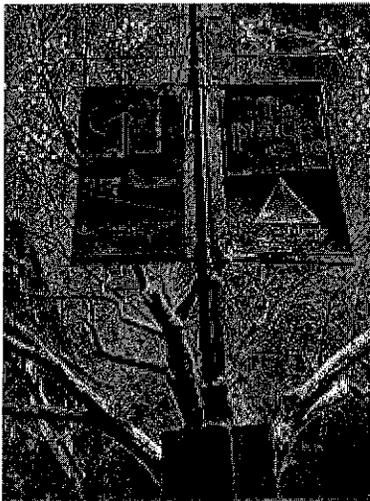




MORE ARTICLES TYPE

A to Z of Business Improvement Districts



Signage from the Golden Triangle BID
in Washington, DC. Photo credit:
FredoAlvarez, Flickr

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are organizations formed by private property owners and businesses within a legally constituted city district. Members pay a special tax to cover the expense of providing their BID with services beyond what the local government offers in their area. The legalities of forming a BID vary from state to state, but the organizations are often created simply by the approval by a majority of local business and property owners, by those who control a majority of the land area, or by owners responsible for the majority of the fees assessed.

BIDS — which are sometimes referred to as business improvement zones, as well as special improvement, special assessment, special services, and/or business assistance

districts — can range in size and scope. Some are independent of local government, having almost complete autonomy to finance, construct, and manage specific projects, while others are dependent on local government, created only to raise revenue for specific projects. The benefits of belonging to a BID vary, also: Some BIDs simply supplement the district's maintenance offerings, providing extra sanitation and landscaping services, while others expand into economic and community development.

For example, BIDs can:

- Provide welcoming services and extra security for public spaces and private businesses. This can come through introducing “ambassadors” to assist visitors to the area, financing extra security guards, and setting up neighborhood watch groups.

- Advocate and lobby on behalf of downtown businesses.
- Generate financing for capital improvements (such as raising money to build a performance stage in a public park) or for infrastructure alterations (like funding historic street lighting).
- Commission research and marketing services, collect and analyze economic and demographic data, and promote businesses in the area.
- Embark on integrated planning efforts.
- Allow BID businesses to experiment with innovative practices, implement strategies at a faster pace than if they had to engage with the full mechanisms of local government, and tailor-make solutions to their own needs.

MORE INFORMATION:

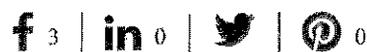
Starting a BID: A Step-by-Step Guide

Interested in starting a BID? This 30 page guide from New York City walks you through the process.

BID Fact Sheet + Bibliography

A great article from Gotham Gazette on the pros and cons of BIDs, as well as a listing of BIDs nationwide.

Author: Project for Public Spaces



Keep your finger on the pulse—sign up for Placemaking News today!  **SUBSCRIBE**

JOIN PLACEMAKING LEADERSHIP COUNCIL  **SUBSCRIBE TO NEWSLETTER** **DONATE**

WORK WITH US **CONTACT US**