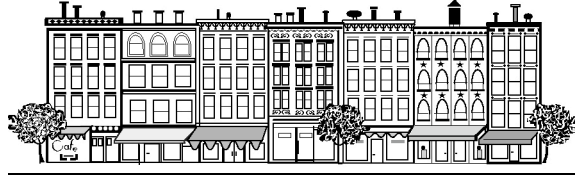


Columbus Avenue

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



Annual Report Fiscal Year 2010

Accomplishments and Goals Report

Columbus Avenue

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



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Section 1

Review of Fiscal Year 2010 Activities

The Columbus Avenue Business Improvement District (BID) is a thriving retail community in the heart of New York City's Upper West Side, wholly contained within the Central Park West Historic District. The district includes the American Museum of Natural History, The Rose Center for Earth and Space, and is just steps from the New-York Historical Society. The fifteen block district runs along Columbus Avenue, dipping into side streets where there is commercial development. Its southern border is at West 67th Street, just a block from Lincoln Center, and the northern boundary is currently on the south side of West 82nd Street.

- **Neighborhood Needs Assessment:**

Characterization of current real estate market in district: The entire stretch of the Columbus Avenue BID is a mix of low-rise retail ground-floor establishments comprising contemporary shops and restaurants housed in late 19th and early 20th century buildings that define the first wave of construction on the Upper West Side. The retail establishments provide a colorful and continuous flow throughout, with architecture composed almost exclusively of French flats and tenements, typically five to six stories high. The second through top floors of these buildings are primarily residential spaces, and although there are a few office spaces, they are no longer permitted above the ground floor, except those now existing and grandfathered. The one architectural exception within the district is the stately American Museum of Natural History, stretching for four blocks on the east side of the Avenue and surrounded by beautiful Theodore Roosevelt Park.

Major tenants moving in or out of neighborhood?: At the current time, there are just two vacancies within the entire BID area, and one of those has a lease pending. This, more than anything, indicates the health of the BID area, and flies in the face of the general economic slump still seen throughout the nation. It is worth noting that the one commercial vacancy is located in a building on the NW corner of W.71st Street, which was purchased by a Spanish clothing designer with a chain of successful shops called Custo, a few years ago. His intention was to open one of his shops in the retail space, but he apparently has changed his mind, and doesn't seem fazed that the property is languishing. All attempts to contact him have failed.

New developments or capital projects in district: The BID is wholly within one of New York City's landmark districts, the Central Park West Historic District, and therefore not



eligible for new developments. There are currently no capital projects in the district and none expected.

Other problems or needs that exist in the district: The BID holds merchant breakfasts, to which all retailers are invited, no charge, in an attempt to address their needs. Speakers of interest to merchants are invited, as a way to begin dialogue and encourage shared strategies and efforts. There are no other major problems or needs in this district.

Review of Accomplishments:

The following is an update on the status of goals noted in last year's annual report:

- 1. New Taste of the Upper West Side event: Now planning for the fourth annual event, this event has established itself as one of the premiere food events in New York City. The event doubled in size this past year, with major events on two nights instead of the previous one night, and was sold out. Due to the constraints of our venue, several hundred more who wanted to attend could not be accommodated. The event included all of the major chefs from the Upper West Side, and with so many high profile chefs who have recently moved to the area, the event was truly a celebration of a major blossoming of gastronomic choices now available on the Upper West Side.

This goal more than met our expectations.

- 2. Greening of Columbus Avenue: After many years of lobbying for this, the Columbus Avenue BID finally got a small portion of a protected bicycle lane on the Avenue, which DOT is currently constructing from W.77th Street to W. 96th Street. It is hoped that after a one year pilot program, this lane will be continued south to connect with the Ninth Avenue protected bike lane (note that Ninth Avenue is the continuation of Columbus Avenue south of 59th Street).

We are still waiting for DOT to install bike racks on the retrofit parking meter poles, as they have now installed muni-meters in the area and removed the meters. We understand that delay is due to design issues.

A Sunday greenmarket on the continuous four-block sidewalk stretch adjacent to Theodore Roosevelt Park, which surrounds the American Museum of Natural History has provided a sense of place for the area, and is a wonderful year-round community amenity, as well as being extremely popular with residents.

