

# Business Community Survey 2016



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Office of Economic Development  
Economic Vitality Commission

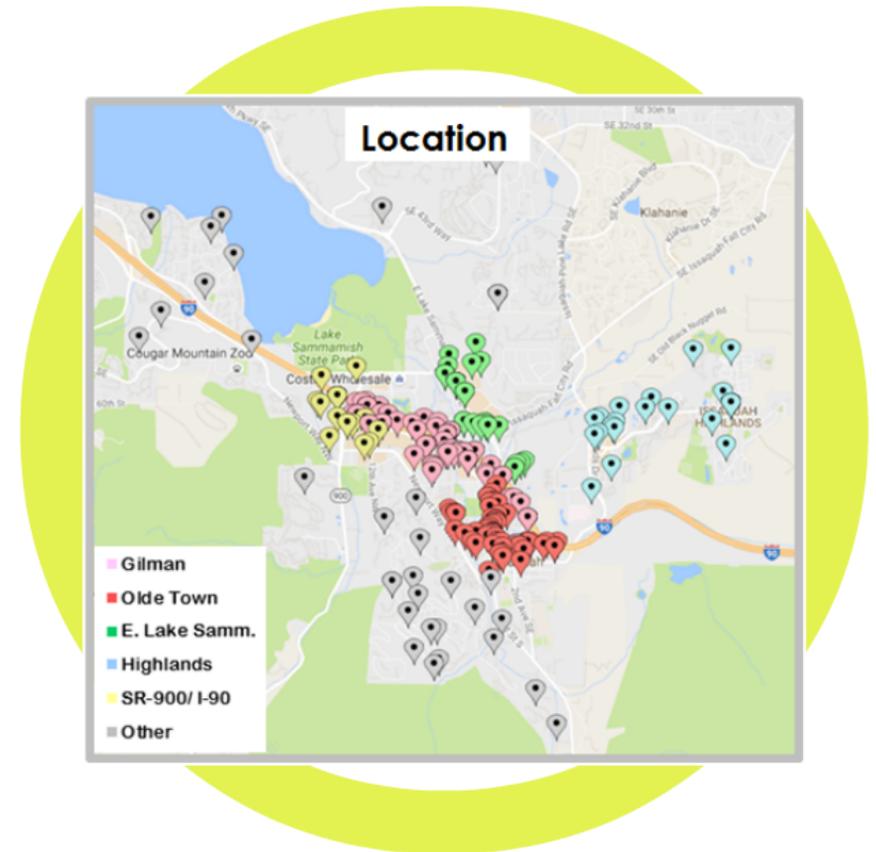
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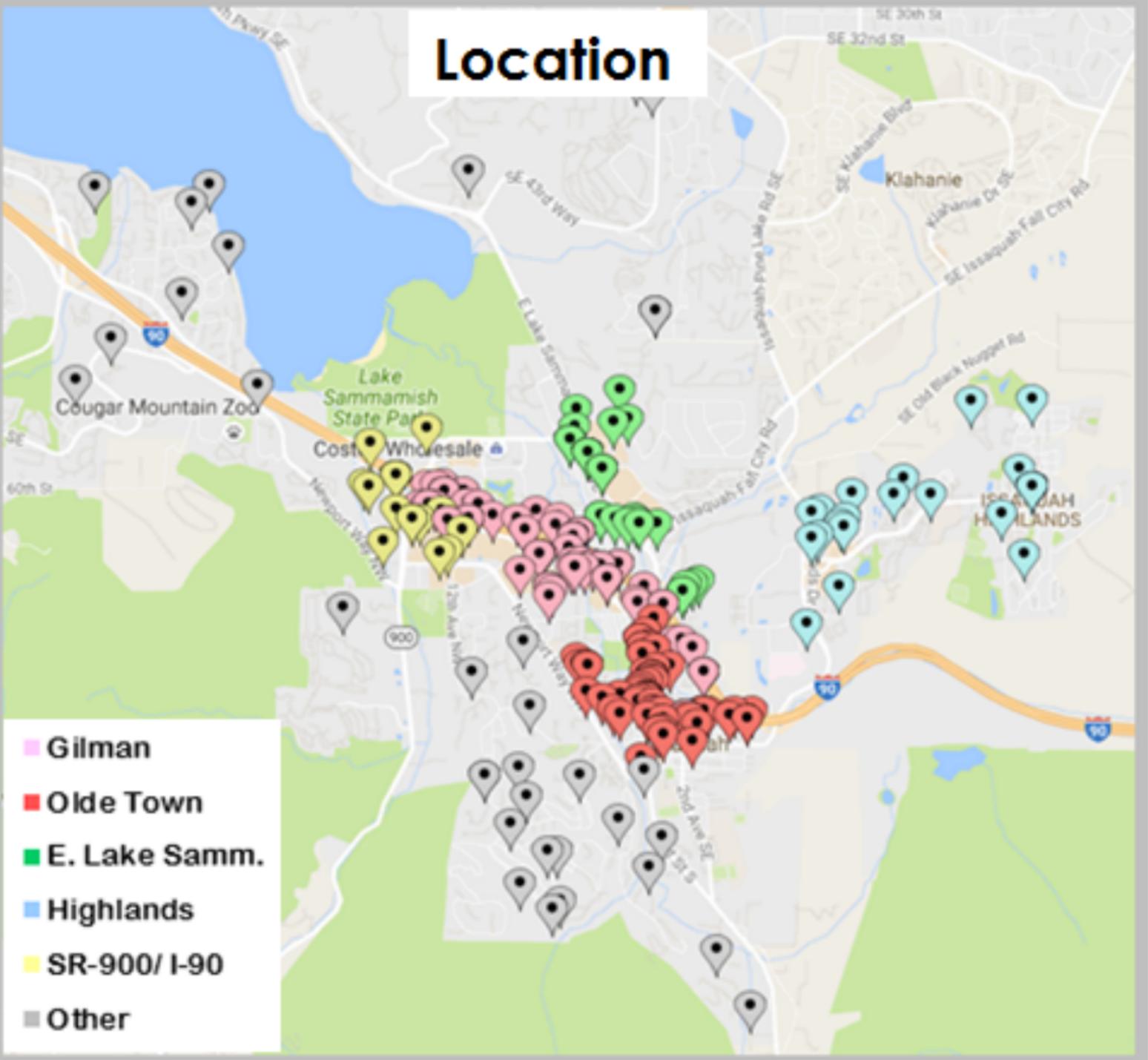


