

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

Focus Groups

August 26 & August 28, BR+C and Mindspot Research



Qualitative research is exploratory in nature and lends itself to adapting to responses, evolving.

Quantitative research is used when measurement and/or confirmation is needed and is statistically more rigid.



- » Perceptions
- » Expectations
- » Linkages
- » Business Insights & Suggestions
- » Improved Understanding
- » Engagement



- » Illuminate Misperceptions
- » Prioritize Appropriate Criteria
- » I.D. Unique Potentials
- » Define Differentiators
- » Net Achievable Actions
- » Discover Resonate Future Vision



ONLINE/RESIDENCE

- » ½ residence in area between 2 months & 5 years
- » ½ are 26+ years
- » slightly less than ½ relocated for job opportunities

ONSITE/RESIDENCE

- » nearly ½ fall between 4 months & 5 years
- » more than ½ from 10-20 years
- » slightly less than ½ stated family & safe place to raise family rationales



“

Business Leaders who participated in the focus groups **acknowledged the City of Palm Bay for creating the focus group opportunity** ... and getting their feedback.

”

WHAT WE ARE Learning

Analysis



- » high crime rate
- » lower income stigma
- » only a bedroom community
- » lack of infrastructure

Participants acknowledged, however, the common misperceptions not to be true and not representative of Palm Bay.



- » Crime
- » Gangs
- » Drugs
- » Lower educational workforce
- » Lower income
- » No malls
- » No downtown/Restaurants
- » Bedroom community
- » Lack of communication
- » Lack of a development plan
- » Low quality infrastructure
- » Cheap housing
- » Low appraisal on homes
- » Melbourne/Viera are better
- » Zoning
- » Nothing distinguishes

“

“Perception is based on the past 20 years when in fact crime has lowered in the past 5 years.”

“All of these things are accurate to a degree.”

”



- » diverse
- » having mom & pop shops
- » being homogenous
- » having large chains
- » manufacturing
- » small hospitality
- » retail
- » high tech



- » affordability
- » undeveloped land potential
- » small town feel
- » outdoor recreational activities & scenery
- » geographic location



- » Affordability/affordable real estate
- » Undeveloped land
- » Small town flavor
- » Hunting/outdoors
- » Bayfront/coastal scenery
- » Geographic location (proximity to major highways and cities like Miami, Tampa and Jacksonville, close to Melbourne, Orlando/theme parks and Daytona beaches)
- » Cultural Diversity (Hispanic population)
- » Good police department
- » Good schools
- » Nice residents
- » No traffic

WHAT BUSINESSES Value *Analysis*



- » **customer base**
- » **business financing**
- » **highway accessibility**
- » financial incentives
- » tax breaks
- » flexible zoning
- » workforce incentives



“

Melbourne cited as a good example of a local city successfully luring business to their area.

”



- » **land opportunities**
- » low cost housing
- » **low cost business leasing**
- » potential for growth



- » limited places or business corridors in Palm Bay **where businesses can congregate**
- » permitting issues or **restrictions**
- » perception of area as **residential bedroom community**



- » lack of **available buildings** that meet required specifications
- » bad roads/no **infrastructure**
- » no community center, **meeting spaces**, banquets, **event space**, etc.



“

One participant noted: “You can go North in the county and get facilities.”

And ...

“Currently, there are only real incentives to build new buildings.”

”



- » **modern**
- » **eco-friendly**
- » **big & specialty restaurants**
- » **hotel/hospitality/convention center***
- » **larger businesses with higher paying jobs**

**Clarifying conversation occurs later.*



What about Biotech and Medical Research companies?

- » Does not play to Palm Bay's strengths
- » Do not have the **specialty labor workforce** for it*
- » Should not compete with Lake Nona
- » Do not have **critical mass partners**— university, doctors, teachers, medical center

**Comment: Engineers are biggest strength in workforce.*





“

One participant said,
to attract new business Palm Bay needs
“critical mass
and growth
through synergies.”

”



Where will Harris take execs to impressive restaurants, **they can't go to Chili's.**

Talent here is amazing, high wages, talented, and they commute in because they don't like to live in Palm Bay.

