

Report to Council

Report Title:	COVID-19 Business Survey		
Prepared By:	Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator		
Department:	Economic Development		
Date:	April 28, 2020		
Report Number:	ED2020-03	File Number:	C11ED, P03
Attachments:	COVID-19 Business Survey Graphs		

Recommendation:

That the Council of the Municipality of Brockton hereby receives Report Number ED2020-03 – COVID-19 Business Survey, prepared by Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator for information purposes.

Report:

Background:

Brockton launched an online survey on March 20, 2020 using our [Build Your Brockton](#) community engagement website to assess the early impact of the coronavirus pandemic on our local economy. The survey questioned the impact of COVID-19, measures being taken, cash flow projections, assistance needed from the federal, provincial and municipal governments, whether the business was currently open, and what sector it was part of. We received 83 responses between March 20 and April 17, 2020. Most respondents represented smaller businesses in retail, professional services, agriculture, healthcare, construction, manufacturing and other sectors.

Analysis:

The key survey findings can be found in the attached graphs. Of note:

- Most businesses said the impact of COVID-19 was significant or very significant and growing.
- Measures taken to offset the impact include temporarily shutting down operations, reducing hours or modifying production, and layoffs. A good number of businesses are offering alternative services.
- Asked about cash flow, well over half said they need help immediately or will have difficulty making ends meet in a few months' time.
- Just under 40% of respondents were essential services, and 28% had been mandated to close.
- 33% said they were either open but had modified their hours or services, or were closed to the public but still operating virtually.

Asked what support they felt they needed from the federal and provincial governments, many identified wage subsidies, grants, tax relief, and deferred payments for government remittances, mortgages and loans.

Regarding support from the Municipality of Brockton, businesses asked for utility and tax relief, clear information about financial aid and government programs, enforcement of social distancing, promotion of businesses that are still open, and free garbage pick-up and dumping.

The Municipality has worked to address many of these requests and continues to do so. The following measures have been implemented to assist local businesses:

- Waived penalties and interest for late payment of municipal taxes to June 30, 2020
- Issued regular business updates, through the Brockton Business e-Newsletter, outlining funding opportunities and assistance from governments, financial institutions and professional organizations
- Created a [Stay Home Shop Local](#) resource webpage to support local business, which has been shared with Bruce County's GIS mapping department
- Created a [COVID-19 Updates](#) webpage and a [Business Recovery and Support](#) COVID-19 resource webpage for business
- Partnered with the [Grey Bruce Huron Strong App](#) to promote available services during COVID-19
- Issued regular video updates from the Mayor and made virtual Council meetings accessible through Zoom
- Ordered #InItTogether Brockton flags for local flagpoles.

Current initiatives include:

- Contributing to the Bruce County Economic Task Force, which is surveying businesses and developing recovery measures and support programs- The Chief Administrative Officer also sits on this committee
- Working with the Walkerton BIA to promote local businesses
- The Community Development Coordinator has connected with various business sectors, including tourism and agriculture, to keep apprised of issues and developments
- Researching online gift certificate programs to assist local businesses
- Considering future business recovery measures that we can undertake in Brockton and aligning those with the Bruce County Task Force Initiatives as pertinent.

We are pleased with the response to our survey and are using the results to further assist Brockton businesses and keep them informed of supports and developments, through our newsletter and other means. We have received many positive comments through the survey and emails regarding our communications and assistance during this difficult time.

Sustainability Checklist:

What aspect of the Brockton Sustainable Strategic Plan does the content/recommendations in this report help advance?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Do the recommendations help move the Municipality closer to its Vision? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Cultural Vibrancy? | N/A |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to achieving Economic Prosperity? | Yes |
| • Do the recommendations contribute to Environmental Integrity? | N/A |

- Do the recommendations contribute to the Social Equity?

N/A

Financial Impacts/Source of Funding:

- Do the recommendations represent a sound financial investment from a sustainability perspective? Yes

We used the Municipality's [Build Your Brockton](#) community engagement website to conduct the survey, so we did not incur any costs specific to this project. However, those businesses and residents that have relied on the waiving of penalty and interest for their tax payments has an overall impact on the Municipalities revenue and cash flow.

