



# Rahway Special Improvement District Report

## Tuesday, October 10, 2023

### I. **SID Business Improvement Program** – Forgivable loans for new and existing Rahway businesses for the following areas:

- Fit Out/Interior Improvements = Up to \$2,000 per business
- Signage = Up to \$2,000 per business
- Brand Marketing/Design Services = Up to \$2,000 per business
- MBE Certified – Minority, Women, Veteran, LGBTQ = \$1,000 per business that has or gets the certification
- The maximum given to one business is \$7,000.
- Businesses must stay in operation for one year to have it be 50% forgiven and two years to have it be 100% forgiven.
- Applications were open from March 1<sup>st</sup> and closed on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Update**

- There was a total of 130 applicants for the BIP. 109 businesses met the established criteria for eligibility.
- Funding requests were due by September 1, 2023.
- 62 businesses have submitted their funding requests.
- The funding requests have been reviewed by SID staff. The City Planner has reviewed all requests for signage to ensure that all proposed signs are compliant with municipal zoning ordinances.
- At present, 53 businesses are ready to receive notification of approval. The SID and UCEDC will work with those businesses to finalize the forgivable loan details and receive funding.

**Facade Improvement Program** - \$250,000 has been allocated for property owners to improve their exterior facades and storefronts as \$10,000 forgivable loans.

#### **Update**

- A letter was sent to all applicants of the FIP notifying them of their eligibility status. Eligible applicants will need to schedule a consultation by October 1<sup>st</sup> with the SID Project Manager and City Planner about proposed improvements.
- There was a total of 32 applicants for the FIP. 24 applicants met the established criteria for eligibility.
- The SID Project Manager and City Planner have met with 13 applicants and are awaiting further paperwork for approval.

### II. **ArtsFest**

- Took place on Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 2-6pm
- Was originally scheduled to be held on Irving Street in front of UCPAC but was moved to the Rec Center due to rain.
- 50 different vendors had their art, handmade crafts, and wares on display.
- Attendees could create their own art, learn origami, or paint a community art project featuring different Rahway landmarks and the diversity of the city and art scene.
- Performing Arts included live music, performances from local dance companies, performances by a contortionist and aerialist.

### III. **Mural Dedication on Cherry Street**

- The mural project was funded through a grant from the NJDEP to raise awareness of climate resiliency and coastal flooding. As a NJDEP grant recipient/host community, the City of Rahway worked with the artist, KeyDetail.

- The mural is located on the western wall of the building located at 69-75 E Cherry Street
- The mural features species of animals that are native to the Rahway River
- The dedication took place on Sunday, October 1 after being rescheduled from the previous day due to weather.
- The dedication coincided with the annual Riverfest event that is hosted by the Rahway River Watershed Association (RRWA)

**IV. Paint Rahway Pink Initiative**

- Partnership with RWJBarnabas for Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October
- 42 businesses are part of the initiative to help bring awareness by painting Rahway pink.
  - 13 businesses are featuring pink food/drink specials
  - 15 businesses are donating to organizations that support cancer research or those diagnosed with cancer when you make a purchase of PRP special items.
  - 3 businesses are featuring special personal care services, yoga, or workout classes.
  - 11 businesses are decorating their windows with pink or have staff wearing pink.

**V. Upcoming Events for October & November**

- Paint Rahway Pink – Partnership with RWJBarnabas for Breast Cancer Awareness – Campaign will run through the entire month of October
- Musicfest for Downtown Restaurants – October 7 at Train Station Plaza
- Rahway Day – Saturday, October 21 from 11-3pm at Rec Center – yearly event hosted by the Rahway Chamber of Commerce
- Mural Dedication at Arts District Park – November 4 (Rain date: November 18)
- Small Business Saturday – Saturday, November 25