

# WHAT IS A COLORADO BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT?

A business improvement district (BID) is a private sector initiative to manage and improve the environment of a business district with services financed by a self-imposed and self-governed assessment. Similar to a common area maintenance (CAM) charge commonly found in shopping malls and office parks, a BID can help a business district increase its competitiveness in the regional marketplace. Services financed by a BID are intended to enhance, not replace, existing city services.

The International Downtown Association estimates that there are more than 1,000 BIDs currently operating throughout the United States and Canada. BIDs come in all shapes and sizes, ranging from large downtowns to neighborhood business districts.

Benefits from BIDs, which can stretch well beyond their boundaries, include:

- Creating and maintaining a cleaner, safer and more attractive business district
- Ensuring stable and predictable revenues
- Providing innovative management
- Responding quickly to market changes and community needs
- Helping to increase property values, sales and occupancies
- Promoting distinct identities in business districts
- Leveraging resources
- Maximizing accountability to stakeholders that pay into a district
- Creating a unified voice to increase a business district's influence

Colorado's Business Improvement District Law of 1988 includes the following key provisions:

- BIDs can finance a wide variety of services, including marketing, maintenance, economic development, public safety, planning, events and parking management.
- BIDs are accountable to those who pay through a BID board of directors comprised of property and business owners within the district.
- Services financed by a BID are usually provided by a private sector organization, not government.
- BIDs require demonstrated support from owners of personal and real property representing more than 50% of assessed value and acreage.
- The "Taxpayers Bill of Rights" requires a vote by owners of real and personal property and lessees and residents of commercial property within a district to approve the assessment.
- Controls and safeguards can include a cap on assessments and a periodic review to ensure that BID services are effective.

BIDs have been established in downtowns and commercial districts throughout the State of Colorado, including Havana Street in Aurora, Downtown Denver, East and West Colfax in Denver, Cherry Creek North, South Broadway in Englewood, Downtown Boulder, Grand Junction, Durango, Manitou Springs and Colorado Springs.



Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.) is an economic development and planning firm that delivers community-based solutions to create thriving downtowns, corridors and neighborhoods. A national leader in downtown and community development, P.U.M.A. advises clients on a wide range of management, marketing, financial, urban design and implementation tactics that help communities and organizations create and sustain dynamic places.