



County of Grande Prairie Triage BR+E





Background

The County of Grande Prairie has undertaken a number of economic development initiatives to further understand and engage with the business community. Business retention and expansion (BR+E) activities can be employed to ensure business needs are monitored and addressed; however, engagement can be time consuming and complex.

A Triage BR+E Survey was commissioned by the County of Grande Prairie to engage businesses and report on observations generalizable to the broader business community, while also allowing for the identification of individual potential expansion or retention opportunities, which staff can follow-up on business-by-business.

Methodology

- A random sample telephone survey was conducted in November and December of 2019. The project targeted 100 survey completions and was able to exceed the original target and survey 115 businesses out of an initial sample of 971 businesses. This rigorous approach resulted in a response rate of 11.8% which is extremely high in the market research industry where response rates average in the 1%-2% range.
- This scientific approach ensures that the results have a high level of accuracy and statistically represents the business community in the County of Grande Prairie. From a statistical point-of-view, this sample results in a margin of error of approximately +/-10 with a confidence interval of 19 times out of 20.
- Businesses were asked a series of additional questions to confirm the nature of their operation, contact details and physical location details to ensure the business directory is up to date and as accurate as possible.

This report represents the findings of the survey exercise.



-
- Overall business satisfaction in the County of Grande Prairie is exceptionally strong at 98.3% with 45.2% very satisfied and 53.0% somewhat satisfied.
 - 12.2% indicate their attitude to doing business in the County of Grande Prairie is more positive than 12 months ago, compared to 19.1% indicating more negative; representing a net deterioration of - 6.9%.
 - Businesses were asked to rate their satisfaction on 16 different factors affecting their business performance. There were no factors with a satisfaction level below 50% but six factors had a satisfaction level of less than 60%.
 - The factors with the lowest levels of satisfaction were “Availability of skilled labour”, “Availability of internet service to support future business needs”, “Ability of internet service to support current business needs”, “Affordability of commercial space for rent or lease”, “Availability of funding programs for business and property improvement” and “Cellular phone service”.
 - When considering what factors are statistically most likely to lead to improved business satisfaction, the top priorities are “Municipal property taxes”, “Development/building permit process”, “Zoning”, “Existing road network” and “Availability of property for purchase or lease”. Addressing these top priority business factors through review, adaptation or sustained attention are most likely to lead to higher overall business satisfaction.

