

APPENDIX B: MAIN STREET ROCHESTER BUSINESS SURVEY REPORT



Main Street Rochester
Business Survey Report
December 19, 2017

Project Overview

Main Street Rochester aims to address US 12's dual role as a regional highway and as Rochester's Main Street. The project developed in response to requests from Rochester area residents to address safety and mobility concerns, infrastructure needs, and improve the economic vitality of the corridor while strengthening Rochester's identity. The study area stretches from Bailey's IGA on the west to the intersection of US 12 and 183rd Avenue SW on the east.

As part of the Main Street Rochester project, Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) contracted with the Thurston Economic Development Council (EDC) to administer a business survey. In coordination with TRPC and the Grand Mound-Rochester Chamber of Commerce, the EDC developed a set of survey questions. During the period from August through November 2017, EDC staff canvassed the businesses on the US 12 corridor as well as others in the Rochester area and Tribal Enterprises and the Rochester School District.

This survey sought to understand businesses' thoughts and perspectives on street access, barriers to growth, ideas to improve the economic vitality of the area, and business and community needs. EDC staff went door-to-door to reach as many businesses as possible and capture individual concerns, and when necessary, made multiple in-person contacts and followed up by phone. This business input will help inform the Main Street Rochester project as the project team looks at current conditions and develops an action plan.

Survey Distribution and Response

The EDC contacted a total of 59 businesses and organizations of which 40 chose to participate in the survey. 33 of the businesses were located in the study area and participated in the survey. One business has two locations and three businesses were closed. The EDC also contacted 17 businesses outside the study area in the greater Rochester/Grand Mound area of which 7 participated in the survey.

Survey Distribution and Response		
Business/Organization Location	Businesses/Organizations Contacted	Survey Participants
Study Area	42	33
Greater Rochester/Grand Mound Area	17	7
TOTAL	59	40



Business Structure, Industry Category, and Length of Time in Business

Rochester area businesses have a mix of business structure types and industries with nearly 70% identified as a corporation or LLC. Forty percent are family-owned and 63% have been in business for more than ten years.

Business Corporate Structure		
Structure Type	Count	Percent
Sole Proprietor	8	20%
Partnership	0	0%
Corporation	12	30%
Limited Liability Corporation (LLC)	15	37%
Non-Profit/Government	5	13%
TOTAL	40	100%

Additional ownership detail		
	Count	Percent
Family owned	16	40%
Franchise	4	10%

Length of Time in Business		
Time	Count	Percent
Less than 2 years	6	15%
2-4 years	5	13%
5-6 years	3	8%
7-10 years	2	5%
11-19 years	7	18%
20+ years	17	43%
TOTAL	40	100%

Type of Business		
Industry Category	Count	Percent
General Retail	8	20%
Food Services	7	17%
Professional Services	6	15%
Health Care	4	10%
Agriculture	0	0%
Manufacturing	1	3%
Auto Sales/Service	6	15%
Other*	8	20%
TOTAL	40	100%

* Other: (Government, Non-profit, Real Estate, Entertainment, Storage)

Building Information

The survey asked about building ownership, size, expansion plans, and whether street flooding was an issue. The majority of businesses are in buildings with less than 5,000 square feet of floor area. Twenty-eight percent indicated they have plans to expand and 33% are impacted by street flooding. For those businesses that plan to expand operations in the next three years, 91% indicated they needed less than 5,000 square feet of floor area.

Is your building owned or leased?		
Response	Count	Percent
Own	16	40%
Lease	24	60%
TOTAL	40	100%

Is street flooding an issue for your business?		
Response	Count	Percent
Yes	13	33%
No	27	67%
TOTAL	40	100%

Does your business have plans to physically expand in the next 3 years?		
Response	Count	Percent
Yes	12	30%
No	28	70%
TOTAL	40	100%

What is the existing floor area of your business?		
Response	Count	Percent
Less than 5,000 sf	32	82%
5,000-10,000 sf	4	8%
11,000-15,000 sf	0	0%
More than 15,000 sf	4	10%
TOTAL	40	100%

If you plan to expand, how much floor area do you need?		
Response	Count	Percent
Less than 5,000 sf	11	92%
5,000 to 10,000 sf	1	8%
TOTAL	12	100%

Business Location

The EDC asked about location, including factors for choosing the location and positive and negative impacts of the location.





