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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In mid-October of 2000 the Northeast Los Angeles Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) conducted a door-to-door survey of business owners in Eagle Rock. The purpose of the survey was to identify the needs and priorities of business owners in the following areas: *business growth/stability, traffic issues, street appearance, crime and safety, financial and business assistance, marketing and advertising, and organizational and funding issues*. What follows is a synthesis of the findings:

Characteristics of Business Owners

- *Race/Ethnicity:* Business owners fall mainly into two groups, **White (38%)** and **Latino (34%)**; out of 26 business owners who identified themselves as immigrants, 31% were from Armenia and 23% from Mexico.
- *Business Background:* The highest ownership type group among Eagle Rock business owners was identified as being **sole proprietors (60% of 90 business owners)**. The survey also found that only 20% of survey participants have been doing business in Eagle Rock for 20+ years, and a higher percentage (46%) have been doing business in Eagle Rock for less than 5 years. Another major finding was in the area of business growth. The survey found that **84% of businesses are either stable or improving**.
- *Property Ownership and Rent Affordability:* Out of 86 responses, the survey found that **35%** of business owners **own the property they are located at** and **79%** said their **rent was affordable**. This affordability might be a reason why only 26% of 54 business owners expressed interest in purchasing their business property.
- *Community Involvement/Membership:* Regarding membership in community organizations, 58 business owners reported belonging to an organization. Of these 58, **55%** of them are **members of the Eagle Rock Chamber of Commerce (ERCC)**. Of those that do not belong to the ERCC, **34% expressed interest in becoming a Chamber member**.

Traffic issues and street appearance

- *Crosswalks, Speeding, and Parking:* The survey found that **crosswalks do not pose a problem** in Eagle Rock, but there is **much concern over speeding traffic** coming from and going to the Ventura Freeway and using both Eagle Rock and Colorado Boulevard as a drive through area. **Parking was reported as the most significant traffic problem**. There is a need for more parking space, especially along Colorado Boulevard, from the intersection of Eagle Rock Boulevard all the way to Townsend Street.
- *Street Appearance:* The survey found that **graffiti is a major problem** for business owners in Eagle Rock and they would like to see their streets cleaner and graffiti free. Litter and tree trimming are not a problem at all for business owners.

Crime and Safety

- Although break-ins and shoplifting were not identified as a problem for business owners, other street crimes and safety issues were. Such problems included drug trafficking, improper lighting at night which jeopardize customers' and business owners' safety, and robberies. There was a report of a woman being held up at gunpoint in the early evening in the parking lot of the Super A supermarket on Eagle Rock Boulevard, armed robberies in broad daylight have been occurring more frequently, car jackings, etc. Due to these crimes and safety concerns, **47%** of 90 business owners expressed a **desire to see an increase in police presence** patrolling Eagle Rock and Colorado Boulevard.

Marketing and Advertising

- *Local Advertising:* Of 79 business owners who responded to the question of advertising, 74% stated that **local advertising is not a problem for them**. This might explain why only a small percentage of business owners were interested in advertising with local journals, in fact the highest interest in advertising (35%) went towards both the Occidental College Student Newspaper and the Occidental College website.
- *Joint Marketing and Advertising:* Of 82 business owners, **51% expressed interest in a joint marketing/advertising venue**.

Organizational/Funding Issues

- *Business Improvement District:* Regarding the issue of Business Improvement Districts (BID), the survey found some skepticism on the part of business owners. Only **49%** of business owners said they **would support a BID**, this might be due to a lack of knowledge on what a BID is. A great number of business owners (**54%**) **reported not knowing what a BID was or how it worked**. When business owners were asked if a **BID would be beneficial** for Eagle Rock businesses, **78% of 68 business owners said yes** but only if it was managed properly.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Traffic Issues and Street Appearance

- *Parking:* Because parking is such a problem, some business owners suggested tearing down the median, to facilitate the conversion of parallel parking to angle parking. Others suggested erecting a parking structure, or purchasing residential properties adjacent to businesses and converting them into parking lots. Such major changes in land use should be reviewed carefully with the cooperation of the Department of City Planning.
- *Speeding:* Speeding was the second most significant traffic. Angle parking may help to slow down traffic. It may be possible to examine lowering the speed limit.
- *Graffiti:* The graffiti problem acknowledged by business owners should be abated. This can initially be addressed with the assistance of Councilman Nick Pacheco's office. Sustaining graffiti abatement could be one of the priorities of a business improvement district. Business owners can also call LAPD Officer Colenzo, in charge of a youth PACE program, at 213-847-0511. This program will paint off the graffiti on walls, but property owners need to provide the paint.

Crime and Safety

- One business owner reported narcotics sales occurring in the evening, associated with pedestrian and vehicular traffic surrounding a liquor store at the west side of the intersection of Eagle Rock Boulevard and Ridgeview. Police should meet privately with the business owners who filed this report to investigate whether this is a recurring problem. In addition, a private security company could be commissioned by a business improvement district to help patrol the commercial corridors. This would be of great help since there are only six LAPD officers responsible for patrolling the Northeast Los Angeles region.

Organizational/Funding Issues

- There is sufficient business owner interest in establishing a business improvement district. Many business owners who said they would not financially support a BID also reported that they believed a BID would be beneficial. The Northeast Los Angeles COPC can help to organize the initial meetings to help form an Eagle Rock BID.
- Follow-up meetings need to be conducted as soon as possible to address any community concerns, clear up any confusions, and provide business owners with proper knowledge as to the dynamics of BIDs.

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

In answer to a request by the Eagle Rock Community Preservation and Revitalization Group (ERCPR) and the Eagle Rock Chamber of Commerce, the Northeast Los Angeles Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) of Occidental College conducted an Eagle Rock Business Survey. The survey covered the businesses along Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevard.

An initial questionnaire was drafted and subsequently improved through review and input from Linda Allen of the ERCPR, Linda Herbert of Councilman Nick Pacheco's Office, business owner Vic Parrino, Paula Crisostomo and Jim Tranquada of Occidental College, and consultant Ed Henning. The survey was translated into Spanish and interviews conducted in such language when applicable.

