City of Louisville
COLORADO · SINCE 1878

BUSINESS RETENTION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: SPRING BUSINESS SURVEY SUMMARY RESULTS

DATE: AUGUST 23, 2018

PRESENTED BY: AARON DEJONG, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUMMARY:
The BRaD Committee sent out the second Louisville Business Survey in June 2018 and survey responses were received throughout that month. Attached are the summary results of the survey responses. This memorandum highlights the main themes garnered from the responses.

DISCUSSION:
The spring Louisville business survey was sent to 715 email contacts on May 29, 2018. Two reminder emails were sent to contacts that had yet to respond the survey. The survey closed on June 18, 2018. A total of 104 responses were received, resulting in a 14.5% response rate. The intent of the survey was to receive a pulse of the business community in several areas; business outlook, opinion of the Business Forum, business satisfaction, input on community challenges, and communication. The survey was not designed to achieve statistically significant results, rather quantitative and qualitative feedback.

Responses were received by all areas of the community with the downtown area (44% of responses) and the CTC (24% of the responses) providing the most responses. The respondents were mostly from small businesses (80% with less than 25 employees).

Businesses generally have a positive outlook for their business with those stating their business would grow or remain stable over the next 18 months was 94% of responses.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents attended the Louisville Business Forum on May 17, 2018. Of the attending respondents, 80% were either satisfied or neutral on the event.

The respondents stating they wouldn't recommend locating a business in Louisville outweighed those respondents who would recommend (45.5% vs. 21.2% respectively). However, respondents noted that it is generally easy to do business in town. The question related to the cost of doing business was rather mixed in its results, without a clear direction that it is, or is not, costly to do business.

The question asking if "Louisville is leading the way in showing how front-range communities should adapt to the rapid growth and change in our region" resulted in business saying Louisville was not leading by a greater amount than Louisville was leading the way (41.8% vs. 10.2%).

Moving into the topics part of the survey, transportation was the first topic requesting responses. Results were mixed as to whether the transportation infrastructure impacted their business. Those that responded the infrastructure impacted their business, 43.8% said they were dissatisfied and 45.3% were neutral. The write-in responses elaborating on the transportation impacts were generally about several topics:

- Lack of public transportation options (noted mostly in the CTC)
- General volume of traffic (particularly on Highway 42)
- Lack of parking (mostly noted about the downtown area)

Housing and amenities was the next topic asked for input and 67% of respondents stated the cost of housing was not sufficient to attract and retain employees. Responding businesses did say Louisville has an appropriate amount of amenities for employees (55% agreeing and 21% being neutral). Small community vibe, downtown, and the City's open space were the quality of life factors receiving the highest responses.

Several reasons were given for what would cause you to move your business out of Louisville. The responses fell into a few main categories:

- Rent and expenses increasing dramatically
- Difficulty finding leasable space that meets needs and is affordable
- Challenges to attract the needed workers
- Housing affordability and availability
- High tax burden

Most respondents have not had a business retention visit (only 5 of 93 respondents had). Of the five that stated they did, only one was dissatisfied with the meeting.

Moving on to communications questions, respondents were mixed on whether Louisville was doing a good job of marketing itself to businesses. They did generally agree the city does a good job of communicating with the local businesses. Respondents were mixed as to their utilization of the Louisville Chamber of Commerce.
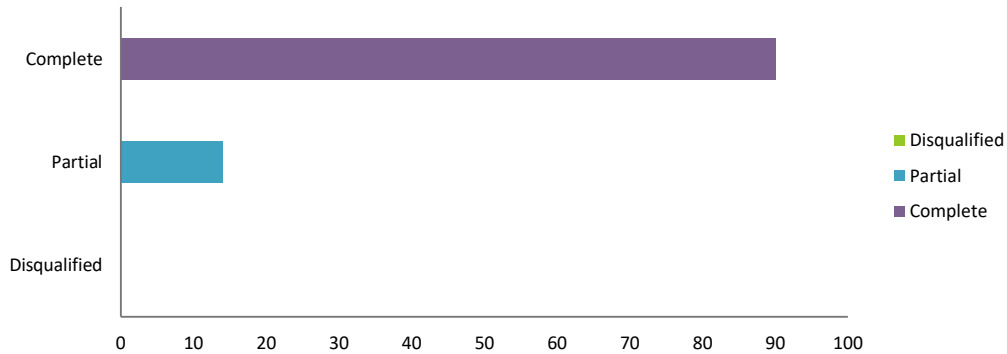
Lastly, several comments were received for the final 'catch all' question to end the survey. Feel free to read them as they cover too many topics to summarize in this review.

2018 Louisville Business Survey results

Total addresses sent the survey = 715

Response Rate = 14.5%

Response Statistics

	Count	Percent
Complete	90	86.5
Partial	14	13.5
Disqualified	0	0
Totals	104	

1.What is your role in the business?

