

stamford-downtown.com

Stamford Downtown Special Services District  
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# Stamford Downtown

"On the other side of a storm  
is the strength that comes from  
having navigated through it.  
Raise your sail and begin!"

-G. S. Williams

"The Show Must  
Go On!"

WE'RE IN THIS  
TOGETHER!

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2020-2021 Annual Report

**VISION**

The Vision for Stamford Downtown is to always be the vibrant regional city-center for living, working, shopping, dining, education, culture and entertainment.

**MISSION**

The Stamford Downtown Special Services District manages, enhances and promotes the Downtown experience.

**GOALS**

To attain the vision the following goals have been set:

- To meet the needs of our constituents by efficiently and effectively managing the operations of the Special Services District
- To protect and enhance the value of Downtown properties and businesses by informing municipal, state, and federal policies
- To continue Stamford Downtown's growth into a mixed-use and vibrant neighborhood through branding, marketing, supporting smart development, and activating street level spaces
- To achieve the highest quality public urban spaces with ongoing maintenance and targeted infrastructure enhancements
- To produce dynamic events to draw visitors to Downtown and enhance the resident, worker, and student experience

"The Tinker"  
by Lorann K. Jacobs

Editor: Annette Einhorn  
Design and Illustration by Creative Insight, LLC  
Photography by Happyhaha Photography

STAMFORD DOWNTOWN SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT  
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True North Rendering

**WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER!**

Our fiscal year running from July 2020 to June 2021 has certainly been twelve months for the record books. As I (David) wrote last year, the pandemic hit just two months after my taking the helm of Stamford Downtown, forcing the nation and our community to "socially distance" though our organization's raison d'etre is to bring people together.

Nothing like a crisis to make you reassess your priorities. Stamford Downtown has done just that. Since early 2020, we've worked closely within our staff, with our Board of Commissioners, and with our key stakeholders to mold our organization to be increasingly resilient. In collaboration with our property owners and small businesses, we've spent the past year honing our programs to ensure that we're delivering the most value for our Downtown and neighborhoods beyond.

As the former Director of Resilience at Connecticut's Department of Housing, I (David) spent a lot of time helping communities across the state understand the acute shocks that they could face, and the chronic stresses that could hinder their recovery. COVID-19 was probably – hopefully – the most significant acute shock that we'll have to weather in our lifetimes. Though it has lasted over a year, it has been acute in that it was a single incident that forced us to literally shut down our economy and install public health protocols that we've all only read about in history books and dystopian fiction. Like hurricanes and natural disasters before this pandemic, its wake exposed the chronic stresses in our communities that would hold us back from a quick rebound to reclaim the course we were on. Poverty, underlying health conditions, overreliance on a global supply chain are all issues that existed under the surface but have been laid bare by the events of this past year.

Thankfully, despite extreme incidence of this virus in its early days across our region, Stamford has fared better than most. Our health-care system orchestrated what felt like a wartime mobilization, our small businesses focused their operations on meeting customer needs within public health guidelines, and our community has come together in support of one another and has had some of the highest incidence of mask-wearing and now, vaccinations in the country.

Stamford Downtown was faced with some tough choices in 2020. As with every other organization with a portfolio of large activities, we canceled most of our signature events. But the creativity of staff

and ingenuity of our partners allowed us to continue with modifications some of our smaller events like the farmers market and crafts fair and create some new benefits for the community like 4th of July fireworks from the rooftop of Landmark Square. In lieu of the Thanksgiving Parade Spectacular, we partnered with Person to Person and our generous sponsors to deliver hundreds of holiday meals to families in need. Perhaps most importantly, we acted as the key liaison between our Downtown businesses and local and state government, helping them understand the evolving regulatory environment and implications for their operations; strengthening our relationship with them in the process.

Now that regulations are being lifted and we're several steps down the long path back to "normal," we eagerly anticipate unprecedented demand for activities this coming Summer and Fall, but questions about the future of downtowns remain. Most notably, will online shopping and remote work degrade the value of urbanity exemplified by Stamford Downtown? We posit that the answer is not as much as folks might presently think. Online retail, though growing, still represents a small share of total sales. Experiential retail that cannot be replicated digitally will remain a driver of bricks and mortar stores. Despite early announcements by some tech companies about perpetual remote work, recent national surveys of employers indicate that less than 5% of companies don't see a need to bring their workforce physically together for at least part of the work week. Many jobs still require 'heads up' collaboration and interaction as opposed to 'heads down' work at a desk, and those positions will continue to demand space in collaborative environments in downtowns.

The coming year will undoubtedly answer some of these questions and pose new ones that we haven't even thought of yet. Emerging from this past year, we have the confidence that the relationships amongst our staff and with our Board of Commissioners, property owners, and businesses are stronger than ever. It will be these relationships and the new ideas that emerge from ongoing collaborations that will continue to strengthen the resilience of our organization and the community that we serve. Stamford Downtown is here to stay and incredibly well-positioned for whatever challenges and opportunities we'll soon face.



**GREG CAGGAINELLO**  
Chair  
Stamford Downtown  
Special Services District



**DAVID KOORIS**  
President  
Stamford Downtown  
Special Services District

**GOAL:** To protect and enhance the value of Downtown properties and businesses by informing municipal, state, and federal policies



677-707 Washington Blvd. Rendering

**2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**ZONING AND LAND USE STRATEGY**

The past year was highlighted by the City of Stamford Land Use Bureau’s effort to affect changes to the City’s land use policy via an Omnibus Zoning Text Change. The Omnibus Zoning Text Change will impact a variety of land use-related issues including historic preservation, parking and future commercial development. Stamford Downtown offered extensive comment toward those applications comprising this process, resulting in multiple changes to the proposals embodied in the Omnibus Zoning Text Change. Stamford Downtown will continue to work closely with the City to ensure that any changes are to the District’s benefit. A focus this fiscal year was on the proposed changes to the Historic Preservation section of the zoning code which Stamford Downtown was successful, through education and advocacy, in balancing the lofty objectives of preservation with the need to focus future development in the core of Downtown.