Factors considered in choosing business location. Most businesses listed customer base, visibility, high traffic volume, and because they grew up in the Rochester area as the main reasons they chose their building location.

Attributes of business location. Most proprietors felt their business is in a good location with high traffic volume and visibility. Most businesses also indicated they value knowing who their customers are and appreciated being in a small town with a close-knit community. Negative location factors include Rochester’s status as an unincorporated community and the associated lack of services (sewer service, for example), lack of parking, flooding, crime, and restrictions on businesses’ ability to expand.

Business Climate

Rochester’s Economic Vitality

When asked about the local business climate, including ways to improve it, participants relayed that it would be easier to expand businesses if they could analyze the total cost of impact fees, the permitting process, and applicable regulations. Businesses also want Thurston County to find ways to reduce costs, reduce review/approval times, simplify regulations, and try to attract more businesses to the area. Respondents also indicated they would also like more efforts to improve existing buildings and install sidewalks.

Survey participants were asked about ways to improve Rochester’s economic vitality. Three out of four respondents felt that having more businesses and destinations would improve economic vitality. More than half of respondents wanted to see sidewalks along US 12 (68%), community park improvements (58%), and commercial area improvements (55%) such as landscaping and well-maintained storefronts. Forty-five percent of respondents felt that Rochester would benefit from a public parking lot downtown.

To improve the area’s economic vitality, Rochester would benefit from:		
Response	Count	Percent
More businesses and destinations	31	78%
Sidewalks along US 12	27	68%
Community park improvements	23	58%
Commercial area improvements	22	55%
Public parking lot downtown	18	45%

Other ideas for improving Rochester’s economic vitality included improving business identification signage, establishing public restrooms, installing street lights, establishing lighted crosswalks, building a swimming pool, widening US 12, installing medians, placing public garbage cans in the area, allowing creative/flexible parking solutions, establishing a sewer system, establishing parking areas for semis, connecting Rochester to the regional trail system, providing guard rails on side roads, paving Swede Hall’s parking lot, easing restrictive regulations, establishing a business environment that encourages new businesses, having a variety of businesses, and installing turn lanes.

When asked what the three most important streetscape improvements they would like to see on US 12 in Rochester, businesses routinely said they wanted sidewalks, lighted crosswalks, and improved safety. Other ideas included cleaning up buildings, improving business signage, enforcing the speed limit, installing turn lanes, improving drainage, removing/fixing gravel on the side of the road, and installing street lights.

Barriers to Business Growth

EDC staff asked respondents if they experienced any barriers to growing their business. Many indicated they experienced regulatory barriers such as the time it takes to process required permits (42%) and permit process predictability (39%). Thirty-two percent identified the cost of permits as a barrier.

When asked what businesses are missing from Rochester that are also needed there, responses included:

- Pharmacy
- Retail establishments including a clothing store, bakery, bicycle shop, tire store, and arts and crafts store. A larger store that offers groceries, clothing, furniture, and sporting equipment was also suggested.
- Service establishments such as a credit union or laundromat
- Entertainment options such as a movie theatre, bowling alley, or pool tables
- Eating establishments such as a sit-down restaurant open in the evening

