

QCITY OF MADISON | BUSINESS WALK

Southeast and Southwest Areas

City of Madison | June 3, 2025

The City of Madison partnered together two departments-The City of Madison Department of Planning, Community and Economic Development-to host the City of Madison's 2025 Business Walk. This walk supported the City of Madison's Southeast and Southwest area plans on June 3, 2025. A Business Walk is an economic development initiative that, in a short amount of time, allows local leaders to get the pulse of how a business community is doing. The premise behind each walk is to target the successes and obstacles the local business community faces, track that information, and provide assistance. In total, 65 volunteer business and civic leaders visited 382 businesses in three hours, of which 261 agreed to have conversations with us. Of those businesses, 79 businesses requested and received followup assistance.

Post-Event Report

The conversation with these businesses focused around these questions:

- 1. How's business?
- 2. What do you like about doing business in your area?
- 3. What can be done to improve doing business in your area?
- 4. How long have you been in business?
- 5. Do your employees have difficulty getting to work? Does access, or lack of access to public transportation affect who you can hire?
- 6. Would your company like to be followed up with a specific question after the Business Walk?

Summary Results

The City of Madison Business Walk was held in two areas: the Southwest and Southeast areas of Madison.

- The Southeast Area is approximately 7,000 acres (10.9 square miles) and is generally bounded by State
 Highway 30 to the north, Interstate 90 to the east, City of Monona to the west, and Siggelkow Road / Village of McFarland to the South.
- The Southwest Area is approximately 5,400 acres (8.4 square miles) and is generally bounded by the West
 Beltline Highway to the north, the City of Fitchburg to
 the east, and S. High Point Road to the west.

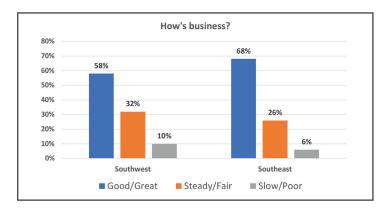
The 2025 City of Madison Business Walk volunteers visited a diverse blend of businesses, including, but not limited to manufacturing, industrial, service-based, traditional big box stores, professional, hospitality, entertainment, transportation, financial, and family run establishments. The results indicated that while both areas offer many promising opportunities, they also face several challenges that require attention. Throughout this report you will see the differences and similarities between the two areas.

When asked "How's Business?", 90% (Southwest) and 94% (Southeast) cited that business was at least steady/fair if not good/great. Although most businesses are steady and/or succeeding, some businesses are struggling. When

asked what they liked about doing business in the Southwest and Southeast areas, two things stood out: 1) location and 2) community/customers. When the volunteer business and civic leaders asked what could be done to improve business in the area, the most frequent responses in the Southwest area were: 1) Infrastructure/transportation, 2) affordability/housing, and 3) access to capital/programs. The Southeast area mentioned: 1) infrastructure/transportation, 2) government

regulations, and 3) public safety concerns. Although businesses discussed these challenges only 7% (Southwest) and 5% (Southeast) said they plan to relocate, sell or exit their business in the next five years. The remainder of this report will go over the questions in detail as well as provide steps the City of Madison is taking to improve the business climate on Madison's Southwest and Southeast areas post business walk.

QUESTION 1: HOW'S BUSINESS?



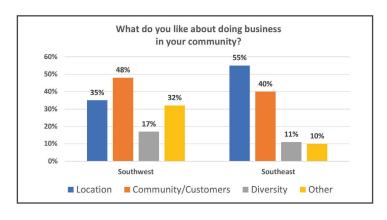
In response to the question "How's business?" respondents provided a variety of answers from "business is thriving" to "fine, ups and downs depending on the season" to "slow with an unknown future economic climate".

