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New DLBA Survey Finds Small Businesses in Downtown Plan to Expand in the Coming Year

(LONG BEACH, CA – April 4, 2022) More than half of small businesses surveyed in Downtown Long Beach said they expect to expand operations in the coming year. That’s one of the key findings from the 2022 Downtown Business Survey released today by the Downtown Long Beach Alliance (DLBA).

Through the phone-based survey, conducted by ISA Corporation in January and February, 250 small business owners across all industries provided direct feedback on a variety of topics including hiring and recruiting, workspace requirements, and issues facing the Downtown community. The results will be included in DLBA’s annual Economic Profile to be released on April 25.

“Small businesses in Downtown appear to be cautiously optimistic as we begin what is expected to be a lengthy recovery period from the economic impacts of the pandemic,” said Mo Mills, Research and Policy Analyst, DLBA. “The business community also has been consistent over the past 18-24 months on key issues they are facing such as hiring and retaining employees, permitting, quality of life and safety.”

Mills added that “the organization’s updated strategic plan is intended to address these issues and was based on feedback from a wide range of community stakeholders including many small business owners.” The DLBA strategic plan, also a foundation for the proposed renewal of the Downtown Property Based Improvement District (PBID), includes the creation of a new Business Navigator role to assist businesses with permitting as well as filing vacant store fronts, and the hiring of a new experienced caseworker to further assist our unhoused neighbors in Downtown, including working with local agencies, non-profits and city resources to connect individuals to services and housing.”

Key survey findings this year also included the following:

- 20 percent of businesses said they had more employees compared to last year. That was up from 12 percent last year and 17 percent in 2019-20
- Only 57 percent of businesses said they are able to recruit skilled workers locally, compared to 61 percent last year
- 66 percent had no plans to change physical workspace, even for office-based businesses
- Quality of life and health/safety concerns represented the vast majority of issues when businesses were asked for general comments about Downtown. About a quarter of the comments related to business environment concerns in the City including permitting, taxes, and streamlining ordinances.

The DLBA annual business survey provides key insights to the health of Downtown and informs new economic development strategies, especially important due to the unprecedented impact of the pandemic. The results also support ongoing economic recovery efforts, such as the [One Downtown](#) initiative for local businesses.

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About DLBA: DLBA is a non-profit, community-based organization whose mission is to cultivate, preserve and promote a healthy, safe, and prosperous Downtown for all. By balancing the interests of the residents, as well as businesses, the DLBA creates tangible progress by way of vested interest and solidified partnerships across local, municipal, and commercial lines. For additional information, visit www.downtownlongbeach.org, or follow on Facebook [@downtownlongbeach](#), and on Twitter and Instagram [@DLBA](#).