What barriers to growing your business have you experienced?		
Type of Barrier	Count	Percent
Regulatory		
Time Permitting Process Takes	16	40%
Predictability of Permitting Process	15	38%
Cost of Permits	12	30%
Utilities Water/Sewer/Energy	7	18%
Government Regulations	5	13%
Health Department	5	13%
Financial		
Access to Financing/Capital	11	28%
Healthcare Costs	8	20%
Labor		
Minimum Wage	15	38%
Recruiting Employees	11	28%
Training Employees	5	13%
Customer		
Changing Customer Base	4	10%
Not Large Enough Customer Base	3	8%
Other		
Parking	7	18%
Transportation/Transit Issues	4	10%
Telecommunication Infrastructure	5	13%
Supplier Network	1	3%

More specific barriers mentioned by respondents included the lack of a sewer system and issues with septic systems; the cost and availability of land; the ability to expand and build has become cost prohibitive (e.g., permitting process, rules and regulations, impact fees, mitigation cost, endangered species); tax increases; cell service; lack of convenient bus service; the rising cost of healthcare; obtaining a water well permit; and congestion on US 12.





Market Conditions

Businesses were asked about market conditions including the type of traffic that supports the business, where the business is in its life cycle, changes in the customer base, and changes in sales. Eight-eight percent of respondents indicated their business relies on local traffic and 75% are destination businesses. Most respondents (68%) indicated their business is growing; another 30% are maturing, and 15% are new. None of the respondents felt that their business was declining.

Is your business dependent on interstate (I-5, I-90), local, or pedestrian accessibility?*		
Response	Count	Percent
Interstate	22	55%
Local	35	88%
Pedestrian	11	28%
<i>*Respondents could select more than one option.</i>		

Are you a destination business or primarily supported by drive-by traffic?*		
Response	Count	Percent
Destination	30	75%
Drive-by traffic	22	55%
<i>*Respondents could select more than one option.</i>		

Where is your business in its life cycle?		
Response	Count	Percent
New	6	15%
Growing	27	68%
Maturing	12	30%
Declining	0	0%
<i>*Respondents could select more than one option.</i>		

The majority of businesses surveyed indicated that their customer base/sales primarily comes from the local (70% of respondents) and regional (55% of respondents) markets. 3% of businesses have a share of the international market and .5% on the internet. No businesses indicated their customer base is part of the national market.

The percentage of businesses experiencing an increase in customers (65%) closely aligns with the percentage of businesses experiencing increased overall sales (63%). 32% of businesses have stable sales and customer base, and 3% have seen a decrease in the number of new customers and 5% decrease in sales. Thirty-eight percent of businesses indicated they would benefit from more foot traffic.

Market Share – where does your business come from?*		
Response	Count	Percent
Local	28	70%
Regional	22	55%
National	0	0%
International	1	3%
Internet	2	5%

*Respondents could select more than one option.

Is the number of new customers you serve increasing, stable, or decreasing?		
Response	Count	Percent
Increasing	26	65%
Stable	13	32%
Decreasing	1	3%
TOTAL	40	100%

Are your overall sales increasing, stable, or decreasing?		
Response	Count	Percent
Increasing	24	63%
Stable	12	32%
Decreasing	2	5%
TOTAL	38	100%

Eleven businesses sell to the government with two experiencing increased sales, six with stable sales, two declining sales and four businesses are interested in selling to the government.

Respondents indicated they market their businesses by word-of-mouth, signage, customer referrals, internet, social media, home shows and local radio and print advertising.

Workforce

Workforce survey questions addressed current and future needs, the quality of the available workforce, job openings and how employers feel about workforce training programs. Not all participants completed the questions; the total number of responses are noted with each table.

Employee Type	2015	2016	2017
Full-Time	1,036	1,087	1,126
Part-Time	139	152	168
Seasonal	1	1	1

At the time of the survey, 11 businesses had job openings including positions for an administrator, manager, auto repair service writer, nurse, receptionist, physical therapist, welder, auto technician, cook, and after school tutors.

In addition to the current job openings, 52% of the survey participants indicated they will be looking to increase their workforce. Thirty percent project a stable workforce and another 8% expect a decrease in workforce. Ten percent of the businesses did not answer this question. Anticipated job openings include those previously discussed as well as teachers, support staff, an attorney, a wood worker, a sales representative, social worker, janitor and a barber.