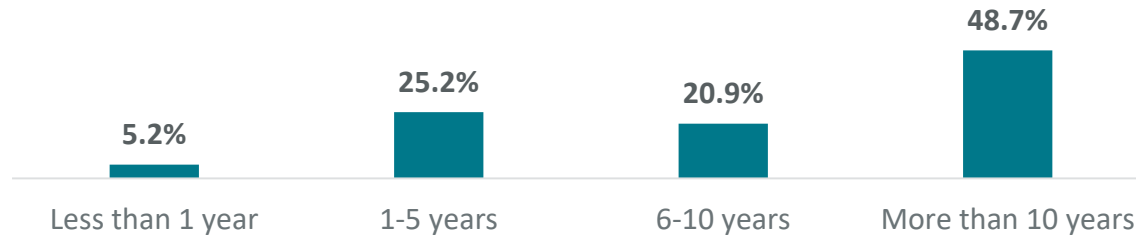
Key Findings



County of Grande Prairie Business Profile

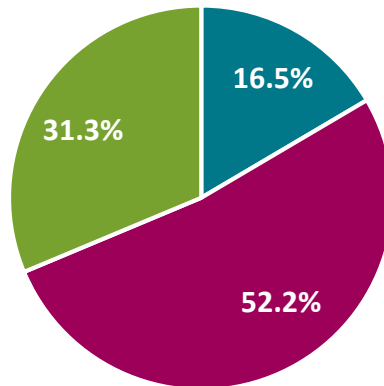


Years Operating in Grande Prairie

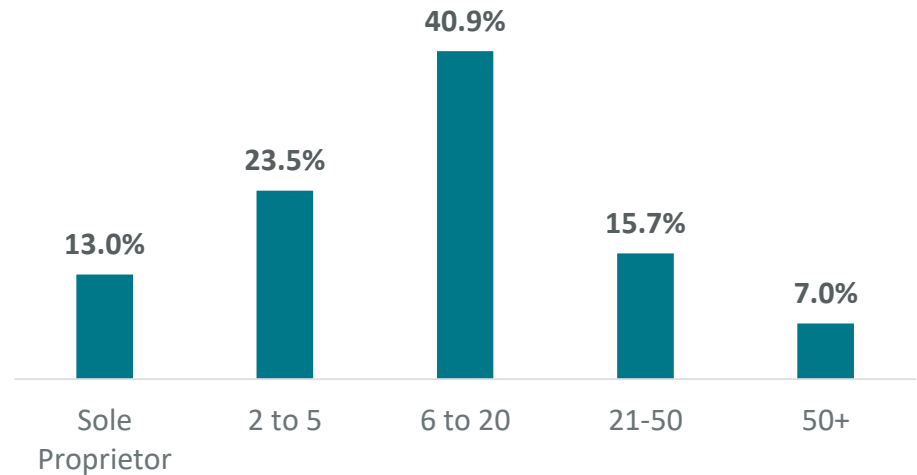


Business Ownership

- Self-Employed Business
- Locally Owned and Operated
- Externally Owned and Operated



