Town Green Special Services District

2020 Annual Report
WELCOME!

On behalf of the board of commissioners, I am once again pleased to report on the Town Green District’s efforts in 2020. The district, along with the rest of the world had an extremely challenging year in 2020, due to the COVID-19 public health pandemic. This year was difficult on all residents of New Haven, and we are proud that The Town Green District continued to function through the pandemic, keeping our district clean, safe and this year, disinfected.

Our admin staff took on new projects to meet the rapidly evolving needs of our community when asked by the City to assist at the beginning of lockdown. We helped provide over 34,000 meals to people experiencing homelessness, coordinated a city-wide online retail project that worked with small businesses to increase their ability to do business online through the MarketplaceNHV.com initiative, and when it was time to re-open downtown, Town Green District led the efforts to get our shops and restaurants outfitted for doing business in a COVID-19-compliant manner. Without knowing what tomorrow would bring, Town Green District acted on their feet, developing new programs and activations to fit the world we are living in. And, we stand today ready to answer the call of downtown’s many evolving needs.

Paul Denz
Chair, Board of Commissioners
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Town Green Revenues

- Tax Assessment Revenue • 77%
- City of New Haven • 8%
- Yale University • 3%
- Non-Assessment Revenue • 12%
  (Shaded: Grants & Sponsorships)

Town Green Expenses

- Office Expenses • 4%
- Events & Communications • 10%
- INFO New Haven Visitors Center • 5%
- Economic Prosperity & Advocacy • 10%
- Administration • 14%
- Public Space Management & Improvements • 56%
COVID-19 RESPONSE

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the safety of our staff, community, visitors, and partners was our primary responsibility. We worked in a variety of ways to ensure continued economic activity to support downtown businesses, visitors, and residents.

Increased Cleaning

Town Green District Ambassadors are considered essential employees for their Clean and Safe duties in downtown New Haven. Within 24 hours of coronavirus becoming widespread news, Downtown Ambassadors began a new, enhanced cleaning schedule, focusing on public surfaces such as door handles, parking meters, pedestrian walk signals, Big Belly trash can handles and more! Town Green District also freely provided hand-washing stations, disinfecting and sanitizing materials, and face masks to the public.

With less feet on the street, the crew also took this opportunity to accomplish downtown maintenance – painting worn light poles, street sweeping curbs and refilling tree pits.

Pick-Up / Drop-Off Zones

In partnership with the City of New Haven’s TT&P Department, Town Green created 10-minute pickup/dropoff zones, turning metered spaces into free, timed spots to not only aid the food delivery services, but provide conveniently-located spaces for customers to pickup both their own food orders and participate in curbside retail. There are currently 20 active “PUDO” Zones in downtown New Haven.

Pop-up Public Handwash Station

With public safety in mind, Town Green deployed a pop-up public handwash station at 900 Chapel, directly across from the major bus depot at the New Haven Green. Ambassadors replenished soap, paper towels and water throughout each day, ensuring those who visited downtown could do so while feeling safe.
**Square Meals Program**

With shelters being closed due to COVID, New Haven’s homeless population was moved into single rooms and dormitories throughout the area to keep them safe. With this came the need to feed 6 locations 3 healthy, “square” meals per day – thus the Square Meals program was created by the City of New Haven’s Emergency Response Department. Due to City staffing constraints, Town Green District assumed holistic management of the city-wide Square Meals program – from acting fiduciary to daily implementation, food provider training, shelter liaison and more – beginning by expanding the restaurant participation from 2 to 12. Over the 6 weeks of project management, 34,000 meals were distributed to those in need and $140,000 was pumped back into the local restaurant economy. Thank you to Yale University and the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven for their donations to the Square Meals program.

**Together New Haven Marketplace**

The Together New Haven Marketplace (aka MarketplaceNHV.com) was created in response to the City of New Haven’s request that Town Green District assist small businesses to “get selling again” during the stay at home order issued by the state of CT. The initial concept pivoted from a single e-commerce platform that local businesses could join to a portal/directory of local New Haven businesses who feature online shopping. Another part of the project mission was to provide free technical assistance to a business wanting to create their own e-commerce site. Since April 2020, the Project has approached 306 businesses and provided 490 hours of tech support to local business owners. The Marketplace site currently hosts 96 businesses selling e-gift cards and 173 local businesses offering products and services for sale online. The City has funded this city-wide effort through a COVID relief grant from the Economic Development Administration.

**Mask Giveaway**

Planning and partnership meetings with the City of New Haven’s Health Department and CT Transit began in late fall 2020 to organize the Downtown Mask Program, a program to distribute free masks and individual hand sanitizer packets to pedestrians and transit riders throughout downtown. Implementing just before the new year after acquiring a starting supply of 13,000 masks, the program was and continues to be a huge success, garnering only positive and grateful responses. Ambassadors report seeing an increase in mask wearing throughout downtown.

