



## **2021 TELKWA BUSINESS WALK**

### **POST WALK REPORT**

The Telkwa Business Walk was organized by the Village of Telkwa staff to canvass local businesses in order to collect information about Telkwa's economic climate. The Business resource brochure was also distributed during the walk, providing businesses with information to help support or their business grow.

Business Walks are a tool to gauge the pulse of the local business climate by asking specific, targeted questions to potentially identify measures and actions that can be taken to assist local businesses.

Businesses were asked the following survey questions:

1. Average number of full-time employees, including owner / manager?
2. Is your business growing, steady or shrinking?
3. What do you like most about doing business in the area?
4. What challenges is your business facing?
5. What information would you like to have access to locally?

### **Methodology**

Businesses within in the Village of Telkwa municipal boundary participated in the Business Walk.

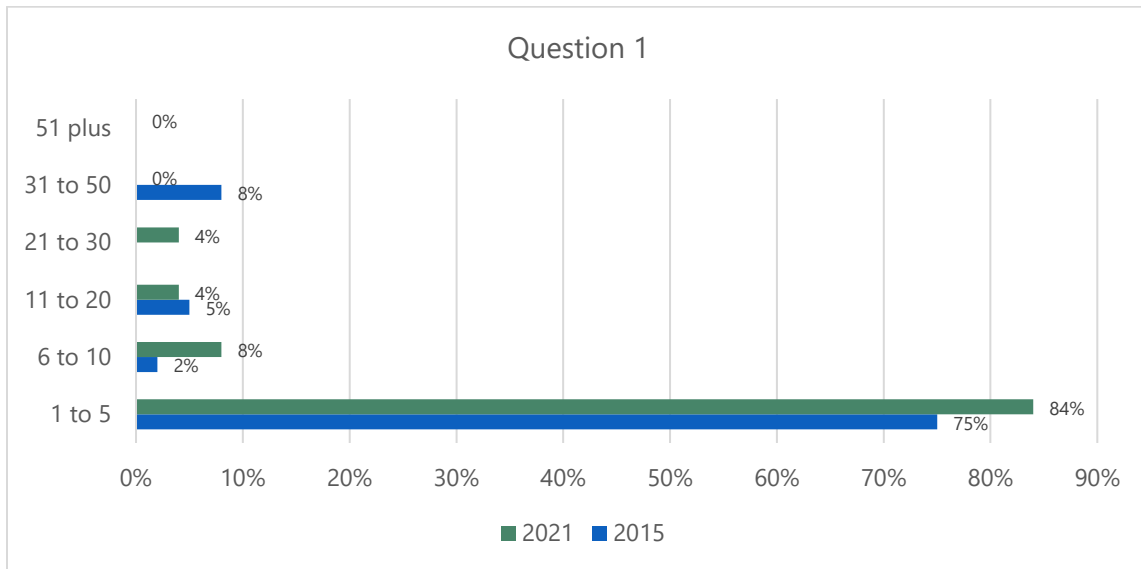
The business walk was conducted on Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup> in person, targeting businesses in the Village of Telkwa downtown core. Home-based businesses or businesses located outside the downtown core completed the survey over the phone on Thursday, October 8 and Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>.

The Business Walk was advertised in advance on the Village of Telkwa Facebook page, and businesses who had provided their email address for our database, received an email notification on September 24<sup>th</sup>.

A total of 24 businesses participated in the survey.

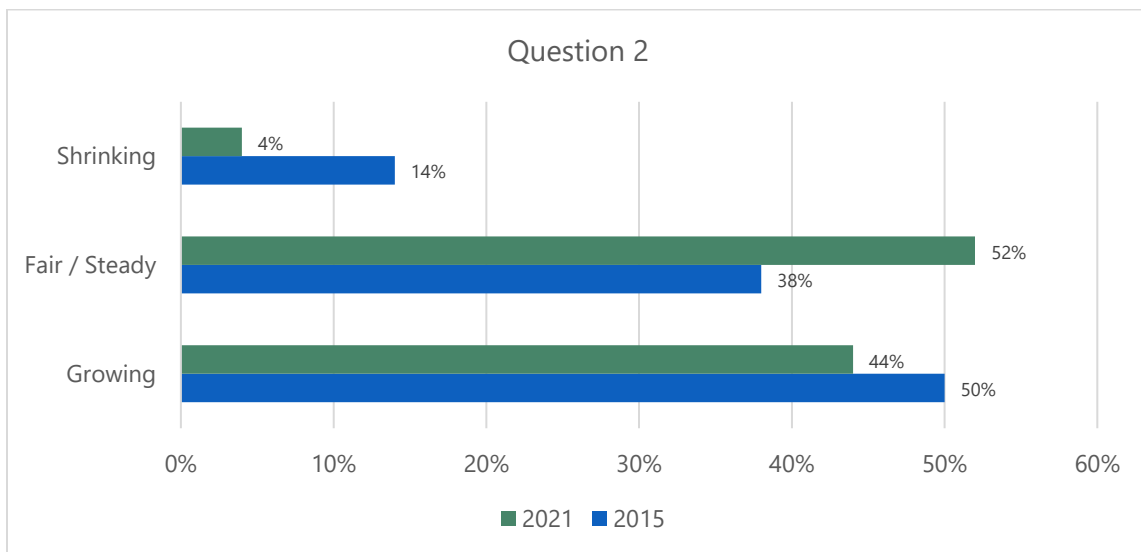
## Findings

Question 1: Average number of full-time employees, including owner / manager?



