



Richmond Main Street is dedicated to revitalizing Downtown Richmond as a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly urban village offering products, services, arts, and entertainment that reflects the community's rich and diverse heritage.

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# HEARD ON MAIN STREET

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## 1<sup>st</sup> Year of DRPBID Yields Results

2013 brought many new and exciting changes to Richmond Main Street Initiative (RMSI) and Downtown Richmond. With the successful passing of the Downtown Richmond Property Based Improvement District (DRPBID) in July 2012, the stakeholders with arguably the most investment in the district—the property owners—demonstrated that they want to see RMSI's revitalization work continue for many years to come. After celebrating this historic victory for Downtown, RMSI began working on establishing the structural and organizational framework necessary to implement the services outlined in the Management District Plan. "We had some challenges, but all in all the implementation of the DRPBID went very well in its first year," says Executive Director Amanda Elliott. "We stayed true to the plan and are very pleased with the progress we've made thus far."

### Clean & Safe Program Receives a Boost with Safety1st



In early 2013 Richmond Main Street utilized DRPBID funds to transition its successful volunteer Neighborhood Ambassador Program (NAP) into a fully-funded service provided by Safety1st. Six skilled workers were hired to provide additional cleaning/maintenance and safety services to the district. These community liaisons—many of whom are Richmond residents and former NAP participants—work

daily (Monday-Friday) making positive and lasting contributions to the appearance and perception of Downtown. As they walk the district, the liaisons not only contribute to the appearance of the neighborhood by keeping it clean of graffiti, litter, and debris, but they also build relationships with residents and business owners, provide way-finding assistance, and support to law enforcement.

### Making Waves in Promoting Downtown & Attracting Businesses

Defining, realizing, and promoting the identity of Downtown was also a major project in 2013. Through visioning exercises and meetings with stakeholders, RMSI established a clear vision for Downtown: a safe, vibrant, thriving destination for arts, entertainment, businesses, and residents with an easily accessible transit center. Although this vision is a long-term goal, RMSI leveraged DRPBID funds and community partnerships to make significant progress, including exploring development projects that promote the district as a hub for health, wellness, and food; creating a comprehensive property inventory; actively working to attract new businesses to Downtown; and creating a sense of place through targeted marketing and branding. The most visible example of our work in action is the successful completion of the Street Banner Project, which successfully concluded in September with the installation of 22 new, vibrant street banners designed by local artist Richard Muro Salazar along Macdonald Avenue between Harbour Way and 16th Street.



# RMSI Board Checks Out Potential Restaurant for Downtown

On February 21, 2014, the RMSI Board of Directors traveled to Walnut Creek to take a sneak peek what may become a new restaurant business in Downtown Richmond. Derreck B. Johnson, owner of Home of Chicken and Waffles, greeted the board with a warm smile and a memorable meal filled with delicious soul food and generous hospitality. Mr. Johnson is an Oakland native with a business degree from Fisk University and strong ties to the Bay Area. In 2004 he invested in the original Home of Chicken and Waffles restaurant, which was struggling. The restaurant, located in Jack London Square, is now thriving with a loyal clientele and a strong online presence. He opened the downtown Walnut Creek restaurant as the second location of this Bay Area institution in 2011. "He is interested in expanding and is looking at Downtown Richmond," says Executive Director Amanda Elliott. In addition to possessing strong business acumen, Mr. Johnson is passionate about operating his business in a socially responsible manner. He is committed to hiring local and providing employment opportunities to individuals facing barriers to employment. RMSI has been working very closely with Mr. Johnson to find the right space for his business and hopes to bring his delicious food and fun, retro dining experience to Downtown soon.



## We Moved!

At the end of October 2013, Richmond Main Street Initiative moved into its new office, located at 1015 Nevin Avenue, Suite 105, with an additional entrance at 402 Harbour Way; both entrances are ADA-accessible. The new office is loft-like, with high ceilings, a shared work area, conference room, and a resource room for office



supplies and educational materials. Staying true to Downtown's rich cultural history, the new office also prominently features original works of art and displays of past RMSI event posters.

