Revitalization Tools & Strategies for Rhode Island’s Urban & Village Centers: Providence’s Downtown Improvement District

A Grow Smart RI Workshop
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Providence’s Downtown Improvement District (DID)

- First DID in RI’s history
- Began operating in 2005
- 1,000 globally
- New England examples: Portland, ME; Boston, MA; New Haven, CT
What is it?

- “Business Improvement District” is an outgrowth of a “benefit assessment district concept”
- Provides for a special assessment on properties within a specific geographic area
- Proceeds directed back to the district to provide services that benefit the property owners
Idea & Formation of the DID

• Next logical step after significant improvement projects in downtown (i.e., rivers and train tracks moved, infrastructure)
• 2004 Home Rule legislation by GA gave City the right to create taxing authority (all municipalities now have same right)
• Is funding source for BID in specific area of downtown
• Petition signed by owners of at least 60% of all the aggregate assessed valuation of all properties within the boundaries & submitted to City Council
• Public hearing
• City creates District
• Sunset after 3 years unless property owners reaffirm through petition drive (then in perpetuity)
DID Governance

• Activities of the Downtown Improvement District are managed by a Board of Directors.

• Board members are appointed by the Providence Foundation (7) and the Mayor (2).

• The appointees by the Providence Foundation consists of a mix of small and large property owners.
Costs

- Costs are determined by property owners and the services they want.
- Paid for by real estate property owners, with payment obligatory (Non-profits are voluntary).
- By state law, costs cannot exceed 10% of the total of the real estate property taxes.
- The DID’s budget is $1.4M annually, $800,000 of which goes to the Clean and Safety Team Ambassadors.
Services Provided

• The Providence Downtown Improvement District has been providing supplemental clean and safe services to downtown Providence.

• The DID also broadened our program of work to address quality of life issues with an additional focus on:
  – beautification
  – marketing
  – economic development, and
  – developing the nighttime economy
Advantages and Why They Work

• Strong private sector participation and leadership is at the heart of a successful business improvement district
• Consistent funding and private sector management
• Strong public/private sector partnership
• Gives private sector leaders a way to be proactive about the district’s future
• Provides the means to attract new businesses, investors, residents, visitors, students and customers
• Consistent focus on district issues – long term management brings solid, stable growth
• The programs and governance are designed, created, implemented and managed by those who pay the assessment
DID Mission

“to continuously enhance the quality of life in downtown Providence.”

- The purpose of the DID is to insure the ongoing vitality of the business, residential and arts communities in the downtown, to stabilize and increase the property values, to attract new business and residential investment and to elevate community spirit and pride.
Agreement with City

- Baseline commitment of services currently being provided by the City
- Guarantee that the assessment revenue will be used to *supplement*, not replace City services
Leveraging & Partnering

- The DID leverages private sector funding, plus partnerships with the City on:
  - Street signs
  - Trash receptacles
  - Trees
  - Brick repair
  - Banners and recorded music at Kennedy Plaza
Convening at the trusted “DID Table,” with an entrepreneurial spirit, creates the environment for other P3 projects:

- “DID Visioning Projects” guiding document
- Downtown Security Network
- Hospitality Resource Partnership
- Social service agency outreach programs and downtown the business community
DID ambassadors keep downtown safe

The Downtown Improvement District's safety guides patrol the neighborhood every day on foot, and weather permitting, on bicycle and segway too. Feel free to ask them for directions, restaurant ideas, or event information. They're here to help! Read More
PARKING PLANNER

FIND A DESTINATION:
Address or Business Name

Or choose a destination from our Downtown Directory

FILTER BY:
- Cash Accepted
- Credit Cards Accepted
- Indoor Garages
- Monthly Rates Available
- Open 24 Hours
- Outdoor Lots

PARKING LOTS (A-Z):
- 100 Westminster Lot
- 127 Mathewson Street: Spotter Parking
- 199 Canal Parking
- 365 Parking: Atwells Lot
- 365 Parking: Empire Lot

GARAGES + LOTS

STREET PARKING

GETTING AROUND

SPECIALS
DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE RI

DOWNTOWN STORES

01 AVERY PIANO CO.
256 Weybosset Street
averypiano.com
(401) 421-6000
Pianos sold and serviced with an unmatched commitment to quality.

02 CARMEN & GINGER
65 Weybosset Street (Arcade)
carmenandginger.com
(401) 274-1700
A destination for lovers of all things fun and vintage.

03 CELLAR STORIES BOOKS
111 Mathewson Street (2nd floor)
cellarstories.com
(401) 521-2665
The largest used & rare bookstore in Rhode Island.

04 CIVIL
221 Westminster Street
civilprovidence.com
(401) 383-1692
Fabulous array of handmade jewelry, prints and gifts in a new location.

05 CLOVER
233 Westminster Street
cloverprovidence.com
(401) 490-4626
Unique clothing selected with attention to fashion, fit and timeless style.

06 COPACETIC JEWELRY
17 Peck Street
copaceticjewelry.com
(401) 273-0470
Handmade jewelry and objects by over 100 artists. Repairs on site.

07 CRAFTLAND
212 Westminster Street
craftlandshop.com
(401) 272-4285

08 DCI OUTLET
133 Mathewson Street
dcioutlet.com
(401) 274-6885
Skateboards, shoes, apparel, sunglasses and other accessories.

DOWNTOWN PLAZA

1 Providence Place | providenceplace.com | (401) 270-1000
Connected by skywalk to the Omni Hotel, Rhode Island Convention Center and Dunkin Donuts Center, Providence Place offers more than 150 stores, restaurants and services. Anchored by Nordstrom and Macy's, the mall is also a regional entertainment center with an IMAX Theater and six additional screens.
Thank you!

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