of Full Time Employees

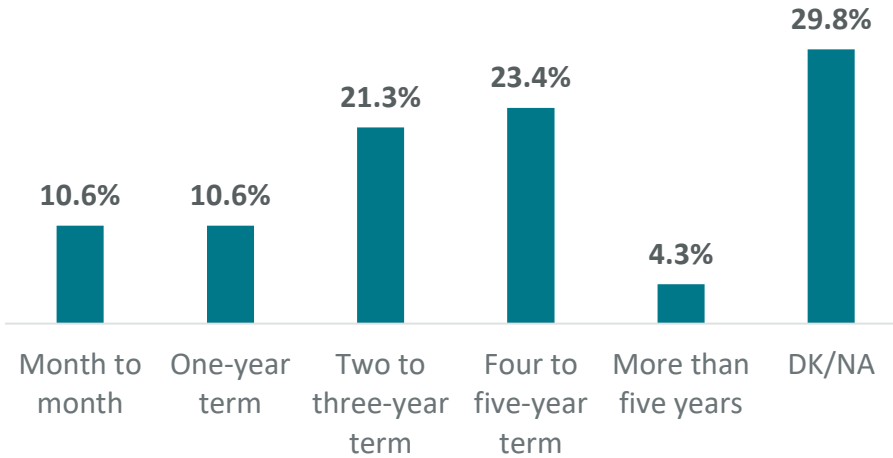




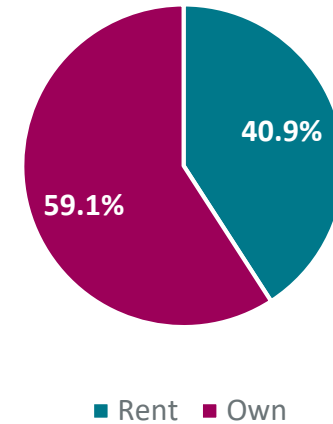
Business Location



Term of Lease

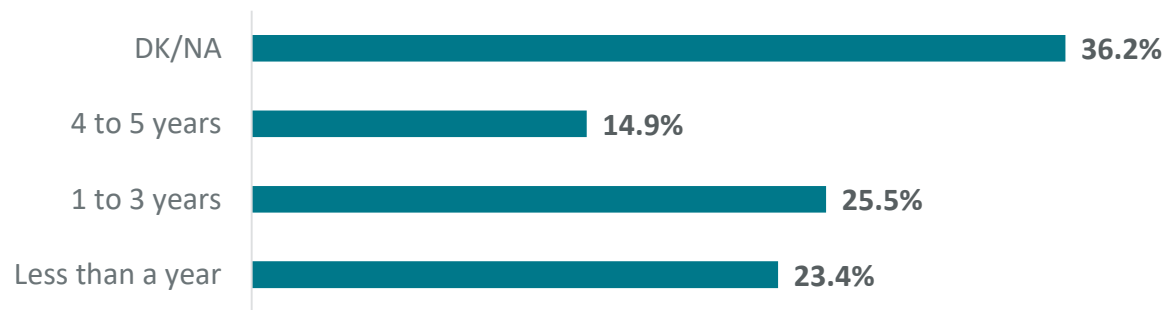


Rent vs. Own Business Location



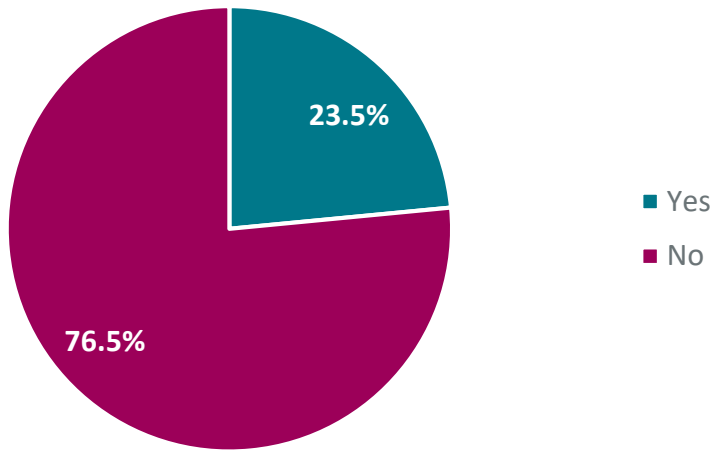
n=115 respondents

Lease Expiry

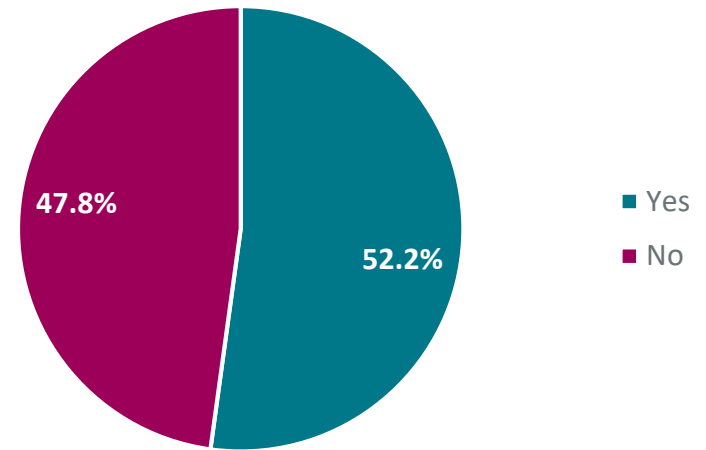




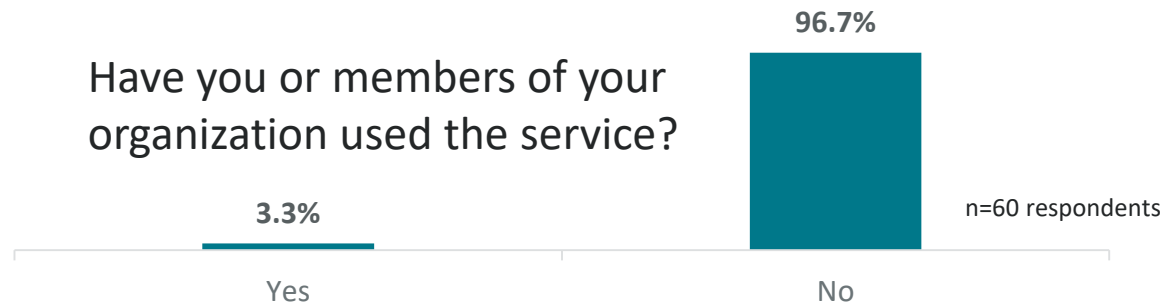
Does your business provide transportation to employees?



Are you aware of the public transportation pilot project?



Have you or members of your organization used the service?





Improvements to the Pilot Transportation Service



- Only two business reported using the service.
- Out of the 60 businesses that were aware of the service, the most recommended improvement was more frequent service (30.0%), followed by more route options (26.7%)
- Only 1.7% of businesses that were aware of the service cited cost as the most recommended area of improvement.
- When asked to specify what other improvements could be made to the service, more promotion, earlier and later start times, and Saturday service were mentioned.