Value		Percent	Count
Owner		85.0%	85
Senior decision maker (not an owner)		8.0%	8
Employee not a senior decision maker		7.0%	7
Totals			100

2.What business corridor/center is your business located in?

Value		Percent	Count
Downtown Louisville		44.0%	44
Centennial Valley/McCaslin Corridor		16.0%	16
Colorado Technology Center		24.0%	24
South Boulder Road Corridor		12.0%	12
Other - Write In		4.0%	4
Totals			100

Other - Write In	Count
Home based	1
home office	1
hwy 42	1
hwy 42 - 95th	1
Totals	4

3.Approximately how many employees do you have?

Value		Percent	Count
1-5 employees		49.5%	49
5-25 employees		30.3%	30
Greater than 25 employees		20.2%	20
Totals			99

4.What is the current outlook for your business over the next 18 months?

Value		Percent	Count
Growing		49.5%	49
Stable		46.5%	46
Slowing		4.0%	4
Totals			99

5.Did you or someone from your business attend the May 17th Louisville Business Forum held at Ascent Church (former Sam's club)?

Value		Percent	Count
Yes, I did		25.3%	25
Someone else from my business attended		9.1%	9
No one attended		60.6%	60
I'm not sure		5.1%	5
Totals			99

6.You indicated your attendance at the Louisville Business Forum. How satisfied were you with the event?

Value		Percent	Count
Disatisfied		20.0%	5
Neutral		32.0%	8
Satisfied		48.0%	12
Totals			25

7.How likely are you to recommend the City of Louisville as a place to do business?

Value		Percent	Count
Detractors		45.5%	45
Passives		33.3%	33
Promoters		21.2%	21
Totals			99

8.How much do you agree with the following sentence: "It is easy to get business done in the city of Louisville."

Value		Percent	Count
Disagree		26.5%	26
Neutral		32.7%	32
Agree		38.8%	38
Not Sure		2.0%	2
Totals			98

9.How much do you agree with the following sentence: "The cost of doing business in Louisville is equal or better than surrounding communities."

Value		Percent	Count
Disagree		32.7%	32
Neutral		33.7%	33
Agree		25.5%	25
Not sure		8.2%	8
Totals			98

10. How much do you agree with the following sentence: "Louisville is leading the way in showing how front-range communities should adapt to the rapid growth and change in our region."

Value		Percent	Count
Disagree		41.8%	41
Neutral		39.8%	39
Agree		10.2%	10
Not Sure		8.2%	8
Totals			98

11. Does Louisville's transportation infrastructure impact your business?

- No, not at all — 34, 34%
- Sometimes — 39.2, 39%
- Yes, somewhat often — 26.8, 27%
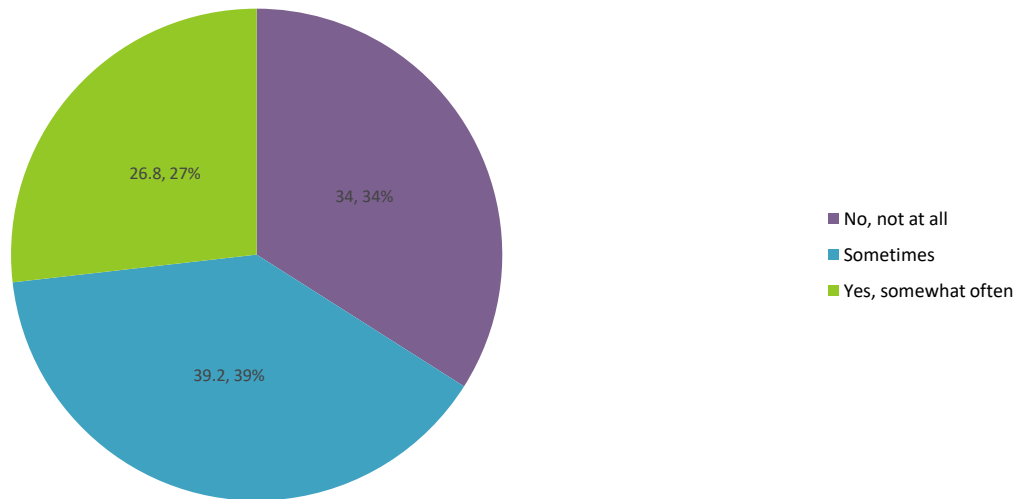
12.Since you indicated you are impacted, how satisfied are you with the transportation infrastructure?
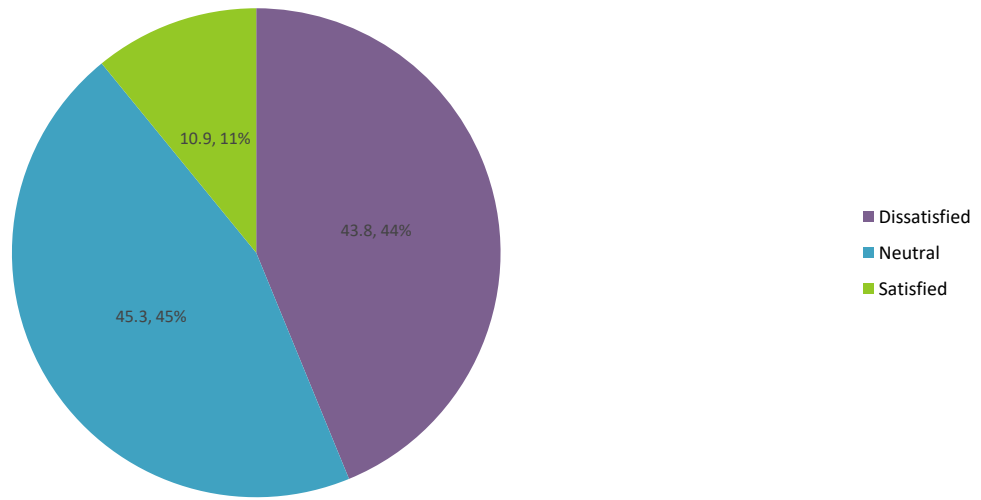
13.Can you please elaborate on how the transportation infrastructure impacts your business?

