BUSINESSBRIDGE

CONNECTING BUSINESSES TO PROSPERITY

Downtown Sacramento 2014 Series

The Sacramento Metro Chamber with Business Bridge presents the annual Downtown Sacramento Business Walk. The premise behind each walk is to "identify the successes and obstacles of the local business community, track that information over time and provide assistance in any way possible." In total, 267 Downtown Sacramento based businesses were available to be interviewed for the Downtown Sacramento Business Walk on September 18th 2014.

The conversations focused on four basic questions:

- How is business?
- What do you like about doing business in the area?
- What should be done to improve business?
- Do you support the renewal of the Downtown Sacramento Partnership?

Summary Results

The results show that the local business climate has had many ups and downs over the past few years, but overall when asked how business is, **87 percent cited that business is at least steady/fair if not good/great.** When asked what they like most about doing business in the area two things stood out for the majority of those interviewed: 1) Location 2) "The Community"

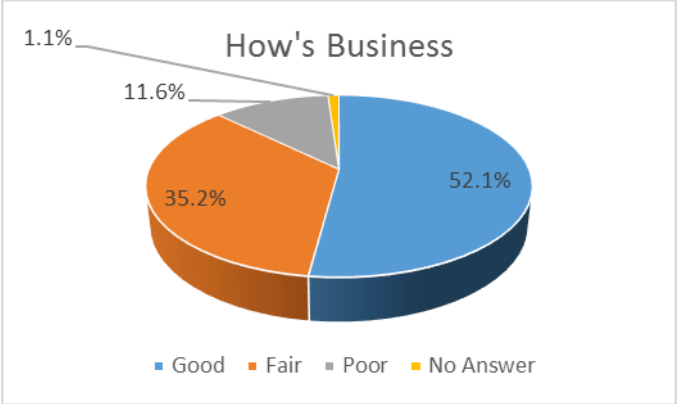
The Downtown Sacramento community is like many other communities right now, looking for different ways to stay in business and keep float. When asked what needs to be done to improve business in Downtown Sacramento, the most frequent responses were: 1) more advertising/events 2) better parking and 3) addressing security/the homeless. While there are challenges to operating downtown, very few said they were considering closing or relocating. The reminder of this report provides additional detail on the responses to each of the interview questions.

How is Business?

When asked how business is, respondents provided answers that were all over the map, from "I am doing great" to "I have seen a slight decrease in sales but I am still in business" to "It has been really slow lately."

52% percent of businesses stated that business is good/great indicating that they are succeeding due to various reasons: the diverse clientele, arena construction, and parking validation.

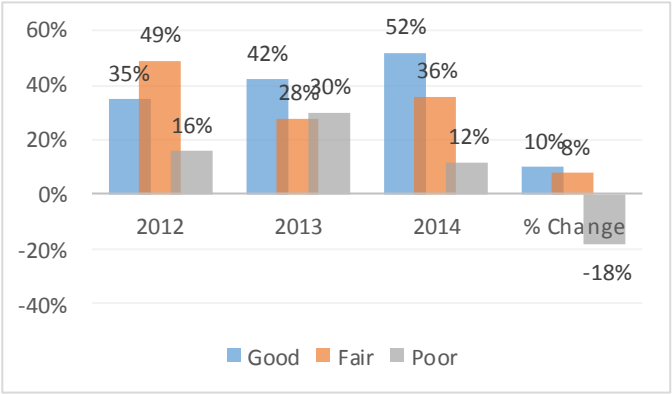
Businesses doing good/great in Downtown Sacramento are up by 10 percent from 2013 and over 27 percent from 2012, this shows positive trend in the Downtown Sacramento economic community.



Thirty-five percent of businesses who were interviewed cited that business is steady/fair and has been up and down over the past few years.

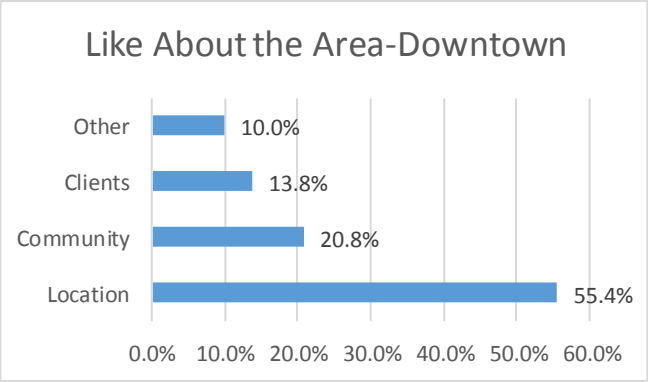
Many businesses cited the need to do more business transactions online. However, businesses hanging on is up by 8 percent from 2013 and down by 13 percent from 2012, which indicates that less businesses are closing and are able to survive.

Eleven percent cited that business has been slow/poor due to various factors such as the economy, changes in spending habits, access to their location, and local construction. Business owners stated that they are getting less foot traffic due to construction and that most of their customers were not aware that are they still open during construction. Despite the setbacks, businesses in Downtown Sacramento want to stay in business and are looking for different ways to market themselves. The number of businesses doing poorly or closing are down by 12 percent from 2013 and 4 percent from 2012.