Employers were asked to rate the availability of quality workers on a scale of one to seven where one indicates the employer cannot find qualified workers and seven indicates the workforce is highly qualified and available. Sixty percent of the employers indicated they have access to a quality workforce (scoring between 4 and 7 points) while 40% indicated it is a challenge to find highly qualified workers (scoring between 1 and 3 points).

Availability of quality workers based on a scale of 1 to 7						
Quality Workforce Lacking			Quality Workforce Available			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18%	11%	11%	4	7	10	2
			18%	26%	5%	11%
<i>Based on 38 businesses response</i>						

When EDC staff asked if the current labor pool will meet their future needs, 49% of the 35 businesses who responded felt that the labor pool will meet their future needs while 51% were either neutral or disagreed. This is concerning because a tighter labor market and lack of a quality workforce can hinder business growth and the ability to meet current product demands.

Do you feel that the current labor pool will meet your future needs?				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
1	17	13	5	1
3%	46%	35%	13%	3%
<i>Based on 37 businesses responses</i>				

Respondents were asked what changes they anticipated in their business in the near future that will impact the type of employees they seek to hire. Employers felt that automation, robotics and business growth would have near-term impacts on their hiring practices. The 16 businesses that anticipated such changes either agreed or were neutral about the workforce system being able to handle the anticipated changes. The low response rate for this question and the in-person interviews revealed that many of the businesses do not know what training is taking place.

Do you think the workforce system (training & supply) can handle these changes?				
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	2	3	4	5
1	7	8	0	0
6%	44%	50%	0%	0%
<i>Based on 16 businesses responses</i>				

Of the 40 businesses surveyed, only 13% have used local resources for training employees. Local resources include trade schools, labor unions, apprenticeships, colleges, and workforce development agencies. Many of the businesses do not know what workforce training programs are available. Those that do know about such programs agree they are effective.

Businesses were asked if the current high school and higher education programs were adequate to meet their future anticipated needs. Sixty-five percent of the 23 businesses that responded agreed and 35%

were neutral and or disagreed. Many of those surveyed were not aware of what education programs take place in high school and higher education.

Are the current local high school and higher education programs adequate to meet your future anticipated needs/demands?				
Strongly Agree 1	Agree 2	Neutral 3	Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
2 9%	13 56%	4 17%	2 9%	2 9%
<i>Based on 23 businesses responses</i>				

When asked if employees seek additional education and/or certifications for positions in their business, 63% indicated most of their employees do. Those that do seek ongoing credit and licensing requirements for real estate, automotive, equipment operation, medical, and gaming.

Respondents reported that they face a number of challenges recruiting employees, including finding reliable, compatible, trained and skilled workers; competition from other businesses; Rochester’s rural location; and the lack of bus service.

Several businesses said they have a near zero turnover rate while some have as high as 50%. Overall, the average turnover rate is 9%.

Facility and Service Needs

Businesses were asked what services they might be interested in accessing. Sixteen businesses (42%) expressed interest in networking or partnering with other business owners. Five businesses (13%) were interested in a copy facility, and one business (3%) sought shared office space, and one business (3%) was interested in a mailbox store. No businesses were interested in a separate facility with high-speed internet access.

If there was a facility in the area that you could go to access the following, which ones would you be interested in?		
Facility/Service	Count	Percent
Networking	16	40%
Copying/Printing/Faxing	5	13%
Shared Office Space	1	3%
Other (Mailbox Store)	1	3%
High Speed Internet	0	0%

Respondents were also asked what free business assistance and training would be of interest. Businesses were most interested in marketing (both traditional and social media) training as well as business management training.