Traffic on South Boulder Road makes my business more visible.

Need Bus routes within the CTC

Parking

Some of our employees rely on public transportation from outside Louisville. The first bus available sometimes is cut due to lack of drivers which causes them to be late to work. Hwy 42 needs bus service as well.

I would like to have more options for parking, more organized approach, and some action regarding the topic. The city has been talking about parking for the 5 years that I have been an owner with no action at all.

Need to be allowed to advertise along a busy road where we are HIDDEN

Hwy 42 is to busy at rush hours

Parking continues to be an issue for customers and employees on a daily basis. Some days are better than others but anticipation is that the pressure for parking needs will continue to grow.

We deliver. Traffic volume is greater than streets can handle. Too many traffic signals, or at least too much waiting at signals. Obviously, too many cars for the roads, but a lot of pedestrian crossing affecting signals, too. 20+ years in delivery business - Louisville/Lafayette are very difficult to "get around".

I would like to see Louisville be more progressive when it come to bike and walking transportation. We need to do better with our connections with surrounding communities. All of our per/bike entries to the historic district are through heavily trafficed areas and bring you into the outskirts of town. As an example it I lived in Lafayette and wanted to bike into Louisville for the day/night I would have to cross several streets and a highway, or follow the CC trail and be lead into the far end of town, or a dead end into the ball feilds, where I

would have to then cross a busy highway, with no cross walk. While it is nice to have the new underpass it is useless when it just leads you to a busy and dangerous highway crossing.

Commute times for employees - 95th needs improvement.

Perhaps, we (city and us) need a community garage.

We have only been affected by road closures but it hasn't affected us too much. In the end we realize it is a necessary and important update to the city.

No RTD services are convenient to our area or along Dillon Road. Potential employees have gone elsewhere as our area does not receive proper transportation services.

No parking from 10 AM on. There also is not a good bus service and it does not handle most of Louisville.

Multi-modal investments and budgetary support for all modes of transportation. Land use and transportation planning need to be better integrated. Budgetary focus on multi-modal transportation, including first and final mile connectivity to the US 36 & McCaslin station, and the CTC.

Volume of traffic on 95th St. (Hwy. 42) is making ingress and egress difficult both morning and evening

We don't like the large RTD busses going through Main Street. Can be disruptive.

Not enough downtown parking. Clients are less likely to book on weekends and Fridays because they have no place to park.

sometimes patients say they have to walk a block to the office because they couldn't find a closer parking spot. I tell them it's good to walk a block. Our appointments are only 20-30 mintutes so parking is not an issue with us

Parking and traffic are a deterrent for many people who drive in to Louisville.

Customers sometimes use the transportation infrastructure to visit our business.

The bus stops are not very conveniently located along McCaslin.

Increased traffic at major arteries in Louisville impact getting around and through the area. The promise of Light Rail connecting the Front Range to the greater Denver area is a disappointing running joke that will NEVER materialize and viewed as an RTD extortion operation.

Lack of Parking.

One safety item: please add four way stops to intersections of main/spruce and main/walnut.   With increased car and pedestrian traffic, it is difficult to safely cross the street or pull into main street traffic at these intersection.

There's no scheduled public transportation to the Colorado Tech center.

If you are referring to parking, the summertime outdoor seating at the restaurants hurts my business because my injured/elderly clientele cannot park within a reasonable walking distance to my office.

