



2025

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

PROJECT

WWW.PETAWAWA.CA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Town of Petawawa would like to thank all of the businesses that took their time to speak with representatives and be a part of the Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) project. We understand that a businesses time is valuable and we appreciate business owners and managers taking time to speak with us. This project was made possible with the support of staff from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and members of the Petawawa Business Advisory Network (PBAN).

OUR TEAM



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BR+E Timeline



Please note: Unless otherwise specified, information in this report is based primarily on data from the BR+E survey and from internal staff analysis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Petawawa Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) Project provided insight into the experiences of local businesses. Overall, the majority of respondents rated the Town of Petawawa as a good or excellent place to do business, with many emphasizing the Town's supportive environment and quality of life.

Key strengths identified by businesses include:

- Strong quality of life for owners and employees,
- Stable workforce, high earnings and steady flow of new customers
- A collaborative local business community, and
- Supportive municipal services, including high satisfaction with areas like economic development, fire services, parks and programs.

Some challenges identified by businesses include:

- Lack of transportation options,
- High land and property costs,
- Municipal tax pressures and regulations, and
- Lack of available commercial space.



*258 total industries
in Petawawa

88%

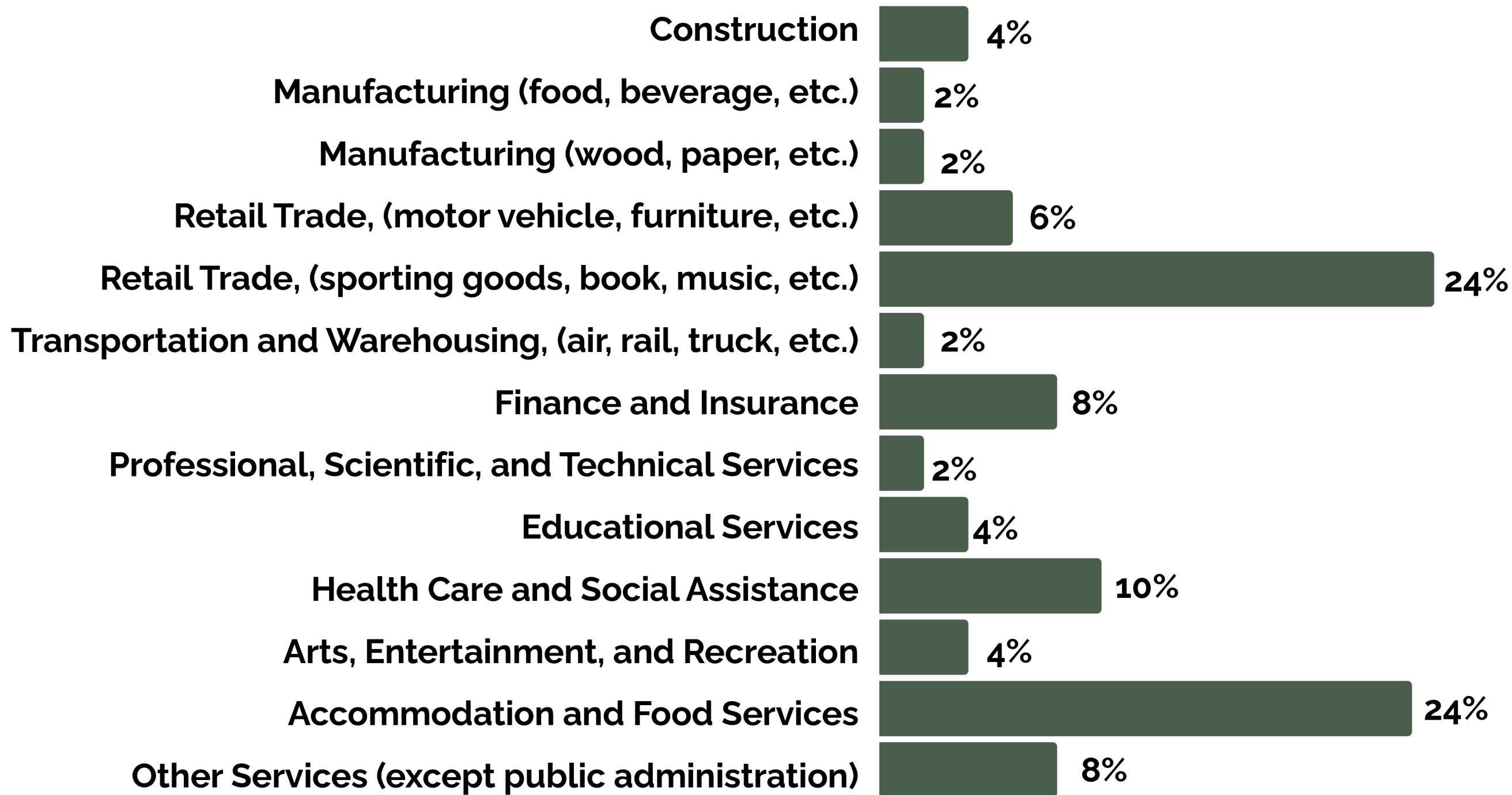


88% of businesses interviewed
say Petawawa is a good or
excellent place to do business

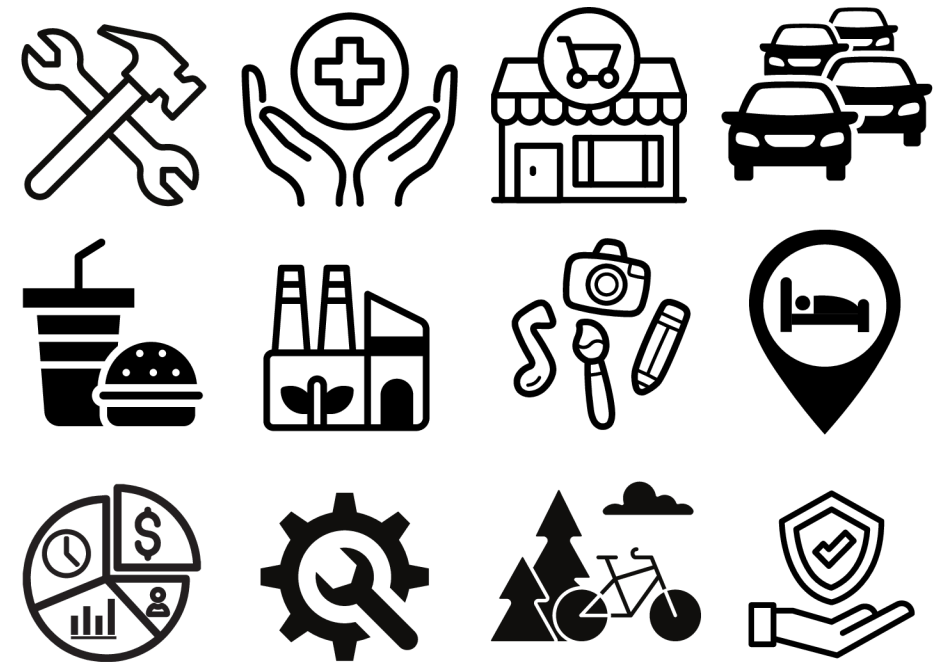


Who Did We Speak With?

Q: Which NAICS code(s) best describes your business?



51 total commercial businesses in Petawawa across 13 different industries

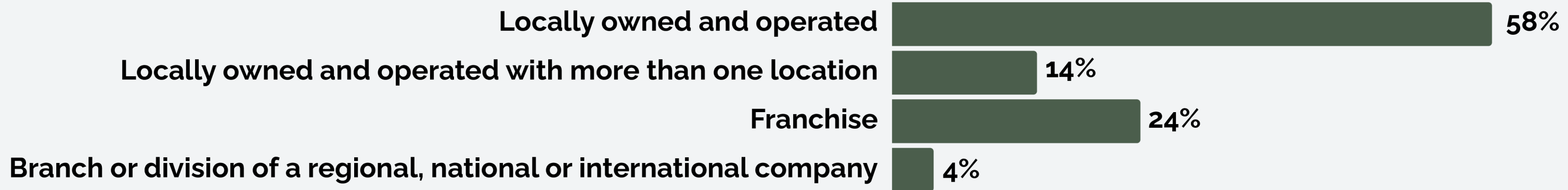


*19.77% of businesses and industries in Petawawa

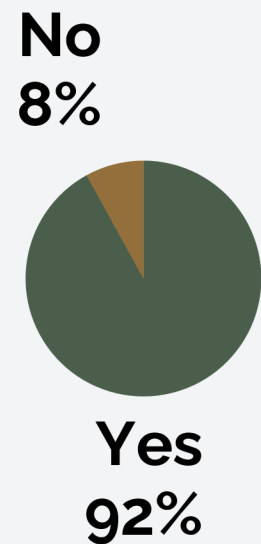
Business Landscape



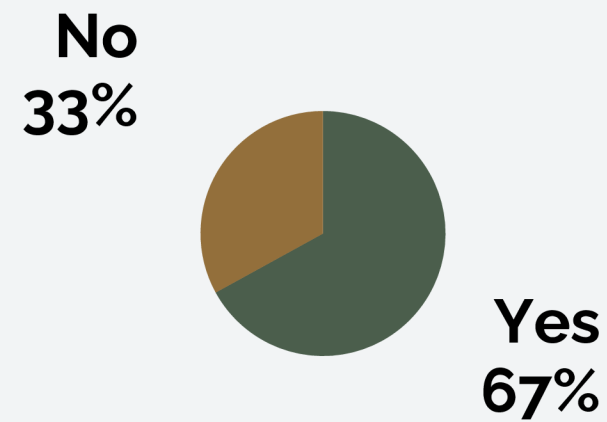
BI1. Which of the following best describes your business?



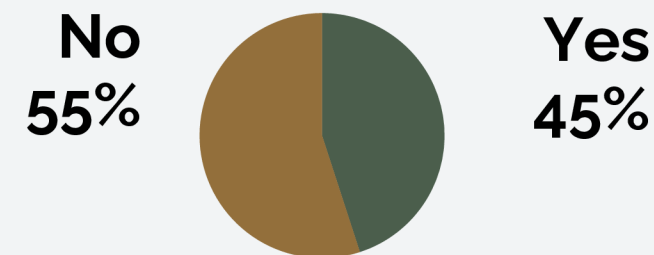
BI2. Is at least one of the owners involved in the day-to-day operation of the business?



BI3. Is at least one of the owners a resident of the community?



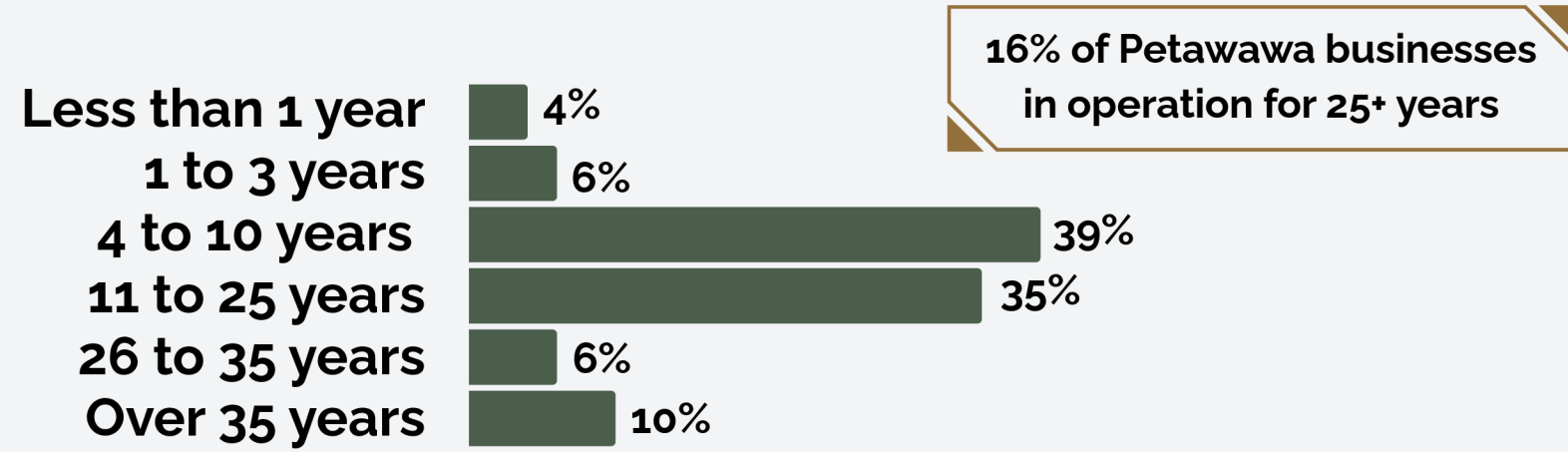
BI4. a) Does your business have a business plan?



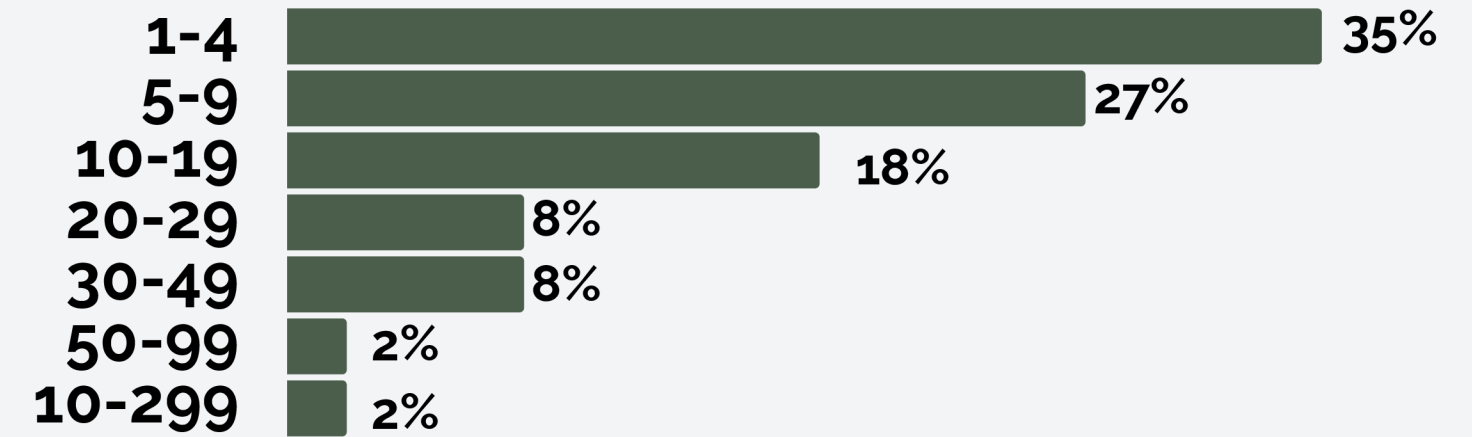
BI4. b) When was your business plan last updated?



