



THE 2022

ANNUAL REPORT



DOWNTOWN ALBANY
Business Improvement District



Dear Stakeholders,

In 2021, the BID continued to provide relief and support from the impacts of COVID-19 all while executing initiatives aimed at engaging and attracting employees, residents, and visitors.

Last year, the BID's Downtown Albany Gift Card, Split the Bill NY, and small business grants resulted in over \$250,000 in direct spending at, and support to, businesses within our District, with leadership continually advocating on behalf of our Stakeholders on issues ranging from alcohol to go to the replenishment of the Restaurant Relief Fund.

The BID invested in our public spaces with the activation and illumination of William Street that included modern lighting and furniture, a 150' mural, and installation of outlets allowing for the connective corridor to be utilized for events well into the future. We assisted Albany Center Gallery with the administration of a State grant, site location, and permit approvals for the creation of a new mural by nationally acclaimed artist Free Humanity, and brought back the wildly popular lifelike pieces from world renowned sculptor Seward Johnson.

This past year 11 new businesses opened and two expanded both in size and services. We also experienced the opening of a new 25,000 square feet of innovative co-working space geared towards non-profits to foster more collaboration, creativity, and inclusion.

As we look to rebuild from the devastating impacts of the global pandemic, the BID Board developed a Strategic Plan for 2021-2024. After surveys from Stakeholders, interviews with elected officials and larger property owners, and a Board planning session, the overwhelming response was to continue prioritizing our core services: Marketing and Special Events; Clean, Safe and Beautification; and Economic Development. Our Committees have begun working on the strategies and tactics outlined in the plan to build back better, and we remain grateful for the property owners and commercial and residential tenants who continue to invest in our District's bright future.

Sincerely,

Georgette Steffens
Executive Director

DOWNTOWN EXPERIENCED CONTINUED INVESTMENT THROUGHOUT 2021 FROM NEW AND EXISTING PROPERTY AND BUSINESS OWNERS, INCLUDING:

11 new businesses opened

5 new fast casual options significantly expanding our offerings – a fully vegan “burger” eatery, a Greek restaurant, a Vietnamese sandwich and coffee shop, a sweet and savory crepe restaurant, and a high-end fresh food café

1 new bakery offering cookies and milk for delivery in the evenings

1 new hair and nail salon bringing to fruition the dream of two sisters to open their own business

1 new gallery that brings together art, fashion, and music with a focus on creating opportunities for local artists of all genres

2 new co-working spaces including Downtown's largest workspace community to date and one focused on providing quality, affordable collaborative space for nonprofits

1 new live entertainment venue with two stages offering varying sizes of shows

2 long time businesses expanded both in size and products

1 florist doubled in size and expanded to offer Albany centric gifts and more

1 sandwich shop more than doubled their seating area and added a soup and salad bar

2 national sports teams returned or opened to Albany – Albany Empire, and Albany FireWolves

Residential remained strong in 2021

- \$50 million in residential conversions were completed in 2021
- 3 buildings came online for a total of 139 new apartments
- One apartment building reported close to 50% of their new tenants moved to Albany from the New York City area during the pandemic

CURRENT IMPLEMENTATION INVESTMENTS

\$350+ million completed since 2015

\$140+ million under construction

\$30+ million in the pipeline

Data provided by Capitalize Albany Corporation

#1 Best Place to Live in New York State



#1 Best Cities for Bicyclists in NY



#3 Best Places for Women's Pay



#11 Best Cities for Millennials



“When I moved to downtown Albany, I was hopeful to make a friend or two and find a coffee shop that I could frequent. What I never could have imagined was finding a new family. I have met incredible friends, become a part of the dog park community, and through those connections I have met so many more incredible people. Today, I walk through the streets of downtown Albany, and I wave hello to friends, shop owners, and neighbors. I am so happy to call Albany my home.”

~Gaelyn S.

THE BID CONTINUED PROVIDING SUPPORT TO THE SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY in downtown Albany as COVID-19 continued to have devastating impacts. Through several creative initiatives and advocacy, staff partnered with business owners and elected leaders to ensure the resiliency of our locally owned and operated retail, retail related, and restaurants Stakeholders.

COVID Forgivable Loans

2020 \$96,821 in grants given to 46 small businesses 48% of the recipients were MWBE	2021 \$56,846 in grants given to 34 small businesses 50% of the recipients were MWBE
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Downtown Albany Gift Card

After a 2020 survey conducted by the BID found that only 10% of our restaurants, retailers, and retail related establishments had the ability to sell online, the BID launched a Downtown Albany Gift Card, providing a free, easy way for Stakeholders to participate in a digital gift card program. Additionally, the BID implemented bonus Downtown Dollars encouraging immediate support of our businesses when they needed it the most.

