



Presented by:
FDC Regional Economic
Development Commission

2024-2025

Business Retention and Expansion Plan

FDC Regional Economic Development Commission

Prepared By: Emily Roberts-Young, Regional Economic Development Officer

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Executive Summary

The FDC Regional Economic Development Commission (FDC REDC) has undertaken a **Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Plan** to strengthen the economic foundation of our region by addressing the needs, challenges, and opportunities faced by local businesses. This initiative was conducted in collaboration with Community Futures Greenstone and the Flin Flon & District Chamber of Commerce, reflecting a shared commitment to fostering a vibrant and resilient business community.

A total of 43 businesses participated in the BR&E process, representing a diverse cross-section of industries that contribute to the region's economy. Through surveys, interviews, and direct engagement, we collected valuable insights into the current business climate, uncovering key opportunities to support business growth and address barriers to success.

Key Findings

- Strengths:
 - Businesses want to invest and continue to operate in the region.
 - Cooperation and collaboration are at the forefront of business operations in the FDC region.
 - A high majority of businesses are experiencing growth or stability.
 - Strong industry growth in natural resources and the peripheral business landscape.
 - Businesses expressed enthusiasm for regional collaboration and economic and tourism investment initiatives from the municipalities.
- Challenges:
 - Main Street Concerns and Issues
 - Physical Space Limitations
 - Labour Shortages
 - Succession Planning
 - Economic Uncertainty

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the BR&E Plan outlines actionable strategies aimed at addressing the challenges and leveraging the strengths of the region. Some of the key recommendations include:

- Developing targeted workforce attraction and retention programs.
- Enhancing business support services and professional development opportunities.
- Advocating for infrastructure improvements and broadband access.
- Promoting partnerships between businesses, educational institutions, and community organizations.
- Implementing marketing campaigns to showcase the region's unique assets.

Next Steps

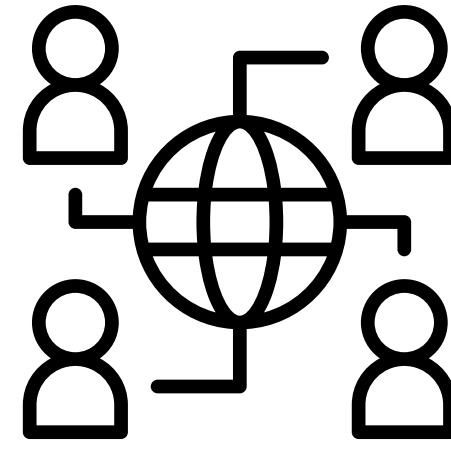
The FDC REDC, together with its partners, is committed to implementing the recommendations outlined in this plan alongside our strategic vision. Collaboration will be the cornerstone of these efforts, with stakeholders working together to ensure businesses thrive in our region. Ongoing communication with local businesses will be a priority, ensuring their voices continue to shape the future of our economic development strategies.

Statistics At A Glance



52%

of business surveyed have been in business for more than 20 years.



95%

of business surveyed collaborate with other businesses and local organizations.



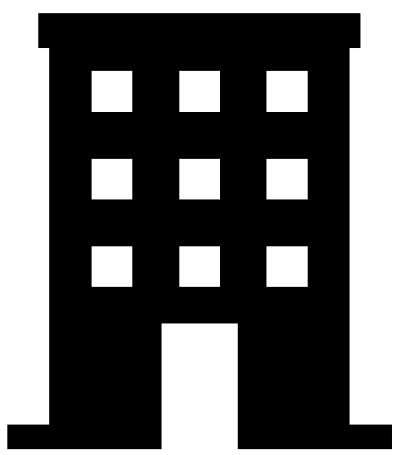
82%

of business surveyed have stable or increasing annual sales.



74%

of business surveyed are unable to find the skilled labour needed.



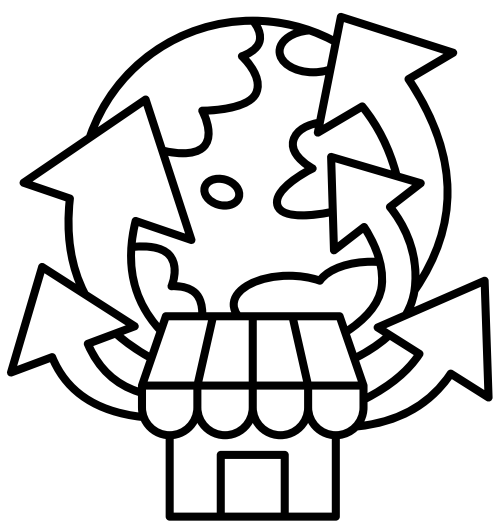
75%

of business surveyed own their building/facility.



63%

of business surveyed feel the local government is supportive of business needs.



50%

of business surveyed have expansion plans over the next 5 years.



80%

of business surveyed felt that local incentives were not sufficient to encourage business expansion.

Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that the communities of Flin Flon, Creighton, and Denare Beach are situated on Treaty 5 and Treaty 10 territory, the homelands of the Cree, Dene, and Métis peoples. We honor the rich history, diverse culture, and contributions of all Indigenous peoples who have lived and continue to live on these lands. We are committed to fostering respect, understanding, and partnership with the Indigenous communities whose stewardship and presence continue to enrich our region.

Fostering inclusive and respectful economic development and government practices are steps towards reconciliation and collaboration.

Introduction

The FDC Regional Economic Development Commission (FDC REDC) recognizes that the vitality and resilience of our local economy are built upon the success of the businesses that call this region home. To better understand their needs and create targeted strategies for growth, the FDC REDC, in collaboration with Community Futures Greenstone and the Flin Flon & District Chamber of Commerce, has developed this Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Plan.

The purpose of this BR&E initiative is to engage directly with local businesses to identify challenges, opportunities, and priorities that impact their ability to thrive in the region. By fostering open communication and providing a platform for businesses to share their perspectives, this plan serves as a roadmap for creating an environment where businesses can flourish, jobs are secured, and the economy grows sustainably.

This initiative focused on:

- **Engaging 43 businesses** across a diverse range of industries to understand their experiences, concerns, and aspirations.
- Analyzing regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to uncover actionable insights.
- Building stronger partnerships between local businesses, community organizations, and other stakeholders to enhance collaboration.

The BR&E process represents more than just a data-gathering exercise; it is a strategic effort to deepen relationships within the business community and demonstrate a long-term commitment to their success. By proactively addressing the needs of existing businesses and removing barriers to growth, the FDC REDC aims to strengthen the foundation of our regional economy and position it for sustained prosperity.

The insights and recommendations contained in this plan are the product of extensive consultation, collaboration, and analysis. Together, they reflect a shared vision for a thriving business ecosystem that benefits not only the entrepreneurs and workers in the region but also the broader communities they serve.

This report is a call to action for stakeholders across the region to work together to implement meaningful changes that will support the success of local businesses, attract new investment, and foster economic resilience. The FDC REDC is proud to lead this effort and invites all partners to join in building a stronger future for our region.

Methodology

The FDC Regional Economic Development Commission (FDC REDC) utilized a systematic and collaborative approach to gather data and insights for this Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Plan. This methodology ensured robust data collection, stakeholder engagement, and actionable outcomes that accurately reflect the needs and priorities of the regional business community.

Data Collection Methods

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by local businesses, the following methods were employed:

- **Surveys and Interviews:** A standardized questionnaire was developed to collect consistent and comparable data from participating businesses. This questionnaire focused on topics such as workforce, infrastructure, business environment, and future growth opportunities.
- **Direct Engagement:** In addition to surveys, interviews were conducted with business owners and managers to gain deeper qualitative insights and context for the quantitative data.

Business Engagement

A multi-faceted outreach strategy was implemented to ensure broad participation from businesses across the region:

- **Email and Phone Outreach:** Potential participants were contacted via email or phone to gauge their interest in contributing to the BR&E process.
- **Local Radio Promotion:** A news segment on the local radio station invited interested businesses to reach out and take part in the initiative.
- **Collaboration with Partners:** Community Futures Greenstone and the Flin Flon & District Chamber of Commerce played a key role in promoting the BR&E initiative and encouraging participation from their networks.

Through these efforts, 43 businesses representing a range of industries participated in the BR&E process, providing a diverse and representative sample for analysis.

Data Management and Analysis

To streamline data collection and analysis, the Executive Pulse platform was utilized. This tool facilitated:

- The secure storage and organization of survey and interview data.
- Comprehensive data analysis, including identifying trends, challenges, and opportunities.
- The generation of statistical reports to inform the findings and recommendations presented in this plan.

Strengths of the Methodology

The combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection, coupled with proactive engagement strategies, ensured the methodology was both thorough and inclusive. By employing a standardized questionnaire, the FDC REDC was able to maintain consistency across responses, while interviews provided richer, contextual insights that added depth to the analysis.

Regional Overview

The FDC REDC serves a diverse and resource-rich region characterized by its strong industrial roots, cultural vibrancy, and close-knit communities. Anchored by the City of Flin Flon, Town of Creighton, and Village of Denare Beach, the region benefits from its strategic location on the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border and its rich history of mining and growing tourism sector. See the FDC Economic Development Strategy: 2025-2030 available at investfdc.ca/stats for more information on this section.

Economic Profile

The region's economy is shaped by a blend of traditional industries and emerging opportunities:

- **Mining and Resource Development:** Mining has historically been the cornerstone of the local economy, with the area's rich mineral deposits supporting jobs, investment, and infrastructure development.
- **Tourism and Recreation:** The region's abundant natural beauty, including pristine lakes, forests, and trails, attracts outdoor enthusiasts, contributing to more recent growth of tourism-related businesses.
- **Entrepreneurship and Small Business:** Local entrepreneurs have played a vital role in diversifying the economy, establishing businesses in retail, professional services, hospitality, and more.

Demographics and Workforce

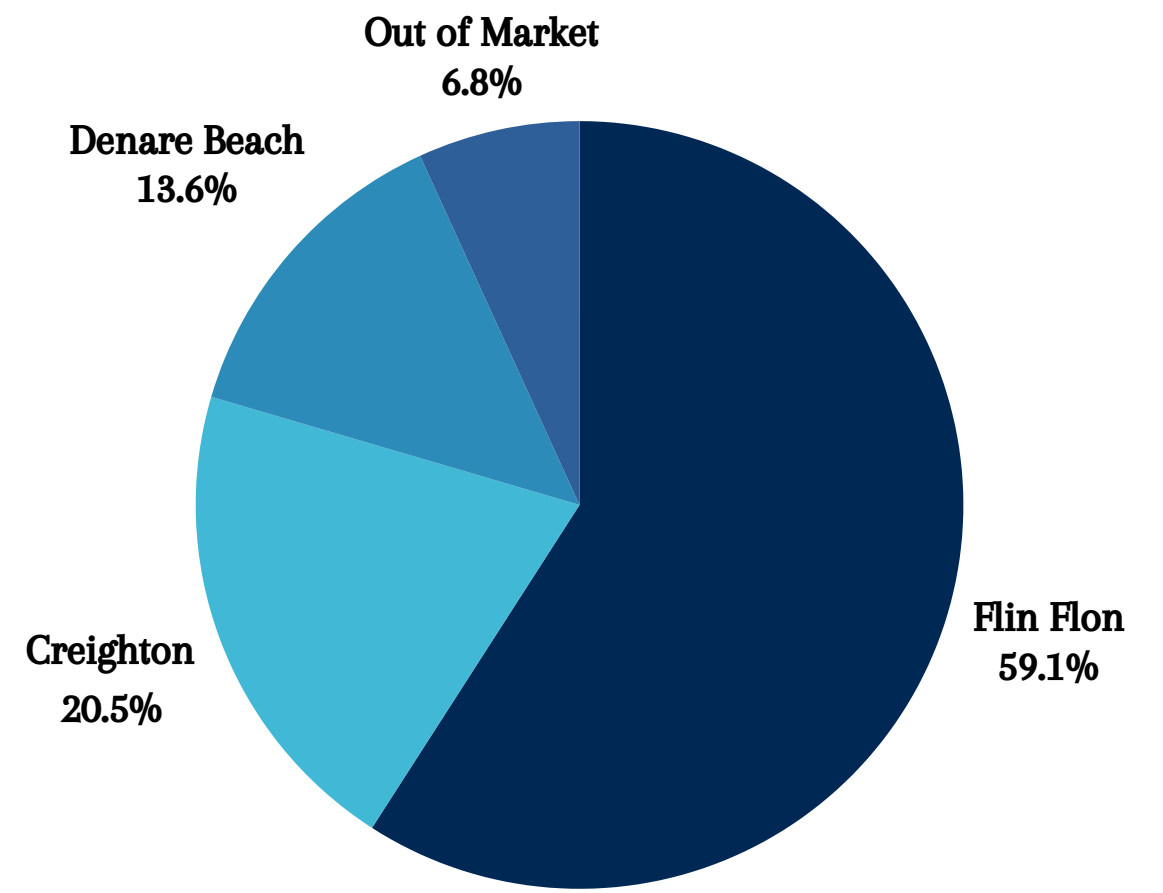
The region is home to a resilient workforce, with strong ties to the resource and manufacturing sectors. The employment rate in the FDC region is 56.5% with an average income per individual of approximately \$59,000 annually (Statistics Canada, 2021). However, challenges such as workforce aging and youth outmigration highlight the importance of strategies to attract and retain talent. Investments in education and training, as well as partnerships with regional employers, are critical to addressing these workforce needs.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

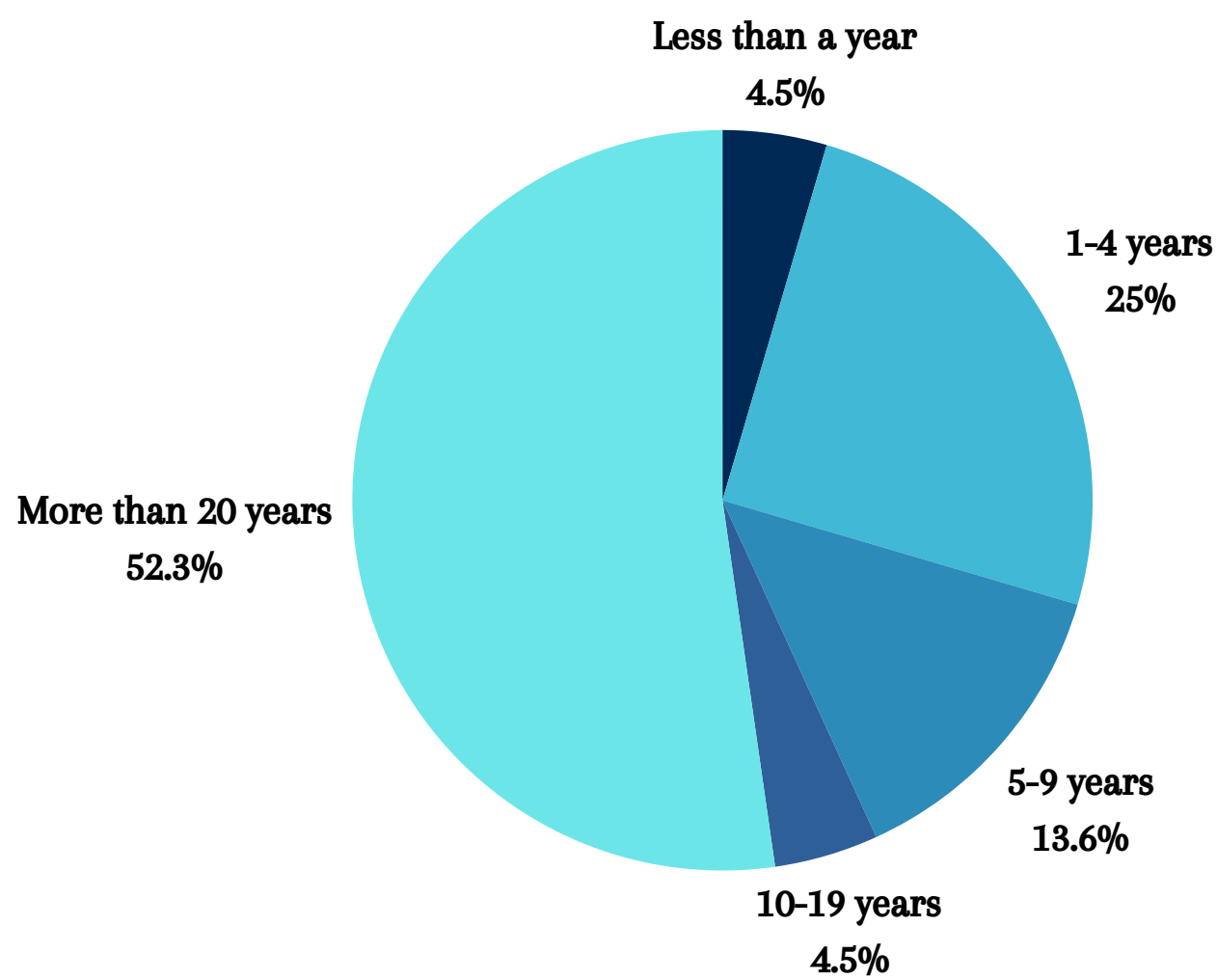
While the FDC region benefits from key transportation links, including highways and rail, challenges remain in maintaining and upgrading infrastructure to fully support business growth. Aging transportation networks require ongoing investment to ensure reliability and efficiency, particularly for industries reliant on supply chain logistics. This is especially pressing with the surrounding industry growth and the increasing transportation needs. A significant opportunity for the region is the revitalization of the Arctic Gateway and the reopening of the Port of Churchill, which has the potential to transform transportation and trade in Northern Manitoba. As Canada's only deepwater Arctic port with direct rail access, Churchill presents a strategic advantage for exporting goods to international markets, particularly in agriculture, mining, and forestry. Enhanced rail connections could position the FDC region as a key logistics and service hub, supporting businesses in supply chain management and value-added processing. With improved infrastructure and policy coordination, this development and the ripple effects could strengthen regional economic resilience, create new employment opportunities, and establish the FDC region as a key player in northern and international trade. Addressing connectivity infrastructure gaps is crucial to fostering economic diversification and attracting new investment.

Findings and Analysis: FDC Region

The distribution of businesses across the FDC region highlights Flin Flon as the primary commercial hub, with 59% of interviewed businesses operating within the city. Flin Flon serves as the region’s economic anchor, offering a diverse mix of industries, retail, and services. Creighton accounts for 20.5% of businesses, benefiting from its close proximity to Flin Flon while maintaining its own local economic identity and recent growth. Denare Beach represents 13.6% of businesses, reflecting its role as a smaller, tourism-oriented community with a focus on recreation and seasonal business activity. Additionally, 6.8% of businesses are located outside of the immediate market, indicating some economic ties beyond the core communities. This distribution demonstrates the interconnected nature of the regional economy, where businesses rely on shared resources, workforce mobility, and cross-community customer bases.