# Methodology

- Conducted May- July 2016
- 2,500 business contacted via mail, online, in-person
- 332 survey responses (13% response rate)
- Promoted through city social media and city partner merchant groups
- Focused on issues & challenges
- 95% confidence level  $\pm 5-6$  MOE\*  
(\*For most questions)



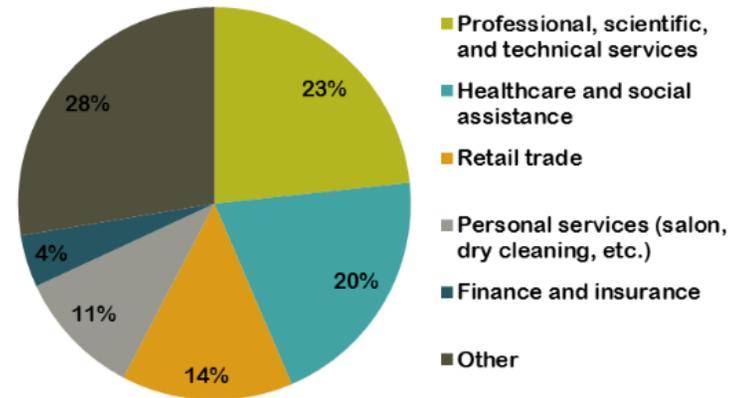
