

Business Retention Survey Results



Prepared by:
**Economic Development
Committee**
August 2013

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the following individuals and organizations who participated in the creation of this Plan:

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Westchester Chamber of Commerce for their support in mailing out the survey & the Business Promotion Committees efforts in calling businesses.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an effort to support the Village of Westchester's 2012 Strategic Plan, the Economic Development Committee created a business retention survey to assess the needs of the Village's businesses. The Village received 135 responses to the survey. This represents a 22.8% response rate. Most businesses are renting their commercial space. The average business has been in operation for 14 years. The longest operating business that responded to the survey has been in operation for 51 years. The largest employer to respond to the survey has 2,000 full time employees. The average was 32.67 employees. Most customers of our businesses are coming from Cook County.

As the economy improves, the survey indicates that business is beginning to improve. Most businesses are seeing an increase or the same level of sales versus last year. Over sixty (60%) of businesses indicated they either planned to hire new employees or maintain the same level of employment next year. One-fifth of the businesses that responded to the survey indicated that they have growth or expansion plans in the future. **Almost two-thirds of the businesses that responded to the survey indicated that they felt the village was business friendly.** The community services the village offers either ranked good or fair. All of the qualities of Westchester as a place to do business ranked as good or fair.

GENERAL INFORMATION

In an effort to support the Village of Westchester's 2012 Strategic Plan, the Economic Development Committee created a business retention survey to assess the needs of the Village's businesses.

Goals & Objectives of the Survey: The goal of the survey was to create a thriving local economy by maximizing the potential of local businesses. By supporting local businesses, we can help grow a diverse local economy, stabilize our tax base, and create a strong and vibrant business community.

Primary objectives of the survey include the understanding of:

1. The challenges and opportunities for Westchester businesses
2. Availability of business assistance within the community
3. Strengths and Weaknesses of Westchester as a place to conduct business
4. Perceptions of local barriers for retention, expansion and attraction of business
5. Probability of business expansion, relocation, closure or sale.

Survey List Development & Outreach Methods: The business list was created from the Village's business license information, Westchester Chamber of Commerce membership list and *OneSource Global Business Browser* a business database. The survey was distributed in a variety of ways. The surveys were mailed to businesses the week of March 18, 2013. The survey was available at the Village's website. The surveys were distributed by email to 169 email addresses on March 4, 2013. Various reminder emails have been circulated to businesses since the time the survey went live. The surveys were distributed at various Chamber events. The Economic Development Committee in

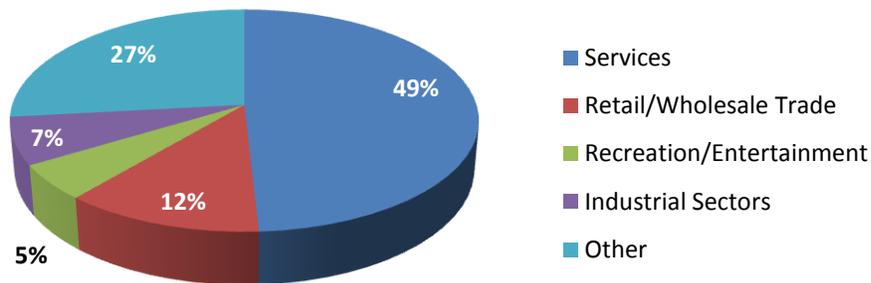
conjunction with the Westchester Chamber of Commerce Business Promotion Committee divided up the list of businesses in the Village that had not responded to the survey and called the businesses to verify the contact information and request that they fill out the survey. The survey was closed on July 31, 2013. Eighty-two (82%) percent of survey responses were received online.

Response Rate: The Village received 135 responses out of 590 businesses in the Village. This represents a 22.8% response rate.

