



ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE REPORT

October 21, 2021
Economic Development

TITLE: BUSINESS NEEDS/RECOVERY SURVEY DISCUSSION

BACKGROUND

In 2013, the City Council adopted the current Economic Development Strategic Plan which the Economic Vitality Committee uses as the foundation for its work. The plan comprises 3 focus areas:

- Priority Area A: Business Development and Communication
- Priority Area B: Built Environment and Workforce
- Priority Area C: Economic Health and Resilience

Priority Area A: Business Development and Communication is intended to conduct business development activities with particular focus on businesses that drive innovation in their sectors, and to expand communications, outreach, and technical assistance program to retain and expand existing firms. There are several action items in this priority area relating to this discussion, including:

A3. Solicit ongoing feedback from innovation-focused businesses in targeted high-technology industries.

City staff will proactively solicit input from businesses in targeted industry sectors regarding how Pleasanton can better meet the unique needs of their industries. Ongoing communications will ensure Pleasanton is viewed as a receptive, productive environment for innovative companies. The outreach may include site visits, and regularly scheduled gatherings and events for business leaders within the target industries.

A7. Solicit ongoing feedback from businesses in Pleasanton, in collaboration with the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce.

City staff will continue to gather feedback from businesses regarding concerns and need for improvements. This data can be collected via tools such as the regular business survey and various business leader roundtable discussions. As necessary, the City will collaborate with the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce to effectively gather this feedback. The business satisfaction survey and other feedback techniques should also assess workforce access issues.

DISCUSSION

Based on feedback from the EVC at its February 20 meeting, additional strategies and activities were incorporated into the five pillars of the Coordinated Business Support Program framework, one of which is a Business Needs Survey under the Business Engagement pillar.

The City previously conducted two Business Needs Surveys. The first survey in 2012 provided a baseline of data, and a follow-up survey was conducted in 2015. Both surveys were completed with an emphasis on statistical validity and the selection of a sample population that was an accurate representation of the City's business community. In continuing efforts to better understand the current needs of the business community, particularly as they navigate through the global pandemic, the City will conduct a business needs and recovery survey this fiscal year.

A Request for Proposal was sent to a consultant list and posted on the City's bids webpage to which four proposals were submitted. Based on qualifying factors, a consultant selection was made to hire FM3 Research. FM3 staff will help guide this discussion by providing an overview of the process and receive input from the EVC.

The final report from the 2015 Business Needs Survey is provided as Attachment 1. The EVC is asked to review the report to understand the survey objectives and findings, and to determine relevancy of the focus areas. The survey focused on the following:

- Pleasanton as a Place to Do Business
- Pleasanton's Location
- Pleasanton's Infrastructure
- Amenities in Pleasanton
- Importance and Evaluation of City Services
- The Permitting Process
- Future Predictions

To compare with previous findings, survey questions relative to the above categories will remain, while new questions will be considered. The 2015 assessment contained questions relating to the Importance and Quality of Internet and Cell Phone Connectivity as that was a specific area for consideration at that time. This survey will focus on COVID-19 recovery needs, so the questions pertaining to Internet and Cell Phone Connectivity will be omitted, and new questions for COVID-19 recovery will be added.

EVC Input

The EVC is invited to provide feedback on the Business Needs/Recovery Survey and ask questions. Below are some questions to help initiate the discussion:

1. Which categories or questions are no longer relevant?
2. Are there any new categories or questions recommended?
3. What specific areas relating to COVID-19 recovery are recommended?

ACTIONS: PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON BUSINESS NEEDS/RECOVERY SURVEY PROCESS AND CATEGORIES

Attachment 1 – 2015 Business Needs Survey