



ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



ABOUT THE HARTFORD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

The Hartford Business Improvement District (HBID) is a 60-block non-profit 501 c(3) special services district located in the commercial core of Hartford, Connecticut.

Working collectively with the City of Hartford, as well as the more than 100 property owners and other organizations within the District, the HBID is dedicated to creating positive and lasting change by enhancing the economic vitality and quality of life for employees, visitors, and residents within our District. HBID projects and programs concentrate on cleanliness and safety, community engagement, marketing, placemaking, beautification, outreach, and advocacy.

Property owners in the District see an immediate and tangible return on their annual investment. The programs of the HBID deliver meaningful and measurable supplemental services beyond what is provided by the City of Hartford. These detail-oriented cleaning, public safety, and marketing services help to mitigate many of the real and perceived challenges that face the District on a daily basis.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

OFFICERS

Cynthia Huveltdt, Chair
City Place I

Lisa Drazen, Vice Chair
Union Place Realty

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The Hartford

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Business for Downtown Hartford Designee

Dina Silva, Secretary
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Capital View Apartments

David Jakubowski
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Elizabeth Judd
Konover Commercial Corporation

Ed Kaeser
Nassau Reinsurance Group

Michael O'Connell
O'Connell, Atmore & Morris LLC

Chris Ostop
Constitution Plaza

Stephen Richmond
Painting With A Twist

Michael Seidenfeld
Shelbourne

Shirley Surgeon
City of Hartford, Court of Common Council Designee

Lynn Veilleux
Aetna

STAFF

Jordan Polon
Executive Director

Sydney Morris
Digital Media Rockstar

Chip McCabe
Director of Placemaking & Events

Rodney Crockett
Block By Block Operations Manager




A NOTE FROM JORDAN POLON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2020 ushered in a global pandemic that stopped us all in our tracks, turned our world upside-down and brought about previously unimaginable challenges for district businesses, employers, employees, property owners, and residents. The momentum we'd been enjoying for the past several years suffered a staggering blow as corporations shifted to remote work, restaurants closed their dining rooms, and entertainment venues shut down completely.


We've all grieved the loss of "normal" life in whatever shape that means to each of us. We have been afraid for our health, our businesses, our livelihoods, our employees, our families, and our friends. We have been afraid of what we can't predict. But we have also been inspired. And we have been grateful, compassionate, flexible, creative, and above all collaborative.

Our entire team showed extraordinary fortitude, adaptability, and perseverance this year. Hartford BID Ambassadors were on the front lines in our district every single day. It wasn't easy but they showed up, worked incredibly hard, and displayed tremendous grace under pressure. We worked with hundreds of local artists and organizations to make sure that (even with diminished foot traffic) there was still a consistent roster of live music, active spaces, and new art installations throughout the district. Hartford.com's structure and content were constantly adapted to reflect the rapid changes in entertainment and dining restrictions and social media posts were geared towards promoting creative ways for people to continue to support struggling businesses and artists in Hartford.

The work we do would not be possible without the thoughtful leadership of Hartford Business Improvement District's Board of Commissioners and Officers, and the dedication of each of our standing committees. Navigating the constant changes of an evolving pandemic event has been beyond challenging but the work we did this year, even when it felt impossible, and the work we will continue to do to bring about positive and lasting change in our district, is something we can all be proud of.



**New, branded Pratt Street
Patio flags and signage
were designed and
installed.**



5X5 Hartford Muralist,
Alex Ranniello, being
interviewed by Suzie
Hunter of WTNH News 8 to
discuss his finished mural
on Kinsley Street.

The Hartford Business Improvement District was represented on the following boards and committees:

iQuilt Board of Directors
iQuilt Board of Corporators
Business for Downtown Hartford Board of Directors
Hartford Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
Farmington Avenue Alliance Board of Directors
City of Hartford Complete Streets Task Force
*City of Hartford Economic Recovery Task Force
Hospitality Task Force
*Future of Downtown Working Group
Reimagining Main Street Working Group
Hartford Scooter Share Working Group
Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association Economic Development Committee
Asylum Hill Neighborhood Association Public Safety Committee
Coordinated Access Network Member
CT Special Service District Directors Group
Greater Hartford Arts Council Board of Governors
International Downtown Association Awards Committee

PUBLIC SAFETY & CLEAN STREETS



Ambassadors sanitized tables and chairs on Pratt Street after each use and periodically throughout the day.