BI5. a) How many years has your business been in operation in this community?



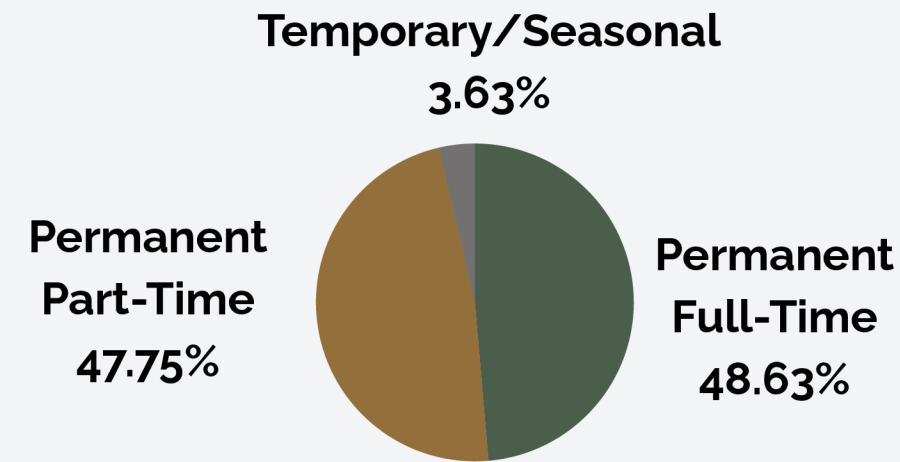
BI7. Including owner/owners, how many employees work at this location?



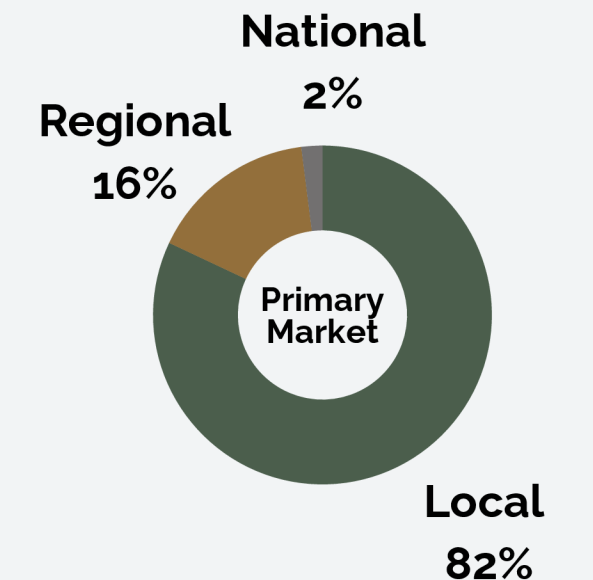
BI5. b) Did the business exist as home-based, in a smaller location or other community, before operating in its current location?



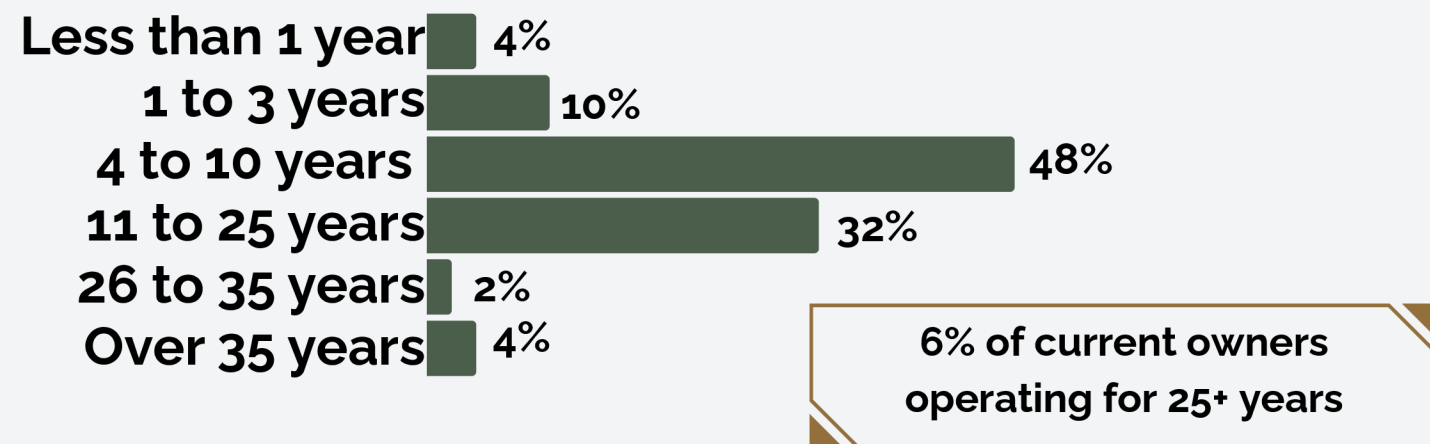
BI8. What percentage of these employees are:



BI9. The primary market of your business is:

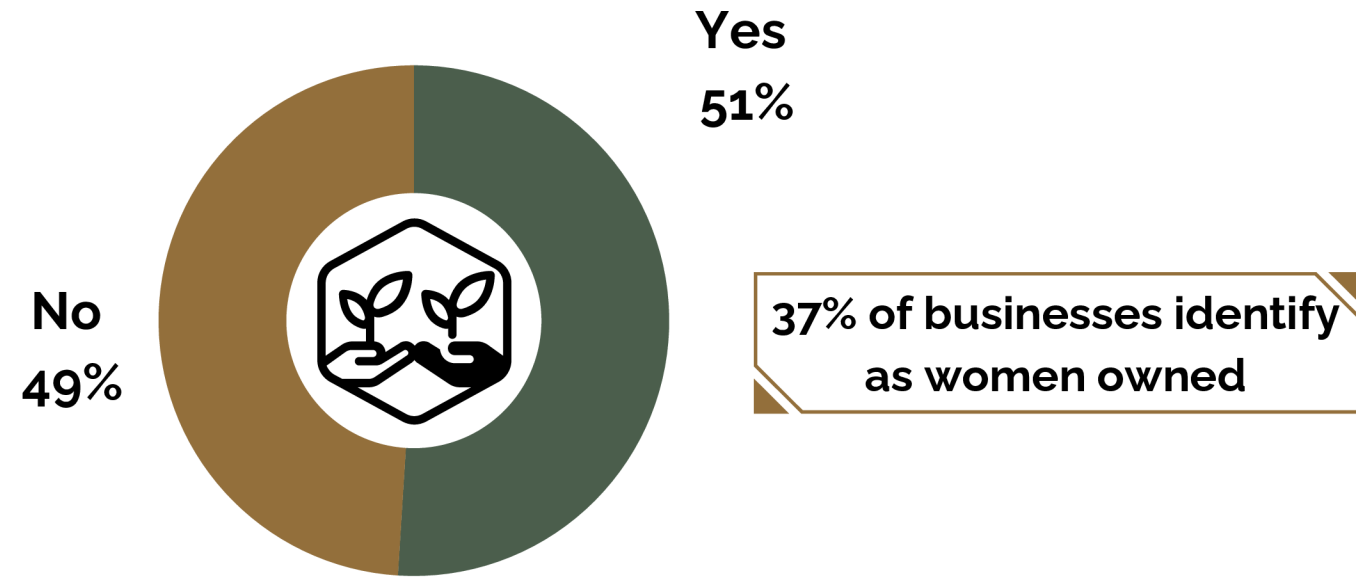


BI6. How many years have the current owner/owners been operating this business?

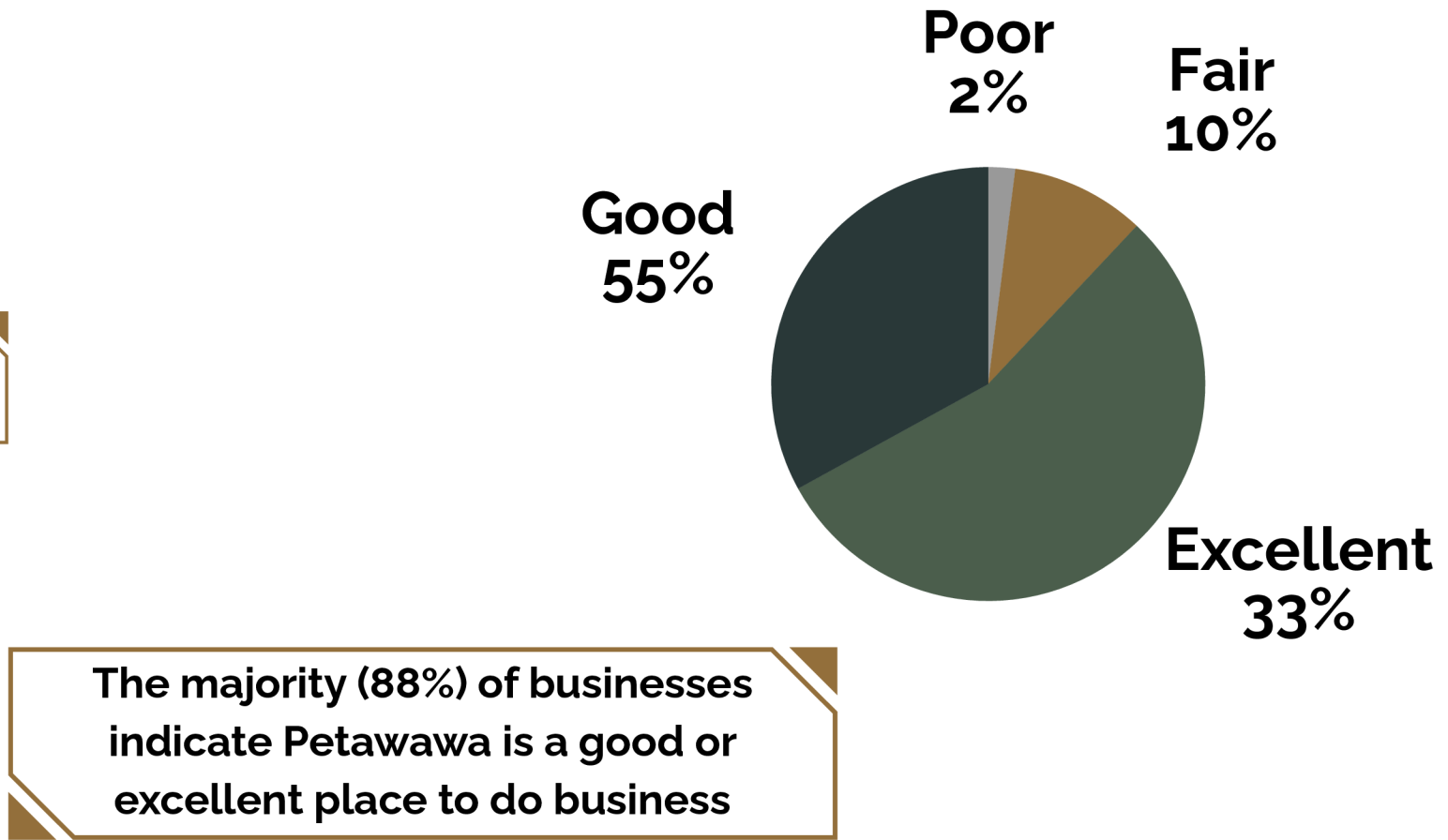


Less than half of employees at small and medium sized businesses in Petawawa are employed full-time.

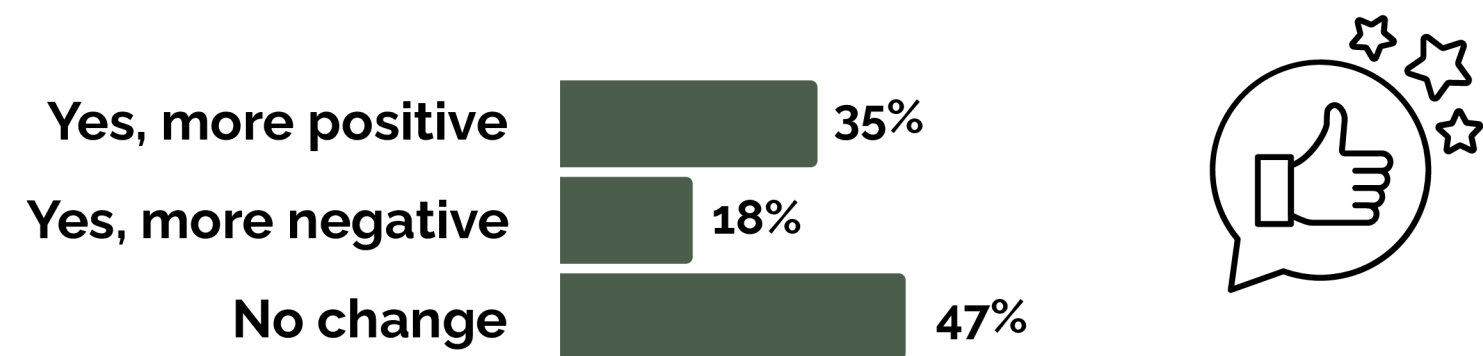
BI10. Do you as the business owners self-identify as part of an equity-seeking group?



BC1. What is your general impression of this community as a place to do business?



BC2. In the past 3 years has your attitude about doing business in this community changed?



Top Reasons for positive change	Top Reasons for negative change
Support from Town / PBAN	Sign By-Law
Community Improvement Plan Grants	Regulations
Improved communication from Town	Taxes
More community events	Increased competition

BC3. How would you rate the following factors of doing business in this community?

Highest Rated Factors for Doing Business in Petawawa

Factor	Average Rating (1-4)	Grade	Responses
Support from local residents	3.68	Excellent	47
Quality of Life	3.48	Excellent	44
Support from other businesses	3.4	Excellent	47
Availability of natural gas	3.16	Good	31
Local roads and streets	3.02	Good	50
Water/wastewater capacity	3	Good	30
Support from municipality	2.95	Good	42
Regional/Provincial roads and highways	2.91	Good	33
Availability of adequate electricity	2.91	Good	43
Water/wastewater fees	2.83	Good	29
Internet Service	2.8	Good	51
Natural Gas Costs	2.74	Good	31

Lowest Rated Factors for Doing Business in Petawawa

Factor	Average Rating (1-4)	Grade	Responses
Workforce	2.42	Fair	45
Cell Phone Service	2.41	Fair	51
Electricity Costs	2.36	Fair	44
Development/Building Permit Process	2.35	Fair	34
Mental Health Supports	2.33	Fair	24
Supports for DEI, Anti-Racism	2.21	Fair	14
Availability of Space for Rent or Lease	2	Fair	30
Availability of Health and Medical Services	1.8	Fair	36
Availability of Serviced Land	1.95	Fair	20
Availability of Adequate Housing	1.91	Fair	36
Municipal Property Taxes	1.89	Fair	29
Land Costs	1.75	Poor	20



Values Rated: 1 - poor, 2 - fair, 3 - good and 4 - excellent.

