

## Baroda Area Community Survey – Document Overview

The first two pages of this document summarizes the results of the survey, and offers recommendations based on the analyst's experience with the data, and with the community at large. The balance of the document contains detailed survey data, including all verbatim comments, and a copy of the survey itself.

### Executive Summary

The survey was open between May 1 and May 31, 2014. A total of 381 people responded to the survey. There were 137, 142, and 102 responses from Village, Township and Other residents, respectively. Based on generally accepted statistical principles, the margin of error (MOE) is 6% for combined responses of the Village and the Township. A MOE of 5% or provides more accuracy in interpreting results. Because we did not obtain sufficient responses to drive accuracy up, Village and Township responses are combined.

Mid way through the period, we discovered a technical problem with the survey that was isolated to people using certain versions of Internet Explorer. This only impacted those questions that asked people to rank their responses. We do not believe that this materially impacted the overall survey or its results.

**Infrastructure.** Repairing Church Street overwhelmingly emerges as the top priority with 61% of the resident respondents ranking it first. The other three projects, paving Menser Drive, improving parking, and extending First Street streetscaping, received approximately equal votes for first priority.

**Downtown Business.** Residents and non-residents alike put a Bakery/Coffee Shop as the top priority for downtown with 33% ranking it first. Specialty Food shops and gas stations came in second and third. All other options received fewer than 10% of first place rankings.

**Attracting Business.** Tax incentives and low interest loans were the top ranked responses for attracting businesses to Baroda.

There were 123 comments to these first three questions. The top comments focused on these three topics:

- Create another village park in the old school lot.
- Clean up the storefronts on First Street.
- Respondents are generally divided on attracting outsiders, but are open to attracting traffic if we maintain the "small, old-village charm."

**School Lot Development:** Establishing a Farmer's Market or building a Public Garden are the first choice for most of the survey respondents (87% and 77% respectively). Bed & Breakfast and Restaurant were the next choices (64%, 61%). Less than 40% of the respondents said "yes" to a retirement facility, church or hotel.

Comments to this question primarily favored the development of another park in the village.

Rezoning 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. Respondents were most favorable to the idea of rezoning both sides of the street (63%). Interestingly, this breaks down to 55% of residents and 82% of non-residents. Across the board, non-residents are more significantly more favorable to the idea of rezoning both sides or either side of the street. Comments to this question offered a variety of options to scale back the rezoning to less than the entire length of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, and to include the old school lot. Comments also suggested that efforts to fill vacant buildings on First Street should take priority.

Second Street Use. There is no statistically significant difference between any of the options suggested for use of Second Street. Again, non-residents are significantly more favorable to the ideas presented. The suggested options were: B&B, combined residential and retail, professional, commercial and restaurants. Comments to this question focused on filling First Street buildings before developing Second Street, and there were several comments favorable to attracting art related businesses.

Attracting more traffic to stimulate economic growth. There is no difference in the responses between residents and non-residents. Overall, 80% of respondents agree with attracting more business, 21% do not (does not add to 100% due to rounding).

Demographics: 67% of respondents noted that the village or township is their primary residence. 14% of respondents are visitors. 13% of respondents own a business in Baroda. 72% of respondents are between 35 and 64 years of age. 14% are below 35; 14% are above 64. These demographics lend validity to the results of the survey: most respondents are residents, and are in their prime income earning years – ultimately, people vote with their dollars.

#### Recommendations:

- Conduct a benchmark visit to a similar community, such as Three Oaks, to learn what they did to gain public support, and attract business to the community.
- Refresh the community 20-year plan with a new vision and strategy. An effective vision will blend the “Casual Country Charm” concept with attracting appropriate businesses.
- Hire a part time community ambassador or spokesperson. There may be ways to achieve some of this work on a voluntary basis.
- Develop a communications campaign to increase awareness that we must change our focus for Baroda to remain a viable community.
- Become more active in attracting business. Leverage awards won by the village and other positive publicity.