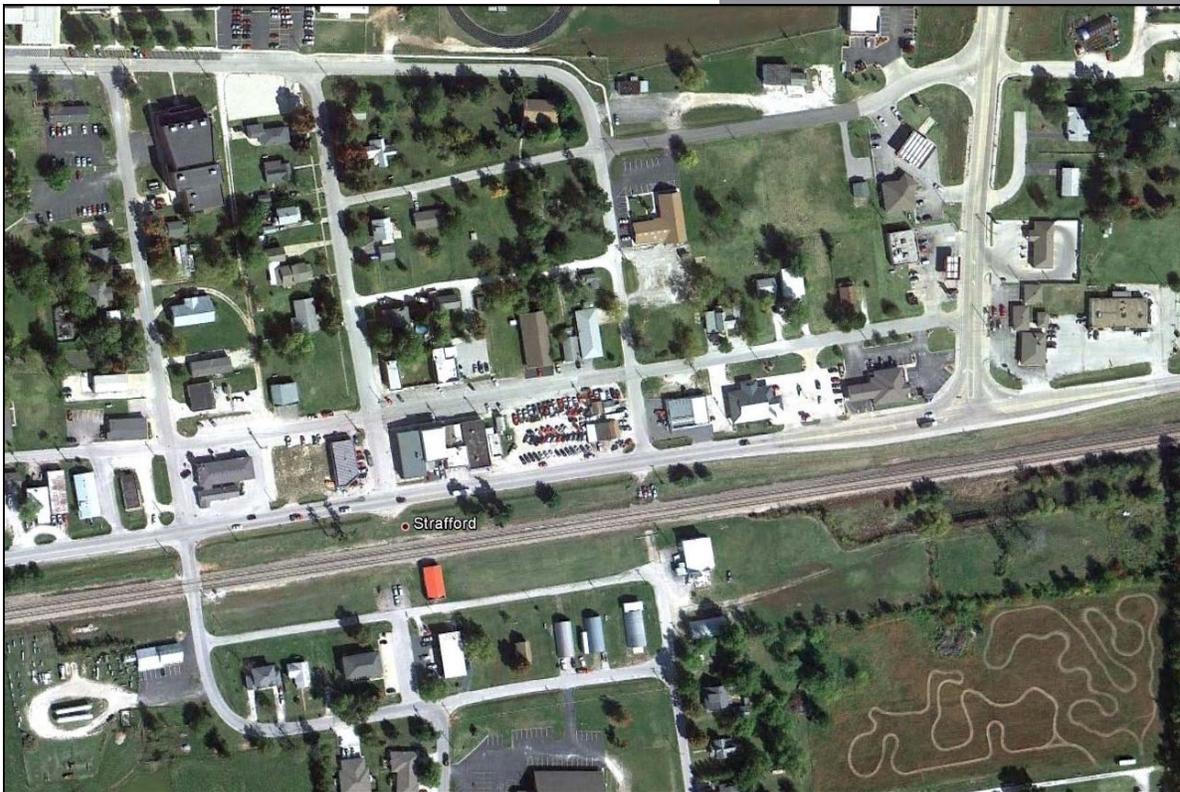


DOWNTOWN  
REVITALIZATION &  
ECONOMIC  
ASSISTANCE FOR  
MISSOURI

March 2012

# COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT MARKETING AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Strafford, Missouri





