



# 2025 Orleans

# Small Business Survey Results

---

## **Understanding Local Business Conditions, Needs & Priorities**

Presented by: Kailey Cordeira, Planning and Economic Development Intern

Amanda Converse, Economic Development Coordinator

October 14, 2025



# Why We Did This

---

- The survey was a coordinated effort between the Economic Development Committee and the Town Manager's Office, informed by business input and grounded in best practices from similar surveys conducted across the country.
- To understand local business needs and challenges.
- To gather input that can inform economic development priorities.
- To track trends over time and compare current conditions to previous years.
- To give small business owners a voice in shaping policies, programs, and investments that affect their success.
- To identify opportunities for support and partnership.



# Survey Snapshot

---

The survey launched on May 15, 2025, and collected 101 responses, representing a broad and diverse cross-section of the town's business community.

The survey captured a wide range of business models, including:

- Brick-and-mortar establishments, both leased and owned
- Home-based businesses
- Year-round and seasonal operations
- 19 distinct industries, including retail, construction, hospitality, professional services, the arts, and more.

This diversity of input gives the Town valuable insight into shared challenges, emerging opportunities, and strategic priorities to support the long-term vitality of Orleans' local economy.

## Outreach Methods

- Emails to business list in May (1) and June (2)
- Included in *Town Talk* newsletter in June
- Shared by local nonprofit partners in June
- Shared on social media in May and June
- Sent printed postcard with survey QR code to every address in Orleans

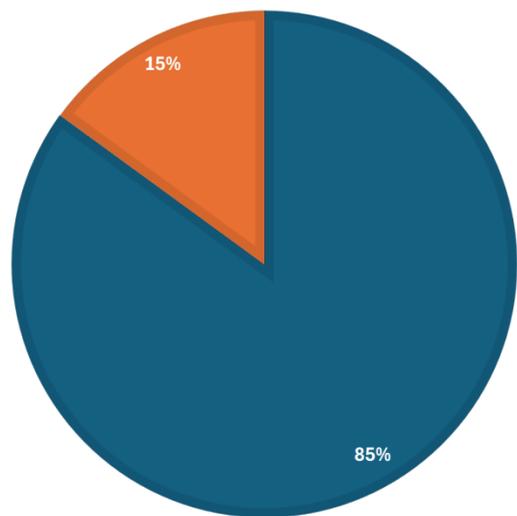


# Business Snapshot

85% Year round

15% Seasonal

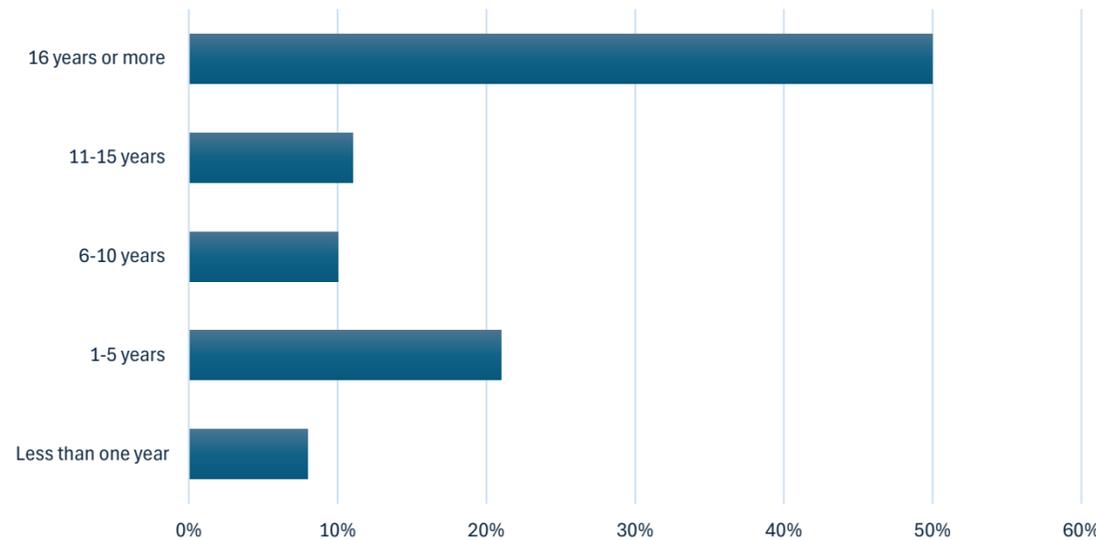
WHEN DOES YOUR BUSINESS TYPICALLY OPERATE?