Need enticing things for families and young professionals, not just retirees, if you want to attract business.





“

PB is unique with respect to the sheer abundance of land.

I can go to get driver's license in an hour, try that in Miami.

It is the hub of all things to do but not directly in it, close enough and no traffic.

”



Overall residents are counting on **the impact Harris will have**, citing it will help improve people choosing to live in Palm Bay.

Quality of life for attracting employees and for existing skilled workforce is important.

Although they noted that builders may need to take the risk of **building and promoting high end homes.**



TWO DIFFERENT Visions

Future



“

Group A. Outdoor activities, recreation and a small town community are advantages to be developed.

Group B. Focus on creating a downtown, city-like approach, with infrastructure, retail and restaurant developments.

Both groups agree on the need for upscale restaurants in Palm Bay.

”



- » Recreational
- » Outdoors
- » Bayfront
- » Small town
- » Bass Pro

VS.

- » Modern
- » Malls
- » High-end & non-chain restaurants
- » Night life
- » Downtown
- » After 5pm scene



When asked for cities that come to mind that may be doing some interesting and positive things that could relate to Palm Bay or the future, participants listed:

Chattanooga; Nashville; Newport News, VA; And North Carolina

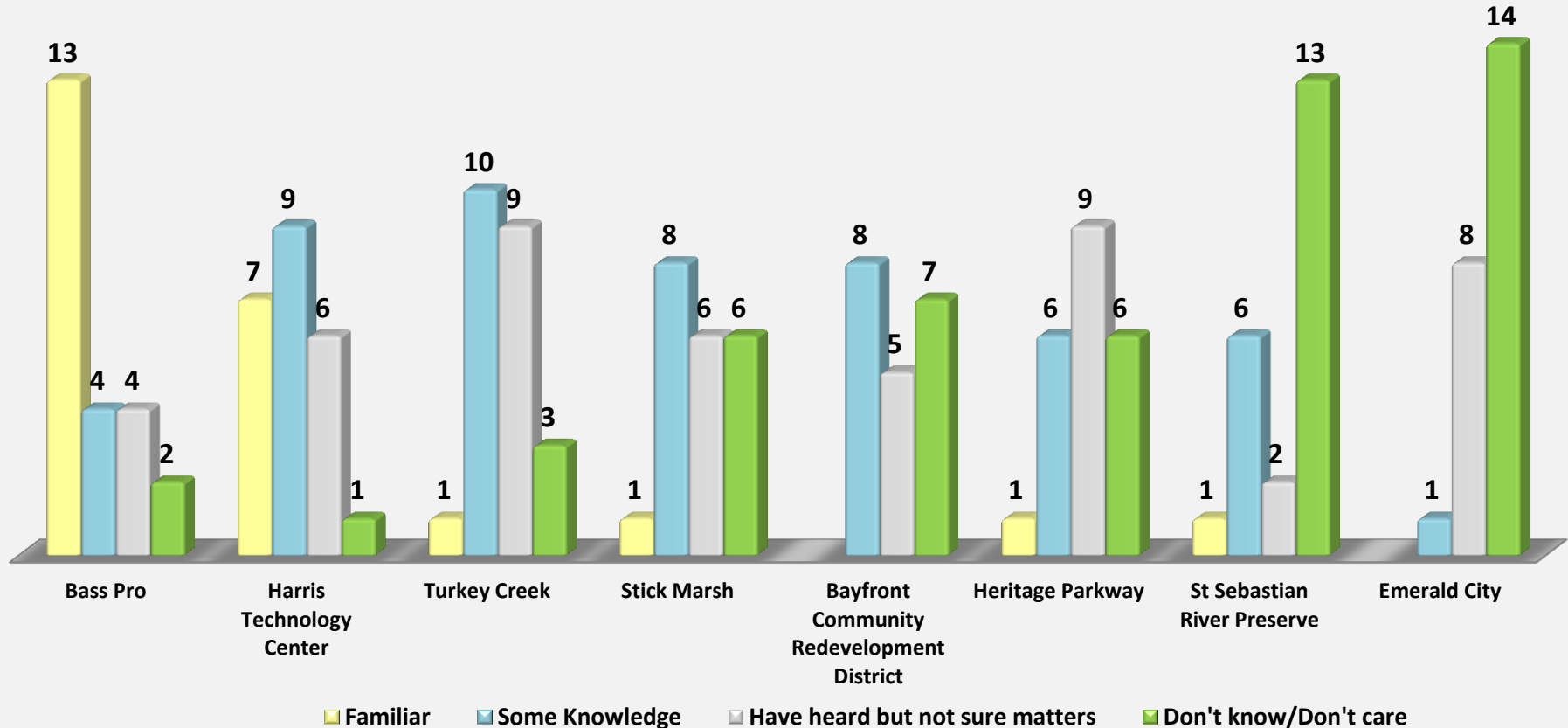
Comments: good strategies for city walks, residential and business areas.



