

The City of Milpitas

Department of Economic Development's

Microenterprise Grant Program

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Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the global economy in ways that no one could have anticipated, forcing entire countries to shut down with no knowledge of when they would reopen. Before the pandemic struck Milpitas, the city enjoyed years of economic stability maintaining a sub-3% to 3% unemployment rate. However, once the Santa Clara County shelter-in-place order was put in action, the city saw a spike in unemployment, reaching a peak of 12.9% in April. Nevertheless, people have shown to be resilient, working tirelessly to find unique solutions to novel issues — the City of Milpitas and its business community are no exception.

Facing a compromised economy, the City of Milpitas launched the Microenterprise Grant Program in August 2020, which provided 38 microenterprises each a \$5000 grant that could be utilized to finance rent, mortgage, payroll, and operating expenses. To assess the success of the grant program, the City of Milpitas partnered with the Stanford University Sustainable Cities course and tasked us with analyzing how the grants affected their businesses. Additionally, we were asked to conduct a spatial analysis of the City of Milpitas to investigate patterns and behaviors present in the current crisis and compare them to those present during the 2008 Great Recession.

We developed and sent out a survey to the 38 grant recipients that centered their experiences with COVID-19, uses for the grant money, and backgrounds. From the survey responses, it was clear that the grant did not meet the businesses' financial needs. From these respondents, 5 were selected to be interviewed in the hopes of getting a more personal perspective into the effects of the pandemic had on their businesses and the effectiveness of the grant. The interviews provided an emotional perspective on business owners immensely impacted by the pandemic and their need for support during this time. While the grant was not sufficient to cover most needs of the businesses, they were all grateful for the city's support. Finally, our spatial analysis provides further insight into the layout of the city and the economic response to the previous recession of 2008.

We conclude that the Microenterprise Grant Program was a success, but more needs to be done to support the business community. We recommend that the possibility of a need-based grant or loan program be evaluated, as the economic effects of the pandemic are hardly over. Furthermore, the city should continue to advertise business development centers and better communicate mask and social distancing mandates to reduce the burden on business owners. Finally, since rent has been the primary financial burden for businesses, we recommend investigating the viability of a temporary commercial rent freeze.

Economic Context

In April 2020, the Department of Economic Development conducted a survey of small businesses in Milpitas in order to gain perspective on the early effects of COVID-19. The results of this survey were finalized in June 2020 and it was clear that only a couple of months into the COVID-19 pandemic, small businesses were in a dire economic situation. The survey touched upon questions regarding the impact of COVID on business hours, specific needs for financial assistance, and revenue losses resulting from the pandemic. From the 173 survey respondents, nearly 48% claimed to have shut down their business hours completely within the first months. Additionally, businesses claimed they needed most financial assistance with rent and mortgage, labor and benefits, utilities, and insurance payments. Nearly 37% of these businesses suffered a revenue loss of more than \$50K from March to June. More detailed findings of this survey can be found in the appendix portion of this report. This survey demonstrated to the Department of Economic Development that this pandemic had caused an economic slowdown that needed to be addressed promptly by the city.

Rapid shifts in unemployment also illustrated the city's economic downturn. Before the pandemic, the City of Milpitas maintained a steady, low unemployment rate of sub-3% to 3% for several years. However, when the shelter-in-place order was set in Santa Clara County in March, forcing non-essential businesses to close, the unemployment rose to 12.9% in April from an unemployment rate of 3.2% in March. By fall, businesses were desperate for financial assistance. Small businesses had generated less than 5% of the revenue that they were expecting for the six months between March and August, and the unemployment rate had only improved marginally to 7.9% in September. Furthermore, their main expenses had not decreased — rent, mortgage, and insurance payments were due, while most businesses lacked the income to pay for them.

Project Background

Approximately 77% of all Milpitas businesses fall into the microenterprise category, meaning that these businesses employ only 1-5 people. To assist these businesses, the Department of Economic Development proposed a loan program to Milpitas City Council in August. However, due to the complexities of a loan program and the hope for this program to reduce economic burden for these businesses, the Department of Economic Development opted for a grant program instead.

The Microenterprise Grant Program sought to distribute \$5,000 to 38 qualifying businesses, amounting to a total of \$190,000. The funds for the program come from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the long-running US Department of Housing and Urban Development initiative. Thus, the recipients of this grant are required to meet certain requirements, as the CDBG must primarily service Low-and Moderate-Income persons (LMI). Microenterprises must also have been operating out of a physical location in Milpitas for at least three years, and have generated less than \$2,000,000 in the 2018 and 2019 calendar years. Overall, 80 applicants qualified; the final 38 were chosen by lottery.

In September 2020, when selected businesses were approved to receive a grant, the Department of Economic Development partnered with our team from Stanford University, participating in the Urban Studies course, Sustainable Cities. Our role was to evaluate the Grant Program's effectiveness and put forth suggestions for what the Department of Economic Development can do to further alleviate the small business community's financial pressures.

In the remainder of our report, we will discuss our process for conducting the survey, interviews, and geospatial analysis; our findings; and our recommendations for next steps.

Methodologies

Our methodology was twofold. First, we issued a survey to all 38 recipients asking questions about recipients' experiences with COVID and their use of the grant. Businesses filled out the survey between October and November 2020. Then, from all those who answered the survey, we selected 5 respondents for follow-up interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes each. Four interviews were conducted via Zoom; one was conducted via phone call. All interviews were conducted in early November 2020.

For the survey, we developed 22 questions (listed in Appendix B) to learn the following information: whether the business was a minority-owned, immigrant-owned, and/or a mom and pop business; how COVID had impacted their business; how they have used or plan to use the grant; whether the grant had fulfilled their needs; whether they used the free technical assistance; and whether they had succession plans if an owner was to retire soon. To maximize our response rate, we made every question optional except for identifying information about the business. Overall, 26 out 38 recipients answered the survey for a response rate of 68%.

For the interviews, we developed five questions (listed in Appendix C) to learn the following information: how long the business had been in Milpitas; what business success and failure looked like prior to COVID; how they had had to adapt to COVID; what other types of support they would like to see from the City of Milpitas; and how the 2008 recession had impacted their business as compared to COVID. We asked these questions in the interviews since we believed they would be too in-depth to cover adequately in the survey, yet would yield richer insights on how COVID affected business in varying sectors. We selected interviewees with an eye to ensuring a diverse representation of business sectors, since the impact of COVID varies widely depending on business type. Our interviewees owned businesses in sectors including retail, financial services, personal care, and specialized technical services.

Although we were not conducting oral histories, we made sure to follow the protocols listed in the Baylor University Institute for Oral History's guidelines for oral histories, since we believed these would help us collect information in a more ethical and compassionate manner. The guidelines included establishing a general introduction, reiterating the purpose of the interview, and how the interview would contribute to our project; giving our interviewees ample opportunity to reflect on difficult subjects; and sending our interviewees thank-you notes. We recorded the Zoom meetings for transcription purposes only and took notes on all five interviews.

Survey Findings

26 businesses in total filled out our survey, though not every business responded to every question. We aimed to make every question optional and straightforward so as to maximize the total number of responses.

Regarding the demographics of businesses surveyed, we offered three descriptors for businesses to classify themselves: minority-owned, immigrant-owned, and/or mom and pop business. We found that 17 of the 26 business owners are either minorities or immigrants themselves, 5 of them describe their business as solely mom and pop, and the remaining 4 did not fit any of the provided descriptors. From our small sample, we see that 65.4% of the businesses are minority- or immigrant-owned, which is generally reflected in the shifting demographics of Milpitas. As we discuss later on, a number of census tracts in Milpitas have seen an increase in the percentage of Asian residents over the past ten years, which is potentially reflected in the microenterprise landscape.

