



Red Tape Survey Report

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1. INTRODUCTION

WHO WE ARE

The Surrey Board of Trade supports, promotes, and advocates for commercial and industrial interests for Surrey businesses — the city’s economic drivers. With Surrey’s significance growing rapidly in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia and across Canada, so does the importance of the Surrey Board of Trade’s role in championing a strong, vibrant business community, and instigating change at the different levels of government.

OUR MEMBERSHIP

Surrey Board of Trade is a powerful link between business, government, and community with a membership of 6,000 member contacts and 60,000 employees.

WHAT WE DO

Since 1918, the Surrey Board of Trade provides businesses and organizations with:

1. Economic opportunity
2. International trade
3. Government advocacy
4. Business connections

Members can further expand their client base with our numerous networking opportunities throughout the year. We provide multiple levels of opportunity for members to promote their brand through business-to-business engagement and thought leadership.

ADVOCACY

We are an independent voice of business that develops positions on relevant topics of concern to our members.

No individual can succeed alone, nor can any business thrive without colleagues and support. The Surrey Board of Trade is here to help. With our many connections to government representatives, we advocate on your behalf.

PURPOSE OF SURVEYS

The Surrey Board of Trade periodically implements surveys, either voluntary opt-in or scientifically rigorous, on a range of topics. Member participation is voluntary and anonymous; however, the data is an invaluable tool for advocacy and policy development.

We thank all those who gave a few minutes of their time to provide information and direction on Surrey Board of Trade surveys.

THE RED TAPE SURVEY

We advocate for red tape reduction, defined as excessive bureaucracy, routines, rules, or complexity, which results in delays or unreasonable costs for business. Filing forms and applying for licenses are a part of doing business, however, we want to ensure that it isn't onerous on our members.

This is the sixth Red Tape Survey that captures member experiences from which the Surrey Board of Trade can measure improvement over time. Several emails introducing the survey were sent to the membership from the end of August to early October. The results are presented at the annual Surrey Development Industry Forum, in conjunction with a press release of a summary of findings.

The Surrey Board of Trade conducts the Red Tape Survey annually to track improvements where they occur and identify concerns as they arise for our members. Specifically:

- To gain a deep understanding of our members’ regulatory burden;
- To determine any actions, recommendations, or policies that may be required; and,
- To add to our body of knowledge that will lead to better regulation and lower costs for businesses and taxpayers.

This year’s Red Tape Survey also included questions pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many businesses have experienced hardship because of the economic shutdown. Understanding how COVID-19 has impacted business operations, and the confidence in recovery will provide insight whether government’s current policies are perceived as being beneficial or negligible.

The Red Tape Survey was inspired by both the Surrey Board of Trade’s Finance and Taxation Policy Team and the Development and Land Use Policy Team.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than 43% of respondents identified as employers. 80% of Surrey Board of Trade member respondents found regulatory requirements of all levels of government had a moderate to major impact on their daily operations, which is down from the 2021 survey (81%), and the 2020 survey (80%).

Below are recommendations made by the Surrey Board of Trade to governments. Given that our respondents are finding regulatory compliance to impede growth and innovation, it is reasonable to consider that it may likewise create disincentives for the broader business community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consistent with what our members have indicated for all five of the previous iterations of the survey, the Surrey Board of Trade recommends:

1. Governments improve their instructions on regulatory compliance;
2. That all levels of government improve their online service portals and call centre services, use clear language for instructions and ensure relevant links are up to date and working; and,
3. Agencies share information and make sure there are no duplicate information requirements.

Impact of compliance	80% reported moderate to major impact on business to comply.
Time away from business	Most respondents at 63.3% spend 0–5 hours per week complying with government regulatory requirements.
Most costly stage of compliance	36.7% reported preparing the information to be costly. 30% of respondents found understanding the obligations in the first place to be costly.
Financial costs of compliance	75.9% respondents determined that overall costs have increased in the last 2 years, consistent with surveys since 2019.
Time taken to fill out forms	82.8% respondents found the time taken to comply has increased in the last 2 years.
Filing taxes	24.1% now outsource income tax return filing. 31% of respondents take between 5-50 hours to file taxes.

Agencies with the most red tape

92.6% identified the Canada Revenue Agency to have moderate to high levels of red tape.
92.6% rated WorkSafeBC with moderate to high levels of red tape.

Measures that would reduce red tape

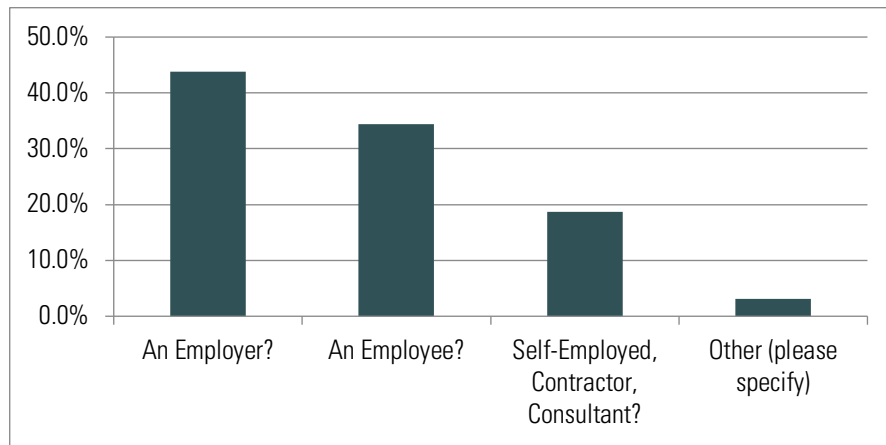
100% suggested better communication and consultation with businesses when developing new regulations would help reduce time of compliance.
96.2% identified agencies sharing information and making sure there are no duplicate information requirements with the potential to help.
87.5% indicated that reducing the frequency of reporting requirements to a minimum could reduce the cost of compliance.

3. RESULTS SUMMARY

The responses from the respondents will be discussed in this section. Unlike previous surveys, which were released in late July to the Surrey Board of Trade’s membership, this survey released later at the end of August.

Question 1

Respondent’s role in the workforce

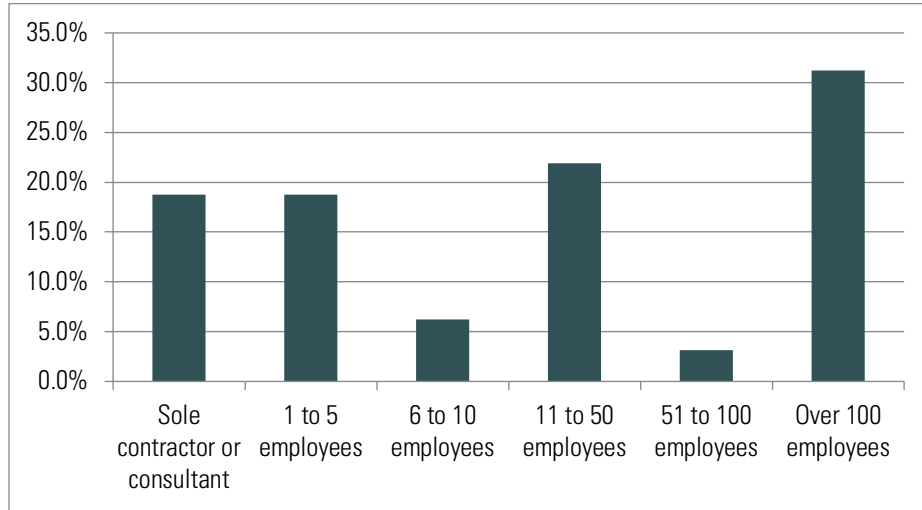


In each survey the Surrey Board of Trade releases, we initially ask a priming question to ensure that the results are indicative of the labour community. There are many businesses that are members ranging from sole contractors to employing hundreds, if not thousands, of people.

Question one asks whether the respondent is an employer, an employee, self-employed, or other. Those who select “Other” as a response indicated that they are retired or unemployed. It is apparent that the respondents are involved in the labour pool in some fashion and therefore qualified to answer the questions within this survey.