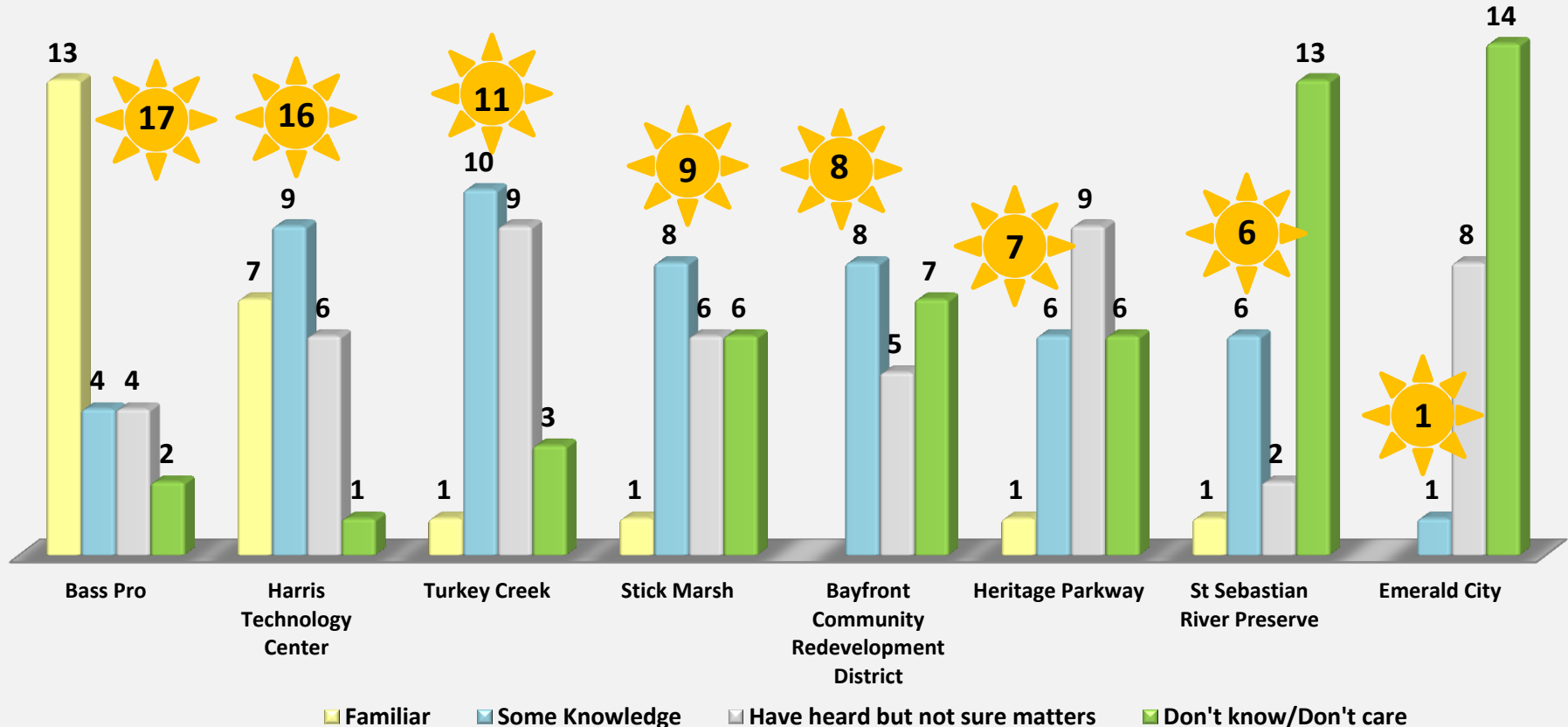
CURRENT Knowledge

Polling

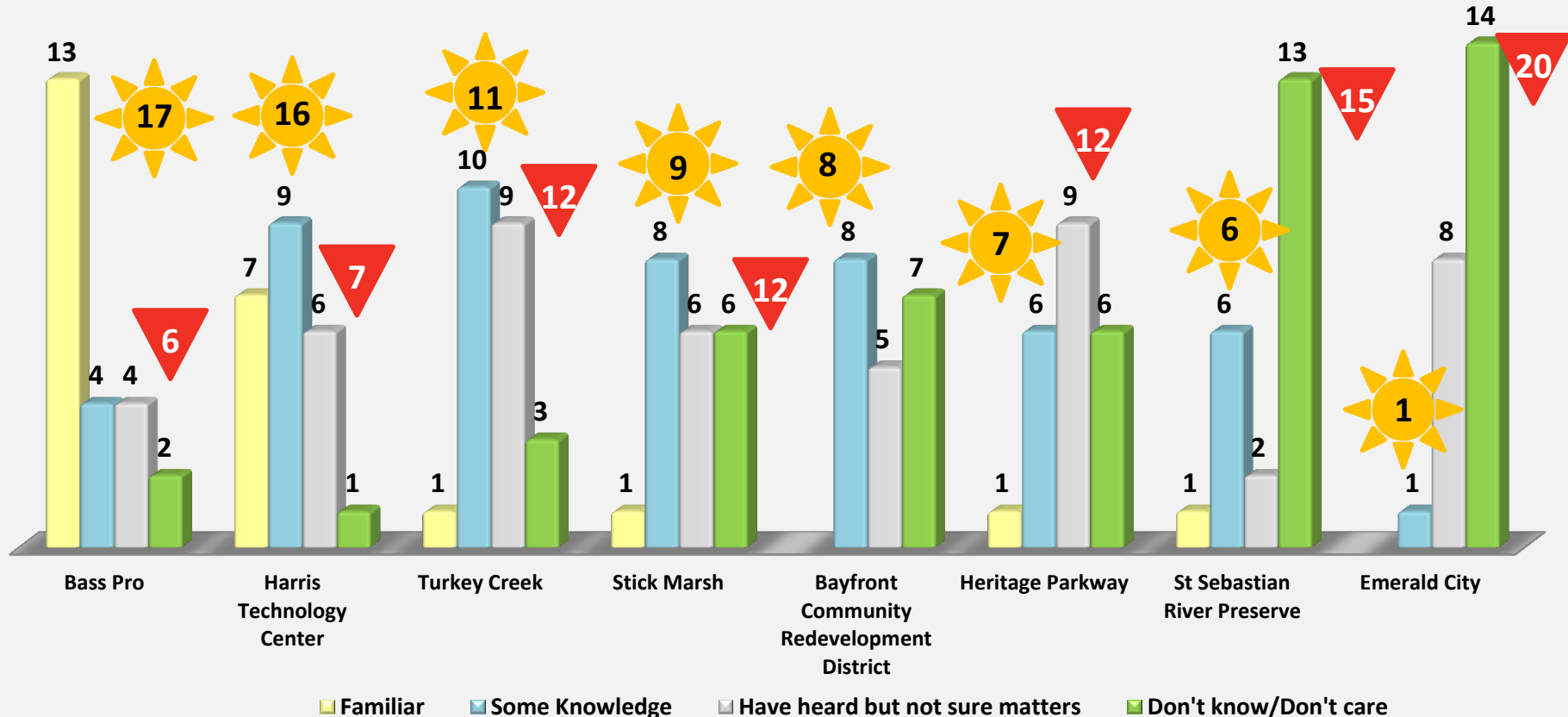
