



Press Release

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For immediate release

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SBD Moves Forward with Visioning Recommendations

Reorganization of the SBD a Consideration

Columbia – The Board of the Columbia Special Business District today announced they are taking several immediate steps to address the goals for downtown outlined by the “Imagine Columbia’s Future” Visioning Committee.

These steps include:

- 1) Reorganizing the Special Business District to better address member needs, economic growth and future downtown development.
- 2) Continuing to advocate for downtown development incentives for catalytic projects, including major attractions and mixed-use residential developments.
- 3) Continuing to work towards creative parking options, increased pedestrian and bike access and an improved streetscape, particularly on Broadway.
- 4) Completing the final phase of the SBD’s 5-year downtown streetscape project to ensure a more attractive and pedestrian-friendly downtown.

“We were pleased to see so much community support for so many of our priority issues,” said Carrie Gartner, Director of the Special Business District. “My board has long supported incentives to spur mixed-use development and is currently considering ways to make the organization itself more effective. This comes at the perfect time for us.”

To jumpstart the process, the SBD has retained the services of the downtown consulting firm Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.) who will begin an organizational assessment of the SBD beginning in March. P.U.M.A. has 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.

“When the SBD was first formed in 1979, they only needed to worry about a small area around Ninth and Broadway. Now we have 43 blocks that are either just as vital as Ninth and Broadway or are well on the way to becoming so,” said Gartner. “We don’t have the resources to keep up with this growth. After nearly three decades, it’s time to restructure so we can better meet our members’ needs.”

The consultants will consider 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. A CID would handle the service oriented tasks of the current SBD, allowing for the formation of an overarching organization that would address the long term vision for downtown. A preliminary report is expected in June.

The Columbia Special Business District is an organization dedicated to beautification, business recruitment, economic development, historic preservation and other issues. Its sister organization, the Central Columbia Association, is a voluntary merchants’ association dedicated to marketing and promotion of shopping, dining and entertainment in *The District*.