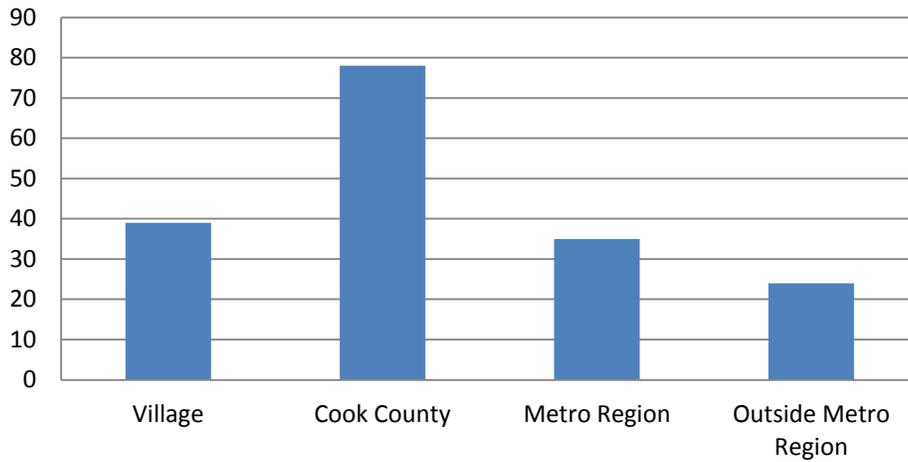
BUSINESS BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Are you the owner of the property?	Yes: 33%	No: 66%	
	Average	Longest	Shortest
Length of time in business:	14.1 yrs	51 yrs	2 months
	Average	Largest	Smallest
Number of employees:			
Full Time Employees:	32.67	2,000	0
Part Time Employees:	5.31	100	0
Seasonal:	2.45	100	0

Business Sectors Represented



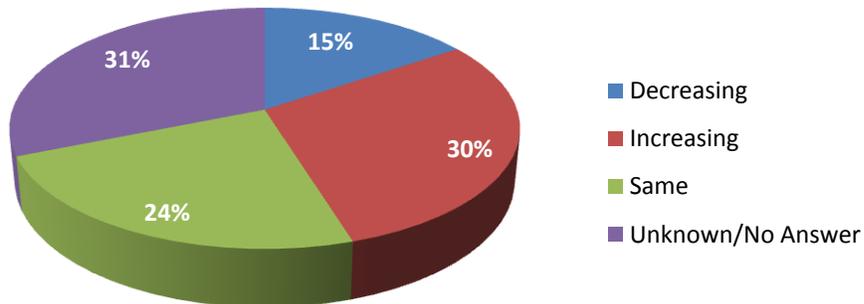
Where do your customers live?



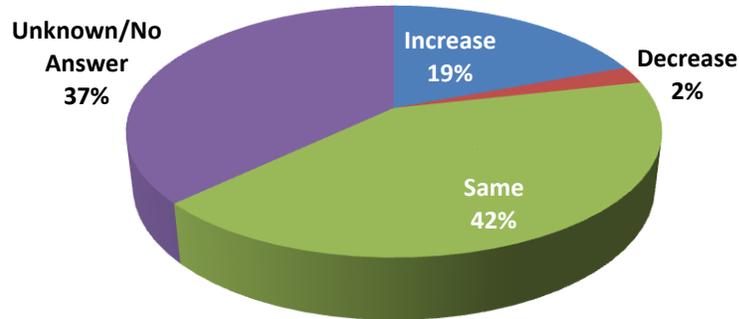
BUSINESS INDICATORS

Compared to last year, sales at over half (54%) of all businesses are either increasing or staying the same. Sixty-One (61%) percent of all businesses are either hiring or maintaining their current employment levels.

Compared to last year, sales are:

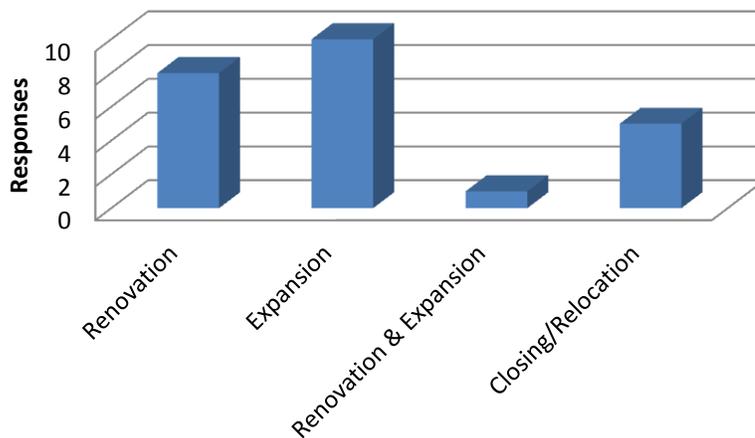


Do you anticipate a change in the size of your workforce?