Question 2

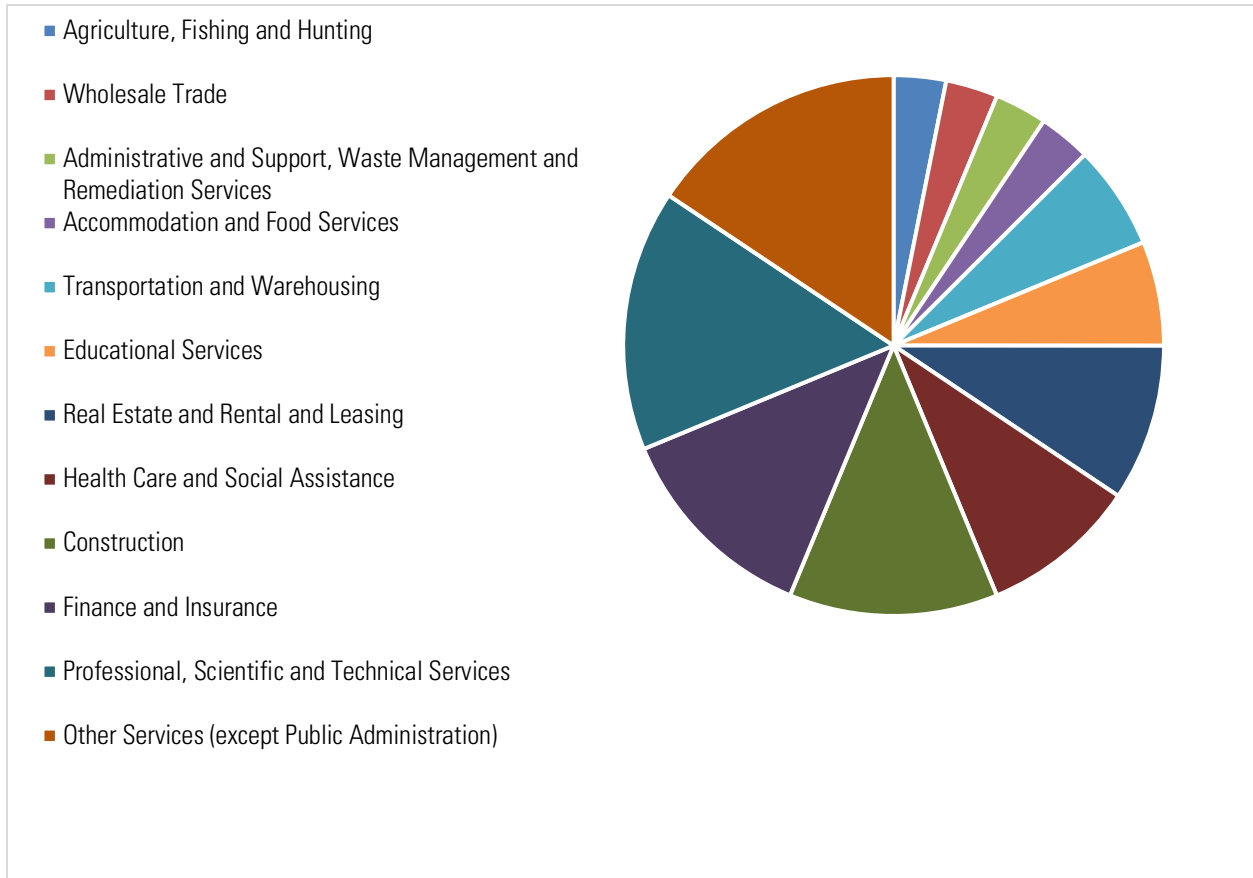
How many individuals are employed by your company?



The majority of the respondents belonged to organizations with over 100 employees.

Question 3

Which category would best describe your company?¹



The largest number of respondents at 15.6% indicated they fall in another category not listed or in professional, scientific and technical services.

The next highest respondents come from finance and insurance (12.5%) service providers and construction (12.5%). The top 12 are indicated in the chart above.

¹ NAICS based choices

Question 4 Impact of COVID-19 on business

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
We have experienced a decline in revenues/business or leads	12.5%	28.1%	18.8%	18.8%	21.9%
We have experienced an increase in revenues/business or leads	21.9%	34.4%	18.8%	18.8%	6.3%
We had to adjust our pricing strategy	9.7%	16.1%	22.6%	35.5%	16.1%
Operating costs have increased	0.0%	6.3%	6.3%	40.6%	46.9%

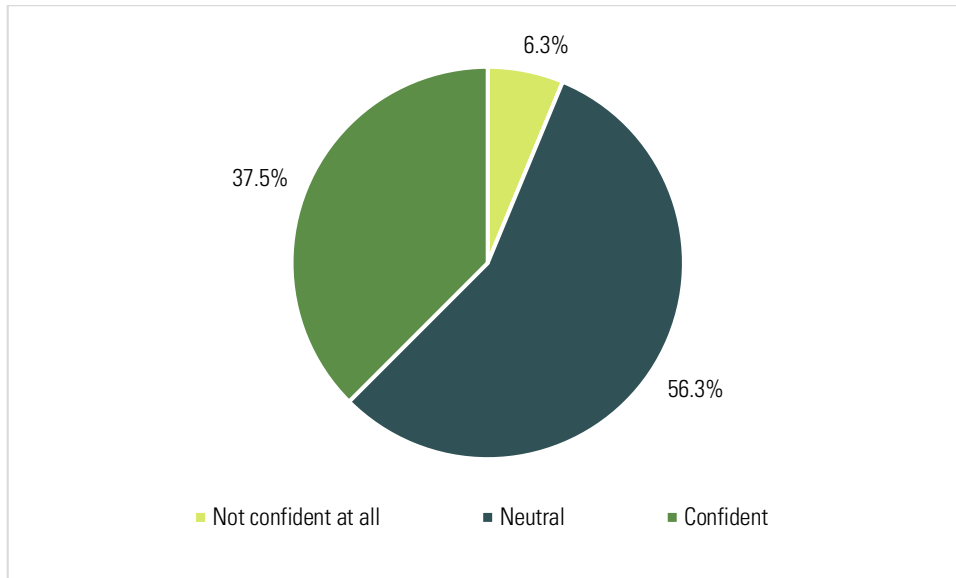
With the impact of COVID-19 on their business in mind, we asked respondents to rate the above statements.

There were 87.5% of respondents who indicated that they agree or strongly agree that operating costs have increased. Additionally, 56.3% of respondents indicated that they disagree or strongly disagree that they have experienced increases in revenues/business or leads. This shows that the cost to do business has increased whereas revenue has not.

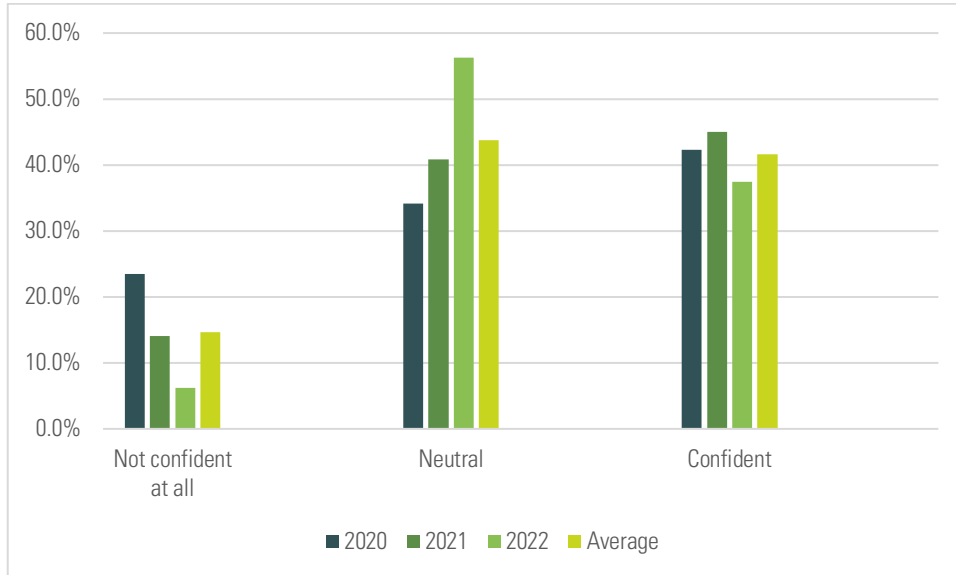
The need to adjust prices depends on whether the business is still operable. Of those that responded to the survey, many adjusted their pricing. Some businesses had to raise their prices due to decreased traffic and increased overhead because of COVID-19, the supply chain issues, or inflation, but others had to lower their prices to remain competitive.

Overall, the impact of COVID-19, inflation, geo-political strife, and interest rates is significant. Over the past few months, many surveys have asked how COVID-19 is impacting businesses, and it seems that the trend of high impact remains, but the reason is now due to other economic issues.

Question 5
Confidence in future business and sales



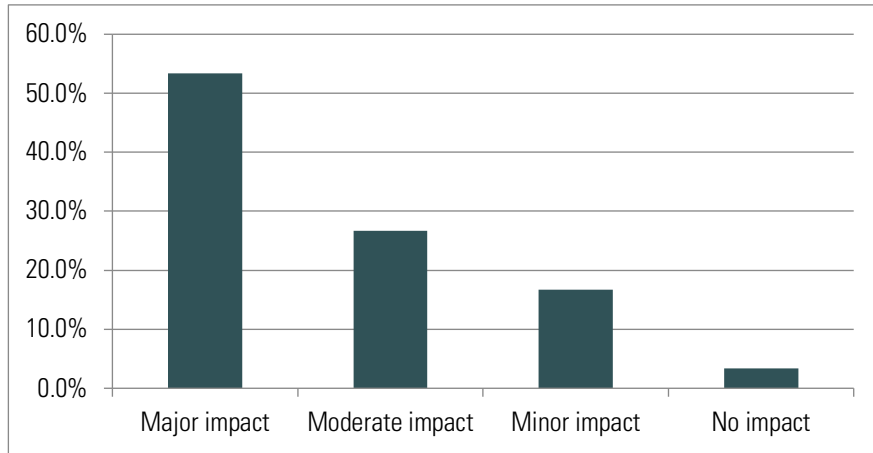
Respondents were asked how confident they are in future business and sales. Many are neutral or confident.



