prioritized while continuing to use the Sustainable Pillars as the guidelines for growth.

**Expansion of Businesses & Services:** In the next five years, respondents envision more businesses and services to meet the growing demands within the Town of The Blue Mountains. Recommendations include:

- Accommodation
- Medical and health care services
- Schools
- Educational opportunities
- Libraries
- Private services
- Counseling services
- Leveraging the beer / wine / cider makers of the region and adopting the "Niagara of the North" tagline

Some respondents feel that the Town's economy is too reliant on tourism and hoped that diversification in every day, year-round businesses and services will be available in 5 years. Others hope that the Town grows its tourism sector and becomes

recognized as a top Ontario destination.

**Infrastructure:** Common themes throughout the survey continue to emerge with regards to infrastructure in the next 5 years, including:

- Increased medical services to meet the needs of an aging and expanding population.
- Wayfinding / better signage
- Participation in conversations re: local airports/droneports that transport people and goods via new electric, hybrid air and land vehicles
- Housing and support for residents with developmental challenges & disabilities
- Public transportation within TOBM as well as between TOBM and surrounding communities (i.e., Collingwood, Owen Sound)
- Increased traffic control / reduction measures
- Increased parking
- Improved plowing in winter
- Bike rack installation
- EV parking / charging stations
- Sidewalks and walking paths
- Water and sewage services in Clarksburg

**Other visions:** Government (maintaining taxes and a balanced budget), Little/no development /Avoid a 'suburbia' feel (NIMBYism, avoid fast food, big box, gas stations, etc.), Agricultural expansion and support.

**Q7 | What roles and actions do you feel the Town could take to further support our local economy and businesses?**

**Attainable Housing:** Respondents felt that attainable housing is a primary role and action the Town could take to further support our local economy and businesses. Many respondents stated that the Town is on the right track and lots of progress has been made and hoped that the Town will continue to commit to attainable/affordable housing solutions. This is a big part of current employment issues and leakage. With affordable housing, the Town will be able to attract all income groups and ages, creating a more diverse community. Some respondents feel that the Town should permit AirBnB type accommodations.

**Building & Development:** Respondents felt that streamlining permits and development approvals is an action the Town could take to support the local economy and businesses. Offering tax breaks/incentives and building fee discounts while controlling the rate of development will be essential over the next 5 years. Respondents also hope that there are development protections in place to ensure adequate access to parkland, shoreline, protection of trees (tree canopy plan) and the protection of natural resources, including creeks and rivers.

**Community Services & Engagement:** A role respondents feel the Town could take to further support our local economy and businesses are developing community facilities and programs. Among the suggestions that would create a vibrant and exciting community:

- Community swimming pool
- Recreation centre
- Outdoor skating in the winter
- Sports clubs
- Paved ice-trails
- Lions Park utilization
- Splash pads
- Activity centre
- Festivals for all-ages
- Support for a foodbank

**Economic Development:** Regarding Economic Development, respondents felt that the Town could offer grants, tax incentives, 1:1 business support and reduce 'red tape' for new businesses to start-up in the area. Respondents would like to see the Town create a hub for new businesses and entrepreneurs. Promotion and marketing of the Town of The Blue Mountains as a great place to live, work and raise a family is a suggestion to attract young families to the area. Some residents expressed confusion regarding what is permitted by the Town and what is not (i.e., wake park resistance vs. pizzapizza and gas station green lights). Compared to towns like Niagara on the Lake, some feel the TOBM and its businesses could be held to a higher aesthetic standard.

**Natural Environment:** Respondents believe that the Town plays a key role in the sustainability of the natural environment in the Town of The Blue Mountains. Creating financial or other incentives (awards/certification) for sustainable business practices with regards to waste, energy use, composting and good social governance will lead to a sustainable and environmentally friendly economy. Sustainability is an ongoing and long-term goal and should always be considered when making any decisions. A few respondents hope that the Town invests in renewable energy and sustainable practices, such as: solar and wind energy and EV charging stations.

**Sustainable Infrastructure & Transportation:** This topic was mentioned frequently throughout both surveys and was specifically mentioned heavily throughout this question, as respondents believe the Town can solve infrastructure and transportation issues, such as:

- Wayfinding signage for visitors
- Enhancing small town feel/beautification
- Traffic management/control
- Traffic lights on Hwy 26
- More parking in commercial areas
- Public transit throughout the Town and into other municipalities
- Water and sewage to Clarksburg
- Speeding in certain areas (installing speed bumps, signage on streets)
- Internet/cellular signal and speed
- More sidewalks for walkability
- Sidewalk maintenance

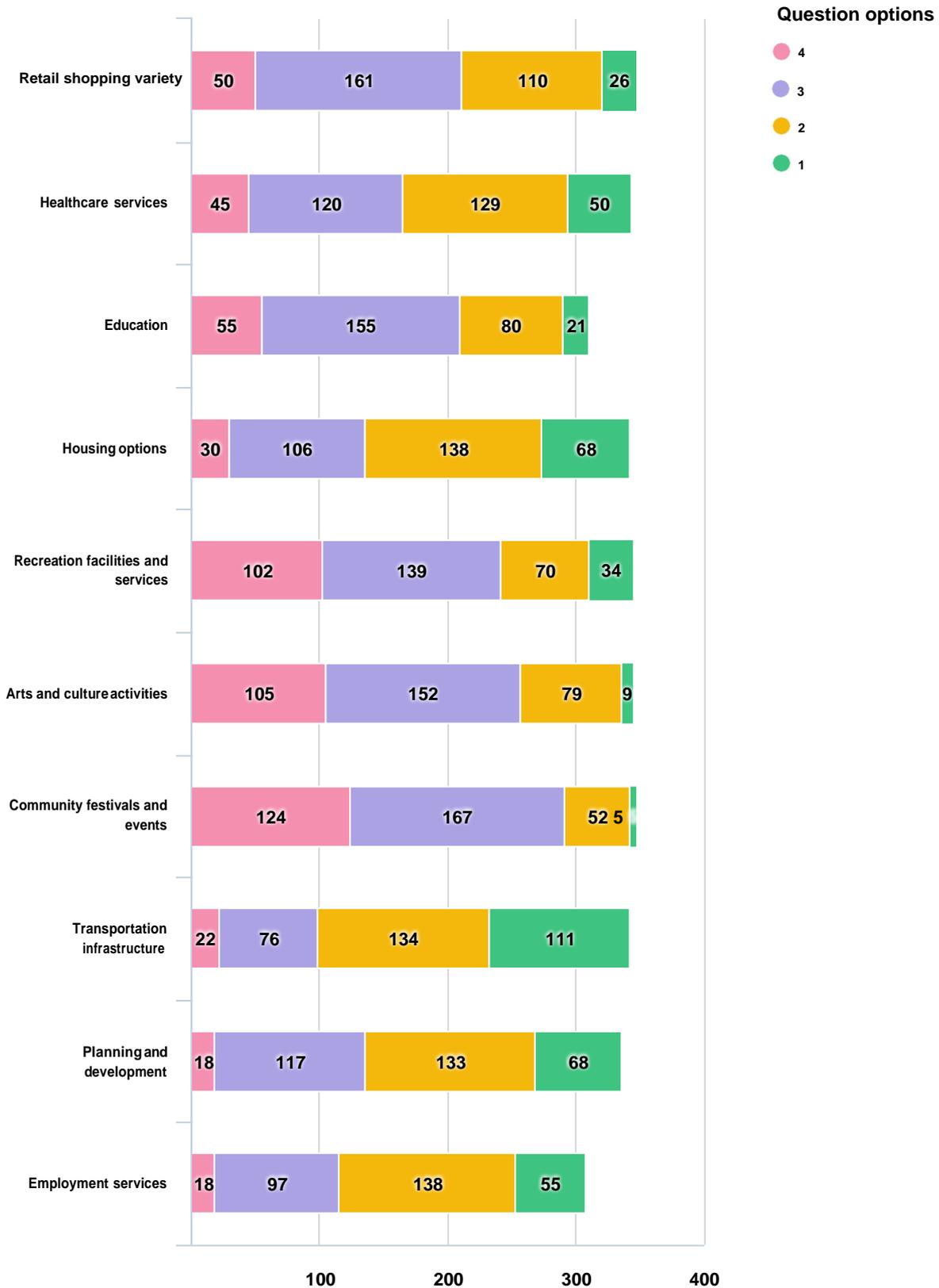
**Tourism:** The promotion of the entire Town of The Blue Mountains and not just Blue Mountain Resort and Village to residents in the GTA was an action that respondents would like to see. They hope that with tourism and the promotion of the Town of The Blue Mountains as a true four-season destination, the Town can attract new business ventures in the area. Promotion of the natural assets - i.e., trails, escarpment, harbour, local parks, and conservation areas - will help bring tourists across the entire community as opposed to one specific area. Social media marketing and promotion of the Town was suggested to increase tourism in the area.

**Q8** On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being 'strongly disagree' and 4 being 'strongly agree' Please indicate to what level you agree or disagree with the following statement:



Optional question (350 responses, 14 skipped)

**Q9** Using a scale of 1-4 where 1 is 'not at all satisfied' and 4 is 'very satisfied', please rate the quality of the services that are available in the Town of The Blue Mountains.



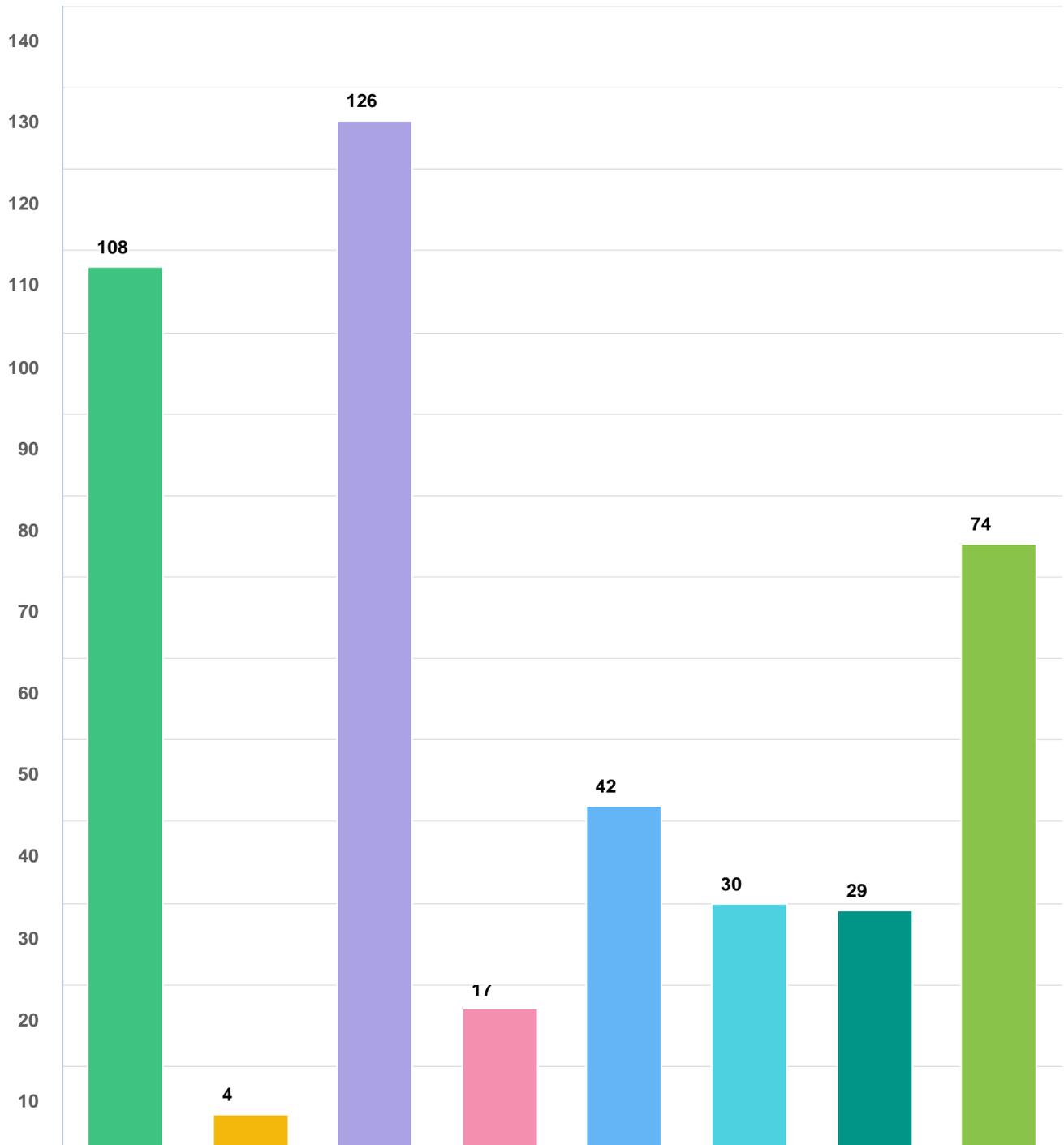
Optional question (350 responses, 14 skipped)

**Q10 | What goods and services do you regularly purchase that are not currently available in the community? (List as many as you can)**

Some respondents have everything they need in the Town of The Blue Mountains, while others regularly travel outside the Town to purchase goods and make use of services. 50+ respondents go to Collingwood for their goods and services because they're unavailable or unaffordable in the Town of The Blue Mountains. Some travel to Barrie, Owen Sound and Meaford for their goods and services. At a glance respondents are traveling outside TOBM to purchase or make use of the following:

- Clothing was the most frequently mentioned consumer good purchased regularly outside of the community. Affordable clothing was more widely available in other communities.
- Groceries were the second most frequently mentioned consumer good purchased regularly outside of the community as they are cited as being more affordable in other communities.
- Fast food/ethnic restaurants/vegan & plant-based foods
- Athletic/sports equipment/sporting goods
- Business/Office supplies
- Big box chains: Walmart, Costco, Home Depot, FreshCo, Food Basics, Canadian Tire, Dollar Store, Cineplex, Bulk Barn, etc.
- Healthcare: doctors, dentist, hospital
- Fitness & Leisure: YMCA Collingwood, swimming pool, playground parks/splash pad
- Nail Salon
- Hair salon
- Automotive Services, Car Rental & Car Dealerships
- Banking & Financial Services
- Continuing education programs
- Garden centres/Nurseries
- Health food/ nutritional supplements
- Fabric/Crafts/Sewing supplies
- Electronics
- Appliances
- Entertainment: live theatre, live music, movie theatre, bowling, billiards,
- Specialty food shops: butcher, bakery
- Furniture & home décor
- Toys, games & books
- Doggy Daycare
- Medical specialists
- Dry cleaning

