



NEWARK  
DOWNTOWN  
DISTRICT



# NEWARK DOWNTOWN DISTRICT TIMELINE

1998-2020

# OUR MISSION

**The Newark Downtown District (NDD), Newark's special improvement district of the central business area, is a privately funded 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the beauty and vitality of downtown Newark.**

The NDD works hard to enrich the quality of life for those who live, labor, and leisure in Newark by providing supplemental cleaning and quality of life services, as well as physical improvements, marketing, and event programs. These efforts make downtown Newark attractive to residents, businesses, students, tourists, and shoppers.

The NDD is funded through a special assessment on district commercial and residential properties and is overseen by a Board of Trustees consisting of business and property owners within the District, representatives of non-profit organizations, as well as municipal officials and staff.

# DEAR NEWARK,

From its modest beginnings in 1998 to today's growing responsibilities and expanded programs, the Newark Downtown District (NDD) has contributed to Newark's renewal and growth in exhilarating ways. Being deeply rooted in the Downtown, the NDD has a street-level view into what the City needs and what types of activations will be most beneficial to its residents, businesses, and students.

The NDD has never been afraid to launch new programs and initiatives when it sees the need. Many of those programs are still going strong today. Some enjoyed success for several years and eventually evolved to meet changing needs. Other programs were heroically launched but were not able to get off the ground due to timing, public acceptance, or other unresolved issues.

Take a walk through the following pages to see what the NDD has advocated for and accomplished during its 22-year history. It has been an inspiring ride, and there is still much left to do.



*Anthony McMillan*

**Anthony McMillan, CEO**  
Newark Downtown District

# 1998



## NDD is Born

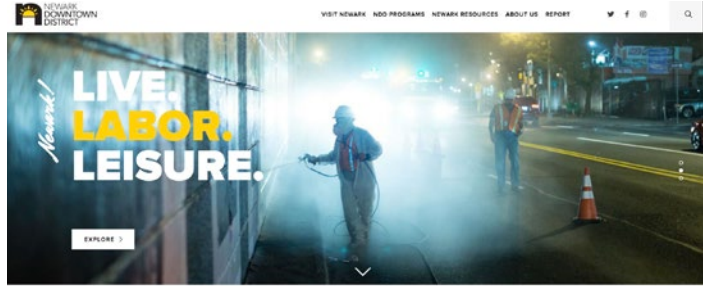
The Newark Downtown District is created to provide cleaning services in a 56-block area of Downtown Newark.

## Facade Improvement Grant Program

Vibrant, busy storefronts signify a healthy downtown. The NDD launches a design competition for facade treatments and makes a 7-year investment of \$1M for

1999

2000



## Website

Beginning in 1999, *downtownnewark.com* has featured NDD assets, programs, and activations. The current version contains a monthly newsletter, business directory, economic development programs, and a tool for the public to report quality of life issues.

Newark's Facade Improvement Grant Program. Program ends to support debt service for the Streetscape Improvement Project.

 4 NDD Timeline

 Currently Active

 Pending Resolution

 Retired



**2002**

### Open Doors / Newark Arts Festival ✓

The NDD embarks on a long-term partnership with the Newark arts community and participates in the Open Doors (later Newark Arts) Festival by providing Ambassador support, seating, and trash collection services.



### ✗ Foodtopia

A popular event held for several years in Military Park that invites Newark residents, employees, and visitors to sample food from the many local restaurants and culinary establishments.



**2003**

### NDD Common Greens Farmers Market ✓

The NDD Common Greens Farmers Market launches in Military Park—which was formerly called “Common Greens South”—and offers fresh produce, baked goods, flowers, plants, and other products directly from local growers and producers to Downtown consumers.

## Security Task Force

The NDD hosts regular meetings for Downtown stakeholders to gather and share security-related concerns for merchants, property managers, and corporations. Meetings frequently feature guest speakers and timely topics. Held on the third Tuesday of every month.



## NDD Golden Broom Award Recipient

The NDD Clean Ambassador Program has received the Golden Broom Award every year since 2006. The award is presented by the City of Newark for efforts in keeping Downtown Newark clean.

2006

## Annual NDD Stakeholders Luncheon

The NDD hosts an annual update, open to all Downtown stakeholders, on what's happening in the District, including accomplishments of the current year, and plans for the year ahead. Guest speakers include NDD Board Chairs and City of Newark dignitaries.

## Street Pole Banners

The NDD collaborates with the City Engineering Department on banner efforts. A later memo of understanding (MOU) where NDD would manage Downtown banners in a revenue sharing program was never executed by the City.

**2007**

## Streetscape Improvement Program ✓

The NDD is the first 501(c)(3) non-profit in New Jersey to bond funds for a Streetscape Improvement Program. The project bonds \$10 million to beautify Downtown Newark with decorative lighting, pedestrian wayfinding signs, planters, benches, trash receptacles, tree pits, and some curb corners. The NDD continues to provide features in expansion areas.