A NOTE FROM RODNEY CROCKETT, BLOCK BY BLOCK OPERATIONS MANAGER

This year forced us to make daily adjustments to the services we provide to take care our Ambassador Team and our district. We've had to be more understanding and more flexible to maintain efficiency on the streets through issues with busses and transportation, the unexpected needs of kids and families, and the overall anxiety associated with working with the public during a pandemic. Through all of this, the team has been completely committed to doing their jobs. They've adapted and stretched to fill in what's missing with a more heightened responsibility for what their work means. Our Ambassadors really took to heart what it means to be "essential." This program is about so much more than the basics of clean and safe. They were essential to making people's days brighter and providing normalcy for the people who continued to work in, live in, or visit our district this year.

HARTFORD BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT AMBASSADORS

Uniformed, state-certified security professionals are deployed on a daily basis to provide an additional reassuring and authoritative presence on the streets. Ambassadors perform security patrols on foot, by bicycle, Segway, and automobile. Working in partnership with the Hartford Police Department, the Security Ambassadors make routine patrols of the District and serve as additional eyes and ears on the street. Along with the security patrols, ambassadors make regular improvements to the appearance of the streetscape. Equipped with a pickup truck, high tech power-washing system, litter vacuum, and other tools, the uniformed crew work on a daily basis to support the Department of Public Works and ensure the District's streetscape remains clean.



95,382
LBS. OF LITTER
REMOVED FROM
THE STREETS

1,830
TRASH CANS
TOPPED
OFF

944
GRAFFITI
TAGS
REMOVED

2,965
BUS SHELTERS
CLEANED

189
HOURS
SHOVELING
SNOW & ICE

1,095
CROSSWALK
CURB CUTS CLEARED
OF SNOW

57
AUTO ROADSIDE
ASSISTANCE
SERVICE CALLS

39
ROADSIDE BICYCLE
ASSISTANCE
SERVICE CALLS

22,292
AMBASSADOR
SERVICE HOURS

76
HOSPITALITY/
SECURITY
ESCORTS

1,209
INTERACTIONS WITH
PEOPLE EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS

90
INTERACTIONS
WITH
PANHANDLERS

PLACEMAKING & BEAUTIFICATION



Autumn decorations on Pratt Street complete with corn husks, leaf garlands, mums and string lights.

SEASONAL DECORATIONS

Activating public space to become a destination can make a huge impact on the district and the city at large. We expanded our holiday decorations through several seasons beginning with an Autumnal theme, placing cornstalks, mums, garland and twinkle lights on street poles along Pratt Street through Thanksgiving. It created a warm and inviting atmosphere for people to extend their interest in outdoor dining as the weather grew colder. We quickly flipped the seasons just in time for Small Business Saturday. Nine Christmas displays were created in empty storefronts, light poles on several streets were wrapped with twinkle lights, and 48 large, LED snowflakes were strategically positioned on commercial corridors throughout downtown and Asylum Hill. In February storefronts and light poles on Pratt Street were decorated for Valentine's Day, and transitioned to an Irish history walk in March. Creating visually appealing streetscapes has become even more important for the residents, employees, and visitors this year, as people have looked for more opportunities to spend time outdoors.

PRATT STREET

Pratt Street continued to be a cornerstone of events and activation for the District. Responding to the need for increased outdoor gathering spaces, we worked with the City of Hartford, Pratt Street property owners, and merchants to facilitate a transition from a weekday lunchtime street closure to a full-time pedestrian-only thoroughfare. This allowed restaurants to offer evening and weekend outdoor dining for longer periods than ever before.

MAKERSPACE CT SCHOLARSHIPS

We wanted to create a program that would introduce local makers and creatives to a potential revenue stream, and connect them to Makerspace CT; a state-of-the-art facility with the tools and training to increase their skill set. Following a call for submissions for our Make-A-Thing program, we awarded three year-long memberships to Makerspace CT. Each local maker has spent the past year working with us, and Makerspace CT, to build a new installation for placement in the district.

5X5 MURAL PROJECT

5x5 is a term originating with radio communications to indicate how a message has been received on a scale of one to five. If a message comes in 5 x 5, it is strong and clear. We commissioned the Rise Up Group and CT Murals to assist with the selection of five Hartford-area artists to create five new 5' x 5' murals throughout the central business district, using the message of strength and positivity as their inspiration. The murals can be found on Talcott Street, Kinsley Street, High Street, Church Street, and Farmington Avenue.

HARTFORD HAS IT BANNERS

The banner program continues to add vibrancy to both Downtown and Asylum Hill, and provided the organization with sponsorship revenue. We reached out to Hartford residents, business owners, civic, and cultural organizations to gather community input for a one-year campaign, centering on recovery messaging that highlights Hartford's strength, pride, and resilience.



