



DISCOVERY
Special Improvement District

DISCOVERY

SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

2023
ANNUAL REPORT

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A LOOK BACK AT 2023

With nearly 20 years of dedicated service to Downtown Columbus, the Discovery Special Improvement District (SID) remains focused on its commitment to safety initiatives, the continued activation of public spaces and serving as the collective voice for our property owners, partners and stakeholders.

A year ago, we embarked on a strategic planning process, gathering input from board members, property owners, elected officials and key partner organizations. This endeavor has reinforced our focus on cultivating a safe and vibrant downtown neighborhood and continues to guide our efforts as we look to the future.

We continue to demonstrate our dedication to downtown with a holistic approach to safety. Focusing on preventative measures and comprehensive training efforts, our operation thrives on collaboration. Our ambassador team operates in tandem with special duty police officers and homeless outreach specialists, responding to nearly 550 calls for service per month.

These services are at the heart of our program, but improving the reality and perception of safety is more than just patrols: It means providing meaningful services and activating public spaces. That's why, in 2023, we introduced a summer-long event series to provide amenities for employees and residents and attract more visitors to the SID. These events drew a diverse crowd, reminding us that downtown is a place for everyone.

Looking ahead, we remain dedicated to building on these successes and following the guidance of our strategic plan. Through robust and thoughtful collaboration, we can be the architects of a safer, more vibrant and inclusive downtown. We are eager to continue our work toward that vision.

Carl Brown

Carl Brown
Chair, Board of Trustees



DISCOVERY SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

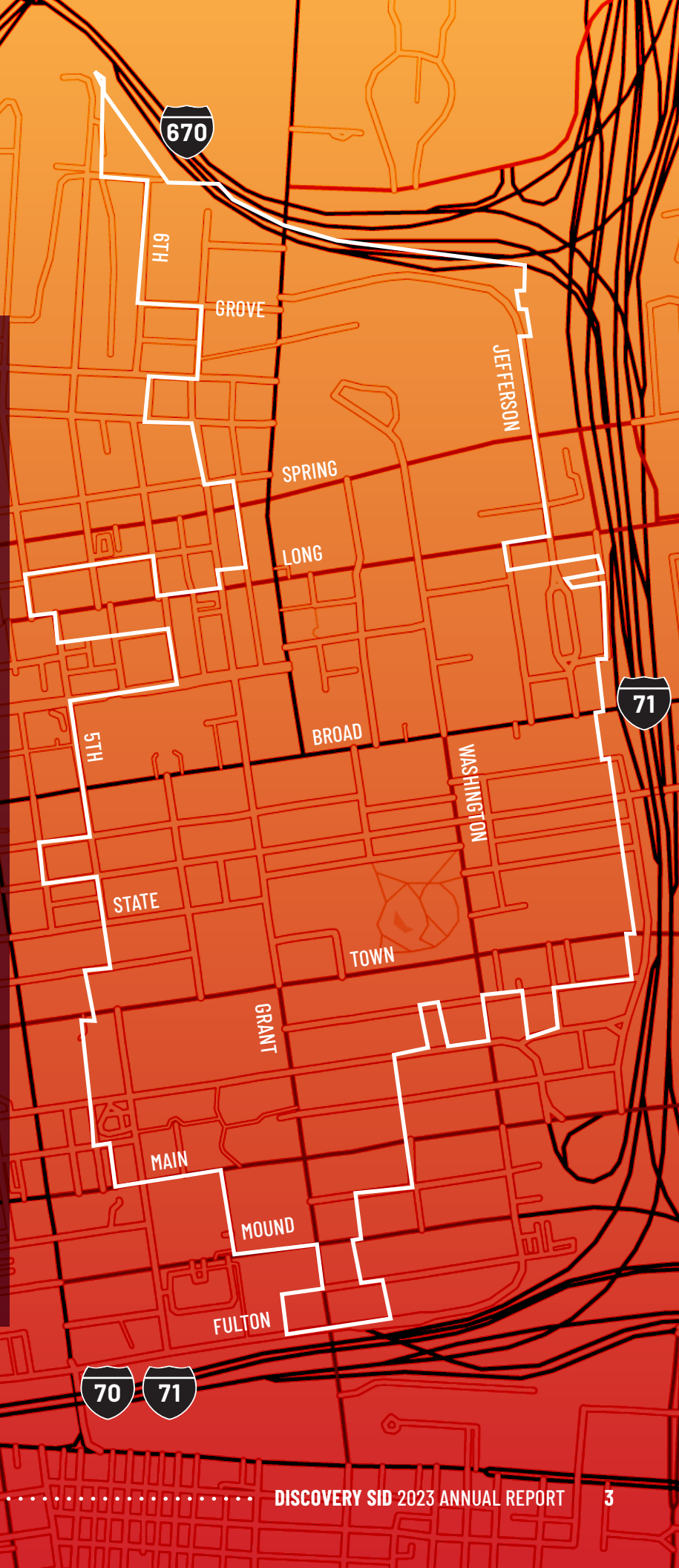
OUR MISSION

The Discovery Special Improvement District (DSID) works to support the vibrancy of downtown through services and advocacy with a keen focus on a safe and excellent experience for all. We are a collective voice of downtown property owners who assess themselves to pay for public services and improvements. DSID was formed in 2005 by property owners in 305 acres of the eastern area of downtown.

