



# BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL CITY OF MERCER ISLAND

**AB 5948**  
**October 5, 2021**  
**Study Session**

## AGENDA BILL INFORMATION

<b>TITLE:</b>	AB 5948: 2021 Business Needs Assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Discussion Only <input type="checkbox"/> Action Needed: <input type="checkbox"/> Motion <input type="checkbox"/> Ordinance <input type="checkbox"/> Resolution
<b>RECOMMENDED ACTION:</b>	Receive the presentation and report.	

<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Community Planning and Development	
<b>STAFF:</b>	Jeff Thomas, Interim Director Sarah Bluvas, Economic Development Coordinator Nancy Hardwick, CEO, Hardwick Research	
<b>COUNCIL LIAISON:</b>	n/a	
<b>EXHIBITS:</b>	1. 2021 Business Needs Assessment Report	
<b>CITY COUNCIL PRIORITY:</b>	3. Implement an economic development program.	

## SUMMARY

The City of Mercer Island contracted with local research firm Hardwick Research to conduct a follow-up needs assessment survey of the Mercer Island business community. Tonight, Nancy Hardwick, CEO and founder of Hardwick Research, will present the survey findings and her recommendations for the City providing support to Mercer Island businesses.

### BACKGROUND

In summer 2021, the City partnered with Hardwick Research to conduct the 2021 Business Needs Assessment. This project was a follow-up to the survey conducted in summer 2020 and aimed to collect more information about business needs as the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Additionally, the State of Washington lifted most business and activity restrictions on June 30, 2021, and staff sought to learn if businesses anticipated facing new challenges as they prepared to resume or increase operations. The survey posed questions aimed at learning the following:

- What, if anything, has changed for businesses since conducting the 2020 survey?
- What challenges are Mercer Island businesses still facing?
- What types of aid and support do Island businesses still need?
- What new needs have arisen?
- How can the City best support the local business community?

Hardwick designed an online survey in consultation with staff and administered it to 962 Mercer Island businesses via e-mail using the City’s e-mail distribution list and partner channels such as the Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce. 176 complete responses were returned, for an 18% response rate. Compared to the 2020 survey, fewer home-based businesses completed the new survey, the number of employees decreased

slightly, and significantly more retail businesses responded to the survey. Where possible, Hardwick also tracked comparisons over time and noted where a difference was significant within the report (Exhibit 1).

Tonight, Hardwick will share the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations included in the report.

## **RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Receive the presentation and report.