To prepare for the survey, a list of business owners on Eagle Rock and Colorado Boulevard was obtained from Linda Allen and Ed Henning. The survey covered businesses along Colorado Blvd. between Avenue 64 and Ellenwood Road, and on Eagle Rock Blvd. between Verdugo Street and Colorado Blvd. There were a total of 350 businesses on the list.

During a three week period, from October 26 to November 10, project participants conducted the survey. When possible, business owners were contacted in advance for an interview appointment, but students were often just as successful walking into businesses and interviewing owners. There was reluctance on the part of some business owners at the beginning stages of the survey, but a letter of support from Councilman Nick Pacheco eventually helped to stimulate greater participation.

A total of 93 questionnaires were successfully completed, for a response rate of 27% (93/350). Once the implementation phase was completed, the acquired data was inputted, analyzed and interpreted through the cooperation of Maria Cardona, Kim Seelye, Marisa Omori, Angela Chan, and Jan Lin. Students reported their initial findings at a debriefing meeting held at Senor Fresh (which provided complimentary dinner) on November 13. A presentation of the final survey findings to the Eagle Rock community took place on Monday, December 11, 2000 at the Eagle Rock Library. A total of 22 people attended the presentation, including business owners, community organizations, survey participants, an LAPD detective of the Northeast Division, and community representatives. During the presentation there was time set aside for further suggestions/recommendations from attendees; their comments have been incorporated into this report's recommendation section.

ECONOMIC HISTORY OF EAGLE ROCK

The community of Eagle Rock is named for the spherical monolithic rock formation, with a shadowy impression in the shape of a flying eagle, which sits in the foothills of the San Gabriel mountains. Originally a portion of the Verdugo land-grant during the period of Mexican rule up to 1848, the Eagle Rock valley was subdivided for East Coast immigrants engaging in sheep ranching, fruit, vegetable and flower farming, during the passage into Anglo rule. Over the years, the artery successively named Old Country Road, Eagle Rock Road, and finally Colorado Boulevard, served as the principal east-west connection between Glendale and Pasadena (Howard and Younghans: 11). Urbanization was accelerated with the extension of electric streetcars into the community in 1909, which linked Eagle Rock with both Glendale and downtown Los Angeles. Eagle Rock incorporated itself as a city in 1911, improving utility and postal infrastructure and paving roads such as Colorado Boulevard and Hill Drive. Occidental College moved from its congested site in Highland Park into its present day 95 acre location in Eagle Rock in 1914. In 1923, due to a need to improve water supply, the sewage infrastructure, and the school system, Eagle Rock was annexed to the City of Los Angeles (Won: 6). Four years later, in 1927, Eagle Rock High School was opened and with 690 students.

Presently, Eagle Rock “is bounded by Glendale on the west, the Verdugo hills on the north, Pasadena on the east, and Highland Park and Glassell Park on the south” (Los Angeles Department of City Planning 1992). Since World War II, however, the region has been bypassed with the development of the freeway system, which fostered commercial decentralization and the growth of peripheral suburbs. The physical appearance and commercial vitality of Colorado and Eagle Rock Boulevard declined further with the opening of shopping malls, such as the Eagle Rock Plaza in 1973, which was subsequently superseded by newer malls such as Glendale Galleria and Plaza Pasadena (Gordon 1975). Eagle Rock has also been bypassed by the kind of gentrification of older pedestrian commercial districts taking place in its sister foothill cities, such as Brand Boulevard in Glendale, Fair Oaks Boulevard in South Pasadena, and Colorado Boulevard in Old Town Pasadena.

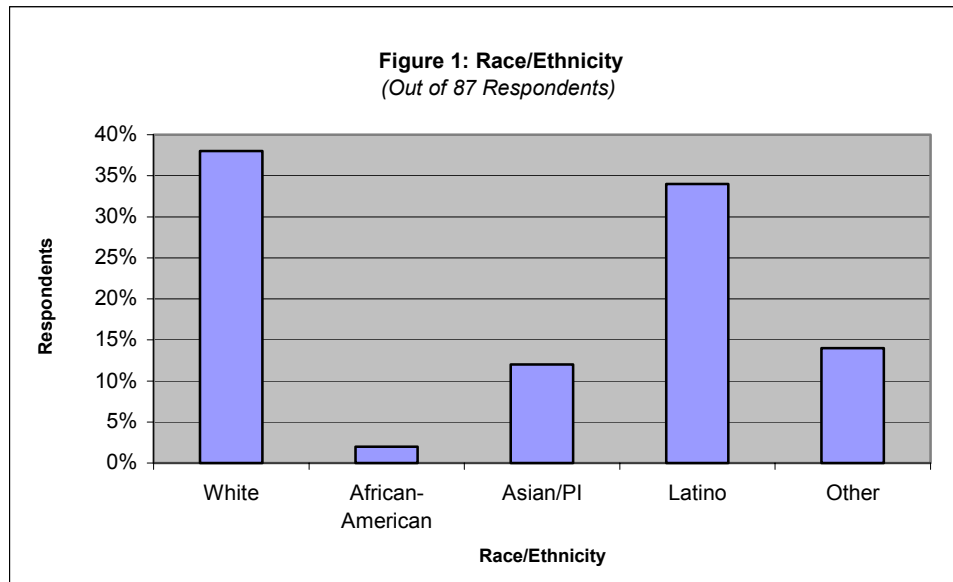
Despite this decline, a sense of continuity and autonomy in the community emanates from the ongoing presence of a strong representation of elderly, owner-occupier residents, and the situating of the 14th City Council Field Office at the old “Eagle Rock Town Hall” building on Colorado Boulevard. New immigrants (especially Latino, Filipino, and Armenian) have arrived since the 1970s, giving Eagle

Rock new commercial energy and a more diverse and youthful demography. There was some speculative development of new mini-malls on Colorado Boulevard in the 1980s, and the demolition of some older storefronts at Townsend drew some community opposition, which eventually coalesced into the founding of The Eagle Rock Coalition (TERA) (Won 1999). In 1992, the Colorado Specific Plan was adopted by the Los Angeles City Council which established various provisions, guidelines, and regulations on land use and development planning, building design, sign standards, related abatement and conformance requirements, and a design review process centered about a locally empowered Design Review Board.