**Raffles & Giveaways**

Recognizing that businesses remaining open required direct stimulus’, Town Green District purchased gift cards and ran numerous giveaways on social media, mailing winners their vouchers and encouraging them to continue supporting local businesses by online or curbside shopping and ordering takeout.
The goal of the Public Space Department is to activate and enhance public space to catalyze economic development, improve public safety and promote the assets, inspiration and opportunities of the downtown district. This is achieved through our Safety, Hospitality, and Maintenance Ambassador program, innovative technology, and city and private partnerships. The Public Space department liaises directly with property managers and owners to address concerns, answer questions, and assist its membership in maintaining public space and reducing negative behavior.

Ambassador Service Statistics

One of the most visible components of the Public Space Department is our Safety, Hospitality, and Maintenance Ambassadors. They are the eyes, ears and caretakers of downtown, serving both as law enforcement aides and goodwill ambassadors to the public.

Every day, our Ambassadors work to keep the District clean and safe. That requires substantial management of public spaces — see below for our work in 2020 and statistics from the last decade of serving Downtown New Haven.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VISITORS GREETED</th>
<th>CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE</th>
<th>DIRECTIONS GIVEN</th>
<th>PANHANDLING INTERVENTIONS</th>
<th>MERCHANT CONTACTS</th>
<th>TRASH REMOVED</th>
<th>BLOCKS WEeded</th>
<th>GRAFFITI REMOVED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>278,052</td>
<td>763</td>
<td>8,613</td>
<td>7,417</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>251,180 lbs.</td>
<td>321</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 Years! 2010-2020</td>
<td>1,254,726</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>45,783</td>
<td>28,515</td>
<td>29,722</td>
<td>3,545,675 lbs.</td>
<td>429</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Throughout the year, Ambassadors conduct regular downtown maintenance in addition to extra cleaning, disinfecting, and safety protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. Maintaining public spaces helps keep the District a safe, clean, and attractive place to live, work, and visit.

**Placemaking & Beautification**

**COVID-Era Outdoor Dining & Terrasse Program**

With COVID-19 restrictions in place, outdoor dining became one of the main sources of income for many downtown restaurants. Recognizing this need, Town Green District expanded its own existing Terrasse program, and using its guidelines as a model, partnered with the City of New Haven to develop an additional parklet dining program, growing the overall restaurant participation in 2020 by over 75%. Additional outdoor dining equipment was designed, built and installed on an expedited schedule, and district businesses received one-on-one application assistance and waived Terrasse fees for the entire season.

**Public Seating Areas**

Town Green District manages 7 popular gathering areas across downtown New Haven for people to spend time outdoors – set up a remote work space, hang out with friends, enjoy a meal. Temple Plaza and Pitkin Plaza are 2 of those spaces, serene and vibrant “pocket parks” among the bustling city environment. Paired with an intensive cleaning schedule, these seating areas were able to be made safe and available for the majority of 2020.

**Planting Program**

One of Town Green District's largest programs, our Spring, Summer, and Fall Planting Program, ensures that public spaces are lushly planted, providing vibrant greenery and color throughout downtown. Spring and summer see the addition of 160 hanging baskets and 180 ground planters with over 2,500 plants annually.

**Holiday Décor**

Town Green District invites more festivity to the downtown with holiday décor installations. This is accomplished with 150 individually wrapped streetlight poles, 24 large wreaths, 16 globes, 24 large snowflakes, and a 15-foot lit snowflake hung over the College and Chapel Street intersection.
Straight Up Art

Straight Up Art in its inaugural year transformed four nondescript walls downtown into exciting sites of public art. Not only did the murals offer creative professional development opportunities for local artists, but they also have marked the surrounding area as a cool and fun place to socialize and live, strengthening the vitality of downtown.

“Business has picked up at the restaurant ever since the mural was painted. People driving and walking by the restaurant stop to look at the mural. Then, they take notice of Pho Thai, too. The mural has been a great thing for us.”
– Charlie Leroux, owner of Pho Thai
(76 Orange St.)

About the Murals

1 “Ninth Square in Bloom” by Svigals + Partners with lead artist Francisco Del Carpio-Beltran
This mural celebrates the evolution of Ninth Square and the many hands beyond the colonial surveyors and city planners which have shaped the neighborhood into what it is today: from furniture makers to dance instructors to organists to parents and children to entrepreneurs to community activists to shop owners.

2 “The World We Left Behind” by Alexander Fournier
More recent decades of urban design have opted to create less detailed, more utilitarian structures. Efficient yet monotonous architecture can do something to the psyche. The World We Left Behind tries to reverse the stifling of imagination by foregrounding architectural intricacy and weaving back into today’s street the compact, artisan-shaped cityscape of past generations.

