## **ANNUAL REPORT 2020**



# **METUCHEN DOWNTOWN ALLIANCE**







## Mission

The Metuchen Downtown Alliance is a volunteer-based, nonprofit downtown management corporation dedicated to the management and revitalization of the designated Metuchen business district (the District) in partnership with stakeholders, residents, municipal government, and other partners.

## Vision

We envision a welcoming, walkable, and inclusive downtown. Engaging public art, entertainment, and recreation abound throughout our historic and vibrant downtown. All residents and visitors will be brought together by daily and special downtown experiences at destinations, independent businesses, and restaurants featuring personalized customer service.

As adopted by the Board of Trustees, August 11, 2017.

#### INTRODUCTION

As the Metuchen Downtown Alliance (MDA) approaches our five-year anniversary, we are using this Annual Report to the Mayor and Council to highlight our activities in 2020 that were focused on responding to the impact of the COVID-19 global pandemic, and to put this work in the larger context of the work of the organization in the Downtown District over the past five years.

From the outset, MDA combined stable funding as a Special Improvement District with volunteer participation using the Main Street Approach to commercial district revitalization. In 2017, a strategic planning exercise engaged more than 425 people to guide the then fledgling organization through 2022. This and other documents are available to review on our website at <a href="https://www.downtownmetuchen.org">www.downtownmetuchen.org</a>.



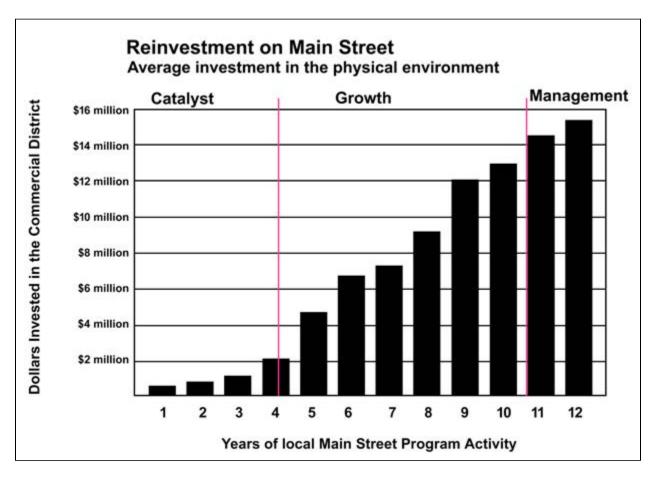
Strategic planning exercise for downtown Metuchen in 2017.

The essence of the Main Street Approach® is to organize people and activities around four areas — Organization, Design, Economic Vitality, and Promotion. These correspond with the four elements of real estate value: Civic, Physical, Economic, and Social.

- Organization get the community working together with a shared vision for downtown
- Design get the commercial district in top physical shape, creating attractive places and destinations where customers want to shop, live, work and dine
- Economic vitality diversifying the district t's economic base and strengthening businesses
- Promotion marketing the district's unique characteristics, assets and businesses

In recent years the "Main Street Refresh" has built on this model, suggesting a focus on economic impact, creating potential for more significant change on Main Street. Community input is gathered, market research performed, and one or two transformation strategies selected to organize the work of

the program moving forward. Over the last 5 years, our organization has followed a growth trajectory typical of Main Street programs starting in a Catalyst Phase where incremental steps are taken in each of the four points. Significant private investment pulled us forward into a growth phase. As the organization learned, evolved, and grew partnerships, we entered the Management phase with established programs, sustained investment, and a track record of results to show.



Reinvestment on Main Street. Credit: Donna Ann Harris, Heritage Consulting.

Early on MDA experimented with "retail promotions" out of an awareness that while Metuchen had many special events, little was being done to drive customers into shops and restaurants to make "cash registers ring." Several retail promotions welcomed kids and families downtown like Kids Takeover, Downtown Loves Moms, and the New Year's Eve on the Plaza. Family-oriented businesses also opened downtown including Genus Boni, Tiny Town, and Creative Twist Events. When the Alliance started there was also an awareness that businesses needed help updating their storefronts, creating an online presence, improving marketing, and attracting customers and their dollars. Finally, improving the physical appearance of the downtown was another need. A crew was hired to regularly clean the downtown, empty trash cans on weekends when DPW was unavailable, and to assist with maintenance. A total of 30 planters were purchased by MDA, adding to 20 purchased by Woodmont and located on the Town Plaza. MDA took responsibility for refreshing and maintaining all 50 planters working with the Garden Club. Finally, a Public Art Policy was developed in 2017 and guided subsequent work including

attracting internationally renowned artist Stephen Powers as well as creating Imagination Alley with a mural by local artist Ed Wetzel, a robot painted mural on Station Place with artwork by Ariel Rutland, and in 2020 another mural on Middlesex Ave by Highland Park-based artist Jonathan Horowitz.









Kids Takeover, Downtown Loves Moms, Downtown Throwdown, and Pre-Prom

Business development was placed front and center as part of the "Innovation" transformation strategy selected in 2017. This was achieved through a workshop jointly held with Central New Jersey SCORE called "How to Win at Marketing." Additional attention was paid to storefronts and the need to update them. Stickers and posters were taken out of windows. Some received consultations and then proceeded with new paint, signage, lighting, and awnings. This had a transformative impact on the look and appearance of the downtown. Finally, a relationship with the Small Business Development Center at Rutgers University allowed dozens of businesses to receive technical assistance on business plans, accessing financing, marketing, and whatever else they needed.

## Downtown Metuchen Referrals to SBDC

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
SBDC Referrals	0	0	9	17	44	70

This work began to show results and attract outside funding. In 2017 the National Main Street Center (renamed Main Street America in 2019) gave Metuchen one of ten grants nationally through a program with EdwardJones. This grant resulted in the Lake Ave Plaza adjoining La Rosa Pizza and FruttaBowls. That same year the New Jersey AARP gave grant funding for one of three demonstration projects in New Jersey. The grant from AARP led to creation of Imagination Alley. These two projects utilized an iterative project delivery approach in which actions undertaken were low-cost and intended to be adjusted and removed as part of a "Demonstration project." The difference between a "Demonstration" and "Pilot" project is that a "Pilot" project is officially sanctioned and may be removed if it does not meet goals. From there "Interim Design" over 1-5 years, and "Long-Term/Capital" improvements over 5-50 years are possible.

## ITERATIVE PROJECT DELIVERY



Terms and diagram format based on PeopleForBike's "Quick Builds for Better Streets," which defines the pilot /interim time intervals above as "quici build" projects. To access Quick Builds for Better Streets, visit: bit/ly/QuickBuildsReport (Images: Street Plans).

Iterative Project Delivery process from Tactical Urbanist's Guide to Materials – available for free download at <a href="http://tacticalurbanismquide.com/">http://tacticalurbanismquide.com/</a>.

One of the measures of the success of Main Street programs is the ratio of public investment to private investment. From 2016 to 2020 public support of MDA totaled \$1,318,512. This included the SID Assessment on property owners in the downtown District that added up to \$718,512, and an additional \$600,000 of Borough Contribution from the Parking Authority. On average Main Street programs nationally have generated \$32.56 of reinvestment for every \$1 of public funds put into the program. That number is much higher in Metuchen with \$82.81 of reinvestment for every \$1 of public funds.

## Borough Funding of MDA, 2016-2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
SID Assessment	\$0	\$108,137	\$165,200	\$220,175	\$225,000	\$718,512
Borough	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$125,000	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$600,000
Contribution						
Total	\$150,000	\$258,137	\$290,200	\$320,175	\$300,000	\$1,318,512

## Public and Private Reinvestment in Downtown Metuchen, 2016-2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Public	\$724,500 <sup>2</sup>	\$10,000	\$927,795	\$57,972	\$735,712	\$2,455,979
Private	\$18,325,500 <sup>3</sup>	\$29,725,500	\$30,966,445	\$26,678,382	\$1,034,863	\$106,730,690
Total	\$19,050,000	\$29,735,500	\$31,894,239	\$26,736,354	\$1,770,575	\$109,186,668

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Main Street America webinar, NJ Department of Community Affairs, January 2021.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Public investment was increased from the \$704,500 initially reported in 2016 to reflect a higher level of public investment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Private investment was increased from the \$17,499,500 initially reported in 2016 to reflect a higher level of private investment.

## **A. REINVESTMENT STATS**

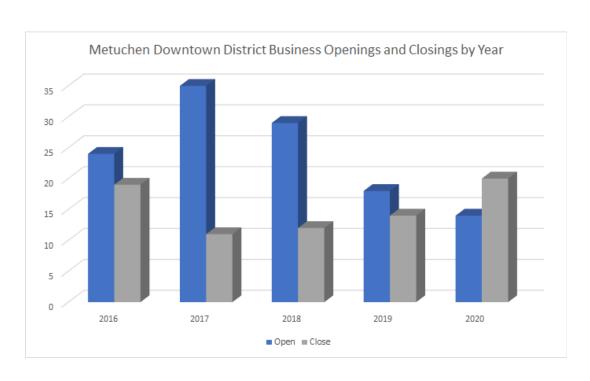
One requirement of being a Main Street program is to keep detailed reinvestment statistics about the economic performance of the downtown. This helps to demonstrate change over time. Since the Main Street program was started nationally in 1980, a total of \$85.43 billion has been invested, 672,333 jobs have been created, and 150,079 businesses have been started.<sup>4</sup>

#### **Net Businesses**

Despite the Covid pandemic, a total of 14 businesses opened downtown in 2020.

- 1. More Life Recovery Center, 280 Main St
- 2. Evnia Hair Studio, 67 Pearl St
- 3. AT&T Store, 660 Middlesex Ave, E
- 4. Wolfe Ossa Law, 475 Main St
- 5. Fresh Coast, 21 New St
- 6. Biggby Coffee, 660 Middlesex Ave, D
- 7. Papillon & Company, 418 Main St
- 8. La Rosa Chicken, 660 Middlesex Ave, C
- 9. Menya Ramen House, 399 Main St
- 10. (private office), 406 Main St, Ste 9
- 11. Rohini Yoga, 315 Main St
- 12. Life Force Nourished, 315 Main St
- 13. Lipolaser, 315 Main St
- 14. Merle-Norman Cosmetics Studio, 552-566 Middlesex Ave, 4





<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> More details can be found on "Main Street Impact" here: https://www.mainstreet.org/mainstreetimpact.

