

Richmond Main Street Initiative



2019 Annual Report

Final | June 2020

Our Big Year of Transition & Change

2019 was a year of incredible transition and change for Richmond Main Street and Downtown Richmond. We are proud to provide this 2019 annual report, illustrating our Main Street Approach in action, the impact that our events and programs have on the community, and our gratitude for all our stakeholders--residents, property owners, businesses, volunteers, sponsors, community leaders, and City and County agencies--for their partnership in this work and their commitment to our mission.

OUR MISSION

To revitalize historic Downtown Richmond as a pedestrian-friendly urban village, offering products, services, arts, and entertainment that reflect the community's rich and diverse heritage.

OUR APPROACH



Promotion



Clean & Safe



Economic Development



Community



Design

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Staff Amanda Elliott, Executive Director; Alicia Gallo, Programs & Communications Manager; Ronnie Mills, Admin/Finance Coordinator; Vaneese Johnson, Small Business Advisor

Board of Directors Xavier Abrams, Chair; Billy Ward, Vice-Chair; Charlene Smith, Secretary; Tami Steelman-Gonzales, Treasurer; Michael K. Martin, Rober Rogers, Sarah Wally, Yvette Williams-Barr

Big Moves & Grand Openings

In January we relocated our office from the historic Carquinez Apartments to the Richmond Transit Station, joining the Mayor's effort to transform the former R-Transit space into the Downtown Richmond Visitor Center. Then in February, after over a year of hard work to save the Richmond Main Post Office from closure, we were honored to attend the renaming of our Downtown post office after Harold D. McCraw Sr.



Spring and Fall brought two exciting grand openings: first the ribbon cutting of the Richmond Food Hall in April, followed a few months later by the celebration to welcome CoBiz Richmond on November 6. Together these two spaces make up the Richmond Business Hub--a \$4 million--project bringing new businesses, jobs, good food, great coffee, inclusive gathering spaces, art, and entrepreneurial and creative opportunities for residents.

Building up Business & Bringing Art Downtown



In 2019 we really put our new office to good use, hosting 3 receptions for two *ʻxʻ Aaxn/`a AxNlyqʻbnl* exhibitions and a record-breaking 25 small business workshops. The Art Through Transition shows explored Downtown and Richmond through the perspective of local artists--The Art of Living Black and NIAD--and receptions included dialogue about the role of the

arts and artists in neighborhood revitalization. The Spring show also brought to fruition two sales and the Summer show was featured in the East Bay Express. Thanks to generous support from partners and sponsors we directly supported 100+ local entrepreneurs and small businesses with 25 free workshops, one-on-one advising, and meet-ups. We also co-hosted a business mixer, endorsed two Kiva micro loans--one of which was funded in just 17 hours--and sponsored a Small Business Saturday reception.

Keeping Downtown Clean & Safe

Our Neighborhood Ambassadors worked hard all year long to keep Downtown looking its best, engaging with merchants, and connecting residents with resources. We also worked very closely with Public Works staff to maintain the Nevin Plaza and install new BigBelly trash cans throughout the district. For Earth Day we joined Groundwork Richmond in planting 11 new trees on 11th Street, then a few weeks later we rolled up our sleeves to get the Community Green Space ready for summer.



Creating Opportunities for Residents to Have Fun Downtown



Thousands came Downtown to enjoy music, dancing, vendors, activities, and community at our signature ¡ZjZUMZž n, l {n, l summer events. Some highlights include the LifeLong Dental van at Healthy Village Festival, Andre Thierry and SambaFunk at Music on the Main, the biggest Spirit & Soul Festival ever, National Night Out with BART PD, Chill with a Cop moving to Metro Walk. The last months of the year brought The Best Time Ever!, a special event and farewell celebration to Amanda Elliott, our long-serving Executive Director. December was filled with winter holiday fun with our annual Santa Needs a New Sleigh fundraiser at East Brother Beer Company and the Downtown Holiday Festival.

Engaging Stakeholders & Fostering Youth Leadership



In addition to our Annual Stakeholder Meeting, we convened two gatherings to engage with our community around this period of transition and change in Downtown. We worked closely with three residents, Jenny, Francisco, and Katherine to survey 200+ people about this topic. We also continued our commitment to providing opportunities for our youth residents to develop workplace skills and

participate in the revitalization of their Downtown: Michelle Hong via Health Career Pathways Program, Humberto Alvarado by way of RYSE Center, and our Youth Media Crew: Imani Jones, Ryan Saechao, and Marlon Ixtabalon.

Warm Welcomes & Bittersweet Farewells

This year we warmly welcomed new businesses Downtown: Roux, Red Bay Coffee (Downtown's first coffee shop!), CoBiz Richmond, Rich City Studios, to name a few. And we said tearful goodbyes to Your Way Pizza, 523Rods, and Hacienda Grill. And, of course, we also bid farewell to long-time Executive Director Amanda Elliott. Through Amanda's leadership our events, programs, and impact grew significantly. Her new role with National Main Street means she is expanding her expertise to sister Main Street communities throughout California and the United States.



There is so, so much more that we accomplished as well. We persevered through tough tasks and celebrated victories big and small. And we did this all with an incredibly lean staff—Amanda and Alicia, later joined by Ronnie and Katherine—with generous support from our donors, sponsors, community partners, board of directors, and volunteers.