Parking is always an issue for customers who want to park directly in front of the business for all restaurants and others in Colony Square. People do not and will not walk to this area. It is silly to try to aim walk ability for our customers. It is more important to have the area walk-able for residents who are not necessarily our customers.

some employees want more public transport (bus) to CTC

Limited bus schedules to and from Louisvile. Perhaps bring back the bus line to Flatirons mall

Constant construction with no warning, medians everywhere making left hand turns impossible, effectively shutting out certain businesses.

No real public transportation in the tech center

Sometimes downtown parking is horrible in the summer months. Our bank and some other business is done dowtown

parking

Parking is quite difficult - and traffic in and around downtown Louisville often difficult at key times

There needs to be a concerted effort on the part of Boulder, Louisville, Lafayette, Erie; maybe Broomfield dealing with the very serious traffic problems during peak times. The east-west roads are a crawl & impact employees.

Poor flow through management. So many cars bottlenecked by narrow roads, slow speed limits.

We need folks to be able to get to and park in downtown

There are 1000s of people working in CTC and there is no transit service, in this day and age to have a concentrated area of employment w/o mass transit is, well appalling

It does nothing to help my business

Bus route to CTC. stops within CTC needed.

Our business attracts clients from many surrounding municipalities, and long commute times across town (auto and pedestrian) negatively affect our ability to attract new clients.

Need more/frequent bus service between the CTC/Northwest Pkwy businesses and historic downtown and/or McCaslin retail corridor.

Lack of long term parking. Street closures make it difficult for customers.

Lack of parking impacts business tremendously, traffic on 42 and Dillon Road to Broomfield have a big impact on people coming into Downtown Louisville.

Difficult to get into downtown Louisville (i.e., find parking) during business hours.
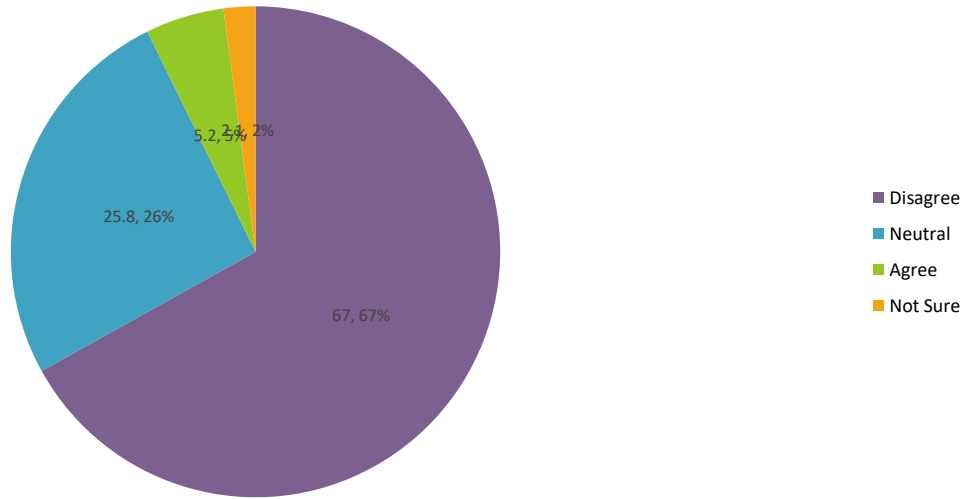
Insufficient bus service from McCaslin and to CTC

Extremely congested highways has made many of my customers stop riding bicycles altogether. It is just too dangerous, there are too many people here - too much in controlled growth.
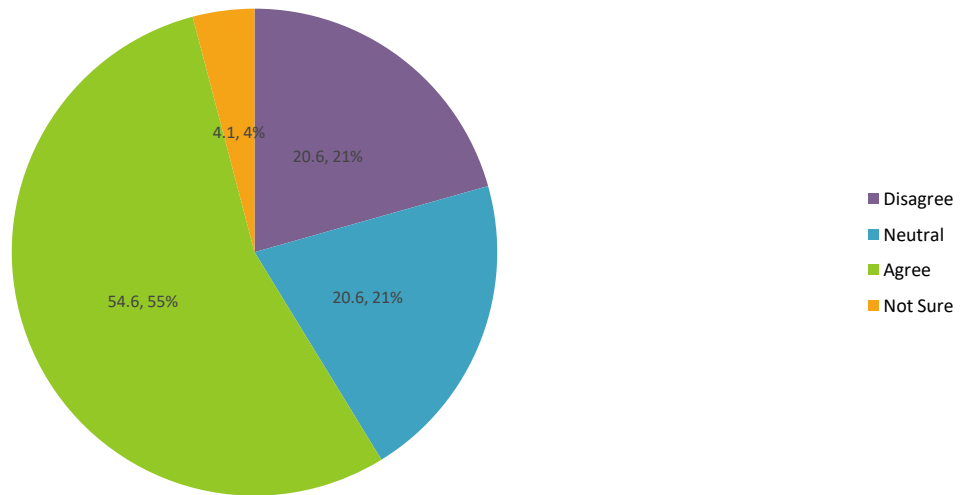
No Buses come to the Colorado Tech Ctr.
Makes it harder to fill light manufacturing positions.