Fifty-eight percent of businesses in the Southwest area stated that business was **good/great**, indicating that they are succeeding due to various reasons: location, stable customer base, or new development in the area. Sixty-eight percent of businesses in the Southeast area provided feedback they were doing good/great, indicating their industry is growing, expanding due to client needs, and their relationship with the community. The 32% of businesses that are fair/steady in the Southwest area referenced that they have been doing "fine" but they are steady overall as their business "tends to have seasonal ups and downs". Businesses in the Southeast area had 26% respond fair/steady, reporting challenges "due to unknown tariffs", and "clients are hesitant on spending right now" describing the overall climate as flat or fair. Overall many seemed content to be stable at this point.

The other 10% (Southwest area) 6% (Southeast area) of businesses interviewed mentioned that business has been **slow/poor** due to their industry being overall down, challenges with staffing and hiring, uncertain tariffs putting projects on hold, unsure how to price items moving forward, economic climate, inflation and loss of government grants and funds. Despite some of the setbacks, businesses in both areas overwhelmingly stated they want to stay in the area and hope to stay in business.

QUESTION 2: WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT DOING BUSINESS IN YOUR AREA?

(Respondents were able to provide multiple answers.)



For the Southwest area, a sense of **community and customers** was mentioned by 48% of respondents. Indicating their clients live in their community, there is a strong sense of home, and that they have many repeat clients who are very loyal. Thirty-five percent highlighted **location** as a reason they enjoy doing business. The businesses in the Southwest area noted factors such as easy access to the Beltline and other businesses, proximity

to a bus stop, being in a college town, short commute times, and the overall appeal of Madison as a city. **Diversity**-mentioned in 17% of responses-was also noted, including the diversity of people, types of businesses, income levels, clients, and neighborhoods.

In addition, **32%** of respondents in the Southwest area provided several reasons for liking doing business, including:

- Transportation (close to a metro)
- City police and fire department are doing a great job, mentioning not much theft and they feel safe
- City provides grants and programming
- · Not a crowded city, good parking
- People appreciate having great schools in the area, including the local public schools, Madison College, and UW Madison

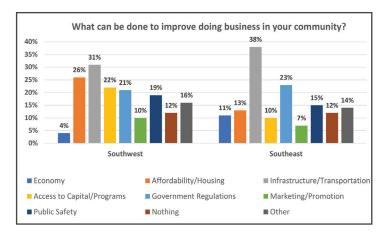
For the Southeast area, **location** was the top mentioned comment by 55% of businesses. Highlighting its central access, the conveniences of living and working in the same area, a wide variety of activities and restaurants, opportunities for expansion, and the ability to operate nationwide–all of which contribute to making it a highly convenient location to do business. **Community and customers** were mentioned by 40% of businesses pointing out various community outreach programs, a strong employee pool, and a good customer base who are friendly and provide steady foot traffic. **Diversity** of the customer base and other businesses was also recorded in 11% of surveys.

In addition, 10% of respondents on the Southeast area provided several **other** reasons for liking doing business, including:

- Variety of restaurants
- Development in the area (new buildings going up)
- Great education system
- Stable/growing environment unlike some other cities and towns in Wisconsin

QUESTION 3: WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE BUSINESS IN YOUR AREA?

(Respondents were able to provide multiple answers.)



The largest area for improvement is focused on **infrastructure and transportation** in the Southwest area. Thirty-one percent of respondents mentioned the city needs to do continued work on public transportation (both locally and easy options to Milwaukee, Minneapolis and Chicago), add more affordable housing options (housing prices are too high) for staff and lower income workers, more restaurants, as well as help with road construction and parking. Addressing roads that need to be repaved to fix safety concerns and poorly timed traffic lights.

Overall lack of **affordability and housing** was mentioned by 26%, relating to challenges with housing for staff and clients both for low income and middle income families as well as high property taxes. Lack of affordability for childcare and food costs were also addressed. There also is a need for more accessible, low-cost advertising options for nonprofits and small businesses to help support broader business awareness in the area. **Lack of access to capital and programming** was cited by 22%, as many are seeking access to capital (grants and loans) to expand, grow and or survive. They found there are too many hoops to jump through to access many funds and/or they do not qualify. Respondents also are looking for small business tools and education for small businesses and access to programming.