Demographics

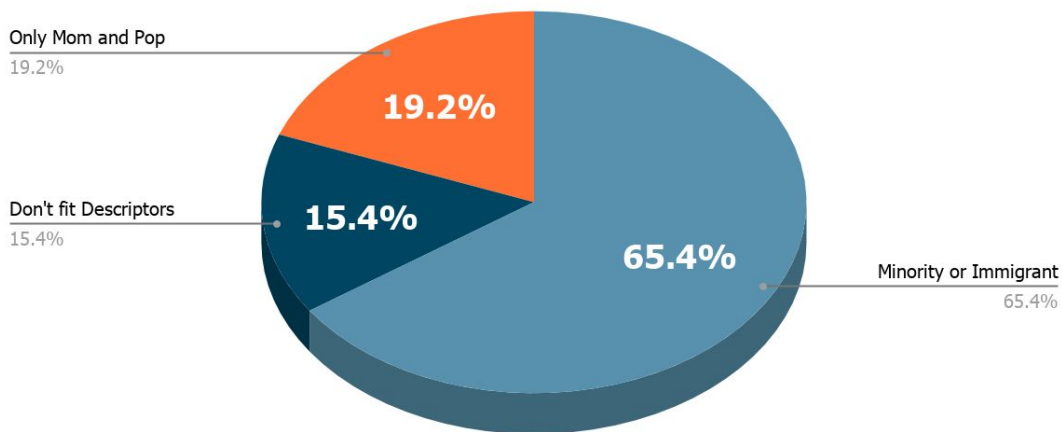


Figure 1.1

We also surveyed businesses on how they have used or plan to use the grant. Since the process for accepting applications began in August and microenterprises were only able to accept grant checks in October and November, some businesses' needs shifted as the pandemic persisted. Five businesses indicated that their intended use for funds shifted since applying for the grant in August, and all five responded that the grant would instead cover rent and utility costs as opposed to what they had originally planned

for. One of these five owners specified that the grant's intended use shifted from covering payroll to instead paying rent. At the time that businesses had taken the survey (note that responses were accepted all throughout October and November 2020), 11 reported that they had already spent the grant, and 10 of these 11 respondents utilized the funds for rent and mortgage payments, the majority of whom spent anywhere from 80% to 100% of funds on rent and mortgage alone. Though some respondents spent portions of the grant on insurance, equipment, and payroll costs, the amount spent in any of those categories was unmatched by the disproportionate need to cover rent and mortgage costs.

The majority of respondents, 17 of the 26, indicated that the grant was enough to cover their needs, but for businesses that responded otherwise, they specified that an ideal amount of assistance would have been at least \$10,000. Businesses' ideal amount of funding ranged anywhere from \$10,000 to \$30,000, the median response being \$15,000.

We also surveyed businesses on whether they had to shut down and, if so, for how long. We saw that all but 2 respondents had to shut down in response to the pandemic, and the majority of those who had to shut down were shut down for 5-8 months. One of the respondents indicated that they still had not reopened since the pandemic started. We also asked businesses to rank how difficult the pandemic has been for them personally, from 1 (very easy) to 10 (very difficult). Given the overwhelming COVID's damage to business communities, an overwhelming majority (18 out of 22 respondents to this question) answered from 8 to 10.

How Difficult has COVID Been for Your Business?

Ranked from 1 to 10

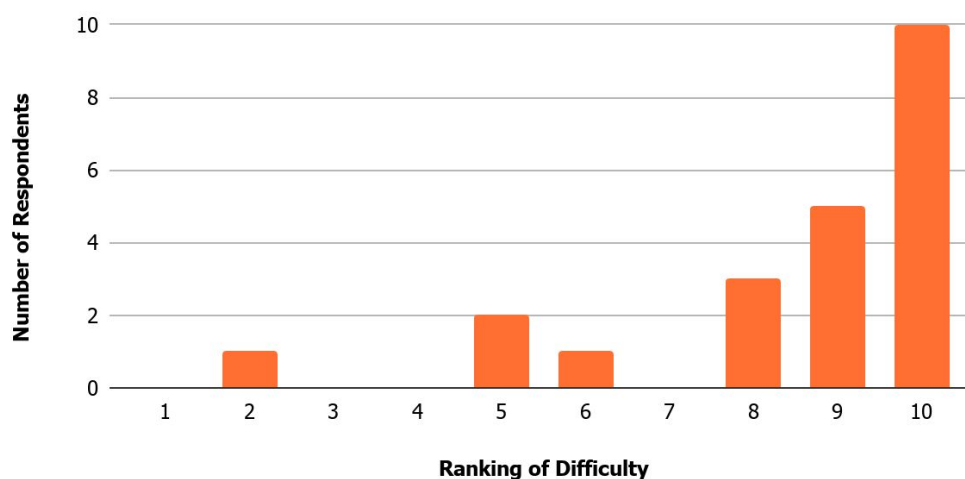


Figure 1.2

Length of Business Shutdowns

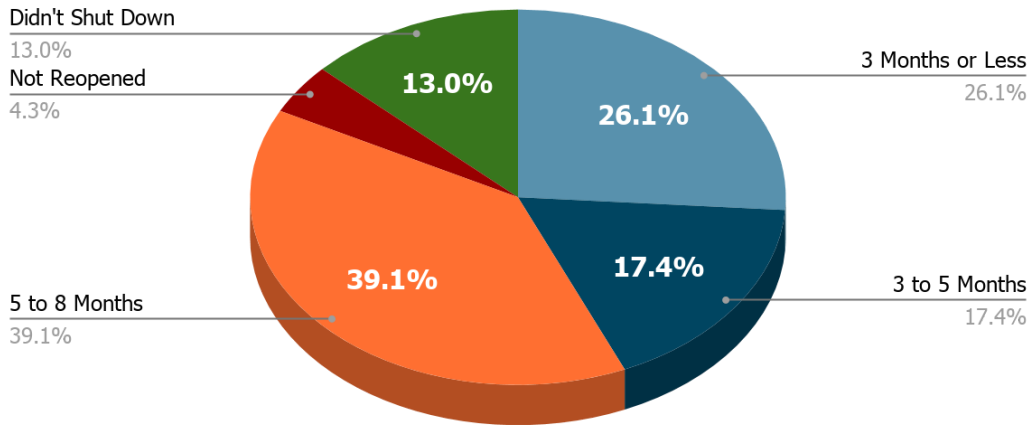


Figure 1.3

As part of the program, applicants are eligible to receive free technical assistance through the Silicon Valley Small Business Development Center, and we aimed to gauge businesses' interactions with the assistance. 84.6% of respondents indicated that they either were not aware of the offerings or were aware and chose not to utilize them. Only two businesses accessed the program, and they used services related to marketing and cost accounting and pricing. In spite of the limited use of the free technical assistance, one business owner indicated that they planned "to check out the various services," and nine businesses responded that they would have liked assistance with various issues, such as marketing, navigating public health guidelines, potentially selling their business, locating other sources of funding, coping with staff shortages, and/or financial planning. From our survey responses, we see a discrepancy in the number of businesses seeking additional assistance and the actual usage of the free technical assistance.

Regarding succession plans, we asked business owners whether they were planning to retire in the next 5-10 years, and 8 out of the 26 responded that they were planning on retirement. Out of these eight businesses, only one indicated that they knew who would replace them. Overall, our survey data reflects some of the irreparable losses afflicting business communities in Milpitas. Though this microenterprise grant was able to alleviate costs for a majority of our respondents, some face continued monetary losses and require assistance through the remainder of the pandemic.

Interview Findings

The interview findings reflected many of the results presented through the survey data results. In addressing how COVID impacted their businesses and the challenges that arose, rent was the hardest component to cover. All store owners had to shut down their business for at least some portion of the pandemic, but they were still required to pay their rents to the store building owners. Some owners were able to reduce rent payments momentarily, but the full amount is still expected to be paid back at some point. Other businesses we interviewed had to resort to laying off some or all of their employees during this time, as there is no feasible way to pay them with lack of business. Layoffs created stress for some business owners, as they often knew the complex situations that their employees were in financially, and delayed unemployment checks further exasperated their worries for fellow employees. Finally, all businesses we interviewed had to reduce not only their own personal hours, but also their store hours if they were in a physical storefront. This had to be done as it would be more costly to remain open when business was so slow. These factors combined resulted in emotional and financial hardships, exacerbated further with the uncertainty of COVID's trajectory. The quote below comes from an independent hairdresser who acutely felt the emotional burden of COVID:

“Six months of not being able to be in business... we had to come up with all these, you know, things to qualify us to work outside. Then we could open up for a day but then we had to close back down, but we had to put all the safety things up that they require before we could open up... but then they would keep shutting it back down. So financially, it was really hard because the owners are still asking that we pay rent.”