Free business assistance is available in the area. Which of these are you most interested in learning more about?		
Business Assistance/ Training Interest	Count	Percent
Traditional Marketing	11	28%
Social Media Marketing	9	23%
Business Management	9	23%
Financing	6	15%
Accounting	5	13%
Personnel	4	10%
Other (Leadership)	1	3%

EDC Services

Survey participants were asked about their awareness of EDC programs aimed at helping businesses. Programs include:

Shop South is a buy-local campaign designed specifically for the unique needs of rural business owners, non-profit organizations and shoppers in the South Thurston County area.

South Thurston Economic Development Initiative (STEDI) is a consortium focused on long-range economic and community development in the rural areas of the Thurston Region. Its intent is to engage the collective strengths and resources of the communities of Yelm, Rainier, Tenino, Bucoda & Rochester/Grand Mound – along with the organizing community partners of the Thurston Regional Planning Council, Thurston Economic Development Council, WSU Thurston County Extension Office, Visitor & Convention Bureau, Thurston Conservation District and Port of Olympia – to identify and implement strategic efforts that will meet south county’s economic and community development goals.

The Thurston Economic Development Council Center for Business & Innovation (CB&I) provides comprehensive advising, coaching and training services to businesses in all stages of development. Included under the CB&I banner are a number of individual programs listed below.

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is part of a network of 24 locations in Washington. SBDC advisors offer one-on-one technical assistance at no charge to help businesses grow, achieve higher profits and improve operations.

Washington Center for Women in Business (WCWB) offers entrepreneurial training programs, workshops, one-on-one counseling, coaching and special events to women (and men) in all stages of business development. Using in-person, phone, and web-based delivery methods, the WCWB provides services throughout most of the State of Washington.

Score is a nationwide nonprofit association whose mission is to grow successful businesses through education and mentorship.

The ScaleUp Training Series is a comprehensive 3-part training series designed to help businesses achieve their growth goals. The series includes Business TuneUp, Build Your Market, and Financial Mastery.

Thurston Investment Network (THINK) Think brings individuals who want a local component to their investment portfolios together with businesses in Thurston County that need financing.

Washington Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) helps small businesses find, bid on and win government contracts.

The chart below reflects the percentage of awareness of each program.

Are you aware of the following programs of the Thurston Economic Development Council?		
Program	Yes	Percent
Shop South	18	45%
STEDI	17	43%
Small Business Development Center	14	35%
Center for Business & Innovation	9	23%
Washington Center for Women in Business	8	20%
Score	5	13%
ScaleUp	4	10%
Thurston Investment Network	3	8%
TuneUp	1	3%
Washington Procurement Technical Assistance Center	1	3%

Role of the EDC and Chamber

Businesses responded to questions about the primary focus of the Grand Mound/Rochester Chamber of Commerce:

- Advocate for and support local business growth by working with Thurston County on permitting and other growth-related issues
- Promote local businesses
- Provide education and training
- Work to keep the community safe and clean

When queried about their idea of the primary focus of the EDC, respondents reported that the primary focus should be to bring businesses to Thurston County, advocate for rural areas' ability to expand and recruit businesses, and provide education and training.

Future Outlook

A majority of the survey participants indicated they felt good and optimistic about the future of their business.





Interviewer Notes

In most cases, the information and opinions shared about what Rochester needs for economic vitality were consistent. The survey participants all expressed their strong sense of a close-knit community in the study area and, as most consider it, the greater Rochester area.

Several participants believe that not having their own form of government (city/town) impeded their ability to control the future of their community. One example shared: The Port of Olympia Small Cities program dedicates an annual \$10,000 grant to the incorporated communities of Bucoda, Rainier, Tenino and Yelm to invest in local economic development projects. Rochester is ineligible because it is unincorporated.

Participants also noted that not having a sewer system and the resulting limitations on the ability to expand or recruit new business to the area is a major issue.

Businesses identified the costs associated with remodeling and new construction, including the permitting process, fees, and regulations as reasons why new projects are not occurring in the Main Street Rochester study area. Building owners stated they wanted to rehabilitate their buildings. However, the permitting process and associated fees make it infeasible to both rehabilitate a building and make a return on their investment. It was suggested to work with the Thurston County Commissioners and staff to analyze in detail the process and costs associated with rehabilitating existing buildings and establishing a new development.