In 1997, a coalition of citizens, with funding from the Councilperson's Office, and the assistance of Consultant Ed Henning, launched the Downtown Directions project to develop a focused revitalization strategy for Eagle Rock. The final report released in 1999 suggested that revitalization be carried out by subcommittees in four areas, including: a) Business Enhancement, b) Image Enhancement, c) Physical Enhancement, and 4) Organization and Resource Development. The revitalization of the "Superblock" surrounding the Duffy Building, and formation of a Business Improvement District were major components of the plan (Eagle Rock Downtown Revitalization Coalition 1999). The Eagle Rock Downtown Revitalization Coalition was subsequently renamed the Eagle Rock Community Preservation and Revitalization Corporation (ERCPR). In the summer of 2000, through assistance from Representative Jack Scott's office, the ERCPR was awarded a \$300,000 grant from the State of California for façade and signage improvements, painting, landscaping, and a traffic study in Eagle Rock.

FINDINGS

Business Owners' characteristics:



Race/Ethnicity

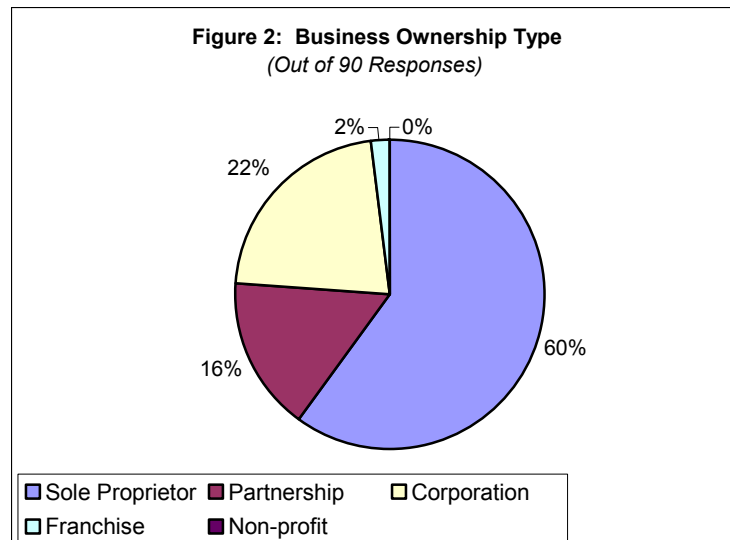
When compared to the rest of the Northeast L.A. region, Eagle Rock as a whole has the lowest Latino population (29%), but this does not seem to be the case with business owners in Eagle Rock¹. Of 87 business owners who answered the question of ethnicity, 38% identified themselves as White, 34% as Latino, 12% as Asian/Pacific Islanders, and 2% as African-American (see Figure 1: Race/Ethnicity, and Table 1a: Race/Ethnicity in the Appendix).

Business owners were also asked to state their country of origin if they were immigrants to this country. Two major groups arose from this question: Armenia and Mexico (see Table 1b: Immigrants' Country of Origin, in the Appendix). Thirty-one percent (31%) identified themselves as Armenian and 23% as Mexican, with 38% identifying as Other. The Other group included 10 individuals from Germany, Korea, the Philippines, Peru, Holland, Greece, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, and Iran.

Ownership Type

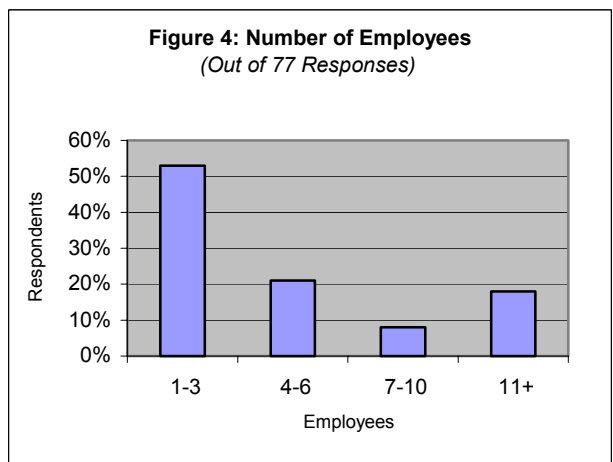
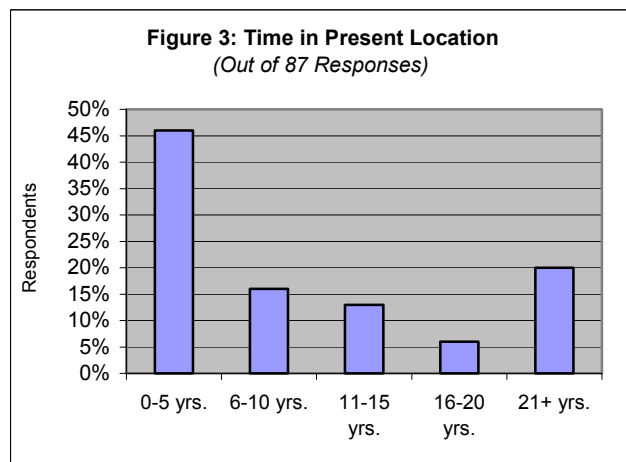
When respondents were asked about business ownership patterns, more than half (60%) identified themselves as sole proprietors (see Figure 2: Business Ownership Type), followed by 22% who identified themselves as being part of a Corporation. Unlike Highland Park, no businesses reported non-profit status.

¹ U.S. Census Data, 1990.