592 Parcels

246 Property Owners

305 Acres



OFFERING SECURITY AND REASSURANCE

12,255 HOURS
OF SAFETY SERVICES

As more people gravitate downtown for work, housing and community events, creating a safe and welcoming environment is paramount to successful urban growth and development. SID safety ambassadors actively keep an eye on downtown, and they're available to lend a hand when someone needs assistance. When people see the red uniform rolling by, they know we have their backs.

A versatile team player, Eric creates a safer atmosphere wherever he goes. His presence is especially appreciated by all the students who attend classes in the Discovery District.



 **11,276 MILES** of Bike Patrol

 **153** Safety Escorts

 **1,850** Client Relations Events

 **384** Quality of Life Issues Addressed*

 **145** Public Assistance Events

 **320** Well-being Checks

*Includes trespassing, suspicious activity or packages, aggressive panhandling, fights and open containers



PARTNERING FOR A SAFER DOWNTOWN

Special duty officers work in tandem with the SID safety ambassadors, enabling faster response times and more coverage of the district. We are grateful for the ongoing partnership with the Columbus Division of Police in patrolling downtown with a focus on community engagement and relationship building.

“As an ambassador, I learned how to engage with people and understood the importance of safety for the downtown community. When I became a Columbus Police Officer, I wanted to come back to help the SID from a law enforcement perspective. Our partnership has been invaluable in lowering crime and providing reassurance in the districts.”

Mark W., Special Duty Police Officer and former SID safety ambassador (pictured, right)



7,169 HOURS

of Special Duty Officer Patrol in Both Districts



39 Collaborations Assisting Unhoused Individuals












THE VALUE OF OUTREACH

The SID homeless outreach team makes a massive impact on the lives of individuals in crisis and people experiencing homelessness downtown. 2023 was a year of many positive outcomes thanks to the unwavering dedication of Ryan, Bill and Jessica as well as support from invaluable partner organizations and donations from the downtown community.

"It's important to meet people where they're at in their journey. Finding that unique approach and providing folks with options is vital for recovery and stability."

Jessica, SID outreach specialist

-  **277** People Connected to Temporary Shelter
-  **30** People Connected to Permanent Housing
-  **5** People Connected to Housing with Friends and Family
-  **855** People Engaged on the Street
-  **746** People Engaged in the SID Office
-  **375** People Engaged at the Main Library
-  **490** IDs/Birth Certificates Secured

SID SUCCESS STORIES



Procuring Identification

The SID outreach team assisted an individual last year who was facing substantial adversity after sustaining a traumatic brain injury from getting hit by a car. Not only had they lost all their documentation, they had a difficult time even knowing which direction they were walking. SID outreach specialist Bill helped them get their birth certificate and ID, then helped them submit a housing application which was fast-tracked due to their vulnerability. Now, this individual has a one-bedroom apartment, knows the area well and has access to “wraparound services,” including rides to appointments, food boxes and case management.



Saving Lives with NARCAN®

Our ambassadors assist with many different situations downtown, and some of those are a matter of life or death. The SID safety ambassadors receive training on how to recognize the signs of an opioid overdose and administer NARCAN®. In 2023, they saved the lives of four different individuals who experienced overdoses. We are thankful for the Rapid Response Emergency Addiction and Crisis Team (RREACT) for leading this important training session and to the ambassadors for the vital services they provide downtown.



Securing Housing

When SID ambassadors came across someone sleeping in front of the Rhodes State Office Tower on Broad Street, outreach specialist Bill approached them to learn their story and lend a hand. The individual, who uses a wheelchair, had been left without a home when their son passed away and was living on the streets. They came to our office and our team got to work helping them apply for publicly supported housing through the Community Shelter Board. They were quickly referred to a wheelchair-accessible, disability-supported apartment.

With assistance from the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority, Bill helped the individual find an apartment and secure funds for the first month’s rent and deposit. They called us shortly after they moved in to express their appreciation and excitement for a space with good furniture, vaulted ceilings and a kitchen island.