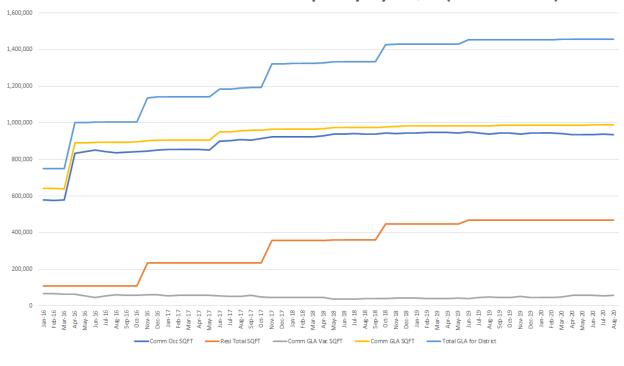
Net Businesses in Downtown Metuchen, 2016-2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Openings	24	35⁵	29 <sup>6</sup>	18	14	120
Closings	19	11 <sup>7</sup>	12	14	20	76
Net Businesses	+58	+24	+17	+4	-6	+44

A total of 120 businesses have opened in downtown Metuchen since 2016. After subtracting businesses that closed, this has resulted in 44 net new businesses in downtown Metuchen. Two businesses moved in 2020 from one location to another within the District: What's the Scoop? (457 Main St), and Weichert Realtors (552-566 Middlesex Ave, 4). These were counted neither as an opening nor a closing because they vacated one space and occupied another space, with the two actions cancelling out.

Of businesses that opened in the district since the Alliance started, 24 of these subsequently closed. According to the Small Business Administration (SBA) around 30% of small businesses close in the first 2 years, 50% in the first 5 years, and 75% in the first 10 years after opening. Of the 120 businesses that opened since 2016 in downtown Metuchen, the retention rate for all of these businesses is 80%. This retention rate exceeds national averages.

## Downtown Metuchen Occupancy by SQFT (2016 - 2020)



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Openings were one more than first reported with the addition of QuantM Technologies in Dec 2017.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Openings were one fewer than first reported because Pearl Street Cafe was temporarily closed before reopening, so was counted as "0" rather than being a genuine new business.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Closings were one less than first reported in the 2017 Annual Report.

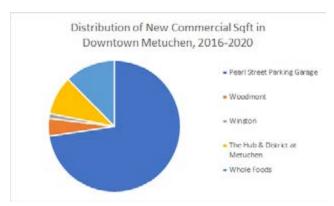
Schanged number to 5 to reflect one additional business closing that was not reported in the 2017 Annual Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> This does not include businesses which moved from one location to another in the district or businesses that changed ownership which are considered expansions that neither add or subtract from the net business total.

Gross Leasable Area (GLA) increased 94% from 750,557 in May 2016 to 1,456,738 in December 2020. Of that increase 23.8% was commercial and 76.2% residential. This includes 347,897 sqft of new commercial space, and 358,284 sqft of new residential space. The most significant increases were in several developments that had been planned for years (and in some cases decades) before the MDA was founded. These include the following

developments by year placed into service:

- Nexus Parking Systems (2016)
- The District at Metuchen (Whole Foods) (2017)
- Woodmont Metro West (2017)
- Woodmont Metro East (2018)
- The Winston (2018)
- Hillside Apartments (2019)
- The Hub (2019)
- Citivillage at Metuchen (2019)











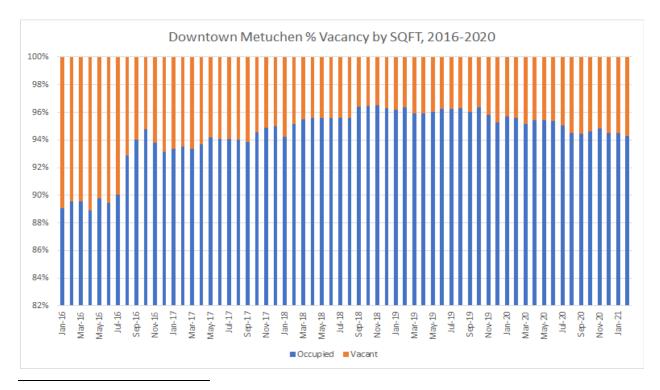
While the 347,907 of new commercial space may seem sizable, 252,690 sqft of this or 72.6% is for the Pearl Street Parking Garage. That means the total amount of leasable new commercial sqft added between 2016 and 2020 was only 95,207 sqft. And of this a little less than half is for Whole Foods. The remaining new commercial space includes, 14,891 feet at Woodmont, and 4,162 at the Winston and 33,154 in the new developments around Whole Foods.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Square footage is not added to the total gross leasable area (GLA) until it is formally put into service. The date a new business opens in a new space is the date that newly built sqft is first counted towards GLA totals.

What these numbers do not reveal is commercial space that has been built but not yet occupied. This includes two units at Woodmont Metro: the anchor space for a restaurant or flagship retail totaling 5,068 sqft and the end space on New Street next to Fresh Coast totaling 1,014 sqft. Otherwise, all commercial space built since 2016 is now fully leased. What that speaks to is market demand for newly built space exceeds the available supply. There are businesses that want to open in Metuchen but cannot for lack of space to do so. The remaining available space in Metuchen is concentrated in older buildings. While businesses are interested in opening in Downtown Metuchen, these older buildings need significant fit-up which is costly. Commercial leases have been signed for several storefronts with anticipated openings in 2021.

Annualized Change of Gross Leasable Area Downtown, 2016-2020

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
GLA at year start	750,557	1,004,247	1,191,028	1,334,457	1,452,163	n/a
New Commercial SQFT	255,690	62,130	17,816	9,686	4,575	349,897
- Retail	3,000	45,000	0	1,231	1,525	50,756
- Restaurant	0	0	9,000	3,623	3,050	15,673
- Service	0	7,000	3,000	2,550	0	12,550
- Fitness	0	6,000	2,117	1,525	0	9,642
- Office	-	4,130	3,699	757	0	8,586
- Parking	252,690	0	0	0	0	252,690
New Residential SQFT	0	124,651	125,613	108,020	0	358,284
GLA at year end	1,004,247 <sup>11</sup>	1,191,028	1,334,457	1,452,163	1,456,738	n/a



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> GLA for 2016 was increased from 986,104 as reported in the 2016 Annual Report. This reflects a more accurate understanding of the size of buildings and units within buildings upon closer analysis.









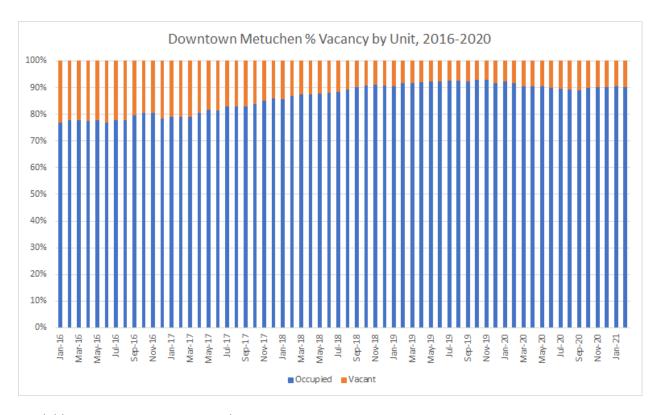
A few of the available storefronts the year MDA started in 2016 - now all occupied today.

Even as commercial sqft increased from 575,158 to 936,863 today, the proportion of vacant sqft decreased from a high of 70,435 to a low of 34,074 in November 2018 to the current 56,627 sqft available in January 2021. The occupancy rate by square foot has ranged from 90% in January 2016 to 97% in November 2018 to the present 95% in January 2021.

When looking at vacant sqft by use group since the start of the Alliance in 2016, only "Fitness" has had consecutive gains in net sqft for each of the past 5 years. Office space saw a net decrease of occupied space of -11,793 sqft between 2016 and 2020. All other sectors saw an increase with retail, fitness, service, and food and dining seeing 8,000 or more sqft added for each category.

Vacancy by Use Group by Year and Sqft in Downtown Metuchen

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Total Vacancy at year start	73,313	61,845	48,306	36,394	46,716	n/a
Net Office	631	1,844	-2,375	-6,128	-4,765	-11,793
Net Food/dining	13,055	-1,300	490	-2,925	-1,233	8,087
Net Retail	-6,083	7,218	13,525	-825	-4,231	9,604
Net Fitness	950	6,000	500	1,400	437	9,287
Net Service	2,915	5,777	-228	-1844	2,081	8,701
New Comm Sqft	0	6,000	17,816	9,686	12,550	46,052
Total Vacancy at year end	61,845	48,306	36,394	46,716	54,427	n/a



#### Available Units in Downtown Metuchen

A similar pattern emerged of fewer available units as total units increased in the downtown. Downtown Metuchen had 361 units in January 2016 of which 83 were vacant for a 23% vacancy rate by unit. Vacant units reached their lowest level of 29 in October 2019. Today in January 2021 there is a 10% vacancy rate by unit with 40 units out of 404 total commercial units available. This number is expected to decrease significantly in the 1st and 2nd quarter of 2021 due to several newly signed leases and projected business openings this year.

#### **Business Retention and Expansion**

Businesses That Opened in Downtown Metuchen and Retention by Year

Year Open	Close in 16	Close in 17	Close in 18	Close in 19	Close 20	Year Close
2016 = 24	0	-2	-1	-2	-1	-6 (25%)
2017 = 35	n/a	0	-2	-3	-3	-8 (23%)
2018 = 29	n/a	n/a	0	-3	-1	-4 (14%)
2019 = 18	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	-6	-6 (33%)
2020 = 14	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0
Total = 120	0	-2	-3	-8	-11	-24 (20%)

Business retention and expansion has been among the top priorities of MDA. This has been achieved through providing technical assistance and financial assistance in the form of grants to aid businesses. Eric Canada in *Economic Development for the Team* refers to the "Fourth Pillar" of economic development being business development. This supports a "grow from within" approach, rather than relying on recruiting new businesses from outside of the community. Business recruitment is not something most downtown management organizations do effectively. Instead business retention and expansion is the preferred strategy for many. Metuchen is fortunate to have success with both retention and expansion.. In the next two sections we will show how MDA contributes towards making a positive business environment in Downtown, helping businesses to locate, expand, and grow.

