2002
State of the Community

Business Survey Results

Prepared for:
Corporate Strategy & Policy Analysis Section
Office of the CAO
The City of Greater Sudbury

By:
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Objective

- The following represents the results of a public opinion survey conducted for The City of Greater Sudbury. This objective of this survey was to gauge the opinions of business owners, managers and professionals from the municipality on a series of issues related to life in the community and about services.

Methodology and Statistics

Project Team

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Methodology and Statistics

Study Sample

- A total of 300 businesses from the City of Greater Sudbury were interviewed in the survey.
- The study sample was randomly selected from an active database of businesses and professionals in the City.
- Interviewers screened for one of the following respondents: principal owner, President; VP Marketing; VP Manufacturing or VP Technology. Interviews were conducted between November 15 and November 23, 2001.

Survey Method

- The survey was conducted using computer-assisted techniques of telephone interviewing (CATI) and random number selection. Interviews were conducted in English or French, as the respondent preferred.
- Oraclepoll Research adheres to and exceeds the strict standards of practice as outlined by the Professional Marketing Research Society (PMRS) and the Canadian Survey Research Council (CSRC).
- A total of 30% of all interviews were monitored and 100% were supervised by the management of Oraclepoll Research.

Logistics

- The survey was conducted between November 15 and November 23, 2001. Calls were made from 830 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with call-backs of no-answers and busy numbers made on a (staggered) daily rotating basis up to 5 times until contact was made. In addition, telephone interview appointments were attempted with those respondents unable to complete the survey at the time of contact.
- While data collection for the 1999 to 2001 surveys took place in January of each year, the data collection for the 2002 survey was undertaken in November of 2002 in order to meet the new budget deliberation requirements of the Council of the new City of Greater Sudbury.

Confidence

- The most conservative margin of error for a survey of this nature is +/- 5.6%, 19/20 times.

Reporting Notes

- The results contained in this report are in aggregate format and protect the identity of individual respondents.
- This report contains breakdowns by each of the key service areas covered in the survey. Each section has an executive summary that highlights the key findings from the survey and the results by question.
- The results are presented in the exact order that the questions were asked to respondents in the survey. A brief analysis of the findings is provided after each question where applicable or warranted. Results from open-ended probes were content analyzed and grouped in general categories. It should be noted that not all respondents may have been asked all questions due to screening and that certain questions may not have been applicable.
- The results from some questions may not add up to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses.

Our Community's Future

Likes and dislikes about conducting business in the City

All business respondents were asked in an open-ended format what they **liked most about conducting business** in the City.

What businesses like most about conducting business in the City							
1999		**2000**		**2001**		**2002**	
The people / clients	34%	The people / clients	30%	The people / clients	34%	The people / clients	32%
Where I live	16%	Size of community	9%	Good location	9%	Good location	12%
Networking / Contacts	9%	Know clients personally	9%	Born & raised here	9%	Friendly environment	10%
Location	6%	Where I live	8%	Where I live	7%	Business climate	7%
Like the area	5%	Networking / Contacts	5%	Lifestyle	5%	Quality of life	7%
Economy / Growth potential	5%	Friendly atmosphere	5%	Size of community	5%	Facilities / amenities	7%

(Excluding responses of Don't Know)

When responding from the perspective of conducting business in the community, in 2002 continued to most like the City because of its people (32%), as in the previous three years. The next most cited responses were the location of the community (12%) and the fact that they felt the community was business friendly. A total of 18% stated that they did not know what they most liked.

What businesses least like about conducting business in the City							
1999		**2000**		**2001**		**2002**	
Bureaucracy / Red tape	11%	Taxes	13%	Bureaucracy / Red tape	19%	Economy	17%
Taxes	10%	Bureaucracy / Red tape	9%	Taxes	10%	Bureaucracy / Red tape	13%
Economy	10%	Attitudes	6%	Location	10%	Location	11%
Location	9%	Economy	6%	Nothing	8%	Taxes	8%
By-laws	6%	People shopping elsewhere	6%	Economy	8%	Roads	7%
Competition	6%	Competition	6%	Not business friendly	6%	Limited market	6%
Climate	6%	Location	6%	Amalgamation	4%	Not business friendly	5%

(Excluding responses of Don't Know)

The state of the economy (17%) has become the single most disliked aspect of the community according to businesses in 2002, showing a sharp increase over 2001 when only 8% cited this as a concern.