Overall how satisfied are you with the County of Grande Prairie as a place to own and operate a business?

Over the past 12 months would you say your attitude about doing business in the County of Grande Prairie...



The combined overall satisfaction is exceptionally strong at 98.2%.
The net impact of changes over the past year is - 6.9%

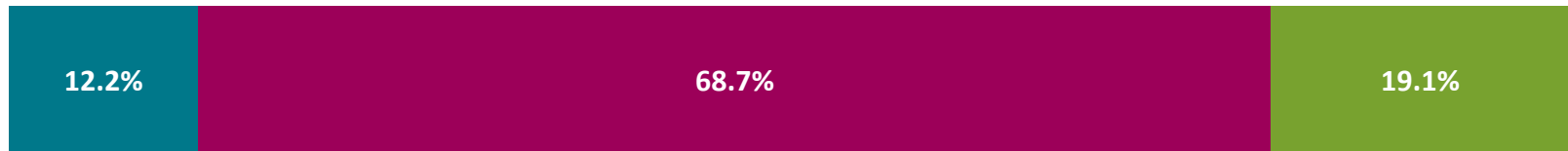


Overall Satisfaction



■ Very Satisfied ■ Somewhat Satisfied ■ Somewhat Dissatisfied ■ Very Dissatisfied

Attitude over the Past 12 Months



■ More positive ■ The same and has not changed ■ More negative

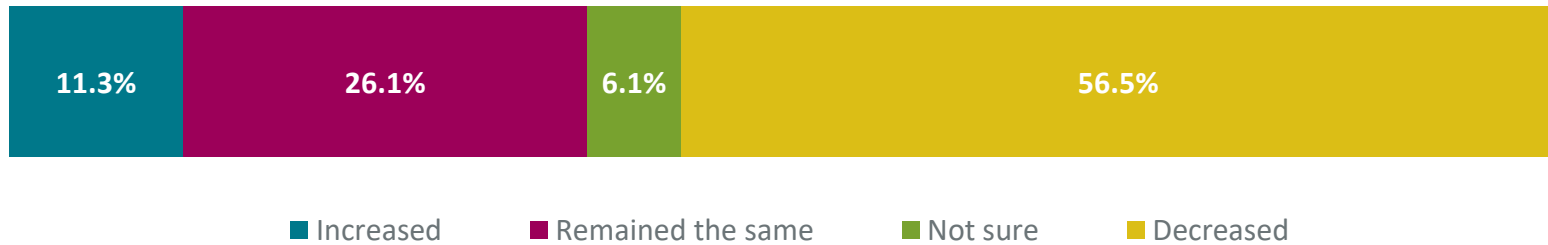
Net Improvement score = % more positive (12.2%) - % more negative (19.1%) = -6.9



