



Division/Clinton Business Association
Business Survey Report
January 14, 2014

Summary

“The more chance there is of stubbing your toe, the more chance you have of stepping into success.” Currently the chances of stubbing your toe in Division/Clinton’s district are high, which means the chances for a successful Division/Clinton are also high. As part of DCBA’s efforts to prepare for success, it created two surveys to provide a snapshot of the district’s present conditions and thoughts for its future. The Business Survey asked how the businesses regarded the district, what they thought of DCBA, and what it could provide to help them. The Resident Survey asked for what they thought of the district, how they interact with it, and what they want from it in the future. With the assistance and a grant from Venture Portland, the surveys responses were collected from June to September 2013.

Businesses think of the district as expanding, active, and ambitious.. They want the majority of new businesses to be a mix or small retail shops that attract customers during the day although they did not name them as did the residents. They choose to operate in the district because they live in or near it and because of the strong sense of community both among the businesses and among the residents. They stay because of the neighborhood, the loyalty of their customers, and the district’s reputation. They do not plan to change and have no noticeable interest in expanding. Like their neighbors, they worry about congestion, lack of customer parking, and unsafe street crossings. Their responses to the usefulness of DCBA’s events is mixed. Businesses want benefits for membership and they want the business association to offer opportunities for them to be noticed through events, marketing, and media.

As a result of the responses from the residents and businesses, Division/Clinton is planning the following actions:

- Redefine its role in the district
- Prepare a marketing plan and market the district widely
- Revise and reconsider annual events
- Recruit more retail businesses
- Aggressively seek new members to the association
- Find more ways for members to connect and communicate

*“I don't think my business benefits *directly* from any of these but rather indirectly, from the overall reputation of the neighborhood. Anything that helps appealing businesses succeed is good for my business, because then my clients like coming here.”* Businesses have no illusion that the association can make them more successful. But, they think the association can help them succeed by adding a district-wide marketing plan, a retail event that draws like Dining on Division, membership benefits, a monthly electronic newsletter, and more mixer/networking events.

Background

Business began at the streetcar stops on Division and Clinton, with blocks of residences between them, creating the pattern of businesses clustered between blocks of residences. When the DCBA was restarted in 1998, it focused its energy on physical improvements to attract business and improve the district's reputation. It successfully advocated to restore commercial zoning to corner businesses. It planted street trees, painted murals; established an annual fair; and a website with an online business directory. It advocated for changes in parking and part time lane use, and worked with the City to upgrade the street. The successful results can be seen in its reputation as a premier dining destination and the many mixed use buildings under construction, with businesses waiting to move in. The DCBA now faces major changes to its business mix, the size of its district, and its reason for existence. Paid membership has not grown and DCBA has needed constant fund raising and grants to operate.

What we learned from our businesses

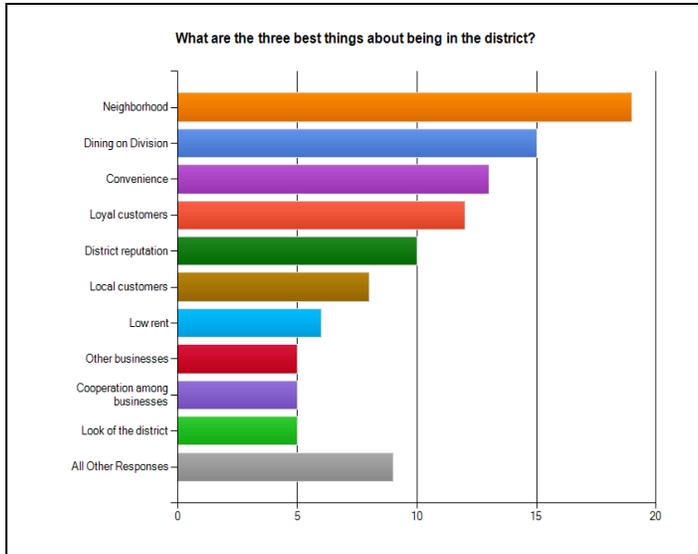
Most of D/CBA's businesses are located on Division and Clinton Streets, with others on side streets one block on either side. Although its reputation is for restaurants, there are over 60 different kinds of businesses in the district. Business owners live in the district and have a strong sense of community and support for local businesses. The majority plan to stay where they are.. They approve of the monthly SE Examiner article, and the Yahoogroups list-serv. They are neutral on the website, occasional mailings and emails, and have very little interest in advocacy and business training as currently presented to them.