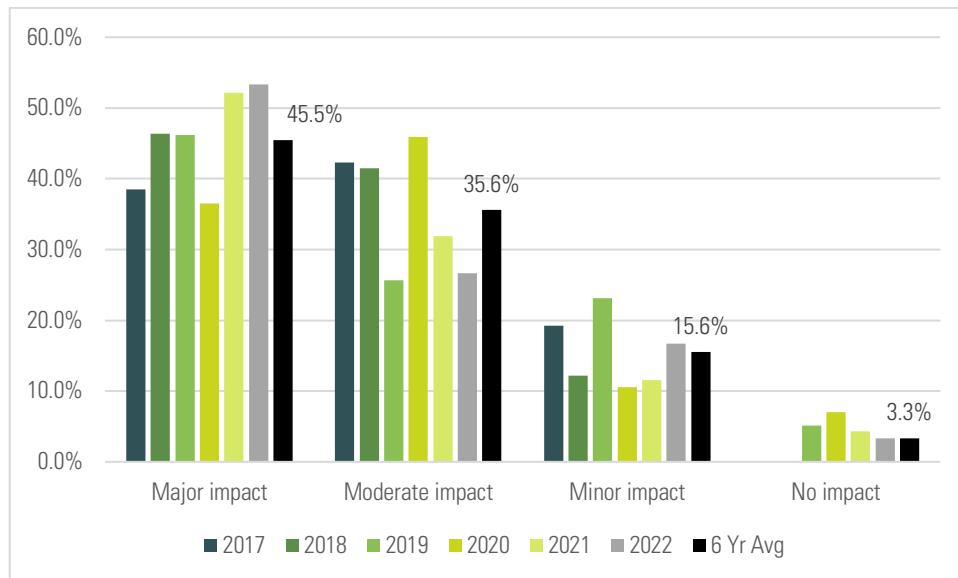
We asked this same question in our 2020 and 2021 surveys, and the confidence level has dropped and many more are neutral. Inflationary pressures, interest rates, geo-political crises, and supply chain changes are all potential reasons for this result.

Question 6

Impact on business of complying with government (federal, provincial, local) regulatory requirements

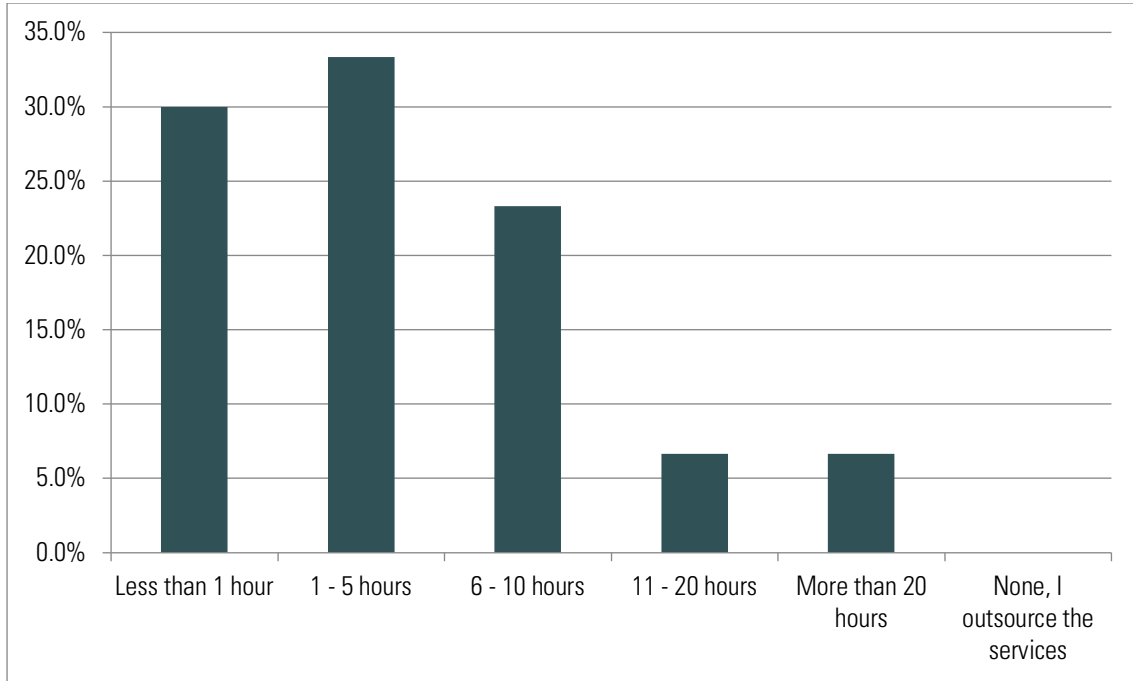


When respondents were asked to rate the impact of complying with government regulatory requirements, 80% of respondents indicated a moderate to major impact. When looking at the previous year's impacts and comparing them to 2022, we see that complying with government requirements is having an increasingly major impact on business. On average, respondents have noted a major impact on their business operations when complying with government regulatory requirements.

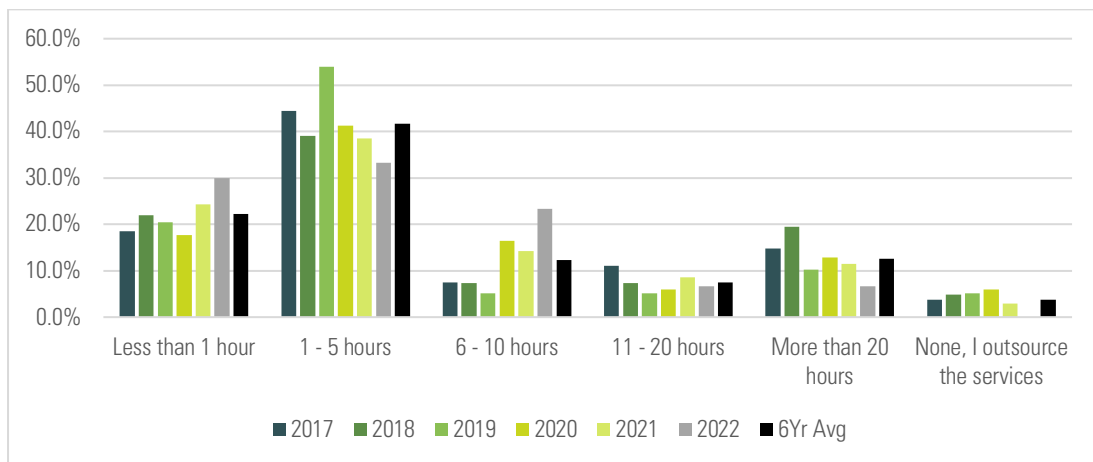


Question 7

Time spent per week on complying with government (federal, provincial, local) regulatory requirements

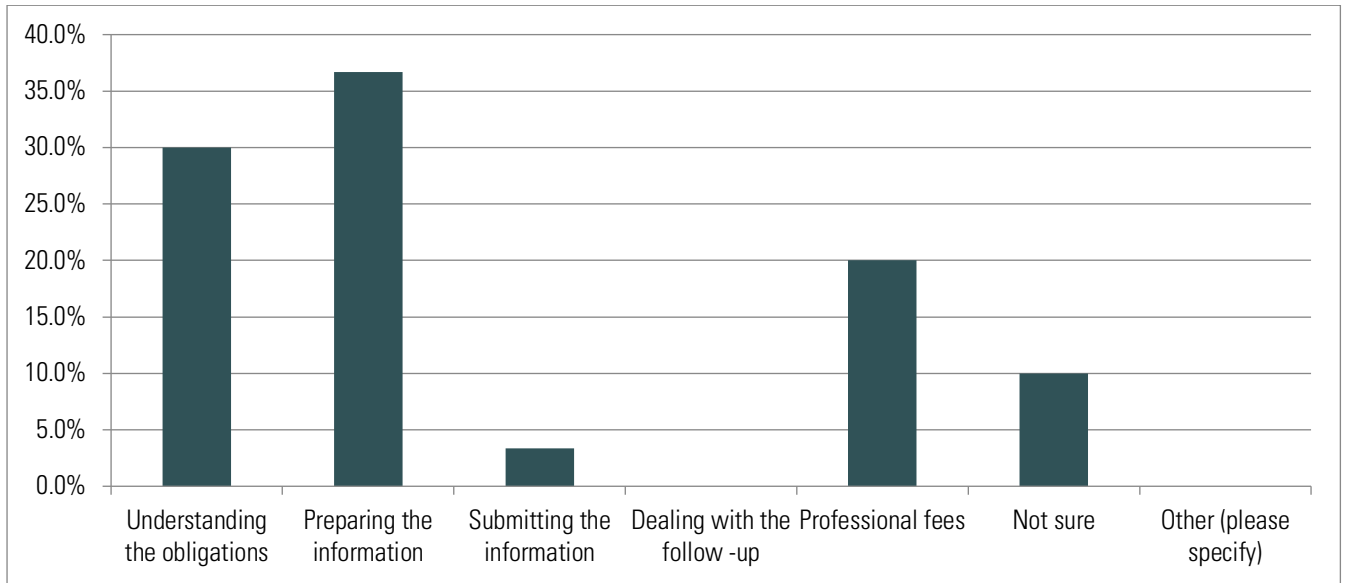


The 2022 responses indicate that the time spent to comply with government requirements is between 0-5 hours (63.3% of respondents). When comparing these figures with 2017 – 2021, we see that it is consistent except for indications of spending between 6-10 hours, which rose this year. This may be because the processes have not been streamlined enough to ensure that businesses can focus on growth and productivity. Respondents indicating that they outsource these services has dropped.

