



February 2015

Revitalizing Historic Downtown Richmond

RICHMOND MAIN STREET INITIATIVE

2014 Annual Report

Letter From the Executive Director

Each year we discover new and exciting projects that connect us to our past and propel us toward the future. 2014 was no different.

We successfully facilitated negotiations between BART and Home of Chicken & Waffles, resulting in a long-term lease of the BART retail space on Macdonald Avenue. As we continue to build on the vision of a vibrant downtown, Richmond Main Street will further support the development and build-out of this 10,000 sq ft space for the Chicken and Waffles restaurant, a coffee shop, and café by raising funds through an Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign. We are encouraged by the early support from the community for this project, which we expect to be the catalyst for more robust economic development investments.

As a member of the Berkeley Global Campus at Richmond Bay Working Group, I have the unique opportunity to make recommendations to the Chancellor about this historic project. I am advocating contracts for Richmond businesses and educational opportunities for our youth. It is imperative that we work to increase the capacity of local businesses and Richmond Main Street is committed to offer solutions to this need.

Our community needs support from commercial corridor efforts like RMSI in order to create economic opportunities and attract businesses to our historic Downtown. Richmond Main Street is laying down tracks and strengthening our foundation. We are on a path toward success, creating a thriving commercial district that honors our rich history and celebrates our bright future.

Warm regards,
Amanda Elliott

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2014 Program Highlights and Accomplishments

2014 was an exciting year for RMSI! This past year, we continued many successful programs and embarked upon a few exciting new opportunities. The core of RMSI's activities focused on health and wellness, small business development, and arts and cultural events. These activities are contributing to continued decreases in crime levels and are spurring renewed interest in the downtown district by local residents, businesses, workers, and visitors.

Fostering Economic Development

In 2014, 11 businesses opened and one business expanded creating 54 new jobs Downtown. Additionally, 16 district merchants were provided technical assistance.

Small Business Bootcamp & Mixer

The 2nd annual Small Business Bootcamp featured a keynote presentation by Derreck Johnson, owner of Home of Chicken and Waffles, and four panel discussions with a focus on a new and unseen opportunities to grow or operate a successful business in Richmond. The event drew 86 attendees.

Richmond Business Bites Workshops

A series of lunchtime workshops offered quarterly throughout the year featuring panelists of small business owners, advisers, City of Richmond representatives, and others offering their expertise on a range of entrepreneurship topics, including: Marketing Your Small Business, How to Choose a Business Formation, and Small Business Certification.

RICHMOND BUSINESS BITES



FREE Small Business Workshop and Lunch Series

Other Small Business Workshops

Our continued partnerships with Contra Costa SBDC and Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center afforded many local small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs opportunities to gain valuable knowledge to start or expand and grow their businesses. These partnerships have resulted in assistance to 60 individuals. The following workshops were completed:

- First Steps to a Successful Start-Up
- Jump Start: Action Planning
- NxLevel Business Planning
- Branding You & Your Small Business

Summer Youth Entrepreneur Program (SYEP)

SYEP 2014 trained and employed 15 youth, the vast majority of whom gave the training and instructor high scores in communication, mentorship, and leadership opportunities. Additionally, despite finding the entrepreneurialism training challenging, nearly all participants ranked the mock business



Q&A with the alternative funding panel at the Small Business Bootcamp. (RMSI Staff)

module's instruction, group discussions, and guest speakers as "helpful" or "very helpful". All participants said they would recommend the program to other youth, citing their experiences, the program's value to the community, and the content of the training as "highly beneficial."

All 15 participants graduated from the program in July after giving presentations of their business ideas to family and friends. Following graduation, the youth completed 100-120 hours at local businesses: T.J.Maxx in Pinole (14) and Richmond Main Street (1). Upon the completion of the program, T.J.Maxx hired eight of the youth workers.

New Downtown Businesses

- Law Offices of Bonner & Bonner
- Angel's Thrift Shop
- The Law Office of Veronica B. Granillo
- Platinum Haircuts
- Jaded Peach Lingerie
- Rich City Rides Community Bike Shop
- Renaissance Entrepreneurship Center
- Catholic Charities of the East Bay
- LeChat Nail Supply
- Iglesia Bautista Es La Roca
- SparkPoint West Contra Costa

Stakeholder & Community Visioning Meetings

Our annual Stakeholder Meeting is a vital tool for us to engage merchants, property owners, residents, and community partners and shape our revitalization work. On January 29, we shared our successes from 2013 and asked for the community's input on projects for the upcoming year. In August, we also hosted two

visioning meetings designed to "ReDiscover Downtown Richmond" and explore potential economic development models for attracting new and expanding businesses and other investment opportunities Downtown.

Arts & Culture

Encouraging active community life and lively events continue to be a key component in our revitalization program. Community celebrations and the arts have helped draw greater interest Downtown.

