

# International District Annual Report

# 2024



# Executive Summary

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The International District has emerged as a vibrant cultural and economic hub in Phoenix, uniting diverse communities through a shared vision of inclusivity, empowerment, and celebration. Guided by its mission to connect cultures and foster mutual understanding, the district achieved transformative milestones in 2024, cementing its role as a cornerstone for economic development and cultural vitality.

This year, the district successfully implemented key initiatives from Phase 1 of its strategic plan, focusing on brand development, community engagement, and foundational partnerships. Signature events such as the Asian Chamber Night Market (ACNM) and the International District Night Market (IDNM) drew a combined 7,000 attendees and featured 150+ vendors, creating dynamic platforms for cultural exchange and small business growth. Through these events, the district generated \$250,000 in revenue for small businesses significantly contributing to the local economy.

Targeted marketing campaigns reached more than 500,000 people, amplifying the district's visibility and fostering deeper community engagement. The district's efforts also attracted new businesses, such as Tambayan, a Filipino eatery that transitioned from food vendor status at the ACNM to opening its first brick-and-mortar restaurant in the International District. This success story highlights the district's role as a launchpad for entrepreneurs and its growing reputation as a cultural and culinary destination.

Partnerships with organizations such as Local First Arizona, Phoenix IDA, and Councilwoman Pastor's Office played a critical role in promoting inclusivity and economic growth. These collaborations, combined with significant financial investments totaling \$170,000, supported events, infrastructure, and strategic development initiatives, ensuring long-term sustainability and visibility for the district.

Looking ahead, the district is focused on continuing to advance Phase 1 initiatives, which include completing brand development, implementing a full-scale marketing strategy to enhance visibility, and deepening community engagement through partnerships and outreach. These efforts will lay the foundation for future growth while solidifying the district's role as a cultural and economic hub.

Simultaneously, the district is preparing to launch its Phase 2 initiatives that emphasizes small business support, anti-displacement strategies, and beautification projects to further enhance the area's appeal and inclusivity. To ensure the successful implementation of both phases, the district will actively seek funding from multiple sources, including public grants, private partnerships, and sponsorships. These resources will play a crucial role in supporting the district's goals while fostering long-term sustainability.

Additionally, the district plans to evolve its business model by attracting external events, offering consulting services to event organizers, and generating revenue through equipment rentals. This multi-faceted approach ensures continued economic growth, community engagement, and the realization of the district's mission to connect and empower diverse communities.

Through continued collaboration with stakeholders and an unwavering commitment to community engagement, the International District is redefining itself as a premier destination for cultural celebration and economic opportunity. By leveraging its accomplishments and addressing challenges, the district is set to remain a beacon of growth, connection, and inclusion for years to come.

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# Mission, Vision, and Values

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## MISSION

*Uniting diverse cultures and communities through the power of connection.*

*In the heart of Phoenix, the International District stands as a vibrant bridge that connects diverse cultures, traditions, and communities. Our goal is to foster an inclusive environment that celebrates multicultural heritage, encourages community engagement, and promotes mutual understanding and respect.*

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## VISION

To establish the International District as a thriving hub of cultural and economic vitality, where diversity is celebrated, small businesses prosper, and the community unites to create a more inclusive and sustainable future.

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## CORE VALUES

- **Inclusivity**
  - We embrace diversity in all its forms, fostering a welcoming environment for people of all backgrounds.
- **Community Engagement**
  - Collaboration with residents, businesses, and stakeholders is at the heart of our efforts to create a district that reflects the spirit and needs of its community.
- **Economic Empowerment**
  - Supporting small businesses, entrepreneurs, and underserved communities is central to driving growth and reducing barriers to success.
- **Cultural Celebration**
  - We highlight the area's rich multicultural heritage through events, programs, and initiatives that promote understanding and pride.
- **Sustainability**
  - Our initiatives are designed to ensure long-term economic, social, and environmental benefits for the district and its residents.
- **Equity**
  - We prioritize equitable access to resources, opportunities, and support for all members of the community, particularly those from historically underrepresented groups.

These guiding principles shaped the International District's efforts this year, enabling the district to serve as a catalyst for meaningful cultural and economic development in Phoenix.

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# Year in Review

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The past year marked a series of transformative milestones for the International District, establishing it as a vibrant hub for cultural exchange, economic development, and community engagement. At the heart of these achievements was the successful launch of the district during the ACNM on April 26, 2024. This flagship event drew more than 4,000 attendees, with 33% visiting the International District for the first time. The event celebrated the area's rich cultural identity and showcased its potential as a thriving destination for commerce and community.

