

## Report to Council

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

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### **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**

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### **Respectfully Submitted by:**



Paulette Peirol, Community Development Coordinator

### **Reviewed By:**



**Sonya Watson, Chief Administrative Officer**