Stamford Downtown also maintains regular attendance at Zoning and Planning Board meetings and convenes meetings of its Economic Development sub-committee to review development proposals and changes to land use policies to ensure compliance with local planning standards.

**STREET TREE PLANTING MANUAL**

A dense, well-planned urban forest is a key element in ensuring an attractive, welcoming setting that encourages pedestrian activity and communal gathering. In 2020-2021, Stamford Downtown took the next step to nurturing an urban forest within Downtown by partnering with the City’s Land Use Bureau to create a Street Tree Planting Manual. This Manual establishes clear guidelines for the appropriate tree species that the City of Stamford and stakeholders, such as property owners and developers, may plant within Downtown. The Manual details the proper location and maintenance of trees, and associated tree beds, thus improving the visual setting in Downtown while ensuring trees do not damage road or sidewalk infrastructure as they grow.

Stamford Downtown is the leading advocate for, and takes an active role in shaping, policies at the local and state level that support Downtown as Stamford’s undisputed focus for residential, retail and commercial growth. Stamford Downtown endeavors to position our district as an enviable location for the region’s highly skilled workforce to live, work, and play. In addition to Stamford Downtown’s work to enhance and activate the public realm throughout the Downtown, the organization promotes and drives public policies that support appropriate urban development.

**BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES**

Stamford Downtown staff holds positions on numerous public agencies, boards, commissions, community groups and corporations including but not limited to: the Palace Theatre, Mill River Park Collaborative, Ferguson Library, Avon Theatre, Stamford Chamber of Commerce, Old Town Hall Redevelopment Agency, Stamford Veterans Park Partnership, Stamford Arts and Culture Commission, Stamford Museum and Nature Center, Stamford Innovation Week, Stamford Partnership, Opening Doors Fairfield County and the Western CT Tourism District.

Through participation in the governance of these partner organizations, Stamford Downtown staff both highlights the role and benefits of the organization while adding capacity to and strengthening those community partners whose success amplify that of one another.

**2021/22 PRIORITIES + PLANNED INITIATIVES**

**LAND USE AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY OVERSIGHT**

Stamford Downtown will monitor emerging development and infrastructure-related proposals, such as transportation improvements, both in the Downtown and in the adjacent neighborhoods through a comprehensive review and analysis process. There are many new projects slated to come before Stamford Downtown’s Economic Development Committee this coming year.

Stamford Downtown will maintain its regular attendance at local Zoning and Planning Board meetings in order to advocate for policies and projects that will support Stamford Downtown’s vision for land use.

Stamford Downtown will also invest in empirical tools to measure the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on commercial office and residential real estate as well as consumer behavior. The re-emergence of the local economy is dependent on the ability of Stamford Downtown, and the City, to draw remote workers and residents to patronize while encouraging development activity.

**STREATERIES**  
in  
STAMFORD DOWNTOWN

**STREATERIES AND THE BEDFORD PIAZZA**

Stamford Downtown took the lead in rethinking how land typically dedicated to cars could be repurposed to facilitate the public’s desires for outdoor experiences during the pandemic and beyond. We created StrEATeries – including the focal point Bedford Piazza – to sustain and underpin the economic resilience of Downtown’s restaurant rows through the challenging Spring of 2020 and beyond. Stamford Downtown worked with a multi-department team from the City of Stamford to implement StrEATeries representing a significant change not only in how we use public spaces but also in the governmental process, making the approval process for innovative ideas more nimble. This effort couldn’t have been accomplished without the creativity and flexibility of David Martin’s administration. This initiative created

approach that minimized negative impacts. The strategy for each area was often a balancing act: not perfect for everyone but not significantly negatively impacting any one stakeholder either. In all, the owners and tenants in these areas came together in a way that is a testament to our community’s resilience in this time of crisis, each compromising a little for the strength of the whole.

Dining in parklets in parallel parking spaces and even closing travel lanes for expanded dining areas isn’t without local precedent during special events Downtown. The creation of the Bedford Piazza brought with it additional layers of complexity; that lot had never been repurposed in this way before. Stamford Downtown was able to redesign a portion of the parking lot adjacent to the Bedford Street Garage so that participating restaurants patios could each utilize an additional approximately 2,000 square feet each for seating capacity. Area



over 1,000 outdoor dining seats beyond those typically allowed on the city’s sidewalks through two complementary approaches: the conversion of on-street parking areas and limited travel lanes to patios along five streets and the transformation of a large portion of the public surface parking lot next to the Bedford Garage into the Bedford Piazza, accommodating seven dedicated restaurant patios.

Reallocating automobile space to other uses (e.g. pedestrians and diners) is an incredibly complex and nuanced undertaking. Along each street with a substantial number of restaurants, a block by block approach was developed. To do so, multiple stakeholders beyond the restaurants (e.g. property owners, retailers, and other building tenants) had to be consulted to formulate an

was essential with social distancing requirements pushing tables at least six feet from one another. The organization painted blue boundary lines around each restaurant’s space, painted each patio grey to reduce heat island effect, painted yellow paths linking each patio to parking areas, lined the Piazza with picket fencing, and constructed specially-designed above-ground tree planters for Zelkova trees and native grasses. The ~50% of the surface lot not occupied by the Bedford Piazza had to be redesigned for a new traffic pattern to accommodate loading zones, bi-directional traffic flow, and allocated reserved parking for displaced tenants. This process will serve as a template for future temporary conversion of automobile infrastructure to outdoor dining and, as the program is sustained over time, will encourage restaurants to beautify and invest in their outdoor spaces.

