



# NEWARK DOWNTOWN DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 1998, the Newark Downtown District (NDD) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing Downtown Newark. NDD manages a Special Improvement District (SID) in Newark's central business core that is funded through a special assessment on 621 commercial and residential properties. For 21 years the NDD has provided enhanced services for the people who live, learn, work, and visit Downtown Newark.

In the second half of 2019, NDD began the process of creating a 5 to 10-year Strategic Plan informed by input from over 650 stakeholders, a review of market conditions and inspiration obtained from SID-based organizations in peer cities. The Strategic Plan provides the NDD with a clear vision and mission, strategies with measurable goals and objectives, an implementation timeline, and a refreshed organizational structure capable of delivering on the expectations set forth in the plan. To assist in the strategic planning process, NDD contracted with Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.), a real estate economics and planning firm specializing in the formation, renewal, and strategic planning for improvement districts across the country.



# BEST PRACTICES

To inform the NDD Strategic Plan, “best practices” from SID-funded programming were sought from peer downtown organizations in:

- MILWAUKEE, WI
- WASHINGTON D.C.
- PITTSBURGH, PA
- CLEVELAND, OH
- BALTIMORE, MD

# STRATEGIC PIVOTS



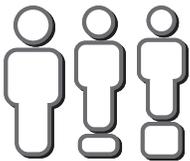
## BUILD ON THE BASICS

While NDD is best known for delivering on the basics of clean and safe, the plan recommends having the Ambassadors take on a hospitality role to provide an approachable friendly face to initiate engagement with visitors, and consider introducing Outreach Workers with an emphasis on making contact with people living in the streets and individuals that are mentally instable to understand their needs and available resources to address those needs.



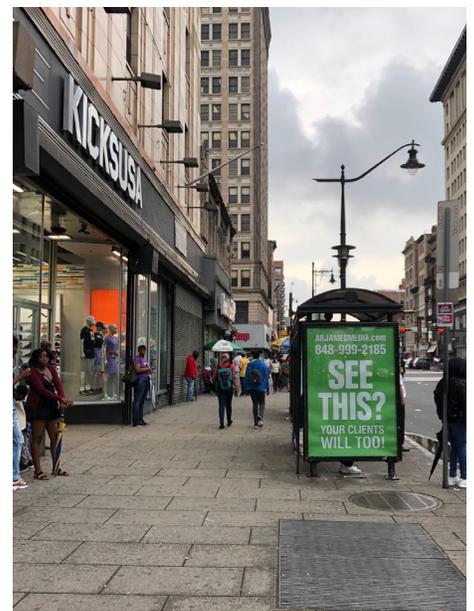
## SUPPORT SMALL BUSINESS

SIDs throughout the country typically start with an emphasis on cleanliness and safety and gradually expand their work programs over time to include initiatives that further enhance district vitality. In Newark, there was an overwhelming response from small business owners that meaningful support is needed, plus filling storefronts is the top priority from the online survey. This requires an NDD program and culture shift to build trust with and support existing small businesses and entrepreneurs who are vital drivers of the character and fabric of Downtown Newark.



## STAKEHOLDER INCLUSIVITY/BROADEN COMMUNICATION

This plan aims to broaden the NDD from being primarily focused on large property owners and corporations to one that also embraces stakeholders that represent a broad range of interests, including residents, small business owners, employees, and others. NDD will have a stronger voice if it integrates and mobilizes the myriad stakeholders who have a shared interest in the Downtown community.





## REVISED ORGANIZATIONAL MISSION AND VISION

Revised Vision:

***Downtown Newark: Bright, Bold, Beautiful***

Revised Mission for the NDD:

***To enhance cleanliness, safety, and beautification in Downtown Newark, while preserving and enriching culture, commerce, and community.***

## ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The plan organizes NDD around four key goals and objectives. Each goal is supported by an explanation on why it matters, key objectives, programs and projects, examples from best practices in other SIDs and budget/staffing considerations for NDD. Organizational goals include the following:

- 1 STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IN CLEAN, SAFE AND GREEN**
- 2 BECOME ACTIVE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS ASSISTANCE**
- 3 IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING WITH DOWNTOWN STAKEHOLDERS**
- 4 EXPLORE A STRONGER ROLE IN PLACE ENHANCEMENTS AND ACTIVATION**

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND STAFFING

Overall, the strategic plan is budget neutral for NDD, but recommends reallocation of effort in several areas, including:

- Introducing new practices into the Ambassador program, reallocating funds from festival events to support the new business assistance program and redefining roles for marketing and communications staff.
- Creating a new staff structure and “management team” within the organization to maximize internal communications and coordination.
- Aligning board committees with the new organizational goals, including 1) Place Management; 2) Policy & Community Development; and 3) Communications & Stakeholder Engagement.
- The plan offers options to diversify organizational revenues, a timetable for implementation sequencing and metrics to measure the success of each goal.