



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 21-036

Date: May 3, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Commissioners

From: Chris Lagerbloom, ICMA-CM, City Manager

Re: 2020 Business Survey Results

In December 2020, the City administered its first Business Survey through the ETC Institute to gauge the perception of the City as a place to do business and businesses' satisfaction with City services. This memorandum summarizes the findings of the survey; the full report is included as an attachment.

The survey results are statistically valid and representative of the businesses in the City, both demographically and geographically (by Commission District). The survey is valuable to guide decisions as we continue to implement *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035*, the City's Vision Plan, and *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2024*, the City's five-year Strategic Plan. The responses also provide important information in the development of the Annual Operating Budget and Community Investment Plan.

Survey Administration and Respondents

This year a total of 13,000 surveys were mailed to randomly selected businesses in Fort Lauderdale. A total of 355 responded to the survey, which is approximately a 3% response rate. These respondents represented a wide variety of industries. The top industries or business sectors represented were professional, scientific, and technical services (14%), healthcare and social assistance (12%), and the retail trade (10%).

The results have a precision of at least +/- 5.2% at the 95% level of confidence, meaning that if the same survey was administered 100 times, 95 of those 100 times, the results would come back as they are reported here, within +5.2% or -5.2% of the results indicated.

Major Findings

Although this past year presented many challenges for our business community considering the COVID-19 pandemic, the overall perception of the City amongst the business community was positive.

- 82% of respondents indicated the City is an “excellent” or “good” place to do business
- 81% of respondents indicated the City is an “excellent” or “good” place to work
- 70% of respondents indicated the overall image of the City is “excellent” or “good”
- 60% of respondents identified the overall sense of community as “excellent” or “good”

Regarding the overall satisfaction with City services, businesses were most satisfied with the quality of fire rescue and police services. For the full list of services that were polled, see the table below.

City Service	Satisfied Responses <i>(“very satisfied” and “satisfied”)</i>
Quality of fire rescue services	84%
Quality of police services	68%
Quality of City Services	62%
Appearance of City	60%
Quality of customer service from City employees	55%
Availability of online or mobile services	53%
Enforcement of City codes and ordinances	49%
Timeliness of response to service requests	47%
How well the City is prepared for disasters	45%
Maintenance of City streets/sidewalks/ infrastructure	43%
City’s efforts to attract new businesses	40%
Efforts to support business growth and development	40%
How well the City is preparing for the future	37%
City’s efforts to retain existing businesses	32%
Effectiveness of efforts to revitalize low-income areas	31%
Flow of traffic	20%

Respondents also indicated that the feeling of safety and level of taxation are the top reasons that will impact businesses’ decision to stay in the City for the next five years.

Reasons Businesses Stay in City for Next 5 Years	Percentage of Businesses <i>(that selected the item as one of their top 3 choices)</i>
Feeling of safety	37%
Level of taxation	37%
Attitude of local government toward businesses	25%
Overall reputation of the City	24%
Availability of qualified employees	21%
Proximity of businesses important to your business	19%
Access to airports	16%

Reasons Businesses Stay in City for Next 5 Years <i>(continued from previous page)</i>	Percentage of Businesses <i>(that selected the item as one of their top 3 choices)</i>
Tourism	15%
Availability of affordable housing for employees	9%
Availability of alternate transportation options	9%
Availability of parks and open spaces	7%
Access to ports	6%
Quality of local public schools	5%
Availability of libraries/arts/cultural amenities	3%
Quality of post-secondary education/training	3%

COVID-19

To better understand how businesses are recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey also asked respondents a variety of questions related to how businesses have been affected or if they have changed their business model. Forty-six percent (46%) indicated that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on their business with another 58% indicating that their business has yet to return to pre-COVID-19 levels of business activity. Loss of customers has impacted the ability of 47% of respondents to resume normal operations. Unfortunately, 30% of businesses responded that they have had to furlough or lay off employees because of the pandemic; however, 48% of the businesses in this group have been able to rehire employees.

Conclusion

City staff will review and analyze the survey results and evaluate appropriate activities and initiatives to address the areas identified as low performing or where low satisfaction is indicated. Please contact me if you have questions or would like additional information about the 2020 Business Survey results.

Attachment: 2020 Business Survey Report

- c: Tarlesha W. Smith, Esq., Assistant City Manager
- Greg Chavarria, Assistant City Manager
- Alain E. Boileau, City Attorney
- Jeffrey A. Modarelli, City Clerk
- John C. Herbst, City Auditor
- Department Directors
- CMO Managers