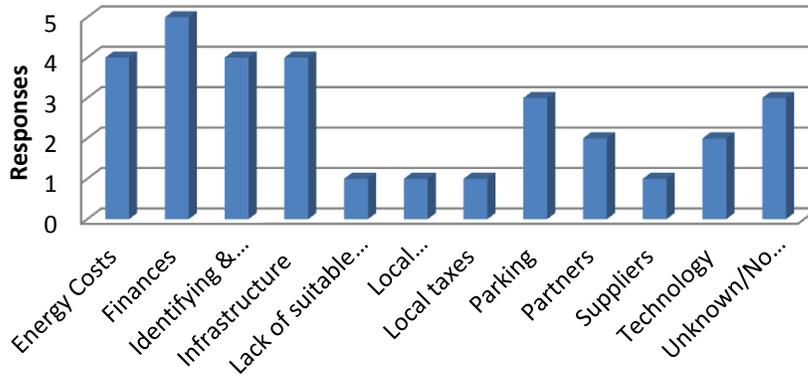


Renovation/Expansion/Relocation/Growth Plans: Of the businesses that responded to the question “Do you have any renovation, expansion, relocation or growth plans?” Twenty-One (21%) percent indicated that they did have some future growth plans. Of the 21% that had some business growth plans, 76% of respondents were planning renovations or expansions.

Business Growth Plans



Reasons for Growth or Expansion Plans

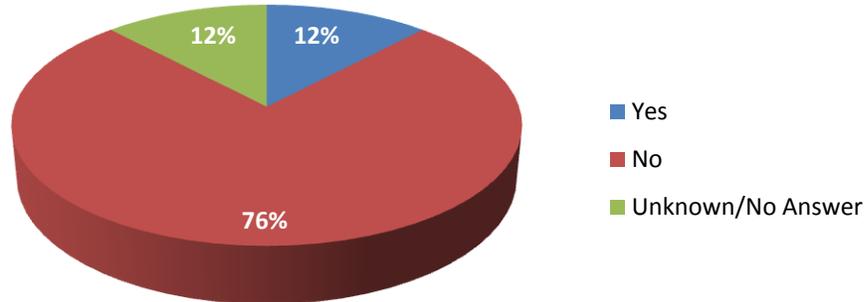


CONTACTED REGARDING RELOCATION

Twelve (12%) percent of the respondents indicated that they had been approached by other cities or states to encourage them to relocate. Surrounding suburbs have approached some of our businesses regarding relocation as well as the states of Indiana and Utah. Some of the points used to encourage businesses to move were:

- Economic
- The clientele would increase, there is more of a need for my tutoring services
- Rent Cost
- Office location to hospital
- Taxes, stable state government
- Traffic, community advertising
- Share space, new location
- Sales tax incentives and build out money
- said no interested
- Location Possible TIF District

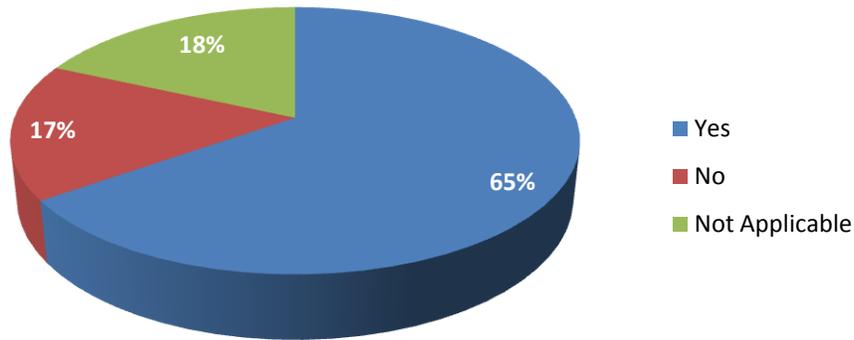
Contacted by other cities/states:



BUSINESS FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

Is the Village business friendly? Sixty-five (65%) of survey respondents indicated that the Village is business friendly. Various comments were received on experiences dealing with the Village. The comments are broken down by those that considered the Village business friendly, those that felt there was room for improvement. Businesses that indicated that the Village was business friendly indicated that staff was friendly and helpful and that staff helped get them get their businesses open. Some concerns raised were with regards to lack of interaction with the Village, permitting and infrastructure.