50%

Have been in business for 16+ years

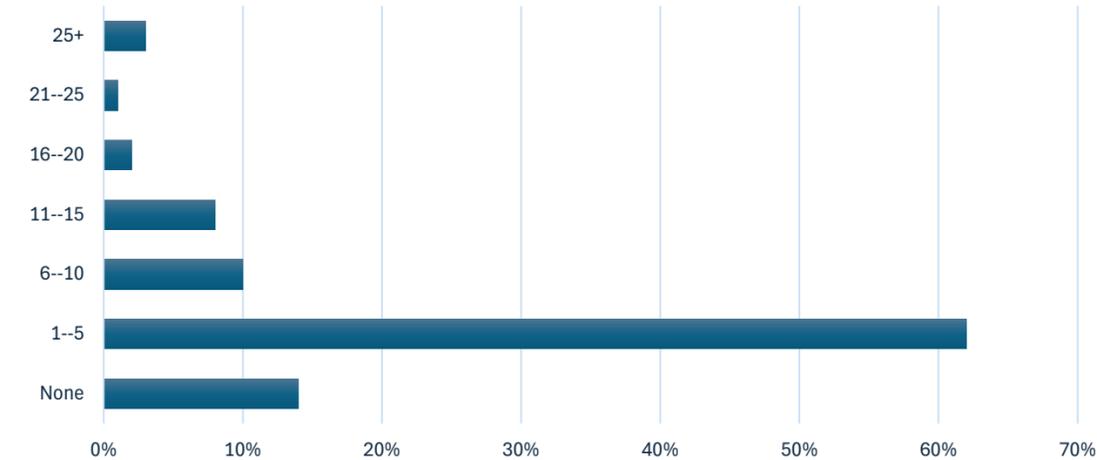
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN OPERATING IN ORLEANS



62%

Have 1-5 employees (full time, year-round)

HOW MANY FULL TIME, YEAR ROUND EMPLOYEES DO YOU EMPLOY IN THE TOWN OF ORLEANS?





# Revenue + Digital Presence

WHAT IS YOUR BUSINESS' ANNUAL NET REVENUE?

Revenue	Percentage
Over \$1million	21
\$500,000-999,999	15
\$250,000-499,999	7
\$100,000-249,000	15
\$50,000-99,999	10
\$25,000-49,999	3
Less than \$25,000	3
Don't know/Prefer not to say	19