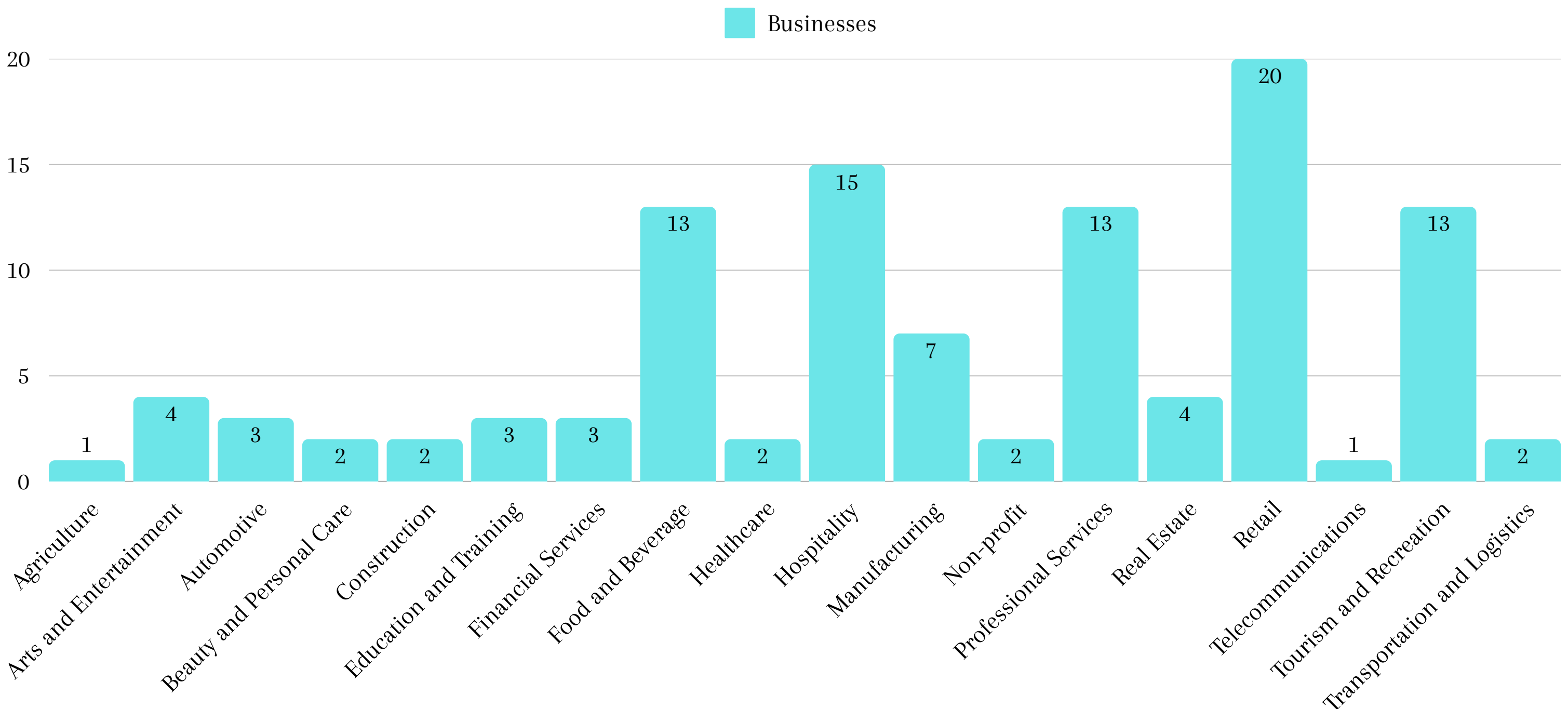
Geographic Area of Operation



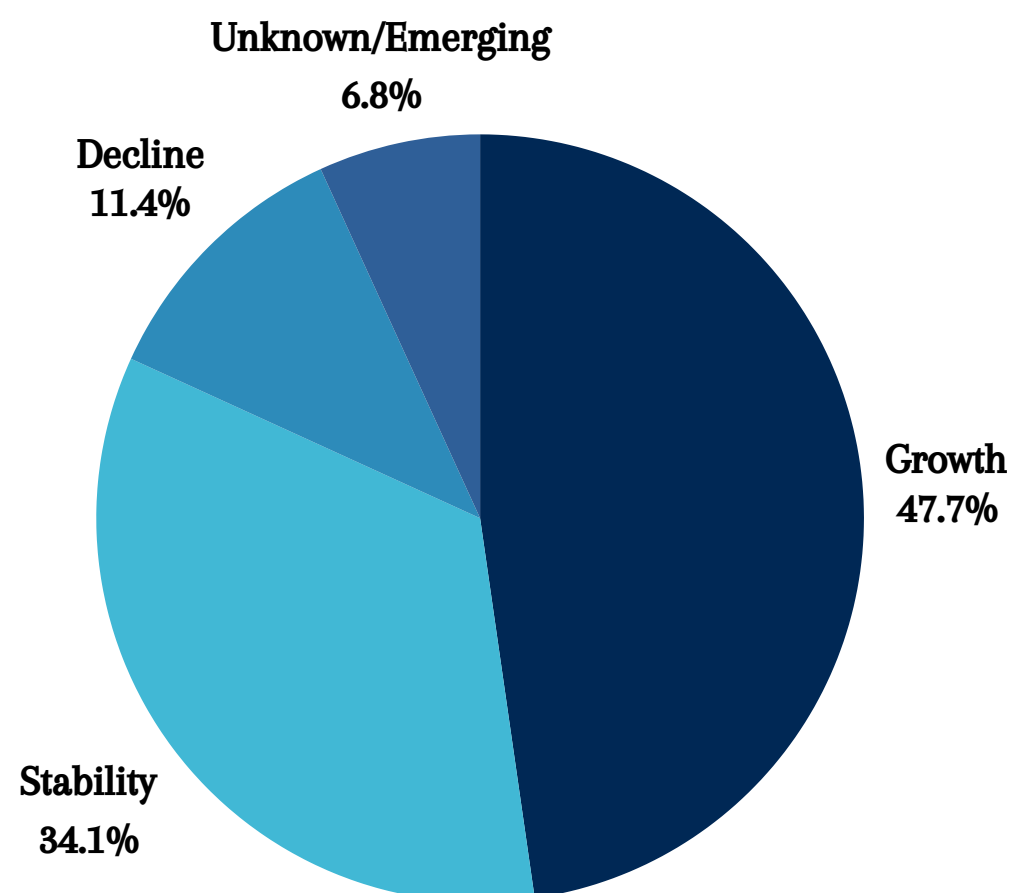
How long has your business been operating in this community?

The FDC Region as a whole reflects similar business operating trends as seen in individual communities. The majority of businesses in the region have been operating for more than 10 years, demonstrating a strong foundation of established enterprises. However, there is also a noticeable increase in newer businesses that have been in operation for less than nine years. These statistics highlight a balanced business landscape, where long-standing businesses contribute to stability and economic continuity, while an emerging wave of newer enterprises signals entrepreneurial growth and diversification. This trend suggests that while the region benefits from experienced businesses with deep community ties, there is also a growing interest in new business development, presenting opportunities for investment, innovation, and support for startups.

What type of products or services does your business provide?



Findings and Analysis: FDC Region

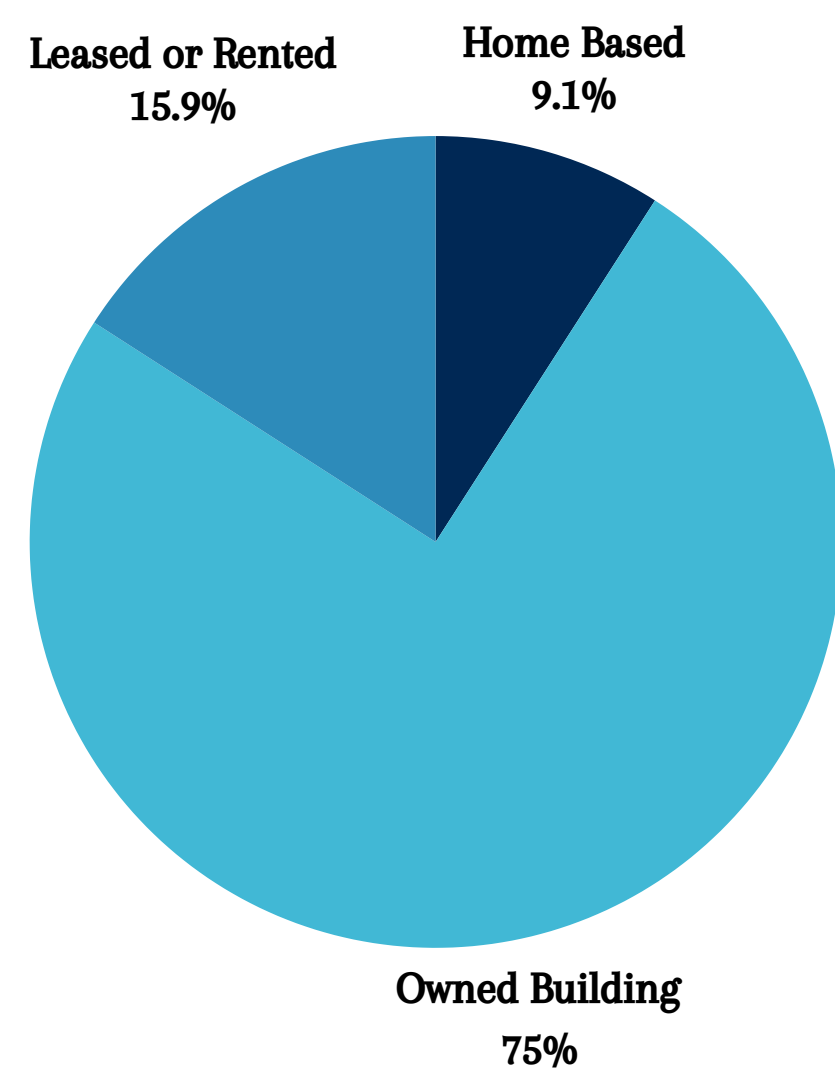


Has your business experienced growth, decline, or stability over the past year?

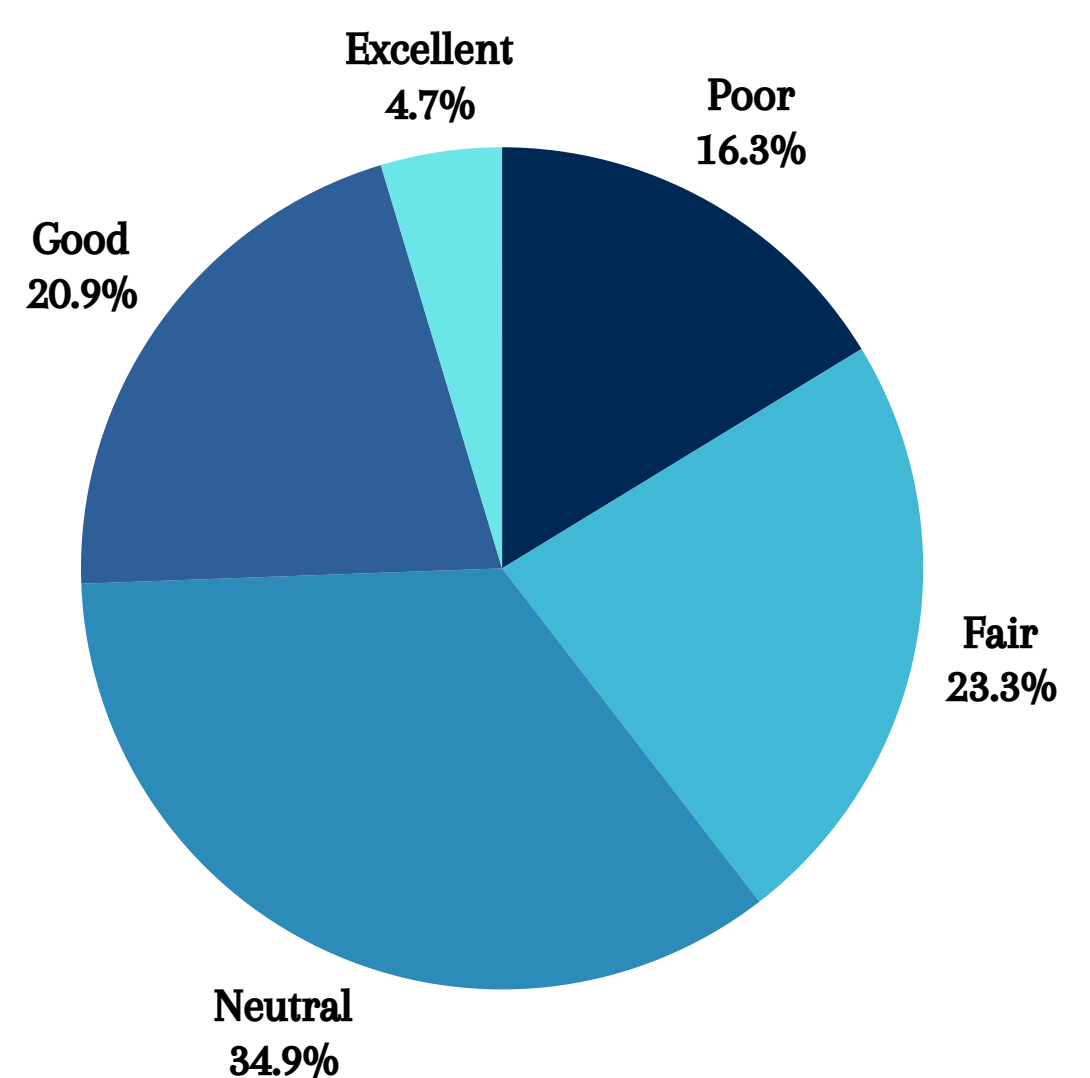
The business ownership distribution in the FDC region reflects a strong preference for owning commercial property, with 75% of businesses operating out of buildings they own. This high rate of ownership suggests long-term investment in the region and a commitment to stability. Meanwhile, 16% of businesses lease or rent their commercial space, which may indicate flexibility for newer or expanding businesses that are not yet in a position to purchase property. Additionally, 9% of businesses are home-based, highlighting the presence of small-scale entrepreneurs, remote workers, and businesses that operate with lower overhead costs. This distribution underscores the need for diverse commercial space options, including flexible leasing arrangements, co-working spaces, and home-based business supports, to accommodate the varying needs of business owners in the region.

The survey results reveal a broad range of perspectives on local infrastructure in the FDC region. The majority of businesses rated infrastructure as neutral, fair, or good, indicating that while infrastructure is functional, there is room for improvement. Some businesses rated it as poor, suggesting significant concerns regarding roads, utilities, internet access, or transportation networks that may be hindering business operations. Only a few businesses rated infrastructure as excellent, demonstrating that few businesses feel infrastructure fully meets their needs. These findings highlight the importance of investments in transportation, connectivity, and commercial development to ensure businesses can operate efficiently and support regional economic growth.

Throughout the FDC region, 82% of business owners reported being in a phase of growth and stability, indicating a strong economic foundation. Several factors contribute to this trend, including increased industry activity, recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, and greater collaboration among businesses, organizations, and municipal partners. Additionally, businesses have benefited from rising consumer demand from the expanding tourism sector, strengthening local commerce. While most businesses are experiencing positive momentum, a handful have faced decline due to a wide range of challenges such as labour shortages, shifting market conditions, and operational costs. Others are in an emergence phase, where they are still establishing themselves in the local economy.



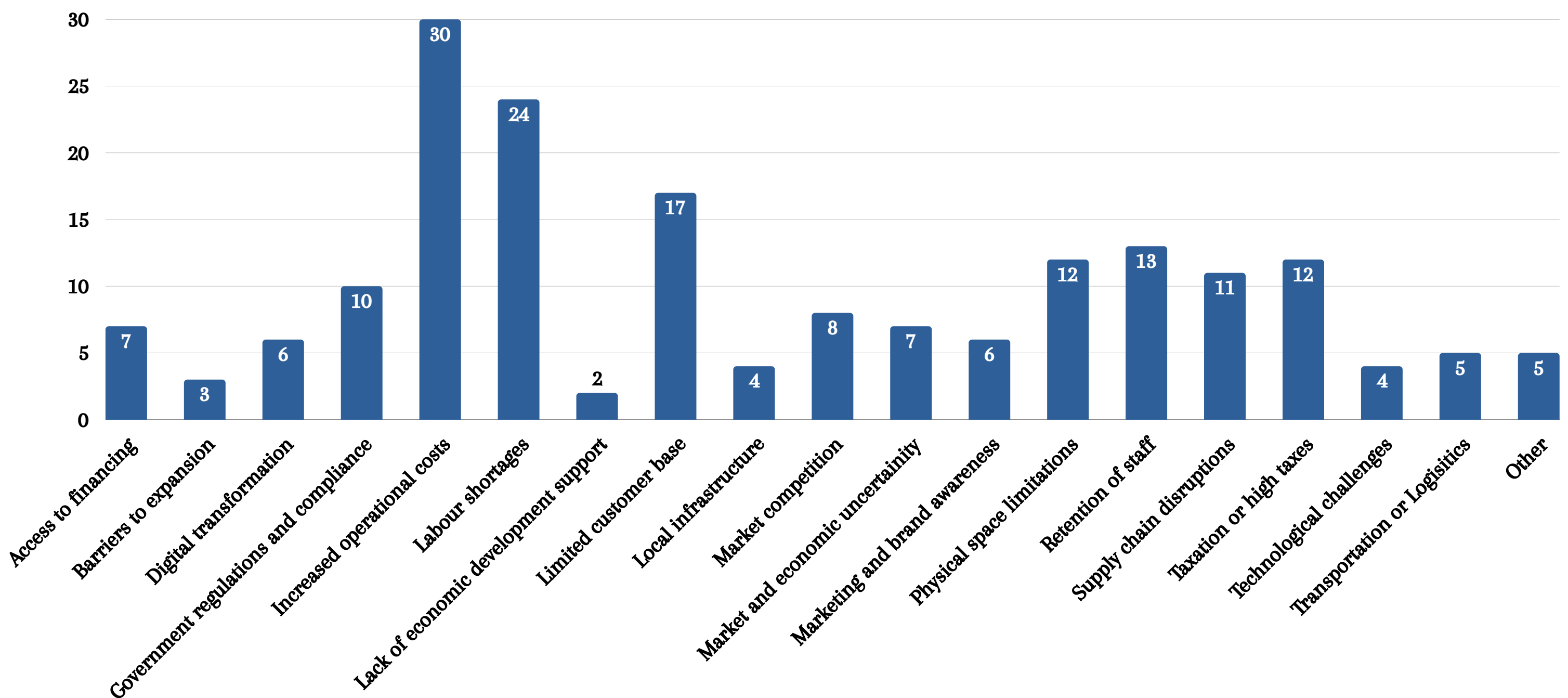
Is this a home-based business, owned building or leased?



How do you rate the quality of local infrastructure?

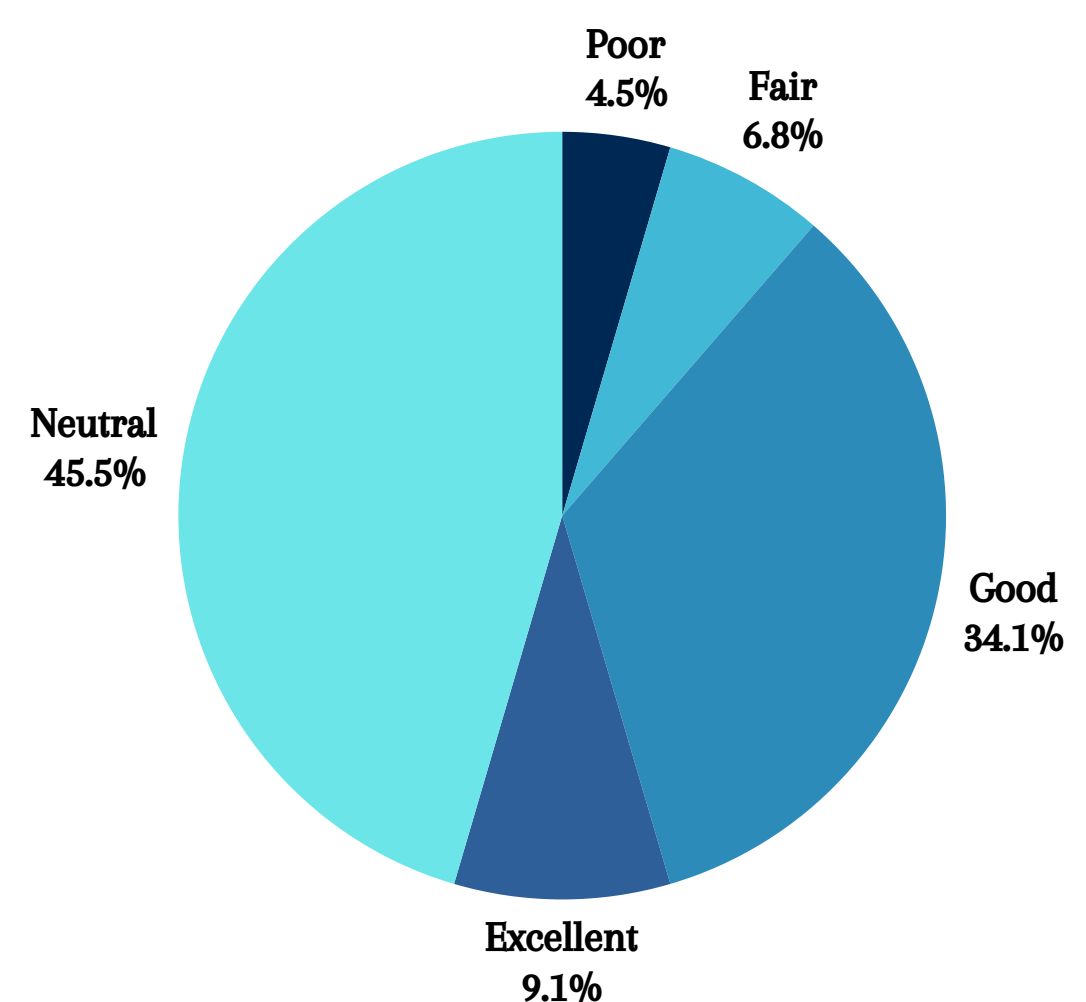
Findings and Analysis: FDC Region

What challenges or barriers are you currently facing in operating your business?



The survey results highlight the key challenges businesses in the FDC region face, with increased operational costs and labour shortages being the most commonly cited barriers to business growth and sustainability. These concerns reflect the rising costs of doing business, including wages, utilities, and materials, as well as the ongoing difficulty in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce. Limited customer base and staff retention also emerged as significant concerns, emphasizing the region's struggle with population size and workforce stability. Additionally, physical space limitations, taxation, and supply chain disruptions indicate challenges in securing adequate commercial spaces, dealing with high costs, and navigating disruptions in product and material availability. Government regulations and compliance and market competition further add to the complexity of operating a business in the region. While access to financing, market uncertainty, and digital transformation were cited less frequently, they still represent important considerations for businesses seeking growth. The "Other" responses included challenges such as minimum wage increases, insurance costs, Main Street safety, and seasonality.