In regard to their thoughts on the grant, business owners were thankful and appreciative to receive the financial assistance. In the quote below, a video producer describes the grant as a pivotal moment in the pandemic:

“Thanks for the City of Milpitas for providing the funds, and that action has inspired me to do certain things that got me out of bed and actually move in some way to put my business in the position... to serve.”

The grant was heavily utilized by recipients and direly needed. Although some business owners indicated that \$10,000 or more would have been more preferable, the \$5,000 that they were provided was critical and allowed them to remain viable. With that

said, the \$5,000 was often not enough to cover one month's revenue that they were making prior to COVID. Business owners interviewed felt that the City of Milpitas has been very communicative through this process as well and truly trying to provide support to their small business community. They did not believe that the city could readily do much more for them, but they would love to see more financial assistance in the future.

All but one of the businesses we interviewed were in operation during the 2008 recession, so we were able to compare businesses' experiences of both economic crises. While they noted that the recession was hard to work through, the majority believed that COVID has taken a much larger toll. The recession caused a loss of business, but the pandemic has caused a loss of business coupled with many changes to how businesses must be run. This bears extra costs, from shifting to selling online, buying safety equipment for the store, shipping, traveling costs for delivery services, etc. Overall business owners feel much more uncertain and worried about COVID than they did the 2008 recession.

"We did lose subscribers as they lost their jobs. We did have a lot of people move out of the area because it was too expensive to live here and when they moved, we lost their business. So yeah, it was a definite dip, but this is NOTHING like this. This is like - so that might have been like a - off top my head, 15% decrease. This is 50%. Five zero. Five zero we're doing."

The first half of this quote is in reference to the 2008 recession. In 2008, this business had a 15% decrease in profits, but now they are dealing with a 50% loss during COVID. We did have one business in particular who reported it the other way around. However, since that business was in glass installment, many other businesses relied on them to provide services after the Black Lives Matter protests that took place in the Bay Area as well as around the country, which resulted in mass breaking of windows and looting.

Spatial Analysis

The purpose of the spatial analysis was to examine demographic conditions and trends throughout Milpitas, focusing primarily on the areas around the microenterprise grant recipients. We were interested in investigating the current economic crisis relative to the Great Recession in 2008. How did the neighborhoods in which the microenterprises are located change between then and now?

Methods

Shapefiles and data for the geospatial analysis were drawn from the United States Census Bureau and from the City of Milpitas's geospatial databases. We collected information on population totals, race, median household income and unemployment at the individual census tract level.

In order to obtain latitude and longitude coordinates, we looked up addresses in Google Earth. These addresses were provided by each of the grant recipients during the application process. We then plotted the microenterprises in ArcGIS according to their coordinate location. Around each of the microenterprises, we drew a half-mile buffer. These points and buffers were displayed over a map of Milpitas's census tracts, which were joined to tables containing the demographic data described above. For each of the following sets of maps, we selected one variable to display at a time. The first map in each set shows data from 2008, and the second map shows data from 2019.

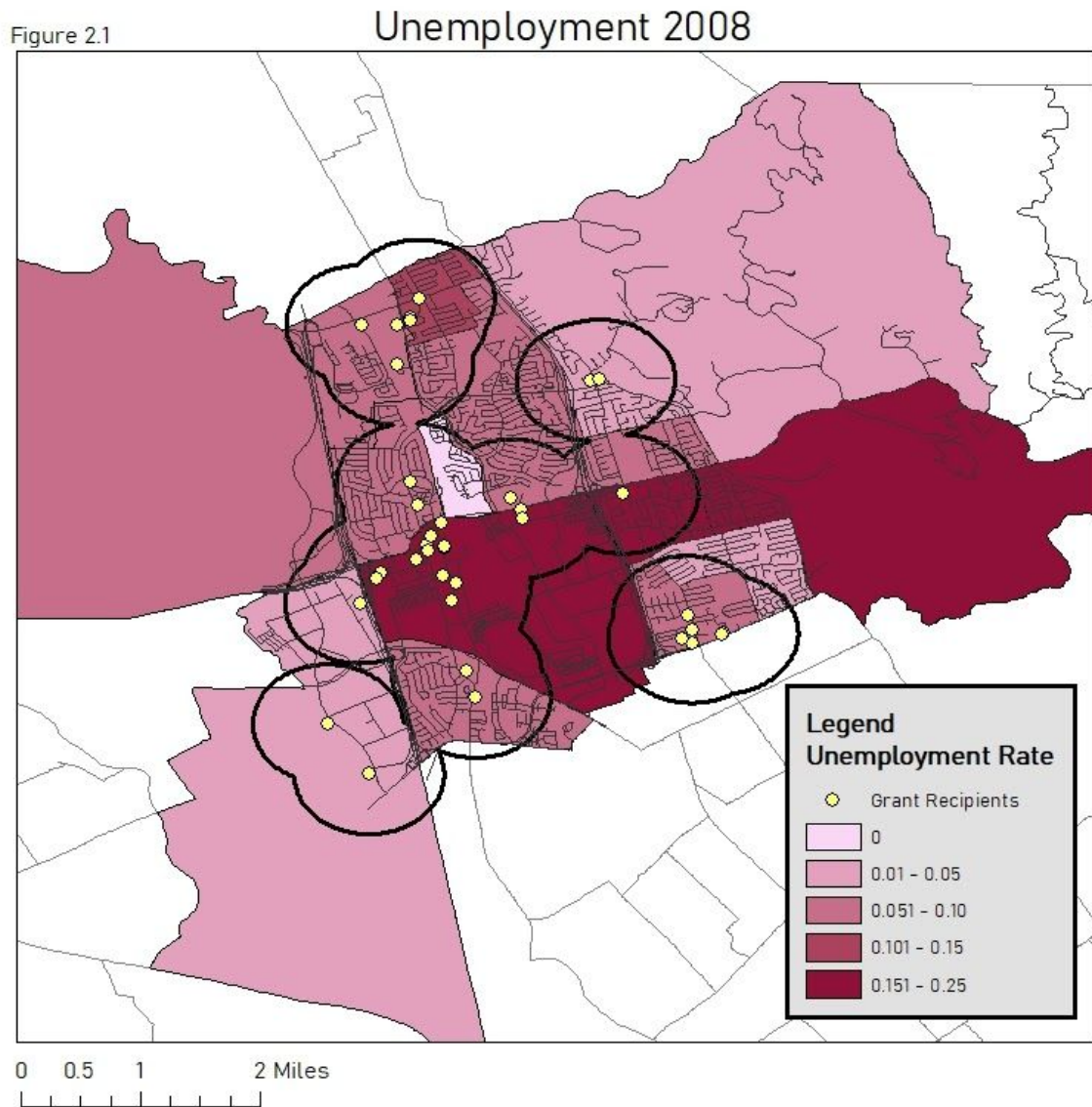
It is important to note that data on the demographic effects of COVID-19 is not yet available. Many of these values are therefore likely to change. When the data is published, the City of Milpitas can recreate this geospatial analysis for further insights on the actual economic and social impacts of the pandemic.

Unemployment

As we noted in our 'Economic Context' section, Milpitas experienced years of sub-3 to 3% unemployment before the unemployment rate skyrocketed to 12.9% in April of 2020. Through the Milpitas Small Business Survey and our own survey and interviews, we found that many businesses faced significant revenue losses as a result of the pandemic. Many were forced to furlough and later layoff employees as a result of these losses. Thus, unemployment rates drastically increased in 2020, especially during the first few months of lockdown.