Reviewed By:



Trish Serratore, Chief Financial Officer

Respectfully Submitted by:



Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator

Reviewed By:

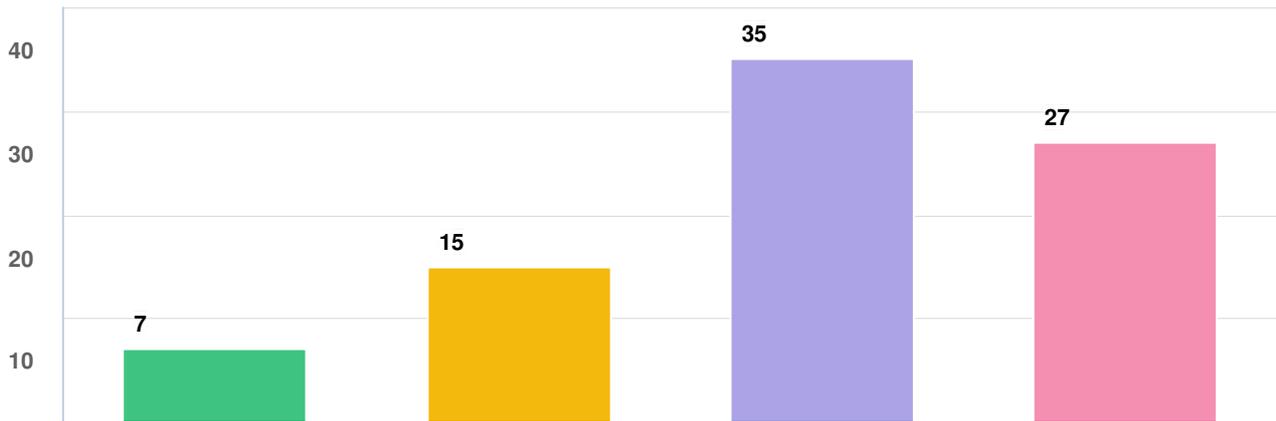


Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer

Measuring the Impact of COVID-19 on Brockton Businesses

Visitors 198	Contributors 77	CONTRIBUTIONS 83
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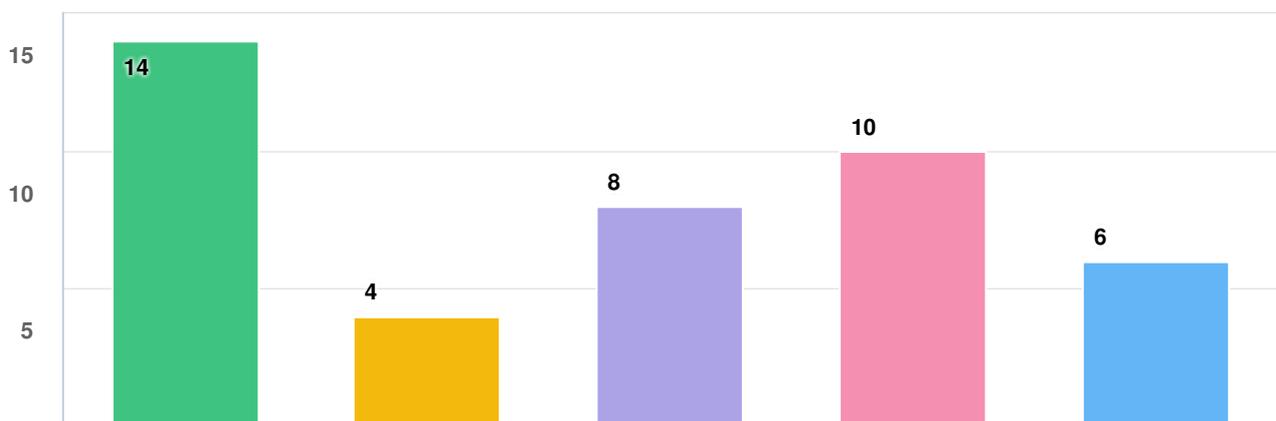
Which of the following best describes the impact of COVID-19 on your business right now?



Question options

- Impact is limited so far
- Impact is noticeable but not significant
- Impact is significant and steadily increasing
- Impact is very significant and growing fast

