



2019



By the Numbers –
26 Volunteers visited
108 Businesses in Green Bay
Asking **10** key questions

Green Bay Business Walk

April 2019

Business Walk Purpose

A business walk is an opportunity to chat with local businesses face-to-face to gather knowledge that will help foster a more prosperous climate. The Green Bay Business Walk was a one day visitation program to assess concerns that local businesses are facing. The information gathered is to be used to help prioritize economic development initiatives and guide business assistance.

Business Walk Highlights

Participation in and positive feedback for the business survey was significant. A majority of businesses took the time to share their thoughts and perspectives on the local business climate. This feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and most businesses anticipated growing and remaining in the community in the near future. Some interesting and/or actionable findings included:

- Many businesses indicated that Green Bay was selected as a business location because of existing ties to the community. Additionally, many indicated strong support for further entrepreneurial and locally-owned business support to fill vacancies and/or gaps in the economy.
- A majority of challenges reported by businesses are associated with broader economic trends and not directly influenced by local initiatives. Promoting overall growth (adding residents and businesses) was the most often identified change desired.
- Businesses value the opportunity to form local connections and promote locally owned businesses. Creating opportunities for coordinated activities such as networking, marketing, job postings and other common functions can tap into this preference, supporting existing businesses and fostering entrepreneurial activity.
- Businesses in the Military Avenue corridor are experiencing struggles as a result of rising vacancy and increasing appearance of blight in the area, which is reflected in the lowest perceived safety rating of the three districts surveyed. However, businesses that remain are committed to the corridor and equally likely to anticipate growth and expansion in the next five years as businesses elsewhere.
- Manufacturing businesses in the corridors surveyed had the lowest overall perception of the local business climate. However, these businesses enjoy long tenure in the community and indicate future growth plans. Potentially assisting them to relocate to other areas better suited to their industry could help address the challenges and perceptions coloring their current experience.
- With 35% of businesses anticipating growth in square footage within the next five years, regular contact by the City and BIDs to identify the type of spaces needed and facilitate infill or redevelopment to accommodate these needs is recommended to retain growing businesses in the City/districts.

A more detailed overview of the business walk process and more specific insights gained through the survey responses are included in the following sections.

Survey Overview

On April 5th, the City of Green Bay, Green Bay Chambers and Business Improvement Districts partnered to conduct a business retention survey in multiple districts, including Broadway, Downtown, Olde Main and Military Avenue. The survey focused primarily on in-person visits conducted with more than 100 existing businesses in the City. The business walk represented the first attempt to take the pulse of the local business community, uncover opportunities and challenges for doing business in the Green Bay area, and identify ways that local partners can help enhance and grow the local economy and create a business friendly environment.

The business walk included both a morning and afternoon interview session, during which community leaders, representing both the public and private sectors visited businesses within a geographic region in teams of two. Businesses who agreed to be interviewed responded to ten questions about their business and perceptions of Green Bay as a place to do business (a copy of the survey is included at the end of this report). They also had the option of receiving additional information on a variety of available resources, request a follow-up visit from a community partner to discuss specific opportunities or challenges identified by the visit, and could opt to receive a copy of the completed report. Businesses which were unable or unwilling to participate on the day of the business walk also had the option to complete the survey online.

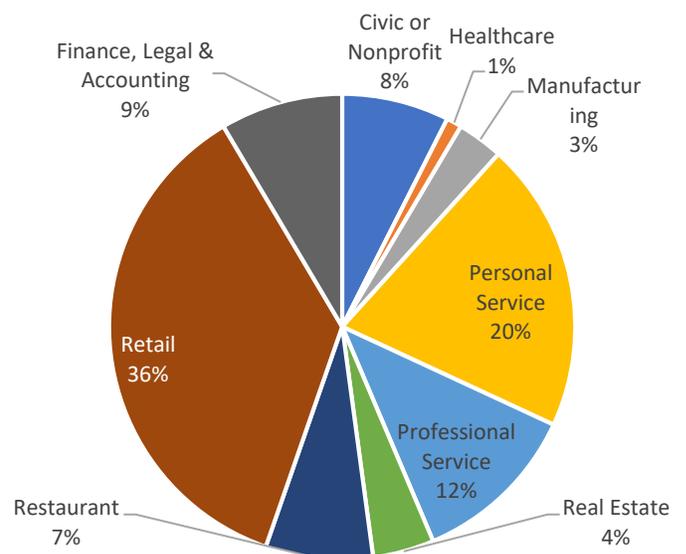
The results from the business visits, including both the quantitative survey results as well as additional comments and insights provided as part of the interviews are summarized in this document. Where relevant, specific comments, with individual and/or company references removed, are provided as an attachment.