During the Great Recession, the unemployment rate in the San Francisco Bay Area reached a peak of 10.2% in 2010. In Milpitas, the unemployment rate was at its

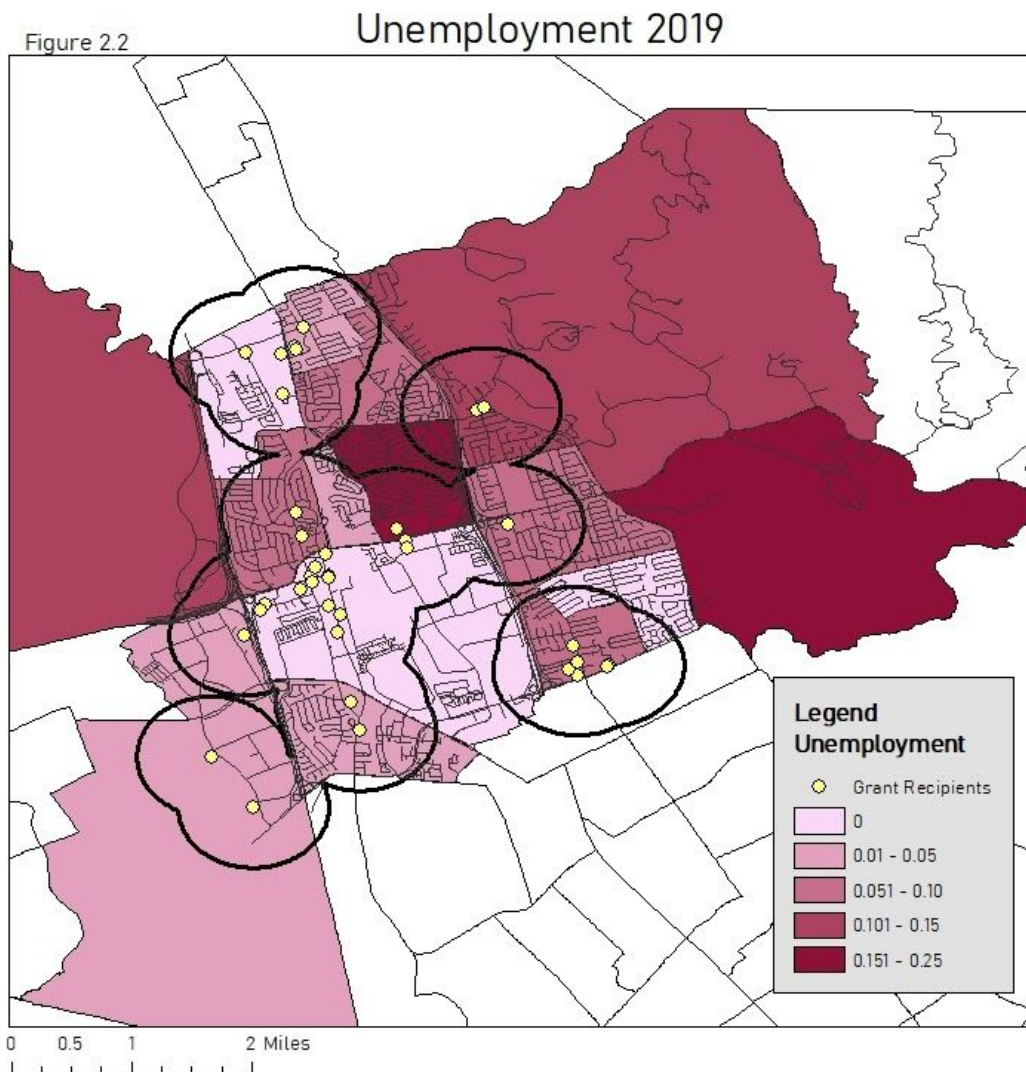
highest in 2009, when it was 10.9%¹. Figure 2.1 captures variation in unemployment rate according to census tract in 2008.



While a small number of census tracts had unemployment rates of 0.05% or less, the majority of census tracts had unemployment rates between 0.05-0.25%. Approximately half of the grant recipients are clustered along East Calaveras Boulevard, South Main Street, and South Abel Street. These microenterprises are located within census tracts, or within a half-mile of census tracts, for which the unemployment rate was as high as 25%. The remaining microenterprises are located near or within census tracts with unemployment rates of 10% or below.

¹ "Vital Signs". Metropolitan Transportation Committee, 2019. <https://www.vitalsigns.mtc.ca.gov/unemployment>.

Figure 2.2 shows unemployment in 2019. In general, there were more census tracts in 2019 with an unemployment rate of 0% compared to 2008. This makes sense given the effects of the recession on unemployment in Milpitas, in the Bay Area, and throughout the country. Many of the census tracts that fall within the half-mile buffer around the microenterprises experienced no change in the employment rate or else experienced a decrease in unemployment. Notably, for the businesses located along East Calaveras Boulevard, South Main Street, and South Abel Street; unemployment in the surrounding area dropped from over 15% to 0%. In the northeast region of the city however, several census tracts experienced an increase in unemployment.



Median Household Income

We decided to map median household income as an indicator of wealth in the areas surrounding Milpitas's microenterprises. In 2008, the Bay Area median household income was \$96,600, and the median household income for all of Milpitas was \$112,000.