3 “Color Balance” by Michael DeAngelo
Straight Up Art selected Michael DeAngelo to paint a mural to foster gratitude, connection, encouragement during the pandemic. “Color Balance” honors essential workers like healthcare and public transit staff to keep fighting the good fight, and the mural looks forward to the day we can safely live again unmasked.
Windowed Worlds

Windowed Worlds transformed 24 vacant storefront windows from lifeless spaces into warmly lit, eye-catching window features along downtown’s commercial corridors—boosting the neighborhood’s appeal to pedestrians and future tenants. Window displays showcased local artistic talent and catalyzed positive interest along the retail street while the block transitioned towards new business.

“When we were looking all over the Connecticut shoreline for the right location to open our business, we fell in love with this block in New Haven. There was something different here than in other cities. Even though this spot was vacant, it looked alive because of the window displays.”
– Ralph Saldi, owner of Bark & Vine (49 Orange St.)

District Promenades

New for 2020 were the College Street and Orange Street Promenades, created by blocking off two lanes of College Street and shutting down a section of Orange Street. Town Green District painted new pedestrian walkways, and organized barriers and signage while working closely with the City of New Haven to create these vibrant areas where restaurants and businesses could take advantage of outdoor seating that followed State COVID-19 guidelines. Town Green District worked directly with restaurants to help them apply for outdoor dining permits that comply with the new COVID-19 restrictions and City’s new permitting application system.

Temple Plaza Lighting Upgrade

In 2020, Town Green District completed a significant lighting transformation in Temple Plaza. Up-to-date, energy efficient bollards replaced the dated and damaged structures. The new glowing ambiance promotes a safer pedestrian experience for residents, restaurant customers, and visitors alike, many of whom park in the Crown Street Garage. As an added benefit, the warmer and more cohesive lighting will enhance Town Green Districts and others’ future evening event programming – from social gatherings to music events and beyond!
MARKETING & EVENTS

In the first few months of 2020, the Town Green District Marketing & Events Department ran according to plan, hosting one of its largest ticketed events and sponsoring two other community winter events. Come March, the department worked quickly to pivot and reimagine how business support and community cultivation would look under new circumstances. Through collaborations with marketing partners and internal brainstorming, safe and vibrant digital and in-person activations were planned for the year.

Digital Promotions

In 2020, the public turned to online resources, especially social media, more than ever before. Whether looking for ways to connect to community through online events, information on business open hours or online services, updates on public art projects, or downtown news in general, Town Green’s @DowntownNHV social media accounts saw large increases in engagement compared to previous years.

Recognizing an urgent need to spotlight and support retail, Sidewalk Saturdays (a partnership between Marketing New Haven, The Shops at Yale and Town Green District) was created. The series had 23 retail locations across downtown set up tables and racks in front of their storefronts, creating an inviting and safe open-air atmosphere for shoppers to browse in the warmer months of the year.

Social Media Growth

+11%  
+38%  
2019 – 2020

Sidewalk Saturdays

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Flights of Fancy ● 350 Attended

Lunarfest ● 750+ Attended

Movies in the Plaza ● 500+ Attended

Ping-Pong in the Plaza ● 150+ Attended

Socially-Distant Santa Photos ● 8 Dates, 750+ Attended

★ = Town Green event  
● = Partner event
For almost 20 years, Town Green District partnered with Yale University properties on the New Haven Visitor Center, located at the corner of College and Chapel. The Center was a vibrant hub that gave out directions, dining recommendations, maps, answered countless questions and served over 1 million visitors since opening in 2001.

We are grateful to the community and our many partners in hospitality and tourism that supported the Visitor Center, and we were very excited to see our neighbor, Claire’s Cornercopia, take over the space to enlarge their restaurant dining room. We will remain engaged in the visitor information site, INFONewHaven.com, and our partners at Market New Haven to continue providing visitor information for downtown.

Town Green District would like to recognize and thank Elizabeth Grace for her many years of service behind the info desk at the Vistor Center, Yale University Properties for being a great landlord, and Jackie Buster with WOW! Creative Design Group and Eric Ginnish with Marrakech, Inc. for their partnerships in this project. Now, lets have some of Claire’s famous coffee cake!

**NEW BUSINESSES IN 2020**

**22 New Businesses in the District!**

Town Green District was proud to welcome these new establishments to our district:

- Vegan Ahava
- Edible Couture
- Lazeez Indian Cuisine
- CBH Café
- Havenly Treats
- Viva Nutrition
- Bark & Vine
- Farnham Realty
- Somos Arepas
- Life Bowls
- Salad Craft Co.
- El Segundo New Haven
- Haven Hot Chicken
- Doc’s Baja Surf Shack
- Blue Orchid Thai
- 10 Second Noodles
- The Lab Gym
- L’Epicurie Choupette
- PARK on Crown
- B Natural Kitchen
- Shiana Hair
- Menya-Gumi

**Claire’s Takes the Corner: Goodbye New Haven Visitor’s Center!**

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