

Building better neighborhoods and great partnerships in city

Written by MICHAEL R. BLOOMBERG
Thursday, 13 October 2011 21:47



SMALL businesses have always provided the heartbeat of our city's economy.

They account for 50 percent of the jobs in our private sector workforce.

They push our economy forward with new ideas, services and products, and they are the glue that holds our neighborhoods together.

Creating more jobs for New Yorkers during this downturn requires us to keep investing in our small businesses — and one of the best ways we can do that is through Business Improvement Districts.

Business Improvement Districts, or BIDs, rose to fame a couple of decades ago because of their success in transforming Times Square and Union Square from areas racked by abandonment and crime into the dynamic neighborhoods they are today.

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BIDs are essentially public-private partnerships in which property and business owners channel funds towards various activities to improve and promote their retail corridors — including street cleaning, street improvements, additional security, holiday lighting and marketing.

Our administration has actively supported BIDs because they are an important tool for improving our quality of life and creating jobs.

The more attractive our commercial districts are, the more shoppers they'll attract, and the more our small businesses will thrive.

And that's why we've made it considerably easier for BIDs to form, and for BIDs to grow.

Last week, I signed legislation that creates two exciting new Business Improvement Districts — one in Chinatown, and one along Atlantic Avenue in Brooklyn.

That brings the total number of BIDs formed under our administration to 22 — more than any other previous administration — and 19 of them are outside of Manhattan, including the very first one on Staten Island.

In total, there are now 66 BIDs in all five boroughs — the most of any city in America.

Collectively, these BIDs contributed over \$100 million in services to more than 64,000 businesses during the past year.

They employ more than 1,200 sanitation workers, public safety agents, and other staff.

Our BIDs are also about bringing merchants together and harnessing their resources to take already-bustling commercial districts to the next level.

And you can see that happening on Fordham Road in the Bronx, where merchants have joined

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together to clean the blocks of graffiti...or on Forest Avenue in Staten Island, where businesses have hosted special events to enliven the streets and attract more shoppers.

Building great, attractive neighborhoods is one of the pillars of our strategy for creating jobs and growing our economy.

And building great neighborhoods happens by building great partnerships.

City government can't do everything we'd like to do — that's why public-private partnerships are so important.

We all want our small businesses to thrive and grow and hire more people — and through Business Improvement Districts, we're all working together to make that come true.