

PRSRRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
COLUMBIA, MO  
PERMIT NO. 319



11 S. Tenth Street  
Columbia, Missouri 65201

www.downtown.org • info@discoverthedistrict.com • (573) 442-6816

# COLUMBIA SPECIAL BUSINESS DISTRICT



## Strategic Planning For THE DISTRICT

### The Times They Are A-Changin'

When the Columbia Special Business District (SBD) was first formed in 1979, we only needed to worry about a small area around Ninth and Broadway. Likewise, the Central Columbia Association (CCA) could easily help promote the handful of retailers located in the area at the time.

Now The District has 43 blocks that are either just as vital as Ninth and Broadway or are well on the way to becoming so. Mixed-use residential development is planned and several catalytic development projects are in the works as

well. Business recruitment and retention are becoming even more important as Columbia becomes a regional shopping, dining and entertainment destination.

We simply don't have the resources—staff or financial—to keep up with this growth. After nearly three decades, it's time to restructure so we can better meet our members' needs.

In early 2008, the SBD retained the services of the consulting firm Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.), who conducted an organizational assessment of the SBD and the CCA. The

consultants are considering a number of restructuring options including the possible formation of a Community Improvement District (CID), a district similar to an SBD but with the ability to pull in more revenues and offer a wider range of member services.

We invite all our members to read more about this restructuring process and take every opportunity to become involved along the way. By the end of this process, we hope to have a stronger organization that can not only do a better job at providing member services, but one that can be a stronger voice for our members as well.

## The Possibility of Change

P.U.M.A. recommends the SBD shift from the role of event promoter to that of property manager, focusing on economic development, business recruitment and maintenance of The District. Event promotion won't be eliminated completely, but changing dynamics make economic development issues such as business recruitment and retention a priority.

### Did You Know?

- Property owners within the SBD are assessed 47.63 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation.
- The average SBD property owner pays \$466 per year in property taxes.

Specific strategies include:

#### Economic Development

- Business Recruitment and Retention
- Developer Recruitment
- Business and Investor Marketing

#### Public Realm

- Clean and Safe Programs
- Beautification and Pedestrian Connections
- Downtown Master Plan Involvement

#### Organizational

- Leadership and Advocacy
- Increased Staffing
- Increased Communications

#### Resources

- Expand Member Services
- Explore New Assessment Options
- Explore Community Improvement District (CID)

Increased services and a broader role for the organization will clearly require more resources, both staff and financial.

When our members were asked if they'd be willing to pay for this increase in services, nearly 55 percent said "definitely yes" or "probably yes." Only 10 percent said "probably no" or "definitely no."

This gives us a good start for exploring the possibility of changing from a Special Business District—which can only receive revenues from property taxes and business license fees—to a Community Improvement District (CID)—which can also generate sales tax revenue.

A CID is created by and requires approval from the members. To that end, the board of the SBD is in the process of forming a Community Improvement District Exploratory Committee to determine if a CID is right for us.



### Did You Know?

- Business owners within the SBD pay an additional fee of 50% of the cost of a business license.
- 44% of business owners pay less than \$20 per year for a business license and 15% pay only \$7.50 per year.

## 2. Form a CID Exploratory Committee

Although some changes can be made immediately, most recommended changes will require additional staff and funding. For instance, members listed their top priorities as business recruitment, clean and safe programs, and more beautification of the pedestrian areas. All these new or expanded programs will require dedicated staff and a dedicated funding source.

A CID is similar to a Special Business District, but can provide more member programs and services because it pulls in additional assessments. One option would be to replace our current SBD with a CID. The CID Exploratory Committee will consist of key District stakeholders representing a range of different interests. Their role will be to review a proposed CID Plan, including budget, services, programs and assessment levels, to determine if a CID is right for us.

The plan can be downloaded at [www.downtown.org](http://www.downtown.org), and we will keep you informed as we move along.

Thank you for your continued support throughout this process.

## Inform, Review and Implement

P.U.M.A. was hired in early spring of 2008 to begin the consulting process. They have helped over 80 downtown organizations across the nation increase their effectiveness through restructuring. Springfield, St. Louis and Kansas City have all benefited from the services P.U.M.A. provides.

After a series of focus groups, one-on-one interviews and member surveys, P.U.M.A. put together a working draft of our Downtown Columbia Strategic Plan for our members to review. They presented this plan to the SBD and CCA boards, their members and other District stakeholders in mid-June. Both boards have approved the

draft, but because it is a working document, we are still accepting feedback from members.

There are two more steps in the process:

### 1. Begin Implementation of the Plan

The basic changes recommended by the plan can be implemented right away. These include setting new priorities, reallocating funds, and moving toward a consolidated board structure where the SBD and the CCA can begin working in concert on key issues. This includes the creation of an overarching nonprofit organization designed to provide a single voice and stronger leadership for The District.

# STRATEGY