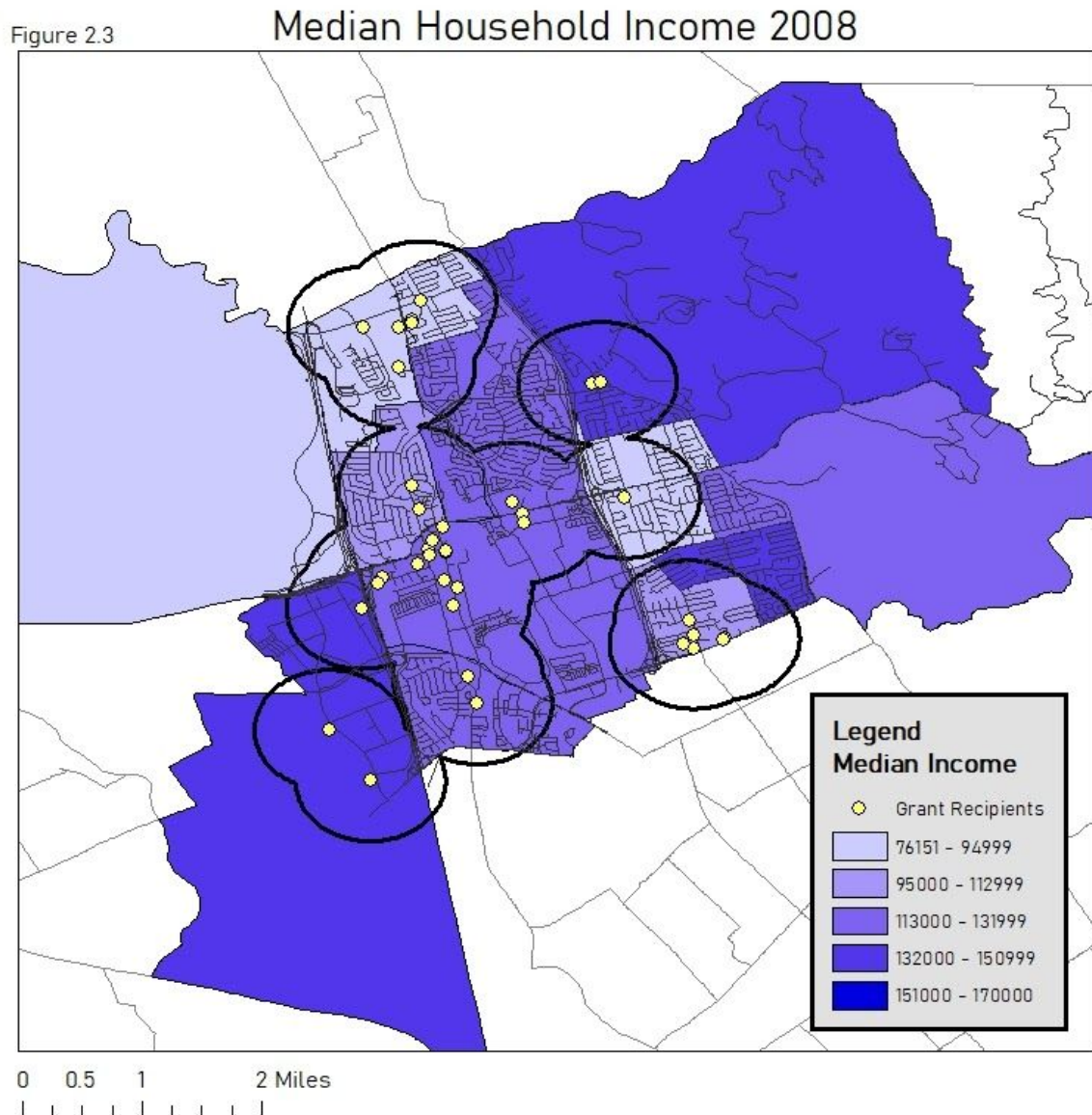
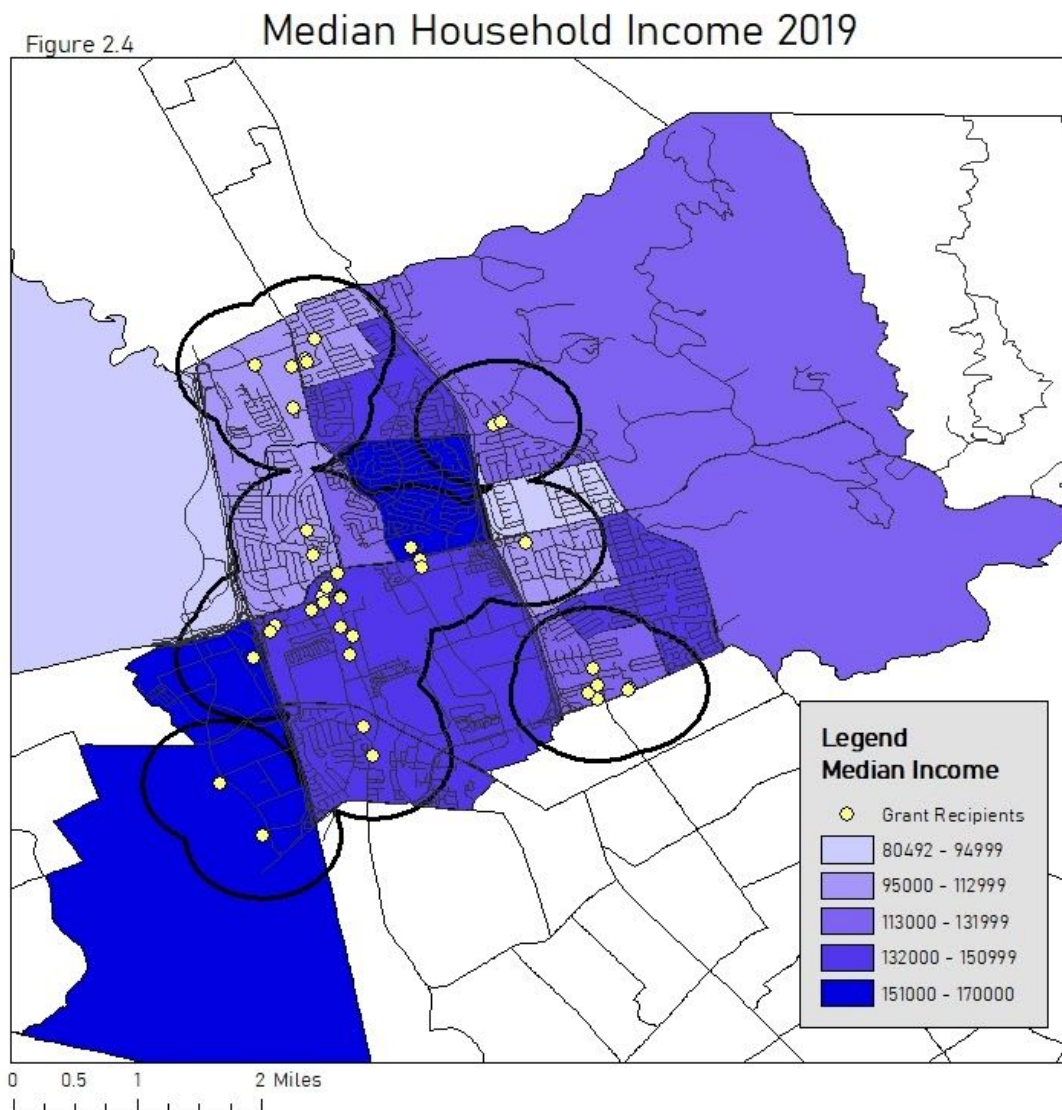


Figure 2.3 shows the breakdown of median household income by census tract. In 2008, a minority of microenterprises were located within a half-mile of census tracts with median household incomes of over \$151,000. For the majority of the microenterprises, the median household income in the surrounding area ranged from approximately \$76,000 to \$132,000.

Figure 2.4 displays median household income for 2019. For the majority of census tracts containing grant recipients, median household income increased by about \$15,000 on average from 2008 to 2019. For the census tracts containing businesses clustered around South Abel Street, South Main Street, and East Calaveras Blvd, this increase appears particularly large.