**GOAL:** To continue Stamford Downtown's growth into a mixed-use and vibrant neighborhood through branding, marketing, supporting smart development, and activating street level spaces

**2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

Despite facing what was likely the toughest year for brick and mortar establishments, our restaurants and retailers fared better than most across the country. Their perseverance and resilience serve as a testament to their tenacity, our organization's and government's nimble approach to enabling them to be creative, and our collective community support for our small businesses. Unlike downtowns across the region and nation, Stamford Downtown did not see a single restaurant closure and, reinforcing the neighborhood's role as a regional dining destination, a half-dozen new eateries opened with several more under construction. Further, this year saw another half-dozen new retailers or service providers open, significantly reducing ground floor vacancy throughout the Downtown. Since our last Annual Report, an impressive list of new businesses have opened in Stamford Downtown, adding some exciting energy to the Downtown landscape. Opened since July 2020, **we welcome the following to the Downtown community:**

**Retailers & Service:**

- CBD Curators** at 180 Bedford Street
- Dogtopia** at 421 Atlantic Street
- eLina Swimwear & Sportswear** at 189 Bedford Street
- Honey Joe's Family Coffeehouse** at 5 Broad Street
- Juice Kings** at 36 Atlantic Street
- Milk N Cookies** at 163 Bedford Street
- Row House** at 5 Broad
- The Learning Center** at 421 Atlantic Street
- United Home & Patio** at 441 Summer Street
- Val's Wine, Crafts & Spirits** at 66 Summer Street
- Whale Tea** at 1 Bank Street
- Whim** at 95 Bedford Street

**Restaurants:**

- Bari 167 Pizza** at 167 Bedford Street
- Chakos Latin Cuisine** at 78 West Park Place
- Cosechas Restaurant** at 217 Atlantic Street
- Divina at the Courtyard by Marriott**, 275 Summer Street
- Jerklyz** at 66 Summer Street
- Quarteriere** at 51 Bank Street
- Taj Indian Cuisine** at 211 Summer Street
- Towne Parlor Pizza & Pints** at 112 Bedford Street



Atlantic Station West Rendering



Divina, 275 Summer Street



The Lloyd, 909 Washington Blvd.



United Home & Patio, 441 Summer Street

**STOREFRONT ACTIVATION**

To enliven the neighborhood for the holiday season, Stamford Downtown hosted their 10th annual Deck the Downtown event, a holiday storefront decorating contest with 18 storefronts competing for Best of Show and Runner up. Prize money was awarded to the winning businesses, with Verde Galerie at 79 Atlantic Street winning Best of Show and Atlantic Street House Pizza & Authentic Greek at 221 Atlantic Street winning Runner Up. The contest stipulated that the prize money awarded will be used by the winners exclusively for permanent spring façade improvements ensuring that the seasonal program translates to sustainable impact.

This year marked a significant expansion of the organization's rotating storefront gallery program. With a focus on short shows highlighting local artists, the program ensured that an ever-changing visual display filled the gaps between active establishments to enhance the pedestrian experience on Bedford Street. During the past year, seven independent artists and several additional from the CT Portrait Society were showcased in ground floor vacancies, adding color and diversity to the streetscape.

**MARKETING AND PROMOTION**

December marked the launch of the Stamford Downtown Card, a digital community-based gift card which is purchased directly on Stamford Downtown's website. At the time of publication, 53 Downtown businesses including both restaurants and retailers had signed up to accept the card at their establishments. The Stamford Downtown Card is a perfect way to support local businesses while giving a unique holiday, birthday or new resident gift. During the first five months of the calendar year, 89 cards valued at \$6,161 been purchased.

Held twice annually, Restaurant Weeks yielded popular public support with a record number of 23 restaurants participating in Summer Restaurant Weeks and 22 in Winter Restaurants Weeks. Once again, a regional marketing/media campaign was initiated for both events. With the Summer Restaurant Weeks occurring when Stamford's and Connecticut's public health guidelines ensured a safe environment while other states' restaurants remained closed, patrons were drawn from across the tri-state region and beyond. To maximize customer confidence in the safety at our establishments, Stamford Downtown coordinated with the City in April to create a vaccine clinic for restaurant workers offering over 700 vaccinations.

Additionally, Stamford Downtown designed and implemented a robust marketing campaign to promote a new restaurant holiday initiative called "EAT! Festive Holiday Offerings" encouraging both dine-in and take-out options for two weeks in December. Twenty-five restaurants offered special holiday themed menus, while the City designated free 15-minute parking zones to encourage easy customer pick up. The restaurants were pleased to see an uptick in business, since many corporate parties had been cancelled due to the pandemic.

Finally, previously published twice annually in hard copy format, our newsletter transitioned into a digital form, now received by over 8,000 subscribers. Articles on this year's 20 new restaurants and retailers, as well as district events, developments and improvements are now featured monthly, to keep people abreast of Downtown happenings.

**2021/22 PRIORITIES + PLANNED INITIATIVES**

**WELCOME BROCHURE FOR NEW BUSINESSES**

A brochure designed to welcome new businesses to the Downtown providing valuable information and links to Stamford Downtown and City resources. The guide will outline Stamford Downtown marketing programs available to new business such as the Welcome Bag program for new residents, UConn Student Discount and the digital Stamford Downtown Card program. Links to resources such as the Employee Parking Discount Program and Stamford Downtown's Calendar of Events will be provided as well.

**CORPORATE OUTREACH PROGRAMS**

As the workforce and corporate business travelers return, Stamford Downtown will be designing new marketing programs to attract these employees to patronize our local businesses as well as discover the new businesses which have opened during the past year. We will continue to act as a liaison between the businesses and the daytime employees to encourage shopping, dining and use of the diverse retail services found in Downtown.