Business Respondents

Businesses responding to the survey represent a diverse mix of industries and sizes, as illustrated in the charts below. Information on business activity sector and/or employee counts not provided as part of the survey were determined using data from ReferenceUsa. A majority (58 percent) of interviewees were small businesses with 10 or fewer employees, while 15 percent had 50 or more employees.

Service businesses (personal and professional) represented 32 percent of businesses interviewed, retail and restaurant accounted for another 43 percent, and the remaining businesses were engaged in manufacturing, finance/legal/accounting, healthcare and nonprofit sectors.

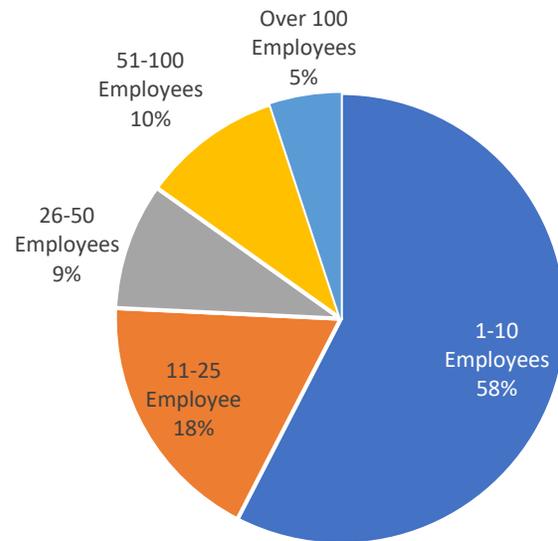
Respondents by Industry



The tenure of businesses was also fairly evenly distributed between newly opened (or relocated) businesses and those with significant longevity in the community. In sum, 21 businesses have been located in the City five or fewer years, 23 have been in operation between 6 and 15 years, and 15 had been in the City for 50 or more years.

Within the targeted districts surveyed, 30 participants from the Broadway district participated, 35 from the Military Avenue Districts (including tenants in the mall), and 31 from the Downtown and Olde Main areas.

Business Size by # of Employees



Survey Results

Overall Climate

When asked to rate Green Bay's business climate on a 1-10 scale with 10 being excellent, the average score among all respondents was 7.29 with a median score of 8. However, the score varied significantly depending on the relative position of the business being surveyed. The chart below indicates the range of responses provided based on the location, size, tenure and industry of respondents. In addition to the overall average score, a percentage of respondents reporting a positive response (over 5) is also included since the presence of 1 ratings in some categories significantly influence the average.

