



New Year's Eve on The Plaza helped to inaugurate a new public space in the heart of downtown. As a retail promotion it made cash registers ring for participating businesses.

2017 Annual Report

Photo credit: Lauren Beischer.

Volunteers Accomplishments in 2017

Business Mix Management: Partner with Innovation and Family Friendly Team to diversify business mix and capture a greater portion of spending at businesses in downtown Metuchen.

- Completed market analysis working with a leading national expert to identify business clusters to cultivate, and product lines to introduce to the downtown area that the market and consumers will support.
- Had **34** Business openings and 8 Business expansions. After businesses that closed that was a net increase of **26** businesses.
- Vacancy rate of 5.24% with only 51,651 sqft available at the end of 2017. Of this there were just 3 ground floor retail units totaling 4,208 sqft available on Main St.
- Available units has decreased as new inventory has been brought online.

Openings

1. Genus Boni, 432 Main St
2. IQ Research, 406 Main St
3. Supercuts, 349 Lake Ave
4. ArteVino Studio, 416 Main St
5. Dr. James D. Oliver Family Dentistry, 339 Main St
6. AliFina's Designs, 463 Main St
7. Leonardo Jeweler, 665 Middlesex Ave
8. John W. Ferrante DMD, 501 Main St
9. Metuchen Smoke Shop, 401 Main St
10. Massage Envy, 665 Middlesex Ave
11. European Wax Center, 349 Lake Ave
12. Multiply Group, 406 Main St
13. Picture Perfect Studio, 507 Middlesex Ave
14. Pearl Street Café, 10 Pearl St
15. Bishop's Bistro, 7 New St
16. The Hair Loft, 401 Main St
17. Strongmile Movers, 406 Main St
18. CBT Center of Central New Jersey, 16 Pearl St
19. Eckankar Satsang Society of NJ, 323 Main St
20. William Colavito, Esq, 16 Pearl St
21. HomePoint Financial, 16 Pearl St
22. Lionheart Holdings, 16 Pearl St
23. Preschool of Rock, 339 Main St
24. Maria Manjelo Photography, 312 Main St
25. FiveStar Mobiles, 20 New St
26. Pearl Street Automotive, 12 Pearl St
27. Wade Appraisal, 460 Main St
28. Whole Foods, 645 Middlesex Ave
29. Body Mechanics Massage Therapy, LLC, 406 Main St
30. Beauty Anthology, 402 Main St
31. Marafiki Fair Trade Pop-up Shop, 16 Pearl St
32. InventHelp, 10 Station Place, Suite 16
33. Title Boxing Club, 349 Lake Ave
34. Amboy Bank, 665 Middlesex Ave

Expansions (moved or expanded)

1. The Busch Law Group, LLC, 450 Main St
2. Readings by Ann, 474 Main St
3. Petroleum Trends, 406 Main St, Room 20
4. Fresco, 456 Main St (change of owner)
5. Woodmont Metro Leasing Office, 99 New St
6. Metuchen Area Chamber of Commerce, 323 Main St
7. Key Home Care, 267 Amboy Ave
8. Lollipop Land, 19 New St (change of owner)

Services to Businesses

- Provided storefront consultations to **20** businesses in 2017.
- Launched pilot matching grant program for improvements to signage, storefronts, and merchandising. Awarded initial round of funding to the following businesses.
 - Boyt's Drug Store, 411 Main St
 - Smoker's Haven, 470 Main St
 - Runner's High, 454 Main St
 - Fresco, 456 Main St
- Seeking additional businesses to receive storefront consultations.
- Newly formed Tech Team placed attractive pictures of businesses on Google to attract more customers. Photos received over 750,000 views.
- Working with Metuchen High School entrepreneurship educator, SCORE, and other partners to provide additional technical assistance to businesses.
- Coordinated parking validation program with Parking Authority, Nexus Parking Systems. In 2018 new meters will be installed throughout the District.

Clean and Green

Implemented clean and green policies that improved the visual appearance of the downtown.

- Purchased **30** new planters to coordinate with new planters at Woodmont Metro.
- Organized plantings in September and November.
- Doubled number of holiday lights to more broadly encompass the entire downtown District.
- Activated "Imagination Alley" between Pearl Street Parking Lot and Main Street through grant from New Jersey AARP.
- Created outdoor dining area on Lake Ave with volunteers funded by Edward Jones and 30 local families.
- Seeking contractor to assist with cleaning on a regular basis starting Spring 2018.