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



CITY OF STRAFFORD, MISSOURI

### DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FOR MISSOURI (DREAM) PROGRAM SPONSORS:



### PLANNING CONSULTANT:



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| <u>SECTION</u>  | <u>PAGE</u> |
|---|-------------|
| <b>I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>                                   | <b>1-1</b>  |
| Purpose .....   | 1-1         |
| Section Two.....  | 1-1         |
| Section Three .....   | 1-2         |
| Summary .....   | 1-2         |
| <b>II. PUBLIC OUTREACH.....</b>                                     | <b>2-1</b>  |
| Engaging District Area Ownership and Residents.....                 | 2-1         |
| Public Engagement Plan .....  | 2-1         |
| <u>Objective</u> .....  | 2-2         |
| <u>Key Messages</u> .....   | 2-2         |
| <u>Strategies</u> .....   | 2-3         |
| <u>Next Steps</u> .....   | 2-6         |
| <u>Timeline</u> .....   | 2-7         |
| <b>III. COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT LEGAL REQUIREMENTS .....</b> | <b>3-1</b>  |
| Purpose .....   | 3-1         |
| Implementation.....   | 3-1         |
| Board of Directors .....  | 3-1         |
| Eligible Projects .....   | 3-3         |
| Funding .....   | 3-4         |
| Reporting Requirements.....   | 3-5         |

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## SECTION ONE

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum is to guide and inform the City of Strafford (“City”) and the City of Strafford, Missouri, Downtown Revitalization Corporation, aka, Action DREAM Committee (“DREAM Committee”) through the process of establishing a Downtown Community Improvement District (“CID”). The implementation of the CID would fulfill recommendations of the DREAM Initiative and establish a sustainable programmatic funding source for the DREAM Committee.

The Downtown Organizational Development task of the DREAM Initiative recommends the implementation of a CID in Downtown Strafford in order to increase the City’s administrative and financial capacity for achieving economic development and infrastructure development goals for Downtown. The implementation and execution of CID projects will also be incorporated into the updated DREAM Initiatives recommendations for Strafford’ Downtown Strategic Plan as a central component for revitalization success. A CID will provide an additional tool to carry out the City’s revitalization plans.

This Memorandum does not answer every question related to establishing and administering a CID; however, it does seek to lay out the primary steps toward successful implementation, including marketing efforts, and also estimate the potential fiscal significance of a CID in terms of actual funds that may be available to fund CID activities.

This memorandum should be combined with projected CID revenue tables based on gross sales figures for the area of the CID. An example table is contemplated and provided in the DREAM Financial Assistance Review.

#### SECTION TWO

Section Two of this memo describes the vital step of implementing a strategy for public outreach and stakeholder involvement pointing out the necessity of a clear plan for the CID and a budget for CID expenditures in line with projected CID revenues. The major steps for implementing the CID are:

1. Defining the boundaries of the District
2. Planning (Defining the goals of, and outlining the expenditures for, the CID)
3. Budgeting
4. Marketing

5. Public Outreach/Stakeholder engagement
6. Determining number of board of directors (Identifying candidates and appointees, if any)
7. Petition approval
8. Election of Board of Directors
9. Election to approve imposition of CID Sales Tax (0.25%, 0.5%, 0.75%, or 1%)

The DREAM Downtown Organizational Development report recommended that a percentage of CID funds be earmarked to support the enhancement of organizational capacity for the DREAM Committee; however in terms of public engagement that item should be lower on the priority list compared to public improvements and other desired projects.

### SECTION THREE

Section Three of this Memorandum explains the legal steps that must be taken and qualifications that must be met to implement a CID. This section also describes key points related to ongoing CID administration.

### SUMMARY

In summary, prior to initiating a public outreach campaign for approving a CID it is absolutely paramount to prepare a preliminary CID “Plan” and a corresponding “Public Engagement Plan”. During the course of the public outreach campaign the City and DREAM Committee must anticipate the need to refine elements of the Plan (i.e. boundary, priority objectives, etc.) in order to build the necessary consensus to approve the CID. This effort will require significant time and effort on behalf of the DREAM Committee and the City. In the end, however, members of the Downtown community must be satisfied that the CID will provide a direct benefit to their property/business/residence and Downtown generally.

## SECTION TWO

### PUBLIC OUTREACH

It is critical that the following tasks be undertaken by a coalition of the City, DREAM Committee, and other property owners, individuals, and civic organizations. This committee should demonstrate support for the establishment of the CID and work to broaden this base of support through various meetings, press releases, and public speaking opportunities.