Government regulations, noted by 21% of respondents, refers to concerns such as burdensome regulations and limited access for small businesses to compete for government projects (seen as favoring large companies). Additional concerns included strict zoning rules, lengthy inspection processes, permit denials, and inconsistent or unclear signage regulations. Public safety concerns were discussed by 19% of businesses due to a need for more security, panhandling problems, homelessness (people living in front of their offices), drug problems (inside and outside of their business), speeding, and parking violations.

Ten percent of respondents expressed a need for additional marketing and promotion opportunities to enhance their visibility and publicity. Specific requests included more Spanish-language promotions, support with networking, and expanded marketing resources. Additional promotion to buy local, more advertising, events to connect local businesses to local clients, and the ability to have more signage up would also be helpful. Four percent commented that the **economy** could be improved to help business, mentioning topics like "tariffs" and "economic unknowns". Twelve percent of businesses stated that **nothing** needed improvement, noting that they were not facing any major challenges. In addition, 16% of Southwest respondents provided several other improvements and changes needed

including:

- High turnover and lower wage staffing shortage
- More support for black and brown students in school
- More retail and restaurants in the area

Just like the Southwest, the Southeast area's major focus is on infrastructure and transportation, with 38% of businesses mentioning it and addressing that there are still areas that are a "public transportation desert" with no bus routes. Some businesses stated that the City should provide grants to offer bus passes for employees. The new bus routes are also causing transportation problems for trucks (especially near downtown). It was brought up that major intersections have now become safety problems in various parts of the city, creating a lack of road access in many areas. Traffic congestion and parking issues were also mentioned.

Government regulations refers to challenges stemming from having to navigate multiple municipalities, each with different regulations and requirements, and was listed by 23% of respondents. High taxes, along with strict zoning, permitting and signage restrictions tend to further complicate the process of doing business. Fifteen percent of businesses had a **public safety** concern and wanted more police presence due to drugs, homeless panhandling, theft, speeding, street lighting, and traffic/parking concerns.

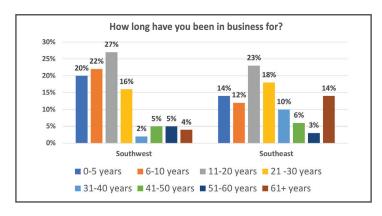
An overall lack of **affordability and housing** issues are very similar to the Southwest area, but with 13% stating this concern. A few other issues addressed are around lowering rent rates and high healthcare, childcare and high food costs. Businesses are looking for funding for programs that benefit companies outside of just the downtown area. Economic (economy) impact, tied around lack of qualified workforce, tariff impacts, and economic uncertainty and unpredictability as prices go up and down, was indicated by 11%.

Access to capital and programming, mentioned by 10%, such as business development, access to grants, loans and programs and is needed. Marketing/ promotion was in 7% of responses with a need to bring more awareness to small businesses. Twelve percent of businesses stated that nothing needed improvement, noting that they were not facing any major challenges.

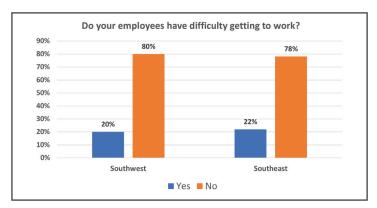
In addition, 14% of Southeast area respondents provided several other improvements and changes needed including:

- Support of homeless shelters
- More parks on the Southeast area
- Flex lane to be open more on the Beltline
- Fix low hanging wires

QUESTION 4: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN BUSINESS FOR?



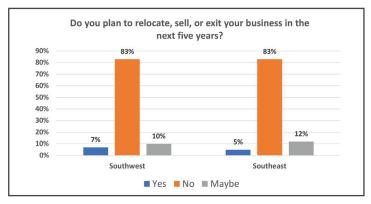
QUESTION 5: DO YOUR EMPLOYEES
HAVE DIFFICULTY GETTING TO WORK?
DOES ACCESS, OR LACK OF ACCESS, TO
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AFFECT
WHO YOU CAN HIRE?



