



The City of



Economic Development

REPORT

Downtown Business Walk

On **Feb. 28, 2018**, the Economic Development Department held its Downtown Business Walk, covering one of the four Business Improvement Districts in Downtown. In advance of the walk, the Economic Development Department mailed postcards (*right*) to nearly 900 businesses to announce the upcoming outreach event. The front of the postcard explained the purpose of a business walk and shared valuable information about City programs popular with the business community. The back of the postcard provided an online survey link for entrepreneurs unavailable at their businesses during the walk.

It was a beautiful sunny afternoon after several winter storms. Volunteers included staff from the Economic Development Department, City Council District 3, the Office of the City Treasurer, Downtown San Diego Partnership and members of the business community. Teams of two or three people each visited about 20 ground-level businesses. The walk area spanned Ash Street south to Broadway, between First and Tenth avenues. Volunteers engaged business owners and had many complete a seven-question survey about the business climate and benefits and challenges of doing business in Downtown.

Volunteers: 20

Number of Businesses Visited: 151

Number of Surveys Completed: 38

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS WALK

Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019 | 2-5 p.m.

DOWN TOWN

What's a business walk? Volunteers from the City of San Diego's Economic Development Department, City staff, City Council, Downtown San Diego Partnership and the community will be stopping by Downtown businesses to chat, visit and learn what we can do to help your business thrive. Discover some of the City's tools and programs designed especially for San Diego entrepreneurs.

Get It Done San Diego
sandiego.gov/get-it-done

Report non-emergency issues through the Get It Done app and get service for potholes, graffiti, broken streetlights, abandoned vehicles, tree hazards, sidewalk repairs and more.

OpenCounter Online Business Portal
business.sandiego.gov

Find locations for new or expanding businesses in the City of San Diego. See which permits you might need for business or residential projects in this award-winning portal.

Storefront Improvement Program
sandiego.gov/storefront

City businesses with street-facing storefronts and 25 or fewer employees can receive free design assistance and max rebates ranging from \$8,000 to \$16,000.

www.sandiego.gov/economic-development | 619-236-6700 | sdbusiness@sandiego.gov

City of San Diego
Economic Development Department
1200 Third Ave., Suite 1400, MS 56D
San Diego, CA 92101

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
SAN DIEGO, CA
PERMIT NO. 134

Downtown Business Walk | Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019 | 2-5 p.m.
Can't be there? Take our survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/PQ8WVGN before March 15.

The City of San Diego Economic Development Department knows that running a successful business is tough work. So, our staff joins local volunteers for quarterly Business Walks in neighborhoods around the City to see what's on the minds of business owners and share information about City resources.

We're here to help!

For more information:
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www.sandiego.gov/economic-development

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Business Walk Survey Results

Of the 151 businesses visited, 38 businesses (25 percent) completed surveys.

Doing Business

Question: Rate your community as a place to do business. (Excellent, Good, Neutral, Needs Improvement, Poor)

71% Favorable

Of the 38 respondents, 27 rated Downtown as an "Excellent" or "Good" place to do business.

Business Climate Outlook

Question: Please describe your outlook on your business climate. (Very optimistic, Optimistic, Neutral, Pessimistic, Very Pessimistic)

46% Positive

Of the 35 respondents, 16 said they are "Very Optimistic" or "Optimistic" about the business climate in Downtown.

"Neutral" and "Pessimistic" respondents (19) cited:

- Homelessness
- Parking
- Safety concerns

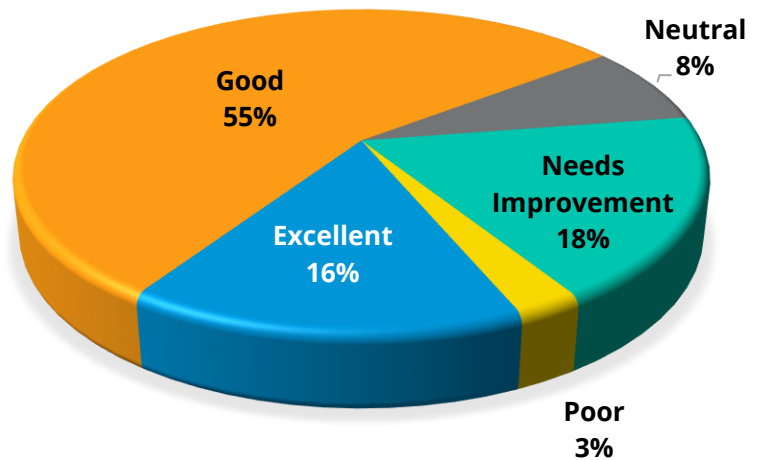
Business Advantages

Question: What are the benefits of operating a business in this community? (Select all that apply.)