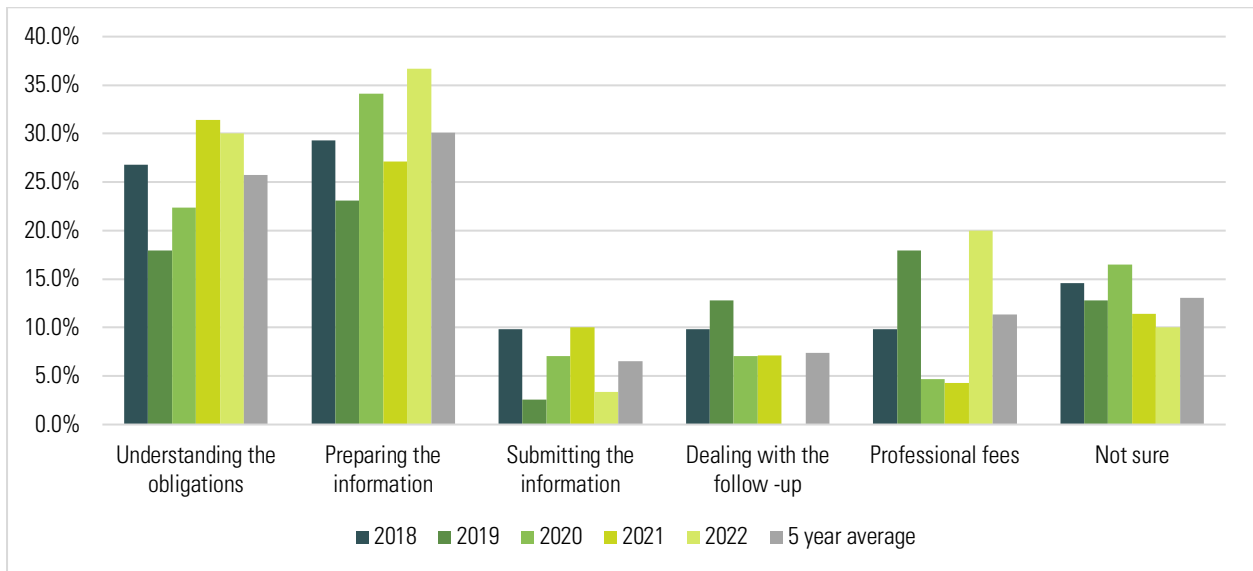


Question 8

Most costly stage of compliance

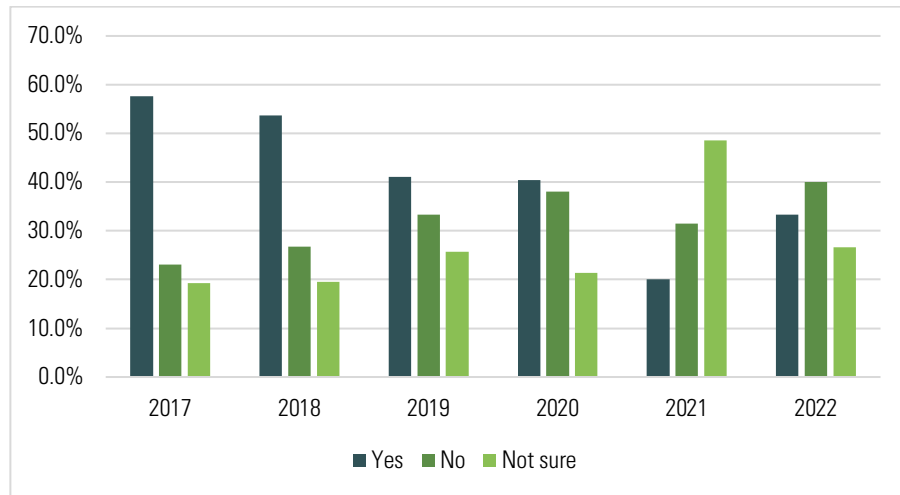


The costliest stage of compliance with regulatory requirements is preparing the information (36.7%). This year, submitting the information and dealing with the follow up saw notable increases.



Question 9

Do you report the same information to different government agencies?



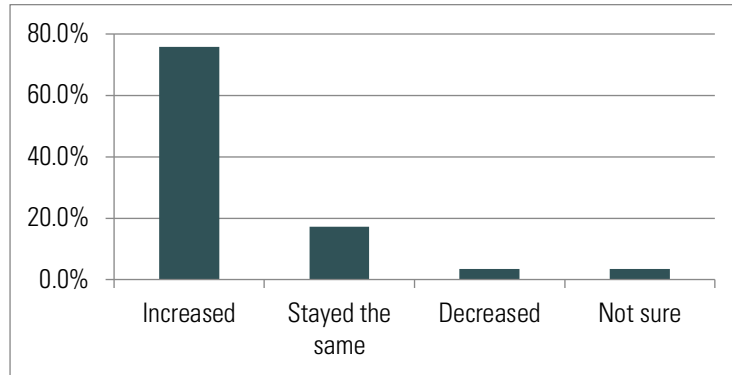
Over the years, it is apparent that fewer businesses are reporting the same information to different government agencies. The responses in 2017 show the highest indication of reporting the same information to multiple agencies, which has steadily declined since then. It can be inferred that government reporting has become somewhat streamlined and resulted in fewer overlapping requirements.

We also asked those that indicated that they were reporting the same information to tell us what information is being re-reported. They indicated the following:

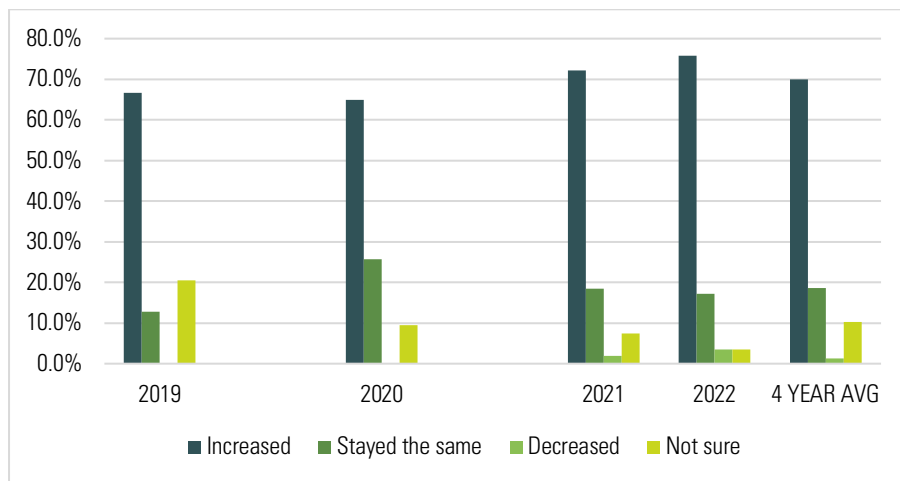
- Audited financial statements, licensing incidents, reportable incidents
- Monitoring tools of hours worked of front-line workers
- Banking information
- Qualified Environmental Professional Reports
- Income/ revenue
- Expenses
- Different agencies may want some of the same
- Environmental safety
- Operational data to Passenger Transportation Board and per km data to ICBC for taxi fleet
- Licensing requirements

Question 10

Overall cost of compliance with government regulations in last 2 years



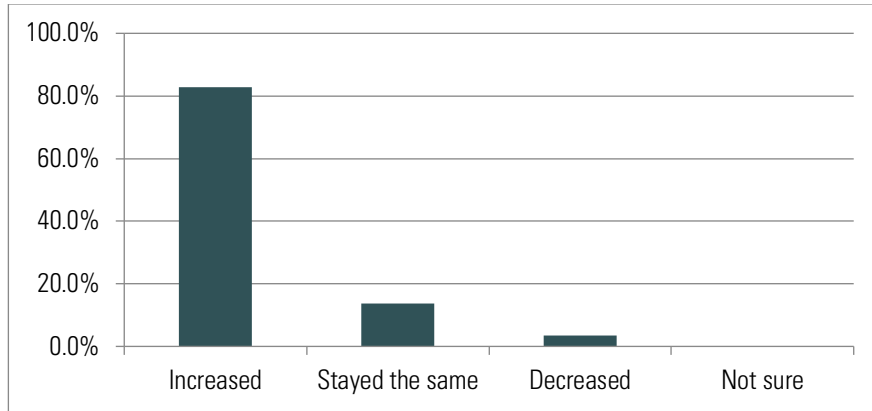
An overwhelming number of respondents indicated that the cost of compliance has increased in the last two years. This is consistent with the surveys since 2019. There have been more regulations implemented ranging from permits, environmental assessment practices, consultation practices, and taxes.



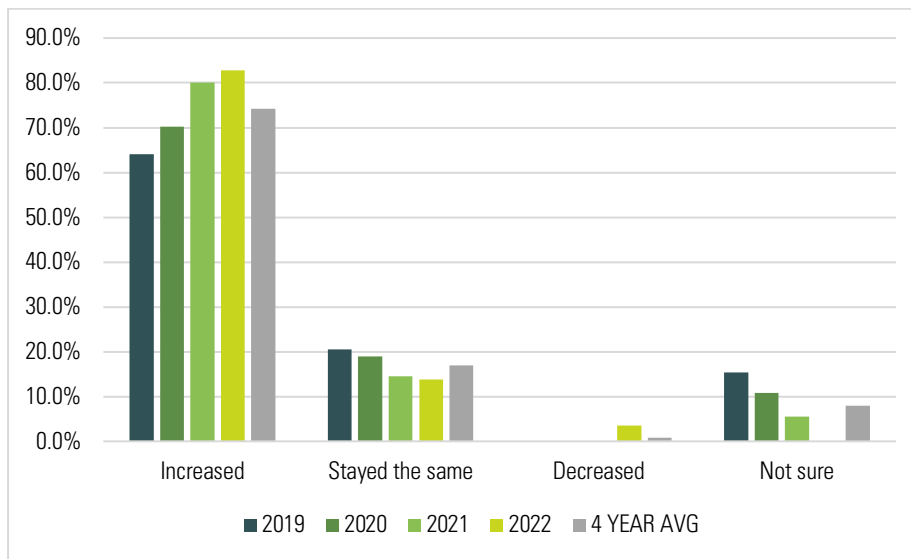
The cost of compliance is increasing, although one respondent did indicate that the cost has decreased.