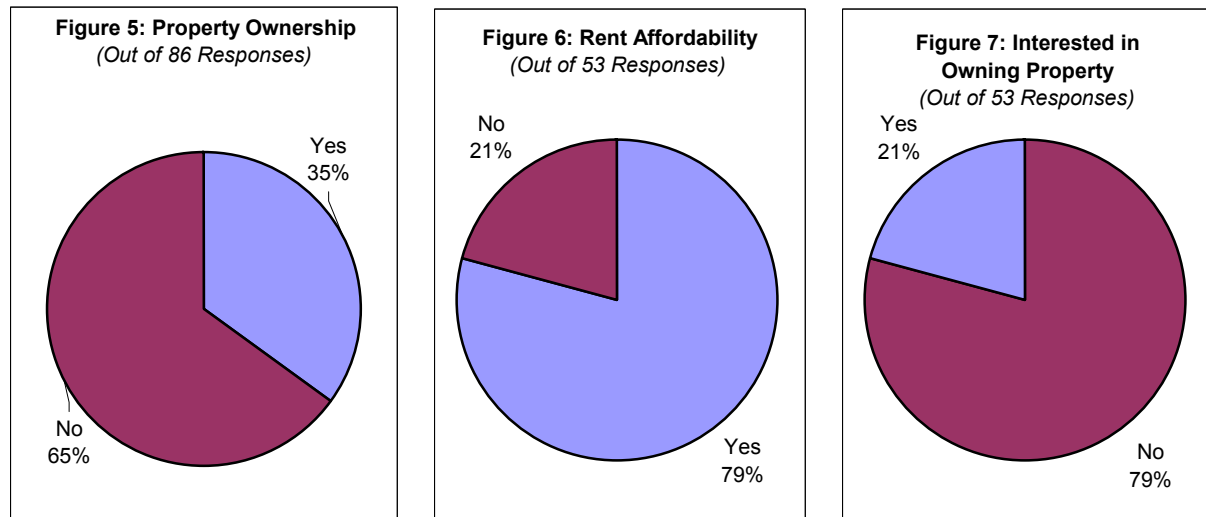
Years in Present Location

Out of 87 business owners, 46% said they had been at their present location doing business for less than five years (see Figure 3: Years in Present Location). A good 20% have been in their present location for 20+ years. This type of locational stability strengthens Eagle Rock's business base and is a sure sign of economic stability, versus decline.



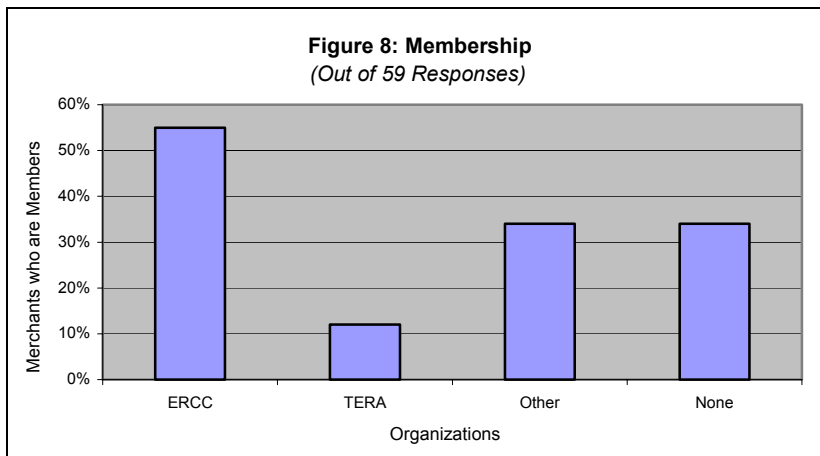
Of 77 respondents, more than half (53%) had between 1-3 employees, 21% had between 4-6, and 18% had more than 11 employees (see Figure 4: Number of Employees). These figures compare with 1990 US Census data which show that 40% of Eagle Rock residents work near their homes. On employee status, business owners reported that 59% of their employees worked full time while 41% worked part-time (see Table 1h: Employee Status in the appendix).

Property Ownership and Rent Affordability



One of the best indicators of business permanence and stability is property ownership. Out of 86 business owners only 35% own the building they are located in, of those that do not own their building 79% said their rent was affordable (see Figures 5 and 6). When businesses who rent their property were asked if they would be interested in purchasing their business property, only 21% said they were (see Figure 7: Interested in Owning Property). This low percentage could be due to rent affordability.

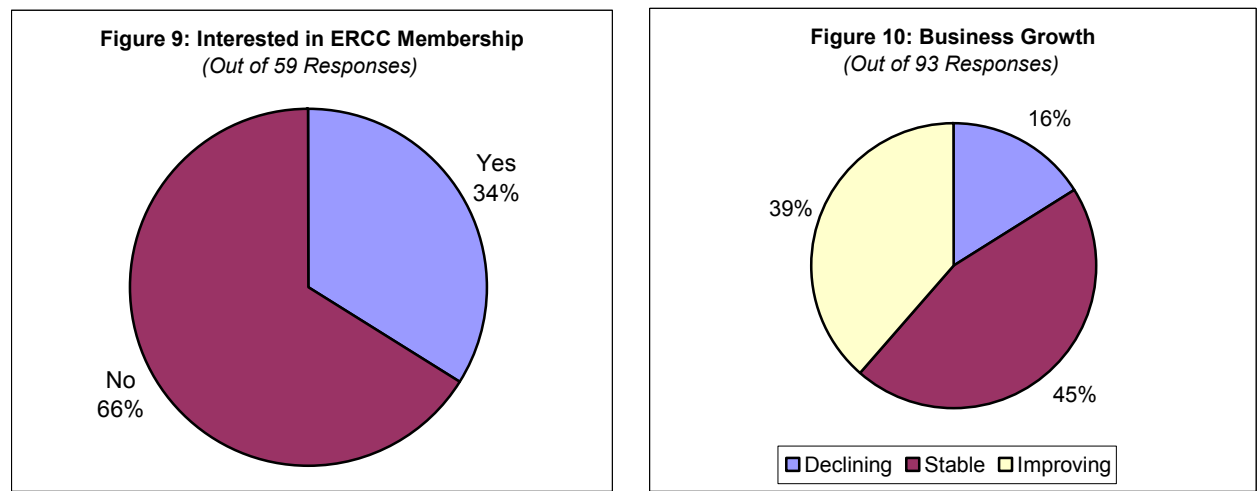
Organizational membership and business growth:



Membership in business or community organizations indicates the level of cooperation, communication, and community involvement among business owners. The Eagle Rock Business Survey shows that 63%, the majority of business owners, are active in business or community organizations (see Figure 8: Membership). Types of organizations that business owners participate in

include the Eagle Rock Chamber of Commerce (ERCC), The Eagle Rock Kiwanis Club, The Eagle Rock Association, CORC, and the Eagles Club.