# Location



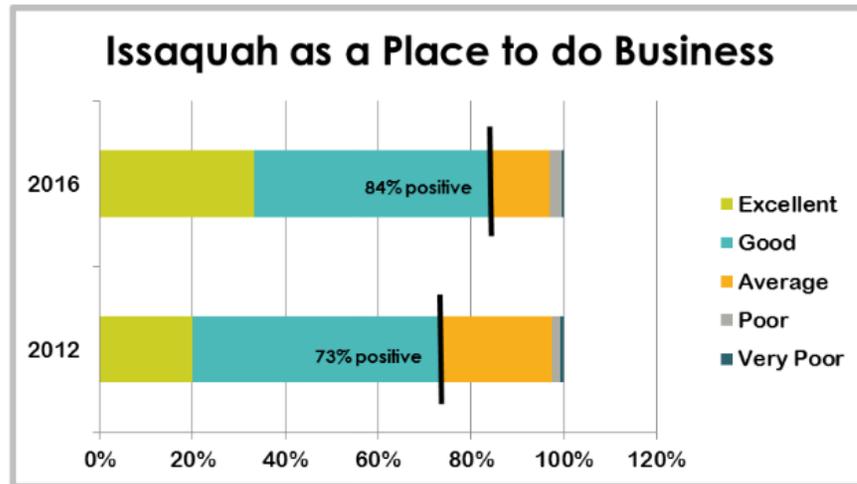
# Demographics

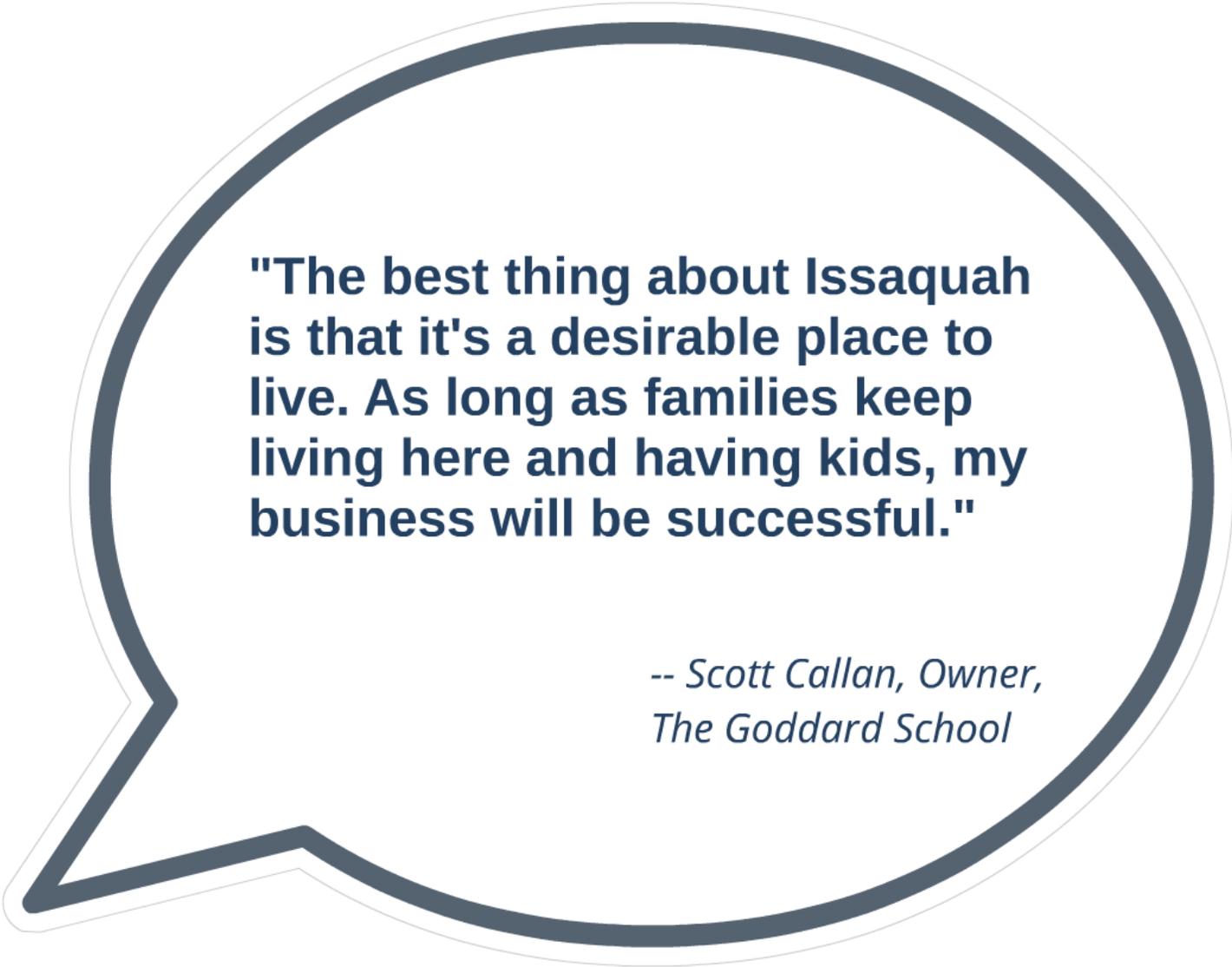
- Dominant industries: professional services, healthcare, and retail
- Mix of new and mature businesses
- A third of businesses are female owned; 10% are minority owned
- Increase in home based businesses