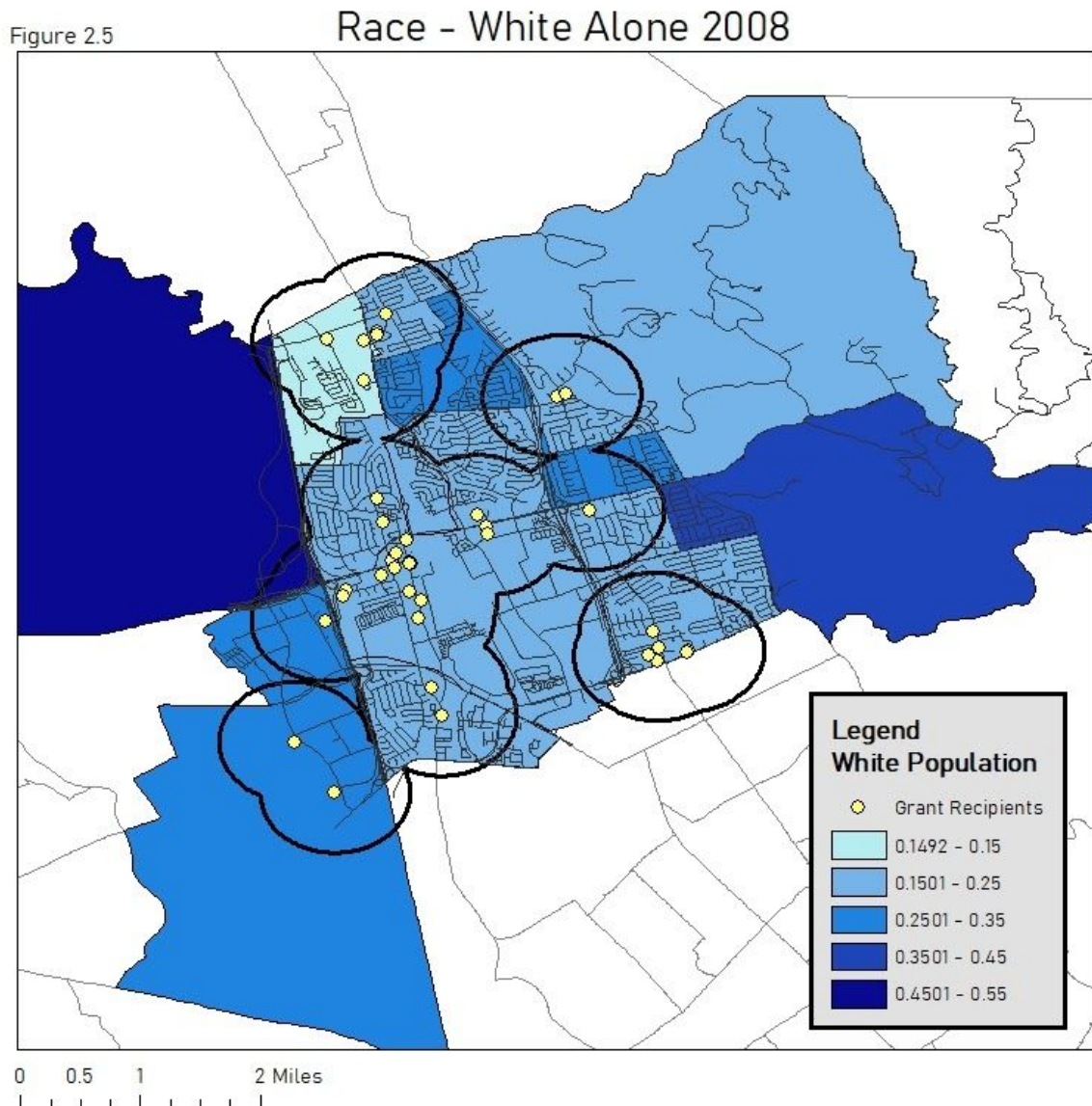


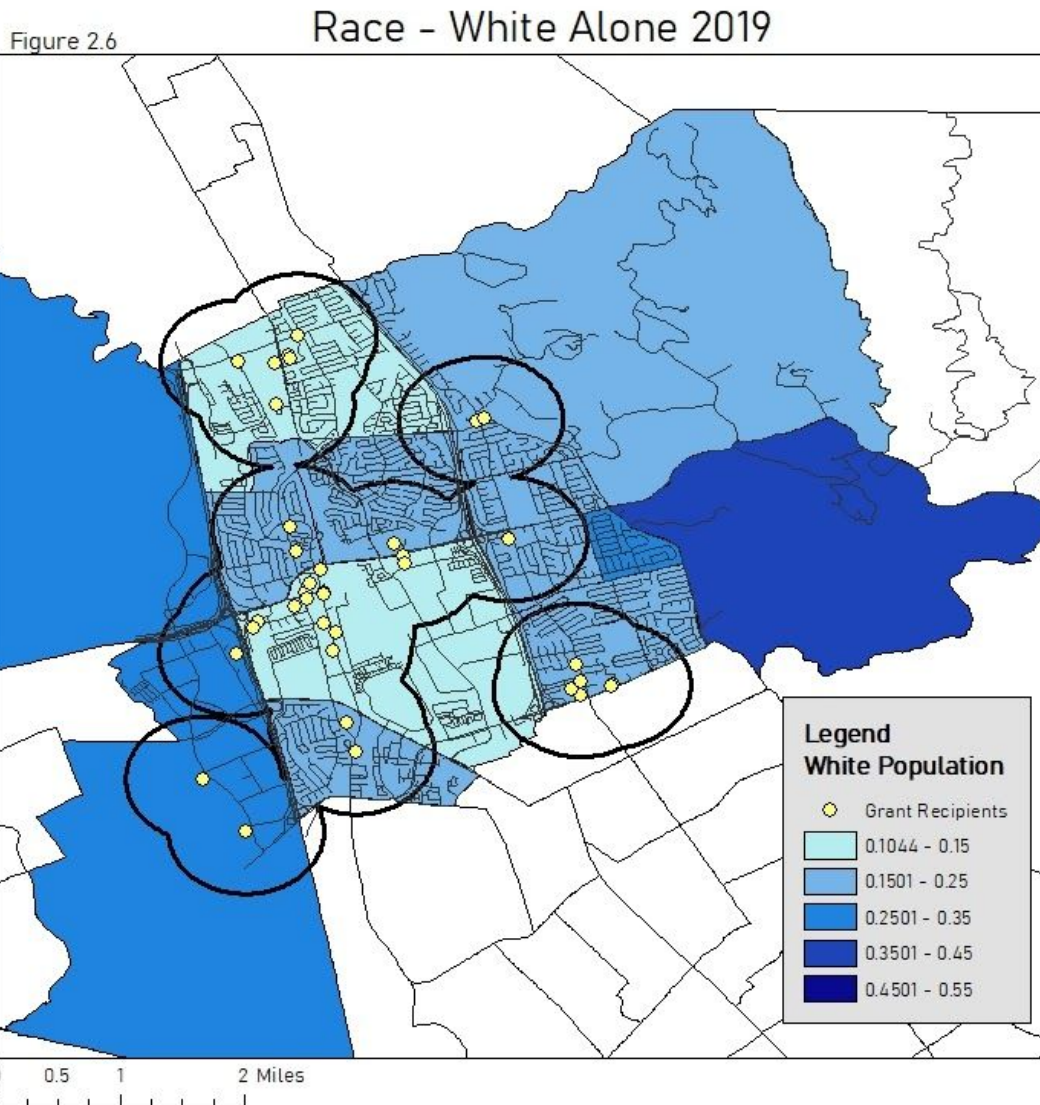
Race

Milpitas's microenterprise community is diverse. The exact breakdown of Milpitas's overall population is as follows: Asian 62.2%, Caucasian: 14.6%, Hispanic/Latino: 16.8%, Black or African American: 2.9%. Of the grant recipients, 65.4% of respondents to our survey identified themselves as immigrant or minority business

owners. We wanted to understand any changes or trends in the racial makeup of Milpitas between 2008 and 2019.

Figure 2.5 and figure 2.6 show distribution of white residents in Milpitas as a proportion of the total population in 2008 and 2019. Overall, the percentage of white residents decreased over the past 11 years. In 2008, most microenterprises were surrounded by census tracts that were 14.9-35% white. By 2019, most of the census tracts within a half mile of the businesses were between 10.4-25% white.