Question 11

Overall time it takes to comply with government regulations in last 2 years



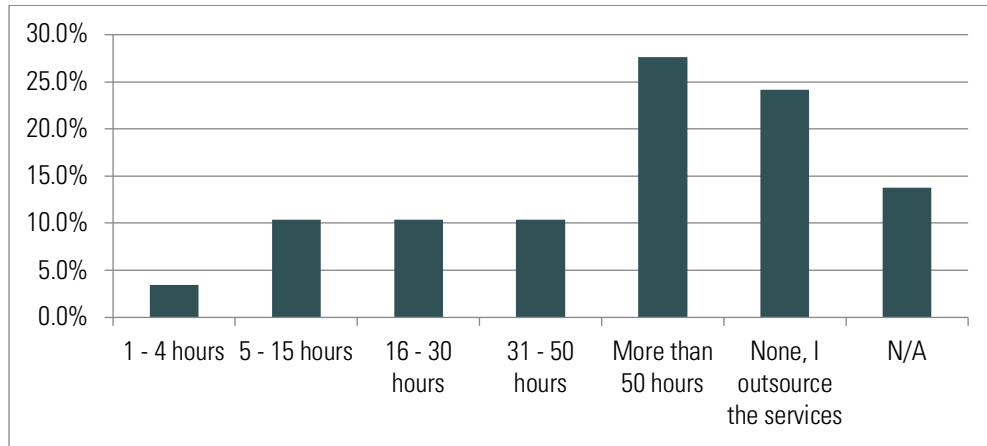
As with the cost of compliance, the time it takes to comply has increased, according to the membership. The business community is unable to innovate or scale up if they are continuously hammered with new and increasingly complicated regulations and red tape.



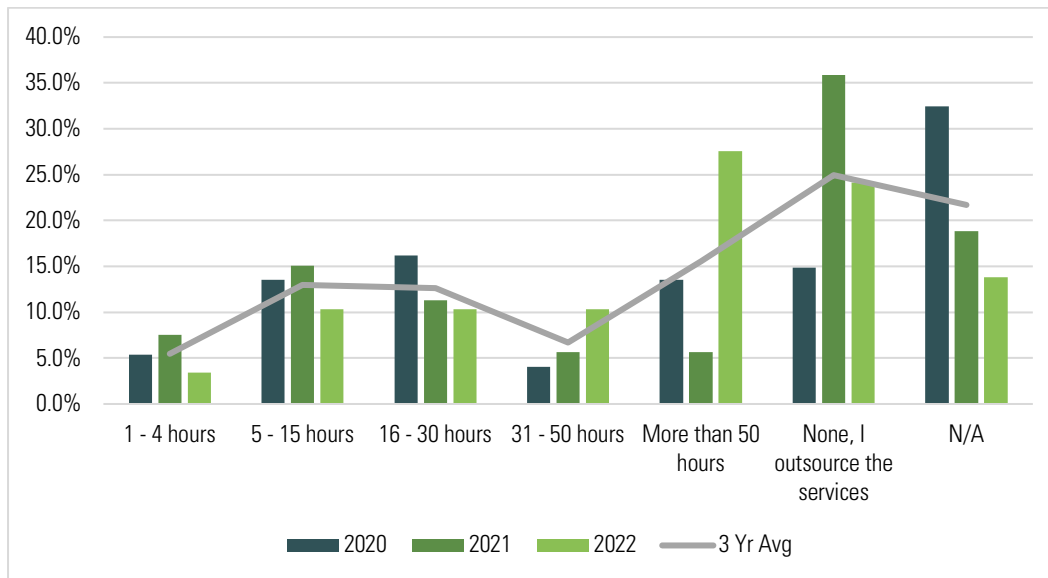
It seems as though the time it takes to comply has decreased or stayed the same since the previous year, although we are still not back at 2019 levels.

Question 12

Time spent on last business income tax return

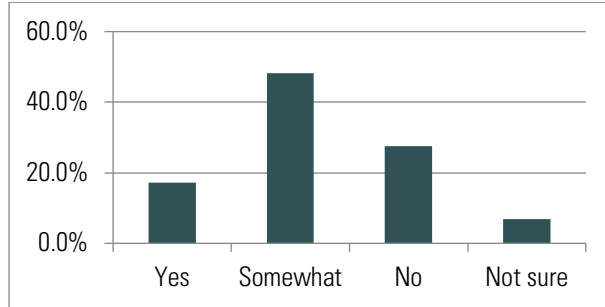


Almost a quarter of the respondents (24.1%) spent between 1 and 30 hours filing their last business income tax return. The same amount of the respondents (24.1%) now outsource the work to complete income tax returns. There is, however, still a large portion of businesses that cannot afford to outsource – over 62% – that spend between 1-50+ hours completing business income tax returns.

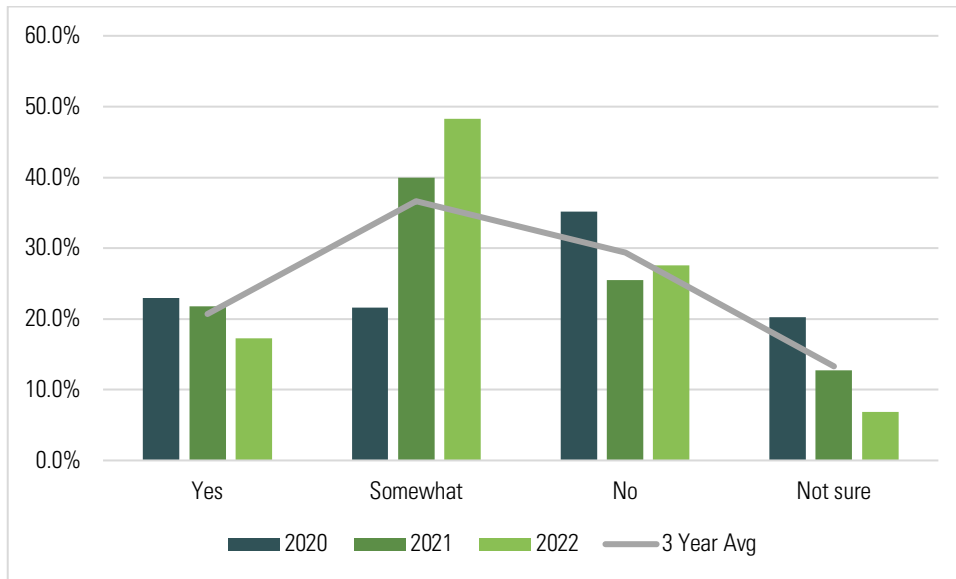


Question 13

Is compliance with regulatory requirements preventing your business from making changes to grow?



In this question, respondents were asked if regulatory requirements prevent their businesses from growing. An interesting result occurred this year; more respondents indicated that regulatory compliance is not impacting their ability to innovate and grow. There are many who indeed did indicate there is some impact – 65.5% stated that there is an impact.

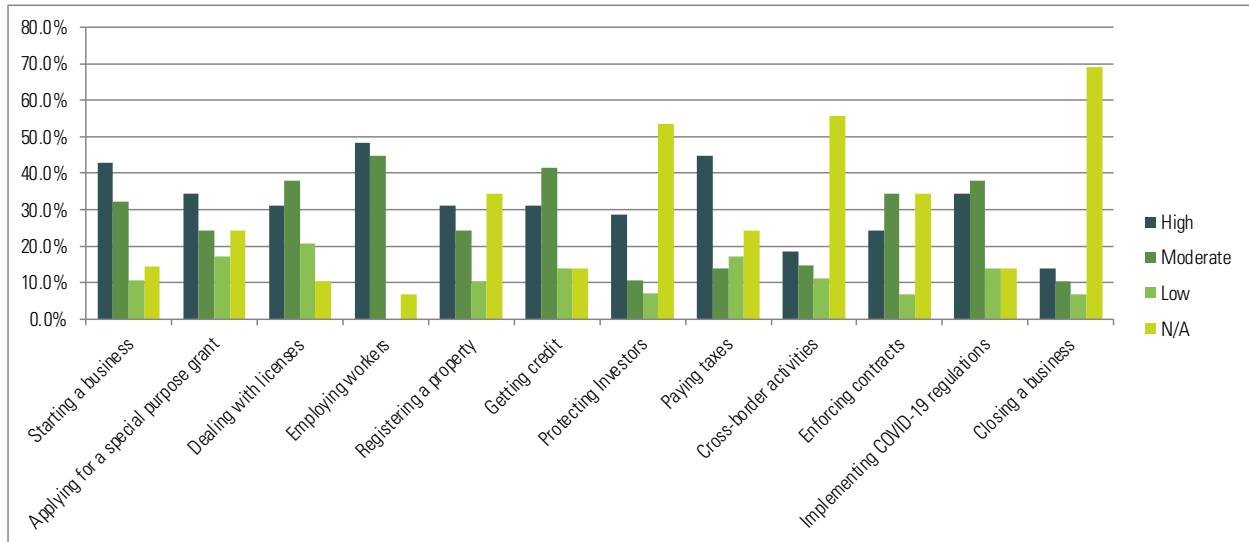


Although regulations are a necessary part of doing business, there is room for improvement. If regulations hinder growth, governments need to look at policy and assess whether the regulations can change so that Canada can maintain a competitive edge in a globalized market. Assessing our regulations against that of other countries is a necessary to drive global growth and investments.

We asked our respondents to provide us with an indication as to what regulations were impeding growth. The following responses were collected:

- Our permitting process with the City of Surrey is such that we took 2 years to get our outdoor patio development permit approved and built. Repeated delays in city hall as the process is designed to waste time and money for architects, designers and engineers and cost us over \$40K to comply.
- One-window one tax system. Anything to do with business license at the federal, provincial, and municipal environment should be dealt at once.
- The Canada/United States border is a problem for us, we have essential items, and the border officials deem our business non-essential, we can't move people properly between Canada and the United States.
- Environmental requirements from the City of Surrey.
- Lack of communication from government agencies.