14. How much do you agree with the following sentence: "the cost of housing in Louisville is sufficient for attracting and retaining employees."

Disagree: 67, 67%
Neutral: 25.8, 26%
Agree: 5.2, 5%
Not Sure: 2.1, 2%

Legend:
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Not Sure

15. How much do you agree with the following sentence: "local retail amenities (coffee shops, restaurants, stores, etc) are sufficient for my employees and me."

Disagree: 20.6, 21%
Neutral: 20.6, 21%
Agree: 54.6, 55%
Not Sure: 4.1, 4%

Legend:
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Not Sure

16. What are the most important quality of life factors that keep you here? (pick 3)

Legend:
- Small community vibe
- Downtown area
- Open space
- Safety
- Schools
- Recreation Center
- Community events (Fall festival, Street Faire)
- Other

Values:
- Small community vibe: 72.3
- Downtown area: 60.6
- Open space: 44.7
- Safety: 36.2
- Schools: 25.5
- Recreation Center: 4.3
- Community events (Fall festival, Street Faire): 23.4
- Other: 30.9
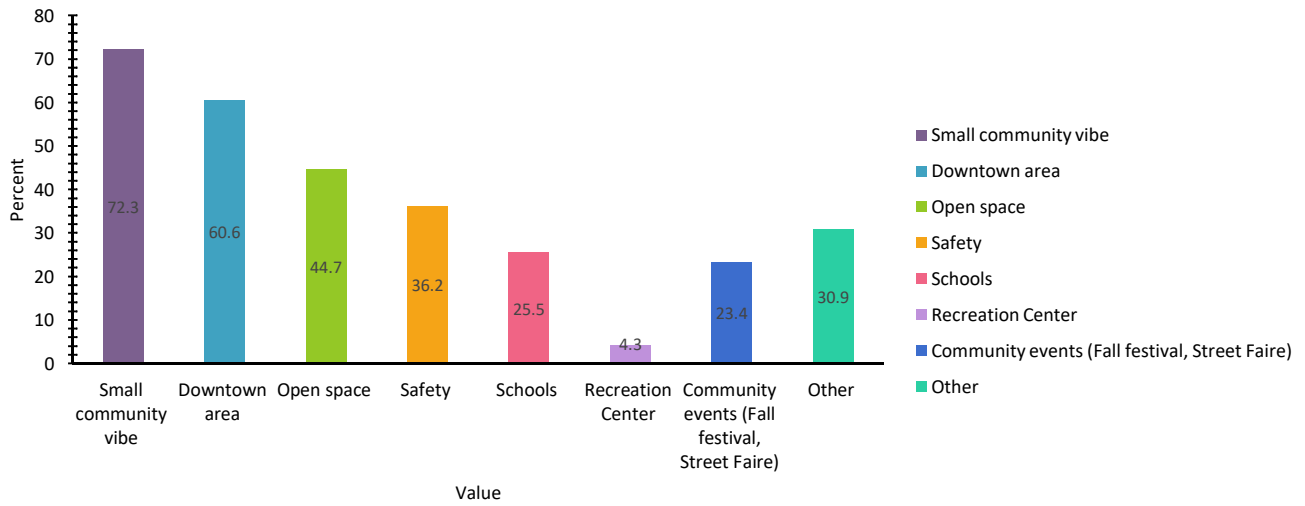
17. Is there something specific which would cause you to consider moving your business from Louisville?

- Yes: 54.3, 54%
- No: 45.7, 46%
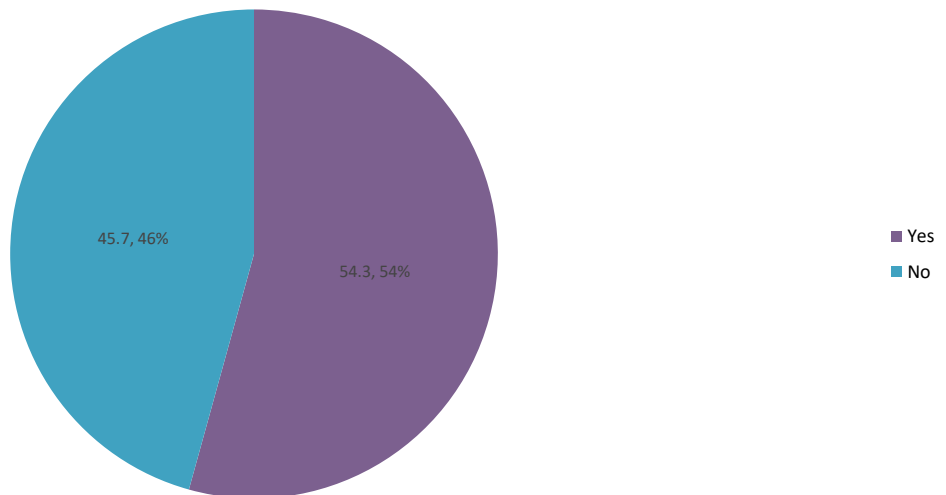
18.Can you please elaborate on what would cause you to consider moving your business out of Louisville?

rising rents

housing cost...