Interestingly two businesses that opened between 2016 and 2020 might be classified as a "pop-up." These included the Marafiki Fair Trade Pop-up from Nov 2016 to Dec 2016 and again from Nov 2017 to Jan 2018, and the Pearl Street Cafe Pop-up between May 2017 and January 2018 and again from April 2018 to July 2018. What each of these demonstrated is how businesses can test market demand for fairly low cost in a short period of time. Facilitating short-term experiments like this is a Borough of Metuchen ordinance allowing for pop-ups.

Of the 50 remaining businesses that closed since the MDA was founded, these were opened prior to the start of the MDA in 2016. This indicates how Metuchen has a much higher retention rate for established businesses as well. Among existing businesses the average duration of businesses at their current location is 14.91 years. These long-lived businesses far exceed the 75% of businesses that close in the first 10 years after opening.

The year 2020 was the first time since the MDA was founded that the net business number was negative. This was due to pressures created by the pandemic on local businesses, with retail and service businesses being the most impacted. This decline was also caused in part by the declining rate of construction in the District over the past 5 years. The Borough Council in late 2020 passed a redevelopment plan amendment to encourage new construction.

#### **Net Jobs in Downtown Metuchen**

Just as MDA does not take credit for every dollar of investment or every business credit, we also do not take credit for each job created as these came about thanks to significant private investment. We do bring up the jobs numbers to show what a sizable return on investment there was for the limited public funds invested in MDA. From 2016 to 2020, a total of 541 FTE jobs were created. This job growth was driven by the 120 businesses that opened in downtown Metuchen during that period of time. Looking at this number further, of the \$1,318,512 of public funding that went to MDA this resulted in a cost of \$2,437 of public funds for each job created. This return on investment is of such a scale as to demonstrate why Main Street is the single most effective economic development program in small and medium-size communities in the U.S., as leading economist Donovan Rypkema said years ago. 12

#### **Volunteer Hours**

Main Street programs by design are volunteer-led. Typically they only have one staff member and that individual is not responsible for carrying out the work of the teams. From the Board to several teams, MDA has been fortunate to have a loyal and highly engaged core group of volunteers. Those volunteers

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Rypkema, Donovan. Keynote at Main Street Now Conference, Detroit, Michigan. 2014.

have contributed to the work of the organization in significant ways. Standard volunteer hours have a cash value of \$20/hour while professional hours where professionals are doing work in their area of expertise are valued at \$75/hour. A total of 20,501.5 volunteer hours have been reported since 2016, with 18,434 standard hours and 2,067.5 professional hours. These are valued at \$523,742.50. Typically the Executive Director is the top volunteer of a Main Street program, working more than standard hours and often with that overtime unpaid as is true in Metuchen. From September 2016 to December 2020 our Executive Director worked 831.5 hours of overtime valued at \$62,362.50.

## Volunteer hours by number of hours

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Standard	3,197	2,914.5	4685.5	4,219	3,418	18,434
Professional	287.5	556	731.5	231	261.5	2,067.5
Total	3,484.5	3,470.5	5,417 <sup>13</sup>	4,450	3,679.5	20,501.5

## Volunteer hours by dollar value

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Standard	\$63,940	\$58,290	\$93,710	\$84,380	\$68,360	\$368,680
Professional	\$21,562.50	\$41,700	\$54,862.50	\$17,325	\$19,612.50	\$155,062.50
Total	\$85,502.50	\$99,990 <sup>14</sup>	\$148,572.50	\$101,705	87,972.50	\$523,742.50

Variance of volunteer hours each year was due to the changing nature of the work. Early on in the "Catalyst" phase the Board and teams required a greater time commitment to set up the organization and get programs started. The focus in 2017 and 2018 shifted to projects requiring professional expertise to complete. As the organization stabilized into a more mature "Management" phase in 2019, many of the volunteer hours were spent on the retail promotions that year, with fewer hours required in 2020 due to fewer retail promotions being held.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> There was an error with 5,409 hours or 8 fewer volunteer hours in the 2018 Annual Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> A calculation error resulted in \$7.50 less than originally reported in the 2017 Annual Report

## **B. COVID-19 RESPONSE**

Everything changed for us downtown in March 2020. With the stay-at-home order imminent, businesses had to rapidly pivot and respond to the changing circumstances. MDA was there to assist them through that process.

#### **Metuchen Delivers**

Quickly after the pandemic started MDA listed on the MDA website all the businesses offering online shopping, gift certificates, and delivery options. A total of 41 businesses participated.

## **Curbside Pickup**

Implemented 10 initial zones in March. Iterated with higher quality signs and new zones in June. Many businesses claimed they would not have survived without curbside pickup options. Older adults appreciated the easy access the most.



#### **Feeding the Front Line**

A crowdfunding campaign started in March helped us to attract \$25,521 from over 225 donors. This was used to purchase 1,686 meals from downtown restaurants at a time they needed a boost in revenues the most because they could only do takeout and delivery at the time. The meals went to first responders in the area. Around Easter special deliveries of food and gifts were sent to area shelters.

#### **Outdoor Dining and Retail**

MDA was proactive in May working with Borough, stakeholders and businesses to be prepared for reopening. Metuchen was one of the first of it's kind programs in New Jersey to ease restrictions. The Borough of Metuchen passed a resolution on May 26, 2020 that temporarily eased restrictions pertaining to outdoor dining and retail and to provide flexibility for businesses before a full re-opening could occur. The application fee to expand outdoors was waived and the application review time reduced, making it easier for non-essential businesses to re-open as soon as was allowed by the state. Businesses were encouraged to not only use the sidewalks in front of their establishments, but also to convert street parking into parklets, activate alleyways, -and use designated



parking lots. Over 30 businesses took advantage of expanded outdoor dining and retail options.

Then MDA provided \$50,000 of "Reopening Grants" to 40 businesses of \$1,250 each. These covered costs of PPE, plexiglass dividers, outdoor dining furniture, rent assistance, and any other needs businesses might have.

#### **CARES Act and NJEDA Funding**

MDA took the lead notifying businesses in Metuchen about CARES Act funding and how to access this. Notification was achieved through 20 e-blasts sent in 2020,<sup>15</sup> and follow up site visits and phone calls. MDA partnered with Middlesex County, the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce, and Small Business Development Center at Rutgers to help Metuchen businesses access CARES Act and NJEDA funding. This helped businesses get critically needed support at a time they needed it the most.

CARES Act and NJEDA Funding by Business in Downtown Metuchen

Source	Amount	Businesses
Middlesex County Small Business Relief Grant	\$618,784	31
Emergency Impact Disaster Loan Advance	\$501,000	134
Emergency Impact Disaster Loan	\$6,510,100	94
Paycheck Protection Program, Round 1	\$4,455,715	134
NJ Economic Development Authority, Phase 1	\$66,000	20
NJ Economic Development Authority, Phase 2	\$113,000	33
NJ Economic Development Authority, Phase 3	\$154,000	13
Total	\$12,418,599	



#### **New Streetery**

Metuchen was one of three communities in New Jersey to secure a \$19,000 grant from the AARP Community Challenge Grant program. The purpose of these grants is to spark "quick-actions" that can then be sustained for the long-term and ensure progress is made. Metuchen's "quick action" project is aimed at improving livability for all residents, regardless of age, background, or ability as well as to support the response and recovery to the Coronavirus. In its 4th year of giving grants to support liveability, AARP announced the largest number of Community Challenge grants to date, awarding more than \$2.4 million among 184 grantees across all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> MDA e-blasts had an open rate of 45%. The industry average was 16% according to Constant Contact.

With the AARP Community Challenge grant MDA expanded the idea of a parklet that allowed a few tables to the "New Streetery" that more restaurants would be able to add many more tables. Starting in June one block of New Street was closed between Main Street and Pearl Street from Friday afternoon to Sunday evening. Restaurants set up tables and chairs in the street. Arts Council collaboration in the summer brought live music. A decision was made to iterate this design in the fall, anticipating colder weather and to better accommodate needs of non-restaurant businesses on the block. Instead of fully closing the street, it was decided to close the south side of the street only and allow one-way traffic. Parking on New Street was made available for up to 15 minutes for free use of customers.

## Main Street New Jersey (MSNJ) COVID-19 Recovery Grant

MDA secured \$655,628 of funding that was distributed to Main Street programs throughout New Jersey by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. That funding was then given by MDA to COVID-impacted businesses in grants between \$5,000 and \$15,000. At the current time MDA is working to secure additional funding and distribute in early 2021.

Anticipating the challenge of outdoor dining in cold weather, MDA purchased 65 heaters and assisted businesses with installation for 12 businesses. The Borough provided courtesy inspections to ensure safety. MDA purchased



four wind rated, snow-load rated, fire-resistant structures with infrared heaters inside and placed these on New Street in the "New Streetery." This provides an option for customers who do not feel comfortable dining indoors. Over two-dozen volunteers helped to pull the covers over the structures in January 2021.

Additionally, another dozen businesses were helped with installation of infrared heaters. Additional businesses were given igloos to extend outdoor dining through cold weather months. Twenty businesses received help with photography to support online sales. Several of these can be seen on the MDA Instagram feed that saw over 200,000 views in Nov and Dec 2020, an amount 100x our monthly average for the prior 3 years. Payment of staff costs for cleaning and sanitizing helped dozens of businesses retain staff that otherwise would have been laid off.

## C. TEAM REPORTS

#### **Board of Trustees**

The Board meets monthly every second Friday at 8:30am. When COVID-19 restrictions made it impossible to meet in person, MDA held virtual meetings. At the January 2021 Annual Meeting the four current officers – Eric Berger, Chairman; Bobbie Theivakumaran, Vice Chairperson; Jay Muldoon, Secretary; and Stuart Schooler, Treasurer – were elected to a new 2-year term. For two of the four this will be their final term so Board succession planning for these leadership roles will be necessary.