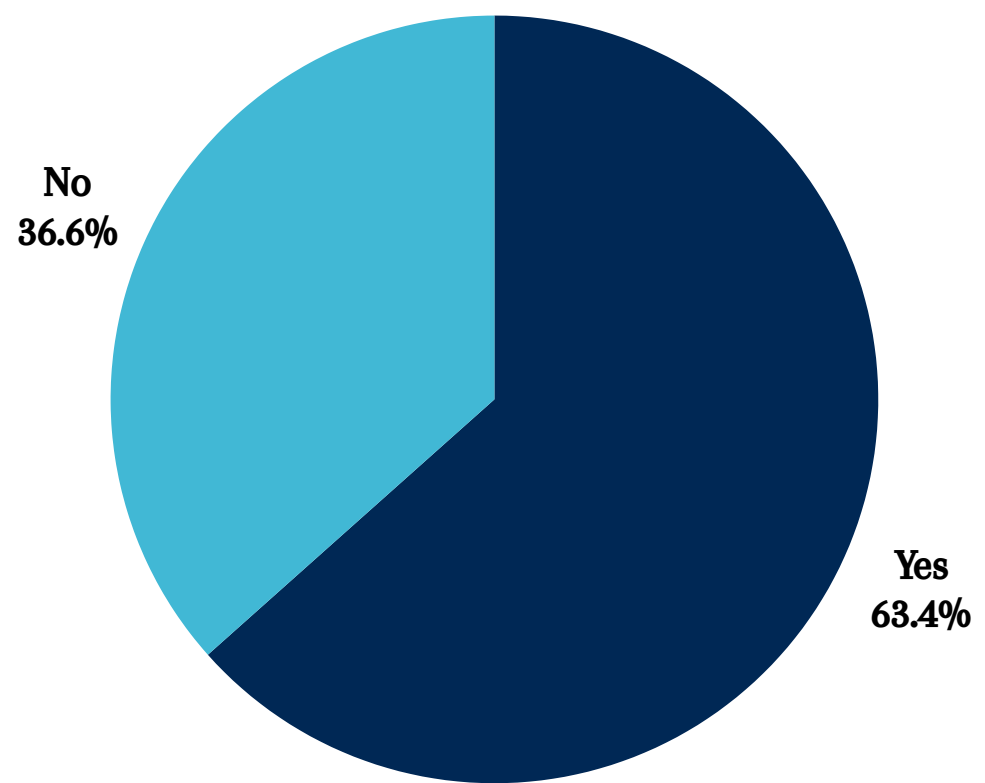
In the FDC region, 63% of businesses reported feeling that local government is supportive of their business needs, citing efforts such as infrastructure improvements and collaboration on economic initiatives. Many business owners appreciate the role of municipal bodies in fostering investment, supporting tourism, and providing resources to encourage business growth. However, 37% of businesses expressed concerns about communication gaps and policies that seem to favor external investors over local entrepreneurs. This divide suggests the need for stronger engagement between local government and business owners, as well as policies that ensure equal opportunity for both external investors and long-standing local businesses to contribute to the region's economic development.



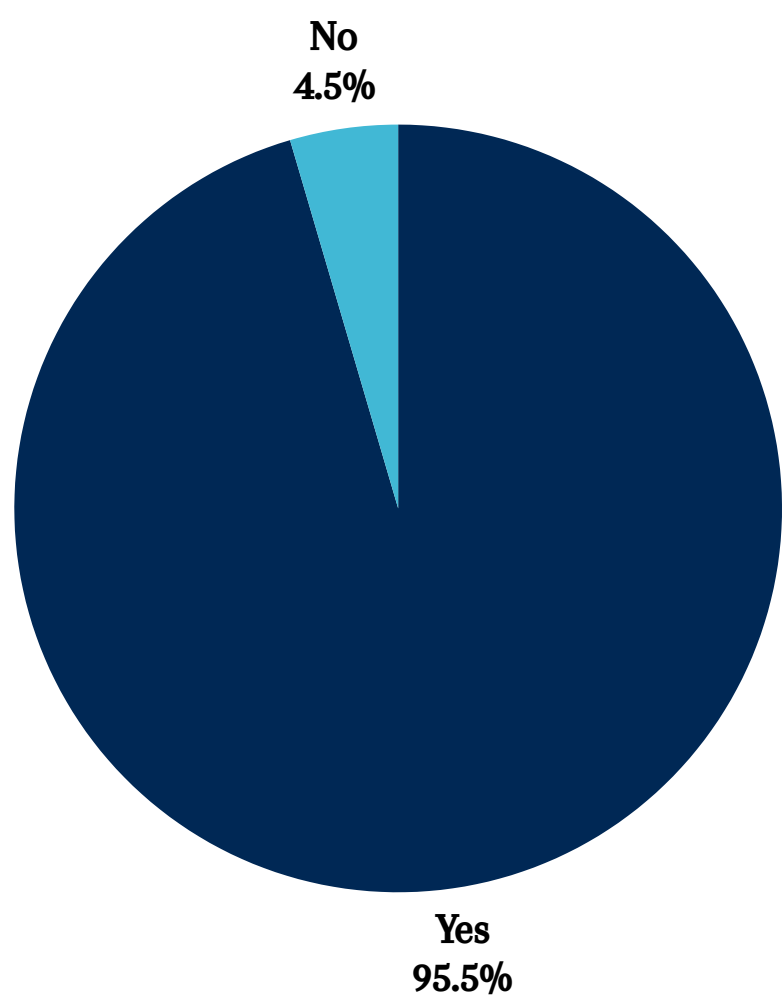
How would you rate the overall business climate of the community?

Findings and Analysis: FDC Region

In the FDC region, 63% of businesses reported feeling that local government is supportive of their business needs, citing efforts such as infrastructure improvements and collaboration on economic initiatives. Many business owners appreciate the role of municipal bodies in fostering investment, supporting tourism, and providing resources to encourage business growth. However, 37% of businesses expressed concerns about communication gaps and policies that seem to favor external investors over local entrepreneurs. This divide suggests the need for stronger engagement between local government and business owners, as well as policies that ensure equal opportunity for both external investors and long-standing local businesses to contribute to the region's economic development.



Do you feel that local government is supportive of your business needs?

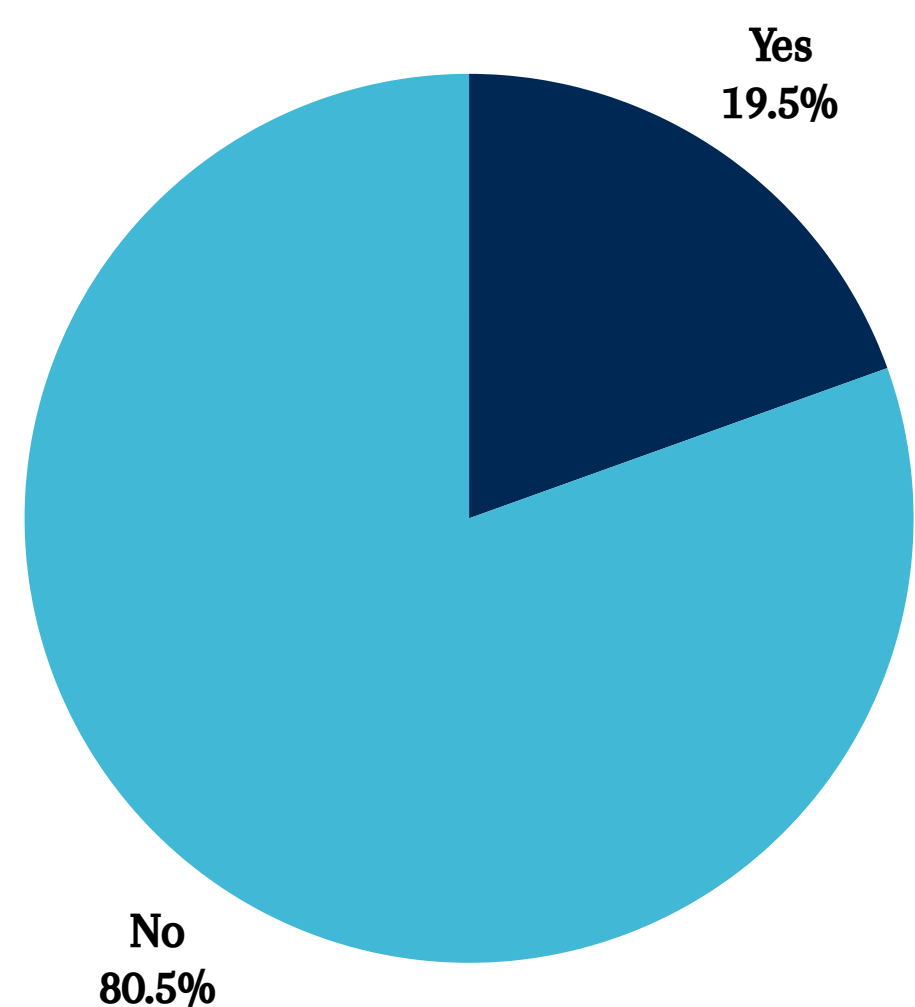


Do you collaborate with other local businesses and organizations?

The survey results indicate that 95% of businesses in the FDC region actively collaborate with other local businesses and organizations, demonstrating a strong culture of partnership and community engagement. This high level of collaboration suggests that businesses recognize the value of working together to share resources, expand customer bases, and strengthen the local economy. These partnerships likely take various forms, such as joint marketing efforts, supply chain coordination, shared events, and networking initiatives, which contribute to overall business success. Encouraging greater collaboration among all businesses through networking events, industry roundtables, and business-to-business initiatives could further enhance economic resilience and growth in the region.

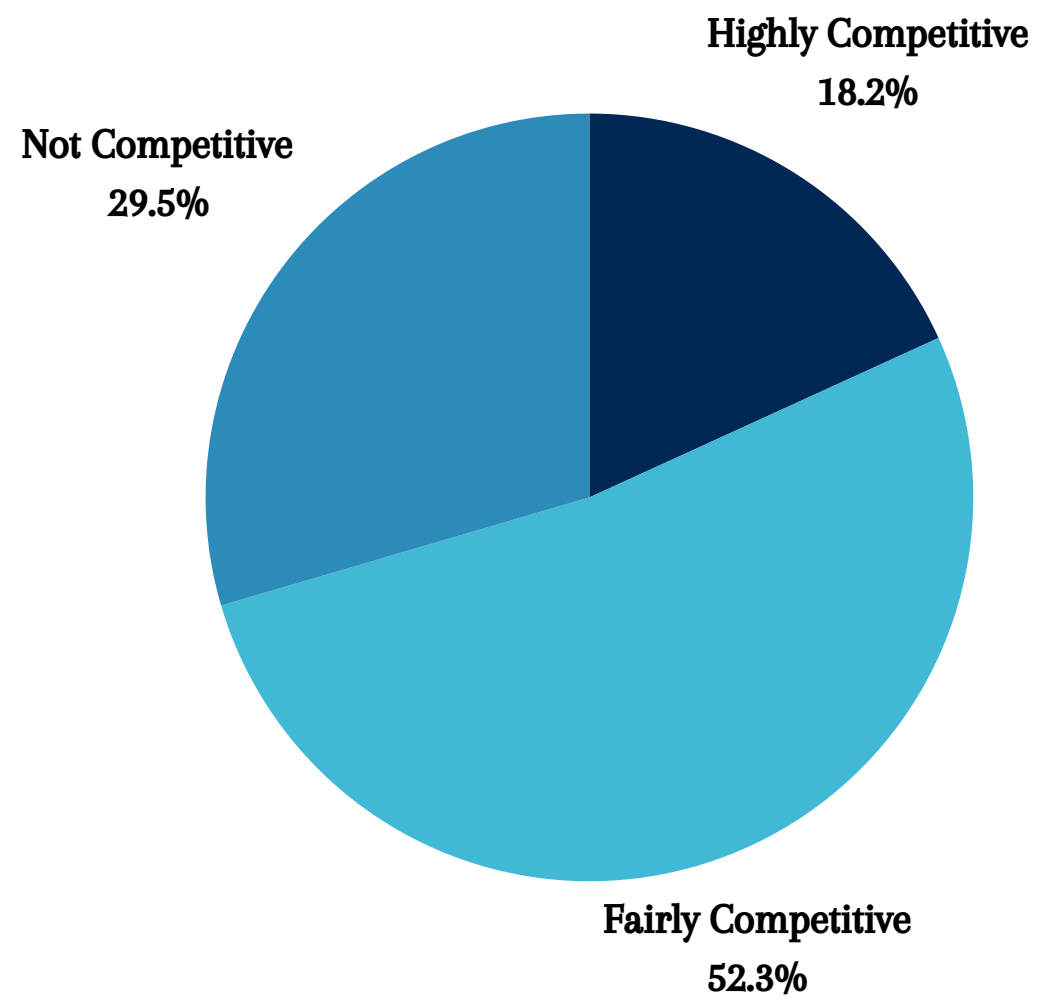
The survey results indicate that 80% of businesses feel that current incentives and support programs offered by the community or local government are insufficient to encourage business expansion, while only 20% believe they are adequate. This overwhelming response suggests that many businesses feel there is a lack of financial incentives, grants, tax relief programs, or tailored support services to help them grow. Business owners may also struggle with accessing or navigating existing programs, indicating a need for clearer communication, streamlined application processes, and more targeted initiatives that align with local industry needs. Addressing these concerns through enhanced support programs and stronger collaboration between businesses and municipal leadership could foster a more business-friendly environment and drive economic growth in the FDC region.

Do you find current incentives and support programs offered by the community or local government sufficient to encourage business expansion?

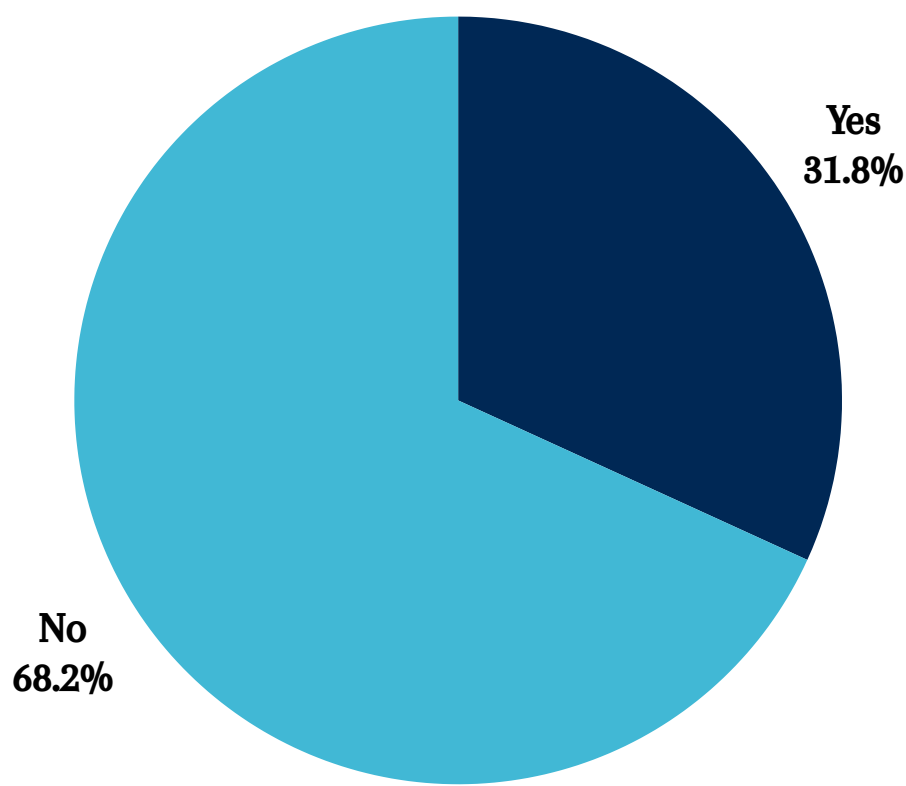


Findings and Analysis: FDC Region

The survey results indicate that 52% of businesses in the FDC region find the local market to be fairly competitive, while 18% consider it highly competitive and 30% do not find it competitive at all. This suggests that while many businesses face competition, it is generally manageable. The level of competition varies by industry, with some sectors experiencing a high concentration of similar businesses, while others operate in more niche markets with limited direct competitors. A balanced level of competition can drive innovation, improve service offerings, and encourage businesses to differentiate themselves, but too little competition may indicate a lack of market diversity, limiting consumer choice and economic growth.



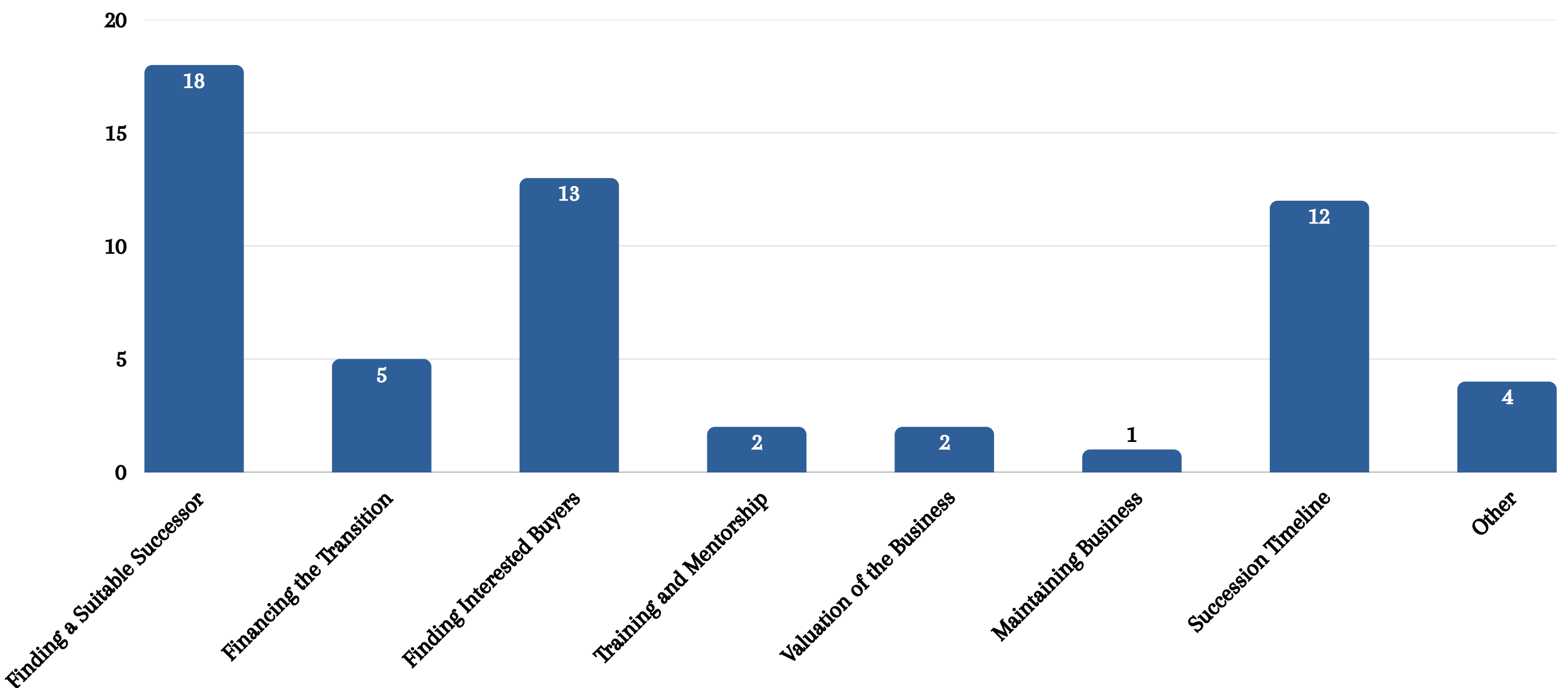
How competitive do you find the local market for your business sector?