Primary Activity or Industry



# Advantages

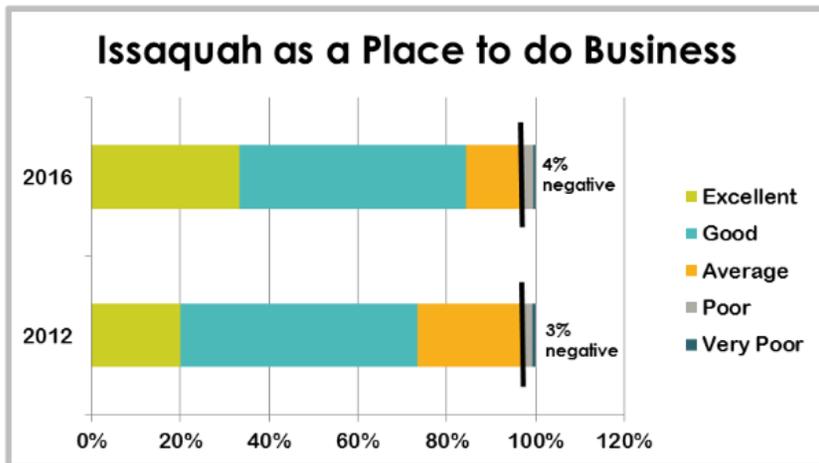


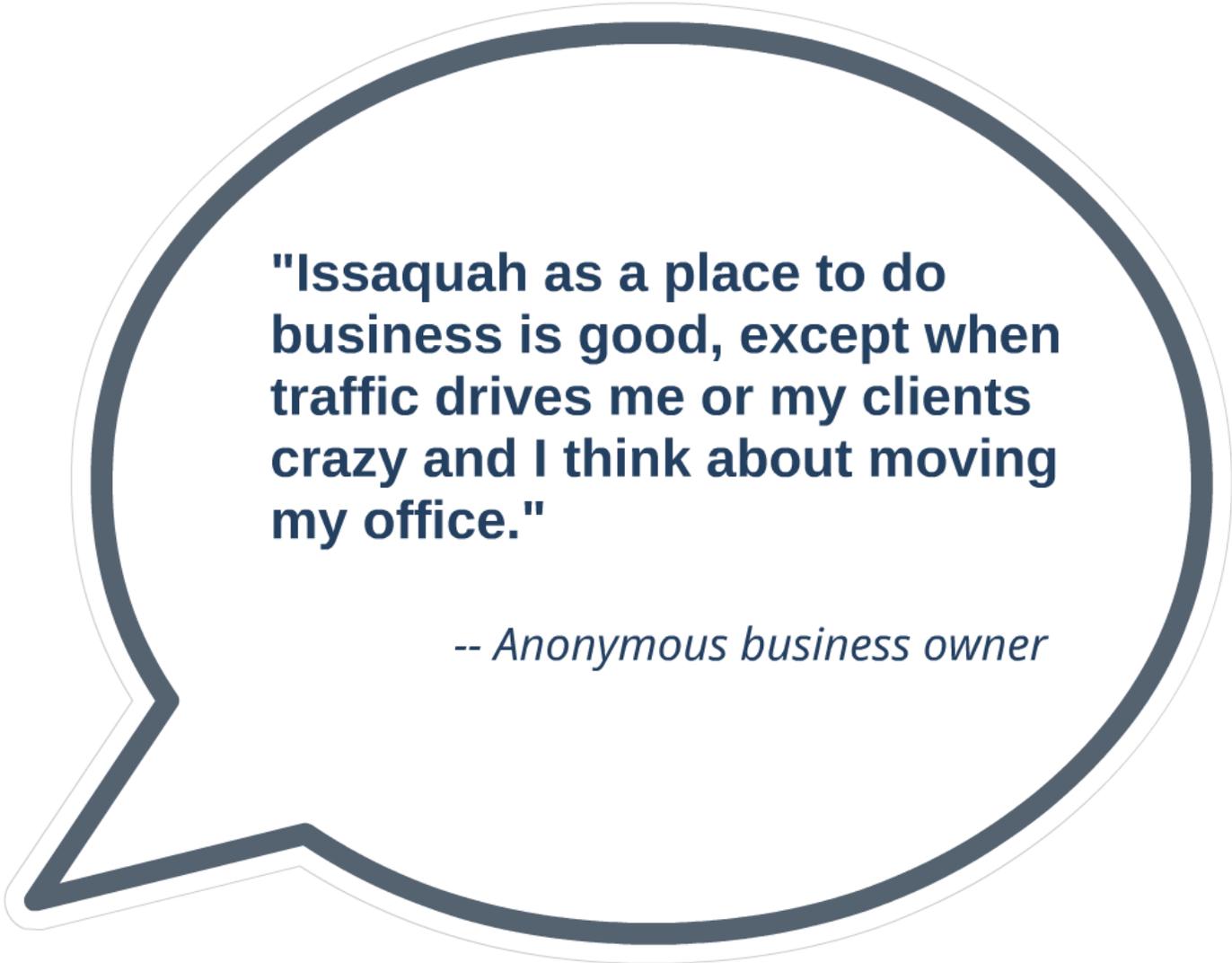


**"The best thing about Issaquah is that it's a desirable place to live. As long as families keep living here and having kids, my business will be successful."**

*-- Scott Callan, Owner,  
The Goddard School*

