

MONTAGUE STREET BID ANNUAL REPORT: FISCAL YEAR 2010

Section I. District Background and Review of Fiscal Year 2010 Activities

A. Neighborhood Needs Assessment

Montague Street is home to over 100 retail tenants – a mix of owner-operated, franchise, and national-chain businesses. While the economic difficulties of 2008-09 increased the district's vacancy rate, as of June 2010, the BID was at nearly 100% occupancy.

The district also contains a number of commercial office towers, high-rise residential buildings (rental and co-op), and several dozen mixed-use brownstones with residential units on upper floors. Conversion of the Franklin Trust Building (166 Montague) from commercial office space to upscale condominiums was completed in 2010, and a second office-to-residential conversion at 172 Montague was announced. Impact from both developments is expected to be positive, with residents providing local retailers with additional evening and weekend sales.

A function of Montague Street's success as a retail corridor is that it appeals to well-established chain and franchise businesses. Therefore, the district's retail mix is more mainstream than most Brooklyn shopping districts. To support the district's unique identity, the BID works to intensify Montague Street's sense of place through public space and development programs, some of which are detailed below.

B. Review of Accomplishments

Pedestrian Plazas, Revised and Refined

FY09 Goal: We will refine our pedestrian plaza program, providing additional event programming, seeking partnerships with community organizations, and creating specific themes that offer our merchants specific marketing opportunities.

Result: Achieved in September 2009. Themed programming attracted significantly more visitors than the pilot events in 2008. Partnerships were established with the Brooklyn Book Festival, the Brooklyn Historical Society, the Dodge YMCA, and other organizations. Merchants were surveyed, and a majority of those that responded were in favor of the program, with some reporting increased sales.

Enhanced Winter Lighting

FY09 Goal: We will build on our prior winter lighting programs by increasing the number of light strands installed and exploring different light types and installation patterns.

Result: Achieved in December 2009, with 9 trees illuminated with LED lights.

Tree-Pit Landscaping

FY09 Goal: We will oversee the final stage of our tree-guard project – installation of the actual iron fencing – and will develop a landscaping program for the protected pits.

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Result: Achieved, with 49 guards installed by in February 2010. We will continue to work with the Parks Department to identify additional locations for the installation of new trees and guards. Spring bulbs were planted and bloomed in April 2010. Planting of summer annuals was completed in June.

Revamped Print Marketing Materials

FY09 Goal: We will replace our outdated district map with new print materials that can be distributed to BID merchants, new area tenants, and/or local tourist centers.

Result: Achieved. A new visitor's map, created in cooperation with the three downtown Brooklyn BIDs, was printed in June 2010. In addition, a brochure outlining BID services has been created for outreach to new and potential BID members.

New Visitor-Attraction Initiatives

FY09 Goal: We will explore opportunities to better reach and attract potential shoppers and visitors in the neighborhoods surrounding the district.

Result: Achieved. Advertising of BID merchants at the Book Festival was successful and will be repeated in FY2010. The new visitor's guide was distributed to Downtown Brooklyn hotels and attractions and to the Brooklyn Borough President's Tourist Center. The BID also retained a social-media intern, who supported BID merchants with updates on our Twitter and Facebook sites.

C. Review of Activities Data

Please see Tab 1 of the accompanying file, *MontagueBID_Impacts_FY10.xls*.

Section II. Looking Ahead: Fiscal Year 2011 Goals

Year-Round Landscaping

We will look to expand our tree-pit planting to a year-round program, with spring bulbs, summer/fall annuals, and (new in 2010-11) appropriate winter plantings or greens.

Enhanced Winter Lighting

After the success of our pilot tree-lighting program last year, we will expand the number of decorated trees and the number of lights installed.

Ongoing Visitor-Attraction Initiatives

We will continue to explore opportunities to better reach and attract potential shoppers and visitors in the neighborhoods surrounding the district. In addition to ongoing programs to distribute our new visitor's guide at area hotels and attractions and to leverage social media, we will explore possible coupon and flyer programs, with the goal of advertising local businesses and tracking response. And we will continue our pedestrian-street event, capitalizing on the presence of visitors in the neighborhood for the Brooklyn Book Festival; this year, we'll be expanding programs to support and encourage merchant participation in the events.

Expansion of BID Online Presence

We will revise and expand our current website to offer more detail on BID programs, to provide digital versions of our print publications and press releases, and to better feature the online activity of BID members. We'll also explore opportunities for further online advertising.

Research into Capital Improvements

We will reach out to BID members regarding their preferences for future improvements to the public realm, and we will begin developing funding and installation alternatives in response to member priorities.

Section III. Contracts

See Tab 2 in the accompanying file, *MontagueBID_Impacts_FY10.xls*.

Section IV. Organizational Information

No staff changes or organizational restructuring occurred during the FY10 fiscal year. The BID continues to be staffed by a single part-time employee, as it has been since its inception in 1998. Chelsea Mauldin, Executive Director, has been with the organization since July 2006.