Building on this success, the district hosted a second signature event, the IDNM, culminating in a combined attendance of more than 7,000 visitors across both events. These markets introduced 150+ vendors to the area, creating new opportunities for small businesses and adding vibrancy to the district's cultural and economic landscape. Event highlights included live performances, cultural parades, cosplay contests, and car shows, which created a lively and inclusive atmosphere that resonated with attendees.

One of the most impactful outcomes was the improvement in community safety. The district typically averages 25 emergency calls per weekend; however, during IDNM weekends, this number dropped to just 4 calls, demonstrating the positive influence of well-organized community events in fostering a safer and more connected environment. Additionally, strategic marketing initiatives reached an estimated 500,000 people, amplifying the district's visibility through social media campaigns, influencer partnerships, and community-based promotions.

The district's achievements also included the attraction of new businesses, such as Tambayan, a family-owned Filipino eatery that chose the International District for its first brick-and-mortar location. Having started as a food vendo at the ACNM, the Tagorda family brought their culinary heritage from the Philippines to life in a 5,000-square-foot restaurant that enhances the district's multicultural appeal. Their success story highlights the district's role as a launching pad for entrepreneurial ventures, inspiring other businesses and reinforcing the district's mission to celebrate cultural diversity and empower small businesses.

Collaborative partnerships were key to these successes. Organizations such as Local First Arizona, the Melrose Business District, Councilwoman Pastor's Office, Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC), AANHPI community organizations, Fuerza Local, Phoenix IDA, and Valley Metro played critical roles in promoting our message of inclusivity and economic growth. These partnerships supported events, strengthened infrastructure, and established the foundation for sustainable, long-term development.

Through these initiatives, the International District has become a beacon of cultural celebration and economic opportunity, demonstrating the power of community-driven engagement. With more than \$250,000 in revenue generated for small businesses through events, the introduction of 150+ vendors, and a marked reduction in emergency calls, the district has solidified its position as a thriving, inclusive, and economically empowering community hub.

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# Year in Review

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## STATISTICS AND INSIGHTS

- **Social Media Reach:**
    - More than 500,000 people engaged in marketing campaigns promoting the district's events.
  - **Visitor Demographics:**
    - Attendees included both local and out-of-state visitors from locations such as California, Nevada, and Texas.
  - **Vendor Participation:**
    - A total of 150+ vendors were introduced to the area across two major events, enriching the district's economic and cultural landscape.
  - **Community Safety:**
    - Emergency calls dropped from an average of 25 per weekend to just 4 during event weekends, underscoring the role of community-driven initiatives in fostering a safer environment.
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## IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY

The International District has become a symbol of cultural celebration, economic opportunity, and community connection. Events provided platforms for established and new vendors, fostering business growth and engagement while connecting diverse communities. The district's collaborative approach with stakeholders has laid the groundwork for sustainable development and long-term success.

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## LOOKING BACK WITH PRIDE

This year's achievements, including the introduction of 150+ vendors, a marketing reach of 500,000, and the attraction of new businesses like Tambayan, underscore the International District's transformative impact. By demonstrating resilience, fostering inclusivity, and driving economic growth, the district has firmly established itself as a premier cultural and economic hub in Phoenix.

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# Financial Overview

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The financial landscape of the International District in 2024 reflects its growing role as a hub for cultural, economic, and community development. Throughout 2024, the district made significant investments in hosting impactful events, supporting educational opportunities, and building long-term infrastructure, all while fostering inclusivity and engagement.

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## REVENUE AND INVESTMENTS

The district directed resources towards a variety of initiatives that contributed to its mission of enhancing the community and driving economic growth.

- **Community Investments:**
    - Approximately \$40,000 was spent on smaller community events within the International District, aimed at fostering local engagement and promoting inclusivity.
  - **Strategic Infrastructure Spending:**
    - Investments in equipment provided critical resources to reduce long-term operational costs, enhancing logistical efficiency and minimizing reliance on rentals for future events.
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## EVENT-SPECIFIC FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

### Asian Chamber Night Market

The ACNM generated \$88,695.57 in revenue against a projected \$127,000.00, with significant contributions from ticket sales and vendor fees. However, costs for infrastructure and entertainment exceeded projections, resulting in a net deficit of -\$39,309.86. Despite these challenges, the event successfully introduced new audiences to the district and reinforced its reputation as a vibrant cultural hub.