To determine the average rating from survey responses, we used the weighted average formula.

Poor: 1.00 - 1.75

Fair: 1.76 - 2.50

Good: 2.51 - 3.25

Excellent: 3.26 - 4.00

BC4. a) From the perspective of your business, rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following community services:

Groups/Organization/Services	Average Rating (1-4)	Grade	Responses
Community Futures Development Corporation	3.31	Excellent	16
Ottawa Valley Tourist Association	3.23	Good	17
Small Business Enterprise Centre	3.21	Good	14
Schools (elementary & secondary)	3.16	Good	31
Chamber of Commerce	3.09	Good	21
Settlement & Newcomer Services	3	Good	1
Post Secondary (college & university)	2.91	Good	24
LGBTQ2S+ Organizations (ex. Pride)	2.5	Fair	2
Child Care Services	2.19	Fair	21
Municipal DEI Committees	2	Fair	1
Workforce Planning/Development Board	1.66	Poor	3
Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) organizations	1	Poor	1

Low engagement/contact noted with many organizations

BC4. b) From the perspective of your business, rate your level of satisfaction with each of the following local government services:

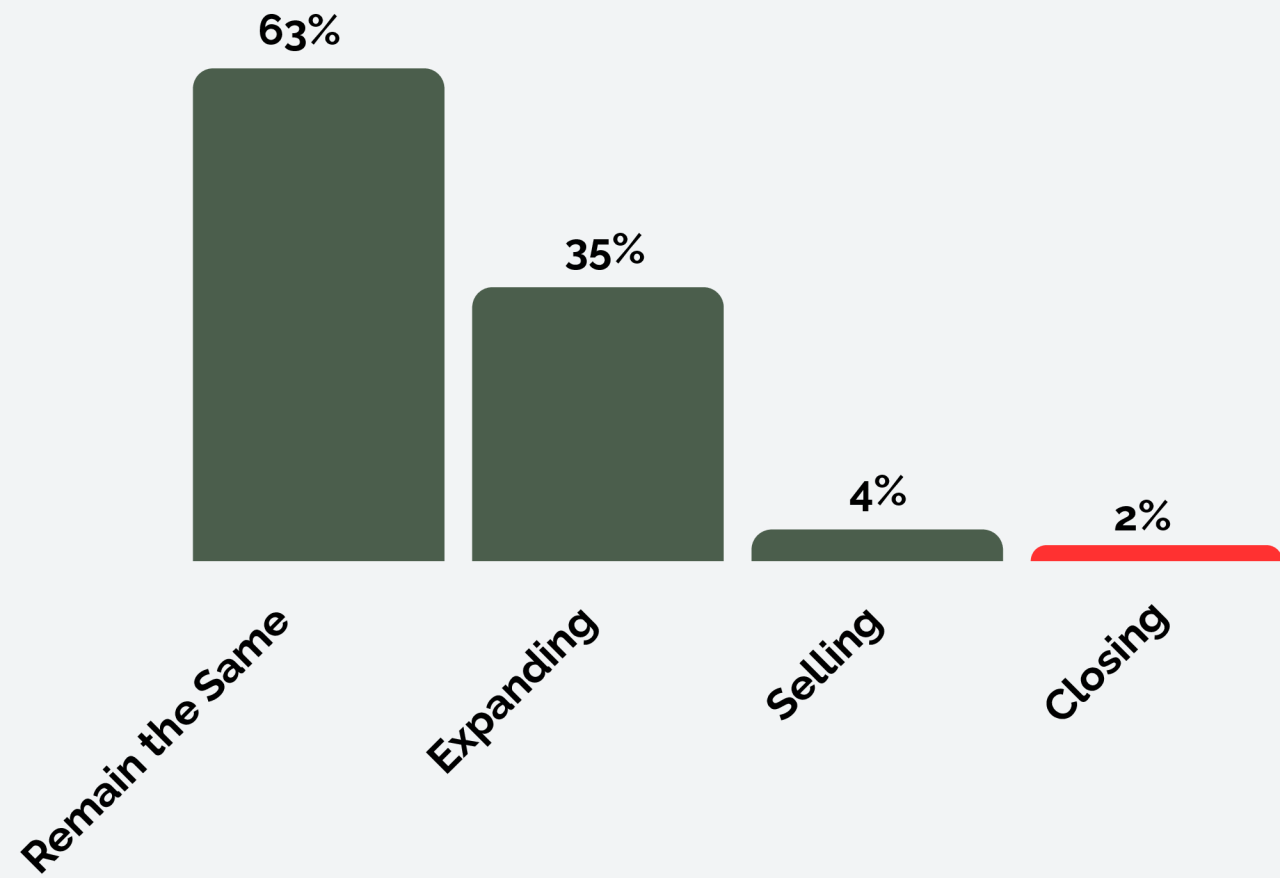
Local government services	Average Rating (1-4)	Grade	Responses
Parks and Open Spaces	3.58	Excellent	33
Economic Development Services	3.56	Excellent	34
Fire Services	3.56	Excellent	41
Police Services	3.52	Excellent	29
Library Services	3.38	Excellent	21
Recreation Facilities	3.36	Excellent	33
Programs from Recreation, Culture & Tourism Department	3.32	Excellent	19
Health Department/Health Unit Approvals	3.27	Excellent	22
Garbage/Recycling	3.11	Good	45
Snow Removal	3.04	Good	48
Street/Road Repair	2.95	Good	43
Planning, Engineering, Zoning and Building Permits	2.51	Good	29
Cultural Facilities	2.5	Fair	8
Public Transit	1	Poor	13

Poor: 1.00 - 1.75
Fair: 1.76 - 2.50
Good: 2.51 - 3.25
Excellent: 3.26 - 4.00

Future Plans



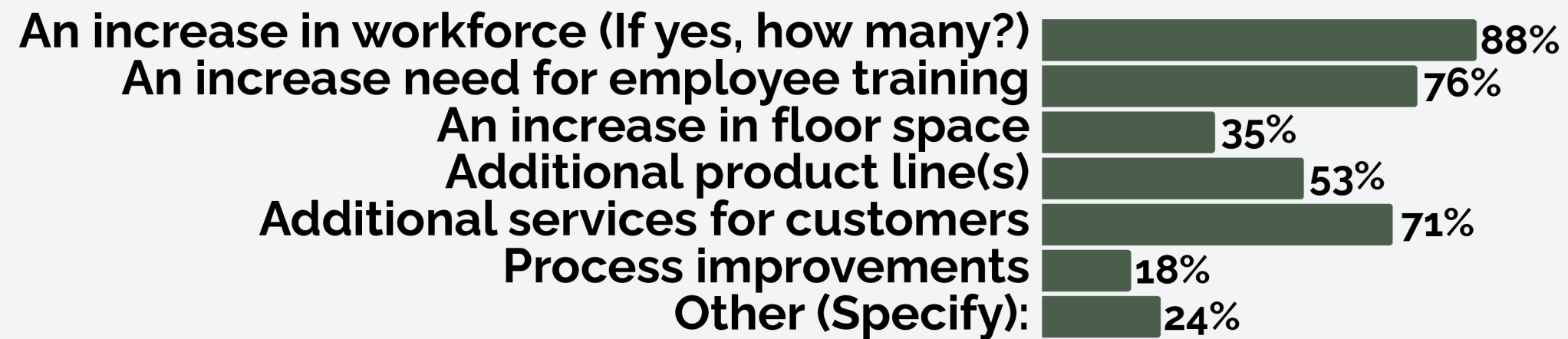
FP1. a) Within the next 18 months, do you plan on:



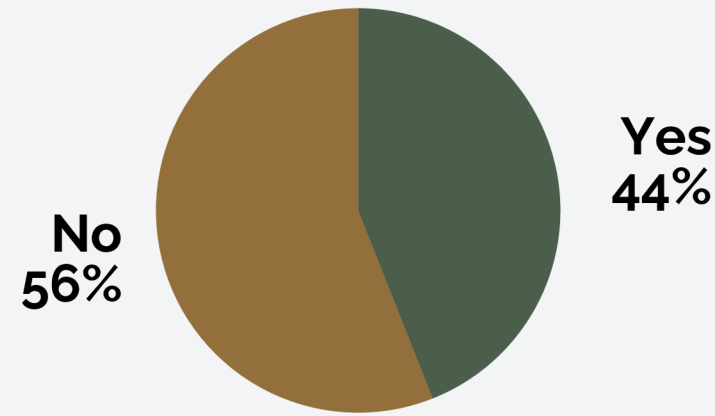
FP2-11. Impacts and reasons for business change

Reasons for Change Over next 18 months	
Remaining the Same	Business doing well, established clientele and owners being happy were listed as the top reasons for remaining the same.
Expanding	Businesses that indicated they were expanding noted they were moving to a larger location or opening a second location in another community. Some expressed interests in diving into new markets and opening online stores.
Selling	Workload, retirement and burnout were listed as reasons why business owners are considering selling.
Closing	Retirement

FP12. Will your expansion require or lead to...

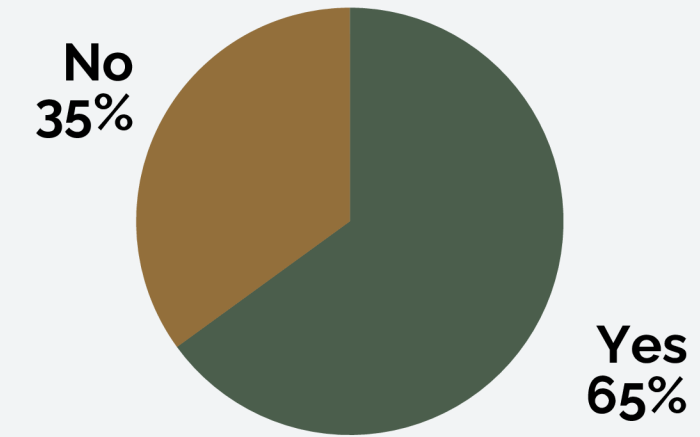


FP13. Are you planning on accessing any Federal or Provincial programs or services to assist with the expansion?

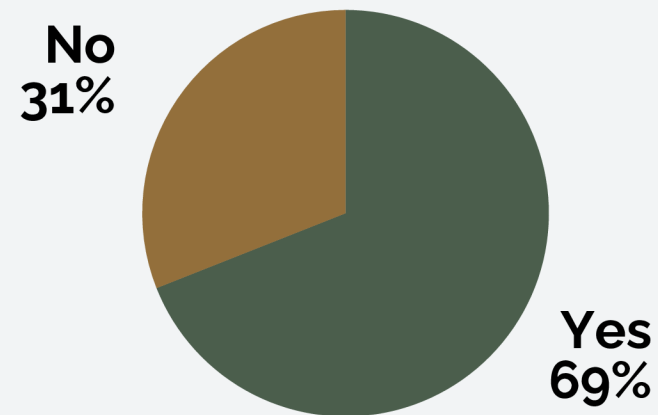


Over half of businesses considering expanding are not planning to access federal or provincial grants

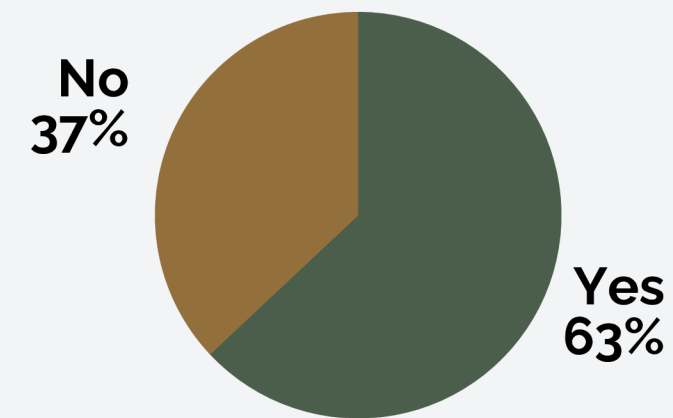
FP14. Would you like to receive information on potential Federal or Provincial programs/services that might assist with your expansion?



FP15. Is your business currently experiencing difficulties with your expansion plans?



FP16. Could the community potentially provide some assistance to support your expansion plans?

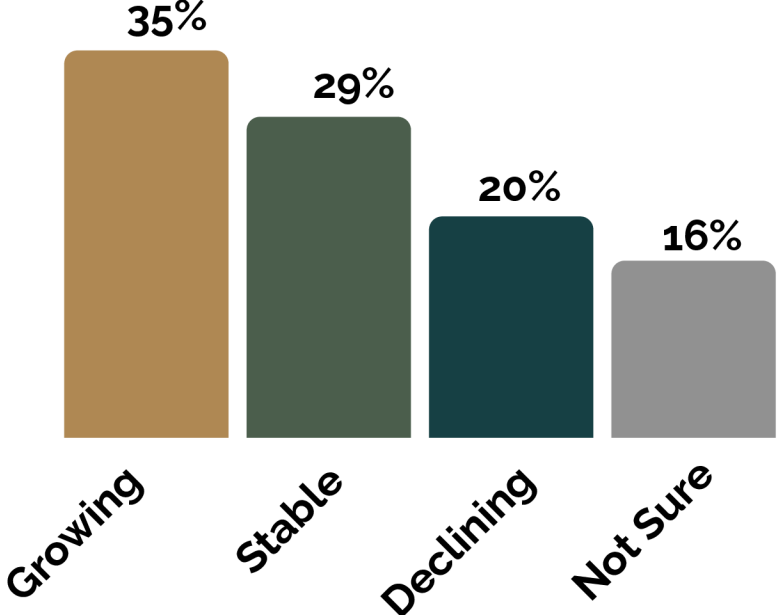


Grants/funding, help with building permits, more partnerships and support were listed as ways the community could assist with expansions

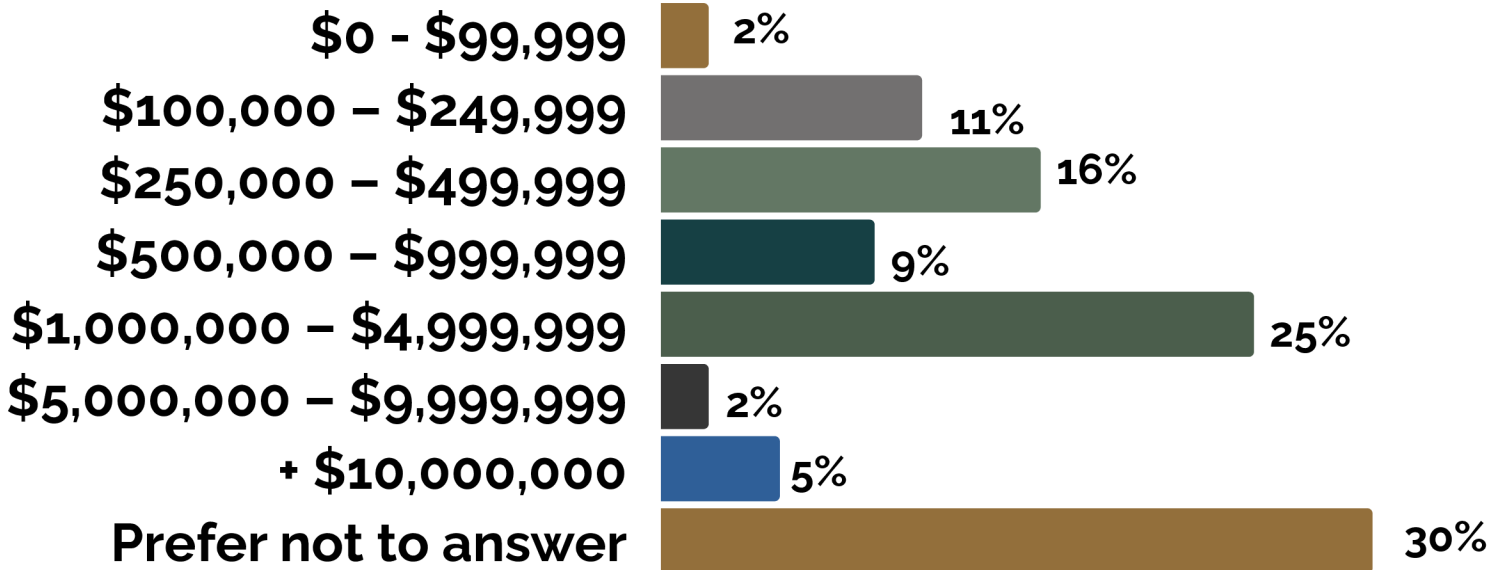


Business Development

BD1. What is the outlook for your industry?