Is the Village Business Friendly?



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Over a third of respondents are members of the Chamber of Commerce. Roughly one-third of respondents indicated that they were interested in learning more about the chamber of commerce. The reasons for joining ranged from networking opportunities and business outreach.

Are you a member of the Chamber of Commerce?	Yes 35.7%	No 64.3%
Are you interested in joining the Chamber?	Yes 32.2%	No 67.8%
Would you like more information on joining the Chamber?	Yes 27.8%	No 72.2%

COMMUNITY SERVICES

All services had an average rating of either "Good" or "Fair". The highest ranking services were fire protection, ambulance/paramedic service and police protection. The three lowest ranking services were streets and roads (local), sign regulations, zoning changes/building permits



SERVICES REQUESTED

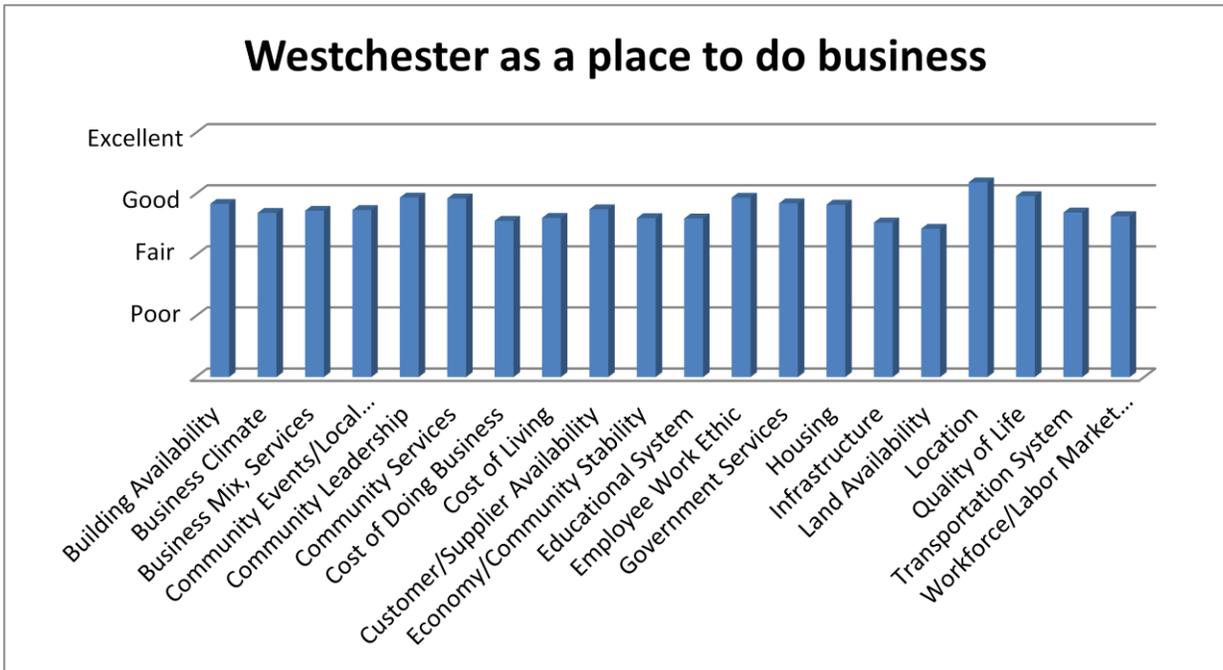
When businesses were asked what types of programs or assistance they would like to see the Village or affiliated organizations offer, the most often cited items were:

- Establish a Shop Local program
- Improve the permitting and licensing process
- Businesses would like to see more communication from the Village to the businesses
- Information on business assistance available
- More economic development
- Improve roads

Many businesses did indicate that they were happy with the services currently offered. Some indicated that they couldn't think of a service that was not being offered already.

