



The 2015 Kitimat Business Walk was conducted during the afternoon of **Wednesday, November 4**. A total of 11 participants were assembled for the event, made up of representatives from the District of Kitimat, Advisory Planning Commission and Kitimat Chamber of Commerce.

- Councillor Rob Goffinet – District of Kitimat
- Councillor Mary Murphy – District of Kitimat
- Warren Waycheshen – District of Kitimat
- Rose Klukas – District of Kitimat
- Tyler Noble – District of Kitimat
- Bev Gibaldi – District of Kitimat
- Barb Haun – District of Kitimat
- Trish Parsons – Kitimat Chamber of Commerce
- Jill Barrowman – Kitimat Chamber of Commerce
- Grant Foraunet – Advisory Planning Commission
- Sheldon Teves – Advisory Planning Commission

Business walks are a tool to gather and track the pulse of local businesses and help community leaders identify measures and actions that ensure jobs, goods and services stay in a community.

Civic and business leaders gather information that enables them to identify and remove barriers to doing business in their municipality. Chambers of Commerce can use the walks to communicate the supports that are available to businesses and use the information gathered to tailor their services to meet the needs of their members.

Businesses were asked:

- Is your business growing, steady or shrinking?
- What do you like most about doing business in Kitimat?
- What is the greatest challenge your business faces today?
- What can be done to help your business thrive?
- What specific information would you like to have access to locally?

## Methodology

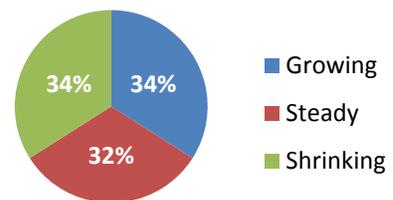
The individuals who participated in Business Walk worked mainly in groups of two. Kitimat Council and Advisory Planning Commission members took part as well as District of Kitimat and Kitimat Chamber of Commerce staff. The teams collectively visited and received responses from **64 businesses** over a three hour period. The areas covered included City Centre, Mountainview Square, Nechako Centre, Service Centre and several other businesses outside of these areas. The event was advertised in advance with a media release, a social media blitz and email alerts distributed to Chamber of Commerce members.

## Findings

At each business, the walkers conducted a survey consisting of five questions:

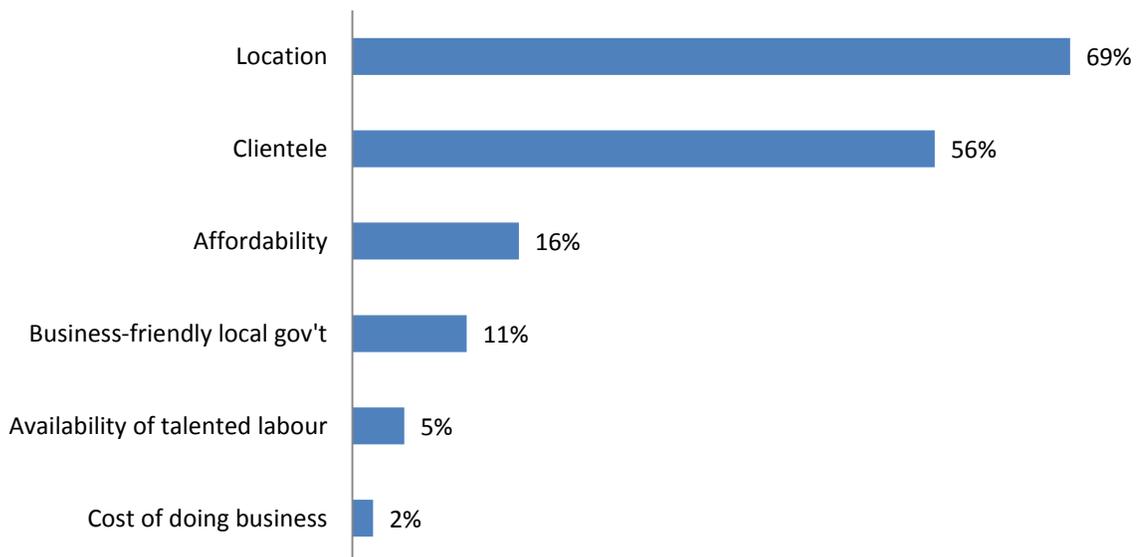
### *Question 1: Is your business growing, steady, or shrinking?*

When asked this question, 66% of businesses indicated a positive outlook responding with either **growing** or **steady**. The other 34% of businesses indicated their business was **shrinking** or in transition. Several respondents linked their outlook to major industrial projects such as the Rio Tinto modernization and liquefied natural gas (LNG) early works.



### *Question 2: What do you like most about doing business in Kitimat?*

The majority of businesses surveyed (69%) expressed satisfaction with their **location** while just over half (56%) cited **clientele** as one of the positive aspects of doing business in Kitimat. Some respondents also indicated **affordability** and having a **business-friendly local government**.



### *Question 3: What is the greatest challenge your business faces today?*

A few common themes emerged from asking this question during the Business Walk.

By far the most commonly cited challenge for Kitimat businesses was **attracting and/or retaining qualified employees**. Responses of this nature were mentioned by 39% of businesses surveyed.

Another challenge referenced by 15% of respondents was **competition from businesses based outside of Kitimat**. Some referred to Terrace-based businesses, while others noted online competition.

**Economic uncertainty** with the Rio Tinto project winding down and no LNG investment decisions yet was identified as the greatest challenge for 11% of businesses.

A small number of businesses (6%) expressed having challenges associated with the **size of their buildings/property** and a lack of alternatives in Kitimat.

### *Question 4: What can be done to help your business thrive?*

There were a wide variety of responses to this question but a common sentiment expressed by 11% of businesses was a desire to see more **initiatives to encourage shopping locally**.

Several businesses (9%) indicated that continued **industrial growth** (e.g. an LNG project going ahead) would have a significantly positive impact on their business.

A few businesses (5%) suggested more **skills training initiatives** would be beneficial to them.

### *Question 5: What specific information would you like to have access to locally?*

While many businesses either chose not to respond to this question or expressed satisfaction with the information available to them locally, 20% of businesses requested more information be made available on **construction projects, new businesses and growth prospects**.

Some businesses (8%) expressed interest in a **community calendar** or some other method of knowing in advance when community events are taking place.

*With each of the three questions above, many of the businesses surveyed provided information unique to their particular business or sector. While these responses are not reflected in this report, they have been retained for possible follow up.*

## What's next?

As a follow-up to the Business Walk, the District of Kitimat Economic Development Department has invited business owners to participate in a roundtable discussion on November 26, 2015 to discuss the findings from the walk and potential actionable items.

The District of Kitimat intends to conduct another Business Walk in 2016 to measure changes in the local business climate.



## For more information, please contact:

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