**Q11 How did you hear about this survey?**

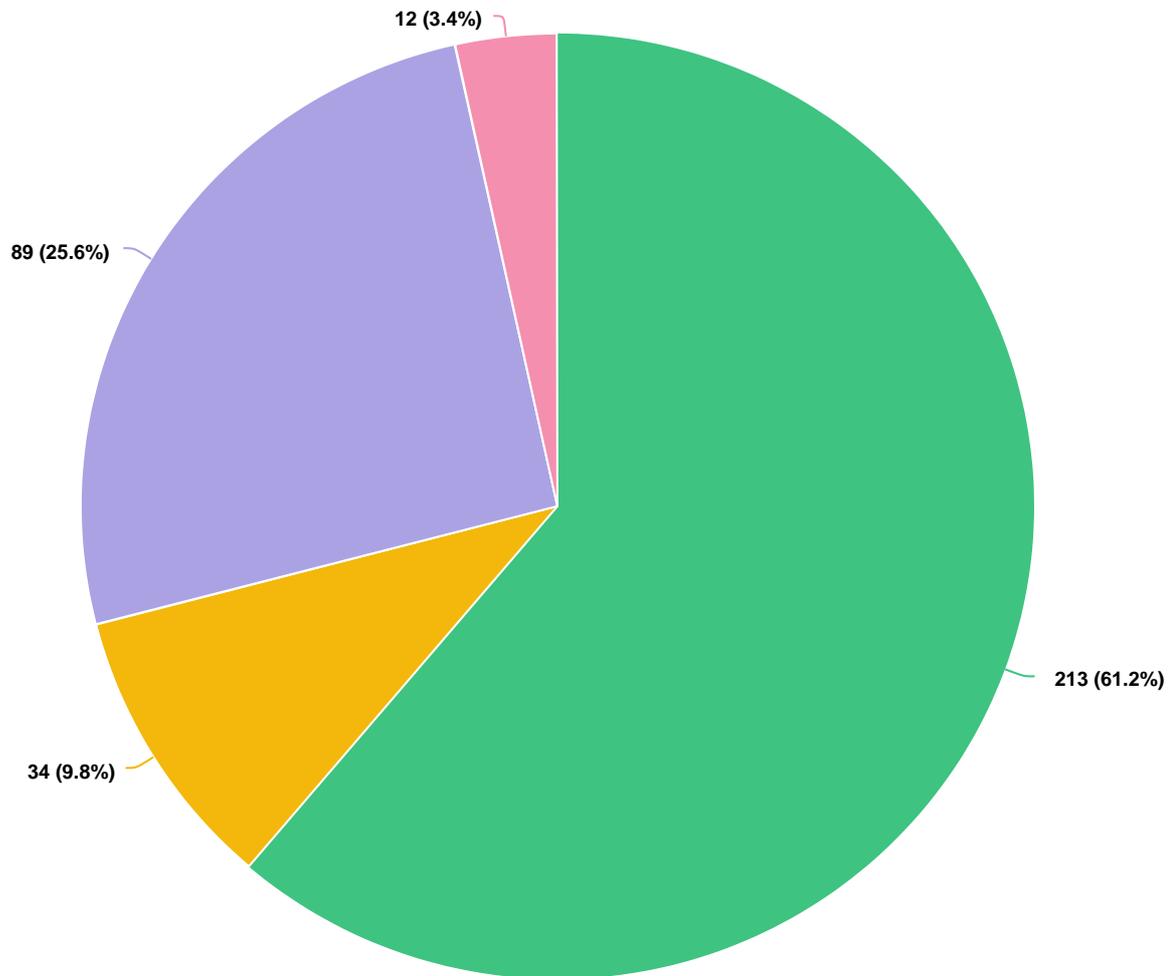


**Question options**

- Other (please specify):
- Social media
- Word of mouth
- Road signs
- Newspaper
- Town website & e-newsletter
- Radio ad
- Survey postcard

Optional question (349 responses, 15 skipped)

**Q12 What type of resident do you consider yourself?**

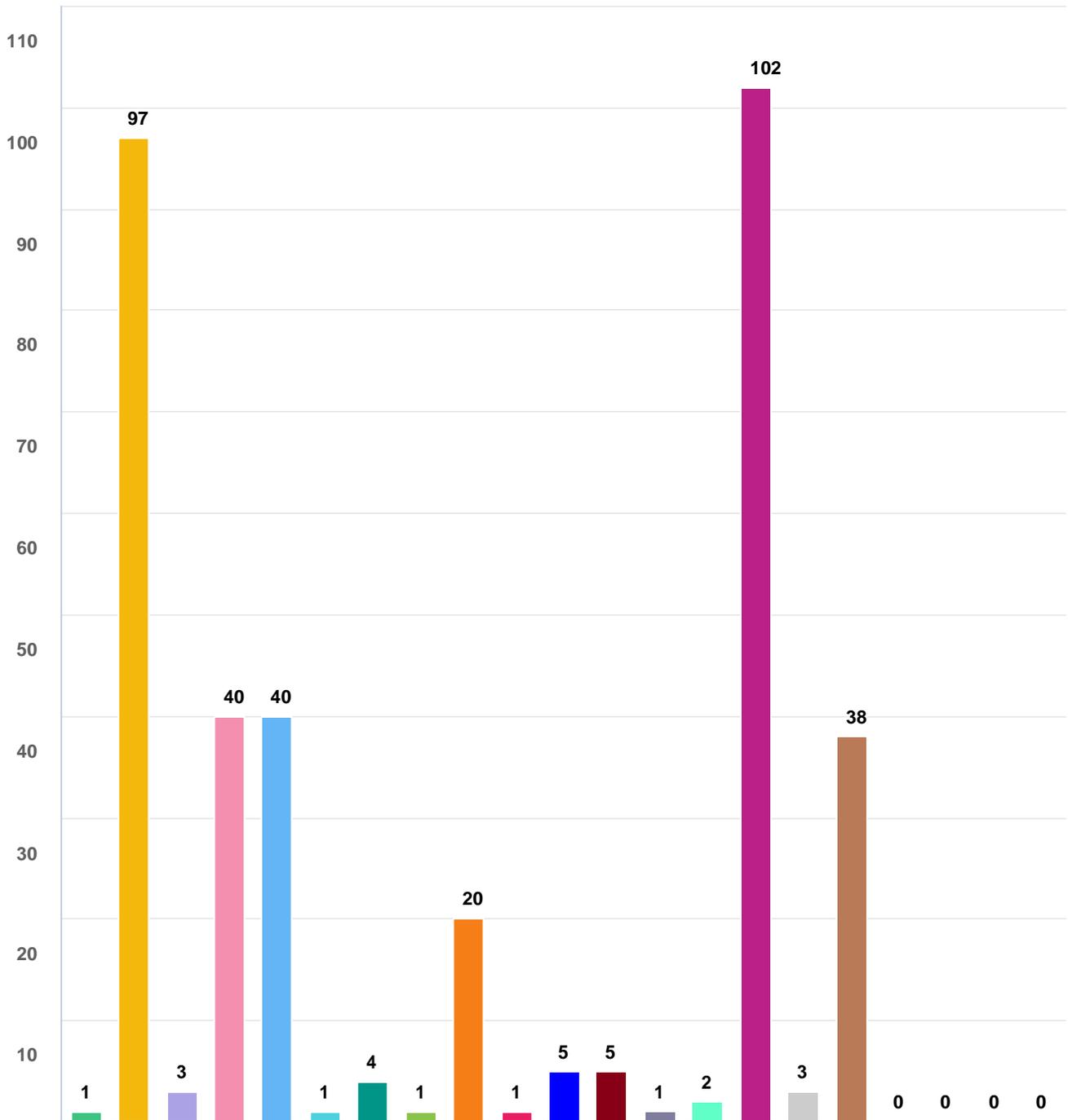


**Question options**

- Flex, live in the Town but work outside of the community
- Seasonal, less than 6 months
- Part-time, 6 Months – 11 Months
- Full-Time, Year-Round

Optional question (348 responses, 16 skipped)

**Q13 Where is your property located in the Town of The Blue Mountains?**

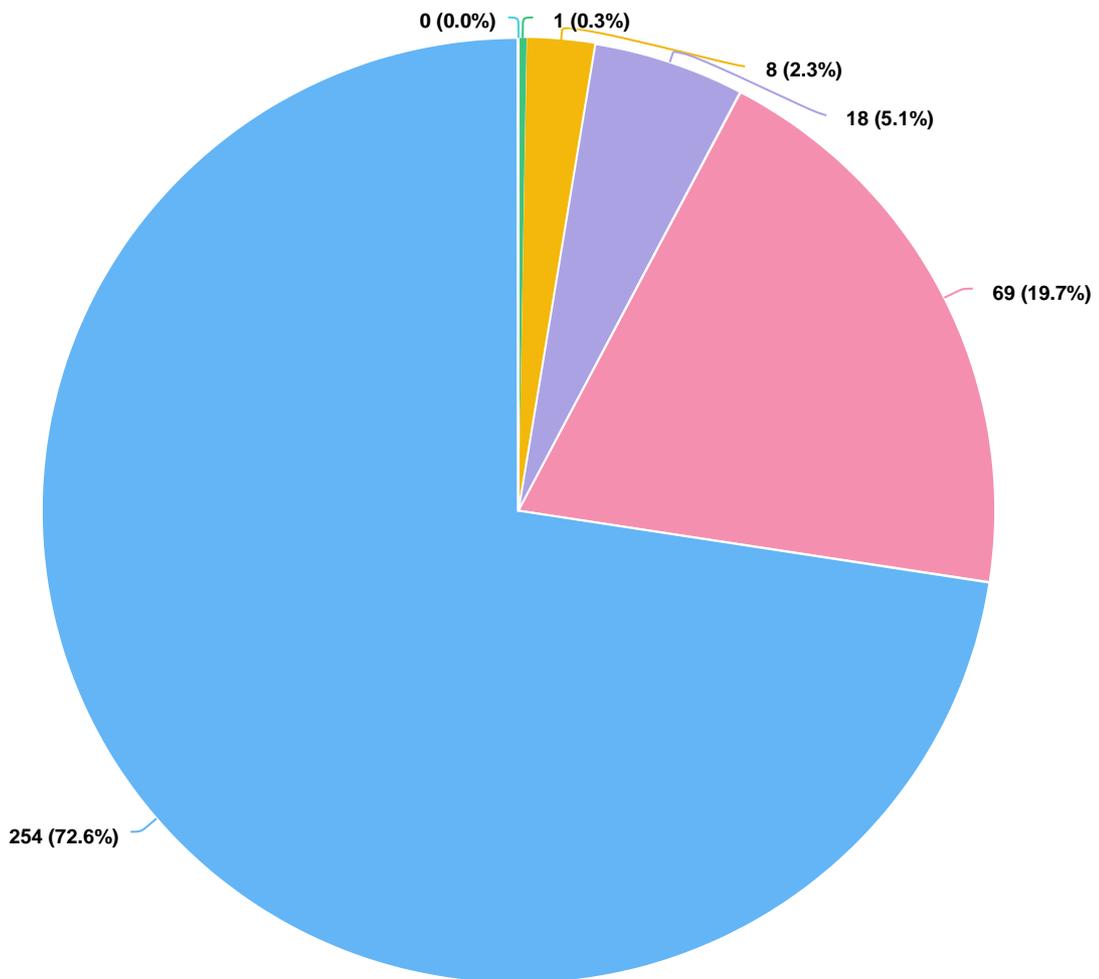


**Question options**

- Sandhill
- Osler
- Egypt
- Castle Glen
- Other (please specify):
- Victoria Corners
- Thornbury
- Swiss Meadows
- Slabtown
- Red Wing
- Ravenna
- Loree
- Lora Bay
- Kolapore
- Heathcote
- Gibraltar
- Craigleith
- Clarksburg
- Camperdown
- Blue Mountain Village
- Banks

*Optional question (351 responses, 13 skipped)*

**Q14 What is your age?**



**Question options**

- Under 18
- 55+
- 45-54
- 35-44
- 25-34
- 18-24

*Optional question (350 responses, 14 skipped)*

**Q15 Additional comments ( Revised, condensed, slightly edited):**

- A lovely place to retire where one can walk everywhere to get what is needed.  
Friendly town of people. Great place to live.
- A sense of urgency is needed right now.
- Any future planning and development must not be done on the backs of the present property tax or business taxpayer. Find solutions to fund things moving forward, i.e. increase development fees as the existing tax base paid for a lot of the existing infrastructure and future development is just hooking into that. A special development levy for new projects should be applied to increase the infrastructure, see Banff and Whistler for example.
- Appreciate the Town reaching out to residents for our input. Agree we need to foster a stronger, larger business sector to ensure we don't end up being one large retirement community.
- Better maintenance of roads and enforcement to protect the Village.
- Bring water and sewer to downtown Clarksburg to attract more businesses.
- Can't think of anywhere I'd rather live, or I would be there.
- Carefully control development. Growth is not always better.
- Collaborate with Habitat for Humanity for a multi-build!
- Collaborate with Ministry of Transportation to ensure that Hwy 26 does not become a 4/5 lane highway.
- Continue to consider the long-term sustainability and community of this Town when you plan. Short-term tourist attractions and recreational activities will not build the Town we need for the long-term. Our family love it here, please makes this a Town they can stay in for the long-term. We need a clearly articulated, specific planning Vision that Town people can get behind and support.
- Decline the wake board park. It will change the feel of the area. Don't let out-of-towners impact our local future.
- Ensure services are utilized. Fix the sewage systems and continue growth of economic development and entertainment industry.
- Ensure that families are well served. Seniors have come to be a well-organized, powerful, and vocal lobby group (they have time, skill, and money!). Develop plans to keep kids active in safe and healthy ways. Try to keep more cars off our roads. Keep it safe for bikes and walkers. Create bike lanes and sidewalks!
- Ensure that growth of our beautiful Town is managed and sustainable.
- Find solutions to fix traffic and it gets heavier each year.
- Full-time residents should have more "say" compared to part-time residents.
- Good to see the village now becoming a hub unto itself, but the area supports it well.
- Grey County needs to put more social housing in The Blue Mountains which means more available labour. This would be in addition to attainable housing and a different social economic category. No labour, no one will want to risk the investment of a new business.
- Have dedicated staff in support investment attraction, business services, and tourism development.
- Help those who need to find affordable housing.
- I appreciate the Town's recent efforts to more fully engage residents.
- I feel like this town has lost its way. It has allowed some developments that are big and ugly. Residents see their taxes being raised to levels they cannot afford. It is great that wealthy people continue to move here - but it is sometimes at the expense of people who have lived here all their lives. I wish the town would try to maintain a quaintness and uniqueness - but with the tacky signage of the grocery store and gas stations - we look like every other town. Slow the developments down until the area can handle the growth (E.g. our public school is busting at its seams; there are NOT enough doctors etc.). It seems like no one is considering these facts when allowing developments. As well, something like the development by Foodland (23 units on less than 2 acres) is awful. Do we want to look like Mississauga?

- I feel that Hwy 26 is totally acceptable even at the busiest of times at "rush" hour and on weekends. We do not need to add more lanes because some percentage of the population suggest it. Perhaps society needs to simply move along and not be in such a rush to get to the next destination.
- I have always been impressed with two things in our community, one being the high level of fitness and well-being of our seniors and secondly, the tremendous numbers and commitment of the volunteers.
- I have been coming up to this area for 64 years and moved here for the small, quiet and friendly community. I moved away from the city areas to the south for a reason. Previously I lived in Aurora moving there in 1974 with a population of 14,000, it is now more than 70,000 and is ruined as a community. Development and growth are NOT good in my mind. What is the matter with retaining what we have, must we always be driven by greed?
- I have been living up here on the mountain in Banks for 20 years and love it. There is no other place in the country I would rather be.
- I have encountered many tourists just driving around. There is an annual vacation guide published but can be a lot to go through. Perhaps a top ten things to see and do could be developed such as: Top 10 hikes, swimming spots, beaches, trails, festivals, spots off the beaten trail, etc. Can also be complemented by strategic signs placed at tourist sites to make it easier as signs can play a strategic role that do more than point to a place or be an advertisement but to delight and inform. I have been in this business for over 30 years and the power of strategic signs should be part of any plan to promote the area.
- I have lived here all my life and love Thornbury. I've often called it "God's country". Our weather is moderated, but great for year-round activities and the scenery is top notch. We MUST maintain the small town feel that attracts people to our area while promoting growth at the same time.
- I love Thornbury but the small-town charm is getting lost with most new residents' influx our community with all the city services they are used to and demanding here.
- I moved here to get out of the city; I do not want it to be recreated here. While I recognize the need for a healthy tax base so that the municipality can do all the things that have been downloaded onto it, I also believe that we need to take the time to find the best solutions, not the easiest ones. The efforts that I see now from the Town to communicate in a meaningful way with its citizens is encouraging.
- I purchased 3 properties here thinking the Town was really "together", but I have since learned that past councils have really neglected this community with lack of services, infrastructure and forward planning for other generations and increase of population, aging seniors, new families, medical etc. Sadly, I am looking at other great rural places to live that might be better managed. TOBM seems like its 10 years behind in its planning, it has such promise and it would be nice if they got their act together and support its people.
- I really enjoy this area but my wife loves the city too so we will always maintain two homes. I like the fact that the Blue Mountains is just a 2-hour drive North. I personally hope it doesn't become too commercialized or overpopulated.
- I support the agricultural sector here but am concerned about the effects of pesticide spraying on human health, on our food, and wildlife.
- I think this survey is a good idea.
- I wish there was some sort of control at the North Winds beach. Visitors come here in large numbers, they take over the picnic tables, set up tents, cook on the beach and leave tons of trash. No one patrols the beach; however, I will say that the Town workers who come in to clean up afterwards do an excellent job.
- I would hope that our survey means some things will now get moving.
- I would like to see sidewalks along Victoria Street, south of Alma to Duncan. Too many vehicles and trucks to keep it safe.
- I would like to see transport truck traffic rerouted around Thornbury. I would like traffic lights to be installed at Grey Rd. 40 and Hwy 26. I do not want any more gas stations! I do not want to see more pricey house sub-divisions or condos being built.
- I'm hopeful that going further you will consider this area's beauty and all her gifts, which includes our wildlife.
- Increasing traffic volume and the existing road system needs to be addressed. For instance, we need traffic lights at Grey Road 21 and Hwy 26 and left-hand turns lanes installed (or traffic circles) along Mountain Road.