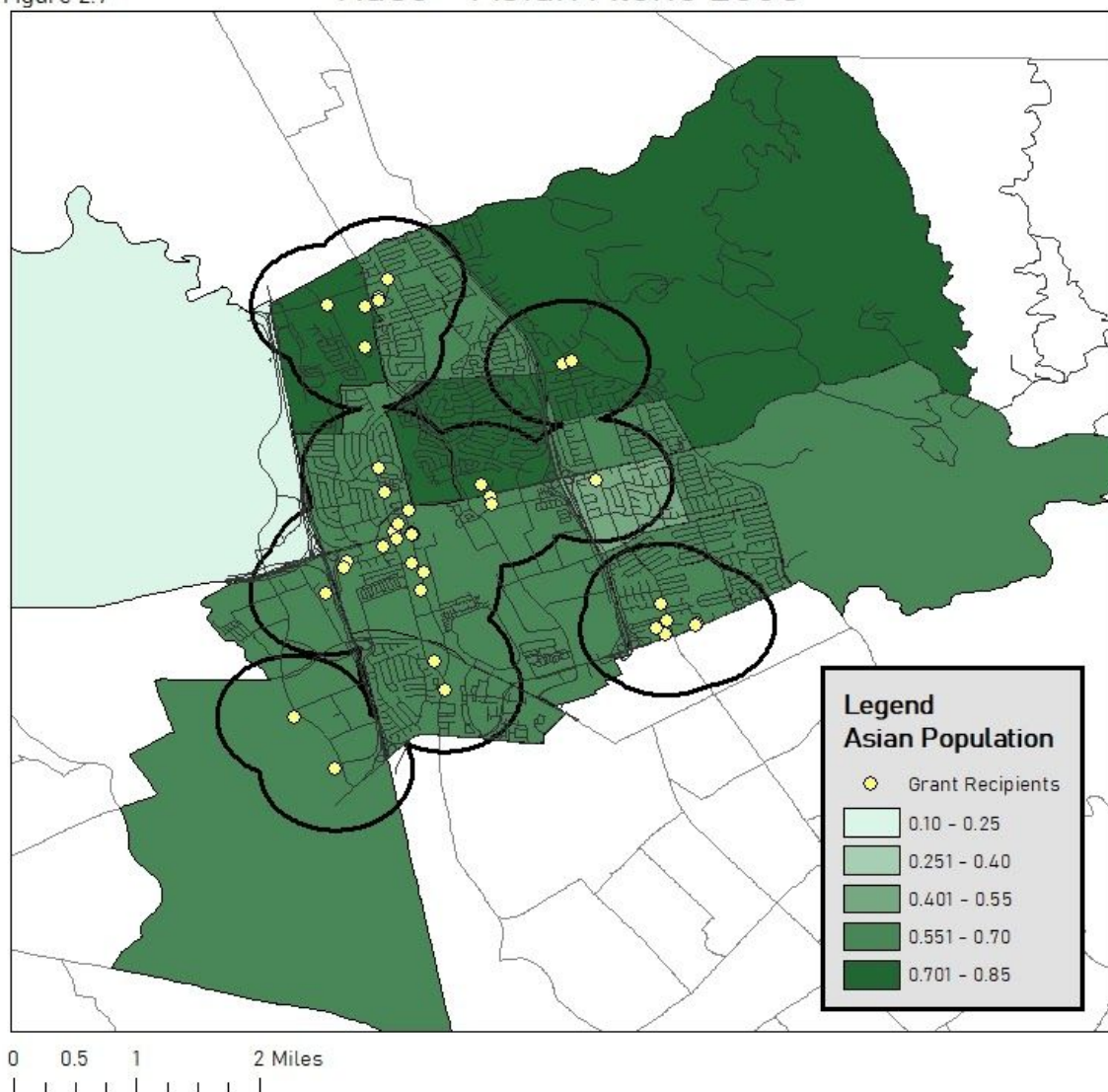




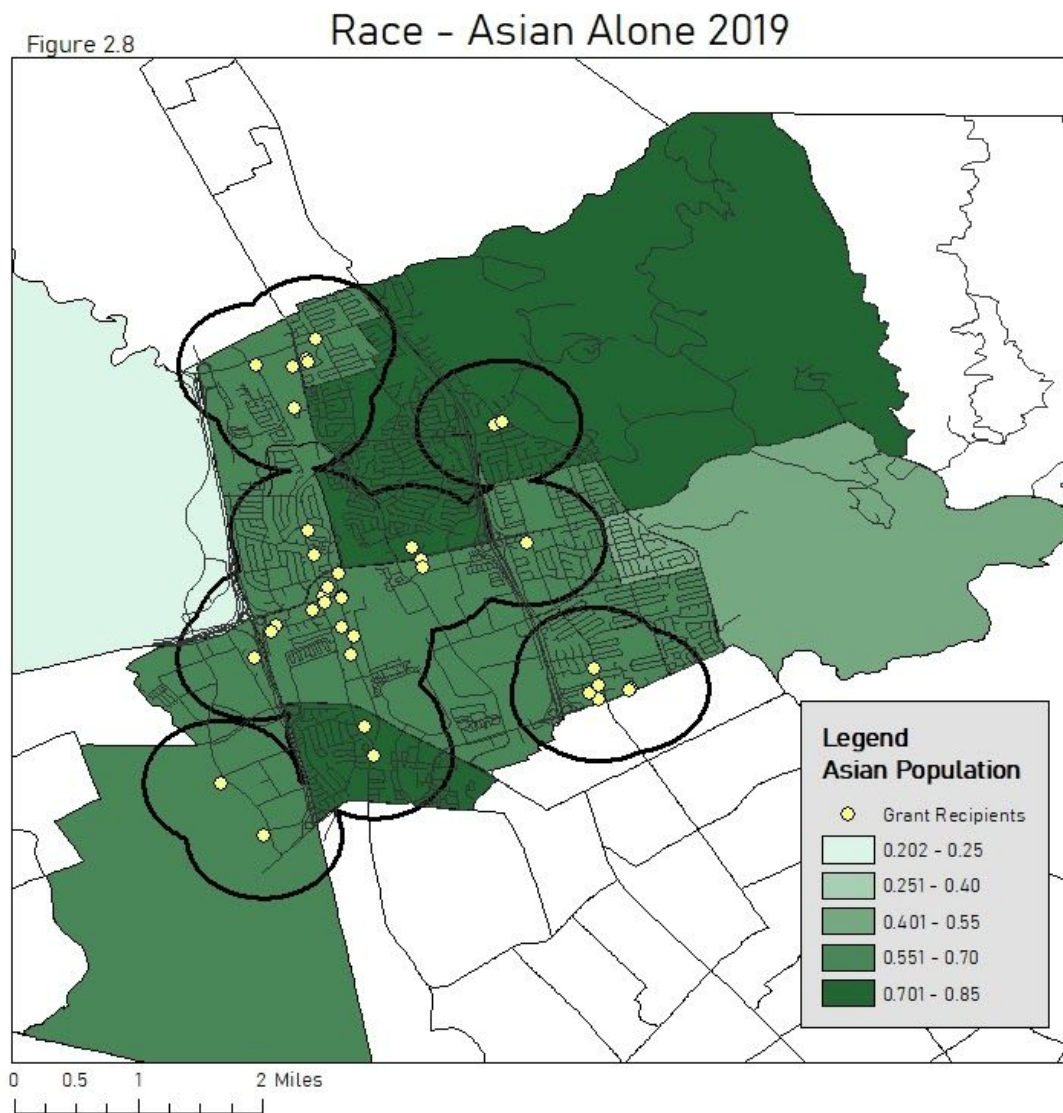
Milpitas has a sizable Asian population, which we wanted to capture in this analysis. Figures 2.7 and 2.8 show the distribution of Asian residents as a proportion of the total population. From 2008 to 2019, the Asian population increased throughout the city. In fact, for the census tract with the small percentage of Asian residents, this value increased from 10% to 20.2%. Overall, there is a lot of variability in the Asian population in each census tract. It ranges from 10% to 85%. Thus, these maps may not capture all of the variation that is actually present.

Figure 2.7

Race - Asian Alone 2008



In 2008, the Asian population within a half mile of the microenterprises was between 40% and 70%. By 2019, this had increased to between 55% and 85%.



Recommendations and Strategies

I. Implement a Need-Based Grant/Loan Program

Given the enormous deficits facing small business communities, we saw several survey respondents indicate that they'd like assistance finding other sources of funding. As businesses continue to recuperate from tens of thousands of dollars in lost revenue and exhibit a continued need for financial assistance, we recommend that the City of Milpitas implement another grant program that incorporates more need-based evaluation. From our survey data, we found that a small portion of businesses were not nearly as shaken by the pandemic, some even seeing a minor surge in business. Meanwhile others indicated that they had still not reopened and needed \$30,000 in financial assistance. By implementing a need-based program, grants could be distributed more justly depending on businesses' varying levels of need. Grants could instead be distributed in \$1,000, \$2,500, and \$5,000 increments in order to match more businesses with necessary funding.

Additionally, we recommend that the City of Milpitas explore the implementation of a loan program. One-time grants of \$5,000 are not nearly enough for a number of microenterprises, and loan programs may be a helpful, temporary solution to ease the catastrophic losses to COVID-19.

II. Enforce Commercial Rent Freeze

We advise that the City of Milpitas impose a commercial rent freeze, as continued rent and mortgage payments during severely limited business hours have drained revenues. Microenterprises whose needs adjusted over the course of this pandemic indicated that they shifted from previously paying off other expenses to instead paying rent and mortgage costs. The majority of grantees we surveyed who had already spent the grant expended 80-100% of the funds on rent and mortgage alone. Additionally, the Office of Economic Development's survey back in April, which gauged microenterprises' needs at the time, showed that nearly 80% of businesses struggled with rent and mortgage payments. Imposing a commercial rent freeze would dramatically cut down on the stressors facing microenterprises currently and help them recuperate lost revenue.