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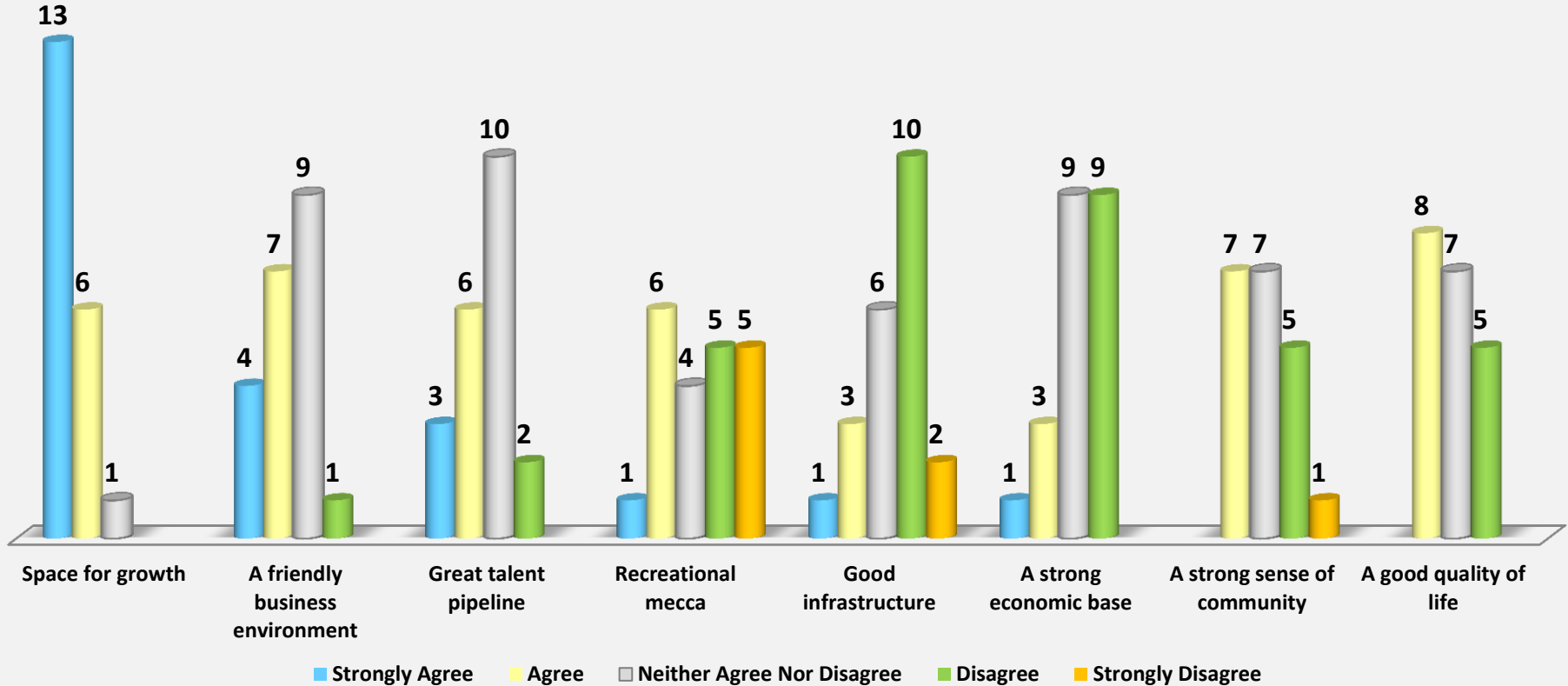