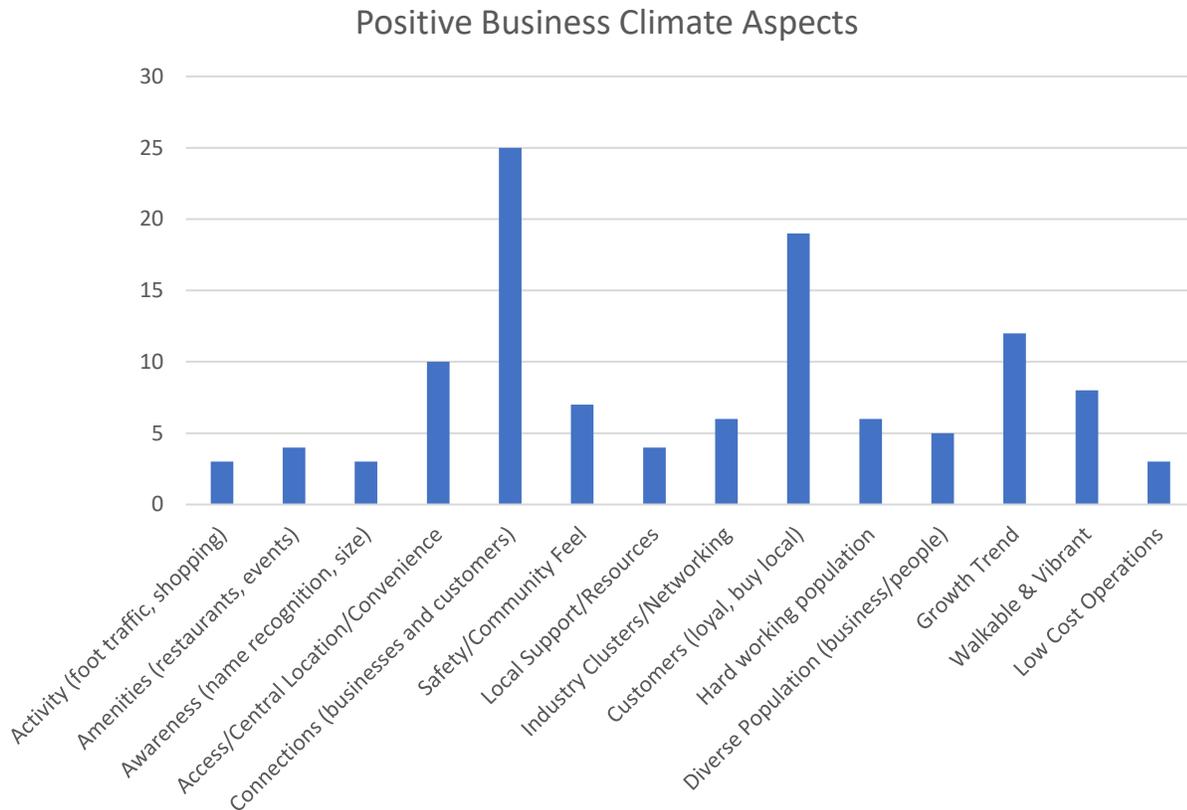
Although obviously there is overlap between the various groups, it is not uncommon for startup businesses and/or businesses with more significant longevity to have more negative perceptions on the business climate. New businesses are more likely to be stressed and experiencing business difficulties in general, while long tenured businesses often did not elect to locate in a particular community and also may be experiencing growth constraints in various forms. Businesses that are established but young enough to have made a decision regarding their location are most satisfied. Although the sample size of manufacturing businesses was small, the more negative score for these businesses merits further investigation. Similarly, there appears to be a cluster of businesses in the Broadway district that are less satisfied than others. This is somewhat surprising given the greater number of challenges identified by the Military Avenue businesses, yet their overall rating remained higher.

Location	Average Business Climate Score	Percent over 5
Broadway	7.16	90%
Downtown/Olde Main	7.58	100%
Military Ave	7.33	94%
Size		
Under 10 employees	7.05	95%
10-50 Employees	7.84	100%
51-100 Employees	7.5	100%
Over 100 Employees	6.8	100%
Industry		
Retail/Restaurant/Hospitality	7.15	100%
Personal Service	7.27	95%
Professional Service	7.53	100%
Manufacturing	6	66%
Civic/Nonprofit	7.29	100%
Tenure		
Under 5 Years	7.63	94%
6-10 Years	7.65	100%
11-20 Years	7.0	96%
Over 20 Years	7.24	94%

Positive Attributes

Businesses were first asked about positive aspects of doing business in Green Bay. By far the most common response was the importance and value of local connections, location and visibility of the community in the region, and the loyalty of both customers and businesses to the community and one another. Newer businesses or those focused on non-local sales identified name recognition and growth trends as the most important positive attributes for Green Bay as a business destination.

The chart below indicates the frequency with which respondents identified certain aspects of the local economy as a key positive differentiator for their decision to locate in Green Bay.