- It seems like all the development is being jammed together in proximity which is going to cause the Town many long-term problems.
- It seems that there is not a tree clearing law and worry the developments will clear all trees and cram buildings especially by the water.
- It would be great to develop the beach area further - bike trails, board walks - cafe's restaurants, volleyball, swimming, etc.
- It's a beautiful and unique spot that has some challenges. We appreciate the challenges and opportunities and will work however we can to make the community all it can be.
- Keep up the good work. Love the concerts. Love Blumination. It is very clean. All staff are very courteous!
- Love living here, we just need to improve on roads and affordable housing to support the service industry.
- Love the small town feel and hope we don't lose it!
- Maintain our parks and greenspace. Do not turn Heritage Park into accessible housing.
- Maintain the rural aspects of the municipality. Protect the environment and the green spaces. Save spaces for the public to enjoy the bay. Add storage for kayaks/canoes for the boating area.
- More stop lights are needed along Hwy 26. We don't need any more fast food places. We need a lot more public beach areas for residents to go to.
- More support for Arts community!
- My wife, dog and I enjoy spending 5 months a year in Thornbury. Lots of activities for seniors in Thornbury, Meaford and Collingwood to participate in. My dog and I can pick a coffee up at Tim's or the local gas bar and wander downtown to the marina/river area and then through the downtown section on our way home. We prefer to buy locally as much as we can. (Goldsmiths, Foodland, Clarksburg Hardware).
- My wish is to see this place continue to grow into a wonderful destination with unique and complimentary destinations and shopping opportunities. People needed Walmart and box stores and urban sprawl has an endless number of locations near and far to satisfy those desires. Please do not let us slip into another one of those that 'used to be really nice'.
- Not sure that the Towns of Blue Mountain should be separated from Collingwood, most of the resources needed are found in Collingwood.
- Our overriding feedback is that the current municipal government spends an inordinate amount of time and resources researching options to the nth degree instead of taking action and executing change. Governments cannot act through consensus alone; they need to act more like for-profit businesses and get things done. Thanks for the opportunity to provide feedback.
- Over the past year the Town's communications have improved so much that it's almost impossible to keep up. I applaud what you have done. It's been terrific.
- Please act on the septic and water situation in Clarksburg before it gets more expensive.
- Please conduct a traffic survey. Grey Rd 40 and Hwy 26 is a major accident waiting to happen. Slow the speed limit on Hwy 26.
- Please consider business and economic development closer to The Village for residents who live there.
- Please do not allow big, ugly franchise companies into our quaint area as people won't find any charm about it and the character of this place, which draws tourists, will be lost.
- Please do not encourage more traffic through our community. I am terrified of the thought of expanding Hwy 10 into a bypass. I would rather have the increased traffic at peak times through downtown Thornbury. Also, I am not a fan of the Wakeboard park. Why would we want that in our community?
- Please fix the roads for cyclists and add extra width specifically on Hwy 2, 40, and 13. When a road is re-surfaced, please consider paving rather than tar and chip.
- Please keep this lovely community sound and vibrant. Collaboration with Collingwood and Meaford would help as we all have similar issues.

- Please protect the nature and beautiful assets of our Town. There is a danger of destroying what is drawing people here in the first place.
- Please try to think outside the box. The entrance and exit on Hwy 26 has NO charm. Businesses need more guidance here. Preserve the brick work of the older buildings. Promote a contest for drawings of how this Town could look.
- Protect the principle asset the Town has - its character.
- Recently learned of a suggestion for creating a bypass that would redirect traffic down the 10th line. This road is used heavily by agricultural traffic and would probably add more time to the journey rather than save any by avoiding the lights in Thornbury. I have never had to wait at those lights more than 30 seconds. In addition, it would direct traffic away from the retail opportunities along Hwy. 26 resulting in a loss of revenue. Also, the cost of the upgrades needed do not justify the large investment in order to save a few seconds at the lights. Maybe someone should talk to the business owners in Stayner to discover the impact that that bypass has had.
- Reduce the 'Red Tape' to make it more affordable for new businesses to start-up in the area.
- Say no to the wake board park, do not let any out of town especially out of the province influence your decision. The decision belongs to the people of Blue Mountain.
- Sidewalks! We need to get people around safely.
- Some of the questions above should have n/a as an option. As an example, I haven't used Employment Services and I have to rate them on a 4-point scale - I rated them a 3 but have no idea. The age scale about should be expanded. Thanks for giving me the opportunity to complete this - you guys did a great job trying to get engagement - I got the postcard and drove by many signs - the one at the community mailboxes were a great idea.
- Some recreational spaces are underutilized, i.e. soccer fields, arena. We also do not have enough bike racks and car parking.
- Stop junk mail.
- Survey took longer than I thought it would. I hope that you take the answers from this survey and create multiple choice questions in the future. Great place to be, The Blue Mountains!
- Thank you for all you do and for offering this opportunity to share thoughts.
- Thank you for doing a survey, I hope you consider what the towns people want.
- Thank you for making the effort to do this survey!
- Thank you for taking the time to obtain our views.
- Thank you for this outreach and please continue to find creative ways to get as many opinions as possible rather than listening to the small number of people who find you. Keep up the great work and please add extra focus to any processes and laws/rules to combat human trafficking.
- Thank you for this survey. It is great to have a say.
- Thank you for using simple tools to get feedback.
- Thanks
- Thanks for reaching out with this survey.
- Thanks very much for the opportunity to comment.
- Thank-you for asking! We would like to be part of the solution and not just "complaining".
- The biggest reason I go and then make other purchases in other communities is that Foodland grocery prices are higher than other chains. As I have said earlier in this survey, prices are higher than in Collingwood, Stayner, and Angus. Unless this changes, I will continue to take my business to Collingwood. I work part-time at the Blue Mountain Resort, so I plan my shopping around my shifts. If I need to get a physician in Collingwood as there are none in TBM, this will only add to reasons that I take more business to Collingwood.
- The L.E. Shore Memorial Library offers excellent multi-services that go beyond expectation. They are very supportive of all forms of creative arts. They provide a caring attentive-to-client-needs environment for both permanent and temporary residents. They are the hub of the Town, particularly in winter.

- The proposal to turn the 10th line into a highway to avoid some minor wait times is not something I support. Routing people around the downtown area is not economically sound.
- The Town needs to move away from being just a tourist location to a modern competitive business minded community. It will be difficult to attract the next generation.
- The Town of the Blue Mountains is a precious gem worth preserving! Let's not lose our attractive charm by allowing big box stores to move in and change our character, so we resemble so many other areas! Careful planning will be required to both preserve and enhance the area's features!
- The Town of The Blue Mountains should be promoted in conjunction with Blue Mountain Resort.
- The Town should prioritize their focus on public transit, cultural, and community hubs. This will lead to better health and wellness, environmentally friendly travel and reduce carbon use for car travel.
- This is a beautiful area to live and visit, but without the preservation of our natural landscape, this area will lose the appeal that draws people here.
- This is a good start taking a survey and putting all thoughts together and go from there working on improvement.
- This is a residential rural community with adequate services. It can grow with appropriate development that preserves its features. Let's preserve it.
- Thornbury is a great, safe place to be in the world. Any decisions for the future should always be tempered by respect for our environment and always keep in mind the beauty and peace that come with a well-managed community.
- Tighten up zoning so that all the waterfront is accessible to the public. Much of it has already been built on, but there are still some areas that could be protected and made into parks. It isn't that there aren't enough parks, it is just that these large homes block the view and create an exclusionary environment.
- Time to get ahead of the developers and enforce standards. Eliminate common element single family home roads. Encourage senior's accommodation, low cost housing.
- Tourists are overrunning private property at Kitchen Bay despite signs. Impossible for residents who pay for it during summer weekends. 39 Sideroad has become a real problem with constant construction traffic.
- Town Council is providing excellent representation for the residents.
- Town Council should consider the environment and sustainability before making wise decisions for our future.
- Town created a commercial centre for Craighleith and is now backing down from the decision to support the needs of current and massive future population. Stick to your policies and support the words you put on paper that the community is counting on.
- Town of the Blue Mountains is challenged with providing future developments that ensure local and new residents an equal share in its choices.
- Transportation and affordable housing are challenges that limit job seekers. The Town needs to place more emphasis on urban needs as the town's economic base will be increasingly derived from the urban communities and businesses.
- Two things to suggest: Parking spaces on Main Street are not properly sized, they are too small, and people have difficulty parking properly and staying within the front and rear lines. And the traffic lights on Hwy 26 and Bruce Street are a real problem. The Hwy 26 section is not coordinated with the light where the fish dam is, and the Eastern traffic backs up significantly. Also, the length of the light when travelling on Hwy 26 is too short, the Bruce Street light is too long.
- Under the new Council, TBM Councilors and staff are doing the best they can. The recent health issues of some Council individuals create an unexpected challenge and residents ought to consider how they can help if needed. Frequent communications via your website (as at present) are essential.

- We are yearning for a complete recreation complex! Swimming pool, gym, workout facilities, fitness classes, day camps, skating rinks, rock climbing, youth games room, seniors' programs, etc. We came from the Durham Region where this was a regular part of our life and we are finding it difficult to replace everything it offered. All these amenities can be found, somewhat, within our community here, but they are fragmented and often outside our financial capabilities. Plunge for swimming is not doable, which leads us further away to the Centennial Swimming Center in Collingwood. There are a variety of yoga studios, but nothing affordable. The township we came from 3 years ago (Ajax) had a lot of options for young families. The options here feel elitist as the cost is high and space is minimal. There were these kinds of facilities in Ajax as well where I could take a \$20 yoga class, but there was a comparable alternative offered through our community center for half the price. I grew up working for the town's day camp program in the summer where they offered free programming at local parks for the kids, or more structured camps for a fee. This is not going to be an option for my kids. They can work for individual private businesses, but nothing owned and led by the township - the community. I hope to one day see an all-encompassing recreation complex where the community can come together for fun, fitness, and special events - both young and old.
- We enjoy spending time in Blue we find it relaxing would love to continue seeing it to be a safe and beautiful place to be. We don't want to see it get busier or congested.
- We have a readymade tourist population available. Their dollars help local business and it will continue due to the sport and scenic character of the area. You're doing a good job as we can see the tourist and population increase here. I consider this community to be successful and thriving with growth potential. Keep it sensible and maintain a quaint country feel.
- We have the potential to be a world class community. Expectations are high.  
We need to keep our finger on the pulse - this is a great way to do it. I'd like to see real action come out of this initiative.
- We love living here, close to airport for travel but far enough away from the city. Please fix Hidden Lake Road and manage traffic and safety on Hwy 26. Other than that, it is the perfect place to live!
- We love this small community the walkability of nearby services. We love cycling and walking the trails and farmland valley roads. The local theatre, antique shop and hardware store. Shopping where people know us.
- We moved here as it was a dog-friendly area. Please designate certain days (or times) that people can use the outdoor parks to hike OFF-LEASH with their dogs. Please find dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs.
- We pay a great portion of taxes to Grey County; our area of The Blue Mountains generates a lot of tax revenue which might be better served in our own community.
- We've successfully made summer a bigger tourist destination than winter - let's push and promote the shoulder seasons with more events, festivals, and attractions. And we cannot introduce a tourism tax on restaurants, hotels etc. like what Niagara does - that would negate all the gains we've made.
- What makes this community appealing is that it is not crowded like Toronto or other cities.
- Your demographic spread should be much more significant, there should be categories for 55 - 64, 65 - 74, 75-79, 80 - 84 and 85+. The needs of these different age bands are quite significantly different.

## **Survey Summary Report**

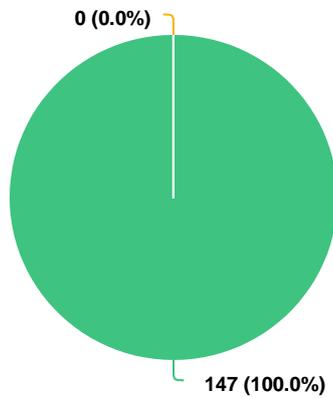
03 September 2019 - 03 March 2020

# **Economic Development Business Community Survey 2020**

**PROJECT: Economic Development Strategy**

**Your View The Blue Mountains**

**Q1** This survey is intended for business owners and managers of businesses that are located and/or operating in the Town of The Blue Mountains. Please ensure that you are completing the correct survey.



**Question options**

- Yes, I would like to proceed with the business community survey.
- No, I would like to complete the general public and residents survey.

**Q2 | In your opinion, what are the advantages of investing and doing business in the Town of The Blue Mountains compared to other communities in Ontario?**

- **Economic Development:** Many respondents mentioned economic development topics such as opportunities for growth, tourism, business opportunities, less competition, entrepreneurial advantages, return on investment as an advantage of doing business in the Town of The Blue Mountains compared to other communities.
- **Natural Environment:** Many respondents stated that the natural environment and four-season attraction is an advantage of investing and doing business in the Town compared to other communities in Ontario. Natural environment comments include: proximity to Village at Blue, Toronto and larger economic centres, natural beauty, small town vibe, outdoor activities, trails, sustainability and climate.
- **Quality of Life:** Many respondents mentioned that the quality of life is one of the main reasons to invest and do business in The Blue Mountains. Examples of quality of life statements were culture/history of the Town, four season Town, recreation & leisure opportunities, sense of community, work-life balance, retirement community.
- **People:** Many respondents stated that the business owners and residents of the Town make it desirable. The entrepreneurial spirit, affluent residents and supportive community were cited as advantages to starting and/or running a business in the Town.
- Other key trends that were mentioned included: **Diversity, Technology, Municipal Red Tape.**

***Overall, the main trends that most business owners in The Blue Mountains mentioned as a key advantage of investing and doing business in the Town compared to other communities were the Natural Environment, Economic Development (Business Opportunities), and Quality of Life.***

**Q3 | In your opinion, what are the disadvantages of investing and doing business in the Town of The Blue Mountains compared to other communities in Ontario?**

- **Affordability:** Many respondents cited affordability as a disadvantage of investing and doing business in the Town compared to other communities in Ontario. Affordability topics ranged from Attainable Housing, cost of living, commercial rent, and rental prices of homes. This in turn led to a few respondents shopping elsewhere in places that provided more affordable items for them which causes leakage in The Blue Mountains economy.
- **Economic Development Barriers:** Respondents were concerned about growth and economic development in the area. Economic development topics ranged from over-development (leading to unaffordability), shoulder season concerns, no consistency of visitors, and potential development of big box stores/franchises in the main areas.
- **Employment:** Respondents mentioned employment as an issue for investing and doing business in the Town of The Blue Mountains compared to other communities in Ontario. Employment issues ranged from unemployment, finding employment, finding skilled labour, low paying jobs, small labour pool, staff retention, seasonal job demands. One of the main issues was that with few affordable housing options in The Blue Mountains, it was difficult to find skilled labour and there is not enough infrastructure to support workers coming from other Municipalities.
- **Infrastructure:** Respondents raised infrastructure as an issue for their business in The Blue Mountains. Bus transportation for workers, signage for different areas of the community (Thornbury and Clarksburg), parking, water and sewage (Clarksburg), sidewalk maintenance and snow removal, traffic on HWY 26 were the main concerns raised about infrastructure hindering their business in The Blue Mountains. Some parts of the community feel overlooked as the infrastructure is not in place to support their business needs. The main issue for infrastructure was transportation as there was no reliable and affordable method for transporting workers and visitors from and to their business.
- **Municipal Policies:** Respondents raised concerns over Municipal policies as a disadvantage to doing business in the Town. Issues such as high taxes, red tape, by-law's, cost of business permits, and development fees were raised as a disadvantage when doing business in The Blue Mountains.
- **Population:** Respondents mentioned population issues as a disadvantage of doing business in the Town. Such issues include an aging population, limited population, and community NIMBY-ism as a disadvantage in doing business in the Town. Business owners addressed concerns about the Town 10-15 years from now when the average age is higher.
- **Essential Services:** Respondents raised concerns about the lack of essential services required to conduct business in the Town (i.e., childcare, access to training and education, access to healthcare/hospital, taxi service/ public transportation/shuttle).
- Other key trends found included: **Community Engagement, Diversity, and Technology** as a disadvantage of doing business in the Town.