ACTIVATING TOPIARY PARK

Tucked behind the Columbus Metropolitan Library's Main Branch, Topiary Park is at the heart of the Discovery District. In 2023, we created a free event series to draw people to the seven-acre green space. Free outdoor movie nights, mindfulness sessions, yoga and Sunday social events helped position Topiary Park as a family-friendly community destination for workers, residents and visitors of all ages.

"Mindfulness in the Park is my favorite!"

Columbus City Schools employee

 **29** Activations

 **877** Estimated Attendees





THE DOWNTOWN HOLIDAY TROLLEY HOP



In December, the Downtown Holiday Trolley Hop drew hundreds of visitors to the Discovery District to take advantage of free rides to various merchants and cultural institutions downtown. This collaborative community event engaged 14 partner organizations and many more local artists and artisans in the spirit of shopping local during the holiday season.



900 Estimated Attendees



14 Local Business Partners





PROMOTING THE COMMUNITY

As champions of Downtown Columbus, we take great care to bolster local businesses and property owners in our districts while also educating the community on all of the incredible resources, activities and amenities downtown has to offer. Our weekly newsletter, The In[SID]e Scoop, and our quarterly Visitor Guides disseminate important events, niche news and expert restaurant recommendations to anyone working, living in or visiting the area.

 **1,836** Newsletter Subscribers

 **86,252** Emails Delivered

 **41%** Average Email Open Rate

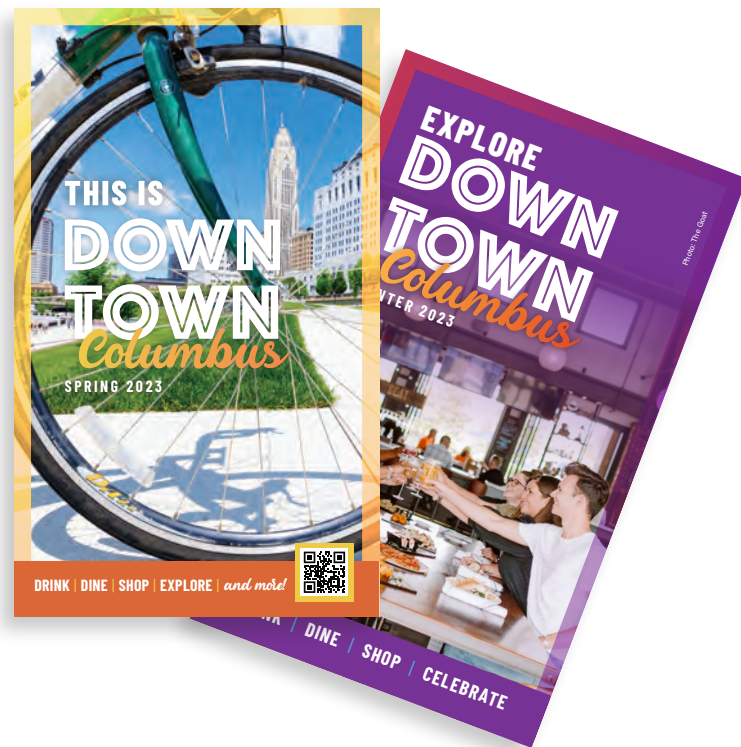
 **4.4%** Average Email Click Rate



Get the In[SID]e Scoop
in your inbox
downtownservices.org/newsletter

IN[SID]E SCOOP

 **24,000** Visitor Guides Distributed



SID STRATEGIC PLAN

One year ago, the Capital Crossroads & Discovery Special Improvement Districts (SIDs) jointly embarked on a strategic planning process to guide our work. We sought input from board members, property owners, elected officials and key partner organizations. We heard from over 200 voices, reaffirming our focus on a clean and safe downtown neighborhood, with a particular emphasis on safety, as it serves as the foundation of a vibrant downtown.

Find the full report at downtownservices.org



THE STATE OF DOWNTOWN REPORT

The annual State of Downtown Report, compiled by the Capital Crossroads & Discovery Special Improvement Districts, gauges the vitality of the central business district and provides key information to community stakeholders as they plan for the future. Each year, the report is released at the Columbus Metropolitan Club.

Find the full report at downtownservices.org

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Property owner assessments provide the funds for much-needed services for Downtown Columbus, and additional support from grants, sponsorships and community partnerships allows us to do even more.

As of Dec. 31, 2023, unaudited. Complete audited statements for 2023 will be available in March or April at downtownservices.org/discovery.