Safety

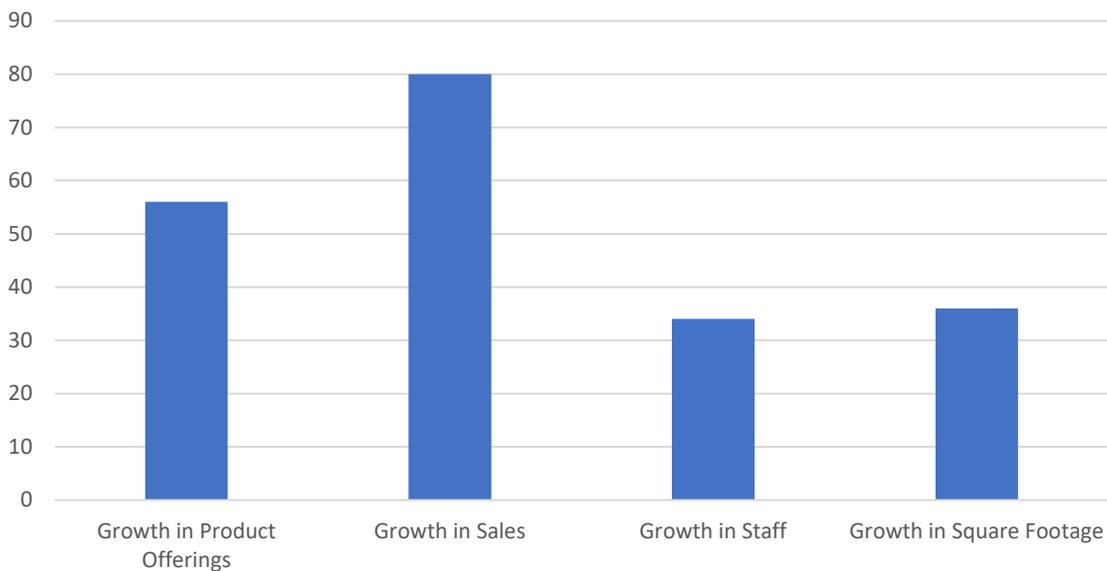
Businesses were also specifically asked about safety – specifically, on a scale of 1-10, how safe do you feel doing business in Green Bay? Overall, respondents felt very safe, with an average rating of 8.4 out of 10. By district, the Military Avenue district had the lowest score at 8.19, followed by downtown at 8.52 and Broadway at 8.81. Several businesses on Military Avenue identified the reduction in mall security and increased presence of vacancy and/or blight as key factors influencing their perception of safety.

Future Plans

Given the overwhelmingly positive perception of the Green Bay business climate, it is not surprising that just under 83 percent of businesses anticipated growing in the community in the next five years. Only six percent of overall businesses surveyed indicated plans to shrink, close or retire within that timeframe. Five businesses report plans to consider alternate locations, expansions or relocations within this timeframe. Only 12 businesses anticipate no significant business changes during the next five years.

Most businesses indicated an intent to grow in multiple ways, as indicated in the chart below. The 35% of businesses with square footage growth goals (representing all industry types) is important, as the availability of suitable space will significantly influence these plans.

Number of Respondents with Growth Plans

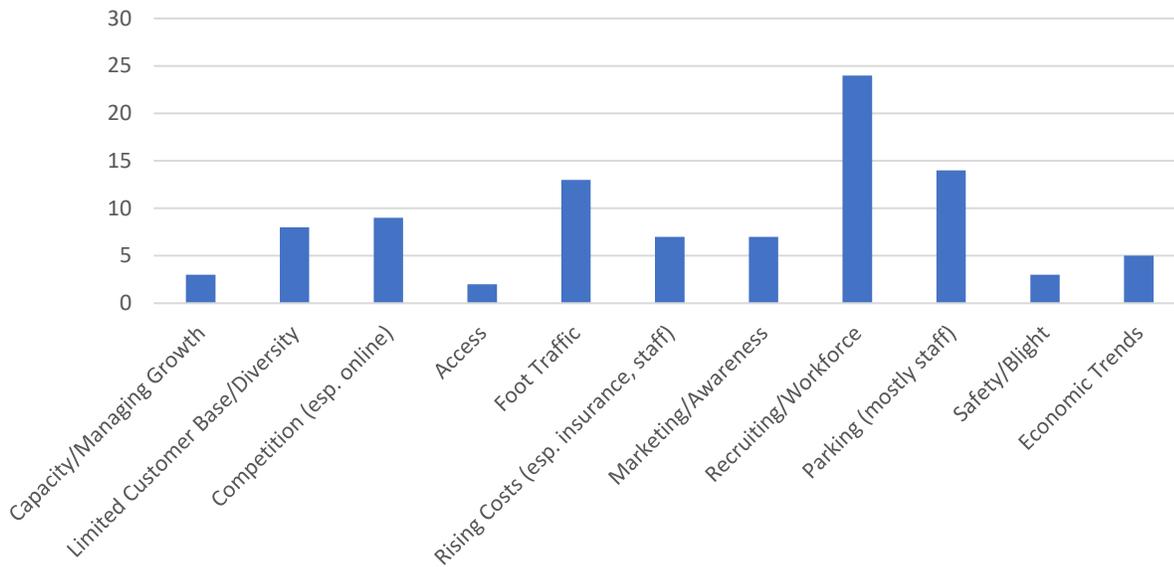


Challenges Identified/Changes Desired

In addition to positive attributes and growth plans, respondents also indicated the greatest challenge facing their business right now, and to identify aspects of the community that they would like to change to create an even more positive environment for their business. Responses to both questions were more varied than for the positive aspect. The top challenges identified are indicated in the chart below.