Several new trustees joined the Board in 2020-2021: Lynne Mueller, Jacquie Zuvich, Jace McColley, and Mansi Khandelwal. In January 2021 several trustees were elected by our members to start new terms that end December 31, 2024. These returningTrustees include Diana Callinan, Jenny Lai, Stuart Schooler, and Gary Tilbor.

Current members of the Board of Trustees follow (in alphabetical order by last name):

- Moshe Atzbi, Hailey's Harp & Pub
- Eric Berger, United States Real Estate Acquisition
- Diana Callinan, Friends of the Family Childcare
- Mansi Khandelwal, The Kabab Factory
- Linda Koskoski, Borough Council (At-large)
- Jenny Lai, Picture Perfect Studios
- Jace C. McColley, Esquire, Law Office of Jace C. McColley
- Lynne Mueller, Metuchen Arts Council (At-large)
- Jay Muldoon, Borough Administrator designee (Ex officio)
- Stuart Schooler, The Maven Group and Sportsplex at Metuchen
- Bobbie Theivakumaran, Managing Director, Citi (Resident)
- Gary Tilbor, Tilbor Realty and See-more Appliance Center
- Gary Wade, Wade Appraisal and Parking Authority (At-large)
- Jacquie Zuvich, Realtor, Metuchen Area Chamber of Commerce (At-large)

Several members of the Board of Trustees and other MDA volunteers took responsibility leading different teams in 2020:

- Promotion Team, Bobbie Theivakumaran
- Storefront Team, Bernie Hetzel
- Planter Team, Ian Fawcett
- Communication Team, Diana Callinan and Dan Cea
- Public Art Team, Linda Vonderschmidt-LaStella<sup>16</sup>
- Organization Team, Bobbie Theivakumaran, Eric Berger

#### **Promotion Team**

The Promotion Team holds many retail promotions throughout the year that attract people and their dollars downtown. When the promotion team got started in 2016, the idea of a retail promotion was still relatively new to Metuchen. Prior to that primarily special events were held downtown. These attracted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> In 2021 the co-chairs of the Public Art Team will be Laura Griffith, Beryl Koblin, and Lorraine Le Ster.

people for a single day or weekend, but except for a few businesses special events did not lead to an appreciable increase in sales. The Promotion Team sought to change that.

A total of six retail promotions were carried out from May to the end of December 2016.<sup>17</sup> The first, a Pokemon Go promotion, engaged a total of 7 businesses. A total of 100 people participated. Cost to MDA was minimal so this promotion produced a fair return on investment. Others such as the Pizza Throwdown and a promotion of a production at the Forum Theater got attention for the MDA and the District, and helped MDA better understand what types of promotions were possible and would be best received by the public. The winner of the Pizza Throwdown acknowledged how that event helped to boost their sales and get through the year to follow as a result.

The one standout promotion from 2016 was Small Business Saturday. A total of 19 businesses and 300 customers participated. One of the highlights that day was the "After Party" at the Marafiki Pop-up located at 463 Main Street. One business owner responded "Usually small biz sat is a flop. Amazing what can happen with some effort. Thank you all." This was the successful ending to an active day for everyone, especially for downtown businesses some of

whom reported double or triple the amount of sales from prior years.  $^{\mbox{\tiny 18}}$ 

## Retail promotions held in Downtown Metuchen by Year, 2016-2020

ne (Year First Held)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Pokemon Go (Jul 16)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Restaurant Week - Chamber (Jul 16)	1	1	1	1	*	4
Pizza Throwdown (Oct 16)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Forum Theater (Oct 16)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Small Business Saturday (Nov 16)	1	1	1	1	1	5
Holiday Passport (Dec 16)	1	0	0	0	0	1
New Year, New You (Jan 17)	n/a	1	0	0	0	1
Find Your Love Downtown (Feb 17)	n/a	1	1	1	<b>1</b> <sup>19</sup>	4
New Jersey Symphony - Arts Council (Mar 17)	n/a	1	1	0	0	2
Dine Metuchen (Mar 17)	n/a	1	0	0	0	1
Shop Small Saturdays (Apr 17)	n/a	1	0	0	0	1
Easter Egg Hunt (Apr 17)	n/a	1	0	0	0	1
Earth Day (Apr 17)	n/a	1	0	0	0	1
Blame Movie Screening (Jun 17)	n/a	1	0	0	0	1
Kids Takeover (Jun 17)	n/a	1	1	1	*	3
	Restaurant Week - Chamber (Jul 16)  Pizza Throwdown (Oct 16)  Forum Theater (Oct 16)  Small Business Saturday (Nov 16)  Holiday Passport (Dec 16)  New Year, New You (Jan 17)  Find Your Love Downtown (Feb 17)  New Jersey Symphony - Arts Council (Mar 17)  Dine Metuchen (Mar 17)  Shop Small Saturdays (Apr 17)  Easter Egg Hunt (Apr 17)  Earth Day (Apr 17)	Pokemon Go (Jul 16) 1  Restaurant Week - Chamber (Jul 16) 1  Pizza Throwdown (Oct 16) 1  Forum Theater (Oct 16) 1  Small Business Saturday (Nov 16) 1  Holiday Passport (Dec 16) 1  New Year, New You (Jan 17) n/a  Find Your Love Downtown (Feb 17) n/a  New Jersey Symphony - Arts Council (Mar 17) n/a  Dine Metuchen (Mar 17) n/a  Shop Small Saturdays (Apr 17) n/a  Easter Egg Hunt (Apr 17) n/a  Blame Movie Screening (Jun 17) n/a	Pokemon Go (Jul 16)       1       0         Restaurant Week - Chamber (Jul 16)       1       1         Pizza Throwdown (Oct 16)       1       0         Forum Theater (Oct 16)       1       0         Small Business Saturday (Nov 16)       1       1         Holiday Passport (Dec 16)       1       0         New Year, New You (Jan 17)       n/a       1         Find Your Love Downtown (Feb 17)       n/a       1         New Jersey Symphony - Arts Council (Mar 17)       n/a       1         Dine Metuchen (Mar 17)       n/a       1         Shop Small Saturdays (Apr 17)       n/a       1         Easter Egg Hunt (Apr 17)       n/a       1         Earth Day (Apr 17)       n/a       1         Blame Movie Screening (Jun 17)       n/a       1	Pokemon Go (Jul 16)       1       0       0         Restaurant Week - Chamber (Jul 16)       1       1       1         Pizza Throwdown (Oct 16)       1       0       0         Forum Theater (Oct 16)       1       0       0         Small Business Saturday (Nov 16)       1       1       1         Holiday Passport (Dec 16)       1       0       0         New Year, New You (Jan 17)       n/a       1       0         Find Your Love Downtown (Feb 17)       n/a       1       1         New Jersey Symphony - Arts Council (Mar 17)       n/a       1       1         Dine Metuchen (Mar 17)       n/a       1       0         Shop Small Saturdays (Apr 17)       n/a       1       0         Easter Egg Hunt (Apr 17)       n/a       1       0         Blame Movie Screening (Jun 17)       n/a       1       0	Pokemon Go (Jul 16)       1       0       0         Restaurant Week - Chamber (Jul 16)       1       1       1       1         Pizza Throwdown (Oct 16)       1       0       0       0         Forum Theater (Oct 16)       1       0       0       0         Small Business Saturday (Nov 16)       1       1       1       1         Holiday Passport (Dec 16)       1       0       0       0         New Year, New You (Jan 17)       n/a       1       0       0         Find Your Love Downtown (Feb 17)       n/a       1       1       1         New Jersey Symphony - Arts Council (Mar 17)       n/a       1       0       0         Dine Metuchen (Mar 17)       n/a       1       0       0         Shop Small Saturdays (Apr 17)       n/a       1       0       0         Easter Egg Hunt (Apr 17)       n/a       1       0       0         Blame Movie Screening (Jun 17)       n/a       1       0       0	Pokemon Go (Jul 16)         1         0         0         0           Restaurant Week - Chamber (Jul 16)         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1         1

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The number of retail promotions was adjusted after issuing the 2016 Annual Report from the 12 initially reported to reflect a better understanding subsequently developed of what constitutes a retail promotion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> For Small Business Saturday MDA logged 244,802 media impressions. Businesses in surveys after the fact reported a \$150,000 increase in sales.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Renamed "Buy Me Love" in 2020 and featured hearts with a \$5 purchase to place at a central location.

n/a n/a	1	1	0	0	2
n/a			J	U	2
11/4	1	0	0	0	1
n/a	1	6	5	*	12
n/a	1	0	0	0	1
n/a	1	1	1	*	3
n/a	1	0	0	0	1
n/a	1	1	1	*	3
n/a	1	1	1	*	3
n/a	n/a	1	0	0	1
n/a	n/a	1	0	0	1
n/a	n/a	3	0	0	3
n/a	n/a	1	0	0	1
n/a	n/a	1	1	*	2
n/a	n/a	1	1	*	2
n/a	n/a	1	0	0	1
n/a	n/a	1	1	*	2
n/a	n/a	1	0	0	1
n/a	n/a	1	1	*	2
n/a	n/a	1	0	0	1
n/a	n/a	1	1	1	3
n/a	n/a	n/a	1	*	1
n/a	n/a	n/a	1	*	1
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1
n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	1
6	19	29	19	6	79
	n/a	n/a         1           n/a         1           n/a         1           n/a         1           n/a         1           n/a         n/a           n/a         n/a	n/a         1         0           n/a         1         1           n/a         n/a         n/a           n/a	n/a         1         0         0           n/a         1         1         1           n/a         1         1         1           n/a         1         1         1           n/a         1         1         1           n/a         n/a         1         0           n/a         n/a         1         0           n/a         n/a         1         1           n/a         n/a         1	n/a         1         0         0         0           n/a         1         1         1         *           n/a         n/a         1         0         0           n/a         n/a         1         0         0           n/a         n/a         1         0         0           n/a         n/a         1         1         *           n/a         n/a

<sup>\*</sup> Where an asterisk appears in the above chart this reflects a promotion that was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but is likely to return after the pandemic.