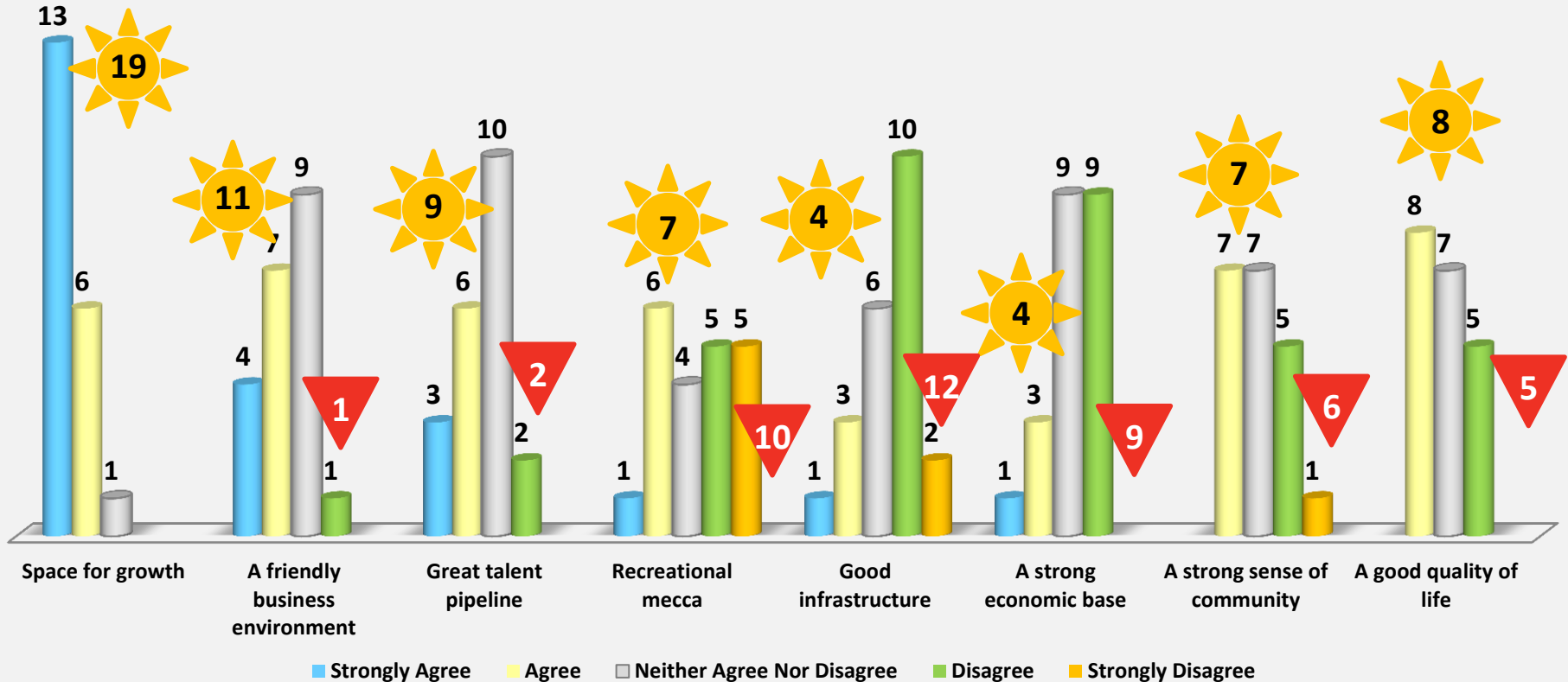
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PALM BAY Offers