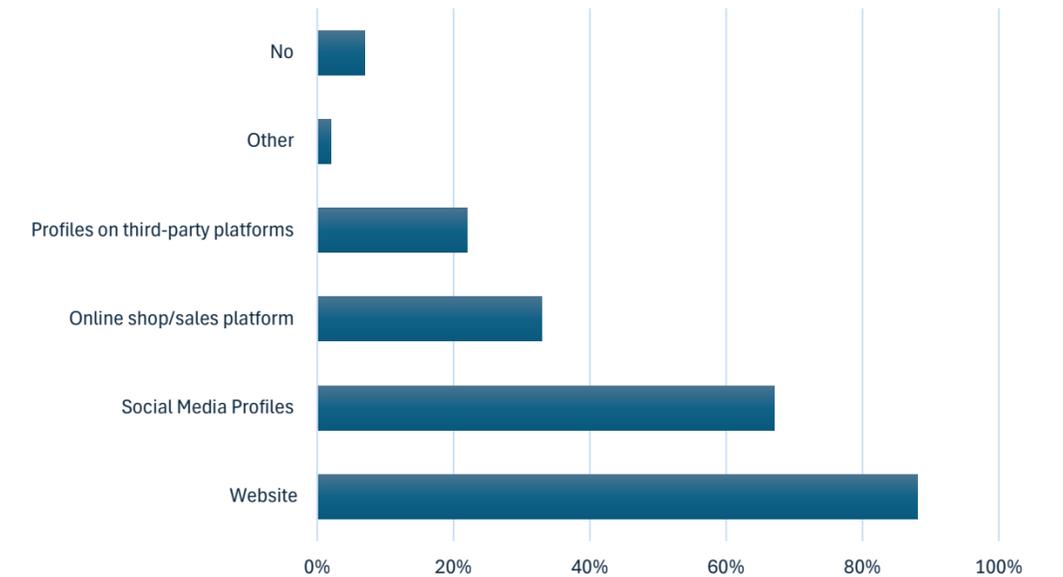
**38%**

Make under \$500K/year

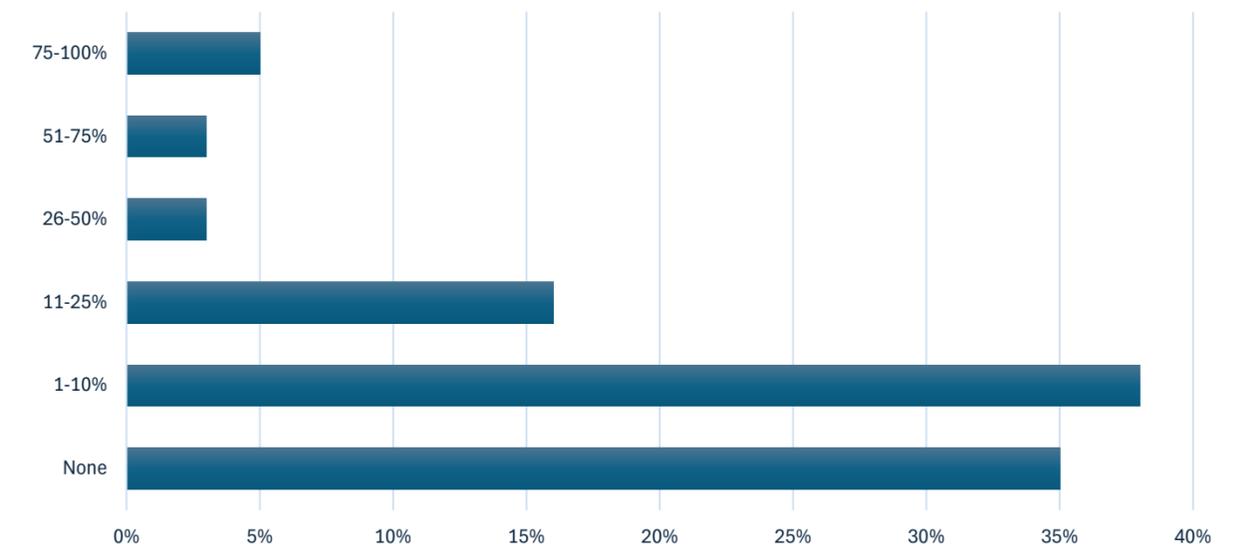
**88%**  
Have a website

**27%**  
Make >10% of revenue online

DOES YOUR BUSINESS HAVE AN ONLINE PRESENCE?



HOW MUCH OF YOUR BUSINESS IS GENERATED ONLINE?

