



Rahway Special Improvement District Report

Monday, December 9, 2024

I. Shop Local Weekend – November 29th-December 2nd

- The SID and Rahway Chamber of Commerce have again collaborated on the Shop Local initiative for Small Business Saturday. We have met to discuss ways to enhance the programs that we already have in place and to add new events and activations.
- The initiative has grown from just focusing on Small Business Saturday to encourage residents and visitors to support small businesses from Black Friday-Cyber Monday and throughout the holiday shopping season.
- To encourage shoppers to visit Rahway, we are worked with our retail shops to help them promote their Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and Cyber Monday deals and special events. Wizdom Media created social media graphics for each business to share and promote all that was happening.
- We put together 150 giveaway bags for customers who shop at participating Rahway retailers. The bags were provided by the Union County Office of Economic Development as part of their UC Loves Small Biz campaign. The bags were filled with promo items, coupons and other swag from Rahway businesses.
- Shoppers who made a purchase at participating businesses received a raffle ticket for a chance to win gift cards to local businesses and the UCPAC.
- A new addition to this year's Shop Local weekend was our Shop & Sip offer. Anyone who made a purchase at a Rahway business on Black Friday or Small Business Saturday, could show their receipt at one of the 8 participating businesses to receive 10% off one beverage.
- We have 21 businesses participating in our Holiday Window Decorating Contest. This contest encourages businesses to get in the spirit of the holiday season and to make Rahway look merry and bright. People can vote for their favorite display using the QR code in the participating businesses' windows. Voting closes on December 18th. The Rahway Senior Art Class will again go on a field trip to look at the holiday windows and vote for their favorite.
- To support local artists and creators, we hosted the Holiday Pop-Up Market on Main (1425 Main St) and the Cherry Street Mall (75 E Cherry St). Both venues featured local creators, artists, and artisans selling everything from clothes to soaps to honey and handmade ornaments.
 - The Market on Main was open on Black Friday (11/29) from 2-8pm to coincide with the Tree Lighting and on Saturday (11/30) from 11-4pm.
 - The Market at the Cherry Street Mall was open on Saturday (11/30) from 11-4pm.
- The Chamber of Commerce invited Santa and Sunflower the Elf to walk around and visit the Shopping Center on St. Georges Ave, Cherry Street and Main Street on Small Business Saturday.
- There was Free Parking on Small Business Saturday (11/30) in the parking garage, surface lots and on the street.
- To encourage people to shop in Rahway throughout the holiday season, there will be Free Street Parking from November 29th - January 2nd.

II. Holiday Lights

- **UPDATE:** For the 2024 holiday season, we worked with a new Christmas light design company, Holiday Outdoor Décor. They decorated the downtown poles on Main St, E. Cherry St, Irving St and E. Milton Ave as well as Train Station Plaza and the trees at City Hall. This year, we have also added lights and decorations to Arts District Park.
- In addition to lighting up the downtown, there will be new décor designed for photo opportunities at Train Station Plaza and on East Cherry Street. Train Station Plaza will transform into Celebration Plaza with a Christmas Tree, Dreidel and Kinara the focus on the stage. In front of the mural on E. Cherry Street, there are 3 photo stations: a baby deer, Santa with an elf and a reindeer, and an 8' light-up photo frame. We hope these new additions and photo stations can be a draw for people to come to visit the downtown and patron our great shops and restaurants.

III. Training & Continuing Education Opportunities for Businesses

- **UPDATE: Social Media and Branding Program**
 - The City of Rahway, in conjunction with the Rahway Special Improvement District, sponsored a Social Media and Branding Program to help businesses improve their current promotional practices while learning during the process. The program will be awarded to three businesses who will receive social media services, social media training and mentoring, as well as a strategic branding analysis and plan over a six-month period. Services will be carried out by the SID Social Media and Branding Specialist, Heather Dube. The program was open to all current and new brick and mortar businesses in the City of Rahway.
 - **UPDATE: Wet Ticket Brewing was the first participating business from May-October 2024. Currently Heather Dube is working with Quilla by Sabor Peruano and just began with Millie & Joy Boutique on November 15th.**

IV. Soup Stroll - January 4, 11, 18 and 25 from 1-4pm at participating restaurants

- The annual soup sampling event will return to Rahway every Saturday in January
- The SID will reimburse participating restaurants for making soup
- The event is popular and draws hundreds of people out to try new restaurants and local favorites