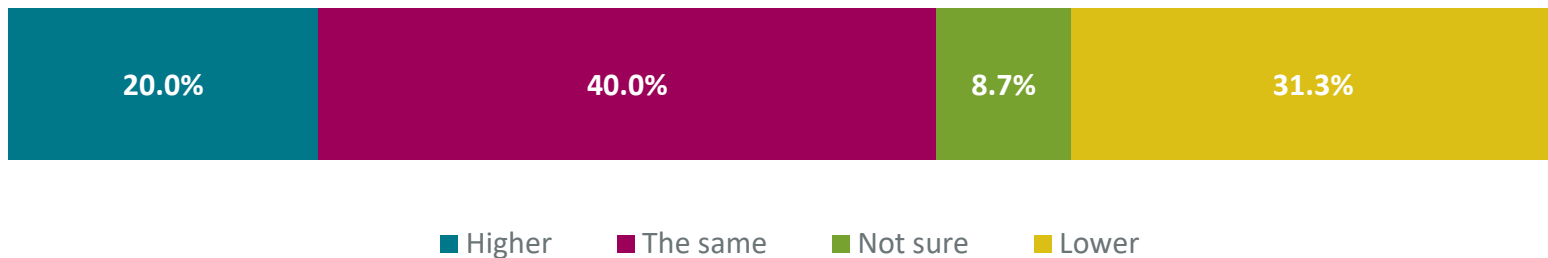
Sales



Sales over the Past 12 Months



Sales over the Next 12 Months

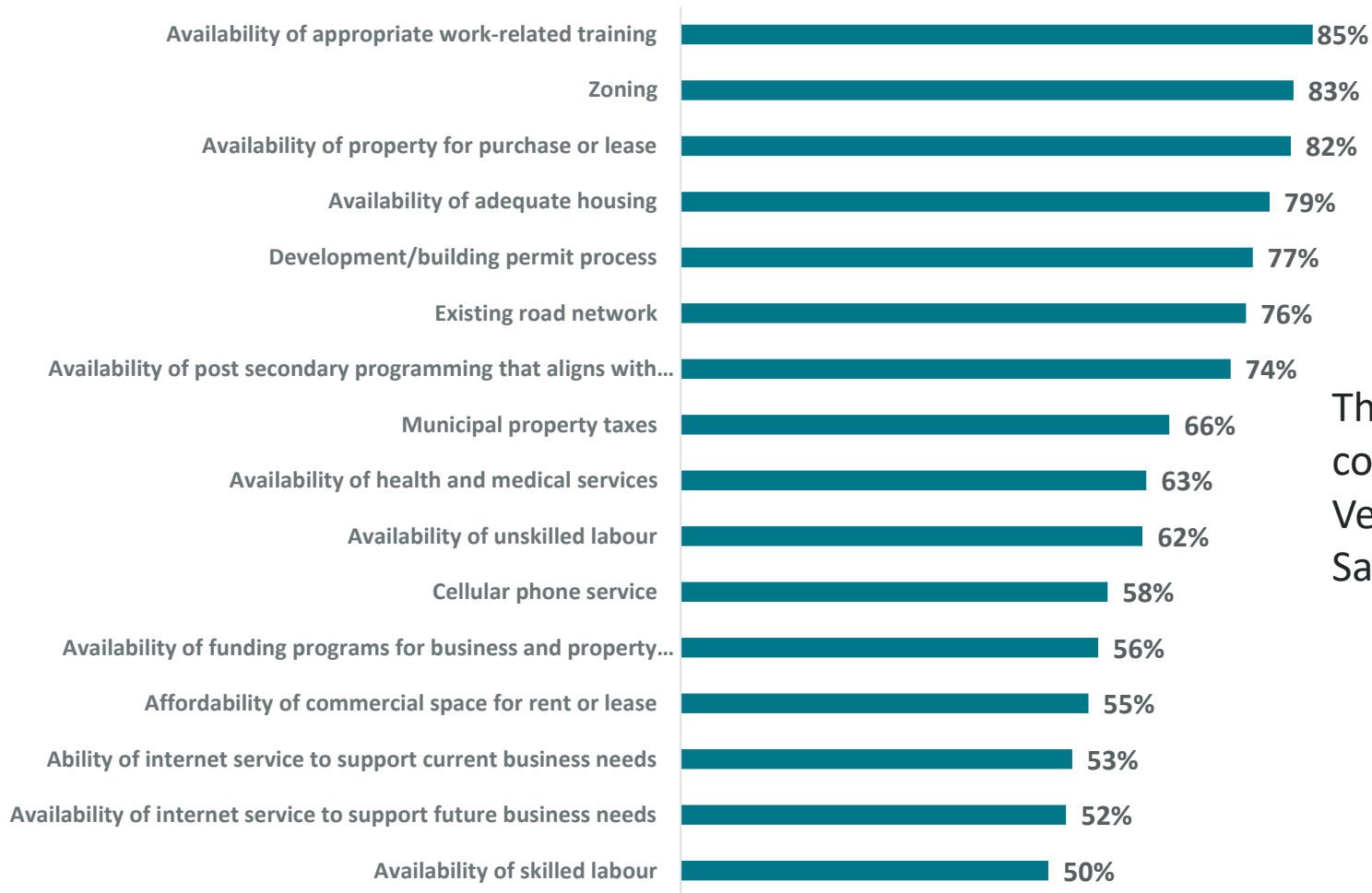




How satisfied you are with each of the following factors of doing business in the County of Grande Prairie?