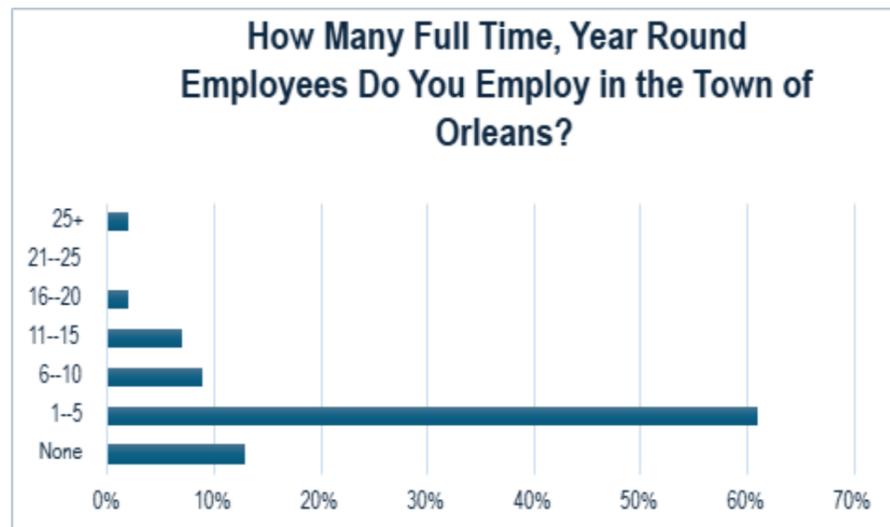




# Workforce Overview

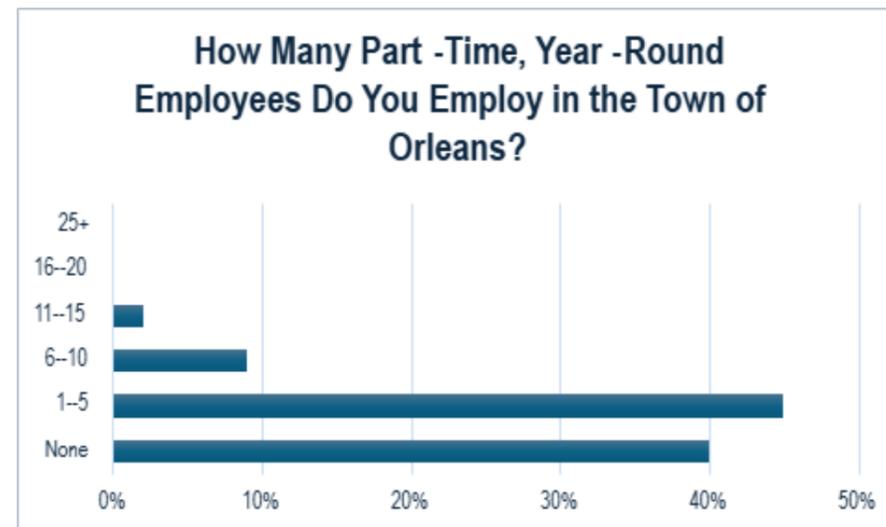
76%

Have 5 or fewer full-time year-round staff



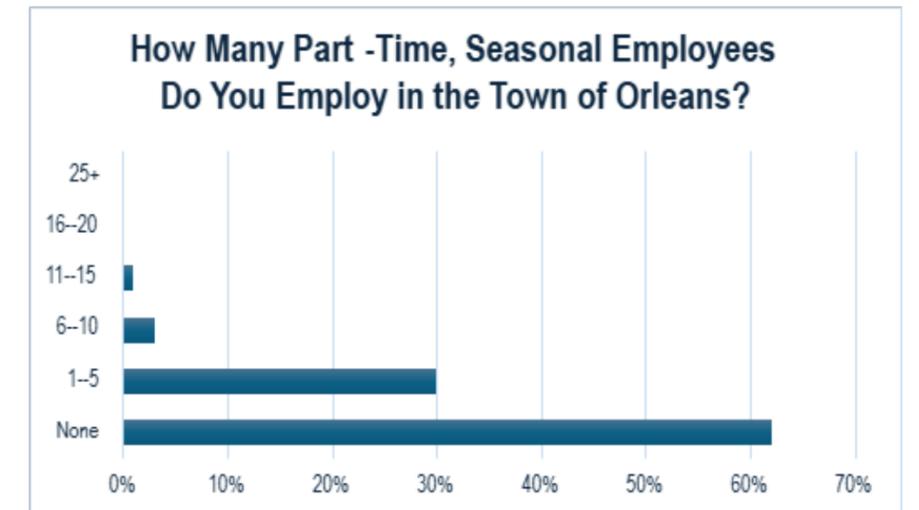
40%

Have no part-time, year-round staff



34%

Hire part-time seasonal workers



## Key Challenges

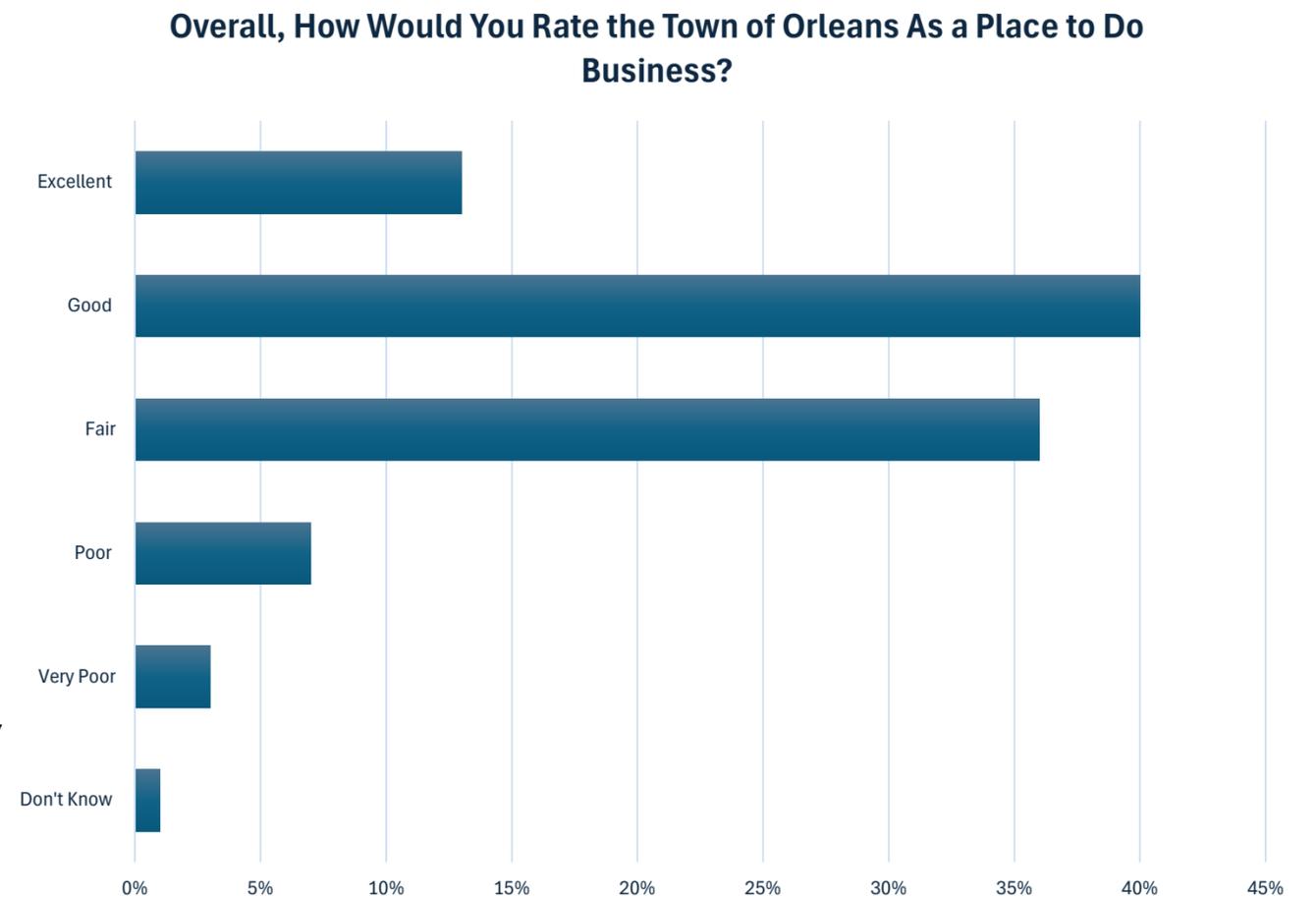
- Housing
- Hiring
- Retention

“There is a shortage of people who work in jobs in the \$20 - \$30 per hour range in Orleans because housing is so unaffordable and out of reach for year-round workers. This is our biggest challenge.”



# Business Attitude Towards Orleans

- **50%** of businesses consider Orleans **business-friendly**