Several community members have more than 40 years of experience in owning several businesses, serving on various commissions, boards, projects, and conducting research on issues and ideas that affect the Rochester area. They are dedicated to and invested in the future of Rochester.

Some participants expressed concern about the development that is taking place in the Grand Mound area and how it may negatively impact their business, while others were hopeful the development will bring more consumers to the area and business to them.

It was evident that more communication is needed about: what community and economic development is taking place in Rochester; the process to start or expand a business including permitting timeline and cost; and workforce training programs and other resources available for business management and success.

The Thurston Economic Development Council looks forward to the next phase of the Main Street Rochester Project and partnering with TRPC, Thurston County, and the Grand Mound-Rochester Chamber of Commerce to improve the economic vitality of the Rochester area.

Survey Materials

The Thurston Economic Development Council made in person visits to each business and provided the following information: Thurston Economic Development Council Letter of Introduction, Grand Mound Rochester Chamber of Commerce Letter of Introduction, Study Corridor Area Map and Survey document.





Gene Weaver, President
P.O. Box 211
Rochester, WA 98579

Dear Rochester Business Owner:

We at the Grand Mound – Rochester Chamber of Commerce are working in partnership with the Thurston Economic Development Council and the Thurston Regional Planning Council to conduct a survey of the Rochester Business Community.

The survey is part of the Main Street Rochester Project. The purpose of the survey is to ensure businesses along the US 12 corridor in Rochester can provide information specific to the business community, including access, barriers to growth, community needs, etc. The information in the survey will remain confidential and will be provided in aggregate for public purposes.

George Sharp from the Thurston Economic Development Council will be conducting the survey in person and we would appreciate you participating in the survey.

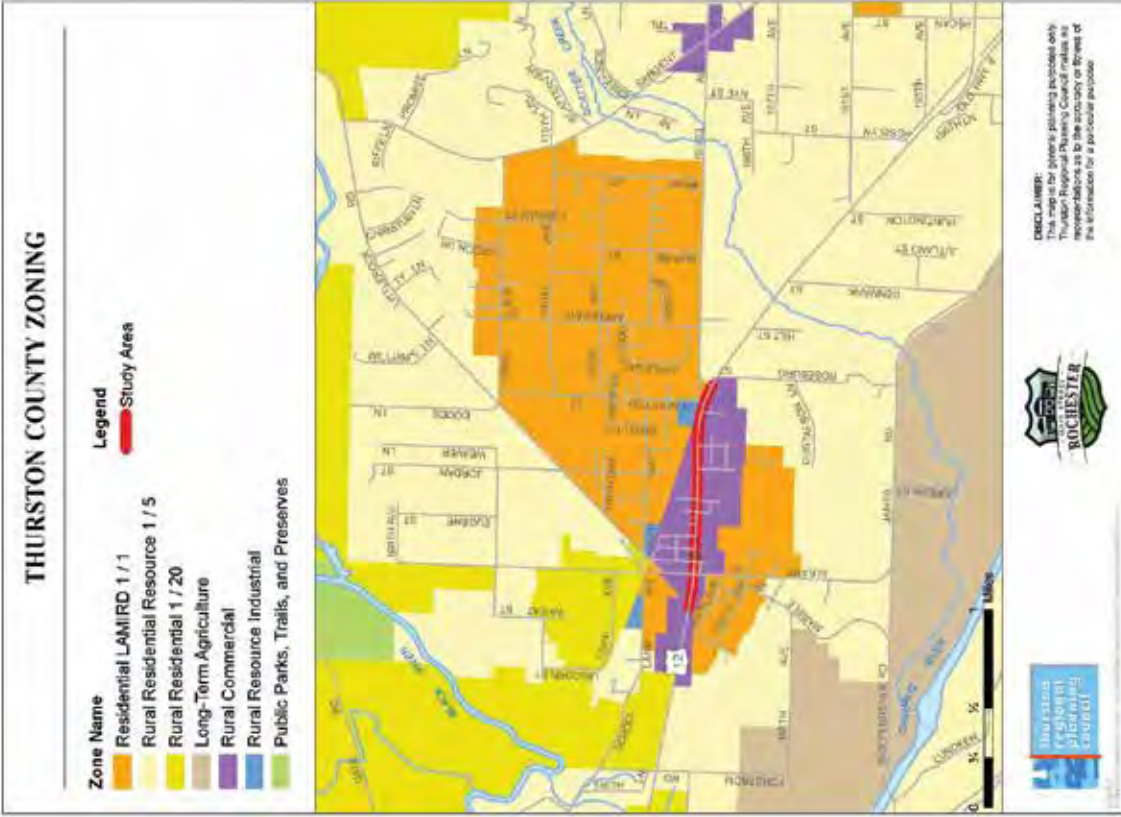
If you have any question please feel free to call me at 360-789-5688.