*Optional question (140 responses, 7 skipped)*

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Q4 What three (3) words would you use to describe the Town of The Blue Mountains?



Optional question (142 responses, 5 skipped)

**Q5 | Employee recruitment and retention has been identified as a significant challenge and growth barrier for most businesses within the region. If you have experienced challenges with employee recruitment and retention, what are the most significant contributing factors?**

- **Affordability:** Many respondents indicated that affordability was an issue pertaining mainly to attainable housing, cost of living, commercial rent, and high prices of products in The Blue Mountains. The wage employees are offered is not relative to the steep increase in the cost of living.
- **Employment:** Many respondents indicated that finding employees is an issue due to a limited labour pool. The causes for this vary from attainable housing, retention, seasonal demands and transportation. Particularly, finding young workers has been an issue for employee retention and recruitment as they are unable to make a living wage here and transportation is an issue when they live in other communities. Access to skilled trades and training is lacking as there is no local education system that supports talent development.
- **Infrastructure:** Transportation was the main issue with infrastructure as employees have a hard time transporting into the Town if they lived in another community. Many workers cannot afford to live in the Town so transportation options was cited as a main barrier to recruiting skilled employees.
- **No issue:** There were responses regarding businesses having no issues due to them as they either pay a higher wage or only employing 1-4 people.

***Overall, affordability, employment, and infrastructure (transportation) were the most significant contributing factors for businesses when dealing with employee recruitment and retention.***

**Q6 | What roles and actions do you feel the Town could take to further support our local economy and businesses?**

- **Affordability:** Many respondents mentioned attainable housing and a fair housing market as a role and action the Town could take to further support our local economy and businesses. Business owners mentioned the Town to continue working with builders and community partners to create affordable housing solutions.
- **Business Support:** Providing business with funding, access to tourism initiatives and a greater emphasis on promoting or supporting events were mentioned as ways the Town could further support the local economy and businesses. Respondents asked that businesses in all communities be given attention and support, as opposed to just focusing on the main business areas. Some businesses expressed that they felt left out or not included in the current BIA format in Thornbury and hoped to find a resolution for them. Some respondents requested regular networking events or opportunities to connect with the business community and Town.
- **Community Engagement:** Respondents mentioned that community engagement such as events, marketing, promotion of the Town, and networking events were actions the Town could take to further support our local economy and businesses. Holding events, marketing/promoting the Town, and providing networking events bring traffic and partnerships within businesses in the Town. Town, senior staff & council need a commitment to celebrate business successes in town - anniversaries and other milestones. Continued dialogue and opportunity for business owners to have a voice is expected and appreciated.
- **Infrastructure:** Respondents mentioned signage, transportation services, pedestrianfriendly, traffic, and traffic safety as the main issues to infrastructure.
- **Municipal Red Tape:** Respondents mentioned to lower taxes, change some of the by-laws, the cost of businesses, reducing permits and development fees as an action the Town could take to further support our local economy and businesses. Some businesses mentioned better tax incentives to help attract businesses to the Town. Be more transparent about a progressive and sustainable urban plan. Ensure that the Town does not rely solely on its tourist economy to weather an economic downturn and decline in tourism.
- Other roles and actions mentioned include **sustainable development, planning, education, health care services, and providing more recreation and leisure.**

**Q7 | What do you consider to be the Town of The Blue Mountain's greatest opportunities to stimulate economic growth in the next 5 years?**

- **Attainable Housing:** Many respondents indicated affordable/attainable housing as one of the greatest opportunities to stimulate economic growth over the next 5 years. Some business owners see this as the only way to stimulate economic growth within the Town as all roads lead back to the lack of affordable/attainable housing. Many business owners are satisfied with the current work of attainable housing solutions but would like to see continued progress.
- **Community Engagement:** Some respondents mentioned that developing attractive campaigns to attract young families, having active/healthy year-round lifestyles, events, and recreational opportunities will help stimulate economic growth in the next 5 years. Business owners also mentioned to utilize the waterfront parks for engagement opportunities.
- **Economic Development:** Many respondents felt that economic development initiatives such as: business growth, developing manufacturing sector, stronger promotion/marketing presence in the GTA, tourism, small business support, land availability, and diversification as the greatest opportunities to stimulate economic growth in the next 5 years.
  - As a service-based industry, tourism was mentioned also with suggestions to continue promoting the current and shoulder seasons, promoting wine industry; agri-tourism; outdoor recreation; attainable housing projects. A couple businesses mentioned to model the Niagara-on-the-Lake model for Thornbury.
  - Sustainable Development was also a recurring theme. Maintaining and protecting public spaces and the natural assets within the Town is important to many business owners. Some business owners want to ensure that there is growth but does not take away from the history and identity of the Town. Business owners recognize that the natural beauty of the Town is what attracts tourists and people here and would not want that taken away.
  - Vertical farming was suggested as a way to preserve prime crop land and create a unique experience that provides benefits for food producers, consumers and tourists.
- **Infrastructure:** Having the proper infrastructure such as: signage, maintained sidewalks, reduced Hwy 26 traffic, bike racks in Thornbury, water and sewage services in Clarksburg, increased parking and public transportation partnerships between neighbouring municipalities were the greatest opportunities to stimulate economic growth in the next 5 years.
- **Vibrant Culture:** Many respondents mentioned that there is a strong arts and culture scene here and would like to continue strengthening support for the local arts through funding and event initiatives. Leveraging community assets to create fairs/events/festivals were one of the many suggestions to create a vibrant culture that attracts residents and tourists to the area.
- **Marketing & Promotion:** Some respondents mentioned developing out-of-home marketing campaigns in the GTA that attract young families with active/healthy lifestyles to stimulate economic growth in the next 5 years. The recommended focus should be on the year-round attractions and active lifestyle offered by the Town. Events, festivals and recreational opportunities can support these initiatives. The suggestion to tap into social media influencers and instagrammers to generate day tripper tourism was made as well. References to Niagara on the Lake, Stratton (Colorado), Creemore and Elora are made as model towns that hit the mark for tourists.

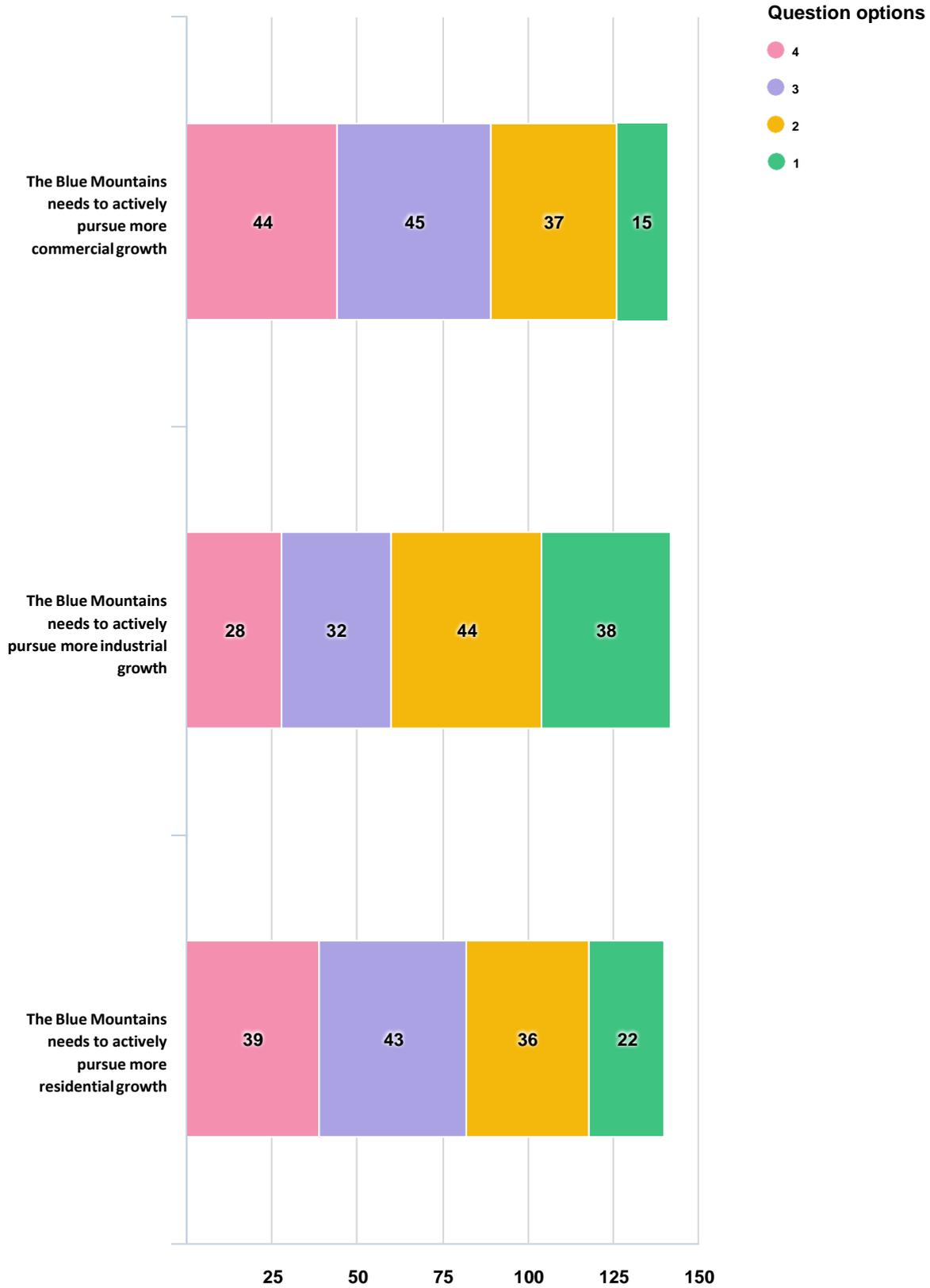
*Optional question (132 responses, 15 skipped)*

**Q8** | The following factors are commonly attributed to creating and maintaining a strong economy. Please rank your top five (5) in order of importance with 1 being the highest priority:

<b>OPTIONS</b>	<b>AVG. RANK</b>
Range and affordability of housing	2.31
Availability of public transportation	3.34
Investment in municipal infrastructure and servicing	3.53
Strengthened tourism development (festivals, events, and experiences)	3.69
Ensuring efficient development and approval processes (permits & approvals)	4.11
Increased marketing, promotion and awareness of the Town of The Blue Mountains	4.24
Access to quality education, skills development and training	4.72
Availability of buildings and land (office, retail, industrial)	5.04
Enhanced arts and cultural amenities	5.49

*Optional question (145 responses, 2 skipped)*

**Q9** On a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being 'strongly disagree' and 4 being 'strongly agree' Please indicate to what level you agree or disagree with the following statements:



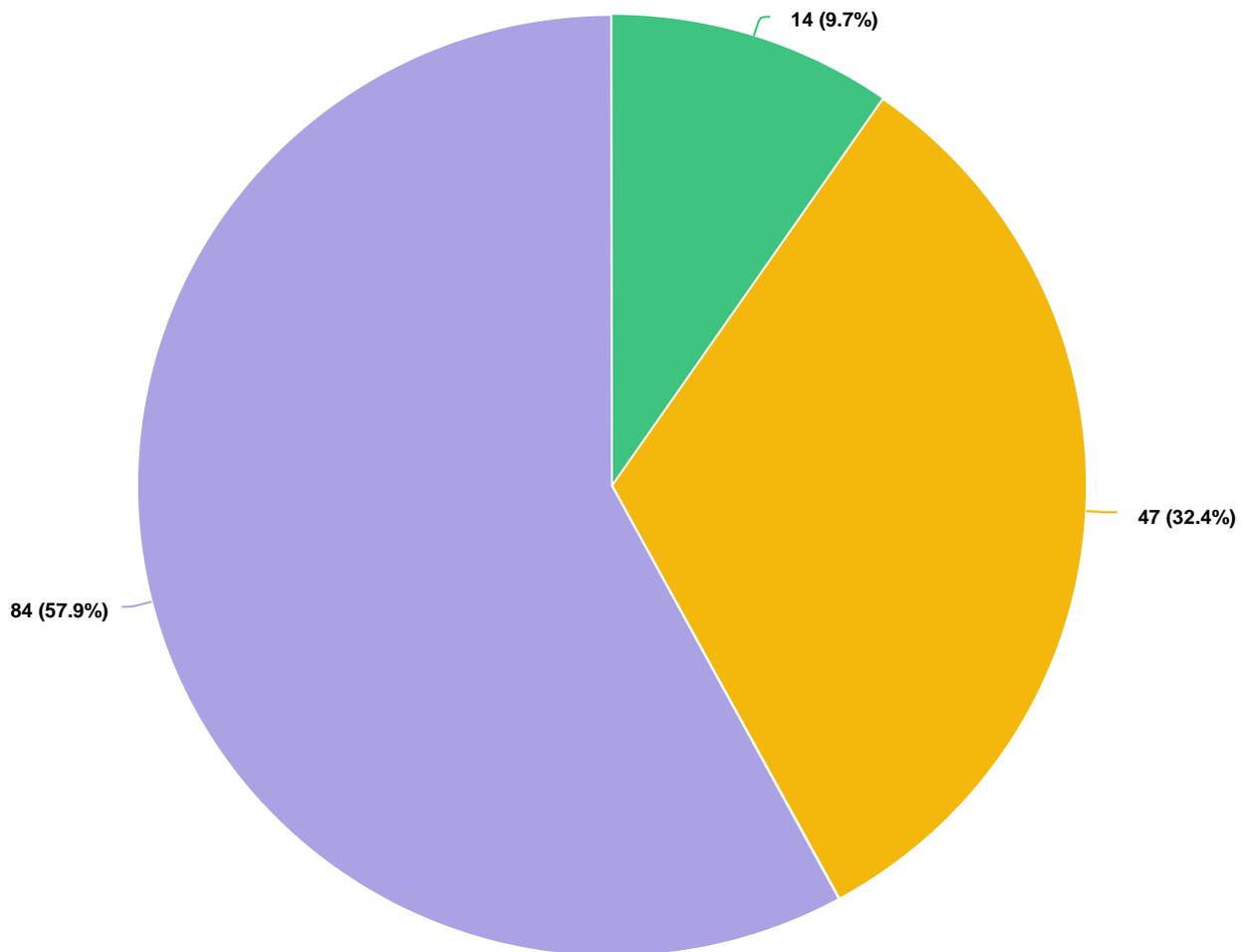
Optional question (144 responses, 3 skipped)

**Q10** What is your vision of the Town of The Blue Mountains economy over the next 5 years?

- **Community Engagement & Vibrant Culture:** Many respondents hoped that The Blue Mountains will have an engaged, diversified economy with many things to do that is accessible for all. Many businesses mentioned that there needs to be a vibrant culture across the entire Town and not just the main areas.
- **Economic Development:** Most respondents hoped to see growth economically in the Town of The Blue Mountains over the next five years as this would enhance their business. A few businessowners mentioned that maintenance is best instead of growth. However, most businesses mentioned that a growing Town that has a diverse, creative, economy to accommodate the current tourism and agricultural industries are their visions over the next five years. They also hope to see more new permanent full-time residents living here.
- **Sustainable Growth & Development:** Many respondents hope to see growth be managed in a more sustainable manner that prioritizes the environment, the Town's heritage and the people that live in the Town. Many business owners mentioned that although growth is great for the economy, it needs to be controlled and managed carefully in order to keep the small town feel and protect greenspace. Some respondents indicated that they are not interested in franchise or big box stores, but to have practical and light retail in the area. Growth in retirement related housing and services is recommended to service the needs of an aging population. Developers should be mandated to contribute to the maintenance and preservation of greenspaces.
- **Tourism:** As a service industry, many respondents hoped to see continued growth and focus in the tourism industry. Many business owners hoped that there will be more support and promotion of our Town in order to attract more people to our area. Some business owners envisioned the Town of The Blue Mountains to be a place where it is a tourism destination focused on event-based activities such as culinary, cultural, and recreational.
- Other key trends found from the questions include: **Municipal planning, affordable living, and employment** (larger labour pool, skilled workforce, providing transportation for workers).