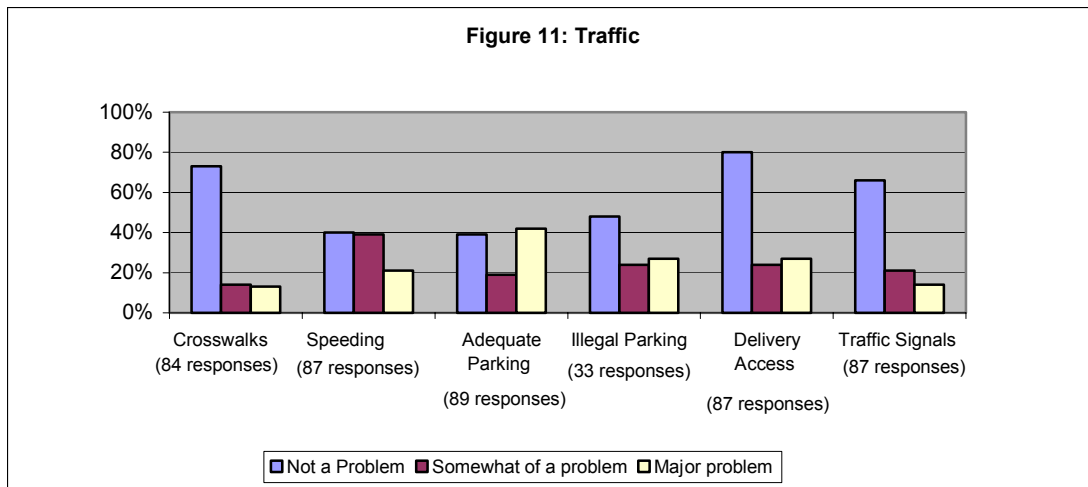
When surveyors asked business owners, who are not currently in an organization, if they would consider becoming a member of the Chamber of Commerce, 34% said yes and 66% said no (see Figure 9: Interested in ERCC Membership). Reasons business owners gave for answering negatively fell into three categories: 1) they do not have enough time to attend meetings, 2) they perceive the Chamber to be ineffective, especially with their use of member fees, and 3) they do not see the benefits of belonging to the Chamber.



When asked how their business was doing, 39% of businesses described it to be improving, 16% declining, and 45% stable (see Figure 10: Business Growth). The fact that only 39% of businesses reported their business to be improving demonstrates that the commercial life of Eagle Rock is not thriving and would benefit from a business revitalization effort.

Traffic:

The survey found that a majority of business owners do not consider crosswalks to be a problem for their business. Of the 84 responses to this question, 73% of business owners said crosswalks were not a problem, 14% said it was somewhat a problem, and 13% said it was a major problem (see Figure 11: Traffic). Business owners are divided as to whether speeding is not a problem or somewhat a problem. Forty percent (40%) of business owners describe speeding as not being a problem, 39% said it was somewhat a problem, and 21% describe it as a major problem (see Figure 11: Traffic).



Many business owners are quite concerned about adequate parking in Eagle Rock, particularly business owners along Colorado Boulevard. Forty-two percent (42%) said adequate parking was a major problem, 19% reported that it was somewhat a problem, and 39% said adequate parking is not a problem (see Figure: 11 Traffic). Business owners who felt that there was a need for more commercial parking in Eagle Rock offered the suggestion of reducing the medians on Colorado Boulevard to create extra parking and converting parallel parking along the main streets to angle parking. Another suggestion was to erect a parking structure.

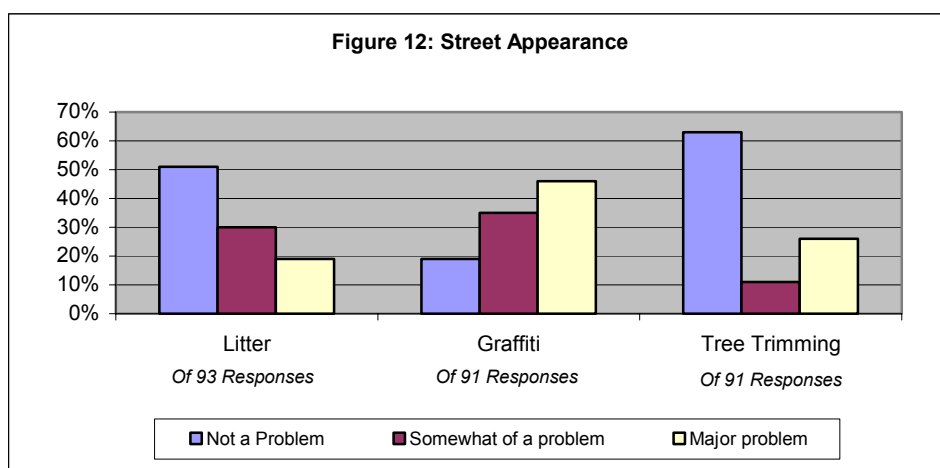
According to one concerned business owner, “we really need a parking complex in Eagle Rock, especially the restaurants.” There is surprising disagreement among business owners as to the necessity of parking meters and their time limits. A number of business owners said the city needs to increase parking meter times to three hours from one hour, while some business owners said parking times should be reduced. Another business owners suggested that the city remove parking meters completely. A few business owners who were located next to popular restaurants said they wanted some public parking spaces designated for their employees and customers.

Regarding illegal parking, only 33 business owners responded to this question, which indicates that it is either not a concern or they were unsure whether the interviewer was asking about parking practices of business owners themselves (see Figure 11: Traffic). With regard to delivery access, the majority of business owners (80%), said it was not a problem (see Figure 11: Traffic). A significant percentage of business owners (21%) reported that traffic signals are somewhat a problem while the majority (66%) said it was not a problem (see Figure 11: Traffic). A business owner stated, “the signals on Colorado should change more frequently to slow down the traffic. I’ve seen accidents right on the corner.” Another business owner said that there needed to be a light installed at Mt. Royal because it was difficult for pedestrians to cross this intersection.

Street Appearance:

With regard to street litter, 51% of business owners said it was not a problem, 30% stated it was somewhat a problem, and 19% said it was a major problem (see Figure 12: Street Appearance). One business owner asked for “heavier restrictions or limitations on the items being left on the streets, or maybe closer eyes on these activities.”