48 businesses accept the Downtown Albany Gift Card

- 2,700 cards representing \$132,372 sold in 2021
- \$40,000 in bonus Downtown Dollars provided by the BID to purchasers
- \$77,619 redeemed at participating Downtown businesses resulting in an estimated \$101,680 in total spend



Split the Bill NY

Wanting to provide relief to the severely impacted hospitality industry, the BID partnered with the Sidmore Family Foundation to host Split the Bill NY, an initiative designed to support local restaurants, their hardworking employees, and the community during the hardship created by COVID-19. Patrons ordered out or dined at participating restaurants and BID and our sponsors paid half of their bill up to \$25.

28 participating full serve and fast casual restaurants and coffee shops

- 1,138 customers submitted reimbursement requests of \$22,891.84
- \$66,670.40 total spend generated during Split the Bill NY at participating Downtown locations

Free Uber Rides

Encouraging safe holiday celebrations with family, friends or colleagues from – and supporting businesses in – Downtown, the BID partnered with DeCrescente Distributing Company and offered free Uber rides home from any Downtown businesses during Thanksgiving weekend and the December holiday season.

89 rides during Downtown Thanks You promotion

137 rides during Holidays in Downtown promotion

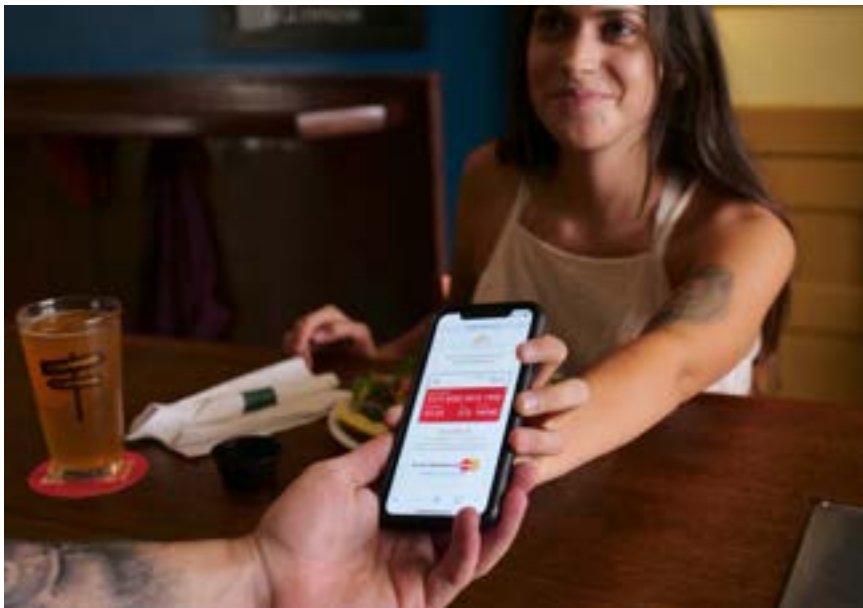




Photo: Albany Center Gallery

DOWNTOWN IS ALL ART

Activating Alleyways

With the activation of William Street, the goal was to create a vibrant pedestrian corridor between the MVP Arena and the Albany Capital Center that invokes a welcoming atmosphere, provides visual interest and attracts visitors. The William Street investment includes a 150' mural by local artist Eugene O'Neill, strung lights overhead, new modern street furniture, self-watering planters, and electricity for future events.

This project also allows the BID, as well as local businesses, to program the walkway with new events to attract folks to explore all that downtown Albany has to offer. William Street, combined with the recent opening of the Albany Skyway and the forthcoming Clinton Market Collective, further Downtown as a Capital Region destination.

New Capital Walls Mural

The latest edition to Albany's Capital Walls mural project, "All Hearts Are Connected," encompasses 1,250-square-feet on 69 N Pearl Street and is the first Albany mural for the nationally renowned, California-based multidisciplinary artist Free Humanity, who is known for his colorful palette and multicolored hearts.

New Visitors in Downtown

The BID was thrilled to bring the internationally recognized work of Seward Johnson back to Downtown. The exhibit featured 10 pieces from Mr. Johnson's *Celebrating the Familiar* sculpture series in various locations throughout Downtown. The sculptures served as an intriguing way to build community, encourage exploration, and celebrate our shared experiences.



Photo: Sana Siddiqui

BID'S CORE SERVICES

The BID continues our work to restore, promote, and maintain the character and vitality of downtown Albany through core services of Marketing, Clean & Safe, Beautification & Visual Improvements, and Business Development.

