



Media Contact

Tiffany
Gonzalez

(908) 472-9415

Tgonzalez@cityofrahway.com

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City of Rahway Announces Transition of Special Improvement District (SID) to Non-Profit Management

Rahway, NJ—The City Council introduced an ordinance to transfer the management of the Rahway Special Improvement District (SID) to an independent 501 Corporation. This move marks a significant milestone in Rahway's ongoing efforts to support and strengthen the local business community while continuing the city's revitalization efforts.

In June of 2022, the Rahway City Council took over the management of the SID to refocus its mission and ensure it effectively served the needs of local businesses. The decision to temporarily bring the SID under council oversight was influenced by the dedication to improve management, strengthen financial planning, and reestablish a clear vision for the district's future. Since then, the SID has seen remarkable success.

"This transition is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our City Council who have consistently worked to rejuvenate the SID and restore it to its original purpose," said Mayor Giacobbe. "We are confident that the SID is now stronger than ever and ready to thrive under a new management structure."

Under council leadership, the SID has achieved numerous milestones that have made a significant impact on the Rahway business community. Some key accomplishments include:

- **Social Media and Branding Program:** The SID launched a program to help local businesses enhance their online presence. Selected businesses received personalized social media services, training, and strategic branding consultations to improve their promotional efforts.
- **Business and Façade Improvement Programs (BIP & FIP):** Over \$280,000 in forgivable loans were distributed to more than 65 businesses to improve storefronts, interiors, marketing, technology, and signage. These improvements have enhanced the overall aesthetic and functionality of Rahway's commercial spaces.
- **Public Art Incentive Program:** The SID encouraged public art projects on private commercial properties, resulting in a vibrant mural that is visible from the train. **La Florista**, located at Quilla by Sabor Peruano, created in 2024 by Peruvian artist Jade Rivera, highlights and broadcasts Peruvian culture from the train line. It notably brought Vice Consul Ms. Maria Alejandra Malatesta from the Consulado General de Perú en Paterson to Rahway, to admire such captivating work.
- **Spearheaded Art Projects around town:**
 - **Rahway Innovators Mural**, completed in 2024, highlights three notable Rahway's own innovators that is visible to passengers on the southbound train between Linden station and Rahway station. The mural emphasizes Rahway's past and future innovators, calling Rahway home.

- **Martin Luther King Park Sculpture**, at MLK Park, completed in 2023, representing Dr King’s ideals and allows the viewer to reflect in his messages. The sculpture features three quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., allowing his voice to fully resonate with the audience.
- **Geometric Mural**, at the Mint II, completed in 2023, creates an illusion of visual distortion when the viewer is in motion. The whole 4,500 square foot mural is visible from the Rahway train station, making viewers experience the illusion in full affect.
- **Native Perennials Mural**, at Rahway Arts District Park, completed in 2023, highlights the native flower of Rahway. The location compliments the closeness of Union County Performing Arts Center (UCPAC) with vibrant colors and a dark background.
- **River Goddess Mural**, at E Cherry Street Park, completed in 2023, advocates for costal flooding awareness and climate change resiliency. The native aquatic life featured are commonly found in the Rahway River Watershed, creating a tie between Rahway and climate change education.
- **Taste of Spring Expansion:** The popular Taste of Spring event has changed significantly under the SID’s management. **In 2018, less than 30% of participating restaurants were from Rahway. By 2024, over 76% of participants were Rahway-based businesses**, showcasing the growth and engagement of local eateries to improve our local economy.
- **Improved Business Directory:** The SID’s redesigned website now features an updated directory of all local businesses. They are organized by category, making it easier for residents and visitors to find what they need in Rahway, which previously was not accessible.
- **Food Handler Training Courses:** In collaboration with the Department of Health, the SID has made ServSafe Manager courses more accessible and affordable to local restaurants, ensuring businesses meet health and safety standards.
- **Enhanced Collaboration with the Rahway Chamber of Commerce:** Since 2022, the SID and Chamber of Commerce have worked closely on initiatives such as the Small Business Saturday/Shop Local campaign, which has successfully promoted local businesses.
- **Public Events Beyond Downtown:** The SID expanded its event programming beyond the downtown area. Notably, the Block Party at 1002 St. Georges Avenue brought community events to new locations, with great success and participation from local businesses.

These accomplishments reflect the hard work and dedication of the City Council, which stepped in to stabilize and strengthen the SID when it was in need. Now, as the SID transitions to a new management structure, the city is confident that the foundation laid over the past three years will continue to benefit the business community for years to come.

For more information, please contact:

Communications Coordinator

Tiffany Gonzalez

✉ Tgonzalez@cityofrahway.com

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