# Challenges





**"Issaquah as a place to do business is good, except when traffic drives me or my clients crazy and I think about moving my office."**

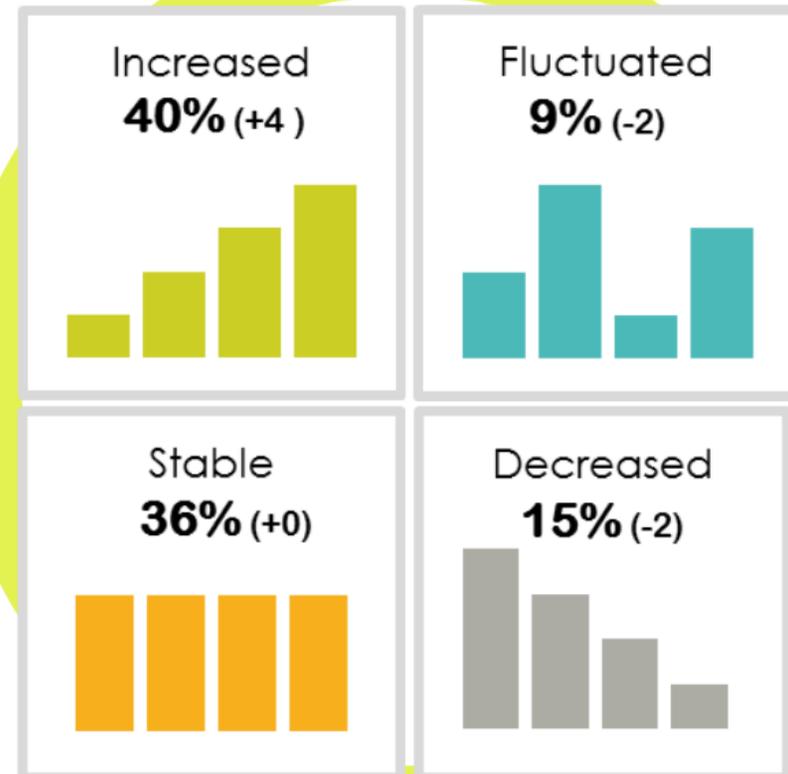
*-- Anonymous business owner*

# Economic Conditions

- Profits stable or increasing
- Rising costs associated with rent and employee compensation
- Non-profit & healthcare sector facing biggest economic challenges

