



**Listening to Business – Roseville and Granite Bay
October 21, 2009
Summary of Results**



INAUGURAL "LISTENING TO BUSINESS"

The Roseville/Granite Bay Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors designated October 2009 as Chamber month with many events planned to celebrate business in Roseville and Granite Bay. The month of activities included the inaugural "Listening to Business" event, a partnership with the City of Roseville and Placer County, to personally visit as many business representatives as possible in a span of four hours. The October 21, 2009 listening tour was also intended to define trends in the current economy and ask for candid feedback on what the Chamber, the City of Roseville and Placer County can do to support business and, in so doing, strengthen the local economy.

A total of **160 business and government representatives** were paired randomly at the Westfield Galleria at Roseville orientation meeting. The Listening to Business volunteers **visited 843 businesses**. A total of 723 businesses were in Roseville and 111 businesses were located in Granite Bay. Nine businesses visited did not have identifying information with the survey forms submitted. A mix of retail, office and industrial locations were included.

SUMMARY RESULTS

At each business, the team members introduced themselves and asked the business owner, manager, or employee three questions:

- How is business?
- What do you like about doing business in Roseville/Granite Bay?
- What improvements are needed in Roseville/Granite Bay?

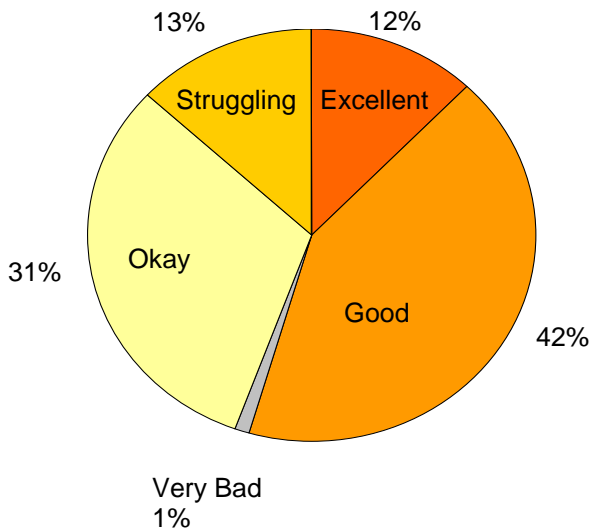
The inaugural "Listening to Business" was a great success based on feedback from the business owners and the volunteers who made the visits. The opportunity to say thank you to 843 businesses and build community spirit during these uncertain times made for a very rewarding day.

The business interviews reinforced the fact that Roseville and Granite Bay businesses are not immune to the economic downturn. National retail chains have closed their Roseville locations and the construction, real estate and financial sector declines have had very real impacts on dollars spent. However, businesses are very happy with the Roseville/Granite Bay location, the new infrastructure, the safe community, and city/county services.

HOW IS BUSINESS?

A majority of the businesses visited on October 21st had a positive outlook. A total of 54% said that business is good or excellent.

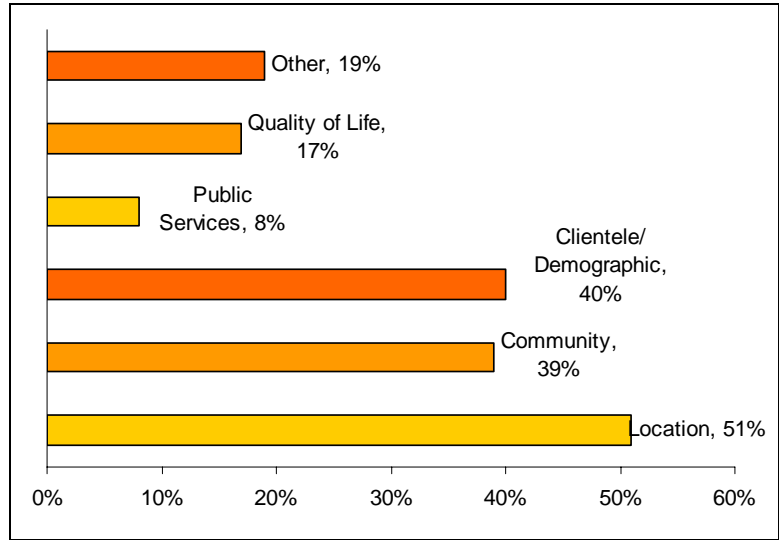
A total of 31% said business was okay and could be better. Business representatives from 13% of the visits said the businesses were struggling and one percent (1%) or 12 of the 843 businesses visited said they would be closing in the near future.



The struggling businesses were largely in the retail sector and cited factors such as significantly reduced spending on their particular product, increased competition in their niche market, or a combination of factors that led to their current business situation.

Nonprofits visited stated that their business is up if they are a service provider, however, donations are down, making their ability to provide service in these economic times even more difficult.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT DOING BUSINESS IN ROSEVILLE/GRANITE BAY?