Alive & Free: Murals on Macdonald

In May we held a dedication ceremony for the new Alive & Free mural in Downtown Richmond designed and painted by Richard Muro Salazar. The mural promotes the philosophy and principles of the Omega Boy Club's Alive and Free program, which promotes positive lifestyle choices and address social issues that promote violence. Salazar, a native of Richmond, is also the creator of many public art pieces throughout his hometown, the United States, and abroad. *Alive & Free*, which features vibrant images of figures, landscapes, graphic shapes, and empowering messages, embraces the historic Bank of America building located on the corner of Harbour Way and Macdonald Avenue.



Downtown comes alive dancing during the 6th Annual Spirit & Soul Festival. (Ellen Gailing)

Music on the Main Summer Concerts

The 13th annual Music on the Main concerts...

- Showcased amazing local talent, including headlining performances by Rhonda Benin, and Andre Thierry & Zydeco Magic
- Attracted 900+ guests to Downtown

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Our Mission...

The Richmond Main Street Initiative is a community-based nonprofit corporation dedicated to revitalizing historic downtown Richmond as a pedestrian-friendly urban village, offering products, services, arts, and entertainment that reflect the community's rich and diverse heritage.

Highlights *(continued from p. 2)*

- Distributed 120 bags of fresh produce
- Provided enriching, educational arts and crafts activities and 90+ books to children
- Featured 24 artisans, food, and community partner vendors
- Encouraged physical fitness with fitness breaks, family bike rodeo, and dancing.

Spirit & Soul Festival

We kicked off the 6th annual Spirit & Soul Festival on Saturday, September 13 with performances by two extraordinary youth groups: East Bay Center for the Performing Arts' Iron Triangle Urban Ballet and RYSE Center's RAW Talent. As the weather heated up, so did the performances: Ric Alexander warmed up the crowd with great Jazz hits and popular favorites. And Dahrio Wonder did not disappoint! Along with Zumba Fitness instructor extraordinaires Willa 'Bontle' Willis and Gina Grant, Dahrio turned up the volume and brought the crowd to the dance floor.

Throughout the day over 1000 guests also enjoyed shopping in the outdoor bazaar, sipping on a variety of beverages, and dining on delicious soul food, BBQ, Mexican street food, Cajun/Creole favorites, and cupcakes. We also honored our 2014 Downtown Champions James Goins, David Thompson, Captain Mark Gagan, and William Casey, and presented the MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Award in Blight Reduction to Captain Bisa French.

Downtown Holiday Festival

On Wednesday, December 17, 2014, in partnership with the East Bay Center for the Performing Arts,

Richmond Main Street Initiative welcomed over 400 children and their families to the annual Downtown Holiday Festival. Upon entering the Center, families enjoyed an evening filled with joyous activities,

including a free "book fair", light refreshments, and rich, multi-cultural entertainment courtesy of the Center's resident companies. Performances included Ballet scenes from the Nutcracker, Mexican La Rama music and procession, New Orleans Second Line music and dance, African dance and drumming, seasonal theater skits, and traditional Christmas carols. Thanks to the generous support of our sponsors and over 26 volunteers, each child had the opportunity to visit with Santa and receive a gift bag stuffed



Santa spreading yuletide cheer at the Downtown Holiday Festival. (Ellen Gailing)

with small toys, activities, candy, and fresh fruit. The festival concluded with group caroling and the ceremony illumination of the holiday lights on Macdonald Avenue—a truly magical moment.

Health & Wellness Activities

Richmond Main Street Farmers' Market

2014 marked the 3rd season of the farmers' market, attracting over 13,000 visitors downtown. Every Wednesday, May through mid-November, hundreds of shoppers flocked to Nevin Plaza to shop and take home affordable, fresh, seasonal produce, enjoy delicious lunch options, listen to live music, and indulge in gourmet goodies. The market featured dozens of vendors—including agricultural producers offering organic and pesticide-free produce, hot food vendors, baked goods, gourmet pantry items, and artisan creations.

The market is sponsored by RMSI and produced by the Pacific Coast Farmers' Market Association; it proudly accepts WIC/ EBT payments and supports the Market Match program.

Healthy Village Farm Stand

In 2014 we continued our efforts to expand the vision and reach of Healthy Village Farm Stand, a fun annual summer event series all about health and wellness. With support from our community partners we crafted each event around a different theme corresponding to each organization's mission: Healthy Food/ Healthy You with Fresh Approach; Grow Your Own Gr\$\$n: Gardening and compost tips from Happy Lot Farm & Garden; EnRich-mond: Nourishing food demos by CURME & Ma'at Youth Academy; Bike Safety & Repair Workshop by Rich City Rides. Together with our partners we:

- Welcomed 700+ guests to the Community Green Space park
- Served 600 healthy food samples
- Passed out 320 bags of fresh produce, 55 cookbooks, and 80 food waste bins
- Distributed 60 educational coloring books, 200+ books, and 120 plants and seedlings
- Provided enriching educational arts and crafts activities and pony rides to children
- Hosted 20 nonprofit organizations, offering interactive information booths