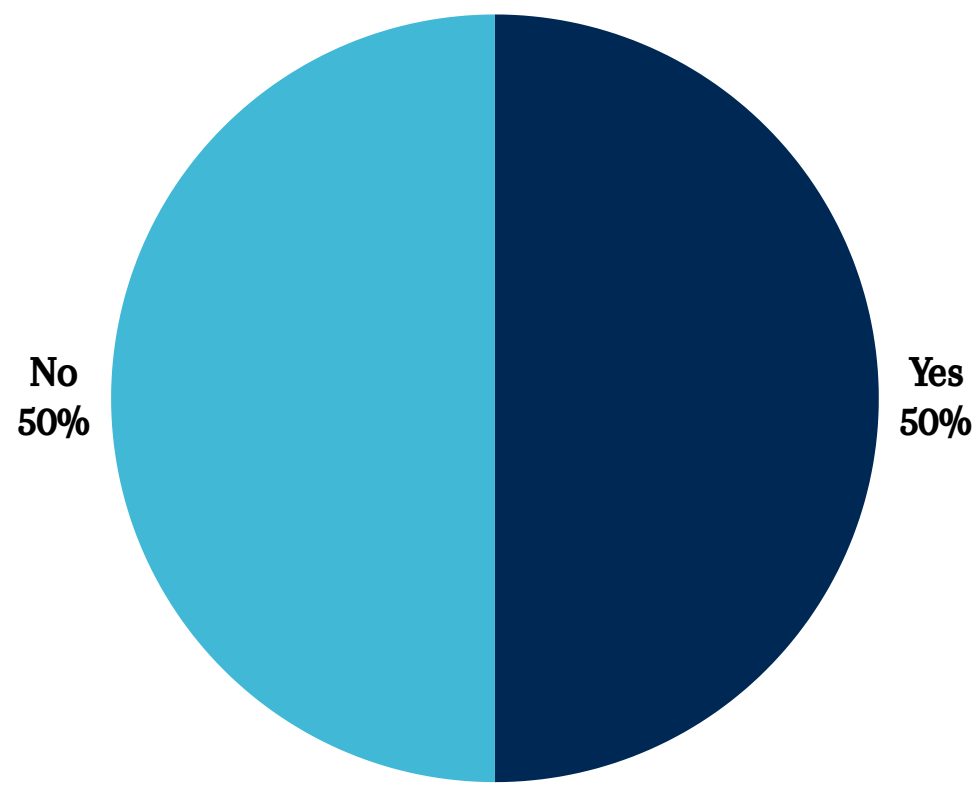
Do you have a formal succession plan in place for your business?

The survey results show that 68% of businesses in the FDC region do not have a formal succession plan in place, while only 32% have taken steps to prepare for ownership transition. This indicates a significant gap in long-term business planning, which can pose risks to economic stability and continuity within the region. Many business owners may be so focused on daily operations that they lack the time, resources, or knowledge to develop a structured exit strategy. Additionally, challenges such as finding a suitable successor, uncertainty around business valuation, and limited awareness of succession planning best practices may further hinder preparation efforts. Addressing this issue through training, mentorship programs, and the development of a regional business succession database could help business owners navigate the transition process and ensure the sustainability of local enterprises.

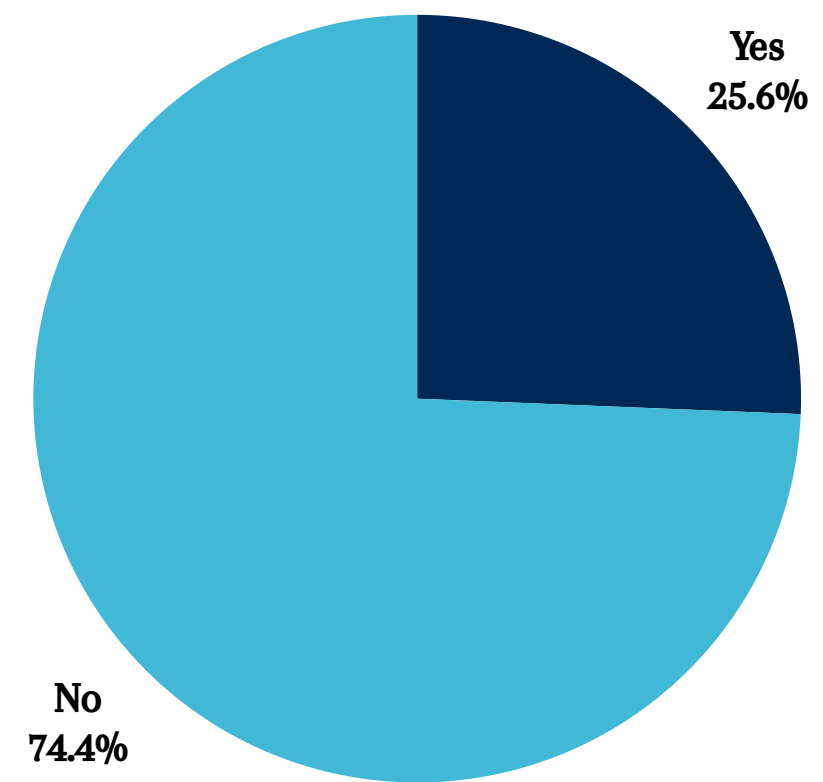
Are there specific challenges you anticipate with succession planning?



Findings and Analysis: FDC Aggregate



Do you have plans to expand or relocate your business in the next 1-5 years?

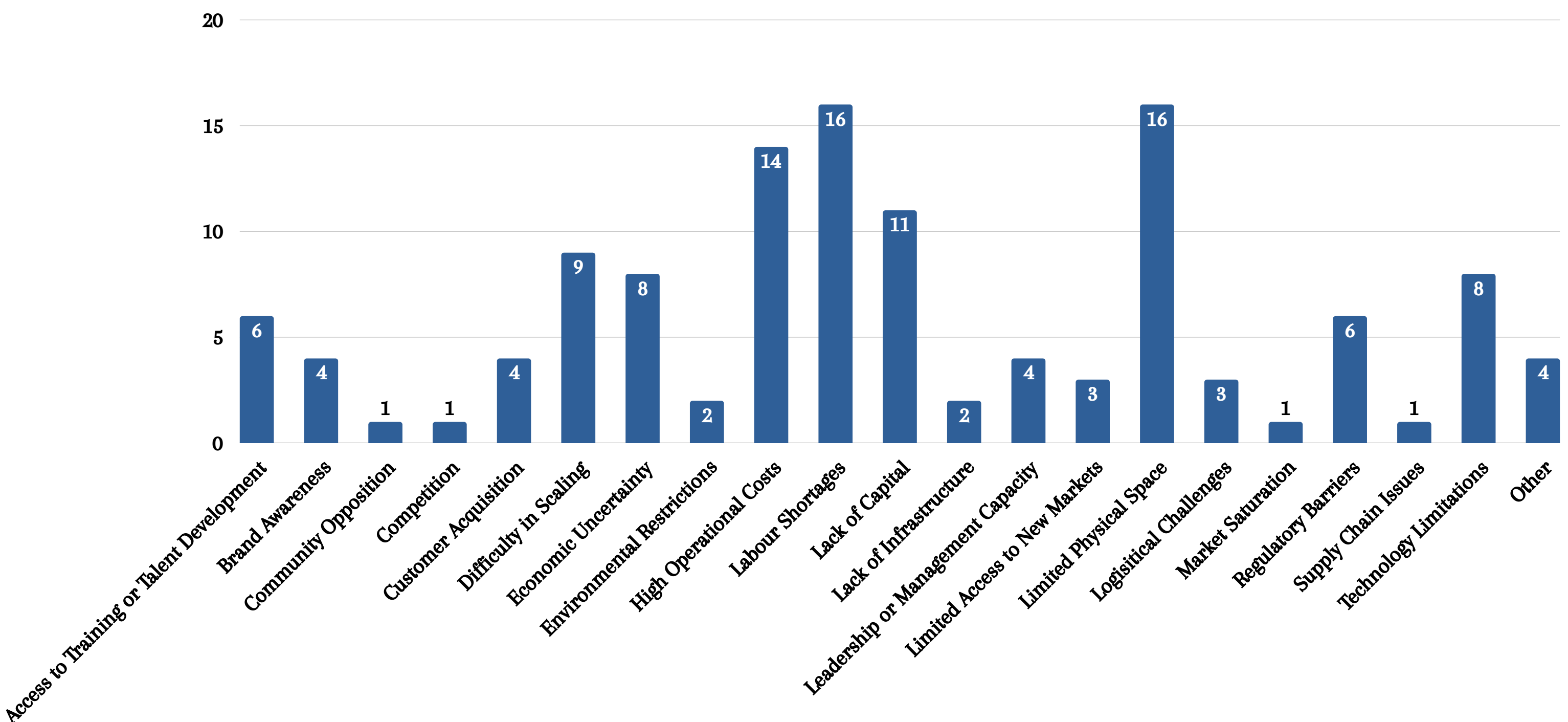


Are you able to find the skilled labour you need locally?

Business in the FDC region were split 50/50 regarding near future expansion plans. Additionally, data collected shows that most business cannot find the skilled labour they require locally, resulting in outsourcing or constricted expansion.

The most commonly cited barriers to local business expansion in the FDC region include labour shortages, high operational costs, limited physical space, and lack of capital. Business owners struggle to find and retain skilled workers, making it difficult to scale operations or maintain consistent service levels. High operational costs, including utilities, wages, and supply chain expenses, put additional strain on businesses, especially in a region where economic fluctuations are common. The lack of suitable commercial space further limits expansion opportunities, as many available properties require significant upgrades or are not configured for modern business needs. Additionally, limited access to capital makes it challenging for businesses to invest in growth, whether through equipment upgrades, marketing, or hiring additional staff. Some businesses also identified "Other" barriers, including difficulties with cross-border immigration, the unique challenges of operating in each community, the region's remoteness, and seasonality constraints that result in a short operating window for certain industries. These combined challenges highlight the need for targeted strategies and support systems to create a more sustainable and growth-oriented business environment.

What, if any, are major constraints on your expansion?



Themes and Recommendations

Main Street Development

Main Street in Flin Flon, Creighton, and Denare Beach represent the core shopping and economic districts of each municipality. It serves as a central point for commerce, attracting foot traffic, supporting a diverse range of small businesses, enhancing community identity, and ultimately driving local spending, which contributes to overall economic vitality and quality of life within a community. This model also encourages a circular economy, where dollars spent by local community members stay within the local borders, increasing wealth and expansion opportunities.



The revitalization of Main Street remains a significant concern, with issues related to infrastructure, safety, and commercial occupancy affecting business sustainability. Vacant storefronts and deteriorating building conditions create an uninviting atmosphere for consumers and potential investors. Without strategic investment and revitalization efforts, the economic viability of Main Street businesses may continue to decline, limiting opportunities for new enterprises and reducing overall economic activity in the region.

In Flin Flon, a revitalized Main Street can help fill vacant storefronts, support small business development, and create a more inviting atmosphere for residents and visitors. Improved streetscapes, safer pedestrian areas, and enhanced commercial spaces can increase foot traffic, leading to higher sales for existing businesses and greater opportunities for new entrepreneurs. Additionally, a vibrant Main Street serves as a focal point for tourism, drawing visitors who contribute to the local economy through shopping, dining, and cultural experiences. For Creighton and Denare Beach, Main Street revitalization offers similar benefits while addressing unique community needs. In Creighton, commercial development can attract more businesses, fostering local job creation and feeding into the circular model. In Denare Beach, revitalization can enhance tourism appeal by supporting seasonal businesses and improving accessibility to amenities, helping the community capitalize on its natural attractions.

As a regional initiative, Main Street revitalization strengthens economic ties between our communities, encouraging collaboration, shared services, and coordinated marketing efforts. By investing in a unified and thriving business district, the FDC region can create a more resilient economy, retain local talent, and position itself as a northern hub for commerce and tourism.

Themes and Recommendations

Strategies & Actionable Plans:

- **Façade Improvement Grants:** Rework existing grant programs to include tax holidays or direct subsidies to reduce financial burden on businesses. See page ... for direct recommendations in relation to the Business Storefront Improvement Grant Initiative.
- **Business Attraction Strategy:** Develop an incentive package for new businesses that commit to operating on Main Street, including reduced property taxes and rent subsidies.
- **Pop-up Business Incubators:** Utilize vacant storefronts for short-term rental pop-ups to encourage entrepreneurial activity and test new business ideas before long-term commitments.

CASE STUDY:

Bethel, Vermont, a small town once reliant on its stone quarries and mills, faced economic decline as these industries waned, leading to a shrinking town core. In response, the Bethel Revitalization Initiative launched "Bethel Better Block," a temporary space activation event designed to unite the community and stimulate local economic activity. This two-day event featured multiple downtown pop-ups led by local residents and partners, transforming underutilized spaces into vibrant, interactive hubs.

The initiative began with community discussions to identify assets and needs, leading to three key priorities: traffic calming and safety improvements, enhanced quality of life and community engagement, and expanded economic opportunities. Guided by inclusionary design principles, the event introduced a temporary multimodal lane that welcomed pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users, stroller-pushing parents, and even horseback riders. It reactivated Blossom Block, a previously overlooked space, by integrating pop-up vendors, seating areas, and traffic-calming measures, encouraging visitors to experience the revitalized streetscape. The event's long-term impact included the development of mixed-use spaces, improved public transportation links, and the addition of public art installations, laying the foundation for a more dynamic and connected town center.

<https://www.planning.org/blog/9227249/activating-communities-using-pop-up-designs/>

- **Traffic & Parking Improvements:** Many businesses in the FDC region cite limited parking, unclear signage, and traffic flow concerns as barriers to attracting customers. Recommendations for improvements include: installing wayfinding signage and maps to guide visitors to off-Main Street parking, identifying underutilized parking areas for shared use, and implementing clearly marked parking spaces along Main Street to enhance accessibility and business visibility. Additionally, reduced speed limits and traffic calming measures can improve pedestrian safety and encourage foot traffic.

Themes and Recommendations

Strategies & Actionable Plans:

- **Safety Initiatives:** Implement a community safety strategy in partnership with law enforcement and local businesses, enhancing lighting, signage, and security features. Municipalities across Canada are facing safety issues and have developed strategies unique to local challenges to address these in partnership with local law enforcement and community organizations. It is recommended that the FDC region consult with the RCMP and local organizations that focus on harm reduction to determine an actionable plan to address the safety concerns on Main Street.
- **Beautification Initiatives:** Develop and create beautification projects that align with local pride and provide a positive atmosphere to the Main Street area.
- **Wayfinding and Brand Identity:** Create downtown signage that highlights the FDC brand identity with navigation tools such as maps and things to do. The Town of Banff introduced wayfinding and signage throughout their Main Street business area that highlights their local branding and encourages more pedestrian traffic. They also implemented a “Streetscape Design Guide” which indicates to public and private reconstruction specific guidelines to ensure continuity of the visual appeal.

Business Storefront Improvement Grant

The Business Storefront Improvement Grant was launched by the City of Flin Flon in the summer of 2024 to provide financial support and incentive to improve the visual facade of the core Main Street business area. With no completed applications, we included questions in our Business Retention and Expansion survey to identify accessibility barriers and underlying reasons to why businesses have not participated in this program. Many businesses agreed that the program was a great idea however, the practicality and grant format created issues for local business owners.

The top recurring concerns include the following:

- Potential tax increases resulting from improvements
- Vandalism and safety concerns on Main Street
- Uncertainty on whether the return on investment would justify the cost
- Lack of financial capital to cover upfront expenses
- Other infrastructure and building issues taking priority
- Misinformation or lack of awareness about the program details
- Economic uncertainty in the FDC region

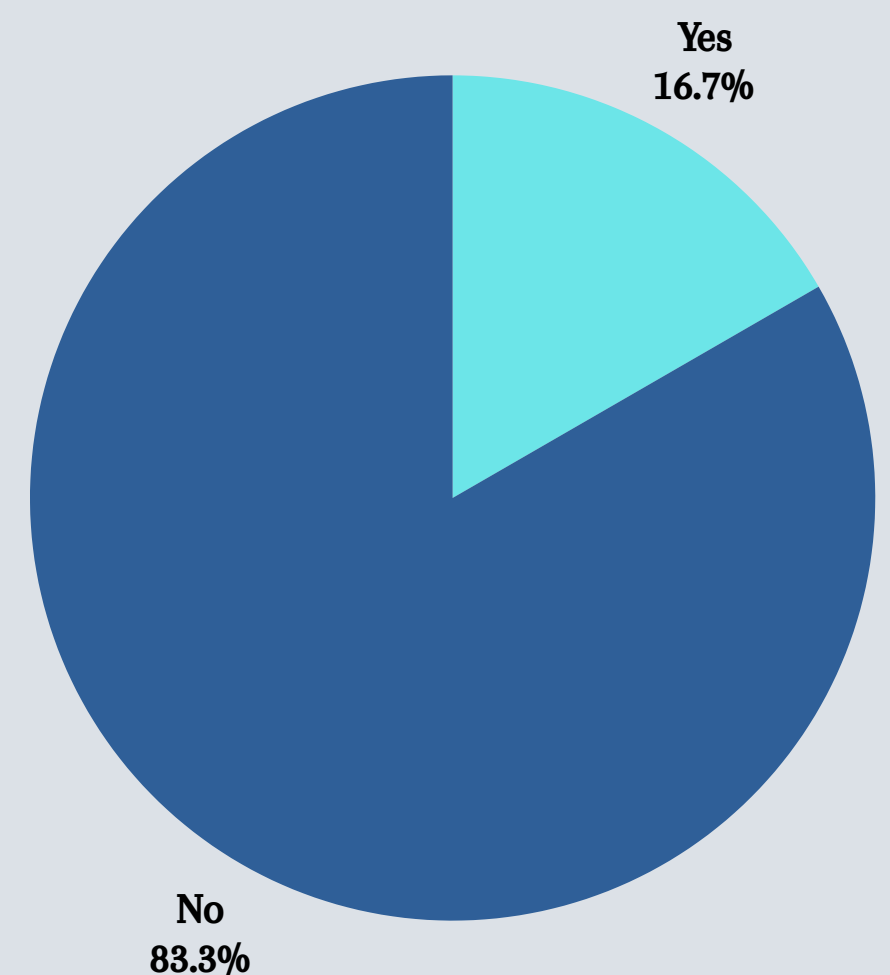
The survey results provided valuable insight into the challenges businesses face in utilizing this program, highlighting opportunities for grant adjustments and improvements for future incentive programs.

Recommendations for enhancing the grant program:

- Offer tax breaks or holidays instead of a lump-sum reimbursement grant.
- Improve clarity on the grant program, application process, and provide a dedicated point of contact for inquiries.
- Create a list of recommended contractors willing to provide quotes for complete façade improvements.
- Encourage commercial landlords to recognize the value and long-term benefits of investing in property improvements.

It is recommended that eligibility is expanded to include all locally owned businesses in Flin Flon and adjust the grant to support economic and business development initiatives more broadly. This will increase program accessibility and efficiency, ultimately increasing participation and impact.

Do you find the current incentives and support programs offered sufficient to encourage business expansion?



Themes and Recommendations

Commercial Space Options

One of the most frequently cited challenges among business owners in the FDC region is the lack of suitable commercial space for business development and expansion. Flin Flon, Creighton, and Denare Beach face significant constraints in providing move-in-ready commercial spaces that do not require extensive upgrades or renovations. This issue poses a major barrier for both new businesses looking to establish themselves and existing businesses aiming to expand. Without appropriate spaces to accommodate business growth, the region risks stagnation in economic development, reduced investment potential, and the loss of local entrepreneurs seeking opportunities elsewhere.

A major concern raised by business owners is that much of the available commercial space in the region is either outdated, in need of costly repairs, or not configured to suit modern business needs. Many buildings require extensive renovations to meet safety codes, efficiency requirements, accessibility standards, and functional business layouts. For small businesses and startups, these additional costs can be prohibitive, discouraging new investment and limiting economic diversity. The lack of turnkey commercial spaces also makes it difficult to attract external investors or franchises that require readily available, high-quality properties to set up operations quickly.

To address this challenge, a strategic focus on commercial space development is needed. This includes incentivizing property owners to upgrade and modernize existing buildings, exploring new commercial developments, and adopting flexible leasing models to accommodate different business needs. Municipal and regional economic development initiatives could encourage the creation of co-working spaces, shared business hubs, and multi-use commercial facilities to increase the availability of modern, accessible spaces. Additionally, zoning regulations and policies should be reviewed to identify underutilized land or buildings that could be repurposed for commercial use and potential red tape for current building improvements.

By prioritizing the development of high-quality, move-in-ready commercial spaces, the FDC region can foster a stronger business environment, attract new investment, and support the growth and sustainability of existing businesses. Ensuring that entrepreneurs have access to the right spaces will play a crucial role in the long-term success of the local economy.