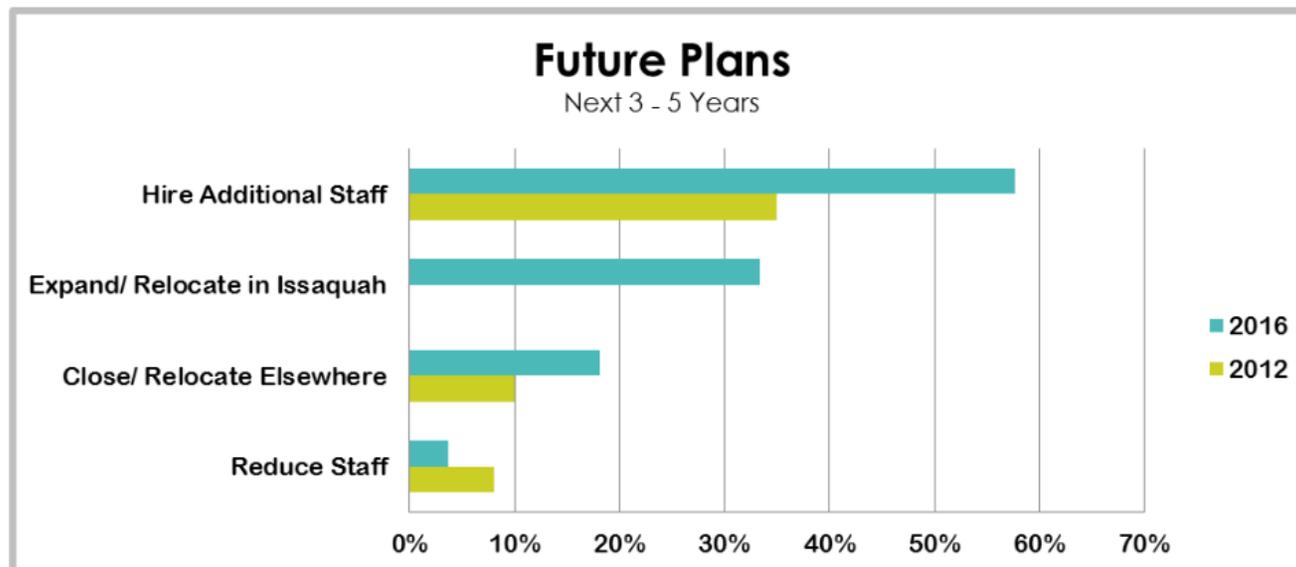
## Profit Trend

Over last 3 years



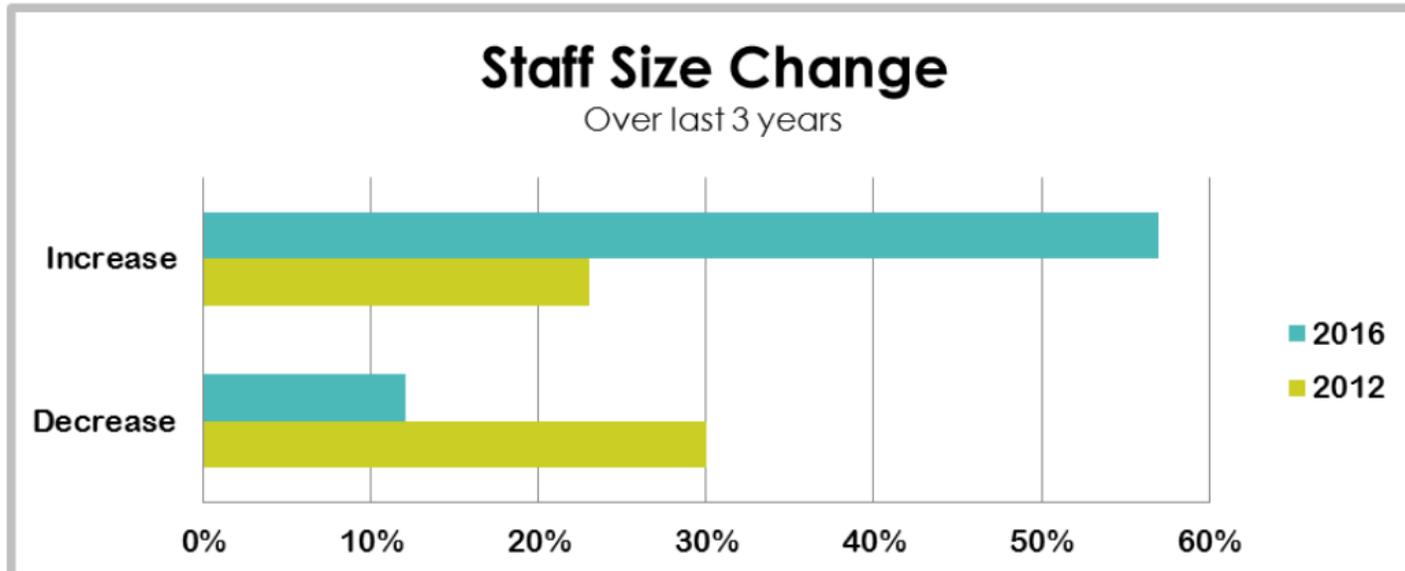
# Retention & Expansion

- Majority of businesses looking to hire
- Increase in businesses planning to close or relocate
- Businesses need help with infrastructure and marketing