Free Fitness Classes

In 2014, RMSI continued to offer free fitness classes to the community. The Martial Arts classes, taught by Master Taylor, were added as a response to community input and a unique funding opportunity through a partnership with Building Blocks for Kids Collaborative. Designed to appeal to children, these fun-filled, action-packed classes

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Cindy Haden
Chair

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Charlene Smith
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Arnie Kasendorf
Past Chair

Amanda Elliott
Executive Director

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Jerrold Hatchett

Michael Davenport

James Goins

Virgil Weekes

OUR STAFF

Amanda Elliott
Executive Director

Alicia Gallo
Outreach Coordinator

Cheryl Derricotte

Admin/Finance Coordinator

Johnasies McGraw

Strategy & Development Consultant

Vaneese Johnson
Small Business Consultant



Left: Promoting water drinking habits at Healthy Village Farm Stand. (RMSI Staff)

Below: Dr. Joseph Marshall, Jr. making remarks about the new Alive and Free Mural during the dedication ceremony. (RMSI Staff)



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Highlights *(continued from p. 3)*

promote self-confidence and self-discipline, and build strong character through Tae Kwon Do. A total of 162 classes were offered. The popularity of the classes are evidenced by high attendance (3,087 total participants) and 62% retention rate.

Clean & Safe

Community Safety Activities

RMSI works closely with the Richmond Police Department to ensure that Downtown is clean and safe for residents, workers, and visitors. In 2014, in partnership with the Richmond Police Department, Richmond Main Street hosted two Community Safety Meetings in April where residents and merchants learned about crime prevention, CPTED and CERT principles, and met their beat officers and Safety1st Community Liaisons. Our Chill with a Cop event on August 23 invited residents to enjoy an ice cream treat and meet their police officers.



Residents young and old meet with their police officers at Chill with a Cop. (RMSI Staff)

Safety1st Community Liaisons

In total, the RMSI Safety1st Community Liaisons provided 1,795 hours of maintenance and hospitality services including: collecting and removing 930 bags of trash and debris, resolving 63 illegal dumping and graffiti issues, daily check-ins with Richmond Shopping Center security and Kaiser Hospital security, collaboration with RPD to provide information related to crimes or incidents, and regular check-ins with Downtown merchants.

Our Vision

Historic Downtown Richmond is a safe, vibrant, thriving destination for arts, entertainment, businesses, and residents with an easily accessible transit center.

RMSI 2014 Work Plan

Economic Development Committee

Chair - Charlene Smith

- Raise funds to cover funding gap
- PBID Sustainability Plan
- Conduct research and develop plan to implement Small Business Incubation program. Confer with local businesses and other organizations that have developed similar programs.
- Summer Youth Entrepreneur Program
- Small business development classes

Promotions Committee

Chair - Xavier Abrams

- Continue to update and upgrade website; Monthly e-newsletters
- Produce commercial for Web and radio/TV broadcast
- Expand online presence: Facebook, Flickr, website, Twitter, LinkedIn
- 2 Summer Concerts - Music on the Main
- Annual Signature Event: Fundraiser (Spirit & Soul Festival)
- HEAL Activities: 4 Healthy Village Farm Stand events, weekly fitness classes
- Holiday Activities: Holiday Festival and Bazaar
- Weekly Farmers' Market

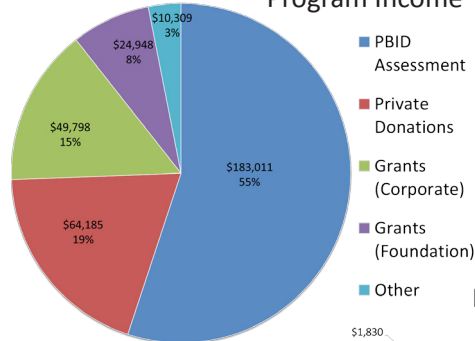
Design Committee

Chair - Amanda Elliott (ex-officio)

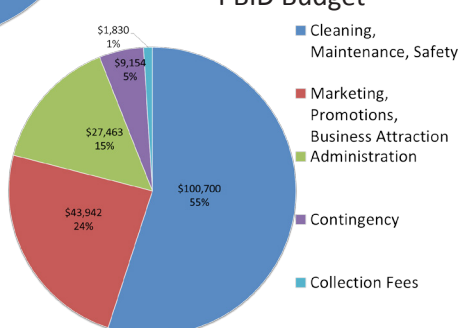
- Continue Art In Windows campaign to enliven downtown and enhance vacant storefronts
- Complete Downtown Mural Project
- Install Holiday Lights
- Store front design assistance for current merchants

Financial Report

Program Income



PBID Budget



Clean & Safe Committee

Chair - Cindy Haden

- Community Garden Plantings and Clean Ups
- Neighborhood Ambassador Program/Safety 1st
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) visits to downtown businesses to tackle blight and address safety concerns
- Neighborhood Community Safety Campaign and Business Outreach