Uptown Emporium, Flin Flon

Themes and Recommendations

Strategies & Actionable Plans:

- **Incentivize Upgrades:** Incentive programs for existing commercial spaces can be explored in a variety of formats such as a Property Improvement Grant Program for landlords to renovate outdated buildings and promoting existing efficiency grant program to provide funding support for businesses upgrading to energy-efficient systems.
- **Zoning & Land Use Review:** Identify and rezone underutilized areas to accommodate new commercial and mixed-use developments and create processes to expedite approvals and permits for new development projects.
- **Adaptive Reuse of Underutilized Properties** such as through:
 - **Inventory of Available Spaces:** Create a public database of vacant commercial properties, highlighting spaces that are move-in-ready.
 - **Building Repurposing Initiative:** Encourage landlords and investors to convert vacant or underused buildings into modern commercial spaces.
 - **Flexible Leasing Options:** Support landlords in offering short-term or shared-use leases to attract small businesses and startups.
- **Development of Affordable & Shared Commercial Spaces:** Work with private and public partners to develop and expand on commercial space options. This approach can be explored through a handful of models such as a co-working/shared office space, commercial space within multi-family housing, or a pop-up/temporary retail space program.
- **Engage Regional Stakeholders & Investors:** Communication with landlords and developers needs to be front and center of any commercial property development. This also goes hand in hand with the zoning and policy reviewal as these will be the stakeholders directly impacted and can be established to promote economic growth. For the local stakeholders, regular meetings should be established to encourage open dialogue and increase clarity on the municipal direction of development. Investment campaigns and marketing can be used to connect with external investors. Local organizations channels can be used as means of communication with investors, local business owners, and developers.

CASE STUDY: Mixed-Use Development in Steinbach - A Model for the FDC Region

Steinbach, Manitoba, is revitalizing its Main Street with a six-story mixed-use development that blends commercial and residential space. The project allows for commercial units on the ground floor with five stories of residential units above. The multi-use approach enhances economic activity, increases population density, and supports downtown vibrancy—a model that could be adapted for the FDC region. The project aligns with long-term urban development goals, with four commercial units and 32 residential suites, ensuring that new businesses have prime storefront locations while residents benefit from walkable amenities. The approval of zoning variances to increase height restrictions and building density demonstrates how municipal flexibility can facilitate growth. This approach is highly feasible for the FDC region, where a lack of move-in-ready commercial space has been a barrier to business expansion. A similar mixed-use development in the region could provide much-needed commercial storefronts, housing for workers, and increased foot traffic to sustain local businesses.

Themes and Recommendations

Labour Shortages

Labour shortages are a growing challenge in the FDC region, affecting businesses across multiple industries, including retail, hospitality, healthcare, and skilled trades. Employers in Flin Flon, Creighton, and Denare Beach are struggling to fill vacancies, which impacts productivity, service levels, and overall business growth. The combination of an aging workforce, outmigration of younger workers, and difficulties attracting new talent has created a gap that threatens the long-term sustainability of the local economy. The shortage of workers is not just a short-term issue—it is a fundamental economic development challenge. Businesses are forced to reduce operating hours, delay expansion plans, and increase workloads on existing staff, leading to burnout and turnover. Addressing labour shortages requires a multi-faceted approach, including workforce attraction strategies, enhanced training and education programs, and better alignment between businesses and potential employees.

This section explores the factors contributing to labour shortages, their economic implications, and actionable strategies to attract, retain, and develop a strong workforce in the FDC region. By tackling these challenges, we can ensure that local businesses have the talent they need to thrive and that the region remains a competitive place to work and invest.

Understanding the Labour Shortage Problem

Several factors contribute to labour shortages in the FDC region:

- **Aging Workforce** – A large percentage of the local workforce is approaching retirement age, leading to a decline in available skilled workers.
- **Outmigration of Young Workers** – Many younger workers leave the region in search of opportunities in larger urban centers and schooling, reducing the pool of available employees.
- **Limited Workforce Attraction Strategies** – The region faces challenges in attracting new residents and workers due to perceptions of limited job opportunities and amenities.
- **Skills Gap** – Employers report difficulty finding workers with the necessary skills and training, particularly in specialized trades and healthcare.
- **Housing, Services and Infrastructure Constraints** – A lack of suitable housing and other amenities can deter potential workers from relocating to the area.



Themes and Recommendations

Strategies & Actionable Plans:

- **Workforce Attraction and Retention Initiatives:**
 - Conduct a Workforce Needs Assessment - Survey local businesses to determine specific labour shortages and required skill sets.
 - Promote Regional Career Opportunities - Develop targeted marketing campaigns to showcase job opportunities, career growth potential, and the benefits of living in the FDC region.
 - Expand Immigration Programs - Work with provincial and federal immigration programs to attract skilled workers and newcomers to fill labour gaps.
- **New Resident Guide:** Develop a New Resident Guide which highlights all the things to know before moving to the FDC region such as amenities, industry information, cost of living, etc. to encourage population growth with targeted campaigning in urban centers. This will aim to increase general population which will feel into the labour pool.
- **Strengthening Local Workforce Development:** This can be taken on by the FDC in a supportive and guiding role. Strategies to improve workforce development include partnering with educational institutions and organizations, workforce retraining programs, and supporting entrepreneurs and self-employment.
- **Employer Support and Incentives:** Increased operational costs were a highly recognized challenge among local business owners, and this applies to staff costs as well. Working with local businesses to provide various supports such as developing an Employer Incentive Programs to offer wage subsidies or tax incentives and/or increasing childcare support to enable parents to enter or remain in the workforce and creating new employment opportunities.

New Opportunities, New Challenges: Immigration

Through this survey, many business owners identified a labour shortages as a growth and operating challenge. Immigration programs have been explored as a potential source of labourers but have been faced with the unique complexities of being in a cross-border community. The FDC region, spanning Manitoba and Saskatchewan, faces immigration challenges due to its interprovincial nature, shared resources, and cross-border employment opportunities. Business owners in the region have been struggling with attracting and retaining a skilled immigrant workers due to differences in provincial policies, licensing requirements, and settlement services. For example, newcomers who settle in Manitoba but find work opportunity in Saskatchewan may face barriers in accessing provincial support programs, healthcare coverage, or credential recognition. This lack of coordination between the two provinces can create confusion for both employers and employees, making it harder to fill labor shortages and sustain long-term workforce growth especially with high outmigration of youth and skilled workers.

Additionally, many businesses in the FDC region report challenges in providing adequate support for immigrant employees, including access to affordable housing, language training, and cultural integration resources. Given the region's rural setting, some newcomers struggle with transportation and a lack of community networks, making it difficult for them to fully integrate into the workforce. Employers recognize the value of immigration in addressing labor shortages, particularly in sectors like healthcare, hospitality, and skilled trades, but without improved settlement services, regional coordination, and long-term retention strategies, businesses will continue to face difficulties in securing and sustaining a diverse and skilled workforce. Addressing these challenges requires greater collaboration between Manitoba and Saskatchewan to create consistent policies and accessible support systems that benefit both businesses and immigrant workers.

Themes and Recommendations

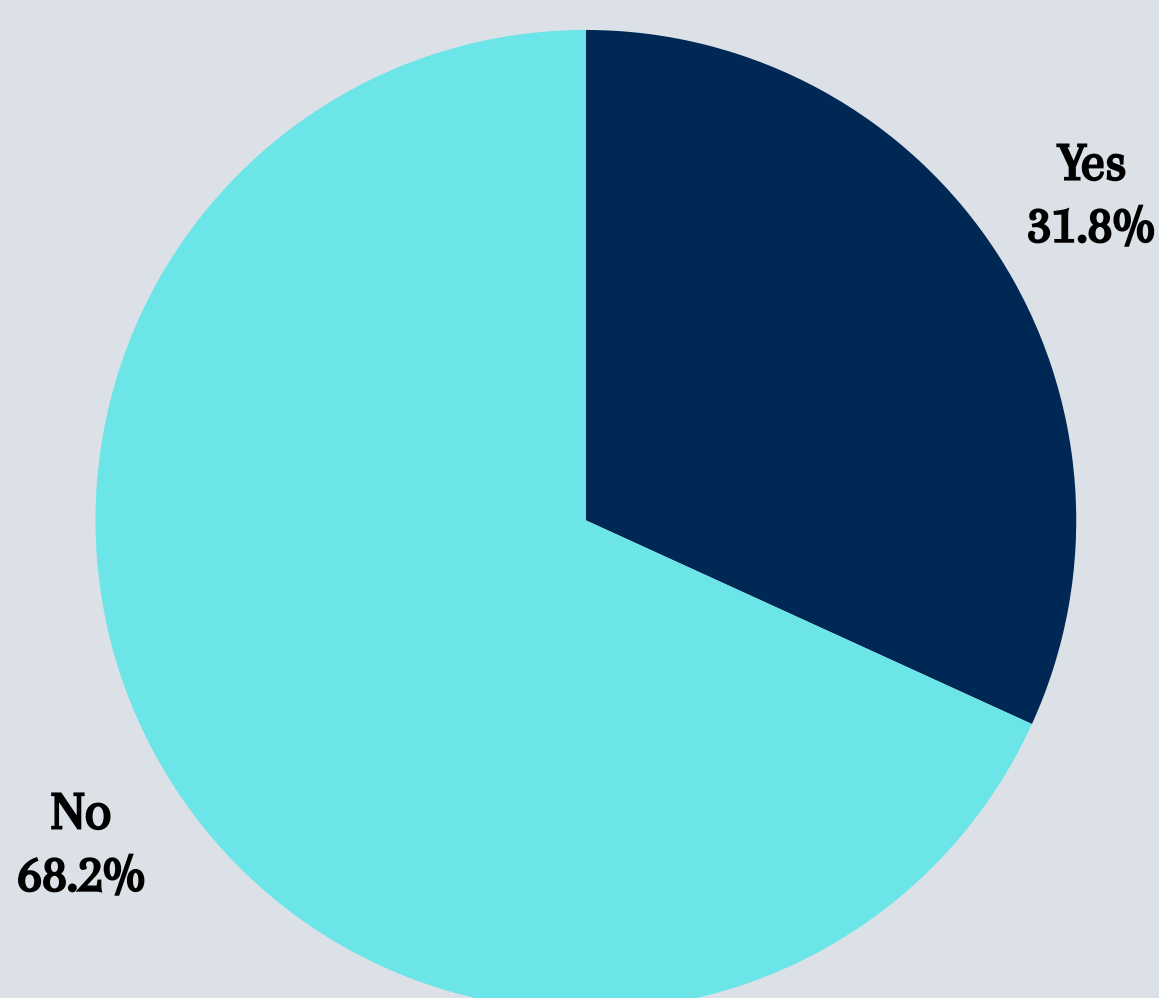
4. Succession Planning

Succession planning is a critical component of economic development in the FDC region, as it ensures the continuity and sustainability of local businesses. With over 50% of businesses (that participated in this survey) in Flin Flon, Creighton, and Denare Beach that have been operating for more than 20 years, many challenges arise such as individuals nearing retirement and a lack of transition planning poses a significant risk to the regional economy. If these businesses close due to the absence of a succession plan, the community could face job losses, reduced services, and declining commercial activity. Strengthening succession planning efforts will help retain essential businesses, foster entrepreneurship, and maintain the vibrancy of the local economy.

Despite its importance, many business owners in the FDC region do not have a formal succession plan in place. Barriers include a lack of awareness, difficulty finding successors, and financial uncertainties. Without a structured plan, businesses are at risk of abrupt closures, leaving gaps in the market that may take years to fill. Encouraging business owners to proactively plan for transitions—whether through family succession, employee ownership, or business sales—will help secure long-term stability and prevent economic downturns resulting from unexpected business closures.

To address this challenge, the FDC region must prioritize succession planning as part of its broader economic development strategy. This includes offering resources and support to business owners, fostering mentorship programs for young entrepreneurs, and promoting succession as a key aspect of long-term business strategy. By proactively assisting business owners in navigating transitions, the FDC region can maintain a strong and resilient business environment.

Do you have a formal succession plan in place for your business?



In the FDC Region, the majority of businesses do not have a formal succession plan in place. The most common challenges cited by business owners include finding a suitable successor, identifying interested buyers, and uncertainty around the succession timeline. Many business owners are so focused on the day-to-day operations of their business that they lack the time and resources to explore succession opportunities.

This also highlights a gap in education and awareness. Succession planning should be an integral part of business strategy from the start, yet many entrepreneurs do not consider exit strategies early on. A key takeaway from this finding is the need for training, tools, and resources to help business owners understand when and how to begin planning for succession, ensuring the long-term sustainability of their businesses and the local economy.

Themes and Recommendations

Strategies & Actionable Plans

- **Increase Awareness & Education on Succession Planning:** From a municipal perspective, awareness and education on succession planning can be offered in a number of ways. Most commonly this can be done through hosting workshops and training sessions in collaboration with a local business organization such as the local Chamber of Commerce or Community Futures or through the development of a Succession Planning Toolkit for business owners.
- **Connect Business Owners with Potential Successors:** Establish a Local Business Transition Marketplace, an online platform where business owners can list businesses for sale, including details on mentorship or transition support. This can be developed alongside local real estate agents and financial advisors to facilitate sales and transitions. Programming can be explored that offers mentorship that pair retiring owners with young entrepreneurs or professionals in business ownership.
- **Provide Financial & Incentive Support for Business Transitions** such as through:
 - **Succession Planning Grants & Tax Incentives:** Explore municipal grants to help cover legal and advisory costs related to succession planning or to help finance the transition between businesses and new ownership.
 - **Support Business Transition Financing:** Partner with local banks and credit unions to offer low-interest loans for new owners acquiring existing businesses.
 - **Offer tax deferrals or reductions** for business owners who successfully transition their business within the community.
- **Monitor & Report on Succession Trends:** Conduct regular surveys to track business transition challenges and opportunities.



Photo by Eric Westhaver

Themes and Recommendations

5. Economic Stability

Economic uncertainty emerged as a major theme in the Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) plan for the FDC region due to significant challenges facing local businesses. One of the most pressing concerns was the historic experience of the closure of the Hudbay mine, a previous cornerstone of the regional economy. For decades, the mine provided stable employment, and a steady customer base for local businesses. Its closure created widespread uncertainty, leading to decreased consumer spending, outmigration of skilled workers, and concerns about long-term economic sustainability in the FDC Region. Many business owners worry about declining sales, reduced foot traffic, and the overall viability of their operations in a post-Hudbay economy. Though there is industry development in the region, secure and stable employment opportunities for the wider population still remains a concern among local business operators.

Beyond the mine closure, local businesses are still recovering from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Supply chain disruptions, rising operational costs, and shifting consumer behaviors have left many businesses vulnerable. Inflation rates add to the unpredictability, making it harder for business owners to plan for future investments or expansion. In this uncertain climate, business owners are hesitant to take risks, whether hiring more staff, expanding their operations, or making long-term capital investments. The lingering effects of the pandemic have compounded existing concerns about economic stability in the region.

Another major factor contributing to economic uncertainty is youth outmigration and the limited availability of skilled labour. Many young people leave the region in search of education and employment opportunities elsewhere, creating a talent gap that makes it difficult for local businesses to find and retain skilled workers. Without a strong workforce, businesses struggle to maintain operations, limiting their ability to grow and innovate. The lack of skilled labour also discourages new investment, as businesses considering relocation to the region may perceive workforce shortages as a risk. To address this challenge, the region must focus on workforce development, apprenticeship programs, and initiatives that encourage young professionals to build their careers locally. By investing in skills training and creating pathways for youth employment, the FDC region can work toward greater economic stability and long-term business sustainability.

Expanding Horizons: The Rise of Tourism

Tourism in the FDC region has seen steady growth in recent years, driven by increasing interest in outdoor recreation, cultural attractions, and regional events. This expansion has had a direct impact on local businesses, creating new opportunities in accommodation, retail, dining, and experience-based industries. As visitor numbers rise, businesses are seeing increased demand for hospitality services, guided tours, and unique local products, encouraging investment in expansion, infrastructure, and workforce development. However, tourism-based businesses also face challenges such as seasonality, external threats, and infrastructure dependence, which can impact long-term stability. For the region to fully capitalize on tourism growth, strategic support is needed to help businesses adapt to seasonal fluctuations, access funding for expansion, and improve service offerings. A strong tourism sector not only enhances economic diversification but also strengthens the overall business environment, making the FDC region more attractive to investors, entrepreneurs, and new residents.

Themes and Recommendations

Strategies & Actionable Plans

- **Economic Diversification and Business Attraction:** Reduce economic dependence on resource extraction by fostering a diverse local economy through tourism, technology, manufacturing, and entrepreneurship. This can include exploring projects such as:
 - Conduct a regional industry gap analysis to identify emerging sectors with growth potential.
 - Establish incentives for businesses in tourism, green energy, and value-added manufacturing.
 - Promote available commercial spaces and industrial lands to attract new investors and businesses.
 - Work with chambers of commerce and industry groups to develop sector-specific growth initiatives.
- **Workforce Development and Skilled Labor Retention:** Address labor shortages by building a sustainable workforce pipeline and reducing youth outmigration. Partnering with secondary and post-secondary institutions are key to establishing a young, diverse workforce. Another project would aim at marketing the region to outside professionals through developing a "Stay and Work in the FDC" campaign targeting young professionals with incentives such as training subsidies, relocation grants, and mentorship programs.
- **Small Business Support and Resilience Planning:** Support organizations that can provide businesses with the resources and tools needed to adapt to economic fluctuations. These can include offering financial planning resources, risk assessment tools, economic response planning, economic forecasting and update reports, or incentive programs for businesses looking to modernize, adopt new technology, or diversify.
- **Infrastructure and Investment in Commercial Spaces:** Improve access to move-in-ready commercial spaces to encourage new business development. Actionable tasks to work towards this goal can be:
 - Incentivize property owners to renovate and repurpose underutilized commercial buildings.
 - Create an online regional business and property investment portal showcasing available spaces and investment opportunities.
 - Partner with developers to explore mixed-use developments that blend commercial, retail, and residential spaces.
- **Strengthening Regional Collaboration:** Work across municipalities (Flin Flon, Creighton, Denare Beach) to create a unified economic strategy and vision.
 - Market the FDC region collectively as a **business-friendly destination to promote local expansion and attract external investment.**
 - Facilitate cross-border economic partnerships with Saskatchewan and Manitoba to enhance trade and workforce mobility. This can be seen through the current immigration initiative.
 - Host annual regional economic summits to connect business owners, investors, and policymakers.

Conclusion

The Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Plan developed by the FDC Regional Economic Development Commission (FDC REDC), in partnership with Community Futures Greenstone and the Flin Flon & District Chamber of Commerce, represents a significant step toward fostering a stronger, more resilient regional economy. By engaging directly with 43 businesses and leveraging insights from a standardized survey, interviews, and qualitative feedback, this initiative has provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and priorities that matter most to our business community.

This plan underscores the importance of supporting existing businesses as the cornerstone of economic development. Businesses in our region have highlighted both their confidence in the community's strengths—such as its workforce potential, strong sense of collaboration, and access to natural resources—and the challenges they face, including workforce shortages, aging infrastructure, and limited access to specialized training and services. These insights have shaped the actionable recommendations presented in this plan, which focus on workforce development, infrastructure improvements, business support services, and marketing initiatives to showcase the region's unique advantages.

The success of this BR&E plan will depend on the collective efforts of all stakeholders—businesses, government, community organizations, and educational institutions. Collaboration will be key to implementing the recommendations and addressing the identified challenges. Equally important is maintaining open lines of communication with local businesses, ensuring their voices continue to guide the region's economic development strategies.

As we move forward, the FDC REDC and its partners are committed to turning this plan into action. By investing in our local businesses, strengthening partnerships, and creating an environment that fosters innovation and growth, we can build a thriving, sustainable economy that benefits the entire region. This plan is not the conclusion of our efforts but the beginning of a long-term commitment to supporting our business community and creating opportunities for future generations.