15
VACANT
STOREFRONT
ACTIVATIONS



144
LIGHT
POLES
DECORATED



182
HARTFORD
HAS IT
BANNERS

24/7
PEDESTRIANIZED
PRATT
STREET

3
MAKERSPACECT
SCHOLARSHIPS
AWARDED

7
NEW
MURALS
PAINTED

EVENTS & ACTIVATION



Musician Orice Jenkins performing during our Pratt Street Patio Music Series.

A NOTE FROM CHIP MCCABE, DIRECTOR OF PLACEMAKING & EVENTS

2020 was extremely difficult to navigate in several ways, however when it came to placemaking and events the Hartford BID was uniquely positioned to succeed. Over the past three years we shifted away from the one-day, large-scale event model that many business improvement districts, and so many other organizations, employ. We moved to a 'cheaper, faster, lighter' model running several small-scale, weekly event series. This shift allowed us to activate more space, to offer more events, and to affect more positive interactions within the district. As the pandemic changed our day-to-day lives we were able to produce almost all of our signature events, and adhere to the shifts in social distancing mandates with little change in the event itself. I was proud to be able to safely offer a full slate of events, and increase placemaking initiatives. The results were tangible for residents, visitors, and business owners alike.

PRATT STREET MUSIC SERIES

The Hartford BID was able to produce 20 live musical performances through a grant from the Richard P. Garmany Fund. We turned Pratt Street into one of the only consistently programmed live music venues in the state throughout the summer and autumn months. We supported 45 local musicians who were struggling with the near-elimination of the gig-economy. Each performance drew an average of 20-30 physically distanced attendees, who listened to the music and supported the restaurants and merchants on Pratt Street.

PRATT STREET WIFI DISTRICT

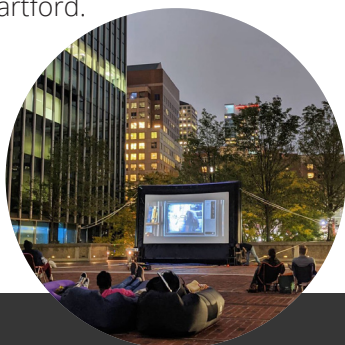
The Hartford BID partnered with Blue Haus Group and Shelbourne to bring free, high-speed, 24-hour wifi to Pratt street from August through October. The program was created for office workers, students, and residents looking to safely utilize free internet access outside their homes and offices. The goals were to bring greater visibility to downtown Hartford through a strategic marketing campaign focused on free-wifi and to give people a unique reason to leave their homes and visit downtown Hartford.

SPOOKY POPCORN

The 2nd annual Spooky Popcorn horror movie festival on Constitution Plaza grew from four to five nights in 2020. The series was easily able to adapt to the ongoing pandemic restrictions through the use of a pod system. As our first-ever ticketed event, Spooky Popcorn was sold out or near capacity for each of the five films, generated over twelve hundred dollars in revenue, and enabled 180 people to safely enjoy a night out in the district.

SUPPORTING OTHERS ORGS

The Hartford BID supported several organizations with their events and activation initiatives. Real Art Ways and NightFall utilized the Hartford BID movie screen and projector, allowing them to safely show films outdoors. We lent tables and chairs to pop up spaces around the district, and connected CT Murals to District property owners to create new murals.



180
SPOOKY
POPCORN
ATTENDEES



\$1,246
IN SPOOKY
POPCORN TICKET
SALES



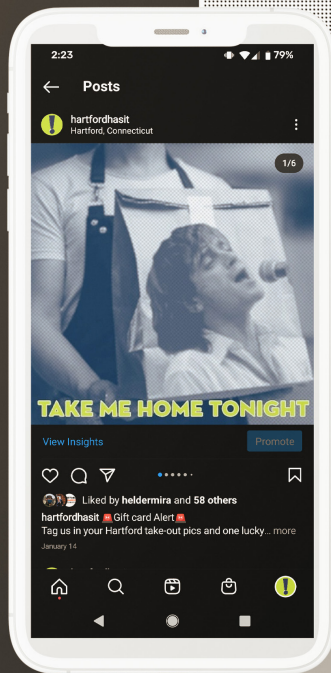
666
STARTLES,
SCREAMS
& GASPS

20
PRATT STREET
PERFORMANCES

45
LOCAL MUSICIANS
HIRED

90
DAYS OF FREE
WIFI ON PRATT
STREET

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



We launched a weekly campaign on social media to emphasize and promote restaurant take away business.

A NOTE FROM SYDNEY MORRIS, DIGITAL MEDIA ROCKSTAR

While this year was difficult for many businesses, with our established online presence it was easy to quickly shift into action to promote the services that were still available. Through several successful advertising campaigns, extensive gift guides, blog posts, contests, weekly social media promotions, and dedication to keeping information as current as possible, we were able to connect our audiences to the businesses that needed it most. Unlike other business improvement districts, we are dedicated to promoting all that our capital city has to offer, even if it is outside of our district limits. This year, I was honored to present at the International Downtown Association's Annual Conference to speak on our unique marketing strategies and development of our signature brand voice. The emphasis of this strategically casual, funny, and engaging marketing creates a strong foundation which has amassed a loyal audience across all our platforms.

