On **Oct 24, 2018**, the Economic Development Department held its first Council District 5 Business Walk, visiting businesses in four major commercial areas: **Rancho Bernardo Town Center, The Plaza, The Mercado Rancho Bernardo** and **Bernardo Center** (Iberia Place). The first big master-planned community in San Diego County outside of Downtown, Rancho Bernardo has its largest retail corridors located in these four areas.

In the week prior to the Business Walk, Economic Development Department staff canvassed the walk area and personally delivered postcards (right) announcing the upcoming walk. The back of the postcards provided City resource information.

The Business Walk was scheduled on a Wednesday, from 2:30 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 Rancho Bernardo.

- **Volunteers:** 14 (Volunteers represented the City’s Economic Development Department, Office of the City Treasurer, Council District 5, ACCION San Diego, Small Business Development Center and San Diego Workforce Partnership.)
- **Number of Businesses Visited:** 96
- **Number of Surveys Completed:** 33
Rancho Bernardo Survey Results
Thirty-three of the 96 visited businesses (34 percent) completed surveys in-person.

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

**84% Favorable**
Of the 31 respondents, 29 rated Rancho Bernardo 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 the 29 respondents, 20 said they are “Very Optimistic” or “Optimistic” about the business climate in this well-to-do community.

“Neutral” respondents (9) cited:
- high rent
- too many mall-related regulations
- not enough parking in The Mercado Center and Bernardo Center (Iberia Place).

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

**Safe and Clean**
Of the 27 respondents, 20 people (74%) said they appreciated the safety of the community. Also, 17 of 27 (63%) spoke of the well-maintained grounds, especially after the completion of construction projects that impacted Rancho Bernardo Town Center (renovation) and The Mercado Rancho Bernardo (road construction).

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.
Business Obstacles – Rancho Bernardo

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

**Construction/Parking**

Multiple tenants (12) at The Mercado Rancho Bernardo expressed frustration over the combined negative effects of the lengthy road construction project near the plaza's entrances/exits on Rancho Bernardo Road and Bernardo Center Drive; and the shortage of parking in the plaza, with no nearby street or overflow parking options for customers.

**Growing Business – Rancho Bernardo**

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

**63% Look to Expand**

Fifteen of 24 business owners surveyed have plans to grow their businesses, with eight businesses looking to hire more employees.

**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 Rancho Bernardo (N=27)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High rent</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low foot traffic</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inactive business community</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety concerns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor maintenance</td>
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</table>

### Business Expansion in Rancho Bernardo (N=24)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expansion</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No expansion</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hire more employees</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open another store</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make tenant improvements</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Interest in City Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small business network</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business mentoring</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get It Done app</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Business Portal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADA compliance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business loans</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
City Online Resources for Entrepreneurs

- **General Information**
  - [www.sandiego.gov/doing-business](http://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](http://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](https://business.sandiego.gov)
- **Business Resource Matcher**: Find services (loans, grants, mentoring, consulting, marketing) to help your business grow.
  - [www.sandiego.gov/business-resources](http://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](http://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](http://www.sandiego.gov/treasurer)
- **Parking Enforcement**: Contact San Diego Police Department Communications Center 619-531-2000.
  - [www.sandiego.gov/police/services/units/traffic/parkingenforcement](http://www.sandiego.gov/police/services/units/traffic/parkingenforcement)
- **Contact your local chamber**: North San Diego Business Chamber
  - [https://sdbusinesschamber.com/](https://sdbusinesschamber.com/)

North San Diego Business Chamber Awareness

*Question: Are you familiar with the North San Diego Business Chamber?*

53% Know the Chamber

Of the 30 respondents, 16 were familiar with the North San Diego Business Chamber.
Promotional Material Left at Businesses Visited (5x7, front and back)

The City of SAN DIEGO

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The City of San Diego’s Economic Development Department assists entrepreneurs, startups and companies—big and small—so they can launch, expand and succeed. We’re here to serve you.

A few companies we’ve helped...

- Ajinomoto-Althea
- Coronado Brewing
- Cutwater Spirits
- Hera Labs
- Kid Ventures

- Nomad Donuts
- Northrop Grumman
- Renovate America
- You & Yours Distilling Co.
- Workshops for Warriors

Sustainability-minded finance company Renovate America, above, partnered with the City for its Rancho Bernardo headquarters.

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

SD Economic Development BUSINESS TOOLKIT

Businesses are taking advantage of the City’s innovative online tools and programs, among them:

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

Need service? Try “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, pot holes, out streetlights, sidewalk issues and dumping.

Gap financing? Business Finance Loan Program
www.sandiego.gov/economic-development/business/financing
Borrow $25,000-$500,000 from the City for business expansion—even if you don’t meet the terms of a traditional bank.

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