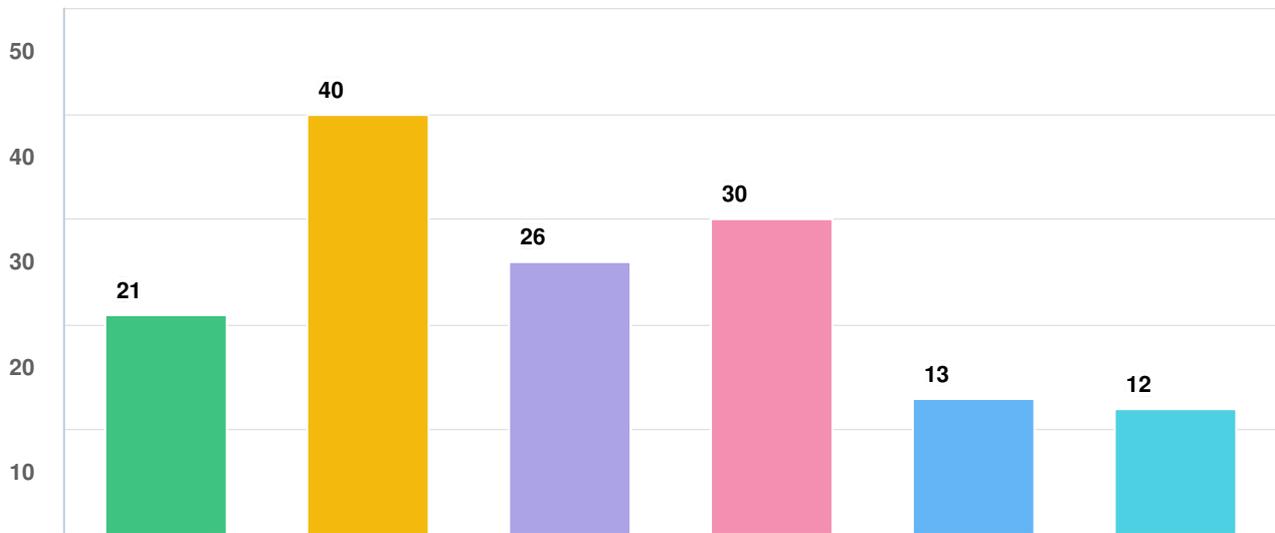
What current measures have you put in place to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic?



Question options

- Closed to the public
- Layoffs
- Modified hours or production
- Alternative services
- We have been mandated to close

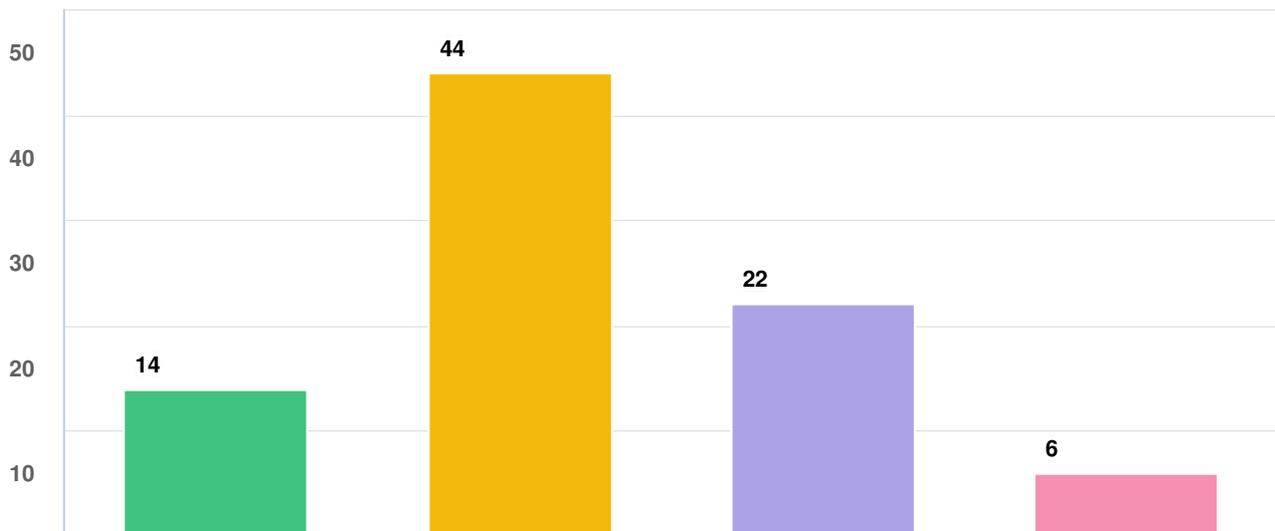
What further measures are you likely to use, or need, to address the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic?