*Optional question (124 responses, 23 skipped)*

**Q11 Which of the following stages best represents your business?**

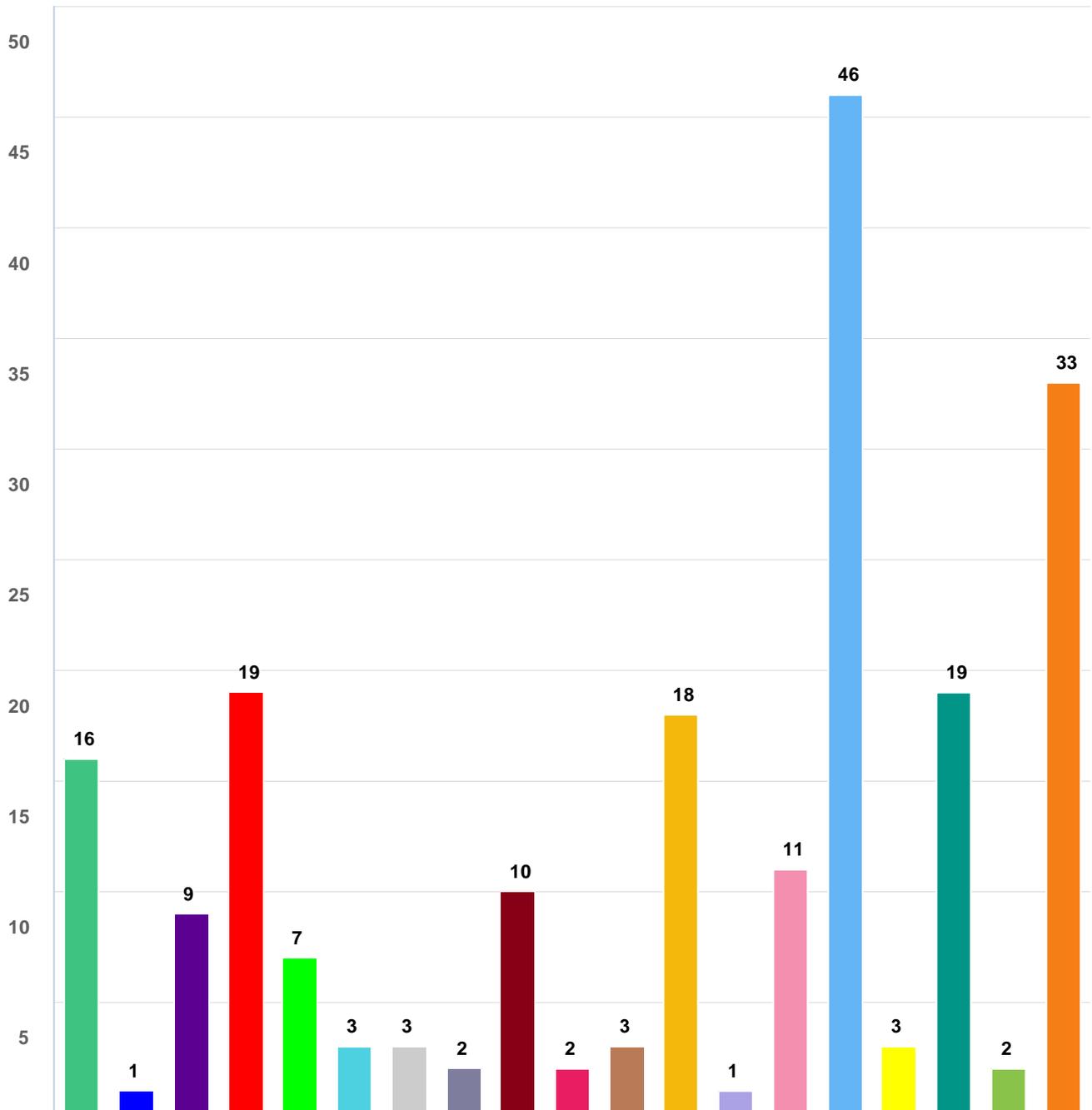


**Question options**

- Established / Mature Business
- Growing / Developing Business
- Start-Up / New Venture Business

*Optional question (146 responses, 1 skipped)*

**Q12 Please indicate which industry your business operates within?**

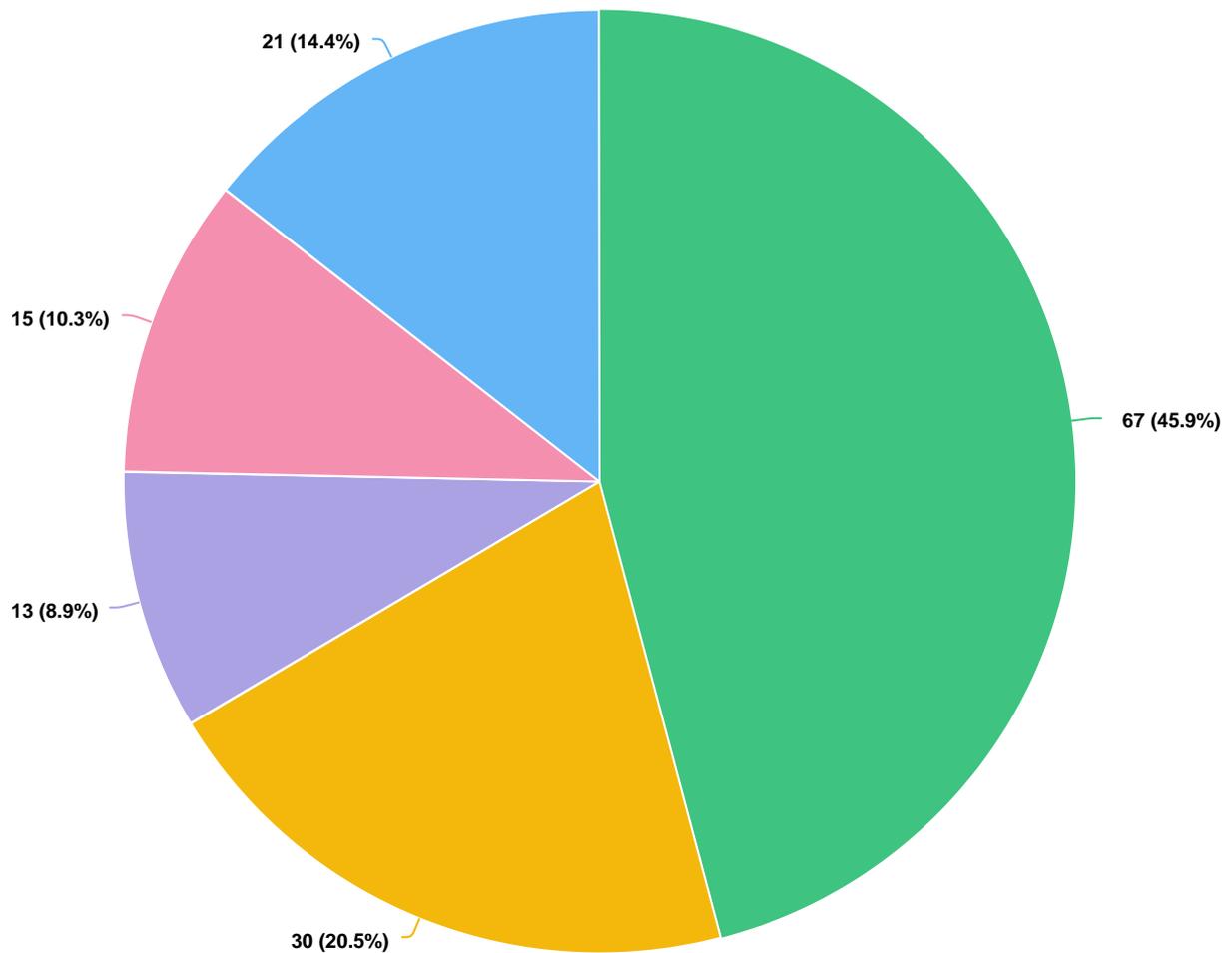


**Question options**

- Other (please specify):
 ● Wholesale
● Tourism
● Transportation
● Retail
● Real Estate
- Public Administration
 ● Professional Services
● Manufacturing
● Management
● Healthcare
● Information
- Education
 ● Finance
● Construction
● Arts & Entertainment
● Agriculture
● Administrative
- Accommodation

*Optional question (147 responses, 0 skipped)*

**Q13** Please indicate the number of employees your business employs (total number of individuals working full-time, part-time and seasonal):

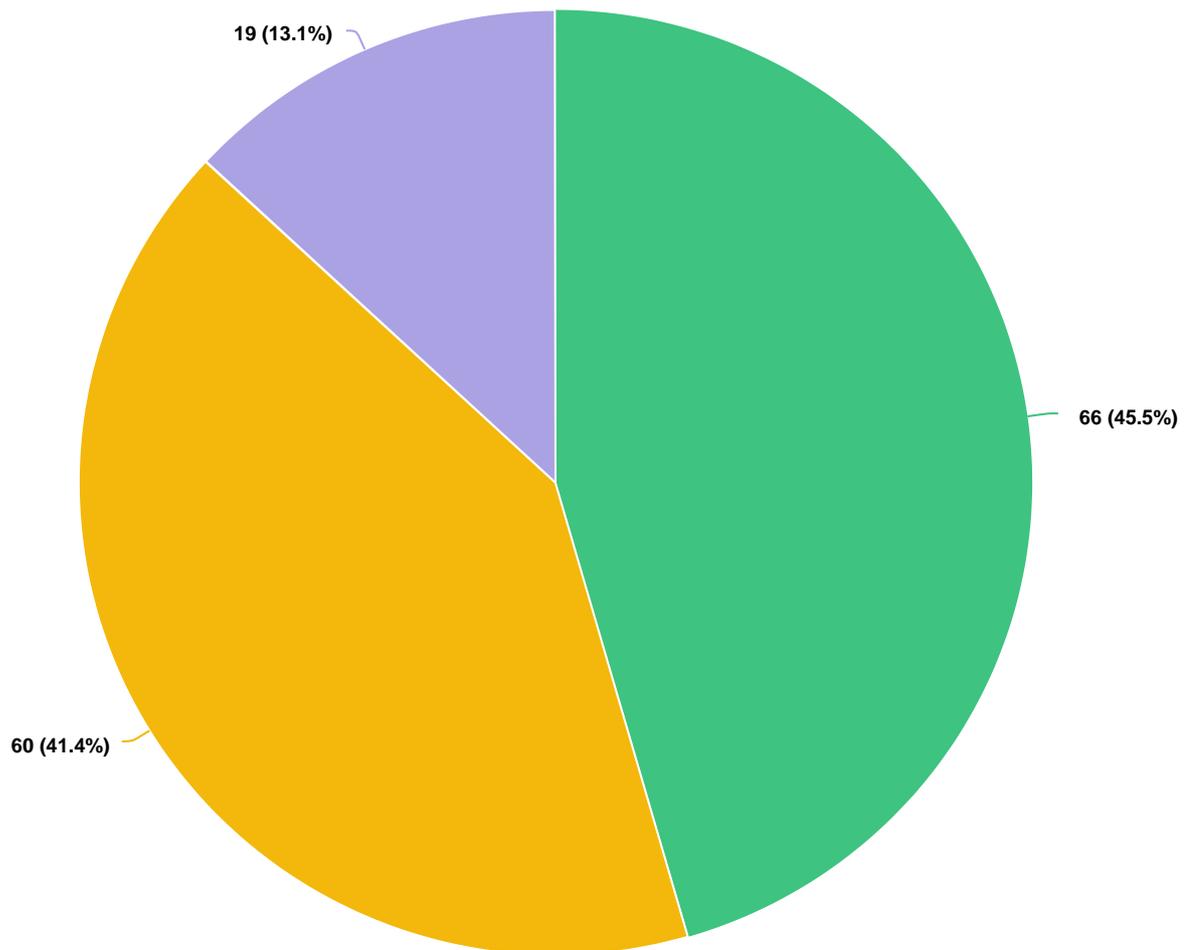


**Question options**

- 50+ employees
- 20-49 employees
- 10-19 employees
- 5-9 employees
- 1-4 employees

Optional question (147 responses, 0 skipped)