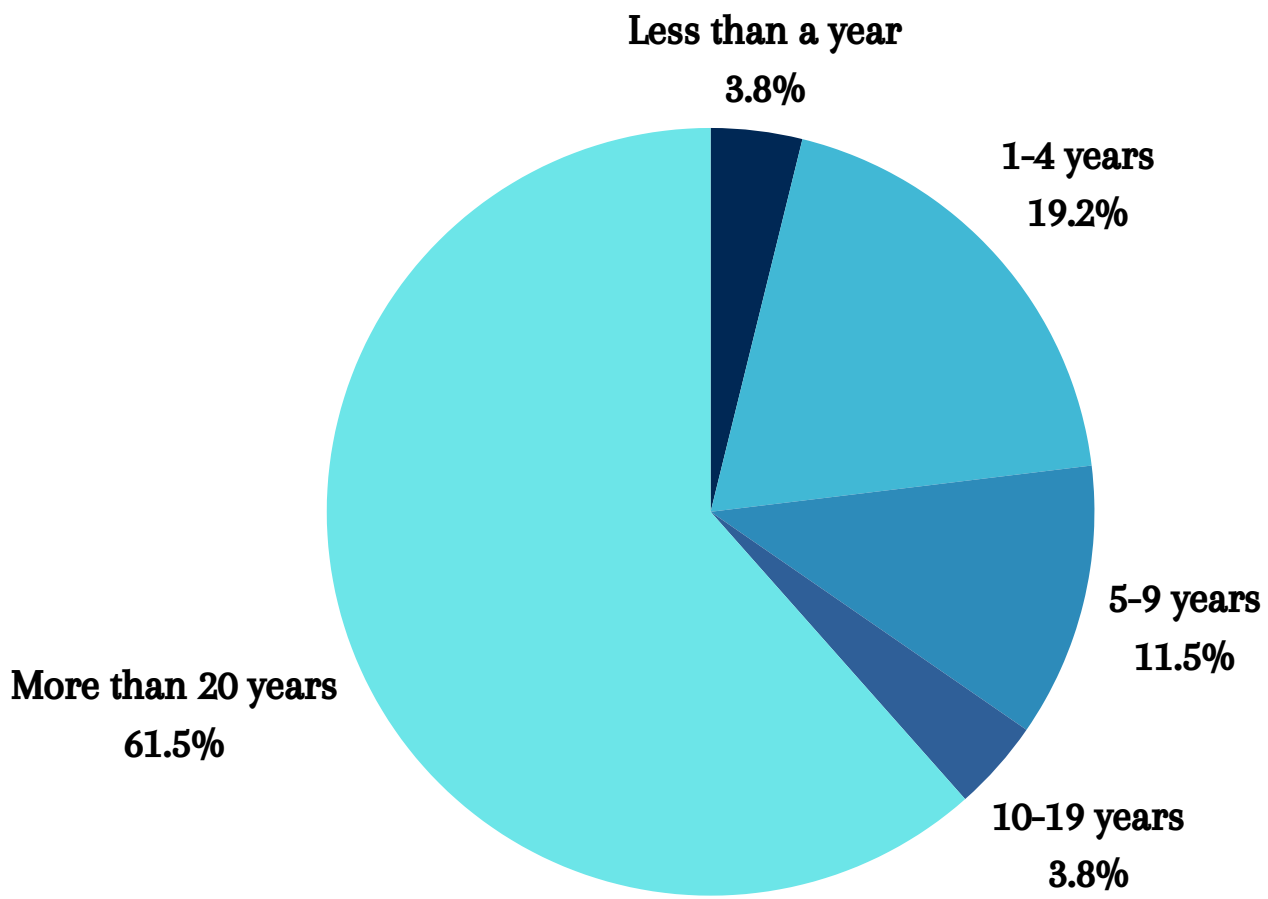
Together, we can create a vibrant future for the FDC region—one where businesses flourish, residents thrive, and the region continues to grow as a model of success and resilience.



Appendix 1: Findings and Analysis for Flin Flon Businesses

Business At A Glance

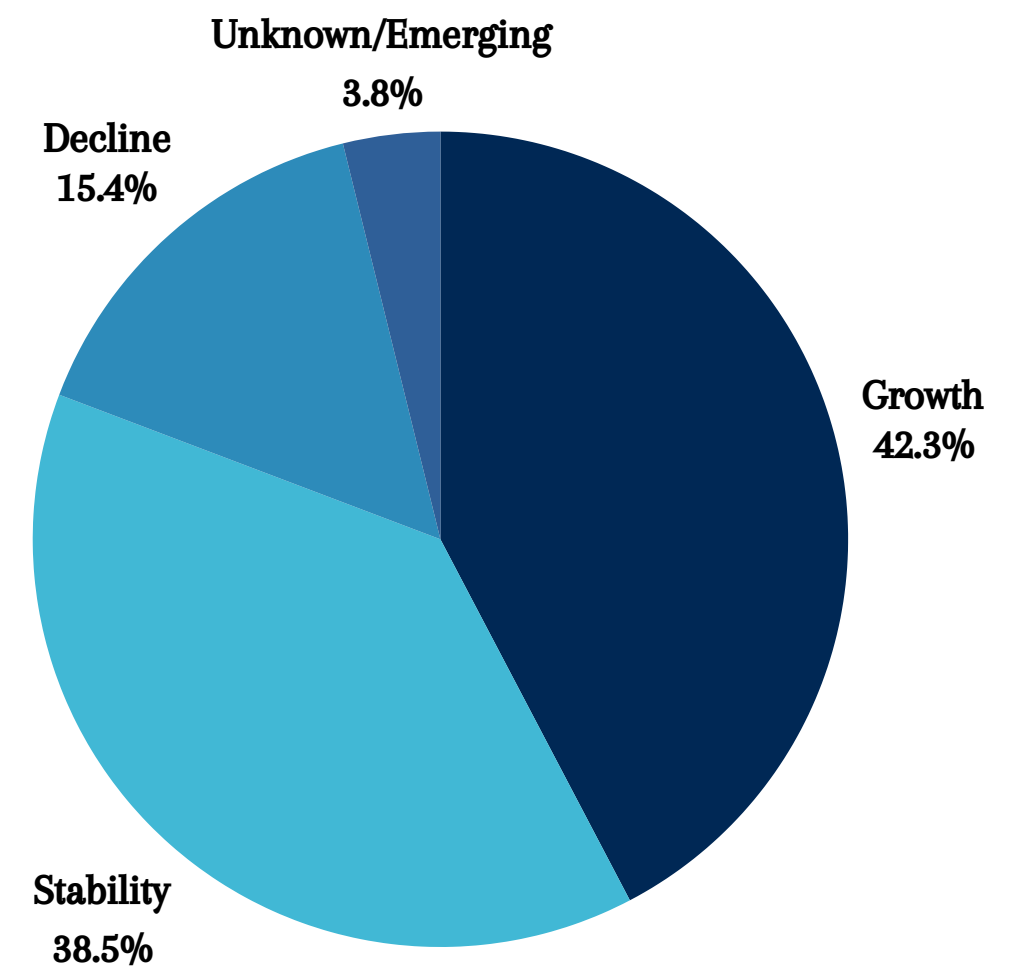
A total of 25 business interviews were conducted with Flin Flon-based businesses as part of this survey. The findings revealed that 61.5% of businesses have been in operation for more than 20 years, highlighting a strong presence of well-established enterprises in the community. Additionally, 23% of surveyed businesses have been in operation for less than four years, including start-ups, indicating a recent increase in new small businesses. These results suggest a healthy balance between long-standing businesses and emerging entrepreneurs, contributing to the region's economic diversity and resilience.



How long has your business been operating in this community?

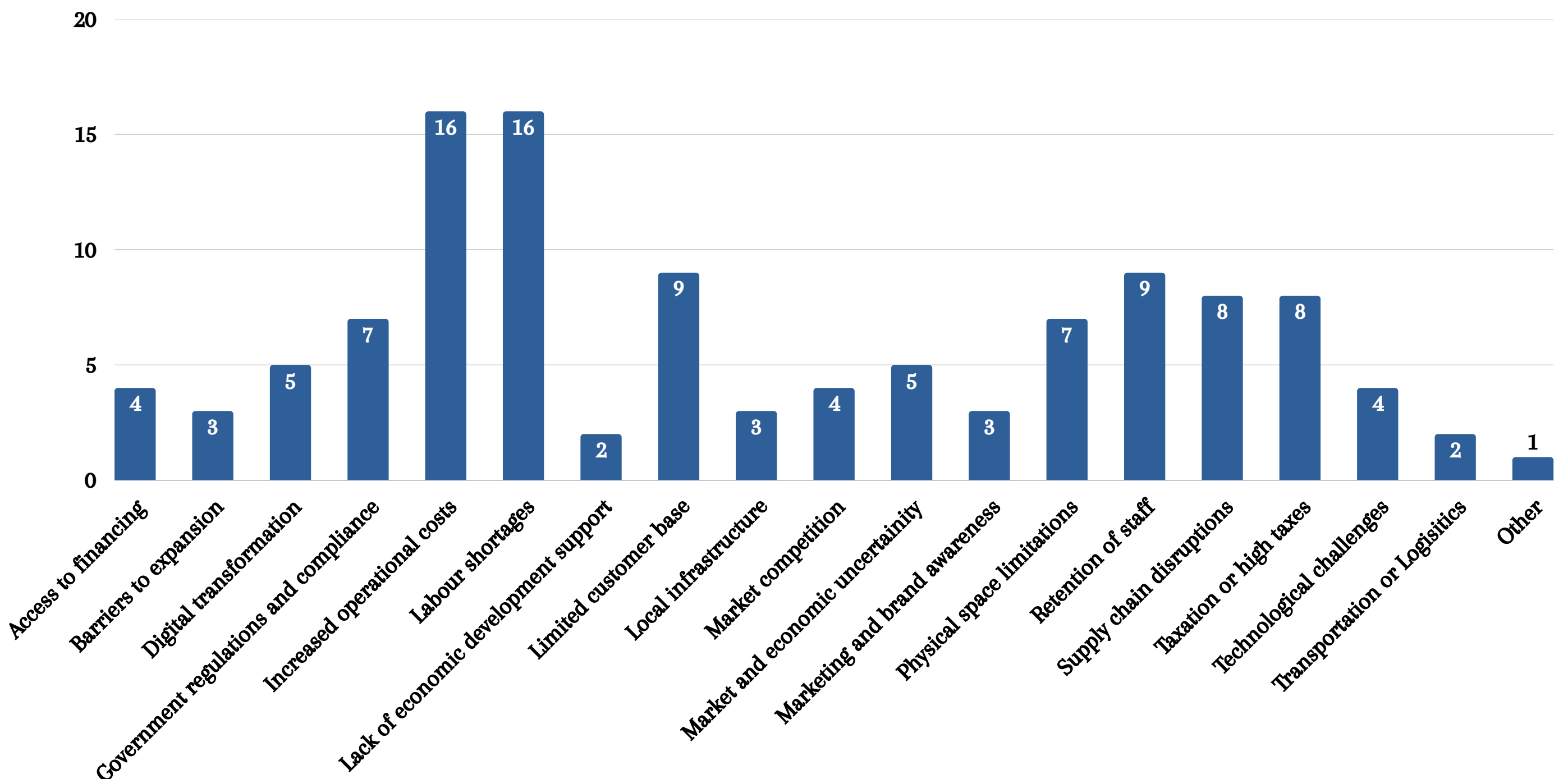
Businesses were asked whether they experienced growth, decline, or stability over the past year. The overwhelming majority reported either stability or growth, while just under 20% experienced decline or were in an uncertain/emerging stage. Businesses in the food and beverage and retail sectors were the most affected, highlighting potential challenges within these industries.

The most common challenges reported by businesses included increased operational costs, labor shortages, a limited customer base, and staff retention. Additionally, one response collected through a fill-in-the-blank option cited "Main Street Safety Concerns." This concern emerged as a recurring theme throughout the data collection process and will be explored further in this report.

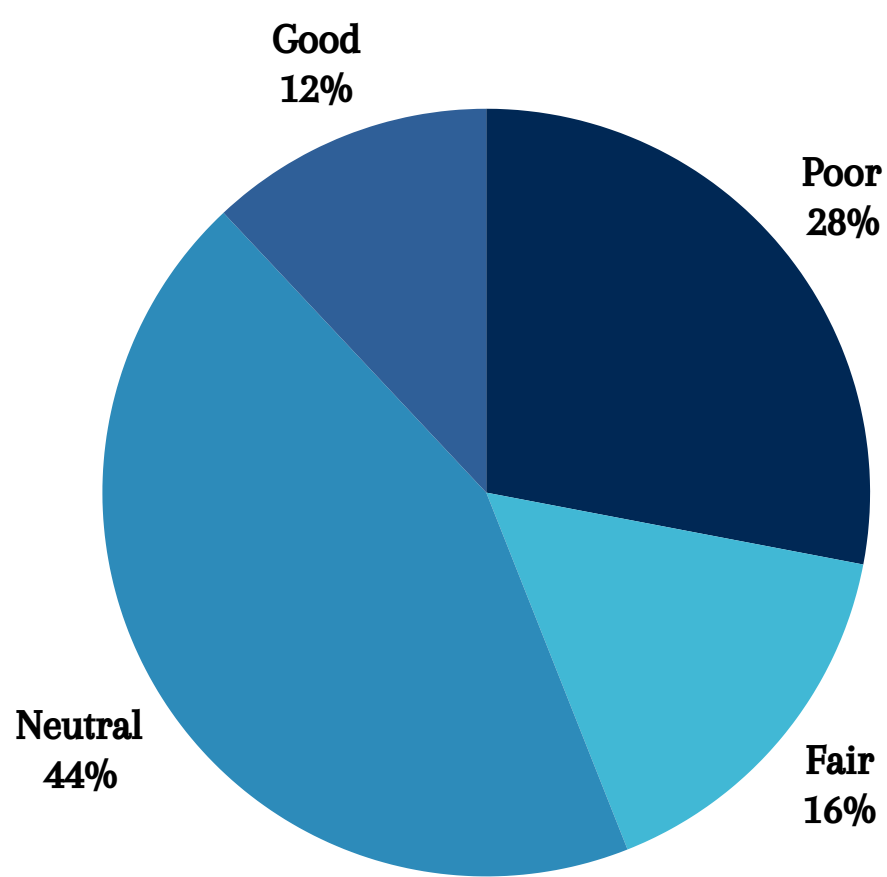


Has your business experienced growth, decline, or stability over the past year?

What challenges or barriers are you currently facing in operating your business?



Appendix 1: Findings and Analysis for Flin Flon Businesses



How would you rate the quality of local infrastructure?

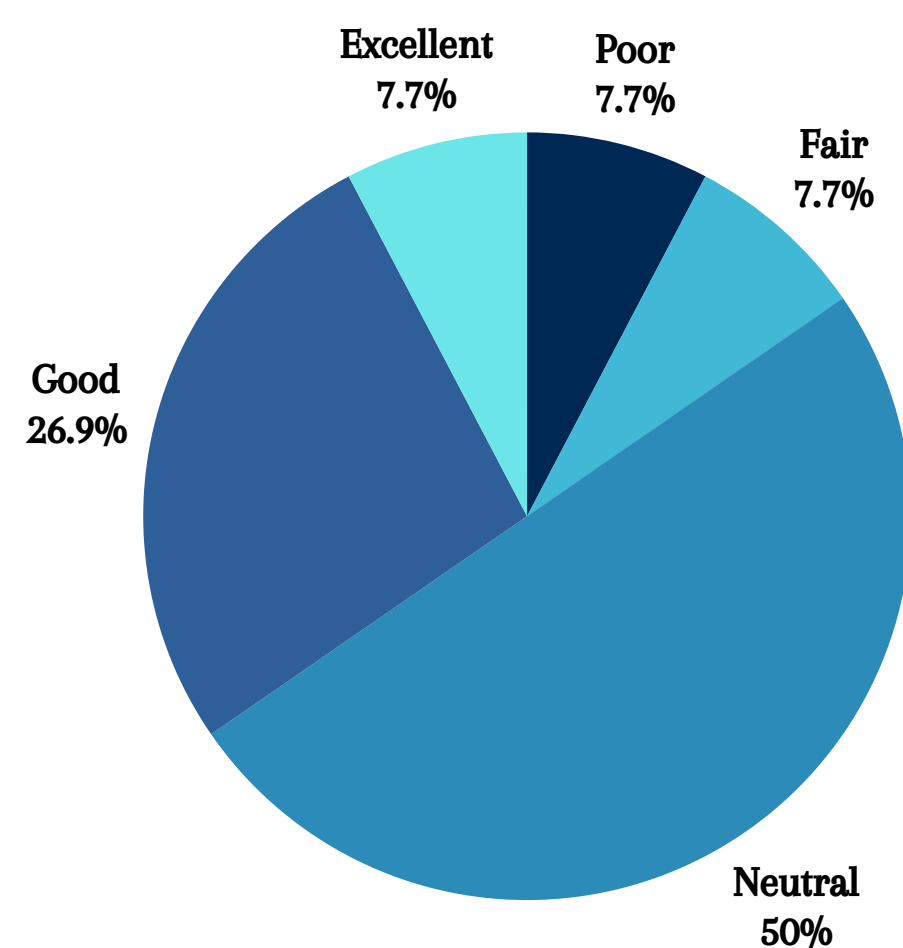
Flin Flon businesses were asked to rate the quality of local infrastructure—including roads, utilities, and internet services—on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. The results showed that 44% of businesses rated local infrastructure as poor or fair, while 56% rated it as neutral or good.

Among businesses located on Main Street, issues with cell service and internet connectivity were frequently reported. Many buildings experience limited or inconsistent service within their facilities, posing challenges for daily operations, customer interactions, and digital transactions. These infrastructure concerns highlight the need for improvements in connectivity and essential services to better support economic growth in the core business hub of the community.

Businesses also identified key areas for improvement that would better support their operations. The most commonly cited needs included enhanced snow removal, increased parking options, metered water services, population attraction strategies, and support to address loitering and safety concerns on Main Street. Additionally, 50% of businesses in Flin Flon indicated plans to expand within the next 1–5 years. With the right improvements and support, this growth has the potential to be exponential, strengthening the local economy. A thriving business community not only fosters local entrepreneurship but also serves as a key attraction tool for outside investors.

From data collected from Flin Flon businesses, the results indicate that the overall business climate in the FDC region is viewed as neutral by the majority of respondents, with some businesses rating it as good, while only a couple of businesses rated it as excellent. On the other end of the spectrum, a handful of businesses rated the business climate as either poor or fair, highlighting that while there are positive aspects to operating in the region, there are still notable concerns. A neutral perception suggests that while businesses are able to operate, they may not feel a strong sense of growth or support that would push their rating into the "good" or "excellent" categories. This could be due to factors such as economic uncertainty, infrastructure limitations, or a lack of targeted business incentives to help companies expand and thrive.

The relatively low number of businesses rating the climate as either excellent or poor suggests that the region is not facing extreme economic distress but also lacks a thriving business environment that strongly encourages investment and growth. Many business owners may feel that while the region provides an adequate space to operate, there are still barriers preventing them from fully capitalizing on market potential. Addressing concerns such as labour shortages and high operational costs could help shift more businesses into the "good" and "excellent" categories. Additionally, enhancing collaboration between local governments and business owners, providing more support programs, and improving infrastructure could help create a more dynamic and attractive business environment in the FDC region.