One more increase in costs from my business to the City of Louisville.

Lack of retail space

punitive and adversarial city staff

The rent has increased in my 5 years of doing business exponentially. I started paying $2300 a month and am now paying $4700. and recent property tax increase is too high for my business to sustain. I cannot afford to pay this each and every year. I need to be in a community with like minded people where there are more thriving businesses and people are interested in supporting small business. For business reasons, I need to be in a town where there is more traffic to support the growth of my business. I also need to be in a town that has a comprehensive vision and online presence with up to date social media presence. I am continue to be disappointed that our town does not have a social media presence, and a vision for the future.

Not being welcomed by the city admins and no one leasing space small enough. People want small businesses to pay a ton for everything. I don't need 3000 sq ft and because there is no other option, I may move the business

1. Traffic. 2. Rent. 3. Difficult labor market for service industry.

Too much traffic on 287 coming from Longmont.

A political movement to stop creative development in old downtown that adds people and not cars to service the retail/restaurants.

Construction and permitting process is not good. We are considering expansion and the prospect of going through the process again is daunting.

Lack of small office space within desired areas (specifically downtown). Cost and logistics of obtaining building permits.   Economic incentives available elsewhere as compared to here.

I feel Louisville rents have gotten ahead of where they should actually be which is causing some pain. We pay high rent, but we don't feel the business is there downtown especially for a lunch time business crowd. We also feel unsupported marketing wise by the city and we're getting killed by surrounding cities that are offering incentives for businesses to go in there including lower rents and tax incentives.

Cheaper costs for Building's/Real Estate
Better selection for home purchases.

Parking. By 10 AM there is not any.

traffic

I eventually want to move my Graphic Design business out of my home and move to an office location. Other surrounding areas have much more affordable small office space leases. Real estate is just too high here for the small service providing business I run.

If rent for office space continues to go up in the future as much as it has gone up in the past three years, I may have to relocate to Longmont or Lafayette.

We are hard to find due to being built in and city signage laws stunt our ability to be visible. Community support in the area is weak.

Would like to expand but there is very little commercial/industrial land available

Property tax

If I can no longer afford to rent space here, which is a definite possibility down the road, especially if my building is sold.

Treatment from the sales and use tax audit department.

Cost of running a business; rents are high.

I need to expand my space but it's hard to find affordable office space that suits my needs in the city limits of Louisville.

Louisville is maxed out on available housing for folks to live and work in the area. As a result, available housing costs are very high perhaps second only to Boulder. So the commute to Louisville for employees becomes more important since they are likely live outside the Louisville area.

Real estate is getting too expensive. Lease rates are high and buying or building is unfeasible for most small businesses.

Employee retention will become more difficult as housing prices continue to escalate in Louisville. Commuting options for our employees will become a factor overtime.

Cheaper better office space, our office complex is old and is looking out of touch with the modern style

Traffic is increasing, parking for my clients decreasing

Any major costs that may close the business temporarily such as realignment of buildings would cause me to move. I can't survive a temporary closure and would just go elsewhere.

I would move my business if my rent keeps increasing, which it does, and if I cannot attract more local clients (a good amount travel for my services vs. all local)

Taxes are excessive.

If the city or city council hinders new building in downtown. Growth is necessary, important for small businesses to grow along side this growth and quantifiable.

If I could get a better location somewhere else I would. Louisville only seems to interested in promoting its tiny downtown.

With changes in healthcare, hospital consolidation might play a part in loss of business. This might result in moving out business due to the proximity to Avista.

cost

High sales tax rates make for increased competition.

better offers

I would move to another city for a larger retail space. I could never afford a larger retail space in downtown Louisville and I rely on foot traffic

Loss of young, new families and over-maintenance of an aging population

Anti-growth City Council

Lower rental for retails, and more convenient customer parking

Ever increasing cost of rent and gentrification.

Parking and more proactive City Governments in surrounding areas.

If downtown development/redevelopment continues to be frowned upon.

Finding cheaper rent space and property taxes

19.Have you had a Business Retention meeting with the City or the Business Retention and Development (BRaD) Committee ?

Value		Percent	Count
Yes		5.4%	5
No		94.6%	88
Totals			93

20.How satisfied are you with the retention visits?

