

Business Walk Program



Powered by the COEDC

Canada's First Business Walks Program finds 88% of Central Okanagan Businesses Steady or Increasing

As an additional tool to gather and communicate industry intelligence, the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission (COEDC) with assistance from partner organizations facilitated Canada's first Business Walk on Thursday, October 4th, 2012.

Within a three hour blitz more than **65 business and civic leaders** walked door-to-door and surveyed **325 businesses** throughout Peachland, West Kelowna, Westbank First Nation, Kelowna (Downtown & Rutland) and Lake Country business districts.

For the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission the information helps to capture and track the pulse of businesses throughout the region, connects business support agencies to the business community, communicates industry intelligence to business support providers and identifies opportunities for COEDC's Business Enhancement programming. Civic and business leaders are able to gain specific information that enables them to identify and remove barriers to doing business in their respective municipalities. Member-driven organizations such as Business Improvement Associations and Chambers of Commerce can use the information to tailor their services to the expressed needs of the businesses they serve.

Businesses were asked three questions:

- *How is Business?*
- *What do you like most about doing business in the area?*
- *What can be done to help your business thrive?*

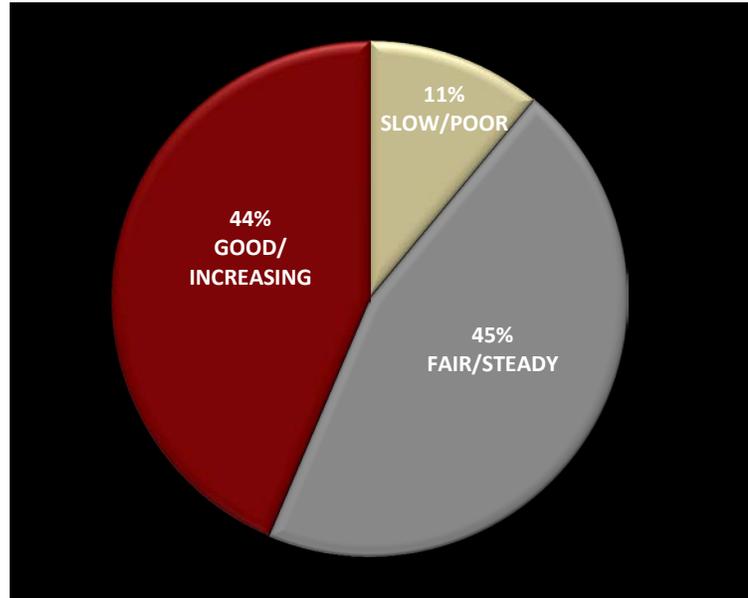
Summary/Results

Of the 325 businesses surveyed 37 were conducted in Peachland, 8 in West Kelowna, 51 in Westbank First Nation, 92 in Kelowna/Downtown, 56 in Kelowna/Rutland, and 81 in Lake Country.

Question 1: *How is Business?*

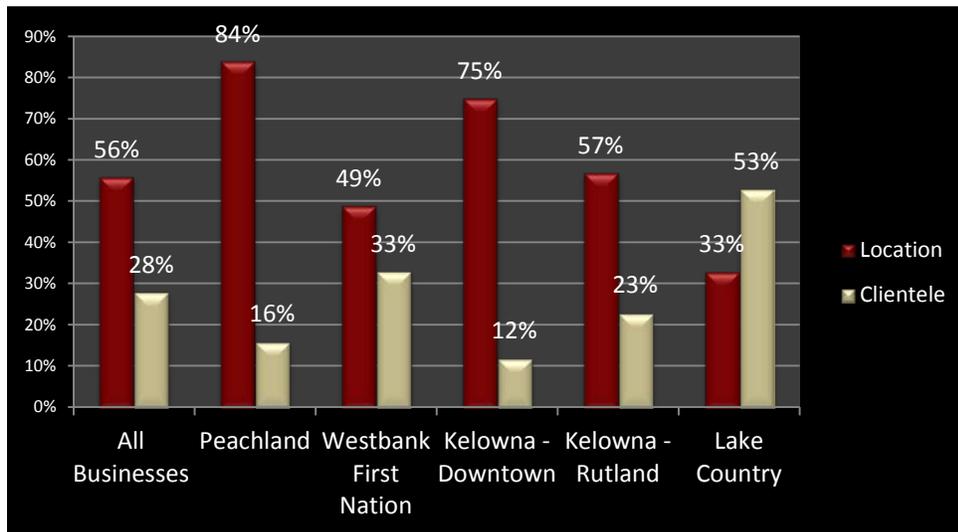
When asked “How is business?” 44% of businesses surveyed responded “Good/Increasing” and 45% rated business as “Fair/Steady” resulting in a generally positive outlook overall from 89% of the 325 businesses visited throughout the Central Okanagan.

11% of respondents rated business as distinctly “Slow/Poor.” Reasons given for this included the seasonal nature of some businesses as well as a sense the economy was “still recovering from the recession”.