 **7,257**

 **7,956**

 **7,789**

ADVERTISING

This year, we worked with Rebel Interactive Group to design and implement several advertisements across multiple channels to promote the Pratt Street WiFi District and Hartford.com. Through our own advertising, we also promoted several blogs, Hartford.com, our e-commerce shop, and ran several holiday advertising campaigns.

HARTFORD.COM

With an average of 13,541 users per month, we are dedicated to keeping Hartford.com at the forefront of people's minds as the source for events. This year, we reorganized and redesigned several pages to better navigate and increase awareness of who we are and what we do.

E-COMMERCE

Through a collaborative effort with the Hartford Chamber of Commerce and MetroHartford Alliance, we hosted a series of small online pop-up shops on Hartford.com. With a curated list of offerings, we promoted small businesses in Hartford that don't have brick and mortar shops with a local pickup to bring people Downtown.

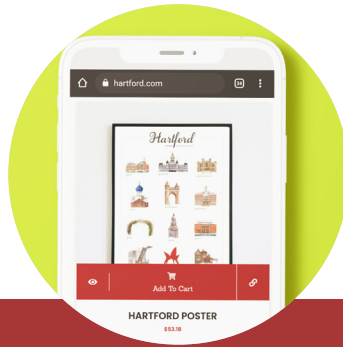
DESIGN

As we focused more on digital presence this year we designed newsletters, social media graphics, advertisements, social distancing signage, and branded Pratt Street Patio flags. Our social distancing signage was such a big hit, the City of Hartford purchased 21 additional decals that were installed throughout the city in bus shelters.



143,158

#HARTFORDHASIT
TAGS ON
INSTAGRAM



2

ONLINE
POP-UP
SHOPS



34

ADVERTISING
CAMPAIGNS

13,541

AVERAGE
MONTHLY
WEB USERS

19

LOCAL
VENDORS

1,427,554

CAMPAIGN
IMPRESSIONS

814

NEWSLETTER
SUBSCRIBERS

56

PRODUCTS
LISTED

854,221

PEOPLE
REACHED

INDEX & CREDITS



Working with LAZ Parking and Spinnaker Real Estate, we transformed this fence on Trumbull Street into piano keys. Painted by muralist Corey Pane.



Original G. Fox holiday decorations on display in vacant storefronts on Pratt Street Loaned from the iQuilt Partnership.



HBID PARTNERS

Paradigm Properties, Data-Mail, Simon Konover, Jones Lang LaSalle, Aetna, PwC, Travelers, UCONN, School of Business, Reid & Riege, Locke Lord, Wadsworth Atheneum, Riverfront Recapture, Hartford Hospital, Hartford Healthcare

FY 2020-2021

Taxable Properties in the District: 221

Individual Property Owners: 108

2019 Grand List Assessed Value of the District: \$754,157,412

Revenue from 1.32 Mill Assessment After Appeals and Adjustments: \$982,921

Revenue from Sponsorships, Grants, and Fee for Service Agreements: \$129,444

Thank you to SGS Metro LLC for the donation of operations space at 350 Church Street, and to Northland Investment Corporation and Constitution Plaza for event storage space.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Hart, Andy. (Photographer). (2020). Hartford Skyline [photograph]. Page 3.

Martin, Chris. (Photographer). (2020). Muralist Alex Ranniello being interviewed by Suzie Hunter of WTNH News 8 [photograph]. Page 5.

Horrigan, Brad. (Photographer). (2020). Ambassadors sanitizing tables [photograph]. Hartford Courant. Page 6.

Gaylor, John. (Photographer). (2020). Ambassador hanging decorations [photograph]. Page 7.

Davis, Zach. (Photographer). (2020). Ambassador portrait [photograph]. Page 7.

Davis, Zach. (Photographer). (2020). Ambassador portrait [photograph]. Page 7.

Wedderburn, Kareem. (Photographer). (2021). Hartford Has It Banners in front of the Connecticut State Capitol Building [photograph]. Page 9.

Hart, Andy. (Photographer). (2020). Orice Jenkins performing on Pratt Street [photograph]. Page 10.

Moore, Tim. (2020). Image of Pratt Street WiFi District [photograph]. Page 11.

Real Art Ways. (2020). Image of outdoor film screening [photograph]. Page 11.

Hart, Andy. (Photographer). (2020). Hartford Skyline [photograph]. Page 16.



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