Question options

- Emergency loans
- Shut down of operations
- Layoffs
- Reductions in hours of operation/production
- Implementation of flexible work options, such as working from home or flex time
- Other (please specify)

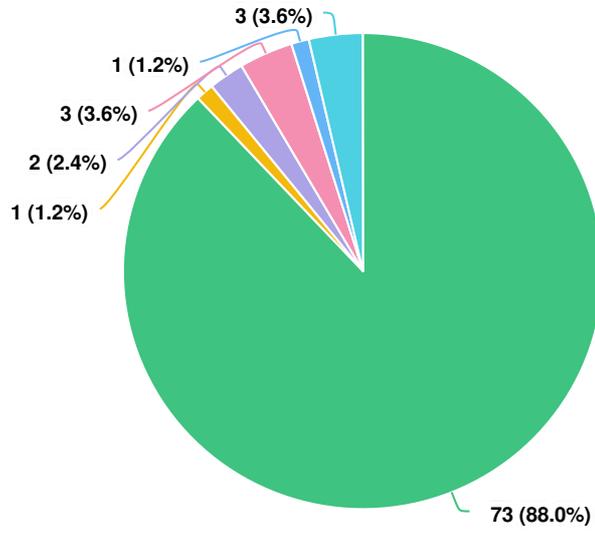
If you have completed a cash flow projection for the next 6 months, what best describes your situation?



Question options

- Need help immediately
- Will have difficulty making ends meet in a few month's time
- Will be OK for 6 months
- Other (please specify)

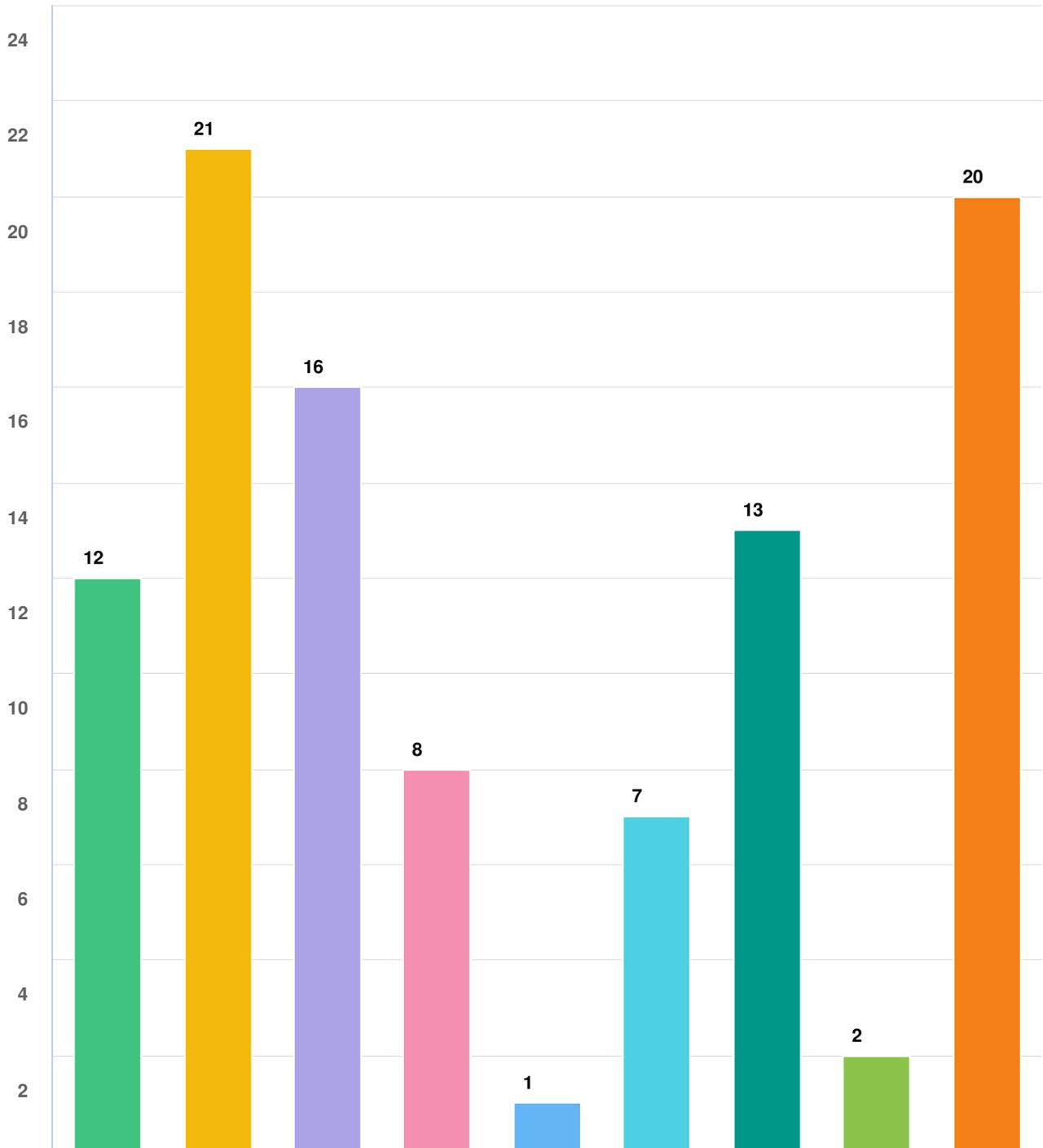
Where is your business located?