Despite new concerns over the economy, red tape continues to be a concern among 13% of businesses and while this is down 6% from 2001, it should be noted that an additional 5% of those surveyed also claimed that the City is not business friendly.

Almost one-quarter of businesses (24%) stated that they did not know what they most disliked and an additional 5% disliked no aspect of conducting business in the community.

Most important issues facing the community

Respondents were asked what they felt were the **most important issues** facing the community.

Significant issues – Of respondents with an opinion

1999		2000		2001		2002	
Jobs / Unemployment	20%	Jobs / Unemployment	15%	Taxes (high)	25%	Taxes (high)	21%
Taxes (high)	14%	Amalgamation / Municipal restructuring	11%	Jobs / Unemployment	13%	Economic diversification	14%
Economic diversification	10%	Economic diversification	11%	Economic diversification	10%	Business friendly environment	12%
Economy	10%	Economy	8%	Business friendly environment	8%	Jobs / Unemployment	11%
Diversification of client base	8%	Keeping youth here	8%	Restructuring (process)	7%	Service accessibility	10%
Mining sector	7%	Taxes (high)	7%	Service accessibility	5%	By-laws	7%

(Excluding responses of Don't Know)

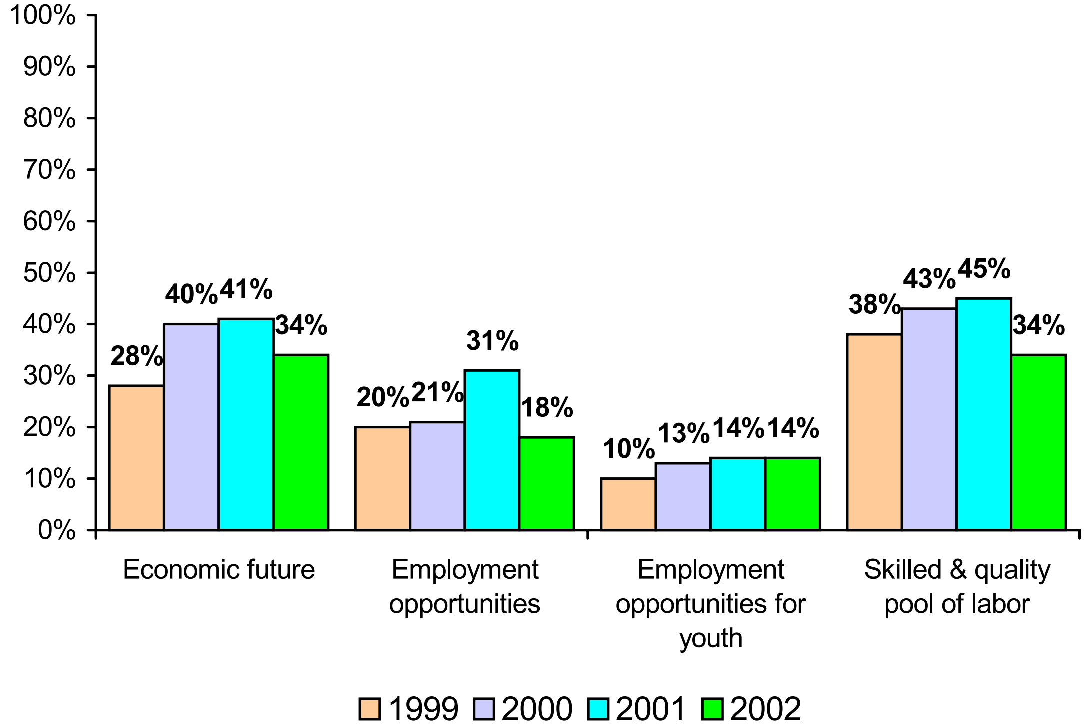
The issue of taxes or taxation remains the single most important issue facing the community (21%) as in the previous survey period (25%). However, economic issues continue to concern businesses, as 14% named economic diversification as the most important issue and 11% stated jobs or unemployment.