As expected, recruiting and staffing was the top challenge facing most businesses. This challenge, along with a limited population size, economic trends and online competition, offer limited opportunities for assistance. However, parking, foot traffic, costs and safety are all top challenges which can be influenced by local leaders. Issues with parking centered largely on staff parking (availability, cost and enforcement), rather than that for customers. Similarly, tenants on Military Avenue were the most likely to identify foot traffic as a primary concern, given the departure of major anchor tenants in this area.

Challenges Identified



Businesses had several suggestions regarding specific supports that might be provided or changes made locally which could help their business. The most frequently identified items are listed below from most to least frequently mentioned.

- Promote City and metro growth (population)
- Collaborative marketing opportunities (especially by industry)
- More events
- Recruit more local businesses, grow foot traffic/clusters
- Address parking (less meters, monitoring of lots)
- Promote infill development and fill large retail vacancies
- Affordable housing development
- Additional financial assistance, especially for startups/small businesses and for property improvements
- Reduce regulation/barriers (signage, licensing, zoning)
- Create job posting clearinghouse for the area
- Road improvements and snow plowing
- Accessibility (handicap/elderly walkability and access)
- Address homelessness/loitering

Business Amenity Ranking

Businesses were asked to respond specifically to the quality of opportunities associated with specific business resources as well as community amenities that are available to support their Green Bay business. The overall rankings for the specific amenities surveyed are indicated below. There was significant variability in responses to this question, both because many respondents were unaware of the presence or quality of one or more amenity categories (especially in the business resource section) and/or certain amenity types were not relevant to their business success. The number of non-answers are indicated for each category. In the case of the business resources, this may represent an opportunity to educate the business community about available offerings.

Business Resource Rankings

Category	Average Ranking	% Not Responding
Networking	7.79	20%
Coworking Space	7.2	50%
Access to Capital	7.44	44%
Start Up Boot Camps	5.51	63%
Business Development Educational Programs	6.49	44%

Community Amenity Rankings

Overall, public transportation and housing received the lowest ratings of the community amenities presented. The average rankings are indicated in the chart to the right.

Broadway district respondents gave the lowest scores to housing and public transportation (an average of 7 was on the low end), Military businesses were happy with lodging and dining, but gave entertainment, transportation and financial resources scores of 7, while downtown businesses gave the lowest scores to public transportation, followed by entertainment.

By industry, service businesses are most concerned with transportation, while retail and restaurant establishments would prefer more entertainment options and professional service firms desired more housing options.

Category	Average Ranking
Housing Options	7.49
Lodging	8.14
Entertainment	7.59
Dining Options	7.86
Financial Resources	7.87
Public Transportation	6.84

Follow-up

The most important element of a business walk is the opportunity to follow-up with individual businesses regarding specific challenges, and to identify strategies or initiatives that will be undertaken as a result of the information and insights gained during the survey. Of those surveyed, only two requested that an individual follow-up with them to address their specific issues. More than half (55%) requested other followup, including 47 percent interested in receiving more information on City programs and 18 percent that wished to receive a copy of the final report. The façade grant was of interest to most people, with 71% requesting information on the program, followed by 48% interested in revolving loan fund information, 40% women and minority-owned business fund information and only 27% interested in demolition grants.



Business Climate Survey

Conducted by the City of Green Bay Community & Economic Development Department, Greater Green Bay Chamber, On Broadway, Downtown, Inc, Olde Main and Military Ave Business Districts

Name: _____
Business: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____
Address: _____
Employee count: _____ Business operates: locally/ regionally/national
How long have you been in Green Bay? _____

1. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, please rate the business climate of Green Bay
2. What do you like about doing business in Green Bay that may be different from doing business elsewhere?
3. What is the biggest challenge you are facing in your business right now?
4. What change or local support would help make your business more successful?
5. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, how safe do you feel doing business in Green Bay
6. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, please rate the quality of opportunities for each of the following in Green Bay
Networking _____ Coworking Space _____ Access to Capital _____

Start Up Boot Camps _____ Business Development Educational Programs _____

7. On a scale of 1-10, 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, please rate the ability of the following amenities to adequately support your business

Housing Options _____ Lodging _____ Entertainment _____

Dining Options _____ Financial Resources _____ Public Transportation _____

8. Which of these best describes your business in 5 years? (Check all that apply)

- Growth in staff
- Growth in products offerings
- Growing in sales
- Growth is square footage
- Closed/Retired
- Other _____

9. Would you be interested in learning more about business resources from the City? (Please check any that may apply).

- Yes, the City's Revolving Loan Fund for all businesses.
- Yes, the City's Revolving Loan Fund for women and minority-owned businesses.
- Yes, the City's Façade Improvement Grant Program.
- Yes, the City's Demolition Grant Program.
- No interest or need for City business resources.
- Would you like someone to contact you to discuss your business aside from the specific options provided?