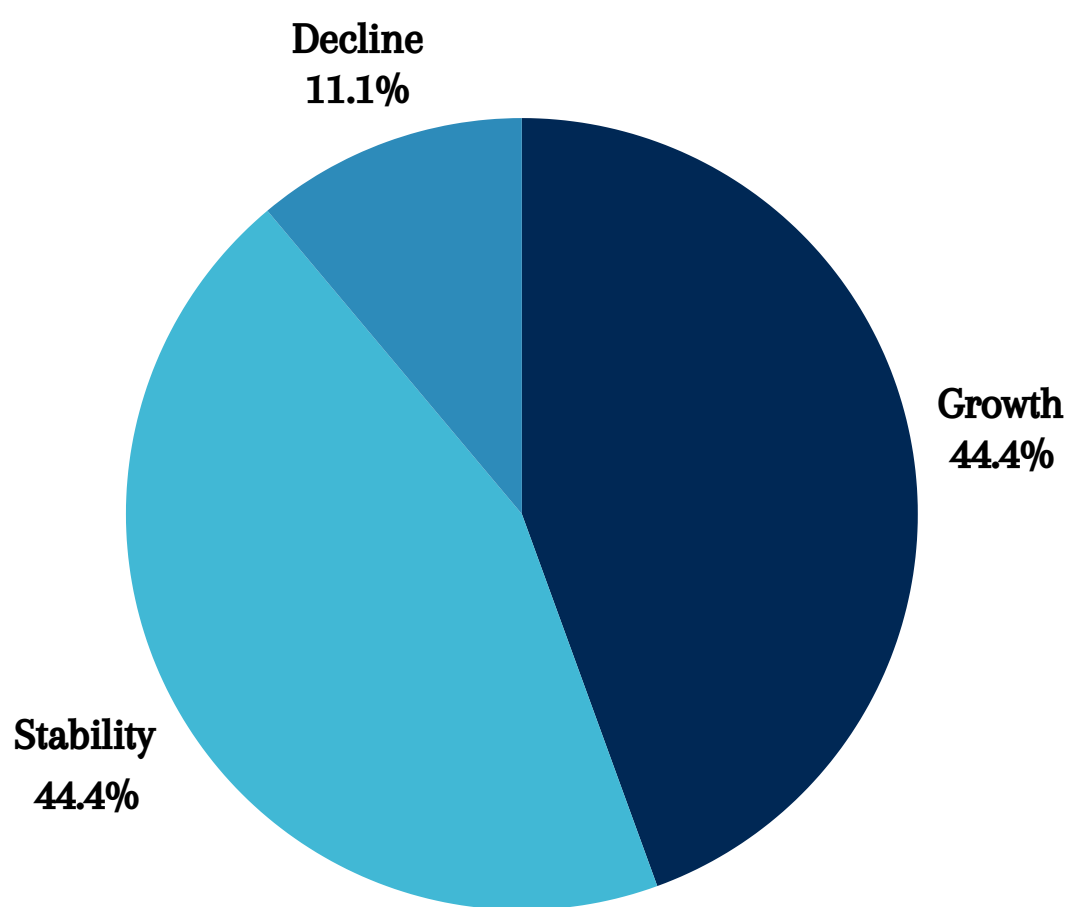
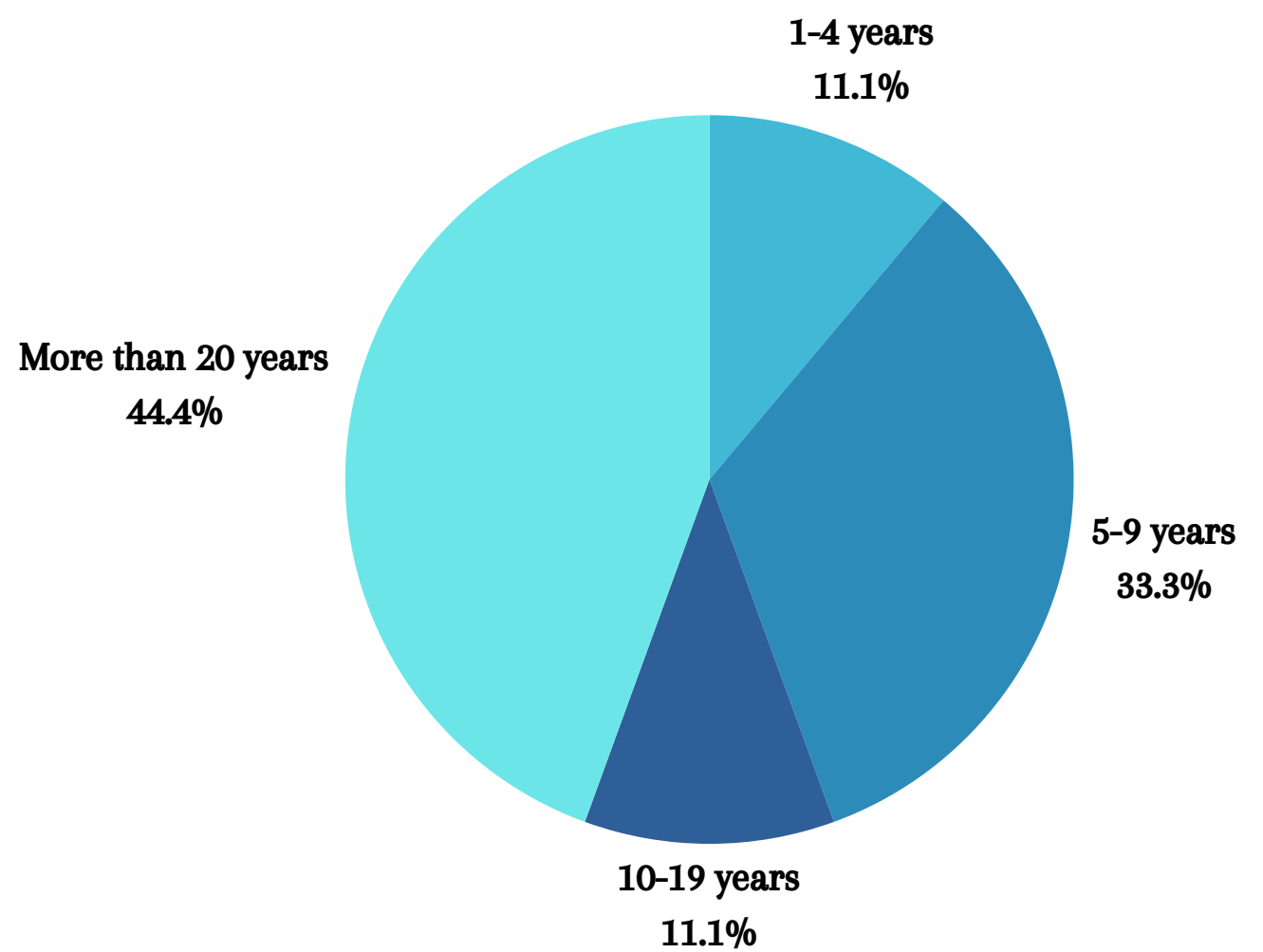


How would you rate the overall business climate in this community?

Appendix 2: Findings and Analysis for Creighton Businesses

Business At A Glance

A total of nine business interviews were conducted with Creighton-based businesses as part of this survey. The findings revealed that 44.4% of businesses have been in operation for more than 20 years, demonstrating a well-established core of long-standing enterprises. Additionally, 44.4% of surveyed businesses have been in operation for one to nine years, highlighting a steady influx of new and growing businesses that contribute to the area's economic vitality.



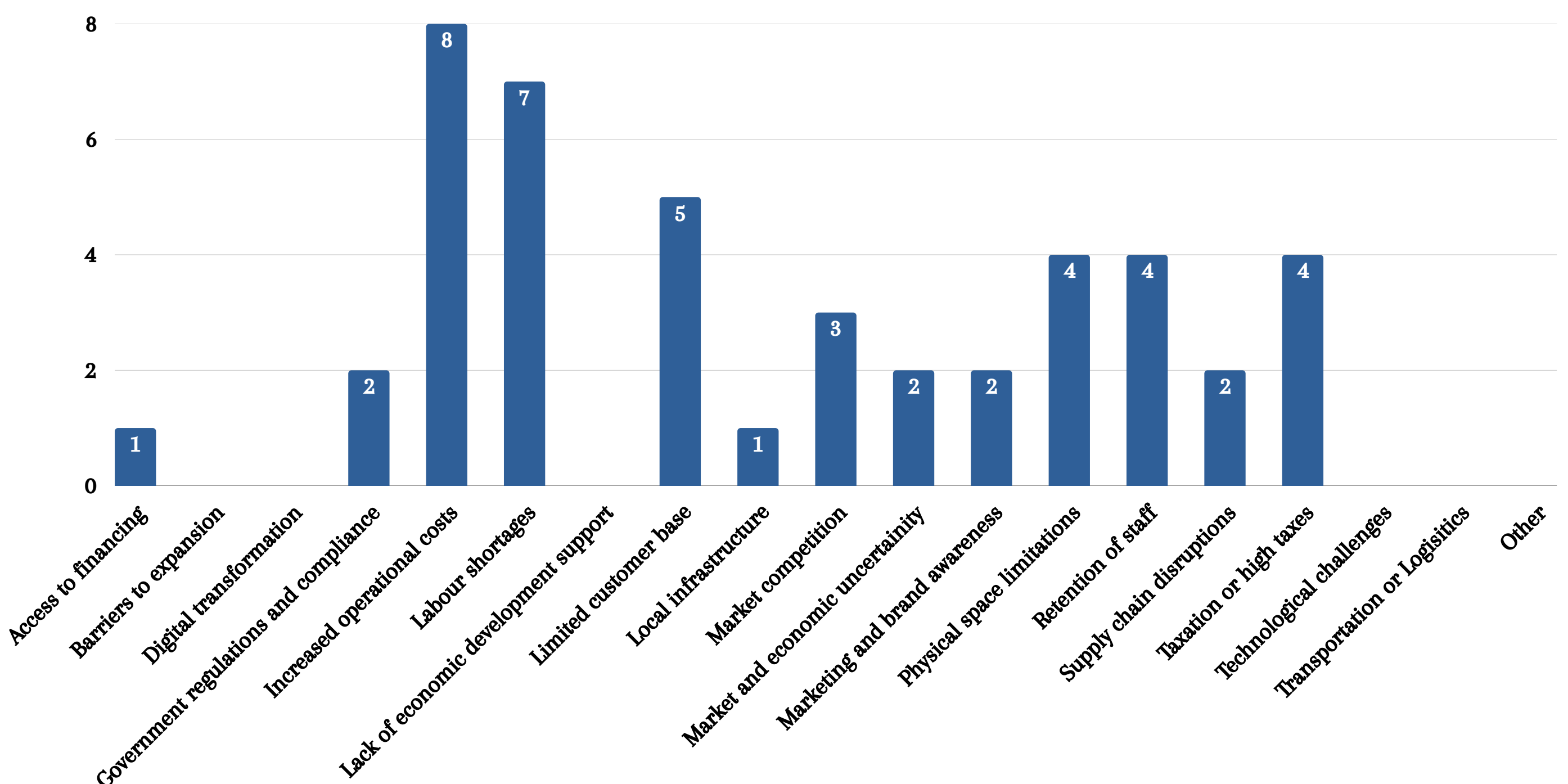
How long has your business been operating in this community?

Businesses were asked whether they experienced growth, decline, or stability over the past year. The majority reported either stability or growth for a response of 88.8%. This information is comprised of business spanning cross-sectors such as service based including food and beverage, retail, real estate, and professional services.

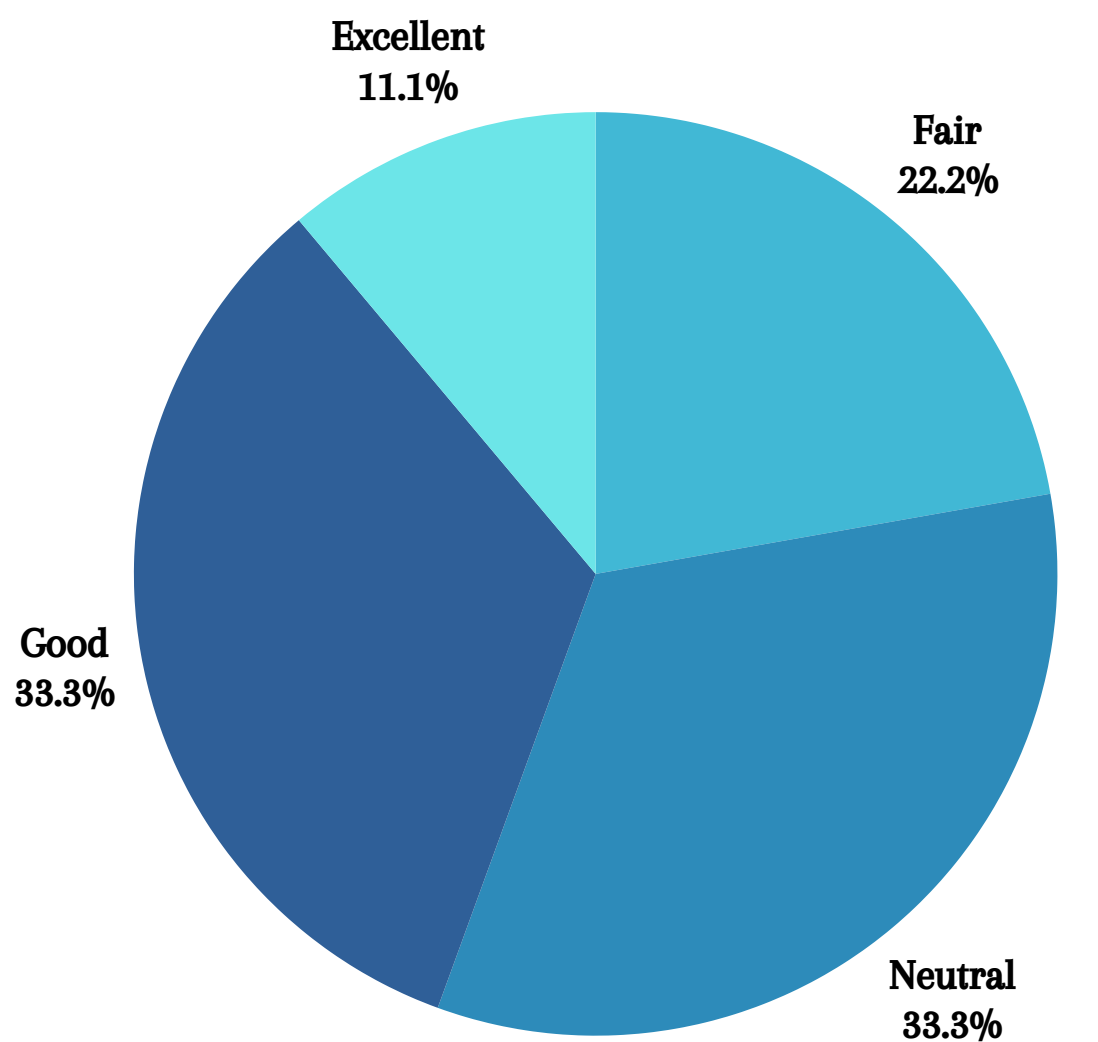
The most common challenges reported by businesses included increased operational costs, labor shortages, and a limited customer base. These concerns emerged as a recurring theme throughout the data collection process throughout the FDC region.

Has your business experienced growth, decline, or stability over the past year?

What challenges or barriers are you currently facing in operating your business?



Appendix 2: Findings and Analysis for Creighton Businesses



How would you rate the quality of local infrastructure?

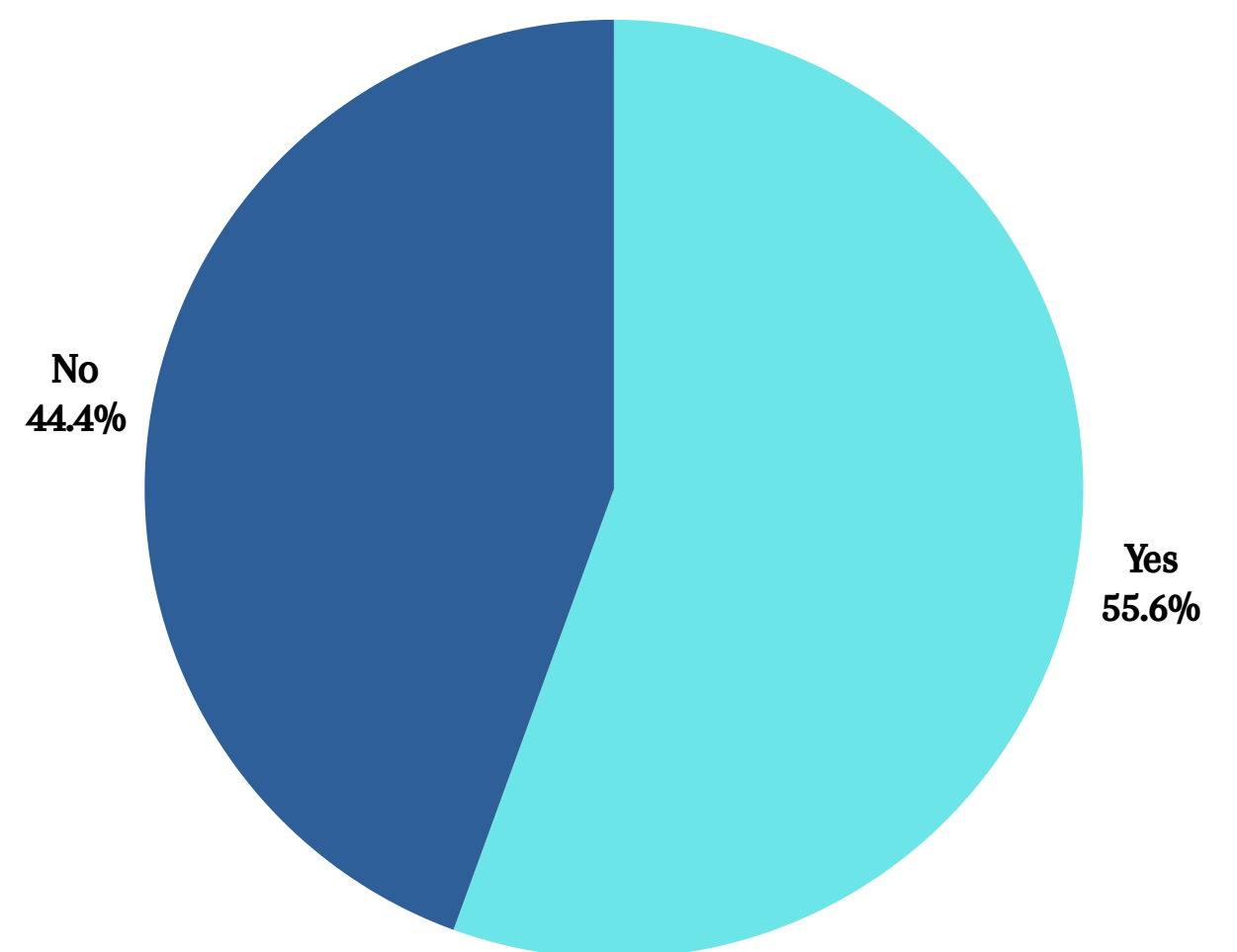
Creighton businesses were asked to rate the quality of local infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and internet services, on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. The results showed that 55.5% of businesses rated local infrastructure as neutral or fair, while 44.4% rated it as good or excellent.

Businesses in Creighton also identified several key infrastructure challenges. Concerns included high-speed traffic from the highway, a need for improved transportation connections to the south, and increased transit options between Flin Flon, Creighton, and Denare Beach. Additionally, Creighton faces a shortage of available commercial space that is ready for development, limiting opportunities for business expansion and new investment. Addressing these infrastructure gaps could help foster economic growth and improve the overall business environment in the region.

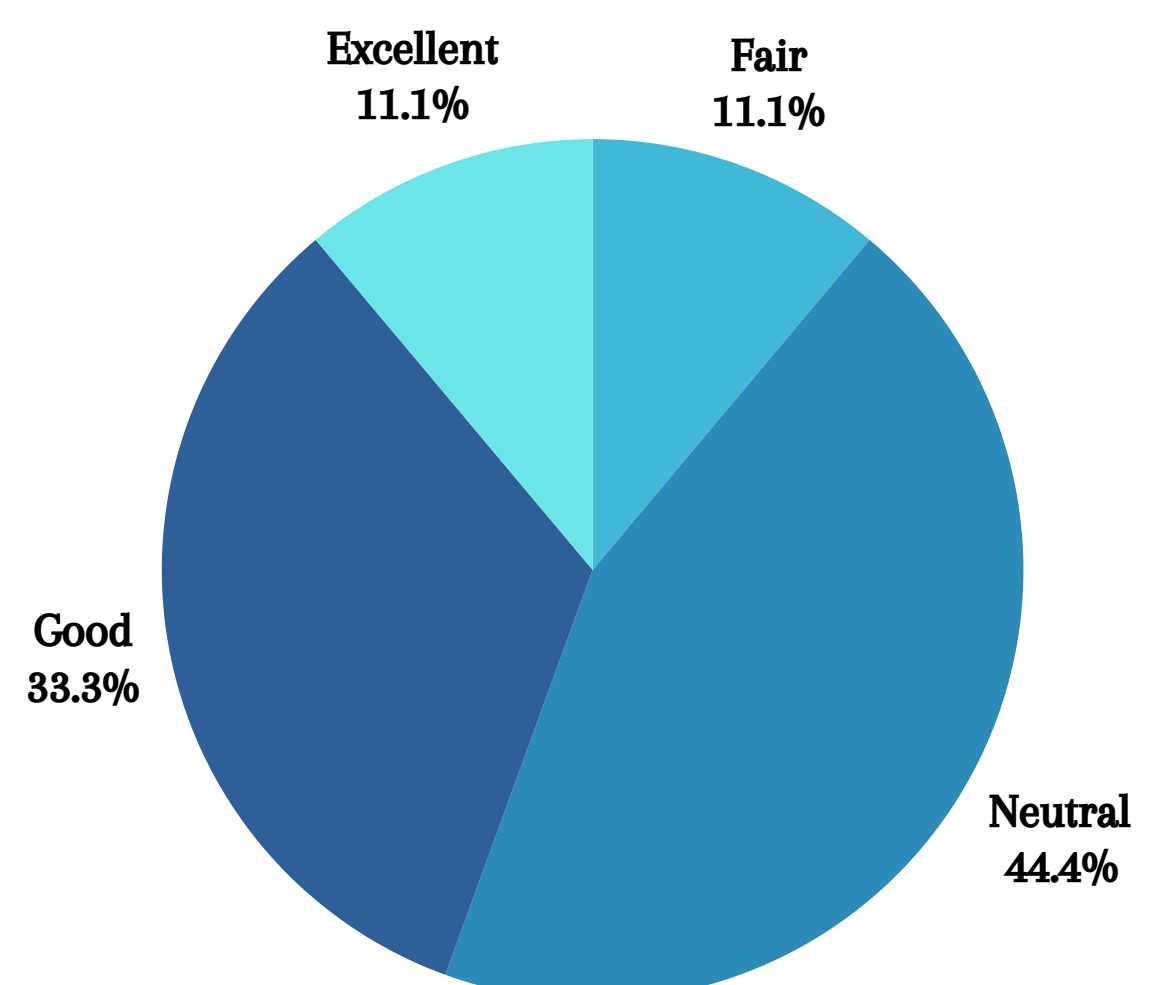
Survey results indicate that 56% of Creighton businesses have plans to expand within the next 1–5 years, while 44% do not currently have expansion plans. This demonstrates a strong level of business confidence and growth potential in the community, with over half of respondents looking to invest in their operations. However, the 44% who are not planning to expand may face barriers such as economic uncertainty, financial constraints, workforce challenges, or capacity limitations. Addressing these concerns through targeted support programs and business incentives could encourage further growth and investment. The positive outlook from the majority of businesses highlights Creighton’s potential for economic expansion, reinforcing the need for strategic planning to support both existing businesses and new opportunities.