Agreement Polling







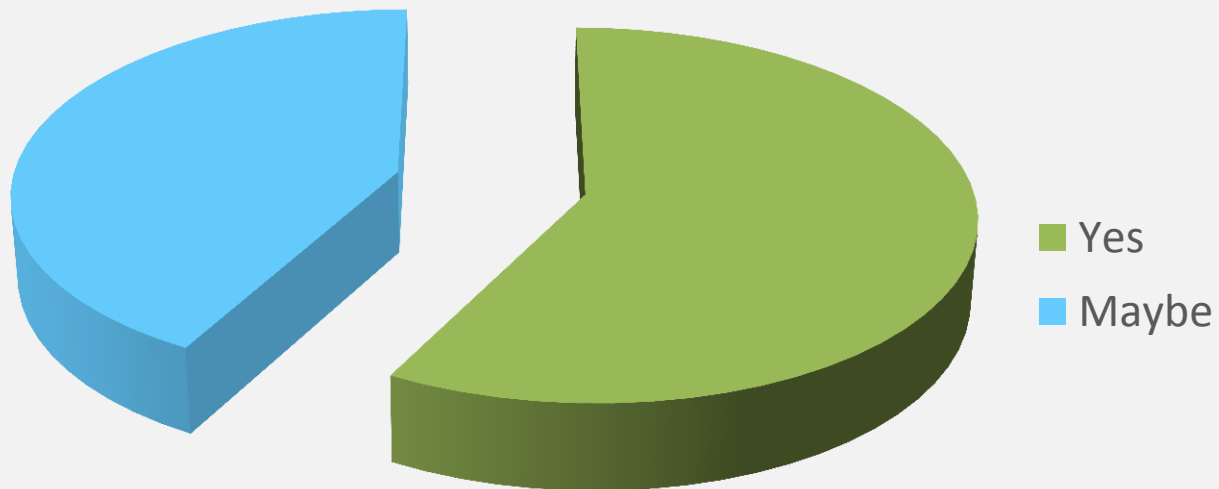
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Palm Bay **feels fragmented** and **needs to develop** and **work on a clear brand** and **communicate what Palm Bays’ strengths are ...** Participants specifically citing **important themes** and things like a **tagline** and **official** and **uniform advertising** and **public relations efforts.**