Question 2: *What do you like most about doing business in the area?*

When asked what they like most about doing business in their area over half the respondents (56 %) stated their **location** was what they liked most about doing business. Peachland and Kelowna/Downtown businesses reported ‘location’ 84% and 75% respectively.



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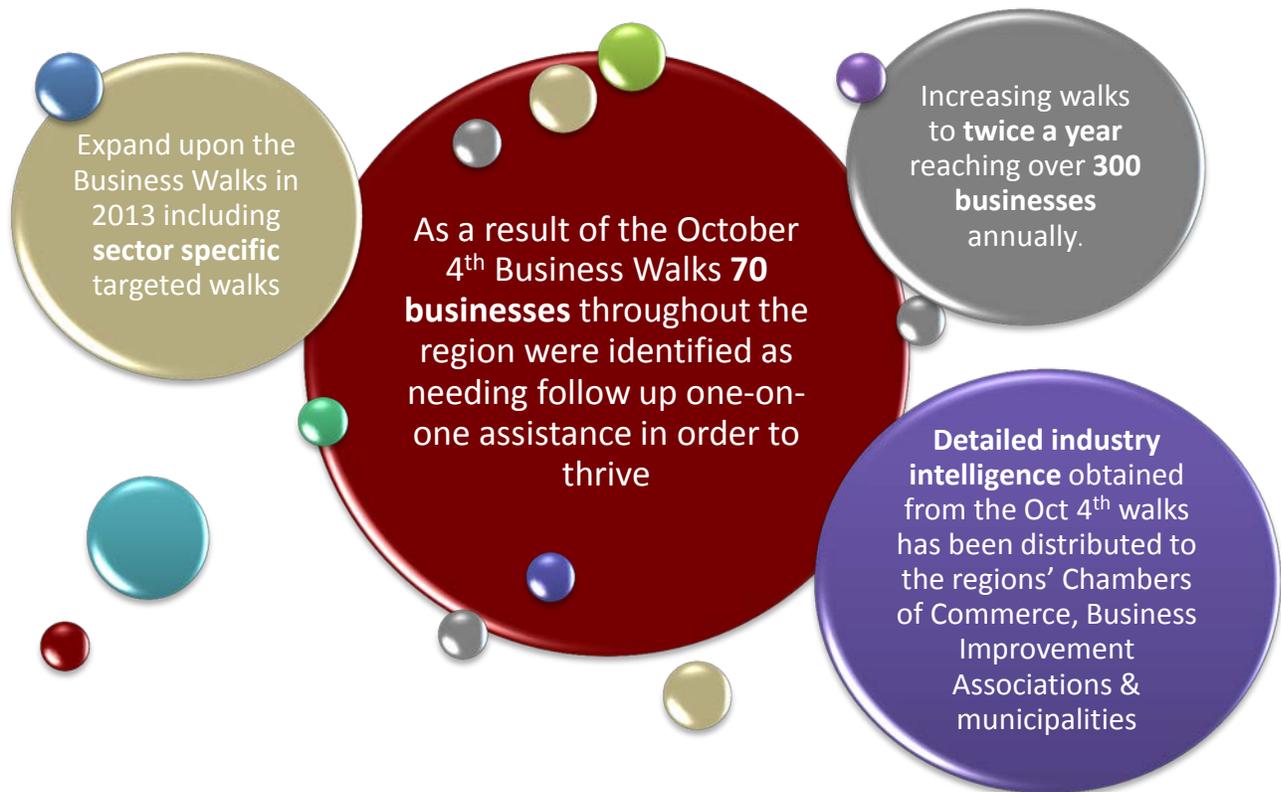
The next most frequent response (28%) was **clientele**. Only 5% of the 343 businesses surveyed cited “Affordability”.

Question #3: *What can be done to make your business thrive?*

Common themes throughout all the businesses surveyed included:

- Increase street-scaping and revitalization projects
- Improvement of directional signage
- Promotional events & marketing initiatives to increase profile of local business community
- Increase communication of regulatory changes; e.g. signage bylaw
- Increase business friendly attitude
- Improvement of transit throughout the valley to help employees and customers reach specific businesses
- Need for assistance in finding qualified staff, specifically retail staff, computer programmers and accounting staff.

What's Next?



The 2012 Business Walks program was facilitated and made possible by partnerships throughout the region. The Economic Development Commission would like to thank the following:

<i>Lead Partner Organizations:</i>	<i>Support and Participation also provided by:</i>
<p><i>Peachland Chamber of Commerce</i></p> <p><i>District of West Kelowna – Business Development</i></p> <p><i>Westbank First Nation – Economic Development</i></p> <p><i>Lake Country Chamber of Commerce</i></p>	<p><i>District of Peachland</i></p> <p><i>Peachland Economic Development Committee</i></p> <p><i>Westbank & District Chamber of Commerce</i></p> <p><i>Westbank First Nations</i></p> <p><i>City of Kelowna</i></p> <p><i>Kelowna Chamber of Commerce</i></p> <p><i>Downtown Kelowna Association</i></p> <p><i>Uptown Rutland Business Association</i></p> <p><i>District of Lake Country</i></p>

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