COMMUNITY QUALITIES

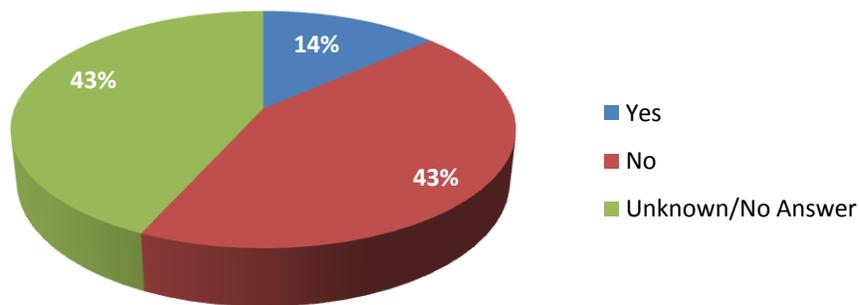
When asked to rank the Village as a place to do business, the Village for each indicator ranked in the "Good" or "Fair" categories. Top three rankings for the community as a place to do business were location, quality of life, and community leadership. Land availability, infrastructure, cost of doing business ranked the lowest.



LOCAL POLICIES

Only fourteen (14%) of respondents indicated that local policies had impacted their business. The item identified most often as impacting business were sign regulations. About half of the open ended responses mentioned sign regulations.

Any local policies impacted/benefited your business?



Appendix A:
Business Retention Survey &
Cover Letter



Village of Westchester

Economic Development Committee

BUSINESS RETENTION SURVEY

Dear Business Owner,

In an effort to support the Village of Westchester's 2012 Strategic Plan, the Economic Development Committee created a village business survey to assess the needs of village business owners. The goal is to create a thriving local economy by maximizing the potential of local businesses. By supporting local businesses, we can help grow a diverse local economy, stabilize our tax base, and create a strong and vibrant business community.

Primary objectives of the survey include the understanding of:

1. The challenges and opportunities for Westchester businesses
2. Availability of business assistance within the community
3. Strengths and Weaknesses of Westchester as a place to conduct business
4. Perceptions of local barriers for retention, expansion and attraction of business
5. Probability of business expansion, relocation, closure or sale.

The survey should only take 3-5 minutes of your time and will help the Village determine what programs will be of assistance to our business community. Please fill out the attached survey and return to:

Melissa Headley
Director of Community Development
Village of Westchester
10300 West Roosevelt Road
Westchester, IL 60154
Email: mheadley@westchester-il.org
Fax: 708-345-0884

If you would like to fill out the survey online, please go to the Village's website at www.westchester-il.org and click on the "business" tab. The Economic Development Committee would like to thank the Westchester Chamber of Commerce for their generous support of the survey.

Sincerely,

Ron Brown
Economic Development Committee Chairman



Village of Westchester

Economic Development Committee

BUSINESS RETENTION SURVEY

Business Information		
Business Name		Date of Completion (mm/dd/yy)
Business Owner Name	Business Contact Name	Business Address
Phone () -	Fax () -	Email:
Year Established:	Years at your current location:	
Property Owner Information		
Property Owner Name	Property Owner Address	
Property Owner Phone () -	Property Owner Fax () -	Property Owner Email:
If the owner has an authorized agent:	Owner's Authorized Agent's Name:	Owner's Authorized Agent's Address:
Owner's Authorized Agent's Phone: () -	Owner's Authorized Agent's Fax: () -	Owner's Authorized Agent's Email:

1. What is your business sector? *(Please check one)*

Retail/Wholesale Trade

- Bldg Material, Garden Equip and Supplies Dealers
- Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores
- Electronics and Appliance Stores
- Food and Beverage Stores
- Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores
- Gasoline Stations
- General Merchandise Stores
- Health and Personal Care Stores
- Miscellaneous Store Retailers
- Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers
- Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, and Music Stores
- Non-Store Retailers
- Wholesale Trade, Durable Goods
- Wholesale Trade, Nondurable Goods
- Other: _____

Recreation/Entertainment

- Accommodations
- Amusement, Gambling, & Rec. Industries
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
- Food Services and Drinking Places
- Museums, Historical Sites, & Similar Inst.
- Scenic and Sightseeing Transportation
- Other: _____

Services

- Administrative & Support Services
- Construction
- Educational Services
- Finance & Insurance
- Hospitals
- Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
- Professional, Scientific, & Tech. Services
- Real Estate & Rental & Leasing
- Waste Mgmt & Remediation Services
- Other: _____