Marketing the Downtown

- Held **17** retail promotions to 'make cash registers ring' that **127** businesses participated in.
- Developed commercial that ran on News12 and several other Cable TV channels elevating the exposure of downtown Metuchen.
- Earned **2,673,226** media impressions on TV/News12, Central Jersey InMotion, The Metuchen Mirror, The Criterion.
- Secured an additional **4,611,943** media impressions from 65 articles, posts.
- Grew database of contacts to **2,042** names. Also have 1,338 Facebook followers, 274 Instagram follows, and 51 Twitter followers at end of 2017.
- Expanding efforts to elevate image of the district and secure additional earned and unearned impressions in 2018.

Metuchen Downtown Alliance Awards for 2017

Volunteer of the Year - Daniel Cea

Past Awardees

2016 – Bobbie Theivakumaran

Active volunteer on our Family Friendly Team, Tech Team, and Town Plaza Team. Made major contributions to the success of our Kids Takeover, Haunted Downtown, and New Year's Eve on the Town Plaza events. Additionally, helped Tech Team with gaining over 750,000 views of photos for businesses downtown.

Business Champion Award - La Rosa Pizzeria and Restaurant

Past awardees:

2016 – Cai's Cafe

La Rosa Pizzeria has kept up with the times by improving the inside and outside of their popular restaurant. A frequent contributor to civic and school causes, they have the reputation as a business with a big heart and even bigger connection with the people of Metuchen.

Storefront Improvement Award - Rob DeFillipis, Runner's High

One of 10 initial businesses to participate in a storefront consultation. Made immediate improvements to windows and front door, followed by changing visual merchandising and layout inside. Continuing to model leadership through new lettering, painting, and merchandising improvements inside.

District Owner Award - Jeff Jossell, Suburban Square LLC

Undertook conversion of one of the greatest eyesores downtown on Lake Ave, and made it into a beautiful, fully occupied retail space that it is today in just less than a year. Collaborated with MDA on placemaking component creating an outdoor dining area for restaurants.

Promotion Award - Joanne Cruz

Past Awardees:

2016 – Bobbie Theivakumaran

Creative force behind some of our most successful promotions including Haunted Downtown and New Year's Eve on the Town Plaza. Her company Creative Twist has partnered with numerous businesses on retail promotions helping to attract new customers and encourage spending.

Innovation Award - Edward Wetzel

Past awardees:

2016 – Elaine Edgcomb

Local artist who made major placemaking contributions to activate spaces and help businesses downtown. Participated in AARP alley transformation between Pearl Street Parking Lot and Main Street, where he designed and painted the "Imagination is More Important Than Knowledge" mural. Implemented first 3D crosswalk in parking lot behind La Rosa.

Public Official Award - Allison Inerro

Past awardees:

2016 – Fred Hall, DPW Director

Founder of MDA and chair of our Getting it Done Team. Took an active hands-on role since returning to the board in 2017. Helped inspire volunteers to carry out planting project. And oversaw installation of new holiday lights throughout the district.

Board Service Award – Grace Shackney

Grace was part of the stakeholder group that helped to establish the Metuchen Downtown Alliance. She participated in training opportunities provided, including attending the 2017 Main Street Now conference in Pittsburgh. Throughout it all she maintained active membership and participation in the Metuchen Arts Council and Borough Improvement League.

These **104** Volunteers contributed **3470.5** hours valued at **\$99,997.50**

Alan W. Tennant
 Alexis Sarmiento
 Allison Inserro
 Anderson Lin *
 Angela Pineiro *
 Angela Sielski
 Anisha Khan *
 Anthony Campisi *
 Audrey Hausser
 Bobbie Theivakumaran
 Brendan Flynn *
 Chris Crane
 Chris Flynn *
 Chrissy Kremer
 Christine Newman
 Claire McClanahan
 Daniel Cea
 Dave Forlander
 David Fenco
 Deb Zupan *
 Diana Callinan *
 Donna Campisi *
 Donna Hills
 Doreen Doherty *
 Dorothy Heyden
 Dorothy Rasmussen
 Dottie Winhold
 Eileen Millett
 Elaine Edgcomb
 Elyissia Wassung *
 Eric Berger *
 Ernie Agtarap
 Gary Tilbor *
 Gayle Becker
 George McGrath

Grace Shackney
 Hasana Muhammad *
 Hazel-Anne Johnson
 Heather Bossowski
 Hector Hernandez *
 Ian Fawcett
 Isaac Kremer
 Jaclyn Emslie
 Jan Margolis
 Jane Mayer
 Jason Delia
 Jason Kirin
 Jay Muldoon
 Jenna Goldate
 Jennifer Lai *
 Jeremy Herbert
 Jim Peck
 Joan Mistrough
 Joanne Cruz
 Joe Cascio
 Jonathan Busch
 Juan Carlos Gomez-Peralta
 Judy Weinberg
 Julie Herbert
 Kalpesh Patel *
 Kara Moeller
 Karen Van de Castle
 Kathy Busch
 Keith Timko
 Laura Griffith
 Lauren Beischer
 Leon Schwartz *
 Leslie Taylor
 Linda Koskoski *
 Linda LaStella

