



**TO:** T.C. Broadnax, City Manager  
**FROM:** Ricardo Noguera, Director, Community and Economic Development  
Martha Anderson, Assistant Director, Community and Economic Development  
**COPY:** Economic Development Committee  
**SUBJECT:** **2016 City of Tacoma Business Survey**  
**DATE:** October 25, 2016

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**SUMMARY:**

The Committee will receive a summary of the key findings of the 2016 City of Tacoma Business Survey. During the summer the City of Tacoma sought to evaluate business satisfaction with City government services. This included questions designed to evaluate Tacoma as place to do business, interaction with city government, biggest challenges to business, Tacoma attributes having a positive effect on business and satisfaction with internet services. In order to collect this information, the City contracted with Elway Research Inc. to design and administer the survey and analyze the results. The results have been summarized and will be reviewed at the Economic Development Committee.

**BACKGROUND:**

In 2014, the City of Tacoma completed the Community Citizen Survey which intended to assess the City's performance in major service areas and help the City better understand residents' perceptions of service areas. As a result, the City Council recommended developing and conducting a similar city wide business survey to provide insight on government support for business. This initiative was included in the City Manger's 2015 strategic work plan.

Elway Research Inc. was hired to develop the survey instrument with input from the City Manager, Mayor and staff. Elway Research has been measuring and analyzing public opinion in the Northwest since 1975. Elway publishes The Elway Poll, a non-partisan, independent analysis of public opinion in the Northwest. Elway has directed research projects for large and small business, trade and professional associations, governmental agencies at all levels, not-for-profits, candidates, ballot measures, etc.

An invitation letter from the Mayor was mailed to approximately 9,200 businesses offering the opportunity to complete an on-line survey. The mailing list represented all businesses with a Tacoma business address in the Tax & License database. Over 900 businesses completed the survey during the June-July, 2016 survey period, yielding a 9.8% completion rate.

Elway produced a report including key findings and annotated graphs summarizing the results to each question. Some findings include:

- Half rated Tacoma as "Good" or "Excellent" as a place to do business
- Infrastructure, taxes and regulations named as "biggest challenges" to Tacoma business
- City government received a solid "C" grade for performance
- Half had contact with City staff within the last 12 months and 7 in 10 satisfied with response

The results from the survey were reviewed individually with department heads whose service areas received the highest response rate relative to importance to business. Those departments will identify actionable steps to address survey results.



**ISSUE:**

This is an informational briefing only.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

This is an informational briefing only.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This is an informational briefing only.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This is an informational briefing only.