

# **CMBA SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY**

## **(45 RESPONSES)**

**1. What are your greatest impediments/barriers to doing business in Cumberland?**

- a. Cumbersome rules & regulations; antiquated and cumbersome ordinances
- b. Huge expense; Too involved & too costly
- c. Property taxes
- d. Customers knowing that stores are open on Route 100
- e. Restrictive zoning and lack of availability of public services
- f. Lack of support from town offices
- g. No synergy among businesses
- h. Location & “Not in my backyard”
- i. Lack of true business district
- j. Planning Board has a reputation of being anti-development

**2. Do you feel that the Town Council is supportive of business in Cumberland?**

**93.2% Yes                      6.8 % No**

- a. Silly issues that consume time and stand in the way of progress
- b. Yes, but concerned with the type of business
- c. Now, but not historically

**3. Do you feel that the Town Council has adequate decision making authority in allowing new businesses to relocate or current businesses to expand in Cumberland?**

**7.1% Too Much                      83.3% Just Right                      9.5% Too Little**

- a. Should be a review of requirements, reduce or combine and make sure others are relevant
- b. At times, Councilors act in their personal interest
- c. Business should also have public support by the people
- d. Planning Board is key to attracting or discouraging growth
- e. Cumberland is a residential not business town

**4. Do you feel that the Planning Board is supportive of business in Cumberland?**

**78.6% Yes                      21.4% No**

- a. Too restrictive; too many regulatory requirements
- b. Reputation of being indecisive and dysfunctional

**5. Do you feel that the Planning Board appropriately exercises its authority when reviewing business expansion or development?**

**79.5% Yes                      20.5% No**

- a. Some members felt that their opinions were more important than our architects – maybe need style or building guidelines without becoming over-restrictive like Freeport
- b. Can get mired in attempts to micro-manage
- c. Why do they have authority instead of just being a review board?
- d. Too expensive and too specific and complicated up-front
- e. Too laden with powers of bureaucracy
- f. Use their power to delay applications; unnecessary requirements

**6. Do you feel that you understand the process required to build or expand in Cumberland?**

**40.9% Yes                      45.5% Somewhat                      13.6% No**

- a. Needs to be streamlined and made clear to the general public

**7. Do you find the town staff helpful?**

**76.7% Very                      23.3% Somewhat                      0% Not at all**

- a. Helpful as needed  
b. I know them all by first name  
c. Always been supportive  
d. None of them seem to be happy with their positions  
e. In general and not business related

**8. Do you feel that the process to develop a new business or expand in Cumberland is too long?**

**58.3% Yes                      41.7% No**

- a. Duplication of efforts  
b. Getting approvals should not take six months; streamline the process  
c. Time between meetings  
d. Too unpredictable  
e. Indecision prolongs process  
f. Zoning and inspections

**9. Do you feel that the process to develop a new business or expand in Cumberland is too expensive?**

**57.9% Yes                      42.1% No**

- a. Too many “experts” are required  
b. Too cumbersome  
c. Reduce the number of engineering peer reviews  
d. Seems expensive to develop a small business because they are put through the same test as larger businesses  
e. Pre-planning requirements  
f. Ordinances need restructuring and streamlining to lower expenses

**10. What part of the expansion or development process did/do you find most challenging/frustrating?**

- a. Paper work  
b. Site plan  
c. As a planning board member, I support the current review – we need to make it more efficient and less costly to the applicant  
d. At the mercy of the Council, then the Planning Board, then the residents. Business might get tired of trying and move to a town that is perceived as easier to deal with  
e. Would like to see a small town charm of a real Main Street  
f. Spending significant money on planning prior to approvals from zoning and planning  
g. Time between meetings  
h. Current citizen attitudes – NIMBY vs. development vs. investment  
i. Process could be streamlined in terms of cost and time frame  
j. Town standards are fair  
k. Applying ordinance requirements to projects of varying size can be difficult

**11. Have you experienced specific problems with provisions of any of the Town's ordinances?**

**9.8% Yes                      90.2% No**

- a. Small additions & signage
- b. Zoning changes, definitions & grandfathering

**12. What would you like to see included in a Guide to Doing Business in Cumberland?**

- a. Clear, concise steps and estimated timeline
- b. Information about available services
- c. Contacts; listing of architects, engineers and landscape architects located in Cumberland
- d. Centralized database
- e. Highlight town's amenities
- f. Peer group who has been through the process
- g. Suggested homework for each step
- h. Brief checklist
- i. Delineation of zoning districts and permitted uses;
- j. Advertise to buy locally
- k. I do not want the town spending my tax dollars on this sort of thing
- l. Guide to regulations
- m. Issues encountered and solutions derived from existing businesses