### International District Night Market

This newly launched event demonstrated more refined cost management, resulting in a modest projected net revenue of \$3,450.00. The IDNM further cemented the district's role as a cultural and economic centerpiece, attracting diverse vendors and attendees.

### Key Financial Highlights

- **Revenue Sources:**
    - Combined ticket sales, vendor fees, and sponsorships across all events were the primary drivers of revenue.
    - Strategic investments in community events and infrastructure supported the district's goals of inclusivity and engagement.
  - **Expenses:**
    - Approximately \$128,005.43 was spent on the ACCNM, reflecting the scale and scope of this event.
    - Additional funds supported community programs, infrastructure development, and marketing.
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# Financial Overview

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## STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

- **Long-Term Investments**
    - The purchase of tents, storage containers, and other equipment ensures operational sustainability for future events, reducing rental costs and streamlining logistics. These investments not only lower operational expenses but also open up a new revenue stream for the district. By renting out this equipment to external event organizers, the district can generate additional income, creating a self-sustaining model that supports ongoing initiatives. This approach enhances the district's financial stability while maximizing the utility of its infrastructure investments.
  - **Community Commitment**
    - Hosting events within the district emphasizes its importance as a premier destination for meaningful cultural and community gatherings, thus reinforcing its role as a vibrant and inclusive hub in the area.
  - **Event Optimization**
    - While the ACNM faced budget overruns, lessons learned will guide better cost management and sponsorship acquisition strategies. The success of the IDNM illustrates the district's progress in achieving these goals.
  - **Expanding Partnerships**
    - Enhanced collaboration with organizations such as Local First Arizona, Phoenix IDA, and Councilwoman Pastor's office offers opportunities to secure additional funding and shared resources for future initiatives.
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## BUSINESS MODEL SHIFT

As the district evolves, a strategic shift in its business model is being proposed to maximize economic impact and streamline operations. Instead of directly hosting all events, the Asian Chamber will focus on bringing external events to the area, positioning the International District as a sought-after venue for cultural and community gatherings. The Asian Chamber will also leverage its resources by consulting on event planning and execution and generating additional revenue through the rental of equipment, such as tents, generators, and other event infrastructure. This approach allows the Asian Chamber to build on its investments in infrastructure and branding while reducing operational burdens and enhancing revenue streams.

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## LOOKING FORWARD

The International District's financial strategy will continue to focus on balancing impactful cultural and community initiatives with sustainable revenue generation. By adopting a model centered on external event attraction, consulting, and equipment rentals in collaboration with Rising Sun Management, the district is poised to enhance its financial sustainability while furthering its mission as a vibrant and inclusive economic and cultural hub.

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# Challenges and Lessons Learned

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## CHALLENGES FACED

- **Decline in Attendance and Ticket Sales**
  - One of the most significant challenges this year was the decline in ticket sales for the ACNM. While previous events, such as the 2023 ACNM, drew roughly 10,000 attendees, this year's event attracted just over 4,000 attendees. This decline in attendance directly impacted ticket revenue, which fell short of projections, contributing to the overall deficit of -\$39,309.86.
- **Community Perception and Safety Concerns**
  - The uncertainty and high crime rates in the 19th Avenue and Camelback area may have deterred potential attendees, as safety concerns emerged as a critical issue. Despite significant efforts to create a secure and welcoming environment during events—which resulted in a reduction of emergency calls from 25 per weekend to just 4 during events—changing public perception remains an ongoing challenge.
- **Operational and Logistical Challenges**
  - Managing large-scale events in an area with existing challenges required substantial resources and coordination. High infrastructure costs, combined with unexpected logistical adjustments, led to budget overruns, particularly for ACCNM.
- **Sponsorship and Revenue Gaps**
  - Sponsorship revenue also fell short of expectations, reaching \$12,000 against a projection of \$25,000. Combined with lower-than-anticipated event revenues, this created additional financial pressure.
- **Building Community Trust**
  - Building trust and enthusiasm among residents and businesses in the area has been slower than anticipated. Convincing stakeholders to view the district as a safe and thriving cultural hub remains a significant focus for the district.

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## LESSONS LEARNED

- **Leveraging Events to Change Perceptions**
    - Events like the Night Markets are essential tools for addressing safety concerns and changing the narrative about the district. These events demonstrate a vibrant, family-friendly environment and directly contribute to reducing crime during their operation. Expanding the frequency and visibility of such events can gradually shift public perception and encourage more people to experience the district firsthand.
  - **Targeted Marketing to Address Safety Concerns**
    - Marketing efforts need to emphasize not only the cultural and economic benefits of visiting the district but also the steps taken to ensure safety during events. Highlighting crime reductions, increased security, and positive testimonials from attendees can reassure hesitant visitors.
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- **Scalable and Sustainable Planning**

- The financial shortfalls and operational challenges underscore the importance of aligning event scale with realistic attendance projections and sponsorship revenue. Future events will benefit from careful cost control and scalable infrastructure solutions.