Value		Percent	Count
Dissatisfied		20.0%	1
Neutral		80.0%	4
Totals			5

21.How much do you agree with the following sentence: "Louisville does a good job of marketing itself to attract businesses."

Value		Percent	Count
Disagree		22.6%	21
Neutral		37.6%	35
Agree		21.5%	20
Not Sure		18.3%	17
Totals			93

22.How much do you agree with the following sentence: "the city does a good job communicating with the local businesses."

Value		Percent	Count
Disagree		26.9%	25
Neutral		32.3%	30
Agree		35.5%	33
Not Sure		5.4%	5
Totals			93

23. How often do you utilize resources from the Louisville Chamber of Commerce?

Value		Percent	Count
Never		37.8%	34
Rarely		24.4%	22
Sometimes		27.8%	25
Frequently		10.0%	9
Totals			90

24. Would you be willing to participate in future annual surveys to help us better understand what is on the minds of Louisville businesses?

5.6, 6%

94.4, 94%

- Yes
- No
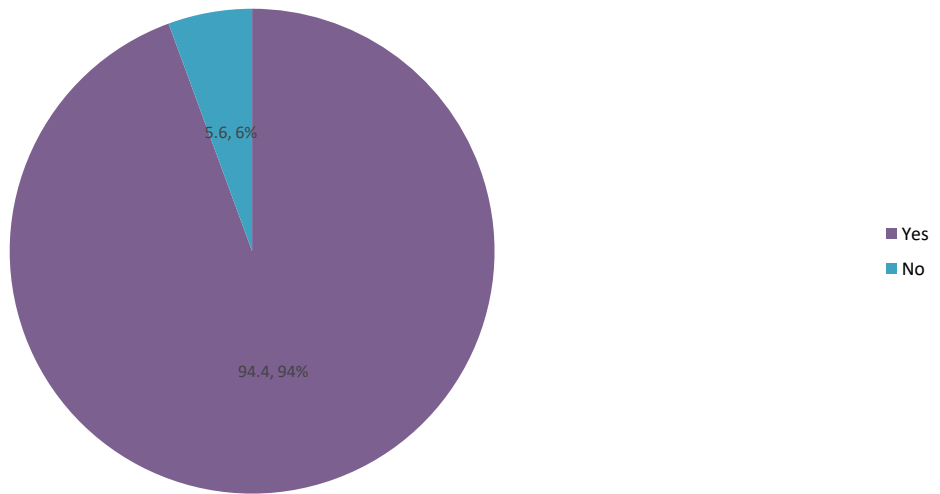
25. Do you have any additional comments or requests? We promise to read them all, however cannot promise to act on all the requests immediately:

I was quite disappointed that the plan to revamp the old county license registration buildings next to Huckleberry. I understand that growth and build outs need to be handled carefully, but to deny the plan and leave a huge chunk of main street looking like it's from the 80s doesn't help our town. Even if the first proposal wasn't right, there needs to be continued improvement of that space.

We need attention on the McCaslin corridor.

First, Aaron is doing a tremendous job! After 45 years in business, this is the first that the city has asked for our opinion. City hall needs more like minded staff! I have multiple concerns and opinions and will write a letter on the balance.

In the latest meeting, the Mayor mentioned that it was his job to provide power, and clean streets in order that we do business. I would appreciate that the streets in Historic Downtown Louisville be shoveled during the winter months by the city so that If there are shoppers, they can walk from business to business. Pedestrian traffic downtown is almost non existent. The sidewalks are almost always impassible. I think it sends a strong message to the people that do come down that we are not interested in walking traffic. To date, it is the shop owners responsibility. The problem is that if it is an office, or a vacant property, the sidewalk doesn't get shoveled. This problem goes unaddressed every winter. If this is the Mayors job, then I would appreciate it being done. The Mayor also said that a broad social media, website for the city as a whole would is "in the works". This needs be done immediately. Like the new downtown in Lafayette, and the new pool in Lafayette, and SoBo road needs to move traffic past 96th much faster at peak times. I wish I could turn left (from any direction) without a left turn arrow only. And, 96th Pine desperately needs a "smart" traffic signal.

Your image of Louisville as supporting small business is woefully lacking. The city actually makes it quite difficult to own a small business in Louisville. I would suggest a reality check is in order.

No more.

Please look into wintertime events to draw more folks downtown during the slower months. RECRUIT young restauranteurs!

Louisville needs to go more to help attract better and more up-to-date retail (local, lifestyle, experience-based) to bolster our down and surrounding areas.

It was suggested in our office that a bike path would be great from the park and ride at Interlocken up to or near the Colorado Technology Center.

Restaurants need to think more of some one that has a time frame. It is hard to just take a 30 minute lunch.