#### ENGAGING DISTRICT AREA OWNERSHIP AND RESIDENTS

In order to establish the CID and to impose an additional sales tax to fund CID plans and projects, the City and DREAM Committee (coalition) need to engage real property owners and qualified voters within the proposed CID insofar as to inform them on the proposed CID projects and the implications of the CID for community, economic development and infrastructure improvements to Downtown Strafford. The coalition needs to inform real property owners and qualified voters in general and area stakeholders (e.g. predominant real property owners, business owners, active residents) in particular in order to build public good-will and “buy-in” to the process of CID implementation and the goals of the CID.

If the proposed CID is to be within an existing TIF Redevelopment Area (“TIF Area”), then the effects on funding of the two programs must be fully understood. The City of Strafford will likely need to coordinate with the County Assessor’s office to determine the number of unique real property owners within the proposed CID, and will also need to coordinate with the local election authority to determine the number of eligible voters which reside within the district.

The coalition should also consider strategically establishing the CID boundary to include a majority of retail uses and property owned by those who are amenable to implementing the CID and seeing the CID carry out its goals while simultaneously incorporating Downtown’s existing and future retail locations/corridors. The coalition may also want to consider removing any properties that do not present current or future retail uses or that otherwise would not benefit the CID, unless the property owners are supportive of CID.

#### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The City should work with the DREAM Committee to devise a plan for best engaging the area stakeholders, as well as the qualified voters at-large, as the success of the CID hinges on voter support for the imposition of the additional sales tax. The City and DREAM Committee should present the case for the CID and the extra sales tax to the

stakeholders and others with a vested interest in Downtown.

Prior to developing the public engagement strategy, the coalition will need to formulate a “framework” for the CID Plan, including:

1. The proposed boundary and description of the district.
2. Proposed plans, projects, and general goals of the district. Some suggestions:
  - i. Safety
  - ii. Security
  - iii. Parking
  - iv. Street improvements and streetscape enhancements
  - v. Building repair and façade improvements
  - vi. Other projects or goals for the CID area
3. Number, and terms, of members of board of directors and officers, including identification of candidates and appointees (if any).
4. Proposed initial budget, or costs of plans and projects, of the district.
5. Proposed rate of additional sales tax from which revenues CID activities will be funded.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The following provides an outline for strategies to create the necessary public support for the implementation of a Community Improvement District (CID) in the Downtown area. This CID will be a key element in better defining Downtown Strafford through a series of physical improvements, including roadway and utility upgrades, streetscape enhancements and wayfinding signage. It can also help develop new community assets and potential revenue streams, such as a Route 66 Visitor’s Center and accompanying retail attraction. The CID could also provide funds that would allow Strafford’s volunteer-led Action DREAM Committee to develop into a more permanent function, capable of overseeing and driving the implementation of these new structural enhancements Downtown.

## **KEY MESSAGES**

To support all communications relating to the implementation of a CID, the DREAM Committee should adopt a few — no more than three — key messages that would be woven into all supporting communications. Possible messages include:

1. By adopting a Community Improvement District, we can create new improvements and greatly enhance Downtown for residents and visitors to enjoy.
2. A Community Improvement District will bring new economic development opportunities to Strafford, without negatively impacting residents and businesses.
3. The Action DREAM Committee is an advocate for Downtown Strafford and a guiding force for continued improvement, growth and development.

Once those top-level messages are adopted, a complete message platform should be developed that includes “proof points” – or supporting facts – to demonstrate the validity

of each message. For example, the first message could be supported by a proof point such as, “The proposed CID could raise as much as \$7 million over 20 years that would be used towards façade and streetscape improvements, as well as their ongoing maintenance.” Other proof points supporting the first key message should also focus on tangible projects the CID would fund. Proof points for the second message should detail the positive financial impacts of attracting new visitors and businesses to the region. This is also where the DREAM Committee should specifically address any concerns of a new tax and illustrate that a CID would have little to no impact on residents and business owners. The final message should be supported with points that demonstrate the DREAM Committee’s role and the potential for the long-term improvement and growth of Downtown, provided the right structure is put in place and properly funded.