Graffiti appears to be a big concern amongst business owners because 46% contend that it is a major problem and 35% said it is somewhat a problem (see Figure 12: Street Appearance). Business owners complained about repeated graffiti on their building and in the neighborhood in general. One business owner said that the installation of more lights in front of, and especially behind, buildings would deter people from vandalizing property.



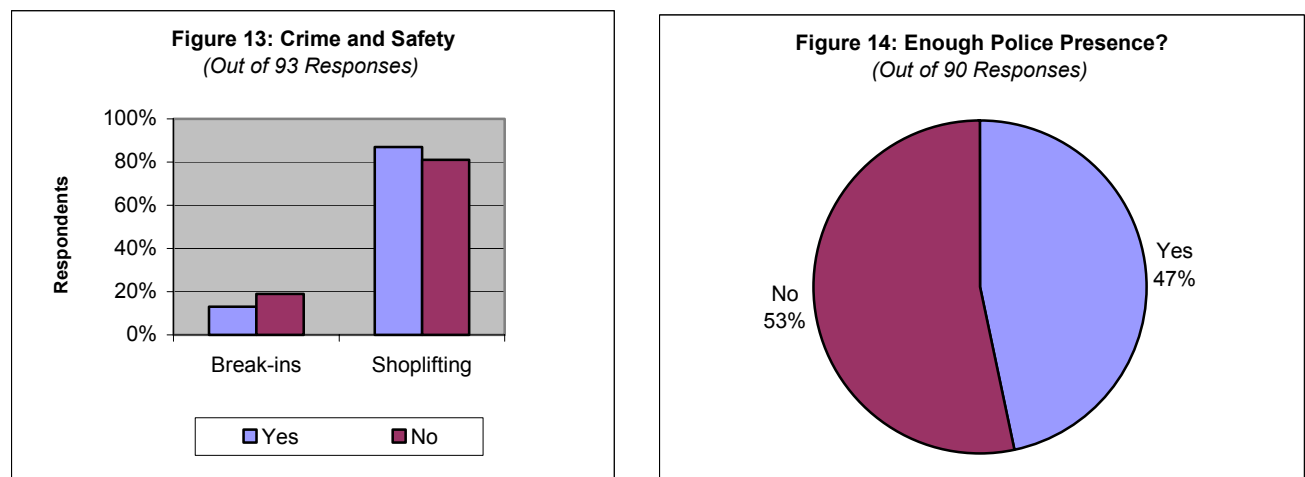
Business owners are divided on the issue of tree trimming. Fifty-two percent (52%) of business owners think that tree trimming is not a problem while 36% of business owners said it was a major problem (see Figure 12: Street Appearance). The intermediate answer, tree trimming is somewhat a problem, was the opinion of only 12% of business owners.

In response to the open-ended question of specific changes that need to be made to improve street appearance, a few business owners criticized the traffic islands on Colorado Boulevard. One business owners said, the city “added trees but didn’t water them, they died. The islands look like hell.” On sanitation, a business owner suggested that the trash bins in the street be covered with fences. Another business owner wanted a marker erected at the boundaries of Eagle Rock to welcome visitors. Some business owners also complained about the appearance of vacant buildings adjacent to their business. One concerned business owner said the building next door to her establishment has been vacant for a

long time and needs to be fumigated because she has seen rats. Other comments concerned the facades and signs of businesses which need improvement.

Crime and Safety:

Statistics gathered from the survey demonstrate that crime and safety are major problems for Eagle Rock businesses. Although crimes such as break-ins and shoplifting were not a major concern (see Figure 13: Crime and Safety), other types of crimes were. A business owner, for example, complained of car theft in the neighborhood while another one told an interviewer, “one of our guests last year got attacked. A car stopped and harassed him between 6 and 7 PM in the summer.” There were also comments on drug trafficking occurring in front of some businesses along Eagle Rock Boulevard.



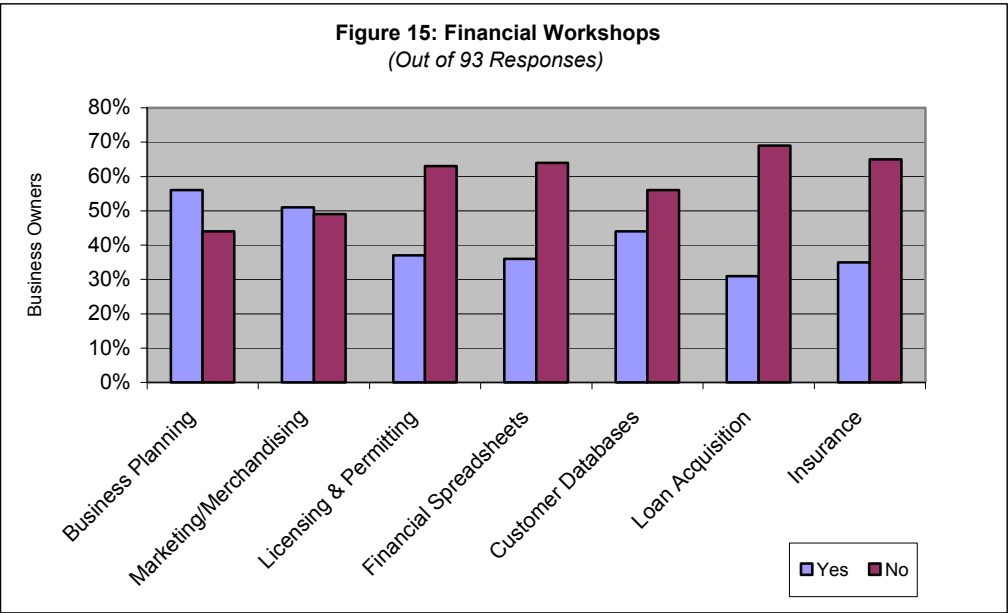
Business owners are somewhat split as to whether there is enough police presence in the area. Forty-seven percent (47%) of business owners said yes, while 53% said there was not enough (see Figure 14: Enough Police Presence?). A number of business owners criticized the police for answering calls too slowly or not at all. One business owner commented that he/she “never sees [the police] from 5AM to 7PM.” Another business owner said, “it doesn’t seem like they patrol very often because the kids are always smoking and drinking at night on Fridays and Saturdays.”