**DOWNTOWNER EVENTS**

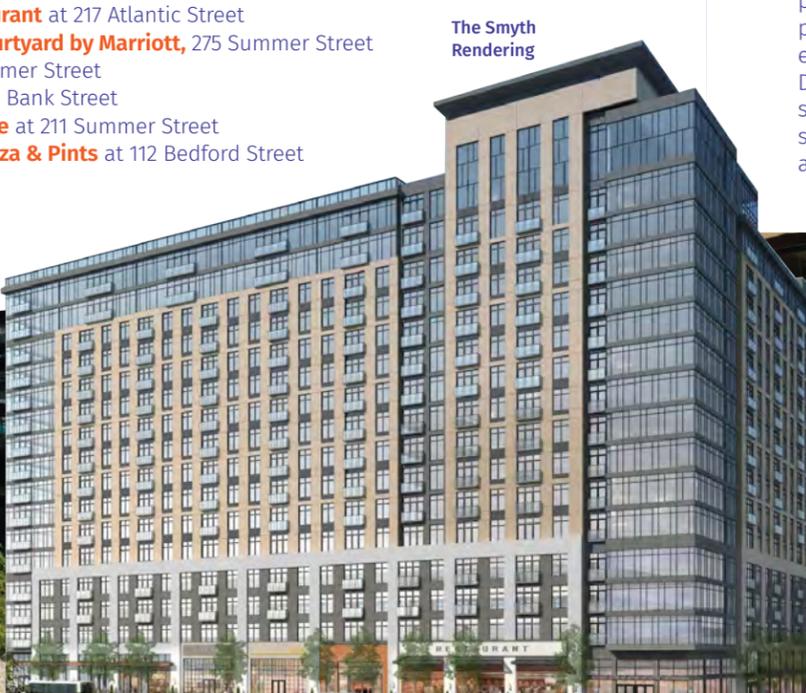
When appropriate this fall, Downtowner events are being planned at Atlantic Station Phase II at 421 Atlantic Street and The Smyth at 885 Washington Boulevard.

**DEMOGRAPHIC & DEVELOPMENT PROFILES**

Stamford Downtown continues to update both the demographic profile and the current projects being developed within the District. These valuable publications are posted on Stamford Downtown's website for prospective business owners, real estate brokers and developers benefit.

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

We will continue to meet with our Retail Committee comprised of nine active local commercial and residential brokers as well as plan a Fall Fairfield/ Westchester County broker event for 200 area brokers to update them on new and existing Stamford Downtown developments.



Jean Benoit, Art Exhibit on Bedford Street

**GOAL:** To achieve the highest quality public urban spaces with ongoing maintenance and targeted infrastructure enhancements

Stamford Downtown is committed to fostering an attractive, well-managed environment that welcomes residents, visitors, workers, and students. To achieve this Vision, Stamford Downtown deploys a multi-pronged strategy that includes our Ambassador and Environmental Maintenance Teams, landscape beautification, winter and holiday lighting, snow removal, and Placemaking through programming of public spaces.

## 2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### AMBASSADOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Stamford Downtown's Ambassador and Environmental Maintenance Program offers a variety of services to ensure a welcoming, attractive setting throughout Downtown.

Stamford Downtown's Ambassadors offer daily pedestrian patrols and weekend bike patrols and maintain close communication with the Stamford Police Department and local social service providers. These constant eyes-on-the-street serve as a source of Downtown-based information for visitors while also facilitating consistent engagement with the district's small businesses to maximize day-to-day quality of life.

Stamford Downtown's Environmental Maintenance Team provides daily sidewalk, open-space, and curbside litter removal as well as graffiti removal and regular power washing. The Environmental Maintenance Team deploys hand-held devices to document street-level physical conditions which are sent to the City's Operations Department to ensure timely repairs.

In 2020, Stamford Downtown restructured its Ambassador Program to create the position of a Social Service Outreach Ambassador. This Ambassador is actively engaging with the homeless or those individuals facing mental health and/or addiction challenges in order to connect these individuals with available social services or, for those individuals already engaged in services, to ensure they meet programmatic benchmarks.

The Downtown Snow Removal and Winter Storm Response Program ensures a pedestrian-friendly path in front of each building, and clear curb cuts, during snow events of two inches or greater. The winter of 2020-2021 proved particularly challenging as Stamford Downtown experienced more than 50 inches of snow whereas Stamford Downtown only experienced eight inches of snow fall in each of the previous two years. Each winter storm event requires Stamford Downtown's snow removal vendor and the Environmental Maintenance Team to clear approximately 150 curb cuts and over four miles of sidewalks.



### PUBLIC REALM BEAUTIFICATION PROGRAM

Stamford Downtown continued the design and implementation of its annual Landscape Beautification Program, which encompasses garden beds in multiple Downtown parks as well as approximately 40 street planters and 215 hanging baskets. In 2020-2021, Stamford Downtown expanded its Landscape Beautification Program to include Fall plantings.

Stamford Downtown again oversaw installation of winter lighting of the great oaks at Columbus Park and in front of Ferguson Library as well as dozens of street trees around Columbus Park, along the northern portion of Atlantic Street, Bedford Street and throughout Latham Park. The lighting of the Columbus Park oak in particular has emerged as an icon of winter nights in Stamford Downtown. The Columbus Park tree alone requires over 53,000 multi-colored lights. The installation of the winter lighting requires three weeks and a crew of 12 technicians.

### MAPPING AND DATA ANALYTICS

Stamford Downtown has begun to incorporate data visualization tools to improve measurement of outcomes from the organization's public realm and infrastructure initiatives. These data visualization tools will allow Stamford Downtown to map street-level fixtures such as light posts, street furniture and trash receptacles. These tools will assist Stamford Downtown to improve response to physical condition needs.

In 2021-2022, Stamford Downtown procured District360, a cloud-based, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, that will enable Stamford Downtown to bring all property, business, and stakeholder information into one system. The District360 CRM will allow Stamford Downtown staff to manage communication with property owners, businesses, the Stamford Downtown Board of Commissioners and sub-committees and administer major initiatives and, eventually, coordinate the response to maintenance requests in Downtown.