## Horticulture Program ✓

Downtown's first commercial planters are installed and the NDD's green thumb is born! Planters are followed by hanging baskets in 2012, monument services in 2012, and landscaping at the *Gateways to Newark: Portraits* mural in 2016. Over 300 planters, baskets, and trees receive seasonal change-outs.



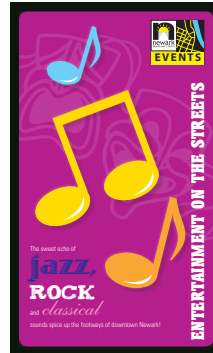
## Trees ✓

Trees promote cleaner air and can provide cooling effects on a hot summer day. The NDD plants trees and continues to weed and mulch tree pits throughout the District.



### Pushcart Program

Newark is host to a varied array of street vendors. To standardize vendor wares, locations, and hours, the NDD supports creating a Vendor Row in Nutria Alley. As part of the Capital Project, NDD offered \$1 million to create a “Vendor Market” but vendors were not open to relocating.



### Entertainment on the Streets

Auditions for talent are held and the NDD selects each act—from an Elvis impersonator to a juggler to a guitarist—and places them in selected areas to entertain the public while they shop. Due to a lack of foot traffic, the program ends.

## 2008



### NDD Beaver Street Cafe

NDD creates the Beaver Street Cafe with Karaoke Fridays, a lunch truck food court, and outdoor seating. The cafe runs for 4 years, until the NDD expands its sights to other outdoor activations.

### Festival Partnerships

The NDD provides Ambassador services to local festivals beginning with the Lincoln Park Music Festival in 2008 and later KCON in 2017, Making Strides Against Breast Cancer in 2017, First Fridays in 2018, AfroBeats in 2019, and more.

## NEWARK FIRST FRIDAYS





## **NDD Walking Club** ✓

The NDD Walking Club is launched with three walks daily, led by a Certified Personal Trainer. Members are encouraged to get fresh air and exercise while enjoying Newark's walkable streets. Each receives a pedometer, water bottle, and t-shirt and earns rewards for steps walked.

## **NDD Geographical Information System** ✓

To keep track of assets for the Streetscape Improvement Project, the NDD works with an outside company to create a Geographical Information System (GIS), which allows the NDD to electronically pinpoint elements (e.g., planters, light poles, benches) on a map and report damage, vandalism, graffiti, or issues with traffic lights or other City property.

## **2013 Quality of Life Matters**

QOL Ambassadors are able to report illegal selling of counterfeit goods and illegal substances, homelessness, panhandling, and violations of vendor ordinances. The QOL reporting portion of the system ended when the sub-station MOU ended.



## **NDD GIS Wins IDA Merit Award**

The NDD wins the International Downtown Association's (IDA) Achievement Awards Competition for the GIS system efforts.

## Fee for Service

The NDD starts providing horticulture, hospitality, and operations services (for a fee) to interested Downtown businesses and organizations.



# 2011

## Newark Community Solutions

The NDD partners with the City of Newark Municipal Court system for their Newark Community Solutions program, where offenders fulfill their community service duties by performing cleaning services under the management of the NDD.



## NDD & Prudential Championship Plaza Cafe

The NDD and Prudential Center partner to activate Championship Plaza by opening a free, daily outdoor cafe, kicked off by a sandwich-tasting contest. The location is not ideal due to the abundance of sun and absence of mature trees.

# 2012

## NDD Urban Bears Art Exhibit

The NDD Urban Bears Art Exhibit is a moving art project where six red bears made out of recycled plastics symbolize the importance of leaving a minimal carbon footprint in Newark.



## Newark Police Department Substation/Community Resource Center

The NDD partners with the Newark Police Department and contributes \$250K to establish a small Metro Police Substation, at no cost to the City. NDD QOL Ambassadors attend daily roll calls with the goal of increasing police interaction with the public. After the 3-year MOU ended, individual organizations entered into agreements with the NPD for their own personal properties.

**2013**

## Homeless Outreach Survey

In partnership with the City of Newark, Newark Police Department, and NJ Transit, the NDD hires a social service professional (as part of MOU for CRC 3-year pilot project) to connect homeless individuals to services. A survey helps to determine demographic information.

## Expansion

The NDD's footprint is expanded to encompass 110 blocks. From early beginnings in Clean and Safe, the NDD now includes Horticulture, Special Projects, and Quality of Life.



## Adopt-A-Median

Nobody provides cleaning services in Downtown Newark like the NDD Ambassadors! The NDD adopts Broad Street medians and tends to them monthly to clear trash and weeds.

## Holiday Tree Lighting

Local families are invited to Downtown's first Holiday Tree Lighting. Children have a chance to visit with Santa, sing holiday favorites, play carnival games, and take home free giveaways.



## NDD Office Share Bike Program

The NDD Office Share Bike Program is designed for voluntary bicycling Downtown and offers five bikes as part of the program.