10. Do you have any other comments to share regarding economic development in Green Bay?

11. Would you like someone to follow up with your company after the business walk is complete?

Yes! Reach me at _____

No

12. Would you like a copy of the final report produced by the business walk?

Yes! Please send a copy to _____

No

Written Comments with Identifying Information Redacted

I appreciate this survey and wish I had the opportunity as a resident to share some concerns

The City should define what it means to be welcoming to entrepreneurs and be business friendly and strive to achieve that standard

A more diverse range of businesses in the area would be a positive. There's not much to do besides go to a bar and drink. Also, I know everyone says it all the time, but there's a reason for it, get a grocery store that isn't save a lot.

Aldi is growing nationally + locally

We're doing great

Been really happy with all the development

Boardwalk was great

Housing really good

Better roads

Better roads and parking

Better roads, affordable housing

Bring more business into the mall

Business Association Group Needed

Buy Local Program

Can't fix sign because it won't be grandfathered in and it just deteriorates

City needs to retain and attract younger workers

Environmental work by Bay Beach is good

Titletown is nice

Need Business ownership that is local in Green Bay

Cool that the city cares

Do not put meters on Broadway street. Just ask the businesses on the east side, they hurt business, not helped. Find a different way to raise funds for roads. Hurting businesses is not the way to do it.

Downtown is doing great

Downtown needs a convenience store

Like the growth downtown and markets

Need family entertainment

Feel like they are part of a renaissance

Feel like they are at the epicenter of the city

Fill up the Easttown Mall

For businesses coming into town the entertainment by Lambeau is doing well

Green Bay is a blue collar town with hard work is built into its roots. I would like to hope that the city is concentrated on assisting those that need a leg up and to work with companies that can fill that gap. The have and have not's gaps seem to be becoming more and more prevalent!

Happy to be somewhere with economic growth and investment

Help with exit strategy

Has come a long way in 8 years

I am pleased to see more residential development along Webster and Main that will hopefully bring more patronage among locals.

I sincerely hope the new Mayor keeps the focus on assisting downtown development. I never really saw that question asked during the campaign and am unsure of his position.

Investing in N Broadway

Keep improving

Like to know what will be done about the drug issue

Likes GB Police involvement

Litter is a problem, cigarette butts

Snow banks block his business

More shipyard information

Need more parking

Need Walgreens or some type of market

No complaints

Things are going well

Limited transportation routes

No handicap accessible bathrooms at the mall. Can't advertise public bathrooms because they are not accessible

Our community has come a tremendous distance in regards to economic development, however, we are at the infancy of where we need to be to continue a position of relevance in the future.

Overall the city has done a great job building downtown

Putting some effort into military would be helpful

Micro brewery would be great

Marketing support needed

Stadium not necessary

Fill what we have already

The BID is our only resource and reaches out to us

The unemployment issues with businesses not having workers. Why are people staying on assistance instead of working

There was a homeless issue- Did not know there was a community police for the area

Fix the roads

They wish they would clean up the neighborhood

The bike cop promised is not present

Think City and the support organizations like Downtown Green Bay/Old Main/On Broadway which have done a nice job - certainly has come a long way the last 16 years or so. Events/support needs to focus on not only the recent/start-up companies but equally on middle/well established businesses and their potential needs equally.

We are very happy to be doing business in Downtown GB

We need assistance in promoting redevelopment of business property and better housing. The current neighborhood does not have the income to support our type of business.

We will see what the new mayor will do

Like the new development downtown

Acknowledgements

The report was prepared by **Errin Welty**, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.

Survey logo design by **Shelby Hearly**, City of Green Bay, Multimedia Communication Specialist.

Survey project management by **Christian Cattan**, City of Green Bay, Intern.

A huge thank you to all our **volunteers** for making this survey possible!

Questions

For questions regarding this report or the Business Walk contact:

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Brian Johnson, Executive Director, On Broadway Inc.
brian@onbroadway.org or 920.569.3405

Next Year

Are you interested in participating next year? Would you like an advance appointment? Would you like to volunteer?

Please contact Wendy Townsend at the City of Green Bay wendtyo@greenbaywi.gov or call 920.448.3086