



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Downtown Boston Business Improvement District (BID) Plants the Seeds For A Spring Awakening in the Heart of Boston

BOSTON (May 1, 2021) – [The Downtown Boston Business Improvement District](#) (BID), a non-profit corporation created by property owners to improve the experience of all who live, work, visit, go to school, or shop within the downtown area, is playing a major role in bringing vibrancy back to the heart of Boston. Celebrating its 10th anniversary this year, the membership-based organization is supporting local businesses and taking extra measures to ensure a safe, clean, and welcoming reopening of the district. The BID provides advocacy, in some cases financial assistance, and supplemental services to keep the streets and sidewalks clean, upgrade the aesthetic appearance of the district and make people feel welcomed and safe.

“With the widespread availability of vaccinations and the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions, it is time to reinforce the heart of the city – Downtown Boston – and its reputation as a vital, historically and economically significant world-class destination,” said Rosemarie Sansone, president of the Downtown Boston BID. “It’s been a very challenging year for all of us. So our goal now is to continue the unprecedented multi-decade transformation of Downtown and put a smile on everyone’s faces – whether they are office workers, shoppers, students, local residents, or tourists.”

Uptick in Traffic & Ongoing Investments Show a Healthy Reopening for Downtown

A measurable rise in foot traffic and the reopening of restaurants and retailers presages a healthy resurgence in Downtown Boston. According to data collected by the BID in a March 2021 survey, approximately 85 percent of ground-floor retailers and 60 percent of restaurants that were open pre-pandemic have now reopened to the public, with many more scheduled or planned. The BID’s pedestrian-traffic sensors have measured an impressive 95 percent increase in foot traffic in the area since December 2020, a month typically busy with holiday shoppers and travelers.

In addition to established businesses reopening, new locally owned restaurants have debuted. Banh Mi Ok, a Vietnamese eatery, opened in March, while Love Art Sushi, a counter-style restaurant offering deconstructed sushi chirashi bowls, opened in February. Many prestigious and globally known businesses have recently moved or are planning to move to downtown, including Sasaki, an internationally renowned design firm previously headquartered in Watertown, Massachusetts, while a new Xfinity store opened in March. Finally, a number of highly anticipated new developments have either recently finished—such as the 399 Washington Street renovation—or are underway, ranging from the landmark \$1.3 billion Winthrop Center project and 28 State Street’s dramatic ongoing lobby makeover to the boutique renovations at 10 Winthrop Square and 127 Tremont Street.

Continued Emphasis On Clean, Safe & Welcoming

With the absence of large crowds over the past year, the BID’s popular uniformed Ambassadors, who work around the clock tending to the district and responding to its needs, have had an opportunity to deep-clean the area – painting and shining street furniture, power-washing sidewalks, refreshing flower planters, removing graffiti tags, stickers and more. The Ambassadors are also readily available to give hospitality assistance, provide directions and maps to the public, and assist in creating and maintaining a safe environment for all who work, live and visit in the area.

The Ambassadors also monitor the physical well-being of people experiencing homelessness in its district. Each morning, Ambassador outreach teams visit areas where people congregate overnight to make sure the individuals they encounter are safe. If needed, the Ambassadors refer individuals to city services and social service agencies. They also help individuals enroll in recovery programs and obtain housing assistance.

“While the streets have been empty, we have continued to work nonstop making our community a better place,” said Nojdar Aga, operations director for the Downtown Boston BID. “The past year, with its scarcity of people, traffic, and activity, has provided a unique opportunity to take our focus on safety, cleanliness and beautification to a new level. We are ready, more now than ever before, to welcome back the thousands of familiar faces that make Downtown Boston so special.”

The BID Lends a Hand in Restaurant Reopenings

As part of the Downtown Boston BID's "dining incentive and support" plan for neighborhood eateries, the BID staff – with invaluable assistance from the City of Boston– has been working closely with the district's restaurant members, providing them the support and direction needed to get back on their feet and to make or expand reopening plans. From creating parklets by setting-off sidewalks or parking spaces, power-washing the area, and facilitating early morning deliveries of tables, chairs, umbrellas and barricades, the BID is creating safe and welcoming outdoor dining areas that enable downtown restaurants to serve more customers.

In addition to the tables, chairs and other basics, restaurant owners have sought the BID's guidance drawing up outdoor seating plans, filling out permit applications, writing letters to city agencies and even accompanying owners on inspection walk-throughs. BID officials estimate their work has saved individual restaurants about \$10,000 each in staff time, equipment rental, security and more.

The BID also recently created a new map of the district's eateries and introduced a six-week campaign, "#DineDTX," that incentivizes residents, workers and shoppers to eat at local restaurants or order food to go and promote their experiences online.

"Closing the business that was our life's work was heartbreaking, to say the least. Having the help of the BID to assist with all the logistics of reopening and helping us reduce costs during this difficult time means the world to us," said Haley Fortier, owner of Haley.Henry Wine Bar. "We are so excited to have officially reopened in time for the beautiful spring and summer weather, perfect for safe outdoor dining."

About The Downtown Boston Business Improvement District

The Downtown Boston Business Improvement District (BID), Boston's first BID, launched in spring 2011. A private, non-profit corporation, the BID encompasses a 34-block area between Tremont and Congress streets and Court and Boylston streets that includes Downtown Crossing, the Ladder District, and parts of the Financial and Theater districts. Its mission is to transform and engage downtown Boston through programs and supplemental services that meet area needs. Created by property owner members, the BID is overseen by a 33-member board of directors, which is elected by the BID membership and represents a cross-section of BID area's business community. The organization's funding is derived from assessments paid by BID

commercial property owner members. For more information on the Downtown Boston Business Improvement District, please visit: www.downtownboston.org.

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