



# DOWNTOWN DIRECTIONS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE PROVIDENCE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

## Survey Respondents Agree: THE DID IS CREATING A CLEANER, SAFER BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT DOWNTOWN

After sending surveys about our services to all property and retail business owners who pay the district assessment, the DID has collected 62 completed forms. The survey responses are report

cards of sorts, giving our Clean and Safe Teams insight into the way that the community perceives them. We have compiled the responses, and the Clean and Safe teams will adjust their services accordingly, where appropriate.

The surveys include questions about which activities the owners would like to see as priorities. Respondents answered that the Clean Team's top three priorities should be trash/litter pick-up, sidewalk sweeping, and graffiti removal. 87.09% of respondents are very satisfied or satisfied with the Clean Team, and 77.42 % said that they are very satisfied or satisfied with the Safe Team.



## DID CELEBRATES FIRST ANNIVERSARY— And Looks Ahead To Year Two

LEFT: DID CHAIRMAN EVAN GRANOFF, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SPACE FRANK LATORRE, AND MAYOR DAVID CICILLINE (L-R) CELEBRATE OUR ANNIVERSARY BY CUTTING A CAKE FEATURING THE DID LOGO.

On Tuesday, April 4th, more than 50 neighbors gathered at the Amica Building at 10 Weybosset Street to celebrate our accomplishments in our first year of operation. Frank LaTorre, Director of Public Space described the Clean and Safe Team members as "fixtures of the community, often recognized on a first-name basis by residents and downtown workers." He praised the collaborative efforts of residents, non-profit organizations, colleges, and businesses to build community, vibrancy, and diversity downtown.

Mayor David Cicilline also described the new feeling and atmosphere downtown, and thanked the members of our Board of Directors for their tireless efforts in helping to create one of the finest, most attractive downtowns in the country. He added, "We have a growing sense of neighborhood, with a common mission downtown. The principles and lessons learned in this district are informing the Neighborhood Markets initiative, which is now focusing on the eight busiest neighborhood commercial districts in the city."

*"The men and women in yellow have really gone the extra distance to effectively secure the area and make it safe for residents and visitors to pass undisturbed.*

*I cannot thank you enough for providing this service."*

*Beth Pistone, Worn Again Vintage.*

## Focus on Special Projects Team Leader: **Jermaine Robinson**

Jermaine celebrated his first anniversary of working with the DID in April. A Providence resident since 1989, he genuinely enjoys beautifying his home city by removing graffiti, painting street furniture and performing other outdoor work. Although the winter's snow and cold temperatures presented many challenges, he is thrilled to be outdoors talking to people. He likes playing basketball, but now he says, "My work is my hobby, and I want to learn everything that this job has to offer."



## Focus on Safe Team Leader: **Jorge Pineda**

A native of Barranquilla, Colombia, Jorge has been living in Rhode Island since 1972. He had worked as a security guard for Blue Cross Blue Shield before joining the DID in December. With awards from BCBS for his outstanding service, we are lucky to have him on our staff! He describes what he likes most about his new job as helping people, interacting with property owners, and making a difference. He recognizes that the city has come a long way, and with the DID in place, he senses that people feel more comfortable downtown than they did in the past. He receives great satisfaction from helping the community, and wants to continue building a better rapport with people downtown through his work at the DID. Jorge also serves as a Spanish interpreter in the mornings, accompanying people to traffic court, medical appointments, and other places. He is married and has a daughter, and he enjoys watching the Red Sox when he's not working.



## CLEAN & SAFE UPDATES

For the first quarter of 2006 — January, February, and March — our Clean and Safe Teams are credited with the following:

- Pedestrian assistance: 2,811
- Property/business contacts: 757
- Motorist assistance: 1,475
- Passive panhandling: 406
- Aggressive panhandling: 77

The Safety Guides have requested police assistance 41 times.

The Clean Team has also been responsible for:

- 41,055 lbs. of trash collected
- 339 graffiti tags removed
- 258 stickers/handbills removed

## Committee Involvement

While our Clean and Safe Teams are visible to the public on their own, DID staff works diligently behind the scenes in partnership with the City and other community groups. As Frank LaTorre, Director of Public Space explains, "This collaborative effort requires the involvement of residents, property and business owners, government, local colleges, and organizations like the DID, the Downtown Merchants Association, and the Downtown Neighborhood Alliance. The results of these collaborations are bearing fruit in a new spirit blossoming downtown."

A sampling of important committees is listed below:

### Responsible Hospitality:

Stakeholders have formed a group to advocate for a safe, yet vibrant nighttime atmosphere in which all downtown residents and visitors feel welcome. Current issues, such as underage drinking and early-morning rowdiness, are being addressed.

