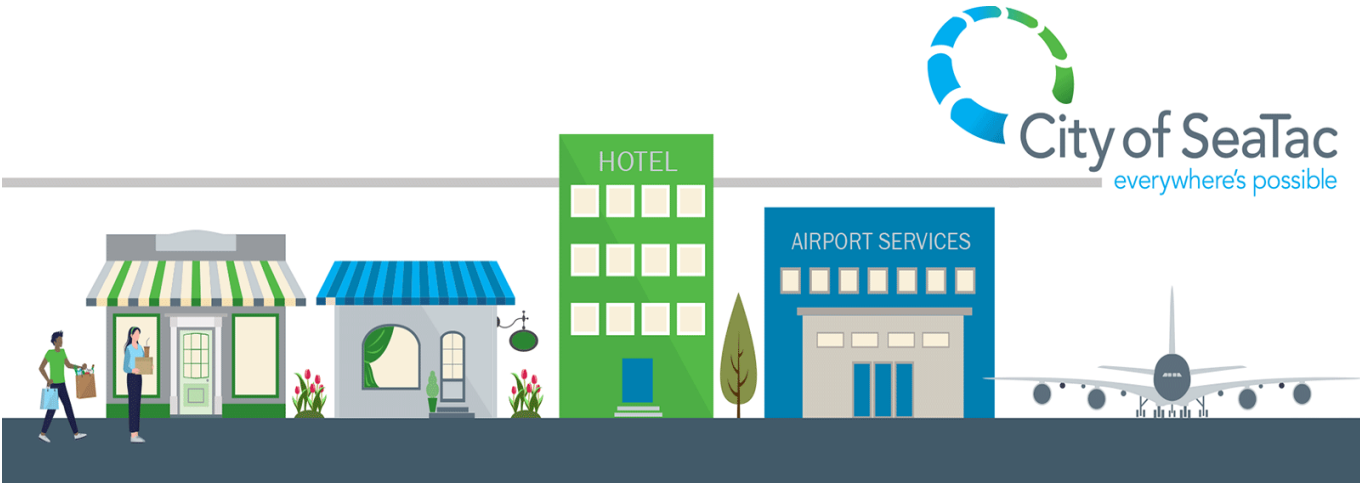


2021 Annual Business Synergy Program

Business Outreach: Survey and Data Collection



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Executive Summary

The Business Synergy program is in its fourth year of existence between the City of SeaTac's Economic Development Division and the Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce (SSCC); and is funded through an annual Port of Seattle economic development grant.

The overall goal of the 2021 five hundred hour outreach, data management and reporting project was to create a baseline framework and understanding of business sentiment as related to City and Chamber interactions.

More specifically this meant:

1. Standardizing the outreach process for future efforts
2. Confirming business contact information for more effective outreach and interactions
3. Identifying barriers local businesses are facing
4. Understanding how businesses perceive City of SeaTac and SSCC business support
5. Building trust and strengthening relationships while establishing a feedback loop

Five hundred (500) airport and travel-related businesses were selected for outreach and a survey. One hundred forty two (142) provided feedback and seventy six (76) confirmed current business contact data. The 28% survey response rate is close to the highest expected rate for survey responses (average range is 5-30% response); and is due to the project methodology.

The anecdotal trends observed in the results enabled the City and the Chamber to conclude that: 1) collective intuition on the current state of business mirrors business sentiment 2) future research projects and programs can be developed based on trends in survey responses 3) relationships to collectively solve business issues are being built through baseline results being distributed to decisionmakers for study 4) trust between the City, Chamber and businesses is being earned as next steps are adopted.

In addition to businesses identifying their level of service satisfaction with the City and Chamber, the outreach survey results identified five common areas of concern in the SeaTac business community: public safety, homelessness, workforce, consumption (demand), and public aesthetic. These "titles" are general in nature for ease of communication and should not be interpreted as more specifically prescriptive (see page 12). In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic is an overarching concern and an ongoing challenge to businesses locally and internationally. Therefore, contextually COVID impacts were considered a factor in the other five areas of note. Due to COVID precautions, all outreach was conducted via phone calls and email.

Methodology*

*See appendix for a detailed and extensive breakdown.

The outreach project contained a comprehensive planning stage prior to outreach to address challenges faced in the 2020 Business Synergy program. The following five stages comprised

the outreach program:

1. Business Selection

500 airport- and travel-related businesses were selected from the 1,400+ licensed businesses located in SeaTac. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) was used to identify these businesses

2. Outreach Database

Multiple lists with various business contact information were packaged together into one comprehensive database in order to simplify outreach and record data from survey responses.

3. Survey

Three questions were developed to gather business sentiment. Two questions were semi-open ended, while the third was completely open ended. Additionally, templates were created for outreach strategy.

4. Interface Standardization

Since there were several outreach specialists on the team, a coding system was developed to ensure information was captured in a standardized way.

5. Master List

A master list of all outreach contact and survey information was created upon outreach completion to ensure ease of use throughout the year when business outreach is necessary.

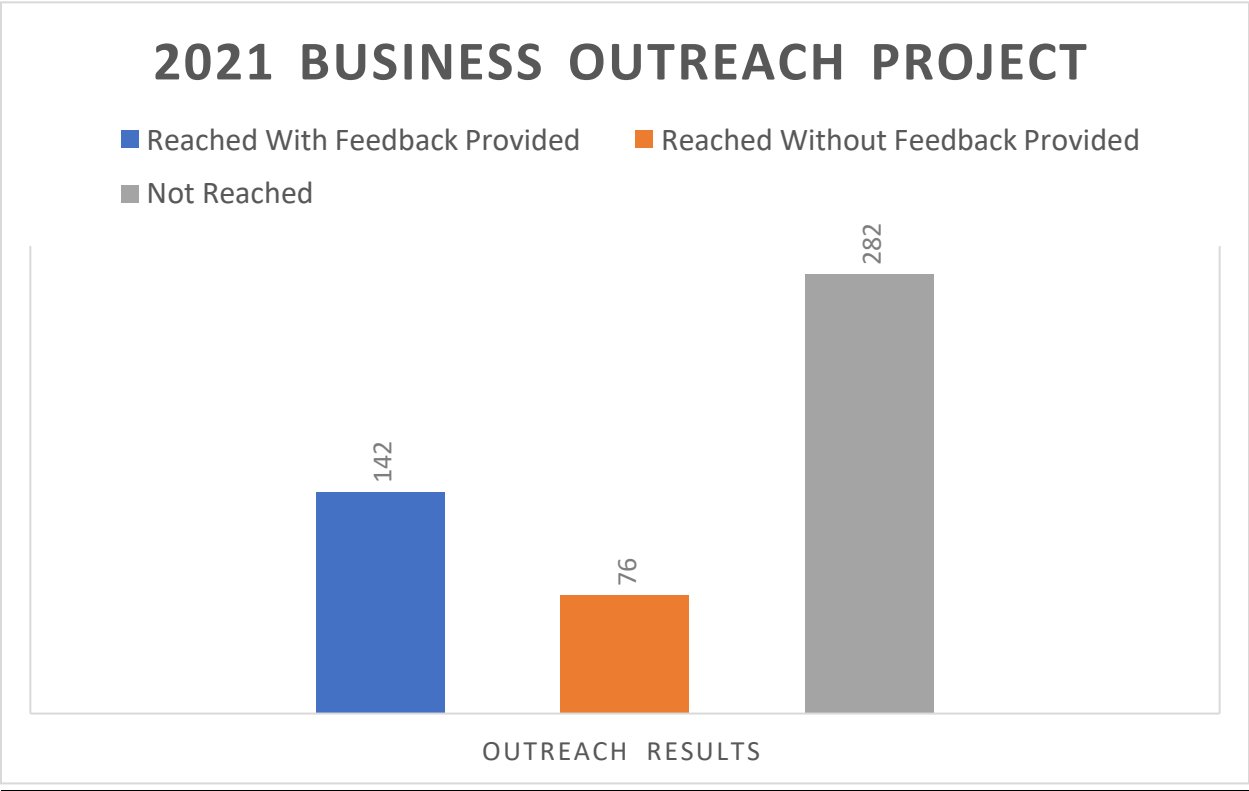
Results Overview

The outreach team identified 500 airport and travel related businesses based on NAICS codes (North American Industry Classification System) and conducted a total of 2,062 attempts to contact all of them, via phone and email, to ask three questions provided in the survey.