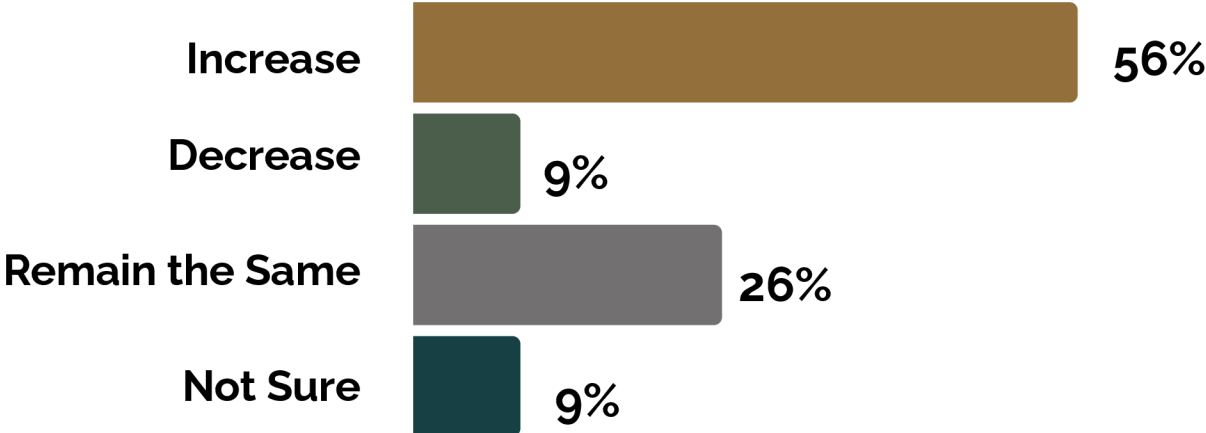


BD2. Please give an approximate annual sales range for your business:



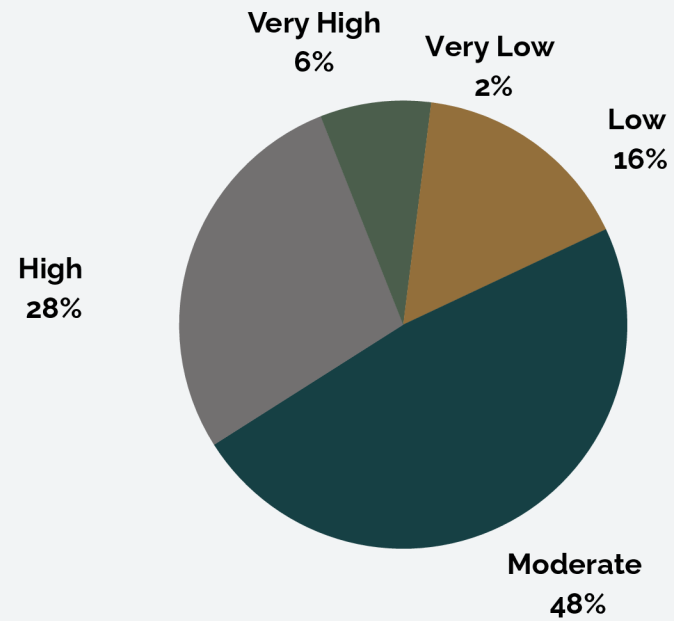
32% of businesses indicated they have over \$1,000,000 in annual sales

BD3. Are your projected sales in the next year expected to...



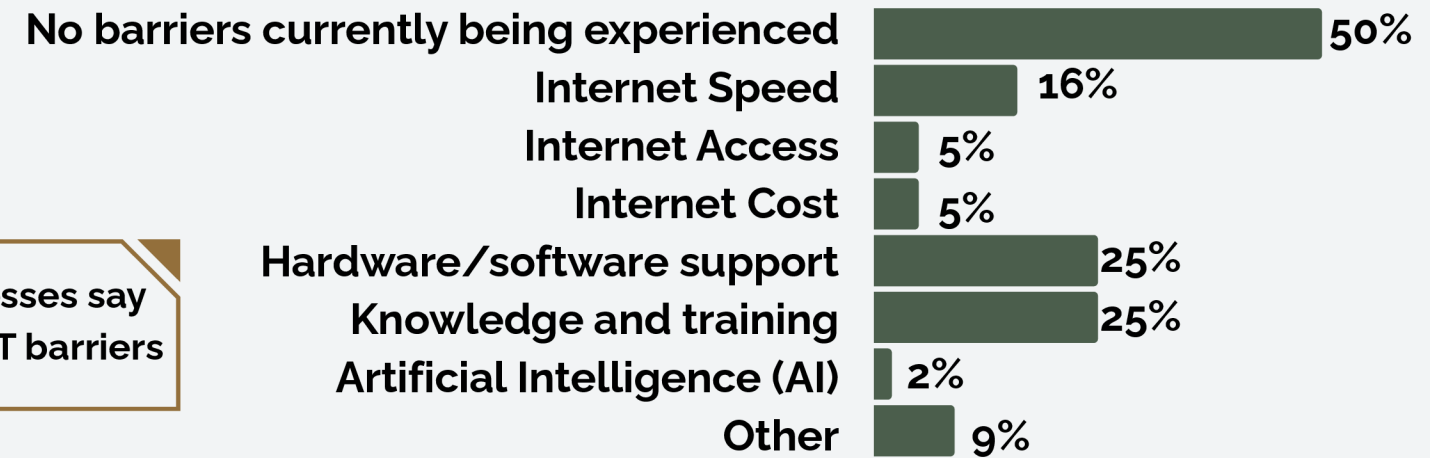
Top Reasons for Sales Increase	Top Reasons for Sales Decrease
Growing customer base	Uncertainty and threat of tariffs
Business expansion and new products	Labour and staffing limits
Milestone events and anniversaries	Increase costs/less disposable income
More people staying/shopping local	Transitioning business models

BD4. How would you rate your business related to the use of technology?



One out of every four businesses say knowledge and support are IT barriers

BD5. Is your business currently experiencing any barriers related to your information technology (IT) requirements? Read list. Select all that apply.

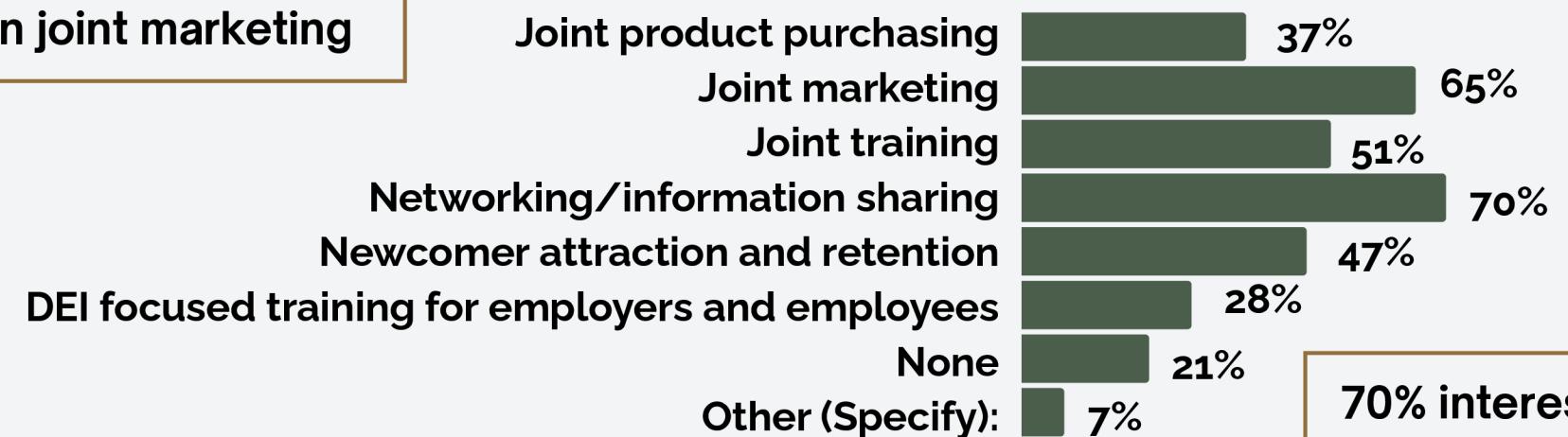


BD6. What products or services would you like to purchase locally that are now being purchased outside of the area?

1. Office Supplies
2. Clothing (specialty apparel)
3. Everyday Retail Items / Department Store
4. Furniture and Office Decor
5. Sports Equipment and Skate Sharpening
6. Beauty and Massage Supplies
7. Fresh Food
8. Google SEO / Digital Services

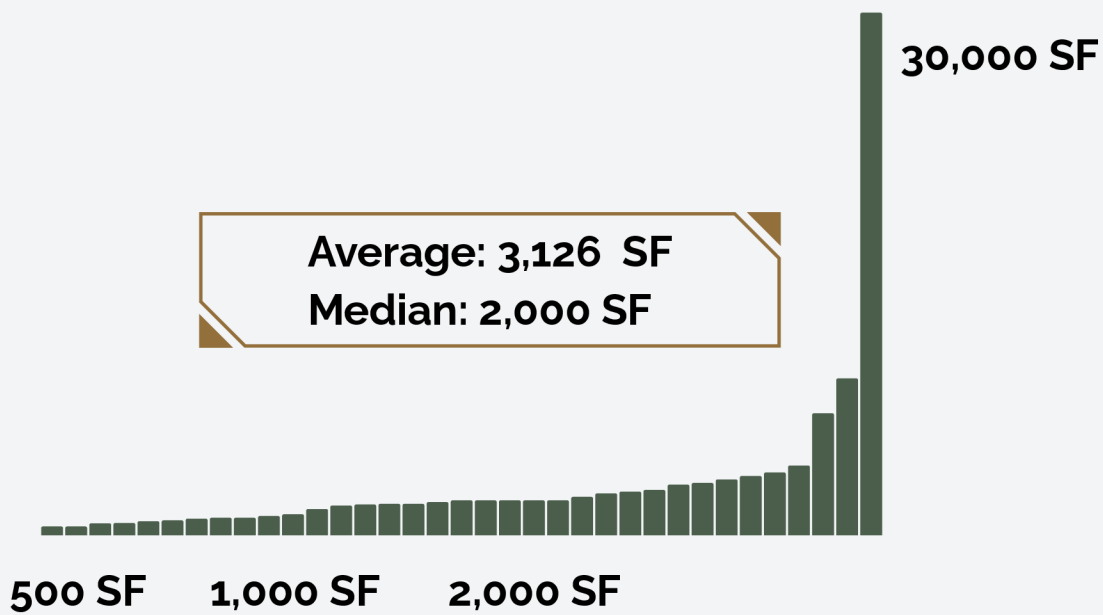
65% of businesses interested in joint marketing

BD7. Are you interested in working cooperatively with other businesses in the community to pursue any of the following?



70% interested in networking and information sharing

BD8. How many sq ft of commercial space are you operating from?



BD9. Does your business own or lease its facility/facilities?

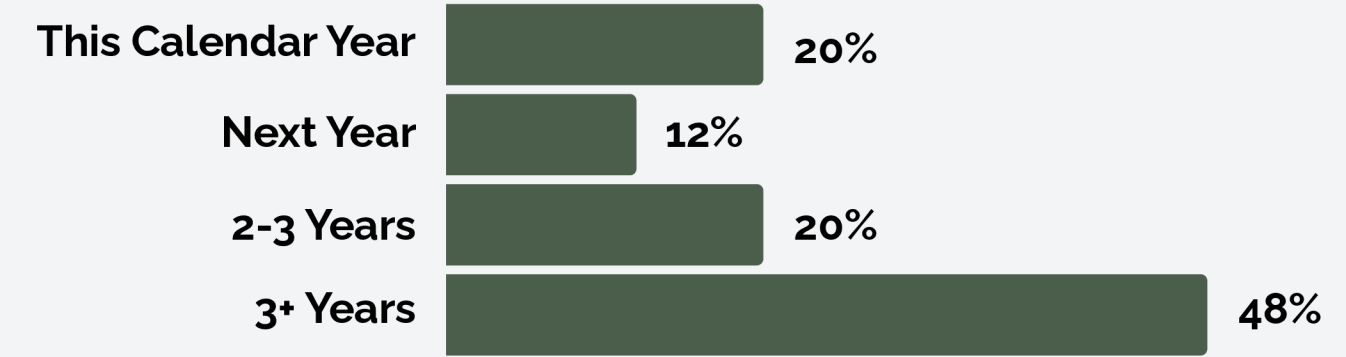


Lease
71%



Own
29%

BD9. b) When does the lease expire?

