



# Rahway Special Improvement District Report

## Monday, September 11, 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**

- In early July, a letter was mailed to all applicants of the BIP notifying them of their eligibility status. Businesses that were deemed eligible were asked to submit a vendor quote, proposal or other documentation showing how funds will be used. In the case of signage, applicants will also need to provide a sign rendering and a commercial zoning permit to receive approval.
- 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. Businesses that have approved funding requests will begin receiving money as receipts are submitted.

**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.

### II. **Business Boost Program**

- The Business Boost Program will provide the opportunity for Rahway businesses to be featured at City-run events and receive promotion on official City and SID social media pages and websites. The intention is to help businesses benefit from the increased traffic of the events. This is also an opportunity for businesses to promote themselves and put their creativity on display.
- An application will be sent to all of our businesses to sign up. It will also be available on our website. Businesses that sign up for the Business Boost Program will be added to a list of participating establishments. Up to two local businesses will be selected to be featured at each event.
- This is a free program that all Rahway businesses are welcome to participate in by any of the following ways:
  - Being present at the event to sell their product.
  - Be present at the event to distribute coupons or promote their business (samples, promotional items, demonstrations, etc.)
  - Offer a deal or special at their business.

- The program began with the Mayor's Summer Concert Series on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, where Gigi's Latin Bistro sold food and Lovely Roses gave out roses and raffled off a bouquet of flowers. On August 10<sup>th</sup>, Alfonso's Catering Food Truck was outside UCPAC for concert goers to grab a bite to eat before and after the show. At the show on August 17<sup>th</sup>, Il Forno was serving up pizzas and Wet Ticket had their craft beers available in the beer garden. For the final concert, Millie & Joy gave away swag bags, coupons and held a raffle while Wheelie Good Pierogi and Souped offered special meals and deals at their pick-up window.
- Upcoming Business Boosts
  - Mind Your Wellness – September 9 – MNM Fitness (1521 Main St) & Rahway Pharmacy (1421 Irving)

### **III. New Business Openings**

- **Dreams Hair Salon** – On August 17th, Mayor Giacobbe cut the ribbon and welcomed Sade Mancias and her staff to 1516 Irving Street. A family owned, full-service salon they welcome all, specializing in the latest styles for men and women.
- **Cholao El P'tas** – Cholao El P'tas brings classic Colombian desserts to Rahway. Cholao, a typical slushy that is sold in the area of Cali, Colombia is a delicacy made from freshly cut fruit and condensed milk. Now open at 1831 Paterson Street, owners Karina and Leidy hope to introduce the community to some delicious exotic fruits imported from Colombia.

### **IV. Up Coming Events for September & October**

- Celebracion – September 14 & 21 at Arts District Park
- Hispanic Heritage – Saturday, September 16 at the Rec Center
- ArtsFest – Saturday, September 23 on Irving Street
- Musicfest for Downtown Restaurants – October 7 at Train Station Plaza