

Business Walks Survey 2016

General Results

Within a two hour period, 11 volunteer teams met with 112 businesses across Vernon. Most of the locations within the community were the same as in 2013 and 2014 in order to provide comparable year over year data. This year no new locations were added to the survey, and two locations were removed due to a smaller amount of volunteers participating.

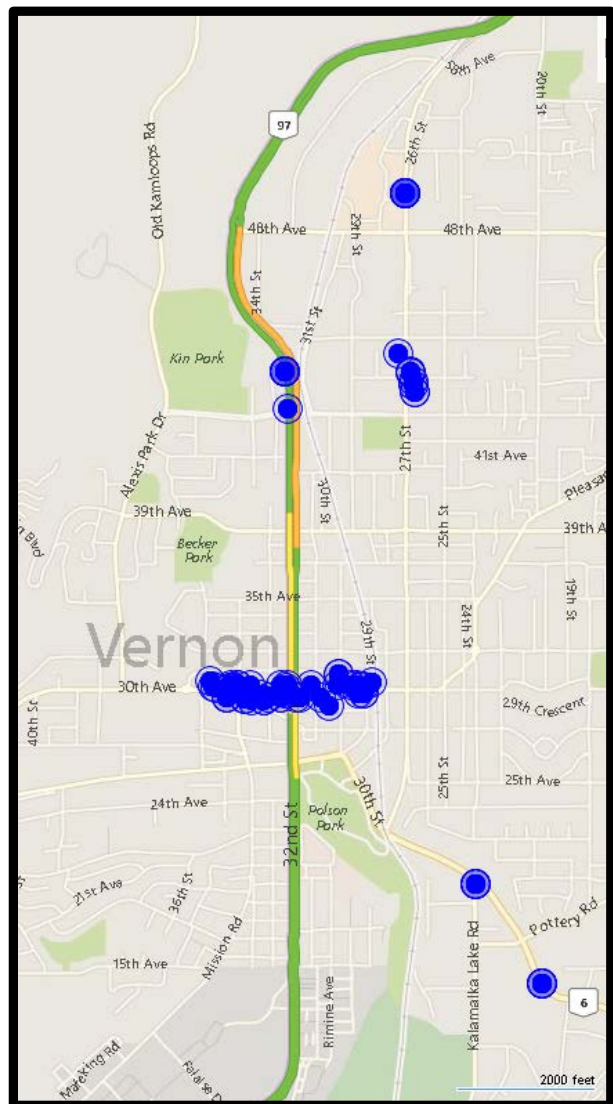
Businesses that were interviewed were located in the following areas:

Repeated Locations:

- Downtown - 30 Avenue
- Fruit Union Plaza and Highway 6
- Polson Mall and Kalamalka Lake Road
- Vernon Square Shopping Centre
- Village Green Mall
- 4300-4420 27 Street

Removed Location:

- Anderson Way
- 4300-4607 29 Street



Map 1: Business Walks Survey Location Map
(Source: Executive Pulse, 2016)