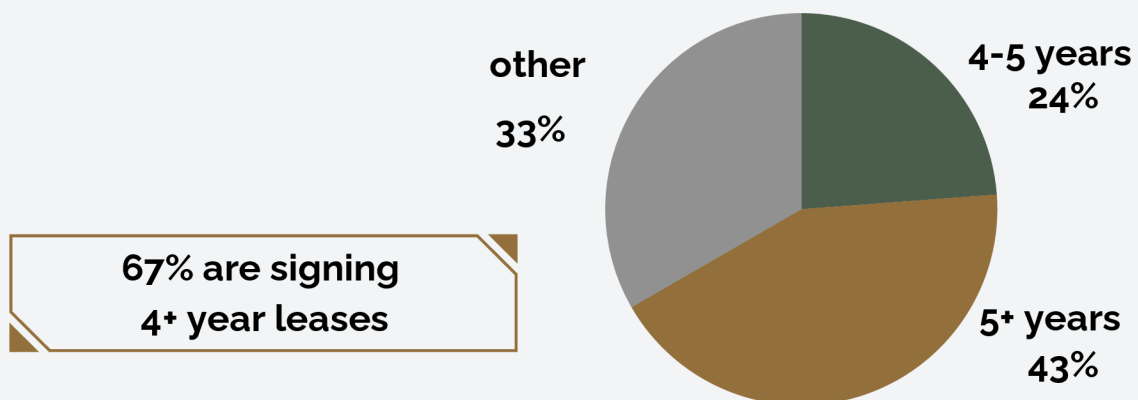


BD9. c) Do you anticipate any problems in renewing the lease?

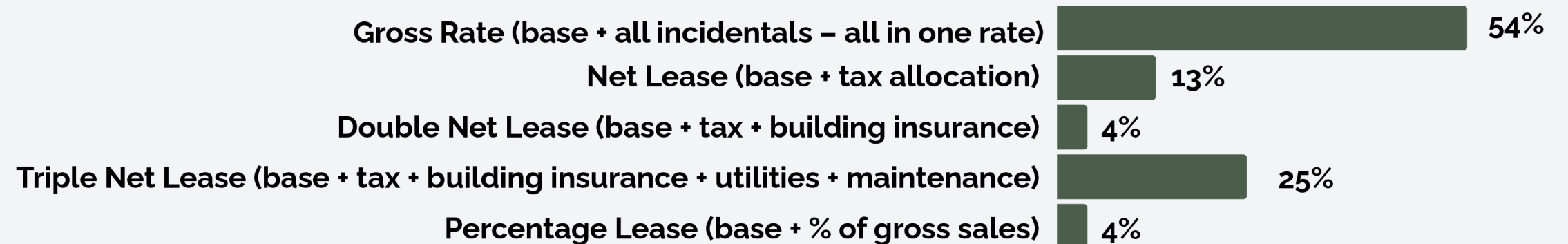
86% of current leasees do not anticipate problems renewing their lease

Anticipated Problems	
Cost	
New Ownership	

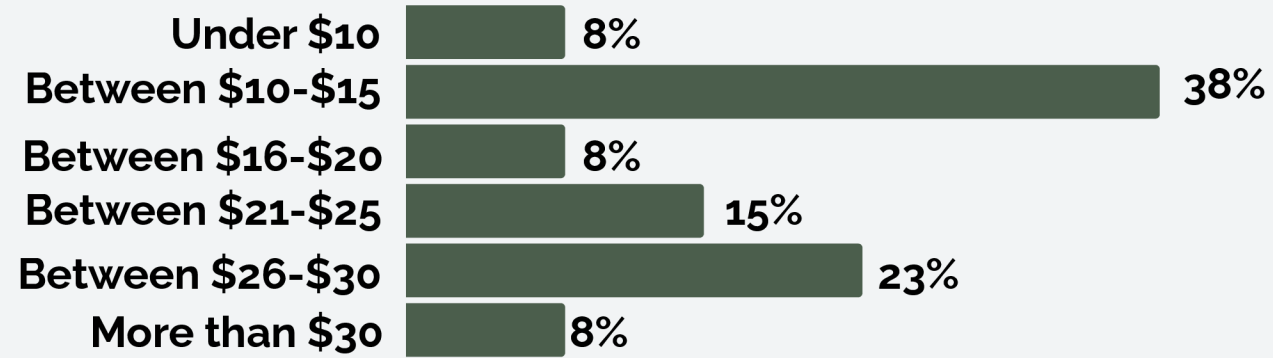
BD10. What is the rental term of your lease (length in years)?



BD11. What are the lease terms?



BD12. What is the lease rate per sq ft?



***Note:** The average square footage rate was based on 13 survey respondents. Midpoints were assigned to each pricing range, and a weighted average was used to estimate the overall average rate.

Estimated average lease rate of \$19.27 per square foot*

BD13. Did the property owner offer you any incentives to rent the space?

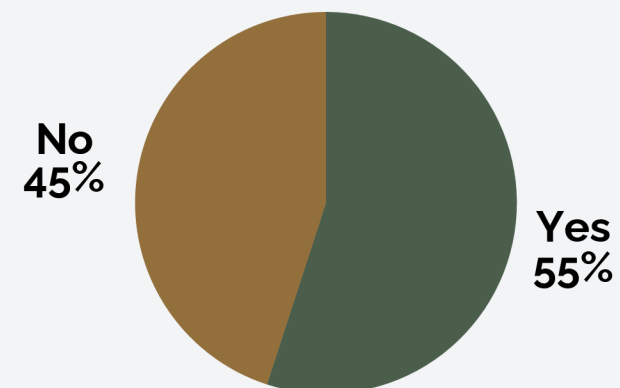


****Rates of \$15-\$35/sq. ft for commercial retail, office or restaurant space**

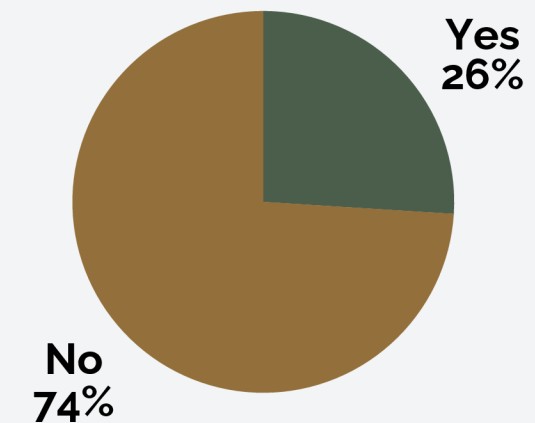
**based on market review - June 2025

BD14. The municipality implemented a Community Improvement Plan in 2021 to support commercial property improvements.

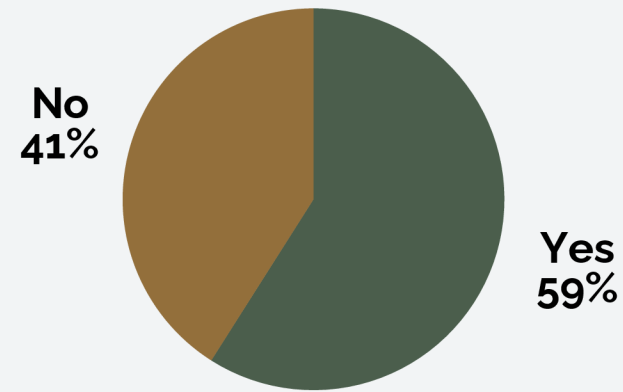
a) Do you know about the CIP Program?



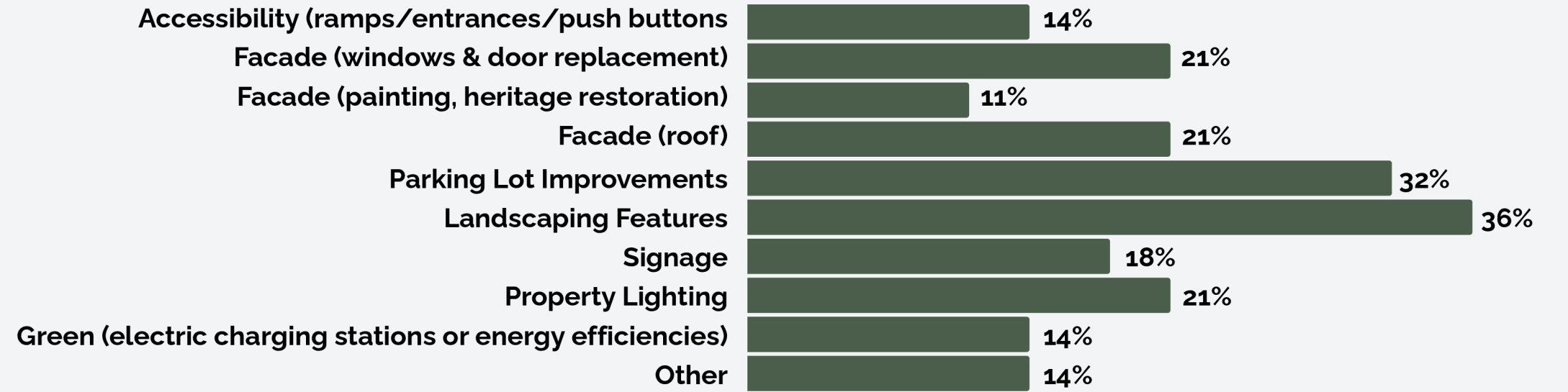
b) Have you used the CIP program?



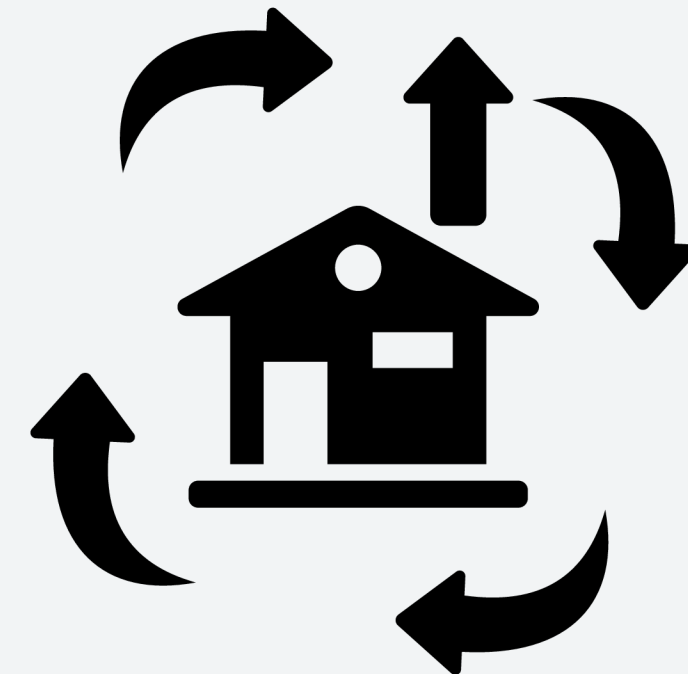
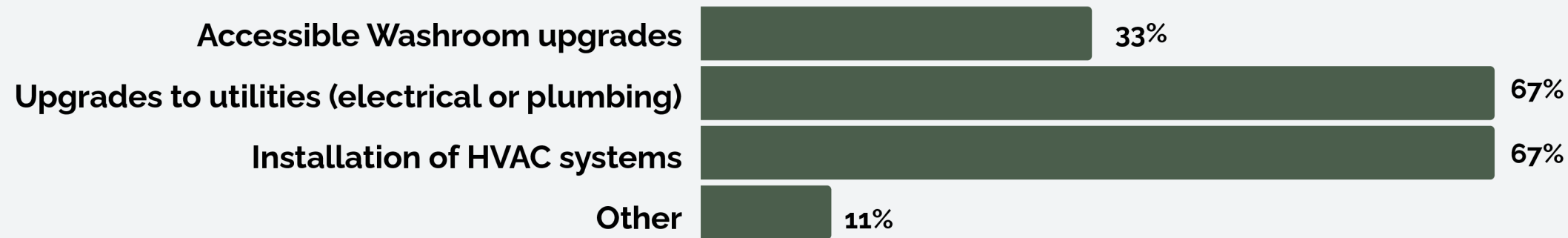
BD15. Are you planning commercial business upgrades for your property in the next 3 years?



BD16. If yes, what types of property upgrades are you thinking about making?



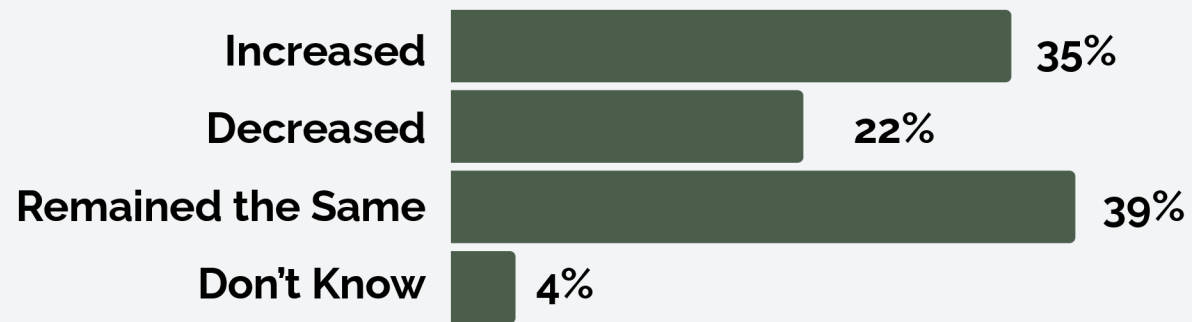
BD17. Does the commercial space require any leasehold improvements that should be considered for CIP grant programs?



Workforce



WF1. a) During the past 3 years, has the number of people you employ in this business increased, decreased or stayed the same?



FROM BUSINESSES INTERVIEWED

Last 3-years number of employees at businesses
= Net Gain of 49 new jobs
MOST PART TIME

DECEMBER 2021 to 2024



Employment
8,780 to 8,910



Unemployment
4.6% to 5.9%.

From December 2021 to December 2024,
130 more people in Petawawa found
employment, but at the same time
unemployment rose from 4.6% to 5.9%.

Source: Labour market indicators, census metropolitan areas,
census agglomerations and self-contained labour areas

WF1. b) What factors are responsible for this change?

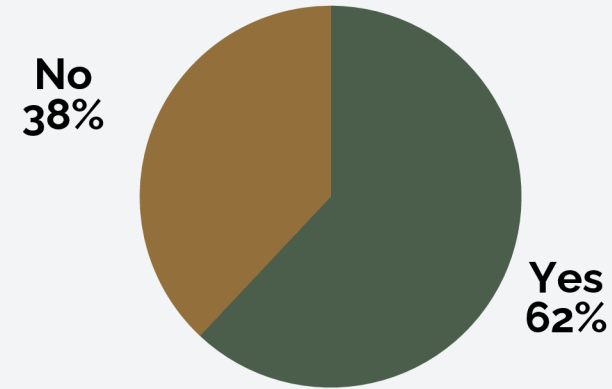
Top Reasons for Staffing Increase	Top Reasons for Staffing Decrease
Demand. All part-time workers.	Seasonal Lay Offs
Hard to hire full-time. More part-time	Staff Leaving
Expansion	Not enough work for staff

WF2. How would you rate the following factors in this community for your business needs?