# 2014



## Placemaking/Outdoor Seating

The NDD places outdoor seating at various locations to encourage residents, students, and employees to sit and enjoy a meal, a conversation, or possibly a good book on a beautiful day.

## 2015



### **Flag Program** ✓

The sight of our nation's flag waving proudly creates a sense of community and pride. The NDD initiates the repair/revitalization of flagpoles and installation of flags (if needed) throughout the District.

### **Downtown Newark Events and Culture Task Force** ✓

The NDD creates a Downtown Events and Culture Task Force to bridge the gap between commuters, residents, and the artistic and cultural institutions that provide events and entertainment.

### **NDD's Downtown Newark Local Marketing Program** ✓

This initiative gives Downtown merchants free coverage on the NDD website, promotion on NDD social media, and inclusion in the NDD Newsletter. There is also an opportunity to purchase paid advertising space on NDD trucks.



## Smart Hub Kiosk Partnership

The NDD partners with the City of Newark Information Technology Department and the technology company Aptinet to create the first Downtown Newark Smart Hub Kiosk. Since then several more have been installed by the City and other organizations.



## NDD Gateways to Newark: Portraits Mural

*Gateways to Newark: Portraits* is an ambitious public mural program that stretches 1.39 miles along busy Route 21 at the southern entrance to the city. It features 15 distinct works of art by 18 local and international artists. As part of its commitment, the NDD remediates two of the panels in 2019 to maintain the beauty and longevity of the project.

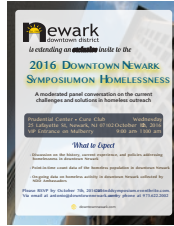
## Point-in-Time Count

NDD provides technical assistance to the City of Newark and the Essex County Division of Community Action for the 2016 Point-in-Time (PIT) survey, an annual survey of individuals experiencing homelessness, mandated by the Department for Housing and Urban Development.



## NDD Outreach Symposiums on Homelessness

The NDD hosts a series of four symposiums that educate key stakeholders on the state of homelessness in Newark. The symposiums review data from the Homeless Outreach and PIT surveys and provide experts in the field of homelessness to field questions.



## Parklets

The NDD places three parklets throughout the Downtown as part of a pilot program to enhance the pedestrian experience.



## Pedestrian Mall

As part of its Placemaking initiative, the first Pedestrian Mall takes place on Halsey Street and features food trucks, live music, and games. The mall has struggled to find a welcoming location, but in 2019 it was held adjacent to Washington Park and drew a crowd every week.



## Rainwater Barrels

Rain barrels collect and store rainwater runoff from roof tops. The NDD receives a 300-gallon cistern to use for capturing stormwater to use for the watering of NDD planters and hanging baskets. Newark residents are also invited to pilot the program through a rain barrel giveaway.



## Inaugural Downtown Newark Living Tour

With more and more residential buildings coming online in Newark, the NDD sponsors a one-day self-guided tour where 600+ visitors tour participating buildings and get a taste of what it's like to live in Newark.



## Banner Program

The NDD initiates a banner program to decorate and beautify the Downtown. Local businesses are encouraged to buy space, an initiative that has the potential to make 1.5M in profits. Maintenance proves to be a challenge and the program is suspended.



# 2017

 NDD Timeline

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## Bike Share

The NDD takes steps to initiate a bike share program in Downtown Newark to promote active transportation and increased movement in commercial areas. The program is currently on hold pending research into identifying Newark as a Transit Village.

## **ANDD Exhibit**

To honor 20 years in Downtown Newark, the NDD stages the *ANDD Exhibit* in a street-level retail space.

This exhibit highlights the many contributions the NDD has made to Newark during its 20-year history.

2018

## Code Enforcement

After repeated incidents of illegal dumping, NDD QOL Ambassadors partner with the City of Newark and are trained and authorized to cite illegal dumping violations in the Downtown. Although over 300 “blue” tickets were written by Ambassadors, none were processed.





### Newark-Opoly

A vibrant city like Newark deserves its own board game! In response, the NDD sponsors a game board that features local businesses, cultural institutions, and community organizations.



### NDD 20th Anniversary

To celebrate 20 years in Newark, the NDD partners with NJPAC to sponsor a free concert featuring the Commodores and Eric Benét.

### Mulberry Commons

During construction of Newark's newest park, the NDD hires a Park Consultant to provide insight and guide best practices. The maintenance and management of Downtown Newark's park program continues to be a work in progress that benefits from this consultant's advice.

**2019**



### Hidden Gems

Who hasn't discovered a local business or organization that deserves a shout out for the great work they are doing? This summertime social media campaign provides that opportunity in Newark.

### Pedestrian Counters

As Newark grows and develops, data around pedestrian patterns, traffic, and concentration can be a benefit to local developers and businesses. To meet that need, the NDD installs counters in five locations throughout the Downtown.



### Recycling Efforts

In the 21st century, everyone is encouraged to reduce, reuse, and recycle. The NDD installs dedicated recycling cans and receptacles that allow cigarette butts to be collected and converted into usable energy.

**2020**



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