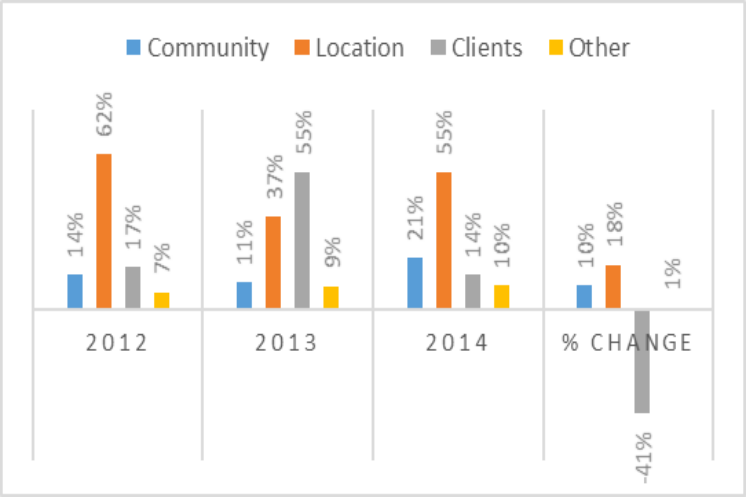
What do you like about doing business in the area?

Location was cited by over 55 percent of respondents as a main reason for doing business in Downtown Sacramento, an increase of 18% over 2013 however it is down 7 percent from 2012. The proximity to major freeways/highways is why so many can do business effectively in Downtown Sacramento. Many businesses have been in Downtown for several years with a low turnover rate. Business owners value the history and longevity that Downtown has to offer.



Respondents stated that they enjoy the tourist clientele and describe the local community as very "diverse". "Community" as an answer to what people like about Downtown is up by 11 percent from 2013 and 7 percent from 2012.

Businesses state that they want to be a positive contribution to the community and would like to be a part of more community events. Business talked about wanting to see more family based events in the future, as these events help them maintain customer relationships. Lastly, a majority of business are appreciative of the employee pool that Downtown has to offer.

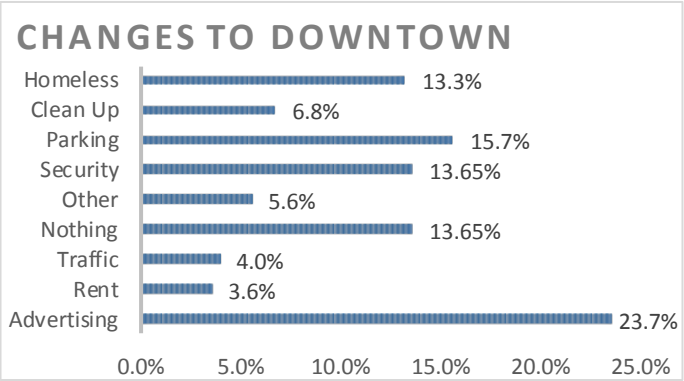


Some respondents provided several "other" reasons for liking Downtown Sacramento, including:

- The Downtown Sacramento Partnership
- Everything is in walking distance

What should be done to improve business?

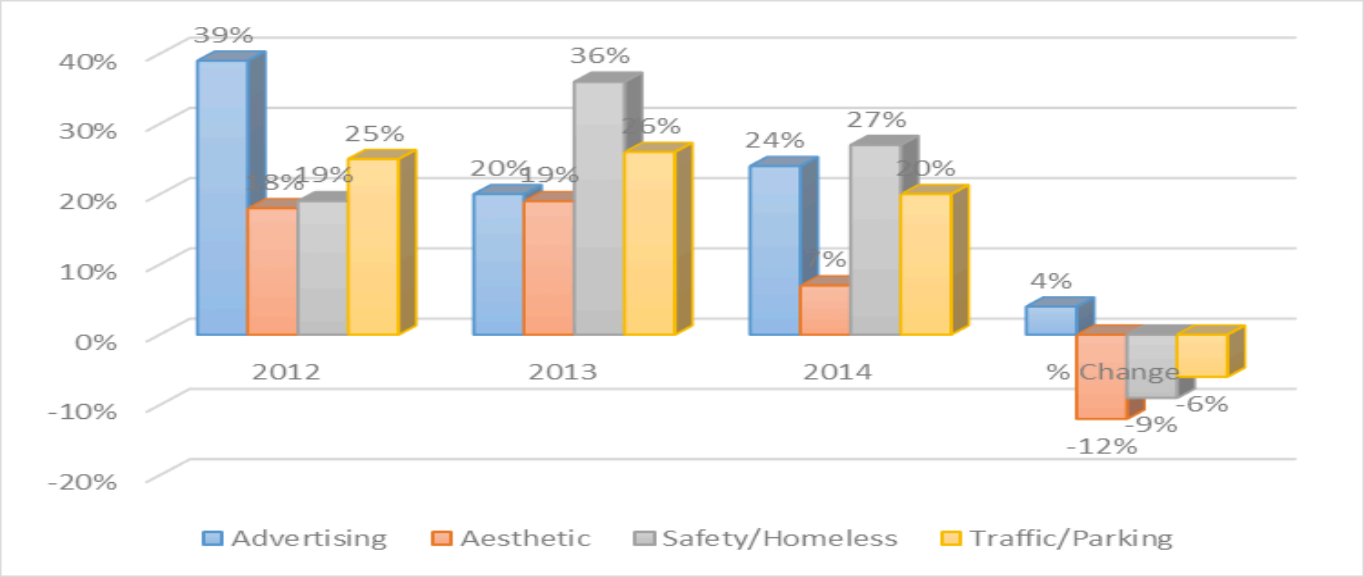
In 2013 local safety and the homelessness concern were key factors for Downtown businesses. While these factors are still high on the list of priorities it seems that there is improvement in the area. Safety and homeless concerns are down by 9 percent from 2013 however they are up by 8 percent from 2012.