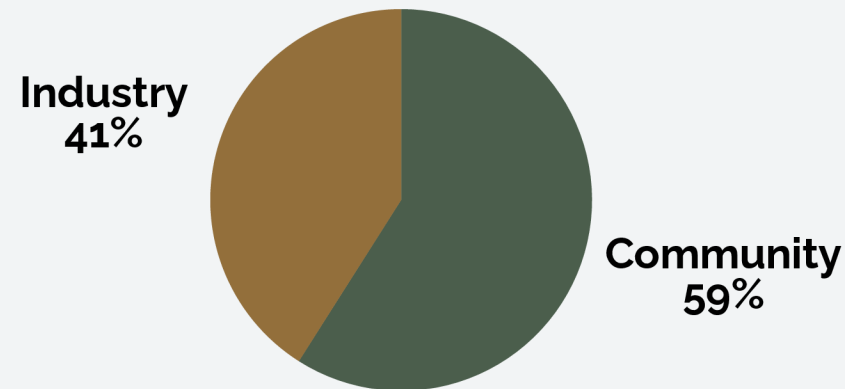
Factor	Average Rating	Rating Category	Responses
Ability to Attract New Employees	2.31	Fair	42
Ability to Retain Employees	2.9	Good	42
Availability of Qualified Workers	2.12	Fair	43
Stability of Workforce	2.64	Good	42

Poor: 1.00 - 1.75
Fair: 1.76 - 2.50
Good: 2.51 - 3.25
Excellent: 3.26 - 4.00

WF3. a) Does your business currently have difficulties hiring?

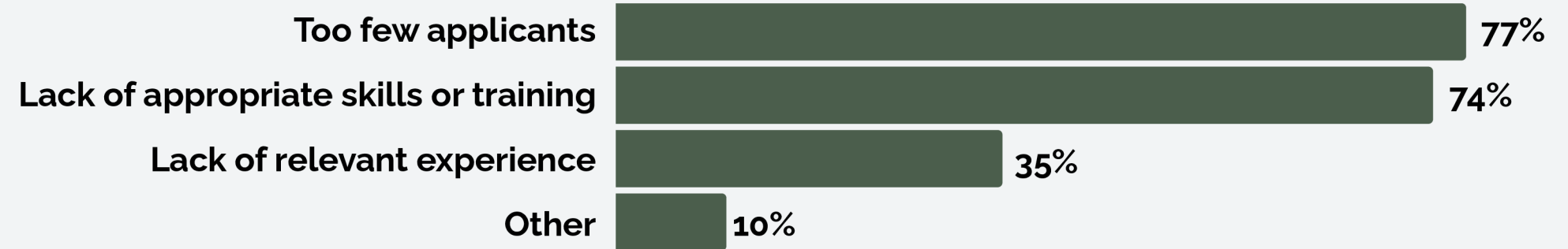


WF3. c) Are the hiring challenges specifically related to the community or industry?



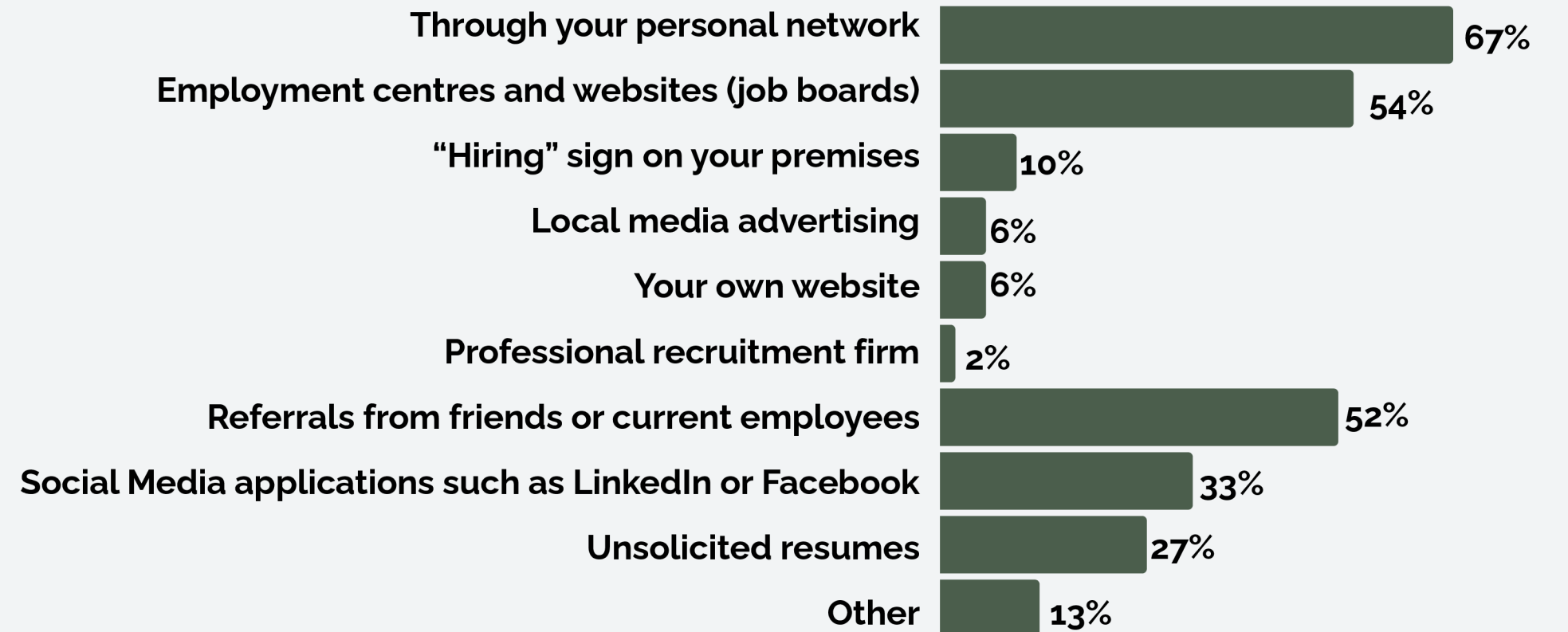
Difficulties Recruiting
Cooks/kitchen staff
Carpenters/HVAC technicians
Managers/supervisors
Health & wellness professionals
Dental staff (hygienists, customer service)
Sales and finance associates
Seasonal workers
Creative and artistic services
Animal care (including veterinary)

WF3. b) How would you describe your company's hiring challenges?

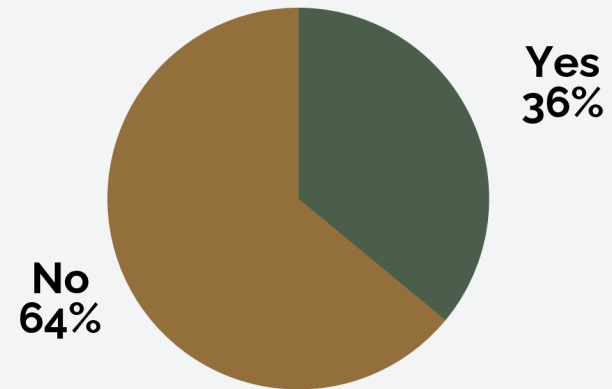


Reasons for Hiring Challenges
Lack of motivation from younger generation
Recruitment of professionals
Individuals don't want to start at the bottom

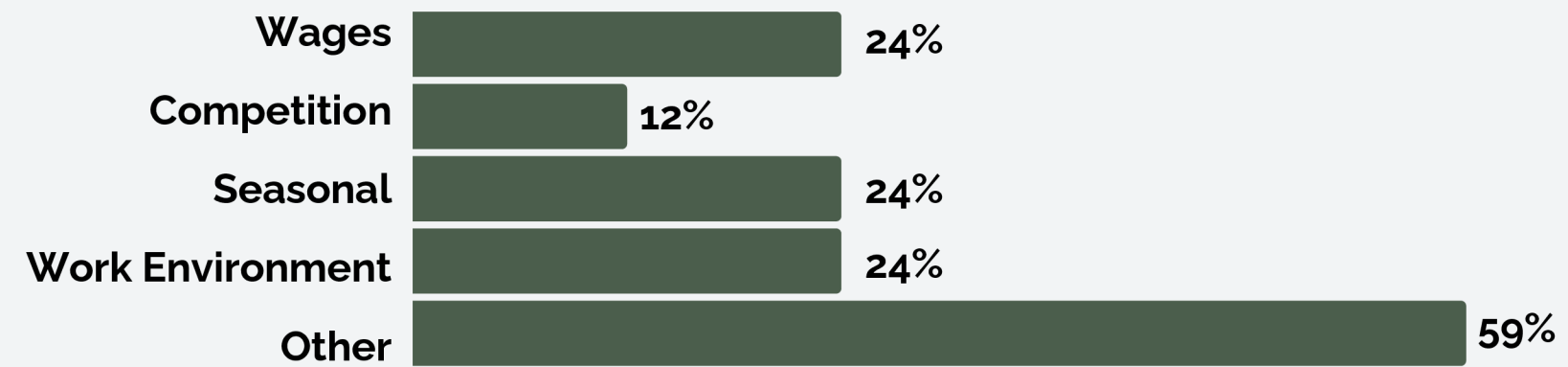
WF4. How do you currently recruit new employees?



WF5. a) Does your business have difficulty retaining employees?



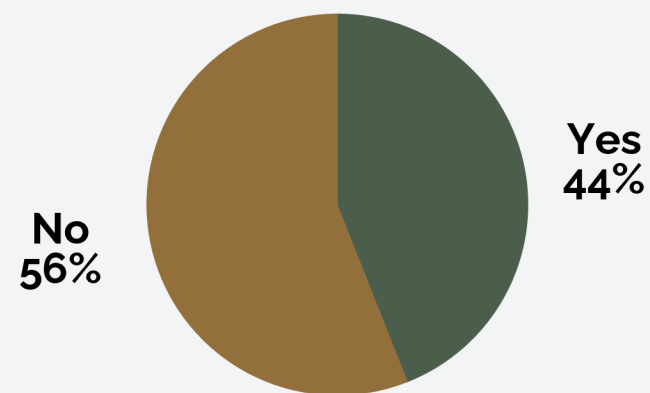
WF5. b) What are the reasons for these difficulties in retaining employees?



Difficulties Retaining Staff

- Physical demands
- Transient community
- Stress
- Don't See Career Potential

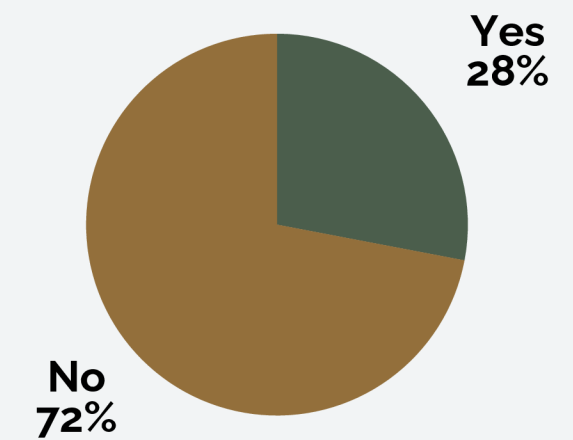
WF6. a) Does your business currently participate in any co-op, internship or apprenticeship programs?



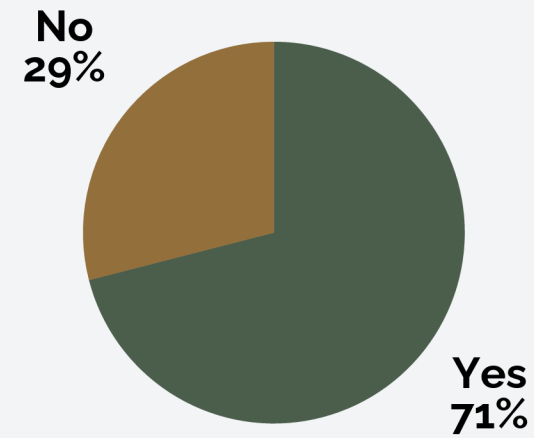
Types of Placements

- High School Co-Op
- Post Secondary Apprentiship

WF6. b) If no, are you interested in information?

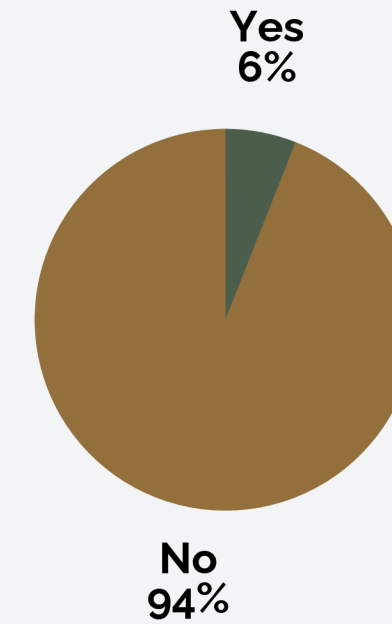


WF7. Does your business currently use any external training?



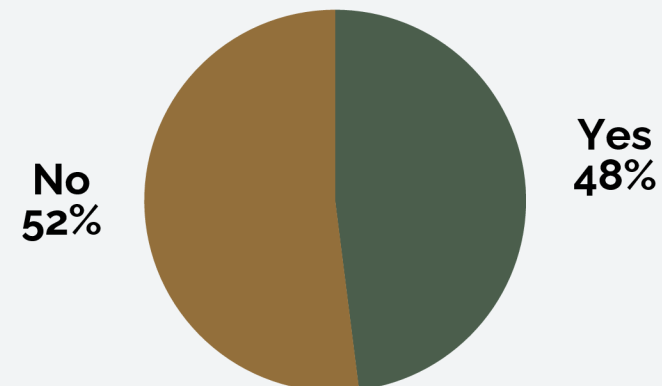
Type of Training Currently Used
Food Safety
First Aid
In house training (health & safety)
Product training from suppliers
Professional Certification
Food Safe
Smart Serve
WHIMIS
Enterprise Small Business Workshops
Red Cross
Dog Training

WF8. a) Are there currently any barriers for you and/or your employees receiving the necessary training?



Restrictions for Training
Cost
Availability of training locally

WF9. Are there any training programs/topics that would be beneficial to you and your employees?



