

Business Hub: From Talk to Action at the City of Victoria

Lisa Helps, Victoria Mayor



Prosperity and Economic Development Task Force



Why a task force?

- History of plans at the City of Victoria: When the plan is written the work is finished.
- Task forces take action whereas committees write reports.
- Draw out the wisdom, expertise and partnerships in the business community.

The # 1 Recommendation: Business Hub at City Hall

THE MAIN FUNCTIONS OF THE BUSINESS HUB:

- Streamline and demystify all business and development processes at City Hall
- Make it easier to do business in Victoria
- Advise on how to reduce unnecessary red tape
- Connect entrepreneurs with the resources they need
- Accelerate the development of a vibrant downtown

From Talk to Action

TIMES COLONIST
Wednesday, December 16, 2013 Victoria, British Columbia High 5. Low 4. Details, C12



Kerri Moore and Mark Lebedynski Tuesday at the City of Victoria's new business hub, adjacent to the mayor's office. BRUCE STOTESBUK/TIMES COLONIST

Business hub opens at city hall

Office set up to offer one-stop interface with City of Victoria

ANDREW A. DUFFY
Times Colonist

The City of Victoria's drive to be more business-friendly picked up its pace Tuesday with the opening of a new business hub at city hall.

Calling it an experiment, Mayor Lisa Helps said the new department, which backs onto her office, will be a one-stop shop for businesses trying to set up or expand in the city.

"We hope this becomes the go-to place," she said, noting it has been established to help everyone from the new start-up, the would-be investor or developer, to the established firm.

She warned that it will not be all things to all people, but suggested its ties and partnership with such organizations as the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, Greater Victoria Development Agency and the Victoria Innovation, Advanced Technology and Entrepreneurship Council would allow it to point businesses in the right direction.

"Any kind of effort to make doing business easy in Victoria is welcomed," said chamber vice-chair Al Hasham, owner of Maximum Express Courier and Max Furniture. "Anything we can do to promote business and cut red tape is welcomed by us."

The business hub was one of the key initiatives to come out of the economic plan the mayor's task force on economic development and prosperity drafted this year.

Launched in April, the 17-member task force was intended to help the city improve its relationship with the business community and lay a foundation to support economic growth.

The business hub, designed to help anyone wanting to start, expand, or invest in a business, is part of that foundation.

"I think any time you can make bringing business to Victoria a little easier means having more businesses land here and get established here," said Grant Olson, owner of the Strathcona Hotel. "In the past, sometimes there were hurdles that frustrated developers and businesspeople who wanted to get something done in Victoria. And if this [hub] can smooth it out and help business get going, it's a great idea."

Helps said the hub will soon hire a "business ambassador." It already has a manager of strategic relations and business development.