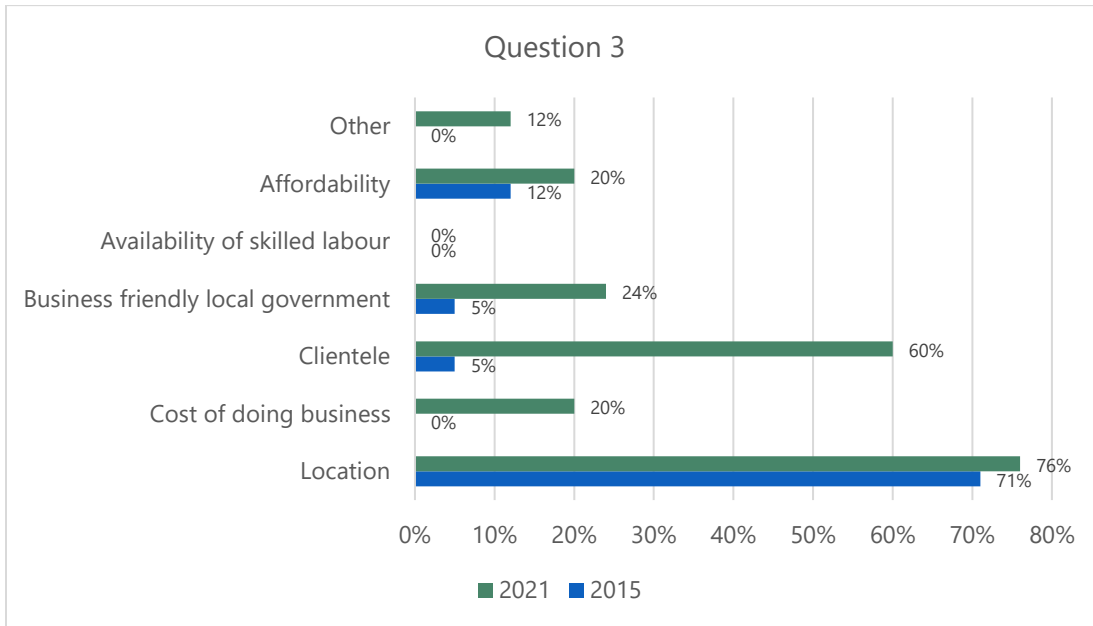
Compared to the 2015 Business Walk results, the number of full-time employees above 11 per business is less in 2021. This could be due to businesses battling to find staffing, as per question 4 below.

Question 2: What is the current state of your business?



A greater percentage of businesses are holding steady compared to 2015. However, less businesses are growing. On a positive note, fewer businesses are shrinking compared to 2015. It is good to note that the majority of businesses interviewed are holding steady as the current economic climate has been a challenge, as per question 4 below.

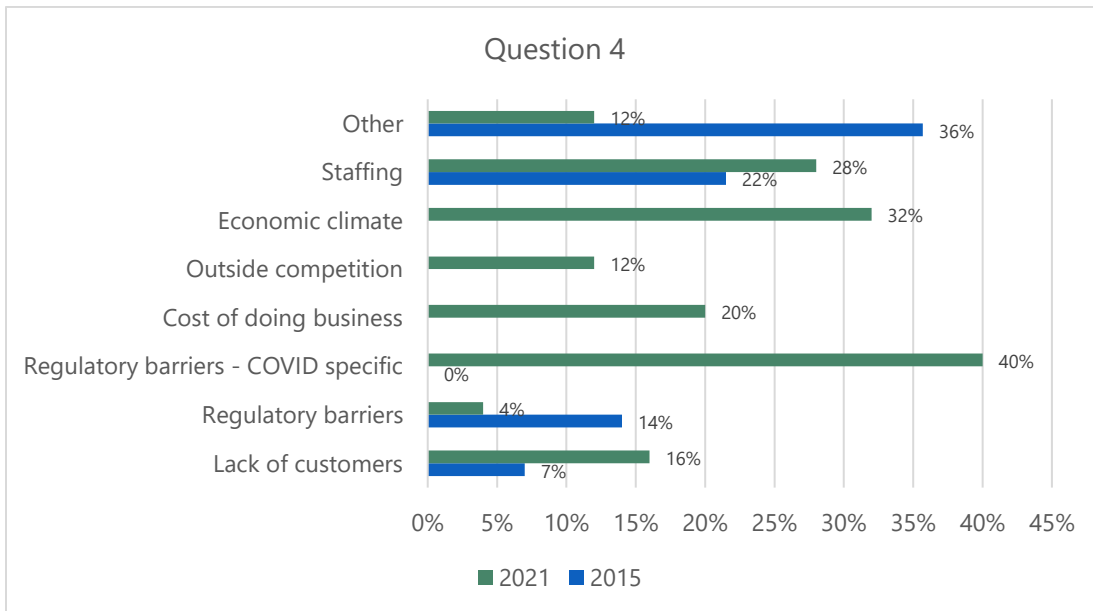
Question 3: What do you like most about doing business in the area?