Type of Training Requested
Social Media & Marketing
First Aid & Health & Safety
DEI, Sensitivity & Trauma-Informed Training
Sales & Customer Service (smart serve)
Accounting & Financial Management
General Business Skills

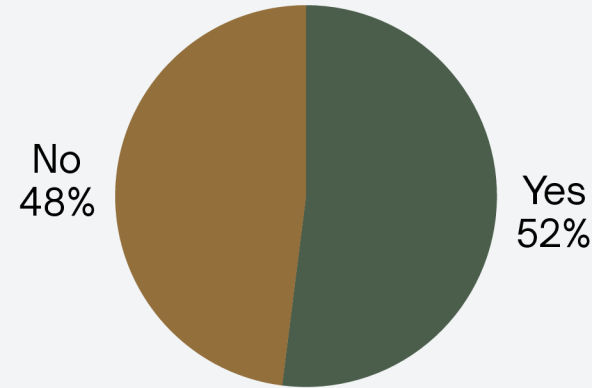
Group	Representation (%)	Count
Women	53%	51
Indigenous Peoples	10%	51
Members of Official Language Minority Communities	12%	51
Youth	18%	51
Persons with Disabilities	2%	51
Newcomers to Canada	6%	51
Visible Minorities	10%	50
LGBTQ2+	12%	51

business indicated at least one staff member is a member of these equity seeking groups

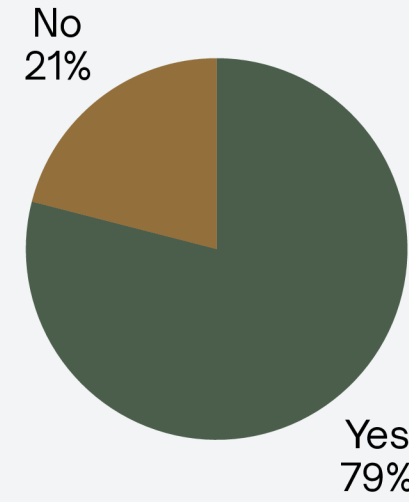
WF11. Does your business embrace diversity in its workforce?



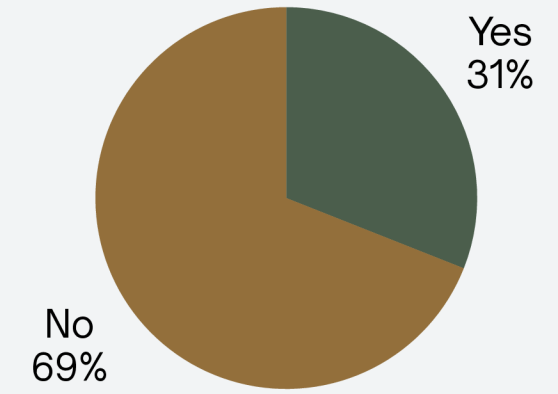
WF12. Does your business have a formal HR Policy?



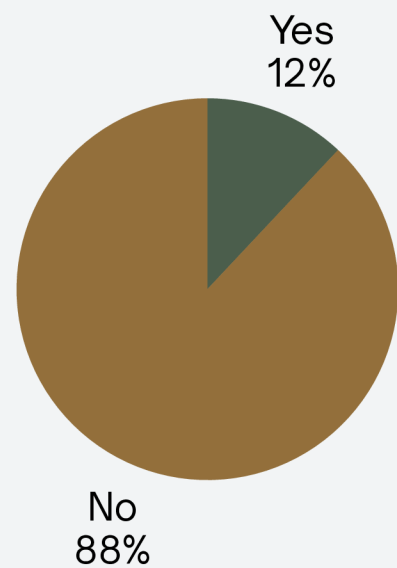
WF13. Does your HR policy support Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)?



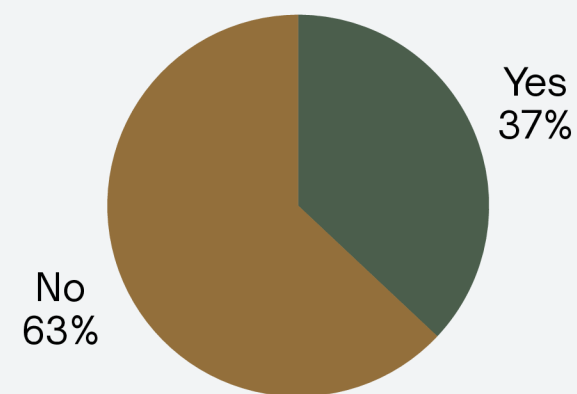
WF14. Would you like support in how to include DEI policies in your HR policies?



WF15. a) Does your business currently participate in any DEI training, co-op, internship, or apprenticeship programs?



WF16. b) If no, are you interested in receiving information about these programs?



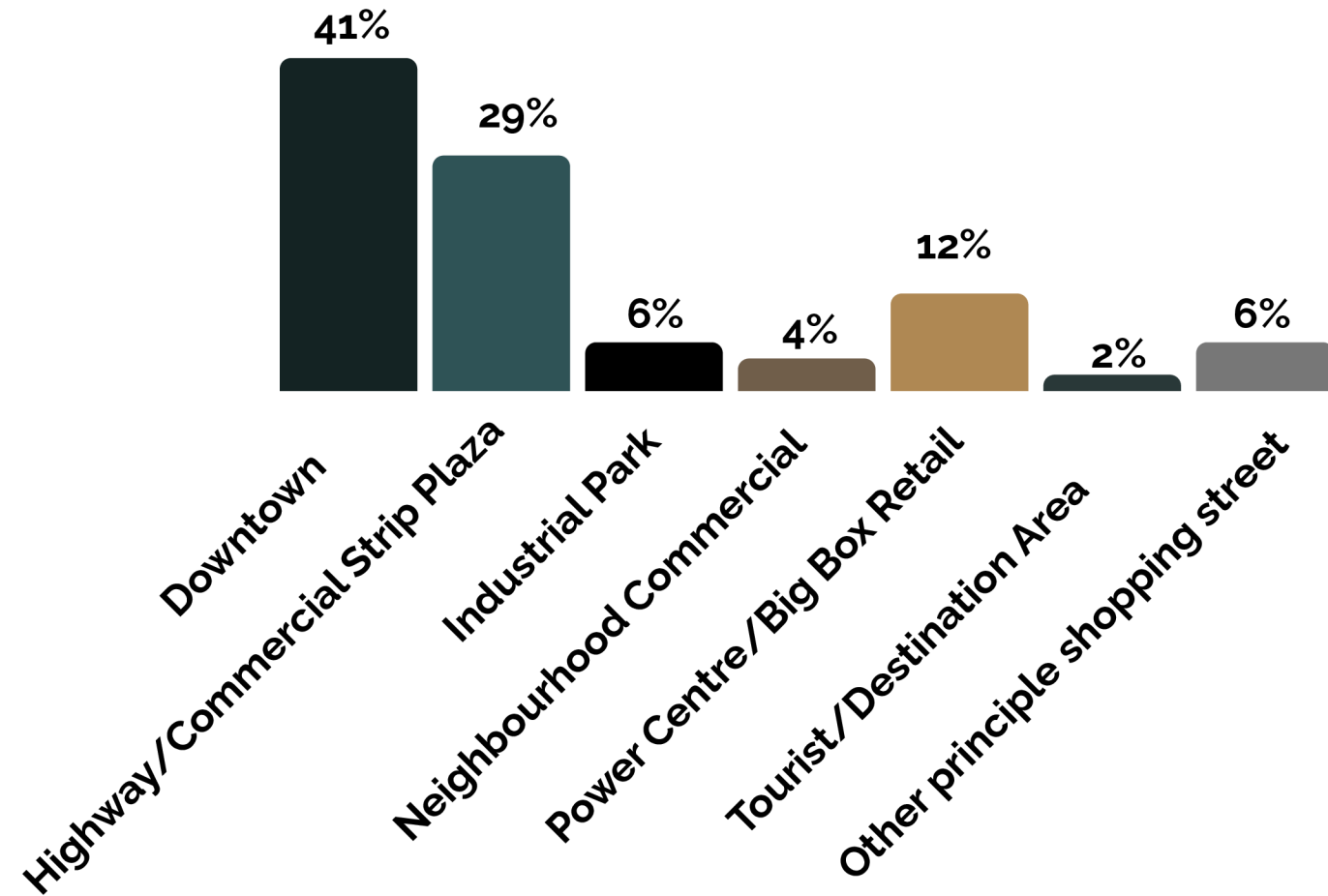
WF17. How does your business support new hires and maintain a diverse workforce? Please select any formal supports that your business offers:



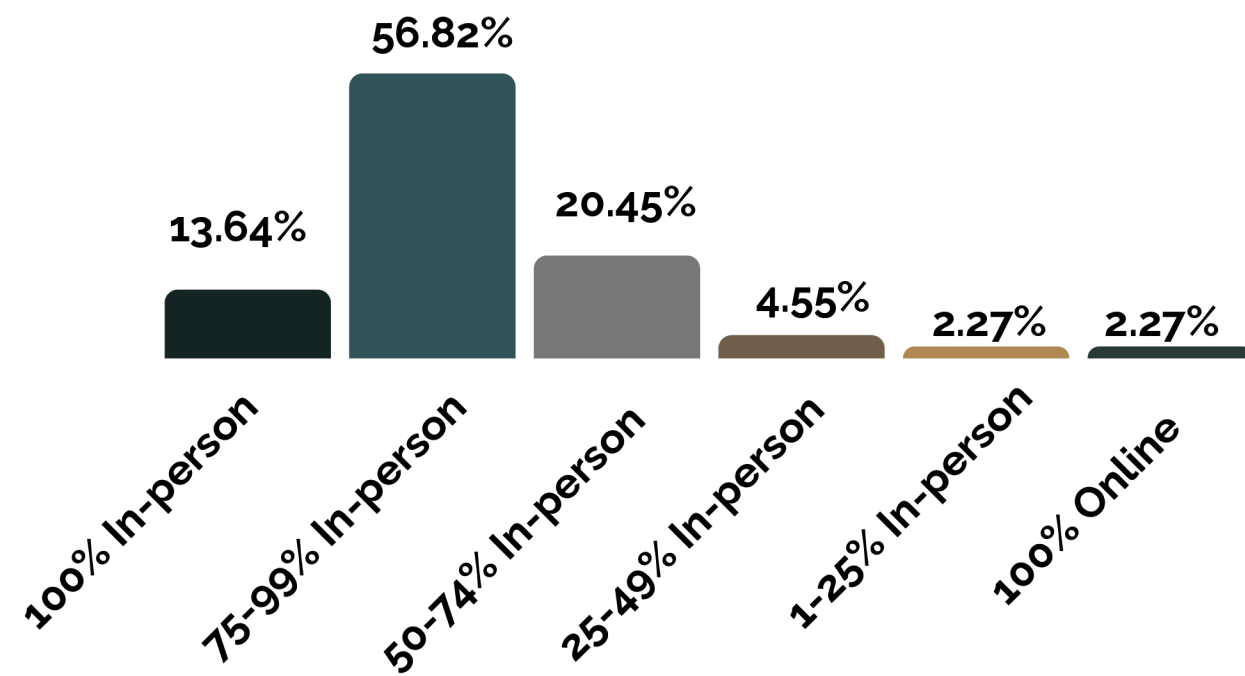


Sector & Community.

SC1. What best describes the area of your business location in this community



SC2. To what percentage is your business (sales) conducted online vs. in person?



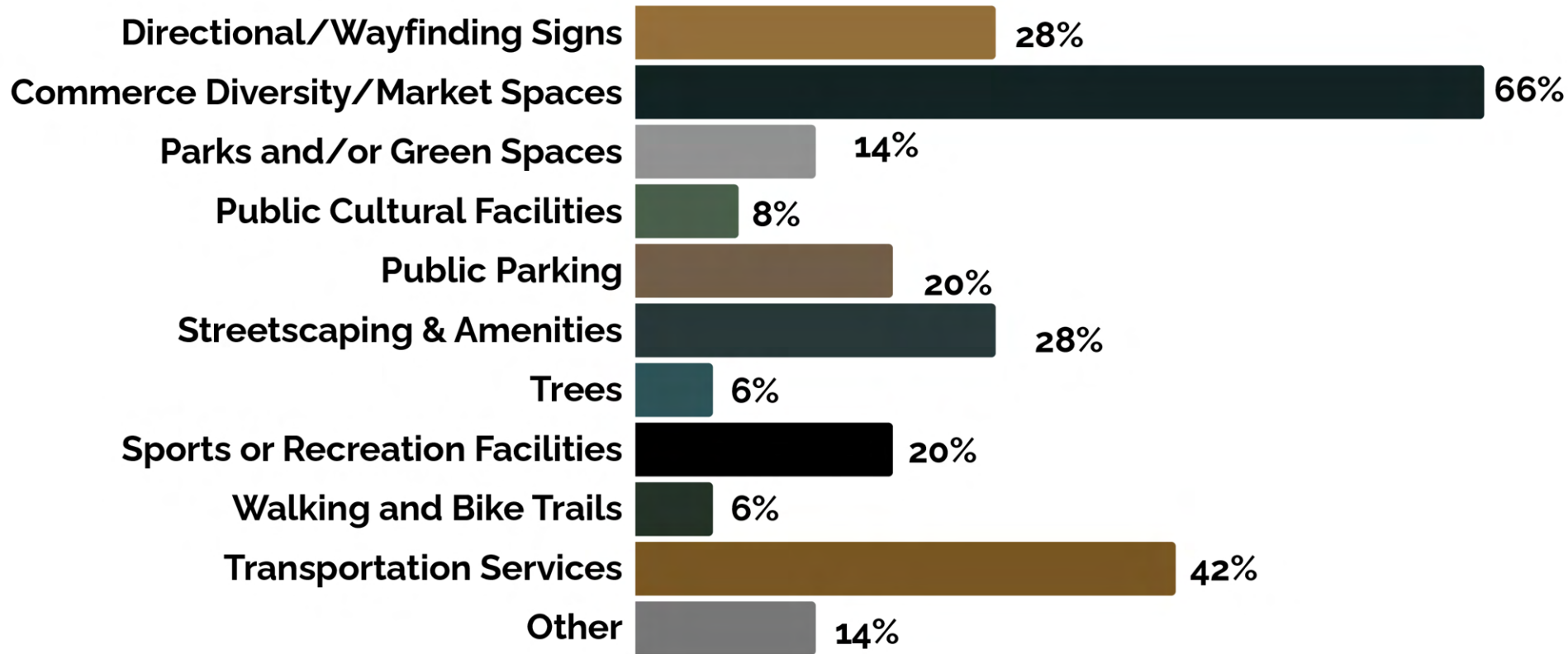
SC3. Using the scale provided, please rate the condition of your commercial district for each factor

#	Factor	Rating (1-4)	Grade	Responses
1	Public Safety	3.63	Excellent	49
2	Vandalism	3.45	Excellent	48
3	Sidewalks & Pedestrian Environment	3.1	Good	47
4	Uniformity of Business Operating Hours	3.09	Good	38
5	Accessibility	3.02	Good	44
6	Exterior Faces of Neighbouring Commercial Businesses	3	Good	45
7	Parking Spaces (availability and condition)	2.89	Good	47
8	Landscaping (planters, trees, banners)	2.87	Good	47
9	Street Furniture (lights, benches, waste containers)	2.71	Good	46
10	Wayfinding Signage	2.45	Fair	48
11	Traffic Flow	2.37	Fair	48
12	Vacant Commercial Land	2.37	Fair	40
13	Vacant Storefronts	2.24	Fair	41
14	Mix of Businesses	1.75	Poor	46
15	Public Transit	1.14	Poor	14

Values Rated: 1 - poor, 2 - fair, 3 - good and 4 - excellent.
 To determine the average rating from survey responses, we used the weighted average formula.