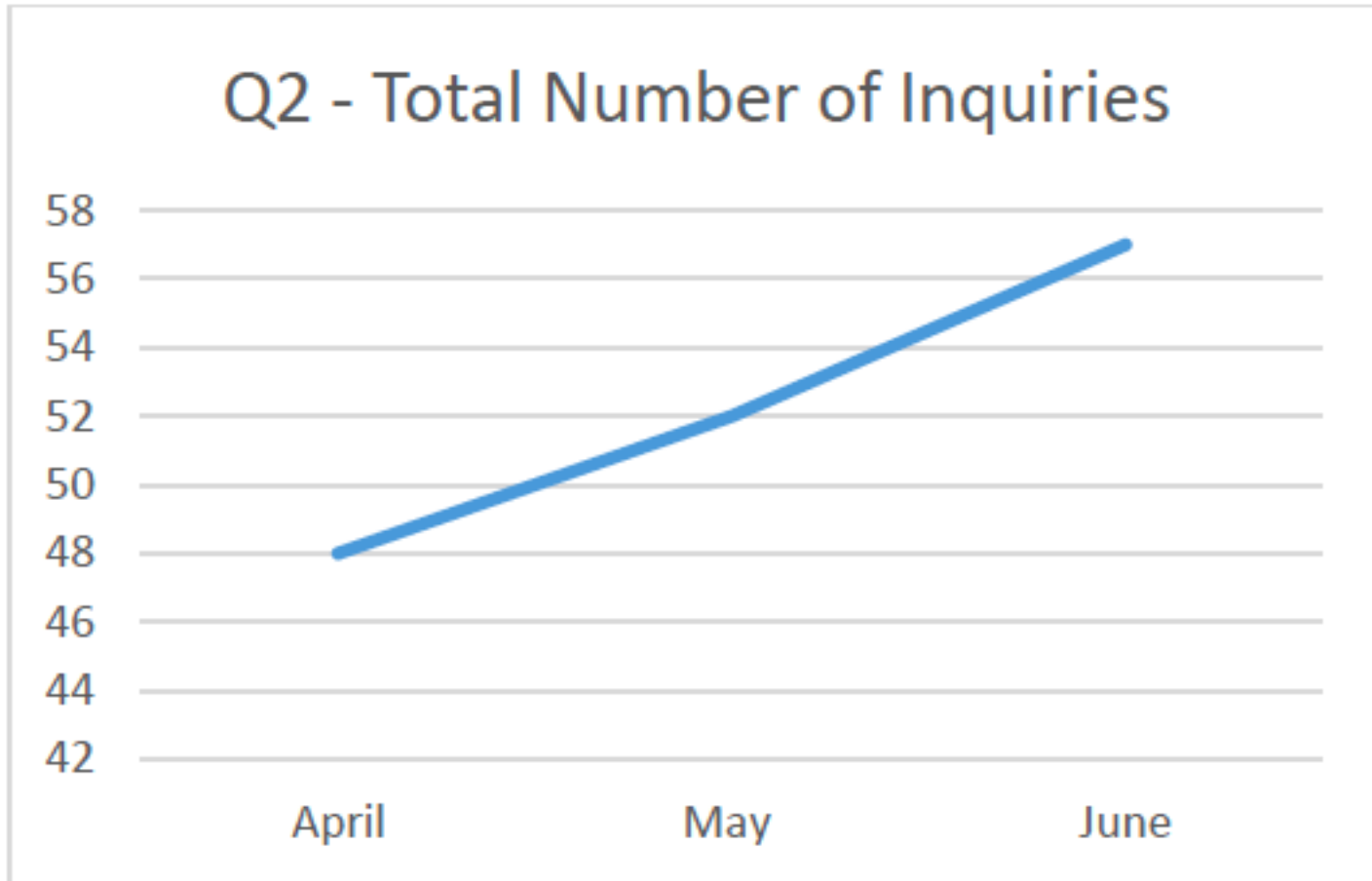
"There will not be a lot of taxpayers' dollars spent right away. We will start small and look to continuous input and feedback from the business community," she said, adding it will operate as a lean start-up.