Lorraine Mulligan *
 Lynette Johnson
 Maggy Cook
 Margaret Cohen
 Margaret Inglese *
 Mark Harris
 Mark Herzberg
 Melissa Karlovitch
 Michael Ciesielka *
 Michael Regan
 Michelle Schutz *
 Nancy Zerbe
 Nathan Johnson
 Nelson Li
 Nicole Blankiet
 Nino LaStella
 Patricia Cruz-Kobayashi
 Patricia Lucas-Schnarre
 Peter Klein *
 Ranjit Walia
 Reed Leibfried
 Richard Green III
 Robert Diken
 Robert Matland
 Robert Russo
 Robyn Russo
 Roman Stefaniw
 Roselle Sy
 Sharon Matt Atkins
 Shirley Kelbie Brown
 Stuart Schooler *
 Suhey Zenito *
 Todd Pagel
 Tyreen Reuter

* These are Full Members of MDA because of their status as a District Businesses, District Owner, or both.

Board of Trustees (term #, term length)

Terms expiring 12/31/2018

Eric Berger, District Owner (1st, 2 year)
 Margaret Inglese, District Owner (1st, 2 year)
 Chris Flynn, District Business (1st, 2 year)
 Michelle Schutz, District Business (1st, 2 year)
 Allison Inserro, Borough Council (At-large)
 Anthony Campisi, Parking Authority (At-large)
 Dottie Winhold, Chamber (At-large)

Terms expiring 12/31/2018 (cont)

Robert Diken, Arts Council (At-large)
 Jay Muldoon, Borough Admin (Ex officio)

Terms expiring 12/31/2020

Gary Tilbor, District Owner (1st, 4 year)
 Stuart Schooler, District Owner (1st, 4 year)
 Diana Callinan, District Business (1st, 4 year)
 Leon Schwartz, District Business (1st, 4 year)
 Bobbie Theivakumaran, Resident (1st, 4 year)

Financial Statement

Revenue

| | | |
|----------------------|---------|---------|
| SID Contribution | 108,137 | |
| Borough Contribution | 150,000 | |
| Contributions | 4,770 | |
| Grants | 25,365 | |
| Total Revenue | | 288,272 |

Expenses

| | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Program Services | | |
| Placemaking | 55,240 | |
| Storefront Grant Fund | 19,470 | |
| Merchant Videos | 428 | |
| Street Improvement and Maintenance | 16,826 | |
| Promotions and Avertising | 37,183 | |
| Communications | 19,062 | |
| Total Program Expenses | | 148,209 |

General and Administrative

| | | |
|----------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Salaries and Related Expenses | 79,585 | |
| Contract Services | 4,355 | |
| Offices | 15,953 | |
| Rent | 9,200 | |
| Utilities | 3,459 | |
| Depreciation | 361 | |
| Facility and Equipment | 13,020 | |
| Travel and Meetings | 7,300 | |
| Insurance | 3,672 | |
| Dues and Membership | 2,448 | |
| Volunteer Training | 2,711 | |
| Website Costs | 993 | |
| Miscellaneous | 7,330 | |
| Total General and Administrative | | 150,387 |

Total Expenses 298,596

Increase (Decrease in Net Assets) (10,324)

Net Assets at Beginning of Period 88,637

Net Assets at End of Period 78,313

The Strength of our Organization is our Volunteers!

Promotion Team, Bobbie Theivakumaran, Chair

Continue the process of turning Metuchen into a convenient regional destination for families and kids where something fun, new, and exciting is always happening. Help activate the downtown with all the opportunities, products, activities, and experiences. This includes the Town Plaza, which will become a place for people to gather daily and for extraordinary events.

Innovation Team, Elaine Edgcomb, Chair

Build on Metuchen's heritage of independent, creative people to cultivate innovative and unique small businesses, entrepreneurs, and artists. Examples include business education, advocacy, recruitment/retention, and more. Our Tech Team helps businesses use technology to grow.

Communications Team, Chris Flynn, Chair

We're working hard to get the message out about Downtown Metuchen through earned and unearned opportunities. Help us find the right mix of tv, print, and other marketing to enhance the image of the downtown. Our AMP Team works to amplify the marketing impact that District businesses get from retail promotions and special events held downtown.

Getting it Done Team, Allison Inerro, Chair

Have an interest in fundraising, organizational management, or just getting cool stuff done? The Getting It Done Team is the place for you!

You may sign up to volunteer online...

<https://www.downtownmetuchen.org/volunteer/>

Or drop by the office or send a note to...

Isaac D. Kremer, Executive Director, isaac@downtownmetuchen.org

316 Main St, Metuchen, NJ 08840