V. 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 commercial 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.
- 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, rights of way, 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 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
 - **UPDATE: Quilla by Sabor Peruano was the first applicant of the Public Art Incentive Program. They applied and were approved to for a mural which represents Peruvian culture. Peruvian artist, Jade Rivera used elements that represent Peruvian culture and heritage, including flora and fauna native to the Andes. This mural will be visible from Irving Street and was completed in early November. A mural unveiling and dedication was scheduled for Friday, December 6th.**

VI. 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.
- There were 130 applicants for the BIP. 109 businesses met the established criteria for eligibility. 62 businesses have submitted their funding requests.
- The application for the program opened on March 1, 2023, and approval letters were sent in June 2023. We gave a deadline of June 30, 2024, for those businesses who were approved to submit funding requests or to notify the SID of the status of their progress. 54 of 62 businesses have completed all the steps and have received funding. There are a few more still in the process and we are working with them to complete everything and receive funding.
- **UPDATE: There have been no new funding requests submitted. We are working with the final few businesses to help them complete their projects and receive funding.**

Business	Business Address	Total Amount
2 World Studios	1544 Irving St	\$5,000
Adeline Deli	45 E Milton Ave	\$3,226
Arch Angels NJ LLC	1600 St Georges Ave.	\$6,412
Arista Yoga and Holistic Wellness Group	75 E. Cherry St # 9A	\$5,485
B & B General Contractors	248 Wescott Dr	\$2,000
Bongiovi Chiropractic Center	764 Jefferson Ave	\$1,800
CasaMon Carribbean Cuisine	1577 Elizabeth Ave	\$600
Chicken Delight	1685 St Georges Ave	\$3,647

Cholao El P'Tos	1831 Paterson St #3	\$6,000
Clark Animal Hospital	1075 Westfield Ave	\$2,000
Coffee Box	1465 Irving Street	\$4,290
Compliments by A Myles	156 East Milton Ave	\$4,973
Cooks Kitchn	1685 St Georges Ave	\$6,000
Copacabana Coffee	77 E. Milton Ave	\$2,000
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 St	\$4,034
Diamond Studio Lash & Brow	1653 Irving St	\$6,000
Dr. Gregg Schneider	1271 Westfield Ave.	\$3,755
Ebony & Ivory	39 E Milton Avenue	\$2,000
Gigi's Latin Bistro	1524 Irving St	\$2,000
Hellhound Studios	1605 Coach St	\$1,990
Instile Stone Corp	713 New Brunswick Avenue	\$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
Nail Rehab Spa	205 W. Main St	\$5,000
Nancy's Towne House	1453 Main Street	\$3,230
Navi Salon	1673 Irving St	\$1,485
Nutradontics	1271 Westfield Ave.	\$2,000
PMU Studio	1275 Westfield Ave, Ste 4	\$4,000
Prestige Hair Salon	2343 St Georges Ave	\$5,919
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 Dance Theatre School	1575 Irving St	\$5,000
Rahway Primary Care	1531 Irving St	\$6,000
Rahway Sushi	75 E. Cherry St	\$2,000
Rocky's Bar & Grill	710 W Grand Ave	\$3,920
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 Dance Studio	40 E Cherry St	\$2,903
Tiger Martial Arts	385 St Georges Ave	\$2,000
Travel Skate Shop	43 E Cherry St	\$4,000

Vendee Events	275 E Grand Ave	\$3,000
West Carpets	385 St Georges Ave	\$3,000
Wet Ticket Brewing	1435 Main St	\$2,000

VII. 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.
- As of August 1st, 7 property owners have completed the work and received funding.
- **UPDATE: There have been no new funding requests completed. We are still working with the property owners to assist them with completing their requests.**

VIII. Ribbon Cuttings

- **Latin Fuego – 2186 Elizabeth Ave**
After years of being on the move with their food truck, Latin Fuego now has a home in Rahway as well! Winner of the 2024 Best of Taste award at Rahway’s Taste of Spring event, Latin Fuego offers a fusion of your favorite Latin foods. Owner Craig Ludington takes great pride in bringing cultures together to make unique, tasteful dishes.
- **Impressions Body Solutions – 156 E. Milton Ave, 2nd Floor**
Owned and operated by Rahway resident, Tarina Jones, Impressions Body Solutions is a full-service spa offer massage therapy, facials, body contouring, waxing and more.