



Rahway Special Improvement District Report

Monday, June 10, 2024

I. SID Business Improvement Program –

- Forgivable loans for new and existing Rahway businesses for Interior Improvements, Signage and Brand Marketing/Design Services up to \$2,000 in each category.
- MBE Certified Businesses (Minority, Women, Veteran, LGBTQ) that has or gets the certification are eligible for additional \$1,000.

Update

- There were 130 applicants for the BIP. 109 businesses met the established criteria for eligibility. 62 businesses have submitted their funding requests.
- **UPDATE:** 42 of 62 businesses have completed all the steps and have received funding.

Business	Business Address	Total
2 World Studios	1544 Irving St	\$5,000
Arch Angels NJ LLC	1600 St Georges Ave.	\$6,412
Bongiovi Chiropractic Center	764 Jefferson Ave	\$1,800
Chicken Delight	1685 St Georges Ave	\$3,647
Clark Animal Hospital	1075 Westfield Ave	\$2,000
Coffee Box	1465 Irving Street	\$4,290
Compliments by A Myles	156 East Milton Ave	\$6,973
Cooks Kitchn	1685 St Georges Ave	\$6,000
Copacabana Coffee	77 E. Milton Ave	\$3,970
Cultured Expressions	1417 Main St	\$2,907
Darkside Industries	1571 Irving St	\$3,822
Dason Stainless Products	1773 Elizabeth Ave	\$2,000
Davis Financial Services	1523 Irving Street	\$4,034
Diamond Studio Lash & Brow	1653 Irving St	\$6,000
Dr. Gregg Schneider	1271 Westfield Ave.	\$5,755
Gigi's Latin Bistro	1524 Irving St	\$2,000
Hellhound Studios	1605 Coach St	\$1,990
Instile Stone Corp	713 New Brunswick Ave	\$2,000
La Chula Tex Mex	78 E Cherry St	\$6,000
La Malinche	1588 Irving St	\$4,000
Le Bijou Nail & Spa	382 St Georges Ave	\$1,200
Luxury Elite Wellness	1567 Irving St	\$6,831
Melao Cafe & Creamery	1425 Irving St	\$5,058
Michelino's Pizza	79 E Milton Ave	\$2,000
Millie & Joy	1361 Franklin St	\$4,000
MNM Fitness	1521 Main St	\$4,880
Nancy's Towne House	1453 Main Street	\$4,980
Navi Salon	1673 Irving St	\$1,485

Nutradontics	1271 Westfield Ave.	\$2,000
PMU Studio	1275 Westfield Ave, Ste 4	\$4,000
Protein Corner	548 W. Grand Ave	\$2,000
Pupz Club	1419 Irving Street	\$5,865
Quality 1st Auto Repair	300 St Georges Ave	\$3,890
Rahway Primary Care	1531 Irving St	\$6,000
Rahway Sushi	75 E. Cherry St	\$2,000
Sabor Peruano	1576 Irving Street	\$7,000
Santana Agency	75 E Cherry St	\$2,697
Spruce Industries	759 E. Lincoln Avenue	\$2,000
The Wannabees	40 E Cherry St	\$2,903
Vendee Events	275 E Grand Ave	\$5,000
West Carpets	385 St. Georges Ave	\$3,000
Wet Ticket Brewing	1435 Main St	\$4,000

II. Facade Improvement Program

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

Update

- There was a total of 32 applicants for the FIP. 24 applicants met the established criteria for eligibility.
- 10 property owners are ready to receive funding and are working with SID and UCEDC to finalize paperwork.
- 4 property owners have completed the work and received funding.

III. Public Art Incentive Program Amendment to the FIP

- The purpose of this amendment is to encourage the completion of significant public art projects on private property. Public art enriches the community and fuels the local creative economy. These projects provide artists, fabricators, and other tradespeople with income while contributing to the unique cultural identity of the community. The economic impact of public art includes supporting commerce by attracting visitors to Rahway and contributing to the enhancement of neighborhoods. It can underscore community values and engage the public in compelling ways.
- Eligible commercial property owners located in the City of Rahway can apply for up to \$10,000 per property/location for a public art installation on their property.
- The Public Art Incentive Program will be funded through the Rahway Special Improvement District or other funding source if and when they become available.
- Public art may include painted murals, wall art, freestanding or suspended sculpture, mosaics and ceramics, light art, architectural metal, architectural glass, and forms of interactive art.
- To qualify as public art, artwork must be designed to be visible or experienced by the public from within the public realm. The public realm is a collective term for spaces accessible to the public, including any publicly owned streets, pathways, sidewalks, right of ways, parks, or publicly accessible open spaces.