- **Strengthening Partnerships**

- Collaboration with organizations such as Melrose Business Association, Local First Arizona, and Valley Metro can provide additional resources and support to manage safety, logistics, and sponsorship acquisition more effectively.
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## PLANS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

- **Marketing as a Tool for Perception Change**

- Launch a targeted campaign that showcases the vibrant, family-friendly atmosphere of events and highlights measurable safety improvements, such as reduced emergency calls.
- Feature attendee testimonials, video highlights, and behind-the-scenes stories to humanize the district and build trust with potential visitors.
- Promote consistent messaging about safety partnerships, such as enhanced lighting, visible security, and collaboration with law enforcement.

- **Increase Event Frequency to Build Trust**

- Host smaller, frequent events to maintain momentum and gradually build public confidence in the area.
- Use these events to show a consistent track record of safe, enjoyable experiences for attendees.

- **Business Model Shift for Financial Sustainability**

- Focus on attracting external event organizers to the district while offering consulting services and equipment rentals to generate revenue.
- Collaborate with other community- focused organizations to optimize event facilitation and provide expertise in engaging external stakeholders.

- **Community Engagement and Stakeholder Support**

- Involve local residents and businesses in shaping events, ensuring they reflect community priorities and foster grassroots support.
- Deepen partnerships with public and private entities to pool resources and expand funding opportunities for future initiatives.

- **Boosting Marketing Efforts**

- Launch a comprehensive campaign to highlight the district's transformation, focusing on safety improvements, cultural diversity, and economic opportunities.
- Utilize digital platforms, local influencers, and community outreach to spread the word about the district.
- Develop content that showcases features testimonials, success stories, and highlights from past events to engage potential attendees and sponsors.

- **Expanding Sponsorship Outreach**

- Begin sponsor engagement earlier in the planning process with customized packages that align with their marketing and community impact goals.
  - Highlight the district's role in fostering inclusivity and economic development to appeal to socially responsible organizations.
  - Leverage partnerships with key stakeholders to secure additional sponsorships.
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## LOOKING AHEAD

By continuing to host well-organized events and implementing targeted marketing strategies, the International District can reshape perceptions of the area, highlighting its transformation into a vibrant and welcoming destination. These efforts, combined with strategic partnerships, will help the district address its challenges and unlock its full potential as a cultural and economic hub.

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# Future Plans

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**As the International District looks ahead, the focus is on building a sustainable and vibrant community that continues to celebrate cultural diversity while fostering economic growth. Strategic initiatives for the coming year will prioritize event facilitation, increased marketing efforts, and deeper community engagement to position the district as a premier destination for cultural and economic activities.**

### 1. Evolving the Business Model

To ensure financial sustainability and operational efficiency, the Asian Chamber should transition to a model centered on attracting and consulting for external events rather than solely hosting its own.

- **Event Attraction and Consultation:**
  - Partner with event organizers to attract more cultural, community, and corporate events to the area.
- **Revenue from Equipment Rentals:**
  - Leverage investments in infrastructure by renting out equipment to event organizers.

### 2. Expanding Marketing and Outreach

Increasing awareness and building a positive narrative around the district will remain a top priority.

- **Marketing Campaigns:**
  - Launch targeted campaigns to promote the district as a safe, welcoming, and culturally rich destination. Highlight success stories, community impact, and safety improvements.
- **Social Media Engagement:**
  - Strengthen social media presence with consistent content, including testimonials, event highlights, and behind-the-scenes features.
- **Influencer Partnerships:**
  - Collaborate with local influencers to amplify the district's reach and connect with younger, tech-savvy audiences.

### 3. Hosting and Supporting Events

Events will continue to play a vital role in the district's strategy to drive foot traffic, foster engagement, and support local businesses.

- **Night Markets:**
    - Build on the success of the ACNM and the IDNM to attract even larger audiences in 2025.
  - **Smaller, Frequent Events:**
    - Organize more regular events, such as cultural workshops, pop-up markets, and family-friendly activities, to maintain ongoing community engagement.
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- **Partner-Driven Events:**

- Co-host events with organizations like Local First Arizona, Valley Metro, and the Melrose Business District to diversify offerings and share resources.