Uninvited Advice by Seward Johnson



### STAMFORD DOWNTOWN AMBASSADORS

Front Row from Left to Right: Chris Calderon, Bob Cornell, Migdalia Rivera

Back Row from Left to Right: Hector Guzman, Robert Irizarry, Tony Reid, Lester Milan, Alen Nelson

Missing from Photograph: Leland Brown, Sam Johnson

### PUBLIC REALM & INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

In 2021, Stamford Downtown convened a new sub-committee of its Board of Commissioners entitled the Public Realm & Infrastructure Committee. Stamford Downtown created this committee in recognition of the importance public spaces play in fostering a vibrant downtown and the daily experience of residents, visitors and investors. More specifically, public spaces – including parks, gardens, spaces between buildings and sidewalks – represent a valuable opportunity to:

- (1) Enhance the aesthetic design of street-level beautification efforts
- (2) Improve pedestrian connectivity between key nodes such as the Stamford Transportation and Downtown's restaurant corridors
- (3) Create cutting-edge places for communal gathering and
- (4) Engage consumers to experience ground floor settings

This Committee will first inventory public spaces, evaluate opportunities for investments to leverage the value of these spaces and then advocate for, or manage, physical improvements.

## 2021/22 PRIORITIES + PLANNED INITIATIVES

### PUBLIC REALM ENHANCEMENT PLAN

In 2021-2022, Stamford Downtown will create a Public Realm Enhancement Plan to generate a prioritized inventory of those public spaces (including parks, plazas, sidewalks, and spaces between buildings) that could best benefit from enhancement. Following the creation of this inventory, Stamford Downtown will oversee the design projects for three of the highest-priority spaces that will either a) mitigate unsatisfactory conditions, b) elevate great aspects of the public realm to exceptional, or c) create a moment of surprise that enhances the urban experience. These projects will combine leading edge, Creative Placemaking concepts, including but not limited to, landscape or eco-design, public art, lighting/projection art, and/or new site amenities. In 2021-2022, Stamford Downtown will oversee the implementation of the first of the projects identified within the Public Realm Enhancement Plan.

### STREATERIES AND PARKLET DESIGN PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Stamford Downtown will assist the City of Stamford to create guidelines for the design and implementation of street side parklets. These parklets provide restaurants with additional dining area for patrons while helping to further activate the street-level environment and fostering a pedestrian-friendly environment. This guideline document will include both parklet design as well as operational considerations such as location selection, permitting, and operations and maintenance. Stamford Downtown intends to construct a parklet on a pilot basis during the Summer 2021.

### MAPPING AND COORDINATION WITH FIXIT STAMFORD

Stamford Downtown will take the next step with its data analytic program by connecting its CRM and mapping software with the City's Fixit Stamford system. Fixit Stamford allows residents and stakeholders to submit maintenance or public safety concerns to the City. The City, in-turn, assigns these concerns to the appropriate municipal staff for repair. Stamford Downtown will attempt to link its internal software to Fixit Stamford so that its Ambassador and Environmental Maintenance Teams may transmit its physical condition issues directly to the City for a response. Linking Stamford Downtown's mapping and reporting software, with Fixit Stamford, will allow for a more rapid response to physical condition needs in Downtown.

### URBAN FOREST

Stamford Downtown will work with the City to identify the financial resources to implement the newly created Street Tree Planting Manual. The first initiative emanating from the Street Tree Planting Manual entails Stamford Downtown working with the City of Stamford to install environmentally-sustainable, tree bed treatments throughout Downtown. This initiative is an expansion of a previous pilot program. Such tree bed treatments reduce the impact of overgrown tree root systems, improve the aesthetic setting within Downtown while improving the health of the streets trees by permitting proper irrigation and eliminating girdling of tree roots from metallic tree grates.

### MURAL PROGRAM

Stamford Downtown has identified a series of façades, primarily on private properties, on which to install murals. Eye-catching public art can transform underwhelming public spaces by elevating the visual setting and helping to transform the pedestrian experience. Stamford Downtown will serve as the project manager for a large-scale mural art installation on the newly-constructed Smyth at 885 Washington Boulevard while also partnering with artists to implement murals in other locations throughout Downtown.

**GOAL: To produce dynamic events to draw visitors to Downtown and enhance the resident, student, and worker experience**

Stamford Downtown has a strong and focused calendar of events featuring an outdoor sculpture exhibit, summer concerts, farmers market, arts & crafts shows, a playday for dogs and their humans, expanded patio dining, a pre-Thanksgiving Parade Spectacular as well as a star-studded Santa rappel down Landmark Square, followed by a Holiday tree lighting.

The events draw renowned artists, musicians and sponsors, while successfully attracting hundreds of thousands of people to the Downtown annually. While the ongoing global pandemic presents a pronounced challenge to attain this goal, Stamford Downtown is committed to working with our stakeholders and government partners to provide a suite of events over the coming year that bring people together in the Downtown in a socially-responsible and health-conscious way.

**2020/21 ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**ENLIVENING SPACES THROUGH ART AND MUSIC**

During Summer 2020, Stamford Downtown hosted a sculpture exhibit with 37 works of art from six regional artists. Stamford Downtown partnered with Otocast to develop an interactive narrated audio tour, which resulted in 9,312 views for sculptures and restaurants at a cost per click of \$.21, with the Average cost per click for online advertising is \$.35. This was a great way for the public to view the exhibit from the safety of home (and provided an excellent tour guide when in the downtown).

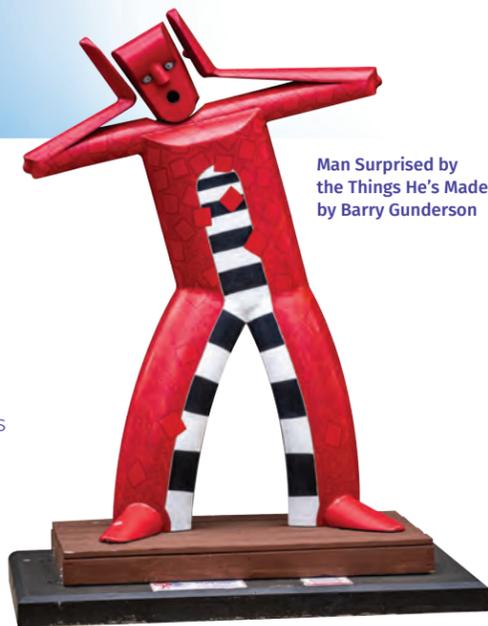
Stamford Downtown hosted the third annual Make Music Day on June 21 with 24 socially distanced performances throughout the day all around Stamford Downtown. A schedule of acoustic music was offered Sunday afternoons in July and August in Columbus Park and Heritage Park.