As well, more businesses named the twin issues of creating a business friendly environment (12%) and local by-laws (7%) as their most important issues in 2002 compared to earlier surveys.

A total of 24% of respondents stated that they did not know.

Confidence areas

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements related to the **economic confidence** of the community.



Confidence statements (total agree)	1999	2000	2001	2002
I am confident about the economic future of our community	28%	40%	41%	34%
I feel that there are employment opportunities in the community	20%	21%	31%	18%
I feel that there is employment for young people in the community	10%	13%	14%	14%
The community provides a skilled and quality pool of labor	38%	43%	45%	34%

The community rated consistently low in each of the four **confidence areas** and there were drops in three of the categories reflecting concerns over the economy, the economic future of the area and ultimately job creation. As well, the numbers reveal a reversal in confidence that has been improving since 1999.

The most precipitous drop was in the belief that there are employment opportunities in the community (-13%), but significant losses were also seen in confidence over economic future (-7%) and the ability of the community to provide a quality labor force (-11%). While there was no change in the confidence area related to providing employment for young people in the community, that rating has remained consistently low since 1999 despite improvements in the other three categories.

In addition, only 40% of businesses were of the opinion that the **community is changing** for the better, far lower than the 51% that stated the same in 2001.

Job creation

Business respondents were asked what they felt could be done to **create jobs** in the local economy.

What Can be Done to Create Jobs in the Local Economy

1999		2000		2001		2002	
Attract industry / manufacturing	24%	Attract industry / manufacturing	30%	Attract industry / manufacturing	26%	Attract industry / manufacturing	20%
Tax incentives	16%	Economic diversification	15%	Tax incentives	13%	Tax incentives	18%
Economic diversification	13%	Tax incentives	10%	Economic diversification	9%	Education	11%
More youth employment	7%	High technology sector	9%	Encourage small business	5%	Business friendly environment	9%
Less red tape	5%	Government assistance	5%	High technology	5%	Government programs	7%
Government assistance	5%	Less red tape	5%	Business friendly environment	4%	Encourage small business	7%
Tourism	5%	Call centers	4%	Promote City	4%	Keep youth / youth jobs	7%

(Excluding responses of Don't Know)

As in the previous three years, the most cited response or 20% of those with an opinion (excluding do not know responses) stated attracting more business to the area, such as industry and manufacturing would create jobs. When reviewing the remaining responses, most felt that tax incentives (18%), followed by providing education (11%) and creating a business friendly environment (9%) would create jobs in the area. There were 12% that claimed they did not know what could be done to create jobs.

Healthy Community

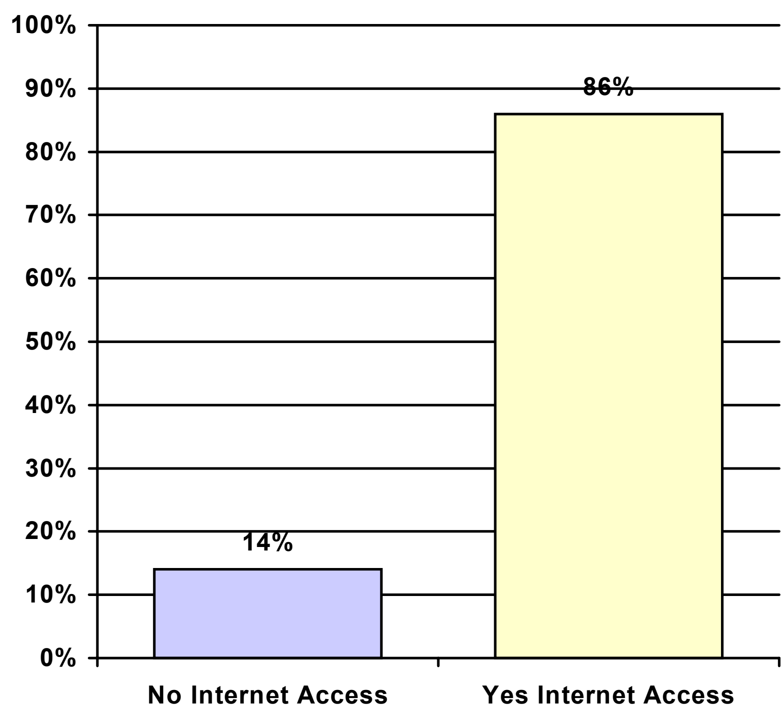
While a high 84% of those surveyed stated that their business had given time to a volunteer, community, religious or charity organization, this result is lower than the findings from the previous three periods that had consistent results in the 90% (2001) to 92% range (1999).

