

**Agenda Item:** 2.b  
**Meeting Date:** January 6, 2026

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** City Commission

**Through:** Jennifer K. Bramley, City Manager

**From:** Nicole Delfino

**Date:** 2026-01-06

**Subject:** Business Survey Action Plan

**Presenter(s):** Nicole Delfino, Strategy & Sustainability Manager

**Staff Recommendation:** Review Business Survey Action Plan

**Strategic Themes:** Infrastructure, Planning and Growth

**Boards & Committees:** N/A

**Budget Impact:** Future action item recommendations may require funding and/or personnel and will be presented as future CIP or BPI projects for review during the budget process.

**Past Action:** Presentation of the 2025 Business Survey Results on September 2, 2025

**Next Action:** Review Suggested Implementation Items, Consider Future CIP or BPI

**Attachments:**

- A. [Business Survey Action Plan 2026 Presentation.pdf](#)
- B. [2025 Business Survey Action Plan.pdf](#)
- C. [Proposed City of Dunedin Business Education and Exploration Program\\_BEEP.pdf](#)
- D. [Chamber Champion Overview.pdf](#)
- E. [Reference\\_2025 City of Dunedin Business Survey Report by Forward Analytics.pdf](#)

**Background:** In 2017 the City conducted several Visioning exercises with residents, culminating in the 2017 Visioning report. In an effort to continue that community dialogue and at the request of the City Manager's Office and the City Commission, in 2019 the City conducted a Citizen Survey, executed by the consultant group Research Data Services, Inc. (RDS), located in Tampa, Florida. Following the initial citizen survey, in 2020, the City planned to conduct a Business Survey with the same firm. The study was

developed to gather business owners' opinions and overall satisfaction, and to provide input to the City's Business Plan and budgeting process.

The first business survey was scheduled to begin in the spring of 2020. The survey was issued in late February 2020, was interrupted by COVID-19, and resumed in May 2020. 156 Businesses responded to the survey and a report was provided to city staff and the Commission in May 2020. In response to the 2020 survey, a Business Survey Action Plan was developed to address the most pressing needs identified including: affordable housing, zoning and permitting, downtown vs outside downtown, balancing development, traffic and parking and communication. Focus groups, recommendations and improvements were put in place to address these issues. RDS was further engaged with a Business Owner Focus Group to address the downtown vs. outside downtown sentiment. The following bulleted items were discussed at the focus group, with the main take away being a concern over special events: Best thing about operating a business in Dunedin (community); How have things changed over the past couple of years (downtown development); Special events (plan for all businesses re: parking, visibility/accessibility, traffic); Permitting (unsolicited positive feedback); The future (positive).

Due to the long-lasting impacts of COVID -19, there was a delay to holding the regularly scheduled bi- annual Business Survey in 2022. The survey was pushed out by one year to 2023 and timing was modified to the survey period to follow the end of peak season to allow for optimal business response. Research Design Services (RDS) was the selected consultant to conduct both the 2020 and 2023 Business Surveys. The 2023 Business Survey initiated on May 9, 2023 and ended on July 7, 2023, with 147 survey responses in total. The survey closely duplicated the survey questions found in 2020. RDS reached respondents through a direct email campaign to a cross section of the Dunedin business owners and managers. Internally, staff promoted and encouraged participation via a multi-pronged approach including: a direct email campaign by City Staff, posting the survey on the City website and social media as well as sharing the survey instrument through the Chamber of Commerce meetings and newsletter. A survey report was provided by RDS and staff, together with RDS, reviewed the survey results at a City Commission Workshop on July 25, 2023.

As 2025 approached, city staff engaged Dr. Stephen Neely, Research Consultant of Forward Analytics to review prior surveys and to propose a new survey instrument. To maintain consistency over time, several key questions remained similar to prior years. Adjusted questions focused on the priorities of businesses, the importance of business retention, and potential infrastructure

impacts.

A total of 279 partially completed surveys were received as part of the City's 2025 Business Survey. Survey responses were collected through an extensive outreach campaign led by City staff, Nicole Delfino, Strategy & Sustainability Manager, including email invitations, social media, local media coverage, and in-person (boots on the ground) engagement with the business community. Because not all respondents answered every question, the number of responses varies slightly across the sections of the survey. The overall increase in responses (279) represents an 90% increase in response rate over the prior year. Most respondents (66%) reported operating a brick-and-mortar business in Dunedin, while a quarter were home-based businesses and 9% reported doing business in Dunedin without maintaining a physical location in the City. The majority of those who responded were business owners (81%), with the remainder identifying as managers or employees. Responses were received from businesses distributed across diverse areas of the city. Roughly half reported operating in or near Downtown Dunedin, while others represented key corridors such as S.R. 580, Alternate 19, Patricia Avenue, and South Douglas. A small number of respondents (5%) indicated that their business was located outside the city. Businesses of all sizes and stages of maturity were represented. More than half had been operating for over 10 years, while nearly one in three had opened within the past five years. This mix of perspectives - from long-standing establishments to newer established businesses - helped provide a balanced view of the local business climate.

Following the September 2, 2025 presentation of the 2025 Business Survey results. City leadership and staff committed to the City Commission to return with an Action Plan. Over the course of the fall 2025, a Business Survey Action plan was developed with a focus on 7 key areas: Growth Management & Small-Town Character; Housing Affordability; Communication & Business Engagement; Transportation, Parking and Mobility; Permitting and Code Enforcement; Storm Preparedness & Business Resilience; and Business Retention & Off-Season Support. The survey action plans involves communication strategies, "did you know?" information, potential remedies, recommendations, and partnership opportunities. The action plan was reviewed across the organization with support from Economic Development and Housing, Community Development and Communications departments. With regards to the partnership recommendations, the plan was also reviewed with the Chamber of Commerce in December 2025. While some cases, the action plan can be addressed internally and with current resources, in other cases, the plan will require additional resources and funding. Items requiring financial or personnel

support will be brought forward through the annual budget process as a CIP or BPI.