III. Further Communicate Technical Assistance to Grant Applicants

Out of all respondents to our survey, only 2 business owners had sought out the free technical assistance. However, 9 businesses surveyed indicated that they would have liked to access assistance on a variety of business-related issues, such as seeking additional grants, managing staff shortages, adapting to public health orders, and

financial planning. Though the offerings through the Silicon Valley Small Business Development Center (SBDC) may not fully capture all of these needs, we see a clear disconnect between businesses' desired level of assistance and the usage of the Silicon Valley SBDC's technical programming. We suggest communicating further with business owners about the number of options available through the free technical assistance.

IV. Assemble a Public Health Transparency Task Force

From several survey responses and interviews, some businesses found it especially difficult adapting to the rapid changes in public health orders coming from Santa Clara County. We suggest composing a task force whose purpose is to communicate and clarify public health guidelines as well as issue suggestions for how businesses can adjust under different public health tiers. One business owner we interviewed explained that it was not her responsibility to explain public health guidelines to her customers, that adapting business practices to COVID on short staff is already overwhelming enough. This task force could create an accessible and readable website that clearly communicates the extent to which different businesses must close or change their operations depending on the business' sector.

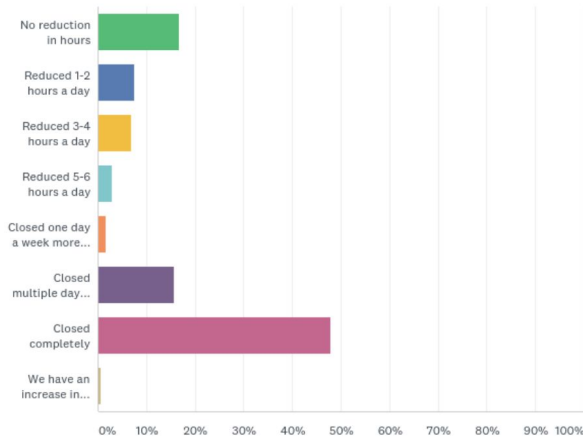
Conclusion

COVID-19 has posed enormous challenges to Milpitas' business environment. Nevertheless, our analysis shows that the Microenterprise Development Grant program has helped these businesses overcome some of the difficulties of March through November 2020, and that further support will bolster microenterprises' resilience so that they can survive the COVID-19 crisis. We are ultimately confident that the Milpitas business community will weather COVID-19, so long as the city stands beside it every step of the way.

Appendix A: Initial Survey Results

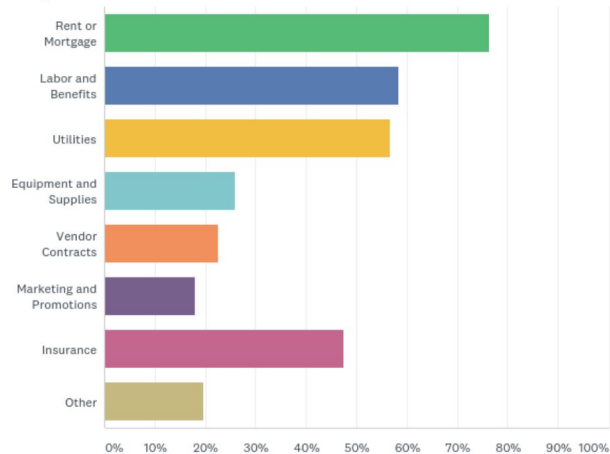
How have your business hours been impacted by COVID-19?

Answered: 173 Skipped: 0



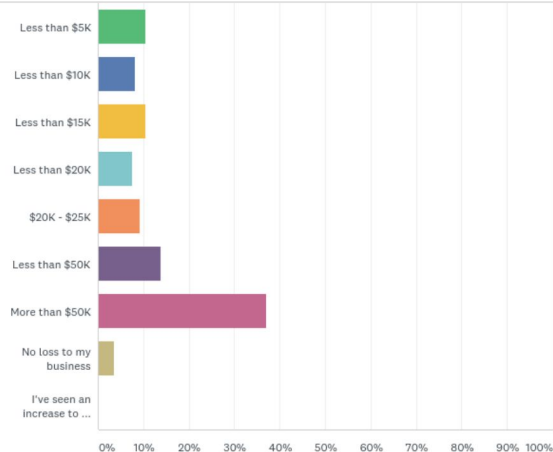
If you need financial assistance from a lending institution, for what purpose(s) are you seeking a small business loan?

Answered: 173 Skipped: 0



What is the total revenue loss to your business so far due to COVID-19? Please include all losses.

Answered: 173 Skipped: 0



Appendix B: Survey Questions

1. What is the name of your business?
2. Check one or more of the following descriptors that apply to you.
 - a. Mom/pop business (Family-owned independent business)
 - b. Immigrant-owned ("Immigrant" refers to a person born outside the U.S.)
 - c. Minority-owned ("Minority" refers to a person of Hispanic, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, biracial or multiracial background)
 - d. None of the above
3. On a scale of 1-10, how difficult has COVID been for your business?
4. Did you have to shut down temporarily due to COVID?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. (If yes to #4) For how long were you shut down?
6. (If yes to #4) Have you reopened?
7. Has your intended use for the grant changed since you applied?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. (If yes to #7) How has your intended use changed?
9. Have you utilized the funds yet?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
10. (If yes to #9) Select all expenses you have used the funds for.
 - a. Rent/Mortgage
 - b. Payroll/Operations
 - c. Equipment
 - d. Insurance
11. (If "Rent/Mortgage" selected in #10) Approximately what percentage of the funds were spent on rent/mortgage?
12. (If "Payroll/Operations" selected in #10) Approximately what percentage of the funds were spent on payroll/operations?
13. (If "Equipment" selected in #10) Approximately what percentage of the funds were spent on equipment?
14. (If "Insurance" selected in #10) Approximately what percentage of the funds were spent on insurance?
15. Did the City of Milpitas' grant meet your needs?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
16. (If no to #15) What would your ideal amount of assistance have been?
17. (If no to #15) What additional needs do you have that are unfulfilled?
18. Were you aware that you were eligible for technical assistance? Did you utilize the free technical assistance?
 - a. I was aware, and I used the technical assistance
 - b. I was aware, and I did not use the technical assistance
 - c. I was not aware of the technical assistance

19. (If "I was aware, and I used the technical assistance" selected in #18) What services did you use? Were they helpful?
20. (If "I was aware, and I did not use the technical assistance" selected in #18) What services would you have liked to use?
21. Is your owner planning to retire in the next 5-10 years?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
22. (If yes to #21) Do you know who will take over the business when your owner retires?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Appendix C: Interview Script

Hi [name of business owner], thank you so much for joining us today. My name is [interviewer] and I'm a senior here at Stanford. I have [notetaker] with me to take some notes as well. To give just a bit of an overview of our project, we have been surveying and then starting interviews with other recipients of the MicroEnterprise Grant like yourself. Through this, we want to help the city of Milpitas to understand how COVID has affected local businesses, their response to it, and how the city itself can provide relief through grants such as this one. I know I'm talking a lot right now, but I really want you to know that this is your space to share whatever you feel needs to be said, however long or short that may be. If at any point throughout this interview you need to take a break or a moment to yourself, please feel free to do so, that will be no problem.

1. Tell us about your business. How long have you been in business?
 - a. (Follow up if needed) Did you live in Milpitas prior to starting business? Did you always see yourself starting your own business?
2. Prior to COVID, what did it mean for your business to be doing well or not so well?
3. Walk us through how your business had to adapt to COVID.
4. We understand that financial support is the most important kind of support you can be receiving right now. With that in mind, is there any other support that you would like to see or have seen during these times from either the city or elsewhere?
5. How did the 2008 recession impact your business? What are the differences between the 2008 recession's impacts and COVID's impacts?
6. Is there anything else you'd like to share before we wrap up today?