Of those that had given their time to an organization in 2002, 69% gave it to a community organization, 21% to interest/advocacy groups, 21% to alumni/school associations and 23% to religious organizations.

The following table highlights the number of **computers** at each business.

Computer terminals at business	***1999***	***2000***	***2001***	***2002***
None	3%	4%	4%	5%
Under 5	42%	36%	40%	40%
Under 10	23%	26%	30%	30%
Under 15	10%	11%	7%	4%
Under 20	3%	7%	5%	5%
Over 20	18%	16%	14%	14%
Don't know	1%	-	-	2%

Internet Access

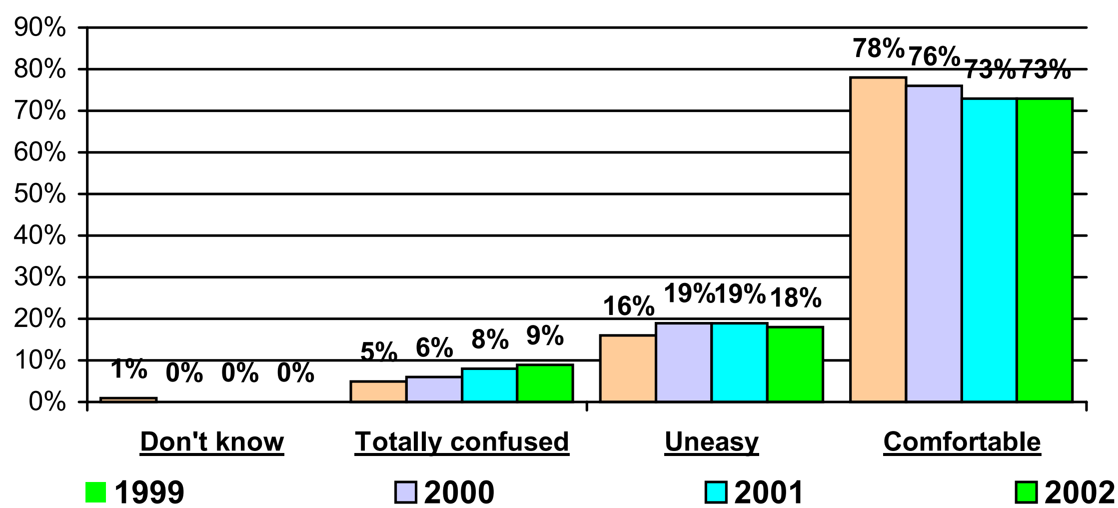


A high 86% of businesses surveyed with computers, stated that they had **Internet access** while 14% did not. This is similar to 2001 (85%) and 2000 (84%) indicating that access may have reached a plateau. Of those without access, 33% claimed that they would get access over the next 12 months.

The Internet was most used for e-mail (91%) and accessing information in general (76%). Among wired companies, a total of 82% answered that they had a **web site;** similar to 2001 (80%) and 2000 (79%) revealing this usage may also have peaked.

A total of 30% of those surveyed stated that they **telecommute.** However, there a higher tolerance to take part in this activity in 2002 as 69% of those not currently telecommuting stated that they would do so if they had the opportunity compared to 39% in 2001.