**ACTIVATING PUBLIC SPACES**

Stamford Downtown hosted two Arts and Crafts Shows (September 12 and October 18). The shows were scaled back to approximately one half of original vendors to allow for spacing and social distancing. Both shows were well received by the crafters and surrounding Downtown establishments. The vendors included jewelry, wood works, fine art, photography, glass and ceramics.

Stamford Downtown in collaboration with local downtown fitness businesses, offered a Covid safe, socially distant weeknight schedule of Zumba, Yoga and an afternoon of youth fitness with Jimmy Locust of LPAC in Columbus and Latham Park during June through September, 2020. Every Saturday throughout the season, Stamford Downtown offered NECA Chess Association's Open Play Chess.

A Covid safe Farmers Market was held on Saturdays from June through October, 2020 on Spring Street. A second week-day Farmers Market was hosted for part of the summer season in Columbus Park.



Man Surprised by the Things He's Made by Barry Gunderson

**HOLIDAY EVENTS**

Though the organization faced significant constraints this year, preventing typical holiday events from taking place, Stamford Downtown found a way to bring holiday cheer to all. On a personal scale, in the early months of the pandemic, Stamford Downtown staff handed out roses on Mothers' Day to women walking or driving up Bedford Street.

On Valentine's Day, The ClariAnna Duo featuring Pavel Vinnitsky, Principal Clarinet for the Stamford Symphony and Concert Pianist Anna Vinnitsky played music to lovers passing by the Palace Theatre façade for an evening on the town. On St. Patrick's Day, the Fairfield County Police Pipes & Drums boomed bagpipes and drums from an empty storefront on Bedford Street to the socially distanced revelers coming/going to one of the restaurants along that strip.

Since the community was unable to come together for the standard beach fireworks display put on by the City, Stamford Downtown produced a Fourth of July rooftop fireworks as an uplifting treat for the residents of Stamford Downtown and surrounding neighbors. Launched from the roof of One Landmark Square, the show was visible from restaurant patios, Downtown towers, and many surrounding residential neighborhoods. Star 99.9 broadcast music simultaneously with the display. With COVID-19 preventing the Parade Spectacular from marching through the

District with balloons flying high, Stamford Downtown partnered with Person-to-Person to create the Stamford Downtown Giving Float. With support from ShopRite, New Wave Seafood, the CT Office of Tourism, and the City of Stamford and generous contributions from our sponsors, Stamford Downtown donated 500 Thanksgiving meals and ShopRite gift cards to Stamford Families and to The Stamford Food Bank and Inspirica. Person-to-Person



4th of July Fireworks from Landmark Building

identified the target families who drove up to a festive food giveaway with two giant helium balloons, music by Kunjan Collective and performances by Locust Performing Arts Center and the Fairfield County Police Pipes & Drums.

Finally, though social distancing requirements made a crowd along Broad Street impossible in the peak of winter, Stamford Downtown continued with its annual Heights & Lights program and the rappelling Christmas troupe but instead produced a made-for-TV event broadcast multiple times on the YES Network starring rappellers NY Yankee's GM Brian Cashman and NY Yankee's Manager Aaron Boone. Following the rappel from One Landmark Square, fireworks were launched and the gang walked north to Latham Park where they participated with the Mayor in the Lighting of the Holiday Tree. The show first aired on the YES Network on December 10 and repeated several times throughout the month.

**2021/22 PRIORITIES + PLANNED INITIATIVES**

**CONCERTS IN MILL RIVER PARK**

Big Changes are in store for our two popular outdoor summer concerts! Alive @Five and Wednesday Nite Live will move to Mill River Park, where people can spread out, social distance and experience a calm and natural setting for these signature events. The shows normally scheduled for July will be held throughout September this year. The lineup is stellar, stay tuned for the big announcement!

**COMEDY NIGHT TO BENEFIT STAMFORD DOWNTOWN**

New this year, Stamford Downtown will present an "A-List Comedian" on September 17th as our annual fundraiser replacing Grand Summer Night.

All music and comedy shows will be ticketed events. Tickets can be purchased in advance through Eventbrite.

**THE PIANO PROJECT**

Stamford Downtown engaged 25 local and regional artists who through a juried process were selected to paint a piano this year. The pianos will grace the Downtown from June through September welcoming people to stop by and tickle the ivories. At the conclusion of the exhibit, the pianos will be sold at auction with a portion of the proceeds donated to Project Music.



Blue Cat Piano Club by David Macharelli

Many additional events are planned including three one-day Arts & Crafts on Bedford shows, a weekly Farmers Market on Spring Street, Make Music Day, Bark in the Park, Fitness Classes, Acoustic Music on Thursdays throughout the summer, Summer and Winter Restaurant Weeks and City Challenge Obstacle Race. We are making plans to welcome crowds back to the Parade Spectacular in November and Heights & Lights in December. We await guidance from local, state and federal government as to restrictions that will be lifted in the fall.