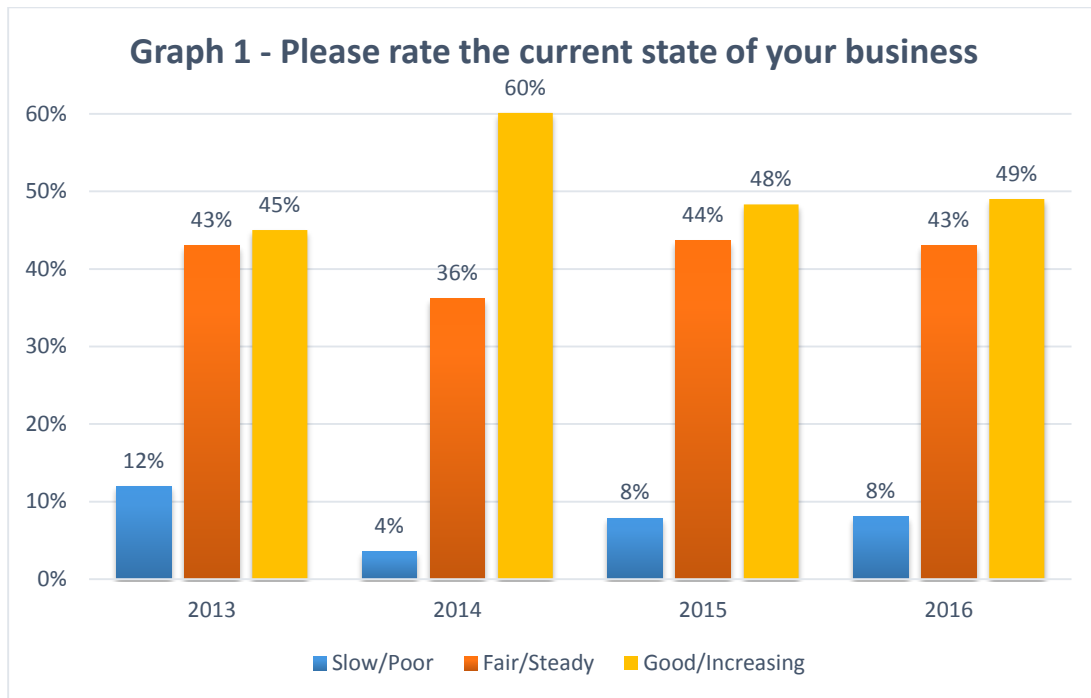
Survey Results

92% OF THE BUSINESSES IN THE 2016 BUSINESS WALK SURVEY ARE EITHER STEADY OR INCREASING

THE 112 BUSINESSES INTERVIEWED EMPLOY A TOTAL OF 1,419 PEOPLE

Question 1: Please rate the current state of your business?

A total of 49% of businesses surveyed responded that business was **good/increasing**, slightly higher than last year's survey (48%). In 2016 and 2015, 92% of the businesses surveyed were either fair and steady or good and increasing, compared to 96% in 2014 and 88% in 2013. In both 2016 and 2015, 8% of respondents rated their business state as slow/poor, compared to 4% in 2014 and 12% in 2013.



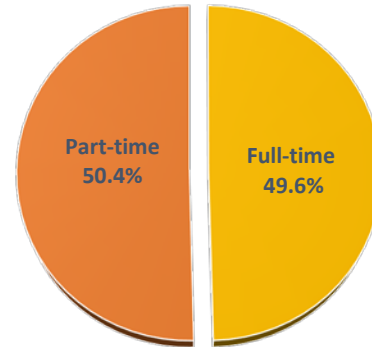
Question 2: What is the average number of employees including yourself?

The 112 businesses interviewed employ a total of 1,419 people. 51% are in a full time position and 50% are part time.

The number of employees ranged from 1 to 161 and the average number of employees per business is 13.

72% of the businesses interviewed employ 10 people or less.

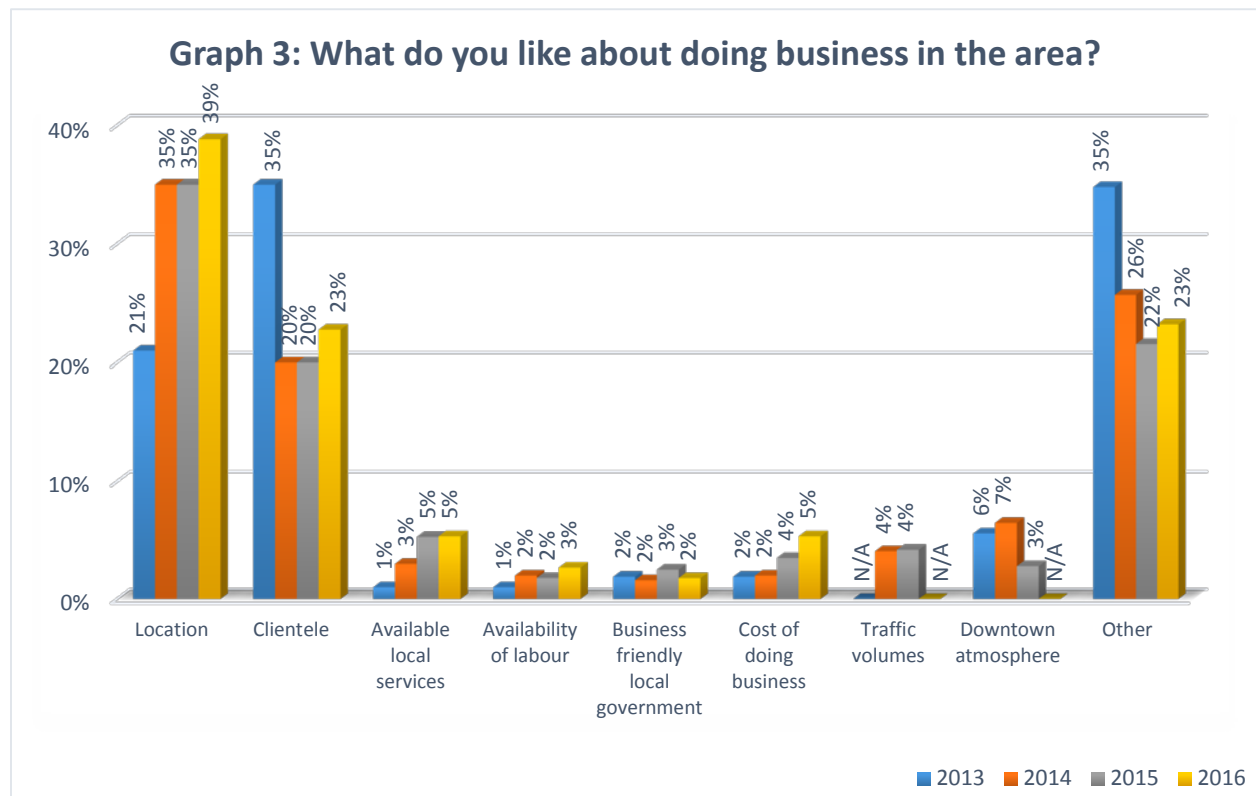
Graph 2: Full-time & Part-time Employment