Poor: 1.00 - 1.75
 Fair: 1.76 - 2.50
 Good: 2.51 - 3.25
 Excellent: 3.26 - 4.00

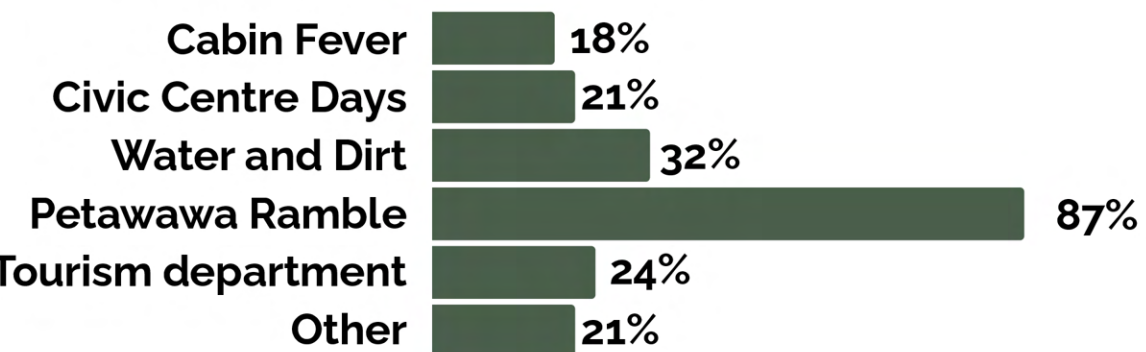
SC4. What community assets would you most like to see developed in the town?



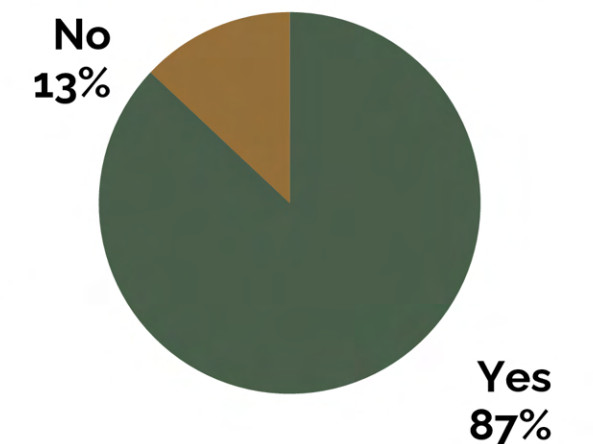
Top Requested Features

- #1 More retail options/restaurants/market space
- #2 Beautification (landscaping, benches, etc.)
- #3 Parking (includes public parking)
- #4 Waste Containers
- #5 Business Signage / Wayfinding
- #6 Transportation Services
- #7 Sport & Recreation Facilities

SC5. What municipal events does your business sponsor or participate in?



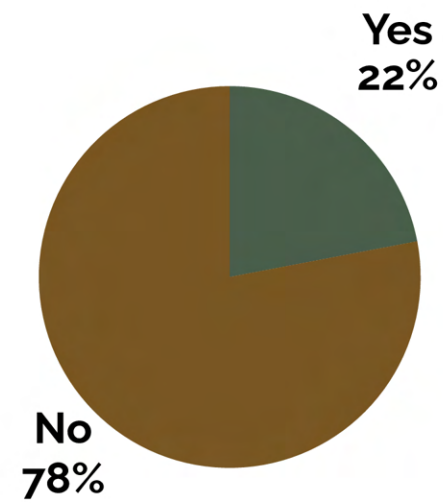
SC6. Would your business like to participate in events, programs and initiatives such as these?



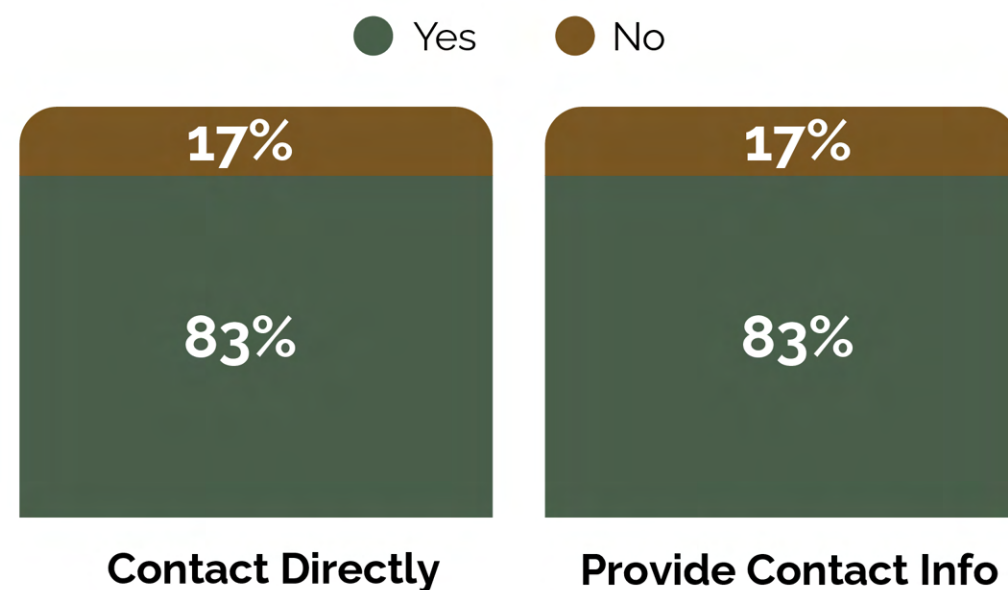
Community. Development



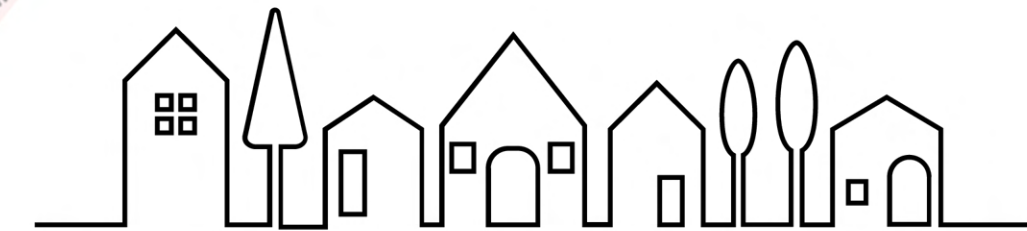
CD1. a) Do you know of a business that may have an interest in locating in this community?



CD1. b) Would you be willing to contact this business on behalf of our community or provide the contact information for this business?



CD2. What are the community's top three advantages as a place to do business?



1. Military
2. Household Income
3. Transient Community (steady flow of new customers)

CD3. What are the community's top three disadvantages as a place to do business?



1. Traffic
2. Lack of Retail
3. Regulations/By-Laws

CD4. In terms of overall impact on this community as a place to do business what is the most significant change you would like to see in the next five years?

Traffic & Transportation

The top request from businesses was to address traffic flow onto Garrison Petawawa and look at the expansion of Highway 17 and public transit options.

Retail & Downtown Development

The business community would like to see more retail, the Petawawa Plaza revived, the development of a downtown core with walkable shopping and large scale shopping centre like a Canadian Tire or Walmart.

Business Grants & Supports

Businesses would like to see more grants and incentives for opening small businesses. More networking and collaboration was also mentioned.

Community Appeal & Beautification

Businesses would like to see Petawawa marketed more as a tourist destination. Beautification including additional flower planters, hanging baskets, banners and signs were also mentioned as requested additions.

Residential Growth & Services

Increase in affordable housing, Plan to service residential developments and an indoor recreation complex.

Health & Social Services

Businesses would like to see better access to doctors and health care services.

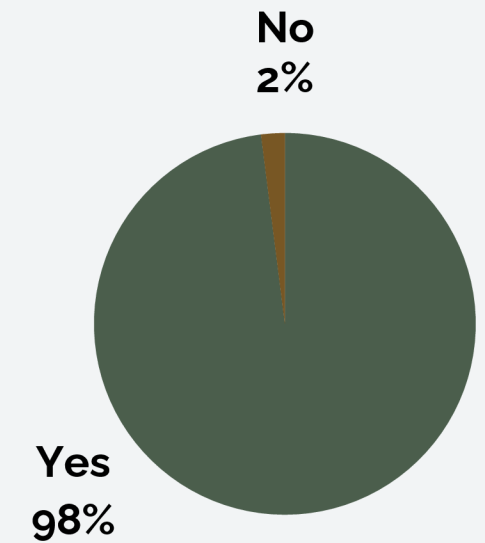
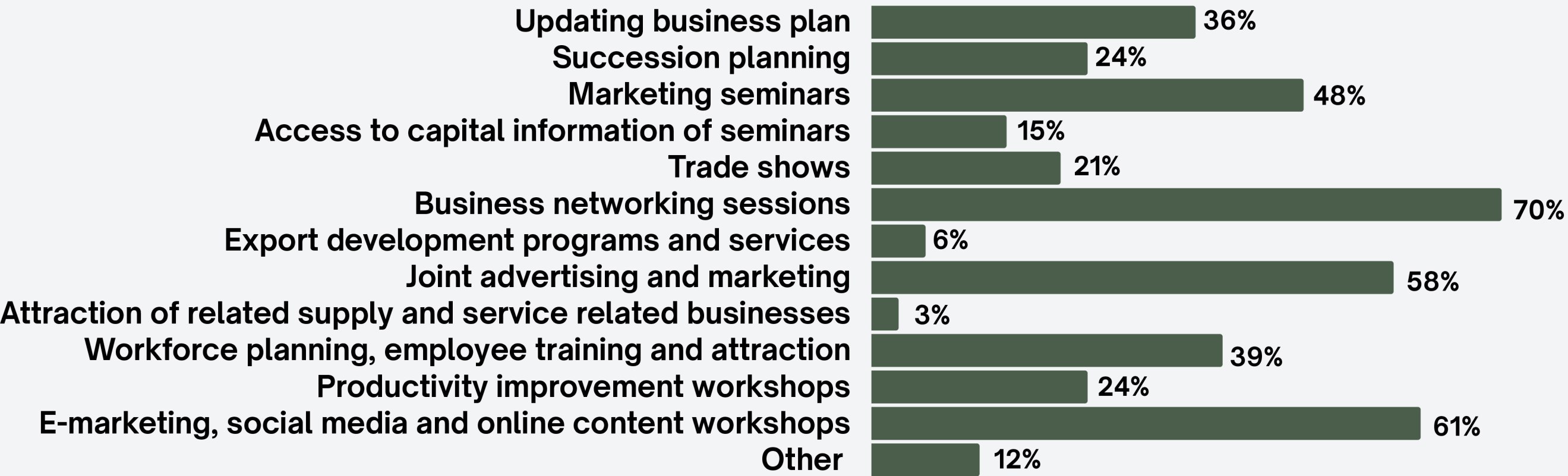
Municipal Policy & Efficiency

Businesses would like to see more efficiency of government services, more building inspectors for faster turn around and a review of the sign by-law.



CD5. What assistance or opportunities would be beneficial to support your business?

Would you like to be kept informed of the Business Retention and Expansion project as it moves forward?



DIRECT IMPACTS & ACTIONS TO DATE FROM BR+E

(as of June 2025)



Grant funding received from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs



1 Staff Member Hired on Contract from January to April.



\$6,000 directly reinvested into community through purchasing of local gift cards and hosting of local networking events.



Improved communication and targeted emails to participating businesses to address immediate opportunities.



Targeted Marketing/Promotions

- Fall for Local Shopping Guide
- Hotel Ads Media Campaign
- Future Opportunities



More access to support programs

- CIP Requests
- SAVE ON Energy Assessments
- Networking Events

Economic Development Departmental Work

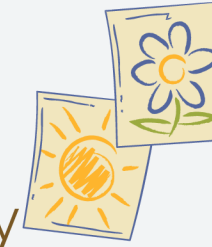
Business Openings/Celebrations

5 events hosted in 2025 so far



Community Art Projects

PetawPainted quilt project underway and new community art project planned



Logo Redesign and New Website

New marketing logo unveiled early 2025 with website to launch in fall.



Business Networking Events

3 Business Connects Networking events hosted in 2025



First Impression Community Exchange

Completed exchange with North Grenville in 2024



Petawawa Ramble

Returns October 16-19, 2025

Business Retention & Expansion

51 surveys completed with businesses

Kiddyland Park Redevelopment

Comfort Station installed in 2024 and work underway for road access from Petawawa Blvd.

Petawawa Business Advisory Network (PBAN)

Meets monthly to discuss economic development in Petawawa



Community Improvement Plan (CIP)

22 total projects funded to date



In Business Video Series

Partnership with YourTV Ottawa Valley featuring 5 businesses to date



Veteran Vendor Expo

Returns on November 1st, 2025

Container Market

New Containers and Thrift Market added in 2025



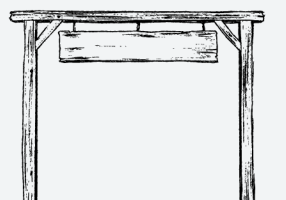
Holiday Tailgate Market

Returns December 6th, 2025



Letter Sign Project

A PBAN initiative that will see large letters spelling PETAWAWA installed near the Comfort Station.



NEXT STEPS

Guiding economic, community and business development in Petawawa for the next generation.

Economic Action Strategy



Town staff will use information from the BR+E survey and other strategic documents to develop an action oriented plan to guide economic development.

Petawawa CIP Review & Update



Based on feedback, planned projects and additional consultation, staff will review and update the Community Improvement Plan (CIP).

BR+E Follow Up Review & Action



Staff will review the possibility of a hosting additional BR+E programs in the future, pending funding, focusing on multiple sectors.

