East Village Business Walk

The Economic Development Department’s Neighborhood Investment Unit held its 10th Business Walk in two years on June 14, 2018, visiting businesses in the East Village Business Improvement District (BID), which is managed by the East Village Association. The largest neighborhood in Downtown San Diego, East Village has experienced a renaissance, becoming the home to innovative companies, startups, artisanal restaurants and mixed-use stores/lofts that embrace the urban vibe and channel East Village’s makers heritage.

Two weeks prior to the Business Walk, more than 600 storefront and home-based businesses with valid Business Tax Certificates were sent postcards (below) that promoted the outreach event and available small business resources. The postcard and leave behind (Page 5) had content customized for East Village businesses.

The Business Walk was scheduled on a Thursday, from 2 to 5 p.m., in an effort to visit business owners at off-peak hours when they would be available to chat and take the seven-question survey about the business climate and the benefits and challenges of doing business in East Village.

- **Volunteers:** 35
  (Volunteers represented the City’s Economic Development Department, Office of the City Treasurer, Council District 3, East Village Business Association, ACCION San Diego, Logan Heights CDC, Small Business Advisory Board and Small Business Development Center. Seven community members also volunteered.)

- **Number of Businesses Visited:** 168

- **Number of Surveys Completed:** 73

Survey Background

It should be noted that there were businesses that were 1) closed during the walk hours; 2) in the walk zones but not on the BTC list; and 3) on the BTC list but appeared no longer located or in operation at the listed address. Seventy-three of the 168 visited businesses (43 percent) completed surveys in-person.

This postcard was mailed to 647 storefront and home-based businesses in early June. The back of the postcard had Neighborhood Investment Unit contact information and a link to the Business Walk survey to take before July 1, 2018.
Survey Results for East Village

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

**58% Favorable**
Of 64 respondents, 37 rated East Village 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)*

**69% Positive**
Of 65 respondents, 45 said they are “Very Optimistic” or “Optimistic” about the business climate.

**Business Advantages**
*Question: What are the benefits of operating a business in this community? (Select as many as three)*

**Pedestrian Friendly**
Of the 68 respondents, 31 people (46 percent) selected the East Village business community as the top benefit.

**Business Benefits of East Village**

- Pedestrian friendly: 31, 30
- Good foot traffic: 27, 22
- Accessible parking: 12, 11
- Clean area: 5, 10

Number of Responses

“We appreciate the efforts to keep it (this area) clean and safe.”
– Donna Callahan, Events Manager, Mission Brewery
Business Obstacles – East Village
Question: What are the challenges of operating a business in your community? (Select as many as three)

Homelessness
Of the 68 respondents, 60 people (88 percent) cited the growing homeless population as a challenge of having a business in East Village.

“I was born and raised in San Diego and have been sad to see how the homeless have taken over these blocks of the neighborhood (near Commercial Street and National Avenue).”
- Matthew Domen, General Manager, San Diego & Imperial Valley Railroad Company Inc.

Growing Business – East Village
Question: Do you plan on expanding your business? If so, how?

57% Look to Expand
Forty-one of the 73 business owners surveyed have plans to grow their businesses.

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.)

Business Challenges in East Village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough parking</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety concerns</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graffiti</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low foot traffic</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor maintenance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many regulations</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of streetlights/crosswalks</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive business community</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Business Expansion in East Village

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plans</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No expansion plans</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire more employees</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open another location</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make tenant improvements</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interest in City Programs

Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Storefront Improvement</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Network</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free bike racks</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Permit Portal</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Loans</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business Mentoring</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA Compliance Resources</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Responses
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/parkingenforcement

- **Contact your Business Improvement District**  
  www.sandiego.gov/economic-development/about/bids

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East Village Association

East Village Association, Inc.  
1041 Market St. #200  
San Diego, CA  92101  
619-546-5636  
director@EastVillageSanDiego.com  
www.EastVillageSanDiego.com

**BID Awareness**  
*Question: Are you familiar with the East Village Association (Business Improvement District)?*

- **54%** Know the BID  
  Of the 65 business owners and managers surveyed, 35 knew about the BID.

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Awareness of East Village Association  
(N=65)

- **54%** Familiar with BID  
- **46%** Not familiar
Promotional Material Left at Businesses Visited (5x7, front and back)

The City of San Diego's Economic Development Department has many programs and local partners dedicated to helping businesses thrive and expand. Check out our website. Contact us.

Let's Get Busy!

Zoning Portal
Learn where you can locate your business in the City of San Diego.

Permits Portal
See who forwards the request for your business.

Need service? Get it Done
www.sandiego.gov/get-it-done
Use the Get It Done website or app to report and get service for non-emergency issues such as graffiti, potholes, streetlights, sidewalks, traffic signals, abandoned vehicles and dumping.

Expanding your business?
Visit OpenCounter™
http://business.sandiego.gov
Access the award-winning OpenCounter online business portal to plan, site and learn about permits and fees for launching and expanding a business in the City.

Get It Done

Top Online Services

Find resources for your business.

Want business advice?
Business Resource Matcher
www.sandiego.gov/business-resources
Find loans, tax credit programs, consultants, mentors, networking opportunities and services to help your business succeed.

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

STRENGTHENING BUSINESSES

Business Finance Loan Program
www.sandiego.gov/economic-development/business/financing
Do you own a small or medium-sized business, want to expand and need capital but can't meet the terms of a traditional bank? Get $25,000-$500,000 in gap financing from the City.

Free Bike Racks and Installation
TrafficOps@sandiego.gov
www.sandiego.gov/bicycleprogram
Think Sustainability. The City's Bicycle Program installs bike racks for free in the public right-of-way to encourage bicycling. Get a free rack in front of your business.

Storefront Improvement Program
www.sandiego.gov/storefront
Get free professional design assistance and rebates up to $16,000 for enhancing curb appeal. Eligible City businesses have a street-level, street-facing storefront, a valid City business tax certificate and fewer than 26 employees.

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

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