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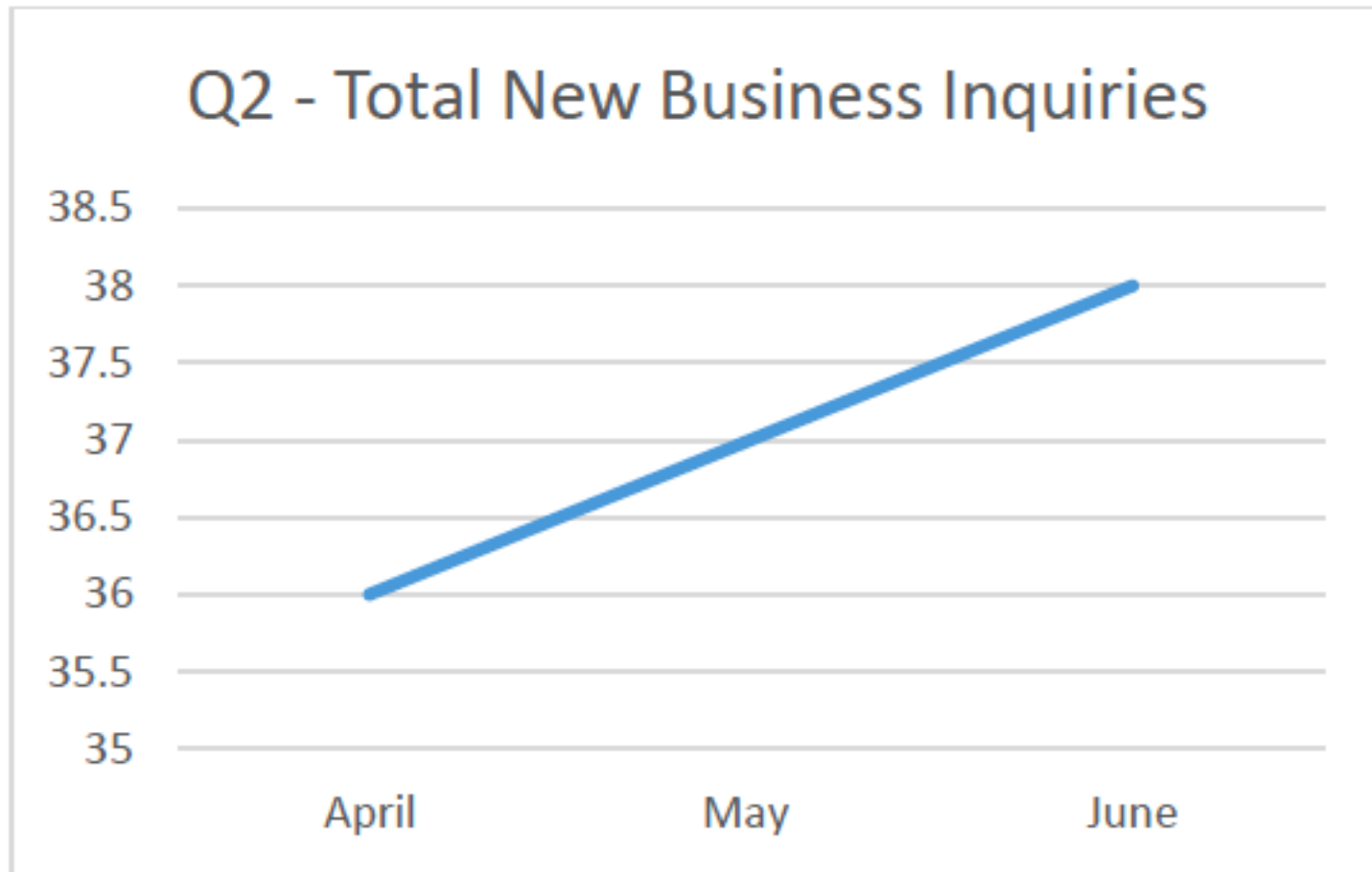
Meet Business Ambassador Emily