From data collected from Creighton businesses, the survey results indicate that the overall business climate is viewed most commonly as neutral, with some businesses rating it as good and excellent. Notably, no businesses rated it as poor. This suggests that while the area provides a generally stable environment for businesses, there are still areas that need improvement to enhance overall confidence in the local economy. A neutral rating from the majority of respondents indicates that while businesses are able to operate, they may not feel fully supported or positioned for significant growth. Many of the concerns regarding business climate are similar to those listed for Flin Flon such as labour shortages, limited customer base, high operational costs, etc.

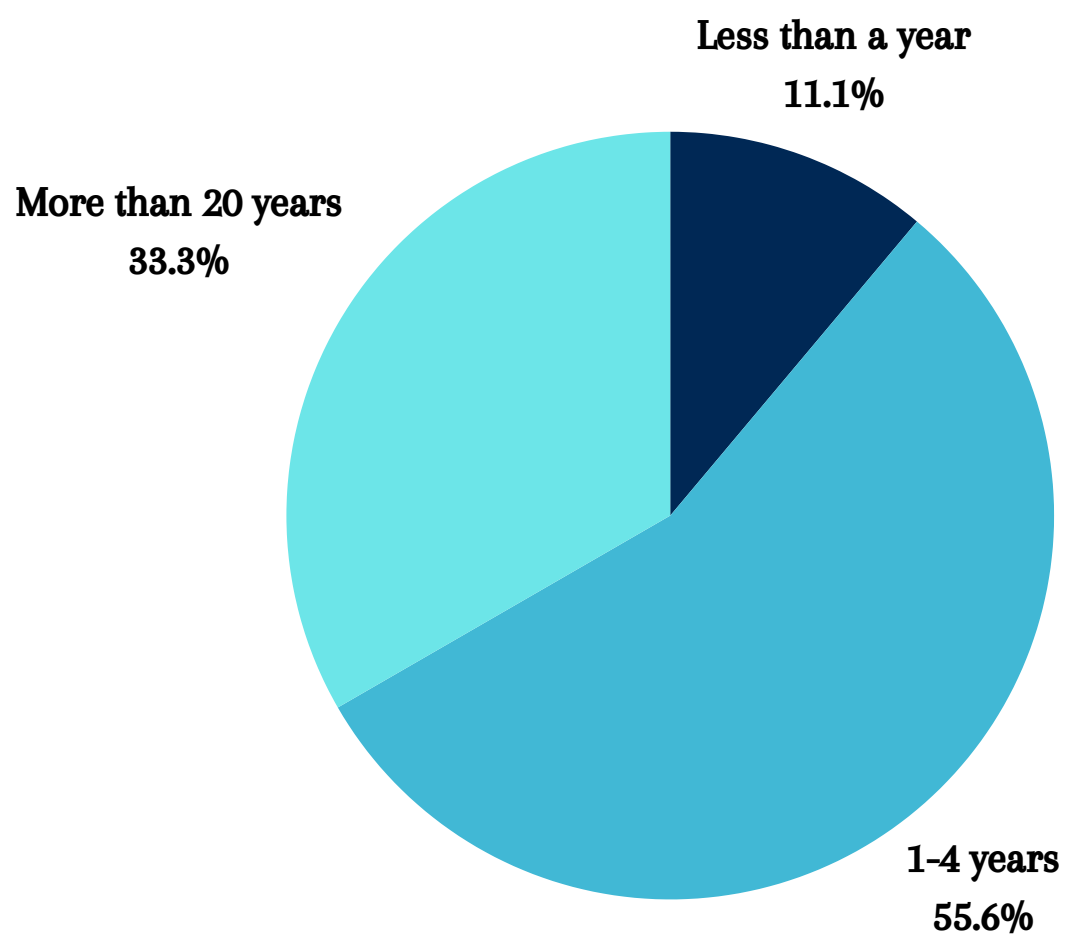
Do you have plans to expand or relocate in the next 1-5 years?



How would you rate the overall business climate in this community?



Appendix 3: Findings and Analysis for Denare Beach/OOM Businesses



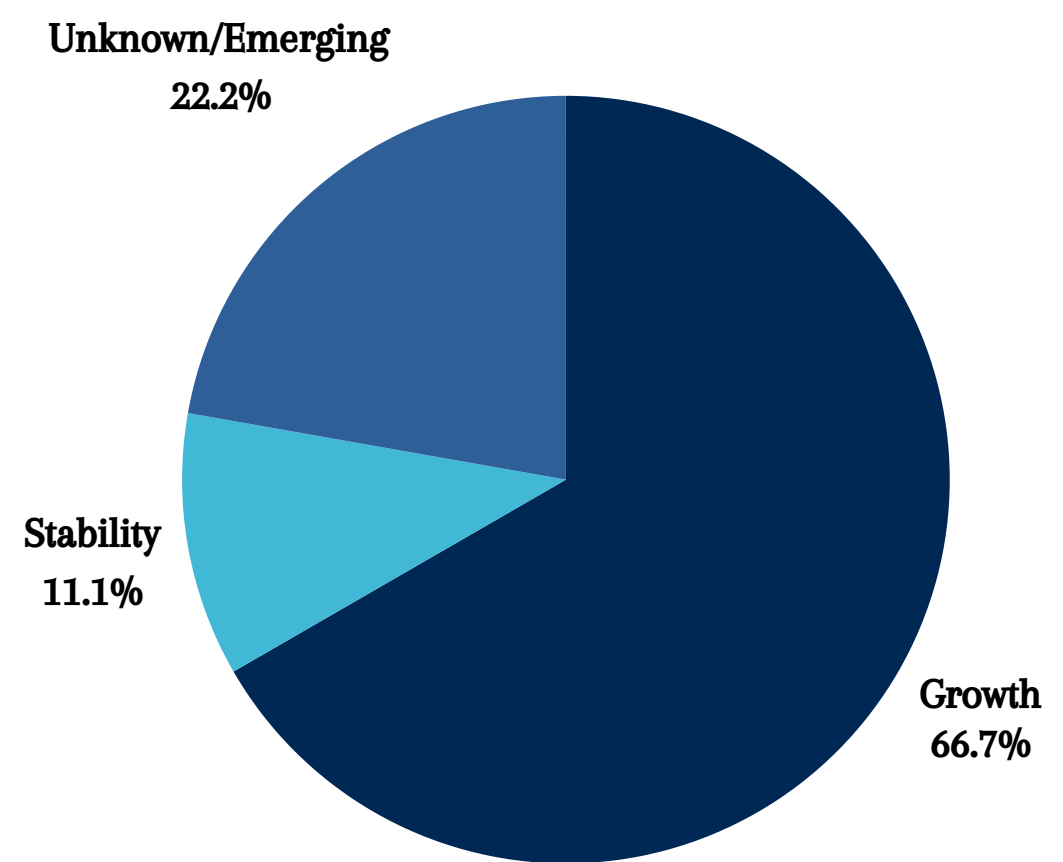
How long has your business been operating in this community?

Businesses were asked whether they experienced growth, decline, or stability over the past year. The overwhelming majority reported either growth, while 22.2% are in a phase of uncertainty and emerging. Businesses in the tourism sectors contribute to a high majority of industry in Denare Beach and Out of Market and has experienced recent growth.

The most common challenges reported by businesses included increased operational costs, transportation, and a limited customer base. Additionally, three responses are collected through a fill-in-the-blank option. these responses cited seasonality, high insurance costs, and minimum wage increases as business challenges.

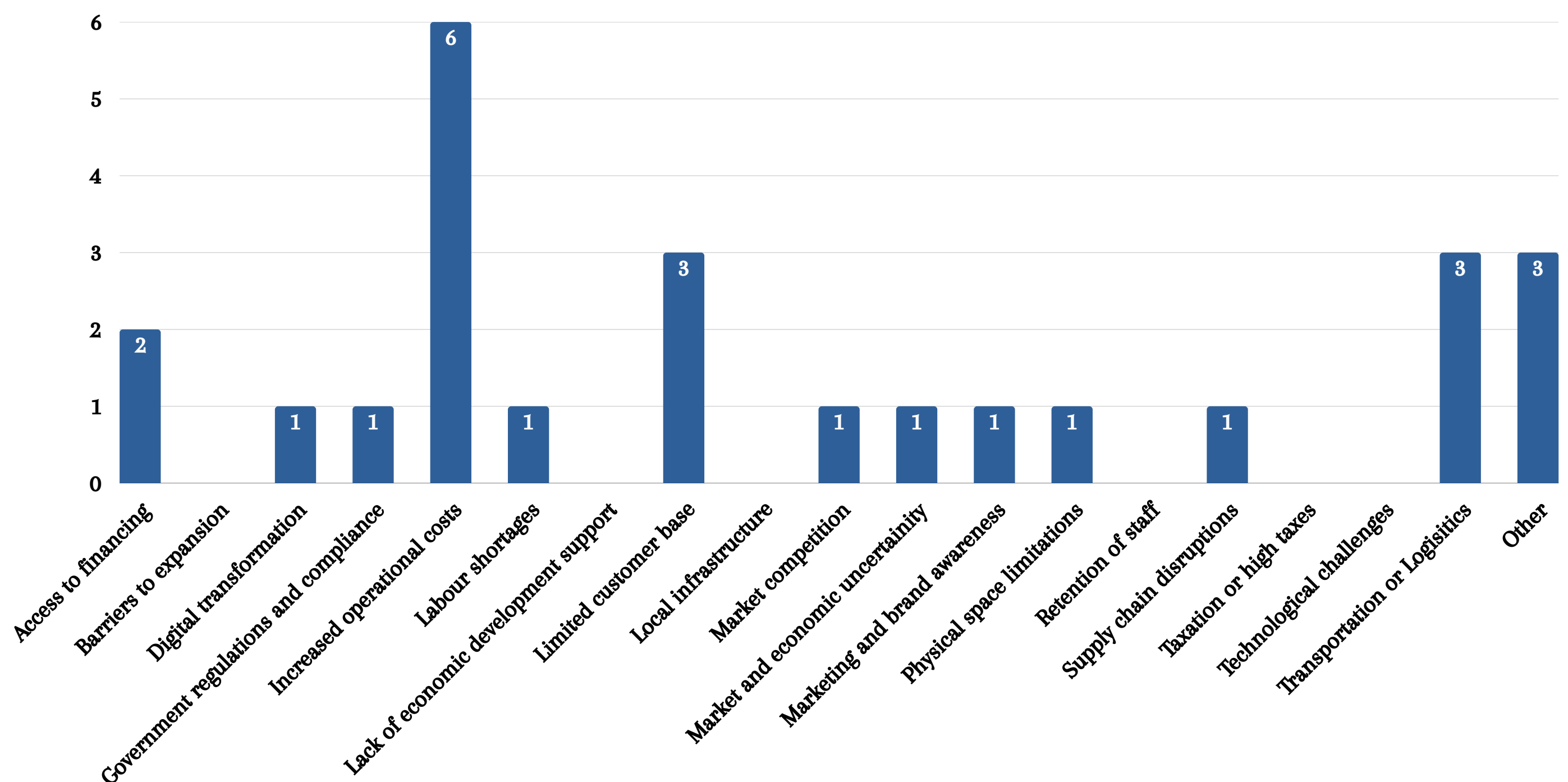
Business At A Glance

A total of nine business interviews were conducted with Denare Beach-based businesses and businesses that impact the FDC that lie outside of municipal boundaries as part of this survey. The findings revealed that 61.5% of businesses have been in operation for more than 20 years, highlighting a strong presence of well-established enterprises in the community. Additionally, 23% of surveyed businesses have been in operation for less than four years, including start-ups, indicating a recent increase in new small businesses. These results suggest a healthy balance between long-standing businesses and emerging entrepreneurs, contributing to the region's economic diversity and resilience.

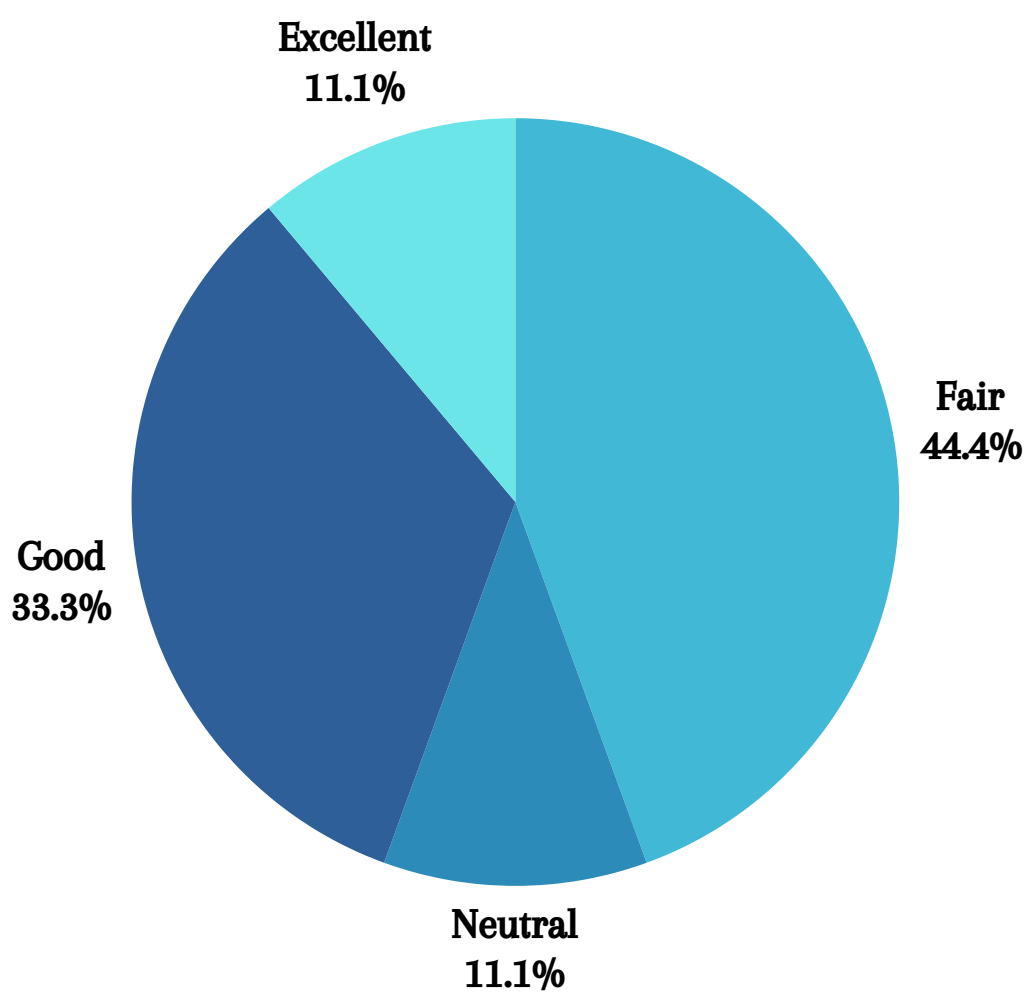


Has your business experienced growth, decline, or stability over the past year?

What challenges or barriers are you currently facing in operating your business?



Appendix 3: Findings and Analysis for Denare Beach/OOM Businesses



How would you rate the quality of local infrastructure?

Denare Beach and Out of Market businesses were asked to rate the quality of local infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and internet services, on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. The results showed that 44.4% of businesses rated local infrastructure as fair, while 55.6% rated it as excellent, neutral, and good.

Businesses in this area also identified several key infrastructure challenges. Concerns mostly surround tourism aspects and includes space considerations for RVs and boat haulers at local businesses, a need for improved wayfinding and signage, and increased marketing for the FDC region as a destination.

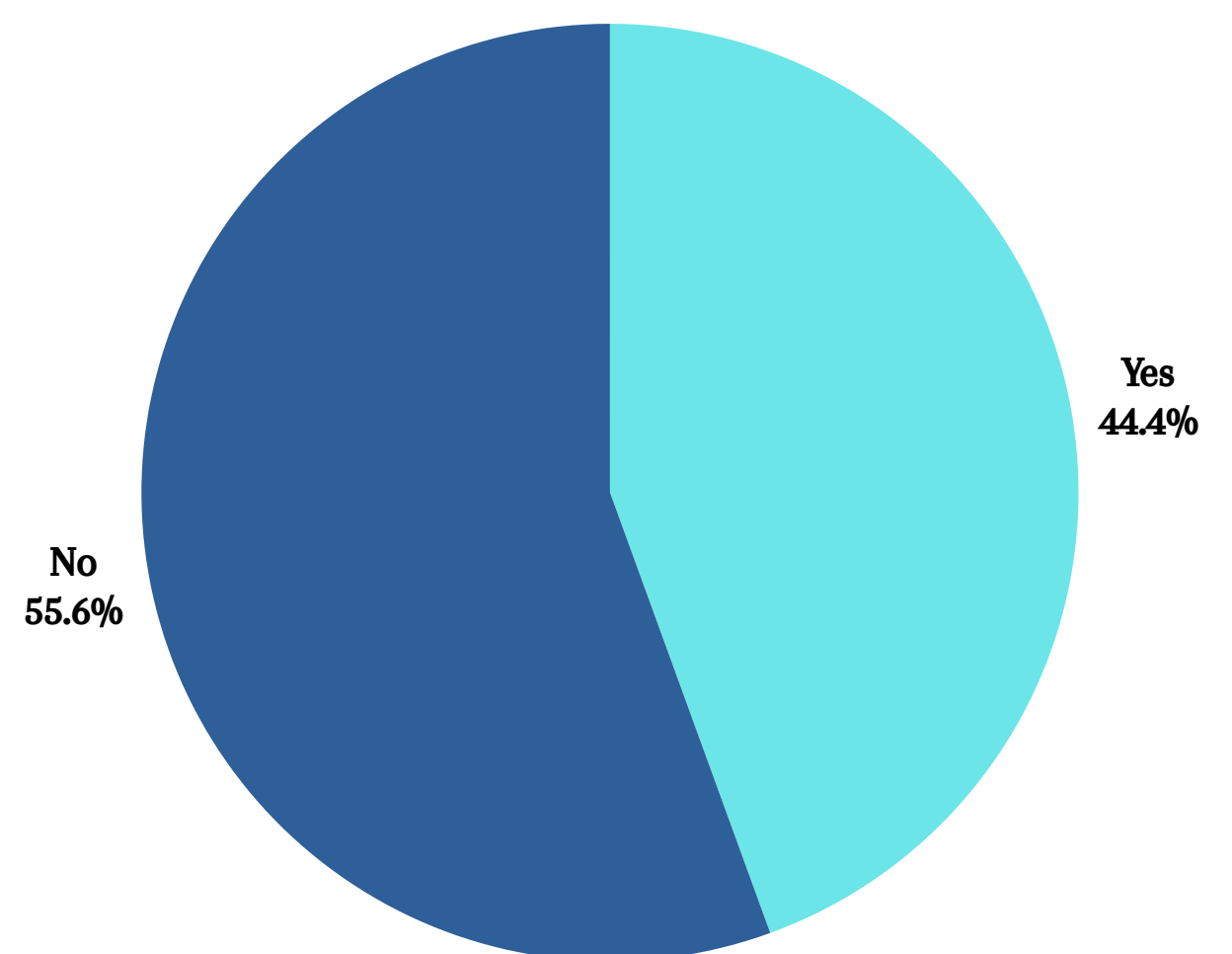
Survey results indicate that 44% of businesses in this area have plans to expand within the next 1–5 years, while 56% do not currently have expansion plans. This suggests that while a portion of local businesses see opportunities for growth, the majority remain cautious due to other factors such as new business ownership.

Among those planning to expand, a significant number are new tourism-related businesses, which present both opportunities and challenges. These businesses often rely on seasonal visitor traffic, making long-term sustainability more difficult due to fluctuating demand, staffing needs, and unpredictable external factors like weather or travel restrictions. Many tourism operators are also dependent on regional marketing efforts and transportation accessibility to support their growth.

The data collected reflects a diverse mix of long-established businesses and newer ventures, with varying levels of confidence in future growth. While some businesses reported stability and expansion plans, others cited barriers such as seasonality, external factors, and uncertain demand as key concerns. Additionally, feedback on local infrastructure, business support programs, and economic conditions offers a clearer picture of what is needed to strengthen and sustain the business community.

The overall business climate in this community is viewed positively, with the majority of respondents rating it as good or excellent and no businesses considering it poor or fair. This suggests that local economic conditions and support systems are generally meeting business needs, allowing them to operate with a sense of stability and opportunity. The presence of businesses rating the climate as neutral, however, indicates that there is still room for improvement in fostering a more dynamic and supportive business environment. To further enhance the business climate, efforts could be made to attract new investments and address challenges such as workforce shortages or infrastructure limitations. By building on the existing positive sentiment and ensuring that businesses of all sizes and sectors feel well-supported, the community can foster a thriving and resilient local economy that encourages long-term success and expansion.

Do you have plans to expand or relocate in the next 1-5 years?



How would you rate the overall business climate in this community?