This goal will be ongoing in various capacities for the foreseeable future, but has come a long way.

- 3. Fence Project: The \$350,000 grant we received from Assembly Member Linda Rosenthal for our fence project has not yet been received. The grant is to be used to construct a fence around the I.S.44 School building on Columbus Avenue between W.76th-W.77th Street, but has had numerous delays having to do with cost of



construction. At this time, we are looking into constructing just the Columbus Avenue side of the fence rather than including the two sides as well, so that we can begin construction.

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- Expansion Project: The Board voted this year to put this project on hold for the time being. Efforts to get support from property owners north of the existing BID proved very difficult due to economic times.
This goal was not met but may be revisited in the future.
- 5. Ten Year Assessment: Where do we Go From Here?: The BID turned ten years old in January. Having reached that milestone, the board has been considering how best to move forward. As you will read below, we have decided to exert efforts to greatly expand the New Taste of the Upper West Side event to a multi-day event, and are still trying to figure out ways to showcase a more varied group of merchants and retailers, though a number of challenging and unusual ideas are under discussion. The BID is also very committed to expanded greening amenities, and working with DOT, Upper West Side Streets Renaissance Campaign, and Transportation Alternatives to make them reality.

The BID did not undertake any other major activities this past year that were not identified with the goals we had set for ourselves.

Review of Activities Data:

Please see spreadsheet, entitled Section I Review of Fiscal Year 2008 Activities Data

Section II
Looking Ahead Fiscal Year 2009 Goals

Top Five Goals for July 2009 - June 2010:

- 1. New Taste of the Upper West Side Expanded Version: This sellout event more than doubled its size this year to have over 1700 attendees, with many turned away due to tent capacity limits. Our elegant food tasting event (see video online at www.newtasteuws.com) called attention to Columbus Avenue through all kinds of media, and served as a wonderful advertisement for the district. However, many changes are being talked about for next year's event, which will be on two nights instead of one, though both will be quite different from one another. Additionally, there is a morning event being planned that will benefit the two schools on the block, as all revenue taken in will go to the school's Parents' Associations. We are also planning for an event in conjunction with our major one that will hopefully showcase the shops on Columbus Avenue instead of just



the restaurants. We hope to be able to implement these changes into the next New Taste event, which will be held from June 4th to June 5th, and possibly as early as June 3rd, with the retail event.

- 2. Greening of Columbus Avenue: We are hopeful that retrofitting of selected defunct parking meters into bike racks will occur this year, as they are sorely needed on the Avenue. We have already identified those we would like to have retrofit, when the tops of the old meters are capped off and the muni-meters are in place. The existing meter poles would then provide the support for the new round stainless steel bike rack. We are also hoping to add some benches to the avenue. To the project described above, we are working with Renew, an English company that produces a recycling can that includes an information center (video component).
- 3. Fence project: Now that we have received a grant from our Assembly Member to construct the green fence around the I.S. 44 schoolyard with one that is unique and contains living green elements, we are waiting for the grant to actually be received, so that this long-awaited project will move forward. The fence has already been designed by the prominent firm of Richard Dattner and Partners, Architects. We are hopeful that this project can be built by next summer.
- 4. Expansion Project: Having stalled for the past two years as described above in Section I, we are hopeful that by taking on this project in-house that it will now move forward. Over the years, the BID has been approached numerous times by merchants in the expansion area, asking how they can be a part of the BID to partake of our services and improvements. When one looks at the proposed district, there is run-down quality we know we can eliminate. The City's timetable for this project is 18 months, and hoping for completion in 2010.

Section III

Fiscal Report

Please refer to the template Fiscal Report for this information.

Section IV

Contracts

Please refer to the template entitled Contracts for this information.

Section V

Columbus Avenue

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT



Organizational Information

The Columbus Avenue BID currently has two full-time employees, an executive director and her assistant. There are no other employees. The addition of the assistant was made possible when we received our assessment increase, and has proved to be invaluable, and we now are able to undertake more in-house projects, such as the expansion project, our own computer trouble-shooting, etc.