For questions or more information about the survey please contact George Sharp, Rural Program Manager, Thurston Economic Development Council, 360-464-6043 work, 362-878-3835 cell, gsharp@thurstonedc.com.

For more information about the Rochester Main Street Project please visit <http://www.trpc.org/818/Main-Street-Rochester> or contact Katrina Van Every, Associate Planner, Thurston Regional Planning Council, vaneveryk@trpc.org, 360-741-2514.

Sincerely,

Gene Weaver





Main Street Rochester Business Survey

This survey is part of the Main Street Rochester Project and is being administered by the Thurston Economic Development Council. The purpose of the survey is to ensure businesses along the US 12 corridor in Rochester can provide information specific to the business community, including access, barriers to growth, community needs, etc. The information in the survey will remain confidential and will be provided in aggregate for public purposes.

Date and Time of visit: _____ Interviewer: _____

Business/Organization Name: _____

Contact: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ST __ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

Social media: _____

Headquarters location: _____

Length of time in business: _____ years (When first started business)

Type of business ownership structure: __ Sole Proprietor __ Partnership __ Corporation __ LLC __ Non-profit _____ is the business a Franchise? __ Yes __ No

Is your business family owned/controlled? (Two or more family members) __ Yes __ No

Is your building: __ Owned __ Leased _____ what is your current square footage: _____

Do you have plans to physically expand in the next 3 years? __ Yes __ No If yes, square footage needed _____

Industry: __ General Retail __ Food Services __ Professional Services __ Health Care __ Agriculture __ Manufacturing

__ Other (please specify): _____



Describe your primary product or service:

What is your business'/organizations greatest achievement(s) in the last three years?

What factors did you consider in choosing your business location?

Describe the positive/negative attributes of your business location:

What do you like about doing business in the area?

What would you improve about the local business climate?

To improve the area's economic vitality, Rochester would benefit most from:

___ Sidewalks along US 12 ___ Public parking lot in the downtown core ___ Improvements to the community park ___ Improvements in the commercial area (covered sidewalks, well-maintained store fronts, trees and vegetation, etc.) ___ More businesses and destinations ___ Other (please indicate)

What businesses are missing from but are needed in Rochester?

Is street flooding an issue for your business? _____



What are the three most important improvements you would like to see within the local streetscape (US 12 Corridor)?

Are you a destination business or are you primarily supported by walk-by/drive-by-traffic?

___ Destination ___ Drive-by Traffic ___ Both

Is your business dependent on interstate (I-5, I-90), local, pedestrian accessibility?

___ Interstate ___ Local ___ Pedestrian

Would your business benefit from more foot traffic?

___ New ___ Growing ___ Maturing ___ Declining

Market and Sales

Market ___ Local (5-10 miles) ___ Regional ___ National ___ International ___ Internet based

Market Share: Are you experiencing a ___ Increase ___ Stable ___ Decline in # of new customers?

