



"To continuously enhance the quality of life in downtown Providence."

DOWNTOWN DIRECTIONS

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE PROVIDENCE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

DID CELEBRATES ITS 4th ANNIVERSARY

On February 26th, we celebrated the DID's 4th anniversary! When the organization began operating in early 2005, it primarily focused on maintaining a clean and safe district. While those services have continued, the DID has also broadened its program of work to address quality of life issues. The impact on downtown Providence has been tremendous!

While it's difficult to describe how far we've come, we can try to paint a picture about our measurable successes. In the past 4 years, the DID Clean team has collected 1,077,764 lbs. of trash, which is equivalent to the weight of 100 elephants! The team has removed nearly 10,000 graffiti tags, and 5,433 stickers and handbills. In addition, the combined Clean and Safe Teams have made 25,232 property/business contacts throughout the years, which is double the entire seating capacity at the Dunkin Donuts Center!

As Board Chairman Bob Gagliardi explains, "When the DID began, we didn't know how it would work. We never dreamed that it would reach this level of success. By focusing on programs to make downtown cleaner and safer, and caring for the district, we've discouraged people from throwing garbage on the sidewalks or tagging our buildings." We are proud of our accomplishments, and we will continue working to improve and expand our services moving forward. For more information about the DID, visit: www.providencedowntown.com.

NEW EQUIPMENT MAKES A DEBUT

The Champlin Foundation has once again supported DID efforts by awarding a \$33,000 grant to The Providence Foundation for new equipment. The Foundation will lease the ATLV riding litter vacuum for \$1.00 to Block by Block, the company that manages the Clean and Safe Teams.

According to the Champlin Foundation, the DID's commitment to a cleaner downtown was critical in its decision to provide financial support. The ATLV will be an excellent addition to the DID's equipment supply, and we thank The Champlin Foundation for its generous contribution.

DID CLEAN AND SAFE TEAMS HONORED WITH HOSPITALITY COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD



Photo by Richard A. Kizirian Photography

Pictured above: (left to right): Steve Marra (Vice-Chairman, RIHA Board), Tim Hamlin (DID Safety Team), Xiomara Ardila (DID Clean Team), Dwayne Jordan (DID Safety Team), Frank Zammarelli (DID Operations Manager), Pedro Reyes (DID Clean Team), Elvis Rodriguez (DID Clean Team), and Dale Venturini (RIHA President/CEO).

Congratulations to the Clean and Safe Teams! On December 3rd, the Rhode Island Hospitality Association (RIHA) presented the DID with an award at the Annual Stars of the Industry Awards Ceremony, held at the Rhode Island Convention Center. The awards recognized individuals and businesses throughout the state for their outstanding achievements in the hospitality and tourism industries, and their commitment to local communities.

DID Director of Public Space Frank LaTorre has explained, "We are proud that the Clean and Safe Teams have been acknowledged as congenial, welcoming ambassadors to our vibrant and diverse downtown. We appreciate the statewide recognition afforded us by this prestigious award from the RI Hospitality Association, letting people around the state know about the hard work that the teams perform everyday."

In addition to the Hospitality Community Service Award, the teams received proclamations of congratulations from Governor Donald Carcieri, Mayor David Cicilline, and the Providence City Council. We are truly honored by this recognition.

BOARD FEATURE: JOHN MACLIVER

Before becoming an ex-officio DID board member and secretary, John Macliver sat on our operations committee, which addresses issues ranging from lighting and signage to sidewalk repair. Because John had been managing several downtown buildings, this was a natural progression for him. Current DID Board Chairman Bob Gagliardi had encouraged him to get involved in the organization, after having served together on the Board of the Rhode Island Building Owners Association (formerly BOMA, now known as RIBO). In fact, John was BOMA president for 3 years.



John has worked in Providence for nearly 30 years, spending the first 10 years as a contractor. In 1988, he opened a Providence office, working for Marsella Development to renovate the Union Station buildings on Exchange Terrace. Soon after, the company evolved and began managing the properties that it had developed. John oversaw the construction of Citizens Plaza, and opened a property management office in the building in 1990. Several years later, he also worked on the development of the Courtyard Marriott, which opened in 2000. In 2002, John bought Marsella Development, and changed its name to MPM Properties. His company has continued to grow and recently, he opened an office in Braintree, MA in order to expand throughout the Southeastern New England market.

When the DID was first proposed, John didn't know much about the concept, and he began to learn about similar districts in other communities. He believed that if the program was handled properly, it would be a real asset to the city of Providence. Four years into the program, he concludes that "it absolutely has been an asset." He is proud that the reporting numbers have been amazingly successful, and he believes that DID projects, like sidewalk repair work and replacement of street signs, will make a huge difference to the city's landscape. He gives much credit to the helpful team members, who wear bright yellow uniforms and have had such a visible presence on the streets.