When asked this question, 80% in the Southwest area and 78% in the Southeast area said that their employees **do not have a difficult time getting to work**. Many of them mentioned the employees of the business have cars, ride their bikes, or use the bus service in place. The 20% of Southwest and 22% of Southeast businesses who stated **they have** troubles mentioned long bus wait times, a bus stop was not located in their area (public transit deserts), bus timing does not work well for 2nd and 3rd shift workers, and lack of frequency.

The question, "Does access, or lack of access, to public transportation affect who you can hire?" was not answered by enough businesses to provide an accurate representation of responses.

QUESTION 6: DO YOU PLAN TO RELOCATE, SELL, OR EXIT YOUR BUSINESS IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS? IF SO, WHY?



A vast majority of the businesses do not plan to relocate, sell or exit their business in the next five years, 83% in both the Southwest and Southeast areas. Common reasons cited include satisfaction with their current location, long-term leases, strong community ties, high costs of moving, and a desire to maintain a legacy presence. Among the small percentage who said **yes they** do plan to move, 7% in the Southwest and 5% in the Southeast, they mentioned retirement, transferring ownership to an employee, outgrowing their current space due to business growth, or the need for a more central location. The surveyed respondents who said they **may be** planning to relocate, sell or exit, 10% in the Southwest and 12% in the Southeast, are exploring a range of options. Businesses mentioned moving to a larger or smaller space, expanding or franchising outside the area or potentially just seeking a new location. Contributing factors included growth of their business, limited signage options at their current location and possibility of being relocated by their parent company.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF THE PARTICIPATING BUSINESSES!

- 1st American Pest Control and Snow Removal, LLC
- 4 Senses Home Services
- A+ Nails & SpaAberle Chiropractic ClinicAble Distributing
- Access
- Ace Automotives
- Adoption Choice, Inc
- · Advance Collision and Repair
- Advanced Building Corporation
- Advanced Employment, Inc.
- Advanced Turf Solutions
- · Agrace Thrift Store
- AirgasAll Surfaces
- · Allen Kitchen & Bath
- Alliance Trailer Body Shop
- Alliance Vinyl Graphics
- Alpine Insulation
- American Family Insurance (2) American Heart Association
- Ancora Cafe + Bakery

- Anesis TherapyAntiques Mall of Madison
- Applied Industrial
- Technologies
 Arc of Life Medical Center

- ArtWorking
 Associated Bank
- Associated General Contractors
- of Wisconsin At Home Atomic Antiques
- Auer Steel & Heating Supply Co, Inc
- Auto Color Inc
- Auto-Chlor
- AutoZone
- Bachmann Construction
- · Bachmanns Pools, Spas & Saunas
- Badger Bus
- Badger Fitness
- Badger Gymnastics Academy
- · Banyan Companies, LLC
- Bartow Plumbing LLC
- · Bennett's Meadowood
- Country Club

 Berndt CPA
- BioFerm
- Blue Terra Design
- BMI HVAC SUPPLY
- BMO
- BMV's Boutique and More
- Bombay Bazaar
 Boost Mobile
- Boyer Fire Protection
- BR Southwestern Foods LLC
- · Braille Library & Transcribing
- Services, Inc.

 Brandt Automotive Services
- BrightStar Care
- Brothers
- Brothers Main Appliance & TVBrunsell Lumber & Millwork
- Builders FirstSource
- · Building Restoration Corporation of WI
- Buks Lgd
- Burn Bootcamp
- Cadence Cold Brew CoffeeCaliber Collision
- · Calming Ground
- Calvary Chapel Madison
- Cambridge Winery Canguro Care
- Canteen
- Capital Window Cleaning LLC CCL Management
- · CDP, Inc
- · Celletech Ltd
- Central Bark
- · CES Nationwide