**Q14** In your opinion, do you consider most employees in your business full-time, part-time, or seasonal workers?

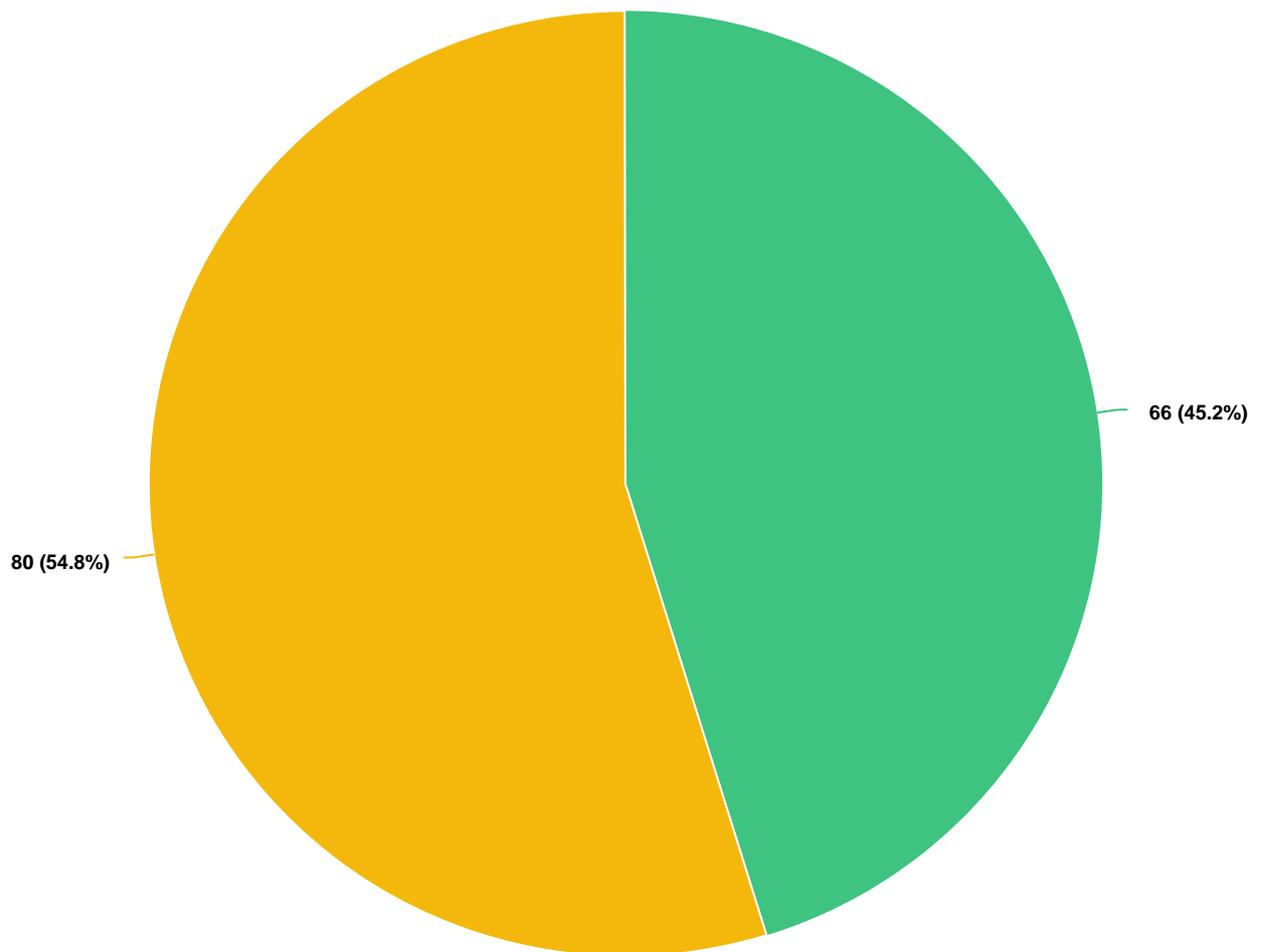


**Question options**

● Seasonal   ● Part-Time   ● Full-Time

*Optional question (146 responses, 1 skipped)*

**Q15** Where do the majority of your employees live?

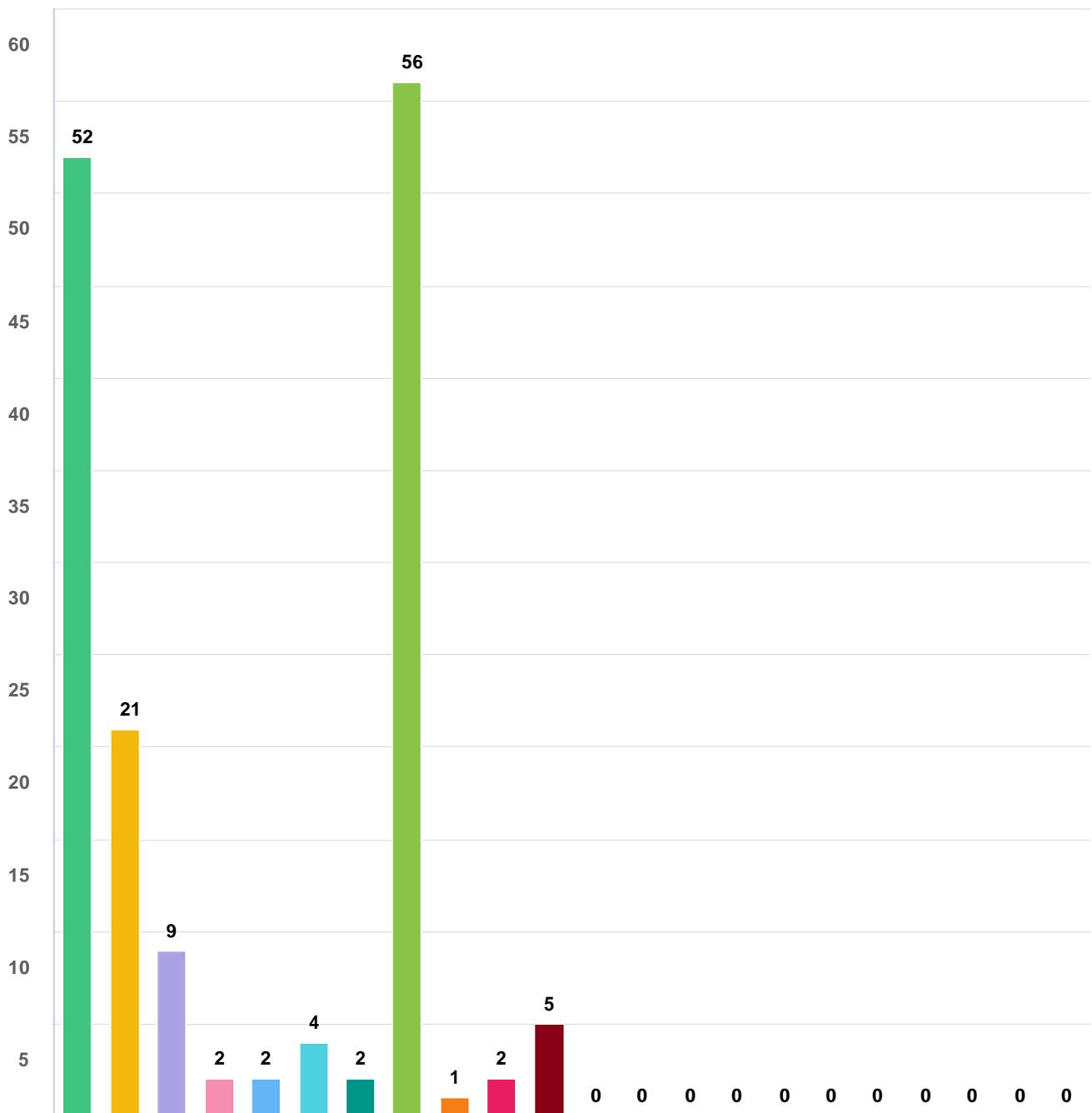


**Question options**

- In an adjoining community
- In the Town of The Blue Mountains

*Optional question (147 responses, 0 skipped)*

**Q16 Where is your business located in the Town of The Blue Mountains?**

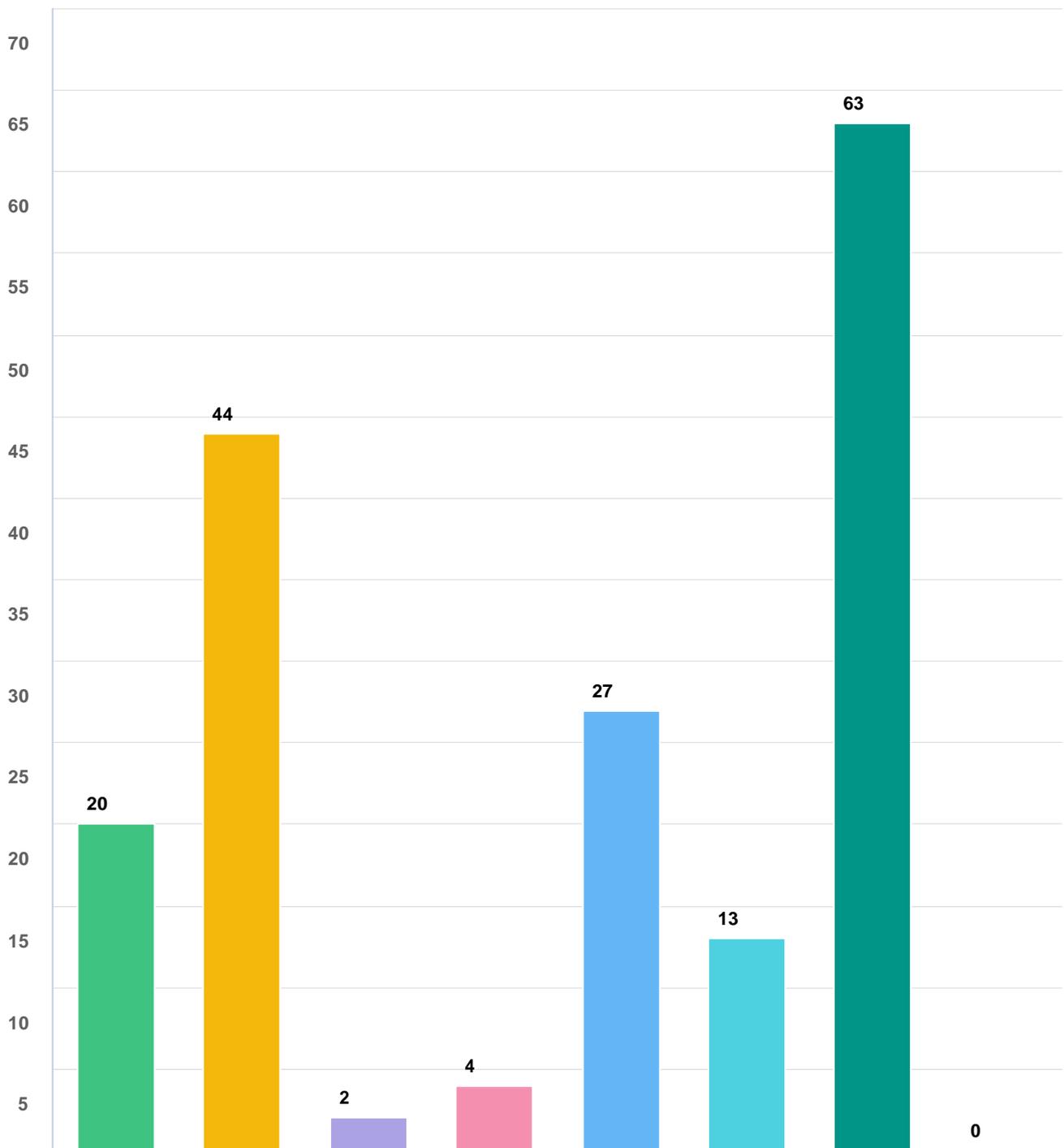


**Question options**

- Slabtown   Sandhill   Red Wing   Osler   Loree   Kolapore   Gibraltar   Egypt
- Castle Glen   Camperdown   Banks   Other (please specify)   No Physical Location   Victoria Corners
- Thornbury   Swiss Meadows   Ravenna   Lora Bay   Heathcote   Craigleith   Clarksburg
- Blue Mountain Village

Optional question (147 responses, 0 skipped)

**Q17 How did you hear about this survey?**



**Question options**

- Radioad
- Other (please specify)
- Social media
- Word of mouth
- Road signs
- Newspaper
- Town website & e-newsletter
- Survey postcard

Optional question (146 responses, 1 skipped)

### **Q18 Summary of Additional comments (optional):**

- 30 year vision is very important to us, keep up good work.
- Business owner in The Blue Mountains for 30 years. Learn from our previous mistakes, use the Economic Development Strategy as intended and not put on the shelf.
- Clarksburg needs support from Town. Signage, parking, business support.
- Could not get survey to work in Google Chrome. Had to use Internet Explorer
- Didn't like question #14 and 15
- Do not lose the charm of the place as it exists currently.
- Embrace diversity in our community
- Encourage opportunities that are profitable and growing. Bring businesses where the attractiveness of the area will encourage decent wage earners that they have a nice place to live. Need higher wage earner spending to support lower wage earners and provide growth opportunities.
- Fix Fire Department
- Growth and popularity benefits businesses greatly but diminishes enjoyment of the area that they grew up in and threatens small town feel. Diminishes heritage and history of so many local families that find it more difficult to afford living and continuing their family farms in the area.
- Growth is great but concerning b/c housing prices go up and infrastructure cannot support it. I.e.: Traffic lights, etc.
- Growth isn't necessary, expanding what you currently have living here would be key to success.

- Have growth but with infrastructure in place.
- Hopeful that the Town will follow through with appropriate action for Clarksburg.
- Hoping NIMBYism doesn't prevent growth and housing needs
- Keep long term perspective. The Blue Mountains differentiates greatly from many communities in Ontario. Not in favour of gas stations and four coffee shops in Thornbury.
- Love the Town, excited to grow their business here.
- Many opportunities in this Town. Looking forward to seeing final product. Hoping to see different events (music festival) happen in the area over the next five years
- More services in Clarksburg
- Our area is beautiful. We love it. This is our home. The marketing we have done as residents and business owners has worked so well ...almost too well. Now we have to make sure it doesn't scare us all away with its high housing prices and city attitudes
- Parking an issue in Thornbury. Signage is needed for all the places in The Blue Mountains. Example: A tourists wouldn't know a labyrinth exists here as there is not enough signage
- Potential to make The Blue Mountains a wonderful place to live and work. Keep the charm while growing the area for a great quality of life
- Preferred a shorter survey with more multiple choice with comments at the end.
- Provide more support for the village
- Recommendation that parking in Clarksburg on Marsh Street have a 1 hour limit from Monday to Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm. Retails affected when there is an event happening at another business and all spaces are taken.
- Need more parking in Clarksburg. Need handicap/accessible parking in front of the medical building and on each side of the street. Parking needs to be paved and marked.

Need to slow down speed in Clarksburg, people driving too fast and dangerous for everyone. Suggest to install speed bumps, rumble strips, or posted speed sign staying a lower speed e.g. 40 km/h

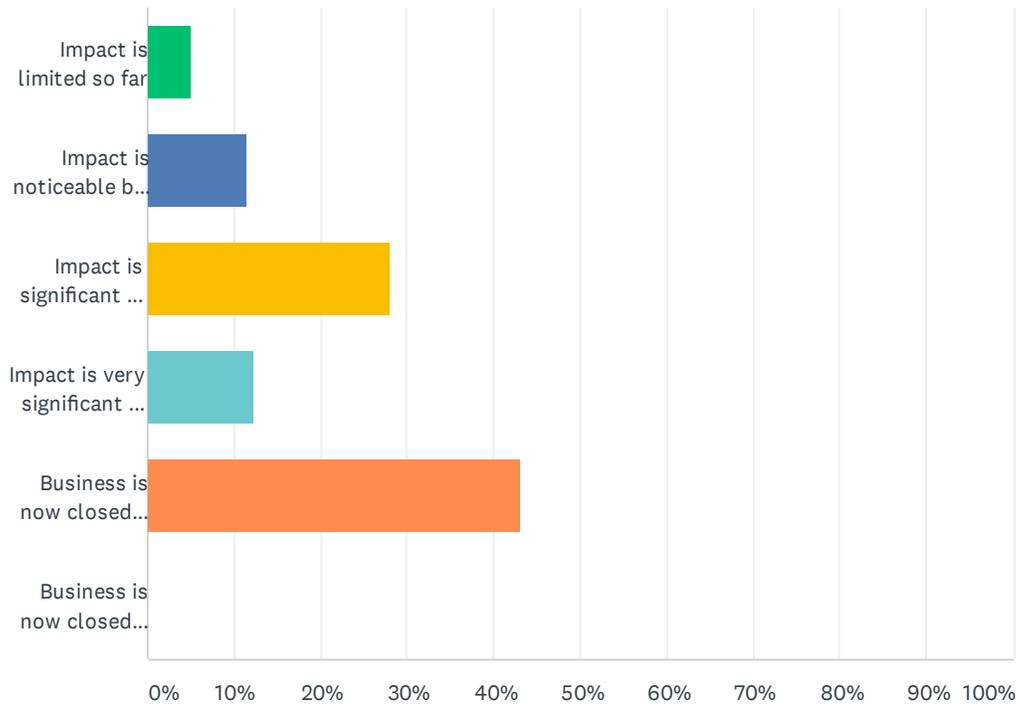
More directional signage to Clarksburg. More beautification, flowers on the poles, community board, better quality signage/exterior of the buildings from the retailers/landlords enforced. Need coffee shop in Clarksburg.

- Sustainable development, making it affordable for all ages in our community and encouraging a diverse economic base and a age-diverse population

- The Blue Mountains is a wonderful place to live and do business. Think strategically about how to grow our businesses, protect assets, and population to support businesses with staff.
- Thornbury, four seasons of charm. We have everything we need here to build on these unique offerings. Old school community that's going to continue to differentiate us in the 21st century.
- Thank you
- Thank you
- Thank you
- Thank you. Wants to see statistics and final product
- Too expensive here to live and too many highly paid people in the Town admin, no reasonably run business could afford that and would have to do personnel cuts
- Work together to make The Blue Mountains the best place to live in Canada
- Results of the survey should be made available to the public, anonymously
- Maintain the charm and quaintness of TOBM
- Improvements to infrastructure needed: signage, parking

# Q1 Which of the following best describes the impact of COVID-19 on your business right now?

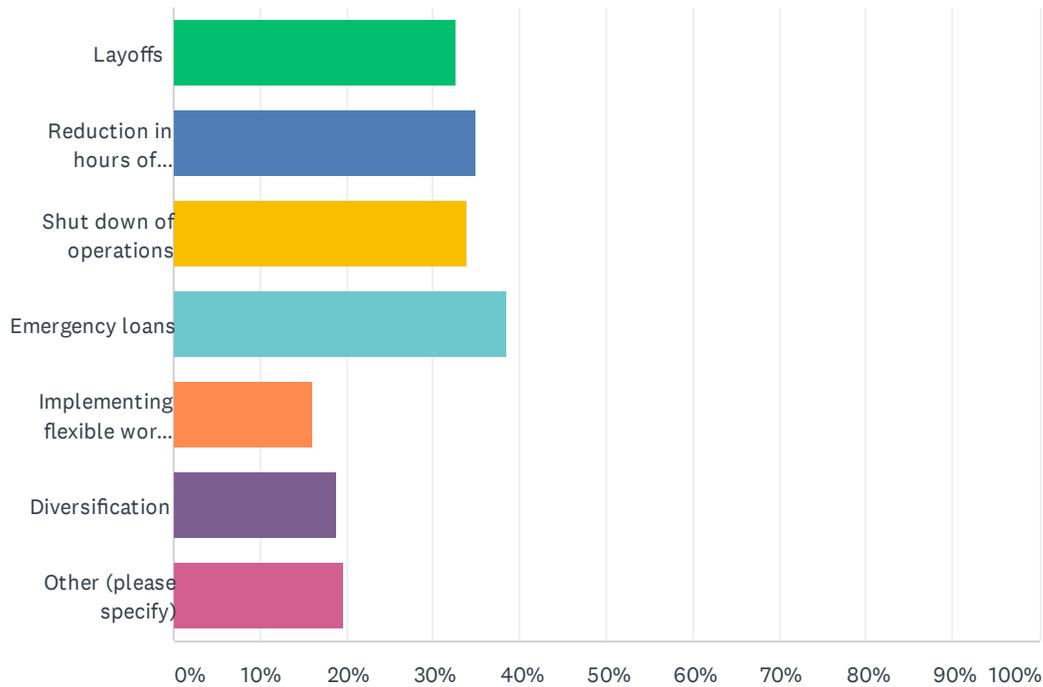
Answered: 218 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Impact is limited so far	5.05%	11
Impact is noticeable but not significant	11.47%	25
Impact is significant and steadily increasing	27.98%	61
Impact is very significant and growing fast	12.39%	27
Business is now closed temporarily	43.12%	94
Business is now closed permanently	0.00%	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>218</b>