An additional 19 retail promotions were carried out in 2017. These tended to be low cost and quickly organized promotions to help make cash registers ring. Movie screenings, an Easter Egg Hunt, and having a presence at the Whole Foods Opening in October 2017 were a few highlights. The first Haunted Downtown was held in October 2017. Small Business Saturday was repeated again in 2017 with 35 businesses participating. Kids Takeover was started in 2017. This gave kids and families an opportunity to pour out into the downtown and celebrate the last day of school. Perhaps the highlight of 2017 was New Year's Eve on the Plaza in which the Town Plaza was officially opened and dedicated before several hundred onlookers, despite the frigidly cold temperatures that day.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> This is 2 more retail promotions than reported in the 2017 Annual Report: Back to School with Boyt Drugs and Library Card Promotion.

In 2018 the idea of what made a successful retail promotion continued to expand and grow. Several businesses collaborated in January on an "Eat Ice Cream for Breakfast" promotion. A "Supper Club" was started and special events held at restaurants on off peak days during the week. Now with the Town Plaza open this became a focal point for much of the programming downtown: Downtown Loves Moms, Downtown-Pre Prom, Movie Nights Under the Stars, Summer Swing, and Downtown Rumble all made good use of this new space for people to gather together. In the last two months of 2018 a coordinated effort was made to push sales at businesses downtown with caroling, the Nifty Gifty Saturday, and a repeat of Small Business Saturday, this time having 35 businesses participate. A repeat of New Year's Eve on the Plaza ensured this much looked forward to event by kids and families continued.



Air guitar contest during Downtown Loves Dads retail promotion in 2019.

Retail promotions coalesced into a regular schedule of 16 promotions throughout the year in 2019. This included popular favorites like Kids takeover, Downtown Loves Moms, Movie Under the STars, Downtown Rumble, and Haunted Downtown. A new promotion, Downtown Loves Dads, had an air guitar contest, beer garden, and vendors selling food on the Town Plaza. Efforts continued around the holidays with 40 businesses participating in Small Business Saturday, another Nifty Gifty Guide, and the New Year's Eve on the Plaza.

Even more encouraging that the promotions that MDA organized are those that other organizations put together on their own. Restaurant Week was started by the Metuchen Area Chamber of Commerce in 2016. The following year the Metuchen Arts Council had a promotion with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra in 2017, and Summer Swing on the Town Plaza in 2018. The Masonic Treasure Hunt for several years has brought participants into area businesses. Even the Public Library got in the act with a promotion to offer discounts by showing a Library Card at local businesses.

In 2020 the approach to promotions radically changed because of limitations on groups of people gathering together. Attention shifted to virtual promotions and live presentations over the internet. When promotions were held in person, size of groups were kept small so people could maintain social distance. A Food Pantry Takeover on the Plaza in June helped to collect hundreds of pounds of food for the First Presbyterian Food Pantry.

Small Business Saturday was held again. A prize wheel gave gifts to participants of up to \$50 in value when people showed a receipt from a purchase made that day. This helped to increase total visits to stores and sales. A Holiday Gift Guide highlighted gifts by different categories such as "For Kids," "For the Foodie," and "For Surviving Quarantine." One last promotion was the Socially Distanced New Year's Eve where confetti cannons were given to people who ordered a \$50 meal or more in advance. Over 100 families participated in this promotion.



The Parade Commission with the help of MDA and Metuchen Chamber of Commerce organized Winterfest Weekend December 11 – 13 held in the early evening. Shop owners were encouraged to offer special incentives to their customers and to stay open later into the evening on those dates. A table set up in front of Cai's at Main and Hillside Avenue with mystery gift boxes that had at least a \$5 valued gift inside. These were a big hit with customers each day. Some boxes contained coupons worth up to as much as \$100 as the "mystery." Many boxes were sold which brought more traffic to the shops. Radio Station WOLD provided holiday music outdoors on Main Street at Cai's. A Snow machine blasted artificial snow onto passersby at "What's the Scoop" on Main which also attracted families to stop and buy ice cream. Businesses reported increased traffic on Friday evening per an unofficial "poll" taken by the Parade Commission. We hope by later in 2021 that some of the popular promotions can return and we can once again gather together downtown.

#### **Storefront Team**

One of the areas downtown has seen the greatest transformation and change over the past five years is with storefront design. The impetus for this work was a New Jersey Downtown Institute training held in October 2016. The Executive Director and an MDA volunteer at the time attended. Over the course of three hours the details of "Essentials of Effective Storefronts" were discussed. This included everything from lighting, to signage, to windows, and display space. Taking this knowledge back to Metuchen, arrangements were made for the presenters to visit Metuchen and assist with an initial round of storefront consultations in April 2017. Since 2017 over 48 businesses have received consultations on storefronts. Of these a total of 35 matching grants of up to \$5,000 each were awarded to help businesses with making improvements.

The first businesses to receive consultations during the first round in April 2017 follow:

- 1. Boyt Drugs
- 2. Fresco
- 3. Runner's High
- 4. Smoker's Haven
- 5. Seemore Appliance Center
- 6. Metuchen News
- 7. Pyramid Vitamin
- 8. Genus Boni
- 9. Metuchen Liquor & Wine
- 10. Carpet Maven II

Storefront Improvement Projects in Downtown Metuchen, 2016-2020

Source	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Consultation	0	20	9 <sup>21</sup>	6	3	38
Grants	0	4	11	16	4	35
Primary sign	0	1	4	4	3	12
Awning	0	0	3	2	1	6
Blade Sign	1	0	3	1	1	6
Awning	0	0	2	2	1	5
Painting	0	1	2	7	1	11
Door Vinyl	0	2	1	5	4	12
Lighting	0	0	2	3	1	6
Display	0	0	2	1	3	6



In 2017, MDA worked with Pyramid Vitamin to clear windows out, starting with the 20% off sticker.

Each business was given recommendations with key points to focus on. These were presented in writing but also with visuals to back them up. The response from businesses varied. Some, like Metuchen Liquor, were quick to implement the recommendation. In their case their storefront was painted in tan with black raised letters. The recommendation was to put a trim around the letters and paint the remaining wood around the storefront in a wine color. Likewise, Genus Boni was quick to put vinyl on their front door with logo at eye level, simplified hours below (removing duplicate times, combining days with the same hours, and removing :00's), and contact info below. Others took much longer to implement the recommendations. The purpose of this organization was to simplify and prioritize information for customers.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> The Annual Report listed 18 businesses receiving storefront consultations when in fact there were only 9. This is because repeat business consultations were not counted as a new business in the updated numbers.





Before and after photos of Metuchen News with windows cleared out, new paint, and vinyl on the front door.





One of the first matching grants went to Boyt Drugs to help with interior painting.

A second round of consultations occurred in October 2017. These included:

- 1. Metuchen Dentist
- 2. Hailey's Harp & Pub
- 3. Picture Perfect Studios
- 4. Cai's Café
- 5. What's the Scoop
- 6. New Pearl Cleaners
- 7. Hailey's Harp-cade
- 8. La Rosa Pizzeria
- 9. Cafe Paris
- 10. Base Camp



Genus Boni with standard door layout – logo at eye level, simplified hours below with days with same hours grouped and no :00, and contact info at the bottom.

To encourage businesses to make changes a 50/50 matching grant was provided up to \$5,000 to implement recommendations in the report. Four businesses received grants in 2017: Boyt Drugs, Smoker's Haven, Runner's High, and Fresco.

In 2018 the program expanded with consultations for several new businesses:

- 1. Cachet
- 2. The Kabab Factory
- 3. The Greek
- 4. Brewed Awakening

- 5. Be My Guest/A Creative Twist
- 6. Primecare Medical Group
- 7. Jewelry Doctor
- 8. Mangia Toscano
- 9. 2 Chicks / Lollipop Land

Matching grants for storefront improvements were awarded to Boyt Drugs, Fresco, Metuchen Dentist, Hailey's Harp & Pub, Picture Perfect Studios, Cachet, Runner's High, Smoker's Haven, The Kabab Factory, and The Greek. Of the more than \$30,000 of grants provided this leveraged more than an additional \$71,838.85 of private investment - far greater than the 50% match requirement.

The following year in 2019 additional businesses received consultations:

- 1. Tiny Town
- 2. Olive Press Eatery
- 3. Sentirsi Studio
- 4. Nauti Cajun Crab
- 5. Menya
- 6. Antonio's Brick Oven Pizza

Matching grants continued in 2019 with many businesses utilizing the up to \$5,000 of MDA funds to carry out improvements of their own. Of the \$159,846 in grants given out to date these have leveraged an additional \$743,877 of private dollars. The year 2019 brought with it additional outside sources of funding including a \$23,000 Main Street New Jersey Grant, a \$5,000 Gannett Foundation Grant, and a \$5,000 Middlesex County Arts & Cultural Trust Fund Grant to undertake additional work. As word got out that MDA was providing grants to assist with signage and storefront design, new businesses planning to open sought out support early on in the process. That is why among the 15 businesses that received consultations in 2018 and 2019, more than half were new businesses. What this speaks to is the need for additional incentives to help businesses planning to open in the downtown. Technical and financial assistance provided early on gives these businesses a better chance of surviving their first few years as has been our experience in Metuchen. Even more encouraging is how thanks to the grants new businesses that are opening seek out the Alliance for assistance - and we are ready and able to help out.

In 2020 new businesses received storefront consultations:

- 1. Metuchen Nail Spa
- 2. A&J Jewelry
- 3. Papillon & Company

Two of these businesses received grants to put new signs and door vinyl up in 2020, with a third business working to complete that work in 2021. Additionally, Mangia Toscano received a grant to put up their awning facing Hillside Avenue. This allowed them to expand their outdoor dining. Fresco and Runner's High redesigned their interiors with support from MDA grants.





Before and after images for Picture Perfect Studios with paint and lighting upgrades.





Before and after photos of Olive Press Eatery that received a grant for outdoor dining from MDA and the Gannett Foundation.





Before and after of projects undertaken with support of a Main Street New Jersey grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in 2019.