- · Chamberlain Associates **Building Company**
- Cintas CircuitBoardRepair.Net
- Citgo Clean Laundry
- Clean Power
- Clothes Encounter
- · Coffee Werks
- · Community Living Connections
- **Community Medical Services** Companion Animal Hospital
- Copper Top Restaurant
- Cosmic Delights Cost Cutters
- Crema Cafe
- Cricket Wireless
- · Certified Refrigerator Maintenance / Food Service Equipment Parts & Service
- Crown Lift Trucks
- CS4 Flooring
- Cummins Inc.
- Dairy Connection Inc
 Dale's Heating & Air
- Conditioning
 Dana Lou's Laundry East
- Dane County Library Service
 Dane County Parks

- Days SpaDelia's MassageDental Health Associates of
- Madison
- Design AirDip Stix
- Dollar Tree (2)
- Domino's (2) Don Beto Groceries
- Dunkin'
- · East Grove Dental
- El Hornito • El Rancho Mexican Grill
- Elegant Foods
- · Emmons Business Interiors
- · Energy Efficient Solutions, LLC
- Envigo Environmental Systems Analysis
- Ernié's Liquor
- Eternity Homecare
- EZ Office Products
- · Fabick, Inc. Facility Gateway Corporation
- (FGC)
- Fastenal
- Feldco
- Ferguson
- FerrellgasFired Up Pottery & GlassFitchburg Family Eye Care
- Fleet Clean
- Forte
- Franklin Electric
- Free Up StorageFreeport Self StorageGardaWorld

- GenePro, Inc.GiGi's Playhouse Madison
- Gino's Italian Deli Glide
- GoldStar Coffee · Good Shepherd Lutheran
- Church
- Goodwill (2)
- · Great Wall Madison
- GreatWater 360 Auto Care
- · Greentech Renewables
- Grifols
- Gurn Glass
- Hansen & Sons
- Harbor FreightHarley's Liquor StoresHatch Building Supply
- Heins ContractingHill Renovation & Design · Hillcraft of Wisconsin

- · Ho Chunk Nation
- Hobart Service
- · Hoey Apothecary Hoyos Event Networks
- IKM Building Solutions
- India House
- Indoorance · Infinity Exteriors, LLC
- Inotiv
- · Inpak Systems, Inc. · Integrated Community Work,
- · Istanbul Supermarket and
- Cafe · J&L Automotive and 4-Wheel
- Drive Center
- J&P Cleaning LLC Jack's Tire Sales and Service
- JBC Coffee Roasters
- liffy Lube John Power Tennis Center
- Journey TogetherJT&JC Beauty Studio
- lust For U Salon
- K&K Gaming Services K9 Crush
- KD Glass
- Kelbe Brothers Equipment
- Kelley's Market
- Kept Companies Kessenich's
- KinderCare
- Kitchen Ideas Center KM Accounting and Tax
- Services
- Kreative Kids Academy
- Krekeler Law, S.C.
- Kwik Trip (4)
- · La Petite Academy (2) Lady Bug Learning Academy
- Laké City Glass
- Lakeland Sports Center Larson
- · Latin Urban Hair Salon Lavender Spa Massage
- Lenis Barber Shop
- Littelfuse Loop Medical Transit
- · Los Atlantes Mexican Restaurant & Bakery
- Lotus Nails Bar and Spa
- Luna's Groceries
- M&I Truck & Auto Repair Inc
- MadiMaids Cleaning Services
 Madinah Academy of Madison
- Madison Cabinetry
- Madison Classics Madison Fire Department
- Madison Health and Rehab
- Center Madison Ice Inc.
- · Madison Liquidators Madison Media Services
- Madison Overhead
- Madison Police Department Madison Public LibraryMadison School &
- Community Recreation
- Madison Waldorf School
- MadMando Discs · Main Appliance Service
- Mainstay Suites · Maintenance Services of
- Southern Wisconsin LLC Maly RoofingManhattan Hair Designs, LLC
- · Maple Grove Dental
- MARC · Marling Lumber and Home Works
- · Mate's Truck and Auto Service Mennenga Tax & FinancialMetal Roofing SystemsMid-West Family Madison