## Q2 What measures are you likely to use/need to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answered: 218 Skipped: 0



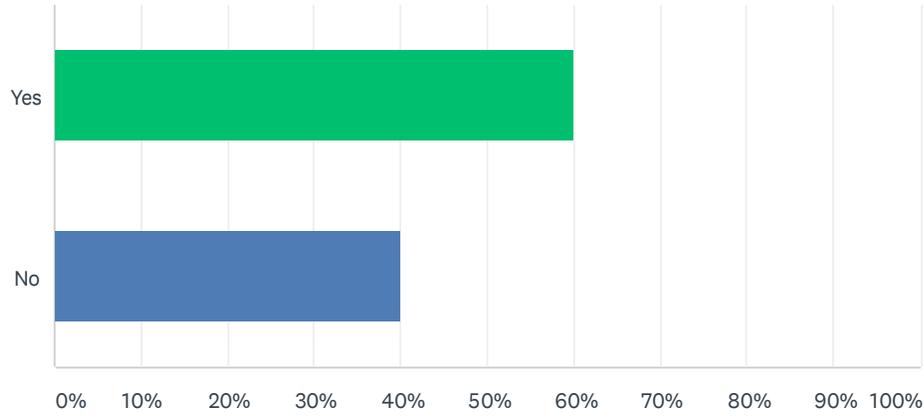
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Layoffs	32.57%	71
Reduction in hours of operation/production	34.86%	76
Shut down of operations	33.94%	74
Emergency loans	38.53%	84
Implementing flexible work hours/work from home options	16.06%	35
Diversification	18.81%	41
Other (please specify)	19.72%	43
Total Respondents: 218		

**"Other" responses include:**

- curb side pick-up
- move online/set up e-commerce store
- owner working the hours of 2 employees
- changing activities and lowering expenditures
- strict monitoring of social distancing in all business practices
- live streaming all gatherings instead of usual in-person gatherings
- close one business to keep the other viable
- increase number of employees to handle additional work with safe practices
- different focus and some innovative marketing

### Q3 Have you accessed any government support?

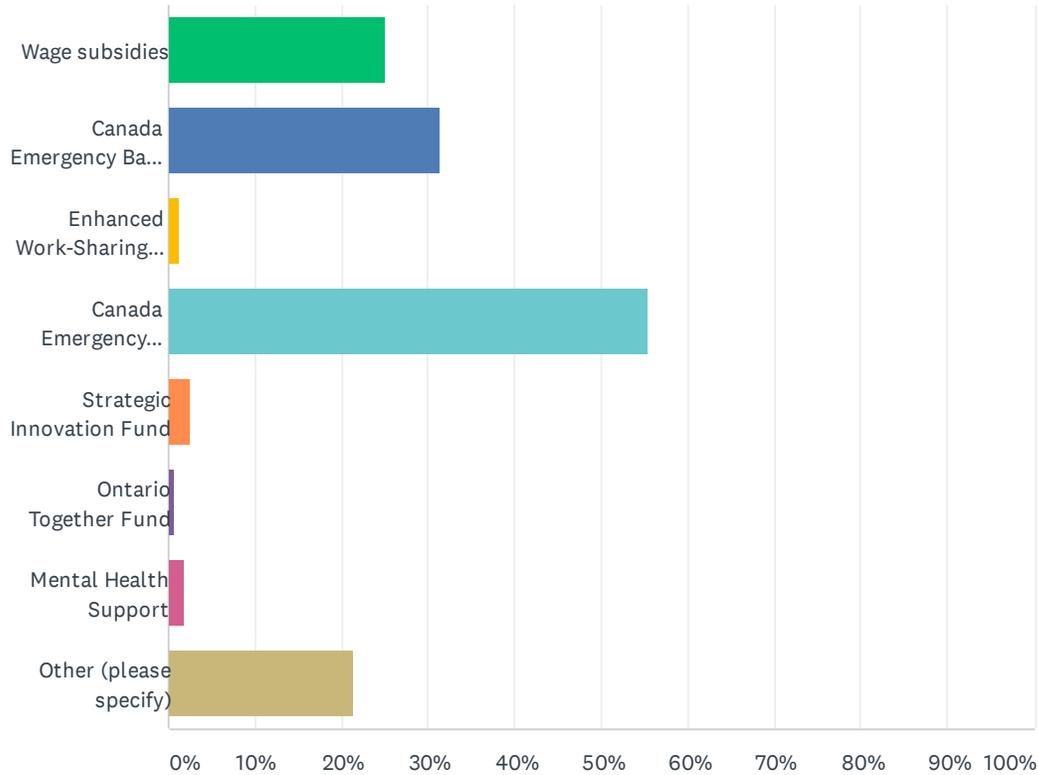
Answered: 218 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	60.09%	131
No	39.91%	87
TOTAL		218

### Q4 If yes, which supports have you accessed? (check all that apply)

Answered: 159 Skipped: 59



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Wage subsidies	25.16%	40
Canada Emergency Bank Account	31.45%	50
Enhanced Work-Sharing Program	1.26%	2
Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)	55.35%	88
Strategic Innovation Fund	2.52%	4
Ontario Together Fund	0.63%	1
Mental Health Support	1.89%	3
Other (please specify)	21.38%	34
Total Respondents: 159		

## Q5 Beyond what has already been announced, what do you need from the provincial and federal governments?

Answered: 160 Skipped: 58

Responses varied greatly and majority of responses were based on financial struggles. However, some main themes worth highlighting include:

- Clearer measures and guidance to re-opening the economy, which includes access to PPE to not only follow safety protocol but also for staff retention & confidence
- Loans for self-employed individuals as they do not qualify for CEBA
- Rent support for all businesses especially those operating a non-essential business
- Support for the hospitality/tourism industry. Seasonal businesses not being able to open is not only affecting the summer season but also the rest of the year as summer revenue supports them through the winter season.
- Request to lengthen timelines for government support as small businesses will continue to be affected post-reopening.
- Request to support Not-for-profits/Charities – fundraising goals are often achieved through social gatherings or large events.

“Recognition from the government that sole proprietors run businesses too. We don’t have employees. We don’t have payroll. We just run businesses that put money into the economy, pay taxes, and contribute.”

“CEWS support for contract employees to stay employed”

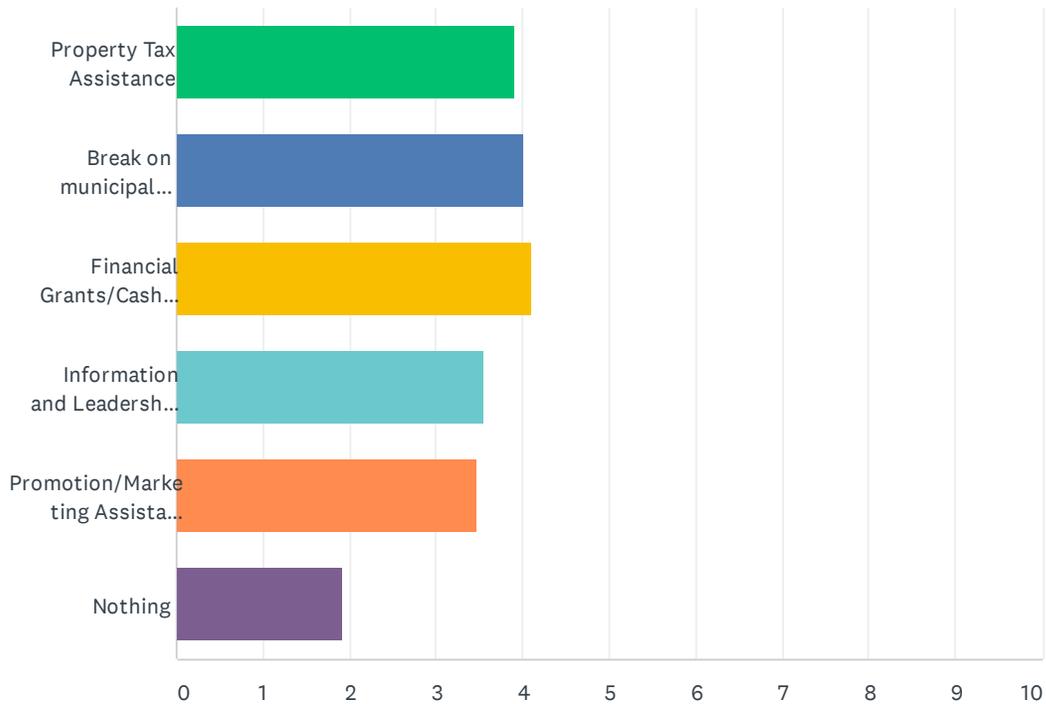
“Flexibility in how the Wage Subsidy program is calculated for farmers working on a seasonal income/expense model”

Businesses are changing activities and reducing expenditures – “a different focus and some innovative marketing”/ “finding new ways to get our food product to market”

“...enhanced PPE would boost employee confidence and may help retention during COVID-19”

## Q6 What do you need from your local municipal governments right now? (ranked by greatest need)

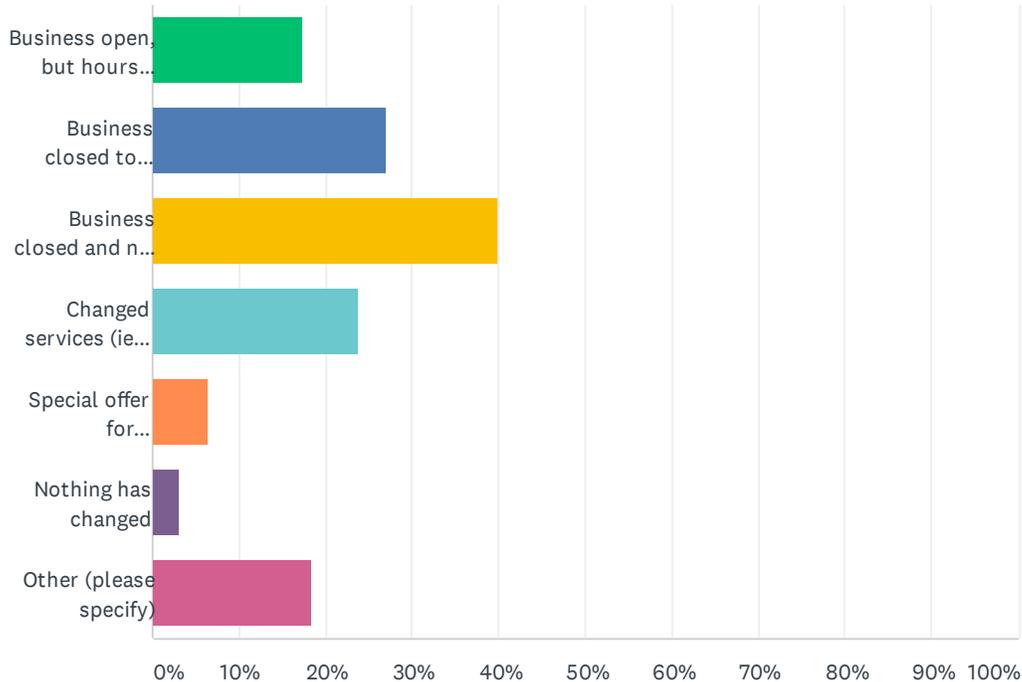
Answered: 218 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	6	TOTAL	SCORE
Property Tax Assistance	27.06% 59	17.89% 39	15.14% 33	10.09% 22	19.72% 43	10.09% 22	218	3.92
Break on municipal charges and utilities	10.55% 23	33.49% 73	22.48% 49	19.72% 43	8.26% 18	5.50% 12	218	4.02
Financial Grants/Cash Flow/Emergency Funds	27.52% 60	15.14% 33	24.77% 54	13.30% 29	11.01% 24	8.26% 18	218	4.10
Information and Leadership (updates on initiatives)	11.01% 24	15.60% 34	20.18% 44	28.44% 62	20.64% 45	4.13% 9	218	3.56
Promotion/Marketing Assistance (During and after COVID-19)	13.76% 30	16.51% 36	13.30% 29	21.56% 47	30.28% 66	4.59% 10	218	3.48
Nothing	10.09% 22	1.38% 3	4.13% 9	6.88% 15	10.09% 22	67.43% 147	218	1.92

## Q7 How has your business responded to COVID-19?

Answered: 218 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Business open, but hours changed	17.43%	38
Business closed to public, but still operating	27.06%	59
Business closed and not operating	39.91%	87
Changed services (ie. take out, delivery, curbside pick up)	23.85%	52
Special offer for customers/community members	6.42%	14
Nothing has changed	3.21%	7
Other (please specify)	18.35%	40
Total Respondents: 218		

Narrative responses included a variety of sectors and situations. Those businesses that are open highlighted "new working protocols", restricting access to emergencies only, and "designated essential service but almost no business, still have bills to pay". Business that have changed their services whether essential or non-essential have focused efforts via online or telephone support and "capitalizing on social media".

Businesses within the tourism industry stipulated that the uncertainty around opening their business to the public is detrimental to their business and survival in the winter months.

"we are deemed an essential service. shop must be able to service. but no one is allowed in per the rules/govt. this greatly affects our ability to do business and generate income. and because we are technically 'open' because we are an essential service our creditors are looking to get their bills paid...but we don't have the customers to pay them"

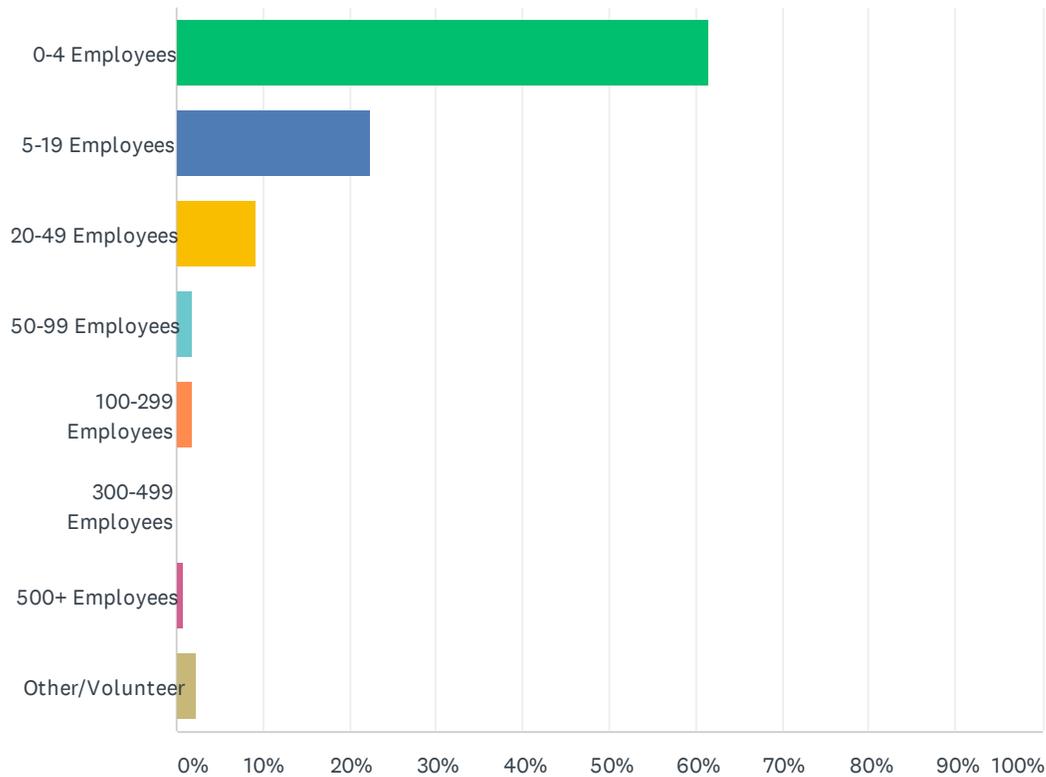
"Designated essential service but almost no business, still have all the bills to pay"

"Working from home, capitalizing on social media"