Question 14 Rating the cost of compliance

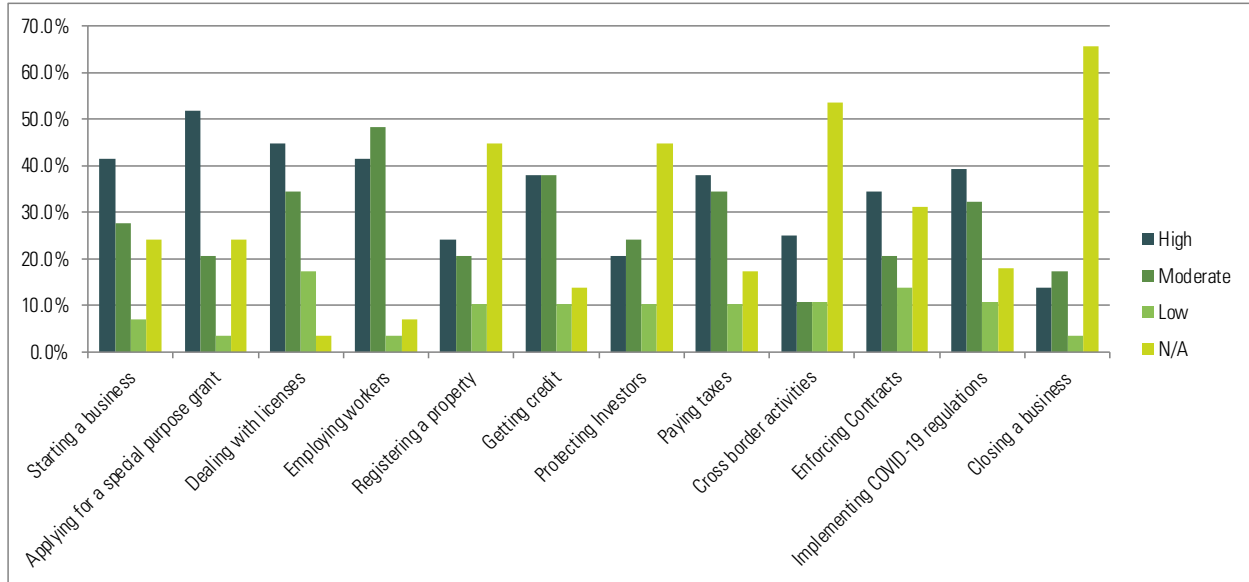


Respondents were asked to rate the options on how costly it is to comply. The options given were high, moderate, low, and not applicable. The top four costly compliance measures with regulations are listed below.

	High	Moderate	Low	N/A	High and Moderate Combined
Starting a business	42.9%	32.1%	10.7%	14.3%	75.0%
Employing workers	48.3%	44.8%	0.0%	6.9%	93.1%
Implementing COVID-19 regulations	34.5%	37.9%	13.8%	13.8%	72.4%
Getting credit	31.0%	41.4%	13.8%	13.8%	72.4%

Question 15

Rating the time it takes to comply



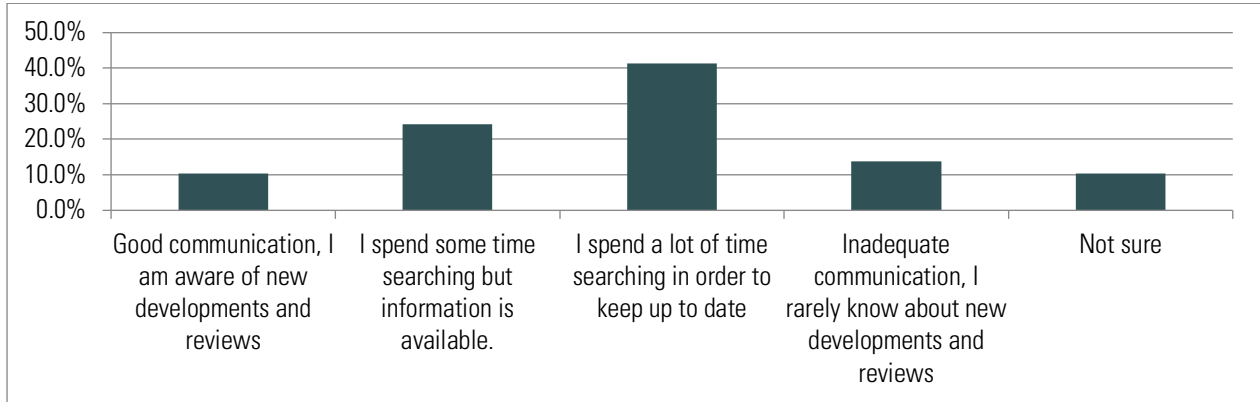
Respondents were asked to rate how long it takes to comply with the options listed from high, moderate, low, and not applicable. The respondents indicated again that employing workers takes the most time, with 89.7% indicating the time it takes is high or moderate. This is consistent with the previous years' survey results.

The top three answers are shown in the table below.

	High	Moderate	Low	N/A	High and Moderate Combined
Dealing with licenses	44.8%	34.5%	17.2%	3.5%	79.3%
Employing workers	41.4%	48.3%	3.5%	6.9%	89.7%
Getting credit	37.9%	37.9%	10.3%	13.8%	75.9%

Question 16

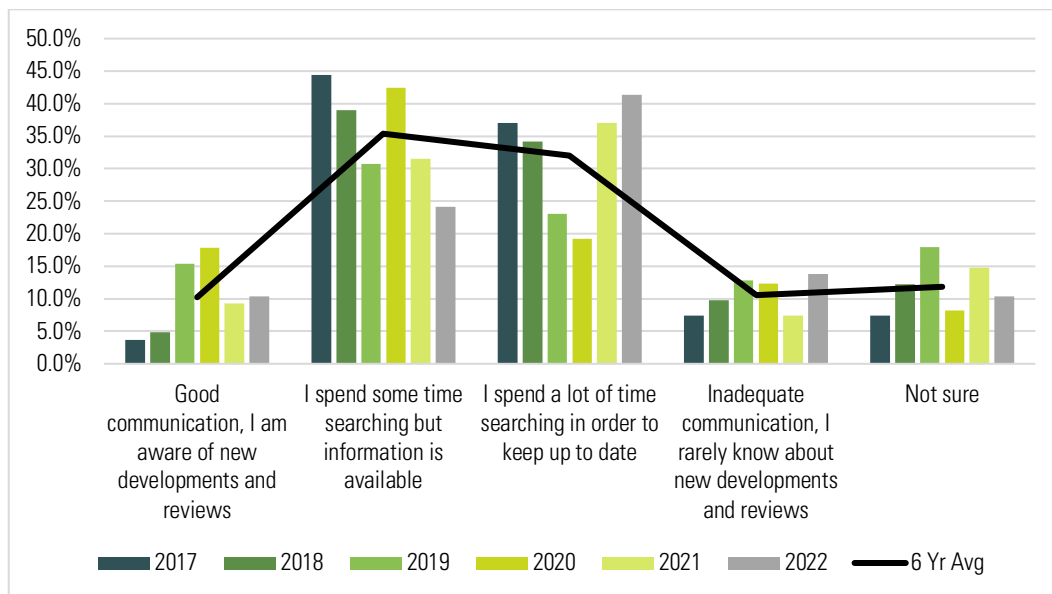
Communication effectiveness with federal government



The Federal Government is the best equipped to disseminate knowledge compared to local and provincial governments. The Federal Government has the most capital available to provide information to provinces and municipalities, that would then disseminate the information further than using their own communication mechanisms.

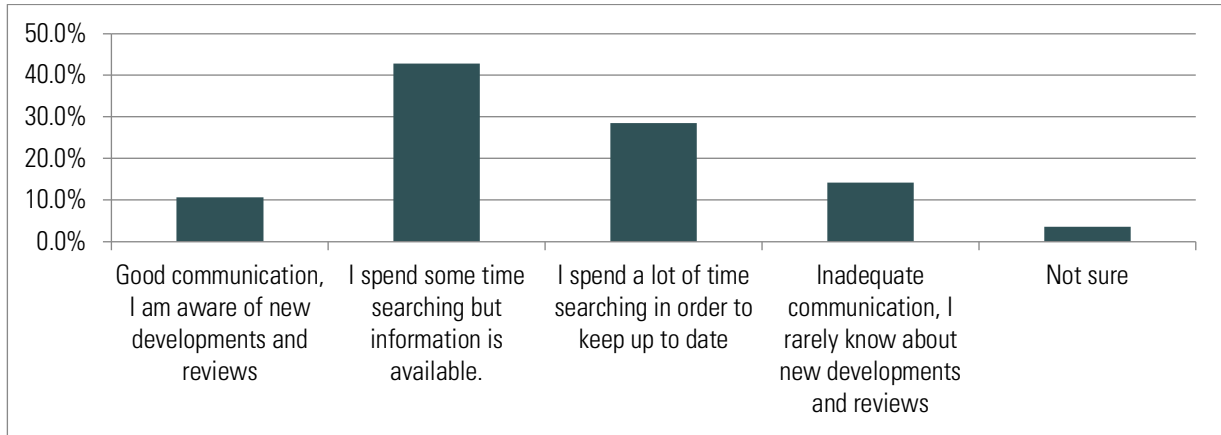
There are, however, shortcomings. The fact that over 41.4% of the respondents indicated that they spend a lot of time searching to keep up to date and that they rarely know about new developments and reviews reveals that the government still needs to improve their capabilities.

Communication effectiveness is getting worse. When comparing with the previous years, more respondents indicate that the communication levels are getting worse.