#### **Placemaking**

Early on placemaking became an important priority of the organization. This was driven by a recognition that many public and private spaces needed improvements to be more welcoming. Assisting with this work was outside funding – both in the form of grants and in private funding raised through several crowdfunding campaigns. With each project an effort was made to be responsive to resident and downtown shopper needs. This took a variety of forms. In 2017 a pilot project by La Rosa Pizza converted "pavement to plaza" for outdoor dining. This corresponded with efforts by a private investor to upgrade and improve the neighboring building. Funds were raised from the National Main Street Center, EdwardJones, and over three-dozen private individuals to build this space. It all culminated in a one-day build on October 28, 2017, when this plaza was finished. Since then it has become a much used and appreciated space in downtown Metuchen, undergoing several iterations with new tables and seating.





Around the same time that work on the Lake Ave plaza was getting started, AARP New Jersey selected Metuchen as one of three "demonstration projects" for their Livable Communities initiative. The purpose of this project was to make places more livable for people of all ages. The alley between Metuchen News and Classic Travel was selected for an alley transformation. Nearby a parklet was proposed outside of Café Paris as a demonstration project to show how the needs of people could be better accommodated.

Several months of planning led up to the build on October 21, 2017. In the week prior local artist Edward Wetzel laid out the pathway to be painted along the course of the alley with the phrase "Imagination is More Important than Knowledge." This was an homage to Albert Einstein who once had an association with Metuchen. The day of the build nearly two-dozen volunteers showed up. Each undertook different activities to bring this space to life.







Before and after photos of Imagination Alley in October 2017

#### **Public Art Team**

The Public Art Team was formed in 2017. An arts consultant out of Philadelphia assisted with development of a Public Arts Policy. This identified possible locations, a curatorial vision of how to utilize public art, and a policy to guide the selection, installation, and maintenance of public art. In 2020 interpretive plaques began to be placed at the location of public art projects downtown.



## Painting of Metuchen Station Bridge (2017)

One of the earliest projects was the painting of the Metuchen Station Bridge over Main Street. One side has the name "Metuchen" with "Explore, Experience, and Enjoy" below. The other side also has "Metuchen" and the words "Shop Local" and "Shop Small." For people walking or driving downtown and those who use the train station, this is a daily reminder to support downtown Metuchen.



#### You Can Always Go Home Again (2018-2021)

Following the AARP New Jersey demonstration project in 2017, Edward Wetzel worked with a small team of MDA volunteers to refine his concept. In July 2018 he started to work drawing an impressive 20 by 30 foot reproduction of a Metuchen house and porch in one-point perspective. The vanishing point drew the eye towards two iconic people with New Jersey and Metuchen ties - Albert Einstein and Thomas Edison. As the veranda turns a corner Samuel Clemens/Mark Twain is sitting in a rocking chair. He reputedly celebrated his 70th birthday in Metuchen. Mary Eleanor Wilkins Freeman was a compatriot and reason for his visit. Also depicted is Thomas Peterson Mundy, the first African American to vote in an election in New Jersey, who once lived in Metuchen.

From the west end of the wall with the house, the Metuchen story unfolds in a series of vignettes. First is a pastoral landscape with the Old Franklin Schoolhouse and idealized buildings in the present-day downtown visible across an open field. Then the viewer is confronted by a towering watering can with a robin perched atop. Butting up against this is a pergola overflowing with greenery. In the next scene a young Martin Jessen is beside a locomotive with the Metuchen station sign overhead. This scene also captures the notion of the artist that the Metuchen story is full of moments where people leave and people come home. From here the retro-themed section has a giant- woman riding a classically styled red bicycle. Then a grandmother pushing an old-fashioned stroller and a child releasing flower petals is a final flourish. The mural concludes with an old-time parade, though inhabited with a celebration of the rich diversity that makes Metuchen so unique in New Jersey and America today.

Edward Wetzel (b. 1959) is a Metuchen-born artist. Through the years he has had a teaching studio downtown, been commissioned to create large-scale drawings of many historic houses, designed scenery for local theater companies, and in recent years has taken an active interest in public art. Wetzel has had a life-long interest in soccer and for many years volunteered and helped with the youth soccer team, even after his kids graduated. He drives a school bus and has formed meaningful relationships with leading artists in Metuchen and regionally through his association with the Du Cret School of Art, Dragonfly Theater Company, and Metuchen Arts Council. He and his wife Ginny who is a teacher in the Metuchen School District live in Metuchen today.



## Metuchen Mural (2018)

One-time Metuchen resident and Metuchen High School graduate Ariel Rutland was commissioned to create an edgy image that incorporates video game themes and fits in with the innovative spirit embodied by businesses and art projects throughout downtown Metuchen. One of the unique features of the work was how it was applied on to the wall. A robot muralist named "Albert" was invented by designers and engineers from Estonia. The first commercial application of its work on the East Coast occurred on this 25 by 60-foot mural in Metuchen. Albert undertook additional projects in Summit, West Orange, and elsewhere.

Ariel is an independent graphic designer and illustrator living in Yardley, Pennsylvania—a town just outside Philadelphia. Before opening her own studio in 2017, she was a designer at Martha Stewart

working on a retail product line of Home Office Goods. Afterwards, she enjoyed four years as Senior Designer at Miller Creative branding agency working with a varied clientele from start-up beauty brands to large national retail food product brands. As an independent designer, she loves working with companies of all sizes to bring their creative visions to life through logo design, packaging design, web design, illustration, and anything else she can dream up.



#### **Metuchen Love Letters (2018)**

MDA commissioned artist Steve Powers to create three works of public art for Metuchen as part of his ongoing *A Love Letter for You* outdoor mural project found in cities around the world. Metuchen Love Letters include Stay in Touch (401 Main Street building facing the train station), Together (19-23 New Street) and street banners along New Street. Metuchen Love Letters are Powers' first major mural commissions in New Jersey.

Metuchen Love Letter #1—Stay in Touch was designed to be seen by train passengers as they come to or from Metuchen. The



playful clipart-like figures—pencils, briefcase, slice of pizza, take-out beverage, and train conductor cap and tickets—relate to Metuchen as a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use transit village.

Metuchen Love Letter #2—Together can be interpreted in many ways. The artist uses a color scheme and typeface based on the iconic red-white-and-blue ICEE frozen beverage logo—including its distinctive ice covered letters. In this mural the building's windows separate the letters in "Together," suggesting that some words are composed of multiple parts that together can form one word. Additionally, window intersections create incomplete letters, causing the viewer to combine all the visual clues together to read them as text. For some, the mural reflects Metuchen's spirit of collaboration where everyone works together to serve the community as a whole.

Metuchen Love Letter--Street Banners activate New Street, and remind pedestrians to REVIVE, RESUME, RELAX and REPEAT as they go about their daily commute or take a walk through town. The colorful banners also feature images of the rising and setting sun and moon, and were intended to help visually link the corridor between Main Street and the developments adjacent to Lake Avenue.

Steve Powers (aka, ESPO—Exterior Surface Painting Outreach) is a Brooklyn-based mixed media artist who transitioned from graffiti writing to a studio practice that includes sign painting. His bold, accessible graphic text-based work relates to the visual language of advertising billboards and signage, which he infuses with wit, humor, and lively visual puns.





Metuchen Love Letters by artist Stephen Powers.







# Language Project (2019)

Adirondack chairs built from shipping pallets were artistically transformed by New Jersey-based artists. The selected artists responded to a call for proposals and were selected through a juried review process. Then each artist was provided a stipend for their time and materials to creatively transform the chairs. They were asked to incorporate themes related to language in their projects. Once complete, the chairs were distributed in pairs through the downtown in the summer and through the early fall of 2019. Subsequently the chairs were auctioned to private individuals with all proceeds from the auction going to support future public art projects in Metuchen.

Selected Artists (alphabetical by first name)

Bonnie Eggenburg (Pilesgrove)
Elina Rosenblum (Verona)
Ellen Avigliano (Elizabeth)
Jennifer Strauser (Metuchen)
Jessica Wu (Highland Park)
Joseph Castronova (Metuchen)
Joseph LaMattina (Hackensack)
Kim Adlerman (Metuchen)
Lauren Rabinowitz (Edison)
Margaret Cohen (Metuchen)

The "Town Portal" designed by Metuchen resident Robert Russo was situated in Imagination Alley and hosted performances, poetry readings, and events through the



summer and fall of 2019. The design was intended for temporary use prior to being de-installed at the end of the year. Subsequently it was acquired by a local family who took responsibility for moving the Town Portal, weatherproofing it, and granting extended life in Metuchen. This was a much-loved addition to our downtown.

Robert Russo is a Metuchen resident with a BFA in Graphic Design from the Pratt Institute. He has worked as a graphic designer for numerous companies including The Wall Street Journal, Gannett Newspapers, NJBIZ, and ROI-NJ. He and his wife Robyn started an art studio/school which they operate out of their own home. Most recently Russo started Metuchen Modern Design Workshop. This business seeks to craft memorable, sustainable and efficient design solutions. He applies modernist design, utilizes humble materials, celebrates the handmade, and does this all through a collaborative and transparent design process. For more information, visit: <a href="https://www.metuchenmodern.com/">https://www.metuchenmodern.com/</a>.



### **Meshing Histories (2020)**

The mural *Meshing Histories* by artist Jonathan Horowitz was commissioned by MDA for the northeast wall of local business See-More TV & Appliance Center, which has served Metuchen since 1970. Horowitz is a Highland Park raised artist, writer, translator, and educator, whose murals are located throughout New Jersey and New York. His work explores the use of symbols and visual references as a vehicle for universal communication and understanding, and connecting with our collective human consciousness. *Meshing Histories* celebrates what makes Metuchen a vibrant, diverse, and inclusive community. Through bold, saturated colors and large abstract forms, the mural suggests a wide variety of cultural influences and local historical references, including 1950s advertisements, Latin American, Caribbean, and Asian patterns and colors, and contemporary and digital art.