### Sidewalk Repair:

Representatives of the DID, the City, the State Department of Transportation are working together with a landscape architect to improve sidewalk conditions. The group is generating a plan to determine which areas should be priorities.

### Street Lighting:

This group recommends additional street lighting downtown, and advocates for funding.

## INTERVIEW with **MARIA RUGGIERI**

When Maria Ruggieri spoke at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Peerless Building a few years ago, she described the quality that she had in common with Buff Chase and the other local property owners: a love they share for downtown Providence.

A downtown resident for six years, her family history downtown extends much further. With pride, she refers to her great uncles' print shop on Snow Street in the early 1900s and her cousin's former restaurant in the Smith Building. She recalls shopping with her grandmother every weekend at Shepards, and hearing about her mother's first set of china from the Boston Store in the Peerless Building. Although Maria grew up in Cranston, she certainly inherited her love for downtown from her family.

She sees great potential in this changing city, and says that she couldn't imagine not getting involved in its development. She moved to the Smith Building, looking for a place to both live and work in a cool, hip neighborhood, and loves being able to see great shows at Lupo's, tazza, or AS220 just steps from her apartment. In 2003, she was elected as the first president of the Downtown Neighborhood Alliance, a group that represents the interests of downtown residents by forming a strong voice. She conveys the group's opinions to civic leaders, and reiterates the importance of having a vibrant live music scene and strong cultural nightlife. According to Maria, "This can only occur in an environment where residents and visitors feel safe, and that must be a top priority."

Besides serving as the chairperson for the DID marketing committee, Maria owns and operates her own business, Ti Adoro Jewelry. She has worked in the jewelry business for more than twenty years, and her handmade necklaces, earrings and broaches, produced in her Providence loft, are now sold in more than 50 bridal stores



nationwide. Her products exude style and grace, and samples can be seen on her website: [www.tiadorojewelry.com](http://www.tiadorojewelry.com).

As a DID Board member, Maria enjoys a sense of camaraderie with her neighbors who share her love for downtown. She hopes that downtown Providence will regain its former status as the premier shopping center in the state. As additional residential buildings are built, she also hopes that the membership and strength of the DNA will grow. Known as a downtown "expert," Maria shared some of her favorite things:

- Favorite restaurant: Bravo Brasserie, Empire Street
- Favorite new store: Worn Again Vintage, Washington Street
- Favorite place to spend a summer day: The downtown farmers' market
- Favorite view: outside her window, facing City Hall and Kennedy Plaza
- Favorite event: Sound Session

We thank Maria for serving on our Board, and providing leadership on so many important initiatives.

## Act-Track Summary

The DID has implemented a new program called Act-Track, which helps us monitor incoming calls for service and their results. When someone requests service, we enter a work order into the communal database. Our employees maintain a log, so that we know whether work is ongoing or has been completed. The system helps us analyze the work that is being done and assists us in deploying Team members and Guides, as well as equipment.

**Downtown IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

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## DOWNTOWN FARMERS' MARKET RETURNS ON FRIDAYS



Now in its second season, the downtown market is planning to improve what many already considered a successful weekly event by switching to lunchtime hours. Funded and managed by Farm Fresh RI, a non-profit organization based at Brown University, the market will kick-off on June 16<sup>th</sup> and will run every Friday until October 27<sup>th</sup>, from 11 am

to 3 pm. While the weekday has changed from Monday to Friday, the location beside the Bank of America Skating Center— in Biltmore Park—will remain the same as last season. Louella Hill, Executive Director of Farm Fresh RI has said “It’s a beautiful thing that the center of our city has representation from the rural parts of our state.” Many vendors featured last year will be back, such as Farmstead Cheese, Providence; Red Planet Vegetables, Providence; Barden Orchards, North Scituate; and Hill Orchards, Johnston.

Customers have a variety of payment options including cash, credit, food stamps/EBT, WIC checks, and senior farmers’ market coupons. Erica Craig is now serving as the downtown market manager, and she can be contacted by email: [markets@farmfreshri.org](mailto:markets@farmfreshri.org). For updated information, please check the Farm Fresh website regularly: [www.farmfreshri.org](http://www.farmfreshri.org).



**NEW DID SIGNS**

More than twenty-five 18”x 27” double-sided aluminum signs have been installed throughout the downtown district to brand and identify the neighborhood.

### NEW DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

- Berry Berry Chocolates (Arcade), 130 Westminster
- Golden Gate Studios (florist), 11 Dorrance
- Fleming’s Steakhouse (coming soon to the Westin), 1 West Exchange
- Picture This (framing center & gallery), 45 Weybosset
- Salon Marc Harris, 57 Eddy
- Taqueria Pacifica (at AS220), 103 Empire
- Worn Again Vintage, 100 Washington