Additionally, business contact information was verified and updated through the survey and recorded in the outreach workbook. A total of 142 out of 500 business provided survey responses, or approximately 28%. Note - some responses were partially completed.

Outreach Results

Of the 500 businesses that were reached out to, 142 provided feedback through a survey either by phone or via email, 76 additional business were reached, but either a decision maker did not wish to participate, or no decision maker was able to participate at the time. The remaining 282 businesses were not reached due to a combination of invalid contact data and unresponsive contact(s).



Total Contact Attempts Breakdown

A total of 1,725 contact attempts to the 500 businesses were made during the outreach project. The goal of the contact attempts was to confirm contact data and/or complete a survey.

227 businesses were not reached despite: 51 being sent emails, 168 had a voicemail left with at least one of the contacts available for that business, and 8 were not reached in any capacity due to invalid contact information even after further research.

Of the 142 surveys collected, 119 businesses were reached and provided feedback/survey by phone. The remaining 23 of the 142 decision maker responses came via email.

Contact	Count
Call Attempts - Number of Call Attempts	1725
Emailed Survey - Survey link emailed to provided address, contact unavailable	51
Left voicemail - Left voicemail or message with staff member	168
Success - Completed survey over the phone with decision maker	110
Not Reached - Number no longer in service, voicemail box full, call incomplete etc.	8
Reached but Nonresponsive - Business reached, but said can't talk or hung up or didn't allow to leave a message	1388

Surveys	Count
Over the Phone – Completed over the phone , 110 plus 9 VM replies	119
Via email link – Survey link was emailed to contact and completed by recipient	23
Total surveys collected	142

Summary of Survey Results

Three qualitative questions were asked within the survey. The intent was to keep the number of questions at a minimum to respect decision makers' time and increase response rates.

The first two questions aimed to explore the current relationship between the contacted business, the City of SeaTac and SSCC. The team inquired about how the city and chamber are currently helping their business, and how the two organizations could improve.

The third question invited conversation into the survey. The open-ended question inspired dialogue and helped the outreach team identify common business issues facing the SeaTac business community.

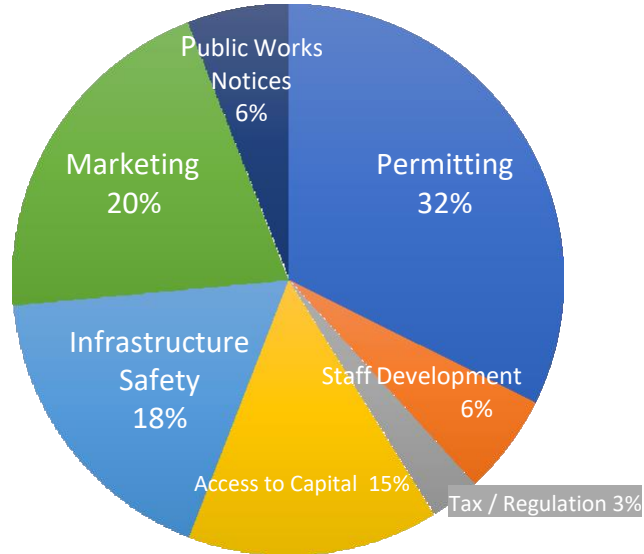
Question #1 Responses

The first question on the survey asked, "In which of the following areas are the City of SeaTac/ Seattle Southside Chamber **currently helping** your business?"

The question was followed by options for decision makers and a text box for comment. The replies are represented on the graph below:

In which of the following areas are the City of SeaTac or Seattle Southside Chamber currently helping your business?

Total: 34



Out of 34 responses, decision makers identified four areas the City and Chamber are currently helpful in. These areas were permitting, marketing, access to capital, and infrastructure safety. No other option received over 10% of the responses by decision makers.

Question #2 Responses

In contrast to question 1 - question 2 asked “In which of the following areas can the City of SeaTac or Seattle Southside Chamber ***improve*** to better help your business?”

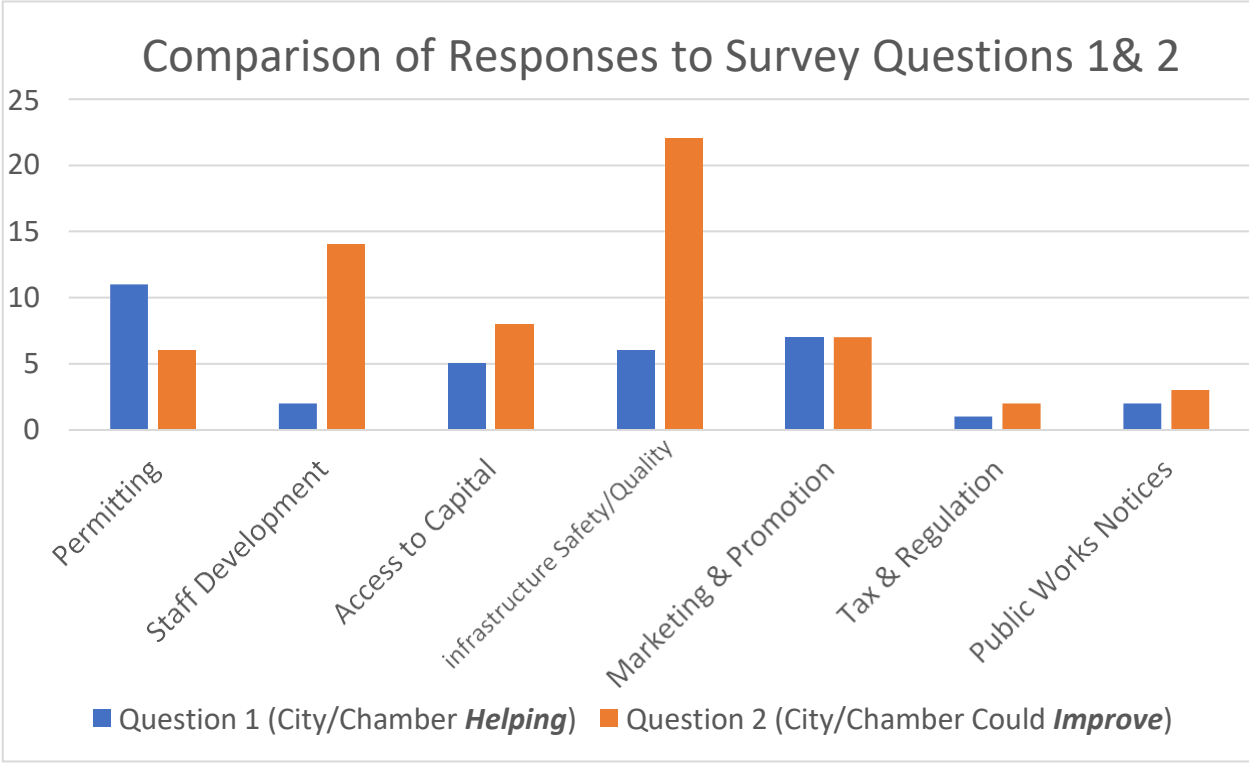
In addition to options provided in question one for respondents (permitting, staff development, access to capital, infrastructure safety, marketing, tax/regulation, and public works notices), additional options were provided in question 2 as pictured below:

In which of the following areas can the City of SeaTac or Seattle Southside Chamber IMPROVE to better help your business?