**13. Do you feel that it is important to expand the Town's tax base in order to protect its rural history?**

**61.9% Yes                      2.4% No                      35.7% It depends...**

- a. Residents of the town should decide this
- b. I don't want to see big box stores, I'd like to see entrepreneurial businesses
- c. What are we protecting?
- d. Without expansion, the area will degrade because the existing tax base will not support the weight of expenditures
- e. There may not be a rural history if the farmers are forced out because the taxes are too high
- f. Maintaining open space and working farm land that does not produce a tax base needs to be fairly picked up by all
- g. With retail centers on all sides, we don't need more of the same
- h. Only certain areas should be developed, while protecting others; Route One and Route 100 only
- i. Favor targeted development combined with preservation of open space – most troubled by Council's apparent bias toward promoting affordable housing even where inconsistent with zoning standards
- j. Larger tax base will require more services, costs money and will not reduce taxes – like the town as it is.
- k. How will the expanded tax base protect rural history? For agriculture, it is more complex than property taxes. A suburban environment is not always compatible with businesses; commercial zone is a good separation.

**14. Would you be willing to serve on a new CMBA committee for a targeted area of development?**

- a. Route One – 63.6 %
- b. Route 100 – 72.7%

**15. What types of business would you like to see on Route One? (Top Ten)**

- a. Professional Office – 86.7%
- b. Healthcare facility – 71.1%
- c. Research & Development facility – 66.7%
- d. Independently-owned restaurant – 64.4%
- e. Banks & Credit Unions – 62.2%
- f. Spa/Salon – 57.8%
- g. Retail: small independently owned – 57.8%
- h. Nursing Home/ Assisted Living – 53.3%
- i. Retail: moderate franchise – 46.7%
- j. Daycare: 46.7%
- k. Private Schools: 46.7%

**16. What type of businesses would you like to see on Route 100? (Top Ten)**

- a. Professional Office – 86%
- b. Independently owned Restaurant – 76.7%
- c. Banks & Credit Unions – 74.4%
- d. Healthcare Facility – 72.1%
- e. Coffee Shop – 72.1%
- f. Research & Development Facilities – 72.1%
- g. Retail: Small independently owned – 67.4%
- h. Spa/Salon – 65.1%
- i. Daycare – 62.8%
- j. Automotive Garage/Repair – 62.8%

**17. What do you feel are the best methods to attract new business?**

- a. Tax Incentives – 37.2%**
  - i. Do tax incentives add to the tax base?
  - ii. Beat the incentives of neighboring towns ; proactive process, earn respect of business community
- b. Targeted mailing of promotional materials – 30.2%**
  - i. Advertising in appropriate business forums in the Boston area
  - ii. Task force to target and contact specific businesses
- c. Networking in person – 27.9%**
  - i. Let the local real estate agents know; word of mouth
- d. Online promotions – 11.6%**
  - i. Strong web presence and interactive web media
- e. Phone calls – 11.6%**
- f. All of the above – 46.5%**
- g. Other**
  - i. The marketplace will drive demand; active promotion of the limited development opportunities in Cumberland would be a waste of time and money
  - ii. Please do not spend my tax dollars promoting business; appropriate businesses will be attracted by what exists today
  - iii. Turnpike exit at Blackstrap Road

**18. Please share any other comments or concerns that were not addressed by our survey:**

- a. I do not favor business at any cost; we need to create jobs that are new and different
- b. There should be an accepted vision for the future of Cumberland; the vision is more important than how it is to come about
- c. Would like to see more in the town center; Main Street is our business corridor
- d. Concern with creating tax incentives for non-locally owned large businesses; don't need more of what is already in neighboring towns; need to invest in those that will create more opportunities and not detract from our rural environment; many small vs. one or two big anchors
- e. I choose to live in Cumberland because it does not have a lot of commercial business; I would rather keep paying high taxes than see more traffic and less trees and wildlife.
- f. Tough times make it tough to sell the idea of expansion
- g. Add incubator business and retail space