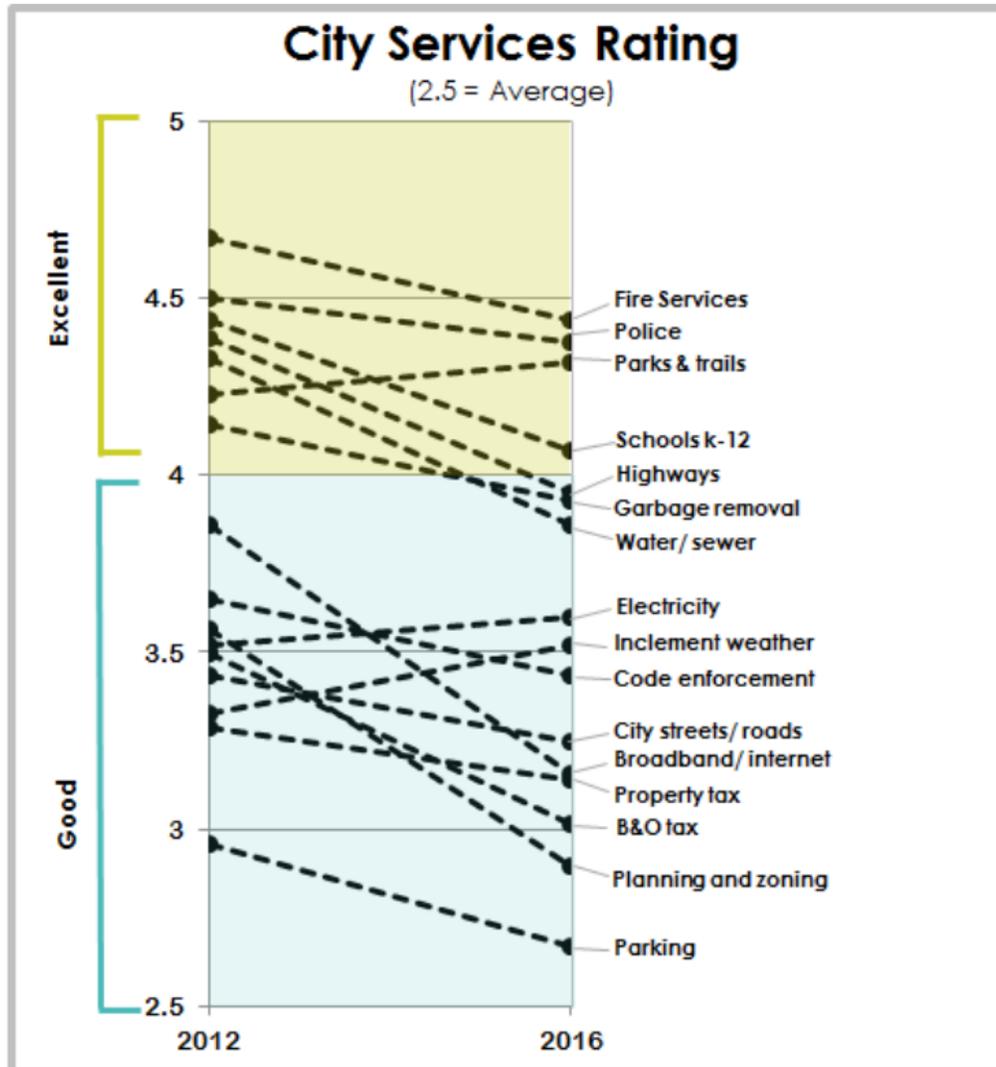


# Workforce Trends

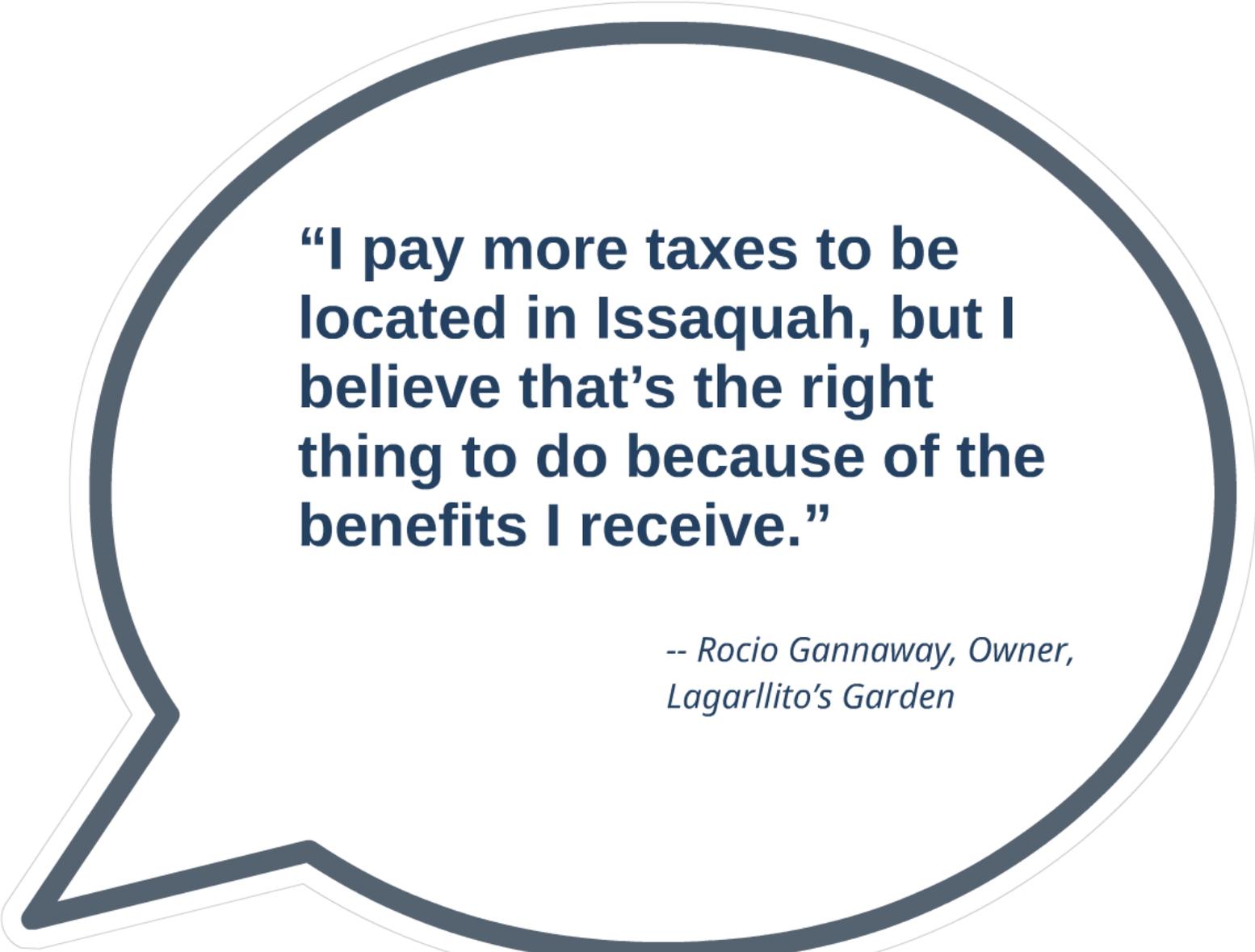
- Staff sizes increasing; median salary falling
- Retail sector having most difficulty with recruiting and retaining employees
- Nurses, teachers, bilingual and customer service skills needed
- Additional workforce housing and transit most helpful



# City Services



- All services rated above average
- Satisfaction for City services has fallen
- Highest satisfaction for public safety and parks
- Lowest satisfaction for planning & zoning and parking



**“I pay more taxes to be located in Issaquah, but I believe that’s the right thing to do because of the benefits I receive.”**

*-- Rocio Gannaway, Owner,  
Lagarllito's Garden*

# Summary

- Issaquah is a better place to do business now than four years ago
- Profits are rising; staffing levels are increasing
- Traffic, competition, space, and parking are major concerns
- Businesses stress the need for affordable workforce housing
- City services have room for improvement



# Next Steps

- Share findings with business community
- Continue follow-up with businesses requesting specific assistance
- Use findings to inform EVC and City Economic Development Department work plans
- Re-focus resources of the City's Business Retention & Expansion program to address issues raised
- Use community feedback and business perspectives to guide decision-making around key upcoming issues such as traffic, parking, and affordable workforce housing

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