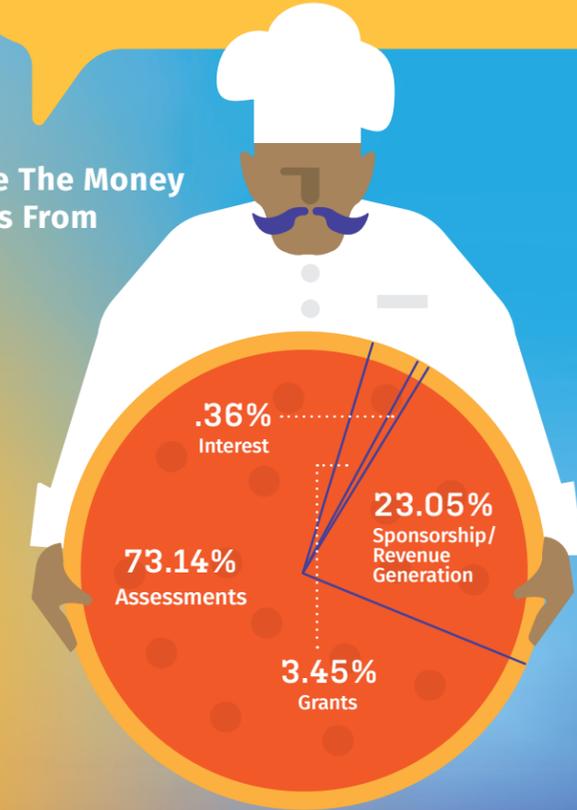
Old Town Hall Lights Up for Pride Week



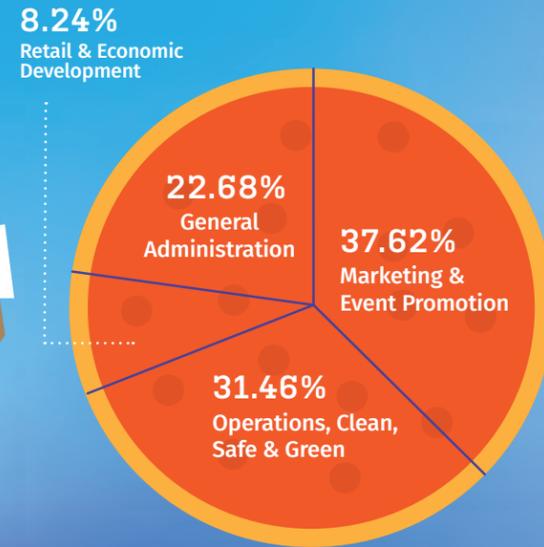
Heights & Lights 2020

The DSSD is funded by 518 property owners including 305 residential owners and 213 commercial and mixed-use property owners who pay an annual fee to the District based on their property assessments. The formula was adopted in 1992 when the District was incorporated and subsequently amended in 1998 to reflect the impact of re-evaluation. In addition to assessments, a significant portion of the DSSD's program income is derived through sponsorships.

Where The Money Comes From



Where The Money Goes



Who Pays What

- Top 5 property owners pay 24% of total assessment income averaging \$131,438 each.
- Top 10 property owners pay 40% of total assessment income averaging \$108,793 each.
- Smallest Annual Assessment \$42
- Largest Annual Assessment \$156,049
- Typical Office Complex \$84,255
- Typical High-Rise Office Building \$35,742
- Typical Bedford Street Building \$1,621
- Typical Main Street Building \$2,664
- Typical High-Rise Residential \$41,423
- Typical High-Rise Condo \$859
- Typical Department Store \$12,380

In Fiscal year 2020/2021, while the DSSD's strong sponsorship and revenue-generating programs were severely limited by Covid-19, the organization was still able to provide a beneficial ratio of services to assessments: for every \$1 of assessment paid by a property owner, \$1.36 was returned in services and programs.

WE THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR THEIR FINANCIAL OR IN-KIND SUPPORT TOWARDS OUR INITIATIVES FOR THIS PAST YEAR

- AffinEco, LLC
- William Ackley
- The Ashforth Company
- Atlantic Station
- Avon Theatre Film Center
- Mike Berkoff & BevMax
- Beth Krupa Interiors
- Bildner Capital Corp.
- Garrett Bolella
- Bulls Head Pet Hospital
- Luke Buttenwieser
- Cacace, Tusch & Santagata
- The Campus and 1937 West Main Street
- The Cappelli Organization
- Carmody Torrance Sandak & Hennessey LLP
- Brian Cashman
- Charter Communications
- Choice Pet
- Tom Chukas
- Orazio Cirelli
- City of Stamford
- Dan Colleluori
- Connecticut Distributors Inc.
- Connecticut Office of Tourism
- Cornell University Veterinary Specialists
- County TV & Appliance of Stamford
- Courtyard by Marriott
- Cummings & Lockwood LLC
- Dogtopia of Stamford
- Alex Eydelman, NEAC
- Empire State Realty Trust
- Event Management Inc.
- Fairfield County Police Pipes & Drums
- Charles Fazzino
- The Ferguson Library
- First County Bank
- 95.9 THE FOX, STAR 99.9, WEBE 108
- Alex Frenkel
- Garden Homes Management
- George Comfort & Sons
- Happyhaha Photography
- Hey Stamford!
- Hoffman Investment Partners
- Captain Diedrich Hohn
- Doug Hoyt
- Inspirica, Inc. Stamford
- Sgt. Kevin Keenan
- The Kempner Corporation
- Kunjan Collective
- Laurel House
- Livesay/Balzano Group of Morgan Stanley
- LMC & The Smyth
- Locust Performing Arts Center
- Nina & Norman Lotstein
- LRC Construction
- Ron Markey
- MarLo Associates, Inc.
- Erin McKenna
- Frank Mercede & Sons
- Mill River Park
- Nagi Jewelers
- NBCUniversal
- New Wave Seafood
- Tony Olive
- One Stamford Realty
- OPIN (Outreach to Pets in Need)
- Pacific House
- The Palace
- People's United Bank
- Person-to-Person
- Mark Pesiri
- Frank Petise
- Port Chester Obedience Training Club
- Reckson, A Division of SL Green Realty Corp.
- Richard Redniss
- RMS Companies
- Chief Trevor Roach
- RXR Realty
- Fire Marshal Walter Seely
- Chief Timothy Shaw
- Jami Sherwood, Simply Signs
- ShopRite & The Cingari Family
- Spot On Veterinary Hospital & Hotel
- Stamford Art Association
- Stamford Emergency Medical Services
- Stamford Greenwich Housing First Collaborative
- Stamford Police Department
- Stamford Professional Firefighters
- Stamford Symphony
- Stamford Town Center
- Stamford Traffic & Operations Department
- Stamford Volunteer Fire Departments
- Stamford YMCA
- Steven Wise Associates, LLC
- Jason Teitelbaum
- James Travers
- Twenty Lake Holdings
- United Realty, Inc.
- United Services of America
- Brian VanOrsdel
- The Whittingham Family
- Asst. Chief Thomas Wuennemann
- Whim
- Winfield Street Coffee
- YES Network

We also thank the various local and state boards and commissions that value the role of a thriving Downtown through their actions.