In addition to serving as MPM's president, John is a proud father of 3 children, and grandfather to 4 grandchildren. He has also been active with the local Ronald McDonald House for more than 7 years, and he now serves as vice president of its board. The DID appreciates John's many contributions to our organization and the local community.

CLEAN & SAFE SUMMARIES

October 1, 2008 through January 31, 2009

Clean Team:

Trash removed (in lbs): 163,560

Graffiti tags removed: 629

Stickers/handbills removed: 212

Combined Clean & Safe Team:

Pedestrian assistance: 4,256

Property/business contacts: 2,444

Motorist assistance: 25

Passive panhandling: 226

Aggressive panhandling: 58

GRAFFITI REMOVAL: CALL THE DID FIRST!

Since its inception in 2005, the DID has removed nearly 10,000 graffiti tags from downtown buildings. While property owners are responsible for removing graffiti from the second floor and above, the DID takes care of all first floor tags.

When you first notice that your building has been tagged, call the DID immediately: (401) 421-4450. We will send out a crew with a pressure washer to remove it as soon as we can. Graffiti removal is weather dependent, so please be patient! Once temperatures rise above freezing for a few days in a row, our services will pick up again.

Every graffiti tag is different, and each building must be treated individually. In some cases, the DID works with property owners to find matching paint colors. For other buildings, the DID may assist in acquiring a lift in order to tackle graffiti on upper floors. In every case, we take care to apply the appropriate solvent and pressure to your building's exterior, to prevent any property damage. We hope that your building is never tagged, but if it is, the DID is here to help!

Downtown IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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DOWNTOWN STREET SIGNS

While we continue to brand Providence as a tourist destination, we must make sure that visitors can easily navigate around the downtown area. To fully understand the issue, the DID has identified street signs that are missing or in disrepair. The cost of purchasing the 253 new purple and white signs, identifying neighborhoods such as “Financial District” and “Downtown Arts District,” is estimated to be \$27,400. With a proposed DID contribution of \$15,000 to the project, a gap of \$12,400 remained. The DID thanks City Councilors John Lombardi and Balbina Young, and Director of Public Works John Nickelson, for making up the difference by generously contributing to this project. The Department of Public Works has also agreed to install the signs at no additional cost.

GOOD NEWS FOR CYCLISTS

Thanks to a RI Department of Transportation (RIDOT) grant received by The Providence Foundation, 50 bike racks (with space for 2 bikes each) will be installed on sidewalks and private property. The DID identified the best locations, with assistance from community leaders and property owners, to make sure that high bike traffic areas are covered. We already have 120 racks, so once the next group is installed, we will be able to accommodate 340 bikes altogether. As the need arises, we will evaluate the demand for more.

SPRING PLANTING PROGRAM: COMING SOON

Through a public bidding process, the DID has hired Jacavone Garden Center, a family owned business based in Johnston, to grow the flowers for our planting program. Approaching the third season, we will draw more attention to Kennedy Plaza, and will consider adding double hanging baskets to 29 poles around Biltmore and Burnside Parks. This beautification effort will be managed through a partnership with Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA) and the city of Providence, and will contribute to the Greater Kennedy Plaza improvement project. The DID is pleased to offer lower cost sponsorships for planters and baskets this year, so if you're interested in becoming a sponsor, contact Frank LaTorre: (401) 421-4450.

HOSPITALITY RESOURCE PARTNERSHIP: GETTING RESULTS

Members of the Hospitality Resource Partnership (HRP), which includes property owners, residents, police, security personnel and club owners, are continuing to identify and address late-night issues. The group is trying to organize a “Providence Nightlife Association” to encourage nightclub owners to put pressure on their peers to comply with laws and regulations.

Working together in 3 task forces, HRP members are finding solutions to maintaining a vibrant yet safe nightclub atmosphere. For example, the Community Standards and Regulations Task Force is proposing legislation dealing with issues of underage drinking and the possibility of staggered hours for nightclub closings. In addition, the Community Policing of a Hospitality Zone Task Force is working to stop overcrowding of clubs and rowdy behavior on the streets. The group is also assisting the police department on the development and training for a new model for community policing of a hospitality zone. As a founding member of the HRP, the DID remains a strong partner with the city in this effort.

nail: BUILDING COMMUNITY AND CREATING IDEAS IN DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE



Photo by Myles Dumas

nail, a local creative firm with a lower-case name and a fresh approach to marketing and design, recently relocated from a nearby office into a 5,000 square-foot space in the back of the Peerless Building. With 17 employees, the firm can now name several local companies as clients, who agree with their philosophy that “big ideas beat big budgets.”