- Mississippi Welders Supply Co (MWSCO)
- Misty Mountain Games
- Mode Realty Network
- Modern Gaming
- Monona Antique Mall
- Motion Industries
- · Muir Field Pet Clinic Ltd
- · Nakoma Plaza Auto
- · National Wildlife Health
- Center
- · Neat Fades Barbershop · New Bridge
- Niemann Ace
- Hardware-Lakeside NorthStar Medical
- Radioisotopes, LLC
- Northwoods Cheese Co. O'Reilly Auto Parts
- Oakhouse Bakerv Oasen Plumbing
- Old National Bank (2) Olson Vacuum Cleaner Sales
- & Service Inc. Ontrac
- · Options in Community Living
- Orion Family Services
- Orkin Pest Control
- Orosz PropertiesOtis Elevator Company Our Redeemer Lutheran
- Church & School
- Outdoor Living Unlimited
- Pa'que Roberto Pancake Cafe
- · Pizza Hut
- · Planet Bike Planet Fitness
- · Precision Diagnostics
- · Premier Paint & Wallpaper · Prime Health Dental
- · Pro Spine & Pain ProAxis LLC
- Project Home Property Revival (2)
- Q Beauty SupplyQ9 PowerSports USA
- Ramos Tax and Services
- Reach Dane Real G's Barbershop
- Red Tail Wraps Reece Auto & Restoration
- Regent Mental Health Group, S.C. Resource One Installation &
- Services Reynolds Urethane Recycling
- Inc.
- ReZen Property Management
- Richard's Beauty SalonRight Angle CommunicationsRobert's Plumbing & Heating
- Rock Cheese Company Rocky's Liquor

Rusty Dog Coffee

- Roman Auto Body RSVP of Dane County
- Ryan's Renovations LLC S&S Accounting & Income
- Tax Services Saffi Saana
- · Schmitz Door Service LLC · SCS Engineers
- Second Harvest Foodbank · Southern Wisconsin Secure ID, LLC
- Semex • Sergenian's Floor Coverings
- SGTS, Inc. Shaman Mama Wellness Sherwin-Williams (2)
- Slow Roll Cycles Snvder & Associates Southport Home Services
- Speedway

- Sport Clips · Springtime Health and
- Wellness
- SPS Self Service
- · SRS Building Products SSM Health
- · Stanley Steemer
- Starbúcks
- · State Collection Service, Inc.
- State Farm
- Subway Sunbelt Rentals
- Sundown Saloon
- Synergy CoworkingTabby & Jack's Pet SuppliesTakin' All Fadez
- Temperature Solutions
- The Douglas Stewart Co.
- The Electric Needle The Exteriors Company
- The Fur Seasons
- The Game CrafterThe Granite Shop of Madison
- The Home DepotThe Joint Chiropractic
- The Raccoon Society
- The Radio Doctor
- The Roofing Xperts Tier 1 Nutritionals
- Tilia Salon & Spa TK Elevator
- Top Tailoring Total Exteriors
- · Town of Blooming Grove · Tribe 9 Foods
- Truesdell Animal Care
 Hospital and Clinic
 Two Men and a Truck
 U-Haul Moving & Storage
 United Mailing Services, Inc.
- Universal Presentation Concepts
- UScellular (2) Variedades Nica's VCA Veterinary Emergency
- Service & Veterinary Specialty Center
- Viking Electric Vitense Golfland
- · Walgenmeyer's Carpet & Tile Walgreens (3)
- Walmart
- · Warren Family Dental · Washa Remodeling & Design WellRive
- Westphal & Co. Westside Service Center

Balance

Association

• Work Plus, Inc.

- · Wickcraft Boardwalks Winter Services Wisco Barbell Club
- Wisconsin Electrical Employees Benefit Fund Wisconsin Family Mental

Wisconsin Newspaper

World Wide Auto Parts

• Wooded Hills Dental Care

Zavala's Market & Taqueria

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