While the majority of respondents said they worked in Health and Wellness, there are over 60 different businesses in the area. They include:

Artists	Alzheimer's care	Printing	Restaurants
Brew Pub	Acupuncture	Product Design	Optometrist
Photographer	Rolfing	Landlord/retail	Pet Store
Financial	Coffee/Tea	Restaurant	Engineers
Real Estate	Entertainment	Grocery	Art Galleries
Lodging	Nonprofit	Psychic	Taxes
Vintage Clothing	Repurposed wood products	Software	Marketing
Auto Repair	Mental Health	Beauty Shops	Real Estate
Architects and builders	Churches	Schools	Tavern
Printing	Music	Child Care	Spa
Clothing	Landlord/Commercial	Property Owner	Yarn
Gym	Counseling	Nonprofit	Winemakers
Veterinarian	Bakery	Yoga	Machinist
Leather Goods	Film maker	Gas station	Mail Boxes
Convenience Store	Imported Goods	Coffee Roaster	Accountants
Safety & Security	Product Design		

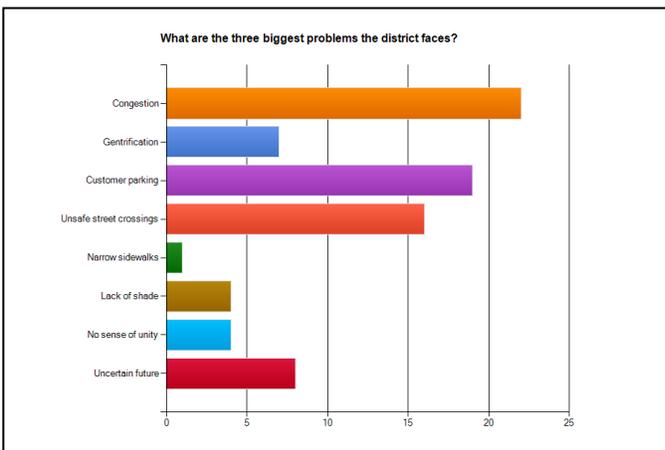
The three factors that would provide the most positive impact on local business are customer parking, followed by improved street crossings and bicycle parking. Businesses and neighbors are in full agreement of this as well as the need for public space. Free Wi-Fi would make them happy too.

Businesses think the best things about the district are the neighborhood (56%), Dining on Division (47%) and loyal customers and convenience, tied at 38%. Comments said it's a destination and greenery.



Answer Choices –	Responses –
Safety	8.82%
Local customers	23.53%
Loyal customers	38.24%
Other businesses	17.65%
Cooperation among businesses	14.71%
District reputation	29.41%
Look of the district	14.71%
Building facades	2.94%
Windows displays	0%
Street Fair	11.76%
Convenience	38.24%
Dining on Division	47.06%
Low rent	17.65%
D/CBA marketing	2.94%
Neighborhood	55.88%

The three biggest problems are congestion (73%), lack of customer parking (67%) and unsafe street crossings (57%). Comments mentioned increasing rents and narrow streets.

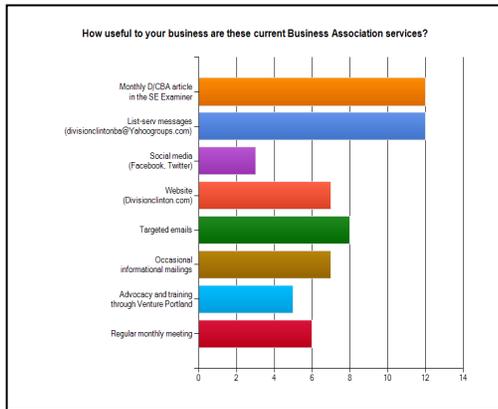


Answer Choices –	Responses –
Congestion	73.33%
Gentrification	23.33%
Customer parking	66.67%
Unsafe street crossings	56.67%
Narrow sidewalks	3.33%
Lack of shade	13.33%
No sense of unity	13.33%
Uncertain future	26.67%

The business association does not score well on public events. None of the D/CBA's current events are seen as providing a positive impact by more than one third of businesses. Asked about the impacts of DCBA's events the responses were:

	Positive impact –	Slightly positive impact –	No impact –	Slightly negative impact –	Negative impact –
January Dining on Division/Clinton Cuisine	6.45%	35.48%	58.06%	0%	0%
July Street Fair and Parade	32.26%	32.26%	32.26%	0%	3.23%
Annual luncheon and meeting	12.90%	16.13%	70.97%	0%	0%

There was somewhat more enthusiasm for other DCBA activities with the monthly article in the SE Examiner leading the List-serv by only a few points. Social media is low because DCBA hasn't paid sufficient attention it keeping it timely.