Special thanks to Mayor David Martin whose vision of a strong and vital Downtown is essential to the District's success. Much appreciation is also extended to the Mayor's team of outstanding city employees who contribute their time, energy and ideas toward making the Downtown the city's premier neighborhood.

Stamford Downtown Staff

- Lynne Colatrella, Senior Vice President, Events & Marketing
- Kate Cook, Manager, Events & Marketing
- Annette Einhorn, Director, Events & Marketing
- David Kooris, President
- Michael Moore, Vice President, Operations
- Maryann Rockwood, Executive Administrator
- Marisa Rogo, Project Manager, Operations & Retail
- Cheryl Vukelic, Senior Project Manager, Operations
- Jacqueline Wetenhall, Vice President, Retail Development



Front Row from Left to Right: Michael Moore, Lynne Colatrella, David Kooris, Jacqueline Wetenhall Back Row from Left to Right: Cheryl Vukelic, Marisa Rogo, Annette Einhorn, Maryann Rockwood, Kate Cook

**STAMFORD DOWNTOWN  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**CHAIR:**

Greg Caggainello, Sr. Vice President  
Reckson

**VICE CHAIR:**

Marjan Murray, Executive Vice President  
People's United Bank

**SECRETARY:**

George Boyce, Agent  
State Farm Insurance Co.

**TREASURER:**

Dan Stolzenbach, *General Manager*  
Stamford Town Center



Stamford Cone

**Greg Belew**, Division President  
LMC, a Lennar Company

**Bruce Berg**, Executive Vice President  
Cappelli Organization

**Carl Bildner**, President  
Bildner Capital Corp.

**Ralph Blessing**, Land Use Bureau Chief  
City of Stamford

**John Cannavino**, Chairman  
Litigation Group, Cummings & Lockwood

**Heather Cavanagh**, President & CEO  
Stamford Chamber of Commerce

**Terrence Cheng**, Director,  
Stamford Campus UCONN Stamford

**Monica DiCostanzo**  
Stamford Board of Representatives

**Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni**  
Basilica of St. John the Evangelist

**Robert J. Granata**, Chairman & CEO  
First County Bank

**Joseph Graziose**, Vice President  
RXR Realty

**Stephen J. Hoffman**, Managing Partner  
Hoffman Investment Partners LLC

**Russ Hollander**, President  
R. Hollander: Master Goldsmith Inc.

**Joseph House**, Store Director  
Target

**Robert H. Kahn**, President  
United Realty, Inc.

**Robert Karp**, President  
BE Rep Group

**Peter Kempner**, Principal  
Kempner Properties

**Alice S. Knapp**, President  
Ferguson Library

**Beth Krupa**, Allied ASID,  
President ASID CT GREEN AP  
Beth Krupa Interiors

**Diana Lenkowsky**, President  
One Stamford Realty

**Todd Lindvall**, Area General Manager  
Courtyard by Marriott Stamford  
Downtown Residence Inn by Marriott  
Stamford Downtown

**Gregory Lodato**, President  
MarLo Associates, Inc.

**Norman Lotstein**, Vice President  
Pyramid Real Estate Group

**Thomas Madden**, Director  
Office of Economic Development  
City of Stamford

**Michael Marchetti**  
Columbus Park Trattoria

**David R. Martin**, Mayor  
City of Stamford

**Frank J. Mercede**, President & CEO  
Frank Mercede & Sons, Inc.

**Nagi Osta**, General Manager  
36 Atlantic St LLC and Old Town Square LLC

**Jason Pennypacker**, General Manager  
URBY Stamford

**Michael Pollard**, Mayor's Chief of Staff  
City of Stamford

**Randall M. Salvatore**, President  
RMS Companies, LLC

**Paul Senecal**, Managing Director  
United Services of America/AffinEco, LLC

**Dr. Sharon J. White**, Principal  
Dr. Sharon J. White & Associates, LLC

**Tracie Wilson**, Executive Vice President  
Stamford Media Center/NBCUniversal

**Jonathan Winkel**, Executive Director  
The Stamford Partnership Inc.

**Ari Yasgur**, Principal  
New England Investment Partners

**STAMFORD DOWNTOWN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**



**First Row from Left to Right:** Greg Belew, Bruce Berg, Carl Bildner, Ralph Blessing, George Boyce, Greg Caggainello, John Cannavino, Heather Cavanagh, Terrence Cheng, Monica DiCostanzo **Second Row from Left to Right:** Msgr. Stephen DiGiovanni, Robert J. Granata, Joseph Graziose, Stephen J. Hoffman, Russ Hollander, Joseph House, Robert H. Kahn, Robert Karp, Peter Kempner, Alice S. Knapp **Third Row from Left to Right:** Beth Krupa, Diana Lenkowsky, Todd Lindvall, Gregory Lodato, Norman Lotstein, Thomas Madden, Michael Marchetti, Mayor David R. Martin, Frank J. Mercede, Marjan Murray **Fourth Row from Left to Right:** Nagi Osta, Michael Pollard, Randall M. Salvatore, Paul Senecal, Dan Stolzenbach, Dr. Sharon J. White, Tracie Wilson, Jonathan Winkel, Ari Yasgur. Missing from Photo: Jason Pennypacker

**IN MEMORIAM TO OUR BELOVED FORMER BOARD & FRIENDS OF DOWNTOWN MEMBERS**



**Paul Dillane**  
Hudson Social  
(1964-2020)  
Commissioner  
2015-2020



**Mario Lodato**  
MarLo Associates  
(1937-2020)  
Commissioner  
1995-2005



**Gail Malloy**  
The Malloy Group  
(1941-2021)  
Beloved "Friend  
of Downtown"

**Their dedication and commitment to the Downtown will forever be remembered and their legacies live with us in the enhanced Downtown experience**