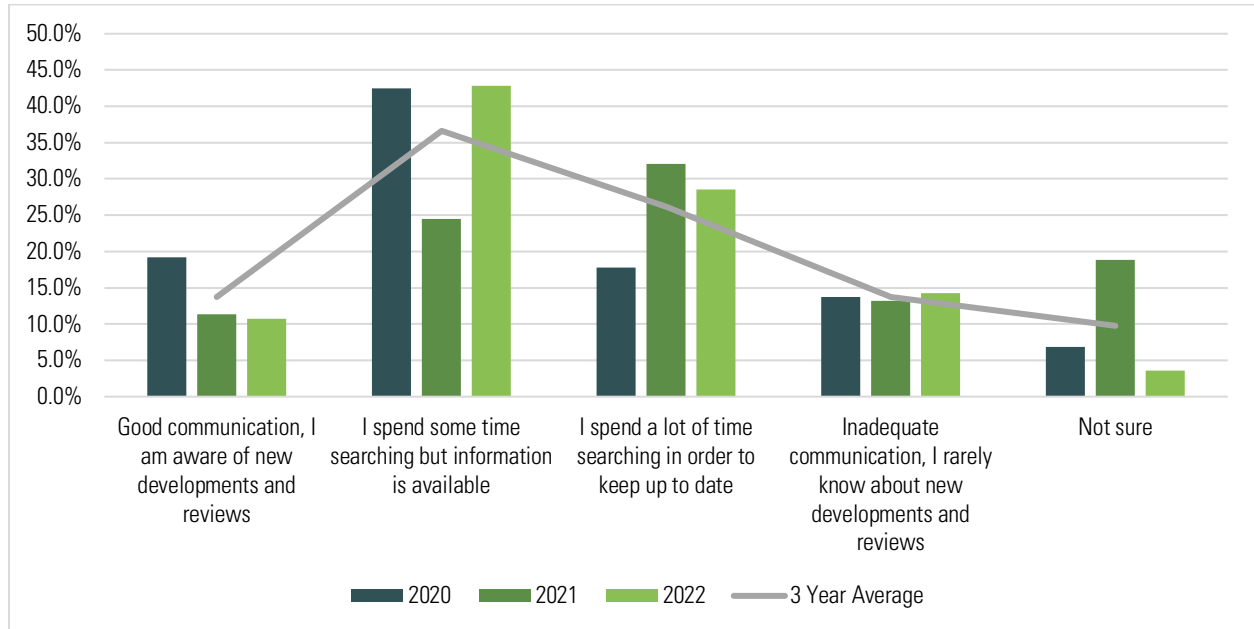


Question 17

Communication effectiveness with provincial government

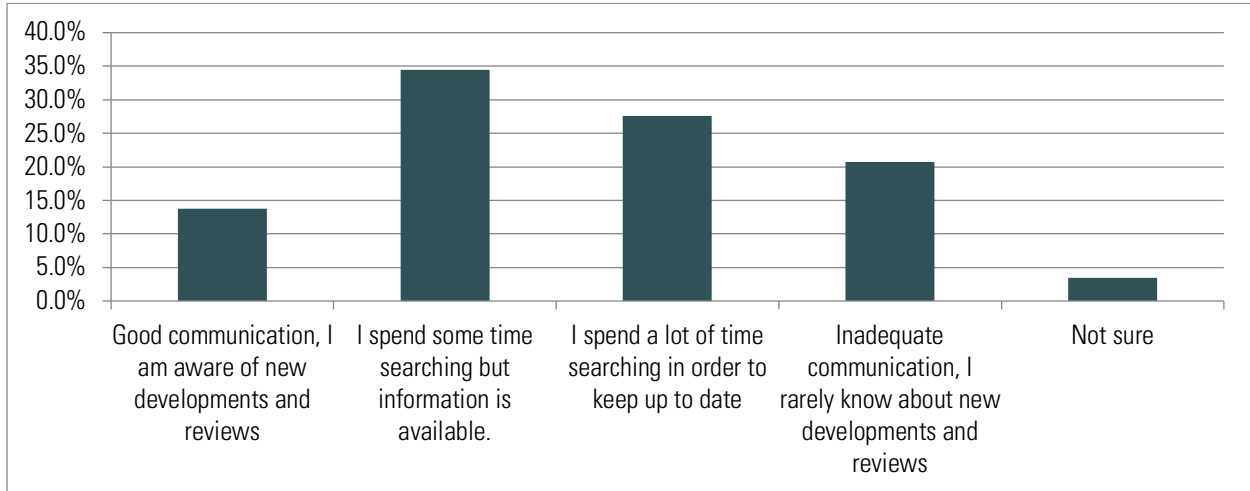


At the provincial level, a large majority believe the government is not effective at disseminating information. Only 10.7% believe that information is readily available. Over 42% of respondents indicated that they spent a lot of time searching for information or felt the government was inadequate in communicating information. The Provincial Government should continue to research ways to disseminate information broadly other than news releases that not everyone subscribes to or is even aware of.



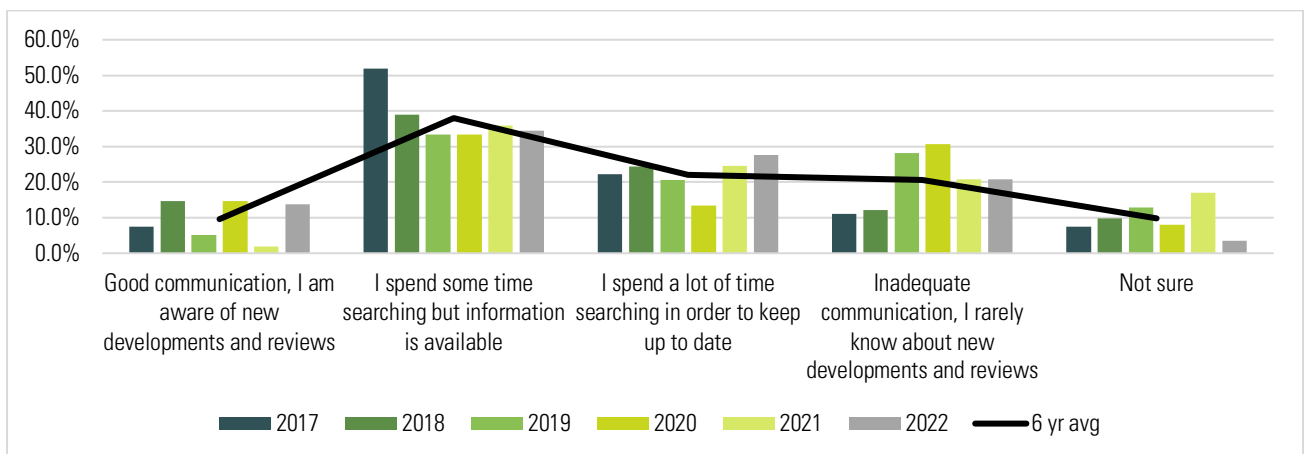
Question 18

Communication effectiveness with local government



While 48.3% indicated that the City of Surrey offers good communication, or only spent some time searching for information, an equal number of respondents indicated that the information dissemination mechanisms are lacking (they spent a lot of time searching for information or found that communication was inadequate). The City of Surrey can become more effective in providing information to the public and the business community.

There are ways to relay information more effectively other than through email and the newspaper. The local government could utilize transformative information transfer processes such as signs along major highways and roadways. Many cities have large electronic billboards that display real-time information.



Historically, the City has not been consistent with their communications. The number of respondents that indicated the communication is inadequate has fallen in 2021 and has leveled in 2022.

Question 19

Opportunity to streamline reporting and make it less of a burden on business

Government has an issue with redundancy and inefficiency. There are many options to create efficiency, such as streamlining, utilizing technology effectively, and improving the lines of communication.

31% of the respondents of this year's survey indicated that there is an opportunity to streamline reporting. Some of the explanations included:

- Lessen employees working from home which cause hurdles in effective/time sensitive communication.
- Have one business information website that covers all requirements.
- Authorities could share up-to-date information of your business.
- Technology improvements at all reporting agencies.
- Permitting and licensing at the City need to be expedited.
- There should be one window where you can do anything to do with business including: tax, payroll, GST, business license, environmental study, employment standards, hiring foreign workers, etc. Also, one tax and one tax rate. No GST /PST /payroll/ extra tax on payroll/ property tax, business licence, carbon tax.
- All provincial documents could be filed as one (WCB, EHT, PST, possibly CRA and GST).
- Creating report templates is helpful, which helps our business understand exactly what information the government is seeking.
- Remove the burden of monthly filing for certain aspects to annually if your revenue is under \$5 million.
- Have the PST rebate program enhanced and reduce required reporting.
- Make the information and requirements easier to find and understandable.
- Businesses with business licences should receive regular email/newsletters from the City.

Interestingly, there were many (48.3%) that were unsure whether there was any opportunity to streamline reporting. This may be because there were some respondents who were employees and do not deal with the reporting aspect.

Question 21

Greatest impact on reducing the cost of compliance

	Definitely!	Would probably help	Possible	Not really	No impact	Not sure	Definitely and would probably help combined
Reduce the frequency of reporting requirements to a minimum	65.4%	30.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.9%	96.2%
Agencies sharing information and making sure there are no duplicate information requirements	80.8%	15.4%	3.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	96.2%
Better communication and consultation with businesses when developing new regulations	73.1%	26.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Improving accessibility of web-based reporting	73.1%	15.4%	11.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	88.5%
One agency which collects all required information	69.2%	23.1%	7.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	92.3%

Respondents were asked which of the above options would reduce the cost associated with compliance to regulations the most. The respondents were able to rate these options on a scale of definitely helping to having no impact. The respondents were also able to indicate if they were unsure of the impact.

Better communication and consultation with businesses is key to reducing the cost of compliance, where 100% agreed that it would provide some sort of benefit. 96.2% of respondents indicated that reducing the frequency of reporting requirements and agencies sharing information and making sure there are no duplication would reduce costs of compliance. Coming in third, one agency which collects all required information would be effective in reducing costs.