Main Street drive-thru traffic is becoming too heavy. I hate to say it but put in more stop signs in downtown on Main to discourage people short cutting through and since most people stop at each intersection already. Develop ridesharing and valet parking to alleviate downtown parking issues

I'd like to see the Chamber of Commerce get an update to the building to make it more attractive to new comers and business owners. It has a look of an antiquated, outdated business and in actuality it is an amazing networking organization and can really benefit local business owners and connect local and community people to the services offered in and around town. I think it would be a service to the City to have the Chamber stay up to day and contemporary.

I appreciated the Business Forum and would like to see the BRaD Committee and City staff to continue convening business leaders. I would like to see more primary employers involved in economic development.

I was told at my first Use Tax meeting that I would not have to fill out Use Tax forms as often (i.e. it would be decreased to quarterly) once it was clear that I had a service-based business and would not be paying Use Taxes. Three years in, I'm still being asked to complete monthly forms.

City Council is, and has been, giving negative signals to businesses and development projects. We need Mayor Sisk back

I think the "new" website is great and we appreciate all that the City does.

Once again, the 600 Block of Main Street (604/600) didn't get flowers on our block like the rest of downtown Louisville. I have been in downtown Lsvl. for 23 years and have commented on this and only once have there been flowers on the sidewalk like all the other businesses. Not really sure why it ends on Pine????

Quiet Zone for train

Louisville needs to be proactive when it comes to business retention and growth. They are still very reactive and it takes the City too long to solve problems. If it's not careful Louisville will become Boulder, too expensive for residents and businesses.

Housing, mass transit, traffic congestion and parking are the key issues that appear to be key to Louisville's future growth. Superior and Broomfield are certainly benefiting from the lack of affordable housing in Louisville.

Old Town Louisville is losing ground to Lafayette. Lafayette is open for business and that is injecting vigor and vitality into their downtown area. That coupled with the rising costs of Louisville, is making Louisville less desirable. Lafayette is going to replace Louisville, as the "cool" place to be, if Lousville does not become a little more proactive and pro business. We are losing our retail, and we have too many restaurants. Commercial is quickly becoming the center of business in Old Town.

Honestly, I have had my business here since 2004, and I LOVE this town, but I feel we are being hugely left behind from similar towns such as Lafayette who HUGELY promote their downtown area, events and more.

Encourage the city council to accept the new building downtown. Council members too often have their own agenda and lose sight of local business and residents views.

We love the Louisville community! People are great about supporting small, local businesses.

I found the permitting process with the building department onerous and arbitrary and don't look forward to working with them when I expand my business in the future.

No

We need to be careful not to "over regulate" businesses wanting to come here or the ones who are here. Staff needs to find ways to speed up certain processes.

the communication is good, but businesses need actions

Let's continue to add more fun and relevant retail to Old Town. Places that customers can purchase goods (food, drink, merchandise). Let's lure best in class businesses to town and incentivize them to come.

Louisville must continue to attract young, vibrant families and citizens who will invest in Louisville. In addition to the question about reasons Louisville is attractive, I would have put "Parks" instead of Open Space.

City Councilors, Mayor/City Manager/Deputy Manager, EDC Director, and/or BRaD should proactively and periodically host small roundtable get togethers with business owners from the various city quadrants. This may elicit more direct and honest feedback?

No more restaurants in downtown, Please! Attract more retailers with unique offerings. Replace and refresh all banners in downtown.

Install a 4 way stop sign between Main and Walnut, drivers turning into Main Street are having difficulty seeing incoming cards north and south bound because its view is obstructed by parked cars

Sponsor and support efforts to make Louisville retail, restaurant, and services unique and home grown; fewer franchises. Fund more Public Art!

Please encourage the City Staff to consider all impacts on permanent businesses when they make decisions closing or reducing parking lots for outside events and how far in advance it needs to be done. Closing the lot the day before an event or all day for an event in the evening is ridiculous unless there is a very good reason. Also, it would be nice to notify the local businesses in advance when this is going to be done, and allow for some feedback from them.

26.If you have feedback about this specific survey, we'd love to hear it!

Thank you for providing the survey. I feel that they are so important. I have been providing this same information for 5 years. Most if not all has been met with road blocks and deaf ears.

It is good.

As a very small and slowly growing business, not all of these concerns apply to me right now, but I appreciate knowing about them and would like to continue to be informed. My experience could change should I move my business, even within the city.

Good job!

Perhaps make different surveys that apply to certain parts of town, i.e. downtown, McCaslin, etc.

Would have liked more ability to write in comments, not just answer "agree", "disagree" or "neutral"

None

When I checked that I didn't own the business, the questioning should have then taken a different direction. For instance, asking me if I had a BRad meeting. How would I know? Just a thought.

some questions seemed more geared towards residents not business operators

Add "Parks" in addition to Open Space for reasons Louisville is attractive

Thank you for resending the survey! I would not have remember to do it!