Since the company was launched 10 years ago, **nail** has received the Hatch Awards for Creative Excellence every year. In fact, **nail** is recognized as the most award-winning firm in Providence. According to Alec Beckett, one of **nail's** creative partners, “As a young start-up business, the affordability of office space in Providence allowed us to ‘act like the company we wanted to become,’ whereas in Boston or New York, a similar sized space would have been cost-prohibitive.”

When **nail's** partners realized that they were outgrowing their former office, they considered buying their own building in another part of the city. They mentioned the potential plans to their employees, who seemed disappointed about the idea of moving out of downtown. Another creative partner, Brian Gross, explains, “We were in this neighborhood 10 years ago, before much of today's activity moved into the area. We thought, ‘Why leave now?’” Alec describes his new location as the “white hot epicenter,” and he's glad that **nail** employees wanted to stay here.

They were excited to find their brick-walled space in the Peerless Building, and they admire their landlord, Cornish Associates, a company that's passionate about the downtown neighborhood and extremely accommodating to its tenants. While building out the space, they've adhered to the concept of creating “a city within a city” with different areas to work, think, and naturally, to play ping-pong. Beyond the open area with workstations, the space includes 2 enclosed rooms, which can be used for conferences and for brainstorming. They wanted to encourage greener commuting, so they also installed a shower to accommodate employees who choose to walk or bike to work.

Brian and Alec are thrilled knowing that other big, exciting things are happening within the surrounding blocks, and they are proud of the vibrant city that they call home. They look forward to mingling with neighbors at the new food market, opening on Weybosset Street, and on the sidewalks as spring arrives.



inside:

Clean + Safe
Summary, page 2

Project Updates, page 3

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Washington Trust: New Downtown Address

The downtown Providence branch recently moved from its former office at 180 Washington Street to an upscale new 3,100 square-foot space at 156 Westminster Street in the Financial District. As the oldest community bank in the United States, founded in 1800, Washington Trust has continued to show its commitment to downtown Providence. The new branch offers a state-of-the-art ATM that provides receipts showing pictures of deposited checks. In addition, customers can check in through an electronic queuing system, allowing them to relax in a lounge area with wireless internet access instead of waiting on line for customer service. Washington Trust offers a range of financial services, including business banking, personal banking, wealth management and trust services. Visit www.washtrust.com for more information.

GREAT NEW OPTION FOR AN OVERNIGHT STAY: THE DOWNTOWN HAMPTON INN & SUITES

The new Hampton Inn & Suites at 58 Weybosset is an outstanding renovation of the Old Colony House, built in 1920 as a bank and most recently occupied by St. Francis Chapel. The first floor now features a large 2-story historic lobby with an open dining area, where a complete breakfast will be served every morning. Set to open in April, the hotel has 110 rooms including 37 deluxe suites. It offers a business center, basement-level fitness center, and free high speed internet access throughout the property. Guests can enter on Weybosset Street, where the hotel offers valet parking. A complimentary shuttle service will also take guests to the airport, theaters, and other destinations.

While the guest rooms are unique, featuring several configurations, most are equipped with microwaves and refrigerators and are adorned with artwork created by local photographers. The waterfront views are incredible from many rooms, and they're exceptional from the windows of the 11th floor meeting space, which can accommodate up to 75 people.

Before choosing this historic property, developer James Karam, president of First Bristol Corporation, had been looking at buildings in Providence for a while. He approached owners Lloyd and (former DID chairman) Evan Granoff about purchasing the property, and eventually undertook

the project as a joint venture with them. With \$5 million in historic tax credits, the costs fell into line, and the \$20 million project became feasible. Newport Collaborative Architects, a firm with offices in Newport and downtown Providence, was hired to design the project, which involved an adaptive reuse as well as new construction.

Mr. Karam, who also owns Hampton Inn & Suites in Middletown, RI and Raynham, MA, is extremely proud of the hotel's green initiatives. The building's exterior is clad with an EFIS system, and all new energy efficient windows have been installed. The high-efficient heat recovery system reduces energy use by redirecting air from the building's sunny side to the shadier parts of the building. The "ozone" system for laundry facilities also reduces the amount of water used to clean linens.

According to Mr. Karam, "The whole downtown area is terrific, and the DID is doing a wonderful job. The neighbors have been extremely accommodating and understanding throughout the entire construction process. We look forward to becoming part of the neighborhood." The DID looks forward to the hotel's official opening, and welcomes the 50 new employees to downtown Providence.