Visitors are welcome Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. For more information or to schedule an appointment call (510) 236-4049.

## Downtown Updates



**The new BART Parking Structure opened** with a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 19, 2013, adding 700+ parking spaces and 9000+ square feet of retail space to Downtown. **Catholic Charities of the East Bay is relocating its Richmond location to 217 Harbour Way**, a previously vacant building. They have been making significant upgrades and plan to open soon offering a range of services for individuals and families. **Many Downtown stakeholders invested in the district by making improvements to their properties:**

Burger King and two Kaiser Permanente buildings received façade improvements and the City Center Apartments underwent extensive energy efficiency upgrades. With heavy hearts **we said goodbye to a number of Downtown businesses in 2013 including Richmond Denim Xchange, Mary's Little Lambs, and Joanne's Boutique**, which, after 60 years, closed its doors for the final time in late December following the passing of owner Joanne King: longtime Richmond resident, businesswoman, and RMSI supporter. In early February 2014 **the murals at Harbour Way and Macdonald Avenue were removed to make way for new artwork** designed by Richard Muro Salazar, which will be on view in late spring.





# Downtown Events and Programs Reach New Heights in 2013

## *Over 14,000 Visitors Attracted to Downtown by RMSI Activities*

Residents, businesses, and community members enjoyed the return of beloved events and the expansion of invaluable health and wellness programs in 2013. RMSI welcomed the new year with a pop of color by transforming its office into a satellite exhibition space for the annual The Art of Living Black show, featuring paintings by Malik Seneferu and mixed-media compositions by Raymond Haywood. The works remained on view throughout the summer, extending the impact of the show well past its official end in March.



As spring blossomed, Downtown witnessed the return of the RMSI Farmers' Market. On average over 300 shoppers visited the market each Wednesday throughout the season (May-October), quickly buying up affordable seasonal fruits and vegetables, gourmet foodie treats, artisan wares, and delicious lunch items. The Community Green Space park was abuzz with activity every 1st Friday of the summer at Healthy Village Farm Stand thanks to support from many community partners who helped expand the vision, reach, and impact of this special event. 500+ visitors accessed free healthy food samples and cookbooks, fresh produce bags, educational activities, and invaluable information on wellness resources.

The weather was hot and the music even hotter at Music on the Main concerts on July 24 and August 28. Hundreds came Downtown for family fun and memorable performances by Tia Carroll and Big Catt, Mazacote, and others. The concerts also featured special presentations: the introduction of the Safety1st community liaisons, the unveiling of the new street banners, and certificates of appreciation to two of RMSI's loyal volunteers, William Casey and Andromeda Brooks. In June RMSI expanded its fitness class program to include Lunchtime Zumba and Bellydance for Wellness, effectively doubling the number of free exercise classes and providing 128 hours of physical activity to hundreds of residents throughout the year.

On September 21, the Spirit & Soul Festival and Fundraiser brought Downtown to life with phenomenal performances by Club Nouveau, Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic, and Dahrio Wonder, as well as local food and artisan vendors, two wine booths, and a variety of raffle and silent auction items. Cynthia Haden, Ruth Mays, and Charles Evans were also honored as Downtown Champions. Downtown embraced winter with a Holiday Bazaar—the annual one-stop shopping experience featuring local merchants—and the beloved Downtown Holiday Festival. RMSI again proudly partnered with the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts to bring this special event to the families of the Iron Triangle. On December 16, 1000+ guests enjoyed festive music, special performances, fun with Buki the Clown, refreshments, gift giving, visits with Santa Claus, and a street lighting ceremony.



## *Expanding Support for Small Business & Workforce Development*

The Summer Youth Entrepreneur Program returned for its 6th year, providing crucial work readiness training and employment experience to 12 young adults from Richmond. RMSI also hosted the Job Search Bootcamp, an intensive 2-week course specifically designed to assist Richmond residents ages 18-25 develop job search, resume writing, and interviewing skills.