Financial and Business Assistance:

The survey also asked business owners to report which bank their business used. The most popular bank among businesses was Bank of America, which is patronized by fifty-three percent (53%) of business owners (see Table 4a: Banking With? in the appendix). The second most utilized bank was Wells Fargo which does business with 13% of business owners. California Federal is used by 9% of

business owners followed by Universal, which does business with 4%. A significant fraction of business owners, about a fifth, go to other banks not listed in our survey.

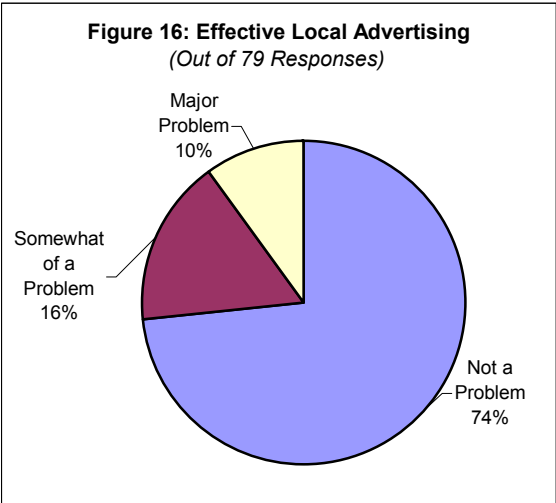
Although many business owners said they did not have the time to be a member of the Chamber of Commerce, a large percentage of business owners expressed willingness to take time and learn skills necessary to improve their business. When asked if they were interested in attending business assistance workshops pertaining to a variety of topics that could be offered in the future, business owners expressed the most interest in business planning (56%) and marketing/merchandising (51%). Thirty-seven percent (37%) of owners will participate in workshops on licensing and permitting, 36% are interested in learning about Financial Spreadsheets, and 44% want to know about customer databases. Furthermore, 31% express interest in loan acquisition, and 35% want to learn about insurance. (See Figure15: Financial Workshops).



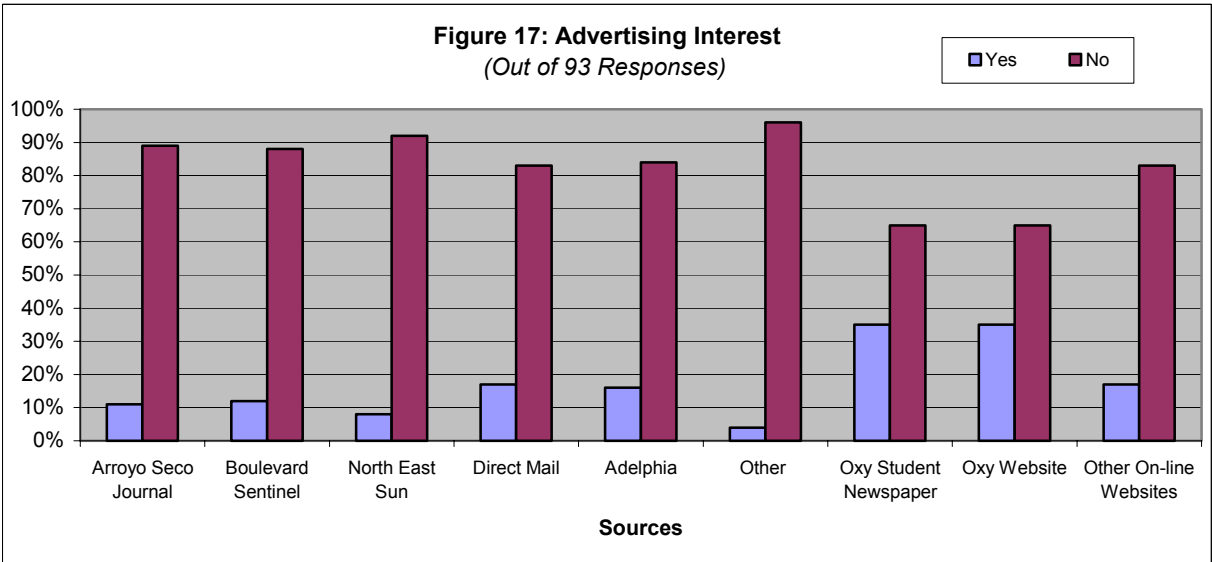
Customer base and marketing/advertising:

When looking to improve Eagle Rock it is necessary to see what type of patron this will affect, therefore businesses were asked about customer base. Generally, customer base also depends greatly on the type of business: Internet or service-based businesses tend to branch outside of Eagle Rock and the greater LA area, whereas restaurants and walk-in services attract local customers. By far most patrons came from Eagle Rock, which ranked 1.53 on a scale of 1 to 5, (1 being the most and 5 the least); this number excluded Occidental College. Occidental College, the notable exception, ranked far behind the other areas (3.8), which some business owners attributed to changes in the school’s

student dining system: “Oxy used to be a major patron, but now [the] cafeteria reduced [student consumption by changing meal systems].”

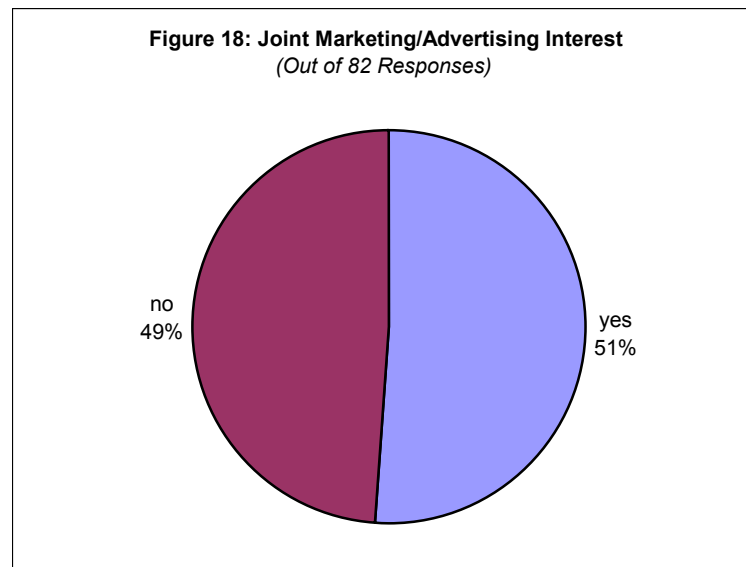


When asked about local advertising, 74% of respondents answered that local advertising is “not a problem,” while the remaining still had trouble with local advertising (see Figure 16: Local Advertising). Both groups however, gave an overwhelming “no” response to additional advertising interest: out of 90+ respondents in each category, interest in local advertising (with the exception of Occidental College) ranged from only 4 to 16 positive responses (see Figure 17: Advertising Interest).