Performance of Business Factors



The Ranking is a combination of Very Satisfied and Satisfied





Derived Importance: Understanding which business factors will have the greatest impact on overall business satisfaction.



Priority Matrix



Business Factor	Performance	Importance	Priority Rank
Municipal property taxes	66%	7.5	1
Development/building permit process	77%	9.1	2
Zoning	83%	8.3	3
Existing road network	76%	5.7	4
Availability of property for purchase or lease	82%	6.5	5
Affordability of commercial space for rent or lease	55%	6.0	6
Availability of skilled labour	50%	5.7	7
Availability of unskilled labour	62%	6.5	8
Availability of adequate housing	79%	5.4	9
Availability of health and medical services	63%	6.0	10
Availability of appropriate work-related training	85%	6.0	11
Availability of post secondary programming that aligns with business needs	74%	5.4	12
Ability of internet service to support current business needs	53%	4.4	13
Availability of internet service to support future business needs	52%	4.6	14
Cellular phone service	58%	4.4	15
Availability of funding programs for business and property improvement	56%	5.4	16

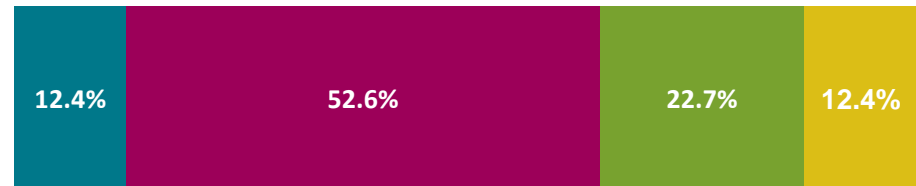




Perceptions of the County of Grande Prairie



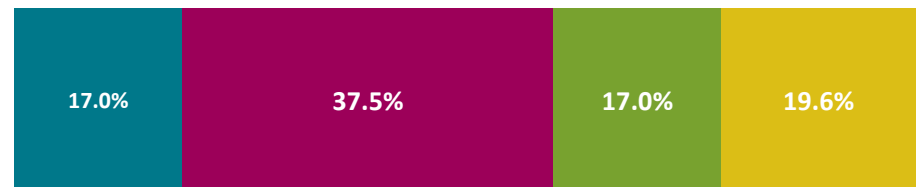
I have a positive relationship with my local government for business needs.



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

n=97 respondents

I know who I need to talk to at the County if I have a problem with my business or a business concern I'd like to share.



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

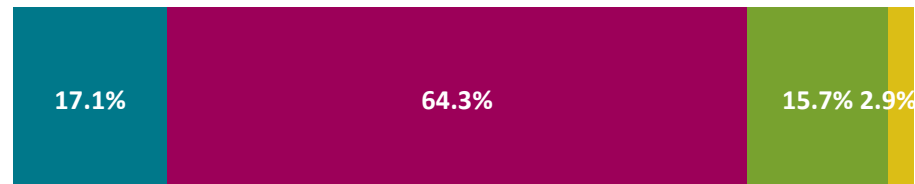
n=112 respondents



Perceptions of the County of Grande Prairie



The permit and zoning application process and timelines are clear and reasonable.



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

n=70 respondents

I would recommend this County to another business looking to expand or relocate.



■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree

n=112 respondents



Future Plans



	# of businesses	Follow up Questions
Expansions	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 15 businesses have expansions planned within 2 years• 6 within the next 6 months
Downsize	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 businesses had plans to downsize• 4 within the next 6 months
Relocate	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 businesses indicated plans to relocate• 1 within the next 6 months
Sell	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 businesses planned to sell• 1 within the next 6 months
Close	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 businesses had plans to close within the next 6 months



Triage Results



Throughout the survey process Triage cases that represented green or red flags have been tracked and followed up with in-person interviews wherever possible. Out of the 115 businesses surveyed, 39 flags presented an opportunity for intervention.



Green Flag

= Businesses considering expanding = 15 businesses



Red Flag

= Businesses considering relocating, downsizing, selling, closing or upcoming lease expiration = 24 businesses



Project Leads:

Paul Blais

Executive Vice-President

pblais@mdbinsight.com

(855) 367-3535 x241

Justin Dias

Consultant

justindias@mdbinsight.com

(855) 367-3535 x229