Sales: ___ Increasing ___ Stable ___ Decreasing

Do you sell to the Government agencies? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, are sales: ___ Increasing ___ Stable ___ Decreasing

If no, would you like to? ___ Yes ___ No

How do you market your business?

Number of employees:

2017 FTE ___ PT ___ Seasonal ___ 2016 FTE ___ PT ___ Seasonal ___ 2015 FTE ___ PT ___ Seasonal

Do you have current job openings ___ Yes ___ No If yes what positions:

Workforce needs in next 2 years are ___ Increasing ___ Stable ___ Decreasing
If increasing what types of position?

Rate the availability of quality workers: ___ (Rating 1 low - 7 high) ___
Do you feel that the current labor pool will meet your future needs?
___ Strongly agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly disagree
What changes do you anticipate in your business in the near future that would necessitate a change in
the type of employees you seek?

Do you think the workforce system (training & supply) can handle these changes?
___ Strongly agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly disagree
Have you utilized local resources for training employees? (i.e. trade schools, labor unions,
apprenticeships, colleges, Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council, etc.). If yes which
programs?

Were they effective? ___ Strongly agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly disagree
Are the current local high school and higher education programs adequate to meet your future
anticipated employment needs/demands? ___ Strongly agree ___ Agree ___ Neutral ___ Disagree ___ Strongly
disagree
Do your employees seek additional education and /or certifications for positions in your business?
Please describe:

What challenges do you face when recruiting employees?

What is your average turnover rate (number of new employees needed to fill vacated positions
annually)? _____





Are there barriers to growing your business? ___ Yes ___ No
 If yes, in what areas has your business had difficulties or concerns (check all that apply)?
 ___ Access to Financing/Capital ___ Changing Customer Base ___ Healthcare Reform ___ Cost of Permits
 ___ Minimum Wage
 ___ Predictability of permitting process ___ Time permitting process takes ___ Health Department
 ___ Recruiting Employees ___ Training Employees ___ Transportation/Transit Issues ___ Telecommunication
 Infrastructure ___ Utilities (Water, Sewer, Energy) ___ Supplier Network ___ Parking ___ Not large enough
 customer base ___ Government Regulations (please specify):

Other (please specify):

If there was a facility in the area that you could go for access to the following, which ones would you be interested in?
 ___ Shared Office Space ___ Copying/Printing/Faxing ___ High-speed Internet ___ Networking/partnering with other business owners, ___ Other (please specify): _____
 Free business assistance is available in the area; which topic areas are you interested in learning more about?

___ Accounting ___ Financing ___ Marketing (Traditional) ___ Marketing (Social Media) ___ Personnel
 ___ Business Management ___ Other (please specify): _____
 Are you aware of the South Thurston Economic Development Initiative (STEDI) ___ Yes ___ No
 Are you aware of STEDl's Shop South Local campaign? ___ Yes ___ No
 Are you aware of the following programs of the Thurston Economic Development Council?
 ___ Center of Business and Innovation ___ Washington Center for Women in Business ___ TuneUp
 ___ ScaleUp ___ Score ___ Washington Procurement Technical Assistance Center ___ Small Business
 Development Center ___ Thurston Investment Network

From your perspective what should be the primary focus of the Grand Mound/Rochester Chamber of Commerce? _____

From your perspective what should be the primary focus of the Thurston Economic Development Council? _____

How do you feel about the future of your business in 2017 and beyond?

Do you have any other comments or suggestions about what is needed in the area to support your business?

Interview notes:

For questions or more information about this survey please contact George Sharp, Rural Program Manager, Thurston Economic Development Council, 360-464-6043, gsharp@thurstonedc.com. For more information about the Rochester Main Street Project please visit <http://www.trpc.org/818/Main-Street-Rochester> or contact Katrina Van Every, Associate Planner, Thurston Regional Planning Council, vaneveryk@trpc.org, 360-741-2514

Survey conducted in partnership with:



