

# Town of Middlebury

## Downtown Improvement District

In 1996, to enhance Middlebury's downtown district for businesses, residents and visitors, commercial property owners in the Middlebury village area joined together to petition the Selectboard to enact an ordinance to create a Downtown Improvement District, or DID. In brief, under the ordinance, owners of commercial or mixed-use properties within the District's clearly defined boundaries pay a small tax in addition to their regular property taxes. This additional tax revenue is then designated to fund - and to leverage grants to fund - public improvements within the district.

In accordance with § 127-104(12) of the Town Charter and Article VII of the DID ordinance, the special Downtown Improvement District tax assessment requires re-authorization every seven years by at least two-thirds of the DID's property owners. The DID special assessment was extended in November 2017 for another seven years, to June 30, 2024, so that we may continue to fund critical public improvement projects within the District.



Map of Downtown Improvement District

## **Mission of Downtown Improvement District**

Our mission is to promote Downtown Middlebury as a vibrant commercial and cultural destination. This is achieved through strategic capital improvements, enhanced maintenance, beautification projects, marketing and promotions. This includes:

1. A clean, safe, well-lit, and inviting appearance, both day and night;
2. Appealing storefronts occupied with an eclectic variety of inviting and interesting retail and service businesses;
3. Activities that will attract and benefit area residents, businesses and visitors;
4. A healthy mix of retail, restaurant, entertainment and service businesses and to be known as having a reputation for welcoming and supporting new businesses, and;
5. Creative and lively places where people will shop, enjoy, remember and return.

## **2018 Board of Directors**

Members of the Board of Directors are appointed by the Selectboard for three year terms, excluding the Selectboard Representative, who serves a one-year term.

Chair: Amey Ryan, IPJ Real Estate

Vice Chair, Becky Dayton Vermont Book Shop

Members:

Gary Baker, Gary Baker Insurance and resident of the District

Steve Dupoise, County Tire

Adam Franco, Middlebury College

Lindsey Fuentes-George, Selectboard Representative

## Recent Projects Funded by the Downtown Improvement District

In recent years, the revenue collected from this tax, which totals approximately \$34,000 annually, has been used to fund or leverage funding for:

- New sidewalks
- Installation of historic streetlight fixtures
- Park improvements
- Wayfinding signs
- Rapid-flashing beacon pedestrian crossing lights
- Removal of old and re-painting of new “Walk Bike” sidewalk stencils
- Landscaping of the new Town Offices



Mill St. Parking Lot Sign  
Sign



Tower at Riverfront Park



Flashing Beacon



Wayfinding

The DID also contributes 15% (approximately \$5,100) of its annual revenue to the Better Middlebury Partnership (BMP) for its support for services to secure grants for downtown improvements and other activities benefiting the district; \$10,000 to support the BMP’s Marketing position, and 10% (approximately \$3,400) to the maintenance of past projects.

## Tax Rate

To raise \$34,000 to fund its annual budget, a tax rate of 7¢ per \$100 valuation has been levied on commercial property in the district valued at \$49M.

## **What is a Special Assessment District Improvement District?**

A special assessment district provides enhanced improvements and activities, such as maintenance, beautification, marketing and economic development in addition to those provided by local government. A special assessment district is based upon the “mutual benefit” concept. Assessments are collected on properties within a specific geographic district, with the proceeds directed back to the district to provide services that benefit the district.

### **Some other attributes of a Special Assessment District are:**

- It is designed and created by those who will pay the assessment;
- It is established through petition process by the property owners who will pay the proposed assessments;
- It is governed and implemented by those who pay through a 501c6 non-profit, private sector management organization that manages the day-to-day operations;
- It provides for a set term of existence (7 years) and requires a new petition process, by those who pay, to renew the assessment district;
- It allows a wide range of service options, including maintenance, marketing, economic development, special events, parking improvements, access improvements;
- All meetings are open to the public.