



# DOWNTOWN DIRECTIONS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE PROVIDENCE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

## With the DID in Place, COOL NEW STORES ARE STILL ARRIVING DOWNTOWN!

If you haven't been downtown since this summer's Sound Session or WaterFire, it's time to come back! While over 30 new retail businesses have moved downtown within the past 2 years, we've noticed an especially busy period of grand-opening activity in recent weeks. Since early November, more than 10 stores and restaurants have opened their doors here or have announced their upcoming moves. Many of these stores offer high-quality products such as toys, home furnishings, and trendy accessories that simply haven't been available in downtown Providence.

Why is this all happening now? Many people credit the city's pro-business attitude, providing loans to small business start-ups through the Providence Economic Development Partnership. Most often though, we hear new retail tenants complimenting the Downtown Improvement District (DID) Clean Team and Safety Guides for their leadership roles in reviving the positive neighborhood energy. As Marc Gelinias, Design Within Reach studio proprietor notes, "The cleaning crew is great, and Westminister Street is distinctly cleaner than it was a year ago when we first opened." He adds that "Before the DID, it seemed like a challenge to attract new tenants to the block. Now that the streets are clean and well-lit, other entrepreneurs can easily see our vibrant neighborhood's potential. They want to become a part of it."

We hope you'll enjoy your first visit to these new businesses and we urge you to continue supporting your favorite downtown shops and eateries.

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**Visit the Downtown Providence website:**  
[www.providencedowntown.com](http://www.providencedowntown.com) for a full ground-floor business directory and a list of new additions.



### NEW DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

**American Apparel** 159 Weybosset  
**Biggles Toys** 275 Westminister  
**Bravo Brasserie** 123 Empire  
**Butterfield** (home furnishings) 232 Westminister  
**cathers & coyne** (shoes & accessories)  
 220 Westminister  
**City Café** 79 Dorrance  
**Dci 275** (gifts) 275 Westminister  
**Jimmy John's\*** (sandwiches) 127 Weybosset  
**Lilypad Home Furnishings** 100 Fountain  
**Spoodles Deli\*** 217 Westminister  
**Starbucks\*** One Financial Plaza  
**Tim Hortons\*** 10 Dorrance

(\* coming soon)



# \$44 Million Invested in Restoration of PEERLESS BUILDING

Since the completion of the **Peerless Lofts** last summer by Cornish Associates, we have welcomed 97 apartments and several new retail spaces to the downtown community! Located on Westminster Street between Union and Eddy Streets, the building features a soaring 7-story atrium as well as large windows, open floor plans, hardwood floors, individual washer/dryer units and stylish kitchens in each loft. Residents may also take advantage of the private roof garden, underground parking and concierge services. Call (401) 276-1155 or check: [www.providencelofts.com](http://www.providencelofts.com) for a virtual tour.

# INTERVIEW With RICHARD LAPPIN

When the initial discussions regarding the DID were presented by The Providence Foundation, Richard Lappin of Chestnut Hill Realty expressed his interest to The Foundation's Executive Director, Dan Boudouin. As a partner in ownership of the Regency Plaza since 1986, Lappin is responsible for managing three separate buildings containing 444 apartments and 35,000 square feet of commercial space. By getting involved with the Board, he hoped that the DID efforts would improve the environment in downtown Providence for his residents and office tenants.



Lappin says, "There is no question that the City is much cleaner and that there is an improved sense of safety, as commented upon by numerous residents of the Regency." He adds that the City and the DID are creating a new living and work environment which is welcoming to new residents. This change is clearly reflected in the occupancy rates of the Regency and Cornish Associates' lofts and sales within the luxury condominium projects.

Lappin believes that the DID should be seen as an advocate for the property owners as well as for those who live, work and use services in the City. He feels that "The organization must continue to listen to the concerns and suggestions of its constituents so that solutions can be effectively executed and opportunities can be pursued. Ultimately, the City must be seen as user friendly - a wonderful and safe place to work, shop, live, visit, attend the arts, etc. If the DID and the City are successful in achieving this goal, then the City and the DID's constituents will prosper."

# CLEAN TEAM UPDATE

With 12 full-time employees covering 2 eight-hour shifts 7 days a week, the Downtown Improvement District Clean Team has made a strong impact in recent months. The Clean Team has quickly removed more than 200 graffiti tags throughout the downtown area, including tags on Clemence Alley and The University of Rhode Island Shepard Building. In addition, the Team began using sidewalk pressure washers for gum removal in mid-September. The process involves three steps: removing the gum with a wand, using the push-unit, and rinsing the sidewalk with the wand again. The Team concentrates on one street at a time and will continue this work as long as weather permits.