Jonathan Horowitz is a writer, painter, translator, educator, and muralist. Born and raised in Highland Park, Horowitz has spent the past ten years collaborating with organizations and municipalities throughout New Jersey on community-oriented projects, like art shows featuring local artists, fundraisers, public murals, writing workshops, and more. Horowitz has completed murals in Highland Park, New Brunswick, Newark, and Orange. He has also assisted on "The {PORTRAITS}" mural at McCarter Highway in Newark, the second longest mural in the U.S., as well as "Birds of Paradise," a 500-ft long mural at Bayswater Park in Far Rockaway, supported by NYC Parks. Horowitz has extensive experience with economic development and community revitalization organizations, like Main Street, and has been part of many creative placemaking projects. Currently, Horowitz is finishing his first novel, *Jersey Drunk*, as he pursues his MFA in Fiction and Literary Translation at Columbia (LTAC) joint course of study at Columbia University. Horowitz is also a program coordinator at the Center for Justice at Columbia University, where he develops programming for justice-involved NYC youth.

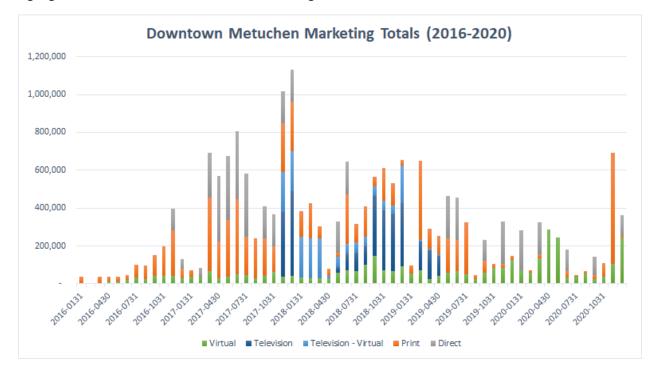
#### Clean & Green Team

We continue to implement our Clean & Green goals with regular weekly cleaning of the downtown. Our 50 downtown planters have been turned over with seasonal plantings in March, July, September, and November. Of these 30 were purchased by the MDA in 2017, and 20 additional planters were purchased by Woodmont and placed on the Town Plaza. MDA took responsibility for refreshing and maintaining all 50 planters.

Assisting in keeping downtown in its top physical conditions is a contractor who performs weekly cleaning and maintenance services. This started in Spring 2018 with 25 cleaning and maintenance visits that year. In 2019 MDA entered into a contract with DARE Commercial Services. In 2020 they made 48 service visits. On their visit each Saturday they porter waste from street trash containers, sweep streets and sidewalks, and perform additional maintenance tasks downtown. This has helped to supplement the weekly cleaning by the Borough of Metuchen. Watering and landscaping services by DARE were provided for all 50 MDA planters and the garden bed at Pennsylvania Avenue and Main Street.

#### **Communication Team**

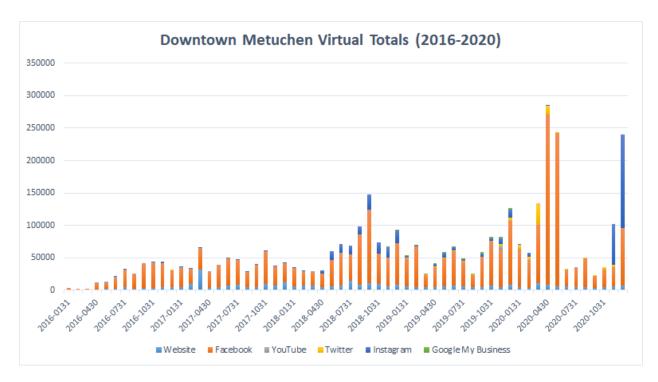
The Communication Team is responsible for increasing the number of earned and unearned media impressions for the downtown. This is accomplished a number of ways. Social media platforms are actively managed with placement of timely, relevant, and engaging content. Occasionally campaigns are developed and run on different platforms – primarily TV, print, and social media. Finally, through a partnership with the Borough and Metuchen Media, videos are produced throughout the year to highlight different businesses and activities throughout the downtown.



From November 2017 through April 2019 MDA contracted with Altice and also Spotlight Comcast on television and virtual earned media placements as part of an image building campaign. A television commercial was produced and ran on News12 and other channels. The television portion resulted in

2,778,447 earned media impressions.<sup>22</sup> The interactive portion resulted in 1,659,052 impressions. Interactive impressions were achieved through geo-targeting and geo-fencing, among other tactics. In April 2019 the decision was made to refocus earned media spend primarily on virtual platforms.

Through a partnership with the Borough of Metuchen and Metuchen Media, MDA has received video production services since 2018. Of the six videos produced for MDA in 2020 they received 59,154 views on the MDA Facebook page. Four of these were focused on the pandemic response and the importance of shopping local (Metuchen Delivers - March 13, Downtown Curbside Pickup - March 23, Metuchen's Still Got It - March 26, and Metuchen Comes Together - April 22). The next video released May 8 - Metuchen Acts Large When They Stand with Small - was the highest viewed video of the year. In 2 minutes and 25 seconds the stories of dry cleaners whose business was most disrupted by the pandemic were highlighted. There were over 189 likes, and encouraging comments such as: "These businesses will rebound. They are extremely smart and hard working owners." One final video was produced for MDA in June highlighting the work of Jonathan Horowitz who painted a mural on Middlesex Ave. Other videos on indoor dining and holiday activities that featured the downtown were produced and posted on the Borough Facebook page from June to December.



While MDA maintains a presence on several social media platforms, the two most used platforms are Facebook and Instagram. Of the others, Twitter, YouTube, Google My Business - they have stable yet low usage. The MDA website had only 7 of 60 months that exceeded 10,000 visits. The average monthly visits to the MDA website is 6,608. An increase occurred across all platforms in 2020, with hundreds of additional followers for each one. In 2020 a spike in usage occurred on Instagram. This was thanks to the work of Lauren Beischer that was supported by the MSNJ COVID-19 Recovery Grant.

42

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> This is higher than the 2,673,226 in the 2017 Annual Report reflecting data collected after the report was issued.

Downtown Metuchen Social Media Use by Source in 2020

Facebook 4,011 follows (2,891 last year) ↑ 38.7%

Average reach 79,722 / month

Instagram 1,747 followers (1,297 last year) ↑ 34.7%

Twitter 657 followers (350 last year) ↑ 87.7%

Contacts 4,129 contacts (3,611 last year) ↑ 14.3%



Earned media spends for MDA in 2020 included a *Star Ledger* ad placement that received statewide distribution on Thanksgiving Day, and continued Facebook Ad spends. The *Star Ledger* campaign was the first produced for MDA by marketing consultant 20 Lemons. A digital version of the ad was effective reaching a mostly female audience, age 25-34. The cost per impression for this campaign was among the best yet with \$0.003 per impression. A selection of media sources that downtown Metuchen received the highest level of coverage from in 2020 follow: News12 (2,350,000), *Star Ledger* (923,229), Facebook Ads (736,475), *Criterion Sentinel* (499,512), and *Home Tribune News* (419,544).

### Downtown Metuchen Media by Source, Impressions, and Cost

Source	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Television	0	1,791,660	2,575,755	556,463	2,000,000	6,923,878
Virtual	339,007	1,970,003	3,923,800	1,731,345	3,736,770	11,700,925
Direct	163,500	2,342,150	341,000	784,000	696,500	4,327,150
Print	833,032	2,584,492	1,334,202	1,430,192	776,871	6,958,789
Total Impression	1,335,539 <sup>23</sup>	8,688,305	8,174,757	4,502,000	8,198,141	29,910,742
Unearned	1,174,739	4,611,408	4,278,430 <sup>24</sup>	2,940,911	5,746,607	18,752,095
Earned	160,800	4,076,897 <sup>25</sup>	3,896,327	1,561,089	1,463,534	11,158,647
Cost Earned	\$1,194	\$19,062	\$34,418	\$13,726	\$12,519	\$73,899

#### **Metuchen Lights**

Every year since 2016 the MDA has made an investment in holiday lighting to give the downtown a festive feel. MDA volunteers wrap the lamp posts with garland, lights, and ribbon. An illuminated globe is suspended from the lamp post on an arm overhanging the sidewalk. In 2020, MDA's holiday decorations program was expanded through the collaboration with Borough of Metuchen and Metuchen Parade Commission. The pandemic made a Winterfest Parade impractical in light of the mandate for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> The 228 more impressions reflects a slightly higher number of views of MDA e-blasts than listed in the Annual Report for 2016 with 1,335,311 impressions.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Unearned media impressions were slightly higher than the 4,092,254 in the 2018 Annual Report reflecting new impressions recorded after the report was issued.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Earned media impressions were higher than the 2,673,226 initially reported in the 2017 Annual Report. This reflects a higher number of TV impressions that were not available until after the Annual Report was issued.

social distancing. In its place, Mayor Jonathan Busch suggested turning Metuchen into "Metuchen Lights," a classic winter scene -- making Metuchen beautiful -- a place to dine and shop during the holidays. The Mayor and the Borough secured \$31,500 from sponsors: Manasquan Bank – Metuchen Branch, Raritan Center Business Community, Woodmont Metro at Metuchen Station, PSE&G, Hackensack Meridian Health, Ramani Group, LKR, The Josell & Rosamilia Familes and Downtown Metro (E.S.K. Builders). Thank you to them.

Light installation was complete by November 27th, in time for Small Business Saturday. Metuchen Parade Commission organized two Metuchen Borough events on the Plaza: a Christmas Tree Lighting and a Menorah Lighting with Neve Shalom and Temple Emanu 'El providing the music and lighting ceremony. Small bags of gelt and Dreidels were made available by Temple Emanu 'El for children to pick up at 7 Metuchen businesses. Both events were prerecorded by Metuchen Media and then broadcast. Articles appeared in the *Star Ledger* and *Bridgewater Courier News*: "Metuchen holiday light display brightens season downtown."

The "Metuchen Lights" holiday lights were removed in January, 2021. Plans are for the lights to return again in 2021. It is possible that more lights will be added then.