## **STRATEGIES**

### **Advisory Committee**

By creating an advisory group for the CID campaign, the DREAM Committee can effectively engage Downtown businesses and residents in this effort, while maintaining an appropriate level of autonomy. It is important that the group of individuals leading the charge for a new financing structure not be the same group of people perceived to benefit the most from the new funds. The advisory committee will help to:

- Identify the appropriate local spokespeople (independent from the leadership structure of the DREAM Committee).
- Serve as advocates for the work being done by the DREAM Committee and the CID concept.
- Bring together other thought leaders from throughout the community to provide counsel regarding the campaign.
- Arrange for and hold briefings with key business leaders and residents.

### **Engage Downtown Business and Property Owners**

Campaign spokespersons, including members of the advisory committee and the DREAM Committee, can begin to approach the local business and property owners. This can happen informally at first, perhaps over a cup of coffee. *Please note, for the best possible results, it is critical that the outreach be initiated by the individual with the strongest relationship with the stakeholder.* Important points to focus on include:

- Reiterate how new structural enhancements and leadership by the DREAM Committee would benefit Downtown.
  - Remind Downtown business and property owners of the coordinated approach and effort that DREAM could bring to the area. Examples include: streetscape improvement and maintenance, new park space and attraction for Route 66 enthusiasts, façade improvements, advancement and promotion for available retail locations, community marketing, etc.
- Remind business and property owners of the threat to losing momentum without a more permanent funding mechanism.

- Gather opinions regarding business or property owner feelings about:
  - The direction of, and vision for, Downtown.
  - The DREAM Committee.
  - The idea of a structured financial mechanism to help fund physical improvements and allow the DREAM Committee’s singular focus and oversight of all things Downtown.
- Leverage what is discovered by conversations with business and property owners to reinforce the value that a CID could bring.

### Materials Development

Demonstrating the value that a potential CID could deliver will be an important part of this campaign. Community leadership will want to be sure that anyone discussing the topic has accurate information to ensure that the most important and pertinent points are discussed properly. To do so, we recommend:

- Message platform with accompanying proof points, such as the examples included above.
  - Create consistent and appropriate messaging to use during meetings, with the advisory committee spokesperson, the DREAM Committee leadership and spokespersons and business/property owners.
    - Detail benefits for Downtown businesses and property owners.
    - Promote any additional benefits for other Stafford residents and visitors to the community.
    - Highlight the opportunity to continue positive improvements.
  - Address possible concerns or objections up front.
    - Demonstrate that a CID would have little to no impact on sales, using quantifiable data from a successful nearby CID.
    - Show that residents would not face an overwhelming new tax burden. Provide simple examples of what the tax would mean in terms of real dollars, such as \$0.50 on a \$100 purchase.
    - Show that much of the new revenue would come from non-residents, providing a specific breakdown by percentages if feasible.
    - Develop proof points that show the positive financial impacts of attracting new visitors and businesses to the region.
  - Use these same messages when talking with any newspaper or radio stations in response to inquiries.
  - In addition to reinforcing key messages, explain the process of getting a CID implemented.
- Mailer to be sent to property owners and city officials.
  - Inform people about what a CID is and specifically how the Stafford CID will work.
  - Detail specific programs and services that would be funded by a Downtown Stafford CID, “painting a picture” of what it could do.
  - Explain the CID process.