Question options

- Walkerton
- Cargill
- Chepstow
- Elmwood
- Greenock
- Elsewhere in Brockton (please specify)

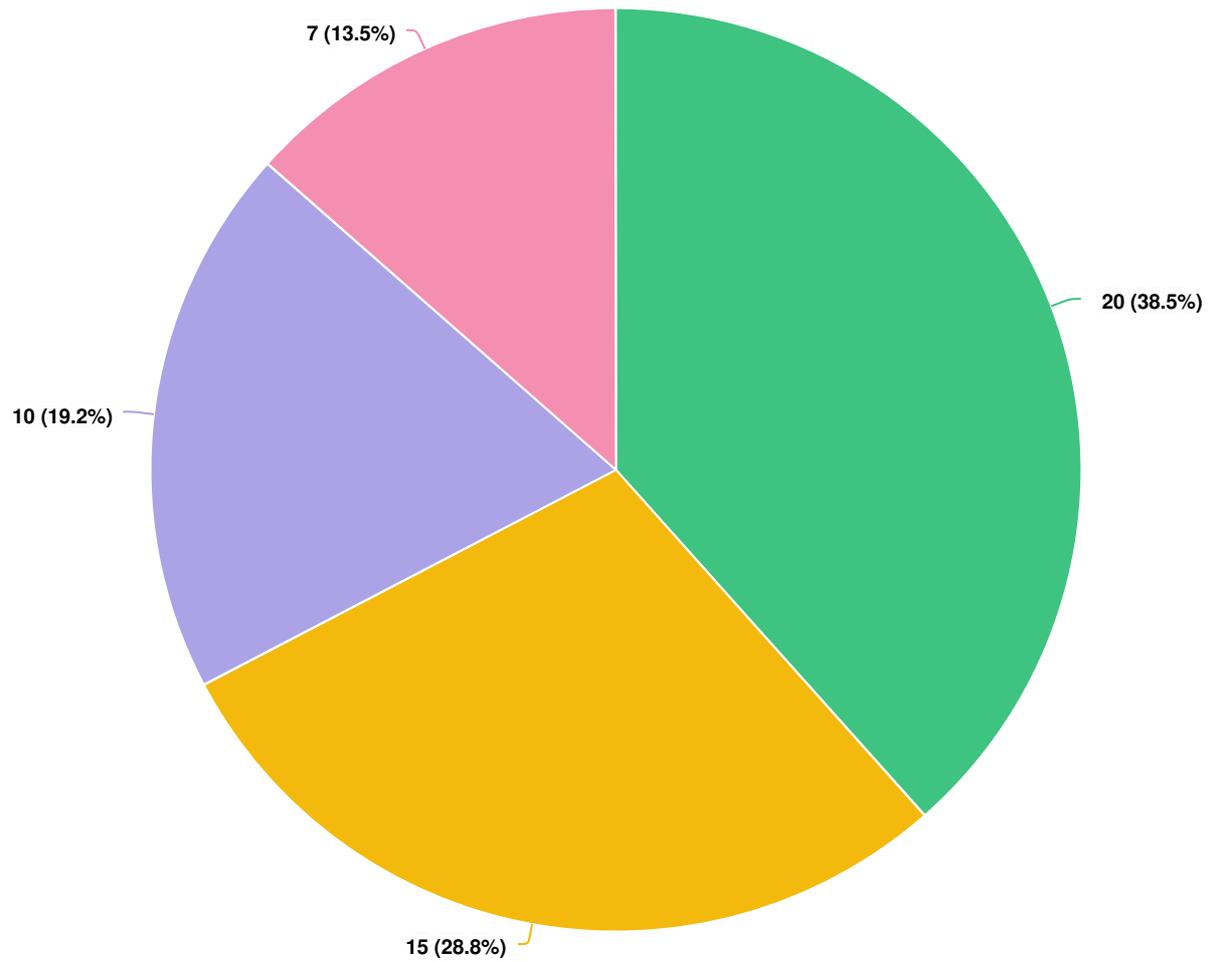
What industry does your business serve?



Question options

- Healthcare
- Retail
- Professional Services
- Manufacturing
- Agriculture
- Construction
- Hospitality
- Transportation
- Other (please specify)

Are you open for business today?



Question options

- Yes, we are an essential service
- No, we have been mandated to close
- We are open but have modified our hours/services
- We are closed to the public but are still operating