- If approved for the Public Art Incentive Program, the property owner and the City shall enter into an agreement that outlines the terms and responsibilities of the involved parties.
- Funding has been prioritized based on the zoning district in which a commercial property is located.
 - CBD – RA: Central Business District Redevelopment Area and RAD- RA: Rahway Arts District Redevelopment Area – Up to \$10,000
 - B-1: Neighborhood Business Zone, B-2: Regional Business Zone, B-4: Service Business Zone, WGO: West Grand Overlay – Up to \$7,500
 - B-3: Highway Business Zone, I-H: Heavy Industrial Zone, I-L: Light Industrial Zone – Up to \$2,500
- The Mural design must be pre-approved by the City and must be reflective of and consistent with the City’s values and purposes. In the case of representational artworks, an emphasis will be made on the reflection of some aspect of Rahway community/culture within the theme. Further, the design must be appropriate to the setting and architecture of the Site.
- There will be a mechanism for grant reimbursement at a depreciated value if the City funded public art is not maintained or must be/is removed within 10 years of completion.

IV. Arts District Park Renovations

- Rahway Arts District Park originally had a wood lattice fence in front of which were planted evergreen arborvitae. In-ground landscaping lights were installed for uplighting at night. Over time, the lights ceased to work. The fence was replaced in 2018 or 2019; the remaining arborvitae were removed at that time.
- The wall murals painted on 1588 Irving Street and 208 Central Avenue were created by the artist Emilio Florentine. The artist typically uses flowers as the subject of his murals, and in this case, he was asked to design the murals using native flowering perennials as inspiration.
- The murals brought life and color to the landscape of the park, and the empty garden beds were in stark contrast. We saw an opportunity to further tie the park and murals together through the creation of a Native Plants Garden. The existing bistro string lights in the trees were replaced and new in-ground landscape lighting was installed to replace the non-functional system.
- The new garden has a woodland theme, and the 15-20 species of endemic plants will offer habitat to support a variety of native butterflies, insects, and birds.
- The garden plan was reviewed by community stakeholders (Bob Markey, and Debra Stewart, both master gardeners and Rahway residents, and Michele Bakacs, County Agent of the Rutgers NJAE Cooperative Extension) and Kennedy Landscaping. Once the plans were finalized, Kennedy Landscaping installed the plants in coordination with D&G Electric, who installed the lighting.
- Rachael Faillace, Administrator of Cultural and Heritage Affairs, designed the garden plan and coordinated with the various stakeholders, city departments, and vendors to help bring this project to fruition. The Department of Public Works was of great help in the renovations as they cleaned the fountain and assisted with the excavation and digging for the new lighting.
- Future improvements could include interpretive signage about what is growing in the garden and how specific plants benefit local wildlife.

V. RECAP: NJ Art and Music Express – Saturday, May 4th

- This is a new event that Rahway hosted in partnership with the Township of Woodbridge and sponsored by NJ TRANSIT.
- Each municipality hosted a day of art and music events. Visitors were able to ride NJ Transit for free between Rahway, Avenel, and Woodbridge stations to experience the art scene near each of them.
- NJ TRANSIT assisted in marketing the event through their social media and on digital screens at the stations along North Jersey Coast Line from Secaucus Junction south to Bay Head.
- Rahway's Schedule of Events:
 - Acoustic performances on Train Station Plaza to greet visitors arriving via the train from 10am-5pm.
 - NCNW Rahway Creates had art on display at Rahway Rec Center, Rahway Library (10am-3pm), The Coffee Box (2-4pm) and Atelier Rosal Gallery (3-5pm).
 - E. Cherry Street Artisan Market (between Irving & Monroe St) from 11am-5pm featuring local vendors offering unique gifts, artwork, and handmade items.
 - Arts Park Mural Dedication and Artist Meet & Greet at Arts District Park at 12pm followed by a Drop in Art Making workshop with Laura Brown at 1pm.
 - The Gallery Space Exhibit: Between Extremes: An Exhibit of Black and White Artworks will have a preview reception from 12-3pm at the Rahway Senior Center.
 - In honor of Star Wars Day (May the 4th be with you), UCPAC Main Stage had an open house event at 1pm featuring a live Wurlitzer organ performance of the iconic John Williams compositions followed by a movie screening of Rogue One: A Star Wars Story at 2pm.
 - Hamilton Stage featured the Golden Gals Live 2pm and 7pm (ticketed show).
- The day started out sunny but turned cloudy and cold which may have deterred more people from coming out. At 4pm it began to rain and many of the vendors packed up quickly. We saw some people using the train to travel between stops and coming to Rahway, where they were greeted by a SID staff member who was distributing maps and offering them details on the day. There were a number of visitors who came to Rahway for the event but did not travel via train. The Artisan Market on E. Cherry had a very good turnout with many of the vendors reporting better than expected sales. There was also a good crowd at the Mural dedication.