"Farm operation - continuing to operate but nervous about future supplies and health of employees and employers. Have to keep functioning - no choice"

## Q8 How many employees did you have before COVID-19 impacted Ontario?

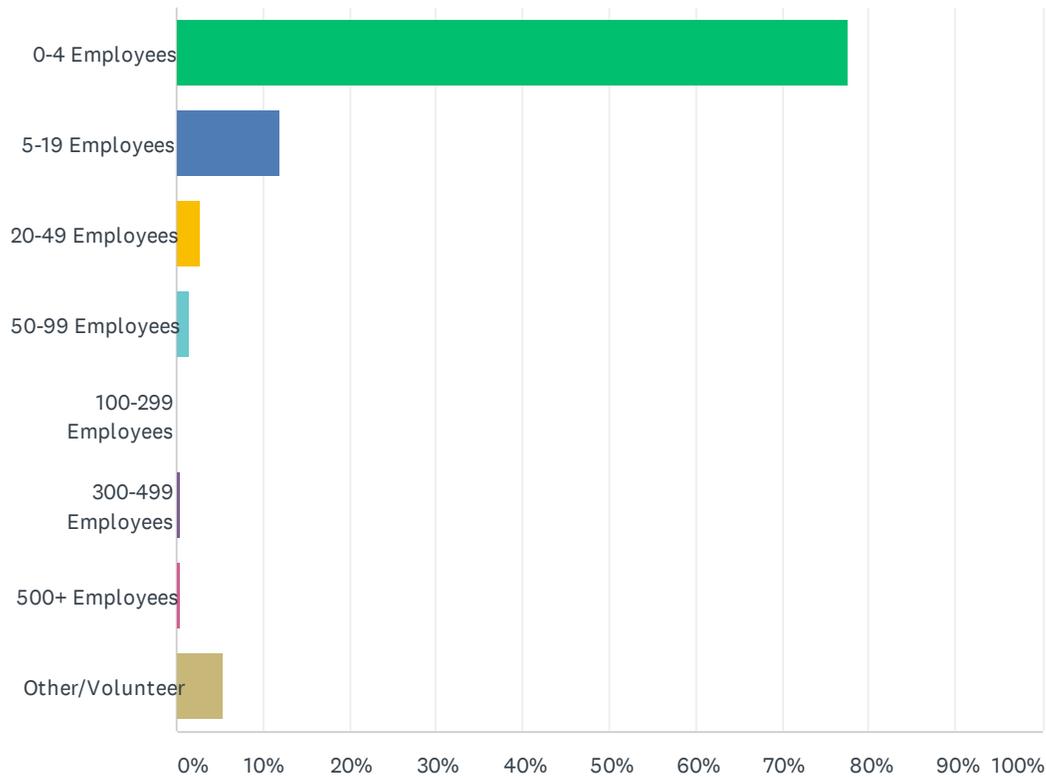
Answered: 218 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-4 Employees	61.47%	134
5-19 Employees	22.48%	49
20-49 Employees	9.17%	20
50-99 Employees	1.83%	4
100-299 Employees	1.83%	4
300-499 Employees	0.00%	0
500+ Employees	0.92%	2
Other/Volunteer	2.29%	5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>218</b>

## Q9 How many employees do you have now at your business as a result of COVID-19?

Answered: 218 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0-4 Employees	77.52%	169
5-19 Employees	11.93%	26
20-49 Employees	2.75%	6
50-99 Employees	1.38%	3
100-299 Employees	0.00%	0
300-499 Employees	0.46%	1
500+ Employees	0.46%	1
Other/Volunteer	5.50%	12
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>218</b>

**Q10 In an effort to gauge economic impact, please indicate roughly:(this information will be added as a sum total for all business - individual data will not be shared)**

Answered: 176 Skipped: 42

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
2019 Revenues	96.59%	170
Projected 2020 Revenues	97.73%	172

150 full responses, based on best estimates today:

2019 Revenue \$ 561,878,422.00

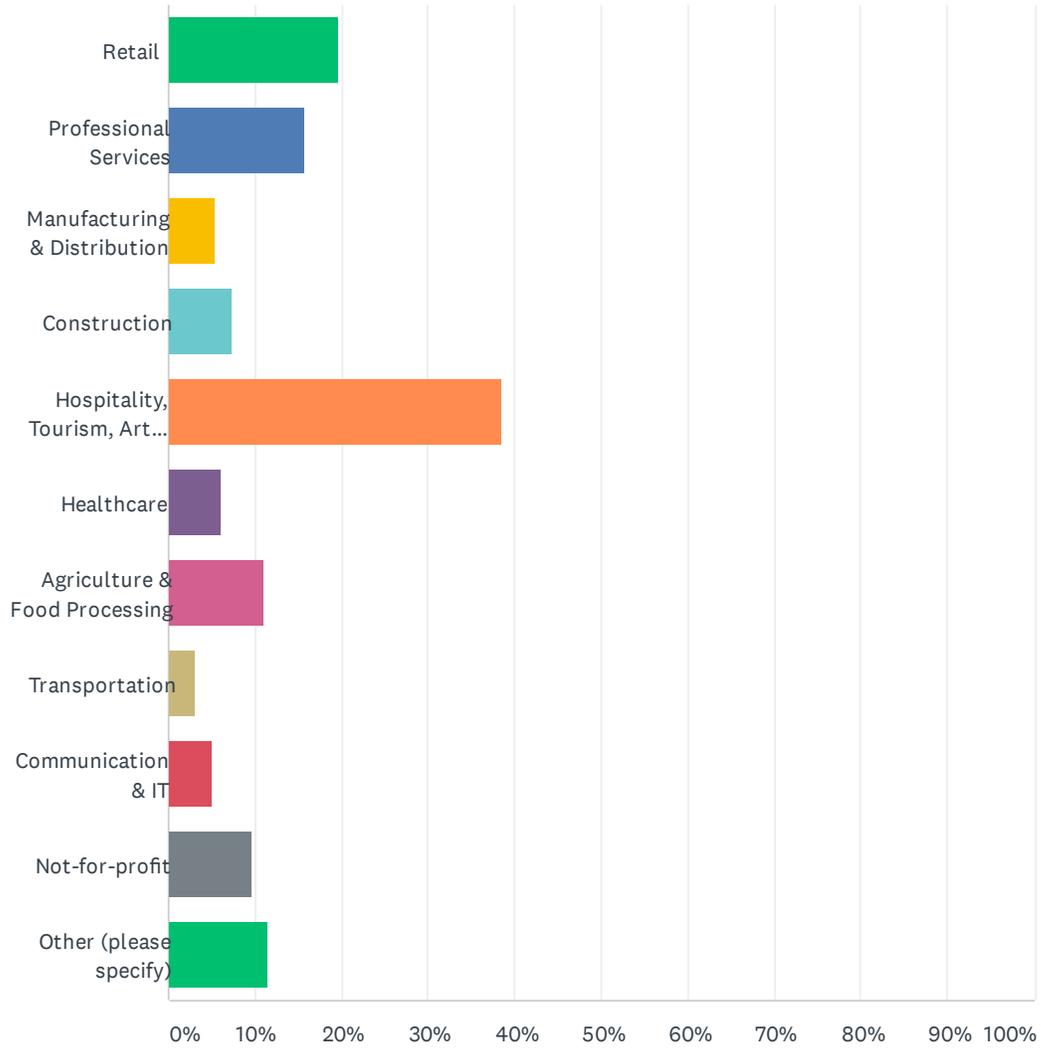
2020 Revenue \$ 444,374,302.00

A total revenue decrease of \$117,504,120

Combined, there is an estimated average decrease of 42.5% in projected revenues for 2020.

## Q11 What industry is your business part of?

Answered: 218 Skipped: 0

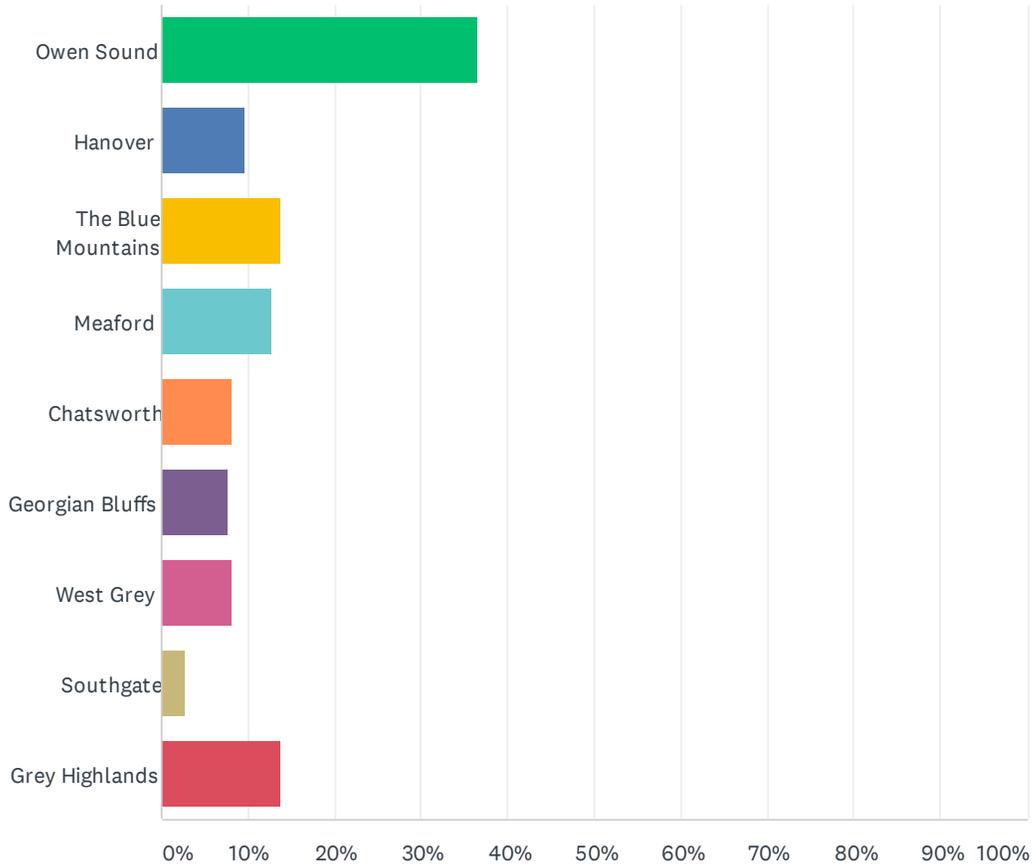


## Follow-Up COVID-19 Business Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Retail	19.72%	43
Professional Services	15.60%	34
Manufacturing & Distribution	5.50%	12
Construction	7.34%	16
Hospitality, Tourism, Arts & Culture	38.53%	84
Healthcare	5.96%	13
Agriculture & Food Processing	11.01%	24
Transportation	3.21%	7
Communication & IT	5.05%	11
Not-for-profit	9.63%	21
Other (please specify)	11.47%	25
Total Respondents: 218		

## Q12 Where is your business located?

Answered: 218 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Owen Sound	36.70%	80
Hanover	9.63%	21
The Blue Mountains	13.76%	30
Meaford	12.84%	28
Chatsworth	8.26%	18
Georgian Bluffs	7.80%	17
West Grey	8.26%	18
Southgate	2.75%	6
Grey Highlands	13.76%	30
Total Respondents: 218		

## Q13 Please describe any other impacts you're experiencing.

Answered: 128 Skipped: 90

A financial crisis continues to be the underlying theme in this section for both essential and non-essential businesses. Those struggling are now identifying severe stress on the family unit and increased mental health issues. Business owners are trying not to burn-out from lack of staff, pivoting their business model, staying healthy from the virus and/or working from home while homeschooling their children. Work/Life balance has become even more difficult to manage.

"I am currently running my business alone, have opened an online store to sell my perishable products. I am not drawing from my business at all, and am now relying completely on my partner financially. CERB would only cover my commercial rent if I stopped working. My partner is having to help me complete my orders, I am now working 10-12 hour days, 6 days a week completing orders, answering emails regarding curbside pick up/delivery without paying myself as I lost \$10,000 when I closed my business for two weeks in March. I don't know when I will be able to pay myself again"

Uncertainty of opening = uncertainty of business surviving. This uncertainty of the future is making it very difficult for businesses to plan and strategize. "The unknown is the hardest to deal with. Our markets are unpredictable..." In addition, once the economy has opened business owners fear business will be extremely poor or nil and that marketing will be a priority. "Significant loss of revenue but also loss of recognition. Will people still come to my business after I have been closed for months? My business will be one of the last allowed to open because of the difficulty in putting protective measures in place."

Additional comments/suggestions include:

- Better understanding of guidelines and regulations and consistent messaging between province and federal government
- Online summer school suggestion for high school students
- "Stress of having to do curb side with risk to me and my family in order to keep business going and not close doors permanently"
- Daycare – even if allowed to open, only 60% of parents will enroll their children again, or wait until Sept.
- "We're rapidly adjusting and now doing most of our sales online, we cannot open to the public and are diversifying as a result. We are a 2 person operation funding our young business with additional off farm employment (now cut in half) and also homeschooling our two young children. We need to hire help but cannot afford to. Our interest costs on loans to finance the business are our biggest concern. We have lost a main revenue stream with bars and restaurants closing and are limited in other growth opportunities as grocery and food retail stores are struggling to keep up and as such not adding new products."

Please note: Where possible, those businesses that identified a significant impact short-term (permanent closure), have been contacted.

## Q14 If you would like to receive economic development updates by email for programs, initiatives and resources available to business, during and after COVID-19, please sign up here or leave your email below.

Answered: 73 Skipped: 145

### Trends & Identifying Gaps

- As CERB was released before CEWS (Wage Subsidy of 75%), many businesses had already temporarily laid off employees who in turn applied for receiving CERB of \$2000/month. Now employers are struggling to call back their employees (especially entry level positions and part-time employees) who are choosing to stay home to take care of their children, etc. rather than return to work.
- Volunteer run charities or not-for-profit are not eligible for CEBA (\$40,000 loan) as they don't have payroll. However they still have overhead costs to cover and often times revenue comes from fundraising events (large gatherings)
- Not for profits – Commercial rent forgivable loan is really the only gov't support that they can access. However, the onus is on the landlord to apply and provide the discount. If there's not a strong tenant/landlord relationship, it makes it less appealing for landlords to decrease their rent by 25%
- Sole proprietorship – do not qualify for wage subsidy (family run) and may not qualify for CEBA (interest free loan) and CERB is only covering their household bills and expenses.
- Property owners of a residential unit whose tenants are unable to pay their rent, except maybe one tenant putting them over the \$1,000 threshold, but still having to pay all overhead costs of building.
- Small businesses (self-employed) that are still open (essential or non-essential) but are making very little revenue each month just over the \$1,000 threshold. It's not enough to cover business expenses and personal expenses. Not eligible for interest free loan either.
- Transportation companies (i.e. taxi drivers) – they are considered an essential business. However, their business is really slow as no one is commuting anywhere. They are making just over the \$1,000/month and don't want to stop working as they are the only taxi business in town and want to support their community.
- “As a start up food processor I rely on rental availability of inspected kitchen space. None are available at the moment due to COVID-19 measures.”
- Thus far, most businesses that we have connected with have been eligible for at least one form of gov't support (CERB, CEWS, CEBA).

How do we support businesses whose current & specific situation does not meet the eligibility criteria for financial support (CERB, CEBA, CEWS)

- o i.e. A business who lives minimally, makes under the \$20,000 revenue threshold, has renters in the building to make ends meet, but tenants are unable to pay monthly rent. Also has a little bit of revenue from a side hussle (online dog training) each week which disqualifies him from CERB as he makes slightly over \$1,000
- o i.e. New owners (April 1st 2020) of a lodge where they live on the property and their only source of income is in the spring/summer/fall. Not eligible for CEBA as they didn't have anyone on payroll yet. Not eligible for CEWS as they didn't have any revenue since new ownership...plus there's no business now so no staff are needed. Not eligible for CERB as they had no income from 2019 to April 1st. Not eligible for Commercial rent as they do not hold a mortgage on the property.
- “We are deemed an essential service, expected to provide staff with PPE. Shop must be able to service but no one is allowed in per gov't rules. This greatly affects our ability to do business and generate income. Also because we are technically 'open' as an essential service our creditors are looking to get their bills paid...but we don't have the customers to pay them”