The top three areas in which decision makers indicated improvement may be needed on the part of the City and the Chamber were: infrastructure safety, staff/workforce development, and access to capital. All other responses gathered less than 10% selection rate from responding decision makers.

Next, responses from questions 1 and 2 were compared and contrasted, and several observations were made. Businesses indicated that both organizations are supporting them in permitting, access to capital, infrastructure safety/quality and marketing/promotion. In contrast, they indicated areas of desired additional help are: workforce (staff) development, infrastructure safety/quality, access to capital and marketing.



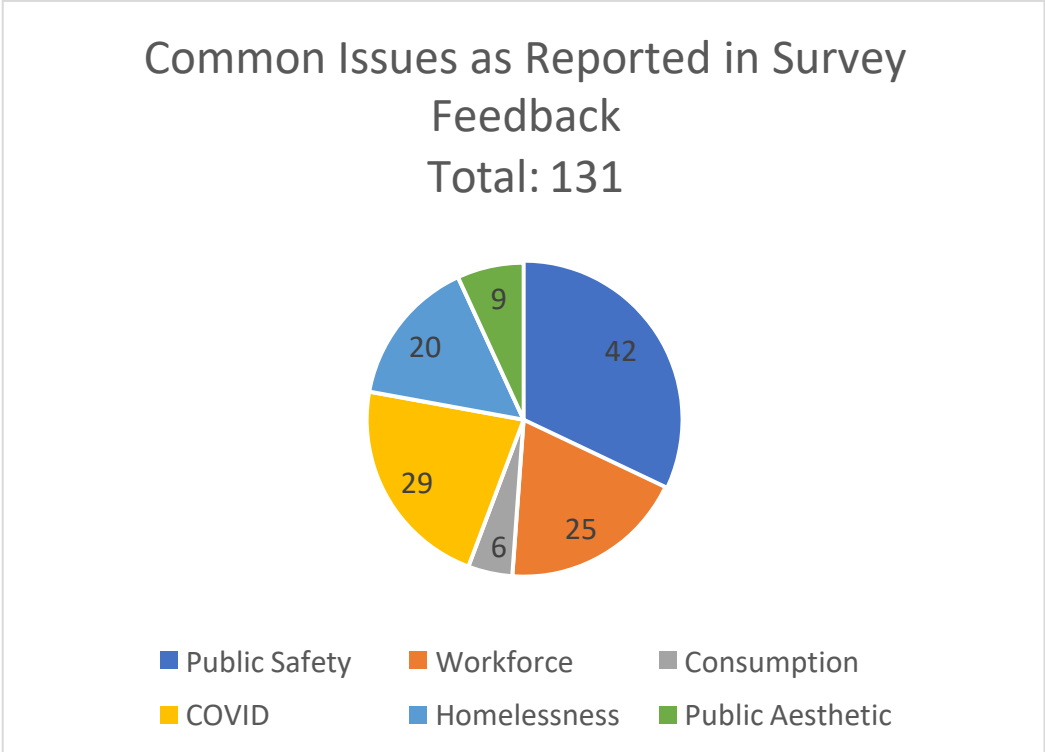
Of note is that more than double the number of responses were recorded for question two than question one (84 compared to 34). The sentiment appears to be that the surveyed decision makers believe that the city and chamber have room to improve, or the decision makers anticipate needing identified services in the future more than before.

Question #3 Responses

The third and final question on the survey was: “What keeps you up at night as a business owner or decision maker?”

The open-ended nature of this question promoted conversation. Through conversation, the outreach team identified common challenges facing the SeaTac business community. Based on the nature of the responses, the outreach team was able to categorize replies into several common groupings. These are: COVID-19, Public Safety, Workforce, Homelessness, Public Aesthetic, and Consumption.

It should be noted, however, that these common group “titles” are general in nature for ease of communication and should not be interpreted as more specific prescriptive in any way.



*Many business owners cited multiple areas of concern in their feedback.

The greatest number of responses fell into the category labelled public safety, while COVID-19 related issues and workforce development also ranked highly. The areas of less concern based on the survey were public aesthetic and consumption. Public aesthetic addresses areas ranging from illegal dumping and graffiti to general beautification requests. Consumption refers to a drop in demand for goods and services.

Question 3 Analysis and Suggestions

Based on the six high level categories of responses observed in the open-ended question 3, the outreach team prepared the below analysis to help interpret the replies and provide a structure for further research on business needs and what responsive actions may be appropriate.

Each category below has an opening statement which attempts to briefly summarize the respondents’ sentiment as observed by the outreach team based on their collective conversations. It should therefore be noted that there may be subjective biases in the analysis since summaries were made collectively from notes, surveys and conversations.

What follows is a summary of:

1. The most common respondent replies by category
2. Observations from actual conversations
3. Suggestions for possible next steps based on anecdotal trends derived from a combination of business owner feedback, SSCC and City staff recommendations.
4. The outreach team also geographically mapped the categories of responses using each business addresses to test the hypothesis of whether there were any geographical commonalities to the replies (i.e. are there any potential isolated geographical triggers that may be causes for replies). If any potential geographical correlations were observed, there is a comment below the map.

Public Safety

The business community consistently expressed interest in finding solutions to local crime. “Public safety” was the most prevalent area of concern among the group of 142 SeaTac business owners/decision makers’ survey responses.

Common themes:

- Theft
- Property Damage
- Violent Crime
- Reckless Driving
- Police Response Time

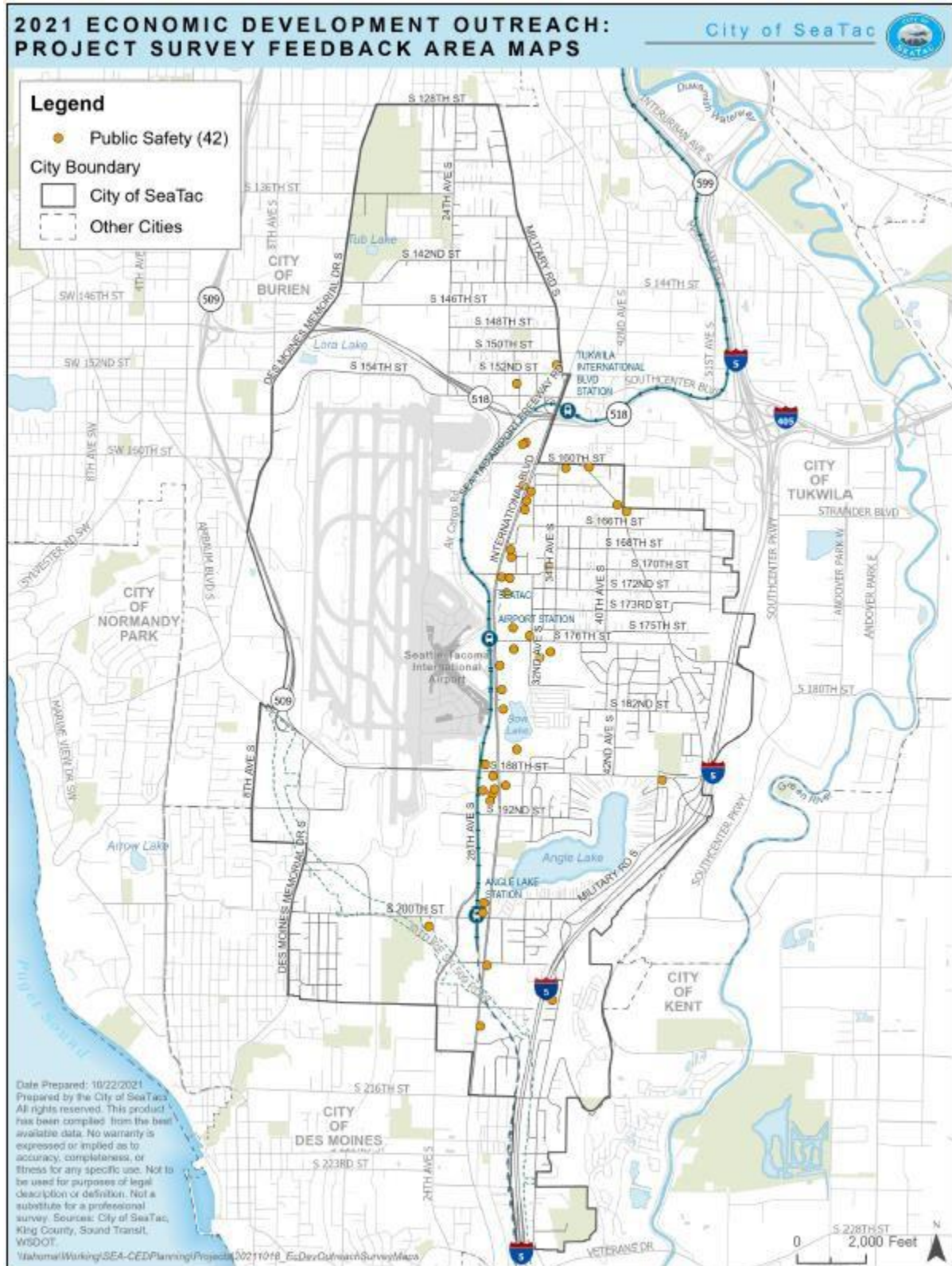
Observations:

- Decision makers seemed to combine crime and homelessness into an umbrella issue of public safety.
- Multiple hotels reported that they had hired and pay for private security to help mitigate the situation. Hotels staff indicated they regularly asked trespassers to remove themselves and did work within their means to encourage the person to leave peacefully. If/when individuals became aggressive, they called the police.
- Some decision makers indicated that police response times varied quite a bit.
- One business manager reported being told to “go ahead and call the police.” It was their interpretation that the individual who was asked to leave, had viewed the police more as an inconvenience than a threat.

Suggested next steps:

- Conduct a study to identify supplemental solutions beyond added security.
- Encourage businesses to continue reporting crimes for improved statistical data.
- Decision makers suggested increasing security and monitoring measures.

Business Addresses for Public Safety Survey Responses



Homelessness

Decision makers perceive a correlation between homelessness and crime in SeaTac.

Business owners seem to believe that crime and homelessness are rising in SeaTac, and they correlate the two issues.

Common themes:

- Loitering

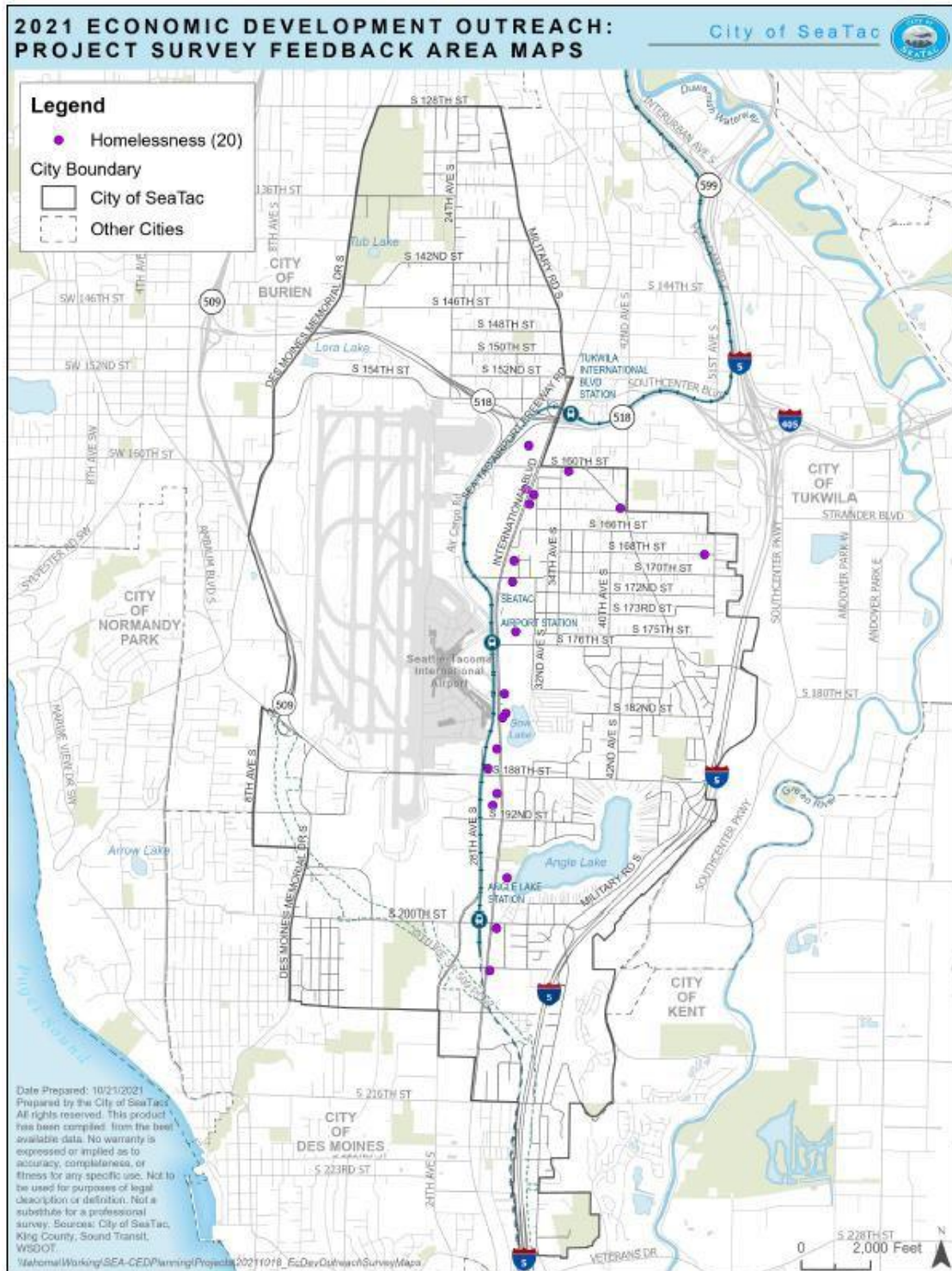
Observations:

- There is no agreement on who is committing crimes, therefore many businesses associate crimes with people they see frequently roaming the streets, loitering, and trespassing.
- A majority of hotelier respondents reported homeless/transient individuals creating problems for their business weekly or bi-weekly.

Suggested next steps

- Conduct research into the survey responses of the business community on homelessness and crime individually and to determine if there is a correlation.
- Engage with agencies which provide support services to individuals in need to better understand and gauge demand for services and what resources are most used/needed.
- Engage with the Police Department to understand any patterns they are observing.

Business Addresses for Homelessness Survey Responses



Workforce

SeaTac businesses have existential concerns as they increasingly face workforce shortages across a range of skill levels.

Hospitality and retail businesses were hit hard by the pandemic and although demand was moving in the direction of pre-pandemic levels at the time of outreach, the workforce had not yet rebounded in the same way demand had.