”

BUSINESS LEADERS Recommend Palm Bay?

Agreement Polling





“

I feel that the city is **motivated enough** to make special arrangements to **attract** and **keep businesses**. They are **interested in win-win partnerships**.

**Workers, customers, waterfront,
outdoor recreation, land.**

”



“

The City has put forth a **great deal of effort** to help timely permitting and **work with businesses.**

Great potential for growth.

”



“

Lots of **reasonable land** and **property prices**;
great climate; **semi-centrally located** with
access to Miami, Orlando and Jacksonville.

**A great city to open a business, a good market
and beautiful surroundings.**

”



“

Palm Bay has a **very talented workforce**, **inexpensive housing** and **close driving proximity** to Miami, Orlando, Tampa and Jacksonville.

The city of Palm Bay and police have **kept crime rates low** and **the city safe**.

”



“

There is still room to improve with some (roughly 40%) only saying they would “*maybe*” recommend Palm Bay as a business location.

”



“

Depends on **type of company** and **labor force**
they are seeking.

Depends on **the business**.
For **technology** or **manufacturing**,
then yes.

”



“

Depends on **type of business.**

Palm Bay **needs more businesses**
but the *businesses needs to survive*. People
used to want to come to Palm Bay.

”

BIG Ideas

Perceptions & Improvements



“

Targeting firms and seeking out businesses that would benefit from the diversity

RE: call centers, cater to businesses that need diversity or serve diverse markets

”



- » Need a focused approach on *specific industries*
- » Consider asset mapping and other economic assessments
- » Give consideration to the *specific strengths* of the labor force



“

Retail Leakage: consumers who spend money outside the local market.

The exit of money from the economy through leakage results in a gap between what is supplied and what is demanded and businesses must find other ways to make up the loss, prices, supplier choices, cuts in jobs or quality.

”



Consider a **Leakage Study**

Identifying loss.

Identifying in-demand businesses (those products and services which have a winnable customer base) can become an economic recruiting and visioning tool.





“

**Developing an entrepreneurial
network locally**
to start new enterprises *is
something every community can do.*

”



“

Provide
meeting rooms and
conference spaces but
strategies that are outside of a massive
convention center or hotel investment.

Comments: Conference center will not provide needed ROI; cited competition in surrounding areas.

”

MORE Promotion

A frequent comment



“

Many cities have communication strategies and platforms to deliver them on.

PB is just beginning this work.

”



“

Some cities seek success thru a differentiator - known for ship building, tech startups or entertainment.

Rather than be all things to everyone could the city choose a 'theme' to develop & support that.

”



Business Leaders feel Palm Bay is one of the **best kept secrets** in the area.

But called the following critical steps in developing Palm Bay:

- hire professionals to ***promote the city***
- provide clear direction*** and communication
- the word '***focus***' came up a lot.



“

Developing a cohesive approach and sticking with it long enough to pay dividends.

”



“

Just the idea that PB is **doing focus groups and value our feedback** is great; **brainstorming and sharing ideas *is a great start.***

But need follow up, there was no follow up in the past
... so this is good.

”





Simplify

Synthesize

Sustain

END

Focus Groups Report

Pull Highlights, Threads, Opportunities & Actions