



NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATION PARTNERSHIPS

Portland's business districts and neighborhoods inherently support each other and are interdependent in many ways:

- Neighborhood businesses provide local residents with job opportunities and are a convenient source of day-to-day retail goods and services.
- Local businesses provide places for neighbors to meet and venues for bringing community members together.
- Business districts often play a central role in defining a neighborhood's identity and character.
- Neighborhood residents are a vital source of customers and workforce for local stores, restaurants and service providers.
- Neighborhood and business associations both help maintain and improve the area's livability and attractiveness to businesses, residents and customers.



(Photo courtesy of Portland Ground: Pictures of Portland Oregon. www.portlandground.com)

Portland's community organizations can help cultivate positive ties between area businesses and their surrounding neighborhoods. Partnerships between active

neighborhood and business associations are one great way to develop this synergy in promoting prosperous, healthy and more livable communities.

Ideas for getting started:

Make introductions and talk regularly with local business owners, managers and employees.

Community group members and local business owners often interact daily without actual introductions. Neighborhood and business association leadership can partner to welcome new businesses to the community through more deliberate outreach, such as a “welcome wagon” effort, in order to proactively develop positive relationships. After this initial introduction, regular check-ins with business owners and personnel help continue ongoing dialogue and interaction.



(Photo courtesy of Portland Ground: Pictures of Portland Oregon. www.portlandground.com)

Encourage shared neighborhood - business association representation and membership.

Business owners and employees share a common desire to improve the livability of their community, particularly since they frequently live in the same neighborhood where their establishment is located. As such, they may be great candidates to volunteer with both the local neighborhood and business association or potentially serve as liaisons between the two. Many neighborhood associations also encourage local business attendance and participation at their meetings and often reserve seats for area business owners on their board of directors.

Success Story

Both Hawthorne and Belmont Business Associations, just to name a few, have board members that participate both with the business association and their area neighborhood associations. These connections have strengthened communication relationships, and partnerships.

Develop partnerships between neighborhood and business associations for area visioning and improvement goals.

Business and neighborhood associations can come together to develop a strategic, collective vision for their area. This may be accomplished through joint meetings to develop a neighborhood, community or business district plan. Staff from one or more of the following agencies can facilitate this process: the neighborhood district coalition offices, the Portland Development Commission (PDC) and/or City of Portland Planning, Development Services, Sustainable Development and Transportation Bureaus.

Success Story

The “Division Vision” neighborhood plan is a great example of how the Division-Clinton Business Association partnered with its surrounding neighborhood associations to develop a comprehensive plan for Division Street including streetscape, green streets and commercial development components.

Host joint events and festivals.

Street fairs, farmer’s markets, art walks, and music festivals are only a few of the different types of events that strengthen local communities and can benefit area neighborhoods and businesses. These events are often larger and more successful when business associations and neighborhood groups team up. Issues like event insurance, publicity, fundraising and volunteer recruitment are facilitated through business and neighborhood association cooperation. Businesses should be encouraged to promote themselves at events through sponsorships and booths, as well as by donating gifts, coupons, and collateral material.



Success Story

The newly formed Portland International District recently held an inaugural International Day street fair in partnership with the Central Northeast Neighbors (CNN) neighborhood coalition, Roseway and Madison South Neighborhood Associations. Event insurance was provided through CNN while Roseway and Madison South contributed through event marketing, volunteer time and table displays, which helped make this first event a success.

Collaborate on communication outreach.

Send publications, mailers, and announcements to both business and resident groups. Share articles, content, advertising space and website links. Local businesses may find marketing value and provide advertising revenue to support neighborhood publications. Businesses or business associations may also be interested in contributing articles and news content on an ongoing basis. Keep businesses informed on the activities of the neighborhood associations, and residents informed of business association efforts.

Success Story

East Portland Neighborhood News, a quarterly print publication produced by the East Portland Neighborhood Office (EPNO), featured a special section on area business associations in its Spring 2007 edition. In addition to circulating through East Portland's neighborhood associations to area residents, this publication was also sent to local businesses and business associations as well.

Collaborate on physical improvement and neighborhood grant projects.

Business and neighborhood associations often have the similar goals and ideas for improving the community through grant projects. There is great potential for neighborhood and business association collaboration in implementing all types of area improvements including the installation of benches, bike racks, hanging flower baskets, tree plantings, kiosks, landscaping, signage and public artwork.



Success Story

An “all hands on deck” neighborhood cleanup is a great example of this type of collaboration. The inaugural “Spiffin’ Up Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.” event in Northeast Portland held in April 2007 joined neighborhood residents, area nonprofits, the City and PDC, community leaders, the North-Northeast Business Association and individual business owners in an effort to put the “glitz” on MLK Jr. Blvd. - a major commercial corridor in Portland. Countless numbers of bags of trash were collected, lots of graffiti was removed and a fun, community-building experience was enjoyed by all participants.



Hold joint fundraising and donation drives.

In many neighborhoods, there is a long history of business support for neighborhood and school fundraising efforts including donations of cash, food, goods and services for drives and auctions. This provides a great opportunity to motivate participation in events and provides increased visibility of neighborhood businesses.



Assist with neighborhood business recruitment.

One of the best ways to help promote a harmonious neighborhood and healthy business district is to be proactive in recruiting the types of businesses that are needed and appropriate for the area. Cooperative business recruitment efforts may help improve vacant or blighted properties. Steps for both business associations and neighborhoods include identifying available properties, contacting property owners and real estate agents, identifying types of businesses desired by neighborhood residents, and contacting potential business occupants.



Success Story

The Old-Town Chinatown (OTCT) Business Association has made business development a key component of the organization's mission. In coordination with neighborhood association members, the OTCT works with developers and commercial real estate agents to help bring new retail and commercial projects to their area.

For more information on neighborhood/business association partnerships or for business association support assistance, please contact Chris Hartye, Business Program Coordinator, at 503-823-3881 or Christopher.Hartye@ci.portland.or.us