Industrial Sectors

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Building & Construction
- Communications
- Consumer Goods Producer
- Diversified
- Durable goods producer
- Energy & Energy Utilities
- Health care & Pharmaceuticals
- High-end Business Services
- Industrial Goods
- Technology/Information
- Telecommunications
- Transportation
- Other: _____

2. What are your primary products/services? _____
3. What are your secondary products/services? _____
4. Where do you believe a majority of your customers live? **Please select all that apply**
- In the Village of Westchester
- Cook County, Surrounding Communities/Towns
- Chicago Metropolitan Region
- Outside the Chicago Metropolitan Region
5. Compared to last year, are sales this year: Increasing Decreasing Same Unknown/No Answer
6. How many employees do you have? FT _____ PT _____ Seasonal _____
7. Do you anticipate a change in the size of your workforce? Increase Decrease Same Unknown/No Ans
8. Do you have any renovation/expansion/relocation/growth plans? Yes No
- Renovation Plans Yes No Please explain: _____
- Expansion Plans Yes No Please explain: _____
- Relocation Plans Yes No Please explain: _____
- Closing Business Yes No Please explain: _____
- Selling Business Yes No Please explain: _____
9. If you have expansion or renovation plans, would you like the Village to contact you for further assistance?
- Yes No Not Applicable
10. If you answered yes to any item in question 8 above, what are your reasons? **Please select all that apply**
- Energy costs Finances
- Identifying & accessing new markets Infrastructure
- Lack of skilled employees Lack of suitable premises in Westchester
- Local Regulations/Zoning Local taxes
- Parking Partners
- Roads Suppliers
- Technology, please specify: _____ Transportation/freight
- Other, please specify: _____
11. Have you been contacted by other states, cities, etc., regarding relocation? Yes No Unknown/No Ans.
If so, what city/state has contacted you? _____
What points were made to try to encourage you to move?

12. Is the Village business-friendly? Yes No Not Applicable
13. If you answered "yes" or "no" to the previous question (#12), please explain?

14. Are you a member of the Westchester Chamber of Commerce?

Yes No Please explain: _____

15. Are you interested in joining the Westchester Chamber of Commerce?

Yes No Please explain: _____

16. Would you like more information about joining the Westchester Chamber of Commerce?

Yes No

17. Please rate the quality of the following services provided by/in the community:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable/No Answer
A) Ambulance/paramedic svc.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
B) Chamber of Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/>				
C) Fire protection	<input type="checkbox"/>				
D) Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
E) Police protection	<input type="checkbox"/>				
F) Public transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
G) Reg. enforce. (fair/equitable)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
H) Schools (K–12)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I) Sign regulations	<input type="checkbox"/>				
J) Streets and roads (local)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
K) Streetscape maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>				
L) Village of Westchester	<input type="checkbox"/>				
M) Zoning changes/bldg permit	<input type="checkbox"/>				
N) Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				

For any services with satisfaction rated "poor", please comment:

18. What services would you like to see provided by the Village or associated organizations?

19. Please rank the community as a place to do business based on the following criteria:

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Applicable/No Answer
A) Building Availability	<input type="checkbox"/>				
B) Business Climate	<input type="checkbox"/>				
C) Business Mix, Services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
D) Community Events/Local Ent. (i.e. car shows, movies in the park, community theater, community festivals, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
E) Community Leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>				
F) Community Services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
G) Cost of Doing Business	<input type="checkbox"/>				
H) Cost of Living	<input type="checkbox"/>				
I) Customer/Supplier Availability	<input type="checkbox"/>				
J) Economy/Community Stability	<input type="checkbox"/>				
K) Educational System	<input type="checkbox"/>				
L) Employee Work Ethic	<input type="checkbox"/>				
M) Government Services	<input type="checkbox"/>				
N) Housing	<input type="checkbox"/>				
O) Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>				
P) Land Availability	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Q) Location	<input type="checkbox"/>				
R) Quality of Life	<input type="checkbox"/>				
S) Transportation System	<input type="checkbox"/>				
T) Workforce/Labor Market Attributes	<input type="checkbox"/>				
U) Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/>				

For any rankings with satisfaction rated "poor", please comment:

20. Have any local policies/regulations **impacted OR benefited** your business?

Yes, please explain: _____ No Unknown/No Answer

21. Any additional comments you would like to make?