Advertising is still a hot topic worth addressing Downtown. 2014 responses show that 24 percent of business owners are still interested in seeing more advertising and events in the area. This number is up by 4 percent from the previous year and down by 15 percent from 2012. Many owners discussed that many consumers are not aware that they are open during construction. Additionally, business owners felt that access to their businesses was negatively impacted due to the local construction. Suggestions to advertise that downtown businesses are still open to the public was a key topic that was raised.

Local traffic and parking as an issue is down by 6 percent from last year, though it stands as a common concern for local businesses. The primary parking concern is to have adequate parking for employees. Many employees are finding it difficult to obtain parking for long periods of time. Lastly, business owners feel that it is difficult to offer competitive wages because they must offer paid parking in order to attract skilled employees.

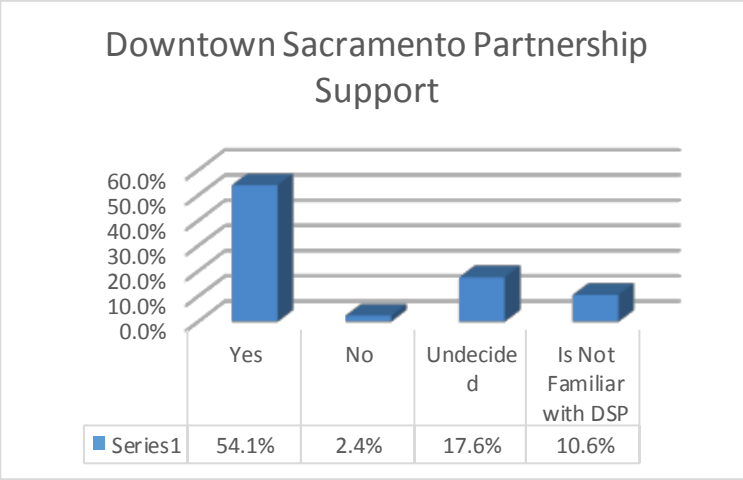
Downtown business owners felt that aesthetic improvement has become a priority to the city. Business owners are noticing the positive changes taking place around the Downtown community. Business owners are encouraging this change to continue while still highlighting their ongoing concerns with proper lighting and trash from the homeless.



Downtown Sacramento Partnership

Over fifty percent of business owners are in support of the Downtown Sacramento Partnership. Many businesses are seeing the changes that the partnership has brought to the community and would like to see the positive changes continue.

Just over 10 percent of businesses interviewed were unaware of the partnership and what it entailed. Most of these owners wanted to learn more about the Downtown Sacramento Partnership. A very small percentage of business owners, 2.4 percent, were not in support of the partnership. Most of these did not state a cause for their position other than they felt that the Partnership was not living up to their hopes.



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Boost Mobile
KBAR
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Ella Dining Room and Bar
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MJ Doyle Jewelers
Frank Fat's
La Bonne Soupe Cafe
Break Time Mini Mart
Fam Smoke Shop
Moler Barber College
Lei's Kitchen
Chamber Room
Sacramento Bail Bonds
J Street Wireless
Atlantis Bail Bonds
Yee Dental Care
Chef's Olive Mix
Munchies
California Tee's
Kings Team Store

Getta Clue
Spinners Cinnamon Rolls
Hallmark
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The Candy Barrel
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The Sacramento Metro Chamber is the largest and oldest voice of business in the greater Sacramento area. Representing nearly 2,000 member businesses and business organizations in the six-county Sacramento region, the Metro Chamber serves as the region's leading proponent of regional cooperation and primary advocate on issues affecting business, strengthening the regional economy and quality of life. As a principal partner in Next Economy Capital Region Prosperity Plan, the Metro Chamber executes the Business Walk Series in cooperation with its local chamber and public sector partners. The Metro Chamber has partnered with 19 other regional jurisdictions and economic development organizations to provide one-on-one support for county businesses and throughout the 6-county Capital region. These organizations, through Business Bridge, are meeting one-on-one with businesses throughout the region to identify and address individual business needs and ensure continued growth and economic prosperity. For additional information concerning Business Bridge, visit www.metrochamber.org/business-bridg.