- Of the businesses that have a second location elsewhere **86%** say Orleans is **“better”** or **“about the same”**
- **54%** say their sense of belonging in the Town of Orleans is **“strong”** or **“somewhat strong”** while **18%** say it is **“somewhat weak”** or **“very weak”**
- When asked how they would rate the Orleans economy **55%** said it is **“good”** or **“excellent”** while **11%** say it is **“poor”** or **“very poor”**
- **53%** Rate Orleans as **“good”** or **“excellent”** for doing business





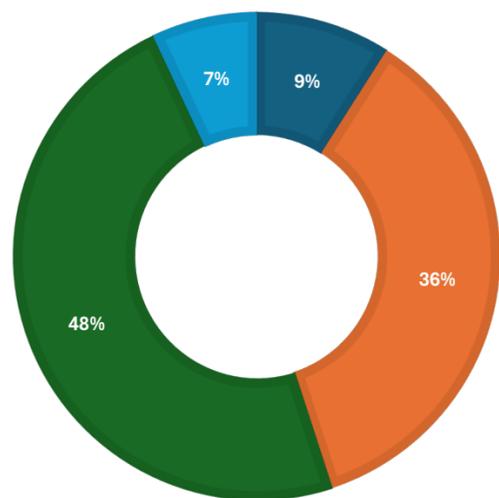
# Business Sentiment in General

48%

Say the economy has worsened this year

OVER THE PAST YEAR, DO YOU THINK THE LOCAL ECONOMY HAS...

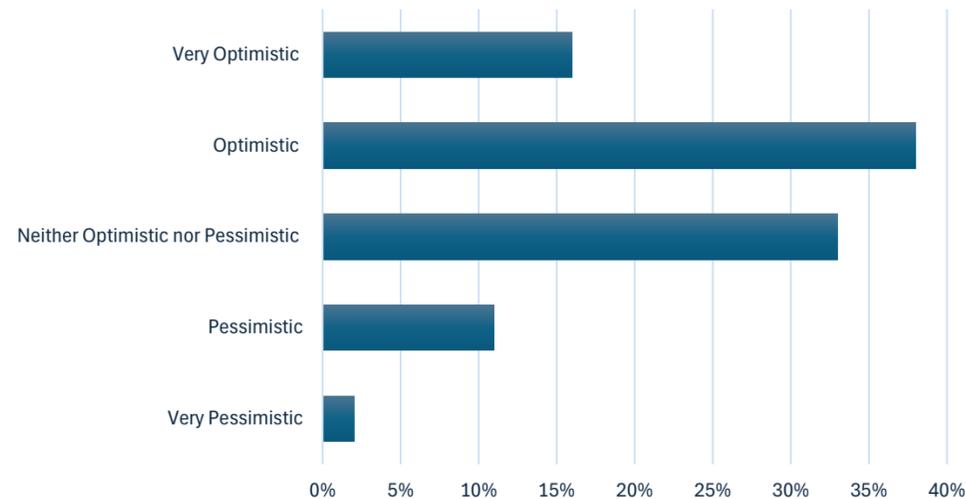
■ Don't Know ■ No Change ■ Worsened ■ Improved