Question 3: What do you like about doing business in the area?

The third question was asked to gain a better understanding of why businesses chose a particular area of the community, or Vernon in general, as a place to do business. In 2016, 39% of businesses highlighted that **location** was the key factor, while 23% highlighted **clientele** as the main factor. 23% of respondents chose other factors, such as availability of free parking, diversity of businesses, regular events which lead to increased foot traffic and friendly environment.

Graph 3: What do you like about doing business in the area?



Question 4: What are the biggest challenges facing your business?

Question 4 provides insight into the main challenges facing local businesses. **Other** challenges (29%), **finding employees** (17%) and **lack of customers** (10%) were among the most common challenges in 2016. Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the concerns reported under **Other** in the 2016 survey.

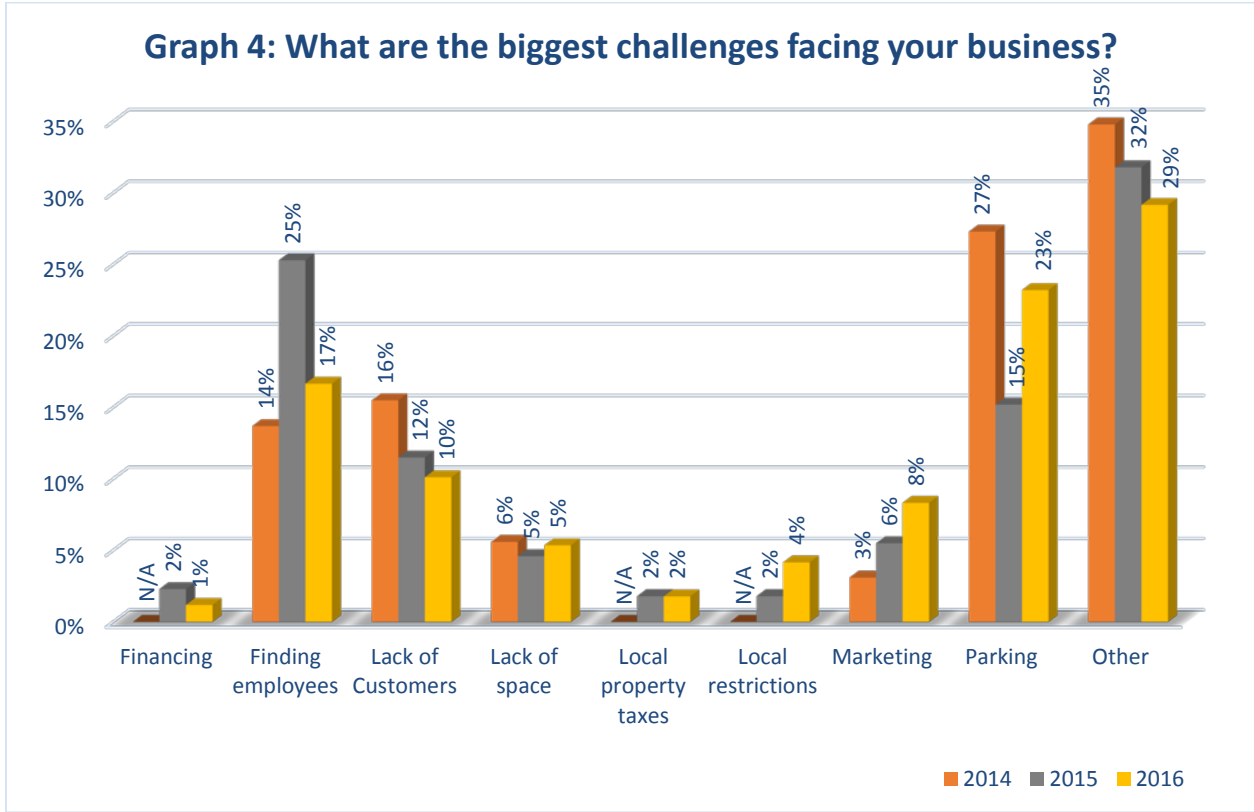


Table 1: Main other challenges local businesses are facing

Safety issues (including homelessness, panhandlers, drug addiction)	13%
Competition (including online shopping)	7%
Road access issues (including right/left turns in and out of parking lots)	7%
Affordability issues (cost of rent, cost of living, limited disposable income)	2%
Aging community	1%
Seasonality	1%

Question 5: What can be done to help your business thrive?