Common Themes:

- Attracting qualified workers
- Retaining qualified workers
- Consistent engagement from job applicants

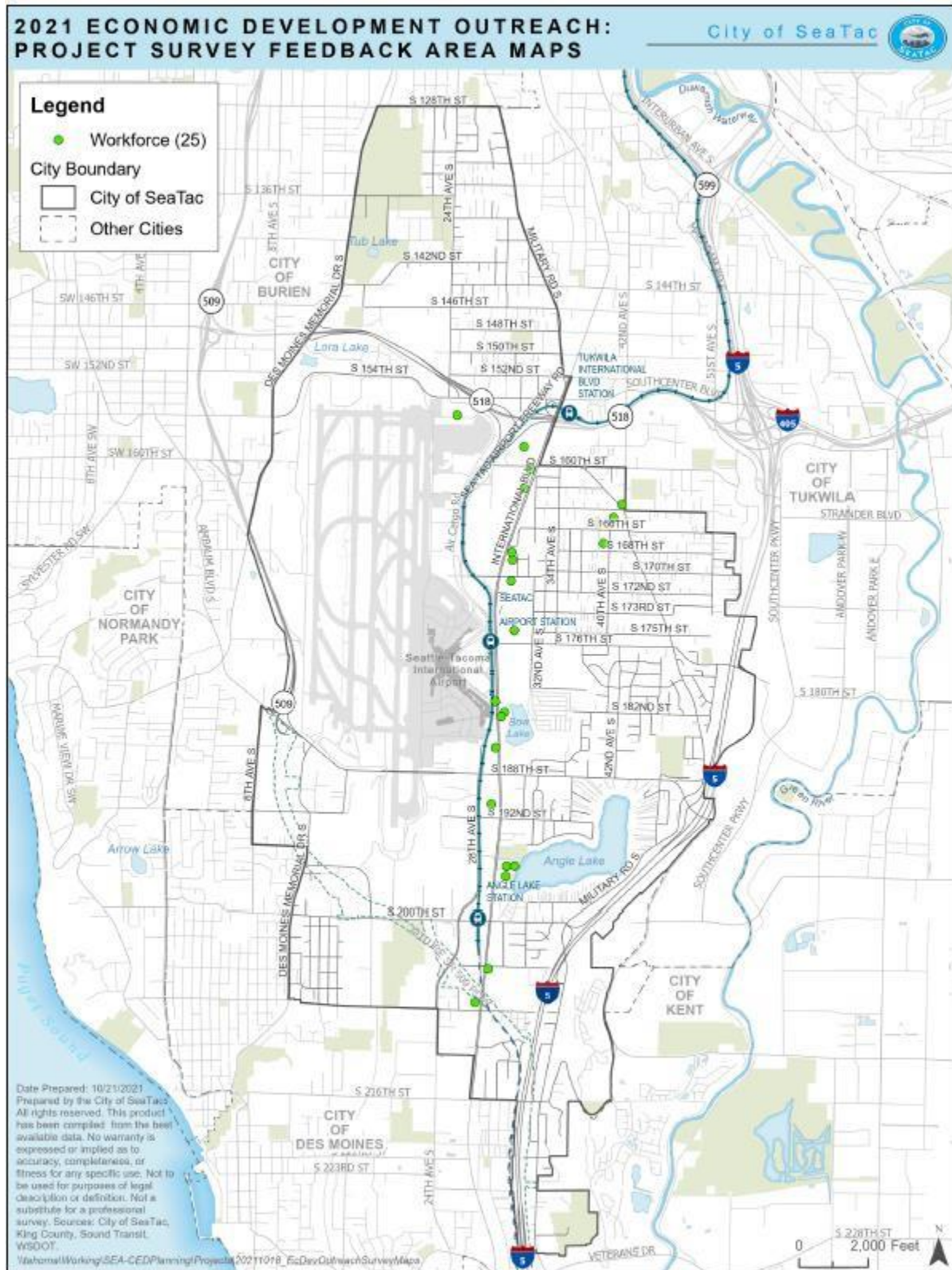
Observations:

- Some employers shared that it was difficult for them to cover local wages.
- Some employers shared that people would apply and accept a position and then never show up.
- "Staffing and retention piece is a major concern. On a daily basis have 15-20% of staff call out. 80% of interviews we have set up don't show up to the interview, let alone go through the full process of being hired."

Suggested next steps:

- Leverage community partnerships and resources to help assist with employee attraction and retention (ex. job boards/job fairs).
- Support education and workforce development efforts to ensure a healthy and robust pipeline of workers.
- Engage with Workforce Development (WFD) organizations and employers to develop short and long-term solutions.

Business Addresses for Workforce Survey Responses



Public Aesthetic

Community beautification is considered important in providing a welcoming atmosphere that visually communicates value and fosters placemaking.

There was interest in investing in cleanliness, public art, landscaping, and streetscape improvements. Decision makers want to better showcase the welcoming atmosphere of the city to its visitors and guests, and also to enhance community pride for residents.

Common themes:

- Illegal dumping
- Graffiti
- Unmaintained properties

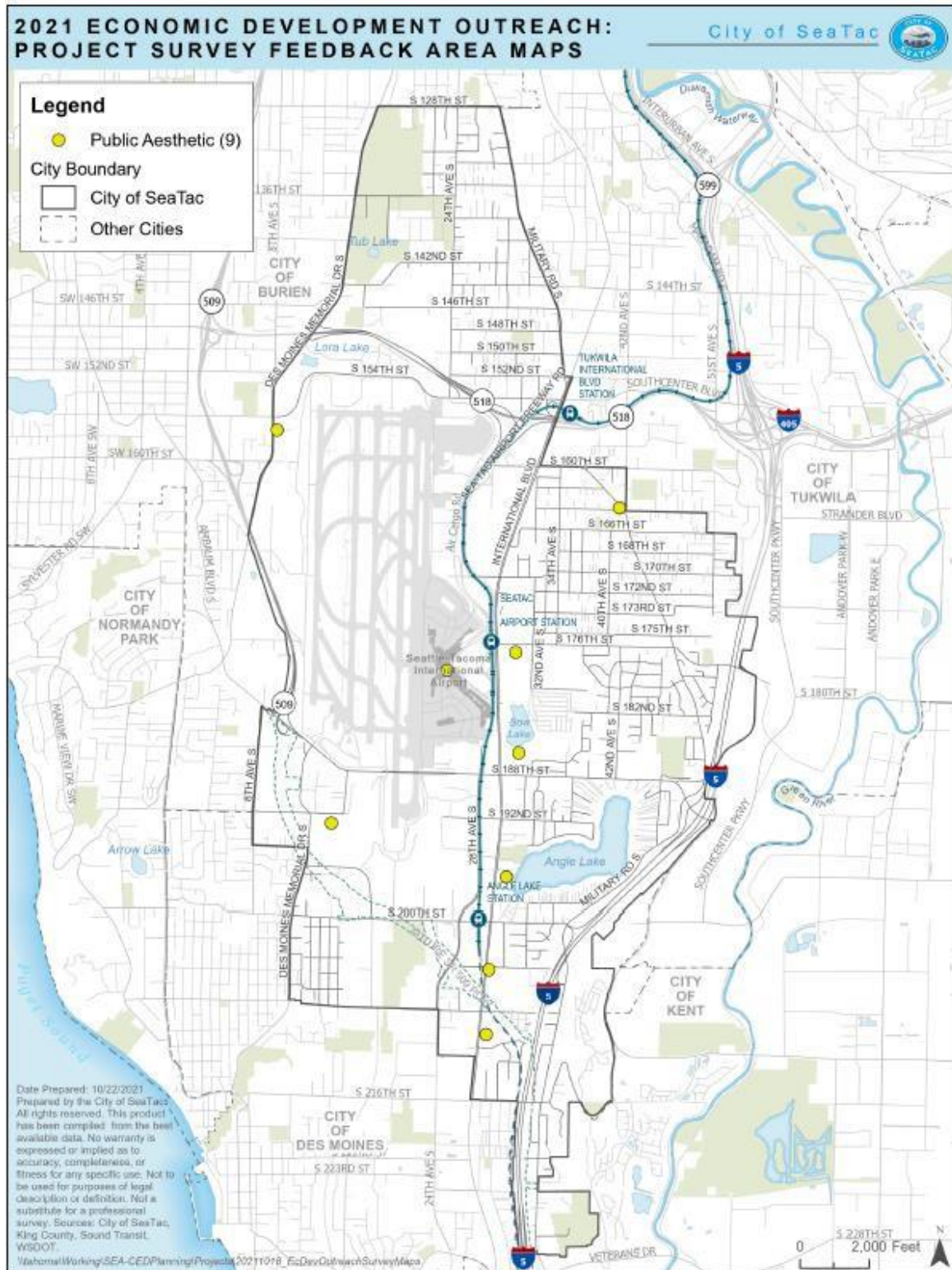
Observations:

- Decision makers were dissatisfied with the amount of trash around their properties.