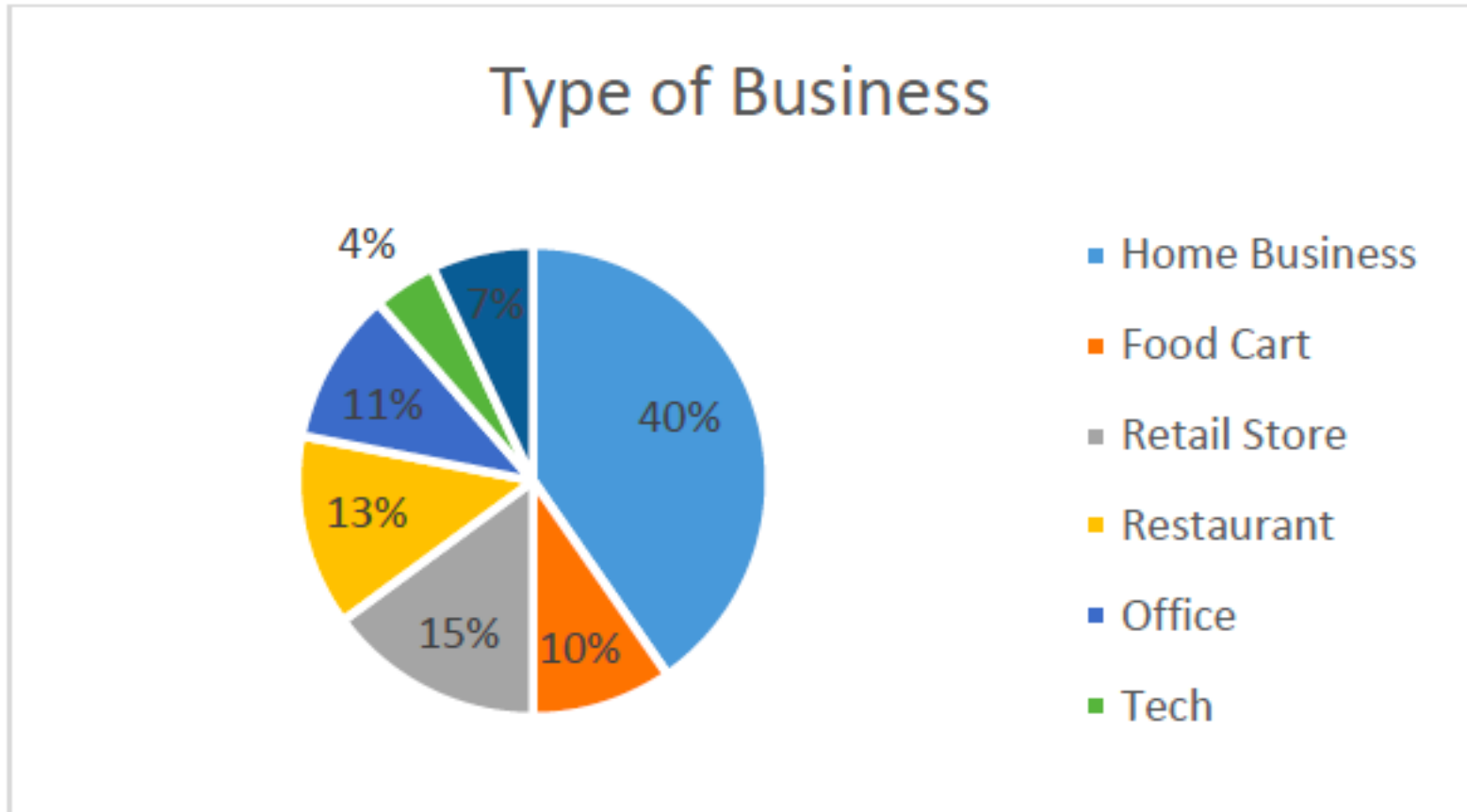
What we're seeing so far



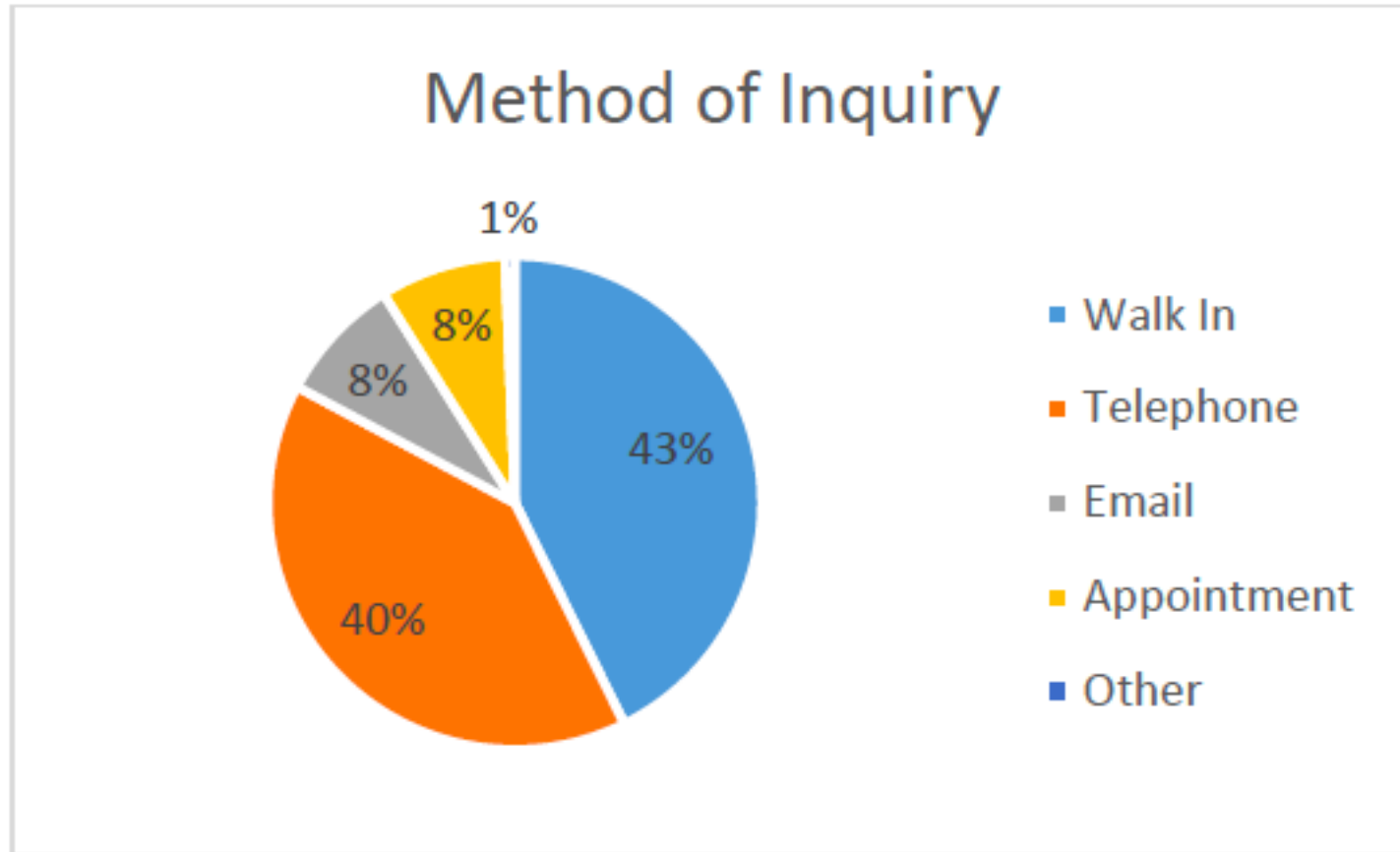
What we're seeing so far



What we're seeing so far



What we're seeing so far



Annual Development Summit

Faster processing times

Application Type	Target	Target Met (%)	
		October 2014 to September 2015	October 2015 to May 31st 2016
Rezoning	6-8 months	85% Average: 6.5 months 20 applications counted	4 applications completed. 3 of 4 have met this goal. Average: 4 months
DPs & DPVs	3-4 months	75% Average: 3.5 months 37 applications counted	100% Average: 1.5 months 7 applications counted
DVPs	3-4 months	66% Average: 3.8 months 14 applications counted	80% Average: 3.5 months. 5 applications counted
HAPs	3-4 months	88% Average: 2.3 months 9 applications counted	100% Average: 2.3 months. 7 application counted

Victoria: An Enterprising City

- Between 2014 and 2015 there was an *increase* of \$80 million in new investment in downtown Victoria
- There are 21 construction projects *currently underway* in downtown Victoria

Victoria: An Enterprising City



Thank you.