#### 4. Phase 1: Continued Development

The district will complete its Phase 1 initiatives by enhancing branding and community involvement:

- **Brand Development:**

- Finalize the district's visual identity, including logos, promotional materials, and a cohesive online presence.

- **Community Engagement:**

- Continue hosting community meetings to gather input and build support for district initiatives.

- **Steering Committee:**

- Fully establish a community-based steering committee to guide decision making and ensure alignment with local priorities

#### 5. Phase 2: Advancing Economic and Community Development

The district will begin implementing Phase 2 initiatives to foster inclusive economic growth and social vitality:

- **Small Business Support:**

- Launch an Equitable Business Technical Assistance Program to provide tailored resources and support for BIPOC and underserved entrepreneurs.

- **Financial Opportunity Center:**

- Introduce financial counseling, career coaching, and housing assistance programs to promote economic stability and reduce displacement risks.

- **Beautification Projects:**

- Collaborate with the City of Phoenix on beautification initiatives, such as enhanced lighting, landscaping, and public art, to make the area more welcoming and visually appealing.

- **Community Development Corporation (CDC):**

- Establish a CDC to attract funding, such as CDBG grants, for projects supporting neighborhood revitalization, social services, and small business growth.

#### 6. Strengthening Community Engagement

Deepening connections with residents, businesses, and stakeholders will be critical to achieving the district's long-term goals.

- **Community Meetings:**

- Host regular meetings to gather input, provide updates, and ensure transparency in decision-making.

- **Small Business Collaboration:**

- Work closely with local businesses to promote their services and integrate them into district-wide initiatives.

- **Collaboration with Stakeholders:**

- Strengthen partnerships with organizations such as Councilwoman Pastor's Office, GPEC, and AANHPI organizations to align efforts and maximize impact.
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## 7. Enhancing Safety and Infrastructure

Investing in the area's safety and infrastructure will be key to improving public perception and attracting more visitors.

- **Safety Initiatives:**
  - Collaborate with local law enforcement and community organizations to implement visible safety measures and crime prevention programs.
- **Infrastructure Improvements:**
  - Continue enhancing the district's physical spaces, including lighting, signage, and public amenities, to create a more welcoming environment.

## 8. Measuring Impact and Success

Establishing clear metrics will ensure accountability and guide future initiatives.

- **Attendance Growth:**
  - Track attendance at all events to measure progress in attracting visitors.
- **Economic Impact:**
  - Monitor revenue generated for local businesses and assess the district's contribution to the area's economic vitality.
- **Community Feedback:**
  - Regularly collect feedback from residents, businesses, and attendees to refine strategies and address concerns.

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## VISION FOR THE FUTURE

The International District's future is bright, with plans that balance cultural celebration, economic empowerment, and community engagement. By completing Phase 1, implementing Phase 2, and evolving its business model, the district is poised to become a thriving hub for culture, commerce, and connection in Phoenix.

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# Our Sponsors and Partners



# Conclusion

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The successes of the International District in 2024 highlights the power of community-driven efforts to create meaningful change. A reduction in crime during event weekends and the attraction of new businesses like Tambayan demonstrate that the district's initiatives are working. However, to build on this momentum and achieve long-term sustainability, deeper collaboration between the public and private sectors is crucial.

**Increased promotion and funding from the City of Phoenix** is essential to support these efforts. Public investment will help the district enhance its programs, attract more businesses, and expand its reach.

Engaging commercial property owners in the area is also critical; their involvement will enable the district to attract additional small businesses, which will drive foot traffic, create jobs, and foster economic growth.

A comprehensive marketing plan is another vital component of the district's future success. By working closely with small businesses in the area, the district can highlight the unique cultural and economic opportunities the International District offers. Incorporating influencers into marketing campaigns will further amplify the district's reach, connecting with broader audiences and attracting new visitors to the area.

Additionally, continued collaboration with schools, community organizations, developers, and other stakeholders is essential. These partnerships will strengthen community ties and ensure alignment with local needs. Implementing a targeted **Technical Assistance (TA) program** will also provide existing businesses with the resources and support necessary to thrive and grow within this revitalized ecosystem.

Through greater public-private collaboration, a robust marketing strategy, and expanded partnerships, the International District can continue its transformation into a thriving, inclusive, and economically vibrant hub. With collective effort, the district will not only sustain its momentum but also serve as a model for community-led economic development and cultural celebration. Together, we can elevate the International District to its full potential, empowering both its businesses and its diverse communities.