RMSI also expanded support for small business development in 2013 by offering a bootcamp event in January and two new workshops in November and December. Additionally, the Start & Grow Smart courses returned, each quickly reaching capacity. In total, about 150 aspiring and established business owners attended RMSI's classes, workshops, and bootcamp sessions—a clear demonstration of the development potential in Richmond and for Downtown.

"The response to last year's small business programs was truly astonishing", says RMSI Small Business Consultant Vaneese Johnson. "We definitely kept this in mind while planning 2014's Smart Business Bootcamp & Mixer...and good thing we did!", continues Johnson referring to the 20% increase in attendance. The bootcamp featured expert panelists sharing their knowledge on a variety of topics including marketing, non-traditional lending sources, doing business in Richmond, and vendor/supplier diversity, as well as numerous networking opportunities and a keynote speech by Derreck B. Johnson.



# Message from the Executive Director

2013 was over in a flash and it's hard to believe that so much could be accomplished in such a short period of time. Richmond Main Street soared to new heights last year celebrating the inaugural year of our Downtown Richmond Property Business Improvement District (DRPBID). With the support of property owners, residents, community partners, and funders we:

- Increased services to include daily maintenance and security in Downtown through our new partnership with locally based Safety1st,
- Offered more events, health and wellness programs, and small business trainings to a record number of individuals, and
- Expanded the farmers' market and secured its return this spring.




Amanda Elliott  
Executive Director

Our future remains colorful and bright. Just like Macdonald Avenue with the new street banners, we have truly come alive. As we embark upon a new year, we are keenly aware of the opportunities for business and economic development that exist in our downtown and have made it our mission to promote small business opportunities.

Our second annual day-long Small Business Bootcamp & Mixer was a resounding success with a 20% increase in participation from last year. Held in Downtown at the state-of-the-art East Bay Center for the Performing Arts, we offered new, aspiring, and seasoned entrepreneurs the opportunity to hear from top level panelists and advisors from Wells Fargo, Travis Credit Union, Opportunity Fund, the City of Richmond, and others. We led the charge of highlighting the fertile landscape of opportunity for business development and the growth potential to build on the more than 34.7 million dollars in private investment in the district in 2013.

The new BART parking garage is complete and ready to house new businesses. RMSI is taking the lead to help recruit businesses that suit the needs of our stakeholders who have stated very clearly that we need a full service family style restaurant in Downtown. Richmond Main Street is determined to make this a reality. In conjunction with business attraction, RMSI is working on branding Downtown with themes that resonate with the community. Some of the themes that keep rising to the top are food, art, and entertainment. We will continue to engage with stakeholders to create a district that represents the rich diversity of our community.

We're just getting started and revving up for another fantastic season of hard work and fun. We hope that you will again join us for all our events, programs, and activities throughout the year. Visit [www.richmondmainstreet.org](http://www.richmondmainstreet.org) for the latest Downtown updates and announcements.

Warm regards,  
  
Amanda Elliott

## Our Board of Directors

Cindy Haden, Chair  
Xavier Abrams, Vice Chair/Treasurer  
Charlene Smith, Secretary  
Arnie Kasendorf, Past Chair  
Adonna O'Sullivan  
Billy Ward  
Susan Bain  
Janet Johnson, Advisory Member  
James Goins, Advisory Member  
Jerrold Hatchett, Advisory Member  
Michael Davenport, Advisory Member  
Virgil Weekes, Advisory Member

## Our Staff

Amanda Elliott, Executive Director  
Alicia Gallo, Outreach Coordinator  
Cheryl Derricotte, Administrative & Finance Coordinator  
Johnasies McGraw, Program, Strategy, and Development Consultant  
Vaneese Johnson, Small Business Consultant



## Our Volunteers: the HEART of Main Street

Richmond Main Street acknowledges and thanks all of the wonderful individuals who donate their time and effort to making our events and programs successful. You are the heart and soul of Downtown and we are forever grateful for your dedication to the revitalization of Historic Main Street.

THANK YOU!!!



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Join the efforts to Revitalize Downtown

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