- Provide contact information and drive people to additional information online.
  - To the most influential voters, deliver in person or include with a letter requesting a meeting.
- Template presentation and “leave behind” flyer or pamphlet about the CID and the DREAM Committee’s vision for the future.
  - Demonstrate the economic impact that new Downtown development has made or could make on the town — including job creation and new tax revenue.
  - Address any possible concerns that may be felt by businesses and consumers.
  - Briefly explain how the DREAM Committee works, provide background about projects the committee has led, and show the committee’s concrete vision for the future.
- “Frequently asked questions” (FAQs) to address issues surrounding the CID.
  - Discuss how a CID would have a positive impact on the District as a whole without impacting retail sales.
  - Provide examples of projects that would be funded by a CID, including streetscapes and park facilities.
  - Demonstrate CID success rates, providing examples in similar-sized communities if possible.
- Follow-up letter to send to members of the voting body near the date of the vote.
  - Stress the importance of each individual vote.
  - Reinforce the case for new development and a more permanent Downtown development structure.
  - Have the letter sent by a prominent community official or member of the advisory committee.
- Website landing page, built as part of Strafford Online (Straffordmissouri.org) and prominently linked to from the Strafford Chamber of Commerce website.
  - To reach secondary influencers and garner broader public support, explain the vision for Downtown Strafford, made possible by the CID.
  - Place a large icon on the home page to promote the opportunity to improve Downtown, such the current advertisement for Route 66 Days.
  - Include an opportunity to sign up for ongoing updates, whether that is through a blog or page RSS feed.
  - On the site, include relevant content such as:
    - The vision for Downtown, along with renderings of proposed improvements.
    - Information about what a CID is and can do for Downtown Strafford.
    - General information about the CID voting process.
    - FAQs.
    - A list of CID supporters with supporting quotes.
    - A map of the proposed District.

## Countering Negative Perceptions

No new tax proposal will come without detractors, especially in the midst of an economic downturn. Fortunately for business owners in the case of the Strafford CID, the small proposed increase to the sales tax should have little to no negative impact on sales. For residents, the minor increase in the sales tax will add very little to the purchase price of an item, and much of the burden will be levied on out-of-town visitors stopping at local gas stations.

In addition to building possible concerns into the core messaging, the DREAM Committee should develop a Questions and Answers (Q&A) document. This piece would be similar to the FAQs, but for internal purposes only. It would be used reactively to answer difficult questions posed by detractors and members of the media.

- Brainstorm a list of possible “hard-hitting” questions that would be asked by reporters, residents and/or property owners.
- Use the message platform to craft succinct answers.
- Provide the developed Q&A to spokespersons and other key advocates who may be questioned about the CID.

## NEXT STEPS

Members of the DREAM Committee should meet to review and discuss the proposed public engagement plan and determine formation and members of a CID Formation Advisory Group. Then representatives can begin the process of engaging stakeholders within the proposed CID boundaries, discuss which supporting materials are needed to move forward with implementation of the plan and set a production timeline.

## TIMELINE

On the following page is a potential timeline for enacting the recommendations outlined in this plan, assuming Strafford adopts the list of materials proposed in the [STRATEGIES](#) section. If materials are removed from the list, or additional assets requested, the timeline should be adjusted accordingly.

**Phase 1: First Month of the Campaign**

| Timing    | Action/Deliverable(s)  |
|-----------|--|
| Weeks 1-2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possible members identified</li> <li>• Invitations to join extended</li> </ul>  |
| Week 2    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft key messages and proof points (message platform) developed</li> <li>• Draft list of campaign materials developed</li> </ul>   |
| Week 3    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductory meeting</li> <li>• Edits to or approval of message platform</li> <li>• Edits to or approval of list of proposed campaign materials</li> <li>• Action plan for engaging individual business owners including who will make contact, when</li> <li>• Action plan for campaign materials development, including timeline and responsible party</li> </ul> |
| Week 4    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final message platform adopted</li> </ul>   |

**Phase 2: Second Month of the Campaign**

| Timing    | Action/Deliverable(s)  |
|-----------|--|
| Weeks 5-6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation for Advisory Committee meetings</li> <li>• “Leave behind” flyer/pamphlet and mailer</li> <li>• FAQs and Q&amp;A</li> <li>• Website copy</li> </ul>   |
| Weeks 7-8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory Committee meeting to review materials and confirm outreach strategy</li> <li>• Mailer delivered to voters and key stakeholders</li> <li>• Website development</li> <li>• Initial Advisory Committee meetings with voters and key stakeholders</li> </ul> |