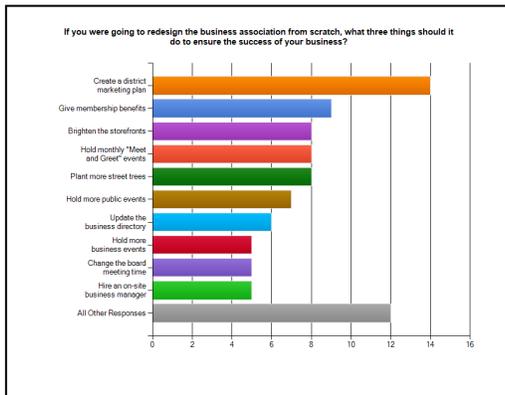


Answer Choices –	Responses –
Monthly D/CBA article in the SE Examiner	52%
List-serv	48%
Social media (Facebook, Twitter)	16%
Website (Divisionclinton.com)	32%
Targeted emails	32%
Occasional informational mailings	32%
Advocacy and training	20%
Regular monthly meeting	24%

When asked what services DCBA could offer to improve the district, responses were muted. 80% said mixers/networking events would be useful or somewhat useful, followed by 78% liking the idea of an electronic newsletter, 70% in favor of cooperative advertising, and 68% in approving of representation to the city and county. Additional trash cans on the street scored 55% and group purchase of office supplies a low 29%.

	Very useful –	Somewhat useful –	Don't know –
Representation to the City and County	35.48%	32.26%	32.26%
Cooperative Advertising	33.33%	37.04%	14.81%
Group purchasing of office supplies	7.41%	22.22%	33.33%
Mixer/Networking events	36.67%	43.33%	13.33%
Monthly electronic newsletter	32.14%	46.43%	14.29%
Garbage cans on the street	29.63%	25.93%	22.22%
Seminars	8%	16%	64%

Their opinions on how to redesign the association were mixed. Nearly half the respondents (48%) want a district marketing plan 31% wanted membership benefits. They want to continue to improve the district by planting more street tree and brightening storefronts. While 80% approved mixers/networking events on another question, only 45% responded positively to holding more business events or monthly Meet and Greet events on this question. The 78% in favor of an electronic newsletter shrank to 10% for a monthly newsletter.



Answer Choices –	Responses –
Give membership benefits	31.03%
Create a district marketing plan	48.28%
Assist cooperative purchasing	6.90%
Hold more public events	24.14%
Hold more business events	17.24%
Brighten the storefronts	27.59%
Hold general membership meetings	6.90%
Provide a monthly newsletter	10.34%
Hold monthly "Meet and Greet" events	27.59%
Plant more street trees	27.59%
Change the board meeting time	17.24%
Upgrade the website	10.34%
Help provide canopies for shade	6.90%
Update the business directory	20.69%
Hire an on-site business manager	17.24%

Their comments were wide ranging and thoughtful.

- I don't think the DCBA should assist directly with cooperative purchasing; it might facilitate the creation of such a service, and allow the individual businesses to maintain the service as they saw fit.
- It might offer to facilitate "Meet and Greet" events and/or some event, but the businesses would have to carry on these services if they wanted them.
- Develop a good neighbor agreement to promote a family place where businesses respect their home owner neighbors and provide a quiet place for those who live in the neighborhood.
- Find ways to serve lower income residents of the neighborhood
- No more noisy bands near our office during business hours, including Saturdays.
- Give more incentives for maintaining store fronts. Have a local publication of the area, provide a food and restaurant guide with a map and pictures of all our award winning establishments and above all have the printing done at our local printers based on a closed bid.
- Not sure if the business association can ensure the success of any business.... certainly it can help though.

Conclusion

Many business owners and their employees are residents of the district and match its demographics. Businesses see a solid business district with a good reputation and a growing number of possible customers, including incoming businesses. They are willing to support the business association in exchange for member benefits, greater exposure, and more communication. While businesses and residents both worry about parking, traffic congestion, mixing bikes and cars, insufficient street crossings and narrow sidewalks, businesses are more accepting of the changes and more optimistic about the future of the district.