Suggested Next Steps:

- Establish a community effort to clean and maintain areas identified through outreach mapping.
- Support investment to improve the aesthetics of the public right of ways and spaces to enhance a sense of place and pride in the community.
- Landscaping programs.
- Grants and funds for business storefront improvements.
- Clean sweep events.

Business Addresses for Public Aesthetic Survey Responses



Consumption/Consumer Demand

Business owners indicated a noticeable reduction in their customer base.

Respondents indicated that their current customer levels are improved when compared to earlier stages of the COVID pandemic, but that the current level is low compared to pre-pandemic norms.

Common Themes:

- Reduction in product and service demand

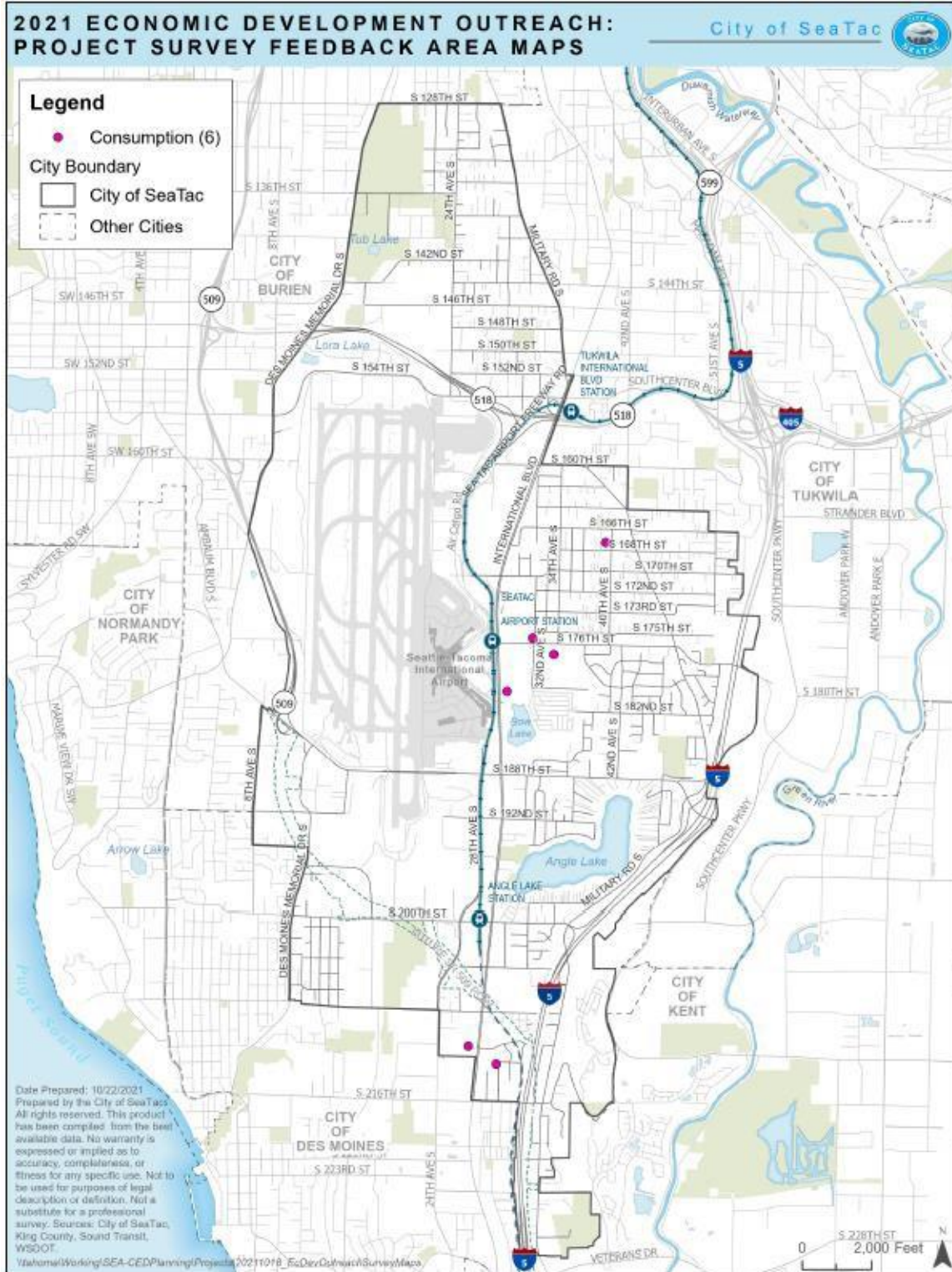
Observations:

- Decision makers note the reduction in cash flow and share how it makes paying for business costs difficult.

Suggested Next Steps:

- Expand services by Chamber and SBDC related to marketing and business strategies
 - Market expansion services
 - Business repositioning
 - Digital market access / e-commerce

Business Addresses for Consumer Demand Survey Responses



COVID-19

Businesses indicated that the disruption to global economies due to the COVID-19 pandemic also caused fluctuations in their production of goods, supply chain, demand for goods and services, and workforce accessibility.

The pandemic provided a unique context that factored into all of the issues identified through survey feedback. It is important to keep the pandemic in mind when addressing the above issues. However, there weren't any proposed local solutions from either the business community or internal sources.

Conclusion

The intent of the 2021 outreach project was to confirm business contact data and identify barriers the SeaTac business community is facing. Many challenges can be attributed to COVID-19 at least in part.

The 2020 outreach project indicated that decision makers were adjusting to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and all of the evolving economic and safety implications. The overall atmosphere was generally tense and uncertain. In the 2021 outreach, the tone of decision makers was more appreciative and engaged, indicating businesses were adjusting to operating in the current environment and looking ahead.

The ultimate goal of the Economic Development Division and the Chamber is to be well informed and implement effective strategies sourced from City and Chamber staff as well as the business community. While some actions appear clear and likely require administrative implementation, the process of further developing other more complex implementation strategies should include additional stakeholder engagement.

When compared to the 2020 outreach project, the 2021 Annual Synergy Program Business Outreach Project was more effective in reaching decision makers and receiving survey responses (28% success rate in 2021, compared to 7% in 2020). This was most likely due to the combination of the comprehensive planning stage, and a shift in context and environment.

In conclusion, the 2021 outreach project enabled the City of SeaTac Economic Development Division and SSCC to gather/confirm valid contact data of decision makers for 142 of the 500 identified SeaTac businesses. In addition, internal economic development databases will be updated, and invalid or inactive business contact data will be tracked. While the processes implemented in order to standardize data collection had and continues to have unforeseen challenges, this project established a solid methodology to base data collection on in future outreach.

Appendix A

Expanded Methodology

Business Selection

The framework established by the Port of Seattle’s grant specified that the business selected for outreach needed to be airport related. Given this, it was decided that the most effective approach would be to select businesses citywide based on their North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code. These codes are also used at the State level for reporting purposes and are the best “common denominator.”