Feelings About the Digital Revolution



A total of 73% of those surveyed stated that they were comfortable with the digital revolution, similar to 2001 when 73% stated the same. While results are foe the most part stable, less people feel confused as each year passes.

Importance of services

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of a range of services that the municipality currently provides. The following table ranks each category by level of importance to respondents.

Importance of Services	1999 Priority	2000 Priority	2001 Priority	2002 Priority	2001-02 % Change
Re-greening of the City	64%	77%	56%	74%	+18%
Promoting tourism	81%	78%	66%	80%	+14%
Libraries	Na	Na	58%	72%	+14%
Pioneer Manor	66%	66%	58%	71%	+13%
Recreational facilities	Na	Na	47%	59%	+12%
Fire protection	Na	Na	69%	81%	+12%
Child care funding	32%	41%	41%	52%	+11%
Maintenance of main roads	84%	88%	83%	93%	+10%
Landfill sites	55%	58%	57%	67%	+10%
Providing affordable housing	37%	36%	43%	53%	+10%
Developing job creation initiatives	79%	85%	74%	83%	+9%
Promoting the reduction of waste	60%	68%	64%	72%	+8%
Leisure programs	Na	Na	42%	49%	+7%
Ambulance services	81%	89%	77%	83%	+6%
Public health unit services	69%	81%	67%	73%	+6%
Winter road maintenance	83%	94%	85%	89%	+4%
Economic diversification	83%	87%	79%	76%	+3%
Public transit	Na	Na	56%	59%	+3%
Providing quality of land development	58%	56%	49%	52%	+3%
Ensuring building safety	66%	65%	64%	64%	N/C
Policing	85%	91%	76%	75%	-1%
Providing welfare assistance	28%	27%	28%	24%	-4%
Planning for the City's future	88%	85%	74%	70%	-4%

The issues of most importance to businesses in 2002 were related to the maintenance of main road and the winter road maintenance of roads, similar to previous years. But businesses put greater emphasis on the importance of all but four areas in 2002 compared to 2001. In 2001, there was a drop across most areas, as the restructuring processes appears to have either confused or made businesses more cautious in their ratings.

The most significant increases in importance were seen in the area of re-greening the community, although there were also strong hikes in areas ranging from promoting tourism as well as libraries and the promotion of tourism.

Rating services

Respondents were then asked to rate how the community currently provides a range of services. The following table highlights the positive ratings accorded to each service in order of highest rated.