Location and clientele were the top reasons that local businesses enjoy operating in Telkwa. Responses from interviewees:

- Business depends on local support as well as from visitors.
- The community has been very supportive of the local businesses.
- Enjoy the option of living and working out of the same building, which reduces costs.
- Telkwa offers a good life-style and work-life balance.

Question 4: What challenges is your business facing?

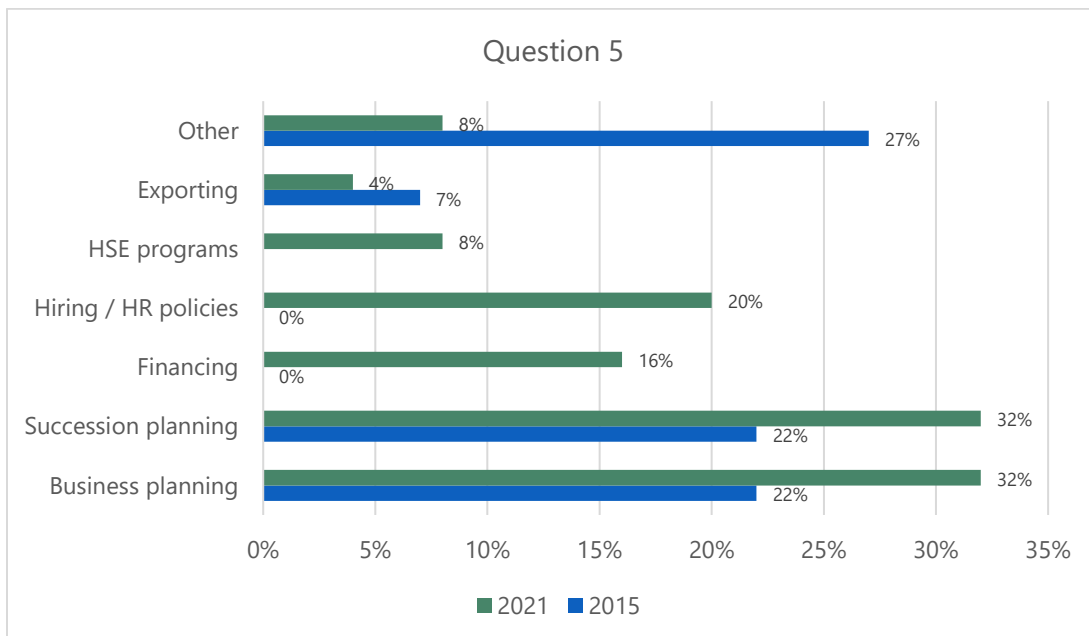


Businesses marked multiple responses for this question. COVID restrictions have been the biggest challenge businesses faced as the restrictions had an effect on the economic climate. Staffing is another rising challenge for businesses, compared to 2015.

Responses from interviewees:

- Travel restrictions affected dollars coming into the community and business.
- Having to ask customers to wear their mask when entering the business is upsetting for the staff and causes conflict with the customers. Suggestion that elected officials stop in and support businesses when new mandates are issued.
- Attracting potential employees from other areas is an option, however, the high price of accommodation and lack thereof is a deterrent.
- Business offers benefit package for employees, but they are still unable to attract staff.
- Telkwa people travel to Smithers for work, but very little Smithers people travel to Telkwa for work, especially relating to front-line workers. The bus schedule doesn't accommodate Smithers to Telkwa employees.
- Taxes are high and affects the cost of doing business.
- Outside competition is good, but there should be more support for local businesses, even if local businesses are offered sub-contracts or contracts split to accommodate smaller businesses.
- The high cost of shipping/postage for online product sales detract customers.
- One growing business mentioned their "other" challenge is being too busy in a positive way.

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



The majority of businesses claimed they would like to have access to succession and business planning resources, which was a similar request in 2015.

Responses from interviewees:

- Information sessions on future contracts to enable businesses to collaborate and subcontract.
- Better communication plan for community members on upcoming projects, enabling better community engagement.
- Annual schedule of local events provided so businesses can plan ahead of time.

### **What's Next?**

- The Village of Telkwa will continue to work with local, regional and provincial partners in attempts to increase the housing capacity, which will attract additional residents to live and work in Telkwa.
- Promote Telkwa as a destination for tourism and increase visitation, which will benefit businesses.
- Work with the local business community to promote the benefits of shopping locally. The Village office will continue to champion and grow the Love Telkwa program, in partnership with Northern Development Initiative Trust.
- Work with partners in order to deliver additional training and learning opportunities to Telkwa businesses.
- The Village office intends to conduct another Business Walk in 2022 to measure changes in the local business climate.