NAICS	Description	#	NAICS	Description	#
72	Accommodation/Food Services	143	54	Professional/Tech Services	12
44-45	Retail Trade	114	23	Construction	10
48-49	Transportation/Warehousing	112	31-33	Manufacturing	5
81	Other Services	50	61	Educational Services	2
42	Wholesale Trade	21	71	Arts/Entertainment	2
56	Administrative	14	51	Information	1
53	Real Estate/Rental/Lease	14	52	Finance/Insurance	1

*The total number of businesses initially selected was 501 prior to screening

The selection process entailed:

Step 1: Organized internal list of SeaTac businesses by NAICS codes

Step 2: Selected relevant NAICS code, transferred all applicable businesses to outreach workbook

Step 3: Repeated process until 500 businesses were chosen

Outreach Database

The following metrics were chosen for the outreach database.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. DBA (Doing Business As) | 2. PHYSICAL ADDRESS STREET |
| 3. UBI (Unified Business Identifier) | 4. BUSINESS PHONE |
| 5. BUSINESS WEBSITE | 6. BUSINESS EMAIL |
| 7. NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES | 8. C1 FIRST NAME |
| 9. C1 LAST NAME | 10. C1 PHONE |
| 11. C2 FIRST NAME | 12. C2 LAST NAME |
| 13. C2 PHONE | 14. C3 FIRST NAME |
| 15. C3 LAST NAME | 16. C3 TITLE |
| 17. C3 PHONE | 18. C3 EMAIL |
| 19. C4 FIRST NAME | 20. C4 LAST NAME |
| 21. C4 TITLE | 22. C4 PHONE |
| 23. C4 EMAIL | 24. NEXT ACTION |
| 25. DATE | 26. CALLER |
| 27. NOTES | |

Fields 1-23 were populated through four source databases. C1-C4 represent different contacts obtained from the 4 databases (i.e., contact one = C1, contact two = C2, etc.).

Fields 24-27 were created for the purpose of tracking and follow up:

Next Action: This column contained a dropdown list implying success, failure, needs research, call back, email survey, duplicate, other (specify in notes section).

Date: This column was used for tracking purposes.

Caller: This column tracked who interacted with the corresponding business in each row.

Notes: This was a column used for any additional pieces of information.

As mentioned, the outreach database was comprised of four source databases (spreadsheets), each thoroughly scrubbed of sensitive, non-public facing data. The reason for multiple source databases was to create a composite master database whereby the data gaps from one database were “filled in” by another commonly used database – thus creating one master database.

In order to ensure data from each of the four databases were merged correctly – the “Doing business as (DBA) field and physical street address were used to cross reference and combine business contact data.

An example of the benefit of combining multiple commonly used and accepted databases was availability of multiple business contact people. This would decrease the need for desk research in case a single contact was invalid or unreachable. With this methodology, each business had a minimum of one contact data point and a maximum of seven, a combination of two email addresses and five phone numbers. These different contacts were then labelled as: C1 PHONE, C2 PHONE, C3 PHONE, C4 PHONE, C4 EMAIL etc.

Outreach Preparation and Tools

After the master outreach database was created, the five hundred (500) businesses were split between the City of SeaTac and Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce for outreach. There were also separate industry-specific workbooks created for the two organizations divided by industry. This enabled easier analysis at the conclusion.

In addition to the standardization established above, a color-coded system was created for interfacing with the workbooks when conducting the outreach.

Key	Colors
Populated/ Not Contacted	Row
Contacted/ Need Follow-Up	Row
Contacted/ Successful	Cell/Row
Invalid/ No Longer In Business	Cell/Row
Record Issue (Misspelled Name)	Cell
Potential Duplicate	Row
Refer to Hotel List (Chamber)	Row
Not Populated	Row

The color-coded system provided both a more efficient way of reading the status of a business within the workbook and a way to track data validity. A column was also created to track active and inactive contact data to indicate in future whether newly obtained or updated databases used in this outreach contained outdated information.

Outreach Tools Used

- Google Survey
- Shared Excel Workbook in Google Docs
- Various templates below:

Phone Outreach Template

Hello, my name is _____ and I am contacting you on behalf of the City of SeaTac and the Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce. We are reaching out in an effort to strengthen lines of communication with our valued SeaTac business community since we realized during Covid that much of the publicly available contact information on our SeaTac businesses is out of date. Could I confirm your correct business contact data on record? As mentioned, much of this is already publicly available, but it may be subject to public disclosures.

Note: template is flexible, keep to theme and adjust to decision maker.

*If voicemail, leave callback /email information. *

*If uncomfortable with sharing, request to speak with the “higher-up”/management when applicable. *

Contact information Questions:

- 1) What is the name of your business?
- 2) What is your business' phone number?
- 3) What is your business' email address?
- 4) What is your business website?
- 5) What is your business type? (Retail, restaurant etc.)
- 6) What is your full name?
- 7) What is your role or title?
- 8) What is your work number or extension?
- 9) What is your work email address?
- 10) How many employees does your business have? *Approximate if they're uncomfortable /unsure*

Thank you for confirming those.

Could I ask three final questions? Y/N

*If hesitant, frame it as owners' chance to vent frustrations? *

Your individual responses will not be shared, but all responses will be aggregated and analyzed for patterns and insights.

N: Is there a better time when I can call you back? /Would you prefer filling out a survey via email?

Qualitative Questions:

- 1) As a business owner or decision maker in the company, what keeps you up at night?
 - 2) How is the city/ chamber helping or hindering your business growth?
 - 3) What can city/ chamber do to help keep you here and grow?
-

Email Outreach Template

Hello _____,

Thank you for responding to my call earlier.

As I mentioned over the phone, we are engaging in a joint effort by the City of SeaTac and Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce to strengthen lines of communication with you and potentially reduce barriers facing your business. In order to do that, we need to receive your feedback on our performance and your experience. Taking 5 minutes to complete the online form below will provide us just that.

URL:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdUEnR1n6AhZHDx6SXnly4F83FswZFfdTEZPGrih-CJnsA2jA/viewform>

Please reach out to us anytime with any questions, or advice on how we can be of greater assistance. Please email our Economic Development Strategist Tanja Carter at tcarter@seatacwa.gov. Thank you for helping us better serve our community and I hope that you have a great rest of your day.

Most contact data used is currently publicly available, but may be subject to public disclosure.

Your individual responses will not be shared, but all responses will be aggregated and analyzed for patterns and insights.

No Response Email Template

Hello _____,

We are engaging in a joint effort by the City of SeaTac and Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce to strengthen lines of communication with you and potentially reduce barriers facing your business. In order to do that, we need to receive your feedback on our performance and your experience. Taking 5 minutes to complete the online form below will provide us just that.

URL:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdUEnR1n6AhZHDx6SXnly4F83FswZFfdTEZPGrih-CJnsA2jA/viewform>

Please reach out to us anytime with any questions, or advice on how we can be of greater assistance. Please email our Economic Development Strategist Tanja Carter at tcarter@seatacwa.gov. Thank you for helping us better serve our community and I hope that you have a great rest of your day.

Most contact data used is currently publicly available, but may be subject to public disclosure.

Your individual responses will not be shared, but all responses will be aggregated and analyzed for patterns and insights.

Outreach Execution

The following strategy was used when performing outreach.