Question 22

Level of red tape in dealing with federal and provincial regulatory authorities

	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)	55.56%	37.04%	3.70%	3.70%
Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA)	40.74%	22.22%	7.41%	29.63%
PST	46.15%	38.46%	15.38%	0.00%
BC Business Registry	22.22%	40.74%	37.04%	0.00%
My LTSA - Land Titles Directory	22.22%	14.81%	22.22%	40.74%
BC Assessment	29.63%	25.93%	22.22%	22.22%
WorkSafeBC	37.04%	55.56%	3.70%	3.70%

92.6% of respondents indicated that the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and WorkSafeBC have moderate to high levels of red tape. The unnecessary audits, the time it takes to gather information, and the difficulty in getting answers from the CRA is a hinderance on business and economic growth.

We asked if there were other agencies that had excessive red tape.

Respondents indicated the following agencies:

- Licensing bodies
- Fraser Health Authority licensing & patient quality
- Fraser Health Authority long term care bureaucracy
- BC Housing
- ICBC, National Safety Code, Passenger Transportation Board
- Having most government employees working from home

Question 23

Level of red tape in dealing with various local government regulations

	High	Moderate	Low	N/A
Building & Construction Permits - From submission to completion	63.8%	2.1%	2.1%	31.9%
Building & Construction - Inspections	53.2%	8.5%	2.1%	36.2%
Building & Construction - Fees	53.2%	10.6%	4.3%	31.9%
Building & Construction - Public Hearing Process	45.7%	4.4%	2.2%	47.8%
Bylaw & Licensing Forms - Business Licenses	48.9%	21.3%	19.2%	10.6%
Bylaw & Licensing Forms - All Others	38.3%	19.2%	12.8%	29.8%
Engineering Services - All	42.6%	12.8%	6.4%	38.3%
City Services (Sanitation, Waste, Water)	38.3%	10.6%	12.8%	38.3%
City Online Services	33.3%	15.6%	24.4%	26.7%
Property Tax/Payment Services	29.8%	14.9%	29.8%	25.5%
Complaints & Resolutions	31.9%	17.0%	8.5%	42.6%

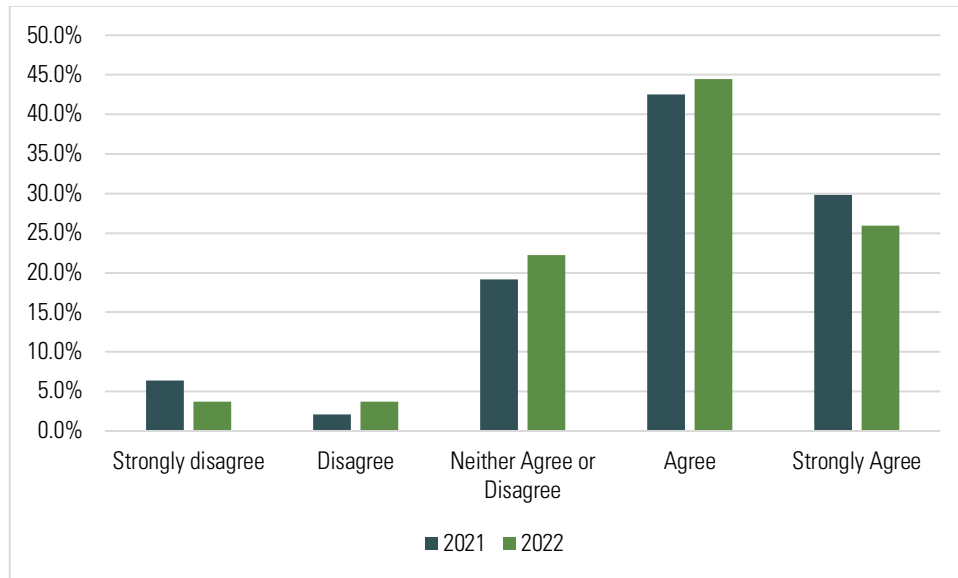
The development and construction industry in the local economy has had chronic issues related to getting projects approved and completed. Due to COVID-19, supply chain issues, catastrophic weather events, geopolitical strife, the City of Surrey has made many innovative changes to streamline operations and moving towards online permitting processes. Unfortunately, there is still much to do for other business services the City provides.

	2022	2021	2020
Building & Construction Permits - From submission to completion	74.1%	66.0%	55.6%
Building & Construction - Inspections	70.4%	61.7%	52.4%
Building & Construction - Fees	70.4%	63.8%	50.8%
Building & Construction - Public Hearing Process	74.1%	50.0%	49.2%
By-Law & Licensing Forms - Business Licenses	70.4%	70.2%	60.3%
By-Law & Licensing Forms - All Others	63.0%	57.5%	57.1%
Engineering Services - All	66.7%	55.3%	50.8%
City Services (Sanitation, Waste, Water)	70.4%	48.9%	48.4%
City Online Services	59.3%	48.9%	47.6%
Property Tax/Payment Services	70.4%	44.7%	39.7%
Complaints & Resolutions	74.1%	48.9%	53.2%

Building & Construction Permits was consistently chosen as one of the highest level of red tape items when dealing with local government regulations. The public hearing process and complaints and resolutions topped the list this year.

Question 24

Change in cost of compliance or time spent on regulatory compliance since COVID-19



We asked respondents if they think the cost of compliance or time spent on regulatory compliance has increased since COVID-19. The trend seems to indicate that COVID-19 costs are declining to a degree but still persistent and highly impactful for some industries.

Question 25

Top 3 local municipal red tape barriers to business

This year, at the request of the City of Surrey, we included a question that allows respondents to clearly indicate their top three red tape barriers to business. The table below indicates the respondents first, second, and third responses.²

First	Second	Third
Building Permits (time and cost)	Inspections	Funding
Building licenses (time and cost)	Time it takes for issues to be dealt with	Constant change of process
Arranging time to meet with staff/ availability of staff/ shortage	Unnecessary inspections	Not showing up for inspections
Pre-application approval	Limited business hours	Too many regulations
Lack of easily accessible information	Too many hurdles	Too many restrictions
	Environmental Assessments	Building Permits
	New business starting	Building Permits
		Fear of asking questions incase you open an investigation
		Actually getting a response that is of use to resolve the situation
		Development cost charges

² Many responses were removed because they were not related to municipal barriers or did not answer the question fully.

Question 26

Top 3 provincial red tape barriers to business

We also included a question asking respondents to rank their top three provincial-level red tape barriers.

First	Second	Third
PST requirements are hard to understand/ remittance	Communication	Changing priorities
Lack of access to staff/ staff shortage	Length of Time for process	Departments don't cross reference.
Reporting to many departments	Online reporting the only option to communicate.	
Fear of asking questions incase you open an investigation	Limited business hours	
Time taken to get an answer	Fees	
Funding application process	Agricultural Land Reserve	
Passenger Transportation Board and ICBC Reporting	Provincial taxes on business (We sell >50% internationally)	
Taxes	Long wait times when calling	
	Level of archaic regulations like taxi boundaries	

Question 27

Top 3 federal red tape barriers to business

We asked about federal-level red tape barriers as well.

First	Second	Third
GST filing/ reporting and waiting for errors to get corrected	Communication	BC feeling somewhat isolated, not in the loop
CRA	Interpretation varies and it is up to each officer	Limited business hours or access
Infighting between prov and fed governments	Information not available on website	Fees
Repetitive reporting	Extremely long wait times, hours, and then get cut off	Extremely long delays in receiving a response - some every 15 days and others only monthly
Staff working from home		
Time to get answers		
Funding requirements		
Finding the right number to call for an answer		

Question 28

Final thoughts

As we have in previous iterations of the survey, we asked if respondents had any further suggestions or comments that were not discussed in previous questions. Key themes emerged in the responses offered. They include:

- Regulatory branches and agencies should be honest with the wait times and time it takes for approval.
- Whether local, Provincial or Federal, there should be better systems in place to provide for a more timely response, as well as clear access points, such as area specific telephone numbers and/or emails.
- Take cues from pro-development cities such as Calgary .
- One agency collecting information is best. But here in Surrey it takes a lot of time (weeks to months) for one department to get information from other department while working in the same office building.
- We must find new solutions to hold paid elected leadership officials accountable for their decisions and their actions.

4. CONCLUSION

Businesses in the Lower Mainland have struggled through the pandemic and require red tape reductions to help them to recover. Therefore, the Surrey Board of Trade concludes that local, provincial, and federal governments must reduce red tape. The business community is unable to innovate or scale up if they are continuously hammered with new and increasingly complicated regulations and red tape. The members that experience high amounts of red tape include the construction and professional services sectors, although the service sector (including restaurants, and others) has seen an increase in regulatory burden because of COVID-19, supply chain issues, catastrophic weather events, geopolitical strife, and economic fluctuations.

Several respondents indicated that the cost of compliance has increased in the last two years. All levels of government need to reassess their policies and regulations to provide an economic environment that permits growth and innovation. Without drastic change, our job creators will shut down, economic prosperity will dwindle, and industry will seek greener pastures in less regulatory-intensive countries.

Many respondents spend between 1-30 hours on business income tax returns. The government must innovate the way that incomes taxes can be filed, and how data is collected as SMEs are suffering from this overburden. Governments can see that there is opportunity to increase growth and innovation in the business community by creating efficiencies in reporting and paying taxes.

Canada's competitive edge is dwindling. Considering an economic slowdown as a result of many international and domestic factors, and a potential recession, Canada's competitive edge is only growing weaker. It is for this reason that the Surrey Board of Trade calls on the political leaders of the local, provincial, and federal governments to act and preserve the economy.

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