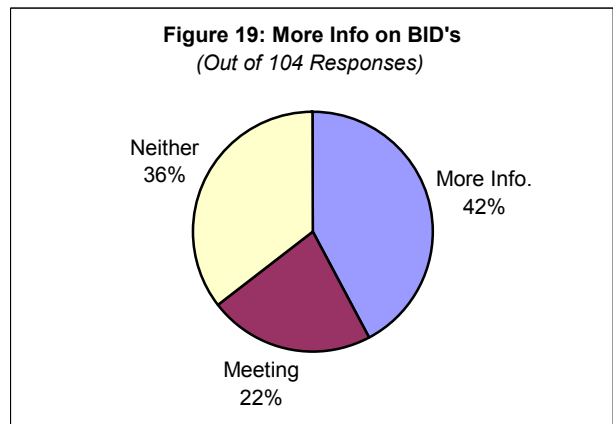
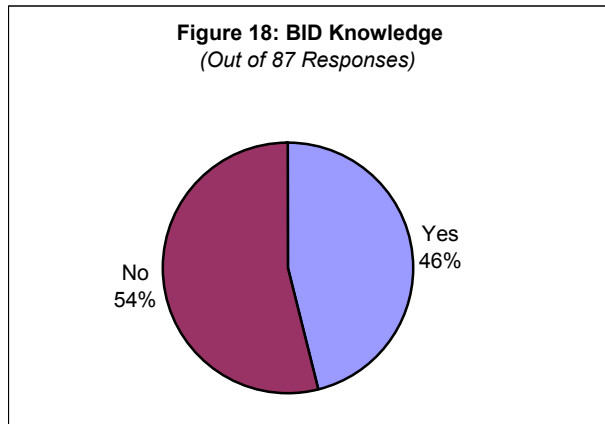
Businesses that are satisfied with their current advertising did not express interest in additional advertising, and businesses that were dissatisfied were unwilling to do additional advertising if they had tried it already and seen no results. Again, there was greater interest in advertising with

Occidental College (33 positive responses for both The Occidental newspaper and the College's web page), indicating business interest in attracting College clientele. Additionally, other on-line community websites and direct mail, although low, were the second most sought after method - thus reaching potential customers outside of Eagle Rock. Several businesses expressed interest in advertising with phone books as well, both local and non-local.



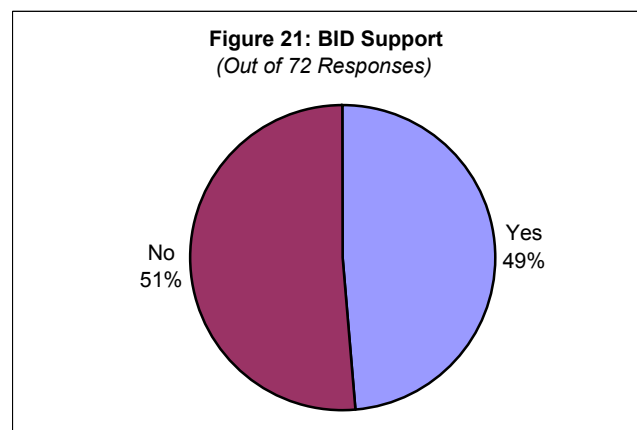
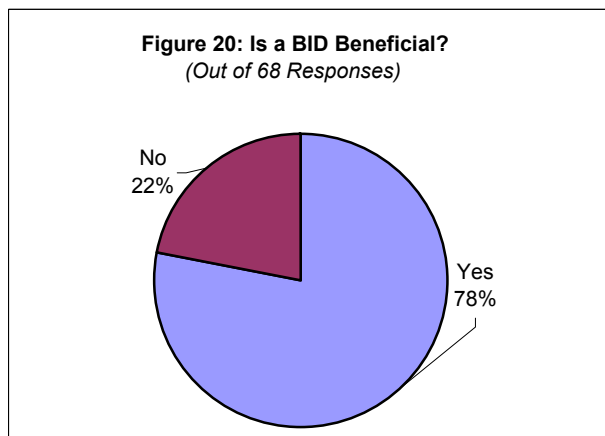
Even with general advertising satisfaction, 51% of the responding businesses were in support of a joint marketing/advertising/ promotions program, which significantly indicates interest in collective activity. Perhaps joint advertising would also be beneficial in pulling the businesses together instead of an Eagle Rock “comprised of individualistic groups” not interested in each other’s business. A similar response was evoked when a BID is mentioned: not only might it improve the street appearance, but it would also provide a place for “networking - getting to know other businesses,” as one respondent commented.

Organizational/funding issues:



An overwhelming proportion (78%) of businesses think that they would benefit from a BID (see Figure 20: Is a BID Beneficial?), but would like more information or attend a meeting before making a decision (64%) (see Figure 19: BID Information); slightly less than half (46%) of respondents had knowledge of a BID (see Figure 18: BID Knowledge). Considering that many businesses are reluctant to commit to a system that they have little knowledge of, support for a BID support drew a little less than half of respondents (49%). The most common reasons for not supporting a BID were that businesses did not have money to pay a monthly BID fee, or that they would be throwing their money away: “Not one penny would go to a can of paint,” one businessperson commented. Another concern raised was about who handles the BID money - many businesses expressed concern over who controls the money: “[A BID] gives too much power to someone other than [the owner] running his business.”

Unfortunately, for a system such as a BID to work, people must believe and buy into the system, thus creating a catch-22 like scenario: businesses are unwilling to buy into it unless they “see immediate results” or results without investing the money and time to make it successful.



SOURCES:

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Appendix

a)Tables

b)Survey