The responses for this question were the most diverse, ranging in comments about parking challenges, improved road access, promotion and organizing of events and marketing.

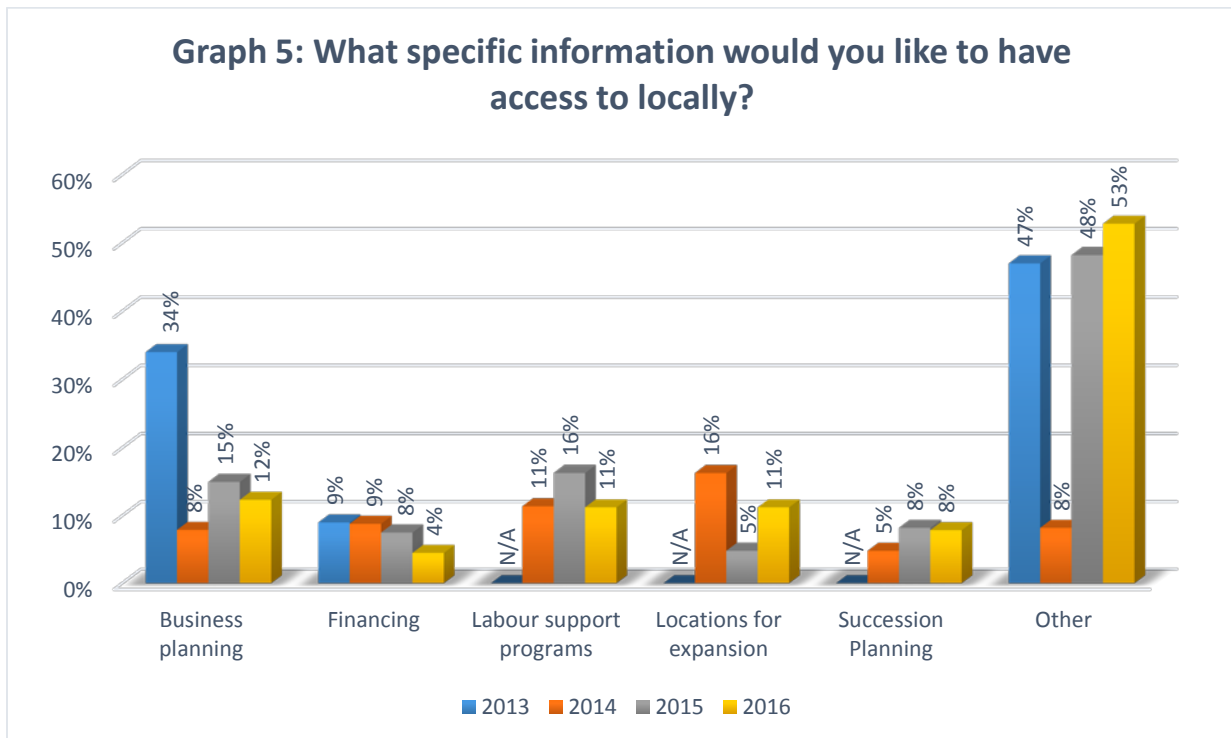
Table 2: What can be done to help your business thrive?

Address safety concerns	21%
Address parking issues (lack of supply, price, over-enforcement etc.)	20%
Help with marketing	15%
Promote and organize more events	10%
Increase foot traffic	6%
Improve road access	5%
All other	22%

Question 6: What specific information would you like to have access locally?

The final question was geared toward finding out what resources are required locally to better assist the business community. The most common assistance required was **other** (63%). Nearly two thirds of respondents requested **other** types of information, such as better access to information on local events, marketing opportunities and campaigns and better access to information on available services and organizations supporting businesses.

Assistance with **business planning** (12%) and information regarding **labour support programs** (11%) and **locations for expansion** (11%) were also identified as information business would like to access locally.



Walkers' Question

Should this company be revisited to provide 1:1 assistance?

One of the primary objectives of the Business Walks is to find out if there are immediate concerns that businesses may need assistance from the City of Vernon or other business support organizations. This year 12% of businesses requested a follow up, a slight increase from the 10% of the businesses which required some form of assistance in 2015. In 2014, 16% required assistance. Staff have begun the follow up process and will have completed all of the follow up by the end of the year, based on the determined urgency level.