Marketing

Average impressions across platforms: 120% INCREASE	159,000+ video views on content the BID produced or partnered on
Average engagements across platforms: 70.6% INCREASE	11 ribbon cuttings held for new or expanding Downtown businesses
Average link clicks/profile actions across platforms: 92.4% INCREASE	45 the number of times Downtown Albany BID events and initiatives were covered by media

9 office tenants and industry leaders highlighted in Downtown Works profiles, a collaboration between the BID and Capitalize Albany Corporation

Social Engagement

Facebook

Impressions up 71.5%
Engagements up 74%
Link clicks up 124%

Twitter

Impressions up 23.4%
Engagements up 28.6%
Link clicks up 39.7%

Instagram

Impressions up by 266.5%
Engagements up by 109.2%
Profile actions up by 113.6%

Marketing data compares 2020 vs. 2021

Clean & Safe

With the growing residential population in Downtown, now estimated at 1,300 people, the BID added another Clean Team member to service the District year-round. The 4.5 person team logged 5,120 hours maintaining the Downtown area, collecting 2,557 55 gallon bags of trash by pan & broom/by hand and 1,800 55 gallon bags with the ATLV machine.

The BID installed 12 additional trash receptacles and 13 new bistro sets that were placed throughout the District parks - DiNapoli, Liberty and Tricentennial. Adding to the District's streetscape beautification, the BID worked with the City's Department of General Services to plant 10 street trees, a continuation of a street tree initiative the BID launched 2018 that also assists with the City's goal of planning 2,025 trees by 2025.

SPECIAL EVENTS

The BID moved from virtual events to in person starting in the spring. Our 30 outdoor events, including 5 new ways to experience Downtown, attracted an estimated 15,000 people to our District.

- Developed a Downtown Public Art walking tour Google map that, to date, has been viewed more than 23,200 times
- Hosted 2 new Artful Albany Scavenger Hunts in partnership with Discover Albany
- Brought back the Hot Chocolate Stroll, one of our most sought-after events, with tickets selling out in less than a week
- In-person PearlPalooza and YogaPalooza with roughly 4,000 people in attendance
- With the African American Cultural Center of the Capital Region as the lead, assisted in closing South Pearl Street, resulting in the Center's largest Juneteenth celebration to date; an estimated 6,000 people attended





2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

In the fall of 2021, the BID undertook a strategic planning process that included surveys from Board members and Stakeholders; interviews with large property owners, elected officials, and developers; and a series of in person workshops. The outcome was definitive - focus on our core services: Clean, Safe & Beautification, Marketing & Special Events, and Economic Development.

The result of these efforts was a 2021-2024 Strategic Plan, through which three Committees were created, each focused on the outlined strategic goals. Overseen by staff and a Board member Chairperson, many Committees have already begun to accomplish their designated tasks, and we look forward to providing all the details of our results in our 2022 Annual Report. Stay tuned!

STRATEGIC GOAL 1

Build a clean, safe, and visually improved Downtown

Objectives:

- Enhance feelings of safety
- Increase cleanliness
- Prioritize parks

STRATEGIC GOAL 2

Enhance marketing, communication, and special events

Objectives:

- Create the narrative and build community pride
- Increase the number of special events
- Attract a broader audience

STRATEGIC GOAL 3

Facilitate economic development in office, retail, and residential

Objectives:

- Create a vibrant, attractive, fun, engaging, and diverse community
- Increase foot traffic
- Enhance parking experience

\$5,000+

Capital Bank
DeCrescente Distributing
Company
Remarkable Liquids
SEFCU

\$2,500 - 4,999

Berkshire Bank
CDTA
Community Bank
Gleason, Dunn, Walsh & O'Shea
M&T Bank
MVP Health Care
NBT Bank
O'Connell & Aronowitz
ParkAlbany
Silver Therapeutics

\$1,000 - 2,499

Albany County Bar Association
Albany Distilling Company
Redburn Development Partners

\$1 - 999

B. Lodge & Company
Mailworks

In-Kind

B. Lodge & Company
The City of Albany
Empire Live
High Peaks Event Production
Hampton Inn Albany Downtown
The Hot Yoga Spot
The Mailworks
Sugar Productions
SUNY Plaza
WEQX



Redburn Development Partners

2022 James M. DiNapoli Award Recipient

Redburn Development Partners made a splash in the downtown Albany market when, in 2018, the firm purchased eight buildings. Since the initial acquisition, their Downtown portfolio has grown to include 11 buildings and they've reinvigorated approximately 625,000 square feet within the BID's boundaries. Their initial investment of \$80 million created 300 residential units, including their signature building – The Kenmore. Their intentional curation of their retail spaces brought a diverse array of retail, food and entertainment offerings that are creating foot traffic every night of the week.

While the buildings marked their entrance into our District, a long-held belief in Downtowns as vehicles for economic development is a pillar atop which Redburn Development Partners stands. Seizing the strength of the Downtown market, Redburn has another \$20 million in development bringing 40 apartments online and 175 new employees to downtown Albany.

Created in 2013 in honor of founding member and inaugural Chairman of the Downtown Albany BID, the James M. DiNapoli Award is presented annually to an individual, organization, or business that exemplifies Mr. DiNapoli's spirit of partnership and community-building in shaping the direction of downtown Albany.

Cover artwork by Mark Adler | markadlerart.com



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