Outreach Methods Used

1. Call
2. Call/call back
3. Call/email

Outreach Steps

- 1) Open outreach database in GoogleDocs.
- 2) Locate business to be contacted in all 4 DB's if business row wasn't populated.
- 3) Attempted to contact business owner/decision maker. Kept notes of invalid contact data by highlighting them in red.
- 4) Was the contact available?
 - a. Yes: Confirmed contact information listed in the survey and moved on to step 5
 - b. No: If contact was unavailable, didn't have time to talk, requested email, requested call back, or gave another reason that they were unwilling to talk, then notes were recorded in the "NOTES" column in the outreach workbook.
- 5) Options for what to record in outreach database:
 - a) Inactive Contact
 - b) Research Contact
 - c) Email Survey
 - d) Call Back + Date

- e) If no option seemed appropriate, enter custom description in NOTES column
- 6) Validity of the following contact information was recorded in the outreach workbook:
 - a. Contact names
 - b. Contact titles
 - c. Contact phone numbers
 - d. Contact Emails
- 7) Move onto qualitative questions. Record answers comprehensively and note trends in new column.
- 8) Finish by submitting the survey and reviewed the contact data. If contact was made successfully, "SUCCESS" was entered in the "NEXT ACTION" column data verification date was noted in the appropriate column.

Survey and Outreach

The main component of the outreach project was a survey. The survey, along with several templates, were used to conduct a telemarketing model of outreach to local business decision makers. Email outreach was used in a supplemental capacity either when requested or when a business owner wasn't reached by phone.

The templates included dialogue that addressed the underlying COVID-19 pandemic and its relationship to the challenges that local businesses may be facing.

The survey began with a section dedicated to requesting accurate information for the following 10 data points:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Business Name | 2. Business Phone Number |
| 3. Business Email Address | 4. Business Website |
| 5. Type of Business | 6. Number of Employees |
| 7. Representative Full Name | 8. Representative Role/Title |
| 9. Representative Phone Number | 10. Representative Email Address |

The second and final section contained three qualitative questions. Questions 1 and 2 pertained to the existing relationship between the business owner and both the City of SeaTac and the Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce.

Question 1: "In which of the following areas are the City of SeaTac or Seattle Southside Chamber CURRENTLY HELPING your business?"

Question 2: “In which of the following areas can the City of SeaTac or Seattle Southside Chamber IMPROVE to better help your business?”

Following were a series of suggested choices along with an “Other” option allowing for personalized text responses.

The suggested choices were:

- Commercial affordability (Examples: CDFIs, land trusts, landlord tenant mediation)
- Access to capital (Examples: Loans or grants)
- Marketing and promotion (Examples: Advertising, social media, printing)
- Permitting (Examples: Obtaining sign/occupancy/construction permits)
- Tax and regulation (Examples: MFTE, B&O, minimum wage)
- Staffing development and concerns (Examples: Education & workforce development, job placement))
- Relocation or expansion (Examples: Moving, lease renegotiation)
- Supply chain connection (Examples: Vendors, referrals)
- Road or sidewalk access to my business/Better road or sidewalk access to my business
- Roadwork and public works projects updates
- Safety or lighting in front of my business
- Community events or tourist activities near my business
- Other

The final question on the survey was intentionally open-ended. The purpose being to engage the business owner in conversation and see if other barriers or additional insight could be identified through dialogue.

Question 3: “What keeps you up at night as a business owner or decision maker?”

The responses were noted, aggregated, and analyzed for patterns.

Master Business Contact List

The master list was the final product achieved from the outreach in addition to the survey above. As mentioned, the outreach goals were to update the City of SeaTac’s Economic Development Division’s internal business contact database and survey decision makers. The master list is a single database that is composed of merged data from the original four databases used in the creation of the outreach database ***and*** the confirmed contact data obtained during the outreach. In other words, the master list is where the data validation performed during outreach was ultimately recorded.

Note: The contact information obtained in the first section on the survey (questions 2,3,7,8,9,10) was used to create an additional set of contact data titled OC (outreach contact) in the list. The ultimate goal is to upload this data into the Economic Development Department's client relationship management database (CRM) and maintain it in future.

Appendix B

Recommendations for Future Outreach

The challenges that faced outreach efforts in 2021 were similar to those faced in 2020. Some of the challenges were: lack of Face-to-Face interactions, accuracy of contact data, and capacity to respond to business concerns.

Lack of Face-to-Face Interactions:

The likelihood of reaching a decision maker by phone may be diminished when compared to an in-person visit, especially within smaller organizations. Calling also created an apparent initial lack of trust and reluctance to answer questions. (Potentially due to contact method and mention of public disclosure laws.) Decision makers showed an occasional unwillingness to provide contact data prior to relationship building.

Potential Solutions:

- Inspire dialogue prior to asking for specific data. Asking the open-ended survey question led to dialogue, often building trust

Business Contact Data Accuracy:

On average, 14% of all contact data points added to the outreach workbook were confirmed invalid during the outreach process. We can say for certain that the combination of databases greatly increased success due to one of the databases containing at least 1 valid contact data point for 218 of the 500 businesses.

Potential Solutions:

- Continue to track data validity through outreach
- Improve data tracking process in future outreach efforts
- Research additional source databases if validity rate is undesirable

Capacity to Respond:

Decision makers in certain industries were often preoccupied and had a limited capacity for the survey. This challenge was prevalent in the food service industry. Different industry needs and experiences seemed to call for different strategies regarding outreach.

Additionally, the outreach team often was unprepared when considering styles of communication and language preferences. All of the outreach team spoke English as their primary language and were unfamiliar with many of the cultures and languages prevalent in the SeaTac area.

Potential Solutions:

- Develop industry focused outreach strategies by anticipating their needs and adjusting when necessary
- Employ the outreach team based on local demographics/language preferences
- Create physical and email templates that are translated in languages that are represented in the local community, or have built-in language options (easier in electronic communication)
- Add questions that aim to understand language and communication needs of decision makers in the business community

Data Tracking

Data tracking was a focal point of outreach. However, the outreach team did not always follow protocols in the same way; therefore most actions were recorded, but not all and not in the same way. A decision was also made by the outreach team that deviated from the established protocol. This was to use a color-coded system to record responses instead of using the prescribed standardized columns. The result was an inability to sort and track data correctly, resulting in the inability to tell whether a contact data point was valid, or unconfirmed. Fortunately, tracking invalid data was not affected by the process oversight.

Below is a summary of the alternative method employed for future reference when reviewing master list:

When a business was listed as a “success,” the team would highlight the row in green to show this. However, while all members of the team would maintain red (invalid)

highlights on invalid contact data, some did not highlight the unconfirmed contact data points in yellow (unconfirmed)

Potential Solutions:

- Adhere to the original protocol of standardized responses, columns and drop down menus in answer cells.
 - In addition, keep the dropdown column for “NEXT ACTION” separate for tracking purposes
 - Create a column in workbook next to every piece of contact data to track validity
 - Add a dropdown stating valid/invalid/unconfirmed (called with no response)
 - Simplify color-coded system, only allow for cells (not rows) to be highlighted, and keep color codes to green (confirmed & valid), red (confirmed invalid), and yellow (unconfirmed)

Resource Issues

The outreach team personnel faced challenges during outreach; including maintaining motivation. The motivation issues seemed to be a result of staffing issues (competing responsibilities), changing methodology due to differences in current conditions versus hypothesized conditions established during planning, the nature of cold calling, and unanticipated staff changes at the chamber. In addition, the chamber team and intern were less motivated to confirm all four databases’ contact data after a decision maker was reached; resulting in a portion of data not being confirmed. For example, if C1 was the decision maker, and they provided feedback, the incentive to contact or verify data of C2/C3/C4 was reduced. Ultimately, due to the above, the scope of work that was affected the most was the data clean up and list merge of all collected contact data and its subsequent upload into the city CRM system.

Potential Solutions:

- Hire call center temp workers to conduct actual outreach on behalf of the city and chamber. This type of temporary worker is skilled and accustomed to cold calling; thus mitigating morale and motivation issues.