**Phase 3: Third Month of the Campaign, Ongoing**

| Timing      | Action/Deliverable(s)   |
|-------------|---|
| Week 9      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory Committee meetings with voters and key stakeholders wrap-up</li> </ul>  |
| Weeks 10-11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information gained from meetings shared with other Committee members and the DREAM Committee</li> <li>• Follow-up letter to voters developed and mailed</li> </ul> |
| Week 12     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CID vote taken</li> </ul>  |

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## SECTION THREE

### COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

#### PURPOSE

Sections 67.1401 to 67.1571 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, as amended, (the “CID Act”) require that a Community Improvement District (“CID” or “district”) must be a contiguous area and may be created for the purpose of financing a wide range of public facilities, improvements or services within a municipality. A CID is either a separate political subdivision with the power to impose a sales tax, a special assessment or a real property tax, or a nonprofit corporation with the power to impose special assessments.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

A CID is created by filing with the municipality, where the proposed district will be located, a proper petition signed by:

- (1) Property owners of at least 50% of the assessed value of the real property within the proposed district, and
- (2) More than 50% per capita of all owners of real property within the proposed district.

Once the petition is filed, the governing body of the municipality shall hold a public hearing and may approve the creation of the proposed district by ordinance.

The petition must include a five-year plan that describes the purposes of the proposed district, the services it will provide, the improvements it will make and an estimate of the costs of the project. The petition must also indicate the number of directors to serve on the board of directors as well as the term for the existence of the district, which may be defined as a minimum, maximum or definite number of years.

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The CID may be governed by a board of directors numbering at least 5 but not more than 30 members. These members may be either appointed by the municipality or elected by the residents and property owners of the CID. The CID Petition may also state that certain officers or members of the Board of Directors are or will be appointed and that others will be elected.

In order to qualify for a seat on the board of directors, each potential director must be: at least 18 years of age; an owner of real property or a business within the CID; or a registered voter residing within the CID. The establishing petition may define any other qualifications, which any potential director would then have to meet.

The procedure for electing the Board of Directors is as follows:

- (1) The municipal clerk specifies a date for the election. The date must be a Tuesday not earlier than the 10<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, and not later than the 15<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, after the effective date of the ordinance adopted to establish the CID.
- (2) Candidates for the Board of Directors shall pay the sum of five dollars as a filing fee and shall file not later than the second Tuesday after the effective date of the ordinance establishing the district, with the municipal clerk a statement under oath that he or she possesses the qualifications for a director and thereafter, such candidate shall have his or her name placed on the ballot.
- (3) A notice of the election must be published in a newspaper of general circulation within the municipality two times. The first publication no more than 60 days prior to the date of the election; the second publication not less than 10 days prior to the date of the election.
- (4) Qualified voters consist of residents within the CID who are registered voters as of the 30<sup>th</sup> day prior to the date of the election; or if no registered voters reside within the CID then qualified voters consist of owners of real property within the CID.
- (5) The election will be conducted via ballot mailed to registered qualified voters within the CID. If registered voters fail to receive a ballot in the mail, they may pick up a mail-in ballot at the election authority's office.
- (6) Ballots are to be mailed to registered qualified voters not more than 15 days and not less than 10 days prior to the date of the election.
  - a. For purposes of mailing ballots to real property owners, only one ballot shall be mailed per owner to the address shown on the records of the county clerk.
- (7) The CID must reimburse the election authority for the costs it incurs in conducting the election.

The directors to be elected shall be elected at-large, with the person receiving the most votes receiving the position with the longest tenure, the person receiving the next most votes receiving the position with the next-longest tenure, and so on down the line. The tenures of each director should be stipulated in the establishing petition.

## ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

A CID may fund public facilities or improvements within its boundaries, including the following:

- (1) Pedestrian or shopping malls and plazas.
- (2) Parks, lawns, trees and any other landscape.
- (3) Convention centers, arenas, aquariums, aviaries and meeting facilities.
- (4) Sidewalks, streets, alleys, bridges, ramps, tunnels, overpasses and underpasses, traffic signs and signals, utilities, drainage, water, storm and sewer systems and other site improvements.
- (5) Parking lots, garages or other facilities.
- (6) Lakes, dams and waterways.
- (7) Streetscape, lighting, benches or other seating furniture, trash receptacles, marquees, awnings, canopies, walls and barriers.
- (8) Telephone and information booths, bus stop and other shelters, rest rooms and kiosks.
- (9) Paintings, murals, display cases, sculptures and fountains.
- (10) Music, news and child-care facilities.
- (11) Any other useful, necessary or desired improvement.

A CID may also provide a variety of public services within its boundaries, including the following:

- (1) With the municipality's consent, prohibiting or restricting vehicular and pedestrian traffic and vendors on streets.
- (2) Operating or contracting for the provision of music, news, child-care or parking facilities, and buses, mini-buses or other modes of transportation.

- (3) Leasing space for sidewalk café tables and chairs.
- (4) Providing or contracting for the provision of security personnel, equipment or facilities for the protection of property and persons.
- (5) Providing or contracting for cleaning, maintenance and other services to public and private property.
- (6) Promoting tourism, recreational or cultural activities or special events.
- (7) Promoting business activity, development and retention.
- (8) Providing refuse collection and disposal services.
- (9) Contracting for or conducting economic, planning, marketing or other studies.

A CID may also demolish, renovate or rehabilitate any building or structure, if the area has been found blighted and the governing body of the municipality has determined that such action is reasonably anticipated to remediate the blighting conditions and will serve a public purpose.

## FUNDING

A CID may be created as either a political subdivision or a nonprofit corporation. Once created, a CID that is created as a nonprofit corporation can finance the costs of a project through the imposition of special assessments for those improvements that specifically benefit the properties within the district. A CID that is created as a political subdivision can finance the costs of a project through the imposition of:

- (1) Special assessments for those improvements that specifically benefit the properties within the district;
- (2) Property taxes; or
- (3) A sales tax up to a maximum of 1%.

Either type of CID may finance the costs of a project through the imposition of fees, rents and charges for district property or services or grants, gifts and donations. A CID may also issue bonds, notes and other obligations and may secure any of such obligations by mortgage, pledge, assignment or deed of trust of any or all of the property and income of the district. However, the bonds or other obligations of a CID that is created as a nonprofit corporation will not be tax-exempt.

If the district wishes to impose a sales tax on all retail sales made in the district, the board of directors of the district must submit, by mail-in ballot, a proposal to authorize a sales tax. The proposal should stipulate the tax rate which may be imposed in increments of one-eighth of one-percent up to a maximum of one-percent. If a majority of the votes cast are in favor of the sales tax, then the resolution is adopted. If a majority of the votes cast are opposed, then the resolution is void. The mail-in ballot election procedure for the adoption of the resolution and imposition of the sales tax is conducted in the same manner as the election for the board of directors as described above, pursuant to Section 67.1551, RSMo.

### REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

- (1) The CID's fiscal year shall be the same as the municipality's fiscal year.
- (2) No earlier than 180 days and no later than 90 days prior to the first day of each fiscal year, the CID board shall submit to the governing body of the municipality a proposed annual budget setting forth expected expenditures, revenues, and rates of assessment and taxes, if any, for such fiscal year. The governing body may review and make comments. If comments are given, they must be delivered no later than 60 days prior to the first day of the relevant fiscal year. Comments from the City do not constitute requirements, only recommendations.
- (3) The board shall hold an annual meeting to adopt an annual budget no later than 30 days prior to the first day of each fiscal year.
- (4) Within 120 days after the end of each fiscal year, the district shall submit a report to the municipal clerk and the Missouri Department of Economic Development stating services provided, revenues collected and expenditures made.

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