VI. Latin Stroll – Saturday, June 22, 2024

- In collaboration with the Department of Recreation, and NJ Salsa, Rahway will host its first Latin Stroll on Saturday, June 22nd from 12-7pm. During the event participants will stroll their way around downtown Rahway to three different businesses to enjoy music, dancing, and a fun atmosphere.
- NJ Salsa offers Latin dance lessons and social experiences throughout NJ.
- Tickets are available on Eventbrite for \$20 and there are 120 tickets available.
- The event will begin outside the Rahway Rec Center with a DJ and live music. The group will then stroll to each location for about two hours of dancing and fun. Each of the three locations will offer food and drink specials to the participants.

VII. Mayor's Music Series – Friday & Saturday evenings all summer long

- The Mayor's Music Series at the Paseo and Arts District Park were set to kick off on June 7th & 8th.
- A mix of returning favorites and new artists will be featured at both venues to create a great atmosphere in downtown Rahway.
- Music at the Paseo takes flight every Friday evening (June-September) from 6:30-9:30pm.
- Arts District Park will come alive with music every Saturday evening (June-September) from 6-8pm.

VIII. Ongoing Initiatives and Programs

- **Holiday Lights**
 - We are currently seeking proposals and estimates for new lighting designs and holiday décor. We are looking to illuminate downtown and create curated areas that will attract residents and visitors to the city to explore all that Rahway has to offer.
 - **UPDATE:** We have received quotes and have done a few walk-throughs with different companies.
- **Training & Continuing Education Opportunities for Businesses**
 - We are working with the Rahway Department of Health, as well as county and state agencies to set up opportunities for our businesses to receive continued training and educational opportunities.
 - We have partnered with the Rahway Department of Health to provide ServSafe Food Manager training for our restaurants at a reduced cost to them. This training will take place on June 10th.
 - In the fall, we are looking to bring in state and county agencies that can provide grant information as well as courses on small business management skills.
- **Website Revamp**
 - www.Rahwayishappening.com website will undergo an overhaul to help make it a more user-friendly experience for visitors to the site.
 - The site was first created in 2016 and has undergone updates, but this will be the first large scale update to the site in eight years.
 - Some of the improvements will include easier to navigate menus, a newly designed Events Calendar and Business Directory and a facelift that will give the site a more modern look. Behind the scenes improvements will also be made to allow for a better user experience.
 - **UPDATE:** We should be able to roll the new site out on July 1 with updated business directory, calendar, and a new look and feel.

IX. Ribbon Cuttings

- **R&J Pizzeria** – 1300 Westfield Avenue
On May 14th, Mayor Giacobbe and the Special Improvement District welcomed R & J Pizzeria, Rahway's newest dining spot on May 14th, 2024. Owners Rosa and Jose are bringing delicious pizza back to the corner of 1300 Westfield Avenue with their thin crust pizza made with the freshest ingredients. They offer a full menu of quality Italian dishes to satisfy all appetites including their house specialty, Chicken Francese and Penne Bolognese.

- **Diamond XY Nail Spa** - 332 St Georges Ave.
On May 29th, Rahway welcomed business owner Yoexis Godinez and Diamond XY Nails to 332 St Georges Ave. Their dedicated nail technicians work with clients to achieve a personal look in a relaxed environment. This is where beauty and quality meet for the best in nail fashion.

- **World of Beauty** – 84 Monroe Street
On June 3, 2014, Mayor Giacobbe officially welcomed World of Beauty to downtown Rahway. Teresa Grande and their team of licensed professionals offer the latest beauty services and treatments for all ages and styles. To feel and look your best, stop by and indulge in a world of beauty!

- **Lymphatic Massage** - 1544 Irving St, Suite 202
Rahway welcomes Yamilca Montero and Lymphatic Massage to the heart of Rahway at 1544 Irving St. Specializing in medical and therapeutic modalities, post operative and lymphatic drainage massage, check out her full range of services.