54%

Say they are "optimistic" about their business future

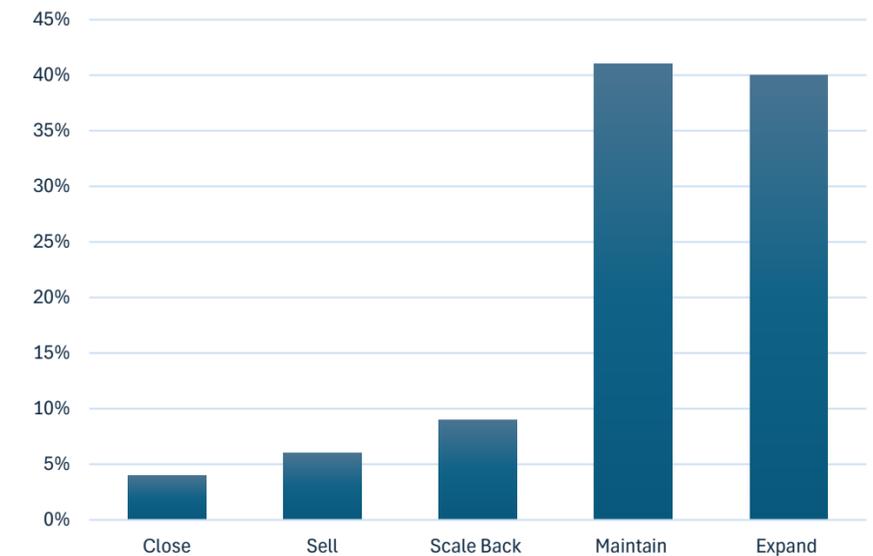
How Optimistic Are You About Your Business and Business Prospects Over the Next 6 Months?



55%

Plan to maintain or expand operations

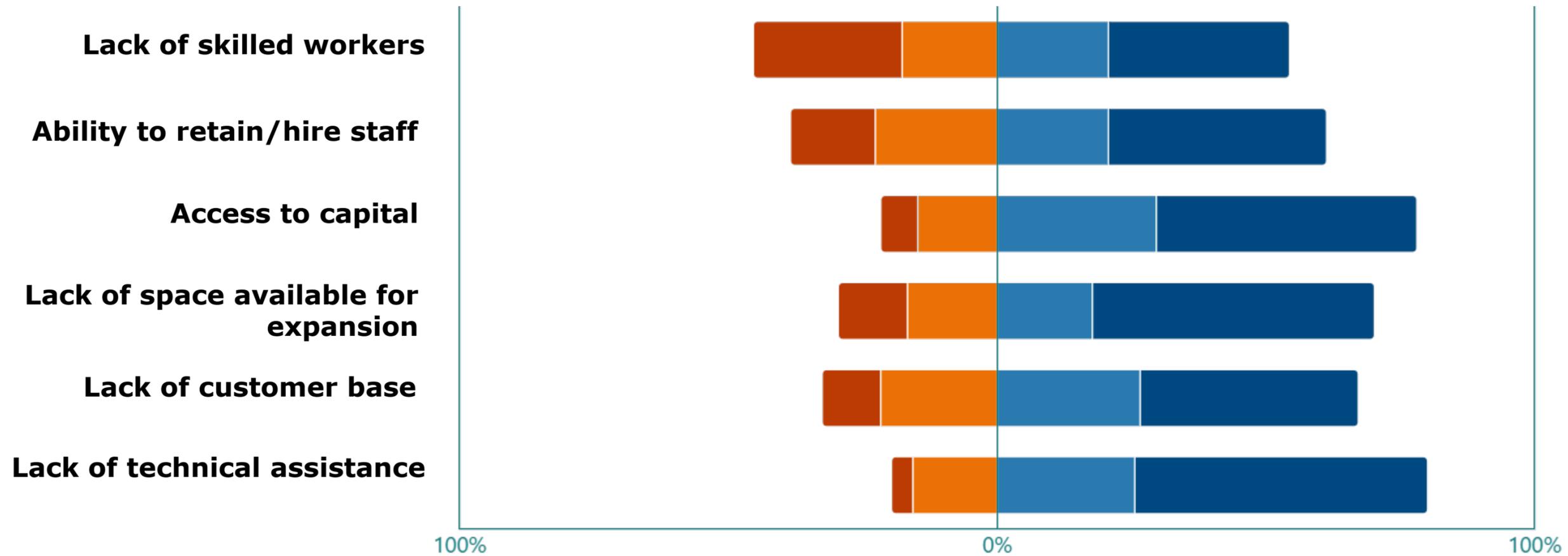
Over the Next Few Years Do You Plan To:





# Challenges and Constraints

**Serious Challenge**   **Moderate Challenge**   **Minor Challenge**   **Not a Challenge**





# Challenges and Constraints

---

**"Definitely need to improve the sidewalks/crosswalks"**

*"My only current issue at this time is the expense of the sewer hookup. I don't have the funds and need help figuring out and navigating that issue. My business was severely impacted during the system installation, as they blocked off my area during the Christmas sales period. This was a significant blow, crippling my bottom line from which I still haven't recovered. "*

**"Need a direction the town wants to head in."**

**"ATTAINABLE Housing for employees who wished to be hired."**

*"It is hard to hire staff, skilled and unskilled. The lack of affordable housing on the Cape makes it difficult for people to live on the Cape, so the pool of people who are interested in working is small."*

**"The whole town could use some paint and better signage...."**

*"There is a lack of quality office space. We would love to have an office downtown, but there's just nothing nice enough available."*

**"Unless we provide real support for lower and middle-income FAMILIES and WORKERS, Orleans will become a shell of a town"**

**"Orleans is a wonderful town, wonderful location but is losing touch of who financially supports us. The town needs to do a better job of supporting its local businesses, attract new talent and massively up its game when it comes to supporting our summer visitors "**

**"traffic issues"**

**...in their words**

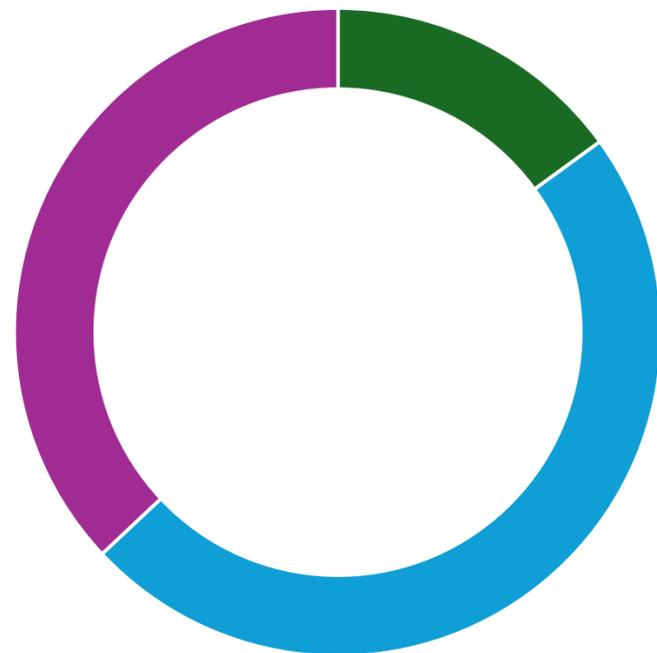


# Strengths and Successes

85%

Listed Orleans' location as good/excellent

Location

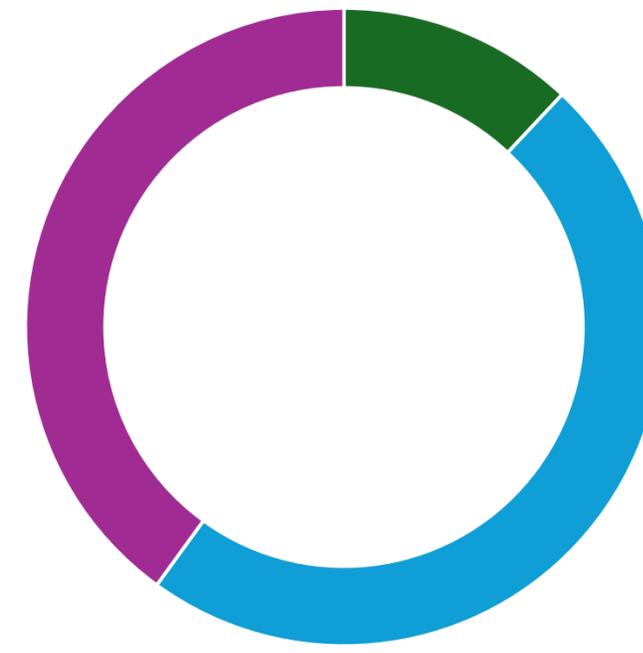


Very Poor Poor Fair Good Excellent

88%

Described their quality of life as good/excellent

Quality of Life



Very Poor Poor Fair Good Excellent



# Strengths and Successes

---

**"Wonderful place for home-based business. Great quality of life. And enough nearby services Staples, AT&T, etc. that are close by."**