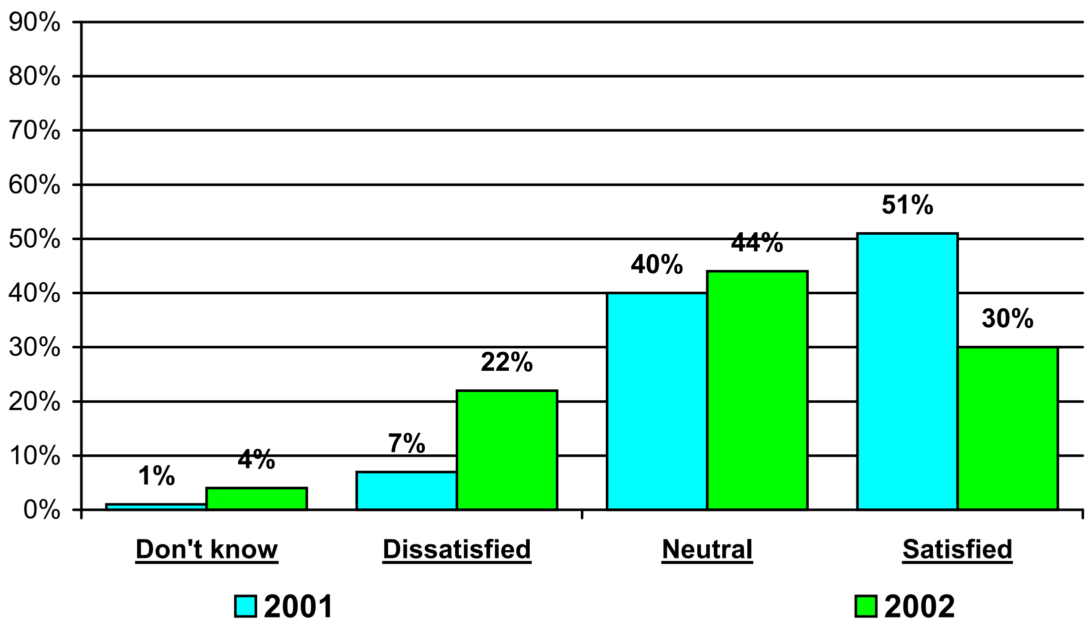
Rating Services	**1999 Positive**	**2000 Positive**	**2001 Positive**	**2002 Positive**	**2001-02 % Change**
Libraries	Na	Na	41%	64%	+23%
Public transit	Na	Na	32%	49%	+17%
Ambulance services	61%	63%	48%	63%	+15%
Public health unit services	55%	59%	44%	59%	+15%
Ensuring building safety	38%	44%	30%	45%	+15%
Landfill sites	31%	36%	27%	41%	+14%
Fire protection	Na	Na	62%	74%	+12%
Promoting the reduction of waste	35%	46%	37%	49%	+12%
Child care funding	18%	20%	7%	16%	+9%
Recreational facilities	Na	Na	45%	53%	+8%
Providing welfare assistance	39%	34%	21%	28%	+7%
Pioneer Manor	36%	40%	30%	35%	+5%
Leisure programs	Na	Na	33%	37%	+4%
Providing affordable housing	32%	33%	26%	28%	+2%
Winter road maintenance	60%	44%	38%	37%	-1%
Water and sewer services	45%	53%	32%	31%	-1%
Providing quality of land development	22%	20%	16%	14%	-2%
Developing job creation initiatives	17%	24%	17%	14%	-3%
Planning for the City's future	40%	39%	40%	35%	-5%
Maintenance of main roads	27%	23%	26%	21%	-5%
Economic diversification	30%	31%	26%	20%	-6%
Policing	65%	65%	58%	51%	-7%
Re-greening of the City	55%	65%	52%	39%	-13%
Promoting tourism	41%	41%	44%	30%	-14%

There were positive rating increases in14 categories and drops in 10, with the sharpest drops in promoting tourism (-14%) and re-greening the community (-13%). On the other hand, the strongest improvement was in the area of public libraries (+23%), followed by transit (+17%) and the health care areas of ambulance service (+15%) and the health unit (+15%). It should be noted that public libraries also house new citizen service centres reflecting that service levels are seen as improving.

Positive ratings were for the most part higher than the negative ratings accorded, with the exceptions were the areas of quality land development, economic diversification, childcare funding, job creation and the maintenance of main roads

Satisfaction with the Range of Services Provided by the City

Residents were asked to rate the **range** of services provided by the City of Greater Sudbury.