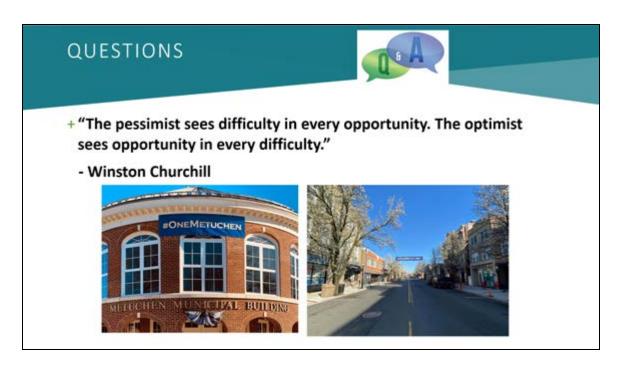
#### **Organization Team**

In late 2020 a decision was made to reform the Organization Team. This was motivated due to the addition of several new trustees, changes in the work of the organization, and the desire to renew and strengthen partnerships. Some of the functions of this team will include board and volunteer training, understanding procedures and operating structures of MDA teams and stakeholders, and review of organization rules and policies as they might impact work of MDA teams. A quarterly check-in with team-chairs will be established so that communication may be improved between the teams.

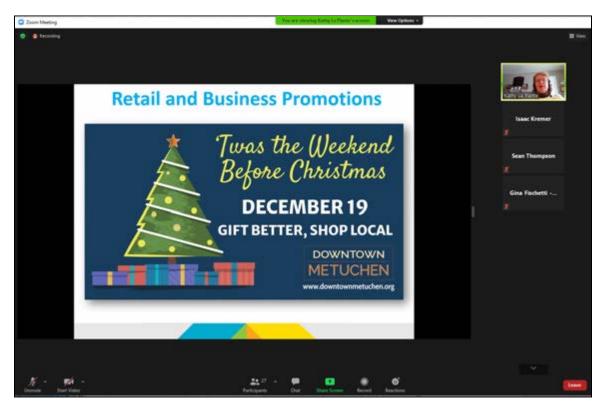
A primary function of the Organization Team is to promote the work of the organization. That was achieved in 2020 through the following presentations:

- "Age-Friendly Communities," New Jersey Future Redevelopment Forum, March 6, 2020,
- "Winning Winter" webinar, Downtown New Jersey, October 2, 2020,
- "Placemaking for the Win," New Jersey Downtown Conference, January 21, 2021, and
- "Benefits of Main Street," New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, January 25-26, 2021.

The work of Metuchen was also featured in webinars by the Business Recruitment and Expansion Network, Main Street America, International Downtown Association, and Downtown New Jersey.



Screenshot from the Organizational Health Check-up webinar by Main Street America, March 31, 2020.



Screenshot from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs webinar by Main Street America on January 26, 2021.

#### **D. VOLUNTEER AWARDS**

# Business Champion Award - Angela Piniero, Blue Parachute

Past awardees:

2019 – Jimmy Katims and Jason Penedos, Lotsa Balls

2018 - Jenny Lai, Picture Perfect Studios

2017 – Jim and Olivia Keane, La Rosa Pizzeria and Restaurant

2016 – Colleen Hansen, Cai's Cafe

Blue Parachute has been a crucial partner and supporter of MDA in 2020. Highlights include rapidly deploying curbside pickup signs, to supervising design and install of signage for Papillon & Company and A&J Jewelers, to research and sourcing for wind-load rated tents on New Street. Her full-service design and print shop is located at 263 Amboy Ave.

#### District Owner Award - Fred Schmitt and Reidun Anderson, Schmitt Anderson Architects

Past awardees:

2019 – Rich Mongelli, Mongelli LLC

2018 - Michael Ciesielka, Nexus Parking Systems

2017 – Jeff Jossell, Suburban Square, LLC

Long time property owner Fred Schmitt and Reidun Anderson have worked hard to keep their buildings leased up and in top physical condition. As an architect he has assisted a number of local businesses with fit out and other improvements.

### Promotion Award – Edna Epelu, Papillon & Company

Past awardees:

2019 – Ian Fawcett

2018 – Linda Levine

2017 – Joanne Cruz

2016 – Bobbie Theivakumaran

Proving that a pandemic is a perfect time to open a new business – Papillon & Company has become an important part of Metuchen since opening in September 2020. Successful promotions include "Mixology on Main" - a partnership with Hailey's Harp & Pub where participants make cocktails from a kit in a virtual class online, welcoming pop-up vendors, hosting local artists to display their work, and a display with The Hub & Spoke Vintage Bikes and Repairs. These activities amplify one another and give people an extra reason to visit this wonderful new store and the downtown.

### Innovation Award - Rob DeFillipis, Runner's High

Past awardees:

2019 - John Manzo, BMG Meals and Joanne Cruz, A Creative Twist

2018 – Bernie Hetzel

2017 – Edward Wetzel

2016 - Elaine Edgcomb

Runner's High is a longtime favorite retail business downtown. When the pandemic hit they accelerated plans to establish their online store and sell products online. An earlier recipient of a Storefront Improvement Grant, they have had a commitment to continuous improvement which is evident.

### Storefront Improvement Award - Ryan Park, Menya Ramen House

Past awardees:

2019 – Amarpreet Singh, Metuchen News

2018 – Mansi Khandelwal, The Kabab Factory

2017 - Rob DeFillipis, Runner's High

Menya Ramen House participated in the MDA Storefront Grant program as part of an extensive project to fit out a new space at 399 Main Street. Since opening in October 2020 they have become a foodie destination. An attractive blade sign, bullet lighting, and new storefront windows give the building a welcoming feel. Inside is a completely renovated dining area with open kitchen serving some of the best ramen around.

### Public Official Award – Melissa Perilstein, Borough Administrator

Past awardees:

2019 – Building and Zoning Department

2018 - Brandon Uhlig, Metuchen Media

2017 – Allison Inserro, Council Member

2016 – Fred Hall, DPW Director

Since taking the helm as Borough Administrator in February 2020, Melissa has encountered one challenge after another due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Borough provided crucial support facilitating curbside pickup zones, allowing for increased outdoor dining and retail, and most recently with establishment of the New Streetery to continue outdoor dining through the winter.

# **Board Service Award – Mark Harris, Metuchen Arts Council**

Past awardees:

2019 - Jay Muldoon, Borough Administrator

2018 – Grace Shackney

Since joining the Board in 2019, Mark Harris served an invaluable role as liaison to the Metuchen Arts Council. An accomplished photographer himself, Mark's work can be found on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Papillon & Company. Numerous initiatives continued to grow while he served, including an ongoing commitment to public art, live music on New Street in the Summer of 2020, Bollywood music event, Jazz performances at The Greek, and a retail pop-up with local artists at Boyt Drugs. While Mark has stepped down from the Board at the end of 2020, his many positive contributions are greatly appreciated.

#### Volunteer of the Year - Linda Levine

Past awardees

2019 – Bernie Hetzel

2018 – Elaine Edgcomb

2017 - Dan Cea

2016 – Bobbie Theivakumaran

Linda has become a familiar face on Main Street – thanks to her outreach to businesses in preparation for numerous promotions that MDA organizes. Also, as a downtown resident, she and her husband Dan could frequently be seen on the Town Plaza pre-COVID and we hope to see her right back there again.

#### **E. NEEDS IN 2021**

While one of the most frequent refrains among people is that they would like "life to go back to normal," in likelihood that will probably never happen. Conditions precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to be with us for a very long time. A more realistic expectation is that the pace of change we have seen happening during the pandemic will continue afterwards. For businesses that have chosen to "pivot" their model and embrace innovation, a few grew revenues in 2020. Businesses that embrace online shopping and new ways to get products to customers will excel.

Just as businesses have been forced to innovate, MDA has had to pivot too with an eye for the sort of transformative innovation that will help the downtown maintain its vitality and continue to be competitive in this new environment. One of the best innovations to emerge during the pandemic is to be creative with existing zoning and ordinances to allow businesses to utilize public and private spaces better for their benefit. We hope to see this trend continue.

Despite a slight increase in the vacancy rate both by sqft and by unit in 2020, we already have an indication that demand is high for the few remaining vacant storefronts in Metuchen. An effort needs to be made to focus on persistently vacant spaces, as well as the few newly built spaces that have never been occupied. More commercial space will be needed to meet the increasing market demand of businesses that want to locate in Metuchen. New apartments and the spending power that these new residents bring will continue to have a positive impact on the bottom line for businesses downtown. Incentives are needed to help businesses looking to open in downtown Metuchen, providing both technical and financial assistance to help with opening.

Given a commitment to walkability and a longstanding commitment of the MDA to help businesses improve their storefronts and public spaces – a priority for 2021 will be to increase the number of blade signs downtown. Already discussions have been had with the Borough about streamlining the process and making it easier for businesses to put blade signs up.

With several major projects on the horizon – from the Forum Theater rehabilitation, to a proposed beer garden on the site presently occupied by Manasquan Bank retail branch, to the NJ DOT improvements planned for several blocks of Main Street years from now – the coordination between MDA, our members, and the Borough will be more important than ever before. Thank you for your support these past five years. If they are any guide of what is to follow, the future for Metuchen will continue to be bright.



# E. FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR CY 2020 (Unaudited)

Rever	nue
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SID Contribution 225,000
Borough Contribution 75,000
Contributions 59,253
Grants 695,828

Total Revenue \$1,055,081

# \*Expenses

**Program Services** 

**Education and Tech** 3,474 25,521 Feeding the Front Line 41,043 **Placemaking** MSNJ and Reopening Grants 645,125 Storefront Grant Fund 22,768 Merchant Videos 14,013 Street Improvement and Maintenance 87,998 **Promotions and Advertising** 47,282 Communications 5,499

Total Program Expenses \$892,723

# General and Administrative

78,000 Salary 8,063 Salary related expenses **Contract Services** 16,338 Offices 3,321 Rent 10,800 Utilities 3,206 **Facility and Equipment** 2,181 **Travel and Meetings** 805 Insurance 2,816 689 Dues and Membership 1,363 **Volunteer Training Website Costs** 0 Miscellaneous 308

Total General and Administrative \$127,890

Total Expenses \$1,020,613

Increase (Decrease in Net Assets) \$34,468

Net Assets at Beginning of Period \$31,772

Net Assets at End of Period \$66,240