**"Attractiveness to visitors and residents"**

*"Orleans has a very supportive community, it is also a very year-round town and the hub of the Outer Cape being the destination for many of the necessities people need"*

*"I've truly loved the support and community of Orleans. Ask people why they chose Orleans, it always seems to be a story of love. Sometimes I forget that I can purchase everything I need in Orleans"*

**"Lower real estate taxes. Natural environment."**

**Best town on the Cape! Wonderful community, easy access and to beaches and stores. Clean. Wonderful influx of local activities.**

**"It's the best town to live in on Cape Cod, best beaches, lakes, schools, library, everything is located and easy to walk to, just missing movie theater in town which I think would be great for town in future. Great bike trails, coffee shops, grocery stores, park areas."**

**"Best for year-round business on the Lower Cape"**

**"Strong, close-knit community; affluent customer base, strong Chamber of Commerce, overall good support from the Town, interest in balancing needs of residents for goods and services with maintaining the special character and beauty of the town."**

*"Orleans is a convenient mid-point for us, bringing in business from Harwich - Wellfleet. Being downtown, the walkability and access to public parking is a big plus. Our renters (office space) like that they can step out for lunch or a coffee, run errands, or walk on the rail trail without driving anywhere."*

**...in their words**



# Economic Development Priorities

Economic Development Priority (respondents were asked to rank their top five)	No. of Votes
Reinforce Orleans as the commercial hub of the Lower Cape.	57
Manage and protect natural assets to sustain tourism activity, retail spending and blue economies.	53
Building residential density in the Village Center for missing middle-income households.	53
Promote growth in the Village Center & Town Cove/Route 6A Waterfront.	45
Create safer pedestrian and bike connections that connect seaside assets.	41
Enhance broadband access.	37
Support and guide memorable seaside town experiences to extend local and visitor dwell time.	30
Enhance public spaces to build critical mass of outdoor experiences/events.	30
Create an anchor destination in the Village Center that serves as a cultural hub.	29
Partner with higher education institutions to develop blue economy, hospitality, and skilled trades workforce training programs.	28
Support the development of an economic development and tourism grant fund.	19
Support enhancement of hotel/hospitality assets.	13



# Observational Field Data

- **Purpose:** Understand how residents and visitors interact with key public spaces in downtown Orleans.
- **Focus areas:** Movement patterns, accessibility, wayfinding, congestion/conflicts, and dwell time.
- **Observation sites:**
  - Main St & Route 6A intersection
  - Depot Square
  - Staples Center area
  - Parking lots behind Main St shops
  - Town Cove
  - East Orleans
- **Observation schedule:** Twice per site (weekday mornings and afternoons, August 5–14, 2025).
- **Data collected:** Pedestrian/bike counts, crossing behaviors, bus stop use, public space engagement, traffic conflicts.





# Observational Field Data Takeaways



- Pedestrian frustration common at Main/6A signals due to long wait times.
- Bike path congestion at crosswalks - frequent traffic stops.
- Parking congestion and unsafe crossings noted near Trove/JoMama's and Staples Center.
- Morning peaks in East Orleans and Main St parking lots tied to commuting and café activity.
- Afternoon peaks near Depot Square and Town Cove reflect recreation and food-oriented traffic.
- Limited pedestrian appeal
- Recommendation themes: Improve signal timing, expand bike infrastructure, redesign parking flow, enhance crosswalk safety, and improve wayfinding.



# Key Themes & Sentiments from the Orleans Business Community

---

## **Strengths**

- Many businesses are long-established, locally owned, and open year-round
- Strong sense of community, customer loyalty, and downtown charm
- General optimism about Orleans' potential as a commercial hub

## **Challenges**

- Difficulty hiring and retaining staff due to lack of affordable housing and childcare
- Infrastructure disruptions (e.g., sewer construction, roadwork) affecting operations and visibility
- Limited capacity to access grants, marketing tools, or technical assistance
- Some concerns around inconsistent enforcement and communication from Town departments



# Key Themes & Sentiments from the Orleans Business Community

---

## **What Businesses Are Asking For**

- Infrastructure upgrades: walkability, signage, and broadband
- More technical support, business outreach, and permitting clarity
- Expanded year-round housing and placemaking efforts to support off-season commerce
- Consistent communication and follow-through on strategic initiatives

## **Overall Sentiment**

- Businesses are stable but feel Orleans is not reaching its full potential
- A clear desire exists for stronger collaboration and targeted action to support sustainable growth