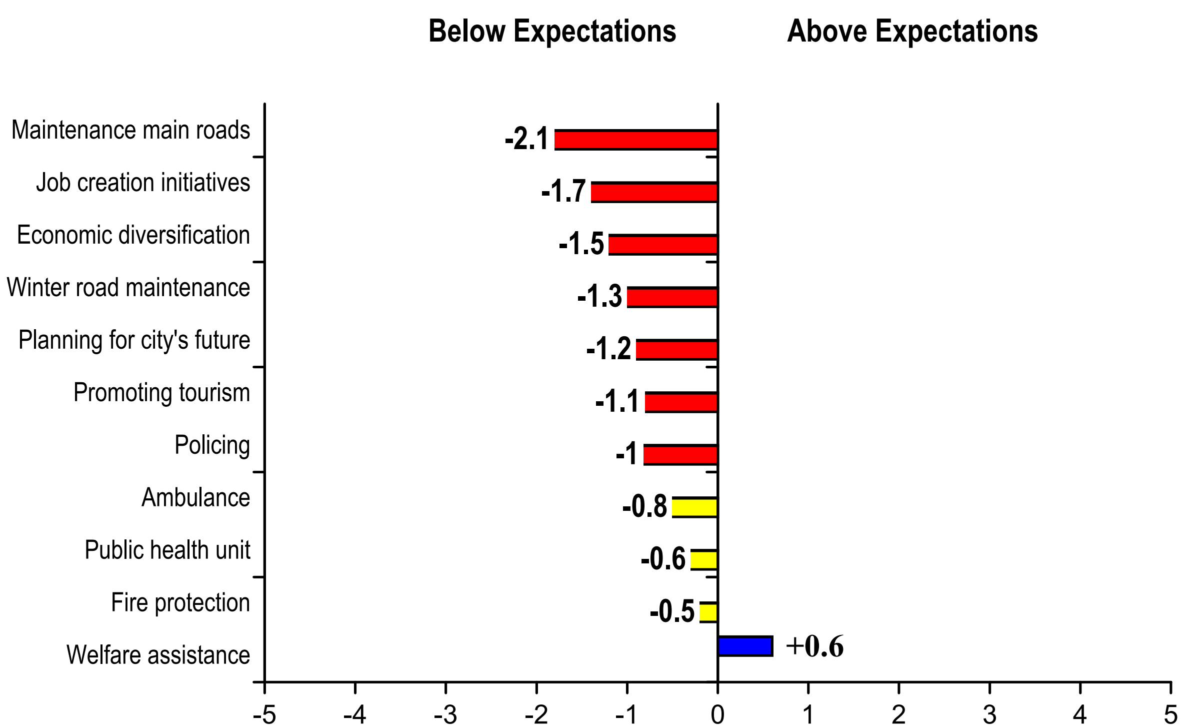


After the first full year of being in the new City of Greater Sudbury, only 30% of business respondents claimed they were satisfied with the **range of services** that the City provides, 44% had a neutral/satisfactory response, 22% accorded a negative rating and 4% did not know. There was a 21% drop over 2001 when51% of businesses claimed that they were satisfied in this area and a corresponding increase in the percentage of businesses that were dissatisfied (+15%).

As this rating reflects the perception of the **range of services** offered, a lower score in 2002 reveals that there still may be some uncertainty with respect to the restructuring process and fears of service losses.

Gap Analysis (Top 10 areas of importance)

The differences between the **level of importance and the level of satisfaction** are further examined via gap analysis. Here, a positive number indicates that the mean satisfaction rating is *highe*r than the mean importance rating (the attribute is exceeding expectations), and a negative number indicates that the mean satisfaction rating is *lower* than the mean importance rating (not meeting expectations). Generally, respondents are cautious with their satisfaction ratings and generous with their importance ratings, which results in most attributes falling "below expectations".



(-1% or more illustrates a major opportunity area).

The areas where satisfaction most falls below expectations related to road maintenance, job creation, and planning for economic diversification. Only the area of welfare assistance exceeded the expectations of businesses.

A low 24% of survey respondents felt that existing municipal by-laws hindered their ability to conduct business. The most cited by-laws that were a hindrance were land use / zoning (30%), followed by signs (17%), and sales/store hours

Budget issues

Respondents were read and asked to agree or disagree with each of the following five statements that will be used by municipal Council to prepare the 2002 Budget.

	Total Agree			
	1999	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**
The private sector should be involved in the delivery of municipal services if they can be delivered more cost effectively without affecting current service levels	86%	83%	80%	76%
Rather than building new facilities or roads, the City should invest in maintaining and improving existing facilities and roads	57%	64%	76%	69%
Where appropriate the direct users of City services should pay for the cost of providing those services	52%	59%	48%	49%
The City should reduce service levels by whatever is needed in order to hold the line on taxes	33%	28%	31%	26%
The City should maintain current levels of service and increase taxes up to 5%	30%	16%	32%	28%

Respondents continued to most agree that the **private sector should be involved in the delivery of City services** and that rather than building new facilities or roads, the City should invest in maintaining and improving existing facilities and roads.

As well, there remains a **low tolerance for service reduction** and for the implementation of user fees. A low percentage of respondents favored the City maintaining current levels of service and increasing taxes up to 5% in 2001 similar to 1999.