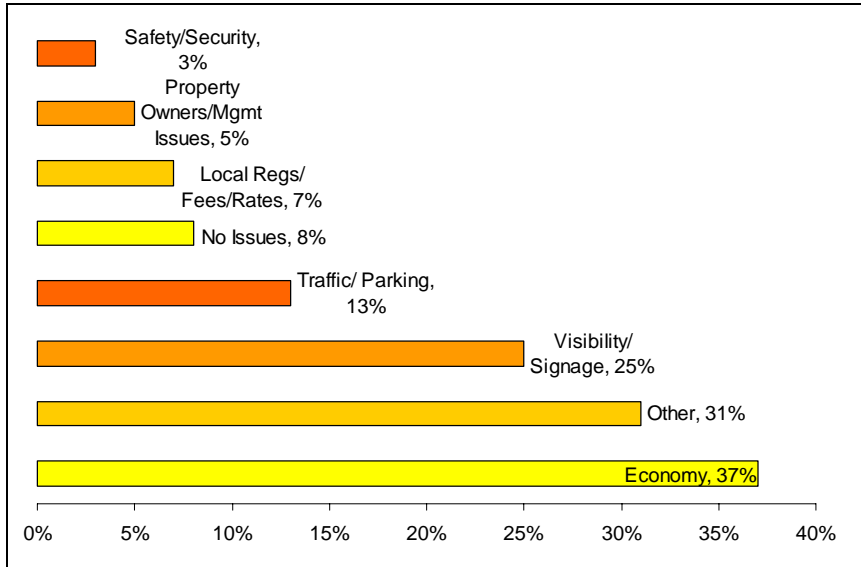
Every business was asked what they liked about doing business in this community. Just over half the businesses listed location as a benefit. Businesses liked the freeway frontage along Interstate 80 and Highway 65 in Roseville. Many cited the benefits that came with an expansion by Westfield at the Galleria at Roseville and the Fountains completion as destinations for shoppers and visitors to patronize numerous other businesses while in town.

Businesses also cited the clientele and demographics, including disposable income and diversity in age as key factors. Many have repeat customers that frequent their business and some have international clientele either because they subcontract to a larger company with an office here or because their specialty item has a following overseas.

The community is a very large factor in the business location. Safety and security was mentioned along with new roadways, reliable utilities, and friendly atmosphere. Several mentioned public services including the parks and bike trails, schools, and that Roseville is one of the best cities to work with. Many noted that as companies have closed in surrounding communities that business is coming to Roseville as this area's business community is resilient.

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN ROSEVILLE and GRANITE BAY?

Based on comments from the civic representatives that participated in the listening tour, Roseville and Granite Bay have very knowledgeable businesses that are aware of national and state issues that affect the local economy. More than one-third of the community businesses cited the economy, broadly defined, as directly affecting their business and if the economy (housing market, costs to do business, health care issues, lower vacancy rates, available of financing) were to improve, their business would benefit.



Visibility and signage is a major issue for any business dependent upon customers finding them. This illustrates the need for ongoing discussions for possible amendments to sign ordinances in both the County and City while striking a balance between aesthetics and successful businesses. Less of an issue was traffic and parking with most of the parking issues being very specific to the center or the location in a shopping center.

Over 40 of the businesses had no issues to report. These representatives were asked to call the City, County or Chamber should a question or concern come up at a later date.

The Roseville City Council approved the first reading of an electric rate increase just prior to the Listening to Business tour. Large employers and those with large electric usage mentioned the increase as an issue; however, they complimented the City on the communication and outreach to explain the rate increase.

Many businesses had other very specific comments to be made that were categorized as other and will be responded to by City, County or Chamber staff in the near future.

Several businesses listed high rental rates, the lack of communication with property owners, and an unwillingness for owners to work with businesses during these difficult economic times as issues.

Marketing and special events was an especially diverse and frequent topic. The business visitors discovered numerous and varied requests in the area of marketing. Suggestions included free advertising, marketing at every level, online marketing online marketing to various population segments.

Several interviewers discovered significant talent among local business owners in the area of marketing. A future opportunity is to have local business owners share their marketing knowledge with other businesses and creating a resource of best practices established right here in Roseville and Granite Bay.

Businesses owners mentioned they would like more special events. Opportunities to sponsor and host events with other businesses was mentioned. A larger Downtown Tuesday Night and additional events outside of Downtown Roseville were requested.

Business owners also want to be recognized for their contributions to the City, the Chamber, and nonprofits and for their community service. Expressing appreciation will pay dividends for many years in the business community.

Interestingly, opposite reactions were discovered in three areas. Some businesses encouraged more growth; some do not want any more growth, especially in the same type of business. Some owners want higher traffic volumes; some do not want any additional congestion. Specific to restaurants and hotels, some owner/operators want more rooms and dining establishments and some think the area is overbuilt.

Many businesses mentioned partnerships as a means to achieve higher sales in their business. This could be business-to-business efforts or working with the City, County and Chamber.

Respondents in Downtown Roseville commented on difficulties with construction activity as the Redevelopment investment has continued. Most recently, businesses on Riverside Avenue have been affected by the civil construction, new landscaping and monument improvements. The construction along Riverside should be completed by early 2010.



Construction on Riverside Avenue

Businesses also noted the increased numbers of vacancies. As of August 2009, the strip mall vacancy rate in Roseville is 17% and the overall retail vacancy rate is 8.5%. (Data is not available specific to the Granite Bay market). Office vacancy rates are hovering at just over 20%. Businesses asked for new anchor tenants if the major tenants in the center had closed and also wanted vacancies filed in general.

FOLLOW-UP BY CITY, COUNTY AND CHAMBER

City, county and Chamber staff began to respond to comments and questions immediately following the “Listening to Business” tour. Requests for information and for direct service are being distributed to the appropriate staff members at each participating agency.

Policy issues raised will prompt discussion and a more formal response by the governing bodies of all three agencies in the future.

The Roseville/Granite Bay Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the 843 businesses and 160 volunteers who participated in the Inaugural “Listening to Business Event.” A complete listing of the businesses and volunteers is available at the Roseville/Granite Bay Chamber of Commerce.

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