Clean Team leaders have been completing an inventory of street appurtenances including street lights, mail boxes, newspaper boxes, traffic signs and poles. When repairs are needed, they also create public property reports and send them to the Director of Public Space, who contacts the appropriate city agencies directly. Federal and State funds are available for sidewalk repairs, and a DID committee will coordinate with the State and the City's Public Works and Planning Departments to procure funds and distribute them.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Please note the DID Board meeting schedule for the first half of 2006. Meetings are open to the public and are scheduled on the third Thursday of each month at 8:30 AM in the DID office.

**January 19th, February 16th, March 16th, April 20th, May 18th, and June 15th.**

# DID Installs 30 New Trash Cans Designed and Constructed by LOCAL STEEL YARD ARTISANS



Frank LaTorre, Director of Public Space for the DID, recognized that the recent inventory of 96 garbage cans was severely insufficient for a district of our size. Once the DID Board of Directors decided to increase the supply, LaTorre contacted numerous trash can vendors to compare their products.

Ultimately, the DID chose to work with the Steel Yard, an Olneyville-based non-profit organization that employs local steel workers, artists, and interns of all ages while providing top quality work. The commercial grade cans have been uniquely designed for downtown Providence, featuring a replica of the anchor on the Rhode Island State flag.

LaTorre says, "The DID will do all we can to support local business. This is a perfect example of a partnership that works well for both sides." He adds, "By installing the attractive cans, we are offering people more opportunities to dispose of litter on their own. Eventually as people take care of their own trash, the Clean Team will be able to spend less time sweeping the streets and more time concentrating on other projects." [Watch for an upcoming mailing about how you can help us purchase more of these much-needed trash cans!](#)

# SAFETY GUIDE UPDATE

The DID Safety Guides work in 2 shifts, beginning with an early shift from 11:30 AM to 8 PM, and continuing with a larger shift from 2:30 to 11 PM. During college orientation, the guides answered many questions from new students and their parents about the downtown neighborhood. For special events like WaterFire, the guides have been posted on the main corridors to maximize their visibility. Their recent accomplishments include:

- Finding a lost dog on Fountain Street and contacting its owner.
- Calling emergency medical services for a man who had been separated from his oxygen tank.
- Returning a lost AFC Championship ring that belonged to former New England Patriots safety Larry Wigham. As *The Providence Journal* reported, he was delighted to have the ring returned and was highly complimentary of the DID services.

According to Brian Whiting, President & CEO of the Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau, "The DID Safety Guides are always courteous and friendly. For attracting meetings to Providence, the DID is one of the best tools we have."



Photo: Frank Mullin

# Downtown IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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First-Class Mail  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 593  
Providence, RI

40 Fountain Street  
2nd Floor  
Providence, RI 02903  
(401) 421-4450

# '4 HOURS for \$5' DISCOUNT HOLIDAY PARKING DOWNTOWN



More than 30 downtown businesses are participating in a new Downtown Merchants Association '4 hours for \$5' program by validating parking from Thanksgiving through New Years' Day. The program is in effect after 10 AM, 7 days a week at the Rhode Island Convention Center and City Parking Co. lots (by the Holiday Inn and Canal Street), and from 12 noon to 5 PM, Monday through Friday at most MetroPark and Intown lots. Union Station Plaza Garage is also participating from 10 AM to 5 PM on Saturdays and 10 AM to 10 PM on Sundays. Customers simply have their parking tickets stamped with the '4 hours for \$5' sticker at one of the participating businesses, or receive a "chaser" ticket for the RI Convention Center. The DMA has produced holiday parking guides, which have been distributed citywide. Receive the validation at one of more than thirty participating businesses, listed online: [www.providencedowntown.com](http://www.providencedowntown.com).

## Addressing Winter Weather Challenges

This winter season we want to make certain to keep the sidewalks safe after each snowfall. The City of Providence is responsible for plowing snow off the streets and public sidewalks, and the DID will shovel handicap accessible cut-outs on sidewalks at intersections. In order to keep downtown safe for pedestrians, we recommend that you shovel a walking path on your property down to the bare pavement so that ice doesn't form. If ice does form, use salt or sand to make the area passable. Please review the City's website for more detailed information about property owners' responsibilities: [www.providenceri.com](http://www.providenceri.com).

Also, please note that in order for the DID to operate much of our cleaning equipment, we must wait for the water and solvents to thaw. While some of our regular activities are on hold, we are maintaining lists of graffiti tags to remove as soon as the temperatures rise!

## First INDOOR MARKET in Rhode Island Brought a Taste of the Holidays to Downtown!

Immediately following its first successful Monday Market season in Kennedy Plaza this summer, Farm Fresh RI launched a Holiday Market inside the Peerless Building at 229 Westminster Street. On Saturdays and Mondays from early November through December 20th, vendors such as Hill Orchards, Barden Orchards, and Ruby's Farm Fresh Goat Cheese offered a variety of seasonal local products ranging from apples, cider, honey, and beets to deliciously prepared nim chow. To provide feedback about the market or find information about next season, visit: [www.farmfreshri.org](http://www.farmfreshri.org)