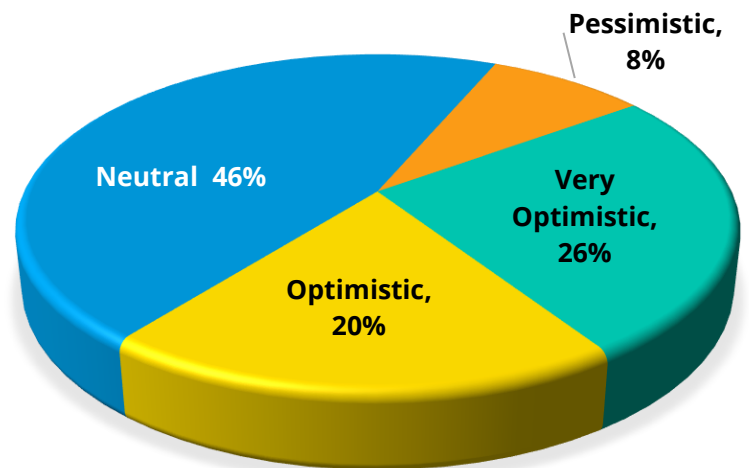
Pedestrians

Working in this portion of Downtown are predominantly professionals in the legal, banking, government and journalism fields. Many ground-level businesses serve those working in Downtown. Responding business owners said they most benefited from the high foot-traffic and an active business community. The businesses also cited Downtown as a place that is pedestrian-friendly.

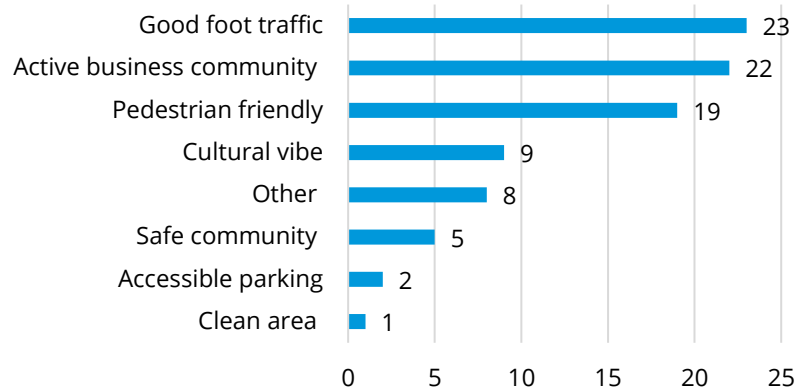
Business Community Rating (N=38)



Business Climate Outlook (N=35)



Business Benefits of Downtown



Business Obstacles

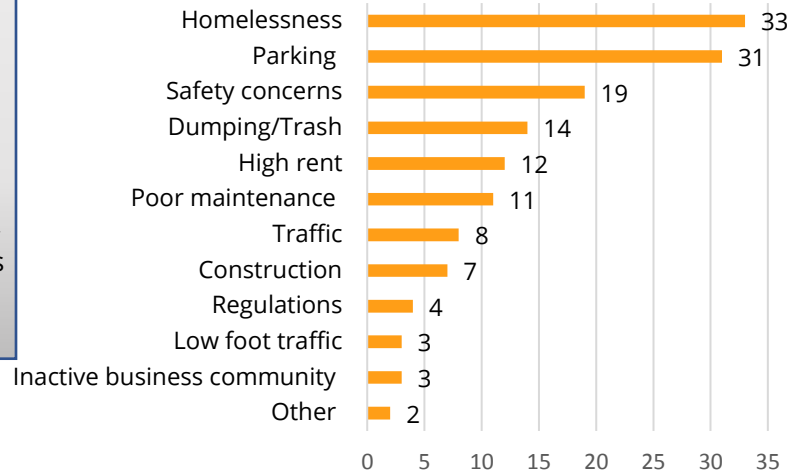
Question: What are the challenges of operating a business in your community?

(Select all that apply.)

Homelessness

Nearly 95 percent of surveyed businesses expressed concerns about the large number of people experiencing homelessness who live or spend time in Downtown. Other prevalent concerns include the area's shortage of parking and its safety concerns, which may be a deterrent to customers. One business owner said the company locks its entrance during business hours for safety.

Business Challenges in Downtown



Growing Business

Question: Do you plan on expanding your business? If so, how?

58% Look to Expand

Whether it's opening another location in the City, updating their shop, hiring employees or making sales online, Downtown businesses have their eyes on growth. EDD staff followed up via email with those looking to expand their businesses.

Business Expansion in Downtown



Finding Resources

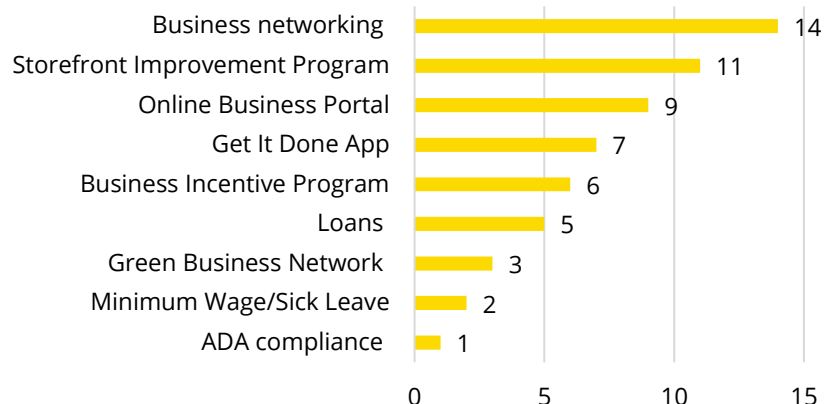
Question: Is your business interested in learning about any of the following City programs?