\$777,171

PROPERTY OWNER ASSESSMENTS

\$197,085

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO GENERAL OPERATIONS



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	2023	2022
Current Assets		
Cash & cash equivalents:		
Cash-undesignated	\$527,438	\$633,442
Accounts receivable	\$58,997	\$35,604
Prepaid expenses	\$21,920	\$32,650
Total current assets	\$608,355	\$701,696
Fixed Assets		
Equipment & vehicles, at cost	\$88,718	\$99,063
Accumulated depreciation	(\$78,408)	(\$85,091)
Net fixed assets	\$10,310	\$13,972
Other Assets		
Right of use asset	\$44,617	\$57,189
TOTAL ASSETS	\$663,282	\$772,857
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$57,907	\$50,249
Accrued expenses	\$5,506	\$5,445
Capital lease obligation, current portion	\$525	\$218
Operating lease obligation, current portion	\$14,668	\$13,297
Total current liabilities	\$78,606	\$69,209
Noncurrent Liabilities		
Capital lease obligation, less current portion	\$1,465	—
Operating lease, less current portion	\$29,949	\$43,891
Total noncurrent liabilities	\$31,414	\$43,891
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$110,020	\$113,100
Net Assets		
Without donor restrictions	\$553,262	\$659,757
With donor restrictions	—	—
Total net assets	\$553,262	\$659,757
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$663,282	\$772,857

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	2023	2022
Change in Net Assets	(\$106,495)	\$120,946
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided (used) by operating activities:		
Depreciation	\$6,030	\$6,250
Loss on disposal of asset	—	—
(Increase) Decrease in Assets		
Accounts receivable	(\$23,393)	\$38,000
Prepaid expenses	\$10,730	\$7,073
Increase (Decrease) in Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$7,658	\$31,920
Accrued expenses	\$61	(\$178)
NET CASH PROVIDED (USED) BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES	(\$105,409)	\$204,011
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES		
Purchase of fixed assets	—	(\$8,022)
Net Cash Provided (Used) by Financing Activities	—	(\$8,022)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES		
Principal payments of capital lease obligation	(\$595)	(\$834)
Net Cash Provided (Used) by Financing Activities	(\$595)	(\$834)
Net Increase (Decrease) in Cash and Cash Equivalents	(\$106,004)	\$195,155
Cash and Cash Equivalents at the Beginning of the Year	\$633,442	\$438,287
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR	\$527,438	\$633,442

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	2023	2022
Revenue		
Assessments	\$777,171	\$774,483
Contributions	\$184,672	\$181,980
Promotions	\$2,990	\$750
Contracted income	\$12,413	\$1,482
Interest	\$271	\$275
Miscellaneous	\$975	\$4,000
Total revenue Without Donor Restrictions	\$978,492	\$962,970
Expenses		
Clean and safe	\$846,745	\$680,975
Landscaping and maintenance	\$15,439	\$15,620
Communications and research	\$132,268	\$61,804
General and administrative	\$90,535	\$83,625
Total expenses	\$1,084,987	\$842,024
Change in Net Assets without Donor Restrictions	(\$106,495)	\$120,946
Net Assets at the Beginning of the Year	\$659,757	\$538,811
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	\$553,262	\$659,757



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Carl Brown	Chair Franklin University
Abigail McLean	Vice Chair Resident
Katharine Moore	Treasurer Jefferson Avenue Center
Greg Bickers	Trustee State Auto Insurance
Robert Davies	Trustee Grant Medical Center
Todd Haywood	Trustee Encova Insurance
Brandon Hill	Trustee NCJC Housing & Development Foundation
Amanda Kepner	Trustee Columbus Museum of Art
Miranda Kridler	Trustee Columbus College of Art & Design
Andrew Kistler	Trustee Columbus Metropolitan Library
Jeff Lafever	Trustee Junior League of Columbus
Matthew Loving	Trustee Loving Realty
Mark Lundine	Trustee City of Columbus
Donald McTigue	Trustee McTigue & Colombo LLC
Jeffrey Mohrman	Trustee Vera on Broad
Zachary Woodruff	Trustee Columbus State Community College
Joe Mollica	Non-voting CDDC & Capitol South
Cathryn Geppert	Non-voting Resident

STAFF

Marc Conte	Executive Director
Lisa Defendiefer	Deputy Director of Operations & Advocacy
Beth Kowalski	Director of Communications & Engagement
Kacey Brankamp	Director of Special Projects & Downtown C-pass
Mark Klingler	Special Projects & Downtown C-pass Manager
Eleanor Hudson	Project Coordinator
Nick Sinclair	Events Manager

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

Call **614.228.5718** for assistance with:

- ↔ Directions
- 🛡️ Safety escorts
- 🛍️ Recommendations
- ⊗ Disturbances
- 🗑️ Graffiti removal
- 🏠 Homeless outreach services
- ❓ Other questions or concerns

Monday-Saturday: 6 a.m.-11 p.m.

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.-8 p.m.

downtownservices.org



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