(Interested owners received follow-up emails with program information.)



WeWork B Street

Interest in City Programs



City Online Resources for Entrepreneurs

- **General Information** www.sandiego.gov/doing-business
- **City of San Diego Economic Development Department:** Learn about programs, loans, business incentives and resources. www.sandiego.gov/economic-development
- **Online Business Portal:** Start or expand a business, find permitted locations, make tenant improvements and learn about necessary permits and fees. <https://business.sandiego.gov>
- **Business Resource Matcher:** Find services (loans, grants, mentoring, consulting, marketing) to help your business grow. www.sandiego.gov/business-resources
- **Get It Done app:** Report graffiti, potholes, abandoned vehicles, illegal dumping, broken sidewalks, malfunctioning traffic signals, streetlights and other non-emergency issues. www.sandiego.gov/get-it-done
- **Office of City Treasurer:** Apply or renew your Business Tax Certificate (The City of San Diego issues Business Tax Certificates instead of business licenses). www.sandiego.gov/treasurer
- **Parking Enforcement:** Contact San Diego Police Department Communications Center 619-531-2000 www.sandiego.gov/police/services/units/traffic/parking/enf
- **Contact your Business Improvement District:** Downtown San Diego City Centre Business Improvement District <https://downtownsandiego.org>

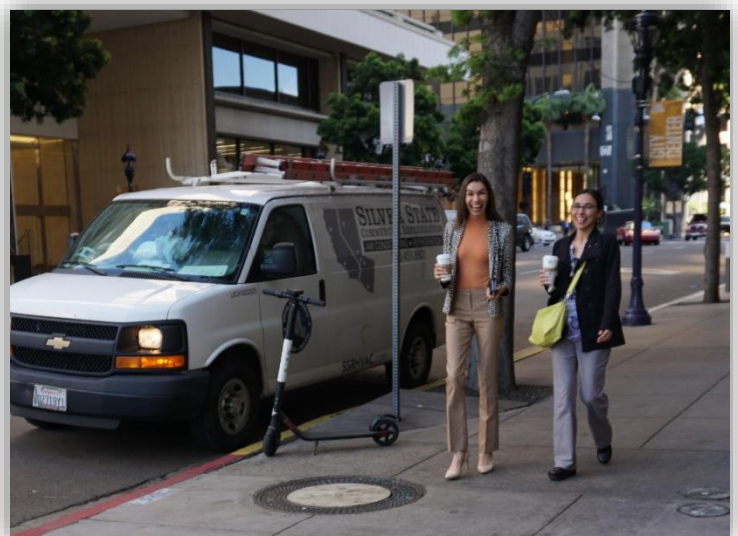
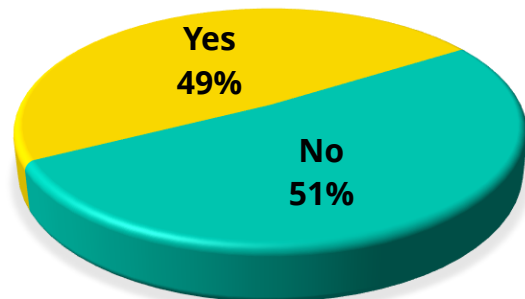
Downtown San Diego City Centre Awareness

Question: Are you familiar with the Downtown San Diego City Centre Business Improvement District?

49% Know the BID

Of the 35 respondents, 17 were familiar with the Downtown San Diego City Centre Business Improvement District as the organization that runs their Business Improvement District.

BID Awareness (N=35)



Promotional Material Left at Businesses Visited (5x7, front and back)



BUSINESS TOOLKIT

Discover the City's enhanced tools and programs designed for San Diego entrepreneurs.



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Business Incentive Program *sandiego.gov/BIP*

Seek \$10K-\$100K for expanding your business. Partner with the City to create good jobs, invest capital, encourage sustainability, mentor youth or revitalize neighborhoods.

Business Finance Loan Program *sandiego.gov/economic-development/business/financing*

Borrow \$25K-\$500K from the City for the gap financing you need to grow your small business—even if you don't meet the terms of a traditional bank. Apply today!



City of San Diego Bicycle Program *sandiego.gov/bicycling*

Ask the City to install a free bicycle rack in front of your business, in the public right-of-way, to encourage bicycling to daily activities such as shopping, riding to school and commuting.

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